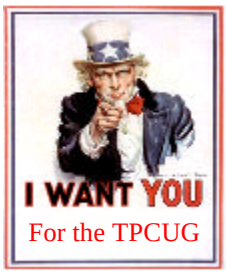
# Bits of Blue




A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 9 No. 8 August 1996

## Meeting

**August 14, 1996**
**6:00 PM**
**Hillsborough Community College, Ybor Campus**
**Ybor Room**

**Windows NT 4.0**
**by**
**Arup Charkravarty**

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## New Computers, the Internet & our Group

*by William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.*

**New Computers**

In the June newsletter I spoke glowingly of my faithful Gateway 386/33 computer that was almost five years old. With the upgrades to memory, hard drives, and video I had made over the years it was still serving me well in all aspects of computing except graphics. My DeLorme *Street Atlas USA* and *Map & Go* maps took a pretty long time to print, as did my work with *Corel Draw*. Then in the July newsletter I described upgrading my daughters no-name 386/33 to a 486DX2 80 with 16 MB of RAM. It is now running approximately four times faster than the old Gateway. And along the way I mentioned the arrival of a new Gateway P5-166 with 32 MB of RAM. Needless to say it is faster than the other two computers.

But how much faster? Based on the results of WinTune (a benchmarking program on our BBS), how about approximately 25 time faster on throughput than the Gateway 386/33 and about 6 times faster than the 486/80. I haven't bothered to actually run comparison tests where I timed sending the same map or drawing to the printer from both the 386/33 and the P5-166, but just based on casual observation, I would say that what was a 10 minute job using the 386/33 is now less than a one minute job with the P5-166. Quite an improvement.

However, for most of what I do the extra speed is not all that impor-

(Comments.....*Continued on page 3)*

**September 11 Meeting: ScreenCam - Video Capture - Bring a 3.5 high density disk to have your photo digitized**
**October 9 Meeting: Micrografx - Great company presenting a graphics software demonstration**

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Bits of Blue is published by the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc., a State of Florida registered non-profit corporation, to provide educational information about personal computer systems to its members. Our mailing address is P. O. Box 3492, Tampa, FL 33601-3492.

However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@ix.netcom.com.

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# SECRETARY'S REPORT & MINUTES OF MEETING July 10, 1996

*Minutes and Comments by Bruce Register, Secretary*

Vice President Mike Hodges called the meeting to order and introduced officers present.

Mike introduced Cathy and Phil Torres who conducted an auction of the two laptops. Melvin Flynn bought one for $145 donation. John Witmer bought the other for $200 donation. The members applauded appreciation to Phil, who is a professional auctioneer, for donating his services for the TPCUG and to Melvin and John.

Frederick "Rick" O'Keefe made a presentation on surge suppressors. His company is CSR Consultants, 13014-363 N. Dale Mabry, Phone 933-1575. These comments are bits and pieces (and my understanding or misunderstanding) of what Rick presented.

He showed us a fire damaged suppressor due to an inadequate system. The average price of a common suppressor is $30 to $50. The better one should run in the neighborhood of $150. He showed us the inside of suppressors. We viewed the "MOV" disks that are in them. The MOVs will burn out and short the surge to the ground, hopefully, without damaging equipment. He said that every time a surge passes through a suppressor, the life of the suppressor is reduced. You cannot know this from the outside appearance. He emphasized the three locations for needed suppressors. 1) From the main panel to the outside. 2) Between the main panel and anything in the building. 3) Middle of the building which generally receives no more than 3000 amps and 6000 volts. You want in a suppressor to be: 1) Durable, 2) Reliable, 3) Safe, 4) Effective. We should never use a suppressor that is not UL "Listed". The old UL-1449 was the top "listed"; now the UL-1449 Adj is the best "listed" that UL has. UL no longer rates; they list. If the device is not UL "listed", do not use it. The UPS is used to tell the rest of the network or system to shut down because there is a problem. He said that a UPS provides no surge protection to your system. The suppressor in the UPS is to protect the UPS so that it can perform its function of shutting down. He says that you need suppressors on "each end" of each piece of equipment. Surges sometimes travel the ground and neutral wires. He reminded us of the need to have telephone lines protected also. Mike Hodges reminded us that Tampa is the lightning capital of the US; lightning in this area is 87 strikes per acre per year. Indonesia is the lightning capital of the world. Other members mentioned the need for lightning arrestors. It was stated that an objective should be to dissipate lightning away from the inside

*(Minutes.....Continued on page 3)*

*(Minutes.....Continued from page 2)*

as quickly as possible. We thank Rick for the most interesting and informative presentation. This report only covers a little of what he imparted to us.

Mike introduced Pat Fulton who gave a presentation and discussion regarding laptops. Pat has a company that services and sells laptops. Pat referred to a newspaper clipping regarding an airport scam for stealing laptops. It seems to work like this. When a traveler places a laptop on the inspection conveyer, two people (appearing to not know each other) jump in line ahead of the traveler. One crook goes through the detector quickly and cleanly. The second crook has his pockets loaded with metal objects. The detector sounds off and he starts unloading piece at a time while alarms keep sounding. The first crook is already inside; he simply picks up the laptop as it comes through. Everyone's attention is on the guy with all the metal who creates all the commotion that he can. Meanwhile the first crook quickly gets around a corner and gives the laptop to a third crook who quickly stashes it. No ones knows or sees the third crook. When the traveler becomes alarmed that his laptop is gone, someone might remember seeing the first crook. If they find him, they do not find the laptop. He naturally denies everything and is not caught with the goods. The second and third crooks disappear. Later the third crook returns to take the stash. He may put it inside a suitcase to hide it as he most casually walks out of the terminal with no one the wiser. Mike Hodges stated that the annual loss for this type of scam numbers 208,000.

Back to the laptops, laptops now have CD drives. Pat told us that the average charge time for a battery is from one to two hours and will last about two hours with a color monitor. The best units may last up to seven hours with monochrome. She said that people should buy the laptop for mobility and not for the sole reason of working unconnected to a wall plug. The battery usage time is generally over emphasized. William LaMartin warned us about using a laptop connected to telephone lines other than those of the telephone company. He had a hotel experience in which the hotel had their own phone system. It was not compatible with laptops. He was lucky that his unit was not damaged by the PBX or whatever the system was. Some have not been so lucky. Pat cautioned us about extreme temperatures. She said never leave the unit in a locked car. The heat will damage it. She said when you move around with one in your car, make certain that it is not in direct contact the heat source of direct sunlight. Extreme cold will damage the unit, also. Things happen to laptops; they get stolen, bumped or dropped. She said that one should close a laptop very gently after use. Damage has occurred when someone has closed the laptop quickly while it is hot from usage. A slam close will damage a hot monitor; that is a $500 repair bill. By the way, her company offers 24 hour repair service in most cases. When one buys a laptop one should be

*(Minutes.....Continued on page 7)*

*(Comments.....Continued from page 1)*

tant. Writing this in *Microsoft Word* works just fine on the slower computer, as does tracking my expenses in *Quicken*, maintaining the User Group's database of members in *Microsoft Access*, or projecting my business expenses in *Microsoft Excel*. And until I get a faster connection to the Internet than the usual modem connection, the old computer and the new one perform just about the same with that task too. Now, if I had an ISDN connection then perhaps I could tell the difference. Why don't you members of the group take up a special collection so the newsletter editor can pay for an ISDN line and modem to check this out? If the group can send two other officers to Europe (see the photo accompanying the Micrografx article), then certainly this extra expense should be trivial.

There are in actuality a couple of tasks using *Microsoft Word* that I have noticed the faster computer really helps with: Compiling indexes and re-paginating. I have several large documents. One is 350 pages, and the other is over 1 MB of text (I don't remember how many pages it is). Anyway, the 350 page document has an index which is quite extensive, and if changes are made in the document, the index must be re-compiled. This, as with re-pagination, is noticeably slow on the old computer. It is almost done in a flash on the new.

While moving from page to page in *Microsoft Word* is fast enough with the old, doing the same in *Adobe Acrobat* produces a noticeable delay between each page. On the P5-166 the page change is almost instantaneous. So for people with plenty of time and patience, a 386/33 may suffice--especially is there is also a lack of money. If you want to gain speed on the cheap, I think replacing the motherboard and processor and probably memory, to upgrade to 486/100 is the way to go. This computer would be five times as fast as the 386/33, and really is good enough for any application I have tried it on. Recall that in my upgrade to a 486 I couldn't get the chip to run reliably at 100 MHz and had to settle for a 486/80 which is about four times the speed of the 386/33.

I apparently am not the only one who has encountered chips that will not run at their rated speed. I know of an individual who bought a mass-market Pentium 100. It worked OK for awhile, but soon failed. He sent it in for a warranty repair and they supposedly installed a new motherboard and processor. Now he is puzzled why when it boots up it states that it is a Pentium 60 or 75 (I can't remember which). You figure it out,

*(Comments.....Continued on page 8)*

# IOMEGA's ZIP DRIVE

*Review by Larry Anders, Librarian*
*Tampa PC Users Group*

I've heard questions lately from several of our members asking about the ***"ZIP"*** drives, as far as what they are and how they work. Well, I've been using one since they were introduced and I think it's one of the best $199 investments I've made since I've been personal computing and I'll be glad to pass on the information to all interested.

The Iomega Zip drive is a light weight portable storage device that uses removable 100 megabyte diskette-like cartridges. It plugs directly into your PC's parallel (printer) port, and can be easily moved from one computer to another, even notebooks and laptops. The cartridges are slightly larger than a regular 3.5 inch diskette, but store the equivalent of 70 diskettes. These Zip cartridges are also inexpensive, compared to the data stored. It works out to about 20 cents per megabyte, less if you purchase the diskettes in quantities of 5 or more.

Although these cartridges look like diskettes, they perform more like hard drives in terms of speed and capacity. They **ARE NOT** quite as fast as hard disks (see the specifications below), but they come close enough to be reasonable alternatives. The main strength is they are removable media, which permit virtually unlimited capacity by exchanging cartridges. Unlike tape, Zip cartridges provide random access. Like tape they offer high capacity, portability, and are well suited for backing-up and archiving. The Zip drive can be used an adjunct "hard disk" drive, especially for temporary projects.

The drive is supported by a simple software driver which makes the Zip disk appear as another drive letter to your operating system. I run my software as a permanent TSR so it's available all the time but you don't have to set it up this way. Actually, no permanent software changes need to be made to your system to use the drive, just run the software when access to the drive is needed.

The Zip drive comes with other software utilities such as: 1) Copy Machine that you can copy one removable disk to another using Single Drive Copy or use Two Drive Copy to make a copy from a disk in any drive (except network drives) to a disk in any other drive (except to CD-ROM drives). The advantage of using Copy Machine to duplicate your data is that you have immediate access to the copies. Backup utilities generally compress data and require much more time for the restore processes. Copying a hard disk may require multiple target disks but Copy Machine automatically spans the target disk set, meaning that it keeps track of where one Target finishes and the next starts. 2) The Guest program is a portable driver that let you easily move your Zip drive from one computer to another without having to permanently install the driver. Just install Guest on a floppy disk and take it with you. 3) The Format tool allows you to erase or prepare a disk for new data. A short format is quick, but does not verify the disk surface. A long format (also called a low-level format or format with surface verify) prepares the entire disk and verifies the disk surface at the same time. 4) The Protect tool enables software protection for a Zip cartridge in a selected drive (it is grayed out as unavailable for all other drives and disks). As a replacement for the conventional write-protect tab on removable disks, this tool provides a wider variety of data protection options for Zip drive users. 5) Making a disk non-removable is sometimes required either by software installations to the disk, or by software running from the disk. This tool allows you to make a removable drive look like a hard drive to the system when necessary. 6) Status provides a quick and easy way to view the selected drive's type and current state of function. 7) and Parallel Port Accelerator is just

what it says it is.

What can you do with a Zip drive? How about low cost archiving with easy retrieval, file backup, temporary storage expansion, multimedia projects (which use large amounts of storage), libraries of images or databases which need not tie up regular disk storage, temporary holding areas for scanned or downloaded files, setup an easy filing system with one cartridge per course, research project, etc., easy to produce backup for secure storage of important files (no special backup software or knowledge required, no permanent device needed), portable mass storage for classroom use (easily attached to an existing classroom PC), transportation of an entire filing system between home and campus offices.

Your computer must have an available parallel port (LPT1) for connection, and be a 386 or better processor running either DOS or Windows (3.x or 95). Newer PC's provide high per-

*(Zip.....Continued on page 9)*

**SOFTWARE AVAILABLE FOR REVIEW**

1. **Microsoft Automap Road Atlas** -Trip planning and mapping made easy - Microsoft Windows 3.1 or higher CD
2. **Work Safe Office for Windows** - Production Technology Engineering & Management Services - Ergonomic risk analysis for Computer work stations- Windows 3.1 & 95
3. **Outside IN**/for Windows - Instant Access to any file - View, copy print search, launch & manage files.
4. **Harvard ChartXL** for Windows - Compelling charts from critical data. Software Publishing Co.
5. **On File** -for Windows, Arranges your files into fun to-use "notebooks "
6. **Family Fun Pack** for OS/2 Warp CD
7. **How Would You Survive?** - Grolier - Multimedia Adventure (ages 7-12) - Windows CD
8. **Jump Start Preschool** - Knowledge Adventure - getting a head start on education (ages 2-5) - Windows CD
9. **Space Adventure**- Knowledge Adventure - up to the moment exploration of outer space. (8-adult)
10. **Aviation Adventure** - Knowledge Adventure - complete world of Flying (8-adult)
11. **TuneLand** staring Howie Mandel - 7th Level. Interactive Cartoon (ages 3 and up) Windows MPC CD
12. **Crossties** - Organize everything on your PC for instant access - Windows 3.1
13. **ECHO Lake** - Delrina Capture and share family memories - The Multimedia Family Album
14. **Life Form** - fitnesoft - Personal Health Management - Windows
15. **Terror T.R.A.X** -Grolier - Full -Screen/Full-Motion Interactive Horror Film (ages 13+) - Windows CD
16. **SFPD Homicide: The Body in the Bay** - Grolier - Murder Mystery Game (ages 13+)- Windows CD
17. **Info Accelerator** - Baseline -Manage contacts, phone, to-do's, calendar and mail merge inside Word, WordPerfect & Ami Pro - Win 3.1 or Win 95

(Call 251-3817 for information on review software)

**People with software reviews due--we need them!**

## August 's Interesting World Wide Web Locations

| | |
|---|---|
| Edmund's Automobile Buyer's Guide | http://www.edmunds.com |
| House Call Network (Medical information) | http://www.housecall.com/ |
| Florida Weather Center - Tampa Bay online | http://www.weathercenter.com/ |
| ClairNet (News) | http://www.clari.net/ |
| Michigan State Univ. Extension Service | http://msue-250.msue.msu.edu/ |
| SoftwarezCom (Shareware) | http://www.softwarez.com/ |
| The Business of Sports | http://www.rothnet.com/sports/index.html |
| GameSpot (Computer game information) | http://www.gamespot.com/index.html |
| Castles on the Web | http://fox.nstn.ca/~tmonk/castle/castle.html |
| Tampa Hillsborough Public Library System | http://scfn.thpl.lib.fl.us/thpl/thpl.htm |
| U. S. Gazetteer | http://www.census.gov/cgi-bin/gazetteer |
| USGS Geographic Name Server (find places in teh US) | http://www-nmd.usgs.gov/www/gnis/gnisform.html |
| USGS Water Resources of Tampa Florida | http://www-tampa.er.usgs.gov/ |
| Washington Post | http://www.washingtonpost.com/ |
| Baseball Scores (from Yahoo) | http://sports.yahoo.com/mlb/ |
| Suck (an irreverent look at computer news) | http://www.suck.com/ |
| PC Quote (Stock information) | http://www.pcquote.com/ |
| Strawberry Facts Page (for all you Plant City folks) | http://vanbc.wimsey.com/~jam/StrawberryFacts/facts.html |
| Virtual Tourist World Map | http://www.vtourist.com/vt/ |

## Software Review

## ABC Graphics Suite by Micrografx

*Review by WilliamLaMartin, Tampa PC Users Group*

I think that I have found a replacement for my aging *Corel Draw* and *Corel Photo Paint*. I have not upgraded to Corel 6.0 since the price is just too steep, and to be honest the previous version has been more than sufficient, doing what I wanted. Having used this package for some time I have managed to figure out how to do most anything I wanted with the it, using Photo Paint most of the time since the majority of my needs involve manipulating graphic images. But after acquiring *Micrografx's ABC Graphics suite*, which includes *Designer 6.0*, *Picture Publisher 6.0*, *ABC Flow Charter 6.0*, and *ABC Media Manager* I think Corel and the other graphic software publishers are in for some intensified competition--especially since this package has a street price of around $300 and a competitive upgrade price of $149.

I have worked for several years with the equivalent of Designer and Picture Publisher. I have no experience with a Flow charting program; however, having learned FORTRAN programming in the 1960's I am quite familiar with flow charts, since then we had to create a flow chart of the program before ever starting on it. It is amazing how I have been able in the intervening 25 years to get any programming done without first starting with a flow chart. Most probably only because what I do now is not all that complicated.

But back to *Micrografx ABC Graphics Suite*. First off, let me advise you of the most remarkable thing. Designer will import any Corel .CDR file through version 5. So all my previous work is right there at my disposal. This is the first program that I have seen that successfully does this--others have claimed to, but failed. For you who are not familiar with what you can do with a program like Designer consider the following simple card I made to go with gift for a neighbor who took care of our bunny while we were in Chicago recently. This is simply a collection of images relating to Chicago I picked from the Internet (another useful feature of the Internet) and inserted in *Micrografx Designer* while adding some text. Of course this is quite simple--no fancy, curved text or layered graphics--just something that I could produce in a few minutes. Unfortunately in the printed version of the newsletter none of the color is visible. For this you must retrieve the Adobe Acrobat version of the newsletter from either our BBS or our WWW Home Page.

The program in the Suite I will be using most frequently is *Picture Publisher* which allows you to retouch and manipulate graphics of all sorts. I have long been an amateur photographer, doing my own black and white darkroom work. And for the past twenty years have been making copies of old photographs of family, places and buildings. Some of those photographs, being damaged, were in need of repair. With a program like Photo Publisher and a scanner you can do that. And with my HP Laserjet 4 plus printing at 600 DPI I get fairly good reproductions. I look forward to the day that I can afford a 1200 DPI printer--and perhaps in the distant future a printer that will give near photographic results.

*Picture Publisher* allows you to obtain a graphic from either a file or by scanning. You can then manipulate its color, contrast, lightness or darkness. If is a little fuzzy you can "sharpen" it, or if you like such an effect you can make it more fuzzy. I particularly like the methods the program provides for accomplishing

*(ABC.....Continued on page 7)*

*(ABC.....Continued from page 6)*
these changes. For example, to change, say, the contrast and brightness of a photo, I simply use the mouse to move my cursor on a two dimensional grid situated next to the photo on the screen. As I move the cursor, for example, to the right, I can view real time changes in the photo as it becomes lighter. Moving the cursor in the vertical axis changes the contrast.

One of the most useful features of such a program is the ability to remove unwanted background objects from a photo. You do this by working with masks. There are about 5 different mask tools to use depending on which suits your purposes. If you have a uniform background that is a different color from what you want to keep you are in luck for you simply have to use the "magic wand" mask tool to click on the unwanted background and then fill the enclosed area with the color white. however, you will probably rarely encounter this lucky situation except when the software vendor is demonstrating the program for you. Most of my work is a bit more messy, and I am forced to use a more labor intensive masking tool to outline the unwanted background and then dispose of it. Most of the photos of members I have put in the newsletter in the past were cut from their backgrounds using such a method.

Of course, once you have cut out the unwanted background you then can add one you like. Remember our group officers Larry Anders and Wil Goble pictured in a past issue wondering whether there was enough money in the treasury to take a tour of Europe. Well with the help of Picture Publisher look what has happened. You don't need to travel to get those impressive photos of you in exotic places. You just need Picture

publisher, a photo of yourself, and one of the exotic places in question. And the *ABC Graphics Suite* CDs provide plenty of stock photos and clipart (30,000 plus clipart symbols).

I could take up the rest of the space in the newsletter just describing what you can do with Picture Publisher. As I said, it is the component I use most. My favorite editing tool is the cloning tool which allows you, by moving the cursor over an area of the image, to produce an exact copy of that area at a different location on the image that you have selected. Cloning is particularly useful in repairing damaged areas if you have a similar place on the image which is in good condition so that you may clone it. Or you may, as above, clone Kevan Sheridan's head onto Don Patzch's photo.

Now there is still more to *ABC Graphics Suite* than *Designer* and *Picture Publisher*. There are *ABC Flow Chart* (design flow charts and analyze performance), *ABC Media Manager* (organize and manage your graphic images), *Instant 3D* (create 3D images), the 30,000 + clipart library, and the seamless integration with *Microsoft Office Professional '95 Suite.* Obviously enough for another article.

Although I am quite happy with and impressed by this Graphics package, it has one shortcoming—There is only a very slim manual to explain how things are done. The online help is good, but I do miss those fat paper manuals of old. ◆

*(Minutes.....Continued from page 3)*
certain that the local support is available. Even when purchasing a new unit, you may get home to find that it does not function. Local vendors may not have the capability of simply taking that unit back and giving you another from stock. Pat says you receive a response like, "Here is the manufacturers phone number and here is a packing box that you might have." We thank Pat for a very interesting presentation on laptops.

There was no drawing tonight. Door prizes will be carried over until next meeting. ◆

## A Better Mouse Trap?

(don't throw that old mouse away, yet!)

*Review by Larry Anders, Librarian*
*Tampa PC Users Group*

Ever had that favorite mouse that you had to put on the shelf because you just couldn't get used to the pointer jumping all over your page? Well, I have, more than once. When Microsoft first came out with their ergonomic mouse I rushed out and bought one almost immediately. I'm on my third or fourth one now but none felt as solid as the first one. When the mouse first gets dirty its simple to remove the ball and clean everything out with a cotton swab and some alcohol. This works for a couple of times but after a while, especially with a track ball on a notebook, the alcohol and swab method doesn't seem to work anymore. Now Curtis, the makers of Rolodex, have a way to breath new life into those old mice. Their product is called *Clean Mouse.*

For approximately $10 you can get the *Clean Mouse* kit from your favorite computer store or office supply house that has all you need to bring those old mice back to life, assuming you didn't throw them away. The kit includes a couple of scrubbing balls that fit what they call standard mice, a Velcro like scrubbing desk pad, a bottle of cleaning solution and a lint-free cleaning cloth. All you have to do is remove the ball, squirt a few drops of cleaning solution on the scrubbing ball and insert the scrubbing ball into the empty mouse cavity. Pass the mouse over the Velcro scrubbing desk pad several times in light circular motions. Remove the scrubbing ball, blow into the empty cavity and wipe out with the lint-free cloth. I cleaned mine a couple of times because it had been sitting on the shelf for a couple of years. Did it work? I'm using it now as I write this article. I'd say it works pretty darn good!

After you've cleaned that old mouse with *Clean Mouse* from above, and want to keep it working in top notch form, take another trip to your favorite computer store and purchase 3M's *Precise Mousing Surface*. 3M has developed a microstructured, low-profiled work surface that will increase tracking control and aid in pinpoint mousing accuracy.

The first things you notice about the new mouse pad is its shape and how thin it is. The shape is designed to conform to your natural hand movements and it has no foam backing like a regular mouse pad. But if you could put this new pad under a microscope you would see what makes it really different. 3M had patented a network of micro peaks and valleys specifically designed to make your mouse move and perform better. They call it WYPIWYG: Where You Point Is Where You Go and say "this surface is specially engineered to provide the

optimal coefficient of friction." I say "it makes the track ball grip just right."

Another benefit of this new shape and microstructural design is that it actually keeps the track ball cleaner. Because of the shape there is minimal hand contact with the pad which means less hand oil gets absorbed into the surface. What debris is left behind is pushed into the channels and not on the ball. Clean the new pad with a little alcohol and a lint-free cloth occasionally and that mouse should perform quite well for some time to come. This is probably the biggest improvement in computer mousing technology since the mouse itself!

**Curtis**
225 Secaucus Rd.
Secaucus, NJ 07094
$10

**3M**
Consumer Stationary Div.
PO Box 33594
St. Paul MN 55133-3594
$15◆

*(Comments.....Continued from page 3)*

did they install a slower chip than before or simply slow the one he had down.

In closing this section, let me note that there is one thing that you can't do on a 386 machine--no matter how patient you are: Run *Windows NT*. By design NT will only run on 486 machines or higher. At present we have loaded the newest Beta of NT 4.0 onto the new machine. The interface is very much *Windows 95*, but your control over the computing environment is much greater. I have done very little with it at present, but I did note that configuring NetCom as my Internet provider for NT seemed to be a lot less complicated than doing the same on a Win 95 machine. Additionally, all the programs we have so far installed, as well as printers, seem to be running fine under NT. My big hurdle right now is getting the HP Scanjet llcx scanner up and running on NT—not a trivial task I have read.

*(Comments.....Continued on page 9)*

*(Zip.....Continued from page 4)*
formance parallel ports that improve the speed of the Zip drive. The Zip drive includes an additional parallel port which permits you to simultaneously attach a printer or certain other devices that use the parallel port.

Specifications: 7 x 5 x 1.5 inches, weighs 1 pound, 29 millisecond seek time, up to 20 megabyte per minute transfer rate, quiet operation, powered by a supplied AC adapter, Example benchmark - copying a 1.25 megabyte file, conventional diskette drive, 100 seconds, Zip drive, 15 seconds, typical hard disk drive, 5 seconds.

Having one of these Zip drives is like having a hard disk upgrade, mobile storage and a backup drive all in one. And you get the drive, the software and one 100 MB cartridge for under $200.

Iomega Corporation
1821 West Iomega Way
Roy, Utah, USA 84067-9977
SRP $199 ◆

*(Comments.....Continued from page 8)*

**Internet**

Has the Internet taken over your computing life yet? If you let it , it will. Just like the computer itself would preempt everything else in the pre-Internet days. I know some of you have no interest, but an increasing number of our members seem to be signing on. Possibly starting out with online services like AOL and Prodigy, then moving to stand alone Internet providers after they see their online bill growing with their online time. Nowadays for $19.95 on average you get unlimited time on the Internet.

To me what is happening in computing with the Internet versus computing without the Internet today is similar to computing using Windows four or five years ago compared to computing using only DOS. I distinctly recall when I first joined the Tampa IBM PC Users Group (that was our name then) that most members didn't use the Windows operating system (3.0 at that time), and they didn't really see any need for it. In fact, they were a little hostile to it. Today, although most of our members are operating under Windows--most probably 3.1, since the majority has not yet upgraded to 95 to the best of my knowledge, only a minority is regularly using the World Wide Web (WWW).

But just as people moved from DOS to Windows when they saw the increase in productivity and ease of use it provided, I think they will embrace the WWW when its value to them is demonstrated. And with the addition of more and better Web sites each day with real content (not just a photo of the creator and his views on life), I think that will happen. Today people who before saw no need for computers are buying them so as to get on the Internet. And it is not just to download dirty pictures as our US Congress seems to think. They want to make contact with other people (e-mail and UseNet News groups)and gather information (WWW).

I use the Internet every day, usually sending or receiving about four e-mail messages, checking listings to see what new WWW pages might be out there, making sure our group's WWW home page is functioning OK, perhaps going to a computer vendor's site for upgrade or driver information and software, or reading some of the online news sources that I have bookmarked. For example I may receive a message from one of our members here in Tampa, a friend in Colorado, or a software vendor's user group representative in California. Then I may check the *Tampa Tribune's* site where most of the day's paper is on view, not to mention a current doppler weather radar image. If that is not enough news for me I can go to the *Washington Post's* site. By now I probably should get to doing something else, but perhaps just a quick visit to a new online art museum, history site, or genealogical site will not hurt too much.

So, if you are not connected yet., take my suggestion and give it a try. There is a lot of useful information out there just waiting to be found by you.

**Our Group**

I have been a member of the Tampa PC Users Group for four-and-one-half years. Initially I didn't expect to receive much of a benefit from joining, since I am a person who likes to solve problems on my own. But a neighbor who was in the group kept badgering me to attend, so I did and after the second meeting, joined. It has been worthwhile. I have been introduced to software that I didn't know I needed until someone demonstrated it at one of the meetings. I have even had solutions to a few of those problems (computer related) that I thought I could always figure out for myself provided by fellow members. But the most significant benefit has come since I started doing the newsletter.

I took over the production of the newsletter from Marylee Bruneau at the end of last year, since she said after doing it for several years she no longer had the time it required—and

*(*Comments.....*Continued on page 10)*

## Special Interest Groups

**Microsoft Access SIG**

This SIG Meets on the 3rd Thursday of the month (Aug. 15) at 6:00 PM at the Reflectone Building. Directions: Proceed west on Waters from N. Dale Mabry across the railroad tracks (which is about 1 and l/2 miles), take second left on Savarese (United Technologies bldg. is just beyond it). Proceed on Savarese until you reach the Reflectone bldg. Take the North door. If you need to ask directions, there is a security guard at the location. PLEASE SIGN IN WITH A SIG LEADER
*For more information call Connie Kincaid - 661-8185 - Leave a Message.*

**Communications SIG**

This SIG meets the first Monday of the month (Aug. 5) at 6 PM at the Reflectone Building. You must sign up to get on list and to get by security. See Microsoft Access SIG for directions to Reflectone. *Contact Charles Howe: at 968-1207 or HOWE@INTNET NET*

**Genealogy SIG**

This SIG normally meets the third Wednesday of the month. (Aug. 21) at 7:00 PM at a member's home.
*Contact SIG Leader Jenny Lind Olin at 960-5723 for directions and RSVP.*

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## Hardware: Logitech Marble

*by William LaMartin, Tampa PC Users Group*

Last month Charlie Howe described a new pointing device he had purchased, the Alps Electric GlidePoint, an alternative to the ubiquitous mouse. I, too, have decided to try out an alternative to the mouse.

After going through at least one mouse a year on my computer, and changing a little less frequently on the other computers in the house, I came to the conclusion I ought to at least try another design. What was happening was that the mouse would get so that to make a movement, say to the left, you had to give it a jerk instead of a smooth push. Movement in other directions was usually OK. Furthermore, all the cleaning and compressed air blowing provided very little improvement. In the past the solution was a new mouse--and not a cheap one (they were a guaranteed failure)--a Microsoft Mouse. I didn't know about the mouse cleaner described by Larry Anders earlier.

This last time, though, I decided to go with the Logitech Marble which the fellow from BCD computing demonstrated at one of our meetings late in 1995. It is not cheap, costing around $90. This is not a normal trackball. There are no mechanical linkages; the movements of the ball (marble) are tracked by light. So there is less chance of problems as with a mouse or trackball. Additionally it takes up less space than a mouse since the device does not move. Ask me a year from now how well it is working. So far so good. ◆

*(Comments.....Continued from page 9)*
someone had better take over or there wouldn't be a newsletter. Since no one else who had the requisite computer hardware volunteered, I said I would give it a try. To do the job correctly, you need a 600 DPI laser printer and a scanner. Additionally the editor needs to have a familiarity with some graphics program and a word processing and/or desktop publishing program. Being familiar with the BBS so as to receive articles posted there by members was also helpful (now e-mail is also satisfying that function). The shoe fit so I decided to wear it. And I have learned a lot. I have honed my graphics skills and my desktop publishing skills—and surprisingly my database skills, since I also keep the list of members and have to perform all sorts of queries and reports to keep up the mailing list and prepare the newsletter for bulk mailing.

Unfortunately I have also honed my stapling and folding skills. Ed Snow helps me prepare the newsletter for mailing, but we could use one more individual who has a very flexible schedule and can come to South Tampa on short notice once a month during a morning. More importantly I need some more content providers. This issue, you will note, consists of mostly Larry Anders and myself doing the writing. I know that you are buying programs and hardware, using them, and forming opinions about them. So, give it a try; tell us about them. That is the purpose of the group: To share ideas and information.

Right now just a few of us are carrying the load. Help us out. I think you will find, as I have with the newsletter, that your contribution will help you as much as it does the group. So, write a newsletter article, do a presentation or suggest a presenter and topic, suggest a SIG topic and lead such a group, attend the monthly meetings.

*(*Comments.....*Continued on page 12)*

## Friends of the User Group

*We acknowledge the following firms for their support*

IBM
BCD (Brainchild Computer Distributions, Inc.)
MerSoft
Reflectone

*And these national software vendors for their demonstrations and contributions of evaluation software to our group*

Access Software
Adobe Systems, Inc.
Borland
Broderbund
Corel Systems
Grolier
Knowledge Adventure
Micrografx
Microsoft
Quarterdeck
Symantec
Traveling Software
Xerox

**RENEWING YOUR MEMBERSHIP?**

WE CERTAINLY HOPE YOU WILL
MAIL YOUR CHECK AND ANY
ADDRESS OR NAME CHANGES TO:

TAMPA PC USERS GROUP
PO BOX 3492
TAMPA, FL 33601-3492

$25 lndividual $35 Family
$20 HCC Students & Faculty
$60 Corporate = 3 employees + $20 each add'l employees

**Check the address label for your renewal month**

## MEMBERS HELP-LINE

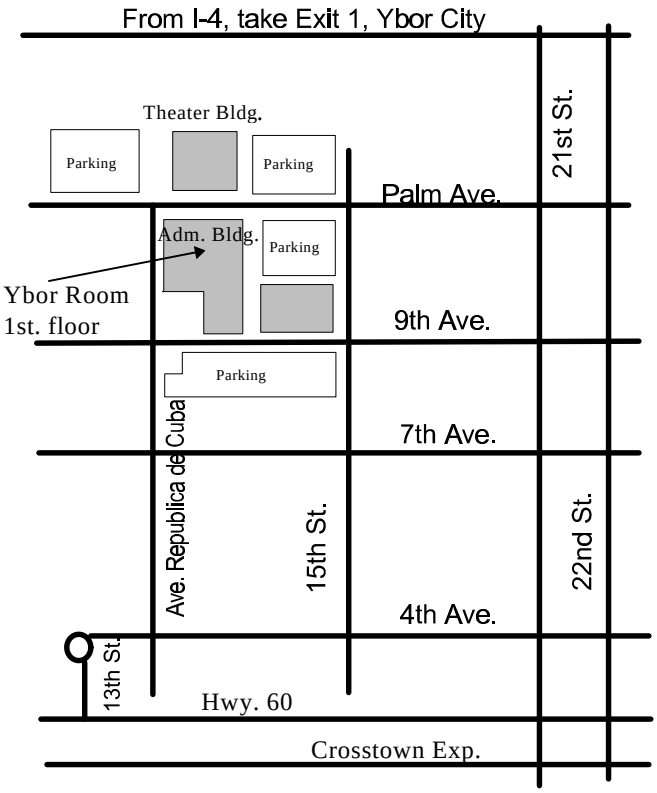
The following phone list is provided for our Tampa PC Users Group members in an effort to establish local support for those frustrating times which we have all encountered while using our PC's. Please note that these are members that have volunteered to help you; treat them in a courteous manner. Be sure to ask if it is convenient for them to help you now, or if you should call another time. It would also be helpful to have your documentation and have it handy when you call. (Don 't expect help if your software is an illegal copy or you do not have documentation!) TPCUG is not responsible for the information or advice provided by volunteers. Volunteers may or may not be experts in the subject matter. You are on your own with any advice received. Be aware also that some of these volunteers may be consultants in their area ofexpertise. If you are interested in volunteering to answer members questions, either leave a message on the BBS or fill in the forms provided for this purpose at the meetings.

| **Name:** | **Phone No:** | **Day**: | **Time:** | **For help on:** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ed Buzza | 685-5898 | Mon-Sun | 10am-9pm | WordPerfect 5.1 and 6 for DOS |
| Jim Clark | 986-3888 | Mon-Sun | 10am-9pm | Express Publisher for Windows, Word for Windows |
| Charles Howe | 968-1207 | Mon-Fri | 9am-5pm | Modems, BBS & Internet |
| Tom Cone | 949-3716 | Mon-Sun | 7pm-9pm | Alpha 4 & Compuserve |
| Larry Anders | 989-9119 | Mon-Sun | 6pm-9pm | Lotus 123 for Windows |
| Connie Kincaid | 661-8185 | Eve.+ Weekends | Leave message | MS Professional Office Suite |
| Merle Nicholson | 879-3602 | Mon-Fri | 6:00pm-10:00pm | Memory Management, DOS, Windows Norton Desktop Visual Basic 3 |
| John Meroth | 831-7878 | Mon-Sun | Anytime except 6-8pm | OS/2, Database (general) Clarion, DTP (limited) |
| William LaMartin | 251-3817 | Mon-Fri | 10am-9pm | Win 95, MS Office Suite, Internet |

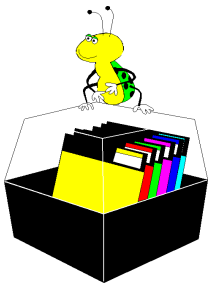
To view this newsletter in color, download PCNL9608.PDF from the BBS or visit our Home Page and view it with Acrobat.

*Comments.....Continued from page 10)*

Regarding the meetings, our attendance is off a good bit, and most people attribute that to our moving from the IBM location to the HCC Ybor site along with a drop off in the frequency of big name presenters. The officers, as best we can, are working on solving these two problems. However, this will take time and is sort of a chicken and egg problem: It is hard to get big name vendors with a small attendance, and it is hard to have a large attendance without such a presenter. So help out here—attend the meetings regularly, and the vendors will follow. Let's start now so that by the October meeting when Micrografx comes we will be back on track with a full house. ◆




**Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.**
P. O. Box 3492
Tampa, FL 33601-3492



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