



# Bits of Blue



September in Tampa

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

Vol. 11 No. 9

September 1998

## Meeting

### Alps Printers

September 9, 1998  
6:00 PM  
Museum of Science  
and Industry  
4801 E Fowler Ave.

**Meeting Preview:** At the September meeting, Vinnie Barber from Alps Printers will demonstrate their unique type of printers. Mary Sheridan will conduct a 30 minute Windows discussion at the beginning of the meeting.

## President's Comments

*By Merle Nicholson, President, Tampa PC Users Group*

Well, my friends, I have a shocker for you. I can hardly believe it myself, but it's **THAT time of year again**. What is it? It's elections! In just a couple of meetings we have to have a slate of officers/workers for 1999, and, at the risk of sounding like a WEDU pledge week commercial, it's YOUR club, and, to make sure that it continues, it takes YOUR active participation.

We must absolutely have a fully staffed volunteer force in place by the November meeting. I'd like to emphasize that it's just a volunteer work force. There's nothing glamorous about holding an office in the club, and I've never known anyone in the twelve years of my involvement to actually "run" or campaign for office. It's not political in nature, it's volunteerism.

For anyone holding one of the elected positions, you are legally an officer of a non-profit corporation. ALL the time you spend on the club's behalf (whether you're an officer or not) is community service. And an officer of the corporation simply has more community service opportunities. Have you thought about that? Have you set a community service goal for yourself for this year and for the coming year? It's something we all need to do.

So, in the next two newsletters I'll be mentioning this again. We really need **you** to volunteer your time. I don't know of any technical or knowledge requirement. I really don't know of a *requirement* for the president to speak before the mem-

*(President.....Continued on page 5)*

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**October 14: Colleen Hinsburg from Mindspring, a nationwide Internet provider**

**November 11: Robert Armstrong from BCD, a local computer company, will demonstrate hardware**

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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.

Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software; plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

Contributors are asked to submit articles as an ASCII, Microsoft Write, Microsoft Word, or Word Perfect file to the editor at 821 South Blvd., Tampa, Florida 33606-2904 or to lamartin@ix.netcom.com.

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All advertisements must be prepaid by check payable to TPCUG, be in camera ready format (actual size, black ink on white paper), and be submitted on or before the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. Commercial advertising is usually limited to 25% of the total space of an issue. The Editor reserves the right to hold ads if the total space for ads exceeds this limit or if they are not received on time.

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## Minutes of the August 12 Meeting

*By Merle Nicholson – for Secretary Kevan Sheridan*

We had a good, lively meeting, starting with the Windows SIG, then with interesting and knowledgeable speakers from Quarterdeck. Quarterdeck generously gave away some useful and valuable new software products as door prizes at the break. If you weren't there, you missed a good meeting.

Mary Sheridan started at 6:00 with the Windows SIG discussion. This is turning into a very valuable session, with a lot of people contributing and some real problems being discussed, and hopefully some useful answers. We only have a half hour for this, until 6:30, so if you want to get in on this, bring your PC problem with you, or just join in with your own opinions. I have a great time myself.

For about 20 minutes, we discussed the club business, SIG group activity and introductions. We passed around the SIG signup sheets and announced a combined Internet/Genealogy SIG meeting for September.

Our guests from Quarterdeck arrived promptly at 6:45, and we were able to turn the floor over to Tom Rivers, Shawn Rivers and Keith Pisano from Quarterdeck. They discussed some of their many products, CleanSweep Uninstaller, Partition-It, Disk Clone Extra Strength and, to some extent, Procomm Plus.

Partition-It is a hard drive utility that enables you to re-size your hard disk partitions. It can create, combine and delete partitions. It can also convert a FAT partition to FAT32. It has an installable boot manager that allows you to choose which operating system you want to run, and sets the partitions necessary to keep those operating systems separate.

DiskClone is both a hard drive copier and a backup utility. As a disk copier, it will "clone" a hard drive, duplicating it exactly to another physically different hard drive. This is necessary when you are replacing your hard drive (and before your old one crashes), a fairly common occurrence with hard drive prices so low. There is no other way to do this except with a utility of this sort. DiskClone will also make a compressed copy of a disk partition to a file, to be kept and used for recovery. This is a very fast way to back up the drive. The only difficulty with this is that you need a place for the file, which is about half the size of all the files on your hard drive. So you need a ZIP, SPARQ, LS120, a CD writeable or a second hard drive with enough capacity to write to directly. The software will split up the file for purposes of backing up to these media, as long as the backup device will work in DOS. The recovery of this file is dead simple, fast and accurate, without installing any Windows software.

Cleansweep uninstaller is used in several ways. One very impor-

*(Minutes.....Continued on page 5)*

## TPCUG.ORG, LAMARTIN.COM, Genealogy, Visual Basic & Sex

*By William LaMartin, Editor,  
Tampa PC Users Group*

**TPCUG.ORG** This is one of those months I have no software or hardware to review. So I am left with writing about what I have done in computing this past month.

The big event was acquiring our own domain name here at the Tampa PC Users Group and moving our web site to a new server under that name. You can now find us at <http://www.tpcug.org>.

We have had a web site for about two years. The first year we were at <http://www.tbos2cla.com/tpcug>. Boy, that was always a mouth full. The site was provided free by member John Meroth under a dial-up and web hosting service he was running in conjunction with his programming services. John's untimely death about a year later forced us to look for another hosting service. Member Larry Anders stepped in quickly and said we could occupy without charge unused space on a site he was running. Thus, we were up and operating within a day or two under our new URL, <http://www.canx.com/tpcug>.

Our web site will soon be into its third year, and we have moved again; this time under a URL that should not change—TPCUG.ORG. If, in the future, we should change hosting services, we will take our URL with us. At this point I should thank Vice President Mike Hodges for getting us a good deal (not free) on our new web site from Long Bay Communications and thank Larry for his year of hosting us.

One of our requirements for a web hosting service was that they provide Microsoft FrontPage Extensions so that I could use the full functionality of Microsoft FrontPage in maintaining our web site. The new host provided this, but things did not get implemented correctly on the first try. So I had to republish our files (about 9.4 MB worth) to their server a second time. It then took them a couple of days to work out a few more problems on their end before all the FrontPage features like hit counters, the Discussion Group, and the Site Search functioned properly.

**SEX** Everything is now working smoothly, but one of the glitches in the beginning was quite amusing. I wanted to look up an article on the software package GoldMine that was in the newsletter last year, so I went to the local site search link on our main page and entered that text. To my surprise, in addition to the local article, it also produced several articles that were not at our site concerning financial investment topics. Obviously something was wrong.

As a test, I searched for a word that I knew there was little of

at our site—SEX. And I found about ten links to sex sites (would you like to buy some sex toys?) which were listed as having URLs under TPCUG.ORG. Clearly something was wrong with the server settings. I copied these links and sent them to several members and the people in charge of the server. The members had a chance to try them for themselves before things were corrected at the server. After things were put right, one of the members sent me a message wanting to know if I could make the links work again!

**LAMARTIN.COM** After moving our web site to its new location under our own domain name, I began to think. For quite some time I have wanted (and really needed) a place on the web where I could try out my own ideas and interests separate from what I do with the group's web site. My ISP, NetCom provides me a free one MB of space for a site with less than one MB of allowable traffic a month, and I have used it as a place to test ideas out for myself and during our Internet SIG. However, one MB is nothing in the scheme of things I was envisioning.

Of course, there are all of the free hosting services like GeoCities, where you get a moderate 10 MB of space and your site is placed in a "neighborhood". I think this works quite well for some people. Of course, they must tolerate advertising banners at their site. GeoCities does not support FrontPage, though. I believe I did find a free site (with advertising) that would give you a FrontPage site. I don't remember the specifics. I do recall, as is the case with all the free sites, that you couldn't have your own domain name there.

I did a good bit of research and finally thanks to some information someone posted in the Microsoft FrontPage Usenet newsgroup, I came up with a hosting service from Canada that gave me the kind of deal I wanted. FrontPage support, a lot of disk space, and a professionally run hosting service responsive to email inquiries and at a low price.

So, go visit <http://www.lamartin.com>. It has only been up for two days as I write this. But a day of hard work allowed me to create a logo for the site, a photo section containing a few of my Louisiana and Mardi Gras photos, a section containing some of my collection of old Florida photos, and a Genealogy section. The Genealogy section was the real impetus for my doing this.

I am supposed to demonstrate how to create a genealogy home page and site at the next meeting of the Genealogy SIG, which will actually be a combined meeting of the Genealogy SIG and Internet SIG this month. Between now and then I hope to flesh out the genealogy section of my new site. Much of the textual material I want to add needs to be polished before I put it on the web. In fact some of what is there right now, the generation reports on various lines, need work, but I

*(TPCUG.ORG.....Continued on page 7)*

## Adobe PageMill 3.0 Review

### Part I: Ruminations

By Tim Condon, Tampa PC Users Group

Okay, okay...this is supposed to be a software review. And that was what I intended it to be, not to mention what our editor William LaMartin expected. So I dutifully unwrapped a spanking new copy of Adobe PageMill 3.0---subtitled "Easily Create and Manage Pages for the Web"---and started gingerly sniffing around the edges of this new artistic technology.

I mean, what do I know about "building Web pages"? Sure, we all have some vague idea of how it all works, about how at the most basic level any ASCII text editor can suffice to become your "Web page builder" if you know the arcana of hypertext markup language (HTML). But most of us don't. And most of us never will: After all, who's got the time? (Our kids, that's who; which is why my 12-year-old daughter is better at computer graphics and creating Web pages than I am.)

But I digress: As I delved into "Web page building" and the increasing number of software tools being presented to us to assist in the endeavor, I found myself mentally diverted into...*philosophy* of all things. I mean, why bother with learning Adobe PageMill 3.0---or Microsoft's FrontPage 98, or Macromedia's Dreamweaver, or Netobjects' Fusion---at all? Especially when everyone I talked to seemed to be chanting about what limited capabilities PageMill has in relation to its more high-powered cousins mentioned above.

Well, several reasons, I concluded. First of all, we're all going to have to become familiar with, if not master, at least *one* such program. How come? Because our personal Web pages are going to be what "define" us in cyberspace. Now what the **heck** do I mean by that? Consider an analogy, if you will: Cars. Remember how extraordinarily important your first car was? Remember how your first car "defined" you in some undefinable way? How it gave you (or withheld) status among your peers? Thankfully, now that we're adults, we've all grown beyond such silly status-consciousness...right? BMW's and Jaguars and Mercedes Benzes aren't purchased for any reason other than the fact that...they're merely useful, utilitarian motor vehicles.... But of course!

And who are we kidding? Sure, **most** of us grow out of defining ourselves according to what kind of car we drive after we're out of our teen years (and I shudder with the remembrance that I started out in a tan 1965 VW Beetle). But the fact is, **even now**, when many of us travel in the "real" world, we define ourselves, even if only in some sort of intangible, limited way, by how we *present* ourselves as we do that traveling. In other ways we define and present ourselves culturally and socially---both intentionally and by happenstance---

by what kind of home we purchase, what kind of neighborhood we live in, what kind of clothes we wear, and even by what kinds of activities and organizations we participate in.

And what does all this philosophical hogwash have to do with the Web, the Internet, and cyberspace? Just this: In the future, personal Web pages are going to become the basic and fundamental way we present ourselves...to the whole world. Just as we present ourselves to the world when we travel geographically, defining ourselves in part by the type of car or vehicle we drive and the clothes we wear...so we're going to "present ourselves" to the world with our personal and business Web pages (a much larger world than when we're merely driving a car) when we "travel" in cyberspace.

I am convinced that the personal Web page is going to become one of the single most important articles for "defining" oneself in the age of the Internet. Right now comparatively few in the general population even have computer access to the Internet, much less personal Web pages. But as we all know, that's changing, and at an exponential rate. Our children will **all** have personal Web pages, and those pages will do much, much more to explicitly, self-"define" each of us than all of our other accoutrements, from homes to neighborhoods to cars to designer or non-designer clothes...to everything else that has an impact on how we are perceived by our fellow human beings.

This will be even more true in the business world. Our current tools for "presenting" ourselves, from business cards to office location, arrangement and decorating, to even---dare we say it?---**advertising**...all will be changed, and **are** being changed, both subtly and obviously in varying degrees, by the advent of the Internet and the Web.

Now, it is true that some people will **never** have personal Web pages. After all, there are people who never own cars, who never purchase their own home, and who couldn't give a hoot less about so-called "designer clothes." There are alternate methods of transportation such as buses, trains, taxis, subways, etc. And renting is a perfectly acceptable alternative to sinking much (or most) of one's wealth into a single piece of real estate. And the Baby Boomer revolution did nothing if it didn't give us all more personal choices in how we dress, from blue jeans and T-shirts to the most haute couture fashions.

But just as those non-car, non-home, non-designer alternatives are choices of a minority---in America at least---so will be the choice to **not** have a personal Web page. It will be a quirk, to say the least, when the percentage of the population "on the Internet" with their own Web pages approaches the current percentages of households that have, say, television, or telephone service.

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

## Internet picture of the month

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

bers at each meeting, so if you want to partner with someone who really likes to get up before the group, share the job! Get creative! Talk to any officer about this. Find out what the jobs entail. Come to a board meeting to look it over and see if there's anything of interest for you.

And while I'm on a soapbox, I'd like to mention that I feel every member knows someone who would be interested in joining our group. A friend, neighbor, spouse or family. Invite them and help the club grow. ♦



Bill Gates in 1977

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

tant mode (to me) is that it can be set to run in the background to monitor any software installation, keep the information in a database and use that information to restore your machine back to the condition before the installation. Even if you install subsequent software that uses some of those files, it tracks that too, so that an uninstall will not also break other programs. It does various other things too, like eliminating duplicate DLL's.

Quarterdeck gave us a very interesting talk; they inspired a lot of questions from the membership, and I think they had a good time too. Thanks to Quarterdeck and to Tom, Shawn and Keith.

The Doorprize drawing was very intense, understandable considering the value of the software. We were able to give away copies of CleanSweep, DiskClone, Partition-It and Procomm Plus. ♦

**Bill was apparently arrested in Albuquerque in 1977 for a traffic violation, had no driver's license on him and thus ended up in jail. This photo was taken from a Power Point slide presentation downloadable from the site [http://www.microsoft.com/billgates/billgates\\_1/speeches/ncta'98.htm](http://www.microsoft.com/billgates/billgates_1/speeches/ncta'98.htm). It is at the end of the document. Some people claimed that they couldn't download the photo—that Microsoft was blocking their ability. Their ability was what was blocking them—your editor had no trouble, as you can see.**

## September's Interesting World Wide Web Locations

Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)  
 Microsoft Software Free Downloads  
 NeoTown.com A Web Based Community  
 Junglee online shopping search  
 Planet Source Code (Visual Basic)  
 Mark 2000 (year 2000 system compliance testing)  
 PC Magazine Y2K Resource Center  
 Software.net -- Premier Online Software Store  
 Phone-Man's Home Page  
 Linux Home Page at Linux Online  
 Foreign Languages for Travelers  
 HotSource HTML Help  
 Varsity Books (college texts)  
 Microsoft Technical Support

<http://www.tpcug.org>  
<http://www.microsoft.com/msdownload/>  
<http://www.neotown.com/>  
<http://www.junglee.com/>  
<http://www.planet-source-code.com/vb/scripts/main.asp>  
[http://www.nstl.com/html/yemark\\_2000.html](http://www.nstl.com/html/yemark_2000.html)  
<http://www.zdnet.com/pcmag/special/y2k/index.html>  
<http://www.software.net/index.htm>  
<http://www.geocities.com/SiliconValley/Pines/4116/index.html>  
<http://www.linux.org/>  
<http://www.travlang.com/languages/>  
<http://www.sbrady.com/hotsource/toc.html>  
<http://www.varsitybooks.com/textbookclub/index.asp>  
[http://support.microsoft.com/support/.](http://support.microsoft.com/support/)



Most of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our Web site, where you need only click on the name.

## Internet Explorer 4 (or Windows 98)

*By Larry Anders, Librarian, Tampa PC Users Group*

Many (or most) of the new "visible features" of Windows 98 can be gained for free by just downloading the latest version of Internet Explorer (IE4) from <http://www.microsoft.com/ie/download/windows.htm>. I wasn't in favor of the "active-desktop" approach to things when it was introduced because I thought I had to make Internet Explorer my primary browser. Although I had IE4, and used it from time to time, Netscape was my choice of browsers because I use the integrated Netscape-mail. Well, if I had read the book, instead of just the cover, I would have known earlier that IE4 doesn't **have** to be set-up as your primary browser to get the benefits of the new look and feel of Windows 98.

I, of course, upgraded within a few days of the new release of Windows 98 because that's the way I am. But the company I work for is a bit more frugal, considering they have so many more PCs to update. I was enjoying the new approach to things on my computer at home so I went looking for a solution for my computer at work. That's when I discovered that all I needed was the latest version of Internet Explorer. Funny thing though, although I am not forced to use IE4, I find myself using it more and more because of one of the new features. (You think Mr. Gates planned that?)

There is now something called a **Quick Launch** toolbar, which probably should be called the quick-launch tray because it attaches itself automatically on top of the left side of the lower main toolbar, although it is not indented like the tray is on the right side of the toolbar. The **Quick Launch** toolbar provides shortcuts to often-used features like the *desktop* (one click and all active windows are minimized), Internet Explorer, Outlook Express (Email program), and channels (which can deliver content from your favorite Web sites directly to your computer automatically). Any of these items can be replaced with a choice of your own by just dragging and dropping its icon to the Quick Launch area.

There are three other new toolbars: The **Address** toolbar enables you to type a Web page address (URL) without first opening the browser. The **Links** toolbar provides shortcuts to important Web sites so that you can open them without first opening the browser. The **Desktop** toolbar contains all of the shortcuts on your desktop and organizes them into one convenient place. In addition to the ready-made toolbars, you can create a toolbar from the contents of any folder. For example, you could create a Control Panel toolbar, or a toolbar that displays icons for each of your monthly sales reports.

One of the new features in Windows Explorer is choosing to view your folders as web pages. If you do this, a middle pane,

between your folders on the left and your files on the right, opens to provide additional info about the file you have highlighted, i.e. the file name and type, last date modified and by whom and the size of the file. If it is a graphics file it will also show you a thumbnail view of the file.

If you right click on your desktop a new choice is **Active Desktop**, which makes it possible for you to customize your desktop, launch programs, switch between files, and keep up with the latest from the Internet by integrating the Web with your desktop. With Active Desktop, you can turn Web elements into desktop elements and update them at any time. You can add any "active content" you want from the Web to your desktop. Active content is content that changes on your screen, such as a stock ticker or a weather map. You can add an item from either the Active Desktop Gallery, a page you've seen on the Web as you surfed, or a channel by right-clicking the desktop, click **Properties**, click the **Web** tab, and then click **New**. If you want to browse the Active Desktop Gallery for a component to add, click **Yes**. If you want to select some other Web site, click **No**, and then type the address of the Web site you want, or click **Browse** to locate it. You can also right-click any link on a Web page, drag it to the desktop, and then click **Create Active Desktop Item(s) Here**.

These are only a few of the new features that Internet Explorer 4x adds to your Windows 95 system. If you want to make your old Win95 system look and act like Win98 and don't want to spend the \$90 to upgrade, go the link listed above and download your free copy of IE4. Obviously you won't get all the underlying changes of Win98 (Mr. Gates isn't that stupid) but it's like remodeling the inside of your computer for free, and I like free stuff! ♦



Long time members Ed Buzza & Tom Cone, who have not been attending meetings, were discovered by Larry Anders with his Sony Mavica MVC-FD7 digital camera.

## The Do's and Don'ts of PC Assembly

### Part One: Setting Up

By Brian Lance, Tampa PC Users Group

First of all, collect all the parts you will need. Tools are just as important to the process as your components. A #1 Phillips screwdriver and pair of small needle nose pliers (for installing and removing jumpers) are essential. An anti-static mat or piece of non-conducting material, which sometimes comes with a new motherboard and/or a grounding "leash", are both good to have. I use a #2 Phillips to place and start screws that may need to be installed at odd angles or even upside down. Most of the time, the screws that come with your case will fit snugly on it. I do not recommend a magnetized screwdriver. Optional tools include: a two or three-pronged tweezers, for those screws that go astray... into the most inaccessible part of the case. A flashlight or penlight can be useful as can a few small containers, to store screws and jumpers.

Then, find an open area in which to work. A work area dedicated to the task is preferable, but a dining room table will do - put several sheets of newspaper down to prevent scratching it - and don't plan to eat on it until you're done with it. Make sure you are near as many outlets as you need. Use extension cords if you need them, and route them so they can't be stepped on or tripped over. Use outlets that are not on the same circuit as a microwave oven, air conditioner, or other high-ampere appliances.

Familiarize yourself with the task at hand. From removing a plate and installing an internal modem to assembly of a completely new system, you should try to know ahead of time what you need to do, and in what order. Having a checklist will help lessen the forehead-slapping associated with placing add-on cards into a PC and then realizing that there's a jumper on the inward-facing card that now could not possibly be moved, even with the help of trained fleas.

Bring together all the "manuals" and papers associated with your hardware. Some of it may appear to be translated from Companion to Martian to English. This seems to be the preferred dialect of non-branded components. If you have access to the Internet, check the manufacturer's site to see if there are updates, or better yet, a nice readable Adobe .PDF to print.

Note the locations of any jumpers you may have to change, especially on the motherboard. Know where your cables will be attached, and in what orientation. Most cables nowadays are "keyed", that is, they can only be inserted in one direction. This does not prevent the attempt of incorrect insertion, including connecting two devices together (instead of to the motherboard) or the breakage of the connector. IDE hard drives, floppy drives, AT or ATX power connec-

tions, parallel and serial connections are keyed or otherwise difficult to insert backwards. Always know where pin 1 is on your hard drives and floppies. It matches up with the red edge of either cable.

Next time: Part Two: Installation ♦

(TPCUG.ORG.....Continued from page 3)

wanted to have something there so I went with what was easy for the time being.

I have lots of old photos I want to add as time permits—both places and people. There is also a tremendous amount of genealogical material to be added—a fair amount of it not even in the computer yet. Eventually I want to be able to link names in the text to photos of the particular individual. This would primarily be photos of people now deceased. The living may not like having their photos broadcast all over the world. Of course I could have a private area, not accessible to the general browser, where "family" photos were stored.

Then there are the additional items I would like to feature, like some of the Visual Basic Programs I have written or might write in the future. I could put the installable package there for downloading with the idea of enticing people to beta test it for me. Now, if I could just figure how to get people to pay for downloading the finished product. Additionally I could place sample VB code there for members of our VB SIG to download and work with. However, the TPCUG web site would probably be a better place for that.

**Visual Basic problems** What would a month be without computer problems. Then I would have very little to write about. The most bothersome problem this past month was a Visual Basic Control that I couldn't use for about 24 hours. The problem started when I noticed that the common dialog control produced an error when I pressed F1 to get help on it. The error message indicated that it was looking for a file that had a 98 attached to it. Suddenly it came to me, I had installed a VB program written by someone else recently that was written in VB 6. This program probably installed the VB 6 version of the common dialog control, and it wanted version 6 help. And that is why when I now wrote a VB program on my desktop and transferred it to the laptop, the common dialog control wouldn't even install there—it was looking for version 6 of the control, but version 5 was all that was on the laptop.

Well, I had to put a stop to this, so I just copied version 5 of

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## SIG REPORT

*By Merle Nicholson & Jenny Lind Olin  
President & Treasurer, Tampa PC Users Group*

A **SIG** (Special Interest Group) is an informal gathering of club members who meet to exchange ideas and knowledge of common interest. TPCUG has four SIGs, Genealogy, Internet and two new ones – Windows and Visual Basic.

**In September the Internet SIG and the Genealogy SIG will have a combined meeting at the Genealogy SIG's usual time and location—Monday, September 14, 7:00 PM at MOSI.**

**Internet SIG** – Normally, the first Monday of the month at Reflectone at 6:00PM. For September, see above announcement. Contact William LaMartin at [lamartin@ix.netcom.com](mailto:lamartin@ix.netcom.com)

**Visual BASIC SIG** - This SIG will hold its second meeting Tuesday, September 15 at the Gateway 2000 Store on North Dale Mabry (just south of Columbus Drive) at 6 PM. Contact Merle Nicholson at [merlenic@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:merlenic@tampabay.rr.com)

The first VB meeting on August 18<sup>th</sup> was well attended – we had to drag a couple of chairs in to accommodate the twelve people who came. The room came with the one item needed for a SIG of this kind—a projector—and William LaMartin brought his notebook. William did several demonstrations on software he has written, some large and some small. We discussed the various VB versions available, and Larry Anders did a short demo of the Learning Edition, which comes on CD with a very good tutorial with an instructor's voice-over.

Next month we'll start with a simple application from scratch to see where we all are in the learning process and to see if we can determine a good format suitable for everyone.

The next release of Visual Basic (version 6) will be out on September 2<sup>nd</sup>. Go to the VB web site <http://www.microsoft.com/vbasic> for more information.

**Windows SIG** – This is an informal discussion group led by Mary Sheridan during the half hour preceding the monthly meeting; 6:00-6:30PM. There is always a lively discussion on any topic of interest related to Windows. The emphasis is on helping each other by sharing experiences. Come to this SIG armed with all your questions about using Windows or any other software; someone will help.

**The Genealogy SIG** met 7:00 - 9:00 on the second Monday,

August 10, at MOSI. Each of those who came had a different need, so Ford Bond, SIG Leader, was available for one-on-one help. Some are just learning to use Windows 95, some are just purchasing their genealogy software, while others are ready to scan their photographs for publication.

Ford Bond helps with the computer hardware and software questions as well as the genealogy related questions. New Web sites were suggested, then there was an opportunity to actually try them at the different computer stations.

Dr. Jay Reese brought in his/their priceless photographs to share and expressed his/their concerns about scanning the photographs and using them for publication.

There was an opportunity to share successful accomplishments. Subjects that have been covered have been selection of genealogy software, using the scanner, moving the scanned pictures into the genealogy software, search engines for genealogy and good web sites to visit. ♦

*TPCUG.ORG.....(Continued from page 7)*

the comndlg.ocx from the laptop to the desktop, replacing the problem version 6 one. That should fix things. Unfortunately things were now worse. Now instead of not having a help topic on the control, I had no common dialog control at all. Uninstalling Visual Basic, additionally deleting the comndlg.ocx, and reinstalling VB produced no solution. Following the instructions in Microsoft's Knowledge Base to download and run a program that was supposed to fix problems with improperly installed controls didn't improve things. It appeared that the only sure way I could see to solve the problem was to wipe my hard drive clean. But I have a general rule of never doing that unless I can not work my way out of the problem in several days of hard thinking. As a point of interest I have not had to reformat my hard drive and reinstall Windows on this computer in the two years I have had it.

The problem, I decided, was a registry problem. VB had stored in the registry that version 6 was the correct version for the control, and since VB 5 did not have this version, the control could not be installed. To correct this, I opened the a VB project file containing a common dialog control, got the number assigned to it, F9043C88-F6F2-101A-A3C9-08002B2F49FB, searched the registry for this number, and deleted all references to a version 6 whenever I encountered them. Problem solved. Subsequently, I think I could have more easily solved the problem by uninstalling VB and then running RegClean to remove left over information about VB in the registry that the uninstall didn't remove. ♦

## Beginner's Column: Should You Buy Windows 98?

By Merle Nicholson, President,  
Tampa PC Users Group

First, before we begin, look at Larry Anders' column last month, "*Is it worth it? -- One Guy's Opinion on Windows 98*". There's a lot of good information there, and I agree with Larry 100% for all the reasons he gave. If you've thrown away your copy, **go to our new web site** and read it there. For all the reasons he stated, I've upgraded one of our three computers, and I'm well on my way to a second.

I've been asked many, many times over the last month about upgrading, and sometimes I've said yes, go for it, and other times, I've said "forget it".

So in keeping with the "Beginner's Column" title, I'll first explain a bit about FAT and hard drives, and how Windows 98 affects this, and then we'll get on with a couple of examples of why you should — or shouldn't — install Windows 98.

First, some terminology. 1K is a thousand bytes (actually 1024 bytes, but this is usually ignored, and we will, too). 1M or 1 Megabyte is a thousand K, or one million bytes. And 1G or 1 Gigabyte is a thousand Megabytes. That's 1,000,000,000 bytes.

FAT — stands for File Allocation Table. FAT was a design especially created for the IBM PC. You know — back in 1982. I'm not sure of the year, but it was back when it was thought that no one would ever need more than 640K of memory (that's 64% of one meg of memory), and a floppy drive of 360K was plenty. FAT is simply a way to lay the files down on disks, organize them. It's a table of numbers and also file names. It starts with a table at the beginning of the disk that keeps track of where all the files go. It has a lot of limitations, one being that it limits the total number of files and folders at the root (say c:\) to 256. Another limitation is that as the size of the disk increases (remember 360K is BIG and for years a 40 MB hard drive was enough to last a lifetime), since FAT keeps track of a limited number of files, then the CLUSTER size must increase. And finally a limit of 2.1 Gigabytes is necessary simply because of the limit of the largest number that FAT will store.

The cluster size is important. A given cluster is the minimum number of sections of disk that can be allocated to a file. At 2.1 GB — the upper limit, the cluster size is 32K bytes. This means that if a file is one byte over 32K, it must take up 64K of space. Up to about 40% of a 2.1 Gig hard drive's space can be wasted in this manner.

FAT32 is simply an update of FAT. The FAT32 table is designed to hold larger numbers. As a result, it's much more effi-

cient, and it can handle huge disk sizes. The cluster size is affected also. The space allocated to a single unit is only 4K up to a drive size of 8 GB. This makes the wasted space go way down, and just converting to FAT32 can recover a significant amount of wasted space, as Larry mentions in his article.

FAT32 was introduced with the second revision of Windows 95, designated Windows 95b. It was not sold in stores, only to dealers and manufacturers because it had no conversion utility from FAT — as Win 98 does.

Win 98 has the conversion utility, and you have to install that utility from the CD. It will not convert a drive 528 MB or smaller.

There is some risk in converting. Let's say you have a power blip during the conversion. Or your system just "burps" (a scientific term) or you inadvertently did not turn off anti-virus during the conversion and it interferes. So anyone would recommend backing up the hard drive before attempting conversion. Will most people do that? No, because very few people have the ability to do full backups. The best you can do is to identify all your "data files" and copy them to floppy. Did you know that your e-mail programs address book is "data" and probably very important (mine is certainly important to me!)? Can you identify what file that is?

So let's leave the technical fiddly-bits and go on with a couple of cases of why — or — why not Windows 98.

My brother-in-law (whom I like and wouldn't steer wrong) asked about Windows 98 just two nights ago. He's a doctor in Indianapolis and uses his new Toshiba notebook steadily, carrying it from home to office every day. He has Windows 95b, with FAT32 installed and he's not a power user. He has a very limited list of software programs that work very well for him. I had to ask — have you been having problems? And do you like it the way it is? He loves his new notebook — just the way it is. Don't do it, I said, it isn't worth it. And very likely he will never install another operating system (unless his hard drive crashes) and because it's unlikely he'll upgrade any hardware.

I have a client, an attorney with three networked computers and a dial-in from home. She had asked about the need to upgrade, and, the situation being the same as my brother-in-law's, I said "don't bother". She really has no interest in computers as such, just as being a platform to using a very limited number of good, quality applications.

But then ... she called me and was very concerned about the noise her computer was making. So I looked at it, and the hard drive was making a very alarming noise. But fortunately it was still working, so I replaced it by making a Drive Image to a new 4.3 GB hard drive. And here was a very good reason to upgrade

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**Note: In September the Internet SIG and the Genealogy SIG will have a combined meeting at the Genealogy SIG's usual time and location—Monday, September 14, 7:00 PM at MOSI.**

## Special Interest Groups

### Internet SIG

This SIG meets the first Monday of the month at 6 PM at the Reflectone Building. **Directions: Proceed west on Waters from N. Dale Mabry across the railroad tracks, about 1.5 miles; take second left on Savarese. Proceed on Savarese until you reach the Reflectone building. Use the north door.** You must sign up to get on the list and to get by security. *Contact Mike Hodges at [hodges@reflectone.com](mailto:hodges@reflectone.com).*

### Genealogy SIG

This SIG meets the second Monday of the month at 7:00 PM at the Museum of Science and Industry. *Contact Jenny Lind Olin at 960-5723 or Ford Bond at 987-6309.*

### Visual Basic

This SIG will hold its second meeting Tuesday, September 15, at the Gateway 2000 Store on North Dale Mabry (just south of Columbus Drive) at 6 PM. For information, contact Merle Nicholson at [merlenic@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:merlenic@tampabay.rr.com).

*(Ruminations.....Continued from page 4)*

So my suggestion is that our personal Web pages will clearly and succinctly define us---more accurately, more personally, and with more individual choice---than any of the other symbols discussed above, even those that might be referred to as "status symbols." If status symbolism is your particular sickness---no, no, let us not be negatively judgmental---if such things are part of your needs and desires in life, they are unfortunately destined to become ever less important. Because in the future everyone is going to have the option of "advertising themselves" to the whole world. Certainly our children's' generation is going to dive into the Web without hesitation. Heck, they're **already** doing it. And certainly every college student and college graduate can be expected to have a personal Web page.

And so, when anyone wants to find out about the "essential you," they'll no longer look to the neighborhood you live in, or the type of car you drive, or the labels on your clothing (this may be stretching it a little: there will doubtless **always** be people to whom such things will be of importance)...no, they will simply look to your personal Web pages, to find the definition of "the real you."

Which brings me, babbling, back full circle: Back to Adobe PageMill 3.0. It is a handy program, especially with the limited-edition copy of Adobe Photoshop that comes with the program. It is not the most powerful program for building Web pages, nor even the most simple in many ways, but it does seem to be universally hailed as a pretty simple, pretty easy, pretty utilitarian, pretty good way to get onto the Web with personal (or business) Web pages with a minimum of fuss and hassle, for those who aren't webmasters and don't have the time to become one. All of which is a pretty good recommendation in some venues.

William LaMartin and I had originally planned on a neat trick, for me to create some Web pages in PageMill and get them onto the Internet as part of this review. Unfortunately, as we all know, learning new software is often a very time-consuming chore, and building Web pages can be even worse...certainly for a newbie like me at least. So the **real** review of Adobe PageMill 3.0 has yet to be written, especially with the Web pages that will be part of the review. **That** will be the future subject of...Part II. ♦

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to Windows 98. It originally had Windows 95a, with a 2.1 GB drive, and I certainly did not want to partition a new 4.3 drive into two 2.1's (the limit for Win95a and FAT). Additionally it is only a Pentium 100, with 16M of memory. So I sold her on the idea of Windows 98 and 32M of memory, reassuring her that it would not affect the network and there was no need to upgrade her other computers, just because this one was upgraded. She was absolutely delighted with the results. The machine was very noticeably faster, especially when loading programs. The improvement was mainly due to adding memory, but Windows 98 certainly contributed a lot, and of course it wasn't possible to install a 4.3 Gig drive as one drive without FAT32.

I've met many people who have a partitioned drive – a C: and a D: and don't use the D: at all because they are really just not

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

## Friends of the User Group

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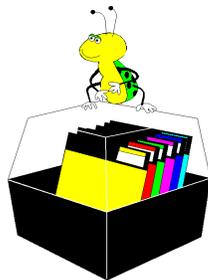
## MEMBERS' HELP LINE

Program	Code	Name	Time	Phone	Codes
Adobe Acrobat	AA	Larry Anders	Mon - Sun 6:00pm - 10:00pm	989-9119	AOL, ME, MW, FP, PSP
Alpha4	A4				
AOL	AOL	Tom Cone	Mon - Sun 7:00pm - 9:00pm	949-3716	A4,VdB
Computer General	CG				
Delphi	DE	Warren Fuss	10am - 9:30pm	949-6844	CG, WNT, N
DOS	DOS				
Family Tree Maker	FTM	Connie Kincaid	evenings & weekends	661-8185	DOS, MA, MOS,Q
Hardware General	HG				
Hardware Modem	HM	William LaMartin	Mon - Fri 9:00am - 9:00pm	251-3817	AA, FTM, HTM, IG, MOS, MP, VB, W95, MGS
Hardware Printer	HP				
HTML coding	HTM	Merle Nicholson	Mon - Fri 7:30pm - 9:30pm; weekends	879-3602	CG, DE, DOS, HG, HM, HP, W3, VB
Internet General	IG				
Micrografx Graphics Suite	MGS	Jenny Lind Olin	Mon - Sun 8:00am - 10:00pm	960-5723	ME, MW, PAF, Q, WP
Microsoft Access	MA				
Microsoft Excel	ME	Don Patzsch	Before 8:00pm	689-8662	CG
Microsoft FrontPage	FP				
Microsoft Office Suite	MOS				
Microsoft Publisher	MP				
Microsoft Visual Basic	VB				
Microsoft Word	MW				
Networking	N				
PAF	PAF				
PaintShop PRO	PSP				
Quicken	Q				
Visual dBase	VdB				
Windows 3.1	W3				
Windows 95	W95				
Windows NT	WNT				
WordPerfect	WP				

We encourage other members to add their names to the list of those willing to assist fellow members with their computer problems. Contact William LaMartin to add your name to the list.

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aware of its being there, even though they're forced to do some file management to keep C: from getting too full. It amazes me, but my own observations say it's quite common. So I try to stick with one drive for my clients, and Windows 98 certainly makes that easy.

So to summarize, don't just jump into it. Give it some thought and ask someone knowledgeable who knows you and how you use your computer.

Here's are some useful hints if you're preparing to go ahead:

- Do your homework. Identify all your hardware components if you can before you start. Look the manufacturers up on the internet and get Windows 98 drivers if you can.
- Disable all the programs that run automatically on your system. Anti-virus in Windows and DOS, System Agents, Schedulers, Office taskbar; move all shortcuts in your startup folder to another folder for later retrieval. Re-boot and double-check. Do an Alt-Ctrl-Del and look at the task list. It can't be empty, but no programs except what it takes to run Windows should be there.
- Do any hardware upgrades now, like memory or new hard drives.
- Back your system up if you can. At least copy important documents and databases like Quicken to diskettes.
- Disable your screen saver. ◆

