



January in Tampa

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

Vol. 11 No. 1 January 1999

Meeting

Running a Home Based Business with your Computer

January 13, 1999
6:00 PM
Museum of Science and Industry
4801 E Fowler Ave.

Meeting Preview: At the January meeting, Capt. Rod Stebbins will tell us how he runs a successful home based publishing/outdoor writing business with the help of his PC. Working with Frank McAllister he has also designed software for Loran-C and GPS positioning. Looks like an interesting presentation. Mary Sheridan, as usual, will conduct a 30 minute Windows discussion at the beginning of the meeting.

President's Message

By Merle Nicholson, President, Tampa PC Users Group

Welcome to the New Year from your TPCUG Board of Directors.

1998 was most certainly a successful year in terms of our financial status and also the quality of our invited speakers. Having a dedicated Program Chairman has really paid off for the club, and Mary Sheridan most certainly stepped up to the job. The newsletter, Bits-of-Blue, and the quality of the web site has continued to develop due to the unselfish dedication of editor William LaMartin. Our membership is at least steady.

In 1999, my personal agenda is to increase our membership. The BOD discussed this last month. (Actually we don't stop discussing it throughout the year.) We'll be calling on all of you to participate in some way.

The elections went off very smoothly at the December meeting, for those of you who couldn't make it. I won't go over the slate here, having done that last month, but I'd like to welcome James Weber to the board as secretary, and give Kevan Sheridan, the outgoing secretary, a very hearty "Thank You" for his years of dedication. I know Kevan won't be disappearing on us, since he's been a very, very long term member of the group. His most notable job was as the BBS SYSOP. He was "Mr. SYSOP" for many years until his wife Mary

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

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

President's Message	1
Minutes	2
Microsoft Publisher 98	3
Urban Legends on the Internet	4
World Wide Web Links	5
Removable Hard Drive	6
Info Select 5	8
Epson Stylus Photo 700	9
Editor's Comments	10
SIG Report	10
Members Help Line	11
Map	12

February 10: Mark Hayley - Travel Software and William LaMartin - Creating Interactive Web Pages
March 10: Jason Velasco-Jewell from Ontrac Data International - Hard Drive Utility Developers

* * OFFICERS * *

President: Merle Nicholson (merlenic@tampabay.rr.com)	879-3602
Vice President : Mike Hodges (hodges@reflectone.com)	962-2114
Treasurer: Jenny Lind Olin (jlolin@juno.com)	960-5723
Member at Large: Bruce Register (bregis@gte.net)	968-8170
Secretary: James Weber (jlweber9@mindspring.com)	988-6480

APPOINTED (Volunteers)

Editor: William LaMartin (lamartin@ix.netcom.com)	251-3817
Librarian: Larry Anders (larry.anders@gtmail.net)	989-9119
Program Coordinator: Mary Sheridan(mcpease@aol.com)	988-6480
MOSI Liaison: Ford Bond (fbond@earthlink.net)	987-6309

Home Page <http://www.tpcug.org>

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.

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.

Permission to reproduce portions which are not specifically copyrighted is given to other computer users' groups for nonprofit use. Reprints must be unaltered; proper credit given to the author and publication; and a copy of the publication must be sent to the attention of the Bits of Blue Editor at the club address. All other reproduction is prohibited without the specific written permission of the original author.

The use of trademarked and copyrighted names herein is not intended to infringe upon the owner's rights but rather to identify the products for the enlightenment of our users.

Commercial advertisements will be accepted. For rate information please contact the Editor by one of the above listed methods.

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.

Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following limitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more than 40 words (240 bytes including spaces); must be camera ready copy or an ASCII file on diskette or as an attachment to an email message to the Editor. Those wishing to place ads are to contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at (813) 251-3817 for space availability and for further information.



Minutes of the December 9 Meeting

*By James Weber, Secretary,
Tampa PC Users Group*

Mary Sheridan presided over the Windows SIG, which started at 6:00. One member had a problem with his Win 3.1 sound card not working in Win 98. A suggestion from the group was to check the web site of the card's manufacturer for an updated device driver. No one in the group had any specific suggestions for solving this problem. Another member was trying to record sounds over 60 seconds using Windows Sound Recorder. No one present at the group had an answer. We also had an open discussion on LCD monitors.

Mary gave a brief run down of her experience at Comdex, the annual computer industry expo in Nevada. She got to see Bill Gates and listen to him take questions from the crowd. Mary was impressed with the clear and eloquent manner in which Mr. Gates answered questions, even though some of the questions lacked intelligence.

The general meeting started at 6:40. Nominations were read to the group for new officers. Ford Bond passed a motion to have the entire list voted on simultaneously with Bruce Register seconding. A unanimous vote passed the election of officers. The installation of officers will occur at the January meeting.

Sign up sheets were passed out for attendance and SIGs. The idea of a Linux SIG was discussed again as well as a presentation of the operating system.

The guest presentation started at 7:00 with Julie Altstatt of Jasc Software demonstrating Paint Shop Pro 5.0. Paint shop Pro is an image and photo-editing program offering a wide range of functionality. Ms Altstatt demonstrated how to make a Christmas card by importing image files and creating new images. She also showed Paint Shop Pro's photo cropping ability by editing and combining several existing photos and touching up damaged photos. Ms Altstatt quoted a price of \$59.99 for group members and a free upgrade off the web site to version 5.01 for registered users.

Ms Altstatt brought two copies of Paint Shop Pro and Quick View Plus, a file translation program, for the drawing. Bruce Register and Jim Weber won copies of Paint Shop Pro and Kevin Sheridan and Jim Weber won copies of Quick View Plus. \$64.00 was raised.

The meeting ended at 8:05. ◆

Microsoft Publisher 98

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

Well, I now have in hand my third or fourth version of Microsoft Publisher, the program I have been using to publish this newsletter for the past three years. There are more sophisticated publishing programs and much more expensive publishing programs, but for the needs of our newsletter I have found Publisher more than adequate. With each new version, too, new features are added. I suppose the big new feature this time is the ability to publish your document easily to the web. As I recall, the previous version had this ability, but it didn't work very well, so, as far as I was concerned, that feature really wasn't there. As is often the case with Microsoft, they got it correct the second time around.

Publisher 98 comes in two versions: Standard and Deluxe. With the Deluxe version, you get Microsoft PictureIt, a "user-friendly" graphics manipulation program. Since I already have both Corel Photo-Paint and Micrografx Picture Publisher on my computer, I have no need for such a program. But if that is not your situation, for an extra \$30 it looks like a good deal.

This will mark at least the second review I have done of Microsoft Publisher, possibly the third, so first allow me to tell you why a publishing program is necessary even if you already have a very good word processor. If you are only going to write letters and simple reports, then a word processor is more than sufficient. But for quality brochures, newsletters, fancy reports, greeting cards or business cards—a publishing program is a must. The reason is placement and text flow. You simply can not get good placement of graphics on a word processor page, and if you have more than one "article" in your document, you will find that in a word processor controlling the text flow from one page to the next is almost impossible without simply daisy-chaining the articles one after another—something you most likely don't want to do. I know, because, three years back, my first three or four newsletters were done in Microsoft Word. With two columns per page and more than one article on some pages, I about went crazy trying to control the text flow within each article when a change was made toward the beginning of the article. Boy was I glad to get my first copy of Microsoft Publisher.

In Publisher, text and graphics are contained in "boxes". If you want two columns of text on a page, you put two text boxes the size of the columns on that page. If you would like to additionally have a picture in the middle of the page, you place a picture box there. The text in the text boxes will then behave nicely and flow around the picture. You are allowed different layers of text and graphics which, depending on

one's creative ability, can produce some nice results.

And, of course, there are the **wizards** which, according to Microsoft, "provide step-by-step instructions that guide you through setting up a publication, then allow you to use the power of the wizard to make global changes to your publication at any time." For the novice, the collection of over 1600 **design templates** produced by these wizards should be a great help. You have templates for newsletters, envelopes, letterheads, menus, business cards, logos, reports, brochures, etc.

You have the ability to set up profiles, which include items like name, address, logo, color scheme, and have them applied to new publications. Using this feature, you could easily achieve a consistent look for your company's newsletter, brochures and business cards. Of course, one must be careful here. If you use the Publisher supplied "**design looks**", then your company's look might turn out to resemble very much the look of another that used Publisher. One thing you can say about my publications (our newsletter & web site, for example) is that they don't have a consistent look and certainly don't have a **coordinated color scheme**.

I think the thing I like best about the new version is the automatic spell checking which underlines possible errors in red as you type—just like in Microsoft Word. As before, you also have the ability to edit each article in Word. It now takes one more click of the mouse to get there, though. In fact, several of the features that I used in the previous version that were accessible with a right click to get a menu, then a left click to select an action now require a right click for a menu, then a left click to choose between a selection of secondary menus and a final left click to choose the action. More options mean more time required to choose the one you want. If everything were still plain ASCII text, then we wouldn't have to make any choices—but we would have typewriter output.

Another nice new feature is the **multilevel undo**. Before there was only a one level undo. There is also the fixing of common errors as you type. For example, I just noted that Publisher supplied an uppercase A for the beginning of this paragraph to replace the lowercase a that I had typed. Of course features like this can sometime be a problem. Perhaps the lowercase a was not an error, and I wanted it there. Then it would be a fight with Publisher until I went into options and disabled the auto correct feature. But, for most of us and most of the time, such features are nice.

Besides producing this newsletter in Publisher, I have made brochures, business cards, envelopes, personalized mailing labels with graphics. And since Publisher has a **mail merge** feature, after creating a nice mailing label, you could use the mail merge to access your database of addresses and print out a nice label for everyone for whom you wanted to print a

(Publisher.....Continued on page 4)

(Publisher.....Continued from page 3)

card—or you could print the address information directly on each envelope, or, in fact, print any personalized information you might have in a database into any Publisher document.

Now, once you have created your document, for example our monthly newsletter, you can do several things with it. First you can simply print it out on your printer. That is what I do with the newsletter, then I use this master copy to run the Xerox copies you get in the mail. Second, if you have the money, you could save the document in Publisher format or in PostScript format (if you have that driver installed) for a printing service. If you have the Adobe Acrobat printer driver installed, you could print it to an Acrobat file, as I do for a download via the Internet of the newsletter in this format. This is also an easy way to share your document with others who may not have Publisher, since the Acrobat reader is free for the downloading from Adobe. A final possibility is to publish the newsletter to the World Wide Web.

To accomplish this you need to take care with the layout of your document. The main consideration here is to avoid having any of your text boxes or picture boxes overlap (something I never worry about—in fact desire—in the creation of the newsletter for printing). If they overlap, Publisher will treat that section as a graphic when it creates a web document from your Publisher file—something that is not optimal. After Publisher has transformed each page of your publication into a separate HTML page and created graphic files in the GIF format for all the graphics in your publication, it remains for you to then link all the pages together and provide any further hyperlinks you wish in the document. When finished, publisher will invoke the **Web Publishing Wizard** to upload your new web document (actually a collection of HTML and GIF files) to the Internet. If you already have your own method of exporting files to the web, you can simply take the folder that contains all these files and export it to the web yourself in your usual manner, e.g., via FTP.

To see the November newsletter turned into a web document with Publisher 98 go to <http://www.tpcug.org/publisher/pub9811/page1.html>, hidden away in the study material section for our Internet SIG. It looks a lot like the original or the Adobe Acrobat version, but it has the additional feature that you can navigate through it while viewing it on the web. Even though Publisher 98 can be used to create nice looking web pages or even web documents like the newsletter example, it is not a web site management tool like Microsoft FrontPage.

Regular version around \$99 and Deluxe around \$129. ♦

Urban Legends (on the Internet)

By Cheryl Alexander, Tampa PC Users Group

Rumors flying. Gossip galore. Knowing something that very few others know, even if it isn't true. Human nature has loved these things since the dawn of time and will continue to do so. However, with the Internet and email putting the world at our fingertips, individuals can do it faster and reach more people at the same time than ever before.

Many of these are stories that were passed on by word of mouth. They never happened to someone known to the individual and usually involved a Friend Of A Friend (FOAF). For the really gross stories, camp and slumber parties were the travel method. With the arrival of fax machines, the stories could circulate even faster. The advent of email brought ease of personal communication and, yes, the very same stories! They've been the basis of at least two movies ("Dead Man on Campus" and "Urban Legend"), a line of commercials for K-Mart, and several different TV series episodes.

These, my friend, are known as Urban Legends. Some of them are even true! However, the vast majority are made up or an old story placed in a modern setting. Many of them serve as cautionary tales in these "dangerous" times. We've all heard them or received them as a fax or many-times forwarded email. I remember hearing all the spooky ones at a slumber party and didn't sleep well for a long time!

What kind of stories are Urban Legends (UL)? The Choking Doberman, Alligators in Sewers, Maniac in the Back Seat, Diver Found in Tree are just a very tiny fraction of the stories that are out there. How do you know if you've been told or passed a UL? Quite often, there are few verifiable details, such as names, places, and dates. But that isn't always a guarantee. There actually are several sites that deal with Urban Legends. The one that I read the most is The San Fernando Valley Folklore Society's Urban Legends Reference Pages. Here is a list of some stories that I have been passed and found on the web site Urban Legends Reference Pages (<http://snopes.simplenet.com/> or <http://www.snopes.com/>):

- \$1,000 email chain letter from 'Bill Gates' (BETA tracking program) <http://snopes.simplenet.com/spoons/faxlore/billgate.htm>
- Monster AOL cookie <http://snopes.simplenet.com/spoons/faxlore/aol.htm>
- aircraft carrier vs. the lighthouse in Canada <http://snopes.simplenet.com/spoons/faxlore/lighthse.htm>
- using 90# for long distance calls from jail <http://snopes.simplenet.com/spoons/faxlore/jailcall.htm>

(Legends.....Continued on page 9)

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

took over the job two years ago. He was pressed into service as secretary last year despite his increasingly busier and busier schedule. So, thanks Kevan, and if you'll stick around we promise not to elect you to something else.

Now my monthly nag. Let's all try to bring in new members. Now. This Month. You know someone, friend, relative or co-worker who can derive as much benefit as you do from being a member. I know you do. Pick up some Tri-Folds. (These are handouts with club and membership information on them.) Drag a friend in. I'm doing just this and it's working, and it really isn't much effort.

I'd like to thank JASC, the Paint Shop Pro people for allowing Julie Altstatt to speak to us at the last meeting. We depend on companies like JASC who will devote some resources for User Group support for our monthly programs. And a special thanks for the door prizes too.

Did anyone manage to take advantage of the discount sales going on this season? I went to Best Buy on the 26th and snagged up a 6.4G Hard drive for \$99 (well, after I wait 2 months for a \$30 rebate). While I was there I found some fantastic prices for scanners. I had bought mine a year ago, and I'm still amazed at how useful it is and how often I do use it. And there were great discounts on CD-ROMs and modems. There's still free installation coupons for new roadrunner subscribers too, good through January 31st. Current cable modem subscribers have these coupons – actually from a web site. Email me, and I'll send it to you with instructions.

Internet picture of the month



1998 stock price chart for Amazon.Com (AMZN)

1998 was the year of the Internet stock, and few did better than the online book retailing pioneer Amazon.Com (<http://www.amazon.com>). It experienced a yearly low of 24, a high of 361, and closed at 321. That resulted in a market capitalization of about 16.9 billion dollars. For each quarter 1/1/97 – 9/30/98, Amazon has failed to make a profit.

The chart above was from The Wall Street Journal's Interactive Edition at <http://interactive.wsj.com/>. You will, however, need to be a subscriber to view the same chart online. But there are many other places on the WWW providing the same information for free, e.g., Bloomberg at <http://www.bloomberg.com/>.

Happy New Year, to our fellow TPCUG'ers, and we'll see you at the January meeting. Merle ♦

January's Interesting World Wide Web Locations

Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Cruising With Capt. Rod Stebbins – January presenter	http://home1.gte.net/caprod/
The Political Graveyard	http://www.potifos.com/tpg/
BUY.COM – Internet superstore	http://www.buy.com/
Victoria's Secret – shopping	http://www.victoriasssecret.com
IRS Forms for download	http://www.irs.ustreas.gov/prod/forms_pubs/
UF Citrus Research & Education Center	http://tangelo.lal.ufl.edu/default.htm
Wotsit's Format – programmer's file & data formats	http://www.wotsit.org/
15 Seconds – ASP programming information	http://www.15seconds.com/
National weather buoy data center	http://www.ndbc.noaa.gov/
Steve Hoffmann's Nature and Scenic Photography	http://www.niftywebs.com/photoweb/
Priceline.Com – where you name the price	http://priceline.com



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

Make your own removable hard drive for fun and profit and backups.

By Merle Nicholson, President,
Tampa PC Users Group

I'd been developing this idea in my head for some time. And it's a pretty simple idea. You have a removable hard drive that you put into the PC, do a full system backup in 20 minutes, pop it out and put the hard drive in a safe place. If you're running a business from it, just take the hard drive home.

The idea got started mostly because of my lack of confidence in tape backups since Windows 95 came out. I think all of my own personal objections to tape backups have been satisfied now with better software except for two – cost and convenience, where a removable HD has the edge.

TAPE

The newest tape software now has you make DOS recovery diskettes that will load your operating system back on a new or reformatted disk and restore your hard drive as it was at the time of your last backup. For many years the procedure was to install Windows first, then your tape recovery program, recover from tape and then start reinstalling all the things that didn't work. The main problem is that you can't update files that are in use, and you have to use Windows to recover. It's time to look at your backup software now to see if it's time to upgrade.

The objections I have to using tape are many. One thing of course is that it takes a long time, so it has to run unattended. Do you look at the log (indeed, does it make a log for you in the first place?) to make sure everything went smoothly? Do you at least get a catalog of the tape each time to make sure the backup has actually been completed? Look at the date and size of the backup to make sure. I have known people who thought they were making backups and they were actually not accomplishing anything. You can set the software so that it doesn't halt on errors (a reasonable thing to do), set it to close when finished and not log the results. What do you have? No backup, probably. It's possible to get good useful backups, but it takes diligence and knowledge; it's not for disinterested employees who want to go home but have to do the weekly backup first.

DISK IMAGES

In the meantime, PowerQuest (DriveImage), Seagate (Ghost) and a couple of other companies came out with disk imaging software. These are really useful, and it's a mystery to me why it took so long to develop the products.

This type of software accomplishes many things, such as duplicating drives. The function that I'm interested in will make a compressed copy of a disk and write it to a file. One thing

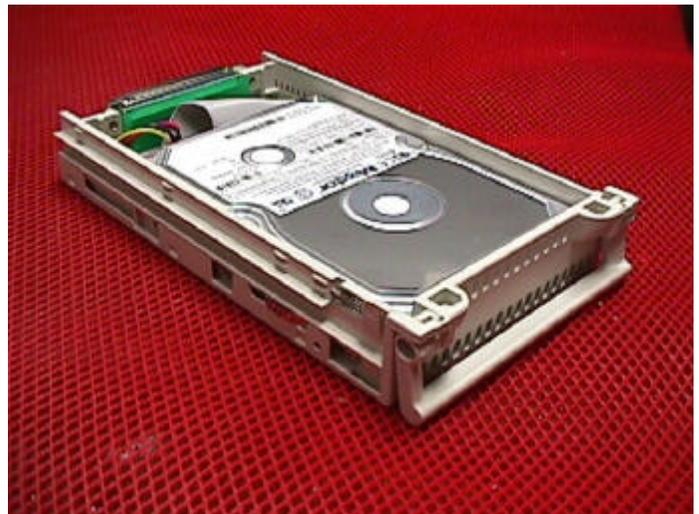
needs explaining. You have to write this file out to some other disk or partition or network drive, but not to itself, so a one drive system just can't be done. As for a network drive, this software runs in DOS, so you would have to have networking program files for DOS that are small enough to run from a diskette. I'm still looking for Microsoft Networking for DOS.

STARTING OUT

On my personal machine, I have one drive with two partitions. In its previous incarnation it had two drives. When one failed, I removed both, bought a 6.4G and partitioned it in two so it would have the same file arrangement without installing all software, and just built a new computer to use as a server with the one remaining. Also I built my spouse a computer to replace her nice old 484 Toshiba Portege. So I have three computers at home (and two at work) to contend with, and life is getting complicated. For a while I was making a monthly drive image from one to the other partition, and then copying the files to the server drive for safekeeping. I even once copied the two files to tape. It worked, but hard drives are too cheap and life is just too short, and besides, I have two other machines to worry about that were getting occasional tape backups. I'd duplicate document directories from the two personal machines to the server when I thought of it.

ENTER THE REMOVABLE HD

So I looked at an IDE removable drive kit. As you can see from the pictures, it consists of a case that installs in a 5-1/4 bay, the same size as a CD-ROM but an important 3/4" longer.



On the outside back of the case is a standard IDE 40 pin connector and a standard power connector, both just like the end of a hard drive. Inside the cartridge is a ribbon cable and a power connector that connects to the HD. The interface connector inside resembles a Centronics printer plug and socket. Notice also the small fan for cooling the hard drive. On the front is a key interlock. This key turns power off to the drive and releases a mechanical lock before allowing you to pull the

(Backup.....Continued on page 7)

(Backup.....Continued from page 6)

cartridge out. It's a standard PC lock key. I hate these keys and would prefer a conventional lock with a unique key. The kits are \$45 to \$50 retail. From some ads I've seen it's possible that some brands don't have the fan. I needed three cases and one cartridge. They can be purchased separately on special order, but there wasn't much cost savings, so I bought three complete sets.

In addition to moving a single hard drive from machine to machine, another possibility is to have multiple hard drives for the same machine, so if you're, for instance, trying to learn Linux or NT server and have one machine, this may beat the "dual boot" situation. I suggested this to my oldest son who is learning operating systems, so I'm sending him my two extra cartridges and one complete set.

INSTALLING

Installation is straightforward. Install the case and connect the ribbon cable and power connector. In my case I used a connector from my CD-ROM cable and set the drive jumper to "slave" since all my machines have single hard drives and the CD-ROM is set as Secondary IDE Master. I set all the BIOS to detect a Secondary Slave as AUTO. Each machine hesitates only a moment looking for that drive when it's not installed. In the inside of the cartridge, connect the ribbon, paying attention to the pin numbering to make sure it isn't backwards, plug the power connector to the drive and last, position the drive and put the four mounting screws in. Thankfully I haven't seen a non-standard hard drive in many years where the power connector is on the other side of the IDE connector.

As an aside, I had gotten a good price a month ago on the 6.4G drive I'm using, but I just got a 6.4G Maxtor at Best Buy the day after Christmas for \$99 after rebate. This is one reason it's cheaper than tape.

I used Partition Magic to partition the drive in two at about one-third as FAT16 and two thirds FAT32. One of our three



machines is Win 98a, and my spouse doesn't want me messing with it. The other two are Win98 FAT32, which the Win 95 machine won't even recognize. In retrospect I should have used one partition FAT16, but it's not worth changing back now. Eventually we'll have them all Win 98 or Windows 2000.

USING THE DRIVE

Simply shut down Windows, turn the machine off, open the lock on the drive, insert the drive and lock it in the on position. Turn on the computer. If you have a partitioned main drive, as I do on my personal machine, just hold down Ctrl (Win 98) or press F8 at the right time (Win 95 and Win 98) to get the boot menu and select Command Line prompt. Since my main drive is partitioned as C and D, the removable will insert itself between as D, with the old D partition as E, and my CD-ROM as F ... so the best thing to do is to just not go into Windows. On my other two machines, it doesn't matter.

Since image programs run in native DOS, Windows must not be running. You can set up what you need three basic ways: On a boot diskette, as an icon on the desktop or Start Menu, or on the removable drive.

As an icon under Windows, no matter where the executable is, the properties for the program must be set to MS-DOS Mode under Properties, Program, Advanced. This causes Windows to exit, and reboot into DOS Mode and start the program automatically. If you go into Command Line Prompt, you can run the program manually from the command line, and if you use a boot diskette, you can call the image program in autoexec.bat. The boot diskette method is pretty clean, and you can have the image program on the diskette or on the removable drive.

So once a week, I go to one machine, restart with the removable in, boot to DOS, run the image software, go away for twenty minutes, shut down, remove the drive and start the machine again. I've backed up all three machines in an hour, easy.

INTERIM BACKUPS

You can't make an image backup every day, I wouldn't think, unless you're running a business and are developing things for clients, something like that where recovery time is critical. I have a reminder to do this weekly, and I have to admit I sometimes skip it. Not often though.

I do daily file copies of the document directories from our personal machines to the server. I'm evaluating a small shareware program called Backer 4.0 from Leanware. It's \$35, and it seems to do what I want. It's a little difficult to understand how to set it up at first. To their credit, they have excellent online help and examples. The help recommends that you start

(Backup.....Continued on page 12)

Info Select 5 – part 2

By Tim Condon, Tampa PC Users Group

Like I said last month, Info Select is a program that people either love...or hate. And many of the software reviewers---accustomed to those orderly rows of boxes and fill-in-the-blanks of the “normal” Personal Information Manager (PIM)---well, they just, plain, flat, don’t **like** this program. Consider David Haskin in the November 1997 *Computer Shopper*, commenting on Info Select 4: “Beyond its unique abilities to manage both free-form and structured information, Info Select’s other PIM capabilities are weak....Info Select’s to-do list capabilities are even more anemic....Info Select also scores poorly on more advanced contact management capabilities.” Or Kathy Yakal in the December 14, 1998 issue of *Shop & Compare*: “Info Select is a terrific idea for an information manager, but its execution doesn’t fulfill that promise, and the PIM lacks the polish it should have by now.”

On the other hand, *Byte* magazine’s famous columnist, Jerry Pournelle, weighed in on Info Select in the November 1996 *Byte*, that the program is great for helping him write his novels, and “it’s also great for diaries, keeping track of work in progress, and other stuff. You can learn to use it in about 5 minutes, and I don’t see how anyone gets along without it.” Ditto for some fans caught raving on the Info Select web page (or I should say, Micro Logic’s web page, the company that puts Info Select out). Said one: “I just wanted you all to know that I am completely enamored of Info Select 3. It has quite literally re-organized my entire information life....It’s hard now to imagine life without it...a truly astonishing piece of software engineering.”

Okay...what’s going on here? Well, I can’t explain everyone else’s rants and raves, both for and against Info Select, but I can tell you that Info Select 5 is the most important single program that I use every day in my law practice (out of, say, a dozen other programs that are used daily or almost daily).

Does Info Select do my calendar and scheduling (super-important for a lawyer)? No, although it does have such capabilities. Does it do my word processing? No, although it has extensive capabilities in that area also, from templates to spell checking to the ability to generate fill-in-the-blank forms. Does it handle my email? No again, although it has extremely extensive capabilities in that area. Does it even do my to-do list (another super-important function for a lawyer)? No yet again; for that I use a little standalone shareware program called To-Do List Pro.

Well, then, why is Info Select so dang-blasted important and useful to me? Well...hmmm...kind of...duh...well, like...I guess, almost **everything**. And therein lies the rub when it comes to this little bombshell. It’s **so** flexible, and so good at **so**

many things, that every user uses it as an absolutely crucial program for...whatever that user finds it most useful for. Jerry Pournelle uses it for keeping scenes and characters straight in writing novels. He’s a writer. I’m a lawyer. I use it for...

- Keeping track of what’s going on in individual lawsuits and disputes, which (as you might imagine) have numbered in the thousands over the years. I use the free-form note-taking ability that Info Select gives me to notate everything that happens in every case I have. Then when I need to refer to any particular lawsuit, whether it be with regard to discussions on the telephone, or what the judge did at the last hearing, what position the opposing shyster...uh, **lawyer**, is taking, or what the phone number and/or address of any-of-the-above might be...I just pop it up in Info Select.
- Keeping track of names and addresses and telephone numbers and email addresses and the such (finally, something that **other** PIM’s are used for...and I can’t imagine that any other PIM could do it better or more effortlessly).
- Keeping a “personal dictionary.” Yep, that’s what I said. Don’t we all run across words that just aren’t in our pitiful vocabularies from time to time? When that happens to me, I strike back: I pop that bugger into my Info Select dictionary (i.e. “list of words you don’t know”), plug in the definition, and when that word pops up again I just check in my personal dictionary. Strange, admittedly, but there it is.
- Keeping...uh...“miscellaneous or oddball information.” Do I remember how to send and pay for a certified letter when I’m asking for a signed receipt back? And what’s the procedure and cost difference between certified and registered mail? Who knows? Info Select knows, because I put the instructions for myself in there years ago. Ditto for, oh, billing procedures, contact information, legal clauses in various documents, procedural hurdles in various situations, etc.
- Legal authorities: Admittedly, this could be grouped under “oddball information” above, but it’s what I do. Do you want to know what interest rate a circuit court judgment drew in 1954? I’ve got it. Or how about the authority for slapping an attorneys’ fees claim on an opponent when the contract only says **they** can get such rewards? I’ve got it (it’s statutory, for all you lawyers out there). Or what about the various charges involved in issuing and serving a post-judgment continuing writ of garnishment? Who the hell would know? I certainly wouldn’t if I didn’t have it stashed in an Info Select window.
- Let’s see...what else is there. Lots. Closed file lists. Payments by debtors. “Miscellaneous interests.” Computer information. Neighborhood civic association newsletter information and volunteers. Professional associations info and happenings. “Projects in process.” Client lists, cross-referenced with files and lawsuits. Internet information and locations. Out-of-town lawyer contacts. Plot and character information for writing projects (yep, I dabble in the black

(Info Select.....Continued on page 9)

(Info Select.....Continued from page 8)

art of fiction writing). Info about repairs, upkeep, modifications, components, records, etc. on....everything, from the lawn mower to the copy machine to the oven and stove, to the various computers around here.

And plenty more. And I really only scratch the surface of what Info Select can be used for. That's the funny thing about the program: Everyone uses it in a different way, for different purposes, none of which may be the "most popular" uses by others, or even "most recommended" by the manufacturer.

Which brings me to an odd thought: In all this talking about what Info Select 5.0 can be used for, I haven't described how the program actually works. The answer to that is...well...it's a free-form, text-driven, windowing PIM database that has uses, as Micro Logic puts it, "limited only by your imagination" (whereupon they list about 50 examples off the top of their corporate heads). That doesn't adequately describe the software in a supposed software review, I know. So thank goodness for the Internet. To get the real flavor of the program, go to <http://www.miclog.com/isover.htm>. You'll find full information on Info Select 5.0 there, including screen shots.

In the meantime, that's my most important, beloved, and crucial program, used every day in every way to make my life more organized and easy. What about the rest of you? Having shared with you that part of my daily computing life, I'd be interested in hearing about the "fave programs" of others in TPCUG. Come on, don't be shy. Step right up and talk. The information you impart may---dare I say it?---change the (computing) lives of the rest of us. ◆

(Legends.....Continued from page 4)

- most bizarre suicide <http://www.snopes.com/spoons/faxlore/opus.htm>
- diver found in tree <http://snopes.simplenet.com/horrors/freakish/scuba.htm>
- Points Off Licence <http://snopes.simplenet.com/spoons/faxlore/ticket.htm>

It is a nicely organized site. They also have a message board where rumors and facts are tossed around with abandon. Before posting anything that you've heard on the board, search the site. It's probably there, and you will prevent unnecessary threads. However, if you just use this site (or a similar one that has researched the stories) to check the email with a subject line that is just too scary or too good to be true, then you can avoid passing on a story that is totally without basis in fact. ◆

Epson Stylus® Photo 700

By Larry Anders, Librarian,
Tampa PC Users Group

As a lot of you probably know, it's hard to buy a computer-type gift for a computer-type person at Christmas time. So my wife gave up on that idea a long time ago... at least picking out the gift on her own. So it's one of my challenges each year to decide what I want Santa to bring me. Of course it would be easy in this day and time to ask for a new computer but I'm still happy with what I have. So more thought was put into solving this dilemma for this year.



I will admit that after seeing the demonstration of the Alps line of printers at one of our recent user group meetings I was tempted to ask for one of them (one of which I hear our newsletter editor **was** fortunate enough to get). Hands down the Alps line has the best output I've seen for photo quality pictures, and if I wanted nothing but a photo printer I would have asked for one of those. But I was interested in finding a good photo quality printer that was also good for printing pages with heavy graphics *and* text, such as web pages. I personally think it's unrealistic to use an Alps printer to do this. The speed is too slow (up to 20 minutes to print a full-page photo), and the cost per page is too high (the Alps uses special paper to get the best quality output). Enter the new **Epson Stylus® Photo 700** ink-jet printer. (The one I asked Santa to bring me.)

This new printer not only prints sharp photo quality pictures but it also has crisp looking text that rivals any laser printer that I've ever used, so that makes it perfect for printing other things like greeting cards, calendars, reports and web pages. The Epson 700 prints up to 1440 dpi resolution and uses something called enhanced Super MicroDot™ technology that creates a lot of detail on the image. Its **6-color** print cartridges print photos as smooth as those I've gotten from the photo-lab. Also, Epson's Micro Piezo™ print head creates clean, consistent printing, no matter what type of paper I use. But obviously, the better the paper, the better the output. The monochrome print head has 32 nozzles while the color print head has 160 nozzles (32 x 5). I have found that printing in 1440 dpi the paper tends to ripple on the backside of lighter paper. On a heavier card stock type paper, it prints just fine.

It can print a standard 5" x 9" photo in about 90 seconds and an 8" x 10" photo in about 5 minutes, which is about ¼ of the time of the Alps printers. While it can print 1440 dpi its standard resolution is 720 x 720 dpi and will also print 360

(Epson.....Continued on page 10)

Special Interest Groups

Internet SIG

This SIG meets the first Monday of the month at 6 PM at the Reflectone Building, off West Waters Ave. You must sign up to get on the list and to get by security. Contact Mike Hodges at hodges@reflectone.com. For directions, see the map at our web site or contact Mike Hodges.

We again critiqued a participant's web site, offering alternate ways of doing things. We also looked back on what we have been doing, trying to get some perspective on not only how but why we build web sites.

Genealogy SIG

(Epson.....Continued from page 9)

or 180 dpi. The input tray can hold 100 pages or 10 envelopes. By the way, it prints envelopes better than any printer I have ever used. It can print on single sheets from 3" x 5" all the way up to a panoramic of 8.3" x 23.4" and can print on plain bond, photo paper, transparencies, iron-on transfers, and a bunch more.

The EPSON Stylus Photo 700 also came with Digital Photo Lab™ software suite, which is a pretty decent photo project package for editing and organizing photos, sharing photos on the Internet, and creating personalized calendars or panoramic images.

I've owned nothing but HP DeskJets in the past so this Epson is a first for me. But this Epson cost half of what I've paid for every HP I've ever purchased. And that was a pretty good deal for Santa, if you know what I mean. ♦

Getting Rich, Alps Printer, Buy.Com & Extended Length Sound Recording

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group

Since my contributors came through so splendidly this month, I have very little space to fill. It is a new year, and I am sure all of our computer savvy members made a killing last year by early on buying stock in AOL, Amazon.Com, Yahoo and any of the other computer/Internet items and then sitting back and watching them quadruple every few months. I am jealous of you. I was just too busy editing the newsletter and web site to get around to increasing my wealth.

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 SIG

This SIG meets the third Tuesday of the month, 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.

The projector was broken last month, so we couldn't run VB on a laptop and project it to the screen. Thus, we went off topic a bit and used the Gateway computers to view and discuss Active Server Pages (which use VB script) on the Internet.

But I have contributed in my own way to this Internet frenzy by making several online purchases. Most recently I have been keeping the connection to Buy.Com busy with orders for Alps printer cartridges and paper. If I don't stop I will soon have as much money in consumables as in the printer. There is serious money to be saved (as much as 40%) by buying such supplies online, and I have had good service so far through Buy.Com. The MD 1300 printer was bought locally and was my Christmas present. Perhaps I will do a review on it next month. Using the photographic quality paper and cartridges, it produces output that looks essentially like a photograph. Coupled with my HP PhotoSmart slide, negative & photograph scanner, it is producing superb results.

Those who watch the web site or read my email messages will know that I have added a TPCUG events calendar to our site. It is another example of using Active Server Pages. It updates itself each month as to our fixed meetings with no input from me. I also rearranged the order of the links on our main page.

I added a slightly different calendar to the ASP section of my site, <http://www.lamartin.com>. This one will create a calendar for any month and year you choose. I am also slowly adding more photos to that site. The latest are black and white shots of the New Orleans area, and I hope to soon add some black and white Mardi Gras shots to complement the color ones.

Finally, recall the question at last month's meeting concerning the one minute time limit on the Windows Sound Recorder? Well, that is indeed the limit. But when you know Visual Basic you can create your own programs, and I created an Extended Length Sound Recorder-Player which records for 90 minutes. You can download it from the VB section of <http://www.lamartin.com> (for free, of course) ♦

Friends of the User Group

We acknowledge the following firms for their support

Gateway 2000
Museum of Science and Industry
BCD
Reflectone

And these software and hardware vendors for their demonstrations and review software

Adobe Systems	Micrografx
Broderbund	Microsoft
Corel Systems	PowerQuest
Grolier	RDI, Inc.
Intuit	SoftKey International
Knowledge Adventure	Symantec

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 Individual \$35 Family
\$60 Corporate = 3 employees + \$20 each add'l employee

Go to our web site <http://www.tpcug.org> and click on the Join link to fill in an online membership application

Check the address label for your renewal month

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	Mary Sheridan	9:30am - 9:00pm	988-6480	AOL, CG, DOS, HG, IG, MW, Q, W95, W98
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 95/98	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.

Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

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



NONPROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
TAMPA, FL
PERMIT NO. 1917

- Member: Your membership is up for renewal
- Vendor: Your product was reviewed on page ____

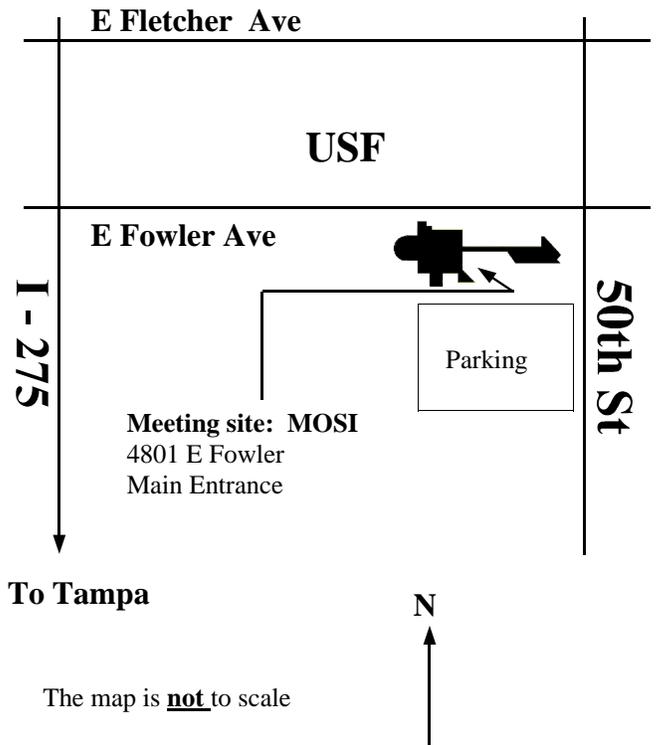
(Backup.....Continued from page 7)

out simple and grow to your needs, and I agree. The way I have it configured, I have two batch jobs, one for each personal machine. I have the folders on the two machines identified that I want backed up as the source and a directory structure on the server set up as the destination. I have it set up to synchronize the destination only to mirror the source. Many, many other options are available. Synchronize to the destination makes the destination reflect the source identically, so that when I delete a source file it deletes the backup too.

The part that I hesitate about is I'm not confident about my ability to identify all that must be backed up daily. Would you remember your Outlook or Netscape Address book?

One thing I know, is that *when* I have a full hard drive crash, the worst I can be is a week old, I can recover in not much more time than it takes to go buy a hard drive, and that lets me sleep better.

If you have any questions about this, don't hesitate to email me at MerleNic@TampaBay.rr.com. ♦



The map is not to scale