



February in Tampa

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

Vol. 11 No. 2 February 1999

Meeting

Two Presentations: Travel Software Interactive Web Pages

February 10, 1999
6:00 PM
Museum of Science
and Industry

Meeting Preview: At the February meeting, Mark Hayley will present Travel Software and other CD programs for the first part of the meeting. In the second half, William LaMartin will discuss creating interactive web pages with Visual Basic scripting and active server pages. 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

In this issue, please look at two notable items. One is the announcement of the new officers. The installment of new officers occurred at the January meeting. Part of this is, of course, so that you, the membership, will know who the dedicated workers are. But, since we are also a Florida corporation, it's a good idea to announce the change in a public manner.

The other item to look for is a very brief financial statement. The club passed a resolution many years back to publish this yearly. Please note that our balance has increased considerably. This is due the reduction of printing costs through the generosity of a club member and a small team of volunteers who put this together at the lowest possible cost.

I'd like to make a plug right now for our SIGs. SIG is Special Interest Group. At the moment we have three SIGs: Windows, Internet, Visual Basic and Genealogy. All meet monthly. There is further information in this newsletter and on our web site with a contact name for each. There is some current interest in a Linux SIG. A Linux SIG will get started only when someone will volunteer some time to collect names and find at least an initial meeting place.

A SIG gets started if, One, there are enough people interested to support it, and, Two, if there's a volunteer or two to make the arrangements. There can

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March 10: Jason Velasco-Jewell from Ontrac Data International – Hard Drive Utility Developers
April 4: Mark Komula from Network Technologies — Home networking

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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 January Meeting

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

Mary Sheridan started the Window SIG at 6:05 PM. The meeting began with a discussion of Y2K and its possible effects on data access. Many group members are aware that older versions of DOS and Windows, as well as certain motherboards, will not work properly after the year 2000. Everyone present seemed to have some type of solution for their own needs, but not everyone was aware that having a Y2K compliant operating system does not make your data safe. Many programs use two digit time stamps that are unaffected by the O.S. This means your database program could essentially disappear before your eyes. Mary shared a story with us about a power plant that shut down during a Y2K test because a pollution sensor in a smokestack was not compliant. We were assured that TECO is aware of similar problems, and they are addressing them now.

The latest beta version of Microsoft's Office 2000 is out, and there are already problems. Steve Singer passed along his experience with it when his Peach Tree accounting and UPS tracking software quit functioning after installing Office 2000. Apparently the ODBC.DRV file is being rewritten in such a manner that older programs can no longer recognize it. Steve said that uninstalling Office 2000 did not cure the problem. Thanks, Bill!

One of our members was having a problem with his 56K modem. Apparently his phone line will ring back to his house when he disconnects his modem. The problem does not happen all the time, only during certain types of connections.

Merle started the general meeting at 6:30 PM. An attendance sheet was passed out along with sign up sheets for the SIGs. Four people present raised their hands when asked if there was still an interest in starting a Linux SIG, and there are approximately 3 others who were not present who have expressed an interest in the past few months. Jenny pitched the Genealogy SIG.

Cheryl Alexander was introduced to the group as the new Membership Coordinator. Among Cheryl's duties will be making contact with members who have not been attending meetings to see if there is anything we could do to increase participation, as well as contacting old members who have quit the group.

Our guest presenter, Capt. Rob Stebbins, began his presentation at 7:05 PM. Capt. Stebbins created a publishing company

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PC Haste, not the case, or new displays for old

*By Mike Hodges, Vice-President,
Tampa PC Users Group*

Recall the old adage "Haste make waste". Well, if you are well prepared, you can indeed act quickly. Such was the case for me recently. Having attended the TPCUG monthly meetings for the best part of three years, I believe I have been well prepared to buy a new PC at any time and would feel comfortable that I was getting a good shake for my money. In the rapidly changing PC market, new models are constantly being introduced, and the price ranges appear to change daily. Yesterday's good buy is only a good bargain today at a far lower price. The computer marketplace is forever rapidly changing. However, my frequent attendance at the TPCUG monthly presentations and exposure to the web sites of sense and good value, as recommended to me by the various other members, each with heaps of experimental experience to call on, had set me in good stead to act quickly if called on to do so.

Recently I was put to the test. My son, who has been slaving away at his studies at the University of Florida, called to say that his PC had finally refused to come on, and yes, of course, he had many papers due within the week. Apparently he used good back-up practices, so he did not fear data loss but urgently needed a PC to complete his self-created masterpieces. Let me first describe the PC he had been laboring with up to the point of failure. It was a Pionex ASD machine I had purchased from a now long defunct retail outlet called Computer Warehouse sometime back in 1992. A 486 machine with the then outstanding speed of a 33 MHz processor. The system was initially configured with 4 MB of memory, a 200 MB hard drive, a 2x CD-ROM and a 2400 baud modem. I believe I had upgraded the modem for \$40 some years back, but this had been providing at best an intermittent connection. Also, as any aspiring writer knows, an HP 540 inkjet printer was needed, as most college professors prefer to grade hardcopy in the solitary confinement of their bathrooms and the like. Getting the PC to power up had become temperamental at best. This power problem was becoming so prevalent that my troubleshooting by phone had now reverted to a final single advisory. "If it comes up this time, keep it on all the time." Finally the machine became totally dormant, so it appeared that I would have to travel up to Gainesville in person to kick some life into the machine or replace the machine if it would not respond to my coaching anymore. Well, on arrival at my son's apartment in Gainesville on my first available non-work day, which turned out to be within three days of the last time the machine showed signs of life, I found that no end of power cycling and switch and cable shaking would bring the machine back to life. Yes, I do have a Masters in Electrical Engineer-

ing pending, and I took along my Simpson meter.

Having been a weekly reader of all the major discount computer store brochures found in the Sunday papers, I considered that for approximately \$500 a replacement PC could be acquired. I inquired of my son as to which was the closest computer store to his apartment, as he and I both were in a hurry and found myself at the local Office Depot within a 3-minute drive. I quickly inspected all the many offerings on display and quickly found a Compaq Presario Model 2266 offered for \$599. Yes, I did see a machine for \$499 on display but decided that the increase in processor speed of the 300 MHz over the 200 MHz model was worth the extra \$100. Within ten minutes I was back in my son's apartment and had the new computer replete with a super duper keyboard and mouse connected up in no time with the old display monitor and HP printer. This rapid connectivity was really child's play as all the connectors and cables are conveniently color-coded. This color-coding really helps to ensure that the left and right speakers are correctly located for instance and that the phone lines in and out to the phone are quickly identifiable. The fully connected system was powered on within minutes of my return to the apartment with the new PC, and this included time to unpack in a very confined college town apartment bedroom.

The system booted up and asked lots of questions in what I describe as DOS format via the ancient display monitor, an early nineties model Magnavox. I had acquired the Magnavox Super VGA display second hand some time after the original display had failed and burnt out most of the resistors in the drive circuitry. The Windows 98 screen appeared and then a problem occurred: the screen went blue, and a central static noise pattern stretched horizontally across the middle two inches of the screen. I rebooted once or twice and the same sequence prevailed. I located the convenient installation manual, which up until this moment I had ignored, and quickly found the tech help 800 number. I was connected to a real person after answering all the right questions that the central computer posed to me and was indeed connected within the 3.7 minutes predicted by the central computer. The technical service person from Compaq had not encountered my problem before and suggested that I reload the system from the back up CD provided with the purchased machine. The hard drive of the system software might have been corrupted. This seem plausible to me, so I followed the instructions and reloaded the system from the CD and went and ate lunch as the reload required 75 minutes even with the 24x CD ROM. Back from lunch and even after the reload the blue screen sequence was repeated yet again.

At this point I had a real stroke of luck. Being only a few minutes from the point of purchase, I returned to the store with the intent of swapping out the system for one that would work completely. I found the assistant manager and described the

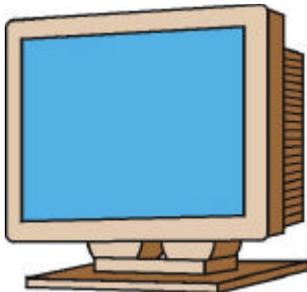
(PC Haste.....Continued on page 4)

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problem. Now this is where I really got lucky by encountering a truly savvy individual. He knew exactly the nature of the problem as he had experienced a similar problem with another model some six months earlier. The display was of an old type and some incompatibilities existed between the video driver and the old type display monitor. Sure enough, he was able to get beyond the blue screen impasse and knew how to optimize the display by adjusting the number of colors and other parameters, such as adapter type, to be found under the control panel display settings menu options. Unfortunately, the edge of the Windows motif could not be optimized on my ancient monitor to be a smooth non-jagged edge. I volunteered at this point to buy a new 14" monitor, which the store had on sale for \$99. This new display immediately solved the problem, and the system responded automatically by means of the plug and play technology, just as it should.

The moral of this story is that if you are attempting to put new wine in old bottles, then you need luck on your side in the form of more computer system knowledge. I therefore highly recommend that if you plan to buy any computer in Gainesville you stop by at Office Depot and also continue attending our monthly meetings held on the second Wednesday of the month at MOSI to stay informed.

By the way, with the help of some talented technician colleagues from my office, the power supply in the 486 has now been replaced, and that machine with its old display monitor is up and running as slowly as it ever did. This recovery took about a week as the five-year-old power supplies, which can cost \$30, are hard to find, but I was yet again lucky and found an old power supply going begging. I had disassembled the 486 and determined with my Simpson meter that the switch assembly was sound and that the power supply was clearly defunct on the night of the Communication SIG presented on the 7th of December by our very own William LaMartin. So I guess the trip to Gainesville took place on 5 December. You can set your calendar on account of the regularity of the TPCUG events. See you at our next regular monthly meeting held on the second Wednesday of the month at MOSI. ♦



Email Netiquette



By Larry Anders, Librarian, Tampa PC Users Group

We may not all surf the Internet, but most of us have some form of an email address (or two, or three). The email programs we have available to us today allow for better communication than ever before, but there are a few rules we should follow and a few things we should be aware of.

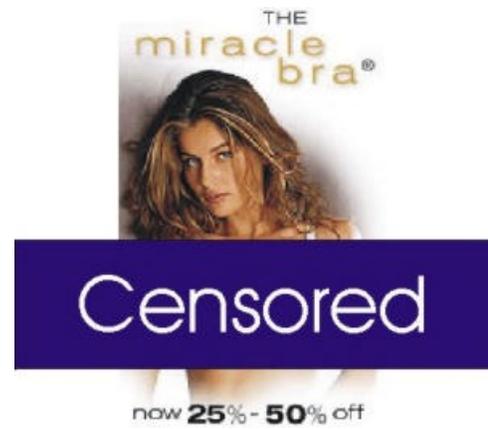
- You should probably consider any message as permanent and that you have very little control over who will see it. The message may lay dormant for quite awhile on someone's computer until someday someone resurrects it. It may not have been anything you would have wanted anyone else to see. Remember this the next time you send an email.
- It's always possible that a message can be misinterpreted, causing the recipient to react negatively. Email doesn't allow for immediate personal feedback. Be succinct and avoid responding while emotional. If you have to be emotional, use some of the "emoticons" listed below.
- To avoid receiving a computer virus, proceed with caution when opening an attachment (a binary or executable file) to the email. If you do not know the sender or were not expecting the attachment, find out who is sending it and what it is first. Remember, though, that most attachments serve a purpose, so don't be overly hasty to delete the message. Likewise, if you're sending an attachment let the recipient know what it is.
- Commonly used acronyms in email messages are: **BTW** – by the way; **F2F**– Face to face; **FWIW** – For what it's worth; **FYA** – for your amusement; **FYI** – for your information; **HHOK** – Ha ha only kidding; **IOW** – in other words; **IMHO** – in my humble opinion; **LOL** – laughing out loud; **TIA** – Thanks in advance; **TNX** – thanks. (Don't overuse these.)
- Commonly used emoticons in email messages are: **:~)** Happy; **:(** Sad; **:-||** Really Angry; **:-(o)** Yelling; **:-D** Laughter; **;-)** Winking; **:-}** Grinning; **:-o** Shocked or Amazed; **:-&** Tongue-tied; **:-#** My lips are sealed; **;-)** (Feel like crying; **:-o** Shocked or amazed; **:-*** Kiss; **X-** Brain dead; **:-P** Sticking tongue out. (Don't overuse these either.)
- Case sensitivity doesn't usually matter in an email address as it does in a URL or Internet address. i.e., johndoe@tpcug.org is the same as JohnDoe@TPCUG.org.
- Make sure to always include a subject line. That will make sure the message gets read and if it's forwarded to others they will be able to understand the subject matter. Be creative!

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- Try to limit your line character length to 65. Some email programs wrap at the wrong place which causes the email to be really hard to read.
- If you quote part of the message in your response edit out unnecessary verbiage and include your reply at the beginning of your message.
- Create a signature file to be added to all outgoing messages. Signature lines are the letterhead (or rather letter-footer) of your email message. Almost every modern email program allows you to create a signature file that typically includes 5-10 lines of contact information about you or your company which is automatically appended to each message you send.
- DON'T TYPE IN ALL CAPS. This is perceived as shouting.
- Don't send entire web pages. Just the link to the page will do.
- Don't attach files larger than 50k without permission from the recipient.
- Always read over your email before sending it and use a spellchecker when possible.
- And last, but not least, sometimes a telephone call will work much better than email. Know when to post... and when to call! ♦

Internet picture of the month



Victoria's Secret Online Catalog Item

1998 was not only the year when Internet stocks defied gravity, it was the year when online retailing really took hold. One of the last name brand retailers to come online in 1998 was Victoria's Secret. There is no need to go to your local store anymore or thumb through the mail order catalog; just point your mouse toward <http://www.victoriassecret.com> and click.

As you can see, the TPCUG Censor has been at work.

February's Interesting World Wide Web Locations

Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)

Florida History and Genealogy

Scams

A complete illustrated Guide to PC Hardware

Cable Modem Software

megaConverter.com

NIST Web Clock

Online Medical Dictionary

Castles on the Web

National Geographic

Snoopy.com (Charlie Brown)

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

<http://www.rootsweb.com/~flgenweb/index.html>

<http://syntac.net/hoax/scams.html>

<http://www.mkdata.dk/click/start.htm>

<http://www.cablemodeminfo.com/cablessoftware.html>

http://www.megaconverter.com/_Conv/cv_home.htm

<http://www.blrdoc.gov/timefreq/javaclck.htm>

<http://www.graylab.ac.uk/omd/index.html>

<http://www.castlesontheweb.com/>

<http://www.nationalgeographic.com/>

<http://snoopy.com/comics/peanuts/>



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.

ALPS MD 1300 Printer

By William LaMartin, Editor,
Tampa PC Users Group

Several months back ALPS gave our group a presentation at our regular meeting. For most of us it was our first contact with ALPS Micro Dry printers. And for many of us it was lust at first site. I almost bought one on the spot since the presenter handed out a preferential user group pricing sheet, but I restrained myself. Apparently a few members decided to make the plunge after returning home. And, since the presenter recommended searching the WWW for prices even lower than the ALPS user group prices, they did exactly that and were happy with their "Internet shopping experience."

Thanks to my wife, I received my ALPS MD 1300 for Christmas, bought from the local COMP-USA for approximately \$400 + Tax. At the time I think the best Internet price was around \$360 + shipping. COMP-USA, I believe, now has the 1300 on sale for \$339, and on the Internet it appears for \$340 at my favorite shopping site <http://www.buycom.com/>. So it appears that buying locally right now is a good idea. If you want to buy the photographic quality ink cartridges or the photographic quality paper, you will save a lot of money by purchasing them via a company like Buy.Com on the Internet. More on that later. Now to the printer.

From the ALPS site, <http://www.alpsusa.com/>, one sees that ALPS is currently selling three printers: the MD – 1000, the MD – 1300, and the MD – 5000. The 1000 and the 1300 are the same except that—and this is very important to me—the 1300 allows you to print in dye sublimation mode using the special ALPS' photographic paper and ink cartridges which produce results approaching closer to photo quality than any other printer I have seen. I have given framed 8 x 10 color prints made in dye sublimation mode to relatives, and they cannot tell that it is not a photo. I have shown members of our group 4 x 6 prints made from scanned color slides, and they agree they look like real "photos".

The normal printing process for the 1000, 1300 and the 5000 is Micro Dry—not dye-sublimation. It is a printing technique, invented and developed by ALPS, to produce fade-proof, water-proof and smear-proof images to a wide variety of media (almost any kind of paper) using a thermal process. The 5000 is a new 2400 DPI micro dry printer (the 1000 & 1300 are 600 DPI), costing around \$600. For some reason, though, you have to pay an extra \$75 to add the dye-sublimation feature to the 5000. I think possibly it also uses different paper for one of its printing modes from that used by the 1300 (so many paper choices can get confusing). But the regular 2400 DPI

MD-1300



mode is quite stunning. Check it out at COMP-USA.

Dye-sublimation is a thermal-transfer process. Ink is heated to "sublimation", the chemical term for moving a substance from a solid state to a gaseous state. The image is then transferred onto special paper. Prints made using this process are beautiful, and you will see no individual dots under magnification, but they are not cheap. I paid about \$31 + shipping at Buy.Com for the three ink cartridges and one

overcoat cartridge necessary to produce these results. A 20 sheet package of the special photographic quality paper runs \$13 + shipping. I bought enough of the ALPS consumables so that the shipping allocated to one set of cartridges and the 20 sheets of paper was approximately \$6. ALPS claims that with one set of the photographic quality ink cartridges you can do 31 of the 8.5 x 11 pages at 56% coverage, that is 1,623 square inches of coverage. This is equivalent to doing 20 full 8 x 10 prints. How convenient for our calculations. So it appears that with one set of cartridges and one package of paper you get twenty 8 x 10 color photographic quality prints at a cost of \$50, or \$2.50 per 8 x 10 print. With more expensive consumables, I suppose this figure could go to \$3.50 or \$4.00.

When I bought my very large supply of ALPS' consumables from Buy.Com (it almost appears as if I have as much money in consumables as in the printer), their prices were 40% below that of ALPS or COMP-USA and about 20% below most other Internet retailers. Additionally, Comp-USA and many of the online retailers didn't offer the entire product line of cartridges and paper. Unfortunately a recent check shows that Buy.Com has increased their prices on these items by about 17%; a photo quality ink cartridge that cost me \$6.95 in December now runs \$8.13. So, check around before you buy.

In addition to the photographic quality paper and cartridges, I purchased additional regular cartridges and something called photo realistic paper—which produces glossy near photo quality prints using the regular ink cartridges. The photo realistic paper is a good bit cheaper than the photo quality paper, just as the regular cartridges are cheaper than the photo quality ones—and the results are still quite stunning. I use this setup for printing color graphics work I create in Corel Draw. It is a big improvement over what I was getting with my HP 855 C DeskJet. I should note, though, that simply using the regular ink cartridges and regular laser paper produced results only slightly better than my HP 855 C DeskJet.

I only use the new ALPS for color work and direct all text documents to my HP 4 Plus LaserJet, so I am not a normal user. I think most people want to own only one printer. Personally, even though I have nothing but praise for the photographic quality output of the 1300, I cannot recommend it as a

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printer for very much text output. The black and white text output is excellent; however, it is quite slow—too slow for me but perhaps not for others, since most people are content with the speed of their ink jet printers.

Speaking of speed, in the dye-sublimation mode the printer uses four passes to print the photographic quality output. It takes approximately 6 minutes to print a 4 x 6 print and about 18 minutes to print an 8 x 10. I didn't check on the speed of printing a standard letter, since I doubt I will ever use it for that. For me the ALPS MD – 1300, used in conjunction with my HP PhotoSmart negative, slide and photograph scanner, is like having my own photographic darkroom (which I have but never seem to find time to use). The only outside work needed is getting your color film developed. Of course, a digital camera could solve that problem. Except that an affordable digital camera has a long ways to go to equal the quality of my Nikon N70. The ALPS MD – 1300's dye-sublimation prints are very close in quality to the product produced by the one hour photo places that most of us use for our prints.

I should also note that in dye-sublimation mode the 1300 also prints beautiful black and white photos. All the different shades of gray are produced by the same photographic quality cartridges that produce color. It is really an education of color mixing to watch as the printer puts down the three basic colors in three passes and ends up with a beautiful gray scale print.

One warning: do not use the photographic quality ink cartridges with regular paper or the non-glossy side of the photographic quality paper. If you should do this, the ribbons in them will stick to the paper and tear. You will then have a tedious job or repair ahead of you if you want to salvage your cartridges. And at their price, you will want to do this unless they are very near the end. To accomplish this, you will have to carefully pry open each cartridge that has a broken ribbon and use scotch tape to splice the ribbon, just as some of us old timers used to do with home movies. Then you will have to reassemble the cartridges, being careful not to lose them, and replace to their correct positions the several interior springs and spindles. I speak from experience. Probably I should tape a note to the top of the printer saying “**Put glossy side of paper face up**”. The regular cartridges do not have this problem.

Unfortunately there is no way to demonstrate the quality of the prints in this newsletter. ♦

TPCUG Officers for 1999

President	Merle Nicholson
Vice President	Michael Hodges
Secretary	James Weber
Treasurer	Jenny Lind Olin
Member at Large	Bruce Register

Appointed

Editor	William LaMartin
Librarian	Larry Anders
Program Coordinator	Mary Sheridan
MOSI Liaison	Ford Bond
Membership Chairman	Cheryl Alexander

Members, please contact any of your leaders with any ideas or suggestions. All the above have made a commitment to serving you, the members in 1999. If you have program suggestions, contact Mary Sheridan; for membership suggestions, contact Cheryl Alexander. Please volunteer wherever you might feel a need. Members are invited to attend the Board Meetings held on the Thursday before the regular Wednesday business meeting. Let us all give Merle Nicholson, our president, our best support. **Bruce Register**

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

really be very little work in running a SIG: finding a meeting place (the hardest), notifying and reminding the members, and coordinating a monthly program or agenda. Many SIGs go on very well as simple discussion groups, with a demo rotating among the members to show what each person's involvement in the subject is. Everyone benefits from the exchange of information, advice and viewpoints.

I mentioned that I have two goals this year. We spent last year getting our financial house in order, and I believe that's behind us. We also had a very good year for presentations. This year I'd like to concentrate on building the membership. I plan to do this in two ways – the first is to build partnerships with other organizations, and the second is to enlist the aid of the membership to recruit family, friends and neighbors. If you come to the meetings, you must surely benefit from the experience. Please share that with one or two people during this year, and we'll be on solid footing.

The other goal of mine is to find a replacement TPCUG president by October at the latest. If you're interested, please mention it to me or any of the board members. Come to the monthly board meetings to see how we are organized; make suggestions, whatever you can contribute.

Thanks, and I'll see you at the next meeting. ♦

Over Clocking Processors

By Merle Nicholson, President, Tampa PC Users Group

An interesting thing is going on in the computer gaming world right now with “over clocking” Pentium II Celeron processors. There’s quite a lot being circulated about this lately, so I thought I would explain what is going on.

To put it as simply as possible, over clocking is running a computer above its intended speed. Why would you do that? It all boils down to money. Right now the cost of an Intel Pentium Celeron 300a processor is \$100, and an Intel Pentium II 450 processor is \$550. So instead of buying the expensive version, just buy the Celeron and over clock it to 450. Why isn’t everyone doing this? What are the risks? Read on; all is explained here.

Hobbyists have been over clocking computers for a long time now, and I’ve never really understood what there was to gain. Back when we were all on 486 computers, much was made of the new AMD 486-80 that could sometimes be run at 100. That’s a 25% increase in processing power. Why bother? Would you see the difference? My opinion was then that it wasn’t worth the work. You had to have a motherboard capable of running it faster in the first place; in other words, make the settings that make it possible. And you had to add a fan inside to keep it cool because it ran hotter. And it didn’t always work.

The price to pay – when it didn’t work - was instability. Sometimes the processor wouldn’t work at all, but many times it would work, but badly. You would have program faults and the deadly Windows “blue screen” errors that forced you to reboot. And sometimes you would get spontaneous reboots. But that’s about the extent of the risks, and if you don’t like the way it behaves just put it back.

Back to the present, the issues and risks are identical to what they were five years ago. But one thing has changed this time: the gain is greater.

Intel and other chip manufacturers would prefer that their processors not be over clocked. Their main concern is that an unscrupulous manufacturer would buy cheaper processors for their computers and pass them off as more powerful machines— an opportunity to cheat the public. And obviously it would cut into the revenue stream. So with the Pentium II they go to some trouble to make sure they can’t be over clocked. And that takes some technical explanation. Stick with me here; I’ll try to make it painless.

A processor’s power is mainly dependent on two things; the capability of the internal program, and the speed at which it is run. The capability of the “instruction set” – that’s the internal program, is slowly evolving with each new processor type. Two

things have to be accomplished here. One is that the processor does all the things it used to do so it can run all the older programs, and that any new instructions are useful enough so that there’s interest in software development to take advantage of them. MMX is a very good example of this. MMX doesn’t hurt anything, and as programs are available to utilize the capability of MMX, some significant performance gains are possible.

I said two things – the other is the speed at which the processor is being run. All other things being equal (the instruction set) the faster a processor is run, the more it can do in a given time (the speed). Why not just build a Pentium II 10,000 then, instead of just messing around with 300’s or 450’s? The answer is just evolving technology. They’re basically making them as fast as the technology allows. And there’s been a constant revolution in manufacturing techniques for many years. If they were capable of building a compatible, say, Pentium 600, and they could make it for a price that would make it worth it, it would be done. And they’re working on it; you can count on that.

Every once in a while they figure that a major change in chip architecture is needed to take advantage of current technology, so we have a major change like the P II. And the next one is already available - the Xeon, and AMD is coming out with a 500 MHz K7 midyear.

So, back to speed. Motherboards have a clock. They run a speed measured in frequency called Hertz, and since the range we’re dealing with is in millions, the term is in Mega-Hertz (MHz). It’s simply the number of “ticks” per second, and the processor does a certain number of instructions at every “tick” of the clock. The Motherboard supplies the clock and normally has several settings that can be made so that it will accommodate more than one speed of processor. So a manufacturer will use the same motherboard for a Pentium 233 and a 266 or 300, for instance.

Motherboards have basic “board speeds”; that is the speed that the board ships information around to its several components. The most important function is the speed at which the processor ships data to the memory. Over time, Pentiums used 25 , 60 and 66 MHz bus speeds. Other speeds needed by the other processors have been 75 and 83.3. Now we’re using 100 MHz for many computers. And the new K7 will be using a 200 MHz bus. Each of these speed increases required more technology development and expense.

The board must also be capable of handling a given range of processor speeds, and that is set by a “multiplier”. The multiplier is a function of the board speed, and to get say a 266, you have to multiply 66.667 times four. And a 400 MHz CPU is run with a multiplier of four also, but uses a 100 MHz bus instead. Boards typically have multipliers of 2x through 5x or more; in half steps; 2.5, 3, 3.5 etc.

(Over clocking.....Continued on page 9)

(Over clocking.....Continued from page 8)

Now back to over clocking and the Celeron. Intel reportedly builds into their processors the capability of detecting both the board speed and the multiplier. But the story goes that someone decided that detecting the board speed of a 300 wasn't necessary. And then it was discovered that the Celeron 300 would actually run at 450 if you reset the board speed from its normal 66 to 100. The multiplier stays the same at 4.5. Successful over clocking at a 50% increase is unheard of. The catch is that the processor voltage must be increased from the normal 2.0 volts to 2.2 or 2.3 volts. And that's the tricky part. And it also increases the risk – of burning out your \$100 processor. But an increase from 300 to 450 is very much noticeable, especially if you're running games.

So first you have to buy a board and processor. And you have to get PC-100 memory. Sorry, you can't use your old memory for this. And do your homework and some research on this. There's a lot available at Tom's Hardware page at <http://www.tomshardware.com> and several other sites. At Tom's, there're good pictures available, and you'll need them, because to set the voltage on most boards, you must actually paint fingernail polish on some of the pins on the processor board.

PC gaming enthusiasts discovered this. There are people out there who routinely experiment with this. But this particular discovery was pretty noteworthy because the 300a is at the bottom end of the processor food chain. So if you would rather put your money into game software and still have the power of a machine that would cost \$500 more, it has a lot of appeal.

If you're interested in doing this, you have some research to do, but there's a lot of help out there. People like to write about what they're doing, and the Internet is the perfect place to publish this information. ♦

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor,
Tampa PC Users Group

I think I have had enough computer problems this past month to fill the small amount of space available. Luckily all problems have been solved except the most recent: As I write this, the Discussion Group at TPDUG.ORG will not allow posting of messages or replies. In addition, I cannot use Microsoft FrontPage to open the site. So, possibly there is a write permissions problem. You need to write to certain folders on the

server when you use FrontPage, and you certainly need to write somewhere if you are going to post a message. And to do this you need the server's permission. But that is just a guess. I assume, though, by the time you get this newsletter everything will be back to normal.

The most interesting problem this month was on a new Gateway Solo laptop—not mine unfortunately. The microphone jack produced no sound; using different microphones did no better. Obviously the microphone was muted in the volume control. Wrong. Obviously something was wrong with the recording settings. Wrong. Obviously all that was needed was to remove all mention of the sound card from the Win 98 Device Manager, reboot and let Windows install all the sound drivers again. Wrong. In fact one of the three sound card components would not install.

Since it was a new machine, the thing to do was call Gateway. The technician I got was the best I have ever worked with. He never missed a beat as he led me toward a solution, and he never broke for a moment to consult a resource (tech talk for asking someone else for help). Of course, he had me do what I had already done with the same result. He then instructed me to insert the recovery disk into the CD drive (not to run the setup program on it, since that would have restored the computer to its status when new—wiping out all the programs we had installed), have Win 98 search a certain folder for the needed driver for this one component, and that is where we stopped. The computer just would not open the folder.

I said I had seen it act like that before and that the drives on this computer seemed slow to react. He said he thought the computer had a corrupted driver for the hard drive, and he had me boot in safe mode, where he had me again remove all mention of the sound card plus some additional Microsoft sound drivers that hadn't shown up in normal mode—and most importantly he had me remove the Intel driver for the hard drive controller. A reboot produced a driver for the hard drive and drivers for two of the three sound components. This time, however, when we had Windows search the recovery CD for the needed driver, there was no problem in getting it.

Miraculously the microphone began to work. Who would have thought that you would need to reinstall the software for your hard drive to get your microphone to work.

My own desktop computer had a problem which I posted to our Discussion Group (when you could still do that). This problem manifested itself by producing an error and closing down Internet Explorer (IE) whenever I would try to type a URL into the URL text box of IE. The same thing would occur when you tried to type anything into the Start | Run text box. I could, however, paste text into the boxes with no problem.

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

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 reviewed what we have done. We also spent a good bit of time studying how the calendars at TPCUG.ORG and LAMARTIN.COM were made.

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.

The members of the TPCUG Genealogy SIG have learned a lot in the past year even if they didn't attend all meetings.

Several interesting items have been sent to the members with e-mail addresses. A list of epidemics was a unique tool to use while doing genealogy. A list of wars fought on American continents and a list of ailments found in the census reports and their modern disease names were very interesting.

Web sites have been shared this past year. There were URLs for maps of the counties as they changed from census to census, Irish genealogy sites, and an opportunity to visit ancestry.com free for a month.

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.

We studied various ways of opening text files for both input and output and how to write data to them and retrieve data from them.

1998 Financial Report

Beginning Balance:	\$1,267.14
Ending Balance:	1,978.48
Difference:	\$ 711.34
Income:	\$ 2,421.50
Expenses:	\$ 1,710.16
Difference:	\$ 711.34

ever published a list of coordinates; they were kept secret by the people who discovered them. It was here that Capt. Stebbins decided that there was a market for a published list of GPS and Loran-C coordinates.

The product Capt. Stebbins came up with is a fully searchable and configurable data base of all waterways along America's Atlantic and Pacific coasts as well as the Gulf Coast, the Great Lakes, interior lakes and rivers, and a good portion of the Caribbean. He demonstrated how to find objects of interest, like fishing holes or wrecks, by either searching by site description or entering GPS or Loran-C coordinates. The Captain says that the thousands of coordinates and the database program only take up about 40 MB of disk space. He uses an HP 890c printer to create his own labels and has two computers running a 2X and a 4X CD burner creating the program disk. His presentation ended at 8:15 PM.

We had our drawing after the presentation. Brian Lance won a copy of Clean Sweep and Ed Snow won a book called Windows 98 Annoyances and a 3-D clip art program called Live Art. Kevan Sheridan won a GPS coordinate book. \$42.00 was raised from the door prizes.

We ended at 8:30 PM. ◆

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

in his own home with a combination of his experience as a seaman and a little bit of programming experience. His annual circulation is around six thousand units. Capt. Stubbins claimed his inspiration came after he bought a boat in 1980 and was not able to catch any fish. After a friend's advice, Capt. Stebbins bought a Loran navigation device and still couldn't catch fish. It was at this point he learned about "secret" spots, or Loran coordinates. Unfortunately, no one

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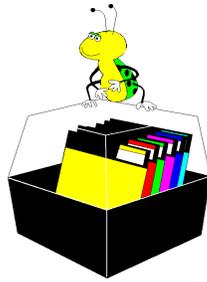
MEMBERS' HELP LINE

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	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.

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

(Comments.....Continued from page 9)

I thought about this for 24 hours and could not solve the problem. I searched Microsoft's knowledge Base and the Usenet newsgroups. Suspecting a problem with IE, I reinstalled it. No luck. I then contacted Microsoft and received the answer that my problem was caused by a corrupted history file for IE coupled with the auto complete feature. The solution was to temporarily disable auto complete, delete all entries in the history file and the cache for IE. That solved the problem, and I decided to not enable auto complete again since it was usually more of a nuisance than a help. I now think if I had uninstalled IE before reinstalling it, that probably would also have solved the problem. Isn't computing fun?

A final problem, actually the first problem of the month, was the inability to get help on the common dialog control in Visual Basic 5 after I installed a program. This program apparently installed a newer version of this control. The control worked but required a different help file. I had various complicated schemes for solving the problem but wanted a simpler one. Again, after checking all my usual resources, I contacted Microsoft and they provided a simple solution: unregister the new version of the control, delete it, get the original version off the CD, register the original version. You can't simply replace the new with the old. You must register and unregister using Regsvr32.exe.

Thanks, Microsoft. Thanks, Gateway. ◆

