



Bits of Blue



October in Tampa

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

Vol. 12 No. 10

October 1999

Meeting

Robert Armstrong
From BCD

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

Meeting Preview: At the October meeting we look forward to another interesting presentation from BCD on the latest directions in hardware and software. Mary Sheridan, as usual, will conduct a 30-minute Windows discussion at the beginning of the meeting.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group

Western Digital If you have recently purchased a WD hard drive, go to the site <http://www.westerndigital.com/fitness/drive-alert.html> and read the notice. It seems there is a problem with their drives manufactured between August 27, 1999 and September 24, 1999.

Newsletter I wish to thank all the contributors to this month's newsletter. It is a big help to me when the membership comes through early with enough material to fill the newsletter and have an extra article left over with which to start the next month.

Meetings It is not enough that you pay your dues, contribute to and/or read the newsletter and visit our web site regularly, though all that is great, of course. We also need your live bodies at our monthly meetings. It is important to fill the room so as to make our presenters feel they are appreciated. It is also important to the health of the group.

Full System Backup to CD Last month I wrote an article about the HP CD-Writer 8210i, describing how I had made data and music CD's with it. Now I can report that I have also used the supplied software to make a
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November 10: Matt McCann from Quicken

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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.

Members may insert non-commercial ads at no charge with the following limitations: no more than 4 ads per member per year; no more

Minutes of the September Meeting

By Jim Weber, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group

Our meeting started at 6:00 PM with our Windows SIG. We began with a discussion on incompatibilities with the latest version of Office 2000 and older versions of the Office suite. Word and Excel don't show any incompatibilities at this time, but Publisher and Access have demonstrated an inability to correctly identify and open older file formats. We also had a piracy alert from one of our members. It seems Microsoft contacted him with reference to a piracy complaint that he was selling illegal programs. Microsoft had his home number and other information the member thought was confidential. Not only is he unaware of how Microsoft got this information, but also he doesn't own a copy of the software in question. The closest we can figure is our member was hacked while online or a company he deals with was hacked. Either way, this is another warning of how dangerous hacking can be, and how far it can spread from its original source.

The General Meeting began at 6:30 PM with representatives from an online mall called Quixtar. Quixtar promises to be the biggest on-line store in the world with financial backing from companies like Microsoft and IBM. It offers you the ability to buy any product imaginable direct from the manufacturer at a guaranteed markup of no more than \$50.00 over cost. Quixtar claims big savings because the distribution network they will use is Amway. Speaking of Amway, Quixtar offers Multi-Level-Marketing options to anyone who gets a user ID number and convinces other people to use their number when making on-line purchases.

Merle took over the meeting at 7:00 PM. He reminded everyone that nominations for Board members are coming up, so be prepared to make nominations or be drafted. A program coordinator is especially needed. We gave Ford Bond a special moment of recognition for all his hard work and dedication in helping us move from the HCC Ybor Campus to MOSI and the time he spent as our MOSI liaison.

The meeting ended at 7:30pm. There was no drawing this week.



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

collection of CD's for disaster recovery. The process first makes a Windows 98 startup floppy that it customizes for this particularly recovery process. It then copies the contents of all of your hard drives to however many CD's as it takes to totally backup your system. In my case it used 5 CD's and took about

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WordPerfect Office 2000 Pro

By Don Patzsch, *Tampa PC Users Group*

WordPerfect Office 2000 Pro includes

- WordPerfect 9 with Dragon's Naturally Speaking, a speech recognition program.
- Trellix 2, a web publisher.
- Quattro Pro Version 9, my favorite spreadsheet program.
- Corel Presentations Version 9, a slideshow presentation program.
- CorelCentral Version 9, a personal information manager.
- Corel Print Office, a small business publishing program. (Good for newsletters.)
- Last, but certainly not least, is Paradox Version 9, a relational database program.

The word processor known as WordPerfect has been my favorite program for many years. The current version is 9. When I bring up this program it has all the items I want already on the toolbars. I don't have to set anything up. When you wish to write a letter, all the possible things you might want to include are here. Fonts, tables, create columns, save in many different forms such as Word, text, and others are right on the toolbar. Another thing, WordPerfect allows you to view the Reveal Codes, which are embedded codes in your letter that show you how your document is formatted or how fonts are changed within the document. This allows for great formatting.

You may set the default as Microsoft Word, and you can write and read MS Word files. Adobe Acrobat Version 4.0 is included, allowing you to exchange documents with Mac and Unix computers. You can save WordPerfect and Corel Presentations in Adobe Acrobat PDF file format. WordPerfect allows you to put a watermark in your letter, and also it is easy to import graphics into your letter. I know of no word processor feature that is not included in WordPerfect. More than 1000 typefaces are included. AutoScroll will advance the text automatically so you can read it over without using the mouse. Speedlink will allow you to create a hyperlink that takes you to that location on the WWW. I could go on, but I hope I have made this point clear: The reason I like WordPerfect is that it is user friendly, and then some.

WordPerfect has the Real-Time Preview feature allowing you to see how any formatting change will look in your document before making those changes. Plenty of clipart and bitmap images are included with the program and a booklet included allows you to view these, so you can easily find what you want.

Dragon Naturally Speaking, Version 3 and a microphone

headset is included. I have not really become interested in using this voice dictation, and so I have not worked with this system much. It is my opinion that IBM's Executive Via Voice is much better.

Netperfect is a server-side application that allows you to publish WWW documents through a central server.

Microsoft Visual Basic for Applications is included in the WordPerfect Office 2000 package.

Trellix 2. Trellix lets you create, convert, maintain, and update content without specialized knowledge of HTML or graphic design. I have not used this feature much because I do not do much publishing on the web. You may publish files in Extensible Markup Language (XML), Adobe's PDF, or Trellix format hyperlinked files.

One of the more interesting changes in this version of WordPerfect Office is in the CorelCentral PIM. It is a calendar, memo writer, card file, task list and an address book. It is one of the better personal information managers due to the fact that it is coordinated with all the other parts of Office 2000. You may use your Windows address book, and it will use your default email program to send messages on the Internet.

Paradox 9. This relational database has been around for many years and is one of the top programs of its type. This program came from Borland originally. A visual database designer allows you a graphic layout of the relationship between the various tables in your database. A new Find Duplicate Expert allows a query that finds and eliminates duplicate field values within the records of a table. Spell checking is now included. PerfectExperts provide you with the ability to create, in a step by step manner, tables, reports, labels and forms.

Paradox can communicate with most databases via the .dbf format. It is hard to know where to stop listing the features, but be advised there are many more.

Quattro Pro. I have been using Quattro Pro since Borland gave me a copy of Version 1 at a seminar in Tampa years ago. I like the way that you can "fit to the page" and print out the spreadsheets. I have put all my financial information into this program and have used it for years. You can produce a spreadsheet of a million rows and 18,000 columns. I've used Excel, and I like Quattro Pro's user friendliness much better for my needs. You can exchange data with databases using OLAP (online analytical processing) as long as the programs are OLAP compliant.

Corel Presentations is another program I have used for a long time. It is easy to bring in slides from PowerPoint or other pro-

(WordPerfect.....Continued on page 5)

Paint Shop Pro 6.0 Including Animation Shop

By Larry Anders, Librarian,
Tampa PC Users Group



Jasc at <http://www.jasc.com> just continues to make an already good program better. Paint Shop Pro 6's (PSP6) ease of use allows you to easily capture, create, enhance, and optimize your graphic projects. Whether you're creating web graphics or just wanting to work on a digital photo, PSP6 gives you the tools to do the job easily.

I've reviewed this program a couple of times in the past, and I'm not going into all of its abilities again, but considering all of the newly added features it bears a third article.... because, if you aren't using it... you should be.

I have nearly all of the upper end graphic programs like Adobe's PhotoShop and Corel's Photo-Paint, but they all take so long to load that they are almost bothersome. Not so with PSP6. I have always used PSP to do all my scanning because it starts so much quicker and doesn't use near the overhead or computer resources that the others do. Now, I'm not saying that PSP6 is better than the upper end stuff, but it sure comes real close. And, if you want to talk about what's better, then let's talk about price. JASC sells PSP6 direct over the Web as a download for \$99, or delivered FedEx or UPS for \$109. Some resellers are selling it for the same price plus a \$30 rebate. And if you're lucky enough to already own it, and you should, the upgrade is only \$49. Considering all the tools you get with PSP6, plus Animation Shop 2, that's relatively inexpensive when compared to the upper end programs.

One of PSP's weaknesses in the past has been its text tool, but not anymore. Now text can be created as a selection on the current layer, as a floating selection above the current layer, or added as a **vector object** on its own layer that can be edited, deformed, and moved. Text is placed horizontally unless a path is created. When created on a path, the text follows the path.

Also new to PSP6 are many other new features and enhancements that include powerful new gradient options, a wide variety of new image effects and deformations, color adjustment layers, expanded digital camera support, multiple image printing and optimization features for producing high-quality web graphics with the smallest possible file sizes. Below is a list of new features and enhancements that JASC lists on their web site:

Editable Text and Drawing Tools

- Editable Text with Character-level Formatting
- Vector Drawing Tools
- Object Manipulation & Node Editing
- Text on a Path

Creative Tools

- Multiple Color Gradients
- Special Effects and Filters
- Enhanced Non-build up brush tools

Web Graphics Solutions

- JPEG Optimizer
- GIF Optimizer
- Animation Shop 2

Digital Imaging Solutions

- Expanded Digital Camera Support
- Adjustment Layers
- Multiple Image Printing

Productivity Enhancements

- Browser File Management
- OLE Screen Capture
- Multiple-level Redo
- Expanded File Format Support

Product Refinements

- Enhanced Control Palette
- Enhanced Tool Options palette
- Enhanced Layers palette for Mask creation
- Roll up feature for tool palettes which minimizes palette
- Enhanced Zoom Tool
- New Recent Colors dialog window
- Numeric edit controls for precise input
- Enhanced Help system
- Eraser mode support for pressure sensitive tablets
- Enhanced Picture Tubes for easier installation and use
- Visual preview pane for Picture Tube options palette
- New preference which defaults saved file type to last format saved
- Multiple-level Undo, Redo and a Command History

And with Animation Shop 2 included, you can also:

- Quickly create animations using built-in wizards
- Edit animations with drag-and-drop flexibility
- Apply high-quality image and text effects
- Optimize and export animations for use on the web
- Optimize and export animations for presentations with full integration with PSP6

All things considered this program should already be part of your arsenal of software. If it isn't, get it. You won't be disappointed with this one! ◆

(WordPerfect.....Continued from page 3)

grams, and this is a great program to produce slide shows for the WWW.

Corel Print Office produces desktop publishing, business cards, and brochures. A most useful addition to the Office Suite.

When I started to write this review, I hoped that it would be easy to do. I find that it is very easy to use the programs, but very difficult to tell you what I would like to about them. If you buy this program, I believe you will agree with me that it is the very best. The suites that I know of are: WordPerfect Office 2000, Lotus Smartsuite, Microsoft Office 2000, Star Office (a program from Germany), Ability Office, and 602pro Suite.

WordPerfect has decided to port at least the word processor to Linux, and they offer it FREE. ♦

WPP

Internet picture of the month



TV Station WITN in Washington, NC
<http://broadcast.com/television/witn/>

During Hurricane Floyd, several TV stations moved to a round-the-clock Internet broadcast of their hurricane coverage. WPEC in West Palm Beach started it off, followed by two of the North Carolina stations. The screen capture above is from WITN, <http://broadcast.com/television/witn/> in North Carolina. The feed was at 20 KB/sec, so the small image was OK, updating fairly smoothly, and the audio was good.

October's Interesting World Wide Web Locations - click, they are hot

Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Smart Computing in Plain English	http://www.smartcomputing.com/
HotJobs.com - Professionals' job board	http://www.hotjobs.com/
CareerBuilder – “The Most Jobs on the Web”	http://www.careerbuilder.com/
Monster.com - search for jobs	http://www.monster.com/
University of Central Florida Newspaper	http://www.ucffuture.com/
Commander's Palace Restaurant - New Orleans	http://commanderspalace.com/
SunSpot – The Baltimore Sun online	http://www.sunspot.net/
Sears PartsDirect - order parts online	http://www3.sears.com/
QuickenMortgage, a personal finance service of Intuit	http://mortgage.quicken.com/
Weather Underground – another weather site	http://www.wunderground.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.

Using VBA Functions in Access

By Merle Nicholson, President,
Tampa PC Users Group

Using Visual Basic for Applications (VBA) isn't really hard. Instead, I'd call it complex. This means that in order to do it proficiently you have a lot of small things to learn. And most of all, you have to stick to the task and don't give up. Find a reasonably easy task and just work with it until it's done.

I teach a beginning class in Visual Basic, three hours on a Saturday, spread over six weeks. That's only 18 hours of instruction, and, for the most part, it's been pretty successful. But only after I've learned a few very important things. I tell my students that if they attend every week and work hard in class ... they'll not learn anything, actually fail...And they're just wasting our time.

Programming has to be practiced. It's a continual voyage of discovery and accomplishment.

Now to the subject of user-written functions. Understanding functions is a very fundamental part of programming. Surprisingly though, you can program in Access (or Excel or ...) for years and never write a function. If that's you, you're missing something essential. Functions give you reusable code. You write functions to be general purpose so that on your next program, and the next, you just merge this function into your module and it's ready to go without modification. ("Without modification" is a goal, not a rule.)

You have to think of a function as an encapsulation of a single idea. To illustrate this, let's look at *built-in functions*. A built-in function – called *intrinsic functions* – are the building blocks of all programs. Let's take Int() for instance. Here's an example of how you use Int(). Dollars = Int(Cost). This takes a variable called Cost, cuts off the fractional part, and stores it in Dollars as a whole number. So if Cost was 3.65, then Dollars will be 3. Int() is just one of dozens of intrinsic functions like Format, Ucase, Mid etc ...

If you were going to write your own Int function, here's what it will look like:

```
Public Function Int( ByVal InputVariable As Double ) As Double
```

```
'Takes the Input Variable, and magically
'cuts off the fractional part if any, and
'returns it by assigning it to Int.
```

```
Int = ... do something clever with math ...
End Function
```

The first line is the function declaration. It simply defines the

rules whereby it runs. The name is Int. It takes as a parameter one variable containing any number – InputVariable – and returns a number. Both the input and output are of type Double. Int is dimensioned as Double – the output and InputVariable is of type Double.

The lines beginning with an apostrophe are comments. Comments are ignored. The next line is incomplete. Frankly I can't think of any way to accomplish this with math, but the objective is to take the value stored in Input Variable and cut off any fractional part. Since I can't think of a way to do this, I substituted "psuedo code". The result is that this function won't work, making it a bad example, but I hope you get the idea.

Here's a better example that actually works.

```
Public Function Round2( ByVal ToBeRounded as Double ) as Double
```

```
'Take the Input variable ToBeRounded, and
'magically round it to two places.
Round2 = Int( ( ToBeRounded * 100 ) + 0.5 ) / 100
End Function
```

To use this function, in your code anywhere in your application, use it like this: Dollars = Round2(Cost). So if Cost was say \$105 times 1.0675 tax and you wanted it in dollars and cents, you'd need to round off to the penny. Useful? Yes, absolutely. If you were to add a column of numbers that had them all rounded off, the result would be very different than if you didn't.

I'd really not program Round this way. I'd add another argument that specifies the places that it would round to. So I'd make the header: Public Round(ByVal ToBeRounded As Double, Places As Integer) As Double. This way it's even more useful because I can round to zero places, or ten places.

OK, now you have the idea, I hope. That is to encapsulate an idea into a single, reusable function. Both examples stand alone with no outside support. They are completely portable. These kinds of functions can be thought of as "*filters*". There are a couple of entire computer languages that operate on the principle of taking data and "*filtering*" it until you get it where you want it.

I'll give a much more complex example. I was asked to help with a problem from another employee in my company. She wanted to calculate 20 working days from now. Whoops. This is more complex.

Simulate it on paper first. Write the date. 7/1/1999 is a good one, and the date plus one, and the date plus 2 in a column on the paper. Write down say 35 days.

Look up the second date on a calendar. If it's not a weekend or
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(VBA.....Continued from page 6)

holiday, mark a 1 beside it, otherwise skip to the next date. If that one is not a weekend or holiday, mark it one plus the last one. The answer is the one that has 20 written beside it.

That's not too bad. And here's the next step, reproducing the ideas in a kind of a fake (pseudo-code) programming language. I made up my own pseudo-code so that you can easily read this example. It does exactly the same thing as the example above except that it delineates the repetitive part in a computer loop.

```
Set a counter to 0
Get a StartDate
Top of the Loop
If Counter = 20, then stop looping and go below
the bottom of the loop
Add 1 more to Startdate and save it in StartDate
If StartDate is not a holiday AND is not a week-
end day Add one to Counter
Else don't
Go back up to the Top of the Loop
Here is where we go when the loop stops.
Since the counter is now 20, the result is the
new StartDate
```

Now this code needs to be translated into the real thing. The header – the function definition – would be AddWorkDays (StartDate, NumberOfWorkDays) as Date. So this function returns a date, and that date is NumberOfWorkDays more than StartDate.

There are a couple of key things to work out. First, how do we know whether a date is a weekend day? And second, how do we find out if a date is a holiday? As it turns out, the first part is easy. There's a function DatePart that does this. DatePart needs a date and two parameters, one that specifies that DatePart returns the day of the week. And the other parameter specifies that Sunday is the first day of the week. You use it like this: Result = DatePart("w", Date, vbSunday). It returns a 1 for Sunday, and a 7 for Saturday.

A holiday is much harder. The problem is that workday holidays don't occur on the same days. Most holidays are predictable, but those aren't necessarily the days we don't work. So the only solution is to make a table. The table must be maintained manually. So I made a simple table in Access called tblHolidays. It has one column called Holiday, defined as Date/Time, and the Primary Key is placed on that column. And then I typed the workday holidays in the column.

Now we need to get dates from the table. Actually all we need to do is see if a date we have is also in the table.

We do this with some DAO programming. DAO uses the Access Jet engine to manipulate data tables. Here's the sequence needed. Refer to the example below as we do this.

- 1) Connect to the database. In Access that's easy. Just use the current database. The connection to do that is easy.

Set db = CurrentDB does that.

- 2) Open the table. We use db.OpenRecordSet for this. And we name the table "tblHolidays" and specify that the access method is dbOpenTable. For our purposes, dbOpenTable is the fastest.
- 3) Set the search index as the primary key. rs.Index = "PrimaryKey" does this.
- 4) Search for a specific date. rs.Seek = DateToBeSearched
- 5) If a property called rs.NoMatch is True then it wasn't found. If it WAS found, rs.NoMatch will be False.
- 6) Seek all the dates you want and check rs.NoMatch.
- 7) Close the recordset and database rs.Close and db.Close

Now these concepts need to be integrated into the program. And it turns out pretty much as below. The structure of the program is the same as the pseudo-code above. But the DAO programming and the DatePart function is worked into it.

```
Public Function AddWorkDays(ByVal StartDate As
Date, ByVal NDays As Integer) As Date
'
*****
*****
' Add NDays of workdays to StartDate.
' Use:  NewDay = WorkDay( "7/1/1999",20)  Adds 20
Workdays days to 7/1/1999
' Work days is defined as weekdays that do not
appear in a table tblHolidays
' The Table tblHolidays has one field called
Holiday, defined as Date/Time,
'           required, no duplicates, and
being the primary key
' *****
Dim db As Database
Dim rs As Recordset
Dim D As Integer
Dim DayIncrement As Date
' *****
D = 0
Set db = CurrentDb  ' Use the current Access da-
tatabase
Set rs = db.OpenRecordset "tblHolidays", dbO-
penTable) ' Use the holiday table
rs.Index = "PrimaryKey" ' Assign the Primary key
as the search column
DayIncrement = int(StartDate) ' Make sure there's
no time part on the startdate
Do Until D = Ndays  'Top of the loop
  DayIncrement = DayIncrement + 1  ' Add a day
  if Not ((DatePart("w", DayIncrement, vbSunday)
= 1) Or _
(DatePart("w", DayIncrement, _ vbSunday) = 7))
  Then
  rs.Seek "=", DayIncrement  ' See if it's a
holiday
  If rs.NoMatch Then  ' If not a holiday, add
one to D.
  D = D + 1
  End If
End If
Loop
```

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The Way It Was

By Ed Buzza, Tampa PC Users Group

Have you noticed a rather curious thing in the trade magazines lately? All the ads are for hardware and, except for Microsoft products (and not many of them either), practically nothing else. And the bloated sizes of these new packages are simply awful. What happened to the old days of fascinating software packages and simple operating systems?

I remember...

in the summer of '87 bugging Walt, a TPCUG member, to let me try out some stuff I'd read about in his copy of the DOS manual. This was before I had my own computer. He had a Kay-Pro. With an 8088 processor. No hard drive. Just two 5.25 floppy drives. With 640K of memory and a floppy disk drive with 360k bytes of whatever. It was a big step up from the Commodore that he had contemplated as his first computer.

But can you imagine - having to put a disk in the A: drive every time you loaded a new program? You see, DOS back then didn't keep but a portion of COMMAND.COM (the heart and soul of DOS) in memory. It had to read the rest of itself from the floppy disk so's it could do something. So every time you wanted to do something in DOS or load another program, you had to put in the DOS disk in the A: drive, then replace that disk with the program disk of the application you wanted to run. You see, you kept the B: drive for your data files.

Then some people would make use of some of the "power" tools available to them in DOS. They would create a virtual disk of 60-70k bytes in memory and put COMMAND.COM, and a few other vital routines up there on the virtual disk. What a breakthrough! No more popping of the master DOS disk just to switch to another program.

Sure you sacrificed some memory but programs back in those days usually got by with just 512k of memory. Now that included the program and whatever space it needed for work files. As for DOS, it used just a pittance of memory; the full COMMAND.COM was under 24k. Just how big was DOS? Version 3.2 (476k bytes, less than 60 files) took up 508k bytes on a floppy.

Oh yeah, back then there was no such thing as buying a box of pre-formatted floppies; no siree, you formatted your own floppies! One nice thing though, since there was no hard drive, there was no need to run backups on your software. 'Cause you loaded a fresh copy each time you ran the program. Now for the data files, some of the scaredy cats did make back-up copies.

Walt was running an integrated package called "Ability". It had

a word processor, spreadsheet, database, and a crude telecommunication package. I can still see that dismal green background on the CGA screen. But it did the job. He wrote letters, had a database of addresses, and used a spreadsheet for his household budget.

How many of you remember the 9 pin dot matrix printers of back then? Today, they look pretty awful but then, they were the cat's meow! And the CGA screen with lines running through the text on the screen? You did have eight colors you could use; but only four at a time. You had to switch to a new monitor mode whenever you wanted to change the color "set".

Disk files were remarkable. One box (ten disk capacity) held all your programs and another box held all your data files. However it wasn't long before you expanded your program library. Nor were all the programs legitimately acquired. How many of you had a utility program that would allow you to bypass the copy protection that almost all of the commercial software vendors used to stop just such pirating? F'sure, we all learned to install from a copy of the master disks and never used the master disks to install software. Further, it was gospel that you never, and I mean NEVER bought or installed version 1 of anything. But then, that's still true! Of course the Xerox machines got a good work out making copies of the instruction manuals. None of that "modern" (read: cheapskate) method of putting the manual on disk/CDs.

Then there were all the goodies out there known as shareware. Sad to say, many thought this meant freeware. There were even software houses that issued catalogs and marketed shareware programs (People's Choice comes to mind) that did a thriving business. Plus, who can forget the little programs listed in many of the trade magazines. PC Magazine was famous for that. You copied the code and then compiled the program using DEBUG. Heaven help you if you keyed in the wrong data. Since most didn't know what the code stood for, users were very careful and double checked their data before running it through DEBUG.

One of the things many of our members looked forward to was the Library maintained by our user group. Some one would bring in a "lunchbox" computer and we'd crowd around making copies of shareware and freeware programs. The "lunchbox"? That was a portable computer that had a small cathode ray screen (7"-9" monitor) and a couple of disk drives. Later, they had hard drives which made copying easier. That lunchbox PC was a far cry from today's laptops and notebooks. And it was HEAVY!

But things change, everyone soon got into the habit of upgrading equipment to handle all the new features of the new upgraded software. Make you wonder (like the question about the chicken and the egg) which came first: improved hardware or improved software. But that's another story. Stay tuned. ♦

(VBA.....Continued from page 7)

```
rs.Close
db.Close
AddWorkDays = DayIncrement
End Function
```

It may take a little time to see how this works. I suggest highlighting some of the keywords like OpenRecordSet and press the Help button and learn as much about it as you can. Have Fun! ♦

(Comments.....Continued from page 2)

two hours. I have two hard drives totaling about 7.5 GB (with perhaps 2 GB free) partitioned into a total of five partitions. To be able to use your disaster recovery CD's you need to have the drives partitioned exactly as they were originally, so you should write down somewhere what the drive sizes are. I put that information in a text file on the boot floppy. That will allow you to repartition and format your drives exactly as before, boot from the floppy and let the disaster recovery process go on its own from there with you just inserting CD's when necessary. I hope I never have to use it.

Wonders of the Web This past month I found the web useful for two things: watching hurricane Floyd on TV in West Palm Beach, FL and Washington, NC via the web and ordering a microwave door handle from Sears.

If you go to <http://www.broadcast.com>, you will find numerous radio and TV stations that you can listen to and watch on your computer. The TV stations, for the most part, only broadcast live during their morning, noon, and evening news hours. But for Hurricane Floyd the West Palm station stayed with it for more than 24 hours, which was of interest at our house since we were putting up a couple refugees from that area. As the storm moved north, two North Carolina stations began their continuous Internet feed. The feed was about 20 KB/sec, so to take full advantage of it you need something faster than a regular dial-up connection.

While visiting my mother a few weeks back, I noticed that her Sears microwave door handle was broken. A year or two ago I had checked if Sears had a parts web site; they didn't. But now a search of the words "Sears parts" in AltaVista produced the site. <http://www3.sears.com/> for Sears Parts Direct. Once at the site, I entered the model number for the microwave and then clicked my way to a schematic of the door, clicked on the handle, got the price, gave my mailing and credit card information, and the part was ordered.

Y2K I finally got around to checking on the Y2K readiness of my two main computers. I did this by going to the Microsoft site and clicking on their Y2K link (<http://www.microsoft.com/>

Computers and Ham Radio

By Clark J. Evans, Tampa PC Users Group

Computers and Ham Radio have some elements in common. The basic of Ham Radio is digital. Ham Radio starts with Morse code or c.w. or continuous wave. Morse Code is on and off of the transmitter. So if the transmitter is on we have a one and off we have a zero. Where did I hear of ones and zeros before? They are the language used by computers.

A dit in Morse code is as fast as you can send it with a Morse code key and a dah is three times longer then a dit. How, you may ask, did Samuel Morse come up with the different beats of dit and dah for each letter? He went to the local printer and asked him to keep track of the number of letters he used each day by letters. The one the printer used the most was "E" so Samuel gave it dit. The least used letter he gave the most dits and dahs. Example: (Z) he gave dah dah di dit.

You can get a Morse code message through when you can't get a voice message through, because Morse code is digital.

So what else in Ham Radio is computer related? Packet Radio is sending messages around the world by digital, computer to computer links around the world.

Next we have satellites we transmit through. Most Ham Radio satellites are on a low orbit of 200 to 300 miles above the earth. This includes the MIR, Space Shuttles, and the Hubble. Because of the low orbit you only have about eight to ten minutes while they pass over you to communicate with them. That is why we use computers to keep track of them so we know when they are flying over us so we can contact through them.

The Federal Government asks Ham Radio operators to do one thing when they pass their test and get an Amateur Radio License, to help provide communication for Red Cross, and Federal, State and County Governments when hurricane, earthquakes, or any disaster happens.

Ham Radio operators will use any form of communication to get the message through radio, Morse code, voice, computers and satellites. ♦

y2k/). There you can download the Microsoft Year 2000 Product Analyzer, which, when run on your computer, tells you the readiness of the Microsoft programs you are running. I had to do a little updating on both computers. They also had links to major hardware manufacturers' Y2K pages, where I checked on the readiness of my computers.

(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 consider all topics concerned with creating web sites. We study sites of interest from the web and those created by members of the SIG. And, in general, we consider anything of interest concerning the Internet.

Genealogy SIG

To be included on the TPCUG genealogy mailing list, contact Jenny Lind Olin at 960-5723 or jloin@aol.com

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.*

Book Review: Teach Yourself Paint Shop Pro 5 in 24 Hours

By Cheryl Alexander, Membership Contact, Tampa PC Users Group

The product presentation for December 1998 was Julie Altstatt of JASC Software demonstrating Paint Shop Pro 5.0. When I mentioned to her that we already used this program, she gave me a book: *Sams Teach Yourself Paint Shop Pro 5 in 24 Hours* by T. Michael Clark.

I have been a long-time fan of Paint Shop Pro (PSP) ever since I was dragged kicking and screaming to it. (I was emotionally attached to a program that I knew well but had betrayed me by becoming obsolete.) I was aware that it could do many things but had no clue how to use the functions to make graphic magic. So, I poked, prodded, read the very decent manual and remained clueless. Then I got The Book.

The layout of this book is 24 lessons designed to take about an hour each. Thus, one learns a manageable amount of information each session if one chooses to follow the lesson plan. These lessons are outlined on the inside of the front cover and in more detail in the table of contents. This helped when looking for a specific lesson. The lessons are very clear and step-by-step. Explanations as to why something is done in a certain manner are included.

Mr. Clark covers the basic functions of PSP extensively and clearly. In fact, the first four lessons are for the rankst beginner. As I read through the material, I learned many things

about functions that I thought that I understood and knew how to use. However, he goes beyond the basics and explains how to use these fairly easy functions in various combinations to produce some spectacular effects, such as glowing text a la X-Files, textured text, and metallic effects.

He takes one from the point of "okay, I got this, now what?" to "so **that's** what it does!" by explaining the use and how to of color, layers, masks, channels, picture tubes and filters. He then demonstrates how to use these functions to retouch photos, correct color problems and combine pictures for phenomenal results.

The last four lessons help in the preparation of graphics for the web: how to use jpg's compression facility to best advantage, how to make those animated gifs and pagesets (coordinating backgrounds, buttons, horizontal/vertical rules). Also included are resources on the web where picture tubes, tutorials and plug-ins for PSP can be found.

I have been using this book to create title graphics, backgrounds, and pagesets for my web site. Also, anything I can learn about color and its adjustments is a bonus since my site is photo-oriented.

Sams Publishing (<http://www.sampublishing.com>) has been producing technical books for over 50 years and computer oriented books for almost 20. You can order books or learn online.

The author, T. Michael Clark, has been an artist all his life. He runs GrafX Design (<http://grafx-design.com>), a web site that features online tutorials for several graphic programs. ◆

Friends of the User Group

We acknowledge the following firms for their support

Museum of Science and Industry
 Gateway 2000 Marshall & Stevens
 Reflectone BCD

And these software and hardware vendors for their demonstrations and review software and contributions of evaluation software to our group

Adobe Systems Micrografx
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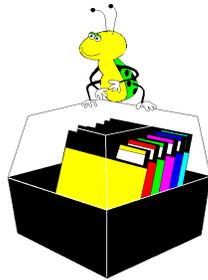
MEMBERS' HELP LINE

Program	Code	Name	Time	Phone	Codes
Adobe Acrobat	AA	Cheryl Alexander	10:00am - 9:00pm M - F	914-0008	HTM,PSP,WP
Alpha4	A4	Larry Anders	Mon - Sun 6:00pm - 10:00pm	989-9119	AOL, ME, MW, FP, PSP
AOL	AOL	Tom Cone	Mon - Sun 7:00pm - 9:00pm	949-3716	A4,VdB
Computer General	CG	Warren Fuss	10am - 9:30pm	949-6844	CG, WNT, N
Delphi	DE	Bob LaFave	8:00pm-10:00pm	248-3379	W95/W98, MOS
DOS	DOS	William LaMartin	Mon - Fri 9:00am - 9:00pm	251-3817	AA, FTM, IG, MOS, MP, VB, W95
Family Tree Maker	FTM	Merle Nicholson	Mon - Fri 7:30pm - 9:30pm; weekends	879-3602	CG, DE, DOS, HG, HM, HP, VB
Hardware General	HG	Jenny Lind Olin	Mon - Sun 8:00am - 10:00pm	960-5723	ME, MW, PAF, Q, WP
Hardware Modem	HM	Don Patzsch		689-8662	CG
Hardware Printer	HP	Mary Sheridan	9:30am - 9:00pm	988-6480	AOL, CG, DOS, HG, IG, MW, Q, W95, W98
HTML coding	HTM				
Internet General	IG				
Micrografx Graphics Suite	MGS				
Microsoft Access	MA				
Microsoft Excel	ME				
Microsoft FrontPage	FP				
Microsoft Office Suite	MOS				
Microsoft Publisher	MP				
Microsoft Visual Basic	VB				
Microsoft Word	MW				
Networking	N				
PAF	PAF				
PaintShop PRO	PSP				
Quicken	Q				
Visual dBase	VdB				
Windows 3.1	W3				
Windows 95/98	W95/W98				
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)

Next, from Quicken I accessed their update page while online and was supposedly supplied with all the necessary updates. The Corel site said that Draw 8 and Photo-Paint 8 were compliant, but their WebMaster suite would not be tested. Now, how hard is it to test a two-year old piece of software for compliance? Symantec doesn't list my WinFax Pro 7.0 as compliant, but it probably wasn't tested since it is a number of years old. Traveling software says that LapLink Professional is, and so it goes. I assume most programs I have purchased in the past few years are compliant, and the older ones will not be tested by their vendors.

TPCUG Solves Plumbing Problem One of the main benefits of our group is being able to call another member when you have a computer problem or just to share computer information. Wade Herman sent me a link to an article on Cable vs. DSL service. That prompted a phone call from me to him to discuss some other computer matter, and during the conversation I let drop that I had just twisted off a 1/2" pipe inside the wall while trying to install some new pipe along with a new faucet. I had a call in for a plumber since I could see no way to fix this short of making a large hole in my bathroom's tile wall. "You need to borrow the large bolt extractor that I have for just such problems with my lawn sprinkler system," he said. He brought it over, I hammered it into the broken pipe until tight, then to my surprise the pipe began to screw out as I turned the extractor with a wrench. Another documented TPCUG benefit. Cancel that call for a plumber. ♦

