Bits of Blue

January in Tampa

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

Vol. 14 No. 1   January 2001

Meeting

Mary Charboneau from Verizon DSL

**January 10, 2001
6:00 PM
Museum of Science
and Industry
4801 E Fowler Ave.**

Meeting Preview: Mary Charboneau of Verizon DSL will give us the details of our local phone company's Digital Subscriber Line service. As usual Mary Sheridan will conduct a computing and Windows discussion for the first 30 minutes of the meeting.

President's Message

By Mary Sheridan, President, Tampa PC Users Group
mcpease@mindspring.com

At the close of the year 2000, having survived all of the "disasters", we can approach 2001 with a greater sense of security. I haven't heard any reports that the world will end in 2001, but I guess you never know.

My run for president was a tough battle, but having been re-elected, it was worth it. Wouldn't it be fun to have two people running for the same office?

I'm having a wonderful time as your president but I fully intend to find some capable person to replace me for 2002. I think the group needs fresh ideas and fresh faces. Anyone who has been toying with the idea of getting more involved, PLEASE, let me know.

Our Christmas party was a success. Due to the generosity of those attending, we had plenty of great food and thousands of calories for those of us trying to "bulk up" (giggle). I hope no one thinks the annual party is a waste of time. Everyone who attends acts like they are happy for the chance to just talk to each other and exchange ideas. If you'd rather we didn't have the party, I do care about the feelings of everyone in the group. Email me (mcpease@mindspring.com) and tell me what you think.

February 14: **To be announced — Check our web site later**

Minutes of the December Meeting

By Jim Weber, Tampa PC Users Group
jlweber9@mindspring.com

This month we had our annual Christmas Party in lieu of a full meeting. The only business conducted was an election of officers. Since we all ran unopposed, election was unanimous. (No need for a recount.)

Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays to all of you.

Jim Weber ◆

My focus for the upcoming year will be to try to have more interesting topics at our meetings. I could use suggestions on the programs you use and what kinds of things you'd be interested in hearing about. I'm in a rut at home because today my computer is working fine. That makes me want to leave it alone and not add or subtract any programs. And we all know, that's no fun.

By the way, I finally upgraded to Windows Millennium. It's not much of a change. The "find" feature is now the "search" feature. Some change, huh? I was hoping for a faster boot, but I upgraded instead of doing a 'clean' install and it boots as slow as ever. I'm not unhappy with it; I just don't really see the point of the upgrade.

I hope everyone had a very nice holiday and I wish you all great prosperity in the New Year. ◆

Member of
The Association of
Personal Computer User Groups

For the month of December 2000, our site
http://www/tpcug.org had:

- An average of 209 user sessions per day

- An average user session length of almost 17 minutes

- An average of 439 page views per day

- 5 PM EST the most active and 7 AM EST the least active

The HP ScanJet5370 Cse

By William LaMartin, Editor,
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There is a new scanner in our house—thanks to my mother-in-law. Why might she be interested in my having a third scanner? Well, she just happens to have a lot of old, very large negatives floating around her house, and the HP 5370C series flatbed scanners come with a transparency adapter good for scanning in transparencies, photographic negatives or photographic slides up to 5" x 5" in size.

I have had an HP IIcx flatbed scanner for many years. And it has really been a workhorse for me. I think I have had it for at least seven years. It has been extremely reliable and does fast scans of standard pages of up to 14" in length. It does a good job on photographs, and, coupled with TextBridge Pro's OCR software, I have converted a lot of printed text to digital text. It has a 400 dpi optical resolution and does its scans quite fast with no warm up of the light.

HP ScanJet 5370 Cse Scanner with transparency adapter and large template

But the IIcx cannot scan negatives. That is why my son added an HP PhotoSmart photo scanner to my collection several years back. It will scan 35 mm negatives and slides at an optical resolution of 2400 ppi (pixels per inch), and the results are quite good. It also scans regular photographs up to 5" x 7" at an optical resolution of 300 ppi. I think here we can equate ppi with dpi. So it would be better to scan a photograph using the IIcx; however, if you have a negative for the photo available, the results of using the negative scanner instead of scanning the photo itself in either scanner is superior. So I always scan a negative instead of a photo when I can.

Unfortunately the HP PhotoSmart scanner will not scan negatives larger than 35 mm, and I have a lot of 6 cm x 7 cm and larger negatives. That is where the new scanner comes in. Using the transparency adapter displayed in the photo above, I can scan these negatives at 1200 dpi (I don't know why HP keeps going back and forth between dpi and ppi in their specifications). It would be nice to be able to scan them at 2400 dpi, but since they are so large, the 1200 dpi scan of one of them contains more information than would a 2400 dpi scan of a 35 mm negative of the same subject.

But what about a comparison of using the PhotoSmart photographic scanner versus the 5370C with transparency adapter for either 35 mm slides or negatives? I did the comparison, and the PhotoSmart scanner is superior. I assume for the simple reason that scanning at 2400 dpi will give sharper results than will scanning at 1200 dpi. The color balance also seemed better

with the HP PhotoSmart scanner.

But for an all in one scanner, I think the HP 5370 Cse is a real good buy. You get 1200 dpi flatbed scanning for documents and photos with the addition of respectable—although not top notch—scanning of slides and negatives. I think, however, that the average individual will be quite content with the quality of the negative and slide scans that it produces.

The HP 5370 also provides for one button scanning by allowing you to scan by simply pressing one of four buttons on the front of the scanner. There is a button to scan directly to your email program, your printer, your fax program or to your scanning software. A warning, though: If you are installing the scanner on a Windows Me computer, you will need to go to the HP site and download a small patch to make the buttons work.

Personally, I prefer to scan from the HP ScanJet software. And if you are going to use the transparency adapter you will have to use the software. Additional features include the ability to scan a document to text, which means that the HP software contains an optical character recognition (OCR) module. If the document is of good quality, like a page printed by a laser printer, then I found the text was recognized fairly well but not as well as by my standalone OCR program TextBridge Pro. However, for a small amount of OCR work on good quality documents, the included option should be sufficient. I acquired the article from the 1989 Bits of Blue reproduced in this issue using Text capture of the 5370 scanner.

The scanner costs $300 at the local CompUSA store, and for an additional $200 list you can get an automatic document feeder. The scanner can be connected to the computer with either a parallel printer port connection or by a USB connection. I like the USB connection. Additionally with the USB connection it should be easy to move the scanner between different computers.

In addition to the HP PrecisionScan Pro software, you also get

- Corel Print Office 2000
- Boomerang Internet Design Shop Gold
- eFax Messenger Plus
- Caere PageKeeper Standard

New Optical Mouse

By Tim Condon, Tampa PC Users Group
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Okay, I have to admit it: My main home computer sits in a Very Dirty Room. Sure, I've got a way-cool cable Internet connection. And I'm thinking of adding a home local area network so the rest of us can log on to the Internet with our laptops. But guess who shares the room, our sun room out back, with the computer? Buddy, our 5-year-old Corgi. And, what's worse, he's got his own doggie-door so he can go out, roll in the dirt, bark at the squirrels, roll in the dirt some more, and then come back in and roll around on the furniture to get rid of all that dirt. Not to mention shedding, shedding, shedding from his thick doggie fur coat.

All of which has no doubt got you wondering…what does all this have to do with computers, software, and the TPCUG Newsletter? Good question, and here's the answer. Think one word: Computer mouse. Then think two words: Little rolling ball. Then let's make a stretch and think **three** words: Try cleaning that thing!

Yes, this article, such as it is, is all about my new computer mouse. Specifically, my new computer mouse with "no moving parts." You know those little spinning rods and that little Teflon roller inside your mouse? The ones that get "coated" (heh) with dog hair, dust motes, little pieces of string, and JPD ("just plain dirt")? Well if you think **you** have periodic problems cleaning the things…think of what kind of problem I have, sharing that room with Buddy!

So…let's look for a solution. A trackball! **Not!** Why? Because the way those things work, using your **thumb** instead of your **wrist**, and then trying to twiddle your fingers this way and that while spinning that ball with your thumb…is just plain **perverse**, if not awfully confusing (it is to me, at least, but then it may be that I'm just not all that well coordinated).

So what to do. Over the last few years I've always wondered why they couldn't take that great trackball-optical-thingie-with-no-moving-parts technology, and apply it to a good old-fashioned, normal mouse, one that slides around on a mouse pad and works the way the almighty intended it to…only with no moving parts.

Well, **viola** (not "voila," we're in America now). What do my wondering, wandering eyes see during an entertainment outing last week at CompUSA? Why, none other than a Kensington Mouse-in-a-Box Optical Pro with no mouseball, and no moving parts to clean. Say Halleujah! Not only that, but the furry little sucker was only $20. Well, hell; I said to myself right then and there: "Self, for that amount I'll take a flyer and see

if it really works as advertised."

It's a pretty little thing. Butttons all over. And no big ball rolling and grinding around on the bottom. Actually, it's true like they say, "no moving parts." Got a pretty red light coming out of the bottom, aka an optical laser. And to make it more stylish, the same pretty red laser light comes out of the back on top of the mouse too, so you can roll it around and see the red light moving around in the dark (at least that's what I figure they had in mind).

Now, the propaganda that comes with the mouse says that it "will glide easily over almost any surface." I tried that out on a table-top with no mouse pad. And it's true, it did "glide easily." However, the pointer on the computer screen didn't glide so easily around on the monitor. No problemo. Just stick with a mouse pad, and all is/was well.

And if you're in to cheap entertainment, you can spend some time gazing into the innards of the Optical Pro mouse, because the bottom of the thing is translucent plastic. As Kensington says in the instructions: "Take another look: you can see right into the mouse interior through the cool blue translucent bottom." Oooookay…if they say so. Fact is, it works perfectly, and I haven't had a speck of trouble from it in the, oh, two weeks I've been using it. Also, getting set up is nothing: The Kensington MouseWorks software that comes with the thing installs off of either a CD-ROM or a 3 ½ inch floppy (both are supplied) in a snap.

One other thing, however. While I do believe that optical mice are going to totally wipe out the old roller-ball things, I don't unreservedly recommend this particular mouse. Kensington is to be congratulated for being the firstest and cheapest with the mostest. However, there are other optical mice out there (go look, you'll see 'em); the problem is that they're more expensive, starting out at $30 or $35 or more, and heading north.

So why not just stick with Kensington? I probably will, but you need to know about a small irritation: The mouse has a thumb-button on the left side, and a button over on the right side that I guess you're supposed to stab at with your right ring-finger, along with the regular two mouse buttons on the top bracketing a scroll wheel. The problem is that button over on the right. I'm used to picking the mouse up and moving it because of limited desk space. You know, to get the cursor to go here or there on the screen. The problem on the Kensington is that I keep accidentally hitting those side buttons as I

(Mouse………Continued from page 4)

grasp and pick the mouse up to move it. Irritation, yes. Disqualifying? Not at all. I'll keep it.

So for those of you who want to stop wrestling periodically with those little spinning rods and that big ball on the bottom of your mouses…it's time to Go Optical. Check out the Kensington Mouse-in-a-Box Optical Pro.

For only $20 you can't beat it with a stick. Why you'd **want** to hit it with a stick is beyond me. Heck, I can see beating the old **roller-ball** mouses with a stick, they get so gummed and messed up inside. But the Opti Pro? **Not!** Try it! You may like it! And if not…you can feed it to the cat.

http://www.kensington.com/   ◆

(Scanner………Continued from page 3)

• Hemera Graphics Desk for HP

I installed none of these since I already have high level graphics and OCR software. ◆

Internet picture of the month

Fifth Ave. & 45th Street, NYC 12/30/2000

This photo from the site http://www.mte.com/webcam/ is from a webcam looking north on Fifth Avenue from 45th Street in Manhattan. When this was taken, approximately 12 inches of snow had fallen. Webcams are a great way to view the current weather situation in different parts of the world.

January's Interesting World Wide Web Locations

Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Digital Cameras Digital Photography Review News	http://www.dpreview.com/
BedandBreakfast.com - Bed and Breakfasts and Inns	http://www.bedandbreakfast.com/
JetBlue – between Florida and the North East	http://www.jetblue.com/
NOAA Photo Library	http://www.photolib.noaa.gov/
HarpWeek.com - 19th Century Harper's Weekly	http://www.harpweek.com/default.htm
Journal E - Real Stories From Planet Earth	http://www.journale.com/
Motherboard Home World	http://www.motherboards.org/
PC Mechanic	http://www.pcmech.com/
Monticello - The Home of Thomas Jefferson	http://www.monticello.org/

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.

Maxtor DiamondMax™ ATA/100 Hard Drive — As good as it gets

By Fredrick Rea O'Keefe
fredrick@tech-center.com

UP FRONT SUMMARY:

- Product – DiamondMax™ Plus 45 GB hard drive kit, Model #54610H6
- Manufacturer – Maxtor®
- Website: http://www.maxtor.com/Maxtorhome.htm
- Class – Hardware, part
- PC requirements – Available PCI slot, Ultra-DMA capable system, Pentium-class processor. MaxBlast™ Plus software comes on 1 diskette. If HD capacity is < 32 GB, requires a full installation of Windows 95 or higher; >32 GB requires full installation of Windows 98 or higher.
- Cable Requirements: An 80-Wire UDMA Interface Cable is required for all UDMA/100 & UDMA/66 hard drives. (Recommended for UDMA/33, too.) Cable comes with both the drive and the card.
- Used with Maxtor Ultra ATA/100 PCI Adapter Card for UDMA 100/66/33 devices.
- Street price – varies, if you can find it in stock. I paid $180 at Staples, $50 for the card.
- Rating (0-10) - 10

Recommendation – This makes a big difference in performance and the price is most reasonable – if you need a hard drive and your PC meets the requirements, a lesser drive would not be the thrifty choice..

 KEY FEATURES:

- Fast ATA/Enhanced IDE compatible
- Digital Signal Processor (DSP)-Based Architecture
- Ultra ATA/100 Data Transfer Rate
- 2 MB SDRAM Cache Buffer
- 7200 RPM
- DualWave™ twin processors
- <8.7 ms average seek time
- Up to 100 MB/sec data flow rate

(To skip the verbiage, jump to the table at the end.)

All right, that kind of detail appeals to techies. It even appeals to me, when comparing products into which to sink my hard-earned dollars. 45 GB in a 3 ½", 1.3 lb. package. Remarkable how technology developed by hard drive manufacturers packs more, more reliably, into ever smaller packages. Happily, the marriage of Maxtor and Quantum has brought the fastest drives to market at a reasonable price. I am impressed with the performance.

Usually I review books and software, so why hardware? Despite partitioning my old hard drive, using Microsoft's DriveSpace 3 compression, I ran out of room. Believe me, you don't want to run short of hard drive space. When Windows doesn't have enough resources, including room for data, temp files and swap space, disaster awaits.

My ordeal began when Windows 98 Explorer got bollixed up. Windows refused to boot, and Windows wouldn't reinstall. DOS was useless, although I did manage to delete enough files to give me back enough room on the HD to supposedly be able to reinstall Win98. Nope. After several attempts to repair or re-load, the SR-1 upgrade CDs refused to try again. (Why did I donate my original Windows software?) None of my local suppliers had or could get the Maxtor ULTRA ATA/100 drives. Mail order vendors either never heard of them, or couldn't get them. Maxtor's regional rep couldn't help other than to suggest that the drives weren't released yet, but "try Tech Data". No luck.

My aggravation and lost time depleted my patience. Off to the new, nearby Staples. They didn't have the hard drives in stock or in their catalog, and couldn't help, even through their regional Staples Direct® sales rep. But, the store had Windows ME ($180 full version) and Norton SystemWorks™ 2001. (Seems that Windows 98 is an antique, no longer stocked.) Hating to shell out the money, I was in need. How could I function without the damned computer?! So, maybe a miracle could occur.

Forget it. Regardless of DOS-deleting much more data and programs from the HD, WinME refused to recognize that there was valid Windows somewhere, somehow on the old drive. Nor could I free up quite enough space for an install. The old Windows was causing problems. Time to buy some kind of hard drive to get me through. Back to Staples – convenience was the goal. I was getting worn down.

At the sales counter, what did my eyes focus on? Eureka!!! Both the Maxtor hard drive of my dreams, and the PCI adapter card to go with it! Perhaps I had paid enough for my sins? $180 for the hard drive kit, complete with software and the required 80-wire UDMA cable, and $50 for the Ultra ATA/100 adapter card. Paying, with relief, despite the sales people having their own involved and lengthy PC/cash register problems, I rushed home (never exceeding the speed limit, naturally). I knew my troubles (might be) were over.

My fine, 5 year old ASUS mother board supports a PCI Bus Master EIDE controller with PIO Mode 3 & 4, and DMA Mode 2, with an Award BIOS (Does that sound promising? What the heck – at this point, it's gonna work or I'll have a new PC!).

Installing the drive and the controller was very easy. My PC has a full tower case. I decided to set the old drive as the slave on the new controller, and for once there was enough cable length

for attaching readily to both drives. What could I lose?

A delay - back on the road to buy a "Y" connector for the power leads. (I am now well known at Staples. In this case, familiarity bred contentment.)

Now I was ready to finish the mechanical part of the installation. But here I had a "confusement." The HD instructions say to install the controller software first. Unfortunately, the controller's instructions indicate installing the hard drive software first. The latter "automatically" (I know you've heard that before) formats the HD and gets it ready for recognition. I chose trying the HD software first. A few choices to configure the system, including drive recognition (perfect), which drives were to be assigned as master and slave, and how to partition the Maxtor were clearly presented. (I didn't need Windows for this.) The software ran so fast that I thought nothing useful had happened. A lengthy scrubbing, partitioning and formatting of the drive were what I expected, as always in the past. I twiddled around a bit, but was left wondering. At least the software offered to transfer any or all data from the old drive to the new one. Great – everything went except the compressed partition data.

So, the card software was next. Again, fast setup seemed too speedy and effortless. Nothing works that well for me. Apparently the drive was preformatted, and because I accepted the recommended FAT 32, single 46 GB partition, little needed do-

ing. Wondrous, as I later discovered.

Straight away, the real test – would Windows ME install? Would my data be recoverable on the slave drive?

Windows installed effortlessly, recognizing all the attached hardware. However, a message let me know the bad news. Something like, "It appears you have a compressed partition - Drive D. Tough luck, WME doesn't support or recognize Drive-Space compression." Searching the CD shows a DriveSpace.exe program, but that works only for floppy diskettes. Drat! Nowhere on the Internet or on the old Win98 CDs could I find DriveSpace. (After a couple of days, I decided to jettison all the data not already backed up, and FDISKed D:. Anything not on the back up tape is tough luck for me, legal records and all.). Enough with frustration.

I lost all of the data in the compressed partition, and much of my Outlook/Outlook Express data, and the Address Book got scrambled. But I am in operation again, and satisfied, even delighted with the new hardware. Here's why.

Comparing the performance of the original Western Digital Caviar™ 32500 2.5 GB HD, plugged into the motherboard controller, with the same drive plugged into the ATA/100 controller, versus the new Maxtor HD on the ATA/100 controller shows these results from SpinRite 5 benchmarking: (7.542 microsecond. is the measured system overhead)

Test	WD direct to motherboard	WD through Maxtor® card	% improvement	Maxtor HD & card	% improvement
random sector access (msec)	17.678	18.079	−2.27	12.412	29.79
sector velocity (MB/sec)	41,068	40,157	−2.22	989,223	2,308.74
burst tx rate (b/sec)	714,418	9,952,183	1,293.05	12,613,525	1,665.57
sustained tx rate (b/sec)	2,203,056	7,333,709	322.89	30,675,957	1,292.43

Burst transfer rate measures transfer of data already in the HD buffer out to the system. This is the maximum rate that data can flow from the HD buffer.

Sustained transfer rate measures transfer of data from the disk surfaces through the buffer out to the system. This is the maximum rate that data can flow from the physical platters.

Summary: This super quiet HD with the ATA/100 card shows an easily observable increase in throughput (i.e., a much shorter time for accessing data). Hard drive operations which previously took a minute or so now take less than 5 seconds. Nowadays, the big slow down on my machine is the motherboard and the bus. The 200 MHz Pentium® II is holding me back!

As ever, wishing you safe and enjoyable computing. Rick O'Keefe ◆

Canon Power Shot G1 Digital Camera — A Second Opinion

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

Last month TPCUG member Wade Herman wrote about his new Canon G1 digital camera. He had a lot of nice things to say and only a few small items that he wished Canon had included but didn't. The main thing he would have liked would be more zoom in the zoom lens. The G1 has an optical 3 power zoom.

Now that we have a G1 in our family, I, too, would like a larger zoom ratio. I would also like to be able to focus closer in macro mode for better close up photography—but perhaps we are asking too much of one lens and should be happy with the quite good quality of photos produced by this camera.

I can thank my wife for the camera, since after reading Wade's article she suggested that instead of separate gifts we get the G1 for both of us. I certainly couldn't turn down an offer like that. Wade brought his camera over, and I tried out about 20 shots with it, he downloaded them to his computer and sent them to me via email (for which a cable modem is handy). Using a setting of medium resolution and medium quality compression, the images were quite good. So then it was only a matter of how to get the camera before Christmas.

With less than a week to go, since Amazon is supposed to give us 5% on orders through the TPCUG web site, I checked Amazon and they had the camera for $900 (a bit less than when Wade bought his from a camera store), shipping in 2 to 3 days. Since the camera comes with only a 16 MB compact flash memory card, we also ordered a 48 MB memory card at the good price of $93. Then the wait began. The flash memory came in two days, but the Amazon site kept saying the camera was in stock and usually ships in 2 – 3 days. It finally did ship and arrived the Friday before Christmas. The only let down was that Amazon restricts its "commissions" on orders to a maximum of $10 except on books. So the TPCUG

Horse at Three D Farm in Riverview, Florida

got $10 for the camera instead of the expected $45.

Of course, the camera couldn't be opened until Christmas. Since then we have taken over 160 photos in five days. As Wade pointed out, one advantage of a digital camera is that you can simply delete the photos that you don't like. At present I have deleted 70 of the 160 and will undoubtedly delete many more.

**Panorama stitched together using PhotoStitch from five photos
shot using the G1's stitch assist mode**

(Canon G1……….Continued from page 8)

Now a word about the photos accompanying this article. The horse and holiday lights were taken at an image resolution of 2048 x 1536 pixels and saved as JPEG files with what Canon calls fine compression (In descending order there is RAW, i. e., no compression, superfine, fine and normal compression). The rabbit was taken at a resolution of 1024 x 768 and saved with fine compression. The panorama was taken at 2048 x 1563 resolution and saved with super fine compression. All except the holiday lights were taken in the auto mode, with the horse photo using the built in flash.

The holiday lights were taken in manual mode with an ISO setting of 100 (think film speed), a shutter speed of 1.6 seconds and an aperture of 3.5. All of this information and more being available to you when you view a photo in the Canon supplied ZoomBrowser EX. This camera is particularly handy for available light photos, since you can immediately see your potential shot in the LCD display and adjust the exposure time until you get the results you want. And then if you do take several shots at different exposures, you can discard the unwanted shots. I found an exposure time of from one second to 2.5 seconds with the ISO setting of 100 provided the exposure I wanted. Of course, a tripod was used for the nighttime shots.

I am particularly intrigued by the camera's ability when coupled with the supplied PhotoStitch software to make quite good panoramic photographs. If you carefully overlap your separate shots about 30%, then the PhotoStitch program does a fairly good job of automatically merging them into the panorama. However, for the best results you should use the manual align mode of the program, which is the method I employed for the backyard panorama. I used a tripod to do this

Holiday lights on S Boulevard, Tampa

panoramic shot. That is the reason for the uneven top and bottom borders—what should be a curved image is being projected onto a flat page. I could have cropped the final image, but I prefer to show more of the combined images.

In addition to the PhotoStitch software for making panoramic photos and the ZoomBrowser software that allows you to view the photos while they are in the camera, download them to computer, then organize and view them in the computer, Adobe PhotoShop LE is also supplied. Since I already have PhotoShop I didn't install this and can't detail the capabilities of the program.

The photos accompanying this article were brought into PhotoShop and reduced to a 1024 x 768 pixel size, then they were saved as JPEG images at what Adobe calls a level 3 (medium) quality file on a scale of 0 – 10. When I publish the HTML version of this newsletter at the TPCUG web site I will probably reduce the files even further to facilitate downloading. As an example of compression, the holiday lights 2048 x 1536 JPEG image as saved by the camera was 1,334 KB, which PhotoShop claims is equivalent to a 9 MB uncompressed file. But after reducing it to 1024 x 768 and saving it with level 3 compression, the resulting JPEG is only 162 KB This is possibly still a bit large for an image on an Internet page, and I will probably reduce it further for the HTML version of the article.

And that brings me to suggest that you go to http://www. tpcug.org and check out this article in the HTML version of the newsletter to be posted there. That way you will be able to better judge the camera's capabilities by viewing the photos in color.

For an excellent review of the camera with probably more de-

When viewed in color, this bunny look as if he needs a little red eye reduction, but what you see is his natural eye color

Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG

This SIG meets the first Monday of the month at the Gateway 2000 Store on North Dale Mabry (just south of Columbus Drive) at 6:30 PM. For information contact either William LaMartin at *lamartin@tampabay.rr.com* or Merle Nicholson at *merlenic@tampabay.rr.com.*

Genealogy SIG

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

Visual Basic for Applications SIG

This SIG meets the third Tuesday of the month, at the Gateway 2000 Store on North Dale Mabry at 6:30 PM. For information, *contact Merle Nicholson at merlenic@tampabay.rr.com.*

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting at MOSI and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Mary Sheridan moderates the discussion.

A Look Back In Time
From the September 1989 Bits of Blue

President's Podium

By Harvey Bruneau, President

EARLY RELEASE. WHO WINS.

Ever wonder why some companies seem to announce a product shipping date before it's completed. Generally it's to stay ahead or even with their competition. Whether it's hardware or software these vendors are hoping that their announcement will make you reconsider or postpone a decision to leave their product or purchase another vendor's similar product. This is called the freeze factor. They are betting that you will purchase their product sight unseen. Ever buy a house that way? Did you pick your spouse or significant other with a blindfold on? I didn't think so.

Software vendors are notorious for asking you to send in your upgrade money or purchase their current product now in order that you may be among the first to receive the new product when it ships. JUST SAY NO. Ask a dBase IV purchaser if he got his money's worth either by upgrading or 1st time purchase.

Many of the big boys COMPAQ, IBM, WORDPERFECT, MICROSOFT , LOTUS, BORLAND, ASHTON- TATE, FOX, 3COM and NOVELL, to mention a few, play the game. Unfortunately bigger does not mean better. For instance, ASHTON-TATE decided to ship a bug infested incomplete dBase IV 1.0 after missing more than one delivery date. This early product release has allowed ASHTON-TATE competitors to be winners at the expense of users. Of course now that word-of-mouth has gotten around, ASHTON-TATE is in deep trouble. A $19 million loss and over 200 employees terminated with no better outlook on the horizon.

WORDPERFECT has been dominant in word-processing for some time. MICROSOFT, in order to keep up, released its answer, WORD 5.0, in hope of surpassing WORDPERFECT. While WORD has some nice new features, the product has glitches. It has problems converting documents from the previous release of WORD. There are other problems related to hardware which have also surfaced. Once again the winner is the competition and the loser is the user. These bugs aren't as serious as ASHTON-TATE's but the product shouldn't have been released until corrected.

LOTUS did the right thing. Although around two years late and a loss in market share, Lotus 3.0 has hit the streets with favorable reviews. The jury is still out, but so far it looks like a good clean product. Users and LOTUS win.

There are many more stories like the ones above. The point is that the user generally gets the short end of the stick on early released products. The Japanese are getting more involved in software and hardware development. If our current vendors don't get their act together they could go the way of the American automobile industry by the year 2000. ◆

Friends of the User Group

We acknowledge the following firms for their support

Museum of Science and Industry
Gateway 2000
BAE
Marshall & Stevens

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

Adobe Systems	Microsoft
CompUSA	Office Depot
Corel Systems	PowerQuest
Imprise/Borland	RDI, Inc.
Intuit	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
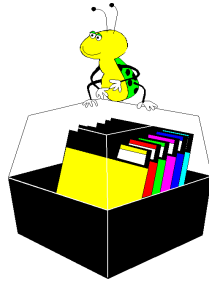
MEMBERS' HELP LINE

Program	Code
Adobe Acrobat	AA
AOL	AOL
Computer general	CG
Delphi	DE
DOS	DOS
Family Tree Maker	FTM
Hardware general	HG
Hardware Modem	HM
Hardware Printer	HP
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
Windows 3.1	W3
Windows 95/98	W95/98
Windows NT	WNT
WordPerfect	WP

Name	Time	Phone	Codes
Cheryl Alexander	10:00am - 9:00pm M - F	914-0008	HTM, PSP, WP
Larry Anders	Mon - Sun 6:00pm - 10:00pm	989-9119	AOL, ME, MW, FP, PSP
Warren Fuss	10am - 9:30pm	949-6844	CG, WNT, N
Bob LaFave	8:00pm-10:00pm	960-0208	W95/W98, MOS
William LaMartin	Mon - Fri 9:00am - 9:00pm	251-3817	AA, FTM, IG, MOS, MP, VB, W95
Merle Nicholson	Mon - Fri 7:30pm - 9:30pm; weekends	879-3602	CG, DE, DOS, HG, HM, HP, VB
Jenny Lind Olin	Mon - Sun 8:00am - 10:00pm	960-5723	ME, MW, PAF, Q, WP
Don Patzsch		689-8662	CG
Mary Sheridan	9:30am - 9:00pm	988-6480	AOL, CG, DOS, HG, IG, MW, Q, W95, W98

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

☐ Member: Your membership is up for renewal
☐ Vendor: Your product was reviewed on page ___

(Canon G1……….Continued from page 9)
tail than you can absorb, go to the site
http://www.dpreview.com/. It is an excellent source of infor-
mation on digital imaging. ◆

E Fletcher Ave

USF

E Fowler Ave

I - 275

Parking

50th St

Meeting site: MOSI
4801 E Fowler
Main Entrance

To Tampa

N

The map is **not** to scale