Bits of Blue

August in Tampa

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

Meeting

Protecting your Computer

**Wednesday, August 14, 2002
6:30 PM
Art Pepin Hospitality Room
Pepin Distributing Co.
6401 N 54th St
Tampa, Florida**

Meeting Preview:

Edgar Duarte will discuss the relationship of your computer to the world…what is in your computer, hardware and software and how it interrelates to the Internet. He will discuss firewalls and how firewalls work and interact with those attempting to get into your system. He will interpret the blocked messages that your firewall reports to you. He will demonstrate zone alarm while connected to the Internet. He will discuss how users around the world come into your computer and use your home or office computer as a staging area for their own manipulative gains.

President, Kevan Sheridan

Edgar is a retired electronics engineer from the federal government. He has an interest in two companies that assist large companies in setting up and maintaining their systems.

As usual, we will have our Windows/computer discussion for the first half hour of the meeting. ◆

September Meeting Topic: To be announced

apcug Member of
The Association of
Personal Computer User Groups

Minutes of the July Meeting

Craig German

Following our usual announcements and Windows/ computer question and answer period, Craig German of AgeSpan, http://www.agespan.com/, gave us a presentation on AgeSpan's various programs and services for seniors.

These services include a web site with information geared to seniors, a computer with optional touch-screen monitor and special keyboard with oversized letters, and their own dial-up Internet service provider. The latter, according to Craig, uses the Internet business backbone instead of the usual Internet backbone, the result being fewer hops to get to your Internet destination, hence faster service.

Craig was an enthusiastic and polished speaker, and we thank him for his excellent presentation. ◆

Jasc® After Shot™ Premium Edition

By Larry Anders, Librarian,
Tampa PC Users Group
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Well, here I am on vacation at beautiful Indian Rocks Beach, Florida, looking out the window of our condo at an outbreak of red tide… so what better time to take a few minutes from my vacation and tell you about my latest find on the Internet, just free for the download.

Although I am a native Floridian and wouldn't trade our fine state for any other state in the Union, I am not much of a beach-sitting, sun-worshiper. While my wife bakes to a golden-brown medium-rare, I usually bring along my notebook and a couple of programs to test out on the trusty old notebook. I do love to walk along the beach at sunset as the Gulf of Mexico swallows up that big orange ball and click away with my digital camera. A few years back one of the photos actually ended up on the front of our Christmas card. I know that may sound a little strange but if you received one of the cards you'll understand; if not, I took one of the more beautiful sunset shots, and using Jasc's Paint Shop Pro, added a string of colorful beads around the sunset scene, and that became the cover of our Christmas card for that year.

Using that as a segue, just before leaving on vacation this year, I visited http://www.jasc.com to see what, if anything, was new since my last visit and found their latest offering in the view-download-organize-manipulate your digital images world called **After Shot™ Premium Edition**. I figured if it was half as good as Paint Shop Pro has always been, then it would be worth my time to look at it.

System requirements are pretty standard: A Windows-based system using Windows 98 or higher, 64MB of RAM, 60MB of free hard disk space, CDROM drive, etc. Also needed for certain features of the program are QuickTime, Internet Explorer and Adobe Acrobat Reader. They also suggest that your video display be set to True Color (24-bit) so you can view digital images with photographic image quality.

Installation was straightforward as any other Windows-based program except that After Shot "investigates" your system configuration and automatically makes recommendations for installation of additional software, if needed, like the programs mentioned in the previous paragraph.

I suggest the first thing you do is run the After Shot Tour to familiarize yourself with all the features and also check out the tutorials included. When After Shot is started, it opens on the Browse Tab that looks very similar to Windows Explorer with the folders, or directory tree, on the left side and thumbnail views of images on the right. On the left side are four tabs, *Browse, Info, Keywords* and *Search*. From the Browse tab you can create new albums or open existing ones by browsing to the location where the images are stored. While viewing an album you can sort the images in any number of ways, such as name, date, size and type. You can also rename a single image or a batch of images. Double-clicking on any thumbnail opens the image and switches to the Info tab, which gives you image information and camera settings (EXIF data). Although not required, the Info tab allows you to enter image specific titles and descriptions, which can be useful when used by other features of After Shot, like Slide Show and Print and Web Layout tools.

If you take the time to enter information about your images using the Info and Keyword tabs, it sure makes it a lot easier to find what you may be looking for when you click on the Search tab. You can set search criteria such as Image Title, Image Description, Album Title, Album Description, Filename and Album Name.

Jasc divides After Shot into five groups of tools:

Organizational tools – which I discussed above
Acquisition tools – *twain, digital camera* and *card reader support*
Photo Editing tools – *crop, Quick-Fix* (adjust colors, contrast and brightness automatically), *batch*

(After Shot………Continued from page 3)

process (Quick-Fix: rotate, rename and resize all your pictures with one click of the mouse), *individual image adjustment* (adjust the contrast/brightness, color, hue/saturation, sharpness and equalization of your pictures one at a time) and *quick red-eye removal*.

Sharing tools – *on-line print services* (Shutterfly.com), *print templates* (over 40 easy-to-use print templates, including standard photo sizes like 4x6, 8x10, etc.), *Web* (create web photo albums and you can upload your pages to the Web right from After Shot), *Movies* (instantly turn a series of pictures into a movie that you can save in .MOV format to share with family, friends or business associates. Requires QuickTime to play and view. You can also load, play and add effects to AVI or QuickTime movies.) and *computer screensavers and wallpaper* (use your own digital photos for your computer wallpaper or as a screensaver).

Cool tools – *slide shows* (create slide shows using individually selected photos or entire albums), panoramic views (create panoramas by stitching several photos together), *text* and *sound* (add a soundtrack or captions to your photos, narrate photos, record greetings or write your own captions with After Shot's annotation features).

I've only touched the surface of the ability of After Shot, because **after all, I am on vacation!** But it didn't take long to realize this program is a keeper. Jasc has produced outstanding software in the past and continues to do so with **After Shot™ Premium Edition**. You can download a complete uncrippled trial-version that is good for 30 days from the Jasc site, which should be more than enough time for you to put it through its paces. To keep using the downloaded version after the trial period it will cost you $45, or you can get it in a box for $49. If you already have a collection of digital images, or have a digital camera and are looking for an easy way to get the photos off the camera and into an album to organize, edit and share, then this program is for you. Try it. I think you'll like it. Thanks Jasc, for another fine program! ◆

Death of a Hard Drive

By William LaMartin, Editor,
Tampa PC Users Group
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Of all the computers I have owned, I have never had a hard drive go bad on one until a few days back. Fortunately, it was on a computer that I really don't use for much anymore.

The Story I was looking for the most recent version of a Visual Basic program I had written two to three years ago. I had an installed version of the program that said it was version 1.3.3, but version 1.3.2 was the highest version I could find in my VB projects. All of these older VB projects had been created on a Pentium 166 computer bought around 1996, I think. That computer had been retired to a back room last year when I added a Gateway 1.8 GHz Pentium 4 as my main computer to a Compaq 333 and an IBM Think-Pad used as secondary machines.

At that time, I had, I thought, copied all data files from the old Gateway 166 and the Compaq to the new Gateway. So I didn't really need the old Gateway 166. But it did have installed a collection of older programs that I chose not to transfer to the new Gateway or the Compaq. Programs like WinFaxPro, Corel Draw, Corel Photo-Paint, Micrografx Graphics Suite, Delrina PerForm, Visual Basic 4 (an older 16 bit version). And it did have my first CD Burner and my first scanner—an HP IIcx (original price, $1,000!). So the old computer could have its uses: scanning legal sized documents, which the newer flat bed scanner ($400) could not do, or using Corel Draw to export Draw documents as Adobe Illustrator documents. The same for exporting Corel Photo-Paint files as Tiff's or some other graphic format.

Well, I now needed to check the old computer to see if I could find the VB project. So I stretched network cable to it and turned it on. During the boot it produced a message to the effect that there was a problem with some file names or something on one of the drives. So I rebooted, thinking it was just a one time problem. The next time I was informed that Scandisk, which wanted to run because of an improper shut-

(Death……….Continued from page 4)

down, could not run since it could not read some data on drive F. Well, I just opted out of that and moved on and finally got the computer booted to the desktop. But I could tell that things were not running properly. The computer's reactions were real slow. So I ran Scandisk again on the F drive with similar results.

Time for SpinRite. Recall that SpinRite is supposedly like Scandisk on steroids. I booted from the SpinRite floppy and ran the program to check the F drive. It told me that it found four bad clusters and then proceeded to do its thing. Unfortunately, its thing didn't get very far, and it said that it couldn't proceed. So much for SpinRite.

Now drive F is actually on the secondary hard drive in that computer. The main hard drive is partitioned as drives C & E; the secondary drive as drives D, F & G. Logical drives D & G seemed OK, and, of course, the operating system was on the other hard drive entirely. So I still had a computer, but a lot of the programs were installed on drive F.

The more I tried Scandisk on drive F, the worse things got. When I started, I think (unfortunately, I didn't take notes) I could access parts of F with Win-

Internet Picture of the Month
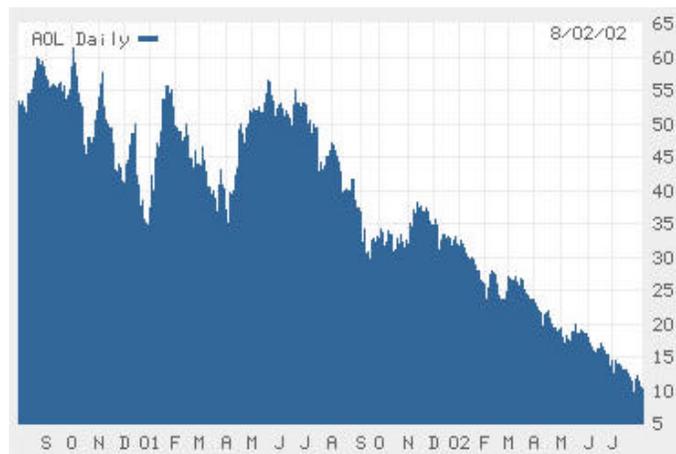
AOL's Decline
From
http://online.wsj.com

As a reminder of the Internet bubble collapse, we have the stock price of AOL over the past 24 months. AOL now consists of the former AOL Internet service and TimeWarner, which were merged January 11, 2001.

At the time, Time Warner executives were ecstatic. Ted Turner compared the deal to the joy he experienced when he lost his virginity. I bet he now wishes he had his AOL virginity back.

August's Interesting World Wide Web Locations

Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Florida, Real Estate and Economic Data	http://www.florida-business-data.com/
Conway's Game of Life	http://www.ibiblio.org/lifepatterns/
Dynamic Family Tree	http://www.dftcom2.co.uk/
Tampa News Network	http://www.tampanewsnetwork.com
Florida Cemetery Records	http://www.idreamof.com/cemetery/fl.html
U.S. Universities, by State	http://www.utexas.edu/world/univ/state
Make your own network cable	http://www.pcnineoneone.com/howto/cat5diy1.html
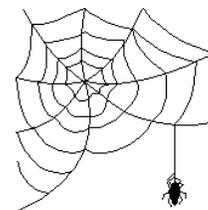
Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our web site, where you need only click on the name.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor,
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Is the Internet losing its grip? Last month I mentioned I had checked an account with Google for their AdWords advertising campaign and it showed I owed $60,182,653.00—a bit above my $5/day limit. When informed, they responded that it was just a technical error and would be corrected.

This month I have experienced problems with online orders from Gateway and Amazon—again technical problems.

The **Gateway** problem was simply that an order I placed for a replacement keyboard for my new computer (spacebar not working properly) apparently never got placed. After waiting a week, I called them and got a person within one minute. Unfortunately, it took that person and two other people almost an hour to get the keyboard on its way again. My impression is that the people I have dealt with at Gateway over the phone in the past were considerably more efficient than this last group. But my email tells me that a new keyboard is on the way. However, email is not always a true indicator of your order status as my Amazon story indicates.

Amazon.com gives our group a referral few of 15% for books ordered through the link at our site. But on software or electronic items that can have a high price, the fee tops out at $10. Anyway, if I want something that Amazon has and their price is as good as any other reputable (not all online merchants have a good record) seller, then I order from Amazon, except that I purchase most non-technical books from a local bookstore.

I had been looking to upgrade Microsoft Visual Studio to Visual Studio .Net—a $549 item. When I was about ready to buy, I noted that Amazon was selling it for $465, as good a price as I had seen, so it was time to order. And the user group would get $10. Additionally, Microsoft was offering a $300 mail-in rebate for orders placed before September. So the net price

was pretty good (I paid $400 with no rebate for the upgrade to Borland's Delphi). Further, on such a large order I was to get free shipping if I didn't mind a few extra days for delivery. That is where I made my mistake.

After placing the order, I would check its status at Amazon every few days. Nothing happened for the first few days, then a message that the order was being prepared for shipping and could not be changed appeared. That stayed there for five days until I lost patience and sent an email to Amazon—and to my surprise received a very quick response that I should ignore what the web site said. The order had shipped. Two days later I got an email message from Amazon saying that my order was delayed and would not ship for awhile. I promptly copied that and sent it with a reply to the first message I had received. A quick response to that said that, like the web site, there were other parts of Amazon that were confused and that my order had indeed been shipped and I should receive it within six days. One hour later the order was delivered by UPS. The next day I got an email from Amazon saying that my order had been shipped.

Does it sound like the left hand does not know what the right hand is doing at Amazon? Two other times in the last four months I have tried to order items from Amazon that the web site said were supposed to normally ship within 24 hours, but which were, in fact, very much out of stock. One was a programming book, *Windows Script Host Programmer's Reference,* and the other was a digital camera. I had to cancel both orders, since right after ordering, I found out that the item would be delayed a couple of extra days, then a week, then not available until the middle of the next month. That was OK for the book, but not the camera. I finally had to give up on the book too, though, because it apparently really is temporarily out of print. I think Amazon had better get their database people on the ball—or hire a few back that they may have fired in a cost cutting move.

Success Online Now to how the Internet can really help you. For years I have done a little electronic/ electrical work where I need a small butane torch and 3/32 inch, white, heat shrink tubing. For years I had

bought the compressed butane cylinders from Ra-
dioShack and the heat shrink tubing from a local
electronics store, which closed, then from a local
music store, which is now also closed. RadioShack
no longer carries the compressed butane cylinders—
because of lawsuits, it was suggested—and another
local music store said there was no longer much in-
terest by musicians in heat shrink tubing. So, as I
have done so much lately, I turned to Google.

An Internet search produced not only the cylinders,
but also the site of the manufacturer of them and the
torch they went with. Apparently the lawyers have
not yet put them out of business. I also found several
electronic supply sites offering the size and color of
heat shrink tubing I needed. I placed my online or-
ders and had the items within three and five days,
respectively.

Visual Studio Dot Net Professional Earlier I men-
tioned getting VS **.**net. (See the small dot. That is the
way it should be written.) Since Dot Net has been in
the news a good bit lately, perhaps a few comments
are in order. My first comment is that it is going to
take me a year to figure out this new programming
environment that combines C++ **.**net , C# **.**net Visual
Basic **.**net (and as a free download J# **.**net) into one
development package that installs three GB of stuff
on your hard drive. You need Windows NT 4, 2000
or XP Professional as an operating system on the
system where you do the installation.

It is described as a platform for building XML Web
services and applications. I have been going through
the walkthroughs to learn how to do such things us-
ing VB **.**Net as a language. And I can tell you this is
not your father's Visual Basic. But as I have more
time to devote to it, I am sure it will begin to be eas-
ier.

By the way, to run a Windows program created with
it requires that the client computer have the **.**net
framework installed. That is a mere 20 + MB
download from Microsoft. Perhaps it is already in-
cluded in XP. So you can see that this will not im-
mediately replace the regular Visual Basic as a pro-
gramming tool. ◆

Technology Notes

By Don Patzsch, Tampa PC Users Group
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On July 11, 2002 Audio Visual Innovations Univer-
sity 2002 was held at the Saddlebrook Resort in
Wesley Chapel, north of Tampa. This is an elegant
Technology Expo. Free gourmet breakfast and lunch.

I attended the Emerging Technologies presentation in
the Royal Palm West. The presenter had a radio mi-
crophone and a very good projector that was con-
nected only to a 110 volt a.c. outlet.

In the projector is a server. I think it was running
Linux. The projector sends the presenter an email to
show the remaining lamp life and other things. You
may change the input to 16 or 32 bps at the podium
via radio. The program is transmitted to the projector
via radio. No need to go to the projector to check any
connections or adjust any controls.

We were told about the newest RS-232 white boards
and the 132 bit security that changes encryption data
every few seconds. OTC wireless makes the radio
equipment for the projector that was in use. Projector
Pilot is the name of a setup to add radio to a projector
that is older and has none of these functions.

Global Streams' On Q software sends a presentation
anywhere. Large corporations are now using IP te-
lephony over the network. This saves long distance
via phone lines. Gateway Products builds IP telephony
gear.

I picked up perhaps 60 various pieces of literature on
the latest and greatest white boards, projectors (I had
no idea there were so many manufacturers of projec-
tors now), wireless touch panels, multimedia proces-
sors, digital video processors, wireless videoconfer-
encing document stands, etc. It will take weeks of ex-
amination of these brochures before I will be familiar
with all the new equipment available. Perhaps you
will want to attend the show next year. ◆

Looking Back to 1992

From the August 1992 *Bits of Blue*

Secretary's Report

TAMPA IBM USER'S GROUP

MINUTES OF 7/8/92

This meeting proved that we can improvise when we do not have a scheduled vendor presentation. We did it all in-house this time, and it was a very good, interesting and worthwhile meeting - in very large measure due to the effort and talents of Tom Cone, who gave an excellent rundown on GeoWorks Pro, and our SYSOP, Kevan Sheridan, who gave a rundown on the FIDO Net of which our Bits of Blue BBS is now a part. And, there were a large number of members and guests on hand to take advantage of the opportunity. If you weren't there, you missed another good one. If you are not a "regular" at the meetings, a bit of advice -- you really should be, because every meeting is interesting and packed with useful info.

CLUB NEWS:

Harvey opened the meeting noting the "new look" of the newsletter and soliciting views on same. The response was an approving round of applause. Good work, Mary Lee (and helper Harvey).

Harvey also noted that newsletter volume was at a breakpoint - 200 copies for mail distribution. That is the breakpoint for non-profit mail status (which takes time to arrange) and that the logistics of handling the increasing volume is becoming something of a burden for him and the editor to handle by themselves - in addition to their other club obligations. Be prepared for some changes in the not-too-distant future and to make yourself available to help if you can.

Harvey pointed out that non-current addresses cost the club $8, and deny the affected party the newsletter. Please keep your address on record with the club current. When your address changes, send a change of address to the address shown on the front of this newsletter -- PLEASE!

Our Prez summarized a decision taken at the last meeting to end club-financed refreshments at our regular meetings to make funds available for club needs. Later in the meeting we returned to this subject with a different twist. The funds for the refreshments came from 50% of the proceeds of the sale of "raffle" tickets at our meetings. The other 50% of the proceeds have been given away as one of the raffle prizes. The idea of also retaining this 50% to finance club needs (e.g., a new modem, etc.) was offered as a proposal. Discussion and a vote on this were deferred due to the late hour, but will likely be presented again at the next meeting.

Harvey announced that our Education Director, Ed Buzza, would begin a 4-class series on Word Perfect 5.1 for DOS at 5:45 PM -- 45 minutes before our regular meeting on Sept. 9.

The 2nd and subsequent classes will be held at the same time on our regular meeting nights for Oct., Nov. & Dec.

Each class will be 45 minutes long and will dismiss at 6:30 to rejoin the regular meeting in time for any program reviews that may be scheduled.

Four 45 minute classes is not, of course, enough time to cover a sophisticated program like Word Perfect in great depth. But I caution you to not let this be a deterrence to your taking advantage of this opportunity. ED IS GOOD and will cover a lot of ground in a short time - plus, it will be a good opportunity to ask questions.

PROGRAM PRESENTATIONS:

GeoWorks Pro

Our own Tom Cone is an attorney and uses GeoWorks Pro as his "desktop" and he finds it meets his needs very well. Tom decided a rundown of the program at one of our meetings might prove beneficial to others. This meeting was the time - and he gave an excellent rundown of the program, including the following:

It has an environment much like MS Windows, with many of the same kinds of features as Windows. (I believe it is easier to use than Windows.)

One big advantage is that the program will work on an XT. It requires a minimum of 512K RAM (likes 640K), DOS 2.1 or higher, and needs about 7 MB of hard disk space. It will work with just about any monitor, including monochrome and CGA (which gives B&W picture).

Another good benefit is that some users report laser quality print from a 9 dot matrix printer. (I have a 24-pin DM and I do get very good quality out of GeoWorks 1.2, but it is no better than I get from Windows 3.1, Adobe, Powerpak, or Bitstream Facelift, all of which are very good quality.)

The program provides three levels of use: Beginner, Intermediate, and Advanced:

The BEGINNER level is limited to the desktop features: An excellent planner/scheduler, address book, calculator, note pad/text editor, and a solitaire game and a banner maker.

The INTERMEDIATE level provides the forgoing, plus GeoWrite word processor, GeoDraw drawing program, a scrapbook, and immediate access to DOS at all times. Applications are available thru icons for all documents stored on disk. This level of GeoWorks Pro is locked into a document sub-directory of Geos where documents are stored. Each document is represented by an icon on the screen. Double clicking any document icon will load the application that generated the document, with that document loaded into the application. This level makes available a "waste basket" into which you can move files, individual and up to and including entire directories -- a convenient feature of file maintenance. Another nice feature is capability to store additional info about your individual files, including up

to 200+ characters of notes (similar to high end word processors). It also provides the capability to group/ungroup files/objects for manipulation, a formatting capability, and file management.

The ADVANCED level provides all of the above. However, instead of being locked into a document directory, a desktop is used, with all applications represented by icons. The desktop is called Geo Manager and is similar in nature to Windows managers. Applications, other than those mentioned above, which appear on the desktop include:

Geo Com; a nice, flexible communications program; and a realities kind of address book with links to Geo Com and the Planner.

GeoWorks Pro can be bundled with Quattro Pro SE, a scaled down, but still powerful version of Quattro Pro. Quattro Pro SE is not a GeoWorks application, but GeoWorks Pro has been designed to allow importing from Quattro Pro SE spreadsheets whatever info you may require.

GeoWrite is somewhat more powerful than WinWrite in that GeoWrite allows use of columns - up to 4. GeoWrite accepts files only in ASCII or GeoWrite. GeoWrite will import a wide variety of graphics, but it does not wrap text around graphics - you can have no text that is not a part of the graphic on the same lines as the graphic.

Other nice features of Geo Works Pro include: A special viewer that allows looking at prospective cut/paste imports into GeoWorks applications; GeoWorks Pro allows shutting down with applications running and files loaded into those applications; it will be returned to that same configuration at next start-up. Another nice feature is the cost; some at the meeting reported purchasing the program for as little as $59. That is cheap. Thanks, Tom, for a super presentation. I have GeoWorks 1.2 and like the program very well, and GeoWorks Pro is a good improvement over that. The biggest problem I have is that, like Windows, it does not have powerful enough built-in programs -- word processors, DTPs, etc. - to meet my needs. Unlike Windows, however, there are no major applications on the market written for GeoWorks Pro. Hence, you are limited to the internal features of GeoWorks Pro and shelling out to DOS to use other applications.

FIDO Net

Kevan Sheridan, our Bits of Blue BBS SYSOP, gave an excellent rundown of the FIDO Net system that our BBS recently joined. A layman's definition of FIDO Net is "a worldwide message network" that allows the exchange of messages between any subscribing BBS anywhere in the world. At present, there are some 17,000 nodes on the FIDO Net. It is a real bargain for us - costing only $3.50 per month for the 10 ECHOs we have subscribed for:

Desqview	Shareware
Novell	QModem
Windows	ZModem
Virus	OS/2
WordPerfect	Disney

Each ECHO on our BBS is limited to the 500 most recent messages. Thus, there are some 5,000 FIDO Net messages on our BBS at all times. That is a LOT of reading. Hence, you are asked to select Only those conferences (ECHOs) you are most interested in and download for subsequent leisure reading, rather than tie up the BBS reading the messages. It should be noted that the Net is designed for the exchange of messages between BBSs and not messages among members of the same BBS; Bits of Blue members sending messages to other BOB members should use the main conference message feature.

For turbo log-on to the BBS, type: (first name) (space) (last name) (space) (password) (space) (!). That will get you to the main menu where you then select Join Conferences. You may then select any conference you desire, with the FIDO Net conferences listed as Public Conferences. M gets you to the QWK mail door. The first time, you must select the compression system you will use (e.g., ZIP) and the conferences you are interested in downloading; these can be changed later if desired. The BBS will keep track of the conferences you select and the messages you download so that the next time you download, only those messages added since your last download of that conference will be downloaded.

You may read the messages on the BBS, but that is not practical and really limits the utility of the BBS for all members. You are asked to download those FIDO Net conferences you are interested in -- it takes a lot less time to download than to read, and you can then read at your leisure. But, you will need an off-line mail reader. The BBS has at least two available:

OLX-TD.EXE for use with DOS, and WINQ200.ZIP for use with Windows. (I believe both have essentially the same features, but I will mention only OLX, which Kevan described.)

When you first crank up OLX (Off-Line Express), you must configure the program to your computer, identifying such as your upload directory, download directory, etc. It is suggested that you set the FIDO Tagline to "Yes". OLX will then allow you to read all messages or selectively read, to print all or selectively print, and/or to save all or individual messages. It is reported to be a nice and easy-to-use program and should meet all your needs in dealing with FIDO Net downloads.

Kevan, you did a super job. I haven't used this new feature yet, but I believe I can do so with confidence after having the benefit of your review of the system. Thanks much, from all of us.

AND THE WINNER IS :

The following had the good fortune of winning some very nice prizes:

Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG

This SIG meets the first Tuesday of the month at the Gateway 2000 Store on North Dale Mabry (just south of Columbus Drive) at 6:30 PM. For information contact 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@tampabay.rr.com.*

Visual Basic for Applications SIG

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

Windows SIG

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

(1992..........Continued from page 9)

Geo Works Pro	Emelie Jurado
Diskette Manager	Calvin Johnson
Box 3 V diskettes	Ruth Redlein
How To Backup Your PC	Bill White & Roger Waters

COMMENTARY:

I recently ordered 0S2/2.0 from a Massachusetts mail order firm, Corporate Software. I received the program after some justifiable delay, due mostly to the need to send in proof of ownership for upgrade price purposes. I had anxiously awaited marketing of 0S2/2.0 after having seen a couple of demos of the program and reading several articles describing the program.

After receiving the program, I used a good bit of scarce "spare time" to read the documentation. I was interested in all of the documentation, especially loading and start-up, with a particular interest in compatibility. I learned much, including that compatibility info was contained in files on the disks -- not much help until I loaded the program. I learned, among other things, that the program included Windows 3.0 and not 3.1. Since 3.1 is a great improvement over 3.0, I wanted to know if 0S2 was compatible with Win 3.1. I also had some other technical questions.

So, I called Tech Support at IBM. I learned that 0S2 was not compatible with Win 3.1. During the course of the conversation, I mentioned disk compression programs. At that point I was also informed that 0S2 was not compatible with any disk compression programs on the market (Stacker, SuperStor, DoubleDisk) and would not recognize the compressed disks. These factors made 0S2/2.0 unsuitable for me.

At that point, I looked at the return documentation from Corporate Software. Among other things, it said it would accept return of only unopened or damaged products. That left me out. I should have read the company's documentation before I opened, you say! It wouldn't have made any difference. I had

no reason to believe that I would not want the software -- I had no indication on the surface that the program was not compatible with my setup (to the contrary, compatibility data is imbedded in the program), or contained features I would not want (e.g., Windows 3.0).

So, what are the options: (1) Send in to the producer of any software you have an interest in your complete setup to ascertain compatibility; (2) Buy the software and be stuck with any that you cannot use; (3) Don't buy software from a source that will not permit legitimate returns, including incompatible software. The latter is now my practice, along with complaints to the companies involved in this exercise. I would suggest that all software purchasers give similar thought regarding their purchases. WHAT DO YOU THINK? ◆

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dows Explorer. Now F was off limits and would hang the computer when you tried to access it.

I talked the problem over with member Merle Nicholson, and the only solution was to first try and simply reformat F using PartitionMagic. However, that couldn't be done either. So the final recourse was to use PartitionMagic to delete F. I did that, and it gave me back smooth operation of the computer— I suppose it was no longer spending time trying to communicate with F.

Before deleting F, I had tried to uninstall the programs installed there, but that was a no go. So after deleting it I tried again. A few allowed me to do this;

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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	Mon - Fri 10:00am - 9:00pm	914-0008	HTM,PSP,WP
Larry Anders	Mon - Sun 6:00pm - 10:00pm	989-9119	AOL, ME, MW, FP, PSP
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.

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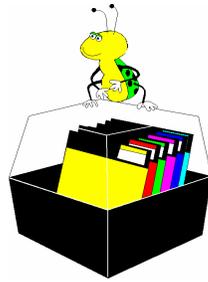
☐ Member: Your membership is up for renewal
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others said that they couldn't find their files, but they would remove themselves from the startup menu; and the ones that had used InstallShield as an installation program wouldn't do anything.

I suspect that the rest of the second hard drive will eventually exhibit the same problems. But the original drive is fine, and I still have the old computer—and, by the way, I found that VB project on drive C.

I wonder if letting a computer sit unused for a long time can cause such hard drive problems. I hadn't put power to that computer in several months. I had another computer that I let sit for several months, and then on trying to boot it found that the video card had gone bad. Another older computer that had sat for about six months with no use wouldn't boot properly since it had lost its CMOS data for the hard drive due to a failed CMOS battery.

Anyway, back up your data, because you never know when you are going to need that backup.◆

The Tampa PC Users Group Meeting is in the Art Pepin Hospitality Room at Pepin Distributing Co
6401 North 54th Street, Tampa, FL 33610