



May in Tampa
Hibiscus

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

Vol. 17 No. 5 May 2004

Meeting

Hyper-Threading & the Pentium 4

Wednesday, May 12, 2004
6:30 PM

Art Pepin Hospitality Room
Pepin Distributing Co.
6401 N 54th St
Tampa, Florida

Meeting Preview: Kevan Sheridan will tell us about hyper-threading in the Intel Pentium 4. We will also have the usual half-hour Windows SIG.



Editor's Comments

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

What to write about this month? I have a new copy of Microsoft Office 2003 Professional that I want to write a review of, but I haven't had enough time with it to be able to compare it in detail to Office 2002. Perhaps I will be ready by next month.

Some of our members have started a digital imaging SIG. It will meet the fourth Monday of the month, commencing May 24th, at 6:00 PM at Pepin. There is no doubt considerable interest in that in the group. As you probably have gathered from my past comments and articles, it is also one of my interests. And that ties in with the topic of my article for this month--something on digital photography. ♦

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June Meeting Topic: Trend Micro Internet Security by Peggy Pulliam

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However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

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Minutes of the April Meeting

By William LaMartin, Editor,
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The April meeting consisted entirely of a swap meet. Below is a photo of Mike Hodges opening the meeting and below that some typical swap items. ♦



The Nikon D100 SLR Digital Camera

By William LaMartin, Editor,
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I have wanted a single lens reflex style digital camera every since I saw Ford Bond's digital Nikon SLR when he gave us a presentation on digital photography in November of 2000, http://www.tpcug.org/newsletter/nl_2000/december2000/minutes200012.htm. Now I have one, the Nikon D100.



This article is not going to be a detailed review of the camera. That has already been done much better than I could do it at any number of web sites. One I particularly like is at <http://www.dpreview.com/reviews/nikond100/>. What I hope to convey here is a comparison of this camera to my digital Canon G1.

For the past few years, most members have seen me taking photos at the meetings with the Canon G1, a small but upper-end consumer digital camera that is now about 3.5 years old. I did a review of it at http://www.tpcug.org/newsletter/nl_2001/january2001/canong1.htm. I have really worked that little camera, taking around 5,400 images in the past 3 years and four months. From looking at the folders where they are stored, it appears that I have retained 3,870 of them. So I have retained about 72% of the images I

took. Furthermore, the average size of a file is 2,056,629 bytes, where the files were saved at the largest size (2048 x 1536 pixels) and with the least compression possible. On a recent trip to New Orleans, I took around 250 photos with the Canon, retaining around 230 of them. And I am happy with most of them.

So, if I am happy with what the G1 produces, why move up? Well, because I am not completely happy. There were just some things the G1 didn't do well, and I had learned to work around them as best I could. And the fact that it did better than any other comparable digital in its price range that I had seen gave a sort of satisfaction. But every time I took a photo of a house in bright sun and the lawn in front had splotches that appeared totally washed out, or when I tried to photograph a moving object--even a slowly moving trolley car in New Orleans--and I knew that I had to aim a bit ahead of the trolley to be sure that the trolley was captured when the camera decided to actually take the photo after all its calculations, I thought about that better digital. Then there were those photos taken in available light that had some strange colors around the edge or where two walls joined in a room that I knew wouldn't have such a problem if I had used my film camera.

Finally, I thought of another photography project I wanted to do in the near future which I probably wouldn't be able to do if I waited more than six months and for which I wanted to use a digital camera, and that made the decision for me to drive over to North Tampa Photography and purchase the D100. It is sold without any lens. However, I can use the lenses I already have for my Nikon film camera, which is the main reason I never even considered the competing Canon digital SLR, which I am sure is a fine camera. A typical Nikon lens will cost you around \$500, so you don't want to have to buy any more of them than necessary.

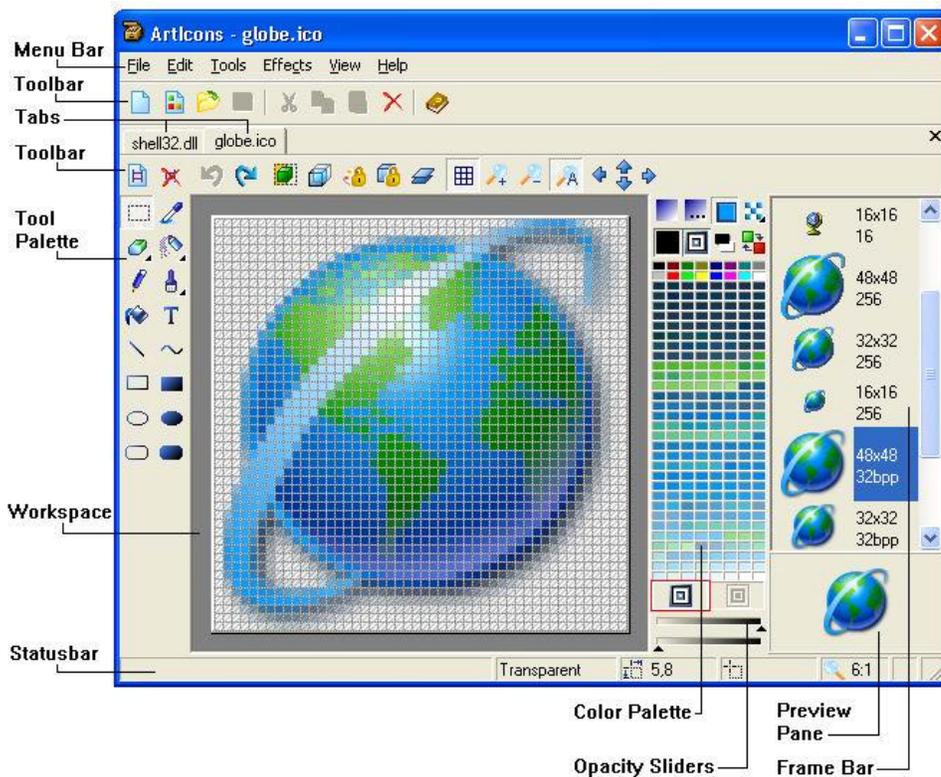
One surprise was that the camera will not work with my Nikon SB-27 speedlight in Through the Lens Mode (TTL). It will only work that way with two of the newer speedlights made by Nikon. I did get it to work with the SB-27 in auto mode and the camera in

(Nikon..... Continued on page 6)

ArtIcons Pro 4.01

By Bob LaFave, Tampa PC Users Group
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In the April 2003 newsletter, http://www.tpcug.org/newsletter/nl_2003/april2003/icons.htm, I did a review on *IconUtilities Suite* by Aha-soft, <http://www.aha-soft.com>, and now I'll look at just one program that has been updated from the suite, *ArtIcons Pro 4.0*. You can find a complete description on the web at <http://www.iconutils.com/articons/index.htm>. From the main page you can link to pages for the cost, \$39.95 for the full version and variable costs for upgrading from various other Aha-soft products, along with history, awards received, F.A.Q., and screenshots of the program. I will try to add to the previous article with more details on the program and what is "NEW" in version 4.0.



I'll start with the main program window showing the location and description of the individual controls. As you hover your mouse over each button you have

a *Hint* over each but you also have a description of the button in the lower left *Statusbar* area. I would like to ask you to look at the two sections that I consider the most useful, the *Color Palette* and the *Frame Bar*. In the *Color Palette* you can see how the colors are presented in different gradients for each. This allows easier color transaction and blending. The predominate colors of the individual icon are shown when editing or changing an existing icon, and when creating a new icon, the full color spectrum is presented. If you need a transition, the shade is easily available without calling up an individual color palette from within the program. The *Frame Bar* area shows the individual icons that are in the different display resolutions. The newer icons are created in *Libraries* that include multiple icons. With ArtIcons you can *Export* any specific icon from the viewing area to work on or to use. This gives greater clarity in the high resolutions available today. You

can create a new icon or convert an existing icon from a monochrome (1 bit) up and through 256 colors (8 bit) and finally to True Color + Alpha (32 bit).

The *Customize Windows Icons* feature is much like the *Effects* tab in Windows *Display Properties* but with much greater control over how and what icons are used and displayed in your Windows environment. As you can see in the picture on the next page, under the *Desktop* tab there are many more choices for you to use in customizing your work. From the picture you can see Control Panel, Printers, Desktop and History to name just a few. Each tab offers more

choices in a particular area. The *Start Menu* tab allows you to change the icons being used on your Windows Start Bar such as the Run, Shut Down, etc. buttons.

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(Icons.....Continued from page 4)



Internet Picture of the Month



Potato Panic

The *Drives* tab allows you to change how hard drives, CD ROMs and other icons in *My Computer* are displayed. Change any of these icons to what you would like, not what Microsoft decided. The *Miscellaneous* tab shows icons such as the Default icon Windows uses to represent unknown file types and even the Printers default icon. Once a Tab is chosen, you can use the buttons on the right not only to change the icons that are displayed, but also to restore any changes to any group or to change any individual icon back to the Windows default.

(Icons.....Continued on page 6)

From the site <http://www.photo.net/>. The photographer is Dick Smolinski. Not everything has gone digital. This photo was taken with a Mamiya RB67 using Kodak Ektachrome

This site has a nice gallery of photographs along with informative columns and equipment reviews.

May's Interesting World Wide Web Locations

Tampa PC Users Group (That's us)
 Elena's Motorcycle Ride through Chernobyl
 Louisiana State Museum
 Wonkette
 The Elder Geek on Windows XP
 U.S. Government Reference Center
 U.S. Government Graphics and Photos

<http://www.tpcug.org/>
<http://www.kiddofspeed.com/>
<http://lsm.crt.state.la.us/>
<http://www.wonkette.com/>
<http://www.theeldergeek.com/>
http://www.firstgov.gov/Topics/Reference_Shelf.shtml#laws
<http://www.firstgov.gov/Topics/Graphics.shtml>



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.

(Icons.....Continued from page 5)

The new feature that is added to this version is *Layers*. What I like about layers is how you can use layers like you would use transparencies in adding to a drawing. Think of having a pretty uncolored painting on a sheet of paper and placing a clear plastic sheet over the paper. You then can add colors to the plastic without affecting the paper below. This leaves the original intact from editing mistakes that would destroy the original. Any changes are easily accepted or deleted. For example, I can start with an icon of a tower computer, Layer 1, and make additions of colors in two more layers, defining the shape and adding color to what was a grey, dull icon. I never changed the original, and it is left alone as I tried to be creative. Once I am satisfied, I save the colored project and have the new icon to play with.

This program allows you to easily change or create icons to enhance your computer's visual appearance. It is not for everyone but can be quite fun and allows you to create a little bit of individuality in your computer. I love it. ◆

This program is easy to install and costs about \$30 at CompUSA. Other than the rare freeze for a few seconds, it is non-intrusive and seems to do a good job at catching those pesky traces and Trojan programs. After installing, go to Options and Active Shields to be sure it checks for what you want. ◆

(Nikon.....Continued from page 3)

manual mode.

The current version of my Canon is the G5 which is a 5 megapixel camera and costs around \$520, considerably less than the \$900 I paid for my G1. The 6.1 megapixel D100 without a lens costs \$1,495, and, as I mentioned, a Nikon Zoom lens can go for around \$500. So what do you get by paying an extra \$1,500 for the SLR type digital camera and lens? Why, you get better photos!

- They are sharper and cleaner looking.
- The color balance is almost always correct, with no need for modification in a graphics program.
- The camera is ready to snap a photo the instant you turn it on.
- High speed image processing shows you the photo taken in the preview screen almost instantly. Note with a SLR digital, you don't see the photo in the screen on the camera's back until the photo is taken, since the camera's mirror is in the way before the photo is snapped.
- This same high speed image processing allows the photo to be taken the instant you press the shutter release (except on some flash shots in my testing), and the camera has a large enough buffer to allow you to take 3 frames per second to a maximum of 7 or 8 photos.
- Focusing is very fast.

These last two items are also what separate the Nikon D100 from the Nikon digitals that cost twice

(Nikon.....Continued on page 7)

Spy Sweeper

By Robert Davis, Tampa PC Users Group
RobDavis@ij.net

Spy Sweeper is a neat little program to check for spy-ware. Its purpose is to detect and eliminate harmful spy-ware that may threaten one's privacy. Sometimes email may contain spy-ware.

I recently purchased and installed this software because I suspected I had extra stuff running on my computer. Apparently I was right. Spy Sweeper found 20 odd pieces of software to quarantine and over 3,800 other traces! My PC seems to run faster now, too. However, every once in awhile it freezes for about 10 seconds. (I am still running Windows 98.) I suspect Spy Sweeper is doing something.

Nikon.....Continued from page 6)

as much again: Faster and longer continuous shooting and the ability to quickly automatically focus large lenses. Think long, heavy telephoto lenses for sports photography. I note that the 24 - 120 mm Nikkor zoom lens I use with the D100 by itself weighs more than my old Canon G1.

That brings up the main disadvantage (other than price) of the digital SLRs--size and weight. I had really come to enjoy the small size of my Canon G1 when compared to my Nikon film camera, which is about the same size as the new D100.



cat is 86 KB and the parrot is 121 KB. Check out these photos in the online version of the newsletter to see them in color and with a much better rendition.

Another difference between the Canon G1 and the Nikon D100 is that the Canon uses battery power to go from wide angle to zoom. With the D100 and



Here are three of my first photos taken with the D100. The top photo is of Wade Herman's parrot cropped from a larger photo taken with the built-in flash. The bottom photo is of a neighborhood cat on his porch shot with the zoom lens at full extension. The photo above is a slightly cropped version of a bee taking nectar from a small flower in the alley behind my home. This photo was taken with an AF Micro Nikkor 60mm lens (close-up lens). The other two photos were taken with an AF-S Nikkor 24-120 mm lens.

All three photos have been considerably reduced in size and compressed greatly to make them usable when the newsletter is put at the web site. However, the quality is still there. The bee is only 56 KB, the

a zoom lens attached, you use your hand to rotate the zoom ring on lens. This is just one of several reasons for the surprisingly long battery life of the D100. It looks like I am out of space, so other observations will have to wait. ◆

Looking Back to 1994

From the May 1994 Bits of Blue

Secretary's Report

MINUTES OF 3/9/94 MEETING
and PERSONAL COMMENTS

By: Jim Clark

A nice turnout for this meeting, and everything seemed to go very well. There was a good bit of time for an open forum kind of interchange between members, along with presentations briefly reviewing a couple of very nice Adobe programs -- one of which most of you will be using in the not-too-distant future: Adobe Acrobat and the Acrobat Reader.

USER GROUP NEWS

- **Membership Survey:** A membership survey form was created by the Board of Directors (BOD) recently for the purpose of gathering the information from the membership needed to help guide our future efforts and the allocation of some rather slim resources. The survey was handed out to those present and was included in the newsletter for those not present. **All members are asked to complete the survey form as soon as practicable and return it to the BOD, or bring it to the next meeting. Your input is very important and will help your BOD a great deal in making the decisions that must be made in the near future.** The data will be held in strictest confidence and will only be used as statistical data.
- **Special Interest Groups (SIGs):** Preparation for SIGs on OS/2 and CorelDraw are in their final stages of preparation and all preparations should be complete by the next general meeting. Both will likely be meeting not long after the next general meeting. It is therefore recommended that any members interested in participating in either of these SIGs be sure to attend the next general meeting. It appears that the OS/2 SIG will likely meet in the IBM facility, and the Corel SIG will likely meet at the Dale Mabry campus of the HCC.

INDUSTRY NEWS

- **Merge Mania:** Competition in the software world has led to what seems to be merger mania. In addition to the passing of Word Perfect, recent announcements include Adobe acquiring Aldus, Symantec buying Central Point, and Intuit buying Best Software. Whether the objectives of the companies involved will be achieved is yet to be seen. In the long term, however, this merger mania could have a negative effect on competition, but it would seem the mania has not yet approached that level.
- **"Simply Tax" Refund For Some:** As many know, Computer Associates, a big name in the main frame world for a long time, has been trying to make their name recognized in the PC world by marketing Simply Money and Simply Tax for only S & H charges. Those that acquired Simply Tax before the final version was available had to pay \$9.95 for the early bird version, and then another \$3.95 to get the final version. After receiving numerous complaints, Computer Associates has agreed to refund the \$3.95 charge to those who request same in writing. So, if you want your \$3.95 back you will have to contact Computer associates and request it.
- **MS Maintenance Upgrades:** Maintenance upgrades are now out for MS Word For Windows 6.0 and for MS Windows 3.1. The upgrades change the program designations to 6.0a and 3.11, respectively. No charge is involved, and they are available from numerous electronic sources, including the MS BBS and CompuServe. They are also available on our own Bits of Blue BBS as WORD60A.EXE and WW0981.EXE.
- **Professional Write Upgrade:** Harvey reported that Professional Write 3.0 is available to all present owners of Professional Write, or any competitive DOS word processor, for \$65 from Professional Write.
- **Win Fax PRO Upgrade:** Version 4.0 upgrade to that program is available for \$49 at 1-800-268-6082.

PRESENTATION -- Adobe

William C. Lindsay, South Eastern Account Manager for Adobe Corporation, generously agreed to give us a brief overview of two Adobe products: Photoshop 2.5.1 and the Acrobat package. I say "brief" overview because, although Bill spent a good amount of time

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accomplishing that end, the scope of the power and features of these programs makes anything short of a several hour review "brief". Bill proved to be a very able representative for Adobe, and he gave an excellent presentation of both packages. I can't hope to cover, even briefly, all of the features Bill demonstrated, but here are a few:

Photoshop: Adobe says that Photoshop is "The world's leading photo design and production tool." I don't know whether that is accurate or not, but I do know that if there is anything you might want to do with an electronic photograph it would seem that Photoshop will do it very well and very fast. You can create your own, scan images into it, or import from a host of formats. Once an image (negative or positive) is in the program, it can be manipulated in just about any way you can imagine: Change the image to a negative or positive image; change colors (w/16 million available) of any part or all of the image; create duo-, tri- and quadtones; provide for simultaneous viewing of a range of color options applied to the image to aid in making choices; export and import all or any part of an image to other programs and/or as replacement/added components of an image; create any tint/hue changes desired; create and add in graphics created with the versatile and powerful built-in drawing tools; add in any text desired using the large selection of fonts included, or Windows fonts, and manipulate their size, shape, and color to your heart's content; etc., and then print out or export your finished product to any of a wide variety of formats, including one to create an actual film negative.

Photoshop is truly a very powerful program and can handle 40-50 MB images and includes excellent on-line help. It also includes 100 beautiful licensed images, covering a wide variety of subjects. It handles a large selection of file formats (import and export). Windows 3.1 (or later) is required, of course, and it will run on a 386, but a 486 with 8 MB RAM is recommended. The specific amount of disk space the program requires is unknown, but it is in the several MB range. But one needs a good bit of free disk space to accommodate images, especially when handling the 40-50 MB variety.

Photoshop is available for IBM-compatibles and

Mac. It lists for \$895, but is available for substantially less. One flyer from a retailer was available at the meeting listing an Adobe Photoshop/Illustrator (also a high end program) package for \$679.

Acrobat: Adobe Acrobat is actually a family of related programs, which includes Acrobat Exchange, Acrobat Distiller, Acrobat Reader, and Acrobat Starter Kit. Acrobat Exchange is the starting point. It converts many commonly used document formats into what is called a Portable Document Format (PDF). This common format then can be read by the other components of the Acrobat family. The components are available in DOS/Windows and Mac. Hence, once a file is converted to the common PDF format it can be read by any PC with a Reader, regardless of operating platform or other application software. "Big deal," you say, "I can do just about that much with ASCII format." The BIG difference is that Acrobat retains all formatting of the document, including fonts, page layout, graphics, etc., literally all of the features of the original, so that what the reader shows on the screen and prints out to a printer, if desired, is exactly the same as the original document. The host computer need not have the fonts nor graphics used in the original document; Acrobat takes care of that. Acrobat, then, allows the interchange of documents between computers, overcoming the limitations of different hardware, operating systems and application software. Interestingly, in many cases the PDF file is substantially smaller than the application file from which the PDF was created.

Acrobat Exchange allows one to create, view, collate, annotate, manipulate and print PDF documents. Acrobat Reader allows viewing and printing any PDF document, and gives the ability to access any annotations, bookmarks and links that are a part of the PDF file. Acrobat Distiller converts postscript language files into PDF files. Acrobat Starter Kit is a 10-user license package of the Exchange and Distiller components, or everything a workgroup of 10 needs to use Acrobat.

For the DOS/Windows version, a 386 machine with at least 3 MB of hard disk space is needed. The street price for none of the components was available at the

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Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG

This SIG meets the **first Tuesday** of the month 6:30 PM. The meeting location varies. For information contact William LaMartin at lamartin@tampabay.rr.com, or Merle Nicholson at merlenic@tampabay.rr.com.

Digital Imaging SIG

This new SIG meets the **fourth Monday** of the month at Pepin Distributors at 6:00 PM. For information, contact Mary Sheridan at mcpease@mindspring.com.

Visual Basic for Applications SIG

This SIG meets the **third Wednesday** of the month at 6:30 PM. The meeting location varies. For information contact 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 discussion.

Emoticons Mail 2.3

By Ron Weinberg, Tampa PC Users Group
rswjbr@att.net

With the high volume of often dull and impersonal emails we deal with, there are times when it is nice to add a little humor or liveliness to your correspondence. This is easily done by adding emoticons or smileys.

Emoticons Mail 2.3 is an easy-to-use program that enables you to insert smileys in your email messages. It supports Microsoft Windows 95/98/ME/NT/2000/XP and provides Premium support of **Outlook** 2000/2002/XP/2003 and Premium support of **Outlook Express** 5.x/6.x.

It will not, however, work with other email or word processors.

A simple download installation places access in your system tray. Thereafter, the program loads at Windows start up but can be set to only load on demand.

More than 800 smileys are included, broken down by categories: General, Action, Love, Sad, Goodies, Japanese, Holidays and Favorites. Each category has a number of subcategories and many of the emoticons are animated. The Favorites holds your 50 most recent choices and has a My Photos section which allows you to add new emoticons from external files. The program provides a nice but not unusually large

or unique selection of smileys.

A single click on the system tray opens the program and a single click easily attaches the smiley to your email as a tiny gif file with nothing to download.

A great many more emoticons in similar categories as well as many additional categories are available via free downloads so why buy Emoticons Mail?

Here are several valid reasons:

- Free emoticons programs often contain ad ware or spy ware to enable them to be “free”.
- No offensive smileys are included.
- No Speedbar or other tool bar is added to your system.
- You can add your personal emoticons.
- You do not need to have an Internet connection when you are adding emoticons.
- The recipient is not required to download anything and does not need an Internet connection to view Emoticons Mail smileys (if they are using Outlook or Outlook Express).

You can download the program from Maxplugs.com for \$19 and get lifetime updates and a 60 day money back guarantee. ◆

Friends of the User Group

We acknowledge the following for their support

Marshall & Stevens
Pepin Distributing Co.

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

Adobe Systems
Borland
CompUSA
Corel Systems
Intuit

Microsoft
Office Depot
PowerQuest
RDI, Inc.
Symantec

RENEWING YOUR MEMBERSHIP?

WE CERTAINLY HOPE YOU WILL

MAIL YOUR CHECK AND ANY
ADDRESS OR NAME CHANGES TO:

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PO BOX 3492
TAMPA, FL 33601-3492

\$25 Individual \$35 Family
\$60 Corporate = 3 employees + \$20 each add'l employee

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

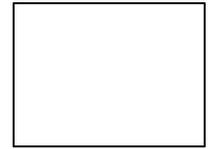
Check the address label for your renewal month

MEMBERS' HELP LINE

Program	Code	Name	Time	Phone	Codes
Adobe Acrobat	AA	Cheryl Alexander	Mon - Fri 10:00am - 9:00pm	914-0008	HTM,PSP,WP
AOL	AOL	Larry Anders	Mon - Sun 6:00pm - 10:00pm	989-9119	AOL, ME, MW, FP, PSP
Computer general	CG	William LaMartin	Mon - Fri 9:00am - 9:00pm	251-3817	AA, FTM, IG, MOS, MP, VB, W95
Delphi	DE	Merle Nicholson	Mon - Fri 7:30pm - 9:30pm; weekends	879-3602	CG, DE, DOS, HG, HM, HP, VB
DOS	DOS	Jenny Lind Olin	Mon - Sun 8:00am - 10:00pm	960-5723	ME, MW, PAF, Q, WP
Family Tree Maker	FTM	Don Patzsch		689-8662	CG
Hardware general	HG	Mary Sheridan	9:30am - 9:00pm	988-6480	AOL, CG, DOS, HG,IG, MW, Q, W95, W98
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				

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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First Class Mail

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

(1994.....Continued from page 9)

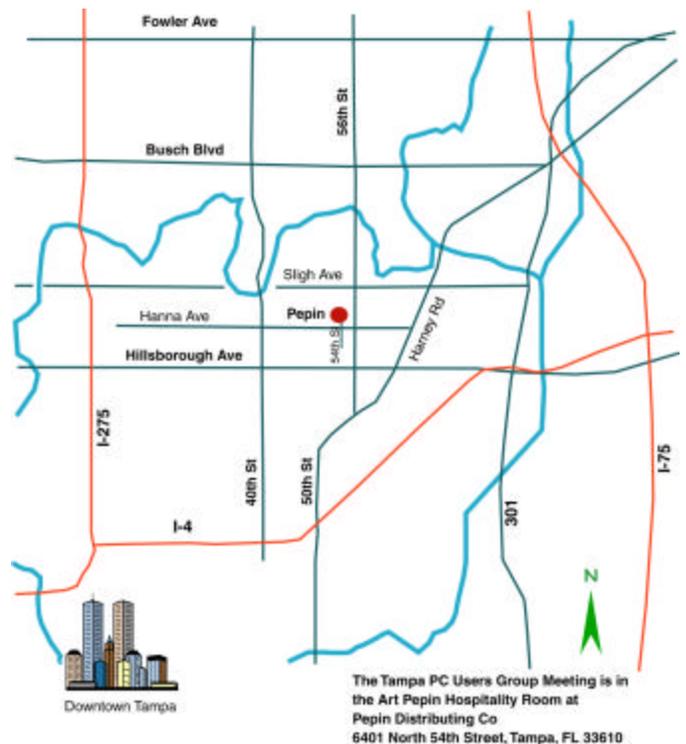
meeting. List price is: Exchange - \$195; Distiller - \$695; Reader - \$50; and Starter Kit - \$1,395.

Bill and Adobe, thank you very much for a super presentation. You have a couple of very powerful and useful programs in Photoshop and Reader. We will soon be distributing Readers to our members and then using Acrobat Exchange and the Readers to post our newsletter to our members electronically.

AND THE WINNER IS

Thanks to the generosity of Adobe Corporation, which donated all but one of the door prizes, there were some very nice door prizes. Those among us to have the good fortune to win are:

- Don Simonds - Adobe Wild Type
- Joe Crochet - Adobe Wild Type
- E. Jurado - Adobe Type On Call
- Mark Saunders - Adobe Type On Call
- Mark Saunders - Almost Perfect Book



The meeting adjourned at about 8:35 PM. ◆