



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

December in Tampa

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## Meeting

### Smart Computing

Wednesday, December 8, 2004

6:30 PM

Art Pepin Hospitality Room

Pepin Distributing Co.

6401 N 54th St

Tampa, Florida

**Meeting Preview:** Marcy Gunn with Smart Computing will tell us what her organization has to offer the computer user. We will also have the usual half-hour Windows SIG.

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## Editor's Comments

*By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group*  
[lamartin@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:lamartin@tampabay.rr.com)

**Data Loss** Two incidents in the past week have given me pause to think about this subject.

**Server Failure** A few days back I checked the neighborhood website I maintain, <http://www.oldhydeparkfl.org> and was greeted by a message stating that maintenance was being performed and the site would again be available as soon as possible. When the message was still there after 12 hours, I sent an email to the web hosting company and received the following message.

*Unfortunately we have had a major catastrophe. Our data centre technicians replaced a power supply in the machine hosting*

*(Comments.....Continued on page 4)*

INSIDE THIS ISSUE	
<a href="#">Meeting Preview</a>	1
<a href="#">Editor's Comments</a>	1
<a href="#">Minutes</a>	2
<a href="#">Christmas Gift Suggestions</a>	3
<a href="#">Links</a>	5
<a href="#">Looking Back to 1994</a>	6
<a href="#">SIG Report</a>	7
<a href="#">Map</a>	8

**January Meeting: To be announced**

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Bits of Blue is published by the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc., a State of Florida registered non-profit corporation, to provide educational information about personal computer systems to its members. Our mailing address is P. O. Box 3492, Tampa, FL 33601-3492.

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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**Check the address label for your renewal month**

**Minutes of the November Meeting**

By Doug Mullis, for Secretary Peggy Pulliam  
[dmullis@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:dmullis@tampabay.rr.com)

President Kevan Sheridan conducted our usual half hour Windows SIG starting at 6:30 PM, He suggested we try Google Gmail as it is almost Spam free and costs nothing.

We will have election of officers for calendar year 2005 at our December meeting. The slate of nominees is Kevan Sheridan for President, John Witmer for Vice President, Mike Hodges for Treasurer, Doug Mullis for Secretary and Mary Sheridan for Member at Large.

At 7:00PM, President Kevan Sheridan began our regular meeting. We have three special interest groups: Visual Basics, Microsoft Access and Digital Imaging. These groups will get back on schedule after the holidays. At our December meeting we have scheduled a Smart Computer presentation and our Holiday Season party.

Our speaker for the evening was Steve Singer, President of RDI. Steve told us of and demonstrated the latest hardware on the market. Some items covered were a Blue Tooth headset for your cell phone, an HP iPAQ with cell phone and camera, a USB dock for notebooks, the latest Motherboards with AMD Athlon Sempron 64 bit and 32 bit processors, also an Intel Celeron D (said to equal the Pentium 4), a very small Konica Minolta 6 meg DiMage G 600 Digital Camera with 3 power zoom lens, and a desktop computer which allows two users to run different programs at the same time (2 monitors, 2 keyboards, 2 mice etc). We all wondered what next?

The meeting adjourned about 8:45 ♦

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*We acknowledge the following for their support*

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## A Couple of Christmas Gift Suggestions

By Larry Anders, Librarian, Tampa PC Users Group  
[Larry@AndersNet.com](mailto:Larry@AndersNet.com)

Well, by the time you get this newsletter there will only be a few shopping days left for Christmas. If you or your family, friends or loved-ones don't have a DVD burner yet you should put that on the list. They are relatively inexpensive now and so is the DVD media to burn to, whether write once or re-writable.



I have always loved music, and I have been collecting music for several years now, ever since ripping CDs to MP3s first became popular. I was originally amazed at how many MP3s one could record to CD. Then along came DVDs which hold over six times that amount and now dual layer DVDs hold almost twice that, etc, etc. I think you get the picture.

I have a retail stereo store near my home that sells all of their CDs for \$10.99 each and for years I have afforded myself the luxury of trying to purchase a couple each week. I said try to purchase because sometimes there just isn't anything there to purchase that I either like or don't already have. Like most people I am typically only interested in one or two songs on each CD, unless it's an old Beatles or Eagles CD. I have all of the words to all of their songs memorized, but that just shows my age.

Anyway, I began ripping the tunes I wanted off the CDs to start my own personal listening collection. As I travel a lot, being able to take just one or two CDs loaded with all the music I wanted to listen to made it much easier. Once we were able to write to a CD more than once I started ripping entire music CDs as soon as I purchased them and archiving them away. I could usually get about 10 to 12 store-bought CDs on one archive CD. Along came DVD players that played MP3 CDs and I was able to put in one data CD that could play unattended for a few hours.

A while back I became a PocketPC user. The Dell Axim I use also has the ability to play music files. To save space on my storage cards I started converting some of my MP3s to Microsoft's WMA format, which is about a factor of 10 smaller in size than MP3s and still sounds basically the same, and putting them on CDs. As you can imagine it did not take long before my house was becoming overrun with CDs.

I invested in my first DVD burner when they were still kind of expensive and so were the blank DVDs so I was a little slow to start archiving to DVD but the sheer number of CDs stacking up in my house forced me into starting. Now I have two DVD burners and am thinking of getting one of the new dual layer models next.

But archiving to DVDs caused another problem. Now I could not play my backed up MP3s on my DVD player in the family room. I could never understand why a DVD player would play a data CD of MP3s but not a data DVD of MP3s. So I started a little research on the Internet.

I found a couple of upper-end DVD players that would play "MP3-DVDs" but they were more than I wanted to spend and they also did not have all of the capabilities that my current DVD player had. Not being one to give up easily (or maybe I just waited long enough for the competition to appear), I discovered the **Pioneer DV-578A-S**, a Universal DVD/CD/SACD/DVD-Audio player, and this little baby plays everything I have at home, including VCD and SVCD movies, jpeg files which are the standard for most digital cameras, and it will also play WMA files. The reviews were good and the price was only \$149 locally. I unplugged my old DVD player and plugged in the new one with absolutely no problems.

So, theoretically, I could burn one DVD that could play music that could last for days. *WOW!* What do you think will be next?

**HAPPY HOLIDAYS! ◆**

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

*your site. When this machine was turned on after the power supply replacement, there was a major problem with the new power supply which caused a damage to all four of the hard drives (including our backup HDDs), the motherboard and RAID card in the machine.*

They replaced that server but had no backup to restore to it, although they were sending the hard drives out for data recovery which could take over a week. Additionally, the three emails they supposedly sent to me never reached me--possibly getting lost in all the SPAM I receive. As with all my sites, I have an exact copy on my own computer (and backed up on CD) that I was able to republish to the replacement server. The only possible problem is that some of the neighborhood residents may have recently changed their password information online, and that data was lost with the online version of the membership database. Also, the statistics for the site reside on the drives that are at data recovery. This is the site where I posted flooding photos of the neighborhood which received a large amount of interest--22 GB of data transfer in one day. So those statistics were somewhat interesting.

**Hard Drive Failure** The second incident was the erratic behavior of one of my external USB hard drives. This was a 40 GB one made by Maxtor (model 3000 LE) that is several years old. I noticed a few weeks back that this drive would all of a sudden go into some sort of auto play mode where a window would pop up and the names of files would flash by real fast. Momentarily I would receive a request to configure what programs would handle certain file types. I always clicked cancel and everything was fine. Then occasionally, this drive, listed as drive F, would be missing from the My Computer listing. Unplugging one or both of the USB or power cords to the drive would fix this problem--up until this last time. No amount of disconnecting and reconnecting got the drive back. Fortunately I only used this drive as a backup drive, so nothing was lost. And the next day, although the drive was missing after I booted the computer, after several hours it went into this auto play thing, and I had it back. But it is certainly not to be trusted and will be retired. When this drive is having problems, the green light

that indicates the drive is doing something blinks rapidly and you can hear clicking noises from inside the drive--not a good sign.

**New External Drive** Only a few days before all of this, I had bought a new Maxtor 160 GB external hard drive (\$199) that supports both USB and Fire-Wire connections. I wanted this as a backup for all the photos, negatives and slides I have scanned in over the years and for all the digital photos I have taken in more recent years. These photos are also backed up on CDs and DVDs, but they are much more accessible on this external hard drive.

This drive has something called One Touch Storage and Backup with a button for such on the front. That is, it does if you install the software that comes with the drive. Since I am only going to use this as storage for my photography efforts and possibly some other file backups like my programming and web sites, I have no need for the one touch thing. But for those who would like a complete backup of their main hard drive, this looks like the thing--and I might get another such drive just for that purpose. Not only can you do a selective backup of files, but also you can back up everything, including the operating system, computer settings, and your applications. This backup can then be used to restore your computer to its state before a hard drive failure or other disaster. This is accomplished with the Dantz Retrospect software provided on the CD.

**Photo Database** With all these photos now on a hard drive (and backed up to CD & DVD), I needed a way to efficiently give the photos descriptions and dates. A typical path for a photo is G:\HP Photo-Scan\Black & White 1970's\1974\March\Scan928.tif.

First, I created an Access database to contain my photo information with fields such as year, month, path, and file name. Then using VB.Net, I wrote a program with two main parts. The first part allows me to select a folder containing photos and have all of the names of the files in the folder added to this database along with the year, month and folder path. This eliminates all typing except for entering descriptions as described below.

*(Comments.....Continued on page 5)*

*(Comments.....Continued from page 4)*

The second part of the program displays the database table containing this information. Here when I click on a record, the associated photo is then displayed. This allows me to easily enter a description of the photo. Of course, it is going to take me some time to create all of the descriptions, since there are about 5,700 photos alone in just the HP Photoscan folder's sub folders. Then I have the photos scanned using my old HP flatbed scanner and my newer Epson Perfection 3200 photo scanner. Then there are all the digital photos I have taken and then all the slides and negatives I have not yet scanned.

When I am finished, if I want a photo with a bird in it, all I have to do is search the database table. This should produce all photos with the word bird in the description. Similarly, and more importantly, I could search for a particular individual.

When I do finally get most of my non-digital photos on the computer along with all the ones taken in recent years with a digital camera, how do I protect and preserve these photos? As I noted earlier, computers can be totally destroyed or their hard drives can simply fail to function. My protection scheme at present is to have every photo on two different hard drives--preferably on two different computers and to have at least one CD or DVD backup of each image, then after several years make new CD or DVD backups and also put the photos on still newer hard drives or whatever new storage media may come out. ◆

## Internet Picture of the Month



### Winter

One of the tens of thousands of photos at PBASE.Com, <http://www.pbase.com/>. This is a place to post and share your photos. It is also a place to view others' photographic efforts. Some of it is very good but most of it is of considerably less quality, in my opinion.

You can create a free trial account. But people who pay have galleries with more features. I came across one fellow with over 5,000 photos posted.

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### December's Interesting World Wide Web Locations

Tampa PC Users Group (That's us)	<a href="http://www.tpcug.org/">http://www.tpcug.org/</a>
Smart Computing (Our Presenter)	<a href="http://www.smartcomputing.com/">http://www.smartcomputing.com/</a>
Default Password List	<a href="http://www.phenoelit.de/dpl/dpl.html">http://www.phenoelit.de/dpl/dpl.html</a>
PBase Photo Database	<a href="http://www.pbase.com/">http://www.pbase.com/</a>
Cuban Cigar Reviews & Ratings	<a href="http://www.cigars-review.org/">http://www.cigars-review.org/</a>



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.

## Looking Back to 1994

### Secretary's Report

#### MINUTES OF 11/9/94 MEETING

#### and Personal Comments

by Jim Clark, Tampa PC Users Group

An important meeting for our group, with nominations for officers, and the weather, though a bit threatening, cooperated. We also had a major and increasingly popular piece of software to be reviewed — OS/2 Ver. 3.0 Warp.

### USER GROUP NEWS

**SECOND BBS 14.4 MODEM ON HAND:** Our group has acquired a second 14.4 modem for use with the BBS. It is an external version and will be placed into use as soon as the ADOPTBBS fundraiser generates enough funds to pay for installation and first year's use of a second telephone line. Harvey called attention to the how-goes-it chart in the newsletter which shows the generation of funds still far below that needed to upgrade the BBS with more file space and a second telephone line, and he emphasized the importance of supporting the ADOPTBBS fund-raiser if we are to realize these improvements in the BBS.

**NOMINATIONS:** Harvey reported that several of the present officers who have served for several years have expressed their intent to not serve in the coming term. However, most decided that the loss of so many on the BOD at one time could jeopardize continuity for the group and agreed to serve again, if nominated and elected, but for only one more year. Harvey pointed out that it is essential for creativity as well as the continued life of the group that new blood come aboard the BOD. It was also noted that our members must become more active in helping the group to improve by contributing their time and effort to generate new members and perform services for the group as a whole.

Nominations were made for the elected positions on the BOD as follows:

President: Harvey Bruneau (incumbent)  
 Vice President: None (it was not known if Al Poole would serve again)

Treasurer: Tom Cone (Incumbent - not present at the time and assumed he would serve)  
 Secretary: None  
 Member At Large: Roger Waters (incumbent)

No new blood was nominated for any of the positions. Members may submit nominations via mail and/or make nominations at the December meeting up to the time of the election. It is extremely important to the group that additional nominees be obtained and that these positions be filled.

Harvey outlined what should be some of our objectives for the coming year, and will be if he is again elected. These included more SIGs, more member-to-member sessions at our meetings where we could help each other with problem solving, using things we already have, working on computers, using DOS, Windows, the BBS and others, demonstrations on installing and setting up components, etc.; and membership of at least 300. None of these objectives are achievable without more active participation from our membership. One of the easiest ways we could all help is to bring in just one new member. Try it, you might like it!

### PRESENTATION — IBM's OS/2 Ver. 3.0 Warp

IBM was good enough to make Carolyn White, one of IBM's Workplace Marketing Specialists, available to give us a rundown on the new version of OS/2, called Warp, they just released. And a fine job she did, too. She began by noting some of the reasons "Why OS/2?" Among them are safer operations because program failures, such as occur in Windows, are contained within the offending program and do not force rebooting the computer as is now usually the case in Windows and DOS; OS/2 is an operating system itself and doesn't rely on DOS or any other operating system; it provides better memory management, and is not inhibited with the constraints that have long limited DOS; it allows simultaneous operation of DOS, Windows and OS/2 applications and supports interchange of information between all three; and it is an operating system designed to make best use of new hardware technology.

You all are at least a little familiar and know what a large and powerful program it is — well beyond the scope of this little section of the newsletter. I will only

*(1994.....Continued on page 7)*

## Special Interest Groups

### Microsoft Access SIG

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

### Digital Imaging SIG

This new SIG meets the **fourth Monday** of the month at Pepin Distributors at 6:30 PM. For information contact Mary Sheridan at [mcpease@mindspring.com](mailto: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](mailto: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.

*(1994.....Continued from page 6)*

point out some of the improvements that have been made compared to previous versions of OS/2. First, IBM says that this program is designed specifically for the home PC user, the student and the business executive, and great emphasis has been placed on making it truly user friendly. Warp combines the advanced OS/2 32-bit operating environment with new features for productivity, reduced memory requirements, and ease of use and productivity enhancements. Among them are:

- Redesigned and simplified installation that automatically configures your system; imagine avoiding all those address and configuration conflicts.
- Much faster and smoother operation of Windows and Windows programs.
- Enhanced print performance and significantly improved monochrome and color bitmap printing due to new 32-bit printer drivers.
- New easier to use tutorial that shows best use of OS/2 to fit your style.
- Customizable program Launch Pad for ready access to your most used applications and features.
- Automatic configuration of PCMCIA cards through a "Play at Will" interface which permits putting in another PCMCIA card without having to re-boot your laptop.
- Includes a set of popular OS/2 Windows audio device drivers.
- Improved user interface and graphics.
- Now requires only 4 Mb of RAM.

- Warp also includes a number of features and utilities in a "Bonus Pak":
- OS/2 CompuServe Access.
- Person-to-person for OS/2: Desk-top conference software where you can share files or multimedia with another computer.
- FaxWorks for OS/2 where you can send, receive and print faxes as you desire.
- IBM Installation Utility & System Information Tool which allows quick, convenient access to detailed info about your soft/hardware.
- Access to Internet which will automatically configure for free hours on IBM's WEB service, and includes several Internet applications including Gopher, Mosaic, News Reader and E-Mail.
- Provides a suite of applications including a word processor, spreadsheet, report writer and database. An organizer to keep track of addresses, phone numbers, to-do lists, and calendars all in one place.

Requirements for OS/2 Warp are a 386 machine or higher, 4 Mb of RAM (though 8 Mb or more is preferred), DOS 3.1 or higher installed if you plan to run DOS applications, Windows 3.1 or higher installed if you plan to run Windows applications, and 30 Mb of disk space for minimum loading and up to 55 Mb for a complete installation, including all the bells and whistles. Carolyn was using a 386/25 MHz with 8 Mb of RAM for the demonstration and while performance was not really fast, it was acceptable. And what a bargain. IBM reports a street price of

*(1994.....Continued on page 8)*

**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 7)*

under \$80; Computer City has OS/2 Warp on 3.5" floppies at this writing for \$69.97. Carolyn and IBM, THANK YOU very much for a great introduction to a super program. OS/2 has been and is of great interest to our members and we hope that you will keep us abreast of future developments.

**AND THE WINNER IS** Thanks to the generosity of Carolyn White and IBM., there were several very nice door prizes. Those among us to have the good fortune to win are:

- Dan Whitman OS/2 mouse pad; OS/2 Programmers Guide
- Dave Clary OS/2 cups
- Herb Atwood OS/2 T-shirt
- Steven Atran Disk Optimizer
- Roger Waters Cash Graf Office
- Joe Crochet OS/2 Warp

The meeting adjourned at about 9 PM. ◆

