



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

March in Tampa

Vol. 18 No. 3 March 2005

Meeting

Gene Barlow

Wednesday, March 9, 2005
6:30 PM

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

Meeting Preview: Gene Barlow presents MoveMe, Secure Clean/Wipe Drive & True Image. 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

As usual, Gene Barlow's yearly presentation should reacquaint us with our hard drives. He is a font of knowledge on the subject, and one of his topics is the different scenarios of backing up your entire hard drive. It is a subject to which we should all pay more attention.

I have my usual problem this month--a lack of articles. Except this is the first month that I have no article, except the minutes, from a member or from myself, and I am not going out and purchase a new program or piece of hardware just to be able to write about it. So, I need to fill up this space with something else. Let's see what I can produce.

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April 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.

Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software; plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

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WE CERTAINLY HOPE YOU WILL

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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

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We acknowledge the following for their support

Marshall & Stevens
Pepin Distributing Co.

Minutes of the February Meeting

By Doug Mullis, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group
dmullis@tampabay.rr.com

Mary Sheridan, Member at Large, started the SIG portion of our meeting promptly at 6:30 pm. She announced that President Kevan Sheridan was out of town (in snow country) and would not be conducting tonight's meeting. As Mary spoke, a PowerPoint presentation of past meetings and conventions was shown courtesy of William LaMartin. We were reminded of the Spring FACUG Conference in Kissimmee Mar 4th through the 6th. Those planning to attend were announced. Mary also encouraged members to attend TPCUG Board Meetings the first Thursday of each month starting at 6:30 pm at this site.

Discussion on Microsoft's Service Pack 2 carried over from last month. There have been eleven security updates to XP since Service Pack 1.

We discussed Windows Messenger and whether we need it. If you use Internet Explorer, you are probably stuck with it unless you do a registry modification.

Bruce Register brought up a problem he was having sending JPEG photo files over Outlook Express. The solution was to send the photos in a zipped folder.

It was announced that Peggy Pulliam, our immediate past Secretary, died on Feb 3, 2005. There was to be a memorial picnic for her at MacFarland Park on Feb 13th starting at 2:00 pm. William LaMartin passed around an excellent picture of Peggy taken at one of our events.

At 7:00 pm our regular meeting commenced under Mary Sheridan's leadership. Mary introduced our presenter for the evening, Bob LaFave. Bob's main

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Free Online Tax Filing. If you go to the IRS site <http://www.irs.gov/app/freeFile/jsp/index.jsp?> and link from that page to one of the vendors listed there, you may just get your taxes figured and filed for free. Some of the vendors listed have restrictions on who may use the free service, others don't. TurboTax, for example, claims that everyone qualifies. I assume that for complicated returns, this service probably lacks the additional forms needed. So Donald Trump need not attempt it.

Treasury Bills Online While we are on the topic of money, have you thought of investing in Treasury Bills instead of CDs at your local bank? <http://www.treasurydirect.gov/> is the site to get you started. As I write this, the return on a six month T-Bill is right at 3%, far better than any short term instrument your bank is offering. To get started, you need to download the "New Account Request" Adobe Acrobat file, print it out, fill in the information, sign it and mail it in. Two of the items to be entered on the form are a bank account number and bank routing number for the bank account from which money to buy the T-Bills is deducted and into which proceeds are to be paid. Once your account is set up, then everything else can be done online. T-Bills can be purchased for as little as \$1,000 and in increments of \$1,000. You can view your account at any time online. Additionally, periodic printed statements are mailed to you.

HP Scanner Redux I recently received an email requesting help with a scanner problem from someone out there on the web. They had done a search and come up with an article I wrote in the newsletter in January of 2003. They said their HP ScanJet 5370C was exhibiting the same problem as I had described. What I outlined in the article that got my scanner working again did not solve their problem, nor did my further suggestions.

My last suggestion to them was to junk the HP Scanner and buy an Epson one, which is what I did when my HP scanner died a year later (http://www.tpcug.org/newsletter/nl_2004/march2004/epson_scanner.htm). HP has produced some quality

products for me over the years (e.g., my still working LaserJet 4 Plus printer bought in 1995), but it is my belief that they have let their quality control lapse and have farmed out most of their manufacturing. I'll give Epson a try for a few years. I also recently bought an Epson Stylus Photo 2200 for my photo printing and am very happy with it.

Perhaps with the departure of Ms. Fiorina HP will regain their focus on quality products and figure out there are other ways to create a profitable company than firing a lot of people. I could never figure why HP brought her on in the first place, since I think she presided over the near demise of Lucent, a once-great company. Now I see that after five years of decline at HP under her tenure she is being touted as a candidate for the president of the World Bank. I didn't know she knew anything about banking. But, then, she didn't know anything about computers, and she was hired to run a computer company and kept on for five or so years.

I see that I have over a page left to fill. What can I present? How about how I use my computer? That was the title of a talk I gave to another user group a few years back.

Like most of you, I use my computer to deal with **email** and browse the **World Wide Web**. Also like most of you, I have to delete more than 100 unwanted emails every day. At least, very few of them have viruses attached anymore. It seems that the Internet service providers are getting quite good at stripping the viruses from emails.

As far as web browsing goes, I find that I no longer go to all sorts of strange and new sites as in the past when all of this was new. The past few years most of my WWW time is spent at just a few sites--The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, and Google. The Internet is no longer a novelty.

In addition, I write computer programs and create and manage web sites. I use **Microsoft's Visual Studio .Net** to write the programs and to create some of the pages at web sites. I use **Microsoft's FrontPage** to manage the web sites.

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Visual Studio .Net has several languages within it that you can use to write programs. My choice is **Visual Basic .Net**. Some of the programs I write are presented in our VB SIG. At the last VB SIG meeting we looked at a simple program that allows you to send text messages from your computer to anyone with a number with one of the major cell phone carriers like T-Mobile, Verizon and Alltel.

After I had demonstrated the program, I noted one thing that bothered me--with a slight modification and a database of cellular phone numbers, you could spam all those phones with text messages quite easily. Possibly the providers have a method of detecting such an onslaught and stopping it, but I doubt it, since I just read an article in *InfoWorld* about a vulnerability at the T-Mobile web site that would allow anyone to gain access to a T-Mobile account from the T-mobile.com web site, as long as they knew the account holder's T-Mobile phone number. Of course you had to know a bit more than that, but not much, since even I could understand it.

For many years I used **Borland's Delphi** program for programming, but I have not used it much since the advent of Visual Studio .Net.

Photography Another use I make of my computer is to use it as my digital darkroom with the help of **Adobe PhotoShop CS**. I have been interested in photography since I was a teenager. In the 1970s and 1980s, I took that interest a step further and processed all of my black and white film and prints. In the 1990s I sort of lost interest in photography, except for starting to scan in photos and then negatives in the mid 1990s. However, with the advent of digital cameras and much-improved inkjet printers, I am back into photography.

Now I have total control. I can take a photo with my Nikon D100 SLR style digital camera and instantly see if it is worth saving. Later I can bring it into my computer, adjust the lighting and color balance, and crop it as desired. Then I can store it both on the computer and on a CD, send a lower resolution version in an email message or print the original image on my Epson 2200 in a size anywhere from 4 x 6 to

11 x 17. 11 x 17 is the largest photo paper I at present have, not the largest size the printer will print.

That is total control. My darkroom equipment is stored away in the garage, and all my chemicals and empty chemical bottles have been thrown away.

I have also found a use for my programming in photography by writing a program that will automatically take all the files in a folder and stuff their names and locations into a database. Later when I click on one of the records in the database, the program will display a thumbnail of the photo and allow me to enter data about the photo, such as a description and date. It is a great timesaver, and I eventually hope to realize my dream of having all my photos from the past scanned in and stored on hard drives with CD or DVD backups and catalogued in the program just mentioned. Additionally I will do the same for all of the new photo files from my digital photography. They, of course, don't need to be scanned, but they do need to be catalogued.

Other programs I use are **Quicken** for all my financial records and **Outlook** to keep my calendar and address book. I do not use full Outlook for my email, using Outlook Express for that, except when I want to do an email merge. Of course I use **Word** and **Excel**. Excel was particularly useful recently when I needed a set of financial calculations to determine the best of several scenarios. And I use **Access** to keep and analyze all sorts of data, not the least of which is our TPCUG membership data.

I use **Adobe Illustrator** to create simple graphic designs and greeting cards. All of the genealogy information gathered by me and several relatives is stored in **FamilyTree Maker**. **Microsoft Publisher** is used in creating this newsletter and other desktop publishing projects such as the directory for my neighborhood organizations.

I suppose there are at least a half-dozen other programs that I use from time to time: Adobe Acrobat, Adobe Streamline, PowerPoint, Art Icons Pro, Delorme's Street Atlas, Easy CD Creator and WS FTP come to mind.

Next month, someone please send me an article. ◆

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topic was Google's Gmail.

Bob started by suggesting we subscribe to Staples' discount coupons email notification. They also have an online rebate system that speeds up the rebate turnaround. CompUSA gives TPCUG members a 5% discount if you go to their special checkout desk (on the left as you face the front of the store). You must show your membership card, and that brought us to the realization that most of us have expired cards. Mary will get new cards issued.

Bob now explained Gmail is a web based mail service. It is separate from your current Outlook Express, but can be forwarded by you to your email account. You can only get a Gmail account by invitation from a current user. Bob says there are advantages to having more than one mail service. He then demonstrated the ease of setting up a Gmail web page and some neat features it claims. Get in touch with Mr. LaFave if you want Gmail.

At some point during our meeting, Mary asked if the members were interested in a presentation on Linux. By a show of hands, many present did want a presentation.

No door prizes were available at this meeting so we concluded at 8:15 pm. ◆

Internet Picture of the Month



Mardi Gras Dog

One of the many photos taken in New Orleans this Mardi Gras was of "Baby Dog" at the Krewe of Grela parade in Gretna by a New Orleans Times-Picayune photographer.

This photo and many more can be viewed at the site <http://www.nola.com/mardigras/photos/>

March's Interesting World Wide Web Locations

Tampa PC Users Group (That's us)
Epinions.com
Treasury Direct
Free Online Tax Filing
IRS Forms

<http://www.tpcug.org/>
<http://www.epinions.com/>
<http://www.treasurydirect.gov/>
<http://www.irs.gov/app/freeFile/jsp/index.jsp?>
<http://www.irs.ustreas.gov/formspubs/>



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 1995

From the March, 1995 Newsletter

SECRETARY'S REPORT

TPCUG MEETING 2/8/95, 6 PM
Ybor Room, Hillsborough Community College,
Ybor Campus

Minutes and Comments by Bruce Register

President Harvey Bruneau called the meeting to order. Comments and information were given regarding SIGs, miscellaneous topics and vendors.

SIGS

Microsoft Access - February 16, 1995, 6 PM Promptly, 3903 Northdale Boulevard, northeast corner of Mapledale and Northdale. Reservations are closed due to limited seating. Next SIG-Microsoft Access is same place, March 16, 1995, 6 PM (sharp-Security Officer must permit entrance at the rear entrance of the building). Sign up early.

OS/2 - February 28, Contact John Lucas for time, place and openings/sign-up.

Internet - February 28, 1995, 6 PM, promptly. Contact Charles Howe. As of February 8, 1995, seven seats were available. You can use BBS to sign up. Promptness is required because security at Reflectone is tight and required. From North Dale Mabry, go west on Waters to TAMPA WEST sign on the south (left) side of the street (if you pass Anderson Road, you have gone too far), turn south at TAMPA WEST sign, go one block to dead end, turn right one block and take a "forced" left turn, go south about a half block to north entrance of Reflectone building. You must enter the north end and be prompt at 6 PM because security will unlock the door and escort us to the meeting room. It reminds me of the Pentagon; you don't stray or wander around.

ANOTHER SIG is under consideration. Let Harvey know your interest. A tax SIG was mentioned as a possibility. It is timely. Harvey wants your opinion. He reads BBS regularly. Send him a message.

MISCELLANEOUS

Harvey reported a monetary gift from GTE to TPCUG. GTE has a program for recognizing their employees who make a contribution of time and effort to community and educational activities. In recognition of Roger Waters' many hours of devotion to TPCUG, GTE donated some

\$430 to TPCUG. Thank you, Roger! Thank you, GTE!

Harvey reiterated the goal of every member in 1995 is to bring in at least one new member.

VENDORS

IBM has recalled power adapters for IBM ThinkPad 360 & 375. If you have one, contact IBM for a replacement part.

HP DeskJet 500, 550 and 560C have glitches in rollers. Call HP for replacement parts.

Pentium prices have dropped and are expect to drop some more before the end of March.

Some surprises have been received by Pentium users who have replaced the old chip with the new chip. Spreadsheets run and calculated under the old chip will carry the same chip errors along with the spreadsheet under the new chip. Solution: when you load the spreadsheet, recalculate the entire spreadsheet under the new chip. Easy solution!

Many companies are tied so completely to Microsoft that they feel that they cannot change software when errors and software problems occur. Some feel that Microsoft, unintentionally, releases software with problems. When this occurs, serious difficulties could occur. Some companies (end users) are so critically dependent upon Microsoft's various packages that they feel it is better to suffer than to try to change it all.

Hardware vendors and software vendors are planning on the future world of Microsoft Windows 95, whenever it is released. IBM OS/2 Warp is the competition. Some feel that sufficient market acceptance of OS/2 would result in a much more healthy competitive market—one without monopoly.

Some feel that Microsoft Windows 3.1 will not only lose its state of the art position but will also become extinct to OS/2 and Windows 95-relatively soon after release.

PS2 mouse ports make your life easier.

Don't use Windows 3.11 32 bit File Access on Gateway, Compaq or Notebook computers. Problems may occur!

SOFTWARE VENDOR DEMONSTRATION

Mr. Robert Morgan of Gold Disk, presented two software products-ASTOUND AND VIDEO DIRECTOR. His general comments during the demonstration ran along these lines: **ASTOUND** was developed originally on a MAC

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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, 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 6:30 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.

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platform. Since then, they have developed it on the Windows platform. Their market demand has been pleasing.

ASTOUND is chasing the PowerPoint (by Microsoft) presentation market. ASTOUND loves multimedia machines. ASTOUND is a presentation package. One can create/use handouts, slides and video clips. A cable connects the computer with video, camcorder and stereo for use in creating presentations. The process was demonstrated to be very fast. We watched a presentation being developed before our eyes!

ASTOUND for Windows allows one to integrate the power of multimedia. sound, animated texts and graphs, and digital video appeared to be easy to add into presentations. Import of files from other presentation packages and from other sources such as clip art, etc., are an emphasized feature.

"No special training is needed—just a few clicks", according to Mr. Morgan. Any object may be animated; you can add digital video animation, sound and synchronized narration. You can save to disk(s) and send or hand to your clients with a full demonstration of what service or product you offer. A user can even add interactivity by making any object button control your presentation. Slides, overhead projections and video tapes are computer based. On-screen presentations appear to be most welcome as tools for instructors and public speakers. The sophisticated production that we have seen on television news, TV advertising, etc., appears to be available now to anyone with inexpensive equipment. The cost of the software is unbelievably low.

ASTOUND has menu bars, and pull-down and pop-up menus. Robert Morgan feels that all the help that you need is on the screen available "for the clicking." ASTOUND can perform 3-D presentations (like you see with CAD). "The time-line is the heart of the presentation. Much time is saved compared to other programs." Voice-over editing is permitted. Mr. Morgan demonstrated by placing a graphics voice track on the screen. The "uhs" and "ahs" can be erased right on the graphics screen. Animation and graphics are very easy to do. One can put together a demo presentation disk to market your product or service and give out the disks. Minimum Requirement: ASTOUND; 486, 4MB (8 MB is better), 66 MHZ. Cost: ASTOUND: Retail, \$399; Computer City \$129. Gold Disk SPECIAL OFFER TO TPCUG \$79.00 ASTOUND/Video Director bundle SPECIAL OFFER TO TPCUG \$150.00

VIDEO DIRECTOR software. Plug your computer into your camcorder or VCR. Video Director has three modes: Icon, Text and Graphics. A tape library is nice to work with. The video clip that you developed with ASTOUND can be selected to be saved on tape (you have already saved it to disk in the ASTOUND software). Pull in the clips that you want. Click to make tapes. One can create the video clip, click the camcorder to make a video tape for replay on the VCR and go have a cup of coffee while your take is being recorded. Minimum Requirement: VIDEO DIRECTOR: 386, 2MB. VIDEO DIRECTOR: Retail, \$199; CompUSA, \$119, SPECIAL OFFER TO TPCUG \$89.00.

Editorial Comment: See Kathrine Powell's excellent review article on Video Director, Ver. 2.0, in Bits of Blue.

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Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.
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Tampa, FL 33601-3492



First Class Mail

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

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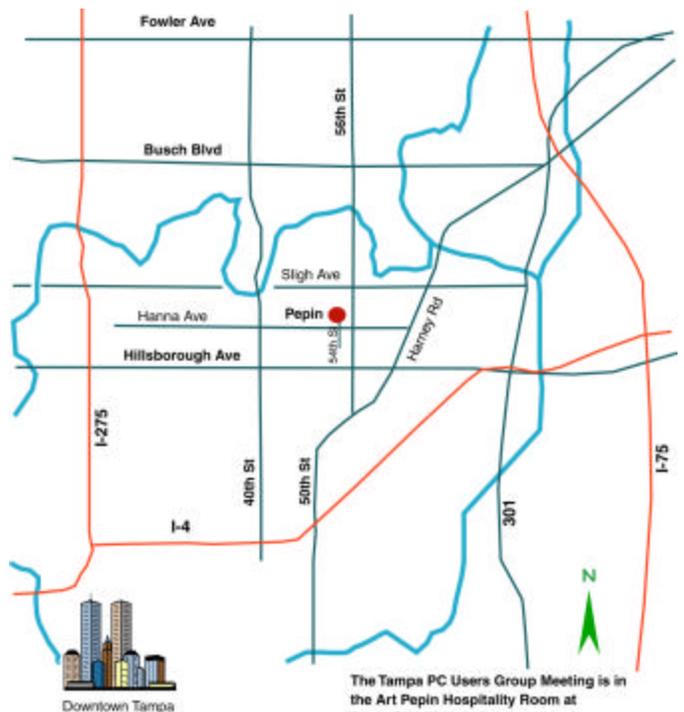
Jan., 1995 on Page 5. Yep! The prices are a correct quote of the Special Offer from Gold Disk.

Robert Morgan gave an excellent presentation of these two software programs. Comments were concise, understandable and meaningful. His demonstration was well planned. He is GOOD!

Robert Morgan and GOLD DISK donated the door prizes. We all appreciate this generosity. The following door prize winners appreciate them even more than the rest of us!

Jay Reese	Multimedia Magic
M. N. Marteny	Multimedia Magic
John Lucas	ASTOUND
M. N. Marteny	VIDEO DIRECTOR

Harvey thanked all for coming. He reminded all to return here (Ybor Room at HCC YBOR Campus, adjacent to the Administration Building) March 8, 1995, 6 PM. Bring a friend. Sign up a new member. Use the BBS. ♦



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