



August in Tampa

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

Vol. 18 No. 8

August 2005

Meeting

Merle Nicholson
Linspire
A Linux based desktop

Wednesday, August 10, 2005
6:30 PM
Art Pepin Hospitality Room
Pepin Distributing Co.
6401 N 54th St
Tampa, Florida

Meeting Preview: Merle Nicholson will tell us about Linspire, a Linux based desktop. 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

This will probably be our last meeting at the present location. If things go according to plan, in September we will be meeting at the new Pepin location a few miles south of the current location. As soon as we know for sure, a new map will be posted at our web site, and a notice and map will appear in the next newsletter. That's if everything goes according to plan.

I just downloaded my email that had arrived since I turned off my computer nine hours ago. There were 94 messages--and every one of them was SPAM. I will receive an equal number of messages during the day, and probably only five or ten will be legitimate email. I am sure with deleting about 200 messages a day some legitimate email gets included. So if you send me an email and don't get a response, send it again because your first one may have been deleted in error. ♦

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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.

RENEWING YOUR MEMBERSHIP?

WE CERTAINLY HOPE YOU WILL

MAIL YOUR CHECK AND ANY
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\$25 Individual \$35 Family
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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 July Meeting

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

Vice President John Witmer started the SIG portion of our meeting at 6:35 p.m. in the absence of both Mary Sheridan, Member at Large, and President Kevan Sheridan. Kevan's absence was because he had to work late.

John announced that the Intel Build Your Own Computer presentation has been moved from August to our November 9th meeting as the program is being revised to permit more flexibility on the participants' part in deciding what they want. John also said that Pepin is moving right after our August meeting. The new location will be south of the existing, on 50th Street at the northeast corner of Martin Luther King Blvd. We will have to get instructions out in the newsletter for getting into the site and finding the meeting place for our September meeting.

Mike Hodges, Treasurer, distributed membership cards and nametags. The cards were very professionally done and waterproofed and the nametags now all match. We can thank Mary Sheridan for such a great job.

Bruce Register reminded us that Comp USA honors our Group with discounts in the range of 12%, so use those membership cards to get your discounts by going to the commercial or service checkout, not the front registers.

At 7:00, the regular meeting began with John introducing our presenter of the evening, William LaMartin, distinguished member and editor of our newsletter. William's demo this evening focused on two areas of interest, examples of Visual Basic .Net Programming and some aspects of digital photography, two areas that consume much of his time. We also got to see part of his collection of "Old Florida" photographs.

According to William, VB.Net is a far more powerful programming language than the old Visual Basic. William gave examples of how to program for the Web, the Windows desktop and the Pocket PC using Visual Ba-

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Member of
The Association of
Personal Computer User Groups

Photoshop Elements 3

By Jim Purcell, Tampa PC Users Group
edward_j_p@msn.com

BACKGROUND

Adobe Photoshop has long been the industry standard for editing photos. A high percentage of all of the photographs that have been published in the past decade have been edited in some way by Photoshop. This excellent program, however, is quite expensive (\$599.00 list price), very difficult to learn and has many features that only a professional photographer will use.

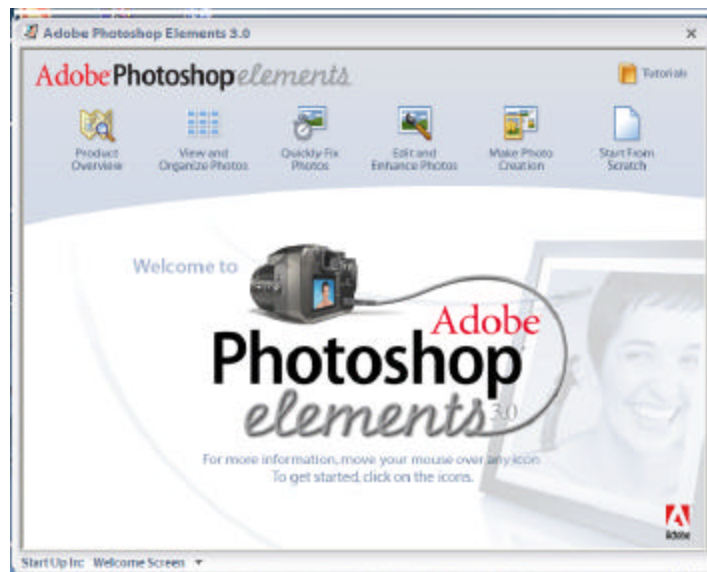
Adobe has worked for sometime to develop a program for the everyday photographer. They started with PhotoDeluxe then Photoshop LE but didn't seem to get the mix of low cost, ease of use and a sufficient number of tools until they developed Photoshop Elements 1. The program was improved with the issue of Photoshop Elements 2. Both of these programs were still a little difficult to learn. With the release of version 3, they have not only greatly expanded the capabilities of the program but also have made it much easier to use and understand.

Adobe has improved Elements as it improved Photoshop. Photoshop Elements 1 was based on Photoshop 6, Elements 2 was based on Photoshop 7 and Elements 3 was based on Photoshop CS, which means that you can use some plug-ins and brushes that were designed for Photoshop CS that weren't compatible in previous versions of Elements.

The Windows version of Elements 3 requires Windows XP with Service Pack 1 or Windows 2000 with Service Pack 4.

The Elements 3 Welcome screen is at the top of the page. The choices across the top of the screen show the new organization of Photoshop Elements 3.

All of the Elements programs are loaded with the tools to edit your digital images and create an unimaginable variety of special effects and projects, especially using the Adobe system of layering. Another thing that is special about Photoshop and all of the Elements programs is that practically everything you do has a keyboard shortcut that is identified on the mouse command. As you learn these shortcuts, your speed and ease in operating the program increases greatly. There is no way that this article can begin to cover all of these capabilities. The O'Reilly book *Photoshop Elements 3: The Missing Manual* devotes



more than 500 pages to the subject. I will try to cover "What's new in Elements 3" and discuss some of the program's highlights that I think by themselves make the program worth the purchase price (List Price \$99.99, but often on sale for less than \$60). You can get additional information and see some graphic illustrations of the program's capabilities at <http://www.adobe.com/digitalimag/main.html>. You can also download a demo of the program at that site.

SOME OF WHAT'S NEW IN ELEMENTS 3

- **Organizer:** Adobe has merged their previous program, Adobe Photoshop Album, with Elements 3. You can use it to collect your photos, store them and search for them using a sophisticated system of tags. You can also set up many different ways of viewing your files. The Create section provides the ability to make Slide Shows, Cards, Postcards, Wall Calendars and other projects.
- **Photo Review:** Allows you to show acquired photos in full screen in slide show format.
- **Version Sets:** Keep track of multiple versions of edited or shared photos by automatically creating a stacked "history" of the multiple copies.
- **Creations Wizard:** Simplifies the tasks performed by the Creation command such as the slide show, calendar and post cards.
- **Stacks:** Save space in the catalog by stacking less than perfect photo shots behind your favorite of the group.
- **Photo Compare:** Allows you to show acquired photos side-by-side in slide show format
- **Quick Fix:** The Quick Fix window has been redesigned. The new tools and commands often create dramatic results, and with the before-and-after display of

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your photos, you can see and evaluate the changes as they take place.

- **16-bit Image Support:** The more technically proficient can work with 16 bit images. There is a limit to the kinds of edits that you can make using this extra color information but you can make these changes and save your photo in the extra detail.
- **Noise removal capability:** If you are using a digital camera, you probably have seen noise in some of your photos. The noise reduction filter should help correct the grainy areas.
- **Shadows/Highlights adjustment:** This tool allows you to correct exposure errors by adjusting shadows, highlights and mid-tones quickly and easily.
- **Styles and Effects palette:** This palette now contains over 100 customizable filters, effects and layer styles.
- **Spot Healing Brush:** This tool allows you to brush away blemishes.
- **Red Eye Tool:** This tool has been redesigned to allow you to correct red eyes more effectively than before and with just one click.
- **Cookie Cutter tool:** This tool crops your photos in a predetermined shape of your choosing.
- **Photo Bin:** The bin displays all photos that you have open so that you can juggle multiple photos. It can be reduced or enlarged, or it can be eliminated to enlarge your workspace or restored with a single click
- **Scan Multiple Photos:** You can scan multiple photos on your flat bed scanner, and the program will separate the photos and let you save them as individual files.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS:

Organizer:

The Photo Browser is the main workspace for organizing your photos. The terms “browser,” which is one of the three windows in the Organizer, and “organizer” are sometimes used interchangeably, which may at first be a little confusing. The Organizer shows thumbnails of all of the photos that you acquire from various sources. The slider at the bottom of the screen allows you to adjust the thumbnails from very small images approximately nine across to a large single thumbnail on the screen. You can acquire photos from files or folders, cameras, scanners and other sources listed under the Get Photos command button. Your files remain where you want them or have stored them. The Organizer merely contains thumbnails that point to the file. If you plan to use Organizer, you need to add, delete and move your files through Organizer to insure that the thumbnails remain connected. Some of the features of the Organizer are a bit aggressive. The Photo Downloader may jump ahead of your camera’s software, moving photos

from your camera to your computer, so be aware that you may have to make choices on how you perform some of the tasks.

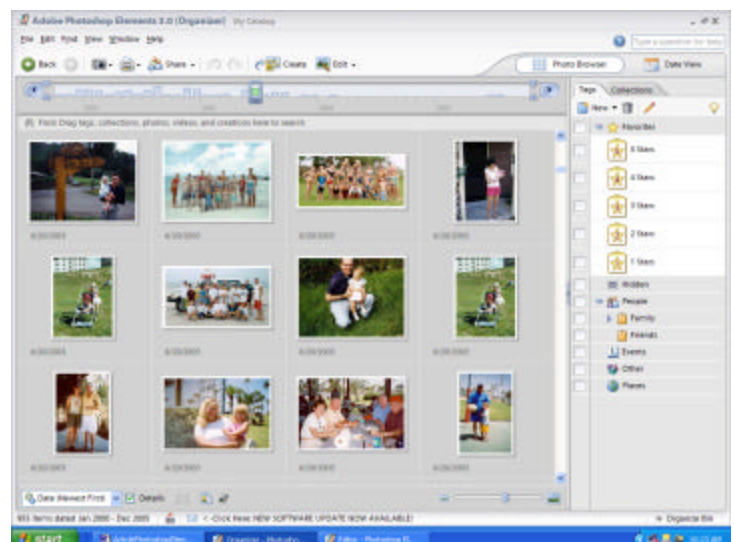
The Organizer automatically assigns a timeline to your photos, so you can search in the point in time in which the photos were taken or in which they were brought into your computer if there is no time otherwise attached to the file. There is a system of tagging that allows you to search in as much or as little detail as you desire.

Organizer also has a very versatile and elaborate built-in backup system for your photos. It’s easy to backup to a hard drive, a CD or a DVD. You can choose to backup your catalog only or include your files. If you choose to move your files to a CD, the program will name the CD so that when you at some future date click on a thumbnail of an archived file it will tell you the name of the CD that you have to load in order to retrieve the file.

In summary, the Organizer is a very powerful tool that you will probably love or hate, but even if you hate it, you’ll probably find some of the features quite useful.

Quick Fix Window: The Quick Fix Window is probably the most significant feature that has been added to Elements. For the first time user of Elements, it allows correction and enhancement of photos by pressing a button and, with the pictures placed side-by-side, it greatly eases the job of fine-tuning the photo. You are able to make significant improvements to your pictures while knowing little or nothing about the process. It allows you to do some positive work while learning the system. I’m sure longtime users will often start at this page to adjust things like shadows and highlights to take advantage of the side-by-side feature.

(Photoshop Elements.....Continued on page 5)



(Photoshop Elements.....Continued from page 4)

This window contains a group of four tools from the Standard Edit screen. They operate the same in both edit windows and have the same keyboard shortcuts. The Zoom and Hand Tools are the same tools found in many programs that allow you to enlarge and shrink the image and to move it about the work space. The Cropping Tool allows you to crop a rectangle or an ellipse. You can set the exact size or the proportions of the sides of the rectangle. The Red Eye tool works better than any I've used in removing the pesky red eye from your photos and normally requires only one click per eye. If you don't like the results, you can undo, then adjust the darkness and pupil size and click again and continue until you have the results you want.

The Quick Fix Control Panel below is where most of the editing adjustment takes place. The Smart Fix command is what most of the excitement concerning this window is all about. With one click, the command automatically adjusts the picture's lighting, color and contrast. If you are happy with the results, you can move on to the next photo. If it needs sharpening, you can move that tool first. If you are not happy with the Smart Fix command results, you can undo it and try using the Smart Fix slider by gradually changing the amount. Sometimes Smart Fix will not be smart enough to satisfy you and you can undo the results and work through each of the Levels, Contrast and Color Auto buttons, or the slides for each, to satisfy your eye. Of course, you still have the option of moving to the Standard Edit window, where you can take advantage of the wealth of tools and even the famous layer system with all of the selection tools to "fine tune" your job.

(Photoshop Elements.....Continued on page 7)

Internet Picture of the Month



Space Shuttle Discovery

Space Shuttle Discovery viewed from the International Space Station moments before docking on July 28, 2005.

The photo is from the NASA site <http://www.nasa.gov/> in the Photo Gallery section.

There are many other items there to help you explore the return of the Shuttle fleet to flight

August's Interesting World Wide Web Locations

Tampa PC Users Group (That's us)

<http://www.tpcug.org/>

Internet Archive

<http://www.archive.org/>

Prescription Drugs

<http://www.drugs.com/>

Flickr - Photo Sharing

<http://flickr.com/>

All Net Tools

<http://www.all-nettools.com/>

Renovator's Supply

<http://www.rensup.com/>

MerleNicholson.com (Our presenter)

<http://www.merlenicholson.com/>



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 August 1995 *Bits of Blue* newsletter

President's Column

By Harvey Bruneau

I certainly hope that each of you weathered hurricane Erin without any major problems. In the aftermath of this storm, it's easy to for many individuals in the Tampa Bay area to say the storm was a wimp. Nevertheless, the center of the storm came less than forty miles from Tampa. It certainly could have been worse. Personally, I thought it was going to be, based on information coming across from the news media. We should all be prepared for these storms and not chance a disaster. Ask the people in the Florida panhandle how they liked Erin. I am sure they have a story that is 180° different from ours.

After the storm, the story, *The Little Engine That Could*, came to mind. Two events happened that caused me to think of this. One was the backups I created for our small data center the night before the storm was to hit, and the second was Erin itself. My nightly backups are usually performed on a 4Gig Mountain tape drive. Unfortunately, it had failed the week before, and I was waiting for a replacement from Mountain. While waiting for the replacement drive, I purchased a 4Gig Conner tape drive from Computer City to ensure that I would have daily backups. At this point Erin was not even a tropical storm. After conversations with tech support from Arcada and Conner it was determined that limitations of the Arcada software that was included with the Conner drive was not going to allow me to properly backup my Novell server. By now Erin was a hurricane and bearing down on Florida and still no replacement drive. Well on Tuesday it was finally time to put plan C and D into action. Plan C was the use of Colorado Trakker 250Mb tape drives. Fortunately I had two. It took a lot of tapes and some time to backup four gigabytes, but it worked. This was a case of the little tape drives that could.

The second reminder is to look at the damage caused in the Pensacola area. Who thought that Erin, that little bitty storm could do over \$200,000,000 worth of damage. I guess it was the little storm that could.

I mentioned in my column last month, we are looking for early candidates to fulfill officer positions of the Tampa PC Users Group for the 1996 year. Elections will be held in December. Let's not wait until the elections to realize that we have no volunteers to run the business of the Tampa PC Users Group in '96. Following is a list of officers needed to run a PC user group and their associated brief job descriptions. I have added some positions which do not currently exist but are important. Additionally, I have placed the names of those individuals currently assuming, in whole or part, the responsibility of each position.

- President (Officer) Harvey Bruneau Duties: Ensure the delivery of the group's mission to its members. Lead meetings and provide overall direction. Serve as overall representative of the user group to the public.
- Vice President (Officer) William LaMartin Duties: Act as president during president's unavailability and chair key committees. Fill other key roles as determined by group needs.
- Secretary (Officer) Bruce Register Duties: Manage correspondence and records. Records minutes from group's general and board meetings.
- Treasurer (Officer) Tom Cone Duties: Oversee financial resources, recording, and reporting.
- Director/Chairperson/Committee Head/Task Leader Tom Cone Committee/Task: Membership Duties: Coordinate new member recruitment and existing member retention. Manage database and membership communication.
- Committee/Task: Program Director Harvey Bruneau Duties: Handle planning and direction of speakers, presentations, demos, special events, and other programs. Periodically query members to identify speakers and programs of interest, satisfaction, and dissatisfaction.
- Committee/Task: Vendor Relations Harvey Bruneau Duties: Responsible for communication with vendors (hard-ware and software; local, regional, and national) regarding working with the group, special events, obtaining review products and door prizes, and other activities.
- Committee/Task: Volunteer Coordinator All officers Duties: Coordinate volunteer recruitment, management, and recognition.
- Committee/Task: Equipment Manager Bruce Register, All officers Duties: Manage inventory, transportation, availability, and storage of equipment owned by group or used by group.
- Committee/Task: Marketing/Public Relations Connie Kincaid, All members Duties: Direct publicity, including media relations, community relations, and special event promotion.
- Committee/Task: Advertising Marylee Bruneau Duties: Manage advertising sales in user group newsletter and advertising placements for group activities. Committee/Task: SIG Director William LaMartin Duties: Assist special interest groups with program development, publicity, membership, meeting arrangements, and other tasks.
- Committee/Task: Newsletter/Magazine Editor Marylee & Harvey Bruneau Duties: Oversee editorial development and submissions, design, production, and distribution of newsletter. Prepares and sorts mail according to bulk mail postal regulations. Creates electronic version, Adobe Acrobat, of newsletter. Selects and distributes

(1995.....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, 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. Mary Sheridan moderates the discussion.

(1995.....Continued from page 6)

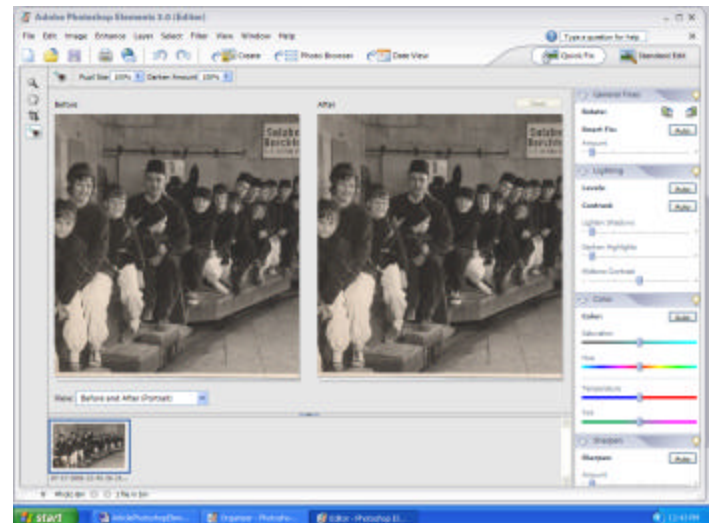
articles to be published in Tampa Bay Online via Prodigy.

- Committee/Task; Bulletin Board Sysop Kevin Sheridan/Al Poole Duties: Maintain and operate group bulletin board system.
- Committee/Task: Librarian/Resource Center Coordinator Larry Anders Duties: Coordinate shareware, public domain software, and other resources for group.
- Committee/Task: Software Review Editor/Coordinator Harvey & Marylee Bruneau Duties: Get review software from vendors, coordinate getting software to review writers, and follow up on reviews.
- Committee/Task: Legal Counsel Tom Cone Duties: Advise group on legal issues.
- Committee/Task: Finance Tom Cone/William LaMartin Duties: Advise and oversee financial management. Committee/Task: Development/Fund-raising All officers Duties: Plan and oversee fund-raising events and activities.
- Committee/Task: Community Relations/Outreach Harvey & Marylee Bruneau Duties: Manage community services activities and serve as contact person with community at large.

In conclusion, if you are interested in serving your group in any one or more of the above positions, share those thoughts with the officers in person at the monthly meeting on the BBS or by phone. The future and the success of the Tampa PC Users Group depends on volunteers committed to leading the group.



(Photoshop Elements.....Continued from page 5)



Summary: I've tried to cover the significant changes that have been included in Photoshop Elements 3. As I've mentioned, this article doesn't begin to touch on the total capabilities of Photoshop Elements 1, 2 or 3. There is massive help and an extensive tutorial system available in Elements to help you utilize its many capabilities. There are also many publications that provide even more insight into the use of all of the available tools. I purchased the O'Reilly book *Photoshop Elements 3: The Missing Manual* by Barbara Brundage. It is an excellent and well organized manual for Photoshop Elements 3. It's available on Amazon.com for about \$13 below list price. (If you purchase any books from Amazon.com, don't forget to go through the TPCUG web site.) ◆

Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.
P. O. Box 3492
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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sic .Net.

In the digital photography section, William showed us photos he has taken with his digital camera and demonstrated how you can modify or improve them using Adobe Photoshop. We had fun making him and other subjects look better (or in some cases worse) than they are in real life. It was lots of fun, but time consuming. It was 9:00 p.m. before we knew it. Thanks William for an entertaining evening.

We had no door prizes to give at this meeting, so we adjourned at about 9:00 p.m. ◆

