Bits of Blue

September in Tampa

Vol. 18 No. 9   September 2005

Meeting

Sunbelt Software

Wednesday, September 14, 2005
6:30 PM
Art Pepin Hospitality Room
Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th St
Tampa, Florida

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Meeting Preview: Phil Owens from Sunbelt Software and David Bove, spyware research director for Sunbelt Software, will tell us about their products. We will also have the usual half-hour Windows SIG.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
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New Meeting Site Be sure to look on page eight for a map of our new meeting location at Pepin Distributing Co., 4121 N 50th Street. We certainly appreciate Pepin for making this room available to us and for John Witmer for organizing everything. John says that if anyone gets lost, please call him at 404-4655 for directions.

Hurricanes We thought last year was bad with four major hurricanes striking Florida. This year we have had two lesser ones strike Florida. However, one of those lesser ones, Katrina, after passing over Florida grew into the monster that totally destroyed the Mississippi Gulf Coast and left most of New Orleans under water. As I write this, after a week of ter-

October Meeting: Pinnacle Systems is scheduled to make their Studio Plus presentation

Friends of the User Group

We acknowledge the following for their support

Marshall & Stevens
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Minutes of the August 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 pm. John reminded us that Pepin is moving on Aug 12th to their new location at 4121 N. 50th Street. We have directions in this newsletter. Also let John know if you are interested in used 17-inch and maybe some 19-inch monitors that Pepin no longer wants.

John announced the Fall Conference of FACUG to be held Oct. 22, 2005 at the Sahib Shrine Temple, 600 N. Beneva Road in Sarasota. Go to their website for details.

Mary Sheridan, Member at Large, reminded us that election of officers for 2006 will be upon us soon. We will seek nominations in November with elections at our December meeting. We really need to get fresh blood as some of our officers need relief. Please think about serving.

Bob LaFave fielded several questions that members raised about programs available and updates to Microsoft's Windows XP.

At 7:00 pm John introduced our speaker for the evening, our very own Merle Nicholson. Merle told us about Linspire, a Linux based operating system previously known as Lindows. For an annual fee of $49.95, you can subscribe to a website called Click & Run which allows you to download thousands of Linux based programs. PC club members can get a nice deal from Steve Singer of RDI, which includes an installation CD, a Linspire "Extras" disk AND the "Gold Membership" allowing access to their warehouse of programs. Such a deal!

Wireless Internet Access on Two Fronts

By Larry Anders, Librarian, Tampa PC Users Group
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I've been away from writing articles for the newsletter for a while because of my busy work schedule, but I've recently had some experiences with some stuff I wanted to pass along.

I've had wireless Internet access at home now for a couple of years but was never really impressed with it. Anytime I was close enough to the router I always plugged in my notebook with a cable and my desktop stays plugged-in all of the time. If it was absolutely necessary I would unplug and go into other rooms of the house with my notebook or PocketPC. My connection would always seem to go in and out. I typically also had the same type of problem when I traveled. But recently my daughter convinced me to upgrade to a Belkin F5D8230-4 wireless Pre-N broadband router and wireless Pre-N notebook network card. Pre-N is the latest wireless technology preceded by wireless b and g.

Since installing the Belkin, my connection has never been so strong or steady. It is at least as good as or better than my direct cable connection. I can now walk out in my yard or next door and still have a very good connection. I'm not sure if it is the addition of the wireless network card, instead of using the internal adapter, or if it is the three antennas on the router, or a combination of both. Belkin's ad says it's both. A new smart antenna technology that boosts wireless network speed and range far beyond that of a 802.11b or g router, and they claim the wireless network card will increase performance another 20% over the built-in internal card. All I know is that my daughter was correct. This is the fastest and most reliable wireless connection I have ever experienced. If you're looking for a reliable, fast, wireless Internet connection, I highly recommend looking into this dynamic pair. Below is a link to a recent test done on both. http://www.pcworld.com/reviews/chart_test_report/0,chid,6089,prodid,25740,00.asp.

I'm on vacation this week as I write this, and there is something else I wanted to tell you about that has made my vacation more enjoyable. We typically go to Indian Rocks Beach in Pinellas County during the summer for a week or two. We stay at some very good friends' condo with no broadband service. I usually just fire up my old AOL account and use it to check my email. After being on cable at home and DSL at work, dial-up is better than nothing, but in my opinion, not much. My daughter came through for me on this, too.

If you're like me, and have not already signed up for the service, you've probably seen or heard the commercials about Verizon's new wireless broadband service. Having used a cell phone in the past to access the Internet and not liked the results, I had not really paid much attention to the advertisements. Well, my daughter loaned me her Verizon wireless broadband NationalAccess PC card to use while I was here at the beach, and it is really terrific.

If you're not familiar with it, anywhere there is cell phone access, you will be able to access the Internet at speeds typically between 400-700 kbps up to 2 Mbps. In a taxi, airport, or at a park, one click and you are connected. I will admit I was truly surprised at the ability of the service. And, if you are on a VPN at work, all of the security is included in the service to connect to that also. The card snapped into the PCMCIA slot, a setup CD was included, and after a few clicks I was connected. The charge is $79 per month for unlimited connection time. It's a little costly when compared to other normal services, but you can't beat the freedom of accessing the Internet anytime, anywhere. ◆

(Comments……..Continued from page 1)

ror, almost all those who stayed in New Orleans and survived have been evacuated. The thousands of dead are yet to be counted.

I lived in New Orleans for eight years in the 1970s and drove along the Gulf Coast many times. So I have been mesmerized by the TV and computer images of destruction and despair, so much so that I have had difficulty finding time to put this newslet-

Good Service on OfficeJet 4215

By Merle Nicholson
merle@merlenicholson.com

I bought a new HP OfficeJet 4215 all-in-one from NewEgg.com – a low end one at $80 plus $6.50 shipping. It's a FAX, copier, scanner and inkjet printer. I ordered it online and received it via FedEx five days later. As I unpacked it, it didn't take long to find out the "front panel overlay" that snaps around the keyboard was missing from the box.

It wouldn't work at all without the cover. There are four switches that have to get depressed by this cover for the machine's own setup to work. It would power up, but I got messages that the panel overlay wasn't installed, and it went no further.

This printer has an LCD screen that enables all sorts of setup options for all of its functions, including prompts for cartridge replacement. There's no guessing here; this little baby tells you what to do. It said to install the overlay.

So I called HP's 1-800 support number about 4:00 PM the same day, talked to a pretty good customer service lady presumably in India; it took her several minutes to find out she could FedEx me one, and a follow-up email gave me an expected delivery for four days later. The next morning at 9:00 AM the FedEx guy was at the door with box in hand, say about 16 hours after I called tech support. Installed and working in 16 hours. It'd be hard to complain about HP's service.

The machine works pretty well. I haven't found anything I haven't liked so far. My research finding reviews haven't anything bad to say except for printing speed, but the cost was more important to me than speed. You can't say that it's slow, anyway, just not fast, about the same as my other printers. I have an old HP 722C I have set on draft black and white (the color cartridge emptied years ago) for very fast b&w copies, and a nice but rarely used Canon 850i for excellent color prints. All three are attached to the same PC, one parallel and two USB.

This OfficeJet has USB connection only. Other, more expensive models have Ethernet and even Bluetooth. The power cord is a simple small cord, no power cube – the way it should be. There are the incoming telephone line connector and an outgoing one if you want to connect a phone instrument.

My spouse wanted a copier that is easier than using the utility and scanner on my PC, and I've been exchanging FAXes with some business associates lately. I'd been connecting and powering up my notebook to receive FAXes, and I'd grown pretty tired of it. My past experience with multi-function devices wasn't too good, and I never recommended one to anyone unless they owned nothing – no printer, scanner or FAX machine. Then you could justify the cost. But all that's in the past. This does a good job of all of these functions for the price of an inexpensive printer. I'm keeping my flatbed scanner though; obviously you can't slide a book into the OfficeJet.

For FAX there are plenty of options for telephone line situations. You can set it up for a dedicated line, share it with a telephone using distinctive ring detection (an option from your telephone utility); share with a telephone and/or answer machine and receive only when you press a button. The instructions even go into sharing it on a line with DSL.

For copying, you just stack the paper in the scanner input tray, press Copy, quickly set the number of

copies if you want more than one, then press the Black or Color buttons.

If you're attached to a PC by USB cable, you can send scans to the PC – you set the default directory and it's automatic. Just load the paper and press Scan. It couldn't be easier. There is a scanner utility installed on the PC that detects the scan. It includes OCR if you receive the scan as Text. There is also photo organizer and photo printing software and more – see the list below.

You can FAX from the PC – and if you've shared the FAX on the network – from any networked PC. When you FAX from a PC, you select the OfficeJet FAX printer. A panel pops up on the attached PC with boxes for destination telephone, cover page fill-ins, the works. In my own case, the OfficeJet is attached to a PC I use for networked backups along with two other printers. If I FAX from my networked personal PC, I then have to go to the backups PC to fill in the FAX destination information.

And of course this is a FAX machine that stands alone; it doesn't have to be connected to a PC at all to FAX or to copy.

And obviously it's a standard color inkjet printer, too. If the printer is shared on the network, you can add that printer to any other PC and the printer driver automatically installs over the network, a feature of

Internet Picture of the Month

Here Lies Vera - God Help Us

Agents with the US Marshal's Service examine a makeshift grave at Jackson and Magazine in New Orleans. It was made by one of Vera's neighbors. The photo is from the site http://www.nola.com/, the Times-Picayune web site, where you can read full coverage of the disaster in New Orleans.

September's Interesting World Wide Web Locations

Tampa PC Users Group (That's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Sunbelt Software (Our Presenter)	http://www.sunbelt-software.com/
Truth Or Fiction - verify rumors	http://www.truthorfiction.com/
iStockphoto	http://www.istockphoto.com/
Webroot Software - Spy Sweeper	http://www.webroot.com/
New Orleans Newspaper	http://www.nola.com/
NOAA Katrina Photo Index	http://ngs.woc.noaa.gov/katrina/090E29M_KATRINA.HTM
Louisiana's Wetlands @ Nat. Geographic	http://www3.nationalgeographic.com/ngm/0410/feature5/

Looking Back to 1995

From the September 1995 *Bits of Blue* newsletter

SECRETARY'S REPORT
TPCUG MEETING 8/9/95, 6 PM
HCC Ybor Room Auditorium
Minutes and Comments by Bruce Register, Secretary

President Bruneau (Harvey) called the meeting to order. Miscellaneous comments and information were given: Harvey Bruneau shared Hurricane Erin preparedness. He stressed the importance of being serious about equipment and data. Losses can occur from wind, storm, rain, or sprinkler systems; or maybe even static electricity in the building through the metal superstructure or conduits. He emphasized backup systems. UPS and dedicated plugs are just some of the terms that have familiarity.

Planning is required for most ongoing systems before making a cold splash into W95. Some of your previous applications may not run in W95 without adding this or that software that you previously had within your software system. Some may elect to increase hard drive capacity so as to accommodate a dual boot, W95 and Windows 3.11. W95 will only run on Intel or clones. Other platforms give one an opportunity for other considerations. Many interesting opinions were expressed regarding many applications. (Secretary's opinion— Some people seemed to be polarized toward W95 or OS/2 Warp. Sometimes these strong opinions become almost argumentive as emotional preference is aggressively manifested. Our president, Harvey, seems to be exceptional at keeping peace while allowing everyone their say. One of the many benefits of TPCUG is the openness of the expressions by the members. We are exposed to other viewpoints. We are then able to have better understanding before making decisions). Much open and frank dialogue permeated the meeting. Several members stated that they thoroughly enjoyed and appreciated the broad participation. Several expressed opinions regarding the future of the computer world. All comments were enlightening and confidence builders. Someone suggested that TPCUG could set up a 286 in a retirement facility to fulfill the desire to provide community service. Volunteers are needed to do it; suggestions such as this are great and hopeful but "we need doers" according to one opinion. The conversation by individual members reflected enthusiasm during the break. One member stated the "refreshing sight to see pairs, threes, etc., groups exchanging information, assistance and fellowship." Sharing info and ideas are just one of the great benefits of TPCUG, Harvey stated.

Harvey reported that GTE has offered to present ISDN at their downtown GTE building. More later as plans develop. Several members responded with delight. Look for messages on the bulletin board. Some members have avoided using the TPCUG BBS. Do not hesitate to try it. You cannot break it. You cannot hurt it. You will enjoy the experience. If you have stage fright, just call one of those most willing helpers listed in the back of the BITS OF BLUE. Any of them will be glad to talk you through the access. In helping me, they have even "fired up" their own computer while talking to me over the phone. They would ask "Do you see......"? etc. They really like to assist you. Do not hesitate! Miscellaneous comments were "stay away from 5 volts and 60 Pentium", "Lotus Approach is better than ACCESS", "Be prepared to upgrade; but you may continue with your present system and may not need to go to the latest technology. If you need it; do it. If you do not need it; you might want to consult your pocketbook before jumping in." Other comments were also appreciated.

PRESENTATION: Tom Cone, Treasurer, shared a tool that he finds useful. Creator, V6.0, writes programs. It is a "code generator". It is not particularly sophisticated and is very easy to use. Tom presented highlights of the program rather than giving detailed training. He likes the program and uses it in building report programs. You tell it what kind of information you want to track and the type of screen you want. Creator then builds the program. You add fields as you desire. Creator is a commercial program that sells for $99 MOL (More or Less).

CONGRATULATIONS TO DOOR PRIZE WINNERS:

Pagekeeper	Steve Schoeneck
CD Murder Mystery	Wil Goble

The next regular meeting of TPCUG will be Wednesday, September 13, 1995, 6 PM at Ybor Room, Administrative Building, Ybor City HCC. Come and bring someone, your spouse, pharmacist, neighbor or friend, etc. ◆

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 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.

(Minutes……….Continued from page 2)

Merle suggested you set up your system to operate bothWindows and Linspire in a dual-boot setup. In fact he offered a used computer for $150 already programmed with Linspire. This system has an AMD 1300+ MHz chip, 40 Gig hard drive, 256 MB RAM, speakers and keyboard.

Someone asked if Linspire would be compatible with his or her existing devices, printers, etc. Merle said in most cases they probably are but printer settings must be changed. USB connected devices work best.

Merle demonstrated how easy it was to use Linspire and showed us some applications. As usual, the hour and a half zipped by. If you are interested in trying Linspire, remember Merle's pre-programmed computer, or get in touch with Steve Singer. Thanks Merle for an interesting evening.

After a short break during which Mary sold raffle tickets, we had a drawing for a year's subscription to Smart Computing Magazine. Jim Purcell was the lucky ticket holder.

The meeting concluded about 9:00 pm. ◆

(OfficeJet……….Continued from page 5)

Windows XP. It has two ink cartridges – a three-color and a black. You can convert the printer to a 7-color photo printer by removing the black and snapping in a photo cartridge. I haven't tried this out, but there's no reason to expect anything but good results; all the reviews I've read praise the photo quality. After all, it's an HP.

Hewlett-Packard OfficeJet 4215
$99.99 List price from HP
$79.99 NewEgg.com (8/25/05)
$92.99 BUY.com (8/25/05)
$89.99 CompUSA (8/25/05)

Some specs:
USB Cable not included
Document feeder: 20 sheets
Input capacity: 100 sheets (doesn't look like it to me)
Media: all the stuff, paper, cards, envelopes
Printer:
Print speed black, draft mode: 17ppm
Print speed black, best mode: 0.9ppm
Print speed color, best mode: 1ppm
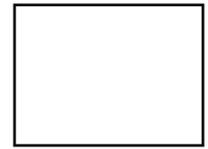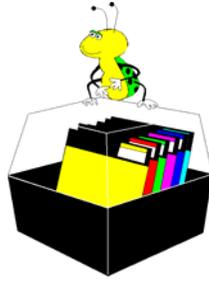**FAX:**
Color FAX
FAX memory: 100 pages
FAX forwarding
Distinctive ring detection
Copier:
Copy speed: 17cpm black, 12cpm color

Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.
P. O. Box 3492
Tampa, FL 33601-3492

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Resolution: 600dpi black, 2400x1200dpi on photo paper
Max: 100 copies
Scanner:
Hardware resolution: 600x1200 dpi, 19200 dpi enhanced
Bit depth: 36 bit
Software:
HP Image Zone Photo & Imaging software: HP Director, HP Photo Gallery, HP Image Editor, HP Instant Share, HP Photo Prints, HP Album Printing, HP Quick 4 x 6 prints, Readiris OCR, HP Send to Programs ◆

ter together. But the newsletter is finished (thanks to this month's contributors), and my concluding thought is that if such a powerful storm should come your way, be prepared to leave and take what is important with you--and don't be slow about doing it. As best I can tell, those with whom I have remained in contact in New Orleans all evacuated successfully. ◆

to I-275

Hillsborough Ave

56th Street

TPCUG Meeting Site
Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th Street

Harney Road

I-4

Martin Luther King Blvd

50th Street

to Tampa

N

Columbus Ave