



December in Tampa

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

Vol. 18 No. 12 December 2005

Meeting

Smart Computing & Holiday Party

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

Meeting Preview: This month we have Smart Computing and our annual holiday party 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

Jim Purcell and Merle Nicholson heeded the call for articles and made this newsletter much easier to produce than was last month's. For next month, it's someone else's turn. So....get to work!

Speaking of Merle, I had him build me a new computer. The four year old desktop from Gateway was getting a bit old and cluttered. This one is has an AMD Athon 64 4400+ dual core processor, two GB of memory, two 250 GB serial ATA hard drives configured in as Raid 0, two DVD/CD Read/Write drives, and a very nice Samsung 20-inch LCD monitor.

Perhaps next month I will give a complete description of the

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January Meeting: Intel's Build Your Own Computer, presented by Bob LaFave

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

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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Minutes of the November Meeting

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

Member at Large, Mary Sheridan, started the SIG portion of our meeting at 6:30 pm. We discussed whether or not you should defrag your PC's hard drive. The consensus was that, although defragging does cause wear, if you first delete programs/files you no longer use and run Disc Clean-up before defragging, you minimize the wear and improve the efficiency of your machine. Always analyze your system to see that defragging is recommended. Also remember to run Disc Check after defragging. The entire discussion was humorously highlighted by a dialog between Merle Nicholson and Bob LaFave over what you should and should not delete from your computer.

Bob LaFave announced he is willing to present a session on Windows Restore Console during the SIG portion at an upcoming meeting after the first of the year.

At 7:00 we launched the new "Business" portion of our meeting. Mary announced the nominees for office for next year as follows; John Witmer for President; Kevan Sheridan for Vice President; Mike Hodges for Treasurer; Doug Mullis for Secretary; and Mary Sheridan for Member at Large. Mary asked for nominations from the floor; none was offered. The election will be at our Dec.14th meeting. We will also have our Christmas Party, and Smart Computing Magazine will be our presenter. Bring finger food or dessert if you wish for our party.

At 7:10 our Program Director, Doug Mullis, introduced our speaker for the evening, Mr. Dennis Elliott, who lectures primarily on PC technology to computer clubs in western Florida. He calls himself the Clone Evangelist and presented a 45-minute presentation with sound and graphics tracing the amusing evolution of the PC over a 25-year period.

According to D. J. Elliott, it all started at Xerox Corporation with a research project at Xerox Parc, CA, where they invented the mouse, the graphic user interface, the laser jet printer and the Ethernet. Xerox mothballed these new inventions, as they were not interested in expanding their product line beyond copy machines. Steve Jobs and Steve Wozniak of Apple Computer and upper management of IBM saw the potential for PC's, pirated these ideas and ran with them.

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Adobe Photoshop Elements 4

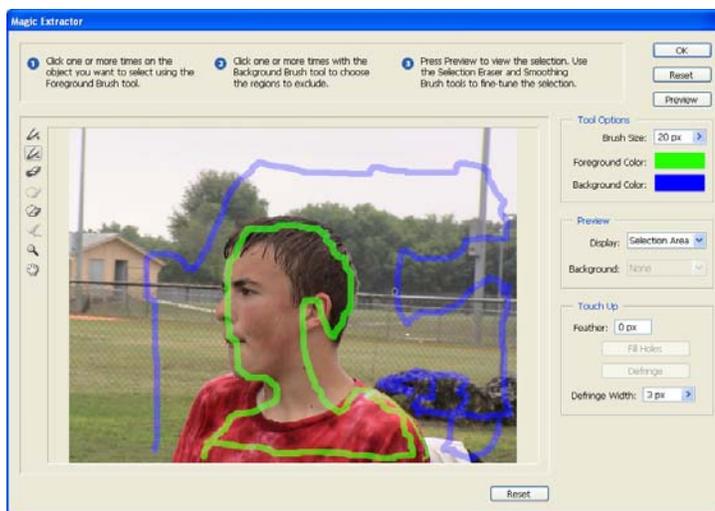
By Jim Purcell, Tampa PC Users Group

Edward_J_P@MSN.com

This is an update to the article on Adobe Photoshop Elements 3 that appeared in the August Bits of Blue Newsletter. That article focused on the new features that were available in Photoshop Elements 3, with some background information on the overall capabilities of the product. The focus of this article is to cover the new features in Elements 4 and the enhancements to the features in Elements 3.

What's New in Elements 4:

1) **Magic Selection Brush:** Using this tool, you select an item by using the Magic Selection brush to draw a few lines or place a few dots on the item. It's not necessary to trace the outline of the item; just try to cover the range of colors. Elements then calculates the outline of the item and selects it. The tools required to "fine tune" the selection, when necessary, are exceptionally easy to use. You simply paint in the area to be added with the plus brush or in the area to be deleted with the minus brush.



2) **Magic Extractor:** This tool is used in a way similar to the Magic Selection Brush in that the areas that you want selected are marked in the same way. After selecting the photo from which you want to extract an image, you select the tool and your photo appears in the preview area of the Magic Extractor. The Magic Extractor provides an array of tools to help you make a perfect selection.

- Foreground Brush.** This brush is used to mark the area that you want to extract.
- Background Brush.** You use this brush to mark the area that you want to exclude from your selection.
- Point Eraser Tool.** This tool is used to remove areas

marked by mistake by either the Foreground or the Background brush.

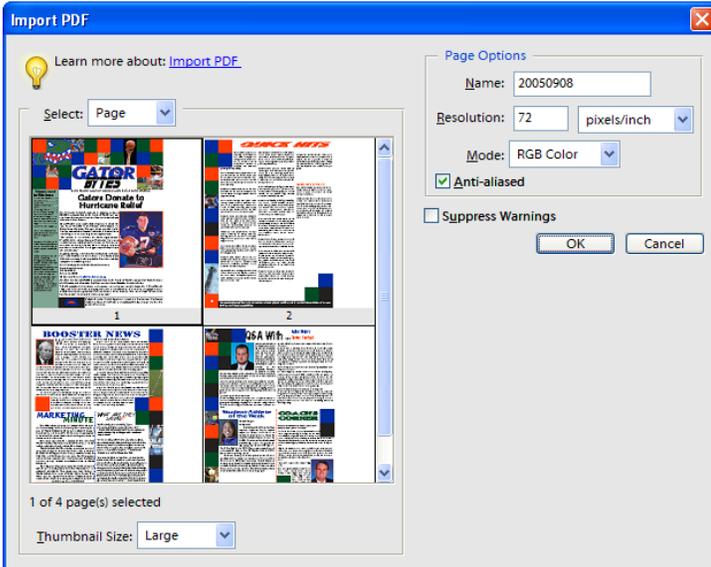
- Add to Selection Tool.** Use this to add to your selection.
 - Remove from Selection Tool.** Paint over areas that you want removed from the selection.
 - Smoothing Tool.** Use this tool after previewing to smooth ragged edges that aren't connected by the touch up commands that are also provided (Feather, Defringe and Fill Holes).
- Adjust Color of Skin Tone.** Call up this command and click on an area of skin in the photo. The skin tone and all colors in the photo will be adjusted. Tan and blush sliders are provided to fine tune your photo.
 - Red Eye Removal.** A new completely automatic Red Eye Removal Tool is one of the newest additions to Photoshop Elements. You can even select to have red eyes corrected automatically as you bring your photos into the program from your camera, scanner or file folders. You'll probably be happier with the results, however, if you wait until the photos are imported and then select the photos with a red eye problem. Once you've selected the photos to be corrected, you merely need to execute the tool from the organizer or the editor and the job is done. If you are not satisfied with the results on any of the photos, you can undo the action and use the regular Red Eye Removal tool in the Quick Fix or Standard Editor, which is more accurate and provides more flexibility (and is also a quick and easy tool to use). The strength of this program is that you also have tools like the clone stamp to use in particularly difficult situations where the "automatic" tools don't work as expected.
 - Defringe Command:** When a selection is moved or copied a portion of the former background is often transported with it. This command will remove that fringe to better allow it to blend into the new background.
 - Straighten Tool:** If you have a picture that is crooked, you merely need to select the photo, activate the Straighten Tool, and choose from three options: 1. Grow Canvas to Fit. 2. Crop to Remove Background. 3. Crop to Original Size. Then use your cursor to draw a line that identifies the part that should be level (such as the horizon) or perpendicular (such as a flag pole), and Elements straightens the photo.
 - WYSIWYG:** The font menu identifies what each font actually looks like.
 - One Click Printing:** Prints or Professional Hardbound Books from Photoshop Elements can be ordered by dragging the items to the "Order Prints" palette.
 - Slide Shows on TV:** If you have Windows XP Media Center 2005 installed on your computer, you can view Photoshop Element slide shows on your TV and navigate using your TV remote.
 - Face Tagging:** Elements will search a group of selected photos and isolate and display the faces on the photos with a thumbnail so that you can easily tag the photos in your organizer. The photos can be tagged by simply dragging the tag and dropping it on a face or by dragging a face and dropping it on a tag (you can tag multiple selected photos at once).

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- 11) **Search by Metadata:** In addition to the previous methods available to search for your photos you can now search by such items as file type, shutter speed, f stop, iso speed, camera name and camera model. This new feature also allows you to search using multiple criteria.
- 12) **PDF Support:** You can open a PDF document in Elements, which produces an Import PDF dialog box. With the Import PDF dialog box, you can preview the pages and images in a multi-page PDF file, then decide if you want to open them in the Editor. You can choose to import individual full pages (including text and graphics), or you can import just the images from a PDF file. If you import only the images, the resolution, size and color mode of the images remains unchanged. If you import pages, you can change the resolution and color mode.



What Has Changed in Elements 4

In addition to the new features, there are numerous enhancements to the previous features. Some of the significant changes in four functional areas are:

Editing and Selecting

- The Crop Tool has been enhanced. The “accept” and “reject” buttons have been moved to a more convenient location at the bottom corner of the item being cropped. New preset sizes have been added and a quick change control for the aspect ratio (switch from portrait to landscape, or landscape to portrait).
- Text handling has been improved. Paragraphs can be formatted and contained by the use of a text box.
- The Quick Fix automatic correction functions have been enhanced. New options and embedded profile support provide easier color management. These changes promise to make it easier to get the color you expect when printing.
- Raw data files from your camera can now be saved in the new Digital Negative format. The Digital Negative (DNG) format is Adobe’s proposed standard format for camera raw files. DNG files are useful for archiving camera raw images because they contain the raw camera sensor data and data specifying how the image should look. Camera Raw image settings can be stored in DNG files instead of in sidecar XMP files or the Camera Raw database.
- The Noise filter, used to remove noise resulting from shooting in low light and with the ISO camera settings, has been improved by adding the Remove JPEG Artifact function.

Sharing and Printing

- The slide show editor has been completely redesigned. Many new features have been added, including the ability to pan and zoom and to add clip art to your show. You can make final adjustments or complete enhancements to any photo, even in the middle of the slide show creation process. There are over 50 transitions included in the program. You have the ability to add text, graphics, narration and music (add multiple songs with precise start and end points). Edit and enhance photos from any point in the slide show creation process. Your work can be saved as a slide show, and you can go back and edit it at anytime.
- Create cards, calendars and photo albums, and send them to your printer. There are formats to personalize your email for various occasions and add your photos. You can also create your own wallpaper.

Viewing Tagging and Organizing

- The enhanced Photo Downloader is faster and can be used even when Photoshop Elements isn’t running. You can view your photos in full screen without the clutter of menus, or you can view two photos in the same mode either side by side or above and below.
- The Organizer allows you to view photos in four different ways. **Date (Newest First)** shows the most recently taken or imported photos first. (Within a given day, the photos are shown in the order they were taken, oldest-first, unless otherwise specified in the General Preferences dialog box). Newest-first order is convenient

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

when you need to attach tags to the photos you imported most recently. **Date (Oldest First)** shows all the photos in chronological order. **Import Batch** displays photos in the batches in which they were imported and shows how the photos were imported. **Folder Location** view in the Organizer splits the Photo Browser into three sections: a folder hierarchy panel on the left, an image thumbnail panel in the center, and the Palette Bin on the right. From this view you can manage your folders, add files to your catalog, automatically tag files using their folder names as the tags, and add or remove folders from Watched Folder status.

- Adding a caption is one more way of identifying your photo. The captions can be added in several ways, depending on the view you are using. Like almost everything else in this program, Adobe has made it as convenient as possible for the user. Captions can be used in Creations, printed in contact sheets, and viewed in a web photo gallery. If you have a microphone, you can even add an audio caption to your photo.

Summary: I've tried to cover the significant changes that have been included in Photoshop Elements 4. In addition to the extensive help and tutorial system available in Elements 4 to help you utilize its many capabilities, the changes to the Organizer provide you with an all-embracing search capability for your photos. 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 4: The Missing Manual* by Barbara Brundage, as I did her book for Elements 3. It is an excellent and well-organized manual for Photoshop Elements 4. It's available on Amazon.com. (If you purchase any books from Amazon.com, don't forget to go through the TPCUG web site.) ◆

Internet Picture of the Month



Bill Gates
Playing with an Xbox

With the introduction of the new Xbox, I wanted to use a photo of Mr. Gates with it, but all I could find were of poor quality. So here is one of him with the old toy from in January 2005.

The link is <http://www.microsoft.com/presspass/features/2005/jan05/01-05CES.msp>

December's Interesting World Wide Web Locations

Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)
Smart Computing (our presenter)
Windows OneCare Live
Fiddler HTTP Debugger
The Life of Birds

<http://www.tpcug.org/>
<http://www.smartcomputing.com/>
<http://beta.windowsonecare.com/>
<http://www.fiddlertool.com/fiddler/>
<http://www.pbs.org/lifeofbirds/>



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.

Photo Story 3 for Windows

By Merle Nicholson, Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

Photo Story 3 is a program that creates movies from your collections of digital photos. It's kind of a slideshow, like Ken Burns does for PBS. If your target platform is a PC, Pocket PC or a new Palm, it creates a Windows Media Video file (.wmv). It also will create DVD's to be played on a TV and for Windows Media PC. And the results are nothing short of spectacular.

Photo Story 3 is a free download from Microsoft. Yes, it's free. The previous version, Photo Story 2, is still distributed on the Windows Plus! CD, along with other things, and of, course, that's not free at all.

There's only one catch. It's a \$20 catch, and one that I bumped into early: If you want to make a DVD that will play in a standard DVD player, you need your own software for the creation of the DVD. I was unable to get my copy of Nero OEM to do that, but I did purchase a plug-in for PS3 that did all I needed. More about that later.

There are excellent tutorials on the Microsoft website, with more information than you'll ever need. I highly recommend looking at those. It's where I found the reference to the Sonic site where I bought the plug-in. All these are in the links section of this article.

Now for the program. If you do these following simple steps and did nothing else, you'll just love the results.

Collect all the pictures you want in your slideshow, preferably in a single folder, but if they are scattered around, you can deal with that inside the program, too. Step two, open the program and read in the pictures. Step three, move the pictures along the picture strip to get them in the order you want. Step four, pull in some music you've ripped from an audio CD, point the start of the music to the first picture, then look down the pictures to see where the music ends, and repeat the same music, or point to another. Step five, save the project in a file because you'll want to come back later. And last, step six, create the movie. For the first save, I'd create a movie file to be run on a PC at, say, 1024x768. When it's done, run the movie.

Everyone knows about Ken Burns' wonderful series on the Civil War for PBS, in which he used a technique on all the still photos where he panned through the picture and zoomed in or out of the photo to a point of interest to create a sense of motion. He may not have invented the idea, but his name became synonymous with the technique. I can remember being entranced with the impact of this when it came out.

Photo Story 3 does this pan and zoom on every picture by default. It's wonderful. And the funny thing is, it must be done randomly. It certainly can't know of the content of the picture to

do it intelligently. So after you've created your first show and maybe looked at it twice, then is the time to go back into the saved project and go to each slide and change the motion so that the motion fits into the context of the picture. Some pictures you'll want to have no motion at all, and perhaps some you may want to repeat the picture so that you can zoom out after zooming in.

I told a friend about this program, and he put together a movie of about six pictures and one song. He said he did it in about five minutes. Just did pretty much what I described above. He emailed it to me, and it was just excellent. And he was extremely happy with it.

For my own 20 minute project with 165 photos, it took three minutes to create a file for my pocket PC. For a file to be played at 1024x768, it took seven minutes. It surprised me how long it took since I have a very powerful dual-core processor. So if you have an older computer, I'd be prepared for a long final creation time.

The program has a very wide range of options that I'll try to summarize: You can crop the pictures, rotate, color correct, remove red eye, annotate with titles on each, record voice for each, create music and edit each photo with 10 effects like sepia color, black and white, watercolor and negative.

Now for the rest of the stuff. The program is written to be a kind of a wizard with five panels. The panels' functions are:

1. Import and arrange your pictures (color correction, red eye, rotate, crop, add 10 effects)
2. Add a title to your pictures (Add text and arrange on the photo)
3. Narrate your pictures and customize motion (Yes, add voice annotations or narrations)
4. Add background music (Select music, create music)
5. Save your story
 - Save your story for playback on your computer
 - Send the story in an e-mail message
 - Save your story for Pocket PC
 - Save your story for playback on a Smartphone with Windows media player
 - Save your story for playback on a Portable Media Center
 - Optionally, with the Sonic Plug-in,
 - Save your story to a DVD for playback on your home DVD player

On "Save your story for playback on your computer," you have a very wide range of options. You have file, DVD and CD (VCD) formats and a variety of screen resolutions for each.

For creating DVDs to play on a home DVD player, I can recommend the plug-in from Sonic. There's a link to it from the Micro-

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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 merle@merlenicholson.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.

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soft site, but it's listed on the Sonic site too.

I've made three versions of my particular project: for PC playback, DVD player and for Pocket PC. The file size for the PC version is 77MB at 1024x768. This is for 20 minutes and 165 pictures. For the Pocket PC it's 23MB at 240x320. The saved project file is 338MB.

There's a lot of information on this program on the Microsoft website that's worth looking at.

Here are the links:

Download details Photo Story 3 for Windows:

<http://www.microsoft.com/downloads/details.aspx?FamilyID=92755126-a008-49b3-b3f4-6f33852af9c1&DisplayLang=en>

Sonic plug-in to PS3:

<http://www.sonic.com/products/Consumer/PhotoStory/>

Tutorial step-by-step Burn a Photo Story to DVD and Play It On Your TV:

http://www.microsoft.com/windows/windowsmedia/knowledgecenter/howto/DigCameraPhotostorytoDVD_StepByStep.aspx

Microsoft Photo Story 3 for Windows make show-n-tell cool again:

<http://www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/using/digitalphotography/photostory/default.mspx>

Microsoft Windows Media Workshops:

<http://www.microsoft.com/windows/windowsmedia/knowledgecenter/workshops/default.aspx> ◆

(Minutes.....Continued from page 2)

Don Estridge of IBM's Small Systems Group went off looking for an operating system for their new small computer that they had spent a year secretly building. After failing to connect with Gary Kildall, who had an operating system called CPM, they sought out Bill Gates, whom they knew but who had never created an operating system. Bill assured IBM that he was up to the task. To his good fortune, his partner Paul Allen stumbled onto a real deal and purchased an operating system from Tim Peterson for \$50 thousand. They then entered into an endless contract with IBM wherein they got a royalty for each computer IBM produced using their newly acquired software. We all know where it went from there.

Not only did Bill Gates take IBM for a ride, but also because of the open architecture of the IBM personal computer, anyone eventually could clone their machines. Compaq Computer was the first with a suitcase sized 50-pound portable and then Michael Dell did his thing to capture a part of the personal computer market. Few realized at the time how popular the personal computer would become at its inception. So here we are today, each of us with our own home computers.

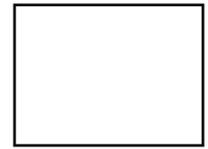
Mr. Elliott ended by saying if we wanted him back, he has an equally interesting presentation on the Internet.

Following our speaker, we took a 10-minute break during which tickets were sold for our five door prizes. The winners were:

Photo Shop CS2 Manual	Ed White
Flight Simulator Software	Bruce Register
Laptop Ventilated Platform	Mary Sheridan
Tech Smith T-Shirt	John Witmer
I Hate Spam Software	Ed White

They're being no further business or entertainment, the meeting adjourned at 8:15pm. ◆

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 ____*

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

process Merle and I went through in my ordering the components, his installation and testing of the components, my installation of the operating system and software, and finally the copying of my files and settings to the new computer using Microsoft's File and Settings Transfer Wizard.

Most everything went smoothly, but there were a couple of glitches. ◆

