



February in Tampa

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

Vol. 19 No. 2 February 2006

## Meeting

### Metro Crime Prevention Of Florida

Wednesday, February 8, 2006  
6:30 PM  
Art Pepin Hospitality Room  
Pepin Distributing Co.  
4121 N 50th St  
Tampa, Florida

**Meeting Preview:** This month we have Metro Crime Prevention of Florida. We will also have the usual half-hour Windows SIG.

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## Editor's Comments

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

**Gasparilla** has come and gone in Tampa. That is the reason for the pirate image above. He really should have adorned the January newsletter since Gasparilla was on January 28 this year. But that is only because the powers-that-be didn't want to have a conflict with some other important event like the Super Bowl. So we had Gasparilla in Tampa on the last Saturday of January instead of the first Saturday of February.

Since I live a block off the parade route, I sort of have to stick around to make sure my home is not part of the invasion. And it is also a good time to take a few photos with the digital camera. Gasparilla, however, is one of those things to which I can find no computer angle. I suppose I could upload my photos of

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**March Meeting: Microsoft with a presentation on Windows Vista**

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

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

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**Minutes of the January Meeting**

*By Doug Mullis, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group*  
[dmullis@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:dmullis@tampabay.rr.com)

Vice President John Witmer called the meeting to order at 6:40 pm. He welcomed a visitor, Dora Jones. Dora read about our group in the Temple Terrace paper, and we hope she joins our group. We need to get the Tampa Tribune to announce our meetings again.

Bruce Register performed the duties of our vacant Membership Chairperson this evening, greeting guests and members and distributing nametags. We need volunteers to perform these important duties at every meeting. Please step forward to make our meetings more memorable to our attendees.

John announced the Spring Convention of FACUG March 3rd thru the 5<sup>th</sup> in Kissimmee. The Board is sending five members and others are encouraged to attend. Registration is \$40 until Feb. 1<sup>st</sup> and then jumps to \$55. Mary Sheridan is the FACUG President this year and can use help putting this conference on.

At this point John turned the meeting over to Bob LaFave for a shortened Windows SIG meeting. After some discussion of a problem Google is having, Bob handed out a paper listing several web sites he thought we would find interesting. He also announced that Microsoft is continuing to offer Baseline Security Analyzer and Windows OneCare Live anti virus and firewall in a free Baea version. Check this out.

At 7:05 we began the business portion of our meeting. First item was the installation of officers for 2006. They are: John Witmer, President; Kevan Sheridan, Vice President; Mike Hodges, Treasurer;

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## Fonts and LCD Screens and ClearType

By Merle Nicholson, Tampa PC Users Group  
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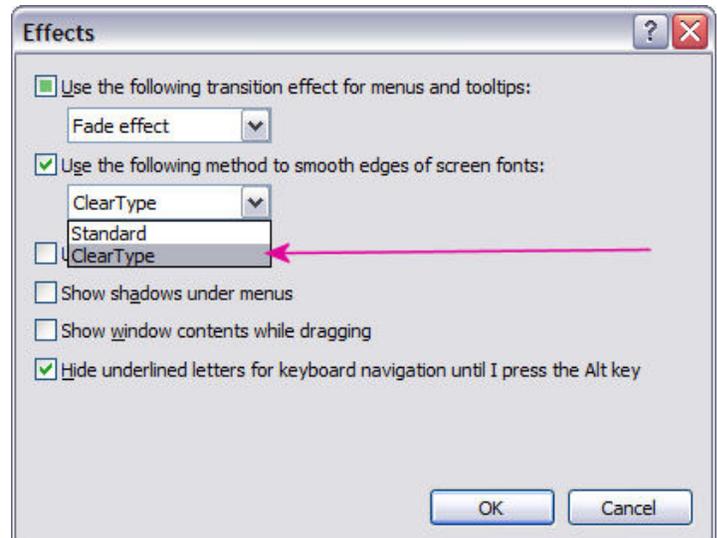
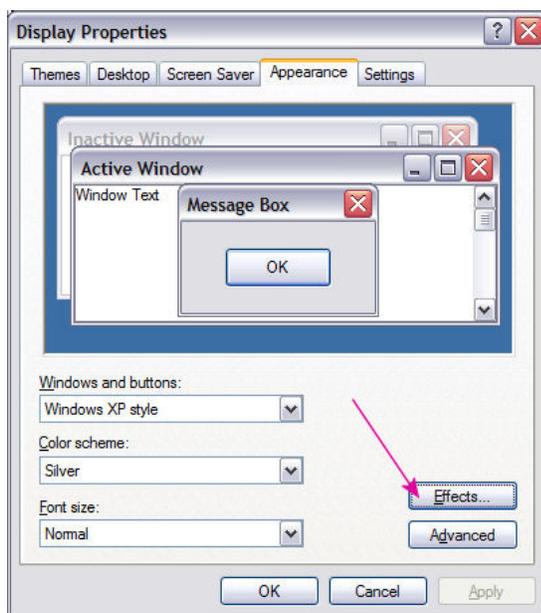
If you have an LCD screen – and you should! – there is a font technology that you should know about. It's called ClearType; it's made expressly for LCDs, and it's already on your computer if you have Windows XP.

You can read about ClearType at:  
<http://www.microsoft.com/typography/WhatIsClearType.mspx>

The following is taken from the web page:

“ClearType is a software technology developed by Microsoft that improves the readability of text on existing LCDs (Liquid Crystal Displays), such as laptop screens, Pocket PC screens and flat panel monitors. With ClearType font technology, the words on your computer screen look almost as sharp and clear as those printed on a piece of paper.”

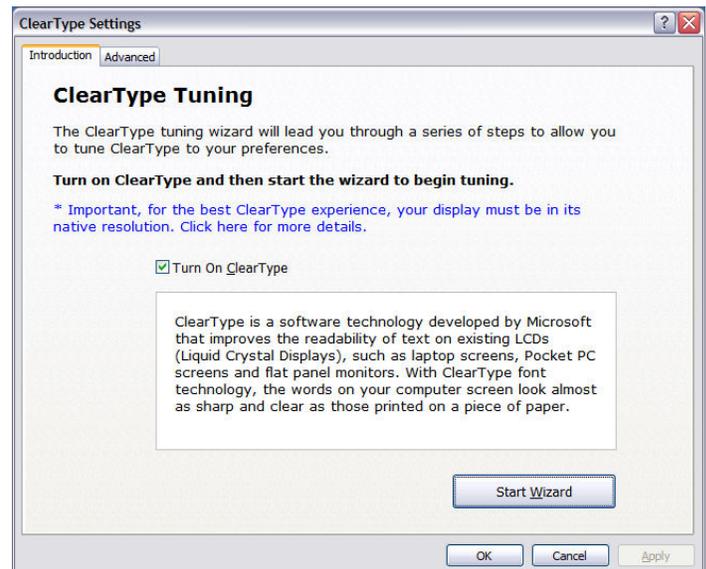
“ClearType font technology works with current displays. Readability on CRT monitors will be improved somewhat, but it will be dramatically improved on color LCD monitors, such as those found in laptops and high-quality flat desktop displays.”



So we know what it's for, how do we use it? Go to Control Panel, Display Properties, Appearance tab, Effects and choose ClearType.

Then click OK, OK. But we're not done yet. We need the ClearType PowerToy Wizard. It's a free download from Microsoft. You can find it at:  
<http://www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/downloads/powertoys/xppowertoys.mspx>

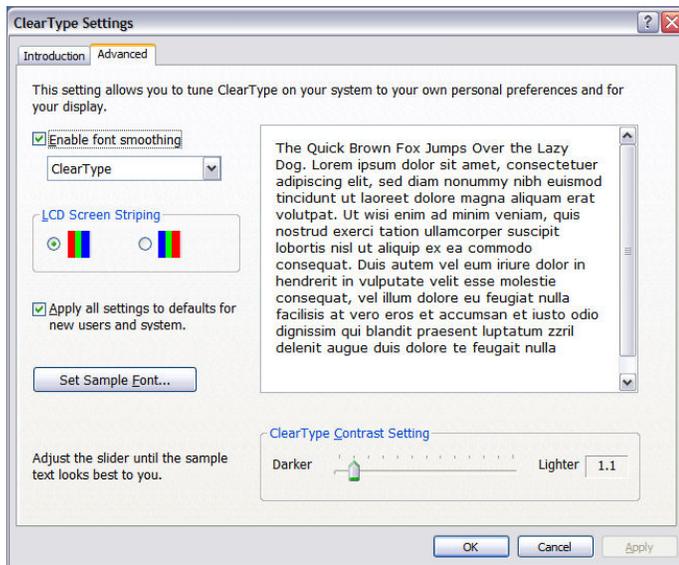
On the right of the page, the “ClearType Tuner PowerToy” Setup.exe is what you want. Save it to a folder on your computer and run it to install. It'll put an item in Control Panel called “ClearType Tuning.” Run that, and here's what we get:



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And on the Advanced tab :



You can make adjustments to pick the clearest looking font with this wizard.

One thing I should mention. On your LCD screen, you have an “Auto” button. This runs a program in the monitor to optimize the screen for your PC’s video signal. Be sure to use that, and then perhaps go back to the ClearType PowerToy and re-run it.

You can make a dramatic difference in the appearance and usability of your screen in just a few minutes. Don’t forget it’s available on Windows Pocket PCs, too! Give it a try! ◆

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

the event to the Internet. But by that standard, anything that you can photograph or write about and then upload to a web site would become computer-related. So let’s drop the pirate discussion and move on to some computer-related items.

**Google** is certainly computer-related and much in the news lately, the current topic being the federal

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## FACUG Spring Conference 2006

By Mary Sheridan, Member at Large,  
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The twelfth annual FACUG spring conference is scheduled for March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> at the Kissimmee Civic Center in Kissimmee, Florida. As President of FACUG, I will have the responsibility of coordinating many of the activities for the conference. I’ve been amazed at all that needs to be done.

The roundtables are held in meeting rooms at the convention center, and each room needs to have whatever equipment that the roundtable facilitator might need for the session. Last year there were several tech sessions, and I’m hoping to have some this year as well.

The caterer last year was Golden Corral, and I hope I will be able to have them again this year. It’s a bit of a Catch 22 because some of the vendors pay for meals or pay for part of a meal and this means that the caterer can’t just be contracted by one person. It becomes a ballet of getting all the parties moving in the same direction. The FACUG will pay for anything that the vendors do not sponsor, but the conference should be at least a “break even” proposition and that means the more FACUG funds, the less money there is for future conferences.

The vendors change from year to year, so it’s hard to say what products will be represented. I have contacted all the vendors from last year and others are working on getting donated door prizes.

We will have a newsletter contest and a home page contest again this year. Letters in the form of emails have gone out to the user groups.

I have contacted the people responsible for working last year’s registration for the conference, and I’m hoping to be able to count on them again. Some of the volunteers have done the registrations for many years, and they know much more than I do about

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government's request for search information from Google. Even though the request does not ask what IP addresses originated the searches in question, all of this has gotten people to worrying that at some time in the future, such information may be requested.

This may be an eye-opener to most of us in the US, but to people in places like China, it is an old story. There you can get into serious trouble for writing about certain forbidden topics; possibly you can get into trouble for just searching the Internet for these things. Recently, at the Chinese government's request, Google removed from the Chinese version of its site the ability to return meaningful links to certain search phrases. In other words, if you search (in Chinese or in English) for Tiananmen Square in the Chinese version, Google.cn, you will get very few links as compared with the version of Google we use, Google.com. I can't read or write Chinese, but I can view photos in Chinese, so I put in the query *tiananmen square* in English into both the Google.com site and the Google.cn site with the second search option selected (the image search). Very different photos were produced by the two sites. I will leave it to you to guess which search produced the photos of police battling students or the famous photo of one lone individual standing in front of a tank.

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## Internet Picture of the Month



### Gasparilla Invasion

From the City of Tampa site, <http://www.tampagov.net>, we have a photo of a typical beginning to the annual Gasparilla Day Invasion with the pirate ship entering the city. The exact page is [http://www.tampagov.net/about\\_Tampa/feature\\_events/Gasparilla/index.asp](http://www.tampagov.net/about_Tampa/feature_events/Gasparilla/index.asp).

The invasion first began in 1904 on horseback and then switched to the sea in 1911.

## February's Interesting World Wide Web Locations

Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)

Public Proxy Servers

Electronic Frontier Foundation

50states.com

Microsoft PowerToys for Windows XP

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

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

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

<http://www.50states.com/>

<http://www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/downloads/powertoys/xppowertoys.msp>



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.

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So how do English-speaking Chinese do a Google search at Google.com so as to see “all” the results? Well, they don’t do it by typing `http://www.google.com` into their browser, since no Chinese Internet provider is going to allow them to get to that site. What they need to do is point their browser to one of the many proxy server sites on the Internet (and necessarily ever changing since once they are known, they can be blocked). The point of these proxy server sites is to serve as “pass-throughs” for web page requests so as to mask the true destination of your browsing.

You can find sites on the World Wide Web that will do this for you, or you can download software that does this. Of course, without recommendations, you don’t know the safety of such sites; they may be nothing but conduits of spyware. For example the site <http://proxify.com/> is a proxy site that promises anonymous surfing without having to download any software. However, I am uncomfortable with it since it does have links at the top for casinos (and how to cheat casinos) and such. Perhaps someone can do some research on this topic and write a full article for the newsletter.

What I did some time back before all the current fuss about Google erupted was to make my own special sort of pseudo proxy server setup for doing Google searches. I did it as a programming exercise, but now it looks as if it might be useful. I created a web service that, when provided with a phrase, would return the html code to the Google search results for that phrase. I then put this service at one of the web sites I have. Next, I wrote a Windows desktop program that would pass such search phrases to this web service and then take the returned html code and place it in a web browser control inside the program so that I could view it. I had to add some code to allow for looking at additional links in addition to those on the first page, etc. What this did was make it look to Google as if the search request was coming from the IP address of wherever the web service was installed—not from my local computer where the Windows program was running.

Of course, to make this of any real use in hiding my

Google searching from inquiring eyes, I would need two more things: allow a lot of people to use this program so that I would be just one among many and—very importantly—delete or don’t let the web server keep a log of activity. This second item is probably only truly possible if either you do your own web hosting or your web host deletes the server logs after downloading each hosted site’s part of the log to the individual site. Otherwise, if Google released the IP address of the requestor for a particular search to anyone with a court order, the people with the court order could then go to the hosting company who owned the IP address Google gave them. They, in turn, would say at the time and date that you are interested in, only one individual who was using the IP address of such-and-such accessed the page in question. Then onto whatever Internet Service provider to which that IP address belonged to find out which of their users had the IP address at that time. And I would be nabbed—for searching for something that the government was interested in knowing about.

So given all that, I believe that if I were truly interested in being anonymous on the Internet, I should use one of the proxy services set up to do just that. But not so fast. What if many of these proxy services are really actually controlled by those people who want to find out where I am surfing? Sort of like one of those police sting operations set up to purchase stolen goods and then eventually arrest all their customers. Think about it. The more you think about it, the more complicated it gets.

On a different sort of Google topic, recall that in the previous newsletter I mentioned that two times I had gotten spyware put on my computer by simply clicking on links provided by a Google search. Of course, being a reasonable person, I did not hold Google responsible in that it had cataloged a web page that contained my search text but also contained some code that provided me with an additional hour of work removing spyware from my computer. Now, many lawyers do not appear to be reasonable people in the way you and I may think of the word reasonable (recall your former lawyer president: “It depends on what you mean by the word is”). So I suppose it is only a matter of time before Google gets sued for not provid-

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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](mailto:lamartin@tampabay.rr.com), or Merle Nicholson at [merle@merlenicholson.com](mailto: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](mailto:mcpease@mindspring.com).

### Visual Basic for Applications SIG

This SIG meets the **third Wednesday** of the month at 6:30 PM. The meeting location varies. For information contact William LaMartin at [lamartin@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:lamartin@tampabay.rr.com).

### Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Mary Sheridan moderates the discussion.

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

Doug Mullis, Secretary; and Mary Sheridan, Member at Large.

John continued the meeting in his new capacity as President by thanking William LaMartin for continuing as our Newsletter Editor. Next he announced that Pepin would be installing gates at entrances and exits. We are to continue using the main gate. Promptly at 7:15 John introduced our presenter of the evening, member Bob LaFave, whose topic was Intel's power point program "Build Your Own Computer".

Bob presented Part I of an intended two-part series specially developed by Intel for computer user groups. The seminar portion presented tonight addressed "Why Build Your Own Computer" and "Where To Buy The Components". Three processors and motherboards were offered with various combinations of video cards, etc. available. PC Club prices were presented which included shipping and Windows XP Home Edition software. Prices ranged from \$572 for the "Silver" system to \$1947 and up for the "Platinum" system. The intermediate "Gold" system started at \$915.

The PC Club web site listed all the options with price increments for your selection to match your needs regardless of chip/motherboard selection. The array is impressive.

At our next meeting we will see who wants to take advantage of this program. Once all components are

received, we need to set up Phase II, a supervised 3-hour workshop to assemble our computers. This would be scheduled for other than a regular group meeting.

At this point we took a break for cookies and the sale of door prize tickets for Roxio software to burn CDs and DVDs. Income on ticket sales was \$39. The lucky winner was Todd Grubbs with #792714.

After some intermingling, the meeting adjourned at 8:35 pm. Remember to turn in your name tags and tell Bruce what a great job he did. Thank you, Bruce.




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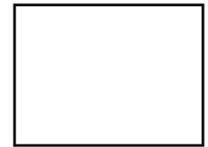
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what needs to be done.

This is just a tiny slice of what goes into the FACUG spring conference, and from what I've heard in the past, it is well worth the effort. Groups are able to leave the conference with a renewed sense of direction for the individual groups. Better ways to manage each organization, increase membership and please the existing membership are found at the conference and returned to the user groups by the attendees.

Let's make 2006 the best conference ever! Further information can be found at <http://www.facug.org> ◆

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- Vendor: Your product was reviewed on page \_\_\_\_*

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

ing a safe computing experience. It certainly didn't provide me one.

To try to keep that from happening again, I download FireFox and now use it for all my Google searches since possibly (I do not know this for a fact) it is not prone to the same sort of spyware attack. I still use Internet Explorer for much of my browsing, though.

**Amazon.Com** has apparently slipped your mind. Almost no one is using the link at <http://www.tpcug.org> to do their Amazon purchases—and depriving us of that 5% commission that costs you nothing. Possibly I am wrong: It has not slipped your mind. You are not ordering anything from Amazon, only buying used stuff on eBay. But be warned. Tiffany is suing eBay for promoting fraud. Tiffany ordered 200 supposedly Tiffany items from eBay vendors—three-fourths of them were fake. ◆

