Bits of Blue

July in Tampa

Meeting

**Digital Photography
by
Merrill Friend**

**Wednesday, July 12, 2006
6:30 PM
Art Pepin Hospitality Room
Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th St
Tampa, Florida**

Meeting Preview: This month Merrill Friend will do a presentation on Digital Photography. 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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Thanks to Doug, Merle and Larry, I have only a little space to fill this month.

Bad Mouse For the past two months, my computer has been freezing occasionally, and recently it got much more frequent. Except for one time, it would freeze when I was doing something with the mouse like resizing a window. When that happened three times in one day, I had had enough. I replaced the Microsoft Wireless IntelliMouse with an old Logitech Track-Man Marble that connects via a PS/2 socket. It has now been three days with no lockup. So I believe the mouse was the problem. It is nice to have a simple solution.

Printing Panoramas As you know, I have an interest in photography and also old photographs. In the past year, I was able

August Meeting: Liz Mueller - Hillsborough Public Library System's Digital-Based Reference System

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Minutes of the June Meeting

By Doug Mullis, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group
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Bob LaFave started the Windows SIG portion of our meeting at 6:35 pm. A member asked why he was unable to retrieve email that had attachments. Bob said they are normally stored in a master email file or possibly are going to the Recycle Bin. William La-Martin suggested checking the MSN email settings for the handling of email.

Another member asked why he should have a UPS protecting his computer. Ed White pointed out that TECO is notorious for short power interruptions. Bob added that our lightning season is just beginning. Power-conditioning to smooth voltage variations and eliminating other "noise" is another reason. Bob suggested not putting a power strip between your UPS and your protected devices. Merle added that if you must use a power strip, use one that does not have a surge suppressor. Bob also said to connect your Internet modem but not your printer to the UPS and to make sure there is good air circulation around all electronic devices.

Bob asked if anyone was interested in a session on backing up the hard drive on their system. A couple of members had indicated they wanted this; so let Bob know if you are interested.

Next someone asked what anti-virus and anti-spyware will work on 64-bit systems. Bob responded that all major brand software and most others should work, but that if he were talking about Windows Vista, nothing is available at this time. Windows Defender will be included as part of the Vista operating system for protection.

At 7:00 pm, Bob turned the meeting over to presi-

Canon Selphy CP510 Photo Printer

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

This is a little photo printer that just does small 4x6 photos – that's it, and it does it well and relatively inexpensively. It uses dye sublimation to lay down the image, and it's virtually indistinguishable from commercial printing.

Dye sublimation is the process of choice for high-end color printing in the commercial world, especially for glossy magazine work. In the case of this little printer, it has a wide semi-transparent spool of film that is laid down on the paper in three passes and then lays down a gloss coat as the last layer. So a color is created by layering (mixing) the colored dyes one on top of another.
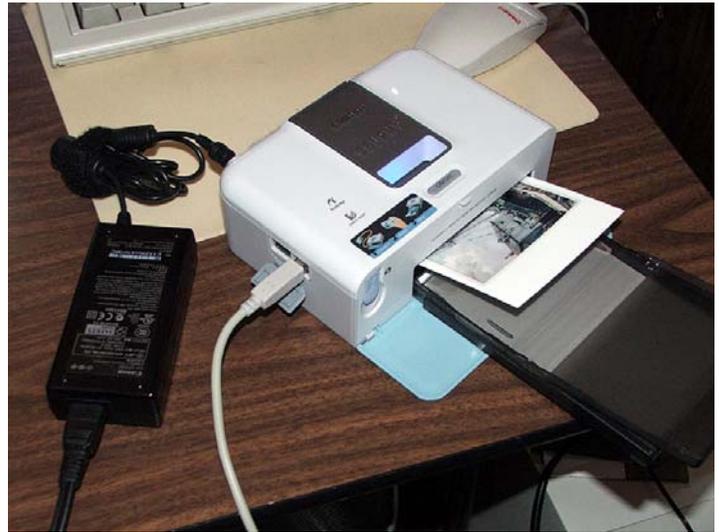
An inkjet process lays down dots next to each other, creating the illusion of different colors. They obviously do a good job, but if you compare the two side-by-side, both will be very good, but the dye-sub process will have a better professional look. All that is fine if you value glossy prints. If you don't, then this is not for you.

I have a Canon i850 photo printer as well that I use for regular color printing and for other full-size printing like labels. Although it will do borderless small cut-sheet printing, I think it's a pain to pull the regular paper out, adjust the paper feeder to 4x6, load paper, then put it all back afterward. I really wanted something better for photos. I also want to contain the cost; at least know what I'm paying for paper and ink.

I wouldn't have considered a printer dedicated to 4x6 except for three new developments. First and foremost, I got this little puppy for 50 bucks at Staples. Second, I bought supplies for 105 prints for $29, and last was that I realized how the supplies are packaged.

The supplies for this little guy are complete with a single cartridge of film and 35 pieces of 4x6 photo paper. So when you run through 35 photos, you pull

the cartridge out, throw it away and unwrap a new supply of 35 pages and a new cartridge. There's no more guessing about cost, or worrying or tracking when the ink will run out and if it will ruin a photo when one runs out and guessing if you should replace all four (or seven) cartridges at once. I hate that.

On the final (fourth) pass of a finished print

As you can see, the printer is small. It includes the body, a paper tray, a power cube with cord, and a six foot removable power cord for the cube. On the left side is a standard USB "B" printer port for connecting to a PC; next to it is a USB port to connect to a camera in case the camera uses a non-standard USB cable. On the front is a clever retractable cord with a standard mini-A connector that plugs into a camera.

The back has the power connection and a cover that can be replaced with a battery to make the printer a portable. The right side has a door to access and replace the color cartridge.

There are two ways to print to this. One is a direct connection to the camera, the other from a PC.

To print from a non-Canon camera, the camera needs to have "PictBridge" capability. PictBridge is a printing program in the camera. My FujiFilm S5100 camera has that, and I did some printing. And I'd say that while it's OK, I wouldn't want to do a lot of it. It's mainly because it requires a lot of tedious navigation through the menu system on the camera. Otherwise it

gives satisfactory results, and perhaps there are better implementations of PictBridge on other cameras. My camera has the standard USB mini-A connection compatible with the retractable cord. My older camera – a FujiFilm 2650 – has a non-standard connection at the camera, but I could use the USB cable that came with the 2650 and plug it into the USB connection on the side.

This is a good time to mention that another model of Selphy printer – the CP710 – has an LCD screen on the printer and a printing menu system. I would expect that this would be a better solution to printing directly from a camera, but I have not tried it out.

Frankly, connecting the printer and printing images from a PC is pretty much dead simple, and I'd print directly from a camera only under conditions where I had no other choice. The printer comes with good software: Easy-PhotoPrint, PhotoStitch and PhotoRecord. Photo Record is for creating albums, PhotoStitch stitches photos together, does a good job and is easy to use. Easy-PhotoPrint makes printing photos about as simple as you can make it. I'm experienced with Easy-PhotoPrint and PhotoStitch because they came with my older Canon i850 printer. I expected that Easy-PhotoPrint would recognize the new Selphy printer and the particular paper it uses, but it wasn't to be. I installed the new Easy-PhotoPrint software, and it still did not pick up the printer until I uninstalled it and reinstalled the new one. Fortunately, it recognized both Canon printers.

The printer will print to a couple of smaller size papers that I have not tried out because you have to buy different paper cassettes. The sample paper that comes with it and the paper that I bought is actually a 4x7 "postcard" size with perforations to break ½" borders from each end. The break is clean and invisible even if you choose to leave it at 7". Interestingly, there's light postcard printing on the back in case you want to mail it as a postcard.

This second picture shows the only real surprise of the printing process. As it prints, the paper slides out the back, and retracts four times. You must be careful to make sure the printer is on a flat surface, and that

the power cord doesn't interfere with the slot at the bottom.

PROS: Excellent quality, convenient, 4x6 glossy photos at reasonable cost, in a small size.

CONS: The large power cube and a total of 11 feet of cord! Also, why does the cord plug into the back where you have to be careful to make sure it doesn't interfere with the paper slot? And how hard would it be to supply a wire or plastic guard to protect the back paper slot from interference?

FINALLY: I think it's a good deal. The quality is excellent; the cost is reasonable in quantities of 105 (at 35 it is too expensive) and nearly competitive to commercial printing ◆

to locate and scan a panoramic photo of downtown Fort Pierce Florida from 1926. As I recall, it took about five scans on a flatbed scanner. I then pieced the scans together in Photoshop. The result was quite good. I then needed a way to print it. Well, it was about 7.5 inches by 41 inches, and paper that size does not exist. However, for my Epson Stylus Photo 2200 printer you can purchase rolls of paper 32 feet in length and either 8.3 inches or 13 inches in width. Just what I needed.
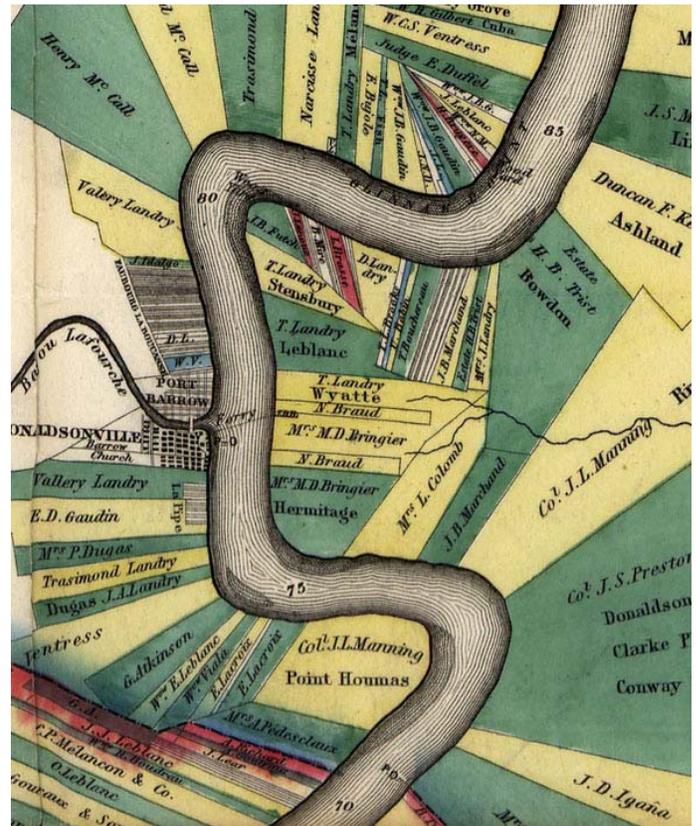
Below is a photo of my printer producing the Fort Pierce panorama. It took it about 32 minutes to do the job.

Where does one get panoramas? One source is your digital camera. Preferably with a tripod, take a number of overlapping photos (overlap about 20%). Then

Internet Picture of the Month

**Norman's chart of the lower Mississippi River
— A very small section —**

The full map displays the landowners along the Mississippi between Natchez and New Orleans in 1858. This was where much of the wealth of the country was located at that time. The MrSID version is 16.2 MB, which if you expand it 1:1 yields a TIF file of 542 MB. A 2:1 expansion yields a file of a mere 135 MB. This would make a beautiful print. From the site http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/index.html .

July's Interesting World Wide Web Locations

Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)   http://www.tpcug.org/
Math Pages   http://www.mathpages.com/
Daryl Cagle's Professional Cartoonists Index   http://cagle.com/
Exploring Florida Maps   http://fcit.usf.edu/FLORIDA/maps/maps.htm
Paper Airplanes   http://www.bestpaperairplanes.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.

Roku: SoundBridge Network Music Player

By Larry Anders, Librarian, Tampa PC Users Group
Larry@AndersNet.com

It's been while since I've written an article for the newsletter, so I thought I was due. It's not that I haven't had anything to write about; it's just that I haven't had the time to write it. But I told William I would

take a little time to write about something, so here goes…

One of the fortunate occurrences in my life is to have a daughter who has grown up to be a first-class techie-geek. Better yet, she married a first-class techie-geek. (And I now have a beautiful 8-month-old granddaughter whom I am sure will grow up to be a techie-geek, too.) My daughter is an IT Director for a firm here in Tampa and my son-in-law is a manager and project leader specializing in medical databases and software also here locally.

What does all this have to do with my article? Well…, having two first-class techie-geeks in the family means that I have stopped getting neckties and socks for Father's Day and other special occasions, and now I get some really neat gifts!

My last two gifts have been great! The first, which I'll talk about this month, was a Roku M1000 SoundBridge. Other than just being a very attractive addition to your stereo gear, if you have a wired or wireless network in your home, the SoundBridge can play your collection of MP3, WMA or WAV files stored on your computer (PC or Mac) directly through any powered speakers, stereo or boom box within range of your network.

SoundBridge is only a networked music player. What I mean by that is, it doesn't store any music, but it is capable of playing music files stored on a computer connected to your home network. It can also play Internet radio without connecting to your computer, using a direct connection to the Internet. But to be able to play the music files stored on your computer, SoundBridge needs to receive data from software installed on your computer—that is, a "music server". This music server streams the music to the SoundBridge, sends the list of music that is available to the Sound-Bridge (when asked), and performs searches of the music library at your request. There is no standard for music servers, but there are several, and you may already have one on your computer. The most popular ones are iTunes, Windows Media Connect, and Rhapsody. But there are others. I had heard a lot about iTunes from friends who use it with their iPods, so I downloaded the latest version of iTunes, which is free, and went with that as my music server. I am extremely impressed with iTunes so far. The installation was simple and straightforward.

After that, you just connect the SoundBridge unit to your powered speakers or stereo and connect the Cat 5 cable to the SoundBridge if it's a wired network, but it is not needed if wireless. If your network is wireless, the SoundBridge will find your network automatically. Then answer a few prompts on the large and readable front panel of the SoundBridge, and you are ready to listen to your music by song, artist, genre, album or even composer, where you please.

Like most electronic devices today, the SoundBridge comes with a convenient remote control device that allows you to control all of its capabilities from across the room. You can also use your computer and a web-interface to customize your musical streams.

The SoundBridge lists for about $200 locally, but I recently purchased one online as a gift for someone for less than that. Now, if they'd make one I can install in my new car, that would be great!

More to follow on another neat gift soon. ◆

Special **I**nterest **G**roups

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—Cancelled until the Fall

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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dent John Witmer for the normal business portion. John introduced the elected officers and William La-Martin, our newsletter editor and webmaster. John announced that our speaker next month would be Merrill Friend with a Digital Photography presentation. In August, Liz Mueller from the Hillsborough Public Library System will tell us what they have to offer. Liz lives in Temple Terrace and will need a ride to and from our meeting.

In the absence of our treasurer this evening, John took dues payments. John then introduced our speaker for the evening, distinguished and long-standing member Merle Nicholson, to tell us about "The Anatomy of a Modern Computer."

Merle told us of and demonstrated the latest success in electronic "cloaking" devices, apparently being funded by DARPA. The idea being to see through or around things. The displays showed the differences between day- and night-cloaking, although, frankly, I saw nothing, So it must be successful.

Merle started by saying most video cards now are capable of driving two monitors. And the latest CPUs are dual core processors. Speed is everything, and with speed comes heat generation. Cooling is therefore a major concern, and Merle is interested in case-modification for coiled and piped cooling of critical heat generators.
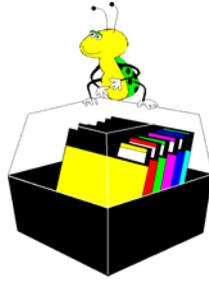
Merle took pictures as he built his current computer. Of course, he modified the case, rearranged the hard drives and piped cool air from three, perhaps four, fans to cool critical components. He showed us a $400 cooling system and referred to a Peltier website for information and pricing. He also showed a video of an oil-cooled PC, which may be the coming thing, and a variety of amusing household-appliance housings used to serve as PC enclosures.

John Witmer and those present thanked Merle for the very informative and entertaining presentation. John is considering whether it's time to redo his system. William LaMartin said now he understands the piping in his new computer.

We had no door prizes this evening so instead of the normal break, Bob LaFave told us about an online evaluation by Microsoft to advise if our current computers are compatible with Windows Vista. To do this, go to Windows Vista Upgrade Advisor. Bob also warned about downloading Windows Vista Beta and Office 2007 as they require a lot of disc space and there are still problems with device drivers.

The meeting adjourned at 8:25 pm ◆

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(Comments..........Continued from page 5)

locate some photo-stitching software and stitch the photos together. I believe many of today's digital cameras come with such software. Photoshop also has this ability. I don't know about Photoshop Elements.

If you would like to see some panoramas from the past, go the Library of Congress site, http:// memory.loc.gov/ammem/collections/ panoramic_photo/. There you can search for what may interest you. I searched for New Orleans and Florida. I didn't find my Fort Pierce panorama but did find several nice ones of Tampa in the early part of the 20th century.

Another interest of mine is maps, and the Library of Congress site also has many old maps for download (however not in the panorama section). Here you will have to learn how to use the MrSID viewer to view them full-size and to export them to TIF format for your use. The Picture of the Month on page 5 is a very small section of one such map.◆

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