



May in Tampa
Graduation

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

Vol. 20 No. 5 May 2007

Meeting

Drew Smith

**Florida Genealogy
Society**

Wednesday, May 9, 2007
6:30 PM
Art Pepin Hospitality Room
Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th St
Tampa, Florida

Meeting Preview: Drew Smith, president of the Florida Genealogy Society, will tell us how to track our ancestors and preserve everything on the computer. As usual, the meeting will begin with our Windows SIG.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
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Thanks to our contributors, I have little need to write anything this month. And since the past month has been a month without much computer-wise to write about for me, that is good.

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I did very little more on the Linux Virtual PC setup I wrote about in last month's newsletter. I did print up a number of 11" x 17" black and white prints from copies of early 1920s photos of my hometown for a friend who is moving his real estate business into a freshly-renovated early 1900s building in that town. This involved using Photoshop to remove blemishes and adjust brightness and contrast on most of the images, which I had copied with a camera years ago, or, in more recent years, scanned as I discovered the old photos. I have

(Comments.....Continued on page 7)

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Minutes of the April Meeting

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

President John Witmer called us to order at 6:30 pm and turned the meeting over to Bob LaFave to begin the Windows SIG portion. Bob was also to be our presenter to tell us about Acronis True Image and Beyond TV.

Bob asked for items the members were having problems with. Doug Mullis began by telling us he has been refilling black printer cartridges from refill kits sold by Office Depot. Office Depot has stopped selling the refill kits and now offers a refill service at about 30% less than new but considerably more than the kits sold for. Another cost-conscious PC user told Doug to try Walgreen's Drug Store or Wal-Mart for ink refill kits. Low and behold, Doug got the black refill kit at Walgreen's for under \$10 and it had twice the amount of ink as he had been getting. So far he is pleased with the change. Color refill kits are offered for under \$15. Bob says Staples issues coupons worth \$3 each for used ink cartridges.

One member was having problems with his Firefox browser. While many like the increased security provided by Firefox, the down side, according to Bob, is that you cannot get Windows updates.

Another member just bought a new Acer desktop computer that is about the size of an encyclopedia. He peeked inside to see how they reduced the size. It's like the inside of a laptop. This is probably the coming thing and good if available space is a problem.

Someone asked if Windows XP Media Center was based on the XP Home Edition. It is based on XP Professional, but you cannot join a server-based do-

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First-Time Vista — Part II

Wood PC

Acronis True Image

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

First Time Vista – Part II

I've only just begun to configure my copy of Vista, and I'm still struggling with configuring it. It's not at all useful yet because of the drivers. So I'm still working on it.

The performance with the video remains less of a problem – See the article last month, April 2007 – and I've decided that I must buy a new video card to completely solve it. The video driver that is installed now for the on-board system is just too generic, making Windows slow to appear and move. The problem is finding a video card that is 1) cheap enough, 2) will work with Vista and 3) will run on my motherboard. It's a process of finding the video card that satisfies 1) and 3) and then going to the supporting website to find if the manufacturer supplies the Vista driver and then finding reviews to see if it's proven to be satisfactory to other users.

To be fair to Vista, though, there is a list of performance options having to do with how Vista treats window behaviors. All are turned on if you tune for appearance, and all are off if you tune for performance. I've turned off nearly all; the most notable for me is "Show Contents of windows while moving". I've kept the "Use Windows Themes" because that makes Vista look like Vista. With it off, it looks like Windows 2000. Turning those off did make a noticeable difference.

The second hardware problem popped up because I'd decided to install a wireless card in the PC. This will help in finding a location in my office for my newest Wood PC, where the Vista hard drive is located. I've run out of wired connections to my router. I have a couple of "new" wireless/G PCI cards in my inventory. I say "new" because they've never been installed, and I'd estimate they're less than a year old. I decided to configure the card for Vista first (before my Win XP) for the obvious reason. After a thorough

Internet search, there's no driver for the Netgear WG311 v2 wireless card to be found, and I'm guessing there won't ever be. There's a WG311 v3 that's being sold now that does have Vista support, but it doesn't work on the v2. There are all kinds of user complaints on the Internet and on the Netgear comment board. So much for that. So I must either buy a new router or a new switch or a new card. The new card makes more sense because it's the cheapest at about \$20.

After working with Vista for awhile and discovering one program that wouldn't work with the User Access Control (UAC) turned on, I turned it off. You just configure it off in the Control Panel, User Accounts. The UAC is a pop-up (that pops up ALL the time) when anything is being run or changed. I quickly discovered the disadvantage of having it off. The Security Alert now pops up, warning you that the UAC is off. It's almost as annoying as the UAC. The Security Center (Alert) can be switched off easily, which I'm hesitant to do. I'm sure there's an ideal solution. Someplace.

Wood PC

I've designed and built a computer built of wood to use as a test bench to make it easy to change out components. The main feature is that nothing except the motherboard is actually fastened down. Everything else just sits in place. Some things that vibrate are sitting on a rubber pad, like the power supply and CDROM. There are six slots for 3-1/2 inch devices like hard drives. I attached three fans to it, one each to cool the hard drive bays, and one for the center. I have two active hard drives right now, one Vista and the other XP Pro. I use these to test software. Each drive has a partition where a clean image of the boot drive is backed up. I used Acronis True Image 9.0 to back them up.

I'm currently working on a new version of Wood PC in an attempt to make it easier to build. The parts themselves just took an afternoon to cut, but the trim work and finishing were time-consuming. I sketched out several ideas until I'd developed the simplest scheme, and now that it's built and working I can see that I can simplify it even more. It's narrow enough to sit on a 10" bookshelf, but it works well as a

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(Vista.....Continued from page 3)

bench computer for testing components and software.



Wood PC Front View



Wood PC Back View

Acronis True Image 9.0

This backup software has been written about several times. We have a nearly annual visit from Gene Barlow, who also sells it on his website. Bob LaFave emailed me a few weeks ago that he'd found version 9.0 at <http://www.nothingbutsoftware.com> for only \$26.95 plus shipping, so I bought one for myself, used it and immediately ordered one to be shipped to my son in Colorado. I used it again to clone a damaged drive to a new one with success. This old drive had a bad Master Boot Record (MBR) which I fixed with XP Recovery Console, but then it failed a diagnostic. It would boot into XP, and I successfully backed up all the pictures and documents to an external drive, so it was worth saving.

I used this software - booting from the CD - to copy the old drive to a new one. The copy process stopped three times, saying that it had encountered a bad unreadable sector. But there was an option to ignore the problem and continue. It did and successfully created a new, usable drive. Presumably there are now a couple of bad files on the disk, but that's usually insignificant. I did find that it was missing one essential file, but I identified that and replaced it easily.

Errors like this are fatal on other drive copy programs, but Acronis saved our bacon. It also says that it will clone to a drive that is smaller, if possible. I haven't tried this, but if it works it solves several problems I've had in the past.

Acronis True Image v9 \$26.95 at <http://www.nothingbutsoftware.com>.

Acronis True Image v10 Home User Group Price \$29 download at <http://www.usergroupstore.com>. ◆

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

John Witmer recently installed PC-cillin on his computer. He asked why it tries to update frequently. Bob said the update might not have installed successfully but look at the program User Options to see what the update interval is. Maybe this needs adjusting.

Another member desired to install a wireless router and wanted to know where he could find the best deal. Bob suggested he check Newegg.com. One can be gotten for around \$40.

Ed White has gotten Verizon DSL and wants to disable the wireless feature for security purposes. Bob said he needs to find the wireless address and turn it off. Hard wire connections should still work.

At 7:00 pm, Bob closed the Windows SIG format and launched into his prepared program. He began with a backup program he finds better and cheaper than Norton's (Symantec) Ghost. The utility program is Acronis' True Image (remember presenter Gene Barlow) for backing up an entire system or just selected files. While Version 10 is available, Bob got Version 9 as part of a package with a \$70 rebate. NothingButSoftware.com is offering True Image Version 9 for \$26.95. This program is really fast and is completely automatic. Bob demonstrated a system incremental backup and highlighted features offered by the program.

Next, Bob showed us Beyond TV, which, with a TV tuner card, allows you to use your PC to receive and record TV programs as long as you have ample RAM

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Internet Picture of the Month



FSU Stadium Stained Glass Window

From the site <http://sports.webshots.com>, we have a photo of the 30 ft. by 20 ft stained glass windows depicting coach Bobby Bowden looking over the field at FSU. I took the liberty of cropping the photo to just display the window. The precise URL is <http://sports.webshots.com/photo/2332296220027668403kUZidx>.

I was unable to find a photo of the window at night when it is most impressive.

According to http://www.fsu.com/pages/2004/11/22/bowden_window.html, the window "created by FSU artist Robert Bischoff, his wife, JoAnn, and 12 FSU students in the Master Craftsman Program, ... is among the five largest stained glass windows in America. It is composed of 112 individual panels and 8,500 pieces of glass."

May's Interesting World Wide Web Locations

Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)

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

Google Trends

<http://www.google.com/trends>

SuTree — Free Video Lessons

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

Custom film holders for film scanners

<http://www.betterscanning.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.

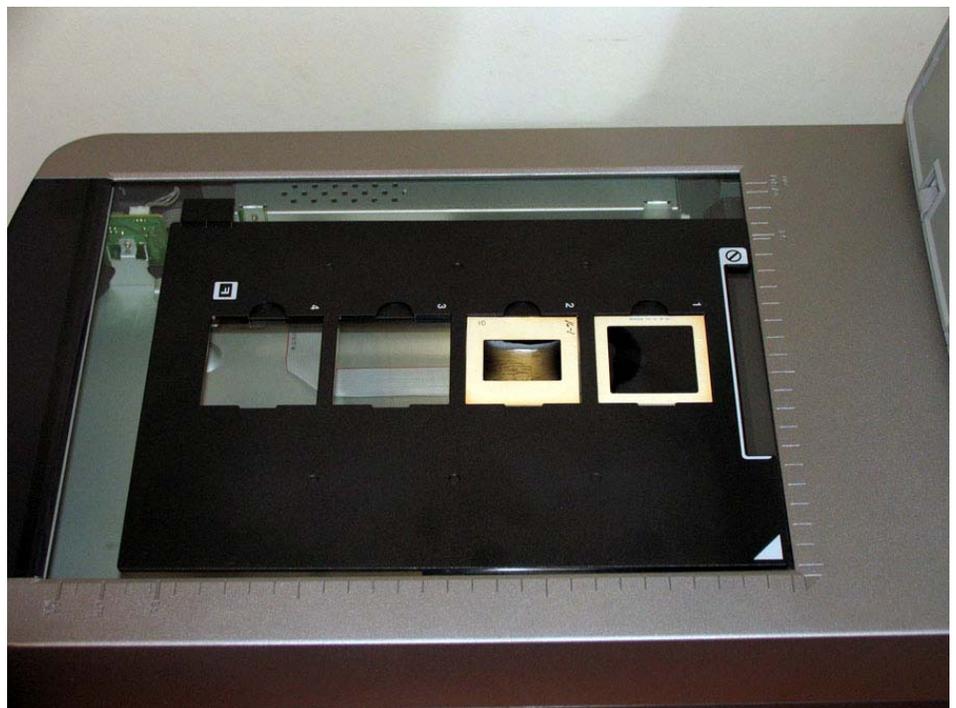
SilverFast Scanning Software

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

My neighbor asked if I could scan some “old slides” so that she could make prints for framing. Since I have a film scanner and a flatbed scanner capable of scanning prints, negatives and positive slides, I told her that it would be no problem. I was wrong; there was a problem. The slides were not 35mm slides but Kodak Ektachrome slides taken on 120 film, which produced a 40x40mm image instead of the 24x36mm image produced by 135 (35mm) film. I knew that I could not use my Minolta film scanner because it can only handle the standard images from 35mm positive and negative film and Advanced Photo System (APS) positive and negative film with an adapter. I thought that there would still be no problem using my “Epson Perfection 3200 Photo” flatbed scanner since it handled images from film much larger than 35mm. I was even more certain that there was no problem when I compared her slides to 35mm slides. The “mounted” sizes of the 40x40mm slide and a 35mm slide were identical (2x2 inches). As you can see in the photo, both slides fit in the Epson holder for 35mm slides, so the problem was solved? Wrong again. When I scanned the film, the scanner recognized only 24x36mm of the 40x40mm image. The software had a setup display that allowed adjustment of both input and output dimensions of the image. However, when I attempted to change the input dimensions they returned to their original settings, reflecting the 2x3 aspect ratio of the 35mm slide.

I called William La Martin, who also owns an Epson 3200 Photo scanner. As usual, he had a solution. He said that the SilverFast software included with the scanner (which I had ignored), was much more versatile than the Epson software. I loaded the software and finally the problem was solved; I scanned the slides and printed the pictures.

I was obviously pleased with the results so I decided to further research the product because I plan to scan a large number of both slides and prints in the next few months. I’m writing this article because perhaps some of you are not completely happy with the software that was supplied with your scanner. LaserSoft Imaging’s headquarters is located in Kiel, Germany; they also have an office in Sarasota, FL and will answer sales and pre-sales questions at (941) 921-4815. I have talked to them twice at this number and found them to be very helpful. They have an exceptionally informative web site at: <http://www.silverfast.com/>. There is a variety of software from which to choose and you can find detailed descriptions of each at the site. There are also movies and testimonials on the site. The software is priced from \$49.00 to \$332.00. The product is available to support a long list of flatbed and film scanners. You can easily determine at the web site whether or not your scanner is supported. SilverFast can be launched as a stand-alone, an Adobe Photoshop (5.5 or later) or PhotoShop Elements plug-in, or as a Twain driver. Once you’ve decided the version in which you are interested, you can either purchase a download or a CD from the web site or by phone. If you want a CD and purchase by phone before 3:00 pm, they say that they can have it in the mail by that evening. If you still have questions or want to see the software in action, you can download a fully operating demo but it will place a watermark on your final scan. ♦



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—Cancelled until further notice

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. Bob LaFave moderates the discussion.

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and hard disk space. We went to the SnapStream Beyond TV web site. Bob showed us product bundles that are available to get us operational. His recommended bundle was \$69.95. This does not include the TV tuner card, which runs about \$120 for a good one.

Beyond TV has an Internet guide listing US and Canadian programming. You tell them what kind of broadcast source you have, and they provide a personalized guide. Also, if you turn on the Smart Skip Feature, Beyond TV automatically inserts markers at major scene changes, AND you can skip commercial breaks. Bob prefers to edit out commercials before recording to DVD. Bob then demonstrated features of the program that impressed him.

Bob went on to tell us about DVD Encryptor and DVD Shrink for copying DVDs. Just remember, movies are copyright protected, and, although programs for breaking the encryption can be purchased, there is a continual effort by the recording studios to render these programs ineffective.

President Witmer took control of the meeting at 8:25 pm for the business segment. He thanked Bob for an excellent meeting and announced that our planned speaker for May would be Drew Smith from the University of South Florida, President of the Florida Genealogy Society. His topic will, of course, be genealogy. Also, North Tampa Photography is putting on a Tamron workshop on April 20 & 21, which should be interesting. Cost per person is \$119 but you get to use equipment (lenses and tripods) being featured, with discount coupons to be issued. Check the Yahoo Group announcement for particulars.

Visitors tonight included Nancy and Bruce Norton and James Kalshoven. James was William LaMartin's guest.

Members were encouraged to join the Yahoo Group to see announcements such as the Tamron workshop. Also, Bob LaFave's haircut was noted, as he looked great! Bob donated his hair to Locks of Love, a worthy charity.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 pm. ◆

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

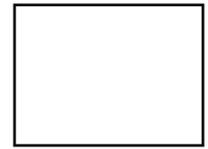
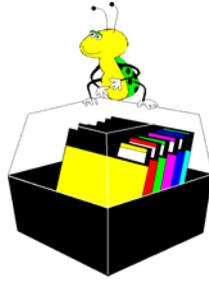
been very pleased with how my Epson Stylus Photo 2200 produces quite good results at this large size from images that were originally smaller than 8 x 10 and in most cases smaller than 5 x 7. Either Photoshop or the printer or both are filling in extra pixels very nicely.

I have moved away from using Microsoft FrontPage in the past few months to using Microsoft Expression Web. It has forced me to learn about Cascading Style Sheets (CSS) so as to better format the look of pages. I touched on this in the presentation I gave to our group a few months back.

On a recent trip to Tallahassee, I had a bit of trouble sending one of the mass emails I am often requested to send to all those in my neighborhood organization. Of the 400 households, 267 have provided us with an email address. I send the messages as individual messages using a mail-merge from a Microsoft Word

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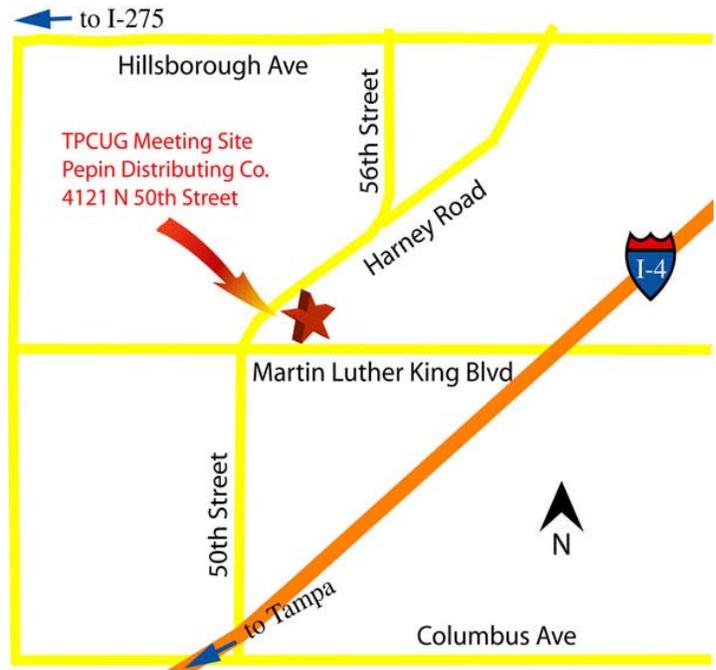


First Class Mail

- Member: Your membership is up for renewal*
- Vendor: Your product was reviewed on page ____*

(Comments.....Continued from page 7)

document based on information in an Access database table. I always have my laptop with me and used the hotel's wireless network to send the 267 messages from Microsoft Outlook (you cannot use Outlook Express with a mail merge). When I later went to check my email messages, I had 75 messages kicked back to me, and all except five were from a Road Runner (RR) address. RR considered the hotel's Internet provider to be a source of spam. So I needed a way to send out the message to only RR recipients. The solution was to use my dial-up Netcom (EarthLink) account over a phone line for a new mail merge based on an Access query of only the 70 or so RR addresses. ♦



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