Bits of Blue

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

Meeting

Creative Memories
by
Kathy Eustis

Wednesday January 11, 2009

6:30 PM

Pepin Distributing Co.

4121 N 50th Street

Tampa, Florida

Meeting Preview: Kathy Eustis will tell us about Creative Memories, which offers a scrapbooking program and supporting photo center to help you manage your "photos and assorted digital memories." Bob LaFave will conduct the Windows SIG at the beginning of the meeting as usual.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
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Several of our members now have Kindles. In this issue, member Jim Purcell tells us about his. And I continue the saga of my computer's chip fan that was begun in the September 2008 newsletter. The moral of that story is that, if possible, purchase a computer with a heat sink instead of a fan for the chip's cooling. That way the fan will never need replacing.

For those of you with smart phones, you might improve their functioning by downloading and installing the latest software updates for your particular phone. My one-year-old HTC Windows Mobile PPC 6800 phone (http://www.tpcug.org/newsletter/nl_2007/December2007/htc_pocketpc_6800.htm) had been giving me more and more trouble, the main problem being that it would quite frequently need to be rebooted. As I was almost at the pont of junking this very expensive phone, I decided to call Alltel and see what could be done. They directed me to a web site from which I could download the newest software that would install ROM updates, etc. And, a bit to my surprise, after the update the phone has worked flawlessly for the past three weeks. ◆

March Meeting: To be announced

RENEWING YOUR MEMBERSHIP?

WE CERTAINLY HOPE YOU WILL

MAIL YOUR CHECK AND ANY
ADDRESS OR NAME CHANGES TO:

TAMPA PC USERS GROUP
PO BOX 3492
TAMPA, FL 33601-3492

$25 Individual $35 Family
$60 Corporate = 3 employees + $20 each add'l employee

Go to our web site http://www.tpcug.org and click on the
About Us | Join link to join or renew online

Check the address label for your renewal month

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Florida Association of User Groups

Association of Personal Computer User Groups

Minutes of the January Meeting

By Jim Purcell, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group
Edward_J_P@MSN.com

Bob LaFave started the windows SIG at about 6:35 PM. He discussed disk burning software, both free and commercial. He discussed the merits and capabilities of software like ImgBurn, which allows you to read a disk to an image file, create an image file from files on your computer, write an image file to a disk and verify the readability of a disk. Bob pointed out that if you were interested in more sophisticated projects like slide shows or video editing, you would need a program like those offered by Roxio and Nero. There was also a discussion about the viability of upgrading the firmware on your CD or DVD drive. Both Bob and Merle Nicholson cautioned that it is not always a simple download and that it is not advisable to do the upgrade unless either you are having trouble with the drive or the upgrade offers additional capabilities that you need. They also noted that new drives with the latest features are relatively inexpensive. Bob also discussed "Network Magic," offered by Cisco, as an excellent program to help you set up and manage your network. It also includes a network scanner to help you understand and secure your network.

John started the business portion of the meeting at approximately 7:00 PM. He welcomed and introduced a new member, Jim Sides, and acknowledged another new member, Bernard Wesner, who was not present. John gave the details of the upcoming Spring FACUG meeting in Zephyrhills on March 13th, 14th and 15th. This will be a combined meeting with the APCUG, so it will probably address more subjects than normal. More details should be available soon. He welcomed Gene Barlow of User Group Relations and thanked him for working us into his schedule. Gene and his wife Linda last visited our group about four years ago.

Gene started his presentation at about 7:10 PM. He was a part of the IBM team that put the IBM PC together, and he worked for IBM with user groups for about 14 years before he retired. He decided to continue working with user groups after he retired and has represented various software groups. His topic was all about backing up your hard drive. He stressed the importance of doing this on a regular basis. If you have performed your backups, it can not only save you a lot of time if your hard drive crashes, it can also probably save you a great deal of money. But, most importantly, it will prevent the possible permanent loss of valuable information, such as financial records, family or busi-

Amazon Kindle eBook reader

By Jim Purcell, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group
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Ayear ago I wrote an article on eBook readers that focused on the Sony and Amazon Kindle readers and covered what I believed to be the advantages and disadvantages of the two. I've been watching both and have been trying to decide whether to buy or wait. The decision was made for me when Amazon couldn't keep up with demand and developed a six-month backlog sometime in November of 2008. I think this was due to the fact that Oprah came into possession of a Kindle, devoted one of her shows to it and proclaimed to the world that it was her "favorite new gadget," and Amazon reported that she even said that it was "life-changing for me." We all know that an endorsement of that kind from Oprah could probably immediately sell all of those buggy whips sitting in warehouses waiting for us to run out of fossil fuel. The reason that my children were able to purchase a Kindle before Christmas is that my oldest daughter was watching the Oprah Winfrey Show and ordered the reader before the big rush (and, thanks to Oprah, got a $50 discount that Amazon offered to celebrate Oprah's endorsement).

In this article, I will discuss only the Kindle eBook reader. There is a great deal of progress that has been made in both the Sony reader and the Kindle. If you are interested in the Sony reader, you probably should visit Sony Style in International Plaza. They have a full display of the two models that are currently active; one is about $50 less than the Kindle and one is about $50 more. They also have knowledgeable personnel who can discuss the intricate features of each or can quickly obtain the answers to any questions that they cannot answer.

To fully appreciate the capabilities of the Kindle, it is important that you understand how the Kindle reader functions. The diagram to the right shows the page turning controls down each side of the reader. For some unknown reason, the main page-turning control is about two-thirds the length of the unit and is very easy to hit accidently. I know that they have received complaints; I've seen them in the reviews. The "Back" control works the same way the back arrow works on your browser. The keys on the keyboard require a firm click so they do not pose the same problem as the page controls. The keyboard has special keys to assist in entering data and navigating the

system. The "Select wheel" runs the cursor up and down the "Cursor bar", to select items from the pop-up menus that appear along the right side of the screen. You make your selection by simply pressing the Select wheel. The Kindle comes equipped with a wireless capability called Amazon Whispernet, which allows you to download books, magazines, Audiobooks, and your personal papers that have been formatted by Amazon to be read by your Kindle. Whispernet is free, extremely fast and works practically anywhere that you are in range of a cellular tower.

BOOKS, NEWSPAPERS AND MAGAZINES: When I wrote my article a year ago, Amazon had approximately 90,000 books in Kindle format for sale at their site. Amazon now has approximately 220,000. The books vary in price but most "best sellers" sell for $9.99. There is some indication that this price is beginning to creep to $14.82. (One Kindle owner suggested in a recent Amazon forum that all owners boycott new books offered at $14.82.) You can search the Amazon Kindle store from your Kindle and order and download from the items available. As discussed

Front View of Kindle
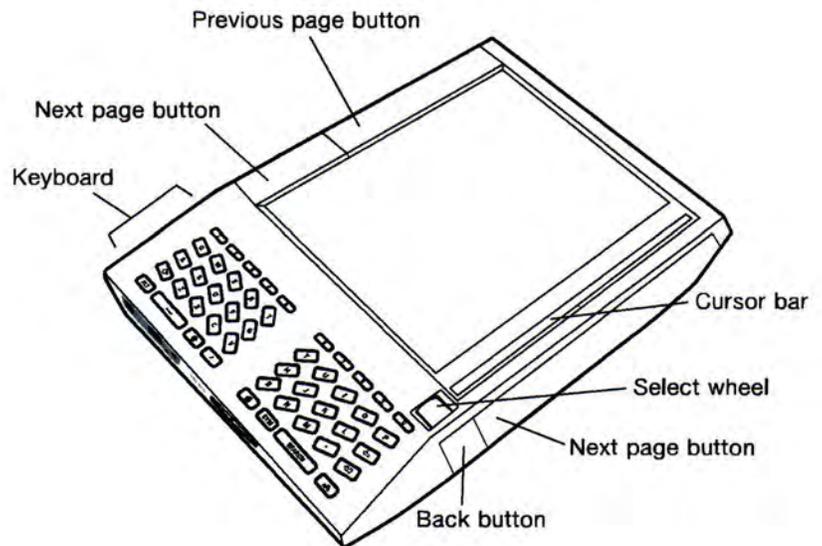
above, books range in price, as do the magazines and newspapers. You can download and read a sample of most books for free. Most all of the newspapers from large U.S. cities, China, France, Germany, Ireland and the International Herald Tribune are available for subscription or an individual copy. The Financial Times, Wall Street Journal, Investor's Business Daily and USA Today are also available. Most of the newspapers that I checked were $9.99 a month or 75 cents per issue.. There are 21 magazines available ranging

from Technology (MIT publications since 1899 @ $1.25 per month or $2.99 per single issue) to the *Reader's Digest* @ $1.25 per month or @ $1.49 per single issue. *Time* and *Newsweek* are both $1.49 per month or 49 cents per single issue. There are also about 1200 blogs that you can search by category. The few that I scanned ran from 99 Cents to $1.99 a month. I'm sure that the range is larger. All newspapers, magazines and blogs offer a 14-day free trial. You simply need to cancel before the end of the period or the subscription will continue until canceled.

PERSONAL DOCUMENTS: In addition to the items that you purchase, you can also read several formats of your personal documents that you may wish to transfer to the Kindle. Some can be transferred directly to your reader from your computer using the USB connection. Some formats must be converted, which is quickly accomplished by Amazon. The formats are identified in the tables below. You have two choices for the documents that must be reformatted. You email the document to Amazon as an attachment and they email it back to your computer as an attachment for free. You then transfer the document to your reader via USB. For a small fee (currently 10 cents per document), they will send it directly to your reader. I've processed two documents, one to my computer and one to the reader. One took less than two minutes from the time I sent my email, and the other took less than 10 minutes.

Reader Folders	File Types That Can be Moved Directly by USB
Documents Mobi (.mobi*, .prc*)	Kindle (.azw), text (.txt),
Music	MP3 music format (.mp3)
Audible	Audible.com (.aa)

* Files containing digital rights management software will not be readable.

The following file formats can be converted via e-mail for viewing on Kindle:
- Microsoft Word (.DOC)
- Structured HTML (.HTML, .HTM)
- JPEG (.JPEG, .JPG)
- GIF (.GIF)
- PNG (.PNG)
- BMP (.BMP)

USING THE KINDLE: Like anything new, it takes a little time to get used to reading an eBook. The adjustment came very quickly for me. It is so much more comfortable

reading from the Kindle. The disadvantages of the Kindle eBook are the lack of color and, in some instances, the lack of illustrations and diagrams. I think that a newspaper is a newspaper and it is almost impossible to create a small screen format that competes with it. Some of the mechanics, such as the accidental page turning, need tweaking. Some will probably not like the screen compared to a page, but I find it easier to read. Being able to easily turn pages forward and backward is certainly a plus. The things that I really enjoy the most are the conveniences resulting from the electronic format. When you place a bookmark, it appears in a chronological list at the front of the book in which you placed it. A single click on one of these bookmarks takes you instantly to that location. You can highlight text in a book and it remains until you erase it. You can write notes as you read (via a small keyboard), and they are stored on a page that you can transfer to your computer. A built-in dictionary allows you to quickly find the meaning of words that have more than two syllables. When you conduct a search, it almost instantly searches the content of the reader (every book, newspaper, magazine, etc., that you bring into the Kindle is indexed). Once the internal search is completed, the "hits" are listed and a search document is prepared for you to search the Amazon library or the Internet. The mere fact that you can have 200 books in a unit smaller than a paperback is also very difficult to fully comprehend. ◆

ness historical files and pictures that can never be recreated. He identified the two stages involved. First, you back up your data to some other device, such as another hard drive, a CD or a DVD. If something happens to your data due to a hard drive crash or corruption of data, then you restore your data to a functioning hard drive. If backup has been done properly, you should be back and running in a matter of minutes. He covered, in detail, the various options for backing up data and also the details and options for restoring data, as to both the entire hard drive and individual files. His presentation detailed what he considered the best hardware and the best software to create an ideal backup program. Of the options available as a destination to backup your data, such as the Internet, DVDs or CDs, tape cartridges, or another hard drive, he believes that the best thing to which you should back up a large hard drive is to another large external hard drive. He talked about both laptop-size hard drives and the normal large hard drives. These drives have become relatively inexpensive. You should have at least one external hard drive that is dedi-

Replacing a Fan with a Heat Sink

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
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In the September 2008 newsletter, http://www.tpcug.
org/newsletter/nl_2008/september2008/comments.htm,
I described how I removed the malfunctioning chip fan
from the motherboard of my desktop computer and oiled
it so that it would again turn and do its job of cooling the
chip. To the right is a photo of the original chip fan with the
top of its heat sink removed so that I could get at its attach-
ing screws to remove it when I did the oiling. I knew that
this probably was not a long-term solution — and it wasn't
since I now have had to go and do what I didn't want to do.
That is, I had to remove the motherboard from the com-
puter and replace the chip fan and its small heat sink with a
much larger heat sink.
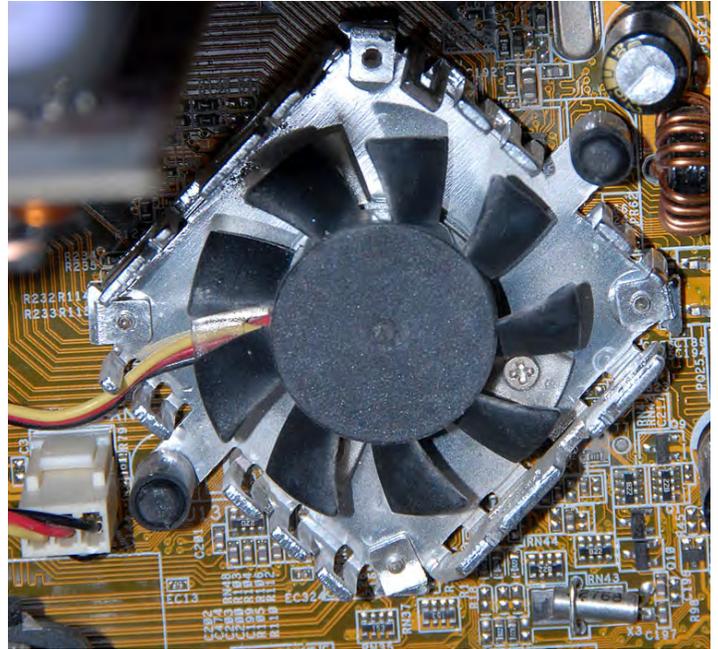
Internet Picture of the Month

Good Job - Bad Job

The Super Bowl is known for its inven-
tive and entertaining ads. In viewing
the ads online at the *New York Times*
site and the *Wall Street Journal* site,
this one for Monster.com caught my at-
tention. Some jobs are better than oth-
ers. The link is http://online.wsj.com/
article/SB123354146320838135.html

February's Interesting World Wide Web Locations

|	
Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Microsoft Pro Photo Tools - Geo-tag your photos	http://www.microsoft.com/prophoto/downloads/tools.aspx
CNBC.Com - Business & Financial News	http://www.cnbc.com/
Wheeless' Textbook of Orthopaedics	http://www.wheelessonline.com/
Learning @ Your Own Pace - lynda.com	http://www.lynda.com

Heat Sink..........Continued from page 5

Merle Nicholson directed me to several suitable replacement heat sinks at the newegg.com site. The one I chose was a little under $10, including shipping. The replacement heat sink and its associated parts are pictured at right.

To remove the motherboard from the computer, you first disconnect the power from the computer and then unplug everything that is external to the computer: Keyboard, network cable, etc. Then you have to open up the computer and remove all its cards. But you are still not finished. You then need to disconnect the hard drive, CD and floppy drive cables. And that is not the end of it since there are various other cables that need to be disconnected depending on your particular configuration. The image below is of some of those other cables. And I confess that on my first try I reconnected them improperly since I misinterpreted the position indications on the motherboard. But no harm was done.

But before you do all of this disconnecting and removal, a word of warning. You are going to have to put everything back the way it was. This is where some mailing labels used as tags can be attached to cables indicating where they should be reattached. And a very big help is a collection of images taken with your digital camera of how things were before the big disconnect. Ideally you would have a laptop computer to which you would download these images so as to have them readily available when reassembling the desktop computer. If you don't have another computer to use, I suppose you could print them out.

Once you have tagged and photographed everything you think is necessary, you simply unplug all connections, remove the cards and then unscrew all the screws holding the motherboard in place. I think there were around nine of these screws. Be careful with the video card removal since
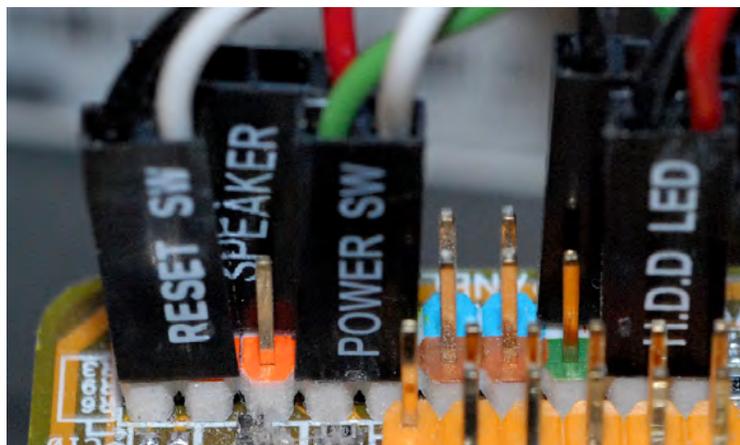
it does not just pull out like the other cards.

Once you have the motherboard out of the computer, the next thing to do is to remove the chip fan/heat sink. This is held in place with two pins similar to the two pictured in the replacement heat sink image above. To remove one, you first use a pair of pliers to squeeze its expandable tip while pulling with another pair of pliers to remove it. Be gentle since you may need this pin if the replacement ones do not work well (as was the case for me).

Once you have removed the fan/heat sink, your motherboard should look like the image on the next page. There was a sort of paper spacer with a hole cut out for the chip that was between the motherboard and the fan/heat sink that the instructions said you could throw away, which

Special Interest Groups

Visual Basic .Net SIG (and sometimes Access 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.

Heat Sink..........Continued from page 6

I did. You then assemble the screws, nuts and flanges and slide them into position in the replacement heat sink grooves. This is somewhat difficult since the screws and nuts are so small. With the flanges roughly positioned in the right locations and the nuts fairly tight, line up the holes in the flanges with the two holes in the motherboard. Then tighten the nuts all you can and recheck the alignment. The next step is to put onto the chip — the silver rectangular object in the center of the image above — a thin film of thermal grease from the supplied tube. The final step is to attach the new heat sink to the chip by pressing the replacement pins until they click in place.

This is where things got a bit dicey for me. The replace-

ment pins just wouldn't make a tight connection. After two tries ended in failure, with the flanges becoming lose and needing retightening, I decided to try the old pins. The old pins worked beautifully. They appear to be a bit longer and heavier duty than the replacement ones, so perhaps that is the reason they worked better.

Once the new heat sink is attached, you are ready to reinstall the motherboard into the computer with the nine

screws. When doing this, make sure no cables get trapped underneath the motherboard. This happened to me, and I didn't catch it until I had reinstalled the motherboard, reconnected a number of cables and reinstalled all the cards. I noticed I had a problem when one cable that was shown in my before photo appeared missing. To get at the cable I had to remove most of the cards and screws so that I could gently lift one end of the motherboard and extract the trapped cable.

With the motherboard reinstalled and all internal cables reconnected, you then connect your monitor, keyboard, mouse, etc. to the back of the computer and fire it up. If something is not right, nothing will happen. If everything is correctly connected, Windows will boot as usual.

All of this is obviously not for the faint of heart. Merle's advice was a big help, as was the web site I found with instructions for doing all this on a motherboard similar to mine. The link to it is http://euroalps.eu/technology/Computing/Chipset_Cooling/Remove_existing_fan/remove_existing_fan.html. This was helpful since the instructions that come with the replacement heat sink are minimal. ◆

Minutes..........Continued from page 4

cated to an organized backup program. He owns several brands of hard drives but prefers either the basic Seagate (without software) or an Hitachi. You should get a backup hard drive about the same size as the hard drive on your computer. You can back up more than one computer on a single hard drive, but the rule of thumb is to get an external drive that equals the sum of the size of the drives that you are backing up. There are two basic types of software available: The "basic file backup software," and the newer "image backup technology," of which he believes Acronis True Image software is one of the best. The image software creates a copy of your entire hard drive and saves it as an image. This image includes your operating system, your

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☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*

Minutes.........Continued from page 4

software, your drivers and everything else, just as it appears on your computer. Acronis also allows you access to all of the individual files on the backup hard drive. The three types of backup are full, incremental and differential. Gene recommends a combination of the full and the incremental. He estimates that the backup takes about one minute to backup one gigabyte. He provided a demonstration of all of the recommended procedures. The required products were offered to our members at reduced rates.

The details of this process are generously provided in the form of a tutorial at Gene's web site at http://www.user-groupstore.com. You will also find tutorials and technical papers on other subjects and the details and prices of all of the products that he distributes. The presentation ended at about 8:35 PM. ◆

← to I-275

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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