



Vol. 22 No. 12

December 2009

December in Tampa

Meeting

Holiday Party

Wednesday December 9, 2009

6:30 PM

Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th Street
Tampa, Florida

Meeting Preview: Holiday party and election of officers.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

This is Merle Nicholson's newsletter by the fact that his article on Windows 7 tips takes up most of the space remaining after the minutes and my brief comments here. And for that I am very thankful. Also, Ed Cohen's unsolicited article on *Continuous Inking Systems* last month was a nice surprise. I could use more surprises like that. Less than two weeks before our monthly meeting, I am usually looking at a newsletter with no content. Then, somehow miraculously we get a newsletter made up of member content. The miracle usually consists of my calling several members and pleading for an article, or my figuring out something to write. Happily, that wasn't necessary this month.

I hope my presentation last month on mapping, photography and computer programming was somewhat enlightening. It amazes me how much we have advanced in these things in the last few years, thanks to the increases in computing power and sophistication of the software. As usual, I had more to present than time, and I thank you for your patience since the meeting ended a bit late.

Finally, don't forget to use the amazon.com link at <http://www.tpcug.org> for your shopping. ◆

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January Meeting: Merle Nicholson on Windows 7

** OFFICERS **

President: John Witmer (president@tpcug.org)	949-8007
Vice President : Kevan Sheridan (kevan@tpcug.org)	988-6480
Treasurer: Doug Mullis (dmullis@tampabay.rr.com)	234-9343
Secretary: Jim Purcell (Edward_J_P@MSN.com)	985-1676
Member at Large: Ron Weinberg (rswjbr@verizon.net)	960-4132

APPOINTED (Volunteers)

Editor: William LaMartin (lamartin@tampabay.rr.com)	251-3817
Librarian: Larry Anders (Larry@AndersNet.com)	989-9119
Programs: Doug Mullis (dmullis@tampabay.rr.com)	234-9343

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

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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Florida Association of User Groups
Association of Personal Computer User Groups

Minutes of the November Meeting

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

Bob LaFave started the Windows SIG at approximately 6:30 PM. Bob showed how the DVD that you use to install Vista or Windows 7 allows you to install a hard drive in the computer as a hidden partition on your current hard drive. He mentioned that with Vista and Windows 7, Microsoft provides you a lot of options to fix your own computer. He stressed the importance of making a recovery disk as soon as you have installed the operating system and your software, because the information will be lost if your hard drive crashes before you have created the recovery disk. Bob mentioned that Belarc Advisor, a free download, builds a detailed profile of your installed software and hardware, a list of missing Microsoft hot fixes, anti-virus status and also provides the serial numbers of your software DVDs. (http://www.belarc.com/free_download.html) In response to a member's question about updating "drivers," Bob discussed the various ways to update and obtain drivers. Merle Nicholson mentioned how easy it has become with the new operating systems to find the drivers that you need. Bob explained how to add a switch to your router in order to provide additional outlets. The Windows SIG ended at approximately 6:55 PM.

William LaMartin began his presentation of "Mapping, Photography & Computer Programming" at approximately 7:00 PM. William opened with an explanation of how and why he spends so much of his time with maps, photography and programming. He has had an interest in maps since he was a young boy, he has a deep interest in programming, and photography is one of his favorite hobbies. The huge technological changes in all three of these areas have allowed him to explore digital maps and show them with amazing clarity and detail that could not have been imagined a few years ago. William showed the members several examples of what he has been able to produce. He started with several maps on which he had used Microsoft Deep Zoom Composer to develop a zoom capability: (1) 1858 Map of the Lower Mississippi River indicating plantation owners; (2) 1798 Map Of New

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Windows 7 Installation Tips

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

By now, I've accomplished three successful from-scratch Win 7 64-bit installations and one failed upgrade from Vista BE 64-bit. This isn't counting a couple of Beta installations. Everything I know is a lesson learned by doing it wrong the first time. So I, of course, can call myself ¾ pretty good at it by now.

In two cases, I've run the free Win 7 Compatibility program to anticipate what I may be missing or may have trouble with. The program gives you a pretty informative list. It warns you if there may be some initial problem with a device driver and may say that it should be fixed after a reboot. It will list all the devices it found and whether or not there's a driver for each. It also lists any software that may have problems if you're interested in upgrading from Vista.

If you're upgrading from XP (and I would only if it's a new PC), there is some very good help on this on the Microsoft Windows 7 page (the link is below). You can get all your mail, documents, favorites, address book and more by using the "Windows Easy Transfer" program. It's on the Win 7 Install DVD and is also downloadable for XP and Vista – both 32-bit and 64-bit.

<http://windows.microsoft.com/en-us/windows7/products/features/windows-easy-transfer>

So here's more or less what I do now for a Win 7 installation from scratch, whether it's for myself or for a friend or customer.

Install the software and get the computer running.

This is really the easy part. There are very few decisions to make, limited to entering your product key, logon name, password and computer name, selecting a public or private network and your time zone. Later if it detects other Windows 7 computers with a Home group name, it will ask for the Home group password. You'll need your network name, too.

Use Help. Now would be the time to say that the Windows 7 on-line help, tutorials and articles are endless and of excellent quality. So, if you don't know what a Home group is, there should be a link on the page to pull up the Help. To get started, you may want to go to <http://www.microsoft.com/windows/windows-7/>. Don't forget about Wikipedia, either. There's a mountain of information available there, too.

Refine the OS. The first thing is to see what issues must be addressed. There is an "Action Center." It's a flag in the System Tray and in Control Panel. It lists all current issues, including that you're missing antivirus programs. The Action Center will have suggestions as to how to fix each issue. Hopefully, most will just require a reboot to allow the OS to find a driver on its own.

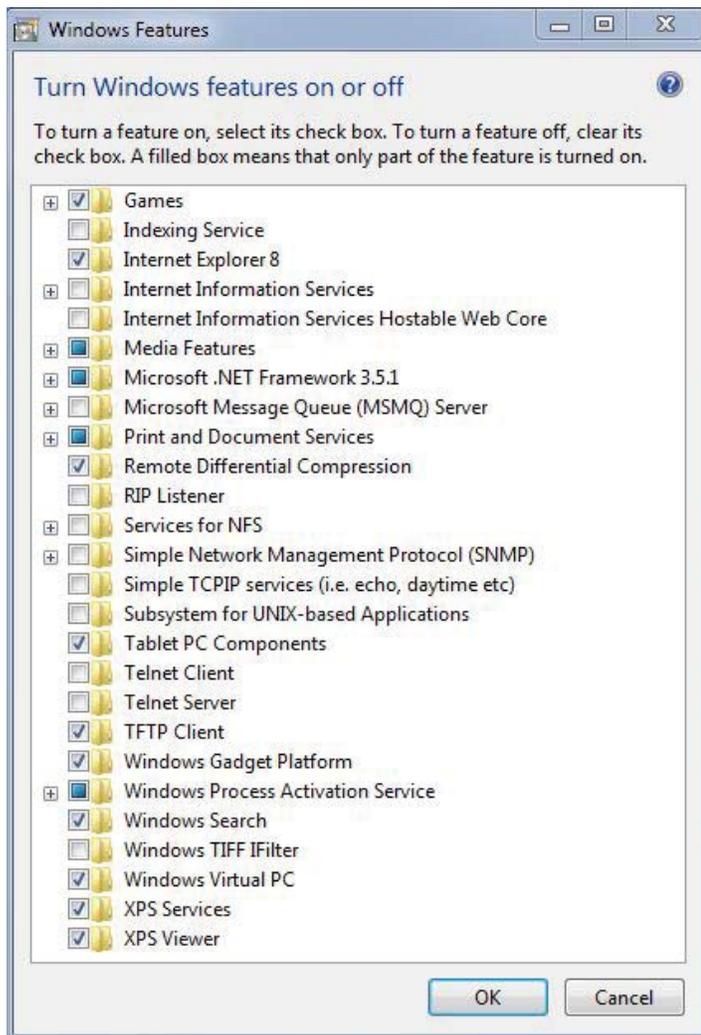
In the case of printer driver problems, you should know that there are many, many supported printers that are not listed in the driver selection where you pick out the model number. In my case I looked under Canon for my i850 inkjet, and it wasn't there. But there's a link you can click on that will update the list, and it goes to the Internet and downloads lots more. I've always resolved all my printer driver problems in this manner. You should know, though, that when I went out to update the printers, it was just the Canon printers because that's where I was in the list. I discovered that I couldn't find my Brother laser printer, until I updated that, too. That was certainly contrary to my expectations.

Look at the Device Manager to give you information about a device if you need more. You can always go out to the manufacturer to get drivers if necessary, but I've rarely needed to do that. Remember that if there's no Win 7 driver, then a Vista driver should work, and a Win XP driver will not. Go to the Windows 7 Solution Center for even more help: <http://support.microsoft.com/gp/windows7#tab0>

After you've resolved all the hardware problems – and obviously some could wait – you need to look at the OS. Go to Control Panel, Programs and Features, "Turn Windows features on or off." There you will

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get a pretty comprehensive list of everything available that it may have installed (checked) or not (unchecked). It depends on the version you have. My Win-7 Professional does not install any games by default, so I have to check that box. And I've been unchecking "Windows Media Center" (go figure). Be sure that you read the info flag that pops up on each one before changing a check box. For instance the one after Games is "Indexing Service," and maybe you want indexing, but this one is the service that was in the previous versions of Windows, and you don't want this one. The "Windows Search" near the bottom is what you need, and it is probably already checked. If you're planning to use Virtual PC XP Mode, you'll want the "Windows Virtual PC" checked. You'll need to look at all of it.



A final OK will configure the features, and pretty quickly, too.

Install AntiVirus. Get this done now. I've been using the free Microsoft Security Essentials, and I see that AVG has a major update –Rev.4– to AVG Free. I installed one of these just yesterday to try it out.

And if you've bought a new PC with Windows 7 – or Vista – it's time to make the recovery CDs or DVDs. Many new PCs have this in the Start Menu, and it should be done immediately.

More Windows components. OK it's time to get the missing programs like Outlook Express (actually now Windows Mail) that you may have discovered are missing. What you're looking for is "Windows Live Essentials." Each program is available individually or all together:

Messenger, Mail, Writer (a blog editor), Photo Gallery, Movie Maker, Family Safety (Internet site blocker for kids), Toolbar (I think this is MSN Toolbar).

Additionally these are available: Microsoft Office Outlook Connector, Office Live Add-in (this is "Cloud Computing" add-ins for IE) and Microsoft Silverlight (you need this one). All are available from <http://download.live.com/>, or from the Windows 7 page above.

More programs you'll need: I have kind of a minimum list of programs that I download and install, usually from <http://download.cnet.com/windows/>.

Imgburn – free dvd/cd/blu-ray read & write, ISO creator/burner. DVD support is built into Win-7, so do not spend money on CD Creator or Nero yet--until you see the need. There are many free products that may satisfy your needs.

1. **Foxit Reader** – Free PDF reader. I use this as an alternative to Adobe Reader because it's faster and smaller. Adobe Reader does a lot of things I don't need.
2. **CutePDF** – A free printer driver that makes PDF files. Again, it doesn't have the capability of the Adobe products, but it does 100% of what I need.
3. **Paint.NET** – A free Paint & Photo program. I used

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to use Paintshop Pro 9, but it's a little hard to deal with in 64-bit, and I really don't see the need to buy a new Corel Paintshop. Paint.NET is a very good substitute for these for the limited photo editing that I do.

4. **VLC** – Multimedia player from VideoLan. This doesn't have any codec problems, seems to play anything and it's small and fast to load, and it's free.
5. **7Zip** – This is a zip program that you can drag and drop from/to, kind of like a better WinZip. It has a very nice user interface. I'll admit that I use it rarely, only when I want to do RAR format or some of the more esoteric types. Zip file support is built into Windows Explorer and does a very good job.
6. **Dataram RAMDisk**. I use this RAMDisk because an Access database is blindingly fast when dropped in a 2 GB ramdisk. Having the extra memory is possible because I use the 64-bit version of Windows.
7. **Virtual Clonedrive** – Allows you to put an ISO file online so you can emulate reading from a CD or DVD. It's way faster than a CD/DVD drive.

And last, there's Virtual PC XP Mode. There are two downloads you must make. One is "WindowsXP-Mode_en-us.exe" at <http://www.microsoft.com/windows/virtual-pc/download.aspx>. This page has advice that should be carefully considered. The first step is to decide if you really need XP mode.

Now Tweak the System. Go to Control Panel, Sys-
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Internet Picture of the Month



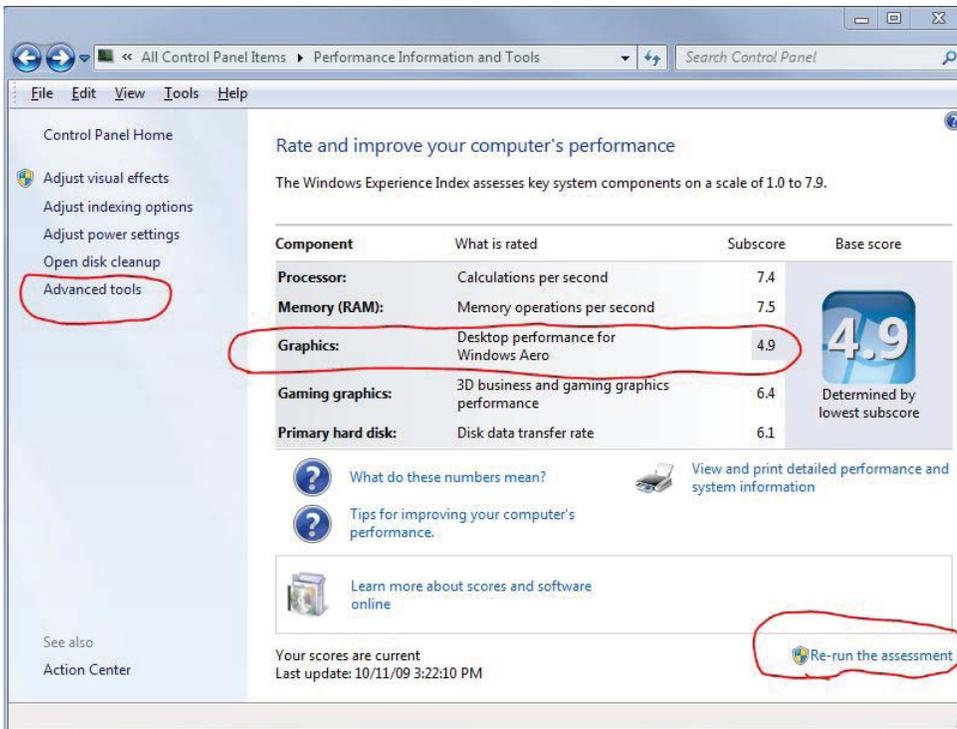
Dubailand

From the New York Times Lens section at <http://lens.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/11/30/showcase-85/>, we see what will probably be a failed real estate development. According to the Times, "Dubailand (is) a complex of theme parks and residential, retail and industrial centers to be completed in 2020" in the desert emirate of Dubai. It is a place that has hit a rough spot lately--not unlike some real estate developments in Florida. In fact, that arch looks a lot like the entrances to some "ranchet" projects I have seen in South Florida. This is a crop of the original photographed by Lauren Greenfield.

December's Interesting World Wide Web Locations

Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)
FoodSafety.gov
Airport Time and Distance Calculator
Denver Post
New York Times Lens

<http://www.tpcug.org/>
<http://www.foodsafety.gov/>
<http://www.airportcitycodes.com/aaa/T&DCFrame.html>
<http://www.denverpost.com/>
<http://lens.blogs.nytimes.com/>



done. I look for those things that I don't care about anyway. I really don't care if menus fade or slide into view. Just remember how you got to this panel.

Now, just a couple more things to do.

Right-click on the Taskbar, select Properties, and look at the customization you can do to the Start Menu and the Taskbar. Be sure to look at Advanced Settings. There's a lot you can do that you'll like. I add "Computer as a menu," Network, Run Command, "Devices and Printers" and "Documents as a link." You can also regulate what items go into the "Notification

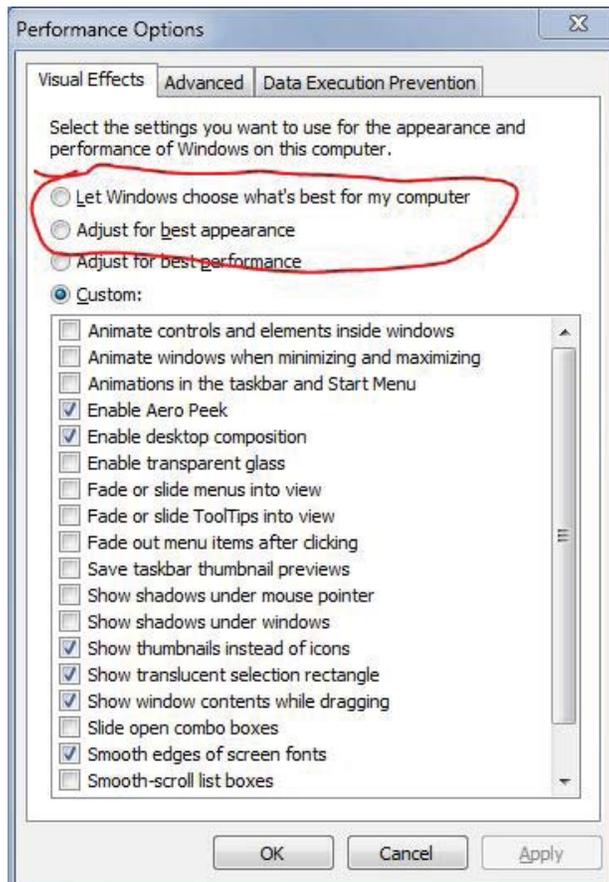
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tem, and see if there is a System Rating for Windows Experience Index. If it hasn't been done – there is no Base Score – then click on "Windows Experience Index" and find "Re-run the assessment." You're looking at a Settings page called "Performance Information and Tools"

It takes awhile to run but then gives you five subscores and a base score. You're interested in the Graphics Component. If that score is too low, it will restrict you from running Windows Aero and Aero Peek.

Now, make sure Aero is on. Click on "Advanced Tools." Unless the Graphics rating limits using Aero, check "Let Windows choose ..." or "Adjust for Best Appearance." Then, as you work with Windows 7 for awhile, you may want to tune for performance a bit by unchecking some of the graphics features, as I have

Area;" the name was System Tray in XP. While you're here, be sure to check "Use Aero Peek to preview the desktop," and set "Power button Action." I have it as "Shut Down" because that's what I use it for 90% of the time.



Default Logon. If you want to turn on your machine and have it go to your desktop without halting for a password, you can easily do that, but it's hard to find. In Windows Explorer, go to c:\Windows\system32 folder and look for netplwiz.exe. Create a shortcut to this .exe and save it. I put it in the Start Menu under Accessories, System Tools. It should be named "Advanced User Accounts Control Panel." On the Users Tab, select your login name and uncheck the box "Users must enter a user name and password to use this computer".

Set Clear Type. It doesn't

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Special Interest Groups

Visual Basic .Net SIG (and sometimes Access SIG)

This SIG meets the third Wednesday of the month at 6:30 PM. For information, contact William LaMartin at lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

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Orleans (1875 copy and translation of original);(3) 1900-1910 (date unsure) “Aerial View” of Manhattan; (4) 1884 Birds Eye View of Deland Florida.

He showed a group of COMDEX buttons that he had scanned and converted to PNG files and made the backgrounds transparent. The detailed background information of the button is revealed when you hover over the button. You can zoom in and out on each of the buttons to get a clear view of all of the fine points of the button itself. William showed an aerial view of a ranch that he and his sister had once owned. He used about 40 screen captures in Google Maps to construct an aerial view map of the property by piecing them together in Photoshop. He used Microsoft’s Deep Zoom Composer to place 137 photos that had been taken on the property at the approximate locations where they were taken. He demonstrated how older maps can be overlaid on current maps to show the historical changes in locations. Two of the maps that he used were a current Hyde Park map, overlaid with 1915 and 1922 historic maps, and a map of Hillsborough County, overlaid with an 1882 historic map. He also showed three interactive maps that he had developed that showed cell tower locations, National Public Radio station locations and ship locations. William demonstrated how to construct a panorama using individual photographs. He showed a striking panorama of Davis Islands viewed from the west that he had composed. You can zoom in to a sharp picture of each house, including the famous Derek Jeter home currently under construction. All of the above projects and many more interesting ones that he has developed can be viewed on his web site, <http://www.lamartin.com>. The presentation ended at approximately 8:50 PM

John Witmer, our president, opened the business por-

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.

tion of the meeting at approximately 9:00 PM. John announced that the meeting room will not be available on January 13th. The members agreed that **January 20th will be an acceptable alternate date. John said that we would again discuss and confirm the date at the December meeting.**

John discussed the proposed menu for the December meeting. The members confirmed that they had enjoyed last years dinner and that a menu similar to the one from last year would be desirable.

He reminded the members of the elections at the December meeting and again asked that anyone interested in any of the offices step forward. The meeting ended at approximately 9:10 PM. ◆

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seem possible that Clear Type is set off by default. Anyone with an LCD screen (all of us, right?) needs to use Clear Type and adjust its properties. Go to Control Panel, Fonts. On the left pane, select “Adjust Clear Type text.” Select “Turn on Clear Type” and then Next. A step-by-step procedure comes up. It’s easy and quick to do and can make all text on the screen dramatically clearer. The name of the Clear Type program is “C :\Windows\System32\cttune.exe.” You can make a shortcut to that as well and keep it. Windows XP and Vista have this feature, too. XP is done through a “Powertoy” download program. ◆

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