Bits of Blue

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

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Meeting

Blain Barton from Microsoft Office 2010

Wednesday, July 14, 2010

6:30 PM

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

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Meeting Preview: Blain Barton from Microsoft, speaking on Office 2010, will be our presenter this month. Member Bob LaFave will lead the usual Windows SIG meeting.

Editor's Comments

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

First I want to thank all of you who have been doing your purchasing from Amazon by starting with the Amazon link on our home page. Each month recently we have been receiving a deposit from them for the purchases made a couple of months previously. The latest check was for around $36.

Microsoft Events I saw one of our members at the Microsoft event location on June 29. Possibly more of you attended since the morning event had been over for at least 30 minutes when I arrived for the afternoon event. The morning session was geared toward Office 2010 and its deployment on the desktop and in the cloud. The afternoon event was aimed at programmers and developers using Visual Studio 2010.

The afternoon session was broken down into three parts: What's new in Visual Studio 2010, Web Development and the new Windows Phone7. It also turned out that there was going to be an additional meeting of developers/programmers in the area inter-

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August Meeting: To be announced

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WE CERTAINLY HOPE YOU WILL

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Minutes of the July Meeting

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

Bob LaFave opened the meeting with the Windows SIG at 6:35 PM. Bob discussed failed mice and problems with dual-layer discs. He suggested that you first check the battery in your mouse, if your mouse has a battery. If that is not successful, then check the drivers for the mouse.

For your dual-layer DVD player, you should see if a firmware update is available. He advised members to check the description of the update to insure that it contains changes that are beneficial. He cautioned members to be sure to follow the update instructions precisely because a botched update can cause very serious problems.

A member asked how to best increase the speed of his computer. Bob recommended that he download the "Windows Live One Care Scanner" (http://onecare.live.com/site/en-us/default.htm) . Bob and the members discussed various ways to save money on software and computer accessories. There was also an extended discussion on how to solve problems that are encountered when upgrading your operating system. The Windows SIG closed and John Witmer opened the business portion of the meeting at 7:10 PM.

John discussed the problems encountered in publishing the June newsletter and emphasized the need for all members to contribute any information they have that might be of interest to the group. He suggested that members might begin preparing profiles of their life experiences to allow us to know more about each other. He pointed out that it is not only very difficult for a few members to carry the load but also that we believe that publication of more diverse subject matter would improve the quality of the newsletter and of its interest to our members.

John announced that Blain Barton from Microsoft will be the speaker for the July meeting and that our only solid prospect for the rest of the year is Steve Singer's yearly hardware presentation. Members suggested several topics. William LaMartin offered to give a presentation on a variety of subjects. John introduced Marty

Home Network Improvements

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

Costs for network devices are dropping pretty dramatically. After some slow backups across my little network, I decided to look into improving its speed from the standard 100Mb/sec to "gigabit" – 1000Mb/sec, (or 1Gb/s), a factor of 10.

There were other reasons to revamp my system that you may relate to: I ran out of places to connect new devices for lack of ports.

I'd replaced two of my older USB printers with one new all-in-one, and it has a network connection, far more desirable than a USB port, but I needed to find an Ethernet port.

I discovered that, when upgraded to Windows 7, the notebook I'd recently bought with wireless-g (with the Vista driver) became wireless-n. WooHoo.

The modem/router installed by the ISP has four 100Mb/s ports and wireless-g. Not nearly enough for my needs.

Two of my four desktop computers (three for me, one for Valerie) have 1Gb/s ports built in and were connected to older 100Gb/s equipment. Valerie's was one of the 100Mb/s; I added a wireless game adapter some time back so it was connected wirelessly as Wireless-g. I really needed to improve that since I wanted to look at streaming movies from Netflix – since proven successful.

OK. We need to stop and present some definitions:

Wireless-g works generally up to 54Mb/s, some at 108Mb/s, depending on distance and interference from other things like walls and portable phones. Wireless-n works generally variably at a raw data rate of 54-600Mb/s. depending on a lot of stuff mostly having to do with money.

Wired Ethernet is reliable, 10/100/1000Mb/s, depending on distance, quality of the cable and the relative positions of Mars and Saturn.

Router is a small ugly box that usually your ISP installs. It may be just downstream of a modem. Most times it has four Ethernet ports and a wireless antenna, typically wireless-g. Or it may combine a modem, router and wireless. Or maybe no wireless. The one necessary requirement to be a router is to have DHCP in the built-in program.

DHCP Dynamic Host Configuration Protocol. Yada-Yada for "IP address traffic assigner" for all the devices on your network needing an IP address. There can be only one of these on your network because they're poor at playing with others.

ISP Internet Service Provider – The large corporate entity seemingly based somewhere in Asia that bills about $300 a month, including TV but not mobile phone.

Ethernet Adapter card A card that you can install inside a computer to a PCI or PCIe socket. The adapters now come in 10/100 and 10/100/1000 speeds. Most computers have Ethernet built in, and this Ethernet can be just ignored or disabled in software. Computers handle more than one Ethernet port easily, but not simultaneously.

Switch This is kind of a small port multiplier with one Ethernet port In and four Out, maybe eight or sixteen Out. It's relatively inexpensive, probably has nothing to set and definitely does not have DHCP. It routes Ethernet signals and can multi-task – that is, handle multiple channels at the same time. If you were to add DHCP, it would be a router. Indeed, if you have a router and disable DHCP in software, you have a switch. If that's not confusing enough, it's similar to a Hhb.

Hub A single-route-at-a-time version of a switch. You don't want one unless you have low expectations and it's offered free of charge.
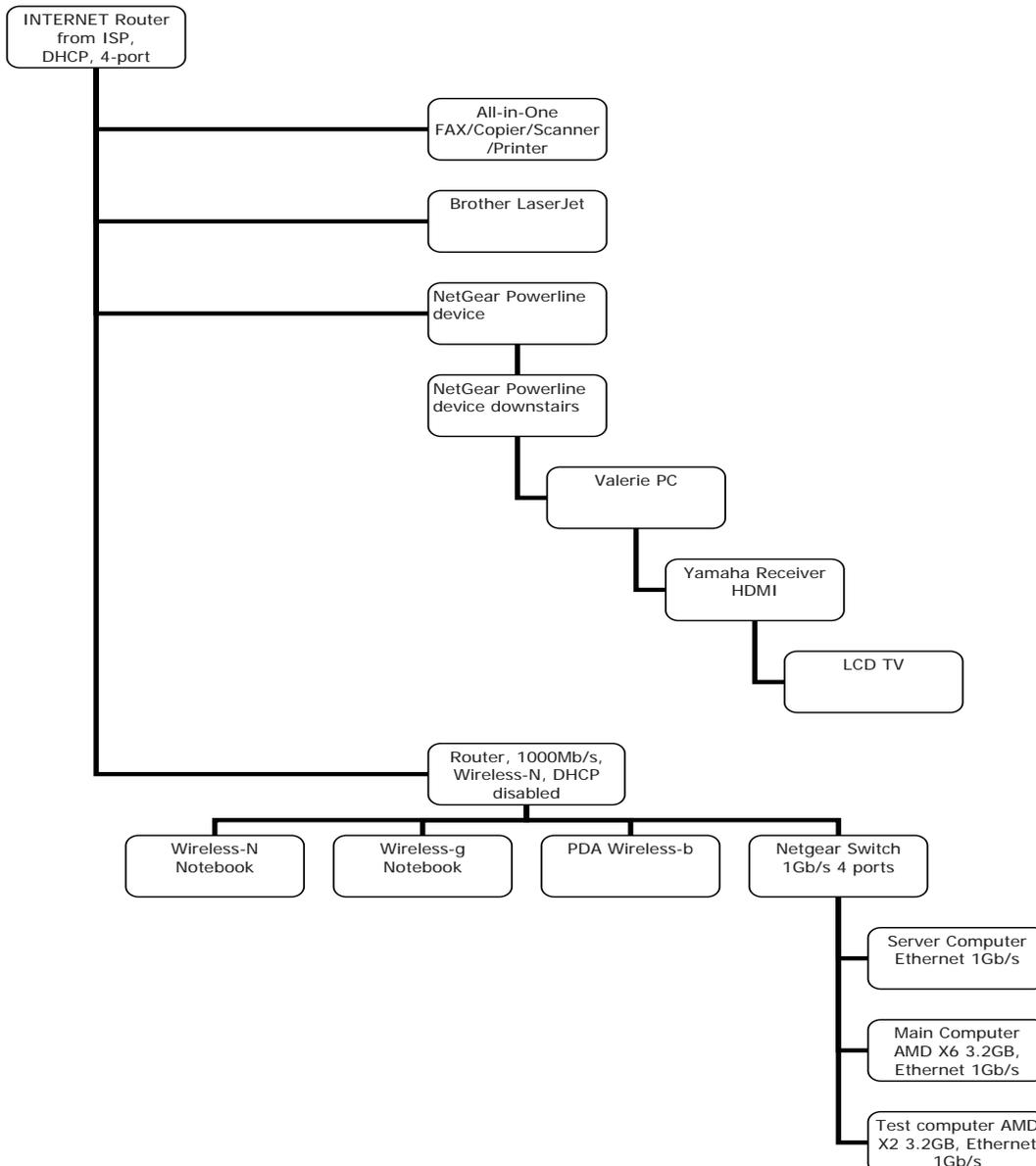
Improving my system a bit at a time.
First thing I had to do was get some more ports available and to improve my backup speed. I had two long

Ethernet cables running to my computer corner where I have my server and main desktop. I abandoned one of the cables and installed a 1Gb/s switch to the end of the other, then two short cables to the two computers. I used CAT5e or CAT6 cables for that. Then I installed a new Ethernet Adapter card in the server. So the rest of the system was slow, but the backups moving files from the desktop unit to the server were fast, and it was obvious it was fast. And it opened up a port on the router for the new printer.

Later, when I was contemplating Netflix streaming, I bought a new Rosewill brand wireless-n router. This was inexpensive, has four 1Gb/s Ethernet ports and wireless-n. I ran the configuration program for this device to set the wireless parameters, set a password, added an encryption code for the wireless, and last thing was to disable DHCP. You do this last because you will lose the configuration program at this point and the only way to go back is to do a hard reset, which blows everything and you have to start the configuration all over. This is because it will lose its IP address. That's OK though. Remember I said they don't play well with others. I placed it next to the ISP's router and cabled it to one of the router's 100Mb/s ports. Then I used the cable from my office corner to the little 1Gb/s switch to the new router, so everything that could use 1Gb/s would. Next steps were to reconfigure my notebook to use wireless-n. Yaaaa cheers. It doubled the speed from 54Mb/s to about 108Mb/s. It's very noticeably faster.

```
INTERNET Router
from ISP,
DHCP, 4-port
  ├── All-in-One FAX/Copier/Scanner/Printer
  ├── Brother LaserJet
  ├── NetGear Powerline device
  │      └── NetGear Powerline device downstairs
  │             └── Valerie PC
  │                    └── Yamaha Receiver HDMI
  │                           └── LCD TV
  └── Router, 1000Mb/s, Wireless-N, DHCP disabled
         ├── Wireless-N Notebook
         ├── Wireless-g Notebook
         ├── PDA Wireless-b
         └── Netgear Switch 1Gb/s 4 ports
                ├── Server Computer Ethernet 1Gb/s
                ├── Main Computer AMD X6 3.2GB, Ethernet 1Gb/s
                └── Test computer AMD X2 3.2GB, Ethernet 1Gb/s
```

I then installed a pair of NetGear powerline devices to route Ethernet downstairs over the house wiring to Valerie's PC. I'd removed the wireless-g game adapter and cabled it directly to the Ethernet port on her computer. Now that's a 100Mb/s port, but the powerline won't do much better than that. It's more than enough for streaming movies though. I got a long HDMI cable from the PC to my receiver/amplifier which routes video to the big LCD TV. William LaMartin and I have both written about the powerline devices in previous articles. It's a very good way to get good (not great) Ethernet across your house without running wires.
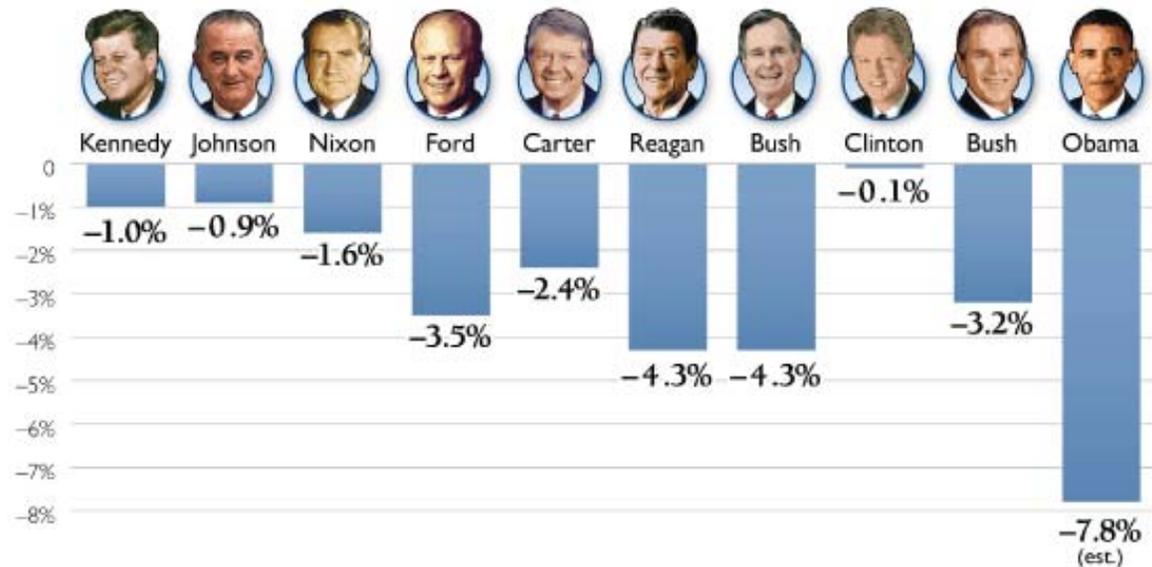
It's complete now, and

Internet Picture of the Month

Obama's Budget Would Create Unprecedented Deficits

The President is responsible for submitting an annual budget to Congress and has the authority to veto legislation including irresponsible spending. Most Administrations ran small but manageable deficits, but President Obama's unprecedented budget deficits pose serious economic risks.

BUDGET DEFICITS AS A PERCENTAGE OF GDP, BY ADMINISTRATION

Kennedy Johnson Nixon Ford Carter Reagan Bush Clinton Bush Obama

-1.0% -0.9% -1.6% -3.5% -2.4% -4.3% -4.3% -0.1% -3.2% -7.8% (est.)

Source: White House Office of Management and Budget.

Debt and Deficits Chart 4 • 2010 Budget Chart Book   heritage.org

Budget Woes

The chart and its comments above are from the Heritage Foundation, a conservative think tank, http://www.heritage.org/, with a specific link of http://www.heritage.org/budgetchartbook/budget-create-deficits. It appears these numbers are accurate independent of political persuasion. In fact, other sites, e.g., the Wall Street Journal, have the 2010 figure closer to -10%.

July's Interesting World Wide Web Locations

Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)   http://www.tpcug.org/
Florida Digital Newspaper Library   http://ufdcweb1.uflib.ufl.edu/ufdc/?a=fdnl1&m=hhh
Gizmag Emerging Technology Magazine   http://www.gizmag.com/
GenDisasters -Disasters that touched our ancestors   http://www3.gendisasters.com/
Tampa Bay Business Journal   http://tampabay.bizjournals.com/tampabay/

ested in Microsoft Silverlight beginning at 6:30. This is something I am very much interested in, so I had to stay for that. The result was that I acquired some very helpful new ideas between 1:00 PM and 9:15 PM, which is a fairly long day. But iff I had attended the morning session, it would have started at 8:00 AM.

Speaking of Silverlight, I have recreated the Pivot Collection of New Orleans French Quarter photos that I wrote about in last month's newsletter ("A New Way of Viewing Data") as a Silverlight application which can now be viewed in any web browser. You may recall that last month you had to download the special Pivot Browser if you wanted to view the collection. Now to view the collection, just point your browser to the link http://www.lamartin.com/NewOrleansFrenchQuarter2006PivotCollection/. Another such collection, which Microsoft created as an example, is the NetFlix Instant View Movies collection at http://netflixpivot.cloudapp.net.

Live Mesh While on a recent trip to Boston and Maine, I had occasion to use Microsoft Live Mesh, which I also wrote about in the June newsletter. I left my desktop computer running and logged onto Live Mesh while away (something I have not done in the past) on the chance that I might want to access it via Live Mesh. And I did. I needed an email address I was recently given and had not yet added to the Outlook contacts on my travel laptop. So I simply logged onto Live Mesh on the laptop, connected to the desktop computer via a Live Mesh Remote Desktop and opened Outlook on the desktop computer and retrieved the new contact information.

Tethering is the term used for connecting a Windows Mobile phone via Bluetooth to your laptop computer and then using the phone as a modem to connect the laptop to the Internet. Not all service providers allow this feature to be enabled in the phone's operating system. However, my provider, Verizon, does, and I used this feature several days while on my recent trip. The hotel in Boston had a note on the room desk saying that a high-speed Internet connection was available and would cost $10/day. Next to the note was a LAN cable. So I concluded that there was no

wireless connection available, and if I wanted to use the Internet, I had to use their cable – or I could tether my phone to the laptop and go that route, which I did.

At the Inn where we stayed in Maine, there was a free wireless connection that worked fine with one exception: It would not allow you to send email. You could browse the Internet and download all the email you wanted using your email client. You just couldn't send any email unless you used a web-based mail setup, such as webmail. Again, I connected my laptop to the Internet via my phone and sent email when any needed to be sent. Arriving back in Boston for a couple more days at the same hotel, it occurred to me that the hotel might have a free wireless connection even though it was not advertised. And they did. It was free, fast and allowed the sending of email. so I didn't need to tether.

I have had a data plan with my phone for many years, and I am one of the lucky ones with an unlimited bandwidth quota. I will probably buy a new phone when the Windows Phone7 comes out in late fall. What I hope is that I will not have to change plans to do it. For, if I have to change, I think the new plan will most likely not offer unlimited data use. Verizon will probably have something like the recently-introduced AT&T plan, with the first 200 MB free and you either pay more for a larger amount or get charged a certain amount for each extra MB. I checked my usage for the trip, and it came to around 125 MB, which was mostly racked up during three days. So, if one did much tethering, it wouldn't take long to go above a 200 MB limit.

Computer Assisted Design (CAD) Member Marty Burgess introduced us to CAD with a very interesting program at the last meeting, where he mentioned a free program called ProgeCad.

I had to do a bit of looking to find the free version of the CAD program he mentioned. It is called ProgeCAD 2009 Smart and can be found at the link http://www.progesoft.com/en/smart-2009.

There does not appear to be a free version of the

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 Editor 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. Member Bob LaFave moderates the discussion.

ProgeCAD 2010 program – only the paid-for professional version. The 2010 version says it is for Windows 7; the 2009 version doesn't mention that. And, in fact, if you download the free version and try to install it on a Win 7 computer, you will get an incompatibility error and the installation will not complete. To get around this, I just right-clicked on the installation exe and had it run in Win XP SP2 compatibility mode, and it installed fine – that is, right up to the end when I received errors about the PDF and JPF print drivers. The problem there is that you need to do them separately as administrator. It tells you where to go look for the appropriate executables. However, I didn't worry about that, since I can print to PDF without their driver.

After all that, the program worked fine in Windows 7 on my laptop. For Windows XP, as I have on my desktop computer, there was no problem at all with the installation, and the programs runs fine.

I found a very good tutorial/instruction PDF for the program at http://www.progesoft.com/skins/ progeSOFT/upl/Inside-progeCAD-2009.pdf And I would be lost without it. Using it, I was able to produce a simple drawing of a bathroom floor plan. Unfortunately, my recent trip interrupted my learning of the program, and I have not been able to get back to it since returning. So I will probably have to start almost from scratch whenever I do find time.

My main frustration was in how using CAD differs from the drawing done in a program such as Adobe Illustrator, with which I am familiar. I think we have at least three CAD users in the group. So be warned that I may be asking you a few questions as I progress. ◆

Burgess, a member, who had volunteered to give the June presentation on Computer Aided Drafting software.

Marty began his presentation at 7:30 PM. He opened the presentation with a discussion of the advantages of utilizing CAD software, which he began using in 1989. He talked about the capabilities of the various software packages. In discussing the advantages of using a CAD program, he cited accuracy as number one. He stressed that you easily have precise accuracy, whether you need it or not. You simply request a length or width, and you get exactly what you requested. The ease of making revisions was his second most important advantage. The ability to change the error only and not the entire drawing saves countless hours. His third most important advantage was three dimensional modeling, which cannot be drawn manually. Marty talked about various software programs and their cost and capabilities. He showed many examples of how he uses CAD software at his job and described how, in addition to the other advantages of using CAD software, it makes it easier and more practical to share data with other contractors on a project.

Marty noted that one of our members, Wayne Lawrence, has been a Computer Aided Design instructor for 20 years. Marty stated that he only recently became aware of this fact, in spite of his interest in CAD software. He said that it made him think that publishing members' profiles might be helpful to the group.

Marty identified a free basic CAD program that he and Wayne think has all of the features that most people need. It can be downloaded using the link: http://www.progesoft.com/en/smart-2009

The meeting ended at 8:50 PM ◆

Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.
P. O. Box 3492
Tampa, FL 33601-3492

☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*

Network........Continued from page 4

worked perfectly until the inexpensive Rosewill router failed after just a few months. I had to replace it and went a big step up in price for a Netgear router. I lost several hours because the new router needed reprogramming. I have to send the Rosewill back for warranty repair and I really didn't want to wait, so I bought the new Netgear.

The diagram on page 4 is what the network looks like now. ◆

to I-275

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