



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



Vol. 23 No. 10

November 2010

November in Tampa

## Meeting

### Library Databases by Mary Jo Combs of the Public Library System

Wednesday, November 10, 2010

6:30 PM

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

**Meeting Preview:** Mary Jo Combs of the Tampa/Hillsborough County Public Library system will tell us about the library's online databases. Member Bob LaFave will lead the usual Windows SIG before the meeting.

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## Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group  
[william@lamartin.com](mailto:william@lamartin.com)

Thanks to Roger Waters for his telephone article, which was especially timely considering what I write about below, and also to Jim Purcell for the minutes.

The past month has been quite busy with computer things: The continuing fine-tuning of my new computer; the learning how to program the new Windows Phone 7, even though I don't yet have a physical one to practice with; the updating the membership database for the yearly membership drive for our three neighborhood organizations; and, finally, making the many changes necessary to switch from Bright House (the old Time Warner Road Runner) to Verizon Fios for my Internet connection. The change to Verizon has caused me much work in notifying many people and businesses about the change in my main email address, which I have had for the past 11 years.

Regarding the neighborhood membership, I am the keeper of the membership database, which I do in Microsoft Access. I am also the producer of the yearly membership directory. For all those

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**December: Holiday Party**

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**Minutes of the October Meeting**

*By Jim Purcell, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group  
[Edward\\_J\\_P@MSN.com](mailto:Edward_J_P@MSN.com)*

**T**he Windows Special Interest Group (SIG) normally opens our monthly meeting. The meeting began at 6:40 PM. The SIG is devoted to a discussion of all aspects of the Windows operating systems and of computer-related subjects in general. The moderator, Bob LaFave, introduces new or little-known products and technological developments for discussion by the group. He accepts questions and requests for help in solving problems from attendees. Bob leads the group in finding answers to questions and solutions to problems. This month's SIG ended at 7:00 PM.

The business portion of the meeting was opened at 7:05 PM by John Witmer, the Tampa PC Users Group President. John discussed the Holiday Party in December and asked for input from the membership. The majority of the suggestions were to "do it like it was done the past two years." John asked members to submit any new menu items that they would like to see added, so that they could be considered by the Board when the menu is finalized. He reminded the members that we will also vote on officers during the December meeting. He said that all of the officers except the Secretary were willing to continue for one more year, so there is a need for at least one volunteer. John described the job requirements for Secretary and advised that there is a proposal to change the structure of the minutes to make them less time-consuming. He also mentioned the limited amount of time required to participate in the monthly Board meeting. John advised that, although the other Board members had agreed to serve, they would step aside if someone else wants the job. Next month's presentation will be delivered by Mary Jo Combs of the Hillsborough County Public Library system. She will discuss the many services available to the public. John ended the business portion of the meeting with a request to the members to come forward with any suggestions that they might have for speakers in the next year. He introduced Steve Singer, of RDI of TampaBay, Inc., who began his "New Computer Hardware" presentation at 7:16 PM.

*Minutes.....Continued on page 5*

## The Evolution of the Telephone

By Roger Waters, Tampa PC Users Group  
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**W**e have come a long way from “Watson, come here, I need you” to today’s telephone. When I started in the telephone industry in 1966, it was an electromechanical system. It was known as step-by-step since each rotation of the dial (you do remember that telephones had dials) stepped you to the next level until you got to a point that you rang a phone. This system had been around since the early 1900s.

The next system that evolved was known as cross-bar. It was still electromechanical, but I viewed it as a relay-controlled computer. It did have some logic to it and allowed for more control, as well as allowing features like call transfer, three-way calling, auto number identification and conferencing. After cross-bar came electronic switching, which was computer controlled. This allowed for even more features that consumers loved.

The company that supplied the Central Office equipment was originally known as Western Electric, which later became Lucent. The Canadian company was Northern Electric, which became Nortel Networks. Lucent was bought by Alcatel and is now known as Alcatel\Lucent. Nortel sold some of their Central Office business to a startup company known as Genband.

The telephone now is going to VOIP or Voice over Internet Protocol. I first got involved with VOIP after Steve Singer told the group about Gizmo Project. I bought a Linksys PAP2 ATA (analog terminal adapter) and signed on with Gizmo. The ATA is used to hook up the phone to the Internet. The calls were priced at 2 cents a minute anywhere in the US. My wife used it to call relatives and said the voice quality was like a cell phone. I was able to tweak it to improve some of the voice quality but it was not the same as calls over Verizon.

My sons signed up with Vonage for their phone service. With Vonage you can take the ATA with you

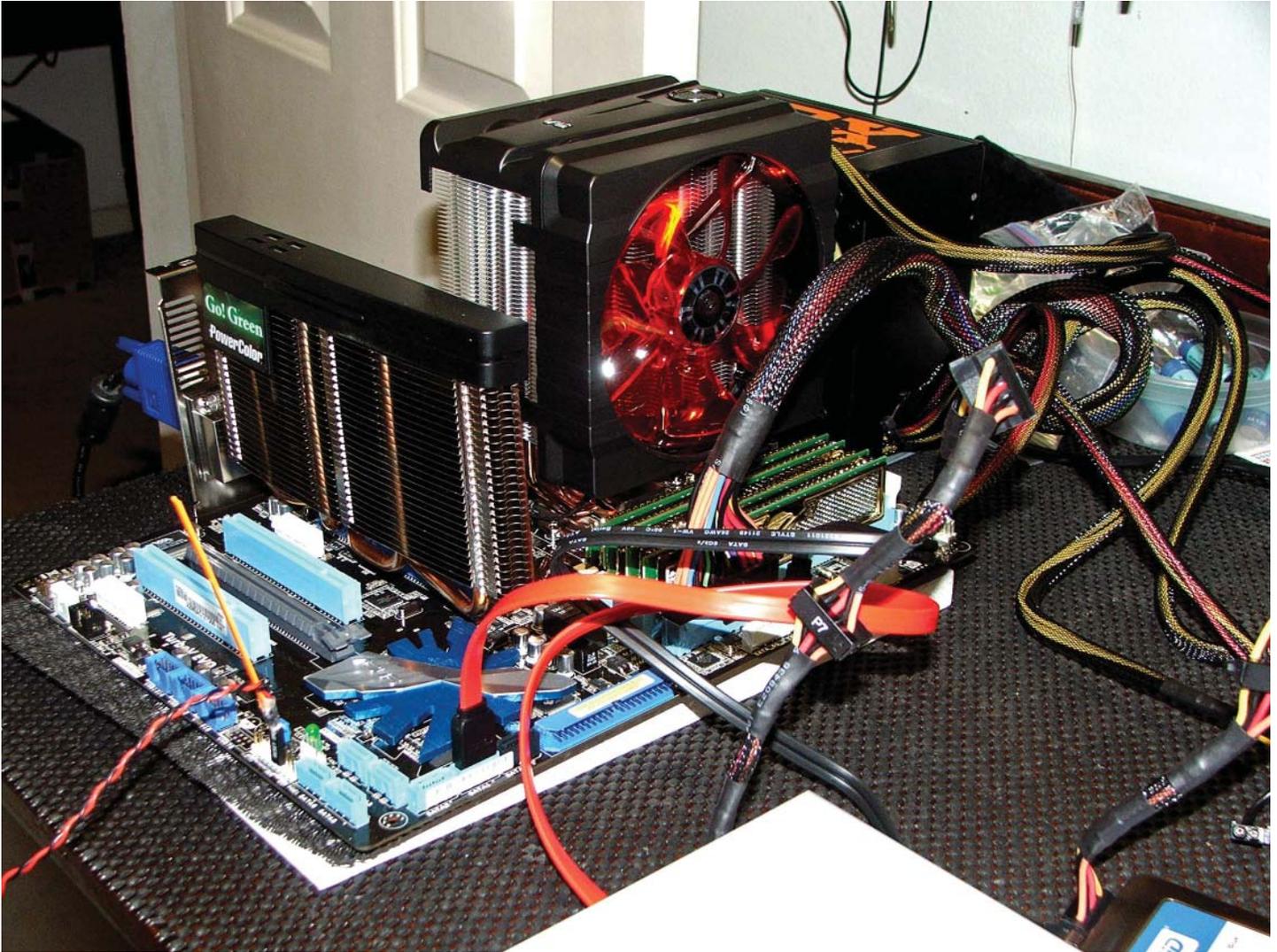
anyplace that has internet access. When one son was sent to Hong Kong for six months he used it in his extended-stay hotel. Since he lives in Orlando, his number was assigned for that area. When he called us, the caller ID came up as his Orlando number. We were able to dial his Orlando number and he answered in Hong Kong. Having this ability, however, presents a problem with 911 calls.

Since VOIP is cheaper to provide, the service is cheap, and free in some cases. I am sure everyone has seen the Magic Jack commercial. For \$20 a year you can make unlimited calls in the US and Canada. You can call for free over the Internet with Skype, Gmail, Google Voice and other free services.

I have a FIOS bundle and my home phone is practically free. I am sure that the bundles from Bright House also include phone service at low cost. My home service is not VOIP but is fiber to the home. Verizon offers what they are calling FIOS Digital Voice, which is a VOIP service. With their Digital Voice you get additional features and more control over your phone service. They allow you block calls, get voice mail via e-mail and have your calls follow you. You can program your phone number to ring up to three phones (cell, business, etc). This service is like Google Voice I wrote about in a previous article.

With VOIP being cheaper to provide, I believe that Verizon will stop providing the current analog service. In the Mid-West, Verizon sold their outside facilities to Frontier Communications to provide local phone service. Verizon sold its Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont wireline business to FairPoint Communications. My feeling is that Verizon will sell all of its cable and will become a fiber company and deliver phone service via FIOS. Maintaining fiber is less expensive for them. Verizon reports a 10.9% decline in home phones. Many people are using cell phones for all calls, or using some type of VOIP service and disconnecting their traditional phone. I have heard that Verizon is removing some of the equipment that they use for analog phone service.

Among the current disadvantages to VOIP provided by Skype and Vonage would be loss of power means



## New Computer

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group  
[william@lamartin.com](mailto:william@lamartin.com)

Above is my new computer under construction on Merle Nicholson's workbench. At this point, on the motherboard is installed, from left to right, the video card, processor with cooling fan and heat sink, and the power supply, along with some cabling. In comparing this to my previous computer, the thing most striking is the size of the processor's heat sink and fan, along with the heat sink for the video card.

The philosophy was to build something that was very fast but affordable (a relative term), so we went for components one step back from the bleeding edge. We were helped in that by Intel's having made available

the i7 875K processor at a very reasonable price. In the future, since it is unlocked, I might try to over-clock it a bit, but right now I see no need for that. Since we are a computer club and many years back a great deal of attention was devoted to the components it took to build a computer, I have included the component list on the following page, just as it came from Newegg.

Merle picked out everything except the monitors, keyboard, mouse and speakers. I appreciate that since I know little about motherboards and processors. I do know that the processor you pick will determine the collection from which you may choose a motherboard, and it will further restrict which memory configurations you may have (mine has four 2 GB modules).

*New Computer.....Continued on page 6*

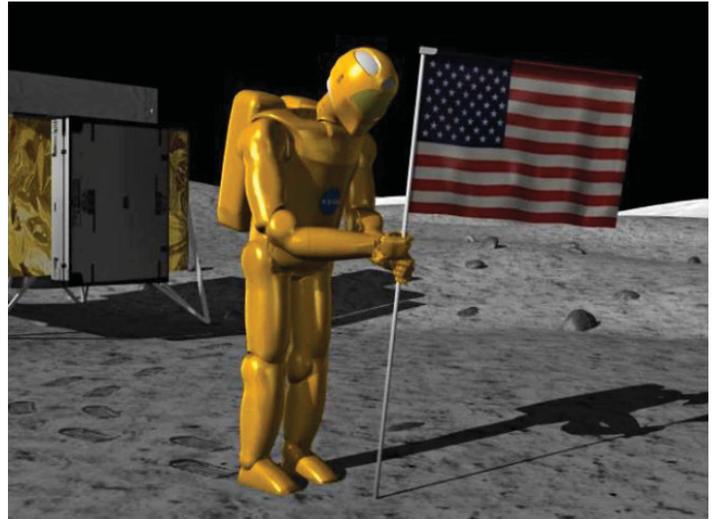
Minutes.....Continued from page 2

Steve Singer (photo below) has, for several years, given the group an annual presentation which highlights the latest changes and improvements to computer hardware. Steve explains in detail the advantages and disadvantages of these changes and explains to our members how to select the hardware that provides the results that they need at the most affordable price. He uses his extensive knowledge of computer hardware and software to answer across the spectrum questions on their use and to provide advice on how to solve problems that users have encountered.

The meeting ended 9:20 PM. ◆



## Internet Picture of the Month



### Robonaut 2

For less than \$200 million, along with about \$250 million for a rocket, NASA engineers at the Johnson Space Center in Houston say they can safely send a humanoid robot to the Moon. And they say they could accomplish that in a thousand days.

That is a bit cheaper than the price tag of sending astronauts back to the moon at a cost of around \$150 billion.

From the New York Times site at the link  
<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/11/02/science/space/02robot.html?ref=technology>

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### November's Interesting World Wide Web Locations

Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)  
 blekko slashtag search (new search engine)  
 Florida Digital Newspaper Library  
 morevalu.com - October's presenter's site  
 Eastman's Online Genealogy Newsletter  
 GigaPan (Panoramas)

<http://www.tpcug.org/>  
<http://blekko.com/>  
<http://ufdc.ufl.edu/fdnl1>  
<http://morevalu.com/>  
[http://blog.eogn.com/eastmans\\_online\\_genealogy/](http://blog.eogn.com/eastmans_online_genealogy/)  
<http://gigapan.org/>

Item	Description	Qty	Unit Price	Total
11-119-216	CASE CM RC-692-KKN2 ADVANCED RT	1	\$89.99	\$89.99
13-131-620	MB ASUS P7P55D-E P55 R	1	\$149.99	\$149.99
14-131-346	VGA POWERCOLOR AX5750 1GBD5-NS3DH R	1	\$169.99	\$169.99
15-166-006	ADD CARD ROSEWILL PCI-PARALLE RC303	1	\$11.99	\$11.99
17-171-052	PSU CM  RS650-ACAAE3-US 650W RT	1	\$69.99	\$69.99
19-116-368	CPU INTEL CORE I7 875K 2.93G 1156 R	1	\$329.99	\$329.99
20-192-021	CARD READ BYTECC U2CR-318/Hub R	1	\$9.99	\$9.99
20-227-483	MEM 2Gx2 OCZ OCZ3G1600LV4GK R	2	\$97.99	\$195.98
20-250-002	SSD 128GB WD SSC-D0128SC-2100 %	1	\$269.99	\$269.99
22-136-533	HD 1T WD 7K 64M SATAIII WD1002FAEX	1	\$89.99	\$89.99
23-155-037	KB&MS KENSINGTON   K72338US %	1	\$39.99	\$39.99
24-001-377	MNTR SMSNG LCD 23" 2MS P2350-1 RT	2	\$209.99	\$419.98
27-140-046	BD COMBO HP   BD240I-H01 R	1	\$99.99	\$99.99
32-116-758	WIN PRO 7 64-BT ENG 1PK DSP OEI DVD	1	\$139.99	\$139.99
35-103-088	CPU COOL CM  RR-V6SV-22PR-R1 RT	1	\$49.99	\$49.99
36-121-034	SPEAKER LOGITECH   Z313 RT	1	\$38.99	\$38.99
25-104-137	U.S. Robotics USR5670 56Kbps PCI Fax modem	1	\$16.99	\$16.99
	Shipping and Handling			\$49.35
	Total			\$2,193.81

*New Computer.....Continued from page 4*

What makes this computer boot fast is the solid state C drive. From the time I press the power button until my logon screen appears is 37 seconds. After I enter my password, it is only about five seconds until I can run a program. This drive is 128 GB, which was quite expensive at \$270 (current price is \$215) when you note that my 1 TB second hard drive cost only \$90. I recall that the choices for solid state drives seem to range between 50 GB up to 500 GB. I don't think you want the 500 GB one since its price is right at \$1,600.

The purpose of the solid state drive is to hold only the operating system and the program files that I install. Everything else goes on the 1 TB Western Digital hard drive that is itself very fast when compared to other similar drives because it has a dual processor and 64 MB of cache onboard. I preferred getting a 2 TB drive but could not find one that matched this one in speed. By "everything else" above, I mean all my data files, most of which are in My Documents, the operating system's temporary files, My Pictures, Desktop, Downloads and probably several more of the Windows 7 special folders that I have now forgotten. All of this goes on the regular drive. That way the computer is not always writing to and deleting things from the solid state drive.

I suppose I should mention that the computer has a Blu-Ray DVD/CD drive that supports LightScribe. However, I did not spring for the extra money to get a Blu-Ray writer since I have not as yet had such a need. The keyboard and mouse are wireless, and the keyboard is the only part of the computer that has given me any trouble in the two months that I have been using the computer. For some yet unknown reason, occasionally I lose the ability to enter text from the keyboard, and I have yet to find a solution to the problem other than closing out what I can with the mouse and then rebooting the computer. I tend to think that it is some key combination I have inadvertently pressed but have no idea what that is.

Merle installed the operating system, Windows 7 64-bit, and, over several days, I installed all of my programs and brought over via the local area network my data and pictures. The main program suites included Microsoft Office 2007, Adobe Creative Suite Standard CS5, Microsoft Expression Studio 4 and Visual Studio 2010.

Then there were the minor programs like Family Tree

*New Computer.....Continued on page 8*

## 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 [william@lamartin.com](mailto:william@lamartin.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.

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*Comments.....Continued from page 1*

people who purchase Office without Access, I don't see how they get by, but obviously they do, just as many people around the world get by with no computer. Access produces the mailing labels we use to occasionally send snail mail, since not all of our residents have email addresses. I use it in combination with Word to do email merges for the many email messages we send the residents concerning everything from membership to parties, from City of Tampa announcements to lost or found cats, dogs, tortoises and parakeets messages. Then, using Access along with Adobe InDesign and a bit of Visual Basic programming, I produce the membership directory and send it to the printer for printing. And, because of the complications of all this, I am not sanguine of being able to find anyone to take over the job.

Now to the Internet provider change. I did not make the change because I was unhappy with the Bright House service, although I do like the faster speed of the Verizon Internet connection I now have. My reason for changing was that Verizon failed over a year-long period to fix our regular telephone service where we could be sure that we, not just the caller, would hear our phones ring when they were dialed. My wife and I had agreed that, if the most recent fix failed (as had the half dozen or more previous ones), we would switch to Fios. It failed, so we changed.

Our setup is probably different from most local households in that we do not receive TV over a service; we get it the old-fashioned way via an antenna on our chimney that is two stories high and provides excellent reception of all the local area channels. TV is not a big thing in our house. I probably watch less than seven hours a week. What we do have is two phone lines and an Internet connection. The package deal offered for two phone lines and Internet was pretty good. What was even better was to have the phone service changed

from regular Fios to what they call Digital Voice. In addition to the lower price, with Digital Voice you receive a number of extra features more than regular Fios provides (see the Evolution of the Telephone article by Roger Waters on page 3).

So what is Digital Voice? The Verizon representative was a bit cagey about that and would only say that it was crystal clear and had many more options than regular Fios. "It was digital." Well, I had my suspicions, and they were confirmed by our local phone expert, Roger Waters. Digital Voice is Verizon's version of VOIP. Yikes! Was this to be something like Vonage or Skype, and might the quality be less than desired? Roger said that he was sure it would be better since it was over Verizon's dedicated lines. And I read on the Internet that, yes, it uses the Voice Over Internet Protocol, but the voice packets do not travel on the Internet (good). I checked with a few others whom I knew to have Verizon Fios, but none had the Digital Voice version. We were on our own. But I was willing to gamble since it wasn't really a gamble in that this was a no-contract deal and, if things didn't work out, we could always move to the regular Fios phone service for the two lines and pay the extra \$40 or so a month.

So far the quality has been fine, and, as with regular Fios, it is nice to have free calling anywhere in the US or Canada. There is one small downside you should know: All calls, including local ones, require 10-digit dialing. I supposedly have 25 MBps up and 25 MBps down for the Internet. In practice, my preliminary tests show slower speeds than that, but what I am getting is much, much faster than with Bright House, especially for uploads. On one test I had a download speed of 13 MBps and an upload speed of 10 MBps. But I need to do more testing.

With Digital Voice, you have 911 dialing and an 8-hour battery backup, just like with regular Fios. ◆

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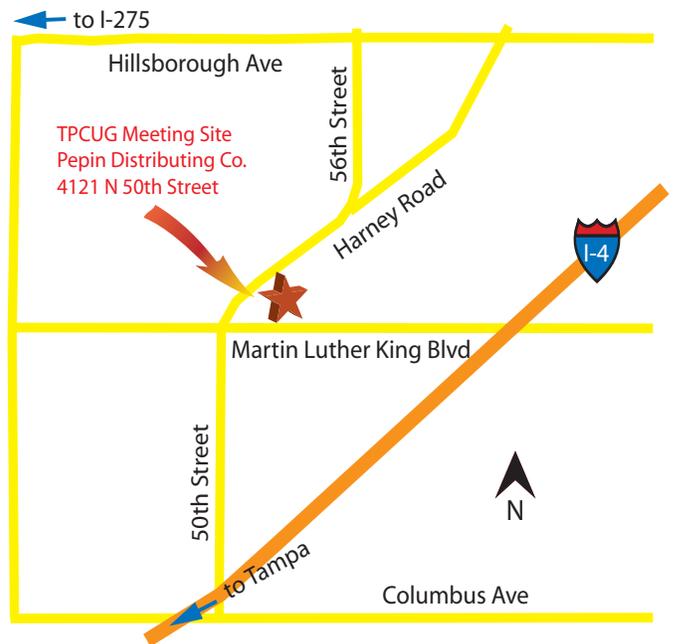
**First Class Mail**

*Member: Your membership is up for renewal*

*New Computer.....Continued from page 6*

Maker and Quicken. Since my copy of Family Tree Maker was a bit old, I decided to purchase Family Tree Maker 2010 to install. If I had trouble with the installation of anything, it might have been with Family Tree Maker. I recall that it wouldn't install properly from the CD, so, as I have discovered in the past in similar situations, I copied all the installation files to a folder on my desktop and installed from there.

Finally, Windows 7 64-bit had drivers for my two printers, so there was no problem with that. However, my Epson Perfection 3200 scanner does not have a Win 7 driver and thus cannot be attached to the new computer. So my old desktop is still sitting under my desk with that scanner attached. ◆



*Telephone.....Continued from page 3*

a loss of phone service. If your Internet service is out, so is your phone system. Calls to 911 are hard to handle since the number could ID for your area and you could be in another city, state, or country. The call quality is dependent in part on the available bandwidth.

We are seeing a shift to all-digital telephone networks. I believe that progress will be made to continually improve voice quality with VOIP. ◆