



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



March in Tampa

Vol. 25 No. 3

March 2012

## Meeting

**Gene Barlow**  
on  
**Hard Drive Utilities**

**Thursday, March 8, 2012**

**6:30 PM**

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

**Meeting Preview:** Our old friend Gene Barlow will present the software programs he represents. As usual for the first 30 minutes, Bob LaFave will conduct our Windows SIG.

---

## Editor's Comments

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

**P**lease note that the March meeting date has been moved forward to a Thursday evening at 6:30 PM (March 8th). We have made this one-time change in order to allow the Group to receive a presentation from Gene Barlow, who will be in our area for a limited time. It has been a couple of years since we last heard from Gene, and we wanted our members to hear from him again and to have a chance to see and purchase his latest offering of software for the hard drive and backups.

I thank Merle Nicholson and Ron Weinberg for their contributions this month. And I will see what I can do to fill out the newsletter with a few things of interest.

**So much is changing.** Merle's article on his home phone, a follow-up on an earlier article, is such an example. You will note that our group was founded 25 years ago in 1987. Apple existed as a company then, but who at that time would have guessed that 25 years later it would be the most valuable company in the world based on the value of its stock. And that there would be

*Comments.....Continued on page 4*

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Meeting Preview	1
Editor's Comments	1
Minutes	2
Wireless Home Phone Part II	3
Picture of the Month	5
Links	5
Verizon FIOS TV Listing	7
Map	8

**April Meeting: To be announced**

**\*\* 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: Merle Nicholson (merle@merlenicholson.com)	879-3602
Member at Large: Ron Weinberg (rswjbr@verizon.net)	960-4132

**APPOINTED (Volunteers)**

Editor: William LaMartin (william@lamartin.com)	251-3817
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 813-251-3817, or william@lamartin.com.

Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software, plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

**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

**Friend of the User Group**

*We acknowledge  
Pepin Distributing Co.  
for their support*

**Affiliations**

Florida Association of User Groups  
Association of Personal Computer User Groups

**Minutes of the February Meeting**

*By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,  
Tampa PC Users Group  
[merle@merlenicholson.com](mailto:merle@merlenicholson.com)*

**T**he Windows Special Interest Group (SIG) opens our monthly meeting. The meeting began as usual at 6:30 PM. The SIG is devoted to a discussion of all aspects of the Windows Operating Systems and of computer-related subjects in general. The SIG 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.

This month Bob showed us Log Me In Free, a remote control software that allows you to control your PC from a remote location. It's available to run on a PC, iPad, or iPhone and Android.

Bob talked about a Mini Media Player from Western Digital. This tiny device allows you to attach a USB hard drive or flash drive with media files to it and play the files on your TV or as input to your home theater device. It has a small remote control and is very inexpensive.

This month our guest speaker was Stephen Blalock of Barnes & Noble. Steven brought a Nook Tablet – the newest eReader device from Barnes & Noble for \$250. It is able to operate as a book reader that uses epub and pdf formats and is networkable to browse the B & N bookstore and purchase online.

The Nook Tablet is a new device that complements two other B & N devices – Nook Simple Touch, an E Ink device, and the Nook Color.

Stephen gave a very good talk on the availability of media files and ebooks, including mention of the public libraries' ecollections and what was available and how it worked – the rules, and how it relates to a real book. He talked about the entertainment aspects – movies and TV shows, newspapers and magazines.



## Verizon Wireless Home Connect, II

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,  
Tampa PC Users Group  
[merle@merlenicholson.com](mailto:merle@merlenicholson.com)

I switched my home phone landline a wireless system. It's still a Home Phone, is on the cellular network, but uses no wires. (Actually, there are about ten feet of wires involved). I wrote about this two months ago in our January 2012 newsletter and, now that the bills have come in, this is a quick update.

### From the January Newsletter

I was looking at the Verizon Wireless phones and plans and stumbled on a tab for "Home Phone Connect," and it looks like the device in the photo above:

It has the cell phone built in, hence the antenna. It has a power cube that also charges a battery, and two telephone jacks. One of these goes to my household Panasonic base station (on the left) – the same one I've had for many years and like very much.

The advertised Cost? The \$129.95 cost was \$49.95 with a two-year contract, and a \$35 one-time connect fee. And \$10/month.

**What it really costs**, now that the bills have come in. Well, as everyone knows, your Verizon bills are almost impossible to figure out. What I really would like to see is:

Your bill for this service is normally: \$\_\_\_. and it's been adjusted \$\_\_\_. for this reason \_\_\_\_\_.  
Not to be, at least in the version of reality I live in.

*Phone.....Continued on page 4*

Phone.....Continued from page 3

But here's what I've seen so far:

**First time installation costs, Verizon wireless:**

\$53.49 for equipment.  
 \$39.33 Activation and fees.  
 \$8.75 Taxes for equipment and Activation  
 \$9.99 Payment in advance for first months service.  
**\$111.56**

**Monthly charges added to Verizon Wireless bill:**

\$9.99 Basic  
 \$4.45 Taxes and surcharges  
**\$14.44**

**Reduced monthly charges on Verizon FIOS bill:**

-\$5.99 Inside wiring maintenance  
 -\$30.00 Essentials Freedom  
 -\$14.35 various incomprehensible Florida and Federal taxes  
**-\$50.34 Savings monthly**

To summarize, there is a net monthly savings of \$35.90 (\$50.34 - \$14.44), starting in three months after offsetting the one-time charges.

**The downside:**

We have a 700 minute wireless family plan. We added this phone to the plan, and it is working out, but we have to be careful. We've run our minutes up to 500 of our allotted 700 minutes, a substantial change. We do a fair amount of talking to our sons in Seattle and an occasional sibling out of state. We do this off-peak, evenings or weekends.

When I have business calls, or have to call some kind of lengthy support line, I use my Google phone. It's free to anywhere in the US, even to non-Internet connected numbers. My Google phone runs from my browser or from my Google Talk App on my desktop or my Android Phone. Sometime I have a call come in and anticipating a lengthy conversation, I'll ask to call them back and I use my Google phone. My favorite place for Google Phone is at my desktop machine because I have an excellent USB Plantronics noise cancelling headset. Did I mention the quality is excel-

lent and it's free?

I can look at my daily minutes usage online, and also from my smartphone and I keep a close eye on it. I can change the plan any time I want by breaking out this phone from my family plan and go to an unlimited local and long distance plan for \$20/month vs. the \$10/month I'm paying now. We'll see, but so far, so good.

**Summary:**

The Katrina experience has taught us that the communication service that is restored fastest is the cellular systems. The biggest reason I think is that emergency services are dependent on them now. Also Verizon and other services have purchased emergency trucks that have a cellular tower on them to spot them where needed in emergencies.

I'm happy with the service. The quality of the calls is excellent, and otherwise, well, you know, it's a phone.



Comments.....Continued from page 1

another company called Google that would allow us to search for information on anything but which also would cause us to worry about all sorts of information being stockpiled about us. All of this done on the Internet, which began as a military project but now had been taken over by companies like Google and another named Facebook, and where people played games like Farmville where they bought and sold virtual things such as pigs and hay. Much of this being done on, of all things, telephones, but not the phones of old, but these are actually small computers that you can hold in the palm of your hand with more processing power and memory than anyone dreamed of for even a desktop computer back in 1987.

So let's talk a bit about Apple, Google, smartphones and even that old fuddy-duddy Microsoft. First, I want to thank everyone who made an Amazon purchase through the link on our home page. We collected \$41.22 for purchases made in December. And this I must remind all was at no extra charge to the

Comments.....Continued on page 5

## Internet Picture of the Month



**The Ascent of Apple** This is a ten year chart from Feb 2002 to Feb 2012 demonstrating how dumb we all were not to purchase Apple stock in 2002 and hold on to it until now. Of course, ten years from now there may be a similar chart demonstrating how dumb we were not to have sold the same stock in 2012.

*Comments.....Continued from page 4*  
 purchaser.

**Apple** is now the darling of the stock-following crowd, closing at around \$544 per share on March 2. That seems mighty expensive, but what do I know. I have made very few decisions in my stock trading life about which I can brag. Many stock analysts that I hear or read say that, based on fundamentals, \$544 is low, and, say, \$750 is a more reasonable price. But perhaps they should note that as recently as 2009 it was below \$100 and recall that what goes up can come down--and usually does. Anyway we are not so interested in the price of a company's stock here but

in what products that company makes. And Apple has certainly made some popular items. In our house, my wife has an iPad, and I must say that it is a pleasure to use to browse the World Wide Web and to have video talks with our son on Skype. Then there is the ubiquitous iPhone. Everywhere I go, I see people using them. And it is not just the young crowd. People in their 60s and older are walking around poking at them. Almost no one is using the things for a phone conversation since they do not have them near their ear. They are holding them in one hand and manipulating them with the other. Who knows? Perhaps they are viewing their brokerage account with the desire to purchase Apple stock. More likely, they are checking

*Comments.....Continued on page 6*

### March's Interesting World Wide Web Locations

Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)  
 Preservation Directory.Com  
 techflash, Seattle's Technology News Source  
 New Scientist  
 VirtualBox

<http://www.tpcug.org/>  
<http://www.preservationdirectory.com/>  
<http://www.techflash.com/>  
<http://www.newscientist.com/>  
<https://www.virtualbox.org/>

*Comments.....Continued from page 5*

their data usage so as not to run into trouble with their service provider since recently several companies, AT&T being the most prominent, have said that they will throttle usage (slow down service) for accounts that exceed a certain amount of data usage in the current month. The surprising thing about this is that this throttling is going to occur on accounts with data plans that were purchased as unlimited data usage. As expected, some heavy data users have cried foul only to be told that they still have an unlimited data plan – they are just going to get that unlimited data at a slower speed once they exceed a, say, 2 GB or 3 GB monthly non-throttled limit. This definition of unlimited reminds me of our former president's statement that "it all depends on what the meaning of is is." ([http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j4XT-l\\_3y0](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j4XT-l_3y0)).

**Google** has been in the news recently regarding their tracking of your online computer use. They seem to be doing things that they said they wouldn't do. In fact, they are accused of actively bypassing the Apple browser's built-in setting that is supposed to keep such tracking from occurring. How could that be possible from a company whose motto is "Do no evil?"

What to do about this? Well, many people obviously don't care since they have already turned their life over to Google by having a Gmail account, using the Chrome browser, being a member of Google+, etc. And turning your life over to Google is probably no worse than giving it to Facebook, which half the world seems to have done. But call me an old fogey because I really dislike having done a search for something like water softeners and then, within an hour, while reading the New York Times online, seeing an ad on the right side of the screen for the very same water softener that I just spent some time considering. And those ads were not just at the NY Times site; they were on other sites, and they appeared for days, and anyone else using my computer would have also seen them. Ads for water softeners, or course, should be of no embarrassment to anyone. But what about ads for things you had rather others not know about?

There may be no real solution since Google seems to be able to figure out a way to circumvent anything that

is tried, as they did with the Apple Safari browser. But we who do not want to be followed (and also have everything we do stuffed in a database) must try.

**InPrivate Browsing** My current solution is to use the InPrivate Browsing feature of Internet Explorer (under the Tools menu item) when I am doing certain browsing activities. You should realize that you do not have to be using an obvious Google application to be giving them your data. This is because many websites use something called Google Analytics to analyze their web traffic, and the information collected goes straight to a Google server.

To use InPrivate Browsing in IE, click on the Tools menu item and then select InPrivate Browsing. A new browser window will open and you can go to work. To learn about what InPrivate Browsing blocks and what it doesn't, look up InPrivate Browsing in IE's help.

**Microsoft's Windows 8** is coming. Microsoft just released the Consumer Preview of Windows 8. They are not calling it beta software, but I would think that is what it is. You may download and install it from this link: <http://windows.microsoft.com/en-US/windows-8/download>. But I would think that you would want to do it in some sort of Virtual PC setup and not overwrite your current Windows OS – unless you have a fairly new PC to spare on which to install it.

Based on advice in our meetings from Merle Nicholson, I went to <https://www.virtualbox.org/> and downloaded and installed VirtualBox. I then downloaded the Win 8 iso file from the above Microsoft address and had VirtualBox add it as a new virtual machine. Surprisingly there was a choice of Windows 8 as the guest operating system.

After that I was up and running with the Windows 8 desktop with Metro icons for a few apps. There were Internet Explorer, mail, SkyDrive, Maps, Weather, a few games and the ability to acquire more from the Store. At the moment, there are just a few and they are all free. With Win 8 running in a virtual machine, to be able to actually install programs as in Win 7,

*Comments.....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.

---



---

## Verizon FiOS TV Listings Problem

*By Ron Weinberg, Member at Large,  
Tampa PC Users Group  
[rswjbr@verizon.net](mailto:rswjbr@verizon.net)*

Verizon TV Listings had been working and suddenly changed several weeks ago. Instead of the spreadsheet format grid of channels and time, all you saw was the channel name or number and a blank sheet. If you click on a channel number you get a horizontal listing of the day for that channel only. I use this to see program listings as well as to set DVR recordings remotely.

I tried to contact Verizon via telephone. After being transferred from one department to another, each saying it was not their problem, and interminable waits on the phone, I hung up in frustration while waiting for the next department (whichever it might have been.).

A day or so later I decided to try again using Live Chat with a Verizon tech. He suggested I try another browser (Firefox) and it worked. However, he could not help correct the issue on my IE 8 in Windows XP. That identified the problem as being from my installation of IE 8, as it also worked on my Laptop which runs Windows 7 IE 9.

How to fix IE 8:

- Backed up my favorites and did a Reset within IE 8.  
Problem not corrected.
- Googled “Repair IE 8” and found repair script “ie8-rereg” and ran it.  
Problem not corrected.
- Removed and Replaced IE 8 with new copy down-

loaded from Microsoft.

Problem not corrected.

- Posted request on Verizon forum.  
To date only 2 replies:
  - 1 Upgrade to IE 9 (but that’s not available for XP).
  2. They are using IE 8 with no problem.

I could not find any other information on this even through the Verizon forums.

Not willing to give up, I resorted to trying “trial and error”.

- Perhaps it was a security error related to .aspx files so I turned off my AV to no avail.
- I tried various Internet Explorer security settings to no avail.
- Downloaded and installed all Optional Windows updates, and it still did not work.

Then almost by accident I right clicked on the page and tried Print Preview. Lo and behold the missing text appeared in the preview window. That alerted me that it might be something related to the display that I had not tried.

I changed the zoom level to 125% and a large detailed spreadsheet appeared. After experimenting, I found that any Zoom Level less than 99% caused the detail to be missing.

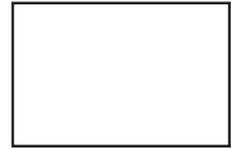
100% looks as well as I could expect.

Problem solved, although I do not really know how it started as I didn’t previously alter the Zoom Level. ◆

**Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.**

P. O. Box 3492

Tampa, FL 33601-3492



**First Class Mail**

*Member: Your membership is up for renewal*

*Comments.....Continued from page 6*

you need to add some shared folders from the host computer. I added the My Documents folder and the CD drive. Adding the CD drive, allowed me to install Office 2007 in Win 8 using the CD drive of my main computer. I also copied over some documents from the host computers My Documents folder to use in my newly-installed Office 2007 in Win 8.

Next month, I will probably delve deeper into all of this. But for the time being, if you are interested, I think I have given you enough info to get started with Win 8 Consumer Preview on VirtualBox. ◆



*Minutes.....Continued from page 2*

His talk was very informative and timely, and he gave some time to the Nook competitors as well. Our thanks to Stephen and to Barnes & Noble. ◆

