Bits of Blue

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

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Meeting

Steve Singer
on
New Hardware

Wednesday, October 10, 2012

6:30 PM

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

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Meeting Preview: Steve Singer from RDI will do his annual new hardware presentation. As usual, Bob LaFave will conduct the Windows SIG at the beginning of the meeting.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
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Thanks to Robert Davis for sending an article for the newsletter this month. Since there were no others, I was forced to purchase parts for a new computer so that I would have something to write about. Well, that is not exactly the whole story, since I wanted to be able to use Windows 8 on a desktop computer that was not simply a virtual machine or a dual-boot operating system. And I didn't want to sacrifice my Windows 7 desktop to an installation of Windows 8 over it, so it seemed the only option was to get a new computer. Plus, isn't that what we are supposed to do to get the economy going? However, I think all the parts were made in Asia. so I don't know how much they help our economy. Of course, Amazon and newegg did get something out of the deal, as did UPS and FedEx.

As I have mentioned before, Apple has not only surpassed Microsoft in its market capitalization (value of its stock), it is the most valuable company in the US. What is new this past week is that Google for a few days had a larger market capitalization than Microsoft. As I write this on Oct. 2, a share of Apple stock

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November Meeting: To be announced

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Minutes of the September Meeting

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
Tampa PC Users Group
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The 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 touched on a variety of subjects – the main subjects were Windows 8, Media Center, Start Menus, TV tuner hardware, Kaspersky Anti-Virus. As usual, an excellent and informative SIG session.

The presentation this month was given by Kevan Sheridan, our vice president and one of our longest-term members. The subject was Smartphones and everything you can do with them. Kevan is most familiar with Android, but gave as much of a brand-neutral presentation as possible. He talked about the OS, Apps (applications), Web Access messaging. He made a comparison of Android vs ios, numbers of applications and what that really means.

He spent a great deal of time describing how to enhance the experience with GPS, tracking athletic progress, watching videos, sharing photos, social experiences and much more. Applications he touched on were WiFi Analyzer, HotSpot, Join.me, View Docs, Remote Desktop, Pandora, YouTube and Navigation. YouWave for Android, and Mint – a Quicken emulation were also talked about, as were GasBuddy – a gas station locator that uses your current GPS location and finds the best price on gas. Shazam – a music recognizer, Disney Parks, Weather and fitness workout software.

Kevan is always well-prepared with his slides (on Google Docs of course) and is an entertaining and

Building A New Computer

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
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If you will look back at the November 2010 newsletter, you will see that I wrote about Merle Nicholson building a quite nice Windows 7 desktop computer for me. You can read the article at our web site and have a look at the specs and the prices of the components. It will be interesting to compare then and now.

Why do I need another new desktop computer so soon? Normally I wouldn't even think about a new desktop computer now. The one I have is still functioning just fine. It is fast, the C drive has sufficient room for more programs and the D drive is not even half full of data. The problem is that I need to be able to work in Windows 8, and I don't want to load Win 8 over Win 7 on my very nice desktop. I am not sure I really trust Win 8 to do all the things I do as conveniently as I do them in Win 7.

I need Windows 8 so as to be able to program in the new Visual Studio 2012 for the new Windows 8 tablets and phones that are soon to appear. You will not be able to do this in Win 7. Right now I have Windows 8 Consumer Preview in a Virtual Hard Disk on my laptop so that I can dual boot to either Windows 7 or Windows 8. Why not just put the final version of Win 8 on the laptop the same way? Well, because I find it difficult to use a laptop to write programs. Thus the desire (I suppose not really a need) for a new Windows 8 desktop. And, I may eventually put Win 8 in a dual-boot situation on the laptop (replacing the Consumer Preview) so as to be able to demonstrate the new programming environment in our programming SIG.

Oh, you say, why not do a Virtual Hard Drive and dual- boot for Win 8 on the existing Windows 7 desktop? Unfortunately, the desktop's C drive is a solid state drive that is 128 GB, of which only 30 GB is free. Having the operating system and programs on a solid state drive is one of the things that make that computer so fast. I am not going the solid state drive

From Amazon	
Western Digital Caviar Black 2 TB SATA III 7200 RPM 64 MB Cache Bulk/OEM Internal Desktop Hard Drive - WD2002FAEX	$166.47
Cooler Master Hyper 212 Plus CPU Cooler with Four Direct Contact Heat Pipes (RR-B10-212P-G1)	$25.16
Corsair Vengeance LP Performance Memory Modules 16GB (2x8GB) DDR3 1600MHz (PC3 12800) CML16GX-3M2A1600C10	$89.99
Cooler Master 690 II Advanced Mid Tower Computer Case	$72.24
Intel Core i7-3770K Quad-Core Processor 3.5 GHz 8 MB Cache LGA 1155 - BX80637I73770K	$324.98
SubTotal	$678.84
From newegg	
ASRock Z77 Extreme3 LGA 1155 Intel Z77 HDMI SATA 6Gb/s USB 3.0 ATX Intel Motherboard	$119.99
HIS iSilence H775P1GD Radeon HD 7750 1GB 128-bit GDDR5 PCI Express 3.0 x16 HDCP Ready Video Card	$109.99
CORSAIR Builder Series CX600 V2 600W ATX12V v2.3 80 PLUS BRONZE Certified Active PFC Power Supply	$59.99
U.S. Robotics USR5638 V.92 Faxmodem 56Kbps PCI Express	$26.99
ASUS 24X DVD Burner - Bulk 24X Model DRW-24B1ST/BLK/B/AS - OEM	$19.99
PLANAR PXL2430MW (997-6399-00) Black 23.6" 5ms HDMI LED-Backlit Multi-Touch Widescreen LCD Monitor 250 cd/m2 1000:1	$371.00
SubTotal	$707.95
Total	$1,386.79

route with the new computer since it will have a still faster processor than the current desktop's processor. The processor in my current desktop is an Intel I7-875K and in the new computer the processor will be an Intel I7-3770K, which is about 66% faster.

New Computer..........Continued from page 3

The parts list for the new computer is above. Merle, who is an experienced and knowledgeable computer builder, made the list with a few minor modifications by me. You will note that there is no keyboard or mouse. I am gong to use what I have around the house until I settle on something better.

The monitor is special for this computer. It is a multi-touchscreen monitor. That is to allow me to use hand gestures on the monitor when working with Win 8 apps. This monitor is like the screen of a smartphone or a tablet in that not only can you use your finger to select items, you may also do swipes and pinches with your fingers just like you do on your smartphone. This will allow me more easily to see how the phone and tablet apps I am working on creating perform. Visual Studio, where I will be doing the work, provides emulators for the phone and the tablets where you can use the mouse to simulate such actions, but it will be much nicer to actually be able to do them by touching a screen. The only thing that I will not be able to do with the screen is to rotate it from landscape to portrait and have what is on the screen rotate as it does in a phone or tablet.
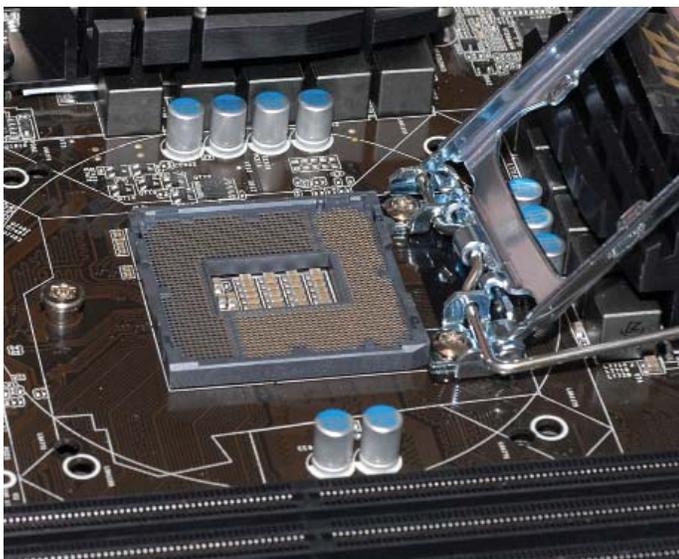
The afternoon the last of the parts arrived, and they arrived quite quickly from both Amazon and newegg, I took them to Merle's and watched him put everything together. I should note that the reason for buying some things from Amazon and others from newegg was that

either the Amazon price was cheaper than newegg, or the total cost was less because I receive free two-day shipping from Amazon because of Amazon Prime.

Merle estimated a two-hour job, but it turned into four because of a few complications. The basic process is to first unpack everything, then put the motherboard on the workbench and expose its CPU socket for installation of the CPU as indicated in the photo on

the bottom left. In the photo at the top, the CPU has been installed, and in the next photo, we see the CPU cooler installed on top of the CPU. In the photo with the cooler, on the lower right is where the memory modules will go and to the left is the slot where we will install the video card. I should note that the moth-

Internet Picture of the Month

Hurricane Isaac

Perhaps you have already forgotten, but there was a hurricane in late August that caused a lot of flooding in southern Louisiana, just not in New Orleans this time, where it only knocked out the power for a few days. Since it didn't really damage New Orleans it won't be remembered like Katrina – except by those unfortunate, very flooded people in several parishes, Plaquemines being one of the worst. The photo to the left from the online New Orleans *Times-Picayune* pretty much tells the story.

As a side note, the *Times-Picayune* after 175 years as a printed daily paper is now going to be printed only three days per week (another casulty of the Internet), with the online version having to be sufficient for the other days. http://www.nola.com

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will put you back $661.31 and a share of Google goes for $756.99 (obviously there are more shares out there for Apple than for Google since Apple has the larger total value). Oh, the current value of a Microsoft share is $29.66. For the record the market capitalizations today are APPL: $619,915,940; GOOG: $248,360,580; MSFT: $248,651,550. So Google, while it temporarily surpassed Microsoft, today has dropped back below.

But just look at Apple. The parts for the computer I just built could be purchased for a little more than two shares of Apple stock. But enough on stocks. Unfortunately I was never smart enough to purchase Apple or Google when they were cheap – only Microsoft and it is still cheap, but at least it pays dividends, which is better than having money in a CD at essentially 0%. ◆

October's Interesting World Wide Web Locations

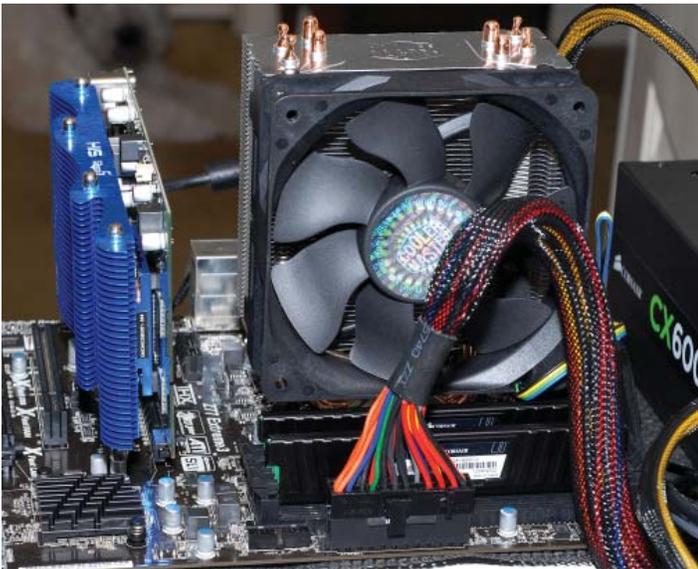|	
Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Computer History Museum	http://www.computerhistory.org/
Index of U.S. Government Departments & Agencies	http://www.usa.gov/directory/federal/index.shtml
Ars Technica	http://arstechnica.com/
A History of New York in 50 Objects	http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2012/09/02/nyregion/a-history-of-new-york-in-50-objects.html?hp

erboard comes with a built-in video. However, Merle said that it was awfully slow, so we will be installing a stand-alone video card, as will be seen in subsequent photos.

The top photo shows the cooler fan installed and in front of the fan are the two 8 GB memory modules which give this computer 16 GB of RAM. In the next photo the video card has been installed, and the colorful (if viewed on the web) bundles of wires you see are one of the connections of the power supply to the motherboard. With this motherboard, Merle advised, there is also a smaller secondary connection of the power supply to the motherboard. In the next to last photo we see the motherboard from the opposite side from which we have been viewing. Here you can see the connections we used to test the setup. The far left

black plug is the power cord to the house power. The second from the left (blue if you are viewing this on the web) is the video connection. Note at this point we are using the built-in video to do the test instead of the separate video card. The white rectangular object that is next is a USB thumb drive with Ubuntu loaded so that when booted the computer loads and runs Ubuntu for our testing (at this point I still don't have a final version of Win 8 to load into the hard drive). To the right of the thumb drive is a LAN cable. What you don't see connected above is the hard drive, a DVD/CD drive and an internal FAX modem. The final installation looks like the last photo, except that the FAX

modem had not yet been installed. As you can see there are plenty of slots and bays available if things need to be added in the future.

McAfee Problem Resolved

By Robert Davis, Tampa PC Users Group
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I had another one of those weird days where something goes wrong, but this time I think I found the problem. McAfee Anti-Virus software! It was right at a week after a weird problem I think was also with McAfee – seeming to stop "Buffer Overloads" – that I had another more damaging and time-consuming problem. Friday afternoon I tried to log onto my email as usual only to see the message "Internet Explorer cannot display the webpage." Thinking I had messed up something, I rebooted the laptop, but I had the same problem. It appeared the PC was not connected to the Internet anymore! I called Bright House tech support, tried plugging their modem directly into the laptop – no good. The laptop was still unable to connect to the Internet. It appeared the modem was broken. I had just had it replaced a couple weeks ago due to the phone line section being zapped by lightening. So I was suspicious of the modem anyway. Bright House agreed to come out Friday night between 6 and 8 PM after I twisted their arm a little. Unknown to me, my mother's Bright House is somehow connected to my account, and, even though my complaint was for my 655 phone number, they called my mother's 653 phone number about 6:30. Of course she told them she had not put in a service request, so I lost the hands-on tech Friday night. She did call me and asked if I had ordered the service – too late.

About 8:30 or so, after I raised a fit with Bright House, their supervisor said he could not send a tech out Friday night anymore, he rescheduled a tech for 12 to 2 PM Saturday, and he wasn't sure they had even diagnosed the right modem! My mom has a similar setup with Bright House. So reluctantly I agreed to talk with their tech support again. After going through the same diagnostics again, the tech thought the modem seemed to be OK, and he asked me what anti-virus I was running. I told him McAfee - for 10 years or so. "That is probably the problem," he said. I thought he was joking, but he

wasn't. It seems McAfee has done an automatic update with apparently bad code which causes many PCs to lose their Internet connection! He said he thought the fix was to merely uninstall McAfee and reinstall it. I did uninstall McAfee and after reinstalling the D-Link router (I had reset it for 10 seconds which sets it back to factory default) I was able to access the Internet again. But none of the other PCs could use the router. I did ask why the first tech hadn't asked me about my anti-virus type that afternoon. He said they should have. What happened next is in my opinion an unconscionable act by McAfee! I logged on to McAfee and downloaded what I thought would be a cleaned version of their software. Why would McAfee leave a known problem available for their customers or anyone to download? Anyway, I reinstalled McAfee from the new downloaded file and all seemed well with the laptop and the Internet the rest of the evening. I finally shut down the laptop about 11 PM. I figured I could fix the other PCs' accesses Saturday.

The next morning to my amazement the laptop would not connect to the Internet again! And of course none of my other PCs could access the Internet through the wireless router either! After reconfiguring and messing around for an hour or so, I finally deinstalled McAfee and again the laptop could access the Internet. I cancelled the Bright House call. But the other PCs still could not connect through the router. They all saw it with excellent signal strength but would not connect. I was using the same key word, same password, and I thought the same encryption type, but still no connecting.

It is now Monday night. This afternoon I went into the modem itself and set the passkey, password, and noted the encryption type was different from what I thought. After I used the correct encryption type, everything started working again. All the other PCs and my MAC can access the Internet normally again. So because of what I consider an unforgivable act on the part of McAfee, I cancelled my account. Bad enough to put out a bad upgrade – but to leave it available for downloading by their customers in my opinion is unforgivable! I am now using AVG until I find something better. Just another three days of trouble-shooting so I can save time by using PCs! ◆

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☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*

This computer has an Intel I7-3770K CPU, a 2 TB Western digital hard drive, 16 GB of memory and a video card with 1 GB of memory. And, of course, there is the DVD/CD drive and the Fax modem (since we still need to send and receive the occasional FAX in our house).

Now if Microsoft will ever get my MSDN subscription activated, I will be able to download Windows 8 along with Visual Studio 2102 Professional and install them on the new computer and get to work. At least that is my plan. ◆

enthusiastic speaker. Our thanks go to Kevan.

Our TPCUG Forum page is inactive and can not be accessed at this time. Merle Nicholson is working on better security to keep the bad guys out. ◆

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