Bits of Blue

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

December in Tampa

Meeting

Holiday Party

Wednesday, December 4, 2013

6:30 PM

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

Meeting Preview: Holiday Party – Bring yourself and enjoy the food and visit with your fellow members.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
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Since the monthly meeting is occurring a week earlier than usual, this newsletter may well not reach you before the meeting. But if it should, don't forget that our meeting is is on the first Wednesday of the month this one time.

As usual, Merle Nicholson came through with an article this month. However, for myself, I had to purchase a new program to have something about which to write. It is a program that I had previously thought I didn't need but now realize is very crucial if I want to do anything with the movies my digital single lens reflex camera can take.

As to newsletter articles, Merle and I need some help. We receive the occasional one from others, but what is needed is an article or two from the rest of the group each month. Otherwise, we may have to rethink the purpose and format of the newsletter. I cannot purchase a new program or piece of hardware to have something about which to write each month.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year! ◆

January Meeting: To be announced

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Affiliations

Florida Association of User Groups

Association of Personal Computer User Groups

Minutes of the November Meeting

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
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The Windows Special Interest Group (SIG) opens our monthly meeting. 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.

Bob covered a variety of PC subjects: A member's Java Script error and how to verify that the Java you have installed is the latest from the Java website; updating Flash; protecting your computer from infection with some common sense rules of conduct; and some discussions about tablets.

Bob was also the speaker for this meeting and gave several tutorials and ideas on a variety of subjects. Playing movies and storing large volumes of media were discussed.

Bob went on with some screen captures taken during the installation of Windows 8.1 over an existing Windows 8 machine. Some interesting new information was revealed: The new dependence on a Microsoft online account and the need to receive a code by email while your computer is tied up on the upgrade. Bob investigated the means to retain your 8.0 user account password and avoid creating a new account and displayed slides for that. Bob demonstrated several good tips to make the upgrade go smoothly.

Next was the subject of the Ceton Infinity4 TV tuner for PCs to allow Windows Media Center (WMC) to receive and record standard and HD television. The Ceton is available as a USB connection and also as a PCIe card. Bob showed us the Ceton Diagnostics Tool to look at the settings available on the card. There was some discussion of the abilities of the card and program and the advantages in cost and function over a standard FIOS or Brighthouse DVR, explaining the card and the Cablecard that must be purchased from

Adobe Premier Elements 12

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
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I have always been a still photographer, never having owned a movie camera until recently. And that camera is not a dedicated movie camera but is a digital SLR camera with the ability to take movies. Of course, over the years I have used others' video cameras to take short videos at their request. So I have a little experience with movies – enough to know that it is not easy to take decent movies. My main problems are holding the camera steady, zooming without shaking the camera, and focus.

Oh, you say, "Why do you have a problem with zoom and focus? My video camera has a power zoom and automatic focus. It also has image stabilization to minimize shaking." Well, my Nikon D800 is not a dedicated video camera. It produces excellent quality videos, but it is up to the user to hold the camera steady, use the zoom ring to zoom in or out and refocus the lens when the subject to camera distance changes very much. If you do a good job at all this,

you will have nice video with good sound. Finally there is no stopping and restarting a video. If you stop a video and then restart, you create two separate video files. And that brings me to why I purchased Adobe Premier Elements 12. At the least, I needed something to allow me to combine several videos. Microsoft Live Movie Maker was a possibility, but I found it lacking (possibly my fault).

Anyway, I had heard about Adobe Premier, so I went to the Adobe site to have a look. Well, things have changed. You can no longer buy the Adobe professional products as separate downloadable or DVD based products. Now you have to purchase a subscription. And to get Premier, you either purchase it as part of a one-year subscription to the Adobe Creative Cloud, which contains many of the Adobe programs such as Photoshop, Illustrator, etc., for $60/month ($720/year), or as a standalone subscription for $20/month ($240/year). That is a bit much for an amateur movie maker such as myself – and I already owned Adobe Creative Suite 6, which includes Photoshop, Illustrator, InDesign and Acrobat.

There was, however, another option, the baby version

Premier........Continued from page 3

of Adobe Premier, Adobe Premier Elements 12. I suppose it is sort of like their Photoshop Elements. In fact, they offer the combination of Adobe Photoshop Elements 12 and Adobe Premier Elements 12 for $150 as a download. Having the full Photoshop, I had no need of that, so I sprung for Premier Elements 12 for $100 as a download. I figured that should do all that I needed. And it has.

With this program, I have been able to

- Combine several videos
- Cut out selected segments
- Insert still images and textual screens (titles for example)
- Apply transitions
- Adjust the brightness, contrast and color of a video
- Add a sound track and adjust the volume at different locations
- Save the video as an MP4 file and upload to the Internet
- Burn the video to a DVD or BluRay disk

Then there are the things I have not yet tried:

- Add a narration
- Install a graphic or other video over the main video and animate it
- Add photos or other videos on top of the main video to create a composition
- Adjust the speed of segments of a video
- Pan and Zoom an image (the Ken Burns effect)
- Mix the audio
- Export the video to a site like YouTube or Facebook with the built-in export presets.

The program has three editing modes: Quick, Guided and Expert. The screen capture on the previous page displays the Quick mode, which has a simplified timeline. I find that good for combining videos, deleting segments, and inserting textual frames. When I want to add a music track and adjust the volume of different portions of the music, or if I want many more options for adding audio, graphics or effects, I use the Expert mode.

The first thing you do when beginning a new project is to import the media you will use: Existing digital video, photos, audio and graphic files on your computer's hard drive. Or you may import from DVDs camcorder, camera or webcam. I have only used video, photos and audio that I already have on my computer. Premier Elements has a companion application called Organizer whose sole purpose is organizing and indexing all the photos, movies, etc on your computer. I don't use it, since I have the much more powerful Adobe Photoshop Lightroom that serves the same purpose. However, it is not integrated with Premier Elements as is Organizer, and Organizer has some interesting features such as the ability to identify people in images.

The basic idea is simple: Add media, edit and add special effects and then output the result to whatever media format you desire. But to do this, you really should first watch some instructional videos. Guided mode is somewhat helpful to teach you; however, what is really better is to find instructional videos on the web. I subscribe to lynda.com which has training videos on almost all popular software, Premier Elements 11 (but not 12 yet) included. For free, Adobe provides help and tutorials here: https://helpx.adobe.com/premiere-elements.html.

All my videos so far were made from material I already had on my computer, where the videos originally came from my Nikon DSLR. But you may import directly for all sorts of devices, including tape-based camcorders as long as you can connect the device to the computer.

I am just a beginner at this movie stuff, but here are some of my first attempts:
- http://www.lamartin.com/Videos/ChristmasDinosaurs1280x720.mp4
- http://www.lamartin.com/Videos/JansonChristmasOnBoulevard1280x720.mp4
- http://www.lamartin.com/Videos/CookingASteakHD1280x720.mp4

The Christmas ones were made almost a year ago, but put together only recently with Premier Elements. ◆

Internet Picture of the Month

Macy's Duck

From http://www.flickr.com, a large balloon duck from this year's Thanksgiving Day Parade in New York City. The photographer is listed as david.gardiner1. His photostream at flickr is at http://www.flickr.com/photos/15022466@N03/, where he has 3,608 photos, some very good. The duck is not one of his better ones, but it is the appropriate one for this time frame. Anytime I think that I take good photos, all I need to do is go to flickr and view some of the work there. It makes me humble.

December's Online Computer Shopping Locations

Microsoft Store	http://www.microsoft.com/store/
HP Home and Office Store	http://shopping.hp.com/
Dell	http://www.dell.com
TigerDirect.com	http://www.tigerdirect.com/
NewEgg	http://www.newegg.com
Amazon.com	http://www.tpcug.org and click on the Amazon link

Windows 8.1 Upgrade – quick notes

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary, TPCUG
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I finally felt it was time to do the upgrade. Bob LaFave gave us some tips at the last meeting, so I felt I was fairly well-prepared. And it went almost-smoothly.

Two things are important. One is that in the middle of the installation, Microsoft wants to send you an email with a code you'll need to type in to continue. They don't have any suggestions (that I can see) on what to do if the only means to receive email is the device you are upgrading, and therefore you can't receive it, but I had another device. Two, the other thing is that it asks for a Microsoft online password to set for the login password. It does give you a chance to create a new one, use one you have and use your local login that you have for Windows 8. Even though Bob found it, and demonstrated it, I failed to find it, so I approached the problem later; details below.

There are several legitimate authorized Microsoft logins: Passport, Windows Live and Hotmail will all work. I suspect that the login is needed because for 8.1 your SkyDrive account is an integral part of all your drives. It even appears as a folder in Windows Explorer. More on SkyDrive later.

At first, the install stopped because it needed me to uninstall my Vipre Internet 2013 antivirus. I researched that a bit (on another computer obviously) and found surprising little on that subject, and the Vipre phone service was after hours. So I uninstalled it and let Defender and Windows Firewall activate. I reinstalled Vipre later, and everything works fine. The little I did find on the Internet suggested that Vipre will work fine after reinstalling, and they were right. It even upgraded to Vipre Internet 2014. Remember that Windows Defender is an integral part of Windows now, so it will be sitting there not running if you have installed another antivirus product. When I reinstalled Vipre later, it turned off Defender and the Windows firewall.

Back to the login problem, I think I followed Bob's instructions wrongly because I had to sign in with my online account and password every time, and even though I unchecked the "must sign in" with netplwiz Network Wizard, I still had to sign in. In Control Panel, User accounts, I was able to switch the login account from the online account to my local account. Then had to do the netplwiz again because it was checked again! Under Win 8, it was unchecked before I even began, so the installation messes with it. All is well now; it logs in automatically on the local machine account. That makes sure that it's on the Internet when I want it to be. I almost believe that.

Last thing, I wanted to get rid of the SkyDrive and eliminate the item in Windows Explorer. A quick group policy GPEDIT fixes that. I found the instructions in HowToGeek. For those not familiar, SkyDrive is an on-line storage drive that anyone with a Microsoft account can get; I think it is 5GB. I'm much more familiar with Google's similar Google Drive. I use Google Drive to sync files to all my – and my spouse's - computers; four Windows 7 computers, a Windows 8.1, a Windows 7 laptop, an Android tablet and two Android phones. Basically, you drop any file in any of the local designated folders and it's available on all the devices within a minute. Skydrive works identically, although it looks like it may be more tightly integrated with Microsoft file types. SkyDrive has an Android App, and Google Drive has a Windows App, so there does not seem to be a conflict or compatibility problem. http://www.howtogeek.com/167058/how-to-disable-skydrive-integration-in-windows-8.1/

More on SkyDrive at http://www.howtogeek.com/166996/how-windows-8.1-integrates-skydrive-everywhere/

It looks like the 8.1 install does not affect the Classic Start Menu I have on this machine to give me a good menu system. The Classic Menu System recognizes that it's on 8.1 immediately. Perhaps through an update that I was not aware of.
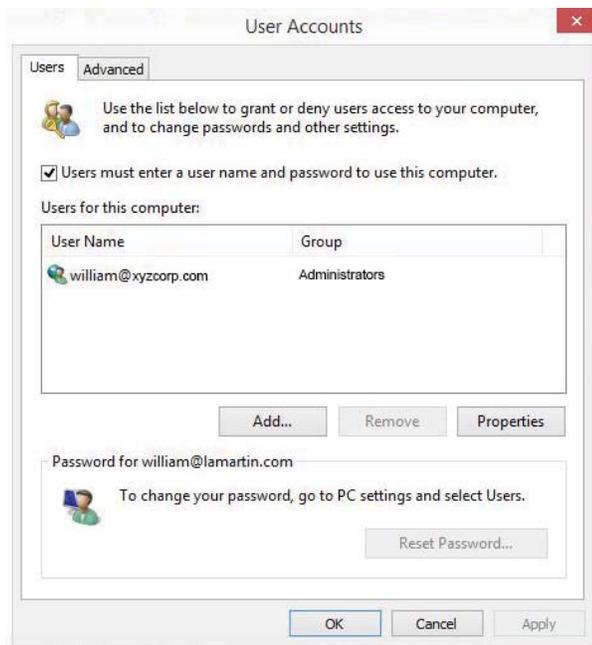
More on Windows 8.1: http://www.howtogeek.com/173871/what-you-need-to-know-about-windows-8.1/

This from Bob LaFave:

You can set to go to the desktop without signing into your MS passport account. Type in netplwiz into search and open netplwiz.exe as seen in the top image below.

Uncheck the box "Users must enter a user name and password to use this computer." Hit the "Apply" button. Enter the current password and confirm and you will GO TO DESKTOP when starting. ◆

Hazardous Waste Reminder

By Merle Nicholson
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This is a very valuable (and free!) resource for disposing of your old computer parts, household chemicals, paint, oil, lead acid batteries, fluorescent bulbs and more. I use this a couple of times a year and have found it easy and quick. The staff are very helpful, and they do all the heavy lifting once you get there.

> Hillsborough County Household Chemical & Electronics Collection Center
> 9805 Sheldon Road
> Tampa, FL 33635
> Hillsborough County
> Phone: (813) 272-5900
> Facility Contact: Household Hazardous Waste Coordinator
> GPS: 28.038283, -82.579087
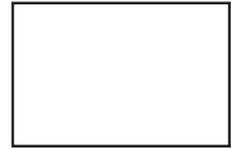> Facility Type: Household Hazardous Waste

Household Chemical & Electronics Collection Household chemicals and electronics are accepted from 8AM to 2PM at the Northwest facility (9805 Sheldon Rd.) on the 1st Saturday of the month, the South County facility (Powell Rd., east off US 41, ¼ mile north of Big Bend Rd.) on the 2nd Saturday of the month, and the East County facility (Thonotosassa, CR 579, ¼ mile north of I-4, Exit 10) on the 3rd Saturday of the month. Materials accepted include paint, solvents, pool chemicals, hobby and craft supplies, lawn and garden chemicals, computers, stereos, televisions, etc. Collections are for residents only - NO chemicals or electronics will be accepted from commercial interests. Call (813) 272-5680 or click on the link below for more information and maps to the collections.

http://www.wastemap.org/Facility-Profile.cfm?idsFacility=817 ◆

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☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*

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Verizon or Brighthouse. He passed a card around the audience.

Bob went on to talk about the format of programs recorded in WMC and converting and the problems occurring when DRM (Digital Rights Management) is applied to the recorded media. He demonstrated the AVS Video editor ($59 Lifetime License), converting .WTV to .DVR-MS.

Last Bob went on to the universal person-to-person method of file (movie) sharing – uTorrent, and some brief discussion of the risks.

Our thanks go out to Bob for a well-prepared and interesting talk on some timely subjects. ◆

to I-275

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56th Street

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Harney Road

I-4

Martin Luther King Blvd

50th Street

to Tampa

N

Columbus Ave