



Bits of Blue

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



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April 2016

April in Tampa

Meeting

Most Useful Tablet and Smartphone Applications

by

Michelle Burgess

Wednesday, April 13, 2016

6:30 PM

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4121 N 50th Street

Tampa, Florida

Meeting Preview: Michelle Burgess is doing a session on the most useful tablet/smart phone applications and is asking if we have favorites to suggest. Merle Nicholson will lead the Windows SIG for the first 30 minutes of the meeting.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
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Thanks to Brian Lance, Ron Weinberg and Merle Nicholson for their contributions this month and again to Merle for the Minutes of that very well-presented presentation last month.

Last month I wrote: "In the news toward the end of February was that Microsoft bought Xamarin. I had to pay Xamarin \$800 to use Xamarin in conjunction with Microsoft Visual Studio to create my Android apps. Perhaps with that purchase Microsoft will now offer the use of Xamarin with Visual Studio as cheaper or possibly even free..... Perhaps they will make an announcement about all of this in April at the Microsoft Build conference in San Francisco." Well, they did, and they made it free, just as is Visual Studio. Now I can hope that they will refund the \$800 that I paid on December 28 to be able to use Xamarin with Visual Studio to create Android apps.

Speaking of my Android apps, the downloads of them have

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May Meeting: To be announced

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Minutes of the March Meeting

*By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
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The Windows Special Interest Group (SIG) opens our monthly meeting. Merle Nicholson, the SIG moderator 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 Merle Showed several items of interest in Windows 10.

The February presentation was given by Abby Stokes, a technology author who concentrates on the basics of technology: computers, phones and tablets (<http://askabbystokes.com>). The title of the talk was "Is this thing on?" Abby talked on a very wide range of subjects: WiFi, Cellular, hands free driving, passcodes and how to protect your smartphone and battery savings. Abby gave a very informative talk; well prepared and entertaining throughout.

Our heartfelt thanks to Abby for an interesting and informative presentation. ♦

Comments.....Continued from page 1

been minimal. The three of them, *Civil War Photos*, *Computer Group Newsletters*, and *Hyde Park Flowers* have received a total of less than 50 downloads over the past month, with *Civil War Photos* receiving the most. I didn't expect much because of their content, but I expected more than that since there are supposedly a massive amount of Android devices out there. Well, nothing ventured, nothing gained. And I have just added to the list by publishing *Old Florida Photos* to the Google Play Store. So it gives me something to do and keeps me occupied.

At the end of March, I watched the Microsoft Build conference via a live stream from San Francisco, and I saw a few truly amazing things. The app that left the

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Fixing Bad Menus in Windows 10

By Brian Lance, Tampa PC Users Group
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I had this happen to a Lenovo Yoga laptop that was upgraded from Windows 8.1. I do not have a screen capture of the original issue, but I can describe it as all menus that had underlined shortcuts, such as Word and Notepad, were bold and misaligned and not the standard font.

I remembered a similar situation had occurred with Windows 7 years ago and tried my usual trick to restart the Themes service. Anyone who knows me knows I typically run with this service off. In this case, I elevated a command prompt to toggle the service to no effect. Rebooting and power cycling also had no effect.

Looking further, I went to the display settings, which, in the 'new' Windows manner, hides many customizations from the user.

Fig 1: Right-click on desktop and select Display settings.

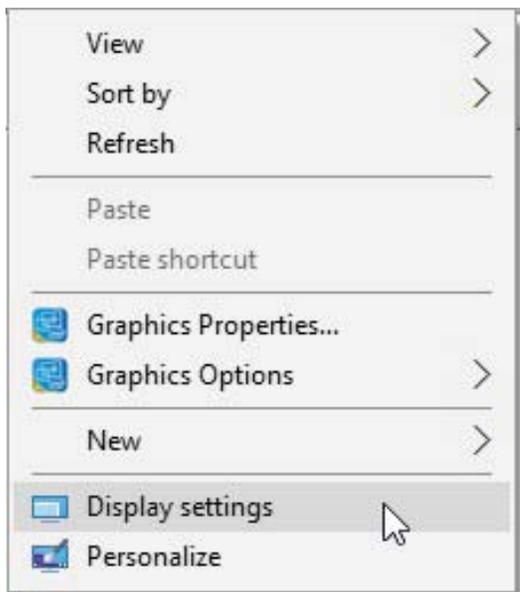
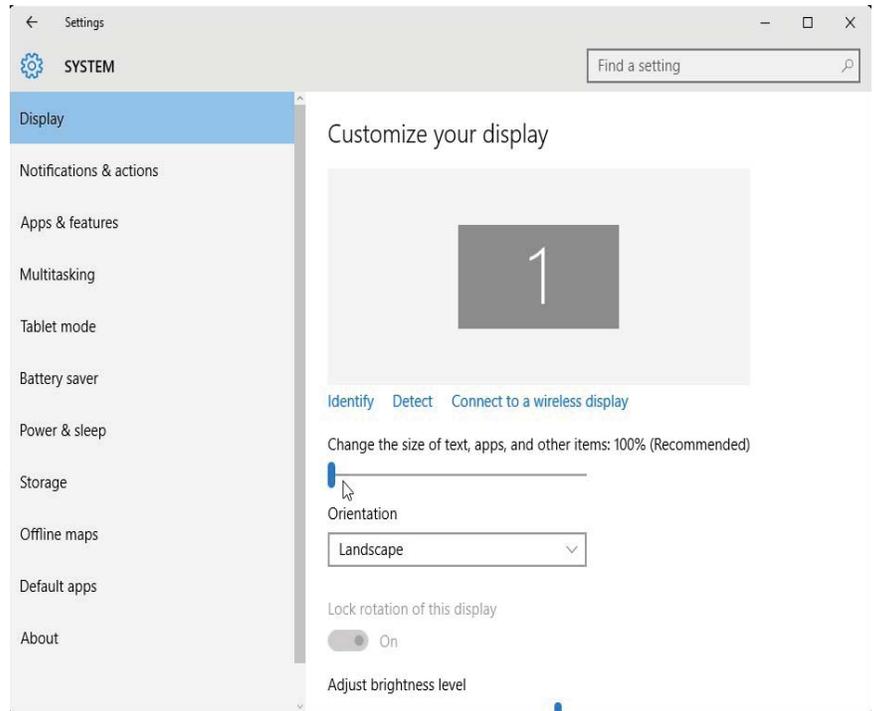
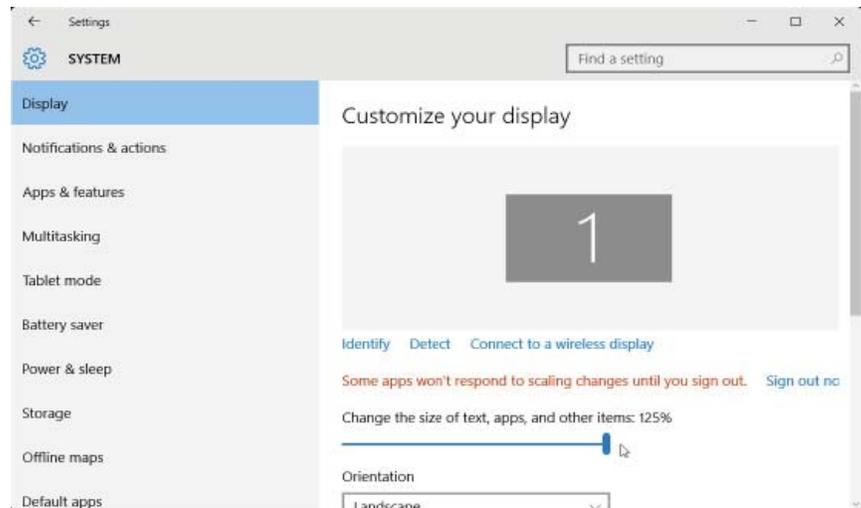


Fig 2: System, Display, Change the size of text, apps, and other items



You'll see the setting here at its default, 100%. My display is slightly crowded, 1366 * 768.

Fig 3: Here is the display at 125% of normal, the only other option for this notebook display. Note that changes are processed immediately, and all was back to normal when toggled back to 100% default. Verified OK after reboot. ◆

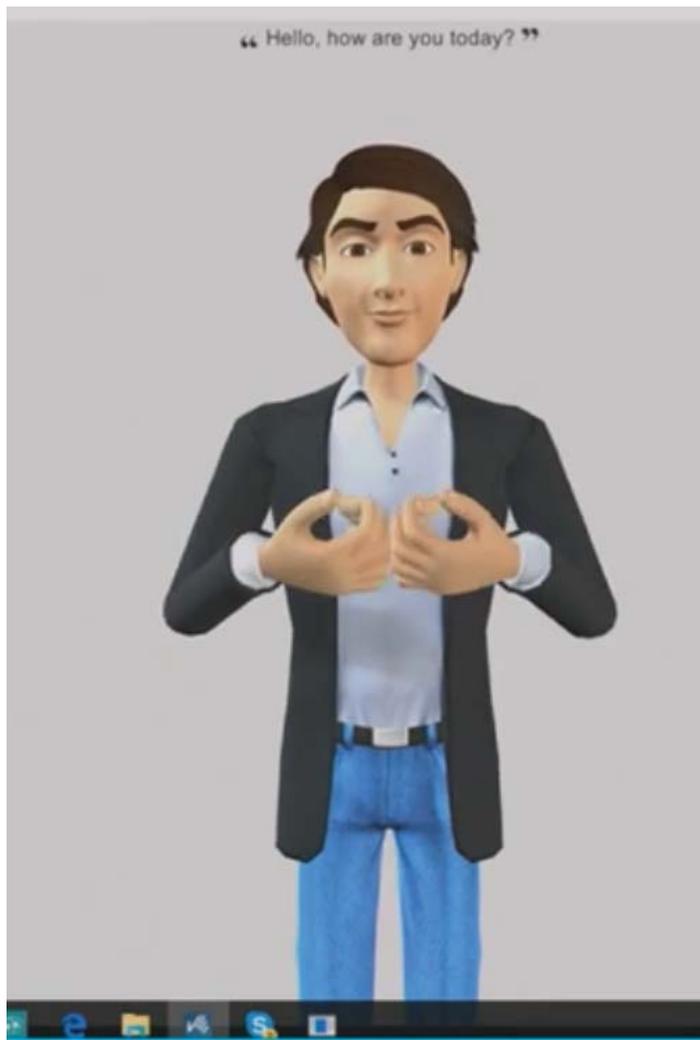


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most lasting impression was one created by a Brazilian developer named Flavio Almedia. It was named Pro-Deaf and used the Microsoft Translation API to convert spoken Portuguese into English, which was then converted to American sign language instructions that were then acted out by an Avatar. It could also convert English directly to American sign language instructions sent to the Avatar that went through the motions of displaying the spoken words with American Sign Language.

Below you see the Avatar saying part of “Hello, how are you today?” I don’t know what word the screen capture is depicting. So, with this app you can now speak to a deaf person.

Then there was Saqib Shaikh, blind since seven and a software engineer at Microsoft. He created an app that



helps you know what is going on around you, based on the Microsoft intelligence APIs. The app runs on smartphones and also the Pivothead smartglasses, pictured above on Saqib. When he swipes the side of these glasses while facing a man on a skateboard as pictured below, it gives him its best guess as to what is happening. In this case it says, “I think it’s a man jumping in the air.” Of course, the blind person does not see the image below; he only hears the spoken description.



When used on a Smartphone and a restaurant menu is presented to it, it will guide you to position the menu so as to be better viewed by the phone. Then it will read the menu and allow you to request things such as “read me the entries.” All of this is truly amazing, and there was much more. I have put a link to the Key-note Address at Microsoft Build Day 1 in the “April’s Links” list on page 5 ♦

Internet Picture of the Month

Frontier Communications Outage

From the site <http://downdetector.com>, we have a screen capture of a heat map of the Internet outages on the day of the transfer from Verizon to Frontier of the land lines and FIOS services. This screen capture is from my Asus Android tablet that was receiving a wireless connection shared from my Windows phone (which had a cellular connection) since I lost my Internet all my waking hours on the day of the transfer. This screen capture was made around 10 PM on Friday, April 1. Some of my neighbors never lost service that they noticed, some lost it briefly, and I and others were out all day. Area wide there were many outages as evidenced by the 6,000 plus messages posted to a site I viewed following the problem. Frontier has said the problems were minimal.

April's Links

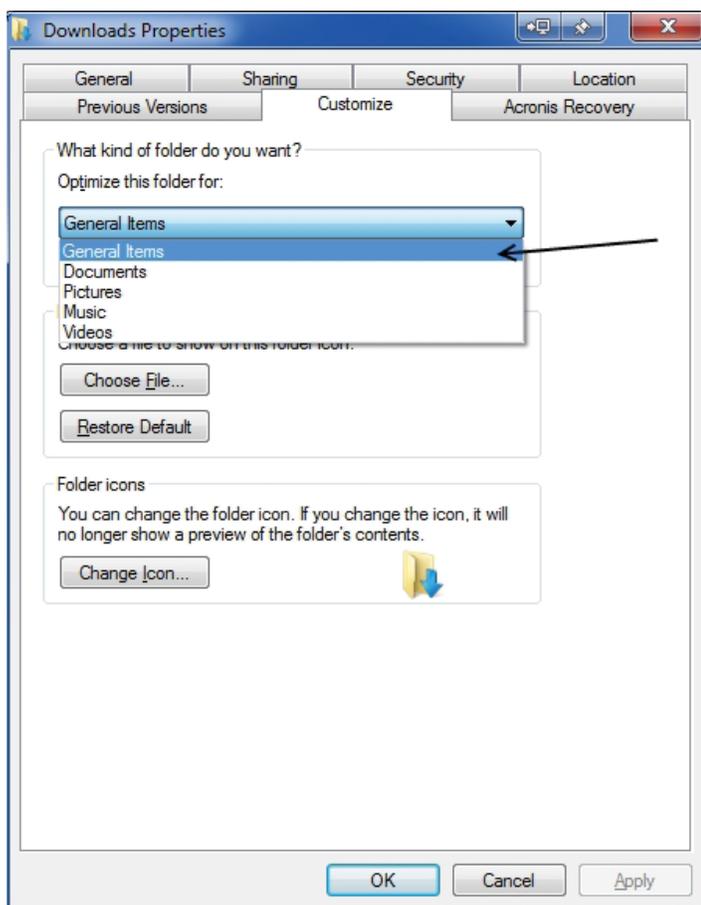
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| <p>Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)</p> <p>Microsoft Build Day 1 Keynote address</p> <p>Historical Photographs of New York City</p> <p>Microsoft Edge's Favorites Folder location</p> <p>How to Tie your shoes</p> | <p>http://www.tpcug.org</p> <p>https://channel9.msdn.com/Events/Build/2016/KEY01</p> <p>http://www.oldnyc.org/</p> <p>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GoEQdKfKZk</p> <p>http://www.bloomberg.com/news/features/2015-11-12/how-to-tie-your-shoes-and-lace-your-shoes-the-best-way</p> |
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Windows 10 for April 2016

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
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Here is an interesting factoid I wasn't aware of. Windows folders are optimized for the type of files in them, and sometimes they're done non-optimally. A case in point is that your Downloads folder is optimized for Pictures, and since folders for pictures generate thumbnails of each one, this slows the opening and scanning of all the files. Instead, change the optimization to "General Items", and opening the folder will be much faster. Here's how.

To do the above, open the Downloads folder and right-click on an empty spot, select "Properties", tab to "Customize", and change the "Optimize this folder for:", and select "General Items" instead of "Pictures". There is a check box just below for "Also apply this template to all subfolders", select OK or Apply. Note, too, that you can change the icon that the shortcut uses, and even use a picture in its place. This works in Windows 7 as well,



and I'd assume Windows 8 if you haven't upgraded to Windows 10, but I've not verified that one.

I've been upgrading a friend's/customer's PC the last couple of days. It was necessary because the motherboard blew out on an electrical fault that left a burn on the board. So the motherboard and processor needed replacing. The new motherboard required new memory, and the drive was four years old. So I added a 1TB Samsung SSD, and just to be safe a new power supply. So there's very little left of the original PC. I first built it in 2004 with Windows XP, then rebuilt in 2009 with Windows 7, so this is the third time around with Windows 10.

The Windows 10 upgrade for Windows 7 is evolving. The screen prompts are very much different than they were a couple of months ago. There was no mention of using a Microsoft online account for the user account. There were three pages of options, mostly concerning choosing your preferred level of information ("telemetry") sent to Microsoft. You have to read the prompts carefully, but as it says on the page, you can opt to make changes to the settings after installation.

For the upgrade media choice, I use the Windows 10 media creation tool, which will download the latest software and either write the software to a USB flashdrive or to disk in ISO form. If you choose ISO, then you can easily write the ISO to a DVD disk using ImgBurn. Installing from a USB3 flashdrive is easy as long as you pay attention. For me, it took an hour installing on that new SSD.

There are still settings left that you must change to minimize Microsoft's involvement. I've covered them in previous articles, and there are surely more to come.

And finally I installed some software over the top of Windows 10 to improve the experience. I installed "Classic Shell" – a menu system, 8Gadgets – to restore desktop gadgets introduced in Vista, Windows Media Center, and Microsoft Games to replace the crappy games collection that Windows 10 provides. I like 7-Zip and FoxIt PDF reader.

One new discovery is that the "Windows Live Family Safety" from Windows 7 no longer works, producing errors in Windows 10. Signing into any account gives a

Save on Ink

By Ron Weinberg, Member-at-Large,
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Inkjet printer users know that no matter how inexpensive an inkjet printer may be, the cost of cartridges to run them is steep. According to *Consumer Reports*, ink costs from \$13 TO \$75 per ounce or \$9,600 per gallon, one of the most costly liquids known, far exceeding the finest aged wine. There have been two recent developments addressing this problem: Epson's new tank printers and HP's Instant Ink.

Epson's Tank Printers

Epson has introduced four new ecotank Supertank Printers. These are equipped with refillable tanks instead of cartridges. Each new printer comes with up to two years' worth of ink, enough for 4,000 to 11,000 B&W or 6,500 to 8,500 color pages depending on model. Prices range from \$279 to \$499. There is also a new business professional heavy duty model which uses ink packs.

These are full featured all-in-one and wireless capable printers, two of which include FAX and Ethernet. With prices starting around \$279, these do not compete with the \$99 and less than \$99 type printers and likely would not really be cost effective for users of those basic printers.

HP's Instant Ink

HP's Instant Ink is a service available for only certain eligible HP printer models. Current HP Instant Ink eligible printers are the HP ENVY 4500 series, HP ENVY 5530, 5660, 7640 series, HP Officejet 4630 and 5740 series and HP Officejet Pro 6830 and 8610/8620/8630 series, and Officejet 8040 Series with NEAT®.

- 2.99 per month provides ink for 50 pages, (\$1 for each additional 15 pages.)
- You can rollover 50 unused pages.
- \$4.99 per month for 100 Pages, (\$1 for each additional 20 pages.) You can rollover 100 unused pages.
- \$9.99 per month for 300 pages, (\$1 for each additional 25 pages.) You can rollover 300 unused pages.

Ink usage is monitored on connected printers automatically via Internet. You never run out of ink. Free ship-

ping for cartridges and return of the used ones is included. You get genuine HP ink cartridges. All calculations confirm this will produce substantial savings. HP owners who have an eligible model would likely benefit from the Instant Ink plan.

Neither of these two options is the perfect or complete solution to high ink costs. Other attempts to reduce costs have been made, notably by Kodak who later abandoned the printer business.

For those considering a new printer, if an ecotank or eligible HP is not for you, check reviews and do some online research. It should help determine printer models which are likely to be more economical than others. Also, consider Laser printers, more costly to buy, cheaper per page, especially for high volume printing. ♦

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Windows 10.....Continued from page 6

notification flag that it failed to run. Looking it up using an internet search gives plenty of information on what Microsoft expects you to do to replace it. If you go to the Microsoft Family Safety website, it's clear that you must sign in with a Microsoft account, and identify the family structure. There is no mention of how to clear the startup error messages. Research into that just brought up that you go to Control Panel, Programs and Features, Windows Essentials, select uninstall and then select the family safety item for removal. But that family safety item is not on this panel, and it is nowhere to be found. Not Essentials or Windows Live. Eventually the startup error stopped on its own.

Last, I must mention that you must make a full system backup before upgrading, and I've been taking my own advice, and it really saved me this time once again. Actually it saved my customers data and all her pictures going back 10 years. In my complacency, I put her pictures at risk without thinking about it, and I had an unexplained failure of a disk clone (Acronis DiskDirector) that wiped out both the old disk and the new. I was absolutely distraught, kicking myself for putting both disks at risk at the same time.

I'd started the clone and headed for bed and within five

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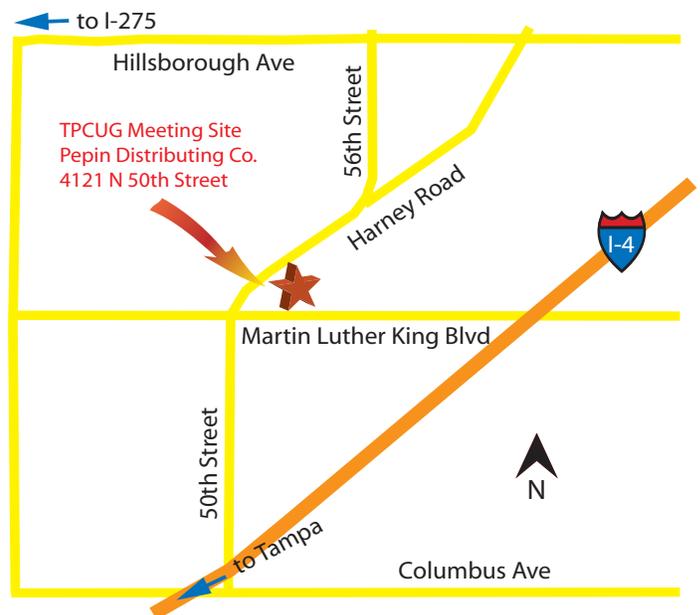
First Class Mail

Member: Your membership is up for renewal

Windows 10.....Continued from page 7

minutes I realized that both drives were attached and running at the same time, and slept knowing that the likelihood of something happening to them was slim. When I got up I attached the new one to the new system and it failed to boot, and the Windows 10 installation drive failed to repair it. I found the same result with the old drive. I was so distraught I wasn't thinking clearly, and when I calmed down I realized that of course I had done a complete system backup to a portable drive that I could recover from. If the recovery worked, that is. But it worked. I used the Windows 10 installation flash-drive and selected "repair this computer", then "Restore System Image". I did this on both the old drive and the new. The old drive is mounted inside the case, but not hooked up as an emergency full system recovery. It was replaced because of its age and was working fine. Sitting unplugged it should outlast the computer itself.

The new Windows 10 backup program is called "FileHistory," not "Backup and Restore". FileHistory is a scheduled backup system that backs up just personal files. But "Backup and Restore" is still on the system renamed to "Backup and Restore (for Windows 7)". "Backup and Restore (for Windows 7)" seems to be fully



functional. It clearly says it's to recover backups made with "Backup and Restore" made from Windows 7. It can be used however on Windows 10, and that's how I made the System Image Backup. So I'm mentally kicking myself for doing a dumb thing, but congratulating myself for being in the habit of doing backups. ♦