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April in Tampa

Meeting

3-D Printer Demonstration

by

Sean Daniels-Ennis

Wednesday, April 12

6:30 PM

Pepin Distributing Co.

4121 N 50th Street

Tampa, Florida

Meeting Preview: 3-D Printer demonstration by Sean Daniels-Ennis from the Hillsborough Public Library.

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 Merle Nicholson and Ron Weinberg for their articles. And to fill out the newsletter, I have a couple recent problems that you may find of interest. One of the problems might well happen to you.

Windows 10 Creators Update

Before getting into problems, let me remind you that a new windows 10 update is coming available on April 11. It is going to be pushed out in waves, so not everyone will receive it on that date. And for those few who have windows phones, it will be available on April 25.

A brief video about the new features may be found at: <http://www.pcworld.com/article/3185431/windows/how-to-get-windows-10-creators-update-the-release-date-and-more.html>. *PC World* says that "Newer PCs that have the optimal specs for

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May Meeting: To be announced

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However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 813-251-3817, or william@lamartin.com.

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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, there were questions about network sharing and browser details.

Our own TPCUG member Michelle Burgess gave an interesting talk and demonstration on video conferencing using Apple Facetime. Harry Lockaby was attending with his Apple Mac Air notebook and served as a conferencing partner. Michelle was using a Mac mini and the room big screen as the only monitor. After the demo, Michelle went on to describe her attendance at a General Motors Hackathon and showed some of the possibilities of connected apps being considered for autos. Our thanks go to Michelle for an informative and interesting demonstration. ◆

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Windows 10 will get the Update first.” Personally I am in no rush since much of what I do on a computer does not involve what all the new features address. But there are some interesting things there regarding inking, for example. One of the more impressive things I saw in the demonstration of inking was: You draw a route on a map, and then Microsoft will turn your drawn route into an actual route with all the information usually associated with a route. The Edge browser will now be able to read your eBooks and display YouTube videos in 4K. I expect everyone to have the Creators update by our May meeting and for someone to give a demonstration of using the new features. Any volunteers?

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New 4K Computer Monitor, Three Weeks Later

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
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A new 27" computer monitor has been a big change for me. It's been mostly a good experience, but there are some considerations that suggest that it may not be an entirely wise move. I'll try to explain.

For those not familiar with the term "4K", it's a very high resolution monitor that's four times the resolution of a "standard" 1080 monitor. That is, vertically and horizontally it's doubled. A 1080 monitor is 1920x1080, and a 4K is 3840x2160. Pixels, that is, dots on the screen.

A little background about the 1080 standard first. We have television to blame for 1080. We needed a digital flat screen for television use for years and years, and we just had to put up with CRTs long after digital was technically possible – we had digital monitors in all sorts of sizes until the (mostly TV) industry decided on a standard. The standard was necessary to move on and scrap the 1930s CRT technology. It stood to reason that the TV standard would be duplicated in other products, not the least for computers, and that happened without question. If you'll look at good quality monitors right now, the 1080 is by far the least expensive and, because of the sheer numbers sold, is pretty much the standard consumer monitor.

In the meantime, computer technology has bypassed the need for standardized monitor sizes and resolutions; the 1080 remains on the least expensive computers. But there are a dozen or more resolutions that are common.

We bought a 55" 4K TV more than 2 years ago for use as our only TV in the household. Its TV comes from a cable tuner in a computer that serves as a large capacity DVR. So we have a lot of experience with the standard. In our minds, we knew the clarity of the 4K screen will be so dramatically improved that I would

thoroughly enjoy the change on my desktop computer, and that is mostly true.

The tipping point on the decision to replace my perfectly good flat screen monitors was price. Amazon hit a low of \$330 one night as I was checking almost daily and clicked on it. It's at \$428 today and \$377 yesterday. That night, I bought an LG 27UD58-B 27-Inch 4K UHD IPS Monitor. It replaces two 1600x1200 21" monitors that I bought in 2005 for about \$550 each. That's \$1,372 in today's money for both.

Surprisingly, there are very few suitable 4K monitors made. Amazon has just eight, and half of those are in the \$600 range.

First, though, the hardware. To use this you need a video system that will handle 4K, and very few do. Mine did not. The newest, higher end computers largely do, but you can't count on it, check the specs. Look for 4K at 60Hz. I built my own system – you could say it evolved over many years, and I knew it wouldn't do 4K. I had two video cards that were just a few years old; I replaced one and kept the other only to discover that AMD video software wouldn't allow an old card to coexist with a new one, so back off the shelf it came and torn apart the second time to remove the second. The new card, a Radeon RX470 was \$175. A DisplayPort cable (and an HDMI) came with the monitor.

OK, so let's see what I did. I replaced two 21" monitors placed side by side for a combined 442 square inches (17"x 13" x 2) with a single 4K screen 305 Square inches (23.5"x13"). And increased the pixels from 3,840,000 to 8,294,400. Oh oh, what have I done? Well, I made those 8.3 million pixels a LOT tinier.

I find it strange to look at Windows elements that small. All this detail is crystal clear and very sharp, but very tiny. Remember I have 8.3 million pixels. Now, Windows 7, 8.1 and 10 all have the capability to scale windows elements larger. If you look at Windows Display Settings, there is a slider that allows you to enlarge everything. Windows 10 offers to set scaling at

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150% right off the bat. But think about it. My 8.3 million Pixels will then become an equivalent of 5.5 million. Well, that's one way to look at it, but remember those very, very sharp pixels are still there doing their job, and it's just spectacular. If you want to really get blown away, look at a high rez movie on Amazon, or even a relatively low resolution YouTube video . . well it's hard to describe. And worth it.

I finally settled for 125% scaling. In terms of how many useful, readable, windows of information I can get on the screen all at the same, it's a tremendous improvement. If you're just a one-application-at-a-time person, you'll still like it because of the clarity. If you're a programmer who needs four or five windows up at a time because you're referencing information between, it's a god-send. Sometimes I'll need to set the scaling back to 100%, and at least Windows makes that easy to do. I have a problem with a 14-year old Microsoft Office product Access 2003 that cuts off 25% of user windows when scaled. I attribute that to fate and the computer gods messing with me. Bill didn't know that would happen back in 2003. But my support for Access 2003 applications is slowly going away.

Now the downside(s). I have to be fairly close to the screen because of the size of screen elements, and that's ok for my eyes; I have computer glasses selected for that distance. But I really can't relax and tip back in the chair unless I'm watching a YouTube video. The previous arrangement with two 21" screens (18.5" x 2 full width) worked well, because I had both turned inward, each facing me. A 23.5" wide screen really needs to be curved, and I'd guess by the time I'm ready to replace this one they'll be readily available. Curved 4K TV screens are available, expensively, but none small enough for computer use.

Sometimes when I have a lot of detail on the screen I feel I must shift my body right or left to get the detail right in front of my eyes. I'm trying to not do that now that I'm aware of it. As I said, the previous arrange-



ment had both monitors turned inward.

I've been discussing my primary monitors' replacement, but I really had four. There is one 1080x1920 monitor on my right, turned in portrait. I use this for help screens and PDF references. It's turned inward to face me. The fourth was a low resolution screen that I used rarely for spillover when I wanted my email and calendar up. I have abandoned use of that one now that I've increased my window area so much.

The side portrait monitor is invaluable, and I've been considering replacing that one with a 24" 4K monitor. The one I'm using now is one of the old ones of course and it has its problems that I've been struggling with. I finally convinced myself that the text is fuzzy and everything is scaled larger even though it should be at 100%. I have just done some research and finally found some Microsoft descriptions of my problems. It seems that even Windows 10 can't handle mixed resolutions well. That is, if you have a new high resolution monitor it works well but any second or third monitor that is older, lower resolution, you can expect that the display isn't sharp like it was (yep), and the scaling may be off (check!). And although Windows 10 handles multiple monitors much better than Windows 7 or 8.1, they acknowledge these problems and offer some suggestions that may mitigate, but not cure them.

Microsoft also mentions that some of the scaling problems have to do with the capability of the applications, and that those applications assembled as a Universal

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Internet Picture of the Month



The island Hotel

In Cedar Key, Florida, a bit of old Florida. From Flickr.com, taken by Faye, whose photstream is at <https://www.flickr.com/photos/sheffe73/>. She has lots of interesting photos, but you will need a Yahoo account to be able to see more than just a few. My interest in the photo was that I stayed in that hotel just a few months ago and also many years ago. Go to Cedar Key. It is very relaxing and off the beaten track.

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App (from the Windows Store) will scale fine and there's no guarantee that others will work. It's also a plug for Office 360 or Office 2016. But that jibes perfectly with my problems with Access 2003. One suggestion on older apps is to change the apps compatibility property. There's a setting "Disable display scaling on high DPI settings". I've changed my MSACCESS.EXE settings, and I'm still assessing the effect.

The only definitive solution is to use secondary monitors of the same resolution. Hence supporting my "need" to buy another new monitor.

Considering how relatively inexpensive they are and how much benefit, the only remaining problem is finding a home for my old ones. ◆

HDMI Cables with Ethernet

By Ron Weinberg, Member At Large,
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At our last meeting there was a dearth of information on the new HDMI with Ethernet cables that are now widely sold in anticipation of devices that have not yet appeared in common use. Here is a simple explanation of these cables.

In short, this feature reduces the number of Ethernet cables required in some networks, primarily home entertainment networks.

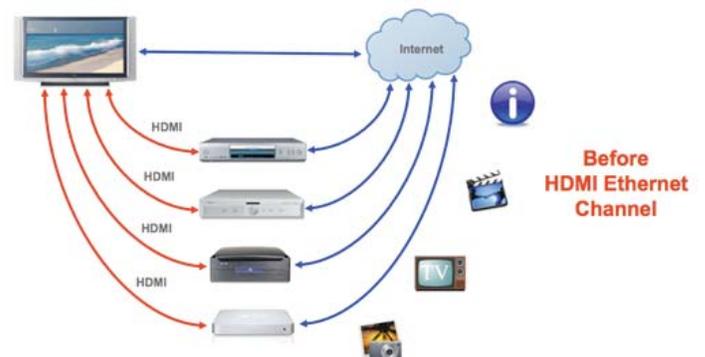
Both standard and high speed HDMI cables are available with Ethernet. These cables are backward compatible and serve as regular HDMI cables if the Ethernet channel is not used. Both ends of the cable must be used in enabled ports for the Ethernet channel to work.

Ports which utilize the Ethernet feature may be marked HEC (HDMI Ethernet Channel enabled). The use of that mark is optional to the manufacturer of the device. When purchasing new devices, as with any new feature, it would be advisable to check product specifications and or user manual to determine if the feature is included.

Here is the basic information and diagrams obtained from the HDMI.org website.

HDMI Ethernet Channel

HDMI Ethernet Channel technology consolidates video, audio, and data streams into a single HDMI cable, combining the unmatched signal quality and convenience of HDMI connectivity with the power and flexibility of home entertainment networking. It incorporates a dedicated data channel into the HDMI link, enabling high-speed, bidirectional networking at up to 100 Mb/sec. ◆



Comments.....Continued from page 2

Hijacked

Read this closely so that you won't fall for the same trick. Although I am not at all sure that I fell for any trick. But here is what happened to me just a few hours before I sat down to write this.

I was using my other desktop computer to work with Visual Studio 2017. I was working on what is known as a cross platform app, that is one that uses Xamarin from within Visual Studio to create a solution that has four projects: A shared project, an Android project, an iOS project and a Windows Universal project. The idea is to put as much of your code as is possible into the shared project and then for anything that has to be dealt with specifically for the separate operating

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systems, such as saving images to the device or sending email, you put the code required by the separate operating systems into the three separate projects

Well, Xamarin is still a bit new to me, even though I have been using it for over a year. So I have to search for how to do certain things using Bing or Google. In this case I was using Bing and had put in a search regarding tapping on images.

And here is where my memory is not perfect. I recall there were a number of links returned as results. I then clicked on one, and I don't recall if it was the first link I tried or the third. Anyway, I clicked on one of the links provided by Bing and was presented with a web page in Edge that had what appeared to be a large yellow popup saying that FLASH was required to view the page. And here is where my memory fails me. I don't recall if I clicked on the x in the upper right corner of the popup to close it or it closed automatically. Anyway, all Hell broke loose with loud audio telling me not to close the web page or I would lose all access to my data; that all my contacts were being sent to some site along with my Facebook contacts (none of which I have); and some other threats that I don't recall. I was supposed to follow the instructions on the screen to make a payment to be able to access my data again.

I stopped paying attention to the verbal instructions since I felt that I really needed to get Edge closed and was pretty sure that the problem was restricted to Edge and not the entire computer. Edge could not be closed except via the Task Manager, which I did. Foolishly I then reopened Edge with the result that all of that talking and threatening was presented again. So I again used Task Manager to close Edge.

What to do? I opened a different browser, FireFox and did a bit of searching and came up with a page about the Edge browser being hijacked. I had not used the word hijacked, but that is exactly what had happened to me. And the solution was quite simple. All that was necessary was to disconnect from the Internet. With that done, if you started Edge again it could not load the offending web page. You see, Edge keeps track of what web pages were open when you close it

and then reopens them again when you start up Edge I don't particularly like this feature and now see a real problem with it.

Anyway, when I restarted edge with no Internet connection, the offending web page informed me that I had no Internet connection. And I was able to close all of Edge's tabs and then Edge. On restarting Edge, I noticed no problems. I did a quick Windows Defender scan that produced no problems and will do a thorough scan soon.

Did I click on that web page? Had the web page been infected with code that redirected me to a malicious site? I don't know, but I do know that many years ago, I followed a link to a page and had something similar happen, and I did not click on anything. It would seem that you should not be harmed by simply viewing a web page after all these years of technological improvement – but I just don't know.

Networking Problems

At least I thought my problem was a networking problem for several weeks. About four months back, I lost my network connection to my TV. The TV is in a room some distance from the router which connects to the TV room via a power-line Internet adapter; the TV connects to a switch which connects to the power-line adapter. Disconnecting the Ethernet cable from the switch connected to the power-line adapter, I easily discovered that the switch was the problem and ordered a new one. In that room connected to the switch I also had an iMac and an older HP laptop, my main computers being in the room with the router. Everything worked fine for several months, then I noticed that the iMac, which I leave running since I use it to compile iOS apps from Visual Studio running on a Windows computer in the other room, had a problem. The iMac started to often lose its network connection while the TV and the HP most of the times still had a connection. I thought the new switch might be going bad because if I rebooted the switch, the iMac reconnected to the network. So I ordered another new switch, but the problem persisted. I tried all sorts of connections, through the switch, directly to the power-line adapter, and even ran a 50 feet plus Ethernet

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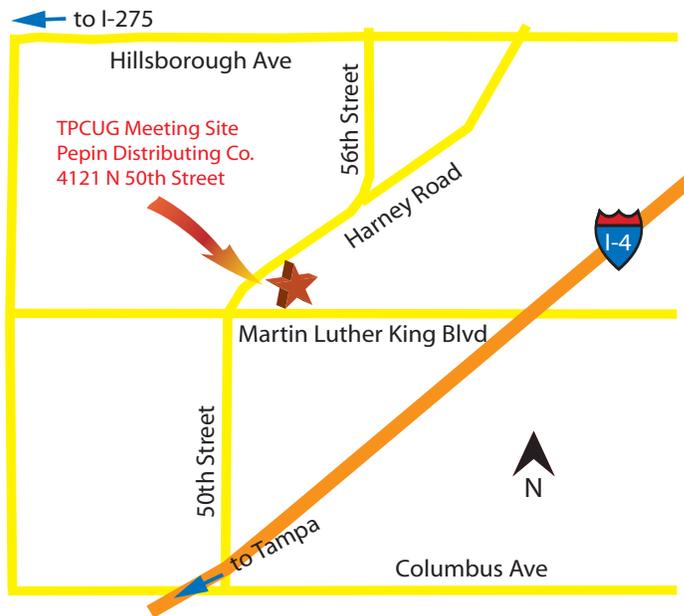
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cable on the floor through the house to connect things. Sometimes I had a connection for over 24 hours, sometimes not. None of the combinations produced an uninterrupted connection for more than two days. I even set the iMac to not go to sleep. But nothing would give me the weeks-long uninterrupted connection that I had experienced in the past.

I then hit upon an idea. The iMac had its operating system updated to Sierra sometime in the recent past. Could that have anything to do with it? An Internet search for “iMac, Sierra and Network” produced many people experiencing the same loss of network connectivity. Many solutions were proposed, but none seemed to fix things for people. Then I found one fellow who had the answer that he had received from Apple: The article said that I should try going to the iMac’s Sys Preferences>Energy Saver and untick Wake for Network Access. I already had it set to not go to sleep (which did not fix things). But de-selecting the Wake for Network Access seems to have fixed the iMac losing its network connection.



What would we do without Google and Bing? However, in all my searching, I only found one person with the correct answer. ♦