



October in Tampa

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

Vol. 15 No. 10

October 2002

Meeting

Programming

Wednesday, October 9, 2002

6:30 PM

Art Pepin Hospitality Room

Pepin Distributing Co.

6401 N 54th St

Tampa, Florida

Meeting Preview:

William LaMartin will present an overview of writing computer programs using Microsoft Visual Basic, Borland Delphi and Microsoft Visual Basic .Net from within Visual Studio .Net.

This will not be a technical presentation, so you will not be inundated with an endless stream of code—just enough to give you a taste of what is happening behind the buttons of a program. The different programming languages will be compared and examples of the final products produced will be shown—some of which you might find useful and can download for free.

As usual, we will have our Windows/computer discussion for the first half hour of the meeting. ♦



See page 6 for the story of the cracked Compaq. Did he do it, or did Compaq create its own crack?

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November Meeting Topic: To be announced

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However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

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Minutes of the September Meeting

By Peggy Pulliam, Tampa PC Users Group
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At the September meeting, Kevan Sheridan presented a way to consolidate Instant Messaging. Instant Messaging (IM) is a way of talking with someone else on the web by typing a message and sending it immediately while the other person is right there to see it at the moment and answer you back.

Businesses find this works in the customer service section when a caller asks a question that the service rep doesn't have the answer to, but his buddy in the office does. Since they are on the web at the same time, they IM the associate and get the answer, and the caller never has to know who had the actual answer. People like it because they can get an answer fast or send a message right now.

Connect to MSN Messenger, Yahoo! Messenger, ICQ and IRC, and most of the time to AOL® Instant Messenger (AIM) in a single interface. What we saw was a way to coordinate all of them through "Trillian". Each person you have entered the name of is shown in your "buddy list", and you can see if they are online, if they have actually done something recently, or might have stepped away from the computer. They can be on any of the six services mentioned and still be managed through Trillian. So you don't have to have your AIM box open and your MSN box open and your Yahoo box open. From that one place, you can talk to any of your buddies if they are available and if there are two or more you can get to an area where the group of you can all IM in the same screen! You cannot, however, chat with someone on one of the systems if you don't have an account on that system set up for instant messaging.

You can block people from seeing that you are online, in case there's someone you don't want sending you messages, or you want to plan a secret party. You can block the whole list from seeing that you are online and do your research without being interrupted by someone sending an IM. You can make the window transparent so it doesn't completely block out the things underneath it on your screen, you can set different sounds, change the look of the box on your desktop, send pictures or links for web sites, and other fancy things, too, that Kevan didn't have time to show us. One other thing he did show is the log feature where your IM words are recorded and saved on your computer. This will help when someone types "Jo's phone number is 555-5555" and you go on chatting and close the IM windows and forgot to note it down.

This will speed and open up communication a lot! Best of all, it is completely free in the version we saw and without ads too! [Http://www.trillian.cc](http://www.trillian.cc) will get you there if you want to try it out. ♦

Auto Trip Planning & GPS Routing

By Merle Nicholson, Tampa PC Users Group
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Microsoft Streets & Trips 2002
DeLorme Street Atlas USA Deluxe v2.0-2.1
DeLorme Street Atlas USA v8.0

My wife and I enjoy traveling by car. We travel around our state for bicycling sites and canoeing and have family and friends scattered around the U.S. enough that augmenting the experience with travel software has been both practical and enjoyable.

This article is incomplete as a software review. Instead I hope to describe how and why we enjoy it and to help with the selection of products.

We're actively using two trip planning products at the same time. We use the DeLorme Street Atlas USA Deluxe for actively tracking in the car, and the Microsoft Streets & Trips 2002 for route pre-planning. We have three copies of Streets and Trips 2002; one for each of our personal desktops and one for the traveling notebook. We have one copy of Street Atlas USA on the notebook. The GPS unit is attached to the notebook when in the car.

Automobile trip planning and routing uses software (and hardware) to:

1. Plan a trip in advance or modify a trip enroute.
2. Print maps and "Trip Tickets".
3. Provide for any detailed street map or highway needs.
4. Track your current position using GPS, or track your current position along a planned route using GPS.
5. Look up any place, address, business or facility and place it on a map or integrate it into a planned route.
6. Find where you are, where you're going, how to get there and when you'll get there.

Our interest began in 2000 with yet another product, Rand McNally Deluxe Streetfinder 2000, software that included a GPS unit; and although it was interesting, we found it difficult to use, so we switched to Microsoft Streets and Trips 2000 and discarded the Rand McNally. To be fair, I have not looked at Streetfinder since, so I do not know if that product has been improved or not.

We've since upgraded Streets & Trips 2000 twice, to 2001 and 2002. This product has stayed the same through this time with no noticeable changes other than updating the databases. It's the product that we have the most experience with and use it for our standard of comparison. It's relatively inexpensive, too. Our first one was \$20 with a \$20 rebate. With GPS, Streets & Trips places your location accurately on the map as you travel. It does not actively compare your real track or position to the

planned route, so there's no recalculation of how far to get there or when. We have used this software for some major trips including one three week trip of 6300 miles, and we do like the product very much. But I wanted it to track where we were along a route so we'd know how far it is to the next location. So we looked at Street Atlas USA.

I borrowed an unused copy of Street Atlas USA version 7 from a friend, looked at it, mapped ourselves a couple of short trips; compared it to Streets & Trips and removed it because it just did not compare favorably. Although it would track a route, the user interface was very difficult, the graphics were clunky, and it just did not stand up to the quality of Streets & Trips. Then DeLorme came out with Street Atlas USA version 8, and I revived my interest in it. They completely rewrote the user interface, and it bears no resemblance to the previous version. There is also a Deluxe version that I saw in a store that was bundled with a yellow GPS unit in the package for \$149. I looked it up on the DeLorme web site and decided I wanted the Deluxe version without the GPS priced \$10 more than the standard, searched for anyone that had it, failed to find anyone and then ordered directly from DeLorme. I paid only \$10 more than the standard was at CompUSA, so I was happy with the \$59 cost. The Deluxe version is 2.0-2.1. It's the Deluxe version of Street Atlas version 8. Isn't there a better way, guys?

I've begun writing this as we're traveling. I'm using MS Word, with Street Atlas also running so I can switch between them as needed while my wife is driving. Right now we're on our way to Chattanooga, then Tampa, having spent a few days in Indianapolis, with a day trip to Chicago. Our total round trip will be about 2450 miles. We just used our software to find a Barnes & Noble Café outside Bowling Green to get a good "café latte" and a scone. We'd never been to Bowling Green, yet we were able to leave the interstate, drive a mile and a half to Barnes & Noble and back with no hesitation or loss of time. Our decision was based simply on a search of candidate cities on our route and my nervous system's demand for caffeine. We simply could not have done this without software and a computer.

HARDWARE

In early 2000 we started traveling with a Compaq Pentium 120MHz notebook and used it on some major trips including a 6300 mile trip in 2001. We had just a few months using a Toshiba Pentium 233 and then purchased our current notebook, a Gateway 1.2GHz Celeron with 256MB memory and a 20G HD (\$1,228 shipped to the house). Since there is no Gateway brand car charger available, we also bought a 120 Volt 140 Watt inverter for the car to power the charger cube, and also a power adapter cable for the GPS.

We decided to buy a new notebook to have hard drive space enough to load the entire product CD so that the CD does not have to be in the drive when searching the databases. Both earlier notebooks had very limited disk space. The new one, with 20G, still has 13G left after loading the full databases of both

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products, along with XP Home and MS Works. Our new machine is very fast for these purposes. Please note that the Pentium 120 was useable for running Streets and Trips in case you can find a used one for a couple of bucks. Ours was free because the previous owner did not want to spend \$250 for a new battery. We simply used the car outlet, and shut the notebook down more often, after removing the outlet from the car's ignition switch.

A few words of caution about notebooks. Many now do not have serial and parallel ports. The one we ordered from Gateway would not have had a serial port for our GPS if we hadn't decided to order it at the Gateway store and told the salesman we needed one. The same model Gateway online has no serial port. We would have had to get a much more expensive model, or purchase a new GPS for USB, a very rare item. As it was, the unit also did not have a keyboard/mouse port, but we were prepared for that.

GPS

The GPS, as purchased, pulled its power from the keyboard connector. Fortunately, Rand McNally still sells the GPS and an accessory power cable. Our setup is actually better now because the GPS needs a few minutes to acquire satellites when first powered up, so we leave it plugged into the lighter socket all the time when traveling, except overnight. Many other GPS units are on the market that are suitable for attaching to PCs. Besides the Rand McNally unit, DeLorme sells one bundled with a copy of Street Atlas. The advantage of these two units is price. They don't have any controls or display. They're intended to sit on the dash while you're driving and have no other purpose. Most other GPS models have computer interfaces, and both Streets and Trips and Street Atlas handle several protocols, even some that are specific to particular models. My GPS has one output protocol "NMEA 2", and both software products have "NMEA 2" in the communications setup. I also own a Garmin GPS for our sailing and canoeing. It has two output settings, one being NMEA 2. I don't use this GPS in the car because the Rand McNally unit is less conspicuous and has an external power cable.

The only place in the car that allows reception from the satellites is on the dash, underneath the sloping windshield. I have it in a small gray felt drawstring sack to make it look less like an electronic device and as a shield from the sun. GPS signals are very weak, so the signal is interrupted by anything overhead and even tall trees to the sides. This has not proven to be a problem but once, when we were looking for a planned turn under the Elevated in Chicago.

THE CAR

I've rewired the cigarette lighter sockets in both our cars, bypassing the ignition switch; and in the case of our van, directly to the battery, with multiple outlet adapters. All this is not totally necessary, but bypassing the switch we feel is worth the work, and I used heavier wire while I was at it. We leave the

system powered up while we're in a restaurant on the road, most times just closing the lid, which immediately turns the screen off (I think.. how do you tell?). The notebook's power settings will also power the screen, processor and hard drive down even while it's on external power, which in this case is our car battery.

HOW WE USE THE SOFTWARE

My wife and I stop frequently while traveling, if only stopping for five minutes, usually to trade off driving. We've found we rarely get fatigued even for a ten hour drive. The notebook sits in the lap of whoever is the passenger at the time. There is room on the floor of the van to put it when there's nothing going on or when leaving the car. The windows are tinted and we use an insulated screen on the windshield and usually drop a towel over it and also take it inside motel rooms.

We use Street Atlas to track our route using GPS tracking. The navigator/passenger uses the software to anticipate events coming up, turns, stops, track how far it is to some event (a turn or a planned stop or traffic merging from another highway is information the driver needs). We use it to locate motels and restaurants in advance. We use it to look up and call hours in advance for hotel reservations, for instance, using our cell phones.

The route is shown on the screen as a map. You zoom in and out showing various levels of details on the map, right down to the corner where you turn, or zooming out to show a whole state if you wish. Street Atlas also has voice announcements warning you of upcoming turns at intervals as you approach. While somewhat useful, the voice announcements are no substitute for a navigator/passenger. When you zoom in, locations of stores, restaurants, exits, services and hotels are shown.

We plan our trip at home on one of our desktop machines using Streets and Trips, sometimes a month in advance, and discuss it for a while, look up scenic locations along the way, plug those stops in with an anticipated length of stay, and use the Internet to research the stops. A good example is this trip we're on. We discovered that we could fit in three hours at Mammoth Cave if we left Chattanooga by 8:00 AM and we could still get to Indianapolis by supper without making our host in Indianapolis wait. It was worth the small amount of work.

With the software, you plug in the Start and End locations, using addresses or place names, then any stops along the way. You have a profile entered that determines the times of day that you start and end. You also can set it so that you do rest stops, say every two hours for 15 minutes. There are profiles that determine how fast you drive on all the various types of roads and set some criteria of a road type preference, so that in our case we may prefer to go a longer distance and stay on interstates. Also, if you put in an average cost of gasoline and your car's miles per gallon, it will estimate your gasoline cost. The software calculates your route, supplies maps, puts a route on the screen and displays or prints written driving instructions.

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After the route is planned and before leaving, we take the time to put Start, Stops and End, and Vias into Street Atlas and make any time of day adjustments. This really takes just a few minutes. So far we have not regretted the use of two software packages.

STREETS & TRIPS VS STREET ATLAS USA

I'll try to describe the difference between the two. We like and use both, but it probably is because of our own preferences. And I'll admit that as we use Street Atlas and become more familiar with it, our use of Streets and Trips may diminish.

Streets & Trips is a Microsoft product that *looks* like a Microsoft product. It has all the standard menus and easy to use buttons. It has better graphics than Street Atlas, and produces better presentations if you're printing maps. It is much easier to learn to use, especially if you're a regular computer user and familiar with the operations of Windows. There are a few things that need improving, like the starting and stopping of GPS tracking is buried in the cascading menus instead of being on an exposed button. They've forgotten that you can be operating this in a moving car using a cheesy touch (touchy) pad. Also, it samples the GPS location only every 15 seconds. At 60 MPH, that's 1,320 feet between samples, and sometimes we were confused about which turn to take.

Streets and Trips does have GPS tracking, but it does not interact with a planned route. It leaves all the ETA calculations up to the user to work out in his or her head. And that's all right, I don't have a real problem with that, but it prompted me to look elsewhere. It has a very large database to search,

(Trip.....Continued on page 9)

Internet Picture of the Month

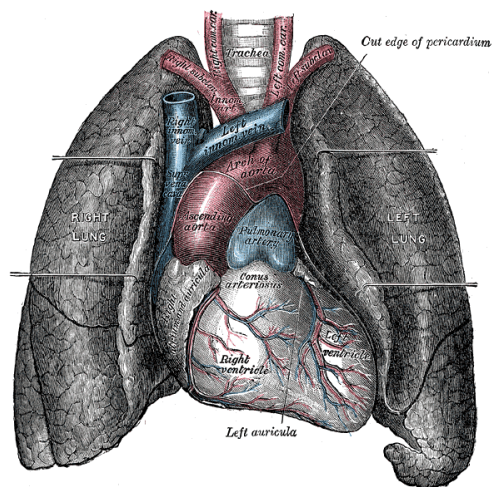


Illustration of the Heart from Gray's Anatomy
at

<http://www.bartleby.com/>

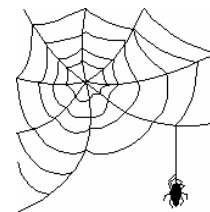
Bartleby.com offers a great collection of online books. They describe themselves as "The preeminent Internet publisher of literature, reference and verse providing students, researchers and the intellectually curious with unlimited access to books and information on the web, free of charge."

The image is from Gray's *Anatomy of the Human Body*.

October's Interesting World Wide Web Locations

Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)
Digital Scanner Reviews
Fast Company
FSU News
Cooking.Com
Florida Map Page
One thousand years of scientific thought
Bartleby.com—Great books online

<http://www.tpcug.org/>
<http://www.imaging-resource.com/SCAN1.HTM>
<http://www.fastcompany.com/>
<http://www.fsunews.com/>
<http://www.cooking.com/>
<http://www.luddist.com/map.html>
<http://www.timelinescience.org/>
<http://www.bartleby.com/>



Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our web site, where you need only click on the name.

Warranty on Compaq Laptops

By Merrill Friend, Tampa PC User's Group
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About three months ago I bought a new Compaq Presario model 710 laptop from Comp USA. Before I left the store the salesman tried to sell me a one year maintenance contract. As I recall the cost would have been \$149. This contract, as I remember the salesman's explanation, would even cover accidental damage.

Since I had used several laptop computers over a number of years without any damage to the exterior of any of them I really wasn't too concerned about accidental damage to the unit. I have carried laptops on airplanes from Tampa to Baltimore to Miami to Tampa without any problems and safely by car all over the State of Florida so I didn't expect this to be a problem. Also I planned to carry the unit in a carrying case, which should provide reasonable protection. In other words, I have always taken good care of my equipment and expected to continue this practice in the future so why spend another \$149 needlessly.

Then one day after I shut down my laptop and closed the top I noticed a small crack down near the rear hinge. "Where did that come from," I wondered as I carefully examined the lid speculating on the cause of this new crack. I had no recollection of bumping the computer case against anything or setting it down hard and I certainly had not banged it against anything when it was not protected in its case. My conclusion was that perhaps there was some fault in the plastic material from which the lid was manufactured. Perhaps, I speculated, the hinge was too tightly connected, placing too much stress on the plastic covering of the top when the screen was widely opened, although I had never heard of this happening with any other laptop I or my associates had used in the past.

At this point I got out the computer's warranty information and dialed the toll free number provided for my use. I went through the usual menu of pressing different numbers on my tone phone until I got to a live person and could describe my problem. I didn't make a note of the exact time this all took but I was pleased that within 10 minutes at the most I had a real person on the line.

The "real" person wanted my name, address and phone number, as well as the model and serial number of my computer. Fortunately, I had written all this information on the material that came with the computer, using the form Compaq provided, even though I had already registered my computer online as soon as I got it hooked up to my Internet provider. Then the "real" person asked me for the date I bought the computer, and I didn't recall that information, although I could have found out by going back through my credit card records. I told her that I had registered my product online and couldn't they find all they

needed from the information I gave them then.

Her response to this was that she didn't have my registration information on her computer. "You will have to talk to customer service about that. They have access to that information on their computers." She then told me she would send me a box to pack my computer in for its return to the factory for repairs. She didn't know if the warranty would cover it or not; that is something to discuss with customer service, she added. Then she transferred me to customer service.

The guy that answered the phone in customer service seemed perplexed at my call. He told me that he understood that I was being transferred to him because I was disputing my warranty dates. I explained to him that I was not disputing anything, I just didn't recall the exact date I bought the computer or the date I registered it, and the lady I talked to initially didn't have access to that information on her computer. He then checked and confirmed the registration date of my warranty and confirmed that I had warranty coverage.

Then he advised that I might hear back from the company's repair service telling me they would only repair my computer if I paid them \$300 and if this occurred I should call back and talk to someone in customer service because they "Might" be able to help me on this.

I had read the Limited Warranty which stated that "Damage from misuse, abuse or neglect" was not covered. Of course, I feel strongly that I did not misuse, abuse or neglect my computer in any way so I have never felt responsible for this damage.

But now I began to worry that Compaq wasn't going to cover this under their warranty but customer service had given me hope that it wouldn't cost an entire \$300. At this point the \$149 maintenance policy was looking pretty good but I had already passed on that opportunity several months earlier.

The very next day the box arrived from Airborne Express and I was told I had three days to return it free via Airborne to Compaq. I was only three months into a one year warranty. So I packed the computer as instructed, called Airborne and they picked it up the same day and returned it to Compaq's repair facility in Houston.

Several days passed so I called to check on the status of the repairs. I had been given an account number and the tone phone menu asked that I punch it in. I did so, and the person I got this time required a lot less information than on the first call. They then transferred me to repair service. The lady at repair service asked me for my account number, and I gave it to her. She said, "That is not your account number. An account number has ten digits and that number is only eight digits long." I then explained that this was the only account number I had been given. So then I had to give her the computer model

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(Laptop.....Continued from page 6)

and serial number again, and, after putting all this information in her computer, she gave me the 10 digit account number she was using. "Be sure you use this 10 digit number on all calls about this repair." I promised I would do so.

I was then told that my repair was not covered by warranty, and they could either repair it for \$300 or send the computer back to me unrepaired. "What do you want us to do?" she asked. Remembering customer service's advice to call them before agreeing to pay \$300 for the repair, I told her I would think about it all, call back later in the day and tell her how to handle the repair.

I then dialed the menu again and asked for customer service. Now where is that nice guy who told me to call back to customer service before paying \$300 for repairs? Well, he certainly wasn't there this time. The guy I did get politely told me that once repair service has made up their minds on whether to charge for the repairs or not there wasn't anything he could do. I'd just have to pay the \$300 if I wanted it fixed.

So once again I dialed the toll free number, and, after the usual wait, I was asked for my account number. Remembering that I now had a 10 digit number I entered that number. The telephone equipment told me that was not a correct account number and to re-enter it. So this time I entered the 8 digit number and I was put through to another real person who routed me back to repair service. When they asked for my account number (I was getting smart by now), I gave them the 10 digit number.

That person said they were getting ready to return my computer un-repaired. I told her that I didn't want it returned until it was repaired and was willing to pay them the \$300 they wanted. She then took my credit card information and gave me an order number. Several days later my laptop was returned by Airborne, repaired and seemingly in good order.

I have the impression that HP and Compaq are making a good effort at handling two computer systems for the two newly merged companies of Hewlett Packard and Compaq Computer, which perhaps explains the different account numbers and the inability for some of their personnel to find all needed information on a single computer network. Nonetheless, everyone was friendly and the repairs were handled very efficiently.

And yet I still wonder how strong that plastic is that is used on the cover of those Presario laptops. Nervously, I bought an even better padded carrying case and I still wince every time I open and close the lid and feel it flex slightly at the force necessary to open it fully, hoping I will not ever again see another mysterious crack beginning near one of the rear hinges. I remain convinced that Compaq's design of this convex lid, or the materials used in its construction, is the primary causal factor in the damage sustained by my laptop. ◆

Editor's Comments: Scanner Problems

By William LaMartin, Editor,
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It is nice to see such nice long articles from the members. That way I have to write very little to finishing filling the newsletter. In fact, if I had used 12 point type, the newsletter would probably already be full.

HP PhotoSmart Scanner Revisited In the August 1998 newsletter, http://www.tpcug.org/newsletter/august1998/photo_smart-scanner.htm, I wrote about getting a 35 mm negative and slide scanner. In the December 2001 newsletter, http://www.tpcug.org/newsletter/nl_2001/december2001/new_computer.htm, I wrote about moving that scanner from a Windows 98 computer to a Windows Me computer and the problems I had in doing that. For Windows Me I had to get a new SCSI card and the new scanning software from HP. But I got it working and did a bit of scanning with it. However, I don't do that much scanning anymore since most of my photos are now taken with my Canon PowerShot G1 digital camera, which I have had for almost two years. But I have many, many black and white negatives, color slides and color negatives that I would like to archive digitally. I scanned in a number of them for my web site and other uses, but I hadn't done a systematic scanning in of everything.

Several weeks back I decided to begin that project. I would scan in the negatives and slides using the PhotoSmart scanner connected to my second computer while doing my normal work on my main computer, which is right next to it. I started with black and white negatives from 1970 (I have earlier stuff than that). These negatives are ones I processed myself and were cut into lengths of 4. I immediately ran into a problem that I had encountered intermittently after installing the scanner on the Windows Me computer. At unpredictable intervals I would get the error message "Hpi_cnr has causes an error in HPI_IH.DLL" and the program would close. Start it back up, scan some number of negative strips, and the error would occur again. I never found a solution—until I moved on to later dated negatives that were cut in lengths of six negative frames to a strip. All of a sudden there were no more error messages.

I believe I know what caused the problem. The scanner is set to scan a maximum of five negative frames. On the strips of four, it sometimes couldn't determine where the end of the fourth frame occurred due to sloppy work with scissors on my part, and that apparently caused the software to crash. When I moved to strips of six frames, it always could determine where the last frame was, in this case the fifth frame. So the problem is solved for negative strips longer than five frames, but what do you do for lengths of four or five. Well, there is no user setting for this, but you can go into the Windows registry and

(Comments.....Continued on page 10)

Looking Back to 1992

From the October 1992 *Bits of Blue*

Secretary's Report
TAMPA IBM USERS GROUP
MINUTES OF 9/9/92

As I sat waiting for the "starting gavel", I noted the gathering of the clan in the very nice facilities IBM makes available to our group and thought how fortunate we are. In addition to these super facilities, we always have a professional presentation of current software by industry reps and/or one of our own, we have a willing source of help with any computer problems we might have, we have access to some excellent training and education in SIGs, we can keep up to date on the most important industry developments. etc., etc., and we get to meet and mingle with some very nice people. And there are always several valuable raffle prizes given away to some lucky members. We always have a nice turnout for our meetings, yet there are many who are members of our group that never attend the meetings. I wonder if they know what they are missing.

CLUB NEWS:

Our Prez informed us of the current SIG on Word Perfect 5.1 for DOS, which was holding one of its classes at the time, and announced that the SIG on Modems & Using the BBS would be held next month -- time and date to be announced. All interested in this group were asked to put their name and phone number on a list — these folks would be contacted by Don Patzsch with the time and place for the SIG. Don Patzsch, a Co-SYSOP for the large Sunshine BBS and an expert in this area, will head up this SIG. Judging from the line of folks waiting to put their name on the list, it is going to be a nice group. Kevan Sheridan, our BOB SYSOP announced that he had ordered our new 14,400 baud modem for the BBS. A 6-8 week delivery is involved, so Kevan is looking toward a Nov/Dec operational date. Club objectives downstream are to add another phone line to the BBS, upgrade the computer to 386 level, and add storage capacity. •We have come a long way, baby—with Kevan's able efforts—and we are going a lot further in the future.

INDUSTRY NEWS:

Harvey informed us of a number of developments in the industry, on only a few of which I was able to get notes.

IBM will be coming out with their new gaggle of PCs next month, including a couple with ISA. A significant part of the announcement is that they will be marketed through national retail outlets, such as Work Place.

New/relocated computer stores: CompuAdd has relocated from its former Fowler location to one on west Hillsborough, west of Dale Mabry, in the same complex as the Sports Author-

ity. A new computer superstore, Computer City, will be going in on Dale Mabry between Kennedy and Cypress.

It appears that at least one company is coming out with a laptop computer that will have a bubble jet printer as an integral part. Harvey observed that that could be a problem -- if you have to have the printer repaired, you would also lose use of the computer. Looks as if that could be handy for the traveler, though.

Software Upgrades:

- MS Money 2.0 will be out next month.
- A new upgrade for Quicken for DOS is on the way. A free upgrade for the Windows version is also out, but you have to ask for it -- so, if you own Quicken for Windows, best get on the phone and make a call to the Quicken folks.
- FoxPro for DOS and a Windows BETA version should be released in October.
- The second interim release (2.0b) for MS Word for Windows will be coming out soon

Still in the software area, the Aldus Corp is perhaps the first major software producer to announce that it will not develop a 32-bit version of PageMaker for IBM's OS2/2.0.

It has been reported that the new Xtree for Windows has some problems. I did not catch all the info, but did hear mention of SuperStor. Check it out before you buy.

Harvey noted that in one of the publications he reviews it had been reported that Windows software now outsells software for DOS. (Think about that just a little bit.)

Speaking of Windows, Harvey observed what could be a very risky situation. In the interest of conserving \$\$\$\$ in a multi-computer situation to network and install Windows on the central computer. That's fine, BUT -- what if the central computer goes down? If you are using Windows programs, what do you do???

PROGRAM PRESENTATION

We were again blessed with the expertise and talents of John Johanasmeyer of WordPerfect Corporation, this time to give us a rundown on WP's Presentation program, version 2.0. This was the second Beta version for DOS. A Windows version will be forthcoming later. Its direct competitors are other upper end graphics and presentation programs -- CorelDraw, Applause, Harvard Graphics, to name a few. WP believes that their Presentation package is superior to those of all of their competitors.

It appears to be a super program, but I am not into that kind of software and am not in a position to judge one way or another. I do know that I would like to have some of the capabilities I

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(1992.....Continued from page 8)

observed. It seemed capable of doing just about anything I could think that anyone would want to do in the way of preparing a computer presentation -- and do it easily and well. Some of the features I noted are:

- Will produce and handle (import and export) both bit-mapped and vector based graphics, and the listing of supported graphics formats is extensive.
- Includes a bitmap editor that allows editing of bitmapped graphics in fine detail.
- Allows manipulating both text and graphics in just about any manner one could imagine.
- Includes a WP 5.1 spell checker.
- Includes a "John Madden" draw capability — you know, redraw the play on a rerun of the play
- Supports .WAV and .MID, and includes hundreds of .MID files and the capability to create .WAV. While it will use the computer sound system, a sound card is certainly desirable to take advantage of this feature.
- Automated or manual presentation of slide shows, and one can quickly and easily reorganize a presentation.
- The output of the program can be transported to and used from another computer via floppy. The other computer need not have Presentation loaded, for the runtime program Presentation will load onto the floppy along with the output will allow presentation with the other computer. Interestingly, the file size per slide seems very small indeed, and the runtime package is only about 75K. So, a single 1.4 Mb floppy would hold a very large presentation. Runtime does not give the capability to modify the presentation, however, so the presentation you take in this manner is the only presentation you can give.
- Includes over 1000 pieces of clip art.

I don't recall any mention of supported text formats, but I did note that Presentation 2.0 would accept directly text input from any version on \VP 5.1.

I don't recall any mention of equipment requirements beyond needing about 15 Mb of hard disk space. Just as with any graphics package, the faster your computer, the better off you are. While Presentation may run on a 286, I would guess that you would want a 386 or better, or you may be twiddling your thumbs a good bit. I believe John was using a 386/40 laptop on which the program ran very well. The retail price is set at \$495, and no clues were available about expected street price.

John did a great job of presenting what appears a super program, and I haven't done justice to either. Many thanks, John, (and Word Perfect) for an entertaining and informative presentation (and all the goodies, of course) -- another WordPerfect job VERY WELL DONE!!
AND THE WINNERS ARE:

With the generosity of WP Corp and GeoWorks, there were quite a few raffle prizes this meeting, and the lucky winners are:

WP Cap	William Coleman Martin Miller Kevan Sheridan Roger Waters
WP Shirt	Larry Anders Susan Atwood
Box 3.5 disks	Larry Anders
WP Graphics Lib	Roger Eggleston
GeoWorksPro	Cheryl Pett
Money Matters	Larry Anders
50/50 (\$36)	Chuck Himes ♦

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and it rarely has disappointed me.

Street Atlas USA is harder to use and to learn to use, but it offers more features. The user interface is not "Windows-like". Everything is on tabs at the bottom. It's really a clever, unique way to pack a large amount of information in a small space, but it is unlike any other program you've used.

The first couple of times I used it on short trips I thought I would discard it and revert back to Streets and Trips, but I'm glad I persevered. It took this one really long trip of 2450 miles to come to the realization that it would do everything that Streets and Trips will do but only after a good many hours of practice. The database search and information it supplies are equally as good as Streets and Trips, just selected and presented differently. In addition, it tracks the progress of your trip against the planned trip, and gives you a continuous re-estimate of your ETA for the next stops and destination. It announces upcoming turns and will announce on demand (press F5). It even tells you when you're "off route". It also has voice recognition for a large set of commands, like "next turn" being the same as pressing F5. I have not used the voice recognition feature.

One thing that annoys me is when your route backtracks. Say you plan to leave the interstate, go a mile down the road with some turns and return to the interstate the same way. It (understandably) doesn't know whether it's coming or going, and announces the turns as if you're doing both at once, doing double announcements. We've learned to hot-key the sound off as the solution. Sometimes it selects a route that doesn't make sense where it may leave the interstate, go down a road

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Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG

This SIG meets the first Tuesday of the month at the Gateway 2000 Store on North Dale Mabry (just south of Columbus Drive) at 6:30 PM. For information contact William LaMartin at lamartin@tampabay.rr.com, or Merle Nicholson at merlenic@tampabay.rr.com.

Genealogy SIG

To be included on the TPCUG genealogy mailing list, contact Jenny Lind Olin at 960-5723, or jlolin@tampabay.rr.com.

Visual Basic for Applications SIG

This SIG meets the third Tuesday of the month, at the Gateway 2000 Store on North Dale Mabry (just south of Columbus Drive) at 6:30 PM. For information, contact Merle Nicholson at merlenic@tampabay.rr.com, or William LaMartin at lamartin@tampabay.rr.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. Kevan Sheridan moderates the discussion.

Virus Alerts - Hoax or Real Threat?

By Jenny Leitzke - Membership Coordinator
Info@tpcug.org

Thank you to Computer Users for your defense against everyday computer attackers. Many of you receive emails addressing such concerns of new viruses that could very well destroy our beloved computer, and many of you act quickly to get that information out to as many people as you know. Please check these email alerts you receive to verify them as a real threat before you take any action. Much of the harm is by hoax emails, which are designed to jam up email servers with unnecessary emails. McAfee and other virus software companies place important information on their sites about which emails do address Real viruses threats or just Hoax chain letters, to get everyone alarmed of an impending threat. Book mark any one of the three sites below as sources to check when you receive these emails.

McAfee Security Alert Page
<http://vil.nai.com/vil/content/alert.htm>

Symantec/Norton
<http://www.symantec.com/avcenter/hoax.html>

Topic Alert Verification Page
<http://www.topic.on.ca/VirusOrHoax/>

Note: "It Takes Guts to Say 'Jesus'" is just another hoax message that has found its way into the netstream.

Another VERY easy way (and we love easy) is to go to www.google.com and type in the name of the warning you just received. You will easily find several entries that will instantly tell you who has already verified your email as real

or hoax.

Thanks for looking out for each other. Friends and Family are the best for watching our backs. ♦

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make the change there to either 4 or 3, whichever produces error free scanning.

I tired of negative scanning, put it away for awhile and moved on to some color slides. I scanned in about 270 and everything seemed to be going fine until I decided to take a close look at my results with Photoshop. Horrors. Under enlargement, they were out of focus with red or green borders around certain parts of the photo. And a random sample showed that all the slide scans were this way. I recalled having had this problem before, but couldn't recall what the solution was other than to recalibrate the scanner. That did no good. Time for the Usenet newsgroup search on Google. I got nothing there—probably because I didn't phrase the question correctly. Time to put a question to the rec.photo.digital newsgroup directly. I had my answer within a couple of hours from two different individuals. The solution: simply unplug the scanner from its power source for one minute and replug it and everything should be fine. It was. How simple, but I couldn't recall it.

With all my problems I thought that I might need to buy a new scanner, but for the time being that does not seem necessary. A lucky observation and the Usenet newsgroups have made the old scanner usable, I am back to rescanning my color slides, and the results look good. But a new Nikon CoolScan IV was looking mighty nice—except for the \$800 price. ♦

Friends of the User Group

We acknowledge the following firms for their support

Gateway 2000
 Marshall & Stevens
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And these software and hardware vendors for their demonstrations and review software and contributions of evaluation software to our group

Adobe Systems	Office Depot
CompUSA	PowerQuest
Corel Systems	RDI, Inc.
Imprise/Borland	Symantec
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Microsoft	

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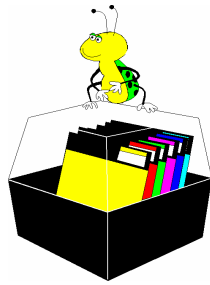
MEMBERS' HELP LINE

Program	Code	Name	Time	Phone	Codes
Adobe Acrobat	AA	Cheryl Alexander	Mon - Fri 10:00am - 9:00pm	914-0008	HTM,PSP,WP
AOL	AOL	Larry Anders	Mon - Sun 6:00pm - 10:00pm	989-9119	AOL, ME, MW, FP, PSP
Computer general	CG	Bob LaFave	8:00pm-10:00pm	960-0208	W95/W98, MOS
Delphi	DE	William LaMartin	Mon - Fri 9:00am - 9:00pm	251-3817	AA, FTM, IG, MOS, MP, VB, W95
DOS	DOS	Merle Nicholson	Mon - Fri 7:30pm - 9:30pm; weekends	879-3602	CG, DE, DOS, HG, HM, HP, VB
Family Tree Maker	FTM	Jenny Lind Olin	Mon - Sun 8:00am - 10:00pm	960-5723	ME, MW, PAF, Q, WP
Hardware general	HG	Don Patzsch		689-8662	CG
Hardware Modem	HM	Mary Sheridan	9:30am - 9:00pm	988-6480	AOL, CG, DOS, HG,IG, MW, Q, W95, W98
Hardware Printer	HP				
HTML coding	HTM				
Internet general	IG				
Micrografx Graphics Suite	MGS				
Microsoft Access	MA				
Microsoft Excel	ME				
Microsoft FrontPage	FP				
Microsoft Office Suite	MOS				
Microsoft Publisher	MP				
Microsoft Visual Basic	VB				
Microsoft Word	MW				
Networking	N				
PAF	PAF				
PaintShop PRO	PSP				
Quicken	Q				
Windows 3.1	W3				
Windows 95/98	W95/98				
Windows NT	WNT				
WordPerfect	WP				

We encourage other members to add their names to the list of those willing to assist fellow members with their computer problems. Contact William LaMartin to add your name to the list.

Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

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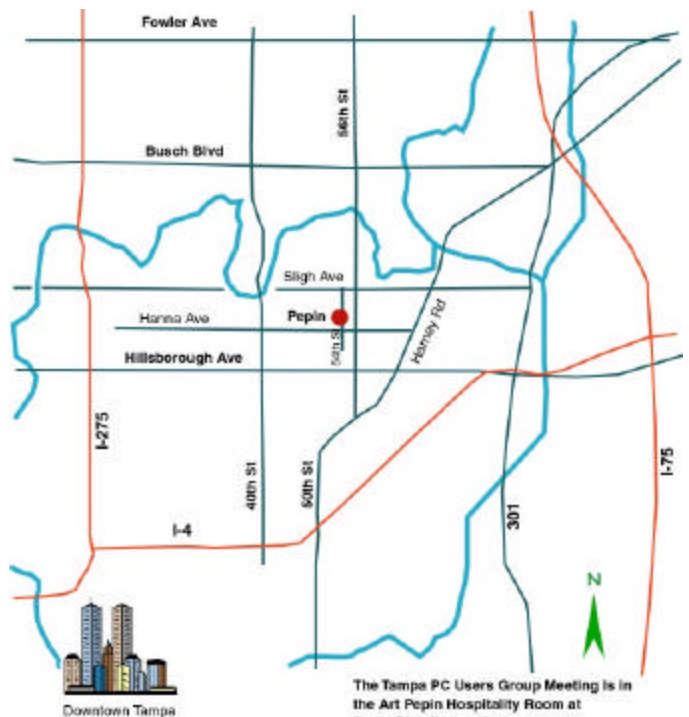
- Member: Your membership is up for renewal
- Vendor: Your product was reviewed on page ____

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for a while and return back onto the interstate. It's usually easy to fix by adding a "Via" to force the route. So after it plans the route, you need to review it closely and correct for this. After having coped with it a couple of times, it isn't too big a deal. It is more difficult to add Start, Stops and End. You cannot convert a Stop to an End for instance. You must delete it and recreate it. Streets & Trips does a much better job on this.

They have announced a new release of this product, for \$35 for registered owners. Added is the ability to split the screen so that you can track your position at two levels of details, and for that reason alone, I'll upgrade it.

To conclude, if my needs were more casual, and I did not value continuous GPS comparison to a planned route, I would use Streets & Trips, otherwise I'd use Street Atlas USA. My own solution is to use both. You can run both at the same time, but do not attempt to have the GPS tracking on both. ◆



The Tampa PC Users Group Meeting is in the Art Pepin Hospitality Room at Pepin Distributing Co 6401 North 54th Street, Tampa, FL 33610