



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

November in Tampa

Vol. 17 No. 11 November 2004

Meeting

Hardware

Wednesday, November 10, 2004

6:30 PM

Art Pepin Hospitality Room

Pepin Distributing Co.

6401 N 54th St

Tampa, Florida

Meeting Preview: Steve Singer of RDI @TampaBay, Inc. will tell us about the latest in hardware. We will also have the usual half-hour Windows SIG.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

This is going to be another short newsletter. The articles are just not there. Possibly the newsletter needs to change--to what I don't know--but the difficulty in getting articles from the membership is the driving force behind the need to change. So this month we not only have an eight page newsletter, we have an eight page newsletter with 12-point type. Last month we used 10-point type.

Microsoft Office Update In the October newsletter, I wrote about installing Windows XP SP2, which is supposed to reduce the chance of various malicious attacks being successful. There were also Microsoft Office updates out that you were supposed to install for similar reasons. The Office updates, as

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December Meeting: Marcy Gunn with Smart Computing

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Bits of Blue is published by the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc., a State of Florida registered non-profit corporation, to provide educational information about personal computer systems to its members. Our mailing address is P. O. Box 3492, Tampa, FL 33601-3492.

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.

Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software; plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

RENEWING YOUR MEMBERSHIP?

WE CERTAINLY HOPE YOU WILL

MAIL YOUR CHECK AND ANY
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\$25 Individual \$35 Family
\$60 Corporate = 3 employees + \$20 each add'l employee

Go to our web site <http://www.tpcug.org> and click on the
Join link to fill in an online membership application

Check the address label for your renewal month

Friends of the User Group

We acknowledge the following for their support

Marshall & Stevens
Pepin Distributing Co.

Minutes of the October Meeting

By Doug Mullis, for Secretary Peggy Pulliam
dmullis@tampabay.rr.com

Mary Sheridan kicked off our usual half-hour Windows SIG at 6:30 PM. Mary was impressed with the Firefox Mozilla Internet browser she saw demonstrated at the FACUG Fall Conference in Clearwater and suggested we try it.

Mary reminded us that 2005 TPCUG officers will be elected in December, so we need a slate of officer nominees by the November meeting. It seems all current officers except secretary Peggy Pulliam are able to remain in office, but remember, they did this last year as well. We need members to step forward to relieve those who have served so well. Treasurer Mike Hodges, although willing to serve, is now teaching evenings and will miss our regular monthly meetings. It is hoped volunteers William LaMartin, Larry Anders, Mary Sheridan and Mike Hodges will continue as Newsletter Editor, Librarian, Program Chairperson and Membership Chairperson, respectively.

At 7:00 PM, president Kevan Sheridan began our regular meeting. He distributed CD's of Microsoft's Service Pack 2, reminding members to first uninstall firewalls and make sure all programs are current. After installing, make sure everything is working, including your firewall.

At this point, our guest speaker, Randall Nagy, president of Soft9000.com, was introduced to tell us about Microsoft's .NET system. If you have Windows XP, you're probably using .NET for system updates which was designed to simplify distributed application development. Microsoft Machine Independent Language (MSIL) relieves the programmer from having to learn another program language to install new applications.

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Member of
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APC Back-UPS 1500 and PowerChute

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
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All these many years of personal computing, since 1983 with an Apple and since 1991 when I changed to a PC, I have been running without a battery backup. And believe it or not, I have rarely lost any work to a power interruption or outage. Furthermore, we didn't even lose power during the recent siege of hurricanes.

But about a week after the last hurricane to pass near Tampa, the power flickered off twice in two days, and on the last one, I lost about one-half-hour of work. After a little research, I went out and purchased an APC Back-UPS 1500, the best UPS that I could find easily, for \$200. The 1500 stands for 1500 VA. I always thought volts x amps = watts, but I am confused now since the maximum wattage supplied is 865 watts.

This device provides six outlets that are both battery backed-up and surge protected and two additional outlets that are only surge protected. Additionally there is a phone line pass-through that provides surge protection for a phone line. There is no protection provided for a cable or DSL line. See the photos at right. Although the photo of the front of the unit has RS in the name, it looks exactly like what I purchased with XS in the name.

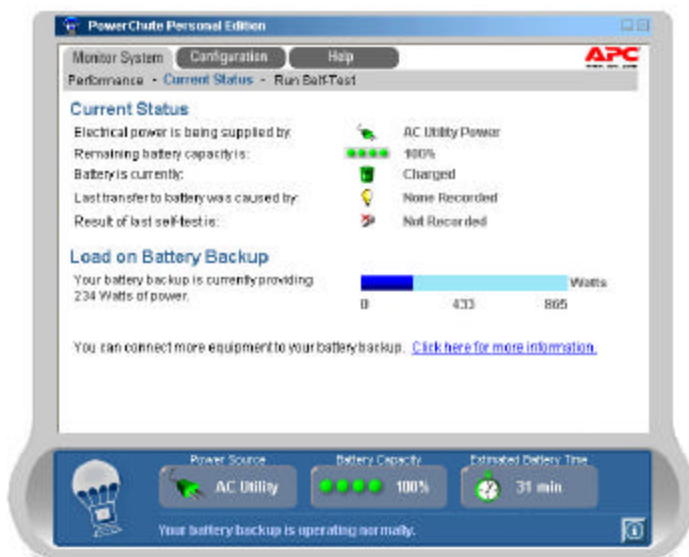


The device when positioned vertically resembles a small thin computer. You may also position it horizontally. But be warned, when positioned horizontally, there is a only one correct side to be the down side.

What is of particular interest is the software that comes with the unit. It is called PowerChute Personal Edition. With this software you can monitor the status of the backup unit and configure how it functions. To the left is a screen shot of my current status. As indicated, 234 watts of power are being consumed. This is for two computers, two flat panel 15" monitors, a cable modem, router and wireless access point. If I bring the flatbed scanner to life, it would add at most another 30 watts. The APC unit communicates with the software via a USB connection to the computer.

What you cannot add to the backup is a laser printer. I plugged my old HP LaserJet 4 Plus printer into the backup, turned it on and watched the APC unit's PowerChute software go berserk with warnings about ex-

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cessive power use. So if you want to be able to print during a power outage with a laser printer, get a bigger unit.

As indicated in the first picture, the estimated time that I could run the two computers on the battery is 31 minutes. As the backup is configured at present, when five minutes of time remains on the battery, the software will initiate an orderly shutdown of the computer (only the one connected to the USB cable). The shutdown point is adjustable in the configuration tab of PowerChute. You may also adjust how sensitive the unit is to power fluctuations. This determines under what circumstances the unit will switch to battery backup due to electrical noise. You may also adjust when the battery backup kicks in if the AC voltage goes above or below certain voltages. My unit is set to kick in above 138 volts and below 97 volts. ◆

(Comments.....Continued from page 1)

best I can recall, went OK on all the computers in the house except for the one upstairs running Windows Me and with Office 2000 Premium installed.

On that computer, I connected to the Microsoft site and went to the Office section, where a search of updates yielded that to get SP3, I had to first install SP1a. So let the download begin. After it ended, and the update began to install I received the message "The file E:\data1.msi is not a valid installation package for the product Microsoft Office 2000 SR-1 Premium," or something close to that. My first thought was that I had put in the wrong version of Office since I had about three different CDs with Office 2000. But a try with the others produced the same error. And the one I originally used had written on its sleeve that it was for this particular computer. Time to go to Google, which produced something from Microsoft's site stating the following:

"CAUSE: This issue occurs if you have Microsoft Works Suite 2000 with Microsoft Word 2000 installed on your computer. The Office 2000 SP-3 Setup program searches for the earliest version of Data1.msi, and Data1.msi for Works 2000 is not

compatible with the SP-3 Setup program." I was trying to install SP1a, but I was sure it was the same problem.

Well, Works had come installed on this computer, and it was a version of Works that contained Word. Microsoft's solution to the problem--an hour of work: First, completely uninstall Works. This was not a quick as it sounds. There were all sorts of programs, like a mapping program, that the computer considers as part of Works. I think I had to uninstall about six programs to get rid of Works. Second, you do a normal uninstall of Office 2000, including Publisher. But that is not the end of it. There are two utilities you must download to remove the remaining Office 2000 CD1 files and the remaining Office 2000 CD2 files. After all of this you can then reinstall Office 2000 Premium. But be warned, you now have to go back to the Microsoft site and get the SP3 update. The SP1a update that it tried to first install was based on the erroneous information that having Works on the computer caused. Keeping up-to-date is not easy.

Missing Floppy As you may recall, I helped my sister with the purchase of a new Compaq computer several months back. It has taken several trips to visit her to get everything up and running perfectly.

One thing I had put off until the most recent trip was to see why she had no 3.5 floppy listed. When she first received the computer and booted it for the first time, she received an error message regarding the floppy. Since she didn't really need the floppy at the time, I had her go into the BIOS setup and disable the reference to such a floppy. That way she didn't have to look at the error message every time the computer started.

This trip, I decided to take the cover off the computer and see if what I suspected was true--that the floppy drive was not connected. Sure enough, when the computer's side cover was removed there was the floppy's power cord dangling. Guess that those Compaq assemblers in Mexico had been drinking too much Tequila. Once connected and the reference set to it in the BIOS, everything was fine with the 3.5

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floppy drive.

I think most computers now come without such drives. That certainly is the case for laptops. I suppose in the day of USB thumb drives and cheap CDs, there isn't much need for them. But my sister had backed up many things to floppy disks over the years that she needed such a drive to transfer the files to the new computer.

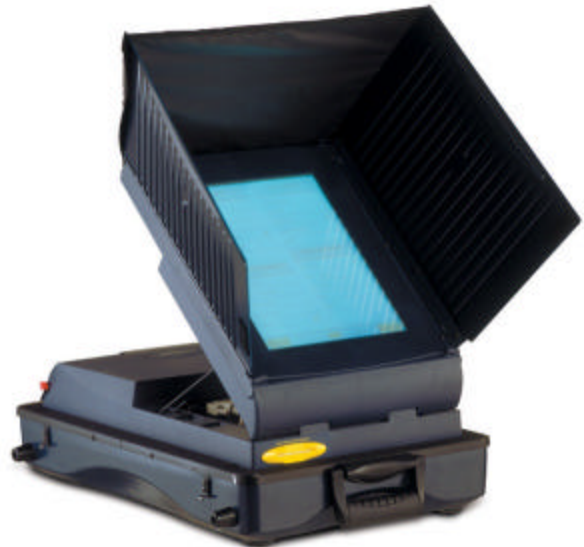
Adobe Streamline is a handy piece of software for those involved with graphical work. It will transform a raster graphic (bitmap) into a vector graphic (line art). Tiff and JPEG files are examples of raster graphics. They are pixel-based and cannot be enlarged without losing quality. Encapsulated Postscript files (EPS) and Adobe Illustrator (AI) files are vector based and can be resized without any loss in quality.

Not all raster graphics lend themselves equally to being made into vector graphics. At this point, I have done very little with Streamline, but I quickly discovered that black and white images are far easier to change to vector graphics than are images with many colors. Also, if the image has text in it, you need the text to be quite large to achieve a good transformation.

As I work with the program, I should have more to

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Internet Picture of the Month



Touch Screen Voting Machine

This photo is of a Sequoia EDGE touch screen voting machine as used here in Tampa, Florida. Of course, when it is actually set up in the polling place it will be on legs.

You can read about these systems at the Sequoia site, <http://www.sequoiavote.com/>, or at the Hillsborough County Supervisor of Elections' site, <http://www.votehillsborough.org/>.

November's Interesting World Wide Web Locations

Tampa PC Users Group (That's us)

<http://www.tpcug.org/>

The Times of India

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/>

Arts & Letters Daily

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

CIA Studies

<http://www.cia.gov/csi/studies.html>

Exquisite Corpse - A Journal of Letters and Life

<http://www.corpse.org/>

Florida QuickFacts - US Census Bureau

http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/maps/florida_map.html



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.

Looking Back to 1994

From the November 1994 Bits of Blue Newsletter

Secretary's Report

MINUTES OF 10/12/94 MEETING

and Personal Comments

by Jim Clark, Tampa PC Users Group

Well, wonders of wonders, it wasn't pouring down rain for this meeting. And it was a good session with a very interesting presentation — a look at some of the latest hardware on the market and where it is likely to go from here. Those that didn't make the meeting missed out on a lot of very interesting information and an excellent give and take.

USER GROUP NEWS

- **MEMBERSHIP DUES INCREASING:** Harvey gave a brief summary of the decision the Board of Directors has taken in light of increasing user group costs —to increase annual membership dues by \$5, except the corporate membership which will increase \$10, all effective 1 January, 1995. Membership dues will then look like this: Regular Membership - \$25; Family Membership - \$35; HCC Student & Faculty - \$20; Corporate Membership - \$60 (includes 3 corporate personnel), with additional corporate personnel at \$20 each. New members joining between now and 1 January and renewals of memberships expiring before 1 January, 1994, will enjoy the current rate. Memberships expiring in 1995 may be renewed between now and 30 November, 1994, at the current rate. Beginning 1 January, however, all memberships and renewals will be subject to the above listed rates. All memberships renewing early will have one year tacked onto the expiration date of the current membership.

- **CONSENSUS - EXPOTECH A FLOP:** Harvey asked for opinions of the EXPOTECH in Tampa this year. This generated a good bit of discussion, most of which was that of disappointment at the reduction in booths this year and the scarcity of computer vendors of interest to most of our membership; the bulk of the vendors provided services, some of which had little or no relationship with high technology.

ELECTION OF CORPORATE OFFICERS: Nominations for the five elected TPCUG corporate officers will be open and solicited at the November 10 general

meeting. Elections will take place early in the December 14 general meeting. Nominations may be made until just before the election at the December general meeting. The five elected corporate officers are: President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, and Member at Large. Newly elected officers will assume their positions effective 1 January, 1994.

All members are asked to give the nominations some serious thought and to make their nominations at the November or December general meetings, or mail your recommended nominations to the TPCUG Nominating Committee at the TPCUG corporate address (shown on the last page of this newsletter).

INDUSTRY NEWS:

Probably the most important bit of information brought out is that the new OS/2, OS/2 Warp 3.0, has been released and is available for \$79, before a \$25 rebate. Pretty good price, I would say. One word of caution, however, is that if you are considering getting OS/2, be sure to check the compatibility listing IBM provides for OS/2 to make sure your hardware and software is compatible.

PRESENTATION — A Look At Some Of The Latest In Hardware. Following notification by Gold Disk that they would be unable to make their scheduled presentation at this meeting, Harvey contacted Jason Kimenker, from our own Tampa/St. Petersburg Brainchild Computer Distributions, Inc., to see if they could fill in. Like the proverbial "knight in shining armor", Lee Vaccaro and Jason responded to our short notice request and put together a presentation on some of the latest in computer hardware. What's more, Jason did an admirable job with the presentation. And as it turned out, I think it was one of the most interesting and informative sessions that we have had during the several years I have been a member — and I have missed but a very few of the general meetings.

I won't even attempt to summarize the information Jason passed on, but among the hardware Jason reviewed were: Modems; PCI technology, compared to VESA; CD-ROMs; Soundcards, especially in a current Microsoft Office bundle; AMD chips, compared to Intel; and the DX4/100 chip. Jason did an excellent

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Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG

This SIG meets the **first Tuesday** of the month at 6:30 PM. The meeting location varies. For information contact William LaMartin at lamartin@tampabay.rr.com, or Merle Nicholson at merlenic@tampabay.rr.com.

Digital Imaging SIG

This new SIG meets the **fourth Monday** of the month at Pepin Distributors at 6:30 PM. For information contact Mary Sheridan at mcpease@mindspring.com.

Visual Basic for Applications SIG

This SIG meets the **third Wednesday** of the month at 6:30 PM. The meeting location varies. For information contact 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.

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job of reviewing these new products and was clearly well versed on them. His discussion was not only very informative and interesting, but it generated a lot of give and take with the membership. Some tidbits that I will pass on are:

28.8 Modem: V.34 standard was approved earlier this year is now being put into 28.8 modems. Though it is currently available only in the Robotics Sportster, all manufacturers should have them out soon.

PCI Technology: If you are considering the purchase of a Pentium, be aware that the 60 MHz chip is giving the most trouble.

CD-ROM: The double speed CD-ROM is probably adequate for most of us, but you should consider the quad speed if you are into multimedia sound/video very much because it will provide near-movie quality. New controller cards are also coming out that will support up to 4 floppy drives, and 4 IDE drives one of which can be used for a CD-ROM. This will not only allow increasing the number of IDE drives one can operate, but can free up an expansion slot by eliminating the need for a separate card for the CD-ROM.

AMD Chips: Have proven at least as good as Intel chips and are considerably cheaper; like AMD has a DX2/80 MHz chip that sells for about the same as Intel 66 MHz chip. Also, a 586 line of chips will be

out soon in competition with the Pentium line and is expected to be about \$200 cheaper.

DX4/100: If considering purchase of this new technology, be sure the voltage of the chip is compatible with your motherboard; some of the earlier chips are 3.2 volts, while 5.0 volts is most common.

Jason and Lee, thank you - and Brainchild Computer - for a GREAT presentation and the most useful and helpful information you provided, not to mention your generous contributions for our door prizes. We hope that you will agree to give us a similar presentation again in the not-too-distant future.

AND THE WINNER IS

Thanks to the generosity of Lee Vaccaro and Brainchild Computer Distributions, Inc., there were a several very nice door prizes. Those among us to have the good fortune to win are:

Joe Crochet	OS/2 2.1
Dave Claire	Printer stand & mouse pad
A.J Mester	Printer stand & 100 diskette box

In addition, J. Whitmer, S. Atron, Van Ost, M. Nicholson, R. Davis and J. Robinson won mouse pads.

The meeting adjourned at about 9 PM. ♦

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First Class Mail

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

(Minutes.....Continued from page 2)

Common Language Runtime (CLR) allows different languages to share information. Mr. Nagy says ".NET" is known as the "Virtual Execution System".

After a short break, several attendees won T-shirts displaying "I'M DRAWING THE LINE," targeting hacker viruses and worms, with Microsoft's Service Pack 2 being our protector. The meeting was adjourned about 8:40 PM. ◆



(Comments.....Continued from page 5)

say. One thing of note is the vast reduction in file size when going from a raster graphic to a vector graphic. You can go from several megabytes to just 20 or 30 kilobytes. In the example I had my best success with, the black and white image went from around 5 MB as a TIFF file to just 40 KB as an EPS file. That makes it a lot easier to send the file to a print shop, as this one was destined to go for use in a yard sign. ◆

