



Computer Newsletter

Newsletter of The Titusville Computer Club Inc., Titusville FL

February 2011

Volume 26, Issue 11

From the Prez' Mouth to Your Ears

By Metro Arden, President



Welcome all to a hopefully prosperous new year. I have a couple of items that I find are indispensable to keeping my machine running and myself out of trouble.

The First is "Smart Computing in Plain English" magazine. Numerous times I have had a problem, and in the very next issue was the fix to that problem. The answer is laid out clearly and concisely, sometimes needing registry fixes with the exact spelling of the fix. And always reminding you to first make a backup of the Registry before messing with it.

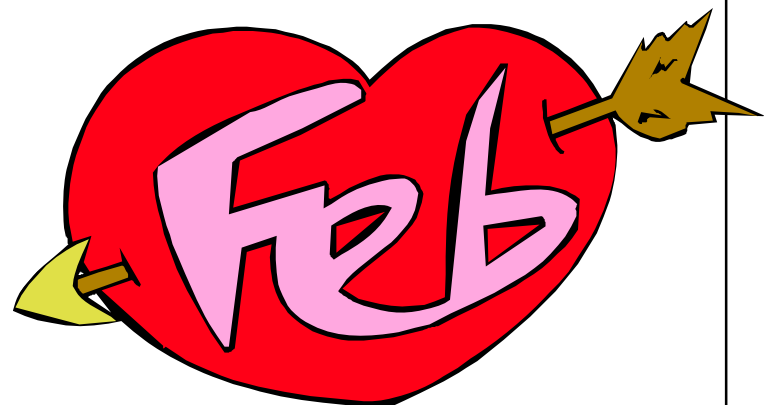
Answers on how to return the 'Recycle Bin' or the 'Volume Control Icon' to the desktop can be found. Best of all, if you have a current subscription, all back issues are at your fingertips through their web site. So if you are having a problem running Win98, a search of the data base will most assuredly give you the answer. Favorite articles can be marked and kept in a separate folder on the site for future reference called 'My Personal Library'.

Having a subscription also gives you access to the three other magazines they put out. 'PC Today' gives clear concise information about the latest trends in technology, 'First Glimpse' provides information about latest products and technologies. 'Computer

Power User' shows the latest computer parts and tech info plus helpful how-to guides.

My most indispensable program is called 'REMIND ME'. It is very easy to set up, and comes on each time I start my machine. Keeping track of bills to be paid, birthdays, and anniversaries is a breeze with this app. You can set the lead time from 1 day to 365. I like to know when the longest and shortest day of the year is, so I set the lead time to 183. Bills are set to 5 days before they are due, birthdays to 10, so I have time to get a card or gift. I also enter when I purchase a new TV or tool, so I have some idea of how long an item lasts. I have over 400 entries in this data base and still adding more items all the time.

On a scale of 1-10, I give Remind-Me a 10, and Tucows rates Remind-Me 5 stars, their highest rating. To get the program, go to www.PC-Magic.com. The cost to register on-line is \$15, well worth it, if it saves you just one late payment charge of \$30.



Titusville Computer Club Web Site - www.tccweb.us

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TCC Newsletter

is published monthly by the
Titusville Computer Club, Inc.
Titusville, Florida

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Visitors Welcome

Secretary's Report

The Titusville Computer Club meeting was held January 13, 2011, at St.

Gabriel's Church, Titusville, Florida.

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 PM by President Metro Arden.



Unfortunately, our secretary had some personal business that prevented her from attending the meeting.

The minutes from the previous meeting as read and approved.

Mr. Dick Clark presented the club's financial report.

Dr. Al Koller reported on the status of the club web site and the changes being made. As time progresses we will see if any changes will be required, and any modifications will be made if required. Dr. Koller will have a few words to say about the web site at the next meeting and answer any questions that may be raised by the users. All members are requested to bring it up on their computers and have any comments ready for the meeting.

The need for demos came up and the next three are going to be:

- January 27: Dr. Koller will demonstrate an interesting device he picked up at Christmas, a new type of flying object that is controlled with an iPhone with a computer controlled set of gyroscopes and electronics that allows it to hover, take pictures etc.; kind of a flying spy robot. After that, there will be a discussion of the club's web site.
- February 24: Metro will demonstrate how to use spreadsheet software to set up schedules, make presentation charts and better organize your time and skills.
- March 24: Terry Tesdall will demonstrate his new Apple iPad.

At this point, the meeting turned to mostly Q & A where several of the member's problems were discussed and possible solutions suggested.

The meeting then fell back to answer some of the questions about who, when, and how the newsletters will be handled. Who will make the labels, who will distribute the unmailed copies and to whom. All questions were not answered at this time.

Respectively submitted by R. Iwan in lieu of Winnie Woods

Recovering from a hard drive crash

Kim Komando Tip of the Day for 12/29/2010

QI have a 500-gigabyte external hard drive. It stores pictures, documents, music and other personal files. I turned it off and then back on a couple days ago. It started making the needle sound, and my PC isn't reading it. I thought an external hard drive was safe. Is it dead? If so, what can I do?

AI'm not sure what a "needle" sound is. But a hard drive making scratching or grinding sounds is never good. It means that the head is dragging on the platter. Or the platter bearings are failing.

Either way, it's time to get your data off the drive. In some cases, you can retrieve your data before it's too late. In this case, though, it sounds like the opportunity has passed. Your best bet is to keep the hard drive turned off to avoid further damage.

Your only real option is to visit a data recovery service. It will probably remove the platters from the drive. Assuming there is no damage, it can put the platters into another drive. Then it can pull your data for you.

Even with some platter damage, services can usually retrieve data. But it won't be complete. And it will cost a chunk of change. The service should give you a firm quote and a list of data that can be recovered.

Now we need to address what appears to be a common myth. I'm talking about the myth that external hard drives don't fail. As your situation amply demonstrates, it simply isn't true.

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A Little More of This and That

By Bob Murray

As found on the web and other sources.



Does the Taskbar in your Netbook take up too much room? Here is how to fix it!

Decrease the Windows 7 Taskbar

From www.lockergnome.com



The taskbar is the bar across the bottom of your Windows desktop that you use to launch and monitor applications. Windows 7 lets you decrease the size of the taskbar by using smaller taskbar icons, which is useful on smaller screen sizes where the taskbar takes up a greater percentage of your total screen. Netbooks are a common place to take advantage of a smaller Windows 7 taskbar, but you can also benefit on virtually any portable computer.

To decrease the size of the Windows 7 taskbar:

1. Right click the Start button.
2. Choose Properties and then Taskbar.
3. Under Taskbar Appearance, click the Use small icons options.
4. Click OK.

Skype tries out group video chat

By Nick Farrell in *"theinquirer.net"*

THE LATEST BETA of Skype 5.0 for Windows has a group video chat feature.

According to the Skype blog the second beta of Skype 5.0 brings a number of changes but the most obvious is that you can now make group video calls with up to 10 people.

We are not sure how many systems can handle ten video streams at once but Skype has been playing with video compression techniques for some time. However the video function has been the most unreliable aspect of Skype and typically causes the most crashes.

Skype says that its Skype 5.0 beta 2 has a fresh new

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"For every credibility gap there is a gullibility gap."

Richard Cobden, English politician (1804-1865)

look as well as increased stability and better quality when making group video calls. Actually it looks about the same to us with a few more icons.

However it adds another feature called Skype Home, which lets you follow your contacts' mood messages, set your profile picture and mood message, receive account notifications and learn more about using Skype.

The beta can be downloaded at www.skype.com/intl/en/get-skype/on-your-computer/windows/beta/downloading/.

Beware Fake Windows Defragmentation Tools

By Brandon Dimmel in *infopackets.com*

PC security and fraud analysts are today warning users of the alarming online spread of fake defragmentation tools for Microsoft's Windows operating system (OS). These fraudulent programs, referred to as scareware, are sold to consumers to "fix their PC," based on an illegitimate warning message, but perform no necessary function.

Bogus Defrag Tools Flood Online Market

GFI-Sunbelt Security recently posted a warning online their blog, stating that many bogus defrag tools have made their way online in recent weeks. The company recommends users steer clear of several deceptive products, including:

HDDRepair
HDDRescue
HDDPlus
UltraDefragger
ScanDisk
Defrag Express
WinHDD

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A Little More of This and That

(Continued from page 4)

These applications claim that they will defrag a user's Windows hard drive, charging \$20 or more for the procedure, which actually does nothing. (Source: networkworld.com.) In many cases, the programs claim that a user's hard drive is full of errors, and that the purchase of additional software is necessary to resolve the problem.

How Defragging (Really) Works

For those unaware, defragmentation is a process that is used to speed up file read and write access times on a hard drive (the "C" drive). File fragmentation occurs as files are added and removed to a hard drive's media platter, which constantly spins.

A heavily fragmented hard drive will spend a great deal of time accessing parts of files that are scattered throughout the hard disk platter, resulting in longer load times.

Defragging a drive moves fragmented segments of files close together, so that the hard drive spends less time moving its read / write heads to different sections of the disk. Newer solid state hard drives (SSDs) do not use media platters and instead use computer chips to store files and thus do not need defragging.

While it's still not a bad idea to use a defrag tool regularly for most users, it's certainly not worth spending a great deal of money on with so many free Windows defrag utilities available. In fact, Windows has these defragging functions built into its operating system.

Scareware, Fraudulent Software Nothing New

Scareware is by no means a new tactic employed by online fraudsters. Scareware is software that uses tactics to scare users into making a purchase, and has been around for some time now. That said, scareware has typically been associated with PC optimization products or malware / spyware threats, but up until now, has not included defragmentation products. (Source: spamnews.com.)

Web users are encouraged to thoroughly research any product before they buy it.

Rename Your User Account in Windows 7

From www.lockergnome.com



When you create a user account, you must assign the account an account name. This name appears on the Welcome Screen and on the Start menu when you log on. At some point, you may decide to change the name of your user account. The steps to do so are very simple:

Click Start and click Control Panel.

Open User Accounts.

Click the Change your account name option. If you want to rename another user account, click the Manage another account option and select the account you want to rename.

Type in the new account name within the New account name field.

Click the Change Name button.

A handy hint: Use the Keyboard to Switch to Full Screen in Windows 7

Windows 7 includes a view called Full Screen Reading.



When you select this view, there is nothing on your screen but the document. However, the document is split into two pages, similar to reading the pages of a book. There is a quick and easy way of switching to traditional full screen in Windows 7 using the keyboard. Simply press Alt+V and then U. To return to your previous view, press the Esc key.



What's a Quadcopter? Ask Dr. Al Koller.

Pick the right processor for your PC

(Continued from page 10)

generation processor would have a model name like Core i5-760 or i7-950. A Sandy Bridge processor will be i5-2500 or i7-2600. The 2000 series numbers denote it's a second-generation product.

There are a couple of important things to note about Sandy Bridge. First of all, the micro architecture has been completely overhauled. In other words, these processors are faster than previous generations. They are also much more energy efficient.

Secondly, they now have the graphics system built into the CPU chip. Until now, graphics were either motherboard-based or on discrete graphics cards. Intel hopes that the new system will combine the best of both worlds.

In theory, you should get the performance of a discrete graphic card. But it will have save space and power like motherboard graphics. Unfortunately, it doesn't quite deliver.

The Sandy Bridge graphic processing is faster than motherboard-based graphics. But it isn't that much faster. For gaming purposes, a \$50 to \$100 discrete graphics card would be better.

Also, the Sandy Bridge graphics don't incorporate DirectX 11. This is the cutting edge of gaming graphics. DirectX 11 won't be available until the next iteration of the processors. And there is no way to upgrade just the graphics.

Video playback, however, is another story. The Sandy Bridge graphics incorporates Quick Sync. This is hardware dedicated to video encoding and decoding.

This means it can play high-definition content with minimal CPU usage. That's excellent for low-cost notebooks and home theater PCs. Multimedia stuttering will be a thing of the past.

The encoding features are a boon to videographers. Encoding a video file is traditionally a slow process.

Even high-end graphics cards don't make it much faster.

Sandy Bridge, however, decreases encoding time substantially. For example, a video that takes two minutes to encode on other systems may only take 20 seconds. Converting and encoding video even on low-end hardware should fly. That's a huge plus for media enthusiasts.

Now let's move on to AMD's new CPU line. It is dubbed the Fusion family. And in principle, it's similar to Sandy Bridge. However, it is currently targeted at a lower-powered machines.

The CPU and graphics unit are both in the same chip. AMD has dubbed the new chip an Accelerated Processing Unit. This differentiates it from a standard Central Processing Unit.

The Fusion family will eventually be available in all types of computers. At the moment it is confined to netbooks and ultra-portable laptops. It will also be appearing in small media desktops. In those gadgets, it goes by the name AMD Vision.

Tablet computers running Vision should be available in early 2011. Larger laptops and desktops will follow after that. Expect them in the middle of the year. They will have a newer, more powerful version of the Fusion processor.

The Fusion chips are designed for energy efficiency. AMD claims that laptop battery life will be 10 hours or more. That will definitely beat out Intel's current Atom processor.

Vision's graphics component uses parts from AMD's discrete graphics cards. Many of the parts come from the Radeon 5450. That means graphic performance will be decent. It will blow away other products in the same range. And it includes DirectX 11 support.

Vision also includes the video decoder from the Radeon 6000 series. This means it accelerates video

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Pick the right processor for your PC

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playback appreciably. It will handle everything but Blu-ray 3-D.

Unfortunately, Vision lacks a dedicated video encoder like Intel's Quick Sync. That means Sandy Bridge processors will have the edge in video processing. However, Sandy Bridge processors are also more expensive.

So, now for the big questions. Should you buy a computer now? Or should you wait for the new hardware?

Sandy Bridge processors and motherboards are already available. And they actually cost somewhat less than the current models. That's a no-brainer for system-builders. And retail computers are already starting to ship with Sandy Bridge.

AMD's Vision systems will be available this month on netbooks and notebooks. Those should make for excellent systems. They will be well ahead of other processors.

Vision-based desktops components are also available. However, these are the low-powered media desktop variety. High-end Vision-based computers will ship later this year.



That's a while to wait for a new system. However, the performance gains could be worth it. It remains to be seen.

There is another critical factor. Buying previous-generation equipment now could save you money. Intel-based computer systems will be falling in price. Retailers are going to need to clear out their inventories.

AMD-based models will also take a price cut. Current AMD processors like the Phenom II and Athlon II can't compete. AMD will have to slash prices to remain competitive. Expect to see very inexpensive AMD systems for a while.

The only problem is that buying last-generation leaves you stuck. There is no way to upgrade to the new components in the future. Well, you can upgrade, but you'll be replacing more than just the processor. So you will spend more money in the long run.

It will depend on your current needs and if you are willing to wait. If you can, I would wait a month or two to buy. Then you can see what pricing looks like. That will help you make a smart purchase.

Recovering from a hard drive crash

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I think this myth arises because external drives are recommended for backups. People assume external drives are more reliable than internal drives. But external drives are just internal drives in a box. They fail just as often.

The real misunderstanding here is the purpose of backup hardware. No backup hardware is foolproof; it can easily fail like anything else. The point of a backup is to have second copy of the data. That way if you lose one copy, there is another copy still intact.

The more copies you have, the more protected your data is. But the number of copies isn't the only factor. Location and automatic updating are key as well.

Putting backup hardware next to your computer is convenient. But it also reduces the backup's effectiveness. All your data is still technically in one location. A power surge, hurricane, fire or earthquake can take out both copies of your data.

And let's not forget automatic updating. Lots of people invest in backup hardware. But then they never remember to use it. Or they use it infrequently. So it really doesn't do any good.

u want a solution that backs up your data automatically. That way, it's always current. And it is one less thing for you to remember.

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TCC Web Site News:

Only a Fool Never Changes His Mind!

By Al Koller, TCC Webmaster

At the club meeting on November 11 (Veterans' Day 2010), our new blog-based web site was discussed, and there was a preference by some to return to the "old" version of the web site. Some thought the new site was too difficult to use, too complicated, too much of a change, etc., although it was also noted that not many had visited the new site to give it a try. My initial reaction was to retain both sites and link one to the other, but after several discussions and some additional review of options, we've upgraded the web site to retain the features of both formats without adding complexity.

When you have a moment, please surf to the new format at our usual web URL: www.tccweb.us.

I think you will be pleasantly surprised at the new look and feel. Based on the comments you provided, Metro Arden and I reviewed a series of "themes" and selected the one providing the simplest, cleanest, and most attractive format. The colors are clear, the fonts are more legible, and the navigation is really simple.

All the features of the old site have been retained, and we've added a link to Forums so those who wish to may participate in an online Q&A, exchange information on topics of interest, or just find information on meeting schedules and download newsletters.

For the new year, we are going to add a File of the Month so members can download tested, safe, and useful programs once a month to add to your "tool kit" of useful applications. We plan to add a photo gallery to provide you with pictures from our demos, as well as links to reference materials and presentation charts when they are made available.

The rules for our website use are really simple: When you arrive at the site:

- You can view most areas but need to register for full access and then log in to post comments. See

the top left side menu. If you don't want to post, just look around and enjoy.

- When you register, you will receive a password via email. Log out, go get your email, then return, log in, and you'll be taken to your "user profile" to change your password.
- Once you change your password, click on the Titusville Computer Club title at the top left corner of the "Dashboard" page to return to the home page. You now have full access.
- The two "Newsletter" buttons and the "Files for Download" button work as in the past. Click on a title to see a listing of available files.
- Click the "Next Meeting" button in the top menu, or mouse over the calendar of events shown in the left side menu for our meeting schedule.
- The "Forums" button in the top menu opens a page of topics for discussion. You can read them but must register to post. If you want to add a topic for discussion, send a note using the Comments command.
- Posting responses to existing comments is done by clicking on the "Reply" button listed next to each post.

That's all there is to it! Enjoy, and visit us often. If you want something else on the site, please let me hear from you!



Demo Meeting Schedule

- **January 27, 2011** — TCC Web Site & Quadri-copter—Dr. Al Koller
- **February 24, 2011** — Spread Sheets by Metro
- **March 24, 2011** — Apple iPad - Terry Tesdall

What do YOU want to see?

Loan out your e-books

Reprinted from Kim Komando Show Electronic Newsletter, January 22, 2011

A listener and a friend both got Kindles for Christmas. Now he would like to loan his friend an e-book. He wants to know if this is possible.

Good timing with the question. A month ago, you would have been out of luck. However, Amazon just added an e-book loan system to the Kindle. It is similar to the loan system for Barnes and Noble's nook.

Open up your e-book library on Amazon's site. Find the book you want to loan. Click the plus sign in the upper-right corner to expand the book details. You may see a Loan This Book button. Publishers can choose to enable or disable loaning. Not all books will have it.

Click the button to share the book with a friend. An invitation will be sent by e-mail. Your friend has 7 days to accept. After acceptance, the book is loaned for 14 days. You can't read the e-book while is on loan. Note that loaning currently only works in the United States.



2011 Dues Are Now Payable

The Titusville Computer Club dues year runs from 1 January through 31 December each year. Dues for 2011 are now payable.

Current members who don't pay 2011 dues by the March 10, 2011 meeting will lose membership and be dropped from the newsletter mailing list. A \$7 reinstatement fee will apply for late renewals.

Dues are \$12.00/year for an individual or \$15.00/year for a family. Make check payable to Titusville Computer Club.

Dues may be paid at any club meeting or mailed to the club treasurer at the following address:

Dick Clark, 2865 Liberty Ave, Titusville, FL 32780

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Club Meetings

Club meetings are held on the 2nd and 4th Thursday of each month. We meet at St. Gabriel's Episcopal Church at 414 Pine St., Titusville. Setup starts at 6:50 PM, and meetings start at 7:00 PM in the Fellowship Hall (located on Palm Ave between Pine and Julia Streets). Everyone is welcome.

Article Contribution

If you wish to contribute an article for publication in this newsletter, please submit the article no later than the 1st club meeting of the month. Articles may be given to the editor at any club meeting or e-mailed to the editor (TerryTeddallSr@yahoo.com). Articles are subject to editing.

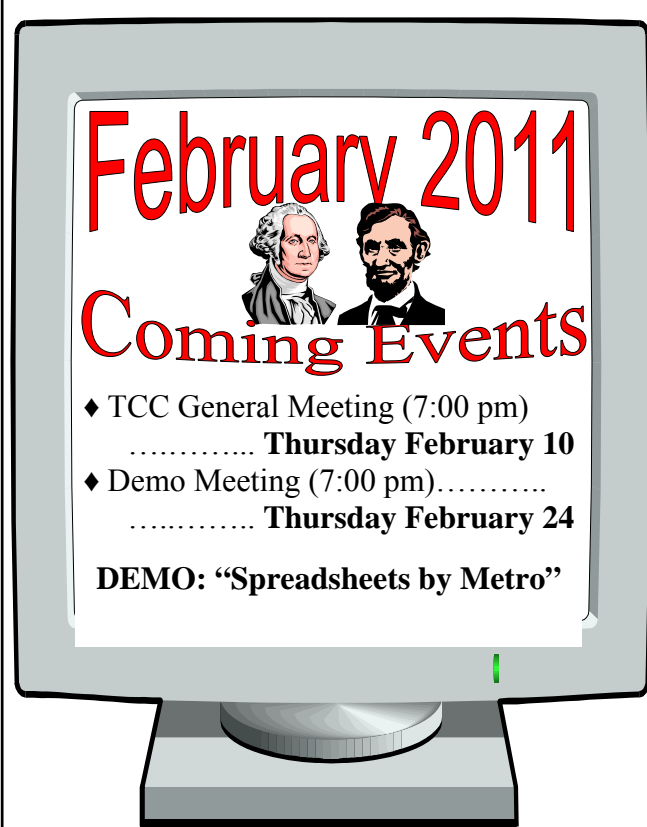
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New processors for your PC

Kim Komando Tip of the Day for 1/20/2011



QI'm in the market for a new computer. And I saw that Intel and AMD are coming out with new processors. Should I buy a computer now or wait for the new stuff?

A Computer technology continues to barrel along. New products are released frequently. And this year will be no exception.

Both Intel and AMD unveiled new processors at this year's Consumer Electronics Show. And they have some interesting new features. Let's see what they can do.

Intel's new processor design is codenamed Sandy Bridge. In the retail market it will still be listed under the Core moniker. Expect to see the Core i3, i5 and i7 labels stick around for a while.

That could lead to some confusion with the older models. The only way to tell the difference is by looking at the naming scheme. A last-

(Continued on page 6)