



# Brevard Users Group



January 2011



## Prez Sez:

The club Christmas party on Dec. 16 was a success. About 30 members and family attended. Everyone seemed to enjoy lots of good food and fellowship.

Chuck Boring won the Windows 7 Home Premium we had the raffle for. About \$30 was made for the club after the cost of the Windows was subtracted.

The BUG clubs future is assured for another year. I decided to stay on and we were able to acquire new Officers for the New Year.

The slate for next year is;  
 President; Larry French  
 Vice-President; Thomas English  
 Secretary; Gervase Bushe  
 Treasurer; Bob Bloch  
 Member-at-Large; Bill Middleton

There will be a confirmation of the new Officers at the January meeting.

I would like to thank the above members for stepping up and taking Officer's positions. I am looking forward to working with them in the coming year.

Larry, Prez



## Meeting / Presentation

### Brevard User's Group (BUG) and Space Coast PC Users Group (SCPCUG)

Will host Gene Barlow on January 10th, the 2nd Monday of the month, at 6:30 pm. At the Central Baptist Church, 2503 Country Club Road, Melbourne, FL

Subject will be the **Acronis True Image** backup software.



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## Secretary's Report

By: Eileen Cameron

December 9, 2010

1. President Larry French called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM.
2. One visitor, Jerry Comer, was present.
3. Larry said we have 23 people signed up for the Holiday Party and passed around the sign-up sheet as well as the paper to sign-up what food we wished to bring. Several more signed up.
4. We only have 3 people signed up for the Window 7 update drawing. A paper was also passed and again more signed on and hopefully we will have enough to cover the cost.
5. Larry spoke about the extreme need for club officers for 2011. After much discussions and suggestions we now have a slate of officers.  
Joint Presidency: Hank Lauritsen/Larry French, VP: Tom English, Treasurer: Robert Bloch and Secretary: Gervase Bushe. Vacancy for Member at Large may be filled later. Larry agreed to help Hank get on-board and Tom will assist Robert with the treasury work. The need for assistance in transporting the equipment required for each meeting was addressed. William Middleton agreed to help with this. Nomination from the floor will be accepted at the January Meeting, for any more officers, before installation of the officer's takes place.
6. Newsletter editor Jim Townsend will stay on and we desperately need an assistant for this project. Our current web site is extremely outdated and suggestions were discussed as to how to update it or design a new web site. More discussion will be needed to resolve this problem.
7. There will be no Tinker's Meeting Sunday. The Holiday Party is December 16, 2010. The next meeting at the One Senior Place in Viera is January 3, 2011 and the regular General Meeting is January 10, 2011 with Gene Barlow to present his Acronis True Image Software and other programs. The Space Coast PC Users Group is invited to this meeting.
8. Discussion to have more meetings in the day time. Lucile agreed to check with local Libraries to see if it was possible to hold meetings in the day time.
9. Tom explained why he gave up the Treasurer's position. He suggested to make the job less time consuming to consider unified dues (all members paying at the same time each year). Dues will need to be

## Treasurer's Report

By: Tom English

### November (2010)

#### EXPENSES

Postage	\$ 101.26
Printing	\$ 77.16
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 178.42</b>

#### INCOME

Dues	\$100.00
Interest	
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$100.00</b>

#### ASSETS

Checking	\$1,296.36
Undeposited Funds	\$ 25.00
Savings	\$2,021.47
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$3,332.83</b>

#### Renewals

Rosshiem, Olympia	1192
Starke, Raymond	1014
Vines, David	1319

#### New Members

Bigda, Rudy	1332
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prorated for some members. It was agreed and Tom will work out a plan and present it to the Board. Jack Nash offered to assist him.

10. It was suggested that we might consider changing our club purpose to include Technology as it is and has been the way to keep up with the many changes in the computer world.

11. Question and Answer time was started and Chuck Boring fielded the questions.

12. 17 members were present and 1 visitor.

13. Meeting was adjourned at 8:05 PM.

Secretary,  
Eileen M. Cameron

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# January BUG Meetings 2011

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2	3 Daytime SIG One Senior Place 8085 Spyglass Hill Rd Viera	4	5	6	7	8
9 Tinkers SIG Call 952-0199 to verify meeting	10 Monthly Meeting Central Baptist Church 2303 Country Club Dr Melbourne, FL	11	12	13	14	15
16 Tinkers SIG Call 952-0199 to verify meeting	17	18	19	20	21	22 Newsletter SIG Call 728-5979 for information
23 Tinkers SIG Call 952-0199 to verify meeting	24	25	26	27 Windows & Linux SIG Central Baptist Church 2303 Country Club Dr Melbourne, FL	28	29
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# BUG & SCPCUG

## Meeting /Presentation

### Brevard User's Group (BUG) and Space Coast PC Users Group (SCPCUG)

January 10th (2nd Monday of the month) at 6:30 pm. Central Baptist Church, 2503 Country Club Road, Melbourne, FL

#### Presentation topic for the meeting:

Want to learn how to protect against loss of those important pictures, files and letters on your computer??

At our January 10th meeting, Gene Barlow of User Group Relations will discuss Acronis True Image Home 2011.

This is a unique and complete way to protect your PC by implementing automatic system backups and data protection so that when a recovery is necessary, you can go back in time to recover it easily.

Acronis just announced a new version of their partitioning product, Disk Director 11 Home with support for windows 7. The 2nd half of Gene's presentation would focus on the best way to Organize Your Hard Drive. This tool makes it easy and simple to take advantage of the large terabyte hard drives today by setting up & organizing the space of a large hard drive.

This is the most important thing that every computer user should do to protect their system and files. With a good backup, you can restore your hard drive to the way it was before a failure.

**Brevard User's Group** and the **Space Coast PC Users Group** will hold the meeting at the Central Baptist Church 2503 Country Club Road in Melbourne, Florida. Our meetings are free to first time visitors; we are a non-profit organization of all ages interested in computer technologies.



*'The man who complains about the way the ball bounces is likely to be the one who dropped it.'*  
- Lou Holtz

## When is a dSLR NOT a dSLR?

By Jerry Schneir, Member of the Los Angeles Computer Society, California  
[www.lacspc.org](http://www.lacspc.org)  
editor (at) lacspc.org

*This article has been obtained from APCUG with the author's permission for publication by APCUG member groups; all other uses require the permission of the author (see e-mail address above).*

Simple question but very indicative of what the future holds for some of us photo buffs. In simple terms, it is a camera that is devoid of a mirror box assembly. In other terms it is an interchangeable lens camera, but unlike a single lens reflex (SLR) it does NOT have a mirror to redirect the light from the lens to the optical viewfinder. All SLR cameras, digital and otherwise, use a mirror assembly to intercept the light that comes through the lens and redirects the incoming light to the viewfinder rather than to the film (or sensor) at the back of the camera. Generally the light will also pass through a prism or fixed mirrors at the top of the camera on its way to the viewfinder. It is this complex configuration that gives a SLR a distinctive look. It is also this configuration that gives a SLR a distinctive sound as the mirror swings out of the path of the incoming light and then returns to redirect the light back to the viewfinder.

To answer the question we need to go back in time. The entire dSLR world started changing in September of 2004 with Olympus's introduction of their E300 dSLR. Here was a camera that didn't look quite like anything else, not SLR nor rangefinder. It sported a mirror that worked different, didn't have the traditional top bulge and was based upon the Four Thirds sensor design. In September of 2005 Olympus came out with their E500 a dSLR looking camera and then in January of 2006 they introduced the E330, another dSLR type, but a camera with "Live View", the ability to see the image on the LCD before the shot was taken. That feature caused an uproar among the traditional SLR manufacturers.

In February 2006 Panasonic introduced their unique looking L1 which was also based upon the Four Thirds sensor. While the L1 still incorporated a mirror it did

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## **Not a dSLR ... Continued from Page 5**

not have the look of a SLR, but more closely the rangefinder cameras of the '1950-1960 period. That camera bombed primarily because of cost. In August of 2007 Panasonic introduced the L10 which now resembled the traditional look of the SLR and had Live View but again did not do as well as hoped for by Panasonic.

In September of 2008 Panasonic brought forth the G1 a Micro Four Thirds camera that looked like a dSLR in that it had the characteristic bulge on the top of the camera, had interchangeable lenses, but it did NOT have a mirror box assembly. In the GI, light passed directly through the lens onto the imaging sensor. This was a much different camera. The camera was different for several other reasons. It was based upon the Four Thirds sensor size introduced several years earlier, but used Micro Four Thirds mount lenses, and used an electronic viewfinder (EVF) in place of the traditional optical viewfinder of the digital single lens reflexes (dSLR) cameras. Though it looked like the smaller dSLR cameras, Micro Four Thirds cameras are not dSLRs. They are also smaller because they don't house a dedicated autofocus image sensor. The autofocus on the G1 uses the Four Thirds image sensor. This is exactly like autofocus on a compact camera. But here, autofocus is speedier because on the Micro Four Thirds cameras they use both a faster autofocus algorithm and a faster processor. This makes autofocus feels faster and more like a dSLR, at least on some cameras.

Up to this time, two companies, Olympus and Panasonic had adopted the Kodak developed Four Thirds sensor design. The major advantage, and to some old diehards, the only advantage, was the reduction in both size and weight of the lenses and to a certain extent, the size and weight of the camera body as well. But these earlier cameras although smaller and lighter in weight, still could NOT do what every point and shoot camera could, show the image on the LCD or EVF before taking the picture and shoot movies. The GI still lacked the movie ability. The movie mode was just peeking its head up in regular dSLR at about that time with "Live View". Panasonic changed that with the arrival of the GH1 in March 2009, a new movie mode had been added.

Up to this point in time, all these cameras still utilized the mirror box, nothing really had changed until the earth shattering (somewhat an exaggeration) introduction of the new mirrorless cameras in 2009, the Olympus E-P1. This was a rangefinder looking camera, albeit, without a rangefinder but having the rangefinder look. However, this breakthrough camera lacked two important built-in features, no flash and no viewfinder of any type. Olympus partially corrected this "whoops: with the introduction of the E-P2 in November 2009. This camera had a port for connecting a high resolution EVF. In February of this year, Olympus announced its newest edition to this family, the E-PL1. This camera had a built in flash and a port for connecting the EVF.

Panasonic finally took the plunge into a rangefinder style camera with the introduction of the GF1 in September of 2009. The GF1 uses an optional EVF and has a built-in flash unit. In March of this year, Panasonic announced two new cameras, the G2 and the G10. These are almost identical cameras resembling SLR designs more than anything else. Interchangeable Micro Four Thirds lenses but no mirror boxes.

But this question about dSLR cameras doesn't end here, other cameras with interchangeable lenses but lacking a mirror box have been introduced, have been announced, or are rumored to be in the works. I have deliberately skipped talking about Leica cameras since, IMHO they are just largely rebadged Panasonics. Sony showed their non-working prototype based upon a full APS-C sensor. Ricoh's GXR comes with interchangeable units containing a lens and a sensor in a rangefinder style camera. Can't say much about the sensor size since it is dependent upon the lens that is part of the system. I have strong reservations about this concept.

The Samsung NX10 is a rangefinder style camera using a new lens format called NX. What is most interesting about this camera is that it uses a APS-C size sensor, that is about 1.5x that of the Four Thirds sensors. Of course, this means larger and heavier lenses than that of the Panasonic or Olympus cameras of similar designs. While Canon and Nikon have said nothing, rumors are rampant. I suspect that we will see new mirrorless digital cameras from these mammoths of the industry in the later part of this year. I suspect that

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**Not a dSLR ... Continued from Page 6**

the designs will be that of rangefinder styles reminiscent of earlier Nikon RF cameras of the 1940-1960 and the same with Canon except they may base it more on their popular G series of cameras such as their G11.

So here we have it, a whole new class of cameras, you might say SLR cameras minus the R. I prefer to say RF style since in my mind they are truly reminiscent of cameras from the 1940-1960 time period. The advantage to this new group of cameras is smaller size and lighter weight while maintaining the excellent image quality associated with the dSLR cameras. Disadvantage, fewer lens choices and, for the time being, relatively more expensive. Some of these cameras tend to be slower focusing but that is changing in the newer models.



## Adobe Reader X secures itself by playing in the sandbox

Vulnerabilities in Adobe Reader have been a common target for hackers and malware distributors attempting to gain access to your computer. On November 18th, Adobe has released Adobe Reader X, which incorporates sandbox technology to protect your computer from unknown vulnerabilities that may be discovered in the future.

Read more at: <http://www.bleepingcomputer.com/>



PC Repair, software or hardware.



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*Think of how stupid the average person is, and realize half of them are stupider than that.\**

*-George Carlin (1937 - 2008)*

## YouTube Versus Hulu: The Battle For Eyeballs

Between 2007 and 2009, video traffic grew roughly 67%, and video represents 2.65% of all of Internet traffic. YouTube is easily the internet's giant when it comes to web video watching, recording 97 million unique users in an April 2010 Nielsen Co. rating. However, Hulu, the fifth ranked video site, only had 13 million viewers.

Read more: <http://tinyurl.com/2wztg9h>



## Intel's Wireless Display (WiDi)

The Web offers more entertainment than cable, but who cares when it's all stuck on tiny laptop screens? Now, Intel's Wireless Display (WiDi) makes the Internet watchable by streaming whatever is on your PC—from House on Hulu to live games on NFL.com—to your big, beautiful TV, no programming or wires required. The key is how Intel's latest Core iSeries processors, currently found in more than 50 laptops, talk to an included receiver box, which connects to your TV with a one-time setup.

[ Read Full Story ] <http://tinyurl.com/39r24fv>



*The first testicular guard, the "Cup," was used in Hockey in 1874 and the first helmet was used in 1974.*

*That means it only took 100 years for men to realize that their brain is also important.*



**Official Ballot**  
**Vote for one in each position**

[ ] President ----- Larry French

[ ] Vice President ---- Tom English

[ ] Treasurer ----- Robert Bloch

[ ] Secretary ----- Gervase Bushe

[ [ Member at Large --- Bill Middleton

## Discovering Windows 7 – Part 3

By Neil Stahfest, Librarian, Tacoma Area PC User Group, Washington  
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*This article has been obtained from APCUG with the author's permission for publication by APCUG member groups; all other uses require the permission of the author (see e-mail address above).*

I know many of you are in the process of upgrading to Windows 7. As you've probably figured out, the more carefully you plan for this the easier it will be. It's also important to make a backup copy of your important files before you start the upgrade. After you've installed Windows 7, you'll want to verify that your hardware was automatically configured (i.e. printers, scanners, etc.) and install your favorite application programs. Remember, unless you are using the "Upgrade" installation method to migrate from Windows Vista to Windows 7 (or Laplink's PCMOVER program), you will need to reinstall your applications programs in Windows 7 to get the required program information into the Windows Registry.

With the effort it took to setup your computer and install any programs fresh in your memory, this might be an excellent time to think about backing up your system. A good backup can make recovery from a hard disk failure or a vicious virus infection a simple process that usually takes less than an hour instead of many hours or even days.

Before we talk about how to backup your system, we need to think about what media we will backup to. Logically, you won't want to store a system backup on drive C. If your hard drive were to crash or become infected your backup would be at risk.

In my opinion, an external hard disk drive that connects to your computer with a USB cable is the best place to backup your system. Currently (February 2010) you can find 320 megabyte to 1 terabyte (1000 megabytes!) external hard drives on sale for less than \$100. When selecting a hard drive, my advice is to go with a larger size rather than a smaller one. What seems adequate today will probably seem small in a year or two.

You should be able to backup your entire system several times on one of these drives and yet they are small enough that you can fit one in your pocket and take anywhere. You can also use one external drive on more than one computer.

Alternately, most backup programs will allow you to save your information to CD or DVD disks. You almost certainly already have a CD/DVD drive installed in your computer (unless it's a mini-laptop like a net computer). Once the data is burned onto them, you can store the disks any place, including in another room, with a friend or even in a safe deposit box (where they will be safe from a home disaster). The problem with using these disks, even high capacity dual layer DVDs, is that it will take more than one disk to save all your system information. In other words, you have to be there for the entire process, to insert new blank disks as they are needed.

Now let's get to the process we are going use to backup our computer. Windows 7 Home Premium edition, unlike previous versions of Windows, comes with a complete backup program built into it. All you have to do is click on the "Start" button and type "backup" in the "Search box." Near the top of the list of options that appears you'll find "Backup and Restore." Click on it.

A window will appear. You can backup or restore your computer from this window. It also shows if you've made any backups and allows you to schedule automatic backups.

When you click on "Create a system image" your computer will search for drives where you can store your backup and ask you which drive you are going to use. After selecting your destination drive, you will see a window like the one below, where you can select which drives to backup. Once you've selected you source drive(s), you'll be taken to another window to start your backup. Assuming that you're using a destination drive large enough to hold your entire backup, you can go get a cup of coffee (or two) while the backup program runs to completion.

If this is the first time you've made a system backup,

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### **Windows 7 Part 3 ... Continued from Page 8**

you will be asked to “Create a system repair disk.” This is a CD which will enable you to boot your computer in the event of a hard drive failure that prevents you from starting your computer. Once the computer has started, using the repair CD, you’ll be able to access your system image (created above) to automatically restore everything (including Windows, all your programs, files and settings) on your hard drive.

Once you have a total system backup, I recommend making additional total system backups at least once a month. This will keep your system backups up to date (you’d be amazed at the number of files you add or change (pictures, emails, etc.) in a month. This will give you extra backups in case one backup is defective for some reason.

The Windows 7 backup program also allows you to make quick backups of selected folders, such as your documents, music or pictures. This is a useful way to make backups of file areas that change between your scheduled full system backups.

PC World Magazine has an excellent video which describes the backup process at the web address below: <http://tinyurl.com/36bvq2>

Of course you don’t have to use the Windows 7 Backup program. There are a number of excellent third party system backup programs, such as Acronis True Image, that work as well or even better. You can find them in stores or through Internet distributors. One advantage of a third part backup program is that you don’t need to buy Windows 7 to get it. Plus, you can use these third party programs with other versions of Windows.

POST SCRIPT – Several days after writing this article the hard drive on my desktop PC started to malfunction. Fortunately, I had routinely made full system backups. It only took 15 minutes to physically replace the hard drive. Using my repair disk and the backup file which I had saved to an external hard drive, it took less than an hour to completely load Windows 7, all my programs, files and settings on the new hard drive and restored full operation to my computer.

Yes, hard drives do fail! Manufactures say they have a life of 5 to 10 years. Other factors, such as power surges, may cause early failure. Play it safe and make a backup!



## **Dick’s Clicks**

*By Dick Ramette, President, Computer Club of Green Valley, AZ*

*November 2010 issue, Green Bytes*

*<http://gvcc.apcug.org>*

*Rwramette (at) mindspring.com*

Resigned to the premise that I’ve irreversibly “welcomed the frenziedness of technology into my soul” (see my piece in October *Green Bytes*), I clicked on ORDER NOW at the Apple Store to get a new iPod Touch 4G. It finally arrived after going through Honshu, Shanghai, Anchorage, Memphis, and Tucson. “Touch” means the smooth and intuitive user interface where fingertips rule. It’s a lot like the much larger iPad.

My chief motivation was to make my entire music collection available during neighborhood walks. The new Touch also has two(!) cameras, one for taking snapshots of what I’m looking at, the other pointing at my face for an application called Facetime, rather like Skype. The cameras have both still and video modes. Also, my photo collections are easily copied onto the Touch for viewing away from home, and I can watch videos.

Then, there’s the vast (200,000?) world of applications (apps), many of which are free downloads, in case I need more ways to veg out in the digital lifestyle. I can access my Netflix account and watch, for free, movies on my tiny screen. But I won’t. My Google Gmail account lets me send and receive messages. But I won’t. A TV Guide lets me scroll through today’s program schedule. I will. Another app peruses the International Movies Database to check up on movies, old and current. The NASA app provides all kinds of info on space technology. With Safari I can surf the web, read the NYTimes, etc., etc. Huffington Post’s app makes it much easier to navigate than the regular web site.

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## Dicks Clicks ... Continued from Page 9

A cool app called Dragon Dictation lets me “talk” to my iPod, and transcribes my words into printed text, virtually error-free. This text can, for example, be pasted into an email message. Maybe I will. Google Earth is there (small world). I’m no big gamer, but I really like Zynga’s Scramble, an interactive word game. I can display maps, a calendar, a clock, stock reports, weather, YouTube and use a simple calculator. The Epicurious app is the ultimate cookbook - in the category of Decadent Desserts alone there are 6,023 mouth-watering recipes, none of which I’ll use.

That so much technology has been crammed into such a tiny case is stunning. Captain Kirk and Mr. Spock would have lusted after such a versatile device. It’s very relaxing to enjoy my new toy while laid back in my recliner. Perhaps, in time, my infatuation will narrow to my original goals of music listening and picture taking while out walking, and Scramble. But, for now, I think I’m in love.

### Thoughts of the Month:

It would appear that we have reached the limits of what it is possible to achieve with computer technology, although one should be careful with such statements, as they tend to sound pretty silly in 5 years.

John von Neumann, circa 1960

“Technology makes it possible for people to gain control over everything, except over technology.”

John Tudor



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## Outside the Lines

By Carla S. Cawlfeld, a long-time HAL-PC member and volunteer

Reprint from: HAL-PC Magazine, newsletter of the Houston Area League of PC Users, Texas  
[www.hal-pc.org](http://www.hal-pc.org)

SO! You Want a New Computer!

*This article is intended as a guideline to how to select a computer, not specifically which computer to buy.*

### The Problem

After nine years, I decided to buy myself a notebook computer as a full-blown replacement for my desktop machine. For once in my lengthy computing life, there was almost nothing wrong with my old computer. The processor was still fast enough for all my applications; the main obsolescence was the 1.1 version of USB and the lack of a DVD burner. But the main reason was I want the portability of a notebook; I sometimes travel for several weeks at a time, and have tired of using public libraries and Internet cafés. Surfing and email are possible on my handheld device, but I can’t manage all of my affairs this way.

### The Process(or)

I started researching my purchase looking under “laptop”, and quickly discovered the industry no longer likes that term; the size categories are now “notebooks” or “netbooks” (effective alliteration enhances advertising? maintaining marketing momentum? busily building buzzwords?).

This will be my sixteenth computer. It will be my fourth portable. I have learned you *have* to do your homework to make the best selection and purchase. After decades of buying computers, the place to start is with your specifications. The machine I want is primarily for writing articles, managing my large photo and video library, financial and accounting maintenance, Internet & email, and watching DVDs & online television. What I *don’t* need is a screamer of a gamer computer or video editing/movie-making platform. This means I don’t need the hottest, fastest processor or maximum amount of memory available in portables; my “don’t” list saved me about \$1,000.

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### ***Outside the Lines ... Continued from Page 10***

Herewith, therefore, are the steps I went through, in mostly chronological order:

Step #1—re-familiarize myself with the state of the technology. Educational sources included...

Printed advertisements, both Sunday newspaper and magazines

Internet surfing for reviews and manufacturer's sites

Visiting the HAL-PC Build or Buy SIG on Wednesday afternoons

Talking with LPs (Learned Persons) at HAL-PC, another benefit of being a member

I attended a recent HAL-PC meeting wherein AMD gave a presentation comparing their current and upcoming lines of processors to Intel's. The AMD speaker had a great chart, showing the different families of processors side by side. However, when I was researching online, I was very disappointed in the charts and lack thereof at the Intel site. (*Intel, work on this; your site is enormous and maze-like. Give us a way to easily compare your products.*)

The processor I ended up selecting, Intel's i5-430m dual core, is a high mid-range mobile processor, released just a few weeks before I bought my computer. It is optimized for speed, power conservation, and heat minimization.

Step #2—develop my specifications. This became a huge spreadsheet, with much minutiae and running eight pages long when printed out. The taped-together pages ran the length of the kitchen door I used as a posting site. My gut told me I would probably have to spend around \$800 to get a reasonable computer, but I was not hard-wired into a fixed budget. (*In the end I spent \$799 plus tax, but that was either a happy coincidence OR, I have a really smart gut.*) The purpose of setting an amount was to have a starting point at which to compare machines; stated another way, at \$800 what is a great deal and what is a ripoff? This "wet finger in the air" analysis showed me the following computers were typically available:

Processor = Intel Core i5-430M dual core; speed is 2.26GHz

Memory = 4GB DDR3, expandable to 8GB

Hard drive = 500 GB, 5400 to 7200 rpm

Screen size = 15.6" to 17", resolution = 1366 X 768 or 1600 X 900, all LED backlit, except for Toshiba, who still uses LCD technology in their larger notebooks (*see note below*)

USB ports = 3 or 4; on some machines 1 port is also eSATA

Optical drive = DVD dual layer burner; some have LightScribe or LabelFlash also. Those units that offered BluRay were about \$100 more, even on sale

Battery life = 2.5 to 3 hours with 6 LithiumIons; one unit had 5 to 6 hours with 12 LithiumIons. (Most notebooks can have larger battery packs retrofitted, but at an additional cost of \$130 to \$150.)

Media reader = 5 in 1; accept various memory cards

Webcam = standard & fairly lousy

Keyboard = only full keyboards with separate number keypad will do

Operating system = Windows 7 Home Premium, 64 bit version

Other Software included = Microsoft Works, trial versions of Norton or other security programs, audio/video entertainment packages, etc. Basically, nothing worth having, so this was not a decision-influencing category. I have my own legal full-blown versions of applications, thank you very much.

Miscellaneous goodies on various machines = Harmon Kardon speakers (Toshiba); Altec Lansing speakers (Hewlett Packard); non-integrated video processor (Toshiba); RJ11 jacks (handy for faxes); built-in Bluetooth; PCI Express slots; Touchpad on/off switch; dual headphone jacks.

NOTE: About LCD and LED backlit display technology—my research led me to believe that the newer LED backlit technology is better for 2 reasons—1) LED uses less power, so battery usage is longer, and 2) it is brighter in outdoor-type environments, so the screen does not become as washed out.

TIP: One of my favorite Learned Persons at HAL-PC clued me in to the Windows Experience Index, available in Windows 7. This benchmarks any given machine in these categories—Processor, Memory (RAM), Graphics, Gaming graphics, and Hard Disk (data transfer rate). Each category is given its own score

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### *Outside the Lines ... Continued from Page 11*

and is graded Olympics-style, with the maximum possible score being a 7.9. No mobile computer I looked at ever scored anything higher than a 6.7 in any category. Most notebooks have puny graphics processors when compared to desktop models, and thusly, notebooks also have puny graphics scores of about 4.6. To use the Windows Experience Index feature, select Start > Control Panel > All Control Panel Items > Performance Information and Tools.

*Shoeleather vs. Let Your Finger do the Shopping*  
Step #3—start shopping. I was pretty disappointed in the available online notebook reviews. None really got detailed about the pros and cons of various machines. They did varying degrees of shallow information about such things as the quality of the LCD display, realistic length of battery life, ease-of-use of keyboards, etc. When I went through a similar drill two years ago before buying a new digital camera, I found much more useful material in the camera review sites. The best site for comparison charts = CompUSA.

So I went to the local stores, several times, with advertisements and legal pad in hand, to gather my own empirical data. Then back to the various manufacturers' websites to fill in my comparison-shopping spreadsheet with yet more data.

A sales/marketing pattern seemed to emerge. It looks like the major computer makers have partnered with the major retailers to "customize" notebooks for exclusive marketing rights. An example—a computer model catches your eye at Office Depot, Fry's, or CompUSA, just to pick on a few random stores. You wish to compare prices.

That same computer may not be available anywhere else, only at that one retail chain, even if you websurf the world for online deals. This computer may be almost identical to a unit available at a competitor, but it will have one tiny little detail different, and also a different SKU number. I found this to be true on several machines by different computer makers, so it must be common and customary for the industry. So much for price guarantees, you say. It didn't really make that much difference in the end, because I tracked the sales and rebates for a couple of months, and good deals are available if you are observant and patient.

I am an avid online shopper; but in this case, I did not find any price advantages online, even with free shipping and no sales tax. So I bought at a sticks 'n bricks locale (in the event anything was broken on my new computer, being able to exchange it at a store is SOOO much easier than dealing with online returns).

Because I was *not* buying a computer on an emergency basis, I took advantage of rock bottom sales and rebates. I ended up actually bringing home 3 different machines during a 2 week time period; at one time I had \$2300 worth of notebooks on my credit card and living room floor, while I weighed the pros and cons of each, waiting for better sales and deals to emerge. Example—Fry's ads come out each Friday, and they have a 15 day return period on notebooks. So if you buy your desired computer on Thursday night at the end of a sale cycle, you then have 2 more weeks of opportunity for Fry's or another retailer to offer an even better deal. I also made sure all returns were made before the cutoff of my credit card billing cycle. As per my plan, I was successfully able to return 2 out of the 3 computers I brought home, and ended up with the unit I wanted at a good deal.

CAUTIONARY NOTE—Do NOT open the computer box unless you really are in love with that unit, as you either cannot return it at all, OR, you can return for about a 15% restocking fee, which is >\$100. Make sure you have the exact details of a given store's return policy BEFORE you make your purchase. WARNING—go back and reread this paragraph.

#### **The Probables**

About 12 similar computers seemed to fit my specs and were in stock in local stores. I took my own copy of a DVD movie in and test drove 11 of these units in the stores; the 12th did not have a demo model available, and the store was not willing to open a box for me. I ran the Windows Experience Index on all 11 machines; I was not able to find this info any other way. It is *not* part of the online data available. Winnowing down through the dozen yielded the three machines I brought home. These 3 computers all have the specifications as stated up in Step #2, so I will only mention the differences.

*Continued on Page 13*

### *Outside the Lines ... Continued from page 12*

**Computer #1 = Toshiba A505-S6020, MSRP of \$899, net price of \$699. Reasonable WinExpIndex scores.**

Pros =

1. killer Harman Kardon speakers
2. nVidia graphics card, which led to a graphics score of 5.0, the highest in the bunch

Cons =

1. Display = LCD, not LED
2. Only 2.0 to 2.5 hour battery life
3. No built-in Bluetooth
4. Tons of extra software goodies. Note that I list this as a “con”, as these are stripped versions of programs, often with time bombs. Mostly they just crap up your Windows registry and machine.

**Computer #2 = Gateway NV5935u; MSRP of \$699, net price of \$649. Reasonable WinExpIndex scores.**

Pros =

1. 1600 X 900 LED display
2. Fingerprint resistant keyboard
3. RJ 11 jack
4. 4 hour battery life

Cons =

1. No built-in Bluetooth
2. No PCI Express slot
3. This was the only machine I was not able to play with in the store, no demo unit available.

**Computer #3 = Hewlett Packard Pavilion dv6-2170us. MSRP of \$899, net price of \$749. Highest WinExpIndex scores.**

Pros =

1. Superbright LED display
2. The 500 GB hard drive has the fastest speed at 7200 rpm
3. Entertainment engineering, including dual headphone jacks (tested—no loss of volume with both jacks in use.)
4. Altec Lansing speakers (although they sound puny to me)
5. Built-in Bluetooth
6. PCI Express slot
7. And lastly, but most importantly, 6 hour battery life!!!! DEAL MAKER!!!!

Cons =

1. No RJ 11 jack, so no built-in fax capability. (This can be remedied with a cheapo USB add-on.)
2. No BluRay.
3. Weight = about 7 lbs. This is due to #7 above, the lovely longer battery life. I am not a road warrior anymore, so I don't really care how much it weighs. I can easily carry 7 lbs. around my house.
4. Interfering HP software that wants to hold my hand all the time with pop-ups and assistance.

Added surprise bonus inside—as mentioned in #3 under Pros, this is an Entertainment unit, so it comes with its own teensy little DVD and music remote control. This is actually important to me—remember part of my original requirements was for a machine to watch DVDs and online television. Mission accomplished!

In the end, I took back the #1 Toshiba unit because of the lack of LED screen. Otherwise, it is a good unit with great speakers. My real choice was between the #2 Gateway and the #3 HP for \$100 more. I opted for the HP because of the enhanced battery life, built-in Bluetooth, and dual headphone jacks.

NOTE: Kudos to Hewlett Packard for using ALL recyclable packing materials—all recycled cardboard inside and out, and not a scrap of Styrofoam to be found.

### **The Procedures**

Now that I had finally made a decision and taken all extra computers back to the store, I was ready to open the box and get going. I have learned that putting a new computer in service is just about as painful and laborious as giving birth, and I am NOT kidding. You have to go slow and methodically.

Step #4. Never, ever hook a virgin computer up to the Internet without verifying that anti-virus software and a firewall are current and completely installed. You may need access to another broken-in computer to download security files. Here is where your membership in HAL-PC will save you. Go to the Friday morning PC Upgrade and Troubleshooting SIG for assistance in these security matters. I have used this

*Continued on Page 14*

### *Outside the Lines ... Continued from Page 13*

group and other gurus at HAL-PC for many of my sixteen computers over the years. Can't live without them. Best \$50 per year I ever spent.

*TIP:* As this computer unit is WiFi capable, I also took my router down to the Friday morning SIG. We were able to configure both the computer and the router and get them connected wirelessly. This was a huge help, as my router had previously been "fixed" by the kids who came to visit my house; they had it totally fouled up and unusable.

Step #5—Start loading my software packages. This includes the usuals—Microsoft Office Suite, Quicken, Palm Desktop for my handheld device. Then load the 20 or so icons that I use frequently onto the desktop.

*TIP:* If you like a lot of icons on your desktop, for your background wallpaper, choose a picture that has a lot of blank space around the edges, sort of like a frame. The photo I use is a family group portrait with an uncluttered background. The icons are arranged along the sides and top.

Step #6—let 'er rip. I began methodically checking out the various ports and devices. This includes such areas as all USB ports, external monitor, WiFi, Bluetooth, DVD burner, webcam & mic, both headphone ports, touchpad on/off switch, etc. My checkout list included testing the battery life; I got up to about 5.5 hours before I plugged back into external electricity. Even with the beautiful screen on this notebook, my old external desktop monitor still delivers a superior resolution, and external speakers are a must.

Step #7—transfer data from old computer to new. This would have been super slow using the USB 1.1 on my old desktop computer. Plus, I wanted to harvest the two perfectly good desktop hard drives and use them as my new backup drives. So I used a handy little peripheral device, an external hard drive box. Specifically, it is a Sabrent SATA/IDE Hard Drive Aluminum Enclosure, High Speed USB 2.0 & eSATA Interface, Plug 'n Play, hot swappable, Item # ECS – STU35K, sku = 88218 00070 5, street price about \$27. The beauty of this device is you can temporarily swap in whatever 3.5" hard drive you desire.

What I actually did was carefully take my D: data drive out of my old desktop computer, load it into the Sabrent, plug it into a USB 2.0 port on my new computer and *Voila!* All my data directories and files were visible and available for installing. I moved 33 gigabytes of data in a little more than 30 minutes.

*TIP:* Use your old working hard drives as backup drives using an external device like the Sabrent. Store them away from your computer, and preferably in a water- and fire-proof safe or safe deposit box at a bank. This accomplishes two things—1) in the event your computer is stolen, the thieves won't have taken your only copy of your data; and 2) in the event of a flood or fire, you won't have lost your only copy of your data. (*If you think this sounds like overkill, your house just hasn't flooded yet.*)

### **Conclusion**

I had two goals in mind when purchasing a new laptop—I want to sit in bed and write stories, and I want to sit in bed and watch movies and online television. Considering that I wrote this lengthy article while sitting in bed, and considering that I got caught up on some recently-missed television shows online I have achieved success! I am very happy with my choice of notebook computer.

*TIP:* Thanks to the HAL-PC homepage, I learned that on Earth Day the local Toshiba plant was accepting electronics for responsible recycling. I had a lot of old hard drives and non-working computers lying around that I did not want to throw into a landfill. A friend and I filled the bed of a large pickup truck with junk computers, broken VCRs, rusted stereo components, & one flooded boombox and delivered all this trash to Toshiba. I estimate the original purchase value of all this junk was about \$15K. We did get a reusable cloth grocery bag in exchange. Thank you, HAL-PC, for this tip. Keep 'em coming!

*Carla Cawlfeld is a long-term HAL-PC member and volunteer. Since her car was flooded under 7 feet of water in April 2009, she has "gone green" and is experimenting with living in Houston with no car. You may email her at [carla@hal-pc.org](mailto:carla@hal-pc.org)*

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## Brevard Users Group Membership Application

First Name \_\_\_\_\_ Last Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_  
Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip + 4 \_\_\_\_\_  
Family Membership \$25.00 E-mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

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### Special Interest Groups

#### Afternoon Meeting

An afternoon meeting is held on the first Monday of the month at 2pm, in One Senior Place, 8085 Spyglass Hill Rd, Viera.

#### WINDOWS SIG Meets 7:00 PM

On the second and fourth Thursdays at the Central Baptist Church  
2503 Country Club Rd Melbourne

#### BEGINNERS SIG (Newbies)

Meets at 6:30 pm. The 4th Thursdays, at the Central Baptist Church

#### IMAGING SIG

Meets at 7:00 PM the fourth Thursday, at the Central Baptist Church

#### NEWSLETTER SIG

Meets twice a month on the Saturdays before and after the BUG monthly meeting.  
Place is Jim Townsend's home.  
Call 728-5979 for directions.

#### LINUX SIG

Meets on the Fourth and Fifth Thursday at the Central Baptist Church

#### TINKERS SIG

Meets on most Sundays at Bob Schmidt's house.  
Call 952-0199 to verify meeting and directions.  
E-mail: [rschmidt@cfl.rr.com](mailto:rschmidt@cfl.rr.com)

### BUG Club Information

#### BUG E-MAIL LIST

To be included in the BUG E-Mail roster, send an E-Mail to Larry French at:  
[president@bugclub.org](mailto:president@bugclub.org).

We will need your full name, E-Mail address and your BUG membership number. You will then receive notices and updates on BUG activities, special events, changes to schedules, etc.

#### BUG Officers

Meet on the Second Thursday of the month  
After the Monthly Meeting at the Central Baptist Church

### Sponsorship Rates

	4 Months	8 Months	12 Months
Full Page	\$160.00	\$305.00	\$440.00
Half Page	\$85.00	\$162.00	\$232.00
Qtr Page	\$45.00	\$86.00	\$123.00
Bus Card	\$25.00	\$48.00	\$68.00

### Moving ?

Don't miss out on any issues of the BUG Newsletter  
Send your new address to:  
Brevard Users Group Att: Treasurer  
PO Box 2456  
Melbourne, FL 32902-2456  
And e-mail to the Newsletter and Treasurer at:  
[newsletter@bugclub.org](mailto:newsletter@bugclub.org)  
[treasurer@bugclub.org](mailto:treasurer@bugclub.org)

**Brevard Users Group  
Incorporated  
P. O. Box 2456  
Melbourne, FL 32902-2456**

**Monthly Meetings:**

Are held at the second Thursday of the month at Central Baptist Church 2503 Country Club Rd Melbourne at 6:30 PM.

**Membership:**

Is by application and payment of \$25.00 annual dues. Membership is for 12 months from receipt of dues and includes a year's subscription to the newsletter.

Your membership expires on the date indicated in the upper left of your address label (YYYYMM). Please allow six weeks for processing the renewal.

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**BUG Officers**

**President:**

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**Vice President**

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**Treasurer:**

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**Secretary:**

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**1st Member at Large:**

Hank Lauritsen

**2nd Member at Large**

Gervase Bushe

**Committee Chairperson**

**Beginners Help:**

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**FACUG Representative:**

Open

**Program Director:**

Hank Lauritsen

**Webmaster:**

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**BUG Web Page:**

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**Newsletter Publishing SIG:**

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**Win 9x/XP SIG:**

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Chuck Boring 454-9455  
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