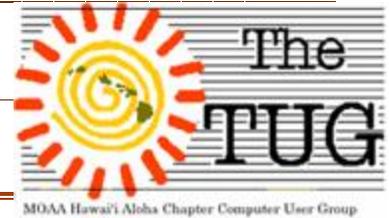# THE TUG

Our first meeting of the New Year covered the newest Firefox browser edition, Firefox Quantum, build 57. Once the premier browser, Firefox fell on hard times once Google Chrome took over 1st Place among internet browsers.

While there were many reasons, real and imagined, Firefox comes in 2nd in several pundit reviews for popularity. The good folks who work with Firefox were determined not to remain a distant participant. They set about rewriting all the code in the existing Firefox package, the end result is Firefox 57, which many pundits renamed Firefox Quantum due to its 'amazing' speed of operation. Bench test comparisons show Firefox loads pages faster.

C|Net, ZDNet and Tech Republic, among others, have declared Firefox 57 twice as fast as Firefox 52. The Pros of this newest version is it uses 30% less memory resources; it's smaller in size and, the new added features are among the high points. One of the low points is that Quantum may not be compatible with legacy (read: older) extensions.

A new addition, *Pocket*, lets you put pages, articles, graphics, etc. in a holding space. All you need due is create a Pocket using your email address and a password. Quantum then holds your items until such time as you want to view, edit or delete them.

Reader View changes the screen into text, with no graphics, sidebars, etc. which makes it easier to read the article.

Regarding the overall operation and performance of Firefox 57, here's a partial quote from a 11-25-17 column, written by David Pierce, in the Gear section of Wired.com.

"It turns out there are lots of things Firefox Quantum could do to improve the browser experience, and it did many of those things. The new Firefox actually manages to evolve the entire browser experience, recognizing the multi-device, ultra-mobile lives we all lead and building a browser that plays along. It's a browser built with privacy in mind, automatically stopping invisible trackers and making your history available to you and no one else. It's better than Chrome, faster than Chrome, smarter than Chrome. It's my new go-to browser."

If you would like to test drive Quantum, just search for Firefox Quantum and download the one from mozilla.com. That's the official site. You do not have to uninstall your current browser. At a recent TUG meeting I had four different browsers, Edge, Chrome, Firefox and Opera, all running at the same time.

If you do check it out, let me know your experience and I'll put them in a future TUG issue

GIFTS FOR YOUR MAIN SQUEEZE

St. Valentine's Day falls on February 14th of each year. Although the name is Saint Valentine's Day, most people refer to the day as Valentine's Day, or even the Feast of Saint Valentine. It was originally a day to celebrate Saint Valentinus, who performed weddings for soldiers who were not allowed to marry. Most scholars believe that the St. Valentine of the holiday was a priest who attracted the disfavor of Roman emperor Claudius II around 270. At this stage, the factual ends and the mythic begins.

According to one legend, Claudius II had prohibited marriage for young men, claiming that bachelors made better soldiers. Valentine continued to secretly perform marriage ceremonies but was eventually apprehended by the Romans and put to death. Another legend has it that Valentine, imprisoned by Claudius, fell in love with the daughter of his jailer. Before he was executed, he allegedly sent her a letter signed "from your Valentine." Probably the most plausible story surrounding St. Valentine is one not focused on Eros (passionate love) but on Agape (Christian love): he was martyred for refusing to renounce his religion.

In 1969, the Catholic Church revised its liturgical calendar, removing the feast days of saints whose historical origins were questionable. St. Valentine was one of the casualties. Not all that romantic, but fortunately, it has become a very romantic day when we exchange gifts with our loved ones. With that in mind, here are 3 gift suggestions for her and 3 for him. Illustrations below.

A fancy turntable – listening to vinyl records is popular again. If your lady or guy) would like to ride the wave, they are going to need a turntable. U-Turn sells great turntables at reasonable prices. If you have extra spending money from your year-end bonus and really want to treat your special one this Valentine's Day, this one's well worth a look.

Digital Pencil – Most people fall into one of these categories: doodler, designer, note-taker, office worker, or, at the very least, an iPad/iPhone user. FiftyThree's stylish digital pencil allows your tech-fan Valentine to use iPads and iPhones like paper notepads. The manufacturer FiftyThree is already well known for its drawing/doodling app called Paper (free for iOS devices). The app has been praised and beloved by Silicon Valley elites including Twitter and Square CEO Jack Dorsey, along with Chinese filmmakers who use it as an alternative to storyboards.

FitBark – is basically a Fitbit for her pet that tracks a dog's activity and sleep. The mobile app lets her check a dog's data from an app, monitor medical issues, and discover nearby friends for her pet. Moreover, it compares the owner and her pet's increase in activity, and is compatible with other applications such as Fitbit, HealthKit, Jawbone, and Google Fit. The dog bone-shaped collar accessory for FitBark is waterproof, syncs with smartphones via Bluetooth or an Internet connection, and is light enough (eight grams) that any pet could easily wear it.
A new everyday watch If you have some money to spend, but not a ton, MVMT's timepieces look great on a wrist. This one comes with a brown leather strap and rose-gold case. It's simple but eye-catching.

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Chemex – coffeemaker If the coffee lover you love doesn't already own a Chemex, get him one. Includes a polished wood collar with leather tie Selected by the Illinois Institute of Technology as one of the 100 best designed products of modern times All of the coffeemakers are measured using 5 oz. as 1 cup Chemex filters are required for operation all Chemex coffee makers. Capacity: 30 Oz

An Echo Dot – Any tech-loving guy will find a lot to like with Amazon's Echo Dot. It can forecast the weather, read an audiobook, order a pizza, tell dad jokes, or any number of things he should find useful. The Dot is the best value of the Echo family, but if he needs a louder speaker, the original Echo works exactly the same.

Now they tell me! After spending time composing the first page, adding Lou's column and other stuff, I discovered the following. Being the frugal type I decided not to spend time re-writing the lead article since this doesn't change the meaning nor purpose of my comments.
I came across this 1-23-18 column by Stephen Shankland at C|Net.com.

Aloha,
Lou, and in spirit, Pooky

Firefox update kicks graphics speed up a notch

"Mozilla released on Tuesday a new version of its Firefox Quantum browser, boosting its graphics speed and improving a couple of new technologies designed to make the web more powerful.

The browser, <u>version 58</u>, is the first major update since <u>Mozilla's recovery plan</u> hit full stride in November with the <u>debut of Firefox Quantum</u>. A decade ago, Firefox was running circles around Microsoft's Internet Explorer, but the browser market has become much more competitive now with the arrival of Google's Chrome and mobile phones."

Good News/Bad news in history on Feb. 3rd
1870 15th Amendment to the US Constitution is passed
1913 US starts the Income Tax
1959 Buddy Holly and others die in plane crash
1960 Yasser Arafat becomes leader of the PLO

NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTIONS

These are two words many of our members do not recognize. OK, I'm being cynical.

Over the years I, and TUG Presidents as far back as 1988 have solicited comments, articles, links – anything worth printing – for our monthly newsletter. Poor Jim has been doing it alone, or just about alone, for many years now. OK, I'm being sarcastic, Jim is not really poor and really enjoys doing this. While demanding, the last-minute deadlines are invigorating.

But, from time to time, and as time goes by and Jim gets older, he would like some assistance in filling the four pages. Once you reach a certain age, you become more frequently involved with those in the medical field, Both GP's and Specialists. Those of you who have 'come of age' know exactly from which I speak. You also know that these scheduled appointments take up much needed time that could be spent on leisure, shopping, goofing off – or working on the newsletter.

So, since it is a New Year I'll once again ask each and everyone of our TUG members to put that old grey matter to work and come up with and suggest a topic for discussion at a meeting; an article on a topic of interest that I could work my keyboard magic to succinctly present your opinion in these 'pages', or a Cliff Notes type submission. Please kokua.

By now I'm sure you have all heard about the Spectre and Meltdown bugs. This is an extremely confusing topic. So much so, that I won't try to go into detail here, except to say neither have, as of this writing, been found 'in the wild' they are potentially the most dangerous malware to date.

These rascals can access the CPU chip allowing them to obtain passwords, sign-ins, account numbers, just about everything. They have the potential to attack Intel and AMD processors.

Intel has released patches but they seem to cause computers to freeze and/or re-boot. AMD is having similar problems with its patches.

To check to see if your computer is vulnerable, go to this link https://www.grc.com/inspectre.htm and download the file named InSpectre, right-click and run it as Administrator. You'll get a dialog box similar to this:

This dialog box is from my personal computer which has an AMD CPU. I'm waiting for AMD to come out with a stable patch.

The other down side is that patches to both Intel and AMD chips slow down the performance of systems.

So, if security is of the essence with you then you won't mind the decrease in performance. If, on the other hand you prefer performance over security, you can op-out of the patches by not downloading and installing.

If you want to learn more about Meltdown and Spectre, do a search on your favorite search engine like Google, or Bing, or Yahoo.

A quicker way to check is to see if you already have the patch. Click on the Windows icon, go to Settings, System and About. Scroll down to Specifications and see if your version matches this

OS Build 16299.125

If it does you don't need any immediate action. If not, go to Windows Updates and look for new Updates, download and install.

As Mr. Gibson often says "Shields Up!"