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Washington Apple Pi Journal

A Journal for Macintosh Computer Users

Building a Better Pi
See cover story, page 10

www.wap.org

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Washington Apple Pi Meetings

Pi Open House — GRAND OPENING!

January 10, 1:00 to 4:00 p.m., Pi Office in Rockville

The move to the new Pi clubhouse is complete! The paint, carpet and fixtures are new. The furniture is in place, and we now have a pleasant and comfortable clubhouse that all can enjoy. Swing by and check out the new digs, share some conversation with fellow members, and meet the club's officers.

Refreshments and snacks will be served. If you would care to bring some sweet munchies or other finger-food items, please, be our guest. Come and enjoy! (Read more about this event in an article on page 10 of this Journal)

Macworld: What It Means to You!

January 24, 9:30 a.m., Luther Jackson Middle School

This meeting isn't going to be your run-of-the-mill Macworld review but rather a blend of announcements and information, important and otherwise, that might make a difference to you! Come hear about the new, non-Apple products announced, behind-the-scenes intrigue, and developments that didn't make the news. Macworld through the eyes of Pi presenters!

Our regular Q & A will start the meeting followed by essential club news. Next, we take a short break for a caffeine jolt before launching into the aforementioned main event. We will end the event with a raffle drawing for an iPod touch!

Our usual pizza lunch and breakout sessions will round out the day. Oh, yeah, one more thing, we will have a room set aside for an iPhone/iPod touch Meetup to discuss the operation of, and Apps for, Apple's smallest computers.

Home Networking Made Easy

February 28, 9:30 a.m., Luther Jackson Middle School

This is a rescheduling of the December meeting originally planned.

The main event will be a nuts and bolts presentation on home networking. Essentials for setting up a network in your abode will be covered to include how to keep out any intruders.

A Q & A session will kick off the day. Club news will be next, followed by Kitty's Koffee Klatch (Mmmm, doughnuts!). After the main event, we will provide more detail on the expansion of Pi electronic services.

The lunch period will feature pizza (what else!) and after that the "members helping members" session, and *iLife* and genealogy SIGs will hold their respective meetings.

As always, check the Pi Web site for additional, updated details on these meetings.

You are invited

Need to renew
your membership?

Use the application
form on page 37!

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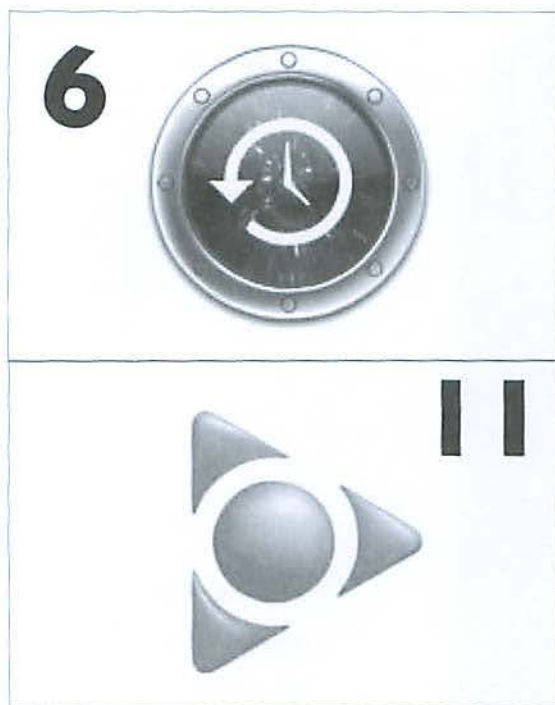
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Letter to the Editor

I have a sister-in-law in Seattle, Washington, whose legal first name is "Pi." While surfing the Net, she came on your site and is curious as to why you are "Washington Apple Pi." Please take time out of your busy lives to let her know.

Thanks.
Dorothy Judd

Dorothy and Pi,

I am pleased that you emailed us about our similar names and would be happy to answer your question, as best as I understand it.

Washington Apple Pi is a Macintosh Computer User Group. While it might sound a bit formal, basically we are a sizable group of Mac computer enthusiasts who love our Macs and love getting together to learn more about how to use them. Plus, many of us like the social aspect of hanging around with other "enlightened" Mac users!

So how does this relate to "Pi?" As noted above, we are a computer group and computers love to calculate things like mathematical formulas. The Greek symbol pi is an expression of a mathematical constant having to do with the measurement of a circle. Computers and mathematics go hand-in-glove.

And so, when our computer club formed in the late 70's, the founders tied together our Washington DC area location with Apple computers (there were no Macs until 1984), and the mathematical pi. However, when the name is spoken aloud, it cleverly confuses many folks who think of our first president, the tree he was famous for chopping down, and the "Pi" at the end is interpreted to mean the pastry dessert!

Thanks for asking,

Bob Jarecke, President, Washington Apple Pi

It might help to know that Washington Apple Pi was founded by scientists at NIST (National Institute of Standards & Technology). The core founders had worked on some of the very first computers, starting in 1946, and were fascinated with the idea that you could buy, in a store, a fully functional, plug-in and run computer. So the mathematical pi and the pun on Washington and the cherry tree (converted to apple, for obvious reasons) were just too much to resist.

While we've never taken a scientific poll, it seems that about half of our members have at least one MA, MS, PhD or some other advanced degree. We're less nerdy than it sounds, but plenty nerdy.

These two articles on our Web site give a bit of background:

<http://www.wap.org/events/25thmeeting/urban.html>

<http://www.wap.org/journal/best/bestoftimesseac.html>

Lawrence Charters, Washington Apple Pi
Journal Editor



2009 — The Year of the Pi!

By Bob Jarecke

As I look back over the past calendar year, I can't help but marvel over the many things that we accomplished. I can only hope we make as much headway in 2009.

What We Accomplished

The Pi hosted a Mac Masters event. We produced eleven credible General Meetings — the most recent one in the *great* category. We published six amazing copies of the *Journal*. And, through it all, we basically kept the financials balanced.

In the area of management, we established a Management Committee to deal with day-to-day matters, and boy, have they performed and earned their oats. And lastly, if that wasn't enough, we picked up everything from a decade-old office space, pared "stuff" down and moved the remains into a new clubhouse. And what a clubhouse it is! But let me save that for the end of this message.

While all of the above, by my estimation, could be placed in a "win" column, we had some losses too. Our membership continued a steady decline as we lost an average of ten members per month, and in some instances we lost good friends too. The move resulted in the Tuesday Night Clinic having to shutter its doors until suitable space can be found for their operation; we hope that will be soon. In the meantime, you can look forward to a new clinic-like service coming your way in our new clubhouse. Stay tuned!

What Lies Ahead

So how are we going to top what we did in '08? It isn't going to be easy, but this year we have a plan, a Strategic Plan! You can find a Reader's Digest version of this plan elsewhere in this *Journal*. We think it spells out the right things that need to be done. Look it over and see what you think.

The process of developing a credible, short-range plan for the Pi produced some outstanding results; however, the tasks the plan outlines are daunting. Checking off each of the plan's five goals, with their many moving parts, will require earnest support and hard work on the part of many. *We are asking for dedicated volunteers to step up to help shoulder the load. If you see something in the plan where you could help — We Want You!*

Another exciting development just beyond the horizon is an energetic project that has been in the wings for some time now. What could it be — free broadband connections for everyone? Sorry, this isn't Oprah's Pi, so you will have to settle for expanded electronic services with a new Web interface. The unofficial name we have labeled the service is *my.wap.org*, and that is the Web address members will access for WAP services, files and information.

The one-stop-shop WAP access page has been a long-time project of the TCS Committee, with Jon Thomason leading the charge. The service will allow members to access their account information and update their personal contact information. It will also be a page that can link members to current and projected new Pi services. On it you will reach the Pi Discussion Forums, a current popular service. The electronic *Journal* is a projected service with this publication, dubbed the *eJournal*, accessible from your *my.wap.org* Web page. This is one of several new services we would like to have available to the membership early this year.

So, back to the topic of the new Pi office. First, I prefer the term clubhouse, because, when you think about it, we are a computer club! And, unlike other computer clubs in the area, we possess a very nice meeting space for everyone to use and enjoy. If you want to know more about it and even make a visit, check out the *Pi Clubhouse — Grand Opening* article elsewhere in this *Journal*. *One point I do want to emphasize: the clubhouse is everyone's to use and enjoy.* We would love to see more use of the space. Of course, more frequent usage would help us justify the cost of the rent that, while reasonable, is not cheap. Second, and more important, we want to build on the social, face-to-face interactions that will help us achieve our Vision — the best Mac User Group ever!



There is no fourth step, unless you want to add one called “don’t mess with it.”

Time Machine Essentials

© 2009 Lawrence I. Charters

Time Machine, the whimsically named backup technology built in to Mac OS X 10.5, is probably the single best feature in the entire operating system. A Mac user doesn’t need to add or patch or alter a thing: just install Mac OS X 10.5, and then plug in or otherwise attach to an appropriate storage device.

Typically, the steps involved are three:

- Boot your Mac running Mac OS X 10.5;
- Plug in a FireWire or USB 2.0 external hard drive;
- Say yes when your Mac asks if it can use the external drive with Time Machine.

There is no fourth step, unless you want to add one called “don’t mess with it.” There are no icky, sticky details. If you have a Mac running Mac OS X 10.5, that’s all you need to do; you can stop reading now.

But I read or heard about some issues...

Once Time Machine was released into the wild (meaning once consumers purchased it and put it into use), rumors started circulating about “problems” and “incompatibilities” with Time Machine. Most of these reports, often vague and almost always poorly documented, could be traced to user error. Usually a Mac user, attempting to second guess Mac OS X, did something strange, such as removing an external drive in mid-backup, or placing an external drive for one machine on a different machine, or installing Mac OS X 10.5 on a machine with known hardware problems, and then blamed any difficulties on Time Machine.

Technogeeks also criticized Time Machine as “inadequate,” since it wasn’t obviously designed for offsite archiving, or didn’t

work with tape drives, or didn’t encrypt the backup stream, or work with punch cards, or didn’t do something else that most people had never done and probably never would do. Even ordinary Mac users who had never, ever backed up anything, found cause to complain that Time Machine didn’t work with their own idiosyncratic setup or preconceived notion of what a backup should be.

What kind of backup do you need?

Time Machine backs up a Mac to a variety of devices:

- It will automatically back up to an external hard drive attached via FireWire or USB 2.0;
- It will automatically back up to a Time Capsule, Apple’s superb combination of wireless router, wired router, print server and file storage;
- It will back up to a second internal hard drive on Power Macs and Mac Pro computers with multiple internal drives;
- It will back up to a drive on a Mac OS X 10.5 Server, or an external drive attached to another machine running Mac OS X 10.5;
- It will back up to a USB 2.0 drive attached to a Time Capsule or to some versions of the AirPort Extreme.

About the only other thing you need to worry about is formatting the drive that will be used by Time Machine. The drive should be formatted as Mac OS Extended (Journaled), which is the default for Mac OS X 10.5. If you buy a new drive in the store, the first thing you should do is fire up Disk Utility, erase the drive, and explicitly format it; many off-the-shelf drives are formatted for Windows and, while the Mac

will appear to work fine with the drive, Windows formatting doesn't properly handle the range of things a Mac routinely stores, and data will be lost.

Naturally, the drive used for backup should be larger than the material being backed up. If you have a MacBook with an 80 GB drive, any USB 2.0 or FireWire drive sold today will work, since all of them seem to be 250 GB or larger. An iMac with a 500 GB drive may require a 750 GB or 1 terabyte drive, but these have dropped so drastically in price that they are quite reasonable.

Backup speed

Much blogging angst has been devoted to the speed of backup via Time Machine. Generally speaking, only the initial backup takes a lot of time. After that, Time Machine backs up only changes, so you won't notice or care about backup speed.

Speed runs along this cline, from fastest to slowest:

- FireWire 800, direct connect;
- FireWire 400, direct connect;
- USB 2.0, direct connect;
- Gigabit Ethernet connection to a Mac OS X 10.5 Server or Time Capsule;
- Wireless 802.11n connection (used in most recent Macs) to a Time Capsule;
- 100BASE-T (100 Mbps) Ethernet connection to a Mac OS X 10.5-equipped machine;
- Wireless 802.11g connection (used in older Macs) to a Time Capsule;

If you wanted to use Time Machine wirelessly with a recent model MacBook, for example, you could do both the initial backup and all subsequent backups wirelessly to a Time Capsule. On the other hand, if you have an older PowerBook with a slower wireless card, you'd probably want to make the initial backup directly

connected to an external hard drive, or over Ethernet, and then the subsequent hourly backups wirelessly.

Naturally, Time Machine doesn't work if the Mac is asleep, so for the initial backup, the Mac will need to be up and running for a while. Depending on the speed of the connection and the amount of material being backed up, this could take an hour or, over a slow wireless connection, half a day or more. But subsequent backups, which fire up every hour, take next to no time at all.

Can you change the backup period from every hour? No, and you don't want to; if nothing needs to be backed up, Time Machine will fire up, check a few things, then shut down. If something does need to be backed up, Time Machine can take care of that in the background, and it won't interfere with what you are doing. Ignore it.

Let me rephrase that: don't mess with it. Leave it alone, and it Just Works.

Drive Choices

The most common choice for Time Machine storage will be an external drive. Either a USB 2.0 or FireWire drive will work, though a FireWire drive will invariably be faster. Owners of the new aluminum MacBooks and all MacBook Air owners will need a USB 2.0 device, since these laptops lack a FireWire port. If you want to attach a drive to an AirPort Extreme or a Time Capsule, it, too, must be USB 2.0, but everyone else should look to FireWire.

You can build your own FireWire or USB drive using kits from various companies, or buy one preassembled. Seagate is the current market leader, both in number of drives sold and in warranty coverage, and they have a large selection of FreeAgent drives that are ideally suited for Time Machine.

Somewhat more exotic is the ICY DOCK. These are drive enclosures that allow you to take a bare hard drive and turn it into a giant, fast, removable disk. Take a bare

If something does need to be backed up, Time Machine can take care of that in the background, and it won't interfere with what you are doing. Ignore it.

Software Tutorial



Seagate's FreeAgent drives are inexpensive, high-capacity drives with nice, long five-year warranties.

Shown is a USB 2.0 or FireWire 750 GB model; the small piece in front of the drive is the USB 2.0 module.

To run this same drive as a USB device, you'd remove the FireWire module and replace it with the USB module. The latest Seagate FreeAgent Desk for Mac drives have a metal enclosure and feature both USB 2.0 and FireWire 800 ports (bundled with a FireWire 400 to 800 cable for Macs without FireWire 800). Photo by Lawrence I. Charters.

drive, mount it in an ICY DOCK drive bracket, and stick it in an ICY DOCK enclosure. If you want to switch drives, you dismount the drive image, eject the drive and bracket, and stick in another drive, mounted on another bracket. The ICY DOCK is a good choice if you need off-site archiving, or if you simply have a huge amount of data but don't need it all online at once.

By far the easiest way to store data with Time Machine is Apple's own Time Capsule. A Time Capsule, as mentioned earlier, is a combination wireless router, wired router, gigabit Ethernet switch, printer sharing hub, and storage device. Both wired and wireless Macs have no problem backing up to the Time Capsule; it is particularly well suited to the newest Mac laptops with fast 802.11n wireless cards.

If you have *lots* of stuff you need to back up, you might want to consider a Drobo. Produced by Data Robotics, Inc., a Drobo is a "disk robot" that can hold from one to four hard drives, offering enormous, secure

online backup. While I haven't personally had a chance to try it, their Web site has an article devoted to the Drobo and Time Machine:

<http://www.drobospace.com/article/10940/How-To—Using-Time-Machine-and-Drobo/>

Test cases

When Mac OS X 10.5 first came out, I installed it on an older iBook G4 with an 802.11g wireless card. I then backed up the iBook, wirelessly, to an iMac G4 running Mac OS X 10.5 Server, saving everything to an external USB drive. This was a Bad Idea. But Time Machine was not the problem; the problem was the iMac.

An iMac G4 has only a 100BASE-T Ethernet card, not gigabit, so the network connection was ten times slower than, say, a Time Capsule. The iMac G4 also doesn't support USB 2.0, but only the older, far slower USB 1.1. In other words, this was the worst of all possible combinations. Yet, over 33 hours, the iBook did manage to completely back itself up, wirelessly, using Time Machine. I would highly recommend against doing this, but it did work.

For the next test, I backed up the iBook wirelessly again, but this time to a Time Capsule. It isn't clear how long this took, as it was much faster than expected. I then booted the iBook from a Mac OS X 10.5 installation DVD, erased it, and – still booted from the DVD – wirelessly restored the iBook via Time Machine. This amazing trick took about 18 hours, mostly because it was a silly idea to begin with and the 802.11g card in the iBook is not all that fast. But it did, in fact, work. Perfectly.

You shouldn't try either of these tricks. But the important thing to know is: Time Machine did exactly what it was supposed to do, flawlessly.

What you should do

Use Time Machine. Don't mess with it. Be happy.



An ICY DOCK drive enclosure, drive bracket, and Seagate drive mounted in an ICY DOCK bracket. ICY DOCK enclosures come in various flavors including USB 2.0, FireWire 400, FireWire 800, and combinations of USB 2.0 and FireWire. Photo by Lawrence I. Charters.

Apple Time Capsule showing (left to right) the power port, USB 2.0 port, and four gigabit Ethernet ports. The documentation is thin, but the device is so simple to use you don't really even need this modest pamphlet. Photo by Lawrence I. Charters.



Resources

ICY DOCK removable drives:

<http://www.icydock.com/firewire.html>

Seagate FreeAgent Desk for Mac:

<http://freeagent.seagate.com/en-us/hard-drive/hard-drive-mac/Free-Agent.html>

Apple Time Capsule:

<http://www.apple.com/timecapsule/>

Mac OS X 10.5 Time Machine:

<http://www.apple.com/macosx/features/timemachine.html>

Pi Clubhouse — GRAND OPENING!

By Bob Jarecke

Come one, come all!

As was reported earlier, the Pi clubhouse has moved, and now we are ready to show off the new accommodations!

Those of us who have been involved in the transition believe it will be a great place for meetings or training sessions for almost every Pi member. Members might consider using the space for whatever meeting they have planned. Whatever the case, everyone on our club roster is welcome to enjoy and use!

With this in mind, all members and guests are cordially invited to attend a Pi Open House on Saturday, January 10, 2009, 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. Refreshments and snacks will be provided. Also, if you would like to bring some finger food or sweet goodie delights, please do so. Nothing like some munchies to get the party started!

So you might be asking, what is so great about this office space versus the last one? Well, for one it is a lot cleaner and tidier. It has an expansive meeting space. It is more

within our budget. It meets all our current needs. And it smells like new paint — can't beat that!

Come on by and give the place a once over, and see what your dues help support. More importantly, see if our new clubhouse is something that you too could use. Whether to comfortably lounge in one of our new "library" chairs as you surf the net or update your portable Mac, or to use the office Macs to browse the Internet, or to host a meeting of a Special Interest Group—or any other group—the space is yours to use! We want to turn this pleasant club space into something of value for all members.

To get to the new Pi Clubhouse, the directions are the same as before. However, we now have a new front entrance to the building and that is where you should enter. There are three sets of stairs that will take you to the second floor. On entering the hallway, you should notice our office entrance immediately to your right — you can't miss it! I hope you can stop by and say *Hello!*

Before: Contract workmen busy installing a new wall in the soon-to-be club space for the Pi. Sure doesn't look like much yet! (Photo by Richard Sanderson, taken with a Nikon D-300 digital camera.)

After: Neil Ferguson, Dan Kerner and Nora Korc, enjoying the comfy and cozy lounge area occupying one corner of the new Pi clubhouse. (Photo by Travis Good, taken with a Canon PowerShot SD770 IS Digital ELPH digital camera.)



Still Using AOL?

By Travis Good

Are you still using AOL? Actually, there's nothing wrong if you are. AOL remains a very prominent player on the Internet. AOL.com is the fourth most visited Web site, AOL mail is the third largest global email service, and AOL instant messenger ("AIM") continues to dominate instant messaging in the United States.

The biggest downside to using AOL is that the company hasn't always done the best job of keeping its Mac software current and working well. So how can you still use AOL without relying on its less-than-best software?

One answer is that you can do almost everything through your browser. Via *Safari* you can go to AOL.com and access AOL's content, mail, instant messaging, radio, and just about everything else the service provides. This is an especially convenient solution if you happen to use several computers, because everything is saved at AOL. Another answer is to use *AOL Service Assistant* and migrate to Apple's software.

Years ago, when Mac sales started to grow, AOL realized it hadn't done a good job of supporting Apple computers. AOL for Mac OS X was not keeping up with changes to Mac OS X and its replacement, *AOL Desktop*, was a long time coming. AOL also realized that Apple always kept its own software up to date, so it got the idea of making it possible to use AOL services via Apple's software. The resulting product was a tool that made migration quick and easy: *AOL Service Assistant*.

In a nutshell, *AOL Service Assistant* sets up Mac OS X *Mail*, *Address Book*, *iChat* and *Safari* with all your information from your AOL account. Here's a description of what it does, from Apple's Web site:

- *Mail*: The *AOL Service Assistant* makes it easy to configure Mac OS X *Mail* to send and receive AOL mail. If you've used the existing AOL service for Mac OS X, you can also import your incoming and outgoing messages from your Personal Filing Cabinet into *Mail*.
- *iChat*: You can now easily set up *iChat* to work with your Screen Name.

- *Address Book*: Using the *AOL Service Assistant*, you can now easily import your AOL *Address Book* contacts into your Mac OS X *Address Book* without bringing in duplicate entries.
- *Safari*: *AOL Service Assistant* helps you import your AOL Favorite Places into a folder in the *Safari* Bookmarks Bar.

Of course, using AOL via AOL.com or through Apple's software isn't for everyone. Change isn't always easy or fun. For those who don't want to deal with the change, there is now another option. *AOL Desktop*, the new all-in-one software from AOL for Mac OS X, is now available for download at <http://daol.aol.com/software/>. To each his own!

In summary, there's nothing wrong with still using AOL. The company offers a huge variety of valuable Internet services. Just be aware that you have at least four ways to tap into those services and you should use the one that works best for you.

Learn more about *AOL Service Assistant* at:

http://www.apple.com/downloads/macosx/internet_utilities/aolserviceassistant.html

Want to save \$300 per year on AOL?

The most common price plan for AOL is \$25.90/month but several years ago AOL started to promote a free plan. "Free?" you ask! Yes, for AOL customers who have their own broadband connection (either DSL or cable) and who don't care to receive free telephone support, the price can be changed to free. Do I lose anything else when I go to free? You lose nothing of consequence but you gain \$300 per year. Just go to MyAccount.AOL.com for more information and to change your price plan.

Everything is Miscellaneous: A Review

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And each system of order breaks down when new problems are presented or new goals are sought.

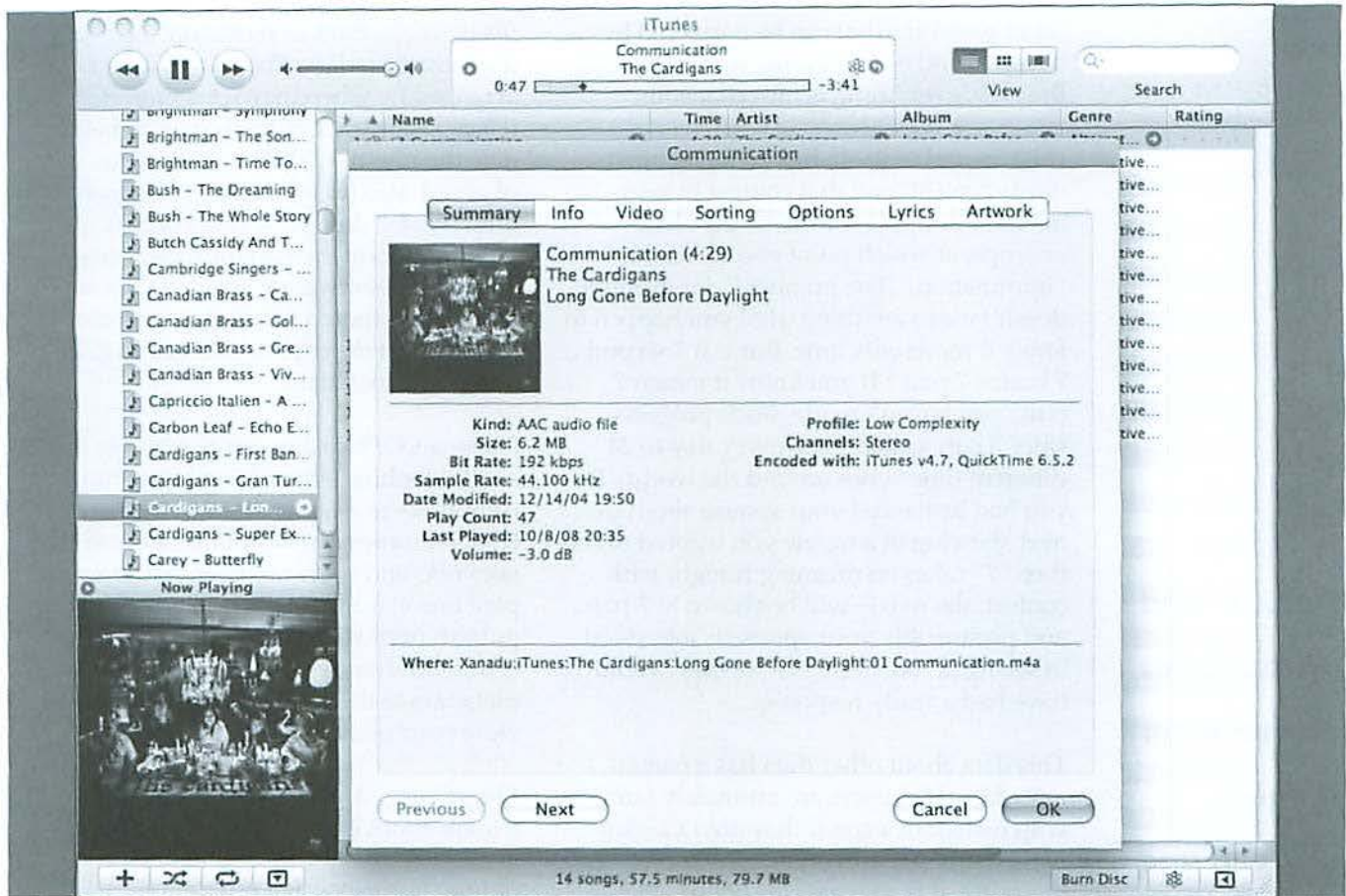
Modern society, no less than medieval society, craves order. While we no longer support the divine right of kings or the stratification of society into lords and serfs, we depend on guidelines, rules, and predictability. We expect the upward-pointing arrow to make the elevator rise and the downward-pointing arrow to make it descend. Women's coats and shirts have buttons on the left, and men's have buttons on the right. Penguins belong in and around Antarctica, not on the shores of Brazil. Explosions make noise in outer space, at least in the movies and on TV, even if we may know, deep down inside, that sound isn't possible in a vacuum.

Humanity has a gift for order, divinely granted: *Genesis 2:19* states, "So out of the ground the Lord God formed every animal of the field, and every bird of the air, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them, and whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name." This isn't limited just to Judeo-Christian belief, either: from ancient times, virtually every religion states that the naming and ordering of things gives mankind power over them.

David Weinberger, in his brilliant book, *Everything is Miscellaneous*, talks a great deal about order, starting with how a Staples office supply store is organized

iPhoto keeps track of a wealth of information about stored photos. In this case, a photo of Chester Cathedral is highlighted on the right, and the Information pane on the left shows the photo title, date and time the photo was taken, photo size, and annotation. Selecting Get Info would bring up additional information in the Photo Info window.





and venturing off into the periodic table of the elements, the alphabet, and the Dewey Decimal System for cataloging library books. Each system of order, formal or informal, is designed to solve a problem, from properly storing groceries fresh from the supermarket to keeping track of the millions of pieces necessary to assemble a Space Shuttle. And each system of order breaks down when new problems are presented or new goals are sought.

The title describes the book very well. For any given task – laundry on washday, references for a scholarly paper on women poets of Byzantium, plane tickets to attend a wedding – there will be discrete piles of “things that go together” and then leftovers. For a given task, a given problem, there are useful items, and everything else is miscellaneous. That dry-clean-only blouse might be wonderful, but if you are washing white cotton clothing, it gets tossed into miscellaneous. The budget plane ticket to

Reno might be a steal, but if the wedding is in Liverpool, it and all other flights are just miscellaneous. At another time, even minutes later, the blouse or the ticket to Reno might be critical, but not now.

Sorting and categorizing are profoundly, deeply human activities. Consider, for example, *solitaire*. This, the world’s most popular game, with a vast range of permutations, is, quite literally, nothing but sorting.

The World Wide Web presents the ultimate test of unstructured, unordered problem solving. Each day, countless gigabytes of new data are added to the Web, by millions of people around the world. Data is placed on the Web so that it can be found, and viewed, and used. But there is no gatekeeper for the Web, nor is there a grand classification scheme, nor even simple checks to see if the new data is genuinely new, or valid, or useful. There is no single

iTunes revolutionized music classification. The normal browser window shows name, time, artist, album, genre, rating and a few other items. Selecting Get Info on a track tells you even more.

Book Review

set of problems that can be answered by things found on the World Wide Web. On the Web, everything is miscellaneous.

Data, in and of itself, has no meaning; it needs context, and that context in turn needs to be applied to some problem or scope, at which point you can call it “information.” The number 7, for example, doesn’t mean anything until you happen to know it represents time. But is it 7 seconds, 7 hours, 7 p.m.? If you know it means 7 p.m., you haven’t made much progress, since 7 p.m. comes once every day to 24 different time zones around the world.. If you had just asked your spouse about the next showing of a movie you wanted to see, then “7” takes on meaning fraught with context: the movie will be shown at 7 p.m., and presumably your spouse is interested in seeing it, too, or otherwise they wouldn’t have had a ready response.

This data about other data has a name: metadata. Mac users are intimately familiar with metadata, even if they aren’t aware of the term. An icon on the desktop is metadata: it is a visual clue about what kind of file or application or document should appear when you launch the file associated with the icon. The icon color, the name given below the icon, and possibly even where you’ve placed the icon on your desktop, all have potential meaning.

Similarly, a song in *iTunes* has metadata. At a minimum, an *iTunes* listing provides name, time (length in minutes and seconds), artist, and album. Additionally, you may also have genre, rating (your rating of the song), play count, last played date, composer, track number, year (of release), album artwork, and a couple of dozen other attributes.

iPhoto keeps track of metadata, too, but very different metadata. Photos and images are arranged by when they were imported, and *iPhoto* keeps track of image width, height, date the photo was taken (if a photo), name of photo, size (in bytes), date of importation (into *iPhoto*), date of modification (if modified), camera manufacturer, camera model, and software version of the camera. If you’ve bothered to annotate a photo, by writing a description, the photo gains additional metadata.

iTunes and *iPhoto* data isn’t limited to a single machine, either. If you have multiple computers in a home or office (or dorm), *iTunes* libraries can be “published” on the network, and users on other machines can play music from your song library. If you publish photos on the Web with *iPhoto*, *iPhoto* will transfer much of the photo metadata to the pages, allowing others to view your photo notes as captions.

Everything is Miscellaneous is essentially a book about everything, and nothing at all. It is a very approachable view of how humans solve problems through information gathering, and how wildly different systems have evolved for slicing and dicing information over human history.

It will make you feel guilty about not assigning captions and keywords to photos in *iPhoto*, or saving word processing documents titled “Review” or “Minutes” or “Report” or something similarly bland and non-descriptive. It will make you appreciate Apple’s Spotlight desktop search engine, and Google. And it will expose you to some genuinely extraordinary methods of bringing order to the universe.

Data, in and of itself, has no meaning; it needs context, and that context in turn needs to be applied to some problem or scope, at which point you can call it “information.”

Resources:

David Weinberger, *Everything is Miscellaneous: The power of the new digital disorder*. Times Books, 2007. 277 pp.; \$25.00 ISBN 13-978-0-8050-8043-8. Also available in paperback.

For a wonderful overview of the book and topic, check out Weinberger’s presentation to the staff at Google on YouTube, presented as a Google Tech Talk:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x3wOhXsjPYM>

Preparing for The Switch to Digital TV Broadcasting

By Dick Rucker

By now, everyone knows that, as of February 17, 2009, all TV over-the-air broadcasting will be digital. Analog TV (ATV) broadcasting will be over, and only digital TV (DTV) will be broadcast over the air in the U.S. If you still have an analog television set, and you get your reception using an antenna rather than cable or satellite service, you will need to make a change if you want to continue to watch TV. You have some choices:

1. You can buy a DTV-to-ATV converter box for your existing TV;
2. You can sign up for cable TV or satellite service;
3. You can buy a new, digital TV.

This article is intended to help you understand what the transition to digital broadcasting is all about and to become aware of a few potential problems. You can also find a brief summary of the transition on the FCC's Website, www.fcc.gov, or read the longer, downloadable version of my write-up on the Pi Website at: <http://www.wap.org/journal/digitaltv/>

Why the Change?

The change to digital broadcasting is mandated by the *Digital Transition and Public Safety Act of 2005*, a section of the *Deficit Reduction Act of 2005*. That law also requires that all TVs manufactured after March 2007 contain digital tuners.

Since digital broadcasting uses the radio spectrum more efficiently than analog broadcasting, some of the spectrum now used for broadcast TV can be reclaimed after February 17th and put to use elsewhere (including, for example, public and safety services such as police and emergency rescue). The law also provided

for the auctioning off of the frequencies associated with UHF channels 52 to 69.

From the consumer's perspective, the new digital standard will permit us to:

1. See program images in much higher resolution, with truer, more stable colors;
2. Hear the accompanying audio with higher-fidelity, five-channel "surround sound";
3. Choose the language in which the program is heard; and
4. Participate in interactive programs.

A downside is that DTV signals are either "on" or "off," so they are either detectable or they are not. In the past, when a signal was weak, you might have watched the program anyway. Now, if the signal is weak, you will not see the program at all. This is known as the "cliff effect."

Converter Boxes

A converter box is a device that you can install between your TV antenna and your TV, to convert the new digital signals received over the air into an analog format that your older TV can read. With a converter box, you will be able to continue to watch TV, although you won't get the enhanced resolution that the digital signal makes possible. You can buy a converter box for around \$50, and the federal government will send you up to two coupons worth \$40 each toward your purchase of converter boxes. For details and coupons, go to:

<https://www.dtv2009.gov/>

If you still have an analog television set, and you get your reception using an antenna rather than cable or satellite service, you will need to make a change if you want to continue to watch TV.

Continued on page 40

The Best of the TCS – Winter 2009

By Bob Jarecke and Dick Rucker

Another Round of Good Questions, and Better TCS Answers!

The Pi has a proprietary discussion forum called the TCS, which is short for TeleCommunications System. This system is accessible, after log-on, to any member who has an active membership account and a password. The big secret about our discussion forum is that most questions posed on the TCS result in concise and quick replies.

Members who are stymied, confused, or hopelessly lost can get plenty of options to help them with their Apple computer or gadget. The answers and advice come from fellow members who invariably have years of experience to back up their suggestions for curing your Mac's ills. And another reassuring fact: these are fellow members that you have met at General Meetings or elsewhere, and you can put a little more trust in someone you know than in a screen name from someone out there in the ether.

Not sure how to get started? There is a newly revised, highly detailed "how-to-use" guide available for download on the Pi's Web site home page. Just look for the title "TCS User Guide" under the Washington Apple Pi Events heading. It is a PDF download of 2.7 megabytes. It even has a Quick Start Guide on the opening page if you want to delve right in!

And what follows are two great TCS discussions. The topics are both found in the Computing Conference/ Mac OS X Board.

Still need help

Jay T. still has a question about creating a new email account in Apple Mail:

When I click on the Mail icon I am welcomed and asked to answer questions. I presume that I need an alpha/numeric code identifying the mail server I wish to use, i.e. Apple Pi. What is it???

Reply:

All the info you need is here: <<http://www.wap.org/config/>>. You know your name, email address and password; the noted page will give you the name of the incoming (POP) and outgoing (SMTP) mail servers.

Security certificates: unknown signers

George K. asks:

Occasionally when entering a secure Website from Safari I get a window that warns me that the authority of the signer of the security certificate is unknown, so that I might be going to a false site parading under the name of the one I want.

I do not understand how the certification system works, so I just decide not to try the site. I had this experience with a bank today and when I phoned about it they said it sometimes helps to clear the history file, or try Internet Explorer. I did both but neither helped. If this is a problem with their server, why would any change I make cause things to improve?

I got around the problem today by doing the intended business by phone, but would like a better understanding of this so that I can evaluate the risk of proceeding despite the warning.

There is another site I would like to reach but their certificate has expired (a different reason but same risk of fraud); I suppose I need to reach the Webmaster?

First reply:

Occasionally when entering a secure Website from Safari I get a window that warns me that the authority of the signer of the security certificate is unknown

A very good feature.

I got around the problem today by doing the intended business by phone



An excellent choice.

when I phoned about it they said it sometimes helps to clear the history file, or try Internet Explorer.

You probably talked to a clerk, so this is almost forgivable. If you talked to a techie, switch banks — without delay.

I do not understand how the certification system works

Think of it as an electronic notary public. A notary is an individual, certified by the state, to act as a witness. If you want some document witnessed, the notary states that, as an official witness, they asked for evidence of your identity, were given some kind of documentation, and based on what was presented, attest that it really is your signature.

Certificates work the same way. Mac OS X has certificates. Safari has certificates. iChat has certificates. Some of these certificates are shared; some are not.

A certificate for a Web site is issued by a “certificate authority,” which is a company that issues Web certificates (a complex piece of electronic code) after being assured that the Web site owner is who they say they are. Certificates vary in complexity based on the need, and based on the value of the transaction. Certificates for banks cost more than, say, Washington Apple Pi. And yes, Washington Apple Pi has a certificate, used mainly when you go and retrieve mail but also at other times.

When you go to a site that is encrypted (https:// prefix instead of http://), your browser asks for a certificate from the Web site. The certificate has a whole bunch of characteristics, but the two most obvious ones are the name of the site and an expiration date. If the certificate is for “panda.ark.org” and the site name is actually “www.panda.ark.org” then you’ll get an invalid certificate error; the name must match exactly. If the certificate is valid until 2008-10-31 and you connect on November 1, 2008, you’ll get an invalid certificate error. If there is *no* certificate, you’ll get an invalid certificate error.

Do not, ever, do business with a site that gives you a certificate error, for any reason. And the advice you were given is garbage; clearing your cache, or using some other browser, will not make any difference.

Second reply:

Certificate errors are a known “problem.” There is a risk

of accessing a fraudulent Website. However, there are other possibilities.

Some places are trying to save money, in some cases the user’s software might not be updated with the latest certificate info. The possibility of the certificate not being up to date is more likely when the user is using an old version of software, such as Mac OS 10.3 or earlier, or a browser from that era, which is no longer supported.

No one can say what the specific problem is for your situations, but the following may help. The decision of what to do is yours, but be safe.

<http://www.vcn.com/knowledgebase/article.php?id=087>

“An internet browser may display a warning when a user enters a secure site with an unknown or expired security certificate. This is an issue with the Web site requested. “Some Webmasters create their own certificates, rather than pay Verisign or Thawte for a Web certificate. In these cases, the certificate may be valid. In most cases, the Webmaster has not taken the time to update their Web certificates, causing annoying security messages.”

<http://www.helpdesk.umd.edu/documents/4/4647/>

“Updating The Security Certificate For Your Web Browser”

“The recommended way to deal with this is to update your browser’s root security certificate. By updating the root security certificate, you should eliminate the warning window.”

One possibility relates to the date(s):

http://www.askdaveytaylor.com/invalid_or_expired_security_certificate.html

“Dave’s Answer:

“After thinking My standard response would be to check the security preferences of the Web browser and to try visiting one or more of the sites using a different browser like Firefox.

“In a private dialog, however, I was pleased to hear that the chap who sent in this question figured out the problem on his own, and it’s a beauty:

“Dave, just so you know, I’ve figured out my problem with the expired or not yet valid security certificates:

Best of the TCS

the date on my computer was set wrong and it thought I was years in the past! Once I fixed the date and time, all of these problems vanished. ..."

More members weigh in:

[First:]

would like a better understanding of this

See the following. When doing commerce, always be safe as Lawrence says. Read the info at the links carefully for a general idea of how it works. You will then understand that a fraudster can originate a real certificate that will work. But as it is not issued by a CA, it provides you with no proof of being the place you are trying to reach, rather than a fraudulent Web site.

<http://www.redhat.com/docs/manuals/linux/RHL-9-Manual/custom-guide/s1-secureserver-overview-certs.html>

"Red Hat Linux 9: Red Hat Linux Customization Guide Chapter 20. Apache HTTP Secure Server Configuration 20.3. An Overview of Certificates and Security"

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Public_key_certificate

"In cryptography, a public key certificate (or identity certificate) is an electronic document which incorporates a digital signature to bind together a public key with an identity — information such as the name of a person or an organization, their address, and so forth. The certificate can be used to verify that a public key belongs to an individual. ..."

[Second:]

Lawrence's answer is concise and correct: if you're expecting to find a bank, accept no suspicious substitutes. A real bank will keep its site certified.

Ed's caveat about system clocks is amusing, and brings up other reasons that a -valid- certificate might not be recognized by your system. Most commonly that would be a dramatically outdated, unpatched system whose preinstalled "root certificates" have expired. The root certificates are the set of recognized authorities that your system respects to act as a notary public. We've sometimes seen people let their browsers and systems get so out-of-date that all of the root certificates expired and no sites could pass inspection.

But Lawrence's "www.citibank.com, not just citibank.com" is more frequent.

[Third:]

Do not, ever, do business with a site that gives you a

certificate error, for any reason. And the advice you were given is garbage; clearing your cache, or using some other browser, will not make any difference.

I agree with Lawrence FAR more than I disagree, so please consider that when absorbing what I think are minor disagreements, but I think there are particular times when it is okay to visit a site with a certificate error.

First, no exceptions: I agree about banks, stockbrokers, and other places where you might have a significant amount of money accessible by capturing your private information. It doesn't matter if the errors are minor. It isn't worth it. Don't bank there. For people who get excited if a bank loses money because your credit card info is stolen, I would extend the rule to all shopping carts and anyplace where you are giving out your credit card numbers. This also includes any site in which you type in a password which you also use for one of those high security purposes. No exceptions.

That said, I can imagine circumstances where you'd willingly visit a site with a bad certificate. When SunRocket went under and TeleBlend took over their Web site, they didn't fix the security certificate situation for at least a year. But, I could read that the certificate was re-issued in the name of TeleBlend.com, but that the site with my voicemails was SunRocket.com. In other words, TeleBlend was pretending to be SunRocket ... electronically as well as legally. I knew that before I signed on. I could swear I remember a time when I was getting certificate errors from some sub-domain of wap.org, and I decided that was no problem. (Of course, Lawrence is the Web maven, and he might recall differently). The point is that every sub-domain of every domain needs its own certificate, and I know I've seen a bunch that aren't registered correctly. As long as I recognize the registrant as being related to the Web site, I proceed ... provided I know that I'm not giving out any overly useful information.

But, you won't be unsafe if you follow Lawrence's easier rule and avoid sites with registration errors. But, then, you won't get to visit those Web sites.

BTW, I also disagree about whether a reload can change a certificate problem. I've had this happen, and it confused the heck out of me until I figured it out. If the Web site had a registration problem when you visited the first time — for any of the reasons above or for those mentioned by Edward or others — they probably won't admit that they had a problem. They tell you to

hit reload, because your browser might have cached the site when the certificate was bad. Convincing you to change browsers also fixes the same problem. Either way, they don't have to admit that the problem was on their end. Leave MSIE alone, but the reload might help if they fixed the site recently.

[Fourth:]

I also disagree about whether a reload can change a certificate problem. I've had this happen, and it confused the heck out of me until I figured it out.

But... did you figure it out? It seems to me this scenario might seem to happen a lot for some people, and not ever for others. The idea being what Lawrence and I both mentioned: substituting "ebay.com" in the location bar when the site identifies itself as "www.ebay.com". If you're the type of person to do that a lot, you may find that the rejection notice redirects to the correct hostname, so reloading works after hand-typing failed.

[Fifth:]

That said, I can imagine circumstances where you'd willingly visit a site with a bad certificate. When SunRocket went under and TeleBlend took over their web site, they didn't fix the security certificate situation for at least a year.

Then you should stay away, just like you'd stay away from a lawyer who hadn't bothered to be licensed. In this age of Web site spoofing, it isn't three strikes, you're out. You get one chance at a proper certificate; there is no excuse — none — for screwing it up

George K. responds:

Thank you all for another advance in my education. I should have mentioned that the man at the bank also did ask me to check if my date and time were current; they were.

The bank situation seems to have healed itself in Safari; I had used it many times with no problem. The link from my bookmark goes right through now. I forget now whether I used the bookmark the other day or typed in the address; the latter may well have been the problem. What I get has not only the look of the real thing but also the data. I suspect a spoof site would take my info but not lead me to useful information.

I also updated my security download sometime in here and that may also have helped. Or perhaps they checked their certificate and corrected any error at their end in the meantime. Sorry to have so many

variables that we can't nail it for certain, but thanks for all the good explanations and cautions.

And that generates more replies:

or typed in the address

My usual practice is to type the web site name into the search box of Google or similar, rather than the Internet address line at the top.

That way, I get the benefit of Google's smart engines who may ask me if I meant "thus and so", in case of a typo, or provide a number of selections from which I can check out and choose the one I intended. There is also some protection that Google will ID some sites as malware sites or just not show fraudulent sites.

When I know I am at the correct site, I may bookmark it for future use. This way helps me, as I am a terrible typer. I dislike taking a chance on being fooled if I type in an "almost correct" address, but get spoof web site. FWIW.

And:

What I get has not only the look of the real thing but also the data. I suspect a spoof site would take my info but not lead me to useful information.

If they have your login credentials, possibly the easiest thing for them to do — easier than creating a parallel spoof site of their own — is to perform a man-in-the-middle attack. They sign in as you and act as a bucket brigade, showing you real information from the actual site while doing whatever.

If the brief excerpts in this article help or clarify in any way, that's good. There is a lot more where they came from. The WAP Web site is a great resource for current and archival information. The TCS takes it a step further by offering near-real-time assistance from friendly fellow Pi members. Give the TCS a try; you may like it.



October 2008 General Meeting: Retired with your Mac

By Bob Jarecke

While the main theme of the October General Meeting suggested that you should be retired in order to attend, that was simply not the case! Several members of the audience looked far too young for that, yet appeared to find the topics of Family, Travel, Health and Entertainment interesting. A post-meeting review suggested that three out of four of these topics struck a good chord with the audience.

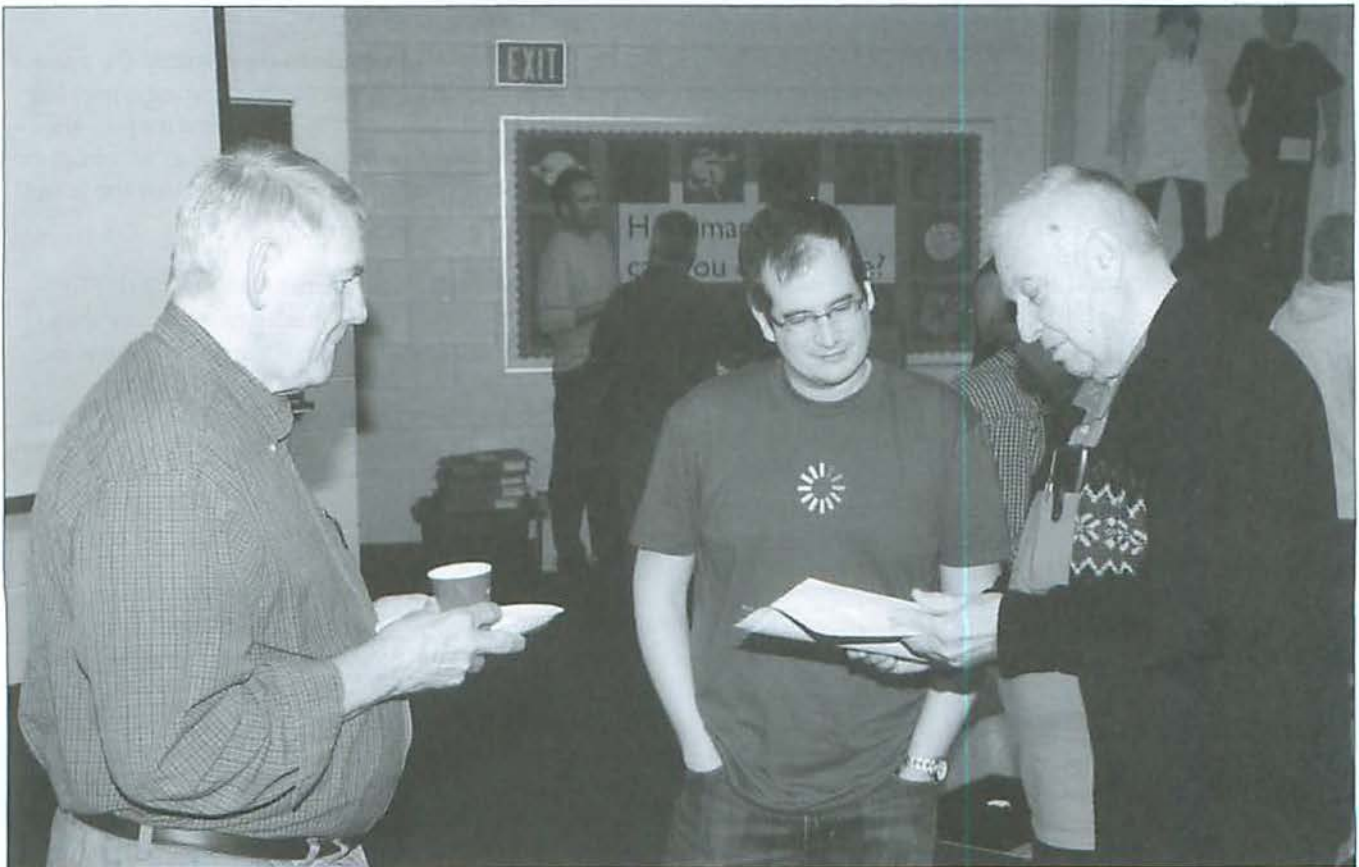
Pi President Bob Jarecke took a few moments up front to explain the rationale for the meeting topics. The club's leadership is coming to grips with the fact that our membership is older, and efforts to recruit a younger demographic are problematic. The reality is that we need to concentrate on bringing in new "older" members, such as recently retired folks who now have time to devote to learning more about their Mac. Also, we need to get them early before their retirement years fill up with other, equally involving interests.

So what does that mean for you? Quite simply, you may see more General Meeting topics that will fall under the themes covered by the October meeting. Family, travel, and entertainment topics have much to offer, so stay tuned!

Questions and Answers — Topics Galore

The meeting started with a little hiccup when our regular Question & Answer session leader, Lawrence Charters, emailed late regrets — but that was okay. *Stuff happens!* With a minor adaptation, the opening act went on, and it took just four stand-ins to fill Lawrence's huge shoes! The new faces upfront did not deter people from asking questions, nor preclude them from getting some reasonable answers.

Steve Roberson discusses his presentation with Pi members. The symbol on Steve's shirt should bring a smile to any Mac OS X user. Photo by Richard Sanderson.



With the stand-in crew ready to pounce on the first Mac-related question, they were thrown a curve. The first questioner was curious about the impending conversion to digital TV over the airwaves. A couple of folks chimed in with a good description of what was to occur and how you can deal with it. (Check out the article on this transition to digital TV elsewhere in this *Journal*.)

Next, in keeping with the TV theme, we had a question about viewing television programs on the Mac. This inquiry was much easier to answer, and a couple of product devices were mentioned as possible options. Two individuals chimed in with their first-hand knowledge of two popular devices: Elgato's EyeTV and Pinnacle TV.

The next question had to do with an Epson R300 printer failing to feed heavy stock paper. The advice ranged from downloading the latest print drivers to checking the paper feed rollers to see if they had become too worn to handle the heavier paper. The questioner mentioned he had contacted an Epson representative, and been told to bring the printer in for servicing. One of our answer gurus suggested that, given the low cost of printers, it might be simpler to purchase a new one. But what about the couple of hundred dollars of ink supplies hanging in the balance? Sell the ink on eBay.

The topic quickly switched to music, as one member asked where to find the best source of information on organizing classical music on an iPod. Although he has loaded his large collection of classical music from his CD collection, he has not been able to organize the music in a coherent manner. One member of the audience suggested he use Smart Playlists, and Steve Roberson provided a quick demonstration on how to do this in *iTunes*.

The next question came from a member whose Airport card, which had been working fine on his older model iBook, lost its signal. He assumed the problem was with the card, but the recommendations centered on possible software issues. The first and simplest fix suggested was to shut the card off in the main menu and then turn it back on. This restarts the card and the card should then find all WiFi networks within range. If the network doesn't reappear and connect, then the next step would be to delete and then add back the user's Preferred Networks within Network of System Preferences. All these steps help clear out possibly corrupted files and reestablish new ones with correct settings.

The final question was a request for an opinion on two different Mac operating system diagnostic applications — *TechTools* and *Disk Genius*. Randy McMillan, who does Mac repair for a living, said both programs were quite good. He related the basics on their use and said he leans towards *TechTools* as his first choice. The questioner then asked about *DiskWarrior*. Randy explained this application's one specific objective, which is to examine the hard drive disk-directory structure and repair and rebuild it as necessary. He felt it was an essential tool for those that don't mind tinkering under the hood of their Mac.

Family

After getting double jolts from the caffeine and sugar served during the coffee break, everyone settled in for the main event. Steve Roberson led off the day with one of his enjoyable and educational presentations on the topic of Family.

Steve introduced his topic with a wealth of information on *iPhoto*, which, as he aptly demonstrated, can produce great recollections of family and family events. He showed the audience how to easily import and send images and print photos, and talked about the great photo-related items that you can order for yourself and your family. He also talked about some competitor services and applications that can do much of what *iPhoto* does and with reasonably good results.

The Web too is a great place to share images with family, and Steve gave everyone a primer on that. As he pointed out, Apple provides a couple of great products. One is MobileMe, which, obviously, requires the MobileMe online service. The other is *iWeb*. Although this is directly tied to Apple's online service, it will work with most other online Web-hosting services.

Next, Steve moved on to movies. He pointed out that there are two ways to create family movies: you can take them with a digital movie camera, or create them by using a slideshow. Of course, the methods for showing your prized family movies vary too, depending on the digital format you choose. Steve showed us how to burn a movie onto a DVD for use in any DVD player. He also demonstrated how all your digital media can be stored, accessed, played and shared online with family, using Apple TV.

Steve finished by mentioning the *iCal* and *iChat* applications and how they too can be useful for family: *iCal* allows for the sharing of calendars while *iChat* is all about sharing conversation in the form of text, audio

General Meeting Report

or video. With that, Steve wrapped up his presentation and the next presenter, Travis Good, took over.

Travel

Travis proved a good choice to talk about Travel since he does his fair share. He has traversed the globe — well, at least the northern hemisphere — and, using his Mac, has devised some great tips and tricks for planning a trip, documenting all you see and do, and finally, sharing your travel adventures with others.

Travis published his presentation as a Web page, and this proved fortuitous, since his new MacBook Pro decided to have a catastrophic failure after he got to the meeting. Unflustered, he brought up the presentation on Bob's MacBook and the show went on — oh, the benefits of the Web!

Travis set out four main objectives for his travel: pick a destination; prepare for the journey; take the trip; and preserve the results of your travels. A pretty simple plan, right? The devil is in the details!

Step one — someplace to go! Travis puts a somewhat romantic spin on the selection process by defining it as “finding your travel inspiration.” Consider your particular interests and hobbies, and look for trips that are compatible with them. In his case, this led him to research visits to National Parks, possible road trips, hiking excursions and biking adventures. While this approach might not necessarily work for the person who travels to visit family or friends, even then it could help you plan side trips to add another dimension to the main journey.

When deciding where to go and planning the details for the trip, Travis uses the Internet extensively, and his presentation included links to several Web sites that helped illustrate the points he was making. Besides the usual questions of how to travel and where to spend the nights, Travis researched activities based on his interests that could serve as diversions along the way, something to break up long legs of the journey.

Next came the actual trip, and here again Travis showed us how your Mac, iPhone or iPod touch could aid the traveling experience. Of course, this means having Internet access, and that is one of the first things he checks for at any place he considers spending the night. Internet — must have. Bed — optional!

With access to the Internet, Travis uses his favorite Web sites to map out custom walking tours and research

other activities within the local area. And to share the experience, he stays in touch with family via “texting” (text messages) and MMS (multimedia message service), which is a method for sending text, graphics, and video files from your mobile phone. Of course, there is the traditional manner of phoning home, and here again the Internet helps, by letting you use a Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) service such as Skype.

Lastly, Travis likes to chronicle his travels using a Web-based travel log, or “blog.” This can be as simple as a paragraph describing the events of the day or as ambitious as a blog page with text, pictures and videos of his latest travel exploits. He also uses Google Earth and Waymarking.com to chronicle special places he has visited. These services allow you to post pictures and descriptions using geographic positioning information. While this sounds really high tech, it only requires recording GPS information when pictures are taken.

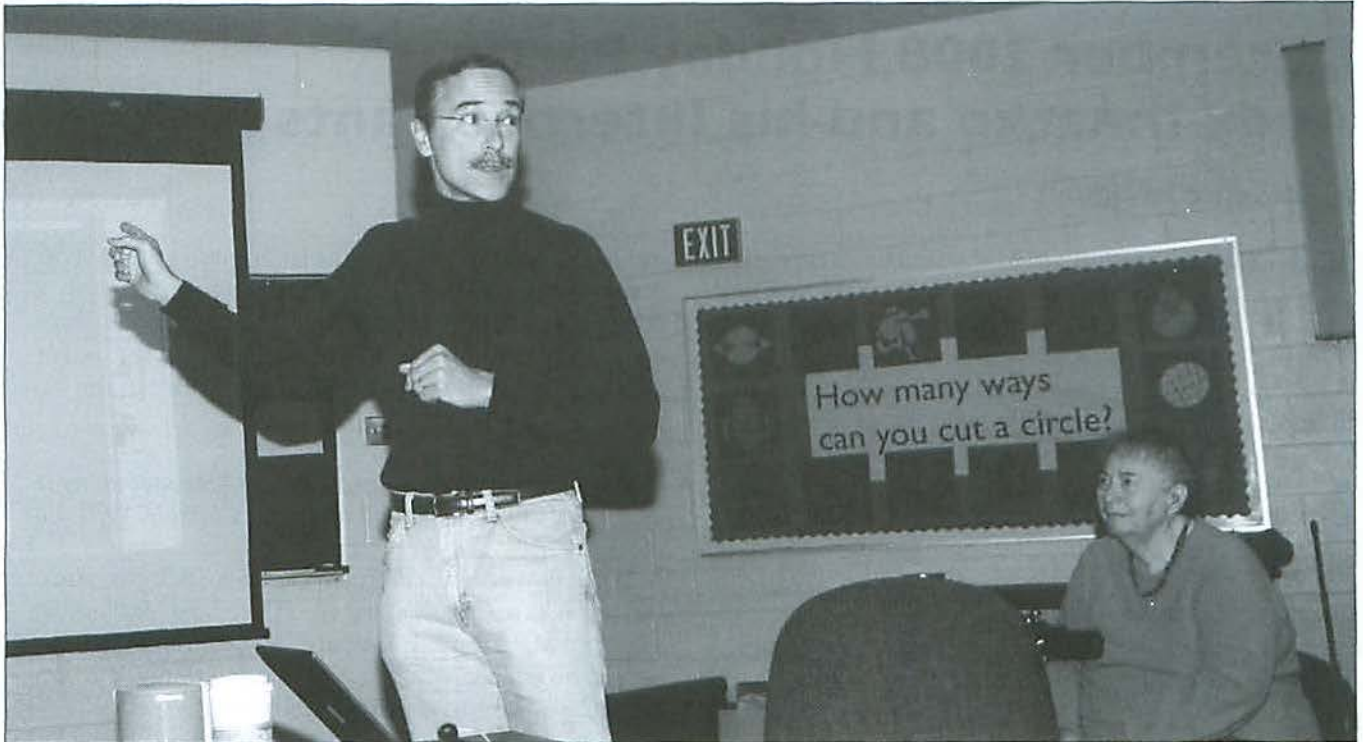
As you can see, Travis is a well-seasoned traveler who has learned to tap many resources in planning and executing his travels. He's always sure to use his MacBook, his iPod touch and his digital camera to transform every trip into an adventure! We will hear more from Travis in the future on the topic of Travel. You can visit Travis' blog at <http://www.goodpursuits.com>.

Please contact president@wap.org if you have an idea for a future Travel segment.

Health and Entertainment

Bob Jarecke took on the last two topics of Health and Entertainment. His Keynote presentation was a bit ambitious, so much of the material whizzed by with limited explanation. To make up for this, his jokes had everyone rolling in the aisles — just kidding!

Overall, the area of Health, which is important to all of us, is not directly related to computing on a Mac. Bob's presentation dealt with both physical and mental health issues, and also health issues related to pets. He presented several examples of Web sites that can help in researching health issues and sites that can connect directly to health care providers. As for health-related applications, these are not as numerous, and focus primarily on tracking health conditions and expenses. There was one application that did address mental health conditions such as depression. Bob also pointed out that a recent study had found that people benefited mentally from Googling. The study, which was a little more involved than just Googling, substantiated that working at mental tasks, in this case computing tasks,



Travis Good outlines the type of pre-travel research he does in order to get the most out of the experience.
Photo by Richard Sanderson.

helps to exercise the mind, and this in turn strengthens your mental faculties. Lastly, Bob reported on an application that dealt with organizing records and tracking critical care of one's pet.

The last theme for the day, Entertainment, in contrast to Health, is not so difficult to relate to computing on a Mac, although there is Web-based fun and Mac-based fun. Gaming Web sites abound, and they for the most part work with any computer. Bob showed off his favorite time-wasting game, *Bubblesooter*. This is downloadable from the Web and installs within a Web browser so you can play it without having to be connected to the Internet. There are other forms of entertainment that are Web related also, such as the movie rental service Netflix. Bob gave a brief introduction on how this service operates. Based on the questions from the audience, this one piqued some interest.

Next, Bob covered two Mac applications that entertain but are not games. Both of them — Skype (a VoIP service) and EyeTV — relate also to the theme of Family, with which we started the day's presentation. While Skype, on its own, might not be considered entertaining, it does connect you to family and friends, which can be an enjoyable and uplifting experience and good for mental health. The program is innovative

and well designed, and a joy to use. EyeTV, while not Internet dependent, does use the Web to access TV program schedules and can set up recording instructions for any number of shows. The EyeTV application is part of a hardware package that connects to any TV signal input and allows the user to watch TV and capture programs for viewing later.

The final entertainment item was Apple TV, which Steve covered in an earlier segment. As Steve demonstrated, the device is quite capable, and when coupled with a large HD display it makes viewing video from any source a sheer joy. Look for more on this topic at later meetings.

Lunch and SIGs

Following the presentations, the crowd was ready for some grub. The pizza arrived from Papa John's ahead of schedule, so everyone who was staying for the follow-on meetings hung around and gabbed between bites.

After lunch, the audience dispersed to the assigned rooms for the *iLife*, Genealogy, and Beginners Special Interest Group sessions. Despite the long series of presentations, a goodly number of people stayed beyond the 2:00 PM quitting time to learn even more specialized ways to use their Macs.

December 2008 Holiday Party: Andy Ihnatko and his Internet Pants

By Lawrence I. Charters

What do around 120 Mac enthusiasts do early on a December morning, with snow swirling in the air? On December 6, Washington Apple Pi invited its members, plus members of other local Mac User Groups, to a combined General Meeting and Holiday Party. A large crowd braved the raging flakes to have a shockingly good time with *Chicago Sun-Times* technology columnist Andy Ihnatko, followed by the justifiably famed Steve Roberson's Top Ten Mac Gifts. First, there were questions – lots of questions.

Questions and Answers

The first things were, oddly enough, about the things the moderator, Lawrence Charters, was carrying.

Q: What is that thing?

A: "That" is a Samson Zoom H2 Handy Recorder, a battery-powered two or four channel microphone that records to SD media cards, such as those used in digital cameras. With luck, it will record the Q&A session so I have some vague idea what people asked. (It worked, though it ran out of space at 48 minutes. Need to get a bigger SD card; 512 MB is not enough.) It saves in WAV format as a native format, which imports nicely into *GarageBand*.

Q: What is that other thing?

A: This is a Skooba Design Roadwired Advanced Protection System (R.A.P.S.), essentially a padded blanket for electronics, with Velcro fasteners and an anti-static lining. It is great for protecting, in this case, a digital camera, or a GPS unit, mobile phone or other electronic gizmo you want to put in a backpack or a coat pocket.

Q: What camera is that?

A: It is a Canon PowerShot G10, a 14.7 megapixel pocket camera with image stabilization and a 5X optical zoom, that can save photos in RAW format for use with Apple's *Aperture* or Adobe's *Photoshop Lightroom*.

Q: Why do you need a 14.7 megapixel camera? That's too large for a Web page, or to E-mail.

A: In the case of the G10, 14.7 megapixels comes to 4416 x 3312 pixels, or 5 by 4 feet, which is admittedly large. But having so much detail allows you to crop

out just a small portion of the image and still have a great photo. You can also use the extra information to create a smaller, sharper image. You can always throw away information you don't need, but you can never add back what the camera failed to capture in the first place.

Q: I'm thinking of recycling a Power Mac and using it as a Time Capsule instead of a Time Capsule. Will that work?

A: If the Power Mac can run Mac OS X 10.5, yes, you can use it as a *Time Machine* file store. *Time Machine* can save to a Mac running Leopard, a Mac running Leopard Server, a Time Capsule, or a hard drive plugged into a Time Capsule or *some* Airport Extremes.

Q: How do you delete old stuff in Time Machine?

A: Don't worry about it. Assuming the drive you are using for storing backups is reasonably large, *Time Machine* takes care of removing old information automatically. Virtually everyone who has *Time Machine* has no problems with space issues, and no problem running *Time Machine* in general – unless the user over-thinks the process and starts meddling.

Q: Should I upgrade the drive I'm using with Time Machine from 500 GB to one terabyte?

A: If you aren't in any danger of running out of room, why bother? *Time Machine* is intended to restore your computer to working order after a problem, and does an excellent job of removing unnecessary files. You want to have a storage drive at least twice the size of what you have on your computer, but if your laptop, for example, has only 60 GB of data, you don't need a terabyte drive to back it up.

Q: But what if I want to retrieve something I did six months ago?

A: *Time Machine* is not a replacement for burning archival information on CD-ROMs. Just because Apple likes to promote *Time Machine* by showing it reaching back in time to retrieve things doesn't mean you are absolved from any need to archive files offline. Burning documents, photos and such that you don't need to CD-ROM, and cataloging them with a good CD cataloger, such as *CDFinder*, is still required.



Andy Ihnatko (in fedora) and Pi photographer Richard Sanderson. This photo was taken with Richard Sanderson's camera, but we aren't sure who was holding it.

Q: *But Time Machine backs up your entire iPhoto library if you add just one photo. It is just one big file.*

A: That's not correct. Apple makes it look like one file, because they don't want you to play with it. But if you modify just one photo in *iPhoto*, it backs up just that one file, not the entire library. Similarly, messages in Leopard *Mail* are saved as separate files (unlike *Mail* in 10.2, for example), and only new or changed messages are backed up as needed. This also applies to *Aperture* and *Lightroom* photo libraries.

Q: *Every once in a while, Time Machine fails, but later on it seems to be working.*

A: *Time Machine* is very paranoid; it checks to make sure things are properly backed up. If a file was busy or there was some other interference, it will notify you of the problem. But if the problem is transient, it will cheerfully carry on without comment during the next backup. Don't worry, be happy.

Q: *In Parallels, how do you set the F1, F2, etc., keys so they work as on a PC?*

A: Most F-keys in *Windows* are set for whatever program is running, and the system-wide F-keys are set by the manufacturer's BIOS. Since the Mac doesn't

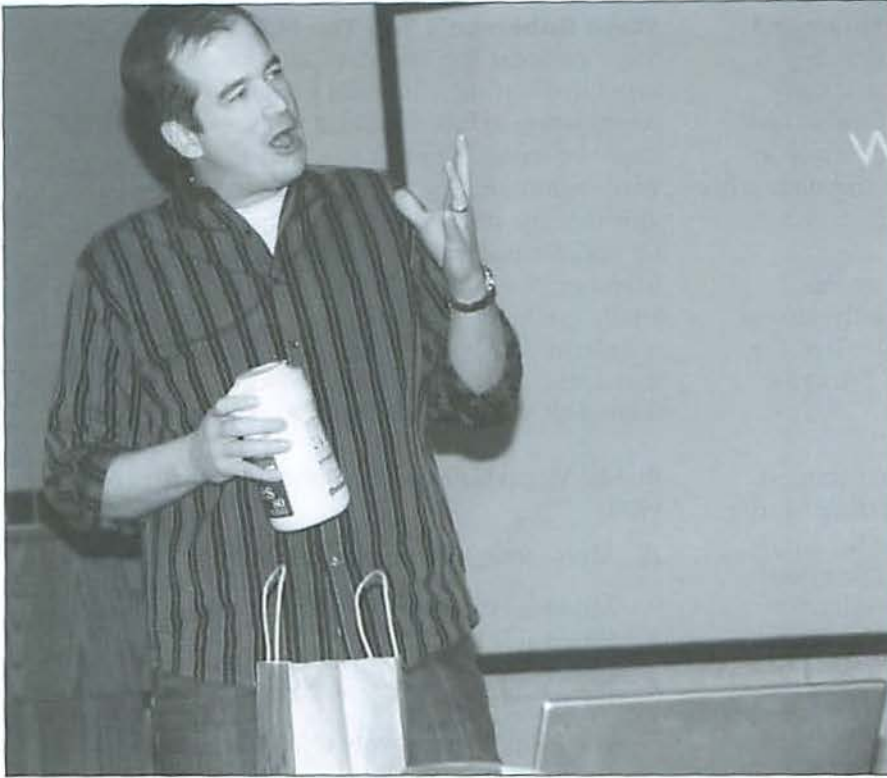
have a BIOS, you can press the Fn key first (if you have a keyboard with an Fn key) or you can change things with System Preferences > Keyboard and Mouse > Keyboard Shortcuts.

Q: *I have a corrupted Address Book; things in Address Book aren't displaying properly.*

A: *Address Book* is a database. If things aren't displaying properly, or you think something is corrupted, quit out of everything, fire up *Disk Utility*, click the First Aid tab, and Verify Disk (forget Verify Permissions). This should be the first thing you check when any kind of file fails to open as expected, or when a program crashes.

If *Disk Utility* says everything is fine, there are numerous utilities on Version Tracker for importing, editing and exporting *Address Book* entries. Leopard users can also use *Bento*, the new lightweight database program from FileMaker, to edit and verify *Address Book* entries.

Q: *I have an E-mail account that uses IMAP. I use several different computers to read my mail, but only the inbox is shown on all the machines; the sent mail and other folders don't appear.*



Steve Roberson waxes poetic about “finger magnets” and the need for monitor wipes, which he buys in bulk. Photo by Richard Sanderson.

probably some other items. When someone mockingly said, “no wallet?,” he even pulled out an “old, analog” wallet, the only non-electronic item apparently lurking in the many pockets.

With a table full of high-def cameras at his disposal, he then talked about high definition cameras, *iMovie*, *Final Cut Express*, and many other things, in rapid sequence. He explained that he’s the kind of guy who gets lots of nice toys for free — for 30 days — because he is a technology journalist. The Panasonic camera, however, was his. After getting one on loan, he thought it was simply too cool to not get one for himself, so he bought one after it had been discontinued in favor of a new model.

While he didn’t directly say so, the Panasonic became the benchmark against which he measured the three “casual” HD cameras from Flip, Kodak and Aiptek. He found the Flip Mino HD to be ideal for the YouTube generation, as it offers casual video — but in HD 720p format — from a flat box smaller than many iPods. But the Flip has internal, non-replaceable or expandable memory, and an internal, sealed battery. While waving his iPhone, he loudly commented: “Now what idiot would develop something with sealed-in memory and sealed-in battery?” The audience, predictably, cracked up.

The Kodak Zi6, in contrast, has removable, replaceable SD media cards for storing video, and removable, rechargeable AA batteries, making it much more flexible. It is also less expensive than the Flip. The sound on the Kodak is definitely better, but the video is a toss-up: neither can compare with the Panasonic, but neither is intended as competition, either: they are simple, fixed-focus, casual video cameras for those who have no pretensions.

The Aiptek GO-HD is aimed at WalMart customers: it is exclusive, and it is cheap. It uses SD cards, and has far more buttons than the Flip or Kodak cameras, plus a flip-out LCD display. You can also use it as a five megapixel digital camera. It doesn’t excel at anything, but it is: cheap.

Ilnatko then demonstrated his technique for testing the cameras, holding both arms straight out, with a camera in each hand, and marching along smartly and capturing video literally side-by-side. If this sounds silly, it looks silly, too, and he admitted to getting quite a few strange looks as he prowls his neighborhood in search of good subject matter.

The many cameras evolved into a discussion of video editing, and Ilnatko admitted he is a fan of *Final Cut Express* rather than *iMovie*. In *iMovie*, Apple was

General Meeting Report

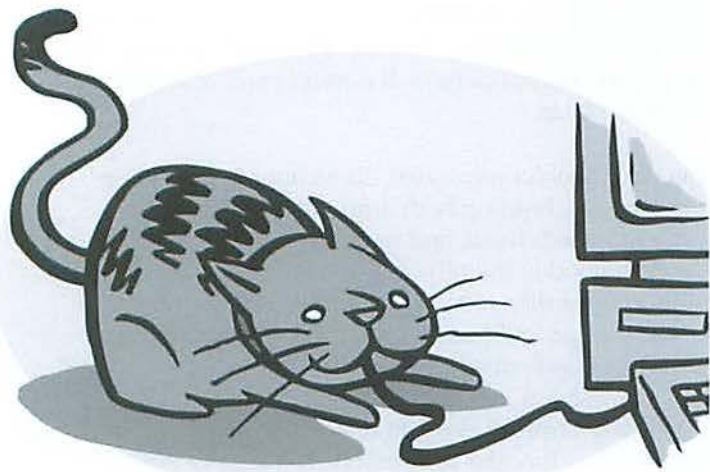
seeking to create a simple-to-use video capture and editing package, and they succeeded. But once you master those skills, there is nowhere to go: it can't ever do anything more exotic. *Final Cut Express* adds a wealth of tools for doing such things as picture-in-picture sequences, and Ihnatko has been chronicling his adventures with the package on his blog.

When asked what he thought of his iPhone, his response was eloquent and succinct: "It is the closest thing to a tricorder I've ever seen." On *Star Trek*, the tricorder did whatever the plot required. "And the iPhone does that, too."

Since he pulled out a Kindle, people asked about it, and he said the Kindle, and Sony's competing Reader Digital Book, work quite well. But even if the Kindle is particularly well done, he isn't sure it fills a need: regular books are less expensive, and most human beings don't have a need to carry around an entire library at once.

He also talked about Apple's design philosophy in *iMovie* and *iPhoto*, about Apple's policies on releasing applications on the iPhone Apps Store, about his love of the Slingbox, and many, many other things. You should have been there. But if you weren't, you can get a taste of his energetic speaking style through a brief clip of him talking about the ethnicity of his name, available on the Pi Web site,

<http://www.wap.org/events/dec2008/>



Steve Roberson's Top Ten Mac Gifts

Steve's annual Top Ten Mac Gifts is an annual event that is somewhat hard to explain, since it is a combination of tutorial, performance art, and what might be termed "practical nerdiness." Roberson, a Washington-area Internet designer, compiles a list of gifts that are, depending on your point of view: (a) for you, for use with your Mac; (b) for a Mac-loving friend or loved one; or (c) for your Mac. Roberson gently guides the audience through an exploration of wonderful gift possibilities, seasoned with whimsy, irony, and, at times, outright lunacy. You shoulda been there. This year's Top 10, with a bonus item, are:

Bonus: Virgin Galactic, the ultimate way to experience WiFi

10. More storage (featuring a Drobo drive robot)
9. Monitor Wipes for "fingerprint magnets" (iPods, iPhones, iMacs)
8. Bigger display (either an Apple Cinema or an iMac)
7. DVD Ripping Software (*Mac the Ripper*, *RipIt*, *HandBrake*)
6. USB Flash Drive (carry it with you, whatever "it" might be)
5. *iPhoto* Calendar (an instant family tradition)
4. More memory (always)
3. iPhone or iPod touch ("funnest iPod ever")
2. Podcasts (free entertainment and education from your iPod)
1. Washington Apple Pi membership. Of course.

Roberson's slideshow is on the Pi Web site, <http://www.wap.org/events/dec2008/>

Food and Presents

Forty-five people stayed for lunch (pizza), along with cookies and other festive fare. While munching away, drawings were held for various prizes. Francis Manion won a copy of Andy's brand-new book, *iPhone Fully Loaded*, and Paul Silverman won a new 8 GB iPod touch. Then it was on to the *iLife*, Mac neophytes and Genealogy SIGs.

It was a great end to another successful year for the Pi. If you feel left out, be sure and attend the General Meetings in 2009. Much like the Mac itself, reading about the experience is never quite the same as experiencing it in person.

Resources

Samson Zoom H2 Handy Recorder,
<http://www.samsontech.com/products/productpage.cfm?prodID=1916&brandID=4>

R.A.P.S. Roadwired Advanced Protection System,
<http://www.skoobadesign.com/product/advanced-protection-system-wrap-small-22/>

Canon PowerShot G10 camera,
<http://www.usa.canon.com/>

CDFinder,
<http://www.cdfinder.de/>

Version Tracker:
<http://www.versiontracker.com/>

Bento,
<http://www.filemaker.com/products/bento/>

Andy Ihnatko, *iPhone Fully Loaded*, Wiley, 2008.
272 pp., \$19.99,
<http://www.wiley.com/>

5.11 Tactical Series pants,
<http://www.511tactical.com/>

Flip MinoHD,
<http://www.theflip.com/>

Kodak Zi6,
<http://www.kodak.com/>

Aiptek HD,
<http://www.aiptek.com/>

Final Cut Express,
<http://www.apple.com/finalcutexpress/>

iMovie,
<http://www.apple.com/ilife/imovie/>

iPhone,
<http://www.apple.com/iphone/>

Kindle,
<http://www.amazon.com/Kindle>

Sony Reader Digital Book,
<http://www.sonystyle.com/>

Slingbox,
<http://www.slingmedia.com/>

Virgin Galactic,
<http://www.virinalgalactic.com/>

Drobo data robot,
<http://www.drobo.com/>

MacTheRipper,
<http://www.mactheripper.org/>

RipIt,
<http://ripitapp.com/>

HandBrake,
<http://handbrake.fr/>

iPhoto calendar,
<http://www.apple.com/ilife/iphoto/#prints>

Retired SIG Meeting, October 23

By Leonard Adler



Seth Mize demonstrated in Mac OS X 10.5's *Photo Booth* how much fun it can be to take your photo with a background selected from this application. You can be in the clouds, in front of the Eiffel Tower in Paris, or in any number of other fun places, just by using the magic of this program.

Next month we will look at another *iWorks* application, *Keynote*. If you've attended a general meeting of the Pi, you've seen the agenda done in *Keynote*. It is Apple's answer to Microsoft's *PowerPoint*, and you'll see why it is so easy to make slides and animated posters from it.

Spotlight on: *Pages*, part of the *iWorks* suite. *Pages* allows users to create a poster, a flyer, business cards, envelopes with text, and more. It can produce the model document so that the user can merely replace text, photos and even video with her own. In polling the attendees, we found that few were actually using it.

Len Adler, who presented, talked about how he got involved with *Pages*, when a committee he is on got him involved in making a series of posters to promote attendance at a Sunday event about contemporary issues. Before Len got involved, the posters had been straight text about the subject of the program. Len started playing around with inserting images from the Internet, and making headers with a color background, using *Keynote*, which is also part of *iWorks*. He moved on to *Pages*, which allows the user to really capture the viewer's attention by adding objects or photos, or big graphics and letters. Len showed us a number of colorful posters he had made, and then described how he sent them to the committee for printing, as .pdf files.

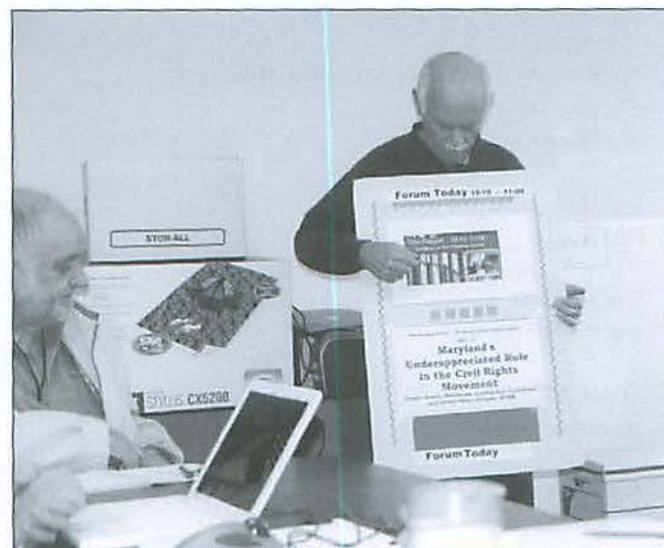
While a .pdf file cannot be (easily) edited, it is a means of sending a heavily formatted document to others, or posting it for review, via Google documents.

This led to a discussion of **alphatizing**, *iWorks* software menus include "alpha." This is a means of erasing background or any color in a photo, so that the image can be manipulated and added to another object.

Because of Thanksgiving, the Retired SIG will have its November meeting on November 20th, the third Thursday of the month. Mark your calendars and join us!

Top: Seth Mize talked about how you can use the "blue screen" effects of *Photo Booth* to superimpose yourself in the clouds. Photo by Richard Sanderson.

Bottom: Len Adler talks about using Apple's *Pages* to create event posters. Photo by Richard Sanderson.



Special Interest Groups and Other Small Meetings

The Pi has a handful of Special Interest Groups and other small group meetings. These gatherings are great opportunities to learn more about your Mac in an informal atmosphere with other friendly Mac users. Listed below are meetings or gatherings, SIG and otherwise, currently operating in conjunction with the Washington Apple Pi.

“members helping members” tutorial sessions

This activity originated as a Beginners SIG, to help novice members, and those new to the Mac, learn more about the basics of the Mac OS X operating system. However, as the group had no formal structure and sessions simply evolved from questions from the attendees, it has been redesigned to simply be a helping session where members offer their assistance to other members. Because the group is typically small, this is as close to one-on-one help that is available.

This informal breakout meets immediately after the monthly General Meeting lunch break. It is scheduled for one and one-half hours. Various helpers to date have been Randy McMillan, Dick Rucker, and Tim Childers. Attendees are encouraged to bring their own portable Macs and, of course, their questions.

Genealogy SIG

This SIG concentrates, obviously, on genealogy. While this topic is not directly related to computing, the Mac ends up being a valuable tool for researching family history. This group discusses various genealogy databases, how to research ancestry records, some pitfalls of the process, and other aspects of genealogy.

The Genealogy SIG meets in the afternoon portion of the monthly General Meeting. The session is scheduled for one and one-half hours. SIG co-leaders are Tom Carlson and Bob Jarecke.

October 25, 2008 Meeting

This SIG meeting featured a presentation by John DiBella about his trip to Poland. He journeyed to this central European country to visit an aging aunt and meet other relatives. His stories were fascinating!

John brought several books that he used for researching the country of Poland and the history of the migration

of Polish immigrants to the United States. These proved to be very beneficial to him and very intriguing to the SIG members. He also showed us other archival materials that he gathered in his travels. John also had some personal insights and experiences that made this meeting a pleasurable and interesting time.

December 6, 2008 Meeting

Our planned presenter was unable to make it to the meeting so we improvised. John DiBella presented a genealogy-related quilt for everyone to inspect and consider. John's wife crafted the quilt, and sewn into it were color family photographs printed on cotton cloth. The quilt was an incredible piece of work and it proved to be one other way to showcase and treasure one's past family members. Also, John offered up another way to obtain related photos from your family's homeland, that being to purchase old postcards that are widely available for sale in many venues in the old country.

At this point, Paul Silverman hooked up his MacBook Pro to the projector and we learned more about the widely popular genealogy software *Reunion 9*. We all watched and helped Paul navigate through some areas of the program that he was unfamiliar with. Thanks to Paul, it proved to be an impromptu education opportunity that paid dividends for all attending.

Graphic Arts SIG

The GASIG is one of the older, more established Special Interest Groups and topics have varied over time. Recently, the group has focused on photography; however, there are still plenty of artists in the group, and the notion of doing graphic arts on the Mac is still alive and well.

This SIG typically meets on the second Saturday of each month at Mac Business Solutions in Gaithersburg, MD, at 10:00 AM. Cheryl Lavoie is the leader of this popular SIG.

October 11, 2008 Meeting

This SIG meeting featured a lab for landscape. Look for the how-to on the topic of this meeting in a future *Journal*.

SIG Report

November 8, 2008 Meeting

At the November meeting everyone enjoyed another lecture with Harvey Levine on LAB colors as applied to portraiture. Again, there is a how-to on this topic planned for a future issue of the *Journal*.

iLife SIG

This SIG is also a very popular group and its most recent focus has been on *iPhoto*. Pat Fauquet, the group leader, has extensive knowledge of this and other *iLife* applications, and she is more than willing to share her expertise with everyone in the group.

This SIG also meets in conjunction with the monthly General Meeting and convenes immediately after the lunch break. The time allotted for the meeting is one and one-half hours.

October 25, 2008 Meeting

This month's meeting was led by a stand-in: Travis Good. With little advance notice Travis polled the dozen or so attendees for items of interest, and then they were off and running. The initial discussion led to a talk about rarely used but powerful features and plugins available with *iPhoto*. Then a member of the group took center stage and gave a step-by-step presentation on how to create a photo book in *iPhoto*. With a reasonable portion of the time allotted left, Travis took questions and this portion ended up covering a good cross-section of *iPhoto* capabilities.

This is typical of these SIG meetings, where all the programs of the *iLife* suite are touched on in one fashion or another. Questions and interaction are the rule of the day, and as a result, everyone comes away having learned something new and useful.

December 6, 2008 Meeting

This month Pat Fauquet was back at the helm of the group, and she presented a topic — mass storage of photos — to the 22 attendees present. The subject matter was based on her personal experiences on a Mediterranean cruise. The principal application involved in the discussion was *iPhoto* and the tips offered apply to that application.

Tip #1. Labeling Photos: *iPhoto* breaks things down to Events, but you can subdivide, and that will allow you to better categorize your images.

Tip #2. Camera Battery Problems: If your camera battery were to fail, the image date/time stamp could be adversely affected. You can correct the date and time,

and Pat recommended adding 15 seconds to the time to keep the photos in chronological order.

Tip #3. Backups: Pat could not stress enough the importance of backing up and, if you are “on the road” (or in her case, the high seas), you need to be backing up your images at least daily, more often if you are taking a lot of pictures. You should have a portable hard disk drive with you, and even consider burning images to CD at the end of the day. You will more than likely never have the same opportunity to take the photos you take on this trip, and you need to ensure you do not lose them due to a faulty piece of equipment.

The final area Pat addressed was sharing your photos on the Web, be it during or after your travels. Pat discussed three methods of posting your images to the Web: *iPhoto*, *iWeb*, and third-party Web applications. In Pat's opinion, *iPhoto* does a credible job, but *iWeb* gives you more control. In the third party category, there are a couple of applications that are more feature rich. Pat prefers using *Rapidweaver*, while other Pi members like using *Sandbox*.

Programming SIG

As the name suggests, this group concentrates on writing and modifying programs to better suit their needs. If you have a serious interest in the inner workings of Mac OS X and other programming languages, this group is for you.

This SIG does not have a regular meeting schedule, but rather evolves into a gathering when one of its members has something they would like to show or needs programming help. Aaron Burghardt is the leader of this SIG.

The Programming SIG did not meet during the October-December time period.

Retired SIG Afternoon Learners

The name of this Special Interest Group is somewhat misleading. While many of the group's members are retired, retirement is not a requirement, so the SIG recently changed its name. The focus of the SIG is very wide ranging, with no topic off limits. There is always something to share and members are quick to help others learn more about computing on their Macs.

This group holds regular meetings at the Pi office on every fourth Thursday of the month. Len Adler is the SIG leader. Look for write-ups of the most recent meetings elsewhere in this *Journal*.

Afternoon Learners — Retired SIG, November 2008

By Seth Mize and Len Adler

The main focus of this meeting was learning *Keynote*, part of the *iWorks '08* package (\$79 from Apple). It is Apple's competition for *PowerPoint*. You begin by choosing a Theme from many themes that come with the application. Then you build on the first "Slide." What the user makes can take the form of a poster, a single sheet, or it can be a series of screens or windows. These may hold music, text, movies and of course transitions. You can set each slide to begin with your Apple Remote or press the keyboard. Or you can predetermine the length of any or all slide transitions. How long a transition takes from one screen to the next is determined by the build in and build out time. Always remember to look under Help if you get lost. You may view the many tools at the top of your screen or with the Inspector (or multiple Inspectors): View, Theme, Masters, Text, Shapes, Table, Charts, Comment, Smart Builds, Mask, Media, Fonts, and Format.

Seth Mize started with the Preferences setting under the *Keynote* Build menu. There the time for each slide can be set. He used it to portray a download of breathtaking color photos of the Olympic Events held in China. The live feed on the web for the Opening Ceremony was blocked to the USA. He added transitions, music from his *iTunes* files, and developed a presentation in a few minutes.

We also agreed to use a new title for our group: Afternoon Learners-Retired SIG.



Century Club

\$100 or more Donations

With greater regularity, some Washington Apple Pi members are choosing to make monetary donations to the Pi.

One recent contributor felt the Pi was a "great organization" and because they could not volunteer time, they wanted to help the Pi succeed by making a donation. The donation option is available on the mail-in form or when renewing via the online Pi Store.

The gifts are greatly appreciated and will be put to good use. The Board of Directors would like to hereby recognize the following members who contributed \$100 or more to the Pi within the last year. Thank you, again!

November 2007

Charlotte Wunderlich

December 2007

*Meg Gabriel
Grant Peacock*

June 2008

*Merle Junker
Patti and Bill Schneider*

August 2008

Tom Carlson

September 2008

Dr. Finerty

October 2008

*Bertha Alexander
Tom Herlihy*

December 2008

Charlotte Wunderlich

All Century Club members' privacy will be respected and names will not be added to the list without explicit approval.

A Strategic Plan for the Washington Apple Pi

By Jay Castillo

This past summer Bob Jarecke, our President, guided the establishment of a Management Committee, which reports to the Board of Directors. One of the first tasks for that committee was to develop a strategic plan for the future of the Pi, in light of what has been a steady decline in membership. We have completed that task. We examined important aspects of the club, and asked and answered some critical organizational questions. We evaluated Pi strengths and weaknesses, scrutinized internal and external factors which affect everyone, and considered members' needs and expectations. And we established strategic goals to guide the Pi.

The Board has now approved the final Strategic Plan and it is ready to be implemented as soon as possible. The Board has all the extensive documentation the Management Committee provided of its work, and the complete Strategic Plan, and this material is available for review by any members who wish to go through it. This summary is designed to give the rest of you an overview of the process we went through to develop the Strategic Plan and the goals it embraces.

Our Process

During the process, the Management Committee established a Mission Statement, a Vision Statement, and Operating Principles for the Pi. These are set forth below.

1. **Mission Statement.** Washington Apple Pi is a community of people with a common aim:

to improve our knowledge and enjoyment of Apple products. We approach this through social interaction, sharing, fun, cooperative activities, mentoring and education.

2. **Vision Statement.** Washington Apple Pi will be the best Macintosh User Group. We will be a dynamic service organization with a growing membership of Apple enthusiasts who are mutually supportive, socially interactive, and dedicated to learning, volunteerism and helping others. The services we provide to our members to enhance their Apple experience will be useful, effective, and efficient, embodying modern Web and Internet technologies.

3. **Operating Principles** to guide the Pi in deciding on services, products, and WAP activities:

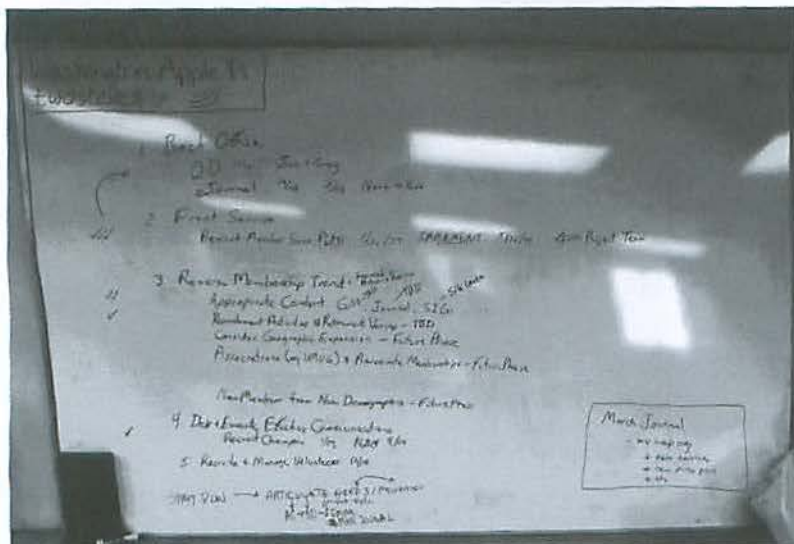
- We will evaluate the utility and viability of existing and new services quarterly.
- We will evaluate the utility and viability of our facilities periodically.
- We will ensure that each new product or service has a champion with a suitable backup.
- We will ensure that new products and services give good value for the resources expended.
- We will create success locally before expanding.

- Personal, face-to-face interaction and support are highly valued by WAP members.

- For those who do not regularly participate in forums or meetings, the "insurance" factor of available help, if needed, is important.

- Our members provide a deep, accessible knowledge base.

This plan for a 21st century Pi was outlined on a high-tech staple of the previous century: a white board.



- We will ensure that WAP membership services keep pace with member interests and passions as well as with Apple products and services.
- New “starts” (programs, projects, initiatives, etc.) must not be “expensive” for benefits gained.
- All products and services must serve an appropriate membership segment.

With the above framework in place, the Management Committee turned to the operational part of the Strategic Plan — setting goals for ourselves. Overall, our ultimate goal is to have a viable organization that provides valuable products and services to an involved membership through a modern Web interface as well as through face-to-face meetings. Each of the goals is broken down into a set of objectives. These objectives become projects which themselves must be planned and achieved. Each requires a stated outcome, and a champion to see them through. We have assigned deadlines for each goal and objective.

Here are our goals, few-in-number, but challenging to our resolve and commitment.

Strategic Goal 1: Implement an efficient and effective infrastructure for management processes.

Using Leopard Server Open Directory architecture, we will integrate our data management applications to reduce the number of disjointed manual processes we now use for Pi services to members. Additionally, we will implement the transition to the WAP *eJournal*.

Strategic Goal 2: Implement an efficient and effective infrastructure for electronic member services, which has its foundations in a proposed *my.wap.org* Web interface.

The objective is to broaden the available member services while bringing them all under one umbrella, and allow members to easily manage their own personal data.

Strategic Goal 3: Building on our new electronic services, we will make changes to other Pi services with the goal of reversing the trend of declining membership numbers.

We have enumerated several approaches to stabilize and grow our membership.

...our ultimate goal is to have a viable organization that provides valuable products and services to an involved membership through a modern Web interface as well as through face-to-face meetings.

We want to ensure that currently provided non-electronic services (*Journal*, SIGs, General Meetings) are responsive to our existing membership. We will focus on the mature and retiree WAP community, locally, and consider the potential for broader reach outside the local area.

We will also investigate associate memberships with other user groups and consider recruitment activities at retiree venues.

Strategic Goal 4: Develop and execute effective communications for the WAP.

Effective communications are critical for Pi operations and activities. We will define the existing and potential WAP constituencies with whom we must communicate, evaluate existing communications modes and identify new ones.

Strategic Goal 5: Recruit and manage our volunteers on a win-win basis.

We are a volunteer organization, and we depend on each other to get things done. We will survey the membership regarding talents and skills, agree to mutual expectations for volunteer activities, and recognize volunteers in an appropriate and personal manner.

Priorities

Goals 1 and 2 have highest priority, since their achievement enables most of the other goals. The Management Committee is already making good progress on them. The other goals are listed in order of priority. Champions are needed for implementation of the objectives as well as team members to help carry the load. There's room for all, so please join us in a worthwhile effort that ultimately benefits you, the Pi member.

Board of Directors

Highlights of WAP Board Activities, October–December 2008

By Gordon Nord, Pi Secretary

The Board met on November 22 at George Mason University, with eight members present. The full Board of Directors now meets only four times a year, because most of the club tasks have been taken over by the Management Committee. This has been working well.

Two issues were handled during the fourth quarter by email vote. First, the September Minutes were approved by email vote - the first time this new feature of the Bylaws has been used. Second, the Strategic Plan as developed by the Management Committee was approved by a two-thirds email vote of the Board of Directors on Dec. 2, 2008. This plan includes a vision of the future for Washington Apple Pi and an Operating Plan to achieve that future.

In November the Board reviewed the first electronic edition of the *Journal*, now named the *eJournal*. The Board gave the *eJournal* rave reviews. The transition to the *eJournal* should be complete by May 31, 2009.

Treasurer Tom Carlson reported that overall, with five months of FY2009 under our belt, we have a modest profit of \$3,067, whereas we had a small loss when the treasurer reported in August. Our biggest change is the reduced office rent. It came from moving to Suite 201, upstairs from our old office. The smaller square footage cut the monthly rent by \$800.

Income is down in most categories. There is no income from the Tuesday Night Clinic while it is on hiatus. *Journal* income is limited to current advertisers; there is no income from new advertisers. (This was assumed in the budget.) There is no event income projected for FY2009, since there are no special events in the planning cycle. Donations and bank account interest are lower due to the economy. Membership, while still having positive variance, is declining. The variance will be negative in a few months if no action is taken to reverse the trend.

The current membership is about 850.

WAP Officers and Board of Directors

President Bob Jarecke
president@wap.org

Treasurer Thomas Carlson
treasurer@wap.org

Secretary Gordon Nord
secretary@wap.org

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Webmaster Lawrence I. Charters
webmaster@wap.org

Tuesday Night Clinic Jim Ritz
jim.ritz@wap.org

Calendar Editor Nancy Seferian
pi-calendar@wap.org



Washington Apple Pi

Membership Application Form

Name _____ Member No. _____
 Address _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____
 Phone _____ Home _____ Cell/Work _____
 Email _____ @ _____

Membership Fee and Additional Options (Check Off Your Choices)

- Classic Membership account which includes the items listed in the section below \$49 annual rate
 - Explorer Service – 56K Dial-Up service and additional storage space (Additional) \$96 annual rate
 - Additional email account(s) (naming nomenclature is set by the Pi with special names available on request)..... \$20 each
 - “Pi Fillings” CD (for renewing members only) \$10 each
 - First Class postage for long distance members to ensure a faster delivery of the *Journal* \$12 annual rate
 - Donation..... \$ _____
- Grand Total \$ _____

Payment Options:

- Check/Money Order Enclosed
- Credit Card (Visa/Mastercard/Discover/AMEX)

Card No. _____

Expires /

Security Code

If the Credit Card owner or address is different than the applicant's, please fill out the following:

Name _____
 Address _____
 City / State / Zip _____ / _____ / _____

Membership Benefits and Payment Options

This membership application/renewal becomes valid when processed by the Pi and will remain in effect for one year, until the last day of the month in which it expires. All new members will receive a classic membership account which includes a subscription to the bi-monthly *Pi Journal*, one email account, 25 MB of web storage space, TCS* access (a proprietary, members-only discussion forum) and complimentary copies of the latest *Journal* and Pi Fillings CD. The new member will also receive by mail a membership card with their member number, user ID and password for use with the TCS* and their email account.

(Please note if you live outside the US, additional postage will be charged for the Journal – email us at office@wap.org.)

**TeleCommunication System is a proprietary name for our internet, email, website and members-only message-board center with forums.*

12022 Parklawn Drive, Suite 201 • Rockville, MD 20852 • (301) 984 030

Opportunities



The Pi operates primarily through the time, talent and grace of a host of volunteers. They devote hours of personal time to ensure members receive the services promised upon joining.

Additional volunteer help is always needed and in particular, we are in need of certain expertise to help in selected areas. Maybe you have work-related skills that could benefit the Pi. Look over the listings below and if you see a place you can fit, let us know and we will discuss how you can get involved.

Bookkeeper's Assistant

Description: Maintain the Pi's financial records using *MYOB Account Edge* and *Microsoft Excel*.

Hours: Flexible; two to three hours every two weeks during days or evenings.

Location: Pi Office and your home.

Experience: No particular previous training is required. The Pi's bookkeeping is not complex and as long as you are not overwhelmed working with numbers, you can do this.

Additional Info: Training Phase
About two to three hours every two weeks at the Pi clubhouse to observe and learn how to accomplish the bookkeeper duties. In three months you will see every bookkeeping transaction with the exception of those required at the end of each calendar year and each fiscal year (May 31).

A user's guide is available that documents:

- The bookkeeping practices and policies that apply to the Pi, and
- How to use *Account Edge* to follow them.

The long-term plan is for the candidate to learn the bookkeeper duties so that they could fill in from time to time and be available if the present bookkeeper became indisposed.

Point of Contact: Brent Malcolm, bookkeeper@wap.org

Recruiting and Retention Expertise

Pi membership, like many Macintosh User Groups worldwide, has been declining at a steady rate for several years. A continued decline could result in a loss of some benefits currently being offered due to a lack of funding that comes principally from membership dues.

Need: Increase Pi membership by reducing current loss rate and adding new members.

The Pi is in need of a member who could help us with a program to assist in retaining current members as well as recruiting new members. Experience in membership drives, consumer outreach programs, political campaigns or charity drives might prove to be very adaptive. Skills in survey development, conduct and interpretation might also prove valuable in defining the current membership.

If you think you might have a skill set that could help in keeping the Pi membership numbers healthy, send an email to president@wap.org.

Education and Training Expertise

Pi membership and potential new members are in need of tutorial assistance. The Pi's Tutorial Program has not been active for several years due to a lack of qualified instructors. Two local Certified Apple Dealers have requested assistance from the Pi with training new Mac computer users. The Pi needs to revamp its Tutorial Program.

Need: A Pi member with an education background, to include teaching experience, needs to work with the Pi leadership to develop one-on-one and classroom training programs which members would value. They will need to find and grow new training talent within the Pi as well as oversee ongoing training activities.

If you have this experience and would like to help in the education aspects of the Pi membership, send an email to president@wap.org.

Pi Reporter

Description: Investigates and reports on Pi activities and other Mac-related items.

Hours: Flexible, work at your own pace. Time involved will increase during workup of bi-monthly *Journal* for publication.

Location: Home and wherever the story is!

Experience: Previous writing experience helpful but not required. If you like to write, this is good enough.

Additional Info: This is not a single position. If there are several Pi Reporters coordinating their activities, then coverage of Pi events and other stories of interest will not require too much work. Innovative writing such as interviewing Pi notables is encouraged. The *Journal* staff is looking for all kinds of Mac or club-related content.

Point of Contact ("POC"): Bob Jarecke, president@wap.org or Lawrence Charters, maceditor@wap.org.

Journal Design and Production Editor

A creative individual is needed who is familiar with publication layout and design and is proficient with Adobe Creative Suite software to fill the position of Design and Production Editor of the *Washington Apple Pi Journal*.

The position would start as an understudy to the current editor in charge of layout and production of the prized bi-monthly publication. Plenty of latitude will be given and creativity encouraged as the individual will learn much about the characteristics and operation of Adobe InDesign, Photoshop and Illustrator CS3.

For additional information, email Nora Korc at nora.korc@wap.org

CLASSIFIED ADS

E-mail to office@wap.org for rates and regulations

Pi members may place ads up to 25 words in length free of charge.

Services

- Mac Hardware, software, networks & training. Apple factory trained & A+ Certified. Marchetti Associates LLC. 301/404-2210 or phil@marchettiassociates.com.

- Graphic Design Services: Newsletters, Brochures, Business Cards, and more. Contact Nora Korc at 301/320 5199 or norako@mac.com.

Discount for Pi members.

- Law Offices of Richard S. Sternberg. <http://www.MetroWashingtonLaw.com>, 202/530-0100.

- Music for a fair, reception, business event. For a combo playing "oldies," an organ grinder, or brass calliope, go to: <http://www.bendermelodies.com>.

Marketing or Advertising Expertise

The Pi operates principally through the collection of dues from members. With a declining membership, the necessary funds to continue providing all the benefits of membership are dwindling and some services might be in jeopardy of being reduced. At one time, paid advertisements placed in the Pi Journal were a great source of revenue, and could be again. A better effort needs to be made to sell ads to those whose business could improve if only Pi members were made more aware of what they have to offer.

Need: The Pi is in need of a member who could help us with a program to assist in raising revenues. Skills in marketing, advertising, product promotion or conducting a fund drive might serve the member well as they devise methods of bringing in additional funding to help the Pi continue to provide important services and benefits to the membership.

If you think you might have a skill set that could help in keeping the Pi membership numbers healthy, send an email to president@wap.org.

Digital Life

Continued from page 15

Preparing for The Switch to Digital TV Broadcasting

Cable/Satellite TV

The FCC cautions that cable subscribers may need new equipment after February 17th to view digital programming in digital format, and satellite subscribers may need new equipment to receive and view high definition digital programming. It recommends that you ask your service provider about this.

What does this mean?

The Advanced Television Systems Committee (ATSC) has adopted a family of digital signal transmission standards that define various formats. *Standard definition (SDTV), 480i*, is a signal that is compatible with the signal transmitted using analog technology. *Enhanced definition (EDTV), 480p*, is a signal that will match the quality of movie DVDs. *High definition (HDTV)* is defined to include **720p**, for compact transmission of HD images, and **1080p** for sharp resolution on all screen sizes.

The goal is for all HDTV to use the 1080p format, but the standard allows for HD broadcasting at 720p or 1080i in the interim. Most DTV receivers are being

built to scan at 1080p and to convert to that when the incoming signal is either 720p or 1080i.

If you have cable TV and you have multiple TV sets in your house, you may have decided, as my wife and I did, to use a two-way *signal splitter*, which divides the incoming signal power between two outputs, so you have the cable service on all your TVs. If you are lucky, as we were, you will have sufficient signal strength for the multiple TVs. If you are less fortunate, you may have to add a signal amplifier to one or more of the runs from their n-way signal splitters. Be aware that adding an amplifier has the potential to interfere with cable-supplied Internet service.

A new TV?

The switch to digital programming is, of course, a great excuse for those of you who have been itching to buy a new TV -- a flat screen perhaps? Remember if you go shopping, though, to keep the ATSC digital standards in mind. Some of the TVs are described as 720p and some as 1080p, and this affects both the price you will pay and the resolution that you will be able to get.

Conclusion

The one sure thing about the switch to digital programming that we are all about to confront is that every situation is different. I wish you success in finding a solution in your situation.

Do You Like Digital Art ?

Are You a Graphic Artist, Illustrator, Photographer, Videographer, Animator or Teacher?

If any or all of the above applies to You, then we need You !

The Graphic Arts SIG meets on the second Saturday of the month with speakers, demonstrations and how to's. Your expertise or simple skills in the digital world is desperately needed to fill some dates in the coming months. Please call or email if you would like to share with our very friendly and diverse group.

We have lively discussions and often meet for lunch after the meetings.

To join, go to:

<http://www.wap.org/gasig/default.html>

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Cheryl Lavoie 703 548-2064, cheryl.lavoie@wap.org

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