



February 2004

# Apple Bytes

A publication of San Leandro Macintosh User Group



Wow, the 20th anniversary...

Many others have made the same comments. It came and it went with no fanfare whatsoever. Just another page in the diary of Apple, much like the recent keynote address with little or nothing to announce or release or whatever. Just remember that "he" said that "they" would be releasing products throughout the forthcoming year. That sorta sounds like a press release. One could interpret that to mean that there is nothing in the works that is far enough along in development to be considered "ready." That being said, we all know that Stevie has plenty up his proverbial sleeve. I belong to the group that says "I believe." It is a fact of life that we (Silicon Valley folk) live in the valley of instant gratification. We can't get enough and we want it now. Back off, relax, and take a deep breath. He is in control and his arrogance shows it. We live in that rat-race because we have chosen to. We belong to the group called Mac Users. We are the faithful.

We will talk about and continue to learn more about many of the things we have on our plates. That is what we enjoy doing. Cheer up. There will be new products soon.

All in all, it has been a rather Ho Hum few weeks, except for the iMini, to say the least.

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# Club Calendar for February

Feb. 2004

5... SLMUG General Meeting 7:30 pm  
San Leandro High School  
Room 416 (iMac Lab)  
2200 Bancroft Ave.  
San Leandro (Info: 510 828-9314)  
SLAEUG Board Meeting. Normally held after the general meeting at a nearby eating establishment.

19... SLMUG Mac SIG  
The Mac SIG meets on the third Thursday in Room 416, the new iMac Lab. Items for discussion are brought by you, the attendees. Discussions are specific to your problems and requests.  
(Info: 510 828-9314)

March 2004

4... SLMUG General Meeting 7:30 pm  
San Leandro High School  
Room 416 (iMac Lab)  
2200 Bancroft Ave.  
San Leandro (Info: 510 828-9314)

**The Fine Print**

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## Just when you thought it was safe...

...to put Macworld behind you, an ugly reminder rears its head - and its name is VISA. Or Master Card. Or American Express. Name your poison, a bill by any other name must be paid eventually. Without having yet uncovered all the secrets of the software or utilizing half of the hardware I bought, the bills have started rolling in.

They weren't completely unexpected. "You play, you pay" we've always been told. I had even put money aside for MW. I planned on spending some Big Money had Stevie answered my nightly prayers for the Cube II. Since he chose to wait on that project, I was free to spend a little of that cache of cash on some other things I needed. Or at least things that might one day come in handy.

This is the time many of us rethink the purchases we made and second guess the wisdom of our impulses. It's been called buyer's remorse. I refer to it as the "What the heck was I thinking?" syndrome, or words to that effect. Do we really need four cases for our PowerBooks, or one more Solitaire game? Or different colored iPod 'Skin for every day of the week? And how many mice can we use, anyway?

Well, none of that for me. I'm happy with everything I bought. I repeatedly tell myself what great deals I got, and how these necessities of life will shave whole seconds off of my tasks, making me even more efficient and adding untold minutes to my free time.

But paying the bills is only part of the fallout. The other side of the coin is the realization that I missed some things at the Expo and the chance to get some more deals. Shopper's logic— you have to spend money to save money. This wouldn't fly on Vulcan, but none of us has pointed ears.

When surfing the WWW, one of the elusive gems of Macworld resurfaced. While wandering the Expo floor, I had noticed a white keyboard that looked like the standard, government issue Apple Pro Keyboard. It had a cable attached so it wasn't wireless. It wasn't oddly shaped, split in two, and didn't glow in the dark (although that would have been *way* cool.) I stopped for a minute to check it out. As anybody does with a keyboard, I showed my obvious test driver skills by placing my fingers on the home keys. Hands poised dramatically like a concert pianist, I tested the 'board by smoothly typing something like "djfaiodjlas v joid alojgfalsjg." Satisfied that all onlookers knew that I knew my stuff, I walked off.

Disappointed that it wasn't wireless or had a built-in phone, cup holder, or some other widget, I left with only the observation that the keyboard had a pretty good feel to it. Had I not been in a hurry (to get to the ProSoft booth, probably) I may have had a greater appreciation for that keyboard.

As it turns out it is billed as by its maker as "a better keyboard for your Mac." The Matias Corporation proclaims it as "'the best keyboard Apple ever made' rises again". The **Matias Tactile Pro Keyboard** is a modern day work of art. But to really appreciate it, a bit of background may be in order.

Those who have been around Macs for awhile know that “the best keyboard Apple ever made” refers to the Apple Extended and the Extended II. These were solidly built keyboards with actual switches instead of mushy buttons under the keys. These may have well been the ‘boards that sound effects people used for the “clickity-clacking” you heard in all those computer movies. You know, *real* “computer” sounds, the kind you hear as the Hacker frantically races the clock to crack a password. (Have you ever noticed that they only use keyboards and never use mice?)

These ‘boards had good tactile response when typing. You knew when you hit a key and when you didn’t. There were no double strikes from soft, undersprung keys. Even a great typist couldn’t “out type” an Extended. They were optional with some Macs and cost about \$150! Eventually they were discontinued for newer, cheaper Apple Design variants that didn’t perform nearly as well.

They can still be found from time to time on e-Bay and from some vendors who specialize in older refurbished equipment. But they use an older ADB interface and need an adapter to work with newer Macs. And they are — beige. I’ve got one of these connected to my 6500. Whenever I need to do something in OS 9 (remember that far back?), using that keyboard impresses me and makes me want to connect it to my Cube. But beige? Not a chance.

Enter the Matias Corporation. Their incarnation, called the **tactilepro keyboard**, is completely updated yet built with the same quality switch technology of yore. The **pro** is full sized with the clear base and white key construction as the Apple Pro keyboards. I doubt that’s an accident. It uses USB to connect to any modern Mac and has two USB ports in the same location as Apple’s OEM ports. Another nice touch is that the optional characters — the ones you get by pressing the Option key along with some of the “regular” keys — are printed on the key caps. That means you don’t have to track down Character Palette and figure out how to enter those odd symbols because you can’t find Key Caps in Panther.

A **five year** warranty is also part of the deal. The MSRP is \$99 but I imagine you will be able to find a cheaper street price if you shop around. For more information visit <http://www.tactilepro.com/>.

This is going to be a Must Have for me. Not because I need it, but because it’s just a great piece of gear. It’s a perfect blend of style and substance at a price less than we Mac users would expect to pay. That doesn’t happen very often.

There will be those late night sessions when I’m trying to finish an overdue project (or article) and it’s perfectly quiet. There will be no whirring from the fan, the TV will be silent, and not even an iTunes will stir. Hunched over the keyboard illuminated only by the glow of the monitor, I will fight a losing battle against the clock. From that near darkness there will emanate the soft clickity-clack of keys, a sound promising great, feverish work.

Just like the hackers in those computer movies.

Until next month — go commando.

# Kline's Korner

Mac OS X

The 20th anniversary has come and gone and there is no news. Most rumor pages were primed and ready for what seemed like an opportunity not to be missed.

I like the game Warrior Kings but for one feature, or lack of one. The settings allow changing the quality of the display. Yet, changing anything results in a rebuilding of the game's graphic driver resulting in a blue screen. Word is that Warrior Kings is more compatible with NVIDIA graphic cards than ATI. Which makes me wonder, as the Radeon 9800 is considered tops. The Mac is still working, but you can only see a blue screen. Normally, I would do a command-option-esc to bring up the force-quit menu. I was not able to see where I was in the menu, but one or two returns would eventually force quit Warrior Kings. If I also quit something else that had been running no loss as I never was working on something other than Warrior Kings that needed saving. MacFixIt has a fix for the blue screen that will return me to the game only at the default graphics settings. Sometimes I can get legible display back by putting the computer to sleep and waking it up, or in certain cases by inverting the screen color back and forth with the keyboard combination control+option+command+8. Inverting the screen is fun no matter what, especially on someone else's computer.

AppleWorks is so much grander. The font list is faster. Everything is snappier, including startup. Best, of course, is that AppleWorks is now scrollwheel aware.

There have been a number of rumors about Apple developing a true Office suite to insure against the day when M\$\$\$ tries to orphan us. The idea has been debated.

Benjamin Horst, on osRadio <[www.osviews.com](http://www.osviews.com)>, suggests Apple could either simply adopt the OpenOffice.org file formats as the default for the newest version of Appleworks, resulting in cross platform compatibility, or Apple could use the OpenOffice.org code and build its own custom Mac OS X GUI on top of it. Because of OOo's distribution under a dual licensing scheme, Apple would have great flexibility with regard to the creation and sharing of this software.

Another alternative is KOffice, which Mac-Slash reports as being more code compatible. <[www.office.org](http://www.office.org)>

Apple instructions are to only install 10.3.2 on the hard drive you have started from. If you wish to install the update on another hard drive, then start up from that hard drive prior to installing the update. Otherwise certain applications will not be installed even though they appear to be.

Safari's autofill may not work on a particular page probably because the site has turned that feature off. Financial sites are likely to do this for security reasons .

RealOne player has been very important the last couple of weeks. NASA has been broadcasting the status of both Spirit and Opportunity, especially now they have both successfully landed on Mars. Real audio format is a nice tight compression which streams well, though with some degradation. MPEG-4, used by QuickTime, is of better quality but not as widely used. Do you have RealOne installed?

Newsweek has an article on Apple's 20th anniversary. The best quote comes from Steve Jobs reflecting on why Apple's market share is below 5%:

"Once a company devises a great product," he says, "it has a monopoly in that realm, and it concentrates less on innovation than protecting its turf. The Mac-user interface was a 10-year monopoly. Who ended up running the company? Sales guys. At the critical juncture in the late '80s, when they should have gone for market share, they went for profits. They made obscene profits for several years. And their products became mediocre. Then their monopoly ended with Windows 95. They behaved like a monopoly, and it came back to bite them, which always happens."

I acquired an HP LaserJet 4 printer for free. Since it was a very old printer, the free part was not that good of a deal. This printer had been the printer in my office for a couple of years. Yet it still works and prints as well as it always has. The problem started when I got it home. My Mac could not see the printer. I went up on the web, even HP's unfriendly web page, for information on how to connect a totally Windoze printer to a Mac. Nothing worked.

I took it back to the office and had our IS guy (actually a good guy) try to connect it to the office network. Conclusion was that the JetDirect card could be bad. We had but one more (the office has upgraded to new HP printers that have built-in cards) and the network did see the printer. I took it home during lunch and my XRouter sent out its DHCP instructions and the JetDirect Card reconfigured itself to the IP address it was receiving. I plugged this IP address into Printer Setup and everything worked. You can get the IP address from the printout of the printer's test setup or from your routers web access. Anyway, the printer is accessible from the entire network at home and we are very pleased.

Enjoy!!

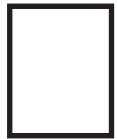


## February 5th meeting features...

Nothing new under the hallowed glow of the Apple. Bummer! However, there will surely be something to chat about. I am confident that some will come forth to continue our enlightenment of the glorious and mysterious innerworking of the Mac. Much will be said and you will be entertained for sure. Please plan to attend. It will be a learning experience for you. There is still a lot to cover for both desktops and laptops.



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Main Meeting - February 5th