



December 2006

Apple Bytes

A publication of San Leandro Macintosh User Group



Busy Month

Christmas is coming and so is MacWorld. Don't forget to save some of Santa's budget for next month. It is a sure thing that Stevie will have some new toys to show off at MacWorld. Lots of rumors about new phones. He blew the last phone deal so maybe he has learned from that.

Spent some time last month upgrading some not-so-new computers to Tiger. A bit of a time with some new challenges. Took a while but we were successful. Ancestor worship is something to think about.

I am starting to see a few more hard drives beginning to fail. The iMacs started shipping in August of 1998 and they are beginning to show their age. Let's face it. Machines don't run forever. Backing up is an important issue and more so with age. The minimum drive size is becoming 80 GB. Even so they are only around \$60. Machines older than the G4 Mirror drive models can only utilize the first 128 GB maximum on any drive.

Airport Extreme routers that are having reliability problems after updating the firmware should reinstall the 5.5.1 update. The 5.7 release seems to have a bug in it.

That's it for now...

Club Calendar for December

Dec 2006

7... SLMUG General Meeting 7:30 PM
San Leandro High School
Room 507 (Shop 7 Graphics Lab)
2200 Bancroft Ave.
San Leandro (Info: 510 828-9314)
SLMUG Board Meeting. Normally held after the general meeting at a nearby eating establishment.

21... SLMUG Mac SIG
The Mac SIG meets on the third Thursday in Room 507, the Shop 7 Graphics Lab. Items for discussion are brought by you, the attendees. Discussions are specific to your problems and requests.
(Info: 510 828-9314)

Jan 2007

4... SLMUG General Meeting 7:30 PM
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The Fine Print

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An Early Winter look at Siberia

By Bob Shayler

So many photo opportunities and so little time. Or so it seemed on my trip with nine students and five other adults to Siberian Russia last month. Some 601 images later, I returned home, sick and jet-lagged, not quite yet ready to edit the photos and put them online.

I had with me on the trip my brand new Canon Powershot A710 IS (Image Stabilized - <http://www.usa.canon.com/consumer/>) digital camera, an iBook and external LaCie drive to store all the images. I didn't need the last two as the 2GB memory chip would have stored over 1000 images at full resolution. Still the iBook proved useful as I had some time to organize the images day-by-day into folders. And I could recharge the iBook battery using Apple's World Travel Adapter Kit (\$35) in the Moscow hotel or the Trans-Siberian railway train. Not being an iPhoto fan, I used my old trusty and very capable GraphicConverter <<http://www.lemkesoft.com/>> photo editing program to review the photos while still on the trip.

The camera was perfect for me. I didn't need to know a thing about how to use it except how to turn off the flash in case I didn't want to use it. It is very successfully automatic. The images are much sharper (7.1Mpixel) than with my old and now retired Sony camera. The excellent light balance and lack of color distortion were a welcome change from that old Sony. It does eat batteries! Since I could not locate anywhere local the rechargeable battery pack, I brought along 20 AA batteries and used them all. Being small enough to fit into my pants pocket, the batteries took up more space and weighed (a lot) more than the camera.

I am now in the process of putting the images online. Since stuffing 20-30 huge images onto one slow loading web page is not a great idea, I used GraphicConverter to reduce the image size from the initial 2592x1944 pixels and 19.2MB of memory down to 600 pixels wide and 1.0MB of memory. That size is available on my web site by clicking on each image that displays on the page. It is still too large for a web page itself. For the web page, I reduced each image again to 300 pixels wide and around 250 KB of memory.

GraphicConverter allows one to choose the "quality" of the JPG when saving it to disk. I chose 90% (not a visible change from 100%) and dropped the image file size to around 20KB. This makes it possible for a viewer to load up 20-30 images on a web page and not get a long load-time delay. From an original total file size for 30 images of 576MB (half a Gigabyte) down to 600 KB (a little over half a Megabyte) is quite a drop in size and really needed for web pages that load images. It also allows one to store all these images on a 1GB maximum .mac site and not quickly run out of storage space.

All this editing is still taking me a long time (hours), but eventually I will get all the images that are worth seeing (about 500 of them!) on the web site I have for my classes at school. You can see what is there so far at: < http://www.shayler.org/physics_projects_nceic.html> (hosted by .mac)

I am using iMovie for the videos but that is another story and a lot more time to edit and then convert to Quicktime movies for the web. Once again though, it is a story of Gigabytes of video reduced to Megabytes of viewable Quicktime movies.

It is good to be back, by the way. See you December 21 at the SIG meeting.

SLMUG Minutes 11-2-06

John Mitchell opened meeting with some comments about iMacs. They are voltage sensitive. Sometimes the old 3.6-volt battery causes a problem: Computer won't start or the clock date becomes 1/1904 or 8/1956. Time to change the battery!

John mentioned the new book by Steve Wozniak: *iWoz ... From Computer Geek to Culture Icon: How I invented the personal computer, co-founded Apple, and had fun doing it.* It is a good read about Wozniak and Apple. He also read *iCon – the controversial unauthorized biography of Steve Jobs.*

From the front page of Apple Bytes “Bev and I, along with 160 other souls and Apple Consultants, spent a tidy sum for the privilege of listening to a number of Apple’s finest instructors cover a variety of subjects. It was fast and furious from 7:15 am until 6:30 pm – 5 days of trying to drink from a fire hose.” John stated that the Channel Camp schedule provided for 2-hour sessions, then a break, then another 2 hour session, etc. There were conversations about IP addresses, OS security, File Maker Pro, Apple Remote Desktop, Shake, Network management to name a few. The Xserver is 5 years old and will be replaced by a new one that is 3 1/2 times faster with 32g of ram and powerful quad chips at the same price point. It is business oriented. A half day was spent on the program Aperture. (v 1.5 costs \$299, 30 day free trial) It works with digital cameras. “It is much like a combination of Adobe Photoshop and Adobe Light table.” Very powerful and broad ranged. Really a dynamite program if you are into editing photos. Very impressive. Way above iPhoto. The program can be used in conjunction with Adobe applications.

Terry Higgins mentioned a commercial web browser called OmniWeb which normally sells for \$29.95. It is on sale in November for \$9.95. The iPod Shuffle will be in the Apple stores on 11/3, 1 gig at \$79. October 23rd was the 5th anniversary of the iPod introduction. We are now in the 5th generation of the iPod.

Elections. MSC “that the current officers be elected to serve in 2007.” The 2007 officers will be Bob Shayler, President; John Mitchell, VP; Dayle Scott, Secretary; and Ed Matlock, Treasurer.

Jay Ruuska reported on the MITI computer project. Nothing so far. He has revamped the Ad.

Ed Matlock reported on a web site that rates the quality of blank DVDs. It is best to buy media made in Japan or Taiwan, but not from India or China. See the handout. This month’s DOM contains DVD Media Inspector.

Ed reviewed the DOM. Included are the following: Cocktail 3.73 (Tiger); Boot Camp 1.1.2 (Intel chip) can boot into Windows XP; Eudora (last version, it will be part of the Thunderbird mail program); Firefox 2.0 (browser); iPod Shuffle reseal utility; iTunes 7.0.2; MacBook update firmware; Office 2004 updater; Office X; Open Office (still need X11); Skype 2.0.0.6; X11 update (Certain apps that run on Unix can be run on Mac). Thanks Ed for another great DOM.

Dayle Scott, Secretary

December 7th meeting features...

Bob will miss this meeting, too. Expect some discussion about MacWorld Expo. What are the “must see” booths. Lots of events will be happening other than just the Exhibit hall. Some free, others not. As usual, Ed will have several nifty new items on the Dom. Membership renewals start this month, also.



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Main Meeting - Dec 7th