



BRMUG

Baton Rouge Macintosh User Group

News and Views

January 2003

BRMUG Information

Member Meetings

Regular meetings are held the third Thursday evening of each month at BlueBonnet Library at 6:30 P.M.

Planning Meetings

The Thursday after the regular member meeting the planning meeting is held at 6:15 at Calendars on Perkins near Essen.

About BRMUG

For more information call the User Group President, Isaac Traxler, 225-926-1552 or send e-mail to info@brmug.org or check our web page at <http://www.brmug.org/>

BRMUG Volunteers

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 Glenn Matherne vp@brmug.org
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 Don Ballard sec@brmug.org
 Richard Johnson m1@brmug.org
 Jeff Sheldon m2@brmug.org
 Contact anyone above if you have suggestions for BRMUG.

After the Meeting

Join us at Brewbachers on Bluebonnet after the BRMUG meeting: fun, food, open format. Get to know each other.

Newsletter Articles

Please submit newsletter articles to newsletter@brmug.org. Articles are printed on a space available basis. Submissions are welcome!

The November meeting will be held at the **Bluebonnet Library** on **January 16th**, the 3rd Thursday of the month, at 6:30 P.M. This month's presentation will be **Macintosh Gaming** by John Quebedeaux. John has been an avid gamer and Macintosh user for years. He plans to demonstrate several of the newest games as well as some classics. This should be a great meeting! Members and guests are welcome. After the meeting, we will have our normal Social Hour at Brewbachers. If you need help getting there (<http://www.brmug.org/about-brmug.html>).

Meeting is at Bluebonnet Library!
 Visit <http://www.brmug.org/next-meeting.html> for more information.

December Christmas Party

Thanks for coming by and chatting in December. I really enjoyed talking to many of you and I am looking forward to a new year of presentations. I hope y'all enjoyed talking as much as I did!

AAPL

Financial news continued its rollercoaster ways. Apple is about where they were this time last month (minus about 30 or 40 cents). The MacWorld announcements did not seem to pull the price up like it has in the past.

MacWorld

This may or not be Apple's last MacWorld (time will tell). Regardless, Apple made a number of announcements in both hardware and software. See below for more information.

PowerBooks

with two new models. Apple took the existing titanium PowerBook and went up and down. The new top of the line is a Ti PowerBook with a full 17" diagonal display! This system remains 1" thin, weighs 6.8 pounds, has a 1 GHz G4, SuperDrive, and costs \$3,299. On the bottom end Apple announced a 12" PowerBook with 867 MHz G4, 40 GB harddrive, 256 MB RAM for \$1,799. This model weighs in at only 4.6 pounds and is 1.18 inches thick. Firewire 800, Bluetooth and 54 megabit wireless were also released for the PowerBooks. All in all, Apple has really expanded the PowerBook line. This provides a large price range and feature list to choose

from. Apple is geared up for the laptop revolution!

iLife

Apple has created a product suite called iLife available for \$49. The suite includes the products iTunes, iMovie, iPhoto and iDVD. While the first three are still available for free download, this marks Apple's first sale of iDVD without buying a SuperDrive equipped Macintosh. As part of iLife, the free products have additional functionality.

Final Cut Express

Apple has released a reduced functionality version of Final Cut Pro for \$299 that bridges the gap between iMovie (free) and Final Cut Pro (\$999).

Keynote

Apple has announced a brand new product that competes directly with PowerPoint. Apple claims this product was designed for Steve Jobs to do keynote speeches. At \$99, the published feature list is impressive.

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iCalliSync

iCalliSync have new versions out.

X11

Apple now has an X-windows server available for Mac OS X. You can download it for free.

Browsers

Apple released a beta of Safari, their new browser. It is based on the base software from KDE's Konquerer browser. Safari's a great first effort. As it matures and gains features like tabs, it will make a huge impact. The Macintosh browser world has gone from famine to feast in a short time. Until recently Internet Explorer was the Mac OS X browser. Now we have Safari, Mozilla (steadily improving) and Chimera (Mac specific derivative of Mozilla).

Games, Mac Games!

I was going to do the November presentation for BRMUG on games like I usually do but a week prior was told I would be attending a conference in Baltimore as part of my new job. So, thanks to Isaac for covering for me and letting me do this after the holidays. *[I was glad to help and thank you for doing this delayed Mac Gaming Meeting. -- Isaac]*

After the holidays is probably the best time to talk about games anyway *[That is what I always said. -- Isaac]*, prior to the holidays it's hard to review anything new BEFORE you get it.. or BEFORE it comes out! The X-mas rush is no different for the game industry as it is for us shoppers. They rush to get their games out just in time for that last minute shopping rush at the computer stores and mail order places. Some still get them out late as you will see below, Nascar 2002 was just released on Jan. 2nd. By now though, most have made it out, been reviewed, and the biggest bugs squashed. Since I usually get some cash during the holidays I look around for what next to spend it on. I'm still a kid at heart and the thought of me not getting at least one new game at X-mas.. is... depressing! Usually its not enough money to buy something like a new lazy-boy chair or BBQ pit... but it usually is enough for one, perhaps two, eye catching games.

I was at CompUSA today helping a co-worker pickup some equipment and cables for a workshop at LSU. While waiting, noticed that on the 17" flatpanel iMac Apple now seems to understand that games DO mean something to Mac users as there was a demo running with

several games demoed. It was a good eye catching demo, but as you will see, I'm not that great a fan of some of the latest games - although, yes, they probably are very neat and awe inspiring as far as graphics and the like go... there are many types of games that evidently don't sell as well as the current 3d graphical shoot-em up games so they don't show up on all the store shelves or your usual mail order places. I like games that either 1) let me blow off some steam... those are usually "mindless" games like Eric's Ultimate Solitaire, 2) challenge me in some way by giving me something new to discover and learn, 3) adventure/role playing of some type.

At the meeting, I will demonstrate some of the current games just out: 3DO's Heroes of Might and Magic IV. Warcraft III and SpaceWard Ho! 5. I know that NASCAR 2002 was just released *[I would have it already, but the required hardware specs exceed every machine I have access to. -- Isaac]*, I'll see what I can get for that. I have something strange to say about my latest purchases... not just a game, but also for printer ink. I ordered from Apple's Webstore... something I thought I'd never really do. I looked and looked for good prices and at a whim, checked Apple's site. And although I paid tax, it was cheaper than some of the other mail order stores simply because they didn't charge shipping up to the 31st of December and their prices were competitive. I'll demo the new WarCraft. Shipping was pretty quick as well. I miss the days of overnight \$3 shipping though. If you look hard enough, someone, somewhere is doing free shipping for 2 day delivery. In this case, it was Apple.

On the games that appeal to a wider audience, I have some new favorites that you may not have seen. Apple has posted them on their site and for those who have a .Mac account at least one of them is free: Alchemist. And some others that are shareware. I've heard that DeltaTao plans to update Eric's Ultimate Solitaire, but I need to update myself on what's coming out and when. SpaceWard Ho! 5, for those who played 4.. and older versions.. is just out. There are other games as well - I usually check Inside Mac Games website <http://insidemacgames.com/> for what's going on. They usually have the inside track on what's coming out and when and have a list of release dates for games just released and estimated release dates for ones coming up. I'm putting together as many different

types of games, some of my new favorites are just takes on old ones.. and some old ones. There is at least one online game I still play quite a bit that I'll mention simply because I have found that the people that play it, and stay playing it, tend to be mature adults that lend quite a bit to the role playing and cooperative nature of the game. While this game is a either a monthly \$9.95 (or annual \$79.95) I feel I've gotten more than my money's worth out of this game. The demo area isn't much (which the folks who play the game keep pointing out) compared to the world in this game, but does give some taste of what's going on simply because you can hear the "network" broadcasts from players. This game is ClanLord. Anyone who has played Eric's Ultimate Solitaire, or SpaceWard Ho! will recognize the style in this online world. DeltaTao is the company and this is one company that you can feel comfortable emailing the president and get a reply. I keep coming back to play this one because of the people that play more so sometimes than the game itself. It's the players that make this game fun. There are some more online role playing games coming out lately for the Mac, like Lineage, etc. But I've found that those don't have some of the friendlier elements of the ClanLord game. In short, young folks (unlike me now) play those other games and are rather the "gimme, gimme" type that want everything for nothing. In ClanLord you do work for what you want to earn, and you do have to earn it. I suppose I should write a separate review for this one! I'll consider it! *[I can't wait -- Isaac]*



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For more information call the User Group
 President, Isaac Traxler: (225) 926-1552
 e-mail: info@brmug.org
 web: <http://www.brmug.org/>

Gaming Links

John provided this list of links about Macintosh Gaming. Visit <http://www.brmug.org/games.html> for even more gaming links!

<http://www.macgamefiles.com/>

<http://www.macgamer.com/>

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

<http://www.macupdate.com/games.php>

<http://www.coolmacintosh.com/games.html>

<http://games.applelinks.com/news.shtml>

<http://macreviewzone.com/html/reviews/magazine/software/games.php>

http://www.solitairecentral.com/sol_mac.html

The latest released games include "NASCAR Racing 2002" just a few days ago (of me writing this) and "The Sims: Unleashed". I'll attempt to get demos in time for the meeting. I know Isaac will want to (if he hasn't already) look into the NASCAR 2002.

There are many games I miss - and the question nowadays is whether or not a game will run for OS X (carbonized or native). Many game companies I'm hearing will jump on the Mac bandwagon now and consider putting out a Mac game for the OS X platform but will not look back to OS 9. I expect to see more of this. I consider this good because I have made the leap to OS X a little more than a year ago and I really don't like when I have to go to OS 9 or classic mode. On the other hand, there are plenty of macs that won't run OS X but are still running fine. Anyone looking for an LC III? Ask me, I'll probably give it away.... (yes, I'm cleaning house [Glenn, I will flip you for it. :] -- Isaac).

Finally, the latest update for OS X allows for devices with force feedback on the Mac. You've probably seen them in the arcades or the latest gaming consoles - drive on a race track and you can "feel" when you are bumping into something, off the track, etc.. because the handheld device you are steering with starts to vibrate or "bump" while you navigate. While I've seen and used this in research settings, I'm betting that the technology goes hand in hand with gaming. There is a nice article about this "Complete Immersion: Force Feedback on the Mac" at <http://www.insidemacgames.com/features/view.php?ID=198> and then go a bit farther out and consider that companies have been making stereographic glasses for use on computers for several years - now they are working on LCD

panels that give you stereographic effect without the glasses. This is probably way beyond the scope of the meeting, but it's something that I'm learning about at my new job and I can certainly see the application in gaming.

Anyhow, I hope to see some of you at the meeting - many of you will know more about the games you play than I, please come and share with everyone else. To me, that is what our meeting are really about!

by John Quebedeaux

P.S. I'll be bringing a TI-laptop (800mhz) and firewire drive if you want to see those as well.

Graphic Utility of the Month

This Christmas, I got a few cool toys to play with like most children. My favorite one is the HP Photo Smart 320 digital camera from Circuit City. It enabled me to take lots of holiday pictures of family and friends. Some of the pics were great and others shall we say were a little red-eyed. In the old days, I would either use a flash bracket to offset my flash angle away from the subject's eyes. This isn't an option on most affordable digital cameras. You are stuck with either turning on the red-eye reduction option or digitally retouching the pictures afterward with Photoshop.

Well, as you would know it, I forgot to turn on the red-eye flash mode which is really a series of flashes like a strobe effect in 1970's disco lights. It tends to scare cats. So, to make a long story short, I had lots of red-eyed family pictures of my family and my fiancée's. This was not an option. Especially since I had to take the images to WalMart to print on photo paper.

So, that brought me to an old friend, the graphic utility, Graphic Converter 4.5.2

by Thorsten Lemke. For those who are unaware, Graphic Converter is the best shareware graphics program outside of commercial products like Adobe Photoshop. It can convert over 100 graphics formats into commonly used formats for use on Macs and PCs.

Over the past few years, it has been refined with options such as making Quicktime movies, plug-ins to work with a scanner and now the ability to work with a digital camera. For years only Adobe Photoshop and its light siblings could work with all of these devices to import and adjust these images. Now all of that has changed.

To get the job done, I imported the images one by one into Graphic Converter. Then I used the red-eye tool to take the red out of the eyes of family, friends and pets. Next using the brightness and contrast tools, I can adjust the colors to print. I find that digital cameras tend to over saturate color and exaggerate contrast. This results in odd colors when printing. In other word, this means that you get dark pictures with green, red, yellow or blue people in low light scenes.

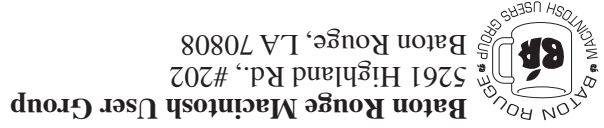
Then I save the pictures as jpeg files for printing. You want select option and save the pictures as jpeg 6.0 files and not Quicktime compressed, This automatically makes these pictures viewable on Windows and Unix systems as well as Macs. Most photo machines are no longer Mac oriented. You also want to select 100 percent resolution to prevent image distortion in the picture from compression. This will make files sizes larger. Not to worry, you can put lots of pictures on a CD.

Lastly, I burned these images onto a CD-R using Toast. I selected ISO 9660 format and saved all of my item in a single directory to eliminate confusion for the imaging machine and for my DVD player. You must have the full version of Toast to do this. Do not use disc burner in Mac OS X, It does not create true ISO 9660 files.

Now all you have to do is take the pictures to your local photomat for printing . Most of the high volume shops have digital printing options. I chose WalMart for convenience. I have to say, the pictures were better than I could have imagined.

Yeah the dog had blue eyes and my fiancée and I had really green eyes, but that's a matter of personal taste. Until next time, when I look at digital options forMardi Gras.

by Glenn Matherne



This Month:
 Macintosh Gaming
 by John Quebedeaux

*Hiroshima 45
 Chernobyl 86
 Windows 95*

**THIS NEWSLETTER IS RECEIVED BY ALL
 BRMUG MEMBERS, CONTRIBUTORS, AND
 REPRESENTATIVES.**

The Baton Rouge Macintosh Users Group is a non-profit organization dedicated to Macintosh Users. Our mission is to help bring these users together in order to keep them informed of Apple Computer, Inc.'s trends, visions, and educate them on how to best use this most cost effective, easiest and friendliest of all platforms: **The Macintosh.**

If you are in the position of selling, supporting, or using the Apple Macintosh computer or any of Apple's products, we would like your participation and support for the benefit of our membership and your customer base.

Everyone is invited to attend the meetings. For a complimentary newsletter, or flyers to give out to others, or any information about the group contact the following BRMUG Ambassador: Isaac Traxler, President, (504) 926-1552, e-mail: *president@brmug.org*. We'll be most happy to talk to you about the Macintosh!

Send this form with \$15 (\$10 with copy of current school id for students) check payable to BRMUG to: BRMUG Treasurer, 5261 Highland Road, #202, Baton Rouge, LA 70808.

BRMUG Membership Form 1/2003

Name: _____

Address: Street, City, State, ZipCode

Home Phone: _____

Office Phone: _____

Things the club should do: _____

My interest areas: _____

