



# BRMUG

Baton Rouge Macintosh User Group

News and Views

September 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](mailto:info@brmug.org) or check our web page at <http://www.brmug.org/>

### BRMUG Volunteers

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 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](mailto:newsletter@brmug.org). Articles are printed on a space available basis. Submissions are welcome!

The September meeting will be held at the **Bluebonnet Library** on **September 18<sup>th</sup>**, the 3rd Thursday of the month, at 6:30 P.M. This month's presentation will be **Hidden Gems** by Don Ballard and Isaac Traxler. Mac OS X is full of features that most people never discover. This month we will show some of our favorite "hidden" features. If you have a favorite, make sure you mention it also. 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 the Bluebonnet Library!

Visit <http://www.brmug.org/next-meeting.html> for more information.

### August Meeting Review

Thanks John Quebedeaux! I think the iSight/iChat A/V demonstration went real good (other than the audio feedback problem). The build the network n the spot demonstration once again showed how easy it can be to do things with a Macintosh. The speed and clarity of iChat A/V video was impressive on the old 10 Mb hub. I learned a lot -- hope y'all did also.

### BRMUG Picnic was September 6!

Another picnic has come and gone. The food was as good as it always is. And we had plenty. The volleyball was normal also. Some things never change, they just keep getting better. If you missed the picnic this year, then put it on your calendar for next year. It will be in late August or early September. And as always, thanks to Don, Glenn, and Kathy for all the food and drinks. Man was that watermelon good!

### AAPL

About this time last month, AAPL was peaking close to \$22. It immediately nose-dived to below \$21. Since then it has bounced its way up to over \$23 (a new 12-month high) and then settled in at just over \$22. With modest announcements this month and very little speculation on new announcements, the price has been very strong. The main big thing was the G5s starting to ship, which could

have been a negative (quite often new machines are a disappointment when the benchmarks come out). Instead, the G5 has held up to a lot of pounding and people are still excited.

### Mac OS X Java 1.4.1 Release

Apple made Java 1.4.1 available via Software Update. This release has met mixed results. Almost all agree that it is much slower than the previous release. In general it produces much better looking displays. Unfortunately it has not been as stable as the previous release for many people (including me). I don't think that I recommend this one at this time.

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### Rumors

Rumor has that another release of Jaguar is coming out soon (10.2.8). This may breathe a little more life in into Jaguar before Panther leaps out as 10.3. One last upgrade.

### Processors

While the G5 is at the forefront of everybody's mind, IBM has been diligently improving the chip we call the G3. New versions running at up to 1.1 GHz are expected to ship soon. It also appears that dual processor versions might be in the future. The new G3 is also capable of a faster system bus. As the PowerBook grows up, it looks like IBM has found plenty of punch for the iBook. I expect to see these processors in the iBook shortly after the next PowerBook bump.

### Apple Records Sues Apple Computer

You heard it here first. Way back, I told you it was only a matter of time before Apple Records (the recording label started by the Beatles in England) sues Apple Computer of copyright infringement. The time has arrived. Apparently the iPod, iTunes and the iTunes Music Store were too much for Apple records. Only time will tell how much this case will cost them. Isn't about time Apple Computer just bought Apple Records? And put an end to this nasty mess.

### Apple Expo in Paris

By the time you read this, the Apple Expo in Paris will have started. Steve Jobs will deliver the Keynote. Some people are expecting a PowerBook announcement (I don't think so). Most are expecting another preview of Mac OS X 10.3 -- Panther (I think so). Will Steve announce a ship date? Will anything new show up?

### MacWorld G4/G5 Benchmarks

MacWorld has released preliminary G4/G5 benchmarks. While the G5 numbers are impressive, the benchmarks also point out that dual processor G4s are not anywhere near ready for the retirement home. Visit <http://www.macworld.com/2003/09/reviews/macworldlabfirstg5tesresults/> for details.

### iMac Speed Increase

The entry level 15" iMac now runs at 1 GHz. includes 256 MB of 333 MHz DDR memory, an 80 GB hard drive, a DVD/CD-RW combo drive, and a 32 MB Nvidia GeForce MX video card for \$1299. The 1.25 GHz 17" model includes

the above except with a 4X SuperDrive and a 64 MB Nvidia GeForce FX 5200 Ultra video card for \$1799. The iMac may be a little more expensive than its colorful ancestors, but it sure has a lot more to offer.

### iPod Update

Apple has also revamped the higher end iPods. iPods now come in 10 GB, 20 GB and 40 GB models for \$299, \$399 and \$499. The features get better and the price stays the same.

### eMac Still a Bargain

The 1 GHz eMac with a 60 GB drive, a 17" CRT, 128 MB of memory and a combo drive is still a bargain at \$999. The same model refurbished has been as low as \$849 this month. A slowed model with a CD drive was as low as \$649.

### Switchers

Chad Dickerson is a columnist for InfoWorld (a weekly newspaper centered on the computer world). InfoWorld, in general, has not been very Mac friendly. Chad has had a 450 MHz G4 for several years and never really did much with it. Recently his 450 MHz Dell PC at home died. He took the Mac home and gave it a whirl. He discovered what many of us already know. Mac OS X plays well with Windows and Linux. Many of the advantages of Linux are present in Mac OS X (open source software, shells, apache, ...). Many of the advantages of Windows can also be found on Mac OS X (runs Microsoft Office, Adobe PhotoShop, ...). In addition you get stability and ease of use to boot. Chad has already published 2 articles worth reading about his experiences. If you want to read more, visit <http://www.infoworld.com> and select *Opinions* from the menu.

### What Happened to the 2 GHz G5s

The world now knows why Apple has been delayed shipping the dual 2 GHz G5s. Rumors had it that Apple was filling education orders first. Actually, Apple was trying to fill the order Virginia Tech placed for 1100 dual 2GHz G5s to be used to form a parallel computing cluster. VT is working against a mid-October deadline to make the next quarterly update of the Top500 ranking of Research Computers. Raw guesstimates put this cluster pretty high. Now VT needs to get all the machines, installed and connected together, software configured and installed, and the benchmark installed.

Then they can start tweaking the system to maximize throughput. VT will spend just over \$5 million dollars on this cluster (price include G4s, networking, and high-speed interconnect). For comparison, LSU spent just over \$3 million building SuperMike just over a year ago (512 dual processor 1.8 GHz Xeon processor systems, networking, and high speed interconnect). SuperMike produced 2.207 TerraFlops running the Top500 benchmark. SuperMike was the fastest education-owned system when it ran its benchmark in September 2002 (third overall). As of the latest official list, SuperMike is still in the top 20. The VT Cluster could come in near the top 10.

by Isaac Traxler

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## Hidden Gems

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Mac OS X is a very powerful operating system. It retains a large part of the original Mac OS ease of use and power. It adds a lot through pre-emptive multitasking and memory protection. But it also adds a lot via its Unix heritage. When you put all this together, there are bound to be some things that not everyone has explored thoroughly. The goal of this article is to help point out some of those features.

Several gems can be found in the System Preferences Universal Access control panel. For any of them to work, you must check the box at the bottom labeled: *Enable access for assistive devices*. Note that you will have to enter the administrative password to make this change. This control panel has four panes: Seeing, Hearing, Keyboard, and



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Mouse. Each pane allows you to set various values and enable features.

The Seeing pane allows you to enable speech (Enable text-to-speech Universal Access preference check box at bottom of pane). Turning this on will cause the Mac to read dialog boxes to you after a short delay (one of Don's favorite features).

You can also enable zoom. This is a wonderful feature. It magnifies the screen. So that when print or a picture is too small, just zoom in. This feature was designed for the visually handicapped (but it is also great for working with programs that don't allow items to be zoomed in).

You can also invert the display (switch from black letters on a white background to white letters on a black background. This can be useful when working with the lights out, conserving energy on your backlit screen, or fighting glare.

You can also force the display into grayscale mode. This can be useful if a program has obnoxious color choices or if you need to temporarily remove colors from a view.

### Future Meeting Calendar

September 18, 2003 ..... Hidden Gems..... Don Ballard ..... Library  
 ..... Isaac Traxler  
 October 16, 2003..... Mac G5 Demo ..... Isaac Traxler ..... CompUSA  
 November 20, 2003..... Annual Game Meeting ..... John Quebedeaux Library  
 December 18, 2003 ..... Christmas Party..... Everyone..... Library

Ideas for future meetings are welcome and desired!

After the Seeing pane, the Hearing pane has very little on it. The first feature is Flash Screen. Many people work where sound cannot be heard (office environments where the noise would be disruptive, loud places, or for hearing impaired). Instead of producing an audible warning when something happens, this switch tells the Mac to flash the screen. I use this option for most errors. Quite often I have the sound off at work. When I have it on, I am usually listening to something I would rather not have interrupted.

The keyboard pane allows you to configure a number of keyboard related features. For example, the sticky keys can be enabled so that the shift, control,

option and Apple keys are remembered after they are pressed. This allows Apple s to be pressed without holding two keys simultaneously. A great help for those with coordination issues or during demonstrations. Several other options can be configured here.

The Mouse pane allows you to use the numeric keypad in place of the mouse and to control the behavior of the mouse. You can also configure your Mac for full keyboard access -- totally eliminating the need for a mouse.

As you can see, in a single Control Panel we have found a wealth of features that many people have never known existed. And there is more!

by Isaac Traxler

## Pictures from the August iSight/iChat A/V Meeting

At the August meeting, Glenn Matherne took a number of pictures. He was kind enough to send a couple to me. I have included them below so that you can get a taste of the meeting if you did not make it.



*Isaac Traxler talking with John via iChat A/V in the background.*



*John Quebedeaux with his iSight mounted on top of his PowerBook.*

