



BRMUG

Baton Rouge Macintosh User Group

News and Views

November 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

Isaac Traxler president@brmug.org
 Glenn Matherne vp@brmug.org
 Don Ballard treasurer@brmug.org
 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 **November 20th**, the 3rd Thursday of the month, at 6:30 P.M. This month's presentation will be an **Overview of Panther** by Isaac Traxler. Mac OS X 10.3, Panther has not been out long and here we are with a timely demonstration of some of its features! So, if you have been trying to decide about upgrading, come on out take a look. 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.

October Meeting Review

The library was unavailable to us in October. CompUSA stepped up to the plate and offered one of their training rooms (which BRMUG packed). Thanks to Mike Luchsinger (Apple's man at CompUSA). He and CompUSA were excellent hosts! I hope everyone enjoyed seeing a G5 up close (as well as the detailed dissection of the new models). Thanks again Mike. Can't wait for the next time. By the way, last time I dropped by CompUSA, Mike said he had 4 dual, 2GHz G5s in stock! I smell Christmas presents baking...

AAPL

It has not been good of a last 30 days for Apple stock price. It has not been real bad, just a slow steady loss. About tis time last month, Apple was approaching \$24 a share (just under). Now they are just over \$21 a share. Honestly, this seems kind of wierd (like all things having to do with Apple and the stock market). In the last month, Apple has upgraded the iBook, released iTunes for Windows, shipped Panther, and caught up with the backlog of G5 orders. Not much more Apple could have done. Hopefully Christmas sales will go well and the price will turn back up.

Mac OS X 10.3 (Panther) Released

Apple released Mac OS X 10.3 (and 10.3.1) in the last 30 days. Yes, Apple

has already released the first update to Panther, so it is okay to go ahead and install it. Another update is expected shortly.

I have done test installs on a 350 MHz iMac with 192 MB of memory and on a 500 MHz iMac with 768 MB of memory. Performance seems no worse (and possibly a little better). I was quite surprised at how the base OS ran on the low memory system (I have not tried Microsoft Office yet). I hope to upgrade my dual 450 MHz G4 soon.

iTunes Store

Time magazine likes Apple and Steve Jobs. They have called the iTunes Store the *Invention of the Year*. the iTunes Store and the G5 were listed in Popular Science's 2003 Best of What's New. Apple now offers gift certificates to the iTunes Store. They also outsold the re-opened Napster Music service.

November Contents

October Meeting Review	•1
AAPL.....	•1
Mac OS X 10.3 (Panther) Released	•1
iTunes Store	•1
Virginia Tech Supercluster.....	•2
Fink Available.....	•2
Gentoo for G5 Available	•2
Game Stuff.....	•2
Panther.....	•3
BRMUG in 2004.....	•3

Virginia Tech Supercluster

The Virginia Tech Supercluster (http://computing.vt.edu/research_computing/terascale/) of 1100 dual processor 2 GHz G5s with 4 GB of memory each, officially placed at number 3 on the Top 500 list of supercomputers (<http://www.top500.org/>). At a mere \$5 million, this really was a bargain for Virginia Tech. It has turned into great publicity for Apple (ignoring the early complaints about dual G5s not shipping). It has also made IBM happy (producer of the G5 processor -- Power 4 desktop chip). This system is only the third supercomputer in the world to top 10 teraflops (10 trillion floating point operations in a second). Virginia Tech is planning to explain how to build a supercomputer based on G5s (Basic instructions will be free. Of course they hope to recoup some of their costs via consulting on design of large scale systems).

Fink Available

Fink is now available for Panther. So go try those Unix applications! <http://fink.sourceforge.net/>

Gentoo for G5 Available

Gentoo Linux is now available for the G5. Their LiveCD is also available. So far, the fans are still on at full speed as their programmers try to determine how to control the speed of the fans in time with monitoring the temperature. <http://www.gentoo.org>

Game Stuff

Well, like last year, plans change and I will not be able to do the November Game meeting again this year. Instead, as you are meeting, I'll be on my way back from the Super Computing Conference this year... like last year... and someone here decided they could pay my way at nearly the last minute. [But this year, the number 3 system will be built from Macintoshes!]

Interestingly enough, I've heard about the ability to harness unspent cycles of processing power even from X-Boxes, Playstations, etc. And I've heard that this was actually done at last years SC02 event.

Well, the best I can do for this month is leave you with some ideas and places to do your own game research for the holidays.. but not without some help listed here. To be honest, I play fewer games nowadays - but my 5 year old

boys do their own thing on their Mac with the CD's and children games. And let me tell you, there are more than I know what to do with. They must have 20-30 CD's worth now and I like to take their favorites, make a CD image, and place a shortcut to the image in startup so that it's always loaded and ready to go on their Mac. The CD-ROM drive is slow anyway, and that speeds up all the movie files that make some of these games their favorites.

Here are some things to look for this year in gaming. First of all, know where to look. One of my favorites every year is <http://www.insidemacgames.com/> from this site you'll know when and what games are coming out.

I'll be receiving my SIMs game (which amazingly, I've never played) this month or next month because I renewed my .Mac account. I'll let you know more about it in the next article.

Here's a more puzzle like game site that I know I enjoy: <http://www.conceptistech.com/>

The ever famous Snood is now very much OS X compatible. <http://snood.com> [Kathy loves this game! It is considered non-violent and appeals to both sexes.]

Another favorite, for kids and adults alike: <http://www.pangeasoft.net/>. [You know these games: Bugdom, Nanosaur, and CroMag Rally. By the way, they have a super pack with CroMag Rally, OttoMatic, Bugdom II, Enigmo, and Billy Frontier for \$49.95].

Note, your iDisk as part of your .Mac account has a games folder. Don't be afraid to take a peek there. Apple does, from time to time, give away a game or two in this area... but usually there will be demos here.

One of my favorites is Marble Blast and Think Tanks: <http://www.garagegames.com/>.

By now you're noticing I'm not getting into games like Diablo, etc... well, those are great too. I tend to spend more time with games that are more social in nature. My all time favorite is still ClanLord -- <http://clanlord.com/>. I've been playing this for now the better part of 3+ years and while some might say the game is now in it's decline... I generally never tire of playing it. There are still many things I *don't* know about in the game after 3 years and it takes collaborative efforts with other players to make progress in the game. It's the only multi-player

game I know that encourages friendly collaboration and yet still encourages individuality from each player. In this game, you make of it what YOU want and what YOU bring to the game. Imagination is everything.

Another place to check: <http://www.aspyr.com/> has just released a bunch of Mac titles I believe.

I know this is rather short, I didn't have too much time between things to get this out. Of course, my discovery of the TiVo and shows I kept missing might have something to do with it -- <http://tivo.com/>. While it may not make much sense to mention this here, I don't see why not. It's a product that allows you to use your Mac and bring it to your living room TV in a way that... is easy. If you have a home network, you can interface a TiVo and with the Home Media Option you can view your pictures from iPhoto or listen to your music from iTunes from your TV system. Now, I take a bunch of digital photos and then preview them on the TV (particularly after a birthday party in our house) right on the TV in just minutes without having to do much more than download the pictures off the camera. Now, I could have hooked the camera right up to the TV (and the one I have can do that) but the ease of use via the TiVo is just nifty. For those technically minded, all the TiVo is a Digital Video Recorder... i.e. a computer with a hard-drive that specializes in this service.

Okay, back to games... <http://www.macsoftgames.com/> is another one of my favorite areas of game play. I wish I had more time to tinker with them.



BRMUG Mailing Address
 5261 Highland Road #202
 Baton Rouge, LA 70808

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

More links! <http://www.macgamefiles.com/>, <http://www.gamedb.com/ssps>, <http://www.apple.com/games/> (yes, even Apple has a game site), <http://www.macgamer.com/>, <http://mac.ign.com/?fromint=1>, etc...

And for those interested in game development... I guess this is one place to go: <http://developer.apple.com/games/> [Also look for Macintosh games at <http://sourceforge.net/>].

Note that LSU's L-CAT (Laboratory for Creative Arts and Technology) <http://www.lsu.edu/highlights/033/lcat.html> plans to help would be gamer developers get a head start in the professional world. Keep you eye on this.

Finally, check out <http://download.com.com/2001-2038-0.html?tag=dir> (i.e. Downloads.com) for Mac Games from the shareware/freeware/demo areas.

I hope this gets you started and I hope to see everyone... well, if not in December then in the New Year!

by John Quebedeaux

Panther

Apple has finally released Mac OS X 10.3 -- Panther. As before, although a little sooner, it was followed by 10.3.1. Panther has issues with data loss on some FireWire attached drives. This update prevents some of the cases. It also includes some security fixes.

Panther is another evolutionary step for Mac OS X. The brushed metal look has moved mainstream (so much for the human interface guideline that said the brushed metal look was only for applications). Finder even has it now. The old pin-stripe look has been minimized.

Along with their new metallic look, finder windows now have a panel on the right not totally unlike a dock. This panel holds shortcuts. Labels have finally returned. If you remember, under Mac OS 9 you could associate a color with a file. By doing this you could categorize things. For instance, you could make important documents red. You could mark finished documents green. Panther brings back this feature (funny how Apple provides features, takes them away, and then brings them back).

One of my favorite features is Fast user Switching. You enable this in the Systems Preferences -> Accounts pane. Once enabled, a new menu will appear on the right side of the menu bar. This menu will be titled with the name of the

Future Meeting Calendar

November 20, 2003 Panther Overview Isaac Traxler Library

December 18, 2003 Christmas Party Everyone Brewbachers

January 15, 2004 Annual Game Meeting John Quebedeaux Library

Ideas for future meetings are welcome and desired!

currently logged in user. You can click here and get a list of other users that you can log in as. After selecting one, you then type in that users password. Now you are logged in as that user. The other user account is also logged in. You can use the user menu to move between the users (passwords necessary if you have them enabled). I have only played with this feature a little -- but it seems to work great. Obviously, if you use it much, you will need more memory (since multiple users are logged in, each is consuming memory). Bu the ability to swap between users without having to completely log out and then log in is phenomenal. You can solve problems in much less time (something works for one account but not for another). You can let another user do something without totally disrupting what you have been doing.

Panther brings disk journaling to Mac OS X. One of the problems that all computers suffer from is disk corruption during a crash or power outage. Journaling can help minimize this problem. Normally, the computer tries to write data to the disk. This involves going to the directory, finding out where to go , going there, writing the data, maybe even extending the file if more space is needed. This can take a long time in computer terms. Plenty long enough to get interrupted during a crash, an unscheduled reboot or a power loss. Almost everything that DiskTools ever finds are artifacts from these causes. Journaling works like this: First the computer writes a list of steps to the journal file to accomplish a goal (adding text to a document). Then it starts going through the steps. When they are complete, it marks them as done in the journal. This is how things are supposed to work. If power goes out before the journal is updated, the disk transaction is lost. If power goes away after the journal is written but before the operations are completed, Mac OS will simply redo the steps in the journal at boot -- thus completing the operation. When the operation is completed, the journal entry is marked as completed. This process should eliminated over 99% of the possible disk corruption problems that we

have had in the past. Many commercial Unix systems depend on journaling file systems. Linux supports several different journaling file systems. Journaling is not glamorous. In fact, if it works, you will never know it exists.

These are just a few of the changes that Panther brings to Mac OS X. You may find others much more important. Personally, the ease of switching between users and the safety of a journaling file system are big to me. And without question, the increased presence of brushed metal is very obvious to me. Let me know what you think of Panther.

by Isaac Traxler

BRMUG in 2004

This year is really almost over now. Where do you want BRMUG to go next year? What meeting topics would you like to see BRMUG present? Would you like to do a presentation? Do you have any ideas or suggestions?

The week after each meeting, the officers get together and have a planning meeting (except November and December). The goal of the meeting is to review the past and plan the future of BRMUG.

To do this, we examine the last meeting (looking for the good andd the bad). Then we try to see what needs the meeting fulfilled and where it fell short. Then we look to see where we should be going. We focus on the next meeting (we obviously need a topic). But we also try to look forward for the next year and try to guess what the members would like to see. Our past history is often useful here. It gives us ideas for meetings, helps us know which topics were most popular, and gives us clues about the proper way to present the topic.

BRMUG watched the 68xxx Macintoshes replaced by PowerPCs. We have watched the G3, the G4 and now the G5. We have watched Mac OS grow up and then be reborn as Mac OS X. The transition to Mac OS X is pretty much over now. We are in the new future. Now, BRMUG needs to figure out how to best move forward. Let us know what you want.

