

BRMUG

Baton Rouge Macintosh User Group

News and Views

September 2004

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 August meeting will be held at the **Bluebonnet Library** on **September 19th**, the 3rd Thursday of the month, at 6:30 P.M. This month's presentation will be an **Introduction to iDVD** by Isaac Traxler. Now that SuperDrives are more common, people need software to take advantage of them. iDVD is Apple's answer. It is a very powerful and simple to use program. This month we will take a first look at iDVD. 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 Agenda	
6:30 PM	Welcome, Apple News
6:45 PM	Don's Distraction of the Month
7:00 PM	Feature Presentation
7:45 PM	Questions and Answers

Meeting is at Bluebonnet Library!

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

August Meeting

I was going to do an Introduction to AppleScript at the August meeting. The Monday before the meeting, I called Don and told him that I had broken my leg and that I was scheduled for surgery. Don quickly volunteered to take over (and I am sure he did a great job). I apologize for letting my personal fun keep me from the meeting.

And for those of you that are interested in the details. I broke the small bone in my left leg at about the ankle while on a canoeing trip (while goofing off on the beach). The Emergency Room X-rays showed a clean break with about 1/4 inch separation between the two pieces. By the next day when I went to the specialist, the bones were back together, but the ankle had spread apart without the pressure from the fibula. So the next day I had surgery to put things back. Seven screws and a plate later, they sent me to a room. I seem to be one of the fortunate souls that has a good bit of swelling anytime my ankle is lowered. This not only kept me away from last month's meeting but also away from work for over two weeks (doing half days right

now). Monday (before the meeting) I am scheduled for another visit where I will hopefully get a walking cast.

Sorry I missed the meeting. Thanks Don for jumping in at the last minute. Oh -- I forgot to mention the toe I broke on the other foot while trying to learn to walk on crutches.

AAPL

I started looking at this month with a lot of concern. Microsoft was scheduled

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BRMUG Picnic

September 18 at 3:00 PM

NE Corner of Highland and South Stadium

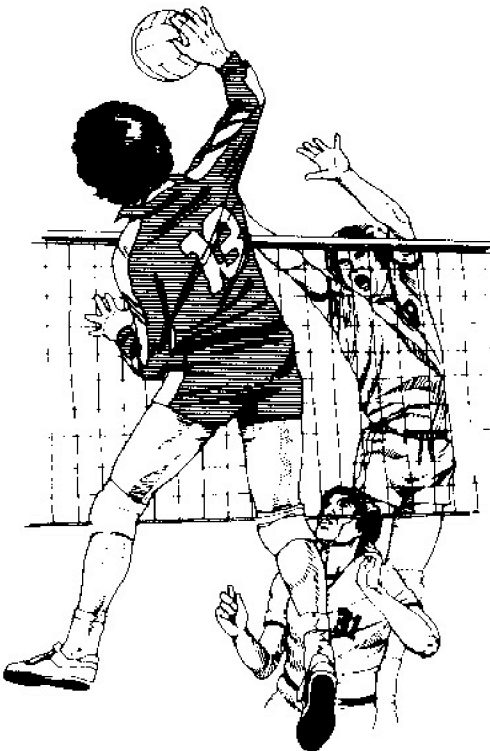
The first BRMUG Picnic was in 1994. The tradition has continued every year since.

The BRMUG Picnic is a chance for Macintosh users to get together, enjoy good food, get to know each other, and participate in the annual Volleyball Match (more about that later).

Menu:

- BBQ Chicken
- Baked Beans
- Potato Salad
- Corn on the Cob
- Rolls
- Colas and water
- Hotdogs for the kids

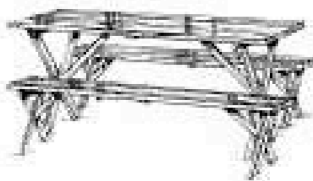
The picnic has always been a family event (in fact some children are growing up with the picnic). The picnic has seen members and guests come and go. At times the picnic seems like a reunion. Other times it becomes a chance to meet new people. It helped hold us together



in Apple's tough times and is a place to celebrate Apple's successes (like the new G5 iMac!).

Please try to join us at the picnic! It will be a great time! Invite any Macintosh users you know. Invite any potential switchers. The food is always great. The companionship is wonderful. Bring the whole family -- kids are welcome.

The menu will include BBQ chicken, baked beans, and potato salad. The chicken will be grilled fresh that afternoon. Don's baked beans are amazing. Kathy's potato salad is as good as it gets. We usually have corn on the cob and rolls. Don will probably bring a watermelon (like he usually does). We will have colas and water. We always have plenty (so far we have never run out). We will have hot dogs for the kids.



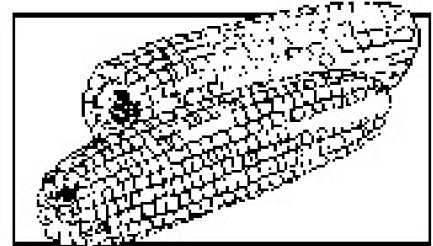
And the best part is yet to come. Each year we have a volleyball match. After the food has settled some, we play volleyball. After each game we mix up the teams. The first year Don and I happened to be on opposite sides. As the teams mixed, we always wound up on opposite sides. Ever since then it has been a rivalry -- Don and I competing. Really funny how the players keep switching sides and in the end my side always wins more.

The pressure is on. Don wants to win. And I need volunteers for my team (I can only coach and cheer this year).

After all, this will be the eleventh annual BRMUG picnic. He needs all the help he can get. Of course I am offering extra helpings to everyone who is on my victorious side!

As you see, the picnic has grown into quite an event. Be sure to join us this year and become part of the tradition.

Please drop me an e-mail at picnic@brmug.org to let me know how many to expect (so we have plenty of food).



Driving directions:

Join us on Saturday, September 18, 2004 at 3:00 PM until dark. We will be at the NE corner of Highland and South Stadium at LSU (get off the Interstate at Acadian going South, turn right where the road splits and the picnic will be on your right when you see the next traffic light).

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/>

Mac OS X Upgrades

Apple has maintained a history of releasing a new version of Mac OS X each year. That has been an amazing feat. A major new release is not a trivial problem. And then they announced that Tiger would not follow the yearly release cycle. In fact they said, we are going to shift to a less frequent release schedule (about every 18 months).

It is obvious that some people will see this as Apple not being able to make Tiger work and that they were just trying to put a positive spin on the situation. And as expected, a huge outcry erupted. Nobody could wait six more months for the new release of Mac OS X. It was just too long to wait. People just had to have all the new stuff.

Apple was in a really interesting position. Yes, the downside of Tiger being delayed was there. But Apple could have done a much better job of selling us on the Tiger delay. In fact, it almost looks like they are not trying to sell the delay (or the new release schedule). From the previews, we know Tiger has a lot of new stuff to get excited about. Apple could keep pointing out how it takes times to develop and debug this software. Instead they just show us glimpses of what Tiger may be and remain quiet about the change in release schedule.

I have come to the conclusion that Apple could have shipped Tiger at the appointed time. I think they chose not to. I know this sounds crazy -- but listen to these ideas.

Apple has been getting a lot of negative feedback about Mac OS X costing \$130 a computer a year. By extending the plan to 18 months between releases, users are getting a 50% price reduction. Think about it. In the next 3 years you will spend 1/3 less money on Mac OS X upgrades (one fewer upgrade). Apple is still releasing updates to Panther (and Jaguar). Many new things are being released without waiting for Tiger. New versions with extra features have shown up in many of the iLife products. Maybe Apple really is looking at total cost of ownership.

Here is another advantage. Apple worked real hard to get Jaguar and Panther out on schedule. In fact, many people waited until the .1 version was out before installing. Everyone assumed that the .0 release would have major bugs and omissions. Apple now has longer to debug Tiger. I, for one, am expecting a

cleaner release than any previous version of Mac OS X.

Tiger is adding some really neat features. Translation: some of the new features are really CPU intensive. Delaying Tiger's debut gives Apple a little longer to ship faster machines. Remember, the PowerMac was already supposed to be at 3 GHz. Maybe Apple could have shipped Tiger on time but was concerned about how it might perform on older hardware (like currently shipping iBooks and eMacs). Faster machines magically make software feel faster.

Apple has been very open about showing us a lot of the features coming in Tiger. Unusually open. Apple rarely demos features until they are positive that they are going to make it into the final release. Over 6 months before release, Apple has started showing us Tiger. Why? In the past Apple has chosen to talk about big changes for a while before they really ship them. Remember the first iMac? Remember how long we had to debate whether it was wise to plan a machine without a floppy drive (by the way, I wonder what percentage of G4 users have used a floppy disk in the last 6 months). Apple might be trying to tell us that Tiger is going to take some getting used to. Maybe we will start seeing explanations about how Mac OS X will change in Tiger.

Maybe Apple is tired of handing working code to competitors to look at and learn from. Maybe they are enjoying showing ideas and watching the competition rush to try and catch up. More than one pundit has theorized that Apple will be making it much harder for Microsoft with the jest: With Tiger delayed, where will Microsoft get ideas for things to add to Longhorn?

Now the next reason is going to take some real imagination to accept. But please try. Maybe Apple *LISTENED* to its developers, support people and users. That is right. Maybe Apple listened.

It is not easy to write software. Apple has made much harder for Mac developers by releasing new major versions of the OS every year. Each new release means a lot of work for a developer to test their product with the new version. Maybe Apple is giving developers a chance to test their code with Tiger before it ships Tiger. This could mean a lot more up to date software for Tiger when it actually ships.

Maybe Apple is listening to trainers.

It takes a lot of time to develop training courses and materials. And then you have to teach the classes. Since Mac OS X came out, trainers have been working overtime. Developing materials for the new/current version while teaching users about current/previous release. What about books? It is almost impossible to get a book written and printed before it is obsolete with yearly major releases. Publishing companies are reluctant to invest in books that have such a short shelf-life. And the rush means the book will have to be full of mistakes. There is not enough time to carefully review the books with the old timetable. Consumers are reluctant to spend \$20 to \$60 on a book that will be obsolete in 90 days.

And what about users? Ignore the cost (\$130 a year vs. \$90 a year) of the OS. Ignore the book cost (\$50 a year). Think about the feature overload. I never used many of the new features Jaguar offered. Panther arrived so quickly, I did not have time to learn many of the new features. Normally I would be researching Tiger preparing for the Tiger Introduction BRMUG meeting. But I have not used half of the new features Panther brought me. Users need time to learn new commands and to figure out which features make their life easier and better. Users need time to adapt to the changes.

I feel a lot better about Panther now. I will have time to get to know it better before I move on. Many people have asked why I don't seem to be real excited about Tiger. The answer is simple. I am still excited about Panther. I need time to learn it. I feel a lot better about the Tiger upgrade now. I have a little longer to save up for it. I have more time to get comfortable with Panther. I have time to look at what Tiger will bring. All those Tiger previews are giving me time to absorb Tiger's features before I have to start using it.

Maybe Apple really does know what they are doing. Maybe they realized that innovation can outrun the people who have to adopt it. Maybe Apple realized that we need time to get acclimated to new software.

And maybe Apple just could not eliminate enough bugs in time. Maybe Tiger was too ambitious for the one year development cycle. Maybe a little of all of the above. Maybe a lot of all of the above. I don't know. I don't care. I am thankful for the chance to catch up.

by Isaac Traxler



Don't forget the BRMUG Picnic on September 18th!

to announce their music service. I really expected this to make a big dent in Apple's stock price. Instead, it seems to have made very little impact. The new iMac seems to have been very well received. HP selling iPods seems to have been ignored. AAPL closed the week at over \$35.

New iMac

Apple finally unveiled the new iMac. And it is a beauty. The rumors of a new kind of all-in-one were true. The new iMac is a 2-inch thick 17" or 20" LCD display. The new iMac looks just like the new metal clad LCDs (except that a couple of inch metal border exists below the bottom of the LCD). The G5 processor and everything else is behind the LCD display. The optical drive is on the upper right hand side (slot loading). Cables connect under the right-hand bottom of the LCD. Even the power supply is inside -- no separate power brick.

This iMac is loaded with differences. Other than changing the memory DIMM, first and second generation iMacs were practically impossible to work on. The new iMac has three screws that hold the back cover on. After removing them, the entire back lifts away. Inside are all the components of the iMac. A new feature is a series of diagnostic LEDs. Apple has already released the information for the meaning of these LEDs so that consumers can diagnose the nature of the failure and replace components.

The video card is still part of the

motherboard and not upgradable -- Apple continues to design the iMac as a cross between a laptop and a desktop system. Memory, the hard drive, the optical drive, and the power supply are easily accessible. Apple has already published Knowledge Base articles about what parts they expect customers to replace. Looks like Apple is beginning to Think Different!

The new iMac starts at \$1299 with a combo drive, a 1.6 GHz G5 processor and a 17" LCD. You will need to add memory to this base config. Based on the price of 17" LCDs and 20" LCDs, the new iMacs are bargains.

The single processor G5 should be more than adequate for most users. While the video card is not the greatest in the world, it is adequate for games currently available for Mac OS X. About the only drawbacks to the new iMac are the non-upgradable video card and the lack of an additional slot to add another video card. The new iMac also includes only FireWire 400.

Regardless, this iMac looks like a great deal. If you have been thinking about getting a new Macintosh but a little short on money, this seems to be a great deal. The iMac is currently a better deal than eMacs which still have single G4s (no upgrade plans have been announced for the eMac). There are reports of the new G5 iMacs beginning to ship.

Virtual PC Announced

Microsoft has finally announced that

the new version of Virtual PC for the G5 is available. Office Professional customers should be receiving their copies soon. This is the last major application for the Macintosh that was not G5 compatible.

15" PowerBook Battery Recall

Apple has announced a recall on some of the batteries for 15" PowerBooks. Please visit <http://www.apple.com> and follow the link to the recall page. This page will provide details on which ones are being recalled. If you have one of the recalled batteries, Apple will replace it with a new one.

Mac OS X Security Update

Apple released a security update for Mac OS X (10.2, 10.3, and server). As with other security updates, you should install this one as soon as possible.

MegaTrack

With hurricane season upon us, I thought I would jump on the band wagon and let people know about MegaTrack. This is a free Mac OS X application for tracking the path of hurricanes. It is available from RUDIS DOT NET (<http://www.rudis.net/>).

Compact Flash and USB Pens

Prices have continued to go down slowly on removable media. Compact Flash is now about \$100 for 1 GB, about \$50 for 512 MB, and about \$30 for 256 MB. Secure Digital prices are almost as low as compact flash periodically. Sony Memory sticks are still a little higher. XD remains the most expensive remove able memory. USB Pen Drives are getting to be very cost effective with prices almost identical to Compact Flash. Remember that most USB drives over 64 MB must be plugged into a powered hub or directly into the computer -- not into an unpowered hub like the keyboard. While USB 1 is to slow to effectively utilize these devices, USB 2 makes them almost handy. Give it a try.

New iTunes Affiliate Program

Apple has announced a new iTunes affiliate program. A web site can partner with iTMS and link to it. Any sales generated via this method provide a 5% commission for the referring site. Macintouch among others has already joined up. This is a great way to support your favorite Mac sites and buy your music. Apple reserves the right to approve or disapprove any application.

BRMUG Website

The BRMUG website has had some downtime in the last few weeks. Our website is hosted at no charge (and has been for many years). The gentleman hosting our site performed a system upgrade and ran into issues. It took a while to straighten them out. I would like to thank him for his efforts recently and over the years. Our website has been a unifying force over the years. It is now back -- so once again, turn to <http://www.brmug.org> for the latest information.

Apple vs. Apple

The law suit in Britain between Apple Computer and Apple, Inc. continues. Rumors indicate that Apple Computer will be paying a large out-of-court settlement to Apple, Inc.

Steve Jobs

Steve Jobs has hit the news several times this month. He is reported to be recovering from his surgery on schedule. He has attended a few meetings and will be back fulltime at the end of the month.

With Michael Eisner resigning from Disney, a bunch of rumors have started listing Steve Jobs as a candidate for the job. Job's success with Apple and Pixar are listed as qualifications.

Macintosh and DVD

Apple has been shipping SuperDrives for quite some time. SuperDrives are capable of reading and writing to DVDs. This is not the same thing as duplication commercial DVDs. DVD media comes in four main categories: DVD-R, DVD+R, DVD-RW, and DVD+RW. Original SuperDrives supported DVD-R media. The PC world embraced DVD+R. Newer SuperDrives support DVD-R and DVD+R. Many people have had trouble with RW media. Macintosh (<http://www.macintosh.com>) reports that RW media will work if they have been formatted previously (by a Windows or Linux system).

Apple provides Disk Utility to write to CD-Rs and CD-RWs. Mac OS X also automatically supports CD-Rs and CD-RWs. Mac OS X will also treat a DVD-R just like a CD-R. This is fine for data. iDVD can be used to author DVDs.

by Isaac Traxler

iDVD

Recently my wife and I were visiting her mother and one of her sisters. It was noticed that we have not given them any pictures lately. Out came the laptop and the iPhoto did a great job of filling the gap.

The slideshow was enjoyed by all. Of course, various pictures created a request for prints. Before the list was long and complicated.

2004 Meeting Calendar			
January 15	Annual Game Review	John Quebedeaux	Bluebonnet Library
February 19	iTunes, iTMS, and Music	Isaac Traxler	Bluebonnet Library
March 18	Adobe Illustrator	Isaac Traxler	Bluebonnet Library
April 15	Places You Should Know About	Don Ballard, Isaac Traxler	Bluebonnet Library
May 20	Introduction to iMovie	Isaac Traxler	Bluebonnet Library
June 17	iCal/AddressBook	Isaac Traxler	Bluebonnet Library
July 15	Networking Macs	Isaac Traxler	Bluebonnet Library
August 19	Intro to AppleScript	Don Ballard	Bluebonnet Library
September 16	iDVD	Isaac Traxler	Bluebonnet Library
October 21	Safari Customization	TBA	Bluebonnet Library
November 18	Keynote	Don Ballard	Bluebonnet Library
December 16	Holiday Gathering	Everybody	Brewbachers
BRMUG's Meetings at a Glance Send ideas to newsletter@brmug.org .			

I knew there had to be a better answer (and cheaper). I pulled out iDVD and started playing. This sent me back to iPhoto to reorganize some. After that I was back to iDVD.

Why did I look at iDVD? I knew it was supposed to be an easy way for a novice to author a DVD. In other words, I should be able to take all those pictures, put them on a DVD, set up some navigation, and problem solved. Then just make copies for Kathy's mother and each of her sisters (blank DVDs can be bought for less than \$.50).

Funny how things are never as simple as they seem. Don't get me wrong -- iDVD was the perfect answer to the problem. And it did eventually produce some very happy in-laws.

But before I could author a DVD, I had to organize the hundreds of pictures into categories.

iDVD supports folders, pictures, slideshows of pictures, and movies. After a little while, it became obvious that the real effort would be in dividing the pictures into logical groups

that were of the appropriate size for slideshows.

It is amazing just how hard it can be to organize hundreds of photos.

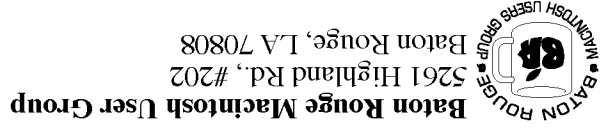
iDVD turned out to be very much like iMovie. It was not hard to use at all. And just like iMovie, without a plan it was useless. Once I had a reasonable organization scheme, using iDVD to layout the DVD was pretty painless.

The end result was great! A DVD that you can stick in a consumer DVD player, and use the remote control to view. By the way, DVD-R media is compatible with most consumer DVD players.

Basically, you use iDVD to create menus of up to 6 links. Each link can point to a folder (another menu), a picture, a slideshow of pictures, or a movie.

A side note, it does take a while. After I finally, had everything layed out the way I wanted, I told it to burn. It took about 30 minutes. Copies were only about 8 minutes.

by Isaac Traxler



This Month:
Introduction to iDVD
 by Isaac Traxler

*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 9/2004

Name: _____

Address: Street, City, State, ZipCode

Home Phone: _____

Office Phone: _____

Things the club should do:

My interest areas:

