



Rmug News

February 2005

This Month

RMUG Meeting, Saturday morning
February 12, 2005 9-11:30AM

All Mac users, new & old are invited to attend the next RMUG general meeting in the classrooms at:

Little Country Church

**873 Canby & Churn Creek Rd.
Redding, California**

(RMUG IS NOT CHURCH AFFILIATED)

Coffee and donuts are served during our "Get Acquainted" time, 9am to 10am. There are classes for "Beginners" and "Intermediate" from 9:15am to 10:00am.

Topics this month will include personal creativity, Timeline projects, poster & Exell, also movie and pic to movie projects, along with the usual Q&A.

Contents

| | |
|-----------------------------|----|
| RMUG Information | 2 |
| Secretary's Notes | 3 |
| Hints and Tips | 4 |
| Old Dogs / New Tricks | 5 |
| \$500 Mac | 6 |
| iPod Favorites | 7 |
| Sound Familiar | 8 |
| Editorial | 9 |
| Our Host | 10 |
| Charlottes Favorite Cartoon | 10 |

Rmug Officers

Marcus Harner - President
Jim Pace - Vice President
Charlotte Ruskowitz - Treasurer
Jacquie Martin - Secretary
Dale Josephson - Librarian
Ken Lorenz - Editor
Barbara Benefield,
Louise Zegers,
- Hospitality

President's Letter

Are we really a Macintosh Group?

At several recent events and meetings we, as a group, discussed using Apple's portable music player, the iPod. I myself have talked of the iPod like it was a Mac. I wrote last months President's letter primarily about uses of the device. Last meeting we spent much of the meeting talking about iTunes/iPod integration. Last year RMUG even raffled off an iPod.

The iPod and Mac definitely have a common thread - they are obviously both made by Apple. It begs the question; are we a group of Macintosh enthusiasts; or a group interested in Apple's products? This is a serious question to consider for meeting content, newsletter emphasis and possibly even the population of the core membership of the group. If the Mac was phased out in 5 or 10 years because it wasn't making enough money, would we still gather and help each other with iPod questions? On the other hand, if the Mac OS and hardware was purchased and further developed by Sony...would we then be discussing Playstations or some other Sony product? OK, OK, enough with the What Ifs.

I believe we are indeed a Mac group, but with a qualifier. We are populated and run mainly by home based Mac users. Home users buy accessories for their Macs, like printers, scanners, cameras, and yes iPods. Talking about the iPod is no different than discussing a favorite digital video camera. Yes, the iPod is made by Apple, but it is still just an accessory. We are not an 'Apple products' user group (APUG?) because frankly there are many Apple products and technologies we don't discuss, such as the Xserve, Xserve RAID, Xsan, Apple professional services, Motion, Shake, Logic Pro, Web Objects, Objective C, the Apple Workgroup Cluster for Biometrics or the opening of the Ginza Apple store in Japan. Could we talk about any of these topics...sure, but most of them are of little interest to the group as a whole. Not to mention trying to find an expert on Xsan technology and the equipment to demonstrate it to the group would be very difficult. Point being that we talk about Macs and Mac accessories, currently the hot accessory is the iPod.

I promise not to talk about the iPod in the Presidents letter for the rest of the year.

RMUG Information

Why RMUG? The Redding Macintosh Users' Group was formed to help members and new users obtain maximum enjoyment and performance from their computers. This is accomplished through group activities and our direct affiliation with Apple™.

Resources: RMUG resources include monthly mailings from Apple™ and numerous outside vendors. We have a library of public domain programs, games and shareware software. We have videos and other computer-related guidebooks and information.

Meetings: RMUG meetings are held on the second Saturday of each month from 9:00 to 11:30 AM at Little Country Church, 873 Canby Rd. Room B-6. (we are not church affiliated) The meetings give members and visitors an opportunity to share information, opinions, personal experiences and techniques regarding Macintosh computer systems—hardware & software.

Membership Information: We invite you, as a guest, to attend our next monthly meeting. If you decide to join RMUG, your membership fee includes your whole family. We need your help as much as you need ours! Please participate!

Welcome To Our Meetings: Call the President, Marcus Harner at 245-0895 or contact other RMUG officers for help. Go to <http://rmug.org/membership.html> for numbers.

Membership Dues: \$24 / year. Includes newsletters, access to shareware, monthly workshops, troubleshooting help. Payment of dues can be made at the monthly meetings or send them to: *Charlotte Ruskowitz, 6538 Mossom Ln., Anderson CA 96007* . Please make check payable to: Redding Macintosh Users' Group.

SECRETARY'S NOTES:

Minutes January 15, 2005

1. President Marcus Harner opened the meeting. He said one of his goals for this year is to increase the RMUG membership. To this end, Ron Brink suggested we make a flyer to put in computer stores. He feels prospective members don't know the club exists.

2. Treasurer Charlotte Ruskowitz said we have \$965.73 in the bank.

3. Phil Nystrom demoed his new 19" Sony Monitor. He showed how to move files from iTunes on his computer to his new Mini iPod. The Mini iPod will hold 1,000 songs, 4GB. He purchased small speakers from Costco that comes with an adapter to allow use of the Mini iPod. Thank you, Phil.

4. Other new products seen at MacWorld were:

a. The new MacMini, \$499. Buy more ram with it. Also add a keyboard, mouse and monitor.
b. The coolest thing Dale saw was the new Mac Operating System, Tiger that is supposed to come out sometime between March 31 and July 4. It includes a Dashboard feature that integrates a number of helpful applications that Jobs called "widgets" into the bottom of a Mac's screen, such as a weather report window, a currency converter, a dictionary (possibly the Oxford English Dictionary) and countless others.

<http://www.computerworld.com/hardwaretopics/hardware/story/0,10801,98883,00.html> AND/OR

<http://www.apple.com/macosx/tiger/dashboards.html>

c. iWork, including a new page layout program (similar to PageMaker) for \$79.

d. Marcus liked CDs from www.Eurotalk.com that teach languages, including endangered languages.

e. iPort holds iPod and plugs into outlets in your house to play music throughout.

f. Envision1.0.2 - lets you experience the Web's increasingly visual nature in innovative new ways.

<http://mac.softpedia.com/get/Internet-Utilities/Envision.shtml>

g. Roxio 'PopCorn' that compresses DVDs so you can put twice the amount on your own DVD.

h. A new iLife is coming out Jan. 22. \$79.

i. Snapz Pro X2 can record anything off the screen and save it as a QuickTime movie or screen shot that can be emailed, put on the web, or passed around. \$69.

5. Marcus asked for input on ideas for programs for the rest of the year.

Feb: Video and Slide Show Presentation and Member's Project (Timeline projects, poster & Excell. Also Movie and Pic to Movie) – Allen, Charlotte & Ken.

Mar: Tax Software

April: Choosing the Right Printer

May: iPhoto and Photo Retouching/Photoshop Elements 2

June: External Hard Drives and Storage

July: Stock Market Software

Aug: Annual Picnic

Sept: Safari/Browser Customization

Oct: Card Creation with Appleworks/Printshop and Holiday Gift Guide

Nov: Harnessing Google

Dec: TBA

6. Reminder. Come see the Video Presentation (Charlotte), Slide Show (Ken), and Timeline projects (Allen) in February.

If you haven't paid them yet,

DUES ARE DUE!

Please give them to Charlotte at the meeting or mail a check payable to RMUG: C/O Charlotte Ruskowitz, 6538 Mossom Lane, Anderson, CA 96007.

Jacquie Martin,
Secretary

HINTS AND TIPS:

Force Quit is Your Friend

It may happen one day that your Mac won't shut down, but just sits with a Finder empty except for the background picture, and won't go any further.

What has happened is that usually the Finder is waiting for some application to quit, but it's refusing to do so. More often than not, the Classic Environment is the culprit. Yes, although Classic enables you to run all your old OS 9 programs, it does remind you from time-to-time of some less delightful qualities of the old OS, of which a freeze when attempting to shut down was a fairly common one.

Whether or not Classic is the offending item, the cure is the same, you need to Force Quit the application that's causing the problem. Don't worry if you don't know which application that is at this point.

There are several ways to initiate a Force Quit. Perhaps the best known is to press the Command and Option keys together, and while holding them down, press the Escape key (at top left of your keyboard). Another is to choose "Force Quit" from the Apple menu.

Either way, you'll see a small window showing a list of the applications that are currently running. Click to highlight the one you suspect of causing the problem -- if one is displayed in red type, that'll be it -- then click the "Force Quit" button. If that doesn't work you can always try again, force-quitting other applications until you find the offender.

This technique can be used in situations other than the "won't shut down" one. Applications can still misbehave in OS X, though happily this won't affect any other program running at the time (unlike OS 9 where a freeze in any one thing froze the whole Mac solid).

If you have an application that's frozen, follow the steps above and when the application has quit, press the Escape key to dismiss the

Force Quit dialog. Then re-launch the problem application, noting that everything else the Mac was doing has continued unaffected. Note that there is no need to restart the Mac after a Force Quit, as there was with OS 9.

If you have access to the Dock, there's another way to force an application to quit. Click a running application's icon in the Dock, and continue to hold the mouse button down. When the menu pops out from the Dock icon, press the Option key and you'll see the "Quit" menu item change to "Force Quit".

AUSOM News, Melbourne Australia

Self-Mending

OS X has a built in self-maintenance program. If you will occasionally keep your computer on during the night, say once a month, it will run the diagnosis program and repair many of the problems that might otherwise show up without this step.

OS X is programmed to run regular maintenance routines in the middle of the night. These routines clear out temporary files created by the operating system, maintain system logs, and backup and rebuild a number of databases. Most of us have a tendency to put our computers to sleep or to simply turn them off at night. Consider picking a night once a week and turn off the sleep setting in the "Energy Setting" in the System Preferences. This will allow your computer to run the maintenance program and who knows what problems you'll be avoiding.

MacPUG Papers, Gardendale TX

Need to send a fax but don't have a fax machine? You can if you're using Panther

Mac OS X 10.3 (Panther) lets you send a fax from within the Print dialog box in any application. Just click the Fax button at the bottom of the Print dialog box and then choose someone in Panther's Address Book. Only those

continued on page 5

HINTS AND TIPS CONTINUED:

people for whom you have entered a fax number will appear. You can also enter a new fax recipient. Faxing requires a built-in modem and a telephone connection. More info at: <http://www.apple.com/macosx/features/faxing/> .

Design Tools Monthly

Making More of the Dock with Hidden Key Commands

As you become a power-user with Mac OS X, you'll undoubtedly begin using key commands to speed up things. But these commands can be elusive.

To help you out, here are a few that will save you time when working with the Dock:

Option/Click on an open application in the Dock and the application's window opens while hiding all other open Finder windows.

Command/Click on a Dock item, the Finder displays the folder that contains that file.

Command/Option/Click on a document to launch the program that's associated with that file and hides all other windows.

Command/Option/Click on an application, it hides all the open programs and displays only that application's folder.

ElementK Journals via LIMac Forum, Long Island NY

Submitted by
Charlotte

Old Dogs New Tricks:

LOOK MA, NO WIRES.

³Look ma, no hands² was the old saying from a kid riding a bicycle, some times just before a fall.

Our never-ending electronic marvels leave us with big eyes and mouths open. Now it is, Look Ma, no wires! All of us with computers have learned to live with a proverbial rat's nest of wires; wires from computer to monitor to printer to scanner to telephone to mouse to keyboard to modem and more.

While this was happening we were learning to live with a garage door opener with no wires. Our remote control clicker for our TV and VCR had no wires. A remote control for our automobile would lock, unlock, turn on the lights and start the engine with no wires.

Now the computer industry is converting: a mouse with no wires to the computer; printers with no wires to the computer; computers that can send and receive information from each other without wires; wireless telephones sending E-mail and Internet to a computer. Will wonders never cease? I think I was born 30 years to soon!

Of course there are limits. The main limit is distance. Like the garage door opener or the TV remote control you must be close to get them to operate. But this is so much better than the rat's nest of wiring we now live with.

Since your eyes and mouths are wide open with wonder lets continue. Casio is manufacturing watches with a camera built into the watch. Also, they manufacture a watch with a GPS system that can tell you where you are anywhere on earth.

By Allen Hall

\$500 Mac:

When the original Macintosh computer was little more than a sketch, its creators envisioned the machine retailing for about \$500. But when the first Mac finally rolled out in 1984, it carried a hefty price tag of \$2,495.

Apple Computer Inc. has never had a problem capturing consumers' hearts, though their wallets have been another story. Over the years, Apple's reputation for innovation, fashion-forward design and high prices rose while its market share dwindled...

Now, it's finally selling a computer, called the Mac mini, for \$499, the same price as one of its higher-end iPod music players.

Though this compact little box won't have the same impact that a \$500 Mac could have had 21 years ago, it just might be the right computer for our times.

The Mac mini is elegant, inexpensive without being cheap, and it's not a magnet for the viruses, worms and other malware floating around the Internet. It could fit in any room as a first, second or third computer. And it plays well with others on a home network.

Most of all, it's a low-cost alternative to Microsoft Corp.'s Windows that doesn't carry the learning curve of Linux. It also doesn't presume you're guilty of software theft: And refreshingly unlike Windows, there's no activation when you set it up - or an anti-piracy checks afterward.

The Mini seems designed more like a consumer electronics device like Apple's iPod than a general-purpose computer. But despite the name, it's watered down only in size and cost. This is as much a Mac as any other that's been sold over the years.

It arrived on my front porch in a carton that seemed more like a cake box. Removed from the packaging, the 2.9-pound unit is basically a 6.5-inch square just 2 inches high. The

silver-and-white case resembles the color scheme of an iPod.

It doesn't include a keyboard, mouse or display, but all can be purchased separately based on what you like and need. After my borrowed Mini arrived, I dug out my old iMac's keyboard and mouse as well as a 15-inch monitor from the attic.

The old parts worked beautifully and cost nothing extra.

Setup took less than five minutes and involved nothing more than connecting the monitor, the mouse and the keyboard to the computer, and plugging everything into the wall. (Yes, there is a pretty sizable power brick, unlike the latest iMacs.)

After completing a brief startup wizard, I was whisked to Mac OS X's simple desktop where I could launch Apple's recently updated suite of programs for music, photos and video as well as check e-mail and surf the Internet. All the software is included.

My unit came with a 1.25 gigahertz G4 microprocessor, double the default (and skimpy) 256 megabytes of RAM, a 40-gigabyte hard drive and a combo CD-burner/DVD player. It also had a built-in Wi-Fi and Bluetooth wireless option installed. The extras brought the total price to \$673.

A number of other upgrades are available, including a faster processor, even more memory, a bigger hard drive and a combination DVD-CD burner. The options are best ordered when you buy the machine. Unlike most PCs, the Mini isn't designed to be easily upgradeable at home.

I slid a DVD movie into the slot that, aside from a tiny power light, is the only feature on the front of the computer. The show started up immediately, and didn't stutter even though the Web browser and iPhoto picture management program were already running.

I downloaded and installed a trial version of Microsoft's Office for Macs, and the applications

continued on page 7

\$500 MAC CONTINUED:

worked fine. (Apple's new productivity suite, iWorks, isn't included but can be purchased for \$79. Microsoft Office 2004 standard edition for Macs is \$399.)

You also can add a Mini to your existing home network, and it will work well even with all your Windows PCs. You can share files, printers and even desktops.

Because I use Microsoft's Windows XP Professional on my primary computer at home, I was able to control that system - and view its desktop - from the Mac mini in the dining room. That was thanks to a program called Remote Desktop Connection for Mac OS X that Microsoft offers as a free download.

Thus, I could run software on the PC while controlling and viewing it on the Mac, including the Windows-only text editor that I used to write this review. (I also could have used Microsoft's Virtual PC emulator, though I find it sluggish even on higher-end Macs.)



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I could have done the same even without XP Professional. A number of Virtual Network Computing programs are available at little or no cost, including some that can transfer the Mac desktop to the PC or another Mac.

There are other options, too: including a \$20 KVM switch that lets two computers share a single keyboard, video display and mouse.

Or you could abandon Windows altogether - at the risk of breaking out in a cold sweat, not knowing what to do with the money you would have spent on anti-virus and anti-spyware software.

By MATTHEW FORDAHL
Submitted by Michael

iPod Favorites?

Last spring it dawned on Apple CEO Steve Jobs that the heart of his hit iPod digital music player was the "shuffle." This feature allows users to mix up their entire song collections—thousands of tunes—and play them back in a jumbled order, like a private radio station. Jobs not only moved the popular shuffle option to an exalted place on the top menu of the iPod, he also used the idea as the design principle of the new low-cost iPod Shuffle. Its ad slogan celebrates the serendipity music lovers embrace when their songs are reordered by chance—"Life is random."

But just about everyone who has an iPod has wondered how random the iPod shuffle function really is. From the day I loaded up my first Pod, it was as if the little devil liked to play favorites. It had a particular fondness for Steely Dan, whose songs always seemed to pop up two or three times in the first hour of play. Other songs seemed to be exiled to a forgotten corner of the disk drive. Months after I bought "Wild Thing" from the iTunes store, I'm still waiting for my iPod to cue it up.

More than a year ago, I outlined these concerns to Jobs; he dialed up an engineer who insisted that shuffle played no favorites. Since then, however, millions of new Poddies have started shuffling, and the question has been discussed in newspapers, blogs and countless conversations. It's taking on Oliver Stone-like conspiracy buzz.

continued on page 8

iPod Favorites? CONTINUED:

Apple execs profess amusement. "It's part of the magic of shuffle," says Greg Joswiak, the VP for iPod products. Still, I asked him last week to double-check with the engineers. They flatly assured him that "Random is random," and the algorithm that does the shuffling has been tested and reverified.

More specifically, when an iPod does a shuffle, it reorders the songs much the way a Vegas dealer shuffles a deck of cards, then plays them back in the new order. So if you keep listening for the week or so it takes to complete the list, you will hear everything, just once. But people generally listen only to the first few dozen songs. In theory, that sample should be evenly distributed among all the artists and albums in their collections. So why do you typically get three Wilco songs in an hour while Aretha Franklin waits in the wings forever?

The question will be even more important to owners of the new tiny iPod Shuffles. These use a new feature called autofill to load the one-ounce players with a supposedly random selection of 120 or so songs from much larger collections. The first few times I tried this, I found some disturbing clusters in the songs chosen. More than once the "random" playlist included three tracks from the same album! Since there are more than 3,000 tunes in my library, this seemed to defy the odds.

Or did it? I explained this phenomenon to Temple University prof John Allen Paulos, an expert in applying mathematical theory to everyday life. His conclusion: it's entirely possible that nothing at all is amiss with the shuffle function. It's quite common for random processes (like coin tosses) to get unlikely results here and there, like runs of six heads in a row. Over a very long time, it evens out, but it's hard for us to envision that. "We often interpret and impose patterns on random processes," he says, adding that this might be expected in the case of music, which evokes strong emotions. Paul Kocher,

president of Cryptography Research, puts it another way: "Our brains aren't wired to understand randomness."

Life may indeed be random, and the iPod probably is, too. But we humans will always provide our own narratives and patterns to bring chaos under control. The fault, if there is any, lies not in shuffle but in ourselves.

By Steven Levy
Newsweek
Submitted by Joe

Sound Familiar?

An elderly couple had dinner at another couple's house, and after eating, the wives left the table and went into the kitchen. The two gentlemen were talking, and one said, "Last night we went out to a new restaurant and it was really great. I would recommend it very highly."

The other man said, "What is the name of the restaurant?"

The first man thought and thought and finally said, "What is the name of that flower you give to someone you love? You know... the one that's red and has thorns."

"Do you mean a rose?"

"Yes, that's the one," replied the man. He then turned towards the kitchen and yelled, "Rose, what's the name of that restaurant we went to last night?"

Hospital regulations require a wheelchair for patients being discharged. However, while working as a student nurse, I found one elderly gentleman--already dressed and sitting on the bed with a suitcase at his feet--who insisted he didn't need my help to leave the hospital. After a chat about rules being rules, he reluctantly let me wheel him to the elevator. On the way down I asked him if his wife was meeting him. "I don't know," he said. "She's still upstairs in the bathroom changing out of her hospital gown."

In eMail from a friend
Editor

Policies

This newsletter is published monthly for the Redding Macintosh Users' Group and is distributed to all club members.

No other individual, group or business may use any portion of this newsletter without prior written permission.

RMUG News welcomes articles and questions relating to Macintosh or Macintosh compatible computers. Articles may be hand written, typed, or submitted on a 3.5" floppy disk (using any popular word processing program).

Submissions must be accompanied by the author's full name, address and telephone number. The submissions become the property of RMUG unless otherwise specified.

If you have a change of address or other questions, please notify the newsletter editor or other RMUG officer as soon as possible.

Deadline for submissions is the last Saturday of each month. E-mail or deliver all material to:

Ken Lorenz

E- mail submissions to:
krlore@cwnet.com

OR

rmug@rmug.org

(stuff files if possible)

Ad Rates

RMUG members are invited to place "Wanted For Sale" & "Trade" ads in the newsletter at no charge. Business cards or commercial accounts are welcome at the rates listed above. One of the best reasons for belonging to a user's group is to let other people know about your activities, as well as learning what other people are doing with their computers and software. Please give your business cards or ads to the newsletter editor.

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|--|
| <p>AD Rates</p> <p>\$4-business card</p> <p>\$6-quarter page</p> <p>\$9-half page</p> <p>\$15-full page</p> |
|--|

Advertisements in the RMUG newsletter will not influence reviews or critiques of hardware, software companies or stories.

RMUG does not endorse any specific dealer or product, but we do encourage the distribution of information which may assist club members in identifying best buys and services.

Editorial

The meeting this Saturday should be inspiring. It will feature interesting projects by members who possess varying degrees of ability but are able to get a lot of both satisfaction and production out of their computers. Speaking for myself, I have very little natural ability or understanding of how my computer does what it does, but I have been having a ball with the application Photo to Movie. It is very time consuming because I am learning, but the end result is well worth the effort. I was inspired by another club member who put on a brief demo of the Ken Burns effect at a regular club meeting. You get the idea.

This months edition is the result of several members submitting referrals and or original content. Thank you for your contributions. This is a group publication and is at its best when diverse group members submit content. Remember that as a dues paying member you can post a "for sale" or "wanted" ad free of charge.

Maintain your awareness of what is going on with regard to fair use rights, civil rights, government secrecy and propaganda. Speak up when you see abuses.



Ken

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Charlottes Favorite Cartoon This Time of Year..