



Apple Blossom Computer Club
A registered Apple/Macintosh User Group



Oct '08
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The

ROSE



BYTER

Next Meeting

Oct 16, 7 PM

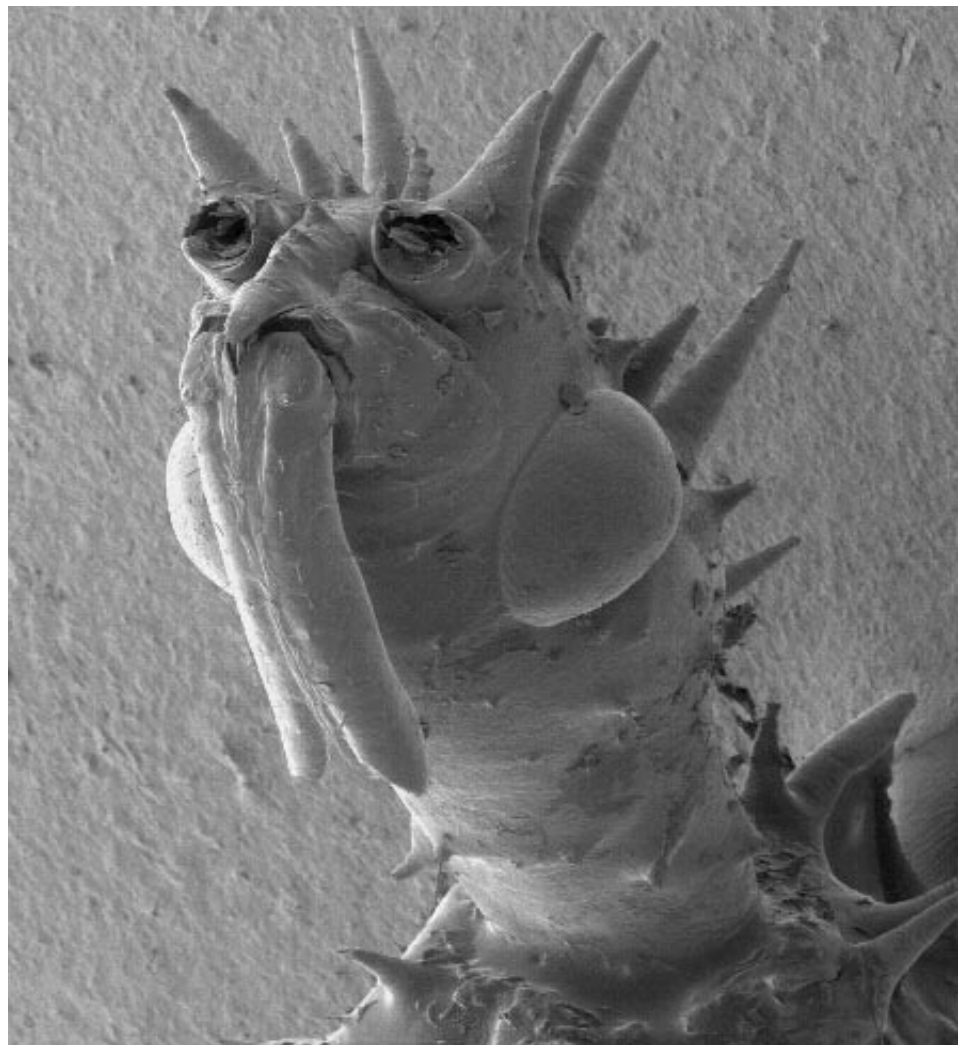
Pine Grove

**Community Church
1729 Buckhorn Rd**

Agenda

1. Meeting starts at 7 P.M.
2. Intro's of members and guests
3. Old business
4. New biz
5. Program: Video on the current state of your privacy.
6. Questions & (maybe)Answers

YOUTUBE BYTER



Saving To The CLIPBOARD



by **Jim McClellan**
<mcclellan@charter.net>

I just received the October 2008 issue of Mouse Tracks from the Portland Macintosh User Group and saw the following:

SAVING TO THE CLIPBOARD

Did you know that if you hold down the Control (^)key along with other keys like - Command-Control-Shift-4 (⌘^⇧-4) - you can save a picture of a selected areas in crosshairs to the clipboard! You can then just paste it into a document you want it in by doing a Command-V (⌘-v). I have been using that key combination,

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by **Dave Archer** <dave@davearcher.com>

Dear Rosebyters, meet a deep sea louse via tunneling microscope. Ah yes, bugs are everywhere. Just looking at this thing makes me itch like fire, and I'm not even a lobster, well ...

I hope you enjoy my contribution this month. I've been so busy traveling and working on my new book that I almost didn't get this in.

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The **Apple Blossom Computer Club** (ABCC) is an Apple Computer Inc., registered Macintosh and Apple][family user group. The ABCC publishes *The RoseByter* newsletter monthly which is posted to each paid up member and reciprocating user groups. ABCC participates in user group newsletter content exchange. The ABCC also maintains a WWW site at:

<http://www.abccmug.org>

Membership

Just \$20/year! Send with your name, snail- & e-mail address & phone to:
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Send your stories and newsletter ideas to the Editor, Walt Pawley, at <walt@wump.org>. Plain text files are preferred, sent within the body of an email message or as an attachment. Mail physical media to:

**676 River Bend Road
 Roseburg, OR 97470**

Please understand that materials submitted may not be used and those that are will likely be edited.

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It's been a tough day

<- 1 YOUTUBYTER

-- Wacky invention from 20's. A wonderful gravity vehicle you won't believe. These are bound to make a comeback, and soon as the "gas-crash" might dictate. Have fun.

<http://youtube.com/watch?v=ktD-SN3C4h4>

-- A ferrofluid (from the Latin ferrum, meaning iron) is a liquid which becomes strongly polarised in the presence of a magnetic field. Ferrofluids are composed of nanoscale ferromagnetic particles suspended in a carrier fluid, usually an organic solvent or water. The ferromagnetic nano-particles are coated with a surfactant to prevent their agglomeration (due to van der Waals and magnetic forces). Although the name may suggest otherwise, ferrofluids do not display ferromagnetism, since they do not retain magnetisation in the absence of an externally applied field. In fact, ferrofluids display paramagnetism, and are often referred as being "superparamagnetic" due to their large magnetic susceptibility. True ferromagnetic fluids are difficult to create at present.

<http://youtube.com/watch?v=OsW8zctD7CM>

--A Halloween effect for the kids. How to make magic glow water.

<http://youtube.com/watch?v=A1bA8NUp2vM>

Oregon man, Kent Couch SOARS in party balloon lawn chair. I think I want to do this. Yes.

<http://youtube.com/watch?v=20TKAIBKyEk>

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DAVE ARCHER STORE - <http://www.cafepress.com/davearcher>

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except for the Control-key (^) and getting a file on my desktop. Adding the Control-key (^) eliminates the file by using the clipboard.

I have been using the keyboard combination without using the Control key (^), but no more!

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[Ed: Jim went on to write:

If I could remember the keyboard combination to make the Command-key symbol, I would have used it. The Control-key and Option-key symbols confuse me, so I wouldn't use them in this article. ;-)

Perhaps there are keystrokes which one could use to create the symbols for the Command, Option, Control and Shift keys.

I sought them out, thinking the

process would be easy – like using KeyCaps of old. By firing up the Keyboard viewer, one sees the symbols right there on the keys. But, unlike the other keys on that window, the symbols on the modifier keys do not copy to your document when the key is pressed, clicked or even kicked vociferously.

After some mucking about, I found versions of these keyboard modifier key symbols in the Lucida Grande font's 00940 region. Perhaps there are those amongst you who know the magic keyboard incantation which proffers well hidden glyphs into your document? How about laying that sage advice upon us?]



Observations of a Peanut Provider

by Dale Nelson <dnelson@cspan.net>

Many years ago in a previous life, I used to own a cattle ranch, and one of the fun things to me was feeding hay to the cows in the wintertime. After my ex-wife took over the spread, I was kind of aced out of the fun of feeding critters. I now live on an oversized lot on the edge of town, and except for the fun of now and then giving a little bitty dog a huge bone, my life was lacking in some paternal way. So I put out a bird feeder or two – you know, the commercial type made of wood just so the squirrels can demolish them for the internal seeds. Once the squirrels had accomplished that, I got to putting out a little wild bird seed on the ground, and all of a sudden it looked like a hundred or so doves were getting fat on my high dollar feed, which kind of griped me, because I figured those doves would fly south to California only to be blasted into a meager meal for some ungrateful city boy with enough money to buy hunting rights on a central valley farm. I didn't want to stop feeding the birds, it's just that the bird seed was too expensive to fatten those doves. So I bought some hen scratch for a lot less money. For the non-country folk reading this, hen scratch is chicken feed that you throw on the ground for the bitty's to scratch around and peck at.

By now I'd quit using a feeder, I spread the scratch out on the ground where the doves and other birds could get at it. It was a good plan, but scratch consists mostly of cracked corn, with a little wheat or barley and some milo. The cracked corn is simply corn meal in the chunk stage, barley and wheat are oblong seeds, and the milo is a little round seed. The wild birds ate the scratch reluctantly, picking out the round seed first, then the corn. The

wheat and barley they pretty much had to be starved into eating. About this time I'm thinking that I've really got a flock of very spoiled birds on my hands. I'm also thinking that a sack of milo is even cheaper than hen scratch, so from that time on I've been feeding wild birds straight milo. Now there are going to be some folks out there that will be thinking, "He's not feeding those poor birds a balanced diet." If those people will read the book on raising chickens or have their own flock of laying hens for eggs, they will find that if, during the day, the chickens are let run free, they don't have to be fed egg maker. Free running chickens can be fed straight cracked corn and table scraps – along with the bugs and grass they eat while out on their own, they will balance their own diet. I'm feeding wild birds. They get plenty of carbs from the milo, and are free to balance their diet with other wild feed. And if they they aren't doing that, but are eating the equivalent of wild bird fast food, getting obese, then dying of heart attacks, well then... life sucks.

I spread the milo on the edge of our driveway, very near some grape vines, and just across from our kitchen window. With the feed in that location, I can drink my morning coffee and watch the breakfast eating birds coming and going. The sparrows love the location where I now put the seeds, I think because they feel safer, what with the close easy cover the grape vines offer. The doves don't care for the location, it's too close to the grapes, and there is the inherent danger of hidden predators lurking under the cover of the large leaves. Since I've moved the location of where I put the feed, the number of doves I'm feeding has decreased considerably. When the doves do come in, they

come in numbers, and there might be twenty or more at once. Of course this is an enticing target for your average hawk, and every now and then a dove will become a meal for a dive-bombing predator. Surprisingly, the hawk is not successful every time, and it's funny to watch the stunned look on it's face when after all the flurry of escaping doves and lesser birds, the hawk is left standing looking around and, I suppose, wondering what happened.

One day several years ago, I decided to feed peanuts to the silver grey squirrels that were hanging around. The squirrels would get some of the peanuts, but they are too slow about it, and it wasn't long before the blue jays discovered that I was putting peanuts out, and after that the squirrels didn't get any. What with one thing leading to another, I decided that I'd just go ahead and feed those blue jays. That was probably 2 or 3 years ago.

Now we are up to date. Every morning I put out as large a handful of non-salted peanuts that I can clutch in one hand, and will also replenish the milo when needed. I have large hands, and the amount of goober peas delivered in this manner runs in the neighborhood of 20 to 25, rarely as many as 30. When I do that, off in the distance I'll hear a distinctive "chirp, chirp" from a Stellar Jay. I assume in blue jay talk he's saying, "Hey guys, the sucker's back spreading the nuts," and here they come. I can't tell one jay from the next, so the only way I know how many there are, is at times they are all there together. There are seven Stellar Jays, and three California Scrub Jays – not all at once and not every day, but those are the peak figures, so I have an idea of how many are coming in. It's really interesting to watch them. Generally they don't eat the peanuts, but it's a horse race to see who

Water Blogged Wump

Any trace of organization in these paragraphs is entirely coincidental

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The Stuff of Dreams

The Gran Prix at Monza is being rebroadcast at an hour that I can see it so I'm watching TV ... again. Like everything (well, almost) on TV, they break in with periodic commercials. So... have you seen the advertisement for Windows Vista in which it's being shown to a bunch of people in a conference room? Everywhere they point their camera someone is oohing or aching over how "cool" it is. Not once (well, I didn't see one but I'm notoriously poor at paying visual attention to the tube) did I see them show anything on the computer screen everyone was fawning over. For all I know, it was turned off. But the real issue for me is this: if you're running a business in which computers are used as tools to help run the business, is "cool" the primary reason to junk your current operation for something new? There may not be all that much wrong with "cool" but it's not the same as "functional," I suspect.

What can I say. They're Italian. It seems the **freesbie.org** web site has gone off the air for unknown reasons. If it weren't a FreeBSD related site, I'd write it off to enjoying *la dolce vita* and simply wait for them to come in out of the Sun. But FreeBSD is not prone to such failures, so there's quite likely something else wrong. I did find that their listed primary DNS doesn't know who they are. Their secondary does, however, which makes it seem like yet another case of left and right hands not being able

to get together. None of this stuff is the main reason I'm writing this paragraph. What troubles me is the foolishness of humans. Some background: Freesbie is a project to create a CD from which one can run a version of FreeBSD on a PC without having to use the hard disk(s); something that can be very useful in several situations. Curiously, despite the web site vanishing from the Internet, the FTP site was still functional. And, while it wasn't exactly easy, I was able to find several mirror sites from which to download some Freesbie data. But try as I might, the manual for Freesbie is not one of the things that's on the mirror sites. There are something like 24,000 sites that mention the Freesbie manual. So far, I've not found any that don't simply reference its availability for download from **freesbie.org**. I'm quite certain Google has numerous copies of this data tucked away in its vast archives but there's apparently only one place for mere mortals to get it and that place just vanished in a swirling puff of electrons.

Isn't it wonderful that **you can now have "real" mashed potatoes without the "homemade hassle."** Now I'm very far removed from being a cook, much less a chef. Still, I can keep myself nourished if I'm not being spoiled by my wife's expertise. Knowing what little I do about heatin' stuff up and slapping it on plates, it's difficult to imagine that making mashed potatoes would be considered a hassle. Yes, it's best to peel the potatoes first ... assuming you like to have at least a semi-uniform consistency. And it makes good sense to cut them into roughly uniform hunks to keep the heating time down to a reasonable period. Ever peel or slice a potato? It's not exactly rocket science or hard physical labor. Sure, if you're substituting for Beetle Bailey doing KP, peeling and cutting potatoes for mashing could be reasonably considered

something of a hassle if only because the huge number one has to deal with. But between six and 12 potatoes is not that big a deal. There's also the mashing itself, coupled with a few splashes of milk, a pat of butter or margarine and a pinch or two of seasonings. I've not found crushing boiled hunks of potato a hugely taxing activity. I've never made mashed potatoes with "ready mix" or whatever it's properly called, so I can't really judge just how hard it is but I seriously doubt it's all that much easier. I suppose one dumps some crud out of a box into a microwave safe bowl, stirs in a measured amount of water, perhaps with some pinches of seasoning. Perhaps that's easier, but you have to deal with throwing away a box and don't get anything except leftovers for your compost heap and have a measuring cup to wash. One big advantage, from my perspective, is that you're eating real potato, not something that's been processed in some sort of manufacturing plant that you know nothing about.

Bob Pease is one of the people steeped in "hard" analog technology. He has a column in a magazine I read that "converses" with other engineers who write to him, most often by email. In a recent column there was a discussion about the behavior of our government toward surplus equipment. **If you didn't know, from time to time and scattered all over the place, our government declares old equipment no longer useful and auctions it off.** It's pretty rare that more is paid for these things than can be recovered by selling it as scrap plus some sort of profit. One thing for sure; most of this stuff has a lot of material to scrap. It was made, once upon a time, often by Americans in America using materials that could stand up to some real use, if not outright abuse. Seldom is the sheet metal as thin as 1/16-th of an inch. The switches make satisfying clunks after requiring a definitive effort

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<--Water Blogged Wump

to operate them. Some of it even has the ability to function nearly as well as the stuff that's modern, though perhaps not so conveniently. Very large amounts of it are non-functional, missing parts that are no longer made, having no documentation and missing major subsystems that are required for operation (they were sold on another pallet with along with six broken toilets and old light fixtures). Guess what. The very same government that is selling this stuff to the highest bidder is now retroactively declaring much of it as classified. They demand that it be returned, some of it to be destroyed. Some of what they're destroying is historically relevant and irreplaceable. You know something? I don't feel the slightest bit safer knowing that this equipment won't be readily available to foreign terrorists.

"Somewhere along the line, there's going to be a major correction in the memory markets because they have to learn how to be profitable, and they're not doing it right now." From what I've seen, if you're buying memory for an *old* computer, someone is likely to be making some money. But I've marveled for some time over the price of RAM for modern systems. **With the noticeable exception of the very highest performance types, RAM prices have been very low.** There has also been considerable news about RAM manufacturers trying to dump their fabs (production facilities) because they are hemorrhaging money in copious quantities. The term used above, "correction," is code for people losing their shirts and jobs. I suppose I should feel sorry for the corporate management types who created this situation and will suffer some sort of consequence as a result. You know: they'll have to pull ripcords on golden parachutes. That sort of thing. Yeah, they have it tough compared to all the people who, while perhaps not living from paycheck to paycheck, are soon to be thrust into a world that no longer needs their services. A few will do

well. Most will find something to keep body and soul together. An increasing fraction of such people will simply remain excess to anyone's needs. More than ever, we face the problem that the efforts of everyone are not needed to provide the goods and services we use.

I'm beginning to wonder whether some of the stuff going on in basic physics is real or just some sort of cliquish delusions. I was reading an editorial in an optics related journal which was clearly intended to be speculation about the future. One of the speculations was that **teleportation of humans is looking like a real possibility.** So was time travel. Of course, the speculation as to when was not exactly "real soon now." As proof of the potential practicality of teleportation, it was pointed out that "... scientists have successfully teleported photons over fiber-optic cable for a distance of 600 m beneath the river Danube in Vienna." Ah. Something as substantial as photons, eh. And via a fiber-optic cable. Ah... don't photons make their way down fiber-optic cables pretty well already? So, I have to wonder, how do the scientists know which of the photons are teleported and which are just doing their normal photonic thing, especially given the fact that only a few photons per unit time are making the magic trip? Time travel seems to me even more problematic. The difficulty is that there's this unknown additive constant relating all movement. It comes from the simple notion that seems obvious enough that only a genius, Einstein, would happen to see it as significant — all motion is relative. Put another way, there's no way to tell "where" anything is from one moment to the next — it's only possible to relate where and when something is relative to something else. If we can travel in time, then we'll be able to determine the additive constant by simply sending something a little forward or backward in time and taking note of where it shows up ... if we're lucky enough to find it at all.

By any chance, **do you happen to have an extra couple of hundred kilobucks sitting around with nothing much to do?** **Well, how'd you like to roll that into megabucks** on the next great Internet bubble? Join the gTLD free-for-all and get in on the craze. What's this about? Well, you know those parts of an Internet address that are to the right of the last period: ie. dot-com, dot-net, dot-org, etc.? They are referred to as the TLD (Top Level Domain). It seems that ICANN (Internet Corporation For Assigned Names and Numbers), which just happens to control the Domain Name System (DNS) is trying to unleash another naming debacle by allowing people to buy control of new TLDs. Like many of the things that are stupid about the Internet (you did know that there are several stupid things about the Internet not related to the enormous mass of stupid content floating about in it, right?), this is a truly horrid idea which seems to have little purpose but loading up ICANN's bank account. Among other things, the gTLD biz should be a godsend to scamsters world wide.

I'm not a woman but I am interested in procedures. Huh ...? **Yeah, it's the TV. Again.** First of all, there are procedures and there are procedures. Most procedures require some form of adjective to identify their class. Admittedly, my exposure to literature and learned discourse is severely limited but I can only think of one field in with the term "procedure" by itself has a reasonably clear meaning. That field happens to be software. Somehow when a TV advertisement says something like, "If you're a woman and not interested in procedures ...," **the notion of a female programmer with a peculiar form of cyber-bigotry does not immediately leap into my mind.** Then, again, I've known a number of programmers with a penchant for writing what is known as spaghetti code ... but that's technostory that'd take a while to explain, so I'll just continue to bore you **6 -->**

<--Water Blogged Wump

with the story at hand. I never did pay any attention to the point of the advertisement. Most likely it had some “clinically proven” formula for beauty or weight loss to hawk that was so good you could avoid surgery. Heaven forbid that someone might actually say “cosmetic surgical procedure” just to clear things up. Is it any wonder we have so much trouble communicating amongst ourselves when we have so many hang-ups we can’t say what we mean? Just for grins: Cadillac is “hybridizing” their SUV. According to <http://dictionary.reference.com>, a site which looks words up all manner of reference material, “hybridizing” is not even a word. What Cadillac means is “hybridizing.” But that nasty “z” sound takes too much effort, apparently. Nothing quite like speaking Murkin, is there?

There are a number of things going on that make me wonder who’s really calling the shots. First, there’s the obvious one of bailing out rich people with tax money while at the same time stripping checks and balances even further out of our idiotic financial system. I guess Bush does need to embellish his legacy just a bit further. **Everywhere you look, there’re people supposedly upholding your interests that are really selling FUD** (Fear, Uncertainty & Doubt). Another example came in the mail yesterday. It was a notice from Qwest that they were raising prices ... on all the stuff that basically doesn’t cost them anything additional to provide. Why? Beats me ... unless there’s an ulterior motive. TFC (The Phone Company) has conditioned us to believe that all kinds of “services,” which are provided by computers which have to be programmed to specifically avoid providing said services to customers who are not paying for them, cost a lot to provide. Actually, TFC is already using computers to do the basic job of patching phone connections together and tracking all the usage based billing crap they’ve managed to dream

up. We’re apparently foolish enough to put up with it. I just heard bits of an advertisement for Chantix, a drug that’s supposed to help you quit smoking. The overwhelming portion of the presentation was filled with great video of the good life while the audio spoke glowingly of all the nasty possible results that both taking and stopping taking Chantix could have. Put another way, it’s like virtually every other commercial we’ve had thrust at us in the media for about a decade to get us to buy into expensive, dangerous drugs to do things that might be better done with nothing at all. I smoked a pipe for many years. I still have a collection of pipe tobacco cans which are handy for storing all kinds of stuff. Some of them are old enough to be considered antiques, I suspect. I decided to quit smoking. So, I did. I didn’t take up chewing gum; not even Juicy Fruit. No patches, shots, pills, hypnosis or what have you. Many people who just refuse to quit smoking, upon hearing the above, simply claim I’m not normal. Could be, I guess. It’s not impossible. But I seriously doubt my peculiar differences number but the tiniest fraction of my similarities to everyone. The point is, why would people want to spend a lot of money and risk all the stuff they warn you about when all you have to do is choose to change your behavior a little?

My 10/100 ethernet switch in “The Lab” has been shy of the desired number of ports for quite some time. This has necessitated playing the game of cable shuffling from time to time. Which, is not a fun thing here since I’m running on really crappy cabling (some day I’ll get rich and put in real Cat 5e, or whatever is considered the “really good stuff” ... not). Anyway, there’s some value in not having to uproot the “standard” connections when messing around with some experiment or other: like just keeping the right stuff plumbed together for instance — I don’t have this stuff labeled (that would be too

easy). The other day an advertisement wafted before me that had a refurbished 10/100/1000 switch at a very low price. I decided it was time to “fix” my mess (or, rather, add stuff to compensate for my lack of organization and preparation). I set things up so that my main switch remains the old one since almost none of my equipment supports 1GHz ethernet. But the stuff that does have 1GHz ethernet is all running through the new switch. I had not had a natural opportunity to really check whether having a 1GHz path would be an improvement until today. I needed to send an 18+MB file from one machine to another via the new switch. I used FTP via Terminal, so I’d get some transfer statistics. It turns out that 18MB is not really a large enough file to get the connection fully wound up. Still, it went faster than 100MHz. I just happened to have a file of about 180MB sitting there, which I didn’t need to transfer, but was curious to see what would happen. It was large enough to get the connection up to flank speed and turned out to be only slightly faster than for the smaller file ... nowhere near the rated connection potentials of the switch. The reasons for the limitation aren’t clear but are most likely due to the slower of the two computers having to write the data to a hard disk, which takes some significant time compared to these speeds.

As only those of us who’ve been completely out of touch with their fellows would be surprised about, we’ve been bombarded with well over a year’s worth of “political speech” from every imaginable direction. I’ve never been one who cared much for it, one way or the other. If anything, political speech consists of more blatant lies than the principle of puffery allows in marketing. Trying to limit the amount of political speech always ends up with the argument that doing so deprives someone of their right to “free speech.” I quote “free speech” because I no longer know quite what it

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VisualHub, AudialHub, and iSquint have been discontinued

So reads the headline on Techspansion's website home page, <http://techspansion.com/>.

For those of you who've had to mess about converting video amongst the myriad forms that it's known to take, the loss of future development of VisualHub in particular may be heavily felt. VisualHub has been the sort of Swiss Army Knife of video format conversion, allowing all sorts

of peculiar things to fit together when virtually nothing else will handle it.

While VisualHub was built upon OSS (Open Source Software) tools, it provided what the Mac user really needs — a simple interface that just works. That's decidedly *not* part of those underlying OSS programs. Techspansion's shut down will leave a big pair of shoes to fill.

<--Water Blogged Wump

means. I used to have the simplistic notion that “free speech” allowed one to express opinions, however idiotic or unpopular. But I grew up outside the cliques from which politics gains its impetus to rule, so the reins of *group think* didn't constrain me all that much. **This political season has got me to wondering whether it's not time to clearly define “free speech” because the “political speech” resulting from using it as an excuse is less than useless.** One principle I'd like to attach to the concept of “free speech” is that it should, in fact, be free. By that I mean without price. This would preclude paid advertisements from being “free speech,” which should go a long way to eliminating the constant bombardment in the media. Consider that if speech is free, anyone should be able to do it, not just those who have deep enough pockets to force it on you. Somehow I doubt we could manage to give 300,000,000 people equal time.

I know I'm getting old and slow. But it's a position that provides some perspective. Sadly, I don't think perspective is something much of the Mac's Open Source Software community is concerned about. Don't get me wrong, I really like the notion of open source software; even open source hardware. My experience with using OSS on my

7 little herd of old Macs has been a very mixed blessing. In partic-

ular, my experience with DarwinPorts, which has segued into MacPorts, has been both exhilarating and incredibly frustrating. Much of the blame must be laid at the foot of Apple, Inc. Every high order digit of new Mac OS X has severely broken the development links between predecessor and successor, necessitating massive amounts of mucking about to “stay current.” This would not be so bad, except that when “ports” — the little fixer scripts used to control a program's compilation and installation — are updated to work with the new OS and also the latest incarnation of the program's source code, the previously working, perfectly fine older version no longer works. No big deal, just update everything and try again. Right. But that includes updating your computer too. Not just adding memory or a bigger hard disk or even a higher performance processor. No, it's pay Apple for all new stuff. I wish I could say the grass was greener by a significant margin elsewhere. Perhaps the best OSS platform is FreeBSD (despite all the hype about Linux, it remains a quixotic choice) simply because they provide ports for different versions of the basic operating system for a long time and, for the most part, in a form you can download and archive to use long after they've decided to quit carrying it on their servers. It's my opinion that operating system vendors are really doing their customers a disservice by producing a constant stream of “upgrades.” Operating systems should be like concrete.

They should be solid and stand the test of time. When it's time to make a new one, the break should be clean. This is very unlike what I've just experienced with MacPorts which keeps demanding tools for newer Mac OS X's than the one the port is supposed to be targeting in order to build the program. This strikes me as very peculiar because the tools won't install on the earlier operating systems. Clearly, changes are being made that don't get tested ... not that it's an easy thing to do; I've accumulated about 20MB of log files trying to get something to work and haven't gotten a quarter of the way through it. **Real software nerds revel in obfuscatational details.**

I suspect that some of my readers may occasionally watch PBS, so they're probably already aware of the Masterpiece Theater production named TIA, which stands for Total Information Awareness. But if you're not, you should be and when you are, you should make others aware of it despite the fact that it might brand you as one of those Commie-pinkos (FWIW: I find the dichotomy between the stated goal of personal freedom while simultaneously giving them all up for what amounts to a dictatorial “security,” a rather curious logical contradiction). Why so strong a recommendation? Well, come to the next ABCC meeting. If we can make all the equipment work properly, you'll get a chance to find out for yourself.



3 <- Observations of a Peanut Provider



gets the most. There is one bird that jumps mean at the others, and while he's attempting to run one off, two are grabbing peanuts behind his back. I've seen him go after another jay, while the pursued one hovers and/or flies backwards, which I didn't know a blue jay could do, all the while two or three birds are cleaning him out. Then there is another that comes in, and spends his time looking for just the right peanut. That bird hops around, weighing every nut, then comparing one with another, then starting over he does the same thing again, at times putting two or three nuts together and hefting each one several times, attempting to make up his mind, all the while the supply of peanuts he's testing is getting smaller and smaller. Finally he's quite lucky if he manages to get the last one. There is the scrub jay that always manages to get two in his beak, and then flies off in the same direction, crossing the road and heading up the hill. That fellow doesn't take much time hiding the pair of peanuts, and either him or his buddy is back, going for two more. I've never seen them getting peanuts at the same time, so I don't know for sure if two or all three of the scrub jays take two nuts at a time, but by the same token I've seen one or two of them only take one nut while another was doubling up. Then there is the Stellar Jay that tries to swallow a nut whole, and if he manages to get the one down, he

picks up another and flies off to hide his treasure. I'm thinking he must choke up the swallowed one and hide it also, but I've never seen him do that particular maneuver. The other birds don't gag down entire nuts, instead, when they decide to eat one, they hold it with their foot and peck off the shell until they get into the meat.

For awhile this summer we had one bird with an injured wing. The wing hung down, and there were feathers missing so he was easily spotted. This guy would get a peanut, then go bounding off in great long hops, hide the nut and come bounding back for another. He stayed around for quite a long time, finally getting so he could fly about three or four feet at a time. Then he would grab a nut, hop/fly to the top of the fence, then do the same into the cedar tree, then hop up branches, I suppose to hide the nut, but he also might of eaten it. I don't know what might have happened to him, but I no longer see him around. Of course there are also the able bodied birds that dash in, grab a peanut, any peanut, and take off to hide it. I don't think that any of the blue jays ever go back and find the peanuts again. Those feathered claim jumpers do a very good job of hiding their take, whether it be in the lawn grass, under the pine needles, in a flower pot, or I've even found nuts hidden in my archery target hay, and in the rain gutter. My guess would be at least 70 percent of the hid-

den nuts are never reclaimed, because I don't think the birds can find them again. At least I've never seen one do it. On the other hand, the peanuts that are found aren't done by a blue jay, instead they are picked off by the silver grey squirrels. The squirrels have an outstanding ability to smell a peanut. I'll be watching a squirrel do it's hop-stop gait across the lawn, then all at once freeze, check the wind and follow his nose right to the hidden morsel. They also don't consume the nut on the spot, but will head off to the top of the fence or up a pine tree, and finish off the nut there. Once again, they don't do that with every one that they find either. Many a time Mr. Squirrel finds a nut, heads for a special spot, digs a hole, and re-hides the nut.

As you can see, I'm easily entertained, and as far as I'm concerned it beats the heck out of all the politics on the TV. Oh yes, once the birds have all the peanuts hidden, they gather back at the handout, some days there might only two or three, but other times as many as seven stellar and three scrub jays will all be calmly eating milo for breakfast. 🍎

Coming Soon to an ABCC Near You!

Here it is, October of 2008 already. We now have a nice, new screen to show things upon with our group's projector and this month we're having an expert tell us what's happened to your privacy. I think it may just shock you even if you currently believe "the worst."

Then in November, we'll get to see an alternative or two to Mac OS X and Windows using OSS (Open Source Software). You might be surprised to

learn that there are all GUI (Graphical User Interface) based versions of both FreeBSD and Linux that are easier to install than Mac OS X. And there are plenty of tools readily available to use that can even be compatible.

ABCC needs your input. Next time you get an email to a "bored meat," come on down and put in your two cents. The coffee'll be a bit more.

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