## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

# Next Meeting
## Wednesday 2nd September
## 7 PM
## Ivan Turmine has a Mac Surprise

## LCG Committee 2009/10

*President: Iris Meek*

*Vice President: Janet Headlam*

*Minutes Secretary: Joel Harbottle*

*Treasurer: Dennis Murray*

*Ass. Treasurers: Don Cooper*

*MAC Librarians: Joel Harbottle*

*PC Librarian: Julie Hjort*

*Ass. PC Librarian: Judy Hall*

*Newstream Editor: Ron Baker*

*Publicity Officer: Karia Wicks*

*Ass. Publicity Officer: - open -*

*OPEN Co-ordinator: Robert Tierney*

*Webmaster/Content: Tom Olsen*

*Auditor: Ron Baker*

*"VICTOR" Liason: Robert Tierney*

*General Committee: Mike Armes, Sue Armes, Glenn Gilpin, Harvey Tavener, Reinhard von Samorzewski,*

## OPEN Committee 2009/10

Chairperson OPEN: Robert Tierney. *Chair all meetings of OPEN and ensure that they run smoothly*

Vice Chairperson OPEN: June Hazzlewood. *Chair meeting when the Chairperson is unavailable.*

Secretary: Margaret Carrington *Handles all incoming and outgoing communications Responsible for the documentation and distribution of all meeting minutes*

Assistant Secretary: - open -. *Help the Secretary where necessary*

Treasurer: Dennis Murray. *Responsible for all monies and banking*

Assistant Treasurer: Don Cooper. *Help the Treasurer where necessary.*

Publicity Officer: Karia Wicks. *Responsible for all advertising*

OPEN Co-ordinator: Robert Tierney. *Responsible for the smooth running of Centre on a daily basis*

Membership Co-ordinator: Karia Wicks.

*Keep Membership database up to date.*
Beginners Project Co-ordinator: Eleanor Horder.

Tutor Co-ordinator: Robert Tierney. *Keep regular contact with Tutors to bring ideas and concerns to meetings*

Assistant Tutor Co-ordinators: Eleanor Horder and Janet Headlam.

Newsletter Editors Assistant: Dennis Murray. *Collates and produces the OPEN Newsletter for inclusion in LCG monthly 'Newstream'*

Technical Co-ordinators: Dennis Murray (PC's) and Joel Harbottle (Mac). Responsible for the maintenance and repairs to all computer equipment

Co-ordinator of "VICTOR": Robert Tieney.

Webmaster/Content: Tom Olsen. OPEN Committee: Iris Meek, Harvey Tavener, Robin Walker, Barry Symons, Laraine Rist.

## Meeting Held at 1/1 Pipeworks Road
## Launceston Computer Group, Inc.

Meeting Minutes

Date: *Wednesday August 5 2009*

Meeting

The president welcomed all present and thanked our guest for the evening, Peter Clark from Black and White Photographics for his entertaining presentation of old newspaper snippets and photos.

The meeting opened at *7:20 pm following supper.*

Present

Janet Headlam, Ron Baker, Harvey Tavener, Eleanor Horder, Lou Horder, Glenn Gilpin, Julie Hjort, Judy Hall, Laraine Rist (acting secretary), Ivan Turmine, Reinhard von Samorzewski, Iris Meek, Tom Olsen, Joel Harbottle, Mike and Sue Armes.

Apologies

June and Bert Hazzlewood, Ted Bramich and Dennis Murray.

Minutes

The minutes of the last meeting were taken as read. *Moved:* G Gilpin *Seconded* : R Baker minutes are confirmed as correct. Car.

Correspondence ASCCA news

Business Arising:

Esk Market. Report in General Business

Seniors week: Tom Olsen has been in touch with the Presb. Homes who had not yet received a reply to the request for funding for stalls at the Casino. He is following this up.

Slide Scanner now installed on Open 10, comes up as another drive in My Computer.

The new printer (thanks to Dennis Murray) has made Tutorial printing much faster and Judy Hall much happier..

Financial Report: Karia presented a balance paper of $18,969.22 inc VICTOR $5,960.44. No statement available. This months rent and accounts as per attached. Moved: Julie/ Ron payments are ratified.

Julie suggested enquiring about how we can receive statement balance on line.

General Business

Ron reported Newstream for this month contained copies of both OPEN and LCG Minutes, but a gremlin caused some extra deliveries via email. He also announced he is Public Officer for National Seniors and  gave us a report on the latest obligations for clubs re audit reports. It was unanimously decided by our club that we continue to have our books

audited annually; at least while our present auditor is available.

ASSCA and LCG : Iris will represent the club at the National Conference, Sydney in a couple of weeks.

**Market Report**: Judy found an old float of $40 while checking Market gear. She and Julie will look at purchasing fabric to use for table covers. No Mac notes for last market, but Joel promises they will be ready for September 20. Judy will again make the booking. The market netted a couple of new members, in particular a new tutor who has already introduced himself to Julie and her Tuesday class. He is Bruce Colebrook, and the new pupil with Facebook welcomed a lesson from him at the club Tuesday evening.

Rob Tierney is holding a meeting Thursday August 27 at 3.30pm for people who can help with Seniors Week. The club wants to play it's part during this important week. Julie is an apology due to work.

June is trying, with him, to organize a birthday party for OPEN while Nan Bosler is visiting. Probable date October 3.

The OPEN meeting was asked to consider the amount of time that Dennis spends on Tech Support for our club. His input is invaluable and the club wishes to reward him for his efforts either monetary or 'in kind'.

Ivan said space had been made on Mac desk for students

who bring own Macs to classes, which are getting busier. He has offered to present a 'surprise demonstration' at the next meeting September 2.

Glenn will try to make contact with Dr Rick Butler re October or November guest roles.

Ron will demonstrate Windows 7 at the December meeting.

The club members appreciated both July and August guests' with their photographic displays.

There will be scanning classes held as soon as time is available. Some students are already using the new scanner.

It was noted that the floor to the toilet area is particularly slippery when shoes or floor are wet. Until the club can move to put down a non-slip surface material, a notice re this danger be placed on toilet door.

Karia Wicks has devised a new system for signing in each day and it's working well. A few more spaces required for meetings and Tuesday evening classes.

Meeting closed 8.15.
Next Meeting  Wednesday September 2.

## OPEN COMPUTING
## MINUTES OF MEETING HELD
## 5TH AUGUST 2009
### Meeting Opened 1pm

**PRESENT:**

Robert Tierney (Chair), Margaret Carrington, Janet Headlam,

Iris Meek, Jenny Napier, June Hazzlewood, Judy Hall, Laraine Rist,

Tom Olsen, Karia Wicks, Harvey Tavener, Eleanor Horder.

**APOLOGIES:**

Robin Walker, Bert Hazzlewood

**MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING:**

Iris Meek moved the minutes be accepted, seconded by Laraine Rist

**BUSINESS ARISING:**

3 Microsoft Works 9 were bought. Eleanor bought one and one was installed on OPEN 5 and one on OPEN 14.

Cartridges from YYUDA on Ebay- Set of five were bought for the cannon and they are working very well. They cost $36.89

**CORRESPONDENCE:**

IN:

Tasmanian Printer Cartridge Company-Bill

My State Financial-re merger

A.S.C.C.A renewal receipt- (paid)

Take the Teacher Home Parcel

Another Computer Store- receipt for rent payment

A.S.C.C.A newsletter

OUT:

E-mail to N.E.C in regards to withdrawal of grant application for kiosk.

Sympathy Card to Brian Robson

**FINANCIAL REPORT:**

Judy moved that it should be accepted and was seconded by June

**GENERAL BUSINESS:**

1. It was suggested that the club purchase the late Don Cooper's computer for $500. Iris moved we buy it, was seconded by Karia

2. Karia showed us the new sign in Day Sheets she has painstakingly put into place in order to replace the exercise books that have been used for so long. She is also running an attendance spread sheet which will show an accurate, up to date account of members attendance which will work very well in conjunction with the Waiting List records.

The sign in sheets have the members' names already printed on them which will make Karia's task of transferring data to the attendance spread sheet much easier. Thank you Karia for this big job well done.

**SENIORS' WEEK:**

3.There will be a meeting on Thursday 27th August at 3.30pm. Anyone and everyone is invited to attend so details can be worked out .People who are willing to help during this period are asked to let Rob know.

Nan Bosler will speak at our OPEN Day on Saturday 3rd October at 3.30pm

If the grant is not forthcoming, we will be holding our function and Birthday celebrations here in the club room.

**4. RETIREES EXPO:**

Tom informed us that there is to be a Retirees' Expo at Launceston Country Club Casino during Seniors' Week. Run by Presbyterian Homes. Decision as to whether we take part will be decided at LCG meeting tonight.

**5. DAFFODIL DAY:**

It was agreed that boxes of merchandise be displayed and sold for cancer research.. .

## 6. ASCCA Conference

Iris is going to ASCCA conference in 10 days time.

## 7. CHRISTMAS DINNER:

Tamar River Villa's was suggested as a suitable venue as well as the Centennial. June is to check details such as the total number of people the dining room at Tamar River Villa's will accommodate and the booking deadline.

## 8. TAKE THE TEACHER HOME:

Between 1st Aug 2009 to 31st Dec 2009 the series is available at the discounted price of $29.95 per set.

## TECHNICAL SUPPORT:

Tom asked if anyone had thanked Dennis for donating and installing a printer on OPEN 14. A thank you card is to be sent in which we also offer our assistance to him in any way we can after he has his operation.

This was seconded by all.

## TUTORS PAYING FOR SPECIALITY CLASSES:

Rob suggested tutors should not have to pay for specialty classes if their

primary reason for learning was in order to teach others.

## JUDY'S ESK MARKET RREPORT:

Through the market, a tutor was found who is on 3 month probation and is now assisting Julie on Tuesday evenings.

MEETING CLOSED AT 2.15pm

NEXT MEETING 2nd September 2009

## VALE DON COOPER July 22nd 2009
## June Hazzlewood

I start my tribute to Don Cooper with some words from a report in the OPEN Newsletter of October 2006. Robert Tierney, the coordinator of VICTOR, OPEN's computer home visit service wrote: "If people haven't already noticed, the phone number has changed in the last month, and that is due to the kind donation of a mobile phone by one of our students Don Cooper. Thank you Don!"

I am sure we all have reason to say thank you Don, who came to OPEN to learn how to use computers as a student in our eLearn course and stayed to quietly help other members and the committee wherever he could, accepting the role of assistant OPEN Treasurer.

Don was nominated by ASCCA, the Australian Seniors Computer Clubs Association as an OPEN delegate to the two day ASCCA conference held at the Power House Museum in Sydney in August 2008. When asked why he wished to attend the conference, Don replied that he had been a member of the OPEN club for a number of years and was pleased he was able to take a more active role in the club and to use experience gained during his working life as well as computer skills learned at the OPEN club.

Don said he would bring back ideas from other clubs to share with the OPEN committee and members both at members' meetings and as part of the daily OPEN sessions. He wrote an excellent report on the various presentations at the conference, recommending ASCCA President Mrs. Nan Bosler's paper "Finding Funding" and the other presentations for study by OPEN committee members.

Don wrote that although taken ill, he found the conference of great benefit to himself and in turn of benefit to OPEN. He concluded that if nominated, he would be willing to attend the 2009 conference and rounded off his report with the words 'Happy Computing'.

I can do no better than to echo these words as I am joined by LCG and OPEN committee members and those present today, including Nan Bosler, who has emailed her personal condolences and spoke of the wider family of seniors computer club members and friends.

In extending our sincere sympathy to Ros, we say Don that you will be remembered as a gentle, thoughtful and helpful member of our club and your contribution will not be forgotten.

## Newbie Club Tutorials

**Tutorial ... "How To Set Up Outlook Express Filters"**

You can filter your email using the filter facility in Outlook Express - or Outlook if you use it.

Open OUTLOOK Express.

Click the Tools menu, point to Message Rules and click on Mail.

In the Message Rules dialog box, click on the New button.

In the 'New Mail Rule' dialog box, find the 'Where the Subject line contains specific words' entry in the Select the Conditions for your rule section.

Put a checkmark in its checkbox.

In the 'Select the Actions' for your rule section, find the 'Move it to the specified folder entry' and put a checkmark in its checkbox.

In the 'Rule Description' section, click on the blue/underlined contains specific words entry.

In the 'Type Specific Words' dialog box, type in a keyword or phrase. This must be EXACTLY as it reads and spells in the email you wish to filter.

Then click the Add button.

Continue to add keywords and phrases until you're done. Then click OK.

Examine the junk emails you wish to filter and pick out the keywords you wish your filters to pick up on. Unfortunately you'll find a lot of the offending words are misspelled to avoid being picked up by the filters.

Click on the blue/underlined specified entry.

In the 'Move' dialog box, click on the 'Bulk Mail' folder and then click OK.

In the 'Name of the Rule' section, replace the current name with the name 'Junk Filter Rule'. Click OK.

Click OK in the 'Message Rules' dialog box.

Normally, when people send email to you, your address is listed.

However, Junk mailers will sometimes hide the destination addresses, and what you see in the To: list is 'undisclosed' and 'suppressed'.

So you can use the keywords "undisclosed" and "suppressed" in your filtering rule.

A friendly word ...

Send your filtered emails to a new folder named 'Filtered' at first. Do NOT automatically 'Permanently Delete' them.

Check this folder for a week or so to ensure that you're not trashing legitimate emails.

You can also use this Filtering System to automatically file specific 'friendly' emails into a folder of your choice. For instance you can automatically file your favorite newsletters to a 'Newsletter' folder which you have created, or filter emails from your friend 'Dracula' into your 'Vampires' folder.

**Tutorial ... "Email Gobbledygook Translated**

The e-mail system uses post offices. They aren't something you can touch, but the post office is big part of e-mail's success.

In fact, next time you set up a new e-mail address, you'll be prompted for something called a "POP3" account.

That's a shortcut for saying "Post Office Protocol Version 3" --which is a mouth full.

A protocol is a way to get things done without running into stuff. That's a homely way of saying it, but if you apply what you know about the world you live in, you'll see that the electronic world is similar. E-mail has to follow certain protocols in its route around the globe. If it didn't, you'd never get it.

POP3 accounts are always for incoming mail.

The computer hosting your POP3 server does one thing, and does it well. It receives your e-mail, placing it in a special place on a hard drive located on your host's server ("server" is just a fancy name for a computer that does nothing but serve up pages in answer to your request for information). When you check your mail, your e-mail client (Outlook, Outlook Express, AOL, Netscape, etc.) sends a request to the server, checking for mail.

If you've got mail, it's downloaded to your computer. Then you can read it without having to be online.

SMTP accounts are always for outgoing mail.

SMTP stands for Simple Mail Transport Protocol. It's the part of the Internet that sends mail. A protocol is followed to ensure safe delivery to the recipient's mailbox, and not some other box.

Web-based e-mail isn't the same as client-based e-mail. OK, the message is the same, but the way you get your mail is different.

Web based mail depends on your browser to read mail. You have to log into an account before you can receive, send or read it.

Use web-based e-mail if you plan to travel a lot, and don't have local access numbers. Then you can get your mail from any computer anywhere in the

world. All you need is an Internet connection and a browser. Hotmail.com, and Yahoo.com are common examples of web-based e-mail services.

You can have as many email addresses as you can think of. There's no limit to the number of accounts you can set up, though a practical limit will be reached depending your creativity or need for various accounts.

Use aliases to receive email at any name you can place in front of the "@" symbol. Your web host should be able to set this up for you. In fact, it is standard stuff on the Net. All you do is ask your provider about email aliases. If they are a good people, they will explain this to you, or send you resource information.

Ever noticed the following addresses: webmaster@domain.com <mailto:webmaster@domain.com> or sales@domain.com <mailto:sales@domain.com> or info@domain.com [<mailto:info@domain.com>](<mailto:info@domain.com>)

**Tutorial ... "Use HTML Email With Care"**

I get hundreds of emails every day - including that stupid crappy stuff - and a lot of it is in HTML format.

You know what? Some of it is soooo cool I can't read the text!

Here's a few examples ...

Colored background with colored font.

Cool background with a fancy font.

Wiggly, squiggly animations that distract me from reading the message.

Cartoons of a funny little gnome waving at me.

Beautifully designed pictures of butterflies or flowers on a green background.

And so on.

Look, when I send a business letter by snail mail, I do not use scented note paper. Or a pink envelope. Or include a picture of a a delicate fairy with gossamer wings.

Nor do I use an illegible airy-fairy font!

If you use a fancy font that's on your PC, it can't be read by the recipient if he/she doesn't have the same fancy font on

*their* PC. Their PC will show what it thinks is the nearest it has, and displays your message in that font. And the result can be a complete mess.

And using a colored background makes it difficult for most people to make out the text. They may be color blind. They could be getting on a bit with tired eyes. There are a hundred different reasons why they may have difficulty in reading your email comfortably. So they may just not bother reading it at all.

So why try to re-invent the wheel? For decades, newspapers have used black text on a white background. So use Arial or Verdana font (not the default Times Roman - it's curly bits are difficult to read on a PC screen) and write it on a white background.

Email is for communicating your message. Not your ego!

Sorry if that hurts a bit. But if you want to lose friends - or have your emails trashed as unread - use a fancy blue font on a blue background with a cute green gnome waving his hand at the reader. And throw in a beautiful multi-colored butterfly as well.

Or maybe don't send it at all:-)

In fact, if you use plain text email the problem doesn't arise.

And everyone can read it.

**Tutorial ... "Net Jargon Translated"**

Here's a translation of some of the Internet Jargon you come across and perhaps don't understand ...

Attachment... A file hooked to an e-mail message that gets sent to a recipient.

Bandwidth ... A measure of the amount of stuff that can get shoved through a limited transmission medium such as a cable or a phone line.

Blind courtesy (or carbon) copy (bcc) ... A copy of e-mail that gets sent to a recipient without the primary recipient's knowledge.

Bounce ... The error message you read when your mail gets returned as undeliverable. Also, what happens to email that can't be delivered, causing the "undeliverable" message that's sent to you by the postmaster.

Filter ... A part of your e-mail program that scans incoming messages for predefined character strings (also known as words or sentences). You can set up a filter to automatically delete e-mail from a particular address.

Flame ... An insulting, caustic, or otherwise unpleasant response.

Forward (FW) .. To pass along a message to another e-mail address. Just don't forward already forwarded messages. They're no fun to receive or read.

Mail Bomb ... To send a huge message or groups of messages to an e-mail address, causing an explosive reaction from the recipient.

Mailbox ... The place on a mail serving computer where your e-mail is stored. You may create individual mailboxes in your email client to distribute your mail to as well.

Postmaster ... The person who gets to troubleshoot the mail server, and make sure everything is running smoothly.

Sig quote or sig file ... A quotation or closer message added to the end of an e-mail message. Often used to promote a cause or business. Short for signature quote or signature file.

-------- "Flame Related Jargon"

Flame Defined ... "To send an offensive email message or newsgroup posting, especially one containing strong language and personal insults."

Asbestos long johns ... What e-mailers put on before sending a message that they expect will get flamed. It's a psychological fact that e-mail has an effect on you.

Burble ... Similar to a flame, except the burbler is considered to be an idiot. Or at least dumb, incompetent, or just ignorant.

Dictionary flame ... Criticizes someone for a misspelling or grammatical gaffe.

Flame Bait ... Usually extraordinarily provocative material designed to elicit a flaming response.

Flamer ... Generally, someone who flames frequently.

Rave ... An irritating flame in which the writer rambles on after the flame war has ended.

Old Flame ... Someone Joe never speaks about when his wife is present:-)

*(Continued from page 10)*

**Tutorial ...  "How To Send Attachments"**

It's funny how it goes sometimes, but we received 3 requests this week for a tutorial on how to send attachments by email.

First of all ...

I NEVER open attachments anymore.  This is the number one method of sending viruses and other nasty stuff by email.  So any email with an attachment is automatically zapped and never seen by me.

So if you're going to send someone an attachment, send them an email first asking for permission.  Otherwise it may be nuked.

In Outlook Express write your email message.

Go to 'Insert' and click on 'File'.  Or simply click on the paper clip icon in your tool bar.

A window opens up.

Navigate your way to the file, picture or whatever it is you wish to attach.

Double Click on it and close the window.

You'll see that an icon has appeared in the bottom left of your email.  You can open this with a double click if you wish, to check that you've attached the correct file.

Send your email in the usual way.

All your recipient has to do to open the attachment is to double click on the file icon.

Want to send 2, or 3 attachments?

Just keep inserting them one at a time as described.

NOTE:

If you wish to forward an image you've already received as an attachment, you MUST save it first in the normal way onto your hard drive.  Then send it as I've explained above.

**Tutorial ...  "File Maintenance"**

This is well kept secret, so tell everyone about it.

You can do file maintenance using the OPEN and SAVE AS dialog boxes (dialog box is another name for "window")

When you see the OPEN dialog box (seen when you are about to open a file after you click on it) or the SAVE AS dialog box (seen when you are about to save a file) you can leave those boxes on the screen and perform the following:

To do maintenance on a file or folder, right-click the object to display a shortcut menu...

To create a new object, right-click an empty section of the file list, and then click New to get the New menu.

To create a new folder within the current folder, click the Create New Folder button.

So what?  ....

Here's an example of how to use this.

Let's say you've begun downloading a file...  and you're at the SAVE AS dialog box (remember it's just another name for "window").

*(Continued from page 11)*

While there, you think, "I need to create a new folder for this file so I keep my computer's hard drive organized."

Click the Create New Folder button, and a new folder appears with blue covering the file name. Type the name for the folder, press Enter, and the new folder is created. Then select that new folder for the download location.

**Tutorial ... "About Slashes"**

A. **"Path"** What's that?

The ankle bone connects to the shin bone. The shin bone connects to the knee bone. The knee bone connects to the... you know.

Well, a 'path' on your computer is a series of folders along the way. The path you follow to get to a specific resource. Kind of like the various parts of your anatomy connecting to other various parts...

Okay, here's an example:

C:\My Documents\Recipes\cornbread.txt 'cornbread.txt' is the file name. It's found in the 'Recipes' folder, which is found in the 'My Documents' folder, which is found in the C: folder... which is your hard drive. So the 'path' to cornbread.txt goes through the C:\My Documents\Recipes forest.

Why does this matter?

It's just lingo. But without knowing the lingo, your trip through the Black Forest of computers will be filled with terror and frustration. Right? Of course. :-)

....While we're on the subject of slashes (aren't we?)
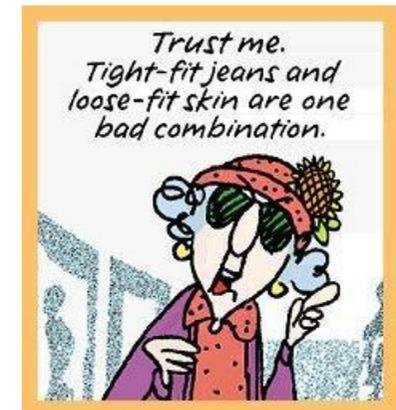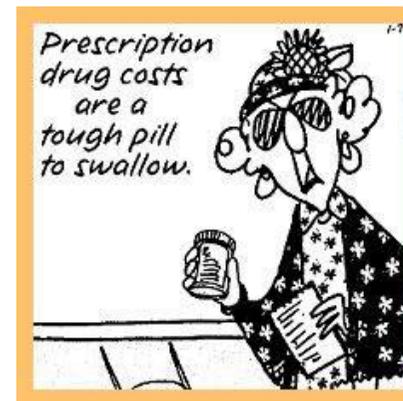
B. **"Forward slash - back slash"**

Ever wondered why the slash is forward (/) in a web page URL, and backward (\) on your computer? No? Okay.

All Internet resources use the forward slash to separate one resource from another. Page names are separate from domain names.

The forward slash indicates a 'change in resource'.

On your home computer, you'll see the slash is backward, or leaning to the left. "And never the two shall mingle!" You can try using a backslash in a Web page URL. But it won't work. You CAN use a backslash in your browser, like this:

C:\My Computer Do that, and you'll list all the stuff on your computer! But you won't see stuff on the Internet that way. Who cares? Someone. Somewhere.



Prescription drug costs are a tough pill to swallow.

Trust me. Tight-fit jeans and loose-fit skin are one bad combination.

## Are Computers getting Too Fast??

When Bill Gates, bless his crooked soul, said years ago that we'd never need more than 640K of RAM, he kind of had the right idea in mind, but he was perhaps a few decades early in expressing this thought.

When Steve Jobs said, with the introduction of the original Power Macintosh G4, that we now had a supercomputer on our desktops, he was closer to the mark, but not quite there.

Today, the speediest personal computers have quad-core processors. The heftier Mac Pros sport two of them, and by next year at this time, six- and eight-core CPUs will be the norm. It wasn't so long ago that you'd fill a room with hot-running hardware to come even close.

In passing, I should mention that one of the reasons the likes of AMD and Intel went to multicore was because they had begun to hit the wall when it comes to CPU clock speeds. At one time, we thought that 3 GHz ratings and higher were going to be the norm, but few Macs achieve that goal, and then just barely. Indeed, we are now told that playing design tricks with the chips, such as adding more cache RAM, integrated memory controllers, Hyper-Threading and, of course, additional processing cores would cure what ails us. Well at least when it comes to getting more power from our Macs and PCs.

What most of you have discovered is that multicore processors and all that extra stuff don't count for a hill of beans with the vast majority of the apps you're running. Only a very few are actually developed to handle the extra cores, so, for the most part they sit there doing nothing beyond consuming precious electric power.

With Snow Leopard, Apple is hoping to change that equation, by providing more thorough tools to make the operating system aware of such configurations, and to make it easier for developers to harness those tools. That, and being able to offload some of the data processing chores to the graphics chip, promise to deliver Macs with previously undreamed of performance potential.

All well and good. The real question, however, is how all this multicore magic translates to the real world, to regular people who don't spend their workdays playing resource-hogging computer games or performing deep math and 3D rendering chores.

You will certainly find that your email doesn't arrive any faster, nor will all that extra CPU horsepower help you put more words on the screen in your favorite word processor. No doubt Apple and its thirdparty software engineers are busy designing lots and lots of graphics eye candy to make things seem more powerful. I'm sure that apps will also launch faster, but part of that is based on the limitations of your hard drive. Stick, for example, a solid state drive inside your MacBook Air, and suddenly it seems to have consumed a large dose of uppers

Such a dilemma.

Indeed, one of the reasons that netbooks may have taken off is the fact that most computers these days really offer more performance than we really need, so why spend more when something super cheap is good enough? Well, the netbooks have other limitations too, such as smaller hard drives with which to store your stuff, tiny keyboards and small screens that, combined, have caused a number of buyers to return them.

But even without netbooks in the picture, there may still be reason for many Mac users to think of downsizing. One of my friends, tech commentator Kirk McElhearn, has decided that his Mac Pro is just too much computer for his needs. So he's ordered a full-outfitted Mac mini instead to replace it. He figures that loading a mini with

4GB of RAM ought to be sufficient and he's also adding external FireWire 800 drives, in case the speed of the internal drive, based on a standard notebook design, proves to slow things down a little too much.

Mac Pro at the earliest opportunity. Sure, the iMac might have been a more suitable compromise, but he is one of those folks who cannot tolerate glossy screens.

How this might impact Apple's marketing direction is another issue entirely. Certainly if a heavier dose of low-end iMacs are moving along with the Mac mini, you can bet they might consider adding more value to their cheaper gear. Indeed, they've already done that with the $999 MacBook. No, not by making it cheaper but by, you guessed it, giving it a faster processor, speedier RAM and a bigger hard drive.

Well, old habits die hard. Will our obsession with ever faster Macs and PCs soon end as well?

[Reprinted from MacNightOwl, 28-May-2009)

## Tricks With Sticks

Some of my friends and relations use Windoze PCs at work. Frequently they have to cart files from/to work on their USB sticks (aka thumb drives). USB sticks formatted using most Wintel disk formats – FAT32 being the most common – will work fine on a Mac, similarly even the Journaled HFS format seems to give most Wintel boxes no problems. Occasionally their USB sticks will be running slow – apparently the cause is that the Wintel PC has reformatted the memory stick to the old FAT16 format.

As I use my USB stick in much the way we used to use floppies, as a form of sneaker net for a one-off transfer of files, I find that, when I do encounter a FAT16 formatted USB stick, I simply put up with the inconvenience for this one transfer and then re-initialise the USB stick to a more up-todate format, either FAT32 or Journaled HFS.

I do this using the Erase function in Disk Utility.

For the benefit of those of you who were late to Mac 101, in the left-hand column of Disk Utility select the USB stick, and click on the Erase tab. A warning will appear telling you that erasing the USB stick will mean that you loose all the data stored on it – click on OK. Depending on how new your Mac is (i.e. whether it has USB 2) and the size of the USB stick, this operation shouldn't take more than a minute or so.

However, sometimes it's not the fault of the USB stick's format that slows things down. USB is not exactly lightening fast at data transfer, though USB2 is a significant improvement over the older USB1. If you have a really old Mac it might be that all it has is USB1 (1.5MB/sec transfer speed)

or USB1.1 (about 12MB/sec). The transfer speed of USB2 is 460MB/sec – theoretically faster than Firewire 400, though in practice there's not that much difference.

If you are using a hub, you may find that, unless it's a powered hub, your USB stick will be slower than if you'd plugged it in directly into your Mac, and the longer the cord on the USB hub, the more the speed drops.

Sometimes I find that for no good reason swapping the USB port into which I have plugged in my USB stick will produce a significant improvement in its performance.

If it's one of my old Macs, where the USB port has had considerable use, then I suspect that it is the port that has got worn out.

If this happens on my new iMac though, I have found that, more often than not, this is the first indication that the USB stick is on its last legs. Heck, they're not that expensive to replace – I still have a 125MB memory stick that I paid $125 dollars for and thought I'd got a bargain. Mind you, it no longer works, but as it was my first … The one I currently use is 2 GB and cost me the princely sum of $15.

By the way, you'll notice, if you look at a newly purchased USB stick in Disk Utility, that it'll come formatted as FAT32. That's OK – you can leave it that way, or reformat it (which is what I do – simple reflex on my part!) to the appropriate Mac OS format. It'll work satisfactorily either way – the speed it works at is determined by what USB version is on your Mac

*From ACTApple August 2009*

## INTERESTING HISTORY LESSON

### Railroad tracks.

*This is fascinating.*

Be sure to read the final paragraph; your understanding of it will depend on the earlier part of the content.

The US standard railroad gauge (distance between the rails) is 4 feet, 8.5 inches.

That's an exceedingly odd number.

Why was that gauge used?

Because that's the way they built them in England , and English expatriates built the US railroads.

Why did the English build them like that?

Because the first rail lines were built by the same people who built the pre-railroad tramways, and that's the gauge they used.

Why did 'they' use that gauge then?

Because the people who built the tramways used the same jigs and tools that they used for building wagons, which used that wheel spacing.

Why did the wagons have that particular odd wheel spacing?

Well, if they tried to use any other spacing, the wagon wheels would break on some of the old, long distance roads in England , because that's the spacing of the wheel ruts.

So who built those old rutted roads?

Imperial Rome built the first long distance roads in Europe (and England ) for their legions.

The roads have been used ever since.

And the ruts in the roads?

Roman war chariots formed the initial ruts, which everyone else had to match for fear of destroying their wagon wheels.

Since the chariots were made for Imperial Rome , they were all alike in the matter of wheel spacing.

Therefore the United States standard railroad gauge of 4 feet, 8.5 inches is derived from the original specifications for an Imperial Roman war chariot..

Bureaucracies live forever.

So the next time you are handed a specification/ procedure/process and wonder 'What horse's ass came up with it?', you may be exactly right.

Imperial Roman army chariots were made just wide enough to accommodate the rear ends of two war horses.

(Two horse's asses.)

Now, the twist to the story: When you see a Space Shuttle sitting on its launch pad, there are two big booster rockets attached to the sides of the main fuel tank.

These are solid rocket boosters, or SRB's.

The SRB's are made by Thiokol at their factory in Utah .

The engineers who designed the SRB's would have preferred to make them a bit fatter, but the SRB's had to be shipped by train from the factory to the launch site.

The railroad line from the factory happens to run through a tunnel in the mountains, and the SRB's had to fit through that tunnel.

The tunnel is slightly wider than the railroad track, and the railroad track, as you now know, is about as wide as two horses' behinds.

So, a major Space Shuttle design feature of what is arguably the world's most advanced transportation system was determined over two thousand years ago by the width of a horse's ass.

And you thought being a horse's ass wasn't important?

Ancient horse's asses control almost everything...

And CURRENT Horses Asses are controlling everything else