

Access

Newsletter of the Louisville Computer Society
Kentuckiana's Macintosh Users Group

December 2002

Laptop Musings by Lee Larson

There are those in my family who accuse me of living by the old aphorism "He who dies with the most toys wins." They may be right, but I know I'm not winning. Anyone in this part of the country who really wants to win must go to the Dayton Hamvention every spring to indulge in an orgy of technolust.

Aging and dwindling in number these days, the ham radio operators were the original techno-geeks who pioneered many of the innovations in communications we now take for granted. More than a half century ago, they began congregating every spring in Dayton to learn new tricks, swap stories and, most important of all, to buy, sell and trade the latest gadgets. Over the years, the Hamvention, also known as the Hamfest, has grown to be an amazing event. Attendance is normally in the hundreds of thousands over three days, and there's a flea market with three thousand vendors from all over the country hawking everything from the traditional ham gear to just about anything you want in the way of computer gadgetry. In fact, a computer geek wandering the flea market with eyes open can find just about anything at a good price.

Here's an example. Three or four of my friends and I used to pile into a car go to Dayton for a day every year. In 1993, we went on Saturday and arrived early in the morning after driving through a steady drizzle all the way. Most of the flea market is outside, and I spent a miserable day fighting the crowds and rain and wandering the endless aisles between the stalls. The day was nearly over, and I was long past ready to quit. The flea market fills a good-sized parking lot surrounded by a fence, and I was way off in a far corner drifting along and

idly watching an endless stream of used gadgets float by on the tables and shelves in front of me. One of the stalls had an uninteresting array of used mainframe computer equipment, but I stepped in closer under its tarp to get out of the rain.

The stall belonged to a liquidation company that bought used equipment from bankrupt businesses and resold it to whomever would buy it. Up on the top shelf, just peeking over the edge, was a PowerBook 180, then the top of the line PowerBook from Apple. I asked about it, and the guy behind the counter said "It's some kind of laptop. I don't know anything about it and it doesn't work. It's yours for \$200." He got it down. There was no power supply or manuals—just the computer itself. After pushing the power button, I saw the brief flicker of a sad Mac icon, and the machine turned itself off, probably because the battery was dead. Since the sad Mac was there, I figured the computer mainboard was probably okay. Most likely, it had a bad hard drive or a dead battery. Of course, I bought it on the spot.

On the way home that evening, we stopped at the Microcenter in Cincinnati so I could buy a new power brick for the machine. After fiddling with things in the lobby of the store for a couple of minutes, the 180 booted right up off the brick. The only thing wrong with it was a dead battery!

Not every trip has turned out this well, and there are many attendees who've arrived with all ten fingers and left with fewer than nine.

I haven't been back to the Hamvention for a few years, but it's still going strong. This year's is scheduled for May 16-18, and you

can get all the information you want from their Web page (www.hamvention.org).

What got me thinking about this was my new iBook 700/14. It's amazing how much laptops have changed in the last ten years or so! The 180 was the best notebook of its day with a 33 MHz 68030 processor, a huge 80 MB hard drive and room for a whopping 14 MB of really expensive RAM. The iBook is Apple's low-end laptop, with a G3 processor running at 700 MHz, 640 MB of RAM and a 40 GB hard drive. In every way, the iBook is an order of magnitude beyond the 180. But, truth be told, the upgrade in the specs don't make all that much difference in the way the machine is used. For me, a laptop is a writing machine. It's a way for me to write wherever I am and whenever I want. The difference in speed isn't that important because when I'm sitting in front of a word processor, even the old 180 takes my typing in a lot faster than my brain can move my fingers. Perhaps that's why the high-end machines aren't selling nearly as well as the industry hoped. Buyers have just wised up to the fact that even the old machines were plenty fast enough to do the mundane jobs that are all most people ever want. Unless the new "killer app" comes along, most of us don't need to venture out onto that expensive bleeding edge.

This being the Christmas season, what should the new laptop user be looking for in the way of stocking stuffers? Here are a few suggestions that I've tried, or various people have recommended.

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Louisville Computer Society, Inc.
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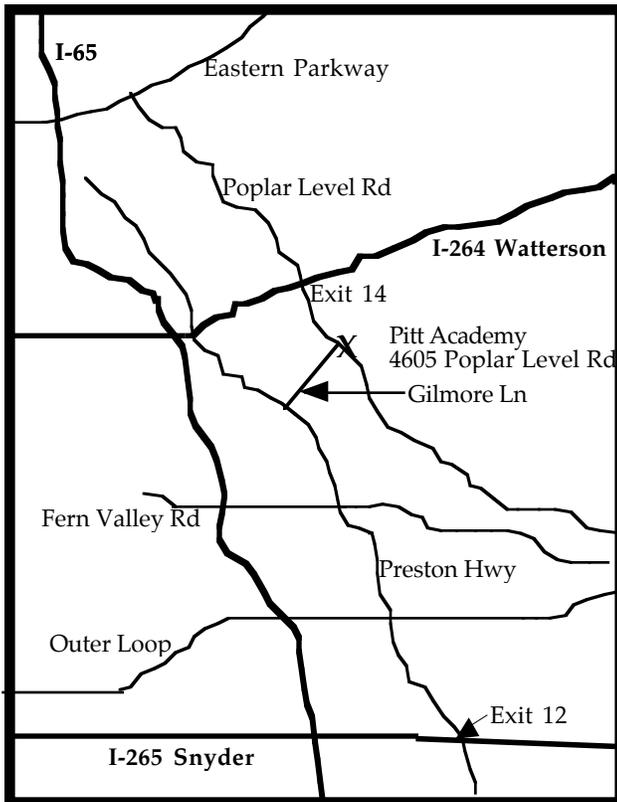
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USER GROUP CONNECTION

Come to our monthly meetings

The Louisville Computer Society meets the 4th Tuesday of each month, 7-9 P.M. (except December) at Pitt Academy, 4605 Poplar Level Rd. (Poplar Level Rd. at Gilmore Lane), Louisville KY 40213 (see map below).

Pitt Academy is 1 mile south of the Watterson on Poplar Level Rd. If coming from the Snyder Freeway, Gilmore Ln is 5 miles north of I-265 on Preston Hwy. Turn right and when you get to the end (Poplar Level Rd), Pitt Academy is directly across the intersection.



Laptop Musings Con't from page 1

Retractable cabling. The bane of many laptop users is the rat's nest of necessary cables that are tangled together in the laptop's bag. For years, I solved the problem with zip lock sandwich bags. But, Belkin has come up with a nice line of laptop cables that retract into small pod-like cases. The line includes telephone, Ethernet, USB and Firewire cables. They're available for about \$25 from all our usual toy stores, and can be found for \$20 or so online.

Portable mouse. The Kensington PocketMouse Pro is a USB two-button mouse with a scroll wheel that has a retractable cord. Mac OS X 10.2 automatically uses both buttons and the scroll wheel works in Cocoa programs such as Chimera, BBEdit and Mail.app. Software can be downloaded from Kensington to make the buttons and scroll wheel useful with Carbon programs, under Classic and older versions of the the Macintosh operating system. The list price for the mouse is about \$40, but it can be found for much less.

Virtual monitors. Many of us use two or more monitors on our desktop Macs to expand screen real estate. On a laptop computer there's no such option when you're on the road. CodeTek Virtual Desktop is a possible solution (www.codetek.com). It creates as many as a hundred virtual desktops inside your machine, and they're each just a mouse-click away. My laptop always runs with three virtual desktops, and this helps me avoid window clutter and saves my sanity. It also works well on a desktop Mac. The program costs \$40, and a limited functionality version can be tried out for free.

Location troubles. One of the things that made Mac OS 9 so nice to use with a laptop was the Location Manager. Different settings could be saved and restored for the different places you used your laptop. The Location Manager was lost in the transition to Mac OS X. Location X is a program that restores all the functionality of the Location Manager, and more (homepage.mac.com/locationmanager/). It makes moving your laptop between home and office a lot less frustrating. The program is shareware for \$10, and well worth it.

SITEings

I got this one through the mail; haven't stopped laughing yet:
<http://www.despair.com/>

And for all you Godzilla fans:  <http://www.Charismac.com/Products/firedino/index.html>

Another use for AOL CDs besides <http://www.cnn.com/2002/TECH/internet/11/10/offbeat.aol.return.ap/index.html>

Go to <http://www.Cyberguys.com/> and search for CD Stick-its; A great idea: you can store CDs (or decorate) just about any flat surface



FireDino
FireWire (4-port) Hub

LCS e-mail address book

Andrew Arnold	a0arno01@athena.louisville.edu
Bernard W. Barron	b.barron@insightbb.com
Jim Bennett	bennettsmay29@earthlink.net
Anne Cartwright	cartwrig@aye.net
Chuck Davis	millyd2@mac.com
Marta Edie	Mledie@aol.com
Jeff Gatlin	father.jeff@home.com
Bernard Griffis	latigopc@bellsouth.net
Tom Guenther	Tom@aye.net
Nelson Helm	helmkyny@clockwinders.net
Glenn Hoehler	glenn@insightbb.com
Harry Jacobson-Beyer	harryjb@bellsouth.net
Bill King	bk0413@insightbb.com
Lee Larson	leelaron@mac.com
Tymna Oberhausen	tymna@bellsouth.net
Brian O'Neal	brimac@mac.com
Henry Simpson	simpsonh@aye.net
Ed Stivers	stivers1@earthlink.net
George Yankey	jeffco13@bellsouth.net
Ron Yates	ryates2000@aol.com

If you wish to be added send message to cartwrig@aye.net

LCS Web Page, List Serve & Officers

Web Page	www.aye.net/~lcs
List Serve	macgroup@erdos.math.louisville.edu
Tom Guenther, President	Tom@aye.net
Lee Larson, Vice President	leelaron@mac.com
Harry Jacobson-Beyer, Program Director	harryjb@bellsouth.net
Brian O'Neal, Web Master	brimac@mac.com
Anne Cartwright, Newsletter Editor	cartwrig@aye.net

Upcoming Programs 7 P. M., Pitt Academy
see map on page 2:

No meeting in December See you in 2003

January 28,2003 In the works;
see January newsletter

Trivia and Stuff Con't from page 4

http://www.cooperativeindividualism.org/adler_moyers_interview_on_great_ideas.html

Five Great Web Sites for Kids:

TechTV's the Screen Savers
(<http://www.techtv.com/screensavers/twistedlist/story/0,24330,3343667,00.html>)

1. Ewwwww, yucky
2. Free Tibet
3. Hey kid, get off my webpage!
4. Rewrite history
5. Gameskidsplay.net

Four Horsemen Of The Apocalypse:

Famine, Pestilence, Destruction and Death

Four Horsemen of Notre Dame:

Quarterback Harry Stuhldreher, left halfback Jim Crowley, right halfback Don Miller and fullback Elmer Layden

Three Wise Men and Their Gifts:

Their names (in Greek, Hebrew and Latin); their gifts, and the land from which they came:

Greek	Hebrew	Latin	Gift	Land
Apellius	Galgat	Caspar	Myrrh	Europe
Amerius	Malgat	Balthasar	Frankincense	Africa
Damascus	Sarachin	Melchior	Gold	Asia

Three Musketeers:

Athos, Porthos, Aramis

Two:

OSX 10.2 Jaguar Latest version 10.2.2, but 10.2.3 is coming.

One: The World's Best Joke:

http://www.news.com.au/common/story_page/0,4057,5220974%5E1702,00.html

December 4, 2002: Scientists in Britain unveiled the world's funniest joke at the end of the largest study of humour ever.

Two hunters are out in the woods when one of them collapses. He doesn't seem to be breathing and his eyes are glazed. The other guy whips out his cellphone and calls the emergency services. He gasps: "My friend is dead! What can I do?" The operator says: "Calm down, I can help. First, let's make sure he's dead."

There is a silence, then a shot is heard. Back on the phone, the guy says: "OK, now what?"

**Louisville Computer Society
Macintosh Users Group
Membership Application**

Please send your \$26 check for a year's membership, made out to Louisville Computer Society to:

Louisville Computer Society
P.O.Box 9021
Louisville,KY 40209-9021.

Fill out the following ; clip on the dotted line (or copy to another piece of paper) and send in with your check .

New or Renewal Membership

Name: _____

Home Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip+4: _____

Home Phone: () _____ Your E-Mail: _____ Your Home Page: _____

How did you hear about LCS? _____



Trivia and Stuff

Every year about this time there are certain things that you are expected to know. The following may be of some use.

"The 12 Days of Christmas"

1. A partridge in a pear tree
2. Turtle Doves
3. French Hens
4. Calling Birds
5. Golden Rings
6. Geese A-laying
7. Swans A-swimming
8. Maids A-milking
9. Ladies Dancing
10. Lords A-leaping
11. Pipers Piping
12. Drummers Drumming

<http://dimacs.rutgers.edu/~judyann/LP/lessons/12.days.pascal.html>

Not to take all the fun out of the song, but you might want to use Pascal's triangle, to find the number of items given each day in the song, "The 12 Days of Christmas."

<http://www.12days.com/>

The 12 days of Christmas website for kids! This site is packed with all kinds of fun Christmas games to play & things to do. You can sing along with your favorite Christmas Carols, print out pictures to color, play online Christmas games, send email to Santa and much, much more.

Eleven Rules of Writing

<http://www.junketstudies.com/rulesofw/>
This site is a concise guide to some of the most commonly violated rules of writing, grammar, and punctuation. It is intended for all writers as an aid in the learning and refining of writing skills. Explore each of the rules to see examples of its application, and use the references to find additional explanations and examples on the Web or in print. Look up grammatical terms in the glossary. For a wider variety of information, check related FAQs and other writing resources. Also, click

on the Word of the Day until you've learned a few new words. If you would like to use this set of rules as an aid in your own teaching, see the teacher's note. (Provided by Junket Studies Tutoring -- a private tutoring service in northern New Jersey.)

<http://wp.netscape.com/security/basics/elevenways.html>

Eleven Easy Ways to Protect Yourself when shopping on-line.

Here are some pointers to help you shop safely and reap the benefits of e-commerce.

1. Always use the latest version of your browser.
2. Make sure the site you're purchasing from uses SSL. SSL (Secure Sockets Layer)
3. Ask your Internet service provider (ISP) about its security system.
4. Look for symbols of security from companies you trust.
5. Shop with familiar companies.
6. Look for easy-to-find security information and a privacy statement.
7. Pay by credit card.
8. Keep a record.
9. Look for information about "cookies."
10. Find out what information the site collects from you.
11. Be extra careful with passwords & IDs.

Top ten mistakes in Web design

<http://www.useit.com/alertbox/9605.html>

by Jacob Nielson (one of his Alertbox columns on Web usability), from 1996, but still pretty relevant. You might also want to look at his 3-year update (1999) <http://www.useit.com/alertbox/990502.html>

1. Using Frames
2. Gratuitous Use of Bleeding-Edge Technology
3. Scrolling Text, Marquees, and Constantly Running Animations
4. Complex URLs

5. Orphan Pages
6. Long Scrolling Pages
7. Lack of Navigation Support
8. Non-Standard Link Colors
9. Outdated Information
10. Overly Long Download Times

Nine planets in our solar system:

Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune and Pluto

Nine reindeer that can fly:

Dasher, Dancer, Prancer, Vixen, Comet, Cupid, Donner, Blitzen and Rudolph

Eight basic HTML directives:

<http://web66.coled.umn.edu/Cookbook/HTML/MinutePrimer.html>

This primer explains .

1. **TITLE** gives the window title.
2. **H#** formats a header in large bold type.
3. **B** formats boldface type
4. **I** formats italic type.
5. **P** designates the end of a paragraph.
6. **HR** places a line, or horizontal rule, across the page.
7. **IMG** points at a picture to be placed on the page.
8. **A** creates a hypertext link to another page.

Seven Dwarfs:

Dopey, Doc, Happy, Grumpy, Bashful, Sleepy, Sneezy

Seven Wonders of the World:

1. Egyptian Pyramids at Giza
2. Hanging Gardens of Babylon
3. Statue of Zeus at Olympia
4. Colossus of Rhodes
5. Temple of Artemis at Ephesus
6. Mausoleum at Halicarnassus
7. Lighthouse at Alexandri

(Note the oldest and only one remaining is 1)

Six great ideas:

Truth, goodness, beauty, liberty, equality, justice.

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Society**

www.aye.net/~lcs

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P. O. Box 9021
Louisville KY 40209-9021

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Mailing Label