

Apple Bytes

The Newsletter of the Lynchburg Apple Core

Volume 2006.02 ----- Lynchburg, VA -----February 12, 2006

February Meeting

General meeting is at Lynchburg College, Thursday, February 16, 7:00 PM.

The February meeting at **Lynchburg College, room 14 Hopwood Hall** will begin with a general discussion and Q&A session at 7:00 p.m. followed by the featured presentation.

This month our program will feature a video from PhotoShop World 2005, courtesy of PeachPit Press. Giveaways include a couple new books from PeachPit Press, along with popcorn and a few munchies, and some coupons. While this is not quite as valuable as the dozen free 17 inch monitors given away last month, we're announcing this giveaway in advance, so you will know to be there if you happen to be interested in PhotoShop.

Due to the timing on this video, as well as the topic, it has already been shown at a Digital Imaging Group meeting for the Blue Ridge Photographic Arts Society, where it received the highest compliment possible: a member told us later that he applied one of the tips from the video to a batch of image files he'd all but given up on rescuing from disaster, and it worked like a charm, saving his proverbial bacon.

The video reveals all about using curves, lab color, layer styles, and Camera RAW, among other things.

Members who don't have PhotoShop, but do have PhotoShop Elements may still find gems in the mix, but we should mention that most of the video is not aimed at real PS newbies, so you might want to bring along a pencil and paper to take notes.

Next month, March, we'll have a look at several backup strategies, including the ultimate: creating a software RAID (level 1, mirrored), which, it turns out Macs can do inexpensively (I built an external firewire one for about \$200, and might have been able to do for as little as \$40 adding an internal drive and catching the right sale), but which can only be done with expensive hardware on a Windows system, and then not for a boot drive or on any version except XP Pro.

Lynchburger Survives 2006 MacWorld Expo

In the last Apple Bytes we told you that Paul Kelbaugh spent a week at the MacWorld Expo in San Francisco and agreed to tell us about it at the January meeting. Well he did, and it was certainly fascinating.

His total cost for the week is just amazing, as you'll see. Remember, Paul flew Delta first class to Atlanta then to San Francisco from Lynchburg. Then return to Lynchburg, also first class. Cost of the airfare? \$0.00. He stayed at a four-star Marriott for 5 nights. Cost? Would you believe \$0.00? His total cost for the Mac World Expo, all five days including transportation and food was

\$163.15. His food cost \$25 a day. The rapid transit to the hotel was \$5.15. He splurged on the return and took a limo to the airport: \$15. Admission to Mac World Expo is usually \$25 to \$45, but he used a user group link to Chuck Joiner and got a code on that web site for a free ticket. He did buy software there, some that he has been looking for a long time at discount. He got them at prices he hadn't hoped to get.

For some of his meals, Paul crashed parties. He just acted like he belonged for some and walked right in. For others he waved a piece of paper that looked like the tickets he saw the attendees show to the monitors and got in with a nod. Paul said you can eat quite well on potato puffs!

But, how did he get free airfare and hotel for a week? Paul got a credit card that pays off in frequent flyer miles a year or more in advance. He charged everything he could with it: food, gas, utilities (many have to be asked as it is not indicated on the bill), and finally his son's college tuition! He put something like \$18,000 on the card, and with double miles offers and all, he accumulated enough frequent flyer miles to get free round-trip air fare to San Francisco, first class! He uses a Marriott plan that gives you frequent nights at Marriotts, and used this card at Marriotts whenever he could over the prior year to build up the points needed. Paul, says don't go into debt to do this! If you choose this route, make sure you use your credit card to make purchases you would normally make that you have money to pay for! Going into deep credit card debt negates the goal of saving money.

How about the Expo? Paul thought it was great. The whole place was the size of two city blocks, all Wi-Fi. But, the Internet Cafe had plenty of Macs to use and he had no trouble getting online whenever he wanted. Drawings and lotteries were all over. Prizes included new iPods. Paul won a copy of iLife 06. Apple had presentations on the hour. Forty new Intel based MacBooks were available to try out, said to be four times faster than the fastest PowerBook. Paul saw car accessories for iPods everywhere, presentations by David Pogue, and of course hundreds of manufacturers represented. Too much to go into here, but he had a great time and plans to repeat his cheap trip next January 8-12, 2007 at Portland Oregon. We hope Paul will discuss his plans for this show at the November meeting and he is encouraging any members interested in going to start planning now and join him next year.

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Family Reunion Booklet

Ann Wharton demonstrated how she made a family reunion booklet she prepared after attending the reunion this summer. She had a multipage booklet filled with photos of family members along with a listing of the names and addresses for everyone. She demonstrated how she used iPhoto to sort, select, adjust and crop the photos she wanted and placed them in the book's layout using InDesign. The final result was an impressive keepsake for the family members. Ann's presentation was excellent and a great example of artistic creativity.

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Archival Grade CD's and DVD's

Last month we told you about archival grade CD-R's and DVD-R's from Delkin (www.delkin.com) and Mitsui (www.dgsi.com). I got curious about the stability of computer discs

and did some research and found out some very interesting facts.

The original music album CD's from back in the 80's suffered from something called "CD rot", wherein the discs had their metal layer deteriorate making them useless. These discs were made by embossing the polycarbonate layer with the digital reflective pattern then metallizing them with aluminum. This is how your commercial albums and movies are made today. Apparently in many of these early discs the aluminum corroded making dark spots or light spots that prevented them from being read. They just died sitting on the shelf or in your collection.

But, the biggest problem today is with the writeable discs, like CD-R's, CD-RW's, DVD-R's, and DVD-RW's. In these the laser in your disc burner burns away an organic dye applied to a layer of silver put on the polycarbonate body of the disc. These organic dyes are very sensitive and can be damaged easily. I also learned that the manufacturers of these discs give them a shelf life of 3 to 5 years from date of manufacture, after which their reliability decreases. This is not readily admitted to by the manufacturers nor is it on their literature or packaging. But, it is probably not wise to stockpile a lot of CD-R's or DVD-R's that you pick up cheap.

Actually, the cheaper discs may be the greatest risk. I found that NIST (National Institute of Standards and Technology, the old National Bureau of Standards) has a publication available online that describes the handling and care of CD's and DVD's. I downloaded this PDF file from the NIST web site, nist.gov. Go there and look for **NIST Special Publication 500-252, Care & Handling of CDs and DVDs -- A Guide for Librarians and Archivists**, a 50-page publication. This has some great information on the subject.

I learned a lot from my Google search. The forums and web sites I found had some information, a lot of speculation, and some good suggestions. Number one: don't consider optical discs to be permanent storage media. Their environment affects their life greatly. Keep them from ultraviolet light, it degrades the organic dyes. That means daylight and especially sunlight (never put them on the dashboard or back window of your car). Some discs are better made than others, Verbatim Long Life discs are highly rated as are others. Cheap discs are fine for storing data to transfer from one computer to another, or putting music or movies onto for use in your car, portable players, etc. But, choose the higher grade discs for archiving, especially discs made especially for archiving.

A good article is at <http://newsletters.hagerman.com/newsletters/ebul37-WP.htm>

This article had a lot of good information in it. Other cautions: do not write on the writeable surface of a disc using a solvent based pen (like a Sharpie marker). Use a water based marking pen. I bought some at Staples and Delkin sells archival marking pens on their web site. Keep the discs away from extremes of heat and cold, chemicals or vapors, high humidity. Best stored in their plastic boxes upright (I never found out why upright). One advice I got from a forum I visited was directed at professional photographers. The person recommended buying an archival hard drive that is only used several times a year to back up the photo files. By using it infrequently, the odds of it crashing are minimized. Then, every year buy a new hard drive and back up everything again every few months or weeks. Apparently there are no permanent data storage devices at all that do not have a risk of loss. My recommendation: use one or two hard drives to back up your whole hard drive to; clone your hard drive to a back up hard drive. That way your operating system and

everything is recoverable. Buy the Delkin or Mitsui gold archival grade CD's and DVD's for more convenient back up of things like photos or other files.

March Meeting:

Lynchburg College, Hopwood Hall - Thursday March 16, - 7:00 PM

Topic: backup strategies, including the ultimate: creating a software RAID (level 1, mirrored)

Advanced Mac OS X Class at CVCC March 18, 25, and April 1

The Lynchburg Apple Core is sponsoring a 1-credit college class on Mac OS X, with emphasis on Version 10.4 "Tiger." This class is intended for Mac users who have been using OS X for some time but who want to gain a better understanding and become more proficient in the use of their Macs. The class will be relatively small and will be geared for a lot of personal attention, questions and answers. It will include coverage of iPhoto, iTunes, iMovie, iDVD, GarageBand, Safari, Mail, and AppleWorks. Gordon Mattox is the instructor.

The suggested textbook for the Class is Mac OS X, The Missing Manual, Tiger Edition, by David Pogue. It not required to purchase the textbook but it is recommended. There will be printed notes and handout available.

This is a Saturday class, March 18, 25, and April 1. Three Saturdays from 8:30 AM to 1:00 PM, to minimize disruption of your normal schedules.

It is listed Class 59643, Business 195-01MD, "Macintosh OS X". Sign up through the CVCC Admissions Office on campus, or if you have been registered before, call 832-7633. Or call Gordon at 434-401-0163 for info.

Visit the Lynchburg Apple Core Wet Site for Updates, Information, and Important Links:

<http://www.lynchburgmug.org/>