# **Apple Barrel**

The Journal of the Houston Area Apple Users Group

# April 2011

Boss HAAUG Speaks page 2

Telephony alternatives for your iDevice page 3

What's Old is New Again page 7

**Board of Directors Meeting Minutes**page 8

Special Notice for those attending the May General Mtg page 8

**Upcoming Events** page 9

**April 2011 Event Schedule** page 10

**Got Junk?** page 11

**Digital Photography SIG: Lensbaby, RAW**page 14



# Apple Insights Saturday, April 30th

(Note that this is the 5th Saturday of the month!)

Dreux St. Marie stops by to give us his insight on what is going on in (and coming out of) Cupertino.

Board of Directors meeting and lunch to follow.

The SIGs start at 9am and the Main Presentation begins at 11:15. We'll see you there on the 30<sup>th</sup>!



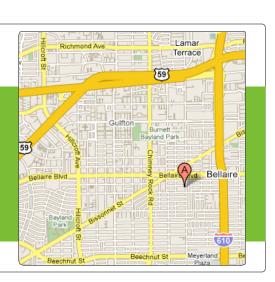
P.O. Box 570957 Houston, Texas 77257-0957

# **Meeting Location**

# **Bellaire Civic Center**

7008 South Rice Avenue Bellaire, TX 77401

Just outside Loop 610 and south of Bellaire Blvd.



Volume 33 | Number 4

Members Helping Members Since 1978

# Boss HAAUG Speaks

Monthly Address from the HAAUG President



# Walking on a high wire without a net

I now know what it is like walking on a high wire with out a net - and it was fun. Being the main presenter at last months meeting gave me the perspective of those folks who do come to our meetings and give us the benefit of their knowledge. Though I am not a certified expert with Microsoft Office, I use the applications and volunteered to give the presentation. The vendor provided the materials to give the demo and a copy to raffle off (thanks Microsoft!) This latest version of Microsoft Office is a very strong release. Office is still the de-facto standard and will be the format that people request if you are working collaboratively. If you need an office suite take a look at MS Office.

In upcoming news: at out meeting on April 30, Dreux St. Marie will share his knowledge about Apple products and the recent additions to Apple's product line. Dreux is a long time member of HAAUG and has presented many times before.

April will be the last month that our meetings will not be on the third Saturday of the month. Beginning in May we will return to meeting on the third Saturday for the rest of the year.

I would like to thank those members who help pickup the chairs at the end of the meeting. That really helps. As always the board is looking for folks to take open positions on the board. if you think that you can give a few hours a month to HAAUG please see me or another member of the board.

Apple has released a security update for OS X and Safari. Software Update should pop up and tell you about it. Also, there have been a few updates to iOS that may show up when you sync your iDevice. Microsoft has also released a service pack for Office 2011. It is update season (and not just for WIndows users.)

It is also earning season where public companies report their results from the first calendar quarter. I expect that Apple will report that they earned buckets of cash. Especially since the iPad 2 started selling during this quarter.

One final announcement: we will be having some special guests at the April meeting. The Bellaire Police Department will be using the lobby of City Hall to collect unwanted prescription drugs. If you have some old prescriptions that you would like to get rid of bring them to the meeting, and give them to the police representatives. They will be deposed of correctly, This is part of a nation wide program to get old prescriptions out of peoples houses. Old drugs are a hazard, and need to be removed from your house when you are no longer taking the medication.

I hope to see many of you at the meeting on April 30th.

# Telephony alternatives for your iDevice

Ed Truitt, etee@me.com

I don't know about you all, but recently I have noticed a disturbing trend: AT&T's network performance is definitely off. Places where I used to reliably get a 3G data connection are now downgrading to EDGE, and the number of dropped calls are on the increase. Since I depend on this phone to allow the folks at work to get hold of me during off-hours emergencies, this is not an acceptable state of affairs, and I had to go looking for an alternative: giving out my home phone number also wasn't OK, as I am still having some lingering interference issues between my landline and my U-Verse internet connection (notice a pattern here?)

As I started looking at alternatives, Skype came to mind. I downloaded the Skype client on both my Macbook Pro, my iPad, and my iPhone. While it works OK, it isn't free, and I wanted to avoid further expense if possible. So, I kept looking, and found something that, while not perfect, does the job: Talkatone from TalkMe.IM Inc., a free VoIP and IM client for GTalk and Google Voice.

I downloaded the Talkatone client from the iTunes App Store, installed it on both the iPad and iPhone, and set about configuring it. This didn't take too long: the only thing, other than inputting my Google logon credentials, was to login to Google Voice via the web browser, and set up Google Voice to route all incoming calls to GTalk. They even provide detailed instructions on how to do it on their blog.

Things seemed to work OK, but then came the acid test: a 90-minute long staff meeting, scheduled for a day when I was away from the office. I was working at home that day, and the AT&T network was acting its normal, flaky self. So, I fired up Talkatone, dialed in to the conference bridge, fired up the browser-based data sharing client (again, an AT&T app), and held my breath. Fortunately, I didn't have to hold it too long, as the other participants dialed in, and the meeting proceeded without incident (except for the fire drill that went off at our Houston office.) The receive audio quality was quite good, and while the transmission quality wasn't as good as our IP Telephony system at work, I received no complaints or requests for repeats. I was able to complete the meeting without having to dial back in numerous times, something I don't think would have been the case had I relied on the iPhone's cellular connection.

There is an additional benefit to using the Talkatone (or even the Skype) client: you gain the ability to make/receive phone calls from your iPad (or even iPod Touch, though using WiFi only.) And, if you have a MiFi or other portable hotspot, you can use that to connect your WiFi-only iDevice to the Internet (and the phone system.) I have had several friends and relatives ask me about why Apple didn't include phone functionality on the iPad, and claim that this is the only thing that is keeping them from purchasing on. I can now report back to them that this is no longer an excuse.

### QuickTip

Ever since I had upgraded to 10.6.7, or about the same

time, my iPhone was no longer backing up.

It was giving me 2 errors: 'Couldn't retrieve profile from Sync Services -- unplug and replug iPhone' and 'Couldn't backup iPhone.' Having restarted, and unplugged/ replugged the iPhone, it still wouldn't back up, or even update to iOS 4.3.1. The situation was very vexing.

The issue was available storage space on the iPhone. I had over 700 photos and movies on my 16GB iPhone, which clogged everything up. The solution, of course, was to delete those photos and videos. Having done that, the iPhone finally synched, backed up and updated to 4.3.1.

It may be slightly obvious, but it's good to know that too little disk space on the iPhone can clog up backups.

[crarko adds: Is there documentation about how much scratch space needs to be left on iOS devices for things like updates? A pointer would be handy if somebody could provide it.]

http://hints.macworld.com/ article.php? story=20110327142712254

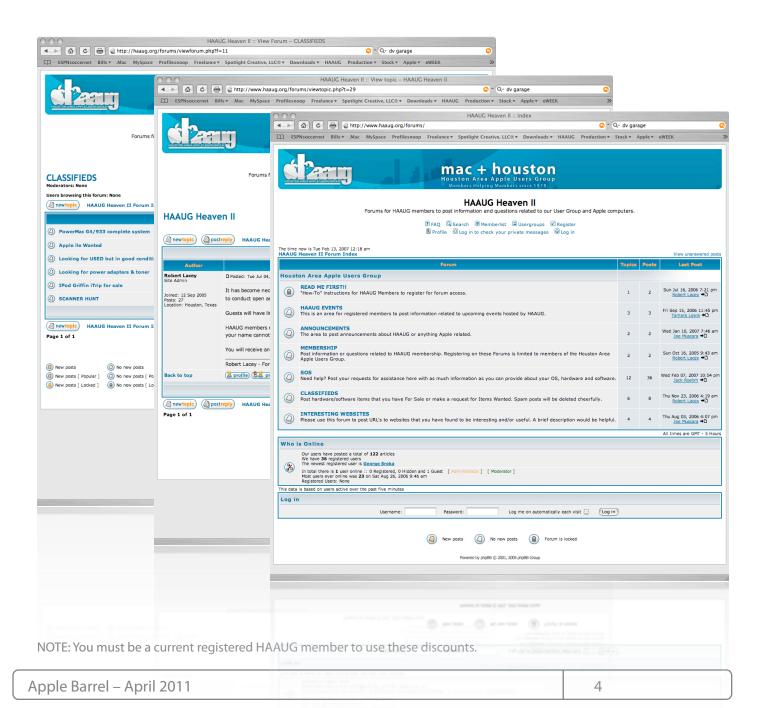
# Find great specials online!

Special Offers for HAAUG Members via HAAUG Heaven

# Check our forums for daily deals!

HAAUG discounts can be found on the HAAUG Heaven forums.

# http://haaug.org/forums



# Classifieds

Products and support for the Macintosh community

Got a story, or photo you would like to see in the monthly edition of the Apple Barrel?

The Apple Barrel is always looking for good, meaty material for its monthly publication. If you have a personal story, review of a new product or just a funny or helpful thought, feel free to spread the word via the Barrel.

Submit your story, review or photos, etc. to: abe@haaug.org



### QuickTip

Another way to save PDFs that don't allow saving from Safari or

Preview (perhaps they require a password to save):

Open the document in Preview and select File » Mail Selected PDF Document and then drag the file from the opened Mail window to the Desktop.

[crarko adds: I tested this, and it works as described.]

http://hints.macworld.com/ article.php? story=20110401101729922

# MAC FIRST AID

Specializing in Apple Computers

- On-site Service
- Repairs
- Consulting
- Very Reasonable Rates
- Special Discount Rate for HAAUG Members

Serving the Houston Area for 15 Years! (281) 537-2842







# Classifieds

Products and support for the Macintosh community

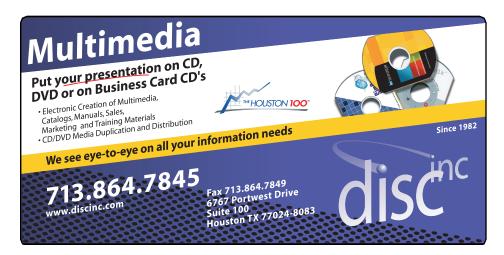


# HOUSTON SIGN COMPANY

Signs • Banners • Vehicle Graphics
Digital Printing • Screen Printing
Come to us for all your signage needs
Quality & Service since 1946.

Phone: 713.662.3123 www.houstonsign.com





#### **ADVERTISING RATES**

#### **General Rate Policy**

If more or less space than specified is used within one year from the date of first insertion, the rate will be adjusted to the earned rate published here.

#### **Frequency Rates**

Number of insertions in a 12-month period determines frequency rate.

# Black and white rates (per issue):

# 2/3 Page Ad

**Dimensions: 5" x 10.125" Frequency:** 1X \$125, 2X \$120, 3X \$115

## 1/2 Page Ad

**Dimensions:** 7.625" x 5" **Frequency:** 1X 90, 2X 85, 3X 80

### 1/3 Page Ad

**Dimensions:** 7.625" x 3.375" **Frequency:** 1X \$75, 2X \$70,

3X \$65

# 1/4 Page Ad

**Dimensions:** 3.75" x 5" **Frequency:** 1X 65, 2X 60, 3X 55

## 1/6 Page Ad

**Dimensions:** 5" x 2.5" **Frequency:** 1X \$40, 2X \$35, 3X \$30

# **Business Card Ad**

Dimensions: 3.5" x 2"
Frequency: 1X \$30, 2X \$25,

3X \$15

\* Dimensions of advertisements may vary as a result of document layout.

# What's Old is New Again

Ed Truitt, etee@me.com

An interesting thing about geeks is their penchant for combining the old and the new - taking things which are outdated, passe, or in some cases outright obsolete, and putting them back to use - sometimes in their former roles, sometimes in wildly and wonderfully new ways. I thought I would share with you several examples I came across recently.

How many of you remember the Moleskine notebooks? Used by artists such as Oscar Wilde, Ernest Hemingway, Pablo Picasso, and Vincent Van Gogh, the little black notebooks faded from the scene, only to be resurrected by an Italian company in the mid-1990s. They have proven increasingly popular, and on April 18th of this year, the venerable black notebook was taken to a whole new level when the company announced that "There's an App for That."

The Moleskine app (currently available for free at the iTunes Store) visually resembles the analog version. However, it does have a few twists, thanks to the fact that is in the digital world. You can mix and match paper styles (each note can be on either ruled, grid, or plain paper); you can embed photos (either from your Photo Library or taken with the camera) into a note; and you can mix sketches/doodles with cleanly typewritten words. An additional feature is "Map My Thoughts", which uses location services (geotags) to show your notes on a world map. You can add your own geotags to a note. The only problem? I have yet to get them to display properly, which indicates this may be a feature that is still "under construction".

I can really see the utility of a notepad app which allows you to mix text with images and free-hand drawings/annotations, and then geotag the note for future reference. For example, as a photographer I often used a Moleskine to record exposure settings (shutter and aperture) when shooting film; the ability to add an iPhone snap to the note would have made going back through those notes, and matching the exposures to the shots, a whole lot easier. Another place where this could prove useful? In the event you have an auto accident (though my preference would be to avoid that entirely.)

The other thing I came across looks, on the surface, to be a case of "a solution for which there is no problem". It is a USB Typewriter, and I first saw it on the <u>iPad Today</u> video podcast over at <u>TWiT</u>.

The creator has his own website devoted to the concept, and there are demonstration videos available (look for the one using an iPad in the carriage, in place of paper.)

At first glance, as noted earlier this looks like a solution looking for a problem. Why (other than to show it can be done) would anyone want to use an old manual typewriter in this fashion? Interestingly enough, I can think of one reason. Remember RSI, that scourge of modern-day keyboard jockeys? How prevalent was it back in the days of the old Royal and Remington manual typewriters? To the best of my recollection - it wasn't. It seems that there is enough difference between those old manual keys and a computer keyboard to prevent the repetitive microstresses that cause an RSI to develop over time. So, it is entirely possible that this type of setup, in addition to the geekiness factor, might actually prove useful to someone who did a lot of typing, but who also has to be careful to avoid the onset (or a recurrence) of an RSI.

The USB Keyboard is available as a DIY kit (the design is distributed under the <u>Creative Commons</u>
<u>Attribution-Share Alike Non-Commercial License</u>), and the creator also has modified typewriters for sale at his <u>etsy page</u>.

While not nearly as portable as the <u>ZAGGmate</u> or <u>Verbatim</u> bluetooth keyboards, the USB Typewriter will definitely prove a conversation starter, and it might just save you some discomfort if you are a heavy keyboard user with your iPad.

# Minutes

HAAUG Board of Directors Meeting – Saturday, February 26, 2017

**Location:** Bellaire Civic Center, 7008 South Rice Avenue, Bellaire, Texas.

**Attendees:** Clair Jaschke, David Jaschke, Greg Wright, Doug Smith, Mike King, Ed Truitt, Lyda McGhee, Phil Booth, Mike Epstein, Jim Connell.

**Call to Order:** President Phil Booth called the meeting to order at 10:45.

# REPORTS:

**Treasurer:** The 2011 budget was presented to the membership. A motion was made/seconded to approve the budget. The budget was approved by vote of the members present.

**Secretary:** The minutes for the January, 2011 meeting were approved without revision.

1st Vice President of Facilities: Doug Smith – The next three general meetings, February, March and April, will be on the last Saturday but, for the remainder of the year, the meeting time will be back to the third Saturday of the month.

### 2nd Vice President of Programming: Greg Wright -

March Microsoft Office 2011 with Phil Booth

April Apple Insights with Dreux Ste. Marie

May How to watch TV without cable (tentative)

June No information

July Swap Meet

**Apple Barrel:** Tamara Alexander and Ed Truitt are updating the Apple Barrel so that it can be written/changed/updated on the web instead of being software-based like DreamWeaver.

#### **BUSINESS:**

We need new members and we'd like to have some new volunteers. Please contact any board member if you'd like to volunteer.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:00 a.m.

# **Special Notice**

for those attending the May General Mtg

### **Arrive early for May 21 HAAUG meeting**

Please plan to arrive before 11am for our May 21 meeting featuring Dwight Silverman.

The City of Bellaire is holding their annual "Public Safety Day" and they will close Rice Blvd from 11:00am to 2:00pm from Jessimine to Linden. This will impact our parking in the lot near the Water tower, along Rice and in the lot across the street after 11:00am.

So please arrive early and enjoy our Mac 101, IOS (iPad, iPhone, iPod), and Digital Photography SIGs, or just chat with your fellow members.

# **Upcoming Events**

# Houston Area Apple Users Group 2010 Officers and Directors

# President Phil Booth

1st Vice President Programs **Greg Wright** 

2nd Vice President Facilities **Doug Smith** 

Secretary Lyda McGhee

yda McGhee Treasurer

Clair Jaschke

Director-at-Large 1
Jim Connell

Director-at-Large 2

Michael Epstein

Director-at-Large 3
Michael King

Director-at-Large 4

Rick Roberts

Apple Barrel Editor **Ed Truitt** 

HAAUG Heaven Sysop
OPEN

Membership Chairman

David Jaschke

SIG Coordinator OPEN

Immediate Past President

**Matt Willmore** 

Boutique Manager

Barbara Long

Webmaster Jeff Davis

HAAUG Hotline Phil Booth

Mentor Program - **OPEN -**

Publicity Chairman
Jim Connell

Vision Committee Chairman

Joe Fournet

Volunteer Coordinator

Senior Advisor **OPEN** 

9

Apple User Group Liaison **Doug Smith** 

# Saturday, April 30th, 2011

# **Apple Insights**

Dreux Ste. Marie will provide us with his perspective on what is going on in (and coming out of) Cupertino.

Location: Bellaire Civic Center | Map online at www.haaug.org

# Saturday, May 21th, 2011

# **Presentation by Dwight Silverman**

The main presentation this month comes from Dwight Silverman, tech columnist and blogger at the Houston Chronicle.

Location: Bellaire Civic Center | Map online at www.haaug.org

# Saturday, June 18th, 2011

# **How to Watch TV Without Cable**

Options are available for those who want to "cut the cable", while still being able to watch most of their favorite TV programs.

Location: Bellaire Civic Center | Map online at www.haaug.org

# Locations, Directions + Parking

### **Bellaire Civic Center**

7008 South Rice Ave. • Bellaire, TX 77401

The Bellaire Civic Center has been a great location asset of HAAUG for the past 4 years and includes many amenities such as wireless internet and both open and closed spaces for Special Interest Group (SIG) meetings and other functions.

Find out the latest news on future HAAUG meetings...

# www.haaug.org/meetings.htm

# **STARTRONICS**

George McKenzie Macintosh/IBM Services, Maintenance & Repair Specialist

> 4141 SW Freeway Suite #470 Houston, Texas 77098 713-524-5646 FAX 713-524-4635

# April 2011 Event Schedule

	Main Room	2nd Room
9 a.m.	Mac 101	iOS
10 a.m.		Digital Photography
11 a.m.	Club Business	
11:15 a.m.	Main Presentation by Dreux Ste. Marie	
1 p.m.	Board of Directors meeting; followed by social time, cleanup, and lunch	

**Main Presentation:** Dreux Ste. Marie gives us his insights on what is going on in (and coming out of) Cupertino.

Mac 101 & Fundamentals: Jonathan Magnus - The SIG for basic to advanced Macintosh topics.

**Digital Photography:** Andrew Polk – Bring your cameras, bring your photos and we'll discuss what makes a great photo.

**iOS:** Doug Smith – iPhone/iPod/iPad -- Oh, who are we kidding? iPad stuff!

**Ad hoc:** Groups are welcome to use the casual spaces to meet on other topics. Scheduled SIGs take precedence.

The HAAUG SIG Coordinator is currently open. If you would like to volunteer to be the SIG Coordinator, please see any member of the Board of Directors.

# Got Junk?

Computer recycling opportunities in the Houston area

# Houston area recycling centers:

#### **Environmental Service Center**

11500 South Post Oak Road • Dial 311 or 713-837-9130

### Westpark Recycling Center

5900 Westpark • Dial 311 or 713-837-9130

#### **Goodwill COMPUTER WORKS**

12230 Westheimer Houston, TX 77077 281-589-1215

# **Commercial electronics recyclers:**

#### ScrapComputer.com

350 W. 38th St., Houston, TX 77018 • 713-691-9995

\*\*Accepts all computer-related items free; offers free pickup for large amounts.

### Altech Metals, Inc.

10612 Hempstead, Building A • 713-680-9325 \*\*No TVs or monitors

### **ARM Trading, Inc.**

2476 Bolsover, Suite 557 • 713-665-0213

### Compucycle

620 W. 6th St. • 713-866-8021

#### **ONYX Environmental Services**

Baytown • 1-800-624-9302

### **Houston Computer Recycler**

6102 Brittmoore, Suite N • 713-937-3334

### **Recycle America Waste Management Asset Recovery Group**

2102 Atascocita Road, Humble • 281-540-8900

### **Eagle Electronics**

10612 Hempstead, Building A • 713-934-8585

## QuickTip

Amazon introduced a new <u>Cloud</u> <u>Drive service</u> offering



browser-based file storage and music streaming. In the countries where this is offered, anyone with an Amazon account can receive 5 GB of free storage.

Unfortunately, the service doesn't work with Mobile Safari. But if you use a third-party browser on your iOS device which enables you to change the User Agent setting, like Atomic Browser (US \$1) or Mobile iCab (US \$2), then simply set it to use desktop Safari as the User Agent and the Amazon service works fine.

[crarko adds: I haven't tested this one, but it makes sense to me.]

http://hints.macworld.com/ article.php? story=2011032918553151

### Did You Know?

When typing, you only need to put one space after the period at the end of a sentence.

Source: <u>The Associated Press (AP)</u> <u>Style Guide - the basics</u>

# Become Part of the Action

Join or renew your membership with the one and only Houston Area Apple Users Group today!

# Join Online With a Credit Card:

Paying for your membership online with a credit card is secure, fast and easy!

Visit **www.haaug.org/join** for details on joining.

# Join by Mail:

Please fill out and complete the following form. Send a check or money order payable to HAAUG and mail it to the address shown below. First year dues are \$45 and renewals are \$40 per year thereafter. Memberships are available for full-time students at \$25 per year, including the first year. Associate memberships are also available for \$25 per year.

Your membership card will be mailed to you. You may pick up your starter kit at the next HAAUG meeting.

First:		Las	st:	
Company	r:			
Address:				
City/State	e/Zip:			
Home Phone:		Wo	ork Phone:	
Email:				
Type Of 0	Computer:			
Members	hip:			
	☐ New Membership (\$45.00☐ Early Renewal (\$35.00)☐ Associate (\$25.00)☐		Renewal (\$40.00) Two Year Renewal (\$70.00) Student (\$25.00) <i>Requires Student ID</i>	
Check #		Me	ember # (if renewing):	
How did	you hear about HAAUG?			
Do you know someone who would be interested in joining HAAUG? Y $\mid$ N				
Would you be willing to volunteer in HAAUG?				
Mail chec HAAUG P.O. Box Houston.				
	mbership Chairman			

# Membership Benefits

Enjoy the benefits of being a HAAUG member.

#### **Monthly Meetings**

This is where the excitement begins. On the third Saturday of each month, members of HAAUG meet for a day filled with activities, including presentations by major software and hardware vendors, special interest group (SIG) meetings, public domain software libraries, raffles and much, much more. Swap Meets are held twice each year, in January and July.

#### **Software Libraries**

HAAUG maintains public domain and shareware libraries for the Apple II, Macintosh and Newton systems. HAAUG also distributes system software for the Macintosh (7.0.1 and earlier), Newton and all Apple II series computers. HAAUG has been designated by Apple Computer to be the Central United States Repository for Apple II Software.

## **Bulletin Board System & Internet Link**

HAAUG Heaven is our 24-hour meeting place with several gigabytes of downloadable software, helpful information and discussions on all topics of computing, all accessible at rates from DSL speeds down to 33,600 bps.

#### **HAAUG Heaven**

HAAUG Heaven provides each member with an internet e-mail address allowing exchange of world-wide electronic mail. Many discussion topics and many internet newsgroups make the answers to your questions as close as your keyboard.

#### Club Magazine

Club and industry news, meeting information and special member offers are published in our monthly newsletter - The Apple Barrel. The Barrel's content is also available to members on HAAUG Heaven in Adobe Acrobat format.

## **Mentor Program**

The HAAUG Mentor Program puts people with hardware, software, system or network problems in contact with volunteers who can provide solutions. Contact with the mentors can be made through the HAAUG Hotline, HAAUG Heaven, e-mail or at the monthly meetings.

#### Special Interest Groups (SIGs)

People with common interests, including Macintosh and OS X basics, Newton, iOS, internet, games, educational computing, databases, publishing, graphics, desktop video, programming and more gather for in-depth discussion, product demonstrations, tutorials and general knowledge sharing.

#### **HAAUG Hotline**

Call the HAAUG Hotline at 832-305-5999 for the latest meeting information and to leave voice mail for officers.

## **Lots of Fun & Friendships**

HAAUG is a not-for-profit volunteer group founded in 1978, three years before there was an IBM PC. Approximately 300 members enjoy the benefits of HAAUG. We range from beginners to experts, but we all know the secret to making our computers more valuable - a HAAUG membership.

Learn more about the benefits of HAAUG membership at www.haaug.org.

The Apple Barrel is a monthly publication of the HOUSTON AREA APPLE USERS GROUP (HAAUG) P.O. Box 570957 Houston, Texas 77257-0957.

Apple Barrel's editors have a policy to protect the creative rights of authors. The Editors acknowledge that authors' works are copyrighted and intend to honor those copyrights by: 1) this statement of policy, 2) providing, when considered significant, copies of edited text to the author for review prior to publication, 3) seeking permission to reprint previously published pieces from the author whenever possible, and 4) printing acknowledgment of reprints used.

If you are interested in joining HAAUG, please call the HAAUG Hotline at (832) 305-5999 or sign up via our web site at www.haaug.org.

Annual membership is \$45 for new members, \$40 for renewing members, \$25 for student members and \$25 for associate members (out-of-state members who receive the Apple Barrel through e-mail only). The Hotline is also the Mentor line if you need help. Guests are welcome to attend one or two meetings to get acquainted with HAAUG, but participation in certain presentations and activities may be limited to members only. HAAUG is an independent support group of Apple product users and is not affiliated with Apple Computer, Inc. The following are trademarks of Apple Computer, Inc., Apple, Apple II, Apple IIGS, eMac, Macintosh, iMac, iBook, iPod, iPhone, iPad, PowerBook, ImageWriter, LaserWriter and the Apple Logo. All other brand names mentioned are registered trademarks or trademarks of their respective holders, and are hereby acknowledged.

# Digital Photography SIG: Lensbaby, RAW

Ed Truitt, etee@me.com

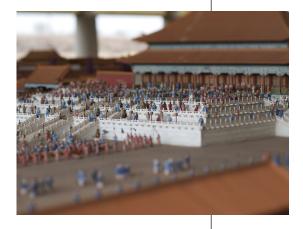
# Example Photos made with a Lensbaby



Terra Cotta Warrior replicas.

Last month, I gave a show-and-tell on the <u>Lensbaby</u> "Creative Effects" SLR camera lens product line. As a long-time aficionado of the Lensbaby since the Lensbaby 2.0 (the precursor to the <u>Muse</u>), I have a bit of experience with the breed on both the Canon EF and the 4/3 and Micro 4/3 systems. I like the dreamy, other-worldly images that these lenses produce, and have used some of the images to give others an idea of what I was seeing during a time when I was experiencing some difficulties with my vision.

Since last fall, there have been several new products (both lenses and optics) unveiled. In September, the Composer® with Tilt Transformer™ was announced, for the Micro 4/3 (Panasonic Lumix™ G Micro System, Olympus PEN®) and Sony® α NEX digital cameras. In addition to the Composer, the Tilt Transformer™ will accept any Nikon mount lens, giving a selective-focus effect similar to the Diorama ART filter on some Olympus cameras. In October, the first non-tilt lens - the Scout - was launched, bundled with the Fisheye Optic. In March of 2011, a new optic - the Sweet 35 - was added to the lineup. This optic is the first from Lensbaby to use a built-in 12-blade adjustable aperture, which speeds up the process of changing the F-stop tremendously.



Forbidden City (Beijing) replica.

Photos taken at Forbidden Gardens, using a Lensbaby Tilt Transformer<sup>™</sup> and a Nikon AF Nikkor 50mm f/1.8 lens.

Photos copyright © 2011 E D Truitt

(Note: in the days since the presentation, Lensbaby announced an upgrade to their Composer lens - the Composer Pro - which is made of higher-quality materials and offers smoother operating characteristics for serious amateur/professional photographers. I don't have this one yet, but hope to get one soon.)

I then showed several photos I had taken that morning with the newly-acquired Sweet 35 optic, including a series I made at each of the different aperture settings. I compared the amount of time it took to take this series (less than 30 seconds) with the amount of time needed to manually change out the aperture rings in the other Lensbaby optics (about 30 seconds/swap.)

Once the discussion on the Lensbaby line was done, we moved to a Q&A session. The questions this time focused on the RAW image format. We talked about the various file types (.CRW, .CR2, .ORF, .NEF), why you might choose RAW over JPEG (as a lossless format, RAW contains all the picture data that was captured by the camera), and why you might choose JPEG over RAW (RAW can create very large files, and requires special software to read.)