

Apple Barrel



Apple II • Macintosh
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Members helping members since 1978

Swap Meet slated Jan. 20

Clean out those closets and sort through those boxes of peripherals and software—it's time once again for the semi-annual Swap Meet. Time to sell the Performa you replaced with a new iMac, the external hard drive and the software you no longer use.

Sales of used and new hardware and software take place Saturday, Jan. 20, from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the Hilton Hotel on the University of Houston Campus at 4800 Calhoun. That's just

"across the street" from the University Center where the monthly meetings are normally held. For directions via web: <http://www.hilton.com/hotels/HOUUHHF/>.

Members and vendors can register for a table at the Swap Meet using an online registration form at <http://www.haaug.org>. A paper version of the table registration form is available on page 7 for faxing or mailing.

So start sorting through your stuff now, and remember to register for a table ASAP. All paid-up members get one table for free.



THE ROAD LESS TRAVELED

Buying and upgrading a used Mac sometimes the best course

BY JAMES HANRIHAN
HAAUG MEMBER

Everybody knows the old joke ... the minute you buy a new Mac it becomes obsolete. I have had this experience and I am sure many others have, too. However, there are ways to get around this with a little knowledge, help from the web and Mac user groups like HAAUG.

Many of you are happy with your existing Mac, peripherals and software. Having said that, I also realize that some of you probably aren't completely happy with your existing Mac and realize you need to make a change because your equipment is getting a little "long in the tooth," doesn't do what you want it to do

anymore and is too slow in today's computing environment—maybe all of the above. If this describes your situation, you have options.

BUY A NEW G3/G4 POWER MAC.

Pros: You are now up to today's computing level with a faster machine and you get a lot more computer for your dollar.

Cons: New machine to master. Your old serial devices (printers and modems) and SCSI peripherals are history (and swap meet fodder) unless you can add a PCI expansion card for \$100 that adds these former features back into your new machine. In many cases, your software will have to be upgraded to run with newer ma-

chines since they must run on the pre-installed Mac OS 9.x.

UPGRADE YOUR OLD MAC.

Pros: No new machine to master. Most of your software will not need to be upgraded. No need to replace existing serial and SCSI devices.

Cons: Cost vs. performance limitations. The older the machine, the more difficult and expensive it is to upgrade. Some older Macs have a very limited upgrade path.

BUY A USED MAC AND UPGRADE IT (THE ROAD LESS TRAVELED)

Pros: More bang for the buck. Some older used Power Macs are

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

Apple Barrel is a monthly publication of the Houston Area Apple Users' Group, P.O. Box 570957, Houston, Texas 77257-0957.

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If you are interested in joining HAAUG, please call the HAAUG Hotline at (713) 522-2179, or sign up via HAAUG Heaven, HAAUG's BBS, at (713) 993-3312, or at our web site, www.haaug.org. Annual membership is \$45 for new members, \$40 for students, \$40 for renewing members, and \$60 in US funds for foreign membership. 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.

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APPLE BARREL PUBLISHING

The Apple Barrel was produced by a committee including Elizabeth English, Manley Mandel and Janet Marks, led by George Sroka on various Macs running PageMaker, among other things. April Enos designed the logo in the masthead.

MAC AND APPLE SIGS WANTED

Volunteers who have ideas for SIGs to run, please contact David Scheuer at (713) 464-1228 or send e-mail to david_scheuer@haaug.org.

ARTICLES NEEDED - ALL FLAVORS

Send any articles to the Apple Barrel Drop on HAAUG Heaven or e-mail them to apple_barrel_drop@haaug.org.

Welcome

NEW MEMBERS WHO JOINED IN 2000

We'd like to take this opportunity to welcome all the HAAUG members who joined last year. We hope you've made some new friends along the way. And if you haven't done so already, we encourage you to become involved in Special Interest Groups and club activities.

Susan Askanase	Donna Glenn	Scott Sheinfeld
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Mary Ruth Cox	O. Keith Owen III	
Daniel Dick	Chris Palmer	
John Dinyari	Ben Pinkerton	
Kathy Farr	Richard Pipkin	
Stuart A Forsyth	Jean Ratliff	
Bernice Friedman	Chris Sanders	
Pedro Gelabert	Leslie Saunders	

Encourage your Mac-using friends to join HAAUG. Bring them to the upcoming Swap Meet.

THE FIDDLE FACTOR

IBM's ViaVoice speech recognition software difficult to install and train

BY REX J. COVINGTON

HAAUG VICE-PRESIDENT

The "fiddle factor" rates the level of difficulty to install and use programs, hardware or peripherals on a scale from 1 to 10 with "1" great and "10" a terrible rating.

This month's fiddle factor is IBM's Via Voice "you talk it types" software I always wanted a computer that would dictate what I spoke. When IBM introduced Via Voice at Mac World, I was excited. However, the reviews it got were not promising, so I waited for a later, debugged version.

I purchased Via Voice about three weeks ago and have been using it with some difficulty. Via Voice comes with a nice headset with your choice of colors that snap on to it. The user guide was useful and the reference card was handy until I learned the commands.

Installing Via Voice has a very high fiddle factor, so be ready to spend about an hour to install and train the program. After I installed Via Voice, Microsoft Word would not start up. I had to reinstall Word to get it to work again.

After installation, you must train Via Voice to recognize your voice. It asks you to read one of two stories that it provides. I picked "Moby Dick." The software learns from that reading and learns from the corrections you make as you speak in the IBM SpeakPad. You have to use the IBM SpeakPad, then transfer your dictation to the desired program. I was disappointed that I could not dictate *directly* into Microsoft Word or AppleWorks.

Via Voice has quit on me twice,

which was very frustrating! Transferring text to other programs wasn't too difficult or cumbersome.

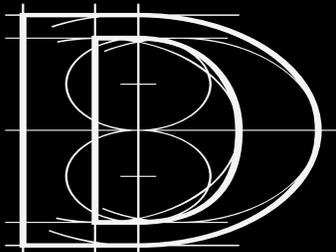
Overall, the fiddle factor for IBM's Via Voice is a whopping "9." If you're willing to take the time and

have patience, ViaVoice works pretty well for a slow typist like me. For example, I used IBM's Via Voice to do this article. For more info, go to <http://www.ibm.com/viavoice>.



MANY THANKS!

The Board of Directors recently granted lifetime memberships to Clair and David Jaschke in recognition of their many years of service to HAAUG. Both have served in several positions in HAAUG over the years. David is retiring this month as head of the Membership Committee. Clair currently heads the Quicken SIG.



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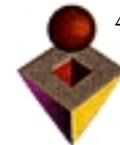
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table at the Swap Meet
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THE ROAD LESS TRAVELED

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

inexpensive and very upgradeable. No need to replace existing ADB, Serial and SCSI devices. Most of your software will not need to be upgraded since these Macs will run with OS 7.6.1 through 9.0.4.

Cons: To use the newer USB and Firewire devices, a PCI expansion card must be installed; the same also applies for a high speed graphics (ATI RAGE etc.) card. You can't improve the data bus speed, which determines the rate information passes from the motherboard to the hard drive, CD-ROM, etc. No matter what you do, you can't get all the features and benefits of a new Power Mac.

After realizing that my used upgraded Quadra 650 (a very good machine) had reached the end of its upgrade capability for my computing needs, I decided to upgrade to a newer, faster *used* Power Mac and upgrade it.

When faced with a problem like this, it is useful to draw up a list of requirements. Mine are listed below.

1. It must have an upgradeable CPU processor slot.
2. It must have three or more PCI slots for upgrading, and at least four memory expansion slots.
3. It must have external ADB, SCSI, and Dual Serial ports.
4. It must have at least a 4xCD, a high speed internal SCSI bus and at least one extra bay for an additional internal hard drive.

5. After CPU upgrading, it must provide a 3-to-4 times real world speed increase with my existing applications. (see calculations below)

6. The cost after basic upgrading must be less than a new or used comparable Power Mac.

There are several web sites that will give you a lot of detailed information on older Power Macs, their upgrade-ability and performance after upgrading. Three of the most useful ones I have found are:

<http://www.lowendmac.com>
<http://www.macspeedzone.com>
 and <http://www.xlr8yourmac.com>.

Don't forget that a lot of HAAUG members are knowledgeable in this area or can steer you to members that are.

After a considerable amount of research, I settled on the Power Mac 7300-7500-7600 and 8500-8600 series (they all have items 1-4 above) and in particular the Power Mac 7500 since it is cheaper with its replaceable, now obsolete 601-100 MHz CPU card.

When upgrading a Mac, I have developed a rough rule of thumb to determine the "real world" speed increase of a CPU upgrade. (Your mileage may vary). I take the square root of similar CPU speed increases or the square root of the MacBench test speed increases of non-similar CPUs. For example, a 100 MHz G3 replaced with a 400 MHz G3 will run your applications about twice as fast—not four times as fast. In my case, a 400 MHz G3 card MacBench tested 10.14 times faster than the stock 601-100 MHz CPU card and should run my applications about three times faster.

Notice that—other than bragging rights—a 500 MHz G3 CPU card yields only a small increase in application speed over a 400 MHz CPU card. G4 CPU upgrade cards can be substituted for G3 CPU cards as applicable when their price/performance ratio improves.

Several manufacturers supply these CPU upgrade cards and are found in the back of MacWorld Magazine, other publications and on the web. Two I recommend, are Sonnet and Newer Technology. (*Editor's Note: Newer Technology went out of business shortly before this issue went to press.*) Both supply G3/G4 CPU upgrade cards that are very easy to install, come with simple clear instructions, and are plug-and-play.

Used Power Macs can be obtained from many sources, including friends, swap meets and commercial sources.

Good commercial sources can be found in the back of MacWorld, other publications and on the web. One commercial source I have used with good results is Power Max

(<http://www.powermax.com>)

However, how do I know that the used Power Mac shipped to me is the correct one and equipped with what I ordered (memory, drives etc.)? The answer lies in two software packages available on HAAUG Heaven or on the web at <http://www.pure-mac.com>.

TechTool 1.8 and above and Tattletech 2.8 and above both provide a snapshot of your computer's CPU, memory, components and more.

I prefer Tattletech since it will report the model, CPU type and speed, installed memory, data bus speed and just about everything else under the hood of just about any Mac. Just load it into the computer and this little jewel supplies the answers.

After my used Power Mac 7500 arrived, I checked it out with Tattletech and inspected it for damage. When I was satisfied all was OK, I ordered the 400 MHz G3 CPU card and some extra memory. By the end of the day, I had the three-gig hard drive from my Quadra 650 installed in the extra bay and my existing serial and SCSI peripherals hooked up and checked out.

The 400 MHz G3 CPU card and memory arrived two days later. I replaced the stock 601-100 MHz CPU card with the new 400 MHz G3 card (a 10 minute job *after* you read the instructions) and installed the extra memory. Time for the smoke test.

The lights didn't dim when I booted up, but they should have. This combination is a MAJOR improvement over my old used upgraded Quadra 650 and the original stock Power Mac 7500. My software does run 3x faster and in some cases more.

The grand total:

Mac 7500-100/32mb/700mb ...	\$245
Additional memory 32 meg	\$ 50
400mhz G3 CPU card	\$295
Total	\$590

'Dr. Mac' LeVitus delivers annual Apple report card at Dec. meeting

BY GEORGE SROKA
APPLE BARREL EDITOR

Houston Chronicle columnist and author Bob "Dr. Mac" LeVitus gave his annual "State of the Mac" review at the General Meeting in December.

In his Year 2000 report card, LeVitus gave Apple a "C-" on service and support, a "C- or a D" on documentation (someone in the audience suggested an "F"), an "A" on products and an "A+" on Mac OS X.

Regarding service, LeVitus related a recent incident in which he had to call Apple because his flat-screen display died. Apple's service "isn't the worst I ever had to deal with—but close," he said.

Documentation is hard to grade considering there isn't any, LeVitus said. The help system built into OS 9 is good, but no substitute for the non-existent printed manual, he added.

Apple continues to put out high quality innovative products, though LeVitus said he thought Apple initially priced "The Cube" much higher than it should have.

He did agree that Apple will have

to address the speed gap between Power PC chips and 1-gig plus Pentium III chips, if for no other reason than bad publicity. But he pointed out that "the megahertz war is imaginary," adding, "I'll take my 500 megahertz G4 over a 1.x gig Pentium any day." The speed differences between the two chips as perceived by the user are slight, he said.

Mac OS X, even in its beta version, is "awesome," he said, "and fully buzzword compliant," meaning OS X features protected memory, true multi-tasking and more. The Unix base of OS X should make it a more stable operating system. In fact, he said he'd been running OS X on a Mac for 52 days without a reboot, even though various software had crashed during that time.

However, he added that he wouldn't run the beta version of OS X "on my main machine or my only machine or the machine I use to make money."

In the second part of his report card, LeVitus listed software "that I love and recommend." The list included Office 2001, Photoshop,

iMovie, QuicKeys, Virtual PC 4.0, DiskWarrior, Explorer 5 and the games "Myth" and "The Sims." Office 2001 is a great product with Word 2001 the absolute best word processing package available for the Mac, LeVitus said. "Microsoft does make some good software," he said, including Explorer 5 "where the price is just right." Photoshop is—bar none—the best, most comprehensive graphics editing package, he said.

iMovie passes "the mother-in-law and 12-year-old test," meaning either of those two people can learn how to use it in about half an hour. QuicKeys is "the one utility I must have on my Mac," he said. Virtual PC 4.0 is easy to install and use, and provides "all the PC I want." DiskWarrior is the best utility for maintaining hard drive "health." In games, Myth is a lot of fun while The Sims is really addictive, he said.

LeVitus took questions from the audience at the end of his presentation. If you missed it, you can look forward to seeing LeVitus at next December's general meeting as his appearances have been a tradition.



Houston Chronicle Mac Columnist Bob LeVitus addresses the December General Meeting in the Cougar Den in the U of H Student Center. In the crowd, HAAUG member Phil Booth is shown taping the presentation for future viewings.

— photos by Randy Herzstein

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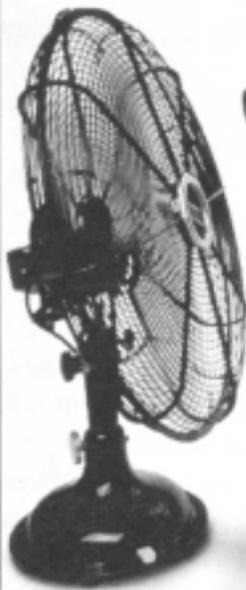
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HAAUG CLASSIFIED AD

FOR SALE: Courier V90 Everything 56K external Fax modem \$100

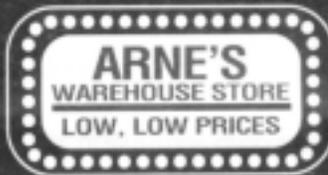
This is the current model usually priced at \$240 or more at online discounters. All the reviews note that this modem has higher actual throughput and great noise resistance than the competition. Have gone to Road Runner and I still have a Supra for faxing. Call David Scheuer (713)464-1228.

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JAN 2001 Swap Meet

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THE HAAUG SEMI-ANNUAL SWAP MEET

Saturday, January 20, 2001 • 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Hilton Hotel on the University of Houston Campus

Reservations are now being taken for tables with electricity and without. We can arrange to share tables for those members with a small quantity of items to swap.

One table is free for paid up members. Those with dues scheduled for payment in January can be paid during the meet. Extra tables are \$50 each for members. Dealer tables are \$50 each.

Electricity is \$5 each for both members and dealers (Cords will not be allowed across walkways).

Please provide your name, member number, expiration date, phone number, so it can be confirmed with your table number.

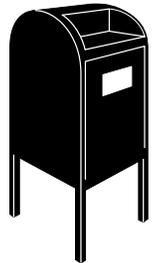
Each table will be tagged with the reservation name prior to the Swap Meet. An alphabetical name list will be posted on the doors, in case you forget the reserved table number. Everybody will be in the Houston and surrounding rooms on the second floor of the University Center.

To reserve a table, complete the

online form at <http://www.haaug.org> or send the information via e-mail to rexjc@wt.net.

If you do not have online access, fax or mail the form above. If you have questions, call Rex at (281) 300-4788.

Before mailing, fold form in thirds and tape edges to keep personal information private.



Upcoming Meeting

The February General meeting of will be held Saturday, Feb. 17. The main presentation will be Pangea Software, makers of Bugdom and Nanasaur

The next meeting of the Board of Directors will be held Tuesday, Feb. 6, at HAL-PC, 4543 Post Oak Place.

About the new look

As you probably noticed, the Apple Barrel has a new look for the new Millennium. What you may not know is that the Adobe PDF version of the Barrel now features live links throughout. For example, someone viewing the PDF can click a link that will automatically launch your browser and take you to that web site.

For the font geeks amongst you (including myself), the body copy is now set in New Baskerville, the headlines/subheads in Futura.

Apple Sauce

by James Dawkins



Remember now, no one says *Where have you been?* or *What have you been up to?*, and above all don't notice his T-shirt!

AppleSauce created by Mr. James Dawkins appears courtesy of the Charlotte Apple Computer Club. For more info: cartoons@charlotteappleclub.org or surf to <http://www.charlotteappleclub.org>

Swap Meet coming Jan. 20
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