

# Apple Barrel

The Journal of the Houston Area Apple Users Group

February 2013

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## "The State of Apple" + Some Cool Stuff Dr. Mac Likes

**Saturday, February 23<sup>rd</sup>**

**(Note - this is the 4<sup>th</sup> Saturday of the month!)**

Bob "Dr. Mac" LeVitus delivers his annual "The State of Apple" Address, along with some thoughts on the recent Macworld/iWorld conference. The Board meeting and the traditional "BBQ SIG" follow afterwards.

The SIGs start at 9am and the Main Presentation begins at 11:15.  
We'll see you there on the 23<sup>rd</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.



# Boss HAAUG Speaks

Monthly Address from the HAAUG President



January is finished, along with the winter version of the HAAUG SwapMeet. I want to thank everyone involved: the folks who came to buy, the folks who came to sell, the folks who helped with setup, and everyone that helped take down the event. That is why I enjoy my involvement with HAAUG: people getting together to have a good time and help each other out with their technology problems.

This month we welcome Bob "Dr. Mac" LeVitus. Bob will give us his take on the state of Apple. This is an annual event, and we look forward to hearing Bob's insights on what the state of the Mac and of its brother iOS devices, drawing on his many years of covering all things Apple. We can also count on a few software and hardware recommendations. This is a meeting that you should not miss.

At the end of last month, we found out that Apple will not go bankrupt any time soon. It reported record profits of \$13.1 billion for the October through December 2012 quarter. According to Apple's press release, they made about 4 billion dollars a week in the quarter as compared to 3 billion in the same quarter a year ago. Sales of iPhones and iPads were greater than the sales a year ago. One sour note: Mac sales and iPod sales fell compared to last year. Some of the drop in Mac sales was tied to a lack of supply, but also many people now feel that they can get by with just an iPad and iPhone. The market's reaction to these announcements was a drop in the price of Apple shares to below \$500. Apples shares are a bargain at \$453 and change on February 1 (the day I am writing this.) I guess the shine has come off of the Apple. The board declared a \$2.65 dividend payable on 2/14. So if you have Apple stock you will get a valentine from our favorite fruit company.

You may have read the Apple-related web stories decrying the business press's doom and gloom stories about Apple. The mainstream press ran stories about the lack of innovation from Apple, because they have not released a new product that has wowed consumers since the iPad. One pundit actually suggested that Tim Cook be fired and the job given to Jony Ives. From my point of view that is crazy talk. But I see the point: folks are not seeing the ground breaking new devices from Apple. In my opinion, however, the recent "Sky is falling" headlines are just click-bait from writers who don't have anything else to write about.

I read the New York Times story on its computer network being attacked by Chinese hackers. It was thought that the Chinese Government was looking for the sources of some stories about the wealth that relatives of Wen Jiabao, the Chinese Prime Minister, had accumulated. The snooping went on for four months until the Times and their consultants shut the doors. I am reminded of a book called *The Cuckoo's Egg: Tracking a Spy Through the Maze of Computer Espionage* by Clifford Stoll, The author tracked an East German hacker ring trying to get into sensitive systems at the Lawrence Livermore Lab in the late 1980's. This activity has a long history.

(cont'd on p. 8)

# Security Beat

Ed Truitt, etee@me.com



**Newton's Third Law of Motion**, paraphrased, states that

*"To every action there is always an equal and opposite reaction."*

Over the years, I have come to realize that there is an analogy (especially in the computer world), which I call **Ed's Law of Unintended Consequences**. It goes thusly:

*"For every course of action undertaken, there are always - **always** - unintended consequences. Failure to anticipate, and plan for, these is a guaranteed recipe for trouble."*

So, what does this have to do with Mac security, you ask?

**Item #1:** recently we have had a rash of '0-day' vulnerabilities in Oracle's Java software. Several of these have been serious enough that the Department of Homeland Security took an unprecedented step, and recommended that the general public disable the Java client in their browsers. The reason: these vulnerabilities are being sold in cybercrime circles for up to \$5,000 apiece, and the purchasers are turning them around and using them to commit identity theft and other cybercrimes.

In response, Apple has (twice!) updated their built-in anti-malware feature in OS X to block the Java client in Safari. Which is great, unless (like me) you have a site that requires the use of Java, and performs a function you need. In my case, the site is one that uses Java to upload data from my insulin pump, so my doctor and I can analyze the data and adjust my treatment as needed. *Oopsie*. So, until the next update to Java comes out ([Java 7 Update 13 was released early](#), thankfully), it looks like I will have to fire up the XP system. Thanks, Apple! (And yes, I will be applying all the Microsoft patches to that XP system.)

**Item #2:** Recently, Twitter released a new app called Vine, which allows you to create short (max 6 seconds in length) videos and post them on Twitter. Apparently, Twitter (as well as others) wants video to become the new photo, and they see Vine as an eventual replacement for services like Instagram. (I am not sure why we need lots of crappy videos on the Internet, but whatevs.) Anyway, it would appear that Twitter failed to anticipate the direction that human nature would take, and they also failed to remember what happened with Chatroulette, for Vine quickly became the go-to place for NSFW content, with hashtags like "#porn" becoming very popular. Gives a whole new meaning to "quickie", I guess. Twitter has responded by blocking the obvious hashtags, and I am certain they will be spending a good amount of time and effort in scouring the submitted content, looking for naughty bits to eradicate.

**Item #3:** In his "Boss HAAUG" column this month, Phil commented on the recent article in the New York Times about how they were "hacked" by the Chinese, who

(cont'd on p. 8)

## QuickTip



I was on the road for a bit the other day, and when I left home at noon, my iPhone's battery was about 95% full. About 4 hours later, I saw it was down to about 25%, and I wondered what it could have been doing to deplete the battery so much. I thought of the usual culprits, like brightness (it's not at the maximum), Bluetooth (it seems well behaved with iOS 6, going in standby mode when not in use), or push email. Then I looked at which apps were open. I quit them all, including Skype. An hour later, my battery had only dropped another 5%.

When I came home, I did some googling, thinking it could be Skype, or it could be another app. I came across a Skype forum post where someone said they lost 70% in four hours, just like me. There were no other apps running that would have been keeping a connection open, so it's safe to say - given the vast number of people who have commented on the relationship between Skype and poor battery life - that there is a link.

So, if you use Skype, and see bad battery life on your iPhone, try quitting the app and see if this improves things. I haven't done any scientific testing, but there seem to be enough people who have this problem to suggest that Skype may be the culprit.

<http://hints.macworld.com/article.php?story=20130124092557493>

# “I Bought a Band-Aid”

Philip Booth, [pcbooth@swbell.net](mailto:pcbooth@swbell.net)

*(This is the second installment chronicling my the demise of my old Mac G-5 Tower. The first installment, “My G5 Died, And It Won’t Boot Up!”, appeared in the January edition of the Apple Barrel.)*

The SwapMeet could not have come at a better time. I was holding the door for a member who was loading in several G-5 Towers for sale. His price for the machines were higher than I was willing to pay but I thought that I would try later. The SwapMeet went on for a few hours, and I noticed that some of the machines were gone. I left the meeting and went to the bank to get some cash. On return I approached him with a proposition:

*“How much would it cost me to have you not need to load one of those machines in your car?”*

He named a price that fit the amount of cash I had, and I was the owner of a used G-5.

It was Saturday night before I decided to setup the new machine. Step one: plug in and check that the machine boots. *Success*. Step two: shut down and remove the hard drive that came with the machine and replace it with the clone of my old hard drive. *No joy*. For some reason the cloned drive would not boot. I put the old drive back in, the machine started, and it was like I never had a problem.

There are a few differences between my old G-5 and the new machine. I had a problem with the fans in the old machine. Every mouse move would cause the fans to speed up. That problem was driving me nuts. The new machine does not exhibit this behavior. The audio system in the new machine is not as good as my old machine.

Yes, it is a band aid to get me though until I can decide if I want an iMac, or if I should wait for the promised new tower. But, I will also transition to my Intel-based laptop, and depend on that more.

Stay tuned.

# 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](mailto:abe@haaug.org)

## QuickTip



You may have seen the news: the latest update to the Apple TV (2nd generation or later) allows you to use a Bluetooth keyboard. This makes searching for things much easier; the non-keyboard interface is slow and clunky. If you want to use a Bluetooth keyboard with your Apple TV, you can see [this Apple technical document](#) which explains how to set up a Bluetooth keyboard with an Apple TV, how to disconnect the keyboard, and how to troubleshoot common problems.

<http://hints.macworld.com/article.php?story=20130131001648924>

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##### 1/6 Page Ad

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#### 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.

# Minutes

HAAUG Board of Directors Meeting – Saturday, December 15, 2012

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

**Attendees:** Jack Adair, Philip Booth, Jim Connell, Michael Epstein, Michael King, Clair Jaschke, David Jaschke, Ed Truitt and Greg Wright.

**Call to order:** 12:38 p.m. by President Philip Booth following the conclusion of the December General Meeting, a quorum of voting members of the board being present.

**General Announcements:** Philip Booth introduced Jack Adair and welcomed him to the meeting. Jack will assume the duties of the secretary at next month's board meeting. Phil announced the dates for next year's meetings at Bellaire Civic Center. The meetings will be held on the third Saturday of the month, except for the General Meetings for February (February 23, 2013) and for December (December 14, 2013). Phil reported that the link on HAAUG's website for table reservations for next month's Swap Meet has generated a large amount of spam mail.

## MONTHLY REPORTS:

**Secretary – Jim Connell:** The board unanimously approved the minutes of the board meeting

held on November 17, 2012, as submitted, upon a motion by Clair Jaschke.

**Treasurer – Clair Jaschke:** Clair Jaschke submitted written financial reports for November 2012 to the board. At the end of last month, HAAUG had \$9,110.17 in its checking account and a \$5,000 certificate of deposit. The CD has earned \$7.50 in interest so far this year. All bills received have been paid. Clair has still not received any requests for reimbursement of the expenses for Chris Breen's visit. Greg Wright will submit a request for reimbursement of the hotel and airline ticket expenses and will request Chris Breen to submit his rental car expense. Clair will send a letter to MacExperts requesting that uncashed checks issued by HAAUG be deposited. Clair

needs to know whether HAAUG or MacExperts pays the fee that is due for HAAUG's domain name.

**Vice President – Greg Wright:** Greg Wright reported by email to the board plans for the upcoming months:

*January 19, 2013: Semi-Annual Swap Meet*  
*February 23, 2013: Bob "Dr. Mac" LeVitus, The State of Apple*  
*July 20, 2013: Semi-Annual Swap Meet*  
*October 19, 2013: Chris Breen*

Phil reported that Kevin McNeish, an author of books on iOS apps development for non-programmers, has expressed an interest in making a presentation to HAAUG.

**Membership – David Jaschke:** David Jaschke reported that HAAUG had 177 members at the end of November 2012, a decrease of one member from October 2012 and an increase of seven members from November 2011. Last month there were five membership transactions (two new members and three renewals). There were three transactions by Square credit card, one by Kagi and one by check.

**Media and Communications Administrator – Ed Truitt:** Ed requested articles for next month's Apple Barrel be submitted by Saturday, Saturday, January 5, 2013. He reported that HAAUG's website has not been affected by the problems some other websites have recently experienced. He plans to make a new WordPress installation during the holidays and to see what can be done to reduce the spam mail that arrives through the link on the website for table reservations for the Swap Meet.

## OLD BUSINESS:

**Election of Officers and Directors:** Phil Booth reported the following were elected to serve as officers and directors for 2013 at today's General Meeting:

(cont'd on p. 8)

# Boss HAAUG...

(cont'd from Page 2)

The relative ease that allows bad people to get into corporate networks that we depend on makes one think of going back to paper checks. This should caution you about securing your systems, and being vigilant about the transactions that show up in your bank and credit card statements. For more on Security updates, check out Ed Truitt's "Security Beat" column.

## Minutes...

(cont'd from Page 7)

President: Phil Booth  
Vice President: Greg Wright  
Secretary: Jack Adair  
Treasurer: Clair Jaschke  
Media and Communications: Ed Truitt  
Directors-at-Large: Michael Epstein, Michael King

**Shirts for Board Members:** Phil reported that he has determined that [CustomInc.com](http://CustomInc.com) can provide a blue Polo shirt with a pocket and HAAUG logo and the words "Board Member" at a cost of approximately \$48 per shirt. Upon motion made by David Jaschke and seconded by Jim Connell, the board authorized Phil to spend up to \$500 for the shirts.

### NEW BUSINESS:

**Audit Committee:** Clair Jaschke announced that the financial records for 2012 should be ready for audit by the end of January 2013. The Audit Committee will be appointed at next month's board meeting.

**Adjourned:** 1:09 p.m.

# Security Beat...

(cont'd from Page 3)

were reportedly trying to determine who the sources were for stories about alleged corruption involving members of the Prime Minister's family. It is an interesting read, and gives an insight seldom seen into the world of cyber-espionage. There are several things I have found interesting: first, it appears the spies managed to gain access to one of the newspaper's Active Directory domain controllers, and snagged all the user accounts (and their password hashes.) In other words, they got the keys to the kingdom: with these hashes, they could easily gain access to the accounts, from the CEO to the Domain Administrator to the service accounts controlling the financial systems. Second, they seem to have gotten in via spear-phishing: teaching people not to click on clickable things (attachments and links) in email is still an area where we have a lot of room for improvement. Third, the Times IT staff allowed this activity to continue for months, monitoring it and learning what the spies were doing, so that when they decided to evict the spies from their systems, they could be sure the spies would *stay* kicked out. This is a departure from the traditional 'best practice' of kicking the bad guys off immediately by erasing and rebuilding affected systems, and requires a high level of trust by the business leadership in their IT staff. Once again, as the bad guys change their tactics, we have to adjust our responses to meet them.

For us Apple users, there are unintended consequences to our products becoming so popular (especially in the workplace.) The bad guys, who previously had left us alone, now see OS X and iOS as targets worthy of their attention. And, if OS X and iOS are resistant to their efforts, they can always take an easier route (exploiting Java vulnerabilities and conducting spear-phishing attacks, for example.) We all must change what we do to counter the tactics of the bad guys. What are the practices that *you* need to change?

Till next month: keep 'em safe!

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Got Questions?  
If so, please send them in to [abe@haaug.org](mailto:abe@haaug.org).

# Upcoming Events

## Houston Area Apple Users Group 2013 Officers and Directors

President  
**Phil Booth**

Vice President  
**Greg Wright**

Secretary  
**Jack E Adair**

Treasurer  
**Clair Jaschke**

Membership Chairman  
**David Jaschke**

Media & Communications  
**Ed Truitt**

Director-at-Large 1  
**Michael Epstein**

Director-at-Large 2  
**Michael King**

Senior Advisor  
**OPEN**

## Saturday, March 16th, 2013

### To Be Announced

Watch this space for details.

**Location:** Bellaire Civic Center | Map online at [www.haaug.org](http://www.haaug.org)

## Saturday, April 20th, 2013

### To Be Announced

Watch this space for details.

**Location:** Bellaire Civic Center | Map online at [www.haaug.org](http://www.haaug.org)

## Saturday, July 20th, 2013

### Semi-Annual SwapMeet

Time to clean out the gadget stash again! Our mid-summer opportunity to buy and sell gently-used Apple (and related) "stuff".

**Location:** Bellaire Civic Center | Map online at [www.haaug.org](http://www.haaug.org)

## Saturday, October 19th, 2013

### Chris Breen, Sr Editor of Macworld

This meeting should be on your "must attend" list. Reserve the date!

**Location:** Bellaire Civic Center | Map online at [www.haaug.org](http://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/](http://www.haaug.org/meetings/)

# STARTRONICS

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Macintosh/IBM Services, Maintenance & Repair Specialist

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# February 2013 Event Schedule

	Main Room	2nd Room	3rd Room
9 a.m.	Mac 101	iOS	Mac One-on-One
10 a.m.		Digital Photography	
11 a.m.	Club Business		
11:15 a.m.	Main Presentation: The State of Apple + <i>Some Cool Stuff Dr Mac Likes</i>		
1 p.m.	Clean-up	Board of Directors meeting; followed by BBQ SIG	

**Main Presentation: The State of Apple + *Some Cool Stuff Dr Mac Likes*.** It's that time of year again!

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

**iOS: Rick Roberts** - iPad, iPhone and the apps that make our lives better.

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

**Mac One-to-One** - Our newest SIG, focusing on personalized help with questions and problems.

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

# 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



Safari occasionally zooms right in on a web page. It's quick to return to the actual size, but you can also disable this behavior if desired.

Myself and friends/family who I support were being bothered by Safari occasionally zooming right in on a web page. Pressing Command+0 (zero) undid it, but it was still disconcerting.

I found this is caused by Safari on OS X trying to emulate Safari on iOS: a double-tap on the mouse zooms the page to the current column.

Take a trip to System Preferences to disable this behavior: it will be either *Mouse » Point & Click*, and turn off Smart zoom, or *Trackpad » Scroll & Zoom*, and uncheck Smart zoom.

**[crarko adds:** This is one of those things I never see since I disable Smart zooming as a matter of course on all of my systems. I have met a number of people who do encounter this phenomenon, and asked what to do about it. So it's not an earth-shattering hint, but perhaps less obvious than it seems. I do think pinch zooming on a trackpad is useful and a logically consistent thing to do. Do folks here make a lot of use of double-tap Smart zooming on a Mac? Knowing the circumstances where it proves useful would be a nice addition to the tip given here.]

<http://hints.macworld.com/article.php?story=20130108131950239>

# 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  
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Visit [www.haaug.org/join](http://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. Dues for regular members are \$35 per year. Student memberships are available for full-time students at a high school, community college, or university for the rate of \$10 per year.

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

First: \_\_\_\_\_ Last: \_\_\_\_\_

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Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Type Of Computer: \_\_\_\_\_

Membership:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> New Membership (\$35.00)   | <input type="checkbox"/> Renewal (\$35.00)                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Two Year Renewal (\$70.00) | <input type="checkbox"/> Student (\$10.00) <i>Requires Student ID</i> |

Check # \_\_\_\_\_

Member # (if renewing): \_\_\_\_\_

How did you hear about HAAUG?

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Do you know someone who would be interested in joining HAAUG? Y | N

Would you be willing to volunteer in HAAUG?

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### Mail check to:

HAAUG  
P.O. Box 570957  
Houston, TX 77257-0957  
Attn.: Membership 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, raffles, and much, much more. Swap Meets are held twice each year, in January and July.

## Social Media & Internet Presence

The HAAUG web site at <http://www.haaug.org> is the place to go for up-to-date information on what we are doing. In addition, there is [a HAAUG group on Facebook](#), where people can go to interact with fellow HAAUG members on topics of interest related to Apple and its products.

## 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 200 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](http://www.haaug.org).

## Reviewers Wanted!

Ed Truitt, Media & Communications Dir.

Do you like to read technical books? Do you fancy yourself a literary critic? Do you like to share your opinions with others? Why am I asking all these questions?

If your answer to most of the questions above is "Yes", then we have something for you: several publishers (including O'Reilly and Wiley) make copies of their book available, at no charge, for review. We are always looking for member-written content for the Apple Barrel, and your book review, published in the HAAUG newsletter, will satisfy both needs.

If you are interested, please see me at the meeting, or email me at [abe@haaug.org](mailto:abe@haaug.org).

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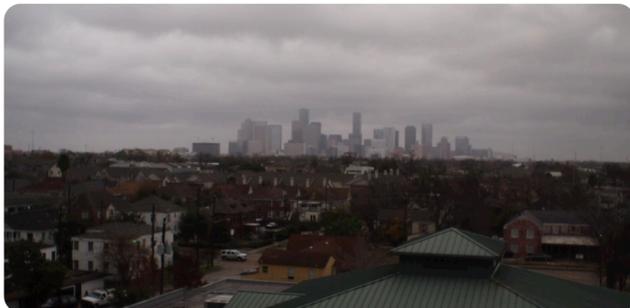
# Review: Olympus 15mm f/8.0 Body Cap Lens

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Two of the things that drew me to the Micro Four-Thirds cameras (the Olympus PENs specifically) were their small size, and light weight (and the image quality certainly didn't hurt!) These factors not only reduce the stress (and associated pain) the camera places on my neck and arms, but they also make the camera less noticeable - a definite plus in the post-9/11 world where photographers are seen as potential terrorists, and are thus viewed with suspicion by police, security guards, and random passers-by. (Yes, I have found myself surrounded by security folks, who questioned by "unauthorized photography." This, after I was invited to the event specifically to take pictures. Though why a terrorist would choose to carry around a full-size DSLR and a long zoom lens, in these days of high-quality camera phones, is beyond me.)



Thus, you can imagine my interest when Olympus announced they were producing a 15 mm "Body cap/lens" with a fixed aperture of f/8.0 and simplified focus (close up and infinity.) I immediately pre-ordered one, only to have the order cancelled. I patiently bided my time, and sure enough I found the lens "in stock" shortly before Christmas. I ordered it, and thanks to Amazon Prime, I had it in time for a Christmas opening.



The lens really is simple. There is no aperture setting to mess with, and the focus is set by a lever on the bottom of the lens. There are three positions: closed, close up (.3 meters, or approx. 1 foot), and infinity. It is designed to be used as a "quick and dirty" lens, or alternatively as a body cap. This combination means that, even when the camera is packed up with the lens removed to save space, it is still ready for instant use, should the opportunity (and need) arise.

15mm and 12mm lenses compared; 15mm body cap lens on a PEN EP-3; Downtown Houston skyline, as seen from the Museum District.  
Photo © 2013 E D Truitt.

So, how is it in real life? This lens is not only easy to use, but it is fun. I attached it to my PEN E-P3, and took off for the top deck of the parking garage where I live. I grabbed several photos of the surrounding landscape, as well as some of the clouds overhead. There was no fiddling with the camera to speak of: this was about as "Set it and Forget it" as you can get. The image quality, while not as high as it would be with my 12mm f/2.0 lens, was totally acceptable (and remember, the 15mm cost me about \$60, or less than 10% of what the 12mm cost!) There was some purple fringing in objects in the background visible when I zoomed in, and it appeared that the focus wasn't tack sharp. But, given that my expected use case for this lens would be snap shots for viewing on the web (or printing on post-card size paper), these issues aren't likely to render the images unusable. This lens has a good home, attached to my PEN EP-3 so I can stow it in my [Hubba Hubba Hiney camera bag from ThinkTank](#) while leaving room for the OM-D E-M5 and several lenses/accessories.

The [BCL 15mm Body Cap Lens is available online](#), at a price of \$49 (as of Feb 2, the day I am writing this.)