Apple Barrel

The Journal of the Houston Area Apple Users Group

June 2013

Boss HAAUG Speaks
page 2

Security Beat
page 3

FBI Public Service Announcement: Cyber Criminals Using Photo-Sharing Programs to Compromise Computers
page 4

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
page 7

Upcoming Events
page 9

June 2013 Event Schedule
page 10

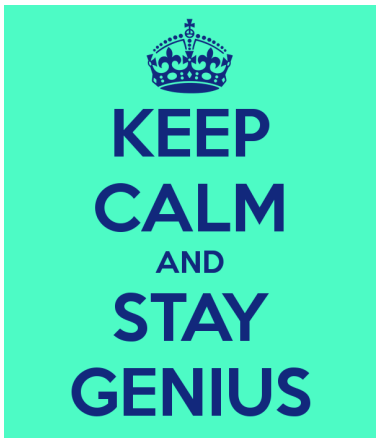
Got Junk?
page 11

Reviewers Wanted!
page 13

First Impressions: "New, Improved" Flickr
page 14

"My Life As a Genius"

Patrick Locket, University of Houston



Saturday, June 15th

This month, we are honored to have Patrick Locket, Sr. OS X/iOS support technician from the University of Houston, speak to us about his experience as a Genius.

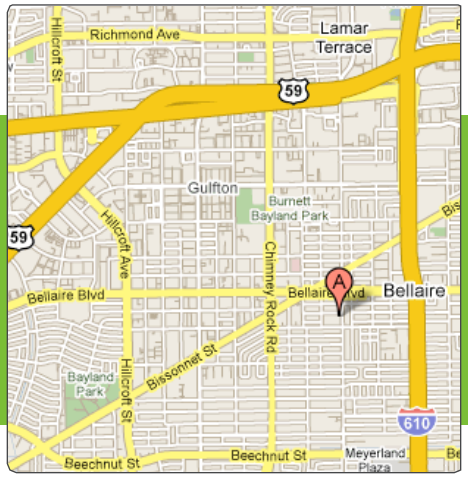
Exactly what juicy tidbits will he reveal, you ask? We aren't telling: you'll have to come to the meeting to find out!

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

Meeting Location

Bellaire Civic Center
7008 South Rice Avenue
Bellaire, TX 77401

Just outside Loop 610 and south of Bellaire Blvd.



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

Boss HAAUG Speaks

Monthly Address from the HAAUG President

Thanks to Nathan Eror for speaking at the May meeting. It was great to hear about App development in the Houston area. He is the principal developer for Free Time Studios. We were lucky to have Nathan as the Houston Hack-a-thon was taking place at the same time as our meeting.

When I was growing up, I remember seeing Ford cars with stickers in the back windows proudly proclaiming: "Built in Texas by Texans." Now I doubt that Apple will put stickers proclaiming that certain Macs are built in Texas, but according to Tim Cook they could. Apple is adding to its extensive campus in the Austin area to bring up a Macintosh manufacturing line. We may know something when Apple does the WWDC Keynote.

The last two meetings, we were on deadline in knowing what the main presentation was going to be. I hope that we will have the topics better defined for future meetings. We will do a better job in getting the word out about meetings even if the Apple Barrel says meeting topic is "TBA".

For June, the presenter will be Patrick Locket, a colleague of mine at the University of Houston. We are developing the topic he will speak on, but Patrick worked for our favorite fruit company as a Genius Trainer. He opened several stores in Texas. By the time the Apple Barrel is published, we will have a topic.

As I mentioned earlier, Apple's WWDC conference will begin on June 10th. Despite all the harpies proclaiming that Apple is losing its edge, WWDC sold out (5000 seats) in something like two minutes. A ticket cost close to $1600. The Keynote should show the new features of iOS 7 and OSX 10.9. Members of the Apple Developers Connection have already seen some builds of the new OS's but this will be the first time members of the general users community will see the new features. Apple may announce some hardware, but WWDC is for App Developers.

Speaking of the WWDC Keynote: get ready for some more changes to Mac OSX. If you could whisper in Apple's ear, what changes would you like to see in the OS? Are there any features you would like improved? I scanned an article on Macworld's website that had different writers asking for changes to the OS. They varied from installing Siri on the OS, improving iCloud, better rules in Mail, and a "Pro" switch that would allow sandboxed apps to interact with each other more than they are allowed to now. Will any of this happen? We will need to hear the Keynote to find out.

Local news organizations are already hyping hurricane season which starts this month. This is a time to have a plan to protect your data in case we do get a big storm. It is all well and good to have your insurance policies scanned but if you lose the drive that they were located on, you have nothing. If you have a collection of photos in iPhoto, drive loss is the same as losing paper prints. A clone of your hard drive sent off to a friend or relative is a simple way to make sure that the important

(cont'd on p. 8)

Security Beat

Ed Truitt, etee@me.com

For years, passwords have been the cornerstone of account security. They have also been one of the weak links, mainly because users fall into bad habits about them: they create very weak passwords, they use the same passwords across multiple accounts, and even when they choose strong passwords, sometimes they store them in very unsafe places (like on a Post-It stuck on the monitor.) Combating these weakness are so-called "best practices", with the current conventional wisdom recommending a "long and strong" approach: make passwords at least 8 characters long, with a mixture of lower- and upper-case letters, number, and symbols.

Recently, the lie was put to this conventional wisdom, as Ars Technica documented how 90% of a list of 16,000+ password hashes were cracked within 20 hours. While some of the passwords were incredibly weak, others (such as ":LOL1313le") would not be found on common wordlists (the easiest way to crack passwords.) Even scarier: the hardware used to perform this feat was not a high-end 25 GPU password-eating cluster, but rather a commodity PC with a single AMD Radeon 7970 graphics card.

The problem is three-fold: first is that many sites still use weak hashing algorithms (the password file in the above example used the MD5 algorithm), and people tend to follow patterns in creating passwords (such as using a capital letter for the first character, followed by lower-case letters, and ending with a number or two.) The third problem, which makes the job of the bad guys much easier, is people giving up their passwords by entering them on fake "phishing" web sites, or having them captured via keystroke loggers installed on their machines.

Fortunately, there is a solution for all these problems: a password manager. Programs such as LastPass (https://lastpass.com/) and 1Password (https://agilebits.com/onepassword) can create long, complex, unique passwords for each site you visit; they don't re-use the same pattern (not being human); they can auto-fill the login fields (which defeats most keystroke loggers); and they only enter your password on the correct URL (which defeats most all phishing sites.) Even better: these programs are cross-platform, with apps for Windows, OS X, Android, iOS, and others. They also have plug-ins for most common browsers. I have used 1Password for several years now, and recommend it to anyone looking for a better way to handle passwords. Leo Laporte (of TWiT) recommends LastPass: different strokes for different folks, and all that. Either one is much better than playing Russian Roulette with your online accounts.

(cont'd on p. 8)

QuickTip

Siri's ability to access Wolfram Alpha lets you access a huge amount of interesting data by talking to an iOS device. One useful thing thing Siri can do for you is ask Wolfram Alpha to generate a very secure, random password.

To do this, invoke Siri, then say "Wolfram password," or "Wolfram Alpha password." This retrieves an 8-character random password, along with a list of a half-dozen others. You can also have Siri get longer passwords, if eight characters doesn't ring your bell. Say, "Wolfram 14-character password," for example.

The downside to this is that you can't copy this password, and once you've switched away from the Siri results, you can't get them back again. So you need to either type this password on a computer or other iOS device, or write it down. Either way, make sure you delete it, or store it in some sort of encrypted file.

[Ed note: If you want to save the passwords to view later, you can also take a screen shot.]

http://hints.macworld.com/article.php?story=2013052402303973

FBI Public Service Announcement: Cyber Criminals Using Photo-Sharing Programs to Compromise Computers

05/30/13—The FBI has seen an increase in cyber criminals who use online photo-sharing programs to perpetrate scams and harm victims' computers. These criminals advertise vehicles online but will not provide pictures in the advertisement. They will send photos on request. Sometimes the photo is a single file sent as an e-mail attachment, and sometimes the victim receives a link to an online photo gallery.

The photos can and often contain malicious software that infects the victim's computer, directing the user to fake websites that look nearly identical to the real sites where the original advertisement was seen. The cyber criminals run all aspects of these fake websites, including "tech support" or "live chat support" and any "recommended" escrow services. After the victim agrees to purchase the item and makes the payment, the criminals stop responding to correspondence. The victims never receive any merchandise.

The FBI urges consumers to protect themselves when shopping online. Here are a few tips for staying safe:

- Be cautious if you lose an auction on an auction site but the seller contacts you later saying the original bidder fell through.
- Make sure websites are secure and authenticated before you purchase an item online. Use only well-known escrow services.
- Research to determine if a car dealership is real and how long it has been in business.
- Be wary if the price for the item you'd like to buy is severely undervalued; if it is, the item is likely fraudulent.
- Scan files before downloading them to your computer.
- Keep your computer software, including the operating system, updated with the latest patches.
- Ensure your anti-virus software and firewalls are current—they can help prevent malware infections.

If you have fallen victim to this type of scam, file a complaint with the Internet Crime Complaint Center at www.ic3.gov.

This FBI Public Service Announcement was shared through InfraGard.

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

MAC FIRST AID
COMPUTER SERVICES

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

YOUR AD HERE.

DYNAMIC DIGITAL DESIGNS
Database • Network
Rex Covington
FileMaker Solutions Alliance Partner
281-300-4788
Mac Support

Need Toner? Call Laser Ink.

LASER PRINTERS • MULTIFUNCTION • COPIERS

- ALL MAJOR BRANDS of new and compatible toner
- LIFETIME WARRANTY on remanufactured toner cartridges
- FREE DELIVERY in Greater Houston on orders of $40+

Specializing in HEWLETT PACKARD
SERVICE & REPAIRS

~ Since 1988 ~
Laser Ink
713-522-4546
1311 Willard • www.laserinktx.com

BBB MEMBER Greater Houston

Classifieds

Products and support for the Macintosh community

Need Help? Ask the experts.

Consulting • Database Development
Web Design and Development • Internet Hosting

MAC EXPERTS

www.macexperts.net (281) 788-5333

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

Eclipse Productions

(713) 665-5261

media communications association international

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.*

Minutes

HAAUG Board of Directors Meeting – Saturday, April 20, 2013

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

Attendees: Philip Booth, David Jaschke, Ed Truitt, Clair Jaschke, Greg Wright, Jack Adair, Mike Epstein

Call to Order: By President Philip Booth at 12:52 PM following the conclusion of the April General Meeting, with a quorum of the voting members being present.

General Announcements: Phil Booth reported that he has been notified that the City of Bellaire is planning to replace the Bellaire Civic Center, our current meeting place, within the next 3-5 years. The replacement facility would have similar functionality, but would likely be a multipurpose facility hosting several other departments. This may force us to find a new meeting place within that 3-5 year period.

MONTHLY REPORTS

Secretary - Jack Adair: The minutes for March 2013 were unanimously approved by voice vote.

Treasurer's Report - Clair Jaschke: Clair presented the financial reports for March 2013. Our checking account balance as of the end of March was $9,796.81, and we still have our $5,000 certificate of deposit. Clair estimated that this one-year CD has earned at least $12.10 in interest, and it matures on April 28. The Board considered the possibility of purchasing another CD, but it was agreed that we will not pursue this until at least May or June 2013. We definitely plan to renew the current CD, and Clair agreed to explore the possibility of a multi-year CD to increase the interest rate we could get.

Clair reported that all outstanding bills are paid, although there are two outstanding checks to MacExperts. She has sent Jeff Davis a note to let him know that these two checks are still outstanding.

Vice President - Greg Wright: Greg reported that we still have open presentation slots for May, June, and August. He invited any of the board members to offer their suggestions for main presentations as well. Barring alternative suggestions, he plans to invite iPhone developers and Apple's Dreux Ste. Marie to present in May and June. Phil Booth agreed to try and get Jean MacDonald of Smile Software, the maker of PDFPen and Text Expander, to present in August. Clair Jaschke also indicated that she thought it might be good to get someone from MicroMat, the maker of TechTool Pro, to present as well. Dave Jaschke suggested that a presentation from Prosoft Engineering should be considered as well.

Greg finished his report by summarizing the commitments for the remainder of the year:

- Saturday, July 20: Semi-annual Swap Meet
- Saturday, October 19: Chris Breen from Macworld

Membership - David Jaschke: Dave reported that we ended the month of March with 174 members, which is down from 180 members at the end of February, and 180 members as of March 31, 2012. Dave reported six transactions in March: three via KAGI, and three via check.

Dave expressed the concern that we need to get our KAGI site fixed. It still shows the old membership rates, and you have to use their new wizard to get the sites changed. Dave indicated that he could use some help in setting this up. We would like to keep using KAGI, as they have proven reliable and trustworthy. Dave will contact Rex Covington to discuss the best way to update the site. We want to continue to publish the annual and two-year renewal rates on the site. The student rate will be available only at meetings to enable us to properly verify student status. We would also like to know how to add other activities for which we might to accept credit card payments. Phil Booth indicated that Tamara Alexander could provide logos and images need for Website work.

Clair Jaschke also indicated that it is very difficult to audit exactly what is going on with our KAGI account. We need to know what fees are being charged, because our records and KAGI's do not match.

HAAUG Electronic Communications Systems - Ed Truitt: Ed reported that the Apple Barrel deadline remains the first Saturday of the month. He indicated that some concerns had been made known to him concerning Website safety

(cont'd on p. 8)

Security Beat...

(cont'd from Page 3)

In other news: it appears the bad guys have found a new way of separating you from your hard-earned cash. Please take note of the Public Service Announcement from the FBI, which can be found on page 4. It seems they (the bad guys, not the FBI) have discovered it is easier (and less dangerous physically) to take your money via cyber theft and con games, than it is to rob a bank with a mask and a gun. Just as you wouldn't walk down a dark street with a bag full of cash, you need to exercise caution with engaging in business on-line.

Till next month: keep 'em safe!

Got Questions?
If so, please send them in to abe@haaug.org.

Boss HAAUG...

(cont'd from Page 2)

files are safe. Scanned PDF's of important documents saved on a USB thumb drive that any machine can read will help start the claims process. The Oklahoma tornado is a good example of why you need to have multiple back ups and stored in a location different than your home.

Minutes...

(cont'd from Page 7)

and security based on attacks on other WordPress sites, in which "brute force" attacks on administrator passwords had been attempted. Ed keeps our WordPress installation up to date with very strong passwords, so we do not expect problems.

Ed then explained the situation with the E-mail issues experienced with the "haaugclubbusiness" mailing list and "haaugnet.org" domain. The IP address of our HAAUG server got thrown into a number of spam blacklists, including ProofPoint, which blocked messages going to iCloud.com, me.com, and mac.com. Eventually, after he talked to MacHighway and ProofPoint, this got rectified.

Ed indicated this would look at alternative server options, such as a server with a dedicated IP address, if this continues to be a problem. Blacklisting by IP address is not a good situation for shared hosting. He also stated that keeping a backup of mailing lists may be a good idea. However, there is no evidence that our domain was sending out any spam.

OLD BUSINESS: None

NEW BUSINESS:

Audit Committee Report: Phil Booth and Greg Wright performed the required audit of the HAAUG books. The comments that they made were as follows:

- Proper documentation was found for all transactions
- We need to find a way to deal with the KAGI issue such that their records properly match our records
- Some reports that should have shown negative totals showed positive totals instead
- There are some issues where Clair Jaschke cannot get proper access to reports

Adjournment: At 1:47 PM.

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, 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**

Saturday, August 17th, 2013

To Be Announced

Watch this space for details.

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

Saturday, September 21st, 2013

To Be Announced

Watch this space for details.

Location: Bellaire Civic Center | Map online at **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**

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/

STARTRONICS

George McKenzie

Macintosh/IBM Services, Maintenance & Repair Specialist

4141 SW Freeway Suite #470

Houston, Texas 77098

713-524-5646 FAX 713-524-4635

June 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: Patrick Locket, on his experience as a Genius		
1 p.m.	Clean-up	Board of Directors meeting; followed by social time/lunch	

Main Presentation: Patrick Locket - Edutaining us with stories on his experience as a Genius.

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: Ed Truitt – I'll bring in my new Lytro light field camera, and we can discuss: just another fad, or the future of photography?

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

By default, Mail will keep file attachments that you've opened or viewed in your ~/Library/Mail Downloads folder, until you delete the associated email. You can save disk space by making the following switch:

In Mail's preferences, go to General, then set Remove unedited downloads to When Mail Quits. This does not remove the attachment from your email, just from your local cache of Mail Downloads.

On one machine I've got, I reclaimed nearly half a gigabyte after using the system for only a few months! I can't wait to see how much I get back on a system I've been using for 5 years!

[**kirkmc adds**: I find it odd that Mail keeps these attachments after you view them, since they're still in the emails. This is only an issue, however, if you save emails with attachments; if you delete them, then the default setting deletes the cached files as well.]

http://hints.macworld.com/article.php?story=20130515071439989

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. 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:_____

Company:_____

Address:_____

City/State/Zip:_____

Home Phone:_____Work Phone:_____

Email:_____

Type Of Computer:_____

Membership:

- ☐ New Membership ($35.00)
- ☐ Renewal ($35.00)
- ☐ Two Year Renewal ($70.00)
- ☐ Student ($10.00) *Requires Student ID)*

Check #_____ Member # (if renewing):_____

How did you hear about HAAUG?

_____

_____

_____

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

Would you be willing to volunteer in HAAUG?

_____

_____

_____

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. SwapMeets 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, which is available to members on the HAAUG web site in Adobe PDF 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, e-mail, or at the monthly meetings.

Special Interest Groups (SIGs)
People with common interests, including Macintosh and OS X basics, 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**.

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.

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**.

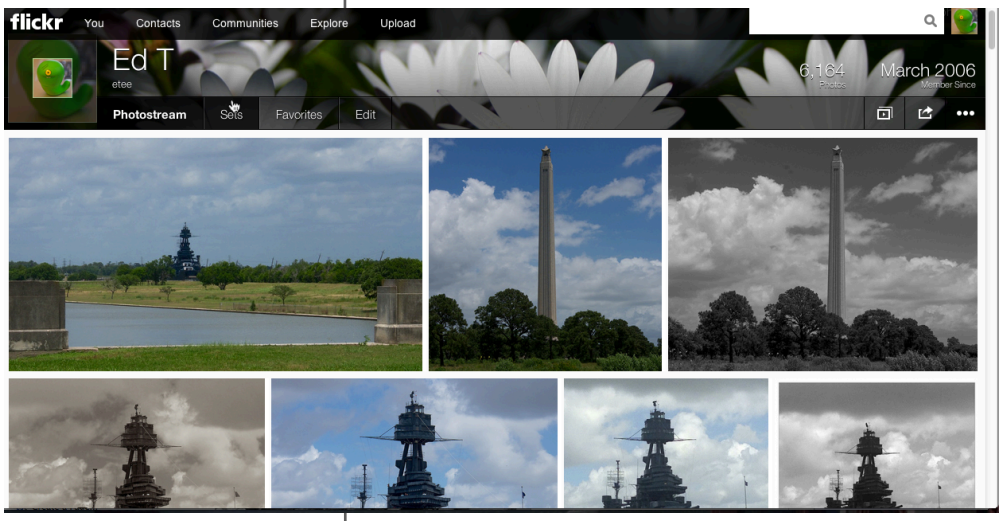
Annual membership is $35 for regular members, and $10 for student members (limited to students enrolled full time at a high school, community college, or university.) The Hotline is also the Mentor line if you need help. Guests are welcome to attend one or two meetings to get acquainted with HAAUG, but 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.

First Impressions: “New, Improved” Flickr

Ed Truitt, etee@me.com

For years, Flickr was the epitome of on-line photo sharing. Users were allowed 100 MB of uploads/month (unlimited uploads with a $24/year Pro account), and the service has survived where others have fallen by the wayside *(remember MobileMe photo galleries, anyone?)* However, this longevity is not without cost: after its acquisition by Yahoo!, the site seemed to languish as others (such as Instagram, 500px and photobucket, as well as photo-sharing provided by social networking sites like Facebook and Google+) came along with modern interfaces and vibrant communities.

We are all familiar with some of the more controversial steps Yahoo! CEO Marissa Mayer took to revive the tech company. Well, it appears that under her direction the firm has undertaken to modernize some of its properties, Flickr among them. On May 20th, the “new, improved” Flickr web site and service was unveiled. And, while some elements of the update are getting very positive buzz, other elements have stirred up passions among the Flickr *aficionados*.



Flickr PhotoStream
(screenshot by Ed Truitt)

First, the good news: the web site interface is much improved. The white space is gone; image scrolling is now continuous instead of paginated, and the appearance is reminiscent of a light box (see image on left.) Users also have access to 1TB of free (ad-supported) storage, the most of any photo sharing service. Photos and videos can be up to 200 MB in size.

As is often the case, the interface changes are not universally welcomed. In addition, while users can purchase 1TB of ad-free storage for $49.99/year (or 2TB for $499.99/year), the old “Pro” account is no longer available, and there is some question as to under what circumstances a Pro account can be grandfathered.

I have used the new interface since it became available, and for the most part my experience has been positive. It did take a bit of looking around to find some features I use (this is often the case with UI changes), but I am very much a fan of the continuous scrolling light box way of displaying photos. I am one whose Pro account is grandfathered, so I have no dog in that particular hunt. The new iOS app is much improved, although I would be happier if it had better support for the iPad: at the very least, it should rotate when the iPad is being held in the landscape orientation.

Only time will tell if the “new, improved” Flickr will regain the awesomeness it had in its glory days, but for now at least, I will remain a loyal customer and user.