## THE APPLE BARREL

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Apple Beefs Up iMac and MacBook Lines, Teases the iMac Pro







The Apple Barrel
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**Houston Area Apple Users Group** is Houston's oldest and largest Apple User Group. If you are interested in joining HAAUG, please call the HAAUG hotline at (832) 305-5999 or sign up via our web site at <a href="https://www.haaug.org">www.haaug.org</a>.

Annual membership is \$35 for regular members, and \$10 for

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by Phil Booth, 2017 HAAUG President

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The calendar changed and so did the weather and Houston has gotten uncomfortable. The Memorial day weekend held the promise of heavy rain like last year. Welcome to Summer. My thanks to Mike King for his demo of the Google Home and Amazon Echo. Both of them are interesting products. if you were near a computer Monday and caught the WWDC Keynote you know that Apple is set to join them in that space with the HomePod.

I watched the keynote and I think that we are in for some changes in all of the Apple OS's (tvOS, watchOS, iOS, and macOS). The code name for the new Mac operating system is High Sierra; it is offering better graphic performance and a new file system, APFS, which features a 64-bit architecture designed for flash storage. It is also designed to work faster on common tasks like file duplication.

Another new feature is a new video codec called H.265, which is designed for 4K and ultra-high definition. This coded will be built in to Apple's pro apps like Final Cut Pro. The graphics engine is being rebuilt and will be named Metal 2. They demonstrated some virtual reality with the system that looks interesting. The good news is if your computer can run Sierra, it will run High Sierra.

iOS came in for some changes including a new name: it will be iOS 11. The changes and new features are numerous. There are additions to Apple Pay and the App Store, and more than I can name. There are new features for the iPad in the next edition of iOS. There will be a file system with folders and individual files. They also announced a new smaller version if the iPad pro with a larger screen. By reducing the margin around the screen they were able to enlarge the screen, in a unit that is still one pound. The new iPads are available now.

While the WWDC is not a hardware event, Apple showed off some refreshed Mac's. The iMac and notebooks got a refresh. New processors and new graphic processors were the features of the refresh. Also, the new iMac's now feature Thunderbolt 3/USB-C and four USB 3 ports. the refreshed machines are available now. Of special interest was the announcement of the iMac Pro, which while the outside design did not change (aside from the color) the internals feature a Xeon processor with up to 18 cores, Radeon Vega graphics processor that will power VR 3D rendering and provide amazing game play. The iMac Pro will be available in December.

And now one more thing: as mentioned above Apple announced the HomePod. The HomePod is designed to compete in the same space as the Amazon Echo and Google Home. They really didn't demo the product but they said that it will interface with your iPhone to control items in your home. The emphasis of the announcement was on its performance as a speaker. Since they did not have a unit on stage I think that it still needs some time in the oven. It is scheduled to be released in December.

In HAAUG News, the board decided to move the July swap meet out of the pool house and we should have an announcement on the location soon.

## Club and Meeting News

	CenterPoint Energy Community Center
9:00 am	
9:30 am	Mac 101 and
10:00 am	<b>Fundamentals, iOS</b> Jonathan Magnus and Rick Roberts
10:30 am	Jonathan Magnas and Machines a
11:00 am	
11:30 am	
12:00 pm	To Be Announced
12:30 pm	
1:00 pm	
1:30 pm	
2:00 pm	

## **New Meeting Location**

We will be meeting in a new location (the CenterPoint Energy Community Center) that is very near to the old Bellaire Civic Center but which lacks the partitioning afforded by the old location.

## **Special Interest Groups**

**Mac 101 and Fundamentals with Jonathan Magnus:** The SIG for basic to advanced Mac topics.

iOS with Rick Roberts: Discuss all things iPhone, iPad, iPod, iTunes, and iCloud.

**Special Interest Group and Ad Hoc Meetings:** Groups are welcome to use the casual spaces to meet on other topics. Scheduled SIGs take precedence. If you have an idea for a SIG, email the HAAUG SIG Coordinator at <a href="mailto:SIG Coordinator@haaug.org">SIG Coordinator@haaug.org</a>!

## Join the HAAUG Board of Directors!

We will soon be asking for members to volunteer to serve on the Board of Directors. Please consider putting your name up for a leadership position. For more information, talk to any board member at a meeting or send an email to <a href="mailto:president@haaug.org">president@haaug.org</a>.

## **Meetup Group**

The Houston Area Apple Users Group is now on Meetup.com! Click here to visit our group's Meetup page and join. We will of course continue to publish all meeting news on our website at haaug.org, to our Facebook group, and all other outlets as usual; this is simply an additional way to market our organization to the local community. If you are already a HAAUG member and join the Meetup group we will mark your dues as paid on the Meetup website, so you won't have to pay HAAUG dues twice!

#### **HAAUG Website Updates**

If you haven't visited the <u>HAAUG website</u> recently, stop by and check it out. Learn more about the organization, get up-to-the-minute news and updates, and browse the Apple Barrel archives, dating back to 1996!

## **Submit Your Content to Apple Barrel!**

Have you tried a new Mac or iOS application? Found a neat accessory for your iPhone? Want to share a cool tip you've come across? Write about it, and send your column to editor@haaug.org. You can help make the Apple Barrel a better publication while providing valuable insight and opinion to your fellow HAAUG members.

## Board of Directors Meeting Minutes for March 18, 2017

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

**Attendees:** Phil Booth, David Jaschke, Clair Jaschke, Marcy Spears, Steve Bridgham, Ryan Eisworth, Mike Epstein, Mike King

**Call to Order:** By President Phil Booth at 12:29 PM following the conclusion of the February presentation.

## **Monthly Reports**

**General Announcements:** Phil announced that this would be the last meeting in the Bellaire Civic Center. Beginning with the April meeting, the HAAUG members will meet in the CenterPoint Energy Community Center at 7001 5th Street in Bellaire, TX.

Phil said that they will still need to set up the tables (which are round) and the chairs on the Friday night before the meeting. WIFI is available at this location.

The available space is one large room with no auxiliary space for other SIG meetings. Going forward the following needs to be determined:

The members will need to decide if they want to split the time before the main presentation for the SIG meetings, e.g. one hour for the IOS SIG and one hour for Mac 101 and Fundamentals SIG.

We need input from HAAUG members to determine future SIG topics and general meeting presentations. Ryan noted that a survey was sent out last year using Survey Monkey and we only received 4 responses. Marcy suggested that we give everyone a paper survey at the beginning of the next presentation. Clair suggested that we give all participants an extra raffle ticket if they completed it and turned it in.

**Secretary - Marcy Spears:** Acceptance minutes of the February 2017 BOD meeting was proposed by Phil, seconded by Dave and were approved unanimously.

Treasurer's Report - Clair Jaschke: Clair

reported that our checking account balance as of the end of February 2017 was \$3,564.46. Our savings account balance was \$10,004.13, for total cash on hand of \$13,568.59. All bills were paid and all funds deposited for January.

Clair request that the audit rescheduled to follow the May meeting. The assigned board members, Ryan Eisworth, Steve Bridgham, and Mike Epstein will audit the documents and provide a written report to the board.

Membership - David Jaschke: Dave reported that HAAUG ended February with 134 members, up by 2 from January. Last year we had 139 members at the end of February. We had a good month for renewals. We had 9 transactions, of which we had 1 new member to join, 1 lapsed renewal, 6 regular renewals and 1 2-year renewal. Of these, 2 were by credit card and one by web.

## **Programming Report - Steve Bridgham:**

Dwight Silverman declined an invitation to speak to the HAAUG members this year. Other proposed speakers include:

Lee Hutchinson, Senior Technology Editor at Ars Technica, has spoken to HAAUG members before on WIFI, Terminal, networking (SSID, mesh, and Ubiquiti routers).

Dave Hamilton, co-founder of both The Mac Observer and BackBeat Media, and producer and co-host of TMO's Mac Geek Gab Podcast. The scheduled month and topics for these presentations are to be determined.

Main presentations confirmed and possible:

Ryan Eisworth will compare Adobe Lightroom vs. the Photos App in MacOS Sierra. Reminder—the April meeting is on Easter Saturday, April 15.

Josh Centers of TidBits is confirmed to speak about home automation in May. He is the author of the "A Prairie HomeKit Companion," which focuses on the what, when, why, and how of home automation. Phil said that Josh wants to set up an ethernet network for demo purposes. Ryan offered to help Phil set this up. Also, Phil will contact Josh for a head shot for use in the HAAUG Apple Barrel and online.

Phil said we should try to schedule Dave Hamilton to speak in June or after July. The bi-annual swap meet is scheduled for July at the CenterPoint Energy Community Center (AKA poolroom). There are no tables stored in this location. Dave said we may have to rent tables for this event. Phil said that getting tables up through the elevator is problematic—relocating the swap meet may be a better alternative. Mike E. believes that his railroad club (a large warehouse in Jersey Village) could provide more adequate space for the swap meet. Mike will see if it is possible. However, the change in location may affect the number of attendees. Phil will check on alternate venues. He said he might have a lead for free space for Saturday access and better parking.

**HAAUG Electronic Communications Systems - Ryan Eisworth:** Ryan reported that the Apple Barrel was published on schedule. Both the HAAUG Facebook and Meetup sites were up-to-date.

Mike E. and Ryan have been handling the Facebook account. Anyone can join the Facebook account.

Steve and Ryan have been handling the Meetup account. Only members are allowed to join the Meetup account. Ryan mentioned that the Meetup site states that you must pay dues to become a member. At some point, an account needs to be set up in the event of a new member joining through Meetup. Phil and Clair said they would take care of that when it happens.

#### **New Business**

No new business.

**Adjournment:** At 1:06 PM. Phil adjourned the meeting and David seconded it.

June 2017

## Apple Beefs Up iMac and MacBook Lines, Teases the iMac Pro

At WWDC 2017 last week, Apple devoted a non-trivial segment of the keynote to new Mac hardware, showing off improved iMacs and performance-enhanced MacBook Pros and mentioning a speed bump to the MacBook Air in passing. After running through all the changes to the existing lineup, Apple gave a sneak preview of the iMac Pro, a workstation-class version of the 27-inch iMac with 5K Retina display that's scheduled to ship at the end of the year.

Apple made no mention of the Mac mini or Mac Pro, though the company has already said that the Mac Pro is in the middle of a major redesign that it won't complete until 2018 at the earliest (see "Maca Culpa: Apple Admits Mac Pro Missteps and Promises More Transparency," 4 April 2017).

iMac -- The workhorse of Apple's desktop line has long been the <u>iMac</u>, which Apple continues to offer in three basic models: a 21.5-inch non-Retina version, a 21.5-inch iMac with 4K Retina display, and the 27-inch iMac with 5K Retina display.

On the CPU front, each model receives a speed bump thanks to Apple using Intel's 7th generation "Kaby Lake" processors and increasing clock speeds. You can see the specifics on Apple's Tech Specs page, but the summary is that Apple is focusing more effort on the 21.5-inch Retina iMac, offering just a single configuration of the non-Retina model. Benchmarks will show how much faster the combination of new CPUs and higher clock speeds will be, but I suspect purchases will mostly be based on price.

Although the iMac Retina displays are already gorgeous, Apple claims to have improved them even more in both the 21.5-inch and 27-inch sizes, increasing brightness 43 percent to 500 nits and supporting display of up to 1 billion colors.

The non-Retina iMac model drives its screen with the integrated Intel Iris Plus Graphics 640, but all the Retina models now take advantage of Radeon Pro GPUs, the 555 and 560 for the 21.5-inch models and the 570, 575, and 580 models for the 27-inch models. The notable win here is for the 21.5-inch Retina models, which were previously limited to integrated Intel Iris Pro Graphics 6200.

Apple has made the Fusion Drive standard in more configurations, and the company claims that the SSDs available in 256 GB, 512 GB, and 1 TB capacities are up to 50 percent faster. You can also add a 2 TB SSD to the top-of-the-line 27-inch iMac for a whopping \$1400.

When it comes to RAM, all base models still ship with 8 GB. The non-Retina iMac and low-end 21.5-inch Retina model remain limited to 16 GB, but the high-end 21.5-inch Retina model can now take 16 GB or 32 GB, a welcome improvement. Similarly, the low-end 27-inch model still maxes out at 32 GB, but the two higher-end models can take 16 GB, 32 GB, or 64 GB. RAM in the 21.5-inch iMac models cannot be upgraded by the user, but you

can install memory in the 27-inch model yourself.

Unsurprisingly, Apple replaced the previous models' Thunderbolt 2 ports with a pair of Thunderbolt 3 ports that support DisplayPort for external screens, Thunderbolt at up to 40 Gbps, USB 3.1 Gen 2 at up to 10 Gbps, and various other protocols via adapters (see "Explaining Thunderbolt 3, USB-C, and Everything In Between," 3 November 2016).

All these changes are welcome for anyone in the market for a new iMac. I doubt they're significant enough to warrant trading in an existing Retina iMac unless Thunderbolt 3 is a necessity. The most interesting changes are actually in the 21.5-inch models, which move past the RAM and graphics limitations of the previous configuration while introducing a cheaper configuration.

The 21.5-inch non-Retina iMac remains priced at \$1099, with the two Retina configurations starting at \$1299 and \$1499. The 27-inch model comes in three configurations: \$1799, \$1999, and \$2299. They're all available now.

Perhaps I'm just boggled by the number of changes Apple announced in the WWDC keynote, but I couldn't see how to give more context for the changes in relation to previous configurations because the matrix of what models get which build-to-order options was just too complicated. If you want to price out different possibilities, I recommend opening several browser windows so you can compare the configurations side by side. In fact, it's possible that even Apple has become confused, given some of the pricing oddities that we've found (see "2017 iMac Configuration Quirks: Don't Get Burned!," 12 June 2017).

MacBook, MacBook Pro, and MacBook Air -- As with the iMac, Apple updated the processors in the MacBook and MacBook Pro with new Kaby Lake processors running at higher clock speeds. That should improve performance, although likely not by that much. The MacBook Pro models also get improved graphics processing, with the 13-inch MacBook Pro models using Intel Iris Plus Graphics 640 and 650, and the 15-inch models switching to Radeon Pro 555 and 560 discrete GPUs on top of Intel HD Graphics 630 and 640.

You can now buy a MacBook with 16 GB of RAM, up from the previous limit of 8 GB, and Apple claims that the MacBook's onboard SSD is up to 50 percent faster. That might make the MacBook a more attractive option, given that lackluster performance was one of its main disadvantages.

Despite rumors to the contrary, the <u>MacBook Air</u> lives, but it sees the least change, replacing its stock 1.6 GHz dual-core Intel Core i5 processor with a 1.8 GHz model. It remains upgradeable to an Intel Core i7 running at 2.2 GHz.

Although these changes are all positive, they do nothing to simplify the difficulty of choosing between the three models. Each falls into the three-dimensional graph of price, performance, and size in a different spot. You'll have to decide what's most important to you — cost, speed, or portability — and figure out which of Apple's notebooks best fits your needs.

As with the new iMac models, these updated notebooks are all available now.

<u>iMac Pro</u> -- During the private media meeting in which Apple executives confessed to the company's sins with regard to the Mac Pro, mention was made of pro-related announcements about the iMac coming this year.

Apple has now revealed more of what that means, pulling back the curtains on the iMac Pro. Due in December 2017, the iMac Pro retains the same form factor of the 27-inch iMac with 5K Retina display but swaps the brushed aluminum look for a space-gray finish that extends to the Magic Keyboard with Numeric Keypad, Magic Mouse 2, and an optional Magic Trackpad 2.

(Curious about the name of that keyboard? Us too. It turns out that Apple quietly released a new wireless <u>Magic Keyboard with Numeric Keypad</u> for \$129 during WWDC too. Keypad users rejoice!)

The goal of the iMac Pro is to provide workstation-class performance within the iMac design. The hardest part of that is dealing with heat, because the iMac Pro will feature Intel Xeon processors in 8-core, 10-core, and 18-core configurations.

Also playing into the necessary thermal architecture redesign is Apple's use of a new Radeon Pro Vega GPU, which reportedly features a next-generation compute core and up to 16 GB of on-package high-bandwidth memory (HBM2). Apple says that the iMac Pro with Vega GPU delivers up to 11 teraflops of single-precision compute power for real-time 3D rendering and high frame rate VR. For half-precision computation that's reportedly ideal for machine learning, the iMac Pro can deliver up to 22 teraflops of performance. (We don't have a sense of what that means, either, but Apple did a good job of making it sound impressive. For comparison, the Radeon Pro 580 in the 27-inch iMac has a peak performance of 5.5 teraflops.)

The iMac Pro will ship with 32 GB of RAM by default, but for a machine in this class, the fact that it's configurable to 64 GB or 128 GB is more important. A 1 TB SSD is also standard, with 2 TB and 4 TB SSDs as options.

Unsurprisingly, the iMac Pro sports four Thunderbolt 3 ports, which enables it to drive up to two 5K displays and two high-performance RAID arrays at the same time. Other connectivity options mimic what's on the 27-inch iMac with 5K Retina display now, with the exception of Ethernet. Instead of gigabit Ethernet, the iMac Pro will include 10 Gb Ethernet, which could be a big deal when transferring massive amounts of data between machines.

How much will all this cost? A lot, with the base iMac Pro configuration starting at \$4999. Apple claimed that a comparable workstation would cost about \$7000, without a 5K display. Even still, given the high price of large SSDs and RAM, we anticipate that a loaded iMac Pro will easily meet or exceed that \$7000 mark.

But that won't stop the audience for the iMac Pro. If you need the maximum performance from a Mac, the iMac Pro will provide it. Or at least it will until a new Mac Pro makes its debut, and many of those who live and die by the teraflop won't want to wait.

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## Board of Directors Meeting Minutes for April 15, 2017

**Location:** CenterPoint Energy Community Center, 7001 5th Street, Bellaire, TX

**Attendees:** Phil Booth, David Jaschke, Marcy Spears, Ryan Eisworth, Mike Epstein, Mike King (Clair Jaschke and Steve Bridgham not present)

**Call to Order:** By President Phil Booth at 1:13 PM following the conclusion of the March presentation.

## **Monthly Reports**

General Announcements: None.

**Secretary - Marcy Spears:** The March 2017 minutes were not approved because there was not a quorum. They will be resubmitted at the May 2017 meeting with the April 2017 minutes.

Treasurer's Report - David Jaschke provided Clair's reports: Clair updated the February 2017 report (already reflected in the March minutes). Clair reported our checking account balance as of the end of March 2017 was \$3,560.11. Our savings account balance was \$10,004.21, for total cash on hand of \$13,564.32. All bills were paid and all funds deposited for March.

Membership - David Jaschke: Dave reported that March ended with 134 members, the same as February. In March of 2016, we had 138 members. We had 9 renewals in March of which 2 were two-year renewals and 7 were one-year renewal. We had 3 renewals by web and 2 by credit card.

6

Programming Report - Phil Booth: Phil said he talked to Steve Bridgham who said that Josh Centers of Tidbits would need to reschedule his presentation on home automation to sometime after May.

Main presentations confirmed and possible:

Mike King volunteered to demo Amazon Echo and Google Home devices for the May meeting. Ryan Eisworth said that he could provide an access point and internet access for the demonstration, 2.4 GHz WiFi, a computer to bridge to the internet, and an extra laptop to project to the phone. Mike will use his phone to demo these systems and can include the integration of the light bulbs, thermostat, and more.

Josh Centers of TidBits to be rescheduled, date yet to be determined. He is the author of the "A Prairie HomeKit Companion," which focuses on the what, when, why, and how of home automation.

Phil said we should try to schedule Dave Hamilton to speak in June or after July.

The bi-annual swap meet is scheduled for July at the CenterPoint Energy Community Center (AKA poolroom). Whether we use the round tables already in the facility or rent rectangular tables, the larger issue may be lack of convenient parking—or even finding the location of the meeting. Someone suggested that we rent the counter in the back of the room and/or

use it to demo equipment that is being sold.

**HAAUG Electronic Communications Systems - Ryan Eisworth:** Ryan reported that the Apple Barrel was published on schedule. Both the HAAUG Facebook and Meetup sites were up-to-date.

Because attendance was down at the April meeting, some folks may not have been able to find the building because the address "shows up funny" on Google Maps. A new map will be added to the HAAUG Web site and to the Facebook page.

Mike E. and Ryan have been handling the Facebook account. Anyone can join the Facebook account.

### **New Business**

Since there is no vending machine in the new meeting space, someone will bring a cooler with diet cokes, regular cokes, and water—to be sold for a nominal cost.

Phil purchased a new bag to store and transport the HAAUG equipment to and from the meetings at a cost of \$84. He will also buy two rectangular tables to be used by the presenter and membership. The cost will be approximately \$30 each. We did not have a quorum so the board members voted by e-mail and unanimously approved the expenditures.

**Adjournment:** Phil adjourned the meeting at 1:53 p.m. and David seconded it.

# **Membership Benefits**

## **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 <a href="http://www.haaug.org">http://www.haaug.org</a> is the place to go for up-to-date information on what we are doing. In addition, there is a <a href="https://www.haaug.org">HAAUG group on Facebook</a>, 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 website 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 <a href="https://www.haaug.org">www.haaug.org</a>.

## Join by Mail

Please print 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:	
Cell Phone:		
Email:		
Type of Computer:		
Membership: New Membership (\$35.00) Two-Year Renewal (\$70.00)	Renewal (\$35.00) Student (\$10.00) Requires Student ID	
Check # Mem	ber # (if renewing):	
How did you hear about HAAUG?		
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Do you know someone who would be v	villing to join HAAUG? Y	N
Do you know someone who would be v	villing to join HAAUG? Y	N
Do you know someone who would be v	villing to join HAAUG? Y	N

