SMUG NEWSLETTER

February 2018

South Suburban Macintosh User Group

Meetings:
7:30 pm
Second Tuesday of each month

Flossmoor Station Restaurant and Brewery
1035 Sterling Ave.
Flossmoor

People start to gather about 6:00pm and lasts until 9:00 pm. Meeting times are flexible.
Any Apple topic is fair game.

February Program

Next Program: Tuesday, Feb. 13, 7–8:45 PM
Flossmoor Station Brewpub, 1035 Sterling Ave, Flossmoor, IL

An Alternative Backup App for iOS Devices

As everyone knows, or should know, our *iPhones* and *iPads* should be backed up regularly. Apple has provided two methods for us to do that: one is with iTunes and the other with iCloud. Many of us had complained that these methods are difficult to use and have not been improved in a very long time. Well, there is a new alternative, it's *iMazing*. Really! It's a new app named *iMazing*.

We will begin with a brief review the shortcomings of *iTunes* and *iCloud* backups and follow with a demonstration of how to do backups and restores with *iMazing*. If you are seeking an alternative to the Apple methods, perhaps *iMazing* will fit your needs.

We will meet at the Flossmoor Station. The program starts at 7:00 P.M. As usual, we will have the room starting at 6:00 P.M. for anyone who wants to eat before the meeting. Please feel free to bring a friend or a spouse or anyone interested in Apple products. *Please pay your dues for 2018 if you have not yet done so.*

Upcoming events
• Feb. 20: Board Meeting
• Mar. 13: Program TBA

News

The Quarterly Financial Reports Are In

Apple's sales dropped, but so did all the other companies in the sector. Apple sold fewer items, but made more money.

FitBit

It was recently discovered that people can and have been tracking FitBits (of others) and other portable electronics. This is to the extant that the military does not want service members to wear them "at work".

Oops!

Apple got caught with its hand in the cookie jar….again. This time it seems that they have unilaterally decided that we prefer longer battery life over performance. By default an Apple product will slow the computer and make other performance changes when the battery reaches a point without asking or even notifying users this is happening. Lawsuits were filed almost immediately after this news became public. In Europe, governments have filed criminal charges against Apple in this affair.

Apple also is caught in the middle over a fuss over parental control of what children see on the internet. Lawsuits and criminal charges have been filed on each side of the issue.

We have discussed this at meetings before - Apple, like a lot of companies, does not want to let go of what it makes. They are not selling objects as much as selling a service. The problem is that we consumers are -buying- objects, in this case, computers.

{Law School: Outside the English speaking world, a very different method of legal procedure prevails:

In its classic form, a Magistrate, who is a civil servant takes police reports and makes a decision as to whether or not a criminal charge will go forward. If the charge goes forward, the case is heard by a three judge panel which decides the case. There was no jury. It is my understanding that juries are now the norm in criminal matters, but as in the US, not so much in civil suits.

As I wrote above, the Magistrate has a great deal of freedom about what action they take. They can take action without a police complaint, for example. Some magistrates are very political and file actions based on their personal "grudges". Some, not so much. Some may have been attorneys, but most are not. Instead of going to law school, they go to "judge school". In listening to the news, it seems that many times a magistrate will file a complaint and "the court above" will let the matter sit. There does not seem to be a statue of limitations, so charges can be in limbo for decades.}

Also, European law is more consumer orientated than in the US. Market based regulation of business is not the primary form of regulation. I am not saying Europe is a consumer heaven, but it is different. Europe's consumer legislation grew out of the guild system and is therefore more pro-active. It is, of course, legislation based, but the attitude is different. American companies that do business in Europe have had a tough time adapting to a different style of regulation - and more regulation - than in the US. Warranties have been a thorny issue. Now, what is allowed, and not allowed, has proven to be a problem. For example, other countries allow more freedom the area of sex and related topics, but political topics are more restricted. One cannot even use the word 'Nazi' in Germany. In the old days this was not a problem, but now that boarders are crossed without knowing what boarders were involved gets people into trouble.

This is why China's ides of what is acceptable have become so important. They are attempting to leverage the internet without people outside China knowing that it is going on. Encourage companies to install server farms in China then regulate what is allowed on the internet servers and bingo!

OK, back to harder news:

Free Battery Replacement

In battery related news, Apple will, for a limited amount of time, replace batteries in almost any iPhone free of charge. No questions asked. It has been suggested that one should make an appointment first though. This is through Apple stores and authorized Apple dealers. A company know as iFixit will sell you a kit made up of a (free) battery and (paid) tools to do the job. No end date has been announced, to the knowledge of your editor. I guess the program will end when iPhones older than iPhone 8/X go the way of all things.

Apple's roof froze over, or rather, melted.

The roof of the new Chicago Apple store froze then started dripping snow when the New Year's snowstorm started melting. It seems that gutters were replaced by drains in the roof's support columns.

Net Neutrality

Jurisdictions across the country are enacting ordinances and laws that are copies of the old federal net neutrality regulations that the Trump administration threw out. Frankly, I do not believe that the movement will amount to much until there is a nice juicy scandal. Ajit Pai, FCC chairman, skipped the Consumer Electronics Show this year.

9to5Mac reports that Apple will support apps that run on iPhone, iPad and Mac net year.

The apps involved (Safari, for example) are all pretty close now. This would include non-Apple apps like Chrome as well.

5G

There was a twelve hour headline that stated that the Trump administration would build a government funded 5G cell phone network to stop Chinese hacking. It was denied.

iPhone Charging Tips

MacRumors via iPhone JD

December 06, 2017
iPhone charging tips -- Juli Clover runs tests for MacRumors

Juli Clover of MacRumors did some incredibly useful testing and wrote a helpful article on MacRumors to compare and contrast the different ways to charge an iPhone X. I suspect that many of her conclusions carry over to other models of the iPhone as well, and her tests confirmed many of the things which I have seen more anecdotally. If you are interested in great tips for iPhone charging — and pretty much every iPhone owner falls into this camp — I strongly recommend that you check out her article, which also includes some great graphs. Normally I would save a link like this for my Friday In the news post, but I wanted to take some extra space to highlight some of the most important take-aways from this article, most of which I (not me, the editor for iPhone JD) can also confirm from my own experiences:

The charger that comes with the iPhone is slow. The iPhone has long shipped with that small, almost cube-shaped 5W charger. It charges the iPhone very slowly. For the iPhone X, it gets you up to an 11% charge in 15 minutes and 39% in 60 minutes.

USB-C charging is 2x to 3x faster. Back in early 2016, I reviewed the combination of Apple's 29W USB-C Power Adapter and USB-C to Lightning Cable, which together cost around $75. In that review, I pointed out that it is the fastest way to charge an iPad Pro. But the iPhone X can also take advantage of USB-C charging, and it can get you almost three times the charge of a 5W charger after 15 minutes and about two times the charge of a 5W charger after 60 minutes. If you need to get the maximum charge to your iPhone X in the shortest amount of time, this is the way to go. And while this Apple combination will cost you $75, Clover notes that you can pay about half as much by using reputable third-party devices. If you own an iPad Pro. I think it is well-worth the $75 investment to get the fastest charge on all of your iOS devices. Higher-wattage USB-C doesn't make a difference. Although I reviewed Apple's 29W USB-C Power Adapter, Apple also has a 87W USB-C Power Adapter that comes with the 12" MacBook, and third party USB-C adapters come in 18W. For the iPhone X, the test results are the same for all of those.

The 12W charger is a nice sweet spot. Apple's 12W charger, which is included in the box with an iPad, will charge your iPhone much faster than the 5W charger that comes with the iPhone. It's not quite as fast as USB-C, but it is much less expensive. It may even be free, if you own an iPad and thus already have one. Even if you buy another one, it only costs $19, and you can use the same USB-to-Lightning cord that came with your iPhone. So for either free or $19, you can charge almost as fast as USB-C without spending the $75 for the Apple USB-C products (or about half as much with third party products). If you don't think it is worth spending the money for USB-C, this is the perfect alternative.

Wireless charging is slow, but the 7.5W version is a little faster. The iPhone X and iPhone 8 support what Apple calls wireless charging, the ability to place the back of the iPhone down on a charging plate and let it charge without plugging in a cable. Some consider it a major convenience, even though it isn't the fastest way to charge. Most of these wireless chargers are 5W and charge at essentially the same speed as that slow 5W plug that is included in the box with an iPhone. Some Apple-approved devices are 7.5W, and when Apple releases its AirPower wireless charger in 2018 it will also support 7.5W. Those 7.5W chargers are a little faster than the 5W version — not a big difference, but enough that if you are going to buy a wireless charger, you might as well buy the 7.5W version to get more bang for your buck.

Refurbs

Apple has started selling its new hardware refurbished. They do this all the time, it is just that the latest models are now available. "Refurbished" can mean that the device went through the assembly line, failed final testing and was factory reconditioned. It can also men that it was in the hands of a consumer and Apple accepted in exchange. This still means that it went back through the assembly line a second time. They all have the same warranty as those that only made one trip down the line.

New Mac? Start here

By Chaim Gartenberg on December 25, 2017 9:00 am
Vjeran Pavic / The Verge

Bear

If you're looking for a note taking app with more functionality than Apple's included one, check out Bear. There are apps for iPhone and iPad to keep all your work in sync, and a powerful linking feature that lets

you chain notes together. (The only downside: there's no way to sync your notes to a PC or Android phone.)
Available on the Mac App Store

Rocket
Emoji are great. Using the annoying emoji picker to find the perfect one is not. Rocket makes it easy to find emoji anywhere on your Mac by adding a Slack-esque shortcut to let you summon the exact emoji you're looking for by bracketing the phrase with colons. Need a fish emoji? Just type ":fish:" and Rocket will pop up and do the rest.
Available for download from The Verge

Franz
Apple has helpfully included a desktop iMessage app, but what about all your other messaging services? Franz can help, with support for Facebook Messenger, Whatsapp, Telegram, Google Hangouts, and more all in a single, helpful desktop app.
Available for download on The Verge

Alfred
Stop using Apple's Spotlight search and install Alfred, its faster, more powerful cousin that makes searching the internet and your local files a snap. And if you're a real power user, like The Verge's executive editor Dieter Bohn, then the sky is pretty much the limit with what Alfred can do for you.
Available for download from The Verge

Muzzy
You know how when you unplug your headphones from your iPhone it automatically pauses the music? Muzzy is a very simple app that lives in your menubar and enables that same behavior on your Mac. It's saved me tons of embarrassment by not blasting my objectively terrible taste in music to my entire office.
Available on the Mac App Store

Pixelmator
Sure, Photoshop may get all the buzz, but Pixelmater costs a fraction of what Adobe's image editor costs, and for most people, it's probably got all the features you'll need for your day to day digital image processing.
Available on the Mac App Store

Daisy Disk
I never seem to have enough room on my hard drive, which is why every few months I run through everything with Daisy Disk, which shows you exactly what's taking up all that space and helps you clear it out, all with a fun and interesting UI.

New games for your new phone
By Chaim Gartenberg The Verge

HQ Trivia
The live trivia show that's taken the world by storm the last few months, HQ has a simple premise — answer 12 questions right, and win real money. HQ Trivia is hosted live twice a day by the unflappably cheerful Scott Rogowsky and with prizes that have reached up to $10,000, you'll want to check it out.
Available for iOS, Android version coming soon.

Hidden Folks
Like a modern day Where's Waldo, Hidden Folks has you searching for various characters and items hidden in sprawling hand-drawn environments. It's available for both iOS and Android and works on

phones just fine, but Hidden Folks is best on a tablet, where the incredibly detailed environments have the space to really shine.
Available for iOS and Android.

Euclidean Lands
A clever puzzle game that has you rotate and flip around boards like a Rubik's Cube to maneuver around and defeat your enemies in turn-based movement, Euclidean Lands is a challenging and creative way to kill some time.
Available for iOS.

Reigns: Her Majesty
The follow up to the original Reigns, Reigns: Her Majesty brings back the swipe-based gameplay of the first with even more characters, new abilities, and items to offer an even deeper gameplay experience than the first.
Available for iOS and Android.

Monument Valley 2
The sequel to one of the most popular mobile games ever, Monument Valley 2 is a masterpiece of atmosphere and design that offers the same brain-bending Escher-inspired worlds that the original made popular, with an even deeper story that focuses on the bond between a mother and her child.
Available for iOS and Android.

Iron Marines
Developer Ironhide Studios flips the tables from its popular Kingdom Rush tower defense series by putting the player in control of miniature squads of soliders that roam real-time strategy maps. It's kind of like a cute, shrunken-down version of Starcraft.
Available for iOS and Android.

Flip Flop Solitaire
Zach Gage is back with another attempt to reinvent solitaire, and his new Flip Flop variant might be the most fun version of the classic card game yet. Based on Spider Solitaire, players have more options for how to move cards around, resulting in a deeper, more strategic version of the original.
Available for iOS.

Alto's Adventure
I'm going to cheat a little bit here — unlike everything else on this list, Alto's Adventure is a couple of years old. But it's my list, so I'm going to include it anyway, because it's simply spectacular. An endless runner game, Alto's Adventure has you snowboarding down a serene mountain chasing after lost llamas, with the requisite trick system for grinding rails and backflips along the way. But Alto's Adventure is simply a beautiful game, with gorgeous scenery and sound design that will keep you coming back over and over again.
Available for iOS and Android.

Macintosh Hints

Do unit conversions in Spotlight
As well as being able to do calculations in Spotlight, in Yosemite it gets an extra trick: unit conversions. You can do specific unit conversions if you need to – "13 stone in lbs", say – but it's also intelligent enough that in many cases if you just give it the amount and unit you want to convert, it will suggest not just the likely conversion but also plenty of alternates.

Type in '$1299' and you'll immediately be told what that is in Sterling (based presumably on what's set as your native currency in the Language & Region pane of System Preferences), and then when the window folds down to show more results, you'll see Euros, Yen and so on.

Automatically hide and show the menu bar
The menu bar has been a fixture on the Mac since it launched in 1984, but since OS X El Capitan, you can hide the menu bar. Open System Preferences, go to General, then click "Automatically hide and show the menu bar."

When you tick this box off, the menu bar will reappear as you glide your mouse arrow towards the top of the screen, allowing you to get at all your menus.

Type exotic characters
As well as letters and symbols you see on your keyboard, you can type a bewildering array of special characters. You may already be familiar with typing accents such as for café (in that case you either type Option+E then E again or, on OS X 10.7 or later, hold down the E until you get extra options) but you'll find there are many more.

Go to the Edit menu of most apps and you'll see Special Characters at the bottom. This panel gives you access to a huge range of symbols you can drag into your documents. Not all apps or operating systems support them, but these are mostly part of the cross-platform Unicode standard. There are probably more than you see at first, too; click the cog to reveal more.

Emoji (those fun, colourful characters available in OS X 10.7 or later) are a notable exception to this cross-platform world. They're not Apple-only, but your recipient might not be able to see them.

Take screenshots of any size
For Windows users, taking screenshots can be a chore. You can either use the PrtSc key to capture the entirety of your display or use the Snipping Tool to snatch but a portion. Of course, some keyboards aren't compatible with the shortcut and opening a separate app to take a screenshot is a bit of a hassle. Luckily, on a Mac, the process is streamlined.

Simply put, to take a picture of your entire screen, press Shift, Command and 3 at the same time; the screenshot will then be stored on your desktop. For a portion of the screen, the shortcut is Shift-Command-4 with the same output directory. To only capture an individual window, you can press Shift-Command-4, hit the spacebar, then click the window you're trying to capture.
Lastly, if you have a fancy new MacBook Pro featuring the Touch Bar, press Shift-Command-6 to take a snapshot of that little OLED strip. No matter the case, taking a screenshot on a Mac requires nothing more than memorizing a few different keystroke combos.

Sign PDFs right in Mail
It might be the 21st century, but we're still using squiggles on a piece of paper to agree to all manner of things. If you are emailed a PDF to sign, though, you don't have to faff about printing it, signing it, then scanning it back in: you can actually sign it right in Mail.

Drag a PDF into the email you're sending, hover over it then at the top right you'll see a little button appear; click it, and you get a range of Markup options, including one for signing documents. Best of all, you can either add your signature by holding a signed piece of paper up to the webcam on your Mac – and it does a great job of cutting it out of the background – or by drawing on your trackpad.
Got an iPad stylus? Try using that instead of your finger!

Batch rename files
In versions of OS X before Yosemite, renaming a group of files at once either meant third-party software or rolling your own rename script using something like Automator or AppleScript. Now, though, you can

just select a group of files and then select Rename either from the right-click contextual menu or from the drop-down button marked with a cog icon in Finder windows.
When you do, you get the option of adding text, replacing text, or applying a format such as a name and an automatically incrementing counter.

Talk to and listen to your Mac!
Before macOS Sierra, the Mac's ability to listen to you as well as talk was already really impressive with its Dictation tool. But now, that's been blown out of the water by Siri's long-awaited arrival on Apple's desktops and laptops.

By either pressing and holding the Command and Space or clicking the icon on your Dock or Menu Bar, you can summon the same Siri you've grown accustomed to on your iPhone. However, this version of Siri is, in ways, much more powerful.

Beyond the standard query that might give you the weather or who's up in the in playoff game, Siri on macOS Sierra can toggle system functions like Wi-Fi or Bluetooth or even pull up individuals files stored on your system based on what you tell Siri about the file.
Siri can even launch or close apps for you as well as store the results of your queries inside the Notifications area of the OS for later use. Just press Command+Space and get to asking.

Make a keyboard shortcut for anything
Keyboard shortcuts are great for saving time, but you're not limited to just the shortcuts put in by developers; if there's a particular menu option you use all the time that doesn't have a shortcut, you can create it yourself.
Go to System Preferences > Keyboard > Application Shortcuts. Click the + button to add a new shortcut. You can choose which app you want to apply it to from the drop-down list, but you must know the exact name of the menu command to type into the next box, including the correct case and any special characters such as ellipses. Lastly, choose a unique key combination to invoke the command, then click Add.

Send and receive SMSs on your Mac (and more!)
When someone sends an SMS – a text message in the original mobile phone sense – to your iPhone, it appears in a green bubble rather than a blue one, as would be the case if someone sends you an iMessage. Before Yosemite, SMSs would only appear on your iPhone where you'd have to peck out a reply, but now you can have them come into your Mac or other iOS devices when they arrive so you can reply to them from there too.

Your iPhone needs to be running iOS 8.1, but once it is, and once you're signed into your iMessage account that also has your phone number linked to it both on your iPhone and on your Mac or other iOS devices, turn on the Text Message Forwarding option under Settings > Messages on your iPhone. Boom!

Sign your documents
In OS X 10.7, Preview gained the ability to add your signature to documents. To get started, go to the Signatures tab in Preview's preferences and then click the +. Now, sign your name in black ink on a small piece of white paper and hold it up to your Mac's webcam. Line it up and click Accept (making sure the 'Save this signature' option is checked if you want to use it in the future).

Now open a document you want to sign, pop up the Edit Toolbar and click the signature icon – it looks like an S on a line next to a tiny X. Draw a box to add your signature on the form. You can scale and reposition it afterwards too.

Use Split Screen
Working with two windows or apps side-by-side became much easier since OS X 10.11 El Capitan, thanks to Split Screen view. By holding down a left-click on an app's green maximize button in the top-left hand side, you can then drag it to be positioned on the left or right-hand side of the display.
You'll then need to pick a second open window or app to snap to the opposite side. Split Screen obscures the launcher and OS X's Menu Bar, so you get a bit more screen real-estate and fewer distractions.
Dividing the separating line between the two apps lets you make them smaller or larger, which can come in handy for keeping an eye on live information such as sports scores at one end while being productive on the other.