

This Month at LAMUG

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The Lewiston Auburn Macintosh Users Group, aka LAMUG, will be holding a special holiday meeting December 5 at Fairview School, 397 Minot Ave., in Auburn, Maine. The non-profit computer group is going to maintain its annual holiday tradition of spending the 'kitty' generated throughout the year from membership dues. The money will buy software in which members have shown an interest. Freebies accumulated from various vendors, including t-shirts, posters, and more software, will also be distributed to members in attendance. You'll feel like a kid again. Which brings us to a very important feature of our monthly meetings: our presentations!

Just like when you were a kid in school, Kimberly Elko, Regional Sales Manager of Wacom will give a creative demonstration of the Wacom graphic tablet. If you work with PhotoShop and other graphic applications, you won't want to miss this demonstration.

Everyone from designers and illustrators to doctors and professors will find this a powerful tool and a new way to work directly on the screen. That's not to say this product is just for professionals. The small 4 x 5 tablet makes a great

gift for the grandchildren according to one of LAMUG's members.

This is what Kimberly had to say, "Wacom is introducing the new Intuos2 and Graphire2 pressure sensitive graphic tablets. The graphic tablet gives you the power to edit images - digital photos - with speed and control. Users can write, draw and markup documents with ease. The Intuos2 has 1024 levels of pressure. Each Intuos2 has the new ergonomic grip pen and a newly designed mouse. The redesigned Graphire2 has 512 levels of pressure. Visit Wacom's webpage at <http://www.wacom.com> for tips and tricks in using this with your favorite software.

The graphic tablet offers freedom, unlike drawing with a mouse, which is like drawing with a brick. The pen gives the user control to draw, write and create."

This meeting is sure to have a large turnout, as every December meeting has in the past, so be sure to arrive with the early birds at 6 PM. Presentation begins at 7 PM. As always, LAMUG meetings are free to attend and open to the public. In the spirit of the holidays, we ask that you bring a canned good to the December meeting which will be brought to the local food pantry.

Be sure to visit <http://www.lamug.com> for updates on this event.



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One year's membership in LAMUG is \$20 per person. Other family members... a spouse, son or daughter... may attend the meetings, as long as facilities can accommodate us, but only one person gets the newsletter. Checks should be made out to LAMUG and sent to:

David Bergeron
 Membership Director
 139 Northern Ave. #4
 Auburn, ME 04210

To submit articles please e-mail them as text files to davnic@adelphia.net by the third Thursday of the month.

November

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
3	4	6:30 pm 5 LAMUG Meeting Fairview School	6	7
10	6:30 pm 11 Officer's Meeting Designs by Skip	12	13	14
17	18	19	20	21
24	25	26	27	28



Events

Wednesday, December 5 LAMUG's Monthly Meeting

Location: Fairview School, Auburn
Time: 6:30pm - 8:30pm approx.

- Questions & Answers
- Guest Speaker from Wacom
- Food, Fun and Prizes

Tuesday, December 11 Officer's Meeting

Location: Designs by Skip, 41 Chestnut Street, Lewiston
Time: 6:30pm - 7:30pm approx.

-All LAMUG members welcome to attend. We'd like your input!

Volunteers Wanted

- Digital Art Contest committee
- Tutor senior citizens through the Auburn Adult and Community Ed Dept.
- School Liaison Directors - inform group of school events which LAMUG could participate in
- Community Projects Directors - inform group of charities and seek volunteers to create committees to work on projects
- Auction Project - volunteer for this committee today
- Writers for CiderPress

If you are interested in volunteering for any of the above, please contact Denise Scammon at 783-5203 or sammeyeam@exploremaine.com

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Computer Confidence for Women (And Others) Part II

“What’s in a Game?”

by Denise Scammon,
LAMUG Public Relations Director

Forget the Barbie computer games, where the only conflict is that Ken won’t go to the dance with Barbie. While the female gender likes playing games like Tetris, the Sims, Jeopardy!, Weekend Warrior, and Golden Eye, they also join the boys playing computer games such as Half-Life, CounterStrike, Quake, StarCraft, Unreal Tournament, Duke Nukem 3D, Descent, Red Alert, Age of Empires, Baldur’s Gate, Mechwarrior, Burnout, Diablo, and Warcraft.

Gaming is not a fad, it is part of our culture. It has been around for years, and is a lucrative business, according to Interactive Digital Software Association surveys. For many gamers, the best games are played on computers.

Entrepreneurs and businesses are starting to recognize this, evident by the proliferation of gaming parlors and websites springing up around the country and on the internet.

Although the gaming industry is generally male-dominated, the number of women involved in gaming is steadily increasing. Statistics tell only a small part of the story about ‘the closing of the gap’. Studies show that girls get bored with the repetitious nature of violent games, as well as the lack of game characters with which they can identify. Typically, girls play games for entertainment while boys play for the competition. Part of the theory behind the design

of games is that girls will buy games designed for boys but it doesn’t work the other way around - boys won’t buy games designed for girls.

Women gamers want to see female characters they can relate to, identify with, and feel proud to play. “I think it is pretty cool that some people like what I do as an independent (non-WWF) wrestler and martial artist so much, that they have actually customized their fantasy and wrestling characters to include one modeled after me called ‘Amanda Storm’,” said gamer Amanda.

Amanda confessed, “I started gaming as a teenager in the 70’s when Dungeons and Dragons was the rage. It was played ‘in person’ and on paper. I play the occasional computer game from time to time, but I prefer the personal touch of gaming face to face with my friends.”

The presence of credible female characters in games is very important. Activities that encourage young girls to use the computer can be positive, leading to computer proficiency and an interest in technical careers. But, separate games for girls are not necessary. It would be sufficient to expand the existing game market through the creation of equal male and female gender characters.

An invitation is sometimes required to join a gaming club, as well as a small donation to cover the costs of equipment usage and food. Paul and Carol Carney have converted part of their home into a gaming area in which the most popular type of games played are First Person

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“Forget the Barbie computer games, where the only conflict is that Ken won’t go to the dance with Barbie...”



Click here to visit
<http://www.user-groups.net>



Computer Confidence for Women (And Others) Part II

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Shooters, with a few Real Time Strategy games in the mix. "We have space for about 24 gamers who reserve their "space" in advance," explained Carney. "Our gaming group is by invite only, so it's a pretty comfortable group. New "members" are brought in through a referral, so you have to know someone who is already a member to join."



Many players use headphones, as Jason Cloutier and Mason Langelier demonstrate. The noise level can get crazy at exciting points in a game.

When gaming takes place in the home, referrals are a good screening technique to keep out the 'undesirables'. Carney said, "You learn a lot about a person when you sit in a 14 hour gaming session with him or her! If it doesn't seem like you are going to be compatible with the group, we don't invite you back."

A similar gaming scenario takes place once a month, when between six and seven people arrive at The MacSmith Store in Cornish, Maine, carrying computers..... and food. "After regular business hours I rearrange the store in preparation for an evening of fun and games," said store owner Stan Smith. "We do this just for fun and do not have a cover charge. We pretty much have an open door policy. Everyone brings their own food, money for a pizza run, and we supply coffee."

Making elbow room for his guests' computer processor units, aka CPU's, Smith explained, "People bring their own computers and laptops because they are con-

figured to their personal preferences, and have all the RAM (memory) they need for game playing." A CPU could be just the 'tower' part of the computer, or if the computer is a compact desktop unit, a CPU could include the monitor. Smith supplies each guest with a keyboard, a mouse, and a monitor if needed. "Gamers usually have computers with top-of-the-line 3D cards."

The two most popular methods of connecting computers so that they communicate with each other include connecting through a local area network (LAN) and connecting through the internet. Unfortunately, Cornish, Maine does not presently have high speed internet access, which is why Smith uses LAN. He commented, "Dial-up modem connections are too slow."

"We generally play action type games. They're quick, usually 15 minutes to play one game." Smith added, "The learning curve on the role playing games is steep. The game might be great, and have an interesting story line, but the details take away from the spirit of gaming - quick thinking followed by quick actions."

"They're not just teens who play these games. Depending on if the gamers have to work the next day, we might play until 2 or 3 in the morning, sometimes later." It seems that losing track of time has nothing to do with age, and everything to do with having fun. Smith noted, "We have gamers of all ages."

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"If it doesn't seem like you are going to be compatible with the group, we don't invite you back."

**Got a Computer?
Got Questions?
Get Answers...**

LAMUG

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Lewiston / Auburn Macintosh Users Group

Computer Confidence for Women (And Others) Part II

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While home, school, and small business networks typically run on LAN connections, a wider audience can be reached through the use of Wide Area Network, aka WAN. "The distinction between a LAN and a WAN involves the physical distance that the network spans. Our master server acts as a WAN game server for special occasions or events on the internet," said Jason Cloutier, co-owner of Drive-X Gamers in Auburn.

"You'll find that gaming is like any other past time - either it suits you or it doesn't. Some people find gaming to be almost addicting and they work it into their schedule before anything else, every week. Typically, that could be three hours a day a couple days a week, or a marathon day, where they spend about eight hours playing competitive games non-stop," said Cloutier's partner, Mason Langelier. "Drive-X has package deals that start with three hours of play. That gives a gamer enough time to have fun." For an addicted player, three hours is just the beginning."

Cloutier added, "We have many high school- and college- age gamers. Our regulars are in their early thirties and are the ones who choose to spend a marathon weekday here. High schoolers usually fit a marathon day into their weekend."

"Five years ago most games did not have 3D graphics and so computers were built without 3D cards. Game graphics were then generated through the computer's processor. A 3D card takes a load off the processor and can even make your computer seem to work faster when you're playing games," added Cloutier.

Drive-X offers gamers a place to play and show off their skills. "We have league nights, similar to bowling leagues. During our league nights, the clans assemble for a practice period before the actual

match. Scores are tallied, clans are ranked, and the best go on to the championship and are rewarded with prizes." Cloutier continued, "Gamers use the term 'clan' to describe their teams. Clans usually have four players and if a clan should find they are short a player, there always seems to be someone to fill the spot. Being assigned to a clan is a great way to meet people with the same interests."

Carney offered his own explanation about the term "Clan". "It's usage is a mystery to us. I believe it refers to the "warring tribes of old" when a small pack of individuals would unite to form a group, which would fight and oppose the resistance, usually much larger than those in Braveheart." He concluded, "Gaming at LAN Parties is about having fun, and interacting with others. It's about socializing, cooking on the grill, laughing, and having a good time. We are not all "masters" at the games we're playing. It's like the 50's and 60's when men went out and had their "poker night" . . . only now it's high-tech . . . and co-ed."

Resources:

Drive-X GAMERS
<http://www.drivexgamers.com>
Jason Cloutier &
Mason Langelier, Owners
782B Minot Avenue
Auburn, ME 04210
Tel: 207-786-3409
info@drivexcomps.com

TheMacSmith
Box 645
Cornish Place RT. 25
Cornish, ME 04020
1.888.769.8476
ssmith@themasmith.com

<http://www.pogo.com>, board, card, casino games, and chat capability

<http://www.gameranger.com>

**"You'll find
that gaming
is like any
other past time -
either it suits
you or
it doesn't."**

A Christmas Story

...from the pages of The SMUG News,
Harrisonburg, Virginia

Christmas will run much smoother this year...

The plane fare was over \$700 alone, and after a seven-hour plane ride, I was still asking myself if this trip was really necessary. The user group can hardly afford this kind of story, but when the president asks me to go, what can I say? A story like this doesn't come along often, and SMUG had to go for it. Mike couldn't go, Preston couldn't go, so the editor of the SMUG NEWS had to go. Just my luck! I don't need this kind of headache, what with the weather and our busiest season at the shop. And, besides... it's Christmas Eve. Oh, well, a couple of hours and I'll be back.

They said the driver would pick me up at the airport (if you can call it an airport), and he did. The ride didn't help my spirits much, either, and for a while I was wondering if I would even make it to the computer center. The closer we got, the harder it snowed and the colder it got. The message on MAUG did say computer center, but this place was as antique as the car we arrived in. Oh, well, I've seen Macintoshes in stranger places.

I sat in the reception area (living room?) almost an hour. Is this any way to treat a reporter? My spirits had improved considerably with hot coffee, the crackling fire, and all these things to look at. The place looked more like a small town gift shop than a computer center. Everything you can imagine was piled up on every available square inch of surface space. I wondered if anything was for sale. My kids would like one of those.

In the corner were two old IBM terminals. By the way they were stacked and covered with dust, I could tell they hadn't been used for some time. The manuals

were there, too, a whole stack of them along with what looked like various software boxes. I could just make out WordStar and Lotus 123, well-used, and thoroughly antique. This interview might just be okay after all.

My daydreaming was brought to an abrupt halt by the irate voice of someone behind the closed door, obviously in a fit of rage.

"You can't do this to me... it's Christmas Eve and I just lost the entire Eastern hemisphere!" said the voice. "No, I can't pull it down... [Pause] Yes, a system error, you nit! Let me talk to someone who knows what they're doing!" [Another painful pause] "What? Don't give me that, Lotus closed hours ago and won't be open until next week!"

Suddenly the door crashed open and a totally unglued young fellow (young? he had a beard!) stormed over to the pile of IBM stuff and began frantically shuffling through it. He was followed by another equally unglued fellow who began wiping off the terminals and searching for the ends of cables and such. I figured this was my chance. I had waited long enough and it was obviously not a good time for an interview.

His office was more crowded and piled up than the (reception?) room and although his back was turned I knew immediately why I was here. He was still on the phone, but must have heard me come in...

"Can we get these things up?" he snorted, then, "Oh, who are you? These blasted people have put me on hold again."

I said I was a reporter from the User Group and began to explain myself but was abruptly cut off.

"Yes I'm holding!" He was so red in the face I wondered if I could remember my CPR course. He wasn't young either.

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"My daydreaming was brought to an abrupt halt by the irate voice of someone behind the closed door, obviously in a fit of rage."

A Christmas Story

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"No I don't have a copy of Norton Symantec WHO???" What coast are they on? Do you have a number" [a slight pause] "That's two thousand miles from here. Young man, do you know who you are speaking to?" [another pause] "Yes, but they're not that fast! NO, I won't hold."

And, SLAM! Down went the phone. He looked as if he were hovering somewhere between homicide and a nervous breakdown. He turned to me. "Young man, if you're not here to fix these blasted machines, we're in for trouble like you've never seen before."

There were two Macs. Very old Macs to be sure. One screen was still alive, showing what looked like an empty spreadsheet -- no database. The other was black with the exception of a sad, frowning Mac icon. No movement. No insertion points.

"I have a copy of Norton with me," I said, my trusty PowerBook always standing by. I couldn't remember, but I thought FileMaker was still on there as well. "Maybe I can help."

He brightened somewhat. "It better be good, son, because it will take us several hours to get that IBM running again... if it will even run. I don't have several hours." Turning, he shouted toward the door, "Sarah! Can you bring us some coffee?" - - more of a wish than a command. Then "Here, son, have a seat. Now what did you say your name was?"

After a short explanation, pushing aside the remnants of what was once a manual for a program called JAZZ, we initialized some disks and made a hasty emergency disk with Disk Doctor on it. His color and composure were beginning to return.

He was a huge man, with a snowy white beard. We could both just barely fit

between his cluttered desk and the computer table. As the drives whirred (yes, there were two of them) the Mrs. (Sarah?) entered with a large plate of chocolate chip cookies and two festive mugs of steaming coffee on a tray. The aroma of those, mixed with the remotest scent of pine and a smoldering pipe on the desk made the room seem very much like a Christmas card.

The first time around we got no boot. No reads. I tried again. The disks whirred. Let's try a sector hack. Didn't work. Try again. Switch drives. I was beginning to get concerned... could I bring this off?

We finally got a desktop and finder. Empty. No files anywhere to be found. System folder empty. This didn't look good. With the Doctor we took a peek at the drive's innards. Although this was an antique computer running antique software, he had a confidence that reassured me that everything was going to be okay. We guessed it would be the largest file on the drive, if we could just figure out which sectors to revive. Sizes were all we had to go on, dates had been wiped and all the file names were mere strings of numbers. After more searching we finally decided on a file and resurrected it. There it appeared on the desktop, named "Recovered File 1098743."

We carefully copied it to a floppy and inserted it into the PowerBook. The file had a blank, generic icon. Not good. Nothing on the computer would access it. Not even BBEdit. I quickly did a find and came up with CanOpener. Let's try this.

Sure enough, CanOpener pulled up the file and displayed a strange screen of code and ascii text. Not good. We saved it out as a text file, quit, and reopened it with BBEdit. Aimless meaningless ascii and code. I was perspiring heavily by now. Only one thing to do...

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**"And, SLAM!
Down went the
phone. He looked
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A Christmas Story

Continued from Page 7

I booted up FileMaker and imported the file. It took a very long time. We waited. The ball spun. I sipped my mug, but not out of thirst. Suddenly the screen came to life, and there at the top were the words "Eastern Hemisphere."

"Young man, do you realize what you just did?" Now he was downright cheerful. There before our eyes were literally thousands, no, hundreds of thousands of names (how could this drive even hold that much data?). The scrolling list went on and on into infinity. Could it be true? On one disk?

No one noticed my puzzlement. He and the little guys had sprung to life and were dancing around as if it were already Christmas. More of the little guys came in as a whirl of activity circled around the room at a frantic pace.

"Son, you've done it! You've saved everything!"

How could I bring myself to break the news to him?

"There's been some mistake," I tried to be gentle. "This could not possibly have happened -- there's no way, on this single disk!" I clicked quit.

He was undaunted. A wide grin came over his face (did I say something funny?). He reached down and did a quick shut-down and scooped up the disk as it was

ejected. As he buckled his wide black belt and straightened his fur-trimmed coat, the room became calm. All eyes seemed to focus on him.

Then as quick as a wink, he was up and across to the outer door. "But wait!" I hurried after him.

"My son," he hesitated, "when you've been in the Christmas business as long as I have, you come to know that there is magic in this world. Miracles do happen, and that Mac just proved it."

Now, with the door open, cold, fluffy snow blowing into the room, his pace had quickened, "...After all," he called over his shoulder, "isn't that what Christmas is all about!"

He was gone. A shapeless form moving quickly through the swirling wind and snow, only to be replaced by another form -- my driver.

"Sir, they're holding the plane. Weather's moving in, we can't wait any longer."

As we climbed into the car, I could barely make out a distinct whooshing sound and a distant, "Merry Christmas and to all a good night!"

Fred Showker - This is reprinted from the Volume 2, #12 issue of the SMUG is The Shenandoah Macintosh User Group (Smug) News, December 1986. Some of the terms, and procedure have been updated. (UGNN News Service.)

Don't Forget!!

Next meeting
is Wednesday,
December 5th at
Fairview School.

Early birds at 6 pm
general meeting
starts at 6:30 pm.



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