NEWSLETTER OF THE LONG ISLAND MACINTOSH USER GROUP

A not-for-profit, volunteer, member-supported organization

The LIMac FORUM

May 2010

www.limac.org

April Meeting *Scott Randell*

Anyone who is active in photography would have really appreciated April's presentation. One of our long time members Leonard Provenzano, stepped up to make the presentation in the absence of our resident graphics guru, Brian Revere who is recovering from surgery. The topic of the presentation was HDR sometimes called HDRI. High dynamic range imaging (HDRI or just HDR) is a set of techniques that allow a greater dynamic range of luminance's between the lightest and darkest areas of an image than standard digital imaging techniques or photographic methods. It involves the merging of several photographs using specific computer techniques.

HDR image (created from the 3 left photos) + Tone Mapping

Leonard first explained that the software needed to do this is available as part of *Photoshop CS2* or newer. He used a simple but effective example to demonstrate the various steps needed to utilize this technique. Leonard started by showing us several shots he had taken of his car in his garage without the lights (garage lights) on. He explained that a minimum of 3 photos is necessary and 5 or more would produce better results. The greater the range of exposure between photos the better. This

May Meeting *Rick Matteson*

How do you organize, prioritize and check off the routine things you need to do? Are you a paper-scrap person? Or a formal list-maker? Job jar devotee? Maybe you use your Mac or portable device to list and remind you of your tasks. Maybe you've just given up because it's all so boring and you wait until some person reminds you that you have "stuff to do." At our May 14th meeting, Michael Simmons, Marketing Director for Cultured Code, will change your perception about task management. *Things* combines powerful features with simplicity through the use of tags and an intelligent filter bar. Featuring a beautiful user interface, *Things* aims at the seemingly impossible: making task management both easy and fun.

There are three versions of *Things*: *Things Mac*, for your desktop computer; *Things iPhone + iTouch*, for your favorite portable device; and *Things for iPad*, for the newest of Apple's must-have gadgets, so wherever you keep track of your daily and long-term tasks, Cultured Code has a Things solution for you.

As usual, we will begin the evening with our Q&A sessions; one for anyone who has a tough Mac problem and one specifically for the novice users not ready for the "big time" answers by Bradley. Following those sessions will be our main presentation, announcements and raffle. Finally our SIGs will meet until the end of the evening at 10 pm.

Bradley's Tech Session

Bradley Dichter
Technical Advisor
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▶ **I'd like to know if there is any way to speed up searching network volumes. Any different software you can recommend?**

■ The free *EasyFind* can do searches on network volumes even non-Mac OS Extended ones, see http://www.devon-technologies.com/products/freeware/index.html It does not rely on indexing. As you probably know, Spotlight from Mac OS 10.4 could only find local files, but *Leopard* and *Snow Leopard* can find files on network Mac volumes. As a matter of fact *Leopard Server* introduced *Spotlight Server*, which indexes server share points. Perhaps your network volumes are not being served up by *Leopard* nor *Snow Leopard Server* and just relying on personal file sharing. Found a nice little video demonstrating a Spotlight search on a *Leopard Server* from a *Leopard* client. It's at http://www.wonderhowto.com/how-to-spotlight-server-mac-os-x-leopard-254193/ Perhaps the Spotlight interface is your issue. Try *HoudahSpot*. It doesn't waste time searching as you type, can exclude folders for each search, and can give more useful results. It's only $30 and there is a downloadable demo. You may also like to use *Path Finder* from Cocoatech. It's sort of like a replacement for the Apple *Finder*, but with more control including results from searches, like adding a column for the full path to each found item. It's $40 and there is a thirty day demo available. You should also look into your network bandwidth. Macs since mid 2000 have supported gigabit Ethernet connections, but many people have slower networks. If you have a simple network of a few Macs all connected to a router (wired or wireless), most of these also have a multi-port switch to offer 3, 4 or 8 Ethernet ports. They may be only 100 Mbps Fast Ethernet and not gigabit Ethernet. If your network is somewhat larger and your Macs connect to a separate switch which then connects to a router, then it's very simple to upgrade to gigabit speeds if your wiring is Cat. 5E or Cat. 6. There have been substandard cables out there made in China. Your *System Profiler* can reveal if your network connection is what you think it is. Click on Network on the left and then select your interface on the top-right and look near the bottom for Ethernet: Media Subtype: you want 1000baseT there. Businesses with busy servers, especially video users, need massive bandwith, so if your server is a Mac Pro or a xServe, I suggest moving up to port aggregation, where you combine multiple gigabit ports or 10GbE ports and connect things through a high performance managed hub. I've set up a xServe with a 4 port PCIe card from Small-Tree and one of their recommended 48 port switches and got a big boost in transfer rates. Also as a search involves a lot of random read operations, it would be very beneficial to have the files on a SSD array as the access time is a tiny fraction of the usual for spinning disk storage.

President's Message

Bill Medlow
President
archbill@optonline.net

Have computers made life more complicated?

I remember in the late eighties working with a HP portable the size of a suitcase and I was drawing circles using a keyboard.

I'm sure we all have stories like this, all intrigued with machines that would change the world. Times have changed as we think of an iPod as having more computing power than was used to get a man to the moon. We have cell phones that do way more than make telephone calls. Today, society is captivated by instant communications. The internet was not fast enough, not direct enough now we have facebook, twitter and any kind alert you may need.

A long time ago software came on a floppy disk (400K) now, much software is part of a suite on multiple DVDs and if you purchased early versions you stand a chance of keeping up with the updates in understanding it and just the update cost. Those that are just starting out need very deep pockets and lots of time. Often I think of simpler times and am grateful for all the friends I've made at LIMac.

In May we will see software that runs on the Mac, the iPod, the iPhone and now the iPad. This will be something to see and in June, we will have Dave Marra. Hopefully to make sense of everything and the future.

Bill

DAN DANGLO

"Don't take it so hard. Some people never tweet back."
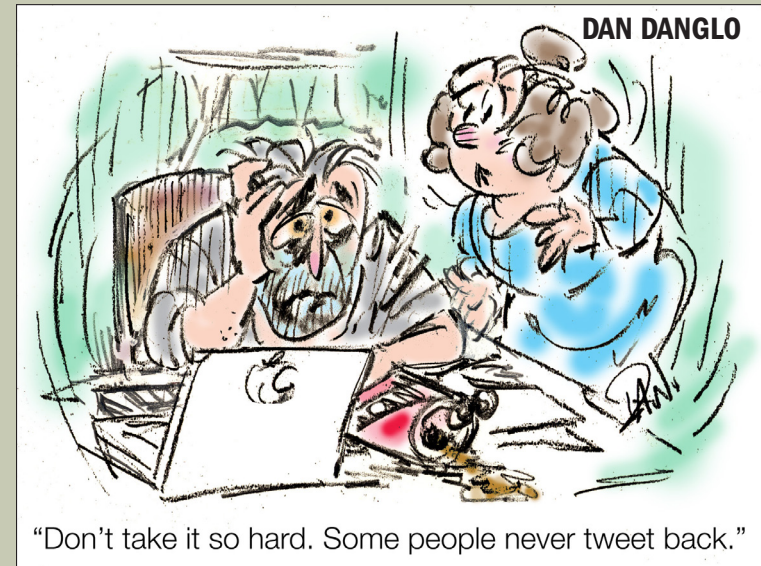
▶ **I do a newsletter for a club and have to work with PC users. One file for example they sent which was supposed to be a JPEG file, opened *Opera* when I double-clicked it, which couldn't show the image either.**

■ Mac OS 10.5 and older relied on invisible type and creator codes set by creating Macintosh applications. Mac OS 10.6 and Windows relies on filename extensions to map files with applications. Since the file you were sent came from Windows, it won't have any creator code information, so the filename extension, such as .jpg is very important. It's possible that the filename will need to be edited so that the default Mac application can open it. Now the default can get messed up, so if you do have a .jpg file and it opens with an unexpected application, it's easy to fix. Just Get Info... on the file (in the Finder) and change the Open with: to *Preview* or *Photoshop* or whatever you prefer. Then click the Change All... button and confirm with the Continue button on the next dialog box. It's possible the image file was encoded and the attachment is no longer an image file and will have to be extracted or decoded first. The three letter filename extension at the end should give you a clue. If the email came from an office running Microsoft's *Exchange* mail server and clients running Microsoft *Outlook*, then it's possible you got a winmail.dat file. The free solution is to process the file with *TNEF's Enough 2.2*. If your mail client is Apple's *Mail*, there is also the plug-in *Letter Opener 3.0.3* which makes these things much easier.

▶ **My wife has a similar problem when she goes to open some *Word* files, what**

opens is *Big Bang 4*. **These files were sent as attachments to e-mail.**

■ Only Big Bang 4 I know is Freeverse's *Big Bang 4-In-A-Row*, part of their *Board Games* bundle. They also have *Big Bang Brain Games*. Just save the attachment to the Desktop. You probably have the same association problem, just get info and fix the open with: assignment. It's possible that the Launch Services database is messed up. You can use the free *OnyX* to reset it. It's found under Maintenance - Rebuild tab. If an installer crashes or it force-quit during an installation, the database could get corrupted. By the way, the Recent Items item in the Apple menu is managed by Launch Services, so if ever something weird there, rebuild the Launch Services database.

▶ **I have not upgraded to an Intel based Mac. I have a first generation (2004) 17″ iMac G5 1.8 GHz now. Is it significantly faster? Is it more efficient?**

■ Check out the results people have reported at http://db.xbench.com/ using Xbench. You should see real world speed improvements. It's results show about a 5x performance jump overall when I went from my 2003 2x 2GHz Power Mac G5 to a 2009 Mac Pro. The purely CPU benchmarks say it computes 10x faster. Your iMac has just one processor core and the base model iMac uses a dual core processor running at 3.4 times faster, considering the clock speed times two. The memory is clocked 2.6x faster but is triple clocked, so memory bandwidth is far better, so processing of data, say some operations in *Photoshop* will be much better. The 64 bit

User Group Offers

George Canellis
*User Group Ambassador &
Vice President*

Mac|Life is THE mac magazine that changes all the rules. Mac|Life recognizes Apple's dynamic role in work, play and life and will appeal to core Apple users. With fresh insight, in-depth how-tos, stunning design and exclusive information, Mac|Life helps users realize their full potential. Mac|Life is the ultimate magazine about all things Apple. Mac|Life is offering a one-time Apple User Group member charter subscription rate of $14.95 for 12 issues, a savings of 40% off the basic subscription price. Subscribe today:

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computer can use 8GB of this fast RAM, while the G5 was limited to 2 GB. The iMac G5 had just 64 MB of video RAM on the NVIDIA Geforce 5200 Ultra, while the 21.5" iMac can be had with the ATI Radeon HD 4670 with 256 MB of video RAM. That was 10.4GB/sec peak memory bandwidth compared to 32 GB/sec now. 750 MHz vs. 325 MHz just on the video chip. With *Snow Leopard*, the Radeon card can handle some tasks otherwise handled by the dual core CPU, making things far more efficient. The hard drive at 500 GB or more, versus your, tiny by today's standards, 80 GB. The modern iMac have a built-in iSight, something your model lacks. The modern iMac comes standard with 802.11n Airport, which is twice as fast as the optional 802.11g of your old iMac. Also bluetooth 2.1 is standard, while the old bluetooth was optional. The screen is now LED backlit, compared to the old CCFL tubes used in the old display. Of course your display may be failing with vertical lines by now. It's 1440 x 900 resolution is not going to be as nice as the full HD of 1920 x 1080 of the new iMac. Your efficiency will be better with more screen real estate. The SuperDrive now does dual layer DVDs. The high performance SD/SDHC card slot that is built-in is faster than any USB 2.0 or FireWire external you could buy. The new wireless Mighty Mouse comes standard is the model of efficiency how you can scroll and move forward or back with just a fingertip gesture. You can say the compact wireless keyboard is space efficient. It does save a USB 2.0 port, as did the mouse. Even the built-in stereo speakers are better now. Memory use: Well I'd say it's less efficient,

but memory is much cheaper than it was 5 years ago and the machine supports 4 times as much. The machine comes with 4 GB standard. Your old iMac came with .25 GB of RAM. As for power efficiency, it's hard to make an exact comparison, as the new 21.5″ iMac, the closest physical model, uses 33% more power at maximum. The real deal is the modern software, not just *Snow Leopard,* but many programs now REQUIRE an Intel processor, so if you desire these new applications, you have to get a new Mac and retire the old PowerPC world. Not yet convinced? Apple no longer makes replacement parts for your iMac so you could not get it serviced at the Apple Store. Your internal hard drive was only expected to work 3 years, so it's on borrowed time big time already. If you have never blown out the dust, the CPU and RAM are overheating and your fans are working harder, burning off any remaining lubrication on their bearings. Perhaps you have not noticed the computer runs a bit louder, as it's a slow process. You want to talk about a slow process? My notes show you have *Virtual PC* 3 on the iMac G5. You can't believe how much faster *Parallels Desktop* is on a new iMac, and you have the option of going to *Windows 7*. Apple will even give you $100 back on a new printer, which could be a all-in-one with a scanner. Bonus: you don't have to replace the old HP Deskjet D4360. It was a pretty fast printer and there is a *Snow Leopard* driver. Another bonus, any USB flash drive you were using before will now work much faster due to the much improved USB 2.0 drivers. The old iMac cost $1499 back in 2004-2005. That's about $300 a year for the 5 year life. All told, you get a far better

Mac for the same money, talking about the step up 21.5″ model with 1 TB HD and the Radeon video chip. That is what I call **efficient**. Yes you can call that progress. Don't you deserve a new Mac?

▶ **I scan a black and white drawing in color because I'm going to add more stuff in *Photoshop* but it comes in with a yellow band at the bottom, about a half inch wide. I don't know what causes it or how to get rid of it. If I scan in grey scale it's OK. It's not the paper and I cleaned the outside of the glass.**

■ Then scan in greyscale and then switch to RGB color mode later in *Photoshop*. It's probably caused by the ageing and discoloration of the CCFL florescent bulb in your scanner. Just like the ones above our heads, it will become yellow with age, particularly at the end. You may not notice the yellow on a color scan. Many of the Epson scanners now have their ReadyScan LED light source so they never need warm-up time and of course have no mercury based florescent bulb. The CanoScan 8800F and 5600F also use LED light source for reflective originals but use CCFL for film scanning. The LiDE

700F uses RGB LEDs for their light source.

▶ **Is there a web site where you can get Mac Pro parts? I want to build my own.**
■ You can get a good assortment from mac-resource.com but your best bet for assorted parts is eBay. Apple won't sell parts. The Mac Pro is not like a PC, it has a Apple unique motherboard, CPU/memory daughter-card, power supply and case. You cannot mount a Mac Pro motherboard into a generic ATX case. The only parts that could be considered generic are the hard drives, optical drives and the memory. The PCIe video card has to work with Macs, most on the market do not. Watch out for PC cards flashed to supposedly work with Macs, they often don't. Operator Headgap's Mac Resale Store has a good selection of parts for older Mac models.

▶ **Can .AVI files be converted so they can be used in iMovie?**
■ Yes. *QuickTime Player 7* from Snow Leopard can open them and Export as a .dv stream file. This can be imported into *iMovie*. If you have a copy of *VisualHub,* that's good too. ▸
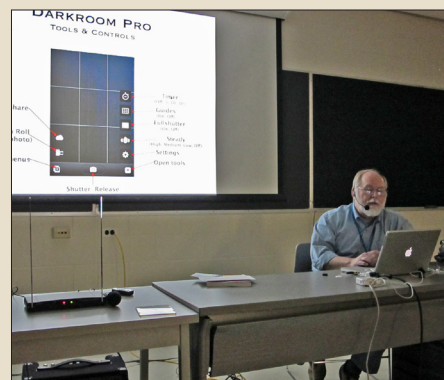
technique is called bracketing. To be more precise the term bracketing refers to: the photographer taking *"one picture at a given exposure, one or two brighter, and one or two darker, in order to select the most satisfactory image." Leonard went through the procedure which is as follows:

- *Opening the HDR tool in Photoshop Choose File --> Automate --> add open files*
- *Finally adjust the bit rate, exposure and curves for the end result.*

We all were able to view the final result which was of course superior to any of the individual shots.

This presentation was so dependent on the visual aspect, that I can't say much more in this article. I really want to com-pliment Leonard on putting together this great presentation with such short notice. If you would like more information on this topic I suggest the following websites:

http://www.metacafe.com/watch/yt-CVuDbcAfN_I/merge_to_hdr_in_photo-shop_cs3_high_dynamic_range/
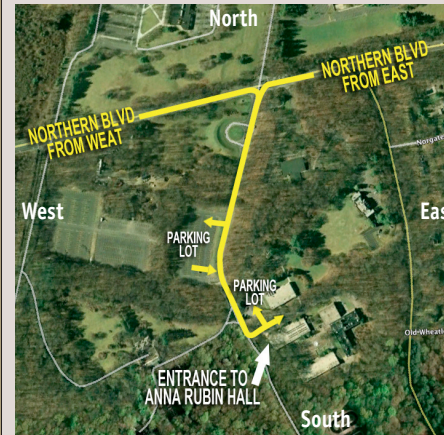
http://www.photoshop-pro.com/tutorials/tuts_cs3/high_dynamic_range.html

http://www.photoshopcafe.com/tutorials/HDR_ps/hdr-ps.htm

http://www.photoshopsupport.com/tutorials/colin/hdr-photoshop-cs3-tutorial.htmlColin

Geoff Broadhurst, 1st Prize raffle winner.

General meeting time schedule:
Meetings are held at
The **New York Institute of Technology**,
Building 300 (Anna Rubin Hall),
Old Westbury, Long Island.
For more detailed information about this location go to *limac.org*

Meetings start promptly at **7:00 P.M.**
Bradley's Q&A: 7:00 – 7:30 P.M.
MacBasics Q&A: 7:00 – 7:30 P.M.
Beginner Q&A meetings
Featured Presentation: 7:30 – 8:20 P.M.
followed by announcements and raffle drawings.

SIG Meetings: (*Special Interest Groups*)
MacBasics is covering Comic Book and Rosetta Stone
DTP/Photoshop SIG: 8:30 – 10:00 P.M. will be replaced with an iPhone OS SIG and Bill Medlow will be showing his favorites

▸ In bad weather, call (516) 686-7789.

▸ The next LIMac board meeting will be at the Plainedge Library, (516) 735-4133, on Wednesday, May 19th, at 7:45 P.M. For more detailed information about this location go to *limac.org*

Renewal

Membership renewal for 2010 takes place from October onwards. A bonus discount was passed by the Board of Directors a few years ago: Bring in a new dues-paying member and get a **$12** discount off your membership renewal. Bring in three new members and your renewal is free!

Bringing in a new member also includes getting a past member back into the group.

Make your **$36** check out to LIMac and bring it to the next meeting, or mail to LIMac, Post Office Box 2048, Seaford NY 11783-0180

How to better visually enjoy the Forum: Your Editor prefers you to use *Adobe Reader 9* as long as your Mac meets the requirement of Mac OS 10.4.11 or newer. PostView 1.8 ($22) works from Mac OS 10.2 all the way up to 10.5 for PowerPC and Intel based Macs.

For a Year's membership Send your $36 check to:
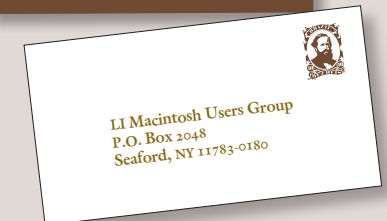
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