CAMP News

JANUARY 2008

Capital Apple Mac Performa User Group

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Gardiner, Maine

www/campug.org

January 9 meeting • 7:00 p.m. at Gardiner Area High School
How does Windows on a Mac compare to Windows on a PC? Find out at our first meeting in 2008 when CAMP secretary Lee Cabana demonstrates VMware Fusion. On deck for February 13 is Sue Westlake, who will show us DiscLabel and TextExpander, both from SmileOnMyMac.

All Hail Mail!

by Jeff Frankel, CAMP Newsletter Editor

Up until last October 26, I had been a contented user of Microsoft Entourage for my email needs. Then along came Leopard. I'd been anticipating many exciting new things from the spotted cat, but email hadn't been among them. Was I ever surprised. In no time short I migrated from Entourage to Mail. Here's why:

Time Machine. Time Machine met all its hype: a set-it-and-forget-it backup program of outstanding simplicity with a jaw-dropping user interface. In a nutshell, Time Machine backs up your system (or however much of it you designate) to a volume other than your startup drive or partition. For most users, including me, the backup volume is an external hard drive. After the initial, full backup, Time Machine records and retains changes according to the following schedule:

- Hourly backups for the past 24 hours
- Daily backups for the past month
- Weekly backups until the disk is full

Once your external hard drive fills up, Time Machine starts deleting older backup data to make to make space for the new.

What's this got to do with Mail and Entourage? Quite a lot, actually. Entourage stores all the mail messages, contacts and calendar items for each user identity in one large database file. At the time I switched, my Entourage database was 200 mb in size. For my wife, who receives much more email than me, the database file is currently 285 mb. Because any little email sent or received changes the database, Time Machine backs up the whole enchilada every hour, every day, every week. Mail, on the other hand, stores each email message as a separate file. These individual message files are negligible in

size. 4-8 kb is typical; up to 24-28 kb for heavy HTML. My backup drive is not large, and my incremental Time Machine backups are far smaller with Mail than they would be under Entourage.

Consequences of data corruption. That one large Entourage database file puts all your eggs in one basket. Should that file become irretrievably corrupted, all of your email, contacts and calendar events are destroyed. Because of its granular file system, Mail doesn't subject your information to this risk. In fairness to Microsoft, in all our years of using Entourage, neither my wife nor I ever lost data for this reason. Still, I consider the danger real.

.Mac. If you're a .Mac subscriber as I am, you experience superb integration between your .Mac web mail and desktop mail if your desktop mail program is Mail. Ditto if you routinely do email from multiple Macs. Thanks to the magic of the IMAP protocol (Mail's default) and the Sync tab in the .Mac preference pane, any mail activity you perform on any one desktop or the web is mirrored on all the other desktops or the web. So if you send a mail message via .Mac web mail from your PC at work, you'll find the message in your Sent mailbox on your iMac at home, as well as in the Sent mailbox on your Macbook. No more sending bcc's of messages to yourself! You can also sync your mail rules, custom mailboxes, smart mailboxes and mail signatures across multiple Macs. The result is total uniformity in the mail environments on multiple Macs, and near-total uniformity between .Mac web mail and desktop mail. I say "near-total" uniformity because as best I can tell, smart mailboxes and Reminders (see below) don't appear in .Mac

Officers and Directors for 2008

After a frenzied campaign that put the upcoming presidential primaries to shame, the following persons were elected at the December 12, 2007 annual meeting:

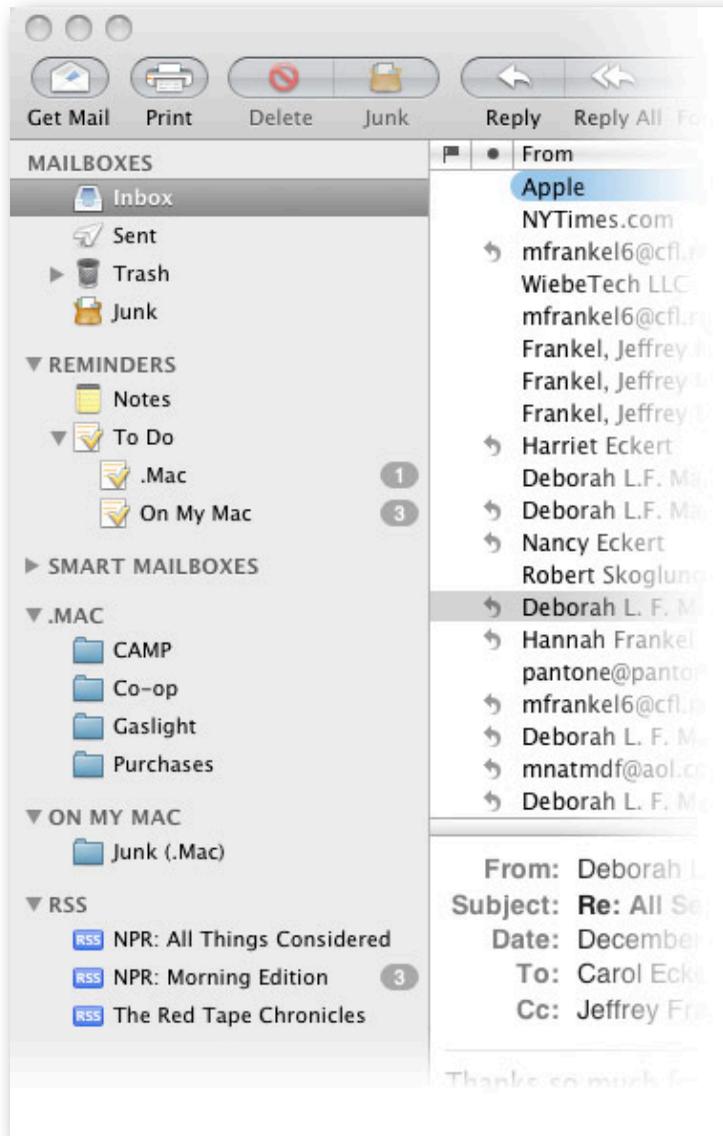|	
President.................. Steve Katz	Newsletter Editor.... Jeff Frankel
Vice President..........Rob Darby	Webmaster...............Sue Westlake
Secretary..................Lee Cabana	Publicity Director....Sue Westlake
Treasurer..................Joe Dee	Director-at-Large.....Del Clough
Membership Dir.......Mike Knight	Director-at-Large.... Adam Tomash

web mail, and mail rules don't function in .Mac web mail.

New Notes and To-Do Capability. Entourage has Notes and Tasks modules. Tasks, at your option, can also display in Entourage's calendar module. Notes, however, appear only in the Notes module. In Leopard Mail, Apple has reconfigured the interrelationship of email, tasks (called to-do's) and calendar in a manner that more closely aligns itself to the way people (OK, to the way *I*) use this information in the real world. Notes, in a sense, are messages that you send to yourself. And that's exactly how Mail treats them. There is no separate Notes module. Rather, you create notes right in Mail. Notes appear in the Reminders section of the sidebar; at your option, they can also appear in your Inbox. When you check your email, you are also checking your notes. Brilliant! Apple has also expanded the concept of to-do's. As before, you can create to-do's in iCal, Apple's standalone calendar program. But you can also create to-do's in Mail. Like the new notes, to-do's also reside in the Reminders section of the sidebar for

easy reference. In a true stroke of genius, to-do's sync automatically between Mail and iCal. The to-do's you create in Mail appear in iCal and vice versa. You can now keep track of your "honeydew" list in Mail, in iCal, or both. In addition, you can easily create a to-do from an existing mail message or note. Or if you prefer, so-called "data detectors" let you instantly build a calendar event or contact from a date or time, address or telephone number contained in a mail message.

RSS Feeds. Not only does Mail function as a container for notes and to-do's: it also serves as an RSS Reader. RSS stands for "really simple syndication." An RSS feed, so-called, is a broadcast from a web site highlighting the most recent news articles available for viewing on the site. These are typically released in a batch that contains the title of each article, a summary, and a link to click for the complete article. Users subscribe to receive RSS feeds in a specialized program, or in an RSS-capable web browser such as Safari. Leopard now brings this capability to Mail. Each feed you subscribe to
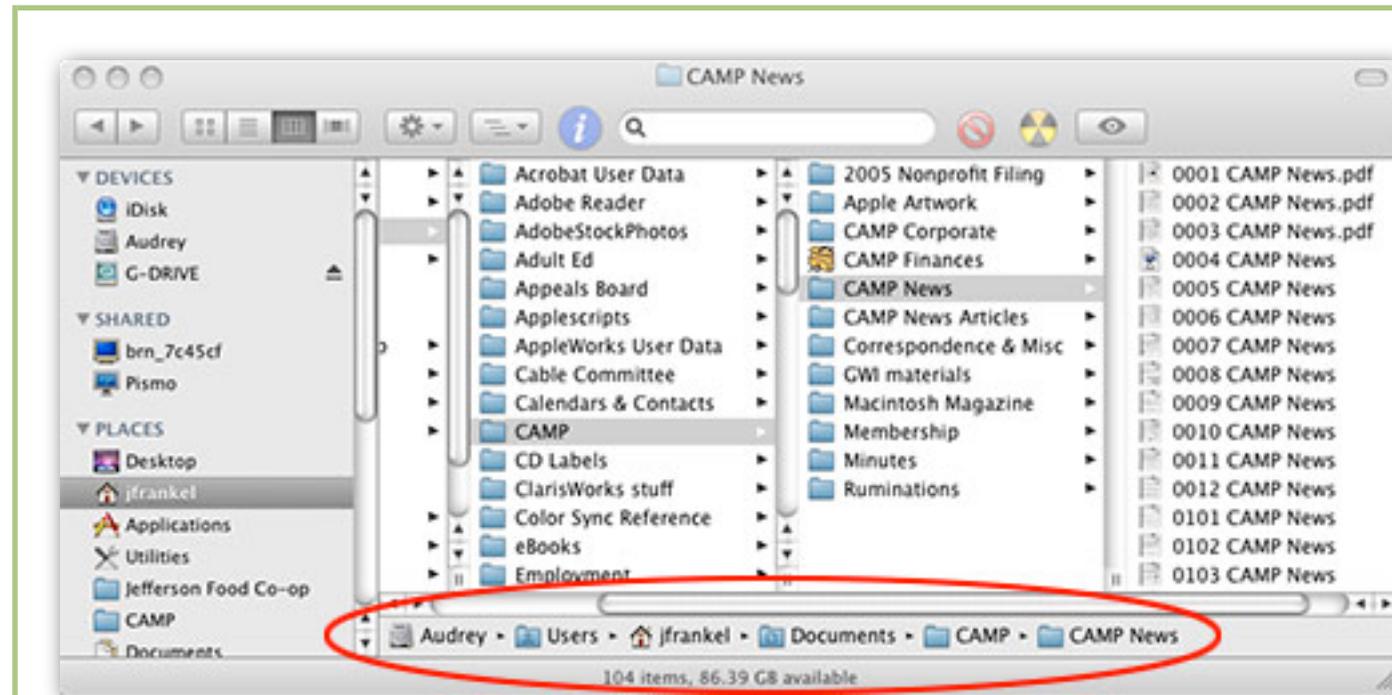
The sidebar in Apple Mail shows your mailboxes, notes, to-do's and RSS feeds.

appears as a separate mailbox in the sidebar. As feeds are published, they appear as separate messages in their respective mailboxes. RSS feeds are just another type of message, but it took the gurus at Apple to realize it. On the other side of the ledger, you can subscribe and post to internet newsgroups from within Entourage's Mail module. Apple Mail doesn't support newsgroups. Users of Mail must obtain one of the many available news readers to access newsgroups.

Wrap-up. Entourage also has many unique features that may be very attractive to some users. These include Microsoft Exchange server support, robust linking of

contacts, events and tasks, and a Projects module. But for me, Mail's feature set holds more appeal: in-line display of attached photos and greater flexibility in handling attachments; iPhoto integration; the ability to forward an existing message as an attachment to a new message; and mail templates with photo drop boxes.

This comparison is about to change. Microsoft will be releasing Office for Mac 2008 shortly. For a preview of the new Entourage and to see how it stacks up against Mail, read "Road to Mac Office 2008: Entourage '08 vs Mail 3.0 and iCal 3.0" by Prince McLean on AppleInsider. I'll be very surprised, though, if I find myself switching back. ☼

Leopard's Path Bar. One of the 300+ new features. "See the path of a file when you view it in the Finder. Just choose Show Path Bar from the View menu and the path is visible at the bottom of the Finder window. You can also drag files to any location in the Path Bar." Double-clicking on a path bar icon brings you to that folder in the Finder.