CAMP News

Are your personal finances spiraling out of control? See how you can rein them in with the widely-acclaimed web-based money manager, Mint. Kathy Ahearn will be taking a unique approach for this demo. Rather than project her own accounts on screen for the world to see, she'll give a group overview and will then show us on a 1:1 basis how to set up Mint on our own equipment. So be sure to bring your laptop, iOS or Android device to the meeting. It all happens at 7:00 p.m., March 13, at Room 11, Buker Community Center, Augusta.

The Dying SuperDrive

Jeff Frankel

Much like Anna Pavlova in *The Dying Swan,* the SuperDrive in my late 2009 iMac trembled, wobbled and stumbled—although it hasn't yet totally expired. But it no longer works reliably, either, refusing to mount many DVDs that play just fine in other machines. The symptoms slowly worsened over time, and I'm kicking myself for not promptly bringing the iMac in for service before my AppleCare contract expired. Neither a cleaning disk nor any of the many hints and tips I read on line have restored the drive to an acceptable state of consistent performance. Rather than pony up big bucks for a replacement, I decided to check out the options for an external optical drive.

An obvious candidate was Apple's $79 USB SuperDrive. However, this handsome aluminum drive is only compatible with Macs that do not have an internal SuperDrive.

Third-party offerings basically fall into two categories: large, fast AC-powered units, and compact, slower, portable USB bus-powered units. I settled on one of the latter: the Samsung SE-218BB/RSBS shown at right ($38 at Amazon). This plastic tray-loading unit is quiet, has virtually-identical specs to my iMac's internal SuperDrive, sits neatly atop the iMac's pedestal, and can be easily tossed into a bag for use with my Macbook Air. Be aware that disks inserted into any third-party drive, such as the Samsung, can only be ejected from the Finder: neither the Eject key on a keyboard nor the open-tray button on the drive will have the desired effect. ☼