

# CAMP News

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August 2005

## August CAMP Meeting

The Board of Directors have opted to have a pot luck supper in August rather than have a formal meeting. So the next regular meeting of the Capital Apple Macintosh Performa User Group's will be held on **Wednesday, September 14, 2005, at 7:00 p.m. in Room 204 at Gardiner Area High School.**

**Delbert Clough** will show us how to buy and sell on **eBay**. Join us for a very practical and rewarding presentation on the ins and outs of **eBay**. You can sell anything at **eBay** and make money at it, too!

On Wednesday August 10, we'll be gathering at **Rob Darby's** home in Winthrop at 6:00 p.m. for our annual summer pot luck supper. Bring-up an entrée or dessert item. You'll find Rob's home at 18 Charles Street. See the attached map on p. 5 for directions.

For more information, please call Sue Westlake at 685-4510.

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## Preserving Family Peace With Airport and Dial-up

**Jeffrey Frankel**, CAMP Secretary

In the *Ozzie and Harriet* days, families squabbled about use of the family car. In the internet age, families in rural America squabble about use of the family dial-up connection.

Now you big-city residents of Augusta, Hallowell and Gardiner are probably chortling as you read this. "Dial-up? How quaint. What century is Frankel living in, anyway?" But my town of Windsor *is* being dragged, kicking and screaming, into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The local cable operator wired the town with fiberoptic cable this past May. I called for installation and after several back-and-forths was given a June 30 appointment. I gleefully bought an Apple Extreme Base Station (AEBS) in anticipation of networking the wired and wireless-capable computers in my house. But a week later, the cable company called back. "Sorry, no can do. Not 'til October."

G-r-r-r. But connecting the AEBS to a cable modem or DSL line are not the only options. The AEBS also includes a built-in modem. Nowadays, the primary purpose of the AEBS, I believe, is to allow a traveling user to dial into a network. However, from day one the AEBS and its predecessors have also been able to dial out. This permits a user to share a dial-up connection from an ISP with the various computers networked to the Airport's router.

The Airport base station was originally designed for wireless communication. Connect the

Airport to the internet, and the Airport beams the signal to all computers within range that are equipped with an Airport (or Airport-compatible) wireless receiver. The AEBS, introduced in May 2003, included a new feature which truly did raise networking to a whole new level: an ethernet local area network (LAN) port for directly connecting a *wired* network to the AEBS.

My understanding is that prior to the AEBS, one had to jump through some pretty geeky hoops in order for Macs on a wired network to recognize Macs on a wireless network, and vice versa. The AEBS made it easy. Most ethernet hubs and switches have a so-called uplink port. Connect the uplink port to the AEBS' LAN port with an ordinary ethernet cable and—

- The internet connection from the AEBS can be shared with the wired computers connected to the switch, as well as with the wireless computers;
- The wired and wireless computers are accessible throughout both networks. This means that users can log on to any wired or wireless machine for file sharing, and that network-aware operations such as Retrospect network backups, iTunes music sharing and iChat Bonjour instant messaging will operate seamlessly across the wired/wireless divide;
- The wireless computers can print to a network printer connected to the switch; and
- The wireless computers can print to a shared USB printer directly connected to one of the wired computers. (Note: The AEBS also contains a USB port for true networking of a USB printer.)

Yes, it all works just like it's supposed to. I can sit outside on the deck with my Powerbook and surf the internet. Any visitors with a wireless-equipped laptop should be able to do the same. Multiple users can independently use the internet at the same time. I can back up the Powerbook from one of the wired computers and move files around at will. But getting there was most definitely *not* half the fun. In a word, it was a nightmare.



### **Problem #1 – Creating the Network**

Once the AEBS is powered on, the next step is creation and configuration of the wireless network with Airport Setup Assistant, or the more powerful Airport Admin Utility. Apple says to do this via a computer equipped with an Airport card (Apple's brand of wireless receiver) as opposed to a wired computer connected to the AEBS through the AEBS' LAN port. My Powerbook has been Airport-equipped since April 2004. I fired up the Powerbook, turned on Airport and launched Airport Setup Assistant. The Assistant found the AEBS. That was good. However, the Assistant would time out with communication errors at all further stages. That was bad. Using Airport Admin Utility brought me to the same stone wall. The Powerbook could see the AEBS, but couldn't connect to it.

I finally found the culprit: the priority of network ports in the Network Port Configuration pop-up selection in the Network preference pane. The priority order on the Powerbook was Built-in Ethernet, AirPort and Internal Modem. Dragging AirPort to the top of the list allowed me to create and configure the wireless network.

### **Problem #2 – Connecting to Internet Applications**

With the network operational, I dialed my ISP through the AEBS' modem. Success – a solid connection! I launched Safari to browse the web, and my elation turned to frustration. The Powerbook churned away but couldn't contact any site. Same problem with Entourage and my email server.

It turned out that the problem related to the distribution of network addresses to my computers. I had previously designated addresses to be distributed via DHCP in the "192.168.6.xx" address range. By default, the AEBS uses the "10.0.1.xx" address range. So although the AEBS was connected to the internet just fine, my earlier configuration was preventing the AEBS from routing that signal to the Powerbook.

I was able to fix the problem in the Network preference pane by selecting AirPort from the Show: pop-up menu and cycling the TCP/IP configuration selection from Using DHCP to Manually and back to Using DHCP again. Upon the reversion to Using DHCP, the computer accepted a DHCP lease assignment from the AEBS in the "10.0.1.xx" range, and all was right in the world. On my wired computers, I made the same change in the Built-in Ethernet pop-up selection. Multiple, simultaneous internet usage was now a reality in the Frankel household.

### **Problem #3 – Controlling the AEBS Modem From the Wired Computers**

I read in Apple's discussion forums about one usability concern that quickly became apparent. A Macintosh with an Airport card can dial and hang up the AEBS' modem, either through Internet Connect or a convenient Airport menu bar icon. Once the AEBS has dialed in to the ISP, the internet connection is active for any computer on the network, wired or wireless, that needs to use it. No additional dial-up is necessary (or possible). The connection to the ISP is just...there.

However, there is no mechanism to allow a wired computer without an Airport card to dial or hang up the AEBS' modem. It would be a constant annoyance if the AEBS' modem could only be turned on and off through my laptop, which is the only wireless computer in the house. And if I took the laptop with me to work or library, none of the three remaining computers would be able to connect via the AEBS' modem at all (unless I bought them Airport cards). Those wired computers would only be able to dial the ISP via their internal modems, and only one at a time. (So 20<sup>th</sup> century...)

Freeware to the rescue! On the forums I learned about Airport Modem Utility, a java application written by Jon Sevy of Drexel University for just this purpose. The program displays a little window that functions like the old FreePPP control panel of yore. Now, any computer in the house can initiate or terminate a modem connection through the AEBS.

There are limitations, of course. Dial-up is still dial-up. Generally, two people can surf the web with little noticeable performance difference. Things slow down in a hurry, though, if one person downloads a file. I'm not sure if we have yet had three people sharing a connection at once, and definitely not more than that.

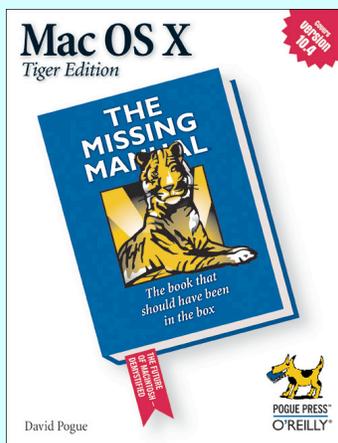
Regardless of how one connects to the internet with the AEBS, wired-to-wireless operations such as network backups are much slower than wired-to-wired. Part of the reason in my case is that my Powerbook only accepts the older and slower 802.11b Airport card, as opposed to the five-times-faster 802.11g Airport Extreme card supported by newer Macs. But even 802.11g wireless transfers, which top out at a theoretical 54 mbps, don't hold a candle to the 100 mbps ethernet port built into all Macs for the last 5–6 years, not to mention the 1000 mbps ethernet ports sported by newer Powerbooks and Power Macs.

Two caveats regarding the AEBS: First don't confuse the Airport Extreme Base Station with the Airport Express Base Station. The Express does not contain a modem or a LAN port. Second, there are two models of AEBS. The one described throughout this article is the most common. However, Apple also sells an AEBS designed for institutional use in closed spaces that does not have a modem.

My only regret? —That I didn't buy an AEBS when they first came out.

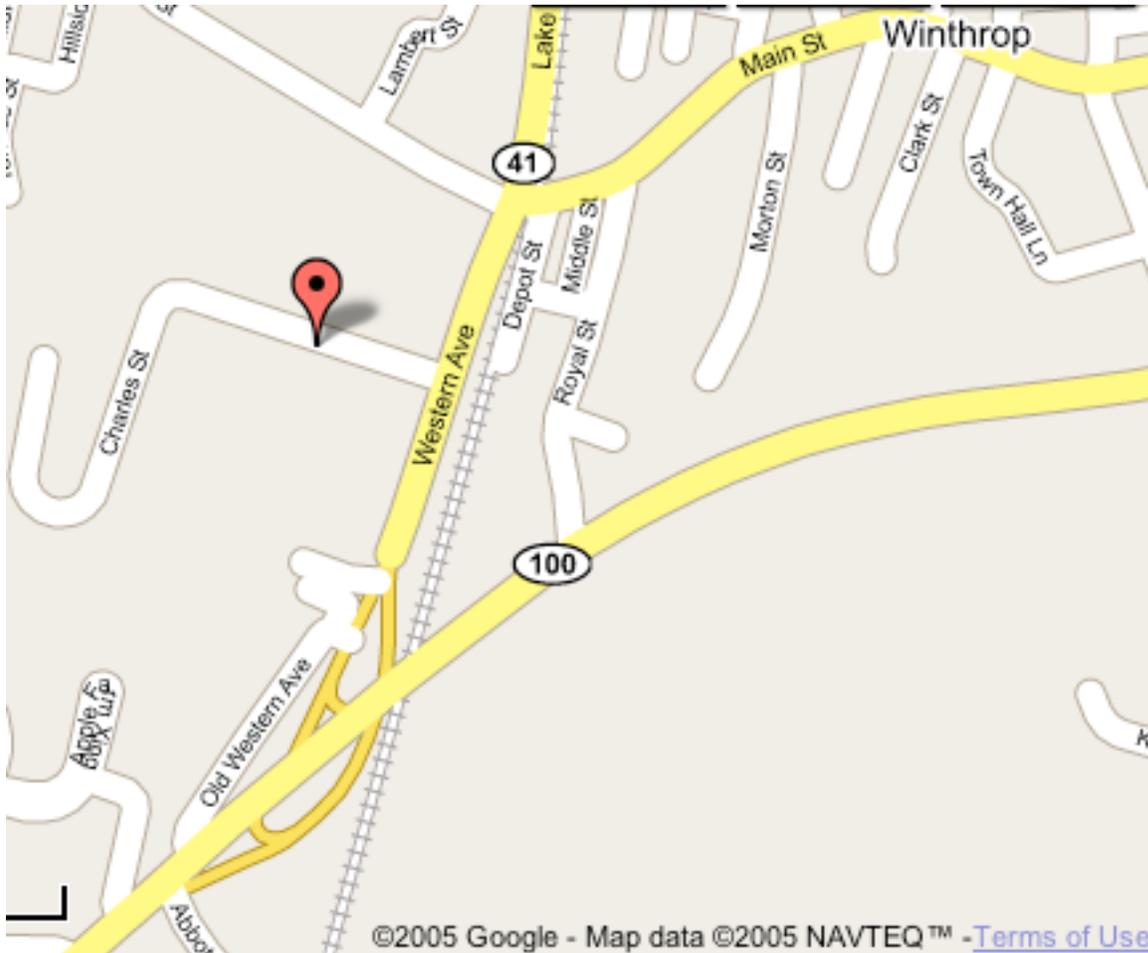
***Special Apple User Group Discount from O'Reilly ends August 31 for David Pogue's Mac OS X: The Missing Manual, Tiger Edition.***

*Save 35% when you use discount code UGMACX to purchase "Mac OS X: The Missing Manual, Tiger Edition" directly from O'Reilly. Order by phone 800-998-9938 or online <http://www.oreilly.com/catalog/macxmntiger>.*



# Quick Clicks

Directions to Rob Darby's house (18 Charles Street, Winthrop): Heading west from Augusta, get off Route 202, which is also Route 100, and head north on Route 41. Turn left onto Charles Street.



## Gizmodo

Joel's last day as editor of Gizmodo was July 15<sup>th</sup>. As some of you may know, Joel had very little good to say about Verizon. Interesting enough when Joel left, Verizon started advertising at Gizmodo. Might there be a connection there?

Anyways, thanks to Joel for keeping Gizmodo interesting and up-to-date. Let's hope Gawker Media finds an editor cut from the same cloth.