



The GAB'er

The Newsletter of the Greater Albany Apple Byters

Volume 29, Number 2 - October 2012

Apple Named No. 2 Global Brand, "Top Riser" for 2012

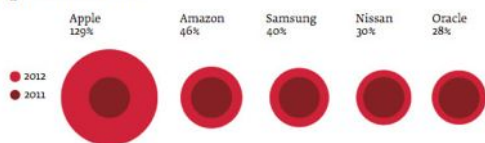
by Mickey Campbell, Apple Insider

Brand consultancy firm Interbrand on Tuesday released its annual "Best Global Brands" study for 2012, and found Apple had the second-best brand value behind reigning champion Coca-Cola.

According to Interbrand, Apple's brand value increased 129 percent to reach an estimated \$76.5 billion, the most growth shown by any of the top 100 companies on the global list. In determining value, the firm measures financial performance of branded products or services, the role of brand in the purchase decision process and the overall strength of the brand.

Apple leap-frogged over other huge corporations to take the No. 2 spot behind Coca-Cola after an eighth place finish in 2011. The company's brand value beat out Intel, McDonald's, GE, Google, Microsoft and IBM all in the past year. The results are even more significant has enjoyed a meteoric rise to become the report's second most valuable brand in the world, jumping 18 spots since 2009.

Top risers of 2012



Coordinator's Corner

by John Buckley



Welcome to GAAB. We had a small turnout for the September meeting but gained new members.

As usual, check our [website](#) for the most current GAAB information. You will find a map and aerial photograph showing how to get to the meeting location.



At the October meeting we will set the schedule for the remaining demonstrations and then take a look at what is now available from Apple including the new Mountain Lion Operating System (OS X 10.8). There have been two updates since its release, so members should feel safe in installing the new system. It is only available through the Mac App Store with a cost of \$19.99.

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Next GAAB Meeting
October 10, 2012
Mountain Lion (OSX 10.8)

7:00 p.m.
St. Mary's Hospital
Troy, NY

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Serving the Apple Computer User Community Since May 1984

The Greater Albany Apple Byters is an Apple Computer User Group. Meetings are held the second Wednesday of each month (except July and August) in Room 212 of Troy High School, located on Burdett Avenue, Troy, NY.

Annual membership fee is \$10.00. Membership privileges include this newsletter, access to a large public domain software and video/audio tape library, local vendor discounts, special interest groups, and other special offers.

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Apple Ambassador

by John Buckley

Apple Ambassador: Snapheal 2 for the Mac

Last spring I received an e-mail from MacPhun Software about their great photo editing tool, Snapheal. Just last month they came out with version 2.0. The latest version of Snapheal has been released for the Mac and it really is a snap to edit snapshots. It has some great new features including being able to import images from your Lightroom library.

Currently [Snapheal](#) is available on the Mac App Store for just \$7.99 (on sale). If you are looking for a desktop photo editor that does healing as well, you can't go wrong with this app.

You can also learn more on the [Snapheal website](#).

Description



Snapheal is the incredible erasing app!

REMOVE extra objects & text; FIX skin imperfections; RESTORE old and damaged photos.

And perform complex pro photo enhancement in a few clicks with no special learning. Same and even better results than expensive photo editing software.

Here is what you can do with Snapheal:

- Remove unwanted objects
- Delete people from the photos
- Make skin imperfections vanish
- Erase text, signatures, etc.
- Fix old scanned photos
- Remove scratches and blemishes

Over 15 easy to learn photo editing tools let you make pictures more awesome in a click:

- Clone & stamp
- Blur
- Light levels control

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Despite the rise in popularity of texting and social networking, email is still the preferred way for many to communicate, especially with co-workers and business associates.

A recent study by the McKinsey Global Institute found that the average knowledge worker spends 28 percent of the work-week either writing, reading or responding to email. You probably know some colleagues who spend more than half of each day dealing with the influx.

A high volume of email can make you feel overwhelmed and overloaded. And a cluttered inbox is a major productivity killer. Follow these 9 steps to tame the daily barrage.

Then, you can spend a few more hours a week not glued to a glowing screen – or perhaps glued to a glowing screen for a more entertaining reason.

1. Send less email

The more email you send, the more you'll get. Look for opportunities to use another form of communication that cuts down on the noise.

Could a quick IM chat, phone call or walk down the hall answer your question or resolve the issue? Face-to-face communication is better when you need to make a point or debate which direction to take. It's also the only choice when the subject is touchy. With body language, there's less chance that your tone will be misconstrued.

It's also a good idea to call an impromptu meeting if it looks like you're headed for a confusing three- or four-way email conversation. Chats, on the other hand, are good when just a few words will do.

2. Send better email

The first key to a better email is crafting a compelling Subject title. In the body of your message, be clear and concise. Anticipate the recipient's questions.

If you often get email responses that start with "To clarify..." that's a clue you're not writing plainly or including enough information.

Remember that people scan rather than read email. Draw attention to important ideas with boldface type. Use a headline, sub-headlines and lists. Don't send long blocks of gray text. Emails are meant to be brief and punchy.

3. Create templates to save time.

Are a lot of the messages you send to clients and colleagues similar in nature? Create templates. They'll save you loads of time over starting from scratch. Templates can be customized on the fly so they don't read like impersonal form letters. You can call up the right one with a single keystroke.

4. Unsubscribe

Over the years, you've probably signed up to receive a lot of e-mail blasts from companies you don't even do business with anymore. Unsubscribe from them. This, of course, does not pertain to emails from my Komando Digital News Network.

Consider disabling email notifications from LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook. Check those sites on your own schedule. I'm guessing you'll find you don't really miss the constant pings.

News is more important to some people than others. If a lot of news bulletins pile up in your inbox over the course of a day, start using an RSS reader.

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Education SIG

Education in the Digital Age

It appears education will be moving into the digital age even if it has to be dragged there kicking and screaming. Two areas moving in this direction are assessments for the Common Core Curriculum and textbooks. [eSchool News](#) has posted two articles describing the potential problems as districts move in this direction. While the articles talk about other states, New York State is part of this process.

Computers seen as ‘unfunded mandate’ as online testing looms



School district officials in Forsyth County, N.C., say they must spend about \$2.9 million to have students in certain classes ready within two years to take high-stakes tests online.

As new online testing designed around the Common Core State Standards looms, public school officials are concerned about what they see as an “unfunded mandate” to buy enough computers to accommodate the shift.

School district officials in Forsyth County, N.C., for instance, say they must spend about \$2.9 million to have students in certain classes ready within two years to take the high-stakes tests online.

By the 2014-15 academic year, students in fifth- and eighth-grade science, high school biology, Algebra I, and English II in public schools statewide, including the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools, must be ready to take exams with a computer, whether it be a laptop or some other device.

The school system wants to prepare for that requirement by getting some classes online this year, Darrell Walker, the assistant superintendent of operations, told members of the Forsyth County Board of Commissioners, which decides what portion of money the school system receives from the county. “That train’s rolling down the hill pretty fast,” he said to the commissioners Sept. 27.

To prepare, school officials want to lease 10,000 laptops and buy computer accessories.

The goal for now is to have students in fifth- and eighth-grade science, as well as high school biology, ready to take tests online this academic year.

The accessories — such as interactive whiteboards — would cost about \$1.7 million, and the laptop leases would cost about \$1.2 million, Walker said. At the end of the lease, the school system would buy the laptops at a discount and use them for students who can’t afford one.

Asked by Commissioner Walter Marshall whether the state was providing any money to help pay for the transition, Walker said that it was an “unfunded mandate.”

The Sept. 27 discussion was preliminary. Walker plans to bring a formal request later to the board of commissioners.

The school budget has enough money for the laptops. Walker’s request would be for the county to approve money already sitting in a bond reserve to be redirected for the \$1.7 million in accessories.

Tammy Howard, the director of accountability services at the state Department of Public Instruction, said the transition to online assessments is being phased in statewide. In the process, school officials are dealing with two issues: bandwidth and computer devices.

The goal, Howard said, is to have as many students online as possible. “Even once we do that in 2014-15, we realize that some students may not be able to have access to computerized assessments,” Howard said. For them, the paper-and-pencil option still would be available, she said. And accommodations will be made.

The online-testing requirement is just the beginning, Walker said. Eventually, every student will be using a computer in the classroom.

“At some point, in the next three or four years ... everyone is going to bring their own device” to school, he said.



States move slowly toward digital textbooks

While education leaders in many states buy into the potential learning benefits of digital content, there are numerous hurdles they need to clear first.

Despite enthusiasm for digital textbooks at the national level, states have been slow to get on board. But the movement is gaining strength.



Digital textbooks have gotten a lot of ink in recent months. In January, Apple attracted attention when it [announced](#) ^[2] its foray into the field with the iBook, a multimedia-rich textbook for the iPad produced by the biggest educational publishers and costing less than \$15. The next month, Julius Genachowski, chairman of the Federal Communications Commission, unveiled the Obama administration's [Digital Learning](#) ^[3] Playbook and [called for all students](#) ^[4] to use digital textbooks by 2017.

“If we want American students to be the best prepared to compete in the 21st-century economy,” Genachowski said, “we can’t allow a majority of our students to miss out on the opportunities of digital textbooks.”

For all the noise nationally, movement to digital has been slow at the state and district level. Digital textbooks still account for only a small fraction of overall textbook sales. Still, several states have enacted changes in recent years to make it easier for districts to go digital and use free material in the classroom that’s available digitally.

This year, Alabama’s legislature is considering a bill that would provide digital textbooks and tablet devices to all high school students, to be paid for with \$100 million in bonds. The measure was approved in the House Education Policy committee at the end of February but hasn’t made it to the House floor. If it does ultimately pass, Alabama would be only the second state to require the purchase of digital content. Florida [became the first](#) ^[5] last year, when it moved to require that all schools spend at least 50 percent of their annual instructional materials budget on digital content by the 2015-16 school year.

While education leaders in many states buy into the potential learning benefits of digital content, there are numerous hurdles they need to clear before they can catch up to Florida, or make meaningful progress toward the Obama administration’s goal.

Defining terms

For a number of states, the first question is defining what constitutes a textbook. In the past few years, several states have redefined the terms “textbook” and “instructional materials” to include a wider array of options, including digital texts and material and, in some cases, actual hardware.

That’s the case in Indiana, where the state’s board of education issued a blanket waiver to all districts in 2009 allowing them to spend all or part of the money they previously spent on textbooks to purchase digital content or devices. That waiver became part of state law in 2011.

But allowing districts to buy digital devices and content doesn’t guarantee that they will do it. In the 2010-11 school year, only 11 percent of Indiana districts actually made use of the blanket waiver, according to a survey conducted by the state Department of Education. “There’s a whole lot of moving parts to replacing textbooks,” says John Keller, assistant superintendent for technology in Indiana.

One of those moving parts is a quirk in Indiana law that allows districts to charge parents a “rental fee” for textbooks. Under the law, districts couldn’t charge more than 25 percent of the retail cost for each textbook, with the state picking up the tab for students on free and reduced lunch. With the shift to spending on technology and other materials, schools can retain the fees they previously charged based on textbook prices. But those fees vary widely by district, meaning it’s easier for some schools to buy technology with the funds than others.

The districts have gotten creative to make it work. Some banked rental money for several years after the waiver was issued to be able to make a bulk technology purchase. Others have issued capital bonds to pay for devices. One middle school opted to resurface its gym floor every other year, rather than annually — no small sacrifice in the basketball-crazed state.

Finding the money

Keller believes the move to digital content will improve student learning, but that, particularly in the short term, it



might not be a money-saver. The seemingly lower prices of digital content are deceptive, he says. Take the eBook. That \$15 “book” is for one student’s use and can’t be passed on to anyone else. Print textbooks typically cost several multiples of that \$15 fee, but they can be reused by students in successive years, bringing the per-use cost down. And that’s before taking into account the acquisition cost of the iPad required to view eBooks.

But some digital advocates say the shift toward more technology doesn’t have to mean significantly higher costs. Maine gives laptops to every middle school student in the state at a cost of less than one percent of the state education budget, according to Jeff Mao, learning technology policy director for the state. It’s expanding to high school students as well, with the goal of providing laptops for every student in grades seven through twelve by 2013.

Mao says that schools can find cost-savings in digital textbooks if they take advantage of content that’s available for free. He is one of a small but growing number of educational leaders pushing their states to use free content available online, known as open educational resources (OER), or develop their own. He’s used federal stimulus grants to pay teachers to create digital content that can be distributed for free to schools in the state. Mao stresses that tasking teachers with creating and vetting open content is intrinsically valuable, helping them sharpen their subject knowledge and craft.

Jeff Taylor, senior vice president for U.S. government relations at Pearson, the largest education publisher, says that open resources have a role in the classroom, but not a starring one.

“We as a commercial provider attempt to create a very complete product,” he says. “It’s very hard for that to exist in OER, because of the level of investment involved.” Reuven Carlyle doesn’t agree. The Washington state legislator was instrumental in creating a statewide open resource project that is building course content for the 81 most popular community colleges in the state. But he turned his attention to K-12 textbooks after he noticed his ninth grade daughter Adi reading a school textbook on world history that was more than 20 years old. “The state of Washington spends \$128 million each biennium on textbooks,” he says. “It is the legislature’s job to be an intelligent consumer.”

Putting teachers in charge

For Carlyle, the answer was to push for more open content. He successfully introduced legislation this session enabling the state, with an initial investment of less than \$200,000 per year, to find and vet open resource material that can be used by schools. “This is an aggregation play,” Carlyle says. “Ninety-nine percent of the work will be to organize, manage and distribute material that exists.”

A strength of that material is that it can be customized by schools and teachers, because it is not proprietary, as commercial texts are. Carlyle points to the “FlexBooks” created by the CK-12 Foundation [as an example](#)^[6]. The foundation’s philosophy is to give digital texts to teachers and let them make changes as they see fit. “We believe the textbook should be a starting point,” says Ope Bukola, partner relations manager at CK-12. “The educator knows what’s best.”

CK-12 FlexBooks serve as the basis for the statewide open math and science texts that the state of Utah announced it will be creating in January. For Utah, the appeal of CK-12 and other open content is that it can be customized to the state’s version of the national Common Core Standards.

Commercial texts, on the other hand, are tailored to meet the needs of larger states such as California and Texas, not smaller ones such as Utah, says Tiffany Hall, the state’s K-12 literacy coordinator. “As a local control state that’s very important to us,” she says. “The [open] textbook is actually supporting what we do.”

The statewide open resource program builds off a pilot initiated in 2010 by David Wiley, an education professor at Utah’s Brigham Young University.

Though the material is obtained and edited digitally, Wiley says most schools so far have actually chosen to print it out for students, creating texts that look and feel like workbooks and cost about \$5 to produce. So far, students in the pilot have shown test scores comparable to those of students using traditional textbooks. Wiley expects to see gains as the program continues.

“Every year teachers can get together and talk about what worked and what didn’t and create a new version,” he says. “Our belief is that students will learn more over time.”

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Program Coordinator

Continued from page 1.

To find out what's happening, GAAB is the place to be. So be sure to be at our October meeting and every meeting to find out the best information about the Mac.

The October meeting will be held at St. Mary's Hospital in the Leonard Board Room on Wednesday, October 10, 2012. The meeting will begin at 7 p.m. [St. Mary's Hospital is located at 1300 Massachusetts Avenue in Troy NY.](#)

However, the best route to take from the Northway is the following:

1. Merge onto NY-7 East from the Northway.
2. Follow Route 7 to Troy where it becomes Hoosick Street.
3. Turn left on Oakwood Avenue (10 Street/NY-40) which is the first light after the bridge and bare right.
4. Turn right on Sausse Avenue.
5. Turn left onto Lindenwood Court.
6. When you come to the first entrance to the hospital parking lot, turn left and park.

Apple Ambassador

Continued from page 2.

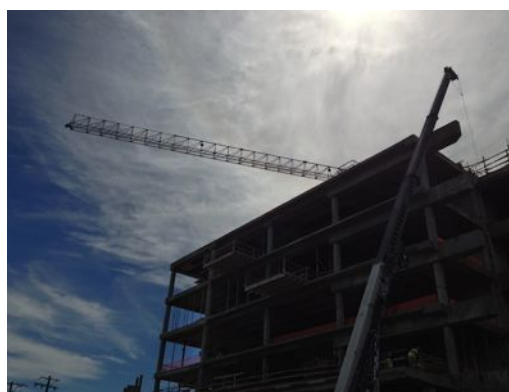
- Sharpen and noise reduction
- Highlights and shadows
- Saturation, gamma, contrast, hues, exposure
- Clarity and color temperature
- Crop, rotate, flip and more
- Above this you can enjoy:
- Support of practically all image formats, including RAW
- Resolution support up to 32 megapixels
- Intuitive user interface
- Gestures support: Two-finger scroll; Pinch to zoom
- Drag and Drop images into application window
- Import from Aperture and iPhoto
- Export "snaphealed" images to Aperture and iPhoto
- Share photos via Flickr, Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, E-mail
- 100% compatibility with Mountain Lion and earlier OS X (10.6 and above)

Snapheal is a one of a kind photo editor that saves you hundreds of dollars (you would spend on photo editing software) and lots of time (you would spend on learning that software), and makes your pictures look awesome in no time ★

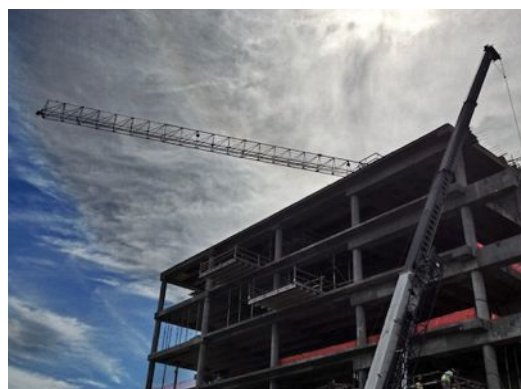
Here is a list of the new features.

- MacBook Pro Retina display support
- 3X faster & flawless erasing: thanks to innovative smart pixel identification algorithm
- New erasing tools & functions: polygonal lasso tool, higher erasing precision, one-click switch between erasing modes.
- New Retouch & Adjustment tools for Pro color play
- Clone & Stamp tool significant performance optimization
- User interface improvements
- Lightroom 4.0 import support
- Mac OS X 10.8 Mountain Lion compatibility
- Overall memory usage and performance improvements
- iCloud support

You can go to the website (Snapheal.com) and try the program for free. The program takes almost no time to learn and makes it really easy to edit images to create great shots. Below is an example Snapheal results.



Original image



After editing with Snapheal

If you are looking for a desktop photo editor that does healing as well, you can't go wrong with this one.



Internet SIG

Continued from page 3.

5. Automate

Every major email program lets users set up filters and rules that can give incoming messages priority labels and colors, then divert them to folders other than your inbox.

For example, you can route email that contains your boss' name or the domain of an important client to a folder marked Urgent. Funnel routine messages to a Read Later folder.

6. Bulk process email and take action

Try to avoid checking messages as they come in or at times when you don't really have time to write and send a reply.

Instead, process email for 5-10 minutes each hour. Experiment and learn what's best for you. But try to cut back. If you can stand it, limit the email purge to twice a day. Then check only your newly created "urgent" folder on an hourly basis (see step 5, above.)

For the rest of your non-urgent email, it's reasonable to respond within a few hours. You won't offend those folks if you don't answer immediately.

7. Turn off your email notifications. It's more distracting than you realize and it makes everything seem much more urgent than it is.

8. Stop thinking of your inbox as a storage system. It's a delivery system. Read and respond, then delete or archive. This will help you stop encountering and re-reading the same and similar messages repeatedly.

9. Divide messages from tasks

A lot of emails are tasks in disguise. Get errands and assignments out of your inbox and onto your to-do list where they belong. There are many mobile apps, Web-based solutions and computer desktop utilities that will help you create and manage to-do lists.

Attention GAAB'er Members

Please pay your 2012-2013 dues to Cecila MacDonald.

iPhone 5

Actual size



"I have just one more question—will it make me happy?"



Social Networking is Not Just for Kids

by Terry White, MacGroup-Detroit

I'm amazed by the number of friends, co-workers, family members, etc. that I have run into on the various Social Networking sites. What was once primarily for high school and college kids has really taken off in the adult world. If you think about it, it makes sense. The older you are, the more friends and associates from your past and growing up you're likely to have. So with more and more people on the internet it's only a matter of time before you run into an old school buddy or someone you're long since lost contact with.

Myspace kinda gave social networking a bad name

I'll go on record here in saying that I really really really don't like Myspace. Yes, I do have an account and the ONLY REASON I have an account is because people kept sending me links to go check out on Myspace and you have to have an account to get to most of the content. However, I can easily go for weeks without logging on to Myspace and not miss it one bit. The thing I guess that I dislike the most about Myspace pages is that you can create some really ugly hard to read Myspace home pages on there. Many of them also have music blaring the minute you land on the page. So it's for these reasons that Myspace really never appealed to me.

Facebook wins

On the other hand Facebook did it right! The content is more uniform and your Profile page customizations are much more limited, which in this case is a good thing. I think it's because of this that Facebook has grown in the last two years by leaps and bounds. Not to mention that it's pretty easy/straight forward to use.

So why Social Networking?

This is the question that most people that aren't doing it ask? My answer is, well because it's fun! That's it. It's not rocket science. If it wasn't fun, it wouldn't be growing at the rate that it is.

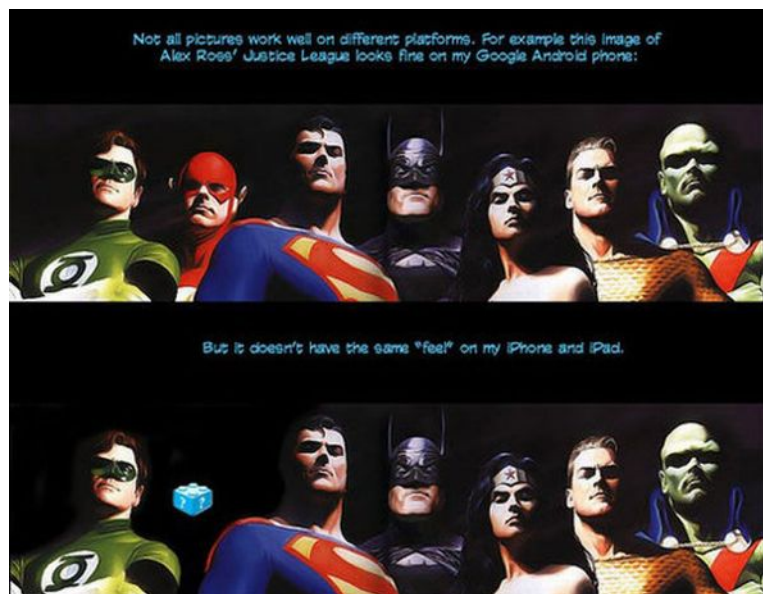
OK, you need more than "it's fun." Think about it this way then. Beginning in 1993 the big rush for everyone was to get a website setup. Every company that mattered and most public figures saw the advantage in communicating with their customers and fans over the internet by simply putting the most commonly requested information on their sites. Then as the tools became easier and the costs went down, individuals like you and I began to

put up personal websites. So if you're asking why Social Networking? Ask, why personal websites? The answers that will probably come to mind are, sharing pictures, information about events and activities (reunions, parties, etc.)

Now take it up a notch and you've got Social Networking! You log onto a free site such as Facebook and within a few minutes you create a profile. You can then post, pictures, movies, information (starting to sound familiar?) that you want to share. Now you build that community by inviting your friends to become your "Friends" on the site. Once that happens, you can then just freely post new pictures, information, etc. whenever you want and your friends, family, colleagues, etc. can see it whenever they like.

So how is this different than just having your own website?

It's different in a couple of ways. For one it's usually easier to update than a website. So you're more likely to keep the content fresh. It's free, so there are no hosting fees. You also can control who sees the information because you control who your friends are on the site. Once you put this same content on a website, anyone can see it! Of course you could have a password protected site and only give out the password to people you want to see the content, but then you've severely limited the amount of people that will actually take the time to come to your site and key in a password just to see the content. It is for these reasons that Social Networking has really boomed!



GAAB Internet Addresses

<u>Names</u>	<u>E-Mail Addresses</u>
Aaron Ambrosino.....	aambrosi@mac.com
Gary Blizzard.....	gmbizzard@aol.com
Mark Bogossian.....	mark@castlecomp.com
Steve Bradley.....	ssbradley@adelphia.net
John Buckley.....	jbuckley@nycap.rr.com
Sheldon Carnes.....	sheldoncarnes@hotmail.com
Tina Cook.....	twonotrump@nycap.rr.com
Anthony Eldering.....	tonye11@verizon.net
Trudy Ellis.....	TE52@earthlink.net
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Brendan O'Hara.....	bohara1@nycap.rr.com
Eric/Lee Rieker.....	Erieker@aol.com
AbdurRahman Rozell..	aryr100@gmail.com
Judith Schwartz.....	jfschwartz2@earthlink.net
Saul Seinberg.....	saul.seinberg@gmail.com
Bill Shuff.....	wjshuff@earthlink.net
Shelly Weiner.....	olliedawg@yahoo.com
Lou Wozniak.....	louw@nycap.rr.com

To start or renew your GAAB membership, see Cecilia MacDonald or send your fees payable to her at the following address:

*Cecilia MacDonald
260 Sever Road
Delanson, NY 12053*



Visit GAAB on the Internet at <http://www.applebyters.com>

