

# KEYMAC

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## JOURNAL

**Netflix Streaming**

*Netflix promises Mac support for movie streaming by the end of the year.*

**Page 2****Pandora Saved?**

*Congress makes a quiet move that should keep Pandora from going out of business.*

**Page 2****New Apple Hardware**

*Apple refreshes their notebook line and more.*

**Page 4****Gene's Tips and Tricks**

*Some fun odds and ends that make Mac life happier.*

**Page 4**

### President's Message

We resolved our issue with the KeyMac meeting space location and times quite nicely, thanks to Jenna the new administrative assistant at the Club. All our meetings in 2009 will be in the Keowee Room at the Activity Center, and at 10 a.m. We don't have meetings in July, nor in December. In December, this year it's on Tuesday the 9th, we have our annual KeyMac cocktail party at the Club. Keep the date open – you will be hearing from Jack Leitch in a few weeks asking you to R.S.V.P. A cash bar affair, KeyMac buys the heavy hors d'ouvres for you and a guest; it is a fun evening.

Year-end is when we plan for who will be performing the leadership activities for KeyMac for the ensuing year. I hope that many of our current volunteers will carry on in 2009. I'll be in touch with them soon to find out, and to recruit those of you who are willing to provide relief if some want to hand over their jobs. In addition to those jobs listed on the front page of the Journal, the Hawkins have been doing snacks for a long time. If you have a desire to be involved, let me know.

KeyMac laptop – you may have been there several months back when I mentioned we had sold the KeyMac laptop. Well, we didn't. If you have any use for a couple-generations-old laptop for \$200, email or call me. It is much [like this model](#).

See you at 1:30 Tuesday for an interesting show from Jim Redmond and me on web sites.

Gene Madill

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# KEYMAC JOURNAL

## Netflix Streaming Coming to Mac

Netflix is an online DVD rental service that almost single-handedly put local video stores out of business. If you're not already familiar with it, here's how it works. For a set fee, Netflix allows you to have a certain number of DVDs checked out at a time. Currently they support two subscription models. The unlimited plan allows a subscriber to have anywhere from 1 to 8 DVDs checked out at any one time (fees for this range from \$8.99 to \$47.99 a month with several steps in between). They also offer a lower-end limited subscription model which allows up to two DVDs a month, and only one checked out at a time for only \$4.99 a month. With Netflix there are no late fees, and no driving to the video store to rent or return movies. Keep a movie as long as you want. Return it when you're done through the mail, and Netflix will ship the next one in your queue, which is managed online through their website.

I've been using Netflix from almost the moment they launched. I was very happy to get away from all the exorbitant late fees that brick and mortar movie rental companies were charging. Almost every time I went into Blockbuster back in the 80s and 90s, I would hear some poor schlub who was stuck with an \$80 late fee because they (or their teenage children) forgot to return something before they went on vacation. Blockbuster was smiling all the way to the bank until Netflix ate their lunch. Years after Netflix got started, Blockbuster tried their own similar movie rental plan, but I can only assume many customers were like me and swore they would never give Blockbuster another

dollar. The Blockbuster plan has never really made much headway against Netflix.

In January of 2007, Netflix introduced a new service called Instant which allowed subscribers (under the unlimited plan only, not the limited plan) to view a subset of Netflix's movies on their own PC using streaming technology. This service was great for those who didn't mind sitting in front of their PCs or using other hardware to view these movies on a big screen. If a user desired, they could theoretically watch as many movies as possible, one right after the other, for no additional fee. Couch potatoes rejoiced.

There is one drawback however: this service has never included Macs. If you wanted to watch a movie using the Instant play feature, you had to have a PC or, just this year, buy a special piece of hardware to hook up to your television and your network to stream movies. Macs were left out in the cold. There was widespread speculation that Netflix would never be able to support the Mac due to security and licensing issues with Digital Rights Management technology.

Now, however, things may be about to change. Netflix recently announced that they will bring streaming movies to the Mac by the end of 2008. Take this date with a grain of salt. Preannouncements of this type have a tendency to slip, but at least there is a light at the end of the tunnel for Mac users who subscribe to Netflix, and that light is the soon-to-be flickering movies on my favorite computer screen.

Netflix is available on the web at [www.Netflix.com](http://www.Netflix.com).



## Pandora Saved?

By now it is a truism that the computer touches everything. There are special computers that are designed to improve almost everything we use from the cars we drive to the blenders in our kitchens. This pervasiveness has caused many unexpected benefits that could not have been predicted by even the wildest imaginations of science fiction writers prior to the computer age.

One of these unexpected areas for me has been the impact the computer has had on my enjoyment of music. Like most people, in my teenage years I was consumed with music. I had my favorite bands. I bought records. I talked about music with my friends, and I spent a lot of time listening to music. I would waste hours of time with music if my parents didn't bang on my door. (Did I say "waste"? See how perceptions change with time?)

*Continued on next page*

### KeyMac Club Schedule for '08

All meetings are in the Keowee Room as far as we know.

#### OS X Meetings

November 4th, 10 a.m.

#### General Meetings

Note that the next meeting is not at the usual time.

October 21st, 1:30 p.m.

November 18th, 10 a.m.

December – no meetings – Holiday Party December 9th at the Club

# KEYMAC JOURNAL

Yet as I grew older, life pressed in on me, and I spent less and less time with the stereo. Music and I grew apart. Except for my time in the car, and often that was more to distract than to really enjoy, I had little time to soak up music. The computer changed all that. With digitized music and MP3 players, music came back in my life like a long lost friend.

An odd thing happened along the way though. Music had changed when I wasn't looking. I found that I liked less and less of the music that was commercially available and being played on the radio. At first, I chalked this up to simply getting older. Like many generations before me, the music that I had come to like wasn't what the younger people enjoyed. Since this younger demographic frequently dominates spending on music, their tastes get all the advertising dollars. It wasn't that there isn't new music (or even old music, for that matter) waiting to be discovered. It was just that the spotlight had moved on and left music I would enjoy hidden in the shadows and hard to find.

It was with a great deal of joy that I discovered [Pandora](#). Pandora is a free Internet service that approaches music in a different way. The people at Pandora started what they call the Music Genome Project to analyze different elements of music and find similar strains within different songs.

What does this mean exactly? It sounds like a meaningless tech buzzword, but it has very deep implications. By analyzing hundreds of elements of a song, Pandora seeks to identify its DNA, what makes that song work for any individual listener. Then Pandora takes those elements and looks for similar elements in other songs. The end result is you can create a channel on Pandora by identifying

a favorite song, artist, or composer, and Pandora will find other music that has a similar feel to it. When a song plays on Pandora, the listener can give it a thumbs up that "Yes, I like that one" or a thumbs down "No, don't play that one or even other songs like it." This feedback fine tunes the Pandora channel so that the more you click, the better it gets. Pandora, frankly, is awesome.

It was with great regret that I learned that Pandora was in danger of being shut down. The record industry was trying to impose onerous fees on Internet radio. These fees were many times more than conventional radio was paying. Pandora for instance, under this fee structure, was being forced to pay a full 70% of their profits to stay in business. Even though Pandora was igniting people's love for music and selling previously overlooked music as a result, the record industry was intent on killing the golden goose.

Then amidst all the chaos of the looming financial bailout, Congress quietly did something amazing. A bipartisan bill passed that satisfied both the record industry and Internet radio, and political watchers say it is almost certain that President Bush will sign this bill into law.

It's the day the music didn't die.

## MacBook Pro Video Issues

Apple is moving to fix MacBook Pros manufactured between approximately May 2007 and September 2008. NVIDIA has acknowledged that there was a packaging defect in some graphics chips. If you are experiencing video problems with a notebook from this timeframe, read the [technote from Apple on how to get this issue resolved](#).

## Flash



Pandora requires the free Adobe Flash

Player to work. The Flash Player is a plug-in for Safari and other browsers. It allows more animation and interactivity than the browser can perform on its own.

Flash Player was just updated to version 10, and is a [free download from Adobe](#).

What else can Flash do? Flash can do almost anything really. Because the tricks built into a normal browser are severely limited, Flash is used in a variety of settings from business websites to games. But let's take a look at some of the more . . . um . . . flashy examples:

[Take Halloween to the next level.](#)

[Play guitar without owning one.](#)

[Treat your arachnophobia at home.](#)

[Macify your Internet experience.](#)

## Important Meeting Reminder

*Changed Times*

Please don't forget that the next general meeting of the KeyMac Club on October 21st is at 1:30 p.m. in the Keowee room, not the usual 10 a.m. The November OS X and general meetings will be at their regular 10 a.m. times.

# KEYMAC JOURNAL

## New Apple Hardware

On Tuesday, October 14th, Apple refreshed their entire notebook line. New MacBook, MacBook Pros, and MacBook Airs were shown. These new notebooks feature a shell made out of a single piece of aluminum which makes them both sturdier and less costly to produce. They also come with a new glass trackpad that has no button at all. The glass trackpad supports multiple gestures and the entire surface acts as the button. Just tap anywhere. These new notebooks also feature a new graphics chip by NVIDIA that is significantly faster than the earlier graphics chips.

The previous low end of the MacBook line is going to still be sold, but at a lower [price point](#) of \$999. All other older models are being phased out.

Some analysts are arguing that this isn't enough of a price drop for the least expensive MacBook. Their belief is that, in a troubled economy, Macs need to be more competitive on price. (See [Wired article](#).) Analysts have been wrong and Steve Jobs has been right more times than I care to count, but it will be interesting to see how this shakes out.

Apple also introduced a new 24" Cinema display on Tuesday. Now you can have a laptop as your main computer and still have all the display goodness of an iMac. The new Cinema display requires a new Apple MacBook, MacBook Pro, or MacBook Air with the newly designed Mini DisplayPort connector. It will *not* work with older laptops, if reporting from the event is correct. Sorry, older notebook owners, Apple thinks it's time for you to upgrade. Surprise.

Bigger, better, faster, more. That's the way of computers.

## Tips and Tricks

by Gene Madill

It was a dark and stormy night...yet many months ago I stumbled across the web site of [Creative Techs](#), a Seattle-based group that "...provides Macintosh IT support to Seattle area creative teams: Graphic design firms, advertising agencies, in-house creative departments, photography studios, PR firms, web design studios, and video houses." I am not of their target audience, but they have great tips that they will email to you every week. [Check old tips and sign up for their mailing list here.](#)

Our own Wayne Walker, music buff extraordinaire, happened to really like this [classic vinyl collection that I referred him to last year](#), and the timing is just right for you to check it out today.



Another tip I passed on to Wayne recently was [coconutBattery, which helps monitor laptop battery health.](#)

## New and Notable

OpenOffice is one of the big names in free, open source word processing. Their previous versions only worked on Mac under [X11 interface framework](#), but with the release of version 3 recently, OpenOffice is now fully Mac native.

OpenOffice is available for Linux, Windows, and Mac. It opens a wide array of file formats including the newest Microsoft Office ones.

The OpenOffice Suite includes word processor, spreadsheet, presentation, database, draw, and mathematical formula applications. With the exception of Entourage, the MS Mail client, this is more than is included in Microsoft's Office suite.

At present, there is a heavy demand for the latest version of OpenOffice and their website is struggling to keep up with the load. If you wish to download and try OpenOffice, and you have problems bringing up the website, please try back again in a few days. These people have built the proverbial better mousetrap, and the world is beating a path to their virtual door.

OpenOffice is available at [www.OpenOffice.org](http://www.OpenOffice.org).

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