

## **Introduction to the SBAMUG History**

*Back in late 2021 to early 2022 I wrote three articles on the history of the SBAMUG User group. I split them up such that each article was consistent with the article length in our on-line newsletters. Part 1 was published in October 2021, Part 2 in January 2022, and Part 3 was published in the February 2022 newsletter.*

*Well in May 2025 I picked up a missing box of our groups older newsletters from Dave Nathanson who found them while packing for an out of state move. This answers a few open questions that were discussed in the first three parts. So, I wrote part 4 of 4. Without a newsletter to publish this in, I just emailed it to the everybody mailing list.*

*While I could rewrite the entire series of articles, I decided to simply combine all four parts plus this introduction into a single combined PDF and upload it to the SBAMUG website on the about page. This will save the reader the need to look up old newsletters.*

*Jim Pernal*

## **SBAMUG HISTORY PART 1 of 4**

Several months ago, during one of our core group meetings, I asked about our club history. CW Mitchell responded that we were incorporated in October 1991. But we were in existence years before that. CW said we started as an Apple III user group. Asking around the core group it was apparent we did not have much on the start of the group.

This is part 1 of 3. There still is not a lot of information about the early days of the club, so perhaps we should call this part 2 of 4, or better go the programmer's convention and create a part 0 of 3 if and when new information comes available.

Gary Fortune started the club. Gary passed away unexpectedly in July of 2000. Which of course is why getting information on the early origins of the club is proving hard. Margaret Fortune, widow of Gary can only place the start between 1981 and 1983. This is consistent with Apple's creation of the Apple III computer.

First a bit of information about the Apple III computer. Apple's evolution is not Apple I, Apple II, Apple III, and then the Mac. The Apple 1 came out in April 1976. It was produced in limited numbers. The Wikipedia article says only 63 were confirmed to exist as of 2013. The Apple II computer came out in June 1977. It was followed by the Apple II+ in June 1979. Apple announced the Apple III in May of 1980, but did not ship until Nov 1980 in limited numbers. Volume shipments were in 1981. It was designed as an upscale business computer, and initially Apple figured it would replace the Apple II. It ran its own OS, and had Apple III specific programs. It could have 256 kB of Ram, as compared to 64 kB of the Apple II. It could reboot and run Apple II programs with only 48 kB available. It could not run Apple II and Apple III programs at the same time. It did have hardware issues. Heat buildup and chips becoming unseated from their sockets were of the issues, among others. There was not a lot of native Apple III software produced. The Apple III was discontinued on April 1984.

Apple did not drop the Apple II. The Apple IIe came out in January 1983. The Apple IIc came out in April 1984. The final Apple IIgs computer came out in September 1986 and remained in production until Dec 1992. If you count the Apple IIe card that went into the Macintosh LC computer, that continued until 1995. There was another parallel Apple product line with a Graphical User Interface (GUI). That was started with the Apple Lisa released in Jan 1983. At \$9,995 it was not really a personal or small business computer for the masses. The Macintosh computer came out in 1984 as a less costly alternative and lives on today.

The public internet did not really exist in the early 1980's. Dave Nathanson did get some material from Margaret Fortune when he took over as president of the SBAMUG in 2000. There does not appear to be any founding documents, rulebooks, Apple III newsletters, etc. to provide insight on the club's early years.

Microtimes was a monthly free pulp magazine that was available at various computer type stores. Initially there was one issue for all of California. Later it split into two editions, one for northern California and a second one for Southern California. Archive.org only has a handful of the Southern California editions.

There was a list of computer user groups in the November 1984 edition. South Bay Apple III User group was listed. Meetings were on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of each month at 7:30 PM. The meeting location was at a room on the CSU Dominguez Hills campus. "Product demo and discussions and more" Our PO box (which we had until recently) was used. "Contact Gary" and a phone number were given. In the Sept 1985 a similar listing existed. It does mention a Special interest group (SIG) met on the first Tuesday. The meeting location is now a room at the Harbor General hospital. Byte magazine was a gloss national publication. In their November 1985 issue, they talked about and listed thousands of user groups for all types of computers. The South Bay Apple III group is listed with Gary Fortunes name. It mentions monthly meetings, classes, and a newsletter. Dues were \$25.00 per year. Note that I have no club newsletters from that time.

There was a magazine devoted to the Apple III called OnThree. It was published out of Ventura, CA. It seems to have started in 1983. The magazine did not have user group listings in the early years. Applearchives website is missing a number of early issues. Later on, we do show up in their user group listings. We are listed for example in the March 1986 issue. In fact, we are still listed as the Apple III user group in the Nov/Dec 1988 issue! However, I don't think we were still the Apple III group.

Dave Nathanson was able to come up with a scanned copy of our June 1988 newsletter. We are calling ourselves the South Bay Apple Mac user group. Main meeting is on the last Wednesday of month. We meet at Ticor Title building on Artesia Blvd. in Torrance California. The building is just east of what is now Harbor Freight tools. No mention of Apple III at all in the newsletter. It is listed as Vol 1 No 6, so presumably this newsletter was started Jan 1988. Gary Fortune is listed as president. Dave also provided an October 1988 scan. The September newsletter never made it to press. This does seem to be the same string of Newsletters that continue to this day.

So, lots of unanswered questions. When did we start exactly? Any other meeting spots? How did we transition to a Macintosh user group? Our PO box remained the same as did our bank account. I feel it is unlikely that the group split into an Apple III and a Mac group. Likely the Mac became the main interest and we transitioned over. I've tried to look up the names in the 1988 newsletters. Several I believe passed away. One of our members had the number of another individual, but has been unable to get a call back. I tried calling another member who had a column. The phone number works, but goes continuously to a full voicemail, and the emails bounce. Again, let me know if you have more information.

There will be a Part 2 of 3 in an upcoming newsletter.

Jim Pernal

## **SBAMUG HISTORY PART 2 of 4**

Hopefully you have read part 1 of these articles. If not go to the older newsletter and read the article. We were at timeframe of June 1988.

Dave Nathanson has a newsletter that talks about us still meeting at Ticor title for the December 1989 meeting. This brings us to another gap in our history. The next newsletter I have is June 1991. We were now meeting at Pacific Avenue Elementary school in Manhattan Beach. So, we moved some where in-between Dec 1989 and June 1991.

During this time our president Gary Fortune had been asking for help with getting the club incorporated as a non-profit entity. I spoke with Wayne Inman. He said after four times or so of hearing this, he decided to help out. Wayne was involved with property management and would presumably be familiar with incorporating homeowner's associations. The word Apple in our name complicated and added time to the process. We are not affiliated with Apple Inc. Wayne went on to state he became good friends with Gary. Wayne mentioned traveling to the Bay area for an Apple event. Didn't remember if the event was Apple's or perhaps something like Macworld event put on by the magazine. Wayne stated many at the event seemed to know of Gary. In any event we were incorporated in October of 1991 as a Non-Profit, tax-exempt 501(c)3 organization.

In November of 1993 we moved to the math and science building at El Camino College for our meetings. The reason given for leaving Pacific Ave school, was that they were going to charge us for the meetings, and could not guarantee our last Wednesday meeting dates.

The meetings at El Camino did not last long. We moved to the Knob Hill Community center in September 1994. Members did not like to pay for parking at El Camino, or they had to park on the streets and walk a fair bit.

In November of 1994 Dave Nathanson got the club online with our own BBS. BBS stands for Bulletin Board System. For those who were not around and did not have a computer a bit of explanation is in order. This is not part the worldwide internet, even though the internet was around at the time but not yet popular. The BBS has a sever computer with a modem. Users could log in and read bulletins, read and send messages, and upload and download programs. Dave used the GUI based first class system. With the First Class client software you could log in via a dial up modem attached to your computer and click on things, rather than work with text based selections. Dave's BBS computer was linked to hundreds of other BBS's so we could get things like the latest mac shareware without having to load them locally.

On a personal note, in July of 1995 I filled in for Jeff Fox for making the Public Domain disk and the article for the newsletter. Jeff said after that I did a good enough job, so the position is yours! Seems hard to believe I'm still working this in 2021! Dr Dave became vice president in July 1995. He took over from Keith Cambra. Gary Fortune continued as president.

In September of 1995 the fee for use of the BBS was made part of the membership benefits and the dues were raised to \$35.00.

The internet was definitely getting more popular with the general public. We got our internet web page as sbamug.org in June of 1997. The BBS continued on until about 2000 per Dave Nathanson. Some issues came up later and we moved to sbamug.com in September of 2000.

In July of 2000 the club heard the sad news that Gary Fortune had unexpectedly passed away. Dave Nathanson became the president. It was some big shoes to fill. Gary was handling both the president's position as well as the treasurer position. In addition, there were other club tasks he was handling.

More to follow in Part 3 of this series.

Jim Pernal

## **SBAMUG HISTORY PART 3 of 4**

Hopefully you have read part 1 and part 2 of these articles. If not go to the older newsletters and read the article. We were at timeframe of the year 2000.

Dave Nathanson continued as president through the year 2003. We had elections and Glen Terry became the president. We continued to meet at the Knob Hill community center.

In 2003, the long running saga of deciding on and obtaining a larger projection screen started a continued into 2004. We are still using it. (Or were when we were at the VFW in person)

Glen Terry continued as president though 2007. In January 2008 LJ Palmer became president. In 2009 Glen Terry again became president.

The Knob Hill community center was a former elementary school that was leased to the city by the Redondo Beach school district. The club was informed that the center could not be guaranteed beyond June of 2009. So, for several months before March 2009, we looked for another place to hold meetings. In May of 2009 we began to meet at the VFW hall in Lomita. We technically still are with the VFW in terms of a meeting place. More about this in a bit.

In January 2010 LJ Palmer became president again. He continued though 2011. In January 2012 Arnold Silver became president. In January 2015 Clarence Baisdon became president. In January 2016 Robert (Kent) McDonald became president. He continues as president. As of the writing he has been elected president for 2022.

In April 2020 our meetings went virtual online using Zoom. This was due to Covid 19 and the VFW being closed. We have continued with Zoom meetings since then. Returning to the VFW when the covid situation improves is possible, but has not been decided as of this writing.

Well, that's a brief history of the SBAMUG. I haven't included the names of all the other volunteers. The vice presidents, Secretary's, Treasurer's, Membership, Programing (ie finding speakers), Newsletter editors, USPS liaison, Greeters, member development, directors at large, would take up a lot of space, but should be thanked anyway. Newsletters since 2005 are available on our website if you want to dig into this information.

As true of most user groups our numbers have decreased over the years. Pre internet, it was difficult to get answers to computer questions. While magazines could provide a good review of a program, they could not give a live demo of the program. That and answering questions was why in person demos were popular with our user group and

others around the world. In the early years we had many members that were professionals in the graphics/desktop publishing arena. Again, I hoping someone can fill in the early pre 1998 details of our club. It would also help to know the month we moved from Ticor Title to the Pacific elementary school.

If I get any new or corrected information I will follow up with another article.

Jim Pernal



## **SBAMUG HISTORY PART 4 of 4**

SBAMUG History part 3 of 3 was written in December 2021 and published in our newsletter. At that time, I stated that if new information came available, I would publish it. Well Dave Nathanson moved to Colorado in May 2025 and found a box of SBAMUG items and I picked it up. The box contained more pre 1991 newsletters and these provided the updates for this part 4.

The most interesting item was from our President at the time, Gary Fortune in the September 1989 issue. He mentions that Apple discontinued the Lisa and Apple III and that some members moved on to the IBM platform (ie MSDOS machines) while others went to the new Apple computer the Mac.

To quote Gary in the newsletter; "A couple of years ago we changed the III to Mac in our user group name." I would have liked it if he qualified it with "almost", "exactly", or "more than" in his couple of years comment to nail down the exact date, but it was then around Sept 1987 that we officially become a Mac user group in name.

Now there had to be discussions and interest in the Macintosh before this transition to a Mac user group, or they would not have changed it.

The earliest newsletter in the box was from March 1988 labeled Vol 1 no 3. On the back it mentions the new meeting place Ticor title building in Torrance. A few pages back it thanks Hal and Mickey of the Personal Computer Centre in Torrance. The store was located on Hawthorne Blvd just south of Sepulveda Blvd. It noted that our membership outgrew the size of the store for meetings.

In the November 1989 there was a new meeting place at the Pacific Ave Elementary school in Manhattan Beach. So, this fills in the missing exact date we moved there. In the September 1989 there is a callout for the need of a school auditorium sized for 150-200 to accommodate our growing membership. So this was the reason for the move.

So here is our listing of meeting places:

1984 CSU Dominguez Hills

1985 Meeting Room Harbor General Hospital

? to Feb 1988 Personal Computer Centre

March 1988 to October 1989 Ticor Title building

November 1989 to October 1993 Pacific Ave Elementary School Manhattan Beach

November 1993 to August 1994- El Camino College Torrance

September 1994 to April 2009 Knob Hill Community Center Redondo Beach

May 2009 to April 2020 VFW Hall Lomita

Due to Covid we have not held regular in person meetings post 2020. (Other than social picnics and Xmas pizza get togethers)

Some post 2021 group developments. One of our hardest working volunteers CW Mitchel passed away in Feb 2023. He held treasurer, Membership Chairman, post office liaison, and tax preparer positions, as well as being a very long term board member.

Yours Truly, Jim Pernal assumed the position of President in January 2024.

Well, the details about the Apple III group pre 1987 remain elusive; like when it was formed. Again any input to fill in the details would be appreciated.