The *GAB'er*

The Newsletter of the Greater Albany Apple Byters

MacBook - Time "Gadget of the Week"

Time has selected Apple's MacBook as its "Gadget of the Week."

The MacBook is a powerful and affordable option, especially for people who are uncertain about their Windows future.

The next version, Vista, might be a success, but with a MacBook you can hedge your bet. You get a computer that runs both Mac OS X and Windows XP today, and even appears to meet the minimum requirements for Vista once it gets here. Dell and HP should be very worried indeed.

Apple has been previously featured on Time's October 24th, 2005 front cover with Steve Jobs holding a 5G iPod. Other appearances have included the 4G iPod being another Gadget of the Week, and the G4 iMac being leaked on the advance January 14th, 2002 issue of Time.

College Students Rate iPods Over Beer

In what can only be described as a stunning development, undergrad students have rated Apple's iPod as the most "in" thing (according to a Student Monitor study reported by the AP), eclipsing beer for only the second time in the study's 18 year history. 73% of the students surveyed rated the iPod as "in", while beer and social networking website Facebook.com garnered second place with 71%. The last time beer was knocked out of the top spot was 1997, when the Intenet took the top prize.

Coordinator's Corner
by John Buckley

The June meeting will be a celebration of our Twenty-second Anniversary. By request, we will be having a special meeting beginning at 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday, June 14th with a dinner at the Plum Blossom Restaurant.

Please note the change in location. GAAB will provide the dinner. Sign up has been through my e-mail address (**jbuckley@nycap.rr.com**). Please make sure you contact me as soon as possible so I can make reservations. This should prove to be a Grand Finale for our twenty-second year.

Below are directions to get to the Plum Blossom at 685 Hoosick Road (Route 7).
See map. The restaurant is about 7 minutes from where we have our regular meeting at Troy High School.

The following are directions from Route 7 and the Northway in Latham.

1. Start out going SOUTHEAST on NY-7/TROY SCHENECTADY RD
2. Merge onto I-87 N/NY-7 E via the ramp on the LEFT toward SARATOGA SPRINGS/TROY.
3. Merge onto NY-7 E via EXIT 7 toward TROY/ COHOES.
4. End at 685 Hoosick Rd, Troy, NY 12180-8818, US

Next GAAB Meeting
June 14, 2006
7:00 p.m.

Annual Celebration

Plum Blossom Restaurant
Hoosick Street, Troy

Featured in this Issue

Serving the Apple Computer User Community Since May 1984

Officers & Special Interest Group Leaders

Program Coordinator
John Buckley
272-7128

Membership Director
Cecilia MacDonald
872-0823

Treasurer
Cecilia MacDonald
872-0823

Public Domain Librarian
Bill Shuff
393-9753

Newsletter Editor
Roger Mazula
782-1160

Education SIG
John Buckley
272-7128

Internet SIG
Lou Wozniak
465-2873

Apple Ambassador

Well here is the first impression from **Macworld** of the new MacBook we discussed last month. It has a lot of the features of the MacBook Pro for less money.

Apple's new MacBook

First impressions after a day with Apple's new consumer laptop
By Jason Snell
May 16, 2006 Macworld

When the MacBook Pro was introduced in January 2006, everyone was left wondering: If this is the MacBook Pro, where's the MacBook? Five months later, the other shoe dropped. The new non-pro MacBook is a 13-inch laptop that replaces both the iBook and the 12- inch PowerBook G4. But despite its lack of Pro in its name, this little laptop is much more powerful and full-featured than the laptops it's replacing.

A box-opening hubbub

This morning we got the call — two MacBooks were waiting for us at the downtown San Francisco Apple store. So Macworld Senior Editor Jonathan Seff and I set out on foot to grab Apple's latest laptops and bring them back to the offices for unpacking, poking, prodding, lab testing, and (who are we kidding?) eventual dissection.

We returned to a crowd of excited staff members, all waiting to see the new laptops. If the buzz around our offices is any indication, there's a tremendous pent-up demand for the MacBook. (One of our staff members has already placed his order for one, and more are threatening to do so even as we speak.) The MacBook box is a slightly smaller version of the thin MacBook Pro box.

Inside is the MacBook itself, along with an Apple Remote and a MagSafe power adapter. Once I slid the first MacBook out of its protective bag, the entire office oohed and aahed — it was the black model!

If you're an old Mac hand, you'll find the black MacBook quite reminiscent of the "Wall Street" generation of G3 PowerBooks. Unlike the white MacBook (or previous iBooks), the black MacBook has a matte finish. Numerous Macworld staff members complimented its look, although another group clearly preferred the "classic" shiny white appearance inherited from the iBook.

Size matters

Compared to a 15-inch MacBook Pro, the MacBook seems quite small. The MacBook is slightly thicker, but the MacBook Pro is 1.3 inches wider and .4 inches deeper than its new little brother. Likewise, the MacBook weighs 5.2 pounds, compared to the MacBook Pro's 5.6 pounds.

Internet SIG

Offloading Pictures on Vacation
by Kim Komando

Photo enthusiasts often struggle with vacations. It's a great opportunity to load up your camera with great shots. But what do you do when your memory card is full?

You don't have to take a laptop on vacation to store photos. There are smaller alternatives to free up your digital camera's storage cards.

The easiest option: Burn the files to a disc at a drugstore. But if that isn't possible, consider portable storage equipment.

Storage comes in three categories: hard drives, disc burning and connectors for thumb drives or MP3 players. After transferring the photos, clear your card and start shooting again. These things run on batteries, so they're as portable as your camera.

1. Hard drive. The FlashPac ($180) holds 40 gigabytes of photos. That's about 8,000 photos using a 10-megapixel camera at its highest settings. Its built-in card reader accepts Compact Flash, Microdrive, Secure Digital, Multi Media Cards, Memory Stick and xD cards. Its display shows file and status only. It does not display pictures.

If you want to see the photograph and not just a file name, the Epson P-2000 ($500) holds 36.5 gigabytes of photos. When your memory card is full, insert it into one of the built-in slots. The P-2000 is compatible with CompactFlash, IBM Microdrive, Multi Media Card and Secure Digital cards. It has outputs to display your pictures on a TV. It also will store and play back video files.

The ZEN Vision ($400) is a 30GB portable media player. It not only will store your digital photos, but it will also play back pictures, videos and music. It has a built-in Compact Flash slot. An optional card reader ($40) can be purchased for Secure Digital, Multi Media Card, xD, Memory Stick and TransFlash storage cards.

2. Disc burners. Portable burners are a little more straightforward and offer fewer features. Insert your memory card and burns your files to a CD or DVD.

The Disc Steno CP300 ($350) and Digital Photo Copy Cruiser Plus ($220) read most memory cards. The Disc Steno CP300 has a 1.5-inch screen and burns CDs and DVDs. The Copy Cruiser Plus only burns CDs, doesn't have a screen that can view pictures and runs on AC power. Both units can play DVDs and CDs on a television.

However, CDs are not necessarily a great medium. They hold only 700 megabytes of data - less than some memory cards. DVDs can hold 4.7GB. But that's still much less than a hard drive's capacity.

3. Linking devices. If your music player has a hard drive, it can store pictures. You'll need an accessory that will offload your photos. Of course, if your player is full of music, you won't have room for pictures.

The Apple iPod Camera Connector ($30) connects to your digital camera's USB connection. It works with the iPod with camera display and iPod with video. Apple lists compatible digital cameras on its site.

The USB Bridge ($40) links your digital camera to any device with a USB slot - MP3 players, thumb drives or external hard drives.

Apple Ambassador

But how you view size is a matter of perspective. I like little

The 12-inch PowerBook G4 atop a MacBook. But how you view size is a matter of perspective. I like little laptops. One of the perks of being the editorial director of Macworld is that I generally get to use whatever Mac system I want to. And yet at one point I was an iBook user, entirely because it was so much smaller than the Titanium PowerBook G4. When the 12-inch PowerBook was released, I glommed onto it and wouldn't let go. Only recently did I reluctantly switch to aMacBook Pro, taking on the added size and weight so I would be able to actually write about using an Intel-based Mac.

So from my admittedly skewed perspective as a lover of tiny laptops, I can't help but notice that the MacBook is most definitely bigger than the 12-inch PowerBook: it's two full inches wider and three-tenths of an inch deeper than that model, and weighs six-tenths of a pound heavier. (If you're an iBook G4 user, you'll find the MacBook slightly smaller, but slightly heavier.)

Still, users who prefer a smaller laptop — and were not inclined to buy a 15-inch MacBook Pro — will undoubtedly be excited about the MacBook. As someone who's been toting around a MacBook Pro for the last three weeks, I know I'm excited about it.

Unlike the 12-inch PowerBook and iBook, this new MacBook comes with a 13-inch widescreen display with a native resolution of 1280 x 800 pixels. (In contrast, the 12-inch PowerBook's screen

Education SIG

Staff Development 2.0

With summer coming on, many teachers and administrators will participate in Staff Development programs throughout the area. The following by David Jakes provides important ideas in how to develop such programs.

Staff Development 2.0

By David Jakes_May 15, 2006, URL: http://www.techlearning.com/story/showArticle.jhtml?articleID=187002843 _

A report recently released by the Center on Education Policy (see News & Trends) reveals that the four-year-old No Child Left Behind Act has indeed served to shine a light on the importance of professional development for K-12 educators. Beyond that basic fact, though, any real broad-based impact on the training of educators remains inconclusive. While the majority of states reports that NCLB has served to ratchet up the quality of professional development, most districts say it's had "minimal" effect.

Whatever the truth, concerns about professional development are sure to remain front and center in the foreseeable future. The definition of *highly qualified* as it applies to educators will evolve with changing technology and the increasing emphasis on accountability and customized learning.

How should districts plan for successful and sustained **technology-infused professional development**? Here are eight crucial ingredients to a high-quality program.

1. Think Multiples.

Effective programs recognize that all educators are not equal when it comes to applying technology to the learning process. A truly effective professional development program may have multiple courses occurring simultaneously, while addressing the needs of multiple types of learners.

For example, Adlai Stevenson High School in Lincolnshire, Illinois, requires every teacher to have a core level of technology competency and demonstrate mastery on a formal assessment. To prepare teachers for this, technology training and integration manager Charlene Chausis offers a dozen 30-minute sessions a week in the school's staff development lab. "Knowing that our staff has achieved a core level of proficiency allows us to move ahead and focus on the topic of integration," Chausis says.

Teachers can also elect to take the "Power Rangers" program, in which they make a commitment to participate in eight hours of professional development each semester in exchange for a laptop computer. This group of teachers then meets with Chausis on a monthly basis to develop integration strategies that can be extended to the entire staff.

To prepare for professional development, the assessment of educator skill level and readiness is absolutely critical. eListen by Scantron provides a Web-based survey for collecting data that can be used to plan for professional development. Coupled with district goals and expectations for student achievement, survey results provide a data-driven foundation for moving forward with training.

2. Align with Goals.

It's key that schools or districts identify technology standards for students and teachers and frame those standards as learning outcomes for students. A sound procedure is for administrators to employ formal data collection strategies to evaluate teacher mastery of standards and their impact on actual instruction. These standards should drive further professional development planning.

District 99 in Downers Grove, Illinois, has developed the Learner Standards for Technological Understanding, which provides a set of expectations for student technology knowledge. The standards are composed of three domains, each with its own set of subordinate components. Domain one addresses functional literacy — what tools should students know how to use? Domain two is based on the application of those tools to the problem-solving process. For example, can students use those tools to answer an essential question that has meaning to them? Finally, domain three identifies how students should use technology tools ethically. To maintain a consistent and focused program, district technology professional development activities are based on the same standards.

3. Evaluate.

The purpose of any professional growth activity should be to produce a change in educator behavior that ultimately results in increased student learning. Districts that offer high-quality professional development employ a thorough evaluation sequence that provides multiple types of data about the strengths and weaknesses of its programs and the link between professional development and changes in student performance.

In his book *Evaluating Professional Development*, University of Kentucky Professor of Education Thomas Guskey outlines a comprehensive five-step evaluation program. The components are:

- **Participants' reactions.** Evaluation at this level identifies the appropriateness of a program's content, process, and context. Was the content appropriate? Was the presenter knowledgeable? Was the coffee hot?
- **Participants' learning.** What are participants' beliefs toward the professional development topic, and has the event changed those attitudes and beliefs?
- **Organizational support and change.** Does the organization have the tools, services, and policies in place to support the training experience once teachers return to the classroom?
- **Participants' use of new knowledge.** Did participants implement what they learned? Did it change classroom practice?
- **Student learning.** Did the experience improve student learning? In most cases, that should be the most important question to ask.

4. Get Off-Site.

High-quality professional development programs support teacher as well as administrator attendance at technology conferences, seminars, and workshops. Getting out and about can be a healthy experience. Conference attendance can expose participants to cutting-edge ideas that can be brought back to the school district to stimulate discussion and growth.

Because not everyone can get away, districts should develop procedures and tools to extend the conference experience to those not attending the actual event. Most conferences now have wireless access, so a blog makes a handy tool for attendees to post notes, ideas, and resources for staff members not in attendance.

5. Dedicate Space.

A dedicated space for technology professional development sends a definite message: Staff training is mission critical.

Bill Burrall, coordinator of instructional technology for the Marshall County School System in West Virginia, has made this a priority. The district's two-year-old Digital Learning Center is used to deliver organization-wide professional development to enhance productivity and a wide range of workplace skills. Teachers can participate in a session on integrating Discovery's United Streaming content, administrative assistants can increase their spreadsheet skills, and maintenance staff can learn how to search for parts online. The Numonics system enables presenters in remote locations to deliver instruction, adding to the staff expertise. Training is available during the school day, after school, and summers.

Burrall stresses that though the center's tools may not all be cutting edge, they work well together, which is key. The center has 16

workstations; a presentation machine that's connected via a T-1 line to a 77-inch diagonal Numonics Interactive Presentation Manager; a digital projector; an Epson document camera; surround sound; and TV, DVD, and VCR feeds. The instructor/presenter has the advantage of controlling the workstations through AB Tutor Control for maximum presentation flexibility and efficiency.

6. Extend Training.

All too often, professional development consists of one-shot experiences that last from one to several days — mostly during the summer. But professional development doesn't necessarily have to be that way.

District 99 in Downers Grove, Illinois employs learning teams and learning clubs. Educators in learning teams receive five two-hour releases during school days following an initial training session. The purpose is to extend the conversation and the learning beyond the session. Participation is voluntary, and educators are required to pair up and make a presentation to the group. Learning clubs are structured similarly but occur after school.

Hunterdon Central High School in Flemington, New Jersey has just completed its first year of a tablet PC initiative, which was supported by three distinct professional development activities extended over the course of the school year. Teachers in the first cohort attended two days of professional development in the summer and then could attend drop-in days for one-on-one support with the school's information systems personnel. Additionally, participants attended monthly meetings focusing on classroom applications.

By moving beyond the "one-shot" experience, schools can take advantage of their in-house expertise while building leadership, internal capacity, and professional learning communities.

7. Invest in Staff

The development of internal capacity to lead professional development activities is absolutely crucial to the long-term success of a learning community. But this expertise takes time. District personnel must be given opportunities to lead professional growth activities and also the administrative, clerical, and financial support to get the job done. Most important, school districts must provide mentor relationships for beginning professional developers to help them plan and evaluate professional growth activities.

Professional development in Marshall County Schools is supported by a technology integration specialist, who is available for the planning and delivery of all training. "This year the district's technology integration specialist is based at our largest school, supporting 90-plus teachers," Burrall says. "We have seen an incredible increase in teacher comfort levels with technology integration and excitement about integrating it into instruction."

Chausis sums it up succinctly. "You can invest money in hardware and software, but technology that is not easily accessed and implemented will not be used," she says. "It is critical for schools to

also provide the 'peopleware' — on-site support personnel who can provide 'just in time' assistance once the technology is in place."

8. Encourage Community.

Web tools like blogs, wikis, podcasting, and social bookmarking make it possible for educators to define their own personal learning environments. These tools enable professionals to connect with experts and peers and obtain valuable information and resources relating to technology best practices. More important, these tools enable conversation, dialogue, and reflection, which are critical to professional growth and development activities.

Educators can take advantage of RSS feeds to deliver high-quality resources directly to their online mailbox or aggregator. The aggregator (http://bloglines.com, for example) serves as a single collection point, enabling the user to view all resources without having to access multiple Web locations. (See "The ABCs of RSS" at www.techlearning.com/ABCs).

These resources can be the raw material for rapid personal growth, because they allow educators to see what others are writing, reading, and finding on the Web.

This type of customizable learning experience is attractive to Linda O'Connor, science and technology coordinator of School District 205 in Elmhurst, Illinois. "I get to decide what's important and how it will help me, and I get the opportunity to learn and be proactive among other supportive professionals," she says.

At Monadnock Community Connections School (MC2) in Keene, New Hampshire, coaching and feedback are critical to professional development. Each teacher maintains an online portfolio; weekly reflections are e-mailed to Principal Kim Carter, who responds to each educator. Dialogue and reflective practice is the key, as is the development of small professional learning communities.

"MC2 is based on the belief that all members of the educational community are continuously learning, that all practice is founded on research and best practices," Carter says. "The tenets of a professional learning community are intentionally integrated throughout our community...all staff write a weekly reflection for me, and I write weekly reflections for the staff as well as for the community (students, parents, and interested stakeholders). Operating in the context of a professional learning community provides all staff members with pervasive, shared support systems while simultaneously modeling the behaviors we seek to develop in our students."

David Jakes has spent 20 years in education as a teacher, staff developer, and technology coordinator.

Tech Forum TIE IN

21st Century Strategies for Professional Development

Increasing time demands on teachers, new and exciting technologies (blogs, wikis, podcasts), "digital native" students how — do these and other 21st-century realities affect professional development?

Visit www.techlearning.com/events and click on Tech Forum Chicago 2005 to access conference presentation materials on this topic.

Toolbox

High-quality professional development means high-quality tools. Here is a sampling of resources used by the districts included in the article.

District 99 in Downers Grove, Illinois uses Electronic Registrar Online to streamline the necessary but time-consuming administrative processes that are fundamentally important to successful programs. The system enables teachers to register for classes online, develop schedules for professional growth, manage growth plans, perform evaluations, and keep track of all the necessary documents required for state recertification. The district also employs Scantron's eListen to deliver surveys and manage data relative to district-wide operations, including professional development.

Adlai Stevenson High School in Lincolnshire, Illinois uses a variety of technology tools to empower staff development. Moodle, an open source learning management system, is used to support professional development activities through the use of discussion boards, and a new blog, E^2 = Educating Educators, provides daily tips and insights into the effective application of technology.

Hunterdon Central High School in Flemington, New Jersey is in the process of expanding its Moodle tablet site and will add screencasts, podcasts, and video clips of instructional best practices as they apply to tablet technology. In addition to in-house professional development, other opportunities take advantage of technology to build community and deliver 24/7 professional development activities. Programs such as the Star Online program, the Apple Digital School Community, and the Discovery Educator Network feature online resources for building this kind of community of best practices.

Marshall County, West Virginia's Digital Learning Center features Numonics Interactive Presentation Manager, an Epson document camera, AB Tutor Control, and various software and service applications, such as Discovery's unitedstreaming.

Apple Ambassador

Continued from page 3.

could only display 1024 x 768 pixels.) This screen is slightly taller, much wider, and quite a bit shinier, since it's the first Mac laptop to feature a screen with a glossy surface.

If you've ever walked past a PC laptop and noticed that its screen was incredibly reflective, you've seen the same type of screen that's been incorporated in the MacBook. While it's too early for me to have reached a judgment about whether this new screen style is an improvement to Apple's older, anti-glare screens, I am sure of this: some people will love it, and others will hate it. In the right conditions the glossy screen looks absolutely gorgeous; however, it's also remarkably reflective, and it can be quite distracting to continually see yourself reflected back by your laptop's screen.

Key features

Speaking of love-it-or-hate-it features, this new MacBook features an entirely new keyboard style for Apple. No doubt the new style will quickly win adherents as well as vociferous critics, although in my brief tests with the keyboard it seemed fine. The biggest change with this keyboard is its look. Previous Apple laptops have featured keyboards with keys that are wide at the base, but narrower at the top. As a result, even though there are fairly large spaces between the square areas where your fingers contact the keys, there are only tiny gaps down at the base of the keys.

This new MacBook keyboard does away with that approach. The MacBook's keys don't get wider at their base. Instead, they're perfect squares that descend into the innards of the MacBook. It's hard to describe, but it's definitely a different look and feel. Speaking of a different feel, the MacBook is reminiscent of the original, clamshell iBook in that it doesn't have a latch on its front.

Instead, there's a slight indentation on the MacBook's front edge that lets you grab hold of the display's frame and open it up. Opening and closing the MacBook feels quite comfortable — opening doesn't require too much effort, but the laptop remains snugly closed until you really want to open it. And closing the MacBook felt remarkably stable and smooth.

I'm not entirely sold on the MacBook's mouse button, which didn't move very much when I clicked on it. I found myself wanting more tactile feedback when I click, but perhaps I'll get used to it as I use it more. However, I was impressed with one new feature of the button: when you click while you've got two fingers on the MacBook's trackpad, the button becomes a control-click/right-clickthe button: when you click while you've got two fingers on the MacBook's trackpad, the button becomes a control-click/right-click button. (This is an option; you can turn it on or off in the Trackpad tab of the Keyboard & Mouse preference pane.) It's not quite a two-button mouse, but it sure beats reaching for the control key when you want to see a contextual menu. (And it's a feature the 15- inch MacBook Pro doesn't yet offer, although it does appear on the 17-inch model.)

Extras aplenty

Although Apple could have skimped on features with the MacBook to distinguish it from the higher-end MacBook Pro models, it didn't. The MacBook contains many of the same features you would find in a MacBook Pro, including a built-in iSight camera and an Apple Remote with built-in Front Row software. As with all other new Apple systems, there's no longer a built-in modem — Apple's external USB modem is $49 extra. And as with all Macs these days, AirPort Extreme and Bluetooth are built in to all MacBook models. The MacBook's also got built-in audio input and output, in both digital and analog forms, and support for external displays up to the 1920 x 1200 pixel resolution of Apple's 23-inch studio display. The MacBook can drive external displays separately from its internal display, allowing for true screen-spanning. You can even run the MacBook in lid-closed mode, driving a large external monitor. (The MacBook does not come with any video adapters, however — if you want to drive a DVI or VGA display you'll need to buy a corresponding adapter cable for $19 each.)

Although the MacBook uses the same Intel onboard video technology as the Mac mini, rather than dedicated video circuitry as in the MacBook Pro and iMac, we found that the MacBook was able to play back HD movie trailers with ease. I'd expect the MacBook's game performance to be quite similar to that of the Core Duo version of the Mac mini, however — in other words, it'll lag a bit behind the systems with more powerful video circuitry. What's missing from the MacBook that the MacBook Pro provides? The big one is an ExpressCard slot. The MacBook Pro also supports dual-link DVI, which lets it drive a 30-inch display. There's also no keyboard backlighting. Several other relatively minor features are lacking — if you're curious, be sure to check Apple's spec sheet carefully before buying.

Beneath the battery

The MacBook's battery is long and narrow, somewhat reminiscent of the original iBook battery — but not nearly as gigantic! We'll work to test the MacBook's battery life, although right now we have no idea how long it'll run on a single charge. Stay tuned for more in our full review.
Underneath the battery you'll find two SO-DIMM slots, which let you take the MacBook up to as much as 2GB of RAM. To get to the slots, you've got to unscrew a small metal housing and then pull back on one of two levers to pop out that particular RAM module. It's relatively easy to do, but it's a different process than on other Mac laptops I've seen.

And here's a tiny observation: the MacBook doesn't have little rubber feet that are bound to fall off in the first month you own the laptop. Instead it's got big plastic feet embedded in its undercarriage. And they work quite well while being unobtrusive. Big power, little package

Although the MacBook is Apple's lowest-priced laptop, it's about as far from a "low-end" model as you could get. Although you can no longer buy a new Mac laptop for under $1,000, the cheapest MacBook (a $1,099 model) features a dual-core 1.83 GHz processor.

Apple could have chosen to release a cheap, underpowered MacBook with an underpowered Intel Core Solo processor — the same approach it took with its Intel-based Mac mini models — but it didn't go down that path. As a result, even the lowest-priced MacBook is a remarkably powerful system.

And for those who appreciate the MacBook's small package but want to make sure it's packed with as much power as possible, the add-on options for this system are incredible. Yes, a maxed-out MacBook will cost you $2,049 ($2,199 if you want it in black!), but for that price you'll get a dual-core 2GHz processor, 2GB of RAM, a 120GB serial ATA drive, and a SuperDrive. The iBook might have gotten a reputation as a compromised low-cost laptop, but the MacBook is as powerful as you — and your bank account want it to be.

GAAB Internet Addresses

Will Aubrey ....waubrey@neric.org
Steve Bradley ....ssbradley@adelphia.net
John Buckley ....johnb179@aol.com
                                       buckleyj@troy.k12.ny.us
Anthony Eldering ....tonye@nycap.rr.com
Harold Flax ....hflax1@nycap.rr.com
Lilajane Frascarelli ....afrascar@nycap.rr.com
Les Goldstein ....lgoldst1@nycap.rr.com
Dan Gonsiewski ....dgonsiewski@yahoo.com
Richard Hester ....hesterFP@capital.net
Bruce Hodsoll ....bhodsoll@nycap.rr.com
George Johnsen ....gjohnsen@sprynet.com
Cecilia MacDonald..........cecilia@midtel.net
Stella Zuris Mallon ....SunnyStela@adelphia.net
Mike Mannarino ....rfd230@nycap.rr.com
Roger Mazula ....aluzam@aol.com
                                       rmazula1@nycap.rr.com
Brendan O'Hara ....bohara1@nycap.rr.com
Robert/Rose Ostrander ...theostranders@earthlink.net
Bill Shuff ....wjs206@earthlink.net
Eric/Lee Rieker ....Erieker@aol.com
Ellie Smith ....eas715@aol.com
Jen Rice ....jrice001@nycap.rr.com
Roy Stevens ....roystevens@aol.com
Terry Tyler ....tylerbears@airstream.net
Edward Walsh...................ewalsh@nycap.rr.com
Lou Wozniak.....................louw@nycap.rr.com

Directions

Troy Hight School is on Burdett Avenue in Troy. Take Alternate Route 7 into Troy (it becomes Hoosick Street), turn right on Burdett Avenue. The school is past Samaritan Hospital, on the left. Call an officer if you need additional directions.

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

The GAB'er

c/o Roger C. Mazula, Editor
12 Shelbourne Drive
Loudonville, NY 12211

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