

IT'S ALL ABOUT SHARING...

Twenty years ago, on April 21st, 1987, Macintosh Users East held their first formal meeting at Durham College; among our current members are at least three of the pioneers known to have attended that first meeting: John Field, Chris Greaves, Helen Alves. (Our late, well respected President, Jim Foster, was also one of those pioneers and played a major role in building and fostering MaUsE throughout the years).

As a club, and as Mac users, we have come a long way since those early days, and so, in this birthday month tribute, please allow me to share a little of the club's history with you.

The title of this piece really says what the club is and always has been about, sharing knowledge and information; it all began....

GENESIS

In the winter of 1987 John Field, a young Certified Engineering Technologist (CET) who worked for EDS of Canada, Ltd. in Whitby; Stuart Blower, Owner Operator of 'The Communications Factory' in Oshawa; and Chris Greaves, the experienced founder of two computer clubs, got together one evening to talk about the possibility of forming a second Apple Macintosh users club in the Durham region, by the end of the evening they had decided that it was feasible to do so and that they would host an evening meeting at the Whitby Public Library for interested Apple computer users.

Chris Greaves writing in the March 1998 issue of Double Click stated: "We saw the Mac as a machine with great potential ! We saw an exciting new interest in business, professional and home applications which we thought should be shown to old and new users alike. We saw a need to increase the rate of users knowledge in practical applications. The need to train the people to use the Mac well; the way to accomplish this was to form a club."

Publicity for that initial meeting was done through personal contacts with known Apple computer users, notices posted in Stuart Blower's business and at the library, and, through the Durham Region Apple Users Group.

The inaugural meeting of people interested in becoming members of the new club was held in a meeting room at Whitby Library in March of 1987. The old library had a single meeting room that was located on the upper floor, it could comfortably hold maybe 15 people and, in a pinch about 20 people could be squeezed into that space. Therefore, if the club was to grow and prosper, a larger, more suitable, regular meeting venue had to be found.

Among items discussed and decided at that meeting were:

- when the club would meet;
- where the club would meet;
- how much the annual membership fee would be;
- the name the new club would be known by.

An interim executive was chosen that comprised Chris Greaves, John Field, and Stuart Blower: Chris Greaves accepted the interim presidency of the fledgling club.

The first regular meeting of the club was held on April 21st, 2007 at Durham College with the meeting topic 'Desktop Publishing'.

During its twenty years of history the club has held its meetings in a variety of facilities each one chosen for a different reason, sometimes based on cost, sometimes on the physical size and layout of the room, at other times on the changing technical needs of the club's membership. Trying to track down exactly where the club met for every meeting has proved nigh on impossible, but we do know the principle locations and why they were chosen at a given time.

Chris Greaves relates: *"I became Warden of St. Thomas Anglican Church in Brooklin and during my time we built a new Parish Hall. The vestry council gave permission [and a room] rate for a monthly Wednesday meeting date and we moved the new club's venue to St Thomas' in Brooklin. (Apple's Canadian H.O. was just down highway seven in Markham and many Apple reps did presentations for the club). During the years that we were at St. Thomas' we had members from Scarborough to Port Hope."*

In 1994 the club moved its meetings to Room 135, Anderson Collegiate in Whitby. The stay at Anderson was short, and in September 1995 we again moved the meetings, this time to the Lecture hall of Henry Street High School in Whitby.

Doug Kettle was instrumental in getting our meetings moved to Henry Street High School because they had a formal lecture theatre which, at the time, the executive thought was a good venue. The lecture hall at Henry Street High was built 'theatre style' with banked seating enough for over a hundred people and plenty of room at the front for the presentors to work in. Built-in movie screens were a plus and provided a good surface onto which the programs being demonstrated could be projected. Getting the projector to work was not always easy, it was a unit that we borrowed free of charge and sometimes there were technical difficulties in getting it to work properly, but, during those 'we gotta figure it out' delays, the members were invariable in good spirits, socialized with each other, and they knew that the ensuing program would more than compensate for those (usually) short delays.

Jim Foster stated: "One issue we had with holding meetings in high schools was that the schools were generally closed for the summer by the time of our June meeting; for that reason for many years special arrangements had to be made for a separate June meeting site." Wednesday, March 26th 2003 was the last date that we held a regular meeting at Henry High School.

In April 2003 the club moved its regular meetings to the Sanctuary of Faith United Church in Courtice. The church's sanctuary is a very large meeting hall that, in addition to its principle role as a place of worship, is also used for a variety of other functions and meetings, it could probably hold three hundred people, is well equipped with computer projection and audio systems, but, due to its construction, (very little sound absorbing materials and a high open metal roof/ceiling), the hall has terrible acoustics and often at meetings it was difficult to hear correctly what the presenter was saying...

At the church we also had the use of a smaller downstairs room where members could congregate prior to the actual meeting and discuss problems that they might be having with their individual computer systems. A unique feature of that pre-meeting gathering was that someone would bring in a Pizza and cold drinks that members could share for a nominal contribution to the club's treasury. The club also had the use of the church's kitchen that adjoined the sanctuary and we were able to sell coffee and cold drinks to members at the mid meeting break. The club made a small profit from the sale of those items.

I believe it is correct to say that the choice of Faith United Church was not particularly popular with members; the location was not central for most people, and, the main hall is so large that no matter how many people were at a meeting, the hall always still seemed to be almost empty: in the final few meetings at Courtice, we were lucky if 25 people showed up for a meeting...

In late 2003 the town of Whitby started to build a new library behind the existing building on Dundas Street, the building process seemed to take forever to complete, but, by the spring of 2005 the old building had been demolished and the magnificent new facility was opened for use: it was time for MaUsE to make another move!

In September 2005 the MaUsE members meetings moved to Meeting Room One in the new Central Library located on Dundas Street in Whitby: it is a modern, well equipped facility, has high speed internet service and a laptop projector that is available for the club's use at a very low rental. At first we only used the 'a' half of meeting room one, but after a couple of meetings we decided that meetings would be more comfortable if we used both halves ('a' plus 'b') of the meeting room which, when used as a single room, has the capacity to seat eighty-eight people 'theatre' style.

Other meeting places

In addition to the club's regular meeting places a number of meetings were held in other locations, some of them 'special' meetings, others because the high schools were not available in late June; the club is known to have held one or more meetings at:

- A lecture theatre at the Durham College South Campus near Thickson Road and Highway 40
- A boardroom located in the GM Headquarters Building on Colonel Sam Drive by the lake.
- The EDS Boardroom at the EDS offices located in the Lang Tower of the Whitby Mall.
- A cafeteria at the Durham College North Campus where we had our first and only ever wine and cheese reception meeting.
- In September 2002 - a special meeting at Faith United Church in Courtice that MaUsE jointly sponsored with the Durham Region PC Users' club for a featured 'special' presentation by Adobe Canada. That meeting was our introduction to the place we would later call 'home'; we held members' meetings in the Faith United Church from April 2003 until July 2005.

'What's in a name?

That which we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet'.

At the time that MaUsE was formed there already existed an Apple users club in the region, the 'Durham Region Apple Users Group,' as the Durham name was taken the question became 'what to call the new club?' The consensus of people that I have talked with is that the name 'Macintosh Users East' was arrived at because it was the first Ontario Apple-Mac club formed east of Toronto; Chris Greaves believes that it was John Field who suggested the name Macintosh Users East, John's suggestion was adopted and, apparently, that was the genesis of the club's name.

From the beginning the club has used the acronym 'MaUsE,' although it was originally written in lower case except for the letter 'M.': Jim Foster stated that as far back as he could remember it has been printed 'MaUsE.' but the earliest printed use I can find in that specific upper and lower case format occurs in the November 1989 Double Click. As to why it is printed in that manner, I again turned to Jim for an explanation: "*Capitalizing the first letters of the three words in our club name seemed to be both appropriate in its own sense but also seemed to be consistent with the way Apple used capitalization in mid word such as in MacPaint, MacDraw, MacWrite, etc.*"

Club Presidents

During the club's history seven men have served as the club's president: Chris Greaves - 1987: John Field - 1988/89: Stuart Blower - 1990: Jim Foster 1991/92: Hugh Amos - 1993/94: Bruce Cameron 1995/96/97/98/99/2000: Jim Foster 2002/03/04/05/06: Michael Shaw - November 2006 to present.

To say that the above named served as President only tells part of the story, all of them wore many club hats and contributed in innumerable ways to the club's day-to-day running.

Treasurers/Membership Chairmen

Throughout the history of the club the treasurer has usually also served as the Chairman of Membership. Interestingly, only three people have filled that joint role since the club's inception, they are: Dean Fry, Doug Kettle and John Kettle. John Field, for a short period, served as membership Chairman.

DoubleClick

The club's first newsletter was published as a single page, printed on both sides, and issued in April 1987. In January of 1988, the very first regular issue appeared in members' mailboxes with the statement of editor, Stuart Blower, on page one, (of four), 'Our First incredible MAUSE Newsletter!' John Field, the president of the club, said in his welcoming message: "*During the formation of our group in 1987 we saw the group grow from just a concept between three people to an active membership in excess of thirty.*" John's message ended with the words - '*Together we are living the vision*' - a slogan that was used in 'Double Click' for a number of years. Since that time DoubleClick has grown to be the pre-eminent Mac Club newsletter in Canada, most editions now run to more than 30 pages.

Stuart Blower was the first publisher of Double click and also looked after the printing of the early editions.

The early issues of 'Double Click' were most often a 'collegiate' effort; the executive all contributing their respective talents to getting the newsletter produced. 'Double Click' has officially had five editors: Stuart Blower, Jim Foster, Hugh Amos, Neil Oates, and currently, (2007), Michael Shaw. To state that the newsletter has had five editors is an over simplification, many issues did not state whom the editor of that particular edition was, and, in many other issues, instead of listing an 'editor,' 'Double Click' simply listed a 'publisher' who, presumably, did double duty acting also as the editor; it is also evident that some of MaUse's presidents did double duty acting as editor in addition to their other duties.

Many editions of 'Double Click' carried the names of 'assistant editors' - 'editorial assistants' and/or 'contributors'; they included - John Field - Ken Holyk - Chris Greaves - Bruce Cameron - Justin Derrick - Michael Gilhooley; all of whom had a great deal to do with the contents of various editions. In parts of 1996 and 1997, Ian Hopkins, Gayle Sutherland and Cathie McCabe were shown as being responsible for 'Double Click's' graphic design and production; credit must also be given to Doug Kettle who, for a number of years, looked after distribution of the printed newsletter.

Throughout its history 'Double Click' has often appeared with very imaginative cover art, most of it by unidentified artists, however, we do know that in the mid-nineties Sean Murphy was responsible for many very interesting cover designs and that Michael Shaw, in his years as editor, has continued the tradition and has produced numerous notable covers for the newsletter.

In 1999 The club's executive took a look at the cost of mailing 'Double Click' to members and found that it was eating up a disproportionate amount of the club's revenue; after much soul searching the executive decided to ask members to download and print their own copy of the newsletter; the October '99 issue of 'Double Click' made the following announcement:

"Beginning with the November issue there will be a definite and obvious change in the publishing format of 'Double Click.' Due to financial constraints and reduced

membership numbers the future editions of our ultra-fine newsletter will no longer be sent out on paper via Canada Post. The 'Double Click' will still be published as a .PDF file and continue to be posted to The Source BBS Conference which bears its name."

There was some adverse reaction from a limited number of members to the change, who, for various reasons, could not download and print their own copy of 'DoubleClick'; therefore, a decision was made by the executive to print a limited number of paper copies of each edition and make them available to members who specifically request that they receive a paper copy; John Kettle, our current Treasurer and Membership Chairman, looks after their distribution.

Our Many Volunteers

This brief partial history of the club would be woefully lacking if I failed to mention that during the past two decades many dedicated volunteers have served the club in a variety of other ways. It is not possible (in the limited space of the current newsletter available to me) to name all of those fine people, so, rather than leaving out some who are not known to me, I will simply state that their services all contributed to the clubs growth and longevity and we owe each of them our sincere thanks.

Dedication

This article is dedicated to the memory of the late Jim Foster, Macintosh Users East's President for a number of years; Jim was a good friend and mentor to Mac users in Durham Region and Canada; also to many other Mac users in North America, in Europe and in Asia; the club's present strength and vitality is a continuing tribute to the years of dedicated service given to the club by 'our Jim.'

Notes:

In this article, other than the first mention of his name, I have deliberately NOT said 'the late Jim Foster' believing that to do so would be unnecessarily repetitive.

Much of the material in this article was gleaned from the archives of DoubleClick, other details were given to me by Jim Foster, Helen Alves and Chris Greaves. Any errors are probably mine; and omissions, of which there are bound to be some, are due to the lack of available records.

Stan Wild, Whitby, March 2007.