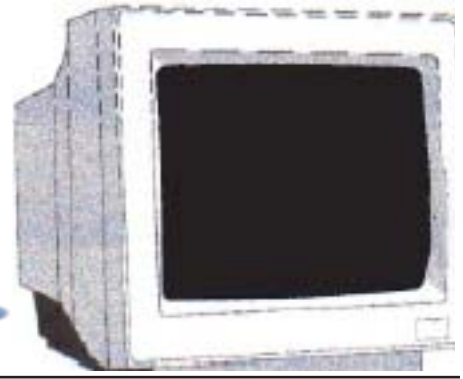


# CVAUG Monitor



Cumberland Valley Apple User Group Newsletter [WWW.CVAUG.ORG](http://WWW.CVAUG.ORG)

June 2004

## A Word From The President

This month has been another crazy one for me personally. In between renovating a bathroom “child proofing” the lower 1/3 of the kitchen and traveling out of state every weekend in May except one, I was also busy putting together as many software demos and freeware/shareware packages as I could for this month’s meeting. This is why I was so pleased to get an article submission from Wayne Younkins this week. I guess my begging for articles has started working.

Keep those creative juices flowing and maybe this monthly newsletter can one day get a table of contents!

## Digitizing Video

By Wayne Younkins

OK, I give up. DVD is here to stay and VHS is on the way out like Super 8. But what do I do with all those VHS home movies? I don’t want to wait until the last VHS machine is sold because by then it might be too late to save my home movies. To keep the ones I have until I’m ready to dub them over might not be a good idea because it’s getting harder and harder to find someone who can fix VCR’s.

I had not worked with video on the iMac before, I had used iPhoto by connecting my digital camera to my iMac via a USB cable, but I had yet to use iMovie or iDVD to burn a DVD. So, now I’m thinking to myself, “Maybe video is done the same way.”

So I’m thinking, “If I play back my home movies from my VHS machine into my iMac, and then something magical happens, and then I could use iMovie to piece them together, and then I could use iDVD to burn a DVD copy of my home movies, and then I would have home movies on a disk that is supposed to last 10,000 years, unlike tape which really only lasts 10 years before the oxide starts to flake off unless you keep them in an airtight vault @ 40 degrees Fahrenheit with 20% humidity that never varies and then they might last 40 years.” (Yes, my mind thinks in run-on sentences.) Don’t you lie awake at nights worrying how long your home movies will last?

“Wait a minute,” I said to myself. “What’s this magic part about?” Sacred bovine, Batman! I didn’t know how to get video into my iMac. So why do I have iMovie and iDVD if I can’t get video into my iMac. I’ll put that one down under “Things I Should Have Asked the Salesman Before I

## This Month Christmas in June

Bought the Thing.”

I asked around and a friend said they run video through their camcorder which converted it to DV and then into their computer for editing. But I didn’t want to spend that much to replace my camcorder just for this.

Quick, to the Internet! It was then that I found out that USB is not the connection of choice for video, but Firewire is. Both USB and Firewire have specifications which can be as fast as 400 Megabits per second, but the USB structure is packet sized and there is a lot of handshaking and housekeeping overhead going on that keeps the actual data bit rate a lot lower than 400 Mbps, sometimes only 7 Mbps. The preferred method here is Firewire which is made for streaming video up to 400 Mbps. (There is another firewire standard that is 800 Mbps.) Hey, my iMac has Firewire. How thoughtful. So, I think again, “All I have to do is plug my VCR into the IEEE 1394 connector Firewire port and.... something magic happens again.” “Again with the magic.” Back to the Internet, again.

I then found the ADS Technologies Pyro API-550 A/V Link. It comes in PCI card form, PCMCIA form, or externally powered in a box. I have an iMac that has no slots so I bought the one in a box. It works with most PCs and Macs. It works on any iMac, iBook, G3, and G4 with a Firewire port. It works with iMovie, Final Cut Express, Final Cut Pro, Adobe Premiere, Avid Xpress, etc. It comes with VideoStudio 7 for PC. It will convert 8mm, Beta, VHS, DVD to DV format and back the other way without a computer, or to Firewire into your computer. It will take RCA connector Video and Audio, or S-VHS plug, or Component connections (YPbPr).

Also, on the internet I found some reviews of this product on Amazon.com that were quite harsh. One point was that it does not work with the latest OSX software. I checked the spec sheet again and found that it specifically mentions OS 9.x, OS 10, and OS 10 Jaguar, but does not mention 10.3 Panther. I have 10.2.8 Jaguar and it runs. The second complaint was frame

grabbing. Apparently, any disturbance in the tape, such as a bad edit, makes it freeze the last good frame and halts the audio for some time before it can recover. I checked the Pyro API-550 product description again and found that a link was provided to a patch can



be downloaded from the Apple web site to help this problem. This patch is meant for developers and is not yet included with the regular operating systems as it is a work in progress. I tried the Pyro API-550 both ways with and without the patch. I found that the loose edits were better with the patch and did not halt the importing of the video clip. But still, it did not like a gap in the tape where there was static. It still took a few seconds to recover and be able to import again. So, when this happened, I just started another clip file and joined the clips together later in iMovie. The third complaint was about the

quality. I think what they were referring to was pixilation (little squares in video). I think there wasn't much to complain about here. If you really look you can see pixels but no one else at my house noticed. My brought over a DVD of a class project shot with a Sony DV cam and it had them too. It was certainly better than when I downloading video from the flash memory of my camcorder through the USB port. Keep in mind that I bought this for home movies and because it's cheap. If it were in a professional environment, then there is a professional version that costs around \$530. Perhaps that one is better. The price of a Pyro API-550 is about \$250. But [www.firewire-1394.com](http://www.firewire-1394.com) has it for \$100 less with an "instant rebate". So for about \$150 plus shipping you can put iMovie to work and preserve those home movies for so long that apes can watch them when they take over the planet.

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**"Bill Gates is just a monocle and a Persian Cat away from being one of the bad guys in a James Bond movie."  
-- Dennis Miller**