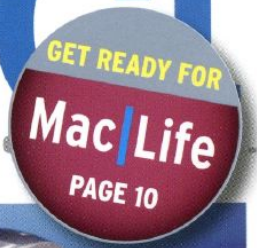




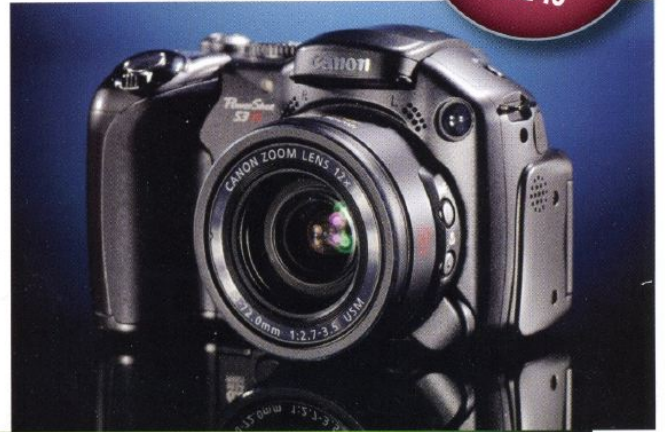
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SURPRISE!

**Nine things
you may not
know about
your Mac**

by **Niko Coucouvanis,
Logan Kugler, and
Rik Myslewski**

Everyone has secrets—even your Mac. Well, “secrets” may be too strong a word; how does “little-known talents” work for you? Did you know that your Mac can help you create new keyboard shortcuts in most apps? That it can proofread—out loud? Are you familiar with its security tricks? Its self-repair skills? Come along with us as we uncover some of your Mac’s more exotic capabilities. They may

not all be new to you, but we’re willing to wager that by page 36 you’ll have said “I didn’t know that!” more than

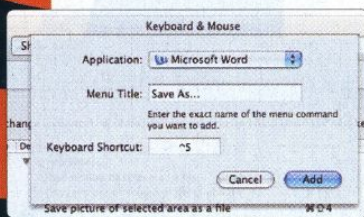
a couple of times—and that the next time you approach your beloved Mac, it will be with even more respect.



SURPRISE!

YOU CAN CREATE YOUR OWN KEYBOARD SHORTCUTS

Your Mac's mouse is great and all that, but reaching and clicking can be a time sink. Luckily, your Mac has a riot of keyboard shortcuts just waiting to enhance your productivity. For example, did you know that you can instantly access any application's Preferences by pressing Command-, (comma), or open a selected folder and all its subfolders in List view by pressing Option-Command-Right Arrow? Now you do—and you can discover many more such time savers in Apple's tech note number 75459; check it out at the euphoniouly named <http://docs.info.apple.com/article.html?artnum=75459>.



Click Add, and Microsoft Word will display the Save As pane when you press Control-S.

Keyboard shortcuts are great productivity boosters—especially when you create your own.

Even better, if you don't find a shortcut for the action you want shortcutted, you can create your own. Launch System Preferences > Keyboard & Mouse. Click the Keyboard Shortcuts tab and then click the plus-sign icon at the bottom left. A pane will drop; in its Application

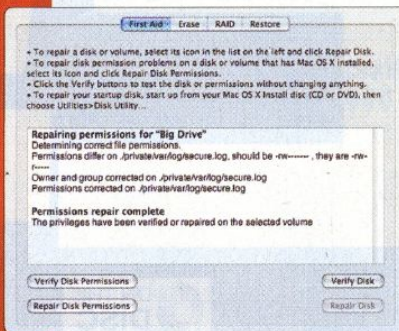
pull-down menu, choose the application that you want to create a keyboard shortcut for and then type the exact name of the menu command that you want shortcutted. For example, if you want to create a shortcut for Save As in Word, you need to add the ellipsis after As (i.e., Save As...). Then click your cursor in the Shortcut field and enter the key-combination you want to use. Click the Add button and you've just programmed a keyboard shortcut; the next time you open that app, it'll have your new shortcut. (Disclaimer: In our experience, this technique works with most apps, but not all, and sometimes we had to first open and close the menu that the command was in before the new keyboard command would activate.)

To remove a keyboard shortcut, scroll to the bottom of the list in System Preferences > Keyboard & Mouse > Keyboard Shortcuts, where you'll find a section entitled Application Keyboard Shortcuts. Select the shortcut you want to cut short and click the minus-sign icon; the next time you open the app it's related to, the shortcut will have vanished.

YOUR MAC CAN REPAIR ITSELF

Like you, any computer benefits from good hygiene practices, but your Mac brings its own toothbrush—it's called Disk Utility (/Applications). Simply using it to repair disk permissions fixes a surprising number of problems. To do so, Launch Disk Utility, select your startup volume in the list on the left, click the First Aid tab if it doesn't auto-select, then click Repair Disk Permissions, and wait until the process is completed. (Skip the Verify Disk Permissions button—why bother if you want to repair them anyway?) You'll notice that you can't repair permissions on volumes that don't have Mac OS X installed on them. So, who said life is fair?

You also have help for more-serious problems, such as your Mac refusing to start up at all, and that help is again



Disk Utility reports that this drive was only mildly unhealthy.

Third-party disk utilities can be a godsend, but first let your Mac try to heal itself.

Disk Utility—but we're talking about the copy on the Mac OS X install disc that came with your Mac. Put that disc in your Mac's optical drive, and then start up while pressing the C key—and be patient, since starting up from the optical drive takes time. Select Utilities > Disk Utility; when Disk Utility launches,

select your recalcitrant startup volume, click the First Aid tab if need be, and then click Repair Disk. Don't mess with permissions this way—that install disc doesn't know what files have permissions for what. Run Repair Disk twice, first on the volume and then on the drive it's on.

You can repair a volume without your Mac OS X install disc, but it requires a trip to your Mac's pure-Unix command-line interface: a dark, scary place where there's no Command-Z undo and you have to use your fingers for typing, not pointing the mouse. Ready? Shut down your Mac, then start it back up. As soon as you hear the startup chime, press Command-S to enter Single-User mode. A Unix prompt will eventually appear—if you get stuck in a cascading loop of repetitive text, press Return once or thrice, and the prompt should appear. You're now deep in the unprotected bowels of Unix—don't get fancy, because one false move could bring disaster. Instead, just type `/sbin/fsck -fy` and press Return (fsck stands for file system check). Your Mac will run a rather lengthy checkup on itself, and then, if anything's wrong, it will let you know and take a whack at fixing things. When it informs you that all's well, it never hurts to type `/sbin/fsck -fy` and press Return again, just to make sure. When both you and your Mac are happy, type `Reboot`, press Return, and you'll return to the good ol' Mac OS X interface.

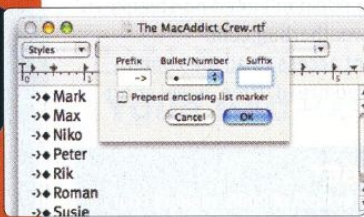
MAC OS X HAS A SOLID BUILT-IN WORD PROCESSOR

Mac OS X includes a surprisingly capable word-processing app: TextEdit (/Applications). Here are

just a few of our favorite TextEdit tricks; more can be discovered in its Help system—and yes, TextEdit can save in Word's .doc file format.

STYLES In the Styles drop-down menu in TextEdit's Ruler, you can choose from five predefined styles. Or create your own and add it to the list by selecting text in that style, selecting Other in the Styles drop-down menu, and clicking Add To Favorites. You can also select text with all instances of any style, change multiple instances, and more.

TABLES Making tables in TextEdit is as easy as pie. Choose



Format > Text > Table, and a table will appear; in its first cell will be any text in the paragraph your cursor is in, so if you want an empty table, make sure to press Return first. When your table appears, so will the Table palette, in which you can enter the number of rows and columns you

Format > Text > Table, and a table will appear; in its first cell will be any text in the paragraph your cursor is in, so if you want an empty table, make sure to press Return first. When your table appears, so will the Table palette, in which you can enter the number of rows and columns you

Once merely a replacement for the venerable SimpleText, TextEdit is now all grown up.

want, choose both horizontal and vertical alignment, merge and split cells, nest tables in tables, and choose both background and border color, plus border thickness.

LISTS Creating bulleted and numbered lists is easy, too. Type your list, select it, and then choose the type of list you want from the List menu in the Ruler. You can also add text or symbols as prefixes and suffixes to your numbers or bullets by choosing Other in the List pull-down menu. Your creativity will be limited to this document—your customized bullets or numbers won't appear in a new document's Lists menu.

PROPERTIES You can identify and search for your TextEdit documents using properties. Select File > Show Properties (or Command-Option-P). In the Document Properties dialog that appears, you can add any and all the info you want Spotlight to be able to search for. A few caveats: Keywords must be separated by commas; properties don't apply to plain-text files; and if you want to avoid the hassle of typing the Author, Company, and Copyright properties for each file, you can add them globally to each new document in TextEdit > Preferences > New Document.

YOUR MAC CAN HELP YOU PROOFREAD

You may already know that your Mac can talk to you; what you may not know is how helpful its

text-to-speech powers can be when you need to proofread a document. The reason this is so helpful is simple: Studies have shown that when we read something over that we recently wrote ourselves, we often skip over a double word or an incorrectly placed word because we read it the way we remember that we wanted it to be read. There are three solutions to this mind game: First, you could come back to the document a couple of days later, after you forget what most of it says. Second, you could ask a friend or a coworker to proofread it for you. The third solution is the

quickest and easiest of them all: Have your Mac read your document to you.

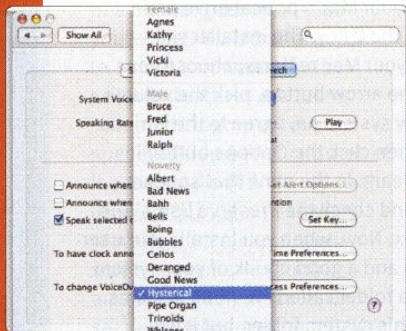
Before you turn your Mac into an automated proofreader, first make sure that you'll be able to understand it and that it'll know when you want it to start talking. Launch System Preferences > Speech and select the

Your Mac can read you a story—which can be mighty helpful if it's one you wrote yourself.

Text To Speech tab. Click the Play button, and your Mac will begin to talk—what it says depends on the voice chosen in the System Voice drop-down menu. If the speech is close to unintelligible, choose a more realistic voice—we're partial to Victoria and Bruce, but to each his or her own. You can also choose how fast the voice speaks. Now check the box labeled Speak Selected Text When The Key Is Pressed, click the Set Key button to set the key command you want to use to tell your Mac to start talking, and then close System Preferences.

Now, if you want to listen to your Mac read a Word document, simply select the text you want your Mac to read, then press your chosen key command, and the recitation will begin. If you've written your document in TextEdit, you can either use the same method as you would in Word, or simply Control-click and choose Speech > Start Speaking in the contextual menu that appears. Other apps sometimes put their access to the Start/Stop Speaking commands in *application name* > Services > Speech. Experiment—most text-emulating apps can be made to speak up.

By the way, text-to-speech is scheduled for a vast improvement in the next version of Mac OS X, Leopard, which is scheduled for release in the spring of 2007. We sentimentalists hope that Zarvox won't be out of a job.



Trust us—you do *not* want Hysterical to proofread your documents!

SURPRISE!

EVEN YOUR MAC'S EYE CANDY IS USEFUL

Dashboard. For many it's a love or hate, or even a love/hate, relationship. But it can make you a multifaceted

Macster—for example, a weatherman, IT whiz, mathematician, cartographer, and designer. With Dashboard you can be all of that and more—but only if you know your widgets. Here's a baker's dozen of the best.

1. AirCompare Track down the best airfare prices. (free, www.widgetizer.com)

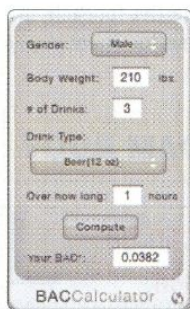
2. AirPort Radar Scan the ether for Wi-Fi signals—a must for mobile 'Bookers. (free, www.macwireless.com)

3. Blood Alcohol Content Calculator Admitting that this might be helpful to you is your first step toward recovery. (free, www.alexjacque.com/bac)

4. CNN News Widget All the news, all the time. (free, www.ejectmedia.net)

5. ColorBurn Get a new professionally designed four-color palette each day, complete with hexadecimal values. (free, www.firewheeldesign.com)

6. GMaps This unofficial interface for Google Maps may inspire you to get out from behind your Mac once in a while.



(free, www.lokkju.com/blog/index.php/category/projects/google-maps)

The Blood Alcohol Calculator says it's OK for our editor-in-chief to drive, but he's taking a cab anyway.

7. iCal Events Here's one fewer excuse for missing those important meetings. (free, www.benkazez.com)

8. iStat Pro Next time somebody calls, "Status, Gladys?" you

Apple's Dashboard widgets are a good start, but the true gems can be found on the Web.

can easily recite your current IP address, memory usage, uptime, CPU load, and more. (free, www.islayer.com)

9. Mirror It's just what you need to check your teeth after a spinach-salad lunch. (free, www.balooba.se)

10. PCalc Use this when your calculations just *have* to use Reverse Polish Notation—and for a whole lot more. (\$19, www.tla-systems.co.uk)

11. Sunlit Earth It's 11:00 p.m.—do you know where your sun is? (free, <http://astronomy.physics.tamu.edu/Widget/SunlitEarth/>)

12. WeatherBug Local Weather We don't need no steenkeen' Weather Channel! (free, www.weatherbug.com)

13. YouTube Widget Get instant access to all the content on the greatest thing since sliced bread. (free, www.sport-monkey.com)

MAKE YOUR OWN WIDGET

When Dashboard first appeared in April of 2005, making your own widget wasn't exactly easy. Today, with applications such as Widget Maker X (\$16.50, www.lajdesign.com) and Wcode (\$15, www.widgetfactor.com), the task is much easier. And Leopard (Mac OS X 10.5) will include two technologies to further improve the lives of widgeteers: Dashcode and Web Clip. Dashcode is a widget-building tool that includes a collection of widget templates into which you can drag RSS feeds, links, and the like to create your own custom, fully functional widgets—it even includes a debugger. Web Clip is even easier, but it doesn't create custom widgets. Instead, you set a Safari page to open in Dashboard, and then clip that page to show only the content you want. Bonus: The clip remains live, refreshed, and interactive. May a thousand widgets bloom!

YOU CAN REINSTALL MAC OS X AT WARP SPEED

You've tried every trick in "Your Mac Can Repair Itself," p32, and you're still staring blankly at the spinning beach ball of doom,

the dreaded international "No!" icon (which replaced the equally dreaded broken-folder icon in Mac OS 10.2), or the kernel-panic Curtain of Death. It's time to admit it: You need to reinstall your system.



If all you see when you start your Mac is this, it may be time to reinstall your system.

But that takes forever, right? Not so, Joe—here are the Mac OS X Installer's hidden options that can both speed up the process of getting your Mac back on its feet and save space on your hard drive.

ARCHIVE AND INSTALL By using Mac OS X's Archive And Install option, you can get the benefits of a fresh system and still save the time and hassle of reinstalling and

Your Mac is only human—sometimes it needs a kick in the pants. Here's how to do that quickly and efficiently.

reregistering your software and resetting most preferences. Pop your installer disc into your Mac's optical drive and restart while holding down the C key. The installer will automatically launch after your Mac restarts; choose your preferred language, click the arrow button, pick the volume you want to install your new system on, agree to the various legal mumbo jumbo, and then click the Options button in the dialog that (finally) appears. In the pane that appears, select Archive And Install and check the Preserve Users And Network Settings check box. Now, when you install, your user files will remain untouched and a good chunk of your system settings will be rolled into a folder called Previous Systems.

You can't start up from this system folder, but it will contain all the old system's preference files and other important stuff you might need, and it will save you the time

and hassle of reinstalling many, if not all, of your current applications. Note that if you checked the Preserve Users And Network Settings check box, you might infect your new system with whatever was plaguing your old system, but the time and aggravation saved by doing so makes it worth the risk. If you reinfect your system, just install it again with this box unchecked.

TRIM YOUR INSTALLATION A full installation of Mac OS X contains all of the system's text items in 15 different languages—and odds are you don't speak all of them. So to speed up your installation and save space (the languages other than English take up 1.1GB total), disable the ones you don't need. After you get past the Install Options page and click the Continue button, you'll see a Customize button in the next dialog; click it, click the disclosure triangle next to Language Translations in the pane that appears, and then uncheck any and all languages that you'll never use.

Brazilian Portuguese, anyone?

Also click the disclose triangle next to Printer Drivers and uncheck any printer drivers you'll never use. If, for example, you know you'll never have an Epson (652MB), Canon (345MB), or Lexmark (299MB) printer, you can save nearly 1.3GB of disk space and speed your installation process. To continue, just click Install, then sit back and enjoy a snappy installation.

QUIT THE SETUP ASSISTANT

After a few system reinstalls during which you didn't check the Preserve Users And Network Settings check box, you'll grow to hate the Mac OS Setup Assistant. Well, you don't have to suffer through it—you only have to sit through the opening song and dance; once the assistant gets to the first data-input screen, simply press Command-Q to quit the assistant. Only do this if you're a power-user type who knows how set up your Mac to use available printers, networks, and the like.

YOUR MAC HAS CIA-LEVEL TECHNOLOGY

Whether you're an undercover op seeking the ultimate in security for an upcoming project, or just a normal civilian looking to impress your friends by sending them password-protected files, your Mac can help. Here's how to step up the security for your next top-secret enterprise.

ENCRYPT FILES If you have an important file that you're looking to spice up with a little bit of security, encrypting the file with a password is quick and easy. Simply open the file that you want to encrypt, select File > Print, then click the PDF button at the bottom-left corner of the Print window, and select Encrypt PDF. Supply a password and you've just created a locked copy of the document—the original remains unlocked on your Mac.

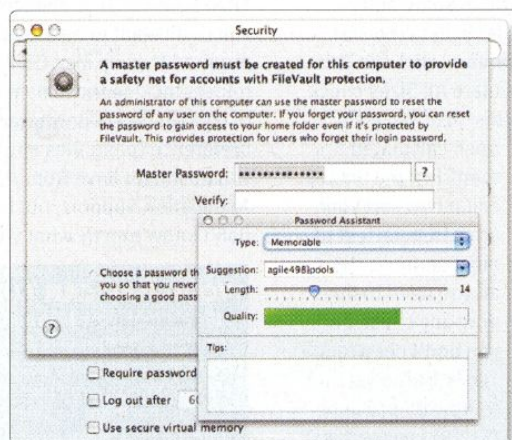
USE FILE VAULT Initiating a full system lockdown is easy-cheesy with File Vault—maybe a little too easy, considering that there's no easy way to bust back in if you forget your password. Located in System Preferences > Security, File Vault can encrypt all of the files in your home (*user name*) folder and make them accessible only if you type in a master password that you've set. It also allows you to set up a number of other security features including automatic logout after a specified number of minutes of inactivity, disabling automatic login, requiring a password to wake from sleep or your screen saver, and requiring a password to unlock each secure system preference. Use File Vault with care, however—if you forget that master

If you've got something to hide—be honest, now—your Mac can help you hide it. Permanently.

password, odds are that your files are totally, completely, and irrevocably hosed.

DELETE SECURELY Simply trash-and-delete something in today's day and age, and nine times out of 10 it can be recovered. It doesn't take a crypto-wizard to find it, either—your teenager's nosy friend could probably do it. So to increase the odds that something you delete doesn't come back to haunt you, there are a couple of things you can do. First off and most simply, if there's a single item or even many things on the hard drive that you want to delete, just place it in the Trash, go up to Finder in the menubar, and scroll down to Secure Empty Trash.

If you're selling your Mac, you'll want to erase the entire hard drive, and if there's something on the drive that you really, *really*, *REALLY* don't want anyone to find—ever—open Disk Utility (/Applications/Utilities) and select the Erase tab. Click on the volume you're looking to nuke in the left-hand list and then click Security Options. Now, will a seven-times overwrite suffice, or do you need the full 35-pass hyper-obliterator? And yes, the seven and 35 passes mean that the process will take seven or 35 times as long as a simple zero-out, respectively—and that can be a long, long time, depending upon the size of your drive. Have a terabyte drive and want to do the full 35-pass erase? Take a vacation to Tierra del Fuego while your Mac churns away.



Click the question-mark icon, and File Vault will suggest a password ranging from simple to diabolical.

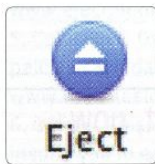
SURPRISE!

THERE'S MORE THAN ONE WAY TO EJECT A DISC

You have a CD or DVD in your Mac's optical drive that you want out of your Mac's optical drive—simple, right? All

you need to do is select the disc's icon and drag it to the Trash—but sometimes the disc is stubborn and won't eject. If that's your problem, try the steps below.

1. Select the icon and press Command-E. If it's still a no-go...
2. ...launch Disk Utility (/Applications/Utilities), select the recalcitrant disc in the volume list on the left, and then either click the Eject button, press Command-E, or choose File > Eject Disk. If the disc is still being stubborn...
3. ...restart while holding down the mouse button. No? Then...
4. ...if you have a tray-loading optical drive, shut down your Mac or put it to sleep, pry or slide open the drive's protective door, find the emergency-eject hole on the front of the drive



CD stuck in your optical drive? Sometimes Disk Utility's Eject button can help.

(its location varies from drive to drive, and some drives don't have one at all), and poke a straightened paper clip into the hole—firmly—

Got a disc stuck in your optical drive? Don't panic—just follow these escalating eviction procedures.

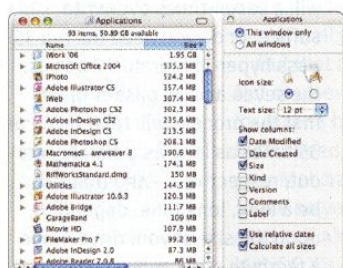
until the disc pops out. If you can't use this method 'cause your drive is slot-loading or is missing that helpful hole...
5. ...it's time for your last resort, short of taking your Mac to an Apple Authorized Service Provider: ejecting the disc using an Open Firmware command. But before you try this, know that this trick doesn't work on all Macs; in fact, it doesn't work on *any* Intel-based Macs. To access the mighty—and mighty bland—Open Firmware interface, restart your Mac; as soon as you hear the startup chime, hold down Command-Option-O-F. A white text-based screen will appear that'll either prompt you to release the keys or simply display an **ok** prompt. At this prompt, type **eject cd** (even if it's a DVD that's stuck in your drive). Press Return, and in a second or two your disc will—should?—pop out of the drive and another **ok** prompt will appear; type **mac-boot**, press Return, and your Mac will resume its startup sequence until you're greeted by a normal desktop.

YOUR MAC RUNS BETTER ON EMPTY

There comes a time when you need to invest a bit of it—time, that is. If you can put aside a

good portion of a day or maybe even a weekend to delete unnecessary files and apps from your hard drive, there's a good chance that it'll make your Mac run snappier, plus save you a few bucks that you'd otherwise spend on a larger drive. It's not a particularly pleasant chore, so schedule it for when there's a good game on the radio; and no, we don't mean the Raiders versus the Bengals (unless, of course, you live in Cincinnati).

ZAP YOUR APPS We recommend starting with your Applications folder; you can often get rid of some hefty apps that you never use. Open that folder in list view and press Command-J; in the dialog that appears, click the This Window Only radio button and the Calculate All Sizes check box. Wait for a bit until your file and folder sizes have all



Sorting your apps from chubby to trim makes it easier to weed out the unwanted plus-sizers.

Well, not "empty," per se, but your Mac will definitely run snappier if your hard drive's not stuffed.

gets rid of most apps' preference files, caches, and other associated files.

GET THE PICTURE AND FLICK THE FLICK Next weed out your Pictures and Movies folders in the same way. If you're like us, you have thousands of pictures you've pulled from the Web during the past decade, plus cute QuickTime flicks you just had to watch—once. Admit it, that kitty-attack WMV file was fun last year, but now it's just eating up space.

TRASH CAREFULLY Remember that there are some folders you don't want to mess with because their contents are required to keep Mac OS X running smoothly. Do-not-touch folders include those named Library and System. You can, of course, delete unwanted fonts from /Library/Fonts and preference (plist) files and application-support files for apps you no longer have from /Library/Preferences and /Library/Application Support, but tread lightly. One simple rule: If you don't know *exactly* what you're trashing, don't trash it.

YOUR MAC CAN AUTO-TRASH

Late at night, your Mac automatically runs a series of important maintenance scripts that, among other things, get rid of space-hogging log files and caches. However, if you turn your Mac off at night—or even put it to sleep—it won't run 'em. The good news is that there's a Dashboard widget named Maintidget (free, on the Disc or www.giantmike.com) that allows you to run the daily, weekly, and monthly maintenance scripts any time your little heart desires.