

Tab 1

Hello, Internet traveler!

Everything here has been polished up and moved to <https://scottknaster.substack.com>. I have locked this doc to prevent comments because these versions are out of date. I'm adding new stories over on <https://scottknaster.substack.com> every few days. Still no paywall, of course. Please check it out. Thanks! - Scott

Occasionally Misses Expectations



A neurotic chaotic episodic memoir
A bunch of things that happened
A collection of weirdness
A box of individually wrapped stories
A Google Doc with 20 or so true stories

[Click here to watch me tell stories on video. Almost no reading required!](#)

By Scott Knaster
[Adjacent to Greatness](#)



Adjacent to Greatness

When I was a kid, I was an absolute nerd. Big surprise. Sadly, this was before nerds were cool. I loved comic books and computers. Computers were magic! They could do amazing feats of math and stuff. They were super smart, and also shiny! Sure, I had never actually touched a computer - or even seen one up close - but I loved them anyway. I saw them in movies, TV, and books.

Computers were giant things off in secure air-conditioned rooms somewhere. They were guarded by computer priests with major beards and 2-liter bottles of Coke. I was a kid and couldn't get in to those kinds of places. I knew I loved computers because of science fiction. Incredible science fiction computers like Colossus from [Colossus: the](#)

Forbin Project and HAL 9000 from 2001: A Space Odyssey. These computers were wonderful. Except for when they murdered humans.

And it wasn't just computers. I loved all technology, because of other movies, like The Andromeda Strain. At the beginning of The Andromeda Strain, a super smart dude is having a dinner party. Some Army types with guns show up at his door and say "There's a fire, sir", and boom, he kisses his wife goodbye and goes off to save the world. I wanted to be that person! Important and famous for being smart! Summoned to save the world! Like the Avengers, but with scientists.

▶ There is a Fire HD The Andromeda Strain (1971)

Well, my life didn't turn out that way. So far, I haven't been called upon to save the world. Usually I get asked to edit some document, because I became a writer, a support person, a teacher, a demo-doer. I spent my whole career working with people who make things, but I'm not really a maker. And I have been lucky enough to work around amazing people who have done world-changing things. Like some of the people who invented the Mac. And the ones who created early software that worked like the web. And an incredible, mostly forgotten company that invented the smartphone 15 years too early.

I started to notice that although I wasn't inventing any of these amazing things, I seemed to be around them a lot. And I figured out what I really am is a *storyteller*. I wasn't creating the greatness. I was Adjacent to Greatness. So I started telling stories about this Adjacent to Greatness phenomenon. And I found stories about other things in my life – fun, weird, ordinary, odd, surprising things. So I'm telling some of those too. I hope you like them! Or at least some of them.

1959

Early adjacency

I was born a white middle-class Jewish nerd. So, my destiny was laid out before me.

When my parents told me I was born at General Rose Hospital, I thought maybe they were stupid. Obviously they meant to say Rose General Hospital. Turns out, I was born in a hospital that was named for U. S. Army Major General Maurice Rose. Yes, his name was General Rose. So, the place was actually called General Rose Memorial Hospital. My parents were right. And they were not stupid!



Lessons:

1. Listen to your parents. They're usually right.
2. The universe is hilarious. It's always cracking these little jokes around the edges. You just have to pay attention as they happen to you. (This is especially important if you want to tell stories.)

1966

Take your child to work at the bar day

When I was a kid, my dad owned a bar called the Club Shamrock. (Lots of Jews owned Irish-named bars in Denver in the '60s. This is one of those inscrutable things.) Sometimes my dad would take me to work with him. I didn't really like hanging out in the

bar among the patrons and the booze. So I would either be playing the bowler (I still have the puck from that machine), or hanging out in his incredibly cool and cluttered office. There were all sorts of amazing artifacts in the office: age-old newspapers, Denver Bears team photos, rolls of ancient coins. Once I found a gun hidden in a cigar box! I was smart and scared enough not to touch it.



The puck from the bowling machine

But my favorite object in the office, the one that occupied hours of my time, was the adding machine. My Dad used it when he counted receipts, figured payroll, and performed other mathy tasks. I would make up big numbers and then use it to add them. It was my favorite toy. I loved pushing the buttons, cranking the handle, listening to the crunching noises it made and watching the numbers appear on the tape.

I was so young that I didn't quite understand how math works. I knew that if you had enough thousands, that was a million. But how many thousands did you need? 50? 178? I wasn't sure. And then if you had a lot of millions, you could make a billion. How many millions did you need for that? 217? 559? I thought it was a different number for every one. How did you know how many? This must be something adults just know. How could you remember it all? Numbers went up to infinity! It was exciting and scary.



1974

The hair

I looked like this at 14. My brother Ken called this hairstyle "the Continental Shelf." I can't believe my Mom let me wear a t-shirt for school picture day.



better. You could screw up and find out immediately!



1978

My fabulous and brief college career

I set off for college in the fall of 1977. I had a scholarship and great SAT scores. I also had no idea how to be a college student or live on my own. It turns out that skipping class most days and playing poker every night was not the best plan. High school was a breeze; college was hard. I dropped out after half a year of college, which kind of sucked a lot. I was majoring in Computer Science when I bailed out of college, so I brilliantly concluded that I must hate computers. (Hahaha, I did not actually hate computers. I liked them more than humans, probably.)

Always Be Computing

I quit college and came home in disgrace. I needed some kind of win. A good friend got me a job as an usher at a movie theatre, and I was happy to have it. I learned how to operate a commercial popcorn machine. And even though I "hated computers", one day I wandered down the street from the theatre into a ComputerLand store. It was pretty



\$3000 worth of Apple II in the early 1980s.

1983

Go west, young man

I was very much in love with Apple. Yes, you can fall in love with a company, and I sure did. Not only was Apple the coolest computer company, it was the ONLY cool computer company. So I decided I really wanted a job at Apple.

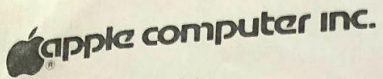
I got a job with the company that was like a go-between for Apple and the retail stores, but it wasn't really working for Apple. And that's what I wanted - to move to Cupertino and actually work for Apple. I was 22, married, and a college dropout. The perfect

candidate! (The crazy blizzard of 1982 also helped convince me and Barbara to move.)



I knew a few folks at Apple, and I found a job I thought I could do, providing technical support. I convinced them to fly me to San Jose for a bunch of interviews. I was incredibly excited to visit Silicon Valley. I spent my first afternoon driving around to see all the legendary companies of that era, like Atari and Hewlett-Packard and Ampex and Jack in the Box. When I went to Apple, I expected a tall office building and a giant six-color neon sign (probably rotating). But it was all kinda boring-looking, one-story buildings with quaint little wooden signs. I couldn't believe that so many amazing things were made in such buildings. Although the signs were cool.

My interviews went well (that's another story!) and I flew home the next day. A week later, I got this letter via express mail. I got the job!



904 Caribbean Drive
Sunnyvale, California 94086
(408) 734-9790

Mr. Scott J. Knaster
7020 W. 20th Avenue #204
Lakewood, Colorado 80215

February 25, 1983

Dear Scott,

We are pleased to offer you the position of Technical Support Engineer, reporting to John Fenwick. Your salary will be \$2250.00 per month.

We will recommend to the Board of Directors that you be granted an option to purchase 400 shares of Apple common stock at a price per share to be determined by the Board at their next meeting after your employment date.

Additionally your offer of employment includes the following relocation benefits:

RELOCATION OF GOODS

Relocation of household goods including packing, shipping, unpacking and insurance (at current standard rate) up to 12,000 pounds by a carrier to be chosen by Apple.

Not included are recreational vehicles, antiques or art work that are not insurable.

TEMPORARY HOUSING

Apple will provide temporary housing for yourself and your spouse up to 30 days.

MEAL ALLOWANCE

You and your spouse are allowed \$30.00 each per day up to 21 days. Meals for this time period are reimbursed for actual expenses (receipts required).

TRANSPORATION

Apple will cover up to four (4) round trips from Colorado to San Jose and vice versa. (two trips for two adults)

Expenses over the above will be your responsibility.

PROCEDURE

The Human Resources Relocation Coordinator, Pat Bradford (408) 973-2628, will make all arrangements for air travel, movement of goods and lodging at the new location.

You must submit expense reports and receipts associated with the move to Pat within 30 days of expenditures.

You will receive, from Accounting, an itemization of deductible and non-deductible relocation expenses.

TERMINATION

If an employee voluntarily terminates prior to the completion of one year of service she/he will be responsible for reimbursing Apple for the prorated portion of the total incurred moving expenses.

Apple has eleven paid holidays and twelve vacation days per year. The insurance package, which includes life insurance, long term disability insurance, medical, dental, and vision care, ranks as one of the best in the industry. We also have an Employee Profit Sharing Plan for which you will be eligible after you have been employed six months, as well as an Employee Stock Purchase Program for which you will be eligible to enroll in June 1983.

We look forward to your joining Apple. We need you to come to the Training Center at 8:00 a.m. on your first day of work for your orientation. The Training Center is located at 20565 Alves Drive in Cupertino.

For our records, we would like to request that you sign this original below and return it to us. You may keep the attached copy.

Sincerely,

APPLE COMPUTER, INC.

Anne Storer

Anne Storer
Staffing Specialist

I accept your offer of employment: _____

Date: _____ Start Date: _____





March 21st, 1983, was my first day at Apple! I loved everything about my new life: my job, the company, Silicon Valley, and California. I was thrilled to see my nametag at work! (I didn't even notice that parts of the Apple logo were misshapen. I mean, what did Steve Jobs think?)



I spent most of my time at the Apple building. I was working, playing, learning, exploring, and hanging out. What else did I have to do that was better? Nothing!

My first job at Apple was helping customers who had problems with their super cool new Lisa computers. Two interesting things about this job:

- Very few people bought these super cool Lisa computers
- They were so easy to use that very few people had problems.

So, I had plenty of time to learn and explore other Apple technologies.

The 3 Rules of Steve Jobs stories

Steve Jobs is the most important human being who worked in technology in my lifetime. He saw things nobody else saw, caused them to be created, and those creations have affected everyone and everything. More than that, Steve Jobs was a *character*: literally, stories about Steve are the most fascinating, entertaining, and consequential stories in tech.

There are 3 rules of Steve Jobs stories:

1. There is an insatiable demand for Steve Jobs stories.

The first time I told stories onstage, the audience was mostly people who didn't work in technology. Yet after the show, every single person was most interested in hearing about Steve Jobs, even though I told them I barely knew him. More than 10 years after his death, his family and friends at the Steve Jobs Archive released a lovely book full of his words from emails, speeches, and interviews. This book is very popular.

2. There is always at least one more untold Steve Jobs story.

Steve Jobs stories are so compelling, and he was such a prolific creator, that new stories will keep revealing themselves for many years. There are many stories that are considered confidential by Apple; I hope in time Apple realizes that decades-old stories can be told without harming secrets, just as some old Apple source code is now becoming open source.

3. If Steve Jobs is in a story at all, it's a Steve Jobs story. There are no stories in which Steve is a minor character. Like, if you're telling a story that takes place in 1995, and you say you went to the store, and there was an elephant there, and and an airplane landed in the parking lot, and Steve Jobs walked by, that story is a Steve Jobs story and all everybody wants to know are Steve Jobs details. (Which I guess makes this book a Steve Jobs story.)

I didn't really know Steve. I only met him a few times. I wasn't at Apple very long when

he left. So I only have a few Steve Jobs stories that I feel empowered to tell, because those are the only ones I personally experienced. But those are very memorable to me, because Steve was incredibly memorable.

1985

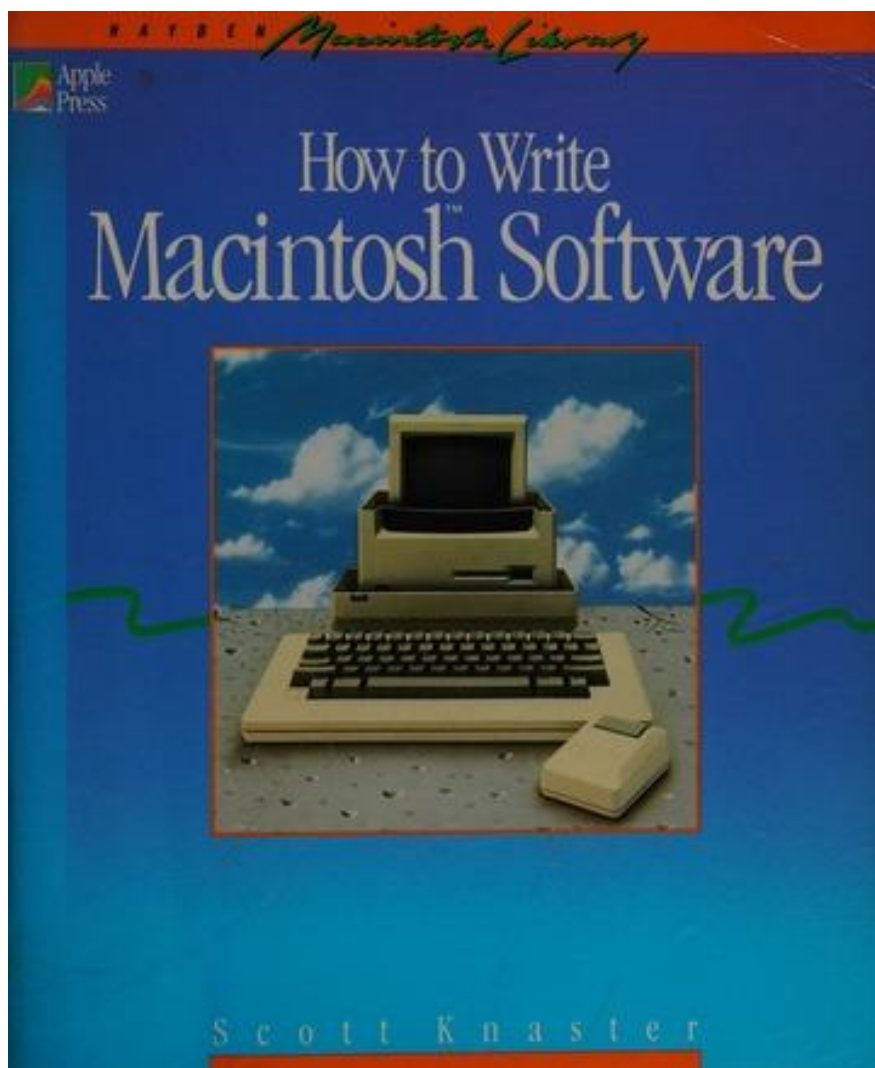
Write a book, get a career

It was clear that Macintosh was going to be the best thing to work on at Apple. Steve Jobs and all the cool kids were there. Since I was chasing amazing things to do, I wanted to work on the Mac. I met a couple of members of the Mac team, which was sequestered off in its own building, and found out there was a job opening for a person supporting outside developers of software and hardware. I could do that! And sure enough, I got the job and moved to the Mac division. I was now a cool kid!

My job was to spend all day on the phone with software developers who were making stuff for the Mac. It wasn't easy for them, because the Mac did everything in a new way, with a graphical user interface and a mouse. We had great documentation but we needed more. My buddy and co-worker Cary Clark knew a ton about how to actually make stuff work on the Mac, like debugging and what memory actually looked like when software was running. I learned from him. Then I would help developers with this info all day, every day. Although Cary was teaching classes to developers, nobody was writing down this incredibly valuable information.

Right about this time I went to one of the first Macworld Expos. A whole conference and trade show just about the Mac! Incredibly exciting for us Mac nerds! And in the trade show, there was a guy I knew named Steve Chernicoff, with the book he wrote about programming the Mac. It was selling like crazy, right there at the expo. He was having a blast meeting everybody who bought the book and autographing their copies. It looked so fun! I thought "I want to do that. I could do that!". And if I wrote down what I knew in a book, I wouldn't have to repeat it to every developer on the phone all day - I could just point them at the book.

So pretty soon I was writing my first book. It was about programming and debugging software for the Mac. I already knew all this stuff because I talked about it all day. It just flowed right out. Like I connected my brain directly to the computer. When it was done, it looked like this:



TODO: add back cover image

The book was filled with the useful info I knew, and also it was weird and obnoxious and possibly occasionally funny, in a highly technical sort of way. I even had fun putting fake entries into the index. Like the one that said "recursion: see recursion." Hilarious.

It turned out that while I was writing the book, the publisher was struggling and was going out of business. This was bad for them, but actually good for me. Because while they were going out of business, they didn't have the proper resources to support my book - which means there was nobody to edit out my voice, which was NOT typically plain and boring in the usual manner of a technical book. There was nobody there to make me change it, to squeeze out the weirdness. Most first-time authors get edited into conformity, but I didn't. Lucky. And it turned out that readers actually liked this style (most readers, not including that one reviewer in Byte Magazine, but I've forgotten all



NeXT, Inc.
3475 Deer Creek Road
Palo Alto, CA 94304
415 424 0200
415 424 0476 (Fax)

Scott Knaster
714 Fairlands Ave.
Campbell, CA 95008

September 30, 1987

Dear Scott,

We are pleased to extend the following offer of employment to you:

- ☐ A salary of \$50,000/year, paid monthly, in advance, on the first working day of each month.
- ☐ A great benefits plan including major medical, dental, vision and prenatal.
- ☐ An opportunity for you to purchase Three Thousand (3,000) shares of NeXT, Inc. common stock at a price to be determined by NeXT's Board of Directors at their first meeting following your start date of employment with NeXT.

Scott, we all have great confidence that you will contribute to our short term goals, and also play a role in the long term success of NeXT.

Best regards,

Dan'l Lewin
Vice President,
Sales & Marketing

I accept this insanely great offer!!!

Scott Knaster



Very good artificially intelligent chocolate chip cookies.

By Wednesday in Washington I figured out that we were never getting a decent dinner. Plus, the Apple office that day provided tasty sub sandwiches at lunch. Clever guy that I am, I stuffed an extra sandwich in my bag for dinner. I was set. When we got to the airport, late as usual, I looked in my bag to find the delicious sandwich had leaked Italian dressing on everything. That bag smelled like a deli for years afterward (actually not such a bad thing).



Sandwich, inadequately wrapped. Generated by AI.

That night we flew to New York, my first time there. Microsoft's travel department had booked us at the legendary Waldorf-Astoria. The Waldorf-Astoria! I figured I'd never be back there again on my own dime. Although we checked in very late, room service was still available. Since it was my first trip to New York, I ordered a New York steak with New York cheesecake for dessert. I probably thought that was really clever. Since I personally wasn't paying (sorry, Microsoft overlords), I also took a \$29 jar of peanuts in a Waldorf-Astoria logo jar. I still have the jar but not the peanuts. I also took a logo pen and a shoehorn. They were "free."



On Thursday, after finishing our demo sessions, traffic and weather conspired to get us to JFK airport very late. No shops or food counters were open in our far-flung terminal. There was a Panera bread cart that was just closing up. We hadn't eaten all day and begged the Panera folks to sell us some bread, but they declined. We watched hungrily as they put all the leftover bread into a large plastic bag. "Can we buy that bread?" I asked. No, he said. It was going to the homeless shelter.

He finished bagging the bread, put the bag on the cart, and left. The four of us debated what to do. It was late. We were hungry. All the shops were closed. We made our fateful decision. Once we were sure the guy was out of sight, we carefully opened the bag and grabbed eight rolls and four pastries. We closed the bag up again and left a \$20 bill tucked under it. As we ate the meager dinner, I imagined the headline - "Microsoft Group Steals Bread from the Homeless" - and thought it would be a bizarre reason to get fired.

On the last leg of the trip, we arrived in Boston late and got to the hotel at about 1 am. When I checked in, the desk clerk produced a box that had been shipped to me at the hotel. This was the first night of Passover, and my amazing wife had packed and sent a box of Passover food goodies for me to enjoy.

That was the best meal of the trip.

2005

How the "lost" Mac intro video was found (in my living room)

In 2004 Andy Hertzfeld was creating folklore.org, his now-legendary website devoted to first-person stories of the earliest days of the Mac. Andy was writing one of the key stories of the saga, about the day of the Mac's public unveiling. I mentioned to Andy that I had a video – on a videocassette – of the intro, and he might want to watch it to spur

his memory of the great day. So Andy came over, we watched the video, he took notes, and wrote his story. In the comments Andy was kind enough to thank me for showing him the video.

from Andy Hertzfeld on February 14, 2004 19:19:38

Thanks to Scott Knaster, who had a video tape of the 1984 introduction, which allowed me to quote so much of Steve's presentation - my memory isn't that good!

Andy's telling of one of the most important moments in computing history was riveting. Right away, people read that there was a video and wanted to see it. I had recorded the video over the air in 1984 from a public TV station. Then it sat on a shelf for awhile – OK, for 20 years – until it apparently became something rare.

I had no way to digitize the video. And if I could get it digitized, I wasn't sure how to share it (this was before YouTube). Replying to Andy's comment, people asked if I could put the video online. I explained the problem:

from Scott Knaster on March 18, 2004 00:31:24

The video is in Beta (that's a format, not a test version) and it's not great quality, but if anybody is keen on digitizing it, let me know: sknaster (at) papercar (dot) com.

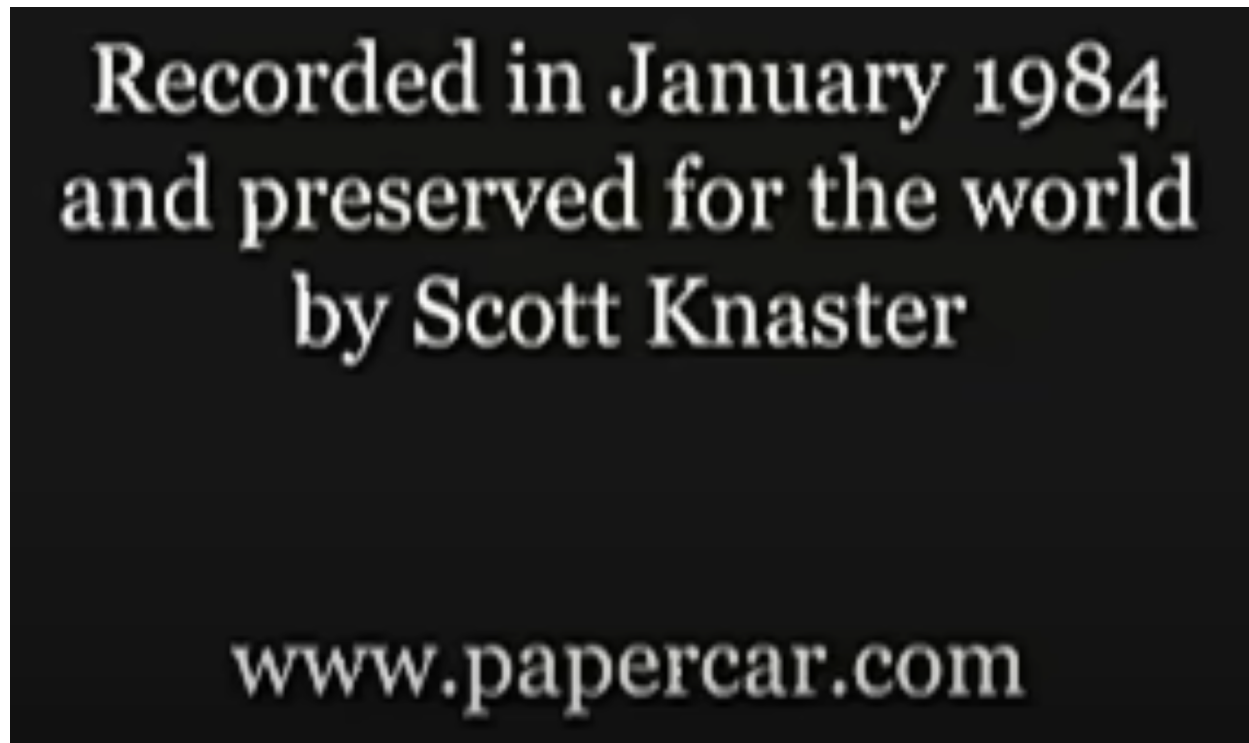
After a few days I did actually hear from someone who wanted to digitize the ancient video. He was a video producer in Germany named majo. He had a website with a bunch of Mac stuff and related things. majo promised to digitize the video and post it for anyone to watch and copy. For some reason, despite the fact that I had never met him and he was 5000 miles away, I decided to trust him. I put the precious videotape in a mailer and shipped it off to majo in Germany.

majo struggled with the terrible quality of the video. Not only was it 20 years old, it was a low-quality home format, and the original show had not been properly lit for video recording. Still, he did a fine job and extracted the most important segment: [Steve Jobs revealing the Mac](#).

On January 24, 2005, Majo posted the video on his site to celebrate the Mac's 21st birthday. The traffic was overwhelming. Streaming? There was no streaming. To watch, you had to download the 20MB file, a substantial transaction, and majo's site soon crashed. In the vernacular of the day, his site was Fireballed, SlashDotted, kottke.orged, and etc., as popular sites delivered loads of web surfers. He begged for mirror sites to host copies of the video, and a bunch of other people helped out. I wrote a blog post and watched the comments appear in a mostly east to west flow as the sun came up around the world and people discovered the "lost" video (that I didn't realize had been

lost). The comments showed how excited people were to discover this bit of history, and how eager they were to help by mirroring it. It was a very cool day.

By the end of the day I finally had time to watch majo's edit of the video. To my surprise, he had added my name near the end with this generous but hilariously pompous credit:



A more accurate credit would have been "Recorded in January 1984 and kept on a shelf in the family room by Scott Knaster". But this was OK too.

Three weeks later, as if on cue, YouTube was founded.

Soon copies of the video started making their way to YouTube. Most of them included the part at the end with my name. After awhile there were hundreds of different copies on YouTube. Some of them have millions of views. Why are there so many copies? I have no idea. I gained an odd sort of fame as I was adjacent to this greatness.

Occasionally I heard from far-away TV producers or documentary makers asking for permission to use "my" video. Many people assumed I was operating the camera that filmed the event.

In the months following, majo extracted and digitized other, less monumental clips from the Mac intro. I assume those have made their way to YouTube also. The [video of the full meeting](#) is available, and you can watch if you have a spare hour and a half.

As the Mac's 30th anniversary approached, I started to wonder whatever happened to majo, and whether he had digitized any more clips. I went to his old website, but it seemed long-dormant. After some further digging I found sad news: majo died in 2010. I never did meet him, but he's the one who really got this video out into the world. All I did was neglect to get rid of an old videotape. I wish I had gotten to meet him.



One more note: Flint Center, where the Mac was introduced, down the block from Apple in Cupertino, was demolished in 2024.

2006

Woz does Google

There was a time when I didn't know who Woz was. I first saw the mysterious inscription "Woz" while reading the legendary Red Book that came with my Apple][. I soon learned that Woz was Steve Wozniak, who had designed the Apple][and co-founded Apple Computer. The more I learned about Woz and his inventions, the more amazed I was: how he enabled the Apple][to use a cheap cassette recorder to load and save data; his incredible design for color output that two professional engineers told me "couldn't possibly work" (they told me this after more than 1 million of them had been sold); his unique disk controller that somehow managed to use software instead of hardware for timing and eliminated the need for all but 5 chips.

Woz is a Silicon Valley legend of the highest order, and Google in 2006 was definitely the nerdiest place in town, so it was very exciting when he came to Google to talk about his new book, "iWoz: From Computer Geek to Cult Icon: How I Invented the Personal Computer, Co-Founded Apple, and Had Fun Doing It."

There was an enormous crowd of Google folks gathered in the company's biggest space to see Woz. He arrived about 40 minutes late, but stayed more than twice as long as he was "supposed" to, answering every question, signing every book, and talking to everyone who wanted to talk to him, and so I figured out why he was late in the first place).

Woz's talk showed why he is an inspiration to engineers (and other people) everywhere. He captivated the crowd with his passion and enthusiasm for what he does, whether it's designing computers, putting on massive concerts, or talking about his life and work. Woz travels and speaks quite a bit, so you might be able to see him where you are -- if you're lucky, you might even get pranked -- and whether you see him in person or not, his books and videos are a wonderful peek at the life of this remarkable guy.

And now my buddies and I have this great souvenir:



2007

Outer space

At Google I was usually the "old guy" on my team, which is very full circle considering I was so young when I started my career at Apple that I got the title "Boy Guru" printed on my business cards. So when my team of about 8 people had an Office Space Day in honor of the classic Mike Judge movie, I didn't know much about the movie. That's probably why I wasn't insulted when they gave me a red stapler.



As part of Office Space Day, we all got together to watch the movie itself that afternoon. Google had just started a program called Lookout to provide every group with a Mac mini strapped to a big screen monitor. The idea was for teams to use these for showing some kind of team information: bug counts, build status, deployment stats, etc. We had just gotten ours, and we weren't using it for anything yet, so we decided it would be perfect for showing the Office Space movie that afternoon. Clever! Innovative! Team-building!

So there we were, about half an hour into the movie, eating popcorn and drinking beer and laughing and enjoying the show and building camaraderie, when suddenly a Furious Dude none of us knew stomped into our area. He actually looked kind of like Milton from the movie. This guy went directly to the screen showing the movie, dramatically yanked out the Mac mini power cord, ripped away the Velcro straps holding the Mac in place, stuck it under his arm, and stalked off, as we sat there too stunned to move.

Later we found out that we weren't supposed to be using the Lookout device for watching movies. Not only that, the Lookout team had set up screen sharing, so they could see what everybody was using them for from their central lair elsewhere on campus. And when they saw our unauthorized use, they took decisive action.

The next day, our manager got an email saying we had lost our Lookout privileges. And then somebody came and took the rest of it away.

But I still have the stapler.



The next day when I went to the micro-kitchen, it looked like this.



The cupboard doors had been neatly removed. The engineers who worked in the building decided the doors were a bug, and they fixed it.

2014

The bunny that did not keep going and going and going

Google has been known for trying crazy, ambitious things, like trying to put every book in the world online, making cars that can drive themselves, or giving everybody fast, reliable, inexpensive Internet. The last project is called Google Fiber. When Google announced it was going to do this, people were confused. Why does Google want to be an Internet Service Provider? The answer is actually pretty simple: Google's whole business depends on fast, reliable, affordable Internet service. The companies in that business were not doing a great job at that. And they didn't love Google, so maybe in the future they wouldn't necessarily be reliable partners for Google. Which is why Google decided to start a tens-of-billions of dollars project to provide fast fiber optic Internet to homes and businesses in the U.S. How hard could it be? (Ha. Ha.)

Most customers hated their current ISPs. Google wanted its customers to love Google Fiber. To help with that, Google spent a lot of time and money on customer service for Fiber. For example, Google Fiber didn't have installation windows - they had appointments. And installers were on time 98% of the time. Phone calls for support were answered within seconds. Repair trucks came within hours. Customers did love Google Fiber. But also, they really loved the Fiber Bunny.



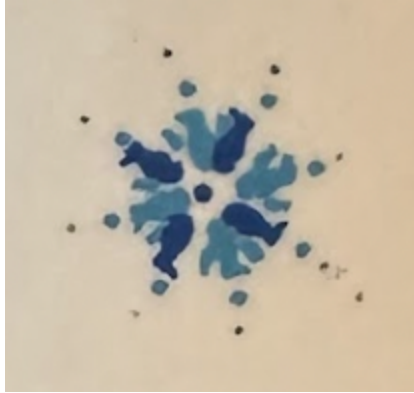
The bunny was the Google-colored mascot for Fiber. It was cute and colorful and strange and spacey-looking, and it represented Internet service that would change your life. So what if it didn't exactly have eyes? It was fun and futuristic! The bunny appeared on lawn signs to show that you were one of the lucky folks who was getting Google Fiber installed. There was also a sign for those who wanted Google Fiber and couldn't

get it yet, but were hoping to.

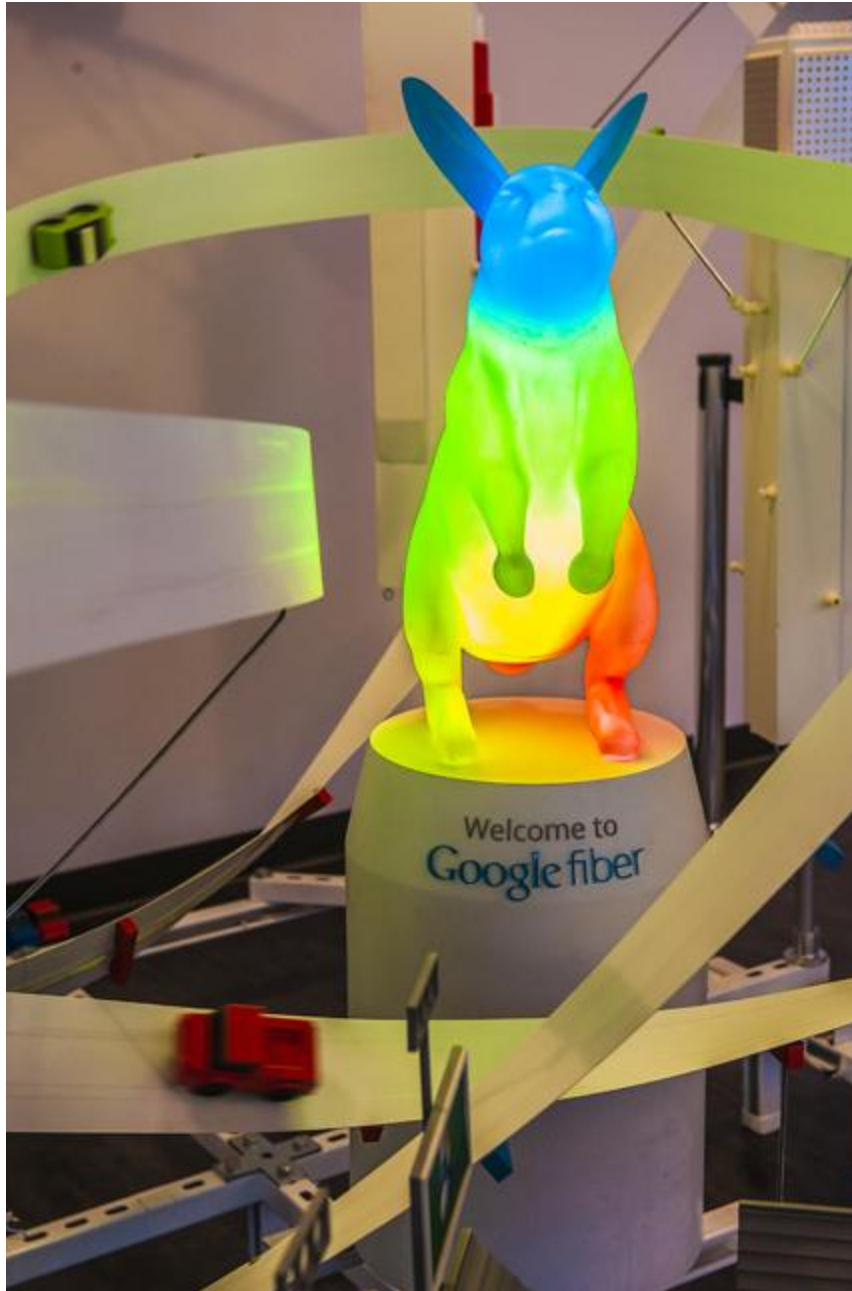


People loved the bunny. There were bunny plushes (I still have mine), bunny lights, and [bunny videos](#). There was a Google Fiber mug with hidden bunnies. (Look closely at the "snowflakes.")





Google Fiber, and the bunny, were incredibly popular in the early 2010s. It takes billions of dollars and years of effort to build a fiber optic network, but it's not hard to crank out rainbow plush bunnies and give them to your customers who are waiting for installation.



But it turns out not every single person loved the bunny. And unfortunately, one who didn't like it was someone who really mattered: a new executive at Google who was involved with Google Fiber marketing. And they really, really didn't like the bunny. They didn't think it fit with Google's brand. Their exact quote was

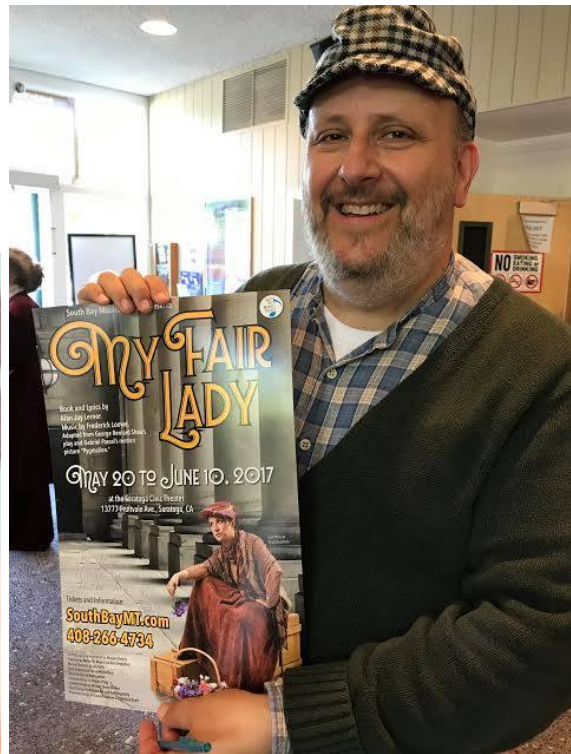
"Get rid of that fucking psychedelic bunny!"

And so that was the end of the bunny, one of the greatest and strangest marketing programs Google ever had.

And now for something completely different: musical theatre

At the age of 54, I signed up to be in a stage musical. I had never been in a play before. I never sang in front of anyone before. The last time I danced in front of people was in 6th grade. So this was crazy and anxiety inducing.

And I loved it! I was surprised to hear people say I could sing and act. (They didn't really talk about my dancing.) I got into a bunch more shows after that first one: some classics and some new ones. I love them all and I'm gonna keep doing it for as long as they let me.





2022

What I did on my last day of work

My last day of work at Google was weird, because I went to my office, where I hadn't been for 2 years, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, and there was nobody there, due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

In the morning, I had my exit meeting with an HR ("PeopleOps") guy working at his home in the northeastern U.S. He had a lovely animated gentle snowstorm background. I met him two weeks prior when I started the process of leaving the company. I've heard all the truths and stereotypes about HR - mainly that you should remember they're there for the company, not for you - but he could not have been more helpful. He went out of his way to get me the info I needed and to just be responsive and friendly.

We finished the business part in about 5 minutes, then spent another 20 just talking about the company. He had been there 14 years, to my 16, so we talked about the old



I went to my office in Sunnyvale. There were only a few people working in the office (a

campus of 6 eight-story buildings). I didn't think I'd left anything at my desk, but I wanted to double-check. It turns out I had a box of random stuff, like a little fake tree and a few posters for shows I had been in.



Sitting outside my building in Sunnyvale, I attended an online lunch with pals. I put on my Noogler hat for a while.



My badge still worked. But I couldn't get on the wi-fi. I had some snacks.

I used the bathroom. The paper towels had my name on them.



I went to visit my first Google office in Mountain View. The number of Google buildings

Now that I had decided to retire, I figured I would definitely get the job offer from Apple, because the universe is just hilarious that way.

The typical Silicon Valley interview process happened over the next couple of months. I made it through to the final round at Apple, but I didn't get the job. So instead, I stayed retired - or as a friend suggested I call it, First Retirement. Since then, my mental health has improved, because I guess I'm more comfortable worrying about money that I'm no longer earning than I am worrying about work that I'm no longer responsible for. I'm still trying to get the hang of getting everything done that I want to get done - house projects, technology projects, storytelling projects like this little book. But I have no trouble watching TV and movies - I'm really good at that! Here's to retirement.

Outro

I had a lot of fun reminiscing and writing these stories down. In some cases, the details are starting to fade, so writing them down is even more important to me. I hope you enjoyed reading them. At least some of them. And if not, at least it was free.

I've got a million more stories. I'm looking forward to writing them down and adding them to this book and future books. And also to performing them on stage as I've done before.

Let's keep in touch

If you want to know when there are new stories here, you can get automatic notifications of changes to this Google Doc. Go to Tools > Notification Settings > Added or removed content > OK. If you want to know about other stuff, like stage shows and future books, I have an email announcement list you can join. Email me at sknaster@gmail.com and I'll add you to that! That address also works if you just want to say hi or ask a question or something.

A special note to you on behalf of telling stories

YOU (yes, you) have stories to tell! Tell them! Tell them to your family and friends, write them down in a blog or on social media, get up on an open mic night, write a little book like this one.

That's it. Thanks and goodbye, friends! 🖐️

Scott



This is what I look like today, December 26th, 2024, on my 65th birthday!

Tab 2

