Birthdays and Such…

by Ron Lichty

User's Guide

Chapter 1 : **Introduction**

Birthdays and Such… is an application meant to be launched on daily startup, to remind you of the important birthdays and anniversaries in your life. It works for me, which has made me the envy of all my friends and relatives. By setting reminders 10 or so days ahead, I find I'm as on the ball as the best of the rest of my friends and relatives in remembering to buy cards and presents (and to actually send them)—and way ahead of the date-impaired.

Now admittedly you're going to have to type in a list of all the important dates you want to remember. But this is a one-time task. From then on, you're home free (ok, ok, you still have to add and remove friends and relatives as they're born and die...). But that certainly beats my previous annual efforts to write every date onto the family calendar or into my day-timer. And it results in a list that, printed out from your word processing program, makes it easy to buy your whole year's cards in one shopping trip!

The steps are simple (with details below): Install Birthdays and Such by copying a few files to your hard disk. Type your list of important dates into a text file you call "Reminders" (yes, the name is required). Put the Reminders file where Birthdays and Such… can find it. And set Birthdays and Such… to run every time you start your Macintosh.

```
═══════════════ ...Birthdays and Such... ═══════════════

Today's Reminders:                Sunday, January 22, 1995

┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐ ⬆
│ Today: Carl Peterson's birthday (1959).               │
│ Tomorrow: Jan. 23, Grandma Ronetta Schroeder's birthday.
│ Tomorrow: Jan. 23, Johnathan Lee Lichty's birthday (1990).
│ In 23 days: Tues, Feb. 14, Valentine's Day.           │
│                                                       │
│                                                       │ ⬇
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
```
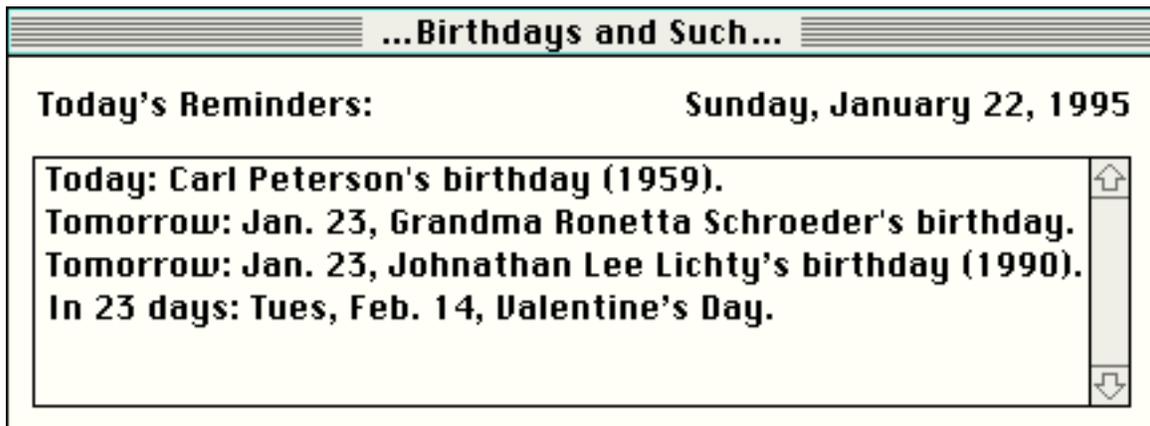
Then every time you turn on your Macintosh, it will start up Birthdays and Such… The program will look up the current date, scan the Reminders file for upcoming events, and display just those you need to do something about.

It's at this point—before I choose Quit from the File menu in Birthdays and Such…—that I write myself a little note (and put it in my pocket) to buy a card, or I pull out the card I bought earlier.

And if you leave your Macintosh running for days at a time, just leave Birthdays and Such… running: its window will update to the next day's reminders every night on the stroke of midnight. (I specifically designed Birthdays and Such… both to launch super quickly and to run all the time: it's absolutely the smallest executable I could make it. In fact, it's probably the smallest executable on your machine! It's only 17K.)

The program name "Birthdays and Such…"

Birthdays and Such… ends with an ellipsis character because there are so many dates beyond birthdays and such to remember… (I have added reminders for such purposes as filing for reimbursement of certain recurring expenses, changing my 401K contributions, paying for my Grand Canyon reservations, and visiting my dentist, for example.)

Version 1.0

Version 1.0 has been extensively tested, and it is my belief that there are no bugs of any kind (I know, I know, famous last words and all). Well, how about this: I've been using Birthdays and Such… for almost two and a half years now on Macs ranging from SEs to Quadras, Performas to PowerMacs, and from System 6 to System 7—all without a glitch.

What you need to run Birthdays and Such…

Birthdays and Such… runs on almost every Macintosh computer that's been made. There is almost no Macintosh in use today that does not meet the following minimum system requirements:

   • a Macintosh computer made in 1986 or later (that is, <u>not</u> a Mac 128 or Mac 512)

   • system software version 6.0 or later (actually, System 6.0.4 or later may be required)

If you're not sure which system you have, choose the About The Finder or About This Macintosh command from the Apple menu (these commands only appear when you're in the Finder).

Distribution

Birthdays and Such… is shareware. (No, not for my relatives and friends. Don't be silly. I sent it to each of you as a gift. But if you're not already one of my friends, relatives and acquaintances, Birthdays and Such… *is* shareware.)

Birthdays and Such… is *NOT* a free or public domain program.

As with most shareware, please try it for yourself for a day, a week, a month. Unlike most shareware, however, Birthdays and Such… is *What'sItWorthWare*—that is, I believe in user-determined pricing. You decide what Birthdays and Such… is worth. Then send me a money order or a check (see Chapter 7). (What's it worth to save your marriage? What's it worth to maintain your relationship with your parents? OK, maybe Birthdays and Such… won't do that all by itself, but... :-)

Please keep Birthdays and Such…, the sample Reminders file, the manual, and any addendum or readme files bundled together, if you pass it on to someone else.

Chapter 2 : **Installing Birthdays and Such…**

To install Birthdays and Such… from a floppy disk (or CDROM) onto your hard drive (you can skip these steps if you downloaded and uncompressed Birthdays and Such… from a network source):

1) Turn on your Macintosh.
2) Insert the floppy disk labeled *Birthdays and Such* in the floppy disk drive of your Macintosh.
3) Copy the folder labeled *Birthdays and Such folder* to your hard disk.
4) Eject the *Birthdays and Such* disk.

Basic installation is now complete.

<u>Auto-Startup Installation:</u>
Most people will want Birthdays and Such… to run every time they turn on their Macintosh computer, so they'll be reminded of upcoming birthdays and anniversaries at least that often. If you would like the program to run every time you turn on your Macintosh, continue with the following instructions.

1) Open the *Birthdays and Such folder* on your hard disk (the one you just moved there)
2) Select the icon labeled *Birthdays and Such…* (click once on the icon).

<u>Remaining installation instructions for System 6 users</u>:
If you use System 7, skip to the section titled "Remaining installation instructions for System 7 users." This section is for System 6 users:
3) Choose the Set Startup command from the Special menu.
4) Click the radio button labeled *Birthdays and Such…* (If *Birthdays and Such…* is not one of the options, click the Cancel button and go back two steps in these instructions to step 1.)
5) Click the OK button.

If you're a System 6 user, auto-startup installation is now complete. Now every time you turn on your Macintosh computer, Birthdays and Such… will start up, look through the Reminders file, and remind you of the upcoming events in your life.

<u>Remaining installation instructions for System 7 users</u>:
3) Choose the Make Alias command from the File menu.
4) Drag the new file labeled *Birthdays and Such… alias* into the Startup Items folder, which is located inside the System Folder.

Auto-startup installation is now complete. Now every time you turn on your Macintosh computer, Birthdays and Such… will start up, look through the Reminders file, and remind you of the upcoming events in your life.

<u>Optional Step</u>: To force the Birthdays and Such… reminders window to appear as the top window (to be "in your face", so to speak), rename the application and the alias to begin with a '•' (type the key combination, option-8). (This works because the bullet sorts alphabetically after all the letters and numbers, and after many special characters.) (Note, however, that Startup Items that are desk accessories or documents will foil this plan: they will open on top anyway, since DAs and documents open after applications.)

Now double-click Birthdays and Such… The four changes of season are in the sample Reminders file, each with a long enough reminder period to guarantee there's a reminder every single day—so you can get a flavor of Birthdays and Such… right away.

Chapter 3 : **Setting Up Your Reminders**

The file you create of all your important dates, a text file which must be named "Reminders", is the source of information for Birthdays and Such…

Each Reminder in the Reminders file can be assigned its own number of days ahead that you want to be reminded that the event is upcoming.

Acceptable locations for the Reminders file

The Reminders file (which must have the name "Reminders") must be located in one of two places:
> • in the same folder as Birthdays and Such… , or
> • in the System Folder

Birthdays and Such… reads in the file, looks through all the reminders in it, and evaluates them to find those which are, today, applicable (those for which today's date is within the reminder period). Then it displays those reminders in a list on the screen.

How to edit the Reminders file

Reminders is a text file that can be created by any word processor that can save a file as 'text'.

The simplest way to edit Reminders is to use TeachText or SimpleText, one of which is located on almost every Macintosh. (Instructions for using other word processors to edit Reminders can be found at the end of this chapter.)

The sample Reminders file was created in **SimpleText** (on earlier Macintoshes called **TeachText**). To edit Reminders, simply double-click its icon. If you have TeachText or SimpleText, it will launch, opening the Reminders file. When you've made your changes, choose Save from the File menu. Then close the document (choose Close from the File menu). Double-click Birthdays and Such… to see the results (if any would be displayed today) of your changes.

The format for each Reminder

The format in the text file named "Reminders" is a series of records, each several lines long, each line a single field. You have to press the *return* key when you add new lines to the document, and not just let the line wrap (*Nerd translation:* each line must be terminated by a carriage return character).

The fields are in the following order:

date	date of reminder
warning-period	number of days prior to *date* to begin reminding (0 to 99)
Reminder	the text to display as a reminder
-	record separator (a dash as the first character on the line)

Reminders consist of just the first three fields, followed by the record separator line (a single dash as the first character on the line). No blank lines are permitted.

Here's an example file with three reminders:

January 14
2
David's birthday (1955).
-
January 23
0
Grandma's birthday .
-
July 19
10
Author Ron Lichty's birthday, P.O. Box 27262, SF, CA 94127.
-

So in the example, you would be reminded of David's birthday from January 12-14, Grandma's birthday only on January 23rd itself, and Ron's birthday from July 9-19, long enough to buy him lots of presents.

While the example shows the birthdays in date order, that's not necessary. But I personally find it easier to look through the Reminders file and keep track of everyone by doing it that way.

The *date* Field: International Date Formats

Dates should be written in a form that is native to the language and region of the system software you are using. (*Nerd note:* a part of system software called the Script Manager is used to read the dates from the file; the date routines weren't added to the Script Manager until version 2.0, which was released with System 6, which is why System 6 or later is required.)

The most common valid English date formats, for example, would be:

September 20
Sept 20
Sept. 20
9/20

European French systems, on the other hand, would probably expect (try it and let me know):

20 septembre
20 sept
20 sept.
20.9

I tested how well this works in other regions, but that is the point of the routines, so I would expect them to work fairly intuitive to your language and region.

The *warning-period* Field

This is the number of days prior to the reminder's *date* that you'd like the program to remind you about it. It's a one- or two-digit number from 0 to 99.

The number '0' indicates that you want to see the reminder only on *date* itself—no prior days. The number '1' means you want to be warned the day before in addition to on the *date* itself. And so on. If the reminder's *date* is October 30, and the warning period is 2 days, you'll be reminded from October 28th through October 30th.

I often set warning periods of 10 days for distant relatives for whom I need to buy a card and send it. But I may set only a 2-day warning for local friends, to remind me I will want to call them on their actual birthdays.

The *Reminders* Field

This one line of text is the line that Birthdays and Such… will show you when the reminder is valid—from the beginning of the warning period through the date of the reminder itself. It's limited to a single line—a maximum of perhaps 70 or so characters. If you get too many, they'll just disappear off the right edge of the window.

Using other word processing programs to edit the Reminders file

Here are instructions for using various common word processing programs to edit a text file. Note that the instructions may change as word processors are updated with new versions.

To use **Microsoft Word**, choose Open from the File menu, make sure the "List Files of Type" popup is set either to Readable Files or to Text Files, navigate to the Reminders file, select Reminders, and Open it. When you've made your changes, choose Save from the File menu; provided you haven't tried (even inadvertently) to use bold, underlining, another font, or other formatting commands, Microsoft Word will maintain the TEXT file type.

If, instead, you were to start a *new* Reminders file in Microsoft Word, the first time you save Reminders, select Text Only in the popup menu labeled "Save File as Type"; if you forget (or if Word forgets, which it occasionally does), choose Save As... from the File menu, type in Reminders again as the filename, and select Text Only in the popup menu labeled "Save File as Type" (you'll be prompted to confirm that it's ok to replace the previous Reminders file). (Special power user note: As a power Word user, I have a custom Work menu; since I tend to add birthdays to Reminders all the time, as I meet people, I added Reminders to my Work menu; that way I don't have to think about where the file is actually located—I just choose Reminders from Word's Work menu to open it; then I edit it, save it, and close it.)

To use **MacWrite 5.01**, choose Open from the File menu, navigate to the Reminders file, select Reminders, and Open it (select the "Paragraphs" button to the Carriage Return prompt; and "OK" to the Document Being Converted prompt). When you've made your changes, choose Save from the File menu, click the "Text Only" radio button, type in Reminders as the file's name, and click Save. (You'll additionally have to click Replace to "Replace existing 'Reminders'?"; and "Paragraphs" to the Carriage Return prompt.) Then close the document in MacWrite 5.01 (you'll additionally have to click No to "Save changes before closing?").

To use **MacWrite II**, choose Open from the File menu, make sure the "Show" popup is set either to All Available or to Text, navigate to the Reminders file, select Reminders, and Open it. When you've made your changes, choose Save As from the File menu, set the "Save As" popup to Text, type in Reminders as the file's name (or simply delete " (Converted)" from after "Reminders"— be sure to remove the space character between "Reminders" and "(Converted)"), and click Save. (You'll additionally have to click Replace to "Replace existing 'Reminders'?") Then close the document in MacWrite II (you'll additionally have to click No to "Save changes to 'Reminders (Converted)' before closing?").

To use **MacWrite Pro**, choose Open from the File menu, make sure the "Show" popup is set either to All Available or to Text, navigate to the Reminders file, select Reminders, and Open it. When you've made your changes, choose Save from the File menu, set the "Save As" popup to Text, type in Reminders as the file's name (or simply delete " (Converted)" from after "Reminders"—be sure to remove the space character between "Reminders" and "(Converted)"), and click Save. (You'll additionally have to click Replace to "Replace existing 'Reminders'?") Then close the document in MacWrite Pro (you'll additionally have to click No to "Save changes to 'Reminders (Converted)' before closing?").

To use **ClarisWorks**, choose Open from the File menu, set the "Document Type" popup to Word Processing (make sure the "File Type" popup is set to All Available or to Plain Text), navigate to the Reminders file, select Reminders, and Open it. When you've made your changes, choose Save from the File menu, set the "Save As" popup to Plain Text, type in Reminders as the file's name (or simply delete " - Converted" from after "Reminders"—be sure to remove the space character between "Reminders" and
"- Converted"), and click Save. (You'll additionally have to click Replace to "Replace existing 'Reminders'?") Then close the document in ClarisWorks (you'll have to click No to "Save changes to 'Reminders - Converted' before closing?").

To use **Microsoft Works**, choose Open from the File menu, click the Word Processor icon, click the Import File check box so the Reminder icon will be visible, navigate to the Reminders file, select Reminders, and Open it. When you've made your changes, choose Save As from the File menu, click the Export File checkbox, type in Reminders as the file's name, and click Save. (You'll additionally have to click Yes to "Replace existing Reminders?") Then close the document in Microsoft Works.

Chapter 4 : **Birthdays and Such… options**

Birthdays and Such… is so simple that it has only one menu option. Nonetheless, balloon help (System 7 or later) is available for Birthdays and Such… Choose Show Balloons under the Help menu to browse the capabilities of Birthdays and Such…

<u>The AutoQuit option</u>

Some users who launch Birthdays and Such… every day would prefer not have to look at an empty list, then manually quit the program, when there are no reminders that day. For these users, there is an AutoQuit option.

When the list of reminders is displayed, you will see, in addition to the three standard menus (the Apple, File and Edit menus), a Reminders menu. Pull down the Reminders menu and you'll see a single option:

> AutoQuit If No Reminders

If you choose this option, the next time you pull down the menu there will be a checkmark in front of it. And the next time you launch Birthdays and Such…, it will automatically immediately quit if there are no reminders to display.

You will want to choose this option only if you launch Birthdays and Such… daily (whether by double-clicking it, or by making it part of your Startup Items).

If today is a date with no reminders, and the AutoQuit option is turned on, then Birthdays and Such… will launch and automatically quit. Unfortunately, the only way to disable the feature is to have Birthdays and Such… running, but it won't run until there's a reminder to display. Catch 22. You can solve this in one of two ways:
• Change the date in the General Controls or Date & Time control panel to a date for which there is a reminder (be sure to change the date back after unchecking the AutoQuit command).
• Add a reminder to the Reminders file that is applicable today.

<u>If you leave your Macintosh running for days at a time</u>, then you should:
• leave Birthdays and Such… running all the time (its automatic update feature—re-evaluating the Reminders file at midnight every night—means that whenever you look at its window, the reminders will be correct)
• leave the AutoQuit option unchecked (checking this option will stymie your intentions: Birthdays and Such… will, some midnight, hit the first hole in your reminders, quit, and never reappear)

Note: Birthdays and Such… does not know how to relaunch itself. It knows only how to update its window once it is running. I specifically designed Birthdays and Such… both to launch super quickly and/or to run all the time: it's absolutely the smallest executable I could make it. (It's probably the smallest executable on your machine! It's only 17K.)

There's one caveat to its window always being correct. If you change the Reminders file, you

will have to quit and relaunch Birthdays and Such… to see the new ones. I could have added code to constantly monitor the disk and check whether the Reminders file had been changed, but opted to keep Birthdays and Such… small...

Chapter 5 : **Errors**

<u>The Current Date is wrong</u>

If the date that Birthdays and Such… displays is incorrect, then your Macintosh's internal clock is off. You can fix it using a Control Panel. Under System 6, the date and time are set in the General control panel. Under System 7, the date and time are set in either the General Controls control panel or the Date & Time control panel. In either system, find the Control Panels by pulling down the Apple menu.

<u>The warning-period for reminders are wrong</u>

One user reported that a blank line at the beginning of the Reminders file had caused Birthdays and Such to see dates as closer than they were—that is, a date two days away was reported as being tomorrow! He said that removing the blank line corrected the problem. This may be model-specific; it was not reproducible on my Mac 7100.

<u>Birthdays and Such… does not display a reminder you added or changed</u>

Birthdays and Such… will not recognize changes made to the Reminders file while it is running. If Birthdays and Such… is running when you edit the Reminders file, you must save and close the file, and quit Birthdays and Such… and relaunch it.

You also need to make sure that there are no blank lines in the Reminders file—whether at the beginning or interspersed into one or more reminders.

Still not recognizing a change? Use the Finder's Find menu command to search your hard disk for "Reminders" to be sure you don't have two copies (and edited a version other than the one Birthdays and Such… is reading reminders from).

<u>Birthdays and Such… launches, but quits right away!</u>

If today is a date with no reminders, and the AutoQuit option is turned on (see the previous chapter), then Birthdays and Such… will launch and automatically quit. Unfortunately, the only way to disable the feature is to have Birthdays and Such… running, but it won't run until there's a reminder to display, and obviously there's not one today! Catch 22.

You can solve this in one of two ways:
• Change the date in the General Controls or Date & Time control panel to a date for which there is a reminder (be sure to change the date back after unchecking the AutoQuit command under the Reminders menu).
• Add a reminder to the Reminders file that is applicable today.

<u>You leave your Mac running, but Birthdays and Such… does not relaunch when a new reminder comes due</u>

Birthdays and Such… does not know how to launch itself. It knows only how to update its

window once it is running.

If you leave your Macintosh running for days at a time, then you should leave Birthdays and Such… running all the time. Its automatic update feature—re-evaluating the

Reminders file at midnight every night—means that whenever you look at its window, the reminders will be correct.

(I specifically designed Birthdays and Such… to run all the time: it's absolutely the smallest executable I could make it. In fact, it's probably the smallest executable on your machine! It's only 17K.)

Error messages

At some point, you may encounter an error while running Birthdays and Such… Here are some error dialogs with the messages they present, and what to do about them.
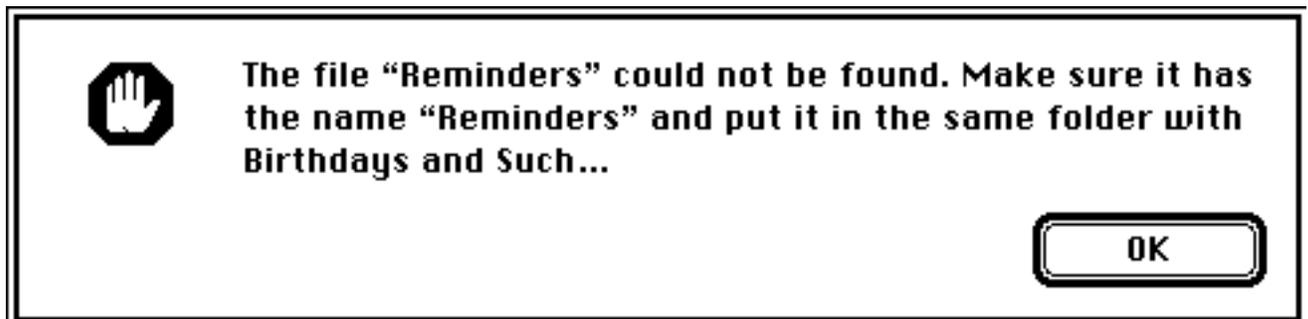
> 🖐 **The file "Reminders" could not be found. Make sure it has the name "Reminders" and put it in the same folder with Birthdays and Such…**
>
> [OK]

The Reminders file (which must have the name "Reminders") must be located in one of two places:
  • in the same folder as Birthdays and Such… , or
  • in the System Folder
If you get this error, make sure "Reminders" is correctly named (even a space character before or after the name would prevent Birthdays and Such… from recognizing it as its Reminders file), and then make sure it's located in one of the acceptable locations.

> 🖐 **The file "Reminders" is not a TEXT file. Edit it once more with your word processor, and save it as "text".**
>
> [OK]
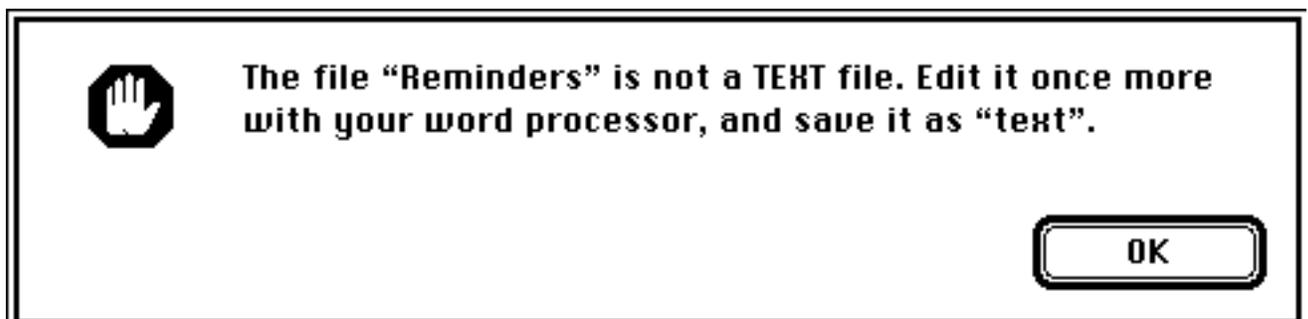
The Reminders file must be saved as a text file, not in the usual format used by your word processor. If you get this message, you'll have to open the document in your word processor again, then save it as a text file using the method your word processor provides to save documents as text files. See *Chapter 3: Setting Up the Reminders File* for an explanation of how to save documents as text files from many common word processing programs.

> **The date in the Reminders file is invalid for the reminder, "Birthdays and Such… author Ron Lichty's birthday."**
> **Edit the Reminders file to correct "Huly 19".**
>
> [OK]
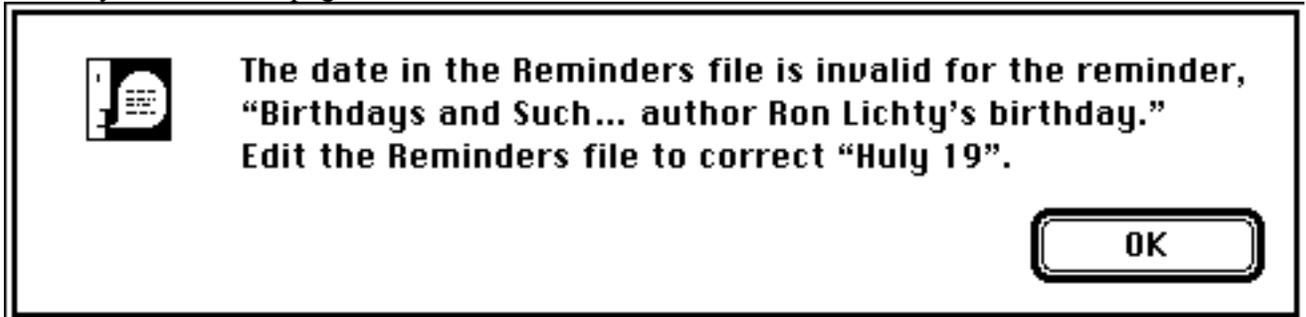
When Birthdays and Such… reads in the Reminders file, it checks the date at the beginning of each reminder. If that date is invalid (such as Fev. 12 or 3/42), Birthdays and Such… will present you with this message. You'll want to edit and re-save the file (remember to save it as a text file) or Birthdays and Such… will never remind you of these invalid-date reminders.

> **There is not enough memory allocated. In the Finder, select the Birthdays and Such… icon; choose Get Info from the File menu, and type a higher Memory value.**
>
> [OK]
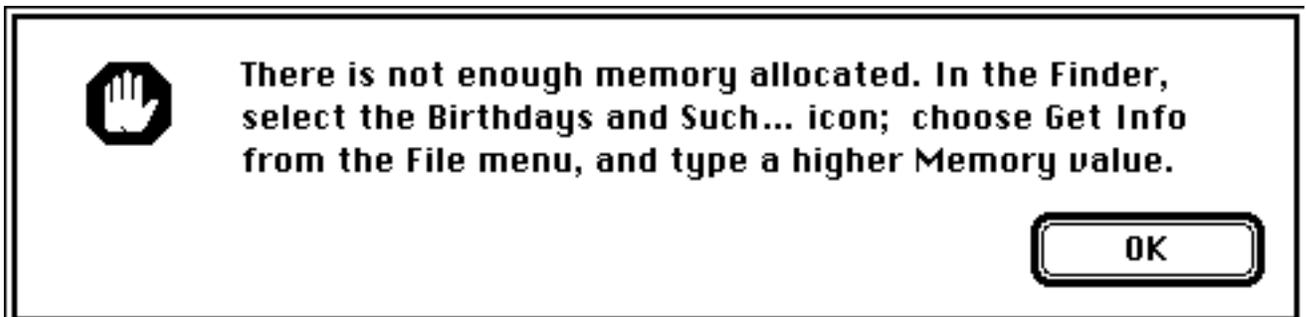
If you have an incredibly large number of reminders in your Reminders file, it is possible to overwhelm the memory partition reserved for Birthdays and Such…   Should that happen, and you're presented with this message, select the icon for Birthdays and Such… in the Finder, and choose the Get Info command from the File menu. Then type a slightly larger value than is already displayed into the Memory Size box(es).

> **Unexpected, unexplainable, but nonetheless unrecoverable error. Please use the bug report form in your manual to report the circumstances of this error.**
>
> [OK]
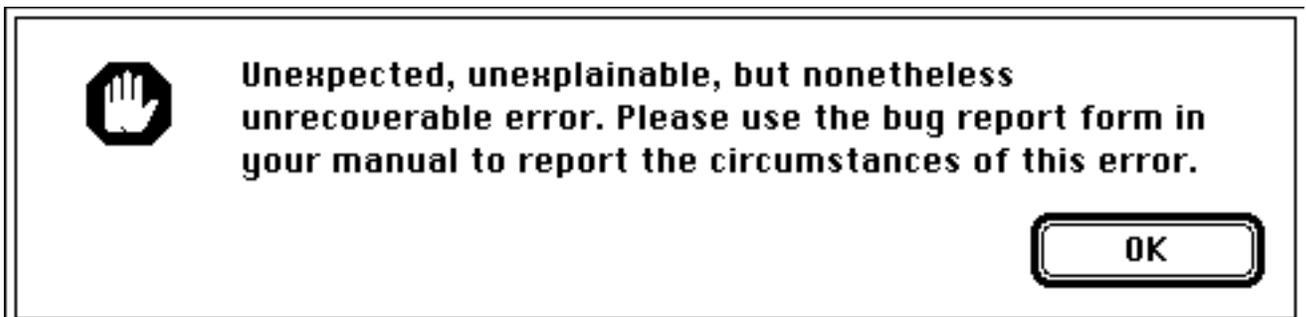
Finally, it is possible that some error could occur that was not anticipated. If that occurs, and you get this message, fill out a copy of the error report form at the end of this manual and mail it to the author.

Chapter 6 : **About the Author**

Ron Lichty, 46 years old, lives in San Francisco, and is director of engineering for client applications for Charles Schwab and Company's electronic brokerage technology.

Previously, Ron was director of engineering at mFactory (makers of mTropolis, an authoring environment for creating interactive multimedia), Fujitsu Cultural Technologies (makers of WorldsAway, a third-generation online animated virtual world—on CompuServe, Go "Away"; or visit its web page at http://WWW.WorldsAway.com/), and Berkeley Systems (makers of the After Dark line of screen savers). Before that, he spent six years at Apple Computer, where he was a Finder engineer, an Installer engineer, a manager of development tools product marketing and, from 1991-94, manager of the Macintosh Finder engineering team.

Before joining Apple, Ron worked for Softwest, a Sunnyvale software consulting company. There, he wrote compiler code generators, co-authored a spell-checking program for the Apple II and Macintosh computers, and was awarded several patents for work on card-access electronic hotel locking systems and on smart-card money-access terminal systems. Also at Softwest, he was contracted by Apple Computer to co-design and program the Apple IIGS Sales Demo Program; featuring digitized music and graphics, animation, dissolves, and speech, it was translated into five languages to debut the computer worldwide in 1986. In his spare time, Ron co-authored two assembly language programming books— one a reference, one a tutorial.

Prior to his 15 years in the software industry, Ron worked in nontechnical fields for 10 years as a writer and editor, and as a freelance graphic designer. Brochures he designed launched a wide variety of companies, services and products. His freelance articles from New York and California appeared widely in regional and national magazines. He started a small magazine in the Chicago area. He was a daily newspaper reporter/photographer in Wyoming. And he authored two successful nonfiction books, one a compleat guide to newspaper and magazine publishing, the other an inspirational/how-to guide called *132 Ways to Earn a Living without Working (for Someone Else)*.

After he became one of the first authors to buy a computer for word processing, in 1980, he teamed up with another early adopter to teach a course that, during the early 1980s, helped hundreds of Bay Area writers and authors select computers and word processing software. Ron also shared with other authors his experiences and research into publicizing and promoting books through classes at San Francisco State and San Jose State and UC Berkeley. Ron has also owned and run several mail order companies that sold books by mail.

Ron has a grandmother, two parents, two children, a wife, four brothers and sisters, lots of friends, and scads of nieces and nephews whose birthdays and anniversaries he dutifully remembers with the help of Birthdays and Such…

Ron welcomes comments, error reports and suggestions (not to mention registrations) at:
    Ron Lichty
    P.O. Box 27262
    San Francisco, CA 94127

or electronically at:

Birthdays and Such… page 19   version 1.0.2
                    America OnLine: RonLichty
                    Internet: RonLichty@aol.com

Chapter 7 : **Birthdays and Such… is shareware**

Birthdays and Such… is shareware. (No, there's no shareware fee for my relatives and friends. Don't be silly. I sent it to each of you as a gift. But if you're not already one of my friends, relatives and acquaintances, Birthdays and Such… is shareware.) Birthdays and Such… is NOT a free or public domain program.

What is shareware?

1) If you keep using it, you must pay for it

As with most shareware, please try it for yourself for a day, a week, a month. Unlike most shareware, however, Birthdays and Such… is What'sItWorthWare—that is, I believe in user-determined pricing. You decide what Birthdays and Such… is worth. Then send a money order or check (or even cash) with your name and <u>email address</u> (for any updates) to:

>   Ron Lichty
>   P.O. Box 27262
>   San Francisco, CA 94127

(What's it worth to save your marriage? What's it worth to maintain a relationship with your parents? OK, maybe Birthdays and Such… won't do that all by itself, but... :-)

(International: Your local check will cost more to cash in the U.S. than the amount you write it for. Instead, send U.S. dollars. Or better, visit your local friendly post office and inquire about the availability of international money orders in U.S. dollars.)

If you don't like it, drag it to the Trash and you'll owe me nothing. But if you do continue to use it, you do owe me a fee—it's just that with What'sItWorthWare, you not only get to try the software before you pay for it, but you also get to decide its value. I don't care whether the amount you send is a dollar or a hundred dollars, provided 1) that you send me something, and 2) that what you send me represents what you believe it's worth.

2) If you like it, share it with your friends and relatives

The second aspect of shareware is that it gets distributed by people who like it and use it—sharing it with their friends. I urge you to share it. Your friends urge you to share it (OK, they would if they knew you had it, and how useful it is to you). Your friends deserve to know about the programs that keep your life together. Give them a disk with Birthdays and Such…, PopChar, The Tilery, TypeIt4Me, SCSIProbe, GunShy, Quoter, DOSWasher, and the other freeware and shareware programs you couldn't do without.

When you do share Birthdays and Such…, please keep it together with the sample Reminders file (you may want to add your birthday, so your friends are reminded of the *most important* day of the year! :-), the manual, the quick-start guide, and any addendum or readme files, and pass them all on. You *must* keep the manuals with the program if you pass it on—that's the second shareware requirement. (What was the first again? Oh, right, paying the author...)

The third restriction is that you cannot modify the program or manual in any way, sell it, or include it on a disk which is sold without my prior written consent (this also applies to freeware

and shareware distribution outfits such as, but not limited to, Educorp et al.). With the exception that clubs and user groups may charge a nominal fee (not to exceed $10) for expenses while distributing Birthdays and Such…

Thank you in advance for keeping the What'sItWorthWare spirit alive!

Chapter 8 : **Sharing the Spirit**

So what do I recommend as essential in Macintosh shareware and freeware utilities (besides Birthdays and Such…, of course) and websites? Here's the list I give my friends:

The Tilery (formerly called "Applicon."). Freeware. The Tilery displays tiles, each of which represents an application, document, folder, control panel, etc. Clicking a tile opens its item: applications are launched or brought to the front, documents are opened, folders' Finder windows are opened and displayed. On the edge of your screen you see the applications you have running. Essential.

WindowPicker. Freeware. Adds a Windows menu to the menu bar, providing a simple way to bring any window in any application immediately to the front.

Quoter. Freeware. Quoter DA is a DA whose main purpose is to convert text on the Clipboard into quotes for email. All you have to do is select text you want to quote, copy it, open the Quoter DA, enter the quoter's initials and hit OK, then paste. Quoter can also reformat text without adding initials and it can postmark replies with the original message date, time, sender name and recipient name.

DOSWasher. Shareware, $5. Simply drag any text document, Mac or DOS, onto the icon of this program. The documents will be converted to their "opposite": a DOS file will be converted to the Macintosh format, and a Mac document will become a DOS file.

PopChar. Freeware. PopChar is a little control panel that enables you to generate every possible character that is available in the current font without having to remember keyboard combinations.

TypeIt4Me. Shareware, $30. Wherever you can enter text by typing it at the keyboard, TypeIt4Me can do it for you.

SCSIProbe. Freeware. Get the Mac to recognize any SCSI device easily.

Do you believe in Macintosh? Check out < http://www.evangelist.macaddict.com/ > to see how you can share your Macintosh fervor with your friends.

Join a user group. If you're not a member of a user group, you're missing an invaluable experience. Visit http://www2.apple.com/documents/usergroups.html or call 1-800-538-9696, Ext. 500 to find a user group near you.

Appendix A: **Thank Yous and Such**

Legalities

Any names and/or information that are registered trademarks of any company, corporation or group are hereby respected and acknowledged.

Warranty

To the best of my knowledge (derived in considerable part from years of use and testing), Birthdays and Such… is "harmless". Nonetheless, Birthdays and Such… is offered "as is" and is not covered by any warranty of any kind, so use it at your own risk. If you do find a bug, I'd like to hear about it—I may not be able to fix it, but I'd at least like to know about it.

Acknowledgments

Many thanks to:
- Apple Computer's DTS group for the sample code from which I started
- Tim Swihart for moral and technical support beyond the call of friendship
- Then-DTS manager C.K. Haun for samples of handling lists inside dialogs
- Internationalization gurus Kerry Laidlaw and Norbert Lindenberg for helping me grok the Script Manager and for fielding my complaints about how it handles February 29
- 1.0 user Charles C. Cares, who determined to fix the 1.0 Birthdays and Such… small icon rather than put up with its distortions, learned more about ResEdit than he'd planned and, most pleased with his handiwork, offered it as his shareware contribution. Great job!

Programmer Talk

This program was written in *MPW C* v. 3.2, and debugged using Apple Computer's *Voodoo Monkey*, an offshoot of *SourceBug*. I found Symantec's *Think Reference* to be a very useful on-line substitute for *Inside Mac*. I found a set of freeware tools called *Tags for MPW* to be terrific. To get my icons to appear (without rebuilding my desktop dozens of times), I used Tim Swihart's freeware tool *BNDL Banger*.

While developing this simple application, I found no sample code for making sure that, when it's opened, a window's location will be on the screen (a problem you might have seen with Birthdays and Such… only if you changed monitors; Excel users who are given spreadsheets with no visible window because they were created on their boss' second monitor will know what I mean). As a good programming citizen (and a curious programmer), I determined that no user of mine would lose the Birthdays and Such… window into "outer space." To do that, I discovered I had to calculate the window's title bar height. And I found doing that to be a whole lot harder to do correctly than I'd expected (and for more than just me: I also uncovered a related bug in *Inside Mac*). All of that led me to update two of Apple Computer's Toolbox Tech Notes

(TB 14 and TB 575), and to write sample code for the above operations. I'd like to thank Dean Yu and Nick Kledzik for reviewing (and giving me lots of corrections to) both my writing and the sample code.

Appendix B: **Improvements**

v. 1.0.2, December 1996
Added Quick Start Guide to the package. No code changes.

v. 1.0.1, September 1996
Improved Finder icons. Updated dialogs and manual.

Error Report

If you encounter the "Unexpected error" dialog—or any behavior of Birthdays and Such… that you didn't expect, please fill in a copy of this report, and mail it to:

America OnLine: RonLichty

Internet: RonLichty@aol.com

Postal: Ron Lichty

P.O. Box 27262

San Francisco, CA 94127

Your name and address:

Your email address:

Your phone number, with area code:

Which Macintosh model you are using:

Which System Software version you are using (in the Finder, choose "About…" from the Apple menu):

Additional comments on your hardware and/or software configuration:

In what folder is *Birthdays and Such…* located?

In what folder is *Reminders* located?

( ) You were presented with the "Unexpected error" dialog.

( ) Birthdays and Such… didn't work the way you think it should.

( ) Other:

What happened:

Describe the sequence of events that led up to the dialog or aberrant behavior: