

## Hiking and hacking on Crete

## PENGUIN OLYMPICS

Wireless Sirtaki, synchronized penguin swimming, bottle cap diving in the pool – only a few disciplines that were part of the annual Linux Beer Hike, aka “Linux Bier Wanderung.” **BY HEIKE JURZIK**

**F**rom the 2nd to 9th of September, about 40 geeks from all over the world met up in Hersonissos, Crete, Greece. The area is a very popular tourist destination and at first it seemed a bit difficult to find other attendees in the crowded little town, but after the “pub of the day” was announced on the mailing list everyone spent a good first evening together. The temperatures made it a little challenging to muster up the energy to go on hikes, and so it was no surprise that the “Welcome Hike” ended with several geeks splashing and paddling in the Mediterranean Sea. During the week though, people got used to the weather so that several excursions to Knossos, the Skinakas observatory, and the Samaria Gorge could take place.

## Lighting the Flame

After the attendees brought the penguin to the host city the games could begin. Throughout the week the geeks expanded the Web of Trust – as well as PGP key signing, there are now six new CAcert assurers [2] in Greece.

We also had talks on a variety of subjects, such as “Teach Yourself Greek in 24 minutes,” “Tor, an anonymizing network,” and “Photographic Workflow” (digital photos in Linux). “LaTeX: from

the prosaic to the bizarre” by Jenny Radcliffe offered some new perspectives. Although the typesetting system is designed for technical and scientific documentation, she presented the audience with some unusual uses, such as creating Go diagrams and typesetting music. Another interesting presentation was given by Dominique Neuenhagen and Antony Stone. They talked about the Braille display and BRLTTY, demonstrated the device and its functions, and told the audience a bit about how a blind user interacts with a computer (Figure 1).

## All G(r)EEK to me!

The round of “I’m Sorry I Haven’t A Clue” caused some puzzled looks from people unfamiliar with the radio show [3], but they seem to enjoy the presentation nevertheless. Another highlight was the round of “lightning talks” in which people spoke – with or without preparation – for a maximum of five minutes on a subject of their choice. It was fun to learn more about “Setting your \$PATH in Bash,” and “Free Beer versus Free Speech.” “Free Speech is all very well as a philosophical concept – something you can sell to people who want to feel good about it, but Free Beer is a marvellous incentive for actually getting the software written and debugged.”

## Thank you!

LBW turned out to be a great week. I would like to thank the Hellenic Linux



**Figure 2: Cheers to a wonderful time in Greece!**

Users Group [4], especially Spiros Bolis and Richard Kweskin, for organizing this year’s event. Many thanks also to the Municipality of Hersonissos (especially the mayor Spiros Danellis and the IT manager Thanasis Sakoudis) who provided the halls and the Internet access. Everyone made us feel welcome in Crete, including the pubs and restaurants (who were always willing to seat 25-30 unexpected people for dinner), particularly the Pegasus [5] in Koutouloufari and the Argo down in Hersonissos [6] where we had the closing party. The staff was very friendly and served us drinks and snacks down at the beach – cheers! ■



**Figure 1: Geeks get an insight into Linux on a one-line display.**

## The Linux Bier Wanderung

LBW is a week-long event that takes place in a different European country each summer, drawing together Open Source and Free Software enthusiasts and friends from more than a dozen different countries. It is an entirely volunteer-run event, funded from donations from the attendees towards the cost of the hall, Internet access, etc [1].

## INFO

- [1] The Linux Beer Hike: <http://www.linuxbierwanderung.org/>, <http://lbw2007.hellug.gr/>
- [2] CAcert International: <http://www.cacert.org/>
- [3] BBC Radio 4 Comedy: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/comedy/clue.shtml>
- [4] Hellenic Linux User Group: <http://www.hellug.gr/>
- [5] Pegasus: <http://pegasus.explorecrete.com/>
- [6] Argo: <http://www.rakiclub.com/>