



# FINANCIAL PREPAREDNESS

*"One of life's most painful moments comes when we must admit that we didn't do our homework, that we are not prepared." ~ Merlin Olsen*

Issue #263  
February 27, 2026

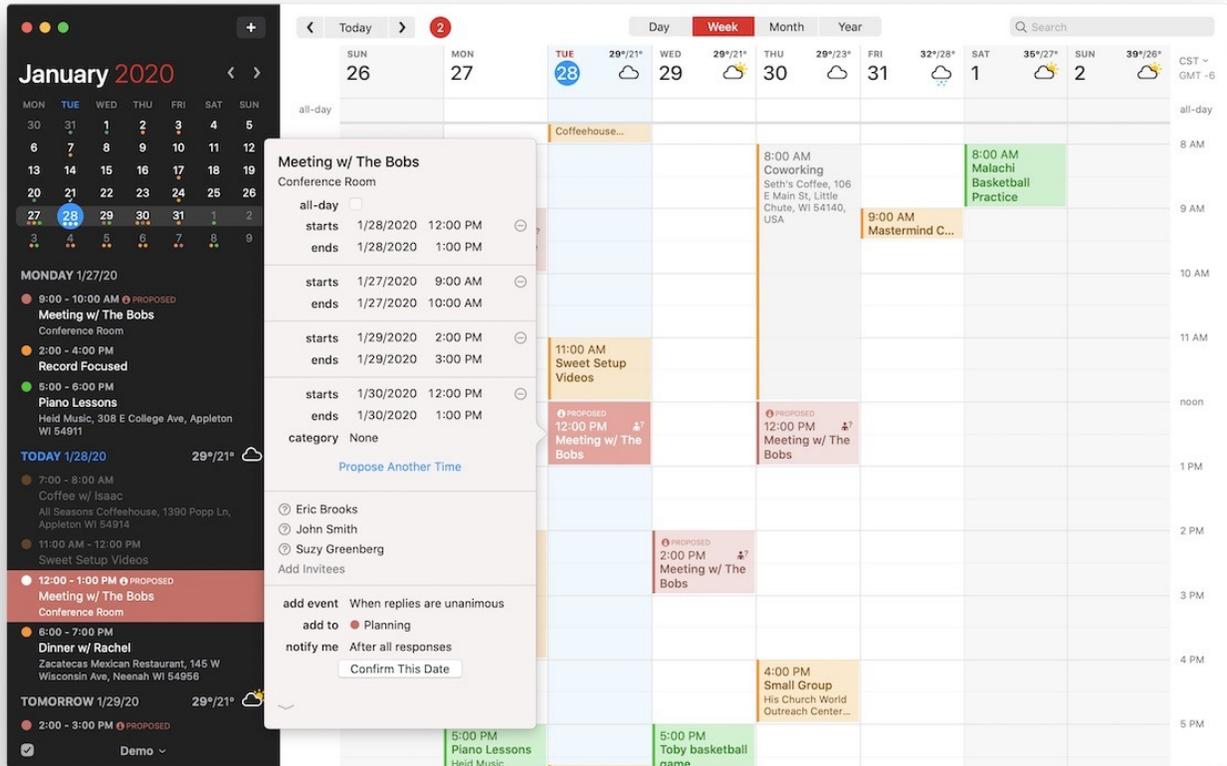
## Fantastical

This week I'm writing about [Fantastical](#), a premium upgrade to Apple Calendar (as well as [Cardhop](#), Fantastical's sidekick and a premium upgrade to Apple Contacts). Most computer owners use the side programs that come with their operating system since they're already installed and usually perform satisfactorily. If you're [a pro](#), however, it often pays to research alternatives and step up your game for key programs such as calendars, contacts/CRM, productivity and spreadsheets.

For years, I wasn't happy with Apple Calendar, specifically how when I scheduled an event that I had scheduled before (such as "pickleball"), when I'd bring up the Alerts submenu, the default was a list of (identical) alerts that I'd used previously (such as five "15 minutes before"), which I had to manually delete. You'd think that eventually, a multi-trillion dollar corporation like Apple would eventually get around to fixing such an obvious bug in one of their key programs, but you'd be wrong.

I was much less happy with Apple Contacts, as after I upgraded to Tahoe (OS 26), every time I viewed a contact card, it didn't even appear to be stable, and sometimes they were full of phone numbers and email addresses that I knew didn't belong to that contact. Enough was enough, so I started looking around.

A friend told me about Fantastical, which is made by Flexibits. The program won the Mac App of the Year in the Mac App Store, and it won Apple's Design Award. I signed up for a free trial and was impressed; it looks better than Apple Calendar.



Two of its features were game changers for me. First, it allows you to insert a task (or convert an event into a task), complete with a box that you can check once you complete it (at which point it disappears). You can set up a reminder for each task. You can also make a task recurring, and if you don't complete it on its designated day, it gets forwarded automatically to the following day. You can also set a color for each event and a priority for each task.

Second, it works with third party programs (such as Google, Microsoft 365, Exchange, iCloud, [todoist](#), etc.) so if I've assigned a date to a task in todoist, it automatically appears on my calendar (though you may need to restart Fantastical to see this).

You can add events or tasks by using natural language or forward an event-related email to Fantastical and it will extract the details and create the event itself. You can create a template from an existing task or event, and attach a file or image to an event.

It makes it easy to organize calls and meetings using its RSVP, Openings, Proposals and Conference Calls features, which would be extremely helpful for someone who does a lot of these.

Another nice feature is the integration of “a detailed 10-day weather forecast directly into all calendar views, with further details on demand. Powered by AccuWeather...forecasts

are accurate to the minute and RealFeel will inform you of what temperature conditions actually feel like....Sunrise and sunset times are also displayed.”

The feature that blew me away the most was the ability to browse and add a slew of “up-to-date calendars for holidays of various countries, religions, or education systems. You can even add calendars for your favorite sports, TV shows, and much more.”

It works in Mac or Windows and on desktops, mobile devices and wearables, in Light or Dark mode. Available views include Day Ticker, day, week, month, quarter and year. You can also select one of 14 widgets to appear on your home screen. After the free trial, you can get a personal or family subscription. Regarding the privacy of your data, “it keeps as much private data on your device as possible.”

Your subscription comes with Cardhop, which is much nicer looking than the latest version of Apple Contacts and completely stable (at least for me). It's not a personal CRM, though it does allow you to add notes for each contact and include a timestamp if you wish. Its most powerful feature is its search bar.

If you want to upgrade your calendar and address book, check out these two programs.

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