



THE BUG REPORT

A Publication of the Greater South Bay PC Users Group

GS-BUG, Inc.

<http://gsbug.apcug.org>

Volume 14, Number 2

February 2009

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This space is blank because
we don't have a
PROGRAM CHAIRMAN.



*Curiosity is as much
the parent of attention,
as attention is of memory.*

*Lose an hour in the morning,
and you will spend all day
looking for it.*

-Richard Whatley
1787-1863



Greater South Bay PC Users Group

*A member of
Association of Personal Computer User Groups*



MEMBERSHIP

Membership is available for twelve months from the date of joining. Membership rates:

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THE BUG REPORT

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GENERAL MEETING

General meetings are held at 7:30 p.m. on the first Monday of the month at the Salvation Army Facility, 4223 Emerald Street (at the corner of Emerald and Earl Streets), Torrance.

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President's Thoughts

By U. A. Garred Sexton

My visit to CES (Consumer Electronic Show) early in January was interesting and informative, as usual. There were fewer exhibitors this year and fewer attendees. The big leaps in technology were not there but some incremental steps in technology made it interesting. The HD 3-D television was impressive and using the Polaroid glasses to get the 3-D effect was much better than using the old red/green glasses; however, the Polaroid glasses were not comfortable on top of my regular glasses.

The fast LCD televisions with LCD backlight were sharp and clear with the blacks approaching those of the plasma screens. The 120 frames per second refresh rate decreased the jitter with rapid movements that was a problem with LCD screens.

I wanted to see the new **Palm Pre** Smartphone. I finally located Palm in a special room but could not get into their demo presentation because it was by invitation only, and they were there only 2 days. At the end of the second day they moved out. This was the first time of which I'm aware that the convention shutdown started the second day by some of the exhibitors.

I visited three groups concerned with the VOIP (Voice Over Internet Protocol). They were VONAGE, Magic Jack, and Packet8 which handles small businesses and does have home service. I have VONAGE service with two telephone numbers and have not had a problem. A friend of mine is transitioning from one home to another while living in a third home for four or five months. He has to have a FAX number and keep his old phone numbers throughout the time because he has a business to run. He chose to

change his service to VONAGE and with broadband Internet he is up and running his business in his temporary home. To his customers, nothing has changed and when he moves to his new home, all he has to do is move his modem and plug it in. This portability is available with all the VOIP companies.

The advantage with VONAGE and Packet8 is that an active computer is not required. Just Internet access is necessary. The cost range is in the neighborhood of \$29.00 per month.

The PROS are:

- Portability anywhere you have broadband internet;
- you keep your telephone number;
- you have unlimited long distance along with other options.
- You may use any telephone instrument you have.

The CONS are:

- If your internet goes down, you lose telephone access;
- if there is a local power outage, you lose phone service.
- To use VOIP with Magic Jack and Skype an active computer is required.

In addition to the comments I made last month in this column, there have been further advances in what you can do using your house wiring for connecting your computers. You can restrict access to modules that you plug in and you can send HD video signals over the house wiring. For security purposes, the modules can be set up to prevent automatic access by just plugging in another module.

Internet Talk

By Frank Chao
Member, GS-BUG

This is the 112th “Internet Talk” article for *The Bug Report*, a publication of the Greater South Bay PC Users Group (GSBUG). Liz and I hope that you are getting as much fun out of the Internet as we are. Let us know what game sites, online sitcoms, and humorous Web sites you recommend.

GAMES FOR FREE

The “Games for Free” page at “Yahoo! Games” at <http://videogames.yahoo.com/feature/playing-for-free/1183474>

has several links to Websites that have free games.

Some of the free games such as *RuneScape* are Web-based. You must have a broadband Internet connection in order to play this online game inside your Web browser.

According to the *RuneScape* Web site at www.runescape.com: “*RuneScape* is a massively-multiplayer online game (MMOG), set in a fantasy world of warring races, ravaged landscapes and sinister powers.

Having chosen an adventurer, players are free to find their role within it: to live by the sword and face hundreds of enemies, to further the storyline in *RuneScape's* quests, or to train in any of a number of skills.”

Another fun game that is Web-based is *Desktop Tower Defense* which can be found at www.handdrawngames.com/DesktopTD/game.asp. According to this Web site: “*Desktop TD* is a fun flash based puzzle / strategy game where you have to protect your desktop from invaders by spending money on attacking pieces and building a maze for them to follow. A strangely addictive yet stress relieving game...”

Another free Web-based game is called *Thule Trail* which is located at http://www.thuleroadtrip.com/thule_trail/thuleTrail.html is a simulated automobile trip from Chicago to Atlanta, Georgia. The purported goal is to attend the *Atlantis Music Festival*.

According to the game's Web site: “See if you have what it takes to navigate through nasty weather, road grub, car problems, and crazy drifters.”

Thule is a Swedish company that makes quality after-market racks and luggage carriers for cars,

The screenshot shows the Yahoo! Games website interface. At the top, there are navigation links for 'Home', 'PC', 'Xbox 360', 'PlayStation 3', 'Wii', 'PSP', 'DS', 'PS2', 'Xbox', 'GBA', 'GameCube', and 'Rent Games'. Below this is a search bar and a 'WEB SEARCH' button. The main content area features a 'Playing For Free' article by Mike Smith, which discusses free web-based and downloadable games. To the right of the article is a large advertisement for Cricket, offering '3 UNLIMITED LINES' for \$99/month. Below the Cricket ad is a small image of a person and the text 'No more sharing minutes. GO UNLIMITED.' The left sidebar contains 'ARCHIVES' with links to various game-related articles and 'TOP TEN VIDEO GAMES' listing titles like 'The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess' and 'Playboy: The Mansion'.

RV's, and light trucks. Their product Web site is at <http://www.thuleracks.com>. Their free Thule Trail game is part of their marketing strategy to get name recognition for their quality products.

Some of the games at "Games For Free" are standalone applications that you download and install into your Windows computer. For example, you can download the three *Grand Theft Auto* games prior to the current "# 3" version at <http://www.rockstargames.com/classics/gta.html>.

The second example of a standalone application game is *Orbiter Space Flight Simulator* which you can download at <http://orbit.medphys.ucl.ac.uk>.

According to this Web site: "ORBITER is a free flight simulator that goes beyond the confines of Earth's atmosphere. Launch the Space Shuttle from Kennedy Space Center to deploy a satellite, rendezvous with the International Space Station or take the futuristic Delta-glider for a tour through the solar system – the choice is yours. But make no mistake – ORBITER is not a space shooter. The emphasis is firmly on realism, and the learning curve can be steep. Be prepared to invest some time and effort to brush up on your orbital mechanics background."

NEIGHBORHOOD AREA NETWORKS

A "neighborhood area network" ("NAN") consists of a wireless network that is created by a group of people who voluntarily provide free Wi-Fi access points. Like all cooperatives, each additional access point makes Internet access better for all persons with Wi-Fi-enabled computers within the geographical area.

A more detailed description of this phenomena can be found at <http://www.lns.com/papers/nans101/>.

Lists of NANs and links to their Web sites are available at http://www.rnpalm.com/802_11b.htm and <http://wiki.personaltelco.net/WirelessCommunities>.

The more formally-organized NANs such as the ones in Seattle, San Francisco, and New York are non-profit 501 (c) (3) corporations which accept tax-deductible in-kind and cash donations. From a purely financial point of view, the formally-organized NANS that are 501 (c) (3) corporations give private individuals and business owners an excuse to deduct the cost of operating insecure Wi-Fi networks from income tax forms as donations.

Most GSBUG members do not live anywhere near an operational NAN. Relative to the "South Bay" area of Los Angeles, the nearest NAN used to be the "Venice Area Neighborhood

Network" but they fizzled out after attempting to start up early in 2004. The nearest NAN relative to the "South Bay" is now the "So Cal Free Net."

SO CAL FREE NET

The "SO CAL FREE NET" provides free Wi-Fi in San Diego. Their Web site is at <http://socalfreenet.org>. They sometimes refer to themselves as "SCFN."

According to the "About" page of their Web site:

"Socalfreenet.org is a Special Interest Group (SIG) of the San Diego Computer Society, a 501 (c)(3) organization. SoCal-FreeNet.org is a non-profit community group dedicated to building, deploying and growing public wireless networks to increase widespread broadband adoption and create an empowered, connected society, where technology becomes a community resource. We are grassroots, community based volunteers who will help you build and use free wireless networks using Wi-Fi technology.

"Our contact form is the quickest way to reach the right person if you have questions."

SoCalFreeNet.org is organized and operated by a group of volunteers known as the "Executive Committee:"

Matt Fanady, Network Deployment

Drew MacCullough, Community Relations

Michael Mee, Project Management, R&D

Andre Pilevsky, Organizational Development

Seren Thompson, Network Operations

This is a project by the community for the community. Inspired by similar projects like Third Break, NYCWireless, PTP, SeattleWireless and AtlantaWireless (to name just a few), we decided to do the same for Southern California.

Current projects in San Diego include, Golden Hill (near downtown), Normal Heights, North Park, National City, Sherman Heights, Barrio Logan and Carmel Valley.”

SOCAL FREE NET

Please do not confuse “So Cal Free Net” with “SoCal Free Net.”

The previously-mentioned “So Cal Free Net” is a free “Neighborhood Area Network” or “NAN” that is operated by the San Diego Computer Society. They have a space between “So” and “Cal.”

In contrast, the “SoCal Free Net” which has Web sites at <http://www.socalfree.net/> and <http://www.sdfreenet.com/> is a dialup Internet Service Provider (ISP) that is free. They do not have a space between “So” and “Cal.”

They sometimes refer to them-

selves as “San Diego Free Net”.

According to Alexa.com, “SoCal Free Net” has a mailing address at
PO Box 37631
San Diego, CA
92137
US

According to a new group posting at <http://www.freedomlist.com/forum/viewtopic.php?t=9520> the above address is the mailing address for “HFT, Inc.”.

A positive-sounding review of their dial-up service can be found at

<http://www.theusefulblog.com/post/southern-california-free-isp/>

The “SoCal Free Net” has been providing the southern California area with free, uninterrupted dial-up Internet since about 2004. (They do not have enough phone lines to give all of Southern California local-area phone numbers without “message unit” or “toll changes.” Only the free versions of “Netzero” and “Juno” have enough phone lines to cover most of Southern California.)

FREE STORAGE ON THE WEB —PART 2

“MY PICTURETOWN”

This is the second installment in our series of discussions about storing files for free on the Internet. Liz’s favorite for storing and sharing her digital photos is called “My Pictoretown.” This storage site is operated by Nikon. Their Web site is at

<http://www.mypicturetown.com>

Click on “Sign Up” near the upper right hand corner to get a free account.

The key features for a free account are:

Total storage space = 2 Gigabytes

Maximum single file size = not stated on “Pictoretown” Web site

Maximum monthly bandwidth = not stated on “Pictoretown” Web site

The maximum monthly bandwidth is the total amount of data that you (and others that you designate) upload to, and download from, your free account.

According to the “Pictoretown” Website:

“my Pictoretown supports the following file formats: JPG, NEF (RAW), NRW(RAW),MOV, AVI, and WAV.”

According to their May 28, 2008 press release, they currently have the following photographer-friendly features:

- “The ability to upload RAW (NEF) files viewable as JPEGs.
- The ability to search for photos by the date they were uploaded or taken using a calendar.
- A full-screen slideshow option for viewing photos

customizable with now up to 25 choices for background music.

- A new system allowing users to rate their images on a scale of 0-5.”

According to their November 19, 2007, press release, they also have the following features:

When you share or download photos, you can now choose size of photos from:

- 1024 x 768 pixels
- 1600 x 1200 pixels
- Original size

Some photos that Liz took on April 15, 2008, can be seen at:

http://a02-b02.mypicturetown.com:80/P2PwebCmdController/share.jsp?x=3dw2n1SrYzfWinMYu.6HcC Fk-xlqz_QolQaYPd.mXBRosjw%2A%3DkSg_mPmIjGVxdGCRzWIpbN%25x0ZotGRPo1nkdvSxyzPhI-tavXvHTLHuRH2Rha61

When Liz logs into her free account to view the same set of photos, it looks like this (see right):

Let me know if there is an online file storage service that you are particularly fond of and we will describe them in future articles in this series.

WORKING LUNCH SITCOM



The ‘Suggest’ and ‘Vote’ buttons at the bottom of the streaming video let you help direct this amusing series of office antics. This Web site is sponsored by “Healthy Choice,” a manufacturer of frozen foods.

ONLINE HUMOR

For a laugh or two, visit W. Bruce Cameron's *8 Simple Rules for Dating My Teenage Daughter* page at: <http://www.wbrucecameron.com/columns/8rules.htm>.

This humorous page is great example of Cameron's award-winning humor.

For a super list of links to comic strip Web sites, go to the *Syndicated Comic Strips and Panels* Web site at: <http://www.stus.com/3majors.htm>.

If you have any questions or problems, I can be contacted by the following methods:

1. Send me e-mail at: fchao2@yahoo.com
2. Send “snail” United States Postal Service (USPS) mail to Frank Chao
405 E. Wetmore Rd. #117-484
Tucson, AZ 85705-1792

Or sell your computer and take up sailing instead !!



Article

Moving on to Vista – Part 11

by Neil Stahfest

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One of *Vista's* disk management systems, that is new to me, is a dynamic disk and the ability to extend a volume. Suppose you have a volume or folder on your hard drive called Pictures for your photographs. If you run out of space on your hard drive, but you have space available on another hard drive installed on your PC, you can extend your Picture volume onto that drive to make it bigger. There are two limitations to this process. First, you cannot reverse the process. Second, once created you cannot remove the space you've used on the second disk to reduce the size of the volume. The only way you can do this is to create a new volume on one of your drives, copy all of the contents of the spanned volume to it and then delete the spanned volume. The other limitation is you cannot extend the Windows System volume.

I'm not really sure how I would use this feature. My inclination is to create new volumes and not try to span a volume across two hard drives. Perhaps when working with video files, which can consume enormous amounts of space, this might be a useful

feature.

How often do you start an operation on your computer which opens a dialog box on the desktop that requires you to click on 'OK?' So you move your mouse to put the pointer on the 'OK'

...automatically move your mouse pointer To the 'OK' button.

box and click on it. You probably do this many times in a day. Did you know that there is a setting to automatically move your mouse pointer to the 'OK' button so that all you have to do is click on it? Here's how you can configure Windows *Vista* to do this.

First click on the 'Start' button and then the 'Control Panel.' Under the 'Hardware and Sound' entry in the 'Control Panel' box, click on 'Mouse.' The 'Mouse Properties' box will open. Click on 'Pointer Options.' Locate 'Snap To' and click to create a check mark to activate 'Automatically move pointer to the default button in a dialog box.'

While you're looking at the 'Pointer Options' box, consider the next option line, 'Display pointer trails.' If you occasionally have trouble locating the

mouse pointer on the desktop, consider this option. Experiment with the length of the pointer trail setting. If you don't like it, turn it off.

On a slightly different topic, let's talk about shortcuts. Many application programs create a shortcut on your desktop when you install the program. They're a convenient way to start a program without have to go to the Start menu. There are other ways to use shortcuts too. Suppose you have a spreadsheet or genealogy file that you frequently update. Locate the file with Windows Explorer, right-click on the file name, scroll down the pop-up menu to where it says 'Create Shortcut' and click on it. Now, before you close the *Windows Explorer* window, locate the new shortcut and drag it to your desktop. Because *Windows (XP as well as Vista)* associates application programs with certain type of files (i.e. *Windows Excel* with spreadsheets), when you click on the file shortcut the application will start and open the file.

But suppose you can't see your desktop icons and short-cuts because they're hidden by something else? Maybe your Internet browser or e-mail program is running and completely cover your desktop. Let's go back and look at the shortcut on your desk-

top. Right-click on it. In the windows that opens, notice the four tabs at the top. Click on the tab marked 'Shortcut.' In the middle of the Shortcut menu you'll find something marked 'Shortcut key.' You'll probably see 'None' entered in the box next to it. Click on the box and press and hold down your Ctrl key. In the box you'll now see 'Ctrl + Alt +.' While still holding down the Ctrl key, press the key you want to use to access the shortcut. Now click on the 'Apply' button and then the 'OK' button. Your shortcut key is now set. Just press the three key combination to instantly access your spreadsheet or genealogy file.

Before we leave the topic of Shortcuts I'll just mention that when you open a Shortcut's properties window, the first tab is marked 'General.' If you click on 'General,' one of the first entries is 'Type of File' and 'Open with.' If you click on the adjacent 'Change' button, you'll see a list of possible application programs to access the file. You can select from this list or click on 'Browse' to locate another program.

I'm hearing more rumors about *Windows 7* but, at this point, they are still rumors. One thing seems certain, *Windows 7* will have more in common with *Windows Vista* than *Windows XP*. Whatever you learn about *Windows Vista* should help you when you upgrade to the next version of *Windows*.

Article

Traveling Then and Now - "Technically" Speaking

by Gregory West

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(This article was originally published in Sarnia's *FIRST MONDAY* magazine, August 2008 issue)

What isn't familiar is the technology that accompanies us on vacations.

In 1974 Richard Nixon was the first U.S. President forced to resign, while gasoline pricing rose to a whopping 55 cents a gallon US (14.5 cents a liter). They claim the reason was that "gasoline shortages and price increases throughout the world help to cause problems in most of the western worlds' economies" (www.thepeoplehistory.com).

Sound familiar? What isn't familiar is the technology that accompanies us on vacations.

I remember in 1974 driving to Fort Wilderness Disney World, Florida in a Volkswagen van built into a homemade camper, all decked out with plywood beds and a Coleman cooler for a fridge with a never-ending request for ice. CAA supplied the trip tik maps that marked out the route and the construction sections of the highway. We had the best of the best for navigating the trip. As well, we had a brand new *Instamatic* camera with 7 rolls of 126 film that cost us a small fortune. Our son, four years old, rode a small tricycle back and forth inside the van to while away the hours and hours of monotonous driving as seat-belt legislation was non-existent.

Today, we still face the gas increase excuses and we are well aware of the price of a liter of gasoline today. In that regard, nothing has really changed, only the numbers and the fact that we are all buckled into our seats. Although, one thing that has changed for travelers in 2008: 'tech toys;' they have now become a **must have** for every family that does ground travel on vacations.

Our kids have been replaced by grandkids and the Volkswagen homemade camper van is long gone. People today are now hauling RVs of all sorts that host most of the comforts of home.

The CAA maps and my son's tri-cycle have been replaced by the latest technical and computer gadgets. Let's have a peek at how technology has changed road travel, some 34 years later.

Our kids have been replaced by grandkids

Kids today are buckled tightly into the back seats as air bag protection in the front restricts them to the back seats only. While in the back seat they have the option of viewing DVD movies run through a DVD player onto 2 separate monitors that attach to the head rests of both front seats.

They listen to the movies via the vehicle stereo system or individual headphones. When they tire of the movies they can play video games by switching over to their PSP or a PS2 that plugs through the inverter. Of course there is always travel bingo if the tech stuff gets boring, but we won't hold our breath on that one.

For the driver and co-pilot there is a GPS display with voice directions, saving the hassle of trying to read the fine print on wrin-

kled and torn maps. Many travelers bring along laptops while traveling as their uses are many. For example, you can record your trip's information, download pictures and videos from digital cameras. The big thing these days with computers is reading digital books, or listening to audio books that have been previously downloaded from the Internet. Of course, when a live Internet connection becomes available (most RV parks have free Wi-Fi) you can check email, use Skype to call home, and research the places to see, all from your laptop.

The days of praying that there will be a pay phone nearby if we break down are long gone as many people have both a Canadian and American cell phone. For instance, one can purchase a Motorola TracFone that works only in the USA for under \$10 and buy a 'pay-as-you-go' card, making long distant calls back home cheaper and giving one more security on the highways in the USA.

Don't leave without your MP3 player. Podcasts of your favourite shows and lectures can be easily downloaded from the Internet. All MP3 players come with headphones that make for easy listening and do not disturb the other passengers or driver.

Walkie talkies are not a new item while on vacation, but the price certainly has come down and the range has expanded greatly. A quick stop in the grocery store for supplies will help you utilize

your group to ensure precision targeted shopping whereby we all search out different items and meet at the same cashier, thus saving time. The walkie talkie is also used in many other scenarios for security and locating purposes. These units are a must have for anyone traveling with children. The *Instamatic* camera has been replaced by the digital camera, thus allowing people to take hundreds of pictures during a trip without any real cost. If some of the pictures are not that great they are easily deleted and forgotten without the worry of paying for more film.

The days of praying that there will be a pay phone nearby if we break down are long gone

An inverter will allow the truck battery to convert power from DC to AC so you can run the laptop while traveling to edit photos, read books, watch movies and connect to Wi-Fi hotspots. This also allows for the use of a PS2 plugged into the truck battery power as if you were at home plugging into a wall outlet. You can even plug in a refrigerated cooler with this inverter, making life just that much easier.

We can only imagine what traveling 34 years from now will be like and what 2042 will offer its road travelers.

The Bug Report

The Greater South Bay PC Users Group

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February 2009

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2 General Meeting	3 SIG Meetings Digital Imaging Daytime Hardware	4 Board Meeting	5	6	7
8	9	10 SIG Meetings Digital Imaging Daytime Hardware	11	12 SIG Meeting Linux	13	14 Newsletter Deadline
15	16	17 SIG Meetings Digital Imaging Daytime Hardware	18	19 SIG Meeting <i>Windows XP</i>	20	21
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