The Bug Report

A Publication of the Greater South Bay PC Users Group

April 2005

Events

May:
Build your own personal computer on Monday, May 2 at 7:30 PM

August:
SW User Group Conference in San Diego, California on August 5, 6, 7. To register, go to: SGUGCONF.com

We have a new Secretary for the Bug!

Please welcome Ferne Fether as our new Secretary. Her duties will include taking the General Meeting notes, Board of Director's notes and what ever the President needs her Secretary's skills for the club.

AND YOU THINK YOU'RE HAVING A BAD DAY!!

Although this picture was taken from a Hollywood movie, it is in fact a real photo, taken near the South African coast during a military exercise by the British Navy. It has been nominated by National Geographic as "THE photo of the year".

(Editor's note: I found this picture along with this comment through an email. If you'd like to view the amazing photos such as this one, please email me and I'll send it to you! My email address is:
thebugreport@netzero.com)

Build Your Own Personal Computer
by Bob Hudak

Date: Monday, May 2, 2005
Time: 7:30 PM
Location: The Salvation Army Facility

This two-part seminar explores the topic of "Building Your Own PC." Part I looks at the different components of a PC, and selection criteria for purchasing the best components for your individual purposes. Part II not only walks you step by step through the process of building a PC, but also enables you to have special pricing and support on everything you'll need to build a state-of-the-art, Intel technology based PC.

Bob Hudak
Software Library News
RSH532@aol.com

Hardware SIG News

On Tue, April 19, at 12:00, noon, I will talk about and show you how to make a back up image file of your computer's hard drive. If you have a second computer used for surfing the net, this is a great way to recover from any virus attack in minutes. Also will work if you only use one computer for everything. Will talk about what you need to do in advance and how to do it. If this sounds good, mark your calendar. Also pick up a copy of Norton Ghost 9.0. This is on sale for free after rebate quit often. This is one of the software programs that will do the job. I will be using Drive Image in the demo. Come early to the Torrance Scout Center.

If you are cleaning house of no longer needed computer parts, I am in need of a ATX case, mid size and a PCI SCSI card. These items are at the top of my list. Any other hardware will be put to good use by other members or used to put together systems for use in retirement homes. This is a new community service that we are trying to do. Help out.

I have been suffering from pop corn withdrawal since Emmett Ingram has not been coming to the Hardware SIG. He is doing well and will be back soon. Big news you might not have heard. Our President has worked out a deal with Comp USA that if you show your GS-BUG ID card and ask, you can get a 10% discount on your purchases. Not sure if that covers everything or not but worth asking for. See our membership chairperson, Joyce Oliver, if you do not have a ID card.
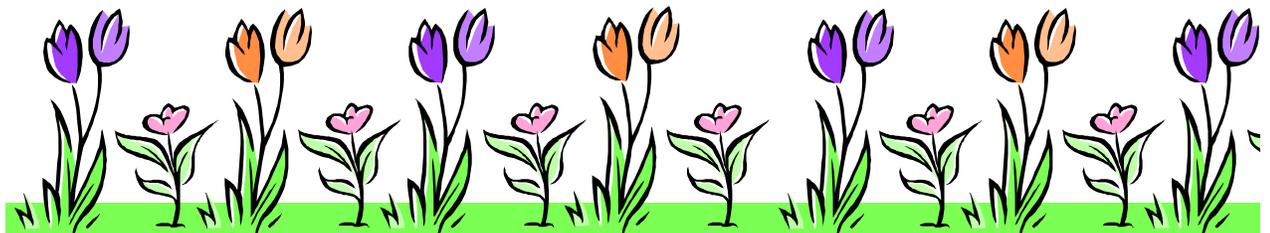
Hardware Tip. Harbor Freight sells a little yellow test meter by Cen-Tech for less then $4.00. Works great but I ran into a problem with mine. The test lead wire broke lose. Hard to take apart the test probe but not impossible. The problem is that the wire is soldiered to the pin probe and each time you rotate the probe the wire turns inside the probe and pretty soon the wire breaks. I might use mine more then you, but you will run into the problem. So the tip is to force silicon adhesive between the wire and the probe handle so that the wire cannot turn at the soldier joint. This should keep it from breaking

Program for May 2, 2005

On May 2nd I will be putting on the second half of the Build Your Own computer Workshop. We will put together a computer before your eyes. Don't blink because of the short amount of time we have, it will be fast. Joey Solinap, the PC Club Marketing Coordinator, will bring the $999.00 high end kit that they packaged, and put it together. Read the specifications that are posted on our web site. If you are ready to purchase a high end computer, this is a good opportunity for you to save some money and learn about how all the parts work.
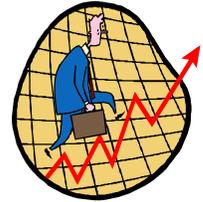
Frank Chao
Internet Talk

This is the 80th "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 making good use of your computer and it's Internet connection.

GS BUG MEMBERSHIP REPORT

Joyce Oliver reports that as of March 9th, GSBUG has 144 members, which is two less than in February. Thank you, Joyce! Editor's note: Please remember to renew your subscriptions when they are up. Thank you!

Ways to Contact Me:

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

1. Send me e-mail at:

fchao@pacbell.net

2. Leave me a voice message at (310)768-3896.

3. Send "snail" U.S. Postal Service mail to:

Frank Chao
4001 Inglewood Ave., Ste. 101
PMB 305
Redondo Beach, CA 90278

Or sell your computer and take up golf instead !!

Gmail is a free Web-based e-mail service that provides you with one Gigabyte of free storage. If you want to have a free e-mail account with more storage space and high-tech features than the free e-mail accounts that are offered by Yahoo, Netzero, Netscape, or Juno, now is the time for you to get a Gmail account.

According to Mark Borison, (mborison@yahoo.com) the Webmaster of the Orange Coast IBM PC Users Group:

<start of quote>
I got this from The Internet Tourbus:
http://www.TOURBUS.com

> A Few More Gmail Invites:
> Just point your web browser to
>
http://isnoop.net/gmail/
>
> Requesting a Google Gmail invite from isnoop.net is
> a snap:
>
>   1. Key in your email address into the box at
>   the top of the page.
>
>   2. Click the "Request invite" button.
>
>   3. WALK AWAY FROM YOUR COMPUTER! I mean it.
>   Walk away. Go grab something to eat, read a

book, watch a
>   television show--just walk away. Isnoop.net takes just short
>   of forever to process your request and send you an invite.
>   Your patience will be rewarded.
>   Eventually isnoop tells you "Your invite has been sent to
>   the email specified."
>   Check your email. Sitting in your inbox should be an
>   brand new email from gmail@isnoop.net with the subject "The
>   Gmail invite you requested." <end of quote>

Security Information from Microsoft

Microsoft's "Security at Home" page is located at:
http://www.microsoft.com/athome/security/viruses/default.mspx

This page provides a link to their Antispyware page where you can download their free "Microsoft Antispyware". This page has lots of good information on preventing computer virus infestations.

However, the information on preventing viruses does not mention the various free anti-virus software utilities. For information on this, see previous "Internet Talk" articles.

Memory Resident Conflicts

Occasionally, there will be conflicts between the anti-spyware software that you run in the background and the anti-virus software that you run the background in the same computer. For example, if your computer has both McAfee Viruscan and Microsoft Antispyware set up to do memory-resident, background scanning, your McAfee "Security Center" icon in the System Tray section of the Windows "Task Bar" might be shown as gray when you log into Windows. When this icon is gray, it means that some of the background "services" that are part of McAfee "Security Center" are not running.

There are two methods to resolve this problem:

Method one:

Re-start the computer. Since the McAfee "Security Center" does not start up in the "gray" mode very often, there is almost no chance that it will come up in this mode twice in a row.

Method two:

If you are running Windows 2000 or Windows XP, you can use "services.msc" to start the components of McAfee that need to be started, in order to turn the System Tray icon from gray to red:

Click on your "Start" button.

Click on "Run…".

In the field to the right of "Open:", type in

services.msc

Click on the "OK" button.

For any services that start with "McAfee.." that do not show a status of "Started", perform a right click. Then click on "Start".

Services.msc

If you are running Windows XP or Windows 2000, services.msc is a very powerful tool for improving the performance of your computer.

For Microsoft's official description of services.msc, see

http://www.microsoft.com/resources/documentation/Windows/XP/all/reskit/en-us/Default.asp?url=/resources/documentation/Windows/XP/all/reskit/en-us/prmb_tol_dcam.asp

For some recommendations on what to do to the processes running in the services.msc list, see:

http://www.tweakhound.com/xp/xptweaks/supertweaks6.htm and see

http://www.theeldergeek.com/services_guide.htm

Using the advice in these two Web sites, you can dramatically increase the overall speed of your computer.

Phoenix PC News

Rich's Computer

- Repairs
- Upgrades
- Tune-ups
- Used computers
- Parts

Contact Information

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richbu@netzero.net

Gift Subscription

Show someone you care and give the gift of a one year GSBug membership. Remember, for every person you sign up you get four months free!

Configuring a Basic User's PC

by Gabe Goldberg, APCUG Advisor & Columnist, AARP Computers and Technology Website

Don't be alarmed by the high-falutin word "configuring". It just means deciding what components -- otherwise called "parts" -- will perform various PC functions. It's like old-days car buying: reviewing a dealer checklist to pick dozens of individual features, from radio to power steering to disc brakes and more.

The good news is that almost any current PC with a printer and Internet connectivity will handle mainstream requirements. That means that a generic Windows PC is usually adequate -- but you should upgrade if you'll do anything challenging or exotic.

Just as when buying a car, the first step in buying a computer is deciding what you'll do with it: e-mail, Web searching/viewing, word processing? Financial work with Quicken? Digital photography? Simple games? Ultra-demanding tasks like high-end games and digital video editing?

Just as when making any major purchase, a small investment in learning pays off for years. Before buying a PC, learn the basics: -- take a class, buy a book, attend local computer user group meetings, consult Web sites, read technology magazines at the library.

As you look at applications' system requirements (processor speed, RAM size, hard drive storage capacity, video card speed and memory, etc.) note differences between minimum and recommended specifications. Vendors are often too optimistic -- and that's being charitable -- about what's needed for their software to run productively. It's much safer, and not much more expensive, to buy at least the recommended choices. In fact, I usually buy a little more power than I need. This bumps cost just a little and it avoids future problems and upgrades. Purchasing this way greatly extends a PC's life and makes it more compatible with future innovations, at least for a while.

Remember that as PCs evolve, a range of choices is always available, from bleeding-edge new to borderline obsolete. An equally valid – and more economical -- approach to configuring is finding the current technology "sweet spot" the point where cost, performance, compatibility, and useful life are in balance.

A key decision is whether to buy a brand-name system or an unknown-brand machine, have a PC built to order, or build it yourself. Choices for laptop computers are much more limited: brand-name systems dominate, trailed by a few off-brand manufacturers. There are no build-it-yourself options, though manufactured systems can be customized extensively.

Each purchasing choice has advantages and advocates. Brand-name systems can be evaluated and compared by consulting references such as Consumer Reports magazine, are available everywhere via catalog or online shopping, and may have better standard or optional warranties (often worthwhile for quick service and peace of mind). But brand-name systems sometimes suffer from using commodity parts vs. best-quality components.

Unknown-brand machines can be reliable money savers or risky acquisitions. I'd only buy such a system from a trusted store with a flexible return policy. I favor having PCs built to order by small local shops with established reputations, offering maximum flexibility and consultation during design. And I've enjoyed watching my PCs take shape as they're assembled from a tableful of parts!

Continued from Section C1

Some people build their own PCs, often with training and mentoring from computer user group volunteers. This demystifies system innards, greatly facilitating diagnosing and repairing problems and upgrading components. Build-to-order and build-yourself allow specifying brand-name parts for improved performance and reliability.

No matter where you purchase, look carefully at monitor choices. Traditional CRT monitors prices have declined, allowing buying larger devices with better resolution. And newer/thinner/lighter LCD panels offer a powerful -- though sometimes less flexible -- alternative. Visit stores to compare brands and models and explore settings to match your preferences.

Decide how you'll back up your software and data. Choices include a second -- perhaps external or removeable -- hard drive, writable optical media such as DVD, and tape. The first two are most often used, with each having unique advantages. Follow your backup plan regularly; nothing ruins a day like losing months or years of can't-be-replaced data, not to mention having to reconstruct all your software.

Small choices can make large differences in productivity and comfort. For example, mouse technology has advanced far beyond the traditional two-button wired device. Mouse alternatives include trackball and wireless devices, gadgets with many extra programmable buttons, wheel mouses allowing horizontal/vertical scrolling, etc. Considering how much time you'll use your pointing device, it's worth spending a little extra money to have the device that suits you best!

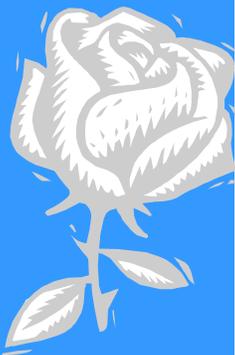Windows offers many choices for easing use -- enlarging type, making keyboarding easier, providing special audible and visual cues, etc. Accessibility options are found in different places -- usually via Control Panel or the Start menu. It's worth exploring these to tailor your PC to your individual preferences. Similarly, small add-on programs can greatly improve a PC's comfort factor. Remember that Windows is highly configurable: you can change how it looks and operates. As you become familiar with your new PC, explore options/settings/preferences. Just as you wouldn't insist on driving a car with seats and mirrors exactly as they came from the dealer, don't be captive of Microsoft's initial settings!

Name-brand computers usually include software bundles. Vendors shout about how valuable they are and how much money you're saving on them -- but that's only true if you'll use the software provided. As soon as you have your machine, examine pre-installed software and remove anything you know you won't use. Then defrag your disk and then install the programs you'll use. These simple steps will make your machine run better by decluttering it.

Finally, If you understand how to do this, use built-in tools such as MSCONFIG to chop out unneeded services started by default when your system boots.

Software bundles often include junior-grade versions or limited-time trial copies of critical tools such as anti-virus and anti-spyware software. For system reliability and security, upgrade these to full versions and subscribe to update services.

Not much else in modern life besides computers keeps getting faster/better/cheaper. And it's not hard to find or build a computer that meets needs for several years, runs reliably, and doesn't break the bank.

Spring Has Sprung

Ah, spring is in the air—a time of year when a young man's fancy turns to thoughts of love, and this old coot's fancy turns to loving thoughts of computing. Ah, to bask in the glow of dual ViewSonic flat-panel monitors; to close my eyes and let the soothing purr of a Seagate hard drive wash over me; to succumb to the sensual feel of my fingers caressing keys that respond instantly to my gentle-yet-not-so-gentle-as-to-be-unmanly touch—on second thought, I really need to get out more. OK, let's set aside those disturbing images and take a look at what's cluttering up Mr. Modem's Desktop this month:

Fat File Fix (http://s3.yousendit.com)

If you occasionally have a file that's too hefty to send via email, upload it from your computer to this site, type in your recipient's email address and an optional message, and then click Send It. The recipient will be notified that your file is waiting, and a link to its location will be provided so it can be downloaded; thus, avoid-

"Look At The Groovy Colors, Man"

If you want to check out the ability of your printer to display a kaleidoscope of colors, the National Optical Astronomy Observatory's solar spectrum (http://tinyurl.com/3jseu), available in a variety of resolutions, can help. This type of image is very difficult to print because it contains such a wide—er, um, well, spectrum of colors. If your printer does a fairly decent job printing the spectrum, you can be sure your printer can handle just about any other printing project that comes along.

List of Lists

(http://lists.gpick.com)

More than 120 categories of computer-related links ranging from Ad & PopUp Tools to Windows XP Tools. This is a no-frills resource that will warm the cockles of any purist's heart. If you're tired of sites that play insipid background music, display animated cherubs, or exceed the FDA's recommended daily allowance of gag-inducing cuteness, don't miss this site. Its clean, crisp appearance and ease of navigation made me weep openly

Rapid Romp to Run

The next time you need to navigate to the Run dialog box in order to enter a command such as MSCONFIG or SPOT RUN, instead of clicking Start, and then Run, you can save a couple o' clicks by pressing the Windows key and the letter R . The Windows key is usually located on either side of the space bar and displays the Windows flag logo. Saluting is optional.

"Look At The Groovy Colors, Man"

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May I Suggest Google Suggests?

Google Suggests (http://tinyurl.com/4gbno) is the latest beta release from the good folks at Google. As the name implies, as you type words and phrases into the Search field, a pop-up window will appear with suggested search results or alternative searches for your consideration. For example, if you type in part of a word such as musi , Google Suggest offers up music, music videos, music downloads, music lyrics, Musilex—well, you get the idea. You can then click to select one by scrolling up or down the list. Next to each suggestion appears the number of search results.

Sharon Grant
Editor
Thebugreport.com

Hotlinks—Editor's Choice

1. noblood.org— Noblood, the bloodless network. This is a unique website, library, and discussion forum to ask doctor's and nurses from around the world about medical conditions that require blood transfusions. However, there is just one catch, if you, or someone you know will be undergoing surgery and you don't want a blood transfusion because of tainted blood, this site gives you all the information, and answers from doctor's and nurses of non-blood medicine to conduct surgeries such as hip replacement surgery, cardio surgery and so on and so forth. Go ahead and sign up, it is for FREE!

2. cancermonthly.com — Cancer Monthly provides cancer patients with the results of hundreds of therapies for advanced and metastatic cancers so that patients can compare treatments, have more meaningful discussions with their doctors, and ultimately, make more informed treatment decisions. Every month, Cancer Monthly summarizes the latest clinical results of cancer therapies presented by oncologists, researchers, and other cancer professionals working in hospitals and research institutions around the world.

3. Ripleys.com— Do you remember ever going to New York City and for fun you visit the Ripley's Believe It Or Not attraction? Or have you ever purchases a Ripley's Believe It or Not book? Say that you've watched a TV program about the wacky, wild, and crazy people. Well now you have it, Ripley's has a website where everything is rolled into one!

A Big Thank You!

A BIG THANK YOU IS IN ORDER! I just want to thank Bob Hudak, Frank Chao and the many others who've been diligently submitting their articles for me, and the dear readers for the past year. Your articles are great! I'm sure many people would agree that we learn a lot from you. Thank you again for everything. Oh yes, now that I have your attention, I'd like to thank all the Board of Directors for the fine job that they are doing. You know they make running the club look very easy, however, there is many behind the scenes work that goes on and they do it well!

Tips and Tricks

1. **Control + Z or also called "Edit Undo"**. Have you ever worked on a project such as bullets and numbering in MS word and then you find that you fouled up the margins, and numbers? Well, the Control button plus the Z button will undo your mistakes for up to I think, 20 times in order to clear all of your errors. How To: First you depress the Control button then while holding down on the Control button you want to hit the Z button. "Whalla" your mistake is erased from memory and you now are back to your original document.

2. **Paste Special.** If you are like me and you like to copy (Ctrl + C) down a website's page, and you find that as you are pasting (Ctrl + V) the website's page into a MS Word document, you find that it has taken the HTML formatting as well into your document. So, if you are like me and find this quite annoying, all you have to do is depress (Ctrl + V) when on the website, then when pasting to your document go to the drop down menu and select "Edit" and then "Paste Special" and then select "Unformatted Text". This will end your HTML woes.

General Meeting
Minutes of March

Ferne Fether
Secretary to the President

The president and Secretary Pro Tem being present, the general meeting of the Greater South Bay PC Users Group (GSBUG) was held on Monday, March 7, 2005 at the Salvation Army Facility, 4223 Emerald Street, Torrance, CA. There were approximately 45 members and guests in attendance. **President U.A. Garred (Garry) Sexton** called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

He began by introducing the new Secretary pro tem, Ferne Fether.
He advised the audience that Program Chairman, Emmett Ingram and Director at Large, John Hanson were both currently hospitalized.

Bob Hudak, LIBRARY chairman gave a brief listing of articles that were for sale. He stressed that the available Laser Printer was an exceptional buy even though it was an older model.

Virginia Pfiffner invited members to the WINDOWS 95/98/XP class meeting for any help, questions or suggestions they might have.

Bob Hudak provided a picture of a computer fan that was very dusty. The members agreed that it was a good idea to clean the dust from the inside of their computers.

President Garry brought the Presentation of "Encarta" — a combined encyclopedia, dictionary and atlas program by Microsoft. He mentioned that it would be a very good program for younger children, besides it's usefulness for adults. He demonstrated it by showing movie clips and pictures along with pertinent information. A clip of the volcanoes in Hawaii and some interesting pictures of animals, including the birth of a giraffe were shown as a demonstration.

After the presentation there was a Question and Answer period from the audience presided over by President Garry.

Questions included information regarding the scanning and printing of printed material, and also trouble with firewalls. It was noted that you should not run more than one firewall at a time because they conflict with one another.

A drawing for prizes was held toward the end of the meeting.
     Marvin Barab won the "Encarta" prize.
     Alan Haskell won a book.
Other prizes included a few tee shirts and candy which were won by various members.

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

General Meeting Notice

Please mark your calendars for the General Meeting is to be held on the 1st Monday of each month at the Salvation Army Facility.
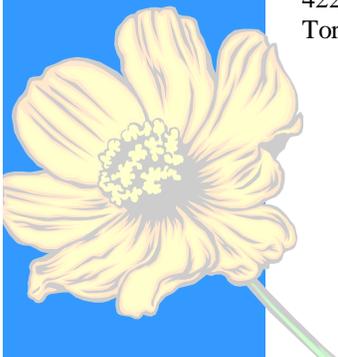
Address:
4223 Emerald Street
Torrance, CA

Time:
7:30 P.M.

GS-BUG INC.
P.O. Box 6950
Torrance, CA 90504-6950
Phone: (310) 373-3989

GO TO GS BUG ON THE NET!

http://gsbug.apcug.org

GENERAL MEETING

General meeting are held at 7:30 pm on the first Monday of the month at the Salvation Army Facility at 4223 Emerald St. at the corner of Emerald and Earl Streets in Torrance

MEMBERSHIPS:

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

Individual - $36.00
Student - $18.00
Family - $48.00
Newsletter only - $18.00

Checks should be payable to: GS-Bug, Inc. and mailed to:

GS-BUG, Inc. - Memberships
P.O. Box 6950
Torrance, CA 90504-6950

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LIBRARY
Shareware disks are available at the General Mtg. for $3.00 per disk and $5.00 per CD. Charges are to recover duplication and distribution costs.
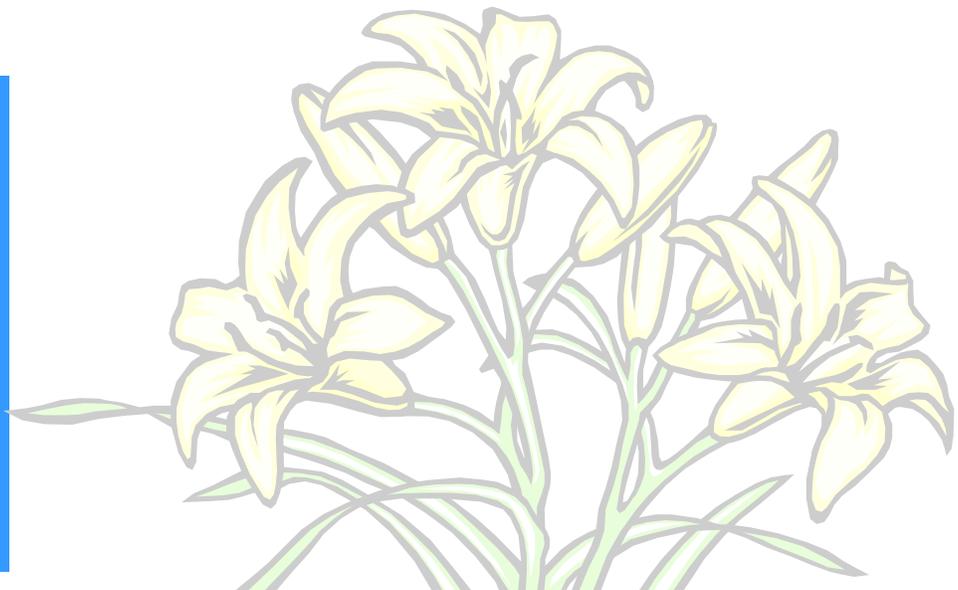

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The Greater South Bay PC Users Group

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Http://gsbug.apcug.org

SPRING HAS SPRUNG!