



The Bug Report

A Publication of the Greater South Bay PC Users Group

June 2005

Go To GS-Bug on the Net: <http://gsbug.apcug.org>

Events

August:

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

Software Review

nik Color Efex Pro 2.0 Complete Edition

by: Fred Vogel, DIGSIG Leader—Greater South Bay PC Users Group (GSBUG)

The nik Multimedia, Inc. Company, www.nikmultimedia.com, has developed a comprehensive group of image editing special effects filters. These filters emulate photographic equivalent lens screw-on glass filters and acrylic (Cokin) lens filters that film photographers have been using to modify their pictures for years.

nik sells three different versions of their Color Efex filter programs with the difference being the total number of filters included in each package. The Complete version includes 75 filters, requires 300 MB of disk space and sells for \$299.95. The Select version includes 45 filters, requires 190 MB disk space, and sells for \$159.95, and the Standard version includes 19 filters, requires 90 MB disk space, and sells for \$99.95. These are the manufacturer's suggested list price. Color Efex filters support both PC Win 95 through Win XP operating systems and Mac 9.x through Mac X operating systems.

The boxed package ships with a registration card, software key, and a minimal installation and filter description instruction pamphlet. The CD includes an extensive PDF user's manual that describes how the program functions and a comprehensive description of each filter.

Several of these filters are capable of producing effects that previously could only be accomplished in chemical based, commonly called, 'wet' dark-

rooms. Also included are filters that mimic conventional photographic lighting reflectors such as gold, soft-gold, and silver filter reflectors. Included are filters that produce stylized effects, for example, soft-focus, infrared, and graduated fog. Finally there are filters that provide a number of black and white conversion effects. All of these filters support 8 and 16-bit RGB, Lab, Grayscale, and CMYK files. 16-bit capability is a distinct advantage for those photographers who photograph in RAW mode. All of the nik filters are functionally clearly laid out for ease of use and also allow for easy image effect previewing before applying the filter.

These filters, which are called plug-ins, can now be applied to digital images with considerably more control than conventional film type filters. The filters are compatible with all image-editing programs that accept plug-ins, including Photoshop 5.5 through CS2, Photoshop Elements 2, and 3, Photodeluxe, Corel Painter, Jasc Paint Shop Pro, Microsoft Digital Image Pro, and Ulead PhotoImpact

There are three primary features that nik Color Efex filters offers are;

True Light™ technology that preserves the tonal relationship between detail, color, and contrast according to the nix literature.

The Selective Palette that enables the

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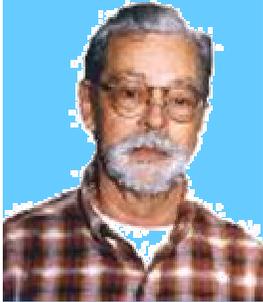
Software Library

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Section
A2

Bob Hudak

Software Library News
RSH532@aol.com



Hardware SIG News

Hardware problems this month included a sound card in one of my machines going bad. I think. I could only play a commercial audio CD. Could not play a MP3 or a Wave file from the hard drive or from a CD. Could not figure that out but a new used card in a PCI slot made everything work. One of our members had his video card die overnight. Worked just fine

the night before but the next day it worked no more. Hardware is a pretty easy fix. Just install a new component. It was like old times at the Hardware SIG this month. Emmett Ingram was able to come to several meetings and that meant we had popcorn! John Hanson, the Battery Man, picked up Emmett and brought him down. It was good to have these experts at the

SIG. Emmett introduced us to a electronic fly swatter that saps bugs with 22,000 volts. They just pop! John was working on some new flashlights that have rechargeable lithium batters installed. They have a really bright light and a long shelf life. There is always something interesting happening at the Tue. Hardware SIG. Come down and join in the fun.

Attention

For every person you encourage to join the GSBUG, you will receive four months of free membership!

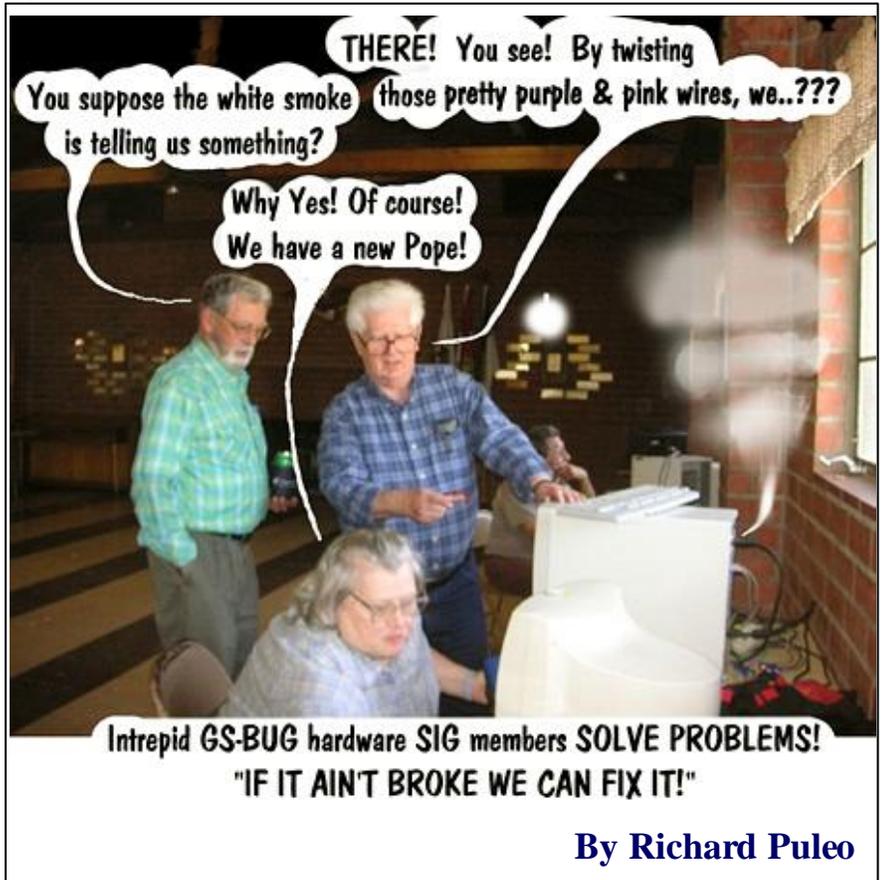
Members

Please notify Herman Krouse at: herm@socal.rr.com of your email address to enable you to receive timely notices regarding special meetings, classes or cancellations. Remember, we are a computer club and we do much of our correspondence by email.

Tip of the Month

I ran across a couple of tips this month that I thought were pretty good. Can't remember where these came from but thanks to whomever put them in print. The first one deals with digital cameras. They have a lot of menus that you need to get into in order to set them up for a not every day task. If you are like me, you can't remember where these features are hidden. Emmett Ingram let me try out his Konica-Minolta Dimage X-50 camera and I had to make little crib sheets for the different operations. So here is the tip. Use the macro setting on your camera and take a picture of the settings you need in the owner manual. Better still, write your own crib sheet and take a picture of it. I was thinking you could use Photoshop using the text feature to do this and save it as a .JPG file which you can transfer to the memory card of the camera. Now lock this picture so it can not be deleted. So now you can look at his help file on your camera. Zoom in if need be. Should work good for carrying phone numbers or ad-

dress when traveling. Think about for a minute. The second one was on how to move your email address book from one web account to another. From your address book click on "All" to send a message to everyone. Now go to the address bar and "select all" and copy to the message space. Then send this message to your new web email account. From there you can import into your new address book. Remove the commas after each name before importing. Sounds like a winner.



Internet Library

Section
B1

The Bug Report
June, 2005

Frank Chao
Internet Talk



This is the 82nd "Internet Talk" article for "The Bug Report", a publication of the Greater South Bay PC Users Group (GSBUG). Liz and I hope that your Internet-connected computer is a useful and reliable part of your summer season !



Membership Report

According to Joyce Oliver as of May 4th, GSBUG has 145 members, which is one more than in April. Joyce continues to do a great job of updating our membership spreadsheet !

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 lawn bowling instead !!

REDIRECTION AND SHORTENING OF URLs

A Uniform Resource Locator (URL) is the address that you enter into the address box of your Web browser in order to go to somewhere on the "World Wide Web". URLs for Web sites usually start with `http://`

For example, the URL for the Web site of the Greater South Bay PC Users Group is

<http://gsbug.apcug.org>

If you take a long URL and submit it at any of the following Web sites:

<http://tinyurl.com>

<http://snipurl.com>

<http://www.makeashorterlink.com/>

<http://www.bittyurl.com/>

then you will get a shorter URL that will redirect you to the original Web page. Here are some examples of the use of these "redirection" Websites:

TINYURL

Sharon Grant and Bob Hudak recommend that you use "TinyURL" at <http://tinyurl.com> to create URLs that are much shorter than the original URLs. For example, the meeting location for GSBUG's meetings is at: 4223 Emerald St., Torrance, California, U.S.A. and the MapQuest Web page for this location is at:

<http://www.mapquest.com/maps/map.adp?searchtype=address&country=US&addtohistory=&searchtab=home&address=4223+Emerald+St.&city=Torrance&state=CA&zipcode=>

This URL is hard for you to read to someone over the telephone and it is unlikely that they can write it down on a piece of paper or type it into their computer without making a mistake.

"URLs" continued on B2

Internet Library

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Section
B2

Submissions:

Members are encouraged to submit text articles for publication in text only. Photos in .Jpg or .Gif format only. All articles must be received by the 15th of the month preceding the month of publication. The author also give permission for republication in other users groups' communications.

Permission to Copy:

Permission is granted to other nonprofit PC user groups to reproduce any article published in this newsletter, provided credit is given The PC Bug newsletter and the author (s) of the reproduced materials. Reprinted articles are subject to the terms of their respective copyright holders.

"URLs" Continued from Section B1

Also, this URL does not travel well in the body of e-mail messages and new computer users often find it challenging to copy and paste it into the address box of Web browsers such as Internet Explorer or Netscape.

Using the TinyURL Web site, the above monstrosity converts to: <http://tinyurl.com/cvvs2> which is much easier to use and will not break if copied and then pasted into an e-mail message.

SNIPURL

I took the above Mapquest URL and copy and pasted it into the "The Long URL" box at: <http://snipurl.com> and I received the shortened URL of: <http://snipurl.com/evo8>

BITTYURL

I then took the above Mapquest URL and pasted it into the "Enter another URL to make bitty: "box at: <http://www.bittyurl.com/> The shorted URL that I received is <http://bittyurl.com/Df>

MAKEASHORTERLINK.COM

Finally, I went to: <http://www.makeashorterlink.com/> where I converted the Mapquest URL into <http://makeashorterlink.com/?G5634231B> When I tried this shortened URL in "Internet Explorer", it first took me to a the Makeashorterlink Website and displayed the actual, original URL at Mapquest, for about seven seconds.



Then, I was finally redirected to the actual page at the Mapquest Website.

Based on various newsgroups postings that I read about re-direction, URL-shortening Websites, having a chance to look at the actual URL might prevent you from going to a rogue Website that causes you to get spyware or viruses.

During the seven seconds when the makeashorterlink.com Web site is displaying the actual target URL, your job is to look for obscene and unexpected words in the actual target URL. If you see any, click on either the Stop button

or the Close button of your Web browser in order to stop it from going to the actual, target Website. In Internet Explorer, the Stop button is the button that looks like a red "X" on top of a piece of paper. The Close button is button that looks like a black "X" on a gray background that is in the upper right hand corner of your Internet Explorer window. The negative aspect of using makeashorterlink.com is that it takes significantly longer to get into the target Website when you have to look at it's URL for seven seconds.

However, I have decided that this final URL-shortening Website is probably the best one at the present time, since most people prefer safety over speed.

Try these free URL-shortening Web services and let me know what you think of them.

Go to GS-BUG on the Net: <http://gsbug.apcug.org>

Rich's Computer

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

Contact Information

Phone:
(310)374.8633

Email:
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!

Welcome to Mr. Modem's Desktop, a neighborly nook and chatty cranny of computerdom, where each month I share a few tenderly harvested tips, tricks, gems, and tidbits genetically engineered to supplement your high-cyber lifestyle. These statements have not been evaluated by the FDA and are not intended to diagnose, treat, cure, or prevent any downloadable afflictions.

Restore ALT-Key Shortcuts

You may have noticed in Windows XP that the underlined letters in menus are missing. The Active Keys feature in previous versions of Windows enabled you to press the ALT key along with the underlined letter to activate a menu item. You can restore these

shortcuts by right-clicking your Desktop, then selecting Properties, the Appearance tab, the Effects button, and removing the check mark from Hide Underlined Letters For Keyboard Navigation Until I Press The ALT Key.

Spacemonger (<http://snipurl.com/>)

This free utility creates an intriguing graphical display of the space consumed by data on your hard drive, where the size of each folder is visually proportional to the space it consumes. The program is a scant 103KB, and works with all versions of Windows. There is nothing to install; simply double-click the downloadable executable file.

Auto-Resize Pictures In Word

If you have occasion to insert photos or other graphics in your Microsoft Word documents, you may find that you need to reduce the size of images. You can do that in a jiffy by first inserting a text box (click Insert and Text Box) in your document; then copy and paste your picture into it. The picture will automatically resize to fit within the confines of the box.

Front Control

When visiting Web sites, the displayed font size is generally whatever is called for by the Web site itself. If you find most Web site fonts are too small, as I do, you can override the annoying 20-something, eagle-eyed Web site designer's font selections. In Internet Explorer, click Tools, Internet Options, General tab, Accessibility, and then check the Ignore Font Sizes Specified On Web Pages option. Then make your font selection on the General tab by clicking the Fonts button. As an alternative, you can increase the size of fonts on the fly by clicking View, Text Size or View, Text Zoom, depending on your browser.

10 x 10 (www.tenbyten.org/now.html)

A fascinating site that takes an hourly photographic pulse of the world. When you open 10x10, you will see a grid of the top 100 world images for that hour, ranked in order of importance, reading left to right, top to bottom. Along the right edge of the screen are listed the corresponding top 100 words, one for each image. Click any word or image to see the news headlines behind the word. This is one of the most intriguing sites I've encountered in a long time.

Mr. Modem (Richard Sherman) is an author, syndicated columnist, radio host, and publisher. "Mr. Modem's Weekly Newsletter" provides personal responses to subscribers' computer and Internet questions, plus weekly computing tips, Web site recommendations, virus alerts, hoax warnings, and more. For additional informa-

nik Color Efex Pro 2.0 Complete Edition (Continued from A1)

Fred Vogel, DIGSIG Leader—*Greater South Bay PC Users Group (GSBUG)*

user to apply any filter to any portion of the image.

16-bit functionality, which minimizes any damaging image adjustment effects of pixel manipulation.

Some of the more interesting filters that are included in the Complete Edition are the Graduated Neutral Density filter that allows users to reduce parts of the image's brightness levels without sacrificing saturation and contrast. The Bi-Color filters which allows one to change the color of selected areas of the image. Brilliance/Warmth filters for modifying color temperature, and the Sunshine filter for warming up pictures taken on dreary days. Also there is a Dynamic Skin Softener filter that intelligently softens only skin tones. Different filters can be combined for spectacular effects.

The filters can be applied two different ways. Either using Selective mode, where a palette floats on screen and where any filter can then be chosen and selectively applied. Alternatively a nik filter can be selected from the Filter menu and the filter is then applied to the entire image. The advantage of Selective mode is that after you apply the filter a mask is generated in the Layers palette. Selecting portions of the image using a paintbrush and by adjusting the layer or paintbrush opacity controls will modify, or "paint" the mask either blocking the filter effect or allowing the filter effect to show. Although this process can be accomplished by the use of layers and image masking after the filter is applied, the nik process is infinitely faster and considerably easier to use. Painting on the mask using a Wacom type tablet provides significant advantages in selective density / opacity changes to the mask.

Incidentally, the Selective mode palette is opened from the File>Automate menu when needed. Both the Brush size functions and settings use the Photoshop conventional brush engine.

The Selective mode palette window provides an image preview in three different viewing modes, plus an on-off preview toggle mode, a histogram, Zoom, Paint, Erase, Fill, Clear, Apply, and Discard function. Visual real time adjustment slider viewing helps the user to see what is happening to the image as each filter is adjusted and applied. All of the filters are accessible through alphabetized sorting tabs. The Selective palette screen can be minimized to conserve screen real estate when not needed and can be set to appear automatically when Photoshop opens or conversely it can be opened manually. Filter effects can be applied to a separate layer as an option if desired. Much of the dialog within this program takes advantage of the JavaScript macro capability available in Photoshop. Special or custom filter settings can be saved and called up again as needed.

The real key to understanding and using these filters is to play with the filter sliders. Run them through their range and the user will be pleasantly surprised with some of the spectacular results that can be achieved.

All of the filters in the Complete Edition are capable of producing very sophisticated effects with exceptional output quality. The control one has over every filter enables the user to achieve stunning results. Of the many plug-in filters that I have used nik Multimedia Color Efex 2.0 are some of the best available. Considering the cost of conventional glass and acrylic filters, the actual cost of each nik filter is truly nominal.

This software program is an exciting creative addition to any user's arsenal of image editing tools.

Finally, visit the nik web site where you can view before and after examples of the nik filters. You can also download working demos from their web site.

Invitation to User Group Members

Fun in the Sun & Computers, Too! This is the 12th annual SW User Group Conference offering fun-filled days packed with vendor presentations, great food, workshops, a chance to talk with user groupies from other UGs, and much more. The conference is held in San Diego and begins on Friday evening, August 5, and ends with lunch on Sunday, August 7. Workshops are offered for UG leaders and members, as well as workshops for enhancing attendee computer knowledge.

We have a wonderful new "larger" venue this year. Read on . . .

**Location

This year the conference will be held at the Town and Country Resort Hotel & Convention Center, 500 Hotel Circle North, San Diego 92108. The conference rate is \$99/night, single or double. The rate is guaranteed for three days prior and three days post conference. Come on down and include the conference in a vacation! You can't sleep in your RV, but the host hotel has an RV parking area. Please make your reservations by July 14 to ensure you receive the conference rate. The phone number for reservations is 800.772.8527 or go to www.towncountry.com to make online reservations; under Make a Reservation, select Group and enter Group Code SUG.

Our activities and the Registry will be in the Grand Ballroom area of the Convention Center. We have Pacific Salons One through Seven reserved. You should be given a property map when you check in. If they don't offer one, ask for it.

**What is the cost?

\$40.00 if your registration is post-marked by July 15
\$50.00 if your registration is post-marked by July 22
\$75.00 after July 23 and at the conference

The fee includes six meals, vendor presentations, workshops, conference T-shirt and Welcome Bag.

**How do you register?

Complete the attached registration form (one for each attendee, please) and return it to the address on the bottom of the form with your check. Or, visit the conference website (www.swugconf.org), click on Registration and click on Form.

**What's the schedule?

The Registry is open from 1:00 pm to 5:45 pm on Friday, August 5. If you are late in arriving (traffic can really be slow on Friday evening coming into San Diego), please join us for dinner and pick up your registration materials and Welcome Bag after dinner.

Saturday morning registration is from 7:00 am until 8:00 am. Please join us for breakfast if you arrive after 8:00 am. You will also be able to register during the day since the Registry remains open except for meals and presentations.

**Events

Vendor sponsored meals / presentations Workshops " You will have over 20 to choose from (check the website occasionally for the updated workshop listing). The Vendor Faire on Saturday evening will give you the opportunity to talk to the sponsoring vendors. Don't forget to bring your meeting calendar so you can sign up presenters.

**Hospitality Suite

The conference sponsors a Hospitality Suite where you can get to talk with members from other user groups, visit with vendors who stop by, etc. It is open Friday afternoon and after the presentation on Friday evening, between the last workshop on Saturday and the Vendor Faire, as well as after the Vendor Faire.

**Newsletter / Website Contests

Your user group is invited to participate in the newsletter and website contests. The criteria and deadlines can be found on www.swugconf.org Newsletter Contest or Web Page Contest buttons.

**What should you bring with you?

Your meeting calendar to set up presentations at the Vendor Faire. A sweater " the workshop rooms can sometimes be a little chilly. 100 copies of your newsletter to share with other attendees. If you have an electronic newsletter, you can send a copy to Judy and it will be included on the CD-ROM given to all attendees. Some of the most important things you can bring to the conference are your ideas, problems and/or successes to share during the workshops " users helping users is what user groups are all about.

**What's new this year?

For those guests / spouses who want to participate in outside activities, there will be a central meeting location where you can gather to walk to the Fashion Valley Shopping Center, take the trolley to The Gaslamp Quarter in Old Town San Diego, etc. There is also a day spa and salon at the resort, four swimming pools, and many areas where you can walk and enjoy the beautiful gardens.

See you in San Diego,

Conference

See Adobe Attachment

The Bug's SIGs:

Event	Location	SIG Leader
Board Meeting 1st Wednesday after the 1st Monday of the month.	Levy School - 229th Place & Madison, Torrance, Rm 7	Gary Sexton, President JAGS@aol.com
General Meeting 1st Monday	Salvation Army, 4223 Emerald St. Torrance	First Monday of the Month
Daytime Hardware SIG Every Tuesday	Torrance Scout Ctr, 2365 Plaza Del Amo 1pm to 4pm	Bob Hudak - rsh532@aol.com rsh532@aol.com
Windows 98/XP SIG 4th Friday	Levy School - 229th Place & Madison, Torrance, Rm 7 6:30 pm	John Sullivan 549-2063
Windows 95/98/ME 3rd Thursday	Levy School - 229th Place & Madison, Torrance, Rm 7 7:00 pm	Virginia Pfiffner 374-2410 vpfiffne@elcamino.edu
DIG SIG (Digital Imaging) Every Tuesday	Torrance Scout Ctr, 2365 Plaza Del Amo 9:00 to 12:00 pm	Fred Vogel 375-9336

General Meeting

Ferne Fether
Secretary to the
President



Minutes of June

MINUTES OF GREATER SOUTH BAY PC USERS GROUP*

The president and Secretary being present, the general meeting of the Greater South Bay PC Users Group (GSBUG) was held on Monday, May 2, 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 7:40 p.m.

*Bob Hudak *LIBRARY chairman advised us that the Daytime Hardware SIG has new customers every week. It is a big help to those having problems with their computer hardware. The SIG meets every Tuesday from 1:00 to 4:00.

Fred Vogel reported that the Digital Imaging SIG that normally meets every Tuesday from 9:00 to 12:00 noon will not be held on Tuesday, May 3, 2005.

Pamela Harrison distributed tickets to those wearing their name tags. A drawing was held and two members won legal size #053 and #048 yellow paper tablets. This was done to encourage members to wear their

name tags.

Bob Hudak introduced George Chiang, the Manager of the PC CLUB Computer Superstore. They are located at 5225 W. Rosecrans Ave., Hawthorne. Mr. Chiang presented the program "The Computer User Group Build It Yourself System." He gave step-by-step instructions on how to build your own personal computer, which he presented on a large screen in order that all may see just how it should be done properly. This was an extensive program presented in two parts. First part presented at the April Meeting by Bob Hudak and the second by Mr. Chiang.

After the presentation, Mr. Chiang answered questions from those who came forward to speak to him.

A drawing for door prizes was held toward the end of the meeting by President Garry. Many of the members won a tee shirt, or a "Hands Free" for Motorola cell phones, or a mouse pad.

The meeting adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

Minutes recorded by Ferne Fether

Original to file
cc: GSBUG Board of Directors

General Meeting Notice 1st Monday of the Month

Please mark your calendars for the General Meeting is to be held on the 1st Monday of each month at the Salvation Army Facility.

When:

1st Monday of the
Month.

Time:

7:30 P.M.

Address:

4223 Emerald Street
Torrance, CA

GS-BUG INC.

P.O. Box 6950

Torrance, CA 90504-6950

Phone: (310) 373-3989

GENERAL MEETING

General meetings 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
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[Http://gsbug.apcug.org](http://gsbug.apcug.org)