



The Bug Report

A Publication of the Greater South Bay PC Users Group

December, 2004

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

Calendar

January:

ATTENTION! The general meeting for January will not be held.

February:

Wireless home (Intel program in box Sexton) how to make your home wireless

Computer Basics

Announcement

by Tom Tucknott

The GS-BUG computer society is planning a series of 'Computer Basics' training sessions. These sessions will be at a higher level than 'beginner's class' and the content depends on you. Please email me as to what subjects you would like to cover. Potential areas might be :

- windows basics
- computer commands
- windows explorer
- internet and internet basics
- digital cameras
- security and privacy
- CD and DVD
- music
- various programs
- wi-fi
- any other topics that interest

you

The content and depth of this training depends upon your response. Respond to:

az994@lafn.org



Tis the Season

by Jim Evans, PCUG

Get into the holiday spirit and join the festivities at CompUSA nationwide for a PC Users exclusive holiday celebration. The event will be held from 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. Thursday, December 16, so get there early!

Eat, drink and be merry, the coffee and donuts are free and the deals are worth celebrating. Do your shopping early and take advantage of special pricing on almost every product in store, and exclusive offers from CompUSA just for you.

Get 10% off your purchase of upgrade parts including Mother Boards, memory, video cards, etc during this special sale for you only at CompUSA! Check out the selection of home entertainment products - one may be on someone's wish list for the holidays!

When: Thursday, December 16th

Time: 7 a.m. to 9 a.m.

Where: all stores, check store locator:

<http://www.compusa.com/locations/>

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Tips Of The Month

by Bob Hudak

Here are a couple of tips that I picked up from Digital Dave's column in the ComputerEdge. The first deals with the 80 wire conductor cable that is now used to connect Ultra IDE hard drives to the motherboard. The cable has color coded connectors. The blue connector has to be plugged into the motherboard. The black end connector is attached to the disk drive. Only after using the black connec-

"Tips" see A2

Software Library

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Section
A2

Bob Hudak

Software Library News

RSH532@aol.com



Attention!

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

New 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.

Library News

I want to wish everyone a Happy Holiday season. Have fun shopping and enjoying your family get together. Hope you get some new toys under the tree this year.

If you replace any computer items, I would like to make use of your old items at our Hardware Sig. We will try to recycle the items. I have a computer with a 133 Pentium processor and all the other hardware to make it a great internet surfing machine. \$ 75.00 will put it under your tree. This is a great way to protect yourself from all the bad stuff you can get while using the Internet. Use your main machine for serious work and the second computer for on line work. Make

a image of the hard drive and if something gets into your computer, just replace everything in a couple minutes using the image file. No need to keep buying anti virus programs and updating a couple times a week. Think about it.

I have the latest copy of AD-Aware in the library along with the FireFox browser and Thundebird, the email program from Mozilla. \$5.00 CD will save you a lot of download time. One of our members ran the new AD-Aware program after surfing for a hour or so and it found 900 spyware items!! Wow

Hardware SIG News

Had a couple computers to work on that would not boot up or if they did boot, could not run any programs. The problem was all the resource were used up by programs loading at startup. Every time you load a new program it wants to start every time you turn on your computer. The fix is to go to RUN and type MSCONFIG. Hit enter and when the screen has the box showing, click on the START tab. Uncock all the boxes that have unnecessary programs or items starting when you boot your computer. Reboot and right click on MY COMPUTER and select Properties. From that screen select Performance. If you have 90+ resources available you will be OK. Want to give Laser Service (310-372-5331) in Redondo Beach a plug. Had HP laser jet worked on. Fixed while I waited. They are local and know what they are doing. They also have a web site where you can order parts to do your own repairs. www.fixyourownprinter.com

Tips Of The Month (continued from A1)

tor should you attempt to use the grey center connector. If you use the center connector and not the end one, the sub of wire left over acts as a antenna and degrades the signal quality severely! The second tip, or warning, is never unplug a USB device after using. Park it instead. A USB port delivers voltage. This means that static electricity can

cause permanent damage to circuits and firmware. Flash memory devices are particularly susceptible. To prevent this harmful zap, USB devices need to be parked before they are unplugged. The procedure is simple. When a USB device is present, you will see a USB icon in the tool bar. Click on the icon and you'll be presented with a list

of USB connected devices. Double click on the device you want to unplug. Unplug after you see the "Safe to Remove" message. I found that this seems to work with Windows XP but not Windows 98. When using Windows 98, I wait till I turned the computer off before unplugging the digital memory card just to be safe.

Internet Talk

Section
B1

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Frank Chao
Internet Talk



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

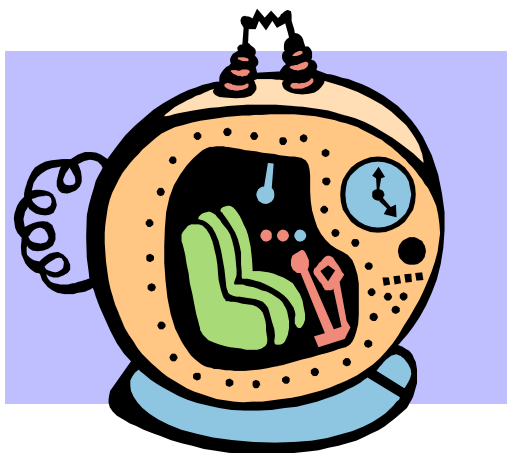
2. Leave me a voice message at (310)768-3896.

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 sewing instead !!

Welcome one and all to the 76th "Internet Talk" article for "The Bug Report", a publication of the Greater South Bay PC Users Group (GSBUG). Liz and I wish you and yours a wonderful holiday season !



WAYBACK MACHINE

Do you like nostalgia? You might enjoy looking at some historic Web pages from back in the 1990's using the "Wayback Machine". It is located at:

<http://www.archive.org>

For example, you can go to this location, type in

<http://gsbug.apcug.org> and see how the GSBUG website looked at various dates between March 2000 and January 2004. For even older GSBUG Webpages, type in

<http://www.lafn.org/community/gsbug/> to see how our Website looked between February 1998 and April 1999.

CD STORAGE

Liz recommends that when you store CDs, you can save space by using double-type jewel cases that store two CDs, instead of using single-type jewel cases.

CHECKING OUT A CONSTRUCTION CONTRACTOR

If you are looking for a contractor to work on your home or business in California, you can find out about any problems that they have had with the Contractors State License Board at:

<http://www.cslb.ca.gov/consumers/default.asp>

Some of the contractors in the South Bay area have a very clean record and a few have a very bad record. The information at this Web site might save you a lot of aggravation and money.

If you need to select a contractor in another state, most other states also have similar Web pages: In Nevada, you can go to <http://www.nscb.state.nv.us/> In Oregon, you can go to <http://www.ccb.state.or.us/>

For other states, go to: <http://www.google.com> and search for state contractor board <name of state>

For example, for the state of Arizona, you would search for: state contractor board Arizona in Google and one of the hits would be <http://www.rc.state.az.us/links.html>



COOL WEB SEARCH

"Cool Web Search", also known as "CWS" is the most virulent spyware/adware trojan program that has ever been invented. It comes from some hackers in Russia and even the most technically astute computer technicians are often unable to eradicate CWS from infected computers.

To learn about this nasty malware "application", go to:

http://beradio.com/mag/radio_browsers_hijacked/

For some instructions on how to eradicate "Cool Web Search", go:

<http://www.kephyr.com/spywarescanner/library/coolwebsearch.ifeatsl/index.phtml>

The instructions at this Web page include running "regedit" to edit the Windows registry which is risky. However, in the case if your computer has is infected with "Cool Web Search", it is a risk that you have to take.

HOLIDAY SEASON GRAPHICS

In this festive season, you might need to "borrow" some graphics of festive objects, so here is a list of Websites for you to look at:

<http://home4christmas.com/hanuka.html>

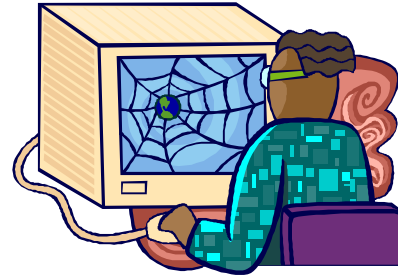
<http://www.kidsdomain.com/holiday/chanukah/clip.html>

<http://www.patswebgraphics.com/christmas/Christmas.html>

<http://www.christmas-graphics.com/>

<http://www.caryn.com/holiday/holiday->

"Graphics" continued on page C1



Blogging

Blogging, also know as Web Logging has proliferated over the past two years. To learn more about it, go to: <http://www.blogger.com>

According to this Website: "A blog is a personal diary. A daily pulpit. A collaborative space. A political soapbox. A breaking-news outlet. A collection of links. Your own private thoughts. Memos to the world. Your blog is whatever you want it to be. There are millions of them, in all shapes and sizes, and there are no real rules. In simple terms, a blog is a web site, where you write stuff on an ongoing basis. New stuff shows up at the top, so your visitors can read what's new. Then they comment on it or link to it or email you. Or not. Since Blogger was launched, almost five years ago, blogs have reshaped the web, impacted politics, shaken up journalism, and enabled millions of people to have a voice and connect with others."

This Web site contains blogs from nice folks throughout the United States and all around the world.

The blogger Web site is owned by Google. To search for blogs on a subject, go to <http://www.google.com> and type in blog <subject>

For example, to find blogs on fishing, type in blog fishing

If you enjoy reading about other folks' fishing experiences and expertise, you would then be busy for a long time !

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!

EasyOffice

Free Shareware

by Smartcomputing.com

If you're looking for a great alternative to Microsoft Office but don't have a few hundred dollars to spring for software, you're in luck. Instead of buying Microsoft's suite, you can download EasyOffice for free.

EasyOffice is a robust suite of programs with the tools you need to perform most business tasks. The suite includes a host of useful programs, including a word processor (EasyWord); spreadsheet (EasySpreadsheet); a presentation tool (EasyPresentation); a database (EasyDatabase); a full reference dictionary (EasyDictionary); an accounting program (EasyBookkeeper); a simple, Notepad-like editing tool (EasyPad); a voice recognition program (EasySpeaker); an imaging program (EasyImage); a compression program (EasyZip); and other backup, email, and Desktop utilities. Although many people use EasyOffice as a replacement for Microsoft Office, the two suites are more or less compatible. For example, you can use many of the same file formats in EasyWord as you do in Microsoft Word, including DOC (document) and RTF (Rich Text Format) files.

Downloading and installing EasyOffice is straightforward, but it's relatively lengthy if you have dial-up connection due to the program's file size—a whopping 82MB. After you install the suite, however, working with the individual programs is fairly intuitive.

Hot Links—Editor's Choice

Memvideo.com—Here it's simple to maintain your own personal record of videos you've seen and those you wish to see. Add comments, feelings plus your own personal ratings. Even keep an inventory of the videos you own and the ones you intend to buy. MemVideo™ is non-commercial, simple, fast and personal.

"Graphics" continued from page b2

Hclipart.html

<http://www.bry-backmanor.org/holidayfun/hanukahclips.html>

<http://presentart.tripod.com/>

<http://www.holidaygraphics.com/christmas/>

<http://www.christmasfreebies.com/christmasgraphics.html>

<http://www.caryn.com/holiday/holiday-xmas-clipart.html>

To download a graphic into your computer, click on it with your right mouse button. Then click on "Save Picture As.."



Webstrider.com—A portal is defined as a Web site that provides links to other Web sites. To derive the most benefit from the Internet, true portals can be invaluable, though finding them can be a bit of a challenge. Webstrider is a portal that strives to be the shortest distance between you and really good, useful information, so check it out: You'll find links to everything from allergy reports to ZIP codes.

Hit, Download & Run

by Carmen Carmack, Smart Computing

Shareware is software you can try before you buy. It's also an inexpensive way for software developers to market and distribute their products. Almost all types of software are available as shareware. In our feature section this month, we focus on shareware system utilities and tools. These products are designed to enhance your Windows OS.

Typically, you download shareware from the Internet to your Windows Desktop or to a folder on your PC's hard drive. To install shareware, close all other applications, double-click the download file, and follow the on-screen instructions. Most shareware has a trial period that ranges from 15 to 45 days, and you agree to purchase the product after the trial period if you decide to keep it.

Depending on the product, some functions may not be operational during the trial period. Generally, a nag screen reminds you of the number of days remaining in the trial period and tells you how to purchase the shareware. Typical shareware prices range from \$15 to \$45. By contrast, some products, known as freeware, have no cost at all.

There are a number of ways to find shareware. Many shareware developers create their own Web sites, and our reviews include this information when applicable. By downloading directly from the shareware author's site, you can learn about the product directly from its source. However, unless you have access to an independent review or recommendation, you are also placing your trust in the developer. Some developers may bundle viruses and spyware (software that secretly tracks your movements on the Internet) with the shareware.

An alternative to developer-sponsored sites, shareware portal sites serve up large collections of products. On these sites, you can often learn about shareware by reading user opinions, user ratings, and independent reviews. Many shareware portals screen products for viruses, functionality, and reli-

ability. For faster downloads, the portals also offer mirror sites, which are duplicates of the source site. When you select a mirror site close to you, downloads are usually faster compared to a distant site.

Our Recommendations

To help you learn more about shareware portals, we examined four of them. We came away with three sites we recommend and one we don't recommend. Most of the products included in our shareware reviews should be available from one or more of our recommended sites.

■ Recommended: CNET's Download.com (www.download.com)

Probably the most well-known shareware distributor, Download.com handles millions of downloads every week. The site's software section features hundreds of product categories that are organized in levels that make it easy to find what you're looking for.

An extensive user-rating system lets you peruse the opinions of others who have tried the products. Each product's information page gives you the total number of user comments and the percentage of thumbs up and thumbs down votes.

In addition to browsing for products, you can use Download.com's basic and advanced search capabilities. When the site displays a list of products that match what you are browsing or searching for, you can click on a column heading to reorganize the product list.

If you would like to know about the products other computer users are downloading, you can view Download.com's list of most popular titles and its shareware Hall Of Fame. Download.com also compiles a list of top-rated products and recent additions to the site.

Download.com does not use pop-up ads to generate income. The site does use banner ads and sponsor ads, but they don't get in the way. Software authors also pay a processing fee to publish

programs on the site. Before a product is available to site visitors, the Download.com staff screens it for viruses, inappropriate content, and stability.

Other shareware Web sites, such as Shareware.com (www.shareware.com) and MSN Downloads (tech.msn.com/downloads), also use Download.com as a resource. These sites distribute software from Download.com, but they have a different look and Web interface.

Downloading shareware from Download.com is quick and easy. From a product's information page, you can view the estimated download time by selecting your Internet connection type. Click the Download Now icon to get the download process underway. For a faster download, Download.com links to the CNET Secure Relay network. The network taps into other computers to find the fastest download for your PC and requires you to install a plug-in, which it provides.

■ Recommended: MajorGeeks.com (www.majorgeeks.com)

Unlike many shareware portals, MajorGeeks.com is not associated with a large Internet-based conglomerate. A couple of guys who go by the names Tim and Jim produce the site and distribute shareware with a relaxed, conversational tone. What's more, the site features a clean interface that is easy to navigate.

MajorGeeks.com organizes its shareware inventory into about 30 categories. Within each category, you can sort products by name, date issued, type of license, OS, and popularity. The search feature offers a full text search and comes with tips on how to effectively structure your query. You can also sort the search results.

The site does not compile user ratings, but the site owners do screen all programs for usability. This does not necessarily indicate that MajorGeeks.com recommends all of the products on its site. It does mean that the shareware should be functional, virus-free, and reliable.

To download software, the product information pages offer several sites to choose from, including MajorGeeks.com and the author's Web site. Unfor-

tunately, there is not much information to help you decide which download site is best based on your location or connection speed. If the download seems slow, cancel it and try another download location.

MajorGeeks.com does not use pop-up ads to generate income. It does include a few banner ads, mostly for products unrelated to the shareware on the site. In addition, some product descriptions include highlighted words that are in fact sponsored links to other Web sites. Thankfully, MajorGeeks.com informs you of this by displaying a bubble tip when you move the pointer over the link.

■ Recommended: Tucows (www.tucows.com)
Featuring its five-cow rating system, Tucows offers more than 40,000 software titles. Each product is independently tested and reviewed by the Tucows staff.

Tucows presents a variety of ways to find shareware. From the home page, you can select your OS (Windows, Mac, Linux, Mobile/PDA) and results appear in a corresponding page that lists the most popular categories, the most popular programs in each category, and the most recent additions. If you click a category from this page, numerous subcategories display in order of popularity. If this list seems overwhelming, click the main categories at the top of the page to display products grouped by application type.

The search feature is always available in the upper right of the Tucows Web pages, and it includes an advanced search option. Because you cannot sort the search results, it's best to use the advanced option to narrow the field as much as possible.

For fast downloads, Tucows offers more than 1,000 mirror sites. When you click a download link, Tucows prompts you to choose a mirror site if you have not already done so.

Tucows does not pester you with pop-up ads, but it does have some banner ads.

And the site is not quite as easy to navigate as some of the other sites we reviewed, but it offers nice features.

Smart Computing

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Section
D3

SIGs:

Event	Location	SIG Leader
Board Meeting 1st Wednesday	Levy School - 229th Place & Madison, Torrance, Rm 7	Gary Sexton, President UAGS@aol.com
General Meeting 1st Monday	Salvation Army, 4223 Emerald St. Torrance	First Monday of the Month
Daytime Hardware SIG	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 Piffner 374-2410 vpiffne@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

Hit, Download & Run (continued from d2)

Shareware

■ NOT Recommended: WinSite (www.winsite.com)

Our main complaint with WinSite is its pop-up ads. The pop-ups display as you search for software, and WinSite also uses numerous third-party cookies that track your movements.

Like the other sites we reviewed, WinSite lets you browse for products. It offers a well-organized Browse WinSite page with links for you to find new products, hot products, and the most popular products. You can also view shareware according to OS and type of application. WinSite also includes basic and advanced search features. The site lists products in order of the date posted on WinSite. Unfortunately, you cannot manipulate the sort order.

WinSite's home page is rather cluttered with understated links to the Browse WinSite and

Search WinSite features. By contrast, the product information pages include a lot of detail, such as the product's system requirements, file size, and developer.

In addition, WinSite includes a user rating system that lets users rate products on a scale of 1 (awful) to 10 (excellent). Compared to Download.com, WinSite's user ratings are not as extensive and lack the ability to view only negative or only positive comments.

The most unpleasant feature of WinSite is the download function. When we attempted to download a product, WinSite placed a large pop-up advertisement on-screen. The X to close the ad window was actually a link to a third-party site. When the download page finally did display, another 10 seconds passed before the download began.

You can skip the download process altogether by paying \$9.95 plus shipping and WinSite will burn a CD with your selections.

WinSite screens its shareware library for viruses and basic usability. It also lets you register to receive bi-monthly notices about new products of interest to you. Despite these and other positives, WinSite's pop-up ads and third-party cookies overshadow its usefulness.

■ Try It, You'll Like It

Without a doubt, shareware is one of the best values on the Internet today. Read our shareware reviews in the following pages to learn more about some great system utilities and tools, and don't hesitate to take advantage of the "try before you buy" philosophy. ■

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General Meeting



Minutes of November 2004

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.

The president and secretary being present, a general meeting of the Greater South Bay PC Users Group (GS-BUG) was held on Monday, November 1, 2004 at the Salvation Army Facility, 4223 Emerald Street, Torrance, CA. In attendance were approximately 45 members and guests. President U. A. Garred (Garry) Sexton called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

President Garry announced that the December meeting will be our Annual "Pot Luck" Holiday Party and will start at 6:00 p.m.

Virginia Pfiffner requested members to bring a "dish" of their choice and for those who can help setup to come at 5:30 Virginia also requested help to stay and cleanup as we must leave the hall clean. Members were encouraged to bring items for the "Silent Auction"

Virginia announced that she will be updating her SIG to include Windows XP.

DIGITAL IMAGING SIG George Austin announced that the SIG group is now

starting Chapter 2 of the Adobe Photoshop CS one-on-one Book.

HARDWARE & LIBRARY Bob Hudak announced he had several items for sale on his table at the back of the room and that he had a few tickets left for the flat screen monitor that will be raffled off at the Holiday Party.

John Hanson cautioned members that when changing lithium batteries in a notebook/laptop to be very careful in handling this situation and also not to overcharge these batteries.

Guest speaker Don Baker of Klassic Specialties gave a comprehensive review on the differences in printers and how the ink is deposited on paper to produce a photo reproduction. Don emphasized "know your printer" so that the media you plan to use is compatible to your printer. Don't always blame your printer on the results, check the media you are using first.

Door prizes were won by Michael Anderson, Robert Wright, Keith Decker, John Hanson and Ferne Fether.

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

—by Pamela Harrison, Secretary

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

GS-BUG On The Net
Web: <http://gsbug.apcup.org>

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

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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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.

The Bug Report

The Greater South Bay PC Users Group
P.O. Box 6950
Torrance, CA 90504-6950

