

The South Bay Mug

MACINTOSH

A Monthly Cupful For South Bay Apple Mac User Group Members, Feb. 2006

MACHinations

A personal view from Bob

More on iTunes music

Apple keeps adding features to iTunes, along with new iPod models, and I keep discovering new tricks. For the inside story I recommend the book "iTunes & iPod," part of the Missing Manual series.

To get music into your iTunes library:

- Download it from Apple's music store (\$\$)
- Rip (import) your own CDs
- Download legal, free stuff from the Internet
- Digitize your tapes and LPs

Storing music in AIFF or WAV format takes 600 MB per hour, so most people import it as AAC or MP3 files that are about 1/10 the size. Although AAC is used by Apple's music store and is claimed to be superior, MP3 is more widely supported. My tin ears can't tell any difference.

Insert a CD in your Mac and iTunes will automatically open so you can play it. If you are connected to the Internet, iTunes will access the Cddb database and assign track names and other information (tags) to the tunes. Click the Import button and the tracks will be ripped to your library along with the tags, according to your preferences. Easy as pie.

Tags: Along with the audio, MP3 and AAC files contain the tune name, artist, album name and cover art and a lot of other information. iTunes lets you add and modify much of this information, but to really to manipulate the tags efficiently get Media Rage (\$30) from chaoticsoftware.com. The program is particularly useful if you're getting tunes from the Internet where tags may be missing or confusing.

Audio Books: My favorite source is gutenburg.org and literalsystems.org which carry an large collection of

audio books, free of copyright. I particularly like the stories of Sherlock Holmes. Librivox.org is a volunteer organization that is recording a large number of books. These are available in MP3 format. I import them to iTunes and then put them on my iPod so I can listen in the airport or while relaxing at home. If I'm too relaxed I often go to sleep and then wake up wondering where I left off. It's a great insomnia killer as it takes your mind off the worries of the day.

Stanford University gives you access a wide range of music, lectures, speeches, debates and other university content through iTunes. (<http://itunes.stanford.edu/>). There's even a video of the Steve Jobs 2005 Commencement Speech at Stanford.

Get iTunes Publisher (free) to create and print a customized list of tunes in your iTunes playlists. These can be in tab-delimited text or HTML format.

iPod to iTunes. You can easily copy tunes in your iTunes library to an iPod. Going the other way is harder since the files on your iPod are in hidden folders, probably to prevent piracy. If your Mac's hard drive crashes you can restore your music from your iPod to the iTunes library with iPod2Mac (free) or the superior iPodRip (\$15).

If you have music on your iPod that isn't in the iTunes library, be careful NOT to synchronize the two or you'll lose the iPod music. Synchronization is the default, so change it in the preferences before you start.

Internet Radio: Clicking the "Radio" icon in the source folder of iTunes lets you listen to hundreds of radio stations? It's satellite radio without the satellite.

	Bob Brooks Helping Beginners 310-545-8060 Bob@SBAMUG.com
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Welcome to **SOUTH BAY APPLE MACINTOSH USER GROUP**

You and your friends are invited to attend our next meeting. Our membership dues are only \$35 per year, entitling you to this newsletter each month and many more benefits.

If you would like to become a member or get more info on SBAMUG, feel free to check out our web site at:
www.sbamug.com

P. O. Box 432
Redondo Beach, CA
90277-0432

310-644-3315
Email: info@sbamug.com

Meetings are held at the

Redondo Beach Community Center
320 Knob Hill, Redondo Beach
(see map & directions on page 11)

Officers & Volunteers:

President.....Glen Terry
Vice President.....LJ Palmer
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Jim Pernal, Dorothy Weeks,
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Newsletter Editor.....John Bernardo
Raffle Chairman.....George Griffiths
Refreshment Crew.....The Apple Blossoms

Membership Report:

*(You may notice your name is in larger letters on your card.
That is so it can be used as a name tag at the meetings.)*

Current Membership - 184

Welcome New Members -

Ed Miyashiro, James Whittington,
Glenn Jaynes & Peter Myers.

Thank You Member Renewals -

Grace Scott, Louise Polsky, Dorothy O'Brien,
Marv Lubofsky, Joan & Samuel Kraus
& Charles Engel.

Your Membership cards are in the mail!

MONTHLY CALENDAR

1st Wed - SBAMUG Core Group Mtg @ announced locations, 7:30 pm
1st Thur - LB Mug @ Emerson School, Palo Verde & Willow, Long Beach, 7 pm
1st Sat - Orange Apple UG, Orange Coast College, Chem Bldg, Costa Mesa, 8am-1pm
3rd Sat - Adobe Tech Exchange Toyota Bldg on Grammercy near 190th, 9 am; \$10
Last Wed - SBAMUG Monthly Meeting
Last Tues - WOCMUG @ Emerson School, Palo Verde & Willow, Long Beach, 7 pm
Last Sat - TRW / Northrop Ham Radio & Computer Swap Meet, 7 am - 11:30 am

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Members are invited and encouraged to submit articles and original artwork for publication. Newsletter deadline is the last Wednesday of the month. Articles may be edited to fit in available space.

Please send to: john@sbamug.com

SBAMUG FEBRUARY 2006 PD CD

Seven items both serious and fun. Two programs are already a Universal Binary to run full speed on the PPC and the new Intel Macs!

I Love Lamp.wdgt-

A widget (so for Tiger 10.4 only) that adds a virtual Lava Lamp for your Mac.



iFlash-

The universal binary program I mentioned. Virtual flash cards. Can be text, audio, or images, and you build up your flash card set. Requires 10.3.9 or better.

iPulse-

This utility program has a unique interface. Small circle with segments. Clicking on the various segments gives you a variety of info on your Mac. CPU activity, System Load, Network Activity, Memory Usage, Disk Usage, and date and time are some of the information provided. For OS 10.2 or better.

Pac the Man X-

OSX version of this Pac Man clone game. Requires OSX 10.3, 500 MHz G3 and 128 MB of ram. Seems faithful, and ran well.

pyramids2.0.dmg-

Lynn's Pyramids is a card game with the cards arranged in a pyramid. The goal is to clear them out. This is the other universal binary program this month. For OSX 10.4.

Snood3.sit-

A highly rated and fun puzzle game. I really liked the older versions back on my Powerbook 520. This is for OSX10.0 and up. A few new features this time around. Great sound effects. Simple enough for the young and fun for adults too!

Stock Portfolio.dmg-

Final program this month keeps track of your stocks. You can view graphs, track prices, and print details. Uses Yahoo's financial web site for the info. For OS 10.3 or higher.

CD for this month will be at the February meeting as the January-February 2006 CD.

Catch you at the February meeting.

Jim Pernal PD Editor

MICROSOFT QUIETLY DITCHES MEDIA PLAYER WINDOWS MEDIA PLAYER FOR MAC

CVMUG ~ Jan/Feb 2006

Despite pledging its support for Apple's platform, Microsoft has backed out of future releases of Windows Media Player for Mac, and the company's Web site now directs visitors to download a third-party application from developer Flip4Mac.

Flip4Mac develops Windows Media Components for QuickTime, an add-in for Apple's multimedia player. According to press release on its Web site, it appears as if the Windows Media division at Microsoft has given the company its full blessing to become the standard-bearer for Mac-based Windows Media playback.

Microsoft seems to have taken a different approach toward dealing with the Mac platform in recent months. This may seem to fly in the face of Microsoft's recent announcement of support for the Macintosh platform for the next five years through Office, but the company's work is now focused solely on business applications.

"If there is a MacBU scaleback, it adds new perspective to yesterday's Microsoft Mac commitment. Soon, Office and Messenger may be the only Mac products offered by Microsoft, because of their appeal to bigger businesses," commented Jupiter Research senior analyst Joe Wilcox. "A consumer exit could mean the end of the low-cost Student & Teacher Edition, too, particularly with Apple offering iWork."

It is unclear if Telestream will attempt to bring Windows Media technologies on the Mac up to date and include support for WMP 10 codecs, or the "Janus" digital rights management framework.

Reports also surfaced that Flip4Mac's application was unstable with the latest version of QuickTime, version 7.0.4. Crashes of QuickTime and Safari were reported on numerous Web sites. The company told users that it is working on a fix for the issue and hopes to have it released by mid-January.



GOODBYE POWERBOOK, HELLO MACBOOK PRO

By Bill Davies ~ MacNexus

On January 10, 2006, Apple said “goodbye Powerbook” and “hello MacBook.” Everyone’s heard of this new Apple laptop by now, and so I plan to only briefly mention what it is, and then turn to my report card on this new product.

So, here’s the skinny. This is Apple’s first laptop to use an Intel processor. In this case, they selected Intel’s new mobile processor called the Core Duo, meaning it is a dual core processor, or basically two brains on one chip. Intel only released this chip for public consumption in late December, and apparently helped get the logic board working so that Apple could ship a product by February. The Core Duo provides 2MB of Smart Cache, L2 cache that can be shared between both cores as needed. It delivers higher performance in 2D and 3D graphics, video editing, and music encoding. The MacBook Pro has a frontside bus and memory that, at 667MHz, runs faster than any previous Mac notebook. It’s the first Mac notebook with PCI Express, a Serial ATA hard drive and the ATI Mobility Radeon X1600 for superfast graphics performance. And for an extra \$100, you can get a 7200 rpm hard drive instead of the stock 5400 rpm version.

This laptop starts at \$1999. Why so much when Intel products are a commodity? Where’s the \$699 laptop we all wanted? Pundits, including myself, speculated that the Mac mini would be first to move to Intel. But Apple came through with a new pro laptop because, in their words, they were two (or three) years late with a Powerbook G5 and never got one out the door, so this is their attempt to make a seriously fast laptop that approaches desktop performance. As 2006 unfolds, we’ll see iBooks and Mac minis sporting a cheaper, single-brain version of this Intel chip.

Notable improvements to this new pro laptop are the inclusion of a built-in iSight videocam, a screen that is almost as bright as an Apple Studio Display, and a cool new magnetic power supply that will simply fall away from the laptop if someone trips over the power cord. Apple is mum on battery life, claiming that they don’t have adequate data yet to make a representation. (Interesting, since the whole rationale for switching to Intel was more power per watt.) Conversely, people have noted that Firewire 800 is nowhere to be found, the laptop lacks an internal modem (you have to buy an external USB modem), the display has



86,400 fewer pixels than the Powerbook display, the SuperDrive doesn’t support dual-layer media (functionality that was standard on all 2005 G4 Powerbooks), S-video requires an adapter, there’s no mention of the acceleration-detection technology that Apple was trumpeting for last year’s laptops, there’s no 12” version, and there’s no 17” version. And in the “can’t decide if it’s good or bad department,” there is a slot for an Express Card/34” but to date no one has found a manufacturer that makes anything to go in there. It was hoped that this laptop would have some flash memory that would allow a user to instantly save all work and shut down, and then upon restart, have the computer be instantly on and ready to go. Some had speculated that the Express Card slot might be used to hold flash, but so far, the best I’ve heard is that someone might make a media card reader to fit in there.

So that’s the good, the bad, and the ugly about the MacBook. But where I really want to focus my attention is whether Apple made this jump to Intel without becoming a fish out of water. In late December I got to thinking (when I saw ads from other PC manufacturers who were using the Core Duo chip and logic board) that maybe what Apple should be doing is letting these large volume shops like Acer and Dell make the hardware, put an Apple licensing chip on the logic board to let Apple derive some revenue, and let the sweat shops do the heavy lifting. We all know that Apple doesn’t want you to be able to buy a \$699 Dell and put OS X on it, so what Apple needs is a hardware validator chip on the logic board, and to let other companies bring out the new hardware and pay Apple a license fee. The bean counters in the world have observed that this gives Apple only \$25 or \$75 per system sold, versus the \$400 to \$800 they must make when they sell one of their own MacBooks. (Probably why Apple is not following my advice on this one.)

To further test my theory, I went online and tried to compare the one other shipping Core Duo laptop that I had seen mentioned in the first week of January 2006, which is an Acer Travelmate 8200. Other than the fact that the Acer laptop runs Windows XP, it could probably pass for a MacBook to all but the most discerning consumer. It has a built-in camera and a top that swivels 270 degrees.

And that brings me to my next point. Now that Apple has come to play in the Intel sandbox, it can’t charge an extra \$1000 for the privilege of having an Apple logo on the computer (even if the Apple does light up). That would be ridiculous. If the components and logic boards are largely the same, why would someone pay an extra \$800 to get an Apple on the front? (Granted, you do get OS X and iLife ’06, but is that worth my speculative \$800?)

For purposes of argument, I’ve prepared a chart that compares the Acer Travelmate 8200 (Windows XP) to Apple’s new MacBook Pro (MacOS X Tiger). Price-wise the two units are almost identical, but if you read the chart

closely, you'll notice that Acer provides more RAM, more hard disk, and a couple of other juicy items. It may not be as gorgeous in its design, but since Apple wanted to play with the big boys, let's face it, Apple is now going to be compared to the big boys.

Acer TravelMate 8200		Apple MacBook Pro
MSRP	\$1,999	\$1,999
Operating System	Windows XP	OS X Tiger 10.4.4
Display size	15.4"	15.4"
Display resolution	1680 x 1050	1440 x 900
Processor + Speed	Core Duo 2GHz	Core Duo 1.67 GHz
Factory RAM	1gb	512mb
Hard Disk + Speed	120gb SATA 5400rpm	80gb SATA 5400 rpm
Media Reader	Dual Layer DVD±,DVD-RAM	Single Layer DVD±
Graphics card	ATI X1600 256mb DDR3	ATI X1600 128mb DDR3
Frontside Bus	667Mhz	667Mhz
Bluetooth	Yes	Yes
USB 2.0	Yes	Yes
Firewire 400	No	Yes
Wireless 802.11g	Yes	Yes
VOIP	Yes	No
Card Reader	Yes	No
Camera Built-in	Yes	Yes
Swivel Screen	Yes	No
Modem	Yes	No
Boot Method	BIOS	EFI*
Extras	5-in-1 card reader	iLife 06 Apple RemoteExpress Card slot Magnetic powersupplyBacklit keyboard
* EFI provides a flexible and adaptable interface between MacOS X and the platform firmware. Computers that lack EFI cannot install OS X. Windows XP 32-bit does not support EFI at this time.		
Both computers appear to use the Intel Mobility 945 Express		

I don't want to sound completely negative on the MacBook Pro. I think it is a great first step by Apple, and I've ordered one myself because, in my way of thinking, all machines I buy from now on are going to be Intel Macs, so I talked myself out of a dual processor G5 tower for my personal toy, and am starting out with an Intel-based MacBook. I'll get my feet wet with this, and when an Intel PowerMac tower comes out I should be ready to integrate that with the rest of my collection.

Should you too start to think about converting everything you have to Apple's new Intel-based architecture? I've prepared a small sidebar that discusses the pros and cons of taking that plunge.

When Should You Move To Mac-Intel?

If you're in the market for a new Mac, you currently can choose between a G4 or G5 Mac, and one of the new models with Intel inside. Run through these questions before buying: • Do you need to run any Classic applications? If yes, then don't get a Mac with an Intel processor, as Classic is not supported. • Do you need high performance video, as the video cards on the Intel Macs are much superior to the ones on the 2005 iMac G5 and/or Powerbook G4. The new ATI X1600 graphics card offers accelerated MPEG-2, MPEG-4 and H.264 decoding. It will not speed up iMovie authoring, but will certainly offer better performance for viewing iMovies and DVDs.

- How often do you buy machines? Buying "last year's model" with a G4 or G5 will get you up to a 3 year lifespan before the machine loses software update support from Apple. Buying an Intel model gets you 5-6 years of machine life as a supported architecture, although certainly Apple will love you if you buy a new machine every 3 years.
- Do you need to run VirtualPC? Because if you do, although VPC does not run yet on Intel Macs, there is every reason to believe it will perform much much better on an x86 chip once they get some issues worked out.
- If considering the iMac, might you want a second flat screen some day? The Intel iMac's video-out port is now Mini-DVI, with support for DVI displays as well as the VGA, S-video, and composite video formats supported previously, and the system for the first time supports 'extended desktop' mode as well as mirroring. Ditto for the MacBook Pro. (As before, you need to buy an adapter for the type of external display you want to connect.)
- If nothing else with regards to the iMac, the Intel iMac appears to give you access to two RAM slots, the G5 iMac gives you access to one.

And of course, if Apple doesn't ship enough systems to derive some economy of scale and drive prices down, this may all be academic, because people can get the same Intel chipset and features on systems from at least 30 other companies for less money, as long as they're willing to run Windows XP.

Welcome to this brave new world. We've done it before when Apple II's changed to Macs, then all Macs had to be replaced with ones that were 32-bit clean, then the PowerPC came out and programs had to be re-written, then OS X came out and programs had to be re-written, and now Macs on Intel have arrived and programs have to be re-written. What a ride it has been.

**BOOK REVIEW:
LEARNING UNIX FOR MAC OS X TIGER**

*By Dave Taylor
Reviewed by Elsa Travisano ~ MUG ONE*

Does the thought of dipping into OS 10.4 Tiger's Unix underpinnings leave you tempted, but slightly terrified? Reach for Learning Unix for Mac OS X Tiger, a refreshingly understandable yet surprisingly thorough guide to using Unix in Tiger. The book is the perfect guide for Mac users who are confident in the graphic user interface (the Finder and applications), and are ready to take on the power and flexibility of the Unix command line.

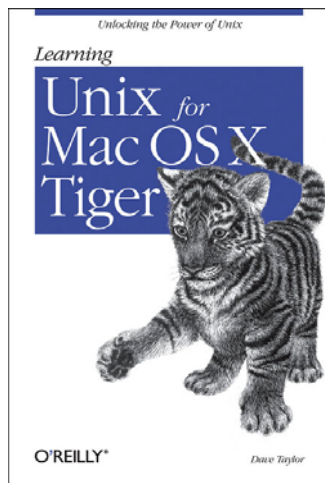
Author Dave Taylor poses the question "Why would any sane person want to type in a bunch of funny looking Unix commands when you can just use the mouse?" The answer? Power and control. The text-based tools of Unix, which are accessed primarily through the Terminal application, allow you to make batch changes, locate hidden files, and find out all sorts of things about how your Mac is functioning - and that's only scratching the surface.

The key to using Unix is to understand its syntax. Taylor explains the logic behind Unix commands in plain, non-geek-speak English, then digs into customizing your Terminal environment, working with the Mac OS X filesystem, managing and finding files and information, changing input and output, multitasking, using Unix online, working with the X11 environment, open source and finally, where to go to learn more about Unix.

Learning Unix for Mac OS X Tiger is amply illustrated with script examples and screen shots, and is nicely designed for easy reference. Very highly recommended.

260 pp. O'Reilly, 2005. \$19.95

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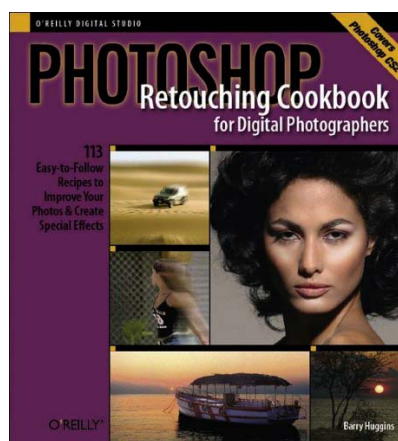


**BOOK REVIEW:
PHOTOSHOP RETOUCHING COOKBOOK
FOR DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHERS**

*By Barry Huggins
Review by Victoria Maciulski ~ CVMUG*

When I saw that O'Reilly would be coming out with a series of "Cookbooks" related to the digital arts, I was intrigued. This book did not disappoint. It is 10 inches wide - wide enough to display lots of photos, which are plentiful.

It really is set up like a cookbook. There are 113 recipes divided into 11 groupings with names like: Exposure Correction, Color Correction, Focus Manipulation, Lighting Effects, Photo Restoration,



Traditional Darkroom Techniques and Photo compositing Techniques. Each of the groupings contains some recipes.

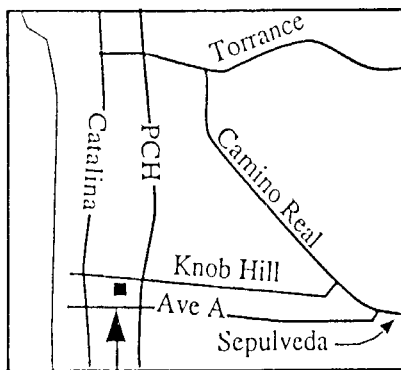
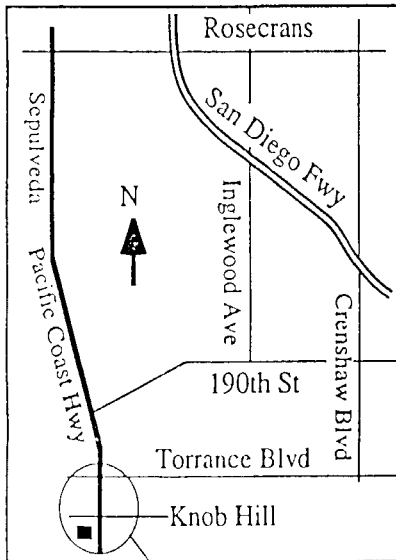
The Retouching Landscapes grouping has recipes for Interesting Skies, Removing Unwanted Objects, Correcting Perspective, etc. Traditional Darkroom Techniques has the most recipes, with 9. There are recipes for Creating Film Grain, Hand-tinting, Cross-processing, Reticulation effects and more.

I was impressed with the multiple techniques for Correcting Perspective (page 84) and Replacing Color (page 92). The recipes for Revitalizing Faded Photographs (page 150) and Recreating Damaged Areas are worth the price of the book alone. We all have those old faded and damaged photos needing repair. And I will be using the recipes for emulating Starburst Filters (page 97) soon.

I give it 4.5 Stars out of 5.

176 pages, O'Reilly, \$29.95

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We're at 320 Knob Hill at
PCH • Free Parking

THIS MONTH'S MEETING

Wednesday Feb. 22nd, 2006 7:30PM

320 Knob Hill, Redondo Beach

(see map at left for directions)

Come early (6:30) for beginners class!

This Month's Topic:

Allison Sheridan will show us what
Podcasting is all about! Details below.



Next Meeting March 29th:

You've heard about eBay,
now learn how to use it.

Presenting will be Pat Carnahan.

GREAT RAFFLE PRIZES TOO. TICKETS ONLY \$1 EACH!

Note from the Editor

Is your newsletter arriving late?

You are not alone.

Recent articles (Daily Breeze etc.) point to the Postal Service's cutbacks, consolidation efforts and closure of a Marina Del Rey processing center in delaying the mail.

In order to compensate (to get you the newsletter prior to the monthly meeting) the newsletter will now be done a week earlier. This will mean the deadline for articles & ads will now be the last Wednesday of the month, the same day as the meeting.

Of course you can always download our newsletter on our web site:

www.sbamug.com

Meeting Details:

Allison Sheridan, creator of the NosillaCast podcast will present at our February meeting to teach us about podcasting. Podcasting is essentially like a radio or TV show hosted on the internet that is delivered to you when you want it, and how you want it. There are more than 10,000 podcasts out there today, and the technology behind it was only developed in late 2004. These podcasts are on subjects from technology to knitting to religion to politics - heck, there's even a tequila podcast!

Allison will show us how to find podcasts, how to subscribe to them (so they're automatically delivered to you), and how to get rid of them. She will demonstrate a few different podcatching clients, and give her opinions on the different podcast directories out there.

Then if there's time, she'll do a quick demo of how she creates her podcasts using the Open Source software Audacity, and also with the new Garageband 3. The NosillaCast has 2000 listeners from 70 countries and can be found at <http://podfeet.com>

SBAMUG Membership Application

South Bay Apple Macintosh User Group provides Mac owners and users with a local source of shared knowledge and experience through monthly meetings, training seminars and our monthly newsletter.

Individual and family membership is \$35 per year payable to SBAMUG.

New Member Member Renewal

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Home Phone: _____ Email Address: _____

Special Computer Interest: _____

Model of Macintosh You Use Most: _____

How did you hear about SBAMUG?: _____

Comments: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Bring Application & Fees to Meetings or Mail to:
SBAMUG
P.O. Box 432
Redondo Beach, CA 90277

PERIODICALS

South Bay Apple Mac User Group

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