

The South Bay Mug

MAGINTOSH

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

MACHinations

A personal view from Bob

Phone for Free

People are increasingly using the Internet to make phone calls. I've been using Skype, now owned by eBay, for a couple of years. Phoning between computers for free. Phoning to landlines (regular telephones) in the US, Canada and most major countries is about 2.3¢ a minute. You can also send text messages, transfer files, and now do video chats using an iSight and other web cam. All you need is the free Skype software and a free account. Skype is similar to iChat, except it works with Macs, PCs and Linux computers, and even some handhelds.

Like other instant messaging programs Skype uses a "buddy list", except the list can include regular telephone numbers as well as your Skype friends. A buddy's icon tells you its status — online, away, not available, etc. If they're online, double-click the name to call and they can answer or decline. If they accept your call, you're connected. Just start talking. You need a microphone, but most iMacs and laptops have one built in. Skype does not have it's own servers so the audio quality can vary, depending on the connection. Usually it's good but sometimes it sounds like you're talking in a barrel. For best results get a microphone-earphone headset to minimize echoes. I got mine at the swap meet for a couple of dollars, but they're available many places, including the Skype store.

Landline Calling (Skypeout). To call a regular telephone or mobile phone, type in the phone number and ring them. It costs about 2.3¢ a minute to call most major countries. For landline calling you need to buy a block of Skype credits for about \$12 using a credit card. That gives you about 8 hours of calling to North America, Europe, and most of Asia.

Skypein (optional) costs \$38 a year and gives you a phone number that friends who don't use Skype can use to call you. If your family lives in Chicago, get a local Chicago phone number they can use to call you from their regular phones. Skypein comes with a Skype Voicemail subscription (otherwise \$18/yr.). When someone calls and you're away or busy they can leave a voicemail message. You can also have your incoming Skype calls forwarded to your regular phone for about 2.3¢ a minute. (Until the end of 2006, calling and forwarding in the U.S. and Canada is free.)

Conference Calling. I haven't use this feature, but you can talk with up to five people in a conference call. (As you add more people, you get more communication delays and you may get people talking over one other)

Recording your chats. Ecomm.com sells a \$13 program, Call Recorder, which can record both sides of a Skype conversation. Audio Hijack Pro (\$32) also lets you record your chats as MP3 files and does many other nice things. I highly recommend it if you use your Mac for audio.

Video. Skype now supports video chatting. Although it's still beta it's working well for me.

Skype has become so popular that there are now cordless phones that let you make Skype calls without being chained to a computer. A Belkin model looks like a cell phone and only needs a wireless connection to a hotspot to make calls.



Bob Brooks

Helping Beginners
310-545-8060
Bob@SBAMUG.com



Welcome to South Bay Apple Mac 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)

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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.)

Your Membership Cards are in the mail!)

Current Membership - 168

Welcome New Members - Jeanne Cosgrove

Thank You Member Renewals -

George Brown, Ken Burrill, Ellen Colopy, Bob Cook, Chuck Dunn, Joe Fierstein, John Gebhard, Jerome Ginsburg, Robert Griffith, Monica Grundmann, John Kier, Don Myers, Sue von Nordenflycht, James Stewart, C. M. Stubben, Eugene Todd, Nob Yonemoto.

MONTHLY CALENDAR

1st Sat - SBAMUG Core Group Mtg @ announced locations, 10 am

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: dhweeks@sbamug.com

SBAMUG October 2006 PD CD

Seven programs this month. Had to toss one since it's license said it could not be distributed. The company has shareware and paid programs. I'm not sure if they missed the shareware items or not.

Cooking_Converter.zip- A simple freeware converter program. Teaspoon, Tablespoon, cup, pint, quart, gallon, liter and milliliter. Pick one, enter the amount, pick the second item to convert to. No requirements found, works in 10.4.

GraphPaperMaker.dmg- While Excel and other programs can plot graphs, sometimes you need old fashioned graph paper, say for a student, or working away from a computer. This will let you generate custom graph paper. Linear or Log scales on either axis. Add titles and scales. Generates a PDF file that can be printed out. Watermark on the page till you register. OSX 10.2

Mactracker406.dmg-Lastest Mac database program now includes the newer Macs. Plenty of info as usual. Shows when introduced and discontinued. Includes Apple printers too. OSX 10.2

MailUnreadMenu_2.0.1.zip- A nice little utility that adds a "menulet" ie a menu on the right side of the menu bar for Mail. Will show the number of unread e-mails directly in your menu bar. You can open other mailboxes or send mail directly from the menu too! OSX 10.4 and will only work with Apples mail program. You can choose to show zero unread e-mails or not in the preferences.

PirateTranslator.zip- A silly Widget. Widgets are for OS 10.4 only. Type in text and have the widget translated into "pirate talk". Won't get into the reasons you might need this, but we can't be dead serious all the time either.

Scenario Poker 1.4.zip- Another widget that plays Texas Hold'em style poker. Full

complement of other computer players and a computer dealer.

VoiceCandy-1.1.2.dmg- Final item this month is described as "photo booth" for recording short messages. Lets you easily make short recordings. You can save as a note, email, or save to iTunes. You can save it as a reminder that will play back at a specific time. Also has fun effects such as chipmunk, Vader, Mouse, Bad Sci-Fi and others. These effected will need to be selected at the time of the recording. You can't apply them later from what I can tell. OSX 10.4 is the OS requirement.

CD for this month will be at the October meeting as the September-October 2006 CD.

Catch you at the October meeting.
Jim Pernal, PD Editor

The Worst Thing You Can Do to Your Portable Computer

Continued from p. 4

taking your computer to your local Apple repair agency to have it inspected for standing liquids before attempting to power it on. The battery voltage and PMU should be checked prior to the first boot.

-Hope For The Best: Though severe damage can occur within a computer, following the above steps can potentially help to minimize the damage. There are repairs that can be performed by a local service provider cheaper than Apple's flat rate damage repair should the situation come to that.

With all that in mind, when I take my MacBook Pro out for coffee, the MacBook Pro stays on the tabletop, the coffee stays on the floor in my sealed mug.

The Worst Thing You Can Do To Your Portable Computer

By Scott@Smalldog.com
Recommended by Glen Terry

With the new school year upon us the MacBooks and MacBook Pros have been selling like hot cakes (apparently hot cakes are quite popular.) These computers go everywhere their owner goes - classes, the dorm rooms, libraries and quite possibly most important of all... the cafes!

Downtown Burlington, VT has, appropriately as any college town should, numerous coffee shops and cafes. Each one has its own individual ambiance. Some have Wi-Fi, some don't. Nonetheless, come night time, college students migrate from the universities to these coffee computers. In my opinion, caffeine and computers go together like peas and carrots, or beer and nuts.

The above listed combination of caffeine and computers however presents one of the greatest risks to the life of your computer! No, it's not about getting over caffeinated and taking out your frustrations over your workload on your computer. It's the fact that although you may enjoy consuming a caffeinated beverage, your computer will not!



Unfortunately, over the past month I have seen 3 computers come through the service department that were victims of liquid spills. One of the greatest risks (and most common mistakes) a user can subject their computer to, is leaving a drink too close. Apple's warranty covers failures that are not related to physical damage. Apple rates a liquid spill in the highest category of physical damage that can be done to a machine. An out of warranty physical damage repair performed by Apple can sometimes cost more than the value of the machine! One of these machines that passed through our service

department here at Small Dog was a brand new MacBook. It had lemonade spilled in it about a month after it's original purchase. Fortunately, the customer had insurance on their purchase provided by their credit card. After data recovery and dispatch to Apple where nearly 3/4 of the computer parts were replaced, the final bill totaled just under \$1000!

As I am advising all of you reading to take extreme caution with liquids around your computer, I will also give you a few simple steps to follow should you spill liquid into your computer to attempt to minimize or potentially avoid damage.

Should you spill liquid into your computer:

-Remove All Power Immediately!: Hard power down your machine and remove the battery and power cord. If you are working on a project do not attempt to save it, unless your project is of greater value than the computer its self.

-Drain the liquid away from the internal components: Keep in mind that the more sensitive and expensive components of your computer are the logic board and the internal components. This means if you have a portable machine open the display to a 90 degree angle and place it upside down. You are better off having the liquid settle in the keyboard or track pad than the logic board. A keyboard may cost around \$85 but a logic board will cost about \$800 to replace.

-Let The Unit Drain: Keep your machine in the draining position in a well-ventilated area. Make sure it is left in a place where it does not risk getting knocked over or broken. It is probably best that you do not use a hair dryer as you may be so inclined. Hair dryers create a large amount of static electricity and could potentially cause an electrical discharge onto a computer component.

-Inspect Before Using: After you have left your computer to drain for a couple days I suggest

Continued on p. 3

Repair Disk Permissions

*Courtesy of Stephen Henry
NCMUG Webmaster*

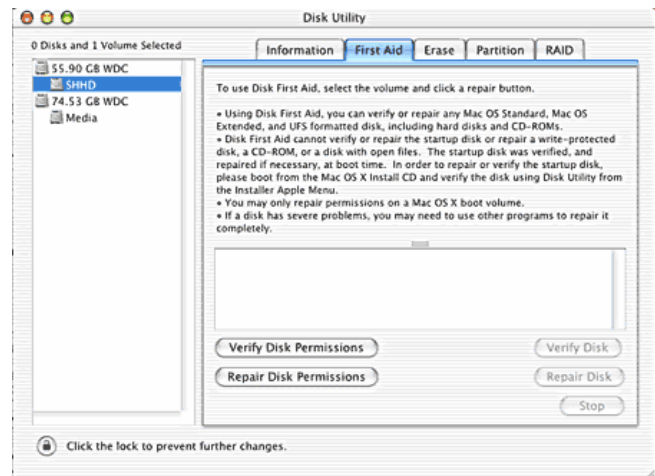
OS X provided Mac users with a new modern operating system with the old foundation of UNIX. One of the benefits of UNIX is its multi-user capability. To manage the users of the system, UNIX uses file ownership and permissions. Ownership and permissions is a large subject unto itself, so we will not address the details here. Look for a tutorial in the future or go to osxfaq.com for additional reading.

Occasionally in OS X some key file ownership and permissions get changed for whatever reason by applications and more frequently, program installers. When ownership and permissions get changed, things just don't work as they should. The symptoms might be programs quitting unexpectedly, preferences not being remembered, programs not launching, etc. This is where Repair Disk Permissions utility comes in. This utility, which is part of the Apple Disk Utility program, corrects the ownership and permissions according to Apple specifications. Frequently, this corrects many system and program errors. Repair Disk Permissions is a OS X specific utility and UNIX does not have such issues. Hopefully, this a concern and procedure that will go away in the future.

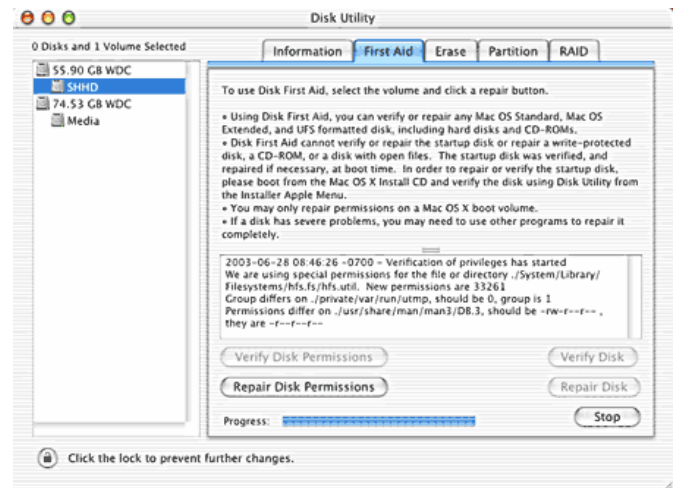
To repair permissions, open the Disk Utility program found in the Applications>Utility folder on your hard drive root level directory. At the top of the Disk Utility window is a row of tabs. Click on the First Aid tab. On the left is a list of the disk and volumes mounted on your computer system. In the example below, I have two mounted volumes - one named SHHD and another named Media. You will need to click on your boot volume to select it. Only boot volumes can have permissions repaired.

If the buttons labeled "Verify Disk Permissions" and "Repair Disk Permissions" are grayed and not selectable, you have not selected the boot volume or you are not a system administrator. To allow system administrator approval to repair

permissions, click on the padlock button on the lower left and enter a system administrator's name and password.



Once you have selected a boot volume and have system administrator privileges, you can go ahead and click on the Repair Disk Permissions button. You will see the process begin with messages in the center window and a progress bar below it. This process may take a while so it may be a good time to go for coffee.



Once done, you can quit the Disk Utility program. You do not have to reboot the system for the changes to be effective. It is recommended that you repair your disk permissions after installing new programs or once every month or so of normal usage.

How to Forward E-mails...

*Suggested by our own Marie Cooper
with some MUG editorial additions*

Do you really know how to forward e-mails? 50% of us do; 50% DO NOT.

Do you wonder why you get viruses or junk mail? Do you hate it? We certainly do. Here's why:

Every time you forward an e-mail there is information left over from the people who got the message before you, namely their e-mail addresses & names.

As the messages get forwarded along, the list of addresses builds, and builds, and builds, and all it takes is for some poor soul to get a virus, and his or her computer can send that virus to every e-mail address that has come across his computer.

Or, someone can take all of those addresses and sell them or send junk mail to them in the hopes that you will go to the site and he will make five cents for each hit.

That's right, all of that inconvenience over a nickel! When we see our e-mail address included in a large list in someone's "TO:" field, we know that now all those people (and who knows how many others?) have our address. Inevitably after receiving one of those e-mails, we suffer through a rash of offers for medicine, financial opportunities, and things less savory. Yuck!

How do you stop it? Well, there are several easy steps:

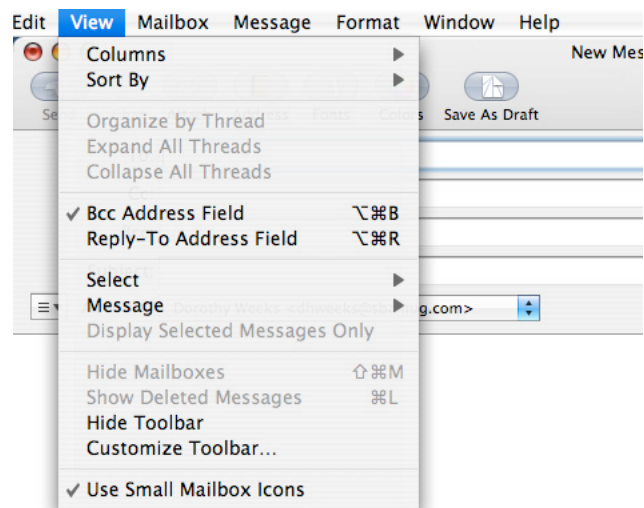
(1) When you forward an e-mail, DELETE all of the other addresses that appear in the body of the message (at the top). That's right, DELETE them. Highlight them and delete them, backspace them, cut them, whatever it is you know how to do. It only takes a second. You MUST click the "Forward" button first and then you will have full editing capabilities against the body and headers of the message. If you don't click on "Forward" first, you won't be able to edit the

message at all.

(2) Whenever you send an e-mail to more than one person, do NOT use the To: or Cc: fields for adding e-mail addresses. Always use the BCC: (blind carbon copy) field for listing the e-mail addresses. This way the people you send to will only see their own e-mail address.

If you don't see your BCC:

Click on the View menu of Apple's Mail program and be sure to check the Bcc Address field. Then you'll see one in future emails you compose.



(3) Remove any "FW :" in the subject line. You can re-name the subject if you wish or even fix spelling.

(4) ALWAYS hit your Forward button from the actual e-mail you are reading. Ever get those e-mails that you have to open 10 pages to read the one page with the information on it? By Forwarding from the actual page you wish someone to view, you stop them from having to open many e-mails just to see what you sent.

(5) Have you ever gotten an e-mail that is a petition? It states a position and asks you to add your name and address and to forward it to 10 or 15 people or your entire address book. The e-mail can be forwarded on and on and can collect thousands of names and email addresses.

Well, here's a fact: The completed petition is actually worth a couple of bucks to a professional spammer because of the wealth of valid names and e-mail addresses contained therein.

If you want to support the petition, send it as your own personal letter to the intended recipient. Your position may carry more weight as a personal letter than a laundry list of names and e-mail address on a petition. (Actually, if you think about it, who's supposed to send the petition in to whatever cause it supports?)

(6) Don't believe things like: "The email is being traced." or "Send this email to 10 people and you'll see something great run across your screen." or "_____ will happen if you send on this e-mail." None of it is true - IT ISN'T GOING TO HAPPEN (could be why we haven't won the lottery?).

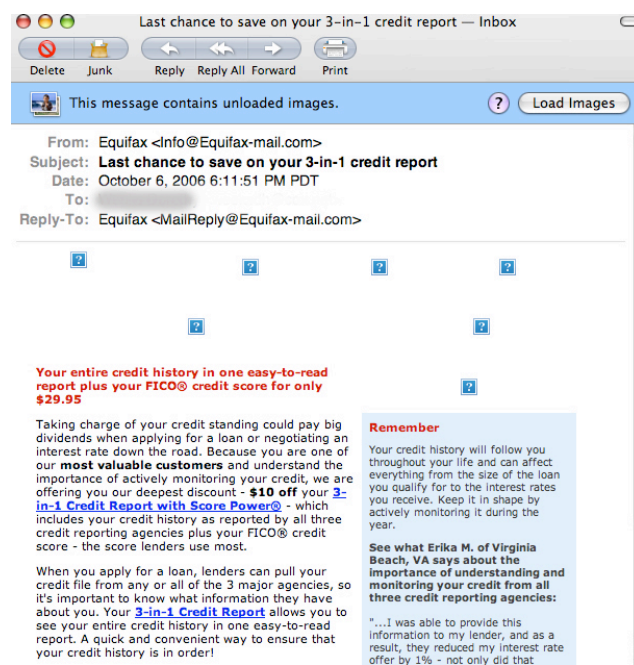
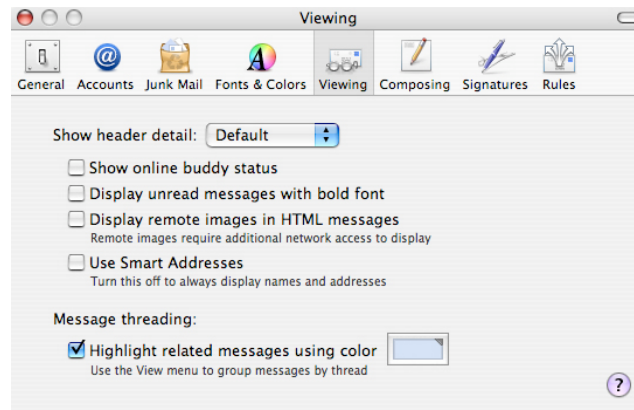
(7) Before you forward an "Amber Alert," or a "Virus Alert," or some of the others floating around nowadays, check them out before you forward them. Most of them are junk mail that's been circling the net for YEARS! Just about everything you receive in an email that is in question can be checked out at Snopes. Just go to www.snopes.com. This is a fascinating website. You can learn so much browsing through it. "Urban Legends" are examined and labeled true, false, etc. It's really easy to find out what's true or not. If it's not, please don't pass it on.

(8) One other thing to take care of: Don't forget to UNCHECK a certain box in Mail preferences under Viewing. If you uncheck "Display remote images in HTML messages," you'll increase your privacy. If there are remote images that show up as ? in boxes, you can easily open them by clicking "load images" in the upper right of the email. Just be sure you really want to communicate with the sender.

Some junk mail has been going around that has nothing in the subject line, and a blank message. Several of the MUG members have been getting these. It might have a tiny one-pixel white image

in the message that alerts the sender that he/she has reached a valid email address—YOURS!

Unfortunately, this particular spam mail cannot easily be labeled "junk" because there is so little information to trigger the Junk Filter.



So please, in the future, let's stop the junk mail and the viruses (which can be forwarded to Windows users) even though they don't affect Mac users.

Finally, here's an idea . . . Let's send this information to everyone we know, but ask people to strip your address off before sending it on! This is something that SHOULD be forwarded!



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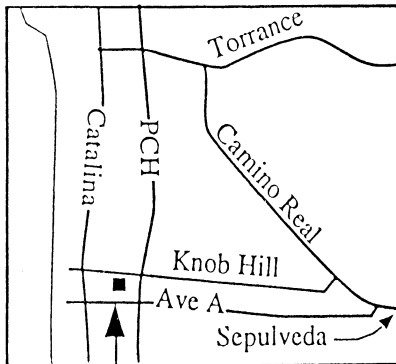
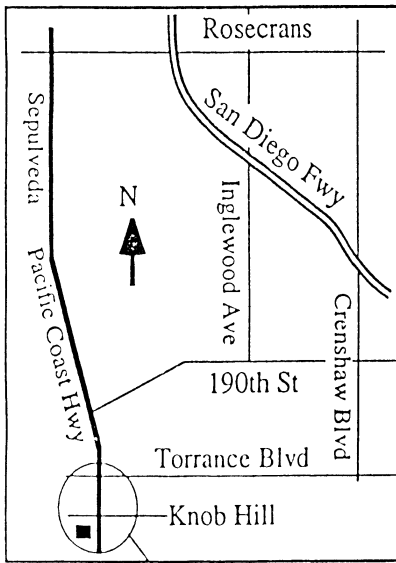
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THIS MONTH'S MEETING

Wednesday October 25th, 2006 7:30PM
320 Knob Hill, Redondo Beach
(see map at left for directions)

Our October 25th Meeting Details:

Did you read Bob Brooks' front page piece on Skype? Did it pique your interest? LJ Palmer will be sharing lots more on how this fantastic new technology can open up your phoning possibilities. Bring your questions and be ready to enter the world of internet phoning!
Also, it's Sign-up Night for all who need help getting on our great MUG eGroup. Don't miss this opportunity!

And Of Course:

Come early (6:30) for Beginners Q & A Sessions! We now have two: one in the kitchen area hosted by LJ Palmer and the other in the main hall hosted by Bob Brooks & Jim Pernal.

November Meeting Details:

Jim Mitchell with Help Desk

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

Note from the Editor

Would you like to help keep our SBAMUG going? There are many ways, from occasional to ongoing, that you can help out. If you can, please contact-- Glen Terry at: geterry@earthlink.net or other board members.

Any comments or ideas for future meetings? Write it down and drop it in our Suggestion Box at our monthly meetings!

Don't forget we have internet access at our meetings. Bring your wifi capable laptop with you when you show up for our next meeting!



SBAMUG Membership Application

South Bay Apple Mac 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
P. O. Box 432
Redondo Beach,
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