A Monthly CUPFUL for South Bay Apple Mac User Group Members

The Most Fun Things You Can Do With an Amazon Echo or Google Home,
by Ann-Marie Alcántara

Smart home devices will tell you the weather and answer trivia questions, sure, but they can do so much more. Try these tips to streamline your day, relax a little or just have some fun. To get the most of these Alexa commands, you'll need to enable the skills from the Alexa Skills store first, and the Google Home commands and settings have to be enabled in your Google Home mobile app.

Automate your daily routine

Both the Google Assistant and Amazon Alexa offer a "routines" skill, which automates certain tasks based on a single command. For example, you can ask your Amazon Echo or Google Home to tell you the weather and what's on your calendar for the day, after saying "Alexa, start my day" or "Hey Google, good morning." With this particular routine, there are nine actions the Google Home can perform, including reading the day's top stories or local news, and then transition into six other actions like playing your favorite music or a preferred podcast to finish up your "morning." On the Echo, there are four basic options, but you can add eight more to lengthen the routine.

The Google Home has six ready-to-go routines that you can customize in the Google Home app, and the Amazon Echo has one. You can also create completely custom routines on both devices.

Give your household an intercom

Parents, this one might be a lifesaver — for your voice: Both products let you broadcast an announcement across other devices in your home. So, if you have an Echo in the kitchen, living room and a child's bedroom, you can say, "Alexa, announce that dinner is ready," and Alexa will repeat the message on each device in your voice — no skill necessary.

With the Google Home and Google Home Mini, you can do a similar command: "Hey Google, tell everyone it's time to go." If you're an iOS user and want to do this but you're away from home, you'll have to separately download the Google Assistant app (Android users already have the Assistant enabled if they have the latest version of the operating system).

September 25 Meeting
Mesh Routers

The main presentation, by Kent McDonald, will explain the rationale for using mesh routers to provide improved Wi-Fi coverage in your home. An actual installation with a single access point in a large, five bedroom home is described. The Wi-Fi signal strength is mapped throughout the house to see where the signal strength is inadequate. A mobile-phone app is used to map the signal strength. A mesh network is then configured to provide good signals everywhere in the house. A three-node mesh network is selected and installed; then the new network is mapped to show that the Wi-Fi signal is indeed strong everywhere inside the house with the new equipment.

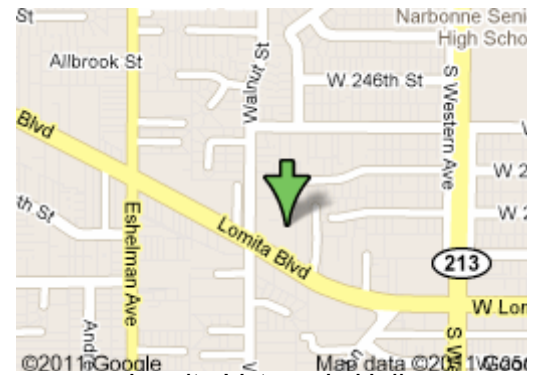Don't miss the meeting! See page 2 for details.

IN THIS ISSUE

Welcome to the SBAMUG
South Bay Apple Mac User Group

Members,friends and colleagues are invited to attend our monthly meetings (usually the last Wed. of the month). The $35 annual membership dues entitle you to receive this monthly newsletter by mail or online, plus many more benefits (page 8). To become a member or get more info please visit our website sbamug.com

Meetings: Lomita Veteran's Hall,
1865 Lomita Blvd, Lomita
Mail: PO Box 432, Redondo Beach, CA
90277-0432
Phone: (310) 644-3315
Email: info@sbamug.com

Lomita Veteran's Hall,
1865 Lomita Blvd, Lomita

SBAMUG Monthly Calendar
Sept 25: Mesh Routers
Oct 30: Reunion (Genealogy)

SBAMUG Meeting Format:
6:30—7:30 p.m. Questions & Answers and Sharing: *Everyone* is welcome, beginners encouraged
7:30—7:50 p.m. 'iSocial' – shoot the Mac breeze with others over a cookie*
7:50—8:00 p.m. Announcements
8:00—9:00 p.m Program
Refreshments provided; donations appreciated!
Submit suggestions for topics or speakers, or articles, ideas & original artwork for this newsletter to pjmyerz@gmail.com by the last Wednesday of each month. Articles may be edited to fit space.

Other Meetings:
- Tue (6 days after last Wed) - SBAMUG Core Group, 7:30 pm. Join FaceTime SBAMUG community, or email: info@sbamug.com.
- 3rd Thu every other month - InDesign User Group, 7pm at various locations in LA area, laidug.com
- Last Sat. each month - Northrop Grumman-Ham Radio & Computer Swap Meet, 7--11:30 a.m. Meet at SE corner of Marine/Aviation Blvd, Redondo Beach
- Los Angeles Portable Users Group: Mac OS X, iPhone, iPod, MacBook, etc., .lapug.org/

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USPS Liaison: CW Mitchell
Refreshments: Arnold Silver/Andy Paroczai

Membership Report – 85 members!
Please wear membership card as your name tag - you may notice your first name is in larger letters on your card - so it can be used as a name tag at the meetings.:)
Welcome New Members*:*
Thank You Member Renewals: Don Barnes, Jan Chesne, Nancie Silver, Barry Henson, John Jensen, Glen Terry
If your name is not spelled right or your expiration date is wrong, contact cwmitchell@sbamug.com for correction. Or contact CW for everything membership, dues and benefits. Please watch for your renewal letter, then sign and date it and return it with $35 check (in enclosed self-addressed envelope) or bring letter with payment (cash, check, PayPal) to meeting.

SBAMUG September 2019 Shareware

This is the September shareware article. Six items this month. Three of them start with the letters Mac; had to think a bit to alphabetize them in the article.

MacDive 2.11.3: Program downloads digital logs from underwater diving computers. Claims to support over 50 models. Lets you add notes. MAC OS 10.11+. $25.00. https://www.mac-dive.com

MacFamilyTree 9.0.5: Latest version of this genealogy program adds feature updates and bug fixes. Mac OS 10.13+. $29.99. https://www.syniumsoftware.com/macfamilytree

Mactracker 7.8: Useful database of all the Macs, iPhones, iPods, iPads, printers, monitors, etc. This update includes the newest Apple products. OSX 10.10+. Free. https://mactracker.ca

My Wine Storage 2.7.0: Program that lets you manage your wine cellar. Enter minimum quantities for a wine and get a message when it is exceeded. Fields for price, location, serving temperature, winery and the like. OSX 10.10+. $5.99 at the Mac App store.

SVG Converter 3.0: A simple tool designed to convert SVG files to PDF, PNG, JPEG or TIFF. SVG are scalable vector graphics, often found on the web. OS 10.10+. Free. https://www.ohanaware.com

VLC 3.0.8: Multimedia player that can handle a great many video and audio formats. OSX 10.7.5+. Free. https://www.videolan.org

See you at the September meeting.

Jim Pernal PD Editor

Internet Slang: NSFW

It is imperative to roll with the latest slang if you want to sit with the cool kids in the cafeteria. This month's item is **NSFW:** This term can be found all over the internet and stands for "not safe for work" or "not suitable for work". It is used when online content is not suitable for the workplace. For instance, articles that have nude or graphic images normally contain "NSFW" in the headline.

Home Networking

This is an overview of a complex topic. If there are areas in your house with poor wifi signal strength, you could buy a new router, or add an extender to your current router. If you have a larger house and/or many devices to connect, you may want to consider a mesh network. First, two definitions:

Wireless access points, or WAPs, work in partnership with a wireless router – their primary function is to extend the reach and speed of an existing wifi network. They connect to a wireless network through either a wired Ethernet connection or by joining it wirelessly. Wireless access points are particularly effective in situations where you need to increase wifi coverage in multiple areas: they're completely scalable, so increasing your wifi network's reach and speed is simply a matter of adding more WAPs. Wireless access points are also ideal for people who have wifi "dead spots" in their home.

Mesh networking devices represent an entirely different method of boosting a wifi network's speed and range that is often confused with wireless access points. A mesh network is one in which multiple identical broadcast nodes work together to provide wifi coverage – every node is involved in every data relay, providing it to your devices as quickly as possible. Mesh networks are considered more resilient than networks using wireless access points (if one node has a problem, the others self-correct), but because most mesh networking kits include multiple nodes, they're significantly more expensive than a single wireless access point. Mesh networks are ideal for larger homes or homes with multiple low-coverage areas.

Several MUG members (including Glen Terry) use the Eero mesh network equipment and are satisfied with its performance. Dr Dave Nathanson recommends the Ubiquiti Unifi Ap-AC Lite - Wireless Access Point.

Other home networking products include the Netgear Orbi, Plume, Luma, Google Wi-fi and Linksys Velop. The cost of most of these is in the $300 - $400 range. For further reading, see

• WAP's: http://bestreviews.com/best-wireless-access-points

• Eero vs Ubiquty: https://justclickappliances.com/eero-vs-ubiquity-amplifi-hd-differences-explained

• How to set up a home network (with diagrams): https://stevessmarthomeguide.com/build-build-home-network

Call anyone at any time — free

You might've heard of this but were dubious whether hands-free calling was actually possible, or easy. The good news: It is. The so-so news: There are a few steps you need to take before your hands-free calling dreams come true.

On Amazon Echo devices, you first have to sync your contacts in the Alexa app. Then, simply ask Alexa to call any of these people. A bonus feature on Echo devices is that you can call a friend or family member on their Echo device, like an Echo Spot or any device with Alexa installed. To enable this, both you and the person you're trying to contact must have Alexa Calling and Messaging turned on. Then, you can call anyone from your mobile contacts. If that person has signed up, he or she will get a phone call on the Echo device or in the Amazon Alexa app.

With the Google Home, first link your Google account to your Google Home, turn on "personal results" and then sync your contacts. You're ready to go, and you can ask Google to call anyone in your contacts list. You can also set hands-free calling to reveal your number when you call, so people can know it's you and not an unfamiliar proxy number used to connect the call. (The Echo offers the same capability.) For now, both devices don't support calling emergency services, so no "Alexa, call 911" for you.

Shop with your voice

You may already know you can add items to a shopping list with both the Amazon Echo and the Google Home, then pull it up to review when you go shopping later. What you may not know is you can shop directly from both devices. They work with takeout restaurants like Pizza Hut and Dominos and traditional retailers like Target and Walmart.

On the Google Home, you can order through Google Express, which works with retailers like Walmart and Target. Just say something like "O.K. Google, add brownie mix to my cart" and the Google Assistant will respond and let you know what's been added and from which retailer (so you know exactly where it's coming from if you want to change it later). You can edit your list via the app.

On the Amazon Echo, predictably you can shop only at Amazon. Also, while anyone with an Amazon account can shop by voice and add items to the Amazon cart, Amazon Prime Members get a special benefit. They can ask the smart assistant, "Alexa, what are your deals?" to hear exclusive deals just for them — and deals that are available only through voice shopping year-round.

If you're learning a new language, or just encounter a word you'd love to translate into another language, both devices can help.

Currently, Google Home works with 28 languages, including Italian, Spanish, Chinese and Russian. It can translate by voice if you ask "Hey Google, what's the word for (word) in (language)," and if you prefer to immerse yourself in a language, you can tell Google Home to communicate with you only in the language of your choosing. If you're not ready for immersion, you can add multiple languages to Google Home so it will work with any one it hears.

The Amazon Echo, for its part, can translate words and phrases from English to more than 30 languages with the Translated skill. After enabling it, say, "Alexa, open Translated," and then follow it up by asking how to say a word or phrase in a different language.

Take a deep breath

Need a moment to yourself? Try meditating or relaxing with both devices with a few free, guided meditations from Headspace. On Google, you can say, "Hey Google, talk to Headspace"; on Alexa, request "Alexa, open Headspace." If you're a subscriber, you can continue a meditation from your phone onto your device. If you want general meditation content, you can say something along the lines of "Alexa, help me relax," or "O.K. Google, help me meditate."

Both devices can also help you calm down with commands like "O.K. Google, help me relax," and sounds like rain falling will play — or white noise if you're using it to go to sleep. The Echo is similar, but you can pick and choose what types of sounds you want to hear from the skills store. Google can also play "sleep sounds," which are really lullabies meant for children, while the Echo offers white or ambient noise. Just say "Alexa, help me sleep" for options.

Have a deeper conversation

Sure, these devices can play music and add items to your cart, but it's a little annoying to start every single request with "Alexa" or "O.K. Google." Thankfully, Amazon and Google realized this. On the Google Home, the "Continued Conversation" feature allows you to ask your device a question, and the microphone stays on for eight additional seconds to see if you'll ask a follow-up. (You do need to enable this in the settings of the Google Home app, as the feature is turned off by default.) The Amazon Echo also has the feature, except Amazon calls it "Follow-up mode" and you also have to turn it on in the app before using it.

Google Home-only features worth trying

Google's later start in the smart home arena wasn't necessarily a bad thing. The extra time allowed it to come up with some truly useful exclusive features. For example, if you download and use the Google Assistant app in addition to Google Home, you can ask Google to remind you to do something at a certain location. So, if you need to buy milk at the grocery store, you can say "Hey Google, remind me to buy milk at the grocery store," and as soon as you're near your preferred store (which Google will ask you to specify), your phone will let you know what you need. And if you're in the mood for a nice story at the end of a long workday, just say

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"Hey Google, tell me something good," and Google Assistant will read some "feel-good" stories.

Amazon Echo-only features to enable

Amazon's focus in the smart home space has long been less about automation or routines and more about who you are as a person. For example, the seven-minute workout skill will walk you through a quick, high-intensity workout just by saying, "Start seven-minute workout." If you have an Echo Show or Spot, both of which have LCD displays, you'll also see images walking you through some exercises.

Another example is "Alexa Donations," where with an easy "Alexa, I want to make a donation," you can donate $5 to $5,000 to the charity or cause of your choice. At the moment, 154 nonprofits work with Amazon and Alexa Donations to make it possible.

With these new commands, you and your home should be on the way to becoming smarter — and more useful. Sure, these devices can play music and set timers, but these tips can help you get even more of your money's worth.

Read the full article at: https://www.nytimes.com/2018/09/19/smarter-living/fun-useful-things-amazon-echo-alexa-google-home.html?

Can You Draw This? Of Course You Can,
by J. D. Biersdorfer

"Any one who can learn to write, can learn to draw," John Gadsby Chapman wrote in his 19th-century instruction manual, "The American Drawing-Book." This can-do sentiment dates back to an era when lead pencils and chalky pastels were standard. Today's artists — and wannabe artists — also have the option of easy-to-use digital gadgets.

If you mainly doodle, your device's notes app may suffice. But if you're serious about sketching in pixels as a way to relax, to focus and to express your creativity, a responsive art app with a suite of precision tools is a more fulfilling choice. Here's how to get started, even if you don't know how to draw (yet).

Step 1: Select Your Stylus

If you want fine lines, you'll need to ditch your fingertip for a stylus. But not all styluses are the same. Nor are their prices. Inexpensive models use simple capacitive touch to interact with the screen, and pricier styluses have wireless connections and pressure-sensitive tips. Just make sure your choice works with your device.

If you want designed compatibility, Microsoft has its $100 Surface Pen for its Surface tablets, and Google's $99 Pixelbook Pen is made for its Pixelbook. Have an iPad? Wirecutter, a product review site owned by The New York Times, recommends the Apple Pencil; prices range from about $99 to $129, depending on the Pencil

model. Another option, the Adonit Mark sells for just $10.

Step 2: Choose a Drawing App

Autodesk SketchBook is free for iOS, Adobe offers several options and Procreate ($5 for iPhone, $10 for iPad) is powerful and well-reviewed.

Step 3: Dive In

Some drawing apps can feel overwhelming at first, especially if you're new to making digital art. Look for an integrated tutorial to point you to the pen, brush, shape and color tools tucked under the menu icons. Then just start freestyling with your stylus.

It may take a while to get the hang of the software, but be patient and allow yourself time to explore and experiment with your digital art supplies. (Need more help? Jump to Step 5.)

Step 4: Take Art Lessons

If you have the tools but fear you lack the talent, let technology be your teacher. Look for "drawing lessons" in the Education section of your app store to get you started with the fundamentals and build your fine motor skills. Shadow Draw (free, with new lessons as in-app purchases) for the iPad and Apple Pencil is one program that teaches drawing forms by having you follow along the animated pen strokes of another artist in an updated take on the "copying the masters" approach.

Step 5: Read the Friendly Manual

Feeling lost in a screen of cryptic menus and complex tools? Look for support-site guides that walk you though less-obvious tasks — like varying the line weight of the pencil tool, working with image layers or adjusting the program's sensitivity to the stylus. Autodesk Sketchbook and Procreate have extensive guides available. The web is full of video tutorials for art apps and drawing instruction. And, if you really want to go old school, there's a downloadable digital copy of "The American Drawing-Book" in the Internet Archive.

Read the full article at: https://www.nytimes.com/2019/09/04/technology/personaltech/how-to-draw-with-apps.html

iPhone Ringer Not Working? Here's The Real Fix!, by Kelly Hunt

If you're constantly on the move or super busy throughout the day, you know how important it is to hear texts and calls when they come through. However, even though you double-checked to make sure your ringer is on, you're still missing calls! In this article, I'll explain what to do when your iPhone ringer is not working!

First, Check The Basics

While this may seem like a no-brainer, check to make sure the Ring / Silent switch on the side of your iPhone is

pulled toward the display. If it's pushed towards the back, your iPhone is set on silent. Pull it forward to set it to ring.

Once you're sure that it is set to ring, make sure the volume is turned up. You can do this in Settings or by using the volume buttons on the side of your iPhone.

If you want to use the volume buttons to adjust the volume, make sure the volume bar that comes on the screen says Ringer when you press them. If it says Volume, head to Settings to adjust the ringer volume.

1. Go to Settings.
2. Tap on Sounds & Haptics.
3. Make sure "Change with Buttons" is switched on.
4. You can use the volume bar on the screen to adjust the ringer volume or the volume buttons now.

Turn Off Do Not Disturb

If your ringer is on, but Do Not Disturb is also turned on, you won't receive notifications for calls or texts. The easiest way to know if your iPhone is in Do Not Disturb mode is by looking for the moon in the upper right-hand corner of the display.

If you have an iPhone X or newer, you'll know see moon icon when you open Control Center.

To turn off Do Not Disturb, open Settings and tap Do Not Disturb. If the switch is turned on like above, Do Not Disturb is on. You can tap the switch to turn it off.

You can also turn off Do Not Disturb in Control Center by tapping on the moon icon. You'll know Do Not Disturb is on when the icon is lit up in Control Center.

Disconnect From Bluetooth

It's possible that your iPhone is connected to a Bluetooth device and that your calls and texts are ringing there. To disconnect it, do this:

1. Go to Settings.
2. Tap Bluetooth.
3. Check to see if you're connected to any devices.
4. If you are, tap on blue i to its right.
5. Tap Disconnect.

Reset All Settings

If none of the above worked for you, let's try to reset all settings. This will reset everything in the Settings app back to factory defaults, which can often fix a deeper software issue. To do this, follow these instructions:

1. Go to Settings.
2. Tap General.
3. Scroll down and tap Reset.
4. Tap Reset All Settings.

https://www.payetteforward.com/iphone-ringer-not-working-fix/

Raspberry Pi as a Web Server, by Ed Tobias

This review was written and recorded by NosillaCastaway and personal friend of Steve and mine, Ed Tobias. We met him for coffee this week and he showed off his website www.edtobias.com, which was awesome, but how he built it was even cooler!

I want to describe how I used a Raspberry pi as my web server.

First, why did I need a web server to start with? Well, we take a lot of family vacations, and our extended family back home likes to stay in touch while we're gone and share in our experiences. Originally we just took pictures and shared them via email. Then I started using the Photos app's sharing feature to share our pictures. As time went on I also started a journal of our travels and wanted to share that as well.

It finally occurred to me that writing a travel blog seemed the easy solution for sharing both the journal and photos with family members. It also served as sort of a memory book for those of us that were on the vacation – years later we could go back and remember the fun we had during a previous adventure. So to create a travel blog I would have to have a web page. I have written web pages before so I was somewhat familiar with writing the html.

I didn't want to pay for a web service however, so I created a web server on my iMac and registered a domain with Hover. I used the MAMP web server construct (Mac, Apache, MySQL, and PHP) I think Allison has talked about that in the past. I could have also added WordPress to this mix, but I wanted to do it on my own from scratch.

It took a little doing, but I finally got my web server up and running – and I was quite proud of it. Then I started thinking – What would happen if my server got compromised? I learned how to set up a secure web site using https, but I still wasn't all that comfortable with running the server connected to the outside world on the same machine that I do my banking.

I wanted to move my server to separate machine, but didn't want to by a mac just for that one small job – enter the Raspberry pi.

Also famous as a delicious dessert, this Raspberry pi is a small circuit board about the size of a deck of playing cards. It costs $35 and contains a powerful CPU, four USB ports, bluetooth, wifi, a HDMI output, and is powered by a micro USB plug that you could connect to any charger strong enough to charge an iPad.

It was created long ago as an educational tool for kids – It also has a general purpose I/O port so it can be programmed to drive servos for building a robot army that you've always wanted.

It runs on a version of Linux called Raspbian. I have connected it up to a TV via the HDMI and plugged in a mouse, keyboard and external hard drive. The operating system even comes with a very useable office suite as well which is pretty powerful. It really is like a $35 Mac mini.

It seemed the perfect solution to my cheap web server needs. Unfortunately no one has come up with "RAMP" package for Raspbian for use as a web server construct, so I had to install Apache, MySQL, and PHP separately – but there is lots of help on the web and it wasn't particularly difficult. When I initially got it running, I used a USB thumb drive to store all the server software, the OS, and my web pages, photos and videos. It worked fairly well but was a little glitchy on serving up the videos, so I switched it out for a old SSD that I plugged into a drive toaster I had lying around.

So now I have my own web server and it is isolated from my personal data and it is inexpensive. And if it gets hacked or damaged, I can just throw it away and buy a new one, after all it's only $35. I want to thank Bart and Allison for the Programming by Stealth series – that has really helped me improve my family web site.

There are so many other things you can do with the Raspberry Pi and I encourage you to find out more about them at their web site at raspberrypi.org.

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CW Mitchell (signature)
Sept 10 2019

I certify that all information furnished on this form is true and complete. I understand that anyone who furnishes false or misleading information on this form or who omits material or information requested on the form may be subject to criminal sanctions (including fines and imprisonment) and/or civil sanctions (including civil penalties).

SOUTH BAY APPLE MAC USER GROUP
P.O. BOX 432
REDONDO BEACH
CA 90277-0432

Join, Renew or Give a Gift of a SBAMUG Membership!

For only $35/year you get:
- Monthly meeting program
- Get help from our experts via our Email Group
- Monthly newsletter (We publish 11 issues per year!)
- Use our Wiki
- Free web space & e-mail on our server
- Build your own website
- Create your own blog
- Special merchant discounts $$$
- Occasional swaps, free software, raffles

http://www.sbamug.com/join.html
Or, contact Membership Chair
CW Mitchell at cwmitchell@sbamug.com

SBAMUG Membership Application

South Bay Apple Macintosh User Group provides you with a local source of shared knowledge & experience through monthly meetings, trainings & monthly newsletter.

Individual & family membership: $35/year payable to SBAMUG

☐ **New Member**   ☐ **Member Renewal**

Name:_____

Address:_____

City:_____

State:_____ Zip:_____

Phone: (_____)_____

Email Address:_____

What are your computer interests?

_____

Devices you use most:_____

Current level of Mac expertise

_____ Beginner   _____ Intermediate   _____ Advanced

How did you hear about SBAMUG?

_____

I would like to help with the club. Please contact me at:

_____

Comments:_____

_____

_____

Signature:_____

Date: _____

Bring your Application and Fee to our General Meeting at Lomita Veteran's Hall
or Mail to our PO Box (see page 2 for our address)

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