

Colorado Springs Metro Area

## **Dec 2024**

Volume 39

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Plus look for some "Joy of Tech" cartoons

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Dec Meeting: Monday December 9



A Publication of the Silicon Mountain Macintosh User Group

# Find My Will Let You Share Lost Item Locations with Anyone

### by GLENN FLEISHMAN

AirTags and other Find My items have been a boon for finding mislaid objects and tracking down thieves—most recently of <u>political lawn signs</u>. Apple aims to make it even easier to find stuff with the help of others with a new kind of secure, shareable link available starting in iOS 18.2, iPadOS 18.2, and macOS 15.2 Sequoia, which are now in public beta and will likely ship in a few weeks.

In a sign of Apple's changing attitude toward not-yet-released features, the company <u>issued a</u> <u>press release</u> on 11 November 2024 describing the in-beta feature, Share Item Location.

### Share a Link That's Temporary and Secure

Starting in iOS 17, iPadOS 17, and macOS 14 Sonoma, you can share your Find My items with up to five people. Those people must have iCloud accounts connected to their email addresses and must use the Find My app on an iPhone, iPad, or Mac, or the Find Items app on an Apple Watch. (iCloud.com doesn't let you view or share Find My items.)

Apple's new Share Item Location feature extends this sharing functionality without requiring an email address or the other party to have an Apple device. You also don't have to add someone as a shared user for an item when you would need to remove them later—this feature is all about temporary access. Share Item Location generates a secure link that requires only a Web browser to access and that you can pass along using any standard link-sharing method, such as via Messages, email, or AirDrop.

The idea is that you can enlist others in a search and get help from a friend, a colleague, employees at a business, or, soon, an airline baggage handling department. The link is temporary, a good attribute when sharing with people you don't know but trust with the information for a short period of time.

Each time you invoke the feature, Apple generates a unique secure link. There's no danger

of reuse—the link expires after seven days or once you "find" the device. "Finding the device" means you come within Bluetooth range of the item in question (i.e., you walk up to a bag containing your AirTag while holding your iPhone) or the item comes within Bluetooth range of one of your linked devices (someone brings a stolen bicycle back to your house close enough to your Mac). You can also manually turn off the link at any time.



# SMMUG Info

Silicon Summit is a bi-monthly publication of the Silicon Mountain Macintosh User Group, Inc.

Newsletter Editor Linnea McDonald

Web Masters Jeff Jensen, Ralph Woodard

Apple Ambassador Mark Griffith

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### **OFFICERS**

President Jim Johnson info@smmug.org

Vice President Mark Griffith info@smmug.org

Treasurer Skip Mundy info@smmug.org

Secretary Mike Marus info@smmug.org

### **Directors at Large**

Jeff Jensen info@smmug.org George Kahler info@smmug.org

Sharon Romero info@smmug.org

Dave St. Andre info@smmug.org

Pam Wilson info@smmug.org

Ralph Woodard info@smmug.org

## SIG News

There is no SIG meeting in December.

The Saturday SMMUG Special Interest Group (SIG) will meet from 10:00 AM to 12:00 Noon, Saturday, January 11, 2025, via a ZOOM video conference.

An email containing the Meeting ID and password will be sent to all members.

The January SIG will focus on Photos Editing

All are invited, but new users are especially encouraged to attend this meeting. Bring your tips and tricks, questions and suggestions.

Go to: <u>https://www.smmug.org/</u> <u>meeting-info</u> to find the instructions for attending our ZOOM meetings.

For more information about Special Interest Groups (SIGs), go to the

Future SIG Zoom Meetings: Feb 8, 2025 - Focus Mode



Scan this QR code to be taken to our SMMUG web site

### **A**DVERTISING

You can advertise your business or service through the Silicon Summit.

\$10
\$15
\$25
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A 10% discount is applied for ads that run in two or more issues, except for inserts.

Sponsoring Memberships are also available to merchants who want to see their business name and address listed on the front page. Sponsoring Memberships are \$100 for one year.

## MEETING DATES

Our regular monthly meetings are on the second Monday of every month. Upcoming meeting dates are as follows:

December 9, 2024 - **Election**! January 13, 2025 February 10, 2025 March 10, 2025 - *Zoom only* April 14, 2025 May 12, 2025

## SMMUG GENERAL MEETING

Most General Member Meetings are "hybrid" in-person and Zoom meetings.

In December SMMUG will conduct the hybrid Annual Business Meeting and Holiday Party at the Al-Kaly Mule Train venue.

See a map at this link:

### https://bit.ly/3Vif8Lu

## Please bring your beverage of choice. and food

to share for the Potluck if you are attending in person.



2025 membership dues will be accepted at this meeting.

### December 9, 2024 - Potluck

- 5:30 Mule Train doors open
- 5:45 ish Potluck & Social
- 6:30 ish Q&A
- 7:00 Annual Meeting & Election
- 7:15 ish More Q&A and Social

### Future Meetings - East Library & over Zoom

January - How to use Focus / Setting up a Recovery Contact

**February** - Accessories for connecting third-party devices to Apple products

### Continued from page 1

### Improve the Ease of Retrieving Lost Airline Baggage

Apple's announcement says that "in coming months," more than 15 airlines will provide a way to add the secure link to a baggage form for mishandled or delayed luggage. The only major US airlines in the initial announcement were Delta and United, though Apple says more will be added over time. The airline sharing system will be slightly different, as Apple said it will have layers of authentication and safety that airlines will have to use to ensure only a small number of people can access the link while it's active.

Even better, Apple said that Share Item Location will eventually be built into a global baggage-tracing system, WorldTracer by SITA, that is used by over 500 airlines and "ground handlers" (baggage firms contracted by airlines) at over 2800 airports worldwide. Conceivably, that could mean you would share a link to tags in your luggage when you check in for a flight, so that if there are problems in transit, the baggage handlers can locate your luggage more easily. And perhaps you'd get a text that your bag had arrived at a baggage carousel? There are many potential uses.

### Create a Sharable Link to a Find My Item

It's a simple process to create a secure Share Item Location link:

- 1. In the Find My app, tap or click the Items button.
- 2. Select a Find My item; on a Mac, also click the Info button next to its name.
- 3. Tap or click Share Item Location.
- 4. The dialog notes that sharing the item's location will also reveal your item's serial number and either your email address or phone number associated with its paired Apple Account. Tap or click Continue. (If the item is nearby, you will be told you can't share a link.)
- 5. In the resulting dialog that says Item Location Ready To Share, tap or click Share Link and choose a sharing method like Messages or Mail. On the Mac, you can also click the blue copy icon next to the URL or Control-click the URL and choose Copy to put the link in the clipboard.
- 6. Return to the same location to copy the link again or turn it off before it automatically expires.



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# Don't miss out on the BIG January door prizes...

Renew your SMMUG membership NOW!

\$30 gets you a year of great advice, interesting programs, door prizes and fun parties. Bring check or exact cash to the December meeting, or fill out and mail the form on the last page of this newsletter.

# Adobe Offers Cyber Monday Special on Creative Cloud "All Apps" Subscription

Courtesy of SMMUG Secretary MIKE MARUS - from the MacRumors website

Check out this link to the all the Adobe offers for Cyber Monday. The special pricing runs through **December 8**. Note that you pay the 50% off price, but must subscribe to an <u>annual plan</u>, committing you to pay for 12 months.

### https://bit.ly/Adobeoffers

Specifically, there are three separate deals on Creative Cloud All Apps for Black Friday this year: one for Individuals, one for Students and Teachers, and one for Business. Starting with **Individuals**, you can get this subscription for **\$29.98/month**, down from \$59.99/month (\$329.74/year billed upfront, down from \$659.88/year).

Additionally, **Businesses** can get Creative Cloud All Apps for **\$44.99/month**, down from \$89.99/month; and **Students and Teachers** can get the platform for just **\$15.97/month**, down from \$59.99/month. Remember that these discounts are for your first year only of Creative Cloud All Apps, and after it ends your subscription will revert to its original price, unless you cancel.

Adobe's Creative Cloud platform is a collection of more than 20 desktop and mobile apps that provide services for photography, design, video, and more. This includes Photoshop, Illustrator, Premiere Pro, Acrobat Pro, and many more. Your subscription to Creative Cloud All Apps grants you access to each of these apps.

# SMMUG Member Bits & Bytes

• **SMMUG is looking for a webmaster.** This volunteer job requires a in-depth knowledge of Word Press. The webmaster will report to the Board, but does not need to be a member of SMMUG. Please let one of the Board officers know IF YOU KNOW ANYONE who might be interested in the job. It could be a high school or college student who would like to bolster a resume.



• Treasurer's Report for December 2024: Funds in the Checking, Savings and PayPal account total \$2,754.28. Member dues for 2025 are payable now & due before the Jan 13 meeting to be eligible for door prizes.

# Apple Dropping Support for iCloud Backups on Devices Running iOS9 or earlier

Courtesy of SMMUG Secretary MIKE MARUS

Starting next month, making a device backup over <u>iCloud</u> will require iOS 9 or later, Apple has informed some customers via email. New backups for iPhones and iPads running iOS 8 or earlier will no longer be supported, and Apple will delete all existing iCloud backups of those devices as well.

Apps and data stored on an <u>iPhone</u> or <u>iPad</u> running iOS 8 or earlier will not be affected, and Apple says that customers can still manually back up their devices to a Mac or a Windows PC.

These iCloud backup changes will be made on December 18, 2024, so customers who have a device running iOS 8 or earlier should update to the latest available version of iOS if possible in order to continue to be able to back up their devices.

According to Apple, iCloud backups for older devices are being discontinued in order to "more closely align" with Apple's "published minimum software requirements." With iOS 9, Apple <u>adopted CloudKit</u> for iCloud backups rather than the prior system, and it seems that the company is now discontinuing the old backup system.

Apps and data stored on an <u>iPhone</u> or <u>iPad</u> running iOS 8 or earlier will not be affected, and Apple says that customers can still manually back up their devices to a Mac or a Windows PC.



# Gary Rosenzweig's Tips

Gary is a good friend of SMMUG and has been a General Meeting presenter several times. He has graciously given SMMUG permission to reference some of his content in our newsletter.

Each wonderful video on MacMost is brought to you ad-free thanks to its supporters! Learn about the Patreon campaign and find out how you can join Club MacMost! For \$5 per month you can become a member. Members of Club MacMost have access to member-only videos, extra posts & tips, and get discounts on MacMost courses.

Gary keeps a list of his recommendations for Backup programs, Software, Microphones, Displays and Accessories at: <u>https://macmost.com/recommendations?awt\_a=2P.a&awt\_l=aitain&awt\_m=K1F44ZIS4h8l.a</u>

Here's a list of descriptions and links to some of Gary's recent videos, available to all, that you may find interesting.

### Using the Built-In Mac Password Manager

The Passwords app on your Mac allows you to create, store and recall strong unique passwords to make all of your online accounts more secure. Learn more about this news feature from Gary's video.

https://macmost.com/using-the-built-in-mac-password-manager.html? awt\_a=2P.a&awt\_l=aitain&awt\_m=I.DC8uhh0h8I.a&nlclx

### Notes on the New Mac Background Replacement Feature (MacOS Sequoia)

The Background Replacement Feature doesn't just work in FaceTime. If you have an Apple webcam, you can use it to record video as well

https://macmost.com/notes-on-the-new-mac-background-replacement-feature.html? awt\_a=2P.a&awt\_l=aitain&awt\_m=Ip2UT7vpSh8I.a&nlclx

### **MacOS Sequoia Shortcuts**

Get Gary's keyboard shortcut PDF for MacOS Sequoia at this link:

https://macmost.com/printable-mac-keyboard-shortcut-page-for-macos-sequoia.html



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## How to Schedule Messages on Your iPhone or Mac

Want to send a message at a certain time? Want to write a message but edit it later before sending? Watch this video to find out how to use this new iOS18 / MacOS Sequoia feature.

https://macmost.com/how-to-schedule-messages-on-youriphone-or-mac.html?

awt a=2P.a&awt l=aitain&awt m=I.DC8uhh0h8I.a&nlclx

### **Creating QR codes on Your Mac**

No need to use third-party apps or dubious websites. Watch Gary's video to find out how to create QR codes with a built-in shortcut.

https://macmost.com/creating-qr-codes-on-your-mac.html? awt\_a=2P.a&awt\_l=aitain&awt\_m=J16h3yO5eh8I.a&nlclx

### Record Calls on an iPhone (iOS 18)

Gary shows you how to record a phone call and have it automatically transcribed in Notes.

https://macmost.com/how-to-record-calls-on-aniphone.html?

awt\_a=2P.a&awt\_l=aitain&awt\_m=K3kukp\_2eh8I.a&nlclx

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## Silicon Summit

# Enhance Your Images with Apple's Clean Up Tool in Photos

#### by ADAM ENGST

To my mind, Clean Up is the most impressive Apple Intelligence tool we have now. Introduced in Photos in macOS 15.1 Sequoia, iOS 18.1, and iPadOS 18.1, Clean Up enables you to remove distracting people and objects from the background of photos, replacing them with AI-generated scenery. After you invoke it with the Clean Up button while editing a photo, Clean Up might automatically highlight items you might want to remove, and you can always scrub over or circle an unwanted one to eliminate it.

Object removal capabilities are widespread in other apps. Since I seldom edit photos, I can't compare how well Clean Up works to other tools. To an extent, that's irrelevant—I would never use Photoshop to edit an image or purchase an app purely to remove objects, but I will use Photos. I suspect I'm far from alone.

Also, for snapshots or informal sharing, if Clean Up's results aren't perfect, it doesn't matter—nobody will notice. However, if you're making a large print or sharing in a venue where the image will attract scrutiny, you might want to switch to a professional tool like Photoshop or Lightroom, or ask a friend with one of those tools to help.

Nevertheless, my testing of Clean Up has provided a sense of where it works well, where it's unlikely to succeed, and when its results are more variable than you might expect. It can prove valuable when the objects to be removed are small and cleanly silhouetted. However, it may struggle in busy scenes or when the background is difficult to recreate convincingly.

Finally, note that I've chosen to edit the images below with Clean Up to illustrate what it can and cannot do well, not necessarily to improve the images. A few of the changes improve the photos, but others don't.



### Cleanly Silhouetted Objects

When it's good, Clean Up is very good. When it's bad, it's laughable. It works best when the people or objects you want to remove are relatively small and cleanly silhouetted against an easily faked background. In this photo of me at a crosscountry race, the pedestrians and car on the stone bridge behind me are easily removed, as is the blue course marking flag on the ground. (Ignore the general blurriness of the photo-it was taken at a distance using the Camera+ Action mode as part of a burst, and I had to crop

heavily to make myself the focus of the shot. Apple's ads notwithstanding, even the iPhone 16 Pro is a weak camera for sports photography.)

If you zoom into the right-hand photo and look carefully at where the truck was, you can see that Clean Up didn't do a fabulous job of simulating either the stonework or the leaves. With the stonework, it went a little overboard and replaced pixels that would have been better left alone. In contrast, the leaves are utterly random, but Clean Up introduced an unnatural pattern in the replacement. Regardless, most people wouldn't notice because the edits aren't near the subject of the photo, and the leaves have an unpredictable texture to begin with.

Here's another example (next page) where Clean Up performed well. The original was marred by the child's hat in front of me, and the large metal traffic signal poles and wires also distract from the dragon.

## Silicon Summit



Even though the hat is quite large, it's silhouetted cleanly against the uniform road surface, which Clean Up can easily fake. Removing the hat was easy, but selecting the metal poles and wires took more time. Nevertheless, Clean Up removed them without a trace because they were backed by either a tree or the sky. Even the man standing in front of the pole looks as if his face is in shadow, although closer examination shows that Clean Up removed part of his head. Again, for informal sharing, Clean Up's results are entirely acceptable.

### X Busy Scenes

It can be tempting—even for Clean Up to remove items in the backgrounds of busy scenes. In my experience with photos like the one below, Clean Up struggles when there are multiple overlapping objects or when the background contains complex patterns or textures that are difficult to recreate convincingly. On the left, Clean Up suggested removing the people under the tent in the background, the car to the left, various shadows, and more—Photos highlights them with a shimmering colorful animation to call out its suggestions.

As you can see on the right, when I took all of Clean Up's suggestions, the trees look strange; it added a blur to the right of the silver cup and orange bell, and the area occupied by the car and bystanders on the



left of the photo gets weird. Ironically, the main thing I wanted to remove from the photo was my shadow at the bottom; although Clean Up didn't suggest it for removal, it did a good job when I selected it manually.

### Variable Results

Finally, although this image of Tonya finishing a run at one of our Tuesday night workouts (next page) doesn't really need much editing, it illustrates an important fact about Clean Up, which is that one removal may affect the next.

For the test, I decided to focus the entire photo on Tonya in the front, removing the other runners, the silver car on the road behind them, the little barbecue grill and picnic table to the left of her head, and the power lines cutting across the top right of the photo.

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Clicking each runner or group of runners removed them, with Clean Up filling in an AI-generated background based on the surroundings behind them. For the first two runners on the left, this worked almost flawlessly. However, removing the larger groups to the right resulted in the ugly artifacts in the left screenshot below. The groups are so large that Clean Up doesn't accurately predict what's behind them.



However, it reveals a subtle but important fact about Clean Up. Individual removals may affect subsequent ones by changing the nearby pixels. In the left screenshot above, I removed each group of runners from left to right, which most people who read in that direction would probably do. When I reversed the direction, removing the runners from right to left, Clean Up did a better job with the smaller groups in the back, creating a more realistic background you can see in the middle screenshot above.

The variability I encountered with the order of removals extends to using Clean Up on other platforms, too. When I edited the photo on my iPhone 16 Pro, Clean Up automatically highlighted the same runners and correctly removed the items I scrubbed over with my finger. Although scrubbing with a finger wasn't as precise as with the Mac's pointer, I could pinch to zoom first to select the smaller objects more accurately.

However, as you can see in the rightmost screenshot above, the background area behind where the runners were is different, and the iPhone version of Clean Up left a more prominent and unsightly artifact than the Mac version. I won't bore you with yet another screenshot, but I was able to use Clean Up once again to remove that artifact.

### 💡 Clean Up Tips

Here's what I've learned about using Clean Up effectively:

- In general, use Clean Up conservatively. Just because you can remove something from a photo doesn't automatically mean that doing so will make for a better image.
- Choose photos where the people or objects to be removed are relatively small and cleanly silhouetted against an easily faked background.
- When removing multiple overlapping or nearby selections, the order in which you remove them may make a difference. If you're unhappy with the initial result, try removing objects in a different order.
- Make additional passes with manual Clean Up selections to remove previously generated artifacts.
- Within an editing session, you can undo any individual Clean Up action with Command-Z or by tapping the Undo button on an iPhone or iPad. Undo them all with Revert to Original. Command-Z also reverses Revert to Original, so you can check your edits against the original without manually recreating them.
- Results may differ slightly between the Mac and the iPhone. (I presume the iPad's results will be similar to the iPhone's, but I don't have one running iPadOS 18.1 to confirm.) If you care deeply about getting the best results and aren't happy with one platform, try another. Manual selection is the most precise on the Mac, but remember that you can pinch to zoom in on an iPhone or iPad to scrub over small objects more precisely.

I have one final recommendation, which is to compose your photos to avoid extraneous or distracting objects in the background so you don't need to use Clean Up at all. I try to do that when taking photos, so relatively few of mine would benefit from Clean Up, which made it hard to find examples for this article. It's no coincidence that the photos above are all action shots taken in public situations where it was difficult or impossible to control what appeared in the background.

Ultimately, Clean Up works well and may be able to rescue photos that would be great without distracting objects cluttering the background. I encourage you to try it the next time you have a photo that might benefit from some selective removal of objects.

However, as Jeff Carlson showed me after his edit pass, a professional tool like Lightroom may be able to do a significantly better job—I can't see any oddities or artifacts in his version below. Remember that Clean Up as we see it today is Apple's first pass; it's likely to improve in future releases.



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## **Apple Intelligence Sets a New Bar**

By RICH MOGULL

The link below will take to you a long, well researched and informative article from the TidBITS website run by Adam Engst. This article was so lengthy the editor thinks it will be easier for anyone who is interested to check it out online.

Some topics addressed are: "How is Apple Intelligence Different from Siri?", "How Does Generative AI Work?" and "How Does Apple Intelligence Manage Security and Privacy?"

https://tidbits.com/2024/07/01/how-apple-intelligence-sets-a-new-bar-for-ai-security-privacy-and-safety/



The article by Rich Mogull was first published online in TidBITS on July 1, 2024; The article by Adam Engst reprinted from TidBITS. published online November 15, 2024.

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# **Apple Opens Repair Program for iPhone 14** Plus Rear Camera Failure

### **By ADAM ENGST**

Has your iPhone 14 Plus rear camera stopped providing a preview? Apple says a very small percentage of iPhone 14 Plus units manufactured between 10 April 2023 and 28 April 2024 may exhibit this problem. The company has started a repair program to fix the problem for free.

joyoftech.com/support

If your iPhone 14 Plus is experiencing the problem, you'll need to use Apple's serial number checker to see if it's eligible for repair. Look up its serial number in Settings > General > About. Touch and hold the serial number until a Copy popover appears. Tap that to copy the serial number to the clipboard, which you can then paste into the form on Apple's repair program page.

If your iPhone 14 Plus has the problem and is covered, you can get it fixed by an Apple Authorized Service Provider, make an appointment at an Apple Store, or contact Apple Support and arrange mail-in service via the Apple Repair Center.

### About Us

The Silicon Mountain Macintosh User Group, Inc. (a nonprofit educational corporation) was formed in Colorado Springs, Colorado in 1985, and is one of the oldest Macintosh User Groups in the United States. SMMUG, Inc. is dedicated to helping members enjoy and learn about their Macintosh computer, iPhone and iPad devices.

Club membership is open to everyone and you are cordially invited to visit our free monthly General Meeting (inperson or over Zoom) on the second Monday of most months, at 6:45 PM. For those new to the Apple Universe, we have a Question & Answer session at 5:45 PM prior to the general meeting, where our collective expertise can help answer your questions.

All members receive a bi-monthly newsletter, published on <u>our web site</u>, and can participate in the monthly door prize drawing. Members may also participate in Special Interest Group meetings held monthly except August & December. Each member gets one vote during annual Officer Elections. No corporate memberships are granted.

Our officers are volunteers and receive no pay. All funds raised are used for the cost of operating the club and its meetings.

## Membership Application Form

Membership entitles you to access to our online forums, participation in prize drawings, and access to the bargains in the members area of the SMMUG website at www.smmug.org. SMMUG renewal membership dues (\$30) apply to the calendar year and are paid each December for the following year. Use the following table for NEW MEMBERSHIP ONLY:

JAN 1 to MAR 31 - \$30.00	APR 1 to JUN 30 - \$20.00
JUL 1 to SEPT 30 - \$15.00	OCT 1 to DEC 31 - \$10.00
Please Print Clearly!	Today's Date
Name	
Street Address	
City/State/ZIP	
Home Telephone	Cell or Work
E-mail Address	
Have you previously been a member of SMMUC	G?
How did you learn about SMMUG?	
Make your check payable to: <b>SMMUG</b> Then mail or give this form and your check to: SMMUG, Inc. 2100 Wood Avenue Colorado Springs, CO 80907-6718	<ul> <li>Please make an online account for me.</li> <li>User Name</li> <li>Don't make an online account for me. I do not want one or I already have one.</li> </ul>