

User Friendly

March 2003



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FUTURE MEETINGS

Tuesday April 8, 2003

Tuesday May 13, 2003 ♦

LACS General Meeting

Crystal Sets to Computers - A Personal Trip Along the Road of Technology

By **Bob Day**

Tuesday March 11, 7 P. M.

Fellowship Hall, 8065 Emerson Ave., Westchester

Many of us, in our earlier days, either played around with (or knew someone who did) those marvelous "crystal set" radios. Bob Day is like us who experimented and went on to tinker with more exotic electronics and computers.

Bob's reminiscences and personal experiences, will probably parallel our own and remind us of early experiences ("learning" and otherwise). His presentation includes pictures and has been very favorably commented by other user groups he has visited.

He draws on his experiences developing and working on military and industrial electronics such as IFF systems, geophysical electronics for oil exploration, guided missiles and integration of ship-board electronics and weapons systems.

And then he got a Commodore C64 and became addicted to computers. We'll let Bob tell the rest....

NOTE: The usual "computer forums" for beginners and advanced users start at 6:00 PM.

Information: (310) 289-7177 or <http://www.lacspc.org> ♦

February Meeting Report

By **Leah Clark, LACS**

President Charlotte Semple opened the meeting with the introduction of guests and first-timers. Charlie Semple reported on the SIGs. For the Hardware SIG, send Charlie e-mails regarding any problems to work on. The Internet/Beginners SIG

needs to work out the day and location for its meetings. The Digital Photo SIG meets the 4th Monday at the American Legion Hall. We're lucky to have Susan Orenstein, a professional instructor, for the Office Applications SIG on the first Tuesday of the month.

Stephanie Nordlinger re-

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 2)

(FEBRUARY MEETING REPORT)

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

ported that Charlie will be the Product Review Coordinator.

Karl Springer said that some members have full e-mail boxes, causing LACS mail to bounce. Please promptly submit e-mail address changes, and other updates for the new roster.

A member asked about how to add a shortcut to the desktop. One way is to find the .exe file, right click on it, choose "Send To" and then "Desktop (create shortcut)". In some versions of Windows, you may have to create the shortcut and then drag it to your desktop.

PROGRAM

Those who braved the cold and the rain heard an informative presentation by Marci Gunn and two assistants from *Smart Computing Magazine*. She gave everyone a free copy of the March 2002 issue and asked for feedback.

Smart Computing is a monthly magazine for computer users written in plain English, for all skill levels. It covers the latest technology relating to hardware and software issues. Each issue contains these sections:

- A focus topic. The March, 2003 issue focused on Digital Photography.
- Product reviews. These are honest opinions, not advertiser - driven. Only 19 pages of each 100+ page issue are advertisements. The products are mostly sent by the manufacturers. Members are surveyed to see what

products they would like to see reviewed.

- PC Operating Instructions
- Tips and Tricks
- Tutorials
- Internet topics and web tricks
- PC Projects – step-by-step instructions
- Quick Studies – tips on various products
- Technical Support, Q and A, Quick Fixes
- Action Editor – help in getting responses from manufacturers or vendors
- Each Month: Technology News and Notes, Find It Online, Sounding Board.

Subscribing also gives you a free membership to the Smart Computing web site,

<http://www.smartcomputing.com>. One must be a member for complete access. Upon subscribing, a user name and password will be e-mailed. One may search for any previously published article by topic and by date range.

Member benefits include:

- A 51% or greater discount over newsstand prices (\$29 vs. \$59.40/year)
- 24 hour access to trouble shooting on the web site
- Tips and Tricks
- Product reviews including comparisons by category or brand name, price lists, where to buy, etc.
- Step by step instructions
- Unlimited access to smartcomputing.com, including chat room, dictionaries, encyclopedias, research, archives, etc.
- Q and A Board – questions from subscribers posted –

anyone may post answers.

One may enter a key word to search for previous posting on a topic.

- Annual index to all issues

Smart Computing publishes three sister publications: These are only available on newsstands for \$9.95 or are free online for members.

- Learning Series – covers one topic in over 140 pages per issue.
- Reference Series – covers a broad topic in about 200 pages.
- CPU – Computer Power User – monthly magazine for the same price (\$29/year) but more technical than Smart Computing.

Permission may be obtained to republish articles in user group newsletters.

User groups may obtain one free subscription/membership for each five paid subscriptions. These may be used for door prizes, etc. Subscriptions may be ordered on line. LACS members should go to the User Group section of smartcomputing.com and check on LACS for user group credit. The home page and the "Become a Member" page are available without a password! Also, back issues may be ordered.

Smart Computing also publishes a 5-volume *Encyclopedia*, which two members won in the drawing. Another member won a bound volume of the 2002 issues of *Smart Computing*, and other door prizes were given away. ♦

Breaking and Entering

By **Wally Wang**, author of *Steal This Computer - Book 2*. From: Sectors, the journal of the Hagerstown Users Group Inc. October 2001

Anything you type on a computer can come back to haunt you. No matter how well you've hidden your data or how many times you may have encrypted it, there's always a chance that someone somewhere will be able to find and read what you have written.

So if you really want to get information about other people or learn how to protect yourself from others trying to get into your computer, keep reading. The secrets inside your computer can be pried open easier than you think.

DEFEATING PASSWORDS

Although passwords restrict access to a computer, they're the weakest link in any security system. The most secure passwords are lengthy, consisting of random characters. But most people tend to choose simple, easy-to-remember passwords and use the same password for several different systems (for example, their work computer, America Online account, and Windows screensaver). If you discover a person's password, you'll often have the key to their other accounts as well.

You have several methods of attack any time a computer requires a password, and you don't know what it is:

- Disable or circumvent the program that requires the

password

- Steal a valid password
- Use a dictionary attack that methodically tries common passwords.

DISABLING OR CIRCUMVENTING A PASSWORD

Often you will need a password to access someone's computer system. There are two common ways that computer systems are password-protected:

- Use the operating system screensaver
- Use a separate security program

DEFEATING THE WINDOWS 95/98 SCREENSAVER

The simplest way to defeat a Windows 95/98 Password protected screensaver is to turn off the computer and turn it back on (pressing ctrl-alt-del won't work). When the computer comes back on, you should have complete access to the computer. Then you can right-click on the desktop, choose Properties, click on the Screen Saver tab when the Display Properties dialog box appears, and uncheck the Password-protected check box.

For the really devious, try assigning a new password instead of disabling password-protection. To do so, keep the Password-protected check box checked and click on the Change button.

Then type in a new password for the screensaver. Now anyone who tries to access this computer will be locked out unless he or she can guess the new password you registered.

Another way to break into a password-protected computer is to avoid loading security or opening menu programs that may run on start-up and lock you out of the computer. To avoid loading these programs, reboot the computer and press one of the following keys as soon as you see the "Starting Windows 95/98" message on the screen:

- F8 - Pressing F8 displays the Windows 95/98 start-up menu, which lets you choose whether to load Windows 95/98 without any start-up programs or go straight to MS-DOS.
- shift-F5 - Pressing shift-F5 bypasses any start-up programs and displays the MS-DOS prompt.
- shift-F8 - Pressing shift-F8 allows you to step line by line through the start-up procedure so you can selectively choose which programs you want to load.

DEFEATING THIRD-PARTY SCREENSAVERS AND SECURITY PROGRAMS

Not everyone relies on the Windows screensaver for password protection, but you should be able to beat third-party screensavers the same way:

Turn the computer off and on again, then use one of the above methods of holding down the F5, F8, or shift keys (for Windows 3.1) or F8, shift-F5, or shift-F8 (for Windows 95/98) to keep the screensaver or security program from loading.

You probably won't be able to circumvent the better security

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(BREAKING & ENTERING*(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3)*

programs by rebooting the computer. To get around these sophisticated programs, boot from a floppy disk to load MS-DOS, and then use MS-DOS commands to copy, move, or delete files on the hard disk at your leisure. If a third-party security program still blocks your access even after rebooting, you may have to resort to stealing the password to the security program.

STEALING A PASSWORD

The easiest way to steal a password is by shoulder surfing — peeking over someone's shoulder as they type in a password. If that doesn't work, poke around the person's desk. Most people find passwords hard to remember so they often write them down and store them where they can easily find them, like next to their monitor or inside their desk drawer.

Still can't find that pesky password? Try one of these:

- A keystroke logger
- A desktop monitoring program
- A password recovery program.

NOTE All of these programs require that you have access to the victim's computer so you can install or run the programs without the user's knowledge.

USING A KEYSTROKE RECORDER OR LOGGER

Keystroke recorders or "loggers" are programs that record everything a person

types and either sends their typing to a monitoring computer or saves it to a file. Since they simply record typing, it doesn't matter whether passwords are encrypted. When the user is away, you can remove the keystroke logging program from their machine and retrieve its logging file containing the password and anything else they typed.

While many loggers were originally written for legitimate purposes, people have found creative ways to use them. (The program *WinWhatWhere* was originally written as a time and billing tool.) Remember, though, if you use one on someone's computer without permission you could be breaking Federal eavesdropping laws, punishable by up to five years in prison and \$250,000 in fines.

Keystroke logging programs tend to be fairly small, so they're easy to hide on a victim's computer. Hackers have written and posted some simple keystroke logging programs with names like *Playback*, *KeyTrap*, or *Phantom*, but many companies have released shareware versions of keystroke loggers too, which you can find at sites like Download.com or Rocketdownload.com. Some of the more popular shareware and commercial keystroke logging programs include *KeyKey* (mikkoaj.hypermart.net), *Keystroke Recorder* (www.campsoftware.com/camp), and *Stealth Keyboard Interceptor* (www.geocities.com/SiliconValley/Hills/8839/index.html).

Some keylogging programs,

such as *SureShot Ghost Keylogger* (home.swipnet.se/~w-94075/keylogger) and *Stealth Activity Recorder and Reporter* (www.iopus.com/), can secretly email you the recorded keystrokes. Parents or employers may legitimately use a keystroke logger to see what their children or employees are doing. Hackers, though, may use keystroke loggers for less than legitimate purposes, such as capturing valuable information such as passwords without having to physically access the targeted computer.

D.I.R.T.

Many hackers also use keystroke logging to capture credit card numbers, passwords, and encrypted data through remote access Trojan Horses like Back Orifice (see Chapter 16). Turning the tables on the hackers, law enforcement officials use a similar program called D.I.R.T. (Data Interception and Remote Transmission), available from Codex Data Systems (www.thecodex.com).

D.I.R.T. can secretly record keystrokes and email the captured keystrokes to another computer. That way law enforcement officials can capture evidence as the suspect types it in. If someone is secretly recording and reading your captured keystrokes, even the best encryption won't protect you. The Peeping Tom who is looking into your computer will already have the password you used to encrypt your data, as well as every keystroke you typed before encrypting your file.

SPYING WITH A DESKTOP MONITORING PROGRAM

Desktop monitoring programs are slightly more sophisticated than keystroke loggers. Like a computer surveillance camera, they secretly record the programs a person uses, how long the person uses each program, the Web sites viewed, and every keystroke. Many monitoring programs can store days of recordings, and some can be set to record at designated times only, when certain applications are run, or when a user logs on to the Internet.

Like keystroke loggers, many desktop monitoring programs were designed for legitimate use. Many people use them to protect their computer from abuse or to monitor their children's computer.

Desktop monitoring programs are also perfect for less-than-legitimate uses, such as spying on another person's computer. If you do, be sure to use the stealth mode so the user won't know that the program is tracking their actions. Then, when the person leaves, go back to the target computer to retrieve the captured data.

Like loggers, you can find several shareware versions of desktop monitoring programs at sites like Download.com. For specific programs, try these sites: AppsTraka (appstraka.hypermart.net), Desktop Surveillance (www.omniquad.com), WinWhatWhere Investigator (www.winwhatwhere.com), Security Officer (www.compelson.com), or WinGuardian (www.webroot.com).

REMOTELY VIEWING ANOTHER COMPUTER'S DESKTOP

Desktop monitoring programs are useful if you have regular access to the computer you want to watch. But if you don't, you can use a remote desktop monitoring program instead. Just install a program such as *QPeek* (www.qpeek.com), *NetBus* (www.netbus.org), *I-SeeU* (www.faxtastic.com), or *PC Spy* (www.softdd.com) on the computer you want to monitor. Then anything someone types, views, or manipulates on that computer will appear live on your computer's screen.

USING A PASSWORD RECOVERY PROGRAM

Because typing a password over and over again to access a program can be a nuisance, many programs let you store passwords directly in the program, hidden behind a string of asterisks. Because people often forget these passwords and then can't access their programs or files, password recovery programs have been developed to retrieve these lost or forgotten passwords. You can, of course, also use these programs to retrieve other people's passwords.

There are many shareware versions of password recovery programs. Look for *007 Password Recovery* (www.iopus.com), *Password Recovery Toolkit* (www.lostpassword.com), or *Revelation* (www.snadboy.com). Besides blocking access to a program, passwords can also block access to files like WordPerfect documents or Microsoft Excel spreadsheets. To

retrieve or crack password-protected files, get a special password-cracking program from one of these companies: Access Data (www.accessdata.com), *Alpine Snow* (www.alpinesnow.com), *Crak Software* (www.crak.com), ElCom (www.elcomsoft.com), Password Crackers Inc. (www.pwcrack.com), or *Passware* (www.lostpassword.com).

You can also find plenty of free cracking programs on hacker Web sites or through Crak Software or Access Data's Web sites. Many provide the source code too so you can see how they work. Surprisingly, their source code is short and relatively simple, revealing the incredible weakness of the encryption algorithms used by *Microsoft Word* or *Lotus 1-2-3*. By studying the source code, you can learn how to crack open password-protected files yourself or even how to write your own password-cracking program.

If you need to retrieve passwords from a computer running Windows NT, grab a copy of the *L0phtCrack* program from the L0pht Heavy Industries Web site (www.l0pht.com). Windows NT encrypts user passwords—the *L0phtCrack* program simply studies these encrypted passwords and attempts to decrypt them.

DICTIONARY ATTACKS ON PASSWORDS

Most people choose easy-to-remember passwords, so hackers have created special dictionary files (sometimes called word lists) that contain

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 6)

(BREAKING & ENTERING)*CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5)*

common passwords such as actors' names, names of popular cartoon characters, popular rock bands, Star Trek jargon, common male and female names, technology related words, and common words found in most dictionaries.

Password-cracking programs take each word from a dictionary file and type it into the program as a password until it finds one that works or runs out of words. If the password works, you have access to the program you want. Of course, if it runs out of words in its dictionary file, you can try other dictionary files until you find a valid password or run out of dictionary files. If a password is an ordinary word, it's only a matter of time before a dictionary attack will uncover it. To foil a dictionary attack, sprinkle some random characters (such as symbols and numbers) in your passwords or use a special password generating program such as *PassGen* (www.noodlesoft.co.uk) or *Quicky Password Generator* (www.quickysoftware.com), which can create truly random passwords of varying lengths.

You can create your own password lists for use in a dictionary file with a dictionary-making program; these programs create random word combinations, words consisting of all uppercase or lowercase, words with random symbols mixed in, and so on. (Dictionary attacks are most useful when you don't have to worry about being spotted, as

when you're breaking into a remote computer through a phone line or the Internet.)

To find dictionary files, use a Web search engine to search for "dictionary file" or "word lists." You can find a number of shareware and password crackers at Download.com, with names like *Ultra Zip Password Cracker*, *CracPak*, and *Password List Recovery*.

USING A DICTIONARY ATTACK TO DEFEAT UNIX PASSWORDS

UNIX operating systems are designed to handle multiple users on a single computer. To isolate users from one another, each user has an account defined by an ID or user name and a password.

Conveniently (for both hackers and system administrators), most UNIX systems store the list of account names and passwords in the `/etc/passwd` file. To provide a small degree of security, UNIX encrypts each person's password using an encryption algorithm (also called a hash function), usually using the Data Encryption Standard (DES).

To gain access to UNIX computers, hackers copy the `/etc/passwd` file to their own computer so they can run a dictionary attack that tries common passwords from a list of words encrypted with DES. If it finds a match between an encrypted word on its list and an encrypted password in the file, then it knows it has found a legitimate password. At this point, the hacker can use that password to gain access to

that unlucky person's account.

To increase the chances of finding a valid password, UNIX password-cracking tools like *John the Ripper* or *CrackerJack* not only try commonly used passwords, but also variations of those common passwords (typing them backwards or adding a 1 or 9 to the end or beginning). While this slows down the overall cracking process, it does make sure the dictionary attack isn't fooled by a simple variation on a common password.

Steal This Computer Book 2 is available from No Starch Press (800-420-7240, <http://www.nostarch.com>) for \$24.95.

Wally Wang is a regular contributor to *Boardwatch* magazine ("Notes From the Underground") and frequently appears on radio and TV programs to talk about hackers and computer viruses. He performs stand-up comedy regularly in Las Vegas and has appeared on the nationally syndicated television show, "A&E's Evening at the Improv." He currently lives in San Diego, California. ♦



Tips 'N Tricks

Compiled by LACS President
Charlotte Semple

1. Watermarks

To make your own watermark for printed documents, from the Format menu, select Background and then Printed Watermark. To insert a text watermark, click Text watermark and then the text you want. Select any additional options, such as the watermark appearing diagonally, or horizontally, and click Apply. To see your watermark on screen, click File and Print Preview.

2. Stop AOL sounds

To stop sounds such as, "Welcome," or, "You've got Mail," and other voice messages and chimes that can be annoying, open the program. From the Toolbar, select Settings, Preferences and Toolbar & Sound. Uncheck "Enable AOL sounds such as the Welcome Greeting and Instant Message Chimes."

If you are simply tired of hearing the same sounds, use the Keyword: Celebrity Voices. Here you can opt for system sounds voiced by the likes of Scooby Doo, David Letterman, and Elijah Wood, to name a few.

3. Computer Turns Itself On

If your computer is hooked up to a network or cable modem, sometimes your computer will turn itself back on, after you have shut down. No, your computer is not really possessed. You may have to go into BIOS and turn off the "wake up on LAN" command.

To access the BIOS Setup utility, restart your computer. As it boots up, a message will display telling you to hit a specific key or keys (F1, F2, ESC). Don't hesitate as the opportunity to hit a key will pass quickly. If this happens, wait until the computer goes through its start up motions then shut it down again, and after a few seconds, restart again.

Setups vary, so you will have to look at the Setup on your computer. On most computers, the "wake up on LAN" command is found under Power Management. Instructions telling you how to maneuver through Setup are at the bottom of the screen. The "wake up on LAN" setting is probably a toggle. That means you press a key for "Enable," then press the same key for "Disable."

When you finish, look for an instruction that says "save and exit." Sometimes you have to press a function key (such as F10). In other cases, you may highlight the instruction and press Enter. Just follow the instructions.

4. Stuck CD drive

If your CD-Rom drive does not open, and seems to be stuck closed, and your favorite music CD is in the drawer, here's what you do: Look really close at the CD-Rom drive. There is a tiny hole in the door. Turn the power to your computer OFF. Straighten out a paper clip and stick it in the hole. With any luck you will get back your

CD. But then you are stuck with a nonfunctioning CD-Rom. The only solution here may be to buy a new one. Sorry about that.

5. Make your Own Icons

Here's how: 1. Go to Start>>Programs>> Accessories, and then Paint. 2. From the Image menu, select Attributes. Enter 32 pixels in Height and Width. 3. Get creative. Make an Icon using the paintbrush or pencil tools. Name and save our icon when you are done. Then, to replace an existing icon with your new one: 1. Right-click the icon on your desktop. Select Properties. 2. Click Change Icon and then, Browse. Find the folder containing the icon you made. 3. Click on your icon and it will appear on the desktop.

6. Lost your Cursor (Mouse Pointer)?

Turn on the Mouse's Sonar option. When activated, press the CTRL key and a radar-like animation zeros in on the mouse pointer. The steps to make this happen vary, depending on the mouse. Generally speaking this option is found in the Mouse Properties. Open the Control Panel and double-click the Mouse icon. Select the Visibility (or Pointer Options) tab. Check the box that reads, "Show location of pointer when you press CTRL key." Thereafter, when you press the CTRL key, the whereabouts of your cursor should show. ♦

January 21 Hardware SIG Meeting

By **Jordan Burkart**, LACS

The group warmed up at this hardware clinic meeting by looking over a motherboard that was brought in DOA. The CPU and RAM (both operable) had been previously removed from the board, which had failed because of some other problem somewhere in its circuitry. The group inspected the board primarily to gain greater familiarity with its various components, such as ISA slots (black), PCI slots (white), and an AGP slot (brown). We also looked over the RAM slots (for 168-pin DIMMs), various DIP switches, and two IDE drive connectors, each of which would support two drives.

SECOND PATIENT

The next patient to be addressed was an IBM 286 machine that had passed through numerous owners and had apparently been unused for quite a long time. We plugged the machine in to let the CMOS charge up and booted up after a while. The screen came on with a RAM test showing 2 megs and then displayed various numbers at the bottom of the screen. It was concluded that the machine was searching for a program in Basic. There was apparently no operating system installed, or at least not one that was loadable. The hard drive therefore could not be accessed. Conclusion: install an operating system, and it might run. But

who needs a 286 in today's world? The owner immediately decided that the machine should be given away (yet again).

THIRD PATIENT

The final item was a very nice and relatively new IBM ThinkPad. This machine was working but needed some fine tuning and some additional software. The screen resolution was adjusted so that the image filled the screen. Then we began to install Lotus Smart Suite, which had come, unloaded, with the machine. The first step was to shut down all running programs except Explorer and Systray (no screen-saver was running). The program began to install from the CD, and installation proceeded slowly. As it was then time for the meeting to end, it was decided to terminate the very slow installation, which the owner was then prepared to start again on her own time. Before the installation could be halted, for some unknown reason, the display suddenly became very dark, with only the faintest image barely visible. Numerous efforts to restore the image failed (we could not find any way to adjust screen brightness, even after referring to the manual). It was concluded that the owner should restart the machine later, and if the screen image did not reappear properly, IBM tech support should be called, as the machine was still under warranty. This was sort of a chicken's way of resolving a hardware problem, but it was quite late by then, and several SIG members

were hungry. (Post-meeting report: Charlie reported the next morning that when the machine was re-booted Wednesday morning, it "lit up" fine, and the owner was happily experimenting with installing the software whose installation had been interrupted.) ♦



Welcome To you All

NEW MEMBERS (3)

Thabit Allah
Sylvia Davis
Bill Wilson

RENEWING MEMBERS (20)

Jordan Burkhart
Philip Colman
Lee Freehling
Barry Katz
Mitchel Keolian
♥ Rosalie Kirsch
Fred Kong
Robert Kraus
Howard Lang
Charles Mahan
Susan Mahan
Ron Manly
Dorothy Miliman
Herb Piltzer
Aggi Raeder
David Speer
Kim Stocksdale
Bill Tippit
Jim Vollmer
Charles Wallace

♥ Contributing ♦

March 2003 into April 2003

| Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|-----------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| 3 March Board meeting 7 PM sharp | 4 Daytime SIG <u>12 PM (lunch)</u> Office SIG 7 PM | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
| 10 | 11 General Meeting 7 PM Forum 6:00 PM | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 |
| 17 | 18 Daytime SIG <u>1 PM</u> Hardware SIG 7 PM | 19 Internet/ e-mail SIG Watch for e-mail notice | 20 Membership Committee 7 PM | 21 | 22 |
| 24 Digital Photo SIG 7 PM | 25 Beginners/ Internet SIG 7 P:M | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 |
| 31 | 1 Daytime SIG <u>12 PM (lunch)</u> Office SIG 7. PM | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7 Board meeting 7 PM sharp | 8 General Meeting 7 PM Forum 6:00 PM | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 |

Location to be announced

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS (SIGs)

SIG meetings are run by and for LACS members. Visitors are welcome to attend up to six SIG meetings (three of the same SIG) before joining LACS. To inquire about a SIG, please call or e-mail the contact person in advance. SIG Coordinator: Charlie Semple, sig.coord@lacspc.org.

| SIG | Contact | Telephone | When and Where, Notes |
|-----------------|----------------------|--------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| After Meeting | Cap Kierulff | 310-472-9206 | Dinah's Restaurant on Sepulveda, southwest of Centinela. |
| Beginners | Dorothy Miliman | 310-473-1391 | 4th Tuesday, 7 PM. Check e-mail for location |
| Computer Forum | Beginners Welcome | | 2nd Tuesday, 6:00 PM before General Meeting. Front of hall. |
| Daytime | Cap Kierulff | 310-472-9206 | First Tuesday, 12-1:30 PM, Golden China Restaurant, L.A |
| Digital Photo | Helen Karagozian | 310-454-3426 | capk@juno.com Third Tuesday, 1-3 PM, Felicia Mahood Center, W.L.A. helenk2@earthlink.net. 4th Monday, 7 PM American Legion |
| Genealogy | Leah & Joe Clark | 310-677-2792 | Hall, 5309 Sepulveda Blvd., Culver City |
| Hardware | Charlie Semple | 310-398-5052 | Second Thursday, 7 PM once a quarter at the Clark's |
| Internet/e-mail | Patsy Bellah | 310-280-0951 | home lclark@ucla.edu. |
| Investment | Stephanie Nordlinger | 323-299-3244 | Third Tuesday, 7 PM, CitiBank. csemple93@earthlink.net |
| Membership | Vacant | | Watch e-mail 7 PM Location to be announced. Watch fore-mail |
| Office Suites | George Wolkon | 310-459-2671 | announcement. |
| | | | TBA If interested, Call or e-mail pastpres@lacspc.org. |
| | | | Third Thursday, 7 PM. |
| | | | First Tuesday 7 PM. CitiBank. * wolkon.gbwolkon@verizon.net |

* CitiBank Community room (in the basement), 12101 San Vicente Blvd. (at Saltair), Brentwood, \$1/meeting donation requested for room rental at CitiBank and at American Legion Hall. ♦

Members Helping Members

LACS members volunteer to help other members solve hardware and software problems by telephone during the hours listed below. Select the topic from the list and then call a person whose number is listed next to it. We hope that you find this free service useful. ***If you are experienced in a particular program or topic, please volunteer to be a consultant.*** To volunteer for this list or to make corrections, please e-mail editor@lacspc.org or call Dick Smith at (323) 294-3441. More Quick Consultants are always needed. You can always decline or postpone a call if it catches you at the wrong time. You perform a valuable service and often learn something unexpected! ♦

| | | |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Adobe Acrobat - 47 | Microsoft Access - 48 | Printing - 42, 43 |
| America Online - 20, 44 | Microsoft Excel - 7, 49, 51 | Procomm + - 24 |
| Ami Pro, WordPro - 14 | Microsoft FoxPro - 27,48 | QModem, QMPro - 24 |
| Basic - 8, 48 | Microsoft Office - 41, 43 | QuickBooks - 14, 37 |
| C++ - 27 | Microsoft Power Point - 49 | Quicken - 14, 20 |
| Communications - 24 | Microsoft Publisher - 14, 32, 33 | Speed Read - 24 |
| Data Bases - 48 | Microsoft Word - 9,43, 49 | Terminate - 24 |
| Genealogy - 20, 34 | Microsoft Works - 32, 34, 44 | TurboTax - 14 |
| GoldMine - 41 | Modems - 24 | Unix - 48 |
| Graphics - 33 | Netscape - 43 | Viruses - 46, 48 |
| Hardware - 7, 41, 42, 43, 48 | Networks - 7, 41, 48 | Windows - 7, 32, 48 |
| Internet - 43, 44, 45, 48 | OLX - 24 | Windows 95/98 - 7, 41,43, 48 |
| LA FreeNet - 14, 24 | OnTime - 1, 20 | WordPerfect - 1, 20, 33 |
| Linux - 48 | PhotoDeluxe, Adobe - 50 | WordPro - 14 ♦ |

| No. | Name | Daytime Phone | Eves/Weekends | From | To |
|-----|-----------------------|---------------|---------------|-------------|----|
| 1 | Broido, Joe | 310-829-3736 | 310-829-3736 | 9 AM-10P M | |
| 7 | Greenberg, Allan | 310-576-1310 | 310-576-1310 | 10 AM-10 PM | |
| 8 | Heller, Elmer | 310-839-9764 | 310-839-9764 | 9 AM-10 PM | |
| 9 | Hershman, Irv | 310-397-9453 | 310-397-9453 | 11 AM-11 PM | |
| 14 | Kammerman, Cora | 310-472-7487 | 310-472-7487 | 10 AM-8 PM | |
| 20 | Nordlinger, Stephanie | 323-299-3244 | 323-299-3244 | 9 AM-10 PM | |
| 24 | Springer, Karl | 310-645-3410 | 310-645-3410 | 10 AM-10 PM | |
| 27 | Rombouts, Tom | 310-519-2941 | 310-519-2941 | 6 AM-11 PM | |
| 32 | LaVere, Hy | 310-837-6517 | 310-837-6517 | 10 AM-9 PM | |
| 33 | Kierulff, Cap | 310-472-9206 | 310-472-9206 | 9 AM-9 PM | |
| 34 | McDonald, Len | 310-836-8698 | 310-836-8698 | 9 AM-10 PM | |
| 36 | Hage, Elias | 310-815-8020 | 310-815-8020 | 9 AM-10 PM | |
| 37 | Ganz, Bill | 310-360-7088 | 310-360-7088 | 9 AM-9 PM | |
| 41 | Engfer, Mark | N.A. | 310-451-1942 | 5 PM-10 PM | |
| 42 | Theodore, Carol | 310-659-0604 | N.A. | 9 AM-5 PM | |
| 43 | Semple, Charlie | 310-398-5052 | 310-398-5052 | 9 AM-10 PM | |
| 44 | Lang, Bobbi | 310-454-9903 | 310-454-9903 | 10 AM-5 PM | |
| 45 | Gibson, Merrill | 310-785-9487 | N.A. | 9 AM-5 PM | |
| 46 | Martin, Todd | 818-766-1151 | 818-766-1151 | 10 AM-10 PM | |
| 47 | Gold, Mike | N.A. | 310-379-8321 | 6 PM-10 PM | |
| 48 | Flores, Alexys | N.A. | 310-306-8403 | 8 PM-11 PM* | |
| 49 | Beckman, Loling | 310-471-7893 | N.A. | 9 AM-5 PM | |
| 50 | Silverstein, Elliot | 310-670-1544 | 310-670-1544 | 10 AM-10 PM | |
| 51 | Katz, Effie (Pager) | 310-785-3313 | 310-785-3313 | 9 AM-10 PM | |

*Weekend: 3 PM-10 PM ♦

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Software for Review

By **Charlie Semple**, LACS

Members can get free software in exchange for writing reviews for *User Friendly* and our website. Be a published author! Almost anyone can write a good review, and we supply guidelines and editors to help you. Some products will make you more productive, while others are just for fun. Members wanting to review something make a deposit (usually a check) in the amount shown (the approximate list price of the product, without tax or discounts) that will be returned uncashed if you submit a printable review.

If you want to review a pro-

Can't come to meetings? If you want to review a product, some of these programs can be downloaded, and we will make arrangements to give you others at a convenient time and place. Upload your review. Editing questions can be handled by phone or e-mail. So don't miss this opportunity to expand your knowledge and software ♦

gram shown below, contact the Product Review Coordinator (productreview@lacspc.org) or 310-398-5052. All programs require a 4x- or faster CD ROM drive unless otherwise specified. The editor also accepts well-written reviews of products you obtain by purchase, etc.

If you would like to review an-

other program and need a review copy, contact me and I will attempt to obtain one for you. By "contact," I mean send me an e-mail with as much of the pertinent information as possible. If you are precise (title, publisher, version, toll-free number, e-address, and web address), I can act promptly. If you make me work, the job is likely to get into my pile of stuff to do, and you know what that means! Also, please be sure we haven't already reviewed that version.

NEWER PROGRAMS

askSam v. 5 - the latest and greatest version of this data organizer. (www.asksam.com) (\$90).

Microsoft's Pandora's Box features over 400 original 3-D puzzles from the creator of *Tetris*. You can follow the game's story line, jump directly to a puzzle, and play singly or competitively. Pentium 166 and lots of hard drive space needed. (\$20)

NaturePainter Digital Canvas 1.0. Would you like to paint but feel you aren't very good at it? Here's a way to try it with no costly materials and the ability to hide (delete) your mistakes. For artists and art educators. (\$33)

Discovering Your Hard Drive, Part 1, v. 1.3 from User Group Relations (Gene & Linda Barlow's company). (\$20 deposit) Excerpts from this were presented at a meeting last summer. (www.ugr.com). CD; for special UG price of \$20, contact me for the code.

WatzNew 1.9.5, a personal web portal program for Windows 95 through XP from A.I. Studio. It regularly checks your favorite websites and mailboxes and notifies you of changes. You get the relevant information without banners, ads or graphics, so it is efficient. Needs 32 MB of RAM, 5 MB of HD space. Downloadable. (watznew.com) (\$25)

Wipe Drive 3.0 from Access Data lets you permanently eliminate individual IDE or SCSI hard drive files or quickly clean whole drives to Department of Defense standards. (\$50)

Sammy Surricate 1.45 - Cute 3-D action/puzzle game for all ages. (www.surricate-software.com) Win 9.x-XP, 3D accelerated graphics card, 15 MB of HD space. Downloadable. (\$20)

Clean It Up! Helps preserve your privacy by deleting caches of file names, etc. that Windows keeps. It will clear your Internet history, cookies, temp folders, recent document listings, etc. Can work in the background and on a schedule. (www.xcentricsoft.com) Downloadable. (\$20)

Essential Net Tools v. 3.1 from TamoSoft, Inc. Win 98 through XP. These are indispensable tools for network administrators, security professionals, etc. (www.tamos.com/-products/nettools). Downloadable. (\$29)

OTHER PROGRAMS

Alpha 5 for Windows from Alpha Software. This version of a major database program has

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12)

been in development for three years and is designed to offer the functionality of MS Access with significantly greater ease of use and the ability to build applications much more rapidly. www.alphasoftware.com. (\$349)

Advanced CATaloguer 2.3, a cataloguer for all removable media files for Windows 95/98/ME/NT 4.0/2000 and XP. It also performs file management tasks, Boolean searches, finds duplicate files on any drive, etc. Be able to access your CDs and other data through easily created databases. (www.evgenysoft.com) (\$35)

Novosoft Inc.'s **Handy Backup 3.5** for Windows 9x/NT/2000/Me/XP automatically backs up critical data to virtually any type of storage including CD-R/CD-RW, remote FTP servers, local network drives, ZIP, JAZ, MO, HDD and floppy disks. Designed for a single computer or a network, it can be used to synchronize files between two computers. Its disk spanning option allows backups to be divided among several CD-R/W disks. Award-winning. Downloadable. <http://www.novosoft-us.com> (\$30)

Click'N Design 3d. Are you creative? Create 2D and 3D text and texture mapping. All major CD Label templates are supported. Includes 100's of designs and over 5,000 photos and pieces of clip art. Includes some photo effects. <http://www.stompinc.com>. (\$20)

XPlay by Mediafour lets you plug an Apple iPod into a Windows computer and transfer MP3 music files back and forth, so that you can organize

songs, artists, playlists and albums for on-the-go listening. Automatic synchronization is also available. Even data files and documents can be transferred to an iPod, which Xplay makes appear like a normal hard drive. XPlay was a finalist for Best of PC Expo 2002 (awarded by *PC Magazine*). www.mediafour.com (\$30)

Reviews are many months overdue from David Trilling (Individual Software's Resume Maker Deluxe) and Carolyn Rosenberg (Family Trees). ♦

Meeting Reporter Needed

Volunteers are needed to write a brief report each month on the LACS General Meeting. It's easy — no computer expertise required — and help in formatting and editing will be provided. We want to thank **Di-
anne Gamble** who wrote the January report and **Leah
Clark** who wrote the February report. **Volunteer now** by sending an e-mail to: editor@lacspc.org or call Dick Smith at (323) 294-3441 and leave a message. ♦

NOTICE

The columns, reviews and other expressions of opinion in *User Friendly* are the opinions of the writers and not necessarily those of the Los Angeles Computer Society. LACS became a California non-profit corporation on July 17, 1991. ♦

Froogle

By **Karl Springer**, LACS

Froogle <<http://froogle.google.com>> is Google's new price comparison search engine. Froogle shows you photos of products that match your search terms and links you to the stores that sell those products.

Froogle does not sell products or promote partner stores within the search results. There is no shopping cart or wallet into which you can place your credit card information. Nor are there preferred merchants who always show up as the first result regardless of what search you enter.

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[...] is a direct quote from the Froogle Web site. ♦



A Grownup's Guide to Audio Files

By **Susan Ives**; reprinted from the Sept, 2002 issue of the PC Alamode

I must have been in junior high school when I bullied my father into buying me a transistor radio. He was a pioneer in the early days of radio and stomped around the house muttering that unless you knew how to build a radio yourself out of a coil of wire and an oatmeal box you had no business listening to one. For him it was all about the technology. For me it was about the music.

It's still about the music but the technology is rearing its ugly head again. All I had to do to listen to my transistor was slap in a 9-volt battery and tune in to my favorite station. After more than 30 years of progress, I'm having to learn how to build the radio. It's a digital radio, made of bits and bytes, but it's a whole lot more complicated than turning that analog dial.

ANALOG/DIGITAL:

To get the gist of digital sound it helps appreciate what came before - analog sound. Physicists can probably give you a concise definition, but for non-scientists who took their last physics classes when dinosaurs ruled the earth, here's how I see it. Analog is physical. In the analog world, something really happens. The gears turn and your analog watch ticks over another minute. The needle bumps up and down on the

grooves of a vinyl disk and sound waves reverberate. Digital is made up of digits, ones and zeros, which represent on and off. Since there are two options, they are called binary digits, or bits. A group of 8 bits is a byte. A megabyte (MB) is 1,048,576 bytes.

On my ancient transistor radio my only choices were between AM and FM, between WIP and WMMR. Now it's more complicated. Digital audio files come in a variety of formats. Within those formats they may be available at different quality levels to accommodate fast and slow Internet download speeds. Depending on the type of file I select I may need to decide to use a particular media player that recognizes that file format. I can download the audio files for later listening, or "stream" them, listening to them on the fly. My old transistor came in a brown leather case. Now, I can even download "skins" on my software media players, changing the way they look with the click of a mouse.

By far, the most popular format for listening to music is MP3. Young people know all about this. Oldies like me had to learn it.

MPG

MPEG (pronounced EM-peg) stands for Moving Picture Experts Group. MPEG contains both video and audio data. DVD movies use MPEG for their video compression. The audio is encoded in . . .

MP3

MP3 which stands for MPEG-1

Audio Layer-3. MP3 is a compression algorithm. An algorithm is a procedure or a formula for solving a problem. (The word has nothing to do with rhythm, so get that out of your head. The term comes from the name of a mathematician, Mohammed ibn-Musa Al-Khowarizmi, who lived in Baghdad in the 9th Century or thereabouts.)

Back to MP3. The compression algorithm works by discarding high and low frequency sounds that only cockroaches can hear. There are different levels of MP3 compression. 128 bit and above compression gets almost CD-like quality. MP3 compression reduces the file size to about 10% of the original or even smaller.

Most MP3 files are made from audio CDs, sometimes in violation of copyright laws. Audio files are extracted from a CD and put on a computer's hard drive using software called a Ripper and then converted to MP3 format using another piece of software called an Encoder. Ripping is also called DAE (Digital Audio Extraction). A Ripper will convert a music CD's files, which are in a .CDA format into a .WAV file. Dale Swafford offers a six hour course on making music CDs, so don't expect me to go into detail. Just toss around the terms ripper and encoder and you'll look like you know what you're talking about.

People share MP3 files over the Internet. This is the main reason why the copyright controversy has arisen. P2P (Peer-to-Peer)

NETWORKING

Networking, is the technology used by Napster, Grokster, KaZaA and file sharing sites. In a nutshell, their software enables users to search the hard drives of other people around the world who use the same program. Users can designate which files are open to the outside and allow people to download them. Although music sharing P2P operates over the Internet, P2P is different from the client-server model used by the Internet.

There are also MP3 files that you can purchase for a small sum, or download for free. Most free MP3 are delivered at 24kbps - not CD quality, but they sound pretty good to me when played on my computer's sound system. Legally free MP3s are usually played by obscure artists. Try out <http://www.mp3.com> to get a feel for what's available. I'm streaming (playing right off the Internet, not downloading) a collection of Celtic songs from MP3.com as I'm writing this article.

PLAYING THEM

So how do you play the darn things? Obviously, you can play them on your PC. If you have a computer with Windows 98 or above, you probably have the Windows Media Player already installed, or you can download something like the RealPlayer. Some of these players are called jukeboxes, which typically means that they can handle several different file formats and organize audio files into playlists, or user-constructed se-

quences of songs. Nobody - but nobody - plays an entire "album" any more. The new best thing is individually crafted compilations. One well-known jukebox is MusicMatch.

There are also portable MP3 listening devices, ranging in price from about \$100 to a whopping \$500+ for the Creative Labs Nomad Jukebox with 40GB of memory. You can either download music, or rip and encode your own audio CDs. No more carrying around your originals, worrying about them getting scratched, misplaced or stolen. MP3 players are rugged and virtually skip-proof. Depending on the memory size, they can play hundreds of hours of music.

If you download your MP3s from the Internet, you can also burn them onto CDs and play them on your regular stereo system or boom box.

OTHER FORMATS

MP3 has been around for a while and it has competition. Microsoft has come up with a competing file format, **WMA (Windows Media Audio)**, which claims to produce a higher quality file at half the size of MP3. Ogg Vorbis is a patent-free compression technology, comparable to WMA and MP3.

Streaming Media is media that comes to you in chunks, called packets, rather than making you wait until an entire file downloads. It is mainly used over the Internet. A little bit of the file downloads, is put in a buffer, or holding area, then starts playing. While

you're listening (or watching; this works for video as well) the next packet is already downloading and poising itself in the buffer. With streaming media you can start listening to a large file right way without waiting for the whole thing to download. Real Networks was in the forefront with this; their files have an extension of .RA. WMA files can also stream. Many radio programs are streamed - I often listen to shows I missed on NPR at www.npr.org . They stream in **Real Audio, Windows Media Audio and Apple QuickTime**.

Some of the older formats are still alive and well.

MIDI

MIDI (Musical Instrument Digital Interface) was designed to record and play back music on digital synthesizers, such as an electronic keyboard. The sounds in a MIDI file are actually embedded in the sound card, so the quality of a MIDI file depends totally on the quality of the sound card. Thirty two different instruments, actual sound samples, can be replicated by the wavetables on soundcards and can be combined and shuffled to sound like 128 instruments - an entire orchestra in a chip!

MIDI files are considered old-fashioned: they sound synthesized, rely on the quality of the soundcard and can't replicate human vocals. You'll find them used as

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 16)

(A GROWNUP'S GUIDE TO AUDIO FILES)

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 15)

backgrounds to Web sites, in karaoke files (the .kar format is a variation of a MIDI) and, of course, in piano bars too cheap to spring for a baby grand. MIDI files have the advantage of being small files because they are just sending instructions to the sound card.

WAVE

WAVE audio file format was created by Microsoft. Wave files - identified by a file extension of .WAV, are used for everything from computer system sounds ("You've Got Mail" is a Wave file) to the sounds on computer games and CD-quality audio.

Most WAV files use PCM (Pulse Code Modulation), a generic digital way of transmitting analog information. PCM is also used in audio CDs and DAT (Digital Audio Tapes). PCM files can be compressed using DPCM, or Differential Pulse Code Modulation. Rather than recording all the 1's and 0s, DPCM just records differences between consecutive samples. APCM (Adaptive Differential Pulse Code Modulation) analyzes a succession of samples and predicting the value of the next sample. DPCM and APCM are LOSSY formats, which means that they compress data by removing some of it, usually redundant information. You probably won't notice the missing data, but the file can't be returned to its exact former state after undergoing lossy compression.

My father is probably chuck-

ling from the grave. After all these years, I'm learning how to build the radio.

Susan Ives is a past president of Alamo PC. ♦

Add USB To An Older Computer

By **Charlie Semple**, LACS

New devices to use with our computers are now commonly USB-connected, but most older computers do not have USB ports. What to do?

First, if you are still running Windows 95, unless it is 95B or 95C, USB may not be supported. If you use Windows 98 or later, there is support for USB.

Next, if you have a PCI slot available, look around for a PCI/USB card module to insert into your computer. Check the "compatibility" of the card. What class and speed processor does it require? Some may operate with a 75 MHz Pentium, others with Pentium II 233 MHz or faster, etc. After you've assured yourself that the card you've chosen should work with your computer, follow the instructions and install it in your machine.

You'll find it pretty easy, and when you're done you'll have 2 to 5 USB ports you didn't have

before and it will be great to be able to load pictures from your digital camera and print them on your USB-connected printer.

You can also simulate a network by using a "cross-connected" USB cable (approximately \$5) and transfer files back and forth between your machines. The software "direct connection" is part of Windows.

Cost

USB cards usually cost from \$15 to \$35, so it isn't a big investment. Searching the Internet for "USB Cards" will bring lots of information to help you.

♦



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Producing Your Own Business Card — It's Easier Than You Think

By **Kuo Yen Ng**; reprinted from the May, 2000 issue of the PC Alamode

Calling cards can be created from scratch, without any help from a commercially designed layout or template. You can produce your own customized cards, limited only by your taste and ingenuity. Necessity is the mother of invention. On various occasions when I needed to give someone my e-mail address or telephone number or such information, I tired of writing on flimsy napkins or scraps of nondescript paper. I declined to use my old cards that were beautifully printed by a printer on nicely textured beige colored card stock. They don't use phone numbers with four digits anymore, anyway. A touch of class would be to flip out your own card with all the pertinent information on it and include a color spot of Fido or pet tabby or grandchild with rosy cheeks or a bright nosegay.

TECHNIQUE

You will need a computer, a scanner and a color printer. Any image manipulation software makes this job easier. Business card software CDs often come packaged with other stuff as a kit. Check with your software store for business card specific software. If you are a hobby type, purchase the card stock, make 10 copies of your card, use an adhesive like glue stick and stick

them in place, scan the sheet, and you're ready to print. Office supply stores have heavy paper stock intended for business cards and you can print ten cards on a standard 8 ½ x 11 inch sheet. They are die cut so they come apart readily. A package of 25 or 35 sheets costs around \$6.00. I selected my photo from a 35mm transparency a friend shot while we were having lunch at a restaurant that had colorful stained glass windows. The sunlight through the glass put white, purple, green, yellow and red stripes on my head. Not a pretty sight, but it is attention getting. Throw a bunch of cards on a table. Which one stands to be noticed first? I scanned the slide with my scanner. I opened the photo on my image manipulation software. I cropped the image, preferring a narrow vertical format. I used the rubber stamp feature to eliminate a busy background and wound up with me and the dark background. I preferred to bleed the top and bottom of the photo. Registration with the card stock was chancy, but this ain't missile science. Just the facts. Simplification is the key. As I am a watercolorist and I sign my paintings a certain way, I chose my art signature as the logotype of my card. I loaded up my No. 2 watercolor brush with paint and painted my signature about nine times. I selected what I considered the best of the lot. I scanned the logo and placed it with my photo. You can use the same method with pen or brush or turkey quill. I chose a sans serif type face to contrast

with the logo. I wanted the telephone number to be the most prominent, so it's on the first line with 14 pt type and the less important area code in 12 pt. Next in importance to me is the e-mail address. It is in 12 pt. The street address and city and state and zip code followed. I flush lifted everything. Being an old newspaper person and layout artist, I prefer eyeballing rather than mathematical formulae to place elements. If you are in business or belong to a club or want to identify your activity, do put this information on your card. I am retired, but I didn't want to put "retired" on the card. Someone might think I was old or something. Perhaps a curmudgeon, but not old. I didn't want to put painter or watercolorist on it because I'm not interested in trying to impress someone who wouldn't be impressed anyway. I just don't like to write my address with my ballpoint pen on soggy, stained paper napkins.

Kuo Yen Ng is a USAA retiree who passes the time painting watercolours and occasionally checks for e-mail. ♦



Computing Factoids

THERE ARE UNRELATED THINGS I PICK UP IN E-MAIL THAT ARE TERRIFIC-BUT NOT LONG ENOUGH FOR AN ARTICLE. HERE ARE TWO OF THEM.

Complied by **Steve Bass**,
Pasadena IBM Users Group

Saving Paper? Ha!

I just bought a program (which I think is excellent) called "Cool Edit Pro" from Syntrillium (www.syntrillium.com) which is audio editing and processing program. The registration card has a box to check that has this amusing statement:

"Yes! Please send me a hard-copy manual. (A complete manual is included on your CD. In the interest of paper conservation, Syntrillium ships

hard-copy manuals only on demand.)"

So I can print it out (conserving their paper) or have them send me something that should have been in the box in the first place (conserving my paper, 225 pages for the manual plus 42 pages for the addendum).

Since I paid \$399 for the program, I think I'll conserve my paper instead of theirs. --*Stan Slonkosky*

LISTEN UP AND TAKE HEED!

I always tell people to unplug their PC when working on the insides. It's something I never do. My unsolicited advice? Do it. All the time.

Here's why: I added a sound card to my wife's PC the other day. Easy enough, right? Then, while the system was up

and running, I replaced the cover. I've done it that way since I started with PCs in 1983. This time it bit me on the butt. The case cover touched an add-in card and the system-board fried. Better it should have happened to my PC, you know what I'm saying? -*Steve Bass*

Steve Bass is a Contributing Editor with PC World and runs the Pasadena IBM Users Group. He's also a founding member of APCUG. Check his Home Office columns at <http://snurl.com/homeoffice> and sign up for the Steve Bass online newsletter at <http://snurl.com/signup> \$

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| Patron | 250 |
| Angel (individual) or Corporate | \$1000 (or more). |

Subscription to *User Friendly* is included with membership. Non-member subscription is \$30.

Contributing and higher categories of members may attend all SIG meetings without charge, including those where an admission fee is normally charged. A corporate membership includes ten individual memberships including

free SIG attendance. Associate members are people who live in the same household or work for the same company as a regular member; they do not receive their own subscriptions to *User Friendly*. Students must prove full-time status. If you have a question, please call our Voice Mail at 310-289-7177.

In addition to LACS monthly general meetings, members enjoy these special benefits:

- ◇ Monthly Journal *User Friendly*. We publish your submissions! Free classified ads to buy or sell your computer items.
- ◇ Eligibility to win our presenters' door prizes.
- ◇ Special Interest Groups (SIGs) to solve your problems.
- ◇ Occasional swap meets and information on trade shows.
- ◇ Product discounts, special offers and group purchases.

- ◇ Free software and computer books (if you review them for *User Friendly*).
- ◇ Network with people sharing your interests.
- ◇ Members and Quick Consultants to call when you need help.
- ◇ Rewards for Recruiting Members: LACS will give you three extra entries for drawings for each new member you sign up. You may use any or all of them at any meeting within six months. While you may not win two prizes at one meeting, if your name is drawn twice, you may swap the first prize for the second one if you wish.
- ◇ Members receive LACS announcements and members' Q & A info via LACS e-mail lists. Send requests for subscription changes with your e-mail address to:
changes.form@lacspc.org ◇

LACS

Membership Application

Please return this form with applicable fees to:
Los Angeles Computer Society, 10410 Palms Blvd., PMB 13, Los Angeles CA 90034-4873

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- | | | | |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Renew | <input type="checkbox"/> Regular - \$36.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> Associate - \$12.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> Student - \$18.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> New | <input type="checkbox"/> Contributor - \$50.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> Supporting - \$75.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> Benefactor - \$100.00 |

Name: First Last Name of Associate: First Last

Company: Your Title/Occupation Retired?

Address: Home Work Address

City, State, Zip + 4

Phone: (Home): (Business):

(Do not Publish Phone No. in Roster)
e-mail address:

I think I am a:

- Beginner Intermediate Advanced Programmer Professional Hobbyist

I am willing to : (at least one, Please)

- Serve on a Committee Assist the Editor Help at the Meetings Join a SIG Other _____

User Friendly

Los Angeles Computer Society
 10410 Palms Blvd. PMB 13
 Los Angeles, CA 90034-4873

Voicemail: 310-289-7177
 Web site:
[http:// www.lacspc.org](http://www.lacspc.org)

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- Author: Your article appears on page _____

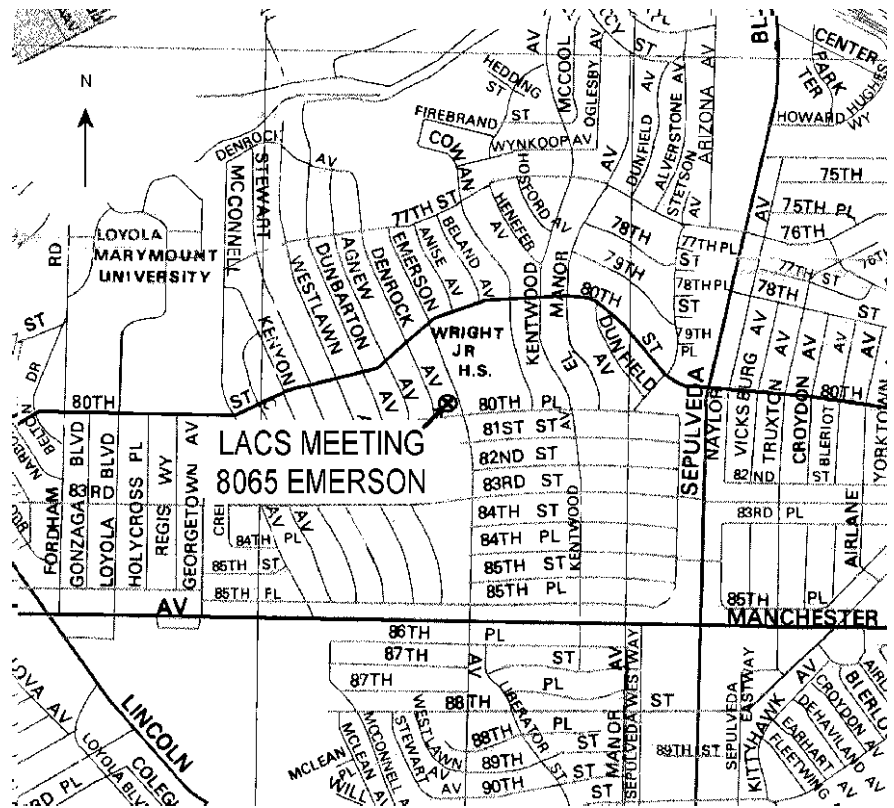
DIRECTIONS TO GENERAL MEETING

From the North: Take Sepulveda Blvd. SOUTH to W. 80th St. Turn WEST/right and go about one mile to Emerson Ave. Turn SOUTH/left and go one long block to W. 80th Place. Fellowship Hall is on the Northwest corner of Emerson and W. 80th Place.

From the South, East or West: Take Manchester Ave. to Emerson Ave. Turn North and go about eight blocks to W. 80th Place. Fellowship Hall is on the Northwest corner of Emerson and W. 80th Place. There is plenty of street parking and a small parking lot West of the church. ♦

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