

JANUARY 2017

User Friendly



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JANUARY GENERAL MEETING

Favorite Utility Programs

Speaker: **Jim Mc Knight**, LACS Director



Jim will present some of his favorite utility programs that can benefit the regular PC user. He will discuss, demonstrate and answer your questions. PC utilities can make your computer run faster, be more secure, be less cluttered, and help solve technical problems. Many utilities are free or low-cost. He will cover as many of these utilities as time permits:

- **Moo0 System Analyzer:** Find the bottleneck in your slow PC.
- **SpeedFan:** Periodically check out how hot your PC is running.
- **CrystalDiskInfo:** See if your hard drive is showing signs of imminent failure.
- **CCleaner:** See the many new functions that this old reliable cleaner program has added.
- **Icon Restorer:** Automatically put the Desktop Icons back in place after they go nuts.

Jim worked for the IBM Corporation for 38 years. He installed, diagnosed and repaired a variety of room-size data center computer systems. After retirement, Jim started playing around with PC's. This hobby took him to LACS where he put his technical writing and diagnostic skills to use by teaching and assisting members, ultimately resulting in his Website at www.jimopi.net. Jim offers all his articles, tips, and guides free of charge, as well as providing free PC services to members of LACS.

Tuesday, January 10, 2017, 7:30 - 9:00 PM
Fellowship Hall, 8065 Emerson Ave.
Westchester, L.A. 90045

An informal Computer Forum meets from
6:30 to 7:20 to answer individual questions.
 All are welcome.

Refreshments and Socializing at **7:00**
 More info: www.lacspc.org
 or at 310-398-0366



NOTE meeting time change.
 See page 3.

Member of



An International
 Association of Technology
 & Computer User Groups

- www.apcug2.org
- www.facebook.com/APCUG
- www.twitter.com/apcug
- www.youtube.com/apcugvide

GENERAL MEETING REPORT December 13, 2016

By Leah Clark, LACS Editor

LACS members and guests got a good start on celebrating the holidays at the LACS second annual **Holiday Potluck Party**. Lee Freehling was the chair. She thanks all those who helped to make this party special. LACS provided Pollo Loco Chicken and hot drinks, and the board brought cold drinks. Members brought a variety of hors d'oeuvres, entrees, salads, side dishes, and decadent deserts. We all ate our fill and then more.

Especially enjoyable was the socializing and fellowship. We all got to know each other a little better. One Meetup member joined us.

Our after-dinner speaker, Sherwood Jones, an award-winning Toastmaster, entertained us with a humorous and lively presentation depicting different areas of technology. He was very much enjoyed by all. Laughter is good!

Our president, Maurice, introduced the new board for 2017. I know we can all work together to make it a good year for LACS.

Since pictures speak louder than words, here are some views of the party.

**Happy Holidays
and Happy
Computing,
Los Angeles
Computer Society**



(Continued on Page 4)

FROM YOUR EDITOR

General Meeting Time Change

The board decided to adjust the starting time and the order of the general meetings. This is to make it easier for working people and those dealing with rush hour traffic to get to the presentations on time. We hope this will encourage more members to attend the meetings, because it is difficult to get good speakers if the audience is small.

Starting with the January 10 meeting, the order of the meetings will be:

- **6:00:** Set up A/V equipment, chairs, etc.
- **6:30:** Computer Forum to answer individual questions
- **7:00:** Refreshments and socializing
- **7:30:** Presentation
- **9:00:** Adjourn

Roster Update

An updated roster will be published in the February issue of *User Friendly*. At the January meeting you will have an opportunity to correct your contact information. Or you may go to www.lacspc.org. Click on **Members** in the bar under the picture. That goes to **LACS Member Forms**. Select **Click Here** for the form you need.

Please give us your corrected information by **January 15**. Many thanks!

Secretary Needed

LACS still needs a board secretary. The secretary needs to attend the board meetings once a month and take and write up the minutes. As a board member, you will have a say in the operations of LACS. I know there is someone out there who can do this. Is it you?

Which Are You?

There are three kinds of people: those who let it happen, those who make it happen, and those who wonder what happened.

Many Thanks....

... to **Gene Jacobs** for his many years maintaining our Membership Data Base. He is truly appreciated, and we wish him the best in the future. We thank **George Wolkon** for taking on this task. We are most grateful.

... and to **Rosalie Kirsch** for being the Culver City Senior Center Computer Lab Coordinator. We are most appreciative of her efficient work and hope she stays happy. We thank **Loling Beckman** for continuing this important work. Thank you, Loling.

Letters to the Editor

It has been suggested to me that I start a "Letters To the Editor" column. I will print 'most' any comments LACS members have about anything in *User Friendly*. I must have your letters by the 18th of the month. Send them to leahjc (at) sbcglobal.net.

In Memoriam

LACS member, **William Rickles, MD** was born in Texas on August 22, 1933 and passed away in Los Angeles, CA. on April 4, 2016.



He graduated from SMU, did a Master's at Baylor Medical School in Neurophysiology, and received his MD from Harvard Medical School. He joined the Air Force as a flight surgeon. He did his residency in Psychiatry at UCLA and spent 15 years as chief of the clinical Psychophysiology Research Lab at the UCLA Neuropsychiatric Institute. He did his psychoanalytic training at the LA Institute (now NCP). He published papers and taught many courses. His private practice was, as he referred to it, multimodal, from Virtual Reality Immersion Therapy for phobias, neurofeedback for stress related disorders to psychotherapy and psychoanalysis.

Dr. Rickles joined LACS in May, 1993 and was a member until his death.

(Taken from the Los Angeles Times obituary from Apr. 22 to Apr. 24, 20)

Holiday Potluck Party

(Continued from Page 2)



Sherwood Jones



Welcome to LACS's Holiday Potluck Party



President Maurice Stephenson



President-elect Stanley Johnson



DIGITAL PHOTO SIG REPORT

By **Elliot Silverstein, LACS**

The topic presented by Elliot Silverstein at the November 28, 2016 meeting was a **New Concept in Cameras**.

This is the **Light L6 camera** (Light is the brand name) that is to become available in early 2017 as the camera on an Android cell phone. The camera is said to be able to match the quality and many of the capabilities of a large Single Lens Reflex (SLR) camera with resolution ranging from 13 to 52 megapixels, and focal lengths ranging from 28mm to 150 mm (35 mm camera equivalent focal lengths).

The camera system consists of 16 cameras, each with $f/2.4$ aperture, all mounted in the back of the phone. A mirror on each of these cameras enables the camera to view the area looking out from the back, the same as the camera on a standard cell phone.

The system is composed of 5 cameras with 28 mm focal length, 5 cameras with 70mm focal length, and 6 cameras with 150 mm focal length. When the shutter is pressed, 10 or 11 of these cameras simultaneously record an image. The images overlap in such a way that they all contribute to the image at the desired focal length. The computer within the unit unscrambles and combines the data, producing a single image. Focus and depth-of-field can be adjusted, if desired, after the photo is taken.

The fact that all images can be made with aperture $f/2.4$ means that photos made in dim light can achieve adequate exposure. And the fact that five images are combined reduces the image noise. One can view more details of this revolutionary camera at the web site <https://light.co>. A gallery of photos taken with this camera is also shown on this site.

It is claimed that this technology (if successful and sufficiently reliable) could eventually replace the standard SLR with its large and heavy variable focal length lens. At present, the price of the camera and phone is listed as \$1699.

Nine people were present at the meeting. ♦



DAYTIME SIG REPORT

By **Edie Ditmars, LACS** and
Jim McKnight, LACS

For starters, what, exactly is this “cloud” thing?

“Anything not on your computer,” Jim tells us, “is in ‘the cloud.’” Although we think of specific services, such as Drop Box or Google Drive, as “the cloud,” the term is ambiguous. We’re floating in the clouds whenever we send or receive email, shop, bank or order a library book online. Using any program that stores data on its site can be called using the “cloud.”

If you’re not sure about the security of a “cloud” service, contact the vendor. Information should also be available on the vendor’s web site. At a recent LACS general meeting, our speaker, an FBI supervisor, stated that he uses the cloud, including for banking, with confidence.

Many online services encrypt data to all eyes but those of the user. As a result, hackers are more likely to access a user account by guessing passwords and answers to secret questions than by accessing the encrypted data itself. (Psst! Jim suggests: “Use false answers.” But write down the wrong answers.) Encryption, however, does not protect data from ransomware that extorts payment to unlock a hijacked computer.

A “key logger” allows a hacker to see every step the user takes, despite encryption. Malwarebytes and SuperAntiSpyware, however, will identify whether a key logger is on your PC. If a program asks you to “sign in with,” e.g., Facebook or Yahoo, don’t do it. Linking such accounts reduces your privacy. Sign in to each account separately and with a different password.

Jim elaborated on email forwarding from a personal domain. Correspondents who use your email address never know the real address, or identity profile, to which their mail is being forwarded. Gmail gives the user the option to set up multiple identities for replying to the original address, is very versatile in working with other email providers and has the best spam filter. Jim encourages everyone to

have at least one Gmail account, as well as an alternate email address listed with each email account. Every email account should include an alternate (recovery) address to use in case you forget your password.

An “email client” is a program, such as Thunderbird or Outlook, that allows you to access your mail directly without using a Web Browser. Logging in to your email with an email client needs only to be done once, then the user only needs to click the email program icon. Most “email providers,” such as AOL or Gmail, store your mail on their web server. Those pesky ads outside your email come only when accessing your mail using the web browser, not with your email client.

Passwords! There are many options for reducing the need to log-in repeatedly at each website. Jim does not use a password manager but keeps passwords, carefully encrypted, on a flash drive.

VeraCrypt, a descendant of **TruCrypt**, is a program that allows the user to enter only one password to open a list of passwords with website associations. VeraCrypt has good reviews but Jim has used only TruCrypt. (*Editor's Note: See page 12 of this issue.*)

Have you used VeraCrypt? Please tell Jim what you think of the program.

Jim recommends using Sandboxie and Malwarebytes free version, along with MSE (in Windows 7) or Windows Defender (in Windows 10). Never run more than one anti-virus that has full-time protection running.

Image backups: The most popular Image backup program among LACS members is Acronis True Image. Because in almost every version the Acronis back-up program user interface is different, Jim needs to see an individual computer to help members set up Acronis. He again demonstrated some of the options in True Image and advised that, despite the option in the newer versions to back up all drives at once, it's better to back-up each drive individually and to make sure you are backing up ALL partitions on the drive you are backing up. Gene Barlow, <support (at) ugr7.com>, sells Acronis at a discount to user group members. Gene is very helpful and is available via email and phone to LACS members.

Windows 10: A massive Windows 10 update is due March 2017. Microsoft will no longer be releasing new versions of Windows but will merely update Windows 10. With each large update, icons, menus and programs may change, not necessarily for the home user's benefit.

Oh, and this gem: Web of Trust (WOT) is selling your personal information and browsing

KEEPING UP WITH OPEN SOURCE

By **Cal Esneault**, former President of CCCC and leader of Open Source Workshops & SIGs *Cajun Clickers Computer Club News*, April 2016
www.clickers.org
tsa70785 (at) gmail.com

Once you start using open-source software, either by running a Linux OS or by installing cross-platform tools on Windows or Mac OS systems, the reality sets in that there is a whole new world of vast opportunities available without the drawbacks of financial cost or restrictive licenses. How does one navigate this new environment? My advice is to use the **DistroWatch** website as a key resource. Besides being a jumping off point to find Linux distributions, it also has a great newsletter with links to current information. In particular, I like to keep up by reading recent newsletters and listening to the latest podcasts. Below is a sample of the left-hand pane on the DistroWatch web site with links to newsletters and podcasts.

Latest Newsletters	
03/14	Ubuntu Weekly Newsletter 458
03/11	Raspberry Pi Weekly 143
03/11	Red Hat's Friday Five 03/11
Latest Podcasts	
03/17	BSD Now - 133 (OGG, MP3)
03/15	FLOSS Weekly - 379 (MP3)
03/15	LAS - 408 (OGG, MP3)
03/14	LinuxGameCast - 186 (MP3)
03/14	#systemau - 27 (OGG, MP3)
03/14	Living Linux (de) - 20 (MP3)
03/10	Bad Voltage - 1x62 (OGG, MP3)

For newsletters, you can see the variety of platforms: Ubuntu, a Debian-based OS; Raspberry Pi, a single board computer using ARM processors; and, Red Hat, an RPM-based OS used in enterprise environments. The resources are listed chronologically, and the list changes with time as new issues are made available.

Podcasts (or netcasts, for purists), are audio files where there is a general discussion with recurring hosts typically focused on recent news items of interest to users of open-source programs. The two common audio coding formats, MP3 and OGG, provide "lossy" data compression which reduces file size while still providing sufficient dynamic range for conversational programming.

BSD Now and **LAS** (Linux Action Show) are both productions of Jupiter Broadcasting, an organization that has been producing audios and videos since 2008. From their studios in Washington State, they now produce ten shows, most produced weekly. In general, shows follow a news format covering recent events with a main segment of more in-depth coverage of a specific open-source software item.

FLOSS Weekly is a netcast produced by TWiT.tv, a company in central California started in 2005 with about two dozen weekly podcasts now being produced in both audio and video formats. FLOSS stands for "Free, Libre, and Open-Source Software." Its shows generally concentrate, in depth, on a particular application or set of software tools. Content is aimed at more experienced users.

Podcasts usually follow a pattern of style set by the hosts, and whether you like a particular show is very subjective for each individual. Prepare to take some time to sample a variety of podcasts before you find a set that meets your own views and needs. Here are a few other shows that may be of interest (many available in both audio and video formats):

- GNU World Order
- Hacker Public Radio
- Mintcast
- Linux Luddites
- Sunday Morning Linux Review
- Blender Podcast

- LinuxLUGcast
- Category 5 Technology TV

If this is not enough, go to the "Tech Podcast Network" site to view their list, or simply use your Internet search engine to search for new shows. Once you find a suitable list of shows that you personally like, you will have a continual flow of information and entertainment to keep you up to date. ♦

TRAFFIC LIGHT BY BITDEFENDER

By **Joe Durham**, Editor

Quad-Cities Computer Society, IA
Qbits, May, 2016

www.qcs.org

joseph85_us (at) yahoo.com

I recently added an extension to Google Chrome called **Traffic Light** by BitDefender. This is a cross-browser extension available from the Google Play store. It purports to analyze, and notify you of tracking activities as you browse the web. Traffic Light places a green colored icon in the upper right hand corner of the screen if it determines that the site you are currently viewing is safe. If there are tracking activities present at this site, a small yellow or gold icon is superimposed on the green light. No tracking activities are indicated if this golden symbol is not displayed.

While at your website location, click on the green symbol and a menu appears that shows whether the site is safe, and below that the number of tracking activities it detects.

A **settings** option in white text gives you the ability to configure Traffic Light to monitor those areas you wish. I choose to turn on the Facebook and Twitter protection. Traffic Light now indicates on the Facebook newsfeed itself with its icon whether the feed is deemed safe.

As you look at the tracking activity, if any is seen, you can click on the **feedback** button in the menu to notify Bitdefender of your concern.

<http://www.bitdefender.com/solutions/trafficlight.html>

Editor's Note: Has anyone used Traffic Light? Would it be an alternative to Web of Trust?

LACS NOTICES

WELCOME ALL

George Wolkon

Data Base Manager, LACS

New Members (0)

Renewals (7)

Deborah Alpert

Leah Clark

Roger Gaefcke

Melvin Gaines

Leonardo Israel

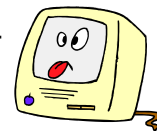
Stanley Johnson

Stephanie Nordlinger



FIX YOUR PC FOR FREE?

Jim McKnight has an open offer to all LACS members to diagnose, repair, disinfect, or upgrade members' PC's for free.



There are certain limitations to Jim's offer, so see the details by clicking the "Fix my PC for Free?" link at www.jimopi.net.

Non-members can wisely invest in a one-year LACS membership (\$40.00), and Jim will fix your PC problem, too.

HOW TO CHANGE YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION

Go to www.lacspc.org. Click on **Members** in the bar under the picture. That goes to **LACS Member Forms**. Select **Click Here** for the form you need. Or send your changes to membership@lacspc.org.

GENERAL MEETING PRESENTATIONS

January 10: Favorite Utilities

February 14: Microsoft Store presentation

Note: This schedule is subject to change. Check email and *User Friendly* for updates.

GENERAL MEETING SNACK SCHEDULE

By **Sylvia Q. Davis**, Hospitality Chair

Refreshments and socializing will be at **7:00**, with the meeting starting at **7:30**. Please bring refreshments at **7:00**.

January 10: O through S

February 14: T through Z

March 14: A through D

April 11: E through I

Bring **finger-food** treats such as fresh fruit, veggies, nuts, cookies, cold drinks and the like. LACS provides hot drinks.

See your email for updates.

Please pick up your remainders and serving pieces at the end of the meeting.



PODCASTS

To listen to the podcasts of our general meetings, go to <http://www.lacspc.org/category/audio-files/>. Click on the session you wish to hear.

LACS IS ON TWITTER AND FACEBOOK

On **Twitter**, follow us at:

https://twitter.com/LA_CompSoc

To see the LACS **Facebook** page, go to <https://www.facebook.com/lacspc>, or log into your Facebook account. In the search box on top, type "Los Angeles Computer Society."

LACS HAS JOINED MEETUP

Our Meetup group is called: "**Los Angeles Computer Society and Technology Meetup**."

Go to <http://www.meetup.com/Los-Angeles-Computer-Society-and-Technology-Meetup/> and click on "**Join Us**." Also, **RSVP** for our general meetings. Please join - it's free. If it is seen that a lot of people are interested, others will be encouraged to join. We hope this will result in new members for LACS.

JANUARY 2017

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 Happy New Year!	2	3	4 Board Meeting 7:00 PM	5	6	7
8	9 Basics & Beyond SIG 7:00 PM	10 General Meeting 7:30 PM	11	12	13	14
15	16  Martin Luther King, Jr. Day	17	18	19	20	21
22	23 Digital Photo SIG 7:00 PM	24 Daytime SIG 1:00 PM	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

Watch your email for the dates of future meetings at the Microsoft Store.

This Calendar may change.

Check your e-mail or with the SIG leader before attending a meeting.

General Meeting: Fellowship Hall on the 2nd Tuesday of the month at 7:30 PM.

Most SIGs meet at the Santa Monica College Bundy Campus, room 235, unless otherwise noted.

The **Daytime SIG** meets at the Felicia Mahood Senior Center.

The **Board** may meet at Charlotte Semple's home or at Santa Monica College. Members in good standing are welcome to attend.

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS (SIGs)

SIG meetings are led by and for LACS members. Visitors are welcome to attend.

To inquire about a SIG, check your e-mail or call the contact person in advance.

Basics & Beyond SIG	Paula Van Berkom	310-398-6734	2nd Mon. 7 PM SMC, Bundy Campus
Daytime SIG	Jim McKnight	310-823-7829	4th Tues. 1 PM, Felicia Mahood Ctr.
Digital Photo SIG	Nancy Cattell	310-452-2130	
"	Elliot Silverstein	310-670-1544	4th Mon. 7 PM, SMC, Bundy Campus

New SIGs can be created if there is sufficient interest and leadership.

ADDRESSES

Felicia Mahood Senior Center, 11338 Santa Monica Blvd., West LA 90025 (at Corinth)

Fellowship Hall, Westchester United Methodist Church, 8065 Emerson Ave., Westchester 90045

Santa Monica College Bundy Campus, 3171 S. Bundy Drive, LA 90066 (west on College Dr., 1 block South of Airport Avenue, 2 blocks North of Rose.) Our room number may change each semester. Look for it on a sign opposite the elevator on the first floor.

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. Or you may use a Helper's e-mail address, found in your LACS Roster. We hope that you find this free service useful. ***If you are experienced using a particular program or topic, please volunteer to be a consultant.*** To volunteer for this list or to make corrections, please e-mail or call Leah Clark at Leahjc (at) sbcglobal.net or at 310-677-2792. More Quick Consultants are always needed. You may decline or postpone a call if it comes at an inconvenient time.

Adobe Creative Suite: PDF, InDesign, PhotoShop, etc. - 17	L.A. Free Net - 6	Photoshop - 17
Android Smartphones - 5	Linux - 11	Picasa - 14
Apple devices - 15	Lotus Word Pro, Approach - 12	Quicken - 3, 5
Anti Malware - 12	Mozilla Firefox, Thunderbird - 12	Thunderbird - 12
Digital Imaging, Editing - 8, 14	MS Excel - 3, 15	Visual Basic - 13
Digital Photography - 8, 14	MS Word - 3, 4, 10	Websites - 13
Dragon Naturally Speaking - 4	MS Outlook - 5, 15, 17	Win XP - Vista - 12, 16
Genealogy - 5, 7	MS Outlook Express - 15	Windows - 5, 12
Hardware - 12	MS PowerPoint - 15	WordPerfect - 5
iPhone, iPad, iPod - 15	MS Publisher - 2, 7	
	Open Office - 16	

No.	Name	Preferred Phone for Calls	From	To
2	Mercer, Bob	310-837-5648	9:00 AM	10:00 PM
3	Wilder, Joan	310-472-8445	9:00 AM	9:00 PM
4	Hershman, Irv	310-397-9453	11:00 AM	11:00 PM
5	Nordlinger, Stephanie	323-299-3244	5:00 PM	10:00 PM
6	Springer, Karl	424-646-3410	10:00 AM	10:00 PM
7	Clark, Leah	310-677-2792	9:00 AM	5:00 PM
8	Silverstein, Elliott	310-670-1544	10:00 AM	10:00 PM
10	Beckman, Loling	310-471-7893	10:00 AM	6:00 PM
11	Hughes, Bill	424-259-1818	Any	Any
12	McKnight, Jim	310-823-7829	8:00 AM	7:00 PM
13	Ialongo, Gilbert	310-641-7906	9:00 AM	5:00 PM
14	Schneir, Jerry	310-451-4140	9:00 AM	10:00 PM
15	Van Berkomp, Paula	310-398-6734	9:00 AM	5:00 PM
16	Johnson, Carol	310-372-8535	10:00 AM	9:00 PM
17	Rozek, E.J.	310-823-3811	Noon	8:00 PM

OFFICERS, DIRECTORS AND LEADERS

Title	Name	Term	Telephone
President	Stanley Johnson	2017	424-216-6984
Past President	Maurice Stephenson	2017	310-625-0450
Vice President	Stephanie Nordlinger	2017	323-299-3244
Secretary	Vacant - Please volunteer	2017	
Treasurer	Charlotte Semple	2017	310-398-5052
Director	Leah Clark	2018	310-677-2792
Director	Jim McKnight	2018	310-823-7829
Director	Emil (E.J.) Rozek	2018	310-823-3811
Director	Paula Van Berkom	2017	310-398-6734
Director	George Wolkon	2017	310-459-2671
APCUG Rep.	Leah Clark		310-677-2792
Car Pools	Vacant - Please volunteer		
Changes	Karl Springer		424-646-3410
"	George Wolkon		310-459-2671
Corporate Counsel	Stephanie Nordlinger		323-299-3244
CCSC Computer Lab	Loling Beckman		
Hospitality Chair	Sylvia Davis		213-924-4927
Asst. Hospitality Chair	Vacant - Please volunteer		
Membership Database	George Wolkon		310-459-2671
Newsletter Editor	Leah Clark		310-677-2792
Program Chair	Stephanie Nordlinger		323-299-3244
"	Stanley Johnson		424-216-6984
Publicity	Mark Presky		310-398-0366
Quick Consultants	Leah Clark		310-677-2792
SIG Coordinator	Vacant - please volunteer		
Webmaster	Paula Van Berkom		310-398-6734
Welcome Chair	Irene Mussack		310-672-3077
Asst. Welcome Chair	Linda La Roche		310-645-4546

Contact Information

Website www.lacspc.org **Newsletter Editor** Leahjc (at) sbcglobal.net
Voice Mail 1-310-398-0366 **Webmaster** sitemaster (at) lacspc.org
e-mail ContactUs (at) lacspc.org **Change of Address** membership (at) lacspc.org

The **ContactUs (at) lacspc.org** address goes to our **president** and **vice-president**.
 If the message is for another board member, they will forward it to the correct person.
 To contact other officers, directors, leaders or members directly, members may use our roster for phone numbers and e-mail addresses.

FILE ENCRYPTION

By **Dick Maybach**

Brookdale Computer Users' Group, NJ

BUG Bytes, July, 2016

www.bcug.com

n2nd (at) att.net

I wrote an article on file encryption that appeared in the August 2014 Bytes, available at <http://www.bcug.com>. While I was writing, **TrueCrypt**, a popular tool for this task, was discontinued by its anonymous developers amid speculation that it had been compromised. As a result, I recommended using **GnuPG** for file encryption.

This is still valid advice, but two successors to TrueCrypt have since appeared, **CipherShed**, and **VeraCrypt**, <http://veracrypt.codeplex.com/>. Both can read files encrypted with TrueCrypt, but only CipherShed can write in this format. If compatibility with TrueCrypt files is important, you should use CipherShed, otherwise use VeraCrypt, which has somewhat improved security and appears to be the more active project.

The remainder of this article will discuss only VeraCrypt, which is available at the CodePlex site given above. You can also get it from **SourceForge**, but this site has been known to include malware with its downloads. SourceForge now has new owners and may again be reliable, but why take a chance? You may be using **GnuPG** with its public/private key method to encrypt your e-mail, and as I discussed in my previous article, you can also use it for file encryption. The advantages of doing this are fewer keys to manage and having only one encryption program. However, you may find some features of VeraCrypt useful, and its single-key encryption can be more secure than the GnuPG's public/private type, provided you use a strong password. You should view encryption as a means of reducing, not eliminating risk. If the National Security Agency (NSA) really wants to decrypt your file, it most likely can.

VeraCrypt creates and maintains on-the-fly encrypted volumes, and data is automatically encrypted before it is saved. No data stored in an encrypted volume can be read without using



the correct password. VeraCrypt stores decrypted data only in RAM; it stores only encrypted data on a disk. Even when the volume is mounted, data on the disk remains encrypted. When you restart or turn off your computer, the volume will be dismounted and files stored in it will be encrypted. To read them, you have to mount the volume with VeraCrypt and provide the correct password.

You can download a 162-page manual from VeraCrypt's Website, but I won't try to cover that here. Instead, I'll walk through establishing and using an encrypted volume to show how easy this is. The screen-shots are from a Linux machine, but the differences for other operating systems are quite minor.

Screen 1 on page 13 shows VeraCrypt's opening screen. (On Windows, the slots column would be labeled "Drive" and the rows would be labeled D:, E:, etc.) Your first step will be to create an encrypted volume, which you do by selecting a slot and clicking the *Create Volume* button.

You will then see **Screen 2** (Page 13). Select the upper option to create an encrypted volume as a file and the lower to encrypt an entire external device, such as a memory stick. Then click *Next* to continue.

On **Screen 3** (Page 13) you choose whether the encrypted volume will be visible or hidden. The first choice is by far more common.

You next specify where to store the volume: **Screen 4** (page 14). Initially the location window will be empty. Just click on *Select File...*, choose its directory, and enter a filename. Important – be sure to choose a filename different from that of an existing file in the chosen directory, or the existing file will be deleted!

You will then go through screens where you select an encryption method (the default, AES, is fine), a volume size, and a password. Give some thought to the size. If you choose 100 Mbytes, the volume will occupy that much room on your disk, even though it contains only a 1-kbyte file. But if you choose 1 Mbyte and have 10 Mbytes of data, you will have to create another volume with enough capacity for your data. Password choice is also important. For example, if the volume will be stored in the cloud and contains

sensitive data, such as passwords to your on-line banking account, you should use a long and obscure password, which you safeguard, perhaps in a password manager such as **KeePassX**. The password screen also offers additional safeguards, such as key files; see the VeraCrypt manual for more information. You then select a file-system, probably FAT or NTFS for Windows users.

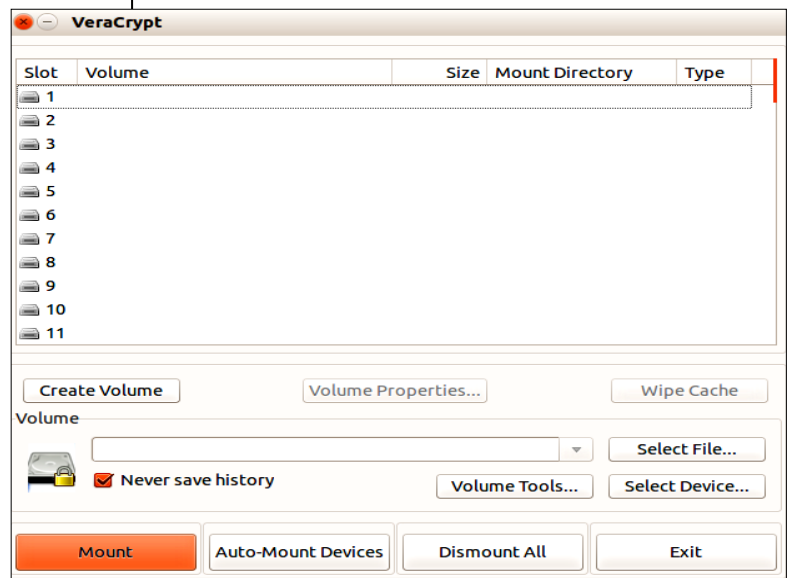
Finally, you'll see **Screen 5** (Page 14). Before you click the *Format* button, move the cursor randomly around the screen, which will increase the strength of the encryption. When you click *Format*, VeraCrypt will create an empty volume with the name and location you specified previously.

Before you can use the volume, you must mount it. In the VeraCrypt opening screen (Screen 1) click *Select File*, choose the volume you created, click the *Mount* button, and enter its password. (Depending on your operating system and permissions, you may also be asked for the administrator password.) **Screen 6** (Page 14) shows the result. In this case, the volume is located at `home/n2nd/VeraCrypt` and is assigned to Slot 1. (On a Windows PC, the column would be labeled "Drive" and you would see the usual drive letters.)

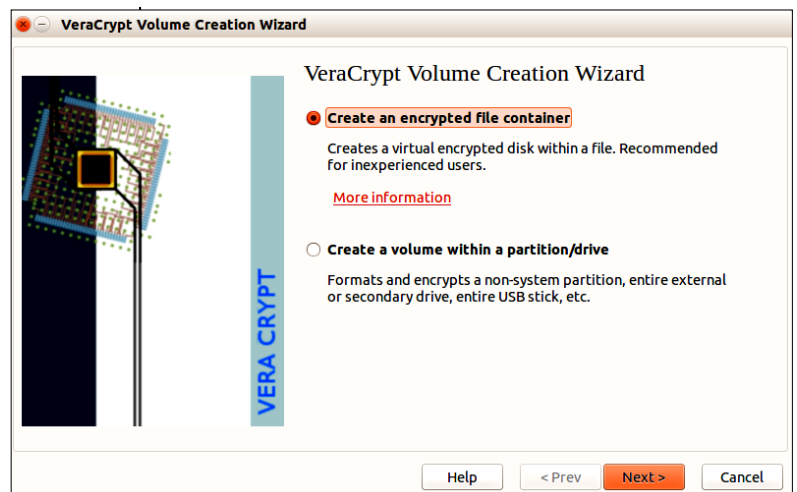
I find it convenient to minimize the VeraCrypt window rather than exit the program, so I can recall it quickly to dismount the volume. This isn't really necessary, as it would be dismounted when you log off or power down.

This discussion has been on using a file as a secure volume, but the procedure for using an entire device, such as a USB memory stick or hard drive is the same.

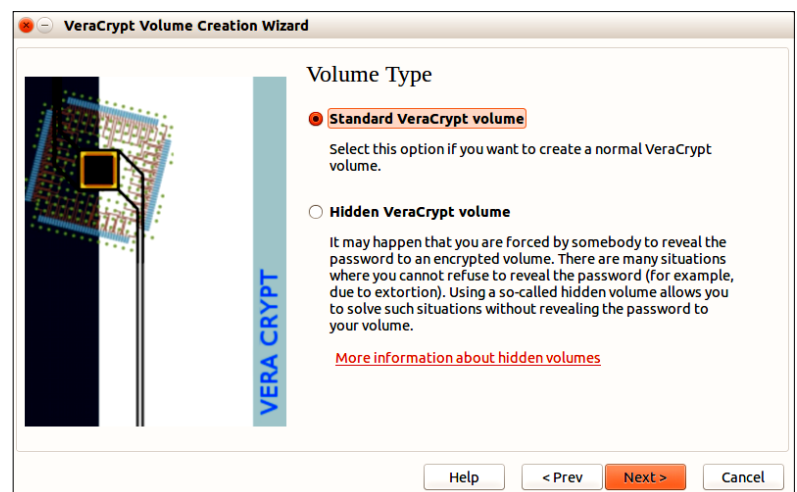
Screen 7 (Page 15) shows the Linux



Screen 1. VeraCrypt Main Window



Screen 2. Volume Creation



Screen 3. Volume

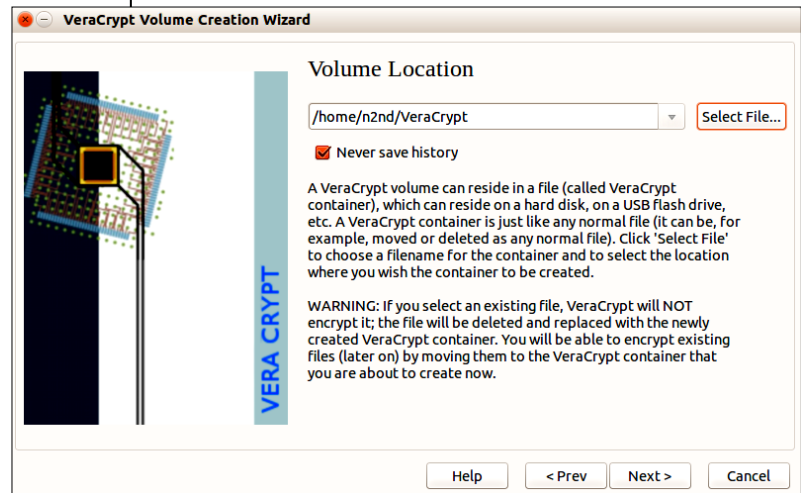
desktop with the file manager open. The encrypted volume is accessed the same as a normal directory. You can copy and paste files to and from it as usual. Linux users should note the mount directory in Screen 6, which shows where to access files from the command line.

You might be wondering what could possibly require a 162-page manual. Although its basic use is quite straight-forward, VeraCrypt has many features, which can make it more convenient and more secure. If your information is sensitive and if the encrypted volume could be accessed by others, for example if it will be stored in the cloud, on a publicly-accessible PC, or a laptop with which you travel, you will want to at least scan the entire manual.

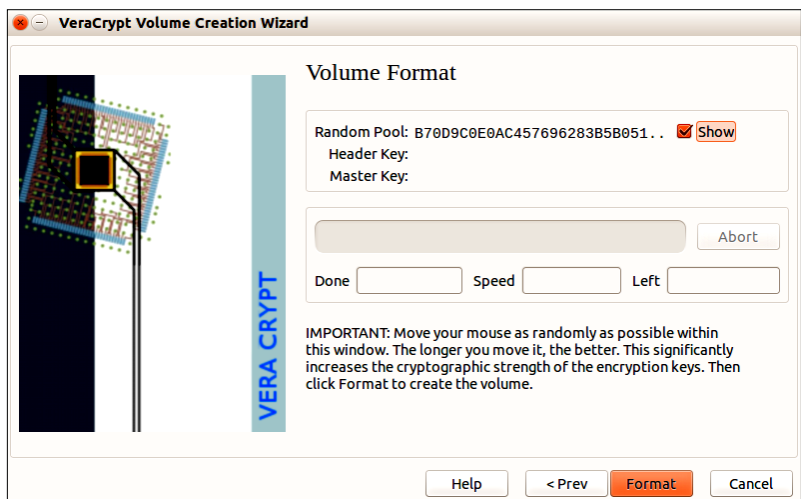
Although both VeraCrypt and GnuPG protect your data using encryption, they do it in quite different ways; GnuPG by encrypting single files and VeraCrypt by creating encrypted volumes. If you want to e-mail a friend some private information, GnuPG will be simpler, and it avoids the issue of securely sending a password.

If you have several files containing sensitive data that will stay on your computer or on a memory stick, then creating a secure container with VeraCrypt is preferred. If you will keep the secure container in the cloud or sync it among several computers, its size is important. This is because file sharing is usually done with entire files.

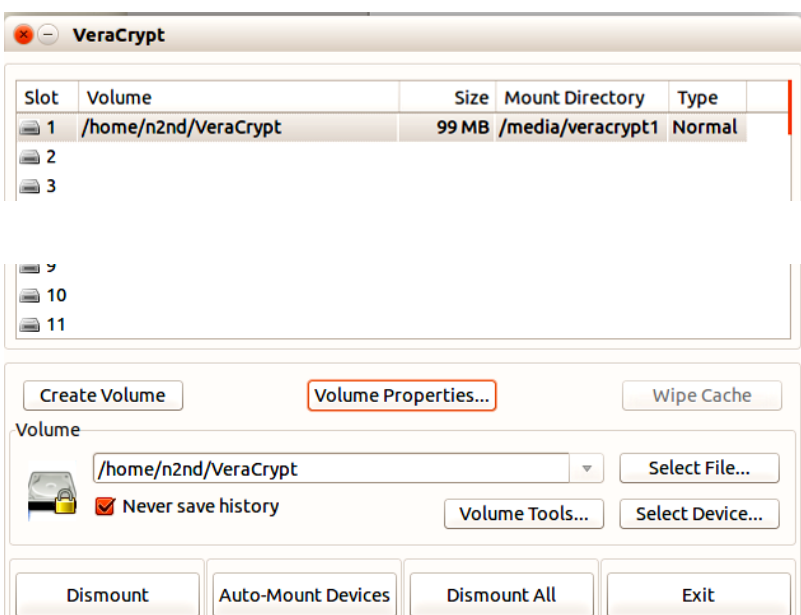
If you change one small file in a large encrypted volume, the entire volume must be exchanged, and this probably won't happen until you dismount it. Thus, you must take care to dismount the volume, but stay logged on until the syncing is complete. This isn't an issue with memory sticks, since these are



Screen 4. Volume Location

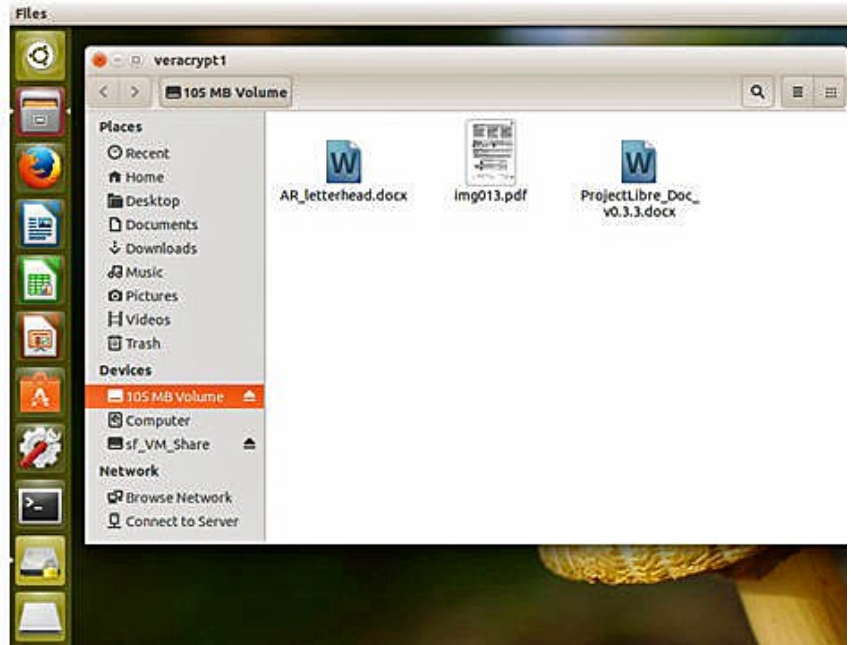


Screen 5. Format Volume



Screen 6. Volume Mounted

updated incrementally as you change the volume's contents. Finally, VeraCrypt stresses using hidden encrypted volumes to establish "plausible deniability," which lets you deny that your computer contains any encrypted data. You shouldn't try to use this casually, for example to bring pirate music or movies into the country, as it could place you in serious conflict with our or another country's authorities. ♦



Screen 7. Linux File Manager Accessing a VeraCrypt Volume

SHORT LINKS

By Leo Notenboom
The AskLeo Newsletter #619, September 2016

Is There a Way to Know Where a URL or a Shortened URL Is Going to Take Me?

Link-shortening services make it hard to tell a link's final destination. When you receive one in an email, you may want to do some detective work to see where it's going - before you click.



URLs, or Uniform Resource Locators, are those strings beginning with http or https. They tell a web browser what website or page you want to view.

Sometimes URLs can be quite long. For example, here's a URL for a Google map of Microsoft's location in Redmond:

<https://www.google.com/maps/place/Microsoft+Corporation/@47.6435107,-122.1252991,15.88z/data=!4m5!3m4!1s0x0:0x1a52969ee03899e!8m2!3d47.6396259!4d-122.1283767>

The problem with long links is that they often break when they're wrapped to fit a particular line length, window, or screen size, particularly when sent in email.

Enter "short link" services. They allow you to create a short, manageable URL that redirects to the longer one. For example:

<https://go.askleo.com/msredmond>.

This is a short URL (using my own service) that takes you to the longer URL listed above. It's easier to type, easier to remember, and not prone to break in email programs and the like.

There are many link shortening services; examples include TinyURL, Bit.ly, and Goo.gl.

The problem with a short URL is that it's not obvious where it'll take you until you click on it. In fact, they're often also referred to as "cloaking links" because they hide, or cloak, the final destination.

Typically, the only way to find out where this link goes is to click on it:

<https://go.askleo.com/mystery>. That one's safe, but there's no way to know for sure.

Particularly if you have reason to be concerned, suspicious, or skeptical about a link you get in email, it's not unreasonable to want to know where it goes before you click.

Previewing Shortened URLs

Some services do have preview features. For example, if you visit tinyurl.com/preview.php, **TinyURL** will help you turn on a cookie-based feature in your browser. Then, when you click on a link, you can preview where it goes prior to going there.

Bit.ly also allows you to do this. Simply add a plus sign to the end of the URL, and Bit.ly will display where you would have gone rather than taking you there.

There are also several sites that show you where a shortened link will take you. Some current services include:

- unfurlr.com
- GetLinkInfo.com
- URLUncover.com

Each of these displays the target and some additional information about a short URL.

The bottom line, really, is to stay away from mysterious links sent to you through spam. But when you receive a shortened link from a trusted source, and you aren't sure why, investigate with these preview tools. ♦

SYNCHRONIZE MAIL, CONTACTS, CALENDAR, AND NOTES ON ALL YOUR DEVICES

By **John King**, SIG Leader/Instructor
Golden Gate Computer Society

GGCS newsletter, June 2016

www.ggcs.org

john.king (at) ggcs.org

Many people have more than one computer these days: a desktop computer at home, a notebook or tablet for when they are away, and a smartphone. They can use each of these devices to:

- Send and receive e-mail.
- Check and record information about their contacts, the people they interact with.
- Add or check appointments on their calendars.
- Make or consult to-do lists or notes.

However, for them all to be fully useful, they have to be able to access the same e-mails, contact information, calendar appointments, and notes on every device so they are always available wherever they are.

The Windows 10 Mail, People, Calendar, and OneNote apps make synchronizing this information on your computers and phone easy, free, and automatic. All you have to do is use the same Microsoft account (a Microsoft e-mail address and password) to log onto all your Windows 10 devices and be connected to the Internet.

You can receive an e-mail on your desktop computer and reply on your notebook or phone. If you delete the message on your tablet, it will be deleted on all your devices.

You also can add an appointment to your calendar on your phone, and it will appear on your calendar on your desktop and notebook computers. Add a new contact in People on your desktop computer, and it will be with you on your notebook, tablet, and phone.

In addition, apps for Microsoft Mail, People, Calendar and OneNote are available for Android phones, iPhones, and iPads, so you can stay in sync on those devices also. Windows 10 phones have all these apps, but few Windows 10 phones are in service.

You can even make the Microsoft Office version of Outlook 2016 synchronize your mail, contacts, and calendar on all the Windows 10 computers, notebooks, and tablets where you install it. To accomplish this, you must log onto each device with the same Microsoft account and make your Microsoft e-mail account the first e-mail account you add to Outlook. This makes Microsoft Office 365 Home for five computers a good deal if you prefer the Outlook 2016 interface for mail, contacts, and calendar.

An important requirement makes this syncing work. The first email account in the Mail app must be the Microsoft e-mail account that you will use to log onto all the devices you want to keep in sync.

This first e-mail account controls syncing and cannot be changed or deleted. No Delete option exists for it.

Here's the key point: The e-mail address and password that you use when you initially set up Windows 10 becomes the first e-mail address in Mail. Therefore, you must use the same Microsoft e-mail address and password (the same Microsoft account) when you initially set up Windows 10 on each computer and phone on which you want to sync your Mail, People Calendar, and OneNote apps.

For these reasons and more, you should have a Microsoft e-mail address and password (a Microsoft account) before you set up a new Windows 10 computer or upgrade to Windows 10.

To create your Microsoft account, go to www.outlook.com and sign up for an e-mail account. If you already have a Hotmail, MSN, or outlook.com e-mail account, you can use that.

Use this e-mail address and password, your Microsoft account, when you set up and first logon to all your Windows 10 devices. You have nothing to lose and a lot to gain by doing this.

If you change your mind and do not want to use your Microsoft account to log onto your computer, you can change to a local account at any time. ♦

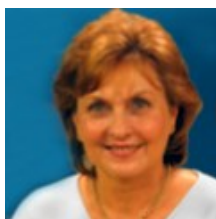
THE WINBOT WINDOW CLEANING ROBOT

By **Sandy Berger**

www.compukiss.com, June 8, 2016

Tugnet Keywords, The User Group's Network

I am waiting for Rosie the robotic maid from the Jetsons to come in and clean my home. So far the only popular cleaning robots are the floor vacuum and cleaners. I was hoping that Ecovac's Winbot 8 window cleaning robot, but I'm afraid that it is not quite ready for use in my home.



It is nice that the Winbot has a long cord and a safety cable, but in everyday use, this turns into a gaggle of wires.

The Winbot is actually easy to set up and fairly easy to use, but the directions are very lacking. The first thing that you must do is to charge the unit. Although this is covered in the instructions, it should be more prominent. Also it should be

noted that the charge time can be lengthy. My unit took about 8 hours to charge. It should also be noted that the cleaning pad that you attach to the device should be attached in the correct direction because it can be installed in the wrong direction.

Although a little noisy, the smart suction on the unit adheres to the window very well and a remote control can be used to start it. Actually, the cleaning is quite good. If you follow the directions carefully, there is practically no streaking. The unit comes with a tether, which is also good.

Like robotic vacuum cleaners, the Winbot moves in its own pattern to cover the window. It is actually amazing to see it glide across the window and turn itself to follow the pattern. I received a lot of "WOWS" from onlookers.

Now for the bad news. The Winbot got caught on all the window latches in my home. It also stopped working quite a few times displaying a red light. It was smart enough to remain adhered to the window, but in this case, you are expected to press the reset button and guide the unit around the area where it stopped.

It is nice that they provided a long power cable, but the cable itself can be a problem. Not only do you have to move the unit from pane to pane and window to window, but you also have to drag the cord. When working outside, I always needed an extension cord to reach one of the few outside outlets.

The WinBot is a great idea and may be very useful for large or hard-to-reach windows, but not if you have an average home like mine. I have 39 panes of glass in my home. Charging the Winbot, spraying it, and moving it from pane to pane did not make it worth the \$349 investment. ♦



CASH FLOW

As of November 30, 2016

Charlotte Semple, Treasurer

Total Assets	\$10,575.70
Member dues	780.00
Total Gross Receipts	\$780.00
Expenses	
Newsletter	194.79
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Verizon Wireless	50.08
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Total Expenses	\$383.20
Current Total Assets	\$10,972.50



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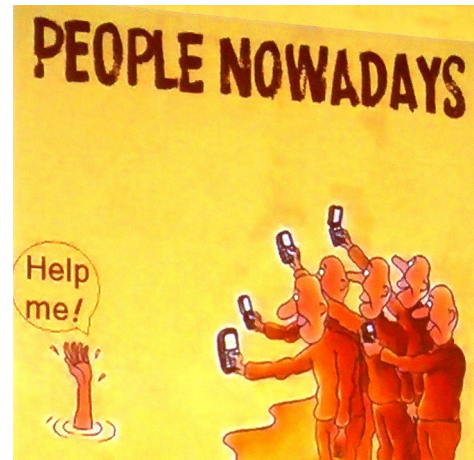
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The Editor of *User Friendly* will accept contributions of any suitable length from members. Send articles to Leahjc (at) sbcglobal.net as plain text in an e-mail message or as a Word document. The deadline for submitting articles is the **20th of the month.**

LAUGHING OUT LOUD

Wife texts husband on a cold winter morning:

"Windows frozen, won't open."

Husband texts back:

"Gently pour warm water over them and gently tap edges with a hammer."

Wife texts back 5 minutes later:

"Computer really messed up now."

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 8065 Emerson Ave.
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From the South, East or West:

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