# **User Friendly**

## September 2014

Member of



#### IN THIS ISSUE

September General Meeting	1
August General Meeting Report	2
Nomination Committee	2
From Your Editor	3
Nominees for the 2015 LACS	
Board	3
Excel Tips	4
Smartphone Workshop Report	5
A High Tech Way To Get To	
Know Your Neighbors	5
You Won't Believe Your	_
(TV) Ears	6
Word Tips	7
Cash Flow	8
Welcome All	8
Scheduled Presentations	8
General Meeting Snack	_
Schedule	8
Calendar Mambara Halping Mambara	10
Members Helping Members	
Officers, Directors & Leaders	11
The Tip Corner	12
Twitter for Seniors	13
Online Guides ToFix Almost	
Anything Around the House, Car, Computer, or Bike	15
Laughing Out Loud	18
Membership Information	19
Map/Directions	20
Map, Directions	20



### SEPTEMBER GENERAL MEETING

# **SELF-DRIVING CARS**

Speaker: Richard Korf

Professor of Computer Science, UCLA

Richard Korf will present an overview of the field of self-driving cars. He will discuss the potential benefits to individuals and society of self-driving cars, some of the technical challenges and approaches, the current state of the art, the



prospects for the future, and some potential roadblocks along the way.

Richard Korf is a Professor of computer science at the University of California, Los Angeles. He received his B.S. from M.I.T. in 1977, and his M.S. and Ph.D. from Carnegie-Mellon University in 1980 and 1983, respectively, all in computer science.

From 1983 to 1985, he served as Herbert M. Singer Assistant Professor of Computer Science at Columbia University. His research is in the areas of problem solving, planning, and heuristic search in artificial intelligence. He is the author of "Learning to Solve Problems by Searching for Macro-Operators" (Pitman, 1985).

Dr. Korf is the recipient of a 1985 IBM Faculty Development Award, a 1986 NSF Presidential Young Investigator Award, the first UCLA Computer Science Department Distinguished Teaching Award in 1989, the UCLA Engineering School First Annual Student's Choice Award for Excellence in Teaching in 1996, and the Lockheed Martin Excellence in Teaching Award in 2005. He was elected a Fellow of the American Association for Artificial Intelligence in 1994. •

Tuesday, September 9, 2014, 7 - 9 PM Fellowship Hall, 8065 Emerson Ave. Westchester 90045

An informal Computer Forum meets from 6:00 to 6:50 P.M. to answer individual questions. All are welcome.

After the meeting some members may meet at Dinah's Family Restaurant at Sepulveda and Centinela.

More info at <a href="http://www.lacspc.org">http://www.lacspc.org</a> or at 310-398-0366

#### **AUGUST GENERAL MEETING REPORT**

By Leah Clark, LACS Editor

Are Modern Programming Languages

Easier To Learn?

A podcast of this talk is at <a href="www.lacspc.org">www.lacspc.org</a>. Click on "Podcasts", then on "Programming Laguages Made Easy." There is more information at <a href="http://cs.lmu.edu/~ray/classes/pl/">http://cs.lmu.edu/~ray/classes/pl/</a>

Ray Toal, Ph.D., is a professor of Computer Sciences at Loyola Marymount University. His presentation asked these questions: Can anyone program? What does it mean to learn or understand programming? How are modern languages helping (or not)? Do program developers care about the learner? Who is going to teach everyone?

Ray told us about the history of programming, mentioning the Eniac and Univac systems. Grace Hopper, an American computer scientist and United States Navy rear admiral, was a pioneer in the field. She developed the first compiler for a computer programming language. It is easy to make typos, and mistakes happen when people don't understand programming. Ray gave us a look at the learnability of some modern programming languages, drawing a lot from the great essay, Learnable Programming, by Bret Victor. Bret had demonstrated a remarkable live coding environment. He talked about creating, not learning. A system should encourage ways of thinking, and allow people to see and understand the execution of their code. Bret Victor, in his talk, Inventing on Principle, said that creators need an immediate connection to what they are making. He came up with a coding environment where the code can be seen on the left side of the screen, while the results show on the right. You can't discover anything if you can't see what you are doing! See this video at

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wxWM4t68cR4

Ray discussed several programming languages. He showed a picture of a friendly turtle robot that introduces the basics of programming step by step. It is based on the **Logo** Programming Language which was designed as a tool for learning. Small children, who learn physically and tactilely, can program it to move in a circle.

**HyperCard** is based on the concept of a stack of virtual cards. Cards hold data, just as they

would in a Rolodex card-filing device. Each card contains a number of interactive objects which include text fields, check boxes, buttons, and similar common graphical user interface (GUI) elements. Users "browse" the stack by navigating from card to card.

**Smalltalk** is the language that came out of Xerox. It was created by the same team that brought us windows, menus, icons, context menus, etc. It was based on the notion of self-contained objects, which break down into smaller objects.

**Rust** is a system programming language that runs very fast. Rust's pointers are one of its more unique and compelling features. It is not designed for learning complicated programs.

**Julia** is a flexible dynamic programming language appropriate for scientific and numerical computing. Its performance is comparable to traditional statically-typed languages.

**CoffeeScript** is a language that compiles into JavaScript.

**Clojure** is a general purpose language, combining the approachability and interactive development of a scripting language with an efficient and robust infrastructure for multithreaded programming.

**Go** was created by Google. Go is an open source programming language that makes it easy to build simple, reliable, and efficient software. Rob Pike, a Canadian software engineer and author, identifies 35 significant simplifications in Go over C and C++.

**Swift** is a new programming language for iOS and OS X app development. Nonetheless, many parts of Swift will be familiar from your experience of developing in C and Objective-C. Ray thinks Apple did a good job here.

Ray emphasized the value of making programming learnable and understandable. People didn't get into programming because all they saw was numbers. The above mentioned programming languages adopt nice features to make programming a little more pleasant. Decades of research on teaching and learning is often ignored. Learning and understanding programming requires more than just live coding. Language can make meaning transparent. We saw some modern languages, and we saw that they did a few things right! �

### FROM YOUR EDITOR

I just realized I have an anniversary to celebrate! I have been editor one full year already! I can't believe how much I have learned in that time, and how much I still need to learn. This has been a fun and interesting project for me. Please let me know if you have any ideas to make *User Friendly* more meaningful to you. What would you like to see in it? I will publish "almost" anything members send me.

y listed proof-readers are sometimes away, have medical issues or personal business. I would appreciate it if a couple of more members would volunteer to be proof-readers. I really need people to catch punctuation or other errors that can slip by me. This needs to be done between the 23rd and 26th of the month.

I found an article about a web service for connecting neighbors called **NextDoor**. Our neighborhood subscribed to it about two months ago. It has already helped to return a lost dog to its owner. Neighbors can send and answer messages, and notify us about community events. I recommend it. See page six.



This issue of User Friendly contains bios and pictures of those dedicated members running for offices and directorships. We may still accept more nominations. It would be good to have more running for Director.

Our dedicated treasurer, Charlotte, has been having some medical problems, and would really like some help. We need someone who knows QuickBooks or is willing to learn it. Charlotte says its not hard, and she will train you. LACS will supply the program.

# NOMINEES FOR THE 2015 LACS BOARD

# **President: Maurice Stephenson**

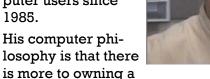
I was born in Guyana, South America, and immigrated to the USA in 1975, and settled in Washington, DC. I moved to Southern California fifteen years ago to complete my academic studies. I obtained a



Ph.D. Degree in Physical Organic Chemistry from the University of Southern California, after four years of study. I have since worked as a scientist, consultant, educator, and am trained as a Manager and Product Developer. I am currently a Science Teacher at Magnolia Science Academy, and enjoy helping my students as they face many challenges in learning Science Content. My hobbies include hiking, running, reading, traveling, writing, and family reunions. •

# **Vice-President: Elliott Stern**

Elliott is the owner and chief nerd at Maestro Computing Services. He has been servicing computer users since 1985.





computer than simply turning it on and hoping for the best. This "plug and pray then walk away" strategy is not the best way to maintain a computer.

Elliott hopes to bring more to LACS by increasing outreach to the community through social media and other PSA type services.

Elliott has a bachelors in business economics from UCLA, a MBA in management/finance from West Coast University, a certificate in Meeting and Event Planning from Cal State Dominguez Hills. He is an active ambassador

### (Nominees for the 2015 LACS Board)

(Continued from page 3)

with the West Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce and a meet-up coordinator for several business networking organizations. Elliott hopes to bring these skills to grow LACS. •

## Secretary: Lee Freehling

After almost 20 years of membership - getting so much out of meetings, SIGs, conversations with others, and *User Friendly* - I feel it is appropriate that I do more than just attend and pay my dues. For years I have coordi-



nated the Holiday Party. When Leah became editor and resigned as secretary, I volunteered to finish her assignment, and then I was elected for the 2014 term. I would like to continue to serve the Los Angeles Computer Society as your elected secretary. ❖

# **Treasurer: Charlotte Semple**

I have been a member of LACS for many years, cannot remember just how many – Sorry. During this time I have been your Treasurer, Secretary, President, Welcome Committee Chair, Refreshment Chair, Editor, etc., often wearing several hats at the



same time – enjoyed every minute of it. I will act as your Treasurer until another person steps forward who is familiar with, or willing to learn QuickBooks – it is an easy program to learn.

#### **Director: Leah Clark**

I have been a member of LACS since about 1997. I started using computers with the Apple II. I retired from UCLA after 43 years as a Clinical Laboratory Scientist. In LACS I have been a Director, Welcome Chair, and Secretary. I am



now the User Friendly Editor. As a member and officer of LACS I have been constantly learning. I want to see LACS continue to be a viable organization serving the needs of its members and of the community. My other interests include gardening, needlework, going on outings with friends, the UCLA Retirees Association, the Daughters of the American Revolution, and my dog. •

### **EXCEL TIPS**

# By **Yomar Cleary**

Big Bear Computer Club Bearly Bytes <a href="http://www.bigbearcc.org/">http://www.bigbearcc.org/</a>

### **Opening Non-Excel Files**

Excel includes a built-in file filtering system that allows you to open many other types of files automatically. For instance, you may be able to open files originally created in a different spreadsheet, such as 1-2-3 or Quattro Pro. Notice that I said you "may be able" to do this. The fuzziness here is because your particular installation of Excel may not allow you to load such files. Exactly which filters were installed depends on which options were chosen during installation.

When you attempt to open a file other than a native Excel file, the program attempts to do a conversion to the Excel format. If a conversion is not possible, an error results, and you are notified. If Excel needs additional information to do the conversion, you are presented with a series of dialog boxes that allow you to specify the parameters Excel will use when converting information. This most often occurs when you attempt to load text files.

The best way to see if Excel will open a particular file is simply to try it. If there is a problem, you can then check the Excel Setup program to see if there is a filter which you can load from your program CD. .



# SMARTPHONE WORKSHOP REPORT

By Gilbert Ialongo, LACS with notes from Leah Clark, LACS

The third meeting of the new Smartphone Workshop was held on August 4<sup>th</sup> at the Bundy Campus of Santa Monica College. About 15 people attended the workshop. The meeting was conducted by Gilbert Ialongo. The topic covered was the Apple ecosystem.

Gilbert started the meeting by giving his take on where technology is going. His indicators were the technology ads in various media, especially the Fry's Friday ads in the Los Angeles Times. These ads have recently changed in two significant ways. He noted that the number of pages dedicated to the Friday ads has diminished from eight to four, indicating that people buy less in stores probably because of the current economic circumstances. More significantly the contents of the ads have evolved from a strictly technological character to include offers for refrigerators, television sets, movie DVDs, audio CDs, telephones and other miscellanea. Gone are the ads for books and software offered at no cost, except for sales taxes, after various rebates. People are buying gadgets and phones, etc. but not software.

Next he introduced the concepts of **AirPlay** and **AirPlay Receivers**.

AirPlay is a technology present in all Apple products, iPhones, iPads and iPods. AirPlay transmits a WiFi signal that can be received by



AirPlay receivers. Apple TV is an example of an AirPlay Receiver. Apple TV connects to a high-definition TV set using an HDMI cable. A movie playing on an iPhone/iPad/iPod will stream to the Apple TV device and can be viewed on the TV set.

Reflector is an inexpensive software program that runs on MACs or PCs and it enables those devices to be AirPlay receivers. Reflector costs about 10 dollars. With Reflector installed anything displayed on



an iPhone/iPad/iPod is mirrored on a MAC or PC. Reflector also allows recording any activity

shown on the "I" devices. A demonstration of Reflector and its recording capabilities was shown.

Gilbert also showed how, using an appropriate connector, the content of the "I" device can be shown on an external monitor or a projector.

Finally Gilbert demonstrated some features of iPads and some apps, applications that run on tablet devices and phones. He created folders and moved files to and from the folders. One can view Office files on the iPad.

A favorite of Gilbert is Triposo, a free travel app. Triposo has customized versions for a large number of countries and cities. Gilbert used the London and France versions on his recent trip to those countries. Each version includes historical information, travel information, points of interest, and a growing number of hotel and restaurant suggestions. Triposo provides a detailed offline map of the city or country highlighted in the specific version. Users can save localities of interest to guide them during their trip. •

# A HIGH TECH WAY TO GET TO KNOW YOUR NEIGHBORS

By Sandy Berger, CompuKISS

www.compukiss.com sandy(at)compukiss.com

Do you remember when neighbors knew each other and a neighborhood was a tight-woven community? Well, I do, and I miss that. So today I'll tell you about a new, high-tech



way to get to know your neighbors.

We don't know our neighbors like we did when I was a kid. We stay inside our air conditioned homes and keep to ourselves. But it doesn't have to be that way.

We can use technology to bring us back to those by-gone days when neighbors joined to form a close-knit community. This can be easily done with a new web service called **Nextdoor** (www.nextdoor.com). Nextdoor lets neighbors get in touch with each other

# (A High Tech Way to Get to Know Your Neighbors)

(Continued from page 5)

again. It is a free and private social network for neighborhoods.

The first member from the neighborhood is called the Founding Member. To use this website, he or she defines the neighborhood boundaries and gives the neighborhood a name, both of which can be edited in the future, if necessary. The Founding Member can then start inviting neighbors to join. Each member must verify their address. A neighbor who is a verified member of that specific Nextdoor neighborhood can vouch for, and invite another neighbor to join. Accepting such an invitation will allow them to join Nextdoor as a verified member. Each neighbor uses their real name and must verify their address in order to join. Not only is your private information never shared, but it is not accessible by search engines.

Nextdoor launched in 2011 and now has over 12,000 neighborhood groups represented. They have communities in all 50 states. According to its co-founder and CEO, Nirav Tolia, they add about 40 or so neighborhoods each day.

Nextdoor lets you share useful stuff with the folks in your immediate vicinity. You can use it for stopping burglars and for spreading crime warnings for the area. You can use it to learn about illnesses, deaths, and other times when a neighbor might need a meal, a ride, or just some moral support.

You can also use Nextdoor for advice about contractors and baby-sitters. You can use it as a mini-Craigs list where you can sell or buy things without dealing with strangers. You can use it to plan a block party or to invite neighbors to an impromptu get together. If your area were to ever encounter a weather-related disaster like a tornado, Nextdoor could be an invaluable asset.

Why don't your neigh-



you try it in borhood? ❖

# YOU WON'T BELIEVE YOUR (TV) EARS, A REVIEW

By **Les Goldberg**, The Gadget Geezer APR, Contributing Writer <a href="https://www.sunset-publishing.com">www.sunset-publishing.com</a> <a href="https://www.examiner.com">www.examiner.com</a> <a href="https://www.examiner.com">lgprman</a> (at) gmail.com

As a 70-year-old, I have trouble hearing my TV. There are no audio controls on the set itself, so I have to strain to listen to the dialogue when it is combined with background music.

My doctors tell me that "when you get to be your age" it is common to experience what is called "ambient noise" problems – the inability to distinguish different sound sources and tones and block them out. It is like trying to listen to one person speak in a nightclub with loud music, laughing and people shouting.

They said ambient noise is the same thing as background noise. You hear these terms used frequently when discussing devices with built-in microphones, such as Bluetooth headsets, computer headsets and webcams. The more ambient noise there is, the more difficult it can be to hear the caller.

In my case, watching TV is frustrating since my wife, only four years younger, does not suffer from hearing loss and background noise does not bother her. When the sound level is fine for her, it is inaudible for me.

My problem is only with the TV, so I wasn't ready to explore hearing aids. What I found, however, was a product called TV Ears.

Since I review all the products before considering them for this column, the manufacturer sent me a product to evaluate.

I can safely tell you that of all the products I have reviewed over the years, TV Ears provided the most immediate im-

provement to my particular problem.

How do they work? TV Ears is a wireless TV listening device that uses an infrared signal similar to that used in your television remote control. You don't need to have a wireless router.

# (You Won't Believe Your (TV) Ears)

(Continued from page 6)

Following the easy one sheet, easy-to-follow instructions, I plugged one end of the audio cables into my cable box (or directly into your TV) and the other end into the headset base unit. Then I seated the headset into the base unit charger. When the green light on the charger came on, I put the headset's two ear pieces into my ears, turned down the sound on my TV and turned on the headset volume. I also adjusted the tone control to a comfortable combination of treble and bass.

Let me tell you, folks, the difference was amazing. With the help of the product's "voice clarifying circuitry" technology, the manufacturer's claims were unmistakably true:

(This technology) automatically manipulates the audio curve to increase the clarity of television dialogue and decrease the volume of background sounds such as music and sound effects. The words seem to jump out of the sound track, making even whispers and accents understandable.

Don't like to wear headsets? TV Ears solved that problem, too. Weighing only two ounces, the headset is designed to rest under your chin, not on your head. It won't mess up your hair, it won't get hot and you can even watch TV lying down. The TV Ears tips adjust easily to your ears.

### One TV Ears customer wrote:

"Just wanted to tell you that I have the latest and greatest hearing aid technology at a cost in excess of \$4000. To watch TV, I take them off and use the TV Ears wireless headset. The hearing aids do not even come close to reproducing clear sound from the television as does the TV Ears product."

TV Ears offers a variety of options, including a wireless speaker system, a special device for use with hearing aids and a mobile system for travelers. Prices for TV Ears products range from \$79.95 to \$249.

They are available at: <a href="http://www.tvears.com">http://www.tvears.com</a>. ❖



#### WORD TIPS

# By Rosemary Lloyd

Big Bear Computer Club Bearly Bytes <a href="http://www.bigbearcc.org/">http://www.bigbearcc.org/</a>

# **Undo Automatic Changes You Don't Want**

By default, Word imposes lots of changes on the text you enter in a document. For example, it might convert a web address to a hyperlink, replace straight apostrophes and quotation marks with their curly counterparts, or turn a pair of hyphens into an em dash. If that's a welcomed convenience, you're in good shape.

If you want to suppress those types of changes, you can disable them. See 10 annoying Word features (and how to turn them off) for details. But, if you want to prevent those changes only from time to time, reach for the Undo command - [Ctrl]Z. Undo isn't just for reversing something you've done; it also undoes some of the actions Word does. Don't want that em dash? When Word inserts it, hit [Ctrl]Z and change it back to the hyphens you intended to enter.

http://www.techrepublic.com/blog/five-apps/five-word-tips-that-could-change-your-life/



Rosh Hashanah

#### **CASH FLOW**



July 19, 2014 Through August 20, 2014 Charlotte Semple, Treasurer, LACS

### **Current Total Liquid Assets**

Bank of America Checking \$14,014.19

### **Gross Receipts**

Member Dues	784.00
Total Gross Receipts	\$784.00
Expenses	
Fellowship Hall Rental	60.00
May <i>User Friendly</i>	269.28
MiFi Expense	100.16
General Meeting Expenses	35.78
Acrobat XI Pro	45.00
SIG Expence	26.15
Total Expenses	\$536.37
Net Surplus	\$247.63

#### WELCOME ALL

### Gene Jacobs

Data Base Manager, LACS

### New Members (1)

Anne Uski

### Renewals (15)

George Andrews Roger Clough Ian Cowen\*

Ray Crovella

Edie Ditmars

Frank Elston

Renata Epstein

Stanley Epstein

Steve Halpern\*

Cora Kamerman

Michael Price

Emil Rozek

Ralph Schack

Charlotte Semple

Wendy Wenzel

\* Contributor

### **GENERAL MEETING PRESENTATIONS**

By Maurice Stephenson, Program Chair

• Tuesday, September 9, 2014 Dr. Richard Korf

Computer Science Professor, UCLA

- Tuesday, October 14, 2014 TBA
- Tuesday, November 11, 2014 TBA
- Tuesday, December 9, 2014 Holiday Party

While we urge you to mark your calendars now, changes are certainly possible, so please watch your e-mail. If you have ideas for other topics and speakers, please contact Maurice Stephenson, our Program Chair, at vp@lacspc.org.

# **GENERAL MEETING SNACK SCHEDULE**

# By Sylvia Davis, LACS

Here is the snack schedule for 2014. Plan ahead!

September T through Z plus H

October A through C
November D through G

December Holiday Party - All

LACS provides hot coffee (decaf too), tea and cocoa. Please participate by bringing finger-food treats such as fresh fruit, veggies, nuts, cookies, brownies and the like. Bottled water and soft drinks (req. & diet) are appreciated, too.

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



# **FIX YOUR PC FOR FREE?**

**Jim McKnight** has an open offer to all LACS members to diagnose, repair, disinfect, or up-grade member's 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 <a href="https://www.jimopi.net">www.jimopi.net</a>.

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

	SEPTEMBER 2014				
	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
1	Labor Day	2	3	4	5
8	Basics & Beyond SIG 7:00 PM	9 General Meeting 7:00 PM	10	11	12
15	Board Meeting	16	17	18	19
22	Digital Photo SIG 7:00 PM <b>Autumn Begins</b>	23	24 Rosh Hashanah	25	26
29		30	1	2	3

Calendar is subject to change. Check your e-mail or with the SIG leader before attending a meeting.



# **SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS (SIGs)**

Basics & Beyond SIG	Kim Stocksdale	310-720-0603	2nd Mon. 7 PM SMC, Bundy Campus
Digital Photo SIG	Nancy Cattell	310-452-2130	
	Elliot Silverstein	310-670-1544	4th Mon. 7 PM, SMC, Bundy Campus
Smartphone			
Workshop	Stephanie Nordlinger	323-299-3244	1st Mon. 7 PM, SMC, Bundy Campus

# **ADDRESSES**

Fellowship Hall, 8065 Emerson Ave., Westchester 90045

**Dinah's Family Restaurant**, 6521 Sepulveda Blvd., LA 90045 (on Sepulveda, just S. of Centinela) **Santa Monica College Bundy Campus**, 3171 S. Bundy Drive, LA 90066 (1/2 block S. of Airport Avenue) 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 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(at)lacspc.org or call Leah Clark at 310-677-2792. More Quick Consultants are always needed. You may decline or postpone a call if it comes at the wrong time.

America Online - 20 Anti Malware - 56 Digital Imaging, Editing - 50, 58 Digital Photography - 50, 58 Dragon Naturally Speaking - 9 Genealogy - 20, 34 Hardware - 55, 56 iPhone, iPad, iPod - 59 LA FreeNet—24

Open Office - 60 Lotus Word Pro, Approach - 56 Picasa - 58 Mozilla Firefox, Thunderbird - 56 Ouicken - 20 MS Excel - 59 OuickBooks -52 MS Word - 9, 53 MS Outlook - 59, 20 Viruses - 46 Visual Basic - 57 MS Outlook Express - 59 MS PowerPoint - 59 Websites - 57 Win XP/Vista - 56, 60 MS Publisher - 2, 52 WordPerfect - 20

No.	Name	Daytime Phone	Eves/Weekends	From	To
2	Mercer, Bob	310-837-5648	310-837-5648	9:00 AM	10:00 PM
9	Hershman, Irv	310-397-9453	310-397-9453	11:00 AM	11:00 PM
20	Nordlinger, Stephanie	323-299-3244	323-299-3244	5:00 PM	10:00 PM
24	Springer, Karl	424-646-3410	424-646-3410	10:00 AM	10:00 PM
34	Clark, Leah	310-677-2792	310-677-2792	9:00 AM	5:00 PM
46	Martin, Todd	818-766-1151	818-766-1151	10:00 AM	10:00 PM
50	Silverstein, Elliott	310-670-1544	310-670-1544	10:00 AM	10:00 PM
52	Semple, Charlotte	310-398-5052	NA.	10:00 AM	5:00 PM
53	Beckman, Loling	310-471-7893	N.A.	10:00 AM	6:00 PM
55	Strate, Steve	310-450-7478	N.A.	9:00 AM	5:00 PM
56	McKnight, Jim	310-823-7829	310-823-7829	8:00 AM	7:00 PM
57	Ialongo, Gilbert	310-641-7906	N.A.	9:00 AM	5:00 PM
58	Schneir, Jerry	310-451-4140	310-451-4140	9:00 AM	10:00 PM
59	Van Berkom, Paula	310-398-6734	N.A.	9:00 AM	5:00 PM
60	Johnson, Carol	310-372-8535	310-372-8535	10:00 AM	9:00 PM



It would be nice if more members volunteered to help other members. After all, that's what LACS is all about! We need helpers for some of the newer technologies with which members may be struggling. That would include Windows 8.1, Linux, Apple, and any Windows, Apple, and Android devices. As noted above, you will not be committed to any specific time. We hope to hear from YOU.

# **OFFICERS, DIRECTORS AND LEADERS**

Title	Name	Term	Telephone	E-Mail Address
President	Stephanie Nordlinger	2014	323-299-3244	president(at)lacspc.org
Vice President	Maurice Stephenson	2014	310-314-8489	vp(at)lacspc.org
Secretary	Lee Freehling	2014	310-837-4022	secretary(at)lacspc.org
Treasurer	Charlotte Semple	2014	310-398-5052	treasurer(at)lacspc.org
Deputy Treasurer	Vacant—Please Apply			
Director	Nancy Cattell	2014	310-452-2130	Please see the Roster
Director	Ray Crovella	2014	310-215-0076	Please see the Roster
Director	Lance Hegamin	2015	424-248-5262	Please see the Roster
Director	Heshmat Laaly	2015	310-838-7140	Please see the Roster
Director	Jim Louie	2015	310-473-4247	Please see the Roster
Director	Jim McKnight	2014	310-823-7829	Please see the Roster
Director	Paula Van Berkom	2015	310-398-6734	Please see the Roster
APCUG Rep.	Charlotte Semple		310-398-5052	apcug_rep(at)lacspc.org
Car Pools	Lance Hegamin		424-248-5262	Please see the roster
Changes	Karl Springer		424-646-3410	changes(at)lacspc.org
Corporate Counsel	Stephanie Nordlinger		323-299-3244	counsel(at)lacspc.org
CCSC Computer Lab	Rosalie Kirsch		310-559-2244	Please see the roster
Hospitality Chair	Sylvia Davis		213-924-4927	Please see the Roster.
Asist. Hospitality Chair	Linda Williams		310-748-1694	Please see the roster
Membership Database	Gene Jacobs		310-397-8457	Please see the Roster
Newsletter Editor	Leah Clark		310-677-2792	editor(at)lacspc.org
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# Los Angeles Computer Society

## **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.

The Editor of *User Friendly* will accept contributions of any suitable length from members. Articles should be sent to the Editor, <u>editor (at) lacspc.org</u>, as **plain text** in the body of an e-mail message or as a Word document. The deadline for submitting articles is the **18th of the month**. The Editor asks that articles be submitted **UNFORMATTED**.

# THE TIP CORNER

By **Bill Sheff**, Novice SIG Coordinator Lehigh Valley Computer Group, PA

www.lvcg.org nsheff (at) aol.com

# How Often Should I Shut Down My Computer?

This question comes up quite often. Unfortunately, there's no easy answer. Are you concerned about your electric bill? How important is it to have immediate access to your computer? What about your own personal preference? Electricity costs vary based upon how many watts of power your computer uses as well as what the local utility charges per kwh. Some say it costs roughly \$25 per month, however I do not think it actually runs that high. But if conservation and economics are important to you, shut it down each night. Wear and Tear does play a part. Today's hard drives usually stop spinning when idle, and fans don't work as hard in sleep mode. Many processes continue to run, which have the potential to cause memory losses. The bottom line? When I researched this tip, the suggestion was to shut your computer off when not in use. I very seldom shut my computer off. I put it into sleep mode before I go to sleep. So I guess this tip was not too helpful for most of you. But just be aware there are many different opinions out there, so no matter what you do, some will agree and others won't.

### **Laptop Abilities**

Here are a few items you might want to consider when searching out your next laptop. By this time we know that Windows 8 is here and alive and well. But if you still prefer the Windows 7 look, Classic Shell and Pokki are two apps that will give you that comfortable Win7 look. And speaking of apps, you can get an app that turns your laptop camera into a surveillance system that will automatically start recording when someone enters the room, or even set it up so you can turn on your camera from a remote location and view a live feed.

You can also download a face recognition app, which uses the camera to scan your face during

startup to ensure that it's really you who is log-

ging on to your machine. But, while this is more

fun than punching in a password, it's a little less

secure. Holding a photograph of you in front of the computer would work.

There are other apps that can turn your laptop into an easy-to-use photo booth. Look for one that lets you accessorize portraits with digital costumes, add thought-bubbles, and even alter the color to make the photos look oldfashioned. These apps and software are usually not pre-installed, so until you download them, your camera will be less functional. Many of the laptops, and all the tablets utilize a touch screen. There are finger and handswiping commands to be learned. Different brands can have different movements, so look them up to learn how to switch between programs and windows, shrink and zoom in, dragand-drop, and more. Lenovo's 10-point multitouch displays offer a wide-range of intuitive gestures that use up to all ten of your fingers. And, if you have Windows 8, you can use Customized Flicks to create your own touch screen commands.

Look for a laptop that has, as a minimum, an HDMI port, USB drives, headphone output, microphone input, and a DC-in. An SD card reader slot would be useful also, however USB connections could do. If your plans also include an external USB3 device you want your new laptop to come with a USB 3.0 port. Data transfer is up to ten times faster with a USB3. And you may want to see if there is a firewire port so you can hook up digital cameras. But whatever they have, take a few minutes to familiarize yourself with all its capabilities.

You might have noticed that I did not comment on whether it should be a Mac or PC. Today both contain almost all the programs you need. The cost of a Mac and associated programs are usually more expensive than the PC. This is because there are a lot more PCs out there which make it cheaper per unit. Most young people prefer the Mac, but that is because of the great marketing job done by providing Macs in the schools. If your laptop is going to be used in business, it should be compatible with the equipment at the office.

# CTRL + ALT +DELETE

Occasionally a program gets stuck. It stops working and will not close no matter what you do. The answer is CTRL + ALT +DELETE. This

# (The Tip Corner)

(Continued from page 12)

opens a window with a few options: Lock, Switch User, Log Off, Change Password, and Start Task Manager. The Task Manager will show all programs that are in use. Sometimes you can see that a program is not functioning if it says 'not running', however it might show that the program you are having trouble with is still running. It could be hung up in a memory loop, or really just taking a very long time to respond. In any event you can just highlight the program you are having trouble with and click on End Task, and the program will be shut down. Using the Task Manager means you do not have to shut down the computer in an incorrect manner.

# CryptoPrevent (4.2.4)

There is a bad program going around called Cryptolocker which locks up your files and you can only unlock them by paying money. CryptoPrevent is a tiny utility to lock down any Windows OS (XP, Vista, 7, 8, and 8.1) to prevent infection by the Cryptolocker malware or 'ransomware', which encrypts personal files and then offers decryption for a paid ransom.

Additionally, due to the way that CryptoPrevent works, it actually protects against a wide variety of malware, not just Cryptolocker!

You can get it here: <a href="http://www.foolishit.com/vb6-projects/cryptoprevent/">http://www.foolishit.com/vb6-projects/cryptoprevent/</a>

#### Has Your Browser Been Hacked?

Many of you have noticed that without warning a new toolbar appears in your browser. Or when you click on a site, you get misdirected to another site touting some product. Since there is no such thing as a free lunch, and many legitimate companies are allowing this to happen, what can we do to minimize this unwanted intrusion? Sometimes this comes from a cookie or temp file that ended up on your computer due to a casual click in a site. More often than not, it appears when you are installing an update from a legitimate program. In more simpler times when an update is downloaded all we had to do is install it normally. We never thought of clicking on the custom update button. But that is what we have to do. If we click on the normal update button, bundled with the update are all the Advertising, Loading toolbars, Redirection, and other marketing tools. Sometimes the boxes to

add toolbars are shown in the opening screen, but more and more they appear within the custom install, and there we are able to decline to add those pesky toolbars. So what you have to do is read everything you upload. The advertising media is big money and doesn't seem to be going away soon. Fortunately, most of these marketing bullies can be uninstalled or deleted quite simply. So if you see some new icons show up in your browser, try to figure out what they are. Depending on your browser, there should be a section on "add-ons". Visit that and see if some strange toolbars are installed there. And go to the Programs and Features in the Control Panel to uninstall. Just remember: it is all about money. �

### TWITTER FOR SENIORS

# By Larry McJunkin

The Retired Geek Technical Tips for the Non-Technical "Over 50" Crowd http://retiredgeek.net/

http://retiredgeek.net/contact-me/

You've never used Twitter. You say you're too old for Twitter...it's only for kids, and

you could care less about reading what Lady Gaga had for lunch today. So obviously, Twitter is not for you. Wrong! If these are your thoughts about Twitter, I can say with authority that Twitter is not what you think.



Twitter does not exist to tell you what a celebrity had for lunch, or what the thoughts are of the singer who was just voted this year's American Idol (though they might tweet this information). Twitter is a handy way to break news, share knowledge, and refer people to longer forms of communication.

Here are some great examples of how I use Twitter. Where we live, in Tellico Village (a golfing and boating community in East Tennessee), the demographic is very much retired and very much over the age of 60, and some of the most important information we receive each day comes via Twitter. Updates

#### (Twitter for Seniors))

(Continued from page 13)

from our three golf courses regarding whether carts are on the path or not; what the flag positions are; are any holes under repair; status of last night's storm damage...and the list goes on. The golf course superintendents post these tweets very early in the morning so the hundreds of golfers here know what to expect as they start their day on the links.

Twitter is a free social networking and microblogging service that enables its users to send and read messages known as tweets. Tweets are text-based posts of up to 140 characters displayed on the author's profile page and delivered to the followers. That's why information on Twitter is short, to the point and effective.

More than half the people I talk to about Twitter think they have to have a smartphone to use it. Not so! You can access Twitter via theWeb, desktop applications and smartphones.

It costs nothing to use and it's just one more social media source, like Facebook, that you won't know how much you needed it until you try it.

Twitter also has a built-in function for you to befriend and track the messages of other users. This is a simple way for you to connect with like-minded people outside of your usual circle. A Twitter association can be developed into a long term acquaintance (if you desire).

If you do happen to have some famous folks you like (singers, actors, golfers, etc.), Twitter is a wonderful way to unobtrusively follow what they're up to. One of my personal favorites is Brandt Snedeker, the professional golfer from Nashville. His life is a comedy of tweets that make me laugh almost every day. Recently, he's been trying to figure out how to win a war with raccoons and his garbage can...and so far the raccoons are winning!

As an individual, you have a variety of interests that a single newspaper or magazine can't cover. With Twitter you create your own personal newsfeed. You can get small bites information on local events, celebrities, politicians, hobbies or interests, your favorite news sites, etc. Much like you read a newspaper by scanning the headlines, on Twitter you can see short

headlines describing an article and you can decide if you want to click on the link to read the rest of the storNews that is published on Twitter. The instant it happens, and if something big happen, you'll likely find out when someone you follow tweets about it. In fact, Twitter became more widely known after a user tweeted a link to a picture of the US Airways plane that successfully landed in the Hudson River.

Unlike traditional media where it is a one-way medium, you can be involved in Twitter. You can re-broadcast (re-tweet) the information you find valuable. You can comment on issues and share your own views (within the 140-character constraint, of course).

You can quickly and directly contact local politicians, celebrities and other people you don't know. You don't have to find out their address and compose a lengthy message; you can instantly let them know your opinion. These are people you will probably never meet in real life, but now you can get daily updates on their lives and their interests.

Public figures tend to have hundreds of thousands, if not millions of followers and they may not respond to a tweet,



but they often do read their (most important) messages because a 140 character tweet is easier to read quickly than a lengthy e-mail. Celebrities usually have an aide sift through tweets and pass on only the ones they think are worth reading.

You can also use Twitter to quickly inform friends and family about your daily life. You can tweet about things that aren't important enough for an e-mail but something you would mention to your friends if you bumped into them. You can also keep track of what they are up to by following them (if they're on Twitter, of course). You may also connect with other people with similar interests and strike-up an online friendship.

In any event, much like Facebook or Skype, don't be afraid to give Twitter a try. It's free, nothing tracks you or your actions, and you might just find that it's fun! If it isn't for you...that's what the DELETE key is for. ❖

# ONLINE GUIDES TO FIX ALMOST ANYTHING AROUND THE HOUSE, CAR, COMPUTER, OR BIKE

By Ira Wilsker iwilsker (at) sbcglobal.net

#### **WEBSITES:**

http://www.makeuseof.com/tag/something-broken-learn-fix-anything-4-websites
http://www.ifixit.com
http://www.familyhandyman.com
https://www.youtube.com/user/diyautoschool
http://www.parktool.com/blog/repair-help

eaders of this column may be aware that There are several websites that I utilize as primary sources of information; one of those favorites is MakeUseOf.com. Recently, MakeUseOf.com published an article, "Something Broken? Learn To Fix Anything With These 4 Websites" by Dann Albright. The preamble of the columns states, "No one likes it when their <sic> things break. It might be something big, like your TV or your car, or something smaller, like a leaky faucet or a cracked floor tile. You can spend hundreds of dollars to have a professional help you out, or you can learn how to fix it yourself for the cost of some tools and a couple hours of work. Which would you rather do?"

The first of the recommended websites is iFixit. The website is selfdescribed as "The free repair guide for everything, written by everyone." iFixit offers thousands of user written and illustrated repair guides for thousands of consumer products, all categorized into product types. Among the



major categories listed are Mac Repair (1900 guides covering 128 devices and 5100 parts), Game Console Repair (514 guides, 83 devices, 353 parts), Phone Repair (2100 guides, 503

devices, 215 parts), iPhone repair (182 guides, 9 devices), Car and Truck Repair (255 guides, 155 devices), Camera Repair (770 guides, 208 devices), PC Repair (1000 guides, 351 devices), iPad Repair (194 guides, 18 devices), iPod repair (177 guides, 24 devices), Appliance Repair (181 guides, 78 devices), and direct links to a large selection of printers, scanners, musical devices, DVD recorders and players, flat screen TVs, classic (antique) computers, wheelchairs, skateboards, mopeds, etc.

Since I, along with almost everyone else, have a phone of some type, I explored the iFixit phone guide; on the directory was every

brand of home and cellular phone that I have ever heard of, and many that were unfamiliar to me. Since my wife and I both have Samsung smart phones, and Samsung is one of the largest manufacturers of smart phones, I selected Samsung under the Phone Repair directory, which then displayed 96 models of Samsung



phones, current and discontinued models.

Somewhat randomly, I selected the Samsung Galaxy Note. iFixit displayed 14 replacement guides covering the battery, display, front and rear camera assembly, headphone and earpiece, memory card replacement, mother-board replacement, SIM card replacement, USB board replacement, antenna replacement, and other repairs, as well as links to sellers of replacement parts.

Since all of us routinely face automobile repair and maintenance issues, I selected the Auto Repair menu, and was presented with the logos for 41 brands and manufacturers, as well as special guides for auto accessories, car audio, and auto parts. There are two Hondas in my extended family so I clicked on the Honda icon. 12 specific Honda models were

(Continued on Page 16)

# (Online Guides To Fix Almost Anything Around the House, Car, Computer, or Bike)

(Continued from page 15)

displayed, as well as two "Feature Guides" which provided instructions on routine maintenance tasks.

While comprehensive, the iFixit guides do not cover all models and variations of products, but it does provide enough information on many of the most common consumer products that a moderately skilled individual can complete the listed repair and maintenance jobs.

The second of the websites recommended by MakeUseOf.com is the **Family Handyman**.

While this is the website of a commercial print magazine, the website contains thousands of guides on how to perform home repair and home improvement



projects. The top of the website contains a menu bar, for which each item opens a selection of relevant topics. For those who prefer to go directly to a topic rather than navigating through a menu hierarchy, you can utilize the search box adjacent to the menu bar. The menu bar has links for rooms, skills, parts of the house, outdoors, and other areas of interest. Selecting "Rooms" from the menu bar displays a list of room types commonly in most homes, with each room type opening an appropriate webpage with details about projects for those rooms. As many of us have crowded and cluttered closets in our homes, that menu item seemed a logical first choice. The page that opened under the banner "Closet Organizers: Maximize storage space with these DIY closet organizers" displayed eight guides on organizing and improving closet space. Selecting another room, the kitchen, opened a page headed "Kitchen: Remodeling ideas for your kitchen with new cabinets, backsplashes, and lighting", which included 50 guides covering diverse kitchen related topics including installing back

splashes, sharpening knives, repairing or replacing kitchen appliances, repairing and replacing faucets, stove repairs, fixing broken ice makers, repairing kitchen cabinets and drawers, and other kitchen repairs and improvements.

Owning and maintaining a home requires an assortment of skills and knowledge; FamilyHandyman.com offers assistance with those skills and tasks under the appropriately titled "Skills' heading on the menu bar. Sixteen skills are presented, with each linking to an appropriate compilation of tasks. Among the skills listed are Appliance Repair, Carpentry, Drywall, Electrical, Heating & Cooling, Painting, Pest Control, Plumbing, Tiling, and other household maintenance tasks and skills. Being in southeast Texas, with our heat, humidity, and endemic pest problems, I selected "Pest Control" from the Skills menu.

The page is headed, "Pest Control: Keep pests out of your home with these do-it-yourself tips and advice from professional pest control specialists." On this page are an even dozen illustrated guides covering relevant topics such as "Do Your Own Pest Control", seasonal pest control guides, dealing with rodents and other small mammals, ridding your home of those pesky mosquitoes, keeping ants out of your home, and other interesting, topics.



Other household components are listed under additional menu heading including "Parts of the House" (ceiling, doors, roof, floors, siding, walls, windows), and "Outdoors" (decks, garden, grills, patios, landscaping, and decking). As with the other categories, each of these links directly to a collection of appropriate guides dealing with common tasks encountered by homeowners.

# (Online Guides To Fix Almost Anything Around the House, Car, Computer, or Bike)

MakeUseOf.com recommended the "DIY Auto School YouTube Channel." as its favorite source of auto repair information. As mentioned in the original article, and a characteristic that I agree with, this "DIY Auto School YouTube Channel" is a dedicated group of hundreds of videos on auto repair and maintenance topics that are easy to follow as well as entertaining, but not well organized. The YouTube videos in this channel include: Series' on getting rid of rust and replacing fuel lines, "Fueling Up for Gas, and "Getting RIPPED OFF at the Pump!", detailing your car yourself, removing dents using the "paintless" technique with Bondo, carburetor repairs on older vehicles, restoring classic cars, how to change the pads on disc brakes, "Headlight Restoration Made Easy" (necessary to remove the light diffusing frosted finish becoming common on the lenses over the headlights on many cars), and many other auto repair topics. I played several of these videos and they are entertaining, "down-to-earth", not overly technical, but clear enough for a novice to follow. For those who like to work on their own cars, this YouTube channel can be a gold mine of information.

The fourth and final website recommended on the "Something Broken" MakeUseOf.com website is a guide on how to fix almost anything on a bicycle, provided by Park Tool Company, a 51 year old company manufacturing bicycle repair tools, located in St. Paul, Minnesota. Park Tool claims to be " ... the world's largest bicycle tool manufacturer." This wide-ranging bicycle repair website is located at parktool.com/blog/repairhelp. Park Tool allows the user to locate detailed bicycle repair information using any one of the three listed tools; the first is an interactive image of a bicycle that displays repair topics as the user moves his cursor over the image of the bicycle; the second is a traditional menu on the right side of the window; and the third is a traditional search box.

Personally, I found the interactive image method to be the most beneficial way to locate appropriate repair information as I did not know all of the bicycle nomenclature, and the interactive image displays part names as the user moves the cursor to that part of the bicycle image.

To get acquainted with the Park Tool maintenance and repair guide, I moved my cursor on the interactive image of a bicycle, and highlighted parts of interest. Being intrigued by the complex gearing on modern bicycles, a far cry from the old 3-speed bike that I grew up with, I selected the "Derailleur Systems", which instantly displayed a dozen guides on adjusting, repairing, and maintaining the



complex gearing on the modern bikes. Included were guides on properly sizing and tensioning the bicycle chain.

With about 150 bicycle repair and adjustment guides, all of which are clearly written, well illustrated, and included a complete listing of parts, tools, and supplies necessary for each repair, these Park Tool guides are a valuable adjunct for anyone who might want to work on his own bicycle. Using these guides, I hope to restore one of my old bicycles, doing all of the work myself.

These four very comprehensive repair guide websites recommended by MakeUseOf.com contain a wealth of information that may enable anyone with a modicum of skill and time to save money and have the satisfaction of doing their own repairs and upgrades. I know that I will "Make Use Of" these four resources in the near future, and that my readers may likely do the same.

Ira is an Associate Professor at Lamar Institute of Technology, and hosts a weekly radio talk show on computer topics on KLVI News Talk AM560. He writes a technology column for the Examiner, < <a href="https://www.theexaminer.com">www.theexaminer.com</a>>. Ira is a deputy sheriff who specializes in cybercrime, and has lectured internationally on computer crime and security. \*

# USER FRIENDLY ADVERTISING RATES

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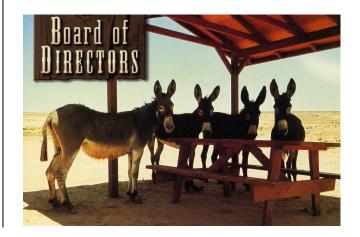
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### LAUGHING OUT LOUD

- Keyboard not connected, press any key to continue.
- MACINTOSH stands for Most Applications Crash, If Not The Operating System Hangs.
- Unprecedented performance: Nothing ever ran this slow before.
- Programming is an art form that fights back.
- Programming is an unnatural act.
- Justify my text? I'm sorry but it has no excuse.
- Maintenance-free: When it breaks, it can't be fixed...
- The generation of random numbers is too important to be left to chance.
- Math problems? Call 1-800-[(10x)(ln(13e))]
   -[sin(xy)/2.362x]
- Disc space, the final frontier!
- Controlling complexity is the essence of computer programming. - Kernigan
- Melted fruit snacks found on Keyboard.
   Delete nephew [Y/N]?
- MICROSOFT: Most Intelligent Customers Realize Our Software is Only for Fools and Teenagers.
- Mommy! The cursor's winking at me!
- My software never has bugs. It just develops random features.
- Never say "OOPS!" always say "Ah, Interesting!"
- No matter how much data you add to your laptop, it will not get heavier.



# MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Annual membership Dues:
Regular \$40
Family/Associate 12
Students 18
Contributing 50
Supporter 75

Benefactor

A subscription to *User Friendly* is included with membership. 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*, but may read it on the LACS website or on Yahoo Groups.

Students must prove their full-time status.

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

- Monthly printed Newsletter User Friendly. We publish your article submissions or free classified ads to buy or sell your computer items.
- Get help by phone from Members who are Quick Consultants listed in User Friendly.
- Get help by e-mail by using our LACSLIST Yahoo Group Mail List. Simply address your e-mail questions to lacslist (at) yahoogroups.com
- Receive important news and announcements via LACS's Yahoo Group e-mail lists.
- Special Interest Groups (SIGs) to help solve your problems regarding selected topics.

- Eligibility to win door prizes in the General Meeting's "Lucky Draw."
- Information on training, swap meets and trade shows.
- Occasional product discounts, special offers, etc.
- Free software and computer books (if you review them for User Friendly).
- Rewards for Recruiting Members: LACS will extend your membership for three months for each new Regular member you recruit.

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For more information:
Telephone (310) 398-0366

# LACS

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Please bring your dues and this form to a meeting or mail them to:

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# 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.

Westchester United Methodist Church, 8065 Emerson Avenue, Los Angeles CA 90045

