

User Friendly

December 2014

Happy
Holidays!

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DECEMBER ANNUAL HOLIDAY PARTY

By **Lee Freehling** and **Fred Kong**

This is a time to relax with friends new and old - to share favorite foods and favorite stories, and maybe get a few answers to computer puzzlements from some of our local wizards. In keeping with our tradition, the December general meeting is devoted to friendship, food and fun. A good party needs good food! We're putting the accent on healthy foods that can be eaten without a fork. Fruit is good. Cheese and crackers - fine. Home baked cookies and cakes are wonderful. Please bring your goodies table ready. If it has to be cut - please cut it. If it needs to be unwrapped - please unwrap it. If it needs to be heated - don't even go there. Board members will bring beverages. Check your CD collection to see if you have any appropriate music you might want to bring along to enhance the holiday atmosphere. (Be sure the discs are in good shape.) If a few good folks would come a little early to help set up, and if some would plan to stay a little later so we can leave the hall neat and clean, it would be most appreciated.

There will be a **silent auction** for a very nice, semi upper grade digital, long zoom, hybrid type camera. It was donated by member Bruce Pechman. He hosts a TV show in San Diego that reviews various electronic and consumer items. He donates many of these items to LACS afterward. We thank Bruce for supporting us throughout the year! A minimum bid will be listed on a pad. Succeeding higher bids will be listed below until a winning bid is accepted. A time for the final bid will be stated. Proceeds will go to LACS. The camera is a Pentax X90 "new" in box with battery, charger, CD, manual, etc. with 12.1 MP, 26 Optical Zoom, 26 mm wide angle, HDMI, face detection and shake reduction. Google the model number for all the detailed specs. It's a discontinued model but has a factory warranty. It still sells for from \$150 to over \$200 on the Internet. Bring your check book or cash to take this beauty home with you!

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

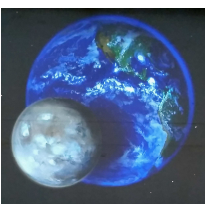
NOTE: There will be no Computer Forum before the December party meeting, and we will not meet at Dinah's after this meeting.

NOVEMBER GENERAL MEETING REPORT

Mars Science Laboratory Mission

By Leah Clark, LACS Editor

Those who attended this meeting were privileged to hear **Leo Bister**, an electronic and system engineer at Jet Propulsion Laboratory. He talked about what they do at JPL, their primary mission being to explore the solar system. There is much variety among the planets. For example, Mercury has a very thick atmosphere, but Mars' is very thin, mostly CO₂. Mars has a retrograde orbit and appears to be a rusty red color. Leo described the Curiosity rover, and he gave us a history of previous missions to Mars.



Curiosity's mission is to determine if life ever arose on Mars and to characterize the climate and geology of Mars to prepare for human exploration. Mars has been a huge challenge with about 50% of the missions failing. JPL recently had a string of successes. Because the team members had munched on peanuts before a successful mission, they are now given peanuts and a Mars Bar for luck before missions!

Leo showed a video of the landing of Curiosity on Mars. This was a monumental success. An extreme amount of testing occurred in preparation for this feat. Ancient river beds were found, giving evidence for life.

Components of Curiosity include (1) the Cruise Stage for power and control, and a star scanner to show where the spacecraft is in the universe; (2) the Back Shell housing

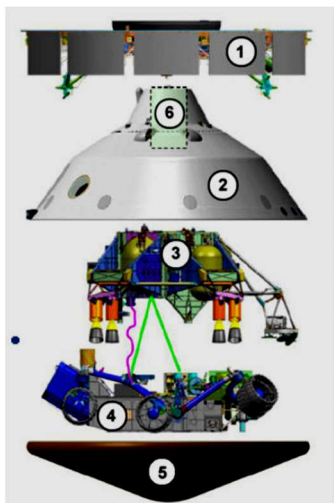
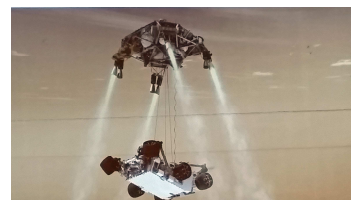


Diagram of the MSL spacecraft: 1- Cruise stage; 2- Backshell; 3- Descent stage; 4- Curiosity rover; 5- Heat shield; 6- Parachute

the parachute which allows the rover to fly to the upper atmosphere of Mars and to be lowered for the final descent by a sky crane;

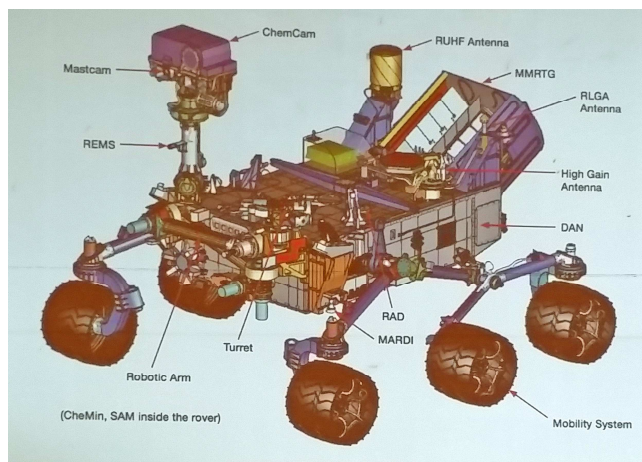


(3) the Descent Stage; and (4) the Rover; (5) the Heat Shield to protect the rover from the intense heat when entering the Martian atmosphere; and (6) the Parachute. It is difficult to get the rover slowed down for landing.

Curiosity landed in the Gale Crater. Interesting things will be learned about Mars by driving from the crater up to Mt. Sharp, which is about the height of Mt. Everest. Soil samples are analyzed for chemical and organic composition.



The "Clean Room" contains pieces in various stages of assembly. Those entering must wear a body suit to keep spores from being sent to Mars and to keep the cameras and lenses clean. The suits are made of an electrostatic discharge material. Samples from the rover are cultured to determine the number of microbes present.



(Continued on Page (4))

*Your Editor
wishes blessings and joy for all
LACS members, their
families and friends for
Hanukkah, Christmas, and
Kwanza.*



Photographers Needed!

By **Leah Clark**, LACS

Nilan Kincaid is no longer able to be the official photographer for *User Friendly*. We thank him for his many years of service. We need a few members to take pictures at the general and SIG meetings for *User Friendly*. This will take very little of your time if you are at the meetings anyway. All you will need to do is e-mail the pictures to me. This would be most helpful.

If you can help in this way, please email me at leahjc@sbcglobal.net.

Drivers Needed!

By **Lance Hegamin**, LACS

LACS has members who no longer drive at night. If you are available to help get them to the evening meetings, please provide the following information to Lance Hegamin at Lanceh02@gmail.com or 310.202.8926.

- Name
- Phone number
- E-mail address
- Nearest major intersection
- Vehicle passenger capacity
- Special equipment accommodation

LACS ANNUAL HOLIDAY DINNER

By **Fred Kong** and **Leah Clark**

It's time again for our last (and best?) bash of the year!

Saturday, 13 December, 6:00 PM

KJ's Restaurant, 8731 Lincoln Blvd.

Two Blocks South of Manchester Blvd.

We'll have our private room to enjoy scrumptious prime rib, baked chicken, salmon or other entrees and trimmings, and coffee or tea. Adult beverages are available if you like. Add to this the lively gift exchange, entertainment, and the festive atmosphere with your fellow members and friends. You will have a most memorable evening. And all this for the same \$26 as the last four years!

If you wish to participate in the gift exchange, bring a wrapped gift worth about \$15.00.

You may also bring any useful items, not wrapped, computer related or not, new or used, for the lucky draw.

Please be there and bring someone.

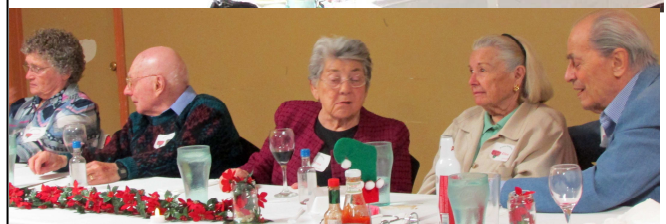
Send or give your check made out to LACS to Leah by the December 9 general meeting. Contact Leah at leahjc@sbcglobal.net or 310-677-2792 with any questions.

Watch your e-mail for more information.

If you haven't attended before, why don't you check it out this year? You'll have a fun evening.



2013 Holiday Dinner



DIGITAL PHOTO SIG REPORT

By **Elliot Silverstein, LACS**

Gilbert Ialongo presented information on several related topics.

He began by demonstrating a color correction kit called **Color Checker Passport**, made by X-Rite. This kit includes a gray card and several small gray targets of slightly varying hues for custom white balance. Also included are a number of patches of various standard colors. For a given light condition, one includes these targets in a calibration photo. Having these standardized patches in one photo enables one to make adjustments to all other photos taken under the same light conditions.



Gilbert demonstrated the use of this kit with Photoshop Elements 11 to adjust the white balance of several of his RAW photos. He achieved remarkable color results, even with photos that had been made with intentionally bad white balance.

He then discussed the meaning of ISO, the standard measure of sensor sensitivity. Camera ISO values are increased by increasing the gain of the sensor amplifiers. As the camera ISO value is increased, the noise levels of the resulting photos become higher, although this may not become readily noticeable until quite high ISO values are reached. A camera with a large, carefully designed sensor, e.g., an expensive single lens reflex camera whose sensor size approaches that of 35mm film, can be used with much higher ISO values than can cameras with smaller sensors before sensor noise becomes apparent. Gilbert showed a video that credited most of the noise to the layout of the sensor electronics. He then calculated the number of photons striking a single pixel and decided that noise due to photon fluctuations is not significant for reasonable exposures.

The discussion then turned to camera shooting modes, particularly those available in his Canon S95 camera - although most of the discussion also applied to many other cameras.

The modes on his camera (not including scene modes) are Auto, Program, Time priority, Aperture priority, and Manual. The last four allow one to adjust the ISO and to adjust exposure compensation. With Time or Aperture priority, one chooses the shutter speed or aperture, and the camera then automatically selects the correct aperture or shutter speed for this setting.

The Manual mode allows one to select all the variables for each photo. It displays an exposure preview and a scale showing if the resulting image will be under, over, or correctly exposed. This mode gives the photographer the maximum control over his photos, but also a considerable chance to make incorrect selections. Gilbert said he prefers working in Manual mode. Probably photographers with less experience should consider using one of the more automatic modes.

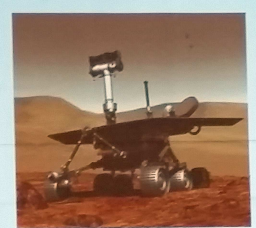
Eight people were present at the Oct. 27, 2014 meeting of the Digital Photo SIG. ♦

(November General Meeting Report)

(Continued from page 2)

The Curiosity Rover electronics are very complex. Half is dedicated to science and half to operating the rover. There are A and B computers, software, and batteries for redundancy. It looks like a nightmare of cables, but they are all well thought out and well organized.

On our home computers everything sits on the motherboard, and they have fans for cooling. The rover computers, called "Rover Compute Elements" (RCE) are powered by a radioisotope power system. Cooling fans won't work in the thin Martian atmosphere. There is a complex system to move heat out to side panels and to radiate it out to space. A lot of Flash memory is needed to store images and so all the different devices on the rover can talk to each other. To hear Leo's total talk with many details not in this report go to www.lacspc.org. This was an outstanding presentation. ♦



BASICS & BEYOND SIG REPORT

By **Kim Stocksdales**, LACS

These topics were included at this meeting.

- Apple Pay
- Typing Special Characters
- Don't be Fooled... by this Fraud!
- Statistics You Never Knew Existed

Apple Pay

Along with Apple's recent iPhone 6 Smartphone came another announcement for a new Apple way to pay for things. Apple thinks "Apple Pay" will revolutionize your wallet by changing your iPhone into a convenient electronic-like wallet that can be used to pay for things. At the meeting we showed Apple's official Apple Pay announcement shown on a YouTube video (enter "Apple Pay Presentation (Sept 2014)" in YouTube search). And then we showed a video of someone in real life testing Apple Pay at McDonald's, Petco, and Macy's. Apple Pay did in fact work in all three places, though not quite as smooth as it was shown in the official announcement (enter "Testing Apple Pay At McDonald's, Petco, Macy's" in YouTube search). Will Apple Pay revolutionize your wallet? Time will tell!

Typing Special Characters

SIG leader Kim Stocksdales demonstrated how to create special characters (such as ♣, ☺, ♪) using the Character Map which is built into Windows XP, Windows 7 and Windows 8. This is how people get all those unusual symbols, musical notes, smiley faces, arrows, etc. into their documents or emails. Although Character Map is buried in an array of sub-folders, Windows 7 offers a quick way to the Character Map window by typing part of the name, such as "chara," into the Windows 7 search box. After the Character Map opens, click the special character you want, click the "Select" then "Copy" buttons. The special character is copied to the Clipboard and is available to Paste into any document such as an email or spreadsheet.

Another way to enter special characters without using the Character Map is to enter the ASCII Code for that character. For example, to type a diamond (♦), hold the Alt key then press the number "4" on the numeric keypad. Let go of both keys and the diamond is inserted into your

document. To find a list of special characters and the corresponding shortcut key, enter "ASCII characters" into Google search.

Don't be Fooled... by this Fraud!

Some of the scams out there to separate you from your money are getting pretty sophisticated and convincing. At the SIG we discussed a convincing credit card scam where someone calls with your credit card number and home address (information which hackers can often purchase online). See the entire conversation in the November Basics and Beyond SIG presentation posted on the LACS website (www.lacspc.org) and click on "Basics and Beyond"). How do hackers actually purchase this information online? We showed a chilling video of an actual hacker being interviewed describing how he anonymously purchased Credit Card numbers, names and addresses (enter "Credit Card Fraud: The How-To Guide" into YouTube Search).

We also discussed how hackers can set up fake Wi-Fi networks in hotels. When you log into the "free" wifi that typically will have the hotel name, they are watching your keystrokes looking for usernames and passwords. When they get you, BINGO, they log into your account and make charges or drain your account. For more details, enter "Hotel Wi Fi Credit Card Scams" into YouTube Search.

Statistics You Never Knew Existed

We looked at a website that provides statistics about the World you never thought might have statistics. It presents those statistics in creative ways that only your computer would allow. Statistics like billionaires per million population, cell phones per 100 people, hydroelectric production by country and year. That is only 3 of the 519 categories to choose from at www.gapminder.org. If you are new to the website, there is a recommended video which you can view by clicking "Gapminder World" at the top of the home page, and then click the "How to Use" button at the top of the window. This video was not shown at the SIG because it was kind of boring with no supporting audio.

There were 11 attendees at the November 10 Basics & Beyond SIG held at the Santa Monica College Bundy Campus. ♦

SMARTPHONE WORKSHOP REPORT

By **Stephanie Nordlinger**, President LACS

At our Smartphone workshop on the third of November, I led a discussion on using smart-phones for photography. While emphasizing the Android system, the principles are similar among types of phones and vary mostly by the capabilities of each phone. Older and inexpensive smart phones have one mediocre digital camera. The better, newer phones have a front facing camera with limited capability for “selfies” (pictures of the photographer, often with others or a background) and a much better outward facing camera for general use.

The main advantage of a cell phone camera is that it is usually available. Even if it doesn't have the lenses and capabilities of your best camera, cell phone cameras are very good. The better ones take videos and make it easy to upload your photo or video in email or to various websites – e.g., Facebook, Flickr, Instagram, Pinterest, other social media, and storage and photography sites.

In an email to me, member Bobbi Gold wrote: “At the risk of sounding cynical, I observe that camera phones have enabled billions more people to take terrible photos with no understanding of lighting or focus, not to mention composition. And they do not know how to transmit a high-resolution version of a photo, so that it can be printed in a newsletter.”

We spent time dealing with these issues. To use any camera well, you need to read its instructions (manual) and perhaps chapters in a third party book like the Missing Manual series from O'Reilly. (LACS members get substantial discounts – see our website.)

Cell phone photos have special problems. Any flash will be very close to your lens and may be too bright, producing harsh uneven light. Indoors, it is often better to turn on a few well-positioned lights. Experiment with the flash on or off instead of relying on auto flash. Fill in flash for outdoor portraits in the sun or putting the person in open, but not splotchy, shade may be good. Generally, you get better light in the first and last hour of the day.

Lenses are more likely to get dirty than an ordinary camera lens, so you need to check and clean them regularly. You can create a macro

lens by putting a drop of clear water on your lens to take close up of an insect.

If you want to produce more than snapshots, you need to follow photographic rules. This includes composition based on the “rule of thirds” – putting the main subject at the intersections of lines that are 1/3 of the way into the picture vertically and horizontally. The horizon should be high or low in the picture, not in the middle. Instead of relying on your zoom feature, walk up to the subject. Pay attention to backgrounds so that you don't have to edit them out – e.g., a tree growing out of someone's head.

How you hold your cell phone is important. Since the photo will usually be displayed on a wide screen, use landscape orientation for everything except portraits. Learn which “side” is up so that you don't take pictures or videos upside down. Even with stabilization, you should brace yourself with your arms close to your body or put the phone on a surface or on a mini-tripod (which can be made from cardboard). If your subject is moving or likely to move (including candid portraits), set your camera for Sport.

Taking lots of photos increases the likelihood of getting good ones. If you expect to enlarge, crop or make large pictures, use the highest resolution available. Turn off your camera's click sound (if any), so that people and wildlife won't know you are photographing them. Only optical zoom provides extra information, so crop after you take the picture. Some cameras allow this and other editing, but most people prefer to do it on a computer. Think about the desired final photo, but take the basic photo and apply filters later so that if you change your mind, you can use a different effect.

I consulted various websites to get this information. Specifically mentioned was <http://digital-photography-school.com> which has lots of free resources, a blog, etc. The Samsung 5 Galaxy Android phone has lots of choices of photo transmittal sizes and a photo album application built in.

We will discuss applications of all kinds at future meetings. ❖



INTERESTING INTERNET FINDS

By **Steve Costello**, Boca Raton Computer Society
editor@brcs.org
<http://ctublog.sefcug.com/>

While in the course of going through the more than 300 RSS feeds, I often run across things that might be of interest to other user group members.

The following are some items I found interesting during June and July, 2014.

- How can I manage a lot of scanned documents
<http://askleo.com/how-can-i-manage-a-lot-of-scanned-documents/>
 Leo Notenboom explains how he manages a lot of scanned documents. Check out this post to get an idea of how to handle your own collection of scanned documents.
- How to Record Screencast Videos on Android
<http://www.labnol.org/software/record-android-screencast/4929/>
 Have an Android and thinking about recording screencasts with it? If so, you should read this post first.
- How to Make a YouTube Video Easily
<http://www.aha-now.com/how-to-make-a-youtube-video/>
 Another interesting post, this time about how to easily make a YouTube video. This post explains how you can create your own YouTube video without a lot of specialized equipment and lighting.
- Is Your PC Updating Correctly? Are You Sure?
<http://www.techsupportalert.com/content/your-pc-updating-correctly-are-you-sure.htm>
 You're updating your Windows PC all the time. Are you sure the updates are actually being done? Gizmo's Freeware tells you how to check in this post. I think this is something you should do periodically. In fact, the post reminded me to check my Windows machines. They all checked out, giving me peace of mind.
- Going Paperless Quick Tip: Clipping Email with the Evernote Web Clipper
<http://www.jamierubin.net/going-paperless>
 In this Going Paperless tip, Jamie shows how to clip your email into Evernote using the Web Clipper. I found the tip useful and

thought you might also if you use Evernote and email.

- 6 Tips to Help You Go Paperless On Android
<http://www.makeuseof.com/tag/6-tips-go-paperless-android/>
 This MakeUseOf post explains ways to be paperless on your Android, by scanning receipts and documents, using a note-keeping app, printing to PDF, and more.
- What's New in Android 5.0 L?
<http://www.maketecheasier.com/whats-new-in-android-5-0-l/>
 Have you been hearing about the new Android 5.0-L? Been wondering what it is all about? If so check out this post from MakeTechEasier.
- Can I Make Phone Calls from Within Gmail?
<http://www.askdaveytaylor.com/can-make-phone-calls-within-gmail/>
 Dave Taylor explains how to make phone call for free with your Gmail account.
- Picasa Tip: Picture Sort Order, Folder Sort Order
<http://picasageeks.com/2014/07/picasa-tip-picture-sort-order-folder-sort-order/>
 Jim and Chris Guld explain how to sort pictures and folders in Picasa. You can find more Picasa tips like this in their free weekly articles at <http://picasageeks.com/> and check out <http://geeksonatour.tv/> for non-Picasa related tutorials.
- What Is RSS and How Can It Improve Your Life?
<http://www.makeuseof.com/tag/what-is-rss-and-how-can-it-improve-your-life/>

If you have been reading the Interesting Internet Finds posts for a while, you know that I get these kinds of things from RSS feeds. Check out this MakeUseOf post to learn about RSS feeds, then check out some for yourself. I guarantee you will find lots of useful things for yourself.

On most Fridays, more interesting finds will be posted on the Computers, Technology, and User Groups Blog:

<http://ctublog.sefcug.com/tag/interesting-internet-finds/>

The posts are under Creative Commons licensing. ❖

WELCOME ALL**Gene Jacobs**

Data Base Manager, LACS

New Members (0)**Renewals (8)**

Mel Ader

Jacques Blum

Carmen Martinez

Bill Hughes

Roger Kohn

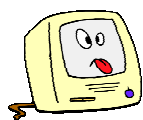
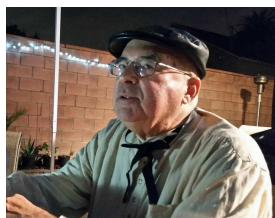
John Schaefer

Joan Wilder

Hedy Zhang



LACS member,
Emil Rozek, as
an old time
printer.

**FIX YOUR PC FOR FREE?**

Jim McKnight has an open offer to all LACS members to diagnose, repair, disinfect, or up-grade 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.

USER FRIENDLY ADVERTISING RATES

Business Card, Member	\$10
Business card	\$15
Half Page	\$35
Third Page	\$25
Full Page	\$50
Two page spread	\$100

For further information on our advertising policy, please e-mail [leahjc\(at\)sbcglobal.net](mailto:leahjc(at)sbcglobal.net).

GENERAL MEETING PRESENTATIONSBy **Leah Clark**, LACS

We thank Maurice Stephenson, our vice president and program chair for finding excellent programs during 2014. He will be our president, starting in January, 2015.

It is getting harder all the time to find good presenters. If you have any ideas for possible speakers, please let the board know. I'm sure some of you have contacts from your other activities.

Are there any LACS members who could provide short, interesting presentations ?

GENERAL MEETING SNACK SCHEDULEBy **Sylvia Q. Davis and Linda Williams**

December Holiday Party - All

January H through K

February L Through P

March Q through S

April T through Z

May A through C

LACS provides hot coffee, regular and decaf, tea and cocoa.

Please participate by bringing finger-food treats such as fresh fruit, veggies, nuts, cookies, brownies and the like. Bottled water and regular and diet soft drinks are appreciated, too.

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

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DECEMBER 2014						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 Smartphone Workshop 7:00 PM	2	3	4	5	6
7	8 Basics & Beyond SIG 7:00 PM	9  Holiday Party 7:00 PM	10	11	12	13  Holiday Dinner
14	15 Board Meeting 7:00 PM	16 Hanukah 	17	18	19	20
21 Winter Begins	22	23	24	25 	26 Kwanzaa 	27
28	29	30	31 			

This Calendar is subject to change.

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

Note: The Digital Photo SIG will not meet in December.



Basics & Beyond SIG	Kim Stocksdales	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 leahjc@sbcglobal.net 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 an inconvenient time.

America Online - 5	Lotus Word Pro, Approach - 12	Picasa - 14
Anti Malware - 12	Mozilla Firefox, Thunderbird - 12	Quicken - 3, 5, 9
Digital Imaging, Editing - 8, 14	MS Excel - 3, 15	QuickBooks - 9
Digital Photography - 8, 14	MS Word - 3, 4, 10	Visual Basic - 13
Dragon Naturally Speaking - 4	MS Outlook - 15, 5	Websites - 13
Genealogy - 5, 7	MS Outlook Express - 15	Win XP/Vista - 12, 16
Hardware - 11, 12	MS PowerPoint - 15	Windows 7 - 5, 12
iPhone, iPad, iPod - 15	MS Publisher - 2, 7, 9	WordPerfect - 5
LA FreeNet - 6	Open Office - 16	Yahoo - 9

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
9	Kamerman, Cora	310-472-7487	Noon	8:00 PM
10	Beckman, Loling	310-471-7893	10:00 AM	6:00 PM
11	Strate, Steve	310-450-7478	9:00 AM	5:00 PM
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

OFFICERS, DIRECTORS AND LEADERS

Title	Name	Term	Telephone	E-Mail Address
President	Stephanie Nordlinger	2014	323-299-3244	Please see the Roster
Vice President	Maurice Stephenson	2014	310-314-8489	Please see the Roster
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Los Angeles Computer Society

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The Editor of *User Friendly* will accept contributions of any suitable length from members. Articles should be sent to the Editor, [leahjc\(at\)sbcglobal.net](mailto:leahjc(at)sbcglobal.net), 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**.

SANDISK ULTRA DUAL USB DRIVE A REVIEW

Android File Transfers Made Easy

By **Frank Ramsey**, Editor, ACPCUG
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Your first question is probably what is a dual USB drive and why might it be useful?

In this context, a dual USB drive is a device that has two USB connectors. In the case of the SanDisk Ultra, as shown in the picture, it has a standard USB type A male and a standard micro USB male connector.



The connections are not to be used at the same time.

There are covers that slide over the connectors, protecting them. Since the covers are attached to the device itself, you cannot lose the cover. Best Buy has them in sizes of 16GB, 32GB and 64GB, priced around \$15, \$25 and \$50 respectively.

Yes, you could use an OTG (on the go) cable and a standard USB device with a USB type A male connector. I personally guarantee that no matter how many OTG cables you have, there will a time when you need it that you cannot find it. Not the case with this device. The two connectors are always attached to the device.

To use, slide the cover back on the connector and plug in the device.

Android and PC devices will typically recognize the device as external storage.



When is the device useful? When you want to backup stuff on an Android device, or when transferring large amounts to/from the Android device.

Think of the picture library on your Smartphone. Have you protected it? What would happen if you drop the phone into the sink? Are your pictures gone?

Not if you use this device. Plug it into the smart phone. Using your favorite file manager, select the picture library (typically contained in a folder called DCIM). Click copy. From within the file manager, browse to the SanDisk dual USB device, typically called USBDriveA (or B or C). Select the device. Click, paste and wait until the picture library has been copied.

Now, unplug the SanDisk dual USB device from your Smartphone and plug it into your PC, copying the picture library to your PC, the Cloud, or an external USB device attached to your PC. The possibilities are endless.

Great device. Highly recommended. ❖

USING MENUS AND RIBBONS

Back to Basics

By **Jim Cerny**, 2nd Vice President

Sarasota PCUG, Florida

PC Monitor, April 2014

www.spcug.org

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Computers give us choices - way too many choices. No matter what program you are running, it probably comes with many options. Even when you are writing an email, your email program comes with hundreds of options such as font size, color, sorting options, and more. I think it would be a good idea to review some helpful hints and tips for selecting options. So here is just a list, in no particular order, of things about menus which, in my view, are helpful to know.

Menu – a list of options or choices. A menu will appear if you click on a tab or name of a menu, such as “File”, “Home”, “Format”, or “Help”. Newer programs have menus called “ribbons”. Some menus may be listed in a whole new window, but most menus provide their options in a “drop down” list.

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(Using Menus and Ribbons)*(Continued from page 12)*

Ribbon – is still just a menu of options. Click on the ribbon tab to see the options for that tab.

Default is what you get if you do NOT change an option. For example, your email or word processor program may have a default font point size of “12”. So, if you do not select a different font size, you will be using the default value of “12”. In many programs you can change the default value of some options. Many people change the default font to a larger size in their word processor program so that they do not have to change the font size every time they open it and start writing a document.

Unfortunately, program updates and new “versions” of programs change the menus. One of the most frustrating things about using a computer is trying to find out how to do what you did before they changed things around. The easiest way to find out how to do things in a program is to use the “Help” menu or option. Sometimes this symbol is a small blue circle with a white question mark in it. Or, use Google – just type in your question in the Google search box, such as: “How do I change fonts in Word 2010.” When using Google be sure to specify the program and version that you are using.

If you “hover” your mouse on a menu item (that is, move your mouse arrow on the item and then wait a moment), you should see a box with words identifying that option. This is helpful when your menu options are symbols you are not familiar with. And these words are the ones you should use when searching to find out more information about that option.

If a menu option is in “gray” (also known as “grayscale” or “subdued”), it means that you cannot select that option now – it won’t work. An example of this is you cannot use the “Cut” command unless you have first selected something to cut (such as by highlighting it). Or, you cannot “Paste” anything unless you have cut or copied something first to the clipboard. An option in gray means that you have not met the conditions to make this command work.

If a menu option has three dots after it, such as “Save as...”, it means that when you select that option you will get another window of choices or options. If you see a symbol next to a word on a

menu, it means that that symbol represents that menu option on other menus or toolbars, etc. For example, if I go to the “Edit” menu, I will see the scissors symbol next to the word “Cut” – so the scissors symbol on a tool bar will also do the same as the “Cut” command.

Some menu options may have a keyboard combination “shortcut” you can use instead of going to the menus. For example, on the “Cut” command you may see the keyboard combination of “Ctrl + x.” So, instead of using the menu, you could just hold down the control key (Ctrl) and hit the “x” key to do a “cut.” I usually discourage people from using keyboard shortcut commands because it is too easy to hit the wrong key.

Using menus, ribbons, and selecting options are how we interact with our computer. Every new edition of a program probably adds more options, many of which you will never use. But why not play with some options and see what happens? You may discover a new deck of cards for your solitaire game or a way to add an automatic signature to your email! ♦

ALTERNATIVE WAYS TO LEGITIMATELY SAVE MONEY WHEN BUYING A CELL PHONE

by **Ira Wilsker**

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www.theexaminer.com



Over the past few weeks, I have been searching for a new smart phone to replace my existing, malfunctioning smart phone. A visit to my carrier's website and company owned phone store offered a wide selection of new phones, but for the high-end models that I was considering, the prices were exorbitant. I had even considered a highly rated smart phone that had been on the market for well over a year which was a "generation" old, and had been supplanted by a greatly enhanced newer model. This "older model" would still cost about \$650 at the carrier store if purchased outright, or an extra \$27 per month for 24 months added to my cell phone bill if paid off over a two year period.

(Continued on Page 14)

(Alternative Ways to Legitimately Save Money When Buying a Cell Phone)*(Continued from page 13)*

I was well aware that these were full retail prices, and that the carrier often had selected phones on sale for up to half off. During their recent sale period, the phone models that I liked were either not on sale, or they were not reduced enough to put them in the "good deal" category.

Being known by the local computer club and by my coworkers as the "resident cheapskate," I decided to search for alternative ways to legitimately purchase a new (to me) smart phone with the features that I was looking for at an acceptable price. Initially, I had narrowed my first choice for a phone to a Samsung Galaxy S4, an Android phone, which has been on the market since the Spring of 2013, but is now replaced by the Galaxy S5 and other worthy competitors. Showing a retail price of \$699 if purchased outright from a major cell phone provider without a contract, but as low as \$49.99 from one carrier if purchased with a two-year contract in which the full price of the phone was amortized over the life of the contract, with the price of the phone being built into the monthly rate. Some of the carriers offered "refurbished" Galaxy S4 phones discounted to around \$400, with one carrier being listed on a daily deal website offering a "one day only" online special on a refurbished Galaxy S4 for \$348, which was very tempting. If purchased from a carrier, that device is typically "locked" and can only be efficiently used on that particular carrier. My old phone was still somewhat functional, so I decided to continue to shop around.

My first place to look was eBay, as at any given time, they have countless thousands of new, refurbished, and used cell phones listed. eBay had hundreds of listings for the Galaxy S4 varying in condition from "new in box" to being sold for parts only, with the majority being listed as used, while a handful were listed as "refurbished". Several variants of the Galaxy S4 were also listed, including a waterproof model. Not willing at present to switch cell phone carriers, I narrowed the search to phones locked to my existing carrier, or GSM phones that

were listed as unlocked, meaning they would likely work on any GSM carrier.

Some points to note are that locked phones generally can only be used on the carrier that "locked" or originally sold them, and that unlocked phones using the same method of communicating as my carrier (like GSM or CDMA), may offer at least basic functionality. They may not be totally compatible with the latest offerings of the carriers in terms of high speed data, such as 4G-LTE compatibility.

Be aware that some people are selling versions of the same phone that were originally designed for foreign carriers, and while shown as unlocked, may have some serious compatibility issues on domestic networks. Most of the sellers of that phone on eBay listed the manufacturer's model number, which could be easily searched on the internet or the maker's website, which will expressly show the capabilities of the phone.

A quick comparison with the specifications on the carrier's website will indicate the likelihood of compatibility. I found several apparent "good deals" on "refurbished - like new" unlocked Samsung Galaxy S4 GSM phones that would apparently work on my carrier's network. But they were incompatible with the latest type of 4G data speeds offered by my carrier, but would work fine at the older (slower) 3G or 4G speeds.

Similar unlocked offerings were listed on Amazon, but Amazon also often offered the locked phones sold by the carriers, with or without a contract, often at discounted prices. Other bargain prices on new cell phones can be found on a daily basis at "daily deal" websites such as deals.ebay.com and at dealnews.com/c171/Electronics/Phones-Cell-Phones.

One warning about buying any used cell phone from any source, including individuals, local advertisements, pawn shops, mall kiosks, eBay, and other sources; it is no secret that huge numbers of cell phones are lost or stolen every day. Every cell phone has a unique serial number, often known as an IMEI or ESN number, which if reported lost or stolen, can often prevent that particular phone from being used on its original and often other compatible networks. All of the carriers offer a free online

(Continued on Page 15)

(Alternative Ways to Legitimately Save Money When Buying a Cell Phone)*(Continued from page 14)*

check to confirm the validity of a serial number, or the carriers can be contacted by phone to check to see if a particular phone has been previously reported as lost or stolen. So called "hot" phones may apparently be in excellent condition, and offered at a great price, but there is a good chance that they can never be connected to a compatible domestic network. T-Mobile phones can be checked at t-mobile.com/verifyIMEI.aspx, while Verizon phones can be checked at verizonwireless.com/b2c/nso/enterDeviceId.do (item #2 on the list). AT&T, Sprint, Virgin, and other carriers offer similar services online or by calling their respective 800 numbers.

Buying from a local or online big-box store may possibly offer better prices than the cellular carrier's company owned stores or independently owned agency stores. Online stores such as Newegg, TigerDirect, Rakuten (formerly known as buy.com) and others, often list new, used and refurbished, locked or unlocked, cell phones at deeply discounted prices. Buying from a major, reputable seller may have some advantages, as they are more likely than lesser companies to stand behind their products in the event of any problems. As an example, a quick search on one of the above sellers displayed the Samsung Galaxy S4, branded and originally sold by one of the major domestic carriers, but now unlocked, new for \$349, and used for \$285. It should be noted that there are numerous builds and sub-groups of Galaxy S4 phones, such that the buyer should be acutely aware of what he is buying, and to compare the different models offered, even if they have the same general model number such as "Galaxy S4".

As I was doing my research on a new smart phone, I read many reviews both on my carrier's website and third party websites, seeking that perfect phone that would meet my needs, but at a reasonable price. As I expanded my search to other models of compatible phones, I found that I could purchase fully functional new phones, at deeply discounted prices. I was surprised to find Google was directly selling new, unlocked Android phones, manufactured by the major

companies, with the same model numbers as the carrier phones. The phones sold by Google lacked all of the proprietary utilities and app "overhead" of the identical phones sold by the carriers, which freed a substantial amount of the storage (memory) on these phones. According to some reviews, this actually improved their performance slightly.

These phones are listed as the "Google Play Edition", and currently include the HTC One (M8), Moto G, and the Samsung Galaxy S4. Coming from Google, these phones are listed as having the latest version of Android installed that is compatible with that model phone, and will automatically receive the next version of Android when it is released. While Google will sell these phones directly at retail price (\$649 for the Galaxy S4), they also wholesale these phones to third party sellers. Google claims that these phones are ready to go and fully functional on any compatible carrier, which for the GSM phones are T-Mobile and AT&T.

One of the online stores that offered deals on the Google Play Phones was the Bloomington, Illinois-based eXpansys (www.expansys-usa.com). Being somewhat suspicious of online services offering excellent prices, and since I was unfamiliar with the company, I checked the Better Business Bureau website, and found that the company is eight years old, and has an "A" rating from the BBB. Now, with some degree of credibility, I found that they are selling new and unlocked, the Google Play Edition of the Samsung Galaxy S4 for \$399 with \$10 shipping; a full \$250 to \$300 less than the same model phone would cost if purchased outright from a local phone store.

Other fully featured, unlocked, discounted Google Play Edition phones listed by eXpansys are the Sony Z Ultra for \$349.99 (retail, \$649), HTC One for \$399.99 (retail, \$649), and the LG G Pad 8.3 for \$225 (retail, \$330). Many other models of new phones, both locked and unlocked, were available. "Deal of the Day" and "Wednesday Markdown" specials are offered. In fact, I originally found this company on one of the larger "daily deal" websites.

I was seriously considering the Google Play Edition Samsung Galaxy S4 listed above, and

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(Alternative Ways to Legitimately Save Money When Buying a Cell Phone)

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had just about made up my mind to purchase one, when I saw a freshly published review of another just released smart phone. The specifications of this new smart phone totally outclassed the Galaxy S4, was highly competitive or superior in terms of features and function with the newer Galaxy S5, and even outperformed most of the features in the latest iteration of the iPhone, but at less than half of their retail prices. Again, being suspicious, I thoroughly checked out other independent reviews of the mystery phone and its maker, and made a decision to buy one.

Many people may not recognize the manufacturer, Huawei, but they are a major manufacturer of cell phones, producing several models of cell phones sold by the major carriers. This particular phone, the Ascend Mate2, has a large, sharp, and bright 6.1 inch HD screen, putting it in a class that some pundits refer to as a "Phablet", as it is almost as large as the popular 7 inch Android tablet, but has the usability of a smart phone. The screen on this phone is made of the almost unbreakable Corning Gorilla Glass 3, and has a very long lasting battery. Extremely fast and feature rich, using a 1.6GHZ Quad-Core processor, 32 GB of internal memory (expandable up to another 64GB using a common micro SDHC memory card), this phone is thin, and surprisingly lightweight for such a large phone. I mostly carry my phone in a shirt pocket, and this phone does fit in most of my shirt pockets.

The Ascend Mate2 operates on one of the latest builds of Android, and will be upgraded to newer versions of Android after they are tested and proofed, including the upcoming version nicknamed "Android L". Huawei decided to sell the Ascend Mate2 directly to the consumer, without the additional markups imposed by the big carriers. Currently available in GSM only, this phone is fully compatible with T-Mobile and AT&T, including their latest



and fastest versions of 4G, such as 4G LTE. Available with free shipping from Huawei at gethuawei.com, or from its other sole source seller, Amazon, this phone sells for only \$299 (plus sales tax) with free shipping. Since it is a direct purchase and unlocked, it only requires that a compatible SIM card be installed in the back of the phone. Most current AT&T and T-Mobile customers can simply remove the SIM card from their current phones and insert it into the Ascend Mate2; no further activation is normally required. Both carriers now readily accept this phone on their respective networks. Other users, those without an AT&T or T-Mobile account, may have to obtain a compatible SIM from the respective carrier, and sign up for an appropriate service plan, but monthly rates may be more reasonable as they are not including the cost of the phone.

For those who are currently happy with their phones, but who may wish to take advantage of the newly lowered monthly rates and improved plans offered by competitors without purchasing a new phone, help is on the way. Both houses of congress recently passed HR1123, the "Unlocking Consumer Choice and Wireless Competition Act," which will again legalize consumers "unlocking" their cell phones, and using them on another compatible carrier. [Editor's note: The Senate version, S.517, became Public Law 113-144 on August 1, 2014.] This law will not excuse users from any existing contractual obligations with their current carrier, but will allow users to take their current phone with them when they switch to another compatible carrier, such as between AT&T and T-Mobile. Some of the major cell phone carriers have already implemented a "We'll pay your early termination fee" program for those switching to the new carrier. Now consumers may be able to continue to use their current compatible phones, rather than be required to purchase new phones from the new carrier. To encourage new business and to retain existing customers, almost all of the major carriers already have a "bring your own phone" policy. As the title of the law says, this should increase consumer choice among carriers, as another potential obstacle of switching carriers has come down.

For those willing to take the time and effort to do a little research, a greater selection of

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(Alternative Ways to Legitimately Save Money When Buying a Cell Phone)

(Continued from page 16)

compatible cellular phones are readily available, often at deeply discounted prices, when compared to the offerings of the cell phone companies. Unless you want the convenience of purchasing a new (or refurbished) phone or tablet directly from your carrier, substantial savings on new phones may be available from others, such as those Google Play Edition and Huawei phones mentioned above.

WEBSITES:

<https://beta.congress.gov/bill/113th-congress/house-bill/1123>

<http://bits.blogs.nytimes.com/2014/07/25/bill-legalizing-unlocking-cellphones-passes-congress/>

<http://www.ktvu.com/news/news/national/congress-oks-unlocking-phones-carriers/ngpKY/>

<http://www.t-mobile.com/verifyIMEI.aspx>

<http://www.verizonwireless.com/b2c/nso/enterdeviceId.do>

<http://gethuawei.com>

<http://e.dx.com/collection/201407/Doogee/auus/default.html>

<http://www.expansys-usa.com>

<http://deals.ebay.com>

<http://dealnews.com/c171/Electronics/Phones-Cell-Phones/>

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 also writes a weekly technology column for the Examiner newspaper <www.theexaminer.com>. Ira is also a deputy sheriff who specializes in cybercrime, and has lectured internationally on computer crime and security. ❖



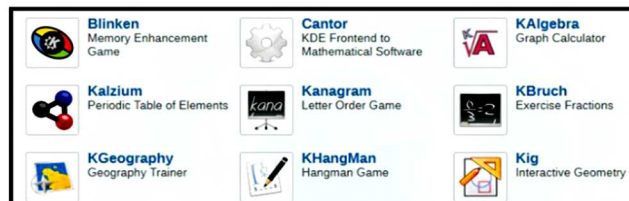
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Open Source Lab

By **Cal Esneault**, former President of CCCC and leader of many Open Source Workshops & SIGs, Cajun Clickers Computer Club, LA Cajun Clickers Computer News, March 2014
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[ccnewsletter \(at\) cox.net](mailto:ccnewsletter@cox.net)

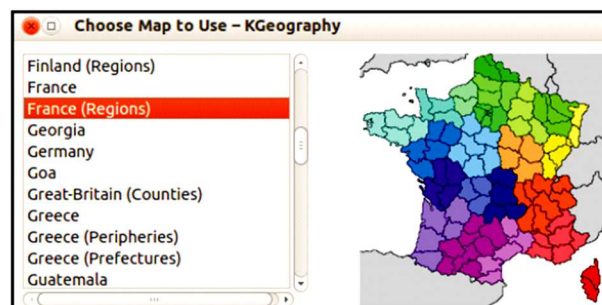
KDE (K Desktop Environment) is a very popular set of Linux software that is available as the default desktop system for many popular distributions. Since initial release in 1996, it has gone through four major version families (KDE 1.x, 2.x, 3.x, and 4.x). With the release of the developmental toolkit Qt 4, much of the KDE software will soon also be available for Microsoft Windows and Mac OSX.

What you may fail to realize is that there are many useful applications available through the KDE Community web site. For example, from the site kde.org/applications/education, the list shown below is a limited sample of available software. One that I recently tried for my Ubuntu system was KGeography (note that many KDE applications have the letter "K")



prominently displayed in the title).

In KGeography, you first choose the country map that you want to investigate. Below I have selected France. Within each map the next geographic subdivision is displayed on the map (possible options include regions, territories, counties, etc.).



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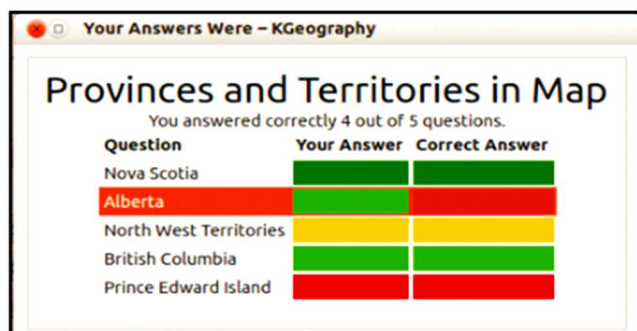
(KGeography)

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After selecting the map of the desired country, a larger map is displayed along with a side panel consisting of several categories for you to test and build your geographical knowledge. The next map shows the country of Canada as a selection with its provinces outlined with different color schemes. By clicking on each province, you will get a display of the province's name, capital and flag.



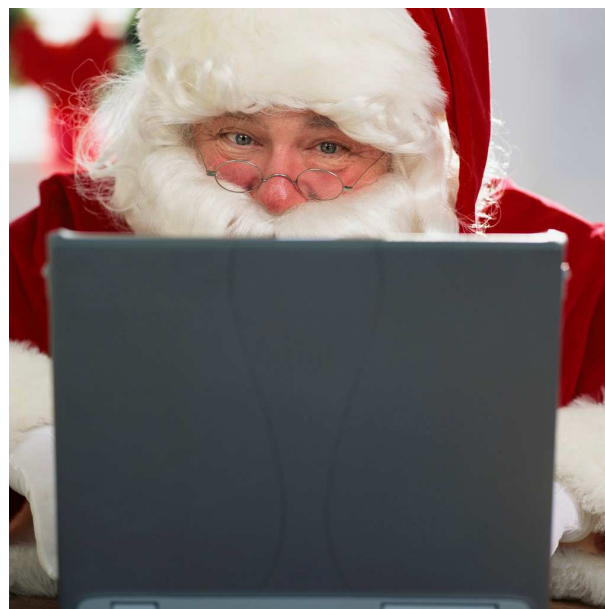
After you become familiar with the information, there is a "Test Yourself" section where you can be queried to identify the location, capital, or flag of a series of provinces. At the end of the quiz, you will get the score and results of each question. Below is a sample result of a series of five questions.



KGeography provides an entertaining way to familiarize you or your children with the details of many countries. Well-known locations are the easiest to start, but you will be challenged as you work your way through less familiar sites. My experience was that flag identification was the most difficult.

This is only one example of a KDE education application. There are many others types of programs available in such categories as office, multimedia, graphics, business, games, screen-savers, etc. Currently these apps are available through the repositories of most modern Linux distributions. Enjoy! ♦

[Editor's Note: See <http://kde-apps.org/>]

LAUGHING OUT LOUD

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Annual membership Dues:

Regular	\$ 40
Family/Associate	12
Students	18
Contributing	50
Supporter	75
Benefactor	100

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.

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- ◇ Get help by e-mail by using our LACSLIST Yahoo Group Mail List. Simply address your e-mail questions to [lacslist\(at\)yahoogroups.com](mailto:lacslist(at)yahoogroups.com)
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- ◇ Special Interest Groups (SIGs) to help solve your problems regarding selected topics.

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- ◇ Rewards for Recruiting Members: LACS will extend your membership for three months for each new Regular member you recruit.

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Send e-mail address changes to

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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

