

User Friendly

LACS
A Computer and
Technology
User Group

IN THIS ISSUE

From Your President - Editor	2
General Meeting Report	3
The Spring, 2019 Virtual Technology Conference	4
Personalize Your Desktop with Pictures and/or Slideshows	5
Interesting Internet Finds	7
Great Entertainment from Planet Coaster	7
LACS Notices	8
LACS Calendar	9
Members Helping Members	10
Officers, Directors & Leaders	11
Mistakes We Make When Buying a Computer	12
Consumer Electronics Show	13
Smart Homes	16
Laughing Out Loud	18
Membership Information	19
Map and Directions	20

LACS IS A MEMBER OF APCUG

www.apcug2.org
www.facebook.com/APCUG
www.twitter.com/apcug
www.youtube.com/apcugvideos



JUNE 11 GENERAL MEETING

Ask the Gurus

This will be a two-part meeting:

1. A discussion of the future of the group

2. An "Ask the Gurus" Q & A session with members trying to answer other members' questions about their PCs, smart phones and other computing hardware and software.

While there was a significant need for what we do when LACS was founded in 1991, the need has greatly diminished as younger people get computer training in schools, colleges, online and on the job. A board member suggested that we close the group while it still had some limited vitality instead of letting it just fade away. Too few people are doing the many jobs needed to keep LACS operating. Recruiting new members and leaders is difficult.

LACS seems to lack a viable purpose that will attract younger members and future leaders. What do you want LACS to do? Should we broaden our focus to include "science" or "tech" or become a user group for "personal applications of modern technology"? Or do something else? We need to know what our current members and potential members feel about this or other possible changes.

Other computer and technology groups are more specialized than LACS, attracting people who are focused on one area. LACS is solvent and has excellent equipment, good meeting places, website, newsletter, etc. Further thoughts on page 2.

✓ Some of our meetings haven't had as much computer education as some members would like. This meeting will give you the chance to ask experts and the group to help you solve your computer problems. Bring your questions, or you may submit questions to the board ahead to give time for researching answers.

If this is a popular format, we can do it occasionally.

Tuesday, June 11, 7:30 - 9:00 PM

**Westchester United Methodist Church
Fellowship Hall**

8065 Emerson Ave., Westchester, 90045

Refreshments and socializing at **7:00**

Informal computer Q & A roundtable,

6:30 to 7:20, to answer individual questions

More info: www.lacspc.org or 310-398-0366

FROM YOUR PRESIDENT / EDITOR**Charlie Semple Scholarship**

Judy Taylour from APCUG donated \$500 from left-over South-West Conference funds to be awarded to a worthy student in the name of Charlie Semple. Charlie had done a lot for the SW conferences so she thought it would be fitting to honor him in this way. Stanley Johnson, LACS past president and current secretary and an engineering and computer science teacher at Venice High, recommended Angel Morales.

Angel was a student in Stanley's Introduction to Engineering Design (IED) class in the ninth grade. He has done well academically in his classes and has a strong aptitude for engineering, math, and computer science.

In IED, Angel learned to use a 3D computer-aided design (CAD) software program called Autodesk Inventor. In this class, students use it to design objects like puzzle cubes, and toy automobiles while solving engineering problems. Stanley chose Angel and two of his classmates to represent Venice High School at the Chevron Design Challenge. At this competition Angel and his team created a 3D model and designed a solution for a company requesting an innovative barbeque grill. Angel and his team presented their design to a panel of judges. He applied his knowledge to a real-life problem and collaborated with his peers. He has a strong ability to work with others from diverse backgrounds and for meeting deadlines.

Angel is the Vice-President of the Computer Club. He helps with activities involving coding, robotics and game design. He is a member of the Architecture, Construction, and Engineering (ACE) Club. He is committed to his education and extracurricular activities, is a member in the Mathematics, Engineering, Science Achievement (MESA) program, the swim team, karate, and he plays the piano. He has been awarded life membership in the California Scholarship Federation (CSF) Delphian Honor Society and is a Jackets of Excellence recipient.

Would any LACS members be interested in donating to continue this scholarship in the name of Charlie Semple and LACS? ❖

More Thoughts on the Future of LACS

At the board meeting on May 27, we had an in-depth discussion on the future of LACS. We are not very happy with the way things have been going.

The same dedicated members have been doing everything year-after-year. They are getting older, some are getting burned out, and others have personal obligations.

We really don't know what the members want.

At the June 11 General meeting, we want to face these realities, and try to come to some decisions. Please come; we want to hear from YOU!

First, we want to know what you come to LACS for. Do you want the presentations to be limited to computer matters, or do you want to include other technologies?

If you think you may be remotely interested in taking on a position, like treasurer or database manager, you will be given a chance to talk with the person currently in that position. You may find that it isn't as hard as you think, or that you are more capable than you think are.

We are getting desperate. Either our members participate in the operation of LACS, or we will fold up at the end of the year. If you feel insecure about taking on a job, you will be given all the help and advice you will need.

Please bring your thoughts and ideas on this matter to the June 11.



is bustin' out all over ...

Rodgers and Hammerstein

GENERAL MEETING REPORT

May 14, 2019

By Leah Clark, LACS Editor

Digital Asset Estate Planning

Speaker: Judy Taylour

Judy calls this her “Living Presentation About Death” because she’s learning new stuff all the time. She has put this presentation into a word document, and she also wrote a document on “How To Find Stuff When I’m Gone.”



Think about how much of your life is virtual. Every email, payment, picture, etc. is one of your digital assets. What happens if nobody can retrieve them when you die? Your estate can get stuck in digital probate. Our information is online, on hard drives, on CDs, DVDs, and wearables. They all need logins and passwords.

The year after you die is one of the most vulnerable times for identity theft. Criminals comb through the obits and public records to manage your virtual life after death. Your heirs don’t need to get drawn into a lengthy probate process. Detailed information, like mother’s maiden name, dates of life events, and full names of survivors, in obituaries is used to steal your identity. Judy said we should write our own obituaries. With a name, address, and date of birth, a bad guy can purchase your social security number on the internet for as little as \$10.00. If you have email accounts, subscriptions, automatic payments, social media accounts that will need to be closed, or cloud storage, you must think of your digital presence in the world. Every account and activity online has an unique user name and password, or they should. Write down everything as you think about it. Close down accounts you no longer use.

Besides designating an executor, you need a **Digital Executor**. This person needs to be

familiar with your digital accounts, your apps, and software, online storage, your operating systems, etc. Don’t include any logins or passwords in your will because it is a public document. Research how to close your accounts; create a list of URLs.

Judy recommends using a password program. The master password can be put on an encrypted flash drive given to your digital executor. DashLane, \$60.00 per year, and LastPass, \$36.00 per year, are highly rated. You can add all your credit card info - it’s a one-stop shopping document. If you should be in the hospital for a length of time, have to go to long-term care, or be away for any reason, you can designate someone to get access to passwords so you won’t have late payments.

If you pay bills or do any banking online, you need 2-Factor Authentication. It is just your user name, password, and an additional authentication. If you change your user name or password, you have to keep it up-to-date. Remember that your executors need to shut down your email accounts and your phone numbers last, because they will be required to take care of other accounts that may need a verification email or phone call. There are websites that assist putting lists together; one is Everplans. It also tells you how to close different email and other accounts. Everyone needs to set up a Social Security account before someone steals your Social Security number. Everyone also needs to set up an IRS account.

Judy discussed closing a deceased person’s email accounts. If you belong to organizations, someone needs to know the codes and passwords necessary to continue your work. Your executor needs to know how to close your financial and social media accounts.

Be aware of scam calls after someone is gone, saying money is owed or due, etc. Social Security, the IRS, DMV, and the

three credit bureaus need to be immediately notified when someone has died. Judy explained what to do if there has been evidence of identity theft or any fraud.

Judy gave handouts on *Digital Estate Planning* and *Where to Find Stuff When I'm No Longer Here*. Go to <https://www.lacspc.org/Podcasts/DigitalAssessmentEstatePlanning.mp3> for the podcast of this presentation. ❖



THE SPRING, 2019 VIRTUAL TECHNOLOGY CONFERENCE

By Leah Clark, LACS Editor

On the Saturday morning of the Spring 2019 VTC Conference, I made extra coffee, settled down, and prepared to “get some learning.” Here is a short review of the three presentations I attended. The slides from the presentations are on www.apcug2.org, and the videos will be uploaded soon.

The Geeks on Tour, aka Chris and Jim Guld, gave a very informative and entertaining presentation on Google Photos. They are full-time RV'ers who give presentations wherever they are. They made me feel nostalgic for all the RV trips my late husband and I took together. I first learned about LACS from a camper in a RV park in Acton,

CA in 1997. I didn't know that Google Photos can do so much more than just arrange and store photos, especially its editing capability. Chris and Jim discussed seven functions that can be accomplished with Google Photos.

1. Editing: You can crop and rotate a photo, adjust color and light, and more.
2. Search: All your photos are in one place, and are searchable from any device.
3. Shared Library: You can automatically share photos with a partner.
4. Shared Photo Album: Everyone in a group can add to an album.
5. Movies: You can make a movie of selected photos and video clips.
6. Google Lens: This is an image-recognition app. It can archive business cards and put them in albums.
7. Navigate to a Photo: Use Google Maps to navigate to a photo's location.

The next video I watched had a whimsical title, “Are Your Bits Flipped?” A single bit flipped in a long string of code will cause a serious error. A single minor misconception about how an app works can cause major problems. Joe Kissell, author and publisher, pointed out how flawed “Mental Models” or conventional wisdom can cause us to waste time or jeopardize our security. It's easier to solve problems if we have some idea how stuff works. Joe gave several examples of flawed mental models. He said that we should think like a two-year-old (wonder, ask questions, and experiment), and think like a grown-up (pay attention to what you see, don't be oblivious, look it up, consult references). If you back up your computer, you don't need to be so afraid to experiment. See www.joekissell.com.

Jim Glass from the Glendora Computer and Technology Club talked about Apps. He gave us many internet sources for learning about installing and managing Apps for computers and mobile devices, where to find them, reading reviews, and how to stay safe. Backup before downloading Apps and read the app's pri-

vacy statement and read the permissions before downloading an app.

After the presentations, Judy Taylour from APCUG led a roundtable discussion on our groups' websites. A lot of good ideas were brought out to help make our websites of value to the members and as a way to attract new members. They should be attractive, and the information must be easy to locate and kept updated. The discussion gradually morphed away from websites, with ideas on a lot of subjects discussed. There is always a lot to learn - sharing ideas is a great way to do it.

The other three available presentations were *Windows 7 Sunset* by Greg Skalka on what to do when Windows 7 is no longer supported after January 2020, *A Beginners Guide to WordPress* by Mark Zinzow, and *Youth and Technology* by Bill Crowe.

You can see slides from the presentation on <https://apcug2.org>, and the videos will be uploaded to APCUG's YouTube channel.. ❖

PERSONALIZE YOUR DESKTOP WITH PICTURES AND/OR SLIDESHOWS

By **Phil Sorrentino**, Contributing Writer,
The Computer Club, FL, April 2019

www.scccomputerclub.org

Philsorr (at) yahoo.com

All desktops are not created equal. Just look at the differences the next time you go to a class where you bring and use your own laptop. I bet none of those other desktops will look like your desktop. Probably the biggest differences will be in the desktop background. These differences come about from the choices in the **Personalize window** in **Settings**. You can get to the Personalize window by at least two ways. **Personalize** is a selection in **Settings**, so just click on the **Start** button and then the **Settings**



button (the gear like icon). Or, you can get to the Personalize window by just right clicking an empty space on the desktop. Either way, you get to the Personalize window where you can set up things like the Background, the Lock screen, the Start screen, and the Taskbar.

The Background can be set to three different possibilities; a picture, a color, or a slideshow. The picture can be one of the pictures that you get to select by browsing your Pictures folder. When you find one you like, select it, and it will become one of your selections, and it will also become your background. (If you have multiple monitors, you can select Monitor 1 or 2 or both, by right-clicking the picture and then left-clicking your choice.)

After you've chosen a picture, you can determine how it will show on your monitor by making a selection in "Choose a fit." Pull down the down-facing arrow at the right-hand end of the selection box and make your selection among the choices, **Fill**, **Fit**, **Stretch**, **Tile**, **Center**, or **Span**. Pictures from different sources will show up slightly differently depending on this choice. Once you've chosen a picture, you'll have to experiment with the choices. Don't worry; you can't really break anything here.

The second background choice, **Solid color**, is maybe a little less exciting. When you select Solid color, you get to choose from a palette of colors to be the background. Just click on the color you like in the **Choose your background color** grouping of colors. You can even add a custom color by just clicking on the **Custom color button** and then in the area, click the color you would like and then click **Done**. If you don't quite like the new custom color, just re-do the selection process, and the custom color will change to your new choice.

The last background choice is **Slideshow**, which is probably the most fun. When you

choose slideshow, you get to choose the source of your slideshow pictures. Maybe you have a folder of grandchildren, or a folder of puppies or kittens, or a folder of your family vacations. Whatever you like can be the source of your slideshow pictures. Just click the **Browse** button, under **DesktopBackground**, and you'll get a navigation window to use to find the folder that contains the pictures you would like to use as a slideshow.

If you don't have a folder with all the pictures you want to use in your slideshow, now is the time to create it. Make a new folder, using File Explorer, and put it in an easy place to find, like under the **Pictures folder**, under **This PC**. After you've created this folder and maybe named it "SlideshowPictures," put all the pictures that you want to be in the slideshow into it, and then go back to Settings-Personalize-Background, browse for your new folder, and make it the source of your slideshow.

Next, decide how often you want the pictures to change; choices go from one minute to one day. The pictures will show in the sequence that they are in the folder. Remember, files in a folder will be in alpha-numeric order, with numbers first, then letters. If you don't want this sequence and would rather have them shown in random order, slide the **Shuffle** slide switch to On. Again, you can make a "Choose a fit" choice just as before in the "Picture" background choice.

The **Lock screen** is the next item that can be personalized in the Personalize window. The Lock screen is displayed when the computer is locked. You can lock the computer by using the keyboard combination of the "Windows Key" and the L key. Or you can lock the computer by pressing the Control-Alternate-Delete key combination and then choosing **Lock**. The choices for the Lock screen are similar to Background but slightly different. The choices are **Windows Spot-**

light, Picture, and Slideshow.

Windows Spotlight is a feature of Windows 10 that downloads pictures from Bing and displays them when the Lock screen is being shown. So it's like a picture option, only Bing is choosing the picture.

The Picture choice seems to work just like the Picture choice in Background. You could even select the same image for the Background and Lock screen, but it would probably be more useful if a different picture were chosen for Background and Lock screen. The picture you see would be a hint as to what was on the display.

And Slideshow seems to work just about the same here in Lock screen as it does in Background, though there are some "Advanced slideshow settings" that can further determine how Slideshow works on the Lock Screen.

The Start screen can be personalized by selecting **Start screen** and then setting the slide switches to **on** or **off** based on your need for the specific feature. You can even choose which well-known folders appear on the Start screen by selecting **Choose which folders appear on Start** and then switching that particular folder on or off. The Start screen is the pop-up window displayed when you click the start button (down on the screen, at the lower left end of the Taskbar.) On this screen you'll find an alphabetical list of all the software (or Apps) on this computer and any App that has been "pinned" to the Start screen. Items on the Start screen can be moved around the Start screen by dragging and dropping them to other locations. Left-clicking an item on the Start screen will start that App. Right-clicking an item will provide the ability to "unpin" the item from the Start screen.

The **Taskbar** is the last item on the Personalize screen and is the bar at the bottom of the Windows display. It shows Apps that have been pinned to the Taskbar along with notification from Windows, Apps, or certain hardware

such as the network you are connected to (and the amount of charge in your battery, if you are on a Laptop).

The Taskbar can be personalized by selecting “Taskbar” and then setting the slide switches to on or off, based on your need for that specific feature. You can even move the Taskbar to the top or a side by selecting “Taskbar location on screen” and then choosing the desired location. **How do I customize Taskbars?** gives a good amount of helpful information for customizing the taskbar.

The **Notification** area (at the right end of the taskbar) can also be personalized by selecting **Select which Notification Icons appear on the taskbar**. This will provide a screen of Apps, the Icons of which could appear on the Taskbar. Each one can be turned on or off, depending on your need for this notification. You can also **Turn System Icons On or Off**. This selection will provide a list of system Icons along with on/off slide switches. The Clock, Volume, Network, Location, and Action center are system notification you might want to turn on if they are not on already.

Personalization provides the ability to customize the way some very basic screens look and operate. Your choices will make your computer look a little different from other computers and give it your particular customized look. ❖

INTERESTING INTERNET FINDS

By **Steve Costello**

scostello (at) sefcug.com

March 2019

Tips For Caring For Your Eyes When Using Technology

<https://www.dailybits.com/3-tips-for-caring-for-your-eyes-when-using-technology/>

Whether you are young or old, wear eyeglasses or don't, you need to know these tips if you use technology. ❖

GREAT ENTERTAINMENT FROM PLANET COASTER

By **Jim Cerny**, Forum Leader

Sarasota Technology Users Group, FL

The STUG Monitor, April 2019

www.thestug.org

jimcerny123 (at) gmail.com

Games and entertainment are big uses for a computer. Recently, I found in my browsing a game called **Planet Coaster** where I have enjoyed watching videos of roller coasters, parks, rides, and more, all created by others who have been enjoying the tremendous creativity possible with this game. You do not have to buy the game to enjoy it – I do not own it myself yet, but I am planning on it. You can experience the creative results of other builders who have let their imaginations go wild just by viewing videos of their creations.

Perhaps you remember the “Roller Coaster Tycoon” game? Well, welcome to the latest imaging technology which now makes Roller Coaster Tycoon look like a pencil drawing by a kindergardener.

Do a Google search on “Planet Coaster” and watch some videos and see what you think. Everything you see – buildings, rides, terrain, water, etc. – is all created in this game following player commands. It is much more than just creating a great coaster, it is the total immersion in the environment you create. There are videos of complete parks with rides and different themes, day and night, and even fireworks displays! What makes this even more amazing is that players are free to share their creations with other players. So, if you like a ride, you can use it in your park – and make any modifications you want.

The night scenes of the parks are really spectacular, with lights, flames, and more. The videos you watch put you IN the ride from a wide selection of “views.” It is very

(Continued on page 17)

LACS NOTICES

WELCOME ALL

George Wolkon, LACS Database Manager

New Members (1)

Sherman Ferguson

Renewals (2)

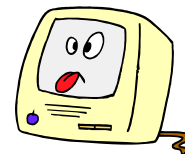
Nancy Cattell

Annette Tossounian



FIX YOUR PC FOR FREE?

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



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

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

JOIN OUR MAIL LISTS

All you have to do to join our lists is send your name only in the message body of an email from the address you want LACS to use to

lacs pc-subscribe (at) yahoogroups.com and to **lacslist-subscribe (at) yahoogroups.com**

These lists are for members only.

Lacspc is for official LACS business.

Lacslist is for any other computer-related messages and questions.

If you have question about the lists, please contact our "Mail Guy" at **mailportal (at) lacspc.org**.

HOW TO CHANGE YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION

Go to www.lacspc.org. Click on **Member Forms** in the bar under the picture. Under **Membership Update**, select **Click Here** to select either the DOC or PDF form. Fill it out and bring it to a meeting, mail it, or email your changes to **membership (at) lacspc.org**.

LACS IS ON TWITTER

On **Twitter**, follow us at:

https://twitter.com/LA_CompSoc or click on this icon to see what's there.



LACS HAS JOINED MEETUP

Our Meetup group is called:

"Los Angeles Computer Society and Technology Meetup."

Please join and **RSVP** for our general meetings - it's free. Go to <http://www.meetup.com/Los-Angeles-Computer-Society-and-Technology-Meetup/> and click on **"Join Us."**

Or click on this icon to see our Meetup Page.



LACS WEBSITE

www.lacspc.org posts back copies of the color version of *User Friendly*, calendar information, and podcasts of most of our general meetings. There is also a biannual index to past issues on the website. Check the menu on the right side.

The Editor of *User Friendly* accepts most contributions of any suitable length from members. Send articles to <editor (at) lacspc.org> in an email message or as a Word document by the **20th of the month**.

LACS CALENDAR



General Meeting

Date: Tues, June 11, 2019

Time: 7:30 P.M.

Where: Westchester United Methodist Church, Fellowship Hall.

8065 Emerson Ave. Westchester, L.A. 90045

LACS Board Meeting

Date: Monday, June 24, 2019

Time: 7:00 P.M.

Where: At the home of Charlotte Semple
Contact a board member for her address.
LACS members are invited to attend.

No Special Interest Group (SIG) meeting is scheduled for June.

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

Please contact the board to make your wishes known, or to offer ideas or help.

June 11: LACS General Meeting

June 14: Flag Day

June 16: Fathers Day

June 21: Summer Begins

June 24: LACS Board Meeting



GENERAL MEETING PRESENTATIONS

June 11 Ask the Gurus, Q & A
The Future of LACS

July 9 You, Your Tech Devices and
Ergonomics, Judy Taylour

August 13 How to Buy and Sell on the
Internet

Note: This schedule is subject to change.
Check email, *User Friendly* and our website
for updates, but mark your calendar now.

PODCASTS

Listen to the podcasts of our general meetings.
Go to <http://www.lacspc.org/category/audio-files/>. Click on the session you want to hear.

USER FRIENDLY BACK ISSUES

To see back issues of *User Friendly*, go to
<http://www.lacspc.org/category/user-friendly/>.

For indexes to find a specific article, go to
<https://www.lacspc.org/category/uf-index/>

GENERAL MEETING SNACK SCHEDULE

By **Sylvia Q. Davis** Hospitality Chair

Refreshments and socializing will be at **7:00**.

The meeting starts at **7:30**. Please bring
refreshments at **7:00**

June 11 A through D

July 9 E through I

August 13 J through N

September 10..... O through S

October 15.....T through Z

November 12 A through D

December 10..... Holiday Party

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

LACS provides hot drinks.

See your email for updates
and reminders.

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



MEMBERS HELPING MEMBERS

LACS members volunteer to help other members solve hardware and software problems by telephone during the hours listed below. Select the topic from the list and then call a person whose number is listed next to it. Or you may use a Helper's e-mail address, found in your LACS Roster. We hope that you find this free service useful. **If you are experienced using a particular program or know a topic, please volunteer to be a consultant. You don't have to be an expert.** To volunteer for this list or to make corrections, please email Leah Clark at Leahjc (at) sbcglobal.net or call her at 310-677-2792. More Quick Consultants, and more categories are always needed. You may decline or postpone a call if it comes at an inconvenient time.

Adobe Creative Suite: PDF, InDesign, PhotoShop, etc. - 17	Linux - 11	Photoshop - 17
Android Smartphones - 5	Lotus Word Pro, Approach - 12	QuickBooks -18
Apple devices - 15	Mozilla Firefox - 12	Quicken - 3, 5
Anti Malware and Backup - 5,12	MS Excel - 3, 5, 15	Thunderbird - 12
Digital Imaging, Editing - 8	MS Word - 3, 4, 10	Utilities - 5, 12
Digital Photography - 8	MS Outlook - 5, 15, 17	Visual Basic - 13
Dragon Naturally Speaking - 4	MS PowerPoint - 15	Websites - 13
Genealogy - 5	MS Publisher - 7	Windows 7 - 16
Hardware - 12	Open Office - 16	Windows - 5, 12
		WordPerfect - 5

No.	Name	Preferred Phone for Calls	From	To
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	10:00 AM	7:00 PM
7	Clark, Leah	310-677-2792	7:00 AM	5:00 PM
8	Silverstein, Elliot	310-670-1544	10:00 AM	10:00 PM
10	Beckman, Loling	310-471-7893	10:00 AM	6:00 PM
11	Hughes, Bill	424-259-1818	Any	Any
12	McKnight, Jim	310-823-7829	8:00 AM	7:00 PM
13	Ialongo, Gilbert	310-641-7906	9:00 AM	5:00 PM
15	Van Berkomp, Paula	310-398-6734	9:00 AM	5:00 PM
16	Johnson, Carol	310-372-8535	10:00 AM	9:00 PM
17	Rozek, E. J.	310-823-3811	Noon	8:00 PM
18	Semple, Charlotte	310-398-5052 M-F	9:00 AM	5:00 PM

OFFICERS, DIRECTORS AND LEADERS

Title	Name	Term	Telephone
President	Leah Clark	2019	310-677-2792
Past President	Stanley Johnson	2019	424-216-6984
Vice President	Stephanie Nordlinger	2019	323-299-3244
Secretary	Stanley Johnson	2019	424-216-6984
Treasurer	Charlotte Semple	2019	310-398-5052
Director	Paula Van Berkomp	2019	310-398-6734
Director	George Wolkon	2019	310-459-2671
Director	Open	2019	
Director	Open	2020	
Director	E. J. Rozek	2020	310-823-3811
Director	Howard Krivoy	2020	310-717-7465
Director	Mark Presky	2020	310-398-0366
APCUG Rep.	Leah Clark		310-677-2792
Car Pool Coordinator	Freda Sanders		323-230-3278
Change of Address	George Wolkon		310-459-2671
Corporate Counsel	Stephanie Nordlinger		323-299-3244
CCSC Computer Lab	Loling Beckman		310-471-7893
Greeter	Freda Sanders		323-230-3278
Assistant Greeter	Penny McKnight		310-823-7829
Hospitality Chair	Sylvia Davis		213-924-4927
Asst. Hospitality Chair	Open		
Membership Database	George Wolkon		310-459-2671
Newsletter Editor	Leah Clark		310-677-2792
Program Chair	Stephanie Nordlinger		323-299-3244
Assistant Program Chair	Open		
Publicity - Press	Mark Presky		310-398-0366
Publicity - Online Media	Stanley Johnson		424-216-6984
Quick Consultants	Leah Clark		310-677-2792
Webmaster	Paula Van Berkomp		310-398-6734

Website www.lacspc.org

Newsletter Editor editor (at) lacspc.org

Voice Mail 1-310-398-0366

Webmaster sitemaster (at) lacspc.org

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MISTAKES WE MAKE WHEN BUYING A COMPUTER

By **David Kretchmar**, Computer Technician
Sun City Summerlin Computer Club NV
Gigabyte Gazette, March 2019

www.scscc.club/

tomburt89134 (at) cox.net



For many of us, computers have become an integral part of our daily lives. Computers have become almost as important as a car to some of us. Fortunately, computers are pretty easy to acquire. They are no longer a major investment (my first computer system, 20 years ago, cost \$3000) but still can be a significant purchase and something we will live with for years.

For the less tech-savvy, buying a computer can be difficult. There is a lot of tech jargon flying around, and all of it is competing to get your money. Because of that, mistakes are easy to make, and they can easily result in your money going to waste. When you're spending hundreds of dollars, you don't want to get a machine that's going to break down in a year, fail to work as expected or cost any more than it ought to. We are going to take a look at several computer shopping mistakes so that you can avoid them and get a great computer without spending any more than you have to.

Always Buying Whatever's Cheapest

If you have very minimal computer demands and hardly browse the internet, you might be able to get away with getting a cheap computer. Cheap and/or old hardware is going to wear out more quickly and fail to meet the ever-increasing demands of new software. A \$200 machine could last you a couple of years, but that time may be filled with headaches as it begins to struggle more and more on its way to the computer graveyard. A \$400 computer should last longer, and that time should be less filled with headaches. It is impossible to be entirely sure

what you're going to get for your money, but you'll probably have a good chance of finding a more reliable, longer-lasting PC if you spend more. You don't need to buy a \$2,000 computer, but keep an eye out for good deals on brands and models that have proven to have a good lifespan, and you should be safe.

Not Buying Based on Your Needs

If you think a computer seems awesome because you've heard media hype about it, it's the latest thing, or it just looks fantastic, you're probably shopping for a computer incorrectly.

Sure, if you want to prioritize a certain feature such as appearance or power, you can, but most of us should just think about what we need from the computer and buy a machine that will enable us to do the job. If you're only going to do light Internet browsing, some word processing, and watch a movie here and there, you can probably do without 32GB of RAM, that 8-core CPU, or 12 USB 3.0 ports. Whatever you get with a computer, you pay for, so try not to go for something you know you don't need.

Not Knowing What You're Getting with an Operating System

About ten years ago, my nephew camped outside of Best Buy to get a dirt-cheap laptop. The laptop was inexpensive, but it came without a permanent operating system! Fortunately, he had a geeky uncle who was able to help him, but not all were so fortunate.

Today you are unlikely to be sold a computer without an operating system (OS). There are plenty of different computer OS's out there — Windows, Apple OS X, various flavors of Linux, including the Chrome OS. Each OS functions differently. Most importantly, for users, each OS handles software differently (if at all). If you have an old computer running one OS and want to bring software you purchased to a new computer, don't expect to succeed if you switch operating systems. For example, Skype may have versions working for Mac

and Windows, but you won't be able to Skype with your friends and family if you switch over to Chrome OS. Remember the first step in buying a computer: you need to decide what you need to do with a computer and ensure the OS will support it.

Assuming a Feature is Included

Whether you're shopping for a laptop or a desktop, don't make any assumptions about the features that are included.

Computers come in all configurations

You should never take anything for granted. If you want a computer with a CD/DVD drive, look and see if there is one, and if you're shopping online or in a store, make sure you know with 100% certainty it's there. Optical drives seem to be slowly going the way of the old floppy drives – away.

Software can usually be downloaded online rather than installed from an optical disk. More and more new computers don't include an optical drive, especially laptops, since the optical drive on a laptop adds considerably to the bulk of the system. External optical drives are available for \$25 - \$30, and this is often the solution if an optical drive is required.

Also, make sure there are plenty of USB ports, and importantly at least one high speed (3.0 or 3.1) USB port.

Some new computers are sold with HDMI video output only.

If you plan to utilize an older monitor with only the old standard 15-pin sub-D input, you are out of luck without a special adapter.

Not Finding a Problem with a Computer While You Can Still Return It

Just because you've spent your money on a new computer already doesn't mean the buying process is over. You have a time window where you can return the computer if you're not satisfied. Test everything. See how far the Bluetooth signal reaches. Ensure it can connect to your Wi-Fi network and maintain a

connection. Test out all of the drives and ports. Try out headphones and microphones. Install all of the programs you want to use and try them out. Run Prime95 or your most demanding video game for hours. You basically want to make sure that the computer will easily meet your needs. If it's falling short or not working how you expect, you want to find that out while you can still return it. (Personal story: I once bought a high-end Dell desktop computer that seemed great, but it would not shut down without cutting off the power. I returned it quickly for a replacement. If I hadn't tested out those features early on, I would have learned the hard way what it felt like to waste \$3000.)

Not Shopping Around Enough

You do need to shop around - that is if you want to get the best deal. Don't just go into Best Buy and assume your options are limited to those devices at those prices. Shopping at a single retailer (especially a brick-and-mortar shop) will guarantee that you'll miss out. Every big retailer is going to have some deal going at any given time, so you've just got to hunt for the right one, which means checking way more than one place. I suggest you look at Newegg.com, TigerDirect.com, Amazon.com, and Best-Buy.com. If you're brave and knowledgeable, you can see what you can find on eBay.com. Check the manufacturers' websites. Check Costco and other retailers. If you shop around and are patient, you'll get a good deal on a new computer.

Setup and Warranty

Finally, there's the matter of setup services and warranties. Choosing to get a warranty is an extra cost, which I do not recommend, but it adds some security. If you're concerned about physical damage to the computer, an accidental damage warranty isn't a bad idea. As far as setup services, if you

know your way around a computer, or know someone who does and is willing to help, you can likely pass on having a professional set it up — most of what's done is pretty simple. If everything about computers is like a foreign language to you and no one you know tolerates your technological deficiencies, it may be worth the money to have a pro come set up your new computer and get you up and running. ❖

CONSUMER ELECTRONICS SHOW (CES) 2019

By **George Harding**
Tucson Computer Society
January 21, 2019

There were 180,000 attendees, 4500 vendors, and some 500 qualified press.

Press events: Unveiled (150 vendors), Digital Experience (250 vendors), Show-Stoppers (200 vendors), press conferences all day Monday

Notable items: More Internet of Things (IoT) and Artificial Intelligence (AI), plus 5G, 4K and Organic Light-Emitting Diode (OLED), autonomous cars, Virtual Reality (VR) and Augmented Reality (AR)

The **Internet of Things** (IoT) is several years old now and has been used to allow operation of one or more devices remotely with one controller, usually a smartphone. Examples are lights, thermostat, garage door, etc. Now IoT has been widely expanded to allow remote control of all devices with one controller. The goal appears to be to hook everything to everything else.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is the use of computer programs to decide to take specific actions when defined circumstances occur, i.e., to cause apparently intelligent actions.

One device that is a combination of AI and IoT is **Footloose**, a cat waste disposal device. But it's more than that. It also analyzes the waste to identify possible illness, dispose of the waste hygienically, checks cat's weight, how often it uses the device, how long it spends there, and how much it leaves behind. It can identify multiple cats (if you have more than one). It's also self-cleaning and odorless, using NASA technology. There's also a smartphone app.



Another example is a **food-ordering system**, perhaps set up in a public place, like an apartment lobby. You select your choices, and the food is delivered into your cubicle. Again, a smartphone app is part of the system.



AI has tremendous potential and has already been used by many companies to speed up business operations.

A *60 Minutes* program talked with a Chinese entrepreneur investing in AI startups. They have 140 of them so far, ten being worth \$1 billion already. He says "Intelligence" is a misnomer, since these programs cannot think like a human and will never be able to do what humans can do.

5G is the latest generation of cellular mobile communications. It brings higher data rates,

lower latency, higher system capacity, and massive device connectivity (per Wikipedia). It is expected to allow much faster cellphone service and much broader coverage. AT&T, Sprint, and Verizon have already demonstrated 5G in limited locations. General availability is expected in 2020.

TV innovation is slowing, leading to ubiquitous inclusion of 4K and OLED. There is 8K on the horizon, but little in the way of source material.

Organic Light Emitting Diode (OLED) is created with a film of organic compound that emits light in response to electric current. This technology provides excellent color response, referred to as HDR, with blacker blacks and whiter whites. It also provides a much thinner TV unit, typically 3/4 of an inch thick.

As usual, there were many car makers with their concept models.

Autonomy is getting more widespread, and the devices are being incorporated into the design, rather than strapped on top and side.



There was an autonomous VTOL helicopter from Bell.

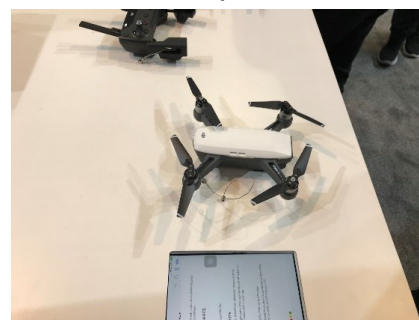


Hyundai Elevate helps first responders access very difficult areas.

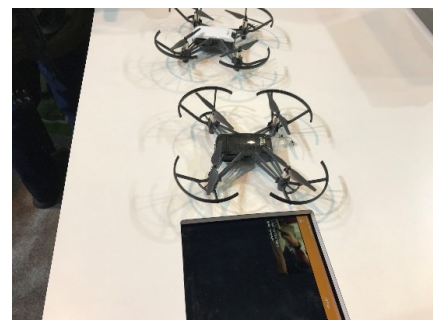


See video at <https://youtu.be/A33Yu-9rgxo>

Drones continue to increase in ability and decrease in price. DJI is the leader in the industry currently. Their lowest price drones are Mavic and Spark.



The rotors of the Mavic fold inward, making a very compact device to carry.



The increased speed of computer chips and the sophistication of devices has made Virtual Reality (VR) more widespread, being used in companies for training, repair, and more. Augmented Reality (AR) is still not widespread.

Kodak showed a very small, compact projector, Luma, which can project to an 8-foot screen.



All in all, CES is a mammoth event that shows what is being provided today, and will be provided tomorrow by companies that serve the consumer market.

CES is presented in early January each year. Their web site is at www.ces.tech ❖

SMART HOMES

By **Dan Douglas**, President
Space Coast PCUG, FL
The Space Coast PC Journal, March 2019
www.scpcug.org
datadan (at) msn.com

I'm pretty sure that almost all of you have heard about having a **Smart Home** and may be wondering what that's all about. This month I'll take a look at what that means and some of the issues to watch out for. The most common starting point for setting up a smart home is to select a hub or main control point/device. There are thousands of smart [lights](#), [digital locks](#), [security cameras](#), [thermostats](#), and more, but if you want to control them all from a single verbal or

screen interface, then you're going to need a smart home hub.

The Amazon Alexa, or an Echo, as it was originally called back in November 2014 when it launched, was one of the first on that market that really took off. That was followed a couple of years ago by the Google Home hub (11/2016) and the Apple HomePod (1/2018). There are several others on the market such as the well rated Samsung Smartthings and the Hubitat Elevation hub, but I'll concentrate on the Amazon products since those are the ones that I'm most familiar with.

Alexa comes in basically three styles from Amazon: the original **Echo** model which is about a 10 inch high 4 inch diameter cylindrical speaker with a light and microphone on the top. Next came the **Dot** which was like a hockey puck in size with a much smaller speaker followed by the **Show** which was the first to offer a LCD screen to display information in addition to the ability to talk, which is a common feature across all models. You set up the device by connecting it to your Wi-Fi network through a smartphone app, and then selecting various capabilities or "skills" through the app which programs the Alexa device. The Alexa device can be set to respond to a key word, which must be Echo, Alexa or Computer, such as "Alexa, what is the weather forecast in Orlando?"

Through the skills settings for the device, you can program it to be aware of and to control all of the other smart items in your house. In my house for example, I can tell Alexa to adjust the thermostat setting, show me who is at the front door, turn the outside lights on or off, turn the sprinklers on/off and control the volume on the TV. Many users have newer versions of TVs, cable or satellite boxes, channel streaming boxes like a Roku or Amazon Fire TV, pool pumps/heaters, robot vacuums, and garage door openers to mention just a few, that can all be controlled through the hub. At Christmas, I wired the outside holiday lights to a

Wi-Fi enabled extension cord that I used to control when the lights came on or off. The possibilities are really endless with the capability of controlling virtually every household appliance, gadget and other things that you may want to turn on or off today, not in the far future.

Now the reason that I wanted to write about this is because of what happened to my smart house when we experienced a lightning strike outside the house. A surge went through the internet cable running to my house and fried part of the circuitry in my cable modem. I have the modem connected to my own Wi-Fi router through a wired LAN cable, which is very common practice in a lot of homes today. My router could no longer connect to the internet, so all of the devices programmed to link through my Wi-Fi network could no longer communicate. The Wi-Fi in the cable modem itself still worked, so I was able to switch my PCs over to it without any issues. However, Alexa, and all of the devices that it was linked to, could no longer be controlled. Of course, most devices have a manual mode of operation, so I could still adjust the temperature, and watch TV, etc. I could have spent time to reprogram Alexa and every device to use the weaker cable modem Wi-Fi, but it was a lot simpler to just wait for the next day when Spectrum came out and replaced the faulty pieces, so my main Wi-Fi router could resume normal operations. It was amazing to see how easily we had adjusted to the smart home automation capabilities and how we had to think about what to do for certain functions that were now automated.

Our Web Master, Curt Postic, has a great deal of experience programming Alexa to do more than I do, such as making phone calls through his Alexa, so take a look at his monthly web master reports for the latest advancements in this ever-evolving Smart Home saga!

If you have suggestions for other topics like this, that you would like to see explained, please let me know! ❖

Great Entertainment from Planet Coaster *(Continued from page 7)*

impressive. Viewing these videos makes me admire the talent and creativity of others, and I am sure you will enjoy watching them as well. Don't get sick riding the coasters! ❖



RIDE SHARING

If you need a ride to a General Meeting, or if you are able to give a ride, please contact Freda Sanders at 323-230-3278.

TECHBOOMERS

teaches how to use various websites and internet-based applications.

- <https://TechBoomers.com>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O2-bwYIYu1I>

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LAUGHING OUT LOUD



Why are PCs like air conditioners?
 They stop working properly if you open Windows!

What did the turkey say to the computer?
 Google, google, google!

Why did Jack and Jill "really" go up the hill? To get better Wi-fi.

source:
<http://www.jokes4us.com/peoplejokes/technologyjokes.html>

FINANCIAL REPORT

A LACS member who wishes to see or has questions about our financial reports may contact our treasurer.

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Electronic Newsletter	30
Family-Associate	12
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Associate members are those who live in the same household or work at the same address as a regular member; they do not receive their own subscriptions to *User Friendly*, but may read it on the LACS website. **Students** must prove full-time status.

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

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- Occasional product **discounts**, special offers, etc.

— **Special Interest Groups** (SIGs) on various topics may be created to help you to learn, to share interests, and to solve your computer problems.

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— **Rewards** for recruiting; LACS will extend your membership for three months for each new regular member you recruit.

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Email: _____ Email of Associate: _____

Preferred Phone: _____ Publish Contact Info in Roster ☐ Yes ☐ No

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DIRECTIONS TO GENERAL MEETING

Westchester United Methodist
 Church Fellowship Hall
 8065 Emerson Ave.
 Los Angeles CA 90045

From the North:

Take Sepulveda Blvd. SOUTH
 to W. 80th St. Turn WEST/right.
 Go about one mile to Emerson
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 long block to W. 80th Place. It
 is on the Northwest corner of
 Emerson and W. 80th Place.

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 about eight blocks to W. 80th
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 Northwest corner of Emerson
 and W. 80th Place. There is
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