User Friendly

*LACS
A Computer and Technology
User Group*

IN THIS ISSUE

JULY

LACS IS A MEMBER OF APCUG

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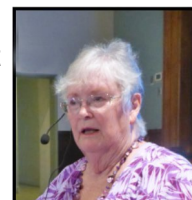& Computer User Groups

JULY 9 GENERAL MEETING

Topic: **You, Your Tech Devices and Ergonomics**
Speaker: **Judy Taylour**
Santa Clarita Valley Computer Club President
APCUG Speakers Bureau

Sit straight! Shoulders and arms relaxed! Feet on the floor! Wrists and hands floating! Cumulative trauma! Repetitive stress syndrome!

We have all been using technology for many years; are we still practicing good ergonomics? Or, are we stressing our bodies every day without realizing it by extending our wrists, slouching, sitting without foot support and bending our head to look at poorly placed monitors? Along the way, we started using tablets and smartphones which have a different set of ergonomic issues.

This presentation will take us down memory lane on computer ergonomics and give us ideas on the proper use of our tablets and smartphones.

Meet Our Presenter

Judy Taylour is President of the SCV Computer Club and Chair of several APCUG committees. APCUG is an international organization of technology and computer clubs.

Judy is a 31-year member of the Santa Clarita Valley Computer Club where she serves as President, Editor, and Webmaster. She is also co-facilitator for the Southern California Regional User Group Summit (SCRUGS), a group of computer clubs in Southern California that have gotten together quarterly for over 20 years to share ideas and presenter information, solve problems, etc. Judy taught adult education computer classes for 22 years through her local high school district and is a member of the Pierce College Computer Applications and Office Technologies Advisory Committee that meets annually to suggest courses and hardware for the next school year. Judy is a firm believer in life-long learning.

Tuesday, July 9, 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

APCUG BENFITS

At the June General Meeting, someone asked what the benefits of membership in APCUG are.

APCUG is the international association of computer and technology user groups. There are about 145 groups throughout the US, Canada, and Australia, with about 45 in California. There are 12 regions; LACS is in region 10. Every region has an assigned Regional Advisor to help with problems. Judy Taylour, who has presented to us several times, is our advisor.

Go to the APCUG website at www.apcug2.org to see and take advantage of what's there. LACS is part of something bigger than itself!

Some of the benefits of membership are:

- Tips and Tricks for Windows, Apple, Linux and Chromebook.

- Speaker's Bureau - A source of experienced presenters for meetings

- Virtual Technology Conferences - Free interesting presentations on various subjects in your own home, YouTube videos of the VTC presentations

- Articles written by user group members and others sent to editors - a fantastic source of material for newsletters

- Newsletters shared by other user groups

- Discounts and Special Offers

- Newsletter, Website and Digital photo contests - LACS has been a winner!

- NOOZ and quarterly reports from other groups

- User Group Locator Service (UGLS)

Please try to find a little time to peruse the APCUG website. You might be surprised! You might have been missing out as a LACS member.

Angel Morales
Winner of the Charlie Semple Scholarship, with Teacher, Stanley Johnson
LACS Past President and Secretary
This picture wasn't available for the June 2019 User Friendly article on page 2.

Culver City Senior Center

Several LACS members volunteer one Friday morning a month from 9:00 to 11:30 at the open computer Lab at the CCSC at 4095 Overland Ave. at Culver Blvd. in Culver City, 90232. Volunteers get a free annual parking permit for the center.

Seniors can use the computers to access email, the internet, or to practice what they're learning in class. Someone must be present whenever the computers are being used.

Our volunteers may get sick or want to go on vacation, so we could use a few more helpers. No special skills are needed. Those using the computers are most appreciative of simple assistance. That gives a good feeling! New volunteers will be partnered with an experienced member, until they feel at ease being on their own.

Please contact Loling Beckman at <LolingB (at) earthlink.net> or 310-471-7893 to learn more about what is needed or to volunteer.

GENERAL MEETING REPORT
June 11, 2019

By **Leah Clark**, LACS Editor/Presiden
The Future of LACS
Ask the Gurus

At this meeting, members came together to consider the future of LACS, and to get answers to questions from our gurus. We discussed what we want LACS to do, what kind of presentations we want, why we come to meetings, the need for officers and volunteers, and if LACS should continue after this year. A couple of visitors also had some ideas; perhaps they can see things with fresh eyes. A visitor liked our program, Translating Thoreau's *Walden* into a Video Game. She would like to learn how to hook up video equipment, microphones, etc. Another visitor was interested in graphics and video games.

Here are some of the comments and ideas that were presented:

- Presentations on different subjects including things that are useful or are just interesting uses of technology
- Shorter programs with more time to interact with other members at the end
- Artificial Intelligence
- Contact Reddit for program ideas
- Meet every other month
- Change the focus of the organization – more social
- Don't want to lose the benefits of belonging to APCUG *(See page 2 of this issue)*

- Focus only on computer issues
- How to prevent computer problems
- What to do when something goes wrong
- Take a survey of members
- Close LACS

A non-profit organization cannot exist without a President, Secretary and Treasurer. Several of our officers and volunteers must resign at the end of 2019. They have held their positions for years, and are getting tired. Here are some of the situations we're facing:

- Charlotte, our treasurer, is resigning at the end of the year. She explained the treasurer's duties, and she will work with anyone interested.
- Paula would like a replacement as webmaster.
- George, our database manager, must also resign. He had sent an email listing of what he does, and he will help anyone interested.
- Jim is resigning at the end of the year from setting up the equipment at the general meetings, so members will be needed to set up, operate, and take down the equipment at each meeting.
- See our bylaws to learn the general duties of each board member. Go to www.lacspc.org – click on General, then on Bylaws. Talk with the current board members for details of what they do.

The second part of the meeting was an opportunity to ask computer- related questions. Here are a few queries that came up:

- How to change the date and other meta data on photos
- Gmail problems – how to delete old messages when replying to an email
- Other email questions including missing attachments, making email lists and setting up email groups
- Inexpensive cell phone providers – PureTalk and Consumer Cellular
- How to use the internet to solve problems – tech support, getting manuals

There was a lot of talking and eating at this meeting, but no definite decisions were made. We plan to send out an email survey shortly. Please reply to it and let us know your ideas for LACS.

If you think you may be able to become an officer or volunteer, please contact the person doing that job now. See page 11 in *User Friendly* to see what needs to be done and the contact information.

Because I am learning constantly and have made good friends over the years, I want to keep LACS going. Is that just a pipe dream?

TRAVELING WITH YOUR DEVICES (COMPUTERS)

By **Jim Cerny**, Forum Leader
Sarasota Technology Users Group, FL
The STUG Monitor, March 2019
www.thestug.org
jimcerny123 (at) gmail.com

You are probably used to using your computer devices at home, but what about traveling? Taking your devices with you can make your trip much better with directions, shopping, gas, emergency needs, entertainment, and much more. Whether you are traveling with your smartphone, tablet, or laptop, here are some important tips to remember.

1. Backup your devices and/or data before you leave. If you are using the "cloud" as your backup, that's fine. But it is wise to check to make sure that you are putting all your important things on the cloud or whatever backup system you use.

2. Bring charging cables and power backups with you, along with earbuds for private listening. You should have a cable in your car as well to keep your devices charged.

3. Check to see if your destinations have free Wi-Fi. Even if they do, be prepared for a much slower response than what you get at home.

4. Take your needed account IDs and passwords with you! If you use another computer or need to access your email in a different way, you will need your IDs and passwords. At home, you may have your device remember your ID or password, but when you travel, it may not work that way, especially if something goes wrong.

5. Keep your travel information handy – in your smartphone, for example. Have an "emergency" note in memory with your medications, doctor information, emer-

gency contacts, etc. You should also have a list of your destination phone numbers, travel club memberships and phone numbers for general travel needs such as hotel chains, airlines, car rental companies, etc.

6. Do a test before you leave on your trip. Go to your local library or coffee shop and test how to get your email or important things on the internet. It is nice to see how differently things work when you are not in a hurry, and when you are NOT using your home Wi-Fi network.

7. If there is no Wi-Fi network, you may be able to use your iPhone/smartphone as a "hotspot," so your laptop can connect to the internet using your phone as a Wi-Fi. Note that you will be using the cellular network and such use may use your data and/or add to your monthly phone bill (depending upon your phone contract). You can ask Google how this is done on your particular smartphone and/or contact your cellular provider for help and possible use charges that may be billed to you. Again, do a test of this before you leave.

8. Be aware that using a "public" Wi-Fi network is, well, not private. In other words, others using the same network may be able to see what you are doing. Try to avoid entering passwords, account numbers, and credit card numbers on public networks.

9. Test how you will use Google maps (or other travel apps) before you leave on your trip. Try them around town in your local area when you are not in a hurry to see how they would work, especially if you will be using them in your car. Can you drive using the audio voice directions? Do you need to touch the screen on your device while driving? Do you understand how your travel app displays bad traffic, accidents, gas stations, hotels, etc.? It is ALWAYS better to have a passenger help you navigate with your device while driving. Any distraction taking your eyes off the road is dangerous. If you are driving by yourself, pull off the road, and stop to use or adjust your device.

10. If you are traveling out of the USA, you will have to get adaptors and arrange for special usage for your devices in other countries. Ask Google or your provider for help and costs.

In summary, it all comes down to being prepared and to "know before you go." Besides, it can be fun to discover some of those wonderful things those apps can do before you are in a bind with problems on the road. Happy, safe travels. ❖

Grammarly, a Review

By **Matt Batt**, President
The Computer Club, Florida
The Journal of The Computer Club, April 2019
www.scccomputerclub.org
mbatt453 (at) gmail.com

I always thought I was a decent writer. I know that I write in the passive voice too often, but I always try to keep my sentence structure correct and my sentences easy to read.

Recently, I discovered a piece of software called Grammarly. It reviews your writing and finds typos, spelling errors, and grammar mistakes. It's quite effective. It's like a proofreader on steroids. Some days, it's quite humbling.

Grammarly comes in a free or paid version.

The free version contains most of the features of the paid version. The free version of Grammarly is more than sufficient for the writing that most of us do with emails, letters, and articles. The paid version gives you an advanced grammar checker, a plagiarism detector, and detailed information about each of your grammar mistakes.

There are several ways to install and use Grammarly:

I installed Grammarly as an extension to my Chrome browser. This is the easiest way to get started with it. It is available from www.grammarly.com. Once I installed it, Grammarly was available to check my emails that were composed using the Gmail website online. This chrome extension also works with other online email and document editors.

I installed the Grammarly desktop app (www.grammarly.come/native/windows). The way to use the desktop is to copy and paste what you have written into Grammarly to be checked. Another option is to click on Import, and upload a Microsoft Word document directly into Grammarly.

I also installed the Microsoft Office add-in (www.grammarly.com/office-addin/windows) so that Grammarly was active for Microsoft Word and Outlook.
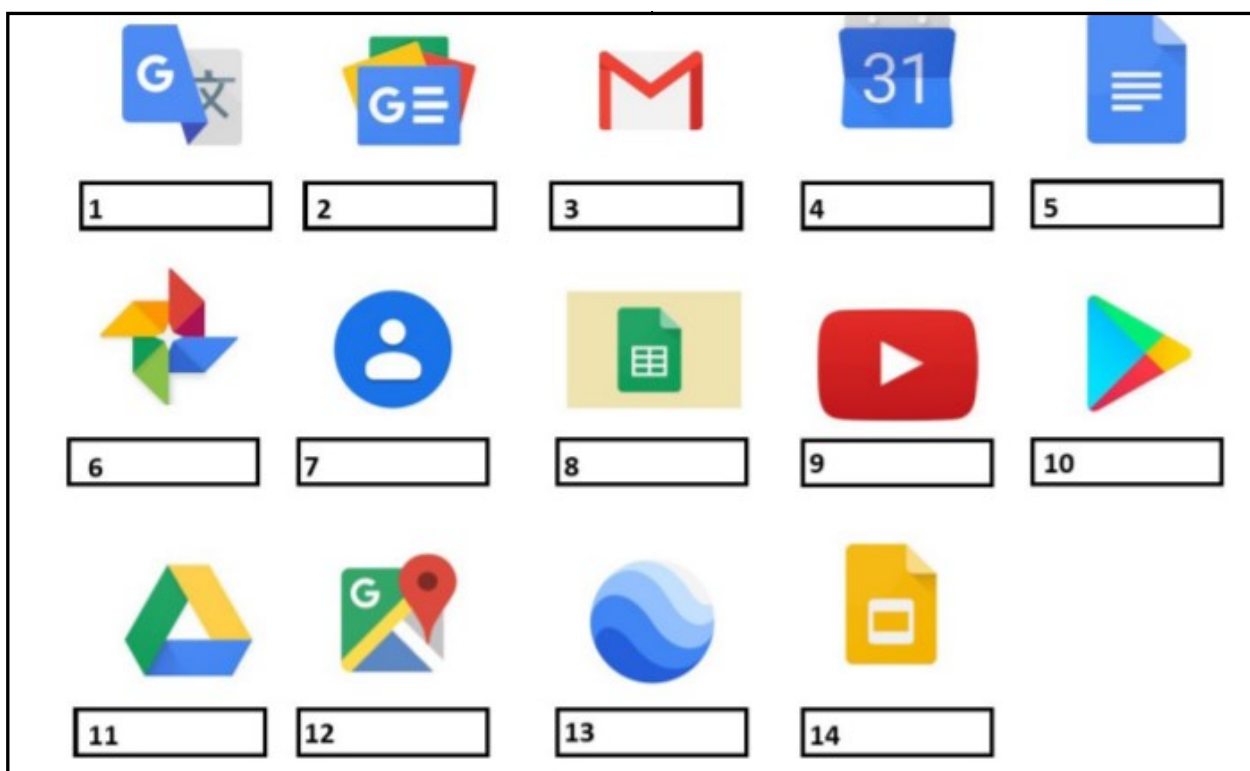
My usage is simple. I use the Word add-in to check documents that I write and the Chrome add-in to check my emails. I won't tell you how many errors it has caught; I'm happy that Grammarly is there for me. ❖

DO YOU KNOW THESE GOOGLE ICONS?

By **Jim Cerny**, Forum Leader, Sarasota Technology Users Group, FL
The STUG Monitor, May 2019
www.thestug.org / jimcerny123 (at) gmail.com

The icons on page 6 represent some popular Google apps; do you recognize any of them? Write the name of the app in the box. All these apps are FREE with Google, all you need is a Google account. Still stuck on a few? Maybe you can match a description below to the icon above. Of course they are not in the same order, what would the fun be in that? (Answers are at the end of this article).

A — Google Earth

Explore anyplace on the planet, zoom in or out, take tours, and enjoy the constantly improving 3D buildings and land formations. Absolutely dazzling!

B — Google DRIVE

Free software that works like Microsoft Office You get Google Docs (word processing), Sheets (spreadsheets), Slides (presentations) and more. You can also put (upload) ANY of your files onto the drive to share with others and have them available anywhere. There is a small charge if you exceed the free 15 GB space amount.

C — YouTube

Now in the Google family. Search and find videos on ANY topic or any famous person. See videos from the past or from other countries. Great for entertainment! When you do a Google search on the internet you will most likely be presented with several videos. It is amazing how many free videos you can find on YouTube!

D — Google MAPS

A great way to travel and get from place to place. Probably better than the map software used in your car. Plan your travels and compare alternate routes.

E — Google Translate

Translate from one language to another, super easy and super fun!

F — GMAIL

A great email app to do your email on all your devices.

G — Google Play

Entertainment access to movies, TV shows, books, music, and much more. Download or use charges may be applied.

H — Google PHOTOS

Use the camera on your smartphone, and your photos will be uploaded to Google Photos for you, freeing up space on your device. Now you can see and work with your photos on any device

I — Google Calendar

Keep all your appointments here. Can be synced to your iPhone.

J — Google Sheets, in Google Drive

Free spreadsheet app similar to Microsoft Excel.

K — Google Contacts

One place for all your contacts. Can be synced to your iPhone.

L — Google News

A great source for news.

M — Google Slides, in Google Drive

Free presentation app for creating great slides for your talk, similar to Microsoft PowerPoint.

N — Google Docs, in Google Drive

A great free word processor similar to Microsoft Word.

Answers: 1-E 2-L 3-F 4-I 5-N 6-H 7-K 8-J 9-C 10-G 11-B 12-D 13-A 14-M

LACS NOTICES

WELCOME ALL

**George Wolkon,** LACS Database Manager

New Members (0)

Renewals (9)

Lawrence Abe*	Roxanne Goodrich
Barbara Benjamin	Henry Harris
Janet Chesne*	Wade Huie
Gavin Faught	Patrick Zilliacus*
Roger Garland	* Contributor

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 **lacspc-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**.

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 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.

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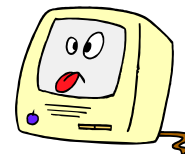
There are certain limitations to Jim's offer, so see the details by clicking the "Fix my PC for Free?" link at www.jimopi.net.

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.

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.

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 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 CALENDAR

General Meeting

Date: Tues, July 9, 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, July 29, 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 July.

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.

July 4: Independence Day
July 9:   LACS General Meeting
July 29: LACS Board Meeting

GENERAL MEETING PRESENTATIONS

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**

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
Android Smartphones - 5
Apple devices - 15
Anti Malware and Backup - 5,12
Digital Imaging, Editing - 8
Digital Photography - 8
Dragon Naturally Speaking - 4
Genealogy - 5
Hardware - 12

Linux - 11
Lotus Word Pro, Approach - 12
Mozilla Firefox - 12
MS Excel - 3, 5, 15
MS Word - 3, 4, 10
MS Outlook - 5, 15, 17
MS PowerPoint - 15
MS Publisher - 7
Open Office - 16

Photoshop - 17
QuickBooks -18
Quicken - 3, 5
Thunderbird - 12
Utilities - 5, 12
Visual Basic - 13
Websites - 13
Windows 7 - 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 Berkom, 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 Berkom	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 Berkom		310-398-6734

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

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

MY MESHED-UP WI-FI

By **Greg Skalka**, President
Under the Computer Hood
User Group, CA
Drive Light, March 2019
www.uchug.org
president (at) uchug.org

Our modern electronic devices are all about connectedness. It seems everything we have now is connected, and that connection is integral to the capabilities that are provided for us. Before they were connected, computers were just big boxes that made calculating and writing easier. Now with the internet, they provide communications, information and entertainment. Thermostats, cameras and lights used to be just things to turn on your furnace, capture pictures and video, and illuminate your surroundings. Now, when you connect them to your home network, they become the start of a smart home. All that connectedness is great, but for it to be useful, it needs to be reliable, secure, easy to use, and available where you need it.

The methods used to connect our devices have evolved and improved over time, going from wired phone and Ethernet cables to wireless communications, with cellular phone networks, Bluetooth and Wi-Fi.

Cables perform well, but limit mobility and can be unsightly or difficult to conceal. Cellular data connections can have great range but can have spotty coverage and require additional costs for data service. They can work fine on your phone or tablet but are harder to utilize for computers or small household devices. Bluetooth is useful for low data rate connections between devices at close range.

Wireless keyboard and mouse connections work great over Bluetooth, but it wouldn't work well for surfing the web. The best wireless method for medium range (in a house or building) and high bandwidth (web surfing and streaming) is Wi-Fi.

Wi-Fi provides wireless connections based on the IEEE 802.11 standards, which were originally established in the late 1990s. The standards and capabilities they provide have evolved over the years.

Wi-Fi now utilizes a number of RF bands, mostly in the GHz frequency range (typically 2.4 GHz to 60 GHz), and can support over 1 Gbit/s.

My first computer (early 1980s) was a stand-alone device, as there were no popular networking standards at the time. When we got married in 1985, my wife and I shared one computer. Computers didn't get "personal" for us until probably the late 1990's, when my wife wanted her own, and we started to think about separate computers for our two children. When we moved into our present house in 1987, it came brand-new with all the networking connections we needed - phone jacks and coax cables in a couple of the rooms for the dial-up modem and cable TV.

By the early 2000s, we had at least four computers in the house, one for each occupant. Around this time we, unfortunately, had a leak in our plastic house water lines, and we had to re-pipe the house with copper. I took this opportunity to use the holes in the walls to pull Cat5e Ethernet, phone and coax cables into all bedrooms except the master (I never considered having a computer there). This allowed us to have a good wired home network, with internet at every computer. My "office" was in the upstairs bedroom in the front corner of the house; this is where I located the router for our home network. From that room, I had cable connections that provided network and internet to the kids' bedrooms and my wife's "office" downstairs in the center of the house.

This network worked well for us for many years. Even though early-version Wi-Fi was

available, I preferred the superior security of my wired network, and I even installed some wired Ethernet network cameras (this did take some work, as my wife hates visible cords and cables). We had laptops that had Wi-Fi capability, however, so I bought a wireless access point to connect to the wired network in my wife's office. I was still so worried about Wi-Fi's security that I plugged the access point into a separate power strip with a switch, so it could be easily powered off and disabled when not in use.

It was either my wife's iPhone or our first Amazon Echo Dot that forced me to finally leave the Wi-Fi access point on all the time. I also bought a Chromebook, which required a wireless Internet connection to do most anything. I later added a second Dot, as well as three Samsung Wi-Fi network cameras. These cameras pointed out the poor Wi-Fi coverage provided by the access point, as I could not place them far from the center of the house. I wanted to put one up in my office to replace one of the wired cameras, but the signal could not reach that far through the structure. One problem with the GHz frequencies used by Wi-Fi is that they are easily attenuated by the material in the walls and furnishings of a house. I tried using the Wi-Fi capability in my router (located in the front of the house) instead of the access point, which provided good signal strength there, but poor Wi-Fi in the middle and back parts of the house.

My poor Wi-Fi capabilities soon became a bigger issue, as I continued finding more and more smart home devices that I would like to have, including more voice-operated assistants (Amazon Echo and Google Home), more network cameras (video doorbells and outdoor cameras), smart light bulbs, smart outlets, and smart thermostats. All these devices require a Wi-Fi connection to allow them to be used or controlled through smartphone apps. I needed to find a way to have good Wi-Fi coverage from my front yard all the way to my back yard.

One handy tool for evaluating Wi-Fi signals and diagnosing coverage issues is a free Android app called "WiFi Analyzer" (by farproc). It can display a real-time graphical indication of the signal strengths of the Wi-Fi signals (networks identified by their SSIDs) that your phone sees. It allowed me to move around the house with my phone and see just how poor the coverage was with my access point. It can also be useful to determine if you are getting interference from a neighbor's Wi-Fi, or if you have other signals in your house that you don't know about. I found that our two HP all-in-one network printers, which have both wired and wireless interfaces, were broadcasting a Wi-Fi signal even though I was only using their wired Ethernet interfaces.

There are several ways to provide better Wi-Fi signal coverage; most involve adding additional Wi-Fi networks (with separate SSIDs). There are Wi-Fi repeaters (or extenders) that can extend your Wi-Fi coverage by receiving your existing Wi-Fi signals and repeating them, though on a separate wireless network (as if you had two wireless routers operating in your home). I could effectively do this with the wireless equipment I already have. If I turned on both my router's Wi-Fi and my access point, then I could have reasonable coverage over most of my house. This still would not cover the rear part of the house or back yard; I would need another Wi-Fi repeater for that and would wind up with multiple wireless networks to manage.

The Mesh Router

A new device for extending Wi-Fi, the mesh router, has recently become a popular option for providing whole-house Wi-Fi. Mesh routers use multiple devices or nodes to provide Wi-Fi from multiple locations in your home. They differ from Wi-Fi repeaters in that these nodes are connected to each other, and they coordinate between each other

to provide the best signal for your device to connect to and present a single network and SSID. Mesh routers consist of a master device and one or more auxiliary or satellite devices.

There are now many mesh router systems available, including the Linksys Velop, Netgear Orbi, Asus Lyra, Google Wi-Fi, Samsung Connect Home, and D-Link Covr. Their prices range from $66 to $500. Since I felt I'd need three sources to cover my home's area, I chose the **Netgear Orbi AC3000 three-unit mesh router**. It claims to be able to cover up to 7500 square feet with three components - one router and two satellite units. The Orbi router would be placed in the center of the house (in my wife's office), where it would connect to my home network with an Ethernet cable. One satellite would be placed in a front bedroom upstairs and the other in our dining room in the back of the house. The satellites need only be located near a power outlet. They connect to the Orbi router through dedicated tri-band RF links (one 2.4 GHz and two 5 GHz connections).

Setting up the Orbi system was easy. I plugged in the Orbi router in place of my old access point (it requires only AC power and the network Ethernet cable in its yellow WAN port) and turned it on. Each Orbi component has a light ring at the top; the router's light ring starts green and then turns white when ready. I next placed each satellite where I wanted it, plugged it in, and turned it on. The light ring on the satellites start white, and then after a few minutes indicate their connection status with the Orbi router through the light ring color. A blue ring on the satellite indicates a good connection with the Orbi router, while amber indicates a fair connection and moving the satellite closer to the router should be considered. If the ring winds up magenta, the satellite could not connect and should be moved closer. Both of my satellites lit up blue.

My next step was to access the Orbi router and configure it and the Orbi network. This can be done through a wired connection (the Orbi router has three RJ-45 jacks on the back for the Orbi network, while each satellite has four) or wirelessly. I decided to connect to the Orbi Wi-Fi with my Chromebook, using the default SSID and security password provided in the documentation. Using the specified URL in a browser to connect to the router's setup pages, I logged in with the default admin account settings, and then immediately changed them. I also changed the SSID, made sure the Wi-Fi security was the most robust allowed (WPA2+AES) and lengthened the Wi-Fi security password.

The Orbi router has all the typical setup pages you would find in any modern router; I left the majority of them set to the defaults. I did note that the Orbi can be set to be a router (providing network translation between its Ethernet input and its Wi-Fi and wired outputs) or an access point (it would use the same IP subnet as on its input); I left it as the former.

I used my smartphone and the WiFi Analyzer app to check out my new Orbi wireless network. I found excellent signal strength throughout my house and a reasonable signal in my front and back yards. I noticed that three signals were shown, one for each Orbi device, with all using the same SSID. I could tell which graph color in the app went with which Orbi by moving next to each and seeing which had the strongest signal. From this, I could see at any point in the house which Orbi a Wi-Fi device would likely connect to. I installed the Orbi app on my smartphone so that I could easily and remotely make changes to my Wi-Fi, including adding a guest Wi-Fi network.

With the mesh network effectively configured, I was ready for the hardest and most time-consuming part of the Wi-Fi upgrade - moving all my Wi-Fi devices to my new Orbi Wi-Fi network. It took several hours to switch all my network cameras, Amazon

Echo Dots, and smart lights to the Orbi network, as I had to go into the app for each device to change its settings. Once everything was switched over, it all worked great.

I used to have to reset (cycle power) my old access point periodically as it would sometimes lock up and lose connections; now with Orbi, everything is rock solid. I guess it is time to go shopping for new Wi-Fi gadgets.

With my old access point, our home Wi-Fi was rather messy. Now with Orbi, we are much happier with our Wi-Fi being "meshy". ❖

IN DEFENSE OF APPLE MAPS

By **Frank Petrie**, YMP Now, March 2019

https://ympnow.com/2019/03

TMC-NCL (at) yahoogroups.com

The big troika of smartphone navigation apps is Google Maps, Waze, and Apple Maps. I believe that recently, Apple has brought its maps app up to parity and then some.

On November 28, 2007, Google Maps for Mobile 2.0 was released. On September 23, 2008, coinciding with the release of the first Android device, Google then broadened its market with an Android version. And not to be left out in the cold, Apple inevitably adopted a version of Google Maps.

With the announcement of iOS 6 in June 2012, Apple took a leap of faith and debuted their own Apple Maps service.

It was obvious that Apple's initial foray into the maps app market was amateur, at best (perhaps a preschooler led the development team). And it remained that way for a long time.

Google had it all over them for many years. And recently, Waze has entered the market with the introduction of crowdsourcing traffic conditions in real time.

It was great to have GPS within your smartphone. (BTW, do we really need to call them smartphones? Why can't we simply say that we have our computer with us? Let's agree that all others have flip phones or coffee cans with twine.)

Being a fanboy, I quickly moved to Apple Maps when it was released. What a mess. Routes seemingly suggested by a sadomasochist, seeing if you would follow on a dare. But I went with it for a while, inevitably switching back to Google to relieve the pain.

As I said, Waze has recently appeared bringing with it the concept of incorporating crowdsourcing, a new concept to a staid maps market.

But now we're on iOS 12 and Apple has given Maps a huge dose of love. Under the "rules" which the market operates, Apple "borrowed" several functions from each competitor. And as is typically Apple, I argue that they have done an excellent job of finessing them.

Maps is being rebuilt from the ground up to
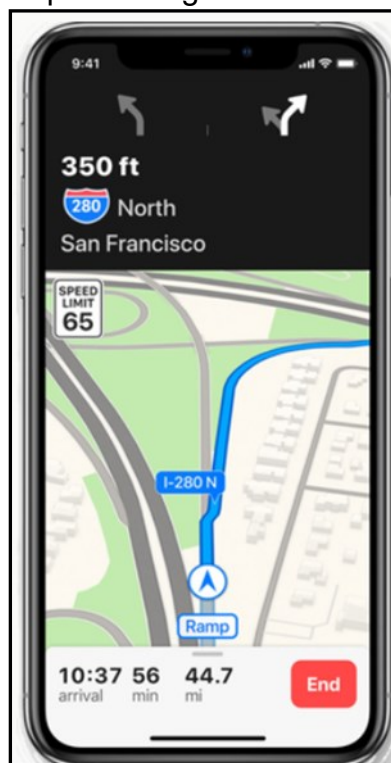
better reflect the world around you. The new underlying map uses Apple data and features enhanced geographic context like pedestrian paths and parks, more detailed building outlines and parking lots, better road network coverage, and more. You'll also be able to get where you're going with improved routes, whether you're on the road or on foot.

In the beginning, it was the map app with training wheels (one of them broken, at that). And it took it a fair amount of time to get where it is now. But I feel that it paid off.

With the release of iOS 12, I have found myself back with the greatly improved Apple Maps and elated with my choice, without any measure of guilt.

There's Flyovers, Indoor Maps (great at airports), Public Transit info, a host of other things including sharing your maps on all of your devices. Even though it's been around for a while, I particularly like the last feature when I receive a last-minute call while at my desktop. Find the location that I have never been to before and send the directions over to one of my mobile device's immediately is a time saver.
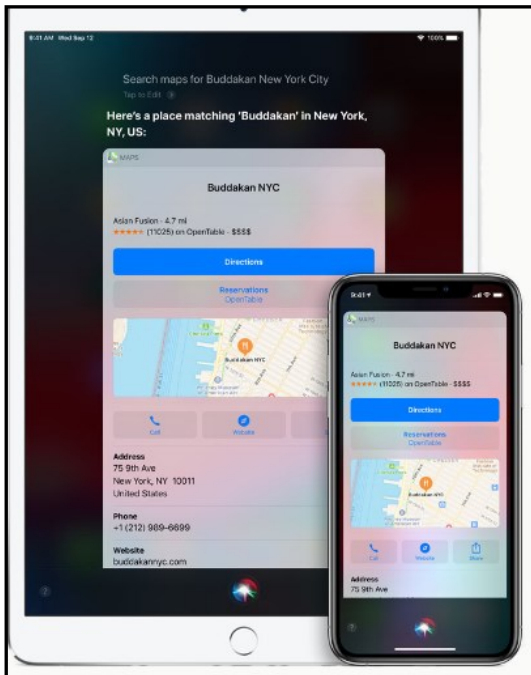
(My guess is that Apple used its time-honored technique that goes back to the iPod. Use buyers as your test subjects. Listen to what buyers like about their devices/apps, discern what they don't like, and pay special attention to their wish lists. Address all three issues then put their own extra twist on it.)

As for the User Interface (UI), the three are roughly the same. But to my eye, Apple's graphics look a bit more polished. One example, it appears to me that they list more landmarks (which is very important to me when driving as I can't remember street names but can instantly remember visual clues).

Another example would be the header that shows you what lanes to use or not to use. Google chose green for its background color. I found Apple's black background much easier to see at a glance, particularly in daylight.

I also found Apple Maps' co-pilot much more valuable. It alerts me two miles before my next turn, then one mile, then half a mile, and so on. It won't let me forget that I have to take action but soon.

It also lists the exit number in the header as the others. I was surprised, however, because knowing my route and destination, it listed my exit four exits before reaching it!

It has all the basic features that you find on the other map apps: places to grab some grub, gas stations, banking services, etc. The only thing that I could ask for is that they would "borrow" Waze's crowdsourcing. Face it; this is the gem that put Waze so much in demand.

Apple's detection of congestion has grown by leaps and bounds. On one of my recent excursions, Siri informed me that there was an accident up ahead, but that the route that I was on would still be the fastest route to reach my destination.

Compare that to several years back when it would send one on a mind-boggling knot of back roads that would cause you to drive an extra dozen or so miles!

So, that's my USD.02. I'm sure that there are plenty of you that are calling me many different names at this moment. Everyone seems to have their preferred map app.

But from my experience, Apple created a maps app "for the rest of us," and I'm more than satisfied with the results. ❖

A GREAT PHOTOSHOP ALTERNATIVE

By **Sheila Swaikowski**, Webmaster
The PCUG of Connecticut
The Program, March 2019
www.TPCUG-CT.org
sswaikowski (at) yahoo.com

Gimp is a great free image manipulation program, much like Photoshop. Here is a YouTube link to a 13+ minute video of a basic beginners' guide that I found very helpful: Q8C0LJPpr64.mp4. It is entitled "How to Use Gimp (A Beginners Guide)" and produced by TechGumbo. According to the instructor, Gimp is one of the top five best free Photoshop alternatives and his favorite.

The video begins by showing where to go (www.gimp.org) to download Gimp and walks you through the whole download process. Then it goes over the layout you should see when you start Gimp: the primary window in the center, the toolbox on the left and the layers window on the right.

The instructor starts a new project by creating a new image from the file tab at the top. He shows how to scale it down (resize it) and add a background color.

Gimp works with layers, which is a new concept for me. Changes are made on individual layers which become part of the whole exported image at the end. If a change has to be made, you can go back to that particular layer which has what you want to change. You create a new layer from the right layer window. The video shows how to create text in a new layer by going to the toolbox, selecting the text tool, then selecting a different text color and changing the text size. It shows how to use the move tool to move the text anywhere in that layer.

If you don't like what you produced, you can go back to a previous step or steps by going to the Edit tab at the top and choosing Undo Move Text Layer which will undo the last operation or using the shortcut, ctrl z, until you get back to the step you want. The instructor creates an oval in a new, second layer, by selecting an ellipse tool from the toolbox; other options are the rectangle tool or circle tool. He also shows how to use the blend tool in the background to show a color variance in the background.

In this video, there are three levels: the background image, the layer with the text, and the layer with the oval drawn on it.

When you are done, its time to export the created image by going to the File tab and clicking on Export As and exporting the image in the file type you want, .png or .jpg being the most popular. Even though you work with each level separately in Gimp, they become one image upon exporting.

If you choose the Save As option in the File tab, and to also save the image as an .xcf file type, you can retrieve and work on the image later and make changes in the different layers. It seems to me to be a good idea, also, to save a .xcf file.

So there you have it, a very good, basic beginners video introduction to Gimp.

There are other YouTube videos you can find by searching for Gimp that will show you how to do specific things, such as rounding corners in a photo. If you've ever wanted to do photo editing, but hesitated because of the cost of Photoshop, this Gimp tutorial is just what you may need. ❖

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.

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

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LAUGHING OUT LOUD

Do you know the song, "Yesterday"?
Then sing along to this computer version.

Yesterday, All those backups seemed a waste of pay.

Now my database has gone away. Oh, I believe in yesterday.

Suddenly, There's not half the files there used to be.

And there's a millstone hanging over me. The system crashed so suddenly.

I pushed something wrong. What it was I could not say.

Now all my data's gone, and I long for yesterday-ay-ay-ay.

Yesterday, The need for back-ups seemed so far away.

I knew my data was all here to stay. Now I believe in yesterday.

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.**

FINANCIAL REPORT

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

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Annual membership Dues:

Regular New and Renewal,
Printed Newsletter $ 40
Electronic Newsletter   30
Family-Associate   12
Students   18
Contributor   50
Supporter   75
Benefactor   100

A subscription to *User Friendly* is included with membership.

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:

— **Monthly Newsletter** *User Friendly*. We publish your article submissions or free classified ads to buy or sell your computer items.

— **Get FREE help** by phone from knowledgeable members who are Quick Consultants listed in *User Friendly.*

— **Get help by email** by using our LACSLIST Yahoo Group Mail List. Send your questions by e-mail to lacslist (at) yahoogroups.com

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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.

— **Information** on training, swap meets and trade shows.

— Occasional **Free software and computer books**, if you review them for *User Friendly*.

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

— **Annual Holiday Party**

— **Field trips**

— **Social Interacting** with others who have like interests in computers and technology.

— **Virtual Technology Conferences**

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LACS   New or Renewal Membership Application

Please bring your dues and this form to a meeting or mail them to:
***Los Angeles Computer Society,* 11664 NATIONAL BLVD. #343, LOS ANGELES CA 90064-3802**

[ ] New   [ ] Renewal   Please PRINT Clearly

[ ] With printed newsletter [ ] $40.00   [ ] Associate $12.00   [ ] Student - $18.00

[ ] With electronic newsletter, not printed [ ] $30.00

[ ] Contributor $50.00   [ ] Supporter $75.00   [ ] Benefactor $100.00   [ ] Other $_____

Name: First   Last

Name of Associate: First   Last

Address:

City, State, Zip + 4

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
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Go about one mile to Emerson
Ave. Turn SOUTH/left. Go one
long block to W. 80th Place. It
is on the Northwest corner of
Emerson and W. 80th Place.

From the South, East or West:

Take Manchester Ave. to
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about eight blocks to W. 80th
Place. Fellowship Hall is on the
Northwest corner of Emerson
and W. 80th Place. There is
street parking and a small
parking lot West of the church.