User Friendly

**LACS
*A Computer and Technology User Group***

IN THIS ISSUE

Change of Date for the October General Meeting

Because of the Yom Kippur holiday on October 8, the October meeting will be on **October 15**. A blessed Holiday to our Jewish members.

LACS IS A MEMBER OF APCUG

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

apcug

An International
Association of Technology
and Computer User Groups

OCTOBER 15 GENERAL MEETING

Topic: **Cyber Security for All of Your Devices**
Speaker**: Norbert** (**Bob) Gostischa**, Avast Software and APCUG Speaker's Bureau

Our security and privacy are constantly in danger of being attacked from many sources. Between ransomware, data breaches, cryptojacking, supply chain attacks, and mobile malware, staying secure and guarding as much of our privacy as possible is a constant challenge. This presentation will cover how we can protect our computers (Windows and Mac), tablets, smartphones, and other smart and connected Internet of Things devices.
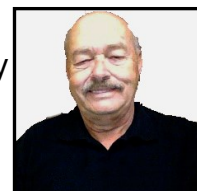
Meet Our Presenter

Bob Gostischa, after a successful career in banking, enjoys his retirement as an enthusiastic IT security expert, most notably for Avast Software, a global leader in cybersecurity products.
Avast has made security software for over 30 years and has more than 400 million users worldwide. Avast prevents 2 billion malware attacks every month. In 2016, Avast purchased AVG Technologies. In 2017, Avast bought Piriform (thus acquiring: CCleaner, Defraggler, Recuva, and Speccy). Its best-known product is Avast Antivirus, the most used antivirus software in the world. Bob is a proud member of the APCUG Speakers Bureau. He has helped to answer tens of thousands of questions and problems at Avast website's Discussion and Help Forum since 2004. Bob's presentations are not a sales pitch for Avast. You can learn more about Bob's presentations and passions by going to his Blog and YouTube Channel.

**Tuesday, October 15, 7:30 - 9:00 PM
Westchester United Methodist Church
Fellowship Hall
8065 Emerson Ave., Westchester, 90045
6:30 to 7:20** Social Time and an Informal Q & A Roundtable to Answer Individual Questions
7:00 to 7:30 Refreshments
More info: www.lacspc.org or 310-398-0366

FROM YOUR PRESIDENT / EDITOR
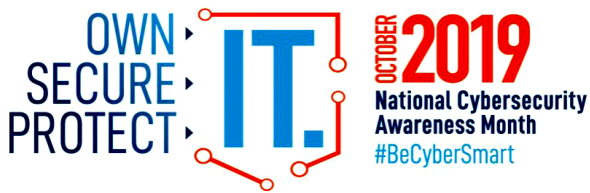
National Cyber Security Awareness Month (NCSAM) – celebrated every October - was created as a collaborative effort between government and industry to ensure every American has the resources they need to stay safer and more secure online.

Since its inception under leadership from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and the National Cyber Security Alliance, NCSAM has grown exponentially, reaching consumers, small and medium-sized businesses, corporations, educational institutions and young people across the nation.

Computer History

Recently I was in Washington D.C. While there, I visited the Smithsonian Museum of American History. They had a special exhibit on computer history. There was a sign that read, "Unless you know the road you've come down, you cannot know where you are going." I wonder where computer and other technologies are going?

Here is some information from the exhibit. Both corporate researchers and self-trained hobbyists played crucial roles in the invention of the personal computer. Robert Noyce, Gordon Moore and Andy Grove used their doctoral training in physics and chemistry to found Intel, a leading manufacturer of integrated circuits. Alan Kay and others at Xerox advanced computer graphics, networking, and printing. The Homebrew Computer Club gave hobbyists a place to share knowledge. Homebrew members Steve Jobs and Steve Wozniak founded Apple Computer after demonstrating their Apple I kit at the club.

Early computers were big and expensive and required technically trained specialists to run them. Not surprisingly, only universities, big businesses, and government agencies had access to these behemoths. In the 1970s and '80s, Silicon Valley inventors changed the face of computing with the first "personal computers" small enough to fit on a desk. They created revolutionary features that we take for granted today — a hand-held input device called a **mouse**, a graphical user interface with overlapping "windows," and clickable pictures called "icons" — and made computers less expensive and more "user-friendly."

Douglas Engelbart and his colleagues at the Stanford Research Institute were pioneers in the field of "human - computer interaction." In 1964, they built a hand-held pointing device to manipulate images and text on a monitor's screen. The prototype was a simple wooden box with two perpendicular metal wheels, a selection button, and a wire connection to the processor.

Engelbart's "mouse" was subsequently refined by researchers at Xerox PARC and made popular with the release of the Apple Macintosh in 1984. Engelbart later noted, "It just looked like a mouse with a tail, and we called it that."

GENERAL MEETING REPORT
September 10, 2019
By **Leah Clark**, LACS Editor and President

LACS Elections

At the meeting, we were very thankful to have two members volunteer for board positions: Marsha Jacobs for secretary and Newton Bernstein for director.

Marcia Jacobs has been a long time member of LACS. Her studies in office and business procedures led to varied career ventures. She had been a stock broker and a financial planner, a travel agent, and she owned the Carousel Café in Santa Monica. She raised three daughters and has traveled widely.

Newton Bernstein has been a dedicated LACS member for years. He had been a director in the past and will bring this experience to the current board.

There were no contested positions, so the following members were elected for the 2020 board by acclamation by those present. We thank them and support them.

> **Leah Clark**, President
> **Stephanie Nordlinger**, Vice President
> **Marcia Jacobs**, Secretary
> **Gavin Faught**, Treasurer
> **Paula Van Berkom**, Director
> **Newton Bernstein**, Director

Howard Krivoy, Mark Presky and **E. J. Rozek** have one more year on their two-year terms as directors.

Cut the Cord: New Ways To Watch TV

Speaker: **Hewie Poplock,** APCUG Speaker Sarasota Technology User Group

Hewie shared many things to consider before firing your cable company. This presentation is meant to help you understand the big picture of cutting the cord, and to give you a place to start your research. Every LACS member who is on our email lists received Hewie's slides and a bibliography with many references. The podcast of the talk is on the LACS website at www.lacspc.org. If you are interested, refer to the slides and podcast for many details which are not in this report. He requested that every attendee fill out an evaluation survey at http://bit.ly/cutthecordsurvey.

Cutting the cord means canceling your cable or satellite television service. It can refer to any number of methods such as using an over-the-air (OTA) antenna or a streaming video service such as Netflix or Sling TV.

Many of us remember the early days of TV in the fifties that Hewie recalled for us. Hewie then showed us details about how his cable bills have been going up. Costs and services have been changing rapidly. He listed all the costs involved as he went along.

So Hewie thought it was time to make a change. He did not do it all at once; he didn't just shut everything off. He went with Frontier which had a special deal, then signed up for DirecTV Now which was AT&T's streaming service. He is now subscribing to Sling TV which gives additional channels and 50 hours of cloud DVR. He also subscribes to FRNDLY TV for boxing and sports. He has Roku TV and Amazon's prime video. He's considering changing Sling to YouTube TV because some of the channel selections have changed.

If you have cable, you have a provider like AT&T U-Verse, Verizon Fios, Charter TV, Cox, Spectrum, or others. The company provides a cable box and/or a router for the internet. You also have a cable box for the TV that is connected to your television.

If you have satellite, you have either DirecTV or Dish with a channel box connected to your television. Another company probably handles your internet. You have a satellite antenna with a cable wire going

to a box that is connected to your TV

If you want to stream, you need an internet service provider and a piece of equipment that can be an Amazon TV, Apple TV, Roku, Chromecast, Play Station, Xbox, or you might even have a Smart TV. There is a lot of content available for streaming. Some of the ones you have to pay for subscriptions are Google TV, Filo, AT&T TV Now which was Direct TV Now, Sling TV, Hulu, YouTube TV, AT&T's Watch TV, and more.

Each of the streaming services has plans that include some of your favorite channels. If you are considering cutting the cord, you must figure out what you need and what you want to watch because this is important in your decision for which services you select.

One of the best places where Hewie gets a lot of information is at www.CordCuttersNews.com. It also has a Facebook page.

If you want to have an outside antenna, you need to be where you will get reception.

Hewie showed pictures of various antennas. You also must decide how you will get the signal to each TV in the house.
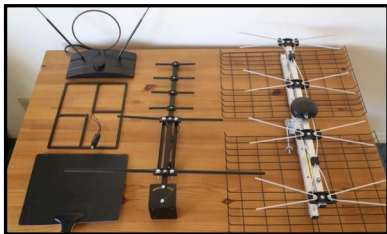
Pluto TV is free. If you have a smart TV, Roku or a fire stick, and are using your TV along with your cable, you can install the app for Pluto and watch TV on your computer, tablet, Android or IOS phone, iPad or Chromebook.

Sometimes there can be downtimes. There is a website called "Down Detector" at https://downdetector.com where you can type in your service and your location to see a map showing where there are outages.

Hewie talked about other considerations. If you travel a lot and want to take your

service with you, you need to see if you can get what you want wherever you are. Local channels are available through some of the services.

You must consider how many people will be watching different TVs in your home at the same time and what channels each must have. It can get confusing!

CNET has a website, www.suppose.tv that lists everything - what equipment you need, what channels are on what service, etc. This is an excellent site to help you figure it all out. You can put channels in a prioritized column and sort them.

At the end Hewie discussed 5G technology, and the internet phone services, Google voice and MagicJack.

Everything is changing so rapidly that even the companies that provide the services are getting confused!

Hewie Poplock's Note

This information is very fluid. As I was putting this presentation together, topics, services and hardware changed almost daily. This presentation is meant to help you understand the big picture of "cutting the cord." The specifics may no longer be accurate, but I have given you a place to start your research as to the best solution for your television choices.

Thank you, Gavin

Jim McKnight is showing Gavin Faught the setup procedures for our general meetings.

HONEY APP: A REVIEW:

By **Judy Taylour**, President,
SCV Computer Club
www.scvcomputerclub.org
scvcomputerclub (at) gmail.com

Do you use the Honey app when you shop online? I do. It even works at Amazon.

I imagine there are many members who remember White Shoulders – one of my favorites and I still use it. I buy it at Fragrance.net. When giving hugs at church, I sometimes hear….you smell just like my mother did ;-).

About Us

FragranceNet.com has been trusted online since 1997. We have shipped over 20 million packages and have sold over $1 billion in beauty products. We carry 17,000 genuine, brand name fragrances, skincare, makeup, haircare, aromatherapy, and candles all at discount prices. We offer Free Shipping in U.S. with a minimum order. FragranceNet.com has received an A+ rating from the Better Business Bureau. (Stock Symbol: FGNT.PK)

I received an email that White Shoulders was on sale, so I took a look. I only buy White Shoulders so those are the only emails I receive. On another site, it was $22 for the spray cologne with no discount or Honey coupon available.

WHITE SHOULDERS for Women
EAU DE COLOGNE SPRAY 4.5 OZ
by Evyan

Our Price: $22.99   Price with coupon: $16.09

When the Honey coupon was applied, it ended up being a total of 37% off. There are shipping and tax; sometimes shipping is free with the promotion or by the amount of sale. I didn't pay shipping (I bought more than one).

On another purchase, I saved a lot when purchasing two of what I call teacher carts (I had one for each class I taught) for the senior center bingo volunteers to use. They cost $29.99 each, and they were on sale at Staples for $24.99. With my teacher discount, they were $20.99, and with the Honey discount, I paid $15.99 for each cart.

After starting this article, I checked my email and had received one from a store where I buy t-shirts. They were having a 10% off sale; with the Honey coupon I saved $17.00. $49 before 10% off / paid $32. They were two shirts I wanted but only when on sale.

I have a PayPal account and use it when I shop. Don't use your Debit card and don't ever buy anything online unless you see this in the address line.

Apprehensive about shopping online? Use a credit card with a low limit, one where you receive alerts when it is used, or a virtual card (as of April 2019 - America, Capital One and Citi).

Editor's note: The Honey app is a free browser extension, or add-on. It's available for all of the major web browsers. Go to https://help.joinhoney.com/article/170-how-do-i-install-honey to learn how to install it on your browser.
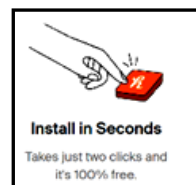
A BIRTHDAY YOU MIGHT HAVE FORGOTTEN :-)

Author: **Art Gresham**, Editor
Under the Computer Hood UG, CA
Drive Light, September 2019
1editor101 (at) uchug.org
www.uchug.org

September 19 is the birthday of some-thing you might use every day. At the very least, you are familiar with it even if you do not text, write emails, handwritten notes, or communicate with other humanoids. In fact, it came into existence before there even existed text messages, the internet, or email.

Back in 1982, none of our modern digital communication methods, or even the net-works that evolved, existed. On university campuses there existed something called USENET boards. USER Network message boards on which the locally connected users could carry out discussions, some scientific, some not as much.

Well... It all started on a Usenet message board on September 16, 1982, because some guy wanted to know how a drop of Mercury would react in a falling elevator. (Evidently, the Physics department guys had a strange sense of humor.) After several rounds of remarks, some of them with at-tempts at humor, there developed a discus-sion about how to indicate to the readers that the message should be read as a play-ful joke, and not so seriously interpreted.

You can read an excellent summary of the message board conversation here:

https://www.ttlg.com/forums/
showthread.php?t=7394

The key entry was on Sunday, September 19, 1982, by Professor Scott Fahlman of Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh

    401298269,0,0

    19-Sep-82 11:44 Scott E Fahlman

I propose that the following character se-quence for joke markers: **:-)**

Read it sideways. Actually, it is probably more economical to mark things that are NOT jokes, given current trends. For this, use: **:-(**

These symbols, composed of normal keys used in standard text, and available on our keyboard, have long been used, albeit in sim-pler forms, for a very long time.

A summary discussion of the Emoticon is at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emoticon.

An entertaining version, at https://www.kidscodecs.com/history-of-emoticons/, credits Victor Hugo with perhaps the first digi-tally transmitted emoticon.

In 1862, Victor Hugo sent a tele-gram to his publisher with a single character, **?**, to ask how his new book Les Misérables was selling. The publisher, equally clever, sent a single-character telegram back, **!**.

So happy birthday to the Smiley Face Emoticon   :-) ❖

SAD STORY, HAPPY ENDING

By **John Roy**, President
The PC Users Group of Connecticut
The Program, August 2019
www.tpcug-ct.org
johnroy1 (at) comcast.net

I have an Android phone and use Google Photos. I wanted to create some storage space on my phone and decided to delete pho-tos that were already residing in the cloud in Google Photos.

Using a local photo application, I started delet-ing photos off my phone. Being a little tedious doing this one-by-one, I looked for a select tool but couldn't find it. I then realized it was availa-ble on the Google Photo application so I start-

ed some bulk deletes using Google Photos. I then had this startling revelation that I was deleting my cloud Google Photos and not the dupes residing on my phone. Panic quickly set in when I realized, in my haste, that I was no longer using the original phone application that was only deleting photos on my phone.

I took a deep breath and searched for recovery solutions. Hooray, there was an easy solution that I had never used. The photos were dumped into a trash bucket that holds deletions for 60 days. Following the steps below recovered the deleted photos.

Recover permanently deleted files from Google Photos in Trash

Files that are accidentally deleted from Google Photos will stay in your trash for 60 days. So, if you permanently delete your photos or video on your phone, you can try to fully retrieve them back fromTrash during this period.

1. Open the Google Photos app and tap on **Menu**. Then select your **Trash** folder.
2. All of your deleted files will be listed. Simply select the photos or videos you wish to recover, and then tap the **Restore** button to restore them.❖

TRUTH IN ADVERTISING

By **Andrew Cummins**, President
 ICON Users Group, MO
The ICON Newsletter, August 2019
www.iconusersgroup.org
andrewcummins (at) yahoo.com

I saw in a store PCs being sold, which boasted of incredible amounts of system memory for their price, such as 24GB. Looking at the smaller print, that 24GB is 8GB of RAM plus 16GB of "Optane memory." Optane memory is just a small SSD to cache a large HDD. It gives the PC the performance similar to an SSD for not much more than the cost of a cheap HDD. Don't be confused by my jargon, and don't be fooled into thinking Optane is

system memory or RAM. At least Optane memory does what it does well and so shouldn't be avoided.

I'm really excited about LED lights, but if you go out to buy high-powered LED lights, they often are advertised with false wattages, such as 600 watts for something that actually uses 60 watts. Sometimes you can't even find the actual wattage used on the packaging. They want you to think you're getting more light for your money than you're actually getting. At least the power savings of LED lighting versus older technology is incredible, regardless of advertised power.

If you've ever checked with Windows to see how large your PC hard drive is, you've always been presented with a smaller number than the advertised capacity for your hard drive. Hard drive capacities are advertised with redefined terms to make them appear larger. At least it's not a large difference between advertised and actual capacity.

When you look into it, there's an incredible amount of misleading, if not false, advertising. It's not just the tech industry. Go to buy a flowerpot and see if it's really the gallon capacity advertised. It's almost certainly smaller. At least pots are often sold by diameter in inches, a less abused measure of pot size.

If you want help finding something to buy, ask at your tech group meeting. I have people often asking more for buying advice. You can read user reviews online for advice. Make your decision on themes you find in comments, not on any one person's review. You can ask the salespeople for advice. Remember, salespeople are trying to sell you something, even if they don't have what's best for you. At least these days, technology is so advanced that you're still getting a great product in spite of dubious advertising. ❖

LACS NOTICES

WELCOME ALL

George Wolkon, LACS Database Manager

**New Members (3)**

Stephan Johnson
Virginia Thomas
Derek Zuniga

Renewals (9)

Cecelia Ball	Harold Igdalloff
Newton Bernstein	Heshmat Laaly **
Barbara Gold	John Schaefer *
Steven Halpern *	George Wolkon *
Kim Holmes	

* Contributor   ** Benefactor

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.

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 current and back copies of the color version of *User Friendly*, calendar information, and podcasts of most of the general meetings. There is also a bi-annual 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.
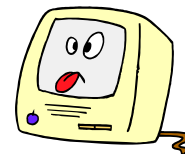
There are certain limitations to Jim's offer, so see the details by clicking the "Fix my PC for Free?" link at www.jimopi.net.

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/ **or click on this icon.** Then click on **"Join Us."**

LACS CALENDAR

General Meeting

Date: Tuesday, October 15, 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, October 28, 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 October.
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.

October 8:   Yom Kippur
October 14: Columbus Day
October 15: **LACS General Meeting**
October 28: **LACS Board Meeting**
October 31: Halloween

GENERAL MEETING PRESENTATIONS

October 15:   Cyber Security for All of Your Devices
November 12: Windows 10 Topics
December 10: Holiday Party
Note: This schedule is subject to change. Check email, *User Friendly*, and the LACS 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 AND INDEXES

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

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.

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 5, 12, 16
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.

NO JOY IN TECHVILLE?

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

Pour a liquid into a glass just up to the midpoint. An optimist would say the glass is half full. A pessimist would say the glass is half empty. An engineer would say the glass is twice as big as it needs to be.

A lot of how we perceive reality is influenced by our internal biases and past experiences. As an engineer, I'm used to looking at things in a more clinical, objective way than others might. My wife thinks I am a pessimist, seeing the worst in everything and having a negative point of view. She feels I should be more positive and optimistic. If only I had a better attitude, things would be better. I prefer to think of myself as a pragmatist, dealing with and reacting to things in a more practical manner. I prefer the objective, based on facts, rather than the subjective, dealing with feelings and opinions, to make my decisions.

My wife and I also differ on how we perceive stuff, those material things we own. I have a lot of interests, including technology, and so I have accumulated a lot of stuff. My wife is more of a minimalist and thinks I have too much stuff. Who is right? Again, I think it is a matter of perception. What may be clutter to one person may just be the result of too little storage space to another person.

My attitudes about things are probably shaped a lot by my Midwest farm heritage. My Czech farmer ancestors came to this country in the late 1800s and made the best livings they could farming and raising livestock in Nebraska. There is a lot to admire in the farmer. While farming is a lot of hard work and you often don't have a lot of control over your situation (the weather, re-sources, crop markets, pests), you usually must become very resourceful, creative and self-sufficient to succeed. Farmers must often also be mechanics, carpenters, plumbers, electricians, weather forecasters and veterinarians. My grandfather had a blacksmith shop on his farm so that he could fabricate items he needed, as there was no Home Depot on every (or any) corner. Farmers must also be conservationists, ecologists, and stewards of the lands, animals, and the environment. I still have relatives that actively farm, and though things have obviously changed for farmers since my grandfather's time, I think a lot of the values remain.

The time I spent on the farm in my youth probably helped instill those values and attitudes in me. I've tried to learn all I can learn about mechanics, engineering, electronics, computers, and technology. I've built my own computers and maintain, debug and repair my devices myself as much as possible. I've become the family IT help person, network administrator, repairman, and system integrator. As a result, I've accumulated a lot of devices, accessories, cables, adapters, software, tools and utilities over the years, probably way more than most other people. Of course, the collection does not remain static either, for as technology advances and new devices, interfaces and services become popular, my collection of stuff must expand to support them.

Unfortunately, it is often difficult to determine when something that used to be essential (or at least useful) has become obsolete and of no use and should be disposed of. I bought extra PATA (parallel ATA) hard drives at one time when the computer industry was transitioning to SATA (serial ATA) drives, in order to be able to support some of my older computers. I've gotten rid of some of the drives but am still running a couple of old machines that could use them, so I continue to keep a few around. I have a number of devices for slide scanning and digitizing video that I need to be

using, but I never seem to find the time. To my wife, all these things I'm not currently using are obsolete and junk, and they should be thrown away. To me they still hold promise; I have the hope that I will eventually get to use them productively again. Now who sounds like the optimist, and who's the pessimist?

I agree that clutter can be a problem, but reducing it and organizing things requires time. Early in my career, I found it difficult to keep up with the number of engineering magazines and component reviews I was receiving at work. I'd scan the items for usefulness, but making a binary judgment (1 or 0, keep or toss) right at that moment was difficult. A few things obviously went right in the trash, a few were keepers, but the majority were in that gray area - might be useful, but maybe not right now. I'd sometimes toss things and later wish I could get them back. Rather than waste my time deciding at the moment I received them, I found it easier to put the "gray area" items in a pile in my office. If I found a need, I could consult the pile for the items that were pertinent. After a year, I'd split the pile in two, and throw away the older half, assuming the information in it was now likely out of date. This worked very well for me. My wife was not happy when I tried to use this method at home, however.

Technology has helped some with physical decluttering, as most information now comes in or can be converted to an electronic form that can be saved on small memory devices or deleted easily. There is the problem of organizing all those files, however. I am now a believer in the all-digital / electronic life, in as much as it is possible. I used to have file cabinets full of financial papers and product documentation. Now I get all my important documents in pdf form online and scan any paper forms I receive. I used to save the paper manuals for things I bought and filed them away; now I download them and / or scan them. All my important documents, product info, photographs, and videos are contained on a few small hard drives. They are not only easier to store but also safer, as I can easily keep copies of the data in a fire-safe, safety deposit box or offsite location. If only storing our physical possessions were so easy.

There is a Japanese woman that has become a decluttering celebrity. Marie Kondo, cleaning consultant, author of the bestselling book *The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up: The Japanese Art of Decluttering and Organizing,* and the star of a related Netflix TV series, has an unique way of determining what to keep and what to discard. I've not read her book or seen her show, but her method, from what I've read about it, involves holding each item, asking yourself if it "sparks joy," and discarding it if it does not. Those (apparently) few items that do bring you joy are then placed where they are visible and accessible.

I have wondered whether her declutter method could work for me and my tech collection. While putting my hands on every single individual item I own might take some time (I have a medium-sized plastic bin of action camera mounts and accessories alone), the bigger problem I see is the hangup I've always had - determining the worth of the items in my life. What does it mean to "spark joy"? How does one define joy?

The dictionary (or at least Google) defines joy as "a feeling of great pleasure and happiness." Other equivalent terms might be delight, jubilation, rejoicing, elation, bliss, ecstasy and rapture. Those terms don't seem to describe any tech items I own. This standard also seems very subjective. Everyone's idea of joy could be different, perhaps very different. It reminds me of one of my favorite lines from the original *Star Wars - A New Hope*. It was Han Solo's response to Luke Skywalker when Luke was trying to persuade him to help rescue Princess Leia. Luke tells Han that Leia is rich, and the reward he would get would be more wealth

than he could imagine. Han replied, "I don't know; I can imagine quite a bit."

Nevertheless, I decided to try Marie Kondo's declutter method on a small part of my home office, as I wanted to clear some space to install an Amazon Echo Dot there. The area I was clearing had only quite old things, which sparked negligible joy, so tossing them seemed easy, but I paused on two items. One was a set of Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia 98 CDs, for Windows 95. I was going to toss them but then thought about how things have changed. Once these were valuable and useful sources for information, but now with Google, Wikipedia and the Internet, they are obsolete drink coasters. Into the trash they went.

The other was a Webster's *New World College Dictionary* (2005 edition), which had been a gift from my wife. It, too, had been supplanted by the Internet. Though it did not spark joy, I felt a twinge of sentiment over it, as it had been a well-intentioned gift, and would be useful if some calamity caused the Internet to go away. I kept it.
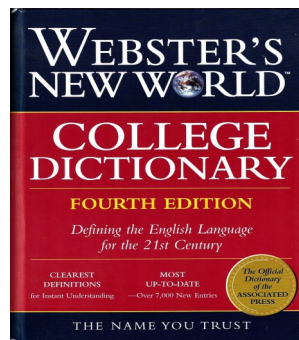
The more I think about it, the more I feel that perhaps none of my tech items could truly spark joy. Do I feel delight when using my laptop? No. Am I rejoicing when holding my Chromebook? I like my Chromebook, and it is very useful, but I am sometimes dismayed when I can't do something simple on it effortlessly, as I can on my Windows PC. Do I feel elation when holding my digital camera? I like it pretty well, but I somehow accidentally got it into a funny mode, and only recently, after much grief, figured out how to give it a factory reset and return it to normal settings.

Am I in a state of bliss when holding my smartphone? It is a very useful device, and I do seem to use it more and more, but I don't long for it or anything like that. I do see a lot of people who can't seem to put their smartphones down, when in a restaurant, while walking, or while driving. Is that bliss I see in their eyes? It looks to me more like a vacant hollow zombie-like stare. No joy.

I don't think this Marie Kondo declutter approach works that well for technology, or for most items (or perhaps for any items). There is, unfortunately, a lot more to life than joy and rapture. A lot of things in our lives are necessary, not for the joy they bring, but for the benefits they provide, the needs they fill and improvements they make in our quality of life. Is that joy? Not really. I don't feel joy when I hold my toothbrush, but I'm not going to get rid of it, as a little clutter in the bathroom is better than a mouthful of rotten teeth.

And it might be asking a lot to expect Microsoft and Apple and Google and Samsung to be responsible for providing us with joy. That's what family and friends are for. The tech devices these companies do provide can help us keep in touch with them. We just shouldn't let the devices get in the way. ❖

DIGITAL TRANSDUCERS: WHAT?

By **Phil Sorrentino**, Contributing Writer
The Computer Club, FL, June 2019
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Computer Input Devices are transducers. They convert the user's physical actions into commands that the computer can understand and use. Technically speaking, a transducer is a device that converts one form of energy to another form of energy. Energy types are electrical, mechanical, chemical, light, etc. Transducers are often employed at the boundaries of automation, measurement, and control systems where electrical signals are converted to and from other physical quantities like force, torque, motion, position, etc. The process of converting one form of energy to another is known as transduction. For example, a pressure sensor (transducer) will detect pressure, a mechanical form of energy, and convert it to an analog electrical signal or digital data for display at a remote pressure gauge. But for this discussion, a transducer converts some action in our physical world to digital data to be used by our computer.

Also, for the purpose of discussion, transducers can be divided into two areas, sensors and actuators. A **sensor** is used to detect one form of energy and report it in another form (most often an electrical signal). For example, a microphone detects sound energy (pressure differences) and reports it as electrical (analog or digital) signals. An **actuator** accepts energy and produces movement or an action. The energy supplied to an actuator could be electrical or mechanical. For example, an electric motor and a loudspeaker are both actuators, converting electrical energy into motion for different purposes. If all is working well, the motor produces rotation, and the loudspeaker produces sound.

Some transducers can provide both functions; they might both detect and create action. For example, a typical ultrasonic transducer switches back and forth many times a second between acting as an actuator to produce ultrasonic waves and acting as a sensor to detect the reflected ultrasonic waves. Another example might be a DC motor. Normally electrical energy rotates the rotor of the motor, but using it another way, rotating a DC electric motor's rotor will produce electricity (a generator). And, believe it or not, the voice-coil of a speaker can also act as a crude microphone.

The two primary transducers (computer input devices) we currently use are mice (or is that mouses?) and keyboards. But, as you can tell from the large number of smartphones and tablets around, the touch-sensitive screen, or simply touchscreen, is also a very much used input device. A mouse lets the user move a pointer on a display, which allows the user to navigate and inspect the contents of a computer's file system. The mouse also lets the user launch and interact with programs. Another common device, the keyboard, translates the user's finger presses or keystrokes into text and commands that let the user interact with programs and perform a variety of functions.

The newest transducer, the touchscreen, combines the functions of the mouse and the keyboard, and turns finger pressure, location, and motion (gestures) into digital signals which, in turn, are used to control the smartphone or tablet software and hardware.

Other common input devices include a microphone, a scanner, a webcam, a trackball, and a trackpad. There was also a "pointing stick" which I've seen on some older Lenovo (used to be IBM) and Dell laptops. If you'll recall, the pointing stick was a device that was used on a laptop mounted in the keyboard, usually between the G, H and B keys. Applying horizontal pressure on the pointing stick moved the cursor, up, down,

left, and right. Using the pointing stick was a little tricky because the velocity of the movement of the cursor was proportional to the pressure applied to the pointing stick. As far as I can see, pointing sticks are not used anymore, probably because the trackpad is easier to use and cheaper.

Newer touchscreens can track the position and motion of more than one finger, sometimes as many as four fingers. These devices can support a wide range of gestures for navigating, launching, and performing other functions. Here are a few multi-finger gestures that can be used with Windows 10.

- Swipe three fingers up (on the touchpad) to see all of your open apps
- Swipe three fingers down to show the desktop.
- Tap on the touchpad to Select an Item
- Pinch in or stretch out two fingers to Zoom in or out
- Place three fingers on the touchpad and swipe right or left to switch between open windows

One of the newest transducers being used for control may be one of the oldest transducers around - the microphone. The microphone, which converts voice (changes in air pressure) to digital signals, is being used in Voice Control systems like Cortana in Windows 10. Cortana is an App with which you can use your voice to:

- Make a call
- Send a text message
- Search the web
- Open another App
- Cortana can even help you
    - ♦ Schedule a meeting
    - ♦ Set a reminder
    - ♦ Get up-to-date weather or traffic

Tap three fingers on a touchpad to open Cortana.

There are also some specialized input devices like game controllers, graphics tablets, and motion-sensing devices. Microsoft made a motion-sensing device called Kinect, which used a combination of a microphone, video camera, infrared light emitter, and infrared sensors to detect user's voice commands and motion. Moving our bodies and speaking is fundamental to our nature, so Microsoft advertised that "Kenect allowed a computer user to interact with the computer without the need for a game controller, through a natural user interface using gestures and spoken commands." Note from Microsoft:

> Manufacturing of the Kenect sensor and adapter has been discontinued, but the Kenect technology continues to live on in products like the HoloLens, Cortana voice assistant, the Windows Hello biometric facial ID system, and a context-aware user interface.

Another, not so common, input device is a MIDI keyboard, which is typically a piano-style device used to create and record music by sending music signals over USB to a computer. The MIDI keyboard does not produce sound, but rather the digital signals that it produces from the user's finger movements are converted to sound in the computer by a software program.

There are even some very specialized and very complex input devices used in medical imaging systems. Some of these are computed tomography (CT) scanners, magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scanners, and positron emission tomography (PET) scanners. All of these specialized devices are designed to convert changes in physical world parameters to digital data in order to let physicians see internal body structures such as tendons, muscles, joints, vessels, and organs beneath the skin to diagnose and treat injuries and illnesses. So, as you can see, transducers play a pretty big role in letting our computers interface with us and our real world. ❖

PASSWORD MANAGERS

By **Dave Gerber**, Windows 10 Forum
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A question about Password Managers came up during the Windows 10 Forum at the July STUG Meeting so I thought I'd share some info common to all of the best known and reputable programs.

Password managers are the most recommended tool by security experts to protect your online credentials from hackers. But many people are still hesitant to use them. Here's why password managers are safe, secure, and your best defense against password-hungry cybercriminals.

What is a password manager?

Think of it as a safe for your passwords. When you need something inside the safe, you unlock it. Password managers work the same for your online credentials.

You create a single, super-strong password, which acts like a key. Install the password manager app on your phone, computer, browser, and other devices. Your passwords are securely stored inside it. Anytime you need to log in to an account, unlock your password manager and retrieve your login info.

With website vulnerabilities and security incidents on the rise, people have grown to mistrust a tech tool to manage their passwords. What if the password manager gets hacked?

Reputable password managers take extra steps to lock down your info and keep it safe from cybercriminals.

A good password manager

- Doesn't know your master password (so hackers can never steal it)
- Encrypts all your data
- Does not store any of your data on their servers
- Can generate strong, secure passwords

No privacy tool can completely guarantee your online safety. Even the most elaborate lock can be broken into. Yet, we still lock our doors to our houses and cars.

The alternative to using a password manager is to rely on your own memory to remember all your credentials. This inevitably leads to recycling passwords or using variations — a bad habit that hackers love.

Password managers can be such an effective security tool because they help us improve bad habits. With a password manager installed on your computer and phone, it's a lot easier to take your logins everywhere so you can use unique, strong passwords on every account.

Password managers don't store all your credentials together in one place. Any data you store in a password manager — passwords, logins, security questions, and other sensitive info — is securely encrypted. Even if the password manager gets hacked, cybercriminals would not be able to see your logins.

The only way to access your data is with a single master password that only you know. You use this password to unlock the manager on your computer, phone, or other devices. Once it's unlocked, a password manager can fill in your logins to websites and apps.

Our memories sometimes fail us. Ever clicked a "forgot password" link? It's very common to use variations of the same password to make them easier to remember. With a password manager, you don't need to remember any of your credentials. It can be installed on all your devices and will auto-fill your passwords for you. Once you get in the habit of using one, you'll no longer have to worry about forgetting your credentials.

Sure, it takes time to log all your credentials in a password manager. But you don't need to do it all at once. You can always start small and change just a few passwords at a time. Try installing a password manager and creating new, unique passwords for the websites you visit most frequently. Over time, as you log in to other sites, you can add others. ❖

JERE'S TECH TIPS

For many helpful tips and tricks for all aspects of computing see *Jere's Tech Tips* at

https://apcug2.org/jerestips/.

TECHBOOMERS.COM

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

- https://TechBoomers.com
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LAUGHING OUT LOUD

"I forgot my password, so I created a new one. Then, I forgot that one, so I created a new one. Maybe you were right. I should write them down."

(From *How-to-Geek*, September 6, 2019)
See page 17 of this issue for a better way to manage your passwords.

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
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Family-Associate   12
Students   18
Contributor   50
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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:

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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
Emerson Ave. Turn NORTH. Go
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.