User Friendly

*LACS
A Computer and Technology User Group*

APCUG EVENTS

February 13

Virtual Technology Conference (VTC)

February 24

Modems, Routers, and WiFi Workshop

Send an email to editor (at) lacspc.org for details and registration information.

LACS IS A MEMBER OF APCUG

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

An International Association of Technology and Computer User Groups

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FEBRUARY 9 GENERAL MEETING

MEETING TIME: 7:00 – 9 PM – Via Zoom
6:00 to 7:00: Socializing and Questions & Answers
Topic: **How and Why To Backup Your Hard Drive**
Speaker: **Judy Taylour,** APCUG Speakers Bureau, President, Editor and Webmaster, Santa Clarita Valley, CA Computer Club, and APCUG Region 10 advisor.

Don't lose any or all of your important data: documents, photos, music, or videos.

- Your computer could be hit by a virus.
- Ransomware could hold your files hostage.
- You should be prepared for a natural disaster
- Hard drives sometimes fail.

We will look at the ins and outs of backing up your hard drive and your smartphone during this presentation.

On March 24, APCUG is offering a free Zoom Workshop on backing up, including demonstrations of several programs. Tonight's presentation will give you a head start, and you can attend the APCUG workshop later for more information and assistance.

Meet Our Presenter

Judy Taylour is a 33-year member of the Santa Clarita Valley Computer Club. She coordinates APCUG workshops and webinars, and is also co-facilitator for SCRUGS, a group of Southern California Computer User Groups that have met quarterly for over 20 years to share ideas and presenter information, solve problems, etc.
Judy taught adult education computer classes for 22 years for her local high school district. She 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. She is a firm believer in life-long learning.

Tuesday, February 9, 7:00 - 9:00 PM

This meeting will be conducted via Zoom

6:00 - 7:00 Social Time and informal Q & A

More info: 310-780-3302

Guests may apply for the Zoom link by email to editor (at) lacspc.org

FROM YOUR PRESIDENT / EDITOR

Attending the Zoom General Meeting

You should receive, via email, a link, Meeting ID, and Passcode to attend the LACS general meetings a couple of days before the meeting. Please let me know by the morning of the meeting if you didn't receive it. **You may join up to an hour before the meeting time for questions, problem-solving, and just socializing.**

We have been having a problem with participants waiting until the meeting time to join, then discovering they can't find the link, have some technical glitch, or want to ask a question. This has become very disruptive and keeps the meeting from starting on time. Participants don't like waiting for the host to answer the phone and try to troubleshoot problems. When we had in-person meetings, attendees could come early for a Q & A forum, the same for the Zoom meetings.

When attending a virtual meeting, I've found it handy to put the invitation or link on my desktop, so I don't have to roam through many emails to find it at the last minute. Or, if you would rather not deal with the long link, you may write down the meeting ID and Passcode on a Sticky Note, go to www.zoom.us and enter them when prompted to enter the meeting.

I thank you for ideas for making our meetings better organized.

LACS January Board Meeting

LACS Roster

I am planning to publish an up-dated LACS roster in the March issue of *User-Friendly*. Please send me any changes or corrections as soon as possible; at least by February 15. Also tell me if you don't want your contact information in the roster. If you can't find last year's roster to check it, send me your first and last names, and preferred phone and email addresses for LACS.

Openings for LACS Directorships

If you would like to have your voice heard about how LACS is managed, or if you want to give back for the benefits you have received as a member, you should become a director. Directors attend one Zoom meeting a month on the first Monday. They make suggestions and vote on proposals. We have openings for both a one-year term and a two-year term. Contact me, Leah Clark, at leahjc@sbcglobal.net if you think you can do this. Thank you so much.

Publicity for LACS

Stanley Johnson will no longer be doing the Flyers and Social Media Posts to publicize LACS meetings. LACS is grateful for the years he has done this for us.

We need others to take over. The same person doesn't need to do both the flyer and the social media notices. This can be done from your home, with no meetings to attend. The person creating the flyer won't need to distribute it. You will be most appreciated. Stanley will assist anyone who's taking over with the transition. Please let Leah Clark or Stanley Johnson know if you think you can help LACS in this way, or to ask about what the job requires.

GENERAL MEETING REPORT
January 12, 2021

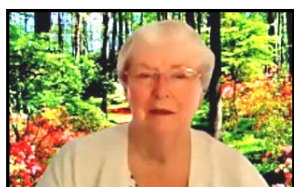**Declutter Your Digital Life**
Speaker: **Judy Taylour**, APCUG
Santa Clarita Valley Computer Club
By **Leah Clark**, LACS Editor and President

Judy took us through a list of what we need to be doing to clean up our computers and other devices, and details on how to do it. Dust needs to be cleaned out, and surfaces can become very germy. She has found the Swiffer to be excellent for cleaning all our tech devices.

Declutter Your Digital Life

- Dust Bunnies
- Germs
- Cleaning Keyboards & Monitors
- Keeping Your Computer Healthy
- Create a Restore Point
- Uninstall Software
- Update Software
- Disk Cleanup
- Optimize Startup
- Organize Hard Drive
- Organize Desktop Icons
- Organize Files & Folders
- Organize Your E-mail
- Clean Up Your Web Browser
- Smartphones

Clean keyboards and monitors First, shut down your computer, unplug the keyboard, and turn off the monitor or laptop. You will need the Swiffer, compressed air, cotton swabs, microfiber cloth, and computer and LCD screen cleaners. Judy explained the proper techniques for cleaning.

Restart your computer regularly to give it a chance to perform diagnostic checks and to fix minor issues. Be sure updates are installed.

Create a Restore Point before downloading a program or app, doing preventative maintenance, or letting someone else use your computer. With Windows 10, type "restore point" in the search box to get the dialogue box to set a restore point.

Uninstall old and unused programs. Type "uninstall" in the search box. Hint: Sort the list of installed programs by date installed, with the oldest first. That makes it easier to locate potentially unwanted programs (PUPs) when you may not know their names.

Judy saves data like email attachments, registration and serial numbers, etc., in subfolders in her Download folder. This makes it easy to find them when needed. You do need to clean out your Download folder. Sort by date to see what can be deleted.

Update your operating system. Check your up-date history and active hours by going to Start > Settings > Updates and Security. Microsoft gives you Patch Tuesday and twice a year feature updates.

Update your software by using Ninite, FileHippo, or Patch My PC to keep security updated. CCleaner has a duplicate finder to find and remove duplicate files.

Disk Cleanup: Go to Start, This PC, Right-click Windows, Properties, Disk Cleanup. Defragging is happening in the background continuously in Windows 10. Never defrag a solid-state drive (SSD).

Free Up Space Tool: Go to Settings > System > Storage > Free Up Space Now, under Storage Sense. Windows can automatically free up space, or you may decide what you want to remove.

Optimize Startup: Use Task Manager (Control – Alt – Delete) to disable selected programs that start up during booting so your computer will start up faster. Or go to Start > Settings > Apps > Startup > Move slider from on to off. You can also use and customize CCleaner to disable startup programs. It's a good idea to check what starts up after an update.

Should you clean your registry? Some people say, "Never!" Others say. "It's all right!" Judy uses CCleaner's Registry Cleaner. It puts everything into a folder so you can get it back again if you need to.

Clean Up Your Web Browser to improve its speed. Delete browsing data, cookies, clear the cache, check security, and customize site settings. Choose what to remove when you close the browser. Delete favorites and bookmarks no longer needed.

Clean up your email. Unsubscribe to no longer wanted newsletters, etc. Report email that you didn't sign up for as Spam. Email can be deleted by categories, date, sender, or content.

Clean up our smartphones. Turn your device off before cleaning. Clean the screen with micro-fiber cloth and cleaner for LCD screens. Use anti-bacterial wipes for the rest of the device. Back up your files to your computer. Uninstall apps you don't use, delete cache, clipboard content, old call logs, texts, messages, history, and cookies. Clean up contacts.

Optimize your Android device with CCleaner. Apps may be organized into folders. Check your photos; delete duplicates, and keep only good ones. Use cloud storage for photos.

Enjoy your Clean Computer!

February 8 has been designated "Clean Out Your Computer Day.

Watch the recording of this Zoom meeting to get the details of the presentation. ❖

ONLINE SELLING, PART 4

By **Mark Presky**, LACS Director
Published in the *Santa Monica Star*

This article is a continuation of my Selling Online discussion in the November 2020 issue of User Friendly.

OK, you've selected your item to sell, you've cleaned and fixed up your sale item, have good photos, and you are ready to post your listing. I want to discuss an essential set of subjects BEFORE you list your items: Fraud, payments, warranty, and buyer discourtesy. Due to space limitations, some of these will have to be discussed next month.

There is a lot of fraud out there regarding selling and buying online, and one needs to be careful. If you continue to sell online, you WILL encounter several attempts to defraud you. Each online selling platform, e.g., Craigslist, Nextdoor, eBay, or Amazon, has important warnings about fraud. I know that you REEEALLY (Diane – not spelling error) want to sell your item, but control your enthusiasm to complete the sale. Read and heed the warnings!

One common technique I've experienced often is the potential buyer who emails or messages you stating that they want your item, but is in another part of the country, is in the military, is disabled, etc. They are unable to pick up the item but want to send you a money order with more payment than you have requested, in advance, to hold the item. They may state that after you have deposited/cashed the money order, they will arrange for someone to pick up the item. Beware, the money order is likely fraudulent, and after depositing it, your bank will later debit your account, and that will likely happen after you have parted with the sale item.

ACCEPT ONLY CASH! Do NOT accept checks, money orders, or payment via Venmo. Even the Venmo website advises you not to accept a Venmo payment from someone you don't know, or any payment method other than cash. On eBay, you can use PayPal for payments; but don't use PayPal to pay for items sold on Craigslist or Nextdoor.

I've had buyers phone or email to tell me that they are halfway to my house and they forgot their cash on their kitchen table; they don't want to return home. Maybe it's a half-hour drive or more and ask/plead with me to accept a personal check. I suggested they use a local ATM to obtain cash.

I know it seems that I'll never get to the end of this, but we will – be patient. I want you to have positive online selling experiences. ❖

BEST OF CES 2021: THE TOP PRODUCTS COMING THIS YEAR

By **Justin Duino,** How-To-Geek, Jan.13, 2021

The Consumer Electronics Show (CES) looked a bit different this year after going all-digital, but that didn't stop companies from unveiling new products. After careful deliberation, the *How-To Geek* and *Review Geek* teams have awarded the following 11 products with *How-To Geek's* Best of CES 2021 awards.

Before jumping into the awards, *Review Geek* has been hard at work covering all of the CES 2021 announcements that you need to know about. Head on over there if you've missed anything from the internationally renowned trade show.

Best in Show: Kensington StudioDock
In order to stand out from everything announced at CES 2021 and win Best in Show, a product needs to make an entrance. The Kensington StudioDock did just that, causing most of the team to say, "I want that." Using the StudioDock with a Bluetooth keyboard and mouse, you can turn your iPad Pro or Air into an iPadOS iMac. Use the two built-in wireless chargers and the optional Apple Watch charger (which is coming soon) and the all-in-one system will transform into the ultimate workstation or secondary display.

Kensington hasn't yet announced a release date or price for the StudioDock, but you can sign up on the company's website to be the first to know when the dock goes on sale.

Best Concept: Razer Project Hazel
Disposable and fabric face masks are so 2020. That's why Razer is working on Project Hazel, a high-tech mask concept chock full of technology you'd expect from the gaming company. In addition to customizable RGB LED lights, the transparent N95 mask includes a tiny microphone and amplifier, active ventila-

tion, and comes with a charging case with built-in UV lights.
Although most of Razer's concepts that have been shown off at past CES events haven't come to market, it's possible that the company might bring Project Hazel to the masses by the end of 2021.

Best Smartphone: TCL 20 5G
Known best for its televisions, in 2020, TCL brought some of the first budget-friendly 5G smartphones to market. This year, the company is looking to keep the ball rolling with the introduction of the TCL 20 5G. Equipped with a Snapdragon 690 5G chipset, a beautiful 6.67-inch FHD+ display, a 4,500mAh battery, and an AI-powered triple camera setup (including a 48 MP sensor), this Android handset will be hard to beat by those looking to not spend a fortune on a new smartphone.

U.S. pricing and availability will be announced later in the year, but for now, we know that the 20 5G is priced at €299 (roughly $363 USD) and comes in Placid Blue and Mist Gray. The handset will first ship in Italy starting in February and expand to other countries and regions.

Best Mobile Accessory: Satechi 2-in-1 Magnetic Wireless Charging Stand

Satechi

Third-party MagSafe chargers are starting to arrive, and Satechi's 2-in-1 Magnetic Wireless Charging Stand is probably one of the cleanest multi-device options currently available. If you're someone rocking AirPods and

an iPhone 12, this charging station is perfect for a bedside table or your desk.

The Satechi 2-in-1 Charging Stand is already up for pre-order for $60.

Best Chromebook: Samsung Galaxy Chromebook 2

Samsung

Samsung stole the show in 2020 when it unveiled its Ferrari-red Galaxy Chromebook. Unfortunately, the ultra-powerful and ultra-expensive Chromebook didn't get great reviews. Samsung took this feedback as a learning opportunity and announced a similar-looking yet vastly different Galaxy Chromebook 2.

Now priced at just $550 with an Intel Celeron 5205U chipset, 4GB of RAM, and 64GB of built-in storage, the Galaxy Chromebook 2 sports a 13.3-inch 1920 x 1080 QLED display and supposedly has a 14-hour battery life. For $150 more, you can get a 10th-gen Intel i3 CPU and double the RAM and storage.

Best TV: TCL 2021 6-Series (R648)

TCL

TCL's TV division is going all-in on two things: 8K and mini-LED. Introduced at CES 2021, TCL's 6-Series (R648) uses third-gen mini-LED backlighting technology called OD Zero to up the TV's brightness, add smoother uniformity between the millions of mini-LEDs, and up the contrast, all while shrinking the thickness of the television's panel.

The addition of 8K resolution in all 2021 6-Series Roku TV models makes it more accessible to more people. Although there might not be a lot of native content available to take advantage of all those pixels, TCL believes its AiPQ Engine will be able to handle upscaling 4K content smoothly.

This year's TCL 6-Series TVs with 8K mini-LED technology will be available for purchase later this year alongside last year's 4L 6-Series Roku TV models. Pricing and availability have yet to be announced.

Best Computer: Lenovo ThinkBook Plus Gen 2 i

Lenovo

If you ever get tired of looking at your laptop's bright display, Lenovo's ThinkBook Plus Gen 2 i is a dual-screen computer that includes a full-size e-Ink panel on its outer lid. While the business-focused laptop includes the top-class specs that you might expect, the 12-inch e-Ink panel has a redesigned UI that gives you quick access to your favorite applications and tools.

Lenovo plans to begin selling the ThinkBook Plus Gen 2 i starting at $1,549 in Q1 of 2021. No set date has been announced at the time of writing.

Best Computer Monitor: LG UltraFine OLED Pro

If you were waiting for a company to announce an ultra-accurate computer monitor at CES 2021, look no further than the LG UltraFine OLED Pro. This 31.5-inch 4K display claims to have 99% Adobe RGB and DCI-P3 color accuracy, a million-to-one contrast ratio, and utilizes the OLED screen technology for true blacks and HDR playback.

The UltraFine OLED Pro, which appears to be primarily marketed for content creation professionals, is set to hit shelves sometime later this year. LG has not announced a set release date or price.

Best Smart Home: myQ Pet Portal

If you're tired of having to let your dog out or don't want to install an ugly doggy door, myQ, the makers of internet-connect garage door openers, has the perfect solution. The myQ Pet Portal replaces your entire door with one with a smart doggy door.

Controlled either by an app on your smartphone or a smart tag on your dog's collar, the doggy door slides open long enough for your pet to walk through and then closes behind them. When it's time to come back in, the doors can again be automatically opened. The addition of cameras, speakers, and microphones on both sides of the door helps you know when your dog needs to go out.

I hope that your dog is your best friend, because the myQ Pet Portal starts at $3,000.

Best Robot Vacuum: Roborock S7

The Roborock S7, which might look like your standard robot vacuum but isn't, automatically and smartly vacuums and mops your home simultaneously. With its sonic mopping feature, the S7 scrubs the floor 1,650 to 3,000 times per minute to clean up dried-on messes. Plus, the robot vacuum can identify surfaces and lift its mop attachment when vacuuming carpets so they don't wet.

The Roborock S7 goes on sale for $649 starting on March 24, 2021.

Best Gaming: Arcade1Up *X-Men 4 Player Arcade Cabinet*

Arcade1Up

Reliving the 80s-era arcades can now be done easily from your living room or game room. Arcade1Up, one of our favorite companies making replica arcade machines, took to CES 2021 to launch new cabinets for *Breakout*, *Dragon's Lair*, *Killer Instinct*, and more. Our pick for the best new release is the *X-Men* 4 Player Arcade Cabinet.

Honorable mention has to go to Arcade 1Up's pub-style, four-player *Pong* cabinet. Unlike the company's past cabinets of this style, this one is at standing height. Congratulations again to all of the *How-To Geek* Best of CES 2021 award winners! Check out *Review Geek* to find coverage of everything else announced at the virtual trade show.

Justin Duino is the Managing Editor at *How-To Geek*. He has spent the last decade writing about Android, smartphones, and other mobile technology. In addition to his written work, he has also been a regular guest commentator on CBS News and BBC World News and Radio to discuss current events in the technology industry. ❖

LACS NOTICES

WELCOME ALL

Gavin Faught, LACS Treasurer
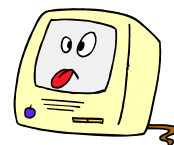
New Members (0)
Renewals (3)

Juan Dominguez
J. Garellana
Susan Mahan

JOIN OUR MAIL LISTS

LACS members can join one, or both, of the lists shown by putting just their name in the message body of an e-mail to each of the lists they wish to join from the e-mail address they wish LACS to use. It's highly recommended to join both lists.

- **PC@LACS+subscribe (at) groups.io**
- **LACSLIST@LACS+subscribe (at) groups.io**

PC is for official LACS business only.
Lacslist is for any other computer or technology – related messages and questions.

New members will no longer be automatically added to the mail lists. They will receive one invitation to join each list; they must respond quickly or follow the above instructions.

If you have any problems or questions regarding joining the lists, please contact

HYPERLINKS

Note that underlined text (blue in the colored editions) in User Friendly usually indicates it's a hyperlink to a website.

FIX YOUR PC FOR FREE?

LACS Member and presenter, **Jim McKnight**, has an open offer to 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.

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, email your changes to **membership (at) lacspc.org**, or mail it to LACS, 11664 National Blvd. #343, Los Angeles, CA 90064-3802.

LACS IS ON TWITTER

On **Twitter**, follow us at:
https://twitter.com/LA_ComSoc .

LACS now needs someone to update our Twitter account.

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/ to see our Meetup Page. Then click on **"Join Us."**

LACS CALENDAR

LACS Board Meeting

Date: Monday, February 1, 2021 via Zoom
Time: 7:00 P.M. (Open from 6:30 P.M.)
Where: At your home via Zoom

General Meeting

Date: Tuesday, February 9, 2021 via Zoom
Time: 7:00 P.M. (Open from 6:00 P.M.)
Where: At your home via Zoom

February 1: **LACS Board Meeting**
February 2: Groundhog Day
February 8: Clean Out Your Computer Day
February 9: **LACS General Meeting**
February 14: Valentine's Day
February 15: Presidents Day
February 16: Mardi Gras
February 25: Purim begins

VISIT OTHER COMPUTER USER GROUPS

Check out the below URL for information for visiting other user groups' Zoom meetings and for a lot more ideas for using Zoom and managing dealing with the stay-at-home restrictions.

https://apcug2.org/tech-things-to-learn-while-sheltering-in-place/

GENERAL MEETING PRESENTATIONS VIA ZOOM

February 9: How and Why To Backup Your Hard Drive
March 9: TBA

 Due to the pandemic, our future presentations may be uncertain. Check email and *User Friendly* for updates.

ZOOM MEETINGS

To join an Zoom meeting, click on the URL on the invitation you will receive via email before the meeting and follow the prompts.

Contact Leah Clark, leahjc (at) sbcglobal.net, if you have any questions, or if you don't receive the link by the morning of the meeting day. Please enter before the meeting starts in case problems need to be solved and to ask questions. We want the meetings to start on time.

PODCASTS & ZOOM RECORDINGS

To listen to the podcasts of most of our past in-person general meetings, go to https://www.lacspc.org/category/audio-files/.
Click on the session you want to hear. **LACS members will receive links to the recordings of Zoom meetings via email.**

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 https://www.lacspc.org/category/uf-index/

To find a specific article or topic, use the search box on the right below the picture.

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. - 10
Android Smartphones - 8
Apple devices - 12
Anti Malware and Backup - 7, 8
Digital Imaging, Editing - 11
Digital Photography - 11
Dragon Naturally Speaking - 3
Genealogy - 8
Groups.IO - 8

Hardware - 7
Linux - 4
Lotus Word Pro, Approach - 7
Mozilla Firefox - 7
MS Excel - 8, 12, 13
MS Word - 1, 3, 13
MS Outlook - 8, 1, 10
MS PowerPoint - 12
MS Publisher - 2

Open Office - 6
Photoshop - 10
Quicken - 8, 13
Thunderbird - 7
Utilities - 7, 8
Visual Basic - 5
Websites - 5
Windows - 6, 7, 8
WordPerfect - 8
Zoom - 2, 9

Number	Name	Preferred Phone for Calls	From	To
1	Beckman, Loling	310-471-7893	10:00 AM	6:00 PM
2	Clark, Leah	310-677-2792	7:00 AM	5:00 PM
3	Hershman, Irv	310-397-9453	11:00 AM	11:00 PM
4	Hughes, Bill	424-259-1818	Any	Any
5	Ialongo, Gilbert	310-641-7906	9:00 AM	5:00 PM
6	Johnson, Carol	310-372-8535	10:00 AM	9:00 PM
7	McKnight, Jim	310-823-7829	8:00 AM	7:00 PM
8	Nordlinger, Stephanie	323-299-3244	9:00 AM	5:00 PM
9	Presky, Mark	310-780-3302	Any	Any
10	Rozek, E. J.	310-823-3811	Noon	8:00 PM
11	Silverstein, Elliot	310-670-1544	10:00 AM	10:00 PM
12	Van Berkom, Paula	310-398-6734	9:00 AM	5:00 PM
13	Wilder, Joan	310-472-8445	9:00 AM	9:00 PM

OFFICERS, DIRECTORS AND LEADERS

Title	Name	Term	Telephone
President	Leah Clark	2021	310-677-2792
Past President	Stanley Johnson	2021	424-216-6984
Vice President	Stephanie Nordlinger	2021	323-299-3244
Secretary	Marcia Jacobs	2021	310-435-1457
Treasurer	Gavin Faught	2021	310-346-2637
Director	Newton Bernstein	2021	310-945-9111
Director	**Open**	2021	
Director	Paula Van Berkom	2021	310-398-6734
Director	Howard Krivoy	2022	310-717-7465
Director	Mark Presky	2022	310-780-3302
Director	E. J. Rozek	2022	310-823-3811
Director	**Open**	2022	
APCUG Rep.	Leah Clark		310-677-2792
Car Pool Coordinator	Freda Sanders		323-230-3278
Corporate Counsel	Stephanie Nordlinger		323-299-3244
CCSC Computer Lab	Loling Beckman		310-471-7893
Database Manager	Sylvia Davis		323-293-5004
Greeter	Freda Sanders		323-230-3278
Assistant Greeter	Penny McKnight		310-823-7829
Groups.IO Lists	Stephanie Nordlinger		323-299-3244
Hospitality Chair	Sylvia Davis		323-293-5004
Newsletter Editor	Leah Clark		310-677-2792
Program Chair	Stephanie Nordlinger		323-299-3244
Publicity – Press	Mark Presky		310-780-3302
Publicity – Online Media	**Open**		
Quick Consultants	Leah Clark		310-677-2792
Webmaster	Paula Van Berkom		310-398-6734

Mailing Address 11664 National Blvd., #343, Los Angeles, CA 90064-3802

Website   www.lacspc.org   **Newsletter Editor**   editor (at) lacspc.org

Voice Mail   1-310-780-3302   **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 are encouraged
to use our roster for phone numbers and email addresses.

Electronic Circuit Simulation

By **Dick Maybach**

Brookdale Computer Users Group

www.bcug.com

n2nd (at) att.net

Circuit simulation will interest only a few, but skimming through this article should impress you with the support a PC can provide for this specialized area. You likely have different interests, and it would probably be worth your while to search for equivalent tools appropriate for you.

When I began my electronics career many years ago, my design tools were pencil, paper, and a slide rule. To check my circuits, I used a soldering iron and a lab full of equipment. Now I can do all this on my PC using circuit simulation software.

An easy introduction to circuit simulation is the free SimulIDE, https://www.simulide.com/p/home.html.

Its primary disadvantage is its documentation, which means you may have to approach it as though it were an adventure game. For instance, the examples weren't available in my Linux version, and I had to extract them from a downloaded Windows version. Fortunately, SimulIDE is intuitive to use, making it a good starting point. Once you become acquainted with simulation, stepping up to more capable tools with their steeper learning curves will be less daunting.

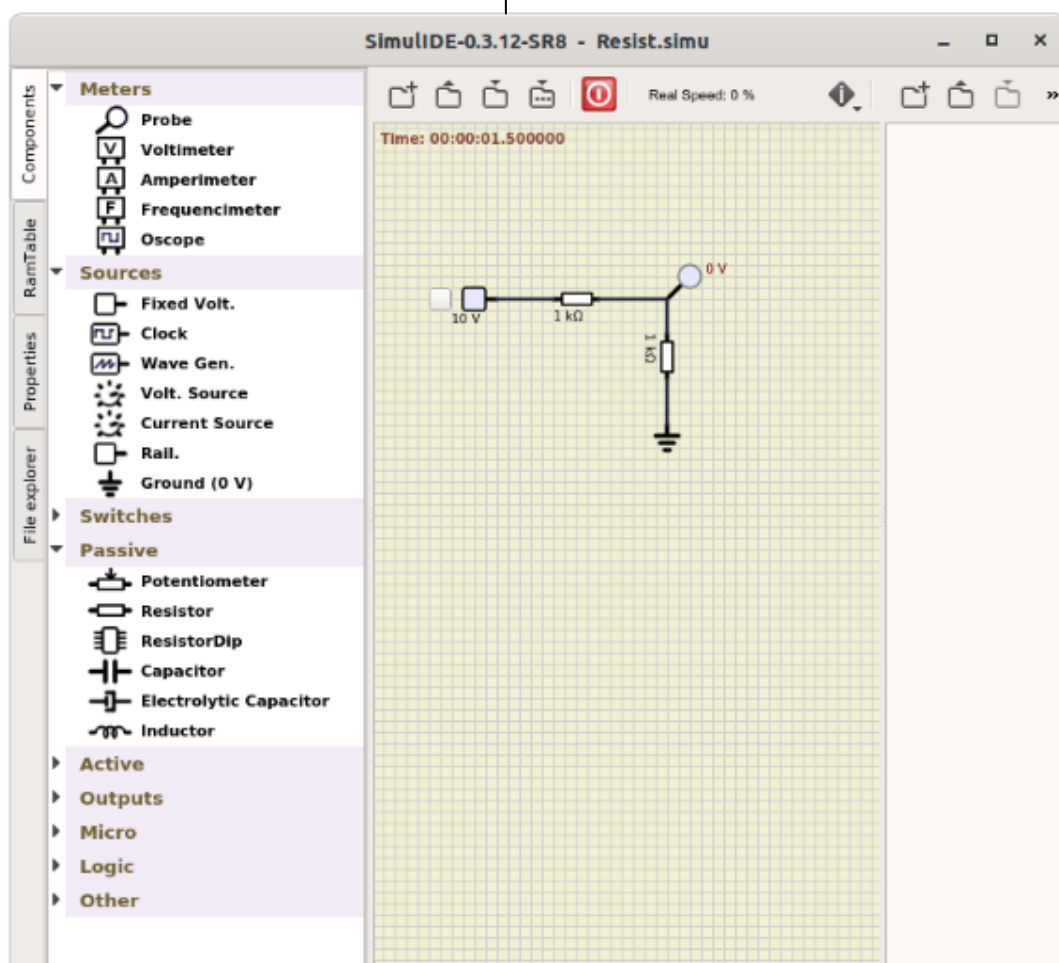**Figure 1** shows SimulIDE with a very simple circuit.
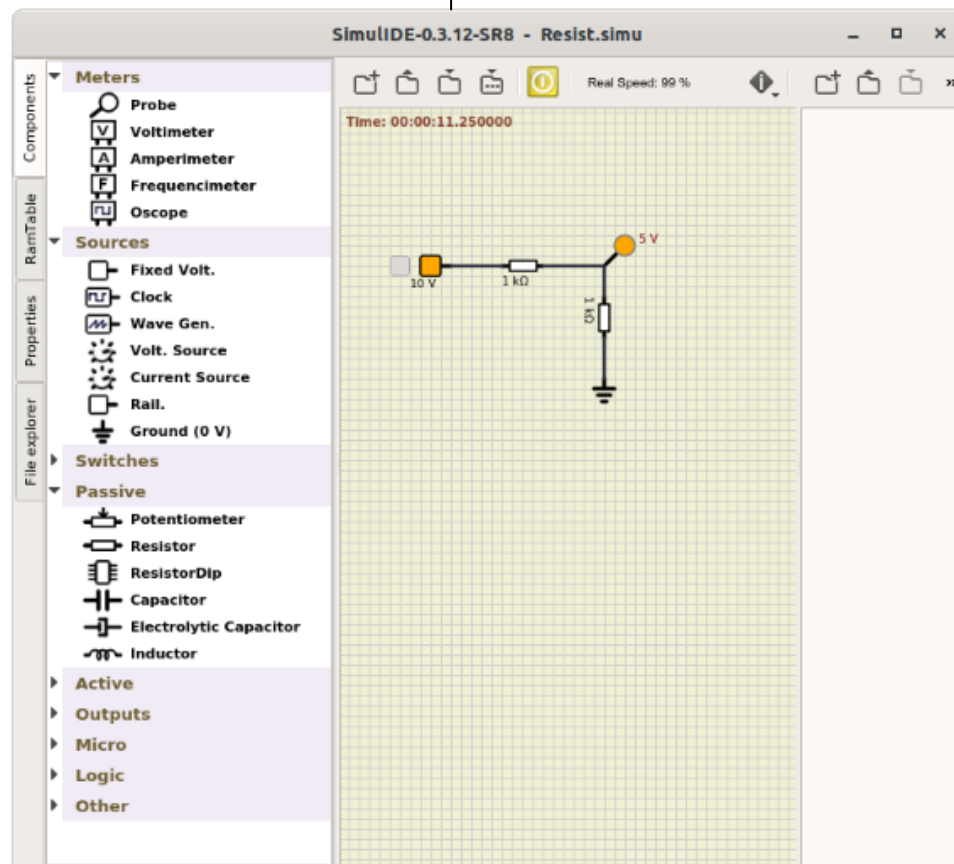

Figure 1. A Very Simple Circuit.

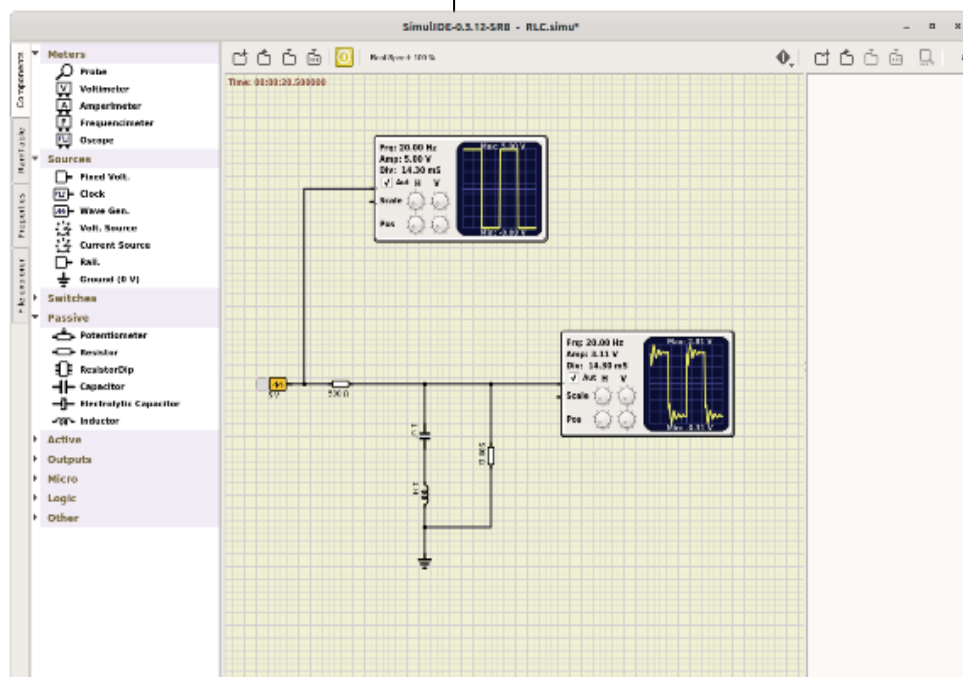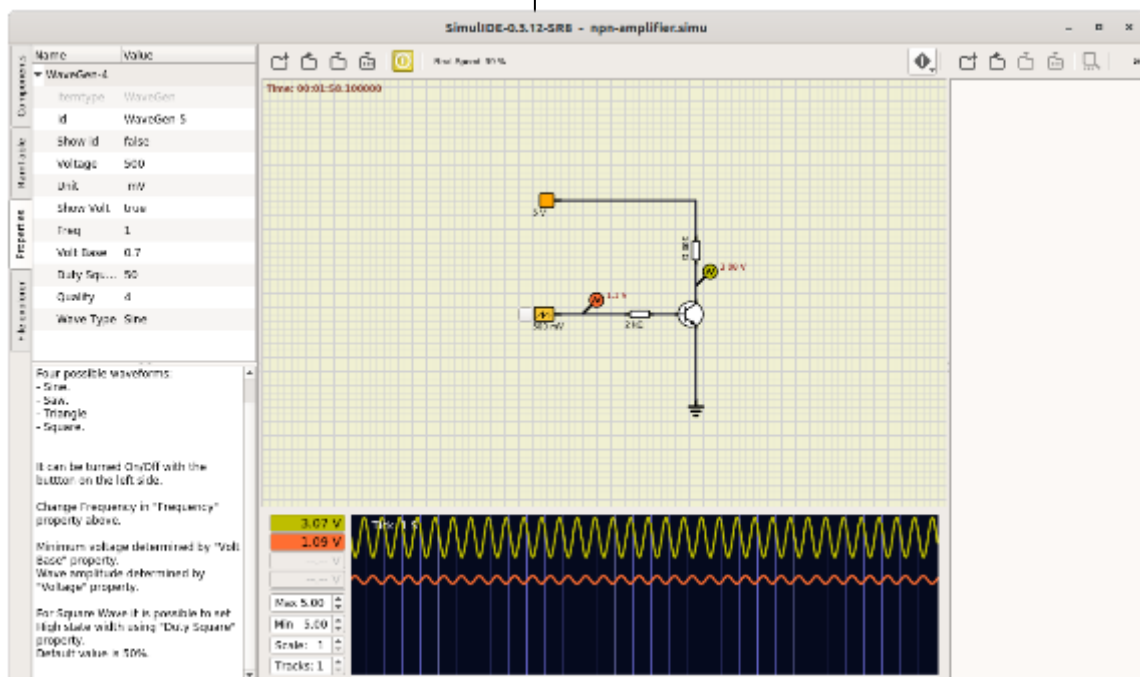**Figure 2**. A Very Simple Circuit in Operation

Figure 3. RLC Example.

Create the circuit by dragging components from the left to the center panel. Right-click on a component and select **Properties** to change them from their defaults (5 Volts for the voltage source and 100 Ohms for the resistor). Left-click on a point to start a wire, move the cursor to where it should end, and left-click again to end it. You may notice that the circuit of Figure 1 doesn't appear to be working. Ten volts is applied to the divider circuit, but the probe measures zero. This is because I haven't turned on the fixed voltage source (by clicking on the small square to its left or started the simulation by selecting the red power button at the top.) I've corrected this in **Figure 2**, and the probe now reads five volts as it should. (The probe is not permanently connected, but it can be moved as needed around the circuit.)

Turning on the source changed its color to orange, and starting the simulation did the same for the probe, which now displays the voltage at the point it touches. **Figure 3** shows a slightly less trivial example.

Here the source is a wave generator set to produce a square wave, the detectors are oscilloscopes, and the circuit includes an inductor and a capacitor. After allowing the oscilloscopes to initialize, I've found it necessary to turn off their auto feature. (Look carefully at the scope icons to see that Auto is not checked.) Then use the cursor to spin the horizontal and vertical scale controls (on the oscilloscope icons); you will probably have to make many revolutions of the knobs.

Of course, many circuits include active components, such as the one in **Figure 4**, which is an example included with the software.

The wave generator is the same one used in Figure 3, but here, as shown by its properties in the left panel, it is set to produce a sine wave. There are also two probes shown, but their outputs are assigned to channel 1 and channel 2 of the plotter (by right-clicking on the icons to display their properties.) This causes the waveforms they see to be displayed in the plotter windows, rather than the DC voltage they see being displayed next to their icon.

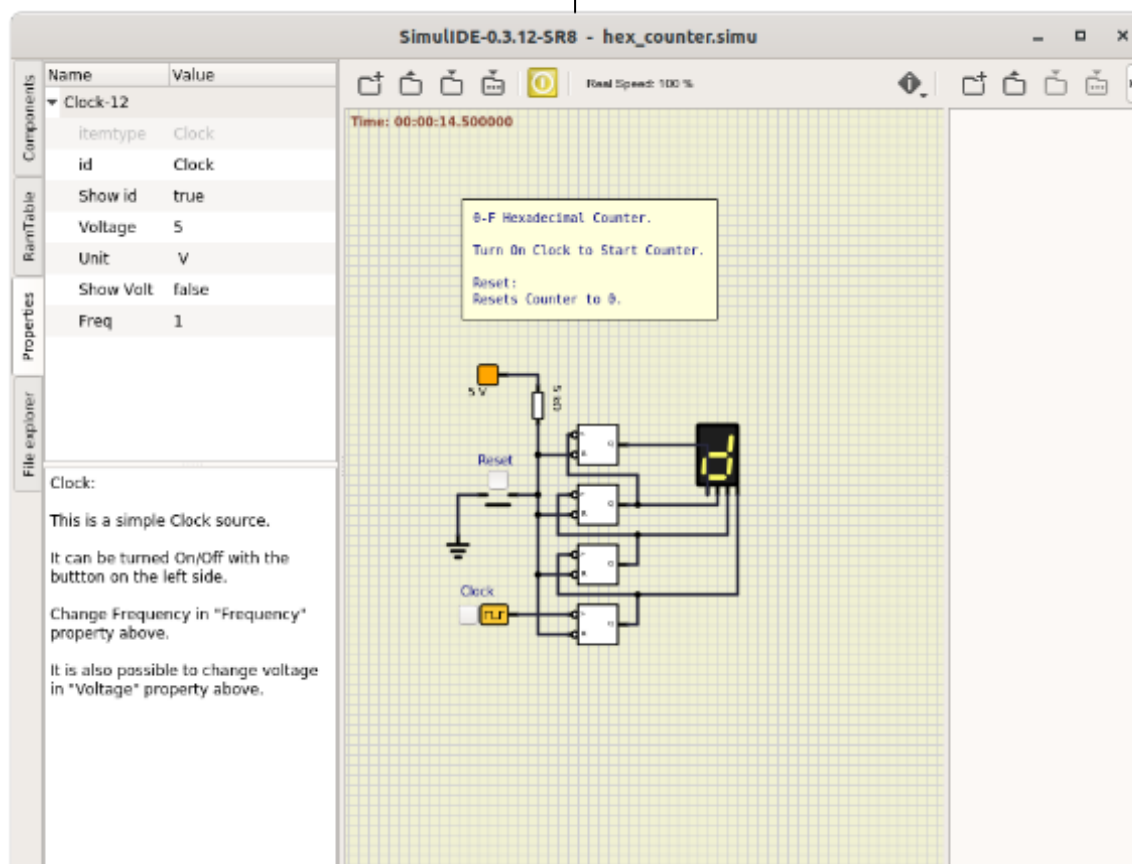**Figure 4.** A Simple Active Circuit.
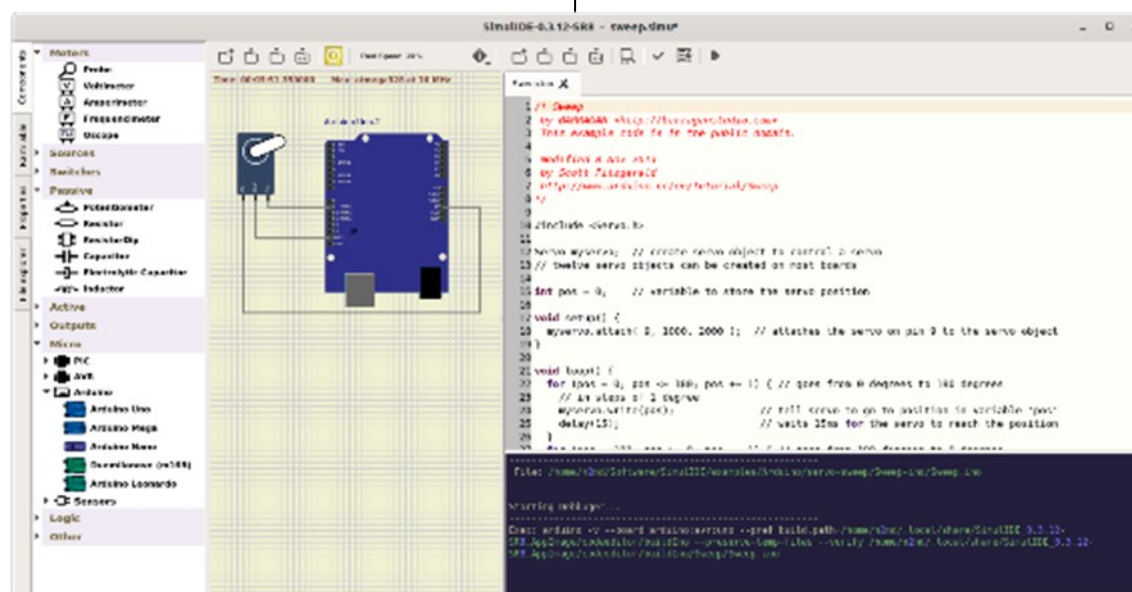
Figure 5. Hex Counter.

Figure 6. Arduino Simulation.

We would obtain more accurate plots with the oscilloscope component used in Figure 3, but it's often more convenient to use probes and their plotter function, as the latter can display up to four waveforms.

The program also simulates logic circuits, like the hexadecimal counter shown in **Figure 5**.

The clock is set to one Hertz, which causes the display to count continuously from 0 to 5, changing once per second. Clicking on the Reset button forces the count to zero. More complex digital circuits are available, for example, five different Arduino models, one of which is shown in **Figure 6**.

Here an Arduino Uno has been programmed to move a (white) servo arm back and forth over a 180-degree arc. The left panel shows the microprocessors available for use and, in particular, the Arduino models. As usual, the center panel shows the circuit, while the program being run appears on the right, with a debug session below it. (You must have the Arduino IDE software installed to support it.) Unfortunately, the instructions I've found on simulating Arduino processors are specific to the Windows version of SimulIDE, and so far I haven't found how to program the processor simulation in Linux.

SimulIDE is a good tool for the home experimenter, but it does have limitations. For example, there are only a few transistor models, and these aren't adequate for radio-frequency design. However, it is a good starting point, as it's easy to learn. I've begun experimenting with KiCad, https://kicad-pcb.org/, which is much more competent. As a result, it's also more difficult to learn, but extensive tutorials are available on their website. Many professional circuit designers use Orcad's PSpice, but its price puts it far out of the reach of home users. A free version is available to students, which is a good choice if you qualify. (Non-students can find a pirate version, but putting one of these on your PC is never a good idea.) ❖

THOSE NASTY POP-UP ADS

By **Jim Cerny**, Help Desk Host
The Sarasota Technology Users Group
STUG Monitor, August 2020
www.thestug.org
jimcerny123 (at) gmail.com

You're going along just fine, enjoying a fun game on your device, you don't know how it happened, or maybe you touched the screen just a teeny bit out of place, and BAM, there is a pop-up ad or window! It overlays part of your screen, and now you are playing a new game you didn't download called "try to get rid of this ad!"

I guess it is pretty standard now that all "free" games on your device come with ads, so here are some tips on how to get rid of them and get back to your game or app.

Naturally, no one way will always work; they are still trying to fool you!

Simple notice box – a short message in a small box that, thankfully, has a little "X" you can touch to get rid of it. It may be an important notice, however, so read it in case you have a problem. Usually, these notices appear in the middle of your screen or the lower right corner "notification area" on your Windows computer.

Larger ad – behold a company catalog page offering clothes or shoes or whatever. Look carefully – where is that "X"? Is it missing? Well, it could be hidden out of sight. Try touching the upper right corner (and if that doesn't work, try EVERY corner) to see if an "X" appears. If so, you "win," now you can touch the "X" and get rid of the ad.

Touch screen ads to swipe away – Ok, some ads do NOT have an "X," these people are getting more creative every year! Try putting your finger on the ad and "swiping" the ad (up, down, left, or right) to get it off your screen. I had a nasty one the other day, which appeared on the far left on my iPad, and the only way I could get rid of it was to

swipe it all the way to the RIGHT to get it off.

An unwelcome web page – Somehow, you must have touched on something to open up (or "go to") a web page. Yes, they can do this to you without you opening up your web browser. Good luck finding an "X" on this one. On a touch screen, try swiping up and hope the window goes up and off your screen. Otherwise, hit your "home" button twice (on your device) or swipe HALFway up on your iPhone from the bottom to get all your open apps. Find the one you want to delete and swipe it up to get rid of it. It is an excellent idea to do this often on your device to delete all your apps that are remaining open and perhaps slowing up your response on your device.

Timed ads – These, at least, are almost expected. An ad appears (if they are nice, they will warn you first), and these ads are "timed" to run for several seconds or a minute. Look for a moving blue bar at the bottom of the ad to see it countdown the clock. Sometimes no bar or timer appears. Sometimes it is hidden in the corner, and when you touch on it, only then will it show you the time remaining. As far as I know, there is nothing you can do with a timed ad other than wait until the time runs out – even then, you will still have to look for an "X" or something to touch to get rid of it.

Your anti-virus software app on your Windows computer may already have an ad blocker as part of it, so look and see what options are already available for you. Apple products do not have anti-virus apps because they are already part of the iOS (operating system).

Ad blockers. Now having said all that, there are many ad "blockers" and "removers" that are available on the internet. Some are "free" (with pop-up ads of their own!). I would be a little careful here – it would be best to ask someone who is already using the blocker tool before you download it and start using

it. Will it work on your device? Will it work on multiple devices? Will it block all ads? Will it work only with your browser (i.e., Chrome, Microsoft Edge, Safari, Firefox, etc.)? Nothing is perfect, and those company marketing people are working hard to get you to see their ads.

Always look up any ad blocker, or any app for that matter, on Google and read what others have experienced. Pretty soon, ads will be popping up on our car screens. Imagine driving along and having an auto insurance ad popping up over your speedometer! Well, I suppose that is a bit better than driving through a billboard! ❖

TECHNOLOGY TRIVIA

Presidential Inauguration Firsts
By **Leah Clark**, LACS

- James Polk's 1845 inauguration was the first to be covered by telegraph.

- James Buchanan's in 1857 was the first known to be photographed.

- In 1925, Calvin Coolidge's inauguration was the first broadcast nationally by radio.

- Herbert Hoover's in 1929 was the first recorded by a talking newsreel.

- Harry S. Truman's in 1949 was the first televised.

- Bill Clinton's inaugural ceremony, in 1993, was the first to be broadcast live on the internet.

From American Spirit, January/February 2021 Daughters of the American Revolution ❖

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
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O2-bwYlYu1I

SPECIAL OFFERS

Go to the APCUG website https://apcug2.org/discounts-special-offers-for-user-groups/ for discounts and special offers for Members of User Groups. Avast Anti-virus and Acronis True Image, and several book, media and training sites offer discounts including the two mentioned below.

- Members can save at the
  Pearson Technology websites: InformIT, Cisco Press, Pearson IT Certification, Que Publishing, Adobe Press, and Peachpit Press.
  Informit.com/user_groups/index.aspx
  Code for print books: **ITCOMMUNITY**
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- See the latest books on digital imaging and photography, gaming, animation, film and video, post-production, audio, music technology, broadcast and theatre from Routledge | Focal Press today! They offer discounts to User Group members.

NOTICE

The columns, reviews and other expressions of opinion in *User Friendly* are the opinions of the writers and not necessarily those of the Los Angeles Computer Society. LACS became a California nonprofit corporation on July 17, 1991. Its predecessor was the UCLA PC Users Group.

LAUGHING OUT LOUD

"Quick! Call our tech dept. and tell them we need to go paperless. The paperwork has turned on us!"

It's called a "Book." Not sure where the batteries go.

From the Sarasota Technology Users Group

FINANCIAL REPORT

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

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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
Gift Membership   20
A subscription to *User Friendly* is included with membership.
Associate members 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. A member may give a 1-year, 1-time **gift** to a non-member.

Monthly general meetings will be via Zoom during the pandemic stay-at-home orders. Members also 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 Group Mail List. Send your questions by e-mail to
lacslist (at) lacs.groups.io

— **Receive important news** and announcements via *User Friendly* and LACS's Group e-mail lists.

— **Free APCUG (**International Association of Technology and Computer User Groups) **Webinars.**

— **Free quarterly Virtual Technology Conference (VTCs)**

— **Information** on training and technical education.

— 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**

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

— **Special Interest Groups** (SIGs) on various topics may be created by members.

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Date: _____   *LACS*   **New or Renewal Membership Application**

Check # _____

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

Please PRINT Clearly   [ ] New   [ ] Renewal

[ ] New / Renewal with printed newsletter - $40.00   [ ] Associate - $12.00   [ ] Student - $18.00

[ ] New / Renewal with electronic, no paper, newsletter - $30.00   [ ] Gift Membership - $20.00

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

Name: First   Last

Name of Associate: First   Last
(Same address as primary member)

Address:

City, State, Zip + 4

E-mail Address: E-mail of Associate

Preferred Phone: Publish Contact Info in Roster   [ ] Yes   [ ] No

Did a member of LACS invite you to join? If so, who? If not, how did you hear about LACS?

Revised Dec. 2020, ljc

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membership for every new regular
member you bring in.

Los Angeles Computer Society

GENERAL MEETINGS WILL BE ON ZOOM UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE.

Before each meeting, members and invited guests will receive an email with the URL link to the meeting. If you haven't received it by the morning of the meeting, let Leah Clark know. When you click on the link, you will enter a waiting room. Then the host or a co-host will admit you to the meeting.

Please try to arrive at least a few minutes before the meeting start-time so you don't interrupt the meeting and any problems can be solved. If you need to take a break during a meeting, do not click on Leave or End. If you do, the meeting will be interrupted for someone to re-admit you from the waiting room. You may turn off your video when you are gone.