User Friendly

*LACS
A Computer and Technology User Group*

IN THIS ISSUE

APCUG EVENTS

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up-coming events.

LACS IS A MEMBER OF APCUG

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www.twitter.com/apcug

An International
Association of Technology
and Computer User Groups

JUNE 8 GENERAL MEETING

Meeting Time: **7:00 – 9 PM – Via Zoom**
6:30 to 7:00: Socializing and Questions & Answers
Topic: **A Guide to Synchronizing Your PC**

Speaker: **Bill James**
APCUG Speakers Bureau

There are numerous ways to sync desktops, laptops, tablets, and phones. From the complex to relatively simple solutions, this presentation will cover sharing over a network, local file sync programs, LANs, Cloud services and more. Bill will also cover selective syncing like deleting some things on your phone but leaving them on your PC.

Meet Our Presenter

Bill James joined the Oklahoma PC User's Group (now the Computer Club of Oklahoma City) in 1992 to learn more about the computer he had purchased. He has been a member of the club's Board of Directors since 1998. Bill was elected President of the CCOKC in 2000 and served two terms. He is now VP of Operations and newsletter editor. He frequently gives presentations on new software to his club.

He is a past APCUG Region 6 Advisor (KY, IL, IN, MI) and Treasurer and member of the APCUG Board of Directors. Bill is now the APCUG Region 8 Advisor (AR, KS, LA, MO, OK, TX). He retired from the Federal Aviation Administration as a Supply Systems Analyst for the FAA Logistics Center in Oklahoma City, OK, in 2007.

Tuesday, June 8, 7:00 - 9:00 PM
6:30 - 7:00 Socializing and informal Q & A
This meeting will be conducted via Zoom
LACS members on our PC list will be sent the Zoom link a few days before the meeting. Guests and members not receiving the link may apply for it by emailing Leah Clark before June 7.

More information at 310-780-3302
and https://www.lacspc.org

FROM YOUR PRESIDENT / EDITOR

New LACS Directors

Many thanks to **Sylvia Davis** and **Irv Hershman** for agreeing to become LACS Directors. They will be great assets.

Sylvia has been Hospitality Chair, and she is currently serving as Membership and Database Manager.

Irv, who now lives in Las Vegas, has been a director in the past. He helps with writing the general meeting reports for *User Friendly* by transcribing the recordings via *Dragon Nationally Speaking*.

The Future of LACS

The May General Meeting began with a discussion on how LACS members want post-pandemic meetings to be held. 29 members responded to the survey asking for their opinions. The results are:

- **41.4 %** - Zoom meetings with occasional social get-togethers with Q & A
- **20.7 %** - All meetings via Zoom only
- **17.2 %** - Hybrid (accessible via Zoom or in-person) meetings
- **13.8 %** - Some meetings online and some in-person
- **6.9 %** - In-person meetings only

As can be seen here, it looks like Zoom meetings will continue as a "New Normal" with some in-person get-togethers.

Hybrid and in-person meetings would require volunteers to set up and take down the equipment.

We also need to determine what to do with the equipment that's being stored at the church where we have met. Do we want to keep enough to be able to run Special Interest Groups (SIGs) as in the past?

Please continue to send the board your ideas and offers of help.

Virtual Technology Conference

I celebrated my birthday on May 1 by attending the APCUG Virtual Technology Conference (VTC). Check at www.apcug.org for when YouTube recordings of the presentations will be available and how to access them.

The first session I attended was *The Audio in Audacity!* and *Avidemux* video editing app given by Sharan Kalwani of the SouthEastern Michigan Computer Organization (SEMCO). Avidemux is a free, open-source video-editing app. There are many different video formats; this app can convert from one to another. There are videos and tutorials on YouTube. Sharan showed a video demonstrating video editing. Audacity is an audio editing tool and recorder. It is also free and open-source, and it is available on many platforms.

Joe Kissell of *Take Control Books* talked about *Online Privacy.* He defined the differences between security, privacy, and anonymity. Some people worry too much, and others, not enough. Choose privacy options on your browser settings, and develop better habits. Turn on Wi-Fi Protected Access (WPA), and use a Virtual Private Network (VPN) when on open networks. Beware of shady VPN providers. Google keeps track of searches for ads; Facebook is an offender of violating privacy.

We learned some interesting Word Tips and Tricks from Jerry Heaton of the Center Kentucky Computer Society. He demonstrated using the Dictate and Editor functions in Microsoft Word, and he showed designing a card as a fun way to say "Thank You" in an email message. He then pointed out all the items we should include in a *Death Data Document* to aid our family when we are gone.

The other three presentations were *Learn all about a Virtual Private Network* (VPN) by Don Arrowsmith; *iPad Controls* by Brooke Thomas, and *Music in the Car* by Ray Baxter.

GENERAL MEETING REPORT
May 11, 2021
Audiobooks
Speaker: **Hewie Poplock**
APCUG Speakers Bureau

ⵙur presenter, Hewie Poplock, has been very active in APCUG and has been involved in user groups since 1982. He explained a lot about acquiring and using audiobooks.

Hewie opened with this quote, "Audiobooks are for those who hate reading and for those who love reading." He told us a little of the history of the evolution of the spoken book. Now, you can listen to audiobooks with apps for smartphones, iPads, desktops, and Kindles from Amazon, Google, and Apple.

One of the best places to get audiobooks is your local library. You can use your library card to check them out, or you can get an e-card to obtain them on the interne, even if your branch isn't open, or if you can't visit your local library.

Hoopla and OverDrive with the Libby app are popular providers. Patrons can use their library cards to check out items.

OverDrive

- Use the Learn How button for instructions.
- Libby is a mobile app for Android and Apple iOS devices.
- Read across devices; for example, start a book on your phone, then take it up on your PC.
- Listen to books in your car through Apple CarPlay, Android Auto, or a Bluetooth connection.
- Send books to your Kindle.
- Get books you can read on your device.
- Most libraries have online tutorials for using their systems.

National Library Service (NLS) of the Library of Congress

- NLS offers free services for the blind and the print-disabled.
- People with low vision can get braille and talking book service in a format that works for them.
- Digital book players are provided free to patrons.
- Share this information so all may read.
- Braille and Audio Reading Download (BARD**)** is a web-based service providing access to thousands of special-format books, magazines, and music materials.
- With the BARD Mobile app, you can download and play audio materials on Apple and Android devices.

Audible

- You can get a 30-day free trial with one audiobook and two Audible Originals.
- After the trial, you get three titles each month: One audiobook and two Audible Originals each month.
- You may swap audiobooks and keep them forever.
- There are two payment plans: Audible Plus for $7.95 per month, and audible premium plus for $14.95 per month.
- Audible Plus gives unlimited streaming and listening from the Plus Catalog.
- Audible Premium Plus allows unlimited streaming from the Plus Catalog, credits to purchase any title in the premium selection, and other discounts.
- Hewie discussed how both plans work.
- Amazon owns Audible, so you can listen through Alexa, and Prime members get extra benefits.

- Audible is compatible with many devices. Check to be sure yours is on the list.

Scribd

- The cost is $9.99 per month after 30 days, and you may cancel anytime.

- You have unlimited audiobooks.

- They have eBooks, magazines, research papers, and sheet music.

- With a premium membership, you can access short stories, essays, articles, and documents.

- Scribd is compatible with Apple and Android devices, Fire Tablets, Nook Tablets, and Samsung Galaxy Tab Nook.

Chirp

- You purchase each book as you want with no subscription fees.

Hewie played a video to show samples of what audiobooks sound like with different professional readers.

After this informative presentation, Hewie reminded us of The Central Florida Computer Society Windows Special Interest Group, WinSIG. You may listen to them live and access past episodes on YouTube. He often speaks at the Virtual Technology Conferences (VTCs). There is a lot of good information about computers on the APCUG website. Hewie's website, https://hewie.net, lists all the items from the WinSIGs, how to see his many presentations, Tech for Seniors, Learning Chromebooks, and much more.

LACS members and meeting guests received the recording of this meeting and a .pdf of the slides from this presentation. The slides include the links to the audiobooks providers and to Hewie's and APCUG's many classes, YouTube, and other presentations. ❖

HELPING SENIORS LEARN COMPUTER SKILLS

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

Almost undoubtedly, you know someone struggling without computer skills – most likely an elderly parent, an aunt or uncle, grandparent, or friend.

I'm a member of the Los Angeles Computer Society (LACS), a nonprofit group established in 1991 to help each other with computer and other technology skills. Several members are amazing. They are well into their 70s, 80s, and even 90s, learning to write computer code, repairing computers, installing and removing software and hardware, teaching computer skills, etc.

But several people I know outside the LACS have managed to learn basic email use, but little else. They are confused by websites, online purchasing, and they haven't figured out how to use copy and paste, and other basic computer skills. They may have a smartphone but don't understand texting or using email on their devices. And when phoned by these seniors, few people answer their phones anymore.

Can you imagine how it feels to be in your 70s/80s/90s, home alone or with another senior, and not understand how to go online to make an appointment to obtain a Covid vaccination? Using the phone for this is often frustrating because of long wait times followed by disconnection, or even with the phone's battery dying, often giving up. And not being able to view photos of your family, including grandchildren, because you don't understand how to open an attachment? And remember, you haven't even seen those young people in a year now.

When they attempt to acquire more computer skills, they encounter well-meaning relatives and friends who rattle off a lot of foreign terminology. They say, "click on your web

browser" or "click on Firefox" (What's a Firefox?) or "go to the XXXX website." (What's a website? Can I take the bus there? What part of town is it in?). Or they say, "double click" or "right-click" or "highlight" this or that, "type in the field" or "go to your desktop" (What's a desktop on a computer?!) and a myriad of other completely foreign language terminology.

Eventually, those attempting to help become frustrated. And the student, still sharp and able to learn, feels embarrassed, ashamed and stops asking for help.

This situation doesn't have to be. Before Covid (and hopefully after), there were several sources for help for seniors and others seeking assistance with technology. In addition, some simple guidelines and tips can make learning these new skills much easier.

In my next column, I hope to go over some suggestions for those teaching and those wishing to acquire or improve computer-technology skills.

Editor's note: If you are trying to help a beginning computer user, refer them to Hewie Poplock's website at https://hewie.net for his Tech for Seniors workshops. ❖

REACT 7-IN-1 VEHICLE EMERGENCY MULTI-TOOL
by **George Harding**, Treasurer,
Tucson Computer Society
www.aztcs.org
actuary110 (at) yahoo.com

Here's a handy gadget! It's multipurpose and has seven uses.

1. It can be used in your car to charge any USB chargeable device. You plug it into your car's power outlet. The enclosed battery will charge if needed, and any of our additional devices that you connect to it will charge as well. There is a battery charge indicator to tell you how much charge is available.

2. It can be used away from your car as a charger for any USB chargeable device

3. It is a flashlight. A button on the side of the React turns on the light. Further presses cycle through low and high options. A long press turns it off.

4. Using the side button also gives you access to a red flashing light.

5. A button on the other side of the React turns on the S.O.S alarm.

6. React includes a seat belt cutter, available for emergency use. The blade is protected so it won't slice your fingers, but it is strong enough to cut a seat belt.

7. React can also be used to break window glass in an emergency. It should not be used to break laminated, windshield, or pane glass.

The manufacturer recommends that the tool be replaced after using either the glass breaker or the seat belt cutter.

The tool comes with a cable that can be used for charging the internal battery. The unit also comes with a User Manual.

The unit has a one-year limited warranty.

This is a convenient tool to keep in your car for use when needed.

React by LimitlessInnovations

Price $40

https://limitlessinnovations.com/collections/usb-chargers/products/react-7-in-1-vehicle-emergency-multi-tool-powered-by-chargehub ❖

THIS 3D PRINTER USES SAWDUST TO MAKE REAL WOOD STUFF

By **Cory Gunther** @xguntherc
Review Geek, May 9, 2021

Desktop Metal

This week, a company named Desktop Metal announced its all-new 3D printers that use wood waste and sawdust for 3D printing, and it looks awesome. Yes, imagine using wood with your 3D printer to create all sorts of stuff. The brand, Forust, looks to save trees by using wood waste to create sustainable wood products. Everything from home goods, furniture, and anything else that looks good with wood grains.

According to Desktop Metal, the technology utilizes sawdust and lignin, byproducts from the wood and paper industries, and turns them into beautiful products. However, many wood-printed items look more like MDF (medium-density fiberboard) or plywood than actual things crafted from natural wood after looking through the website. Still, it's a neat approach to 3D printing while also being easier on the planet.

Desktop Metal CEO Ric Fulop said, "There are many applications where polymers and plastics are used today that you can now cost-effectively replace with sustainably manufactured wood parts: luxurious high-end components in interiors, consumer electronics, instruments, aviation, boats, home goods, and

Desktop Metal, Forust

eventually in flooring and exterior roofing applications."

Forust is repurposing and upcycling wood with 3D printing technology. It can create all sorts of products from existing wood, rather than cutting down trees. As of now, it looks like the website already has items including bowls, flower pots, car shift knobs, and random home products or furniture. Moving forward, the company wants to build anything and everything from upcycled wood.

Based in Las Vegas, Cory Gunther has been writing about phones, Android, cars, and technology in general for over a decade. He's a freelance writer for Review Geek covering roundups, apps, and news. He's previously written for GottaBeMobile, SlashGear, AndroidCentral, and TechRadar, and he's written over 6,000 articles. ❖

KNOWLEDGE IS YOUR BEST DEFENSE

Windows Defender and Firewall
By **David Kretchmar**, Computer Technician
Sun City Summerlin Computer Club
https://www.scscc.club
dkretch (at) gmail.com

There is confusion regarding Windows computer security. Some anti-virus software reviews will state that **Windows Defender** is very poor, while others will say it is very good. I would personally call it entirely adequate while lacking some features.

Microsoft Windows Defender initially was considered pretty weak. Over the past five years, beginning with Windows 8 and continued in Windows 10, Microsoft has upped its game. Through several upgrades to Windows 10 and weekly updates, Windows Defender has become a real challenge to malware developers.

Windows Defender was originally known as Microsoft Security Essentials back in the days of Windows 7 when it was offered as a separate download. Now it's built into Windows 10 and is enabled by default.

I've been using only Windows Defender and Windows Firewall since the day I moved to Windows 10 in 2015, and I have not found a virus infestation in any of my four computers.

Different protections

There are different types of malware protection available, which many people wrongly think are the same, and label it under anti-virus. Within anti-virus software, there are multiple parts; the two major ones are "Scan time Detection" and "Run time Detection."

Scan time detection detects malware based on analyzing an application's software executable and is only as good as its latest virus definition updates. It depends on recognizing known malware signatures and types and uses that information to determine an executable's validity (or bogusness.) Virus definitions must be periodically updated, so its definitions include the latest discovered malware.

Run time detection detects malware based on the way it runs, system functions it calls, and system files it accesses. The run time A/V software then analyses this information to determine whether the application is malicious or has similarities to known malicious software. This is also known as heuristic analysis. Heuristic analysis is incorporated into more advanced security software to detect new threats before they cause harm without needing a specific signature. New viruses are called "zero-day." The best protection against these is a real-time scanner that analyzes how software behaves on your PC. This is one area where Windows defender has excelled.

The firewall

The firewall is a major part of the security system, preventing unauthorized connections to your system by malicious software. The **Windows firewall** does the exact same job of blocking incoming connections as any third-party firewall. Third-party firewalls like the one included with Norton may generate pop-ups more often, informing you that they're working and maybe asking for your input. The Windows firewall just quietly does its thankless job in the background.

Windows firewall is enabled by default and should still be working unless you've disabled it manually or installed a third-party firewall. You can find its interface under Settings, Updates and Security, Firewall & network protection.

You are the best defense

Some experts feel that if you know how to use a personal computer, what to browse on the web, where to click, where not to click, which software to install, and which link to click, you don't need anti-virus software. But you need always to be aware. Think before you click on anything, and never download third-party software onto your system unless you understand precisely what it will do.

Free alternatives to Windows Defender

If you don't feel Windows Defender is adequate and don't want to pay for protection, I suggest looking at the Avast or AVG free anti-virus editions. Both do a good job of protecting your computer. They offer some features that Windows Defender lacks, such as on-line monitoring for potential exploits. They are available from:

Avast: https://www.avast.com/en-us/index#pc

AVG: https://www.avg.com/en-us/free-antivirus-download

I have used both, and they are excellent. ❖

LACS NOTICES

WELCOME ALL

Gavin Faught, LACS Treasurer

New Members (0)

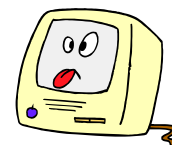**Renewals (4)**
  Larry Abe *
  Janet Chesne   *
  Wade Huie
  Annette Tossounian

* Contributor

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 Stephanie Nordlinger: nordlacs(at)aol.com.

HYPERLINKS

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

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-

ATTENDING A ZOOM 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 Leah Clark know the morning of the meeting if you don't have it.

You can put an icon to the link on your desktop so it's handy at meeting time.

1. Right-click a blank spot on your desktop.
2. Select **New** from the drop-down menu.
3. Select **Shortcut**.
4. Type or copy and paste the link in the box that says "Type the location of the item."
5. Click **Next**.
6. Type a name for the shortcut.

LACS CALENDAR

LACS Board Meeting
Date: Monday, June 7, 2021 Via Zoom
Time: 7:00 P.M. (Open from 6:30 P.M.)
Where: At your home

General Meeting
Date: Tuesday, June 8, 2021 via Zoom
Time: 7:00 P.M. (Open from 6:30 P.M.)
Where: At your home

June 7: LACS Board Meeting
June 8: LACS General Meeting
June 14: Flag Day
June 20: Father's Day
June 21: Summer Begins

VISIT OTHER COMPUTER USER GROUPS
Check out the URL below for information for visiting other user groups' Zoom meetings and for many 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
June 8: Synchronizing Your PC
July 13: All Things Google
August 10: Evernote
This schedule is subject to Change. Check your email and *User Friendly* for updates.

ZOOM MEETINGS
To join a 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 top right.

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 - 11
Anti Malware and Backup - 7, 8
Dragon Naturally Speaking - 3
Genealogy - 8
Groups.IO - 8
Hardware - 7

Linux - 4
Lotus Word Pro, Approach - 7
Mozilla Firefox - 7
MS Excel - 8, 11, 12
MS Word - 1, 3, 12
MS Outlook - 8, 1, 10
MS PowerPoint - 11
MS Publisher - 2
Open Office - 6

Photoshop - 10
Quicken - 8, 12
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	Van Berkom, Paula	310-398-6734	9:00 AM	5:00 PM
12	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	Irv Hershman	2021	310-397-9453
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	Sylvia Davis	2022	323-293-5004
APCUG Rep.	Leah Clark		310-677-2792
Corporate Counsel	Stephanie Nordlinger		323-299-3244
CCSC Computer Lab	Loling Beckman		310-471-7893
Database Manager	Sylvia Davis		323-293-5004
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   **Voice Mail**   310-780-3302

The email addresses on the LACS website are currently being updated. Until this is completed, please use your roster or the phone numbers above to contact any officer, board member or chair person.

INTRO TO GEOCACHING
Get Outside, and Find Those Hidden Containers

By **John Krout**, Writer/Presenter, Potomac Area Technology and Computer Society

www.patacs.org

krout75 (at) yahoo.com

INTRODUCTION

What does Geocaching mean? The word is derived from GEO, meaning the world, and CACHE, meaning a hidden container. The noun geocache means a box hidden somewhere, usually outdoors. The verb, geocache, or geocaching, refers to the process of the game. Another noun, geocacher, means anyone who plays the game.

The game got started in the general area of Portland, Oregon, in the year 2000. A hiker had several hiker friends, and they all owned hand-held GPS receivers. Those GPS receivers were the best solution of the time for tracking your hiking path, measuring the distance you traveled, and retracing your way back to your car.

The hiker decided to hide a box in the woods and obtained map coordinates of that spot using his GPS receiver. Then he emailed the map coordinates to his friends and challenged them to find the box. Many of them did and said they enjoyed the process thoroughly and asked him to do it again. Also, one or two of his friends hid other boxes and sent out map coordinates for those.

Eventually, a website was founded to provide the name, map coordinates, and other info about geocaches. The website URL is www.geocaching.com. Each cache has its own Web page on geocaching.com. As of early 2021, there are about 3 million geocaches globally and over 1 million inside the US.

When I learned of Geocaching in November 2002, I had been a map collector for 23 years, and I owned a hand-held hiking GPS receiver. Since the GPS receiver was, at the time, the equipment needed to participate in Geocaching, and because I have always been fascinated by maps and geographic information, in the spring of 2003, I decided to give it a try.

Fortunately, the price of game entry has declined a lot. Back in 2000, those hand-held GPS receivers cost upwards of $300. In mid-2002, my first one cost about $150. Today, you can use the GPS receiver built into your smartphone and appropriate free apps to see and save info on geocaches you want to find, display the description and photos posted by finders, and see a direction and distance to a geocache. You can also see a map of local streets, and perhaps you can identify trailheads and nearby parking on the map.

There are urban and suburban geocaches also, where trails are not involved, and sometimes you might be able to park within 10 feet or so of the hidden geocache. Near where I live, some of the Smithsonian buildings have geocaches on the grounds, placed by museum staff.

Each geocache contains, at a minimum, a paper log on which you sign your account name and the date on which you found the container. Bigger geocaches may also contain trade goods, sometimes called swag. If you want to remove a swag item, then the protocol is that you need to put something in its place, in trade. While growing up, my kids were very enthusiastic about inspecting all the trade goods in a cache, looking for something of interest.

One important constraint: never put candy or food in a geocache. Those things attract animals. If you find food or candy in a geocache, remove it.

GEOCACHING.COM

The geocaching.com home page is shown in **Illustration 1**. You can tap the Play button, the triangle in the center of the home page, to see a 75-second video intro to the game.
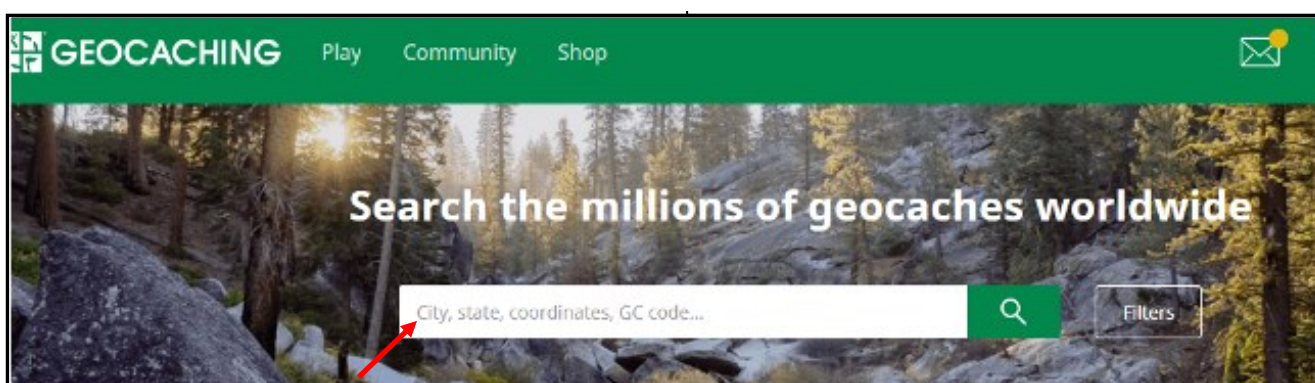
Illustration 1

Illustration 2

To obtain geocache info from this website, the site requires you to create a **free account**. Tap the SIGN UP button on the top right of the home page to begin creating your account. You need three items of info to create a free account: (1) an account name, 19 characters maximum, (2) a password, and (3) an email account. I strongly recommend that you not use your first or last name in any of those three items. The account name will be visible to all other account holders on geocaching.com, and the email account will be visible to system administrators. Keep it anonymous.

The primary use of geocaching.com is to identify nearby caches. After you create an account or sign in, you will use the Search field in the center of the page, as shown in **Illustration 2**. In the search field, type your home Zip code as a first search. That will produce a list of geocaches, in order by distance from the center of the Zipcode. You can see an example in **Illustration 3** for Zip code 22032**.**

At the top right of the list, there is a **Map these Geocaches** button. Click that button, and geocaching.com will display a map. The map includes an icon for each geocache. The smiley icon tells me that I have already logged finding the cache, so I need not find that one again. You can see a sample map in **Illustration 4.** On the map, you can click on any geocache icon to read about it.

You can see the top of a sample geocaching.com page describing a cache in **Illustration 5**.

Geocaching.com allows account holders to see map coordinates of geocaches and create an online log of their experience of finding each geocache. One advantage to you as an account holder for writing an online log is that geocaching.com reports to you the number of caches you have found. You can see some sample online logs from the sample cache page in **Illustration 6**.
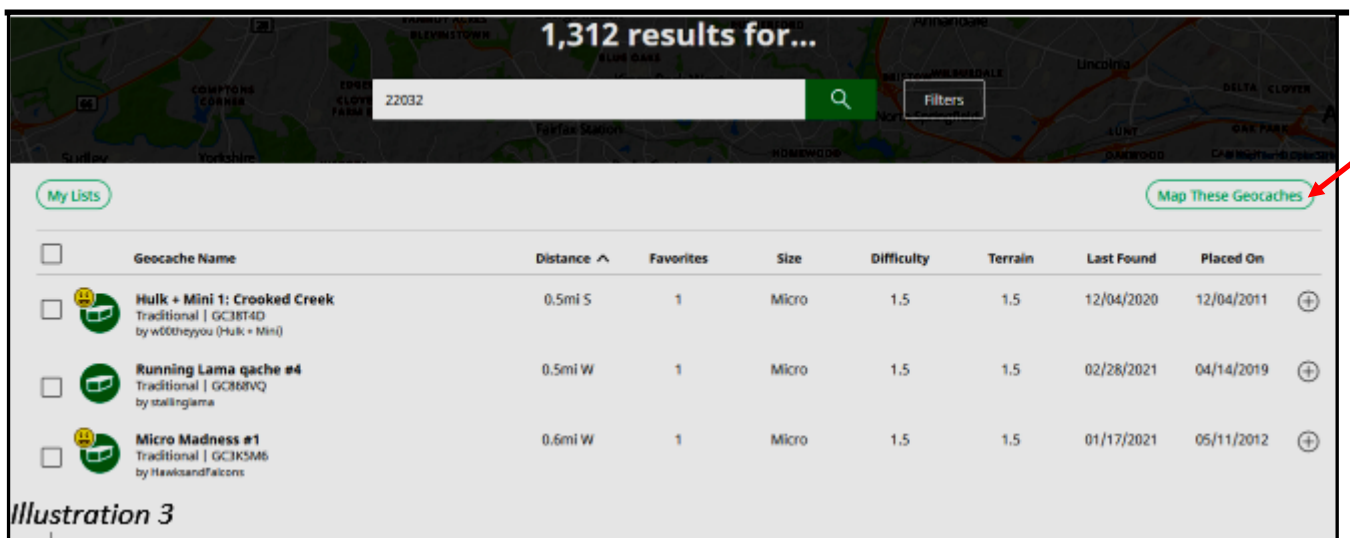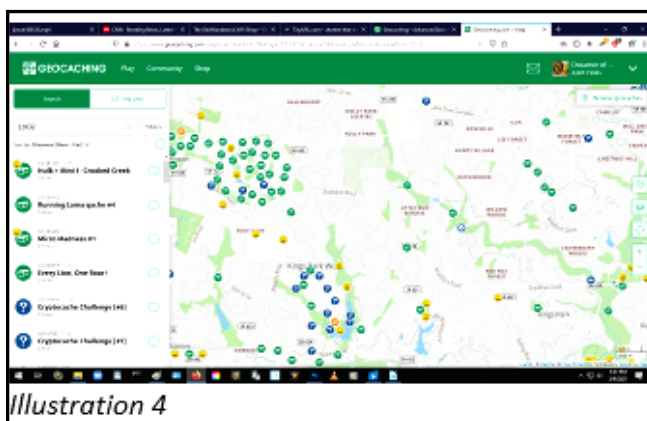
Illustration 3

Illustration 4

You will see an acronym **TFTC** in some of the logs; that is cacher-speak for **Thanks for the Cache**.

You can also report the condition of the geo-cache and, in particular, if the paper log is full or is ruined by water. That will help the Cache Owner (CO) to maintain the geocache.

It can be fun in the online logs to provide hints indirectly that might help later cachers find the container.

GEOCACHING APPS FOR SMARTPHONES

I have used the **c:geo** app on my Android phone for about seven years. It allows you to configure your account name and password to log into geocaching.com automatically whenever you start the app.
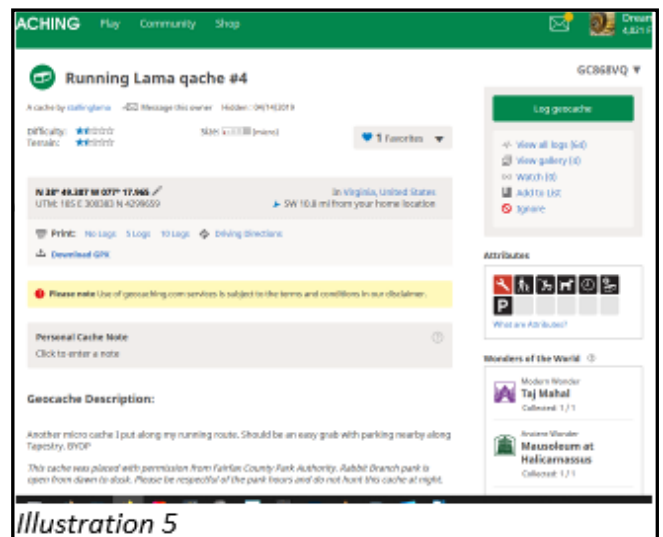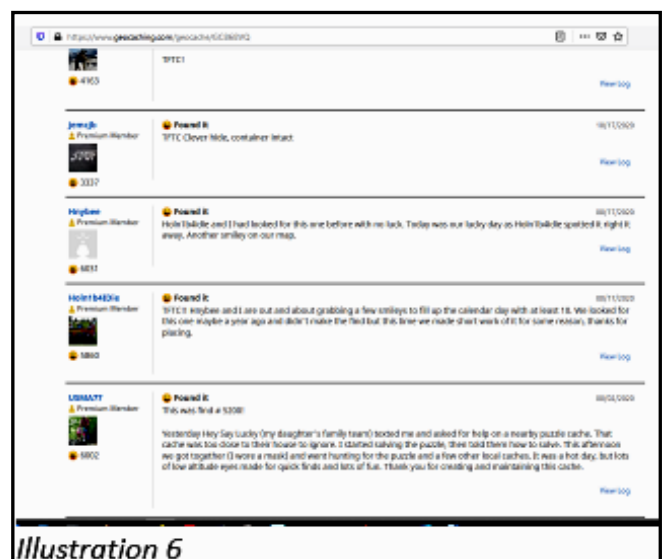

Illustration 5

Illustration 6

The app displays maps, including cache icons, and you can tap a cache icon to read about it. You can save cache coordinates and other info on the smartphone for offline use, for instance, in mountainous areas where cell power data service is unavailable. You can even install offline maps so that you can see the roads and trails without cell data service. You can use the app to log cache finds, though I prefer to write those logs on a computer.

Similar apps exist for iPhone and iPad users, such as **Cachly** and **Looking4Cache**.

WHO CREATES GEOCACHES?

Geocachers create geocaches. They want to give back to the geocaching community. They often want to show you a great spot that they have found, for instance, a waterfall known only to a few. Ruins and abandoned cars are popular hideouts. A person who creates a geocache, and writes about it on geocaching.com, is known as the Cache Owner, abbreviated CO.

The classic waterproof container is a US military metal ammunition box, known as an ammo box. Other typical containers are large plastic jars, like pretzel jars or nut jars. Smaller containers can include plastic sandwich containers, plastic military decontamination kits (decon kits), breath mint tins, pill bottles, and film bottles.

GEOCACHE SIZE RANGES

Knowing the size of a geocache often helps reduce the search effort. Every geocache has a size description, in addition to coordinates, terrain and difficulty ratings, and whatever else the CO wants to say about the cache. Here are the size definitions from the geocaching.com knowledge base and some examples of containers:

- LARGE = 20+ liters (sealed bucket)
- REGULAR = 1 liter to 20 liters (ammo boxes, plastic jars)

- SMALL = 100 milliliters to 1 liter (large bison tube, a metal, water-tight cylindrical container, or pill bottle)
- MICRO < 100 milliliters (film bottle, pill bottle, small bison tube)

Bison Tube

There is an informal type, called nano, a metal cylinder or plastic cone barely big enough to hold a 1/4th inch wide log strip wound into a spiral.

BENEFITS OF GEOCACHING

Aside from the bragging rights for finding lots of geocaches, there have been health benefits for me. I was desk-bound as a software engineer and later a system documentation writer. In my case, I have gotten accustomed to hikes of 4 to 6 miles in up-and-down terrain, often an afternoon hike on trails to find half a dozen or more geocaches. My doctor told me to keep doing it because the exercise brought down my blood pressure and heart rate, kept my weight down, and improved my stamina. I have hiked to find geocaches in parks and national forests in Virginia, where I live, and West Virginia, Wyoming, Texas, Massachusetts, Tennessee, Ohio, and many other states.

The parks generally welcome geocaches as a way to increase attendance in parks.

Urban and suburban Geocaching is seldom so challenging physically, but the mental challenge is non-stop. There are indoor geocaches too, some in libraries, hidden between books or even inside a book.

GPS RECEPTION CAN VARY

GPS is not accurate even to the yard, and certain environments degrade the GPS signal. Trees do that, and tall buildings do that. Under trees, the accuracy is seldom better than about 20 feet, so when the GPS says you are close, look around and ask yourself, "Where would I hide it?"

In the woods, a common hiding tactic is to hide the container under sticks, bark or rocks, or in a hollow tree or log. Those man-made hideouts are called **geopiles**. You might also find an informal trail formed by prior finders, called a **geotrail**. I found one geocache a mile down a jeep trail in Idaho, under a pile of light-weight volcanic rocks, a type of rock I had never encountered on the East Coast.

A bigger GPS antenna helps. For most of us, the largest available antenna is in a tablet rather than a smartphone.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: John Krout has been writing and speaking about creative uses of personal computers since the early 1980s. After a long career as a software engineer for federal contractors, he wrote technical documentation about a major federal computer system during his final 14 years on the job. He is now retired and lives in Arlington, Virginia, with his son, many computers and cameras, and too many cats. ❖

HOW TO CHARGE YOUR ANDROID PHONE AS FAST AS POSSIBLE

By **Joe Fedewa**   🐦 @tallshmo
How-to Geek, May, 2021

Even the Android phones with the best battery life barely make it two days on a charge. When your phone is dead, you don't want to wait forever to top it off. Here's how to charge your phone Quickly.

Turn off Your Phone

One simple trick that you may have never thought about is simply turning off your phone while it's charging. By reducing the number of tasks that your phone is doing simultaneously, you'll allow the charging to go faster.

Pulling a wagon full of bricks up a hill would slow you down a lot. The more bricks you take out, the faster you can move. The same logic applies here. Take some of the workload off your phone, and it won't have to overcome as much to charge quickly.

When you turn off your phone while it's charging, all the power can go straight to charging rather than being used to power the phone and charge at the same time.

Plug into a Wall Outlet

To ensure that you have the most current possible running through your charging cable, you should use a wall outlet. Using the USB port on a laptop or desktop computer can charge your phone, but it is so much slower.

In fact, if you use the USB port on a computer, you may even see a notification that says "Device is Charging Slowly." To maximize the power output potential of the charging cable, a wall outlet is going to be the faster option.

Don't Use Wireless Charging

Wireless chargers are very convenient, but they don't offer the fastest speeds. This is because they're much less efficient than chargers that are charged with a cable.

What makes wireless charging slower is the energy that's lost to heat. This is when the coils in your phone aren't perfectly aligned with the coils in the wireless charger. This method is slower, and it uses more electricity.

Opt for the cable instead. There are faster wireless chargers out there, but finding one that supports your device is another story.

Use a Supported Fast-Charging Cable

Perhaps the biggest key to getting the fastest charging speeds is using a Fast-Charging cable and adapter supported by your phone. There are several different fast-charging standards to look out for when it comes to Android devices.

Qualcomm Quick Charge

Qualcomm Quick Charge is a proprietary charging standard found in many Android smartphones. There have been several versions of Quick Charge over the years, including the Quick Charge 5, which was announced in July of 2020.

Each version of Quick Charge has different requirements and charging capabilities. Many

phones come with cables and adapters that maximize the potential of their Quick Charge ability. If they don't, make sure that you get cables for the version your device supports.

Samsung Adaptive Fast Charging

Adaptive Fast Charging is Samsung's fast-charging standard based on Qualcomm Quick Charge. That means that a Quick Charge cable will work with a device that supports Adaptive Fast Charging and vice versa.

There are multiple iterations of Adaptive Fast Charging. Samsung includes cables that support Fast Charging in the box with phones, but you'll need to buy them separately for some of the newer, faster speeds.

OnePlus Dash Charge

Dash Charge is another proprietary standard also known as Oppo VOOC or Dart Charge. The important thing to know about these standards is that they're not interoperable with Qualcomm Quick Charge.

As with the other standards, there are several versions of Dash Charge. To get the most out of your device's charging capability, use the included cable or find the version you have.

USB Power Delivery

USB Power Delivery (USB-PD) is a fast-charging standard that can be found on both smartphones and laptops. It's not as popular as Qualcomm Quick Charge, but there are some advantages to it.

First, USB-PD only works with USB Type-C cables. That means that it's possible to get a cable that can fast charge both your laptop and Android smartphone. Google Pixel smartphones use the USB-PD standard, and Samsung Galaxy devices support it as well.

How to Check Which Fast-Charging Standard to Use

OK, so that was a lot of talk about fast-charging standards, and there are quite a few other details. But what does all of this mean to *you*? How can you find the standard that

your device supports and the charging cables that you should use?

Here's the good news: You don't have to worry about choosing the *wrong* standard, at least in terms of damaging your phone. Plugging in a cable with an incompatible standard isn't going to blow up your phone. These devices have precautions in place to ensure that they charge safely.

That being said, you do need the correct cable if you want to charge your Android device as fast as possible. A good rule of thumb is simply to use the cable that came with your device. If you see a message on the lock screen or a notification that says "Fast Charging," you're all set.

Some newer Android devices, including some from Samsung, aren't being shipped with fast chargers in the box. You'll want to go straight to the source in these situations to find the compatible cables and chargers.

For example, if you have a Samsung phone, you can go to the company's online store and select your device from the menu. Then, you can easily find the exact Adaptive Fast Charger to use for your particular phone.

The same thing applies to any Android device. Go to the manufacturer's website and find the accessories specifically listed as compatible with your phone.

If you're shopping on Amazon, though, you'll need to be more careful. Let's say that you want to find a cheaper option for Samsung's 45W "Super Fast Charging Wall Charger." Here's a charger from Anker that's also 45W, which says explicitly "compatibility with Samsung Super Fast Charging." That's what you want to see.

Do some simple research before going out and buying a charger. You may already have what you need, and if you don't, be sure to reference the manufacturer's website before making a purchase. ❖

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-bwYIYu1I

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LAUGHING OUT LOUD

Give a person a fish and you feed them for a day.
Teach a person to use the Internet and they won't bother you for weeks, months, maybe years.

"No, it's not a computer monitor. It's a doggy door. Not everything is technology related."

From How-To Geek

FINANCIAL REPORT

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

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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)

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   — 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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Los Angeles Computer Society

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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.