User Friendly

*LACS
A Computer and
Technology
User Group*

IN THIS ISSUE

APCUG EVENTS

Watch your email for APCUG workshops and other upcoming events.

LACS IS A MEMBER OF APCUG

www.apcug2.org
www.facebook.com/APCUG
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An International Association of Technology and Computer User Groups

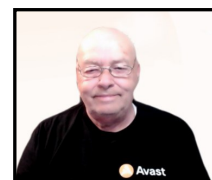## FEBRUARY 8, 2022

Meeting Time: 7:00—9:00 PM—via Zoom
Socializing and Q & A: 6:30—7:00
Topic: CCleaner's Numerous Uses
Speaker: Norbert (Bob) Gostischa
         APCUG Speaker and Consultant
See the box below for how to attend the Zoom meeting.

CCleaner is a well-known free program with many useful utilities. Bob G. will do a hands-on presentation of the various tools that are parts of CCleaner that many users do not even know are there. He will also show us how to use CCleaner's cleaning software. There are PC, Mac, Android, and paid business versions.

Do you have a computer problem? Before 7:00 PM and after the Q & A of Bob's talk, members are encouraged to ask for help with their PC or similar problems.

Meet Our Presenter

Bob Gostischa retired as a Vice President from what is now the Dime Community Bank. He has been an APCUG Speaker for years. He has traveled all over the U.S. to speak to computer and other clubs (including LACS) where people were interested in learning more about "Cyber and Personal Security." Avast did not employ him, but it paid his expenses when he represented its products, especially Avast Free Antivirus. For nearly two years, he has been doing Zoom meetings on computer security. He also created a weekly Security News Round-up video blog (vlog). 88 short vlogs were on YouTube today. See the playlist at bob gostischa - YouTube. Bob lives in Meadow Lake, New Mexico.

Tuesday, February 8, 7:00—9:00 PM Via Zoom
   6:30—7:00 Socializing and informal Q&A
LACS members on the PC groups.IO list will receive the Zoom link on or about February 6. Guests may ask for the link by emailing Leah Clark at leahjc@sbcglobal.net before February 6.
More information about LACS is at www.lacspc.org.

🌼 FROM YOUR PRESIDENT / EDITOR 🌼

2022 ROSTER

Please check your last roster and email Leah Clark at leahjc@sbcglobal.net
by February 10 to say that all is correct,
or

1. Send any corrections

2. Send your email address and preferred phone number if you don't have a roster.

3. Send your email address and preferred phone number if you joined after the last roster was published.

4. Say you don't want your email and/or phone in the roster.

I will really appreciate every member heeding this request to prevent errors.

THANK YOU

Many thanks to Charlotte Semple for again volunteering to be a proofreader for User Friendly. She has been a lot of help to me.

Please let me know if you would like to be a proofreader for me.

IN MEMORIAM

Nancy Cattell's family and LACS members have sent much information about this amazing woman. It all could fill a book. See pages 3 and 4 of this issue for a summary.

From LACS VP, Stephanie Nordlinger

Nancy would not let her age or nationality prevent her from traveling to where she wanted to go. When the U.S. had bad relations with Iran, she wanted to visit it, so she went with a Canadian tour company. When she was too old to schlep around India, she took a luxury boat tour down the east coast and up the west coast of India with visits to various cities, etc. en route.

I'm now sorry to report the recent passing of two other LACS members.

Henry (Hank) Harris, a member since 2005, and **Richard (Dick) Reaser**, who joined in 1991. I plan to recognize them in the March 2022 issue. Please send me your remembrances of these two gentlemen.
       May they rest in peace.

MEDICAL ALERT SYSTEMS

After Joe died, I was living alone, getting older, and was often working in the yard or on projects in the garage. I would climb ladders to get items off of shelves, etc. If I fell, or had a medical emergency, no one could see or hear me in those places.

I had often seen Life Alert ads, so I subscribed. Twice when I was away from home, I had false alarms. It was connected to my cell phone, and when I was in church or a restaurant with the phone silenced, I didn't know they were calling. Paramedics were sent to my home unnecessarily.

I then did some research and found Mobile Help. With Life Alert, I had a one-year contract, so when it ended, I switched. There are no contracts with Mobile Help, and GPS can tell them where I am. I don't need to answer my cell phone. And it cost less.

LACS member, Edie Ditmars, shared a helpful website comparing medical alert systems. It's AgingInPlace at https://aginginplace.org/medical-alert-systems/fall-detection/

Please let me know if you have had experience with any medical alert systems that I may share in *User Friendly*.

IN MEMORIAM
Nancy G. Cattell
1921 – 2021

Nancy on her 90th Birthday

Nancy Cattell, a Los Angles Computer Society member since May 2002, passed away two weeks before her 101st birthday. She was an amazing woman who had led a well-lived life. She was a passionate traveler who had traveled to over 180 countries, was an avid photographer, and was a licensed private pilot. When she was not traveling, she enjoyed needlework and weaving projects. She bought her first computer in 1981 which she used in her law practice to write wills and trusts.

In LACS she was co-leader of the Digital Photography Special Interest Group (SIG) where she taught photographic techniques, demonstrated the latest cameras and equipment, and showed her photos of birds, wildlife, and exotic parts of the world. Members reported learning much from her over the years.

Nancy Cattell was born and raised in New Bremen, Ohio in 1921. After college, she served in the military and was very proud of becoming a major in the Army while serving in Berlin at the end of WW ll. She served from 1942- 1947, holding several positions from Company Commander to Chief of Military Personnel in the Military Government of Germany, and she was awarded five medals.

After leaving the service, she earned her masters' degree in International Relations and Law at Columbia University, where she met her first husband. After they moved to Los Angeles, she started working as a teacher and then a counselor at Santa Monica College for 31 years. She was very active in the SMC community. She was a college Trustee for two terms, served as Director on the SMC Foundation Board, and then was a member of the Emeritus College Executive Council for SMC. She arranged for meeting rooms at SMC for LACS SIG meetings.

While raising her two children, she finished her master's degree in International Relations and Law, and Philosophy from Columbia. Then she received her Juris Doctorate from Loyola University. She went on to practice family law for over 30 years. She used her law degree and teaching experience to develop paralegal programs for UCLA Extension, which she often taught. She was made a Fellow of the American Association of University Women in recognition of her research and travel. Nancy can best be described as adventurous. "She has flown planes and led Safaris, practiced law, and counseled students, been a trailblazer in the U.S. Army, and never stopped learning and teaching." *

In the last ten years of Nancy's life, she was still very busy. She traveled to New Zealand with her son Herb, zip lined with her daughter Jody in Costa Rica, and traveled to Sorrento Italy with her daughter-in-law Lora, as well as many other trips. Then it's easy to believe Nancy had a life well-lived. There is also a tremendous void, but gratefully, many good memories.

* *From a Tribute to Nancy Cattell at a Women's History Week Event, March 17, 2015*

From LACS member, Elliot Silverstein

Nancy Cattell was a remarkable woman. She was an officer in the Women's Auxiliary Army Corps during World War II. She became a lawyer and taught political science at Santa Monica College. She was later elected to the SMC Board. Nancy loved to travel to exotic places. She was an enthusiastic photographer during these trips. Nancy regularly attended the LACS Digital Photo Special Interest Group (SIG) meetings for many years, bringing fascinating photos to the group. She will be missed.

A Sample of Nancy Cattell's Photographs

Copyright Nancy Cattell

GENERAL MEETING REPORT
January 11, 2022

By **Leah Clark**

Topic: **Two-Factor Authentication**
       Tips for Using YouTube

Speaker: **Ron Brown**
APCUG Speakers Bureau

Ron started by telling us about the show, *Tech for Seniors* that he and his colleagues produce. It's a free Zoom meeting from 9:00 to 10:00 on Monday mornings that covers many interesting subjects. The link to it is at www.techforsenior.com. (Note: There is no "s" on senior in the URL) You will like it and will learn a lot.

Two-Factor Authentication

Ron recounted how it was hard to get used to wearing a seat belt, but now he feels unconvertable when he doesn't have his on. It has been a struggle to get people to use Two-Factor Authentication (2FA), but if you start using it, you will get used to it and won't be comfortable without it.

Google is turning 2FA on for everyone who has a Google company account. There are five things to know to prepare for 2FA.

1. You need your own email address, not one shared with a spouse or anyone else.
2. You will need your own cell phone.
3. You need to know the account you are adding 2FA to.
4. You need to know what an SMS (Short Message Service) text message is. It is separate from the internet.
5. You can't swap the SM (Smart Media) card.

Passwords do not keep the bad guys out. Hackers are not individuals but are often state-sponsored bots or large criminal organizations. 2FA must be turned on for each of your accounts individually.

There are four types of 2FA that you need to know about.

1. The simplest type is a text message. When you log into your bank account, they send you an SMS text message which gives you a six-digit code. Enter the code to access your account.
2. You can download an authenticator app to place on your cell phone. Ron gave a list of companies who make these apps. They are all free, and each can be used for all your accounts. He uses *Authy*. Ron explained how you might decide which app to use for your needs. The app gives you a Time-Based One-Time Password (TOTP). This is a random number generator, is not connected to the internet, and gives you a six-digit code. When you open the app, all your codes are there, and the numbers are regenerated every 30 seconds.
3. Google is going to use Push Notification. You will get a message on your cell phone asking if you are trying to sign in and you answer "yes" to get into your account. It's simple.
4. Another method is to use a key system. It is a physical key you plug into your computer to authorize your account.

Ron explained generating and using backup codes. He also explained how Google tracking makes it so you don't get challenged so often with 2FA requests.

Ron answered many questions on 2FA.

LACS members and attendees will receive a recording of the presentation, and it will be on YouTube as well.

Next, Ron presented **Tips for Using YouTube.** There is the free YouTube service, premium YouTube for $11.99 per month that eliminates ads, and YouTube TV which is a subscription service. All smart TVs have the YouTube app on them.

Ron told us how he spends the day on YouTube, starting with watching the evening news the next morning on his TV. He then spends time looking over many channels to see what people have created, any new technology issues, planning the Tech for Seniors shows, working on editing and creating presentations, etc., all on YouTube. He likes to watch funny shows for good laughs. If you're into cooking, there are unlimited recipes on YouTube. Ron emphasized the convenience and ease of watching YouTube videos on the TV. Many don't realize that YouTube is on your TV.

When you go to YouTube, you see on the home page a list of what they think you might like. When you find a video you're interested in, you can share it, or save or bookmark it to come back to it. Ron showed us how to do these things and the many options available for each, including being able to navigate to a specific part in any video. You may subscribe to any channel, including *Tech for Seniors.* Subscriptions are anonymous; they don't know who you are, so they won't generate spam or unwanted emails.

Whatever you want to do, there is a YouTube video for it!

GETTING RID OF AN OLD COMPUTER OR OTHER TECH DEVICE

By **Mark Presky,** LACS Director

So, you got a new computer, pad, or even a phone, and it's time to pass the old one on to someone who can use it, or simply to recycle it. You may decide to sell it. It'll be important to get the data and information transferred to your new device, but you also need to erase the info from your old device. You don't want that info to fall into the wrong hands.

If you're passing it on to a family member or friend, you'll probably want to leave some of the applications on it for their use. If you're

selling or donating it, you'll want to delete applications that you paid for, so the next owner isn't using your software licenses. If you are recycling it, you'll want to wipe out all your apps, files, and anything that might be compromising.

All stored information on a computer or other tech device is on a hard drive. You can wipe information from the hard drive by restoring it to factory presets, also called a "reset". It is still possible to retrieve data from a reset disk. So, you'll need to go further to ensure the device is fully purged of all your data.

Steps to wipe data from your old device

1. Backup your hard drive to a separate external hard drive, stored away from your computer. Always have a backup, even if you've transferred the information to your new device. Even your new device can break down.

2. Delete all files that contain personal information, then empty the Trash folder.

3. Delete browsing history and cache from your browser(s), along with autofill form data such as addresses and stored credit card data.

4. Delete stored passwords from apps and delete any password manager that you may have.

5. Delete apps if you don't intend to pass on the device with apps intact. App makers gather and store data on users, so it may be safer to delete the apps. Reinstall them after the factory reset.

6. Use a data shredding program such as Eraser to overwrite any data that may be left on the disk. This can be time consuming, but there isn't need to sit and watch it.

7. Follow the device manufacturer's instructions to reset the device. This is sometimes called "revert to factory settings." If you have stored any files in "the Cloud", delete them first. ❖

DO YOU *PAY* FOR A PRODUCT? IF NOT, YOU ARE THE PRODUCT.

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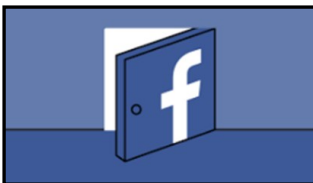https://www.scscc.club
dkretch (at) gmail.com

Maybe not always, but hopefully, we know there is no such thing as a free lunch by this point in our lives. Advertising is something we have come to accept or at least ignore. We expect commercials on television, the radio, newspapers, magazines, and movies and accept this advertising knowing that the revenue generated pays for or subsidizes the entertainment and information we want.

The Internet takes advertising to a new, more personal level. We see ads directed to us as individuals rather than generic advertising. The first time we see ads based on a recent search, we know advertising has reached a new level of personalization. The entity selling ads is obviously using information about us to direct advertising to our eyes.

Facebook

In early April, yet another personal data breach was recently disclosed. Since some time in 2019, the personal data of over 533 million Facebook users was compromised via their phone numbers. In this case, Facebook users became more of a "product" than most users had ever anticipated. Many Facebook users recently realized that Facebook is an advertising entity that collects lots of data on users.

Free (with advertising) has been a successful business model for a long time. However, the recent Facebook disclosure (along with other accidental and deliberate data breaches) causes some to wonder if this is evidence that consumers have been treated poorly by this business model.

Aren't you always the product?

And just because you pay doesn't mean you're not the product. Cable and satellite television companies take our money PLUS sell us (via advertising) to the various sponsors. Magazines take our money and still sell ads; banks and credit cards can charge us money for the service of having and helping us manage our money.

Any business that has a "loyalty card" takes our money for products, services, and entertainment but gives us a discount or other benefit in exchange for the ability to monitor what we are doing. In other words, we routinely become "the product" even when we're already paying.

All businesses treat their customers with varying levels of respect, and they provide different levels of value to us. There is often no direct correlation between how much money we pay and the value of the service we receive.

For example, someone might pay a couple of dollars a week for online, or a little more for delivered paper subscriptions, to *The New York Times* or *The Wall Street Journal* or the local newspaper, or some other publication. Yet this same information is available to people who read these papers at their local library or coffee shop at no charge. So, in effect, we are not paying for the product; we pay for getting the product in a way we find much more convenient.

This example is much more complicated than the black and white "you're the product" logic allows. For instance, some users get the service virtually for "free" in an airplane, using accumulated points or a "bump" coupon. Other travelers pay big bucks for the benefit of being transported to the same

LACS NOTICES

WELCOME ALL

Gavin Faught,
LACS Treasurer
New Members (0)
Renewals (4)

Juan Dominguez

Juan Garellana

John Schaefer

Betty Weatherspoon

HOW TO 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 ad-dress 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 tech-nology – related messages and questions.
**Email computer or technology-related questions or comments to all members on the LACSLIST to
lacslist (at) lacs.groups.io.**

New members will receive one invitation to join each list; they must respond promptly or follow the above instructions.

If you have any problems or questions about joining the lists, please contact Stephanie Nordlinger: nordlacs(at)aol.com.

HYPERLINKS

Underlined text (blue in the colored edi-tions) in User Friendly usually means it's a hyperlink to a website. Click on the link 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.
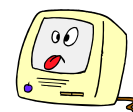
Non-members can wisely invest in a one-year new regular LACS membership ($40.00), and Jim will fix your PC problem, too. Contact Jim for specific considerations.

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, and email it with your changes to
membership@lacspc.org   or mail it to

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

ATTENDING A ZOOM MEETING

LACS members should receive, via email, a link, Meeting ID, and Passcode to attend the LACS general meetings a couple of days be-fore the meeting. **Please let Leah Clark know by the morning of the meeting if you don't have it.**

You can put an icon to the link on your desk-top 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, February 7, 2022 via Zoom
Time: 7:00 P.M. (Open from 6:30 P.M.)
Please arrive early so we can start on time.
Where: At your home or wherever you are

LACS GENERAL MEETING

Date: Tuesday, February 8, 2022 via Zoom
Time: 7:00 P.M. (Open from 6:30 P.M.)
Please arrive early so we can start on time.
Where: At your home or wherever you are

February 1: Chinese New Year of the Tiger
February 7: LACS Board Meeting
February 8: LACS General Meeting
February 14: Valentine's Day
February 21: President's Day

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

February 8: CCleaner

March 8: Password Managers

April 12: TBA

Check your email and *User Friendly* for updates to this schedule.

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 at leahjc@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 our meeting starting time in case problems need to be solved and to ask questions. We want our meetings to start on time.

ZOOM RECORDINGS & PODCASTS

LACS members will receive links to the recordings of Zoom meetings via email.

To listen to the podcasts of many of our past in-person general meetings, go to https://www.lacspc.org/category/audio-files/. Click on the session you want to hear.

USER FRIENDLY BACK ISSUES AND INDEXES

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

For indexes to past issues go to 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 contact a person whose number is listed next to it. **Find a helper's email address and phone number on your roster**. If you don't have your roster, call 424-261-6251. Only members in good standing may receive a roster. We hope that you find this LACS free service useful.

If you are experienced using a particular program or hardware, 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@sbcglobal.net or call her at 424-261-6251.

More Quick Consultants, and more categories are always needed. Do we have anyone who can help with Google apps? 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

Lotus Word Pro, Approach - 7
Mozilla Firefox - 7
MS Excel - 8, 11, 12
MS Word - 1, 3, 8, 12
MS Outlook - 8, 1, 10
MS PowerPoint - 8, 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 Time for Phone Calls	
		From	To
1	Beckman, Loling	10:00 AM	6:00 PM
2	Clark, Leah	7:00 AM	5:00 PM
3	Hershman, Irv	11:00 AM	11:00 PM
5	Ialongo, Gilbert	9:00 AM	5:00 PM
6	Johnson, Carol	10:00 AM	9:00 PM
7	McKnight, Jim	8:00 AM	7:00 PM
8	Nordlinger, Stephanie	9:00 AM	5:00 PM
9	Presky, Mark	Any	Any
10	Rozek, E. J.	Noon	8:00 PM
11	Van Berkom, Paula	9:00 AM	5:00 PM
12	Wilder, Joan	9:00 AM	9:00 PM

Note: Times are Pacific Times

OFFICERS, DIRECTORS AND LEADERS

TITLE	NAME	TERM
President	Leah Clark	2022
Past President	Stanley Johnson	2022
Vice President	Stephanie Nordlinger	2022
Secretary	Marcia Jacobs	2022
Treasurer	Gavin Faught	2022
Director	Sylvia Davis	2022
Director	Howard Krivoy	2022
Director	Mark Presky	2022
Director	Irv Hershman	2023
Director	Fred Kong	2023
Director	Annette Tossounian	2023
Director	Paula Van Berkom	2023
APCUG Rep.	Leah Clark	
Corporate Counsel	Stephanie Nordlinger	
CCSC Computer Lab	Loling Beckman	
Database Manager	Sylvia Davis	
Groups.IO Lists	Stephanie Nordlinger	
Newsletter Editor	Leah Clark	
Program Chair	Stephanie Nordlinger	
Publicity – Press	Mark Presky	
Publicity – Online Media	Open	
Quick Consultants	Leah Clark	
Webmaster	Paula Van Berkom	

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

Website: www.lacspc.org

Contact the President/Editor at 424-261-6251. Follow the prompts. This is a Google Voice number.

Please use your roster for email addresses and phone numbers to contact any officer, board member or other member, or you may leave a message at the above number. If you don't have your roster, please contact Leah Clark at leahjc@sbcglobal.net and she will email you a copy. Only LACS members may receive a roster.

COMPLETE ROBOCALL DETERRENCE — PART 3 0F 3*

A two-step approach:
prevent the ring and convince the robocaller that your line is disconnected.
By **John Krout**
Presenter & Newsletter Contributor
Potomac Area Technology and Computer Society
https://www.patacs.org
jkrout.apcug.presenter (at) gmail.com

INTRODUCTION

In Part 1 of this series, you learned how to configure your smartphone so that only your contacts will ring your phone, a Whitelist strategy.

In Part 2, you learned robocall systems respond to the Special Information Tones (SIT) that begin certain phone network messages, such as the number has been disconnected, by removing the dialed number from the robocall systems internal list of known valid numbers. In addition, you learned how to obtain a recording of SIT, how to record your voice, and how to combine SIT and your voice recording into a complete voicemail greeting using Audacity.

In this conclusion, you will learn how to record that complete greeting as your custom voicemail greeting, using your computer to play the combined greeting while your phone "listens." The key is that the smartphone and the recording system for voicemail greetings expect greeting sounds to come in through the smartphone's microphone.

There are at least three ways to feed audio from your computer into the smartphone microphone.

THE SIMPLE APPROACH

The low-tech, low fidelity way is to use your computer to "speak" into the phone.

The steps are simple: prepare to play the combined greeting on your computer speakers. Then, on your phone, work through the steps to begin recording your customized

*See parts 1 and 2 in the December 2021 and the January 2022 issues.

voicemail greeting. Hold the phone up to the computer speaker, tap the final Record button on the phone, and immediately start the audio playback on the computer. When the combined greeting playback is done, tap the Stop Recording button on the phone.

There are problems with this simple approach.

1. This approach also records environmental sounds such as air conditioning or heating, other people, or passing vehicles.
2. The quality of the recording is limited by the quality of the speakers. The weakest link in any audio system is the speakers.
3. We need to make sure the high frequencies of the SIT are faithfully recorded so that robocaller systems, when they reach voicemail, will have no doubt that robocallers have heard and recognized SIT at the start of your greeting.

THE WI-FI APPROACH

It is possible to connect and transfer audio from my computer to the microphone device of my Android phone. Using this approach, the phone can record the incoming audio from the computer, just as if the audio was being delivered through the microphone. However, since speakers are not involved, the audio received is high quality. Simple improvements can further increase audio quality.

To make this happen, I found and tested an Android app called **SoundWire**, and its corresponding personal computer application called **SoundWire server**. Both are freely available. There are versions of SoundWire Server available for Windows, Linux, and Raspberry Pi. The app is available on the Google Play Store, and SoundWire Server can be obtained from this URL: http://georgielabs.net.

The basic idea is that the SoundWire Server captures audio being played on your computer and sends captured audio via your Local Area Network Wi-Fi to the SoundWire app on your phone. The SoundWire app on your phone then injects the incoming audio into your

smartphone's microphone device and plays it on your phone's internal speakers.

To accomplish the SoundWire connection of the app and the server, you must not run a Virtual Private Network (VPN) client on your computer or phone. Using a VPN client means the two cannot be connected via your WiFi.

- **STEP 1.** Start the SoundWire Server application on your computer. Initially, SoundWire Server will display a window like that shown in **Illustration 1.** Note the status **Disconnected,** which appears in red and is circled. That is the normal status at startup.

- **STEP 2.** On your computer, start the audio playback application; it will play your combined audio greeting. Then, load the combined audio greeting in that application.

- **STEP 3.** On your Android smartphone, start the SoundWire (free) app. It will look like the app shown in **Illustration 2**. Note the big wire-filled button which dominates the app screen.

- **STEP 4.** This step connects the SoundWire app and the SoundWire server application across your Wi-Fi.
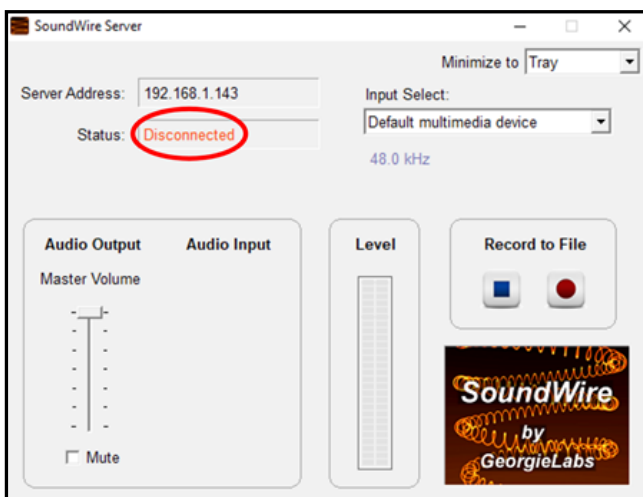

Illustration 1

On your smartphone, tap and hold the wire-filled button in the SoundWire app for about 1/3rd second. The SoundWire Server applica-
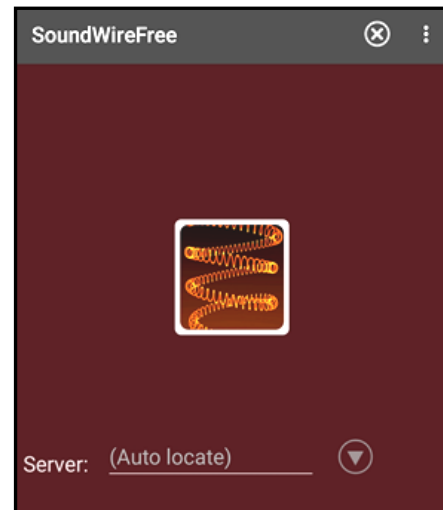

Illustration 2

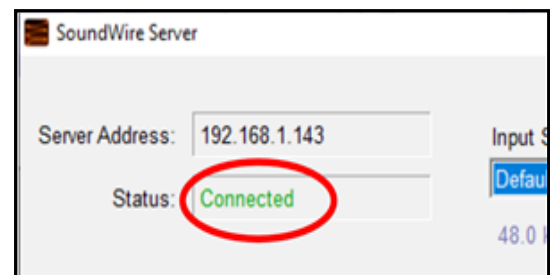tion status should change to Connected on the computer, as shown in **Illustration 3**.

Illustration 3

The SoundWire connection method described above is known as the **automatic method**. If it does not work for you, try the **manual method**, as follows.

Note the IP address displayed by the SoundWire server, in the field Server Address, directly above the Status field. You can see that IP address in **Illustration 1**.

Type that IP address into the SoundWire app field named Server. Then re-try the long tap on the big button in the app.

When you connect SoundWire for the first time, I suggest you use a smartphone voice recording app to test audio transfer and recording quality on the phone. There is an excellent variety of free voice recording apps available on the Google Play Store for this testing purpose.

THE TEST

After establishing the SoundWire connection, as shown above, start the voice recording app on your smartphone, tap the Record button in that app, and start your audio playback application on your computer. For example, the phone on my WiFi received audio about one quarter of a second after the computer played it.

Here are more steps to improve audio quality when using SoundWire. While using SoundWire, the Android phone physical microphone still works. However, it will pick up audio from your computer speakers, which means the voice recorder app will pick up an echo, and it will pick up ambient environmental noises. I strongly suggest blocking the smartphone microphone with duct tape, electrical tape, or the like to prevent that. Also, while doing the test, I strongly recommend listening to the computer audio on earbuds or headphones instead of speakers.

When the computer audio finishes playing, tap the Stop button of the voice recorder app on your phone. Play back the voice recorder recording to make it recognizable, fairly loud, and free of ambient noises and echoes.

USING THE COMBINED GREETING ON ANDROID

Since each carrier and smartphone have different ways of starting and ending an effort to record the customized voice greeting, I must leave those details for you to figure out.

On Verizon Wireless, my Samsung Galaxy S10 phone, running Android 10 (and later 11), the voicemail greeting recording is found in the Voicemail app Settings. I strongly suggest practicing the recording start steps two or three times to become familiar with the somewhat complex sequence of steps before you attempt the actual recording.

Once you figure it out, the recording process is basically the same as the test process above. However, instead of using the voice recorder app, you use the Voicemail app or whatever other app your carrier and smartphone provide for recording a customized voicemail greeting.

ANALOG AUDIO CONNECTION TO IPHONE

I could not find an iPhone equivalent for SoundWire. So, for iPhones, the approach is to feed analog audio coming from the computer speaker/headphone socket into the headset socket of the iPhone.

Such a technique faces some challenges. First, the audio level coming out from a headphone socket is line level; the audio level expected on the headset socket is mic level, roughly 1/1,000th of the line level voltage. We need a method to reduce that audio signal voltage. Cables that accomplish this signal voltage reduction are called **attenuator cables.** Second, the iPhone headset socket includes a microphone input connection and two headphone output connections. We need a way to connect the analog audio from the computer specifically to the socket's microphone input connection.

These days, a single cable can resolve both issues. For example, some **attenuator cables** provide a monophonic 1/8th inch diameter phono socket and a 1/8th inch diameter plug for connection to the iPhone headset socket.

The third challenge was more vexing. Even when the Windows 10 audio volume was fully turned up, my audio feed volume to my phone's headset socket was **so low** that Verizon Wireless refused to use my custom voicemail greeting. Instead, Verizon Wireless switched automatically to the default greeting, in which it announces my phone number. Finally, I added a **mixer** in the cable path to amplify the audio signal a bit. I expect few readers will own a mixer, and mixers can be expensive. An alternative way to amplify the signal is to use an analog audio device that may already be in your hands: a **stereo receiver**. But the cable cost is still substantial. Since I am an audio recording enthusiast, I had a
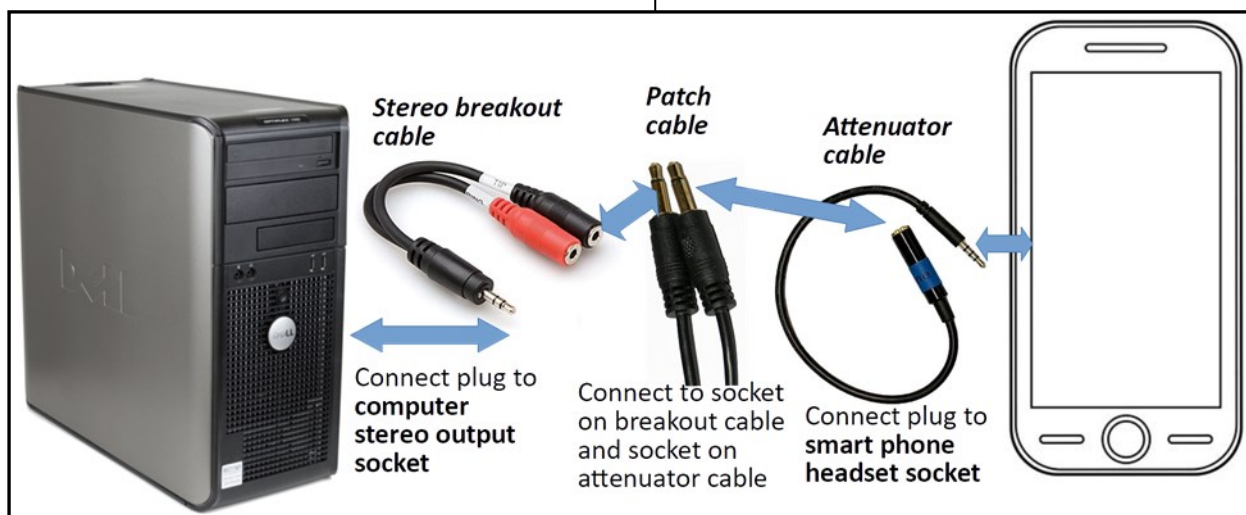
Illustration 4

mixer and cables on hand, but most people will have to buy them.

For my initial attempt, during which I found the volume was too low, I used an inexpensive set of cables, as shown in **Illustration 4** above. Overall, this cable set costs only about $35 on Amazon. The most expensive one is the Attenuator cable, at about $22. Please note that the patch cable is monophonic since the microphone input on the phone headset socket is monophonic.

Recently, my son found audio software for his Windows 10 laptop that drives the speaker output to greater audio volume than is possible using the normal Windows 10 audio controls.

The software, I thought, could eliminate the sound amplification hardware requirement. That would make the original, least expensive cable set shown in **Illustration 4** work.

I found the software my son uses, **Sound Booster** by Letasoft, which works for 14 days as a free trial, though the free trial version drops out the volume boost for 5 seconds once every 2 minutes. Also, Sound Booster is available for Windows only. So, I found some alternatives to Sound Booster. I cannot test all the other options, and I do not have a Mac for testing in any event. Here is a table listing many of the alternatives.

Software Title	Download from	Works on Mac	Works on Win10	License
Boom 2	https://www.globaldelight.com/	Yes	Yes	Single payment $14.99
Sound Booster Lite	https://soundbooster.froyosoft.com/soundbooster.php	No	Yes	Free Trial
DeskFX	https://www.nchsoftware.com/deskfx/index.html	Yes	Yes	Free for personal use

Table 1. Software for increasing audio volume

Once you establish a setup like this, I suggest you do some tests with the **Voice Memos app** of the iPhone to find an appropriate volume knob setting on the stereo receiver. You can find that app in the iPhone **Utilities** folder. Fortunately, there is no need to block the physical microphone on the iPhone since connecting audio into the microphone connection in the headset socket disables the iPhone physical microphone.

Before you record your combined greeting as a custom voicemail greeting, I suggest you practice the steps required to start that greeting recording process a few times so the steps become familiar.

THE BOTTOM LINE

If you feel plagued with robocalls and their voicemails, as I did, the results will justify the work and the dollars. As I mentioned in Part 2, while using such a combined greeting on my smartphone, my rate of incoming robocalls has fallen from 25 per week to 2 per week, and my rate of robocall voicemails has fallen from 10 per week to *zero per week*, in about eight months.

See parts 1 and 2 in the December 2021 and the January 2022 issues.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: John Krout has been writing about creative uses of personal computers since the early 1980s, and more recently, about creative uses of smartphones. He finished a long career as a software engineer with 14 years as a technical writer for a federal contractor. He lives in Arlington, Virginia, with his son, many computers and cameras, and too many cats. ❖

LACS January, 2022 Zoom General Meeting

MAC COMPUTERS: A LOVE-HATE RELATIONSHIP

By **Joe Callison**, Author
Geek Free & For~Go (For Geeks Only) blogs;
Convener, Senior Techies SIG
Seniors Computer Club of Greater Kansas City
https://kcsenior.net/
sencommember00 (at) gmail.com

Full disclosure: I do not own or regularly use a Mac computer. I have provided technical support and upgrade services for several clients with MacBook Pro, iMac, or iPad devices over the years and have virtual macOS systems running on my Windows computers to help increase my knowledge and skills to support them.

As a long-time Windows PC user, my first exposure to macOS was a little intimidating. I can appreciate the similar challenges going from Mac to PC. Soon I began to realize that the differences were mostly in semantics. For most familiar Windows functions or apps, there was an equivalent macOS one with a different name. There are many helpful articles on the internet explaining this:

- https://www.online-tech-tips.com/mac-os-x/mac-equivalents-of-windows-software-and-features/

- https://www.laptopmag.com/articles/windows-hot-keys-on-mac

- https://support.apple.com/en-us/HT204216

- https://www.dummies.com/computers/macs/comparing-common-windows-terms-with-mac-terms/

There are also some differences in navigating the user interface on a Mac vs. a PC, but it can be learned with practice. My overall impression of the macOS after experiencing several of the yearly updates of Mac OS X is that the look and feel of the user interface change much less than Windows does, which may be appealing to some users.

The Apple hardware is the most distinguishing difference between a Mac and a PC, in my opinion. Each new model usually introduces new advancements in lighter and thinner design, display technology, port capability, or other features. That, coupled with the fact that Apple only competes with itself (through the Apple certified refurbished market), means that Apple can and does demand a premium price compared to mainstream Windows PCs.

The biggest distinguishing difference between a Mac and a PC that I find particularly frustrating, along with many other independent repair companies, is that Apple likes to control the aftermarket repair business. Official Apple parts are only available through the Apple supply chain to Apple Certified repair facilities and only for as long as they want to produce the parts. Attempts to sell the identical part produced independently by the same factories have been limited by Apple sometimes officially coding parts. As a result, the device will either not function or not update with non-Apple-supplied parts that do not have the code.

Other industries have tried taking similar actions and have eventually been stopped by right-to-repair legislation to protect the independent repair shops and consumers. I can sort of understand the desire to control repairs while a product is under warranty, but after that, the consumer should have the right to obtain parts and repair the device in any manner they choose.

I follow a website called **ifixit.com** that likes to dismantle new products to see what has changed and how difficult it might be to repair. Eventually, they produce repair videos and sell parts and supplies for do-it-yourself repairs. They also have information on the right-to-repair issue. Another good resource for information on the repair or upgrade of Apple products is **Other World Computing** (OWC).

- https://www.ifixit.com/
- https://www.owc.com/

In general, Apple products have a good track record for quality and reliability. However, a few notable miscues have been noted, such as a problem with Nvidia graphics processors popping loose or problems with new keyboard designs.

How a company responds to such problems is essential, and I feel Apple could do a better job of that. Typically, they wait until customers start threatening class action lawsuits before extending the warranty on defective products. Still, the repair or replacement is usually the same design as the original, so there is a good probability that the problem could reoccur.

This does not seem to bother a lot of Apple customers who typically replace their devices frequently, but for those who want to hang on to a device for more than a few years, it could be an issue. ❖

Do You Pay for a Product?
Continued from page 7

destination! So, who or what is the product?

Individual responsibility

Many entities whose services you pay for treat their users well, and others treat users poorly. There are all sorts of business models online. Some work in some cases, others work in other cases. But to argue that "free" services mean you're "the product" and thus not treated as well isn't true. In the online world, each of us must decide if the value of the product we receive is worth the inevitable compromise in our privacy that takes place.

Suppose we accept the privacy compromise inherent in most online experiences. In that case, it is incumbent on each of us to understand, compromise, and share only as much information as necessary. ❖

JERE'S TECH TIPS

For many helpful tips and tricks for all aspects of computing see *Jere's Tech Tips* at https://www.apcug2.org.

TECHBOOMERS.COM

For learning how to use various websites and internet-based websites and internet-based applications for free.

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

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** Code for eBooks: **DIGITALCOMMUNITY**

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LAUGHING OUT LOUD

Modern CD Player

I wanted to buy a CD player, but I was completely perplexed by one model's promotional sign. So, I called the sales clerk over and asked, "What does 'hybrid pulse D/A converter' mean?"

He said, "That means that this machine will read the digital information that is encoded on CDs and convert it into an audio signal."

"In other words," I said, "this CD player plays CDs."

"Exactly."

Dear Customer Service,

Last year I upgraded from Boyfriend 5.0 to Husband 1.0 and noticed a slowdown in the performance of the flower and jewelry applications that had operated flawlessly under the Boyfriend 5.0 system.

In addition, Husband 1.0 uninstalled many other valuable programs, such as Romance 9.9, and installed undesirable programs such as NFL 7.4, NBA 3.2 and NHL 4.1.

Conversation 8.0 also no longer runs, and Housecleaning 2.6 crashes the system.

I've tried running Nagging 5.3 to fix these problems, but to no avail.

What can I do?

Signed,

Desperate

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 are via Zoom. In-person or hybrid meetings may take place in the future.
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 eMail List. Send your questions 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**

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

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Address:

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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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Podcast Transcriber ....Irv Hershman

Proofreaders …...........Irv Hershman,
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and Charlotte Semple

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GENERAL MEETINGS ARE ON ZOOM.

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 technical 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.