

User Friendly

LACS
**A Computer and
Technology
User Group**

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



An International
Association of Technology
and Computer User Groups

APRIL 11, 2023 GENERAL MEETING

Meeting Time: 7:00 to 9:00 PM — via Zoom

Socializing and Questions & Answers: 6:30-7:00 PM

Speaker: Judy Taylour

APCUG Speakers Bureau

Topic: What's Cooking?

Home Automation in Your Kitchen

Turn your kitchen into one that works for you
and makes it fun to do everyday kitchen tasks.



Meet Our Presenter

Judy is a 35-year member of the Santa Clarita Valley Computer Club, where she serves as President and Webmaster. She co-facilitated the Southern California Regional User Group Summit (SCRUGS), a group of computer clubs that met quarterly for over 20 years to share ideas and presenter information, solve problems, etc. This work helped two groups remain active.

She spent 23 years volunteering with the S. W. Technology Conference held in San Diego for 20 years and three years at Cal Poly Pomona. Judy served as chair or co-chair for 21 years. Her responsibilities included registration, scheduling speakers, and working with the volunteers.

Judy taught adult education technology classes for over 20 years. She is a member of the Pierce College Computer Applications and Office Technologies Advisory Committee. They meet to suggest courses and hardware for the next school year. She believes in life-long learning and enjoys giving presentations via APCUG's Speakers Bureau.

Judy has spoken to us on Home Automation, Ergonomics, Digital Asset Estate Planning, How and Why to Backup Your Hard Drive, and Trouble-Shooting Your Computer. She can answer your questions on many topics if there is enough time after the on-topic questions or comments.

Tuesday, April 11, 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 before or on **April 9**. Guests may ask for the link by emailing Leah Clark at LeahClark424 (at) gmail.com. before or on **April 9**.

More information about LACS is at www.lacspc.org.



FROM YOUR PRESIDENT / EDITOR



PAYING YOUR LACS DUES

We are working on a procedure where all members' dues will be paid in January, starting with January 2024. This will entail additional work and organizing in 2023, but should make it simpler in the future. All members will know when to pay their dues.

Your 2023 dues will be prorated to the end of the year. For example, if you are due in May, you will pay for eight months. A new member joining in July will pay for six months. See

chart below. Your 2023 dues reminder email will tell you what you owe. You will still be able to pay by check, PayPal, or Zelle.

We hope this transition will be painless. Please watch your email and *User Friendly* for updated information. We welcome your ideas for carrying this out easily.

Please send questions to Gavin or Leah.

We thank you for your patience as we make these changes.

| MONTHLY RATES FOR MEMBERSHIP LEVELS | | | CHOOSE THE MONTH YOU ARE RENEWING OR ARE JOINING LACS. | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|-------------|--------------|--|----------|---------|-----------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|----------|----------|
| | Yearly Rate | Monthly Rate | December | November | October | September | August | July | June | May | April | March | February | January |
| New/Renewal with Newsletter | \$40 | \$3.33 | \$3.33 | \$6.67 | \$10.00 | \$13.33 | \$16.67 | \$20.00 | \$23.33 | \$26.67 | \$30.00 | \$33.33 | \$36.67 | \$40.00 |
| Associate | \$12 | \$1 | \$1.00 | \$2.00 | \$3.00 | \$4.00 | \$5.00 | \$6.00 | \$7.00 | \$8.00 | \$9.00 | \$10.00 | \$11.00 | \$12.00 |
| Student | \$18 | \$1.50 | \$1.50 | \$3.00 | \$4.50 | \$6.00 | \$7.50 | \$9.00 | \$10.50 | \$12.00 | \$13.50 | \$15.00 | \$16.50 | \$18.00 |
| New/Renewal with electronic newsletter | \$30 | \$2.50 | \$2.50 | \$5.00 | \$7.50 | \$10.00 | \$12.50 | \$15.00 | \$17.50 | \$20.00 | \$22.50 | \$25.00 | \$27.50 | \$30.00 |
| Gift membership | \$20 | \$1.67 | \$1.67 | \$3.33 | \$5.00 | \$6.67 | \$8.33 | \$10.00 | \$11.67 | \$13.33 | \$15.00 | \$16.67 | \$18.33 | \$20.00 |
| Contributor | \$50 | \$4.17 | \$4.17 | \$8.33 | \$12.50 | \$16.67 | \$20.83 | \$25.00 | \$29.17 | \$33.33 | \$37.50 | \$41.67 | \$45.83 | \$50.00 |
| Supporter | \$75 | \$6.25 | \$6.25 | \$12.50 | \$18.75 | \$25.00 | \$31.25 | \$37.50 | \$43.75 | \$50.00 | \$56.25 | \$62.50 | \$68.75 | \$75.00 |
| Benefactor | \$100 | \$8.33 | \$8.33 | \$16.67 | \$25.00 | \$33.33 | \$41.67 | \$50.00 | \$58.33 | \$66.67 | \$75.00 | \$83.33 | \$91.67 | \$100.00 |



WELCOME TO LACS NEW AND RENEWING MEMBERS

Gavin Faught, LACS Treasurer

New Members (0)

Renewals (7)

Raymond Crovella
Irv Hershman
Sheila Moncavage
Stephanie Nordlinger



Aggi Raeder
Jerri Speed
Aldo Vendramin

*I wish happiness and blessings
for the April holidays of
Passover, Easter, and Eid al-Fitr
for all LACS members, their families, and
friends. May the festivities, love, and
friendships bring us
hope for the future.*

VISIT OTHER APCUG GROUPS

Many APCUG groups invite members of other groups to join their meetings. LACS heartedly welcomes visitors from other user groups, and we are welcome to join other group's meetings. See page 9 of *User Friendly* for the link to a list and contact information for the groups that are inviting others.

GENERAL MEETING REPORT

March 14, 2023

By Leah Clark, LACS President/Editor

Topic: Everything Google

Speaker: Bill James



Bill James spoke about the more popular Google apps and how we use them today.

“Google’s mission is to organize the world’s information and to make it universally accessible and useful.” Google has everything online; no software resides on your computer. Google began as a search engine at Stanford University in 1995. “Google” is a misspelling of “Googol”, the number 1 followed by 100 zeros. Google talks about **Ecosystems**, a term describing “the whole system” or hardware and software that works together. In the Google ecosystem, each app is designed to work seamlessly with each other.

Google Search is the most used search engine in the world across all platforms. It handles more than 5.4 billion searches each day. **Google Doodles** are fun takes on the Google logo on the homepage representing various holidays and events. The core of **Google Applications** is the Chrome browser. They work across a wide variety of operating systems. When you are working with Google, you should sign in with your Google account, which is your Gmail address and password.

Google Chrome is a cross-platform web browser developed by Google. It is the main component of Chrome OS.

Google Maps provides a route planner which allows users to find directions for driving, public transportation, walking, or biking.

Google Calendar is a time-management and scheduling calendar service. Users can create and edit events, receive reminders and locations of events, and invite others to events. It can be synced on all your devices and is integrated with Google Maps.

Google Home lets you set up, manage, and control your Google Home, Google Nest, and Chromecast devices as well as connected lights, cameras, thermostats, and more in one place. Users can listen to music, control the playback of videos or photos, and receive news updates by voice commands.

Google Assistant is an artificial intelligence-powered virtual assistant primarily available on mobile and smart home devices. By engaging in two-way conversation using Google’s language processing algorithm, it can search the internet, schedule events and alarms, adjust hardware settings, and show information from the user’s Google account.

Google Contacts can be utilized by using any of three Comma-Separated Values (CSV) methods. They are Google CVS format for importing into a Google account, Outlook CSV format for importing into Outlook or other applications, and vCard format for importing into Apple’s Address Book.

Google Docs Suite includes apps that equate with Microsoft Office applications. They include Google Docs (MS Word), Google Sheets (MS Excel), Google Slides (MS PowerPoint), Google Forms (MS forms and surveys), Google Drawings (MS Visio), Google Sites (MS Business Websites), and Google Keeps (MS Notes or Evernote.) Google Docs is cloud-based, but it can be downloaded to your computer. Google Docs is available as a web app and a mobile app for Android and iOS. It works with Windows and Blackberry, and it is a desktop app on Google’s Chrome OS. It will open Microsoft, Libre Office, Calc, and Impress docs. The docs can be edited by one person or a group, or just viewed. They can be edited by MS Office Apps.

Google Drive includes Docs, Sheets, and Slides, and it permits collaborative editing. Users have 15 GB of free storage across Google Drive, Gmail, and Google Photos. You can purchase more. Store, share, and collaborate

on files and folders from any mobile device, tablet, or computer with Google Drive. Cloud-based files will be available in case of any disaster.

Google Earth maps the Earth by superimposing satellite images, aerial photography, and GPS data onto a 3D globe to allow users to see cities and landscapes from various angles. Use your computer, tablet, or smartphone to zoom into your house or anywhere to see a 360-degree perspective with **Street View**. It covers more than 98% of the world. You can visit many cities around the world to tour them.

Gmail is a free email service that can be accessed on the web using third-party programs that synchronize email content through POP or IMAP protocols. Gmail automatically adds a Google Drive link if an attachment is larger than 25 MB. Gmail has a search-oriented interface and a “conversation view” similar to an internet forum.

Google Duo offers voice calling as well as video calls for up to 32 people.

Google Photos stores up to 15 Mega Pixels (MP), and videos up to 1080p (pixels) resolution, with apps for Android and iOS operating systems. Photos are backed up to the cloud and are accessible for all devices. The service analyzes and organizes images into groups.

Google Play Store is where you can download apps to your devices. Three million apps are available.

Google TV offers movies and television for purchase or rental. A Google TV competitor would be Roku.

YouTube offers advertising-free streaming, access to exclusive content, background, and offline video playback on mobile devices, and access to the Google Play Music “All Access” service. There is a free and premium version. You can watch APCUG’s Virtual Technology Conferences (VTC) and Workshop videos on YouTube.

Google Hardware includes products that are so useful they make people wonder how they ever lived without them. The Pixel phone, speakers, Chromecast, digital media players, wireless routers, and smart displays, doorbells, thermostats, and smoke detectors are examples. Also, there are smartphones, tablets, laptops, earbuds, and other accessories. The big breakthroughs come at the intersection of AI, software, and hardware, working together to find a shorter route to work, gorgeous vacation photos, or a faster email response.

Google Nest is a brand to market smart home products including smart speakers, displays, streaming devices, thermostats, smoke detectors, routers, and security systems including smart doorbells, cameras, and locks. Nest products are often programmable, self-learning, sensor-driven, and WiFi enabled.

Google Chromebook is a laptop or tablet running the Linux-based Chrome OS. They perform a variety of tasks, with most applications and data residing in the cloud rather than on the machine itself.

Google Chrome OS is an operating system in which apps and data reside in the cloud. It primarily runs web applications.

Android OS is a mobile operating system based on a modified version of the Linux kernel. It’s designed primarily for cell phones and other touch-screen mobile devices.

Google Pixel is a brand of consumer electronic products that run either the Chrome or the Android OS.

Google Chromecast is their streaming device to access Netflix or YouTube from your laptop and cast it to your TV. It uses the HDMI port to do that.

Google Voice provides a U.S. number to call anywhere in the world. Calls to this number are forwarded to telephone numbers that

each user must configure in the account web portal. Users can answer and receive calls on any of the phones configured.

Google Locations

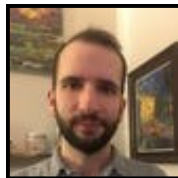
Google Venice is where software is developed. It's a fun place to work. Employees can play games, bring their pets to work, walk to the beach, go surfing, and have free food. It's all about ideas. As long as they are productive, they can do a variety of things.

YouTube – Playa Vista is another installation that offers free food and a fun working environment.

Bill will send us links to his handouts, Google quick start guides, and other resources. You may also get these links from the end of the meeting recording which LACS members received. ❖

WHY IS TURNING ON A COMPUTER CALLED "BOOTING"?

By JORDAN GLOOR
How-toGeek.com



The word "boot" comes from the phrase "pull yourself by your bootstraps." You can think of computers as lifting themselves up by their bootstraps when they self-manage the complicated process of powering on.

Why do we use this term when talking about powering on our phones and PCs, and what does it have to do with rugged footwear?

Computers Pull Themselves Up by Their Bootstraps. The word "boot" is a shortened form of the word "bootstrap," which refers to the strap on a pair of boots that you can grab and pull to help you get the piece of footwear onto your foot. The verb form, "bootstrapping," refers to the English idiom "pull oneself up by one's bootstraps." Picture a person lifting themselves into the air by simply reaching down and tugging on their waders. The metaphor illustrates the idea of a person achieving a goal that would seem impossible

(Continued on Page 17)

TAX SEASON SECURITY TIPS

National Cyber Security Alliance

Underlined text links to further information

Tax season is a stressful time for most of us, and scammers add even more anxiety to this frantic season.



There is an uptick in phishing, scamming, and other online fraud during tax time, and lots of bad actors love to catfish as the Internal Revenue Service. By following some simple best practices, though, you can keep the hackers' mitts off your refund.

KEEP YOUR SECURITY STRONG THIS TAX SEASON

By following a few, easy-to-adopt cybersecurity habits, you can make it much harder for scammers to ever gain access to your information.

Enable Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA).

Use multi-factor authentication (MFA) wherever possible. MFA (also called "two-factor authentication" or "2FA") will fortify your online accounts by creating an extra layer of security, such as a fingerprint scan or a unique one-time code sent to your phone. Most major email and online tax preparation services have this tool available. Even if hackers somehow get ahold of your password, MFA keeps your accounts locked down.

Be aware of "MFA fatigue," too. Of course, if you get an MFA notification that you are trying to log into an important account (like your tax preparer's platform), and you didn't make the request, DO NOT grant access. Scammers sometimes will bombard you with MFA requests, hoping you will accept the bogus requests to enable them to gain access. If you didn't expect the request, DO NOT grant access.

Contact the company to see about the next

steps, which might involve changing your password or other security measures.

Get Your Identity Protection PIN

You can get a special Identity Protection PIN (IP PIN) from the IRS to keep your online tax information secure. An IP PIN is a six-digit number that prevents someone else from filing a tax return using your Social Security number. The IP PIN is known only to you and the IRS and helps verify your identity when you file your electronic or paper tax return. Protect your IP PIN as you would other sensitive information.

File Early To Give Scammers the Slip

We recommend filing your taxes as early as you can. The sooner you can file, the less time cybercriminals have to file a fake return and try to nab your refund. As they say, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure, and it is much harder to try to get back all of your return after having your identity stolen than it is to file early. While having your refund routed illegally to a scammer's bank account isn't common, getting done with your taxes ASAP reduces the chances of this type of disaster even more. Even if you aren't expecting a refund, you should get your taxes done early, because hackers can forge documents that make it seem like you are owed a refund – which they'll send to their bank account. Filing early strips them of time.

RED FLAGS OF IRS SCAMS

It might not be the sexiest choice, but scammers love to catfish (deceiving another person online with a fake identity) as the IRS. Unsolicited emails, calls, texts, or direct messages that prompt you to share valuable personal and financial information are very likely scams. With your personal data, online thieves can swindle funds and commit identity theft.



What Do Real IRS Communications Look Like?

The biggest red flag that you are being targeted for an IRS scam is that you get a phone call or message from a supposed-IRS representative without receiving any mail from the agency. Contact from the IRS is initiated via the United States Postal Service. The IRS might call after it has sent you physical mail first, especially if you haven't responded to multiple letters. An IRS agent might also visit you in person.

The IRS will not email, text, or direct message (DM) you. They won't try to friend you on Facebook or swipe right on you on Tinder. This is true for most government agencies in the U.S.

Criminals impersonating federal employees can be very convincing by using fake names, presenting fake credentials, or spoofing telephone numbers. If you are unsure if the caller is legitimate, hang up, look up the direct number for the agency online, and call that agency to verify.

A real IRS agent WILL NEVER demand you make an immediate payment to a source other than the U.S. Treasury. Unscrupulous callers claiming to be federal employees can be very convincing by using fake names or phony ID numbers. If you are unsure if the caller is legitimate, hang up, look up the direct number for the agency online, and call that source to verify.

More Red Flags

Requests for data: Be extremely suspicious of any communications that ask you to provide personal information such as bank account information, Social Security numbers, login credentials, or mailing addresses. Cybercriminals will often impersonate the IRS in phishing campaigns.

Urgency: Scammers use an abnormal sense of urgency and other scare tactics to obtain information. Their goal is to make you

panic and stop thinking clearly.

Attachments: Watch out for any message that includes an attachment, such as a PDF. Never open attachments from a suspicious or unknown email address. It may download malware or viruses onto your device.

Phishing as tax preparers: Along with the IRS, scammers will also imitate popular tax programs like TurboTax and H&R Block to try to snag your financial information. These companies will never contact you through phone, email, or text asking for your login information, or for you to give them an MFA code that you didn't request.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN A TAX PREPARER

Unless you are a tax code aficionado yourself, working with a professional tax preparer is the best way to avoid audits and ensure you get the maximum refund. However, because this person or business will have access to some of your most sensitive information (from your Social Security number to your bank statements), you need to due diligence that they will keep your data, and money, safe.

Research Is Worth It

Vet your tax preparer before handing over information. Ask what steps they take to protect your information. Businesses of all sizes are susceptible to cyber thieves, so it is critical to choose a preparer who takes security seriously. Here are some specific questions you can ask:

- How will we exchange files and sensitive information?
- Who at your firm will have access to my data?
- Are our communications end-to-end encrypted?
- What types of network security have you implemented?
- How do you back up client data?

Securely Send Documents

When it comes to data privacy, sometimes the old ways are best – one of the most secure ways to transfer your most sensitive documents is physically, either delivering them in-person or through the mail. When communicating with your tax preparer digitally, use encrypted email services, which is now common on major email platforms. Encryption protects the email contents from being read by entities other than the intended recipients. Also, only use a secure portal to upload documents to your tax preparer, which also uses encryption to restrict access to files.

Back It Up

Like any important documents or files, you should back up everything related to your taxes. Make electronic copies (such as scans or photos) of your tax documents. Back up all your files on the cloud, an external hard drive, or both. Ideally, you will have the original paper copy and multiple digital copies. One of these digital copies should be located away from the rest, either online in a secure cloud system or on a hard drive locked in a safe.

REPORT SCAMS

If you think you are the victim of a tax scam, report it right away. The sooner you report a incident, even if you are not totally sure, the better your chances of recovering your cash.

- Victims of identity theft: [IRS Identity Theft Central](#)
- Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration (TIGTA): [Report IRS-related impersonation](#)
- IRS, Treasury, and tax-related online scams: [Report Phishing](#)
- IRS CI: [Report Tax Fraud](#)
- FTC: [Report Fraud](#)
- IC3: [Report Cybercrime](#) ❖

LACS INFORMATION

PAY DUES BY PAYPAL OR ZELLE

To pay by PayPal, go to this link:

www.paypal.com/paypalme/00001024

and then click on **Send**. You'll be asked to log in to your PayPal account or sign up for an account so that PayPal will know where to get the money to send. Follow the prompts. Once you have entered your dues amount, click on **Add a note**. Tell us of any updated information: physical address, email address, phone number, and what type of dues you are paying: regular, electronic *User Friendly*, etc. or if you don't want your contact information published in the roster.

To pay by Zelle, log into your bank with your username and password.

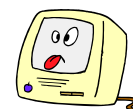
Select **Transfer Money > Send Money with Zelle**. Follow the instructions. The name of the recipient is **Los Angeles Computer Society**. Select **Send by email**. The email address is: **lacompetersociety@gmail.com**. The wording may be a little different on your bank's site. Email questions to Gavin at gmfaught@gmail.com.

HOW TO JOIN LACS'S MAIL LIST

LACS now has **one** active general list: PC@LACS.Groups.IO. Use this email address to ask questions, to offer any comments or suggestions, and to conduct official LACS business.

New LACS members should receive an invitation to join our list with two weeks to accept. LACS members who want to join the list should send an email to LACS+subscribe@Groups.IO from the email address they want to use with their name and phone number. Stephanie, our Groups.IO Coordinator, will check your membership and add you to the PC list. You can contact her at nordlacs@AOL.com

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 snail-mail it to

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

ATTENDING A ZOOM MEETING

LACS members who are on our PC email list will receive a link, meeting ID, Passcode, and instructions to attend the LACS general meetings a couple of days before the meeting. **Please let Leah Clark know by the morning of the meeting if you don't have it or have any problem.**

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, April 3, 2023

Time: 7:00 P.M. (Open from 6:30 P.M.)

Place: Wherever you are via Zoom

Please log in early so we can start on time.

LACS General Meeting

Date: April 11, 2023 via Zoom

Time: 7:00 P. M. (Open from 6:30 P.M.)

Place: Wherever you are via Zoom

Please log in early so we can start on time.

April 3: LACS Board Meeting

April 5: Passover

April 9: Easter

April 11: LACS General Meeting

April 20: Eid al-Fitr

April 22: Earth Day



VISIT OTHER COMPUTER USER GROUPS

Many APCUG groups allow members of other groups to attend their meetings. Check out the URL below for information for visiting other user groups' Zoom and hybrid meetings. See a list of groups open to other groups, and for tips and ideas for using and joining Zoom meetings.

[Attend-another-APCUG-group-meeting-11-2022.pdf](https://www.apcug2.org/Attend-another-APCUG-group-meeting-11-2022.pdf)
([apcug2.org](https://www.apcug2.org))

UPCOMING MEETINGS/EVENTS

April 11: What's Cooking?

By Judy Taylour

May 9: Computers to the Moon

By Mark Schulman

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

ZOOM MEETINGS

Members on our PC email list will receive, via email, an invitation to join LACS Zoom general meetings. Click on the URL in the invitation before the meeting and follow the prompts. leahjc@sbcglobal.net

Contact Leah Clark at if you have any questions or if you don't receive the link by the morning of the meeting day.

ZOOM RECORDINGS

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

HYPERLINKS

Underlined text (blue in the colored editions) in User Friendly usually means it's a hyperlink to a website. Copy and paste it into the address bar, or click on the link on the online version to see the referenced place.

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 or 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 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.

| | | |
|--|------------------------------|------------------|
| Adobe Creative Suite: PDF, InDesign, Photoshop, etc. - 10 | Hardware - 7 | Photoshop - 10 |
| Android Smartphones - 8 | Lotus Word Pro, Approach - 7 | Quicken - 8, 12 |
| Apple devices - 11 | Mozilla Firefox - 7 | Thunderbird - 7 |
| Anti Malware and Backup - 7, 8 | MS Excel - 8, 11, 12 | Utilities - 7, 8 |
| Dragon Naturally Speaking - 3 | MS Word - 1, 3, 8, 12 | Visual Basic - 5 |
| Genealogy - 8 | MS Outlook - 8, 1, 10 | Websites - 5 |
| Groups.IO - 8 | MS PowerPoint - 8, 11 | Windows - 7, 8 |
| | MS Publisher - 2 | WordPerfect - 8 |
| | PDF 24 - 8 | Zoom - 2, 9 |

| Preferred Time for Phone Calls | | | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------|----------|----------|
| Number | Name | 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 |
| 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 Berkorn, 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 | 2023 |
| Vice President | Stephanie Nordlinger | 2023 |
| Secretary | Marcia Jacobs | 2023 |
| Treasurer | Gavin Faught | 2023 |
| Director | Sylvia Davis | 2023 |
| Director | Howard Krivoy | 2023 |
| Director | Mark Presky | 2023 |
| Director | Irv Hershman | 2024 |
| Director | Emil Rozek | 2024 |
| Director | Annette Tossounian | 2024 |
| Director | Paula Van Berkom | 2024 |
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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 mail you a copy. Only LACS members may receive a roster.

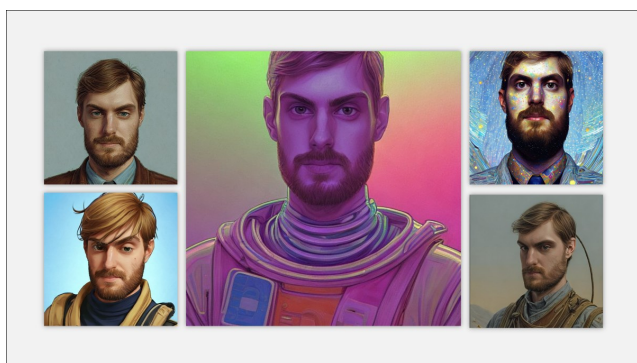
THE LENSA AI ARTWORK APP WILL FINALLY MAKE YOU LOOK COOL

Add a little AI to your selfies

By Joe Fedewa

HowToGeek.com

People love entering bizarre text prompts for AI image generators and seeing the results. However, it's not as easy to make it personal. Lensa is an AI-infused app that can generate selfies of yourself that look way too cool.



What Is Lensa?

Lensa is an app created by the makers of Prisma, a popular photo editing app that applies heavy art filters to photos. Lensa is a similar idea to Prisma, but it uses AI to do the hard work for you.

With a single tap, you can apply natural face retouching, blur the background, or swap out the background entirely. Lensa also has manual controls to allow you to get things right.

However, it's the most recent feature—**Magic Avatars**, added in November 2022—that put Lensa on the map. It takes what people love from AI image generators and applies it to selfies.

How Do Lensa AI Avatars Work?

The prompt is text-based for most AI image generators—such as DALL-E 2, Stable Diffusion, and Midjourney. You describe what you want to see with a written prompt. Lensa uses images as the prompt.

You select 10-20 photos of yourself, and

Lensa uses them to generate completely new self-portraits. Unlike Prisma, these are not just filters applied over your image. Instead, they're entirely original creations, which is why some of them will not look exactly like you.

Lensa is using **Stable Diffusion** to pull this off. So, if you were inclined, you could do this yourself, but it would probably take quite a bit of tweaking to get the same results. On the plus side, you would avoid having to spend much money, as Lensa starts at \$7.99 for 50 images.

How to Create AI Selfies with Lensa

Creating an AI “Magic Avatar” with Lensa is easy because you don't have to do most of the work. First, download the app for your iPhone or Android phone. You'll be asked to sign up for a seven-day free trial. If you do this, you'll get half off the price of the Magic Avatars.

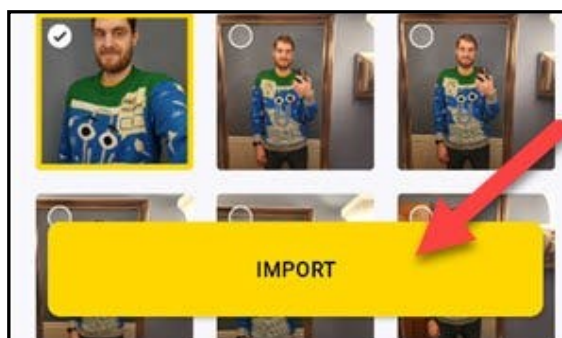
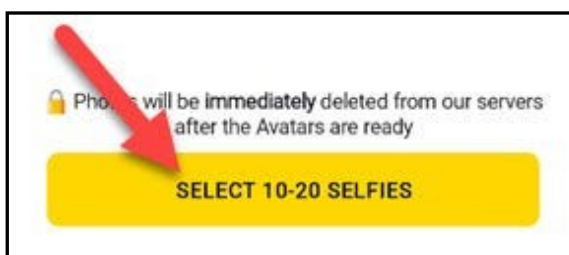
Once you're done with the introductory screens, you'll see a prompt asking you to try Magic Avatars. To continue, tap the “Magic Avatars” button.



Confirm that you're of age and then tap “Continue”.



Next, you'll need to select 10-20 close-up selfies. You'll want to use clear photos of your face from a few different angles. Avoid photos with hats or sunglasses, group photos, and anything else that might be distracting. Select “Import” when you're done.



Select your gender to proceed.

Select your gender

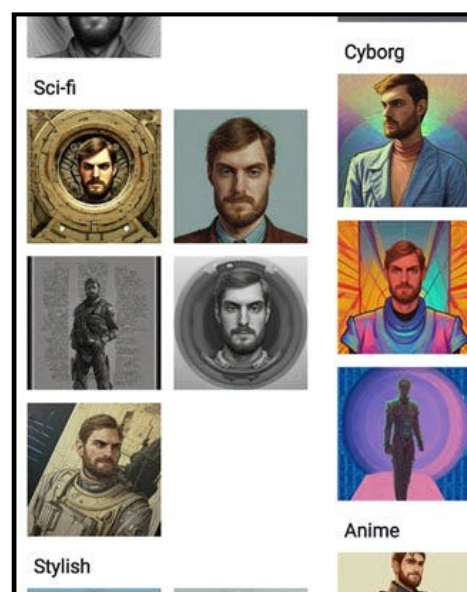
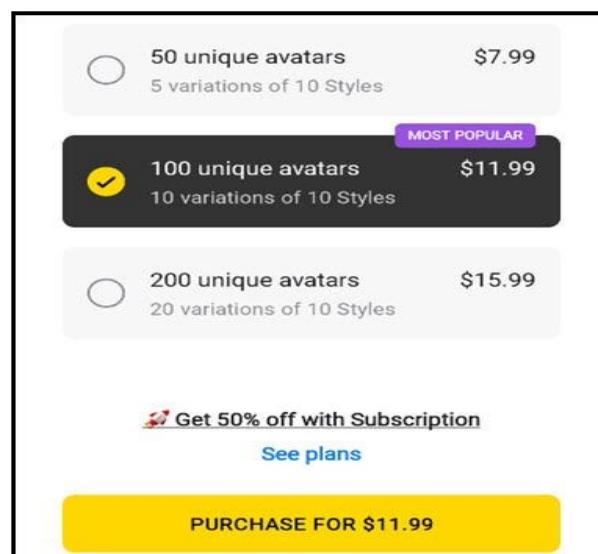
☐ Female

☒ Male

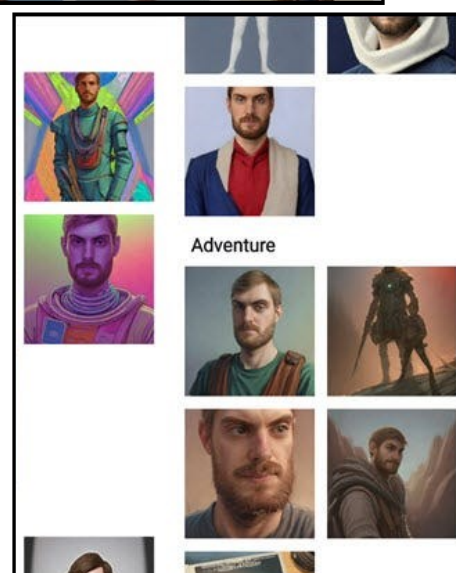
☐ Other

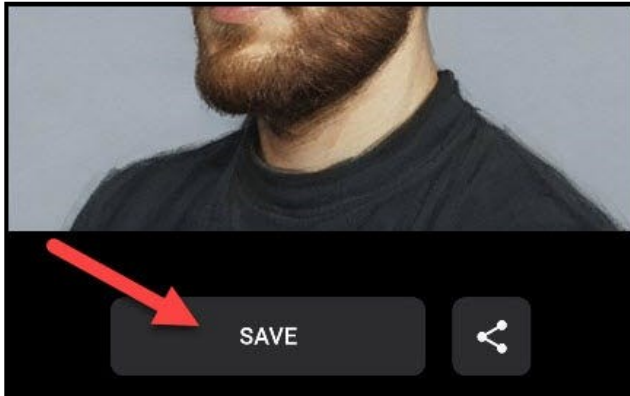
Here's where you'll have to pay some money. Without a subscription, you'll need to pay \$8 for 50 avatars, \$12 for 100, or \$16 for 200. The prices are cut in half with the subscription.

After you've made the purchase, you'll have to wait up to 40 minutes for the results. When they're done, you'll see the avatars organized into a few categories of styles, such as "Mystical" and "Sci-Fi."



Select an image to download or share with another app.





That's all there is to it!

You can repeat this as many times as you like, if you don't mind paying up. The results are mostly good, but you'll see a few misses and some don't even show your face at all. AI art is fun to play with, and this makes it even more personal.

Related: *What Happens if You Let a 4-Year-Old Use an AI Art Generator?*

Joe Fedewa is a Staff Writer at How-To Geek. He has been covering consumer technology for over a decade and previously worked as Managing Editor at *XDA-Developers*. Joe loves all things technology and is also an avid DIYer at heart. He has written thousands of articles, hundreds of tutorials, and dozens of reviews. ❖



TWO IF BY LAND, ONE IF BY AIR

By **Phil Sorrentino**, Newsletter Contributor, Sarasota Technology Users Group
www.thestug.org philsorr (at) yahoo.com

Well, that may not quite be the famous quote “One if by land, two if by sea,” that allowed Paul Revere to signal the patriots how the English army was coming. But the idea may be similar. Here it's a statement of choices, and in this case, the option is how the internet is connected to your home. Until recently, the only choice was “by land.” Yes, I know there is DishNet (communications-satellite provided internet), but that is a reasonably small percentage, and it doesn't fit in my metaphor-simile.

There are two land delivery methods in this general area of southwest Florida, cable, and fiber. In the Sun City Center area, Spectrum will provide internet to your home via a cable-TV type of cable brought right into your home. (Brighthouse was the provider until 2015 when Charter Communications acquired Brighthouse and folded it into Charter Spectrum.)

The other land internet provider is Frontier Communications. Frontier provides the internet via fiber optic cable brought right to your home. (The actual cable brought into your house may be fiber, but more typically, the fiber signal is converted to a cable-TV signal at the entry point, and a cable-TV type of cable is brought into the house.) Verizon installed all the fiber in the Sun City Center area, and then in 2016 sold that part of their business to Frontier.

So that's the two land choices, now for the air choice. The air choice is 5G wireless to the Home. Until 5G, distribution of the internet via wireless may not have been considered practical by Internet Service Providers for various reasons. But 5G's frequency spectrum, modulation schemes, and bandwidth appear to make it a practical way to connect homes to the internet. Keep in mind that this is a way to

connect the internet to the house. Once the home is connected, you don't need a 5G phone to use the internet; Wi-Fi connects all your devices in the home to the internet. A 5G phone is still required if you want to access internet resources directly using the 5G network.

A Brief Review

1G - The first generation of wireless systems was voice-oriented, analog cellular.

2G – The second generation was voice-oriented digital cellular.

3G – The third generation changed the emphasis from voice to data.

4G – The fourth generation increased the available bandwidth.

5G – The fifth generation continued to improve the available bandwidth and speed.

Most of us use phones that can take advantage of the 3G and 4G networks, though some newer, more expensive phones can use the 5G network. The chart below shows some of the major features of the five generations. Notice the bandwidth improvement; it went from Two Thousand bps to over One Thousand-Million bps.

Advertising for 5G states that 5G Wireless Technology is intended to deliver higher multi-Gbps data speeds, ultra-low latency, more reliability, increased network capacity, and availability, and provide a more consistent user experience for more users.

5G Internet to the Home is currently only available in certain cities. A recent estimate for T-Mobile indicated about 30 million people in about 40 states. So more than likely, all three

major internet companies, Verizon, AT&T, and T-Mobile, will eventually provide 5G Internet to the Home in many geographic areas, even if you are not seeing any advertising for it right now. The only advertising I've seen so far was an article that indicated that T-Mobile and Verizon services would be \$50/month with no contract, no equipment charges, no added fees, and no data caps. We'll see!

If you Google "5G internet to the Home," you will find websites that may help you determine if 5G to the Home is available in your area. T-Mobile and Verizon seem to have the most presence if the number of hits on Google is any indication. Verizon currently offers 5G internet to the home, referred to as "Verizon 5G Home Internet", in selected geographic areas.

I tried a Verizon site with my address and concluded it is not available in Sun City Center at this time. However, Verizon offered LTE Home Internet service for \$60/month if I was interested. LTE stands for Long Term Evolution. It is a term used for a particular type of 4G network that delivers fast mobile internet service.

I also learned that the T-Mobile offering is called "T-Mobile Home Internet" and that AT&T currently only offers a 4G Home Internet. After trying a few other websites, I concluded that 5G Internet to the home is probably not available from any of the three providers at this time in most places.

"5G Internet to the Home" is also called "Fixed Wireless 5G" to differentiate it from

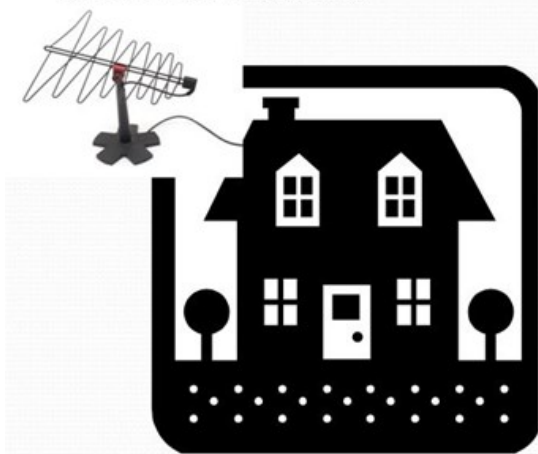
| Features | 1G | 2G | 3G | 4G | 5G |
|-------------------|-----------------|----------------|----------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| Start/Development | 1970/1984 | 1980/1999 | 1990/2002 | 2000/2010 | 2010/2015 |
| Technology | AMPS, NMT, TACS | GSM | WCDMA | LTE, WiMax | MIMO, mm Waves |
| Frequency | 30 KHz | 1.8 Ghz | 1.6 - 2 GHz | 2 - 8 GHz | 3 - 30 Ghz |
| Bandwidth | 2 kbps | 14.4 - 64 kbps | 2 Mbps | 2000 Mbps to 1 Gbps | 1 Gbps and higher |
| AccessSystem | FDMA | TDMA/CDMA | CDMA | CDMA | OFDM/BDMA |
| Core Network | PSTN | PSTN | Packet Network | Internet | Internet |

“5G Mobile,” which is the standard wireless service that supports our smartphones. Fixed Wireless refers to the equipment used to convert the 5G signals into an internet service. Fixed Wireless Internet is created from a fixed antenna connected to a nearby (and in the line of sight) wireless tower. The fixed antenna receives signals from the wireless tower, which it then sends to a router in your home to provide your home with local Wi-Fi access.

5G Antenna Tower



5G Home Antenna



5G Internet to the Home

5G Internet to the Home providers advertise that this type of Internet distribution will come with benefits such as higher connection speeds, with a potential to reach 1,000 Mbps, and lower latency. This parameter affects buffering while streaming movies and video chatting. Another benefit cited is that the installation is pretty simple and that, in many cases, it can be installed by the end user. Additionally, they are projecting higher reliability, lower prices, and no contract or hidden fees. We'll see how all this works out as 5G Internet to the Home becomes available in more and more locations. ❖

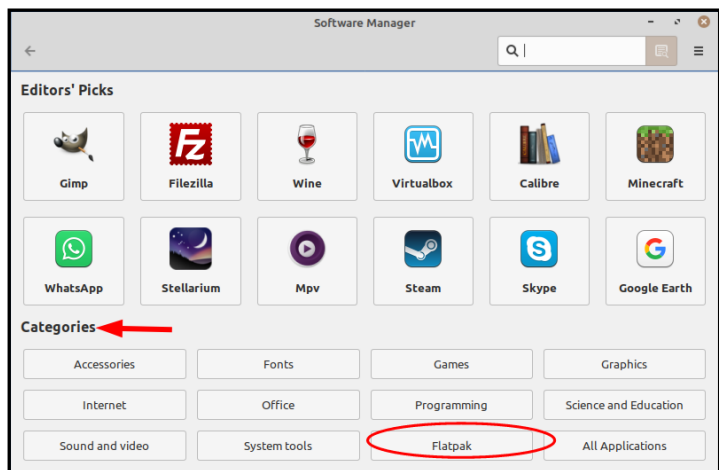
FLATPAKS WITH LINUX MINT

By **Cal Esneault**, Past President and leader of many Open-Source Workshops & SIGs
Cajun Clickers Computer Club
<https://www.clickers.org/>
cpesne (at) bellsouth.net

Linux software is installed using pre-compiled “packages.” The traditional method, called dynamic packaging, separately installs the main application and additional supporting sub-components (dependencies). Mint uses the Debian package management system and provides a graphical Software Manager program to help users install new software. To minimize developer efforts, new software versions usually only appear at two-year intervals. Note: security and bug fixes appear as soon as they are available.

Recently, Mint has included the ability to get more recent software using the Flatpak container method. A “container” packages the main program and dependencies as a single unit. Flatpak applications are universally available from flathub.org and are maintained by software developers. The Linux Mint software manager has a special section for Flatpak

programs (see below). Installation is analogous to the standard method. About 200 Flatpak applications are available at this time.



When installed in this manner, the application will be “integrated” into the menu system (it appears just like any other app). It can also be removed using the software manager.

While it may be rare that you urgently need a brand new version of standard programs (such as LibreOffice, GIMP, Inkscape, etc.), Flatpaks are very useful in obtaining apps typically unavailable through legacy packaging. A short list of some of these programs is in the chart below.

| | |
|---------------|---|
| Discord | Text chat for gamers; phone calls; replaces Skype |
| Gradio | Browse, search, play radio stations |
| Bitwarden | Password manager, sync among various devices |
| Visual Studio | Microsoft proprietary code packaged in a flatpak |
| Viber | Message or call via PC or mobile |
| Brackets | Code editor for HTML, CSS, and JavaScript |
| Shortcut | Video editor for Mac, Windows, Linux |
| Signal | Voice/Video private calls (PC and Phone) |
| Slack | Linux version; chat with team members |
| ElectronMail | Desktop client for ProtonMail |
| VueScan | Scanner software for Linux, Mac, Windows |

Although Flatpak packages come from outside sources and are not compiled by normal reputable groups (Debian, Ubuntu, Mint, etc.), security is enhanced by isolating them from the main OS and from other programs (known as

“sandboxing”). Also, developers are helped by writing their interfaces to comply with Flatpak runtime code versus standard Linux OS methods. Finally, some available programs usually run on Windows or Mac OS.

Flatpak apps are a way to augment your standard Linux Mint packaging system, not replace it. Flatpak and other container systems (Snap, AppImage) are established but still developing protocols to address issues raised by the Linux community. Try one out to see how you like the new way. ❖

Why Is Turning On a Computer Called “Booting”?

(Continued from page 5)

without help from someone else.

Before you can use your phone or PC, the device’s numerous pieces of hardware and software, like the [CPU](#) and [operating system](#), need to be powered or loaded in the correct order. If overseeing that critical chain of events was up to you, every [power cycle](#) would be a difficult and tedious chore.

Instead, all you have to do is press the power button, and a small program called the bootloader springs into action coordinating the process, thereby allowing the device to “get itself off the ground” so to speak. In this way, the computer or smartphone can be thought of as having “pulled itself up by its bootstraps” or, for short, “booted.”

So, while you might say, “I booted my computer”, it’s technically the device, not you, which can claim the miraculous feat of booting. ❖



FOR MANY HELPFUL TIPS AND TRICKS

Go to <https://www.apcug2.org> for all aspects of computing and operating systems.

TECHBOOMERS.COM

For learning how to use internet-based websites and 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.

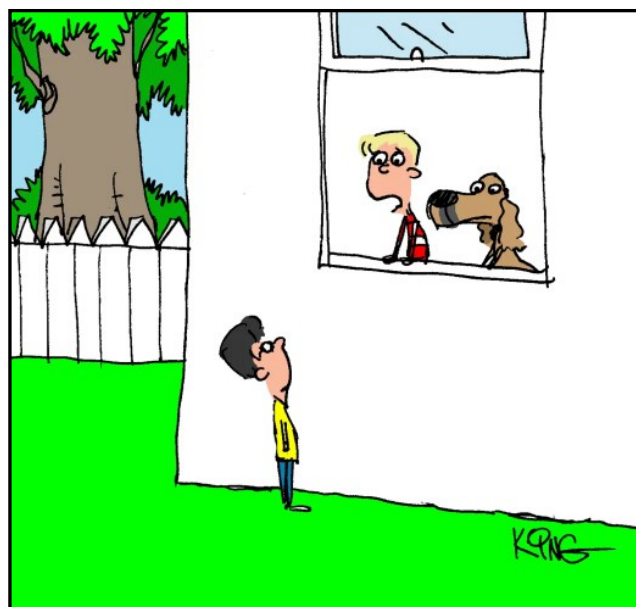
- Members can save at the **Pearson Technology** websites: InformIT, Cisco Press, Pearson IT Certification, Que Publishing, Adobe Press, and Peachpit Press.
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LAUGHING OUT LOUD

"My parents figured out a way to help me stop losing my phone."



"I can't come out. My dad needs help with his phone; my mom needs help with her computer; and my grandpa needs help with his TV. Being smart is a curse."

Cartoons from How-To Geek**NOTICE**

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

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION and BENEFITS of MEMBERSHIP

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 or email (See your roster) from knowledgeable members who are Quick Consultants listed in *User Friendly*.

— **Get help by email** by using our group email list. Send your questions to PC@LACS.Groups.IO

— **Receive important news** and announcements via *User Friendly* and LACS's email list.

— **Free APCUG** (International Association of Technology and Computer User Groups) **Webinars, virtual conferences, programs, and technical information.** Check *User Friendly* and your email to see what's offered and when.

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

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

— **Special Interest Groups** (SIGs) on various topics may be

NOTE: Please refer to page 2 of this issue for an update on the new dues-paying system and for the amount due for each category of membership in 2023.

Date: _____

Check # _____

LACS

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Please mail your dues and this form to:

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Please PRINT Clearly

☐ New ☐ Renewal

☐ New / Renewal with printed newsletter - \$40.00 ☐ Associate - \$12.00 ☐ Student - \$18.00

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☐ Contributor - \$50.00 ☐ Supporter - \$75.00 ☐ Benefactor - \$100.00 ☐ Other

Name: First _____

Last _____

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Address: _____

City, State, Zip + 4 _____

E-mail Address: _____

E-mail of Associate _____

Preferred Phone: _____

Publish Contact Info in Roster ☐ Yes ☐ No

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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.