User Friendly

*LACS
A Computer and
Technology
User Group*

NOTE: Refer to pages **2, 8, and 19** for updates on the new dues-paying system and for the amount due in 2023.

IN THIS ISSUE

**Tuesday, October 10,
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 **October 8**.
Guests may ask for the link by emailing Leah Clark at LeahClark424 (at) gmail.com before or on **October 8.**

OCTOBER 10, 2023 GENERAL MEETING

Meeting Time: 7:00 to 9:00 PM — via Zoom
Socializing and Questions & Answers: 6:30
Elections: See pages 5 and 6 for the current slate of candidates for the LACS 2024 Board. Nominations will be taken from the floor. If there are no contested positions, we will vote to accept them at this meeting. If there are, members will be mailed a ballot. Maybe we can arrange voting by email.
Topic: Members' Favorite Programs, Apps & Websites

Our members and their guests have lots of experience using computers and smartphones. Let's share that knowledge. Let's discuss good and bad programs, aps and websites. No one has to make a long presentation, but Stephanie will start the program with some of her ideas. You can share your screen, just talk, or ask relevant questions. We will get to know each other better and probably get some good ideas to try and maybe things to avoid. You can learn where to get information and webinars so that you can learn more than you get in our monthly meetings and User Friendly.

Everyone may participate when called upon (click on "Raise Your Hand" in Zoom's task line). If you want to talk for more than a few minutes, please let Stephanie know in advance what you will present and how much time you may need. Advance planning will make it a better organized program. If you want help in preparing your presentation including using Zoom, Leah or Stephanie can help. Or a few of you can ask for help in the 6:30-7:00 period. The more you want to say, the more it helps to plan it and try it out in advance.

To make things easier for attendees to hear, it helps to share a page with the names of products and /or the internet URLs, or to put it in Chat. A Florida computer user group has a monthly meeting (SIG) for technical help for members. We could consider doing that. The meeting will be recorded, so you will be able to review anything that interests you.

🌼 FROM YOUR PRESIDENT / EDITOR 🌼

LACS 2024 NOMINATIONS

Those who have agreed to be on the LACS board in 2024 are featured on pages 5 and 6 of this issue. We are so grateful for what these dedicated members are doing. They will appreciate help from all our members. Can you offer ideas and resources for presentations or *User Friendly* articles? Perhaps you can partner with one of the officers as a helper.

NATIONAL CYBERSECURITY AWARENESS MONTH

October is Cybersecurity Awareness Month. The Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency will have a new evergreen theme for 2023. Cybersecurity education continues to grow. The October *User Friendly* will go to press before the availability of their education resources, so watch for more information in the November issue.

WELCOME NEW AND RENEWING MEMBERS TO LACS

Gavin Faught,
LACS Treasurer

New Members (0)
Renewals (3)
Virginia Cottrell-Thomas
Heidi Feingersh   Clara Harris

THE LOS ANGELES COMPUTER SOCIETY
Composed by ChatGPT

After attending the APCUG Wednesday Workshop on Artificial Intelligence, I asked ChatGPT to write a poem about the Los Angeles Computer Society. This is what came up!

In the heart of sunny Los Angeles,
Where technology thrives and progress never ceases,
Stands the vibrant hub of minds so bright,
The Los Angeles Computer Society, shining with light.
A gathering of tech enthusiasts, both young and old,
Sharing knowledge and ideas, a story yet untold,
From coding to networking, they explore it all,
In this digital realm, they stand tall.
With monthly meetings and workshops galore,
They delve into the depths of tech galore,
From AI to cybersecurity, they never cease to learn,
The Los Angeles Computer Society, a place to discern.
Networking events bring professionals together,
Sharing experiences and insights, like birds of a feather,
Connections are made, careers are advanced,
In this community, opportunities are enhanced.
The Los Angeles Computer Society, a beacon of
    innovation,
Where technology's wonders become a fascination,
From Silicon Beach to Hollywood's glitz,
They embrace the future, where possibilities fit.
So raise a toast to this society grand,
Where minds unite and ideas expand,
The Los Angeles Computer Society, a place to grow,
In this digital world, they continue to glow.

LACS LUNCHEON MEETING

On September 20, LACS members and guests enjoyed lunch and fellowship at the Culver City Sizzler. We're now planning our holiday lunch in December.

WARNING: THE FULL YEAR'S DUES AMOUNT IS DUE IN JANUARY, 2024 FOR ALL MEMBERS.

All LACS members will pay their **full** annual dues at the same time, in December or January. Use the following chart to see the prorated amount you will owe for the rest of 2023. .

MEMBERSHIP LEVELS		Select the month you are renewing or are joining LACS					
	Yearly Rate	Monthly Rate	Dec.	Nov.	Oct.	Sept.	Aug.
New/Renewal with Newsletter	$40	$3.33	$3.33	$6.67	$10.00	$13.33	$16.67
New/Renewal with Electronic Newsletter	$30	$2.50	$2.50	$5.00	$7.50	$10.00	$12.50

GENERAL MEETING REPORT
September 12, 2023

By **Leah Clark,** LACS President/Editor
Topic: Practicing Safe Computing in the
        Time of AI
Speaker: Hal Bookbinder
The Jewish Genealogy Society of
the Conejo Valley & Ventura County

Hal Bookbinder delivered a comprehensive presentation on cybersecurity, emphasizing the importance of being proactive and taking steps to protect personal information online. He provided practical advice on contingency planning. He discussed the benefits and drawbacks of artificial intelligence (AI) and a guide to avoiding common AI scams.

Contingency Planning

We must recognize that there will be computer and internet outages. What are the things that you need to be able to do? Keep some cash around just in case credit cards can't be processed. If you back up to the cloud, what happens if access to the cloud gets disrupted? Your data is probably still protected, but you can't get to it.

What if we have an earthquake, the hard drive next to your computer is destroyed, and your only backup is on that hard drive? Have at least two backups, one locally and one in the cloud, so that you're protected.

You know the mantra about strong and varied passwords. So many of us use the same password repeatedly, or we use easily guessable passwords. If you can remember it, AI can figure it out quickly. Hal focuses on contingency planning, that is, being ready for whatever might happen.

Disruptions are going to occur. Data will be lost. If you haven't experienced it yet, your computers will fail. Networks will fail. They'll go down when you most need them. If you can't get to your stuff, you have a problem. It would be best if you had backups. Back up your data locally and in the cloud. If some-

thing is important, like having your laptop working, have a backup laptop, or a tablet as a backup for your desktop computer. If you don't have a second browser on your computer, download one. They're free. You might always use Google or Firefox, but what happens if Google gets corrupted and you don't have Firefox to take over for you?

We depend on GPS to get where we want to go in our cars. What happens if the app you always use for directions fails or you can't get to it? There are alternate driving apps out there. Have one ready to go.

They always say not to print out your passwords; that's nonsense. Do print them out, but keep them in a secure location. You may have all your passwords sitting in a password manager out in the cloud, but what if access to the cloud is disrupted?

Our phones have hot spots, yet many have never tested them. If your access to the internet through your ISP isn't working, and you need to get to the internet, you can bring up the hot spot on your phone. It's easy to bring it up, but if you have never done it, trying to figure out how to do it when needed is not the right time. Prepare for it.

When we have a local disaster, the local phone lines may be jammed. But you may be able to call a long-distance number. So, arrange for a relay point with a relative in a distant location or another state. Tell them that if there is an issue, you'll call them so they can call your family. Be sure they have their current phone numbers.

Identify an alternate place for your family to gather in a disaster like an earthquake. If everyone is to gather at your house and they can't get there, what will they do? Have an alternate place for them to gather if your primary place doesn't work.

Think about how you can back up your phone if it gets lost or doesn't work.

Every one of us is at risk for being a data breach victim. What can you do to be ready for a breach? Use different complex passwords, choose multi-factor authentication, monitor statements, bills, and credit reports, and check passwords for anything that doesn't look right at haveibeenpwned.com.

Don't click on any link if you get a scary-looking error message. Power your PC off and on. Don't let scammers panic you into doing something. Hal gave us several red flags that may indicate scams. He also gave us more hints for securing our computers and for protecting our identity.

What about anti-malware software? Those of you using Windows devices know that they come with Windows Defender. It now stands up quite well to commercial products. If you install a commercial antivirus program, Windows Defender will go quiet. You cannot run two antivirus programs at the same time.

The virus risk is much less on MACs than on PCs. Only about 7 % of the computers out there are MACs. Most of the folks who are writing malware have their focus on PCs rather than MACs.

Remember, think of whatever you put out there on the internet as broadcasting it to the world, even if that wasn't your intention. Be careful with what you share on social media.

The Pros & Cons of Artificial Intelligence

Sam Altman, the CEO of Open AI, who brought you ChatGPT, said, "Like all technology revolutions, I expect there to be a significant impact on jobs. I believe that there will be far greater jobs on the other side, and the jobs of today will get better." That doesn't mean there won't be disruption getting there. But he also said, "My worst fear is that we cause significant harm to the world if this technology goes wrong."

A lot of good will come from artificial intelligence in science and discovery. AI can use incredible analytics that go beyond what any human being can do in a lifetime.

AI will allow for much better precision medical care, which will be able to be tailored to each individual. There are so many factors, that a doctor can't possibly know it all. With AI, we'll be able to do amazing things.

It will disrupt careers just as computers affected the travel agent business and many others, and the horseless buggy got rid of buggy whips. AI will undoubtedly disrupt careers, but Hal believes it will create other jobs that will be even better. And maybe the thirty-two-hour work week is ahead of us. AI will be able to structure information to make bad information even more believable. When we look on the Internet for answers, we can often get misinformation.

Scams that already exist will become even more potent with AI. You're all familiar with the grandparents scam, where you get a call from your grandson who needs money immediately, or he will be in jail. They hope to panic you into actually sending the money. AI is going to be able to capture your grandson's voice, so you'll think it is him. Other scams will focus more directly on you, making them seem more real. Remain aware, remain vigilant, don't let your guard down. Independently verify. Do not assume that it is legitimate, even if it looks legitimate. Do not share personal data when contacted. Hal presented ten rules to protect yourself from AI scams.

The White House, with several companies, has addressed security concerns, biases, etc. They promised to establish independent test labs that would actually report to their competitors and to the government. That's what they promised. Let's hope it works.

Hal and the discussion after the presentation gave much more information and advice for keeping us safe online. LACS members received the recording of this presentation. His 95 safe computing articles are available at https://tinyurl.com/SafeComputingArticles. ❖

We are grateful for the following officers and directors who have graciously agreed to serve for another term. We wholeheartedly thank them for their dedication. They would greatly appreciate the support of our members in various ways. Suggestions for program presenters, contributions of articles for *User Friendly*, ideas for activities, arranging special interest group meetings (SIGs). Any form of assistance would be highly valued. Let's work together so that the workload is shared., rather than burdening just a few individuals.

PRESIDENT
LEAH CLARK

I have been a member of LACS for 25 years, serving as the newsletter editor for ten years and as the president for five years. I have been secretary, director, welcome chair, and SIG leader. I have continuously learned, formed friendships, and had fun.

I have a bachelor's degree in microbiology from UCLA and have worked as a clinical laboratory scientist in hematology at UCLA for 43 years. My husband and I explored much of the country in our RV. I first learned about LACS from a member we met at an RV park. I am also the vice-regent of a DAR chapter and enjoy crafts, needlework, and gardening.

VICE PRESIDENT
STEPHANIE NORDLINGER

The VP helps to select and invite general meeting speakers and may stand in for the president. I was a member of the UCLA PC Users Group (the mid-1980s-1991) and helped to incorporate LACS in 1991. I have been President, VP, U.F. Editor, Counsel, Smartphone SIG Leader, product review coordinator, author, product reviewer, and Groups.IO Coordinator. I am a nearly retired Los Angeles attorney with degrees from UCLA (Political Science), U. C.

Berkeley (Economics), and Loyola University School of Law (Los Angeles). My aim is to have varied and stimulating programs to interest and inform many people. I welcome your input. I am willing to give up this job if a qualified member wants it. I would like to train someone to become VP. LACS has taught me many better ways to use PCs. and other technologies.

SECRETARY
MARCIA JACOBS

Important events in my life

- My three daughters
- Six years as Executive director for the March of Dimes for 47 cities in the Northeastern Massachusetts Chapter
- Six years as a stockbroker and financial planner in Boston, being the first woman member of the Boston Investment Club!
- Two years in Real Estate in Beverly Hills
- Ten years owner of Tripmaster Travel in Century City
- 25 years Owner of Carousel Cafe and Santa Monica Gifts
- Retired since 2016
- Three years as LACS secretary

TREASURER
GAVIN FAUGHT

My name is Gavin Faught, and I'm looking forward to my fifth year as Treasurer of LACS. Besides being your Treasurer, I was Vice President for the fraternity Phi Beta Lambda at UC Davis, and I was Treasurer for the Accounting Society at CSU Sacramento. Computer topics that interest me are Information technology (IT), cybersecurity, and the programming language, Python. My hobbies include playing and recording music and working out. I am looking forward to making LACS the best it can be.

DIRECTOR
MARK PRESKY

In the early 1970s, the University of California, at Davis, was conned into bestowing Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Biological Sciences and Microbiology on me. I also took several courses in anthropology and animal ethology. After internship and licensing, I worked in the departments of pathology at UCLA and Tarzana Medical Centers. In 1997, I wandered into a middle school in Culver City one evening and encountered a motley group of people speaking a strange language. In the fashion of my previous anthropology/ethology studies, I decided to study them. The odd language was computerese, and I have been studying this group since. I later persuaded them to allow me to join them on their Board of Directors, and have been terrorizing the members of that body since.

DIRECTOR
LOLING BECKMAN

I was born in China and raised in Argentina; therefore I am fluent in three languages: Chinese, Spanish and English.
In my IT career, I started as a programmer/Analyst and ended up as Department Manager for the Procurement System at an aerospace company (now Northrup Grumman) with a $10 Million yearly Budget.
I joined LACS in 2001and was the coordinator for the Culver City Senior Center Friday Computer Lab monitor group.
Recently I accepted the position of LACS Database Manager. I will be maintaining the Membership Database. I am happy to be able to contribute and help our computer club.

DIRECTOR
HOWARD KRIVOY

LACS has greatly enhanced my computer experience. Serving as a director has been an opportunity to give something back.
I spent several years writing advertising for JBL speakers and other audio products. I wrote on a typewriter. Remember typewriters? Next came outside sales to auto mechanics and car dealers. I knew most of the local horse thieves.
My hobbies include square dancing and target shooting. I played trumpet and trombone in a marching band. I enjoy jazz, Dixieland, ragtime, and Sousa marches. I like science fiction.
My first computer was a DOS laptop. I CAME TO LACS FOR ADVICE when I had to purchase or return it. Everyone said, "Send it back." So, here I am.
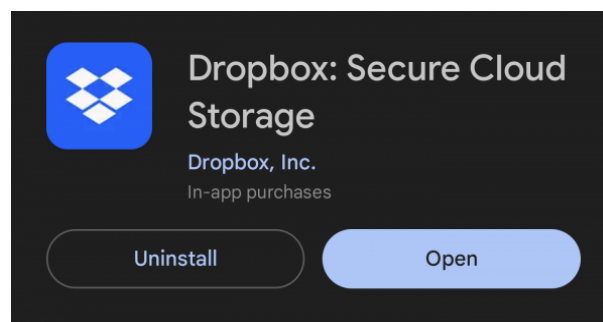Serving a third term would be an honor.

BACK-UP SMARTPHONE PHOTOS USING DROPBOX

From **The Best of Ask Leo**
Avoid losing everything if you lose your phone.
By [Leo A. Notenboom](#)

Smartphones are a popular way to take snapshots and videos. Tools like Dropbox are great for making sure those are backed up automatically.

(Screenshot: askleo.com)

Someone recently told me that the storage on their phone was primarily full of photos. I, of course, asked if they had backed up, to which I got an exasperated "Yes, of course" in return. Apparently, I talk about backing up a lot.

What that person didn't realize is just how many people regularly lose everything on their phone, including their photos, if they lose their phone or their phone stops working.

Don't let that be you.

Back Up Smartphone Photos

Use an app like Dropbox to automatically back up the photos and videos you take on your smartphone. In the app's settings, look for "Camera Uploads" or similar features, and make sure they're enabled.

Install the Dropbox App

Go to the Google Play Store or the Apple App Store on your mobile device and search for Dropbox.

Install the app and accept the permissions it requires to do its job.

Run the app and sign in with your Dropbox account. If you don't have an account, I recommend you create one online first at dropbox.com. I also recommend enabling two-factor authentication for additional security.
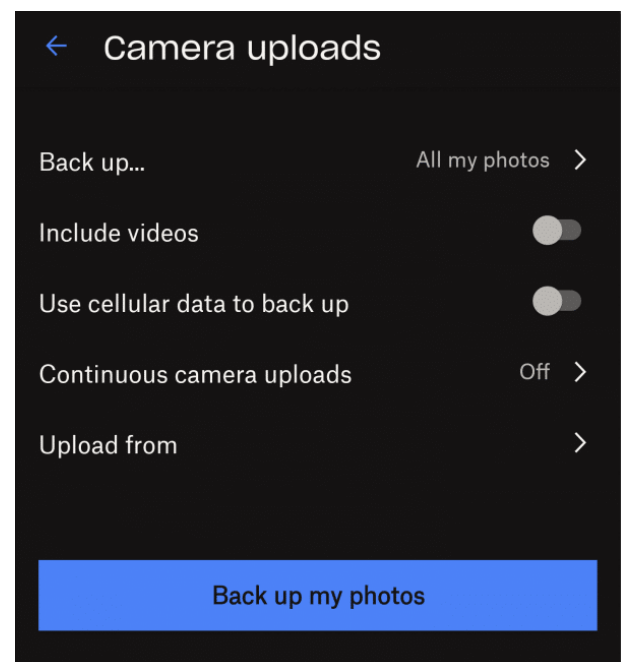
Enable Auto-Upload

If you're setting up the app for the first time, Dropbox may offer to turn on the auto-upload feature for you. Otherwise, in the app settings (accessed by tapping "Account" in the lower right), tap on **Camera Uploads**. Turn on "Include videos" if you like, and then tap on **Back up my photos**.

(See screen shot on top of next column.)

Dropbox will begin uploading and backing up the photos you've already taken. From now on, however, the photos you take will be uploaded almost immediately.
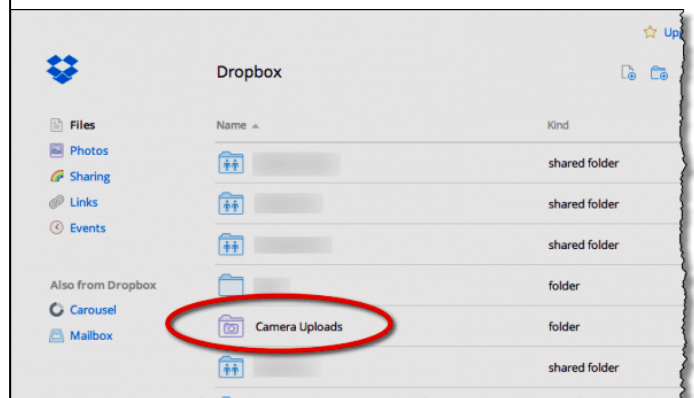
Uploaded where?

(Screenshot: askleo.com)

Accessing Your Uploaded Photos

Dropbox creates a new folder called Camera Uploads.

Examine the contents of that folder, and

you'll find all your photos.

If Dropbox is installed on more than one device with the same account, the photos will be downloaded to all those devices as well.

Controlling the Upload

Dropbox Settings allow finer control over exactly what and when Dropbox uploads.

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.

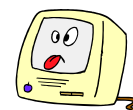**To pay by Zelle,** log into your bank with your username and password. Select **Transfer Money > Send Money with Zelle.** Follow the instructions. The name of the recipient is **Los Angeles Computer Society.** Select **Send by email**. The email address is: **lacomputersociety@gmail.com**. The wording 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. 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, October 2

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: October 10

Topic: Members' Favorite Programs, Apps and Websites
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. Allow extra time to be sure you have the link, to get or update your Zoom software if you have not used it before or recently, or to solve other issues before the meeting starts.

October 2: LACS Board Meeting

October 9: Indigenous Peoples Day

October 10: LACS General Meeting
    Nominations and possible elections

October 31: Halloween

Watch your email for the dates of APCUG Wednesday Workshops and Saturday Safaris.

VISIT OTHER APCUG COMPUTER USER GROUPS AND SEE THEIR NEWSLETTERS

Many APCUG groups allow members of other groups to attend their meetings. LACS heartedly welcomes visitors from other user groups, and we are welcome to join other groups' meetings.

Go to www.APCUG2.org . Click on **Member Benefits**, then on **Groups Sharing Meetings** or on **Newsletters Online**. A list of groups sharing meetings is arranged by time zones.

UPCOMING MEETINGS/EVENTS

October 10: Members' Favorite (or disliked) Programs, Apps, and Websites
Nominations and possible elections
November 14: TBA
December: Holiday Party
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. 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.

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 your browser's search or into your 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
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 - 1, 8, 10
MS PowerPoint - 8, 11
MS Publisher - 2
PDF 24 - 8

Photoshop - 10
Quicken - 8, 12
Thunderbird - 7
Utilities - 7, 8
Visual Basic - 5
Websites - 5
Windows - 7, 8
WordPerfect - 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 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	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
Immediate Past President	Stanley Johnson	
APCUG Representative	Leah Clark	
Corporate Counsel	Stephanie Nordlinger	
Database Manager	Loling Beckman	
Groups.IO Email 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 mail you a copy. Only LACS members may receive a roster.

WHY EVERYONE NEEDS TO STOCK UP ON POWER BANKS

By **DAVE MCQUILLING**
How-To Geek
https://www.howtogeek.com

Skrypnykov Dmytro/Shutterstock.com

We've all made purchases we regret, especially when it comes to tech. But there is one object that's pretty cheap, practical, and will more than prove its worth over its life. That's the humble power bank.

Like all batteries, there is a limit to a power bank's lifespan. And technology also advances, so obsolescence is a consideration. If you dig through a drawer, you may have an old 1,000 mAh (milliamp hours) power bank, which was enough to fill a phone ten years ago — things have come a long way since then, and modern power banks are arguably an everyday essential. They're very cheap and have a bunch of applications. Not only should you own a power bank, you should have a reasonable collection of them.

It Can Bail You Out in a Pinch

As advanced as modern phone batteries are, heavy use can see most phones' charge deplete in less than a day. Worse still, there are times you may leave the house having forgotten to charge your phone the night before. Or an extended trip may see you left with a dead smartphone.

A power bank about your person can bail you out in these situations. Banks sitting at around 10,000 mAh of capacity can charge the average phone twice before they empty. They're also quite small and portable. Ultra-portable models are also available and will get a full charge into most devices. Either one can slip into a backpack, purse, or even a pocket without causing any trouble.

It would be best to pack a charging cable, though, as cheaper power banks tend not to have a wireless charging option. There are power banks with USB-C or lightning cable jacks built-in instead of generic USB ports. But I find it's best not to limit your possibilities.

You'll also be in a position where you can help other people out when they need a quick charge. My wife's phone spends a lot of time in the red zone, so I often find myself handing her a portable power bank on the way out of the door. I was also at a bar in Boston recently, and the wireless charging stations they had built into the table weren't working. As I had a power bank on me, I was able to help an acquaintance put enough juice into his phone to get himself home.

Also, there are power outages. Your home may not have electricity, but your phone can keep you in touch with friends and relatives. Your phone's internet is also likely to work, even if a storm caused extensive damage. It's a vital lifeline, and a stack of fully charged power banks can keep it going for a very long time.

It Expands the Functionality of Other Objects

Yuriy Golub/Shutterstock.com

A power bank can help fix or improve other devices that have battery woes. If your elderly cellphone can only hold a charge for a few hours, a power bank can help it function. Equally, if you're a VR enthusiast who likes long sessions on the Meta Quest, a power bank is a great way to extend your play session while staying "wireless." The same applies to PlayStation and Xbox controllers. If you don't have a spare battery, and you don't want to trail a wire across the room, a power bank can keep your controller going as long as you need to.

Then, you have objects that are designed to work with power banks. Many carry-on suitcases, backpacks, and jackets have built-in wires and compartments meant to hold a power bank. Attach a fully charged power bank to the USB cable in said compartment, and you'll have a handy outlet somewhere on the case, bag, or coat you can use to charge a device. There are also specialist devices which can charge objects like Apple Watches on the fly.

There are also things like camping trips and through hikes to consider. Portable solar panels aren't great, but packing a few power banks can help keep essential devices like flashlights, smartwatches, and navigation tools charged.

Perhaps surprisingly, it can also keep you warm. Heated coats and jackets are widely available with electrical elements running through them. Plug a power bank into one, hit a button, and you have your own personal heater on your body.

They're Incredibly Cheap

Money is tight these days, and non-essential electronics may be the first thing on the chopping block when trying to save. However, power banks aren't expensive and provide much value for a fairly reasonable outlay. You can get a high-quality power bank from a reputable supplier for less than $20.

Power banks get even cheaper when electronics are on sale. You can snag between 25% and 50% off in some cases. So, occasions like Prime Day, Black Friday, Cyber Monday, and post-holiday season sales events are an ideal time to stock up. They're also something you can't really have too many of.

If you only have one, you may forget to charge it, and you won't be able to use it when needed. If you have several and keep them in a designated area, at least one will likely be charged, and seeing the number of charged power banks dwindle may remind you to plug another in as you take the one you're going to use.

Smaller is Sometimes Better

Anker

It's worth noting that, in most cases, you're probably better off with multiple smaller power banks than one large-capacity one .

Having a 40,000 mAh bank capable of powering a laptop or charging a phone eight

times might initially sound like a good idea, but you're actually limiting yourself by going big. Even if it costs more, multiple smaller power banks, ideally around 10,000 mAh or so, are more practical. You're more likely to have at least one of them charged. Particularly, you can have a depleted one on charge while using a fully charged one.

Then, there is portability to consider. Larger batteries weigh a lot and can't be transported as easily as smaller power banks. The weight may not feel like much initially, but after you've been carrying the bag your power bank is in for a while, you'll start to notice. You're also prohibited from taking power banks larger than 27,000 mAh on planes.

Keeping a few power banks around won't do you any harm. They're like a multitool or a smartwatch. They just make life easier. If you don't have one, you're unaware, but when you do, you'll wonder how you survived without them in your life.

But why stop at one? As stated, you're better off with multiple power banks. If you spot one on sale or have some spare cash, pull the trigger and add it to your collection. You'd have to establish a battery hoarding complex before you actually damage your finances, and the more you have, the more likely one will be ready when you need it.

If you're trying to bulk out your collection without breaking the bank, I can recommend the [Anker PowerCore 10000 Portable Charger](). The fact it still uses Micro USB to charge is a bit of a downside, but it makes up for that with its compactness, capacity, and reliability. If you can afford to splash out, the [Zendure Power Bank 10000mAh Mini]() is ideal for those who favor portability.

Dave McQuilling has spent over ten years writing about almost everything, but technology has always been one of his main interests. He has previously worked for newspapers, magazines, radio stations, websites, and television stations in both the U.S. and Europe. ❖

IS CHARGING YOUR PHONE ALL NIGHT BAD FOR THE BATTERY?

By [Joe Fedewa]()
How-To Geek

Smartphones have advanced a lot over the years, but they still basically last about a day on a charge. That means most of us are juicing up the battery all night while we sleep. Is that good for the battery?

Inked Pixels/Shutterstock.com

Contrary to what you may think, battery technology has improved quite a bit. The problem is that phones can also do much more now, requiring more power. The end result is bigger, better batteries that still need to be charged daily.

Information Changes

What makes this situation complicated is there's a lot of contradicting information out there. Maybe you've heard that charging your phone overnight is bad. Perhaps you heard it's completely fine.

Some of this confusion is due to advancements in battery technology. Things that were true at one time are no longer valid. That's a natural part of learning more about how things work. So, what's the deal right now? Let's dive in.

How Charging Works

The moral of this story is similar to other topics revolving around how to "properly" use gadgets. In most cases, the device was designed to handle whatever it is you're worried

about. For example, you don't have to close apps on Android; it's designed to handle multi-tasking for you.
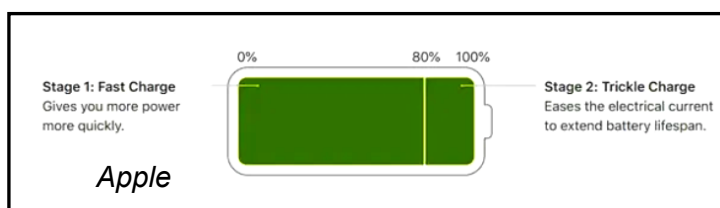

Amazon

Smartphones are designed with protections in place to keep the battery and other components inside safe. One thing that can do damage to phones is overheating, which is where a lot of the concern for charging overnight comes in.

Most phones will charge quickly when you first plug them in or place them on a wireless charger. This is so if you just need some extra juice in a hurry, you don't have to wait long. However, after a while, charging will slow down and stop entirely when it reaches 100%.

Of course, since it stops charging at 100%, the battery will slowly discharge. Once it drops to 99% again, it will sip a minimal amount of power to return to 100%. That cycle repeats itself until you take it off the power. The phone is never being overcharged, but it is almost constantly charging.

Advanced Protection

Stage 1: Fast Charge
Gives you more power more quickly.

0%   80%   100%

Stage 2: Trickle Charge
Eases the electrical current to extend battery lifespan.

Apple

You may have heard that keeping a battery charged between 20-80% is best. Apple and some Android manufacturers have introduced extra features to keep your phone in that
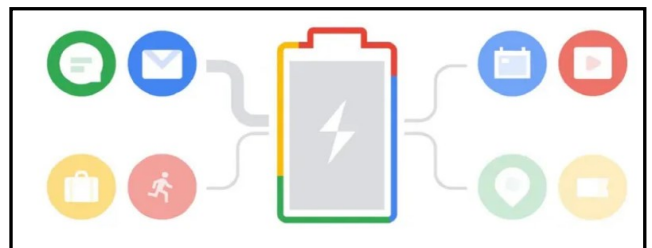
range as much as possible.

Beginning with 2019's iOS 13, iPhones have an "Optimized Battery Charging" feature. When enabled, the phone will stay around 80% for most of the night. An algorithm learns when you typically wake up and charges the device the rest of the way before that. You will still start the day at 100%, but it wasn't cycling between 100 and 99% all night.

Some Android devices have essentially the same feature. OnePlus calls it "Optimized Charging;" Google Pixel phones have "Adaptive Charging." Samsung Galaxy devices take it a step further, allowing you to cap the battery at 85% constantly.

If you charge your phone overnight, it's a good idea to enable these features if you have them. It makes charging overnight slightly less problematic.

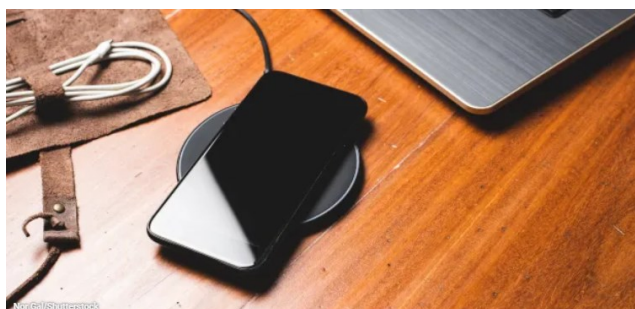### How Do We Define "Bad"?

Google

With those protections in place, it's very, very difficult for you to do any undue damage to your phone's battery. However, batteries will degrade over time, and there's nothing anyone can do about that. It's just a matter of how much you are helping that process along.

Charging cycles are what affect the lifespan of your battery. The more charging cycles it goes through, the more the battery degrades. This is why keeping your phone between 20-80% charge as much as possible is best.

That's where charging overnight can speed up the battery degradation process. Cycling between 99-100% for several hours is sort of like flipping a light on and off. It's not going to make the bulb explode into flames, but it's also not particularly good for the bulb.

That's the question we must ask when it comes to charging batteries overnight. What exactly constitutes "bad" for the battery? Is your phone going to overheat and start on fire? No, there are protections in place to prevent that---as long as you use the correct equipment. Will it take some life off the battery? Yes, but it may not be noticeable to you.

Charge Overnight Without Damage

Nor Gal/Shutterstock

There are some things you can do to charge your phone overnight and mitigate some of the downsides. First and foremost, make sure the device has room to breathe. Overheating is a big concern, so give it space and don't cover it up with anything.

The other big thing you can do is choose the correct charging equipment. It is very important to use the chargers provided with the device and those specifically designed for it. Beyond that, you may consider avoiding "fast charging" during bedtime. Getting to 100% slower means spending less time in that 99-100% cycle.

Other than that, you must accept that batteries can't last forever. Using your phone is degrading the battery. There's no getting around that. There are some tips you can use to slow that degradation down, but most of us have

no other convenient time to charge up our devices. Charging all our devices overnight is a part of life now.

About The Author

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. ❖

THE RUSSIANS ARE COMING

By **David Kretchmar**, Hardware Technician, Sun City Summerlin Computer Club https://www.scscc.club dkretch ** gmail.com
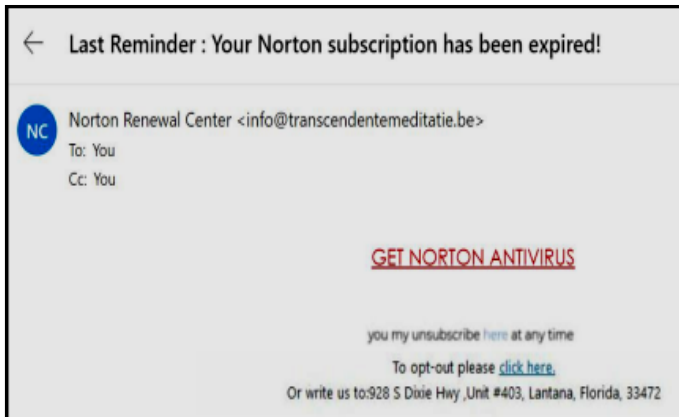
As Russia's invasion of Ukraine grinds on, it becomes increasingly likely that Russia will intensify cyberattacks on perceived enemies, especially the United States. As a result, at least one major federal agency is no longer allowing employees to use any USB devices on their government computers. The ability to read/write optical media, CDs, and DVDs has been completely cut off.

Ironically, the federal government is addressing the least likely avenue a cyber attacker is likely to use to install malware on their systems. The threat is most likely to manifest via an email containing a link to a site that will download a virus to an unsuspecting user's computer.

The U.S. government does attach a warning to each email received outside the government domain. These warnings are unnecessary on your home computer, not because the threat is not real, but because ALL of the emails you receive come from outside of your system. And it is almost certain this is the

vector hackers will try to use to infect your system. Based on experience, I can safely predict that an infected email arriving in your Inbox will appear to be either from a trusted friend or a business entity with which you might have had some business.
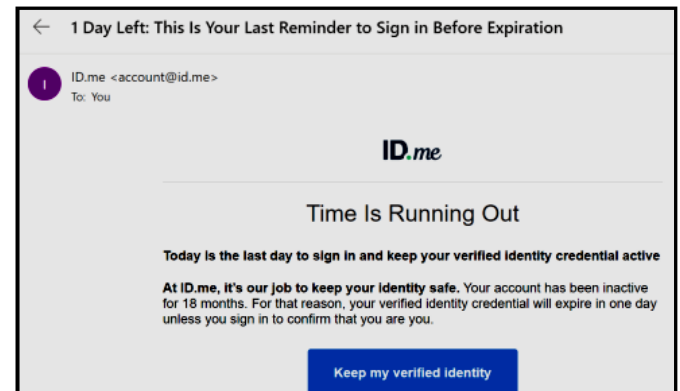
Here is an example of an email I received recently:

For at least 20 years, I have not run Norton Antivirus on any computer I have owned. This email was obviously a fake and, most likely, an attempt to compromise my system. An obvious clue is the sending address: "info@transcendentalmediate.be." In addition to the not-very-professional sounding name, the sender is obviously based out of Belgium (.be is the internet country code top-level domain (ccTLD) for Belgium.) I know that Norton is based in Mountain View, California.

Another term for the activity represented by this type of email is phishing. Phishing is still the world's most common cyber threat. It is estimated three billion fraudulent emails are sent out every day in an attempt to compromise sensitive information. In 2022, according to CyberTalk.org, 30% of phishing email recipients clicked on the malicious link.

This was easy for me to spot; I do not use ID.me. However, this was a more sophisticated attempt since the ID.me sending address was spoofed. I could see this was not the actual sending address by hovering my mouse cursor over the address, NOT CLICKING.

Here is another example, also from my inbox:

You are most likely to be fooled by an email that appears to be sent from a trusted friend, as I was several years ago. My friend's computer had been compromised, and the virus perpetuated itself by invading my friend's contact list and sending infected emails to all his contacts. Be aware that the risk you will be exposed to malware infection is higher than it has ever been before. If you have any doubts about clicking on a link in any email message, don't do it. ❖

Backing Up Smartphone Photos
(Continued from page 7)

(*Here is a list of settings from Leo's talk. Go to* https://askleo.com/back-smartphone-photos-using-dropbox *for details of each.*)

• **Back up:** All photos or new photos only.

• **Include videos:** With this off, only photos will be backed up.

• **Use cellular data to back up**

• **Continuous camera uploads**

• **Upload from:** There may be several folders containing photos on your phone. ❖

APCUG NEWS

LACS IS A MEMBER OF APCUG

An International Association of Technology and Computer User Groups

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

FOR MANY HELPFUL TIPS AND TRICKS

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

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.

TECHBOOMERS.COM

For learning how to use internet-based web-sites and applications for free.

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

LAUGHING OUT LOUD

Computers

Composed by ChatGPT

In a world of ones and zeros,
Where computers reign supreme,
There's a tale of a quirky machine,
Whose antics were quite extreme.
His name was Larry, the computer guy,
With wires and circuits in his brain,
He loved to crack jokes and make us laugh,
Even when things went down the drain.
One day, Larry got a virus attack,
His screen turned blue, oh what a fright,
But instead of panicking, he said with a grin,
"I guess it's time for a virus fight!"
He donned a cape made of Ethernet cables,
And a helmet made of old floppy disks,
With a keyboard shield and a mouse sword,
He fought viruses with mighty risks.
He battled Trojans and worms with flair,
And malware trembled at his sight,
Larry's laughter echoed through the air,
As he defeated each digital blight.
But amidst the chaos and the code,
Larry never lost his sense of fun,
He'd crack jokes and puns in binary,
Making even the toughest hackers run.
So here's to Larry, the computer guy,
Whose humor was truly one of a kind,
He showed us that even in the digital world,
Laughter and joy are what we should find.

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.

— 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 created by members.

> **NOTE: See 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   **New or Renewal Membership Application**

See note above for amount changes for 2023

Please mail your dues and this form to:

Los Angeles Computer Society, **11664 NATIONAL BLVD. #343, LOS ANGELES CA 90064-3802**

Please PRINT Clearly   [   ] New   [   ] Renewal

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

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

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

Name: First   Last

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

Address:

City, State, Zip + 4

E-mail Address: E-mail of Associate

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

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

First Class Mail

Los Angeles Computer Society

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.