

User Friendly

LACS
**A Computer and
Technology
User Group**

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**Come to the LACS lunch
meeting on Thursday,
June 20. See page 2**

Watch your email for APCUG
workshops and
other upcoming events.



**LACS IS A MEMBER OF
APCUG**

**An International
Association of Technology
and Computer User Groups**

www.apcug2.org

www.facebook.com/APCUG

www.X.com/apcug (Twitter)

JUNE 11, 2024 GENERAL MEETING

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

Socializing and Questions & Answers: 6:30

Speaker: **Judy Taylour**, APCUG Speakers Bureau and
Region 10 (California) Advisor

Topics: 1. Social Media for Seniors or Anyone
2. Facebook, Creating a Safe Environment

What is social media? Do you want to find old friends, make new friends, or keep up with what your children and grandchildren are doing? Learn about what to share and what not to share. How often you should post and more will be included in this presentation. Doctors say that social media is healthy — it keeps seniors mentally and socially vital. Learn what you need to do to be more secure when using Facebook.

Meet Our Presenter



Judy Taylour is a 34-year member of the Santa Clarita Valley Computer Club where she serves as President, Editor, and Webmaster. She was also co-facilitator for the Southern California Regional User Group Summit (SCRUGS), a group of computer clubs' leaders in Southern California that met quarterly for over 20 years to share ideas and presenter information, solve problems, etc. Judy taught adult education computer classes for 22 years in her local high school district. She is also a member of the Pierce College Computer Applications and Office Technologies Advisory Committee. It meets to suggest courses and hardware for the next school year. She is a firm believer in life-long learning.

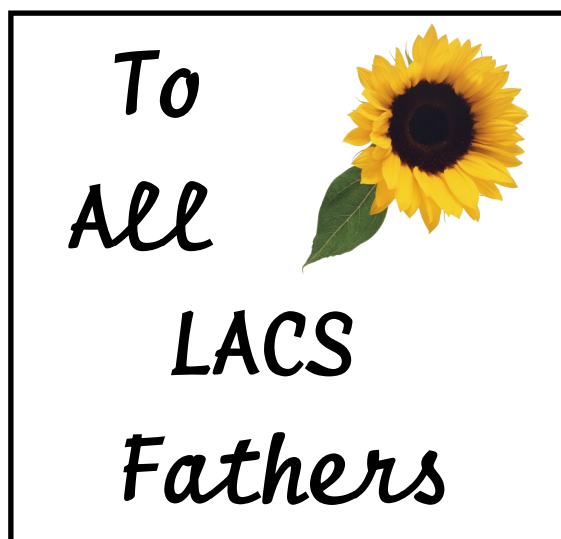
LACS members on the PC groups.IO list will receive the Zoom link to this meeting before or on **June 9**. Just click on it to enter the meeting.

Guests may ask for the link by emailing Leah Clark at leahjc@sbcglobal.net before or on **June 9**. We can help you learn how to use Zoom if you have questions; see page 10.

See more information about LACS at www.lacspc.org.



FROM YOUR PRESIDENT / EDITOR



**BE SURE TO KEEP YOUR ROSTER THAT
WAS IN THE MAY ISSUE.**

LACS LUNCHEON MEETING



**WELCOME NEW AND
RENEWING MEMBERS TO LACS**

Gavin Faught, LACS Treasurer

New Members: (0)

**Member Who Renewed
for 2024: (1)**

Eugene Jacobs



TIPS

1. A while ago, my picture would not come up at a Zoom meeting. After trying different things, and Googling, I decided to uninstall my Zoom app and reinstall it. That worked!
2. I heard on the news that a woman who had a suitcase stolen had put an AirTag in it. She called the police and was able to locate it. There are other GPS tracking devices for both Apple and Android phones.

The next LACS lunch meeting will be on **Thursday, June 20, 2024 at 11:30 AM** at the Culver City Sizzler at 5801 Sepulveda Blvd. At the March lunch meeting we had fun, good food, and lots of social and tech talk. It would be nice to have more participants in June. Those who miss our in-person meetings will enjoy getting together at our lunch meetings. It is enjoyable to be together in person. You may invite family and friends. Please RSVP to Stephanie at Nordlinger14@gmail.com or phone her before or on Tuesday, **June 17**. Watch your email for updates.

LACS NEEDS A NEW SECRETARY



We are sorry that our LACS board secretary, Marcia Jacobs, has to resign. We thank her for four and a half years of service. Now, we need another member to be secretary, to attend the board meetings on the first Monday, and to take notes. We want YOU!

GENERAL MEETING REPORT

May 14, 2024

By Leah Clark, LACS President/Editor

Touring the Web by JB Burke

JB took us on quite a tour at this meeting, including old, new, humorous, and informative places to go.

He started by showing us how to view APCUG's presentations on YouTube. To find them, go to YouTube and search for APCUG.

He also showed us many websites, which I'll make a list of here. You can see his Power-Point slides, which he graciously shared with us via email, and get further information from the meeting recording that members on our mailing list received. The slides and recording include the URLs for many of the sites and some videos.

- **The New York Times:** *The East Coast Is Sinking*
- **USA Facts:** U.S. Train Derailments, Average Annual Wages for Physicians and Surgeons, Authorized student immigrant arrivals, Percent of high schoolers who have used drugs or alcohol
- **Open Culture:** Advice for Time Traveling to Medieval Europe by a history professor.
- **BoredPanda:** Signs of the Times, 3D murals by a Dutch Artist
- **Space.com:** Timelapse video of the sun's rotation with fascinating video.
- **Weather Forecasting Stone**
- **Mental Floss:** Amazing Fact Generator with lots of weird facts
- **Theguardian.com:** NASA's Ultra-HD video transmitted 19 million miles through space
- **BBC and YouTube:** The daredevil flight to save rare birds.

- **Zdnet.com:** DATT-E3 and ChatGPT image generators created a portrait of every U.S. State from text.
- **Livescience.com:** How many times has Earth orbited the sun?
- **Techradar.com:** How to factory reset a computer
- **US Energy Information Agency:** 40% of US electricity is now emission-free.
- **Zdnet.com:** Copilot, AI chatbot
- **Gemini:** Another AI Chatbot by Google
- **The Brighterside:** AI reconstructs the ancient seven wonders of the world.
- **Geeks on Tour and Tech for Seniors:** Learn to use your smartphone or computer for digital photos, maps and apps for travel planning, and much more.
- **YouTube channel Boxlapse:** Time-lapse videos of plants growing over months or years.
- **USA website:** US foreign aid by country
- **Inc.com:** Ways to boost your memory
- **Fakespot.com:** Spot fake reviews on Amazon.
- **Ask Leo:** How do I tell if an email address is fake?

More interesting information

- Reasons to avoid some home automation.
- More use Windows 10 rather than Windows 11. JB discussed some of the differences and problems.
- BJ recommends *Everything* for finding your files; it indexes every file on your computer, and it is free.

- There's a new update for Windows 11's best Start menu alternative, Stardock's Start11 v2, which lets you pin your favorite websites to the Start menu. JB showed a video about *Start11* and *Everything*.
- You should memorize two passwords: your password manager's master password and your email account password. If your password manager is unavailable, you can receive password reset emails from your online accounts.
- A list of 11 free movie streaming sites
- Tesla's Optimus robot
- Pictures of the earliest cave paintings at the Lascaux Caves

This has been BJ's 80th *Touring the Web* presentation, starting in 2007. Whenever he has a spare moment, he scans the Web for interesting sites, and he puts them into Evernote to have them ready for the next presentation. ❖

I SIMPLY WON'T TRAVEL WITHOUT THIS CHEAP IPHONE¹ ACCESSORY

By **Andrew Martonik**

How-To Geek, May 13, 2024

Skip the wall charger and give your phone a little friend.

Anker's \$40 MagSafe battery pack is a game-changer for hassle-free charging while traveling.

The battery pack eliminates the need for extra cables and chargers, providing a convenient 100% recharge.

I've spent a *lot* of time on the road. Or should I say, in the air? I've flown about 75,000 miles a year for the last several years. And in that time, this simple iPhone accessory has



become my must-have travel companion. Although silicon-powered MacBooks have cured my power anxiety when it comes to my laptop, my iPhone still feels the pain every time I head to the airport. Mapping my way to the airport, listening to podcasts, checking my flight status, and more—routine travel activities—are big battery drains.

The solution? A simple iPhone accessory. And no, it's not a wall charger and a cable—but close! It's the one piece of tech I simply won't travel without.

The accessory I'm talking about is the humble MagSafe battery pack. It made its debut on the iPhone 12, but it wasn't until the iPhone 14 that I truly fell in love with it. And it's not because I use it for charging at home or docking my phone at my desk, although many of my colleagues swear by MagSafe in all areas of their lives. My love for MagSafe is simple and focused on just this one accessory: the battery pack.

I use a relatively cheap \$40 MagSafe battery from Anker, and this one purchase means I never have to worry about my phone dying or hunting for a wall plug at an airport or coffee shop. Better yet, I don't have to think about carrying an extra USB cable and charger, which never fit in a pocket as cleanly as this little pack does. I just pull out the battery, slap it on the back of my phone, and I have a worry-free 100% recharge over the next couple of hours.

¹ There's nothing wrong with a little phone envy. But if you're an **Android user**, there's no reason to be jealous of the iPhone's MagSafe capabilities. You can add MagSafe to any Android phone---it's a quick and easy task, and it opens the door to hundreds of useful magnetic accessories. For instructions, see

<https://www.howtogeek.com/141546/how-to-add-magsafe-to-android-phones/> ❖



YOUTUBE AS A KNOWLEDGE RESOURCE

By **Tom Burt**, Vice-President
Sun City Summerlin Computer Club

<https://www.scscc.club>

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YouTube (www.youtube.com) is Google's online platform for user-created videos. Over the years, users have posted an amazing collection of videos, which grows larger daily. YouTube is my "go-to" resource when I'm looking for arcane bits of knowledge—especially "how-to" examples. This month, we'll look at a few examples of YouTube videos that quickly convey helpful knowledge in an audiovisual format.

Example 1 – Adjust the Brakes on a Walker

Take, for instance, my four-wheeled Rollator Walker. Its brakes for the rear wheels need tightening every couple of years. I turned to YouTube, entered the phrase "**how to adjust brakes on a drive rollator**" into the search window, and immediately found several helpful videos. After watching a few to ensure I had all the necessary information, I was able to make the adjustment using just a pair or two of pliers.

Example 2 – Replace the Hard Drive in an HP Laptop with a Solid-State Drive

Among the various computers in Casa de Burt is a 2014 vintage HP Pavilion laptop that originally came with Windows 8. Its disk drive is a 500 G-byte 5400 RPM hard drive. Its CPU is an AMD A8, and it has 4 G bytes of RAM. I upgraded the operating system to Windows 10 in early 2016.

After that upgrade, this laptop became so slow it was almost unusable for about 15 minutes after booting, even with software tuning to minimize Microsoft's "instrumentation." After booting, Windows 10 launches a variety of scans of the hard drive, all

running simultaneously, that fight each other and overwhelm the system. While this happened, it often took Windows over a minute to respond to a mouse click.

The Computer Club experienced this same effect with laptops in our training lab. The club's volunteer maintenance team eventually mitigated the problem by installing solid-state drives in those laptops. However, the procedure is complex and requires careful handling and sequencing of the steps to disassemble and reassemble the laptop.

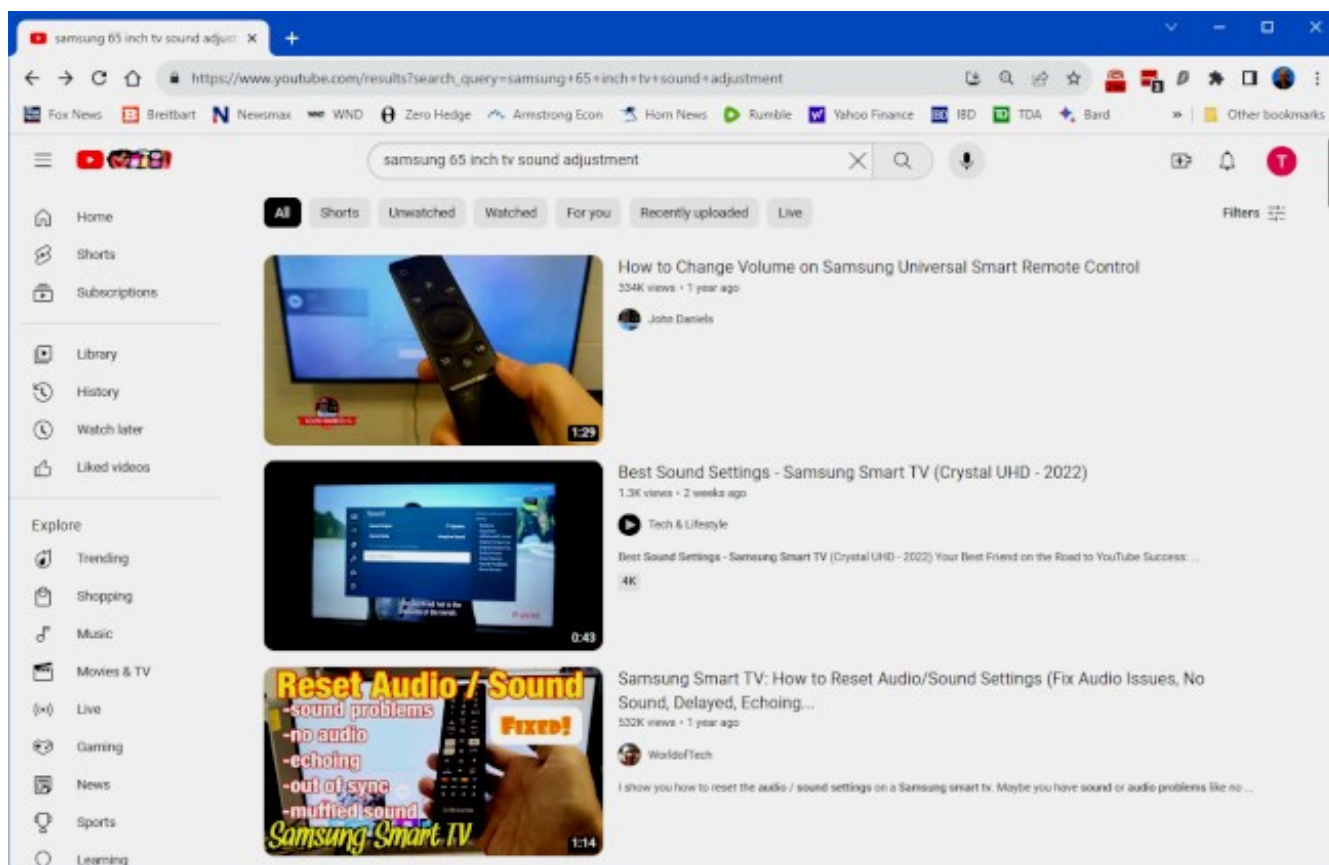
I decided to look into what it would take to upgrade to a solid-state drive on my HP laptop. I browsed YouTube and entered the search phrase: "**replace hard drive on hp pavilion 17z laptop**". YouTube offered me a selection of similar searches, one of which I picked. I got an excellent selection of hits on step-by-step videos that detailed the procedure. I played a few of these to get a sense of how complex the upgrade would be. Ultimately, I decided to pass on the upgrade, not because I felt I couldn't do it, but because, even after upgrading the laptop with a new SSD, the rest of the system components were over eight years old. The other hardware specs (CPU, RAM, chipset) would not be compatible with Windows 11. I concluded that installing Linux Mint on that laptop in place of Windows 10 would be better.

This was an example of YouTube helping me decide NOT to do something.

Example 3 – Adjusting the Sound Settings on My Samsung Smart TV

A few months ago, I "cut the cord," abandoning DirecTV in favor of streaming YouTube TV, Paramount+ (CBS), Amazon Prime Video and its companion FreeVee, the free tier of Peacock TV (NBC), and Samsung's own 100+ channel free streaming TV service. The video quality of these services has been excellent, and I've got more content available than I could ever have watched. One

frustration, however, has been that the sound level varies a lot between the various services. I must frequently adjust the TV volume depending on which service I'm currently streaming. I decided to see what YouTube could tell me. I browsed to YouTube and entered the search phrase: "**samsung 65 inch tv sound adjustment.**" I got several useful hits, as shown below. The middle hit video showed an advanced setting for Adaptive Sound, which I needed.



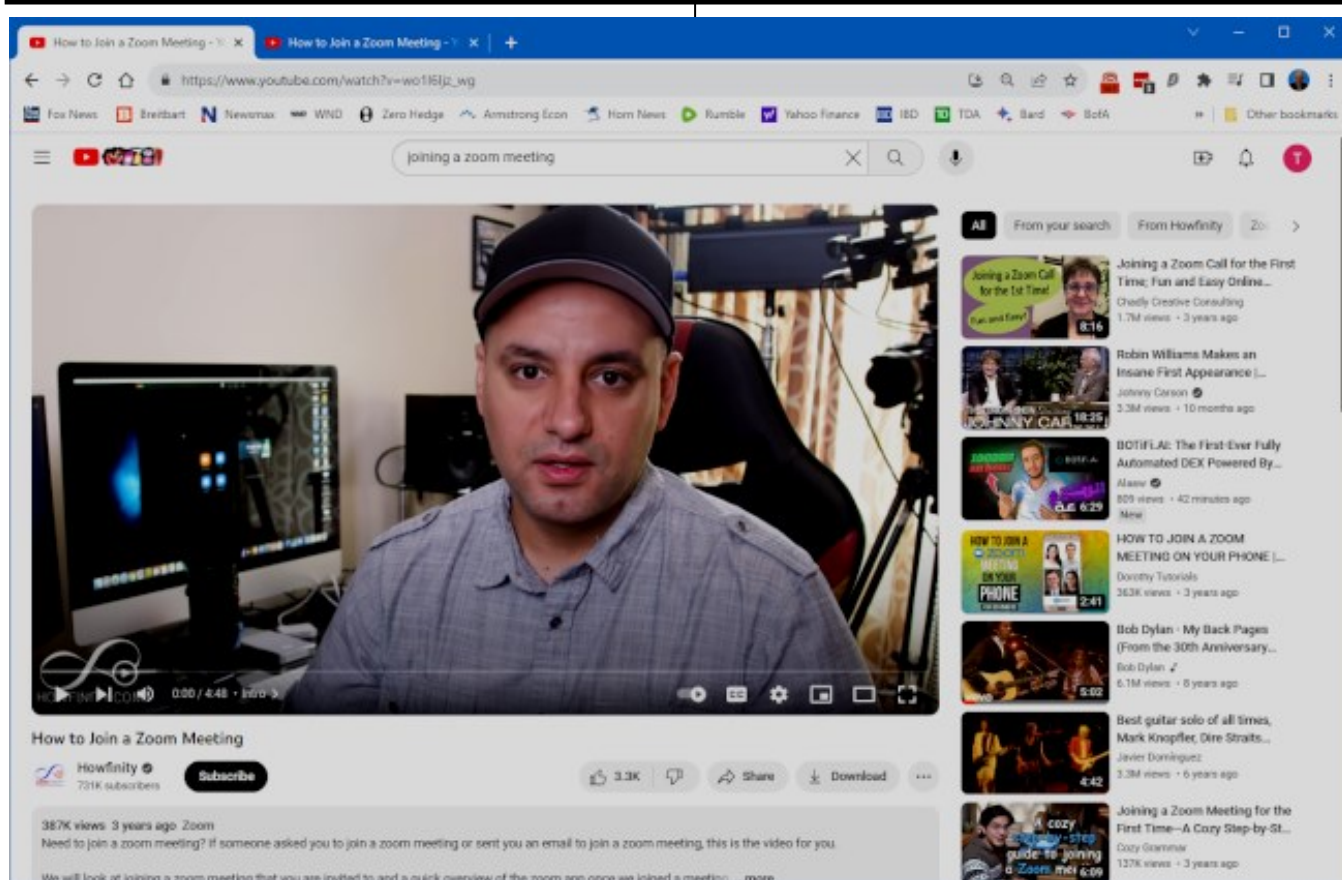
Example 4 – Tutorial on Using Zoom

I do two monthly teaching sessions – one on investing and one on some technology topics of current interest, such as AI, networking, or photo editing. My preferred presentation venue is Zoom, which I can use to teach from my home office. Zoom works well, but one problem has been that some of our Sun City seniors have found getting Zoom to work difficult. It would be nice to teach a class on using Zoom; however, teaching a class on Zoom via Zoom is a classic "Catch-22". What to do?

I browsed to YouTube and entered the search phrase "**joining a zoom meeting.**" I got several helpful video hits. On page 7 is a screenshot of one of the videos.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wo1l6ljz_wg

The video was a simple tutorial focusing solely on how a novice user could join a Zoom video session. That is the only procedure my class attendees would need to attend my Zoom sessions. Once I had reviewed the video, I copied its URL so that I could include it in my email notice of the meeting as a helpful tutorial aid for beginners.



Closing Thoughts

The possibilities for finding online tutorials on YouTube are vast, all available for free. Alas, in this article, we've barely scratched the surface. A caveat is that, like all Internet content, there's no guarantee that it's up-to-date or

even factually correct. The quality of videos can vary, and speakers make many with difficult-to-understand accents. Patience is the key to finding the gem that you are seeking. ❖

SPRING CLEANING: ORGANIZE YOUR DESK

By **Kurt Jefferson**, Editor
Central Kentucky Computer Society
<https://newsite.ckcs.org/>
lextown2 (at) gmail.com

PCMag offers several tips for organizing your work area and desk. Spring cleaning is underway; This doesn't just apply to your yard or closet. It's time to tackle your desk, too.

First, *PCMag* recommends buying anything you might need for your workspace, whether a laptop or a new keyboard.

Next, clear all objects off your desk. This includes any cables plugged into a wall outlet

or surge protector, lamps, coasters, mugs - everything else. Then, use a micro-fiber cloth that is slightly damp with water. You can use other products, but don't spray your computer monitor or desk with chemicals containing ammonia or other harsh cleaners. *PCMag* recommends getting out the vacuum if you need to clean off your desk chair.

PCMag notes you should start placing your items back on the desk, but don't plug in any items yet. Check to make sure the feel is right, your monitor is at the right level, and you're practicing good ergonomics.

Once you are ready, get your cables under control. Use Velcro cable ties or another method to contain all of the excess cables. ❖

LACS INFORMATION

USING PAYPAL OR ZELLE

To pay LACS by PayPal, go to this link: www.paypal.com/paypalme/00001024 and then click on **Send**. 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 the amount to pay, click on **Add a note**. Tell us what the payment is for. If paying dues, add 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.

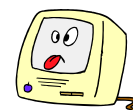
To pay LACS by Zelle, log into your bank with your username and password. Select **Transfer Money > Send Money with Zelle**. Follow the instructions. The name of the recipient is **Los Angeles Computer Society**. Select **Send by email**. The email address is: lacomputersociety@gmail.com. The wording 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 has an active general email list: PC@LACS.Groups.IO. This email address goes to all members on the list. Use it to ask questions, offer suggestions or help, and to conduct official LACS business.

New LACS members should receive an invitation to join our list with two weeks to accept. Other LACS members who want to join the list should send an email to Stephanie, our Groups.IO Coordinator, at nordlacs@AOL.com and she will send you an invitation to join. If you have any problems or questions about joining, please contact Stephanie.

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.

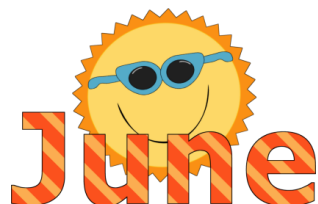
ATTENDING A ZOOM MEETING

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, Monday, June 3

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

Place: Wherever you are via Zoom

LACS General Meeting: Tuesday, June 11

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.

June 3: LACS Board Meeting

June 11: LACS General Meeting

June 14: Flag Day

June 16: Father's Day

June 19: Juneteenth

June 20: LACS Luncheon Meeting



Freedom Day

VISIT OTHER APCUG COMPUTER USER GROUPS AND SEE THEIR NEWSLETTERS

LACS heartily 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**.

UPCOMING MEETINGS/EVENTS

June 11: Social Media, Judy Taylour

June 20: LACS Luncheon Meeting

July 9: TBA

August 13: Gmail and Google Drive, Rod Truman

Please watch your email and *User Friendly* for changes and updates.

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.

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

leahjc@sbcglobal.net

ZOOM RECORDINGS

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

HYPERLINKS

Underlined text (blue in the color edition) in *User Friendly* usually means it's a hyperlink to a website. Click on the link in the online version to see the referenced place. You can also copy and paste it into your browser's search or address bar.

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	PDF - 8
Android Smartphones - 8	Lotus Word Pro, Approach - 7	Photoshop - 10
Apple devices - 11	Mozilla Firefox - 7	Quicken - 8, 12
Anti Malware and Backup - 7, 8	MS Excel - 8, 11, 12	Thunderbird - 7
Dragon Naturally Speaking - 3	MS Word - 1, 3, 8, 12	Utilities - 7, 8
Genealogy - 8	MS Outlook - 1, 8, 10	Windows - 7, 8
Groups.IO - 8	MS PowerPoint - 8, 11	WordPerfect - 8
	MS Publisher - 2	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
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 Berkomp, 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	2024
Vice President	Stephanie Nordlinger	2024
Secretary	Open	2024
Treasurer	Gavin Faught	2024
Director	Loling Beckman	2025
Director	Donna Benton	2025
Director	Mark Presky	2025
Director	Irv Hershman	2024
Director	E. J. Rozek	2024
Director	Annette Tossounian	2024
Director	Paula Van Berkom	2024
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. **Only LACS members may receive a roster.**

Please note: The 2024 roster was in the middle pages of the May User Friendly. It was mailed to all LACS members, including those who usually receive only the electronic version. The roster will not be sent to anyone electronically. Be sure to keep it where you can find it when you need it.

SO I JUST GOOGLED MYSELF

By **Bob Rankin**, a Translator for the Technology Impaired Offering Free Tech Support
<https://askbobrankin.com/>



Have you ever used Google or Bing to search for your own name, address, or phone number? In an age of powerful search engines, social media, artificial intelligence, and changing attitudes about privacy, you might be shocked to see what a casual searcher can learn about you. If you're okay with that level of transparency, then that's fine. If not, read on for some tips on what you can do about it.

Removing Personal Information from Google

You may be surprised by the results if you search for yourself on Google. Things you posted on social media without thinking twice; blog posts or news reports that mention you in an unflattering or libelous manner; an embarrassing photo; even your home address or phone number — all of these are examples of things you'd probably wish you could remove from Google.

Recently, I saw an example of a well-meaning person who saw a neighbor dumping trash. He posted a photo of the man's truck on social media, along with his name, license plate number, and home address. Thankfully, several people warned that this could endanger both the poster and the bad neighbor, and the personal information was removed. But that doesn't always happen.

Once it gets found and indexed, removing information from Google (or any other search engine) is not easy. Google's business is indexing Internet content so that people can search it. Since Google does not control what is published on the Web, you have to start with the person who did publish what you want removed. If you regret publishing

something, delete it. If the offending info is on someone else's site, ask the poster, publisher, or site administrator to delete it. Then, when Google's Web-crawler indexes the site again, it will delete Google's cached copy of the now-missing content and no longer appear in search results, but that may take a while, depending on how often Google indexes that particular website. You can file a request with Google to remove outdated content to speed up the process.

But first, you must be sure that the content you want removed from Google search results has been removed from the Web. If you can't get the content owner to remove the offending content, there are some special cases in which Google will intervene. On the Remove your personal information from Google help page, Google lists things such as

- Nonconsensual explicit or intimate personal images
- Financial, medical, and national ID information
- Cases where “doxxing” (exposing information with an intent to harm) is involved.

Google won't help you remove the offending information from the page where it exists, but they will delete it from their search engine database so it is not easily found.

Dealing with others who control the content you don't want online requires diplomacy, lawyers, or both. It's always best to start with a polite approach: “Hi, sorry to bother you, but I have a problem with this content... would you please delete it?” You'd be surprised by how cooperative strangers can be.

More Removal Tools

Google has another tool for requesting the removal of content from sites it owns, including Google Search, YouTube, Google Maps, and others. Requests for removal through this tool must rely on legal issues, i.e., violation of

copyright, privacy, or child pornography laws.

My article *Breaking Up With the Internet* discusses your options for removing personal data from social media, online phone directories, and other places. The best way to keep unflattering information about yourself out of Google is to keep it off the public internet. That means tightening up the privacy controls of all your online hangouts: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, TikTok, LinkedIn, etc.

Also, watch what you say in web forums, which Google indexes unless the administrator has added a "do not index" tag to his forum. Be careful what you post on your own website, Facebook page, or blog.

You can use **Google Alerts** to monitor what's being said about you or your business online. There are also very expensive services like Reputation Defender that will fight to remove offensive or incorrect content on your behalf. Of course, if someone has a grudge against you, you may need to decide whether removing the offending content is worth the cost of these services, or even legal fees. But there's always the bluff. Sometimes, sending a threatening letter spiced with a bit of legalese will do the trick.

If you are a content creator, such as a musician, writer, or digital artist, you may find that someone else has used your music, article, or artwork without permission. This has become a bigger problem with the recent advent of "generative AI" tools that create content by imitating or taking portions of copyrighted materials, combining it with other content, and passing it off as something new and original.

Some of these tools can write articles or term papers, create works of art, or write music. One recent example is the song *Heart on My Sleeve*, created by AI software. It appears to be a collaboration between musicians Drake and The Weekend, but it's an AI fabrication. In such cases, you can initiate a Digital Millennium Copyright Act (DMCA) Takedown request

to have the offending content removed.

But Wait, There's More

Of course, Google is not the only search engine in town. Although it has a smaller reach, you should also search for yourself on Microsoft's Bing search engine. If you find something that's troubling, use the **Report a Concern to Bing** page. You can report broken links or outdated pages, unauthorized use of intellectual property, child pornography, offensive material, exposure of private information or images, or malicious pages.

In addition to searching for your personal info on Google or Bing, there's one more place you might want to look. The **Internet Archive** is a collection of over 600 billion Web pages captured over the past 25 years. You can use it to see what a Web page looked like in the past.

The point here is that something pertaining to you might have been removed from a given website years ago, but it still lives on in this archive. See how to remove something from the Internet Archive. ❖

SMARTPHONE WIRELESS CONNECTIONS

Help Keep Us Connected

By **Phil Sorrentino**

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The smartphone is a wireless marvel. You may not have thought about your smartphone in this way, but your smartphone may be able to connect to up to five different wireless networks. I'm sure this would have made Nicola Tesla very happy. He is credited with the wireless transmission of energy via his patented Tesla coil, though Marconi got the credit and the patent for inventing radio communications. Just think about the

hardware and software that allow your smartphone to participate in **five different kinds of networks**, all wrapped up in your smartphone package along with all the other electronics needed to support a powerful computer system. I bet even Steve Jobs would be impressed.

Cell Phone Network

The most apparent wireless network your smartphone works with is the one you initially bought your smartphone to use. That is the cell phone network supported by all those antenna towers that have sprouted up everywhere in the past 40 years. There aren't many landlines around anymore. This network lets you keep in voice contact with just about anyone since over 91% of the people in the world have smartphones. That's over 6.6 billion possibilities. Even more impressive is that most Americans – 97% now - own a cell-phone. The share of Americans who own a smartphone is now over 85%.



This cell phone network also provides access to the internet when you are out and about. The internet is considered a "Wide Area Network" or WAN. A WAN is an extensive computer network spread over a wide geographic area.

A network's speed is its data speed or data rate and is measured in bps or bits per second, typically, Mega bps or Giga bps. WAN data rates are generally around 150 Mbps.

When you are not out and about and are within a Wi-Fi network, the Wi-Fi router provides access to the internet. Without this ability to be constantly connected to the internet, I'm not sure how many would own what would only be a competent personal digital assistant.

Wi-Fi Network

Wi-Fi is the second wireless network that your smartphone can take advantage of. Wi-Fi



is considered a "Local Area Network" or LAN. A LAN is a collection of wired and/or wireless connected devices typically in your home or office. LAN data rates can be from 100 Mbps to 1 Gbps. Using Wi-Fi, you can connect to the many servers on the internet.

The use of your smartphone in this manner is sometimes called **Cloud Computing** because you are accomplishing a task on the smartphone by using the resources of a server computer somewhere out there on the internet (in the cloud), like using GPS and the Maps or Waze app on your smartphone to help navigate you from home to a place you've never been to before. Cloud Computing is just a more common term for **Client-Server Technology**, which allows our smartphones to take advantage of powerful computer servers connected by the internet.

GPS Network

Remember that every wireless network your smartphone can work with requires a transmitter, a receiver, and an antenna in the smartphone to send data to and receive data from the other network members. This is only possible because of digital electronic circuitry, which would never have been possible in the analog electronics world. Thanks to microminiature integrated circuits, which typically get smaller and cheaper over time, this is possible.



Though GPS, which is a third wireless network, is an exception. Your smartphone only has GPS receivers and antennas, no GPS transmitters. However, it has multiple receivers because your smartphone must receive data from at least 3 GPS satellites to determine your location.

Bluetooth Network

The fourth wireless network supported by your smartphone is Bluetooth. You may not have taken advantage of this feature unless you have a relatively



new car and you have introduced (paired) your smartphone to the car's entertainment system. If you have, you are familiar with one of the best safety features in the new cars: the ability to receive and make calls from your smartphone while always keeping your hands on the steering wheel. (Now, if they could only convince the many speeding drivers to stay under the speed limit.)

Bluetooth has also become the preferred connection for speakers and headphones (earbuds.) Bluetooth headphones are for quiet listening, and Bluetooth speakers are for loud listening—a lot louder than the sound capability of the smartphone. Bluetooth is considered a "Personal Area Network" or PAN. A PAN is a computer network for interconnecting devices within a person's workspace. It transmits data among devices such as computers, smartphones, tablets, and personal digital assistants. Bluetooth data rates can be as high as 1 Mbps.

NFC Network

The fifth wireless network may not be available on some older smartphones or even some new ones. This network is called NFC or Near Field Communications. NFC is a set of communications protocols (rules) that enables communications between two devices over very short distances, maybe an inch or two. It facilitates data transfer between nearby smartphones, laptops, tablets, and other devices. NFC data rates are around 400 Mbps.

NFC is used to make contactless payments with your smartphone using Apple Pay or Google Pay. Just enable the amount in the payment app and touch the smartphone to the NFC reader or terminal. This type of payment protects your payment information with multiple layers of security to help keep your account safe. The payment terminal does not share your card number when you pay, so your private information stays secure.



So, with these five networks, your smartphone helps you keep in touch and connected.

Reprinted from the newsletter of the Rochester Computer Society, www.rcsi.org. ❖

TECH TRAVEL TIPS 2024

By **Greg Skalka**

Under the Computer Hood Users Group
WWW.uchug.org, San Diego, CA, May 2024

I have written a number of columns over the years on how technology enhances the travel experience. Traveling with tech can help your trip be more productive, more enjoyable, more memorable, less expensive, and safer.

My wife and I just completed a weeklong trip to Texas to see the total solar eclipse and visit friends and relatives. We had a great time and had no significant mishaps. The tech we took, which was a little different from past trips, helped make our trip better. There are a few downsides, however, that must be weighed against the benefits that bringing this technology provides. Many of the things we brought or resources we used were the same as in past trips, though perhaps improved.

You can't beat **Google Maps** for travel planning and checking out hotels, restaurants, and attractions. The Maps mobile app is essential for navigation, whether driving or walking. Google is constantly improving the app and the data behind it to provide the most current and enhanced information. Rather than going to a business's website for hours of operation, I now often look at Google Maps, as the search seems faster and the information is specific to the location I am interested in. Linked with photos, websites, and reviews, Maps has a wealth of information. The ability to search for something "near me" is invaluable. We would be literally lost without the directions provided

by Maps on our phones.

However, there are a few downsides to Google Maps. A major gripe about Maps is how much power it takes to run. A day of navigating easily drains my Samsung S22's battery. I am also not very fond of having Google know everywhere I've been, though the navigational benefits are so compelling that I've had to make a bargain with the Google devil. I have found it has a way to track my location even when the app is not running on my phone; the only way to travel untracked is to turn the phone off, or leave it at home.

With something as important as navigation, it is essential to have a backup system. I have had a few instances where the Maps app (or Android) has suddenly told me it has lost GPS positioning while navigating. This has happened a few times in unfamiliar locations on vacation trips, forcing me to make the best guesses possible with our directions. Since my wife insists on driving, I'm the navigator and the one responsible. Fortunately, the problem has so far just gone away after a short time or a phone reboot, but it is unnerving. Was it due to a GPS signal reception issue, a phone hardware issue, an app issue, or a GPS satellite system issue? Can the U.S. GPS satellite system have occasional glitches, or is our signal loss an indication of an attack by Russia or China? It is best not to become totally dependent on Maps. I try to bring a few AAA maps of the area on trips, just in case.

Another Google Maps issue is related to cell coverage, as there are many areas in the U.S. where coverage is poor or non-existent. Traffic and road condition information is provided through your cellular connection to internet data, as is the ability to search for a new detailed destination. You can navigate to a spot in an area without coverage, but then navigating to another location from there may be difficult as online map data is unavailable. You can store offline map data in Maps to

solve this problem; I always store new map data in the app for the areas I'll be traveling through before my trip. I have also recently found that I occasionally can't close the Google Maps app after arriving. Shutting down or restarting the phone seems to be the only solution.

We like to fly Southwest Airlines when we can. It seems all their planes are now equipped with a satellite data link, so the airline can offer free movies, live TV, and paid internet access in flight, all on the device you bring. The viewing experience on our eclipse trip was great; I started watching a movie on the flight out but could not finish it before landing. On our flight back, it allowed me to pick up where I left off.

They also appear to track checked luggage through bag tag barcodes. When we arrived back in San Diego from our trip, it appeared one of my two checked bags was missing. After watching carefully as each bag hits the luggage claim carousel, it is a sad feeling when everyone on your flight has left, and the carousel has shut down, but your bag is not there. Fortunately, I had the bag tag stub to present to the Southwest employee in baggage claim, who was able to tell me my bag had been offloaded from our plane. She instructed another employee to feed a "slug," a fake piece of luggage, into the conveyor system. Soon, the slug came out onto the carousel, and with it, my lost bag. This slug is specially designed to dislodge bags that become stuck in the conveyor system.

Reviewing the TSA rules for travel with tech items before your trip is important. Lithium batteries, whether loose or in devices, cannot travel in checked baggage and must be carried on. TSA inspections can be done differently at different airports. In San Diego, I had to remove my laptop from my backpack for x-ray scanning, while TSA insisted I keep it in the backpack in San Antonio. It is also important to review everything you are taking on

the plane. My wife carried a photo backpack she seldom flies with. It got flagged for secondary inspection in San Antonio on our way back. It was a pocket flashlight that also incorporated a small pocket knife blade. She didn't know it had that capability and had to give it up. The same item had made it through the inspections in San Diego without detection.

With all the tech devices we bring, batteries and charging are very important. At home, I have my phone set to limit the battery charge level to 85% to improve battery life. I turn off that feature on travel to get back the extra capacity. I charge my phone with a pair of Baseus 65W, 20,000 mAh power banks, which fast charge my phone. We drove around San Antonio and up to Austin on our eclipse trip. On the day we went to Austin, I forgot to top off my phone, and Google Maps drained the battery about halfway there, so I hooked up the Baseus battery to charge the phone while navigating.

Security is essential while traveling. Carrying many devices, such as laptops, smartphones, and fancy cameras, creates a theft risk if they are left in a car or hotel room. I bring a small backpack so that I can carry my laptop and camera with me everywhere I go. I avoid using any public Wi-Fi other than the one provided by my hotel.

I always use a VPN (Private Internet Access) when connecting to the internet on my laptop. I also brought a new security device, a secure travel Wi-Fi router (GL.iNet model GL-SFT1200) on this trip. I've had small travel routers in the past; these were wired WAN in and wired LAN or Wi-Fi out. Now, hotels only provide Wi-Fi. My new travel router can take Wi-Fi as a WAN input, so I use it between the hotel Wi-Fi and my laptop (with a wired connection.) I bought it from Amazon (\$34) only a week before we were to leave and tried it only the day before. While it has many complex features, it is fairly easy to set up how I intended to use it. After powering the travel router, I

connected my laptop to one of the two LAN ports with the Ethernet cable provided. I could have also connected my laptop to the router through the default router Wi-Fi SSID, but the cable was easier and what I preferred. I next entered the specified IP address into a browser on my laptop, going to the router admin login page.

After entering the default password, I immediately changed that password. I then selected SCAN on the Wi-Fi and selected the Wi-Fi SSID I was looking for. You have to click on the SSID pull-down to see more than one SSID.

After entering the password for the SSID selected, the router should connect to the target Wi-Fi network (as router WAN), with my laptop on the router LAN port.

This worked very well at our hotel in San Antonio. I got the hotel Wi-Fi SSID and password from the front desk and entered them into my travel router, and everything connected fine. I still used my VPN on my laptop, but I had the additional protection provided by the router's NAT (network address translation). I did not use the router's LAN Wi-Fi, so I should have either turned it off (I presume that is possible) or changed from the default SSID and password of the router.

Things did not work so well the one night we stayed in Austin. At this hotel, their Wi-Fi was open with no encryption password. I tried and tried but could not get the travel router to connect to their open Wi-Fi. I could connect my laptop directly to the hotel Wi-Fi, so I gave up on the router and used the direct connection with my VPN. I thought less of the hotel for not protecting their Wi-Fi with encryption.

I'll have to verify that my router's firmware is up to date, and then try it on more Wi-Fi networks. ❖

Happy and Safe Travels

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 at <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.

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LAUGHING OUT LOUD**Pickles**

Reprinted from the newsletter of the Pikes Peak Computer Application Society, Colorado Springs, CO



"I don't think Control + Z is going to get me out of this one."

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 use the same mailing 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.

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All renewals are due in January. New members will pay the annual amount when they join.

Check # _____

LACS

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Date _____ Dues may be paid by PayPal, Zelle, or check. If paying by check, make the check out to "Los Angeles Computer Society", and mail it with this form to:

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

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[] Renewal

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Name: First _____

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

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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. **Just click on the link.** 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.