User Friendly

*LACS
A Computer and
Technology
User Group*

IN THIS ISSUE

LACS WEBSITE
https://www.lacspc.org

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)**

TUESDAY, JUNE 10, 2025
GENERAL MEETING

**Topic: Embracing the AI Age with Practical
Applications for Seniors**
Speaker: Hewie Poplock
Sarasota Technology User Group and
Central Florida Computer Society
APCUG Speakers Bureau

Hewie will demonstrate how we are embracing the age of artificial intelligence (AI). He provides an overview of what AI is, explaining that it is a technology that helps computers think and learn like humans. Hewie highlights the chatbot *ChatGPT* as an example of AI having human-like conversations. The presentation delves into the various ways AI is being used, such as in developing medicines and vaccines, medical imaging analysis, and autonomous vehicles. It also covers concerns about AI, including unemployment, bias, accountability, privacy, and ethics. There will be many examples of AI to amaze you.

Meet Our Presenter

Hewie Poplock is a former APCUG Vice President and has for many years led the Windows SIG of the Central Florida Computer Society. He has a great website (www.hewie.net) and many YouTube videos. When Hewie attended his first user group meeting in 1982, he knew that computer user groups were an invaluable source of help, information and friendship. He is part of Tech for Seniors and runs a monthly *Let's Talk AI* Zoom meeting to share new developments.

TO JOIN THE LACS GENERAL MEETING
June 10, 2025

LACS members on the PC Groups.IO list will receive the Zoom link to this meeting before or on **June 8**. 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 8.** See pages, 8, 9, 10, and 20 for help in using Zoom, or email Leah with questions.
See more information about LACS at www.lacspc.org.

🌼 FROM YOUR PRESIDENT / EDITOR 🌼

IN MEMORIAM
Linda Ellen La Roche
LACS Member

By **Cris Taylor**

Linda Ellen La Roche was born in Hollywood, California to Elena and George Beck and died peacefully on May 5, 2025 in Los Angeles, Calfornia at the age of 85.

Linda enjoyed being a nurse and providing home health care. In her retirement, she enjoyed music, gardening, politics, good food, good company and good humor.

Indian food and Chinese food were her favorites. And if chocolate was involved, even better. She was particularly interested in supporting animals rights and cared deeply for elephants, horses, and cats in particular.

She is survived by her brother, Joel Beck, her granddaughter, Cris Taylor, and grandson John Taylor. Linda is preceded in death by her husband Frank La Roche.

Linda and Her Grandfather

Date unknown

To All LACS Fathers

WELCOME NEW MEMBER TO LACS

Dave Brown

LACS LUNCHEON MEETING

The next LACS lunch meeting will be on Wednesday, **June 18, 2025 at 11:30 AM** at the Culver City Sizzler at 5801 Sepulveda Blvd. At the in-person lunch meetings we have fun, good food, and lots of social and tech talk. It would be nice to have many 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 Leah Clark via email before or on Monday, **June 16** so we can have an idea of about how many to expect. Watch your email for updates.

You may bring items for a give-away table.

CURIOSITY

By **Bob Rankin**
Ask Bob Rankin, May, 2025
https://askbobrankin.com

I believe curiosity is essential to success in many areas of life. One friend described curiosity as the precursor to genius. An article in the Harvard Business Review titled Curiosity Is as Important as Intelligence quotes Albert Einstein as saying "I have no special talents. I am only passionately curious."

So, be curious. Read a lot. Ask questions. Look for answers. Take things apart and find out how they work. Or just try new things.

You might discover you're a genius. ❖

GENERAL MEETING REPORT

By **Leah Clark,** LACS President/Editor

May 13, 2025

Topic: Bitwarden

freejohn@protonmail.com

Speaker: John Kennedy

APCUG Speakers Bureau and the East-Central Ohio Technology User Club

Everywhere you go, someone wants a password for your protection. There are too many to remember. It is risky to use the same password for multiple sites. What is the best way for YOU to manage your passwords? John showed common ways to manage passwords, like using sticky notes, notebooks, etc. These ways don't work very well.

Do We Really Need Password Managers?

Your passwords must be unique and strong to keep your data secure. You want a password manager that's easy to use.

Bitwarden

- Is open-source, FREE, and has zero knowledge of your material. If you lose your Bitwarden password, they cannot recover it.

- Can be used with unlimited devices and with an unlimited number of passwords.

- Works on desktops, laptops, mobile devices, and with any browser, anywhere.

- Can store notes, credit cards, and identities.

- Can be used anywhere.

- Is a username and password generator.

- Has end-to-end encryption

Setting Up an Account

John showed us how to set up Bitwarden and how to switch to Bitwarden from another password manager by importing the database directly into Bitwarden. The only information that Bitwarden gets from you is your name and email address. It doesn't even have to be your real name. It has a browser extension for all top browsers. The kinds of entries you can have are logins, cards, identity, like a passport and secure notes. Your entries can be sorted in folders or listed alphabetically. John showed slides showing what a browser extension looks like.

Steps To Build Your Password Manager

Log in to a website with your username and password. Bitwarden asks if you want it to remember the password, and you answer "Save", and it is entered and done. You can build your password manager as you log in to sites, one by one, as you go. You can change the names of the sites. You can use Bitwarden as a bookmark program to launch a website. You can also launch a site from the browser extension using autofill. John gave more details on logging in easily and adding new items by entering the visual name for the site, your username, password, and URL.

Switching to More Secure Passwords and Passphrases

You can generate very secure passwords or passphrases with Bitwarden. John showed how to do that, selecting the length, how many numbers, special characters, and avoiding ambiguous characters like ells and ones, etc.

Changing Current Passwords to More Secure Passwords

Go to a website → Accounts and Settings → Change Password → Open Bitwarden → Save the old password in Notes → Click on the button to generate a new password → Copy and Paste it in the website → Click on Save.

Start with the most data-sensitive sites like banks, medical, government, and personal information. Then get the rest over time.

The personal Bitwarden is free. A premium version costs $10.00 per year, and a family plan is $ 40 per year. One item on the premium edition that makes it worth the $10.00 is **Emergency Access**. This will allow a person to access all your accounts in the event of an emergency or at the end of life. Everything lasts forever on the internet, so we need someone who can shut down our accounts when we pass on. Or you can put your Bitwarden master password on a thumb drive and lock it up where your technology executor can access your account.

The meeting was then opened up for questions. There were a lot of questions and discussions.

LACS members and guest attendees received the link to the recording of the meeting and John Kennedy's slides.

Why Aren't You Going to Get Bitwarden and Start Using It?

DOES A FIREWALL GIVE EXTRA SECURITY?

By **Bob Rankin**
Ask Bob Rankin, May 2025
https://askbobrankin.com/

What Kind of Firewall Do You Need?

Most people think of firewalls as barriers between their computers and bad things "out there" on the Internet. **Inbound** firewall protection blocks attempts by external entities (hackers, malware, or denial of service bots) to connect to your computer. See the related article Do I Really Need a Firewall? (*See page* 5) for my advice on **inbound** firewall protection (and to find out what happens when you yell "MOVIE!" in a crowded firehouse).

But remember, the Internet is a two-way high-

way. **Outbound** firewall protection is just the opposite of inbound. It blocks attempts by software that resides on your computer to send data over the Internet. So if your computer is infected with a keylogger or some other data-stealing malware, an outbound firewall should prevent that rogue from transmitting your passwords, banking information, shoe size, and other sensitive information to its evil masters. If another type of malware is using your computer to spew spam or participate in a botnet, an outbound firewall should prevent that as well, in theory.

In practice, though, outbound firewalls provide little useful protection, consume computer resources, may interfere with legitimate programs, and are generally more trouble than they are worth. They can also give you a false sense of security.

By default, the firewall in Windows 7, 8, 10 and 11 provides only inbound protection. You can enable outbound protection as well, but then no program on your machine will be allowed to connect to the Internet! That means no browsing, no Windows Update, no email, no other updater programs, etc. It's effectively a self-imposed roadblock.

You'd have to manually configure permission for every single program or process that you want to have access to the Internet, and update that configuration regularly. I don't know about you, but that doesn't sound like my idea of fun on a Thursday afternoon.

Wolves, Shoplifters and Geniuses

Outbound firewalls tend to cry wolf; they spew too many false positives. That is, they warn you about programs that really are not a problem. After seeing many false positives and ignoring them, it's all too easy to ignore a legitimate warning of malware. Imagine a security system in a retail store that flagged every customer leaving the store as

a potential shoplifter.

There are legitimate reasons why some software on your computer may need to make an outbound connection. Some programs poll a remote server to see if there are any fixes or updates available, and install them automatically. Others send anonymous statistical data, or use collaborative feedback mechanisms. A weather or stock market widget on your desktop will need to poll for the latest data periodically. Multi-player online games send and receive reams of data. And then there are all the cloud-based apps that let you store, edit, and share files online.

Has Your Horse Left the Digital Barn?

It can be very hard for the average user to figure out whether a given program should be allowed to access the Internet. Most outbound firewalls give only cryptic descriptions of what is trying to access the Net, so only the most technically savvy users can decide what to do about it. The chances are pretty good that you'll block a program you do need, and later wonder why something isn't working.

You've heard the old saying about closing the barn door after the horses got out. Outbound firewalls don't do anything to prevent your computer from becoming infected, which is the most effective line of defense. If an outbound firewall warns you that malware is trying to access the Net, it's already too late; your inbound defenses have been compromised somehow. Better to focus on keeping your horses in the barn.

A router configured to use NAT (Network Address Translation) is my preferred alternative to software firewalls, inbound or outbound. Such a router effectively hides your computer from everyone "out there" so malware can't even find it. It protects an entire network from a single point, instead of having to install firewall software on every device on the network. The router also does the heavy lifting, freeing resources on your local machine. The good

news is that you probably already have a NAT router. See [Do I Really Need a Firewall?](#) (*See below*) for more information about routers and inbound firewall security.

Expert users may have to resort to outbound firewalls occasionally. If you know every legitimate program that should be allowed access to the Net, an outbound firewall may alert you to hidden malware. Large enterprises may employ outbound firewalls to make sure sensitive or confidential data isn't leaking out. But some malware is clever enough to disable your anti-virus or firewall protection, or fool the outbound firewall into letting it slip past.

The Bottom Line

Outbound firewall protection is of very marginal benefit and can be an enormous irritation. See my advice and links above concerning inbound firewalls and malware protection, and you'll be better off. ❖

DO I REALLY NEED A FIREWALL?
By **Bob Rankin**
Ask Bob Rankin
https://askbobrankin.com/

What Happens When You Yell "MOVIE!" in a Crowded Firehouse?

Well, all the firefighters go running out into the streets, of course. Okay, it's a bad joke.

But it illustrates the point that even people who are supposed to be experts in computer safety are often confused about firewalls. Here's the scoop on WHO needs a firewall, WHAT they do, and WHY you might be wasting your money on firewall software.

First, let's look at what a firewall is supposed to do. A firewall is hardware or software that limits access to a computer from an outside source. If your computer is ever

connected to the Internet, a firewall is an essential tool to prevent malware and hackers from accessing or damaging your computer.

So YES... you do need a firewall. Without a firewall, your computer can be compromised within seconds after connecting to the Internet. It might take a little longer if you're a dial-up user, but it will happen. The reason for this is the automated hacking drones that are constantly scanning Internet-connected computers, looking for any vulnerability.

What Kind of Firewall Do I Need?

The real question is, "Do I need a software-based firewall or a hardware-based firewall?" If you have a high-speed Internet connection such as DSL, cable, or fiber optic, then you should have a little black box inside your home that was installed by the phone/cable company. This is sometimes called a modem, but in most cases it's actually a network router, or a combination modem/router. If you have a router with the NAT feature (Network Address Translation), you already have a hardware firewall, which effectively makes your PC invisible to the attacking hordes. However, some cable internet providers still install cable modems without routers.

If you're unsure you have a NAT router with a built-in firewall, ask your internet service provider. You can also do a web search for your modem or router to find the manufacturer's specs or a review that answers the question. Most routers allow you to log in and customize the firewall settings, and also offer content filtering and parental controls. See my related article, [Securing Your Router](#), for details on how to log in and other router security tips.

If you have a dial-up connection, where the telephone line connects directly from the wall socket to your computer, you definitely don't have a hardware firewall. So, in the absence of a hardware firewall, you absolutely need a software-based firewall.

What About the Built-In Windows Firewall?

If you have Windows XP with the latest service pack, Windows Vista, or Windows 7, then you already have a software firewall. Windows Firewall has been part of the operating system since 2004, and the default setting is ON. To check or change the firewall setting, click on Start / Control Panel / Security, then click on the Firewall link.

My position is this: If you have a hardware firewall, there is no need to run a software firewall in addition. It doesn't matter if you have a wired or wireless connection to your router.

If you do turn off the Windows firewall, you should tell Windows that you have your own firewall solution, or it will nag you about the firewall every time you start up your computer. For XP, click Start / Control Panel / Security Center. Then, under Firewall, click the Recommendations box. On the next screen, check the box labeled "I have a firewall solution that I'll monitor myself." Follow these instructions for [Vista](#) or [Windows 7](#) systems.

Other Software Firewalls

I know there is a heated debate on this topic. Some people claim that you MUST have a software firewall to protect you from malware that might be trying to make an OUTBOUND connection for nefarious purposes. My position is that anti-virus and anti-spyware programs should be installed to remove and prevent malware in the first place. Sure, you can use the Windows Firewall, or install ZoneAlarm, Black Ice, etc., but my experience shows that many users are confused and unnecessarily alarmed by the constant stream of "warnings" that these programs present.

Lots of good programs DO need to make outbound connections to the Internet. Your browser, email program, FTP client, media player, and any software that checks for

available security updates will need access. So, if you're not very careful, you'll end up blocking them, and then they won't work correctly. I've also seen cases where software firewalls malfunction and either interfere with certain programs or end up blocking ALL connections. And don't get me going about all the times when a software firewall prevented access to a shared folder or a networked printer... arrgh!

But I will grant you this. Installing a software-based firewall as an extra layer of protection is not a bad thing. If you have kids in the house who are likely to click on or download almost anything, it could be helpful. See my related article on Free Firewall Protection for some excellent free software.

A Word About Laptops

If you have a laptop that's connected to the Internet through your home network, there's no difference in terms of the firewall setup. But if you take that laptop on the road and make a wired connection (as in a hotel room with a network cable) or go wireless (in the airport or a coffee shop), you are no longer protected, so it's a very good idea to turn ON your software firewall. See the instructions above for details on how to do this with the Windows Firewall.

To summarize, YES you need a firewall. My personal opinion is that if you have a hardware firewall, don't bother with a software firewall. Can you run both? Yes, but the "benefits" may be outweighed by the problems. ❖

WINDOWS & ANDROID TIPS

APCUG2.org, May 2025

HOW TO CHANGE YOUR DEFAULT WEB BROWSER

Want your Windows PC to open links in Firefox, your Mac to load up Chrome, or your iPhone to favor Edge? Read this PCMag article to learn how to change the default web browser on a PC or mobile device. https://tinyurl.com/4byyhvjt

HOW I DITCHED GOOGLE PHOTOS AND BUILT MY OWN PHOTO SERVER

From How-To Geek

I grew tired of paying for Google One storage just to use Google Photos. Plus, I wanted more privacy and security over my stored pictures. What did I do? I built my own server to replace Google Photos, and you can, too. Learn how to build your server here: How I Ditched Google Photos and Built My Own Photo Server

5 MICROSOFT WORD HACKS YOU PROBABLY DIDN'T KNOW

Make the most of Word's tools with these useful tricks you should know. 5 Microsoft Word Hacks You Probably Didn't Know

5 THINGS EDGE'S MOBILE BROWSER DOES BETTER THAN CHROME

By Demilade Adejola, How-To Geek

I always used Chrome to browse on my phone, not because I loved it, but because it was what was there and it got the job done. However, recently I decided to branch out and explore the Edge mobile browser, and I've already found things that it does way better than Chrome." Read more at 5 Things Edge's Mobile Browser Does Better Than Chrome

5 MICROSOFT WORD HACKS YOU PROBABLY DIDN'T KNOW

Make the most of Word's tools with these useful tricks you should know. 5 Microsoft Word Hacks You Probably Didn't Know ❖

LACS INFORMATION

HOW TO JOIN LACS'S MAIL LIST

LACS has an active general email list: PC@LACS.Groups.IO which goes to all members on the list. Members will receive meeting notices and Zoom links via this list. You can also ask questions, offer suggestions, and help others.

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 Larry McDavid, our Groups.IO Coordinator. (See your roster for contact info.)
He will send you an invitation to join. If you have any problems or questions about joining, please contact Larry.

USING PAYPAL OR ZELLE

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 recipient is **Los Angeles Computer Society.** Select **Send by email**. The email address is: **lacomputersociety@gmail.com**. Add a note telling what the payment is for and your contact information.
The wording may be a little different on your bank's site.

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. Enter the amount to pay, then click on **Add a note**. Say what the payment is for. If it is for dues, add your physical and email addresses, preferred phone number, and if you want a hard copy or the electronic version of the newsletter.

Email questions to Gavin Faught. See our roster for his contact information.

FIX YOUR PC FOR FREE?
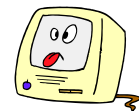
LACS member and presenter, **Jim McKnight**, has an open offer to LACS members to diagnose, repair, disinfect, or upgrade members' PC's for free. There are certain limitations to Jim's offer, so see the details by clicking the "Fix my PC for Free?" link at www.jimopi.net.

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.

CHANGE CONTACT INFORMATION

Go to www.lacspc.org. Click on **Join LACS** in the bar under the picture. Under **Membership Update,** select **Click Here** to select either the DOC or PDF form. Fill it out; email it with your changes to Leah Clark. See the LACS roster or pages 9 or 10 of UF.
Or 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 few days before the meeting.
Please let Leah Clark know by the morning of the meeting if you don't have it or have a 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.
7. Click **Finish**.

LACS CALENDAR
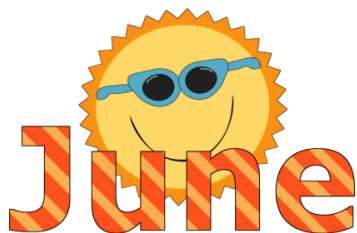
LACS Board Meeting, Monday, June 2
Time: 7:00 P.M. (Open from 6:30 P.M.)
Place: Wherever you are via Zoom

LACS General Meeting: Tuesday, June 10
Time: 7:00 P.M. (Open from 6:30 P.M.)
Place: Wherever you are via Zoom

> **June 2: LACS Board Meeting**
> **June 6:** D Day (WW II)
> **June 10: LACS General Meeting**
> **June 14:** Flag Day
> **June 15:** Father's Day
> **June 18: LACS Lunch at the Sizzler**
> **June 19:** Juneteenth
> **June 20:** First Day of Summer

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 10: Embracing the AI Age
June 18: Lunch at the Sizzler
          See page 2.
July   8: TBA

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

See back issues of *User Friendly at* 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 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.

Android Smartphones - 5

Apple devices - 7

Anti-Malware and Backup - 4, 5

Dragon Naturally Speaking - 3

Genealogy - 5

Groups.IO - 9

Hardware - 4

Lotus Word Pro, Approach - 4

Mozilla Firefox - 7

MS Excel - 5, 7, 8

MS Word - 1, 3, 5, 8

MS Outlook - 1, 5

MS PowerPoint - 5, 7

MS Publisher - 2

PDF - 5, 8

Photoshop Elements - 2

Quicken - 5, 8

Thunderbird - 4

Utilities - 4, 5

Windows - 4, 5

WordPerfect - 5

Zoom - 2, 6

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
4	McKnight, Jim	8:00 AM	7:00 PM
5	Nordlinger, Stephanie	9:00 AM	5:00 PM
6	Presky, Mark	Any	Any
7	Van Berkom, Paula	9:00 AM	5:00 PM
8	Wilder, Joan	9:00 AM	9:00 PM
9	McDavid, Larry	Contact by email	

Note: Times are Pacific Times

OFFICERS, DIRECTORS AND LEADERS

TITLE	NAME	TERM
President	Leah Clark	2025
Vice President	Stephanie Nordlinger	2025
Secretary	**Open**	2025
Treasurer	Gavin Faught	2025
Director	Loling Beckman	2025
Director	Donna Benton	2025
Director	Mark Presky	2025
Director	Irv Hershman	2026
Director	Jim McKnight	2026
Director	**Open**	2026
Director	Paula Van Berkom	2026
APCUG Representative	Leah Clark	
Corporate Counsel	Stephanie Nordlinger	
Database Manager	Loling Beckman	
Groups.IO Email Lists	Larry McDavid	
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: https://lacspc.org

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

Please use your LACS roster for email addresses and phone numbers to contact any officer, board member or other member. If necessary, 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.

YOUR HEALTH

By **Kurt Jefferson**
Central Kentucky Computer Society
May 2025, https://newsite.ckcs.org

What you eat during your 40s, 50s, and 60s directly impacts your health when you're 70, according to research by Harvard's T.H. Chan School of Public Health. The study concluded that healthier diets when younger translated into better health and living to 70, free of chronic diseases. *Nature* reports the study results. The research team followed more than 100,000 Americans for up to 30 years to track their eating habits. The participants logged their diets and were asked how often they ate more than 130 different foods. The study found "Higher intakes of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, unsaturated fats, nuts, legumes, and low-fat dairy products were linked to greater odds of healthy aging, whereas higher intakes of trans fats, sodium, sugary beverages, and red or processed meats (or both) were inversely associated. Our findings suggest that dietary patterns rich in plant-based foods, with moderate inclusion of healthy animal-based foods, may enhance overall healthy aging, guiding future dietary guidelines," reports Nature.

For the first time in more than two decades, the FDA has approved a new type of painkiller to treat moderate to severe pain. It's called suzetrigine and is sold under the brand name Journavx. *Everyday Health* reports this is "the first drug in a new family of non-opioid painkillers." Suzetrigine is thought to be non-addictive. The FDA has approved the drug to treat acute pain, which is pain lasting less than three months. It has not been approved for chronic pain. Suzetrigine has provided relief without serious side effects, according to reports.
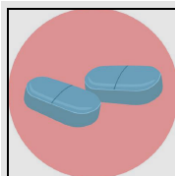
A dictionary can help uncomplicate the maze of words you find on products at the grocery store. There are also plenty of other descriptions pertaining to medicinal plants, oils, nuts, and other items. *Healthline* assembled the list showing words in tables, so it's very easy to use.
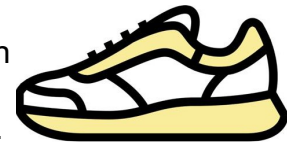
An interesting new study out of Great Britain sheds the spotlight on just how valuable pets are in our lives. Researchers at Kent University have determined that owning a pet can bring the owner the same psychological benefits as getting married or earning an additional £70,000 a year in terms of life satisfaction. The study involved 2,500 British households and showed that people were less likely to own pets as they grow older. Study details are published in the *Springer Nature Link*.

Here's a pop quiz. On average, who walks more in a day—waiters or farmers? The answer is waiters, according to a report in *Healthline*. In addition, people living in Canada, France, and Australia, on avera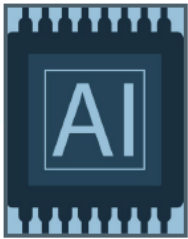ge, put in more daily steps than people living in the U.S. If you wear a fitness tracker or smartwatch, you probably walk more than if you didn't wear the device. The Centers for Disease Control urges adults to get at least 150 minutes of aerobic exercise a week.

If you've never been jabbed with a syringe containing the shingles vaccine, consider this. A study from Wales shows older adults there who got shingles shots were 20% less likely to acquire dementia compared to those who were not vaccinated. Science-Daily calls the results "remarkable," and says the study by Stanford Medicine "supports an emerging theory that viruses

that affect the nervous system can increase the risk of dementia." Shingles, as you may know, is caused by the same virus that infects people with chicken pox. Two shingles shots are typically given; the second dose usually comes two to six months after the first one.

Artificial intelligence, known as AI, has been shown to accurately predict the dementia risk in older American Indian and Alaska Native adults who were 65 and older. A study by the University of California-Irvine used seven years of health records from 17,400 adults from that population, none of whom had dementia. In a two-year follow-up study, 611 people had acquired dementia. Researchers say the study proved that AI could predict at a high level which individuals might acquire dementia. They say this confirms that AI could be used in similar health studies with other participants. In addition, AI improved efficiency, accuracy, and the ability to crunch large numbers involved in the study. Details are outlined in the *National Library of Medicine.*

Why does one brother love classical music and the other can't get enough of 70s and 80s country? It may be partially in their genes. A study of twins reveals that music preferences may be partially inherited. *ScienceDaily* reports "an international team led by scientists from the Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics in Nijmegen, the Netherlands, uncovered genetic factors that influence the degree of music enjoyment, which were partly distinct from genes influencing general enjoyment of rewarding experiences or musical ability."

Heavy drinking, according to a new study, can damage the brain over time so that one's decision-making ability is greatly compromised. This was the first study showing that high alcohol use over time could dramatically change the brain. *MedicalXpress* reports that rats given high amounts of alcohol over time performed poorly on a complex task even after they were off alcohol for months. Johns Hopkins University conducted the research.

Are you on a mission to boost your brainpower? In the largest study to date, researchers discovered that exercise "can significantly boost brain function and memory across children, adults, and older adults," according to a study done by the University of South Australia. This involved data on more than 258,000 individuals. What researchers discovered is that low-to-moderate intensity exercise had the best benefits for both brain function and a person's memory. "Exercise has a profound effect on physical health, but we also know it benefits brain function. What this study confirms is that even low-intensity exercise – like yoga or walking – can improve cognition, making it accessible to people of all ages and abilities," said Dr. Ben Singh, UniSA's lead researcher. Adolescents and children showed the best memory improvements from exercise, while individuals with ADHD showed the best improvement with executive function skills, such s planning, time management, and impulse control.

Medical advancements, improvements in education, nutrition, and sanitation, along with other factors, have made a major impact on the lives of older individuals. A study by Columbia University reveals that "age-related declines experienced by older adults have significantly slowed down," reports the journal Nature Aging and GoodNewsNetwork. The study revealed major health improvements of older adults living in Great Britain when compared to earlier generations. Today's older adults are functioning at higher levels of physical and mental ability than prior generations at the same age. The study used data from the English Longitudinal Study of Aging.

What's being called a possible "game changer" for folks with asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) could be around the corner. For many years, doctors have prescribed steroid tablets for those ailments. Scientists from King's College London believe a drug already available could be used in emergency situations with no additional treatment needed. The drug is Benralizamab, an antibody that reduces lung inflammation. The *Lancet Respiratory Medicine* journal details the study by the King's College team. The *GoodNewsNetwork* says the drug given by syringe is the "first new treatment for asthma attacks in 50 years."

Rolling down your car window can be healthy, reports MotorBiscuit. The website cites a 2024 Swedish study from Umeå University. That study showed that better car ventilation reduced levels of dangerous semi-volatile organic compounds (SVOCs). These chemicals are produced from plastics, stain and water repellants, flame retardants, and other items that

car manufacturers use in the cabin of a car. It's been shown that SVOCs can disrupt the human endocrine system. On hot summer days in a closed car, those chemicals can be up to 40,000 times higher than in a closed car in cooler weather. *MotorBiscuit* writes, "At a minimum, rolling your windows down before driving and keeping the ventilation system on (without using recirculate) helps clear out these chemicals. The study showed that cars with active ventilation had much lower chemical levels." Details of the study are provided by *ScienceDirect.*

A T-shirt worn three times a day that tracks a patient's vital signs following cancer surgery could allow that patient to go home from the hospital sooner. *GoodNewsNetWork* reports that researchers at Sapienza University in Rome worked with *LET Wearable Solutions* to "design a light T-shirt with sensors that track ECG, heart rate, body temperature, and more, then sends the data to an app and web-based software." The research team wanted to see if patients could be discharged on a faster track after urological surgery for cancer. A study has begun to check the cost effectiveness of this technology.

Scientists in Israel have stumbled upon a previously hidden part of the immune system that may provide a source of natural antibiotics. The spotlight is on protaesomes, which are inside cells and essentially work as "cellular garbage cans," writes *Good*. This website notes that the protaesomes "recognize harmful

invaders and cancer cells" and help erase "unwanted and damaged proteins." A team at the C made the discovery. The Institute wrote, "the discovery holds promise in light of the growing resistance to antibiotics."

Many Americans are trying to lose weight. If they're using artificial sweeteners, weight loss might not be so easy. *Everyday Health* reports that 40% of Americans use sugar substitutes. Now, researchers at the USC Diabetes and Obesity Research Institute in Los Angeles have discovered that artificial sweeteners may actually increase the appetite and food cravings. A growing body of evidence "suggests replacing foods and drinks containing real sugar with ones containing sugar substitutes doesn't help with weight loss and may even cause people to gain weight," reports the site. Researchers say the problem might be that artificial sweeteners may not provide calories expected by the body, so that may increase the appetite.

Drinking brewed tea might be healthier than you realize. It turns out that heavy metals attach to tea leaves while the tea is brewing. A new study from Northwestern University reveals that the longer the tea is steeped, the greater the number of harmful contaminants that are filtered. *Everyday Health* reports the study showed up to 15 per cent of lead is removed in three to five minutes of brewing. While tap water in the U.S. is normally safe to drink, some heavy metals might end up in drinking water in homes containing older, corroded lead pipes and plumbing fixtures.

Regarding tea bags, researchers discovered that cellulose bags work quite well, while nylon and cotton bags only drew a small amount of contaminants. Those who did the study say decaffeinated tea most likely also filters contaminants. *Everyday Health* notes that contaminants in water, such as lead and cadmium, can lead to serious health impacts.

Fitness trackers and smartwatches are on more wrists than you can imagine. "Wearables are being adopted at a pace reminiscent of the mobile phone boom of the late 2000s," writes *The Conversation*. Do they actually provide an accurate snapshot of one's health? Writer Cailbhe Doherty notes that the lack of standardization makes it very challenging for researchers to complete an accurate picture of a wearable device's accuracy. Therefore, he adds, "As wearable technologies continue to permeate various facets of health and lifestyle, it is important to approach manufacturers' claims with a healthy dose of skepticism. Gaps in research, inconsistent methodologies, and the rapid pace of new device releases underscore the need for a more formalized and standardized approach to validation of devices." ❖

DEFAULT APPS: WHERE AND WHAT ARE THEY?

By **Phil Sorrentino**
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Sun City Center Computer Club
https://scccomputerclub.org/

As printed in The Rochester Computer Society, Inc. Newsletter, *Monitor,* May 2025*.*

Default Apps is a choice in the Apps section of Settings. To get there, click the Start button, then click "Settings," then "Apps," and finally, "Default apps." This is where you

can choose which Apps will be used for certain types of files. Windows 10 and Windows 11 both have this feature, but the screens look a bit different. It looks like Windows 10 scratches the surface of this feature, and Windows 11 expands on it. But as an example, let's first look at the more straightforward Windows 10 screens. Let's look at one of these choices, probably familiar to most computer users, "photo viewer" (the fourth item on my list). Below the choice "photo viewer" is the icon and the name of an App. In my case, it is "Photo Gallery." By default, this App will be used when the user attempts to open a photo file type, like a .jpg file.

Just a Bit of Background

Many file types (extensions - the letters in the file name after the period) have been defined, and many are commonly used daily. FileInfo.com maintains a searchable database that contains over 10,000 file extensions. They are used for documents, databases, graphic images, disk images, presentation software, email, virtual environments, file encoding, and other purposes.

Many of these file types are defined and used by specific software and are not often encountered by the average computer user. However, we usually use a few categories of file types in our daily computing lives so frequently that operating systems have identified some categories and provided specific folders for their use, such as documents, pictures, videos, and music. In this same order, you can think of these categories as Text-based, Image, Video, and Audio files. So, now that some basic categories have been defined, we can see what file types might fit into these categories.

Some common file types like .docx, .xlsx, .pdf, .html, .odt, .pptx, .zip, and .txt are document file types. .jpg, .jpeg, .jpe, .png, .tiff, .gif, .heic, and .raw are image file types. .mp4, .wmv, .avi, .mov, .flv, and .mkv are video file

types. And finally, MP3, .ogg, .wma, .wav, .aac, and .flac are music file types. (If this doesn't make sense, you may not see the file type extension part of your file names.

Windows defaults to not showing extensions. To change this, in File Explorer, click "View" and then check the "file name extensions" checkbox.) Additionally, there are categories for file types for specific uses like email, maps, and web browsers, which Windows puts into categories for convenience. For example, Email file types are .msg, .pst, .edb, .ost, and .eml. Map-oriented file types are .shp, .shx, .kml, .kmz, and .gpx. Web browser-oriented file types are .html, .xps, .css, .asp, and .php.

So, Windows provides control over the Application (or App) that will be called upon to open and/or process a file. When you attempt to open a file by double-clicking it, the "Default" App associated with the double-clicked file type will be used. For example, if you try to open a Photo document (.jpg file type, for example), the Default App (in my situation), Microsoft Photos Gallery, will be used. There may be other Apps on your computer that can also do the job.

If you want to see what Apps could do the job and maybe even change the Default App, click the current Default App, in my case, the "Photo Gallery" Icon, and you will see a list of the other Apps on your computer that can be used. When I clicked the "Photo Gallery" Icon, I was presented with a "Choose an App" list that included *Photos*, *Faststone Image Viewer*, *Microsoft Office Picture Manager*, *Movie Maker*, *Paint*, *Paint 3D Photoshop Elements 13 Editor*, *Snip & Sketc*h, and *Look for an app in the Microsoft store*.

Microsoft is always anxious to provide or even sell solutions. This list indicates the apps that could be set as the default apps for photo files. The list on your computer

may be shorter or longer depending on the Apps you have installed on your computer.

To change the Default App to an App in the list, click the Name of the App, and the Default will be changed. Notice that below the Default Apps choice is an option to "Choose default apps by file type." Clicking this allows you to set default Apps for every file type on your computer. My computer's list of file types is quite long, totaling around 500, going from .386 to .zpl. Changing these entries is probably unnecessary, at least not for the average computer user. However, if you have specific and maybe expensive software you want to use for certain file types, this would be the place to make that choice.

Windows 11 **Default Apps** is similar but a little different. When you select Default Apps (under Settings—Apps) instead of a list of a few categories, like "mail," "maps," or "photo viewer," there is a list of all the Apps on your computer. If you select an app, you will see a list of all the file types associated with the App chosen. At this point, you can change the "Default App" used for the selected file type. This is similar to the "Choose default apps by file type" in Windows 10. As such, in either version of the OS, there is an attempt to give the user complete control over which App is used by default when attempting to open a specific file type. ❖

STAYING SAFE WITH YOUR SMARTPHONE WHILE TRAVELING

By **Chris Guld,** Geeks on Tour
https://GeeksOnTour.com May 2025

Have you ever found yourself in a new place, maybe a little lost, and realized how much your smart- phone can be a lifeline? Whether cruising across the ocean or driving through unfamiliar territory, knowing how to use your phone's safety features can give you real peace of mind.

Here are smartphone features you should know before your next adventure. So many built-in tools can help you stay safe, connected, and prepared for the unexpected.

Key Features Every Traveler Should Use

- **Share Your Location:** Android and iPhone let you share your real-time location with a trusted person. This can be a lifesaver if you're exploring solo or just want loved ones to know you're safe. Look for the "Share Location" option in Google Maps or Apple's Find My app.

- **Emergency SOS:** You can call emergency services even if you can't dial? On most phones, pressing the power button multiple times brings up the SOS feature. Make sure you know how your phone does it before you leave home.

- **ICE (In Case of Emergency) Info:** Add emergency contacts and medical info in your phone's settings. First responders can access this from your lock screen if needed.

- **Offline Maps:** Download maps of your destination ahead of time. If you lose connection, you'll still have directions at your fingertips.

Digital Wallet: Store your credit cards, ID, and even boarding passes in your phone's wallet app. It's safer than fumbling through your bag in a crowded place.

I covered many of these features in a recent episode: **How Our Phones Help Us Stay Safe**. It is at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iJUC50frFuk&t=726s. Watch it before your next trip! *Editor's note: This video is excellent, with many helpful tips for using your phone, not only for when traveling.*

My Tip: Practice Before You Go

Spend a few minutes setting up your emergency contacts and a credit card in your wallet, downloading maps, and testing location sharing with a trusted friend. A little preparation goes a long way. ❖

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. Several book, media and training sites offer discounts including the two mentioned below.

- Members can save at the **Pearson Technology** websites: InformIT, Cisco Press, Pearson IT Certification, Que Publishing, Adobe Press, and Peachpit Press.
  Informit.com/user_groups/index.aspx
  Code for print books: **ITCOMMUNITY.**
  Code for eBooks: **DIGITALCOMMUNITY**

- See books on digital imaging and photography, gaming, animation, film and video, post-production, audio, music technology, broadcast and theatre at Routledge Focal Press . They offer discounts to User Group members.
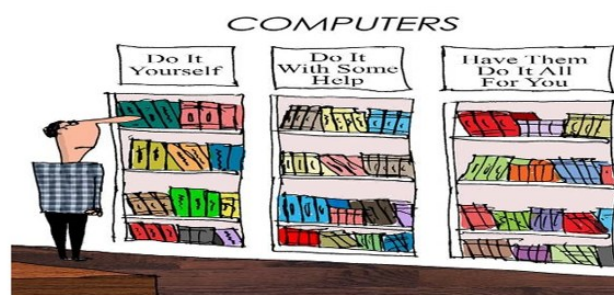
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For learning how to use internet-based websites and applications for free.

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LAUGHING OUT LOUD

From the Plateau User Group, Inc
Newsletter, Gazette, Feb 2025

To make our robot dog more authentic, I programmed it to chew things and bark at every sound it hears.
From How-To Geek.com

I want to **Backup** my computer.
Can you tell me where to find **Reverse**?

Submitted by Mark Presky, LACS director.

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.

— **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* **New or Renewal Membership Application**

Date _____   Dues may be paid by PayPal, Zelle, or check. If paying by check, make it 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**

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?

Revised Jan. 2025, ljc

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. **Just click on the link**. If you haven't received it by the morning of the meeting, let Leah Clark know.

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 you to re-enter.

You may turn off your video when you are gone.