Los Angeles Computer Society Newsletter

User Friendly

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February 2026
LACS
A Computer and Technology User Group

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LACS WEBSITE
For information about LACS, go to 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
http://www.apcug2.org
www.facebook.com/APCUG

TUESDAY. FEBRUARY 10, 2026 GENERAL MEETING

**Meeting Time: 7:00 to 9-00 PM - via Zoom**
Socializing, Questions & Answers: 6:30-7:00
Topic: Declutter Your Digital Life
Speaker: Judy Taylour, APCUG Speaker

You invest a lot in your devices—this presentation shows you how to get the most out of them. Digital clutter builds up. It slows your computer, fills your phone, and makes everyday tasks more frustrating. Regular decluttering keeps everything running smoothly to reduce stress. In this session, Judy shares simple, practical ways to clean up your digital life, get organized, and boost your device's performance. You'll learn easy steps to work faster, stay safer, and feel more in control of your technology.

Judy Taylour, an APCUG Wednesday Workshop coordinator, is a member of the Santa Clarita Valley Tech Club. She has taught tech classes for over 20 vears. She is a member of Los Angeles FBI Senior Scams Working Group and the Pierce College Computer Applications and Technologies Department Advisory Committee, collaborating on course and hardware recommendations. She strongly believes in life-long learning.
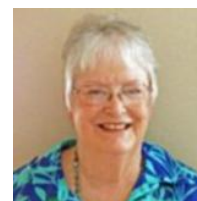
TO JOIN A LACS GENERAL MEETING
LACS members on the PC Groups.IO list will receive the Zoom link to meetings two days before the meeting. Click on it to enter.
Guests may ask for the link two days before at Leahjc (at) sbcglobal.net

FROM YOUR PRESIDENT/EDITOR

I need to tell you about what happened to me on Tuesday, Jan 20.

While driving north on 15th St. in Santa Monica, a car coming south on 15th St. made a left turn right into me. I got some lacerations on my legs, but nothing serious. The airbag really hurt my sternum when it exploded into me. Then I was examined by the paramedics and interviewed by the police. They towed my car to a body shop, and a police officer offered to drive me to a car rental.

I walked over to my car to get a few things out before it was towed. I suddenly became very lightheaded. I tried taking a few steps. The next thing I knew, I was surrounded by paramedics and police. I had fainted and fell on my face which now has many lacerations, broken bones on top of the nose and above the left eye, two black eyes, and a laceration on top of my head. I also have a fractured bone in my neck. I look terrible. An ambulance took me to the UCLA trauma center. I was in the ER until Thursday evening. They X-rayed, CT-scanned, and MRIed every part of my body. They wanted to make sure the fainting wasn't from some underlying condition, like a stroke. I think it was from the stress and adrenaline rush from the accident.

Thanks for all for your good thoughts and prayers from Leah.

It is with a sad heart that I must announce the passing of two LACS Members. May they rest in Peace, and may their loved ones be comforted. We will miss them.

Dr. Ruth Petrucha, MD
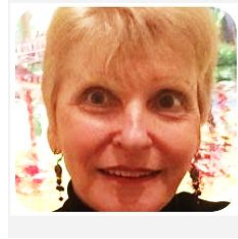
Dr. Petrucha, an obstetrics and gynecology doctor (ObGyn), was the head of obstetrics at Kaiser, where she had delivered over 5000 babies. She fell in love with LACS member Fred Kong, whom she met through another organization. Family members and LACS members remembered her energy, kindness, and sense of humor.

Emil (E. J.) Rozek

E. J. was a printer by trade. He told us a lot about the printing technology before the computer days. After he retired, he was a docent at the International Printing Museum in Carson. He took LACS members on a field trip to the museum, where it was so interesting to see all the historical machinery!

E. J. had been a director on the LACS board.

GENERAL MEETING REPORT

By **Leah Clark,** LACS President/Editor
January 13, 2026
Topics: Edge Browser's Secrets
Windows and Mac
Speaker: William (Bill) James
APCUG Speaker

The Edge Browser has evolved since it replaced Internet Explorer. Microsoft created a new browser based on the Chrome platform. Bill presented and discussed his PowerPoint presentation titled "*Edge Browser Secrets*." (I added the video time locations after some items in this report to help you find them.)

Bill talked about 10 secrets you might want to know about.

1. **Collections** (11:53)
   You can put web pages into a folder to review them. They sync across all your Microsoft devices. MS Edge is available for Android and Apple mobile devices, as well as for Apple, Chromebook, and Linux desktops. Bill showed how to start collections on your computer and how to add, save, use, and sort them. You can group web pages by type, such as sports or recipes.

2. **Save Your Edge Tabs in Collections** (25.51)
   To save tabs to a collection, right-click on a tab and select "Add all tabs to a new collection."

3. **Microsoft Edge for Linux on your Chromebox** (29:30)
   You can use Edge on your Chromebook, but you must download the Linux version to do so. Go to the MS Edge web page to see the different versions of Edge.

4. **Pin Websites to the Taskbar** (34.14)
   It can be handy to pin a frequently used website to your taskbar, so it's only one click away. It reduces the need to type URLs. Bill showed how to do that on Windows and Mac machines.

5. **Edge Web Capture** (51:18)
   To take a screenshot within the Edge browser, open MS Edge and go to the desired web page. Press **Ctrl + Shift + S** in Windows and **Command + Shift + S** in Mac. Select the area you want to capture by dragging the mouse. Copy, save, or share captures easily. (*This also works to capture anything in a document.*)

6. **Import Settings and Tabs from Google Chrome to MS Edge** (39:31)
   Imported tabs and pinned tabs from Chrome will appear in Edge and will apply immediately. Bill showed examples of how this is done.

7. **Change the Font Size in Immersive Reader** (41:56)
   Bill demonstrated how to use the Immersive Reader tool to format web pages like a book, removing ads for easier reading. You can change the text types and size.

8. **Opening .pdf Files** (1:24:02)
   Open PDFs quickly by dragging and dropping.

9. **Change URL Copy/Paste Format** (1:12:10)
   When copying and pasting a URL, you can change its appearance as a link or as plain text by choosing Paste or Paste Special. Bill demonstrated the difference. Often, a link is very long. Bill told us about using Tiny URL to shorten a long URL.

10. Microsoft Rewards (1:07:15)
This is a free loyalty program from Microsoft that lets you earn points through your everyday activities. Sign in with your Microsoft account.

Differences between Microsoft Windows and Mac (1:24:47)

The Mac Dock and the Windows Taskbar are similar. On the Mac, the Apps icon is on the Dock. This is similar to the Start menu on Windows. Bill showed his PowerPoint on the similarities and shared features between Windows and macOS. It started with the history of Apple and Microsoft. Apple has dominated in hardware, whereas Microsoft continues to dominate in software.

Apple and Microsoft now have fascinating parallels. The Windows key opens the Start menu, providing access to programs, files, and settings. The Command key on macOS is similar to the Control key on Windows. It is used in combination with other keys to perform various actions. Bill showed some useful key combinations on both.

The Options key on macOS is similar to the Alt key on Windows, but may not have direct equivalents on a Windows keyboard.

Both systems have Word Processing: Microsoft Word in Windows and Pages in macOS. With a Mac, you don't need to buy an office suite because it comes with your Mac. Bill discussed many apps that are compatible with both macOS and Windows.

The *Parallels Desktop for Mac* app allows you to run Windows and macOS simultaneously on a Mac.

After the presentation, there was much discussion about using ChatGPT to learn how to do things.

Watch the recording of this presentation to learn more about all that was covered. I noted the video locations after some items in this report to help you find them. ❖

YOUR DOG HAS SOMETHING TO TELL YOU
AI Cracked the code
By **Kim Komando**
[Komando.com | Trusted Tech News, Tips, Podcasts & Smart Advice](#)
From: [kim@mail.thecurrentnewsletter.com](#)

Hold on. We're about to crack one of humanity's oldest mysteries. What is your pet really trying to tell you?

Is that bark excitement, anxiety, or a dramatic demand for cheese? Is your cat affectionate or quietly plotting your demise? I'd love to be able to have a conversation with my golden retrievers, or at least better understand what they want.

They know specific phrases for sure, from "Let's go potty" to "Do not go in the pool." But how cool it would be if, when I walked in the door, Bella would say, "Hey, Mom, sorry. I didn't mean to chew up your Peloton bike shoes." Yeah, that happened yesterday.

🐶 Dr. Dolittle

There aren't many products that really do interspecies communication (that's what it's called, btw).

MeowTalk analyzes your cat's meows against 40 million recordings. That sounds great, but it has a terrible 1.5-star rating on Google Play. Folks report connection errors, translations that don't match obvious context, and one reviewer's cat apparently only says, "Hello," no matter if he's hungry, sleepy, or happy. Consider it entertainment. It's free with a $6/month premium.

FluentPet takes a different approach, teaching pets to communicate using recordable buttons. They say over 70% of dogs learn two buttons within a month. My golden retriever, Abby, could not grasp it. I'm ready to try again with Bella.

In case you want to see it in action, **Bunny the Sheepadoodle** on TikTok, with 8 million followers, is an apparent Mensa canine member.

🐱 CES 2026 game changers

The big leap is about to come from applying the same AI world models used to teach machines how humans move and behave. AI is being trained on massive libraries of animal video and audio, mapping ear position, tail movement, posture, and vocal patterns to predict actual outcomes.

Companies like SatellAI unveiled AI collars that create a digital twin of your pet, combining behavior, biometrics, and environment to spot stress or illness early.

Others went further. Ecovacs introduced LilMilo, an AI robotic pet companion that recognizes voices, learns routines, and responds emotionally. Think of it as a social robot for pets and humans.

Meanwhile, Petkit showcased AI-powered feeders and litter systems that track diet, hydration, and health trends. This isn't translation. It's care.

🤨 Is it possible?

Right now, from what I have read, pet interspecies communication is about 60% verifiable science and 40% bull. AI is excellent at pattern recognition, but we're years away from philosophical debates with a pug. Still, detecting distress or pain before symptoms show is a big deal.

If AI finally translates your cat knocking a glass off the counter as, "Observe my mastery of gravity, you mere human," that would be amazing. So yes, the animals are finally getting a voice. And I have a feeling they've got strong opinions about the kibble.

And just because, if all dogs go to heaven, where do cats go? Purrrgatory. Meow.

🐾 **Share this with a pet parent** before they waste $6/month on an app that only says, "Hello." People are fascinated by this. We're years away from conversations with our pets, but early disease detection is here now. ❖

Your Dog Is Talking. Are You Listening?
AI Is Cracking The Code To Your Pet's Secret Language

What Stood Out to Me at CES 2026
Continued from page 17

Glyde: This is an AI-guided hair clipper. Instead of snap-on guards, it automatically adjusts the cutting length as you move it along your head. I didn't test it, but as someone who was obsessed with the idea of the Flowbee as a kid, this feels like the AI version of that. Not sure how well it will work in real life, but I sure could have used this during the pandemic.

Fitasy 3D-Printed Sneakers: Startup Fitasy is making custom 3D-printed sneakers. I tried them on, and they were super comfortable. You can scan your feet with your phone and get a custom pair made in a few weeks, or buy a pre-printed version faster. I tried my usual size, and they fit perfectly. They're cool, comfortable, and yes, I want them.

[Seattle Ultrasonics Chef's Knife](#) - This vibrating chef's knife vibrates at about 40,000 times per second to make cutting easier and help food slide off the blade. I tried it on a tomato and a potato. It did feel a bit easier, but it's expensive right now: $350 for the knife and $150 for the charger. Maybe one day this becomes like a Sonicare toothbrush. Not for everyone, but good to have options.

[ChocoPrint Vending Machine](#) - This has been one of the most debated videos on my [Instagram](#). It's a vending machine that 3D-prints edible chocolate figurines in a few minutes. You pick the design on the screen and watch it print. It's chocolate plus a show. I can see how this could work well in a candy shop or attraction because it definitely draws a crowd.

Iceplosion: This one isn't really for me, but I get the appeal. It's like a K-cup machine, but instead of coffee, it makes a carbonated slushy in under four minutes. The carbonation is the key. Apparently, no other home machine does this yet. I can see it being fun for kids' parties, but realistically, there's no way kids are waiting five minutes between slushies.

Lollipop Star: Probably the weirdest thing I tested at the show was a lollipop that plays music. There are electronics built into the base of the lollipop, and when you put it in your mouth, it uses bone conduction technology to play music that only you can hear. The music lasts for about 60 minutes. Each lollipop costs around $9, and no, it's not reusable.

You Can't See Everything at CES

At this point, you might be thinking, "Rich, didn't you see the smart Legos?" or "Didn't you see the 163-inch TV?" or "What about the rollable laptop?" To understand CES, you have to understand one thing: you can't see everything.

I did see a lot of other stuff. This isn't a complete list. These are just some of the things that stood out to me as interesting. There are plenty of concepts, many small iterations on existing products, and a lot of things that will probably never make it to market. There are also a lot of cars.

The one thing that really stood out was the number of robots. It's the most robots I've ever seen in one place. They are getting better and smarter. Once AI is fully built into these robots, it will change everything.

I'll be live on the radio on Saturdays from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Pacific. If you have a question, call in at **1-888-RICH-101** or just tune in to KFI AM 640. ❖

LACS HOLIDAY PARTY

January 24, 2026

Photos by Mark Presky

Leah's Notes

It looks like a good time was had by all. I feel so bad that I was unable to attend after being in an auto accident. I am feeling better now, but I'm still a little sore.

Please remember that we get together quarterly for Sizzler luncheons.

Let's make 2026 a good year for LACS.

LACS INFORMATION

HOW TO JOIN LACS' MAIL LIST

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

New LACS members will receive an invitation from Groups.IO to join this list with two weeks to accept. Other LACS members may join the list by sending an email to Larry McDavid, Groups.IO Manager. See the roster for contact information. They will receive an invitation to join. Contact Larry with any questions about joining.

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.** Enter **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 knows 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 an electronic copy of *User Friendly*.

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 mail it to
Los Angeles Computer Society
6201 W. 87th St. # 4095
Los Angeles, CA 90045

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.
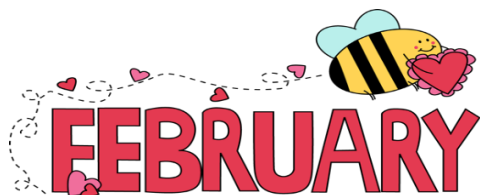
USER FRIENDLY BACK ISSUES AND INDEXES

See back issues and indexes of *User Friendly* at https://www.lacspc.org.

Los Angeles Computer Society Newsletter

February 2026

LACS CALENDAR

LACS Board Meeting
   Monday, February 2
    Time: 7:00 P.M. (Open from 6:30)
     Place: Wherever you are via Zoom
LACS General Meeting
     Tuesday, February 10
      Place: Wherever you are via Zoom

February 2: LACS Board Meeting

February 2: Groundhog Day
February 10: LACS General Meeting
February 14: St. Valentine's Day
February 16: Presidents' Day
February 17: Chinese New Year
            Ramadan Begins
            Mardi Gras

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

February 10: Declutter Your Digital Life
            Judy Taylour, APCUG

March 10: TBA

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

ATTENDING A ZOOM MEETING

LACS members who are on our PC email list and guests 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 any problems.**

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

You can put an icon to the link to a meeting 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**.

MEMBERS HELPING MEMBERS

LACS members volunteer to help other members solve hardware and software problems by telephone or during the hours listed below. Please select a topic from the list below 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, email Leah Clark at the address below. 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, to make corrections, or to ask questions, please email Leah Clark at leahjc (at) sbcglobal.net

Android Smartphones	Moxilla Firefox	Photoshop Elements - 2
Apple devices – 7	MS Excel - 5, 7, 8	Quicken - 5, 8
Anti-Malware and Backup - 4, 5	MS Word - 1, 5, 8	Thunderbird - 4
Genealogy – 5	MS Outlook - 1, 5	Utilities - 4, 5
Groups.IO – 9	MS PowerPoint – 5 ,7	Windows – 4, 5
Hardware – 4	PDF 5 - 8	WordPerfect - 5
Lotus Word Pro, Approach – 4		Zoom – 2, 6

Preferred Time for Phone Calls			
Number	**Name**	**From**	**To**
1	Loling Beckman	10:00 AM	6:00 PM
2	Leah Clark	7:00 AM	5:00 PM
4	Jim Mc Knight	8:00 AM	7:00 PM
5	Stephanie Nordlinger	9:00 AM	9:00 PM
6	Mark Presky	Any	Any
7	Paula Van Berkom	9:00 AM	5:00 PM
8	Joan Wilder	9:00 AM	9:00 PM
9	Larry McDavid	Contact by email	

Note: Times are Pacific times.

OFFICERS, DIRECTORS, AND LEADERS

POSITION	NAME	TERM
President	Leah Clark	2026
Vice President	Stephanie Nordlinger	2026
Acting Secretary	Stephanie Nordlinger	2026
Treasurer	Gavin Faught	2026
Director	Loling Beckman	2027
Director	Donna Barton	2027
Director	Howard Krivoy	2027
Director	Mark Presky	2027
Director	Jim McKnight	2026
Director	Paula Van Berkon	2026
Director	**Open**	2026
APCUG Representative	Leah Clark	
Corporate Counsel	Stephanie Nordlinger	
Database Manager	Loling Beckman	
Groups.io Manager	Larry McDavid	
Newsletter Editor	Leah Clark	
Program Chair	Stephanie Nordlinger	
Publicity	Mark Presky	
Quick Consultants	Leah Clark	
Webmaster	Paula Van Berkon	

**Lacs Mailing Address: 6201 W. 87th St. # 4095, Los Angeles, CA 90045
LACS Website: https://www.lacspc.org**

Please use your LACS roster for email addresses and phone numbers to contact any officer, board member, or other member. **Only LACS members may receive a roster**.

Please note: The 2025 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 electronically to anyone. Be sure to keep it where you can easily find it when you need it. If you don't have the roster, please contact Leah Clark at < leahjc (at) sbcglobal.net >.

KEEPING A PERSONAL HEALTH RECORD
on Your Home Computer

Updated from October 2023
By **Tom Burt**, Vice President
Sun City Summerlin Computer Club
https://www.scscc.club
tomburt89134 (at) cox.net

As residents of a senior community, most of us see a cadre of doctors and other health practitioners regularly. Before retiring, I worked as VP of Software Development at a Silicon Valley startup that was developing an Electronic Health Record system. I worked with a large group of doctors and nurses and got familiar with the typical stages of a medical "encounter" between a patient and a practitioner. This experience led me to develop some ongoing processes for keeping my own personal health records and for producing simple documentation to take with me whenever I go to see one of my healthcare providers or if I need to go to urgent care or to the hospital. This article discusses several key processes, with the hope that you can adapt them to your own situation.

Organizing Your Information

On my PC's hard drive, I have a master folder named "Tom Health". Within that, I have sub-folders for each year. The yearly subfolders contain my personal health summary sheet, my health-tracking data files, my Surgical History, lab results downloaded from the Quest Labs' website, and specific "encounter" documents for each doctor visit. I also keep folders for each of my healthcare providers. These require initial effort to compile, but once compiled, it's straightforward to create updated versions by copying the previous version and editing the copy. Let's explore these in more detail.

Personal Health Summary Sheet

I keep a short personal health summary sheet as a Microsoft Word document. It includes all the usual information required on a "new patient" form when seeing a new doctor. Often, I can just give them that sheet. At the top, it lists the date, my name, address, home and cell phone, email address, gender, and date of birth. It also lists my primary care doctor's name and contact information, my cardiologist's name and contact information, my pharmacy's contact information (name, address, phone, and FAX), my emergency contact information, and my insurance information (insurer, my ID, insurer's phone, and mailing address).

Next, my personal health summary lists all my prescription medications. For example:

Current Medications and Supplies

Regular Prescription Medications

Glucophage (metformin**)** 500 mg, (for type 2 diabetes) **1 tab daily (AM)**

This shows the medication's brand name (and generic name), the strength, the purpose of the medication, and the dosing instructions.

Next, my health summary lists all my over-the-counter medications. For example:

Regular OTC Medications / Supplements:

Vitamin B complex 100 mg - **1 tab daily (AM)**

Next, my health summary lists my Immunization History.

Recent Immunizations

Flu: 2005-2015; Flu-HD: 2016-2025; H1N1: 2010, **Shingles:** 2009, **Pneumonia:** (13 strain): 9-2016 (23-strain): 10-2018

Next, my health data sheet lists Clinical Problems and Diagnoses. For example:

Clinically Significant Problems and Conditions

Diabetes (**Type II)** Diagnosed Fall, 1991. Controlled with meds.

Lastly, my health summary lists known Allergies and Adverse reactions.

Medication Allergies / Adverse Reactions

Flagyl – Allergy: hives and rash; **Prednisone** – Adverse reaction: Extreme elevation of blood glucose levels.

I take along a printout of this personal health summary sheet to every health care encounter. It saves lots of time, ensures accuracy, and avoids confusion. Plus, I don't have to remember off the top of my head all my medication names and related dosing. I also keep an up-to-date copy in my **"Vial of Life"** pouch on the refrigerator so that when the day or night comes to call 911 for the rescue truck, all that detailed health data is ready to hand to the paramedics.

Health Data Readings Tracking

In my own case, I have an assortment of ongoing health problems, including type 2 diabetes. I run a daily fasting blood glucose test and record the readings in an Excel workbook with each month's data in a separate worksheet within the workbook. In the same worksheets, I track body weight readings and keep short notes on any other "interesting" issues, including my prior day's meals. This data tracking helps spot deviations from my "normal" baseline and guides me when I'm preparing for a visit with one of my doctors. I also track blood pressure readings and pulse/oxygen readings in a separate spreadsheet for my cardiologist.

When I'm preparing for an appointment with a provider, I always print copies of my most recent tracking data for the provider's files and to discuss as needed.

Surgical History

I keep a separate Word document that lists a table with all my past surgical procedures by date, including the surgeon's name, the location where the procedure was performed, and a brief summary of the procedure. This document changes infrequently, but a printout is useful when starting up with a new doctor. The following are two examples. (See **Figure 1** on page 14.)

Lab Results

Quest Labs now allows any patient to set up a "My Quest" account where they can log in for various services. You can view and download lab results (as PDFs) and make appointments for future lab sessions. Lab results are usually available 1 to 2 days after specimen collection. The reports provide lots of information about normal ranges and whether your readings are low, normal, or high. What's nice is that, as you build up a history of lab results, you can compare current and past readings to see if out-of-range values are improving or at least not getting worse. I don't have experience with other testing labs, but I would expect that most labs offer the same service.

Encounter Documents

A typical outpatient encounter – say a visit to your primary care doctor – starts with the nurse weighing you and taking your vital signs (blood pressure, pulse,

Date	Surgeon	Location	Procedure
04-14-2014	Dr. Xxxxxx Yyyyyy	His Office	**Epidural injection of steroids & Lidocaine at L1/L2 and L2/L3** (bi-lateral)
05-16-2013	Dr. Ffffffff LIIIIIIIIII	Mountain View	**Lumbar laminectomy and foraminotomy at L3/L4 with mechanical fusion.**

It's important to keep this updated soon after a procedure while the details are fresh in your memory. You may have to ask the performing surgeon for the medical details of the procedure.

Figure 1

blood oxygen, temperature). Ensure you record these for entry into your own tracking data file. Then the nurse wants to know why you're there (the Reason for Your Visit). The nurse will review your current medications, problems, and allergies to make sure their office medical chart on you is up to date.

The nurse may ask questions about Signs and Symptoms or may leave them to the physician. The doctor may examine you physically (e.g., look at your ears or throat, press into your abdomen, or listen to your heart).

Based on all the above, the doctor may make or reconfirm a diagnosis and propose a treatment plan, such as a course of medication, physical therapy, or a change in one or more existing medications. The doctor may also order additional tests or make a referral. Take notes during the visit – especially directions and next steps. Some practices will now provide you with a printed visit summary as you leave. At home, type or scan the notes or summary into a document to save in your folder for that provider. If there are new prescriptions, add those to your Health Summary document.

In modern primary care, it's become the norm for doctors to see about 28 patients a day (four per hour, 7 hours a day). That means, you can only get about 15 minutes of the doctor's time, during which he or she has to review your past medical chart, determine what issues you have, figure out what treatments, if any, to add or change, write the prescription or call them in, write any required lab orders, and document the encounter for billing purposes.

The key to getting the most out of your time with the doctor is to have the information they will need ready in writing in advance. I take a printed copy of my latest personal health summary and lab results, prints of the past month or two of health tracking data, and a one-page sheet on the Reasons for the Visit, any relevant signs, symptoms, and comments about ongoing medications and problems (e.g., Diabetes control has been good on current medications).

"Reasons for Visit" Example:

- Routine BP and weight check.
- Review and discuss my latest lab results from Quest.
- Review blood pressure meds, diabetic meds (see my personal health summary).
- **Assess sharp ache in right hip (onset about 3 weeks ago, relieved by 2 - 325mg aspirin AM)**

- Refill prescriptions (see my personal health summary).
- Get lab order sheet for next checkup.

I bolded the exceptional item regarding hip pain to ensure that it is noticed.

This helps both the nurse and the doctor focus on meeting all your needs for the visit and ensures you don't forget anything critical (like refilling your prescriptions). It frees up a few more minutes for ad-hoc questions and comments.

Conclusion

With a modest investment of time, you can set up an easy-to-manage system on your computer to keep track of your health information. With this system in place, your visits to doctors' offices can be more efficient and productive. Having this personal documentation with you makes it much easier for medical practitioners to understand what is going on with your health and to treat you more effectively. ❖

WHAT STOOD OUT TO ME AT CES 2026

By **Rich DeMuro,** January 10, 2026
Rich DeMuro is the tech reporter at KTLA-TV in Los Angeles and hosts the *Rich on Tech* Radio show, syndicated on radio stations nationwide.
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This is my busiest week of the year, but it's always a great one. CES is where I spend days walking the show floor, tracking down new tech, and trying to figure out what's actually worth paying attention to.

I logged well over 100,000 steps this week doing exactly that. While the giant TVs always grab attention, most people aren't upgrading a TV every year. So instead of focusing on those, I'm going to run through the gadgets and trends that stood out, so you can get caught up without having to come to Vegas.

I mentioned the steps because I measured them a little differently this year. For the first time, I wore a smart ring instead of my wedding ring. I asked my wife if she'd be okay with that and wore the [Samsung Galaxy Ring](#) all week.

Wearing one ring on the hand I'm used to felt natural, and by the end of the week, my opinion on smart rings had changed.

I found the health, sleep, and activity tracking useful, and I now see smart rings as an interesting way to keep tabs on your health 24/7 without wearing a watch all the time.

That said, there's still one thing I don't love. When I'm sleeping, I sometimes feel as if I'm being measured or evaluated. If I wake up in the middle of the night, I catch myself thinking about what the ring is tracking instead of just going back to sleep.

A quick note if you're considering one: the Samsung Galaxy Ring only works with Android. [Oura](#) works with both Android and iPhone, and so does [RingConn](#), which has been getting good reviews.

While walking the show floor, I was also wearing an Apple Watch, Ray-Ban Meta smart glasses, and the Plaud Recorder. I picked up another AI recording device as well, which I'll talk about later. I was also carrying both an iPhone and an Android phone.

The Android phone was the <u>Samsung Galaxy S25 Ultra</u>, and it's a beast. I used it almost exclusively this week, and it reminded me how much I like Android. The customization is excellent, and many everyday tasks take fewer taps compared to the iPhone.

On the flip side, I still think iPhone video looks slightly better.

One other note: it's always kind of amazing how, in a sea of more than 100,000 people, you still run into people you know.

I saw several folks who've been on my radio show, along with other tech journalists and content creators. And a lot of people came up to me to say they listen to me on the radio, watch me on TV, or both.

Bee: An AI Memory for Your Life

One of the most interesting meetings I had all week was with a company recently acquired by Amazon called [Bee](#).

I follow the tech world pretty closely, and I honestly wasn't very familiar with this company before CES. What they're building is a Fitbit-style wearable that essentially records your entire day.

This is a trend we saw all over CES in different form factors, everything from necklaces to wristbands to credit card-sized recorders and even rings. But Bee stood out.

I've been wearing it for a couple of days now, and it's not just recording and transcribing everything. It's actually analyzing your life and surfacing insights.

After wearing it for a bit, it starts suggesting to-do items based on things it hears you talk about. You can press a button on the device to capture a note. You get daily memories, the ability to look back at what you did on any given day, and summaries of recent conversations. There's also an automatically generated to-do list and little fact cards it creates based on patterns in your life.

It's an intriguing concept. This idea of a small companion that knows almost everything about you and offers light guidance. Not in a therapeutic way, but more in a practical, help-you-stay-on-track kind of way.

Of course, this raises many privacy questions. Do you need to tell people you're recording them? And there are probably moments in your life it captures unintentionally that you might not want recorded.

At the end of the day, you're left with a massive memory bank of your life. And you can chat with it, just like an AI chatbot, except it's trained only on your personal experiences.

[Bee](#) sells for $50. Battery life is up to 14 days, and there's no subscription fee. It's one of the most intriguing devices I've tested in a long time. I should also mention that if you have an Apple Watch, you can download the [Bee app](#) to get some of the same functionality as the wearable. Note that Bee is not available for Android right now.

CES Gadgets That Caught My Eye

WearPhone: Think of this as a portable sound booth for your face. It's a mask that keeps your voice private when you talk into it. The idea is that you put it on, it has built-in earbuds, and you can interact with AI, take a phone call, or work in a cubicle without anyone around you hearing what you're saying. It definitely looks silly, but this feels like one of those ideas that could actually catch on.

Tombot Jennie: This is a robotic therapy dog designed mainly for comfort. Tombot worked with Jim Henson's Creature Shop to create the look and feel, especially the face,

and it's surprisingly realistic. This isn't a robot that runs around or does tricks. It's meant to be a lap dog. It has fur, responds to touch and voice, and is aimed at people with Alzheimer's or hospital patients who want extra comfort.

Cheerble CatFeeder Match G1: If you have multiple cats, this is pretty clever. It's a smart pet feeder that only opens for a specific cat. Yes, this is cat facial recognition. If you have two cats on different diets, they can't eat each other's food.

Vivoo: This company is making your toilet smart. You hang a small $99 device over the side of your toilet, kind of like an air freshener. When you go to the bathroom, it analyzes your urine for hydration and sends the data to your phone. They say hydration is a marker for a lot of health-related things. Vivoo also makes at-home for health and wellness, so I had to test one. You go on the strip, take a photo with your phone, and it analyzes it for all kinds of health markers.

Plant Petz: This was one of those booths where you stop and think, "What is happening here?" It looked like a scene from Little Shop of Horrors, with plants moving around. But the idea is cool. It's a smart plant pot. You put your plant inside, insert a probe into the soil, and suddenly the plant is smart. It can sense touch, move to your voice or music, and even make sounds when it needs water or care.

Holo Swim 2 Pro: These are augmented-reality swim goggles. There's a small display inside one lens that shows your lap count, heart rate, and other stats while you swim.

Even Realities G2: Smart glasses were everywhere at CES, with and without displays. I think Even Realities is doing a nice job here. These glasses have a built-in display that can show notifications, directions, and even a teleprompter. They also have a companion smart ring to control what you see.

The teleprompter idea is great, but because your head is always moving, the screen moves around too, which isn't ideal. If they solve that, it could be a killer feature.

Chamelo: These glasses let you manually change the tint with a touch of a finger. Think transition lenses, but you control them. They're high-tech and fun. Some versions also include automatic tinting and built-in music playback.

Amazon Ember TV: I said I wouldn't focus on TVs, but I did check out the Amazon Ember TV. It has a matte display and shows artwork when not in use, and it actually looks pretty convincing. The price is reasonable, too. An Amazon rep told me they're moving forward with Ember branding for their TVs, while Fire TV remains the operating system. It's a little confusing, but now you know.

Clicks Communicator: Clicks is known for snap-on physical keyboards, but now they've made an entire BlackBerry-style phone. At first, I thought this was gimmicky, but after going hands-on, I actually think it's pretty smart. I don't personally crave a physical keyboard since I mostly use voice-to-text, but if you miss Black-Berry, this is a unique device. It's $400 on preorder, runs Android, has a physical keyboard, a programmable side button with a notification light, a headphone jack (2.5mm, so you'll need a dongle), Mag-Safe, microSD, and a SIM slot. They're positioning it as a secondary device, which makes sense if you want to separate work and personal life.

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 Discounts & Special Offers For User Groups – APCUG for discounts and special offers for members of User Groups on books, media, and training sites, including these:

- **Pearson / Que / Informit / Sams Program – 35% Discount**
Contact: community@informit.com
Enroll in the program at http://bit.ly/2dK4L for well-known Pearson technology brands, including Addison-Wesley Professional, Cisco Press Exam Cram, IBM Press, Prentice Hall Professional, Que Publishing, and Sams Publishing.

- **Take Control Books – Apple and Windows eBooks**
Use the form at https://apcug2.org/contact-us/ to request the discount code.
Subject – General
Body of form – Name of your computer club and discount code.

LAUGHING OUT LOUD

Miss Piggie's Thoughts on Computer Frustration

STICK **THIS** IN YOUR DISK DRIVE!

I just got myself a senior's GPS.

It not only tells me how to get there, but also why I wanted to go there in the first place.

The problem with computers today? They do exactly what you tell them… not what you *meant*.

TECH LIFE UNITY (TechBoomers)

https://www.techlifeunity.com

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

DISCLAIMER

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 address as regular members; 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.

Benefits of LACS Membership

Monthly meetings with presentations via Zoom.

Monthly Newsletter, *User Friendly* — Your article submissions and free ads to sell your computer items

Free help by email or phone — See page 10.

Group mailing list to contact or ask questions of all members at PC@LACS.Groups.IO

Important news and announcements via *User Friendly* and LACS's mail list.

Webinars, virtual conferences, programs, and technical information free from APCUG, an International Association of Technology and Computer User Groups

Annual Holiday Party

Social interaction with others who have interests in computers and technology

In-person luncheons at a restaurant

Renewals are due in January. New members' dues will be prorated quarterly.

Check #_____   **New or Renewal Membership Application.**

Date_____ Dues may be paid by Zelle, PayPal, or check. If paying by check, make it out to "Los Angeles Computer Society" and mail it with this form to
6201 W. 87th St., # 4095, Los Angeles, CA 90045
Please Print Clearly   [   ] New   [   ] Renewal
[ ] New/Renewal with printed newsletter - $40 [ ] Associate - $12 [ ] Student - $18
[ ] New/Renewal with electronic, no paper newsletter - $30 [ ] Gift membership - $20
[ ] Contributor - $50 [ ] Supporter - $75 [ ] Benefactor - $100 [ ] Other

_____

Name: First   Last

Name of Associate: First   Last

Mailing Address:

City, State, Zip +4

Email Address: Email of Associate

Preferred Phone: Publish Contact Info in the roster [ ] Yes [ ] No

To Contact in Case of an Emergency: Name: _____

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

Los Angeles Computer Society Newsletter

First Class Mall

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 at leahjc@sbcglobal.net .

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 when you re-enter. You may turn off your video while you are gone.