

User Friendly

Volume 44 Issue 9

September 2026

LACS

A Computer and
Technology User Group

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LACS WEBSITE

For information about LACS, go to <https://www.lacspc.org>

LACS IS A MEMBER OF APCUG
An International
Association of Technology
and Computer User Groups

<http://www.apcug2.org>

www.facebook.com/APCUG

www.X.com/apcug (Twitter)



Watch your email for APCUG workshops and other upcoming events.

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 8, 2026 GENERAL MEETING

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

Socializing, Questions & Answers: 6:30-7:00

Topic: Delete Request and Opt-out Platform (DROP)

Speaker: Marissa Rosemblat,

Assistant Deputy Director of the Delete Act.

Marissa will describe California's centralized state system, managed by CalPrivacy at <https://privacy.ca.gov>

She will educate consumers about digital privacy and how to remove personal information from data broker networks through a single submission.

She will include:

- What data brokers are and how they track or sell personal details.
- Give step-by-step guidance on verifying California residency and filling out the secure form.
- Explanations of privacy-first cryptographic hashing (ensuring raw personal details are never exposed or stored).
- Timeline expectations, status tracking features, and broker enforcement penalties (\$200 per day for non-compliance).

Marissa Rosemblat serves as Assistant Deputy Director of the Delete Act. In her current role, she assists with the launch of DROP and leads ongoing improvements to the system. With more than 13 years of experience in technology and consumer reg brings strong product management experience into the private and public sectors.



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 at least two days before at Leahjc (at) sbcglobal.net.

FROM YOUR PRESIDENT/EDITOR

AI Warning

I had been following my sleep score, as well as other health data on my Fitbit watch, which was synced to my Samsung phone. Then, after Samsung Messages were taken over by Google Messages, I could no longer get my data. The Fitbit App was no longer on my phone. When I tried to download it from the Play Store, I received a message that the Fitbit App is now the Google Health App, and an icon for that was on my phone. It wouldn't open.

I had read warnings that teens, pre-teens, and lonely seniors may get taken in by scammers because everything sounds so human-like with AI. They forget they are not talking to a human who wants to be friends.

This illustrates how AI can sound so like a real human.

I decided to ask ChatGPT for help. They told me that the Fitbit app and the Health

app were 2 separate things, and I needed to open the Fitbit app. There was no Fitbit app on my phone. I told them about the message I received that the Fitbit app was now the Health app. Then they gave me instructions on how to get the Health App to sync with my phone, and everything is now working fine. They then thanked me for sharing the information about the Health App replacing the Fitbit App. It happened only a month before my inquiry. They said I helped others with the same problem. They really sounded grateful to me, which made me feel appreciated and like I was their friend. It would have been easy to forget they are not human. I felt like I wanted to be friends, too.

Please warn your children and grand children that what they read on AI is not from humans and may lead to scamming. Someone looking for romance could get carried away. AI can be helpful, as it was to me, but be careful. ❖

SPECS MARK THE SPOT

From the *Current*

Powered by **Kim Komando**

A guy in a Fort Wayne, Indiana, Kroger parking lot was working on his car when a group jumped him, slammed him into his windshield, and grabbed the handgun off his waist. One turned, aimed at his chest, and pulled the trigger. [No round in the chamber](#), so nothing happened. Here's the kicker: He was wearing Meta smart glasses. They did not catch the attack, but they caught the faces before and the get-away after. Two arrests so far. Your glasses are witnesses now. See page 7.

"AI should not be seen as an artificial form of human intelligence, but as a product of it." From a Vatican document

PROOFREADERS NEEDED

I would appreciate it if a few members would help me by proofreading User Friendly. I find it so easy to make mistakes and typos. I'm particularly concerned about dates. It was brought to my attention that a member's name on page 11 has been misspelled since November.

A few members could divide it up so that each would only need to do a few pages.

Many thanks for considering this.

AUGUST GENERAL MEETING REPORT

By Leah Clark, LACS President/Editor

Topic: Computers in Space

Speaker: Mark Schulman
APCUG Speaker



Mark presented an amazing history of computers in space.

Mercury was America's first human venture into space to prove that humans could survive in space. It ran from 1958 to 1963. It did not have a computer!

Gemini was the next project that ran from 1965 to 1966. Its purpose was to prepare to go to the moon. We had to be able to work outside the spacecraft, to do long-duration flights, and to navigate and maneuver in space. With Gemini 4, the first astronaut got outside the spacecraft, and could do real work in space.

On Gemini 7 in 1965, Frank Borman and Jim Lovell were in space for two whole weeks, proving that humans could live and work in space for longer periods of time.

Maneuvering in space is highly mathematical and not completely intuitive, making it impossible without a computer. Mark gave a detailed example of the calculations required. The Gemini Onboard Computer (GOC) was the very first computer put in a spacecraft. Mark described the stats of this monstrous computer. The controls were in three different places on the control panel. Mark then showed how the GOC was used. It was quite cumbersome by today's standards.

Apollo went to the moon! The computer requirements for going to the moon:

- Perform engine burns to take the spacecraft between the earth and the moon. The computer had to be able to fly the spacecraft.

- Keep track of the spacecraft's position and attitude.
- Interact with radars, engines, and thrusters.
- Display flight data.
- Receive updates from the ground.

1960s Computing

The NASA Real Time Computer Complex (1966) weighed tons and took up the size of a large warehouse. Information was punched into punch cards and read into card readers connected to a computer. This would have been inappropriate for astronauts in space to do calculations.

A personal computer in 1960 was a slide rule!

Charles Drapeer, head of the MIT Instrumentation Lab, believed his team could build a digital computer for a moon mission. The most serious constraint was weight. Next was electrical power. Integrated circuits were just developed. The crucial decision he made:

- The computer would be digital.
- Save weight and power by using integrated circuits.
- Simplify by using identical integrated circuits.

Work began on this computer in 1961.

The Apollo Guidance Computer (AGC)

Apollo Computer Philosophy:

Minimal Hardware, Maximum Efficiency

- Developed by the MIT Instrumentation Lab.
- Manufactured by Raytheon.
- Development cost: \$26.6 million.
- Real Programable digital computer.
- Memory: 36k words of ROM, 2k words of RAM.

- Weight: 70 pounds.
- Power usage: 70 watts peak.

Software:

- Different software in two spacecraft: Command module, *Colossus*, and Lunar, Module, *Luminary*.
- 1400 person-years of effort, peak workforce of 350.

Where's the mouse? How do we talk to the computer?

- Keyboards were big, bulky, and heavy.
- Mice did not exist
- Flat panel displays didn't exist
- CRT displays were heavy and power-hungry.
- Display/Keyboard (Dsky).

A few pioneering things:

- Logic built entirely with integrated circuits.
- Real-time processing.
- Priority multitasking.
- Digital fly-by-wire.
- Discipline of software engineering.
- Crash and restart.

The Space Transportation System Space Shuttle Computer Philosophy:

Absolute Reliability Over Raw Performance.

- Commonly known as the Space Shuttle.
- Intended to be a space truck to orbit.
- 5 space-worthy orbiters built (2 lost).
- First flight: April 12, 1981.
- Retired: 2011.

There have been major advances in computer technology since Apollo. Each orbiter had five general-purpose computers (GPCs) for backup. Their specs:

- Processor: 16-bit.
- Processor: 16-bit.
- Memory: Originally 64 KB, later 1 MB.
- Speed: 400,000 instructions per second.
- No hard drive — programs were loaded from magnetic tape cartridges before flight.
- Upgrades throughout the shuttle program.

What the Soviet Union was doing at the time

- First human in space: Yuri Gagarin, April 1961.
- The spacecraft was larger than the American Mercury because it had larger rockets.
- It had no computer; there were guidance calculations from the ground.

The Soyuz (1967 – present) was the work-horse of the Soviet and Russian programs. There are many variants, and they are still in use today. It gets regular upgrades. In 1975, the Soviets and Americans did a joint mission with Apollo-Soyuz. The two docked in orbit. Astronaut Tom Stafford and Cosmonaut Aleksey developed a long-lasting friendship. In 1997, the Soyuz-T had a triple-redundant, fault tolerant computer, which was used for over 25 years. This was used in Soyuz, progress cargo ships, the Salyut Space Station, and the Mir Space Station.

Modern Spacecraft

Modern Spacecraft Computer Philosophy:
***Distributed, High-Performance,
Autonomous***

Mark shared a couple of interesting videos. One was on Elon Musk's Tesla on a spacecraft. The other was on a Super Heavy Booster. There are dozens of computers on board those boosters doing all the calculations necessary to maneuver the boosters so accurately. It has an onboard network. Dozens of computers each handle different tasks. They can operate without human intervention.

Crew Dragon Capsule:

- Built by SpaceX's part of NASA's commercial crew program.
- Mostly reusable.
- The control panel is a touch screen, looking like a large tablet.
- Contains a network of computers.
- Based on commercial off-the-shelf components.
- X86-based processors.
- Radiation tolerance through redundancy, error-correction, and cross-checking.
- Error checking.
- Cross-checking (Voting)

Going back to the moon

Why haven't we been back to the moon since 1963:

- Expense.
- Return on investment.
- Safety risk.

Artemis

- NASA's current program for returning to the moon.
- Targeting a landing in 2027.
- Focusing on the moon's south pole.
- Partnership with commercial providers.

What about Soyuz?

- TMA-M and MS variants.
- Modern TSVM-101 digital.
- Just 18.3 pounds.
- Integrated satellite navigation.
- Modern displays.

Mark explained most of the bullet points in this review. All LACS members and meeting guests received his slides and a link to the meeting recording. There were a lot of active discussions and questions and answers after this exciting presentation. ❖

SAMSUNG MADE PHONES FUN AGAIN

By [Rich DeMuro](#)
Rich on Tech, KTLA-TV
July 25, 2026



Greetings, and welcome to another edition of the Rich on Tech newsletter.

This week, I was in London courtesy of Samsung, which covered my travel to Galaxy Unpacked. The company unveiled three new foldable phones, and I'm not sure Samsung could have asked for better headlines.

I've been using the new Galaxy Z Fold 8 for the past 48 hours, and I can confidently say it has made phones fun again.

Does that mean you need to run out and buy one? Not necessarily. Let me explain.

I've been covering smartphones since before the iPhone launched in 2007. Phones used to be exciting. Every new release introduced some strange, clever or useful feature that kept the industry moving and nerds like me entertained.

- Music on your phone
- Second screens
- Face unlock
- Self-healing materials.
- Pop-up selfie camera
- Wireless charging
- Fingerprint unlock
- Iris scanning
- Curved displays
- 100x zoom
- More Camera Lenses

The list went on and on.

And then it stopped.

BlackBerry, HTC, LG, and OnePlus disappeared from the U.S. smartphone conversation. Huawei was pushed out. Things got stale.

Apple continued to polish the iPhone. Samsung did the same with the Galaxy lineup. Google mostly experimented with new software and AI features.

That changed this week.

Samsung now has three viable foldables in three distinct form factors, and it is hard to find a major fault with any of them.

Well, we can find faults because that's our job. But overall, these are really good phones.

First, the rundown.

The Galaxy Z Flip 8 is Samsung's modern take on the classic flip phone. It folds down into a compact square and opens into a traditional smartphone. This year's model is a little thinner and lighter, and it gets an upgraded processor.

It also gets a \$100 price increase.

Next is the Galaxy Z Fold 8 Ultra, the successor to last year's Fold 7 with an added Ultra moniker. It looks like a tall, narrow phone when closed, then opens into a much larger screen.

Samsung gave it a bigger battery and faster charging this year. It is much easier to open and close. The power button and fingerprint reader are raised slightly, making the button easier to find by feel and easier to press when you want to activate the AI assistant.

It also gets a \$100 price increase.

But the phone everyone is talking about is the Galaxy Z Fold 8.

It looks a bit like a passport. Open it up, and you have a mini tablet in your pocket. It is fun, different and instantly feels at home in your hand.

That's the model I've mostly used for the past two days, and it feels like a breath of fresh air in the smartphone market.

It is weird enough to be compelling.

Samsung also strengthened the folding displays this year, and the crease is much less noticeable. Basically, the company addressed many of the biggest complaints about its foldable lineup.

But the question remains: Why do you actually need a foldable?

At this point, the best answer is consolidation. You may no longer need a separate tablet or e-reader because you always have a larger screen in your pocket. At the same time, these devices still work perfectly well as regular phones when they are closed.

That doesn't mean the experience is perfect.

The Fold 8 does not have Samsung's best camera system. There is no dedicated optical zoom lens. The Fold 8 Ultra has a higher-resolution camera and a dedicated zoom lens.

The software experience can also feel overwhelming. Samsung's One UI operating system has so many features that you could use the phone for years and still never discover all of them.

Also, because these screen ratios are relatively new, some apps may not fit them perfectly. The keyboard can take up nearly half of the outer display; other apps might not make good use of the extra space.

Things are improving, but expect a few quirks while developers (eventually) update their apps to better support these new layouts.

One new Samsung introduced with these phones is both fun and useful. It is called [My FanCam](#).

You can record a video, then tap the person you want the phone to follow. The software zooms in and keeps that person framed, even if you change the video's aspect ratio. In my testing, it works really well.

My advice is simple: If you've been wanting a foldable phone, this is the year to get one.

The problem is that this may also be the worst possible time to buy a smartphone.

The AI boom is creating a RAM-apocalypse, with demand for memory chips driving up prices across the technology industry. Samsung's trade-in and upgrade incentives also do not appear to be as generous this year, possibly because there is less room to absorb those costs.

Then there is a little company called Apple.

Apple is expected to launch a foldable iPhone in a nearly identical passport style form factor. It will run iOS, developers will optimize their apps for it, accessory makers will produce countless cases and add-ons, and Apple has hundreds of stores where customers can get help, service or even some free Wi-Fi.

And therein lies Samsung's problem.

Very few longtime iPhone owners are going to switch just because Samsung has spent seven years polishing foldable phones and has finally figured it out.

Apple devotees are more likely to look at the Fold 8 and say, "That's amazing."

Then they'll add, "I can't wait for Apple to do that."

Early adopters may buy whatever Apple unveils first, while everyone else waits a year for the bugs to get ironed out.

Don't feel too bad for Samsung. It still has a huge worldwide market, sells other Galaxy phones by the truckload and supplies components to many of its competitors, including Apple.

In the end, this is the year foldable phones finally get the credit they deserve.

Even if you don't buy one.

The [Galaxy Z Flip 8](#) starts at \$1,200 with 256 GB of storage.

The [Galaxy Z Fold 8](#) starts at \$1,900 with 256 GB of storage and 12 GB of RAM. To get 16 GB of RAM, you need to move up to the 1 TB storage model.

The [Galaxy Z Fold 8 Ultra](#) starts at \$2,100 with 256 GB of storage. The same RAM upgrade requirement applies. ❖

THE BRIGHT SIDE OF META'S AI GLASSES

By [Rich DeMuro](#)

If you've followed the headlines, you've probably heard the concerns about Meta's AI glasses. Critics say they invade people's privacy and can be used for malicious purposes. Those concerns are valid, but I also see plenty of benefits.

I wear mine on weekend runs to listen to music, and I use them throughout the week. Most of the time, I forget they even have cameras and microphones. Still, you need to be respectful. Don't wear them in a public restroom or anywhere a camera might make someone uncomfortable.

Continued on page 16

Los Angeles Computer Society

September 2026

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.

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.

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*.

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 the link in the online version (www.lacspc.org) 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

September 2026

LACS CALENDAR



LACS Board Meeting

Monday, September 7

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

Place: Wherever you are via Zoom

LACS General Meeting

Tuesday, September 8

Time: 7:00 PM. (Open from 6:30)

Place: Wherever you are via Zoom

September 7: Labor Day

September 11: Rosh Hashanah

September 16: Mexican Independence Day

September 22: First day of Autumn

September 26: Yom Kippur



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

September 8: Delete Request and Opt-out Platform (DROP)
Marissa Rosemblat

October 13: Touring the Web
JB Burke, APCUG

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**.

Los Angeles Computer Society

September 2026

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 — 5	Mozilla Firefox — 3, 7	Photoshop Elements — 2
Apple devices — 7	MS Excel — 5, 7, 8	Quicken — 5
Anti-Malware and Backup — 3, 5	MS Word — 1, 5, 8	Thunderbird — 3
Genealogy — 5	MS Outlook — 1, 5	Utilities — 3, 5
Groups.IO — 4	MS PowerPoint — 5, 7	Windows — 3, 5
Hardware — 3	PDF — 5, 8	WordPerfect — 5
Lotus Word Pro, Approach — 3		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
3	Jim McKnight	9:00 AM	7:00 PM
4	Larry McDavid	Contact by email	
5	Stephanie Nordlinger	9:00 AM	9:00 PM
6	Mark Presky	Any	Any
7	Paula Van Berkomp	9:00 AM	5:00 PM
8	Joan Wilder	9:00 AM	9:00 PM

Note: Times are Pacific Times

Los Angeles Computer Society

September 2026

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 Benton	2027
Director	Mark Presky	2027
Director	Jim McKnight	2026
Director	Paula Van Berkom	2026
Director	Open	2026
APCUG Representative	Leah Clark	
Corporate Counsel	Stephanie Nordlinger	
Database Manager	Loling Beckman	
Groups.IO Manger	Larry McDavid	
Newsletter Editor	Leah Clark	
Program Chair	Stephanie Nordlinger	
Publicity	Mark Presky	
Quick Consultants	Leah Clark	
Webmaster	Paula Van Berkom	

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 2026 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 >.

HELP, I FORGOT MY WINDOWS LOGIN PASSWORD!

BY **Tom Burt**, Vice-President
Sun City Summerlin
Computer Club
<https://www.scscc.club>
tomburt89134 (at) cox.net



Not long ago, a longtime friend emailed me in a state of desperation, asking for my help. She had been “cleaning up” her Windows laptop PC and at some point, she was no longer able to log in. Her password, which had worked earlier in the day, was rejected as “incorrect”. I agreed to take a look and, if it looked beyond my skills, to advise her on what options she might have. This began a two-week odyssey on my part to get the laptop back into a state where she could log in and then to recover her data files, which we discovered had seemingly gone missing.

Let me call my friend “Amiga”, which is Spanish for “female friend”. (In Las Vegas, we all “hablamos un poco español”.) Amiga brought her laptop to Casa de Burt (my house), powered it up, and showed me the login failure. She was pretty certain her Windows login was her Microsoft account.

We tried using her smartphone to log in to her Microsoft account and reset her password. We gave the laptop a couple of minutes to synchronize with the online Microsoft account and then tried logging in with the new password. (I determined later that this was useless because the laptop wasn’t connected to my in-house LAN.) Windows rejected both the new and old passwords.

At that point, I said I’d have to do some research on how to reset a forgotten Windows password.

Amiga said, based on her own research before calling me, that if I clicked the power icon in the lower-right corner of the Login screen and then clicked the Restart option while pressing the Shift key, it would boot into the System Recovery screens. Sure enough, it did. But she didn’t know what any of those screens did and was, wisely, uneasy about clicking around and initiating any actions.

Note: The icons only appear after you press Enter or click to display the password entry box.

We agreed I’d keep the laptop, do some research, and see if I could get in and reset her password.

Research

I set up Amiga’s laptop in my office, near my WiFi router and desktop to make it easier to do research and then try things on the laptop. It was fairly easy to use the Power > Shift+Restart sequence to enter the laptop’s Recovery environment, then go to Advanced > Command Prompt. The Command Prompt would show it was running from the Recovery environment’s boot partition, labeled with drive letter X:. When I tried to switch to the laptop’s C: partition, I would get an error message saying I needed to enter a recovery key to access that partition. I didn’t have that recovery key. I didn’t initially appreciate the implications of that message.

Connecting the Laptop to the Internet

By then, it had also occurred to me that Amiga’s laptop was set up to login using her Microsoft account credentials. But with the laptop at my house, it couldn’t access the Internet because it wasn’t connected to my in-home WiFi LAN. I noticed an icon at the lower right of the laptop’s login screen that, when I hovered the mouse over it, displayed the word “Internet.” I clicked the icon and got to a screen where I could connect the laptop

to my in-house LAN's guest network. I gave it a few minutes to sync up with Microsoft's servers, hoping that the recently changed Microsoft password would now work. But the laptop still rejected the password.

Consulting Gemini 3

I decided to consult Google's Gemini 3 AI on how to reset forgotten passwords. It offered up a very helpful discourse on the topic. In the Command Prompt, there's a command: NET USER that lets you list user accounts, reset the password of a specific user or to add a new user. Just what I needed! However, those commands apply to the current boot partition's registry. When running the Command Prompt from the Recovery environment, those actions were not affecting the users defined on the laptop's C: drive. So, time for more research.

BitLocker Surprise

I'd also come to realize that, when initially set up by Dell, Amiga's laptop had Windows BitLocker encryption enabled on the C: partition. This is now quite common. I spent another hour with Gemini, learning all the fundamentals of how BitLocker worked and how to locate the **48-digit BitLocker recovery key** for Amiga's laptop on her Microsoft Account. It's kept at:

<https://account.microsoft.com/devices/recoverykey> .

Once I had that recovery key, I could manually enter it into the Recovery environment's Command Prompt and finally access her laptop's C: drive. My first action was to plug in a flash drive and copy all her data files from the C: drive to the flash drive.

It had gotten late, and I decided to shut down Amiga's laptop for the night, planning to pick up the troubleshooting the next morning. However, the attempt to shut down reported that Windows Updates

were in progress and not to power off. I finally left the laptop running overnight. The next morning, I found the laptop shut down. I powered it up and got to the login screen. I hopefully tried various passwords, but all were rejected.

Consulting Gemini 3 Again

I consulted Gemini 3 again, this time asking how to reset a password when the C: drive was encrypted with BitLocker. Gemini returned another sympathetic but helpful exposition outlining the steps needed to access a Command Prompt running on the unencrypted C: drive.

The key step is to use the icon on the login screen to launch the Accessibility Settings applet (utilman.exe). Once connected with the Recovery environment's Command Prompt to the unencrypted C: drive (by entering the 48-digit recovery key), here are the commands to type in:

1. `CD C:\Windows\System32`
Navigates to the correct folder
2. `copy utilman.exe utilmanback.exe /Y`
Backs up utilman.exe
3. `copy cmd.exe utilman.exe /Y`
Copies cmd.exe over utilman.exe
4. Exit the command prompt
5. Exit the recovery environment, choosing to boot normally.

Resetting the Forgotten Password

The login screen will appear. Press Enter to show the "Accessibility" and "Power" icons at the lower right. Click the "Accessibility" icon and it will launch utilman.exe, which is actually now a copy of cmd.exe. Shazaam! A Command Prompt window opens from the now-accessible C: drive. Once in this state, it's possible to use the NET USER and NET LOCALGROUP commands to reset the forgotten passwords and to create a separate local administrator account.

Here are the commands I typed to reset Amiga's password on the laptop:

Here are the commands I typed to reset Amiga's password on the laptop:

1. NET USER
Lists the current user accounts (to be sure of spelling)
2. NET USER: amiga *
Initiates a reset of the password for Amiga's account
3. Enter the new password
I used her latest Microsoft account password.
4. Confirm the new password.

Creating a New Local Administrator Account

I decided to add the local administrator account so that if future problems arose with Amiga's regular Microsoft account, there would be an alternative way to log in to the laptop and manage the system without needing to resort to these backdoor methods.

I tested both logins, and they both worked. I was able to get to the Windows desktop, and all the regular windowed interfaces worked. A final step was to restore utilman.exe so that the icon on the login screen actually launches the Accessibility settings. This required once more clicking the Power icon on the login screen, Shift-clicking the Restart option to reach the Recovery environment, selecting Advanced and the Command Prompt, and then entering the 48-digit BitLocker recovery key to access the C: drive.

Here are the commands to restore utilman.exe:

1. CD C:\Windows\System32
Navigates to the correct folder
2. Copy .exe utilman.exe /Y
3. Exit the command prompt
4. Reboot normally

On the login screen, clicking the Accessibility icon will again display the Accessibility settings screens.

Where Did the Data Go?

Once I logged in to the laptop (as Amiga), I did some checking in Windows Update and found that Windows 11 had updated itself to version 25H2. Everything seemed to work, but I was suspicious because there were no third-party apps installed and a lot of the data file icons in the OneDrive folder didn't launch any app when clicked. The laptop was also very sluggish. Clicking on things would take several seconds before there was any visible response on screen. This laptop had only a 5400 RPM hard drive – no solid-state drive.

I had Amiga come back to my house to check things out. She said that many items from her desktop were missing. It appears that in her own attempts to resolve the login problem before calling me, she may have initiated a factory reset. The Windows event logs were inconclusive. It did look like most of her data files were backed up to her OneDrive cloud storage on Microsoft. But the laptop didn't seem to be connected to that cloud storage, even though it was logged in using her Microsoft Account.

Amiga took the laptop home. She planned to access her OneDrive cloud storage on her other Windows PC, download the data to a flash drive, and then load it onto the laptop. I got an email from her that night saying that when she tried to log in to her Microsoft account, she was rejected with an "invalid password" error.

Since I had the credentials for Amiga's Microsoft account, I tried logging in to that account using my web browser and was able to log in with no problems. I then browsed to her OneDrive cloud storage and confirmed all the missing data files were there.

I downloaded a copy of everything to my own desktop's hard drive. I sent Amiga a note with directions on how I'd downloaded the data. And that's where things stand. She's been busy with other things and set the laptop aside.

There are several morals to this story:

1. Back up your data files – not just to the cloud, but also to local storage media.
2. Set up an emergency local administrator account with a known password. Write those credentials down.
3. With laptops or desktops that come with BitLocker encryption enabled on the system drive, spend the time to turn BitLocker off. That setting is in Control Panel > BitLocker Drive Encryption.
4. If you DO want to keep BitLocker encryption, be sure to retrieve your drive's 48-digit BitLocker Recovery key and print it out on paper.
5. Microsoft has engineered Windows 11 to be very difficult for ordinary consumers to troubleshoot. Sometimes it's better to get skilled help from the start, rather than poke around on your own. ❖

DO NOT USE AI FOR THESE FIVE THINGS

Tech for Seniors, www.techforsenior.com



<https://hewie.net>



<https://www.techforsenior.com>

Tech for Seniors
Hosted by Ron Brown & Hewie Poplock

Every Monday from
9-10 AM PT / 12-1 PM ET
Broadcast with ZOOM

Many people have come to depend on artificial intelligence for all kinds of everyday tasks. AI can help write letters, summarize articles, plan meals, explain unfamiliar terms, and solve computer problems.

It is easy to see why it has become so popular. However, there are certain responsibilities that should never be handed over completely to a machine.

1. The first is making high-stakes health and medical decisions. AI can explain general medical terms and help someone prepare questions for a doctor, but it should not diagnose an illness, select a treatment, or determine a medication dosage. AI sometimes provides inaccurate or invented information with complete confidence. Even AI medical devices are evaluated and authorized for specific purposes, as the [Food and Drug Administration explains](#).

Suppose someone takes a daily medication but cannot remember whether the day's pill was already taken. Asking an AI chatbot whether it is safe to take another dose could be dangerous. The correct response may depend on the medication, dosage, medical history, and other medicines being taken. In that situation, the proper sources are a doctor, pharmacist, poison control center, or the official instructions provided with the medication. AI can supply general information, but it should never make the final decision.

2. The second area is legal, hiring, and other critical choices. AI can help prepare the first draft of a contract or organize information about job applicants, but a qualified person must review the material and make the final decision. An AI system may overlook a deserving applicant or repeat biases found in its training information.

The [Equal Employment Opportunity Commission](#) has warned that automated employment systems can result in discrimination. Important contracts, legal notices, and employment decisions require human judgment and, when appropriate, professional legal advice.

AI should also not be given unlimited authority to spend money. Allowing an autonomous AI agent to use a credit card, purchase supplies, or manage online services without supervision could result in expensive mistakes. Spending limits, approval requirements, and regular human review should always remain in place.

3. The third concern is confidential information. Never enter passwords, Social Security numbers, medical records, banking details, private employee information, or confidential business material into a public AI service. Once that information leaves a personal device, it may be difficult to control how it is stored, processed, or used. The [Federal Trade Commission](#) has emphasized the importance of privacy and confidentiality commitments by AI companies. Before submitting anything, consider how damaging it would be if the information became public.

4. The fourth area is making core ethical judgments. AI does not have a conscience, personal values, or a genuine understanding of right and wrong. It recognizes patterns and predicts responses based on data. It cannot accept legal or emotional responsibility for a harmful decision, failed project, or broken promise. People must remain accountable for choices that affect others.

5. Finally, AI should never replace genuine human relationships. An AI companion may sound understanding and sympathetic, but it does not truly care, experience emotions, or share a life with another person. Relying too heavily on an AI companion may reduce opportunities to speak with family members, friends, neighbors, or community groups.

Technology should support human relationships, not replace them. AI can be a valuable assistant, but it should remain an assistant. Health, privacy, moral responsibility, important decisions, and human connections are far too important to surrender to a machine.

Editor's note: This article was written with seniors in mind, but I think it should also be introduced to inexperienced, naïve young people. ❖

The Bright Side of Meta's AI Glasses *Continued from page 7*

I recently visited the Braille Institute in Los Angeles and saw how people who are blind or have low vision are embracing these glasses as an accessibility tool. Using the built-in cameras and AI, the glasses can read text and instructions, translate languages, describe nearby objects and provide hands-free directions.

More smart glasses are entering the market, so this technology isn't going away. Even for the average person, being able to make calls, ask AI questions and take photos without reaching for a phone can be useful. ❖

PHOTO RESTORATION

By **Lynda Buske**

Ottawa PC Users' Group (<https://opcug.ca/>)
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How many of us have a big Rubbermaid bin of old photos from parents and our own past? Well, I'm happy to say that the bin I have has been greatly reduced, but it definitely took some time. Scanning old photos is such a tedious process that if you don't break it into chunks, it is easy to get discouraged. My strategy was to break down my family history into manageable sections. I scanned about 30 images (1200 dpi is best) dating from 1899 to 1930. After editing them, I created a hard copy photo book using Shutterfly. The following year I tackled the 1940s to 1960s, and the third year I did the late 60s to early 80s. These made perfect gifts for my sisters and did not take up much space on their shelves.

I've written many articles on editing digital photos using free PhotoScape X (PSX) software. Please refer to archived articles at <https://opcug.ca/digital-photography/>. This article will highlight techniques that are particularly useful for restoring scanned family photos.

Many old photos, both black/white and color, fade over time. A good place to start when restoring images is to add contrast, in the case of a black/white image, by providing some pure black and pure white areas rather than a sea of soft grey.

(<https://opcug.ca/Photography/PunchUp-Photos.pdf>).

Often old print photos have signs of wear. There may be spots or lines that appear in the scanned version. To remove these, use the spot healing brush (under the *Tools* tab) in PSX. You can drag the mouse over multiple spots at a time if the background is relatively homogeneous, since the program

will look for pixels in the area to replace the dot or scratch line. With complex backgrounds, I find I get optimal results by doing a small area at a time. You can also use this tool to remove acne blemishes or reflections from eyeglasses. In the paid version of PSX, there is a clone brush that lets you remove unwanted objects, such as the pop can in the image below.

While you can sharpen the entire image (*Adjustments/Sharpen*), you may wish to focus on specific areas, such as faces. Sharpening or whitening eyes can have a great impact, as the viewer is drawn to faces first and then to eyes. To whiten, click the *Color* tab, then click *Mask* to select the area you wish to change by dragging your mouse. Then use the brighten slider bar. Teeth can also be whitened with the same process. To sharpen just the eyes, go to *Adjustments/Sharpen*, paint a *Mask*, and then adjust the sliders.

For old colored photos, it is sometimes difficult to restore the original hues, and saturation adjustments can make the image look phony. My preference is to convert them to a black-and-white image so that people focus on faces rather than distracting clothing colors. See sample images.



Consider cropping images to a tighter frame to emphasize the people in your photos. ❖



Los Angeles Computer Society

September 2026

FOR MANY HELPFUL TRICKS AND TRICKS

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LAUGHING OUT LOUD

Computers in Space by ChatGPT

1. **Astronaut:** “Houston, we have a problem.”
Mission Control: “Have you tried turning it off and back on again?”
2. **Why don’t astronauts use regular keyboards?**
Because they’re always looking for the space bar.
3. **The first computer on Mars sent one message home:**
“Great scenery. Terrible Wi-Fi.”
4. **What does an astronaut do when the computer freezes?**
Nothing. In space, everything is already below zero.
5. **NASA computer:** “Storage almost full.”
Astronaut: “How is that possible? We have the entire universe!”
6. **Why was the computer nervous about the rocket launch?**
It was afraid it might crash.
7. **Mars Rover:** “I’ve traveled millions of miles” I still can’t find a decent charging station.”
8. **Alien:** “Take me to your leader.”
Computer: “Please wait. Installing updates—27% complete.”

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.

Los Angeles Computer Society

September 2026

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

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

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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: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

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

Los Angeles Computer Society

First Class Mail

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GENERAL MEETINGS ARE ON ZOOM.

Before each meeting, members and invited guests will receive an email with the URL link to the meeting. **Just click on the link.** If you haven't received it by the morning of the meeting, let Leah Clark know 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 so 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.