The BYTES of Las Vegas
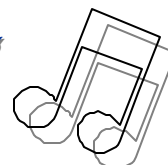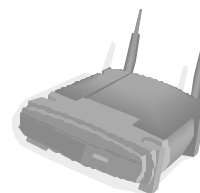
Supporting your technology interests

Join Us and
Learn More About The

Linspire

**Wednesday, July 5, 2006
at 6:15PM at the
West Charleston Library
Auditorium**

More info inside and at

www.lvpcug.org

July 2006 — *In This Issue…*

Las Vegas PC Users Group

"Users Helping Users"

Sharing computer knowledge and promoting fellowship among members in the Las Vegas, Nevada community since the 1980s.

LVPCUG Board of Directors 2006-2007

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The Bytes of Las Vegas is the monthly newsletter of the Las Vegas PC Users Group, an independent, non-profit group. We encourage members to submit articles for publication. Articles must be submitted by the first Wednesday of the month preceding the month of publication. All articles received after that date will be considered for the following month's issue. By submitting articles, the author gives permission for publication in this newsletter and in other user group publications.

Articles may be sent electronically to editor@lvpcug.org. Text may be in ASCII, Rich Text Format, MS Word, MS Publisher, or WordPerfect. Graphics may be sent separately provided they are referenced for proper placement. The Editor reserves the right to edit all submissions, and cannot guarantee publication.

The information contained in this newsletter is believed to be correct and accurate; however, the Las Vegas PC Users Group does not assume responsibility for the consequences of errors or omissions in the articles or misuse of any information provided. Any information used from these articles is at the user's own risk. Upon written notification of errors or inaccuracies in hardware or software reviews, LVPCUG or the editor will print a correction in the issue following receipt and verification of the correction.

Change of address should be sent to the **Membership Chair**:

E-mail: **membership@lvpcug.org**
Send postal mail or ship to:
LVPCUG
1350 E. Flamingo Rd #188
Las Vegas, NV 89119

Remember, the Postal Service does not forward the Bytes.

Las Vegas PC Users Group
presents
Linspire

At our General Meeting • **Free** and **Open to the Public**
West Charleston Library Auditorium, 6301 West Charleston
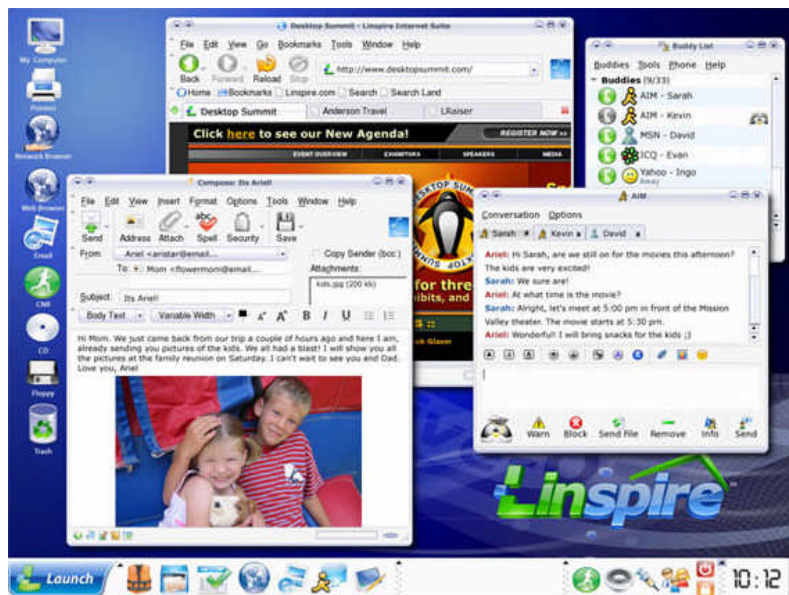July 5, 2006 • 7:00 pm, with pre-program at 6:15 pm

Linspire is a full-featured operating system like Microsoft Windows XP or Apple Mac OSX. Linspire combines the power, stability and cost-savings of Linux with a familiar, easy-to-use desktop environment. In addition, Linspire has CNR, the most advanced Linux software delivery service in the world. The CNR Service makes installing software on Linspire fast and easy – simply find the software you want in the CNR Warehouse, then click and run it. Watch a five-minute Flash Demo to learn more about Linspire and CNR at their web site

Linspire, Inc. was founded in 2001 to bring choice into the operating system market. The company's flagship product, the Linspire operating system, is an affordable, easy-to-use Linux-based operating system for home, school, and business users. Linspire, Inc. was founded by former MP3.com CEO Michael Robertson, and is headed by CEO Kevin Carmony. Linspire is headquartered in San Diego, CA.

The latest operating system offering from Linspire, Linspire Five-0, is compatible with all popular operating system, Internet and media file extensions. You can open, edit and share files including Word (.doc), Excel (.xls), PowerPoint (.ppt), Real Player (.ram, .rm), audio files (.wav, .mp3), graphics files (.psd, .jpg, .gif, .tif, .bmp, .pdf, etc.), and many more.

Linspire pioneered CNR (click and run) Technology, which allows Linspire users to download and install thousands of software programs with just one mouse click. The more than 2,000 software titles available in the CNR Warehouse (www.linspire.com/cnr) include full office and productivity suites, games, multimedia players, photo management software, accounting tools, and more.

Anyone interested in computing, from novices to experienced users, is always invited and welcome to attend any of the LVPCUG meetings. Information on all the Special Interest Groups is available on the LVPCUG web site.

As always, the General Meeting is **free** and **open to the public**. Invite your family, friends and colleagues! Some things to remember:

- **Members, check in** to receive a ticket for the **door prize drawings**.

- **Renewals and new applications** will be available at the **Membership** table.

- **Printer cartridges and cell phones** are collected for recycling at check-in.

- **Interested in reviewing a product** for the group? Look for these opportunities at the check-in table.

- **Opening Q&A** period at **6:15 p.m.**

- **Presentation** begins at about **7:00 p.m.**

- **Drawings** for Member door prizes will take place **after the featured presentation**.

For information, please call **702-263-5910** or see us at **www.lvpcug.org**.   ⊙

One-Click Access to Frequently-Used Programs, Files and Folders

By Glenn Richards, Emeritus Member of the Lake-Sumter Computer Society, Leesburg, FL
grich32@yahoo.com • www.lscs.us

Internet Explorer.

Stock quotes from Yahoo.

Netscape Mail.

ISP (dial-up).

NewsLetter working copy.

LSCS Roster.

Newsletter Distribution List.

A "Diary".

Utilities folder.

Data folder.

Archives folder.

Newsletters folder.

Quick View Plus.

eCleaner.

Notepad.

my Favorites folder.

IrfanView graphic file viewer.

SnagIt.

Alarm Clock.

Freecell.

Spider Solitaire.

System Shutdown.

There are certain files, folders, programs, and websites I access frequently during the day. To make this easy I create shortcuts to them in my Quick Launch toolbar that I keep normally hidden on the left side of my Desktop. Moving the mouse cursor to the left side of the screen unhides the toolbar, and a single left-click opens the shortcut.

Every entry in the list at the left is a shortcut, so any can be deleted without loss of the underlying program or file. However, Internet shortcuts like YQ will be deleted if the icon is deleted (but I keep a copy of it in my Favorites folder).

The one thing that takes getting used to is that sweeping the mouse cursor to the left edge of the screen may unhide the toolbar, thereby obscuring icons on the Desktop or menu choices on a window. This is just a matter of not letting the sharp point of the cursor get too close to the edge of the Desktop window.

Since this toolbar auto-hides, it does not take up any Desktop space. When unhidden, by moving the mouse cursor to its position, it moves out over icons at the left edge of the screen, and does not force those icons to shift over.

To start the QL Toolbar right-click an empty spot on the Taskbar, Toolbars, Quick Launch. Make sure the Taskbar is not locked (right-click the Taskbar to see). Move the mouse cursor to the "Handle" at the left end of the QL toolbar to result in the double-pointed arrow), press and hold the left mouse button, drag to the left edge of the screen, and release the mouse button. Drag the edges of the resulting toolbar to the

shape shown. Right-click an empty spot on the toolbar and click "Always on top" and "Auto-Hide". Other right-clicks on this toolbar can lead to other options (I am using large icons and no text).

I have created my own icons for many of the choices so I can identify the functions from just the icon – but that is another story.

To add a shortcut to this QL toolbar, right-click the toolbar, uncheck Auto-Hide. Then right-drag a program, file, or other choice to the toolbar so a dark horizontal bar appears, release the mouse button, click "Create Shortcut Here." The icon can be dragged up or down the toolbar to whatever position you like. Once added, right-click the toolbar again and hide it.

President's Column

By Dennis Kemper, President LVPCUG

Hello Folks,

This is the second month of my term and we can expect great things for this year: a timely newsletter, general meetings with appealing topics, and a plethora of cool SIG (Special Interest Group) meetings.

IMPORTANT NEWS

about *The* BYTES *of* LAS VEGAS

In our ongoing efforts to better serve the **Las Vegas PC Users Group** membership and our community in a responsible manner, we will now be publishing our monthly newsletter, *"The Bytes of Las Vegas"*, in PDF format on our web site only.

Members will continue to be reminded of our General Meetings and of the online publication with our mailed postcards and/or via e-mail.

The LVPCUG membership will benefit from redirection of resources toward program-related activities. Additionally, the reduction of paper waste from unused printed copies will be more environmentally sensible.

If you have any comments, questions or concerns, please contact Dennis Kemper at president@lvpcug.org.

How will we accomplish all this, you say? With the help from our dedicated staff of volunteers and help from you…yes, you — the Las Vegas PC User Group members. By working together, we can make our User Group educational, interesting, and a lot of fun!

So far, we have decided on a path for our newsletter; for the time being, it will be a "web only" publication and ultimately a "quarterly" printed version will be available once we secure a printing firm…also we have combined the May/June newsletter and posted it on our website.

One thing I would like to see is better communication among us. We are working on some type of emailing system to get this done — after all, we are a Computer User Group and need to start talking to each other via this medium.

On another front, I learned some things this week on my vacation to Nebraska. There are no 24 hour stores or pubs, they have breakfast at grocery stores… I am talking bacon and eggs J. Also, I found that they have some very cool farmers' markets with produce like I have not seen in a long time.

Enough of non-computer talk. I encourage all of you to come down and participate in our Special Interest Group meetings (SIGs for short). Our team of volunteers work very hard and provide great learning tools to try and decipher this thing we call the "personal confuser". I hope to see you at the SIGs this month.

Dennis Kemper
President
Las Vegas PC Users Group   ⊙

Bootup Problems?

Most hardware-related boot problems can be avoided with a little preventive care. Make sure you install new hardware correctly and that your PC is well-ventilated, as excessive heat can damage PC components. So can electrical surges, so it's a good idea to invest in a surge protector or UPS (uninterruptible power supply), which will help protect your PC. Take care of your computer, and it should take care of you.

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Online Librarians Never Say Shhh!

By Gabriel Goldberg, APCUG Advisor;
Columnist, AARP Computer & Technology Website, www.aarp.org

Growing up, I was lucky to live just a few blocks from a great neighborhood library. I fondly remember the children's librarian encouraging my love of reading and books. The library was rebuilt while I was in elementary school; I was recently shocked that the "new" library was undergoing renovation and improvement. Then I realized that what seems like yesterday was five decades ago!

The good news for us all – near libraries or not – is that libraries have greatly improved in that 50 years. Research assistance once only available in person or by telephone is blossoming into diverse online "ask a librarian" services. These handle all sorts of questions: general curiosity, homework-related, business research, etc. Just don't expect medical or legal advice.

E-mail assistance has been available for some time. Librarians sometimes like it because they can answer questions as they have time, and it avoids people waiting on line or holding on the phone. But it can be slow if a question must be clarified – that's important, since people often don't ask what they really want answered! And online interaction lacks face-to-face intimacy, voice tone, body language, which all help communication.

In addition to accepting e-mail, libraries use Web forms for submitting queries, take questions via instant messaging, and offer interactive Web chats. Highly interactive instant messaging and Web chats allow quick conversations, often providing answers within a few minutes. Newer technologies such as VoIP (voice over IP, Internet telephony) and SMS (cell phone text messaging) may soon increase research availability.

Library policies vary regarding answering non-resident questions; some specialized queries (local history, obituaries, newspaper clippings, etc.) must be handled by a library near the area of interest. That brings genealogy questions from far away as people research their ancestors.

Most queries are handled at no cost, though some searches incur charges. A library card usually isn't needed. Some libraries currently mail printed research results; e-mailing images will provide faster service and reduce costs.

Behind-the-scenes technology helps librarians manage queries, ensuring that all questions are answered and eliminating duplicate responses. Shortcuts fill in frequently used answers.

The same sorts of questions are asked online as are posed by phone or in person, with addition of sensitive areas such as sexual issues. Queries often deal with homework – math, science fair challenges, etc. – and country reports. Librarians enjoy the occasional obscure gem, such as being asked about "modeling the economic infrastructure of railroads in Great Britain".

The geek expression "24x7" means that something is available all day, every day. Since people expect this full-time access to e-mail, the Web, shopping, banking, and other online services, they're enthusiastic about being able to ask questions whenever they occur.

But it's hard for libraries to provide this never-anticipated level of service, especially when off-hours demand may be limited. So they support each other locally/nationally/ internationally by sharing round-the-clock assistance chores. Questions are entered locally and routed to on-duty librarians – who sometimes work from home in pajamas, answering off-hours long-distance queries.

Even librarians sometimes need help – so their world-wide Stumpers mailing list lets them share baffling questions.

Librarians and the public are learning together to use electronic tools. New technologies facilitate supporting diverse clienteles by – for example – facilitating non-English services.

Here are a few tips regarding online queries:

- Provide your name/e-mail/phone for answering and clarification

- Use plain text (not formatted) for easy reading

- Don't nag, allow time for an answer – but follow up in a week or so.

- Finally, contact the correct library. A library in Plymouth, Michigan has received queries about Plymouths in Massachusetts and England!

Using online library services is easy once you have an Internet connection. Some libraries favor PCs with Windows and the Internet Explorer Web browser, but Linux and Macintosh systems are increasingly supported. There's generally no software download or install. Browser pop-up blockers or firewalls sometimes get in the way but they're easily customized.

Start by finding your library's Web site For example, I locate my library by submitting "fairfax county" library to Google [www.google.com]. Or I could click from my county government Web site to the library pages. Or Googling library questions yields many library sites offering answers. Then look for links like Ask-A-Librarian! or "Homework Help!. Links and
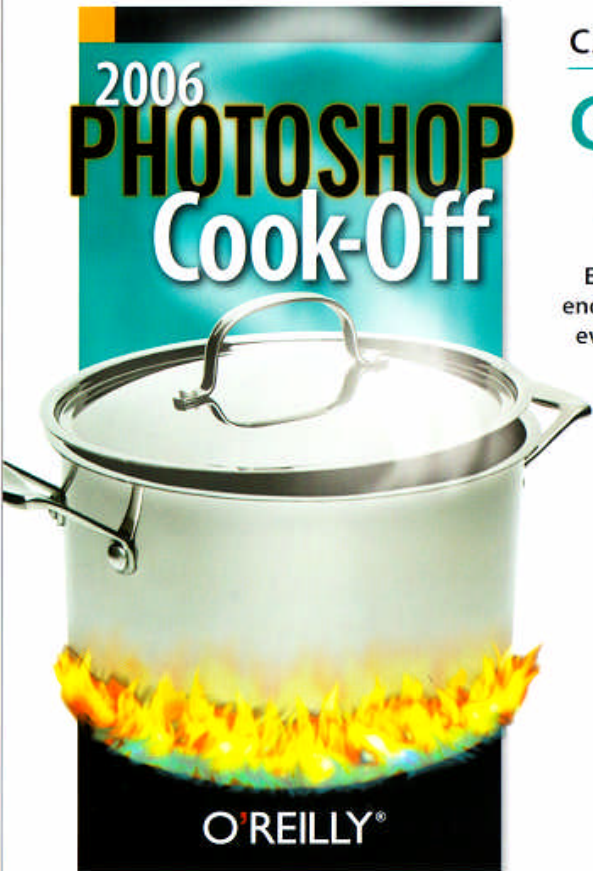
services will vary; when I click Ask-A-Librarian, I can choose between chatting, e-mailing, or (of course) actually visiting a library.

In researching this article I challenged my library with two questions. I was delighted that they quickly named the obscure British TV show whose name I couldn't remember (The Duchess of Duke Street) and found a science fiction book containing a short story I wanted to reread.

No matter how they evolve, whether as buildings or online, libraries' core mission is everlasting: providing timely information in a customer-friendly format.

Provided by Howard Mark, Digital Imaging Techniques SIG Leader

Tech News

By Sue Crane, Editor, Big Bear Computer Club, California
Scrane5@charter.net • www.bigbearcc.org

Cosmeo Encyclopedia Service

Cosmeo is bringing Discovery's online encyclopedia into homes via its Web site. The site resembles the screen of a handheld game device and features video clips and interactive games. Content providers, including Scholastic Corp. and the Public Broadcasting Service, are customized to meet the curriculum standards of different states. The service is available for $9.95/month.

Microsoft Vista Launch Delayed

Microsoft announced that it has delayed the mainstream launch of Vista until next year. Steve Sinofsky, the head of the Office unit, has been tapped to lead Windows development. Following its push back of Windows Vista, Microsoft confirms the Office 2007 release will move to next year as well. It's been reported on a number of blog sites that Microsoft will release Windows Vista with 8 different versions, but no pricing information is available yet . . .

Microsoft Windows Performance Rating

Microsoft is also building in a tool, Windows Performance Rating, that will rate a PC based on how well it is running and on how much it can take advantage of Vista's capabilities to help average consumers easily understand their Windows Vista PC's overall performance. As for systems slowing down over time, that's another issue that Microsoft is trying to tackle. Meanwhile, Vista is being designed to shut the door on spyware. It will introduce important changes at the heart of the operating system, as well as to Internet Explorer, and include Windows Defender, an anti-spyware tool.

McAfee Virus Definition File Error

An error in McAfee's virus definition file released mid-March caused consumer and enterprise antivirus products to flag Microsoft Excel, Adobe Update Manager and other applications on users PCs as a virus called "W95/CTX". Files were deleted or quarantined, depending on the user's settings.

Microsoft Windows Live

When Microsoft first talked about Windows Live in November, most of the "Live" products were MSN services that had been rebranded. Since then Microsoft has added more than a dozen new products under the Windows Live umbrella. MSN executive David Cole explains, "Microsoft's goal is to continuously update and launch products". Over the next 3-6 months, Microsoft expects to ship more Windows Live technology into the marketplace than during their entire 10-year OS history. Microsoft's new ad-serving engine, AdCenter, is at the heart of Windows Live. AdCenter draws on user demographic information to help drive more targeted marketing. Microsoft has even talked about using advertising as a way to pay for traditional desktop software. Meanwhile, the list of Windows Live services continues expanding to include all the basic portal services.

Ice Weasels, Space Cookies and Cheesy Poofs?

Take a look at the Ice Weasels, Space Cookies and Cheesy Poofs, high school teams competing for top merit in the 15th annual robotics contest sponsored by FIRST (For the Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology). With about $10,000 worth of donated hardware and software, high school students are given 6 weeks to assemble a functioning robot that can move around a court and shoot Nerf basketballs for points. Part of the challenge is for teens to find and work with mentors who are experts in technology and science. Once registered, the teams are given 3 boxes of hardware and software and a programming language called Easy C that allows them to write a program for the robot's onboard computer. Also included is Autodesk's 3D Max Studio animation software so they can create a 30-second animation. The game itself is roughly 2 minutes long, with robots that are 2 feet wide by 4 feet high. For the first 10 seconds, the robots must make as many baskets as possible; the robot with the most points from the first 10 seconds then gets to play offense. Winning bots will go on to compete at Atlanta's Georgia Dome at the international finals.

Video Games Help Young Patients

Neurofeedback, a form of conditioning that rewards people for producing specific brain waves, taps youths'

fascination with animation and electronics to sweeten frightening medical treatments. While this form of treatment has been around for decades, incorporating video games marks a new frontier that taps young people's fascination with animation and electronics to sweeten often frightening, lengthy and tedious medical treatments. Video games are being used, for instance, to help sick children manage pain and anxiety during hospital stays. A young leukemia patient inspired "Ben's Game," which let him fight the cancer cells invading his body. A private island called Brigadoon in Linden Lab's "Second Life" virtual world is open only to people with Asperger's syndrome and autism. West Virginia's public schools are battling obesity by making "Dance Dance Revolution"–a step-to-the-beat video game–part of their curriculum, while Nintendo has made a splash with its new "Brain Age" mind-exercising game. CyberLearning's Smart BrainGames system targets symptoms arising from brain injuries, attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and learning disabilities. Priced at $584, the system is built on NASA technology that used video games and neurofeedback to train pilots. Traditional treatments, such as prescribing the stimulant Ritalin, behavioral therapy and education, are often covered by health insurance, while neurofeedback usually is not. Despite such hurdles, some medical practitioners are advocating the new approach.

Trading Up, To The Extreme

Kyle MacDonald is on the verge of successfully completing a project that sounds absurd: Trading–with the help of a blog–a single red paper clip for a house. Since embarking on his house hunt last year, MacDonald has traded with people from across Canada and the United States and is now sitting on a year's free rent for an apartment in Phoenix. MacDonald is confident he's going to succeed, and hopes it can happen by the July 12 anniversary of the project's launch. And his goal is getting tantalizingly close. The project has allowed him to initiate a Net cult following that's hoping he'll succeed, too. Popular blogs such as boingboing have been tracking his progress. [Ed.: see http://oneredpaperclip.blogspot.com/]

There is no restriction against any non-profit group using this article as long as it is kept in context with proper credit given the author. The Editorial Committee of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG), an international organization of which this group is a member, brings this article to you. ☉

What Is Phishing?

Phishing (short for password harvesting fishing) is an online scam that attempts to trick or threaten unsuspecting users into sharing private information that miscreants later use for identity theft. The scam often starts with a mass email to millions of random email addresses, often in the guise of a major service or banking company. The message then tells readers to visit a Web site and complete a form or face some consequence (such as account cancellation). The Web site itself is usually a very good replica of the site that the major service or banking company actually uses. Phishing emails differ in their specifics, but they all share a few common traits. First, they appear to come from a legitimate company, using the same graphics you'd expect to see at that company's site. Second, they try to create a sense of urgency, telling recipients that their accounts are about to be suspended or are otherwise experiencing major problems. Third, these emails contain forms or links to forms where users are supposed to enter personal information, such as an account password or a credit card number. Once you enter the data in the form and click Submit, it is sent to the scammer's computer and he can use it to steal from you.

Cover your Tracks

If deleting cookies or your Web browser's history cache isn't secure enough for you, Tenebril GhostSurf Platinum is about as complete (and unobtrusive) a way to cover your tracks as there is. Aside from securely wiping all surfing traces from your system, it also provides an anonymizing proxy for Web, instant messaging, IRC, and newsgroup access. The proxy hides your IP address and encrypts all data to/from your computer and blocks personal information, such as cookies. You can configure exceptions (don't anonymize connections to this site, for example), the strength of the encryption used, and even the variety of safe-erase technology (conventional, Department of Defense-compliant, etc.) used to erase tracks. If you use IE, the GhostSurf is self-configuring; other programs only require minimal setup to work with it. ($49.95) www.tenebril.com

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July 2006 – Las Vegas PC Users Group – Meetings & Events

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
2　　**July**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**
		Independence Day	6:15p -8:45p General Meeting **Linspire™**			9:00a -11:00a Genealogy 1:00p -3:00p Using Office Suites 3:30p -5:30p Multimedia Lab
9	**10**	**11**	**12**	**13**	**14**	**15**
12:00p -2:00p Digital Imaging Techniques	6:30p -8:30p Mobile Computing		6:30p -8:30p Databases	6:30p -8:30p Windows Developers		
16	**17**	**18**	**19**	**20**	**21**	**22**
1:00p -3:00p Linux/Open Source 4:00p -6:00p Novice (new Users)	7:00p -9:00p Internet					
23	**24**	**25**	**26**	**27**	**28**	**29**
			6:30p -8:30p Board Of Directors			9:30a -2:30p How To Workshop 3:00p -5:00p Wireless Networking
30	**31**	**1**　　**Aug.**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
						12:00p -4:00p Systems / Applications Review 6:00p -8:15p Saturday Night Bytes & Bites

*Visit **www.lvpcug.org** and **http://my.calendars.net/lvpcug** for the latest scheduling updates.*

Special **I**nterest **G**roups (**SIG**s) and Meetings

Note: Times and locations are subject to change. If you are planning to attend a particular SIG (Special Interest Group) meeting, it is best to **e-mail or call ahead to confirm** that the meeting will take place as listed here. When possible, schedule changes are also posted at **www.lvpcug.org** on the front page.

In addition, if you are interested in a SIG not listed here or if you would like to start a SIG, please contact **SIG Coordinator, Wendy Jaroslawski**, phone **702-339-3812** or e-mail her at **sig-coordinator@lvpcug.org**.

The SIGs are one of your benefits of membership!

General Meeting
First Wednesday .... 6:15 PM
West Charleston Library, Auditorium
6301 W. Charleston (west of Jones)
Information Line (702)263-5910
or www.lvpcug.org

This monthly general meeting covers topics of interest to all members and guests. The typical meeting includes a beginners/Q&A session of approximately forty-five minutes. This is followed by an update of relevant activities, including SIGs. Each meeting has a feature presentation, usually by a major computer related vendor. See page 3 for information on the next General Meeting.

Board of Directors Meeting
(president@lvpcug.org for confirmation)
Fourth Wednesday.................. 6:30 PM
Clark County Library,
Reader Services Meeting Room
1401 E. Flamingo (east of Maryland Pkwy)
President, Officers, Board Members

Open to members and others. The Board of Directors discusses organizational LVPCUG issues relative to meetings, programs, communications, education, public information and finances.

Remember…
All of the LVPCUG meetings are FREE and OPEN TO THE PUBLIC. Tell all your family, friends & neighbors!

Databases
Second Wednesday................ 6:30 PM
Boy Scouts of America
Las Vegas Area Council Office
7220 S. Paradise Road, Las Vegas
Leader: Donna Sword (702)795-2653
Email: program@lvpcug.org

Databases are not as scary as they sound! Beginners to advanced users, and even non-users are welcome to attend. Essentials of good database design are discussed and presented with popular database management tools such as Microsoft Access, Excel & more.

Digital Imaging Techniques
Second Sunday.............12:00–2:00 PM
Nevada Power Building, Wengert Room
6226 W. Sahara (west of Jones)
Leader: Howard Mark (702)256-3662
Email: hmark@earthlink.net

If you take photographs using a film or digital camera, this SIG will look for ways to use software such as Photoshop and Photoshop Elements, Photosuite, PhotoDeluxe and others, to learn how to scan, edit, correct or manipulate images. If you would like to copy your image onto a floppy disk or CD, you're welcome to bring it to the meeting.

Genealogy
Second Saturday 9:30AM
Family History Center, 9th/10th & Clark
Leader: Val Sharp (702)453-4037
Email: sharpvd@yahoo.com.

This SIG covers searching the Internet for information on ancestors and family members, overcoming "brick walls", genealogy publications, and genealogy software evaluations.

How-To Workshop
Fourth Saturday .... 9:15 AM
Paseo Verde Library, in Henderson
Green Valley Pkwy (south of I‑215)
Leader: Dennis Kemper (702)458-0654
Email: director@lvpcug.org

Hands-on computer workshop, covering a variety of software programs and hardware questions. You are encouraged to bring your computer, or at least a disk with the problem or demo to share. If you have a specific program or problem please call in advance to ensure we will have someone available to assist with your specific problem.

Internet SIG
Third Monday .... 7:00 PM
Nevada Power Building, Wengert Room
6226 W. Sahara (west of Jones)
SIG LEADER NEEDED
Contact SIG Coordinator at (702)339-3812
Email: sig-coordinator@lvcpug.org

Covers use of the Internet: how to access the service, Internet access providers, hooking up, surfing the Internet, how to find information, the use of Internet utilities to find information, and software packages supporting the Internet.

Linux/Open Source
Third Sunday .... 1:00–3:00 PM
Nevada Power Building, Wengert Room
6226 W. Sahara (west of Jones)
Leader: Joseph Mottola (702)310-9980
Email: mottola@softcom.net

A free operating system that is an alternative to Microsoft windows operating systems. The many flavors of this operating system and applications will be covered and explored.

Mobile Computing
Second Monday .... 6:30–8:30 PM
Location Pending – contact Leader
for notification of latest information
Contact SIG Coordinator at (702)339-3812
Email: sig-coordinator@lvcpug.org

Exchange of information regarding the use of personal digital assistant devices using Microsoft's Pocket PC software and others.

Multimedia Lab (fmr Digital Music)
Second Saturday........... 3:30–5:30 PM
Nevada Power Building, Wengert Room
6226 W. Sahara (west of Jones)
*** SIG CO-LEADER NEEDED ***
Contact SIG Coordinator at (702)339-3812
Email: sig-coordinator@lvcpug.org

Topics to be covered include – but are not limited to – downloading MP3 music, converting audio CDs to MP3; organizing and playing an MP3 music library with software programs such as Music Match Jukebox, WinAmp, Sonique, etc; making audio CDs on a CD-RW drive; digital recording from external sources; and editing digital music. This group has also begun to venture into digital video.

Novice (New) Users
Third Sunday.................. 4:00–6:00 PM
Nevada Power Building, Wengert Room
6226 W. Sahara (west of Jones)
Co-Leader: Charles Frederick (702)452-9440
Email: cifgrf4041@yahoo.com

Topics of interest to the beginning computer user, explained in simple easy-to-understand terms. Each session is complete; beginners are welcome to start attending meetings at any time.

Saturday Night Bites & Bytes
First Saturday .... 6:00 PM
*** LOCATION(S) NEEDED ***
*** SIG LEADER NEEDED ***
Contact SIG Coordinator at (702)339-3812
Email: sig-coordinator@lvcpug.org
(Request notification of each meeting's location by e-mail to director@lvpcug.org)

A time to have a bite to eat and socialize with other users, and enjoy presentations and discussions that cover a variety of general topics of interest to PC users. All discussions are based on member input.

Systems/Applications Review
First Saturday .... Noon– 4 PM
Nevada Power Building, Wengert Room
6226 W. Sahara (west of Jones)
SIG Leader - Linda DiGiovanni 395-6676
Email: Lindigiovanni@spinfinder.com

A meeting focusing on the Windows environment. Members helping members in the exchange and sharing of knowledge and information.

Using Office Suites

Second Saturday........... 1:00–3:00 PM
Nevada Power Bldg. Wengert Room
6226 W. Sahara (near Jones)
Leader: Wendy Jaroslawski (702)339-3812
Email: sig-coordinator @lvpcug.org
Leader: Sharon Fry (702)562-2028
Email: SharonFinLV@hotmail.com

The Using Office Suites SIG centers around discussions and presentations of techniques applicable to "office" or "productivity" software applications. These include word processing, spreadsheets, personal information managers, presentations.

We demonstrate usually with Microsoft Office products (Word, Excel, Outlook, PowerPoint), but we also explore other products with similar functionality, such as OpenOffice and WordPerfect Office. Most information applies to any applications of this genre.

This is an open group driven by member input, so if you run across a problem that you need help with, e-mail the Leaders or bring in a CD or diskette, and the entire group will assist in finding a solution to the problem! Each meeting will usually center around a specific feature of a particular program. Any related programs or add-ins will also be explored. Tools and texts that are available will also be introduced.

Windows Developers

Second Thursday.......... 6:30–8:30 PM
Sahara West Library, Board Room 2nd Flr.
9600 West Sahara (west of Fort Apache)
Leader: Richard Rosenheim (702)897-1117
Email: windev @lvpcug.org

The Windows Developers SIG is a forum for those who develop programs and applications targeted to run in a Windows environment. The SIG addresses topics relating to Windows development issues and languages. While the primary focus is on Visual Basic, attention is also given to database design and programming, web programming, and program algorithms. In addition, any other area of interest to the membership (such as Windows API, Visual Basic, C++, Delphi, Java and ActiveX programming , etc. can be addressed.)

Wireless Networking

Fourth Saturday............. 3:00–5:00 PM
Paseo Verde Library, in Henderson
Green Valley Pkwy (south of I-215)
Leader: Harold Rozinski (702)870-8946
Email: wirelesssig @yahoo.com

Covers the basics of wireless networking, wireless network criteria and expectations. Discuss the benefits and pitfalls of wireless technologies; introduction to wireless networks in the home, business and traveling (hotspots); site survey for location rules, regulations. ☉

You can help LVPCUG and our planet at the same time!

As you may already know, LVPCUG has a recycling program for most of your inkjet cartridges. If you follow the Board Meeting Minutes, you know that this program has grown to be a significant source of income for the Group, thanks to your support.

Thanks to the efforts of Donna Sword, our past President, we have expanded our program in conjunction with **Funding Factory**, a "Recycle & Redeem" program. Now, **we can accept ANY inkjet cartridges**, **laser toner cartridges** and **cell phones** for recycling—and earn money and more!

Collect these items from your family, friends, and neighbors to **support your LVPCUG** while **helping our planet's environment.**
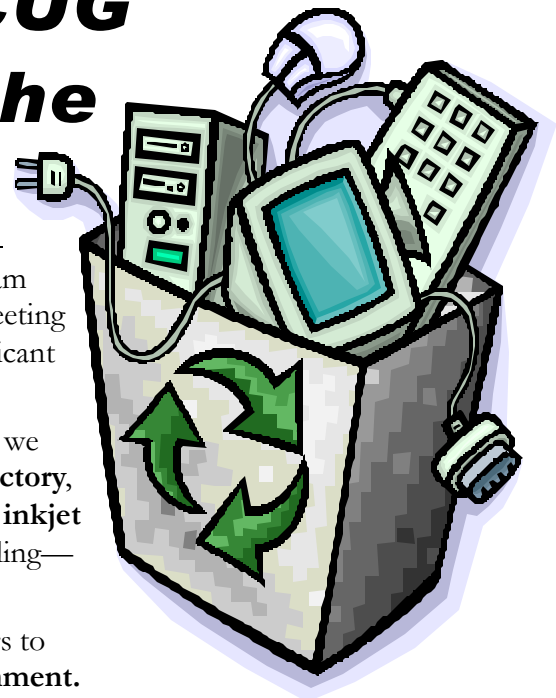
Traveling With
A Video Camcorder

By Joseph Asling, Video Project Coordinator • jasling(at)pacbell.net
MBUG-PC (Monterey Bay Users Group – Personal Computer) • www.mbug.org

Summer is coming and it's time to go somewhere interesting and photogenic. Many people carry cameras when they travel and not a few of us take camcorders. Here are a checklist and a few suggestions for coming back with better video.

Pre-Departure
Equipment Checkup

Make sure your camcorder is in good shape. Run a few minutes of tape and see that it looks and sounds OK, otherwise take it in for cleaning. Allow at least two weeks for turnaround.

Camcorder Size

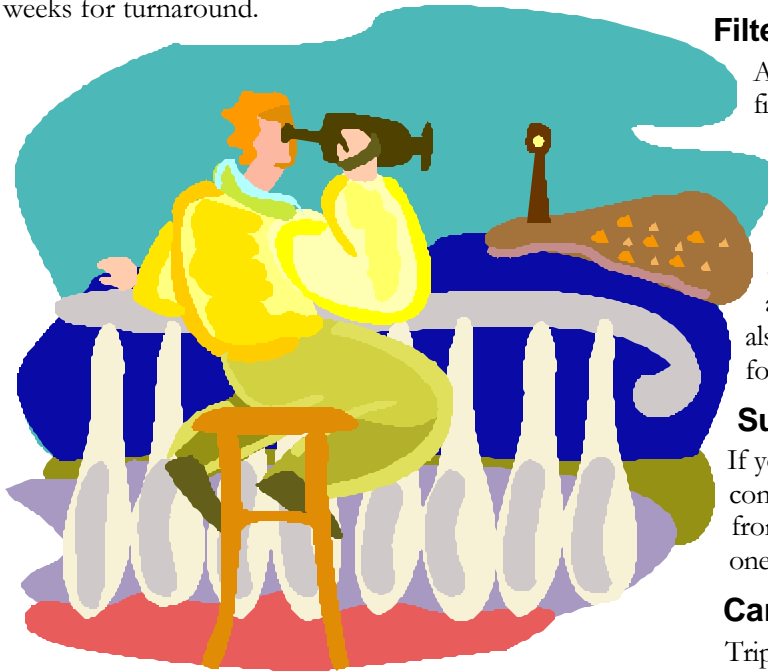If you haven't bought your camcorder yet, consider the following: if you plan to do candid shots of people, buy a small, unobtrusive camcorder. Not only will it fit better in your carry-on luggage, but it will attract less attention. Also, some museums allow them in where they will reject larger camcorders because the big ones look professional.

LCD Screen

I usually shoot through the viewfinder, but an LCD screen is useful.

Computer Connection

Make sure your camcorder has an IEEE-1394 ("Firewire") or USB2 connector, whichever you need to capture to your computer.

DVD vs Tape

Some newer camcorders record to a DVD instead of tape; since it is more difficult to do computer editing with these, I recommend a camcorder which uses mini-DV tape.

Filters

ALWAYS keep a filter on your lens – a scratched filter is cheaper than a scratched lens. A transparent or UV filter is fine for most uses; tinted lenses are of less use because the auto-white balance of the camcorder tries to compensate for it. For sunny days I like a circular polarizer to suppress reflections on glass and water and to make the sky appear bluer. It also doubles as a neutral density filter. Pay the extra for good double-coated glass filters.

Sunshade

If your camcorder has a sunshade with an atypical connector, buy a sunshade which screws onto the front of the filter (I use a round rubber collapsible one).

Camcorder Stand

Tripods are big, heavy, and slow to set up. A monopod gives you much of the stability of a tripod, and if you buy one with a quick-release extension it takes only five seconds to set up. Plus, it doubles as a walking stick on difficult terrain. Spend an extra $20 for a quick-release for the camcorder.

Lights

I don't recommend you travel with any lights. Unless you're on a professional shoot they aren't worth the trouble.

Tape Supply

Take plenty of tape – I take at least 10 hours' worth!

Buy good quality brands such as Sony or Panasonic (people I trust have said bad things about TDK).

I buy Sony at www.taperesources.com but there are other reliable websites which will sell packs of five for as little as $3 per tape. (As an aside, NEVER record with the extended time setting on your camcorder – you may not be able to play it on any other camcorder.)

Head Cleaner

Carrying a head-cleaning tape is probably a good idea, although I've never had to use it in the field.

Batteries

If you run out of power you are going to be distinctly unhappy. Buy at least one high-capacity extra battery. And don't forget to pack your recharger. If you are going abroad make sure you have two plug adapters (research what type of adapter you need for where you'll be), and that your recharger is multi-voltage.

Headsets

These are nice to have but not essential. If you have a microphone monitor output, take a compact headset (like Walkman earphones) for monitoring music. Make sure the plug is compatible.

Weatherproofing

Bring some paper adhesive tape — if you are going to be in a dirty or sandy environment seal the tape door with it so you don't get sand into the works. If you may be in the rain figure on bringing some kind of plastic cover (maybe large plastic zip lock bags).

When You're There

Rule 1: Tape is Cheap!

If you might want a

shot, shoot it! Every shot should be at least ten seconds long if possible and if you are going to zoom, shoot several seconds before and after the zoom. You'll thank yourself when you're editing.

When you put a fresh tape in your camera, run about a minute of "throwaway" video. Most dropouts occur at the beginning and the end of a tape, and some capture programs can't handle the first few seconds of a tape.

Watch the Background

Many a shot has been ruined by a telephone pole growing out of someone's head or a distracting item behind the subject. Often moving a few feet to one side will fix the problem. A corollary to this is to find a good angle: one with clear sight lines and no-one in the way. And don't get in the way yourself. Years ago, I was in Chichicastenango and a funeral procession happened by. The mourners stopped in front of the Church – and a German tourist with a big camcorder shouldered them out of the way and started videotaping the coffin and the deceased! I cheered when the locals drove him away with rocks.

Tricks for Big Crowds

If you are in a crowd which you can't see over, hoist the camcorder up on your monopod. If you open the LCD screen and tilt it down you can see what you're shooting (so, there is a use for that screen).

Tricks for the Kids

One more use for the LCD screen — see if you can reverse it so that the people

you're shooting can watch themselves while you are recording. You'll get terrific reactions from kids.

Candid Camera

If you are trying to take candid shots, hold the camera at waist level and watch the subject through the LCD screen. Before you do that go into the menu and turn off the red recorder indicator light so your subject won't know you are recording. It doesn't always work — in Morocco, one sharp-eyed fellow noticed from 30 feet away what I was doing and came over with his hand out for money. I paid him, of course.

In the Rain

Check the lens frequently when shooting in the rain. Raindrops on your video are understandable but disconcerting.

Narration

If you are shooting something which needs describing, just dictate in a low voice while you shoot; your voice will be audible on the tape. Of course you'll have to cut out the audio when you edit, so you don't want to do this over anything you will want to hear as well as see.

Consider what you will say on the voiceover when you edit the video, and make sure you have names and events correctly. I write them down in a little journal every night.

Music

Think about the music you'll use with the video and record it if you hear local musicians. I have sometimes let a tape run most of an hour just to capture live music (another reason to have plenty of tape).

Background "Chatter"

When traveling with friends, I delicately remind them that anything they say will be picked up by the camcorder. It cuts down on extraneous conversation and four-letter words in your audio!

Documentation

Make sure you label each tape with the trip, location, and tape number. When you put it back in the plastic cover, slide the little switch to lock it so you can't accidentally record over it. I keep camcorder, tapes and critical accessories in my carryon baggage. The accessories I can't fit in the carryon go in the checked luggage.

X-Ray at Security

The X-ray machines at security checkpoints have never hurt my videotape, but I'm not sure about the more powerful X-rays of checked luggage.

Bon Voyage!

There is no restriction against any non-profit group using this article as long as it is kept in context with proper credit given the author. The Editorial Committee of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG), an international organization of which this group is a member, brings this article to you. ⊙

Other User Groups in Las Vegas and Surrounding Area

Association of Information Technology Professionals (A.I.T.P.) - Monthly dinner meetings at Palace Station the fourth Wednesday of each month (except July and August) . Social hour begins at 5.45 p.m., dinner at 6:15 p.m. speaker at 7:00 p.m. Reservations, or additional information, contact Roberta Weller at 702-233-1225, rweller326@earthlink.net.

Commodore Users Group - Meets on the first & third Saturday of the month. Al Jackson ajax@wizard.com 702-645-2402

Kingman Arizona CUG www.kingmanarizonacug.com Email: rbth1@hotmail.com

L.V. Netware User Group - Meets second Tuesday of month. Roland Hughes 702-455- 4273 rolandh@co.clark.nv.us

Las Vegas Linux Users Group Meetings first Saturday of each month at Century 23 Computers from 11:00 am - 3:30 pm. It is located at 4101 Meadows Lane, Las Vegas. (Across from Meadows Mall). About once every quarter we have a Sunday meeting for those that can't make the Saturday meetings. Please check calendar each month in case of changes. www.lvlug.org

Meadview (AZ) PC User Group - Meets first Thursday of month. Chuck Shull 928-564-2782 Railrider86@citlink.net

Pahrump NV Computer UG - Meets first Monday of month at 1pm in the Pahrump Moose Lodge. Don Norvell 775-727-1246 DonNorvell@air-internet.com

Southern Nevada Amiga Group Ron Gatreaks 702-645-4610 captg@skylink.net

Southern Nevada Users Group - Meets second Monday of month. David Gaberel 702-658-6462 davegaberel@sierranv.net

Sun City MacDonald Ranch Computer Users Group – Members are residents of Sun City MacDonald Ranch. Meetings are held on the first Wednesday of the month at 9:00AM in the Community Club House. Contact Ms. Sam Giordano at samespin1@cox.net.

Sun City Summerlin Computer Users Group Meets first Thursday of Month. For more information call 615-5735. You must live in Sun City Summerlin in order to join this organization.   ⊙

Who, me? Yes, you!
You, too, can do a Product Review

Have you recently...

- • Read a computer book that was especially well written and helpful?
- • Played a computer game that you think is really challenging?
- • Found a computer show or program that's quite informative?
- • Taken a course that you really enjoyed?
- • Got a new piece of equipment that you feel comfortable recommending to others?
- • Tried a new or unique software program that solves a problem?

Why not take some time and share your thoughts with fellow LVPCUG members?

Consider the following to help arrange your thoughts and ideas:

- • Identify the item specifically with name, version and the vendor.
- • Describe its purpose and what it does – its objective and selling points or features.

- • Tell us its price and where other members can find it.
- • State any requirements, and if it is for a novice, intermediate, or advanced user.
- • Tell us why you selected it.
- • Tell us about the original installation or your first impressions.
- • Describe your experience – what you liked, didn't like, etc.
- • Any unexpected result, or any outstanding feature or function?
- • Any improvement recommendations?
- • Make your concluding comments and recommendation. Add a rating, if you like.

Don't worry about your writing skill or grammar, or length of review. That's why we have an Editor. Just write down your thoughts, put them aside for a day or two, then read them and make sure that you said what you intended and that it all makes sense, then e-mail it to **editor@lvpcug.org**

Let's get into the habit of sharing our experiences with fellow members. After all, isn't that one of the reasons we all joined LVPCUG in the

Don't Pay For Pixels You Won't Use

If you simply want to take snapshots you can email and post to a Web site, you don't need a megapixel-loaded monstrosity. A 6MP model would be overkill for these tasks, and you'd have to resize your pictures before they'd be compact enough to email. On the other hand, if you want to create 8- x 10-inch or larger prints, or if you heavily crop photos before you print, you'll need the extra data provided by a higher megapixel count; for those tasks you'll want at least 4 or more megapixels.

Reprinted with permission from Smart Computing. Visit http://www.smartcomputing.com/groups to learn what Smart Computing can do for you and your user group!   ⊙
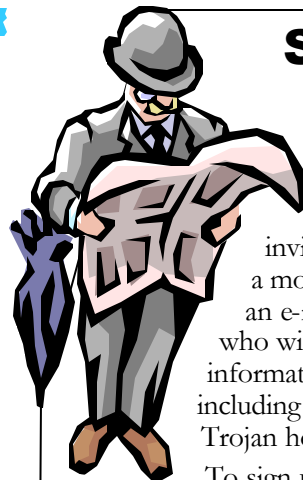
Subscribe to NewsBytes

In addition to the regular monthly publication of Bytes, members are also invited to sign up for **NewsBytes**, a more immediate publication. It is an e-mail service geared to members who will benefit from time-sensitive information related to Internet topics, including early warning of viruses, Trojan horses and related information.

To sign up for **NewsBytes** send a message to lvpcug-subscribe@yahoogroups.com. To join, or for access to past **NewsBytes** or to change your settings, including your e-mail address, go to **http://groups.yahoo.com/group/lvpcug** and register or manage your profile there.

Another LVPCUG Member Benefit!

— *For Members Only* —

Helping Hands
"USERS HELPING USERS"
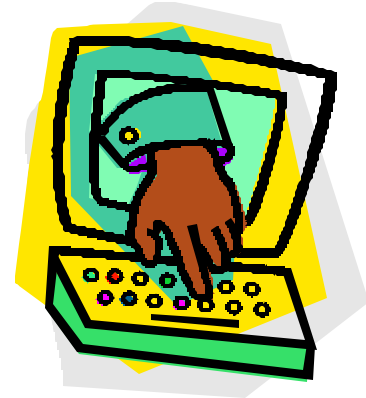
When you need help with computer related problems, call a **Helping Hand** volunteer. This service is available only to LVPCUG members.

Please be courteous when you call and make sure the time is convenient. Have ready your manuals, questions, etc. and be at your computer. Or, e-mail a description of your problem along with your phone number and best time to contact you.

If you feel that you could be a **Helping Hand** in any area, please contact one of the Board Members, or contact the Editor and ask to be added to the list. We can always use more volunteers in this area. **"Users Helping Users"** is what it's all about! ⊙

Beginners & Quicken
Marilyn Mills • 361-6363 • cmxx@earthlink.net
Communications, Linux/Unix
Rob Winchell • 795-7153 evenings
r_winchell@newsguy.com

**Microsoft
Access,
Databases
in General**
Donna Sword
795-2653 evenings
sword_nv@hotmail.com

Microsoft Office, Publisher, Adobe Acrobat
Sharon Fry • SharonFinLV@hotmail.com
290-3518 evenings/weekends

Microsoft Excel, QuickBooks Pro
Debbie Hathaway • debhathaway@juno.com
497-3995 cell

**Windows 98, Nero CD Burning Software,
Music Match Jukebox, Cool Edit, Digital Music**
Rich Vance • 438-3394 • r.p.vance@cox.net

Windows XP, Miscellaneous
263-5910 • fixitgeorge@lvpcug.org   ⊙

LVPCUG Membership Benefits

The Las Vegas PC Users Group welcomes new members anytime. The only criteria for membership is an interest in computers! The Las Vegas PC Users Group is an exciting non-profit organization of novices, experts, computer professionals and casual users that began in the 1980's.

Membership includes a subscription to "The BYTES of Las Vegas", and full access to the web site. Full members may purchase hardware, software, and books made available by the manufacturers and various vendors at discounted prices. Helping Hands are there when you need them. A group of members with experience in particular fields has volunteered to help user group members one-on-one. When you need computing assistance, you can contact a Helping Hands volunteer.

A General Meeting is held the first Wednesday of each month Feb.-Dec. in the Auditorium of the West Charleston Library at 6301 W. Charleston. The pre-meeting at 6:15 PM is a computer fundamentals presentation with general questions and answers. At 7 PM, the General Meeting starts with a presenter on a topic of broader interest, followed by questions and answers about the presentation. Each meeting concludes with door prize drawings.

What areas are you most interested in? We have Special Interest Groups (SIGs) that focus on various areas of computing such as help for novice users, office software, databases, programming, digital imaging, wireless networking, etc. They meet on a regular basis in a variety of meeting formats–such as workshops, discussions and classes–to share information on diverse topics. We even have a Saturday Night "Bites & Bytes" that shares dinner and computer expertise. And, all of our meetings are free and open to the public.

Visit our web site at www.lvpcug.org Members can get answers to questions, and find out when and where the Special Interest Groups are meeting. There are links to other interesting sites as well.

For more information about membership in the Las Vegas PC Users Group, contact President Dennis Kemper at president@lvpcug.org, Membership Chair

Las Vegas PC Users Group
Membership Application

(PLEASE PRINT)   Date: _____ ○ New ○ Renewal

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

Phone: _____ Alt. Phone: _____ Fax: _____

Email: _____ Have you been a Member Before? ○ YES ○ NO

It is LVPCUG policy to keep your information confidential. We do not sell or exchange personally identifiable information with any third parties. Upon acceptance of your Membership Application, you will be automatically opted in to receive electronic and postal mail regarding LVPCUG activities. You may opt out of these notices at any time by notifying membership@lvpcug.org via e-mail.

For purposes of contact regarding SIGs and meetings, may we release the following to other Members?

  Your phone # _____   and/or Your e-mail address _____

SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION (optional but helpful):

How did you hear about the LVPCUG? _____

What type of computer user are you? (Circle all that apply)

             Novice   Programmer Consultant   Trainer   Work Related   Home User

Other (please specify) _____

Please put an **"X"** in front of the **items you use and/or have some knowledge of**, and put an **"O"** in front of those subjects **you would like to learn more about**.

_____ Programming	_____ Art & Design	_____ BBS/Telecommunications
_____ Networking	_____ Desktop/Web Publishing	_____ Windows
_____ Word Processing	_____ Multimedia	_____ Databases
_____ Operating Systems	_____ General Computer	_____ Spreadsheets/Accounting
_____ Hardware	_____ Other: _____	_____

Bring completed application and check for $30 Annual Membership Dues to our General Meeting, or mail to:

        Membership Chairperson
        Las Vegas PC Users Group
        1350 E. Flamingo Road #188
        Las Vegas, NV 89119