



• **CENTRAL KENTUCKY COMPUTER SOCIETY** •

**OPEN — ONLINE!**

**WELCOME TO 2021!**

**January**



**January**

**Official Newsletter of the Central Kentucky Computer Society, Inc.©  
CKCS Resource Center, 160 Moore Drive, Suite 107, Lexington, Ky. 40503  
(859) 373-1000 • [ckcs.org](http://ckcs.org)**

**Jan. 2021, Vol. 46, No. 1**

**• Since 1984, Empowering CKCS Members With Tech Skills •**

**Titles below are now links. Click on a title to go directly to that article.**

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## New Memberships & Renewals

### CKCS Memberships

From Nov. 22 to Dec 21

Submitted by CKCS Board Member, Ben Rice

#### New Members

None

#### Renewing Members

Susan Abaecherli

Nancy Bowling

Joe Clancy

Darrell W. Doty

Sterling Duvall

Myra Engle

Deborah B. Gresham

Barrie & Jane Hart

Maryann Koegel

Richard & Annette Mathy

Daniel B. Moore

Mike J. O'Connor

Janet S. Scheeline

E.C. Seeley

Ruth Straus

Michael & Helen Thomson

THANK YOU FOR YOUR RENEWAL.

**Your support is what keeps CKCS going. Thank you for becoming a member, renewing your membership and helping keep CKCS alive!**

Website links used in the CKCS newsletter are not in any way associated with CKCS. In addition, the linked websites do not endorse CKCS. We include these links in this newsletter as a service to the reader. We attempt to provide high-quality content and believe the links provide a great addition to what you are reading.

# Central Kentucky Computer Society

Incorporated

CKCS Resource Center  
160 Moore Drive, Suite 107  
Lexington, Kentucky 40513  
(859) 373-1000  
[www.ckcs.org](http://www.ckcs.org)



#### • OFFICERS •

**Tenure ends June 30, 2021**

President: Brooke Thomas  
Vice-President: Joe Dietz  
Secretary: Larry Trivette  
Treasurer: Jim McCormick

#### • DIRECTORS •

**Tenure ends June 30, 2022**

Boone Baldwin  
Toni Greider  
Jan Landers-Lyman  
Ben Rice  
Mike Seiler

**Tenure ends June 30, 2021**

Bob Brown  
Janet Cartmell  
Larry Mitchum  
Eugene Potter  
Pennie Redmond

#### Webmasters

Bob Brown, Wendell Curtis

#### Class Coordinator

Janet Cartmell

#### Office Coordinator

Jan Landers-Lyman

#### Office Supervisors

Bob Brown, Wendell Curtis, Tracy Elton, Nancy Kolacz, Jan Landers-Lyman, Mike Seiler, Lydia Short, Julia Steanson, Larry Trivette, Cookie Dungan

#### Alternate Supervisors

Jenny Brown, Nancy Bowling, Kathy Davis, Gale Greer, Marie Han, Nita Martin, Toni Greider, John Plumlee, Sandra O'Neal, Helen Pope, Dottie VanWinkle

#### CKCS Calendar

Wendell Curtis

#### Mail Chimp Manager

Larry Mitchum

#### Newsletter Editor

Kurt Jefferson

#### Newsletter Proofreaders

Ben Rice, Brooke Thomas, Bob Flynn, Toni Greider, Kurt Jefferson

#### Refreshment Center

Jim Hughes

# ONLINE REGISTRATION AVAILABLE STARTING JAN. 11

It's easier than ever before to register for classes or become a member of CKCS. For the first time, folks interested in registering may do so on the secure CKCS store.

While visiting the CKCS store website, here are your options:

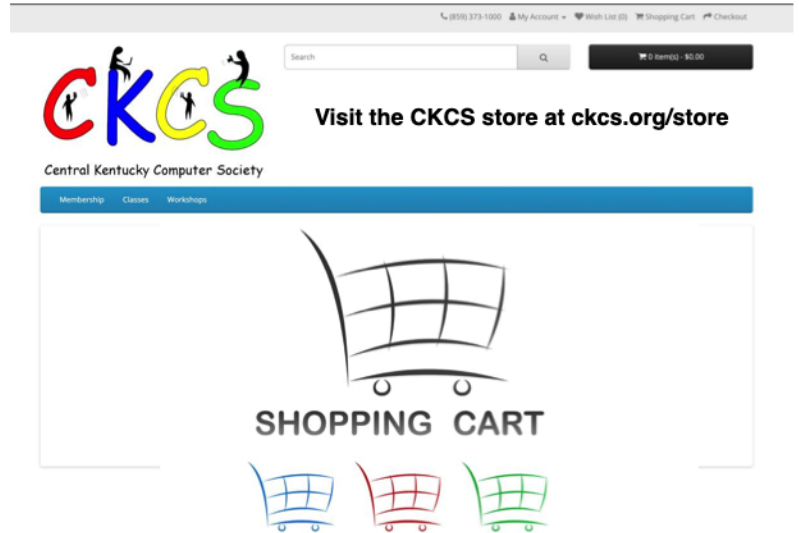
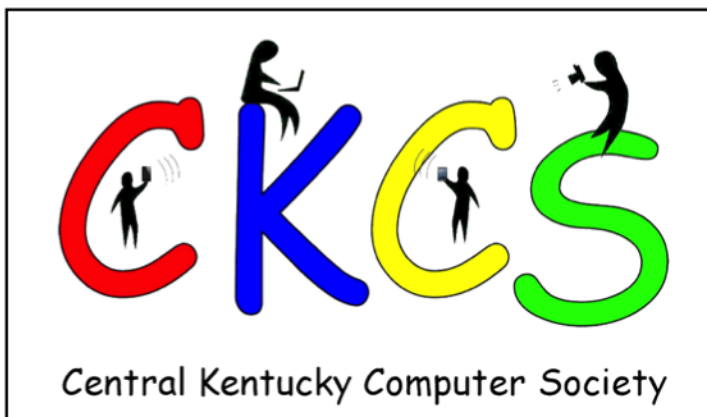
**Membership** – Join CKCS by clicking on the Membership link. Choose among these options:

- Regular Individual Membership – 1 year
- Regular Individual Membership – 2 years
- Regular Individual Membership – 3 years

After you make a membership choice, you'll be asked to enter the name you want to appear on your CKCS membership card. You can pay by credit card online.

**Classes via Zoom** – Register and pay online by credit card or PayPal. (Click on a link for a specific class to get more details about that class. Students will receive a Zoom link via email for each class before the class begins. The link will be sent to the email address you provide when you register.)

**Workshops via Zoom** – Register and pay for CKCS workshops by credit card or PayPal. (Click on a link for a specific workshop to get more details about that event. Students will receive a Zoom link via email for each workshop before it begins. The link will be sent to the email address you provide when you register.)



The new CKCS store is online Jan. 11. The options to register for a class and workshop or join CKCS with a membership will appear in the blue horizontal ribbon at the top of the webpage.

Because the CKCS registration website is new, during the transition period in January, you'll still be able to register by phone by dialing **859.373.1000** between Jan. 11 and Jan. 21 from 10 A.M. – 1 P.M. (See page 8 for more details on registration.)

## Class/Workshop Pricing

Unless indicated otherwise, classes cost \$48 for CKCS members; \$60 for non-members.

Workshops cost \$24 for CKCS members; \$30 for non-members.

CKCS members receive a 20% discount on all class and workshop fees.

# Start the New Year with a Free Open House



So you've made a New Year's resolution to learn more about your PC, Mac, iPad, Internet or Google apps.

Here's your chance. There's no registration.

Just show up on the day the open house is offered, use the Zoom address

shown in the proper row for your open house, and you're in.

Each open house is free and lasts one hour. You're encouraged to participate.

Date	Topic	Overview	Time	Zoom address
Jan. 6	<b>Windows 10 Snip &amp; Sketch Tool</b>	Have you ever seen a picture on an internet web page and you wanted a copy of it for yourself? There are tools built into Windows 10 that you can use to save the picture for your further use and enjoyment. In this Open House we will go over the new tools that allow you to clip and save anything that appears on your desktop.	10–11 A.M	<a href="https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86027768340">https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86027768340</a>
Jan. 8	<b>Tips to Using the Internet</b>	Google Chrome will be used to explore ways to find things on the internet, how to exclude things from a search, and how to search for specific words or string of words. Handy things like the snip and sketch tool, the calculator, using the internet as a dictionary or thesaurus, and lots more will be demonstrated.	11 A.M–Noon	<a href="https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84115936922">https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84115936922</a>
Jan. 12	<b>Using Apple iCloud for your iPhone &amp; iPad</b>	When you purchase an iPhone or iPad you have an account set up in the cloud. Here you store copies of your photos, contacts, text messages, email messages, and more. Students will learn how to set up this account to their best benefit. We will talk about downloading and uploading your files to and from your iPhone or iPad. We will also discuss how to share documents and photos from the iCloud. Acquiring more storage space will also be discussed.	11 A.M–Noon	<a href="https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81415386109">https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81415386109</a>
Jan. 13	<b>Apple Pages for Mac</b>	Basics of Pages on your Mac and how to create eye-appealing documents from scratch and from templates will be presented. Also, how to create and use tables, columns, fonts, clip art, and other features will be demonstrated.	10–11 A.M	<a href="https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84992817145">https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84992817145</a>
Jan. 14	<b>Windows 10 File Explorer</b>	We will look at all the settings in the ribbon of File Explorer and how to make Tabs, the Quick Access Toolbar, and Panes more user friendly.	10–11 A.M	<a href="https://zoom.us/j/94696890726?pwd=UTNFbzBjbmcvSjgveHJl6eTR4c2dBUt09">https://zoom.us/j/94696890726?pwd=UTNFbzBjbmcvSjgveHJl6eTR4c2dBUt09</a>
Jan. 19	<b>Disabling Windows 10 Advertising</b>	Windows is notorious for displaying notifications, “helpful” hints, and advertising on your computer. In this Open House we will talk about the settings you can change to turn most of these off.	10–11 A.M	<a href="https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86072752550">https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86072752550</a>
Jan. 20	<b>Apple Pages for iPad</b>	Basics of Pages on your iPad and how to create, format, and print professional word processing documents will be presented. Also, how to save Pages documents in Word and PDF formats will be demonstrated.	10–11 A.M	<a href="https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84192013670">https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84192013670</a>
Jan. 27	<b>Beyond Gmail: Exploring the world of Google Apps</b>	We'll explore some of the programs Google provides in addition to Gmail. The session will cover Calendar, Photos, and Drive. Other apps will be explored if time permits.	2–3 P.M	<a href="https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87386526457">https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87386526457</a>

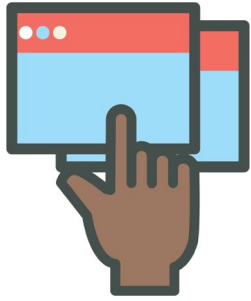
# Spring classes & Workshops

Dates	Course	Overview	Times
Wed. Feb. 3, 10, 17, 24 & Mar 3, 10	<b>Advanced &amp; Independent Digital Imaging using Corel PaintShop Pro for Windows</b>	During this pandemic and using ZOOM for classes, the structure of the Advanced/Independent Digital Imaging Class will be a little different. Students are encouraged to work on their projects at home and bring their questions and projects to share with the class. The instructor will discuss, provide tips, and share student's work with the other participants for discussion. The instructor will also demonstrate various projects for the students to work on in the class or at home. These projects will then be shared with students at the next class. This class is geared to those who have some experience with digital imaging programs and using ZOOM. Programs used will be predominantly Corel PaintShop Pro and FastStone. Other programs may be adaptable. <b>Class</b>	10 A.M.– Noon
Thur. Feb. 4, 11, 18, 25 & Mar 4, 11	<b>Getting the most out of your iPad</b>	Learn how to use the built-in Apple apps on your iPad. Personalize and organize your apps, take better photos, and organize them. Acquire information about settings, learn the secrets of the keyboard, emailing, and texting with animation. Get tips on using the Calendar, Notes, Reminders, and Books. We will look at Face-time if time permits. Participants should bring their fully charged iPad updated with the latest operating system and know their Apple ID and password. <b>Class</b>	1–3 P.M.
Mon. Feb. 8, 15, 22	<b>How to take sharp photographs</b> CKCS members: \$36; Non-CKCS members: \$45	Learn how to take photographs in focus and well exposed. The instructors will demonstrate the correct way to focus and stand and breathe when taking a photograph. Because many cameras do not have the settings selected for optimum performance, the instructors will help students correct their camera settings. Have a camera with a fully charged battery, the camera manual, and a note pad. <b>Class</b>	1–3 P.M.
Tues. Feb. 16, 23 & Mar 2, 9, 16 & 23	<b>Getting the most out of your iPhone</b>	Requires an iPhone—any version. Learn essential (and hidden) functions of your iPhone. Learn how to download apps, move them, nest them, and delete them. Learn how to get better photos with your phone, organize your pictures, and send them in text and emails. Texting messages and using Siri will also be covered. Participants should have their iPhone fully charged and know their passcode, Apple ID, and Apple password. <b>Class</b>	1–3 P.M.
Mon. Mar 1, 8, 15, 22 & 29	<b>Basic Beginning Photography 101</b> CKCS members: \$44; Non-CKCS members: \$55	Learn your camera's essential functions to improve your photography skills. You will learn how ISO, shutter speed, and aperture affect your photographs and how to control your camera settings. The instructors will use video and lecture to demonstrate how to operate the camera. There will be specific photography assignments to practice using these settings and an opportunity to get feedback and ask questions to improve your skills. Students need to bring their camera with a fully charged battery, the camera manual, and a note pad to class. <b>Class</b>	1–3 P.M.

# Spring classes & Workshops

<p>Mon. Mar 1, 8, 15, 22 &amp; 29 &amp; Apr 5</p>	<p><b>Basics every Mac user should know</b></p>	<p>Basic Mac computer skills that students should know will be presented. These skills include using the Safari browser, basics of using the Pages word processor, Mac keyboard shortcuts, backing up one's data, using email and the Messages app, changing settings on your mouse, trackpad, and more. Using the techniques taught in this class, you will be more productive using your Mac. <b>Class</b></p>	<p><b>10 A.M.– Noon</b></p>
<p>Tues. Mar 16</p>	<p><b>Is Windows 10 driving you crazy?</b></p>	<p>In this Workshop, students will learn how to change the Start Window to make it less confusing. Also, they will learn how to change the appearance of File Explorer. A free program will be demonstrated that changes the Start Window, making it look like the Windows 7 or XP Start Window. <b>Workshop</b></p>	<p><b>9 A.M.– Noon</b></p>
<p>Mon. Apr 5 &amp; 12</p>	<p><b>Foundations of photography – Lenses CKCS members: \$32; Non-CKCS members: \$40</b></p>	<p>This course will present a very detailed study on how lenses work, the different types of lenses, and what to consider when buying a new lens. <b>Class</b></p>	<p><b>1–3 P.M.</b></p>
<p>Tues. Apr 6</p>	<p><b>Making a Photo book using Shutterfly</b></p>	<p>You will learn how to prepare pictures for a photo book, transfer pictures to the Shutterfly workspace, and then organize the images from the front to the book's last page. Finally, we will go through ordering the book and applying coupons to reduce the price. (This program is on the Internet so that it will work on both a Windows PC and Macintosh computer.) <b>Workshop</b></p>	<p><b>1–4 P.M.</b></p>
<p>Thur. Apr 8</p>	<p><b>Using Facebook on a Windows PC</b></p>	<p>Learn how to maintain a Facebook account on a computer. We will explain how to use the Profile and Home pages. How to find friends, make a post, edit and respond to posts, prioritize news feeds, check privacy settings, unfriend and block friends, and delete and deactivate your Facebook account are some of the features covered. Students should plan to watch the Zoom presentation on a different device like a smartphone or tablet to leave their computers available to practice the activities on their own Facebook account. <b>Workshop</b></p>	<p><b>1–4 P.M.</b></p>
<p>Tues. Apr 13</p>	<p><b>Using your iPhone camera to the MAX</b></p>	<p>Using apps already on the iPhone, students will learn techniques to take better pictures and fix them by cropping, lightening or darkening, or adding filters. They will learn how to take videos, time-lapse, and panoramas. Students will also learn how to create albums and learn several ways to share their photos with others. Have your iPhone fully charged for this course. <b>Workshop</b></p>	<p><b>1–3 P.M.</b></p>
<p>Mon. Apr 19, 26 &amp; May 3, 10, 17 &amp; 24</p>	<p><b>Adventures in Photography</b></p>	<p>This class will include instruction in white balance, Depth of Field, aperture, shutter speeds to blur motion, and how to stop motion. The instructors will show how to photograph close up with the lens students already have and demonstrate close up and microphotography techniques with other lenses. Students will learn how to use standard filters correctly (polarizers and ND – neutral density). The instructors will also introduce infrared photography with the student's camera using filters provided by the instructors. This six-week course will spend alternating weeks on Zoom and in the field shooting photos. Students should have a basic knowledge of their camera. Students need to have their camera with a full battery, an empty memory card, the camera manual, and a note pad. <b>Class</b></p>	<p><b>1–3 P.M.</b></p>

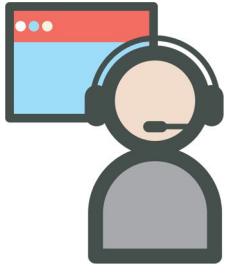
# How to register: CKCS Classes & Workshops



## Online: (Starting Jan. 11)

Visit the CKCS store and click on either **Classes** or **Workshops** on the blue menu at the top of the page. Choose the course you want to take and check out on the secure website using your credit card or PayPal.

OR



## By Phone: (Starting Jan. 11)

Call **859.373.1000** and provide details on which classes and / or workshops you want to attend. Provide payment information.

OR

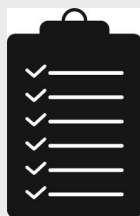


## In the CKCS Lobby: (Starting Jan. 11)

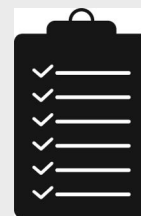
**Stop by CKCS** at 160 Moore Drive and register in the lobby. There will be a table in the hall where you can fill out class enrollment forms as well as CKCS membership forms.

**No one will be allowed to enter the CKCS office.**

### Registration Dates & Times for Phone & CKCS Lobby Visits



Jan. 11	10 A.M. – 1 P.M.
Jan. 12	10 A.M. – 1 P.M.
Jan. 13	10 A.M. – 1 P.M.
Jan. 14	10 A.M. – 1 P.M.
Jan. 18	10 A.M. – 1 P.M.
Jan. 19	10 A.M. – 1 P.M.
Jan. 20	10 A.M. – 1 P.M.
Jan. 21	10 A.M. – 1 P.M.





*2021 is here*



**iHelp** *is here*

**Email your tech questions by Jan.1 for your Apple devices (iPhone, iPad, iPod touch & Mac).**

**Email: [CKCSihelp@gmail.com](mailto:CKCSihelp@gmail.com)**



**We'll do our best to answer your questions live via Zoom, plus offer tech tips and tricks. Join us!**



**The new iHelp:  
Saturday, Jan. 2  
from 10 A.M. –  
noon on Zoom**



Join us for the live Zoom iHelp session: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81333291320>

# President's Comments

## Online Registration

**D**rum roll, please! Online class registrations finally arrive this month! I know it sounds crazy, but we've always had office supervisors taking calls and in-person registrations. It worked well for those who were uncomfortable paying online or wanted to pay by cash or check. It's now a different world. The pandemic has changed everything. We've encountered issues with the Post Office not forwarding our mail. Many of you have had your membership dues returned to you saying the letter was "undeliverable". That is simply not acceptable.



Brooke Thomas  
president@ckcs.org

So, our new, secure CKCS website will be one more method for you to register for classes and / or renew your membership. Starting January 11, you can still call the office or enter the office lobby to register for spring classes. Another option? Register at the CKCS Store starting Jan. 11.

All registration options will begin on the same day to give everyone the same advantage to get into the classes. With the ability to increase class size, there should be no problem getting a spot in a class. (See page 8 for more registration details.)

## Zoom is a boom

**Goodbye 2020! What a year.** Little did we know last January what was coming. Despite shutting down suddenly and unexpectedly in March, we were able to bounce back in May. We started off May during Tech Night learning how to use Zoom.

Then there was no stopping us. We initially tried using our Nest camera to stream presentations but found that we were lacking the interaction that we enjoy. It was Zooming from that point forward. Many of our classes and SIGs worked well with that format.

When I say "Zoom has been a Boom", we have enjoyed great participation with all our activities. We are able to accommodate more students in our classes and participation in the Special Interest Groups have doubled, and even tripled. Members and guests alike have enjoyed our free one-hour Open Houses we hold during months when we don't have classes.

## iHelp is back!

We were even able to bring back iHelp in a new format. We address participants' questions and include some tips and tricks with the Mac, iPhone, and iPad. Unfortunately, Dr Fixit doesn't work well virtually so the "Drs" have decided to wait until we can meet in-person to resume that activity. With all that being said we've learned a lot about how to use Zoom, but still have hiccups when we try the various features and occasionally get the links wrong.

I blame COVID-19 and the haze our brains are encountering with the shut downs and staying at home rules. You have been very gracious and patient when these things happen, and we appreciate that.

The SIG Leaders are working hard to bring you some interesting topics this year so be sure to stay tuned to the newsletter. The calendar is all set for the spring classes, but we would love to hear from you about which summer classes you'd like. If you have an idea, please drop me a line. We want to keep our classes fresh and interesting.

This should be a very Happy New Year! We hope you are looking forward to having a great year of learning new and exciting things. May 2021 bring back what we all crave: **Normalcy.**



# Jan. Tech Night

Jan. 11, 7 P.M. via Zoom

By Brooke Thomas

Okay. Everybody, work those glutes! I said work it! I can't hear you! Work it now!

**Um, excuse me.** I was remembering the 1980's when exercise gurus Richard Simmons and Jane Fonda filled early morning TV with their infomercials.

While Richard and Jane no longer take over early morning airwaves to encourage you to exercise, everyone needs to get off the couch and walk or run or lift weights, or ice skate or play volleyball or hockey or basketball...

You get the idea. And one of the most popular ways to track your progress is on your wrist. It's called a fitness tracker or a smart watch. What better time than now to start getting in shape!

You can track everything from the number of daily steps you walk to your heart rate to the level of oxygen in your bloodstream during sleep. Amazing technology here, folks, Apple uses the phrase, "The future of health is on your wrist." And that might not be too far from the truth as these devices keep getting better.

Need a big push to get started on your New Year's Resolution to get fit? Getting a fitness tracker or smart watch might just fit the ticket to get you off the couch. The quote, "If you can't measure it you can't improve it" holds true with exercise, too. These trackers and smart watches will help you set goals and hold you accountable, unless you strap it to your dog and watch him run circles in the backyard.

There are so many options when it comes to choosing a fitness tracker. There are many brands on the market and although they are similar—there are

differences. Personal preference is the main determining factor. Some trackers work with Android and iPhones, but the Apple Watch is only compatible with the iPhone.



**Kurt's Garmin fitness tracker during one of the few times it's not on his wrist.**



**To borrow lyrics from The Carpenter's 1970 holiday hit – Merry Christmas, Darling: *Greeting cards have all been sent. The Christmas rush is through.* That may be true, but the holiday spirit lingers. This is the Brooke Thomas garage as she celebrates the holidays. Wonder if Santa delivered a shiny new Apple Watch Series 6 under her tree? Hmmmm...**

Today's choices include FitBit, Garmin, Apple Watch, Samsung, Fossil, Amazon Halo, Withings, Wyze, and a host of other brands.

**Join Kurt Jefferson and Brooke Thomas on January 11 at 7 p.m. to hear about their experiences with Fitbit, Garmin, and Apple Watch.**

Brooke started with a Fitbit and now has an Apple Watch. Kurt has had experience with different fitness trackers and he'll share what he's learned.

We hope this presentation will help you decide which tracker is for you and will inspire you to improve your fitness routine in 2021.

**If You Zoom:  
Tech Night**

What: Fitness Trackers & Smart Watches

When: Mon., Jan 11 at 7 P.M.

Where: Via Zoom

Zoom here: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82109235232>

# IF YOU BELIEVE IN CKCS AND ITS MISSION, PLEASE SUPPORT IT BY:

- ✓ • **Becoming a member.** You can phone 859.373.1000 and request a membership application or visit <https://ckcs.org/ClcsApp.pdf>. Fill out the form and mail it in. Or, go online: [ckcs.org/store](https://ckcs.org/store)
- ✓ • **Taking classes or workshops.** The spring session of classes will start in February. See pages 6 & 7 for a list of classes & workshops.
- ✓ • **Choosing to support CKCS when you shop at Kroger.** [This website tells you how to set it up.](#) Please choose the Central Kentucky Computer Society as the non-profit you want to support. When you buy groceries, a portion of what you pay benefits CKCS.
- ✓ • **Choosing to support CKCS when you buy online using AmazonSmile.** You have to visit [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com) (not [amazon.com](https://amazon.com)) to make this work. If you prefer, you can use the Amazon mobile app on your smartphone and activate “Amazon Smile” in the Settings. Then choose CKCS as the non-profit you want to help. This [website](#) explains what AmazonSmile is and how to use it.



# New Year's Resolution: Vow to maintain your home Wi-Fi network

By Kurt Jefferson

Now that 2020 is finally, finally, finally over, it might be time to reflect on how well our home networks held up to the strain of constant use last year.

COVID-19 is keeping many of us at home and connected via Zoom, FaceTime, and Skype. That's putting sometimes creaky Wi-Fi Internet networks under the microscope.

And many of us have discovered our sometimes outdated routers, modems, PCs and Macs, iPads, keyboards, mice and trackballs, and other equipment aren't faring too well under the strain.

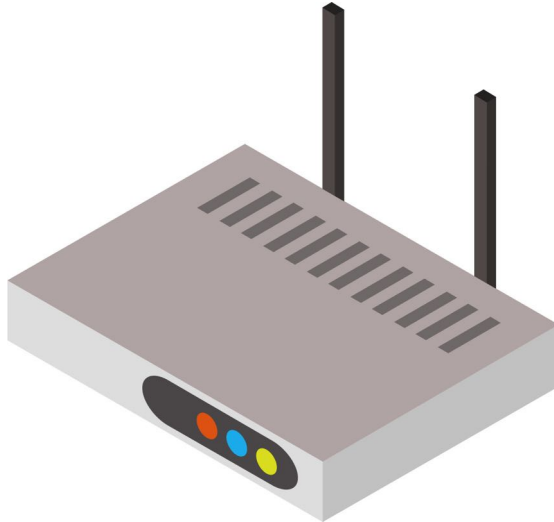
(November's CKCS newsletter

reported that iPad sales in America rose by 31% as of mid-summer as plenty of folks replaced old equipment with newer technology.)

In March, Forbes reported that Internet use in America climbed by as much as 70% as more of us were forced to work at home, students activated distance learning, and streaming (services such as Netflix and Amazon Prime) surged by at least 12% while demand for TV via cable plummeted.

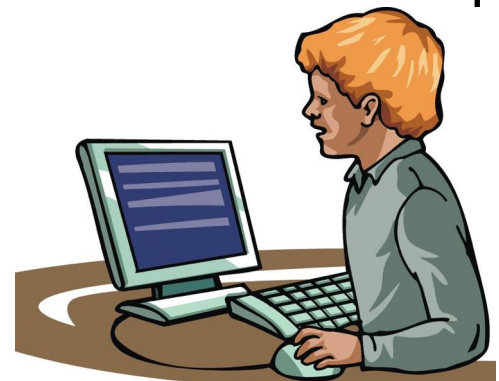
Cable TV subscriber losses in 2020 could top the population of Chicago and Houston combined, headlines one article from BGR.com. And, as NoCable.org writes, "As many Millennials enter the workforce, they simply do not see the benefit of paying over \$123 a month on cable service and are colloquially referred to as 'Cord Nevers'."

So if you or family members are using your Internet network more than ever, you have plenty of company. Just as your car needs maintenance, so does your Wi-Fi network. Yet, many of us don't consider this until our home Internet stops working.



Consider the following:

- ✔ **If your WiFi router** is more than four or five years old it might be time to replace it. A 2012 PCWorld article says heat could be the real culprit. WiFi routers tend to get very hot. If your Internet connection is getting slower and slower or drops connections more often, heat might be damaging your router's internal parts. Try pointing a small fan on your router and see if your Internet performance improves.
- ✔ **If your cable company** provides you Internet service, consider buying and installing your own modem rather than paying the cable company to use theirs. That's one way to cut your costs. The Wirecutter has tested a number of top models. Read their reviews to see which WiFi router might fit your budget and home.
- ✔ **I checked The Wirecutter** before buying a new WiFi router late last year. My six-year-old Apple Extreme Base Station was failing. (Apple no longer makes WiFi routers.) Internet connections were periodically dropping, web pages loading more slowly, and the connection speed was dropping. (I use a Mac app called WiFi Explorer from the Mac App Store to get an overview of how well my home Internet network is functioning. WiFi Analyzer for Windows is another good tool.)



## New Year's Resolution: Vow to maintain your home Wi-Fi network

- ✓ **If your home is plagued** by Internet dead zones, consider installing what's called a WiFi mesh networking kit. The Wirecutter spent more than 200 hours reviewing 24-mesh WiFi networking kits before it chose its [top pick](#).
- ✓ **Update your WiFi router's firmware.** "Firmware" is one of those words that causes some folk's eyes to glaze over. You might as well be talking to an American audience about [camels](#): Or what's the difference between a Dromedary camel and a Bactrian camel? But as Tom's Guide has [repeated over and over](#), "Your router is the most important part of your home internet setup. It's also probably the most vulnerable." Why bother? Well, as Tom's Guide writes, "...Updating your router's firmware is a pain, but you've got to do it." A firmware update can protect your entire home Internet network from hackers. Just do it. Enough said.
- ✓ **Internet Security 101:** Wow. Broadband Search outdid itself when it published this [website](#) offering some of the best advice on keeping your home Internet safe and secure. You'll read tips such as pick better passwords and choose to use a virtual private network (especially when you're using an iPad or laptop.)
- ✓ **Turn on your Mac's firewall.** If your firewall is off, turn it on. Visit System Preferences, click on Security & Privacy. There's a horizontal panel at the top of the window. Click on Firewall. Then, make sure there's a green dot next to Firewall: On. Macs come from the factory with this turned off. Switch it on.
- ✓ **Turn on your Window's firewall.** (Make sure it's not disabled.) [securicy.com](#) tells you how to "enable your Windows" firewall. Make sure you leave it on.
- ✓ **Run anti-virus, anti-spyware software.** Learn more from [PCMag](#) and its article, "Do You Really Need to Buy an Antivirus App or a VPN Anymore?" (Obviously, the answer is YES.)
- ✓ **Protect your smart speaker.** (You know, speakers that react to your verbal commands.) If you've got one of the many smart speakers (Amazon, Google, Apple, and Sonos all make smart speakers) in your home, be aware they can be hacked. As Norton notes, 39-million Americans owned smart speakers in 2019. Norton's [website](#) offers ten tips to keep your smart speakers secure.
- ✓ **Use a Passcode, Touch ID or Face ID** on your iPad & iPhone. It's a pain to enter a series of numbers, touch the home button or allow the camera to snap your head shot every time you use your tablet or smartphone. But consider this: An iPhone and iPad are among the two top [stolen](#) electronic devices in America. Think about it. Turn on "[Find my App](#)" on all of your Apple devices: Macs, iPhones, iPads & iPod touch. A passcode can save you plenty of grief, especially if you use your iPad or iPhone for online banking.



# In 2021, vow to start using a password manager

By Kurt Jefferson

I keep telling students in my CKCS classes that they need to start using a password manager. You should be using a password manager on your iPad, iPhone, Mac, Windows PC, and Linux PC. Seriously? Yes.

With a good password manager, you only need to remember one password. That's right. You don't need to remember the one you use when you buy from Amazon. And the password you use to pay your water bill. And the one you use to log into your bank account.

Password managers are apps that securely keep track of your passwords, allow you to create private notes, automatically log you into your password-protected websites and more.

Some of the best include:

- [1Password](#)
- [Dashlane](#)
- [LastPass](#)
- [Keeper](#)
- [NordPass](#)
- [RoboForm](#)
- [Sticky Password](#)
- [bitwarden](#)
- [RememBer](#)
- [Enpass](#)

If you're reluctant to use a password manager, [wired.com](#) says you've got company. "Password managers are vegetables of the Internet. We know they're good for us, but most of us are happier snacking on the password equivalent of junk food," writes Wired in an [article](#) headlined, "The Best Password Managers to Secure Your Digital Life."

As I read that I said to myself, "Ain't that the truth." I know plenty of really smart people who are committed to their habits, who are stubborn, and who simply cannot change. They don't use password managers.

You probably know that your web browser will save your passwords automatically for you. The website Tech Republic says this is a bad idea.

[Why you should never allow your web browser to save your passwords](#) shows it's possible for others to see your passwords. The article describes step-by-step procedures that someone can use to view your saved passwords in Google Chrome, Firefox, and Safari browsers.

The article concludes: "Don't allow your browser to save your passwords. None of them. Not one. If you do, those passwords are vulnerable. All someone has to do is have access to your computer (remote or physical) and, unless you use Safari or the Master Password feature in Firefox, those passwords are available for anyone to see. If you absolutely must have your browser store

your passwords, and you're not using macOS, make sure to use Firefox and enable the Master Password feature. Use Chrome at the peril of your passwords. In place of having your web browser store your passwords, make use of a password manager."

If you use a Mac, you might avoid using Apple's built-in keychain system and opt instead for a password manager. Glenn Fleishman, who writes about security issues for Macworld, [gets into the details](#) and digs deeper into this if you're interested.

Tom's Guide [spoke](#) with a number of digital-security experts. While some are not fond of password managers, plenty of others use them, trust them, and rely on them. Cybernews [writes](#), "You really should use a password manager. Yes, they have their flaws and vulnerabilities. But it's still better than re-using the same weak passwords and writing them down as a note on your smartphone that becomes a playground for your kids after work."



## In 2021, Vow to backup your data — before it's too late

Most people don't seem to realize how quickly their important information could be gone in a flash. Poof! Your hard drive dies. So does your data.

Poof! Your flash drive drops out of your coat pocket and into someone's yard as you're walking home. You'll never see the data on that flash drive again.

Accidents happen. Drives die. *It's not a matter of whether it will happen, but when.* We all know that another major earthquake will eventually strike California and Alaska and New Zealand. It's inevitable because of plate tectonics far underground. It's also inevitable that every hard drive made will eventually falter.

As we enter a new year, make a resolution. Vow to backup your data this year. The tools to do just that are built into every Mac and Windows computer. But you have to take the initiative to activate them.

The review site, The Wirecutter, provides a good overview of how to use both [Time Machine for Macs](#) and [File History for Windows 10](#).

In simple terms, you hook up an external hard drive to your computer and automatically copy your files to that hard drive.

In case your computer's hard drive fails, you can reinstall them from your external drive. You can even reinstall the entire operating system.

But you have to activate the computer's built-in backup system. The experts recommend you go one step further and back up your data using an online cloud service. [The Wirecutter's top pick is Backblaze.](#) Runner-up is iDrive.

[Tom's Guide](#) flips the two – it picks iDrive as the best cloud backup service while Backblaze scores second place. Acronis True Image comes in third. All three are excellent choices, according to Tom's

Guide.

If you want more choices, Lifewire digs deep and [tested 22 different](#) cloud backup services. Its top pick is Backblaze, followed by Carbonite, CrashPlan, SOS Online Backup, SugarSync, SpiderOakONE, Zoolz Cloud, and Livedrive. Check out the article for its other picks.

The tech website, We Rock Your Web, [lists the top ten benefits](#) of using an online backup service. Among the benefits included: you can set up your computer to back up automatically to the cloud, your data is secure, and online backup gives you access to your data from anywhere.

Using an online backup service via the cloud is different from copying files to Dropbox.

Online backup services generally copy all of your data and provide access using an app on your computer, an app on your mobile devices, and from a website where you can log into your account.

Make 2021 the year you don't just think about backing up your data. *This year, just do it.*

*Note: After we submitted this story we learned that Microsoft is planning to eliminate the built-in backup app in Windows 10. In a future Windows update, Microsoft will phase it out.*

*So Windows 10 users are urged to find an alternative backup system for their computers.*

*If you're interested, Mike Seiler will be discussing one alternative at the January Windows 10 SIG (special interest group) meeting on Jan. 12 at 7 P.M. Join that Zoom session if you want to learn more.*





# Helpful sites to usher in the New Year

**A**s we start 2021, here are some websites you might find yourself visiting over and over. There's a lot here.

## **Free printable calendars for 2021**

Here you'll find a great selection of free calendars in PDF format. The website, [calendar-12.com](http://calendar-12.com) even allows you to create your own customized calendars.

## **Even more printable calendars for 2021**

Another excellent calendar website from [calendardate.com](http://calendardate.com) offers monthly and yearly calendars in a printable format. You'll also find season calendars, holiday calendars and even printable calendars through the year 2025.

## **Time and Date**

This site offers a giant collection of everything — a Time Zone map to world clocks, to calculators.

[timeanddate.com](http://timeanddate.com) has created a very easy-to-use website that you'll find yourself using quite a bit. Check it out.

## **Free label templates for Apple Pages and Microsoft Word**

[worldlabel.com](http://worldlabel.com) serves up a giant collection of label templates. In addition to Pages and Word, you'll spot label templates here in PDF format, for the Maestro Label Designer, in Adobe Illustrator .EPS format, as well as CD labels in all formats. If you know your Avery label number, click on "Avery Cross Reference" and you'll find an exact match.

## **Import addresses from Apple Contacts**

[podfeet.com](http://podfeet.com) provides a step-by-step guide to creating address labels from your macOS Contacts app.

## **Lexington Electronics Recycling Center**

Urban County Government's recycling center is open to folks living in Lexington. The hours are on the right-hand side of this page. A great place to recycle that old computer, can opener, TV, or landline phone.

## **Apple's PDF guide to managing your devices when personal safety is at risk**

Here's a "go-to" guide for keeping your data private, instructions on how to return your device to its original settings, and much more.

## **Online calculator**

Calculators are available for all platforms, and are built into PCs and Macs. But if you're looking for a solid online calculator, check out [calculator-1.com](http://calculator-1.com). It calls itself a "quick, easy and handy calculator online." It fits the bill.



# CKCS Zoom Links

**J**oin us for the following January Zoom sessions on your PC, Mac, iPad, iPhone, Android phone or tablet or other device that will run the Zoom application:

## **Tech Night**

**Jan. 11 at 7 P.M.**

Zoom link to join:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82109235232>

## **Word Processing SIG**

**Jan. 19 at 7 P.M.**

Zoom link to join:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83030906264>

## **Amateur**

### **Photographer's Club SIG**

**Every Thursday in Jan. at 10 A.M.**

Zoom link to join:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89234995079>

## **Windows 10 SIG**

**Jan. 12 at 7. P.M.**

Zoom link to join:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82811157647>

## **Mac/iPad SIG**

**Jan. 14 at 7 P.M.**

Zoom link to join:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89152197881>

## **Digital Photography SIG**

**Jan. 26 at 7 P.M.**

Zoom link to join:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82232057510>

*Zoom links for CKCS classes and workshops will be emailed to students.*

Zoom for Windows and Mac can be downloaded from the Zoom Download Center [here](#).

**The latest Zoom version available for desktops is 5.4.7.**

If you need Zoom for your iPad or iPhone, it's available from the App Store. Zoom is also available for Android phones and tablets through Google Play.

*Get More Out of Your Zoom Meetings* is available [here](#).

ZDNet has created a *Complete Zoom Guide: From Basic Help to Advanced Tricks* found [here](#).



Photo by: Tim Sullivan  
<https://stocksnap.io/author/timsullivan>  
From: <https://stocksnap.io>

# How the pandemic impacted tech in 2020

**T**he year just past will be remembered for many tech issues, but the ones that impacted many individuals in the U.S. include:

**Working from home.** Teachers are still using Zoom and other remote learning tools to teach from their homes. Many students in the U.S. and elsewhere are still using virtual learning instead of heading to the classroom.

**Many tech companies** dealt with increased demand almost overnight as people working from home bought new computers, tablets, routers, keyboards, computer monitors, mice and trackballs, and more. Online shopping grew at a very rapid pace in a very short time. AppleInsider reports Mac revenues grew a stunning 50% in the third quarter of 2020, while PC sales to consumers jumped by 33% over the year before.

**Twitter is telling** its employees they can now work from home forever.

**IBM announced plans** to break its business in half, eliminating 10,000 jobs in the U.K., Germany, Belgium and elsewhere.

**Apple and Microsoft closed** their retail stores because of the pandemic. Apple eventually opened its Fayette Mall store by appointment only because of a still high COVID-19 infection rate in central Kentucky.

**Mask makers grew their business** as more people than ever donned masks to help prevent the spread of coronavirus.

**Supermarket home delivery**, curbside delivery at grocery stores, and increased business for UPS, FedEx, and other delivery services (including Amazon) changed dramatically last year. The U.S. Postal Service also emailed customers, asking them to be patient because the service was dealing with huge amounts of deliveries, equipment changes, and staff impacted by Covid-19.

**Since cash might carry the virus**, some folks, for the first time, began using their smartphones to make payments using systems such as Google Pay, Apple Pay, PayPal, and Visa.

**Home buyers, for the first time, searched** for smart, non-touch options for light switches, faucets, electrical outlets and door locks.



Photo: PS Imaging  
<https://stocksnap.io/author/psimaging>

# Tech meets the the pandemic challenge

**T**alk about challenging times. When the COVID-19 pandemic first struck America in early 2020, 40% of the workforce began working from home. That created huge challenges for the Internet as the amount of network traffic skyrocketed almost overnight.

Internet providers were hit by an onslaught of at-home workers who were trying to get the job done all at once.

**The Atlantic** reports, “Almost the entire nation now seems to be online at the same time, many of us using two or three devices at once—for urgent work meetings and talking with Mom, for college chemistry lectures and neighborhood yoga classes, for grocery shopping and video binge-watching.”

Major Internet providers, such as AT&T saw major traffic spikes, adds **The Atlantic**: “In the United States, internet traffic carried by AT&T, one of the nation’s largest internet providers, rose almost immediately by 20 percent starting in mid-March. By the end of April, network traffic during the workweek was up 25 percent from typical Monday-to-Friday periods in January and February, and showed no signs of fading. That may not sound like much, but imagine suddenly needing to add 20 percent more long-haul trucks to U.S. highways instantly, or 20 percent more freight trains, or 20 percent more flights every day out of every airport in the country. In fact, none of those infrastructure systems could have provided 20 percent more capacity instantly—or sustained it day after day for months.”

How did the Internet in the U.S. withstand such a huge increase in demand? **The Atlantic** labels the Internet “an unsung hero of the pandemic” and notes the Internet worked during a very stressful time because people worked to keep the Internet functioning. Most Internet providers are reluctant to discuss network demands, numbers of users online, or when peak demand occurs. But AT&T actually revealed details to **The Atlantic** about just how much network traffic spiked and when it got really busy.

Two major changes occurred: Face-to-face contact among students, teachers and workers at companies came to a screeching halt. Online contact via Zoom, FaceTime, Skype and other services became the new way of meeting.

Second, these Internet connections were no longer made at schools and businesses which typically have better Internet service. They were made from home – students’ desks in bedrooms and living room tables.

**The Atlantic** notes that businesses in office parks or downtowns normally have much faster, very responsive Internet connections that don’t slow down much. Home connections are much slower and creaky compared with businesses. Because of the pandemic, we saw more people using much more Internet service than normal from places not designed to handle that amount of traffic: homes.

Yet, it worked. There were hiccups. Companies providing Internet services were in high demand as home Internet users called to upgrade their Internet service. Many of these folks replaced old, slow equipment with faster cable and fiber-optic modems and routers. They replaced old computers with new ones along with iPads.

Students, workers, and others who had never used apps such as Zoom met the challenge and were able to use virtual learning or meet with business associates.

AT&T quickly discovered another impact from the pandemic: Americans were communicating more on their cell phones. **The Atlantic** reports we’re speaking 33% more on our mobile phones and sending 40% more text messages than before the pandemic.

Even landline phones – yes, those hardwired phones disappearing from many homes – are getting a workout with a 45% increase in weekday minutes.

Experts predict all of this might make us better prepared for what lies ahead.



# Jan. SIG Meetings via Zoom

## January 2021 CKCS Special Interest Group (SIG) Schedule

Larry Trivette prepared this SIG calendar. Print this page for your refrigerator or bulletin board.

Our Resource Center on Moore Drive remains closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.  
Join us ONLINE for selected SIG and Open House meetings.

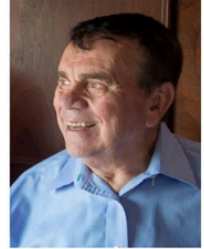
- Zoom Meetings: Click your invitation email hyperlink to join the meeting.

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
28 Dec	29 Dec	30 Dec	31 Dec	1 Jan	2 Jan
			10 a.m. Photography Club via Zoom No meeting this week	New Year's Day	10 a.m. Dr. Fix-It No meeting until CKCS office reopens
			New Year's Eve		10 A.M. – Noon  iHelp Tech Session via Zoom See page 9. 
4 Jan	5 Jan	6 Jan	7 Jan	8 Jan	9 Jan
			10 a.m. Photography Club via Zoom		
			7 p.m. Board of Directors via Zoom		
11 Jan	12 Jan	13 Jan	14 Jan	15 Jan	16 Jan
7 p.m. Tech Night Get in Shape with Fitness Trackers Kurt Jefferson Brooke Thomas	7 p.m. Windows 10 MIKE SEILER via Zoom		10 a.m. Photography Club via Zoom		
			7 p.m. <a href="#">Mac &amp; iPad</a> KURT JEFFERSON via Zoom		
18 Jan	19 Jan	20 Jan	21 Jan	22 Jan	23 Jan
	7 p.m. Word Processing JERRY HEATON via Zoom		10 a.m. Photography Club via Zoom		
25 Jan	26 Jan	27 Jan	28 Jan	29 Jan	30 Jan
	7 p.m. <a href="#">Digital Photography</a> JOE DIETZ		10 a.m. Photography Club		

**iHelp:** We will be offering tips and tricks and answer your Apple questions on Sat., Jan. 2 from 10 A.M. – Noon via Zoom. Send in your questions ahead of time to [ckcsihelp@gmail.com](mailto:ckcsihelp@gmail.com). See more details on page 9.

## WORD PROCESSING SIG CHANGES DATE

The CKCS Word Processing SIG is being moved permanently to the third Tuesday of each month, according to Jerry Heaton, the SIG leader. The sessions will be at 7 p.m.



Jerry Heaton

For several months now session reminder notices have been sent by email to previous attendees using an old mailing list. Many participants have changed addresses and have had to be removed from that list. Jerry wants to update the email list and if any member or guest would like to be sure that they receive a reminder two days before a WP session occurs, Jerry asked that you provide him your first and last name plus an email address. To join his list, use [jerry.heaton@ckcs.org](mailto:jerry.heaton@ckcs.org).

For the past 20 years, the WP SIG has met on the first Tuesday of each month

### PLAN FOR THE NEW YEAR

**At 7 p.m., on Tuesday, January 19,** Jerry will continue to explore some changes made to the way Microsoft's Word Processing program works. Some of these changes and improvements occur with the issuance of newer versions of all Microsoft products that are offered to those who pay an annual fee for that service. Reviewing these changes will help you decide whether this is something to which you might want to subscribe.

Members and visitors are welcome to join this Zoom session which can be accessed ten minutes before the program begins by using this link. <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83030906264>.

# Windows Special Interest Group

**Tuesday, January 12, 2021**

**7:00 pm**

Mike Seiler  
Windows SIG Leader



Backup! Backup! Backup! You have probably read or heard this many times. If you have files on your computer that you cherish, you need to back up your computer. The 2019 fall update from Microsoft deleted files on several computers. One person had over 20,000 pictures deleted from his computer. Fortunately, he backed up his computer several weeks before the update occurred. My C: drive crashed about five years ago. I had a backup and was able to restore my computer in about an hour. You need to backup your computer.

Reports indicate Microsoft is phasing out the built-in Windows 10 app used to back up your computer. So Windows 10 users will need to find an alternative program to back up their computer. The current built-in backup app will be eliminated.

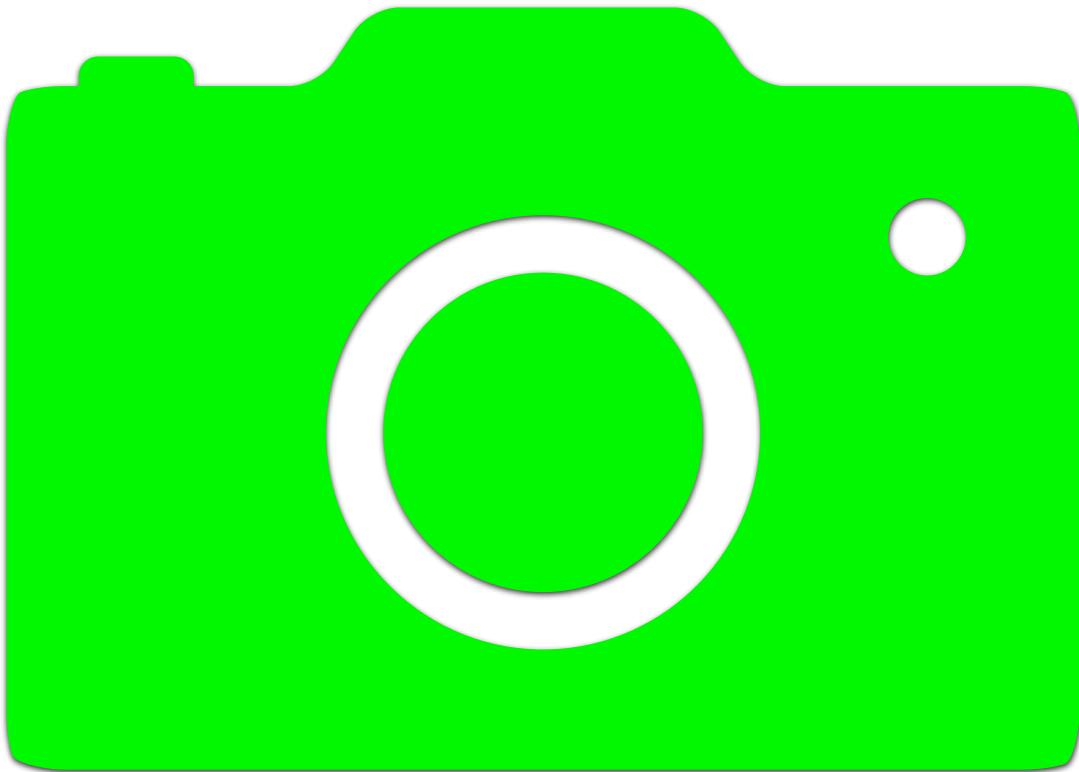
In January, I will demonstrate a program that will back up your computer. It can also be used to backup your thumb drives. The program has a free and a paid version. I will show you how to install and run the free version.

The Zoom link for this meeting is <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82811157647>

To receive a link for the handout for this meeting, you need to be on my mailing list. If you are not on my email list and want on it, send me an email with your name and email address to [w10sig.ckcs@gmail.com](mailto:w10sig.ckcs@gmail.com)



**Join the Amateur Photography Club  
SIG every Thursday at 10 A.M.**



**You need the Zoom app to participate.**

**To request an invitation, email:**

**[boone.baldwin@gmail.com](mailto:boone.baldwin@gmail.com)**





## Jan. Mac/iPad SIG

# macOS 11 (also called Big Sur)



**We'll examine what's new in the latest Mac operating system. If you're familiar with the Mac, you'll feel right at home. But there are many new features.**

**Join us: Jan. 14 at 7 P.M. via Zoom**

**Zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89152197881>**



**Photo by Peter Belch**

From: <https://stocksnap.io/author/6696>

StockSnap: <https://stocksnap.io>

Digital Photography Special Interest Group  
Tuesday, January 26, 2021



## John Snell Returns ZOOMing for the Pandemic



The ZOOM link to this meeting is

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82232057510>.

"Join us once again as local photographer John Snell shares with us the experiences and images from his past year's travels.

"Despite limitations brought about by the 2020 pandemic, photographer John Snell managed to get out and make some more memorable images. Overcrowding dissuaded him from frequent visits to his preferred Red River Gorge, so his focus became that of driving back roads of central Kentucky, looking for interesting scenes to shoot. Included are covered bridges, nostalgic looks at tobacco barns, creek views from various bridges, the Neowise Comet, full moon over the Castle on Versailles Road and others. His travels also included three trips to western North Carolina. He'll show images and provide tips on making them."

Check out his webpage for lots more.  
[www.johnsnellphoto.com/](http://www.johnsnellphoto.com/)

This month's photo contest topic is "Sunsets". Check through your photos or head out and get some good shots! Send your photo to [joedietz@aol.com](mailto:joedietz@aol.com) no later than January 25, 2021.

ZOOM with us January 26, 2021 at CKCS. Invite a friend. The ZOOM link to our meetings is

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82232057510>

# 2021 Digital Photography SIG Photo Contests

## Photo Contest Topics for 2021

Photos must be emailed to [joedietz@aol.com](mailto:joedietz@aol.com) at least one day prior to the monthly contest.

- **January** - Sunsets
- **February** – Gates and Doorways
- **March** - Waterfalls
- **April** – Wildflowers
- **May** - Trees
- **June** – Places of Worship
- **July** – Annual Hall of Fame:  
*Three topics – Leading lines, Cloud Formations, Animals that are not pets*
- **August** - Vistas
- **September** – Interesting clocks, timepieces
- **October** - Leaves
- **November** – Rock Groupings
- **December** – No contest. Happy Holidays!



**Digital Photography SIG (special interest group) meetings are held the fourth Tuesday of each month at 7 P.M. via Zoom.**

**The ZOOM link to our meetings is:**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82232057510>

HAPPY NEW YEAR  
HAPPY NEW YEAR

**CKCS WISHES YOU AND  
YOURS A HAPPY 2021!**

**A big thank-you to all of you  
who helped make CKCS  
successful in the past year.**



# Proofreaders Needed



The folks who currently proofread the CKCS newsletter do a fantastic job.

We couldn't create this monthly online publication without their help.

*They are vital.*

But we ask quite a bit of them to review every newsletter, every month. They are volunteers who

go above and beyond to help make this newsletter great.

We are seeking additional help to lighten the load. If you have a keen eye, we could use your help.

If you think you'd like to help, email:

lxtown2@gmail.com

Thank you.

# In 2021, vow to check out online reviews

When you're considering a purchase online, how can you be sure you're getting the real deal when you read online reviews? How can you be sure they're accurate?

One way is by using the website tool called [Fakespot](#).

If you're shopping online at Amazon, Best Buy, eBay, Sephora or Wal-Mart, you can utilize Fakespot.

Simply copy the web address in the location bar on the top of your browser on the page where the product you want to buy appears and paste it into the Fakespot page in the search box on the upper left-hand corner of the page next to Analyze.

Then click on Analyze and Fakespot will go to work.

It may take a few minutes if Fakespot needs to update its engine for the page involved.

There's also a Fakespot plug-in for Google Chrome, but since I don't use that browser I don't use the plug-in.

I always visit the Fakespot page when I'm considering an unknown product purchase.

You might be surprised. If Fakespot gives the online reviews a D or F – you shouldn't put much weight in the reviews because they're probably bogus. A "C" grade is passable.

It means there is a mixture of both accurate and bogus reviews. But at least you get a good overview of the product you're considering, if you realize some of the reviews are bogus.

CNN also wrote about how to protect yourself this past October in an article headlined, [How to avoid falling victim to fake reviews when shopping](#).

CNN writes that the CEO of Fakespot confirms the number of misleading reviews on Amazon soared in 2020.

"Fakespot CEO Saoud Khalifah blames the surge in review fraud on Covid-19, which has caused

e-commerce to skyrocket and created steep competition for vendors hoping to tap into all that new money coming in," writes CNN.

The article continues, "It'd be a mistake to take online reviews as gospel and use them as your sole criterion for evaluating the quality of a product or retailer. However, you'd also be remiss to completely ignore online reviews when considering a purchase. Below, we've put together a guide that should help you get the most out of reviews so they can be a powerful tool rather than a liability."

Another excellent tool to wade between the junk and excellent reviews is [ReviewMeta](#). You paste the web address for a product found on Amazon's website into the search blank found on the top of ReviewMeta.

ReviewMeta also provides browser extensions for Firefox, Google Chrome and Microsoft Edge.

Since Apple updated its Safari browser, users need to [utilize a bookmarklet](#) to make revisiting ReviewMeta simple.

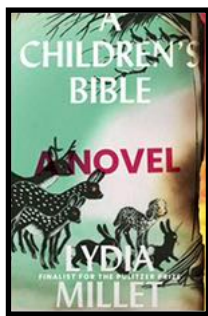
You can also find mobile apps for ReviewMeta from the App Store and Google Play Stores.

Do yourself a favor. Put ReviewMeta and Fakespot to work for you the next time you're considering an online purchase.



# Books!

## For a cold Winter's day



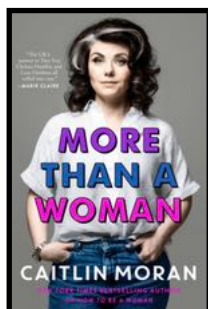
**A Children's Bible**  
by Lydia Millet



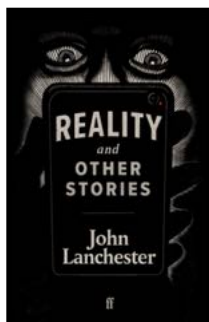
**Shuggie Bain**  
by Douglas Stuart



**Hamnet: A Novel of the Plague**  
by Maggie O'Farrell



**More Than a Woman**  
by Caitlin Moran



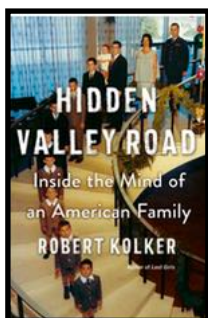
**Reality and Other Stories**  
by John Lanchester



**The New Wild**  
by Diane Cook



**Sweet Dreams: The Story of the New Romantics**  
by Dylan Jones



**Hidden Valley Road: Inside the Mind of an American Family**  
by Robert Kolker



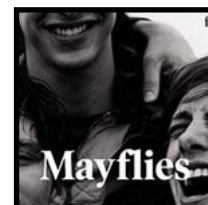
**Ready Player Two**  
by Ernest Cline



**White Ivy**  
by Susie Yang



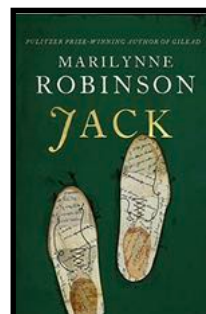
**The Shadow King**  
by Maaza Mengiste



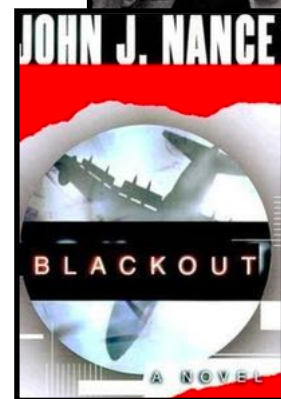
**Mayflies**



**The Vanishing Half**  
by Brit Bennett



**Jack**  
by Marilynne Robinson

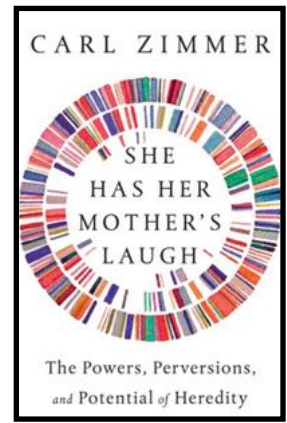


**Blackout**

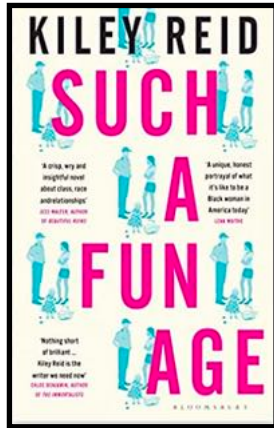


**The Midnight Library**  
by Matt Haig

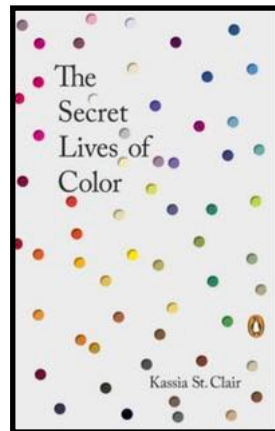
**More Books!**  
**For a cold**  
**Winter's day**



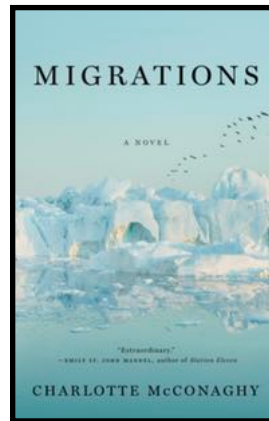
**She Has Her Mother's Laugh**  
The Powers, Perversions,  
and Potential of Heredity  
by Carl Zimmer



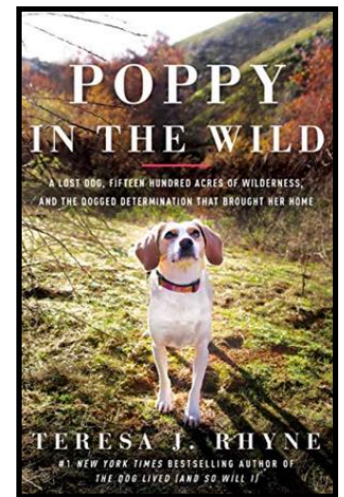
**Such A Fun Age**  
by Kiley Reid



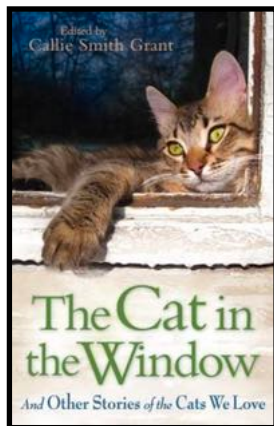
**The Secret Lives of Color**  
by Kassia St. Clair



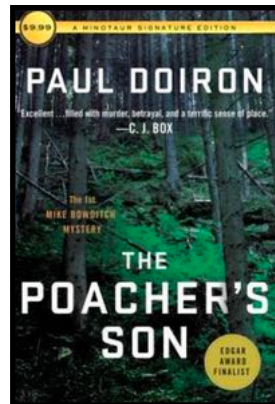
**Migrations**  
by Charlotte  
McConaghy



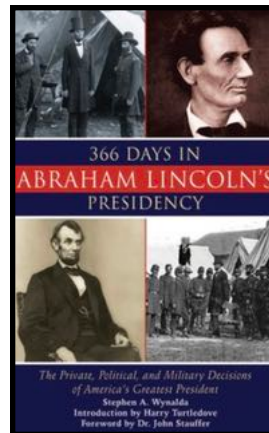
**Poppy in the Wind**  
A Lost Dog, 1,500 Acres of  
Wilderness, and the  
Dogged Determination that  
Brought her Home  
by Teresa J. Rhyne



**The Cat in the Window**  
And Other Stories of  
the Cats We Love  
by Callie Smith Grant



**The Poacher's Son**  
by Paul Doiron



**366 Days In Abraham  
Lincoln's Presidency**  
by Stephen A.  
Wynalda

**Blackout**  
by John J. Nance

**Source: Goodreads.com**



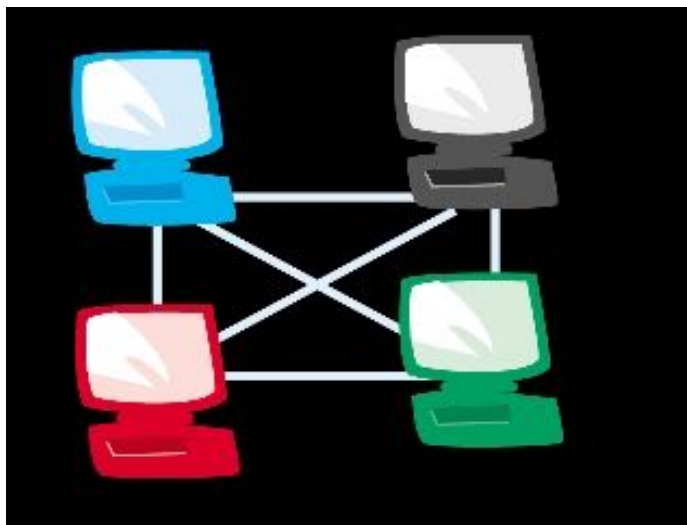
# Is my Internet down?

**W**ith so many Internet users logging in from home during the pandemic, the Internet has become just as important as electricity and water for many of us. What happens when your home Internet connection goes down? Is it just your connection or is the neighborhood dark?

That's where a website called [downdetector.com](http://downdetector.com) comes in handy. Downdetector monitors everything from broadband Internet service to satellite TV to online banking to individual websites such as Netflix. Downdetector currently monitors more than 6,000 services in 45 countries.

Type the name of the service you think might be down in the search blank at the top of the page or click on one of the tiles on Downdetector's page. (Obviously, if your Internet is not working you need to check this using a smartphone or iPad that connects using cellular Internet service. Or you could check with a neighbor to see if their service is working.)

Downdetector verifies whether Gmail, Amazon, Spectrum, ROKU, Fidelity Investments, CNN, MetroNet, the Apple App Store, Pandora, *The New York Times*, Microsoft Teams, NordVPN, OneDrive, Costco, online banking sites and dozens of other services are up and running or not.



Downdetector will also:

- File an outage report for you when your service is down
- Provide outage maps so you can check for local outages with telecommunications companies

Similar services that confirm outages include:

[downforeveryoneorjustme.com](http://downforeveryoneorjustme.com)  
[UptimeRobot.com](http://UptimeRobot.com)

If you're interested in learning more about Downdetector, check out [this overview](#). It calls Downdetector, "The Internet outage map live."

Downdetector explains its goal to provide real-time outage alerts:

"Downdetector is independently owned and operated by Ookla®, LLC. Downdetector grew from the idea that users are the first to experience outages. But when they contact their service providers for additional information, they may not receive up-to-date information. We set up our service in April 2012 to provide the fastest and best possible way of outage detection and have been expanding ever since."

## Free iOS & iPadOS App

Downdetector even provides an app for the iPad and iPhone in the App Store if you'd prefer to use that rather than the website. The app is free.

The app, according to the description in the App Store, "is based on on a real-time analysis of user reports from multiple sources, including social media such as Twitter, the Downdetector website and reports filed through the app."

Downdetector is provided by the same folks who developed the Speedtest app (free from the Mac App Store, Microsoft Store for Windows, App Store for iPad and iPhone, and on the web at [speedtest.net](http://speedtest.net))

There are also Speedtest apps for Chrome, AppleTV, Android, and CLI.



# VIDEO LINKS



What's My Line? (1954)  
– Doris Day

What's My Line? (1961)  
– Carol Burnett

Cats reacting to the first  
snow (compilation)

Funny Cats  
(compilation)

Funny Dog Videos

Funny Animals' Life

Game Show: Scrabble  
(1984)

Game Show: Classic  
Concentration

Game Show: Sale of the  
Century (1985)

The Best of Get Smart  
(1965–1966)

Combat! (1963)

The Flying Missile –  
Glenn Ford (1950)

The Movie: Jane Eyre

The Movie: A Good  
Woman

15 Classic Books  
Everyone Should Read  
in their Lifetime

Top 100 Places to Visit  
in Europe

15 Books Bill Gates  
Thinks Everyone  
Should Read

Eric Carle reads The  
Very Hungry Caterpillar

Author Peter  
Raymundo reads I Am  
Not A Fish!

Julie Andrews sings  
Auld Lang Syne

Celtic Woman perform  
Auld Lang Syne

Rosemary Siemens  
performs Amazing  
Grace

Celtic Woman perform  
Amazing Grace

I put one–million  
Christmas lights on a  
house (world record)

Intro to Canada

Virtual tour of Toronto

Virtual tour of New  
Zealand

Virtual tour of Waikiki  
Beach, Hawaii

12 Hours of Soft Music  
(Summer Scenes)

Virtual Tour: Santorini  
Greece

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