

The Digital

(membership includes  
monthly subscription)

# Viking



**Twin Cities**

PC USER GROUP

NEWSLETTER

Minneapolis & St. Paul, Minnesota USA • Vol. 44 No.9 • April 2024

*TC/PC Exists to  
Facilitate and Encourage  
the Cooperative Exchange of  
PC Knowledge and  
Information Across  
All Levels of Experience*

**April 2024**

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## General Meeting

Tuesday, April 9, 2024

7:00 PM

### Android Curated Music App

Via Zoom Only

At our April meeting we will take a look at a an app for Android phones created by individuals who have curated a playlist of music. The app lets you explore selected music by country using an atlas and by decade in time as well. We will also look at a website that has curated books and movies by a country with the the prospective traveler. Bring your own suggestions for apps or websites that have curated playlists or movie or book lists to share. 📺

**Note:** All TC/PC Meetings and SIG Groups will be virtual until further notice. Visit [tcpc.com](http://tcpc.com) for info.

**Tech Topics with Jack Ungerleider via Zoom at 6pm before the General Meeting.**

TC/PC is a  
Member of



**24-Hour Information • [www.tcpc.com](http://www.tcpc.com)**

Application form inside back cover

# The Digital Viking

The Digital Viking is the official monthly publication of the Twin Cities PC User Group, a 501(c)(3) organization and an all-volunteer organization dedicated to users of IBM-compatible computers. Subscriptions are included in membership. We welcome articles and reviews from members. The Digital Viking is a copyrighted publication and reproduction of any material is expressly prohibited without permission. Exception: other User Groups may use material if unaltered and credited.

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## Advertising

Full page (7½ x 9½)	\$100.00
Two-thirds page (7½ x 6)	80.00
Half page (7½ x 4¾)	65.00
One-third page (7½ x 3)	50.00
Quarter page (3½ x 4¾)	40.00
Member Bus. Card (2 x 3½)	10.00

Multiple insertion discounts available.

Contact Sharon Walbran at: SQWalbran@yahoo.com

Deadline for ad placement is the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month prior to publication. All rates are per issue and for digital or camera-ready ads. Typesetting and other services are extra and must be requested in advance of submission deadlines.

Payment must accompany order unless other arrangements are made in advance. Place make checks payable to: **Twin Cities PC User Group**

## TC/PC 2023-2024 Board of Directors

Meets once or twice per year. All members welcome to attend.

Visit [www.tcpc.com](http://www.tcpc.com) for meeting details.

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## TC/PC Member Benefits

Product previews  
and demonstrations

Special Interest Groups  
Monthly Newsletter

Discounts on products  
and services

Contests and prizes

## Business Member Benefits

All of the above PLUS:

FREE ½ page ad on  
payment of each renewal

20% discount on all ads  
Placed in the *Digital  
Viking* Newsletter

Up to 5 newsletters mailed to  
your site  
(only a nominal cost for each  
additional 5 mailed)

## Newsletter Staff

Editor Sharon Walbran

# Tech Magazines, now Websites

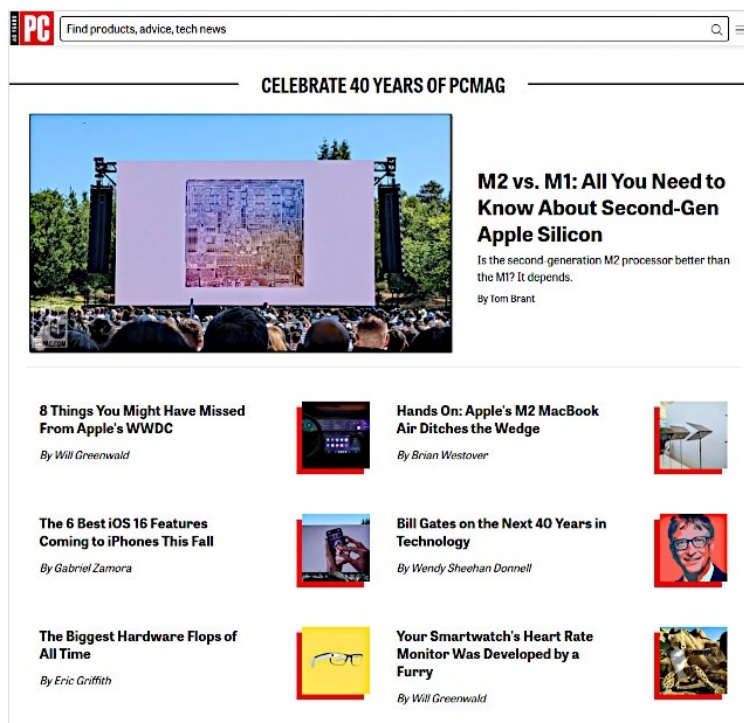
By Dick Maybach, Brookdale Computer User Group

[www.bcug.com](http://www.bcug.com)

n2nd (at) att.net

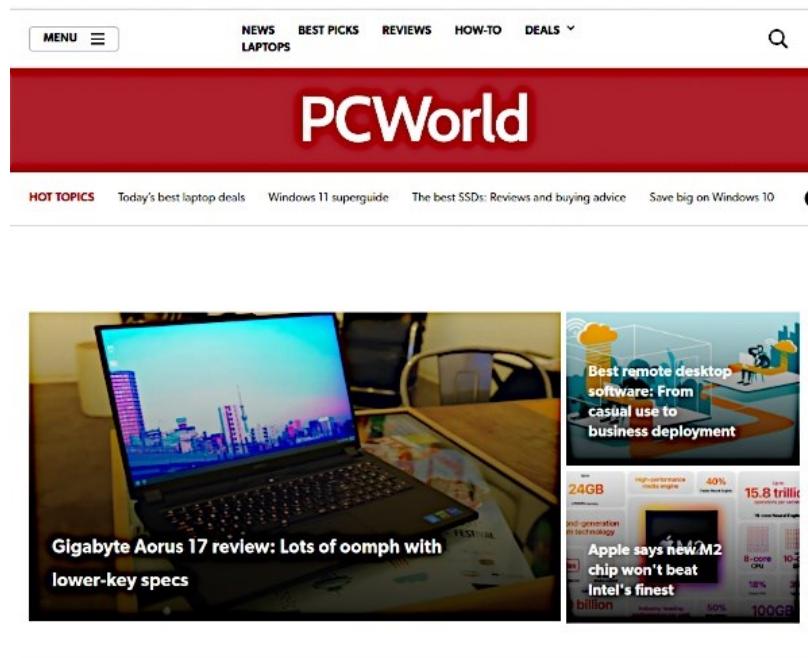
When PCs arrived in the 80s, bookstores were full of hobbyist magazines, such as PC Magazine, PC World, and Dr. Dobbs Journal. Now, most PC users consider their devices to be appliances rather than hobby equipment, and magazines have disappeared. However, a few enthusiasts remain, as do publications that support them, but most now as websites. These are not where you go to find problem solutions but to learn about new developments and tutorials. Here are a few examples.

PC Magazine appeared once or twice a month in my mailbox, and I would read every page. It now is a website, <https://www.pcmag.com/>, that covers Macs and PCs.



The website covers more topics than its print predecessor and includes product, advice, and tech news reports. There is a search feature to help you find past articles that interest you. As with all websites, the content evolves continually, so if you see something interesting, you may wish to save the article or its URL. In addition, you can subscribe to special-topic newsletters (what's new, lab reports, tips, tricks, etc.), apparently at no cost.

PC World is also still alive and well, <https://www.pcworld.com/>.



The topics are less wide-ranging than those on the PC Magazine site and are mainly limited to PCs. However, they also have free newsletters, and you can subscribe to their digital magazine for about \$20 per year to relive the print magazine experience.

Another old favorite was ComputerWorld, <https://www.computerworld.com/>.

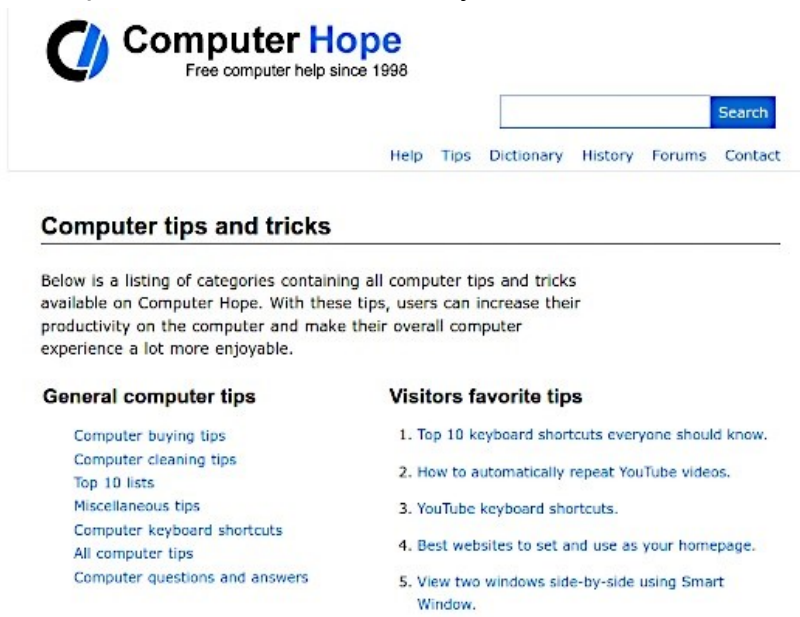
They, too, have free newsletters on specific topics, and the site is searchable.

See Tom's Hardware, <https://www.tomshardware.com/>, for information on PC components. Unfortunately, this never appeared in print and is formatted as a traditional website rather than a periodical.



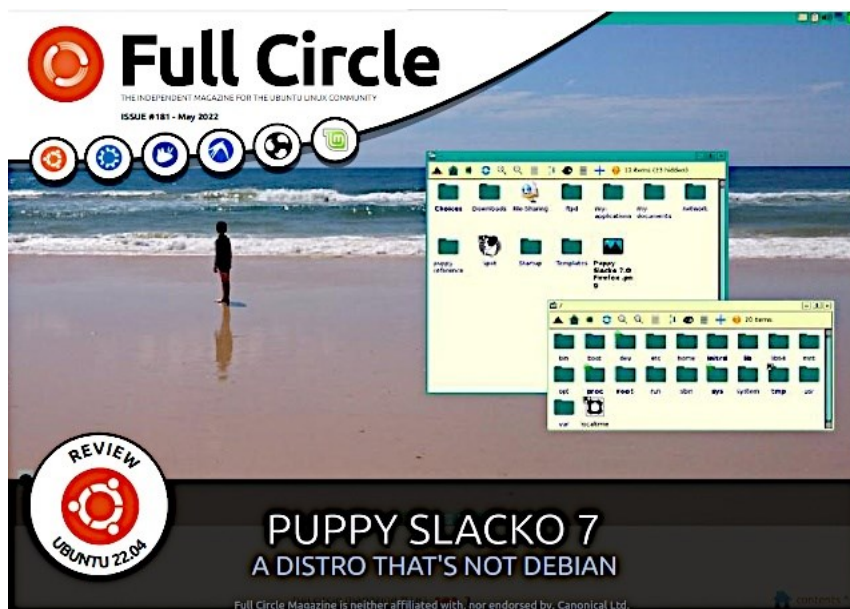
You'll find detailed reviews of motherboards, CPUs, monitors, storage devices, other peripherals, and complete computers here. There are also tutorials on building and testing PCs and forums where you can ask questions and exchange views. Although the name implies, this is a one-person project, a sizable staff supports the site.

If you're looking for tutorials or help to solve PC problems, check Computer Hope, <https://www.computerhope.com/tips/index.htm>. Unfortunately, this, too, has existed only as a website.



If you need information or help on specific topics, this may be a better site than the general-information ones above. In addition, its coverage includes Linux, while the first three above appear to be limited to Windows and Macs.

Full Circle Magazine, <http://fullcirclemagazine.org/>, is a 60 to 70-page monthly publication covering primarily Ubuntu Linux, although much of the material has a wider scope.



Unlike the sites discussed above, this magazine began publication in 2007 and continues today.



You can read or download the issues online as PDFs or EPUB files. The monthly issues cover Ubuntu primarily, but

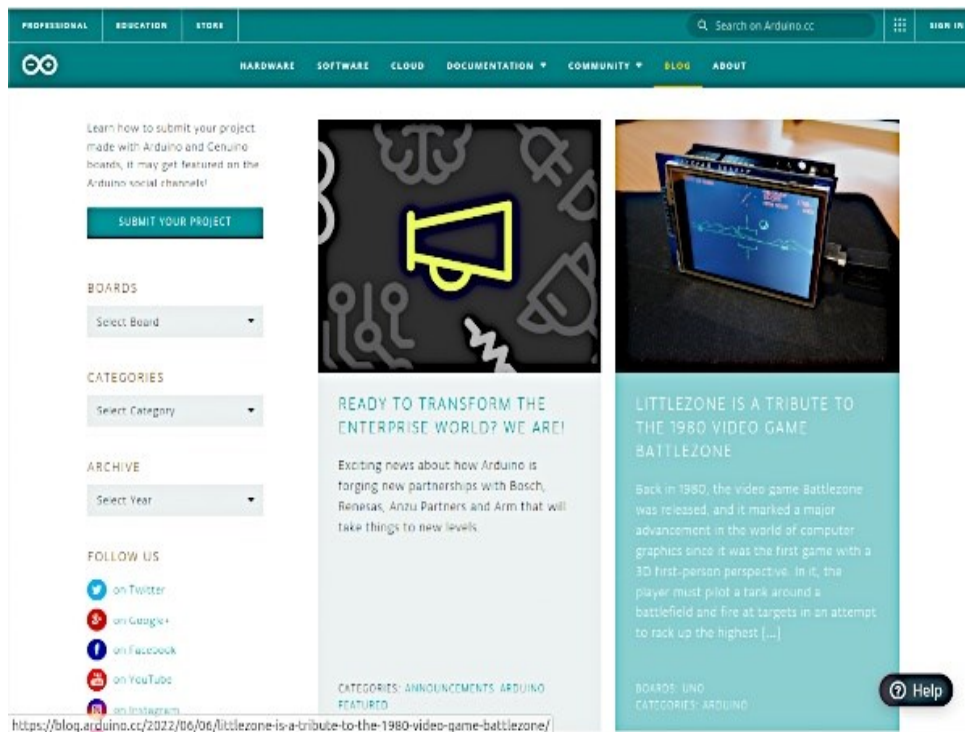
There are also special issues on such topics as the Python language and LibreOffice. But, like print magazines, once an issue is published, it doesn't change.

Raspberry Pi users have MagPi, <https://magpi.raspberrypi.com/>, a 100-page monthly, available as a download or in print.



The first issue was published in 2012. Like Full Circle, you can read and download the issues for free, although they request a donation. Many articles describe hardware and software projects, often with a link to step-by-step instructions. This is an essential resource if you are working with a Raspberry Pi.

Arduino users should check the blog on the Arduino website, <https://blog.arduino.cc/>.



This blog, not a magazine, is made of short articles describing Arduino projects with links to more complete descriptions. Since the content changes continually, you'll want to record the URLs of those that interest you.

This has been a sampling of some resources available to those interested in PCs, and many more may suit you better. With the decline of printed publications, it's easy to use the Internet only to find solutions to specific problems, which can narrow our focus. However, in the early days of PCs, print magazines continually exposed us to new products and ideas, which websites like those discussed here can do today. PCs are wonderful aids for exploring and growth; losing this resource would be a shame.



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## The Russians are Coming

David Kretchmar, Hardware Technician

Sun City Summerlin Computer Club

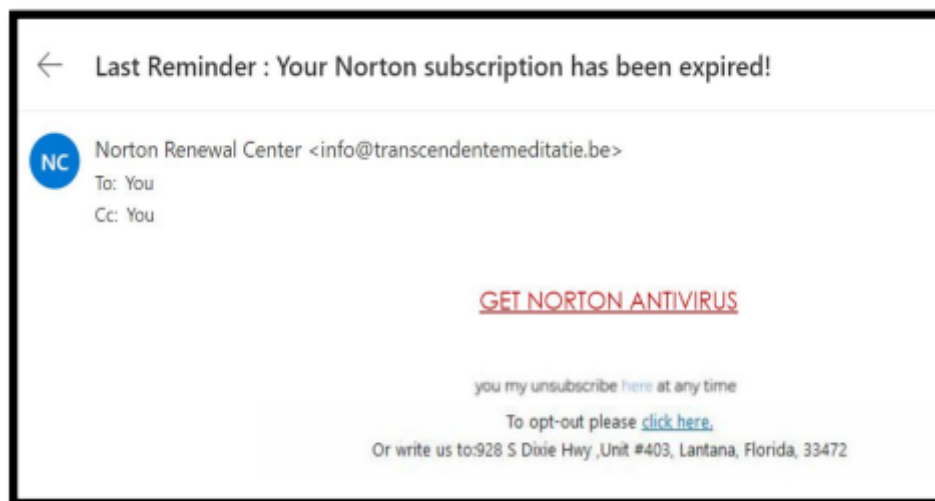
<https://www.scscc.club>

dkretch \*\* gmail.com

As Russia's invasion of Ukraine grinds on, it becomes increasingly likely that Russia will intensify cyberattacks on perceived enemies, especially the United States. As a result, at least one major federal agency is no longer allowing employees to use any USB devices on their government computers. The ability to read/write optical media, CDs, and DVDs, has been completely cut off.

Ironically, the federal government is addressing the least likely avenue a cyber attacker is likely to use to install malware on their systems. The threat is most likely to manifest via an email containing a link to a site that will download a virus to an unsuspecting user's computer. The U.S. government does attach a warning to each email received outside the government domain. These warnings are unnecessary on your home computer, not because the threat is not real, but because ALL of the emails you receive comes from outside of your system. And it is almost certain this is the vector hackers will try to use to infect your system. Based on experience, I can safely predict that an infected email arriving in your Inbox will appear to be either from a trusted friend or a business entity with which you might have had some business.

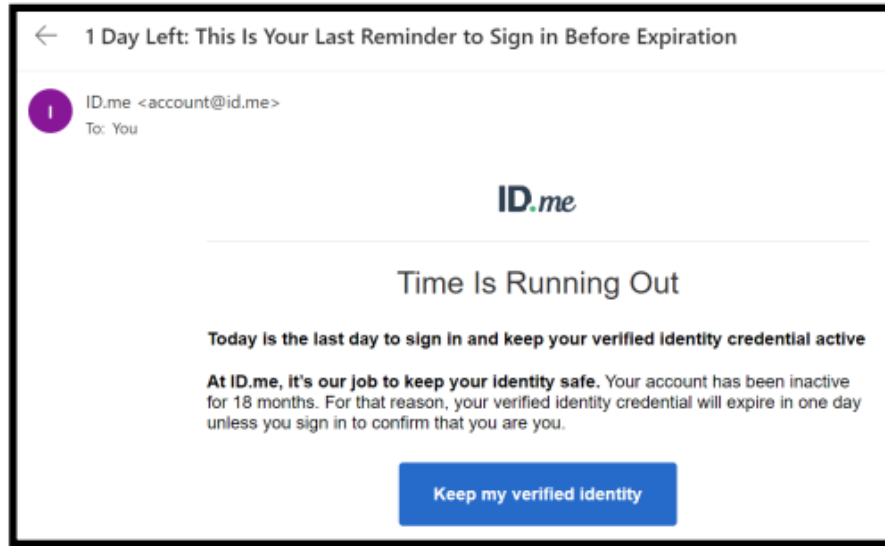
Here is an example; this is an email I received recently:



For at least 20 years, I have not run Norton Antivirus on any computer I have owned; this email was obviously a fake and most likely attempt to compromise my system. An obvious clue is the sending address: "info@transcendentemeditatie.be." In addition to the not-very-professional sounding name, the sender is obviously based out of Belgium (.be is the internet country code top-level domain (ccTLD) for Belgium.) I happen to know that Norton is based in Mountain View, California. Another term for the activity represented by this type of email is phishing. Phishing is still the world's most common cyber threat. It is estimated three billion fraudulent emails are sent out every day in an attempt to compromise sensitive information. In 2022, according to CyberTalk.org, 30% of phishing email recipients clicked on the malicious link.

Here is another example, also from my Inbox:





This was easy for me to spot since I do not use ID.me. However, this was a more sophisticated attempt since the ID.me sending address was spoofed. I could see this was not the actual sending address by hovering my mouse cursor over the address, NOT CLICKING.

You are most likely to be fooled by an email that appears to be sent from a trusted friend, as I was several years ago. My friend's computer had been compromised, and the virus perpetuated itself by invading my friend's contact list and sending infected emails to all his contacts. Be aware that the risk you will be exposed to malware infection is higher than it has ever been before. If you have any doubts about clicking on a link in any email message, don't do it. 🖥️

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## Wyzedom - The Wisdom of Battery-Powered Products

Greg Skalka, President, Under the Computer Hood User Group

[www.uchug.org](http://www.uchug.org)

president \*\* uchug.org

Batteries are the new normal. Throughout history, humans have found different ways to power their devices. Humans initially provided the power but soon enlisted animals to plow, power mills, and pull wagons. The industrial age was powered by burning fuels like coal and oil, which brought significant progress but released a lot of carbon dioxide into the Earth's atmosphere. We must transition to low- or carbon-free energy to reduce climate change. Electricity is the best medium to distribute that energy, and batteries are the primary way to store it. As we move into an all-electric world, we will need more electricity, batteries, and some good strategies for charging and disposing of those batteries.

When I look around my house, I see many things that are now powered, or now powered by electricity, but were not when originally invented. Toothbrushes, razors, can openers, corkscrews, safes, clocks, clothes washers – all these things were originally human or mechanically powered but now have electrically-powered versions.

Stoves cooked by chemical processes (burning fuel) and clothes were dried by natural processes (outdoor air on a clothesline). Still, these tasks are predominantly accomplished by using electricity (or soon will be, with the eventual elimination of residential natural gas). Automobiles, trucks, trains, and planes were all powered by burning fuels but are now on the path to eventual electrification. Many of these things are mobile, or at least would be hindered in use by being tethered by a cord, and so will need batteries to operate.

My house now has several electric items it didn't have before. My wife has bought some electric soap dispensers for the kitchen and bathroom. Instead of pressing down on the top of the bottle to dispense some liquid hand soap, you put your hand under the nozzle, and a sensor detects it and squirts some in your hand. It is more hygienic, but it has batteries that require replacement or recharging periodically, and it is just another device that can break. Do we really need it?



How many battery-powered devices do you think you have in your home? Ten? Twenty? Fifty? One hundred or more? I don't know how many I have, but it could well be that last guess. I pondered this question recently as I sat on the only seat in our master bathroom. From that vantage point, I could see nine devices that contained a battery, with another two that I knew were nearby in cabinets. Multiply 11 by the number of "rooms" in our house, and we would have over one hundred batteries to deal with.

These bathroom devices I found are probably a fairly representative sample of the types of battery-powered devices we own and fall into two classes, depending on if the batteries can be removed. Six of them (two electric toothbrushes, a shaver, a Bluetooth speaker, a face scrubber, and one hair trimmer) have rechargeable batteries that can't be removed. The other five (wall clock, clock/thermometer, flashlight, another hair trimmer, and a bathroom scale) have replaceable batteries. These five typically use disposable single-use batteries, though all but the wall clock (which is powered by a coin cell battery) use AA or AAA batteries, which would allow the use of rechargeables.

Being powered by batteries does not limit the usefulness of any of these bathroom devices. The

toothbrushes are charged inductively through their holders and can stay charged constantly;



their charging is transparent to the user. The other four devices that don't have removable batteries must be plugged into a wall outlet to recharge, but since a full charge typically provides many uses, we are seldom caught with a dead battery. My shaver, for example, can go for well over a week of normal use on one charge, so I typically plug it in to charge after I have used it on Sunday mornings. It charges fully in an hour or so before I need it again. Like the hair trimmer and face scrubber, it also can be used in a pinch while charging; having a cord does not significantly degrade its usability. The remaining devices with removable

batteries either have a long battery life (typically years for the clocks and scale) or rely on a quick battery change to keep going.

Moving from the bathroom into the bedroom, I find only slightly fewer battery-powered devices. There are remote controls for the TV, cable box, DVD player, ceiling fan, and window air conditioning unit. A couple of flashlights, a clock, and a cordless phone are in its charging base. These fall into the same two battery categories and present no particular problems to the user by being powered by batteries (other than having some replacement batteries on hand when needed).



Moving from the bedroom to the hall, I see one of my favorite battery-powered devices, the Wyze night light. These small stick-on lights can be used to illuminate your path at night. They detect your motion and turn on, and can be linked to turning on a series of them when triggered. I have a set of three on my stairs (top, middle, and bottom) to keep me from falling and breaking my neck in the morning when it is dark, and I don't want to wake my wife by turning on the ceiling light fixtures.

I love my Wyze lights, but keeping them charged can be problematic. In normal use in my stairs location, they run for about three weeks on a charge. I have come to rely on them to light my way, and so I do not want to wait until they are discharged. I initially tried charging them on a two-week schedule, taking them down (they are magnetically attached and easily removed) every other Sunday. They must be charged during the day when not needed and take about 2 hours to charge fully from a USB charging source. The Wyze lights have a USB-C connector, and to protect that connector, I use USB magnetic charging cables and adapters.

The problem in charging the Wyze lights came from having to charge each one separately. I initially used one USB AC charger and cable and had to charge the three lights sequentially. This took at least six hours, and I had to be around most of the day on Sunday to swap them on the charger. Occasionally I was not, so I sometimes had problems getting all three lights charged before dark.

I celebrated with the First Lady most of the day on Mother's Day and did not get my Wyze lights charged before dark. I decided to find a better way to charge these lights. Possible solutions to my problem included:

1. Faster charging – The process would not take all day if each light could charge faster. This would require some investigation to determine if this would be possible.

2. Parallel charging – If I could charge all three lights simultaneously, it would take 1/3 of the time, and I would not have to hang around to swap lights on the one charging station. It would require buying a three-output USB charging station and two more USB charging cables.
3. Have an alternate set of lights – If I bought a second set of Wyze lights, I could charge the alternate set over the two weeks and then swap them all out at once. This would be the fastest and most versatile but requires buying another set of lights.

I first investigated if faster charging was possible. I bought a MakerHawk USB 3.0 Tester from Amazon a while ago; it can be used to test USB-powered devices and USB cables and to monitor USB charging. Connected between a USB charging source and a device to be charged, it can display the voltage, current, power, charging mode, and other things.



I used the USB 3.0 tester while trying to charge a Wyze light with several different power sources (USB AC charging cubes and USB power source batteries) and several other USB cables. No matter what combination of source and cable I used, the power into the Wyze light remained between 0.951 W and 0.976 W. A higher power into the light would be needed to charge faster, so it appears speeding up charging is not possible.

I found another dual-output USB charging block and a couple more cables in my household stock and set them up in the spare bathroom I use for charging. This method worked well, and I could set them up and walk away, knowing they would all be charged when I remembered and returned.

Using another set of Wyze lights as a charging spare might be slightly easier, as I could charge them sequentially at my leisure over the two-week operating period. It would, however, require buying another \$26 set of lights, and I'd still have to keep track of which lights are charged and which are not.

Ultimately, I've found the parallel charging method works the best for me. It gets the lights all charged at once and has the benefit of having the "charging station" set out for less time, which makes my wife happier. I've now adopted this charging method for my bike lights and switched to charging my front and rear rechargeable safety lights simultaneously rather than sequentially. 🖥️

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# Special Interest Groups (SIGs)

Most SIGs will meet at Edina Executive Plaza, Conference Room #102, 5200

Willson Road, Edina, MN

Confirm with a SIG group if they meet elsewhere.

For more info contact the SIG Leader(s) listed here.

w Work phone   h Home phone   c Cell phone  
\* Meets at an alternate location

Get SIG announcements!

Link from [www.tcp.com](http://www.tcp.com)

## Board of Directors\*

All members are welcome! Check  
[www.tcp.com](http://www.tcp.com) for location.

Selected Saturday mornings

## Linux on Saturday

This is for the Linux newbie and those trying  
to come over from Microsoft to a different  
operating system.

Second Saturday @ 9 AM-Noon

Note: No Meetings June-August

Jack Ungerleider      612/418-3494 c  
jack@jacku.com

## Tech Topics

Technical presentation/discussion on  
various technical topics from the following  
areas:

- Web/Internet
- Mobile Devices and Apps
- Playing with Programming
- DIY (3D Printing, R-Pi, other hobby electronics, etc.)

Second Tuesday @ 6:00-7:00 PM

Every month

Right before the general meeting.

Jack Ungerleider      612/418-3494 c  
jack@jacku.com

## Microsoft Access

All levels. Presentations by expert develop-  
ers within the group and by MS reps.

Third Saturday 9:00 AM—Noon

Note: No Meetings June-August

Steve Kuhlmeier      952/934-8492  
skuhlmeier@hotmail.com

## Microsoft Office

Addresses the use, integration, and nuanc-  
es of the Microsoft Office applications.

Combined with Systems on Saturday

Third Saturday of the Month

9:00 AM—Noon

Note: No Meetings June-August

Steve Kuhlmeier      952/934-8492  
skuhlmeier@hotmail.com

## Directions to Accord, 1515 Energy Park Drive for General Meetings:

From I-94 in St. Paul, take the Snelling Avenue exit, then go north on Snelling  
Avenue about one mile to Energy Park Drive. Take Energy Park Drive and take the  
first left into the driveway to 1515 Energy Park Drive.

From I-694 or Hwy 36 in St. Paul, take the Snelling Avenue exit, then go south on  
Snelling Avenue past Como Avenue to Energy Park Drive. Take Energy Park Drive  
and take the first left into the driveway to 1515 Energy Park Drive.

Directions to Edina Executive Plaza  
for Systems on Saturday, Access,  
Word and Picture Perfect SIGs: Take  
Highway 100 to the 50th Street/Vernon  
exit. [If you have come from the north,  
cross back over Highway 100 to the  
east side.] Take the first right and go  
past Perkins [The golf course will be on  
your left.] and continue on the east  
frontage road (Willson Road) to the  
next building—5200 . There is ample  
parking in the building's lot.  
Conference Room #102 is on 1st floor.

## Help yourself by helping others!

## Join the team & share your knowledge with others.

Contact TC/PC at [www.tcp.com](http://www.tcp.com)

Meetings start at 7:00 PM (9:00 AM on Saturday) unless otherwise noted. \*Virtual Meetings during Covid pandemic.

## April

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9 7pm General Mtg Curated Music App  6pm Tech Topics	10	11	12	13 Linux on Sat- urday SIG 9am—Noon
14	15	16	17	18	19	20 MS Office SIG (includes Access) 9am—Noon
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11 Linux on Sat- urday SIG 9am—Noon
12	13	14 7pm General Mtg TBA  6pm Tech Topics	15	16	17	18 MS Office SIG (includes Access) 9am—Noon
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

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## You have just read an issue of The Digital Viking.

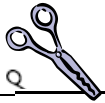
*Would you like to receive this delivered directly to your email or business each month?*

As a member of TC/PC, the Twin Cities Personal Computer Group, one of the benefits is reading this monthly publication at [www.tcpc.com](http://www.tcpc.com).

As a member of TC/PC, you may attend any or all of the monthly Special Interest Group (SIG) meetings and be eligible for software drawings. The small membership fee also includes access to real-live people with answers via our helplines, discounts, and various other perks.

Does membership in this group sound like a good way to increase your computer knowledge?

It's easy to do! Simply fill in the form below and mail it to the address shown.  
(If you use the form in this issue, you will receive an extra month for joining now.)



3424

### Here's the info for my TC/PC Membership:

Full name \_\_\_\_\_

Company name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Home ☐ Business ☐ Change address: ☐ Perm. ☐ Temp. 'til \_\_\_\_\_

Home phone \_\_\_\_\_ Work phone \_\_\_\_\_

Online address(es) \_\_\_\_\_

Where did you hear about TC/PC? \_\_\_\_\_

☐ I DO NOT want any of my information disclosed.

☐ I DO NOT want to receive any mailings

### I'm signing up for:

☐ Individual/Family Membership (\$18)

☐ Business Membership (\$100)

If an existing member your # \_\_\_\_\_

### Make checks payable to:

**Twin Cities PC User Group  
341 County Rd C2 W  
Roseville, MN 55113**

### Or sign up on our website:

<http://www.tcpc.com>

☐ Check # \_\_\_\_\_ ☐ Bill me

☐ New member ☐ Renewal ☐ Prior member

### I'm interested in:

☐ Training classes ☐ Volunteering

☐ Special Interest Groups: New User, Access, etc.

List here:

**Administrative Use Only** Rec'd \_\_\_\_\_ Chk# \_\_\_\_\_

**April 9, 2024  
7:00 pm  
General Meeting**

**Android Curated Music App**

**Via Zoom Only**



341 County Rd C2 W  
Roseville, MN 55113

***FIRST CLASS MAIL***