Presentation review by Leah Clark, Editor, User Friendly, Los Angeles Computer Society – November Issue

Is There a Meet-Up Type Group In Your Future?
Ray Baxter, President, Payson Area Computer Association, AZ
Bill James, Vice-President, Computer Club of Oklahoma City

Some computer user groups are facing the prospect of closing down, because members, for a variety of reasons, are not willing to participate in club activities. They let someone else do all the work, burning out the existing officers. Fewer members are showing up at meetings, and it's difficult to get presenters or people to run for office. In 2008 there were 276 groups in APCUG; in 2016, 172.

One option is to close down the group, and sell and distribute the assets. Ray Baxter of the Payson Area Computer Association said that they have decided to convert to a Meet-Up Club. This would require one facilitator who could rotate for each meeting, and a Meet-Up organizer. There would be no officers, agendas, minutes, assigned duties, dues to collect, etc. Instead, members would agree on a meeting time and place, and just show up. The facilitator would keep things in order. There could be Show and Tell, Q and A with free discussion, Help and Fix-it, and individual presentations. People with like interests would just come together. They will continue to be members of APCUG.

Bill James talked about how the Computer Club of Oklahoma City is using MeetUp.com to grow their membership. These groups are usually for those interested in one particular topic, but multiple events, like SIG meetings, can be listed. Anyone is free to come to a meeting. It is a way to put your name and brand out there. Those who subscribe to MeetUp.com get email reminders of meetings. Meet-Ups draw younger people; it can be accessed from their phones. Attendees can vary from meeting to meeting. It is also an inexpensive way to get advertising.