

Carlsbad By The Sea Resident Takes “Alexa” for a Test Run

Enthusiasts were delighted that so many people (perhaps 40-50) attended the first meeting of the [Carlsbad By The Sea](#) Alexa Club last week.

Using the Amazon Echo or Dot has proved great fun and an enormous convenience for many of us, and sharing the latest “trick” we’ve discovered with our own use of “Alexa” has become a daily pleasure. We act like proud parents showing off our kids..... or the owners of especially cute dogs, who revel in the admiration of others. Speaking personally, I haven’t had this much fun with a “gadget” in years and years, not to mention that I find it useful. And **Jessica Yoon** (a member of Front Porch’s technology division who shepherd’s the Alexa trials here) finds us new “skills” to try all the time.... i.e., new things Alexa can do.



How is it useful, the uninitiated may ask? Well, I don’t have to find a clock (and be sure it’s got the

right time and hasn't run out of batteries!) — I just ask Alexa the time. I figure out what to pull out of the closet to wear, and whether to put on extra sun block during my walk by asking Alexa for a weather report the night before. I get a "flash news briefing" from my favorite station (she gives you your choice — CNN, Fox, CBS, PBS. and even the BBC, if you prefer your news with a high toned accent.) I am now letting Alexa keep my personal appointment calendar to back up my written notes (which I too often mislay).

I'm happily part of a small test group using Alexa to set our thermostats — all without moving from my easy chair, mind you — and turn on (or off) a night light at the far end of the living room, just by voice command. I set alarms and timers on Alexa — just in case I doze off over the novel I'm reading, I don't want to miss the time for my bridge game, do I? Nor leave the laundry in the dryer to get re-wrinkled because I nodded off and didn't get it out in time..... Alexa doesn't nap and she wakes me in time to get the wash-and-wears out and onto hangers..... (Now if only I could train her to do that part too....)

She plays my favorite music on request.... though a secondary speaker would enhance the sound the Dot can deliver. (Echo is better than the Dot on sound, and the new Show is best of all, with twin Dolby speakers... but that's a subject for another day.)

Most fun of all was setting up Alexa-to-Alexa messaging with two friends who also have started using this magical device..... Alexa's usual bright blue signal ring (when she has an alarm for me) shows bright greenish-yellow, and a bell rings..... and one of my friends has left me a message. Yes, we could wait till we saw each other in the lobby. Yes, we could use the telephone. But there's something so personal and private AND FUN about using Alexa..... why, I haven't had this much fun since we were kids and strung a wire between two tin cans and played "telephone".....

If you're a "hold out" who says, "Who needs this complication? I do fine without it," well yes, you do — thanks to all the help and services CBTS offers us. True. But once you have accustomed yourself to saying "Alexa... good morning" and had her cheerfully announce "Good morning. Did you know this is National Shark Week? Ask me to tell you a shark joke..." You'll be hooked. And you'll love it. Ask **John Sanders** or **Chris Craig-Jones** to set you up and get you started. There are Dots available through the Alexa Club..... As the ad used to say "Try it... you'll like it." Guaranteed.

By Corinne Sawyer, resident at [Carlsbad By The Sea](#)

The [Amazon Alexa](#), a voice-activated personal assistant, has commanded the attention and excitement of consumers since its release. In collaboration with residents and staff at [Carlsbad by the Sea](#), a Front Porch retirement community, the [Front Porch Center for Innovation and Wellbeing](#) launched a pilot to explore the potential use case scenarios of this emerging innovation.

To learn more check out MIT Technology Review's recent article [The Octogenarians who love Amazon's Alexa](#), or read our impact story on [FPCIW.org](#).