

Abort, Retry, Ignore...



Computers Are Easy User Group

October 2001

Suggested Retail Price \$1.95

Volume XIV

Issue 10



Start Here to Transform the Windows Start Menu

Customizing the Start Menu is a snap

By Steve Bass, Pasadena IBM Users Group

I was sitting on the back deck, a Sierra Nevada Pale Ale in hand, and leafing through Microsoft's Windows XP Reviewer's Guide.

I was describing to my wife how XP made better use of the Start button than Win 98, when she casually said she hated it. "I never use the thing," she went on, not realizing I was under a moral obligation to make sure she was using the Start Button correctly. "I can get to all the programs I regularly use," she continued, "by clicking an icon on my desktop." Oy vey, I thought, the 293 icons-on-the-desktop syndrome. I had my work cut out for me. (Needless to say, she's never seen my collection of 70 Desktop icons, but that's another story altogether.)

"I'm a computing professional," I said empathically, hoping she wouldn't challenge me, "so tell me all about it."

"Besides," she was on a roll and there was no stopping her, "when I open the menu and click Programs, another menu slides out, then another, and half of them aren't even programs I have anymore. To get to the program I want takes, I dunno, 20 minutes."

Was that in real or computer time, I wondered, grabbing my beer, trying to decide if I should start the barbecue or plunge deeper into the abyss.

"The Start Menu," I said, easing back into the conversation, "is fully customizable. Give me ten minutes and I can show you how to make it look, feel, and act just the way you want it to."

Step into my wife's office and I'll show you what I did to her PC. I'm basing my tips on Windows 98 so while some will work in Win95 (and certainly in Win ME), you'll need to do some fiddling on your own.

(con't on page 4)

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Calendar
of
Events

!!! IMPORTANT !!!

Meeting dates for
2001

See page 10
for all
confirmed
dates.

Time and Place
remain the same.

Upcoming
CAEUG meeting
Saturday,
October 27
2001
9:45-12:00

Rick Scalzo
will
discuss
Windows 2000

SEE YOU
THERE!!

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The retailers listed below have in one way or another supported CAEUG and we thank them.

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 Wheaton, IL 60187
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 Retail store is closed
 630/416-0102
<http://www.bytes.com/>

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 Wheaton, IL 60187
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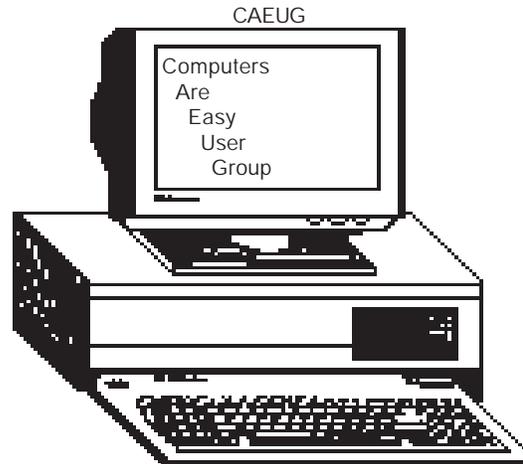
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This printed version of our newsletter was laid out using Adobe's Pagemaker Version 6.5 for Windows and was printed on a EPSON EPL-7000. Our group's membership database is maintained using MSWorks and address labels are printed using PostalSoft Desktop Mailer software. Our checking account records are kept in Quicken software.

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The CAEUG newsletter is published eleven times annually. Contributions by members are encouraged and will be gratefully acknowledged in the newsletter. We have a policy of exchanging newsletters with other users groups across the nation. Several CAEUG member articles have already been picked up and reprinted.



Computer Central

Next show date
SUNDAY, Oct 28
 College of Dupage
 9:30 A.M. to 3:00 P.M.
 Chicagoland's Oldest and Largest
 Multi-Vendor PC Show & Sale for
 Home and Business

COLLEGE OF DUPAGE
 Main Arena of Physical Education Building
 Corner of Park Blvd & College Road
 Glen Ellyn, IL
FREE PARKING
 Admission - \$6.00
 (With this coupon admission \$5.00)
www.computercentralshows.com
 E-mail address:
compcent@megsinet.net

COMPUTERCENTRAL
 2001 dates
 October 28
 November 25
 December 16
 COD

PICTURE YOUR AD HERE!
FREE !!

IF YOU ARE A MEMBER OF CAEUG THIS SPACE
 COULD SELL ANY COMPUTER
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JUST CONTACT ANY CLUB OFFICERS
 OR THE NEWSLETTER EDITOR TO PLACE YOUR AD IN
 THE NEWSLETTER.

In order to have your article or item for sale
 appear in ARI they must be received by the
 10th of the month prior to publication.

Membership Costs.....

	First Yr.	Renewal
Individual	\$25.00	\$20.00
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MEMBERS HELPLINE

Any member with a specific expertise
 can volunteer to be on the Members
 Helpline. Contact Rick Scalzo.

Beginners Helpline.....Billy Douglas

Beginner hardware
 problems.....Dick Fergus

QuickBooks, Turbo Tax, IBM Lotus, MS
 Excel, Corel's Quattro Pro....Terry Moye

Win 9x, NT, 2K.....Rick Scalzo
 e-mail.....mitsufan@webcentrix.net

Hardware problems
 & WIN NT4, Linux.....John Spizzirri

Start UP Discussion Group

Ask questions and discuss computer
 experiences with the Start UP group.
 Such as:

1. New to Computers? (basic topics)
2. How to use the Web or download information
3. How to install hardware/software
4. Discuss how to troubleshoot hardware conflicts, learn boot up emergency tricks
5. What do you want to know??

Meets before regular meeting from
 9:15 to 9:45

STARTing to Understand

The first thing to be aware of is that the Start Menu is built upon directories (folders, if you're new to this sport) and shortcuts. If you'd like to make a sub-menu, just add a new folder. Don't forget, a shortcut simply points to the program and can be safely renamed, moved, or even deleted.

You might also think of your old program groups (hello? Win 3.1?) as the folders on the Programs menu.

The Structure of Start

When you click on the Start Button and the menu pops open, you'll see three sections. Depending on your PC, the lowermost part has Shut Down and Log Off. The middle section includes Run, Help, Find, Programs, and other entries.

Folder Fodder

The top section is the most troublesome and may have tons of stuff.

What happens when you install a new application is that the program, in collusion with Windows, adds a folder either to the top portion, the Programs area (again, just a folder), or worse, both spots. In my case, at least before I made the Start Menu my own, I had 12 entries (and few that I used often) because of the proprietary way these arbitrary, capricious, and dumb programs install themselves.

Making the Change

To reorganize items on the Start menu, just keep in mind they're all menus or shortcuts, and all your moves can be unmoved.

If you're a novice and want to experiment, try this: Close all your applications so you're at the Desktop. Open the Start Menu and slide any item from the upper portion onto the Desktop.

Don't like it there? Two remedies to try: Right mouse click on the Desktop and select and click Undo Move. Or just slide the entry back onto the Start Menu by dragging it to the Start Button, waiting for the menu to appear, and dropping it where you want to see it. Cool (and easy), eh?

Now open Start, Select programs, wait for the menu to pop out to the side, and try the same thing. Move,

delete, and rename items by dragging and dropping, or using the right mouse button to copy and paste.

Win Explorer Meets Start

If you want to be a power user (or pretend to be one), open Windows Explorer and head for \Windows\Start Menu. Both of those files are shortcuts and correspond to the upper portion of your Start Menu. Try this: Rename any item (press F2, a shortcut). Then open the Start Menu. The change is effective immediately.

Now click on the Programs folder and take a few minutes examining the contents. Each folder matches what's in your Start Menu, right? Begin rearranging items in a logical way. For example, I created a folder named "tools" and moved every system tool, utility, and applet into it. Another folder? Multimedia for all of my music programs. Ditto for security, photos, and games.

Now move programs you use often to the upper portion of the start menu.

Here's a trick: I take frequently used programs, ones I use daily—PowerDesk, Eudora, IE, Word's Open Doc, Snagit (a screen capture tool)—and stick a shortcut for each one in the Quick Launch part of my taskbar. Do it by right clicking on an empty area on your taskbar, click Toolbars, and make sure that Quick Launch is selected.

Then from Win Explorer or PowerDesk (or even your Desktop), drag a program onto the Quick Launch bar. It will add a shortcut (that's done automatically) and you can slide it along the Quick Launch area to suit your needs.

A Clean Start

As you poke around the Start Menu, my guess is you'll find more than a few dead links, programs that you've uninstalled but are still in the Start menu. Instead of hassling with it, use Start Menu Cleaner, a freeware utility which cleans the start menu by removing unneeded shortcuts and folders. It's available at <http://www.mithril.d.se>.

If you want to fiddle with other settings on your PC besides the Start Menu, say, changing icons or editing the Add/Remove Programs list, grab a copy of More Properties 2.0. It's free to try and a

dollar if you continue using it.
<http://home.global.co.za/~olivierd/imaginary/mp20lite.zip>

Hey, I've gotta go. My wife's wondering if I can show her how to modify Word's Toolbar.

Steve Bass is a Contributing Editor with PC World and runs the Pasadena IBM Users Group.

Connecting Your PC to Your Stereo
By Bruce Fries - author of The MP3 and Internet Audio Handbook.

If you've taken the time to put your music collection on your computer, you'll probably want to listen to it through a good stereo system. Even if your stereo isn't in the same room as your computer, there are several options for connecting the two, including direct analog cabling, USB Audio devices, wireless audio transmitters, and network audio receivers.

The most basic concept of connecting audio equipment is that inputs must always be connected to outputs. Sometimes you will still get sound if you mistakenly connect a sound card output to an output of a stereo receiver. When in doubt, connect the sound card output to the CD jack on your stereo-it's always an input.

Connect high-level (also called line-level) outputs to high-level inputs, and connect low-level outputs (such as a microphone) to low-level (Mic) inputs. Do not use the receiver's phono input jack because this is designed for a very low-level signal and has a special equalization circuit. Avoid using the sound card's headphone or microphone jack to connect to other equipment unless you have no other choice.

Most consumer sound cards have 1/8" mini phone jacks. A mono jack is used for the microphone input, and stereo jacks are used for the line-in, line-out and headphone. Better sound cards may have separate RCA jacks for the left and right channels. These are the same kind of jacks found on most home stereo systems. High-end sound cards may also have connectors for digital inputs and outputs.

The simplest connection between a computer and a stereo system is to run a cable directly from the sound card's line output to a line input of your stereo. To record from your stereo system to your computer, connect a cable from a line-out (or record) jack on your receiver to the line-in jack on your sound card.

If your sound card's line output is an 1/8" stereo mini-

phone jack, you'll need an adapter cable (male 1/8" stereo mini-phone to dual male RCA). These cables can be purchased from most consumer electronics stores, such as Radio Shack, Best Buy and Fry's Electronics. USB audio devices perform the basic functions of a sound card, but outside of the PC, and are less likely to pick up noise from the PC's electronics. USB audio devices can be used for both recording and playback and are a good solution for notebook computer users who want higher quality sound.

The Roland UA-30 (www.edirol.com) is a flexible USB audio device that supports both Macs and PCs. The UA-30 works great and includes just about every type of input and output connector you might possibly need.

Wireless audio devices can transmit a stereo audio signal up to 300 feet. These devices typically include a transmitter and a receiver with standard RCA line-level input and output jacks. Wireless audio devices provide more flexibility than hard cabled connections, but are much more prone to interference compared to other types of connections.

The MP3 Anywhere Digital Audio Sender by X10 (www.X10.com) is a good wireless audio device for most users. It sells for under \$100 and uses the 2.4 GHz spectrum to reduce interference and provide a high quality connection. The MP3 Anywhere also includes a remote control and software, which allow you to control most popular player programs.

The ideal way to transmit audio from your PC throughout your house is by streaming the audio from your PC via a network. A network audio connection eliminates the loss of high frequencies, interference and hum typical of analog cable and wireless connections.

The Rio Receiver (www.riohome.com) is a very capable network audio device that allows you to access individual songs and playlists from your PC anywhere you have a telephone or network jack. The Rio has an LCD interface that displays song title, artist name and other information, and also includes a remote control.

Whatever your choice of PC to stereo connection, you will be able to use your computer as a digital jukebox and take full advantage of the latest digital music technologies to play high-quality music anywhere in your house.

For more information on connecting your PC to your stereo, pick up a copy of The MP3 and Internet Audio Handbook (\$19.95) from www.TeamComBooks.com or read it online for free at www.MP3Handbook.com.

Bruce Fries is a writer, technology consultant and entrepreneur who lives in Silver Spring, Maryland.



The Lamp Post Number 23

by John Spizzirri
October 10, 2001



The weekend after the WTC debacle, I traveled to Munising, Michigan for a weekend get-away. The weather was wonderful. The Munising area has a number of attractions that may be of interest to you. East is the Pictured Rocks National Lake Shore (<http://www.nps.gov/piro/>). You can 'tour the rocks' at the Pictured Rocks Cruises Web site or plan for a cruise when you go up at <http://www.picturedrocks.com/>. To the north of Munising is the Grand Island National Recreation Area (<http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/hiawatha/grand.htm>) which, frankly, is for the more rugged among you. Touring the island requires a boat trip there where you are dropped off for the day. You hike the island on your own. You are warned that if the waves on Lake Superior are too high you will have to stay the night, because the boat may not be able to pick you up. In Munising Bay is the Alger Underwater Preserve. The preserve is the graveyard of 8 wooden and steel-hulled ships. Most of these ships are in very good condition due to the cold water of Lake Superior. You can take the virtual tour at <http://www.shipwrecktours.com/> or plan to take a glass bottom boat cruise when you are in Munising. Supervised scuba diving of the wrecks is also available. Munising Falls is a short drive to the east. It is a small 50-foot waterfall that was used for industrial purposes back in the days when the Schoolcraft Steel Mill was located in Munising. The falls are at <http://www.munising.com/Attractions/content.html>. You can check the schedule of events and listings of tourist businesses at <http://www.munising.com/> and <http://www.munising.org/>. If you are into snowmobiling, Munising gets over 100 inches of snow each winter (average) and has many trails.

Communication and Internet infrastructure companies, MRV (<http://www.mrv.com/>) and Akamai (<http://www.akamai.com/>), have lost top executives on the planes that struck the World Trade Center (WTC) last month. Four other computer companies lost executives in the planes. The communications companies in the WTC have been devastated. The WTC Web cam, as well as, Web cams that pointed at the towers are no longer functioning. Network Computing Magazine published a list of Web sites related to the aid of the victims of this heinous affair at <http://www.nwc.com/helpamerica/index.html>.

AT&T (<http://www.att.com/>) technicians were working at a remote site from the WTC found that after the collapse and the cessation of power, the local telephone switches in the basement of one of the towers was still functioning on batteries. They turned off the switches to prevent more fires. The switches serviced both buildings.

The Taleban had a Web site at <http://www.taleban.com/>. On September 12th it was hacked. Pictures of Ossama Bin Ladin were posted with some epithets. By the 15th the site was down and has not been back up since.

One of the executives at Clear Channel Communications (<http://www.clearchannel.com/>) decided that there are about 150 songs that should not be played on its 1,170 radio stations in light of the WTC fiasco. Those songs include Elton John's "Rocket Man" and Peter, Paul, and

Mary's "Blowin' in the Wind". I'm just glad this executive is not a Congressman.

The Business Software Alliance (BSA <http://www.bsa.org>) will be starting another anti-piracy campaign on October 15. Since the WTC/Pentagon attacks are still on everyone's mind the BSA will tone down its approach and language. Fortunately, Chicago is not one of its 'targeted' cities. After the last campaign, I'll find that refreshing. We'll see.

Advanced Micro Devices, Inc. (AMD, <http://www.amd.com/>) may be in trouble. IBM (<http://www.ibm.com/>), Dell (<http://www.dell.com>), and Gateway (<http://www.gateway.com/>) have dropped AMD processors from their respective machines. Currently, the only large computer makers that use AMD are Hewlett-Packard (HP, <http://www.hp.com/>) and Compaq (<http://www.compaq.com/>). A handful of small manufacturers like Systemax (<http://www.globalcomputer.com/pc>) offer the AMD, but the volume of sales is no longer there. The economy was slowing down before the WTC attack. Now, it's much worse. AMD is about to lay off 2000 workers. Intel (<http://www.intel.com>) using their market clout (price cuts, incentives, etc.) has trounced AMD. Intel has paid a big price to win. Their earnings are off 92%. The question that you must ask is, if AMD is not there to prod Intel, will innovation slow down and prices go up? I think the answer is yes. The merger of HP and Compaq could spell the end for AMD processors (fewer units sold because fewer models offered).

There is no truth to the rumor that Hailstorm, .NET, and Passport will permit Microsoft (MS, <http://www.microsoft.com>) to turn off your TV, stereo or refrigerator if you do not pay them their monthly fee (for software as a service). This rumor has been floating around the Internet for about 2 months. There are many other reasons not to use those services (privacy concerns, high prices, etc.), but this wild rumor is not one of them.

As of October 1st MS retired NT 4.0. MS removed all upgrade versions of NT 4.0 from retail stores; full versions are still available. For an interesting and brief history of the NT operating system try <http://www.qvctc.commnet.edu/classes/csc277/nt.html>. NT 4.0 isn't the only Microsoft product that's getting the axe. On December 31st, MS will retire Windows 95, Windows NT 3.5, and all versions of MS-DOS and Windows 3.x. There will be no support for these products after that date. Information on MS product lifecycles is at <http://www.microsoft.com/windows/lifecycleconsumer.asp>.

The US Supreme Court met October 5th to discuss the Microsoft antitrust case. In July, MS petitioned the court to hear its appeal to the decision of the US Court of Appeals, which ruled that MS was a monopoly but that Judge Jackson's penalty for MS was incorrect. If the Supreme Court refuses to hear the appeal then the action goes back to the US District Court of the District of Columbia. Judge Colleen Kollar-Kotelly has already ordered MS and the DOJ to come to a settlement by November 2nd. By the time you read this the Supreme Court decision may be known. If the court rules against MS the pressure will be on to settle, although the XP release will be unaffected. (Editor's note: The Supreme Court rejected the MS appeal.)

Money 2001, a component of MS's WorksSuite 2001, does not run on Windows XP. In order to continue using the money program, users will be required to upgrade to Money 2002, which is in MS's WorksSuite 2002. If you use money, this may be an upgrade consideration for you.

If you use Windows, and who doesn't, here is a site that you should know about. Bugtoasters

(cont on page 8)

(<http://www.bugtoaster.com/>) has a lot of useful information on why Windows does not work all the time. The CEO of Bugtoasters, Bob Puckett said, "The average computer user experiences a crash about 2.5 times a week. Of the top 25 crash signatures in the world, we have info on what's causing 22 of them." Download their program to find out why Windows crashes.

A Scottish firm, Front Page Design (FPD, <http://www.frontpage.co.uk>), has won and lost its 5-year fight with MS. The Trade Mark Registry in London ruled that the 15-employee firm had a right to use its name (win). The trademark was applied for in 1995 before MS introduced Front Page in the UK. FPD was awarded 1500 pounds for its costs. The actual cost to FPD was 25,000 pounds (loss). MS will appeal. Naturally.

Novell (<http://www.novell.com>) filed suit against MS for making false claims and misleading statements about Novell in MS advertising. MS sent an advertising piece to Novell customers in the form of a mock cereal box called "Microsoft Server Crunch" that incorrectly stated that Novell was exiting the software business and that its software was expiring. MS stopped the campaign and sent a letter of explanation to the customers that received the cereal boxes. An MS spokesperson said, "The box made some representations that Novell took issue with... Apparently these actions have not satisfied Novell. We will review the lawsuit when we receive it and respond accordingly. We regret any inconvenience to these customers and hope that Novell views our efforts to address their concerns in good faith." Novell was not impressed. A Novell spokesperson said, "Microsoft hasn't acknowledged that the statements were false, and they haven't said they would not use them any more. That's where the problem lies." Novell wants money and a better explanation sent to its customers.

Ever read a press release and say to yourself 'what were they thinking?' MS UK (United Kingdom) issued one in August that read in part, "One month to go and customers can't wait for Windows XP! Thanks Microsoft for letting us - the public - have a try before we buy! Thousands of people, both technical as well as those who wanted to get a look at the latest home PC operating system from Microsoft, who have signed up to the Windows XP preview programme have been posting their comments up on the MSN user group site over the past couple of weeks - and the good news is, they like it." Spin? I think so. (Editor's note: Ever look at XP in the mirror? It looks like 9X.)

Ed Foster, a columnist from InfoWorld Magazine (<http://www.infoworld.com>), wrote an article about the MS FrontPage 2002 EULA (End Users License Agreement). The EULA printed in the package is different from the one that must be agreed to when installing the program. The difference includes this sentence, "You may not use the software in connection with any site that disparages Microsoft, MSN, MSNBC, Expedia, or their products or services, infringe any intellectual property of other rights of these parties, violate any state, federal, or international law, or promote racism, hatred, or pornography." Ed contacted MS whose spokesperson knew that there were two EULA's but denied that either EULA limits free speech. I think the MS mouthpiece does not understand or does not want to understand the meaning of free speech.

Did you know that some numbers are illegal? Phil Carmody, a mathematician, published the first illegal prime in March. It is a 1401 digit prime number that encodes the gzipped code of the anonymous C source code for the CSS descrambling program. The DeCSS is a program that can defeat the encryption on a DVD. A Scandinavian teenager who wanted to play DVD's on his Linux machine first created the DeCSS. The movie industry did not and has not provided a way to play an encrypted DVD on Linux. The number is "illegal" because publishing it could be considered trafficking in a circumvention device, in violation of the Digital Millennium Copyright Act, 17 USC 1201. The University of Tennessee has an archive of prime numbers where Carmody's is registered as the first illegal prime to be discovered at <http://www.utm.edu/research/primes/glossary/Illegal.html>. Phil Carmody's page is at <http://asdf.org/~fatphil/math/illegal.html>.

(con't on page 9)

You may have noticed that the price of Pentium 4 machines has dropped in the last month. The competition is fierce but there is another reason. Intel has finally made a motherboard (mobo) chip sets that accept SDRAM instead of RAMBUS (<http://www.rambus.com/>). Although faster, RAMBUS is very expensive compared to SDRAM. The 850 chip set is for RAMBUS while the 845 chip set is for SDRAM.

Fred Langa, a freelance computer/web author (<http://www.langa.com/>), has a site that help you 'tune up' your browser. You can compare various browsers you might have, check your connection speed, fix any problems you may be having, and check that plug-ins are not dragging your speed down. This is available at <http://browsertune.com>.

For some strange reason (I don't think he needs the money), billionaire Jeff Bezos (owner of Amazon.com, <http://www.amazon.com>) is doing Taco Bell (<http://www.tacobell.com/>) commercials hawking chicken quesadillas. Go figure.

Between you, me and The Lamp Post that's all for this month.

Minutes of CAEUG Meeting
September 22, 2001
by John Spizzirri

President, Rick Scalzo called the meeting to order at 9:54 AM. Rick welcomed 28 members and 2 visitors. The next meeting is scheduled for October 27th. There were three books for the raffle. Volunteers for the COD show on September 30th were requested. Anyone willing to represent the club at the show can get a free admission (via reimbursement). Due to the CAEUG Picnic there were no meeting minutes published for August. There was no financial report because the treasurer, Lynn Johnson, was not at the meeting. There was no CD of the month.

Old Business

Rick is searching for an affordable LCD projector. Thus far all projectors were not in the affordable range.

Lost items: 1 stainless steel serving spoon and 1 red and white water jug. Both were left at the CAEUG picnic. If you picked up these items they could be returned to their owners by bringing them to a meeting or by contacting one of the officers to let them know you have the item.

New Business

The Glen Ellyn Public Library (GEPL) has decided that they need the meeting room on the fourth Saturday of every month for an, as yet, unknown purpose beginning June 2002. A committee of one, John Spizzirri, was formed to search for a

new, affordable location. The location requirements are:

- Must be available on the 4th Saturday of the month and the 1st Saturday in December
 - Must have room for 60 or more people
 - Must allow for coffee and refreshments
 - Must have a screen or wall suitable for projection
 - Must have electricity for presentation equipment
 - Prefer low cost or no cost phone line for local calls (Currently GEPL charges \$10 per use)
 - Prefer to have some tables available
 - Must have handicapped access
 - Must have ample parking
 - Chair setup and take down by CAEUG members is doable
 - Must be affordable (Currently GEPL charges \$10 cleanup fee per meeting)
 - Prefer a central DuPage county location
- Any members that have a meeting place in mind can contact John Spizzirri via email at spizman@iwon.com or by phone listed on page 2 of the ARI...

Rick gave the technical report about Windows 2000 and Windows XP comparing and contrasting the feature set in each.

Members Forum was followed by the traditional coffee break.

Roger Kinzie gave the presentation on digital photography.

CAEUG
P. O. Box 2727
Glen Ellyn, IL 60138

FIRST CLASS MAIL

Meeting place and date information:

The next REGULAR meeting will be held at the Glen Ellyn Library in Glen Ellyn at 9:45 am on
Saturday meeting October 27, 2001

The library is located 1 block west of Citibank at the corner of Prospect & Duane FREE PARKING
Directions: Park to Duane; go west on Duane to Prospect Street. Please park at the West end of the
lot, away from the building. Thank you.

The meeting(s) are not library sponsored and all inquiries should be directed to Rick Scalzo at .
Individuals with disabilities who plan to attend this program and who require certain accommodations
in order to observe and/or participate in the program are requested to contact CAEUG president, Rick
Scalzo at , at least five (5) days prior to the program, so that reasonable accommodation can be made
for them.

Confirmed Meeting dates for 2001: October 27,
 November (no meeting),
 December 1 (Nov/Dec meeting),

Confirmed Meeting dates for 2002: January 26, February 23, March 23, April 27, May 25

CD OF THE MONTH: Available at the meeting or
by ordering previous CD's via the CAEUG
website.