

Abort,
Retry,
Ignore...



Computers Are Easy User Group

September 2002

Suggested Retail Price \$1.95

Volume XVII Issue 9



!!! IMPORTANT !!!
Meeting dates for
2002

See page 10
for all confirmed
dates. Time and
Place remain the
same.

September 28
Frank Braman
Flipbook

COMING IN OCTOBER
Scott Mueller Author
of 'Upgrading &
Repairing PC's'

SEE YOU
THERE!!

COD Dates
2002 dates

September 29
October 27
November 24

Buying an LCD Monitor by Larry Bothe 8/15/02

Do you have the hots for one of the bright, really sharp, truly flat liquid crystal display (LCD) monitors that are skinny and take up very little space at your computer workstation? I have wanted one for a long time, ever since I used my buddy's computer down in Tucson over a year ago. He's an Apple person (actually, to give him full credit, he is a certified Apple Solutions Expert), but I tolerate his Apple affiliations. He has at least 5 machines in his home-office, and one of them has a 17" LCD monitor that set him back the best part of a grand. By the end of the week I was hooked; I just had to have one.

The problem was that they were expensive, and I just couldn't justify (rationalize?) one a year ago. But I was recently appointed as an FAA Designated Pilot Examiner, and using some of the fees I collected I decided to treat myself to a new monitor. Besides, maybe some or all of the cost can be tax-deductible. After all, I do use my computer in conjunction with my pilot examination reports. And my desk was so crowded that I really needed to save some space. Isn't rationalization great?

The first step was to determine what size to buy. I ultimately decided that I wanted a 17" version. I was already using a 17" conventional CRT monitor and I didn't want to take a step backward in screen size. This size business bears a little discussion. In a conventional 17" (diagonal measurement) CRT monitor there is really only 16" that you can actually see. This 16" comes from a real screen dimension of 12-1/2 x 9-3/8 for a viewing area of 117 square inches. In LCD monitors a 17" unit really is

(con't on page 4)

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**Great Midwest
Computer Show ©**

Next show date
SUNDAY, Sept 29th
College of Dupage
9:30 A.M. to 3:00 P.M.

The Midwest's oldest and largest
Multi Vendor PC show and sale for
Home & Business

COLLEGE OF DUPAGE
Main Arena of Physical Education Building
Corner of Park Blvd & College Road
Glen Ellyn, IL
FREE PARKING
Admission - \$7.00
(With this coupon admission \$6.00)
www.CODSHOW.COM
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info@codshow.com

Great Midwest Computer Show ©

2002 dates

September 29
October 27
November 24

PICTURE YOUR AD HERE!
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IF YOU ARE A MEMBER OF CAEUG THIS SPACE
COULD SELL ANY COMPUTER RELATED ITEM FREE OF
CHARGE.

JUST CONTACT ANY CLUB OFFICERS OR THE NEWS-
LETTER EDITOR TO PLACE YOUR AD IN THE NEWSLET-
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In order to have your article or item for sale
appear in ARI they must be received by the
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MEMBERS HELPLINE

Any member with a specific expertise
can volunteer to be on the Members
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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 9x, NT, 2K & Linux.....John Spizzirri

Membership Costs.....

	First Yr.	Renewal
Individual	\$25.00	\$20.00
Family	\$30.00	\$25.00
Corporate	\$30.00	\$25.00
Associate	\$20.00	\$15.00

Beginner's SIG

Ask questions and discuss computer
experiences with this 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
9:05 to 9:45

17" diagonal size. The dimensions of the 17" LCD monitor are 13-1/4 x 10-5/8, resulting in 142 square inches of viewing area; a 21% increase over my old 17" CRT.

Then I had to decide on some other specifications. Consumer Reports says that in LCD monitors the dot-pitch size doesn't matter, although this specification is given for all the LCD monitors I looked at. However, contrast ratio and brightness do matter. I went for a high contrast ratio of 450:1, but it turned out that a lower ratio would probably have been fine. The brightness for my monitor is given as "250 CD/M²", but I confess that I don't really understand it. When I first turned on the new LCD screen the default brightness of 90% was just overwhelming. I had to turn it down to 50% for comfortable viewing even in full daylight. Another specification LCD users need to be aware of is "native resolution". And it's not something American Indians do at New Years. (I know, that was bad, but I couldn't resist.) In conventional monitors we tell our video card what resolution we want to run in. For example, I had been running in 1024 x 768. When I got the new LCD monitor I just left it there, thinking it would be fine. However, some of the characters on the screen appeared to be a little out of focus. Fiddling with the "phase" control on the monitor improved it somewhat but didn't make it entirely clear. Then along came the August issue of Consumer Reports with an article about monitors. In it they explained that LCD monitors have what is called "native resolution". That means they have a built-in resolution that works best. In the case of both 17" and 18" LCD's the native resolution is 1280 x 1024. (If you buy a 15" LCD monitor, the native resolution is 1024 x 768). I went into Control Panel/Display/Settings and increased the video card resolution to match the native resolution and wha-la, the "focus" problem cleared up immediately. And I thought it was sharp before!!

Another consideration when thinking of an LCD monitor is that it may not always respond as well as a CRT to the fast-moving images in games or movies. Since I don't do the fast-moving stuff I didn't care. However, I do care about flicker. In CRT's you have to set the refresh rate at 75 Hz or better to avoid it. Because they are a completely different technology LCD's just don't flicker. There is no flicker eyestrain from an LCD. LCD's do have a narrower viewing angle than a CRT; you have to be looking more directly at an LCD to see it clearly. Since most of us sit right in front of our screens anyway that's not really a factor either. Neither is the somewhat limited color palette of an LCD; who can see more than 16.7 million colors anyway? Some more expensive LCD monitors can be operated in either analog or digital mode. Digital requires a special video card (which your machine probably doesn't have) and cable. But don't worry about "digital". In recent tests Consumer Reports says that they found little image quality difference in analog vs. digital. I'm perfectly happy with analog.

OK, you have convinced yourself that you just have to have an LCD monitor. Where do you shop and how much will you have to pay? I shopped on several websites, including Micro Warehouse and Tiger Direct. I ended up paying \$500 (forget the pennies) for a 17" DVSam brand LCD monitor from Tiger (www.tigerdirect.com). I could have had a 15" one for \$200 less, but I just wanted the larger screen size. The "shipping and handling" was a reasonable \$16 additional; no sales tax. It came with the required cables; there was nothing else to buy. I passed on the extended warranty. It was on my doorstep 3 days after I placed the order.

I want to comment on Tiger Direct and S&H charges. There was a time, maybe 3

years ago, that they seemingly tried to make their profit from the shipping and handling. I distinctly remember them trying to soak me \$125 to ship me a computer system one year at Christmas. When I complained like hell, threatened to cancel the order and demanded to talk to a manager the S&H suddenly got reduced to \$65. It appears that Tiger has since seen the error of their ways. They now have S&H charges much more in line with the actual cost of shipping, plus a few extra bucks for the handling part. I can live with that.

Actually hooking up the new monitor was a piece of cake. The cabling is just like a regular CRT monitor. The Windows plug-and-play feature took care of the installation in a few seconds. Other than adjusting the contrast and brightness, the only other setting I had to change was color. The color settings give you 3 stock "temperature" combinations to choose from, plus infinitely variable user adjustments. I ended up with the custom user settings to get it to where the color is pleasing to me. In any case, there are easy-to-navigate on-screen menus and buttons right on the front of the monitor that change all the settings. No reaching around and craning your neck to see what is going on.

I say that if you want an LCD monitor, go out and buy one. They have come down in price to about half what they used to be, but the price no longer seems to be falling rapidly. I did just recently (mid-August) see a Tiger ad for a 17" LCD monitor for \$480; a little less than I paid for mine in late June. If you get one be sure to remember to set your video card resolution to match the native resolution of your new monitor.

(Larry Bothe is an associate member of CAEUG and an "honorary" member of FVPCA. He was President of CAEUG for a while back in the 90's when he lived in the Chicago area. He presently resides in southern Indiana where he is retired from industry and teaches people to fly airplanes. He can be contacted at Lbothe@aol.com.)

WHY DID THE CHICKEN CROSS THE ROAD?

GEORGE W. BUSH

I don't think I should have to answer that question.

AL GORE

I invented the chicken. I invented the road. Therefore, the chicken crossing the road represented the application of these two different functions of government in a new, reinvented way designed to bring greater services to the American people.

RALPH NADER

The chicken's habitat on the original side of the road had been polluted by unchecked industrialist greed. The chicken did not reach the unspoiled habitat on the other side of the road because it was crushed by the wheels of a gas-guzzling SUV.

PAT BUCHANAN

To steal a job from a decent, hardworking American.

RUSH LIMBAUGH

I don't know why the chicken crossed the road, but I'll bet it was getting a government grant to cross the road, and I'll bet someone out there is already forming a support group to help chickens with crossing-the-road syndrome. Can you believe this? How much more of this can real Americans take? Chickens crossing the road paid for by their tax dollars, and when I say tax dollars, I'm talking about your money, money the government took from you to build roads for chickens to cross.

MARTHA STEWART

No one called to warn me which way that chicken was going. I had a standing order at the farmer's market to sell my eggs when the price dropped to a certain level. No little bird gave me any insider information.

JERRY FALWELL

Because the chicken was gay! Isn't it obvious? Can't you people see the plain truth in front of your face? The chicken was going to the "other side." That's what they call it — the other side. Yes, my friends, that chicken is gay. And, if you eat that chicken, you will become gay too. I say we boycott all chickens until we sort out this abomination that

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The Lamp Post Number 33
by John Spizzirri
September 19, 2002



What is Wi-Fi? Webopedia (http://www.webopedia.com/TERM/W/Wi_Fi.html) defines it as "short for wireless fidelity and is another name for IEEE 802.11b." The IEEE (Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers, a global technical professional society <http://www.ieee.org/>) sets standards for certain types of electronic and electrical devices. The 802.11 standard applies to wireless LAN (Local Area Network) connections. The b extension is for those devices that operate on the 2.4 GHz band providing 11 Mbps data transmission, which is about the same speed as Ethernet (IEEE 802.3). The standard resolves compatibility issues between manufacturers of wireless LAN equipment. That means that any IEEE 802.11b device will work with any other IEEE 802.11b device regardless of who manufactures it. This is a benefit to consumers who can now base their purchase based on price and service. I bring this to your attention because some of our members have asked me about starting a Wi-Fi 'hotspot' for use by club members. A hotspot is an IEEE 802.11b router attached to a DSL or cable Internet connection with a high gain antenna. The router would let anyone with an IEEE 802.11b card in their machine access the Internet within the geographical area covered by the high gain antenna. To explain that in a different way let us suppose that I have a DSL Internet connection. If I put an IEEE 802.11b router on that connection, my neighbor, Jim Bracewell, could access the Internet through my connection if he had an IEEE 802.11b card in his PC. He and I could simultaneously access the Internet at speeds up to 11 Mbps as opposed to standard dialup connection speed of 56 Kbps. The standard antenna for a router can send a signal only about 300 feet. A high gain antenna increases that distance based on the price of the antenna but only to a maximum of about 2,000 feet. Signal loss, small geographical coverage, and high costs make this a project the club should not be involved in. Other factors also prohibit the club's involvement. AT&T DSL (<http://www.att.com/dsl/>) and all the cable companies object to and are taking legal actions against people who share their Internet connections with others. They want more money. Earthlink (<http://www.earthlink.net/dsl>) and Covad (<http://www.covad.com/>), so far, do not object to connection sharing. Some East Coast ISPs (Internet Service Providers) encourage connection sharing in their advertisements. A DSL connection costs from \$35 to over \$300 per month depending on the speed of that connection. Cable costs from \$35 to \$50 per month and the speed diminishes based on how many users are on line at any one time. There are also equipment (router) and installation costs. Neighbors could split the cost of a DSL connection with a standard router provided the antenna was placed in a window toward the neighbor sharing the cost. Other neighbors within range could also share the connection. There is the possibility of 'war drivers' sharing your connection as well. War drivers are people who drive around with a laptop equipped with an IEEE 802.11b card 'sniffing' for open connections to the Internet. If you are connected to the Internet, a war driver could, not only, access the Internet but your computer's hard drive. As you can see, security is a big problem with wireless connections. Currently, the counter measures for wireless are weak, but there are a number of companies

working on the problem. I will be demonstrating a wireless network at one of the upcoming meetings early next year. There is a wireless tutorial at <http://www.computer.org/students/looking/summer97/ieee802.htm>. The tutorial is not a how-to but gets into the theory of wireless.

There are some public wi-fi access points in our area. They are advertised on the Internet at http://directory.google.com/Top/Business/Industries/Telecommunications/Wireless/Service_Providers/Internet/Public_Access_Hotspot_Providers/. You will have to search through all the places not in your area. You will also need a laptop with an IEEE 802.11b card. From my limited search, it does not seem worthwhile, yet.

If you are looking to set up a wi-fi network in your home, be certain to get the IEEE 802.11b devices. The IEEE 802.11a devices are NOT compatible with the 'b' devices. The 'a' devices are significantly more expensive and operate on a different band (5 Mhz). The 'g' devices will be coming to market soon. I do not know if they will be compatible with the 'b' devices. I have been calling the equipment devices because there are various types. For laptops there are PCMCIA cards and USB connectors. For desktops there are PCI cards, USB connectors, and PCI connectors that take a PCMCIA card. There are also wireless access points that convert Ethernet to wi-fi. The last is the wi-fi router that acts as a DSL or cable modem and wi-fi access point.

For those of you who use Hotmail (<http://www.hotmail.com/>), Yahoo Mail (<http://mail.yahoo.com/>), or another online mail service, a story in The Register (<http://www.theregister.co.uk/content/6/27131.html>) will be a warning. Telewest's blueyonder (<http://www.blueyonder.co.uk/>), a British ISP and mail service, had a disk failure. That failure destroyed 25,000 email accounts along with all the email stored on that disk. Telewest said: "We are sorry to inform you of a major disk failure on one of our mail servers. As a result, your mailbox had to be recreated, which, regrettably means that all of your mail stored on the server has been lost." Don't store any important email or data in only one place. Backup, backup, backup.

Microsoft (MS <http://www.microsoft.com>) introduced its Windows Media Player 9. The site <http://www.microsoft.com/windows/windowsmedia/default.asp> lists the new features and has the beta download. RealNetworks (<http://www.realnetworks.com/>) released its Helix Initiative, an 'Open standard' for media delivery. Helix appears to be software used on the server side for delivery to RealOne player and WMP. It only supports Real, WMP, and Ogg Vorbis (Linux media standard). WMP only supports Windows media. Helix does not support .NET.

Comdex Chicago 2003 (<http://www.comdex.com/chicago/>) has been canceled due to lack of interest. There is no word of it on the Web site yet. The reason given was that this year only had 25,000 attendees.

The New Scientist magazine as well as other sources report that Pioneer DVD recording drives 'burn up' if used with new high speed blank disks. This happens in PCs and in Macs.

Pioneer wants its customers to contact the company for a firmware upgrade to prevent the drive destruction. One million customers are affected. The story at <http://www.newscientist.com/news/news.jsp?id=ns99992815> has the full details. If you have a Pioneer DVD burner, read that story and contact Pioneer.

I have used the Illinois Tollway System quite a few times this past month. On three occasions the automated toll booths took my money, but the light did not turn green. On the tollway Web site (<http://www.illinoistollway.com/>) states "We are also aware that there are times when toll money is deposited and the light does not change from red to green. Wait a reasonable amount of time before proceeding through the lane, then contact us. The information required: date, time, location, and license plate number, name, and a daytime phone number in case we have any questions." It further states, "Failure to pay the toll may result in a \$75.00 ticket as well as a moving violation recorded on the motorist's driver's license. Video surveillance cameras are located at all plazas to record toll violators." I contacted them at info@tollway.state.il.us. They responded with, "Thank you Mr. Spizzirri. If you have paid the correct amount of money for your toll and the light does not turn green it is OK to proceed and merge in with the traffic. Paying additional money is not necessary or recommended. The most common reason that the lights do not turn green is that other motorists throw garbage into the machines and jam them or cause your coins to tumble around for some time before they are eventually counted. Should a malfunction occur on the machine, it is noted directly on the video surveillance tape so you will not be charged for a toll violation. A signal is sent to the main office and a service representative is dispatched to clean the machine and realign it." Quite frankly, this sounds like contradictory government double talk. The tollway authority turned over enforcement of the video surveillance to a private company who gets a percentage of each ticket that they issue. That sounds like a MAJOR conflict of interest. I will continue to email the tollway each time one of their machines fails to work correctly. I suggest you do the same.

If you are new to the Internet or are helping a friend or child with the Internet try this About.com site <http://www.learnthenet.com/english/index.html>. It has lots of information that can help the newbie (a person new to the Internet) understand what its all about. Don't buy the book that is for sale, just click on the free information.

Caldera International Inc. (<http://www.caldera.com/>) announced in August that it's changing its name to The SCO Group (SCO). The new name reflects the company's shift away from Linux and toward UnixWare product lines. The new name "SCO" comes from The Santa Cruz Operation Inc. Caldera acquired the Server Software division of The Santa Cruz Operation in 2001, forming Caldera International Inc. The SCO software has been reliable, stable and cost-effective for 20 years. The Caldera OpenLinux will now be called SCO Linux powered by UnitedLinux. The new site URL is <http://www.sco.com>.

Charles Simonyi is a billionaire you have probably never heard of. From 1981 until this month he worked for Microsoft. He was the programmer that came up with Excel and Word. He was chief software architect until 1999 when Bill Gates took that position. Does Chuck intend to retire? Hardly. He is starting his own software company. I've been saying all along that Gates is sowing the seeds of his own destruction. He pays people moderately, but gives large stock options and bonuses. Simonyi is a billionaire because of his MS employment. He

obviously will not compete with MS because his employment contract prohibits that for a period of time. Once the time is up, watch out. The RegisterUS has the story at <http://www.theregus.com/content/4/26327.html> .

Between you, me, and the LampPost - that's all this month.

(con't from page 5)

the liberal media whitewashes with seemingly harmless phrases like "the other side."

DR. SEUSS

Did the chicken cross the road?
Did he cross it with a toad?
Yes! The chicken crossed the road,
But why it crossed, I've not been told!

ERNEST HEMINGWAY

To die. In the rain. Alone.

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

I envision a world where all chickens will be free to cross roads without having their motives called into question.

GRANDPA

In my day, we didn't ask why the chicken crossed the road. Someone told us that the chicken crossed the road, and that was good enough for us.

BARBARA WALTERS

Isn't that interesting? In a few moments we will be listening to the chicken tell, for the first time, the heartwarming story of how it a serious case of molting and went on to accomplish its life-long dream of crossing the road.

JOHN LENNON

Imagine all the chickens crossing roads in peace.

ARISTOTLE

It is the nature of chickens to cross the road.

KARL MARX

It was a historical inevitability.

SADDAM HUSSEIN

This was an unprovoked act of rebellion and we were quite justified in dropping 50 tons of nerve gas on it.

VOLTAIRE

I may not agree with what the chicken did, but I will defend to the death its right to do it.

RONALD REAGAN

What chicken?

CAPTAIN KIRK

To boldly go where no chicken has gone before.

FOX MULDER

You saw it cross the road with your own eyes! How many more chickens have to cross before you believe it?

SIGMUND FREUD

The fact that you are at all concerned that the chicken crossed the road reveals your underlying sexual insecurity.

BILL GATES

I have just released eChicken 2003, which will not only cross roads, but will lay eggs, file your important documents, and balance your checkbook — and Internet Explorer is an inextricable part of eChicken.

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Did the chicken really cross the road or did the road move beneath the chicken?

BILL CLINTON

I did not cross the road with THAT chicken. What do you mean by chicken? Could you define chicken please?

THE BIBLE

And God came down from the heavens, and He said unto the chicken, "Thou shalt cross the road." And the chicken crossed the road, and there was much rejoicing.

COLONEL SANDERS

I missed one?

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 September 28, 2002

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 2002:
Sept 28, Oct 26, Nov/Dec meeting December 7

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

-> Our next meeting will be Septmeber 28 and will be Frank Braman giving a
presentation of FlipBook

-> COMING ~ OCTOBER 26 ~ CAEUG ~ meeting presenter will be
Scott Mueller, Renowned Author of 'Upgrading & Repairing PC's'

-> Coming - Nov/Dec meeting covering Epson printers.

Hope to see you there.