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FOUNDED 1984
The Official Newsletter of THE
COMPUTERS ARE EASY USER GROUP

Abort, Retry, Ignore...

CAEUG Computers Are Easy User Group

June 2003 Suggested Retail Price $1.95 Volume XIV Issue 6

Calendar of Events

!!! IMPORTANT !!!
Meeting dates for 2003
See page 10 for all confirmed dates. Time and Place remain the same.

June 28

Frank Braman will be presenting how to go from digital camera to a VCD (video compact disk) in a few easy steps.

SEE YOU THERE!!

COD Dates
2003 dates
June 29
July 27
August 24
September 28
October 26
November 23
December 21

Message from the President

Last month I misunderstood communications from Peter Niccia, Membership Chair. He told me he was going on a vacation. I did not remember that his vacation would interfer with the distribution of the newsletter. I am sorry for that misunderstanding which caused the newsletter to go out after the meeting. I hope it did not cause you any inconvenience. The board has put in place controls that will prevent that error from happening again.

Upgrading to Windows XP
by Larry Bothe, 5/26/03

When Microsoft comes out with a new operating system a lot of people are leery of being among the first to use it. Some wags say that the first release is really a Beta (test) version being foisted upon an unsuspecting public. Better wait until “Service Pack 1” is issued to fix all the “bugs” that come to light when the system is used by the public at large. So it was with me. When XP first came out, it was said to be more stable (less likely to crash) than earlier Windows versions for the home user. This is because XP is built on the proven NT technology used in business operating systems for several years. But applying the NT technology to the home use environment was a new thing, so I decided to wait while XP matured a bit. Besides, my relatively new machine running Windows ME was running just fine. No need to change operating systems.

But as time marched on, my machine started to act up. It would “hang” (freeze up) or get the “blue screen of death” for no apparent reason. I did the maintenance chores (Scandisk, Defrag) regularly, my hard drive was only about one-third full, and I had plenty of RAM (384 megs). I began to yearn for the alleged stability of XP. Then I started to have shutdown problems. The machine would not go all the way through the shutdown sequence to the final “It’s OK to Shut Down” screen. At first it happened only occasionally, then more often, and in recent months, all the time. I would click “Shutdown”, wait for the screen to go blank, then count 3 seconds (one-thousand-one, one-thousand-two.....) and then turn off the power. I hoped that at the next start-up the damn thing wouldn’t chastise me for improper shutdown and then run Scandisk. I hate it when that happens.

I finally decided that this is all a bunch of crap. There had to be a better way. (No,

(con't on page 4)

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CAEUG
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CAEUG LIST OF SUPPORTING RETAILERS

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

COMPUTER MAINTENANCE, INC.
1433 W. Fullerton Avenue, Suite M
Addison, IL 60101
630/953-1555

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Retail store is closed
630/416-0102
http://www.bytes.com/

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330 S. Naperville Road, Suite 310
Wheaton, IL 60187
630/260-4020

SOFTWARE EMPORIUM
123 E. Front St
Wheaton, IL 60187
630/653-0085

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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.

Great Midwest Computer Show ©

Next show date
SUNDAY, June 29
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
E-mail address:
info@codshow.com

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.

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 9x, NT, 2K & Linux.....John Spizzirri

Great Midwest Computer Show © 2003 dates

June 29, July 27, Aug 24, Sept 28, Oct 26, Nov 23, Dec 21

For Sale
Price Reduced!

Compaq Armada 1530DM Laptop, Pentium 133, 32MB RAM, 1.2MB HD, floppy, CD-ROM, Sound, Win 98. Battery does not hold charge more than 20 minutes. Runs fine plugged-in $150 obo

For Sale

Office Suite 2000 full version
$200.00

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

I don't want to get a Mac.) I started investigating moving to the XP operating system. Nobody said that it behaved badly. Some didn't like it because it looks "different", but I'm pretty tolerant of change so that didn't bother me. I had used XP on a neighbor's machine without any problems. A couple people told me it ran faster and was indeed more stable. I decided to go for it.

We don't have a real computer store anywhere close by down here in the cornfields of Indiana. Without driving for an hour the best shot is the computer department at the local Staples. Since I am a regular Staples customer (I run a small business in my home) I get all sorts of coupons in the mail. My wife uses a Discover card and gets cash-back coupons worth double at Staples. So, armed with all these coupons, I went shopping at Staples. I picked up the Windows XP Home version for $99.95 and a box of envelopes for an additional $5.00, so I could have more than a $100 purchase. Then I dumped all these coupons on the clerk. She had no idea which ones she could take in combination with all the others, so she called a department manager for help. The manager didn't really know either, so she told the clerk to take all of them. In the end I got $111 worth (with the tax) of merchandise for five bucks and change. Such a deal!

If you decide to go to XP, do you need the Home Edition or the Professional one? The cost for Professional is double; $200 vs. $100. The basic difference is the ability in the Professional version to operate one computer from another. Since I don't have that need, I decided to save the $100. I was after stability, not takeover capability. And besides, I didn't have enough coupons to get the Professional version essentially for free (snicker, snicker).

It was with some fear and trepidation that I finally sat down to install the upgrade version of Windows XP Home. I knew that some older software and hardware is not compatible with XP. Since all my stuff is 3 years old or newer I figured I wouldn't have any incompatibility problems. Wrong! The first thing XP does is analyze your system and prepare a report of incompatibilities and conflicts. I was surprised that there were quite a few things listed. I had forgotten that my scanner was old (circa 1998; I bought it in a garage sale a couple years ago). I hardly ever use the scanner, so that didn't bother me. A bit more disturbing is that the software that came with my 2-year old digital camera isn't compatible. A check of the HP website revealed that I can get two disks of upgraded software (one to unload the camera; another to edit the images) for $10 each. I decided to wait until after the upgrade and see what happened.

Earlier investigation had shown that AOL 6.0 is not compatible with XP. I use AOL for several things besides e-mail (appointment calendar, portfolio tracking, etc.), so I wanted to make sure that it would continue to work. I downloaded the current version, 8.0; and that ran fine until after the XP upgrade. Then I lost some functionality. I solved that with a trip to Wal-Mart for a free AOL 8.0 disk. I deleted the downloaded version of 8.0 and reinstalled the program from the CD. That made it run right, but I had to reset all my preferences that I lost when I uninstalled the downloaded version. It was an inconvenience, but all is well now.

The real hassle in the XP upgrade came with Norton Antivirus. Now, I take virus protection very seriously, and you should too. I had NAV 2000 on my machine. It was not compatible with XP, so I downloaded and installed NAV 2003 prior to my XP upgrade. Big mistake! NAV 2003 "saw" my old ME operating system and configured itself for ME. Then of course it wouldn't run right in XP. OK, so an uninstall and reinstall will fix it, right? Well, yes, but not easily. It turns out that to fully get rid of the ME configuration it is necessary to edit the registry. I had never done that before. It is easy to do, but scary because of how critical the registry is to the operation of the computer. Norton's (Symantec) website told me exactly what to do, but I was still uncomfortable doing it. And then the reinstall of the downloaded software faulted. A call to Norton's Customer Service got me the program on disk for free (actually, cheaper than the download due to an available rebate), and the Norton problem was finally resolved. The procedure that would have avoided all the Norton problems would have been to delete the old 2000 version prior to the XP upgrade and then load the new 2003 (XP-compatible version) AFTER the upgrade to XP was completed. Unfortunately, neither Windows XP nor Norton warned me about that. Shame on them!!

There were a few other obscure pieces of software on my machine that weren't compatible with XP, but since I didn't use them much anymore I just deleted them prior to the upgrade. If I need those applications in the future I'll get an XP version. In the meantime I just

figured that I cleaned up my machine a bit. And noteed that not all the software incompatibilities that XP warns you about in their initial report really turn out to be a problem. While the camera picture transfer software indeed would not run under XP, I discovered that XP has a camera image transfer utility built in, and it works just fine. That same utility may in fact also run my old scanner; I haven't tried it yet. The HP image editing software turned out to work under XP even though the report said it might not.

After dealing with the removal of incompatible software the installation of the XP upgrade itself was anticlimactic. It took a while but went very smoothly. The computer started right up upon completion. Except for the aforementioned problems of having to reinstall AOL 8.0 and NAV 2003, everything else worked just fine. The remaining question is; was it all worth it? Did I get what I expected? The answer is "yes". Over a period of two weeks I have not had a single freeze-up or seen a blue screen of death. I did have one "software error", but in XP you just close that program and move on. No freeze-up or need to reboot. The machine now shuts down perfectly, every time, and fast. The boot time at start-up is faster too. Overall, I'm pleased with XP.

If you decide to upgrade to XP, here are a few more comments that you might find helpful.

1. Be sure to uninstall any old, incompatible programs before you do the upgrade. XP gives you the option to ignore its report and just continue with the installation. But if you do that, figuring you can uninstall any old programs later, you will find that the uninstall routines will not work for the old software. While you can still delete the old program's files from Program Files using Explorer you will not get as clean (complete) an uninstall, as if you had used the uninstall routine that came with the program.

2. Wait to install the new XP versions of your favorite software until after the upgrade to XP is completed. That way you will avoid any hassles, like I had with Norton Antivirus.

3. As with any major change to your computer, be sure to back-up all your data files before making any changes. I backed-up to a 100-meg zip disk, but any media will do. You should be backing-up regularly anyway, but be sure to do a current back-up before embarking on an operating system change.

4. XP Home Upgrade will use either your old file system (probably FAT-32) or allow you to transfer to the NTFS (NT File System). By default XP leaves you in FAT-32. I have not yet converted to NTFS, and I'm not sure if/when I will. XP provides you with an article about which system to choose ("if this then do that"), but in my case the choice was not clear-cut. I decided to stay with FAT-32 for the time being. But even if you change file systems your data is not altered. It's more like how the files are organized on your hard drive, than any change in the data itself.

5. If you have more than one computer at home and figure you will buy one XP upgrade and do all your machines, think again. XP requires "activation" or it will crap-out after 30 days. Once you activate it on one machine you can't do it on another one. You will have to buy an upgrade for each machine you intend to do. Bill wants the money, Honey.

6. I had been using the free version of Zone Alarm as my firewall. I have a cable-modem Internet connection, so I am always on-line any time my computer is turned on. That makes me susceptible to hacker attacks. XP has a built-in firewall that you can activate if you choose. I didn't like having to wait for Zone Alarm to load each time I turn on my computer, so I decided to uninstall ZA and use the firewall in XP. ZA apparently doesn't like to be uninstalled, even using its own uninstaller. It still left bits and pieces of itself (icons, temp flies) all over the place. This wasn't a big problem, but you should be aware that Zone Alarm is hard to get rid of.

7. Another small problem I had was that the driver for my HP 932C inkjet printer was not compatible with XP. I downloaded new software from the HP site. Since the printer was only two years old, I didn't think I would have a problem, but I did. At least, unlike the camera software, the fix from HP was free. From what I have read, almost all printers except the very latest ones will need updated drivers to run under XP.

8. There were some early reports that the old familiar maintenance routines called Scandisk and Defrag were gone in Windows XP. That's not true. Defrag is still there in Control Panel, Performance and Maintenance, Organize Your Files So Your Computer Runs Faster. It looks different when it runs, but it does the same thing. Scandisk has been replaced by a new utility called Error Checking. You get to it by starting in My Computer and selecting the hard drive you want to check, usually the C-drive. Then click on File, Properties,

Tools, and under Error-checking click on Check Now. Just as in earlier versions of Windows, you should perform these tasks regularly. But before you run them you should first run the disk clean-up utility to get rid of junk files. Do that by going to Control Panel, Performance and Maintenance, Free Up Space On Your Hard Disk. Check the boxes and dump the junk.

That is my experience and words of wisdom about upgrading to Windows XP. If you don't mind a little work and you would like a lot more stability and consistent shutdown than with previous versions of Windows then go for it. Don't let Norton bite you in the butt.

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.

Minutes of CAEUG Meeting May 24, 2003

- John Spizzirri called the meeting to order at 9:49 am. There were 24 members in attendance and no visitors.
- The minutes were approved as read, as the ARI was not sent out before the meeting.
- The Financial Report showed a starting balance of $3,265.87, income of $298.00 and expenses of $217.06 for a balance of $3,346.81.

Old Business:

* John advised the next computer show at COD is June 29 and asked volunteers to work at our table. Volunteers for the COD show. Anyone willing to represent the club at the show can get a free admission. The show lets two members in free and the club will reimburse two other members who work at our table. The reimbursement is given at the next monthly meeting.
* Mike Goldberg passed around a sign up sheet for the annual picnic.
* There is a now a universal sign on for club members to access the "members only" section of the website;
* John advised that it would be nice to have back-ups for the coffee service, newsletter, etc, in case the member volunteer is unable to perform their duty or are unable make the meeting that month.
* John also encouraged the membership to submit articles for the monthly newsletter.

New Business:

** The Board passed a resolution to decrease expenses or increase revenue to cover expenses. The Board authorized a six-month trial of charging regular members for postal mail delivery of the ARI newsletter. If a member opts for postal mail delivery, they would be charged $10.00 dollars per year for a printed copy of the ARI. The ARI would be delivered via e-mail for those who did not opt for the postal mail delivery. A delivery system is being worked on and there is no start date yet. Discussion was held as to what format the newsletter should be e-mailed, such as a .pdf file vs. other formats. It was noted that the Adobe Acrobat file is the most universal format compared to others.

** Bill Douglas discussed the possibility of having a member's auction. The member may offer up an item for auction and would split the proceeds with the club on an 80/20 basis, where the club would get the 20%, or charge a flat rate such as $10.00 dollars for each item. Also suggested was a 50/50 split. Also discussed were the parameters of when and how the auction would take place.

** The ARI newsletter was not mailed due to misunderstood communication.

** Discussion was held as to the club offering some type of training workshop as a way to get new members. Apparently, there is a place in Aurora called Community Tech Center that offers a classroom for rent to community groups. The classroom contains six PC's.

** The formal meeting was then adjourned at 10:15am.

** John then informed the members of the contents of the CD of the Month.

Members' Forum:

- Carl Schow downloaded a program to allow him to program a ham radio. The file has an extension of ".exe.cfm" on it. Does anyone know what this is? Tech support was no help. A suggestion was made to type the extension into Google to see what it is.

- A question was asked if anyone knew how many times your hard drive can crash before having to call Microsoft for a new activation code. A question was asked about RAID arrays. How do they work, what benefits are there to having one, etc.

- Another question about stopping pop-ups when using Opera or Netscape as a browser and how they can be stopped? Several software titles were suggested.

- Did you know that you can "Google" your telephone number? Type your telephone number into the Google search box and it will come back with your name, address, and telephone number. It will also give you a link to a map showing where you live! This will not work if your phone number is unlisted.

- We then had our traditional break with coffee and doughnuts, bagels, and muffins.

- Raffle items included Tripmaker 97, The Complete PC Upgrade and Maintenance Guide (Third Edition), Using the Internet, and an MPC Encyclopedia CD-ROM.

- Rob Humphreys, President of D& B Power Associates Inc. in Batavia, IL made a presentation of the effects of power surges, brown outs, voltage spikes and the effect of static electricity on our home and our computer equipment. Rob then provided information and advice on the various types of surge protectors and what to look for in purchasing this type of equipment to prevent damage to our computers and other electronic devices in the home.

Respectfully Submitted, Dean Holste, Acting Secretary

Member Survey

To better serve our membership, we are having a member survey. Please fill out this survey, detach it from the newsletter, and return the completed survey to CAEUG. For your convenience, the survey is self-addressed. Fold the survey in half, TAPE it closed with 2 strips and affix first class postage. The survey may also be returned at a meeting.
The club agenda will change based on the your response to this survey. Be sure to return it.

What presentations have been of value to you?

_____

_____

What kind of presentations would you like to see?

_____

_____

What content would you like to see in the newsletter?

_____

_____

What current content in the newsletter would you like to see deleted? _____

_____

List your computer(s)

Brand	Hard Drive Size(s)	RAM	OS	CD?	DVD?	ZIP?

What is your current preferred e-mail address(es)?

_____

Do you regularly use any OS (Operating System) other than Windows? __Yes __No
If yes, what OSs? _____

Version(s) of Windows you use? __95 __98 __CE __ME __NT __2K __XP

Do you network you home PCs? __Wired __Wireless __No

What type of Internet connection do you have? __DSL __Cable __Dialup __None

Do you have a __CD Writer (burner) __DVD Writer __Neither?

How do you use your computer? Number your choices starting with the application you use most often to the least often (1 through ?).

__Word Processing __Spreadsheets __Presentations __Personal Finance
__Stock Portfolio __Database __E-Mail __Instant Messaging
__Publishing __Web Publishing __Digital Photography __Digital Moviemaking
__Drawing/Art __Internet __Computer based training
__2D games __3D games __Listening to music
__E-Bay (Auctions) __Computer utilities __Small Business (SOHO)
__Backup __Programming __Creating Music
__ Other Please specify_____

Do you attend the annual picnic? __Yes __No

How many CAEUG meetings do you attend each year? _____

Do you attend meetings based on what is being presented? __Yes __No

Have you ever purchased a CD of the month? __Yes __No
If yes, have you used any software on the CD of the month? __Yes __No

Would you prefer the CD of the month be theme-based or have a wide variety of software?
__Theme __Variety

Would you be willing to do a presentation for the club? __Yes __No
Would you do a presentation if you could receive one year's membership free? __Yes __No

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P. O. Box 2727
Glen Ellyn, IL 60138

Place stamp here

FIRST CLASS MAIL

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

Tape here Tape here

The Lamp Post Number 41 by John Spizzirri
June 10, 2003

Independence Day celebrated on July 4th is one of the national holidays that has retained its actual celebration date (the others being Labor Day, Christmas Day, Thanksgiving day, and New Years Day). There are a number of Web sites that explain the origins of the holiday:
http://www.holidays.net/independence/, http://www.usacitylink.com/usa/ , and http://wilstar.com/holidays/july4.htm . You may view a picture of the document at the National Archive and Records Administration site
http://www.archives.gov/exhibit_hall/charters_of_freedom/declaration/declaration.html , which has not only the Declaration of Independence but the Constitution and other historical documents of significance. If you would like to read the Declaration, you can find a plain text version at http://memory.loc.gov/const/declar.html . Another holiday celebrated on July 1st may be of interest to you. It is Canada Day or Dominion Day. You can get the story about the holiday at
http://www.holidayinsights.com/other/dominion.htm and
http://www.pch.gc.ca/progs/cpsc-ccsp/jfa-ha/dominion_e.cfm
If you are interesting celebrating with the Canadians in Edmonton, Alberta try this site:
http://tis.gov.ab.ca/public/item/Dominion_Day_-_Fort_Edmonton_Park.htm .

There is another declaration. It is the Declaration of the Independence of Cyberspace located at http://www.eff.org/~barlow/Declaration-Final.html . I do not agree with all the provisions of this declaration but in general I find it refreshing. It is a declaration about freedom of thought and communication. Utah Senator Orren Hatch has recently stated that the RIAA (Recording Industry Association of America) should have the “right” to erase hard drives without the consent of the owners. Obviously, Hatch has not read the Constitution let alone this declaration. The most complete story is on the foreign site at http://www.theregister.co.uk/content/6/31287.html .

Santa Cruz Operation (SCO http://www.caldera.com/) was founded in 1979. Microsoft (MS http://www.microsoft.com/) entered an alliance with SCO to sell a form of Unix called Xenix. MS soon saw that Unix ‘interoperability’ did not fit into their marketing mix. SCO changed its name in 1994 to Caldera. In 1995, Caldera bought a version of Unix from Novell (http://www.novell.com/). Caldera changed its name back to SCO in 2002. You may recall that Caldera was trying to sell Linux to business as a complete MS alternative (desktop and server market). In March of this year SCO sued IBM (http://www.ibm.com/us/) for distributing SCO’s copyrighted Unix via IBM’s Linux asking $1 billion (http://www.theregister.co.uk/content/archive/29632.html). The contention is that SCO claims that Linux has ripped off parts of the Unix version that it purchased from Novell. Novell claimed it did not sell the copyright to the Unix that it sold SCO. Novell retracted that claim. In May, MS signed a licensing deal with SCO for an undisclosed monetary value. Ray Noorda, former Novell CEO, controls SCO through a company he owns called Canopy. This convoluted story (http://www.eweek.com/article2/0,3959,1094805,00.asp) has major implications for Linux. If IBM loses, it means that Linux will have to get major code alterations before is can be distributed or sold. This story is puzzling because of the interconnections of the companies involved and the past battles between the players. Ray Noorda was a notorious MS opponent. He now seems to be siding with MS. Watch this story closely.

Linus Torvalds, Linux creator, is quitting Transmeta (http://www.transmeta.com/), the chip maker, to work at the non-profit Open Source Development Lab (http://www.osdl.org/) located in Washington state. He may telecomute.

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