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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

July 2004 Suggested Retail Price $1.95 Volume XX Issue 7

Calendar of Events

!!! IMPORTANT !!!
Meeting dates for 2004
See page 10
for all confirmed dates.
Time remains the same.

Saturday
July 24

* * * *
MEETING PLACE
will be the
Glenside Public Library
* * * *

SEE YOU THERE!!

COD Computer Show Dates
July 25, 2004
August 29, 2004

Of Old Mice & Old Farts
by Larry Bothe, 7/3/04

If you're an old fart like me and have owned computers for many years you have probably replaced virtually every piece of computer equipment you started with, perhaps several times. But you may have an accessory that just seems to be better than what is available today, and so you keep on using it. For me that is a Kensington Trackball Expert Mouse. It has a huge Q-ball in the middle with large left and right-click buttons on each side. There is nothing like it available on the market today. At one point I had about half a dozen of them when the company I used to work for standardized all the mice in the office and gave the trackballs away. Now I have just two of them left; one for me and one for my wife.

Most modern computers use a PS-2 (little, round 6-pin connector), or perhaps a USB, connection for the mouse. Typically the connection, labeled "Mouse", is right next to the keyboard connection of the same type. However, my old Kensington trackball is a serial mouse. The cable that came with it is a 9-pin serial cable and it connects to the serial port on the back of the computer. It used to be that accessories like joysticks also connected to a serial port. Sometimes we had to put extra serial cards in our machines so we had enough serial ports for all our serial goodies. Now we have that problem with USB ports instead. (and IEEE 1344 Firewire)

At one point I had a serial joystick and only one serial port. Not wanting to install an extra serial card I instead obtained a serial-to-PS-2 adapter cable. Now I could attach my mouse where it said "Mouse", and still have my one serial port available for my fancy joystick. This was back in 1998. For a reason that I can no longer remember we did the same thing with my wife's machine; serial mouse with a PS-2 adapter plugged into a PS-2 mouse connection.

Then in the 2000-2001 timeframe my wife and I both bought new computers. Some upgrades (more RAM for both machines, LCD monitor for me, new motherboard and faster processor for my wife) to those machines ensued. A little more than year ago we both moved up to Windows XP to get away from the badly unstable Windows ME

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Reminder: You'll get better, faster service if you use CAEUG in the subject of your e-mail.

ABOUT THE NEWSLETTER:

This printed version of our newsletter was laid out using Adobe's Pagemaker Version 7.0 for Windows and was printed on a HP Laserjet III. Our group's membership database is maintained using MS Access and address labels are printed using MS Access 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.

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??

SIG meets before regular meeting from 9:05 to 9:45

MEMBERS HELPLINE

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

Beginner Helpline . . . . . Billy Douglas

Beginner hardware problems .Dick Fergus

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

Hardware problems, Win 9x, 2K, XP & Linux . . . . . John Spizzirri

Great Midwest Computer Show

Next show date
SUNDAY July 25, 2004
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
http://www.greatmidwestcomputershow.com
E-mail address:
info@greatmidwestcomputershow.com

Great Midwest Computer Show ©
2004 dates
July 25, 2004 at COD
August 29, 2004 at COD
September 26, 2004 at COD
October 24, 2004 at COD
November 21, 2004 at COD
December 19, 2004 at COD

NEW Money Saving Offer
CD of the Month
Pre Order + Prepay = SAVE $$

The club will offer the CD of the Month on a pre order, prepaid basis. The charge will be $50.00 a year for 10 months. This is $20 annual savings over buying them for $7 each month. Lynn Johnson, the treasurer, will keep track of anyone placing a 10-month order. Anyone wishing to place a prepaid order should contact:
Lynn.

BEE-Free CAEUG Picnic :: A Big Success

The board would like to thank Roger Kinzie and Michael Goldberg for their contribution in making the Annual CAEUG picnic an enjoyable time to relax. Also, thank you to everyone who so graciously supplied the extra food and to whoever forgot to order the bees :: Thank you. Everyone that showed up got to enjoy friendships, great food, beautiful weather, conversation (not always about computers) and great prizes. No one left empty handed.

Large turn-out for CAEUG picnic

A big winner of software & DVD drive.

Flower arrangements graced the tables

Food tables

Raffle items disappearing fast.

The Lamp Post Number 53

by John Spizzirri

July 15, 2004

Fry's Electronics (http://www.frys.com) opened at the beginning of this month. Fry's is located in Downers Grove on Finley road about a quarter mile south of Butterfield Road. Fry's is a nineteen-year-old West Coast computer and consumer electronics operation that is expanding into the Midwest. There are 25 stores in the western states and Texas. Many stores have a theme with exhibits depicting the subject, such as; ancient Rome, ancient Egypt, the old West, NASA, and etc. Fry's does not sell directly on the Internet. In order to get an Internet presence they purchased an established Internet retailer, the Outpost (http://www.outpost.com/). Fry's also operates a dial-up ISP (Internet Service Provider) in 22 states, Illinois among them. Our treasurer has switched from MSN to Frys and likes it. She also saves about twelve dollars a month. (Fry's ISP is $9.88 per month.) I missed their grand opening day because they advertise in the Friday Chicago Sun Times (http://www.suntimes.com/index/). That is the same Sun Times that lied about their circulation figures to charge more for advertising. Fry's is located in the heart of Republican controlled DuPage County. The Chicago Tribune (http://www.chicagotribune.com/) is reported to be the voice of the Republicans. Fry's has chosen not to advertise in the Tribune, thus most of you did not see their ad. Perhaps it's that Fry's was founded in California or maybe their marketing staff is inept. Fry's sales run from Friday through Tuesday. Sales are limited to stock on hand (no rain checks). Many items are limited to one per customer. On the grand opening day they had computers with the Linux operating system for $99 actual price (no rebates required). Their advertised sale items are priced below most competitors. The regular pricing is on par with competitors like CompUSA (http://www.compusa.com/), MicroCenter (http://www.microcenter.com/), TigerDirect (http://www.tigerdirect.com/), and Global Computer (http://www.globalcomputer.com/). There is a restaurant inside the store. I did not check it for quality or pricing. I have checked with some members and found that since Fry's opening our membership has spent almost $2000 there.

Dell Computer (http://www.dell.com/) and Hewlett-Packard (HP http://www.hp.com/) have both announced computer recycling programs. The Dell program requires that you purchase a new desktop or laptop computer from them in order to recycle an older computer/peripheral(s). HP, on the other hand, is working with Office Depot (http://www.officedepot.com/) to collect old hardware. The HP/Office Depot plan does NOT require a purchase. The details of the HP/Office Depot plan are at http://www.officedepot.com/promo/pages/docs/TermsandConditions.doc or on the Office Depot site just click on "recycle your tech hardware". The Dell plan will run for a "limited time" while the HP/Office Depot plan runs from July 18 through September 6. The full story is at http://zdnet.com.com/2100-1104_2-5267725.html .

Do you know Tarrant Costelloe? He owns http://www.planet-tolkien.com/ and http://www.shiremail.com/ . The J.R.R.Tolkien estate sued him for the planet-tolkien URL (Uniform Resource Locator). Costelloe is a Tolkien fan. The planet-tolkien site is a clearinghouse of Tolkien and Lord of the Rings information. Costelloe makes no money from it. The Tolkien estate dropped their case after that revelation. Costelloe started the shiremail site to make money by operating an e-mail service. Along comes lawyers for Warner Brothers (WB http://www2.warnerbros.com/main/homepage/homepage.html), New Line Productions (http://www.newline.com/), and Saul Zaentz Company (http://www.zaentz.com/). They somehow think they have rights to the word shire. You can look it up in the dictionary. It is the English word for the governmental unit that we call county or parish. Sheriff

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is derived from the term shire reeve (reeve was a law enforcement officer of old). I grant that "The Shire" was the pristine place where the Hobbits lived in the Tolkien books, but the word shire is close to 1000 years old. (Windows is at least 500 years old.) Shiremail has no references to Tolkien or any book or movie characters. There is a picture of a grassy field with trees. The picture was probably taken in England but could have been taken in New Zealand or Wisconsin. What gives these rich thugs the idea that they can bully a small business owner, who is not hurting or taking advantage of them, out of business? Will the people of Lincolnshire and Hampshire, Illinois be forced to pay the WB for the names of their towns? Will you have to pay a stipend to the WB for your next Yorkshire steak? (Yorkshire cattle http://www.ansi.okstate.edu/breeds/cattle/shorthorn/) I think its high time for this nonsense to stop. You can read the whole story with annotations at
http://www.theregister.co.uk/2004/07/14/one_domain_to_rule_them_all/ .
Th-Th-Th-That's all, folks.

Bloor Research in England reported that the French government was considering moving to Linux: http://www.it-director.com/article.php?articleid=12046&si=3247a7a891 . The article stated that Microsoft (MS http://www.microsoft.com) was going to offer France a lower price to remain in the MS fold. Computer Business Review Online has since reported that the strategy did not work. France is converting 1500 Windows NT servers to Mandrake Linux
(http://www.mandrakelinux.com/en-us/). The story is at
(http://www.cbronline.com/cbrnews/be5405c4ee06f5c680256ecf0032deab).

Paul Thurrott of Windows Network and .Net Magazine (http://www.winnetmag.com/) and others have reported that Steve Ballmer, MS CEO (Chief Executive Officer), issued a memo to all 57,000 MS employees stating that MS has to cut $1 billion in expenses this fiscal year. The problem is that expense growth has exceeded revenue growth for the last three years, while profits have been flat. Revenue growth is still in double digits, a growth rate most companies would kill for, but expenses are approaching triple digit growth rate. There are no immediate lay-offs planned but I just wonder what the "investment" Bill Gates made in India will do for his company. I see this as an indication that Linux is having a far greater influence on MS than anyone wants to mention. Or is it software piracy? Or could it be MS's three-year-old corporate software licensing program? Or could it be a combination of an aging product line and the other things I have already mentioned? If you hold MS stock in your portfolio, you may want to keep abreast of how MS handles these problems. IBM had similar problems that led to its $8 billion loss. To avoid bankruptcy, IBM re-organized the company, revamping the product line and laying off 30,000 plus employees. MS is not losing any money, yet.

Computer Business Review Online reported that 33% of all software installed worldwide last year was pirated. China and Vietnam are each responsible for 92%, the Ukraine responsible for 91%, Indonesia at 88%, and Russia 87% of the software that was pirated. The United States was the most compliant at 22%, yet in dollar terms the U.S. was first in pirated software. The full story is available with graphs for the various findings at
http://www.cbronline.com/cbrnews/585ab2eb94fbb6e180256ecb0032deeb .

The United States Computer Emergency Readiness Team (CERT) has issued a warning that MS Internet Explorer (IE) has a dangerous flaw that can allow a cracker to execute code on Windows machines (http://www.kb.cert.org/vuls/id/713878). CERT's recommendation is to switch to another browser (like Mozilla or Opera). Currently, IE has 95% of the browser market. The Mozilla Foundation (http://www.mozilla.org) reported that after the CERT report, daily downloads of Mozilla and FireFox browsers have doubled. Mozilla reported that on the day of the report, there were 200,000 downloads. Mozilla cannot take into account the gray distribution of its products, like our CD of the Month Basic which has the latest editions of both the Mozilla browsers as well as the free version of the Opera browser.

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A bug was found in the Mozilla browser about 2 weeks ago. A patch for the bug was issued two days after the bug was found (http://mozilla.org/security/shell.html).

Last week, MS released its monthly security patches. There were a total of seven patches and fixes. Two of them were identified as “critical”. The critical patches were for home users and can be found at http://www.microsoft.com/security . MS also released a tool to remove the Download.Ject virus. This virus attacks the vulnerability that was identified by CERT. MS has yet to patch that vulnerability, but they can create a tool to fix one virus that attacks via that security hole. You can get the tool for free at http://www.microsoft.com/downloads/details.aspx?familyid=FC84B8B5-A64D-4837-B65F-96925A514F71&displaylang=en .

There is a new free modem/cable/DSL speed test available from Cnet at http://reviews.cnet.com/Bandwidth_meter/7004-7254_7-0.html . The site tests the speed of your connection and gives you a graph showing how you compare to various Internet connections.

The movie, Fahrenheit 911, was available for free at http://www.archive.org/ for a short time. Allegedly, it was made available for download with the consent of the owners. The story is at http://www.theregister.co.uk/2004/07/09/archive_yeahright_org/ . The movie is no longer legally available on the Internet.

The remake of the movie Titanic is available on the Internet. It is not as long as the original (only 30 seconds) and it does not have the original stars (only animated bunnies), but it is fun to watch at http://www.angryalien.com/.

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

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translated into a plain-text file for delivery. Even some savvy recipients were duped to open the attached file, which was really an executable file that included a malicious virus. The innocuous subject line of the infected e-mail was “Hello,” “Server Report,” “hi,” “Mail Delivery System,” “Mail Transaction Failed,” “Status,” or “Error.”

The SCO Group, target of the original worm’s denial of service attack scheduled for February 1, 2004 (its fourth in the past 10 months), offered a $250,000 reward for information leading to the virus author’s arrest. When a variant targeted Microsoft, they offered a similar reward.

MessageLabs reported that in the first 4 days it had trapped over 5.5 million copies of infected e-mail headed for its clients. At one point, one in every 12 e-mails was laced with this worm, compared to last year’s SoBig virus outbreak, which peaked at an infection rate of 1 in 17 e-mails. Other antivirus companies reported that Mydoom (also known as Novarg) generated more traffic than any e-mail worm in history.

Viruses that have multiple vectors are the worst threat because they can send e-mail, perform a distributed denial of service attack and open a backdoor. The most problematic viruses have been the most recent. The SQL Slammer broke all records for the speed at which it was able to spread, to the point of disabling ATM machines and bringing Internet traffic to a halt. The SoBig Project employed spammed worms to infect PCs that could be used to install spyware, steal financial credentials, act as a front for spamming operations, launch DDoS (distributed Denial of Service) attacks on anti-spam sites, and allow spammers to be virtually untraceable.

Although many worms are benign, they demonstrate serious vulnerabilities, and the sheer volume of traffic can cause effective denial-of-service attacks because of bandwidth consumption. While IBM-compatible computers are the initial target, the network downtime and cleanup costs affect computers on all platforms. Mail servers are overloaded with the sheer volume of bogus messages, and automated responses from filtering software multiply the problem.

Once the latest threat has passed, the opportunity

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still remains for potential control of infected machines. So everyone should remain vigilant to apply patches, maintain current virus signatures, and otherwise secure their systems. Whether the next attack comes from worms, e-mail spamming of Trojans, newsgroup postings, websites or other methods, one thing is for sure. This kind of malware has gone from being just a nuisance to a permanent menace.

There is no restriction against any non-profit group using this article as long as it is kept in context with proper credit given the author. The Editorial Committee of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG), an international organization of which this group is a member, brings this article to you.

Don't Be a Victim of Health Scare Stories

By Alicia King Padgett
Alicia-apcug@comcast.net
APCUG Advisor for Region 9

Health scare artists are utilizing the Internet as a medium for terrorizing the public, and unfortunately many adults are taking the stories seriously. These tall tales are often written citing evidence and research that sounds legitimate. Frequently an e-mail is sent to you from a reliable friend who had received it from another acquaintance who had "personal knowledge or personal experience" with the alleged dangerous item. The health scare messages are always the same-whatever it is will make you sick or even cause death.

If you try to research accurate health information about the topic sent, you may literally become caught in the Web, where health hoaxes and urban medical myths run rampant. Many of these Websites appear to have valid researched data.

Before you decide to believe or, worse forward e-mail with serious health claims, do a little checking. Start on the Web with
http://www.urbanlegends.com or
http://www.snopes.com that catalogue the more persistent rumors. These two sites also detail persistent legends on other topics in addition to health scare stories.

Then go to reliable health sites, like:

http://www.mayohealth.org for general health
http://www.medhelp.org especially good for cardiology
http://www.oncolink.org for cancer
http://www.cancer.gov for cancer
http://www.navigator.tufts.edu for nutrition
http://www.fda.gov for latest updates on food/ drugs as well as extensive archives

So keep yourself informed and don't become one of the individuals caught in a web of confusion by believing the stories and passing them on to others.

Many of us have been victim of health-related frauds, myths, and fallacies. We have to make many decisions about our health and care and want to make them well informed. This site will keep you up-to-date on the latest findings on health care frauds.

Quack Watch is an informative site that deals with such issues like growth hormone scams, coral calcium, and acupuncture. It has a section on allergies and alternative medicine. You might want to start with Tips for Navigating our Web Sites. In the "Quackery" section you will find the following sections: Seven Warning Signs of Bogus Science, Ten Ways to Avoid Being Quacked, Signs of a "Quacky" web site.

Always seek a second opinion, but please peruse http://www.quackwatch.org

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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
Glenside Public Library in Glendale Heights
at 09:45am - 12:00pm on
Saturday July 24, 2004

The library is located. Please park at the West side of the lot, away from the building. Thank you.
The meeting(s) are not library sponsored and all inquiries should be directed to John Spizzirri. 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,John Spizzirri, at least five (5) days prior to the program, so that reasonable accommodation can be made for them.

CONFIRMED Meeting dates for 2004 at Glenside Public Library:
July 24, August 28, September 25,
October 23, November/December meeting on December 4

NEW CD of The Month format: Is now available in two (2) flavors. The Basic CD will be packed with the standard items, while the CD of the Month will have NEW and updated items. Both are available at the meeting.

Hope to see you there.