

Abort, Retry, Ignore...

The Official Newsletter of THE
COMPUTERS ARE EASY USER GROUP



April 2005

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Volume XXII

Issue 04

Financial and Investing Web sites

By Arthur Biladeau

In January 2004 I broke my back and was out of work for 7 months. I'm fine now, no surgery, went through physical therapy, and I'm back to work full-duty with no restrictions. During this 7-month forced vacation with tons of free time, I gave up on individual stocks and switched to index funds and asset allocation. The following web sites might be as interesting to you as they were to me.

Try the Wall Street Journal at <http://online.wsj.com/public/us> and search for articles by Jonathan Clements. They're free, no log-in required. Click on the "Market Commentary" section at http://www.thomson.com/financial/fi_investmgr.jsp. Once you reach the Market Commentary page, you can read the last two months of commentaries. Click on The Intelligent Asset Allocator link at <http://www.efficientfrontier.com/> and check out this book from your local library. <http://mutualfundstore.com/> is loaded with investment strategy segments in RealMedia format. Real player is required. Read the annual letters of Warren Buffett from 1977 to present at <http://www.berkshirehathaway.com/letters/letters.html>. Read Business Week articles on-line at <http://www.businessweek.com/investor/funds.html>. <http://www.sectorupdates.com/recommend.asp> is filled with investing ideas. <http://socialize.morningstar.com/NewSocialize/Asp/AllConv.asp?forumId=F100000015> is a chat forum for Vanguard Diehards and Bogleheads, if you love Vanguard Funds. Check out the list of 3-ALARM funds, i.e. funds you should consider selling, at <http://www.fundalarm.com/>. Chuck Jaffe no longer writes for the Boston Globe, but an archive of his articles can be found at <http://www.boston.com/business/personalfinance/jaffe/>. Use the Morningstar Retirement Planning Tool for free at <http://www.morningstar.com/Cover/RetirementPlanner.html>, or pay for premium advice. Read financial columnist Terry Savage at <http://www.terrysavage.com/>. For Vanguard investors, read Dan Wiener's Advisor Online at <http://www.adviseronline.com/>. View the speeches of John Bogle, the Chief Executive Officer of The Vanguard Group until 1996, at

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!!! IMPORTANT !!!

Meeting date
Saturday
April 23
Time 9:45 - noon

MEETING PLACE
will be the
Glenside Public
Library

SEE YOU
THERE!!

COD
Computer
Show Dates

2005
April 24
May 22

CAEUG OFFICERS & CHAIRPERSONS



President	John Spizzirri
V.P. (Programs)	Dick Seward
Secretary (& donuts)	AlSkwara
Treasurer	L. Johnson
Newsletter Editor	Kathy Groce
Membership Chairperson & Circulation Manager	Pete Nicchia
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Software Reviewer	Brian Noon
Webmaster	
& Technical Consultant	John St. Clair
Coffee Service	Joan Thompson
Picnic Chairpersons	Mike Goldberg Roger Kinzie

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 April 24
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

Kids 12 and under FREE

<http://www.greatmidwestcomputershow.com>

E-mail address:

info@greatmidwestcomputershow.com

**Great Midwest Computer Show ©
2005 dates**

April 24, 2005 at COD
May 22, 2005 at COD
June 26, 2005 at COD
July 31, 2005 at COD
August 28, 2005 at COD
September 25, 2005 at COD
October 30, 2005 at COD
November 20, 2005 at COD
December 18, 2005 at COD

**NEW Money Saving Offer for 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.

http://www.vanguard.com/bogle_site/bogle_home.html . Read opinionated investment FAQs at <http://www.travismorien.com/FAQ.htm> . Ric Edelman has tons of financial advice at <http://www.ricedelman.com/> . Chris Farrell's "Right On The Money" personal finance program is on Public Radio. His web site is <http://www.rightonthemoney.org/> . Dr. J is seen on Fox News In The Morning, and his web site is <http://www.insideoptions.com/> . When to sell a stock? Read Motley Fool advice at <http://www.fool.com/news/1999/foth991103.htm> and at <http://www.fool.com/dripport/2000/dripport000424.htm> . Get a financial education at the Federal Reserve Education web site, <http://federalreserveeducation.org/FRED/> . And finally, read "Hot Commodities" by Jim Rogers. Rogers believes that a COMMODITIES index fund rather than a STOCK index fund is the way to go.

Good Luck with your investing!

Note to the Editor

Dear Editor,

At the March meeting, members of the CAEUG had a great opportunity to help defray club expenses by receiving the club newsletter, the ARI, via e-mail. The subject generated much discussion and an informal poll was taken as to how many times during the day, week or month members checked their e-mail. In the end the motion was defeated. As President Spizzirri had stated earlier in the meeting, there will be some expenses coming up that the club will have to cover. Saving up to \$100.00 dollars a month in printing and postage would have gone a long way to help the club save money. Two comments I remember during the discussion were, ' I like getting the printed copy as it reminds me of the up coming meeting', and ' I like to save it to read later when I have time'. In both cases getting the ARI via e-mail serves both purposes. It can be a reminder of the upcoming meeting and be a link that takes you to the CAEUG web site to click on the ARI file or the actual Acrobat pdf file attachment can be in the e-mail. Last year the club mailed out post cards as a reminder of an upcoming meeting at nearly a third of the cost of first class postage. Surely if meeting reminders needed to be sent out this would be a cheaper method to use. This is a computer club, every month we learn something about our computers. Whether its sending out Christmas letters, enhancing a digital photo we took or creating DVD's of family events. In this day of electronic communication we need to look forward and use these machines as they were intended; to help us be more efficient.

Dean Holste

How to Report Tech Problems to Get Answers

By Gabe Goldberg, APCUG Advisor and Columnist, AARP Computers and Technology Website. ggoldberg@apcug.net

Using computers and technology means having questions and problems. But you can't get answers and solutions without asking the *right* questions. A little preparation can be a big help in solving annoyances, mysteries, and disasters.

How to Report Tech Problems to Get Answers

The more we use computers and technology, the more questions we have and problems we need solved. But it's hard to get answers and solutions without asking the *right* questions and describing the problem at hand. We're specific when visiting the doctor or auto mechanic: we describe what's wrong and when it began. We may even imitate the noise our car makes for the mechanic.

But when faced with computer oddities and malfunctions we sometimes revert to unhelpful generalities such as "My email is broken" or "My printer stopped working" or "I get an error when I start Word". Problem reports such as these don't allow diagnosing a problem; at best, they elicit a response like "Tell me more".

It saves time to collect as much information as possible before asking for help. As a bonus, gathering problem details and considering relevant factors can often allow solving problems oneself!

Just as a doctor or mechanic needs details, someone analyzing a computer problem must know the environment in which it occurred. So describe your computer (hardware/software/networking/application/etc.) to provide context. Mention your operating system (Windows 98/ME/XP, Mac OS, Linux, etc.), what version of what application failed (Internet Explorer 6.0, MS Word XP, etc.), what Internet connection is used (dial or cable/DSL), and any other details that may help.

Don't omit details — it's better to have too much information than to miss a crucial factor. Sometimes it's worth capturing screen images showing a problem; tools for doing this will be described in a future article.

Other important steps in describing symptoms and getting help are:

- Distinguish facts from guesses and interpretations.
- If an error message was issued, write it down, word-for-word. Then check it for accuracy. (Often searching Google for the error message text or a distinctive chunk — entered in quotation marks — will yield information on a problem.)
- Note what you did just before the problem occurred and whether anything else odd happened since you last rebooted and before the problem at hand.
- Mention whether the problem happened before, and if so how you resolved it.
- List whatever (hardware, software, settings, network, *anything*) changed recently.

-- Explain if you attempted to solve the problem and what resulted. (Remember that rebooting often cures problems, though without explaining them.)

-- Note where you've already looked for information (product manual or Help, company Web site or FAQ, etc.).

-- Reread your query imagining you know nothing about the problem except what's in the query. Add what's missing that someone else needs to know in order to help.

-- To help friends or service personnel respond to your question — and to let the question be filed and found — use a meaningful Subject line, not Help!, Urgent, or Question. Describe the context (e.g., Windows XP) and the problem (e.g., Windows Update never finds new patches).

To help your helper help you —

Be clear about your overall goal, don't focus on an intermediate step you think is necessary — you may distract someone into addressing how you're trying to do something rather than what you actually want to do.

Ask for help in the right/best place. AARP's Computers and Technology Web board

<http://community.aarp.org/rp-computers/start> hosts many people with deep and diverse experience who are most generous with their time offering help and advice. And the Internet hosts thousands of mailing lists and newsgroups specializing in every imaginable topic. Searching for find the best place to pose a question will get you better and more complete answers and avoid your seeming like a novice for posting out-of-place queries.

As you work with an individual or a group, collaborate — don't try to overpower them. Be respectful, not belligerent; don't make them feel stupid even if you feel they are. They may have missed a detail, you may not have conveyed the whole story.

If you're working with someone at a company help desk, don't try to "pull rank" based on age or experience or professional credentials. Mention past interactions with the company, emphasizing positive outcomes.

Finally, a longish document from Eric Raymond — an influential leader of the "open source" (shared software development) movement - at <http://www.catb.org/~esr/faqs/smart-questions.html> provides useful tips, though it's a little too harsh in places for my taste. But his comments on how to ask questions and where to seek help are interesting and helpful.

This article appeared originally on AARP's Computers and Technology Web site,

<http://www.aarp.org/computers> . (c) AARP 2005. Permission is granted for reprinting and distribution by non-profit organizations with text reproduced unchanged and this paragraph included.

Obtaining Your FREE Credit Report

by Larry Bothe, 3/30/2005

A few years ago the federal government mandated that everyone is entitled to receive one free credit report once a year from each of the three national credit reporting companies; Trans-Union, Equifax and Experian. In order to not place too big a burden on these companies all at once the country was divided into 4 regions. Each region is being phased in over time about 4 months apart. The Midwest, the second region, became effective the 1st of this month (March 2005).

The place to start to get your free reports is a website called Annual Credit Report, <http://www.annualcreditreport.com/>. Note that there are a lot of offers for free credit reports these days, but the catch is that you have to sign up for future reports for a monthly fee. Unless you really want monthly reporting don't go to these sites. Stick with [annualcreditreport.com](http://www.annualcreditreport.com/) to get your truly free, no-strings-attached credit report as provided for by law.

Once in the A-C-R site you will be asked to select your state, and then enter your basic name and address information along with your social security number and date of birth. Then you are given a choice of from which credit reporting company you would like to receive a report. You can choose any one, or two, or all three companies. If you choose all three, as I did, then after each report you go back to the choice page and tell it to GO again. You are automatically cycled to the next credit reporting company in turn.

As you go into each company's site you will be asked additional questions to establish that you are really you and not someone trying to steal your personal credit information. These questions are things like the street address of a previous residence, the name of a mortgage company with whom you have done business, the name of the county in which you live, an account number for a credit card you have, etc. They are things that are already in your credit report but only you personally would be likely to know.

Once you authenticate yourself you will be offered two things that you have to pay for if you

want them. One is the continuing reporting service mentioned above, and the other is your credit score. (More on credit score later.) I just said "No Thanks" to both items and then got my free, detailed report from each of the companies. The free report lists the facts of your credit history; things like credit cards or charge accounts, any loans (mortgage, auto, home-equity, line-of-credit, etc.), and the payment histories for each one. They also tell you who has recently inquired about your credit and if you have any negative credit information on file.

Since all 3 credit reporting companies purport to do the same thing you would think they would each have the same information about you and the reports would look pretty much the same. Unfortunately, such is not the case, which is why you should obtain and study all 3 reports. In my case only Trans-Union had my employment history. Experian has my ex-wife's phone number in Florida as one of my phone numbers. The Trans-Union report is a total of 5 pages long and reports on 13 accounts. Experian and Equifax each report on 18 accounts but the Experian report is 11 pages and the Equifax is a whopping 20 pages in length. You would think that the 13 accounts reported by Trans-Union would be included in the 18 reported in the other two reports, but they aren't. Each reporting company found one or more accounts not reported by the other two. In every case the odd ones found were old closed/inactive accounts. Each report tells you how to contact the respective company if there is an error in the report. But Equifax consumes the last 4 pages of their report telling you about this, and many of the laws and rights you have about credit reporting. It's a bit of overkill in my opinion. I doubt that many people will read it all.

I mentioned above that you have to pay to get your credit score. All three reporting companies want \$6 or \$7 for that bit of information. Here's the deal. The free credit report gives you the FACTS of your credit history, but not an ANALYSIS of it. In the analysis part they assign a numerical value to such things as amount of credit available to you, late payments (if any), length of time at current residence, rent or own your home, overall indebtedness, bankruptcy (god forbid!), etc., and they come up with a composite number called

credit score. It is an indication of your creditworthiness and is used by potential lenders to determine if they want to extend you credit or loan you money, and if so, how much and at what interest rate. If I were about to borrow a large sum of money (mortgage on a house or a car loan) then I would want to know my credit score so I could use that as a negotiating tool with the lender. In my opinion the reporting companies ought to give you your credit score as part of your free report, but I guess the law wasn't constructed that way.

When you sit down to get your credit reports be sure you allow adequate time. This is not something you do in a couple minutes. When I did it I got a total of six reports, three each for my wife and me. Between learning to navigate the websites, answering the authentication questions for each report and printing them out, it took me about an hour. And be sure to have plenty of paper in your printer; you're going to kill a few trees before you're done. [Editor's note: You must print these reports out. They cannot be saved to disk unless you pay for the reports.]

I'll close here by going out on a limb and saying that if I was in a hurry and had time to get only one report I guess I would obtain the one from Trans-Union. It is the by far the shortest, and in my judgment it is the easiest one to read. While Trans-Union missed some accounts that were reported by the other two, all the "missed" ones were closed/inactive. I'm a lot more worried about open accounts that I am not aware of, and fortunately none of the reporting companies found any of those. The very long report from Equifax did include one nice feature that the others did not; they presented a one-line listing of all open accounts, and separately a listing of all the closed ones. That is a really helpful quick reference.

These days the real concern and need to look at your credit report frequently is to guard against identity theft. Any new and unrecognized account (one you didn't ask to be established) should be investigated immediately. A whole raft of recent credit inquires should also raise a red flag. One strategy to keep up with this on a timely basis would be to stagger your free annual credit report requests. Since there are

three credit-reporting companies, and each one will give you one free report a year, you may want to ask for a report from a different company every four months. This would give you the most up-to-date credit information you can get without subscribing to (and paying for) a monthly service. Of course since I asked for all three of my reports at the same time I can't pursue this strategy for a year.

Larry Bothe is an associate member of CAEUG and an "honorary" member of FVPCA. He was President of CAEUG for a time back in the 90's when he lived in the Chicago area. Larry 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
March 26, 2005**

President John Spizzirri called the March meeting to order at 9:50 am. There were 24 members in attendance and 2 guests. The minutes were approved as printed in the ARI.

Old Business:

President Spizzirri reminded everyone that the next computer show at COD is Sunday April 24th and asked volunteers to work at our table. Remember your admission cost is reimbursed by the club.

President Spizzirri also advised of the need for articles for the newsletter, submit articles to Kathy Groce. You can e-mail her at kgroce@iwon.com

New Business:

The permit for the annual picnic has been secured. The picnic is June 18th, which is the third Saturday in June. (Mike Goldberg passed the sign up sheet around.)

Frank Braman reported on the status of executive board nominations; The Vice President position is unfilled at this time. The current slate is as follows: President: Mike Goldberg; Vice-President: Open; Treasurer: Lynn Johnson; Secretary: Al Skawra & Dean Holste. Frank then asked for any nominations from the floor. Bill Douglas was nominated for President and Frank Braman was nominated for Vice-President. No other nominees came forward, nominations closed. The final slate to be voted on at the April meeting is as follows:

President: Bill Douglas

Mike Goldberg

Vice-President: Frank Braman

Secretary: Dean Holste

Al Skawra

Treasurer: Lynn Johnson

The By-Law change proposed by President Spizzirri will be handed out at the next meeting.

President Spizzirri advised that the Executive

The Lamp Post
Number 61 by John Spizzirri
April 10, 2005



A number of free books by Graeme Birchall on SQL and DB2 are available at http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/graeme_birchall/HTM_COOK.HTM . All the downloadable files are on the CD of the month.

The Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF <http://www.eff.org/>) monitors the government on your behalf looking for infringement of your rights. The most recent proposal is use of Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) in passports. The State Department (<http://travel.state.gov/>) wants all passports to be “machine readable” to facilitate entry/exit of United States borders. That might expedite its stated objective but the unintended consequences are readily discerned. ANY RFID reader can “read” a passport. You can purchase a proximity RFID readers here <http://www.boundless.com/> and <http://www.alientechnology.com/> . Longer-range readers are available. By just walking or driving past an RFID reader, all the information stored on it can be obtained. Any information read can be cloned so a passport can be forged. Will it have your Social Security number (SSN)? The SSN is required at application time (http://travel.state.gov/passport/forms/ds11/ds11_842.html). It will surely have your name, address, date of birth, place of birth, employer’s name, current or former spouses’ name, mother’s maiden name, and father’s name. This method of identification will cost between \$97 and \$160. Will it stop a terrorist or other undesirable from obtaining a passport? Never. A recent “rule” was announced that by 2006 all people entering the United States will be required to show (have) a passport to (re)enter the country. Thus, any American visiting Niagara Falls, Sault Ste. Marie, Tijuana, Juarez, Nogales, and many other border tourist centers will be required to have a passport to cross the border. I can foresee that criminals will hang around border tourist areas gathering information for identity theft and con games. Terrorists will do the same so they can pose as a real American via cloning and forgery. The other downside of this scheme is the cost of these machines, personnel training, and law enforcement costs or ID theft and cons all paid for by your tax dollars. Would this really facilitate border crossing? Would it force honest citizens into revealing information about themselves to nameless, faceless bureaucrats who generally, have the same percentage of criminal elements as the general population i.e. 2%? You judge. Would it stop illegal immigration? Hardly! The story is at <http://www.eff.org/cgi/tiny?urlID=447>

The Real ID act is before the Senate again. This act would create a defacto national ID card. It would compel states to have a uniform drivers license/ID card. RFID may also be a requirement. The downside of a national ID card is similar to that of a passport. It makes it easier for Transportation Security Administration employees (TSA <http://www.tsa.gov/public/>) to deny access to airplanes. It will facilitate a TSA-like structure for trains, buses and other forms of mass transit (commuter trains?). If you are unlucky enough to get your name on a “no fly” list like Senator Edward Kennedy or David Nelson (Ozzie and Harriet’s son), you will not be allowed to travel via a public conveyance. Unless you are a Senator, your name will not come off the list without spending weeks of time and thousands of dollars. Will police officers routinely ask for IDs of passengers in private vehicles? They already require the driver to show ID. “May I see your papers, please?” may become as commonplace as it was 60 years ago in Germany. Many people scoff at that, yet a number of laws passed in the last 35 years along with law enforcement practices since 9/11, mirror the Third Reich. The story and a method of contacting your Senators is at <http://action.eff.org/site/Advocacy?id=119> .

For those of you who think that a sacrifice of our rights is justified because the Bush administration would not abuse this added power, check <http://www.judicialwatch.org/1197.shtml> and <http://www.uhuh.com/clinton/list-cli.htm> . Perhaps Bush might not abuse this power, but who will be

(con't on page 8)

the next President? Who will be the President in 20 years? The Constitution was established to “secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity”

(<http://www.house.gov/Constitution/Constitution.html>). Thomas Jefferson said, “...let me hear no more about having trust and confidence in the men of government — but rather BIND THEM DOWN BY THE CHAINS of the Constitution!” (<http://laissez-fairerepublic.com/RepVsDem.htm>).

Ziff Davis Net and Sophos (<http://www.sophos.com/>) reported that there is another e-mail campaign by crackers to fool people into downloading a Trojan horse onto their machines. I'll say it again - Microsoft does NOT send anyone unsolicited e-mail. If you get e-mail that looks like it came from Microsoft (MS <http://www.microsoft.com/>) that you did not ask for, throw it away. Do NOT click on any link in e-mail to go to MS. If you need a security update, start Internet Explorer; click on Tools on the menu and click on Windows Update. Doing that will safely take you to MS for a security update. Check <http://www.sophos.com/virusinfo/articles/fakemsupdate.html> or <http://ct.zdnet.com.com/clicks?c=117294-13173416&brand=zdnet&ds=5> for the story .

Mike Goldberg sent me a link from TheRegister.com (<http://www.theregister.co.uk/>). It exposes a study done by the Royal Economic Society (<http://www.res.org.uk/>) that revealed that computers at home make children less intelligent. The study states that children who use computers regularly lack creativity, imagination and critical thinking skills. Check the story at http://www.channelregister.co.uk/2005/03/21/how_dumb_kids/ .

Kathy Groce, our newsletter editor, and I attended Tom Skilling's Severe Weather seminar at Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory (FermiLab <http://www.fnal.gov/>) on April 9th. Tom Skilling is the meteorologist for WGN television (<http://weather.wgntv.com/US/IL/Chicago.html?main=1>). Each year for the last 25 years, Tom has gathered experts in severe weather from across the country to present a free seminar at FermiLab. This year's guests included:

Mary Ann Cooper MD, a lightning injury expert (<http://www.uic.edu/labs/lightninginjury/>)

Jim Angel, Illinois State Climatologist (<http://www.sws.uiuc.edu/atmos/statecli/>)

Albert Pietrycha, storm-chasing meteorologist (<http://www.sws.uiuc.edu/atmos/statecli/>)

Jim Allsopp, a NOAA meteorologist (<http://weather.gov/chicago>)

Paul Sirvatka, a COD storm chaser (<http://weather.cod.edu/chasing/>)

Brian Smith, warning coordinator for NOAA (<http://www.crh.noaa.gov/oax/>)

A number of helpful Websites dealing with lightning were <http://www.lightning-strike.org/> , <http://www.lightningsafety.noaa.gov/> , and <http://www.struckbylightning.org/> . Stills and video from the seminar is on the CD of the month. WARNING: Some of the videos contain strong language e.g. the s-word and the f-word.

If you take Vioxx or Bextra, as I did in the past, you may want to check out this site for possible health effects: <http://www.fda.gov/cder/drug/infopage/cox2/default.htm> . Both of these drugs have been taken off the market.

I reported last month about the theft from LexisNexis (<http://www.lexisnexis.com/>) of personal information. LexisNexis now reports that information about 310,000 U.S. citizens was 'stolen' instead of the 32,000 that was reported last month. Check the LexisNexis Web site to see what types of information it has about you. You won't be able to access your information directly without paying a large fee. The full story is at <http://news.zdnet.com/2100-1009-5665221.html> .

I was asked by one of our members if the <http://criminalcheck.com/> Web site was a good one to check on sex offenders. I checked it against the official sites and found it accurate; but not complete. The official site is http://www.isp.state.il.us/sor/asp/search_county.htm for the State of Illinois. For redirector sites outside Illinois try: <http://www.klaaskids.org/index.htm> or <http://www.usatrace.com/sex.html> . The last site has

many dead links. Usually the county or Parrish Sheriff's office keeps the official list of sex offenders in a specific area. If you know a general address or area, look up the Sheriff's Web site for that area for a list of sex offenders. Those sites are probably more accurate. Remember that everyone on these lists is not necessarily dangerous. Some sites make that differential clear.

If you are interested in Linux, try <http://ifs.crash404.com/ifs/news.html> , which has the Linux from Scratch book online for free. The site states that you may download the whole book to read offline, but those links are dead.

Another site, <http://www.maththinking.com/boat/booksIndex.html> , has numerous books that can be downloaded or read online. Most of the books are about information technology - operating systems, programming, databases, and the Internet.

Recently, 1,000 Chicago schoolteachers took a school day off. They went to Springfield to "lobby" the legislature to increase your income tax to pay for schools (teacher's salaries?). The word they used was lobby. I wonder how many of them paid the \$50 fee to register as a lobbyist per state law? The Superintendent of Schools, Arne Duncan, seemingly approved of this action even though his budget had to pay for the 1,000 substitutes. If the teachers were "representing" the Chicago School District, the district would be obligated to pay a \$50 fee, also. If you want to check who is lobbying whom, try <http://www.cyberdriveillinois.com/departments/index/lobbyist/home.html> .

The Center for Public Integrity (<http://www.publicintegrity.org/>) is a Web site that keeps track of the money spent in Washington, D.C., not government money but lobbyist money (big business, big labor, 527's and PAC's).

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

Board approved an increase in the cost of the CD of the Month. The price will increase from \$7.00 dollars to \$9.00 dollars each; therefore the yearly subscription cost will be \$70.00 dollars per year. The cost of the basic CD will remain the same at \$5.00 dollars each. A question from the floor asked why the cost is being raised. President Spizzirri advised that the club will need more money in anticipation of future expenses. One example is that the LCD projector will need to be replaced soon. Discussion was held as to how to raise more funds for the club.

Club member Weldon Johnson made a motion to stop mailing the club newsletter, the ARI, to members and to use e-mail instead. Doing this would save the club the expense of printing and postage each month. The motion was seconded by Mike Goldberg. There was much discussion as to the pros' and cons' of e-mail vs. U.S. mail. An informal poll was taken about how often members checked their e-mail. Some members liked the fact that the newsletter came as it reminded them of the up coming meeting. Others liked being able to read the newsletter on their computer and printing it out if needed. Suggestions to cut down on the expense of printing and mailing the ARI were made. It was noted that approximately 100 newsletters are printed and mailed each month. As there was no other discussion, President Spizzirri called for a vote on the motion. The results are as follows:

Yes: 10

No: 11
Motion Failed.

It was noted that the club website was down. President Spizzirri advised that due to a miscommunication the annual subscription fee was not paid. This will be taken care of forthwith.

Members' Forum:

Questions about where to buy laser printer toner cartridges, the cost of printing digital photos, a balky Belkin wireless router, using dBase IV (a DOS based program) on a Win 2000 laptop.

We then took a break for coffee and donuts.

Raffle items this month included:

Tripp-Lite power Center, Iomega 1GB SCSI Jaz drive, Microtek Slim Scan C3 Flatbed Scanner, Visioneer Paperport 600B Scanner

Presentation:

Frank Braman presented a program on the capabilities of a digital camera and using an editing program to put video, sound and photos together.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:45am.

The next meeting is Saturday April 23, 2005

Respectfully Submitted,
Dean Holste, Acting Secretary

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
starting 9:45am on
Saturday April 23

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. 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, at least five (5) days prior to the program, so that reasonable accommodation can be made for them.

**CONFIRMED Meeting dates for 2005 at Glenside Public Library:
May 28, June 18 CAEUG Picnic (THIRD Saturday of June)**

****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.

Presenter will be Dean Holste with a presentation of MSPublisher

Hope to see you there.