CAEUG

Computers Are Easy User Group

Confirmed meeting dates
:: ::
March 23
Room A
9:15-12:15
April 27
Board Room
May 25
Board Room
June 22
CAEUG Picnic
:: ::

Mailing address:
CAEUG
P.O. Box 3150
Glen Ellyn, IL 60138

:: ::

MEETING PLACE is the Glenside Public Library

:: ::

Visitors Welcome
HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE!!

* *

March 23, 2019   4th Saturday
Board Room

Medical Information on the Internet
Dr. Garry Sexton
APCUG Video

REMINDER: $20.00 Membership dues for 2019 are due
See John StClair at the meeting or mail dues to
CAEUG, P.O. Box 3150, Glen Ellyn, IL 60138

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Lamp Post 211
March 2019
by John Spizzirri

The Decorah, Iowa bald eagles web cam is up and running at a new location (1). Raptor Resource Project (RRP (2)) reported that three eggs were laid but one was broken. This means that there will only be two eaglets to watch, if they make it to hatch. This has only happened three times in the last ten years. Bald eagles are believed by the RRP to mate for life. The male that has been pairing with this female since 2007 failed

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to return to the nesting area this season and is believed to be dead. The female accepted a new male last October for this season. WhoTV has the latest news on the eagles (3).

1) https://is.gd/YAuMF0
2) https://is.gd/bSlvkd
3) http://via.whotv.com/z7kxA

Kim Komando reported that a recent Windows 10 update has degraded system and game performance (1). This update is known as KB4482887 (2). If you have installed this update and it is affecting your system, you can remove it by following the instructions in the Kim Komando article or a much clearer article is available at Windows Central (3).

1) https://is.gd/YVbf2G
2) https://is.gd/aEIWTC
3) https://www.windowscentral.com/node/44268

March, the month of meteorological spring (1), is a time for spring cleaning (2) which includes your computer ((3), (4), (5), (6), (7), (8)). The common thread in these articles is remove junk files, remove unused files, remove unused programs, remove duplicate files, get rid of spyware and malware, make sure your antivirus software is up to date, de-fragment your mechanical hard drive, and back up your files. Only two of the articles mention cleaning the physical device(s). Desktops should have the side cover taken off and the dust blown out with compressed air or a leaf blower (9). Do that job outside, if possible. Shake keyboards upside down to dislodge detritus. Wipe keyboards, screens, and mice down with cleaning wipes. Only use approved materials so as not to cause damage. The one thing that all the articles assume is that you not only want to do the cleaning, but that you will set aside the time and actually do the cleaning. In my experience, those assumptions are wildly optimistic.

1) http://www.ncei.noaa.gov/node/55
2) https://is.gd/WNRI8j
3) https://www.teachhub.com/node/5866
4) https://is.gd/SGcsFo
5) https://www.ontrack.com/blog/?p=5614
6) https://www.technology-solved.com/?p=5826
7) https://is.gd/o4OtbE
8) https://is.gd/MbFh8Q
9) https://is.gd/ewTPpv

While working on the Lamp Post, the solid-state drive (SSD (1)) in this Hewlett Packard (HP (2)) PC failed. I did a normal shut down in the evening. The next morning the PC reported there was no boot device. I booted to a USB (3) with a Linux OS and was unable to find the SSD. I opened the PC. I checked the power and

data connections on the SSD and the power supply and motherboard. All the connections were firmly seated. I restarted the PC without the USB with the same failure. I removed the SSD from the PC and put it into a external hard drive enclosure (4). Using another Linux PC I was able to see the drive. The drive reported it had no data. On a Windows PC it reported it was not 'initialized' i.e. it was blank. It was a Crucial M300 2 Terabyte SSD. I contacted Crucial via their web site (5). I had a 'web chat' with a person (I think it was a person) named Jen. Jen asked for a number from packaging that I had thrown away a long time ago. I gave Jen four numbers that were printed on the the SSD. From those numbers Jen was able to give me the number that was asked for first. From that number Jen determined that the SSD was still under warranty and gave me a Return Material Authorization number (RMA). Jen directed me to another Crucial web site to fill out forms to get a replacement SSD. It took about 45 minutes. I had to go to the Post Office to get a bubble mailer to send the SSD to Crucial with the RMA and a print out of an e-mail they sent me. I had to insure the SSD and get tracking. The retail price of the M300 2 Terabyte SSD is $300. I bought it for $125 during an introductory sale. I did lose the data and the Linux Mint settings. Fortunately, virtually all of my data files were backed up. I lost no files that I use to write the Lamp Post. All in all this episode is just a nuisance that cost a few dollars and a few hours.

1) https://is.gd/6b8V9F
2) https://is.gd/36jtnp
3) https://is.gd/55Ieln
4) https://is.gd/aq1ewH
5) https://www.crucial.com/

I have listed search engines that do not track or spy on you in previous Lamp Post articles. They are: Start Page (1), DuckDuckGo (2), Qwant (3), Yippy (4), Swisscows (5), Lukol (6), MetaGer (7), Gigablast (8), and Oscobo (9). You may note that some are no longer listed and some new names have appeared. Ixquick has been rolled into Start Page. Not all these search engines work equally as well as each other or the tracking search engines. The tracking search engines are: Google (10), Yahoo (11), and Bing (12). Most people I know blithely use Google, Yahoo, or Bing. These companies are building profiles of each person and then selling the data to advertisers. Why does that matter? For one thing if they know you want a product, you're more likely to pay more for it.

1) https://www.startpage.com/
2) https://duckduckgo.com/
3) https://www.qwant.com/
4) http://yippy.com/
5) https://swisscows.ch/
6) https://www.lukol.com/
7) https://metager.org/
8) http://www.gigablast.com/
9) https://www.oscobo.com/

10) https://www.google.com/
11) https://search.yahoo.com/
12) https://www.bing.com/

Here are a few web sites that may be as useful to you as they are to me. If you are in need of a font (for free) Google has some to offer (1). Just select the one you want, download it, and install it according to the rules of your operating system. Amazon (2) has just about anything that you may want, but at what price? CamelCamelCamel (3) tracks prices for you. if you set up an account, it can notify you of better pricing. If the pricing irritates you, you can calm yourself with soothing sounds at A soft murmur (4). Perhaps you want more excitement with Broadcastify (5). It allows you to tune it to public emergency band radio channels (fire, police, etc). Getting free pictures for use as wall paper or creative projects all royalty free at Pixabay (6). All pictures are in the public domain.

1) https://fonts.google.com/
2) https://www.amazon.com/
3) https://camelcamelcamel.com/
4) https://asoftmurmur.com/
5) https://www.broadcastify.com/
6) https://pixabay.com/

Between you, me and the LampPost, that's all for now.

I Drive vs. Carbonite
by Larry Bothe, 3/7/19

I have written in ARI about backing up computers on a couple of previous occasions. However, technology changes, as does the marketing of backup services, and those changes have caused me to take a fresh look. I have again changed what I am doing to protect my data, and the data of others for which I am responsible.

Backup is very important to me. I can't wait until something bad happens and then exclaim, "Darn, I wish I had that backed up." Back in the 90's, when I lived in the Chicago area and was for a time president of CAEUG, the group had financial problems. As President I took over membership and dues payment. With that move I created a fiduciary responsibility to protect CAEUG's data. I couldn't risk having to come to a meeting and say I had a hard drive crash. I have no idea who is a member or who has paid their dues. Back then we backed up to CDs. I remember carrying a copy in my car so they could be off-site in case there was a fire at my house. Today isn't a lot different. I'm the Treasurer of the local pilots' association, and I keep their membership records. I'm also deeply involved with a WW-II museum where I am the volunteer curator. I have a lot of their data, especially photographs and fund-raising information, on my computer at home. I of course have my own important personal

data (tax returns, investment records, magazine articles, etc.) on my computer as well. If I lose my own data it's just my problem, but I absolutely can't cause a problem for others.

Somewhere a while back I graduated from CDs to DVDs for backup. But they still weren't automatic: I had to manually make the backup copies and store them offsite. Then "cloud" backup became available, which could be automated. I started with a service called Rebit. Their plan was to have both cloud backup and backup to a local external hard drive. I used them until they suddenly went out of business several years ago. Next it was Carbonite, which was touted by Kim Komando, and also used both the external hard drive and the cloud (their servers). The Carbonite downfall, for me, was that they want a lot of money to add additional computers. I wanted to back up not only my main computer, but also my wife's, and the main computer at the museum. At $72 per computer per year, it would cost me $216 a year. That caused me to look into other providers. IDrive ("eye-drive") seemed to be the best deal, and their reviews are very good. They have a plan for one user (me!), 2 terabytes of data, and an unlimited number of computers, all for $52 per year. That suits me perfectly! Now I get all the computers for which I have any responsibility backed up automatically for about ¼ of what Carbonite would charge. Yes, I know, Carbonite sometimes runs "specials" where they offer a 30% discount for added machines. That still makes each additional computer $50 per year; a far cry from free.

In my opinion, IDrive has some other advantages over Carbonite, besides the attractive price. It is very easy to add another machine in IDrive, and there is no additional fee of any kind. The IDrive user interface is cleaner and less confusing than Carbonite's. Both IDrive and Carbonite support backing up to an external hard drive as well as to their servers, so if you want that you can have it. However, when I switched to IDrive around Christmas I dispensed with the external hard drive option. The constant copying of data to the external drive slowed my machine down, and I found that annoying. Having my data backed up to the cloud, once a day, while I'm sleeping, is good enough for me.

A side benefit of cloud backup is that you can access any of your data from any internet enabled computer, whenever you might need it. I'm writing this article while my wife and I are visiting friends in Cocoa Beach, FL. I'm using my laptop computer that I take with me on trips, but for security reasons I don't have very much data on it. (Laptops have a nasty habit of getting lost or stolen.) I wanted to show my friend a picture of the new handgun display in the museum where I volunteer, but I didn't have it on the laptop. I simply logged into my IDrive account, browsed to the backup of museum pictures, and called up the one I wanted. Very convenient.

Another important feature of IDrive is that it provides what they call "versioning". That means it saves old versions of the same file, up to 10 of them. And if you ever have to do a Restore, you can restore whatever version you want. Normally of course, you would want the most recent version of each of your files. That's what

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you would restore in case of a hard drive failure, or if you bought a new computer and wanted to transfer your files. However, if you were attacked by malware, and your files were corrupted, and then before you knew what had happened your automatic backup took place, then you would have backed up the corrupted file. Restoring the corrupted version wouldn't be any help to you. In that situation you would want to go back to an uncorrupted version, restore that, and then work from there. IDrive will do that for you.

Before I go, I need to point out that IDrive has nothing to do with Apple Computers. These days, often when a name starts with the letter "I", as in iPad or iPhone, it means it is an Apple product. In the case of IDrive, the "I" is upper case, and to the best of my knowledge has no relationship with Apple, other than it will run on a Mac. By the way, it also runs in Linux.

Hard drives are pretty reliable, but I have had 2 fail on me in recent times. Before the laptop I have now I had a Toshiba netbook (very small laptop) with a conventional spinning-platter hard drive. That drive failed with no warning. Like this laptop I have now, I had very little data on the netbook for security reasons, so that failure wasn't a big deal. More recently, about a year ago, the solid-state drive in the museum's main computer failed. I had essentially all of the museum's data on my main computer at home so we put a new drive in the museum machine and I put the data back on it. The point is that while I have owned numerous computers since the late 80's until the present time, and had no hard drive failures for the first 20 years or so, I have had 2 of them in the past 5 years. It can happen to you, too. If you have any data you care about, and especially if it belongs to somebody else, you better have it backed up.

Larry Bothe is an associate member of CAEUG. He served as president 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 the plastics industry and currently teaches people to fly airplanes, and is the volunteer curator of the Freeman Army Airfield Museum. He can be contacted at LBothe@comcast.net.

[Editor note: Website for Idrive is https://www.idrive.com/
The site has screenshots and video tutorials that are very helpful. IDrive for use with Linux has additional steps that will need to be completed.]

President's Corner
Happy New Tech Year
By Greg Skalka, President, Under the Computer Hood UG, CA
January 2019 issue, Drive Light
www.uchug.org
president (at) uchug.org

Another New Year is upon us. As we start 2019, I wonder what new technology we

will see this year, and how it will affect our lives. It seems we can't swing a corded mouse (better for our times than a dead cat) without hitting some piece of technology in our lives. So many things we take for granted today were not around 20 years ago, or even 10. Smart phones, smart homes, smart cars, smart TVs - everything is becoming smart through technology. How did we ever survive with only dumb stuff around us?

We have just concluded another busy holiday shopping season. Remember when that meant spending the month of December in the shopping malls, standing in long lines? Now with online shopping (especially Amazon.com) and all the tech that enables it, we can do all our shopping from home. With our smart phones, we can even shop while on the go. This trend has resulted in big changes in our behaviors, as well as in our local and global economics. Brick and mortar chains that were once the powerhouses of commerce, like Sears, are shrinking or going out of business. Almost all businesses fear Amazon, as it has transformed the shopping experience in many categories. How will Amazon next change our lives?

The concept of two-day delivery of products used to be exceptional and/or expensive, but now it is commonplace (and the default for all those Amazon Prime subscribers). Will 2019 finally be the year that Amazon makes good on their plans to deliver products the same day using drones? Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos claimed in December 2013 on "60 Minutes" that drones would be delivering packages within five years. Where are our drone deliveries?

There are plenty of drones, or unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) out there now, of all kinds. They protect our borders, launch strikes against our enemies, photograph and film our events and monitor our real estate, crops, forests and construction. They can also provide entertainment, through personal use and drone racing. Unfortunately, misuse of the technology has also occurred, requiring new regulations for their use. From interfering with fire-fighting efforts in California wildfires to the recent shutdown of the Gatwick Airport in England due to drone overflights, we have seen how these useful devices could be misused by vandals, criminals and terrorists. Some aviation experts believe it is just a matter of time before a drone causes a commercial plane crash.

Another technology that didn't exist ten years ago is personal DNA analysis. Companies like AncestryDNA, 23andMe and MyHeritage claim to provide ancestry information and ethnicity breakdowns. Some claim to provide genetic health information and predisposition to inherited conditions. Some can match you to others that may be relatives. These are home kits that allow you to provide a sample that is analyzed and potentially matched to the samples of others. Many of these kits were discounted for the holidays and advertised as great gifts.

These tests may be entertaining and can provide useful, though perhaps vague, information on your ancestry and genetic health. There are some concerns about privacy and accuracy, however, and you may learn things you might have wished you

didn't know. One company's test reportedly failed to identify that a submitted sample was actually from a Labrador retriever. Some have learned from these tests that their parentage is not as they were led to believe, or that they had half siblings unknown to their families. Submitting your sample puts your DNA information in the test company's genetic database, which could be used for things you didn't intend. One example is in identification of suspects in law enforcement investigations. These genetic testing companies could also share or sell genetic information to insurance or pharmaceutical companies.

Loss of privacy seems to be a common risk with a lot of the new technology we have adopted in the last decade or two. In the best case, our personal information, preferences and habits (such as for travel and consuming) have become a commodity that companies we deal with can use, buy and sell, with advertisers looking to improve their sales to us, the consumers. In the worst case, criminals are trying to gain, through tricks or theft, our personal information, especially that dealing with our identity and account passwords, in order to steal from us, or sell to others that will. Somewhere in the middle is the threat posed to the individual by a police state that has accumulated detailed information on its citizens, with the goal of tracking and controlling them.

In addition to the information that we provide online with our computers, or in using our smart phones, we now have to worry about the data collected by our connected cars. Automakers are collecting ever more information about how our cars are running and how we use them, and that information is often accessed wirelessly. While older cars are still safe from this, about 3 in 4 of the cars sold by 2020 will be online. This information may be able to help track your car servicing more easily, update safety systems and provide emergency services, but it also could be sold to insurance companies eager to study your driving habits or provided to law enforcement to determine where you have been or when you have been speeding.

Self-driving cars have seemed to be on the verge of introduction to the consumer for a few years now; perhaps 2019 will finally see a service generally available. Many companies have been testing autonomous vehicles for years, mostly with human back-up drivers. Autonomous trucks, taxis and cars could be revolutionary forces in our society, economy and labor market. These technologies could reduce transportation costs greatly and help provide greater freedom for the disabled, and likely would reduce vehicle accident rates.

Technology appears to be finally allowing humans to once again make real progress towards space travel. Christmas Eve 2018 marked the 50th anniversary of the first flight to the moon, where Apollo 8 orbited the moon and took the first photo of Earth as a distant object. Following the final Apollo moon landing, however, human space flight never left low Earth orbit. Now that many commercial companies are competing with NASA to fly cargo and ultimately people to the International Space Station and beyond, progress in space is accelerating. Several companies, including Elon Musk's SpaceX and Jeff Bezos' Blue Origin, have successfully demonstrated the

recovery (landing) of a rocket first stage, allowing reuse and a lower cost for future launches. Musk has a plan for SpaceX to be able to launch people to Mars within six years. I feel for those that watched the moon landings as fifty-year-olds and then died disappointed that humans never again did anything so dramatic. With luck my 82-year-old parents will see people on Mars.

National Geographic has created a TV series called 'Mars', which is very inspiring, yet brings some concerns with the human colonization of that planet. It portrays some of the issues we could face in the development of space technology by private companies, rather that government entities, a road we appear to be going down now. It shows the parallels this could have with the commercial development of resources here on Earth in the arctic. It is a series well worth watching.

As hopeful as I am that all the new tech we get in the New Year will on balance be a benefit to humankind, I sometimes wonder more about the humans. Many notable people, including Stephen Hawking, Elon Musk and Bill Gates have concerns about artificial intelligence, or AI. AI is on its way, so I wonder if one day we will have to battle with it for our survival, as in 'The Terminator' movies, or will we humans gladly relinquish our control over technology, should that time come. A study by McCann Worldgroup of young people in seven countries conducted in 2011 indicated that 53% of 16 to 22-year olds would prefer to give up their sense of smell than their technology. Will our future turn out rosy, or just stink?

Let's talk about cookies
By Joe Issac, Tech Talk, Central Kentucky Computer Society
December 2018 issue, CKCS Newsletter
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joeisaac1234 (at) gmail.com

NO, NOT CHOCOLATE CHIP COOKIES -- I'M TALKING ABOUT BROWSER COOKIES: Browser cookies are good, they make life easier and don't take up much space.

First, let's start with what cookies are. Cookies are simple text files that are created when you open a website. They help users navigate websites and perform certain functions. Cookies are used when you tell a website to "remember me," or when you log onto a message board, play online games, and a bunch of other things. A cookie allows you to log onto a website without having to enter your email and password every time. They can only be read by the site that creates it.

The main purpose of a cookie is to identify users and possibly prepare customized Web pages or to save site login information for you.

They make surfing the web more seamless, and help websites operate more profitably and with greater efficiency. They record which pages you viewed, and how long the visitor stays and can help you return to a place you visited.

Cookies may store street addresses, city and zips, passwords, credit card numbers, etc. which allows you to enter those with a single click and are used by web servers to know whether the user is logged in or not, and to which account they

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are logged in, like your bank or stock broker.

Cookies were designed to be a reliable mechanism for websites to remember information, such as items in a shopping cart or to record the user's browsing activity (including clicking particular buttons, logging in, or recording which pages were visited by the user as far back as months or years ago). Cookies are designed to save you time and trouble. The chocolate chip kind are also rather tasty!

There is a theory that the name for browser cookies came from the Chinese fortune cookie which usually contains a chunk of text, but there are arguments against that.

March 2019 DVD of the Month

ARI - Monthly newsletter
AsteriskPasswordSpy - Displays passwords hidden by
   asterisks on screen
AudioBook - Free audio book

ChromeFox - Frontend for Firefox to make it look
   like Chrome
CPix - Photo viewer that resizes and converts from one
   format to another
DupFilFind - Duplicate file finder
DVDOMlists - Contents of CDs and DVDs of the Month

FreeMake - Video converter
HardwareMonitor - Hardware monitoring program
ImageMagick - All-in-one graphics software suite

MemberContributions - Things members send me
MyFamilyTree - Simple family tree program
OldTimeRadio - Old radio audio files
Opera - Updated web browser

Prime95 - App used to find prime numbers and tax the CPU
PrivaZer - Hard disk cleaner with privacy emphasis
RestorePhotoViewer - Restore Photo Viewer in
   Win 8 and 10

UnrealCommander - File manager for Windows
USBDrvLtr - Simple control of USB drive letters
USBImageTool - Images USB devices to be mounted as
   USB drives
WhoIs - Utility to find information on any URL

Mailing address:
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Members Helpline
Any member can volunteer to be on the Members Helpline.
Hardware problems, Win 7, Win 10, Linux and Virus Removal
 - John Spizzirri

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