



Computers Are Easy User Group

Abort,
Retry,
Ignore....

Founded 1984 ARI is the
Official Newsletter of
Computers Are Easy User Group

February 2024
Volume XXXX Issue 2

PER GLENSIDE Library (Masks are optional)

INFORMATION for Saturday **February 24th** start time in person at
Library Board Room is 9:30am or at home Zoom is 10:00am.
This will be a hybrid meeting.

There will be a meeting invitation e-mail Thursday evening
before the Saturday meeting.

Our February presentation will have various
short video presentations about income tax software

Dues for 2024 are due.
Mail dues to CAEUG, P.O. Box 3150,
Glen Ellyn, IL 60138

Thank you to all who will pay 2024 dues!

Confirmed
meeting dates

2024

February 24

March 23

:: ::

Hybrid
Board Room
in person
OR Zoom

:: ::

Check
website for
dates and
meeting info

:: ::

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

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Join CAEUG meeting in Library or from Home,
Stay Safe! Update information on our website at

<https://www.CAEUG.net>



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The Glenside Public Library address is at 25 E Fullerton Avenue, Glendale Heights, Illinois. The meeting(s) are not library sponsored. 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.

Members Helpline

Any member can volunteer to be on the Members Helpline.
Hardware problems, Win 7, Win 10, Linux and Virus Removal

- John Spizzirri

About DVD of the Month

Unfortunately, the DVD of the Month is no longer creating an income center for the club. August 2022 will be the last issue of the DVD. Starting in September, I will feature a review of a freeware program in the ARI... Some of these programs may be elaborate and complicated others may be very simple. I may include screen shots if that can be accommodated.



Lamp Post 265 February 2024 by John Spizzirri

The bald eagles at Decorah, Iowa have taken up residence in the north nest (**1**). One egg was laid on February 15th. There may be another in a day or two. The Northern Lights (Aurora Borealis) cam at Churchill, Manitoba, Canada (**2**) is pointed at the sky. When the weather is clear, you can see the lights at night. You can check the weather at the polar bear site (**3**). It is off season for polar bear watching. Churchill is in the Central Time zone. If you stay up really late or get up early, try the Alaska Borealis cams (**4**) or Yellowknife cam in the Mountain Time zone (**5**). Two places to try offer various cams from around the world (**6**, **7**). The brown bears are hibernating. The videos show highlights of the past. To check on the space weather (for aurora forecasts) try here (**8**) and NASA (**9**).

- 1) <https://is.gd/0YqTVG>
- 2) <https://is.gd/3RjcRQ>
- 3) <https://is.gd/7PDEvO>
- 4) <https://auroranotify.com/aurora-links/>
- 5) <https://auroramax.com/live>
- 6) <https://seetheaurora.com/webcams>
- 7) <https://lightsoverlapland.com/?p=79>
- 8) <https://www.spaceweather.com/>

9) <https://www.swpc.noaa.gov/>

Google (**1**) used to have old versions of every web site cached in case a web site was down or for historical purposes. No longer. Arstechnica (**2**) reported that since December Google has not been caching web sites. Just thinking about it seems implausible. Google backed up the whole Internet, for free. The people at Google have decided to save money and stop backing up the Internet.

1) <https://www.google.com/>

2) <https://arstechnica.com/?p=2000802>

Jérôme Segura penned an article for Malwarebytes (**1**) detailing a number of income tax scams that have happened in the past and may happen again this year. Pieter Arntz reported on Malwarebytes (**2**) a Facebook (**3**) scam that has been going on for about a year. Arntz also wrote an article about a fake app (**4**) in the Apple Store (**5**) misrepresenting the LastPass Password Manager (**6**). The app is designed to get the master password and user name for people using LastPass. That would give the cracker access to every account of the person that was cracked (bank accounts, stock management accounts, wealth management accounts, email accounts, etc.).

1) <https://www.malwarebytes.com/?p=103073>

2) <https://www.malwarebytes.com/?p=103766>

3) <https://www.facebook.com/>

4) <https://www.malwarebytes.com/?p=103893>

5) <https://apps.apple.com/us/>

6) <https://www.lastpass.com/>

If you have gotten this far and gone to some of the web sites I have cited previously, you may have been stopped from reading the full article by a 'paywall' (**1**). That type of forced advertising is frustrating. A couple years ago I put a web site (**2**) in the Lamp that let you get around many paywalls. The site is now called 12ft (**3**), back then it was called 12ft Ladder. It is still there and works well. If you want to read the articles I have cited that have paywalls, give it a try. On the site there is a link for an Apple OS version.

1) <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paywall>

2) <https://caeug.net/newsletters/2022/Sep2022.pdf>

3) <https://12ft.io/>

Arstechnica reported (**1**) that Sony (**2**) owner of Funimation (**3**) have defined "forever, but there are some restrictions" as ending on April 2, 2024. People who paid for subscriptions to digital libraries of anime from Funimation or bought physical media with codes to access the digital streams will no longer have access to media that they paid for after April 2. The reason for this action

is that Sony purchased Crunchyroll (4). Crunchyroll already has this media in its inventory. Instead of merging the two companies, Sony has decided to close Funimation stranding its customers. Thanks Sony. Amazon has argued (in court) previously that Prime Video subscribers do not own the content that they paid for (5). If you pay for something, you should get something in return. It seems that the streaming companies promise one thing but deliver a movie house experience (without the big screen and sound). Perhaps they should charge accordingly or make good on their PROMISES.

- 1) <https://arstechnica.com/?p=2002114>
- 2) <https://www.sony.com/en/>
- 3) <https://www.funimation.com/>
- 4) <https://www.crunchyroll.com/>
- 5) <https://wp.me/pcEQmt-h8mb>

Kim Komando jokes

I accidentally deleted all my German friends' phone numbers. Now my iPhone is Hans-free.

What rock group has four men who don't sing? Mount Rushmore.

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

Reflections on the PC Environment

By Dick Maybach, Brookdale Computer User Group

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The PC world was far simpler when I began writing PC tech columns in 1992. Many of us relied on diskettes for storage; if we had a hard disk, it held only a few hundred megabytes. Software was distributed on diskettes, and its box usually contained a manual. Windows 3.1 appeared that year, and it was the first version that was really practical, but many continued to use DOS. Significantly, Windows required a hard disk; when we used DOS, two diskette drives provided adequate storage. The PC was undergoing a transition from an experimental and educational toy to an essential information appliance. The Internet was available only to governments and large corporations, although some exchanged messages through software bulletin boards, which they accessed (slowly) over telephone lines using dial-up modems—even simple configuration changes required opening the system case to access jumpers and expansion cards. There were frequent PC shows where dozens of vendors sold hardware and software. Bookstores had extensive collections of PC books and magazines. It was an exciting time for us.

The situation is far different today. Most PC users, excluding those reading articles like this, have no interest in what goes on inside the box. They would no more open a PC case than a dishwasher cabinet. As a result, PC books, magazines, and parts vendors have largely disappeared. This is good for most folks who want to communicate with friends and family, surf the Internet, and prepare taxes. But it can be frustrating for those of us who see the larger potential of the PC. However, the barriers are superficial, and the experimental and educational world is still alive, well, and accessible on the PC. We must exercise more care while experimenting with our PCs than we did years ago because it's become a vital tool in our lives and holds valuable information we have to protect. Let's look at some of the opportunities.

For years, I took pictures with a 35-mm camera, and film and processing cost about a dollar a click. Editing required a darkroom, expensive equipment, and smelly chemicals, and few did it. Today, we don't use film; bytes are free, and image processing software costs vary from reasonable to free. Any imaging program can do things that darkroom users couldn't even imagine. When you've finished the processing, you can send the results anywhere in the world for free or, if you have a suitable printer, commit it to paper. Image editing can be complex, and it takes some effort to learn, but there are very few photos that can't be improved, many substantially. I use the GNU Image Manipulation Program (GIMP), <https://www.gimp.org/> , to retouch JPEG image files. Your camera compresses images to produce JPEG files and discards information in the process. You can often recover this by working with images before they are compressed, using RawTherapee, <http://rawtherapee.com/> , or darktable, <https://www.darktable.org/> . These are complex programs that require some effort to master.

Early PCs limited your programming to BASIC, which, as its name implies, has quite limited potential. However, we have a much wider choice today, including Python, <https://www.python.org/> , which provides an accessible start to programming and includes widespread features among all programming languages. In addition, the required software is free, and although some support tools are not, they aren't really necessary.

Experimenting with operating systems does require care, as what seems like a simple configuration change can wreak havoc and sometimes require re-installation. (Ask me how I know.) For this, I prefer using a virtual machine, such as one managed by VirtualBox, <https://www.virtualbox.org/> , for this. In the past, I used dual-booting to install an alternative OS, but this requires re-partitioning the hard disk, which is risky, and the UEFI BIOS in modern PCs has features to protect the installed OS. Working around these requires non-trivial expertise. Your OS views each virtual machine as an application, which avoids all this risk and complexity. If you want to experiment with Windows, you'll have to buy the software, as the virtual machine is legally a different machine. Of course, you can experiment with Linux for free.

Arduino, <https://www.arduino.cc/> , provides an inexpensive way to experiment with both hardware and software. This microprocessor on a small board plugs into a USB port on your PC, which supplies the power for the board and communicates with it. You program in a variant of C++, which you compile on your PC and download to the Arduino. It's easy to connect the board to external circuits, so this provides a way of learning circuit design and programming. Since all the action takes place off your PC, the risk is minimal.

The Raspberry Pi, <https://www.raspberrypi.com/> , provides a considerably more complex environment than the Arduino. This is a complete PC on a circuit board about the size of a playing card. While the Arduino is a controller that runs only a single program at a time, the Pi is a complete computer running Linux. You'll need a display, mouse, and keyboard to get started, making this more difficult than an Arduino. However, you can use its peripherals if you have a desktop system. (You might use a USB hub to consolidate the keyboard, mouse, and printer cables. Then you could switch between your PC and the Pi by swapping just two cables, the USB from the hub and the HDMI from the display.) After configuring the Pi, you can connect it to your home network and access it using remote desktop software on a PC; it won't need dedicated peripherals until you install a new OS on the Pi.

Fabricating objects used to require a shop and tools, but now it can be done with only a 3D printer, about the size of your existing one. You design an object using CAD software, transfer the file to the printer, and (perhaps some hours later) return to find the completed object sitting in the printer. This is an emerging technology and presently is quite limited. Printing is slow, set-up is fussy, and the material is usually plastic, but things are rapidly improving. For example, I recently saw a device, <https://snapmaker.com/> , that could also machine aluminum and cut sheet material and create with plastic. Currently, the projects are limited to small enclosures, key fobs, game tokens, or similar small objects, but this will surely improve.

To learn about electronics, instead of acquiring a collection of tools, parts, and instruments, you can run experiments with a circuit simulator, such as KiCad, <https://www.kicad.org/> . It lets you build circuits with simulated resistors, capacitors, inductors, transistors, and integrated circuits, then test the result. The next step would be to use an Arduino with a prototype board into which you plug physical components to build circuits you've simulated. Kits that facilitate this are available from such vendors as Adafruit, <https://www.adafruit.com/> . Because you are using Arduino to generate signals and detect the result, this approach limits you to low frequencies.

If you play a musical instrument, you probably have a collection of scores, some of which are barely legible. However, you could input them into a score composing program such as MuseScore, <https://musescore.org/en> , to make

corrections, transpose them to a new key, or just clean up the appearance.

These examples reflect my interests and my preference to use open-source software; your interests and preferences are undoubtedly different, but perhaps these examples will inspire you to search for some that would help you. In the past, we relied on PC magazines to suggest areas to explore. There are many more interesting and useful tools today, but it takes more effort to find them without magazines. Don't let your PC become just an appliance; it can be a wonderful tool to help you enjoy life.

I've been writing these articles for a long time, have about run out of things to say, and it's time to retire. Thank you for your attention over the years.

Interesting Internet Finds

by Steve Costello

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In the course of going through the more than 300 RSS feeds, I often run across things that I think might be of interest to other user group members. The following are some items I found interesting during April 2023.

New Privacy Tool: Mullvad Browser

<https://firewallsdontstopdragons.com/new-privacy-tool-mullvad-browser/>

I currently use Google Chrome, Firefox, Tor, and Vivaldi browsers, depending upon the level of privacy and identity hiding needed. Still, I found this post about the Mullvad browser interesting.

Still Using Windows 10 21H2? Time To Upgrade

<https://www.computerworld.com/article/3692869/still-using-windows-10-21h2-time-to-upgrade.html>

For those using Windows 10, this is a must-read article. It gives the reasons you should upgrade to 22H2 and some reasons you might not have already. (Note: Both my Windows 10 machines are using 22H2.)

Top 10 Ways To Turn Flashlight On And Off In Android

<https://www.online-tech-tips.com/smartphones/top-10-ways-to-turn-flashlight-on-and-off-in-android/>

Just the day after I read this post, my wife asked me if there was a way to get a shortcut to turn the flashlight on and off for her Samsung Galaxy S3. Luckily, I remembered reading this, and now she has a flashlight shortcut on her lock screen. If you use an Android phone or tablet, check out this post.

What Can You Do With The USB Port On Your Router?

<https://www.howtogeek.com/791384/what-can-you-do-with-the-usb-port-on-your-router/>

I had never thought about the USB port on a router until I read this post. Unfortunately, my router does not even have a USB port. But I have a neighbor with a 2 TB drive setup on his router for sharing files and backing up his travel laptop.

What's My IP Address And How To Find It

<https://www.thewindowsclub.com/whats-my-ip-address-and-how-to-find-it>

You might not know your IP address or even need to know right now. Even if that is the case, you should know how to find it, so this post might come in handy someday.

What's The (Number) Added To Some Of My Downloads?

<https://askleo.com/whats-the-number-added-to-some-of-my-downloads/>

This is one of those things that come up from time to time. When it happens to me, I usually know what it is and why it happens, but not everyone knows about this. If you are one of those that don't know, check out this post.

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Interesting Internet Finds

by Steve Costello
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In the course of going through the more than 300 RSS feeds, I often run across things that I think might be of interest to other user group members. The following are some items I found interesting during May 2023.

How To Have Unlimited Email Addresses

<https://davescomputertips.com/how-to-have-unlimited-email-addresses/>

It is easy to have many email addresses. Also, it is not necessarily expensive. Dave's Computer Tips blog post explains different ways to get alternate email addresses. It also explains why and when you might want to use the varying methods.

How To Block Google Popups

<https://firewallsdontstopdragons.com/how-to-block-google-popups/>

If you get popups to "Sign in with Google," you should check out this post to learn how to block them. The use of third-party tools to do the same thing is also discussed.

8 Streaming Services That Still Let You Share Passwords

<https://www.mentalfloss.com/posts/streaming-services-allow-password-sharing>

As you know, Netflix is cracking down on password sharing. In this blog post, you will learn about eight other streaming services that still allow password sharing.

10 Firefox Features You Should Be Using

<https://www.howtogeek.com/891045/10-firefox-features-you-should-be-using/>

If you use Firefox as your web browser, check out this post. I found three things I should have been doing all along but did not know about.

Skip The Wireless Earbuds And Buy Something That'll Last

<https://www.reviewgeek.com/152420/skip-the-wireless-earbuds-and-buy-something-thatll-last/>

Wireless earbuds are convenient but earbuds, or their batteries need to be replaced too often. That is what this post is all about. I know I can't go completely wired, but try to as much as possible. Check out this post and see if it makes sense for you too.

Will AI Crack Your Passwords?

<https://askleo.com/will-ai-crack-your-passwords/>

AI is the big thing right now. Leo Notenboom talks about AI and password cracking in this post. If you are concerned about AI and password cracking, you should check out this post for yourself.

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