

Abort, Retry, Ignore...



Computers Are Easy User Group

January 2003

Suggested Retail Price \$1.95

Volume XIV

Issue 1



Changing a Motherboard by Larry Bothe 12/10/02

Calendar
of
Events

!!! IMPORTANT !!!

Meeting dates for
2003

See page 10
for all confirmed
dates. Time and
Place remain the
same.

January 25
Al Buchholz
Demonstration
of
Alpha5
a relational
database

SEE YOU
THERE!!

COD Dates
2003 dates

Feb 23
Mar 30
April 27
May 18
June 29
July 27
August 24
September 28
October 26
November 23
December 21

Have you ever thought about changing a motherboard? That would involve disassembling almost the whole machine and therefore be quite difficult, right? Well, I just did one for the first time, and I found it to be relatively easy. It's mostly mechanical (operating a screw driver); you don't have to know very much about computers.

Before I get into the nuts and bolts of doing the change, let's consider for a minute why you might want to change a motherboard in the first place. I think the most compelling reason, and what prevailed in my case, is that you have problems with your computer that appear to be hardware/motherboard related and can't be resolved any other way. Other reasons might be that you want to add or change certain "cards" (modem, network interface, video, sound, USB, etc.) and you don't have enough open slots of the right kind to add the cards. Some of the lower end Compaq computers from a few years ago are famous (or infamous) for not having any available expansion slots for upgrades. You also may wish to upgrade the processor, but your motherboard doesn't have the proper socket for the processor you want to buy.

Any of the reasons mentioned above, either alone or in combination, would be reason enough to change out the motherboard. My problem was that on my wife's machine, a 4-year old Pentium 350 machine from Tiger, the monitor intermittently turns a sickly green shade, and off and on the machine loses audio capability. Through trial and error I learned that if I would open up the machine and physically remove and reinstall the sound and video cards then the problem would go away for a month or so, only to return sometime later. After doing

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

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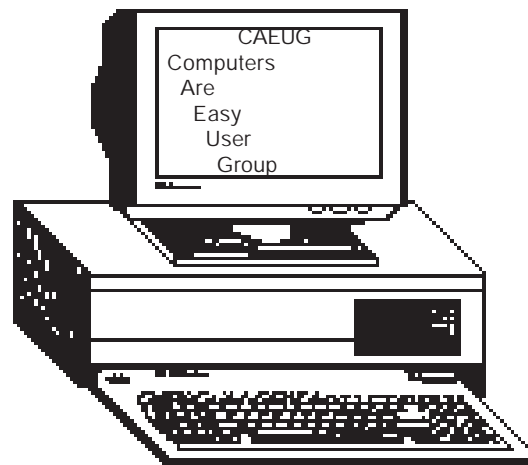
ABOUT THE NEWSLETTER:

This printed version of our newsletter was laid out using Adobe's Pagemaker Version 7.0 for Windows and was printed on a EPSON EPL-7000. 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.



**Great Midwest
Computer Show ©**

Next show date
SUNDAY, Feb 23
College of Dupage
9:30 A.M. to 3:00 P.M.

The Midwest's oldest and largest
Multi Vendor PC show and sale for
Home & Business

COLLEGE OF DUPAGE
Main Arena of Physical Education Building
Corner of Park Blvd & College Road
Glen Ellyn, IL
FREE PARKING
Admission - \$7.00
(With this coupon admission \$6.00)
www.CODSHOW.COM
E-mail address:
info@codshow.com

Great Midwest Computer Show ©
2003 dates

Feb 23	June 29	Oct 26
Mar 30	July 27	Nov 23
Apr 27	Aug 24	Dec 21
May 18	Sept 28	

For Sale

Compaq Armada 1530DM Laptop
Pentium 133, 32MB RAM, 1.2MB HD,
floppy, CD-ROM, Sound, Win 98
Battery does not hold charge more than
20 minutes
Runs fine plugged in - \$200

In order to have your article or item for sale appear in ARI they must be received by the 10th of the month prior to publication.

MEMBERS HELPLINE

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

Beginners Helpline.....Billy Douglas

Beginner hardware problems.....Dick Fergus

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

Win 9x, NT, 2K.....Rick Scalzo
e-mail.....mitsufan@webcentrix.net

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

Membership Costs.....

	First Yr.	Renewal
Individual	\$25.00	\$20.00
Family	\$30.00	\$25.00
Corporate	\$30.00	\$25.00
Associate	\$20.00	\$15.00

Beginner's SIG

Ask questions and discuss computer experiences with this group.
Such as:

1. New to Computers? (basic topics)
2. How to use the Web or download information
3. How to install hardware/software
4. Discuss how to troubleshoot hardware conflicts, learn boot up emergency tricks
5. What do you want to know??

Meets before regular meeting from
9:05 to 9:45

this repeatedly over a year and a half I concluded that there must be a problem with the motherboard; a crack or a bad solder joint or something like that. Knowing that I could buy a new motherboard with a faster processor I figured I could get out of the sound and video problem and upgrade the machine to run faster at the same time.

But what motherboard to buy, and where to buy it? First, the new motherboard has to fit in the computer case, and the connections have to end up in the right place. Fortunately, there are industry standards for motherboard design. The most common, and what has been in use for quite a few years, is the "form factor" known as ATX. If your existing machine is ATX, and chances are that it is, then any new ATX board will fit. The manual for your existing board will tell you whether or not it is ATX. If you don't have a manual then any computer shop or knowledgeable person can tell you if it is ATX just by looking at it, or from a verbal description you give over the phone.

Once the form factor is determined then the fun really begins. I started shopping on the Tiger website (www.tigerdirect.com), and later expanded my search to Aberdeen (www.aberdeeninc.com) and Treasure Chest Computers (www.tccomputers.com), but ended up buying from Tiger anyway. Tiger "bundles" motherboards together with appropriate processors in such a way that it is much easier to make a purchasing decision. As a novice I was overwhelmed by the choices of motherboards, socket styles and processors offered on the other two sites. There were hundreds of them. If you were a computer professional then perhaps you would appreciate this level of choices, but my eyes started to roll up into my head.

So it was back to Tiger where I began to apply my requirements to what they had to offer. In

my case I was dealing with an old machine that wasn't worth a lot of money to start with. I didn't want to pour a ton into an upgrade. My wife's computing needs are definitely of the low-power variety so a really high-speed processor was not a priority. What I did want to do was use all of the cards (video, sound, modem, network interface) out of the old machine. I also wanted to use all the random access memory (RAM), especially since I had just a month before increased the RAM from 64 to 192 megs.

Motherboards have different styles of slots into which the various cards are inserted. The most common these days are called PCI. Before PCI there were larger slots called ISA. The ISA ones are all but obsolete now, but my wife's machine, being 4 years old, had two of the four cards (sound and modem) in ISA style. The sound part sort of took care of itself because many motherboards come with on-board sound; you don't need a separate sound card. And that is especially good in my case since I was having sound problems anyway. That left me with the modem, so I was looking for a board with at least one ISA slot. My video card is AGP (goes in an AGP slot), and nearly all motherboards have an AGP slot.

RAM is a consideration since it comes in a variety of styles (number of contacts) and in many different speeds. Two very common ones are PC100 and PC133, both of which go into 168-contact memory slots. I had 2 pieces of 32 meg and one piece of 128 meg, so I needed at least 3 of the 168-contact slots on a motherboard that would recognize PC100 memory. A rule of thumb is that a board that will recognize the faster PC133 memory will also recognize PC100, but not the other way around. And you can't mix the two speeds on the same board.

To recap then, I didn't need a very fast processor, I did need an ISA slot, and I wanted to use 3 pieces of PC100 RAM. Tiger had just such a board, with a 1-gig AMD processor, for \$80. The processor is still slow by today's standards, but is still 3x faster than the 350 Pentium it would be replacing. Good enough considering how the computer will be used, and the price was right. Once I selected the motherboard and put it in the "shopping cart" on Tiger's website then Tiger showed me some related accessories I might be interested in. One of those things was a cooling fan that was pre-selected to be compatible with the processor I had ordered. Since a cooling fan is a must I added that to my shopping cart for an additional \$20. Shipping and handling came to another \$10, so the whole works cost about \$110.

Tiger shipped in one day, and I received it two days after that. Since it was only mid-afternoon I decided to start the swap-out project right away. But before I even thought about opening up my wife's machine I backed up her data files first. I never do any significant work on a computer without creating a current backup. In my case that's easy because our two machines are networked. I just copied her My Documents folder over to my hard drive and the backup was done. Then I disconnected all the external cables from her machine and moved it from our office to my shop so I would have enough space to work and lay things out.

I started by removing the cards from their slots; then I removed the RAM. The last things to disconnect were the power supply (just one big connector), hard drive and floppy drive controller connections (3 on the end of wide ribbon cables) and the little connectors that go from the motherboard out to the switches and LED lights on the front of the case. I thought the latter group was going to be a real pain, but when I started disconnecting

them I found that each one had a nice little label stuck on the connector telling what function it performed. In the absence of the labels I would have had to trace each one back to the front panel and then mark it according to where it went. It wouldn't have been difficult but would have taken longer. With all the components and connections removed from the old motherboard it was no job to remove 5 screws and lift it out of the case. Note that some motherboard installations have one or more little brass or plastic supports that keep the board from bottoming out against the steel computer case. Mine had one. Be sure you note where any such supports are located and be sure not to lose them since the new motherboard will need the same support.

With the old motherboard out of the way, it was time for some housecleaning. Computers acquire an amazing amount of dust over time. I used the air hose from my compressor to blow all the dust bunnies and cat hair out of the machine. The cooling fans (my machine has 3 besides the one attached to the processor) need special attention as the blades and adjacent vents get really clogged with dust.

To begin the reassembly I put the new processor in its socket on the motherboard and installed the new cooling fan. Then I put the 3 pieces of RAM in their slots and set the motherboard in place in the computer case, being careful to use the one plastic support. Using the same screws that held in the old motherboard I screwed the new one securely into place.

Next came the cards, but, oh wait, what's this? I finally noticed that my new motherboard didn't have the advertised ISA slot. The description on the website specifically called it out, and even the box it came in had a picture of a motherboard with an ISA slot. But there was still no ISA slot on the board. I was so far

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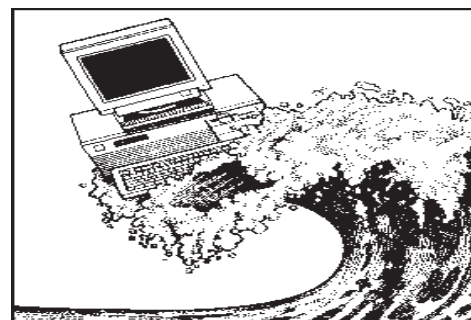
along by this time that I couldn't just return the stuff to Tiger. After uttering a few unprintable words concerning Tiger's heritage I decided to press on. I wouldn't be able to use the modem I had, but since we recently got cable modem service I didn't really need the phone modem anyway. Using the instructions and diagram in the book that came with the new motherboard I was able to easily connect up all the cables and connectors I had removed when I took out the old motherboard.

You may have seen or heard tales of the difficulty people have had in configuring a new motherboard. You have to install jumpers and set dip switches (a lot of both) in order to tell the motherboard about your processor speed and type of RAM you are using. Well, I'm pleased to tell you that you don't have to go through all that confusing stuff any more. Modern motherboards have auto-detect for these things. I didn't have to move a single jumper or set a switch. Everything was automatic. The default settings are correct for a vast majority of installations. After confirming that I didn't have to change anything, all that was left to do was take it back to the office and fire it up. It ran correctly right away. Windows thought I had a whole lot of new hardware, and I did have to put my windows 98, 2nd Edition CD in the drive in order to let the machine find some drivers. Then I put in the CD that came with the new motherboard and ran an automated install-motherboard sequence. That loaded some drivers specific to the motherboard, the most important of which was for the on-board sound, and the installation was done. The whole thing took about 5 hours, and actually less than that because I took time out to eat dinner. Total expense was about \$150; a lot less than a new machine would have cost.

As a famous radio commentator says, "and now for the rest of the story." The motherboard

swap was easy and the machine ran properly, but one of the problems I was trying to solve didn't go away. The sick-green monitor hue was still there while the intermittent sound problem seemed to be cured. OK, if changing the motherboard didn't help, what's next? Fiddling with the video card made a difference in the past so maybe the video card itself was bad. A look at the Tiger website revealed a pretty good 32-meg video card with a closeout price of \$29. I had already called Tiger back to gripe about the missing ISA slot, and they readily agreed to make it right by shipping me a modem that would go in one of the PCI slots on the motherboard. A second call to Tiger got the video card added to the shipment with the free modem. The new video card seems to have done the trick; no more green hue, and some other goofy video things that used to happen during boot-up are now gone as well. The end result is that my wife's machine now runs error-free and is markedly faster than it was before. I think it might even be faster than mine, but don't tell anybody.

(Larry Bothe is an associate member of CAEUG and an "honorary" member of FVPCA. He was President of CAEUG for a while back in the 90's when he lived in the Chicago area. He presently resides in southern Indiana where he is retired from industry and teaches people to fly airplanes. He can be contacted at Lbothe@aol.com.)



The Lamp Post Number 36
by John Spizzirri
January 10, 2003



Have a happy Valentine's Day. Here are a few Web sites that may help you out; <http://wilstar.com/holidays/valentn.htm> has the 'true' story of the holiday and a countdown clock, http://www.homeandoffice.hp.com/hho/us/eng/creative_projects.html has HP color printer projects, <http://www.800bear.com/> is a Teddy Bear gift sight, <http://www.theholidayspot.com/valentine/> has a multitude of stuff including e-card, wallpaper, recipes, poems, gifts, and crafts.

Cecilia Biegel sent an e-mail to me. It contained an article from Wired Magazine (<http://www.wired.com/news/infostructure/0,1377,57132,00.html>). The article condemned the amount of spam received by people who have accounts on Microsoft's (MS <http://www.microsoft.com>) Hotmail and MSN online e-mail services. I have mentioned the amount of spam users get with these services in this column before. I use online e-mail services Yahoo (<http://www.yahoo.com>) and Iwon (<http://www.iwon.com>) and get VERY little spam. If one of my accounts starts getting spam, I abandon it and open a new one. A site that can keep you abreast of the latest legislation on spam is <http://www.spamhaus.org> . If you are wondering 'what is spam?', try this article; <http://www.winnetmag.com/Articles/Index.cfm?ArticleID=37693>

Fly Guy is a small amusement at <http://www.trevorvanmeter.com/flyguy/> .

MS wriggled off the hook in California. This was the largest class action lawsuit against MS since the guilty verdict in the DOJ anti trust case. The suit claimed that MS charged too much for its software from 1995 through 2001. Thirteen million plaintiffs will split about 1.1 billion dollars. That averages out to about \$85 each, paid only in vouchers of \$5 to \$29 that are good for new MS products over the next four years. I do not know if the lawyers will get a chunk of that 1.1 billion but suspect they will. MS got off easy because the California consumer protection laws provide for serious monetary damages. MS's statement is at <http://www.microsoft.com/presspass/legal/ca/> . Another site is at <http://www.geek.com/news/geeknews/2003Jan/gee20030113018117.htm> .

EWeek magazine has an excellent article about last year with predictions for this year at <http://eletters1.ziffdavis.com/cgi-bin/10/flo?y=eTWu0EyAyy0HX60tSE0AY> . Jim Rapoza and Peter Coffee caution that government interference on the side of megalopolies (a made up word referring to you know who) will reduce the usefulness of your computer and violate your privacy.

MS has new software aimed to help the music industry with Digital Rights Management (DRM). The software will permit 'layering' on music CD's that will permit them to play on any device, but prohibit copying of the music content to another CD. MS invested \$500 million in this software. So far all attempts to prohibit copying of legally purchased music has resulted in annoying customers and crashing PCs. The story is at <http://news1.iwon.com/tech/article/id/296298|technology|01-18-2003::09:30|reuters.html> I assume that this will also annoy customers. It is interesting to note that Napster was the big bogeyman the recording industry had to crush because pirating music was costing the industry 'billions of dollars' in revenue. With the demise of Napster, about 2 years ago, CD sales have also taken a nosedive. The next target of the music industry was Internet streaming audio or Internet 'radio stations'. With most of them forced off the Net because of lawyer's fees and court judgments against them last year,

(con't on page 8)

another method of hearing music was thwarted. Could there be a connection? Could it be that when people can easily hear music, they tend to buy it? I recall that music labels used to pay radio stations to play their music. Now the music industry is after KaZaa and Morpheus. PC World covers this story which involves the Digital Millennium Copyright Act (DMCA) at <http://www.pcworld.com/news/article/0,aid,108762,00.asp>.

The Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF) has an article on the consequences of the DMCA. The article covers the last four years the DMCA has been in force. It's at http://www.eff.org/IP/DMCA/20030102_dmca_unintended_consequences.html.

On a happier note Jon Johansen, the Norwegian teen who was prosecuted by his government at the behest of the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA), has been exonerated. Jon uses Linux. He purchased a DVD but found he could not play it because the movie industry does not recognize Linux as an operating system and did not create a Linux decoder for their trivial encryption scheme on DVDs. Jon wrote his own decryption program and put it on the Internet for others in his situation. The MPAA sued Jon and his father but withdrew the suit once the program was taken off the Net. The MPAA persuaded the government of Norway to prosecute Jon for copyright infringement. The Norwegian court found that Jon did nothing wrong in trying to view a DVD that he had purchased. The story is at <http://www.aftenposten.no/english/local/article.jhtml?articleID=466519>. So now, you too can view a DVD on your Linux PC, but only if you live in Norway. Move information is at <http://forums.infoworld.com/webx?14@249.emMZamx3CrP.1@.ee7672a/0>.

Mandrake Linux, the French corporation, has had money trouble for about two years. They have had various schemes to get money from their customers after the initial purchase. They have finally gone into bankruptcy. The company's statement is at <http://www.mandrakesoft.com/company/press/briefs?n=/mandrakesoft/news/2405>. They are not out of business but will go through a reorganization.

Donald Rumsfeld, the Secretary of Defense, issued an order to Department of Defense (DoD) Web masters to remove 'sensitive' material from .mil Web sites. The article on Security Focus Web site at <http://online.securityfocus.com/news/2062> states that the DoD has 700-gigabytes of Web presence. The Federation of American Scientists (FAS) has posted the actual order at <http://www.fas.org/sgp/news/2003/01/dodweb.html>. The FAS disagrees with the definition of the word 'sensitive'. The FAS thinks that virtually any material may have a use to an enemy under the right circumstances thus the order only serves to censor the American public. When I read the article I was shocked by the fact that the DoD has nearly 3/4 terabytes on the Web.

George Orwell, in his book "1984", had slogans the fictitious government had created. These slogans were meant to confuse the meaning of words in the minds of the populace. Our government seems to be doing the same thing on a smaller scale at the Department of Transportation Security. Their Web site has tips for air travel and proudly proclaims the slogan 'Freedom of Movement'. Looking through the tips, I found freedom the last thing to come to my mind. You can be your own judge when you check out the site at <http://www.tsa.dot.gov/public/index.jsp>.

I found an interesting site of a free lance Web master. He sells his product, creating Web sites, but has a plethora of interesting links and essays. The site has the uncommon name <http://www.mythofsisyphus.net/>.

Windows XP, Plus! Digital Media Edition is an XP add on that costs about \$20. It consists of tools that help you record LPs and tapes to digital format, photos into slide shows (like FlipBook), and a PocketPC synchronizer. It includes Widows Media Player v9. There are also screen savers and

(con't on page 9)

games. Unfortunately, it also has Windows Product Activation (WPA). In order to use it you must call MS, either by phone or the Internet, to activate the software. Cnet's Molly Wood does not think it's worth the 20 bucks. <http://www.cnet.com/techtrends/0-6014-7-20783219.html> has the details. One other detail is that it does not appear to work on versions of XP that were designed for use outside the U.S., see <http://212.100.234.54/content/4/28888.html>.

Ricin was featured last year as a method of murder on an episode of the CBS television show 'CSI: Crime Scene Investigation' (Thursdays at 8 P.M. <http://www.cbs.com/primetime/csi/main.shtml>). Ricin was also in the news briefly this month. British police made seven al-Qaeda related arrests and confiscated a small quantity of ricin

(<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A22281-2003Jan7.html> and http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/2637515.stm). Subsequently, the FBI issued a warning to all police departments across the country about how to recognize and handle the substance. This warning was not on broadcast news. I found it at

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A37879-2003Jan10.html>. This prompted me to investigate further. I found the following sites that explain the action of ricin on the human body and how it can be deployed as a weapon:

<http://www.nbc-med.org/SiteContent/MedRef/OnlineRef/FieldManuals/medman/Ricin.htm>

<http://www.dhfs.state.wi.us/healthtips/BCD/Ricin.htm>

http://www.millennium-ark.net/News_Files/NBC/Bio.Bugs.Ricin.html

<http://www.cbwinfo.com/Biological/Toxins/ricin.html>

Ricin is a deadly poison with no known antidote that is made from the husk and skin of castor beans. For a more detailed explanation of its effects and what to look for check the above sites.

Between you, me, and the LampPost - that's all this month.

Minutes of CAEUG Meeting
December 7, 2002

John Spizzirri called the meeting to order at 9:55 am.

There were 32 members and one visitor in attendance.

The next meeting is scheduled for January 25, 2003.

The minutes were approved as published in the Newsletter.

The Financial Report for December showed a starting balance of \$3,620.85, income of \$151.00 and expenses of \$384.10 for an ending balance of \$3,261.75.

Members' Forum addressed several problems that members were having with both hardware and software.

There was a call for volunteers at the COD show.

The Glen Ellyn Library issued a letter requesting an additional fee for room set up. This new fee would be in addition to the \$10 clean up fee and the \$10 local phone charge. The board will investigate costs of a new meeting place in the event that the Library prices themselves out of the market.

We then had our traditional break with coffee and pastry.

The presentation was made by Kathleen Groce on Star Office, the new office suite.

The CD of the Month included Wav to Text, 6 memory management, SnagIt, and motherboard monitor software. Scott Mueller training videos and the CAEUG standard files were also included.

Respectfully submitted,
John Spizzirri

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 Glen Ellyn Library in Glen Ellyn at 9:45 am on
Saturday January 25, 2003

The library is located 1 block west of Citibank at the corner of Prospect & Duane FREE PARKING
Directions: Park to Duane; go west on Duane to Prospect Street. Please park at the West end of the
lot, away from the building. Thank you.

The meeting(s) are not library sponsored and all inquiries should be directed to Rick Scalzo at .
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, Rick
Scalzo at , at least five (5) days prior to the program, so that reasonable accommodation can be made
for them.

Confirmed Meeting dates for 2003:

January 25, February 22, **March 29, April 26, May 24, June 28, July 26

All these dates are for the 4th Saturday except one -

**March 29th, 2003, is the 5th Saturday of March.

CD OF THE MONTH: Available at the meeting or by ordering previous CD's via the CAEUG website.

-> Our next meeting will be ~ January 25, the presenter will be
Al Buchholz -- Alpha 5, a relational database

Hope to see you there.