

Abort, Retry, Ignore...



Computers Are Easy User Group



February 2008

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Volume XXV Issue 2



!!!IMPORTANT!!!

***** NOTE *****
Confirmed
2008 meeting
dates will be on

February 23
March 22
April 26
May 24

CAEUG
Picnic on
JUNE 28

**** * * * ***

MEETING PLACE
will be the Glenside
Public Library

SEE YOU
THERE!!

CODLinuxfest
http://
www.codlug.info/

The next meeting will be Saturday, February 23, 2008

Our next presenter
Terry Moyer on Quickbooks

Power Saving Features By Larry LaRue

Discussing power saving features built into your computer can many times lead to confusion, some of it due to loosely defined terminology, partly from the way the features can be implemented. Some of the features are implemented with hardware and some with software. BIOS settings and software customization by manufacturers as well as individual changes can make one computer work one way and similar makes and models can function entirely different. A person could almost understand if different models behaved differently but according to standards that is not supposed to happen.

If your computer was built after 1997 it should adhere to a standard called Advanced Configuration and Power Interface, ACPI for short. Designed by HP, Intel, Microsoft, Toshiba, and the Phoenix Technologies Ltd., ACPI's goal was to take the control of power management away from the BIOS and place it in the hands of the operating system. The current 3.0b standard was accepted October 10, 2006 so why do we still have so much trouble with this creature???

These troubles are not just isolated to Windows, it has been reported that the latest version of Ubuntu Linux has a few problems as well. If you have many hours or even days to kill you could read the actual specs at <http://www.acpi.info/spec.htm> in either Word or PDF format, the PDF has 631 pages of fun filled facts, figures and terminology

(con't on page 2)

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for you to amuse yourself with. These ACPI standards do not contain specifications for software or hardware, but try to define how the two should work together.

Let's use the phrase "Your computer goes to sleep" as an example. While the phrase can describe a very definitive act that your computer can go through, the actual process can vary according to how your software and hardware support the ACPI standards. Just using the term sleep in the phrase is enough to cause confusion. You could very well be describing a feature of ACPI known as standby, suspend, or even hibernation and all three are more commonly referred to as sleep. Let's look first at the various states that your computer can be in using the ACPI standards.

These Global states or (Gx states) are:

G0 Working: The power is on and the computers performance can be adjusted by the user with software.

G1 Sleeping: The computer uses a small amount of power to maintain the stored information; You can return to a working state without having to reboot.

G2 Soft Off: If you use the Start button to turn your computer off, you have entered this state; however the computer still consumes power.

G3 Mechanical Off: I call this state, "pull the plug from the wall". This is the only time you can safely dismantle your computer.

These are the global states as defined by the ACPI. Not a whole lot of confusion here. That's how standards should be, which would all be fine and dandy if sleeping states were confined to the G1 state Sleeping. So let's look at the ACPI Sleeping states or (Sx states) For most modern PCs today support six distinct power modes, or "sleep states," commonly defined as S0 through S5.

S0 Full system power. Same as the G0 state.
S1 thru S4 offer increasing levels of power savings. You can resume work on your computer in S1, S2, and S3 with mouse or keyboard activity.
S4 requires the power button to resume normal function. This mode is commonly referred to

as hibernation.

S5 Achieves the greatest power savings by using the shut down command, same as the G2 state.

So now I hope you know a little bit more than you did before but at the same time I am aware that this makes very little, if any sense. How can you have Global states be the same as Sleep states? I guess if it isn't on or off it is asleep, which is all they had to say to begin with.

Dumb Things to Avoid While Using Your Computer

by Vinny La Bash

a member and regular columnist of the Sarasota Personal Computer Users Group, Inc., Florida
vlabash(at)comcast.net
<http://www.spcug.org>

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To paraphrase a recent TV commercial, we all do dumb things, but doing them with your computer doesn't have to be one of them.

Most of us know that our computers work better when they are plugged into an active electrical outlet, but ask any service technician how many times he or she has encountered that situation, and you may be surprised at the answer. Every one of us, no matter how experienced, has done at least one dumb thing with our computers. Maybe you pressed a wrong combination of keys and changed a setting you didn't mean to disturb. Maybe nothing much happened or you ended up crashing your system.

Whatever does or doesn't happen, paying attention to what you're doing combined with a dash of forethought can prevent most dumb mistakes.

David Letterman has his top ten lists. I offer my top six. My list will do little to entertain you, but it will help you to be smarter about using your system.

Dumb Computer Mistake # 6: Failing to install

LampPost 92

by John Spizzirri
February 17, 2008



Daylight Savings Time (DST) will commence March 9th this year (<http://webexhibits.org/daylightsaving/b.html>). If your operating system does not correct the time on your machine automatically, you will have to do it yourself. To do it, double click on the time in the task bar. That will open the date and time properties window. Click on the hour number under the analog clock and type in the correct hour. Click the OK button to finish the operation.

U. S. Budget was sent to Congress by President Bush; <http://origin.www.gpoaccess.gov/usbudget/fy09/browse.html> . A copy will be on the CD of the month. Governor Blagojevich and the Illinois state legislature have yet to pass last year's budget so I will not include this year's state budget on the CD of the Month.

Mac users are becoming paranoid according to a survey by Sophos (<http://www.sophos.com/>). 93% of Mac users think they will be attacked by hackers and malware. The story is at http://www.cbronline.com/article_news.asp?guid=3670FF17-1DD0-4827-9A03-A642D32AB04A . I don't think they have much to worry about.

Marks & Spencer (M&S <http://www.marksandspencer.com/>) will begin selling M&S branded software. M&S is a British retailer with an Internet presence. They have already begun selling hardware. M&S will actually be selling software made by other companies and rebrand it. Microsoft (MS <http://www.microsoft.com/>) has a new competitor in Europe. The story is at http://www.cbronline.com/article_news.asp?guid=C3B1A19A-838E-47EB-A245-BB36C0EBA43F .

MS has purchased Calista Technologies (CT <http://www.calistatechnologies.net/>). CT is a two year old company that develops technology to provide virtual desktops. CT has been involved in many Linux and Xen projects. This could be a move by MS to kill two birds with one stone. First, slow or stop the virtual desktop development for Linux. Second, develop virtual desktops for exclusive use by Windows. This may also put Citrix (<http://www.citrix.com/>) which has been doing this type of work plus connectivity since the days of Windows 3.1. The story is at http://www.cbronline.com/article_news.asp?guid=17917F93-EC86-44BC-A9D2-0BC70631AAF6 .

Computer Business Review did a survey of enterprise computer executives. They found that only two percent of their corporations (in the UK) have made the upgrade to Vista. An MS spokesperson said the MS was happy with that number of conversions. The story is at http://www.cbronline.com/article_news.asp?guid=1589AB78-D9C8-4210-84BE-48113688825B . The spokesperson said that many corporations wait until the service pack (SP) is released before making an upgrade. I guess that corporations got burned by MS and now wait for the stable version of the software (SP1). In another article (http://www.cbronline.com/article_news.asp?guid=211C7FAF-5E63-4D6B-87D8-B56F6A4B8332), the spokesperson revealed that the SP1 will be out by the end of March (or so they say).

In another article by Computer Business Review (http://www.cbronline.com/article_news.asp?guid=975B8F9E-2FE9-4C1A-BC9D-DDCE90BFB800), MS claims that Vista is more secure than XP. Their spokesperson said that comparing the first year of release of both XP and Vista, Vista had fewer security problems than did XP. I am glad they think so.

eWeek Magazine's, Steven J. Vaughan-Nichols, did an article that calls into question many of the MS claims. The first three sentences of the article say it all, "It seems that Microsoft is already giving up on Vista and is setting up business users to switch from XP to Windows 7. Technically, Vista is pure misery. It eats system resources like an elephant does peanuts, Windows applications break and its so-called improved security is a joke." Windows 7 is the code name for the next version of Windows after Vista. The article explains that there is a great deal of resistance to Vista for various reasons. The article is at

<http://www.eweek.com/c/a/Windows/Has-Microsoft-Disavowed-Vista/?kc=EWKNLBOE020208STR1>.

Windows XP will no longer be sold after June 30, 2008. The only way you will be able to get XP after that is to buy a new machine with XP preinstalled. InfoWeek Magazine thinks that the rush to Vista is unfair to consumers. It has started a petition drive

(http://weblog.infoworld.com/save-xp/archives/2008/01/save_windows_xp.html) to ask MS to extend the date for purchase of XP. Windows ME replaced Windows 98. If you have used Windows ME, you know it was riddled with operational and security problems. MS had discontinued 98 in favor of ME, but reintroduced 98 once it was found that ME was garbage. InfoWeek through this petition is trying to alert MS not to make the same mistake twice. Sign the petition here;

http://reg.itworld.com/servlet/Frs.frs?Context=LOGENTRY&Source=entdesk&Source_BC=13&Script=/LP/80276783/reg&.

OpenLogic (<http://www.openlogic.com/index.php>) did a survey of its customers and found that usage of open source software was up 26%. The most common item in use under an open source license was Apache (<http://www.apache.org/>). This is not a good sign for MS.

Wal-Mart (<http://www.walmart.com/>) is demanding that its suppliers use radio frequency identification (RFID) technology or else they will back charge them a fee of \$2 fee per pallet. That fee may not seem like much, but it must be remembered that Wal-Mart is the low price leader and supplier profit margins are very slim. The story is at

http://www.cbronline.com/article_news.asp?guid=27B7BC87-10E3-48A5-99D5-E595D8D030A7.

NASA (<http://www.nasa.gov/>) has taken a picture of a Marzonian or Martian if you prefer. The Register has reprinted a picture from a Chinese web site that was taken from the NASA web site (<http://photojournal.jpl.nasa.gov/catalog/PIA10214>). The picture was taken by the Spirit rover. A blow up of the picture reveals a figure that looks like a kneeling primate. It is probably a rock formation unless you are a regular listener of the Coast to Coast

(<http://www.coasttocoastam.com/>) radio program. The story is at

http://www.theregister.co.uk/2008/01/22/life_on_mars/.

Hypertext Markup Language 5 (HTML) has been introduced

(<http://www.w3.org/TR/2008/WD-html5-diff-20080122/>). This is the language that is used by your browser to display web pages and other content. HTML 5 will eventually replace HTML 4. The upgrades will be provided with your browser upgrades.

This sounds like the Y2K scare all over again only this time is real because the government caused it. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC, part of your government) has mandated that all "high power" television stations broadcast in digital format only on February 17, 2009. The FCC website that explains the change is <http://www.dtv.gov/>. It is not the best designed site. National Telecommunications and Information Administration

(NTIA <https://www.dtv2009.gov/>) administers the TV Converter Box Coupon Program, which cost you just \$1.5 billion in taxes (\$990 million for coupons and \$510 million in administrative

costs although not all articles agree on this cost breakdown). Part of the \$510 million you may have seen in the form of television commercials telling you your television will stop working next year unless you do something. On February 17, 2009, all "high power" television broadcasters will convert to digital only signal. Not all TVs will need converter boxes. There are three options. First, each household is eligible for two coupons, each worth \$40, that can be applied toward the cost of qualifying converter boxes (coupons expire in 90 days

(http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20080215/ap_on_hi_te/digital_tv_coupons). Second, TV sets connected to cable, satellite or other pay TV services do not require a TV converter box. Third, you can purchase a TV with a digital tuner. It looks like the government wants you to sign up for cable or satellite service if you are one of the 12% of households that have indoor or outdoor antennas. The NTIA approved 34 different digital to analog tv converter boxes from 24 different manufacturers. Here is the list of approved boxes; https://www.ntiadtv.gov/cecb_list.cfm . I wonder who got to pick which suppliers would be on the list? NTIA estimates that nationwide there are only 13 to 21 million households

(<http://dtvfacts.com/latest/530/how-many-americans-watch-tv-over-the-air/>) that receive TV signals via antenna. For those that receive TV via antenna, the choices will all cost you money. The first choice costs you the least at \$10 to \$20 plus a (tax subsidized) coupon. The second will cost about \$40 to \$75 (with annual increases) for the rest of your life (sign up for cable or satellite service). The third will cost \$250 to \$70,000 (price range of new television sets) every 10 years or so. To get a coupon or two, apply on line at

<https://www.dtv2009.gov/ApplyCoupon.aspx> or call 1-888-388-2009. If you call for an application, you can fax it to 1-877-DTV-4ME2 (1-877-388-4632) or mail one to P.O. Box 2000, Portland, OR 97208-2000. Get your coupons now. Five million of the 33 million (15%) have been issued thus far. Remember that they will expire in 90 days. Also, note that you will need one box per device with an analog tuner (TV, VCR, TIVO, etc.). Some of the stores that will feature approved boxes are Wal-Mart Stores Inc. (<http://www.walmart.com/>), Best Buy Co. (<http://www.bestbuy.com/>), Circuit City Stores Inc. (<http://www.circuitcity.com/>), Target Corp. (<http://www.target.com/>) and RadioShack Corp. (<http://www.radioshack.com/>). Boxes run from \$40 (ECHOSTAR TR-40) to \$175 (Magnavox ZV450MW8). Unfortunately, high end boxes like the Magnavox (<http://www.magnavox.com/>) are ineligible for the coupon rebate. The Magnavox includes a DVD Recorder/VCR. The problem with the Magnavox and other high end boxes is that it takes from 5 to 15 seconds to change the channel.

Business Week reports

(http://www.businessweek.com/technology/content/jan2008/tc20080128_135558_page_2.htm) that some retailers may be unscrupulous and try to upsell television sets instead of the converter boxes. Cable and satellite services are selling by innuendo about this change. The U. S. Public Interest Research Groups reported that a majority of retailers were giving inaccurate information about the converter boxes and the deadline

<http://www.uspirg.org/newsroom/media-internet/media-internet-news/retailers-misleading-consumers-on-the-digital-television-dtv-transition> . After reading all these articles, I am still a bit confused and I have yet to shop for a converter box. A good FAQ is on the FCC site at <http://www.dtv.gov/consumercorner.html> .

Just as an aside, an official said there are funds for 33 million coupons. The FCC has set aside \$990 million for coupons. My 4th grade arithmetic tells me that each coupon is worth \$30. The government has valued each coupon at \$40. Is there a built in cost over run?

<http://www.businessweek.com/ap/financialnews/D8UR2T6G1.htm>

Low-power television stations are exempt from the Digital broadcast conversion on February 17, 2009. They will have to convert on a different time schedule that may put some of them

out of business because they are low budget operations;

<http://dtvfacts.com/103/are-any-tv-stations-exempt-from-the-2009-cutoff-date/> .

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

(con't from page 2)

or keep your anti-virus and anti-spyware programs up-to-date.

Some people think that keeping these programs current is too much trouble. Others quibble because sometimes they have to disable their anti-virus program to install another application.

Don't be misguided. Viruses and spyware can gum up your system to a point where your machine can be rendered useless and inoperable. You could be a victim of fraud or risk turning your machine into a "zombie" where a third party can use your computer for criminal activities. Innocent people have been arrested and charged with downloading child pornography. They had no idea that their machines were compromised for illegal purposes, yet they found themselves in deep trouble.

Dumb Computer Mistake # 5: Indiscriminately installing freeware and shareware you find on the internet.

If you are guilty of this it's only a matter of time before you get infected with a piece of sloppily written software that will cause your system to behave erratically or crash. If you follow dumb with dumber by installing pirated software, don't ask me for help.

Dumb Computer Mistake # 4: Share your files and peripherals with the immediate world.

Turn off file and printer sharing. Unless you do this you could open your computer to access by using a public wireless hotspot with your laptop. Even if you don't use a laptop be aware that Windows, by default, has administrative sharing for the root of each drive. You can turn this feature off in the Systems Administration portion of the Control Panel.

Dumb Computer Mistake # 3: Browse through

the internet without a firewall.

People new to computers are most likely to make this mistake. They tend to be entirely unaware that they need a firewall because nobody told them what a firewall is or why they need one. This lack of knowledge exposes them to every virus, worm or malicious hacker in the computer universe. Fortunately, this exposure can be easily corrected. Many modems and routers have built-in firewall protection. Personal firewalls can easily be downloaded from the web. Go to

<http://www.avast.com> and download one of the best all around network security programs in existence. The best part is that this excellent program is free to the general public.

Dumb Computer Mistake # 2: Picking weak passwords.

Every hacker in the known universe understands that many people use their children's or grandchildren's name as a password. Cracking that kind of security is as easy as breathing. Don't use a family member's birthday or social security number as a password either. It's the kind of information that is all too easy to obtain. Don't create passwords from a dictionary. Hackers have programs which automatically compare passwords against dictionary entries.

Passwords should be at least 8 characters long, and be a combination of upper and lower case characters and numbers. The common objection is that they are hard to remember. That also makes them hard to crack. Create a phrase that you can easily remember and use the first letter of each word along with logical numbers. For example, "Our vacation in Jamaica begins on the fifth day of August" becomes OviJbot5do8. A password like that is impossible to guess and is not found in any dictionary.

Dumb Computer Mistake # 1: Never backing up your data or system files. Even if you never do any other dumb thing while computing, failure to back up your data can negate everything else if you lose important information. There are too many things that can go wrong for you not to be backing up your data. Hard disk crashes, fire or water damage, tornados, hurricanes, magnetic interference, and theft are just a few of the many things that can damage or destroy data.

Backing up data can be time consuming and inconvenient, but losing your data could be catastrophic. There are many strategies you can use to protect your data, but any strategy is better than none. Don't think that merely copying your data files to an external disk constitutes backing up. Make copies of your essential data to three CDs or three sets of CDs. Keep one set at home, but in a different room than where the computer is housed. Keep another set at the office if you work for a living. If you're retired ask a friend to keep a set for you. Do the same for your friend. The third set of disks should be kept in a secure place like a safe deposit box.

Data is the only irreplaceable thing on your computer. You can replace hardware, operating systems and application software, but you can't go to a store and buy a replacement copy of your data.

The dumbest thing I can remember doing is backing up my data files to a RAM disk.

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February CD of the Month

Adobe - Acrobat Reader updates
AM-Deadlink - Detects dead links in files
ARI - February newsletter
ASCIITran - Converts characters to ASCII code and back
Ashampoo - Finds and downloads video clips
AudioGrail - A swiss army knife for audio files
AutoBanIP - Protects your FTP site from password guessing
AutomaticWallpaper - Changes wallpaper on a schedule
Avira - Free anti virus program
BOINC - Program to use your computer during idle cycles
BulkRename - File renaming program
Ccleaner - Cleans garbage files on your PC
CDCheck - Program for the prevention, detection and recovery of damaged files
ComplInventory - Determines the hardware in and attached to your PC
CrystalXP - Perfects the Aero interface in Vista
Daphne - A process killer
DeleteDr - Delete files that are difficult to delete
DesktopSidebar - Creates a Vista like side bar in XP and 2K

(con't on page 8)

Meeting dates confirmed for 2008. Room (A+B) for the following Saturdays.

**February 23, 2008 ::: March 22, 2008 :::
::: April 26, 2008 ::: May 24, 2008**

deVault - Utility to backup, organize, categorize, compress, encrypt and share files
DoltAgain - Creates a routine to do repetitive tasks
EusingRegClean - Free registry cleaner
FilseclabPersonalFirewall - Free fire wall
FinalBurner - Free CD / DVD burning software
Firefox - Upgrade to Firefox browser
Flock - New browser based on Firefox
FreeHideFolder - A tool to hide folders from prying eyes
FreeHTTPSniffer - A tool to capture and view all communications over the HTTP protocol
FreshView - Multimedia file organizer
HDDlife - Monitors the health of your hard drive
Homer - A local host webserver (improves performance)
HostsFileManager - Manager for the Hosts file
IE7pro - Addon for Internet Explorer 7
InstantTimeZone - Shows current time in different time zones
JkDefrag - Defrag software
K-Meleon - Update of browser based on Mozilla browser
MagicBook - An electronic coloring book
NotePad++ - Update to a Notepad replacement with plugins
OldTimeRadio - Old radio programs
PhotoToolkit - A digital image editing program
RealWorldCurEd - A cursor editing program
RocketDock - Emulates Mac's Dock bar
ScrCapPro - save your printed screens without help of image processing software
SmartSniff - Capture TCP/IP packets that pass through your network adapter
SpyBotSD152 - Update of spyware prevention program
SpywareBlaster - Update of spyware prevention program
SUMo - Software Update Monitor checks for updates
SUPERAntiSpyware - Update of spyware prevention program
TeraCopy - Lets you pause and resume copying quickly
TestDisk - A free data recovery program
TimeBridge - An on line calendar and scheduling program
UniversalViewer - An advanced file viewer with suport for a wide range of formats
VidStability - Tests your video card
ViewpointKiller - Kills Viewpoint Media Player (adware)
Vista4Experts - Customize Vista features free
VistaStartMenu - Modifies Vista and XP start menus
WinMerge - Reveal differences in files
WinPatrol - Update to program behavior watchdog
WiseCleaner - Free up disk space by deleting junk files
WorldBrowser - IE compatible browser

Check out the CAEUG web site at **<http://www.caeug.net>**

Post your question or get useful tips like this.

How to get rid of the Windows XP popup message? "You have unused icons on your desktop ...". Here's how to do it. Right click on the desktop. Select the Desktop tab in the resulting dialog box. Click the Customize Desktop button (toward the bottom of the box). Uncheck the Run Desktop Cleanup check box. Click the Ok button. Click the Apply button. Click the Ok button.

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

ABOUT THE NEWSLETTER:

This printed version of our newsletter was laid out using **Adobe's Pagemaker Version 7.0** for Windows.

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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.

Beginner's SIG

Ask questions and discuss computer experiences
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

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

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.

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 \$70.00 a year for 9 months. This is \$20 annual savings over buying them for \$9 each month.

MAIL Request - There will be a \$2.00 mailing charge per CD

Meeting Location and Special Accommodations

The Glenside Public Library is located at 25 E Fullerton Avenue, Glendale Heights, Illinois. The Library is located on Fullerton between Bloomingdale Road (stop light intersection) and Schmale Road (stop light intersection) on the south side of Fullerton. Fullerton is parallel to North Avenue (Route 64) and Army Trail Road. North Ave. is south and Army Trail is north of Fullerton. Please park away from the building. Thank you.

The meeting(s) are not library sponsored and all inquiries should be directed to Mike Goldberg at MikeGold60137@yahoo.com. 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, Mike Goldberg at MikeGold60137@yahoo.com, at least five (5) days prior to the program, so that reasonable accommodation can be made for them.

CAEUG
P. O. Box 2727
Glen Ellyn, IL 60138

FIRST CLASS MAIL

*** ! ** ! ** Notice Date information ** ! ** ! ***

The next **REGULAR** meeting will be held at the **Glenside Public Library in Glendale Heights**
starting 9:45am on

Saturday February 23, 2008

CONFIRMED Future Meeting dates for 2008 at Glenside Public Library:
February 23, 2008 :: March 22, 2008 :: April 26, 2008 :: May 24, 2008
CAEUG Annual Picnic on Saturday JUNE 28, 2008

Next presenter on February 23

Our next presenter: Terry Moye, QuickBooks.

See page one for more information

Hope to see you there!

CAEUG website has a new home.
Remember to change your bookmark to the
new address to
<http://www.caeug.net>

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