



Computers Are Easy User Group

Abort,
Retry,
Ignore....

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

July 2025
Volume XLI Issue 7

PER GLENSIDE Library (Masks are optional)

INFORMATION for Saturday July 26 start time in person at
Library Board Room is 9:30am or at home Zoom is 10:00am.
There will be a meeting invitation e-mail Thursday evening
before the Saturday meeting.

Our July presentation
We will have various videos about Internet Privacy

NEW MAIL ADDRESS!!!

NEW MAIL ADDRESS!!!

**CAEUG,
P.O. Box 153
South Elgin, IL 60177**

***Thank you! to all who paid the
low \$20.00 dues for 2025!
Your support helps pay for our
APCUG membership and CAEUG website***

Confirmed
meeting dates

2025

July 26
Aug 23
Sept 27

:: ::

Hybrid
Board Room
in person
OR Zoom

:: ::

Check
website for
dates and
meeting info

:: ::

**!!!! NEW !!!
Mailing
address:**

**CAEUG
P.O. Box 153
South Elgin,
IL 60177**

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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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webmaster(at)caeug.net

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



Lamp Post 281 July 2025 by John Spizzirri

The brown bear cams are live (**1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6**). The Brooks River is teeming with salmon and other fish. The salmon are swimming upstream for the spawn that will soon attract the experienced bears. Currently, there are a few adolescent bears feeding on the salmon. They don't seem to know how to catch fish. If you are interested, tune in every few days to look for more bears. There is a highlight reel of bears

feeding in the river. The eagles are around but the camera operators have trouble finding them (**7**). The Canadian Geese had a clutch at the Decorah South nest (**8**). The camera views the family at the pond.

- 1) <https://is.gd/5XSkeR>
- 2) <https://is.gd/8qsdz0>
- 3) <https://is.gd/BYn1NE>
- 4) <https://is.gd/5RsMdk>
- 5) <https://is.gd/c7jg58>
- 6) <https://is.gd/ERw674>
- 7) <https://is.gd/0YqTVG>
- 8) <https://is.gd/YAuMF0>

Its becoming harder and harder to know who to trust. The press has reported on companies that you have never heard of that have files on you that have been cracked that may disrupt your life. Those companies offer 'free insurance' from other companies you have never heard of to protect you from identity theft or other life disruptions. Of late the big boys have been cracked (

1, 2). Meta (3), Google (4), Apple (5), and Amazon (6) are the big boys involved. If you have a Facebook (7) account, a Gmail (8) account or purchased something from Amazon these companies have lots of personal information about you. If that information was not on the dark web (9) from previous cracks, its out there now. So far there is no offer of 'free insurance'. I guess they cannot afford it. I guess these billionaires really do need the tax cuts.

- 1) <https://is.gd/BGFIDC>
- 2) <https://is.gd/Mh9vjW>
- 3) <https://www.meta.com/>
- 4) <https://www.google.com/>
- 5) <https://www.apple.com/>
- 6) <https://www.amazon.com/>
- 7) <https://www.facebook.com/>
- 8) <https://www.gamil.com/>
- 9) <https://is.gd/pbtgJd>

On July 21 Rachel Maddow (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8) explained on her MSNBC (9) TV show that she does not live in Texas (10) and has not visited Texas in the last year. She, also, explained that neither she nor her partner, Susan, had a baby. She told her audience that she did not have an altercation with the President's Press Secretary. She told the audience that these were news stories that were circulating on the internet 'machine' with pictures. All the stories were fake. All the pictures were fake. They were created with Artificial Intelligence (AI 11). She went on to tell about how AI is being used to generate fake news and email that keep various groups of voters stirred up. She was concerned about how she was depicted. I was immediately reminded of the self proclaimed internet privacy 'expert' Rob Braxman (12, 13). Braxman would say she was Zucked, meaning that false statements were posted about her on Facebook. Facebook is owned by Mark Zuckerberg. Rachel went on to say that everyone should check any story on the internet for veracity using Snopes (14). She and MSNBC started a website to check on stories about her (15).

- 1) <https://is.gd/sj4xcm>
- 2) <https://www.rachelmaddow.com/>
- 3) <https://is.gd/0v7DGX>
- 4) <https://www.rachelmaddow.com/?p=153>
- 5) <https://is.gd/xnrzg2>
- 6) <https://is.gd/Vy9GN6>
- 7) <https://is.gd/MvsweS>
- 8) <https://is.gd/IX2H6o>
- 9) <https://www.msnbc.com/>
- 10) <https://www.texas.gov/>
- 11) <https://is.gd/bqZd2c>

- 12) <https://is.gd/XF5kD3>
- 13) <https://is.gd/rRL0Mb>
- 14) <https://is.gd/sk7oI1>
- 15) <https://is.gd/gSIvE0>

What is browser or device fingerprinting (**1**)? The fingerprint consists of some or all of the following specifications of your machine and browser; operating system (OS), browser, browser version, screen resolution, supported fonts, time zone, plug-ins installed, CPU, GPU, and other hardware specs. The more ordinary you look the harder it is to track you. If you do not use an unusual OS, browser, fonts, have no plug ins, and do not use JAVA Script (**2**) or Flash (**3**), you will not stand out and have better chance of blending in like a blade of grass in a lawn. The more unique you are the more likely you are to be tracked putting your personal data at risk and making yourself an advertizing target. Cookies (**4**) have little impact on fingerprinting. It is a good idea to delete all cookies at the end of every browsing session. NordVPN (**5**) has a site that explains how to protect yourself. The Electornic Frontier Foundation has a site (**6**) that lets you check your set up for security.

- 1) <https://is.gd/d7D5cr>
- 2) <https://is.gd/vLieRZ>
- 3) <https://is.gd/ohrt2I>
- 4) <https://is.gd/eXA5Nq>
- 5) <https://is.gd/ek110h>
- 6) <https://is.gd/dCnaHE>

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

On Buying a New Laptop By Larry Bothe 7/4/2025

Those of you who have followed my computer journey over the years know that I don't buy new machines very often. And even when I do buy, "new" for me often means a refurb; not really new. I'm not a gamer or a developer, so I have no need of the latest and greatest in personal computing. The latest and greatest costs too much, and isn't at all necessary, for the average computer user. However, there does come a time when obsolescence, lack of features, faulty operation, and lack of convenience come together to make a new machine necessary.

Such became the case with my old laptop computer. I use it only when traveling overnight or longer, and occasionally locally when I go out to do a presentation for an aviation group. I don't use the laptop at home, except to do

maintenance and update tasks. It is a HP EliteBook 8470p. I bought it from Tiger Direct in 2017 as a refurb machine, updated from Win 7 to Win 10 when refurbished. It has a 14" screen, 125-gig solid state drive (small!!), and an optical drive built in. Back then I thought I needed the optical drive, but I have hardly ever used it. It is also a "rugged" model, which I thought would be helpful because I haul it around on trips. Between the rugged construction, and the optical drive (makes the machine thicker), it weighs a lot more than laptops of the same screen size that aren't robust and without the CD/DVD capability. More on weight later.

The old machine still runs, but it has problems and shortcomings.

- Main battery goes dead in 3 days if left in the computer. Started to happen after I paid a shop to change the CMOS battery. I bought a new main battery. No help. But if I take the battery out, it holds a charge for months. Something is wrong internally.

- Screen is 14", but the computer is larger than you would expect due to a wide bezel on all sides of the screen. And I yearned for a larger screen. Friends have 16" laptops, and I like that screen size a lot better. Many have narrow bezels, so the overall length and width aren't much bigger than my 14" hernia box.

- Does not have an HDMI-Out port (but does have Display Port out). Doing presentations often requires that I connect to a big-screen TV. They all have HDMI-In. That means I have to carry an adapter, and/or a special cable. Sometimes I lose audio when using an adapter. Phooey!

- The keys are not backlit. Why do I care? Do I often compute in the dark? Not really, but when my wife and I travel, she wants to go to sleep, and I want to stay up and do email. Then I wish I had backlit keys.

- No USB-C ports. Many computer accessories these days come with the smaller -C connectors.

- The old laptop, with its required adapters, cables, and larger charger, in the case, ready to travel, weighs just a tad over 8½ pounds. That doesn't sound like a lot, but when you lug it through an airport for a while, even using the shoulder-strap bag, it begins to feel like twice that much.

- It's too old to run Win 11. I wasn't really hot to move to Win 11, but with all the other problems, I couldn't see prolonging the life of the old laptop by purchasing the extended Win 10 security updates for an additional year (\$30). It was time to move on.

Shortly after the first of the year, I began casually shopping for a new laptop. I looked at the offerings at Sam's Club, Best Buy, and at Walmart, but nothing really caught my eye. I read some reviews of laptops in Consumer Reports, but the ones they liked all cost a lot of money; \$1000 and up. Then on a more recent trip to Walmart, as I was looking at the spec cards beside each of the laptops, I saw one with an advertised weight of just 2.64 lb. All the other 16" ones were right around 4 lb. My old laptop is nearly 5 lb. Suddenly, I was interested! I read the rest of the specs, and looked it over. It addressed all of

my problems listed above. It had a 16" screen, with a very narrow bezel, so it was only about ¼" bigger, length and width, than the old one. Hard drive is 512 GB SSD, and it has 16 gigs of RAM. Backlit keys. HDMI and USB-C ports. Win 11 Home. The brand is LG, name is Gram, model no. 16Z90R. It said "buy me, buy me!"

Hold on a sec. What about price? When I first saw it, it was marked \$698. Then on a subsequent visit to the store it was at some interim markdown price; \$500+. Then it fell to \$454. At \$454 I was in and said I would buy it. But they were out of stock. I said OK, I'll take the display model. They wouldn't sell it to me, stating that it didn't look good from a marketing point of view to have an empty spot in the row of laptops. At some point they would do a reset in the laptop area, and I could buy it then. OK, when? Nobody knew.

At this point I need to explain that my next-door neighbor works at Walmart, in the TV and computer department. But he wasn't there the day I tried to buy the laptop. I told him I wanted the LG. The next time I was in the store the laptops had been reset (all new ones). My neighbor was there, and he had the LG in a locked cabinet behind the counter. All he had was the laptop itself, and the charging cable. At that point I asked that since I was getting nothing but the computer & charger, could I have an open-box discount? He paged his boss (Walmart calls them "Coaches"), and she authorized an additional 10% discount. I got the new laptop for \$408.

Just getting the new computer doesn't mean you're ready to go to work. There is the initial setup, and then you need productivity software to do any real work. After I signed into Microsoft, they told me I had an available license for Office 2016, and offered to activate it for me. Office, which includes Word, Excel and Power Point, took care of most of my productivity needs. If you don't have a spare Office license, you can download Libre Office; a free and worthy substitute for the expensive Microsoft version. I downloaded Thunderbird (free), my favorite email client program, and that provided communications. I had trouble getting my Contacts (T-bird calls it Address Book) onto the new laptop, but it turned out to be a stupid (on my part) folder naming issue. Once I fixed the name of my profile folder, all was good. I also got VLC Media Player because I like it way better than the built-in Windows program.

The only significant change I made on the new laptop is to add a 3rd-party Start Menu program. Some internet reading suggested a free menu program called StartAllBack. It gives you a start menu that looks and behaves like Windows 7; clean and intuitive. That helped with my transition to Win 11.

I mentioned using 3 freeware programs. I made modest donations to all 3 of those developers.

On the hardware side, I retired all my cables and adapters for the old laptop,

and instead got one 10-foot HDMI cable for connection to large TVs. Not wanting to be completely without the ability to play or burn a DVD, I bought an external DVD (optical) drive on Amazon for \$20. I also bought a low-profile Bluetooth mouse, again from Amazon, for \$12. I don't think I will need anything else.

I have mentioned weight several times in this narrative. Where did I really end up? I mentioned earlier that the weight of the old setup, as I carried it around, was just over 8.5 lb. The new one, in the same carrying case, is about 5.25 pounds, nearly 40% lighter. It feels like even less. I'm thrilled!

Buying the new laptop, and learning to use it for my somewhat limited travel needs, is a precursor to my next computer move. My desktop every-day workhorse computer is also obsolete. I bought it new in 2016, and it won't run Win 11. The hard drive is an old, relatively slow, spinning platter type. Besides the obsolescence, the computer also does bad things. When I shut it down, or do a restart for an update, it often hangs on restart and has to be forcibly shut down manually (hold the Power button) and then started again. I fear that one of these days it just isn't going to wake up. The optical drive quit working several years ago. For some unknown reason, the desktop icon titles get drop-shadows, even though that "feature" is turned off. There are other foibles, but you get the idea. Time to go.

The new computer I'm considering to replace the desktop is one of the relatively new mini cubes that are about 5"x5"x2". It's just a small box with the guts of a laptop, with a bunch of connection ports. No keyboard, no mouse, no screen. Just the box and a power supply. Even has the Pro version of Win 11. You can get a fairly powerful one for around \$300. I'll use my existing 27" HP monitor, Kensington wireless trackball mouse, and Logitech wireless keyboard. Such a deal!

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, does a little flight instruction, and is the volunteer curator of the Freeman Army Airfield Museum. He can be contacted at [LBothe\(AT\)comcast\(DOT\)net](mailto:LBothe(AT)comcast(DOT)net).

Life before the computer:

Memory was something that you lost with age. An application was for employment. A program was a TV show.

A cursor used profanity. A keyboard was a piano. A web was a spider's home. A virus was the flu.

A CD was a bank account. A hard drive was a long trip on the road. A mouse pad was where a mouse lived.