



Computers Are Easy User Group

Abort,
Retry,
Ignore....

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

October 2026
Volume XLII Issue 10

PER GLENSIDE Library (Masks are optional)

Confirmed
meeting dates

2026

Oct 31

**Nov/Dec
TBD**

:: ::

Hybrid
Board Room
in person
OR Jitsi

:: ::

Check
website for
dates and
meeting info

:: ::

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

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

:: ::



INFORMATION for Saturday October 31 start time in person at
Library Board Room is 9:30am or at home Jitsi is 10:00am.
There will be a meeting invitation e-mail Thursday evening
before the Saturday meeting.

On Saturday October 31
Presentation will be various videos
about cybersecurity

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 2026!
Your support helps pay for our
APCUG membership and CAEUG website***

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

CAEUG OFFICERS

President Carl Wallin

V.P. (Programs) Position OPEN

Secretary Position OPEN

Treasurer Kathy Groce

Newsletter Kathy Groce

Board Member

Frank Braman

Joanne Beauregard

Webmaster John Spizzirri

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 295 October 2026 by John Spizzirri

The brown bear cams are still live (**1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6**) in Katmai, Alaska, but not for much longer. The fishing is all but finished for the season. There are just a few bears trying to catch what few fish there are. Get your viewing in now before they go to the hibernating caves and beds. With the days getting shorter and the nights getting longer now is the time

to start looking to the skies for the Northern Lights. Check the Aurora cam sites during the night sky. The Northern Lights (Aurora Borealis) cam at Churchill, Manitoba, Canada (**7**) is in the Central Time zone as is the polar bear site (**8**). If you stay up really late or get up early, try the Alaska Borealis cams (**9**). Two places to try offer various cams from around the world (**10, 11**). To check on the space weather (for aurora forecasts) try here (**12**) and NASA (**13**).

- 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/3RjcRQ>
- 8) <https://tinyurl.com/4rbn7j8c>
- 9) <https://auroranotify.com/aurora-links/>
- 10) <https://seetheaurora.com/webcams>
- 11) <https://lightsoverlapland.com/?p=79>
- 12) <https://www.spaceweather.com/>
- 13) <https://www.swpc.noaa.gov/>

October 4-10 is National Fire prevention Week (**1**). I know that week has already past but it is time to check your smoke detector and carbon monoxide detector batteries to see that they are functional. The reason that week is selected is that the Peshtigo fire anniversary is October 8, 1871 (**2**). That fire holds the record for the most deaths of any U.S. fire. The number of deaths are unknown due to the fire consuming many of the bodies. The estimates range from 1,200 to 2,500 dead. There is a mass grave in Peshtigo of about 350 unidentified people. The fire destroyed forests from just north of Green Bay to just south of Escanaba, Michigan. If you were to drive that distance today it would take about two hours at highway speeds. The span of the fire was from 20 to 50 miles across. The mature trees at the time had diameters of about five to six feet. By the way, there was also a fire on the same day in Chicago (**3**) that killed about 300 people and destroyed three square miles of the city.

1) <https://is.gd/s4d79C>

2) <https://is.gd/sQkX3c>

3) <https://is.gd/e1DI82>

October is National Cybersecurity Awareness Month (**1**). Our presentation will be various videos about cybersecurity. The CAEUG meeting is on Halloween day. The library could not give us the 4th Saturday. Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA (**2**)) was gutted (**3**) by Musk and DOGE (**4**). CISA is attempting to keep the Internet safe with its limited resources. We have to help by helping ourselves. Hopefully, our presentations will help our members be more careful online.

1) <https://is.gd/bCSzKL>

2) <https://www.cisa.gov/>

3) <https://is.gd/6Omzmp>

4) <https://is.gd/VCf2x2>

On a side note Day Light Savings Time will end the morning after our meeting on Sunday at 2 AM. Be sure to turn back your clocks. Congress failed us again.

In the following links I will try to show you places on the net where you can determine if your personal information has been exposed on the Internet or the dark web. If it has, you can take actions that will minimize the hazard to your well being.

Malwarebytes (**1**) provides a place to check whether your personal data has been exposed to crackers (**2**). Enter your email address to see if you are at risk. Have I been pwned web site (**3**) is one of the oldest. If you go there, insert one of your email addresses and see if and/or how often it has been involved in a data breach. You may want to get rid of an address that has too many threats. Avast also has a site that reveals data breaches (**4**). The process is the same as Have I been pwned but less comprehensive. They do try to sell you stuff (Do NOT buy anything. Do NOT download anything.), Databreach.com also has a site that searches for data breaches involving your email address (**5**). The site is recommended by The New York Times,

Wired Magazine, and PC Magazine. Norton Lifelock also has a site (**6**). They show more breaches but have less information about the breaches. They are also more insistent about selling their products (Do not buy them.). The National Public Data Breach (NPD) happened a couple of years ago. It was important in that massive amounts of data was released to the dark web. If you have not checked if your data is out there you should check now and take appropriate measures. Check to see if your information has been compromised using these web sites in (**7 and 8**). Whether it has been exposed or not, contact the three main credit bureaus, set up an account, and request a credit freeze. Get a credit report from each credit bureau and check it for accuracy. The three main bureaus are Equifax (**9**), Experian (**10**), and Transunion (**11**). There are other bureaus, but the big three are the ones that most creditors check. By law you can request a credit report every week for free. Do not get a 'fraud alert' as these are 'services' that cost you money needlessly. You can easily unfreeze your credit if you need to get a new credit line and then freeze it again.

- 1) <https://www.malwarebytes.com/>**
- 2) <https://www.malwarebytes.com/?p=102025>**
- 3) <https://haveibeenpwned.com/>**
- 4) <https://www.avast.com/en-us/hackcheck#pc>**
- 5) <https://databreach.com/>**
- 6) <https://is.gd/oZ4cbv>**
- 7) <https://npd.pentester.com/>**
- 8) <https://www.npdbreach.com/>**
- 9) <https://www.equifax.com/>**
- 10) <https://www.experian.com/>**
- 11) <https://www.transunion.com/>**

With all the data breaches (**1**) over the last few years there are measures you can take to protect yourself. First, you must harden your browser against cyberattacks. There are a number of web sites that outline the methods of strengthening your browser (**2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7**). My credit union (**10**) has a site that provides many tips for other types of scams to avoid. The Brave browser (**11**) is locked down by design. You might want to try it.

- 1) <https://is.gd/m788yp>**
- 2) <https://www.fb-pro.com/?p=6249>**
- 3) <https://www.cisa.gov/sites/default/files/2023-09/CISA%20CEG%20Securing%20Web%20Browsers%20And%20Defending%20Against%20Malvertising.pdf>**
- 4) <https://is.gd/yjaU5X>**
- 5) <https://is.gd/8gbrW2>**
- 6) <https://blog.mozilla.org/attack-and-defense/?p=149>**
- 7) <https://is.gd/xCZPtF>**
- 8) <https://is.gd/vu9xbS>**
- 9) <https://www.osibeyond.com/?p=2850>**

10) <https://is.gd/a5euMQ>

11) <https://brave.com/>

Two organizations that are worth knowing about are the Electronic Freedom Foundation (EFF (**1**)) and the Electronic Privacy Information Center (EPIC (**2**)). Steve Wozniak (**3**) is a co-founder of EFF. He was also co-founder of Apple Computer (**4**). The issues that EFF concerns itself with are Free Speech, Privacy, Creativity, Innovation, Transparency, and Security. There is a newsletter that is free via email and a podcast. They do not share your email address without your permission. They have a part of their site dedicated to Surveillance Self-Defense (**5**). There you can find tips and tools to keep yourself safe on line. EPIC is more political and oriented toward stopping the surveillance by the government. Their issues are Artificial Intelligence vs. Human Rights, Consumer Privacy, Cybersecurity, Data Protection, Free Speech, Privacy Laws, and Surveillance Oversight. There is some crossover between the two groups but EPIC is much more involved with governance. EPIC has its own publications and a 'digital library' of publications virtually all free to read online. Check them out.

1) <https://www.eff.org/>

2) <https://epic.org/>

3) <https://is.gd/GhRfnw>

4) <https://www.apple.com/>

5) <https://ssd.eff.org/>

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

Odd Printer Problem

By Larry Bothe, 9/24/2026

I recently had a small computer problem that aggravated the heck out of me. I didn't react very well to it at the outset, but I got it solved in fairly short order after I got my old brain in gear.

Here's a lesson in starting with the basics, and not going down useless rabbit holes. I do a lot of printing. Between my work as a volunteer museum curator (exhibit signs), newsletter editor (28 years of the Freeman Flash aviation news), and personal needs (daily crossword puzzle for me and my wife), I'm always printing something. Suddenly, for no apparent reason, my printer began taking a very long time from clicking on Print until the printer started working. It never failed; it just took half of forever.

I have a wired connection between my mini-cube "desktop" computer and the printer, so I checked that first. Unplugged and re-plugged. Connection OK. Looked in the print queue. Nope, no junk in there. Went to Settings/Devices/Printers and checked various settings. Didn't see anything wrong. Driver up-to-date. I rebooted my desktop. Still had the problem. I was at my wit's end. OK, never mind, I'll just uninstall

and reinstall the printer.

But that's a big pain, so I hesitated. In that moment, I had a flash of (belated) brilliance. I did all the things mentioned in the paragraph above, but what didn't I do? Think – the printer itself has a small computer inside to control its functions. I hadn't rebooted that computer. How do you "reboot" a printer? Turn it off, wait a minute or so, and turn it back on. I turned it off, and it took a very long time to go down. I almost just pulled the plug, but it finally went down on its own. I was pretty sure I was on to something when the shutdown took so long. Went and got a cup of coffee. Started the printer back up, and it came up in the normal amount of time. The slow-to-print problem was gone, and it has stayed gone.

I still don't know what caused the problem in the first place, but I'm very happy to have it resolved. The lesson here is to start with the basics; don't chase after obscure details. Reboot is the most basic action. Start there, and don't forget your peripheral equipment. If I had turned off the printer first (after all, the problem was with printing, duh!) I would have saved myself a lot of time fooling around.

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.net](mailto:LBothe(at)comcast.net).

Where is the Real Problem? (Hint: Probably Not Thunderbird) By Larry Bothe, 9/24/2026

This computer problem seemed to be with using Thunderbird as an email client program. I first got involved with Thunderbird some 20 years ago, when my wife and I were doing cruise ship vacations. Back then, the ships sold you a block of internet time, and it was expensive, like 50¢ a minute. If you did email online, composing new messages, and replying to ones you received, took quite a while. You blew through your block of time rather quickly, and had to buy more.

An email client program allows you bring your messages into your computer and deal with them from there, without having to be online all the while. I think it was John Spirrizzi who suggested that I use Thunderbird. On the ship, I could use T-Bird to logon to my (then) AOL account, download my messages into T-Bird on my laptop, log-off, and deal with the messages at my leisure. The download took, literally, only a minute or two. Any messages I answered, and new ones I created, went into a queue to be sent later. After I was all finished with the mail, I would log back on, click on Send Mail, and my accumulated messages were sent all at once. Like the downloading of messages earlier, it took only a minute or two. I could do a complete email session, using only about 5 minutes of internet time. If I was careful, I could get

a whole week out of a 1-hour block of time, doing 2 email sessions a day. Hooray!

But I digress. I told the Thunderbird story because I still use it today, even though we seldom cruise any longer. And the ships charge differently for internet time now anyway. I really like the way T-Bird handles messages to large groups of people, a feature I regularly use, so I stay with it. And I donate to T-Bird every year.

About a week ago I was doing email, and T-Bird had difficulty maintaining a connection with Comcast, my present ISP. I received error messages that didn't make a lot of sense, like the violation of some unspecified policy, or needing to change my password to Comcast. I was waiting to receive an article for my aviation newsletter, so I decided to bypass T-Bird and go directly to Comcast online to get the message/article. When I tried to log in at Comcast, I was told I had to change my password. Changing my password was required from time-to-time to maintain security. OK, sure, I'll change my password. It had been the same for 3 years or so. I changed it, logged on, got my article message, and logged off.

That solved my immediate problem about needing the newsletter article, but now I wanted to go back and continue to use Thunderbird for my regular email handling. That meant I had to tell T-Bird the new Comcast server password, so T-Bird could get, and send, my messages to/from Comcast. OK, easy, just go into T-Bird Accounts, Settings, Servers, and change the password to Comcast. Oh rats, they changed exactly how you get to the password to change it. I couldn't readily find where to make the change, so I went to T-Bird FAQs. No help there. T-Bird does some things very well, but Help isn't one of them.

I wanted to get this over with, so I just entered a question in Google search. Now that Google uses AI to answer questions, the results are fast, and amazingly good! In maybe one second, I received an AI response that was a step-by-step listing of where and how to change the server password in the current version of Thunderbird. I used the Windows feature that allows you to have two active programs showing at once (split-screen mode). With the Google AI answer and Thunderbird both up on the screen, I went through the steps. Perfect! Got the server password changed immediately.

This isn't like the old days. I remember back in the 90s when I lived in La Grange and came to every CAEUG meeting, when I had a problem, I called John Spizzirri. Later, John gently but firmly nudged me toward doing my own online research. That entailed entering a question in Google, much like I did just now, but instead of a cogent AI response, you had to go from website to website until you found an answer that appeared to fit your situation, and try it. Now AI does all that searching for you, and you get a solution that works. Very nice.

You would think that was the end of the article, but it isn't. I had this problem before, but my need wasn't as urgent. The next morning it had gone away on its own. I got to thinking about all this, and recalled having the same sorts of issues, to a lesser

extent, several times. They have always been in the early evening, when everybody in my residential area is home from work and school and using their computers. Later that night, or the next morning, all is well. I don't know this, but I'm thinking that the real culprit here is Comcast. They are running out of bandwidth when lots of people are trying to move an enormous amount of data at the same time. Think streaming TV & movies; that sort of thing. When the system can't handle the traffic, connection problems occur, and odd warnings pop up. Demand goes down, and the problem goes away. I probably didn't need to do the server password change, or anything else. Live and learn.

One final related suggestion. Your modem and router have a lot to do with how well your system exchanges data. Modems especially can get clogged up with crap (highly technical term!), lose buffering RAM, and miss firmware updates. Routers can have the same sorts of problems. One way to guard against those things is to power-cycle your modem and router on a regular basis. I have been trying to remember to do that once a month for the past several years, but I sometimes forget. Now, after this most recent session of chasing my tail, I entered a repetitive Task in Google Calendar to remind me to do the power-cycle each month. The good thing about a task, as opposed to an appointment, is that a task nags you until you specifically tell Google that it is done.

As in the rest of life, computer problems are not always as they first appear. You may have to dig a little deeper. Stay warm & cozy by your computer as we come into the fall and winter season.

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.net](mailto:LBothe(at)comcast.net).

Lessons on the Road

There's a man trying to cross the street. But when he steps off the curb a car comes screaming around the corner and heads straight for him. The man walks faster, trying to hurry across the street, but the car changes lanes and is still coming at him.

So the guy turns around to go back, but the car changes lanes again and is still coming at him. By now, the car is so close and the man so scared that he just stops in the middle of the road.

The car swerves at the last possible moment and stops next to the man. The driver rolls down the window. It's a squirrel.

He says, "See, it's not as easy as it looks."