

Print Screen

August 2000
Vol. XVIII No. 8

Newsletter of the Stanford / Palo Alto Users Group for PC (SPAUG),
a Non-Profit / Educational Organization
PO Box 20138, STANFORD CA 94309-0138 <http://www.mediacity.com/~spaug>

Articles Wanted:
No Reasonable Offering
Refused

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President's Message ...

Notes from the Pres

by Jim Dinkey

OUR SPEAKER FOR AUGUST

Google, in the personage of Craig Silverstein, will present how Google operates, their objectives, and how they are different from other companies in similar businesses.

MEMBERSHIP

Over the years I have noticed that women do not enter into the research and development of computers and the software that runs it. About 5 years ago, I attended a Linux workshop where the movers and shakers were in attendance, but of the 72 people there, 70% of them were men and 1% were women (there was one that was indeterminate).

Our membership includes several women that add a great deal to the vitality and effectiveness of SPAUG. I wonder just what we need to do to expand that part of the group. Your suggestions are encouraged.

Another part of membership is maintaining our base. We will lose about 10% of our membership each year through no fault of our own. Some are moves, retirements, and circumstances changed. So we need to assure that our advertising under our Publicist—Marvin Kraft—is effective.

Next General Meeting ...

Wednesday, August 30

5:45 pm (Optional)
Dinner at Su Hong

7:15 pm, Palo Alto Elks Lodge

Topic: Google

Speaker: Craig Silverstein

www.google.com

[For fun, see the site below—]
www.google.com/logos.html

For more info, next page

BACKUPS

We are back on that subject. I evidently stirred a bit of a nest with the suggestion that tapes be used. I have heard lots of arguments, but the final view is that the ability to make backups is primarily dependant upon the process being benign—else it will not be done at all. This is the crux of why CDs, which take intervention, do not meet that criteria. Tapes, on the other hand, are put in once and then can receive a full backup, four daily backups, and be replaced once a week in 10 seconds. All of the processing is usually automatic. That is why tapes are your best bet. Now when the CDs get to be over 2 GB each, well, we might have to revisit the subject.

WEBMASTER SIG

Stan Hutchings has quite a Webmaster class going. About six members have been meeting as

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President's Message (Continued) ...


(Continued from page 1)

He has us reviewing the basics that are presented on the SPAUG website. Anyone who wishes to find out what we are doing merely needs to look at our website. The current assignment is to review the portion on TABLES.

FUTURE PROGRAMS

I could use some help. You are requested to see if your favorite organization is interested in presenting its case to SPAUG and to send me the name and phone number of the contact. I will take it from there.

DOLLARS FOR SPAUG

If you subscribe to Smart Computing Magazine by phone or mail, use Source Code 8592 and SPAUG will receive a \$5 rebate. Jim Dinkey will have forms available at the General Meeting. 


SPAUG CDOM ...

CDOM (Compact Disk of the Month)

The SPAUG CDOM contains a fairly comprehensive collection of free or Shareware files, available for download from the Web. At 33.6 Kbps, the 200 MB on the disk would take at least 1,000 minutes (16 hours) to download—after you have found the files on the Web. SPAUG's Webmasters have already done the work for you.

The free programs on this CD can be used without restriction. Shareware can be evaluated at no charge, but if you decide to use the program, the honorable thing is to send in your registration and payment. Buying this CD does **not** pay for the registration.

The content listing is available at the SPAUG website <http://www.mediacity.com/~spaug> and on the CD.

The price is \$20. To purchase, contact JimDinkey@JimDinkey.com. 

General Meetings ...

Locations ...


Su Hong Eatery, (for Optional dinner) El Camino Way at West Meadow Palo Alto

- **If you're on El Camino Real (ECR):** Starting at Charleston, head north on ECR (toward Stanford U) in the far right lane. At the traffic signal a few hundred feet north of Charleston, take the 30-degree right turn which puts you on El Camino Way, a narrow two-way street. Su Hong is immediately to your right at the stop sign for the W. Meadow intersection, across from the Goodwill store.
- **If you're on West Meadow:** Drive toward the peninsula hills. West Meadow ends at El Camino Way. Su Hong will be on your left. Parking may be tight in Su Hong's lot; you may have to park on the street.

Elks Lodge, 4249 El Camino Real, Palo Alto, CA 94306-4496

The Elks Lodge is on the bay side of the street, between Charleston and San Antonio Road, but very close to Charleston. It is next to Ricky's Hyatt House, which is on the corner.

Use the lodge's front lot and main entrance. The entrance has a card-operated lock. If no one is there to let you in, use the wireless SPAUG doorbell we place (usually to the right of the entrance), and wait for someone to come for you.

We meet in the Lodge Room, which is straight ahead, and to the left. 

Usual Agenda ...

- 7:15 "Boot up"
- 7:30 Announcements.
- 7:35 Guests introduction.
- 7:40 Random Access (Crosstalk)
- 7:50 Break
- 8:00 SPEAKER
- 9:15 SIG Reports
- 9:20 Raffle
- 9:30 Adjourn 

From other publications ...

[contributed by co-Editor Mildred Kohn]

HANDY, HIDDEN WINDOWS 98 UTILITIES

Compiled by Greg Lenihan, newsletter editor for the Pikes Peak Computer Application Society in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

Although Win95 did everything I needed, I switched to Win98 (2nd edition) because I kept reading and hearing about new utilities that were built into the new operating system that looked like good troubleshooting aids. Each of these utilities can be accessed by typing the commands below into the **Start** □ **Run** box.

System Information Command: **msinfo32.exe**

You can get there the long way by going to **Start**—>**Programs**—>**Accessories**—>**System Tools**—>**System Information**. What you get is information about the hardware and resources used, software components installed as part of Windows, and software currently loaded and running (called the Software Environment). To view any of these areas, click on a plus sign next to the heading shown in outline form. If you look under the Tools menu, you can launch other Win98 utilities such as the System Configuration Utility, System File Checker, Registry Checker, and Dr. Watson.

Want to know how long your system has been running since turned on? Look for the Uptime value in the right panel.

System Configuration Utility Command: **msconfig.exe**

This is a handy utility used to modify many of the settings for Win98. Individual lines can be turned on or off in your `config.sys`, `autoexec.bat`, `system.ini`, or `win.ini` files. You can use it to turn off the annoying Scandisk function if you are forced to shut off your system, and can turn off any program starting at boot up. The command **msconfig.exe** is found in the `c:\Windows\system` directory where you can create an icon for it on your desktop. It's a very handy tool for troubleshooting startup problems.

System File Checker Command: **sfc.exe**

The System File Checker verifies the integrity of your system files in Win98. Running this file will determine if any of your system files have been replaced or corrupted. It will then prompt you to replace them from your install CD. A nice feature of the utility is that by running it after installing new applications, you can find out what system files that application has installed or changed.

Version Conflict Manager Command: **vcmui.exe**.

This utility enables you to revert to newer versions of certain files that are replaced when you install or reinstall Win98. An install of Win98 will overwrite DLLs and other files—even if they were newer than those installed by Windows. Launching the **Version Conflict Manager** will display a list of possibly troublesome files that you may than fix with the click of a button.

Dr. Watson Command: **drwatson.exe**

This tool can provide clues to software-related problems. Typing **drwatson** into the Run command box won't launch to a main screen or dialog box like the other utilities. Instead, an icon will appear in your system tray. Right-clicking on it will display the user interface. To be effective in troubleshooting, Dr. Watson should be running in the background when you are testing problems. That way you can look at log files generated and maybe get some meaningful error messages about what occurred to your system. This may mean loading it at startup so it can try to interpret why a problem or crash occurred.

Hardware Diagnostics Tool Command: **hwinfo.exe**

The Hardware Diagnostic Tool provides the same information as the Microsoft System Information Tool, except it is color coded to display problem areas and potential problems. Open the Run box in the start menu and type it in with the `/ui` switch. It will not run without the switch.

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From other publications (Cont'd) ...

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Automatic Skip Driver Agent Command: `asd.exe`

When a software driver prevents the system from booting properly, this tool can help determine which driver is having problems and how to fix it. Make sure two consecutive restarts were attempted whereby the same driver doesn't load. After typing in the command, a listing of all drivers not loaded should appear along with advice on what to do.

Link Check Wizard Command: `chklnks.exe`

This wizard is found on the Windows98 Install CD in the directory `\Tools\Reskit\Desktop`. It scans all of the shortcut files on your system, and checks to see if the link points to an existing application or document. If the associated application or document is not found, it lists that file as a dead link, giving you the option to remove it. Copy `Chklnks.exe` to your Windows directory and create an icon on your desktop to use it.

IP Configuration Tool Command: `winipcfg.exe`

This tool provides the current information about your IP address assigned when you connect to your Internet Service Provider. It includes your subnet mask and the gateway your ISP is using. This information can be helpful in connecting your system to other computers on the Internet. IP Config is found in your `c:\Windows` directory. 


Technical Tips ...

[articles contributed by co-Editor Mildred Kohn]

[An excerpt from "Doing Windows" by Lee Reynolds, Contributing Editor, Boca Raton Computer Society, Inc., July 2000 issue of Newsletter for The Palm Beach PC Users Group.]

ANNOTATE WINDOWS HELP


Did you know that you can add your personal notes to Windows 9x Help topics?

Kind of like using one of those little yellow sticky notes. When your Help window is showing a topic that you want to annotate, you do it as follows: right click any empty area of the topic's window and select Annotate from the context menu that pops up. A box appears where you can type your own notes and then you click Save. The next time you navigate to that item where you have an annotation, you will see a little paper clip as an icon in order to open and read your note. If you want to remove an annotation, then just open it and then click Delete. 

COMPUTER HARDWARE [USB HUBS]

From the Newsletter of the Connecticut PC User Group

Issue: The world is moving to the Universal Serial Bus (USB). New computers have a couple of USB ports. Most peripherals don't yet allow you to daisy-chain hardware together. What do you do when you run out of ports?

Response: Buy a USB hub and plug it into one of your ports. (You can chain hubs.) The main caveat is to buy a powered hub since some USB devices draw power from the bus. Another option is to buy a new monitor since many of them have USB ports on them. Either way, an unintended benefit is that your connections will no longer be hidden in the back of your computer. They can be on your desktop if you wish. 

Product Reports ...

All CD-RW disks are not the same!

by John Buck

Taking to heart Jim Dinkey's admonishment to **BACK UP YOUR PC**, I checked on devices available locally and settled on an HP 8210e External CD-Writer. At the same time, I bought a box of cheap [pricewise] generic CD-RW disks. That last part may have been a big mistake. Of six disks I tried from this package, only one seemed ultimately usable.

When I started using the CD-Writer, I figured I'd start with one of the cheap disks, instead of unwrapping the HP disk. The cheap disk seemed to format ok, and it seemed to accept data ok. But when I removed it from the drive and then put it back, it didn't read and locked up my PC. As soon as I removed the disk, the PC was ok again. Tried a second cheap disk, same problem. Reinstalled CD-Writer and software. Same problem. Checked documentation in preparation to call HP for help. Figured that HP would ask what disk I was using and it would only be fair to be using the disk they'd provided. **THE HP DISK WORKED AS EXPECTED.** OK, there seems to be no problem with the HP disk in the HP drive. There also seems to be no problem with Imation disks.

From all of this, I did seem to find a way to determine if a disk was OK or not.


In Windows Explorer, going to My Computer shows my drives.

When I put a CD-RW in my CD-Writer, one of three things will happen.

- If the disk hasn't been formatted, software to format the disk will be started.
- If the disk has been formatted and is usable, Windows Explorer will show me Total Size and Free Space on that disk.
- If neither of those two things happens, I get an hourglass and the PC hangs as long as that disk is in the drive.

Of six cheap disks, only one seemed usable. My benefit from this exercise is that I have early-on 1) learned about problems of this sort, 2) learned more about dealing with my CD Writer than I'd expected, and 3) learned that all CD-RW disks are

not the same.

All disks used in the above examples were labeled 650MB/74 minute. I'm noticing that there seem to be more 80-minute disks available than the 74-minute variety. If you're thinking of using 80-minute disks, be aware that HP, for one, does not recommend using them for critical information at this time. See http://www.hp.com/cposupport/information_storage/support_doc/lpg40817.html. HP's website also has other information about using, handling, and caring for CDs; try starting at www.hp.com/storagemedia/english/prodinfo.html. 


Recommended Reading ...

[contributed by John Buck]

The World Streaming In

by Bill McKibben, in *The Atlantic Monthly*, July 2000, pp 76-78.


<http://www.theatlantic.com/issues/2000/07/mckibben.htm>

Free, easy-to-use software turns any PC into the greatest [radio] set there ever was. You listen through the speakers on your desktop computer. By year's end, car radios will be available to "stream" channels playing your favorite formats (for a fee). Internet radio can be inexpensive; one service will webcast a station's signal for only two minutes of advertising a day. The digital revolution is also changing the way radio programs are created, in addition to how they are delivered. 

Technical Tip (beginner's level)...

That front-panel switch on my PC

by John Buck

There's a switch on the front of my PC that can turn it on if I press it. What I didn't know until a lady told me in church was that this same switch can also turn my PC off—if I press it for about eight seconds. Apparently the delay is to keep the PC from being turned off unless I absolutely, positively, intentionally, really want to turn it off. It works for me. 


Webpage Building and Maintenance SIG ...

A gallery of beginners' web pages

by John Buck

Most of the Webpage SIG members now have webpages on line. On SPAUG's website, click "Webpage Creation & Maintenance SIG". At the top of the right column, click "Members", then a "Home Page" link For many of us, these efforts represent what we've been able to learn from Stan Hutchings, each other, other sources, and by trial and error. Each class session has been about 2 1/2

hours long—and we have homework. You can see some of the info Stan is providing by reading the material posted for each week's topics. Even if you're not thinking of building a webpage right now, you may want to read that material to see what it takes to make one, and some of the problems to be consider.


Maybe as result of this class, we'll get a new Co-Webmaster and be able to remove the "Help Wanted" notice below. 

SPAUG Club Business ...

Planning Meetings ...

NEXT PLANNING MEETING: See back-page calendar


Planning meetings are held on the first Wednesday of each month, usually at the home of a member, at 7:15pm. All members are welcome, and encouraged, to attend.

Please phone Jim Dinkey ((650) 493-9307) or Bev Altman ((650) 329-8252) to confirm venue. 

Help Wanted ...

Co-Webmaster Sought

by Stan Hutchings

With the imminent advancement of Kendric Smith to Webmaster Emeritus status, the club is in need of a co-webmaster. Anyone willing to help out with the updating and maintenance of the club web site, please volunteer. This is an excellent chance to see how a web site is created and maintained, especially for anyone interested in creating their own personal web site. Experience with HTML coding is preferred. 


Contacts ...

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Tech Support, Questions and Answers


The members listed below are willing to offer help and advice on their areas of expertise. It's free, so there are no guarantees! However, it provides one-on-one help, and more time than the ten minutes of Random Access at our General meetings.

If you have questions on subjects not listed, try calling Jim Dinkey ((650) 493-9307). If he can't help, he may know who can.

Jim also maintains a laboratory in his home which is available to SPAUG members when intractable problems arise. Call Jim to make an appointment, which would normally be on a Saturday morning. This service is also available to non-members, but at the cost of a suitable donation to the Club's coffers. That alone should be an inducement to join - any appropriate contribution would be more than the annual membership, but less than you would pay a commercial outfit. Tell your friends. 


Topic	Expert	
DOS , Quick Books 6, Quicken 98	Jim Bailey Jimby@pobox.com	(650) 494-0631 9AM-9PM
Win NT/Win 98	Jim Dinkey jimdinkey@jimdinkey.com	(650) 493-9307 9AM-9PM
DOS	Bill Goldmacker gold@svpal.org	(650) 691-0911 6PM-9PM
AOL, ZIP managers, Win 95/98, MS Picture it 99	Robert Mitchell Rfmitch702@aol.com	(650) 941-5792 4:30PM-9PM
MS Publisher, UNIX, Fortran, Perl	John Sleeman sleemanj@earthlink.net	(650) 326-5603 9AM-8PM
All PC areas: Software and Hardware	Walt Varner walt2222@aol.com	(408) 739-3488 9AM-9PM

Listserver (e-mails to SPAUG members) ...


Any registered member on the SPAUG-list can send messages to ALL other members on the list automatically by sending e-mail to this address. This list of addresses is intended for announcements of interest to ALL SPAUG members. Please avoid excessive or trivial announcements, since some members pay for their connect time. Send additions or corrections for the list to spaug@mediacity.com. 

SPAUG = 501(c)(3) ...

Arlan Kertz, SPAUG Accountant

SPAUG is a non profit organization registered with the IRS under Internal Revenue Code 501(c)(3). In this regard, your dues (except for \$12 for the newsletter) are deductible. Also, any additional cash and/or other non-business assets donated to SPAUG are also deductible. 

Trademarks, Service marks, etc. ...

All trademarks, service marks, etc., used in this newsletter are the property of their owners. 

About SPAUG ...

Membership ...

SPAUG memberships last one year, beginning with the date you sign up, and are renewable annually

Annual membership dues are \$35, payable to SPAUG, at PO Box 20138, Stanford CA 94309-0138.

Please include your name and address, and optionally an e-mail address and any special interest group (SIG) you want more information about.

Questions? Call Beverly Altman ((650) 329-8252) or Jim Dinkey ((650) 493-9307).

Attention, Correspondents ...

If our addresses in your records do not match those below, please update your records, Thanks.

<http://www.mediacity.com/~spaug>

SPAUG Calendar ...

MONTH	Plan Mtg	JB -> RM	RM -> PO	Genl Mtg
August	2	9	16	30
Sept	6	13	20	27
Oct	4	11	18	25
Nov	1	8	15	29
Dec	<i>SPAUG Vacation—Enjoy Your Holidays!</i>			
Jan	3	10	17	31
Feb	7	14	21	28
March	7	14	21	28

Legend:

JB -> RM = John Buck to Robert Mitchell

RM -> PO = Robert Mitchell to Post Office

SPAUG
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