

SPAUG

Vol. XXVI No. 11

Print Screen



Newsletter of the **Stanford/Palo Alto Users Group for PC**
A Non-Profit / Educational Organization • <http://www.pa-spaug.org>
Post Office Box 20161, Stanford, CA 94309-0161

Notes from the Prez

by Jim Dinkey

Just a week before Halloween, several newsletters and emails have referred to a **Microsoft Update release of an unscheduled patch to all Microsoft software** wherein the absence of a key patch can allow a nasty virus to gain access to your computer.

Microsoft has never before deviated from its policy of releasing patches on the second Tuesday of the month (or once in a while on an in-between Tuesday) but **this patch was released on a Thursday near the end of the month and all of the technical media are jumping on the requirement that everyone update their computer – NOW!**

I have been through the technical reviews. **The ability of selected malware to exploit this vulnerability to get past just about everything including all of the anti-virus programs is without parallel as several viruses can attack the operating system itself as a legitimate piece of data.**

While you are at it, please feel free to do a backup and bring all of your patches current. Don't forget the Office updates. The use of Secunia here is appropriate.

And **don't forget to have Avast check your computer at boot time!** Right click the right-most rotating ball at the bottom right of the screen, click on "Start Avast Antivirus", wait for the 30-second scan to complete, right click on the funny controller that appears, and choose "Schedule Boot Time Scan". Reboot and be prepared for the reboot scan to take 20 minutes. Review the resultant report file at: Program Files/Awil Software/Avast4/Data/Report/aswBoot.txt. It is amazing what shows up when the viruses can't defend themselves because the anti-virus programs are running with the operating system quiescent.

Remember the old Homebrew Computer Club? A part of at least its spirit will be with us in February when two of our members, **Larry Templeton and Bill Young, will bring to the meeting, their own creations that started as a pile of parts.** Hands-on demonstrations with Q and A will be the order of the evening.

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General Meeting @ American Legion Post—Wed. November 12 @ 7:15 PM
347 First Street, Los Altos (directions on page 3)

Optional Dinner at Aldo Los Altos, 388 Main Street Los Altos
One block west from American Legion Hall, 5:45 pm (see page 3)

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For the umpteenth time if one puts into Google: [**WINDOWS LIVE SAFETY SCANNER** (tab) (tab)] you will be looking at the Microsoft stand-alone scanner that will check out the registry, fragmentation, anti-virus, general checker, resources and a lot more. Please run it.

Many of us keep on using Windows XP because it works! Why help Microsoft debug their next OS be it Vista or OS7? It turns out that OS7 will look and feel like Vista. Some time in the far distant future we all will be using OS7 or some derivative. Everyone will be translating the support functions we have been doing for twenty years into the new procedures presented by Vista and OS7. Just

finding out how to do a simple FORMAT is a trial. Delay the “fun” as long as you can!

Windows 7 is really Vista (that failed) and is reworked yet again. All of the functions of XP are there – just hidden from 20 years of history of kinesthetically running around the operating systems. Now if the UNIX people would just make a decent interface to the support functions...

One last caveat: when you purchase your next computer and you are tempted to spend the extra bucks for a quad core that requires 64-bit-designed programs, make darn sure you don't get a surprise to find that a key older program won't run because it is not designed for a 64-bit environment!

Caveat emptor!

Filler by John Buck

Often, when what I've read about some piece of software that makes it seem like a “must-have”, I wonder what others think of it—especially the negative aspects. My usual sources for **software reviews** are **Snapfiles.com**, **download.com**, and **lifehacker.com**.

For **restaurant** reviews, my first choice is **yelp.com**. The second place I go looking is **paloaltoonline.com**, via the Mtn View Voice < <http://www.mv-voice.com/restaurants/> > .

Optical Illusions and Kaleidoscopes can be interesting and/or provide some pleasant distraction. Check out <http://tinyurl.com/5fo5m6> and <http://www.moillusions.com/> for illusions. The best (free) kaleidoscope site I've found is at <http://tinyurl.com/295a99> .

It's about time: After all these years of looking at digital clocks, I sometimes want to see an analog clock with a second hand sweeping its dial. One of the Opera browser's most-popular Widgets is just such a clock. Other

sources for analog clocks I like are—

ClockX < <http://www.clocx.net/> > ,

Rainlender Lite (aka Rainlender2 < <http://tinyurl.com/5djn98> > , and

TimeTrek < <http://tinyurl.com/58c4oo> > .

Rainlendar and TimeTrek have additional capabilities. Here's an unusual clock that combines analog and digital in its display < <http://www.jessonyip.com/analogy/> >

Where's that message I thought I'd downloaded? It's taken me more than once to figure this one out! I think I've downloaded a message, then can't find it in my inbox. First thing to check is that I am looking at my inbox. Next, check sorting order and search filtering. My default sorting order is newest-at bottom, so I can get thrown off if I've changed it (source, topic, etc), or applied some search filter that doesn't pass the message.

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Meeting Day: Wednesday, November 12

General Meeting

American Legion Post
347 First Street, Los Altos

Meeting time is 7:15 pm

Hank Skawinski
Speaking about:
Marketplace 2008-09

The American Legion Post is in downtown Los Altos, on the North (bay) side of First Street, between San Antonio and Main Street. It's directly across First Street from Draeger's Market.

The American Legion Post does not have its own parking lot. All off-street parking close to the hall is private, and only for use by customers or tenants of the respective properties. The closest public parking is on the street and in the public lot West of the hall, behind the Main Street businesses. Consider carrying a flashlight, it's dark in downtown LA after our meeting.

Our meeting place is the back room of the AL Post, directly accessible via a door on the West side of the building.

Typical Meeting 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

Optional pre-meeting no-host dinner

Join us for dinner before our General Meeting at —

Aldo Los Altos

388 Main Street, Los Altos; (650) 949-2300

directions: One block west from American Legion Post

map: <http://tinyurl.com/6hm3ga>

menu (via waiter.com): <http://tinyurl.com/57hhgc>

reviews: <http://tinyurl.com/5laoug>

Dinner time is **5:45 pm**

**Note the
location
for
this month's
dinner.**

◀ (Continued from page 2)

Where's that file I thought I'd downloaded?

More than once, I've downloaded a file and not found it where I'd said it should go. This is particularly problematic with a large file that has taken a long time to download. What I've learned is to look in my browser's temporary storage area. Particularly useful here is a file manager, such as **Free Commander** < <http://tinyurl.com/52dsae> >, whose search tool allows you to specify a file-creation-time range less than a day; if you're looking for a file you've just downloaded, you probably want to limit your search to the last hour or so.

Where's that file I thought I'd saved? Editing files poses a couple of hazards. The first is unintentionally overwriting a file, the second is losing track of where you've saved your work.

To overcome the first of these problems (unintentional overwriting), I try to make it habit to always "save as" a different file name—before making any change, and doing this may cause the second problem ("where is it?"), if the "save as" pointed to a different folder than the one I started in. In this case, before firing up my file manager to search for the lost file, I look for the file in the editing program's list of recent files, open it, and then note where "save as" wants to save it—which is probably where it was sent in the first place.

Why didn't Microsoft think of it? Often I'm working in a situation where I'm switching between two (or more) files and have wished their taskbar buttons were adjacent, to make that switching easier. Now I have two small

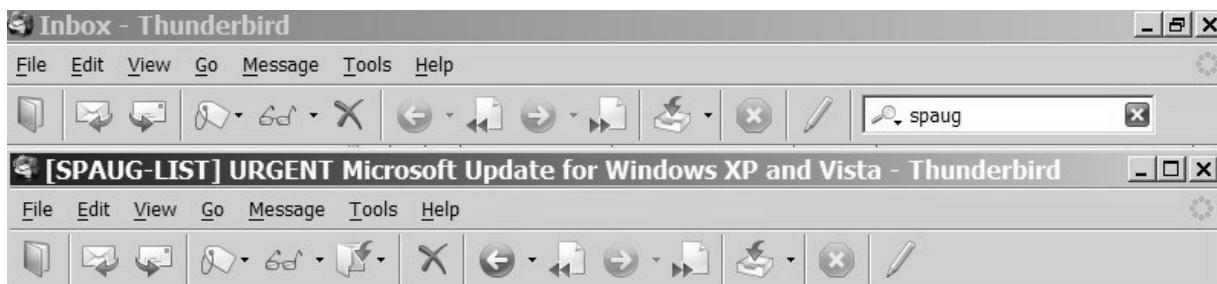
programs that enable me to do that—**Taskbar Shuffle** < <http://tinyurl.com/687qnn> >, and **Taskix** < <http://taskix.robustit.com/> >.

Here's something Microsoft did think of: Because I run lots of programs at the same time, my System Tray (Systray) has lots of icons in it. Microsoft has provided a way to **hide icons for programs not actively used**. Here's how to do it, in Windows XP:

1. Right click on an empty area in the Taskbar.
2. Select "Properties" to open the "Taskbar and Start Menu Properties" window.
3. At the bottom of the "Taskbar" tab, select "Hide inactive icons".
4. Click "OK".

I use **CutePDF Writer** < <http://tinyurl.com/2lznks> > as my **default printer**, and also have several other PDF printer programs installed. I've noticed that when I install an upgrade to any of these programs, I should expect that my default printer becomes changed to my ink-and-paper printer, so I have to remember to check the selected device when I specify printing, and be prepared to restore my preferred-printer choice.

Two troublesome buttons I remove from my email handlers' toolbars are "**Send**" and "**Reply to All**". That way, I feel I'm less likely to inadvertently do either of those things. Another thing I try to do is to have the message-level and folder-level toolbars' "**Delete**" **buttons in different places**, so clicking "twice" on a message's "Delete" button is less likely to inadvertently delete a message from the folder. See the illustration below.



November 2008 SPAUG News

SPAUG CALENDAR						
Always subject to change; verify event with host or Jim Dinkey						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	27 7-9 pm WebSIG Micro Center		29 HALLOWEEN →		31	1—Clinic, by appointment only
	3 7-9 pm Multi-MediaSIG Micro Center	4 ☒ ←	5 ← Election Day			8—Clinic, by appointment only
	10 7-9 pm WinSIG Micro Center		12 5:45 pm Dinner (Optional), Aldo Los Altos, 388 Main, LA 7:30 pm General Meeting Amer. Legion Post, 347 First St, LA Spkr: Hank Skawinski			15—Clinic, by appointment only
	17 7-9 pm DISIG Micro Center		19 7:15 pm Planning Meeting, Bev Altman's			22—Clinic, by appointment only
	24 7-9 pm WebSIG Micro Center		26 Thanksgiving Day →		27	29—Clinic, by appointment only

Saturday Clinic

Clinics usually are held when needed. **Call Jim Dinkey** to make a reservation.

Contact Jim at jimdinkey at jimdinkey.com or 650-493-9307 for an appointment.

SIGS

MultiMedia SIG—1st Monday each month, at Micro Center, Santa Clara

WinSIG—2nd Monday of the month, at Micro Center in Santa Clara

DISIG—3rd Monday of the month, at Micro Center in Santa Clara

WebSIG—4th Monday of each month, 7-9 pm, at Micro Center in Santa Clara

These SIGs are coordinated by **Maury Green**, mauryg3 at comcast.net

Planning Meeting

Planning meetings are usually held on the **third Wednesday** of each month at Beverly Altman's home at 7:15 pm.

All members are welcome and encouraged to attend. **Please phone Jim Dinkey or Bev Altman to confirm venue.**

Next meeting: Wednesday, **November 19**, 2008 at **7:15 pm**, at **Bev Altman's home**.

SPAUG
PO Box 20161
STANFORD CA 94309-0161

November 2008

First Class Mail

• **General Meeting—Wed. November 12, 7:15 PM**

Amer. Legion Post, 347 First St., Downtown Los Altos, across from Draeger's (betw. San Antonio and Main)

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Listserver

spaug-list at svpal.org

Any 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 is intended for announcements of interest to all SPAUG members. Please avoid excessive or trivial announcements, since some members are paying for connect time. Additions or corrections can be sent to:
info at pa-spaug.org

**The SPAUG Web Page
is available at
<http://www.pa-spaug.org>**

hosted by

**www.
svpal.org/**



PC USER GROUP Meeting

WEDNESDAY

Nov 12

7:15 PM

American Legion Post, 347 First Street, Los Altos

Hosted by: SPAUG (Stanford Palo Alto Users Group for PC)

Topic: Marketplace 2008–2009

Speaker: Hank Skawinski, Owner/Manager, Datawise



Hank will give his update on what you should buy, what you should avoid, based on his extensive experience supporting over 1,000 computers (including many for SPAUG members). He'll discuss hardware and software, and probably compare and contrast Windows with Linux. This is always an informative presentation, and if you are considering an upgrade of your peripherals, computer or software, be sure to attend. Hank will also help with the CrossTalk session, so if you're having problems, bring your questions.

Hank is a favorite SPAUG speaker. This is Hank's second SPAUG presentation this year.

You are invited to join us for an optional no-host dinner before our meeting, at **5:45 pm**, at **Aldo Los Altos**, 388 Main Street Los Altos, One block West from American Legion Post

Upcoming meetings (2008): **11/12**

(2009): 1/14, 2/11, 3/11, 4/8, 5/13, 6/10, 7/8, 8/12, 9/9, 10/14

SPAUG — Stanford Palo Alto Users Group for PC

PO Box 20161, STANFORD CA 94309-0161

<http://www.pa-spaug.org>

Jim Dinkey, President, 650-493-9307 jimdinkey at jimdinkey.com

Dues: \$35 for 12 months

STANFORD PALO ALTO USER GROUP FOR PC (SPAUG)

MEMBERSHIP FORM

To become a member of SPAUG—

1. Provide the information requested on this form.
2. Send this form and a check for \$35.00, payable to **SPAUG**, to the address on the right:

SPAUG
PO BOX 20161
Stanford, CA 94309-0161

Date: ____ / ____ / ____

Your Name _____
Last, First

Your mailing address: _____
Number and Street, PO Box, etc.

City, State, ZIP

e-mail: _____

Phone: _____ (Area Code) Number
Fax: _____ (Area Code) Number

Areas of expertise you would be willing to share with SPAUG:

Areas of special interest:

What are you hoping to find in SPAUG?

How did you learn about SPAUG? _____

Your Occupation: _____

NOTE:

Bring a printout of our online Membership information page < <http://www.pa-spaug.org/main.htm#newmember> > to a meeting, and you can join SPAUG for \$30 for your first year of membership, a saving of \$5 off the regular membership rate!