

SPAUG

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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

The mess of moving your phone to Comcast et al without Local Number Portability (LNP)

In order for you to learn from the experience of others, I offer the following discussion on how to avoid problems when attempting to move data communications services between vendors, and the problems their personnel insert into the process.

The time came when we planned to move from our home to an apartment that we knew had Comcast as their primary supplier of communication capabilities.

To get the capability of having our AT&T phone number appear at the new location, about December 10 I requested that the phone be maintained, but that AT&T should plan to move the phone on December 29. AT&T countered that they needed to observe the facilities at the new location and to ascertain if there were any problems. The request was reasonable, as AT&T needed to see if there was a common point accessible to them and to assure that they could hook into any wiring panel

in the basement of the building. So it didn't bother me that the anticipated dead phone was present on December 23rd, but it did surprise me that the interruption went on for hours.

I called AT&T and asked when the service would be restored and I was told that the service had been cancelled! Further probing revealed that some overzealous AT&T person had interpreted that the testing of the line was a cancellation of the order and so our service was cancelled. Needless to say—invoking the name of the FCC and other agencies—I explained to the representative that the line had not been cancelled but merely released for testing purposes.

Once the attention of AT&T was secured, the process of canceling the cancellation order began and we had phone service back around 6 p.m. That took care of the screw up, but left the basic question of the accessibility of having a phone with our old number as compared to having to start over with some assigned number issued by Comcast.

On the above item, I filed an electronic complaint with the FCC on the actions of AT&T. I am convinced that it was my threats to AT&T to file that

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**General Meeting @ American Legion Post—Wed. February 10 @ 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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made the giant respond to the problems. They had two persons working on the problem to assure that I was happy – which I was not.

Then the story and problems started to come out:

It seems that Comcast approached the apartment house management into which we were to move with the offer to wire the entire 182 apartments for FREE! This had the effect of locking all of the apartments into Comcast, as the apartment managers did not design into the plans any additional conduits for the AT&T type of installations. AT&T was locked out! Whether this is legal is TBD, when I have the time for more research.

In the meantime, I issued the order that our phone number be transported to Comcast by AT&T, as a result of inputs from both John Buck and Roger Summit, who both picked up on an alternate way of getting what was wanted, which was Local Number Portability (LNP). This was entered by AT&T who then instituted a 5-day delay for processing of the order. By approaching AT&T early, the 5-day delay and outage of the primary phone number was hoped to be avoided. In practice the delays went on for 10+ days of no service.

Then I tried to get the Comcast representative to get me an account and to have it modified. I tried for three days to get the Comcast representative to respond. It turned out he was out of town, with no backup person in place. Nothing worked, so I issued an order directly to the retail Comcast location which got an account in Comcast for AT&T to process the order.

Eventually, the Comcast salesperson assigned to the apartment complex returned to town and saw that the Comcast contract was not correct, so he canceled the order. The cancellation caused AT&T to unlock the transfer for another 5 days so we had an additional 5-day period without AT&T phone service (for 10 days total) before anything significant was completed by AT&T.

I filed another complaint with the FCC against Comcast.

In all, over this mess I filed four complaints. As near as I can tell, the FCC did nothing other than to take the report(s). So there we were, stuck with Comcast as a captive who provided a phone service:

- Whose dialing area is miniscule.
- That did not meet AT&T standards, as AT&T-manufactured equipment could not interface to the Comcast equipment in spite of protestations to the contrary.
- Where Radio Shack equipment could interface, which revealed that Comcast did not meet AT&T power requirements.
- Whose phone has a built-in audio delay of about 1 second.
- Whose phone has a stuttering sound, which I attribute to packets handing the signal.

The lessons to be learned here are to check out the facilities carefully and to assure that the capabilities of the receiving location meet your standards and needs.

I am not using my Comcast number Use my AT&T number: 650-493-9307

You can learn more about local number portability (LNP) via <http://tinyurl.com/yb75r7n>.

Meeting Day: Wednesday, February 10

General Meeting

American Legion Post
347 First Street, Los Altos

Meeting time is 7:15 pm

Gary Sasaki
President, DIGDIA

Speaking about:
Digital 3D Entertainment

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 Los Altos 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

website: <http://www.aldolosalto.com/>

directions: One block west from American Legion Post

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

menu: <http://www.aldolosalto.com/Menu.php>

reviews: <http://www.aldolosalto.com/Recognition.html>

Dinner time is **5:45 pm**

"Contemporary
Italian Food With
International
Infusion."

"This is not
your daddy's
spaghetti joint!"

—website

Planning Meeting Notes

January 20, 2010

by Maurice Green, Recording Secretary,
edited for use here

Attendees: John Buck, Jim Dinkey,
Maurice Green, John Sleeman

General Meetings:

- **Jan 13 (review)**—Cathy Marshall from Microsoft discussed digital archiving. It was a fascinating introduction to the human psychology of accumulation of junk. Attendance was 45 members plus 6 new members.
- **Feb 10**—Gary Sasaki discussing the highlights of the recent CES meeting
- **March 10**—Elliot Margolies. Meeting will be held at Media Center with a tour of the studios for the production of public service videos and television programs.
- **April 14**—Maurice Green – Producing a DVD of family memories from video clips and pictures.
- **May 12**—Kevin Lynn
- **June 9**—Hank Skawinski
- **Aug 11**—(tentative) Jerry Cerillo, Foothill College

Suggestion was made that we poll the membership for desired topics for future meetings.

Vinyl record conversion project—The conversions have been completed and the participants have been notified to collect their records and CDs from Peterson's. John Sleeman will solicit comments from the participants regarding their satisfaction with the project.

Newsletter Archive project—John Sleeman stated that the project is now complete with only a few issues from 1984 missing.

SPAUG History project—Robert Mitchell has completed a writeup of the history and collected a number of interviews with past SPAUG presidents. The final document will undergo editorial review by the board before publication.

Volunteers needed—Non-profit volunteer organizations like SPAUG need to have volunteers in order to function.

We are now looking for people for the jobs of Program Chair and Publicity Chair. Anyone who would be willing to take on one of these positions is urged to contact Jim Dinkey.

Newsletter Archiving & SPAUG History Project Report by Robert Mitchell

John Sleeman and I have nearly finished the Newsletter archiving project we started last summer, and also the SPAUG History project.

Having finished with the creative phase, we are now reviewing our work to make sure we got everything right.

We plan to give an update about these projects at an upcoming general meeting.

We thank those who helped us in these projects.

Newsletter Archive Project

We archived all SPAUG newsletters—from 1983, when the club started at Stanford University, through 2009—except for 2 issues from 1984 that we couldn't locate.

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Our newsletter archive will be donated to the Computer History Museum (CHM), with a reproducible copy kept by SPAUG. John Sleeman and I want to invite our CHM contact person to a general meeting, to receive our SPAUG newsletter archive donation on the museum's behalf.

SPAUG History Project

This project was done in parallel with the Newsletter archiving project. I developed and wrote much of *A SPAUG History*, using information from the newsletters John Sleeman and I archived. Others who contributed significant information were Beverly Altman, Jim Dinkey, and many of our past Presidents.

Filler
by John Buck

Searching for text in Opera is easy—Just type the dot/period and the string you want. This also puts the string into Opera's search tool. Some examples are: **.print, .rss, .spaug.**

Selecting a Portion of Text in Snopes.com—If you want to select as portion of the content of a Snopes.com page, turn off javascript. To learn more, go to <http://tinyurl.com/y8bnqv>

Downloading large files via dialup can be a real pain. My dialup download rate is about 12MB/hr, so when I need or want to download a file over 10MB, my tool of choice is **Star Downloader Free**—<http://tinyurl.com/yjx6yj3>. It doesn't seem faster than downloading via Opera, but it does seem more fault-tolerant and does a much better job of reporting what and how it's doing.

PDF Printing—Sometimes my favorite PDF printer, CutePDF Writer refuses to print something, but one of my other PDF printers—Bullzip PDF Printer and doPDF—will. In those cases, the problem seems to be that some possibly illegal character is created in the target file name, and the latter-named programs handle it better. Snapfiles links for these programs are:

- **CutePDF Writer:** <http://tinyurl.com/2lznks>
- **Bullzip PDF Printer:**<http://tinyurl.com/328w8r>
- **doPDF:**<http://tinyurl.com/ykn5kdv>

The free version of **PDF Xchange Viewer** (<http://tinyurl.com/ypuwbm>) lets you annotate a pdf file (highlight, add sticky notes, type, etc.).

And, if you need to do page-level modifications—insert, delete, rotate, edit book-marks—an older version of **Acrobat** (such as 3.0) may do the job, even if it can't display text or images correctly.

Visit the DMV—Online—If you need to do something with or at the California DMV, you may be able to do it or prepare for it online. Here are some possibly helpful urls:

- **CA DMV:** <http://www.dmv.ca.gov/>
- **Redwood City office:**..... <http://tinyurl.com/yjyt4dk>
- **Santa Clara office:** <http://tinyurl.com/mtuovq>
- **Appointments:** <http://tinyurl.com/5nop55>

I found the Santa Clara office DMVQ time useful and accurate when I renewed my driver license in fall 2009. The sample tests were useful, too.

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- Sample Tests:..... <http://tinyurl.com/5m33a>
- Driver Handbook:
.....<http://tinyurl.com/2eaxeq>
- Driver License Information:
.....<http://www.dmv.ca.gov/dl/dl.htm>
- Vehicle Code:
..... <http://tinyurl.com/yj3224a>
- Vehicle Code (PDF): .No longer available
..... <http://tinyurl.com/yhdz3j2>

Searching for people—Alive, Dead, in Prison, etc.—

Beyond Google, Yahoo, Ask, Alta Vista, Bing, etc., there are other sites that you may find useful for finding information about people. Here are some:

- free411.com
- 123People.com
- Webmii.com
- isearch.com
- kosmix.com
- Social Security Death Index
..... <http://tinyurl.com/ygbmkhz>
Of the many sites that provide entry points for the SS Death Index, I prefer Rootsweb's advanced search:
..... <http://tinyurl.com/29dgad>
- Obituaries;..... <http://tinyurl.com/yf9cpzp>
- The VA National Cemetery Administration has a Nationwide Gravesite Locator at <http://tinyurl.com/2gh8e>
- Prisoners: <http://tinyurl.com/ykpad7t>
or: <http://tinyurl.com/yjzbf27>
- Doctors, etc: ... <http://tinyurl.com/y8nuk9e>
- Contractors:.....<http://tinyurl.com/yebwq9c>
- Attorneys: <http://tinyurl.com/yc2qodr>
- Mechanics: <http://tinyurl.com/yetkzym>
- Real Estate:<http://tinyurl.com/yasxetn>
- Lenders: <http://tinyurl.com/ydrsut9>

- Financial Advisers:
.....<http://tinyurl.com/ybx9czm>
- gethuman .com—"phone numbers, customer service shortcuts, reviews & tips for better support worldwide"
..... also <http://tinyurl.com/acyon6>
- <http://www.hardtofind800numbers.com/>

What complaints do other Comcast phone customers have?—go to <http://tinyurl.com/yf4pjfq>

What complaints do other AT&T phone customers have?—go to <http://tinyurl.com/yd8xd24>

Look for an ISP rating OR review—
<http://tinyurl.com/y8vf5yc>

Where (and how) to complain (general)—
<http://tinyurl.com/yfcqjfh>

Sudoku for beginners or the very busy

	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
4	5	6	7	8	9	1	2	3
7	8	9	1	2	3	4	5	6
9	1	2	6	7	8	3	4	5
3	4	5	9	1	2	6	7	8
6	7	8	3	4	5	9	1	2
8	9	1	5	6	7	2	3	4
2	3	4	8	9	1	5	6	7
5	6	7	2	3	4	8	9	1

Furlongs per Fortnight—
<http://tinyurl.com/ykna2q>,
<http://tinyurl.com/yakdvka>



February 2010 SPAUG News

SPAUG CALENDAR						
Always subject to change; verify event with host or Jim Dinkey						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 7–9 pm BIY SIG Micro Center		3			6 —Clinic, by appointment only
	8 7–9 pm WinSIG Micro Center Happy Valentine's Day, Chinese New Year, Presidents Day		10 5:45 pm Dinner (Optional), Aldo Los Altos, 388 Main, LA 7:30 pm General Meeting Amer. Legion Post, 347 First St, LA Speaker: Gary Sasaki			13 —Clinic, by appointment only
14 	15 7–9 pm DISIG Micro Center		17 7:15 pm Planning Meeting, Bev Altman's			20 —Clinic, by appointment only
	22 7–9 pm WebSIG Micro Center		24			27 —Clinic, by appointment only
	1 7–9 pm BIY SIG Micro Center		3			6 —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.

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, February 17, 2009 at 7:15 pm, at Bev Altman's home.

SIGS

NOTE: SPAUG-member participation in any of these SIGS requires membership in SVCS, currently \$12/yr. SVCS is not a part of SPAUG.

- **Build It Yourself 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

For more info about these SIGs, go to svuga.org

SPAUG
PO Box 20161
STANFORD CA 94309-0161

February 2010

First Class Mail

General Meeting—Wed. February 10, 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

Feb 10

7:15 PM

American Legion Post, 347 First Street, Los Altos

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

Topic: Digital 3D Entertainment—Why Now and How?

Speaker: Gary Sasaki, President, DIGDIA

< <http://www.digdia.com/> >

We are seeing an explosion of activity, products and services pop up touting 3D. Why is this happening now? Didn't 3D die back in 1953? Find out why it is different this time, including some behind the scenes technical and business details that few people know about unless you are deep in the industry.

Gary Sasaki is President of DIGDIA, a market analysis and strategic consulting firm focused on digital entertainment and media markets. Prior to DIGDIA, he was with HP, the last ten years in HP Labs with a focus on finding new billion dollar businesses.

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 : **2/10**, 3/10, 4/14, 5/12, 6/9, 7/14, 8/11, 9/8, 10/13, 11/10

SPAUG — Stanford Palo Alto Users Group for PC

PO Box 20161, STANFORD CA 94309-0161

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

Jim Dinkey, President, 650-493-9307 [jimdinkey at jimdinkey.com](mailto: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!