

**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 **\$30.00**, 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.
_____ ZIP+4 _____
City, State, ZIP (All Nine Digits—xxxxx-xxxx—Please)

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: _____

SPAUG

Vol. XXX No. 3



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

ANTIVIRUS PROGRAMS

When asked which of the roughly 50 anti-virus programs I use or a SPAUG Member should use, I used to mention the then-current anti-virus programs that were either priced reasonably or one of the FREE anti-virus programs that was currently on the top of the list.

That is no longer a problem.

Microsoft Security Essentials

<http://tinyurl.com/7oz3es4>

Microsoft now has come to the marketplace with **Microsoft Security Essentials**, a FREE program that has all of the functionalities of the for-pay programs but also **comes with Microsoft's warranty** that if there is a virus or malware that Microsoft Security Essentials misses, Microsoft will, at your option, enter onto your computer and quash the offending malware.

The program has all of the options you would like such as a timer to start up the program on a day and a time of your choosing. You may

leave the computer unattended allowing the program to run at a time of your choice.

One can easily divine where this program came from: Microsoft was inundated with the result of poor anti-virus programs that were letting junk through and Microsoft was being stuck with the results, under their warranty program, of cleaning up the mess. They offer to clean up viruses and crashes for free under the philosophy that their software should not permit such intrusions.

An Anti-Virus program that allows ANY virus to remain after a scan should summarily be removed from the computer! No exceptions! Remove the dud first in its entirety and replace it with Microsoft Security Essentials.

Malwarebytes

<http://tinyurl.com/7zypfq6>

Malwarebytes is not a Microsoft product and so I am going to violate what I wrote above a bit when I say or urge that you also run Malwarebytes once in a week.

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General Meeting @ Elks Lodge—Wed. March 14 @ 7:15 PM
4249 El Camino Real - Palo Alto (directions on page 3)

Optional Dinner at Elks Lodge Bistro
Elks Lodge, Ground Floor, 5:45 pm (see page 3)

◀ (Continued from page 1)

For a measly \$25 you can have a Malwarebytes scanner that will run for life of the computer - not just a year. Even if you don't pay Malwarebytes any money, the product will perform well when initiated manually. If you go to the Malwarebytes site, you can see the differences between the two options and make your own choice. I have it run once a week as a check on the Microsoft Security Essentials. Nothing is perfect, of course, but the permanent combination of the two seems to be quite effective. The combination of the two costs just \$25 for the life of the computer.

CCLEANER

<http://tinyurl.com/7nw9gzp>

It is amazing how many computers that come to the Clinic do not have available some sort of cleanup routine such as CCleaner which does a wonderful job of identifying junk/extraneous and removing the junk files. It is not unusual to remove a gigabyte of useless files! Some of the junk file scanners can be set to run at a specific time; but manually, just before backing up is mandatory as the deletion of useless intermediate files saves on both space and time.

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SPAUG Meeting Videos (DVD) and History Book Available

by Robert Mitchell

Both Video and Archival DVD's are \$5 each.

Gene Barlow – Acronis True Image — 2.8.2012

Maurice Green – Video Editing — 2 Copies — 1.11.2012

Discussion Panel Part 1 — 3 Copies — 8.10.2012

Discussion Panel Part 2 — 1 Copy — 9.14.2012

SPAUG Newsletter Archival DVD

This contains all original newsletters dating back to 1983

They are in pdf format

SPAUG History Book - Limited quantity available on hand

Hardbound - \$30 ----- Softbound - \$20

Please pay money to Beverly during Checkin, break or after meeting.

Thank you,

Meeting Day: Wednesday, March 14

General Meeting

**Palo Alto Elks Lodge,
4249 El Camino Real, Palo Alto**

Meeting time is 7:15 pm

**SPAUG's Own Experts
Speaking about:
Ask Us!**

The Elks Lodge is a light-colored two-story bldg on the North (bay) side of El Camino Real (ECR), just east (toward Los Altos) from the Charleston-Arastradero-ECR intersection. It's diagonally across ECR from the Crowne Plaza Cabaña hotel.

Park your car in the parking lot that wraps around the lodge, and proceed to the front door (on the West side of the bldg.). This is a keycarded door. If you cannot get in the front door because you are late, press the intercom button on the post to the left of the main entrance, identify why you're there (try "computer club"), and you should hear the door unlock. Pull handle and enter

Proceed to the Lodge Room—upstairs. An elevator is available behind the stairway.

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 dinner

Join us for dinner before our General Meeting at —

The Bistro—at the Elks Lodge

There's no dining place closer to our meeting place than this. It's on the ground floor toward the back of the building,

Directions: It's on the ground floor toward the back of the lodge building.

Menu: <http://www.paloaltoelks.org/bistro-menu>

Review: <http://www.yelp.com/biz/palo-alto-elks-lodge-no-1471-palo-alto>

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

Dinner time is 5:45 pm

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AUTOMATE YOUR MAINTENANCE

For many of these computer maintenance functions, if you automate the running for a specific time, such as dinner time, the effect will be transparent.

Many of the maintenance programs take so long to run that they probably are an annoyance when run in the day. For those maintenance programs that get into your way during the day - time them to run through the night (sequentially) on Sunday and leave the computer on each Sunday night. Adjust as necessary for your particular lifestyle.

You might even plan having maintenance programs to run daily at lunch time for some of the shorter runs.

Also plan to visit the Microsoft Updates location each 2nd and 4th Tuesday! It is super important to keep your software current! In Outlook Express, plan to go to TOOLS in the bar, and pick "Updates". Even though the computer is set for "Automatic Updates", there are updates that are NOT automatic that you will ALWAYS have to review to assure you are not missing some critical updates. The choice by Microsoft as to what is critical seems to be somewhat arbitrary.

A minor reminder is that the updating of the Microsoft Updates by Firefox will not work - no matter what they say!

HOW SAFE ARE YOUR PASSWORDS?

<http://tinyurl.com/7y24mt>

Depending on the number of characters in the password, the following table is an extract of the time to crack a password consisting exclusively of numbers - (at 1,000,000 guesses per second) vs. number characters in password) and dumb ones like 1234567890.being special-cased as being common and thus tried first:

A Business Week article

< <http://tinyurl.com/7yn76xm> > says it can take a hacker's computer anywhere from 10 minutes to over 44k years to randomly guess a password, depending on the password's length and complexity. A Google search for more password security and password cracking information is

< <http://tinyurl.com/7dzt4uv> >.

The table below provides more detail. For a larger version of the table, with more password-complexity variables, go to *Consumers Checkbook*—<http://tinyurl.com/878zfd7>. (Subscription may be required.). See NIST info about password strength and management via <http://tinyurl.com/7rwvpw8>

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Number of characters in password	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Time to crack	0.01 second	0.10 second	1.00 second	10.00 seconds	1.67 minutes	16.67 minutes	2.78 hours	1.15 days	11.57 days
Seconds	0.01	0.10	1.00	10.00	100	1000	10,000	100,000	1 Million

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The pattern is clear: improve your passwords for your account with your ISP or suffer the pain of having to deal with your account being hacked.

The hacking will be apparent to your recipients when they tell you that you are sending out salacious junk emails.

This whole section is a review of your ability to assure that your email will not be hacked. I have had to handle two of these in the last few weeks including one that is owned by a friend that seems incommunicado.

If you need help, come to the Clinic; that is what it is for.

[Editor's Comments]

- I use the Opera browser SecurePassword Widget by Thomas Dondorf to generate my passwords. There are other similar random-string generators available, either as add-on for a browser or as standalone programs.—
 - <http://tinyurl.com/6rm8sng>
 - <http://tinyurl.com/6s8hsfs>
- There are password-strength test programs available.—
<http://tinyurl.com/7zbcvor>
- Microsoft's website has articles about password strength.—
<http://tinyurl.com/7vm797f>
- Reread "How To Find Out Why Your Email Account Spammed Your Friends and Family" in the Feb 2012 *Print Screen* (page 4), or go directly to the *Lifehacker* source—<http://tinyurl.com/7gw9kwg>

EXTENDED WARRANTIES

Often I am asked if extended warranties are worth the money. Frankly, they are probably

never a good deal. Many companies sell goods at cost with the hope/desire that they will make their profit out of the warranty cash flow.

Look at it this way: you already have a 30- or 60-day or 1-year warranty on something, so the exorbitant fee you are paying doesn't even start until the warranty is over. So after the warranty, which is designed to cover most infancy failures, your paid insurance will finally kick in. I submit the probability of needing the warranty after, say, a year does not justify the cost. There definitely is a "feel good" effect here, but the monetary investment is not worthwhile. For example, most of the hard drive warranties are 5 years and paying for insurance (warranty) on hard drives was not sensible. Now that many of the hard drive warranties have been changed to 1 year, the situation is much tighter but still probably not worth the investment - especially when the technology on the newer drive is so improved over what you have now.

SOLID STATE DRIVES (SSDs)

Solid State Drives (SSD) are currently the rage and well they should be. What bothers me is that, on recent computer purchases, the option has been ignored to obtain a SSD for not much additional dollars. For a laptop especially, the SSD makes a LOT of sense because it cannot crash. Solid State Drives can withstand physical shocks and bumps far above the mechanical drives --- and the SSDs are MUCH faster! That in itself is worth the investment!

SSDs are also worthwhile for desktop computers because they are much faster and the whole computing experience is speeded up considerably. I believe the additional investment is worth the speedup.

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Notes on SPAUG General Meeting 2012-02-08 by John Sleeman

Gene Barlow from User Group Relations presented two familiar products (newest version) and one new subject, via Webinar:

- Organizing the Hard Drive (i.e. partitioning)
- Protecting the Hard Drive (i.e. backup)
- Synchronizing Hard Drives on multiple machines.

ORGANIZING Latest release of Disk Director 11 Home, for partitioning

Gene talked a bit about the history of the program, going back to OS2, and Partition Magic. Corporate changes occurred and Acronis took up the product line.

He mentioned the development of Dynamic Disk (aka **RAID**) useful mostly for business) as distinct from **Basic Disk** (useful mostly for home applications).

There followed a demo of the product, which showed the structure of the drives. This included hidden partitions (no drive letter) and their uses.

He reminded us of the distinction between primary partitions (which can boot) and logical partitions which are used for data.

He also mentioned Acronis Recovery Expert, which can help repair errors (before they have been made permanent.)

PROTECTING

Acronis True Image 2012, for backup

This is the most powerful backup tool on the market, with many features and a simpler interface than earlier versions.

It has scheduling options, for full partitions.

Gene defined an Image Set as one full backup plus a set of incrementals. One can automate the deletion of the oldest image set to avoid running out of space. One can also consolidate an image set into a single file, but this has the disadvantage of losing intermediate versions.

SYNCHRONIZING New feature in TI2012

Gene gave a quick overview of the history of synchronizing files between multiple computers, mentioning “sneakernet” and Lap-Link. The problem occurs mainly when the computers are remote from each other.

TI2012 has a new feature called synch group. A group of computers all using TI2012 can activate the feature (for a small fee) and need to register online. There is no intermediate storage on other servers. But it takes a few minutes (or hours) for all the other systems to catch up. The synched computers can be anywhere on the Internet. Coming soon - smart phones will be able to join synch groups.

To order either of these programs there is a secure web order form on **www.ugr.com**. The favorable prices for members of user groups are available for 30 days.

Finally Gene mentioned **Acronis® Drive Monitor™**, a free downloadable program via <http://tinyurl.com/294zdnd>

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Following the meeting, several copies of the programs were sold.

There will be a video of the meeting, in due course.

Notes on SPAUG Planning Meeting 2012-02-15 by John Sleeman

The meeting was at Bev Altman's home, at 7:15 pm.

Present were: Bev Altman,
Jim Dinkey (presiding),
Robert Mitchell, and
John Sleeman.

GENERAL MEETINGS

Review of last General Meeting:

- 36 members attended, and 3 guests.
- The presentation was a Webinar (Gene Barlow of User Group Relations) on the latest Acronis True Image Home 2012 and Acronis Disk Director Home 2011. Several sales were made of these program.
- Some DVDs of former meetings were sold, but no more copies of the SPAUG History.
- Jim Dinkey had a problem with sound from the laptop, but was able to work around it.

Future meetings:

- **March 14** - another **Experts panel** discussion,
- **April 11** - **Red Calub** on coming products,

- **May 9** - **Andy Marken** on what is in the future for gadgets (mentioned were USB ports integrated with wall sockets for power.)

Videos

Question arose about giving speakers a copy of the video of their presentation. It is still ad hoc, i.e. mostly does not happen. We need a policy and procedure to make it automatic. Nothing more agreed upon now.

Membership

Membership is stable; two new members and two non-renewals.

PUBLICITY

Jim Dinkey mentioned again the possibility of having a full page ad in the Elks bulletin. He is having difficulty getting a response, and will keep trying. The advantages are (1) a source of new members and (2) tending to lock in our welcome at the Lodge.

Jim is still hoping the Computer History Museum may sell copies of the History. May be feasible if they take it on consignment. Jim also mentioned the need to send copies to the Copyright Library (Library of Congress).

IN OUR PO BOX

John Sleeman collected the mail from the Stanford post office box, and there were three returned newsletters. Two were marked insufficient postage, but upon return to Menlo Park P.O., they were accepted as OK and remailed. The third was marked as undeliverable, but this was clearly an error. This was delivered by hand (next day) to the address shown. (Recipient has lived at this address for forty years.)

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Filler by John Buck

Cloud Storage Startup [TeamDrive] Also Lets You Run Your Own Server—

[Gizmo]—“TeamDrive, like Dropbox, gives you 2 GB of storage for free. If you need more, you'll have to pay. But unlike Dropbox, TeamDrive encrypts your information before it gets copied to the remote servers, so (the company claims) there's no way that anyone but you can gain access to your files.”—

<http://tinyurl.com/7mqqddh>

Keep Track of Changes to Your PC with a Free Microsoft Tool—

[Gizmo]—“Do you ever wonder exactly what is being added or modified on your PC by that new application that you are trying out? This free utility [“Windows System State Analyzer”] from Microsoft does just that. -It's yet another of those wonderful Microsoft utilities hidden so deep in the Microsoft site that only insiders can locate them.”—

<http://tinyurl.com/795s2jm>

How to add an Additional Layer of Security to Your PC—

[Gizmo]—“*Here's a useful trick that add another layer of security on top of your antivirus scanner.*

It's mainly of interest to high risk users or those who simply cannot risk a getting the computers infected. Note: This article is not suitable for beginners. . . .

Surun attempts to give Windows users a “Linux sudo” like experience so that users do not have to log in as admin to install/remove software or perform administrative tasks.

—<http://tinyurl.com/7jy4uyu>

Best Free Genealogy or Family Tree Software—[Gizmo]—Extensive listing of what to look for in a Genealogy program, and programs that meet those criteria.—
<http://tinyurl.com/2vgja4q>

Restore previous file versions from Shadow Copy (Win Vista/7 Home and Peremium)—[Snapfiles]—“Shadow-Explorer . . . enables access to the Shadow Copy backup of your files. . . . [H] owever only the Ultimate, Business, and Enterprise editions allow access to these files via the right-click option “Restore previous versions”. If your edition of Windows Vista or 7 does not have this option, you can use ShadowExplorer to browse the Windows Shadow Copy storage and restore previous versions of your files.”—
<http://tinyurl.com/6wpbde7>

PDF Conversion and Online Virus Scanning—Increased Limits—[Gizmo]—Describes *Virus Total* and *PDF to Word*.—
<http://tinyurl.com/75hz9d7>

Best Free Genealogy or Family Tree Software—[Gizmo]—“Gramps is my top pick for the best free Genealogical software.”—<http://tinyurl.com/8x39jne>

SETI Research Is Revived —[NYTimes]—“Operating on money and equipment scrounged from the public and from Silicon Valley millionaires, a band of astronomers recently restarted the search for extraterrestrial intelligence.”—
<http://tinyurl.com/75haasv>

Pursuing [an] iPhone Thief, [an] Officer Knew [the] Right Buttons to Push—[NYTimes]—A successful use of the “Find My iPhone” app.—
<http://tinyurl.com/7ajpszy>



March 2012 SPAUG News

SPAUG CALENDAR						
Always subject to change; verify event with host or Jim Dinkey						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	27		29			3—Clinic, by appointment only
	5 7–9 pm BIYSIG Micro Center		7	St. Patrick's Day		10—Clinic, by appointment only
	12 7–9 pm WinSIG Micro Center		14 5:45 pm Dinner (Optional), Elks Lodge—Bistro 7:15 pm General Meeting Elks Lodge, 4249 El Camino, PA Speaker: SPAUG's Experts			17—Clinic, by appointment only
	19 7–9 pm DISIG Micro Center		21 7:15 pm Planning Meeting, Bev Altman's			24—Clinic, by appointment only
	26 7–9 pm WebSIG Micro Center		28			31—Clinic, by appointment only

Saturday Clinic

Clinics usually are held when needed. **Call Jim Dinkey** to make a reservation. The clinics are to help you unscrew your Windows XP and Windows 7.

Email: jimdinkey at jimdinkey.com or call 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, **March 21**, 2012 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

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/



Door Prize Tickets

Free

You get one ticket for free when you sign in at a general meeting.

Buy a Ticket

\$1 each

Buy More Tickets

Quantity discount: Six tickets for \$5

Must be present to win



Without-Whoms

SPAUG is an all-volunteer operation. Listed below is contact information for those who work to keep it happening.

You are invited to help.

President: *Jim Dinkey*
jimdinkey at jimdinkey.com
(650) 493-9307

Vice President: *John Sleeman*
sleemanjc at copperhouse.net
(650) 326-5603

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Computer Clinic: *Jim Dinkey (see above)*

►►► Positions Open:

- Program Chair
- Publicity