

Jim Dinkey, President 1998 - present



In 1958 my career in Data Processing started at the age of 21. That started a career that is still going on. By 1980 I had programmed 29 computers, 11 of 'em in assembly language, and so I knew what a computer could do – that it had storage, printing capabilities, an operating system and applications packages that produced some useful work. And, oh yes, there was the occasional game. It was

also hellishly expensive.

As a member of the Homebrew Computer Club. I could see that the only difference with the computers that were coming along was that they were cheaper and much less professionally managed.

Eventually it also became obvious that the purchase of small computers was a backlash against the Data Processing Department's refusal to allow anyone other than the DP personnel to administer any data processing equipment. I was aware of engineers buying parts under different names and satisfying their needs with assembled single-use computers. I felt that Lee Felsenstein was doing a great job at the Homebrew Computer Club bringing out the best of the new products and I could also do that job, but was tremendously inhibited about getting up in front of audiences. That was corrected by playing harmonica in a bar in Mountain View for 4 years, during which I moved from back row to front row and overcame my inhibition.

The SPAUG computer club arose at the time that the Homebrew Club just seemed to implode. There were a few members from the Homebrew and a lot of talent keeping the new entity going. During that time I was asked to run for office but refused. I was working and swamped full time and did not have the proper amount of time to run such an organization.

Then I retired. The time became available, so I ran for President of SPAUG and was elected. In the early days, things were somewhat disjointed in that speakers were not booked early enough and that meant that we took what was available at the time while excellent speakers were often not available for months.

Guest Speakers

We started booking speakers well in advance and thus were able to obtain more of the speakers we wanted. We have been fortunate to not really have had any poor speakers – and we also have had a number of outstanding speakers on current subjects.

The finances were not really very good in the beginning. Decisions on what to do were predicated upon whether there was enough money in the treasury to cover desired activities. This situation has improved greatly, allowing us to plan for needed items or support.

Saturday Morning Clinic

With many people having trouble with Microsoft software, the Saturday morning Clinic that I started has been a win/win situation. Because users of the Clinic have to be SPAUG members, it has been a great recruiting tool. Then the new members found that they liked attending the meetings, as they were of much help. With improvements in software the Clinic has become less utilized.

Other Contributors

During my entire tenure, SPAUG has been blessed with an effective and dedicated group of people that carried the organization forward both before and after I was elected President. While it is true that the President is the most visible, there are many volunteers whose contributions should be recognized for the valuable service to SPAUG that they provide. Whenever such a list is constructed, there is the risk of inadvertently leaving someone out. Nevertheless, in no particular order, here is my attempt to acknowledge the contributions of

our all-volunteer support team:

- Beverly Altman has handled the Membership function for over 27 years. She has ensured that first timers can sign up and renewing members stay signed up, and she recruits other new members. She works with the Treasurer to ensure that dues are collected.
- Nat Landes, Treasurer, has been handling the position for about 10 years. His accurate accounting methods mean that the funds are totally accountable and visible. Nat became Treasurer when the position became vacant. I was prepared to shut down SPAUG if there were no Treasurer, but Nat agreed to take on the position.
- Stan Hutchings has performed many of the technical functions of SPAUG for years. Stan has been a stalwart contributor serving as webmaster, leader of the web SIG and recorder of the meetings.
- John Buck has been PrintScreen editor for over 10 years and has applied his expertise as technical writer for HP to the creation of an effective and attractive newsletter. He is always bugging me to complete my “Notes from the Prez”.

- John Sleeman has been VP forever – sort of an internal troubleshooter. He gets the specialty projects such as facilitating the digital conversion of members’ phonograph records, scanning the newsletter archives and making the website more searchable.
- Arlan Kertz is a CPA who files our required papers yearly with the State authorities to keep our non-profit tax status.
- There are many other people who accomplish various tasks behind the scenes to keep SPAUG operating smoothly. For example, Bill Young and Carl Moyer help by transporting and setting up the PA system.

The most important aspect of the SPAUG effectiveness is stability. Since there has been very little turnover in the Planning Committee membership, everyone knows what to do, how to do it, and why it is being done. Further, the work is broken down to a number of small jobs that each require very little effort or time. It all seems to work out well because of our volunteerism . I would be remiss not to acknowledge that the prior administrations provided a solid foundation to carry SPAUG forward to where we are today.

