SPAUG *PrintScreen*

Notes from the Prez
by Jim Dinkey

Jim's giving up his space this month so you can read all of Stan's great notes from Hank's presentation and the club doesn't have to pay additional postage for extra pages.

—John Buck

13 October
General Meeting Notes
by Stan Hutchings

Administrivia

- **If you have a wireless network, turn on encryption.** If you don't you may find others using your connection and searching your drive.

- **If you're using XP, upgrade to SP2** or you'll be part of the security problem. See the SPAUG website or other source of advice on how to proceed.

- SP2 upgrades were given out.

- **Elections are next month**. John Sleeman is nominated for vice president.

- **We need a volunteer to back up for Joan Wheelwright** to bring cookies and coffee accessories (cups, sugar, cream), and to set up the coffee.

- **Microsoft will give the presentation next month**, we want 100 or more people. Get the word out!

CrossTalk/Random Access

- **Run Spybot S&D periodically**.

- **Sometimes a downloaded program will give problems installing it. It's best to get the CD from the manufacturer,** if that's an option; then you have the disk if you ever need to reload it. Some programs want to install from a CD or floppy; you can download an application and copy it to CD or floppy; then you've got an archive copy.

- **Question: When I use Windows Media Player to copy music from my CDs into my PC, why can't I use those files on my other computers?** Answer: By default, Windows Media Player copy protects songs you rip (copy) from your audio CDs to prevent people from distributing copies of the music. You can turn off the copy protection, if desired. In Windows Media Player, click **Tools**

General Meeting @ Elks Lodge - Wed. November 10 @ 7:15 PM
4249 El Camino Real - Palo Alto (directions on page 3)

Optional Dinner at Sizzler, 1962 West ECR, Mtn View, 5:45 pm (see page 3).

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and **Options.** On the **Copy Music** tabbed page, clear the **Protect Content** checkbox.

Presentation - Hank Skawinski of Datawise

When you install XP SP2, if you're on a network, turn on File and Printer Sharing. By default, networking is disabled. If you still have a problem, use the Windows Help for networking.

Spyware and Malware are a huge problem. Microsoft's operating system is not optimized for security; it is for ease of use. Therefore, it is very susceptible to malware disguised as an application or service. Linux and Unix were designed from the beginning to be more secure, so are much less susceptible to malware. Most of the systems Hank has fixed recently have been badly infected with malware, and about 10% could not be fixed even after hours of work, and had to have the OS reloaded (losing any data that was not backed up). The later versions of Windows have such a high complexity and size that malware can easily hide in the registry or among the system files. Hank has to scan drives outside their computer so nothing is running, and even then some malware escapes.

The antivirus applications do not address malware; they only find viruses. Malware does not replicate, but slows down the system (sometimes dramatically, and sometimes crashes), can send information (including passwords and other sensitive data) about you and your computer to the malware owner. The malware is usually installed on your computer without your knowledge or permission, and hides in the background doing its dirty deeds. It can come from a download, or even from just visiting a website, which opens ports on your computer. Your browser downloads files to the Temporary Internet Files area, and also runs many script files, like JavaScript, Java, Shockwave, ActiveX, etc. Malware can be hidden in seemingly useful software that you run (i.e. a Trojan).

You need a hardware firewall (router). The output from your cable or DSL modem should feed into it. You can get a simple router from Fry's or Microcenter for $20–$30; or a 4-plug router for a little more, so you can share your Internet connection and printer; or with a wireless antenna so you can connect to your laptop. Some optional upgrade SBC DSL 2Wire (www.dslreports.com/faq/twowire <http://www.dslreports.com/faq/twowire>) modems come with a built-in router, but they are more expensive, and only have one outlet, unless you buy the even more expensive 4-connection model.

You also need a software firewall (you can use WinXP's built-in firewall, which is turned on by SP2). But firewalls do not stop malware, because when you when download or browse to a site, this opens your computer to that website. Along with the HTML there could be a malicious script that gets on your computer. You need to train your firewall (if it monitors and can block outgoing communications - Microsoft's firewall does not, but ZoneAlarm and others do). You tell the firewall which programs are allowed to access the Internet, and which ones are not allowed access; you can also require any program to ask your permission before it is allowed to access the Internet. This way, you can be notified if malware is trying to communicate with its outside owner. You can also set safe, or "trusted", zones for your network.

Linux and Unix servers are 70% of those in service, and are pretty secure; but the other 30% are Microsoft servers, which are vulnerable to being hacked. In addition, Linux and Unix can be patched without being shut down and restarted, a real advantage in 24/7 operations. Microsoft servers must be shut down to apply patches, which come out quite often, and sometimes have bugs themselves. Many large companies' websites are hosted on server farms (large numbers of computers in a central location), and if the servers get infected or subverted, they can pass the infection on to millions of computers that connect to the servers. This happened at Yahoo recently.

Hank is a contract worker to smaller companies that cannot afford a full-time dedicated IT staff. He gets called when there is a problem, rather than being called to keep everything safe and secure. So he's in a reactive mode, trying to root out the viruses and malware that has gotten into the computers.

Meeting Day: Wednesday, November 10

General Meeting

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

Meeting time is 7:15 pm

Microsoft® representative

Speaking about:
Windows XP

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

Park your car in the parking lot at the front of the lodge, and proceed to the center door. This is a keycarded door so we will have someone at the door to let you in. Proceed to the Lodge Room straight ahead and to the left.

If you cannot get in the center door because you are late, press the wireless doorbell that will be in place for each SPAUG meeting, and someone will come to let you in.

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, 5:45 pm

Join us for dinner before our General Meeting at —

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

Sizzler
1962 West El Camino Real (betw Escuela & Rengstorff), **Mountain View,** (650) 967-5574

Map: Google™-search < 1962 west el camino real mountain view ca >

Menu: http://www.sizzler.com/ourmenus/dinnermenu.html

"Sizzler's menu features a variety of quality USDA steaks and other grilled foods including, fish and shrimp. You can order any of these items on our renown sizzlin' platters. Sizzler also offers one of the freshest salad bars around, with dessert and hot appetizers included."

Questions and Answers

Name	Area Of Expertise	Phone	Hours	e-mail
Jim Bailey	DOS, quickbooks 6, Quicken 98	650 494 0631	9AM - 9PM	Jimby@pobox.com
Jim Dinkey	All Windows versions	650 493 9307	9AM - 9PM	jimdinkey@jimdinkey.com
Bill Goldmacker	DOS	650 691 0911	6PM - 9PM	gold@svpal.org
John Sleeman	UNIX, UNIX Utilities, Awk, HTML, XML, Perl	650 326 5603	9AM - 8PM	sleemanj@earthlink.net

"SPAUG 501(c)(3)"

This is to remind you that 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.

Stanford/Palo Alto Users Group for PC (SPAUG) annual membership dues are $35, payable to SPAUG, at PO Box 20161, Stanford CA 94309-0161.

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.

Spyware is mostly financially motivated. The perpetrators get paid for obtaining your information, or information about your computer use - where you browsed, what you bought, your bank and password, etc. This is often the financial model for the "free" software you download.

Use Spysweeper, Spybot S&D and AdAware to scan for malware. Periodically also use **TrendMicro House Call** online checkup. **Panda Software** also has a free online scanner called Panda ActiveScan (www.pandasoftware. com/products/activescan <http://www.pandasoftware.com/products/activescan/>), which found a really insidious piece of malware on Hank's computer that was hijacking his browser. The other scanners missed it (Panda's full security suite is available for about $79, a reasonable price for what you get). This is the reason you should use several different scanners regularly, but be sure to have an antivirus program working in real time checking your email and downloads. There are probably 100,000 different malware applications, any or many of which may be on your computer. Be sure to use the Immunize feature of **Spybot S&D,** and update the list of malware periodically, especially be-

fore starting a scan. Spybot has other features, including Tea Time, in the Advanced mode. [N.B. - Tea Time is not turned on by default. See the documentation online <http://www.safer-networking.org/en/index.html>.] Don't worry too much about cookies, they are almost never malware. Some of them are beneficial, making your browsing easier by allowing sites to "remember" you and your preferences, even allowing automatic login.

If you have Norton Internet Security suite installed, remove it before upgrading to SP2. It will cause your system to slow way down. Removing it may be difficult, you may need to go to the Symantec site to get uninstall files or help. Microsoft unofficially says Panda, Trend Micro and a few others have the least problem, but Norton has "many issues". Hank says the antivirus program is good, but the security suite will gunk up your system. Actually, **it would be good to remove any antivirus and other security programs before upgrading to SP2.** You certainly have to turn them off before doing the upgrade. Then be sure to reinstall them after upgrade.

Windows relies on the Registry to keep track of all its

◀ *(Continued from page 4)*

components and programs. This is not the best design, and causes a lot of problems, especially when software is removed. Linux and Unix do not have a registry, so avoid a whole host of problems. The registry grows over time, causing gradual slowdown. Old program residue is still there, slowing the system response. Many program uninstalls purposely do not remove their entries from the registry, because that might cause a problem elsewhere, if any of the code is used by other applications. This is even more of a problem if you often add and remove programs like games. By contrast, the Linux core is compiled, and doesn't get affected. The new Mac OS is based on Linux, so enjoys a much greater protection from virus and malware infection. Some people are trading in their PCs for Macs, especially small companies that run servers, because of increased security and lower cost of applications.

Hank expects Microsoft to lose operating system market share over the next few years. Linux will gradually take over as it becomes more supported by applications, and easier for inexperienced users to operate. Already a Linux operating system emulates Windows. Openoffice.org software [N.B. - it is on the club CD, and has been demonstrated several times] has all the functionality of Word, Excel and PowerPoint, can read and save as Microsoft file types, and it is free. For just a few dollars, you can get Star Office, a full-featured office suite. Many companies are starting to recognize Linux, but a lot of hardware and software sold today is either for Mac or Microsoft, not Linux. Over time, an increasing number of vendors will add Linux compatibility. Even now, you can get the software drivers for most hardware somewhere online.

Mozilla Firefox and Thunderbird are good alternatives to the Microsoft Internet Explorer and Outlook/Outlook Express. They are less subject to problems. You do need to get a lot of plug-ins to take advantage of many multimedia effects. But you avoid the ActiveX problems. You can get them for Linux, too.

If you have problems finding malware, one option is to start in Safe Mode. Usually you repeatedly hit the F8 key during boot up until the system recognizes the command. It looks ugly, 640x480, strange colors,

different icon sizes, etc. But only the really core programs are running, not the malware. This is a good place for running the malware scanners. Unfortunately, there is no Internet connection so House Call and Active Scan won't work. Another option is to use the Process view screen (accessed from Alt-Ctrl-Del). Windows uses many programs, but if unexpected programs are running, you should be suspicious. Google any suspicious names to determine if they are malware.

Hank has started providing Linux on computers he sells, if requested. Companies find reliability and cost advantages from running Linux, especially as servers. There is still a problem with hardware compatibility, although many sources of drivers, especially for older hardware, exist, and many drivers are already included in commercial versions of Linux (like Red Hat, Mandrake, Suse, etc.). If you just want basic functionality, Linux should be fine; but if you have specialty or proprietary hardware or software, be careful to check for compatibility. Things are improving, but there is still a way to go. **If you want to try Linux,** get the Wal-Mart $200 computer that has the Linspire OS <http://www.walmart.com/catalog/product_listing.gsp?path=0%3A3944%3A3951%3A41937%3A86796%3A96356&dept=3944&cat=96356&sb=61&bti=0> (name changed from Lindows due to a lawsuit). It will run most Windows programs.

Linux is very configurable; you can customize it to your heart's content. Fortunately, Linux core code is very standard from manufacturer to manufacturer. Hank thinks three years will make a big difference in Linux becoming mainstream. You can add Linux to a new partition on your hard drive, and then make your computer dual boot. Or buy the $200 Wal-Mart computer and a $20 keyboard/monitor switch from Fry's, then you have two boxes with one monitor/keyboard/mouse; you can network them if you want.

Don't bother buying CPUs with speeds over 3 GHz. The 2.3-3 GHz chips are suitable for all the hardware and software available today. Rather than higher speeds, go for dual chips eventually. 64-bit chips are on the way, but almost no software takes advantage of them yet.

◄ *(Continued from page 5)*

Hank showed his new favorite file server, a Linux based 250 GB hard drive from Buffalo Systems. That is only $330 for a file server in a very small, portable box. It has USB and FireWire connections. Connect it to a home or small office computer, and you have a great NAS (network attached storage) backup device. Hank was up and running in just a few minutes. Hank is using it to carry around all his software tools he needs to work on computers.

Hank showed a 2 GB portable hard drive the size of a pack of cigarettes. It connects via USB, and is invaluable for transferring large files. Hank then showed his newest "latest and greatest" personal model computer, with a modernistic design, small footprint, Pentium 3 GHz CPU, 512 MB RAM, 120 GB HD, Pioneer DVD writer, floppy, 6 USB ports, Ethernet, 5.1 sound . Buy an external USB 2.0 hard drive for backups. Hank showed his case for $59, 40 GB laptop style for $110. He can plug it into any computer for backups, or to download his tools to a problem setup.

The **door prizes** were distributed. There was a scanner, a gift certificate to Microcenter.

20 October
Planning Meeting Notes
by Stan Hutchings

- The meeting was held at Bev Altman's house; attendees: Jim Dinkey, Dick Delp, John Sleeman, Bev Altman, John Buck, Stan Hutchings, Nat Landes, Dick Sweet. The attendees enjoyed the refreshments served.

- The **10 November General Meeting** will be at the Elks Lodge, **Microsoft is giving the presentation.** Jim has invited several other groups, and everyone is encouraged to invite guests to this special program. We'd like to have at least 100 attendees.

- Nat reports the **finances** are in great shape. Jim got $200 from the projector rental to another or-

ganization; Bev handed over $290. Jim proposed getting a replacement bulb for the projector, since we have a surplus. The motion was seconded and approved. Jim also proposed buying 10 Acronis backup software packages at $34 each for door prizes over the next several months. Approved.

- The **Linux SIG** is gathering about 100 MB of Linux software to be included on the next club CD. Dick Delp is heading the effort. Dick will start demonstrating Linux applications at the December meeting, and continue a short presentation at each meeting. Member interest will be evaluated. Dick was asked to create a bootable Linux disk for sale at about $5 for the December meeting, It will help sales of the club CD if the Linux applications on it can be run by SPAUG members easily, without having to install Linux.

- **Elections will also be held at the November meeting.** John Sleeman is nominated for vice president. Dick Sweet for Publicity Chairman. Other office holders agreed to serve another term if no other candidates were nominated.

- **The November pre-meeting dinner will be at the Sizzler [on ECR in Mtn View]; the December dinner will be at Armadillo Willy's.** The usual dinner attendees will be asked to decide on the January and February locations.

- The **CD SIG** will meet Monday 25 October at 7:30 at Jim Dinkey's house.

- The **WebSIG** will meet Tuesday 26 October at 7:30 at Stan Hutchings' house. We'll review the error logs for the website, consider changes to the website, figure out how we can avoid date confusions (perhaps JavaScript code in the .JS file) caused by multiple locations of dates for the same event, and any other questions or diversions that arise.

- **A holiday party is proposed for Tuesday 21 December at the Elks Lodge from 6 pm to about 8**. There will be a gift exchange for those interested. We're considering entertainment - any suggestions? Perhaps the fiddlers who performed at previous parties?

SPAUG CALENDAR
Always subject to change; verify event with host or Jim Dinkey

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
31 **Boo!**		2 **Vote Early & Often** [x]	3			6 Clinic
		9	10 **5:45 pm** Dinner (Optional), Sizzler (1962 West ECR Mtn View) **7:15 pm** General Meeting Elks Lodge **Spkr:** Microsoft® rep	11 **Vets Day**		13 Clinic
		16	17 **7:15 pm** Planning Meeting, Bev Altman's			20 Clinic
		23 **7:30 pm** Web SIG, Stan Hutchings'	24	25 **T Day**		27 Clinic
		30	1			4 Clinic

Saturday Clinic

Two slots are available each Saturday.
Contact Jim Dinkey at jimdinkey@jimdinkey.com or 650-493-9307 for an appointment.

SPAUG's SIGS

Name	Description	Usual Date, Time	Location	Coordinator	e-mail
WebSIG	Web Page work	Tuesday following planning meeting, 7:30 pm	Stan Hutchings' Home, near Page Mill and Alma, PA	Stan Hutchings	stan.hutchings @LMCO.com

Planning Meeting

Planning meetings are held on the **third Wednesday** of each month, usually 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, **Nov 17**, 2004 at 7:15, at **Bev Altman's home**.

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Listserver   **spaug-list@cloves.montereynet.net**

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@pa-spaug.org

The SPAUG Web Page available at http://www.pa-spaug.org

hosted by http://www. montereynet. net/

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MNC
Monterey Network Center

General Meeting Wed. November 10, 7:15PM

Elks Lodge, 4249 El Camino, Palo Alto (bay side of El Camino, between Dinahs and Charleston)

SPAUG
PO Box 20161
STANFORD CA 94309-0161

November 2004

First Class Mail

PC USER GROUP *Meeting*

WEDNESDAY	Nov. 10	7:15 PM

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

Hosted by:
SPAUG (Stanford Palo Alto User Group for PC) and
SVCS (Silicon Valley Computer Society)

Topic: **Experience More. Windows XP**

Speaker: **Microsoft® representative**

Join SPAUG, SVCB, and Microsoft® on November 10, 2004 at 7:15 PM, and discover how to experience more of the photos, music, television, movies, and games you want in your home with Microsoft® Windows® XP Media Center Edition 2005, and how to keep your pc safe and secure with Microsoft® Windows® XP Service Pack 2.

Microsoft® Windows® XP Media Center Edition 2005 is making it easier to experience the broad range of digital entertainment including TV, music, photos, music and games. When connected to a home network, Windows XP Media Center Edition 2005 can become a hub for entertainment, providing you with access through connected devices in any room in the home, or through portable players on the go. Best of all, the experience is enabled by Windows, making it easier and more familiar.

Come join us and learn how you can have more fun, learn and explore, keep in touch, and be more productive — all with your pc. Plus, we'll talk about how you can keep your pc safe and secure with Microsoft® Windows® XP Service Pack 2. And, of course, there will be cool prizes for the lucky few. See you there!

Note our dinner LOCATION and TIME

You are invited to join us for an optional no-host dinner before our meeting, at **5:45 pm**, at *Sizzler,* **1962 West El Camino Real** (between Escuela & Rengstorff), **Mountain View,** (650) 967-5574

Upcoming 2004 SPAUG meetings: **11/10,** 12/8
And in 2005: 1/12, 2/9, 3/9, 4/13, 5/11, 6/8, 7/13, 8/10, 9/14, 10/12

**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@ jimdinkey.com**

☞ **See other side for a SPAUG Membership Application form.** ☜

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