

SPAUG

Vol. XXVII No. 1

# PrintScreen



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

**What to do with a new computer?** It is always a working mess.

Right up front, one has to **decide if you want to be on the bleeding edge of technology by obtaining a 64-bit computer rather than a 32-bit computer as has been going on for years.**

The pros and cons of this decision are far reaching and extremely difficult for the first-time user.

- If you are already a computer user and have a lot of legacy software (old programs) and hardware (old printers), and you are not doing video editing, then **32-bit** is for you because the drivers and support for all of those old programs is in place and you will not have to be on the phone with the manufacturer trying to convince them to make 64-bit drivers for your computer. The transition will be much, much easier.
- If you are just now starting out with computing or are willing to start over with all peripherals, then **64-bit** is the way to go for you. Make the transition now to software that is

certified 64-bit by checking each one on a list of software you are ready to purchase. Don't allow for surprises.

**Then there is the problem of dealing with the mess that many manufacturers deliver to you and expect you to maintain.** Little stuff like delivering a computer image that is already so fragmented that the computer runs somewhat slowly or that has so much **crapware** on it that it can't get out of its own way for all of the paid bloatware installed.

- A little further explanation: Dell now will, for \$50 more, deliver a computer to you that has no crapware on it e.g. software that is delivered to you that manufacturers paid Dell to put onto the computer. It comes by the ton (or bits) and represents about \$50 per computer. That is why the Dell prices are sometimes cheaper – they are prepaid by the advertisers.
- There is a program called the **DeCrapifier** which will allow you to identify and remove the crapware. Hint: The program, while

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**General Meeting: Docent-led tour @ Computer History Museum  
Contact Jim Dinkey by December 31 to reserve the place(s) you need.**

**NO Dinner Scheduled this month**

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aimed at Dell, will work on any computer at any time and will assist you identifying and removing crapware from your computer even though your computer is ancient.

### Speaking of ancient computers:

SPAUG will get to see some really ancient computers at the **Computer History Museum January 7** (not the usual 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of the month). There will be no regular meeting on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday in January.

**The Computer History Museum needs to know how many docents to bring in as for every 15 persons, a docent needs to be in attendance. So a count (including spouses and/or other guests) is needed by emailing your information to: JIMDINKEY atsign JIMDINKEY.COM by December 31 (earlier is better).**

You are also cordially invited to view the Babbage Computer in the lobby of the Computer History Museum at 2 p.m. on the same day. The drawings for the Babbage calculator were made over a century ago but were turned into an actual calculator in the past few years. The drawings were accurate! The result weighs 8 tons. A great treat to see. Even includes a printer!

### Voice Recognition software

Voice Recognition software is finally ready!

For years I have purposely purchased **Intel chips** because they have the ability to handle Voice Recognition Programs properly because only Intel chips have 46 instructions

the AMD chips do not have. These instructions were requested to be integrated into the Intel chips by a **Voice Recognition coalition** of several software manufacturers. These 46 instructions are unique to Intel chips.

Because it is my dream to be able to dictate what I am currently typing slowly and not so well, I have been very interested in the progress of the voice recognition industry.

To that end, many Voice Recognition programs have come and gone. I try them out and train them—all to no avail. They stink. They get deleted. Good riddance.

During the time that I was working on a computer of a SPAUG member, the owner requested we check out the **Dragon Naturally Speaking version 10** program that was already installed and so he was using a microphone I swiped from another usage, The owner was talking and the words were arriving on the screen a few seconds later – just as it should. The program was running flawlessly.

Then the headset was transferred to me and while I happened to be talking about some characteristics of the computer, my words started showing up on the screen!

**No training, no prior knowledge, different voice with different timing and the program had no initialization by me as a new user. Impressive!**

I'm installing my copy of Dragon Naturally Speaking version 10.0 as soon as I can. It has gotta be good because Dragon Naturally Speaking 10.0 has already been tested.

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### Reloading an Operating System

What are the criteria for deciding that it is time to reload an operating system?

Basically, **when there are so many things that it cannot do without extreme measures or continual error messages. If it is a pain to use the computer, it is time for a reload.**

If it won't boot, then there is no option. The problem is to forensically figure out what caused the computer to crash. The corrective action tends to cover up the original problems and the clues they leave.

A little test: **What is the size of the directory located at c:\windows\installer?** I don't expect that there is a record of how big it was when the computer was installed, but it is a measure of how much junk is on the computer. The real reason for the test is to evaluate how much worthless overhead has been loaded onto the computer by repeated loading and unloading of programs.

This exercise brings out the fundamental assumption that if you install a program and then uninstall that program, the program will be gone. Not true in the case of Microsoft. Microsoft leaves files equivalent to the install size on the computer in the c:\windows\installer file area. Thus if you install 10 times (and remove 9 times) a large program such as Naturally Speaking, you will consume the space of 10 installations and there is no way to collapse the wasted space other than reinstalling.

So if you are an experimenter of programs and install something just to try it and subsequently uninstall the experimental program, your computer will fill up with rot that is not removable.

**The only proper way to uninstall itinerant programs is to make an Acronis backup of the entire computer before you install the itinerant program and then restore the entire computer in order to wipe out all traces of the temporary install.** All computers upon which you are testing anti-virus programs need special treatment. Anti-virus and other programs are known to integrate themselves into the structure of the Microsoft operating system. Only a selected restore will do the job of removing all traces of the program. To provide me with the ability of restoring in case something goes wrong, I tend to run ERUNT (15 seconds) followed by Acronis incremental (3 minutes) as protection in case I need to remove an integrated program.

The **Secunia** program that checks for the up-to-date status of all of your software – not just Microsoft, is now going to be a for-fee; but the older program (RC3) will work for a while. This is a standard pattern in the industry wherein a program will appear for a year or so as free until the bugs have been worked out – and then they want money. Feel free to use it to tell you if your software is out-of-date. If it is, click on the icon beside the software that is out-of-date and the next thing you will see will be the download of the current software. No chasing around on the web to find the proper location.

### Are you being blacklisted?

**www.robtext.com will check about 200 blacklisting sites for your being blacklisted.** If you suspect that you have been blacklisted by some site, use the URL to run a routine check. You may have forwarded, unknowingly, an email that had a virus in it and the recipient automatically blacklisted you. This is how you find out if you are blacklisted.

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### FAT or FAT32 vs NTFS HDDs

**CONVERT X: /FS:NTFS is the command that will take a FAT or FAT32 HDD to NTFS.**

Unfortunately, many of the external USB external hard disk drives are sold with FAT32 formatting. There is nothing inherently wrong with this but **some files, including especially Acronis files, will cross over a FAT32 boundary without any warning. Acronis will not be able to read its own**

**output at a later time – thereby making Acronis report the file as being corrupt.**

**If you have any external hard disk drives, please check it out NOW to establish the formatting and if not NTFS, please use the CONVERT command to fix the problem.** Then check the status of the Acronis files by using the Acronis VERIFY option. Hint: Turn on VERIFY in the Tools of the initial screen so that you won't get caught.

**Other large files should be checked with their own verify option both before and after the CONVERT.**

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## Filler by John Buck

### SPAUG Election

Somehow, we seem to have missed having the SPAUG election we should have had last November, so we're planning on having it at our February meeting. As far as I know, all the current officers are willing to continue in their offices.

and have found the experience to be rewarding.

- **Next CD:** Our current CD has been out for a while, so it's probably time to get started on a new one.

### Volunteer Opportunities Available

Jim Dinkey does one hell of a lot for SPAUG as a group, and for its individual members. Here are some places you can help Jim and SPAUG by volunteering—




- **Publicity Chair:** It's been a while since we've had a Publicity Chair, but I think we need someone to be sure people know about us, and what's via SPAUG membership.
- **Program Chair:** Similarly, it's been a while since we've had a Program Chair, but I think we could benefit by having someone taking on this chore. I've been Program Chair for other organizations,

### Dealing with a Dead Computer

During Thanksgiving week and the two weeks following, at least three computers belonging to current or former SPAUG members died. Mine was one. I'd ignored and denied signs of its impending demise. My Acronis backup was two months out of date, and I've been able to recover only half of what I'd saved. Additionally, I'd been using MS Works for most of my spreadsheet operations (address and birthday lists, etc.) and don't have access to a version that can let me continue using them. MS Works spreadsheet files are not directly usable in Excel.

Jim Dinkey did the foundation work getting me started working with a new computer. But it is a humbling experience for me to have to try to teach the new machine the tricks the old one knew.

## January 2009 SPAUG News

SPAUG CALENDAR						
Always subject to change; verify event with host or Jim Dinkey						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	<b>29</b> 7–9 pm WebSIG Micro Center		<b>31</b> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div>	<b>1</b>		<b>3</b> —Clinic, by appointment only
	<b>5</b> <b>Museum Tour</b> <b>Reservation Deadline</b> 7–9 pm Multi-MediaSIG Micro Center	<b>4</b>	<b>7</b> <b>Tour Computer History Museum</b> <b>Reserve place(s) by Dec 31</b>  NO Dinner Scheduled			<b>10</b> —Clinic, by appointment only
	<b>12</b> 7–9 pm WinSIG Micro Center		<b>14</b>  NO Meeting tonight			<b>17</b> —Clinic, by appointment only
	<b>19</b> 7–9 pm DISIG Micro Center	<b>20</b> 	<b>21</b> 7:15 pm Planning Meeting, Bev Altman's			<b>24</b> —Clinic, by appointment only
	<b>26</b> 7–9 pm WebSIG Micro Center		<div style="text-align: center;">  </div>			<b>31</b> —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, **January 21**, 2009 at **7:15 pm**, at **Bev Altman's home**.

SPAUG  
PO Box 20161  
STANFORD CA 94309-0161

January 2009

First Class Mail

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## Special General Meeting—Wed. Jan 7—Contact Jim Dinkey

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### Contacts

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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/](http://www.svpal.org/)



# PC USER GROUP Meetings

## Wednesdays: Jan 7, Feb 11, Mar 11

**January 7, 1 pm and 6:30 pm:** (NOTES: • This is the *FIRST* Wednesday, NOT our usual *SECOND* Wednesday meeting day. • The 1 pm tour is shorter than the 6:30 tour—don't expect to see as much or linger as long. • **Sign up with Jim Dinkey by Wednesday December 31, 2008.** • NO Dinner is scheduled for this meeting date. • There is NO Jan 14 General Meeting.)

The premier Computer History Museum of the world is in our backyard, and we are going to go have a docented tour of its static display—which isn't quite as static as you might think, as they have added a number of additional displays.

On the same date, at 2 p.m. (only), the Babbage Engine will be operated. For those of you who do not know of the significance of this 8-ton monster, go to: <http://www.computerhistory.org/babbage/> .

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In February, we return to our usual Second-Wednesday, 7:15 pm, meeting time, and our usual Los Altos American Legion Post meeting place, 347 First St.

**February 11:** We will be awed, amazed and entertained by Bill Young and Larry Templeton doing a show-and-tell about how they selected, assembled, and smoke tested their own computers.

**March 11:** Robert Ackermann of the SETI Institute will discuss the engineering aspects of the Allen Array. If you don't know what the Allen Array is go to <http://www.seti.org/Page.aspx?pid=503> to get some idea of what it takes to search the heavens for intelligent life in the universe. Their computer is the most parallel processor design you will ever see.

Upcoming meetings: 1/7, 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:

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Areas of special interest:

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What are you hoping to find in SPAUG?

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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!