

SPAUG

Vol. XXVII No. 4

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

Biases Biases Biases Biases

We all have ‘em and I am no exception.

My computer has to produce output – if it isn’t in working condition I can’t get output so I don’t fool with it. So my bias is to get it working and to leave it alone.

I’m biased: **if it ain’t broke, don’t fix it.**

+ But I’m biased towards a set of favorite tools to keep it fixed:

- A defragger runs at 1 in the morning – daily.
- On Friday I ERUNT, and then Acronis backup to a 160 GB drive that has ¾ of a years’ worth of backups.
- The backup drive is so full that I have to make room every month or so. The drive is my file cabinet in case I delete a file and discover later that I need the file. In practice this hasn’t happened for years.

+ Another bias is to **keep the computer lean and mean.**

- Ccleaner helps keep it lean.
- Running Avast! Boot-time scanner and Google: WINDOWS LIVE SAFETY SCANNER both keep the bad guys out or squish them if they creep on.

+ My bias **for safety** reasons is Firefox because the infection risk is less than with IE, but when I sense that things aren’t going right, the URL is transferred to IE for verification.

- I am biased **against new programs**, no matter who is pushing them. Recently a big outfit was touting a “free” scanner, but when it showed up that the program was not a free scan, I wiped it out completely by going back 15 minutes to an Acronis backup before the test. Thus there was no trace of the program or the places it might leave remnants at the entry points into the programs.

+ **Antivirus programs** have to insert themselves into multiple key access points and take about a 20% toll on speed, so it is worth the

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General Meeting @ American Legion Post—Wed. April 8 @ 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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effort to assure that those choke points have only one active element and not two or three from prior “uninstalled” anti-virus programs. This is one of the key ways a computer gets slowed down and my bias is to go to great lengths to clean all of the choke points. This is one thing that a “repair” does for the XP operating system.

⊖ I'm based **against companies that, after all this time, still hand a neophyte user a CD of hundreds of drivers and expect a non-computer professional to select the drivers necessary.**

⊖ I'm biased that **the manufacturer does not put the items on its website but expect you to pay \$30 to a second-party outfit to do what is necessary to recover after a crash or reload.** They are ALL bad and **I don't know of any manufacturer that has had the guts to stand up and fix the problem.** I'm going though the problem for the 20th time in the past 12 months and I'm tired of it. Dell, HP, Compaq are still fresh memories.

⊖ Call it bias **when a manufacturer does not give you the CDs to restore your computer but relies on a special partition on the hard drive to be activated to restore to factory.** Trouble is that when your hard drive goes defective, you have to mail or phone to the manufacturer for the media they left out. It is good for a week or so and always too many bux. And the manufacturers that rely on outside services to provide the drivers needed by a computer being reloaded – for-fee services that often do not work properly. So they take your money and provide such a mish-mosh of spaghetti code to get at the supposed solution. The whole system is a rip off.

⊖ And then there is **the manufacturer that will put in a power supply that is just big enough for the computer that is sold but is not large enough to add a second hard drive** when there are provisions for the cabling or the cabling is left out so that no matter what you do, you need a new power supply and additional wiring when upgrading to a second hard drive. **Don't buy cheaply!**

⊖ And then there is **Microsoft that doesn't have enough clean-up diagnostics that delve deeply enough into the guts of the XP operating system to assure that the fat and bloat are removed.**

⊖ And then there is my standard rant about **the Microsoft support window that is left over from Windows 95 that is so small that many displays are worthless for lack of full visibility.**

This covers yet another bias.

A note of thanks: SPAUG is a volunteer organization and it seems to be doing well because the necessary jobs are broken up into very small pieces.

- Carl Moyer usually picks up the PA system, sets it up, and delivers it back to my home late at night.
- Bill Young often assists wherever and also set up the chairs.
- Maury Green is the person to be called when things are gong poorly and helps with whatever.
- These are not Planning Committee members. One that is, Bev Altman, on a continuing basis, keeps the membership entries correct and phones laggards if they have not renewed. Thanks to all.

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Meeting Day: Wednesday, April 8

General Meeting

**American Legion Post
347 First Street, Los Altos**

Meeting time is 7:15 pm

Larry Templeton

Speaking about:
**Building Your Own
Home Theatre PC**

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 LA 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

directions: One block west from American Legion Post

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

menu (via waiter.com): <http://tinyurl.com/57hhgc>

reviews: <http://tinyurl.com/5laoug>

Dinner time is 5:45 pm

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

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A word about the **slide scanner**: This can be the one of greatest things that SPAUG has ever done or an expensive disaster. It all depends on how we present it and how it meets the needs of the members.

One of the sticky points is how do we get the device from place to place. It is composed of a scanner driven by a laptop – which eliminates the need to be installing software wherever the device goes.

What we need is a unique individual with a lot of patience to:

1. Deliver the scanner house to house and train the recipient;
2. Be at home as smaller batches are run;
3. Agree to do the scanning for others.

You have to keep in mind that the production per hour is about 50. When you factor that into the mix, the slow scan rate means that a collection of 3000 slides will take 60 hours of elapsed operating time.

Also, having each user supply their own external USB hard drive is probably a good way to avoid swamping the laptop.

Keep in mind that the scanning of the slide is very precise and very fine so it takes a lot of drive space and time per slide.

Do we have any volunteers?

Computer for Sale: Hank Skawinski has a Standard DG35 System \$650 computer for sale, loaded with goodies and several attractive upgrades, and it comes with Hank's standard 1-year parts and labor support.

Planning Meeting Minutes 18 March 2009

by Stan Hutchings; edited for use here

At Bev Altman's home: **Attendees:** Bev, Maury Green, John Sleeman, John Buck, Nat Landes, Jim Dinkey, Stan Hutchings, Robert Mitchell

Speaker Review:

Caveat: Info about future meetings is subject to change without notice.

- **March**—Larry Ackerman of SETI did a good job on the Allen Array Antenna.
- **April**—Larry Templeton on how to build a media center computer;
- **May**—John Foliot, Stanford Online Accessibility Program. We need a write up for John. Maury will follow up to get a bio.
- **June** —A roundtable/panel discussion of how to change your email using your domain to avoid problems when changing ISP; using whois; etc. The problem of leaving one ISP for another is to change your email address. Jim Dinkey will address that issue. An autoresponder is useful, as is an automatic signature line notifying of the coming change.)
- **July**—Hank Skawinski.
- **August**—Gene Barlow in an interactive video conference, Acronis 11 or 2009?
- **September**—TBD
- **October**—Red Calub
- **November**—Hank Skawinski
- **December**—no meeting

Maury will poll the membership for topics. Maury has a contact who can talk about the legality of photography, perhaps for June.

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Website(s): We can use the old SPAUG site < pa-spaug.org > for archive items, linked from the new site < svuga.org >.

We want to transfer the archive material to the new site eventually. The web support team (John S, Maury, and Stan) will meet to coordinate transfers to the new site and responsibilities for the new site.

Maury wants to have forwarding from the old site to the new one.

The new site's upcoming events "countdown timer" doesn't seem to be working correctly; Maury is trying to get response from the support person at Drupal.

An index of Prez letters for the past two years has been created; each letter has its own URL.

The updating process needs to be reviewed and clarified.

SPAUG CD: The CD contents link will be updated by John S. on the old site. The CD is getting pretty old and sales are down. Do we want to create another one? More people have broadband connections, so it might not be necessary.

Maury suggested that maybe a "ShareWhere"-type page would be more useful, with links to (external) program sources and info.

If we continue with the CD, it would be good to have demonstrations of the programs just before the General Meeting break so people will be motivated to buy a CD.

Also, for income, we can become an affiliate with Amazon.com, etc. We don't want to

compete with Micro Center; but if people go through our site, SPAUG gets 4% or so from Amazon; other companies have similar programs. Some software manufacturers are already linked from the new site. Micro Center does not have an affiliate program. We may be able to affiliate with GoDaddy for domains and hosting.

SIG Meetings:

- **WebSIG**—23 March—Best practices for website design
- **DISIG**—Last meeting had a good presentation by Chris Pedersen from NVidia. Jim D suggests we may need an amplifier for the room at MicroCenter. Speaker for April TBD.
- **Multimedia SIG**—6 April will feature Studio 12 Ultimate presentation by Maury, or AVCHD presentation by an engineer from Panasonic.

Membership—We had 7 renewals, and 2 new members join, last meeting, so have 129 members (includes 2 \$50 family memberships). Bev will not be at the next general meeting; John Sleeman will fill in for her.

Whatever. Controlling ATSIGN to avoid scraper bots. Jim has found several instances of email with "@" instead of "ATSIGN" or other stealth email address.

Financial report: We are in good shape.

New equipment for SPAUG—Discussed having a high-quality negative/slide scanner available for membership.

The proposed Nikon scanner is about \$1500 new. SPAUG could purchase a new or used unit and make it available to members after a tutorial.

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You can do about 50 slides/hour.

The discussion covered no-cost loan, fixed borrower fee, or time-based rent to members? Jim D suggests a laptop could be bought to accompany the scanner so the software is available and ready to go, which would avoid installation/uninstallation issues. Perhaps the software could run from a CD (like a Linux distro with just the scanner software), which would mean a laptop would not be required, just the boot Linux disk?

Who would be the keeper of the unit? It would be best to have someone in charge, and ideal if others could use the unit at that person's home. There is the problem of transferring possession, when someone is finished, how to transfer the unit to the next person? Exchange at monthly meetings is inconvenient, only gets 11 people per year, is unreliable, and increases the risk of damage.

What about repairs if the unit malfunctions?

Based on the membership response, there is considerable demand. However, the learning curve and rental cost may discourage some.

Nat made several points about cost and usefulness that make purchase less desirable.

Maury will do a study on the system and make a recommendation to the board. A scanner would fit in very well with DISIG, and the leader of DISIG might be a good custodian. The board will set the terms for use, and can poll the general membership before making the final decision.

Newsletter/Publicity: John Buck needs info input about speakers—topic title, program description, and speaker bio, totaling about 100 words. Maury would like to be copied, especially if more information is available, for posting on the website.

“The Machine that Changed the World”—by Robert Mitchell

I don't know if you remember the “**The Machine that Changed the World**” series that was shown only once, back in the early 1990s on PBS. It was a five-part series about the history of computers, ranging from the Babbage Engine like the one at the Computer History Museum to computers just before the Web as we know it today in 2009. A few months back, I found the se-

ries online, downloadable via BitTorrent. I downloaded all five episodes in MPEG4 format, putting the five one-hour episodes on five DVDs for viewing. The quality is acceptable, not hi-def, but watchable. It's a great series to watch. If you want either a copy of already-made DVDs or the files to make your own. I am happy to get you a copy.

Creating a *Print Screen* Archive—by Robert Mitchell

John Sleeman and Robert Mitchell are scanning club newsletters into pdf format, using Adobe Acrobat PRO 9 and a scanner with a sheet feeder. So far we have done the year 1985. Eventually the newsletters might be available on DVD or CD or on a club web-

site, as determined by the club board. If you would like to help in this project, please contact either John Sleeman or Robert Mitchell. Currently, the activity is located at Robert Mitchell's house.

April 2009 SPAUG News

SPAUG CALENDAR						
Always subject to change; verify event with host or Jim Dinkey						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	30		1 april fool!			4—Clinic, by appointment only
	6 7–9 pm Multi-MediaSIG Micro Center Easter		8 5:45 pm Dinner (Optional), Aldo Los Altos, 388 Main, LA 7:30 pm General Meeting Amer. Legion Post, 347 First St, LA Speaker: Larry Templeton			11—Clinic, by appointment only
12 	13 7–9 pm WinSIG Micro Center		15 7:15 pm Planning Meeting, Bev Altman's			18—Clinic, by appointment only
	20 7–9 pm DISIG Micro Center		22			25—Clinic, by appointment only
	27 7–9 pm WebSIG Micro Center		29			2—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, **April 15, 2009 at 7:15 pm, at Bev Altman's home.**

SPAUG
PO Box 20161
STANFORD CA 94309-0161

April 2009

First Class Mail

• General Meeting—Wed. April 8, 7:15 PM

Amer. Legion Post, 347 First St., Downtown Los Altos, across from Draeger's (betw. San Antonio and Main)

Contacts

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

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

Maury Green
mauryg3 at comcast.net
Recording Secretary (650) 493-5914

Nat Landes
natlandes at gmail.com
Treasurer (650) 851-2292

Beverly Altman
bevaltman at aol.com
Membership (650) 329-8252

Stan Hutchings
stan.hutchings at gmail.com
co-WebMaster (650) 325-1359

John Sleeman
sleemanjc at copperhouse.net
co-WebMaster (650) 326-5603

Susan Mueller
susan_mueller at yahoo.com
Newsletter Publisher (650) 691-9802

John Buck
jbuck1467 at mindspring.com
Newsletter Editor (650) 961-8859

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

April 8

7:15 PM

American Legion Post, 347 First Street, Los Altos

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

Topic: **Building Your Own
Home Theater Personal Computer**



Speaker: **Larry Templeton, SPAUG Member**

Constructing a home theater PC (HTPC) and a standard PC are about the same, so Larry won't be repeating Bill Young's February talk, but will describe the differences: • System requirements, • Interfaces, • Hardware requirements (tuner cards, graphics cards, processor, enclosure, HDD capacity, etc.), • Software (with an illustrated discussion of the Beyond TV software < <http://tinyurl.com/dj666k> >), and • Remote controls. He'll close with a short discussion about 3D TV, how it's done and how it's just around the corner.

A Stanford BSEE grad, Larry took time out from his career to work as a consulting engineer in the field of broadcast radio/TV. He was involved in early developments in video art — work that is still ongoing (see <http://blip.tv/file/1566386> and <http://tinyurl.com/cqm424> for example). In retirement, he became interested in Home Theater and realized that a home theater PC would be perfect for his system, so he researched and built one.

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

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@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!