

SPAUG

Vol. XXVIII No. 6

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

My recent classes on how to maintain your computer's software were a learning experience for me. I learned that there was, indeed, a need for the class, as about 20 people actually wanted to learn the material presented. These students should have fewer problems with their computers. Even more important, they will have less need to come to the Clinic.

I sense that not many more people want this two-session training. I have kept the class notes in case I am wrong, and they will be posted as soon as possible.

Controlling your startup sequence

A key portion of the classes was a discussion of

- how to control what starts up at boot time,
- how to control the start up sequence, and
- how that can help a user.

While resurrecting a very old computer, I was reminded that MSCONFIG < <http://tinyurl.com/2fgja8z> > does not require ANY entry in MSCONFIG STARTUP. Indeed, one of the best ways to cut down on overhead is to uncheck ALL

of the entries and let the computer recheck only those items it needs. The problem is that some programs will egotistically set themselves up to start when the computer starts, although they are really only marginal players that could wait on the sideline until they were needed. The answer to this problem is a DELAYER that permits user to inhibit the startup of one or more selected programs until a specified period of time has elapsed. The catch is that, while it may be beneficial, the delayer program may not operate with enough of the programs you want it to find.

[*Editor's Note: Snapfiles.com lists a program named "Startup Delayer" < <http://tinyurl.com/2ddtm9> > in its "Startup Managers" < <http://tinyurl.com/nndds> > freeware category, which includes other programs that do the same, similar, or related things. Here's the list sorted by popularity < <http://tinyurl.com/2vn5d86> > .]*

Managing your Backups

Whenever possible, you should automate your backing-up process to be sure your system—especially your personal data files—gets backed up. The first thing asked in the Clinic is: "What is the status of your backup?", and the answer is usually not good.

(Continued on page 2) ►

General Meeting @ American Legion Post—Wed. June 9 @ 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)

◀ (Continued from page 1)

Not only should you automate your backups, you should also automate whether a full or incremental backup is created. Indeed, you should check, on a timely basis, to delete files so you don't fill the HDD and thus stop the backup process, leaving yourself vulnerable.

Adding RAM

Adding RAM is one of the cheapest and most productive upgrades to your computer. If you wish to add memory (RAM) to your computer, you might bring your computer to the Clinic to see what can be accomplished. You can learn there how to find out the RAM installation limits that apply to your motherboard.

Motherboards can vary in RAM installation pattern, so you need to establish just how much memory your motherboard can accommodate and in what sequence. Depending on the board, RAM often can be installed • in a single slot or • in pairs, or • biggest in the lowest-numbered slot and successively smaller memory sticks in each of the higher-numbered slots.

To find out what rules apply to your machine:

- First, see what the motherboard manufacturer has to say about the memory assignments. You want two things if possible:
 - the Model Number and
 - the motherboard number.

One problem is that often the manufacturer gives no documentation, or the documentation gets lost. The best place to keep the documentation of your new computer is inside the case, so it is likely to be available when needed; be sure you don't block ventilation holes or slots when you use this method.

- If you lack the needed documentation, run a copy of Belarc Advisor < <http://tinyurl.com/2dkemul> > to get the inventory of

your computer; you will learn the actual model number of the motherboard from the results. [**Editor's Note:** *It might be interesting to compare Belarc's report against what the manufacturer said.*]

When you have the needed information, go to each manufacturers' website—Kingston, Crucial, Micron, PNY and OCZ, and plug into their website the computer information and the result will be a statement of what a particular motherboard can take. [**Editor's Note:** *For more info about these RAM mfrs/sellers, you might start here: <http://tinyurl.com/2c4v95p>.*]

Once you know this, then buying locally can get you a speedier computer for not much money. Note that the various manufacturers will gladly sell you their memory for a higher cost plus shipping. The local dealer will sell the same product for less money and immediate delivery.

Managing your Hard Disk Drives

When there is only one hard drive, a second partition may be created on it, and backups created on that partition. Then, if you need to restore the "C" partition (which contains your operating system and programs), your data stays untouched (on the other partition) and your computer can be restored in about 10 minutes.

What I've just said applies only as long as the single HDD has not crashed, which would mean that both partitions are likely lost forever.

A common upgrade is to add a Hard Disk Drive (HDD) to a desktop computer in order to

- permit backing up to a separate physical drive or
- add data storage area.

(Continued on page 4)

Meeting Day: Wednesday, June 9

General Meeting

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

Meeting time is 7:15 pm

Hank Skawinski

Speaking about:

What Hank will talk about

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 Los Altos 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

website: <http://www.aldolosalto.com/>

directions: One block west from American Legion Post

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

menu: <http://www.aldolosalto.com/Menu.php>

reviews: <http://www.aldolosalto.com/Recognition.html>

Dinner time is 5:45 pm

**"Contemporary
Italian Food With
International
Infusion."**

**"This is not
your daddy's
spaghetti joint!"**

—website

◀ (Continued from page 2)

Good desktop HDD practice is to have a second physical HDD installed and used. Then, if the primary drive fails, you can restore to a new HDD from the secondary drive. For laptops, you must use an external HDD.

The added internal desktop HDD technique works for everything except fire and theft, where everything in the computer is lost at once. For fire and theft protection, about every 3 months I put the contents of my “C” partition onto a DVD DL and give the disc(s) to a person about a mile away. I have never had to use this backup, but it is there.

For professional situations and the need to recover from problems in minutes, I have each computer make a full backup every day onto a second partition. Where possible, the presence of a second HDD increases data safety by making a copy on the secondary HDD.

A secondary effect of creating an image each night is to assure that there are no bad spots on the source HDD. Thus data is known readable because you know the backup copy was created correctly. Usually a message will be generated for the user if the source or backup data is not readable. If you need additional clarification, then you need to investigate the Event Viewer

Using the Event Viewer

The Event Viewer is located in Settings/Control Panel/Administrative Tools/Computer Management/Event Viewer or via Settings/Control Panel/Administrative Tools/Event Viewer.

You should check your Event Viewer daily, but I know that’s not likely to happen. The point remains that this is how to check the

health of the entire computer. When you get an indication of trouble, this is the first place to go to review what might be wrong. The entries are stored in a fixed-size buffer; when the buffer is full, each new entry forces the oldest one out. It is often useful to review and then delete the report on a periodic basis. This is a very good habit to get into.

Now, having done all the management described above, maybe you will actually have some time left over to use the computer for what you bought it for!

Filler

by John Buck

Book Sales—Got books? Got enough books? Want more books? Maybe software, too? My favorite place for these is **BookBuyers**, 317 Castro, MV, open late 7 days, < <http://www.bookbuyers.com/> >.

Online, I like **BookCloseouts** < BookCloseouts.com >, when they have what I’m looking for.

And then there are library book sales—all over the place! Find them here: < <http://www.booksalefinder.com/CAB.html> >

If you’ve no place to put the books and other stuff you’ve been acquiring, it might be time to read the NYT article about hoarding < <http://tinyurl.com/2ep8fxo> >, and make “Stuff” your last book (for a while, anyhow) < <http://tinyurl.com/2d7m4ss> .

And if you want to borrow a book, you can check out many libraries’ catalogs online—search for [<library name> catalog online]. **Hint:** Add your library’s search field as an option in your browser’s search bar.



June 2010 SPAUG News

SPAUG CALENDAR						
Always subject to change; verify event with host or Jim Dinkey						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	31		2			5—Clinic, by appointment only
	7 7–9 pm BIY SIG Micro Center		9 5:45 pm Dinner (Optional), Aldo Los Altos, 388 Main, LA 7:30 pm General Meeting Amer. Legion Post, 347 First St, LA Speaker: Hank Skawinski			12—Clinic, by appointment only
9	14 7–9 pm WinSIG Micro Center		16 7:15 pm Planning Meeting, Bev Altman’s			19—Clinic, by appointment only
	21 7–9 pm DISIG Micro Center		23			26—Clinic, by appointment only
	28 7–9 pm WebSIG Micro Center		30			3—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.

Contact Jim at jimdinkey at jimdinkey.com or 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, **June 16, 2010** 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

SPAUG
PO Box 20161
STANFORD CA 94309-0161

June 2010

First Class Mail

General Meeting—Wed. June 9, 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
bev at altman.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

June 9

7:15 PM

American Legion Post, 347 First Street, Los Altos

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

Topic: What Hank Will Talk About

Speaker: Hank Skawinski, Owner/Manager, Datawise



Yes, that topic is flippant, but it's also true, because regardless of what's up there, Hank will talk about what Hank will talk about—knowledgably and in detail. It's likely to be about the latest things he's learned, and be based on his day-to-day experience dealing with the problems of maintaining, building, and using computers and related devices. He'll likely have something to say about Microsoft, about Linux, about some new product that's grabbed his fancy, and about something that's peeved him that shouldn't have.

Hank builds computers and maintains hundreds of computers for places where performance is critical. He's the über-guru to SPAUG's gurus. He's smart, knowledgeable, informative, and entertaining. Have a computer problem or question? Present it to Hank at this meeting.

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: (2010): **6/9**, 7/14, 8/11, 9/8, 10/13, 11/10
(2011): 1/12, 2/9, 3/9, 4/13, 5/11

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!