November 2010 SPAUG News







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

<u>Reimage, aka Reimage Repair</u>

A new program– called **Reimage** < reimage. com > or **Reimage Repair** < tinyurl. com/2fey73v >—will revolutionize how Windows operating systems are maintained. Software repairs will be vastly different—and more-easily done by an average user—but the solution won't be free. More about pricing later.

• Background

As you use your computer, a pattern develops of what is "right" with that computer's software. Reimage can detect variances from that "right" pattern, and, if there is a something that is not "correct":

- Remove any offending "extra",
- Replace any defective or out-of-date file with its current version.

After using Reimage, the computer's operating system is as it was originally installed and then updated to current status—with viruses and other malware having been removed as being nonconforming variations.

• The Reimage Experience—An Overview

If you download, install, and run it, Reimage first goes through a discovery and presentation to you of the things that it wants to correct on your computer – all in about 5 minutes. This part is free.

If you choose to go ahead and have all of the problems fixed, it will cost you money and at least half an hour to download and replace bad files with good ones.

If, during the first seven days after a Reimage repair, you don't like the result, you can perform a reversion to restore your files to what existed were *before* the repair.

• At the Clinic

I anticipate using Reimage extensively in the Clinic, as it sets things right that are often absolute time burners to fix manually. Further, it fixes problems that you didn't even know you had.

For each computer coming into the Clinic, I print a Belarc Advisor report as an inventory of what is on the computer. This has worked flawlessly,

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General Meeting @ American Legion Post—Wed. November 10 @ 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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except for one computer that would not recognize the connected printer. After running Reimage, the printer was recognized without problem—representing the repair of a problem unknown before, but repaired along with potentially multitudinous unknown problems. Repair time? About an hour.

Caveat: As my experience using Reimage has increased, I have found that it it is not as problem-free as I'd initially hoped or expected. I can use it problem-free on about one-third of the machines I see. On another third, I have some problem(s); and on the remaining third, I seem to be unable to get it to work. I haven't yet detected a pattern that lets me accurately predict which third a particular machine will fall into. If the Reimage concept interests you, bring your machine to the clinic so I can see if Reimage will work, and you can get a one-year license for about half of the single-license price—a double benefit for you.

• Reimage Pricing (as of Oct. 2010)

Reimage has been around for at least a year, but at a very much lower price. Strangely, Reimage has received virtually no coverage in the press and they seem to be not advertising themselves.

Reimage seems to be stable and debugged now—as indicated by the increased retail pricing. Its current price is

- one license, good for a year at \$70.
- Additional licenses bought at the same time are \$15 for the second and \$15 for the third.

An individual would probably be paying \$70. I intend to buy the licenses in the Clinic at three for \$100, and to parcel them out at \$35 within the Clinic.

• Back Up Before You Proceed

Not all is rosy. In practice, there are some arguments that Reimage can never operate perfectly in the fine detail of trying to keep thousands of program structures current and correct – that there <u>must</u> be some errors in the process. So it will be a crapshoot whether some of those errors will show up on your computer, and, thus, you should create a full backup of before letting Reimage make any repair.

• Clean Up Before You Back Up

Before making a backup, you should clean up your hard drive by:

- 1. Using CCLEANER to get rid of overhead. See more information below
- 2. Checking the hard drive by:
 - a. In XP, double-clicking My Computer
 - b. Right-clicking the "C" drive
 - c. Clicking PROPERTIES.
 - d. Clicking on TOOLS
 - e. Clicking on CHECK NOW
 - f. Clicking both boxes.
 - g. Clicking on START.

This will bring up a message that the operation must be performed in Boot Mode. Reply YES and watch the boot start—then go to bed because the checking will take a couple of hours to complete depending on the size of your hard drive.

- h. In the morning, checking the results of what was found, by:
 - 1) Going to Control Panel/ Administrative Tools/Event Viewer.
 - 2) Checking each file for any red indications.

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Meeting Day: Wednesday, November 10

General Meeting

American Legion Post 347 First Street, Los Altos

Meeting time is 7:15 pm

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.

Hank Skawinski

Speaking about: What Hank will talk about

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.aldolosaltos.com/
directions: One block west from American Legion Post
map: http://tinyurl.com/6hm3ga
menu: http://www.aldolosaltos.com/Menu.php
reviews: http://www.aldolosaltos.com/Recognition.html

Dinner time is 5:45 pm

"Contemporary Italian Food With International Infusion."

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

-website

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 - 3) Planning on deleting the files once read.
 - 4) Resolving any red-marked problems.

More About Using CCleaner

Above is a reference to running CCLEANER before beginning any other significant activity, such as a backup, to keep your computer running as fast as possible.

If you take this newsletter to heart and download CCLEANER < tinyurl.com /37e96n > and then run it using the default choices it presents, you might cut too deeply, because CCLEANER allows you to delete some files that are best allowed to remain on the computer. **Cookies** are a good example of this type of file. Getting rid of Cookies won't kill your computer, but it will make the computer harder to use because Cookies are where the sign-on sequences are stored to allow you to automatically sign onto many of the websites you have visited before.

Keeping in mind that CCLEANER's initial choices will differ with each computer, **I rec-ommend checking (enabling) only** (see example on page 5):

On the Windows tab —

Internet Explorer:

- ✓ Temporary Internet Files
- ✓ Index.dat files

Windows Explorer:

✓ Other Explorer MRUs

System

- ✔ Empty Recycle Bin
- ✓ Temporary files
- ✔ Clipboard

- ✔ Memory Dumps
- ✔ Chkdsk File fragments
- ✓ Windows Log Files

Advanced

✔ Old Prefetch Data

On the Applications Tab

- Firefox/Mozilla ✓ Download History
- Internet Cache
- Internet History

Applications: ✔ (enable) all Internet: ✔ (enable) all Multimedia: ✔ (enable) all Utilities ✔ (enable) all

Windows: ✔ (enable) all

Eliminating Persistent Viruses

How do you get rid of a virus that won't go away when your anti virus program is run?

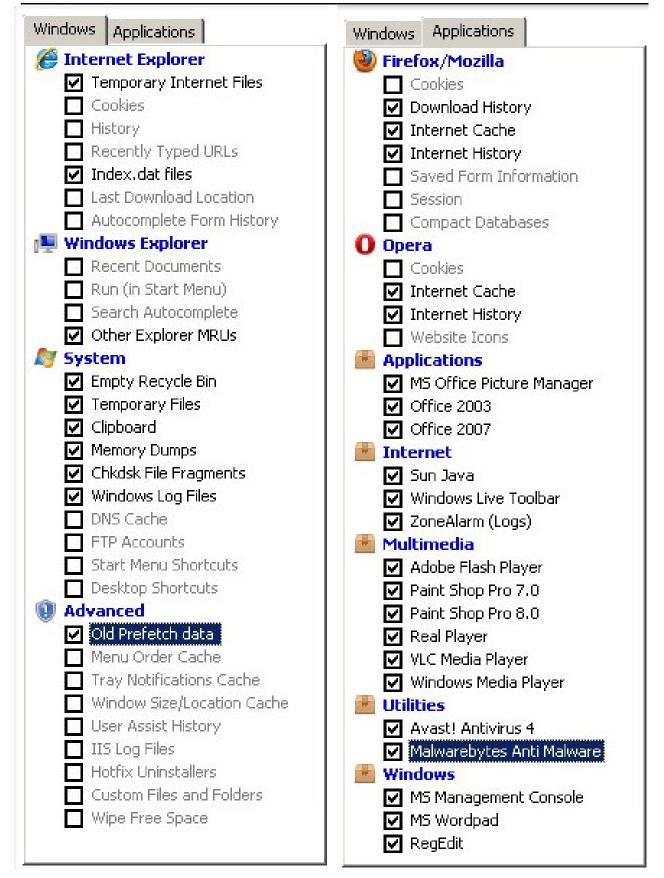
As you know, there is no single procedure that is guaranteed to identify and remove a virus.

With the Zero Day problem— the need for time to identify and devise a counter to a virus (the government has evidently required that the information be shared among all anti virus manufacturers)—there will *always* be about a three-day delay to discover, identify, devise a response, and disseminate information to end users. Meanwhile, the virus can run rampant. That is why there are literally millions of viruses now, mostly just variations on a theme.

To get an idea of how effective a particular anti virus program is, go to **VIRUS.GR** and review the percentage of viruses picked up by your vendor. If you're more comfortable

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reading English than Greek, click the link that switches to English. Here's a path to the latest report (Summer 2009): **tinyurl.com/y9qpqer.** Scroll to the bottom half of the page to see the ranking list. Of the virus-fighters listed, consider using the free Avira AntiVir Personal < tinyurl. com/2cxfwj9 >.

In order to get rid of a virus, you need to understand that **often when an AV program finds a virus, it cannot delete the virus without some assistance from you.** This assistance is usually in the form of a multi-step procedure—hopefully you won't need all of them:

- 1. Run your regular AV program and do what it says to remove the virus.
- 2. Run Malwarebytes to confirm that the virus is gone.
- 3. If there is any remnant, repeat steps 1 and 2 above, but from Safe Mode. Hint: Use the F8 key at boot-up.
- 4. If the steps above did not get rid of the virus
 - a. Remove the infected hard drive and install it as a non-bootable drive in another computer. This isolates the drive from its links to any other programs installed by the virus which might be supporting the reintroduction of the virus.
 - b. Run Malwarebytes in the test computer to inspect the suspect hard drive.

Why is this procedure (Step 4) necessary?

The lengths to which virus makers go include putting malware into a computer's <u>pagefile</u>; this malware could rewrite a virus back onto a "cleaned" hard drive. Isolating the hard drive from the operating system means the drive will not be booted, so any virus-restoration program in that machine will not be activated to reinfect the hard drive. A virus in a file on a hard drive cannot operate without the support of the operating system around it. And, if the operating system on that drive is not being used, as in Step 4, the linkages to the virus are denied, so the file containing it is exposed and deletable.

Just as an aside, It is my understanding that this compiled/non-compiled OS issue is what ended the IBM/Microsoft business agreement.

- IBM insisted that the core of the program be compiled, as Unix/Linux is, thereby not permitting modifications on-the-fly.
- Microsoft insisted that the individual operating systems being put together at load time was sufficient and if there was a problem (virus) that Microsoft would fix it.

By the time IBM's OS2 came out, the Microsoft juggernaut was running and there was no going back.

Apple's computers have been notoriously difficult to use because of the inflexibility created by having compiled operating systems. If you need to hook on additional unique equipment that you might be developing, you have to have Apple do the customizing for you—and then agree to incorporate it into their operating system.

Microsoft needs the ability to take any configuration that you might propose, let you make the new device modifications you need and any changes you might like to the operating system, and then allow you to freeze the configuration in the Apple manner for your own computer. That would stop this virus

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nonsense. I don't expect the viruses to stop until there is such a program by some third party!

<u>Hard Disk Drive Alternatives</u>

I've waited at least 30 years for Solid State drives to come to fruition. Thirty years ago we would put key programs into resident memory (which, at the time, wasn't cheap) just to get the speed boost of not having to swap programs from mechanical rotating memory (hard disks) into and out of memory. This was in the time when 607 Megabytes (MB) of storage was 94 pounds and cost about \$6000. Now you can put GB onto a thumb drive

Enter the current hybrid and totally solid-state drives.

Hybrid—Here, part of the total capacity is solid-state, usually in the form of a buffer, with the remaining storage being a dedicated regular hard drive. The solid state portion of the drive can respond almost immediately to the demands of the CPU.

In practice, the later buffers have been set up to select and retain certain files in the cache (immediate storage), thus responding very quickly with those files that are found to be in high demand and to have the slower-recalled files only on the regular hard drive.

These hybrid drives are considerably cheaper than totally solid-state drives, and, in key applications such as sorting, are quite effective.

Solid State – A totally solid-state drive takes all of the available data coming at it from the information bus and saves it in some format, with an index so the data can be retrieved very quickly. These drives are still quite expensive, but their prices are coming down, just as thumb drive prices have fallen as their technology matures.

Look into the desirability of your next desktop computer having a hybrid or an all-solidstate drive. Laptops probably need not apply for a while.

Traveling sans Computer . . .

While traveling recently without my own laptop, I had to access accounts and travel information via other peoples' computers, and could not use accounts that required qualifying information such as POP addresses. This was not good, because it took time to set up on some else's computer and left trails I didn't want.

So I switched all my travel information to a Yahoo account that only I could access, simply by entering its (non POP) email address in any browser. The benefits were: no imposition upon my hosts, no POP addresses required, no delays. I could still use my hosts' printers to create my boarding passes during the 24 hours before my flights; I had to do this for six separate airline legs of my trip.

Planning Meeting Minutes October 20, 2010 by Stan Hutchings, edited for use here

Attendees: Jim Dinkey, John Buck, Maury Green, John Sleeman, Stan Hutchings.

<u>General Meetings</u>

• Return to Elks Lodge: Jim Dinkey has aranged for us to meet in the Palo Alto Elks' new lodge, beginning in January 2011. The new lodge is on the same site as the old one where we used to meet..

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- **Dining places near Elks Lodge:** Trader Vic's, to start.
- Upcoming speakers:

November—Hank Skawinski. No announced topic, he will speak and have a question and answer session..

December—no meeting

January—Chuck Esposito of the FBI on cybercrime. Maury will re-confirm.

• **Doorprizes**: Nat needs a formal document for the records.

For reimbursement of expenses incurred for the club:

- Send an 8.5x11 sheet of paper (.pdf or .jpg as email attachment OK) with name and address and other info about the purpose of the purchase;
- Copy the receipts if possible,
- Specify amount desired and sign.
- Fax with all the info is also OK.

Excess club funds could be used for educational purposes (for example, \$25/ mo subscription to Lynda.com, subscription to Smart Computing, or similar). Gift cards from Micro Center would be a good prize.

Update of Club history document:

Provided by Robert Mitchel, for board members to review and comment.

<u>SPAUG Election</u>: Scheduled for November General Meeting:

- Maury Green will not run for **Recording Secretary;** Stan will run in his stead.
- John Sleeman will continue as Vice **President**;

- John Buck as editor;
- John Sleeman as **webmaster**, with Stan as emeritus;
- Nat Landes as **treasurer**;
- Bev Altman as Membership Secretary;
- Susan Mueller as production manager for PrintScreen;
- Jim Dinkey as **president.**

Other Business:

SVUGA and SVCS websites are being redesigned by Maury. SVUGA will become a portal to other information sources, while SVCS.net will carry info on the SIGs and other SVCS activities.

<u>Post-Meeting Discussion—Printer</u> <u>Purchase Experinces</u>

- Printer purchase is best from Micro Center, with their modest extra-cost 2-year "Bronze" warranty, according to Maury. If the product fails within warranty, replacement is easy and inexpensive. Brother laser is a good deal.
- After his about 5-years-old HP 1210 Printer/Scanner/Copier died, John Buck went shopping—and shopping, and shopping—at Micro Center, Fry's, and Office Depot.—for a replcement.

Initially, he bought another HP, which didn't work right out of the box. After asbout two hours on the phone, HP's service guy, in the Philippines, said the unit was refurbished, and added that it was a lemon and should be returned. Office Depot refunded the full price, with no problem—John's happy with them for that.

John ended up buying a \$50 Canon All-In-One at Micro Center, and (for now) is happy with his choice.

We're moving back to the Palo Alto Elks Lodge beginning in January 2011

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SPAUG CALENDAR Always subject to change; verify event with host or Jim Dinkey								
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat		
31	1 7–9 pm BIY SIG Micro Center	4	3			6 —Clinic, by appointment only		
H a I I	8 7–9 pm WinSIG Micro Center		 10 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 	11		13 —Clinic, by appointment only		
03001	15 7–9 pm DISIG Micro Center		17 7:15 pm Planning Meeting, Bev Altman's			20 —Clinic, by appointment only		
n	22 7–9 pm WebSIG Micro Center	Т	24 hanksgiving	25		27 —Clinic, by appointment only		
	29 See		SPAUG Meeting in December. t Palo Alto Elks Lodge, Jan 12, 2	2011		4 —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.

Email: jimdinkey at jimdinkey.com or call 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, November 17, 2010 at 7:15 pm, at Bev Altman's home.

SIGS <u>NOTE:</u> 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

November 2010



General Meeting—Wed. November 10, 7:15 PM

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

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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/



Let someone else know about SPAUG—Please post or share this flyer

PC USER GROUP Meeting

Nov 10

WEDNESDAY

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): **11/10** (2011): 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 Dues 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

Dues: \$35 for 12 months

7:15 PM

STANFORD PALO ALTO USER GROUP FOR PC (SPAUG)

MEMBERSHIP FORM

To become a member of SPAUG—		
 Provide the information requested on this form. 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, Fit	rst	_
Your mailing address:		_
	ty, State, ZIP	_
e-mail:		_
Phone:(Area Code) Number	Fax:(Area Cod	e) Number
Areas of expertise you would be willing to share wit	h SPAUG:	
Areas of special interest:		
What are you hoping to find in SPAUG?		
How did you learn about SPAUG?		
Your Occupation:		
Bring a printout of our online Membership informat to a meeting, and you can join SPAUG for \$30 for your firs		