

SPAUG

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Print Screen

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

Getting faster downloading

For the last several weeks, I have been attempting to get more download speed into the Clinic area of my home, which was served by Sonic.net's DSL service at 3.0 KB/sec. In practice, I averaged 2.85 most of the time, and was capped by AT&T at 3.0 KB/sec. Pretty typical.

But, for the Clinic, I often wanted a faster download rate, either because of • multiple PCs, • downloading of Windows XP SP3, or • other heavy updating. The delays were very irritating.

Since I was already being served by Sonic.net at 3.0 MB/sec, I tried their on-line program that was designed to give me feedback on whether I might be able to use their new fiber optic service. I decided that I was a poor candidate because I was 8727 feet from their point of origin. However, when I called Sonic.net for another reason, I broached the subject.

The Sonic.net person told me that the fiber optic option was feasible, but that their 20.0 kbps rate would be degraded by distance to somewhere around 7 kbps which was about 2½ times the speed I was experiencing currently. If you are closer to their point of origin, you will probably do better!

Since I was already paying about \$35 per month, going up about \$3.05 was not really a problem. What makes it really not a problem is that I was nearing the end of my one-year introductory \$35 rate and would have been at \$55 within a month. So, upgrading from 3.0 kbps to 6.0 kbps freezes the fees indefinitely and provides about twice the speed to service the Clinic that is run on Saturdays on behalf of over 100 PC Club members.

Here's why Sonic.net is good for my situation:

- They were chosen as best of the pack by **DSLReports** < <http://www.dslreports.com> >, and by Bill Young, who had led me to them. He had signed up and was very satisfied with the throughput and customer support. So I did also.

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We're Back at the PA Elks' Lodge

General Meeting @ Palo Alto Elks—Wed. March 9 @ 7:15 PM
4249 El Camino Real, Palo Alto (directions on page 3)

Optional No-Host Dinner at Su Hong, 4256 El Camino Real, Palo Alto, 94306: 650-493-3836
Across El Camino Real from Elks Lodge, 5:45 pm (see page 3)

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- Then, several years later, Google chose Sonic.net to supply the Stanford area with a research fiber optic capability, which made that endpoint available to anyone in the Palo Alto area. <http://tinyurl.com/6ergsxp>

As a SPAUG member, you should consider it your duty as a researcher to test the waters of Sonic.net for better service.

That's the simplified story. Here are the gory details you were spared.

AT&T commissioned an outside survey outfit to canvass our neighborhood to sell U-verse < <http://tinyurl.com/68evdok> > to us. After a long negotiation, we came to terms.

We agreed to switch over everything from my current suppliers: • AT&T for wired phone, • Sonic.net for DSL, and • Dish Network for TV. Other than the slowness of DSL, everything was working fine. The proposed changes were worth it to get faster DSL and a net cost reduction.

Everything was set and I was given a date. We waited for the installer, but no one showed up. No calls, nuttin'.

It turns out that no matter what I had been told about switching lines from Sonic.net to AT&T, **AT&T was determined to have my DSL line “cool”—be unused—for seven days to assure that no one else had any claims to it.** Still, AT&T gave me a date, but never let me know that there was a delay. Actually, most of this was done verbally, so I cannot point to any instruction that said that I'd have to (catch this!) **go to a dialup modem for 7 days** while AT&T “punishes” me for using a competitive service over AT&T lines.

The AT&T contractor salesman had warned me that this might happen, but I never received any written information about the delay possibility, although I had received a notice of how to handle my PIN account and some other arrangements.

Remember that I have two separate paid lines into the house—one for voice only and one for DSL, voice and FAX. The second line allows continuous availability of the FAX, using the upper frequencies for DSL, and also lets me have a second line for voice when the primary line is busy.

What I wanted to do was • add/install U-verse on my primary (till-then voice-only) line, • still be able to use all the capabilities of my second line, and then • cancel my second line when I wanted to, after checking out U-verse on the primary line. When AT&T said they wanted the second line (with DSL) to “cool” for a week., I asked them to separate the lines into two separate accounts, but they refused, saying it isn't their “policy”.

I complained about this AT&T “policy” to the FCC, but they could do nothing because of the regulations set forth by the negotiations with Congress and what they passed.

Rather than putting up with AT&T's way of doing business, I called Sonic.net (as I described in the shorter version above) to find out what their situation was. During our discussion, I told them that I had reviewed the fiber optic option associated with the Google-Stanford-Sonic.net installation, but had rejected it because I was 8727 feet from the point of origin of the signal (see the Sonic.net site).

The Sonic.net person explained that the fiber optic option was still very much alive for me, but that I would have to settle for about

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Meeting Day: Wednesday, March 9

General Meeting

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

Meeting time is 7:15 pm

**Richard Rands,
Professional Genealogist
Speaking about:
Yahoo! Let's Google Bing—
or YahGooBing your family tree**

The Elks Lodge is a light-colored two-story bldg on the North (bay) side of El Camino Real (ECR), just east (toward Los Altos) from the Charleston-Arastradero-ECR intersection. It's diagonally across ECR from the Crowne Plaza Cabaña hotel.

Park your car in the parking lot that wraps around the lodge, and proceed to the front door (on the West side of the bldg.). This is a keycarded door so we will have someone at the door to let you in. Proceed to the Lodge Room—upstairs, elevator available past stairway.

If you cannot get in the front 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 no-host dinner

Join us for dinner before our General Meeting at —

Su Hong Eatery & Chinese Restaurant
4256 El Camino Real, Palo Alto, 94306, 650-493-3836

website: <http://suhongeatory.com/>

directions: <http://suhongeatory.com/map.html>

menu: <http://suhongeatory.com/menuenglish0209.htm>

reviews: <http://www.yelp.com/biz/su-hong-eatery-palo-alto>

Dinner time is 5:45 pm

*"We enjoy
serving your
favorite dishes,
prepared to
your specific
taste."*

—website

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7.0 kbps (which turned out to be 6.0 kbps), instead of their full 20.0 kbps. I bought into their idea because • it did not require one week of using a dial-up modem, • AT&T was not involved, and • the speed doubled. Objective accomplished. Even though there was a one-week delay imposed by AT&T, my Sonic.net DSL ran (on my second line) during that time (at the ~3.0 KB/sec rate), and the one-hour interruption on the appointed changeover day was trivial.

The stranglehold that AT&T has on the network must be broken. AT&T itself was broken up into the Baby Bells, which have since grown back together. AT&T must be broken up again – only finer!

Planning Meeting 16 Feb 2011
by Stan Hutchings
Edited for use here

Held at: Bev's house

Attendees: Jim Dinkey; John Sleeman; Bev Altman; Robert Mitchell; Stan Hutchings; Nat Landes.

Review of 09 Feb 2011 General Meeting

- The setup of the room was much better than January's. The PA system with two wireless microphones is a problem, but we can work around it now that we realize what the problem is.
- It would be nice to have coffee and cookies during break. This would require a Refreshment Coordinator and perhaps the Lodge providing coffee. Jim will investigate.
- Speaker Laurie Burruss presented a lot of information on what Lynda.com is and how it can be used.

Joining or accessing Lynda.com through the SVCS website gives SVCS a commission.

Many mainstream applications, including Premier Pro, Flash, and Drupal, have instructional programs. Maury Green has taken other courses that he recommends.

Bev suggested a one-month subscription as a possible door prize

Maury has publicized Lynda.com on the SVUGA website.

- The 9 Feb 2011 presentation is available on DV tape, soon to be DVD. Contact John Sleeman or Robert Mitchell to purchase. Copies are \$5 each.

Upcoming speakers

- **March 9**—Richard Rands, Professional Genealogist.
- **April 13**—Gene Barlow, by video conference. Expect Acronis 2011 presentation. Bring your checkbook.

Computer History Museum Tour in May

There will be a tour of the Computer History Museum sometime in May. Expect a fee in the \$12–\$15 range. Join the museum and your tour may be free—<http://www.computerhistory.org/hours/>

Membership

128 members. 1 new member, 9 renewals.

Proposal to drop dues to \$30 for individuals; \$45 for couples—Voted and passed, effective as of 1 Jan 2011. Nat will refund \$5 for everyone (9) who paid dues at the old rate since 1 Jan 2011.

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John Sleeman and John Buck will revise the **membership forms** to reflect new dues, and remove the \$5 credit for submitting the form.

Financial—Nat says the club is flush.

Update of Club history document—Work is continuing.

An Elks officer wants to forward SPAUG info to the Elks Lodge members via their newsletter. We may see new SPAUG members from this. There will be invitations to both noon CompuSIR and evening SPAUG meetings.

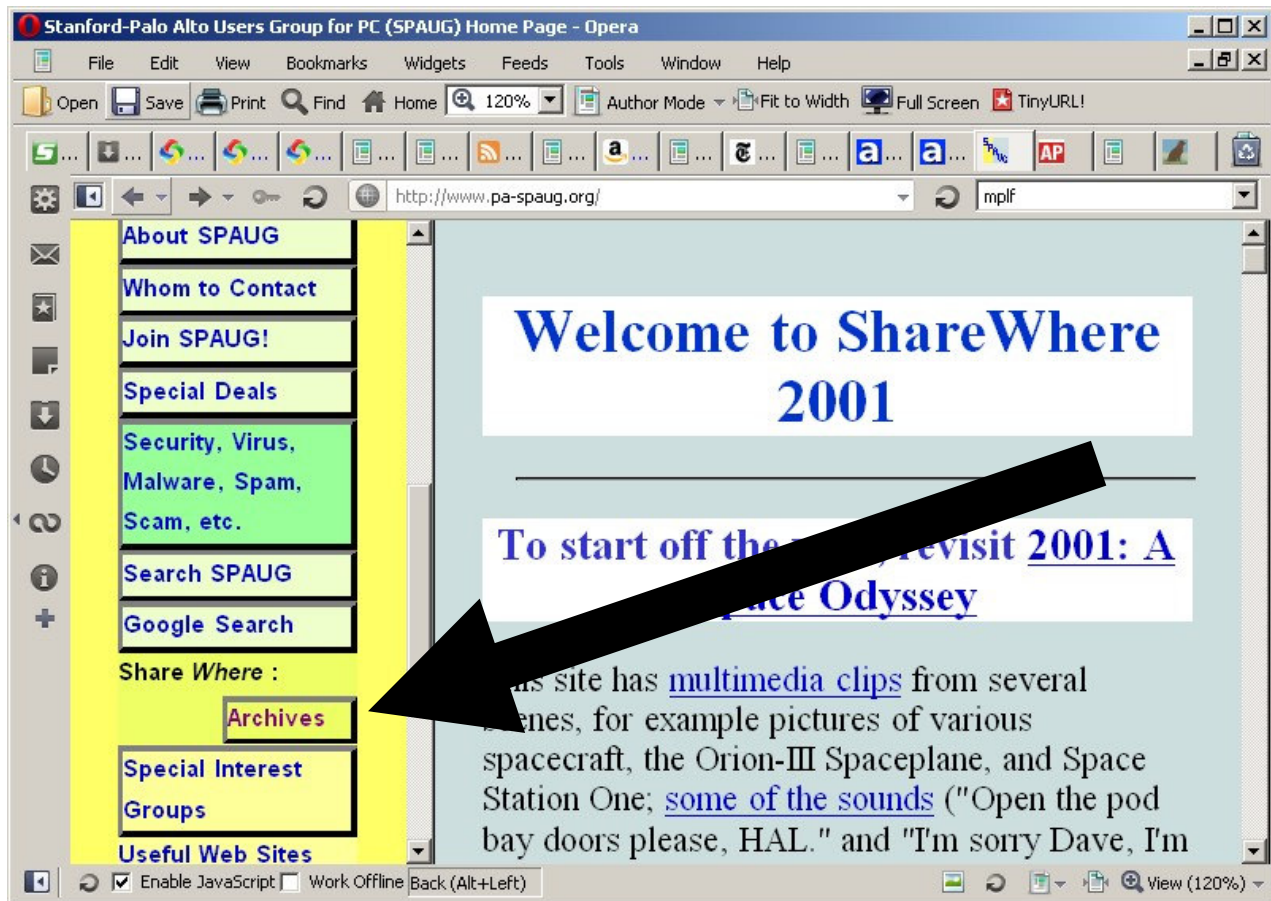
Filler

by John Buck

Visit the SPAUG Website—I hear that John Sleeman and Stan Hutchings are working on updating the SPAUG Website. I have no idea what their finished product will look like, but for now you can take trip through yesteryear there. While there, go to the Shareware Archive (link in left column), select a year you'd like to visit and see what links still work.

AT&T boo—See what complaints others have about AT&T via <http://tinyurl.com/4v5586p>

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Google recognizes “&”—While doing some research about Jim Dinkey’s AT&T comments, I discovered that the ampersand (“&”) is one character/symbol that Google recognizes. I don’t know how long they’ve been doing it. More info via:

- <http://tinyurl.com/4qydajb>
- <http://tinyurl.com/4hfzveh>
- <http://tinyurl.com/ykd6vz4>

Customizing Opera—Among the things I like about the Opera browser is its customizability.

- I’ve found some pages I visit “flicker” if **JavaScript** is enabled, so I put an **enable/disable** checkbox in the lower left corner of my Opera window. It’s also useful when I want to do a favorite online crossword. See an example in the screen capture on the previous page.
- Another puzzle I like is generally well-behaved, but puts up a noisy video when I’ve finished it. **Working offline** after I’ve downloaded the puzzle takes care of that. So, I added the Work Offline checkbox.
- You can see more of my customizations (**Author/User Mode, Fit to Width, and TinyURL**), along the toolbar at the top of the window

Free Countdown Timer—How much time is left before the next SPAUG meeting? How long has it been since you graduated? Free Countdown Timer counts down, and up. And it looks good—nice large print.

- <http://www.snapfiles.com/get/freecountdown.html>
- <http://free-countdown-timer.com/countdownclock.html>

How long has your computer been on?—Here are some programs that can tell you.

- **Winbar**—<http://www.snapfiles.com/get/winbar.html>—Shows uptime and more
- **Uptime, aka Uptime2 or Uptime 2**—from <http://www.jimmythefork.com/>, aka Fidel Perez-Smith, <http://tinyurl.com/4a5rfup..>

Fidel/Jimmy’s site also lists another program I recommend highly, **File Hound 3.2**—“Search for text inside any file on your computer. It can search all kinds of text files, including pdf, doc etc. Now a portable edition!”

A new **graphic program** has shown up that intrigues me—**PhoXo**—

- <http://www.snapfiles.com/get/phoxo.html>
- <http://www.phoxo.com/en/>



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Only \$5 Each

To order, see
contact info at right

John Sleeman
([sleemanjc atsign copperhouse.net](mailto:sleemanjc@at-sign.copperhouse.net)),
or, if no reply,

Stan Hutchings
([stan.hutchings atsign gmail.com](mailto:stan.hutchings@at-sign.gmail.com)).

For delivery at a General Meeting, place
your order at least three days before the
meeting.

March 2011 SPAUG News

SPAUG CALENDAR						
Always subject to change; verify event with host or Jim Dinkey						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	28		2			5—Clinic, by appointment only
	7 7–9 pm BIY SIG Micro Center		9 5:45 pm Dinner (Optional), Su Hong Eatery, Palo Alto 7:30 pm General Meeting Elks Lodge, 4249 El Camino, PA Speaker: Richard Rands			12—Clinic, by appointment only
	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		2			5—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 and Windows 7.

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, **March 16, 2011 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

March 2011

First Class Mail

General Meeting—Wed. March 9, 7:15 PM

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

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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



PC USER GROUP Meeting

WEDNESDAY

March 9

7:15 PM

Elks Lodge, 4249 El Camino Real, Palo Alto

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

**Topic: Yahoo! Let's Google Bing—
or YahGooBing your family tree**

Speaker: Richard Rands, Professional Genealogist

With the rising popularity of digging for family roots, organizations have discovered the potential financial benefit of posting searchable indexes of their records, and even the images of their records on the Internet.

One major source of genealogical information posts their collections for all to see without charge. Some sources are subscription-based, or pay-per-view. Others only give you a searchable index and expect you to order a copy of the documents you want for a fee. The array of search tools at the click of your mouse is astounding, and more are on the way.

This presentation will help you get a handle on what's there and how to keep up with what's coming.

Richard Rands is a professional genealogist with over 50 years of experience working on his own family history and helping others trace their ancestors. He recently retired as CEO of Computers for Marketing Corporation in San Francisco. He is currently president of the Silicon Valley Computer Genealogy Group, Director of the Los Altos Family History Center, and is the proprietor of Brute Force Genealogy.

You are invited to join us for an optional no-host dinner before our meeting,
at **5:45 pm**, at **Su Hong Eatery**, 4256 El Camino Real, Palo Alto,
Across El Camino Real from the PA Elks' Lodge

Upcoming meetings (2011): 3/9, 4/13, 5/11, 6/8, 7/13, 8/10, 9/14, 10/12, 11/9
(2012): 1/11, 2/8

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: \$30 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 **\$30.00**, 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: _____