



PC USER GROUP Meeting

WEDNESDAY

Aug 8

7:15 PM

Elks Lodge, 4249 El Camino Real, Palo Alto

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

Topic: How, When, Why, Where, etc., do I _____ ?

Speaker: SPAUG's Own Experts—And YOU!

Tonight is your chance to have your questions answered by SPAUG experts, who are experienced in many areas. You may even find that you have knowledge or insight to share.

This will primarily be an audience-directed evening.

Some Caveats

- This event is intended to be for information-sharing, not to stump the experts
- This event is intended to be participatory. If you find you have expertise or experience worth sharing please do so—either as part of the event or later.

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Special Guest Speaker: Chester Yeung, Central Computers

Central Computer's headquarters building, at 3777 Stevens Creek Blvd, Santa Clara, is the new home of the SVCS SIGs. They also have a store at that location. Closer to most of us, they have a store at 1255 W. El Camino, Sunnyvale.

You are invited to join us for an optional no-host dinner
before our meeting, at **5:45 pm**, at
The Bistro—Elks Lodge, Ground Floor

Upcoming meetings (2012): **8/8**, 9/12, 10/10, 11/14

(2013): 1/9, 2/13, 3/13, 4/10, 5/8, 6/12, 7/10

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 (All Nine Digits—xxxxx-xxxx—Please) ZIP+4 _____

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: _____

SPAUG

Vol. XXX No. 8



Print Screen

Newsletter of the Stanford/Palo Alto Users Group for PC
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Post Office Box 20161, Stanford, CA 94309-0161

Notes from the Prez

by Jim Dinkey

USE LONG PASSWORDS

One of the most important things you can do for yourself is increase your computer password to be over 20 characters.

We have had this discussion before, but the carnage continues.

I have had to handle over ten calls from people who have identified (correctly) that they have been hacked. When I ask them about the length of their computer sign-on password, the answer is inevitably below 10 characters with 7 or 8 being the most common.

You can't do this! Passwords 8 characters long can typically be cracked in about three seconds whereas it takes about ten times longer for over-20-character cracks.

99.8% of all passwords can be found in a list of 10,000, with 91% in the top 1,000. If the attacker's computer is powerful enough, ANY password is crackable—you need to **make the cracking not worth their time.** Because the attacker's objective is to get the largest number of valid passwords cracked on any individual computer, and volume is a factor, the cracking process is usually abandoned much over 12 characters.

So now you have it—again. **Be sure all of the computers you deal with have a password over 20 characters and you should be OK.**

When a password is short, I tell the person to make a new password by concatenating the short one enough times to make it more than 20 characters long: Separate the iterations with a semicolon—which is not only a lower

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In Memoriam

Gene Duncan

General Meeting @ Elks Lodge—Wed. August 8 @ 7:15 PM
4249 El Camino Real - Palo Alto (directions on page 3)

Optional Dinner at Elks Lodge Bistro
Elks Lodge, Ground Floor, 5:45 pm (see page 3)

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case character but also one of the few special characters permitted in the Microsoft passwords.

For example, if your password is

aRand0M1 (eight characters)

you can easily turn it into this 26-character version:

aRand0M1;aRand0M1;aRand0M1

Then, when the situation permits, the sign-on password may be submitted (hidden) automatically whenever the computer is turned on—the normal situation for home computers.

So there you have it: Start asking your clients/friends about their password length. Most won't remember that there even IS a password, much less its length.

Mark Burnett, an IT security consultant, with a collection of over 6 million username/password combinations, reports that—

- His list contains only about 1,300,000 unique passwords.
- Approximately 300,000 of those passwords are used by more than one person; about 1,000,000 appear only once (and a good portion of those are obviously generated by a computer).
- The list of the top 20 passwords rarely changes and 1 out of every 50 people uses one of these passwords.

Read the details of Mark Burnett's report via <http://tinyurl.com/d94cz3m>.



FAREWELL, MICRO CENTER SANTA CLARA, HELLO, CENTRAL COMPUTERS

Micro Center's departure from Santa Clara is a blow to this area. I expect MC will resurface somewhere in the Bay Area, but they may not be as convenient or in time to retain Santa Clara's customers. Micro Center still has a web presence at <http://www.microcenter.com/>, and has posted Santa Clara closure info, accessible via <http://tinyurl.com/e2a3u>.

As a result of the Micro Center closure, the Santa Clara Valley Computer Society (SVCS) has relocated its SIG meetings to the Central Computers Santa Clara site, at 3777 Stevens Creek Blvd.—<http://tinyurl.com/bu5mlcl>.

Note: A closer Central Computers store for most of us is at 1255 W. El Camino Real, Sunnyvale. It's on the Bay side of ECR, between Bernardo and Hwy 85.

Central Computer's Chester Yeung, will be making a short presentation at our next general meeting, August 8, 2012.

STILL USING WINDOWS XP? SWITCH TO WINDOWS 7

This is a reminder that we all begin move from Windows XP to Windows 7 as soon as possible.

You will likely need a new PC, since Windows 7 will not work on an older platform because of the hardware changes.

Note that the Windows 7 operating system will soon be supplanted with the no-charge Windows 8,

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Meeting Day: Wednesday, August 8

General Meeting

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

Meeting time is 7:15 pm

SPAUG Experts Panel

Speaking about:

Answering Your Questions

Plus

Chester Yeung, Central Computers

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. If you cannot get in the front door because you are late, press the intercom button on the post to the left of the main entrance, identify why you're there (try "computer club"), and you should hear the door unlock. Pull handle and enter

Proceed to the Lodge Room—upstairs. An elevator is available behind the stairway.

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 dinner

Join us for dinner before our General Meeting at —

The Bistro—at the Elks Lodge

There's no dining place closer to our meeting place than this. It's on the ground floor toward the back of the building,

Directions: It's on the ground floor toward the back of the lodge building.

Menu: <http://www.paloaltoelks.org/bistro-menu>

Review: <http://www.yelp.com/biz/palo-alto-elks-lodge-no-1471-palo-alto>

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

Dinner time is 5:45 pm

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Many of us have chosen to stay with Windows 7's XP-like interface, let the computer update itself to the Windows 8, and then return to the Windows 7 appearance by exercising Windows 8's fallback to Windows 7 capability. This way they can get all of the latest patches but still have the familiar interface. With Windows 8 being available soon for the average user, obtaining the Windows 7 interface may become more difficult.

With the support for Windows XP ending on June 30, 2014, there will be a crush of last-minute changeover, users computers will eventually cease to operate properly because of unchecked viruses and out-of-date software that will quickly deteriorate.

The real problem with switching over to a new computer will be identifying and moving over the user data, where I expect the bulk of the time will be spent.

The message is: Switch over to the new (cheaper) hardware and operating system while there is time for a leisurely switchover

For those who are still using XP, I estimate that about 60% of SPAUG members are now using Windows 7, and I have not yet had a Win 7 machine show up at the clinic because of an operating failure.

SPAUG 2012-07-18

Planning Meeting Notes

by Stan Hutchings—*edited for use here*

Location: Bev Altman's home

Attending: Bev Altman,
Jim Dinkey (presiding),
John Sleeman,
Stan Hutchings,
Nat Landes

GENERAL MEETINGS

July 8—38 members and 1 guest attended the meeting.

August 8—We will have the SPAUG Experts Panel in August (moved from September).

September 12—Stan Hutchings will show frugal computing

October 10—Open/TBD—Make a suggestion, or volunteer.

November 14—Open/TBD, SPAUG Election

January 2013—SPAUG 30th anniversary.

COMPUTER HISTORY MUSEUM

The Computer History Museum thanked us for our donation of Newsletters and DVD, and the SPAUG History. John Sleeman will post a copy of the letter on our website.

MEMBERSHIP (BEV)

120 members, 4 renewals

FINANCES (NAT)

Nat said we are spending more for printing and door prizes than before.

Filler

by John Buck

- **“NEW! Many popular Government publications are now available as Ebooks!**—In addition to producing and distributing print publications for the three branches of the U.S. Federal Government, the U.S. Government Printing Office is pleased to announce that we are now also selling eBooks of Federal Agency published information to the public.”—*via GPO email, 7/23/12.*
— <http://tinyurl.com/cqv2p3e>



August 2012 SPAUG News

SPAUG CALENDAR						
Always subject to change; verify event with host or Jim Dinkey						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	30 7–9 pm BIYSIG Central Computers		1			4 —Clinic, by appointment only
	6 7–9 pm WinSIG Central Computers		8 5:45 pm Dinner (Optional), Elks Lodge—Bistro 7:15 pm General Meeting Elks Lodge, 4249 El Camino, PA Speaker: SPAUG Experts Panel			11 —Clinic, by appointment only
	13 7–9 pm DISIG Central Computers		15 7:15 pm Planning Meeting, Bev Altman's			18 —Clinic, by appointment only
	20 7–9 pm WebSIG Central Computers		22			25 —Clinic, by appointment only
	27		29			1 —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, **August 15, 2012 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
- **WinSIG**—2nd Monday of the month
- **DISIG**—3rd Monday of the month
- **WebSIG**—4th Monday of the month

For more info about these SIGs, go to svuga.org

ALL SIG Meetings Are Held At
 Central Computers
 3777 Stevens Creek Boulevard
 Santa Clara
 —<http://tinyurl.com/bu5mcl>

Listserver [spaug-list at svpal.org](mailto:spaug-list@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](mailto:info@pa-spaug.org)

The SPAUG Web Page is available at

<http://www.pa-spaug.org>

hosted by
www.svpal.org/



Door Prize Tickets

Free

You get one ticket for free when you sign in at a general meeting.

Buy a Ticket

\$1 each

Buy More Tickets

Quantity discount: Six tickets for \$5

Must be present to win



Without-Whoms

SPAUG is an all-volunteer operation. Listed below is contact information for those who work to keep it happening.

You are invited to help.

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

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

Recording Secretary: *Stan Hutchings*
stan.hutchings at gmail.com
(650) 325-1359

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

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WebMasters:

- *Stan Hutchings (see above)*
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►►► Positions Open:

- Program Chair
- Publicity