



PC USER GROUP Meeting

WEDNESDAY

Jan 9

7:15 PM

Elks Lodge, 4249 El Camino Real, Palo Alto

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

Commemorating SPAUG's 30th Anniversary

Featured Speaker: Hank Skawinski

SPAUG is one of the few computer clubs that have or will achieve a 30th Anniversary. That's only a few months short of the lifetime of the PC itself. One indication of a successful computer club is the quality of speakers it regularly attracts.

Our featured 30th-Anniversary speaker is Hank Skawinski, a perennial SPAUG favorite. If you've heard him, you know he's good. If you haven't heard him, trust us—he's good. Hank will talk about what he wants to 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
The Bistro—Elks Lodge, Ground Floor

Upcoming meetings (2013): **1/9**, 2/13, 3/13, 4/10, 5/8, 6/12, 7/10, 8/14, 9/11, 10/9,
11/13

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: _____

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Notes from the Prez

by Jim Dinkey

POWER SUPPLY CARE AND DIAGNOSIS

A week before Xmas 2012 my computer decided to poop out. It randomly failed to work its best. It became clear to me that its power supply needed replacement.

A new replacement supply didn't work either. So, I told my tale to the people at Central Computer's Sunnyvale shop. They replaced the replacement power supply. The computer passed testing in CC's shop, so I brought it home—and it continued to have problems with random odd events. One device or another would fail and only one or more reboots would bring it back.

The strange set of failures would move around on the computer! Finally—after chasing a few devices around the computer in a giant game of Whack-a-Mole—I realized, reluctantly, that the original; and replacement power supplies (all 380 watts) were being overloaded and I needed another 100 watts or so. I had not taken all of the power-using usb devices attached to the

computer to Central Computer, so they couldn't reproduce those loads in their testing setup.

Lesson: Debugging dynamic load problems in the field is not the best method, but is, unfortunately, part of the real world. Needed are intuition and experience. I have never seen a full-load simulator for replicating a computer's actual load—and transporting all of your printers and other gadgets to a testing site is not easily done.

THE CLINIC IN THE REAL WORLD

Lacking a large parts inventory, I can't reproduce any specific environment consistently—and I am **not** going to create the parts inventory for every brand of computer.

So, I can accept only software-oriented problems in the Saturday Clinic.

Also, Microsoft has fixed many of the problems that for years brought SPAUG members to the Clinic on my dining room

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General Meeting @ Elks Lodge—Wed. January 9 @ 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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table. Over the years the Clinic had about 300 visits. But no longer—the Clinic load was eased by Windows 7—which made great strides in Operating System stability.

I have envied the seemingly bullet-proof operation of Apple's Operating Systems. Apple kept control over the hardware environment. Microsoft, unlike Apple, promiscuously took on manufacturers promoting various configurations, and both profited and paid a price.

UPGRADING MY WINDOW OS

My current PC is the 11-year-old Windows XP machine I wrote about above. Remember my power supply problem?

I have a new, not-yet-used, Win7 PC. I want to bring my data from my XP machine over to this one, and make sure I am satisfied with how it is working.

Then, when I'm satisfied with the performance of my Win7 machine, I want apply the Win8 upgrade for which I paid \$150. I expect this upgrade will provide the fixes and stability of Win8. After that, I want to bring back the Win 7 interface, as I don't need the glitzy junk of the Win8 interface.

30TH ANNIVERSARY

April party—SPAUG has been business for 30 years! As such, we will be celebrating the event and acknowledging those who have been around for at least twenty years. In about April, we will be having a commemorative dinner before our meeting, at which time the honorees will be acknowledged for initiating many activities resulting in the furtherance of SPAUG and its mission.

NOT MY USUAL BAH! HUMBUG!

And now a comment on the end of the year—a time of rejoicing by all for various reasons.

Christmas used to be a very simple process: Identify someone you wished to bestow your own gift onto, fabricate the gift to your liking, and finally present the gift personally.

Gad! Have computers made a mockery of that scenario! We order what is described on a screen, supply an address, and wait for a "Thank You" email return. This isn't "right"! Down with computers! Send 'em back and get out the pencils! Then we can all relate to each other.

*But in the meantime,
be sure that you have
a Very Merry Christmas
and a Happy New Year.*
—Jim

Filler

by John Buck

GIZMO'S SELECTION OF THE BEST PC FREWARE

"This really is a "best of the best" list for free Windows applications. Most of the products in this list have been awarded the coveted "Gizmo's Freeware Top Pick" award signifying they are the best free product in their class. We've also included some other outstanding products that have impressed our editors with their usefulness and professionalism."

—from Gizmo

—<http://tinyurl.com/cdyjyc>

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Meeting Day: Wednesday, January 9

General Meeting

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

Meeting time is 7:15 pm

SPAUG 30th Anniversary

Featuring
Hank Skawinaki

The Elks Lodge is a light-colored two-story building 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 in the 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 the 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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FREWARE FILES, FULL PC GAMES AND FREEBIES

“SundryTools.com is an extensive collection of freeware files, free full version PC games, sundry freebies, IT resources and other things you can find on the Internet.”
—from SundryTools.com

HERE’S EVERYWHERE YOU SHOULD ENABLE TWO-FACTOR AUTHENTICATION RIGHT NOW

“Two-factor authentication is one of the best things you can do to make sure your accounts don't get hacked.”
—from Lifehacker
—<http://tinyurl.com/94x3ppn>

HP WARRANTY SURPRISES

“HP does not make finding its product warranty easy, and when you find it, it can contain a surprise or two.”
—from Mouseprint
—<http://tinyurl.com/cbso8xg>

More via g-search
—<http://tinyurl.com/c96wa6o>

WHY YOU SHOULD START USING A VPN (AND HOW TO CHOOSE THE BEST ONE FOR YOUR NEEDS)

“You may know what a VPN, or Virtual Private Network, is; you probably don't use one. You really should be using a VPN, and even if you don't think so now, at some point in the future you may consider it as important as your internet connection.”
—from Lifehacker
—<http://tinyurl.com/cu4nblk>

GET A BARGAIN ON AMAZON BY MONITORING THEIR CONSTANTLY FLUCTUATING PRICES

“Competition drives down prices, so much in fact that Amazon prices can fluctuate a ton over the course of a single day.”
—from Lifehacker
<http://tinyurl.com/c2m3o4w>

GOOGLE ADVANCED SEARCH

I (jb) couldn't find a link to Google's “Advanced” search page on their home page. Here it is>
—http://www.google.com/advanced_search

HOW 'FREE TRIAL' WEB OFFERS CAN BE CREDIT CARD TRAPS

“Free trials are enticing, but . . . they come with strings attached. Back in April, in order to test how consumer-friendly free trials are, I signed up for and attempted to quit 40 free trials that required a credit card number. More than a quarter of the services I tried turned out to be a real hassle to quit.”
—from PCWorld
—<http://tinyurl.com/d4dzlhd>

TOP 10 SIMPLE THINGS EVERY COMPUTER USER SHOULD KNOW HOW TO DO

“No matter how tech savvy you are, there are certain things every one of us has to deal with when using a computer—and we don't always deal with them in the most efficient ways. Here are 10 things that everyone can (and should) learn to keep their computer fast, safe, and easy to use.”
—from Lifehacker
—<http://tinyurl.com/9rac98e>

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HAVE HOURS OF ONLINE FUN WITH THESE JIGSAW PUZZLES

“If you enjoy jigsaw puzzles, take a look at www.thejigsawpuzzles.com. It's an online collection of Flash-based puzzles, ready to solve simply by dragging with your PC's mouse.”

—from gizmo

—<http://tinyurl.com/8768ue5>

WHAT IS NFC AND HOW CAN I USE IT?

“It's being hyped as The Next Big Thing that will change how we use our mobile devices: everything from shopping to interacting with your home and unlocking your car. NFC stands for Near Field Communication, and, as the name implies, it's a set of close-range wireless communication standards. NFC-equipped smartphones and other devices can exchange information with each other with a simple tap or wave.”

—from Lifehacker

—<http://tinyurl.com/9ryh2yw>

HOW TO FIX PROBLEMS WHEN WINDOWS INSTALLER OR UNINSTALLER DOESN'T WORK

“It isn't uncommon for something to go wrong when installing, uninstalling, or updating a program on a Windows system. . . . This happens often enough that Microsoft provides a special troubleshooter for fixing this sort of problem. The Fixit can be run at [the linked] Microsoft page. . . . If you prefer to try to solve a problem yourself, Microsoft also gives instructions for a manual procedure.”

—from Gizmo

—<http://tinyurl.com/cx7x4sg>

TIME TO MALWARE-SCAN NEW PCs BEFORE FIRST USE

“Microsoft purchased a small sample size of 20 new PCs in China to analyze them in detail. The company found out that none of the Windows licenses were genuine, and that malware was installed on four of the twenty PCs. . . . [I]t is likely that those PCs have been produced for the domestic market and not export. Still, that malware is installed on Windows PCs during manufacturing should concern all Windows users, as the majority of PCs get produced in countries like China. Even if the likelihood that exported PCs get infected with malware is slim, one has to realize that this is certainly a possibility.”

To avoid operating an infected PC, Windows users who bought a new PC, and this includes desktop PCs, laptops and tablets, should scan it thoroughly before they run it. The best way to achieve that is to use anti-virus software that you can boot from.”

—from ghacks

—<http://tinyurl.com/ceo92qc>

—Linked Guardian article—

—<http://tinyurl.com/8poknsp>

HOW TO ACCESS HIDDEN SECRET “ADVANCED CONFIGURATION” PAGES IN MOZILLA FIREFOX, GOOGLE CHROME AND OPERA WEB BROWSERS?

“Using these hidden configuration pages, you can enable many new experimental features which are disabled by default in the browser. You can also disable many unnecessary features which you don't need or don't like in your browser.”

—from Askvg

—<http://tinyurl.com/8c94h7s>

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WINDOWS 7 FORUMS

“Our forum is dedicated to helping you find solutions with any problems, errors or issue you are experiencing with Windows 7. The site also covers news and updates and has an extensive Windows 7 tutorial section that covers a wide range of tips and tricks.”

—from Windows 7 Forums
—<http://www.sevenforums.com/>

PLEASE DROP BUNDLED INSTALLER, IT IS INSTALLING STUFF CONSIDERED MALWARE (E.G. BABYLON TOOLBAR)

A long stream of user discussion/rants about an installer bundled with PDFCreator [which I (jb) don't use], but applicable to other products doing the same nasty thing.

—from forums.pdfforge.com
—<http://tinyurl.com/ca22u47>

You can read a lot more by searching for things like [windows installer malware]
—<http://tinyurl.com/c9agdy6>

It seems that even Macs aren't immune to this sort of stuff.

—<http://tinyurl.com/c2ezkv2>

CNET'S EVIL CRAPWARE BABYLON TOOLBAR BUNDLING

“So for the moment we strongly suggest you don't use download.com. Go direct to the developer's sites for your downloads.”

—from PassMark Software
—<http://tinyurl.com/bwjewe9>

LOCKHUNTER—DELETE FILES BLOCKED BY OTHER PROCESSES

LockHunter enables [you] to unlock files when they are locked (in use) by other processes. Simply select the file in question and the program will show you which processes are locking it and offer you op-

tions to unlock, delete, rename or copy the file. You can also choose to close, and optionally delete, the locking process. LockHunter also integrates with the Windows Explorer context menu and adds a convenient "What's locking this file?" option to the right-click menu.

—via Snapfiles
—<http://tinyurl.com/8vqmsek>

There may be other programs that do this.
—<http://tinyurl.com/c4s9mk4>

X-RAY 2.0 VIRUSTOTAL FRONTEND WITH A BATCH OF EXTRA FEATURES

“The main service that I use to test a file for traces of malware is VirusTotal which scans the file using more than 40 different antivirus engines from respected companies such as Avast, AVG, Symantec, Dr. Web or Microsoft. The service is great for single-file verifications, but not so great if you have a number of files that you want to check. That's where programs like the official VirusTotal Uploader or Raymond's X-Ray come into play.”

—from ghacks
—<http://tinyurl.com/9upuq6f>

LA TIMES' SCAM WATCH

With the demise of the MurkyNews' Action Line column [alas], the LA Times' Scam Watch column may be a source of useful anti-scam info.

—<http://tinyurl.com/cya7d4k>

STUNNING SITE HELPS YOU APPRECIATE THE UNIVERSE'S SCALE

“Here's a brilliant fun, educational site that can help you and your children to appreciate the sheer scale of our universe. The site is simple to operate, and takes the form of an image that you can zoom into, or out of, with a slider.” [Note: The site quietly plays background music that you may find annoying or distracting.—jb]

—from ghacks
—<http://tinyurl.com/cczzahc>



January 2013 SPAUG News

SPAUG CALENDAR						
Always subject to change; verify event with host or Jim Dinkey						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	31	1 Happy New Year	2			5—Clinic, by appointment only
	7 7–9 pm BIYSIG Central Computers		9 5:45 pm Dinner (Optional), Elks Lodge—Bistro 7:15 pm General Meeting Elks Lodge, 4249 El Camino, PA Speaker: Hank Skawinski			12—Clinic, by appointment only
	14 7–9 pm WinSIG Central Computers		16 7:15 pm Planning Meeting, Bev Altman's			19—Clinic, by appointment only
	21 7–9 pm DISIG Central Computers	US Pres Inaug Ceremony		22		26—Clinic, by appointment only
	28 7–9 pm WebSIG Central Computer		30			2—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, January 16, 2013 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/bu5m1cl>

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/



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

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natlandes at gmail.com
(650) 851-2292

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WebMasters:

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Computer Clinic: *Jim Dinkey (see above)*

►►► Positions Open:

- Program Chair
- Publicity