SPAUG PrintScreen

Post Office Box 3738, Stanford, CA 94309-3738
Vol. XVII No. 5 - Newsletter of the Stanford / Palo Alto Users Group for PC
A Non-Profit / Educational Organization - http://www.mediacity.com/~spaug

Jim Dinkey - Notes From the Prez

Owing to the Prez being out of town, there is no column this month.

Planning meeting Minutes

The Planning Meeting was held on May 5, 1999 at the home of Bev Altman. Attendees were Herb Hamerslough, Bev Altman, Kendric Smith, John Sleeman, Stan Hutchings and Ron Nicholas.

Being as I arrived late, I missed the Membership and last month's General Meeting attendance reports. These reports as well as the Treasurer's will be included in next month's Minutes.

Web wizardry: Our Web Master Kendric suggested including the due dates for the submission of the

Election

The annual election of officers will be held at the May meeting. Nominations can be made at that time, or in advance to the President.
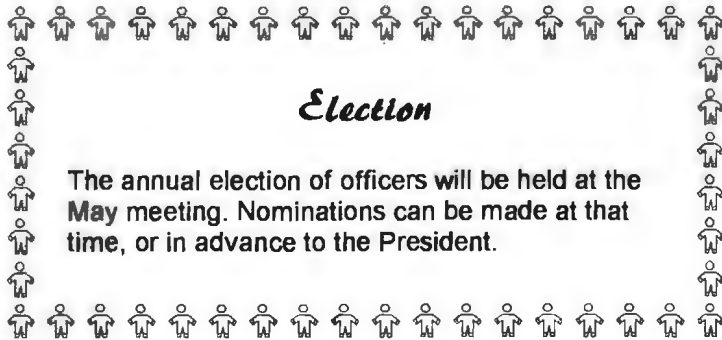
Newsletter items and articles. Perhaps the most appropriate place would be in the Editors Corner; his e-mail address is in the Newsletter. An excellent idea and would be of great help to our Editor, John Sleeman. Kendric also suggested members create their own home page and/or set Netscape as default having their own folders. He explained that first you copy

Meeting Agenda.

7:30 Announcements.

7:35 Guests introduction.

7:40 Random Access (Crosstalk)

7:50 Break

8:00 LECTURER

9:15 SIG Reports

9:20 Raffle

9:30 Adjourn

General Meeting @ Elks Lodge - Wed. May 26 @ 7:30 PM
4249 El Camino Real - Palo Alto (directions on page 4)

SLAC - Field Trip May 27th @ 10am.

We have organized a visit to Stanford Linear Accelerator Center. This is at 2575 Sandhill Road, a quarter mile east of the junction with highway 280. There is a visitor's car park inside the entrance. Please plan to arrive at least 15 minutes early.

For more details, see last month's newsletter.

Meanwhile, you could visit their Web site at: http://www.slac.stanford.edu/

LLNL field trip – April 22

A party of twenty-five SPAUG members had a very interesting visit to the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory. The Livermore folks were excellent hosts, and generous with their time. We saw a lot and learnt a lot. A delightful well worthwhile trip.

We met in the visitors center and were given time to look around - the range of subjects they research is astonishing. Then in a nearby conference room we were given a 15 minute video showing the overall facilities, an introductory talk by a retired engineer, and a hour's talk by a computer scientist. He explained to us in layman's terms what they were trying to do and are accomplishing at the Lab.

We discovered that nuclear weapons age, and ours are approaching the end of their useful life. This is set at the year 2004 for many. Since underground testing has been stopped since 1992 it is necessary to simulate, in the labs with very high-speed computers, what is happening to the components, including the containers of these weapons.

The 3.8 teraops computer developed by IBM has been in operation for nearly a year. Faster units, reaching by stages to 100 teraops, are being developped by IBM, SGI, Cray and other companies. (A 'teraops' means a trillion operations per second. The more familiar term is 'teraflops' - trillion *floating-point* operations per second - but some politician wanted nothing to do with any "flops" and the official term was changed!) The speakers took several questions after the presentation.

A bus trip followed, through some of the one square mile area of the Lab, with a stop at the Nova Laser Facility. Since 1985 the Livermore Lab's laser facility has been the world's primary research tool for Inertial Confinement Fusion (ICF). With Nova, named for stars that suddenly become explosively bright, they are working to better understand and control the nuclear fusion process. Nova occupies a big building and comprises several lasers all focussed on a target about pinhead size. They expect to 'break even' soon, getting as much energy out of the fusion as the laser puts in. We saw from the bus an even bigger laser facility under construction, that should eventually get net energy out!

Fusion is the source of energy for our sun and all other stars. When the temperature and pressure are high enough, hydrogen nuclei fuse into helium, and give off energy. (Both nuclear fusion and fission occur in thermonuclear weapons - the fission explosion provides the temperature and pressure for fusion to happen.) ICF uses very short and extremely high-power laser pulses to "zap" a hydrogen target hard enough for fusion to occur.

Herb Hamerslough & John Sleeman.

SPAUG's home page to your computer to use as a guide. Then you cut and paste in your own group folders. About that time this writer got

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★                                   ★
★          General Meeting @         ★
★            Elks Lodge              ★
★          4249 El Camino Real       ★
★              Palo Alto             ★
★           May 26, 7:30 PM          ★
★                                   ★
★ Steven Wilder will talk about MS Windows 2000, ★
★    in which Win 95/98 and NT come together.    ★
★                                   ★
★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★
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lost. Hopefully Kendric will include more details in print soon.

The Board of Directors agreed to Kendric's idea of including Tax Exempt notation to the web page.

Disk of the Month: Our co-webmaster raised the DOM issue again. The BIG problem is the size of the program files, aka bloatware, is making the selection of interesting shareware/freeware very, very difficult. The idea of a "CD ROM of the Month" rose again, It would have the obvious advantages of more variety, more

Future Meetings

May 26	Steven Wilder – Microsoft Windows 2000 - rescheduled
June 30	Donald Teague Uptime Corp Total Solutions.
July 28	Hank Skawinsky Mid Year Review
Aug 25	"Excite" on portals.

Printer sharing by Jim Dinkey.

For those with two PCs at home. One of the less-used features of Win98 is the ability to have a peer-to-peer network rather than using an A-B switch to select the printer to be connected to the active computer.

The only things you need are a cable between the two computers, and a pair of Network Interface Cards (NIC). Total cost is under $70.

The main advantage of this is that it avoids the hassle of switching, or forgetting to switch and wasting a lot of paper. Another is that swiches are electromechanical devices, and can fail at the most inconvenient time.

Once you set up printer sharing, each machine has the ability to use either one's printers. Thus, if one of the computers has a better or special-purpose printer and the other needs to use it, you just select it in the PRINT menu in the pull-down window.

Setting up the networking parameters isn't totally obvious, but having just done it for 15 PCs in a classroom, it's not insurmountable.

An all-purpose File Viewer by Stan Hutchings

Sure, Netscape Communicator allows you to browse the Internet, but you can also access files stored locally on your computer (or linked to an internal network). To do this, select File, Open Page (or Ctrl-O), to open the dialog box. Enter the path name of the file if you know it,

then click Open. If you're not sure of the file name or folder, click Choose File and select the file from the browser box. You may need to change the File Type, either to all files (*.*) or the specific type you are interested in. You can open any kind of file - HTML, spreadsheets, graphics, etc. - but you may need a specific plug-in to open some file types. Also, Netscape may open another application to view the file (for example, a . BMP file may be opened in Microsoft Paint). This is especially good for viewing various graphics files - but you cannot edit them.

If Netscape does not recognize the file type, and you really would like to use Netscape (instead of the native application directly); or if you want to use a different application than the one Netscape currently uses, you can assign/edit a "helper application". Netscape includes native support for certain graphic images, but you can also configure it to work with graphic formats that it doesn't support directly. This is done through helper applications, such as Paint Shop Pro and LView. To do this, you have to install the program on your system, then configure Netscape to work with it. Select Options|General Preferences, then click the Helpers tab (note: different revisions of Netscape may vary, Ver 4.5 is under Edit - Preferences - Navigator - Applications).

The available helper applications are in the File type list box. Select the one(s) you want, then click Launch the Application, which tells Netscape to launch the application whenever it encounters an image with the file type the program supports. You must tell Netscape where it can find the helper on your computer by entering the full path name in the box below the Launch the Application button. Click OK to save the settings and close the box.

Questions and Answers

Name	Area Of Expertise	Phone	Hours	e-mail
Jim Bailey	DOS , Quick Books 6, Quicken 98	650 494 0631	9AM - 9PM	Jimby@pobox.com
Jim Dinkey	Win NT/Win 98	650 493 9307	9AM - 9PM	jimdinkey@jimdinkey.com
Bill Goldmacker	DOS	650 691 0911	6PM - 9PM	gold@svpal.org
Bill McElhinney	Quicken, Dazzle, Plug In, Word Express, Daytimer, Sidekick	650 325 9808	9AM - 9PM	Mcels@aol.com
Robert Mitchell	AOL, ZIP managers, Win 95/98, MS Picture it 99	650 941 5792	4:30PM-9PM	Rfmitch702@aol.com
John Sleeman	Fortran, UNIX	650 326 5603	9AM - 8PM	sleemanj@earthlink.net
Walt Varner	All PC areas: Software and Hardware incl. Win 95	408 739 3488	9AM - 9PM	walt2222@aol.com

Arlan Kertz - "SPAUG 501(c)"

This is to remind you that SPAUG is a non profit organiztion registered with the IRS under Internal Revenue Code 501(c)(3). In this regard, your dues (except for $12 for the newsletter) are deductible. Also, any additional cash and or other non-business assets donated to SPAUG are also deductible.

Elks Lodge, 4249 El Camino Real, Palo Alto, CA 94306-4496

The Elks Lodge is at 4249 El Camino Real on the North side of the street, between Charleston and San Antonio Road, but very close to Charleston. It is next to Ricky's Hyatt House, which is on the corner.

Park your car in the parking lot at the front of the lodge, and proceed to the center door. This is a keycarded door so we will have someone at the door to let you in. Proceed to the Lodge Room straight ahead, and to the left.

If you cannot get in the center door because you are late, press the new wireless doorbell that will be in place for each SPAUG meeting, and someone will come and let you in.

(Continued from page 2)

interest, but take more time and people to compile. The CD ROM would also cost more than the diskettes. Also would require the purchase of a CD ROM Read/Write device. The real test of this endeavor will be at the next General Meeting. It should be remembered that the DOM is one our major fund raisers.

Newsletter: Our Editor would like articles of any type; LLNL field trip, program evaluations, new website favorites, etc.

Election of Directors: The yearly event of elections has arrived again. At the May General meeting will be held the election of officers. Nominations will be accepted from the membership for all Offices. The election will follow.

Most of the present staff has agreed to continue, if approved by election:
President: Jim Dinkey
Vice-president: Open
Treasurer: Walt Varner
Recording Secretary: Ron Nicholas

Presidentially Appointed Directors have agreed to continue, pending the President's discretion:
Webmaster: Kendric Smith
Co-webmaster: Stan Hutchings
Director at Large: Bev Altman
Newsletter Editor: John Sleeman
Publicity: Ron Nicholas
DOM: Tentative candidate
The newly elected Officers will assume their Office at the next Planning Meeting, June 2, 1999. Y'all come.

The Planning Meeting adjourned at 9:30 PM

Respectfully submitted, Ron Nicholas
(ron1nick@juno.com)

Planning Meeting

Planning meetings are held on the first Wednesday of each month, usually at Beverly Altman's home – 1670 Oak Avenue, Menlo Park – at 7:15pm. All members are welcome, and encouraged, to attend.
Next meeting: June 2nd, 1999 at 7:15.

SIG News.

Internet and **Win95/98** - These special interest groups have concluded for the present. They were well attended and might be revived if there were enough member interest.

QUICKEN – There is a proposal to start a new Quicken SIG, and interested members should contact Beverly Altman. A leader/tutor for this group is needed, and potential volunteers should make themselves known to Beverly.

Random Access

Summary from the April General Meeting

Q1. Regarding the Melissa virus, how can I handle it? I don't know if I have it.
Feed Back 1. The best way is to scan your entire hard drive, all the files with a virus detection and removal program. Among the many are Viruscan and Norton utilities. But to be effective, the detection program must be continually updated from the manufacturer's web site. New viruses appear almost daily.
FB1-2. Many viruses are hidden in e-mail attachments. When detaching/opening an attachment, a set of instructions could also be activated that causes mischief. These attachments are easily scanned by your virus checker and can be eliminated.
FB1-3. In defense of e-mail attachments, many are useful and often highly desired. The better e-mail reader/converter is Eudora Pro program. It will read and present virtually any format into a readable document in the original format.
FB1-4. If you don't know who is sending you an e-mail with attachments, DO NOT open the attachment until you have virus checked it or Delete the e-mail all together. In most e-mail programs you can read the sender's return address and name without detaching/opening the attachment and without activating any hidden virus. But clicking on the attachment to read it has just activated the virus! Just words of caution and encouragement to get and use your frequently updated virus scanner.
FB1-5. Visiting your virus checker website frequently for updates; most are free updates for a time period. Others have a sustaining fee.

Tech Support.

Don't overlook the list of members (on page 4) who are willing to offer help and advice on their areas of expertise. It's free so there are no guarantees! However, it provides one-on-one help, and more time than the ten minutes of Random Access at the General meetings.

If you have questions on subjects not listed, try calling Jim Dinkey. If he can't help, he may know who can.

Jim also maintains a laboratory in his home which is available to SPAUG members when intractable problems arise. Call (650) 493-9307. This service is also available to non-members, but at the cost of a suitable donation to the Club's coffers. (That alone should be an inducement to join - any appropriate contribution would be more than the annual membership, but less than you would pay a commercial outfit. Tell your friends.)

Q2. I am having a COM port assignment problem using Win 95. I start my machine and the COM port shows it shared by 2F8 and 3F8. If I delete/reassign to only one address, and restart the machine, the shared assignment reappears. Any ideas?
FB2-1. It sounds like some card has a contact corrosion/intermittent problem or a file has gotten corrupted. The connectors and cards should probably be re-seated and checked for the problem recurrence.
FB2-2. A lot of problems are cured by upgrading to W98. There is a feature in the W98 setup where you are able to set aside 50 MB to backup W95. This is a just in case you have problem in setting up W98 and want to restore W95. Recovery is through RECOVER module of W98.

Q3. Each time I boot up, my computer searches for a piece of software that either I don't have or it can't be found. How do I stop the searching?
FB3-1. You can't easily . There apparently was a program that required the piece of software but the main program was removed, except for the one reference you are seeing. There are programs like Norton System Doctor, First Aid, Nuts and Bolts etc, that can search for strings and clean them up.
FB3-2. Sometime running Demo programs can leave these kind of trails that are difficult to eradicate. .
FB3-3. The best way to install and remove

programs is to use the Windows Add/remove Programs feature. This feature keeps very good track of setting changes and removes them when the uninstallation is desired.

Q4. I checked my system for Y2K and it was simple. I reset the clock to 11:55 on December 31, 1999. The shut it down. At about 10 minutes later, I turned it back on. It seemed to work just fine.
FB4. That checks out the system operation, but not the files that are time and date sensitive as a reference point for calculations. The records of insurance companies and other organizations may be difficult to obtain.

Q5. My computer, using W98, does not display the shut down message "It is now safe to turn off your computer." It closes all the programs correctly. Ideas?
FB5. This sounds like a Microsoft Tech Support problem. Don't forget to have the system serial number handy.

Paraphrased by Ron Nicholas, Recording Secretary (ron1nick@juno.com)

New Computer – part 1
By Walt Varner

You have noted that your "old computer is one or more years old and the new ones have fabulous speeds and hard drives so big you can't believe anyone could use that much storage...and they are dirt cheap. You are thinking, "Now is the time to act " However

let's think a few things through before you rush to your friendly Dell-Gateway-Fry-HP computer wheeler dealer.

Why are PC's suddenly so inexpensive? Part of the price collapse is due only to normal supply and demand fluctuations. Competition has reduced profit levels for equipment manufacturers to near bankruptcy levels which means that PC makers can obtain the parts for the lowest prices in two decades. Thus they can build a machine that would have cost them $2500 two years ago for less than $1500 today. But how do they get the price down to the sub $1000 level and make any profit at all? It's easy, they keep removing components, features and quality until they get the selling price down to the level they want.

The least costly of the "cheapies" comes in an inexpensive mini case with such marginal components as a 150 watt, or even a 100 watt, power supply. no expansion trays, and only two RAM sockets so RAM can't be expanded without discarding some that is already installed. Dealer ads are ablaze with numbers like 450 MHz and 500 Mhs and 20 GB hard drives and 128 Meg of RAM, but those are not the ones that are only $500. Most of the "cheapies" don't include the monitor, and if they do it's a 14 or 15 incher. None come with a ZIP or other backup unit. Their CPU's are in the 133 Mhz class.

To summarize the cost picture, just keep in mind that you have to pay for what you get and you don't necessarily get what you pay for, especially in the quality of the components. The builders use the cheapest components available that will be adequate to make the computer operate.

This is what business is all about-make a product as inexpensively as you can, sell it for as much as the traffic will bear and with some creative marketing techniques, convince the customer that he's getting a $2000 computer for less than $1000. The operating system software the dealers throw in for free is an OEM version which carries no free tech support from Microsoft.
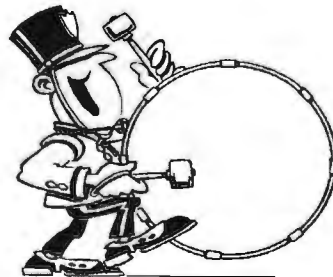
Thanks.

We should like to express our gratitude to the Elks Lodge for the use of their room.

Editor's Corner.

Members have started responding to the appeal for newsletter material. Many thanks – please keep it up. Please note that the official deadline for inclusion in the current month's issue is the 15th of that month. However, inclusion also depends on space available – for the present we have settled on an eight page format (the most we can mail for 33 cents) – so good material might still languish for a month.

We hope you will post the enclosed flyer where it will catch the public eye. Suggestion – if you have posted last month's flyer, take it down and post this one in a different position so people will not look right past it, not realizing it is new.

Stanford/Palo Alto Users Group for PC (SPAUG) annual membership dues are $35, payable to SPAUG, at PO Box 3738, Stanford CA 94309-3738.

Please include your name and address, and optionally an e-mail address and any special interest group (SIG) you want more information about.

Questions? Call Beverly Altman (650) 329-8252 or Jim Dinkey (650) 493-9307.

The SPAUG Web Page

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PPP/T1/Frame Relay/ISDN

General Meeting
May 26, 7:30PM
at Elks Lodge,
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