



## Five Questions

The first in a series of informal Spruce customer interviews

### Free Web Events

If you're curious and would like a 1-hour look at SpruceWare.NET, here's your chance. We're holding demonstrations for Spruce customers only on (all times Eastern):

Tuesday, 3/18/08, 11-Noon.

Wednesday, 3/19/08, 2-3 PM

Thursday, 3/27/08, 4-5 PM

**SPACE IS LIMITED!**

These web events are free and open to all Spruce customers.

Join via an email to:

[events@sprucecomputer.com](mailto:events@sprucecomputer.com)

...and we'll get you the details.

**The Niehaus Companies** is a 4<sup>th</sup> generation business currently celebrating its 75<sup>th</sup> year in business. Its varied interests include 3 home centers, 3 wholesale building material suppliers, a door mill, a countertop laminating mill, and two product distributorships (Karran undermounted sinks and Lansen stainless steel sinks). They transitioned from their Activant 4GL software to Spruce's SpruceWare.NET early in 2007. We caught David Niehaus at his office in Vincennes, IN.

### What makes the Niehaus Companies successful?

Probably the main thing is diversification. When business in one part of our company slows down, business in another part usually offsets that. For example, our Karran and Lansen sink lines are doing very well right now.

### What advice would you

### give to a new business owner in this industry?

*(laughs)* What do they say, if you want to make a million in this industry, start out with two million? Seriously, you've got to make sure your systems and procedures and decision making processes are nailed. Spruce has helped us with—it's a cliché, but I'll say it—best practices. The 22 years' experience that Spruce has really helps—for example, on our prior system we actually had defined 30 or 40 price levels, but Spruce limits us to 7, and more than 7 really is too many.

### Is technology your friend, your enemy, or somewhere in between?

That depends on whether you're having a good day or not! In the

past, it was our enemy. We were sometimes too far out on the bleeding edge, and with 4GL and UNIX the technology was too hard to manage. But going to Microsoft and SQL and Intel, we are more in charge. We can really push our SpruceWare.NET software hard. For example, we took a fully computerized inventory for the first time at the end of the year—when we left for home on December 30<sup>th</sup>, we were completely done. So technology is becoming more of a friend.

### How did you decide to get SpruceWare.NET after looking at all of your options?

We had had software issues ever since 1990 when we computerized. We weren't going to make a

*(Continued on page 3)*



### Inside this issue:

<a href="#">Five Questions</a>	1
<i>Customer Interview</i>	
<a href="#">New Year's Resolutions</a>	1
<i>.NET Enhancements</i>	
<a href="#">Welcome</a>	2
<i>New Spruce Customers</i>	
<a href="#">History in the Making</a>	2
<i>SprucePlus Enhancements</i>	
<a href="#">Employee Snapshot</a>	3
<i>Andy Beisler</i>	
<a href="#">Who ya Gonna Call?</a>	4
<i>Spruce Contacts</i>	
<a href="#">Captivate Your Documents</a>	4
<i>Captiva &amp; Attachments</i>	

## New Year's Resolutions

A new set of features is launched for SpruceWare.NET in the January release

When SpruceWare.NET was officially released in late 2006, it was a complete software suite for Lumber, Hardware, and Building Materials Dealers, and it was well received as such. That doesn't mean our R&D team wasn't busy planning enhancements, though!

You might have gotten a peek at some of these at our November User Conference. Now that you've forgotten your real New Year's Resolutions, make a new, more attainable set:...

**Be more open to outside influence:** Import data from a myriad of third-party applications, whether we've thought of them or not, with the **Import Wizard**. Use it to access data from anywhere by choosing a delimited text file, an Excel spreadsheet, or even your clipboard. Define a particular file format once, then save it for repeated use. So for most third party software, there's no need to wait for Spruce to program an interface—it's in there!



**Shed those extra wires:** Use a Windows Mobile device to connect to the application for Physical Inventory and Cycle Counting, ... All you need is the **Spruce Mobile Application Suite**, available with its own low-cost seat license. The cost-effective Symbol MC50 and outdoor-ready Symbol MC70 are here with built-in barcode scanners and an easy-to-use interface. Take advantage of your investment by looking into other useful software for these industry-standard Windows Mobile devices, too!

*(Continued on page 3)*



## Interact

USE the internet!

Did you know there's a "bulletin board" available within the [www.spruce1.com](http://www.spruce1.com) website? Once you log in, click on "Bulletin Board" (or "Contact Information" then "Bulletin Board") to access it. Chat with other Spruce customers where non-customers don't have snooping rights.

For general open chat with other hardware/home center owners, there's a very active bulletin board for hardware stores run in

"Where can I get this kind of widget?"

association with Hardlines Digest. You can sign up for that at <http://www.hardlinesdigest.com/> (use the subscribe link). Threads run from simple "where can I get this kind of widget" questions to in-depth discussions about the various buying groups. People even occasionally ask about software providers, and it would be nice to get some active Spruce customer participation! ☺

**Please Welcome** our newest employee, **Lewis Robinson**, who is filling the support position opened by Andy's move (see employee snapshot, next page). You'll appreciate his great attitude!

## Welcome to the Spruce Family

Thanks to all our newest partners.

**A.H. Wilcox & Son**  
Naples, NY

**Baker-Miller Lumber Inc.**  
Groton, NY

**Bayview Building Materials**  
Olympia, WA

**Bison Lumber**  
Jackson, WY

**Borgnis & Son Company**  
Lee, MA

**BTU Building Materials**  
Las Vegas, NV

**Byrd-Stephens Building Supply**  
Dawsonville, GA

**Cashway Lumber, Inc.**  
Watertown, SD

**CJ Siding Supply**  
Statesboro, GA

**Corum's Building &**

**Farm Center**  
Hartselle, AL

**Country Builders Inc.**  
North Scituate, RI

**Fairbanks Lumber Co., Inc.**  
Bronx, NY

**GillRoy's Complete Hardware**  
Flushing, MI

**Heartland Building Center**  
Hays, KS

**Horsham Plumbing & Heating Supplies Ltd.**  
Horsham, U.K.

**Huntoon Lumber Co.**  
Marlette, MI

**Jake's Lumber**  
Delta, UT

**Johnson's Lumber & Supply Inc.**  
Tallahassee, FL

**Latanzio Lumber Company**  
Somerset, NJ

**Marcus Lumber Co.**  
Marcus, IA

**Maschino & Sons Lumber**  
New Gloucester, ME

**Murray Lumber Company**  
Grant, MI

**Newark Lumber & Hardware**  
Newark, NJ

**Niehaus Companies**  
Vincennes, IN

**Page Lumber**  
Page, AZ

**R.P. Lumber Company**  
Edwardsville, IL

**Rush's Pueblo Lumber**  
Pueblo, CO

**Sequoia Supply**  
Hatfield, PA

**Star Building Materials**  
Calgary, Alberta, Canada

**Top Notch Building Supply, Inc.**  
Pecatonica, IL

**Vortanz Lumber Company**  
Hayward, WI

**Western Lumber, Inc.**  
Gunnison, CO

Welcome aboard! ☺

## History in the Making

SprucePlus enhancements beef up retained history

### Item Price Change History (Release 19)

A new audit function is available for tracking changes to an item's pricing. Audit records are maintained in a separate file and are accessible for inquiry-only through a Hot Key function (named ITEMIPCA). This lookup is available for use on screens where an item entry is applicable. After entering an item#, you can select the hotkey and a history of price changes for the item will display, with most recent first. Data displayed will include Date of change, Sales ID, Previous price, New price, where price was changed and cost if allowed. The *Function Key Setup* area, under the *Utilities Initialization*

#1 menu, is where "hot keys" function lists can be set up. Once set up, lists can be assigned to a specific port or user.

To enable this option, a *System Parameter* must be set. This is located on the 4<sup>th</sup> screen of *System Parameters* located on the *Operations Management/System Maintenance* menu. Use the NEXTPAGE function to navigate to the 4<sup>th</sup> screen of settings. There are three new fields related to this audit function under the heading Inventory Pricing.

Field 6, ITEM U/P CHANGE AUDIT FILE, turns the audit feature on or off. Because this is a *System Parameter*, we suggest enabling its

use between business days to provide a clear starting point. If done during the day, users will need to sign-off, disconnect and re-connect before the audit begins tracking price changes.

Once the audit is enabled, the other two fields can be used to set the default pricing and cost displayed when the hot key is used. Both pricing and costs may be changed by the user once the screen is accessed. These just determine the default settings used when the hot key inquiry is first selected. Field 7, DEFAULT PRICE DISPLAY, determines the default price type using the following codes: 0 (Retail), 1 (Level 1), 2 (Level 2) and 3 (Level 3). The code in field 8, DEFAULT COST DISPLAY, determines which cost

(Continued on page 4)





## Five Questions David Niehaus

*(Continued from page 1)*

mistake again, not only because of the hardware and the software but because of our customers too. We looked at every package out there, touched every vendor in the industry and some outside it. The software was simple to use compared to other Windows software we saw--cumbersome stuff that required a lot of mouse clicks. But in the end, it was the people that did it. When we visited [Spruce's] corporate offices and we talked with Rob and Ray, they weren't

answering their cell phones during the meeting, and it was clear these guys really cared about us...we've dealt with others and it always seemed like—I don't want to say we were a number, but it just wasn't the same.

**You have been using SpruceWare.NET since April, 2007. Any surprises (or wisdom) you'd like to relate to people thinking about upgrading?**

At the Spruce user conference, one of the existing Spruce customers said "when you got this

software, did they brainwash you, because you don't have anything bad to say about it." But we have not had a gotcha yet, nothing but little things. The software was underrepresented, it really is great, it has performed better than how it was sold to us. That is why we have no problem talking to prospects about the software. There's not a day that goes by that we don't say "Jeez-O-Pete! This is just awesome!" We had to look up something on the old system the other day and it was just terrible. The main surprise? It's that there haven't been any surprises. ☺

☞ "When you got this software, did they brainwash you?"

### Did you Know?

Current SprucePlus and SpruceWare Customers get SpruceWare.NET licenses at **half price**—our way of thanking you for your continued loyalty. Call to schedule a demonstration and to get a quote!

## New Year's Resolutions SpruceWare.NET enhancements

*(Continued from page 1)*

### Save money by doing it yourself:

If you mull windows, hang doors, build trusses, or any of a myriad of manufacturing processes, have a look at the new **Manufacturing** application. It will allow you to track work on custom items as well as items you make for stock, and you will be able to rest easy knowing that your real costs are being accounted for.

### Upgrade to a quality import:

If you carry Andersen windows or you design kitchens and baths for your customers, take a look at the new custom interfaces for **Andersen iQ** and **20-20 Design**. These go a step beyond straight text importation by filtering out unnecessary information and formatting quotes and orders as you

would want them.

**Exercise your brain:** If you want a better handle on how your business is performing without spending more time on it, you'll be all over the **Executive Dashboard**. Customize it to show you, alert you, and cajole you into running your business better.

**Study More:** We've added **reversing journal** entries, improved **fax** capabilities, enhanced **reporting** functionality, added even more **lookup options** for customers and inventory, added barcode label functionality for speedier **non-spruce document scanning**, added a new status folder for a look at a specific customer's **A/R activity** during a specified time period... the list goes on, but space here doesn't

Be sure to go to [www.spruce1.com](http://www.spruce1.com) and log in to look at the latest SpruceWare.NET release notes!

### Meet all your obligations:

SpruceWare.NET has been certified as Do it Best Level 1 Compliant, the highest compliancy tier. If you're a Do it Best dealer, you're golden!

**Get organized:** Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) has been completed for Do it Best, LMC, Orgill, and True Value. ☺

*Remember, these enhancements and more are available now to all SpruceWare.NET customers.*

### Lexmark Update

Through April, get the Lexmark T642n network laser printer (a 45 page per minute version that normally retails for \$999) at the same price as the Lexmark T640n (a 35 page per minute version costing \$749). Stock up now by filling out our [Spruce1.com](http://Spruce1.com) website order form, or call 800-777-8231, ext. 102.

## Employee Snapshot: Andy Beisler Each issue, we briefly profile a Spruce employee.

**Name:** Andrew (Andy) Beisler

**Tenure at Spruce:** 11 years.

**Education:** SUNY New Paltz, BS in Art Education

**Prior Experience:** Growing up, Andy worked in his family's hardware store in Stamford, NY, in the Catskills Region.

**Main Duties:** Andy has written the documentation for both the SprucePlus and new Spruce-

Ware.NET products and keeps the Spruce website up to date. He is moving from a support position into a newly-created position as a quality assurance tester for changes made to the SpruceWare.NET application. We'll miss him in Support, but he will be a great addition to the SpruceWare.NET team, keeping dreaded software bugs from invading your businesses.

**Noteworthy:** Andy's brother, Ted, is a SpruceWare.NET programmer living in Reno, NV.

**When he's not giving SpruceWare.NET a workout:**

Volleyball, Playing Guitar.

**Favorite Quote:**

"My brains hurt" (Monty Python) ☺

*Andy on a hike*



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Haven't seen our new HQ?  
Stop by if you get a chance!

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**Log in!**  
**SpruceI.com**

“The deposit transactions pertaining to the order are listed. Pick a transaction from the list to view additional details.”

## Who Ya Gonna Call? Our mini-directory of your most important contact information at Spruce

### Supplies, hardware, etc:

1) Get information and pricing through [www.spruceI.com](http://www.spruceI.com); choose “Customer Support” then log in. If you don't have a password, there's a link to sign up for one on the login page. Once you're logged in, select the “Products” link.  
2) Call 1-800-777-8231 and dial extension 102 for John LaFave. John's email address is [johnl@sprucecomputer.com](mailto:johnl@sprucecomputer.com).

### Demonstrations & upgrade quotes for SpruceWare.NET:

Contact Mitch Adams at 816-468-0507 or through

[mitcha@sprucecomputer.com](mailto:mitcha@sprucecomputer.com)

### Original SpruceWare (not SpruceWare.NET) support:

262-717-0943.

### SpruceWare.NET and SprucePlus support:

1-800-SPRUCE5 (777-8235).

Some menu options to remember:

- 2 - SprucePlus Applications Support
- 3 - Hardware / Integration
- 4 - Marketing
- 8 - SpruceWare.NET Application Support

If you're a SprucePlus user but you have converted to .NET, please use option 8.

## Captivate Your Documents Captiva software automates SpruceWare.NET

Those of you who use SpruceWare.NET count on the document trail as an easy and quick way to find any of the documents the system has ever produced—but are you scanning documents from the outside world? Several .NET customers have already found that they can speed up scanning and be more

accurate through the use of EMC Captiva's QuickScan Pro software, which automatically recognizes the barcode (as printed on a Spruce document or as printed through low-cost DYMO label printers) on any document and allows quick and automatic batch attachment to original SpruceWare.NET

documents as a result. If your driver returns with a stack of signed delivery copies, scan and attach them to the originals almost instantly. If your receiver comes in with a marked-up shipper, you can print a quick barcode, stick it anywhere on the packing slip, and put it in the pile for later automatic attachment.

## SprucePlus History Enhancements

(Continued from page 2)

is displayed: market (0), weighted average (1) or replacement (2).

### Customer Order Deposit History (Release 20)

Deposit history tracking is now available for Customer Orders. This audit history is updated for all customer order deposit related transactions. Included transactions are: the receiving of a deposit when creating a customer order via POS, the Cash Handler - Accept Deposit, Customer Orders - Order Deposit, the use of a deposit when an order is sold in Point of Sale, and any Deposit Refunds. Data retained in the audit log includes:

order id, account, project, invoice, branch, sales id, date, time, port#, transaction type, method of payment, and amounts.

The new feature can be found on the Customer Orders menu (Point of Sale, Customer Orders, and Order Deposit History). Most functions used for look-up in the Order Status area are also available from the Deposit History inquiry. After selection or entry of an order number, the deposit transactions pertaining to the order are listed. Pick a transaction from the list to view additional details. Use the up or down arrow keys and previous/next page screen options for selection within the list of transactions involving the order. As in

the Order Status screen, users can also select the 4) INVOICE screen option to bring up a list of invoices linked with the order to view. Only invoices (sales) are retained. Orders, deposits, and deposit refunds are not saved in invoice retention and won't be available using this function.

For those users with the optional Order Archive module, purged orders and also their deposit audit records are copied to the Archive file for future reference.

For information on other recent features in Release 19 and Release 20, please see the Documents / Release Notes option on our web page [www.spruceI.com](http://www.spruceI.com).