

# PPCUG NEWS

## This Month

Monday June 8, 1998

## Using a PC as an Investment Tool

**Sheldon Koepf**

Learn how to use a PC for portfolio and investment analysis, investment screening, financial planning, buying and selling on-line and much more.

**7:00-7:45 PM:**

**Tech Corner is Open  
Social Time**

**7:45 PM**

**Meeting Comes to Order**

**8 PM**

**Featured Presentation**

At

**Lawrence Library**

Meeting Rooms A & B

**US Route 1 South & Darrah Lane, Lawrenceville, NJ**

☆☆☆☆☆☆ **Our New Meeting Location** ☆☆☆☆☆

## Calendar

### General Meetings

*Second Monday of the month  
7 PM at Lawrenceville Library  
Route 1 and Darrah Lane.*

### Telecom SIG

*Last Wednesday of January, March, May,  
July, September and November — Call  
Perry Weaver for location and topic.*

### Windows SIG

*Last Wednesday of February, April, June,  
August, and October. Call Paul Kurivchack  
for location and topic.*

### Board Meetings

*Third Monday of the Month  
8 PM at Lawrenceville Library  
Route 1 and Darrah Lane.*

*Board meetings are open to All.*

### Newsletter Deadline

Articles for the newsletter are due the second Friday after the General Meeting.

Articles are accepted all month on diskette, sent to kurivchack\_p@compuserve.com (ascii only), handed to the editor at meetings, or sent to the PPCUG PO Box (see below),

in the following on-disk formats:

**Word for Windows 6.0, 7.0 or 97;  
Ami Pro / WordPro, or Ascii Text**



Peter Fillingham speaking to our members about the virtues of Linux OS.

Digital Photo by Ed Weiss

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## Annual Dues Rates

Normal dues rate is \$25.  
New Members Only: after February, the rate is \$2 per month times the number of months remaining in the year.

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### Voice Mail System

For information about SIGs, meetings, etc. call ..... 908-281-3107

To contact Board Members, use the E-Mail Addresses on page 7.

### Board Members

President:  
Paul Kurivchack ..... 908-218-0778

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Perry Weaver ..... 609-275-8220

Secretary:  
Len Clarke ..... 609-882-5577

Treasurer:  
Tom Canavan ..... 732-422-9055

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Ed Weiss ..... 609-586-1395  
Vic Laurie ..... 609-924-1220  
Vince Polignano ..... 609-586-1466

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Sol Libes ..... 609-520-9024

Telecommunications SIG:  
Perry Weaver ..... 609-275-8220

Web Master:  
Jon Abolins

### Affiliated BBS: NJCC-BBS

Voice ..... 609-896-2799  
Internet (data) ..... 609-896-3191  
FAX ..... 609-896-2994

### Web Site

<http://pluto.njcc.com/~ppcug>

## Coming Events

### July 13, 1998 - Windows98 (Lawrence Library)

Upama Uniyal - Microsoft Corporation will present the newly introduced OS that: "WorksBetter and Plays Better"

### August 10, 1998 - Voice Recognition Software

Steve Shaw - Past PPCUG President & LAN Manager will demonstrate voice recognition software. Rescheduled from March.

### September 13, 1998 - To Be Announced



## Presidents Message

by Paul Kurivchack

Well, we made it through our first meeting at the Lawrenceville Library and it very successful. I want to thank the members who helped set up the room and those who stayed to clean up. It was greatly appreciated.

Peter Fillingham was very entertaining with his presentation on Linux. I hope all that attended obtained good information on why you might want to use Linux. Also, those who were able to get the free Linux CD's might try them out and report to our group with an article for the newsletter and to Peter thanking him for his generosity.

As I mentioned at last months meeting, we are seeking SIG leaders for both the Windows and Telecom. Perry Weaver is off on a Year 2000 assignment and will be unable to chair the Telecom SIG. Jon Abolins stepped in for the May meeting where he discussed Internet Security. He did an excellent job as always. We had a total of six members attend including Jon and myself. I will still be chairing the Windows SIG, but would like another member to assist at the meeting. If all goes as plan, I will load Win98 on our groups laptop for the June 24 meeting and will get a first hand view of Win98. Meeting location to be determined as I am awaiting an answer from the Plainsboro Library which hopefully will be our new SIG meeting site. Call or e-mail me for details as we get closer to the meeting date. I realize that we do not advertise a meeting topic, but we always discuss important issues about the Internet or Windows that may not be covered

at the general meeting. If your schedule allows, please join us. In addition, let me know how you can help at the SIG meetings. One last note. Unless we find a leader for the July Telecom meeting, it will be canceled since I will be away that week and unable to chair it.

Lastly, Sol Libes, [sol@libes.com](mailto:sol@libes.com), has asked me to let everyone know that he sends out the publicity each month about our meetings to various publications. Also as a service to our members, he sends similar meeting information out to the members who supplied their e-mail addresses to the group. He seems to be getting a larger number of returns each month. Please keep our group informed of address changes if you want to be on Sol's mail list along with our need to be able to contact you. If you do not want to receive any information, please let us know so we can remove your name.

I look forward to seeing you on June 8<sup>th</sup>.

## NEW MEMBERS

Victor Kushnirchuk  
Jane Nelson

THANK YOU FOR JOINING US IN  
1998!

WELCOME TO THE CLUB!

# Minutes for the General Meeting May 11, 1998

By: Len Clerke, Secretary

President Paul Kurivchack opened the meeting at 7:55 with several announcements.

Paul welcomed all to our new meeting site, the Lawrence branch of the Mercer County Library, located at the intersection of Darrah Lane and U.S. Route 1 in Lawrence Township. All members were asked to assist with clean-up after meetings as it will be our responsibility to stack chairs and tables and dispose of litter.

The May meeting of the Board of Directors will not be held due to a

scheduling conflict. Board meetings will resume in June at the library.

The Telecom Sig is in need of a new leader. This person will not have to make all the presentations but will be responsible for coordinating presentations and meeting dates. As of this date, the May meeting at E.T.S. is not definite. Anyone interested is assisting should contact Paul.

The June general meeting will feature the use of the Internet for investing. July will have a presentation of Win 98 from Microsoft and August will include the rescheduled voice-recognition program.

The donations received at our T.C.F. parcel pick-up booth exceeded all previous years although there was a definite shortage of man-power. Several members made suggestions

from the floor regarding our effort next year but at this point there is no final word on whether the Computer Fest will be held.

The main presentation for the evening was made by Peter Fillingham, Ph.D. His introduction to the Linux operating system covered some history, various versions, system requirements, features and many entertaining anecdotes. The program was spirited and elicited many questions from the audience, many of whom obviously use, or have used, Linux. At the end of the presentation he offered several CD's of Linux versions. Peter invited members to contact him at: [pete@panix.com](mailto:pete@panix.com)

The meeting closed at 9:25 p.m.

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## MORE WINDOWS 95 TIPS

By: Vic Laurie

### *Speed Up Your System By Adjusting Vcache*

Last month we discussed setting the size of your hard disk's swap file in order to speed up system performance. Another tweak involves setting the parameters for the size of the RAM cache which Microsoft calls *vcache* (not to be confused with virtual memory in the hard disk swap file). This file-caching process is the successor to the old *Smartdrive*. Recently used files are cached in RAM for ready access in case they might be needed again. Unfortunately, the operating system is not a good judge of whether you are likely to want to reopen a recently used file or not, and it only slowly flushes out files once they are cached. As a result, the size of the vcache keeps growing and can rather quickly consume a big chunk of your RAM. Soon the system finds insufficient RAM for an open program and has to page out to the hard disk swap file in order to create enough memory for the application. I have monitored my own 64 Mbyte system and have watched vcache grow to 30 or more Mbytes in surprisingly rapid fashion. For a system with less than 32 Mbytes of RAM it is easy to get to the point where frequent accessing of the disk is required.

A simple system adjustment is possible, however, which will control the size of the vcache and prevent it from monopolizing too much RAM. Fortunately, the adjustment is made in *system.ini* rather than the registry. Using *sysedit* or other text editor, open *system.ini* and find the section headed

#### **[vcache]**

This section may not already exist, in which case add the heading. Then add (for example only, your system may vary) the lines

```
minFileCache=2048  
maxFileCache=8196
```

New settings will take effect after a reboot. Numbers are kilobytes of RAM to be used. There is some variation of opinion about which are the optimum set of parameters. It is generally recommended that the maximum file cache be set at 15 to 25% of the system RAM. Suggested minimum file settings range from none to the same as the maximum. In my own system I see little effect from varying the minimum file setting. A little experimenting will establish what is best for your system. Fortunately, fiddling with these settings is not nearly as likely to be lethal to your system as registry changes.

*If you have less than 16 Mbytes of RAM, leave the settings alone. Always back up system.ini before making changes.*

### **Stop Microsoft Office Constantly Accessing Your Disk**

If you have Microsoft Office installed on your system, you may have noticed that at unexpected times your hard drive suddenly goes into action for no apparent reason. You may not be aware that during installation Microsoft Office automatically puts a utility called Find Fast into your start-up folder. It also appears in Control Panel. The intended function of Find Fast is to speed up the opening of documents, etc.. It does this by searching all the files on your disk and creating indexes of their contents. By default, the index files are updated every two hours by searching your hard drive — resulting in the apparent random disk action. If you like this "feature" (whose efficacy escapes me) but want less frequent updates of the index files, you can change the interval of updates. If, like me, you want to remove the "feature," delete it from your start-up group.

You will also want to get rid of all those hidden \*.ffa, \*.ffl, \*.ffo, and \*.ffx files which have been created. Open the Control Panel and double-click Find Fast. Select the path for the index you want delete from the list of indexes in the Find Fast dialog box and click Delete Index on the Index menu. You can also remove any *mscreate.dir* files. By the way, if you have an empty folder *~mssetup.qt* with a sub-folder *~pp.t* (left over from installation) you can remove that, too.

# FYI Re: PDF PDQ!\*

By J.D. Abolins (jda-ir@njcc.com)

If you have been on the Web for a while or used some computer products on CDs, you may have run into Adobe Acrobat PDF files. Perhaps, you clicked on a Web link and your computer gets a PDF document but you don't have a way of looking at it. Or you have seen some Web sites with the yellow "Get Acrobat!" buttons and wondering if it is a particularly athletic or very kinky site. This article is going to take a look at what these PDF files are, why they appear in so many places and how to use them.

## What is PDF?

"PDF" stands for "Portable Document Format." It is a file format developed by Adobe. (<http://www.adobe.com>). They call the product that works with PDF files "Acrobat."

The "portable" idea is to make publications to look similar to their print versions across different computer setups and types. A PDF file, read with the PDF reader software for the particular computer, will look almost the same on, say, a Macintosh or a Sun Unix X-Windows systems as it does on a Windows 95 PC.

The value of this can be seen if we consider some of the other electronic ways of sharing publications. We could share word processing documents. But everybody would have to have a compatible word processor. ASCII? That does work across most systems but lacks fonts and other formatting features. HTML? Works for the Web but the documents look

different across the different computers. With all of these formats, we run into a problem with fonts. Not everybody will have the same font's as the documents' authors.

Adobe Acrobat PDF solves these problems by creating a file that stores the appearance of original print document including the fonts and formatting. The differences among various computer types is solved by providing PDF reader software for different types of computers. One file format, different readers. One of the great things about PDF is that the readers are free from Adobe. (The software to create PDF files is not free. That's where Adobe makes money from PDFs.)

## Making PDFs

The main way to make PDF documents on a Windows PC is to use the Adobe Acrobat Exchange. It acts as a printer on your PC. Develop a document on your favorite Windows word processor, desktop publishing software, spreadsheet, whatever. Then print, selecting the Acrobat software as the printer. The software will "print" the document to a file instead of a paper printer.

There are other products, such as Adobe PageMaker 6.5, that will allow you to "print" their documents as PDF files.

## Reading PDFs

When we read PDF documents, we find they look a lot like printed documents. The reader allows us to read and print the documents. We can't edit the documents although we copy sections of the document into other documents.

The first we need to do is to get the PDF reader for our computers. Install the reader and we are ready to go. If we open a PDF document in Windows Explorer, the computer will recognize the .pdf extension on the file name and load the file into the PDF reader. We can also run the PDF reader and open PDF documents.

The PDF reader works well with some Web browsers, Microsoft Internet Explorer in particular, to display a PDF document on the Web as though it were a regular Web page. The document comes up in the browser window. Some Web sites use a page-serving feature of PDF to quickly display large PDF documents, downloading only a portion of the document at a time.

Note: If you are using Internet Explorer 4.0 or higher, the PDF reader might not work with the Web browser. Adobe has a fix for this problem at <http://www.adobe.com/prodindex/acrobat/ocxreader.html>

## Closing Comments

If you want to practice reading Adobe Acrobat PDF documents, you are welcome to try the PPCUG Newsletter PDF files on the users group's Web site.

To learn more about Adobe Acrobat PDFs and to get the free readers, go to <http://www.adobe.com/prodindex/acrobat/>

\* "A Pretty Darn Quick Article About Adobe Acrobat Portable Document Format for Your Information"



## Windows 98 Launch Event

On June 25<sup>th</sup> see Bill Gates, live via satellite broadcast introduce Windows 98, the successor to Windows 95 that "Works Better" and "Plays Better". See demonstrations and hear consumer success stories.

Microsoft representatives will be on site to answer your Windows 98 questions, T-shirts will be given to attendees.

Resister early for this Free Event!  
Seats are limited. Show starts at  
7:00 PM

To register, connect to: <http://www.microsoft.com/events/windows98>

Area event sites:

NJ - Rt 17 Triplex  
S-85 Route 17  
Paramus, NJ

NY - Copacabana  
617 West 57<sup>th</sup> Street  
New York, NY

PA - UA Theatre Grant Plaza  
1619 Grant Avenue  
Philadelphia, PA



# PRINCETON PC USERS GROUP

<http://pluto.njcc.com/~ppcug>

## PPCUG Member E-mail Directory

| Name Last      | First       | E-Mail Address              | Name Last   | First          | E-Mail Address                       |
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(Last Update: 31 May 1998)

Send Updates to kurivchack\_p@compuserve.com for inclusion in this listing.

### Consultants Corner

#### Meyda Online

John Abolins, Sysop  
BBS: 609-883-8124

World Wide Web Home Page:  
<http://www.meydabbs.com/~jda-ir/>

#### MVP Communications, Inc.

Jon Conant  
Suite 106 - CN 5330  
Princeton, NJ 08543-5330  
(908) 359-2251  
Fax: (908) 359-2003  
Voice Mail & Communication Services

### Consultants Corner

You can advertise your consulting business for \$25 per year in addition to your normal

#### Brite Consultants, Inc.

Perry Weaver  
1 Barnard Place  
Princeton Junction, NJ 08550  
609-716-1880 / 888-318-BRITE  
Fax: 609-716-1825  
Email: brite4@juno.com  
<http://www.brite-consultants.com>



### Membership Card Discounts

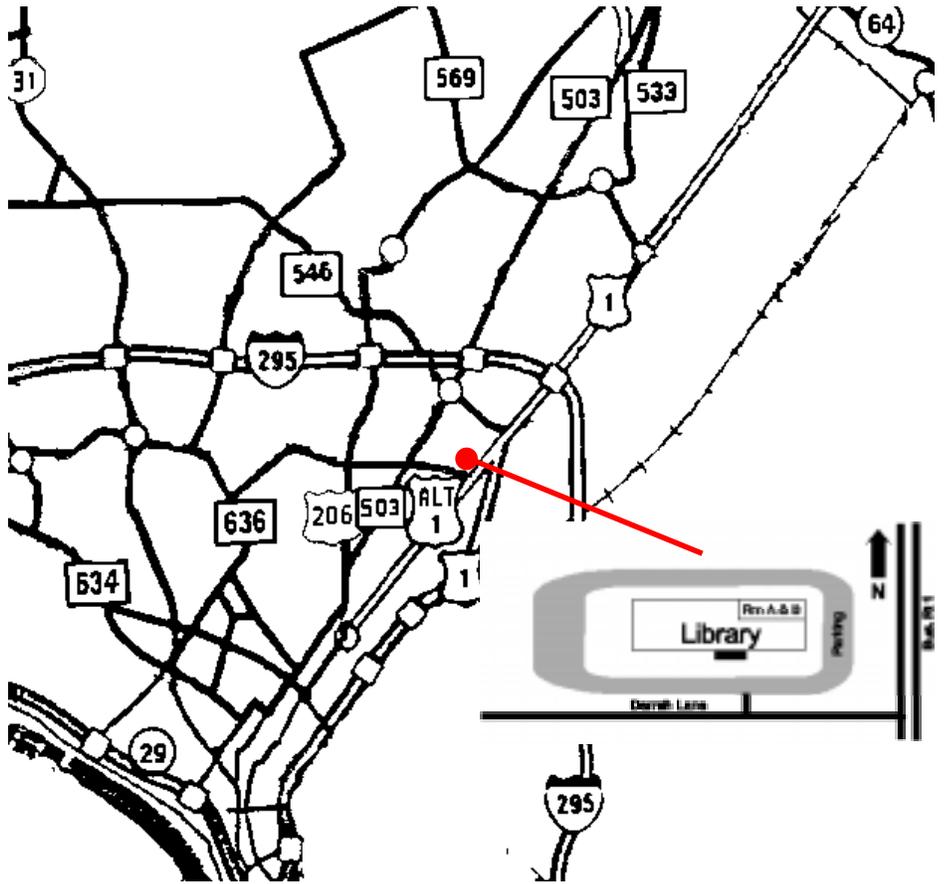
STM Robotics/Computers  
825 State Highway Route 33  
Hamilton, NJ 08619  
Phone: (609) 587-3335  
5% off all products and services.



**The Lawrence Library is at the corner of Business Route 1 South and Darrah Lane.**

**From Princeton and North:** Take US Route 1 South, past the Quaker Bridge / Mercer Shopping Centers. Continue on approximately 1 3/4 mile past I295 to the Route 1 split, stay to the right to Business Route 1 (Brunswick Pike). First traffic light is Darrah Lane. Library is on right side. Park in lot towards Route 1 and to the rear. Enter Library at main entrance in front. Meeting rooms A & B are located through glass door on Route 1 side of building.

**From Trenton and South:** Take I295 North to US Route 1 South. Library is approximately 1 3/4 miles south of I295. Continue south to Business Route 1 (Brunswick Pike). First traffic light is Darrah Lane. Library is on right side. Park in lot towards Route 1 and to the rear. Enter Library at main entrance in front. Meeting rooms A & B are located through glass door on Route 1 side of building.



Using a PC as an Investment  
Tool  
June 8, 1998  
Lawrence Library

Princeton PC Users Group  
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