

PPCUG

NEWS

A PUBLICATION OF THE PRINCETON PC USERS GROUP

Calendar

General Meetings

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

7:00-7:45 PM:
Tech Corner is Open / Social Time

7:45 PM:
Meeting Comes to Order

8 PM:
Featured Presentation

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 by the last Wednesday of the month.

Articles will be accepted via e-mail to:
kurivchack_p@compuserve.com in the following formats: Word for Windows 6.0, 7.0 or 97; Ami Pro / WordPro, or Ascii Text.

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This Month

Monday April 12, 1999

DATA RECOVERY

Jason Velasco
OnTrack Data International

**Learn about hard drive data recovery,
hard drive utilities, anti-virus
and
recovery services from a Industry leader!**

At the

Lawrence Library

Meeting Rooms 1 & 2

US Route 1 South & Darrah Lane, Lawrenceville, NJ
Our New Meeting Location

Meetings of an organization at any of the facilities of the Mercer County Library System in No Way implies endorsement of its programs



John DeGood (right) of Sarnoff Labs speaking about Y2K issues and how they are being addressed to a near capacity crowd at the March meeting.

Digital Photos by Ed Weiss



About PPCUG NEWS

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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 or Web Site.

Web Site

<http://www.ppcug-nj.org>

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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.



Coming Events

May 1 & 2, 1999 - Trenton Computer Festival - Edison, NJ

Help at the PPCUG Parcel Pick-up area & see the show!

May 10, 1999 - Using E-mail Effectively

Sol Libes will present a tutorial on making the most out of e-mail, various e-mail software and more.

June 14, 1999 - Microsoft Office2000 - Tentative

Bret Davis of Microsoft will present the newest release of the industry office suite standard.

July 12, 1999 - Windows 95/98 Tips.

Vic Laurie will be back once again presenting his "Tips & Tricks" in using Windows 95/98.

August 9, 1999 - On & Offline Security - Jon Abolins

September 13, 1999 - Bill Machrone - Editor PC Magazine



Presidents Message

by Paul Kurivchack

We made it successfully through another winter without any bad weather affecting our Monday night meetings so let us hope for continued good weather and great speakers.

John DeGood did an excellent job presenting the Y2K issues in a straightforward approach. Explaining the programming techniques that were employed in creating many of the programs used today and possible solutions. Not being a programmer, I really appreciated his style and hopefully all the members and guests that attended the meeting. Thanks again John for a great presentation.

Speaking about the meeting, did we have a great turnout or what? By my count, we had over 70 people in attendance. This brings back memories of when we always had a full house for our speakers. This is not to discount the 45 or so hardy souls that attended our meetings religiously over the past couple of years. However, it is nice some new faces out in the audience and so far this year, we have added nine new members. Thanks for joining.

The Trenton Computer Festival is getting closer and closer. We are still in need of volunteers to help man the PPCUG sponsored Parcel Pickup Area. We need help both Saturday and Sunday in the 12:00 to 5:00 PM shifts. Free entry to the show will be provided by TCF for our volunteers. Come work for a couple three hours and then see the show. Sign up sheets will be out at the April meeting.

Lastly, on a serious note. The Lawrence Library has been very good to the PPCUG during the past year in providing our group its meeting space for both our general monthly and board meeting at no cost. I thought we have been equally good to the Library by being great guests in leaving the Library as we found it, neat and clean and providing the utmost courtesies to the staff. I want to continue this policy, but as it turns out, some of our guests and members attending the meetings have not provided those courtesies to the Library staff. In the future, any issues that involve the Lawrence Library meeting room or the Library in general must be addressed to a PPCUG board member or chairperson first and then it will be brought to the Libraries attention. The Library was provided a list of who duly represents the PPCUG at our meetings and will only speak to those representatives. The Library will not, nor the Board and I tolerate discourteous behavior before, during, after or any other time in the Library. Remember that we are guests and good guests are invited back.

See you all on April 12.

Windows 9X Tips: Fits and Starts

By: Vic Laurie

Have you ever had the eerie feeling that some not so benevolent intelligence was lurking in your computer and running things to suit itself rather than doing what you want? Lately I have been asked a great deal about the problem of computer operations and programs that run on their own without being asked and that seem to be beyond human control. Hard drives suddenly go into a fit of activity for no apparent reason, programs are loaded at start up by some unseen hand and can't be gotten rid of, mysterious files come and go. Who's in charge here? Actually, all of this is in *your* control if you know where to look. I grant you, Microsoft and other software companies sometimes seem to go out of their way to make things mysterious but a little diligence will put you back in command.

The Runaway Hard Drive

I have previously discussed the problem of hard drives churning away at unexpected times but the problem comes up a lot so here is a brief reprise. Problems with FastFind from Microsoft Office, and with swap file resizing activity were discussed in the 1998 May and June issues of this newsletter. (Back copies of the newsletter can be accessed or downloaded at the PPCUG website <<http://www.ppcug-nj.org>>). Other common sources of unexpected disk activity are Microsoft System Agent or a program like Norton Utilities. Utility programs often have default settings to automatically carry out activities such as disk housekeeping at regular intervals

and may suddenly take over. Be sure to check the settings in these programs. For example, to turn off System Agent go to: *Start- Programs- Accessories- System Tools- System Agent*. In the System Agent window, select *Advanced, Stop Using System Agent*; then click *Yes* to confirm you're turning it off.

Also make sure your anti-virus program isn't activating when you aren't expecting it. Some default settings do periodic virus scans on your hard drive so check these out. Incidentally, when you shut down the computer, your anti-virus program may check your floppy drive to look for boot viruses in any diskette you might have there. You can turn this option off but it isn't a bad idea to leave it on if you are in an environment where floppies are used.

Mysterious Start-ups

When software is installed, the default method of installation often includes programs or routines that run automatically every time you start your computer whether you want them to or not. (By the way, it is my personal opinion that you should never use the so-called *typical* installation, but should always opt for the custom installation, wherever possible, so that you can control what is or isn't installed). Every time you turn on your computer things may be happening in the background that you are unaware of or don't want. Try the following experiment. After booting up and before starting up any software (*i.e.*, any that you know of), bring up

Windows 9X tips continued on page 4

PCs & the Y2K Problem

By Sol Libes

Much has been written about the Y2K problem and what its effects will be. They have been reported in great detail elsewhere. What I am concerned with are what PC users need to know to check if their systems and software have problems (are not "Y2K compliant") and how to fix the problems. The problems occur on four levels:

Hardware,
Operating System (OS),
Applications
Data.

The Hardware Problem

Computers contain an RTC (Real Time Clock) circuit. It operates in conjunction with a small program contained in the BIOS ROM (Basic Input Output System - Read Only Memory). Together they keep track of the date and time. If the RTC and BIOS are not Y2K compliant they will roll over from 1999 to 1900 when the year 2000 occurs. The BIOS supplies the date and time information to the Computer's OS (operating system) every time the system is started (the boot up).

A BIOS which is Y2K compliant will correct for a non-compliant RTC. Contact the computer supplier (many have this information on their web sites) and ask them if the hardware is Y2K compliant and if it is not, how do you go about fixing it. You can also test your system to see if it is Y2K compliant. A free test program is available and can be

downloaded from <ftp://ftp.symantec.com/misc/americas/sabu/n2k/btestfix.exe>.

If you determine your system is not Y2K compliant it typically means that the code in the BIOS ROM must be changed or you need to replace the BIOS ROM chip. If the computer is very old the supplier may not have a fix for it and it may be necessary to get a new computer. If you are not running any applications that utilize date and time the problem may not even affect you.

Estimates are that up to 93% of PC BIOSes made before 1996 will not roll over properly from 1999 to 2000. The estimate for computers built in 1998 are that 11% will not switch over properly.

The Operating System Problem

Almost every operating system, including those introduced in 1998, will have Y2K problems unless you apply the fixes and updates that the vendors are developing.

The OS also has a clock. At boot time the OS queries the BIOS to update its clock. In the instance of MS-DOS, this means the number of days since 01/01/1980. The OS may not correct flaws in the date reported by the BIOS. Some operating systems (like NT 4.0 with service pack 3) will correct the date for the use of the OS and applications, but will not correct the CMOS/RTC.

PC's & the Y2K continued on page 5

Taskmanager with ctrl+alt+delete. Do you recognize all the programs that are listed? (Actually, the descriptions can be a little cryptic. To find out what they are, you may have to close them one at a time. They will run again the next time you reboot so you need not worry about permanently losing something. Leave Explorer alone since that is your interface.) There are also several freeware programs for getting a list of the applications that are started automatically. One is STARTVW which is available at <http://gucc.org/greene/software/>. A program that lists the programs running at any given time (not just start up) and tells you how much CPU time each is using is part of Microsoft's Kernel Toys (not to be confused with Power Toys). Go to <http://www.microsoft.com/windows95/downloads/>. A very useful utility that I am now using is STARTUP MANAGER. This is recommended by *Windows Magazine* at <http://www.winmag.com/software/1999/0199/01share.htm>. This program gives you complete control over starts by presenting a list from where applications can be disabled, moved to run from a different location, or deleted. If you have Windows 98, use the new System Configuration Utility. Go to *Start-Run*, type *msconfig*, and click OK. When the System Configuration Utility appears, click the Startup tab to see a list of all applications that are launched. Uncheck the box next to each application that you want to prevent from starting.

For the Hardcore Hacker

If you like to really get down to basics and do things yourself, you can search in the myriad of places where the command that launches a program can be located. I can only briefly discuss the procedure here. Further discussion of this topic is found at <http://www.zdnet.com/pcmag/pctech/content/solutions/oe1801b.htm> or the 1/5/99 issue of *PC Magazine*. The easiest location to deal with is the folder *Windows\Start Menu\Programs\StartUp*. Normally, only shortcuts are found here and their deletion will keep a pro-

gram from launching at the start. Conversely, adding a shortcut here will cause the program to launch at the start. This folder can be reached the usual way through Explorer or by right-clicking an empty spot on the TaskBar (most often located at the bottom of your screen). Open the Properties sheet, click the Start Menu Programs tab, and click Advanced. This will bring up an Explorer listing of the Start Menu. Many programs are not started here, however, and this only begins the search. The next place to look is in the *win.ini* file. Using the Sysedit app, look for lines that begin with either *Load=* or *Run=*. You can delete any programs you do not want, or more safely, comment them out by entering a semicolon in front of an unwanted entry. BACK UP FIRST. Next comes a search of the registry. This is for the stout of heart only. Again, BACK UP before doing anything or you may be sorry. Using Regedit or the registry editor from one of the popular utility programs look in the following registry keys for offending applications:

```
HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Run
HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\RunOnce
HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Run
HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\RunOnce
HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\
  RunServices
HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\
  RunServicesOnce
HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\
  RunOnce\Setup
```

The keys involving RunOnce functions often have special roles so are probably best left alone unless you know exactly what the function is. For safety and to help keep a record of your alterations, you can also export each key individually to separate .reg files.

Getting Information, Software, and Lots More via E-mail

By: Sol Libes

E-mail is a great source of things that are often easier to access than using the World Wide Web. Users who do not have an Internet Service Provider (ISP) and use a free e-mail service (e.g. Juno, etc.) can access a large many databases, download software, create and lots more things. This works because there are many e-mail servers with auto-response capability that respond by automatically sending back files. These files may be text, images, programs, etc. To learn how to do this, send e-mail to email4u@wireworm.com. Leave the subject and body of the message blank. If your e-mail software will not allow you to send a message with a blank subject then just put a period in the subject area.

What you will get in response is an e-mail message containing the text file "email4u.txt." It contains a wealth of information on where to send e-mail to get information on the subjects mentioned above plus lots of other e-mail things you can do. For example, you will find in the file that you get information on using e-mail to create a web site with your own domain name and e-mail address by sending a blank e-mail to email-only@wireworm.com. Incidentally, wireworm.com is located in Germany, and if you have Internet access you can go to their web site <http://www.wireworm.com> to learn more e-mail tricks and tips.

Wireworm also has several other files with a wealth of information that can be retrieved via e-mail by sending blank e-mail messages. To find lots of fun stuff (e.g. games, etc.) send a blank e-mail to fun4u@wireworm.com. To find where to retrieve free software, send a blank e-mail to getit4u@wireworm.com. If you are looking for a free program to view or convert a strange graphics, animation, and sound file formats then send a blank e-mail message to pix4u@wireworm.com.



MS-DOS 6.22

Microsoft states that "it is compliant with some minor issues." However, the DATE command does not accept years from "00" through "79", but it will accept 4-digit dates. The MSBACKUP program ignores "tens place" in the year (e.g. it treats "1989" and "1999" as the same dates.

Windows 3.1 & Windows for Workgroups

Microsoft states that "it is compliant with minor issues." You must install updated WINFILE.EXE. The DATE/TIME control panel applet using the mouse will not work correctly.

Windows 95

Microsoft states that "It is compliant with minor issues." You must install WINFILE.EXE and COMMAND.COM files. Problems still remain in SHELL32.DLL, COMCTL32.DLL, VDHCP.386, TIMEDATE.CPL, DIALER.EXE, and XCOPY.EXE

Window 98

Microsoft states that "It is compliant." However, you must install "Windows 98 Year 2000 Update."

Windows NT Workstation 3.51

Microsoft states that "it is compliant." However, you must install SP5 (Service Pack 5) and the Y2K hotfix.

Windows NT Workstation 4.0 SP3

Microsoft "strongly suggest that customers evaluate and deploy SP4." It can be made "Compliant with minor issues" with SP3 + post-SP3 hotfixes + upgrades: e.g. Active Directory Services Interface version 1.0, FrontPage97, Internet Explorer version 2.0, 3.02, 4.01, Internet Locator Service version 1.0, and Site Server Express version 2.0

Windows NT Workstation 4.0 SP4

Microsoft states that it is "Compliant." However, you must install SP4 + upgrades: e.g. FrontPage 97, FrontPage 97 Server Extensions, and Microsoft Virtual Machine. Warning: SP4 can create non-Y2K related problems

The Software Applications Problem

This is the largest problem, particularly for companies many of which have thousands of application programs being used. Many are spending years evaluating their application software. The expense often runs in to many millions of dollars.

The problem with applications are twofold. Has the software developer written the software to accept only two digit years? Further, how does the application get its date information from the BIOS and RTC.

Most companies have no idea how many or which applications are being used and by whom. Therefore, they have to first inventory each and every software application used in the organization. The applications should be ranked in terms of date sensitivity and how critical they are to the organization's day to day running of the organization. Applications, which are not date sensitive (e.g. word processing would be at the bottom of the list. Programs are available from several vendors (e.g. see resources section below.) that will scan application's code and assist in determining whether the program is compliant. This is done by comparing the programs to a database of applications which lists the Y2K compliance of thousands of applications by version number. The software will identify which applications need to

be updated. Then you have to contact the application software vendor for updates and patches, where necessary. For example, Microsoft, Lotus, and Corel, have Y2K patches and updates on their web sites for their spreadsheet and database manager programs.

The big problem is with software where the vendor has gone out of business. Analyze the problems. Applications which do not perform date/time processing are probably OK. Some Y2K defects will not cause any problems or they will cause minor problems that you will have to work around. If they are significant then you may have to scrap the application and switch to another. Be sure to find an application where your data can still be used.

If you have custom software, then go through the code (hopefully the source code is still available) and locate all date references and convert them from 2 digits to 4 digits. If other date references (e.g. Julian Dates) are used it will be necessary to change the way the date is encoded. You may also be able to add some code to do a date conversion. Many of these techniques are described in Y2K resources listed below.

The Data Problem

Applications such as spreadsheets and database managers which have two digit date entries and hence are not Y2K compliant. Problems can occur when data is shared by different applications with different database structures. Fortunately, there are companies selling programs that can be used to scan databases (e.g. Oracle, Access, Paradox, Excel, Quattro, etc.) and identify the problems so that they can be corrected. A search on the World Wide Web will lead you to them.

Y2K Resources

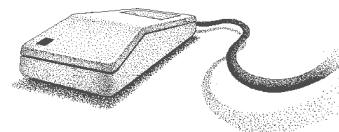
Government Y2K Resources

President's Council on Year 2000 Conversion
<http://www.y2k.gov>
Federal Emergency Management Agency
<http://www.fema.gov/y2k>
American Red Cross Y2K Consumer Information
<http://www.redcross.org/y2k.html>
1-888-USA-4-Y2K

General Y2K Resources

Year 2000 discussion group and listing of consultants and Y2K software vendors
<http://www.year2000.com>
Interesting articles, links, and papers
<http://www.2k-times.com/y2k.htm>
[y2kculture.com](http://www.y2kculture.com) (What me worry?)
<http://www.y2kculture.com>
Y2K help, utilities, patches, solutions, workarounds, etc.
<http://www.mitre.org/technology/y2k>

I would like to acknowledge John DeGood, Sarnoff Corporation, Advanced Networks and Computing Group, Princeton NJ, for much of the resource information.



Minutes for the General Meeting

March 8, 1999

By: Ed Weiss

Paul called the meeting to order at 7:53 PM. He asked all meeting attendees to please sign in (both visitors and members), and for volunteers for TCF, and that a number of members had not yet paid dues.

At this time Paul turned the meeting over to Sol Libes, who spoke for the moment on TCH, and then introduced John DeGood from Sarnoff Labs for his presentation of Y2K problems.

Mr. DeGood kept the whole audience interested, and provoked many questions from the audience. He whole presentation was done on overhead slides, with some very useful URL's to help members find more information on their own.

After John finished his presentation, Paul presented him with a certificate of appreciation, asked the members to help clean up, and closed the meeting.

Minutes for the Board Meeting

March 15, 1999

By: Paul Kurivchack

In Attendance: Jon Abolins, Bill Hawryluk, Sol Libes, Paul Kurivchack, and arriving later due to a work emergency, Ed Weiss.

8:00 PM Paul open the meeting.

The presentation by John DeGood at the March 8 meeting set an attendance record of over 70 members and guests. Is Y2K such a hot subject for our membership or is the word spreading about PPCUG? We will monitor attendance and guest comments.

Programming was discussed and a change was made for the May meeting. Sol will present Using E-mail Effectively instead of his presentation on the history of computing. We will hold that for a later date. Paul made a request to Mi-

In The Mail Box

By Paul Kurivchack



Barnes & Nobel Welcomes John Woram, Author of *The Windows 98 Registry: A Survival for Users*, For a Presentation And Book Signing On Wednesday April 14, 1999 at 7:30 PM. Barnes & Nobel is located at 240 Route 22 West in Springfield, NJ. Call 973-376-8544 for directions and additional information.

Lava Computer MFG, Inc., a manufacturer of PCI Enhanced Parallel and Serial Port accelerator cards is offering User Group members significant discounts on their products. Their products allow Zip Drives and other parallel port peripherals to work up to 3 times faster than standard PC parallel ports. Laval Parallel-PCI (Single Port) – User Group price: \$35.00, Laval Dual Parallel-PCI (Dual Port) –

April 1999

URLs, that were taken down from the presentation:

<http://www.yardeni.com/cyber.html>
<http://www.yourdon.com>
<http://www.garynorth.com>
<http://www.garysouth.com>
<http://www.smu.edu/~acambre/garynorth.htm>
<http://www.wired.com/news/news/culture/story/17193.html>
<http://www.serve.com/thibodep>
<http://www.y2k.gov>
<http://www.fema.gov/y2k>
<http://www.redcross.org/y2k.html>
<http://www.yesr2000.com>
<http://www.2k-times.com/y2k.htm>
<http://www.y2kculture.com>
<http://www.mitre.org/technology/y2k>
<http://www.nerc.com/~jdegood/y2k>

I hope that I spelled all these URL's correctly in my haste to get them all written down. If you have any problem with any, I would just suggest that you try to eliminate the area after the last "/" in the line, and then try it again. Sorry I did not have time to verify all these. Enjoy—

Microsoft for a presentation on Office2000 at the June meeting. We are awaiting a reply. Sol suggested a number of topics such as Ron Rouse presenting on Visual Basic, Using Quicken and another Vic Laurie Tips & Tricks.

A hardware upgrade meeting was also discussed, but without Tom Canavan, who would be the likely speaker, no commitment could be made. We will discuss with Tom and solicit recommendations from the membership as to a possible format for the night's presentation.

TCF parcel pickup was discussed and we are still short for staffing on both Saturday and Sunday. Volunteers are needed.

Sol Libes discussed the upcoming APCUG Officers meeting the weekend before PC Expo as he will attend and suggested Paul schedule to attend.

There was no treasurer's report.

Meeting adjourned at 9:30 PM by Paul.

User Group price: \$45.00, Laval Port-PCI (Dual Serial Port) – User Group price: \$69.00. Contact Mike Wynnyckyj at mwynn@lavalink.com or visit www.lavalink.com for information and ordering details.

The Winners Are! !

**Gerald Henney
David Kerslake**

**Thanks to PowerQuest Corporation
for their Donation of
two copies of PartitionMagic 4.0**



PRINCETON PC USERS GROUP

<http://www.ppcug-nj.org>
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Foulkes	Frank	ffoulkes1@aol.com	Rouse	Ron	DrRonRouse@aol.com
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Gerwers	Hank	PSCI@idt.net	Sked	Bill	billsked@aol.com
Gilstrap	William	wkgbill@earthlink.net	Sneath	Blanche	PettieJ@Juno.com
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(Last Update: 27 March 1999)

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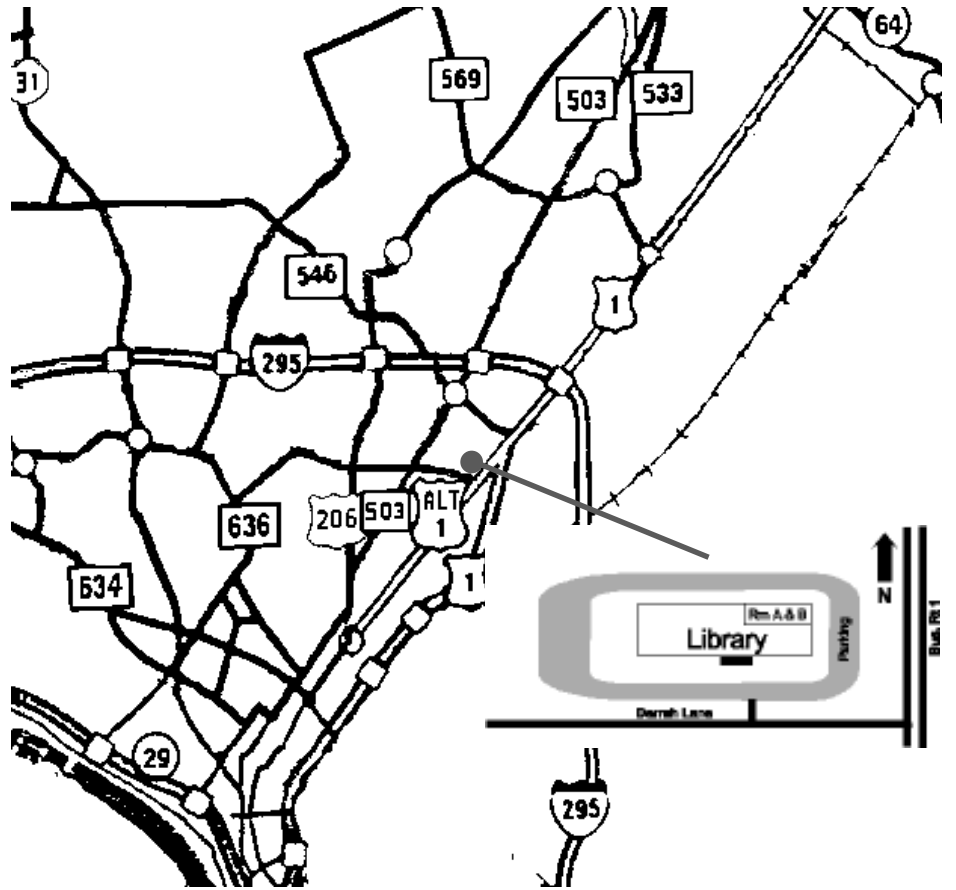
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WELCOME TO THE CLUB!

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.



**Hard Drive Data Recovery
April 12, 1999
Lawrence Library**

Princeton PC Users Group
P.O. Box 291
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