

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 November 8, 1999

Adobe GoLive 4.0!

Ron Di Torro
Adobe Systems

GoLive 4.0, Adobe's latest web design application will be demonstrated. Learn all the great things you can do with this powerfull application to enhance your web pages!

At

Lawrence Library

Meeting Rooms 1 & 2

US Route 1 South & Darrah Lane, Lawrenceville, NJ

☆☆☆☆☆ Our New Meeting Location ☆☆☆☆☆

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



Dr. Ron Rouse, (right) and John Best going over Ron's Visual Basic presentation prior to the start of the October general meeting.

Digital Photo by Ed Weiss

About PPCUG NEWS

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Voice Mail System

For information about, meetings, etc. call 908-281-3107 to leave a message.

Web Site

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

Board Members

President:

Paul Kurivchack 908-218-0778

Vice-President:

TBA

Secretary:

Ed Weiss 609-586-1395

Treasurer:

Tom Canavan 732-422-9055

Members-At-Large:

Kim Goldenberg 609-671-9188

Vic Laurie 609-924-1220

Vince Polignano 609-586-1466

Jon Abolins 609-883-8126

Chairpersons

Disk Library:

Tom Canavan 732-422-9055

Hospitality:

Bill Hawryluk 609-655-0923

Member Records:

Larry Lewis 609-771-9536

Newsletter Editor:

Paul Kurivchack 908-218-0778

Program Coordinator:

Sol Libes 609-520-9024

Web Master:

Jon Abolins 609-883-8126

Annual Dues Rates

Normal dues rate is \$25 per year.

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



Coming Events

December 13, 1999 - Gift Idea's for the Hoildays - Microsoft

Microsoft will be here to present the hottest items for the holidays!
Remember! ! 2000 Board Elections & Holiday Party also!

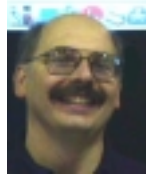
January 10, 2000 - Microsoft Office Annoyances

Fred Kagel will speak about Office issues!

February 14, 2000 - Controlling Devices with a PC

Paul Bergman will speak about Home & Equipment Automation.

March 13, 2000 - To Be Announced!



Presidents Message

by Paul Kurivchack

Well we are in the final stretch of the year. Baseball is over, Football is moving front and center, Halloween came and went, now we are on to Thanksgiving and Black Friday, the official start of Christmas shopping madness and of course the PPCUG elections.

For the 2000 year, the nominations are: Paul Kurivchack, President; Tom Canavan, Treasurer; Ed Weiss, Secretary; and a open position for Vice-President. Members-At-Large are Jon Abolins, Kim Goldenberg. Vic Laurie and Sol Libes. If any member is interested in one of these positions, you are eligible to be nominated at the November General Meeting. Voting will take place at the December General Meeting.

Thanks to Ron Rouse for his excellent talk on Visual Basic and proving that, you do not have to be a professional programmer to do some neat stuff. In fact, Ron is seeking other interested members to help form a VB SIG (See insert on page 4 for details). I appolize to Ron for not having his certificate for presentation at the end of his talk but will present it to him at the November meeting along with Jon Abolins.

Speaking about SIG's (Special Interest Groups), Sol Libes is preparing another of his e-mail surveys to poll the members as to some topics that would be of interest, such as Web Design, On-line Auctions, Home LAN setup, etc. As we have given up the space at the Plainsboro Library, we are proposing to use our Board Meeting night (Third Monday) on an alternating monthly schedule. The only hitch is we would like more people attending the meeting as in the past. Look for Sol's e-mail in the coming weeks and make your voice heard. We will do this again!

I look forward to seeing you all at the November meeting.

NEW MEMBERS

Donald Arrowsmith
George Hansen
Hernam Mintz
Charles Tang
Robert Willis
Kevin Larkin

James Gnantt
William P. Mooney
Mark Rutzky
Mike Tayyabkhan
William Wolff

**THANK YOU FOR JOINING US IN
1999!
WELCOME TO THE USER GROUP!**

Windows 9X Tips: Registry Facts for the Average User

By: Vic Laurie - PPCUG

Much has been written about the subject of the Registry from the point of view of the power user. In the past few years several articles have also appeared in this newsletter. However, the subject often seems so obscure and arcane that the typical user takes the path of least resistance and remains ignorant of even the most basic knowledge of the Registry. This is unfortunate since there are some things that are easily learned that can be very helpful in keeping a system in good order. Here, I am going to address the subject of the Registry again but stick to those aspects which are of practical use to an average person.

What the average user needs to know?

Editing or making direct changes to the Registry is not typically an activity of most users. However, it is important to at least know how to back up the Registry and how to restore a damaged or corrupted Registry should the need arise. A little learning here can save big headaches with Tech Support problems. The backup and restore process is neither difficult nor lengthy (especially for Windows 98) and is easily mastered by the greenest of neophytes. Also, just a little knowledge will make the Registry seem less like some cabalistic ritual of Druid priests and will remove some of the fear and loathing from the subject.

What is the Registry?

The registry is a central database containing all the varied assortment of information needed for the computer to run both the hardware and the software. The information is divided between two hidden, system, read-only files, *System.dat* and *User.dat*, which are located in the \Windows\ folder. This division into two files allows for flexibility in multi-user environments with user-specific information being kept in *User.dat*. It contains logon names, desktop settings, **Start** menu settings, and so on. If there is more than one user, each can have his (her) own version of *User.dat*. Hardware-specific and computer-specific settings are contained in *System.dat*. It contains all the hardware configurations, Plug and Play settings, application settings, etc. It is much the larger of the two files and on a Windows 98 system with Internet Explorer 4/5 may be 5 Mbytes or more. On a very basic Windows 95 system without Internet Explorer, it may be less than 1 Mbyte.

Backing Up and Restoring the Registry in Windows95

Windows 95 makes a rather feeble attempt at automatic backup by creating *system.da0* and *user.da0* files after every successful boot-up (note that the extension is *daZero*). These are copies of the last successful version of *system.dat* and *user.dat*. This stopgap measure is better than nothing and has saved my bacon once or twice but it is too easy for errors to creep in for this to be the only backup. Windows 95 also came (if you knew where to look) with two accessories for Registry backup, CFGBACK and ERU but both suffer from problems and I do not recommend them. There are also innumerable shareware programs that offer to do back ups. Don't waste any money on them. The canonical way to back up that is in all the literature involves booting to Command Prompt Only and doing DOS. For completeness, I will include this method here but, unless you are on a network, it isn't necessary to go to DOS, a procedure which may be more trauma for many people than it is worth (the average user seems to suffer from DOSophobia.) Old DOS hands can write a batch file that makes it all very easy, of

course, but I will skip that.

Here is the standard DOS backup procedure. Boot to "Command prompt only" (NOT A DOS BOX), and enter (I am using upper case but that is not necessary):

```
CD WINDOWS
ATTRIB -H -S -R SYSTEM.DAT
ATTRIB -H -S -R USER.DAT
COPY SYSTEM.DAT SYSTEM.BAK
COPY USER.DAT USER.BAK
ATTRIB +H +S +R SYSTEM.DAT
ATTRIB +H +S +R USER.DAT
```

This places the backups in the Windows folder along with the original registry files. If you wish to back up to another folder or a ZIP disk or other external medium as well (wise) insert the appropriate destination.

Why go to the bother with DOS? That is to make absolutely sure that nothing will try to access the Registry while it is being copied. However, if you are careful to have nothing else running (including things like screensavers) you can simply copy the two Registry files from within Windows Explorer (with Show All Files enabled) in the same way you would copy any other file. I have used this procedure many times. Nothing could be simpler. (These copies will have the hidden system attributes; they will need to be removed if the files are ever needed in a DOS procedure.)

How often is a backup needed? In principle those who do not make changes in their settings and do not install new software need only one healthy back up with the *da0* files serving as a second tier. In practice, keeping several backups in different places that are made a week or so apart isn't a bad idea. If you make frequent changes to your system then frequent backups are called for. In particular, before trying some new component or software always back up.

Registry backups are a form of insurance. Just as you purchase fire insurance for your home without expecting it to burn down, make backups even if you never expect to trash the Registry. Many users go through life with nary a whimper of trouble. (One way to help keep out of trouble is regular housecleaning which is discussed below.)

However, suppose the dreaded day arrives, you get one of the infamous corrupt Registry error messages and your machine refuses to open in Windows. What then? For purposes of illustration, I will assume the backups are also in the Windows folder. For other paths make appropriate substitutions. Assuming you are getting a C:\ prompt (if not, that is a whole other procedure involving a boot disk which I won't discuss here) enter the following DOS commands to replace the corrupt Registry files with back up copies.

```
CD WINDOWS
ATTRIB -H -S -R SYSTEM.DAT
ATTRIB -H -S -R USER.DAT
DEL SYSTEM.DAT
DEL USER.DAT
COPY SYSTEM.BAK SYSTEM.DAT
COPY USER.BAK USER.DAT
ATTRIB +H +S +R SYSTEM.DAT
ATTRIB +H +S +R USER.DAT
```

Restoring the attributes in the last two steps is to ensure proper functioning of the system.
(Incidentally, bad RAM or hard disk problems can alslead

A Y2K Solution for Old Computers

By Lewis A. Edge, Jr.

lewis@edgeassoc.com

"The Millennium Bug!" What do you do about it if you have an old computer that works fine and is doing its job . . . throw it away? There are many applications, such as routers and voice mail systems that don't need all the speed and power now available. If you're running DOS applications, many of them will not display graphics on modern 3D video boards that are optimized for Windows.

Seemingly endless "hand wringing" articles have been written about the problem. Fortunately there are several companies that offer solutions for PC's with out-of-date BIOS. A group of simple, thorough tests for Y2K hardware compatibility are available for FREE download from www.securenet.org. Software on your computer will NOT be tested.

To my knowledge, SecureNet is the only organization that offers a software fix for the Y2K problem that works both in DOS and in Windows. For about 30 bucks, Securenet will send you a 3½" floppy with the program on it. I evaluated it, but returned to the vendor for credit because of some "features" I did not like. The program must be installed onto a PC only from the *original non-write-protected program disk*, which cannot be backed up. Once the program is installed on your PC, it cannot be installed again. So if your hard drive crashes (a likely possibility with an old computer), and has to be reformatted or replaced, you will no longer be Y2K compliant.

Although SecureNet claims that they will replace the floppy in the event of a hard drive crash, I did not want to take that chance. Also I HATE software that cannot be backed up or reinstalled and, as a matter of principle, refuse to knowingly buy it. Software companies come and go and even the big, well-established ones discontinue support.

Our office's old 286 voice mail computer runs 24-hours a day and is still working great. I was not sure that I could successfully transfer the software, voice processing card and software lock to a new, modern Pentium class computer. Most of my voice mail computer's work is done by the voice processing card, so even its slow 286 CPU just loafes along. There would be no performance benefit from replacing the motherboard and hard drive. The vendor, who

sold us our voice mail system, generously offered to upgrade it for just \$3,000.00, which I had not budgeted. I did know, however, that if the voice mail system's clock rolled over to 1900 at the end of this year, it would purge all messages because they would appear to be more than 30-days old.

In searching for another solution, I found a product from Evergreen Technologies (www.everttech.com) called, "Fix Y2K Year 2000 Upgrade." Its a board that sells for \$39.95 + S&H and plugs into an empty ISA slot on any 286, 386, 486 or Pentium® computer. It updates the computer's BIOS to be Y2K compliant for at least ten years. I found other boards that sell for more, but this one appeared to be able to do the job.

Evergreen also has a free Y2K hardware testing program on its Web site. The test would not run on my old 286 computer, but it tested my 486 and Pentium class computers just fine. Shopping around, I found that most of the major mail-order companies had the Evergreen product in stock, but their prices are no better than buying it directly from Evergreen's Web site, so I bought mine directly.

About three business days after ordering, my Y2K solution arrived. I shut down the voice mail computer, removed the cover, installed the board in an ISA slot, replaced the cover and turned the computer back on. On boot-up, the computer showed a screen message that its BIOS had been updated. I ran the SecureNet test and, Voila, the computer passed all of its comprehensive tests. Not believing anything could be so simple, I then reset the computer's date for 12-31-1999 and the time for 23:59:50 and watched the clock roll over properly to the year 2000. Seeing is believing. For slightly more than 40 bucks and less than five minutes of work, I postponed a \$3,000 computer upgrade indefinitely.

Lewis A. Edge, Jr. is President, Lewis Edge & Associates, Inc., Princeton, NJ and a member of Princeton PC Users Group.

WANTED: VISUAL BASIC PROGRAMMERS NO EXPERIENCE NECESSARY.

After my presentation on Visual Basic Programming at the October PPCUG meeting, several people expressed interest in learning more. I have been hoping that we could form a SIG (Special Interest Group) for Visual Basic so those of us who are just learning it would have someone to talk to, and so those who are already experts would have an audience for showing off their expertise. Would you be interested?

There will be an exploratory meeting on Monday, November 8 at 7:00 p.m., before the regular PPCUG meeting begins. I'll have a table set up, with a Visual Basic SIG sign above it. Please join us.

Ron Rouse

to corrupt Registry error messages. Repeated problems with Registry errors may actually be a hardware problem.)

Backing Up and Restoring the Registry in Windows 98

Windows 98 is a piece of cake compared to Windows 95 since one of the best improvements Microsoft made in going to Windows 98 was to add some new system utilities. One of these is called the Registry Checker which backs up the Registry automatically and also restores it if needed. The da0 files are superfluous and are no longer created. Below are excerpts from the Microsoft Windows 98 Resource Kit explaining the whole process.

“Registry Checker is a system maintenance program that finds and fixes registry problems. Each time you start your computer, Registry Checker automatically scans the registry for inconsistent structures, and if no problem is found, Registry Checker makes one backup for each day. Registry Checker consists of two executable files, Scanreg.exe and Scanregw.exe, which are automatically copied to the \Windows\Command and Windows folders, respectively, when Windows 98 is installed.

If a problem is found in the registry, Registry Checker can restore the registry from a good backup copy. Registry Checker maintains five compressed backups of the registry that have successfully started the computer. Registry Checker attempts to fix the registry if a backup cannot be found. Registry Checker also removes unused space in the registry, reducing the size of the registry file, and therefore improving performance.

Once per day at startup a new CAB file containing a backup of the registry is created by Registry Checker. The file name is Rbxxx.cab (where xxx is a unique number assigned when the file is created). The new file replaces the oldest file. These files are located in the \Windows\Sysbckup folder (a hidden folder). Registry Checker always maintains *at least* the last configuration from which the system was successfully booted.”

Also from the Microsoft Resource Kit

“ To manually back up the registry using Registry Checker

1. On the **Start** menu, click **Run**.
2. Type **scanregw.exe**, and click **OK**.

First Registry Checker verifies that the registry is structurally sound. If the registry is sound, Registry Checker offers to back it up. Registry Checker will back up the registry and store the compressed CAB file in \Windows\Sysbckup (a hidden directory).”

And finally,

“To restore the backup manually

1. On the **Start** menu, click **Shut Down**.
2. Select **Restart in MS-DOS mode** and click **OK**.
3. At the MS-DOS command prompt, type **scanreg /re store**.
4. Select the latest known good backup.

Backed up, compressed registry files are listed with the name Rbxxx.cab. The files show the time and date of backup.”

In addition to whatever backups are made by scanreg, you can make copies of *System.dat* and *User.dat* through Windows Explorer just as was explained in the Windows 95 section above. These will not be in the compressed CAB format and can be used directly as previously discussed.

Cleaning the Registry

The Registry is in dynamic flux; programs continually access it both to obtain and to add information. Often, obsolete entries are left behind and over time the Registry will grow in size as it accretes outdated stuff. Also, if programs are installed and then removed, residues are left behind because of the inefficiencies of Windows uninstaller programs. If the Registry collects too much rubbish, it may slow down the system or even become less stable. Various programs exist to help clean the Registry (always back up before using any of them) and a free one called Regclean is available from Microsoft at <ftp://ftp.microsoft.com/Softlib/MSLFILES/REGCLEAN.EXE>

There were some reported problems with older versions but I have used this version, 4.1a Build 7364.1, without trouble. This utility is only a partial cleaner and does not get many things but I use it regularly. It creates an Undo file so that your previous Registry can be restored if you choose. Another free program that I have used with good success is called Easy Cleaner. It can be found on a number of sites including the author's homepage <http://www.saunalahti.fi/tonihele/>. It seems to do a good job, is really fast, and is recommended by many websites, but I point out, for what it is worth, that the author is a 15 year old Finnish kid. Back up before you use it.

If you want to pay for something, there are a host of utility programs with Registry cleaners. None that I have used clean all that much better than the kid's freebie but they have many more bells and whistles. They can back up what they clean and they are quite useful when uninstalling software. They remove stuff the program uninstallers miss. I have used CleanSweep quite a bit but you have to keep a close eye on what it wants to clean out. It always shows you first what it might do but sometimes wants to throw out stuff it shouldn't. Also, older versions have trouble with Windows 98. Now that Symantec has bought it and added it to Norton Utilities, I am not sure what the latest version is like.

The really diligent and fearless can clean by hand using a registry editor.

Editing the Registry

Average users will probably do this about as often as they bungee jump, but some of us are inveterate tinkerers and really like to get into the core of things. Windows 9X comes with a utility called Regedit. It is not listed in the Programs menu but it is in the Windows folder as the file *Regedit.exe*. There are also help files. The easiest way to use it is to open the **Run** menu and enter “regedit” (without quotes). One serious drawback to Regedit is its lack of an “undo” function. Whatever editing is done, is done, and cannot be reversed. More flexible editors are available in programs like Norton Utilities.

For the less intrepid and more circumspect, there are other, safer ways of editing the Registry. The *TweakUI* utility is an interface for easily making Registry changes which I have recommended many times. Go to <http://www.winmag.com/win95/software.htm> or <http://www.winmag.com/win98/software.htm>. Another free utility which is quite useful is *X-Setup 5.0*. It is available at <http://www.xteq.com/main.html>.

Disclaimer: Everything mentioned here works on my and other computers but Windows systems can be highly idiosyncratic so your results may differ.

Streaming Video - The Next Killer App?

By Sol Libes - PPCUG

The next biggest thing on the World Wide Web is predicted to be "Streaming Video." Will it replace television, or at the very least merge with it in some way? It is still in early development. In the meantime, there are several streaming video sites on the web for users to check out.

Streaming Video Lectures on the Web

An excellent Streaming Video example can be found at Princeton University's WebMedia web site <<http://www.princeton.edu/WebMedia>>. On it you will find lectures that have been given by individuals prominent in their fields. For example, I recently viewed a series of three lectures given by Andrew Knoll, from Harvard University, titled "Reconstructing the Early History of Life on Earth" in which he traced the earliest living creatures on earth going back several hundred million years ago. Each lecture was over an hour long. In addition, to previously recorded stuff, you can listen to scheduled Princeton University multicast concerts and sports events.

How would you like to view lectures given at The Royal Institute of Technology, in Kista Sweden? If so, go to <<http://www.it.kth.se/misc/events/Lecture-series.html>>. Interested in watching a surgical procedure done at a hospital in England? Then go to <<http://gasnet.dundee.ac.uk/sata/announce/messages/5.html>>. Want to go the place that created the first WYSIWYG Web Browser (Mosaic), National Center for Supercomputing Applications at the University of Illinois, to see, in action, the projects they are working on? Then go to <<http://www.ncsa.uiuc.edu/MEDIA/vidlib/new.html>>. You can view the NOAA (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration) streaming videos at <<http://www.broadcast.noaa.gov/>>. This is just a small sampling of educational videos that are available on the web. Do a search on "streaming video" and you will discover a lot more.

Watching Movies On-line

If you want to watch a full-length movie, many are already available on the web. You don't have to go to video store. Just go to NetMovieMania <http://www.kkrs.net/net-moviemaniahome/MOVIE_page.html> where you will find close to 200 movies and it is all free! A few nights ago I went to the Comedy section and watched "His Girl Friday," a classic with Cary Grant and Rosalind Russell.

Interested in going out to a real movie theatre and want to check out the movies first? Then go to Moviefone <<http://www.moviefone.com/>> where you can view the trailers for every movie currently in the theatres. These are the exact same trailers that are shown in the theatres.

How to Watch Streaming Video

Watching streaming video requires that you are connected to the Internet via at least a 28.8Kbps connection. Of course, a faster connection will improve performance. Use either a Windows 3.1, 95, 98, NT, or Macintosh computer. You will need a browser (e.g. Netscape, Internet Explorer, etc.) and a streaming video plug-in for the browser. Currently, most streaming videos require either Apple's Quick Time, RealPlayer G2, or Microsoft's Windows Media Player. All are free plug-ins and can be downloaded from the web. The streaming video sites usually have links to the download sites.

When you click on a link to a streaming video file, the plug-in starts working and loads the first part of the media file to be viewed. A viewing screen will appear along with some VCR-like controls. It may take a little time for the first part to come across to your system. As you view it, the next part will be downloading in the background, be uncompressed, and passed to the viewer creating a continuous viewing experience. Hence, the term "streaming."

If you have a very slow connection to your ISP, or if things are very busy on the Internet, then there may be some noticeable interruptions as each segment is transferred. I have a cable connection and notice that during normal working hours there some jerkiness when I was watching a video from a distant web server that is also very busy.

Streaming video is still in early development and I expect it will improve. The audio quality is very good. I would rate the video quality as "not bad." The video quality does not compare to going to the live lecture, or watching a movie in the theatre, or viewing a video tape or CD. But then again, it is free and very convenient. You can watch the event or movie any time you want and it sure beats travelling to the event.

There is no doubt that our children, or grandchildren, will soon be getting much of their formal education at home, from the best teachers available in locations on the other side of the globe, via the internet.

Minutes for the Board Meeting October 25, 1999

By: Ed Weiss

In attendance: Paul Kurivchack, Bill Hawryluk, Sol Libes, Vince Polignano, Tom Canavan, Vic Laurie, John Abolins, and Ed Weiss.

At 8:13 PM, Paul opened the meeting.

First order of business was a discussion about the upcoming elections. The following board members will run again: Paul Kurivchack, Vic Laurie, Tom Canavan, Kim Goldenberg, John Abolins, and Ed Weiss. The position of Vice President is open, and currently there are no candidates announced. Any one interested in running for Vice President should contact Paul by phone, email or snail mail.

The forms were delivered to the Lawrenceville Library to request the dates for the meeting rooms for the year 2000. Further information will follow if any of the dates are changed.

The unofficial Treasure's report stated that the amount in the treasury is \$3462.00

Sol reported that the programs for January and February are scheduled, and will be announced in the newsletter.

Sol asked if the board believed that there was enough interest to present another Internet SIG. Sol will send out a questionnaire to the membership to find out their feelings on the subject.

Paul is attempting to update the information that appears in the "Computer User" newspaper, to reflect the correct contacts, meeting place, and phone numbers.

9:37 PM Paul adjourned the meeting.



PRINCETON PC USERS GROUP

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

Name Last	First	E-Mail Address	Name Last	First	E-Mail Address
Abolins	John	jda-ir@njcc.com	Lewis	Larry	ll@gfdl.gov
Ancier	Sherman	sancier@ibm.net	Lewis	Lloyd	Budnorth@juno.com
Arrowsmith	Donald L.	Donald.arrowsmith@bigfoot.com	Libes	Sol	sol@libes.com
Axelrod	Albert	aaxelrod@erols.com	Lin	Alex	first@bellatlantic.net
Best	John J.	JJbest57@alum.mit.edu	Lindbloom	Loree	loreez1@aol.com
Canavan	Thomas	TCanavan1@aol.com	Lipscher	Betty	forenexts@att.net
Caris	Paul	pd_caris@csi.com	Lukpetris	Sylvia Sila	lukpetris@erols.com
Carman	Tom	tom_carman@compuserve.com	Markward	Margaret	mteragram@aol.com
Chilton	Neal	chilforce@aol.com	Maruska	John	maruska1@Juno.com
Clerke	Len	lenc@castle.net	Metzler	Joseph	76116.3117@compuserve.com
Cohen	Jon	jon@pluto.njcc.com	Miller	Doug	d.n.miller@worldnet.att.net
Colucci	Frank	dasweb1@aol.com	Mintz	Herman	hmintz4@aol.com
Crossley	Helen	CrossleyHM@aol.com	Mooney	William P.	who8350722@aol.com
Davis	Perry	perrydavis@compuserve.com	Oldenburg	Tom	oldenburg-ta@worldnet.att.net
Dinkins-Belton	Joyce	Joyce8NJ@aol.com	Olson	Gaylord	go@electrim.com
Dodge	Bill	B-Mdodge@juno.com	Papier	Philip B., Jr.	papierp@superlink.net
Duggins	Marsha	msd@gfdl.gov	Parker	Nicole	nparker239@aol.com
Edge, Jr.	Lewis	lewis@edgeassoc.com	Phadke	Laxman	lgphadke@home.com
Einthoven	Bella & Wim	einthoven@mail.eclipse.net	Polignano	Vince	vincepo@worldnet.att.net
Ewer	Tim	tjewer@worldnet.att.net	Pratt	Zeblon	zpratt@aol.com
Foulkes	Frank	ffoulkes1@aol.com	Pruden	David	nedurp@aol.com
Gazzillo	Vince	vgazzillo@otis.state.nj.us	Reichart	Richard	reichart@pluto.njcc.com
Gerwers	Hank	PSCI@idt.net	Rothstein	Rick	frnoth@aosi.com
Gilstrap	William	wkgbill@earthlink.net	Rouse	Ron	DrRonRouse@aol.com
Gnandt	James	Jim8541@erols.com	Rutzky	Mark M.	marky@injersey.com
Goldberg	Ed	EdGoldberg@home.com	Sivakumar	Ganga	gsivakum@dol.state.nj.us
Goldenberg	Kim	kim_goldenberg@bigfoot.com	Sked	Bill	billsked@aol.com
Griegel	Wayne	wgriegel@ix.netcom.com	Sneath	Blanche	PettieJ@Juno.com
Hardy	Wayne	wayne97wh@aol.com	Stockwell	Hunt	huntstock@aol.com
Hawryluk	Bill	hawr@compuserve.com	Steinman	Arthur	amsteinman@aol.com
Henry	Chuck	chenry@eclipse.net	Suber	Michael J.	MPSuber@Juno.com
Holly	Lois	lholly@ariel.Princeton.EDU	Sweeton	Andrew	andrew.sweeton@response-analysis.com
Houlihan	Bill	lorrainebill@cybertours.com	Tang	Charles	ctang@njcc.com
Johnson	Florence	kredit@erols.com	Tayyabkhan	Mike	tayyabkhan@aol.com
Juelch	Karl	karljnj@nerc.com	Tenner	Edward	tenner@clarity.princeton.edu
Kahan	Maurice	mkahan@juno.com	Treadwell	Isaac	itreadwell@aol.com
Kerslake	David	Dongsung@Juno.com	Walthall	Ron	DKDM83A@prodigy.com
Kleinerman	Milt & Irma	Rafiki5513@aol.com	Weaver	Perry	Weaver@home.com
Kocsis	John	JKocsis234@aol.com	Wee	Tito	tito@dragonagro.com
Konvalinka	John	jkonvalinka@msn.com	Weinberg	Robert	bweinb@worldnet.att.net
Koosman	Milton	miltonk2@aol.com	Weiss III	Edward	eweiss@eweiss.jvnc.net
Kurivchack	Paul	kurivchack_p@compuserve.com	Williams	Jan	SianiPowys@aol.com
Landis	Houston	judge@alumni.princeton.edu	Williams	Ken	krw1948@worldnet.att.net
Laurie	Vic	hampsi@bigfoot.com	Williams	Rick	rick75@aol.com
Lazar	Joseph	joelazar@nerc.com	Willis, Jr.	Lloyd	llwillis1@prodigy.net
Levine	Robert J.	rjl@gurus.com	Willis	Robert	robert4269@aol.com

(Last Update: 24 October 1999)

Send Updates to kurivchack_p@compuserve.com for inclusion in this listing.

Consultants Corner

Cascade Media Group, Inc.

Jon Conant

335 Wall Street

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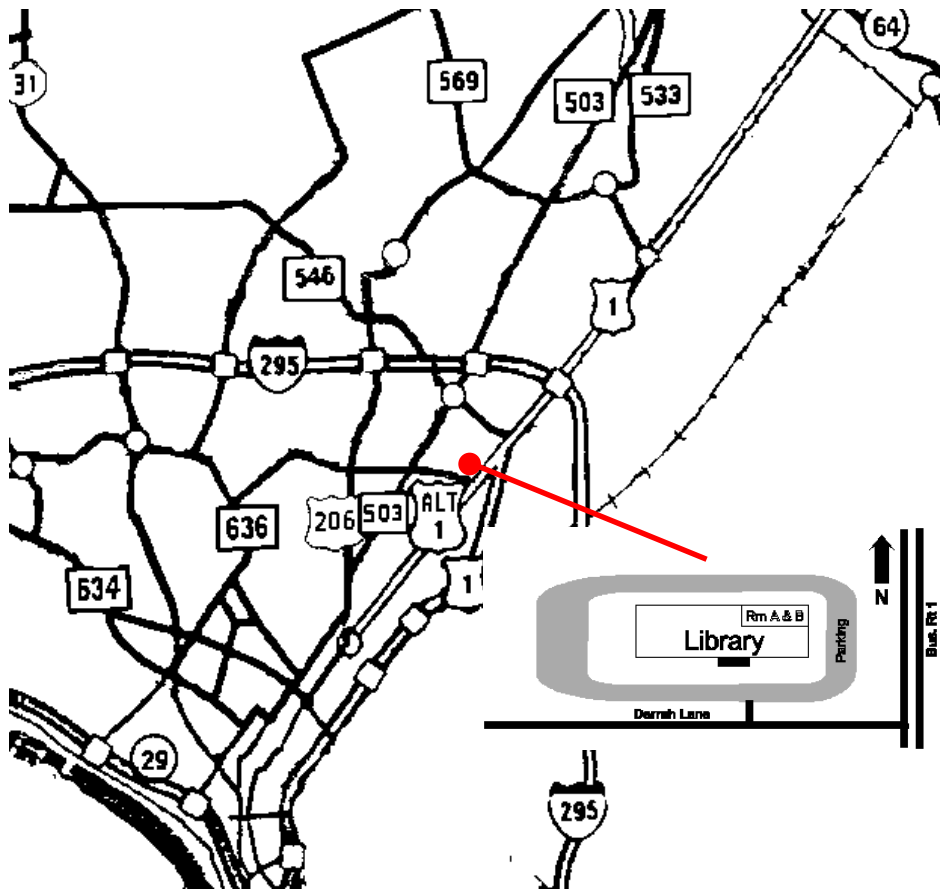
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The Lawrence Library is at the corner of Business Route 1 South and Darrah Lane.

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.



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