PPCUG

NEWS

Monday March 13, 2000

You *Can* Get Something for Nothing:
My Favorite free Windows Utilities

Vic Laurie

**The Internet abounds with software utilities free for downloading.
Things to be found range from the totally useless or even dangerous to the really helpful.
A selection of the speaker's best picks will be presented and discussed."**

At
Lawrence Library
Meetng Rooms 1 & 2
US Route 1 South & Darrah Lane, Lawrenceville, NJ
☆ ☆
*Meetings of an organization at any of the facilities of the Mercer County Library System
in No Way implies endorsement of its programs*

In this issue

Member of

APCUG
Association of Personal Computer User Groups

Dr. Ron Rouse speaking on using your computer and the Internet to do your taxes with TurboTax at the February meeting.

Digital Photo by Ed Weiss

About PPCUG

General Meetings

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

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

7:45 PM: Meeting Comes to Order

8 PM: Featured Presentation

Board Meetings

Third Monday of the Month
8 PM at Lawrenceville Library.
Board meetings are open to All.

Board Members

President:
    Paul Kurivchack 908-218-0778
Vice-President:
    TBA ....
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Treasurer:
    Tom Canavan 732-422-9055
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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

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

April 10, 2000 - Intelligent Video Cameras on the Web

Keith Sproul will be here again to enlighten us on new techniques.

May 8, 2000 - Home Networking

Scott Vincent will show us how to set up a simple home network.

June 12, 2000 - Web Lifestyles - Microsoft

Sonal Shah will be back to talk about using the internet to organize, communicate and improve your life.

July 10, 2000 Create Your Own Personal Web Page

Presidents Message
by Paul Kurivchack

For many of our newer members, March is just another month. This year, March is very special. It marks the fifteenth anniversary of the founding of the Princeton IBM PC Users Group, now known as the Princeton PC Users Group.

Unfortunately, many of the founding members have moved on to other interests or areas of the country and are no longer involved with the present group to relate the early days history of the group.

Larry Lewis, a founding member, who also was our membership chairperson and had much of this past history knowledge has decided he needed to move on to other interests and has passed the membership task back to the present board. Larry will be greatly missed, not only in his role of keeping our membership records but as a link to the early days of the group. Larry you did a great job during the past fifteen years and we wish you well for the future.

Now moving to the future and the next fifteen years, we need your help. We need more feedback as to what we are doing right and wrong. Was the low turnout for February just a fluke due to it being Valentines Day or something else? I know the Ron and Vic work very hard in preparing their respective presentations and both work at giving a talk about a timely subject such as tax software or Windows. While Ron is not a tax accountant, he was able to do a very good job of presenting TurboTax, it features, ease of use and benefits of using it to do your taxes or just as a Tax planning tool. Ron thanks again for stepping up to the plate and doing an excellent job.

E-mail Sol or I, we want to offer the programs that are of interest to you our members. Would a night of tech question and answers be helpful instead of a formal presentation or a night where everyone gets a chance to describe their home system, what they like about what they own or what they are wishing for? We still have plenty of nights to still schedule, so please let us know what you want to see and hear.

Keep in mind that TCF is coming up in May. We still need volunteers to help man the Parcel Pickup Area we run at the flea market. This was a great revenue generator for the group last year and hopefully will be again this year as well. As this is the only outside event we participate in, please try to spare four hours on either Saturday or Sunday afternoon to help at the Parcel Pickup Area. While it does not generate huge sums of money, it does help keep our yearly dues to $25.00. So again, please sign up.

I look forward to seeing you all on the thirteenth.

Windows 9X Tips: SPLASH!

By: Vic Laurie - PPCUG

Windows Explorer is the basic shell or user interface to the operating system. Its properties and characteristics are something we deal with every time we use the computer. Learning efficient ways of manipulating Explorer can speed up the way we get things done and make life easier. In this article are some tips on setting up Explorer to best suit individual preferences.

In earlier days, Windows Explorer and Internet Explorer were totally separate entities. Somewhat different modes of presentation for the desktop and for the Internet are still available, but with IE 4/5 the distinction between the two Explorers has been considerably blurred. Nowadays the two are very much intertwined. Many tips, therefore, apply to either Explorer. There is some interesting history here for which we have no space. For reasons of its own, Microsoft wished to integrate IE into the operating system as much as possible and wanted to make the desktop and the Internet basically indistinguishable. They did beat out Netscape through this integration, but on the other hand, there was considerable dislike of the feature called Active Desktop. In Internet Explorer 5 Microsoft crippled one of the components of Active Desktop in IE 4 known as Desktop Update. If you install IE 5 over IE 4, however, the option of Desktop Update is retained. In this discussion, I will assume that Active Desktop is not in use.

Views

Let us begin with a basic function of Explorer- displaying the list of folders and files that are present on the system. This information can be displayed in a number of different formats, which have been termed "Views". In my opinion the default settings that come with every computer are far from the most useful and need modifying for most users. If you double-click *My Computer* or a folder icon, you will obtain a single-pane view using icons to represent folders and files. If you pull down the *View* menu you can change to a "List" or a "Details" representation. On the other hand, opening Explorer from the Programs Menu or by right-clicking Start and choosing Explore gives a double-pane view. The double-pane view in turn has a number of options. The default setting uses icons but again this can be changed to a "List" or "Details" view in the *View* menu. Personally, I prefer the "Details" view and I also find some other changes from the default settings to be important. The default setting is for something called "Web Style" which is really not useful unless the user wishes to make certain special custom settings. I prefer the so-called "Classic Style." These settings are in View | Folder Options | General. Also, files with the hidden or system attribute and most file extensions are not shown by the factory settings. For many purposes these settings need to be changed. To make changes go to View | Folder Options | View. (That's right. "View" is in there twice.) In the list of settings, check "Show all files" and uncheck "Hide file extensions for known file types." You

may wish to check "Remember each folder's view settings." (But see Windows Amnesia below) You may also want to make sure that "Show file attributes in Detail view" is checked. (Microsoft removed the capability to show attributes in Windows 98 SE but you can restore it. See http://support.microsoft.com/support/kb/articles/Q241/3/80.ASP). While you have the menu open, look over the list to see if there are any other changes that appeal to you. Click "Apply" (the menu will stay open) or "OK" (the menu will close) to make your changes.

If you prefer the double-pane Explorer view when opening *My Computer* or any other folder instead of the default single-pane, right-click and choose Explore from the context menu. You can also get the double-pane view from *My Computer* or any other folder by first highlighting it and then double-clicking while holding down the *Shift* key. Yet another way (Windows never does something only one way if it can be helped) is to open the menu for View | Explorer Bar and click "Folders." If you wish to make a double-pane view the default (what you get when you double-click) go to View | File Options and click the "File Types" tab. Select "Folder" from the list of Registered file types. Click "Edit", then "explore", then "Set Default", then OK.

If, on the other hand, you are using the double-pane view and wish to change to the *My Computer* kind of view, click the X in the upper corner of the left-hand or All Folders column (note: not the X in the upper right-hand of the window as a whole).

Here are a couple of keyboard shortcuts that can be used when you are in a double-pane view. To expand a folder in the left pane, highlight it and press the asterisk key (*) on the Numeric keypad. The result is a fully expanded view of every folder and all their subfolders. For a folder such as *Windows*, which contains many subfolders, the listing will be very long and will take a while to unfold. If you use the Details view and find that some of the columns in the right pane are too narrow, hold down the *Ctrl* key while pressing the plus (+) key in the Numeric keypad. Columns will be resized automatically to fit their longest entry. If you have IE 4, the F6 key will switch you from the right-hand pane to the left-hand pane to the Address bar. In conjunction with the up and down arrow keys, this allows you to navigate the list of folders without using the mouse. Also when in the left-hand pane, the right arrow key can be used to expand the listing for a highlighted folder. The expanded list will appear on the right. (If IE 5 is installed, Windows Explorer has slightly different behavior and this shortcut is less useful.).

A specialized view that can be useful for folders with graphics files is "thumbnail view." If you right-click on a folder and open the Properties sheet, you can check a box near the bottom "Enable thumbnail view." You will then get a display that shows small views or "thumbnails" of the contents of the files in that folder. You also get thumbnails if you use Web view.

Windows Amnesia

After you have obtained the type of view you wish, the next step is to adjust the window size to your preference. Sizing win-

dows is something everyone learns at the beginning. The trick is to get Windows to remember your preference so that you do not have to resize every time you open a new window. In principle this is easy. In View | Folder Options | View, there is a box with the caption, "You can make all your folders look the same." If you have your settings where you like them, click the box, "Like current folder." However, this brings us to one of the unsolved mysteries of life (or at least of Windows). At random times Windows will "forget" your settings (size, view, everything) and revert to the defaults. There are many purported explanations but no one seems to have a unique, definitive handle on why this happens. There appear to be a number of things that can cause Registry settings to jump back to the defaults. In my experience, it seems to be worse with Windows 98SE but that is a subjective assessment.

The most straightforward and easiest to understand of the reasons for Windows amnesia is the fact that it can save only a finite number of different settings. Settings are kept in the Registry in:

HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Explorer\ **Streams.** Windows 95 has room in the registry for 29 separate settings and Windows 98 increased this to 200. When the limit is reached the oldest setting is dropped. Thus, after you have opened many windows you will find yourself back at the default. There are a number of ways to work around this limitation on the number of settings, but then, at apparently random times, Windows will still suddenly revert to the defaults. The Internet and Newsgroups have much discussion on the phenomenon with various suggested fixes. None seems to work all the time and if anybody knows a definitive solution, please let me in on the secret. For what it's worth, here are a couple of common suggestions. After sizing a window to the desired setting, close it by clicking the X in the upper right hand corner while simultaneously holding down the *Ctrl* key. Another suggestion is to hold down *Shift* while clicking the X in the upper right hand corner. Yet another is to hold down the *Shift+Ctrl* keys while closing. Take your choice.

If you have installed *TweakUI*, make sure "Save Explorer window settings" is checked in the Explorer section.

Open Explorer Where You Want

A very popular tip, which has been given in these pages before (http://www.ppcug-nj.org/articles/vic_laurie/ potpourri2.html) but which I will repeat here with more detail, shows how to open Explorer at a folder of your choice. A new Explorer window can be opened by a command in the RUN line or in a shortcut. One form (but not the only one) of the syntax for the command line and its switches is *explorer.exe /n, /e,{folder}*.

Here */n,* specifies that Explorer should open a new window (may usually be omitted) and

/e, opens the folder in expanded or double-pane view. (Note the commas in the switches. Omitting the commas gives a different result.) As an example, to open Explorer at a specific folder *C:\myfolder,* the command line would be *C:\windows\explorer.exe /n,/e,C:\myfolder*. To create a shortcut on the Desktop that opens Explorer where you want, right-click in an open area of the Desktop, choose New | Shortcut from the context menu, and make the appropriate entry in the Command Line box. Then give the shortcut whatever name you prefer. This view will display your whole system tree but with *C:\myfolder* highlighted and expanded. To create a view with *C:\myfolder* at the beginning or root of the display tree, use the command *C:\windows\explorer.exe /n,/e, /root,C:\myfolder*. If you wish a view of the whole system tree with the focus on *My Computer* use *C:\windows\explorer.exe /n,/e,/root,,/select,C:* (Note that there are two commas after *root*.)

Make sure to get all the commas in the right places. Change one comma and the action you get may be completely different.

For a discussion of the various switches and syntax for Explorer commands, you can read the Microsoft knowledge base article at

http://support.microsoft.com/support/kb/articles/q130/5/10.asp However, be aware that this article is not always clear about where the commas should go in command lines. Neil Rubenking has an article in *PC Magazine* at http://www.zdnet.com/pc-mag/stories/solutions/0,8224,2425962,00.html that gives a discussion of the command line parameters and references to possible glitches in the switches.

January Meeting Photos
By: Ed Weiss

Windows 2000 - An Open Letter
By: Sonal Shah & Jim Allchin - Microsoft

Dear User Groups,

In light of the recent release of Windows 2000, I thought you may find the following information enlightening. Around the country, user groups are posting this information to their sites and newsletters. Many of you have probably read or heard of a recent article claiming Windows 2000 has shipped with over 63,000 bugs. If not, click on:

http://www.zdnet.com/pcweek/stories/news/0,4153,2436920,00.html to read more.

The article includes quotes from the author stating "How many of you would spend $500 on a piece of software with over 63,000 potential known defects?". These claims are completely inaccurate. The 63,000 number does not represent bugs, but includes areas where comments are present for additional functionality a developer may request to add later, or a developer marked where they may want to do something differently or more efficiently. We have had over 750,000 beta testers and hundreds of customers rolling out Windows 2000 in production environments, even before general availability. Windows 2000 is fully deployed across many organizations today, including Stride Rite and Sears Homelife, is being currently being deployed across hundreds of enterprises such as Wells Fargo, Motorola, and Prudential, and it is driving many of the world's major websites, including Buy.com, Barnesandnoble.com, DataReturn, and Digex. Attached is an open letter to Microsoft customers from Jim Allchin, Group VP, Platforms Group, Microsoft. In it, he dispels the myth of the 63,000 bugs in Windows 2000. Please feel free to share this information with your groups.

Thanks,
Sonal Shah
Channel Marketing Representative
Partner and Consumer Education: NJU & Greater PA Districts
Home & Retail Division - Microsoft Corporation

An Open Letter to Microsoft Customers on Windows 2000

From: Jim Allchin, Group Vice President, Platforms Group, Microsoft Corporation

You may have seen reports in the media claiming that Windows 2000 contains over 63,000 defects. I'd like to assure our customers that these reports are inaccurate. Microsoft is committed to delivering high quality products, and we believe Windows 2000 is the most reliable operating system Microsoft has ever shipped.

In fact, the technical press, industry analysts, and our customers have already spoken.

There have been more than 20 technical reviews of Windows 2000, and in all of them Windows 2000 received very high marks in the area of reliability.

Analyst studies show Windows 2000 to be significantly more reliable than any previous version of Windows ever.

To ensure we received the maximum testing coverage possible before releasing we shipped over 750,000 beta test copies of Windows 2000.

Many small businesses like CenterBeam and WFofR as well as hundreds of enterprises such as Ford, Wells Fargo, Motorola, and Prudential are currently rolling out Windows 2000 across their infrastructure.

Windows 2000 has now been fully deployed in many businesses including Stride Rite and Sears Homelife.

Additionally, Windows 2000 is driving many of the world's major websites, including Buy.com, Barnesandnoble.com, Dell.com, Microsoft.com, Monster.com and large ISPs such as DataReturn, and Digex.

So does Windows 2000 have 63,000 defects? The answer is a flat no. There was an internal development paper that described a broad set of focus areas for the team that mentioned the 63,000 number. However, without understanding our development process (which isn't described in this paper) reporting such a number is totally meaningless when taken out of context.

First, we track many issues internally in our "bug" database, including feature requests that someone may have mentioned or dreamed about, potentially confusing phrases in the documentation, performance improvement ideas, etc. – most of which are clearly not bugs in the classical sense. We track virtually everything mentioned by testers (internally or externally). These include feature requests, potential problems, or real problems. We also track any place in our code where we think we can improve an algorithm. This does NOT mean that there is a bug. In fact, it is often the case the code is marked so that it can be reviewed in the future for performance or feature enhancements.

We also have a special advanced source code analyzer that we use. This tool generates a significant number of false positives (it thinks the code should be changed, but in fact it should not be). But, we track them all. The only way to be sure is to look at each hit and see if the issue is real or not. We love this tool. It helps us improve our code for readability and it can find bugs that our testing may not find. We also track our test code. There are over 10 million lines of test code that can also have improvements, potential bugs, etc. that we track in the *same* database. So, we track together test code, shipping code, and future code for the next release (we always have future projects cranking out code long before the previous release ships). Technically, we keep all of this information in a single tracking system and simply query for the kinds of information we want. At the end of every release we need to clean up our database and code since it ends up accumulating lots of random data. The internal paper discussed doing this clean up.

Will customers run into bugs in Windows 2000? We worked harder than ever to ensure they would not. Windows 2000 is the highest quality product we have ever released-just ask any one of the thousands of satisfied users who have experienced Windows 2000 so far.

We are very proud of Windows 2000's quality and our relentless pursuit of the highest quality software in the world.

Thank You,

Jim Allchin
Group Vice President, Platforms Group
Microsoft Corporation

Minutes for the General Meeting
February 14, 2000

By: Ed Weiss

07:55 PM - Paul opened the meeting. He stated that the board meeting would be held 02/23/00 because of the holiday on Monday the 21'st. After that, Sol Libes mentioned which programs were being scheduled for the months ahead. The "TCF" sign up sheet was in the back of the room, and waiting for members to sign up as volunteers for the festival May 6'th & 7'th. One other fact mentioned is that DUES ARE STILL DUE !! 08:04 PM, Paul turned the meeting over to Dr. Ron Rouse, who gave the program demonstration on Turbo Tax. Despite several thwarted attempts with the LCD panel, all was finally properly configured, and the demo went to completion. At 09:15, Ron closed the demo, and opened the meeting for questions about Turbo Tax, while the rest of the room was being cleared.

After the questions and before the meeting was adjourned, there was a small badge raffle held for several gifts.

At 09:32 PM, the meeting was adjourned.

Minutes for the Board Meeting
February 23, 2000

By: Ed Weiss

20:35 the meeting was opened. In attendance, Paul Kurivchack, Vic Laurie, Sol Libes, Tom Canavan, and Ed Weiss.

Discussions included:

Total Membership - currently 67 renewals.

Ways to acquire new members and boost the amount of members attending meetings.

A motion to be sure that there is at least a 15 Min period for technical questions from the floor.

A motion to start the meeting at 07:45 to accommodate the 15 Min. technical questions.

A motion to have a more formal Help Desk arrangement instead of the technical questions that would run from approx. 07:30 PM till 08:00 PM, hosted mostly but not limited to Tom Canavan in an area so designated.
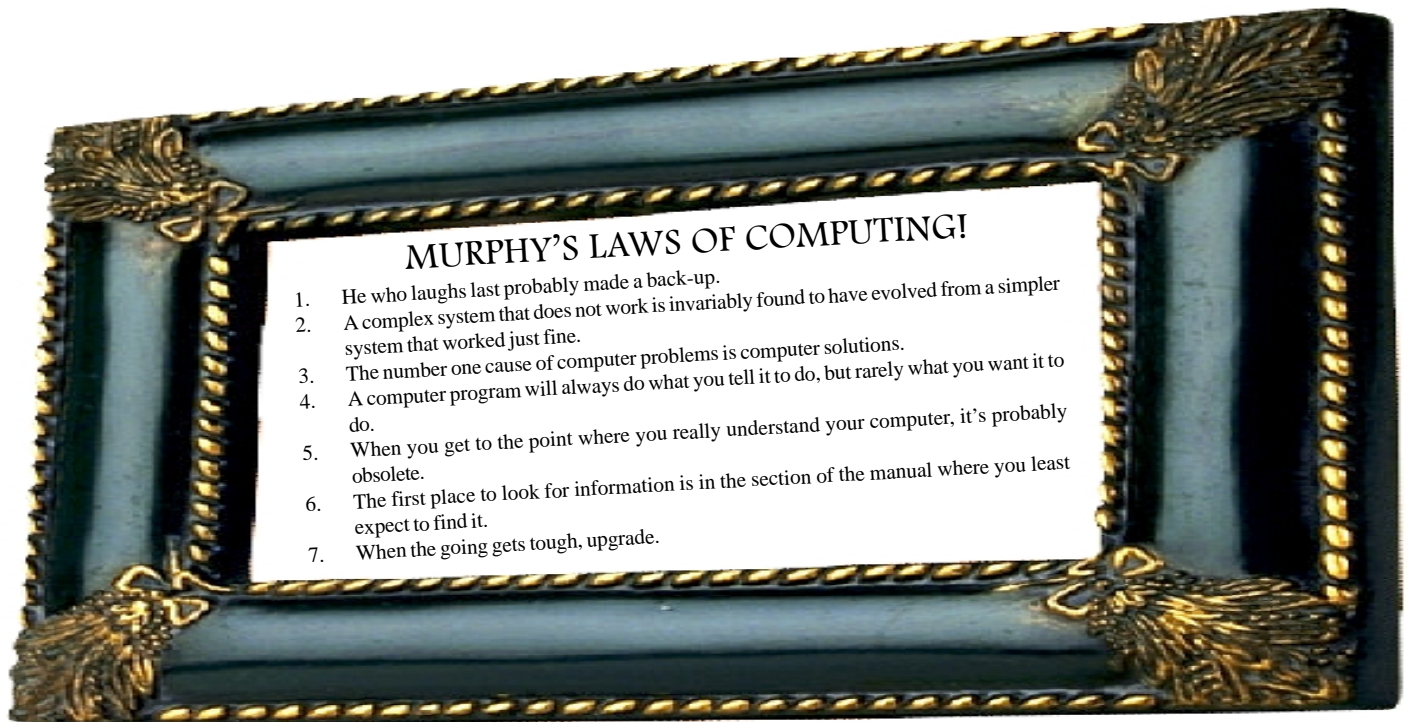
Paul will check on phone access thru the library, also extending to PCMCIA modems, and even to cell phone access.

Sol discussed scheduling of the upcoming programs for the general meetings, setting up schedules so that all equipment, etc. would be available for the appropriate speakers.

Discussion on the club's replacing the LCD panel with a projector capable of 800x600 and bright enough to be usable in the library, or other facility that the club may use.

Current treasury balance as of 02/23/00 at meeting time $5,018.

22:15 the meeting was adjourned, the room cleaned and all left the building.

MURPHY'S LAWS OF COMPUTING!

1. He who laughs last probably made a back-up.
2. A complex system that does not work is invariably found to have evolved from a simpler system that worked just fine.
3. The number one cause of computer problems is computer solutions.
4. A computer program will always do what you tell it to do, but rarely what you want it to do.
5. When you get to the point where you really understand your computer, it's probably obsolete.
6. The first place to look for information is in the section of the manual where you least expect to find it.
7. When the going gets tough, upgrade.

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(Last Update: 5 March 2000)

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

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Consultants Corner

You can advertise your consulting business for $25 per year in addition to your normal membership fee. The text space is your or your company's name plus five lines.
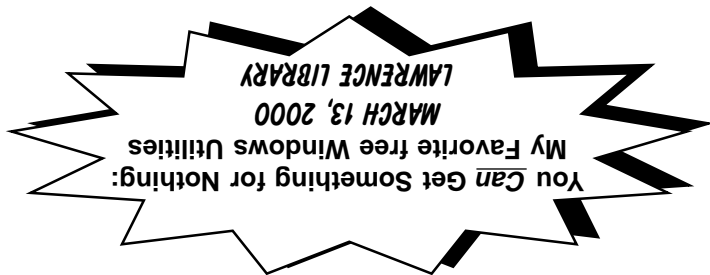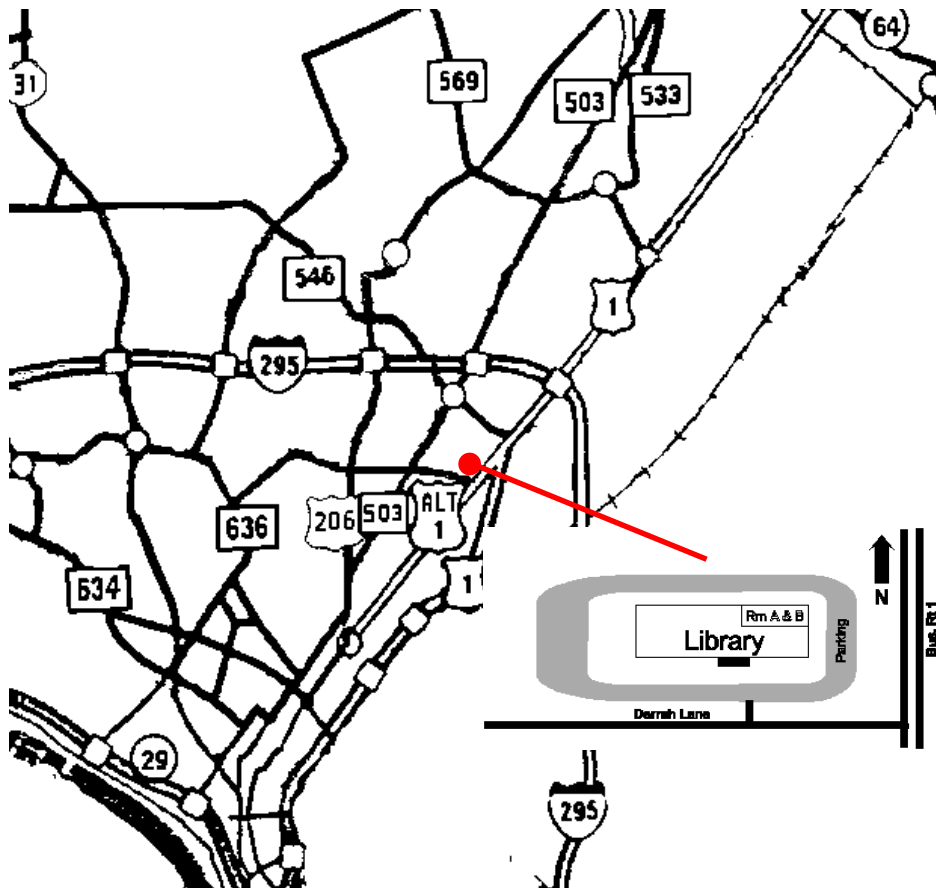

NEW MEMBERS

Andrew Sweeton
Lloyd Willis

THANK YOU FOR JOINING US IN 2000!

WELCOME TO THE USERS GROUP

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 enterance 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 enterance in front. Meeting rooms A & B are located through glass door on Route 1 side of building.

You _Can_ Get Something for Nothing:
My Favorite free Windows Utilities
MARCH 13, 2000
LAWRENCE LIBRARY