PPCUG

NEWS

Monday September 10, 2001

Using the Internet for Genealogical Research

John Konvalinka

John will demonstrate how the Internet can be used, in conjunction with traditional
genealogy research methods, to trace family histories.
He will visit several important Web Sites and, using case studies,
will demonstrate how they can be used for genealogical research.

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

President, Paul Kurivchack conducting the business portion of the August General Meeting.

Digital Photo by Joe Lazar

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

For information about upcoing meetings or joining PPCUG call 908-218-0778 to leave a message.

Board Meetings

For Meeting Location, Date and Time, call 908-218-0778

Board meetings are open to All.

Board Members

President:
    Paul Kurivchack 908-218-0778
Vice-President:
    Tom Carman .... TBD
Secretary:
    Don Arrowsmith .... TBD
Treasurer:
    Tom Canavan 732-422-9055
Members-At-Large:
    Jon Abolins 609-883-8126
    Vic Laurie 609-924-1220
    Kim Goldenberg 609-671-9188
    Sol Libes 609-520-9024

Chairpersons

Hospitality:
    Bill Hawryluk 609-655-0923
Member Records:
    Paul Kurivchack 908-218-0778
Newsletter Editor:
    Paul Kurivchack 908-218-0778
Program Coordinator:
    Sol Libes 609-520-9024
Web Master:
    Jon Abolins 609-883-8126

Web Site

http://www.ppcug-nj.org

Annual Dues Rates

Normal dues rate is $30 per year.
    New Members Only: after February, the rate is $2.50 per month times the number of months remaining in the year.

Presidents Message
by Paul Kurivchack

Every year about this time I start my call to arms for fresh blood to enter into our board as members-at-large or officers. Well this year I give up. I will stay on as President one more year unless someone wants the challenge of the office. And why the change of heart. Well I guess that I'm not doing as bad a job as I thought. Membership has not dropped, we have added some new members to the ranks, so despite the limited time I have to devote to the group we continue to move forward. We still have money in the treasury after the purchase of the new projector so 2002 doesn't look that bleak. I should add that I do have the help of some great people, who in their own way contribute more than they realize.

In addition, how many times do you get the fabled being "Famous for Fifteen Minutes" twice? Once for having a quote pulled from my review of OnTrack's System Suite 2000 and it being placed on the inside cover of the package for their new product, System Suite 3.0. The second time came from the weekly newspaper US1 (who by the way has been a great supporter of our group). The article about our group and my work in the computer industry. It was great to see my name in print.

It is amazing how writing a simple software review for the group's monthly newsletter or just being involved as an officer can be for ones ego. Maybe this time next year, you to will have the opportunity to feel "Famous for Fifteen minutes".

Lastly, did everyone enjoy and learn a thing or two from the "Upgrading Your PC" presentation? I hope so. Maybe this program should become a yearly meeting so that you never get rusty. Please let me know your thoughts on this program or the possibility of doing a hardware/software trouble shooting presentation, "What to look for when this (?) happens to your PC".

I look forward to seeing you all on the 10th.

Troubleshooting Windows Problems

By: Vic Laurie - PPCUG

Windows computer systems are many and varied. The number of possible combinations of different pieces of hardware, different application software, and various versions of operating systems must be very large. The resulting witches' brew of potential problems makes troubleshooting into an art form. Nonetheless, there are some general guidelines for what to do when things go awry. I will sketch a few and give links to several of the useful troubleshooting sites on the Internet. All of the following assumes that your computer still more or less functions. If you cannot boot into Windows at all, that is a different situation not covered here. But for those problems that still allow you to get your system to run (even if badly), here are some suggestions.

Some Symptoms of Trouble

Just as there are large numbers of possible problems, there is quite an assortment of trouble signs. Here are just a few:

Very slow performance, folders take forever to open
Icons wrong
Frequent freezes or system lock-ups
"Blue screens of death"
Messages about missing file(s)
Kernel32 messages
Invalid page fault messages

First Things to Try When Something's Wrong

Make sure that you do not have a virus, worm, or Trojan. Update the virus definitions for your anti-virus program regularly. These days, every week is not too often. Run a virus check regularly. Keep a record of your system files by regular use of System File Checker (SFC) and check to see if any suspicious changes have occurred recently.

In many cases, the cure lies in doing housekeeping stuff that you should have been doing all along. But like so many things that we know we should do regularly, housekeeping gets put off. And then some day the system protests by running very slowly or crashing randomly or giving error messages or whatever. In any event, try running Scandisk and Defrag. Clean out all your temporary files. Empty the Recycle Bin. Boot to DOS and run Scanreg /fix. Do these sorts of things routinely and your machine's performance will reward you. For more details on regular maintenance procedures see the article at http://www.ppcug-nj.org/articles/vic_laurie/keepclean.html. Also PowerPoint presentations on the subject can be downloaded at http://pages.zdnet.com/hampsi/computers/id8.html and http://pages.zdnet.com/hampsi/computers/id14.html.

You can pay a visit to PC Pitstop (http://www.pcpitstop.com/) if you do not object to a third-party tune-up.

Have you recently installed some new hardware? Check in **Control Panel | System | Device Manager** to see if it is functioning properly. Or enter "Hwinfo /ui" (without quotes) into **Start | Run** for hardware information. The system accessory Microsoft System Information (http://support.microsoft.com/support/kb/articles/q184/0/75.asp) also has hardware information.

Check to see if your drivers are up-to-date. Go to the vendor's site and look for support or downloads. You can also try one of the sites that specialize in drivers such as http://www.windrivers.com/. More information on checking drivers is at:http://www.microsoft.com/insider/extremehttp://www.zdnet.com/zdhelp/stories/main/0,5594,2438537,00.html

Have you recently installed some new software? If you have been keeping a record with System File Checker, check to see if the software changed some system file such as a DLL. Check if the new program is running in the background and, if so, remove it (this does not uninstall it) by using Msconfig (System Configuration Utility). If necessary, uninstall it. Microsoft System Information may be helpful here also.

Have you turned off your computer lately? I mean really turned it off. If you continually start up from sleep or hibernate mode, in a few days (or sooner, depending on how you use your computer) you will probably notice sluggishness and even flaky behavior. If you want a computer that you can always leave on, you need Windows 2000 (or Linux or something like that).

Startup Problems

Microsoft has a series of articles on troubleshooting Windows startup problems and error messages.
For Windows 95:
http://support.microsoft.com/support/kb/articles/Q136/3/37.ASP.
For Windows 98:
 http://support.microsoft.com/support/kb/articles/Q188/8/67.ASP
For Windows Me:
http://support.microsoft.com/support/kb/articles/Q273/7/38.ASP

Looking at a boot log can help pinpoint problems. Check the file C:\bootlog.txt. (Note: this is a "hidden" file) For details on boot logs see http://www.aumha.org/a/bootlog.htm. The free utility, Boot Log Analyzer, may be useful in this connection. Download at http://www.vision4.dial.pipex.com/

Shutdown Problems

In recent articles I have mentioned some ways to exit more expeditiously. Unfortunately, it is not uncommon with Windows 9X (especially Windows 98SE) and Windows Me to find that you cannot exit at all; the computer simply refuses to shut down. Microsoft even has a patch for Windows 98 specifically for this problem. Jim Eshelman has provided an excellent website giving detailed troubleshooting steps at http://www.aumha.org/a/shutdown.htm. This site is the premier reference for all shutdown problems and is the place to go if you encounter this type of difficulty.

I would suggest, however, that first you make sure that some application software is not the culprit. A number of programs do not always unload properly when a shutdown is attempted. If your computer hangs at shutdown, take a look at what is run-

Can Spam!

By: Brain Backman

Anyone who has had an e-mail account for more than twenty three and a quarter milliseconds has received Spam, so there's no need for a lengthy description of it.

Basically, Spam is unsolicited advertising e-mail messages. It is also a really tasty meat product that goes great with pineapples and sliced jalapenos, but that's not the kind we're dealing with here.

My goal for this article is to give you a few pointers on how to reduce the amount of Spam you receive or possibly eliminate it, and some ways to deal with it when you do get it.

Before we get started, you should understand that there are two kinds of e-mail advertising.

Opt-in and Opt-out

Opt-out is Spam. Opt-in is any sort of commercial mail, such as newsletters, catalogs and sales flyers that you have agreed to accept. Usually, you agree to accept these as a condition, reward or benefit of registering with an online service (remember Price-Line?). Be careful about the difference. If you get a message that you believe is Spam, think first about any agreements you may have made recently. It would be really poor form to report a legitimate, sweet, loving, angelic emailer as a putrid tool of the Devil, Spammer.

With that in mind, to the ramparts!

Attempt to Eliminate

I don't believe that you can totally eliminate Spam, but this is as close as you can get:

Filter out mail from any sender whose address is not in your address book. This is the anti-social method, but absolutely the most effective. Set up your mail system so that it will compare the sender's address to those in your address book. If the sender's address does not match anything in your address book, the mail will be rejected or redirected away from your inbox. This is fairly simple to set up, though not all mail systems offer this feature. Using Hotmail as an example, go to Options, then Inbox Protector under Mail Handling. For Level of Protection select Custom, and then check only—The senders address is in your Hotmail address book. If you really don't want to be bothered, you can also select the trash can as your discard folder.

While this method seems foolproof, I have heard anecdotal evidence that some Spam has slipped through, so I can't guarantee it. Also, remember that this will not protect you from any virus that an "approved" sender might mail you.

You should also keep in mind that this will prevent you from receiving any mail you have requested, such as newsletters you sign up for, unless you can get their address into your address book first.

This can be very annoying as when your Uncle Finster's lawyer sends you a message that the old boy is about to croak and you'll not get a dime of the inheritance unless you show up at his bedside pronto.

Anti-Spam Mail Accounts

This one usually incurs a fee, so move on if you're a cheapskate.

There are mail systems out there whose main claim to fame is the near total elimination of Spam, as well as aggressively reporting Spammers. These services use a combination of methods to prevent Spam. I'll give a quick description of the most famous one, SpamCop (URL listed at end). When you sign up with SpamCop, give them a list of approved sender addresses. Mail from these senders will pass through unimpeded, exactly as in the Hotmail example previously mentioned.

Now things get complicated. Any mail from a service provider that is on SpamCop's approved list, or that SpamCop has never heard of, will be passed through as well. Any mail from a service provider whose name is on the Evil Children of Satan list will be placed into a "holding area." The sender will receive an automated reply explaining that they've been blocked because their service provider is in league with the minions of Hades. The sender can then fire back a reply that he or she is not a spammer and this was a legitimate message. The mail will then be sent on to you.

If you do receive Spam, you report it to the mail service and they'll take care of reporting it. If a provider causes a lot of complaints from members, then that provider will be considered scum of the earth and placed on the bad list.

You don't totally eliminate the Spam, but you do cut it way down and get the satisfaction that providers who generate a lot of Spam will be inconvenienced.

Try to Fight Back

Ah, you valiant fool. Do not go quietly. . . Rage, Rage!

Fighting back is OK as long as you understand that you will ultimately lose. At best, you may close down a few Spammer's accounts, but they will just open new ones. At worst, your mail account may become unusable.

But if you want to try...

When you open a message that turns out to be Spam, there will almost certainly be a link at the bottom that you can click on to cancel further messages. This seems pretty easy, just click and end the torment.

Right?

Don't you believe it!

ning. Use the three-finger salute **Ctrl-Alt-Delete** to bring up a list of running applications. Try closing them down one at a time to see if one of them is hanging the computer. (Don't close Explorer since that is your interface.) Also, a number of utilities are available that can be used to close down running processes one at a time, including those processes that do not show up in the three-finger salute list. One of these is Process Viewer 2000, available at http://www.blehq.org/pv2k.htm#Download. Another is TaskInfo2000 at http://www.iarsn.com/index.html#/download.html. There are a variety of others. Try your favorite freeware site. Also, don't forget *PC Magazine's* free utility **EndItAll** that provides a very quick and easy way to terminate all non-essential programs. It can be downloaded at http://www.zdnet.com/downloads/stories/info/0,,0011NB,.htm

Interpreting Error Messages

At one time or the other all of us have received one of those ominous sounding messages about illegal operations or fatal exceptions or other invalid activity. Often they are accompanied by some hexadecimal code and might as well be in Babylonian cuneiform as far as the average user is concerned. There is actual information in there, however. If you are going to call on technical support somewhere, make a note of the message. (Knowing how to make a screen capture is very useful at this point.)

For help in interpreting the messages, Microsoft has an Error Message Resource Center at
http://support.microsoft.com/support/windows/topics/errormsg/emresctr.asp. It is pretty extensive. Just to give you a little of the flavor, here are some topics covered: Invalid Page Fault, Windows Protection Error, General Protection Fault, Fatal Exception 0E, Fatal Exception 0D, Kernel32.dll. Knowledge Base articles on these topics and their definitions are listed. Articles are also listed by specific Windows function.

Jim Eshelman gives an excellent compendium and discussion of error messages at http://www.aumha.org/kberrmsg.htm. Go there to find out what they mean and some advice on steps to take. Another good site is http://whatis.techtarget.com/definition/0,289893,sid9_gci212076,00.html

Where to Get Help

Windows troubleshooting guides covering a number of topics are at:
http://www.windows-help.net/windows98/ttips-idx-nf.shtml
http://www.zdnet.com/zdhelp/filters/splash/0,9700,6008945,00.html
http://members.home.net/winhelp98/index.htm
http://www.microsoft.com/TechNet/prodtechnol/win98/support/troubles.asp
When Windows crashes:
http://www.zdnet.com/zdhelp/stories/main/0,5594,2703668,00.html
For Registry errors in Windows 95 only: http://support.microsoft.com/support/kb/articles/Q131/4/31.ASP
To see how to use the Windows system accessory, Dr. Watson, go to http://members.home.net/winhelp98/watson.htm. This

applet can help find what is causing problems. It won't fix things but it may help pin down the source of a problem.
For help with defrag problems:
http://badour.freewebsites.com/html/defrag.html http://members.home.net/winhelp98/defrag.htm
For kernel32 errors:
http://www.aumha.org/a/k32harp.htm
http://www.svetlian.com/en/Kernel32.htm
http://www.aumha.org/a/k32fix.htm
For troubleshooting General Protection Errors:
http://www.windrivers.com/tech/troubleshoot/winexceptions.htm
http://support.microsoft.com/support/kb/articles/q149/9/62.asp
http://support.microsoft.com/support/kb/articles/q82/7/10.asp
For hardware problems:
http://support.microsoft.com/support/windows/topics/hardware/hwddresctr.asp
For Netscape problems:
http://help.netscape.com/kb/consumer/19970203-1.html

The Microsoft Knowledge Base is a good place to look for answers. It is a huge collection of articles covering many subjects. The prose is not always the most lucid but much valuable information is provided there. Doing a search on a particular problem or error message can be frustrating but worthwhile. The search page is at http://search.support.microsoft.com/kb/c.asp. A description of how to use key words in doing a search is at http://support.microsoft.com/support/kb/articles/Q242/4/50.ASP
Some help on how to search the Microsoft site in general can be found at http://www.pcworld.com/hereshow/article.asp?aid=8737. If you know the article number and use Internet Explorer just enter mskb (number) in the address bar, for example "mskb 149962" (without quotes).

For immediate up-to-date answers to questions in general, it is hard to beat the Microsoft Newsgroups. A lot of savvy volunteers (who are not employees of Microsoft) hang out there. These very knowledgeable people will help you with any reasonable question. The free server is at news://msnews.microsoft.com/. If you use Outlook Express, all that is necessary is to enter this address into Internet Explorer. It will automatically enter it into Outlook Express. You will then be given the option of downloading the rather large list of available Newsgroups. The most generally useful one is probably *microsoft.public.win98.gen_discussion.* A number of others are of the type *microsoft.public.win98.** or *microsoft.public.windowsme.** Now that Google (http://groups.google.com/) has reestablished the old DejaNews service, an on-line search of the Newsgroups for information is again available. Using Google on-line may also be preferred by those unfamiliar with Newsgroup readers. Google provides a way to search all Newsgroups but it may be better to limit an initial search to the *microsoft.public.** hierarchy.

If you are familiar with search techniques, you can search your problem on the whole Internet with your preferred search engine. Unless you know how to focus a search, however, you may be overwhelmed with suggested (and irrelevant) sites. You will need to be pretty specific on what you are looking for. §

What you're really doing is proving to the Spammer that your e-mail account is valid and that you read Spam. The vicious little insect will then sell your address to others of its species and you will be inundated.

You could try reporting the Spammer. This may give you some personal satisfaction, but don't think for a minute that it'll accomplish much.

First off, you'll need to set your e-mail system to "display full header information." What you're doing here is inserting all of the available routing history into the message when it's displayed, rather than just who sent it to you and the date of transmission.

This will, hopefully, give enough information to the Spammer's provider that they can track down the weasel.

The downside is that the full display option takes up more space. It'll also insert a mountain of text into your mail when you forward messages. You can delete it, but it's extra work to do so.
Sooo, the question is, are you willing to put up with all the extra gobbeldygook just to report a Spammer?

Your email service provider's Help should tell you where to report Spammers, but usually it will be "abuse@" followed by the provider's name. For example, abuse@yahoo.com.

You need to forward the Spam message to the "abuse@" address, making sure that you have the full header showing. Now the problem with that is that you had to open the Spam to forward it. Guess what? The Spammer may now know that you read the message and you will again be inundated.
Maybe it's worth it to you just to report. However, I have reported Spammers numerous times and all it got me was some very nice automatic responses and an increase in Spam mail.

Now, you can use certain tools to try and trace the Spammers yourself and report them.
For example, Whois (http://www.cix. co.uk/~net-services/ spam/whois.htm) from Net Services is supposed to show information on the originator of the mail. You can then send a complaint to their provider.

Another program from Net Services is Spam Hater (http:// www.cix.co.uk/~net-services/spam/spam_hater.htm). This program is supposed to help you trace and report Spammers as well.

I haven't tried either (Whois is freeware by the way), but they may be worth a look.

Accept Fate, But Reduce the Pain

As you may have noticed by now, I'm a bit of a fatalist. Then too, I don't have time to go chasing Spammers and I'll bet you don't either. Of course, if you're truly committed to going after the vermin, I applaud you. If I were retired or even just single, I would certainly take a shot at them now and then.

All I do is delete any and all messages that I do not recognize.

That's it. The whole Tamale.

Spammers have a way to get notices that you opened their mail. I'll say it again, whenever you open a Spam message, the Spammer knows it. Now you have just verified that your address is valid. Your address will be sold. You will get more Spam. End of story.

Whenever I forwarded Spam from Hotmail accounts to abuse@hotmail to report them, I got replies that there was nothing that could be done because the addresses in the message were fake. Within days, I was flooded with Spam from hotmail addresses. The same results from Yahoo and Netscape. On and on.

When I started simply deleting the Spam, the volume slowly decreased.

Well, on my Hotmail account there is one other thing I do; perhaps your account has a similar feature. In Options go to Inbox Protector under Mail Handling. In the Level of Protection, select Custom and then check only—Your address appears on the "To:" or "Cc" line and The sender's address is in your Hotmail Address Book. This seems to have cut down on my Spam somewhat, but it's not certain.

Well, that's it. The sites listed next can give you much more information. If you really want to fight, check them out.

More Info and Help

Here are links to some sites that will give you more information and help on fighting Spam
• JMHO on Spam (http://home.att.net/~marjie1/index.htm): Great information site.
• Spam Cop (http://spamcop.net/): Spam free e-mail and reporting assistance along with more info.
• Fight Spam on the Internet (http://spam.abuse.net/): More info and some tools!
• Spam FAQ (www.mall-net.com/spamfaq.html): Some good resources, redundant info, a stirring call to arms!

Brian has worked in Tech Writing, Training, Quality Testing and Help Desk, as well as some Web Development. He is a regular at the Internet SIG.
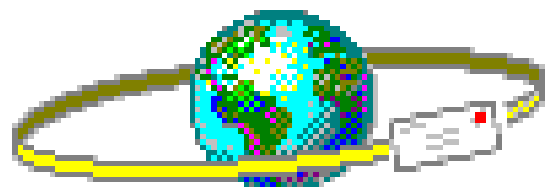
Name Last	First	E-Mail Address
Abolins	John D.	jda-ir@njcc.com
Adler	Seymour	syadler@aol.com
Arrowsmith	Donald L.	donaldarrowsmith@yahoo.com
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Carman	Thomas	tom_carman@compuserve.com
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Colucci	Frank E.	DasWeb1@aol.com
Crossley	Helen M.	CrossleyHM@aol.com
Davis	Perry J.	perrydavis@compuserve.com
Dinkins-Belton	Joyce	Joyce8NJ@aol.com
Dodge	William B.	b-mdodge@juno.com
Duggins	Marsha	msd@gfol.noaa.gov
Edge, Jr.	Lewis A.	lewis@edgeassoc.com
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Laurie	Vic	hampsi@yahoo.com
Lazar	Joseph	joelazar@nerc.com
Lewis	Lloyd N.	Budnorth@juno.com
Libes	Sol	sol@libes.com
Markward	Margaret	mteragram@aol.com
Metzler	Joseph	76116.3117@compuserve.com
Middleton	Frank	ftmprob@nerc.com
Miller	Douglas E.	D.N.Miller@worldnet.att.net
Mintz	Herman	hmintz4@aol.com
Montani	Linda	l.montani@worldnet.att.net
Mooney	William P.	wmo8350722@aol.com
Oldenburg	Thomas A.	oldenburg-ta@worldnet.att.net
Olson	Gaylord	go@electrim.com
Papier, Jr.	Philip B.	papierp@bellatlantic.net
Phadke	Laxman G.	lgphadke@home.com
Pitcher	Barbara	bpitcher@ets.org
Rothstein	Rick	rich_web@email.com
Sked	Bill	billsked@aol.com
Stockwell	Hunt	huntstock@aol.com
Suber	Michael J.	mpsuber@juno.com
Tayyabkhan	Mike	tayyabkhan@aol.com
Tenner	Edward	tenner@clarity.princeton.edu
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Weinberg	Robert	bweinb@att.net
Weiss III	Edward A.	eweiss@nerc.com
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Willis	Robert S.	rsw9999@cs.com
Willis	Lloyd	lwillis1@prodigy.net
Shah	Sonal	sonals@microsoft.com
Stroiney	John	johnstro@microsoft.com

(Last Update: August 3, 2001)
Send Updates to kurivchack_p@compuserve.com for inclusion in this listing.

GET WELL WISHES TO:

MILT KLINERMAN & KIM GOLDENBERG

Minutes for the General Meeting
August 13, 2001
By: Don Arrowsmith

The formal part of the meeting opened at 7:50 with many questions from the attendees.

Topics covered were: Methods for replacing hard drives with newer, faster models; Whether to use Windows 2000 or Windows ME for a small office; Effects on performance of having many programs in the Startup folder; Elimination of Internet Explorer v4 splash screen; Availability of broadband Internet connections.

At 8:30 the main presentation started. This was a continuation of the PC Upgrade program from May by Paul Kurivchack and Tom Canavan. Previous points were reviewed before connecting all the pieces together: motherboard, memory, processor, power supply, floppy, hard drive, mouse, keyboard, and video board. The video output was cabled to our new Polaroid projector. The hard drive already had Windows 95 loaded so the system started directly into Windows when power was applied.

Minutes for the General Meeting
July 9, 2001
By: Don Arrowsmith

The formal meeting began at 7:45 with Paul and others commenting on TechEx (formerly PCExpo). Some other Q&A occurred before the main presentation. Dana Zangrillo of Comcast (http://www.comcastonline.com) described their @Home cable Internet service. Topics covered included: Geographical areas of service, Contents of the self-install kit and Rates. An attractive offer for new subscribers was outlined and at least two members signed up. She took questions from the floor and offered assistance to several members who are current @Home subscribers with ongoing technical and billing problems.

GENEALOGY
SEPTEMBER 10, 2001
LAWRENCE LIBRARY

Princeton PC Users Group
P.O Box 291
Rocky Hill, NJ 08553