CHRISTMAS

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK
by Phil Janz

Ready or not, the Christmas season is here! Everyone is busy and moving fast at this time of the year! `Tis wonderful that we have set aside an evening to honor our "young one," better known as JUNIOR! This gala event, known to all club members far and wide as the JUNIOR CHRISTMAS POTLUCK is set for Thursday, December 14 at 6:00 p.m. Cindy Hoffman has again been kind enough to reserve the recreation room and kitchen of the Church of Christ, 2424 Norkenzie Road in Eugene for our holiday gathering. The map on page three will help you in wending your way to the church. Even though it is easy to find, darkness falls early this time of the year and traffic does tend to get a bit crazy, thus Louie's map is appreciated.

The main reason for holding our meeting at the church is to accommodate our program for the evening. Mike Luttio, Past President and Modem Captain, is going to demonstrate modem use. Our Ida Patterson School setting has never been successful with modem use attempts because we could never obtain an outside phone line. Mike has been gearing up his hardware and skills so that a Christmas sharing is "wrapped" and ready for us.

What do you bring to the JUNIOR CHRISTMAS POTLUCK? Yourself and your family goes without saying! The Club is going to provide a baked ham, so you just need to decide on bringing either a hot dish, salad, or a dessert. Please bring along a place setting, including a cup and/or glass for each person in your group. Also, have each person Christmas wrap a "white elephant" gift (no name tag) and bring it along for a fun gift exchange.

Several of us will be calling many of you who live in the local area to remind you about the potluck and encourage your joining us for some holiday food, fun and Club fellowship.

1989 has been a good year for our club . . . . programs, individual interest and participation have been our strong suits. I want to personally thank the Club officers and Board of Directors for their efforts and support . . . but most of all I want to thank you, the Club Members, for attending the meetings and rolling up your sleeves and joining in when things need to be done. You are all simply terrific!!!

STILL RUNNING YOUR JUNIOR
ON ONE DRIVE??

Are you still doing the old "two-step-swap" when you do a diskcopy? Getting tired of the old "insert diskette for drive B" messages? Well, the Creative Firmware Drive-IIA Adapter may be just what the doctor ordered.

The adapter plugs into the modem slot and acts as a second disk drive inter-face. You disconnect the internal disk drive cable from your drive and plug it into the Drive-II Adapter. You then take the dual disk drive cable provided with the adapter and plug it into your old drive and extend it on outside Junior's case to your new disk drive. They even supply a Y cord to power both your old and new drives.

DOS 2.1, which we all got with our Juniors, will support two drives, and your new drive can be a 3.5 inch drive, but 2.1 will recognize it as just another DSDD 360K drive. If you use 3.2 DOS or higher, you can then use the full 720K of your new 3.5 drive. Of course, the Creative Firmware Drive-IIA Adapter will fully support another 5.25 inch drive should you elect to use it instead of a 3.5 inch drive.

Creative Firmware prices are very competitive. The Drive-IIA Adapter with cable and software is less than $50. A complete 5.25 inch package can be had for under $200 and a 3.5 complete package for just a small tad over $200. We'll have a special report on these products at the next meeting for members of the Eugene PCjr Club, but if you are not a member, and are a Newsletter subscriber only, write to Creative Firmware, P.O. Box 850064, Richardson, TX 75085 . . . tell them the Eugene PCjr Club sent you!

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

The Eugene PCjr Club Board of Directors will meet on Tuesday, January 2, 1990 at 7:00 p.m. at the Church of Christ, 2424 Norkenzie Road in Eugene.

A main agenda item will be selecting programs for our meetings during the months of February through May. This is an open meeting and any club member is welcome to attend and participate in the discussion.
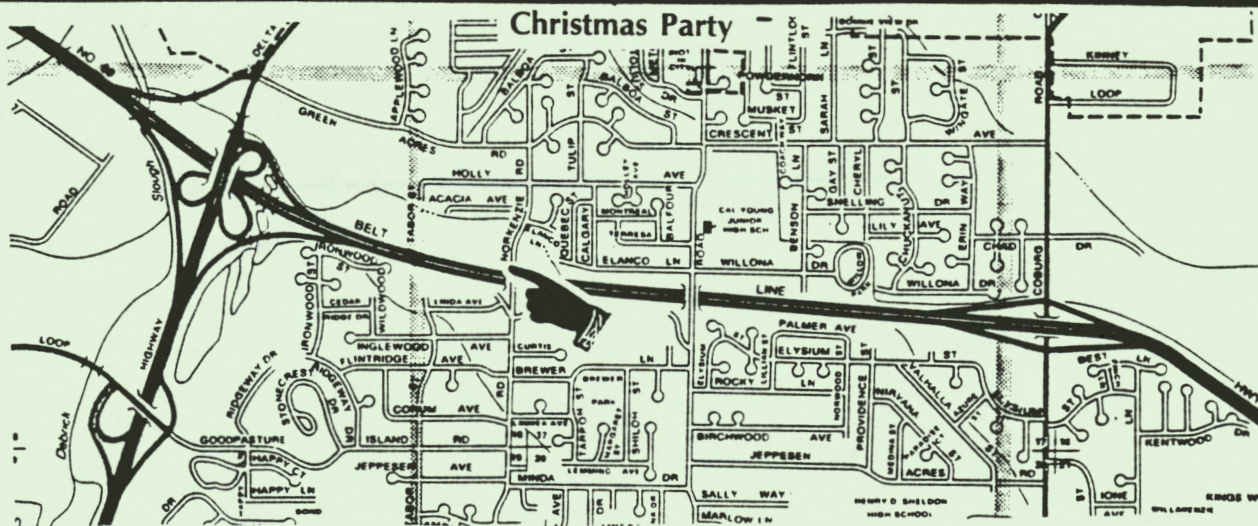
INQUIRING MINDS
WANT TO KNOW

Quest: There must be an easy way to stop the scrolling of the README files on the Club disks from the library. I have tried to use the CTRL S key combination, but it is really a pain. Other than run-ning up my word processor, do you have any idea?   AL in SAC

ANS to AL: DOS comes through again with MORE.COM. By running MORE along with the README, only one screen full at the time will show on your display with the mes-sage -MORE- at the bottom of the screen. You can then press any key and another screen full will appear . . . and stop. In order to get this to happen you must have MORE.COM from your DOS disk in the default drive. You can either copy MORE.COM from your DOS disk onto your program disk, copy MORE.COM and the README file to another disk, or, if you have two drives, have your DOS disk in one drive and the program disk in the other drive. Type MORE <README if both files are on the same disk, and if you are using the two drive method, put your DOS disk in A and the program disk in B and type MORE <B:README.

NOTE OF CAUTION: Be sure and use the "less than" sign (<). If you use the "greater than" sign, (>), you will zap the README file! Also, if you are using MS DOS (rather than PC DOS) the command is TYPE README ¦ MORE. Can't find the ¦ on Junior's keyboard? Try holding the ALT key and press the [(next to the P). Who was it that said that PC and MS DOS are the same!

Christmas Party

DIRECTIONS: The big intersection above is the Beltline and Delta Highway interchange just north of downtown Eugene. Just north of the interchange, take Green Acres Road east (right). The first road past the shopping center (Club Wholesale, GI Joes, Best, and Food Connection) is Norkenzie. Turn south (right) on Norkenzie and go two short blocks. The Church of Christ is on the right side (correct) just before the Beltline overpass. Drive around the church and park in the back parking lot.

LOCATION FOR THE DECEMBER "LUCK-OF-POT" MEETING

DATABASE TIPS

The February '89 issue of PC/Computing has an excellent, lengthy tutorial on construction of a database. While it uses PFS Professional File as it's model, the process works well for most any database.

Here are some tips from that article:

1.) Create an explicit unique-number field for every record (so each record has its own unique number).

2.) Separate data into the smallest practical elements. For example, make City, State, and Zip Code separate fields. Don't combine them!

3.) Use "white space" to design data-entry screens that are clear and self-explanatory.

4.) Build data-entry screens in a left-to-right, top-to-bottom sequence. That's how we read and therefore how the eye likes to scan the screen.

5.) Avoid obscure abbreviations for field names (ie.: "YR_END_TOTALS", not "YET".

6.) Use your DBMS program's data formatting features to assure the integrity of the database. For example, make sure social security numbers follow the pattern xxx-xx-xxxx.

7.) Require four-digit entries for all Year fields. (The 21st century will soon be upon us!)

8.) Do not enter dollar signs or "thousands" commas in numeric fields. (Otherwise it makes it hard to total and sort those fields.)

9.) Plan your database with an eye toward the reports you'll need to generate from the data.

10.) Before entering volumes of real data, build a 10-to-15 entry test database of bogus data. Then use that data to construct sample reports to test your design.

from PC/Computing, February 1989

Season's Greetings

Eve Olitski

DISK OPERATING SYSTEM (DOS) 2.1
IBMBIO.COM and IBMDOS.COM

When you purchase an IBM PCjr computer or compatible, one of the programs you must also purchase is DOS. Without DOS your computer wouldn't function much. When we "boot" our Juniors without a DOS disk, the only program we can access is BASIC version 1.2. It is only when we have a DOS disk in our Juniors that they come alive. Why?

When Junior comes up to speed, it gets some instructions in its ROM (Read Only Memory) that begins the Bootstrap Loader. This Bootstrap Loader then looks to see if there is a diskette in the drive, and if it determines there is no disk, it will load BASIC C1.2 (1981) that it reads from ROM. But, if it determines that there is a diskette in the drive, it will direct Junior to read the first sector of the disk.

This first sector is present on every formatted diskette no matter what version of DOS you have used. (The only way to prevent the booting files from being on your disks is to use the FORMAT /B para- meter which will leave room for the system files, but will not actually copy them to the disk.) The first sector is called the "boot" sector. This sector directs Junior to read the next sectors to see if the two files, IBMBIO.COM and IBMDOS.COM are present.

It is the file IBMBIO.COM that contains the specific data on the machine's BIOS, or Basic Input/Output System. It is IBMBIO.COM that determines the drivers or the instructions that will be used by

your disk drive, your keyboard, some of the data for your printer, and your display.

The other file, IBMDOS.COM, does the specific systems functions such as file management in the form of a file allo- cation table and directory, memory man- agement and character interpretation. To prevent inadvertent erasure or deletion of these two necessary files, they are "hidden." When you do a directory listing, these two files which make up your "Boot record" and "File Allocation Table" (FAT) won't show on your screen, but they are there. If you use utility programs such as PC-TOOLS, Norton Util- ities or Ultra-Utilities (Library Disk number 10), you can see these two files and see that they are "hidden, read- only."

DISK OPERATING SYSTEM (DOS) 2.1
COMMAND.COM
John Wilson

The command processing function of DOS is familiar to all of us. We use DOS com- mands to look at file directories, to copy files, to erase files and many other tasks. To most of us, command processing is really what DOS is all about. It is a very important function of DOS, so let's take a closer look at it.

Command processing is handled by DOS through the file named COMMAND.COM, which is one of the three files placed on every system (boot-up) disk. The other two are the hidden files IBMBIO.COM and IBMDOS. COM. Within COMMAND.COM are three dif- ferent sections: an initialization sec- tion, a resident section and a transient section. The main purpose of the initialization section is to look for an AUTOEXEC.BAT file during boot-up and if one is present, to follow the list of commands in it. After that, this section of the command processor is discarded.

The resident section of COMMAND.COM stays in the lower portion of the computer's memory (where it won't be affected by an application program) and contains routines to process breaks (Ctrl-C and Fn-Break on Junior), the termination of application programs and handle errors. This section of DOS is the source of the beloved error messages

we receive whenever we fail to correctly type in a command or try to get DOS to do something it can't do.

The transient section of COMMAND.COM is loaded into the high end of the computer's memory. Sometimes the application program uses this portion of memory and overwrites the transient section of the command processor. If this occurs, when the application program is ended, DOS will look for COMMAND.COM on the disk and reload it. If DOS can't find it you will get a message to "Insert COMMAND.COM and strike any key", and this is why it is a good idea, if there is room, to have COMMAND.COM on the same disk as your program.

Commands from the keyboard which are processed by the transient section are classified as either internal or external. Internal commands are embedded in COMMAND.COM and can be executed by the transient section of the command processor without outside help. Examples of this type of command are: COPY, ERASE, DIR and TYPE. External commands are based upon the names of other programs which must be loaded into the transient section of the command processor before they can be executed. Examples of external commands are FORMAT, CHKDSK and DISKCOPY. The transient section also contains an interpreter which reads batch files (files with a .BAT extension) one line at a time and executes the specified command.

The command processor tries to carry out the user's command in the following order. First it looks to see if the command is in COMMAND.COM; if it's not there it looks on for an external file with the same name as the command and a COM extension; it there is none, it looks for a file with the same name and an EXE extension; if such a file is not found, it looks for a file with the same name and a BAT extension, and failing that, the user will get an error message. You will note that if two programs have the same name, but one has an EXE extension and the other a COM extension, the program with the COM extension will be the one loaded and run.

From The Junior Report

❋❋❋❋

Does Lotus 2.2 Run On the PCjr??
Carl Haub

Yes! Fer sure! No problem!

Lotus FINALLY delivered upgrades of the industry standard spreadsheet this year. The new version, 3.0, was completely rewritten in the C language and was intended to support all older PC's. It failed. Lotus 3, as it turned out, is a dinosaur that requires an 80286 CPU and an absolute minimum of 1 mb of RAM. To atone, Lotus now offers a nice improvement to venerable version 2.01 that will run on PC/XT/jr's with 640K. It will run on 384K machines, but won't leave much memory. 512K should handle it, however.

2.2 is available for $150 as an upgrade, but it's FREE if you bought version 2.01 after September 6, 1988 and you still have the sales slip. Registered users have received notice by now.

There was little doubt 2.2 would run on junior since virtually all "business" software does. But would the graphics? The disks contain no obvious PCjr video driver, so it didn't look good. But, wonder of wonders, Lotus graphs display just fine on the junior by simply specifying CGA in the INSTALL program. CGA, of course, means only 4 colors and there is not Tandy 16 color support for those of you with the Tandy mod.

The new version is more of an "incremental" improvement rather than a reincarnation of the old favorite. After installation, regular Lotus users can go right to work with no difficulties. It even works perfectly with older Lotus files since it uses the WK1 format and does not require file translation. 1-2-3 v. 2.2 does use 30K more RAM, but that's not a big price for an upgrade.

New features include "file-linking," the ability to reference cell values in other worksheets, not the full "3-D" spreadsheets of 3.0, but few of us need that anyway. A partial laundry list of new features:

- Multiple column widths can be set with a single command.
- Search and replace for a range of cells.
- "Setting sheets" now show all specs for printing and for graphs.

- Multiple graph ranges can be specified for adjacent ranges, column-wise or row-wise.
- Long X-axis labels no longer overprint, but are staggered.
- Hatching patterns in graphs are improved.
- A warning if you try to exit the program without saving -- a long overdue addition. BUT, there is still no warning if you use the /Worksheet Erase command without saving! Why is that?
- The option to make backup files when saving or doing a /File Extract.
- Minimal recalculation.
- An UNDO feature (Lotus HAL does not work with 2.2). This feature uses about 150K of RAM and can be disabled with the command :/Worksheet Global Default Other Undo Disable (yikes!); that configuration can also be saved with the "Update" command in the Default menu.
- Improved macro debugging.

Lotus is also bundled with Funk Software's Allways, a program that brings a few desktop publishing features to Lotus. Printouts can be given a "presentation quality" appearance and even have embedded graphs. The manual says that a hard disk is needed to run Allways, but I found otherwise. You DO need a 3.5" disk drive or a 5 1/4" 1.4 meg floppy, however. If you have either of those, create a directory, \123 on the disk you'll be using for Allways. Then copy the two files 123.RI and 123.DYN from the Lotus program disk to that directory. Then, using the AWSETUP pro- gram install Allways; Allways will install itself in the directory \123\allways that it creates. If you install Allways on a 3.5" disk you will only be able to use one font file at a time, however, since Allways needs 1.2 meg for all of its files and 3.5's only hold 720K.

In order to attach Allways as an add-on from within Lotus, however, it seems to be necessary to have started Lotus itself from a disk with the Lotus program stored in a subdirectory called \123. Allways would not attach itself when I had started Lotus in the normal way, from a root directory on a floppy; so, when installing Lotus, copy the files to the directory \123 that you have created. Strange.

All versions of Lotus run quite well from a single drive PCjr. Once the program has been run, the program disk can be removed and the drive used for data files. Is 2.2 worth the upgrade cost? It probably is for heavy Lotus users and the Allways bonus might just make it worth it.

Sept. 89 Metro PCjr Journal

Ed's Note: Carl Haub, the author of this review, is president of Metro PCjr Users Group. If you would like to subscribe to the Metro PCjr Journal, send $20 to Dave Tursan, MPCjrUG, 92203 Antelope Place, Springfield, VA 22153. With this fee you will also become a member of one of the fastest growing PCjr clubs in the country.

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HEARD (HERD?) ON THE STREET
by DICK PAGE

STOP THAT STATIC!

(No, this is not about getting your kids to quit fighting. It's just a little tip that may prevent the data on your disk from getting zapped.)

If the fabric on your computer chair generates static, here's a solution that doesn't require buying a new chair. Spray the fabric regularly with "Static Guard", an inexpensive laundry product by Alberto Culver. It's available in most supermarkets.

F.Y.I.
WHEN IT COMES TO USER GROUPS, HOW BIG IS BIG?

The Eugene PC User's Group Newsletter mentions an impressive set of statistics about the Houston Area League of PC Users, Inc. (HAL-PC for short).

"HAL-PC is one of the largest U.S. users' groups. They have a 'newsletter' of 100 pages, annual income of $200,000 from dues alone, 8,000 members and over 40 SIGs [Special Interest Groups]. All meetings are held in the George R. Brown Convention Center."

EPYX STOPS DEVELOPING GAMES FOR FLOPPY DISKS

Epyx, producers of such popular computer games as the *Summer Games Series* and *California Games Series* has gone through a major corporate restructuring. As a result, it will no longer be making games for floppy disk computers. It will now place its focus on developing cartridges for dedicated videogame machines. Current Epyx titles will remain on sale through the end of 1989. (This according to an announcement in the December 1989 issue of COMPUTE! magazine).

THE NEWEST JUNIOR GADGETS:
THE MESA 286J SPEED-UP BOARD
AND THE 1,024K MEGABOARD

The word is out that the new *MESA 286J Speed-up Board* really is a screamer. It was invented by Ed Strauss who also developed jr Hotshot. It works well with every hardware add-on except with cartridge BASIC (and possibly with Racore DMA units). It runs at 12 MHz using zero wait-state read and write cycles. It has a 16K self-flushing static RAM cache which is software controllable. A 80287 math co-processor socket is included on the board. It is being sold through most PCjr mail order suppliers for around $325 to $350.

Craig Tregillus writes in the *jr Newsletter,* Nov, 1989, that the MESA 286J gives Junior a Norton SI rating of 11.8 and PC Tools shows that it runs at 680% of the speed of an IBM XT! He found that there was no muss or fuss with setting it up on his Junior and it really improved the speed. In the article he speaks to the issue of possible problems with other hardware add-ons and configurations. He states, however, that he really didn't have any problems at all with adding it to his present setup.

If you want to speed up the operation of your Junior, if you don't want to "upgrade" to an AT, and if you just happen to have three to four hundred dollars sitting around needing to be spent, the MESA 286J board may be just the right thing for you.

736K - not enough memory? How about 1.8 MB on your PCjr? PC Enterprises has announced it is developing a *1,024K PCjr Megaboard* which externally looks just like any other PCjr sidecar expansion module. But inside it is up to 1 MegaByte of available memory! Special software is included which allows Junior to address any memory you already have (whether it is only 128K or 736K). Any memory above 736K can be treated as EMS memory or as a RAM drive. The board will cost between $200 and $400 dollars depending upon how much memory you want installed on the board. (You can purchase your own memory chips and install then yourself, if you want to.)

The members of the Club wish
Warren Hampton a speedy recovery
from his recent surgery.

Happy Holidays from
The Eugene
PCjr Club !

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