FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK
by Phil Janz
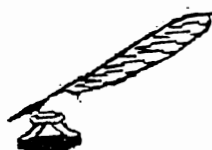
As I mentioned in the January newsletter, we have moved ahead with the revision of our membership survey form. If you live in the "greater Eugene" area, the form requesting information about local members' and subscribers' hardware and software is included in this issue of your newsletter, already stamped to return to the club. We will put together, publish and circulate a Club Directory to local members and subscribers containing this information. This approach will enhance the "support" aspect of our Club's goal to provide a support group for "jr" owners. Please take lots of time at home to review the survey, complete it in as much detail as possible, then return it by mail as soon as possible.

Our February 8th meeting will be of interest to all "jr" users! The evening program will focus on ENHANCING YOUR PC JR and will also cover ADD-ONS that will do a job for you. Dick Page will be our adult presenter and his son, Ben, will be the presenting junior member. Look over the newsletter for Ben and Dick's articles about the evening's program.

Come and join us at Ida Patterson School library. . .The meeting begins at 7:00 p.m. and Dennis Lutwen from Riddle has "whomped" up some refreshments that are sure to tickle everyone's taste buds during the break midway through our program. I am looking forward to seeing you on Thursday, February 8.

A Hard Drive for My PCjr. Should I?
By Carl Haub

A great deal of water has gone under the microchip dam since Junior's introduction in 1983. Junior arrived on the scene as IBM's overpriced, chiclet-keyboarded answer to the APPLE (shudder). The "peanut" offered some heavy artillery for those bygone days: a genuine Intel 8088 eight bit microprocessor, a clock speed almost as good as the "big" PC, 16 blazing colors, 3 audio voices, the list went on.

Five years later, there are hundreds of thousands of Juniors out there with 640K of memory, multiple disk drives, high speed modems--all the things IBM never really wanted it to have. And all of this despite the stern gaze of PC Magazine's John Dvorak who makes himself look even more ridiculous throwing brickbats at the Junior.

Today, many Junior owners cast envious eyes and tentative wallets at the promised land of PC's, the hard disk. Prices for a 20 megabyte unit for the PC have dropped as low as $259, about what a floppy cost five years ago. But a hard disk for a Junior will take a bigger bite out of the old checkbook than that. 20mb hard drives for Junior will set you back about $600. There, we have that out in the open. After allowing a mild form of sticker shock to pass, it is time to consider the alternatives.

Some users wonder if such a purchase is a good "investment." Computers are, like cars, fast-depreciating machines... not investments. If you want to invest, buy Boeing stock. You don't buy computers to resell them, just to use them.

Back to the point. Those considering a hard disk, and the associated question, "Should I sell my Junior," may be divided into two camps: Those for whom color is important and those for whom it's not.

A typical PC "clone" can be had for about $1,100 - $1,200 with a 20meg hard drive, 1 floppy, and a monochrome monitor. At that price, the machine may run at 4.77 MHz. If you want color, add about $400 - $500. But be careful, not all color systems are equal. The typical CGA machine's four colors is a poor substitute for Juniors 16. With CGA, you will normally get to see games running in cyan, magenta, purple and white. An EGA machine is what you'll need to see the kind of color you've taken for granted. And, you will doubtless run into color compatibility problems with some of your existing software.

So far we've spent from $1,100 to $1,700 to get underway. But, there's more. If you want joysticks and external modem, you'll need some add-on cards to plug them into. Makes one appreciate all the standard plugs on the back of Junior. But, if all one wishes to do is write long documents at the fastest speed possible or crunch huge spreadsheets, the move to a "clone" may make sense. There is one big consideration with clones, however. If it breaks under warranty, do I have to UPS the thing to Texas to get it fixed? Will it come back? This year? Will the store or manufacturer still be there? One thing the Junior is known for is its rugged reliability (and IBM parts)

--except for its rather flaky original Qume disk drive.

Another factor is the monitor you will get with your clone. Low-ball prices and quality monitors rarely go hand in hand. Try to see the monitor if at all possible --it's what you spend the entire time looking at.

In short, one can buy a monochrome clone for about the same cost (as) a hard drive for Junior (assuming a good sale price for the clone). But, do make a list of what you'll be giving up at the same time. Few IBM compatibles fit the bill as a versatile home computer as well as the PCjr and, with cartridge Lotus, you can actually run a larger spreadsheet than the big PC, RAM for RAM. Also, the Junior can be boosted to run at 7-8MHz with the Nickel Express board for about $89 and will even accept a math coprocessor should you need it!

A final possibility is that this may not be the time to buy a completely new system. In a few years, high-speed, mega-RAM systems based on the 80386 microprocessor will be commonplace and affordable. You may want to skip the joy of reinstalling all your software for a new system for a while and wait for the next quantum leap. In the meantime, enjoy your Junior!

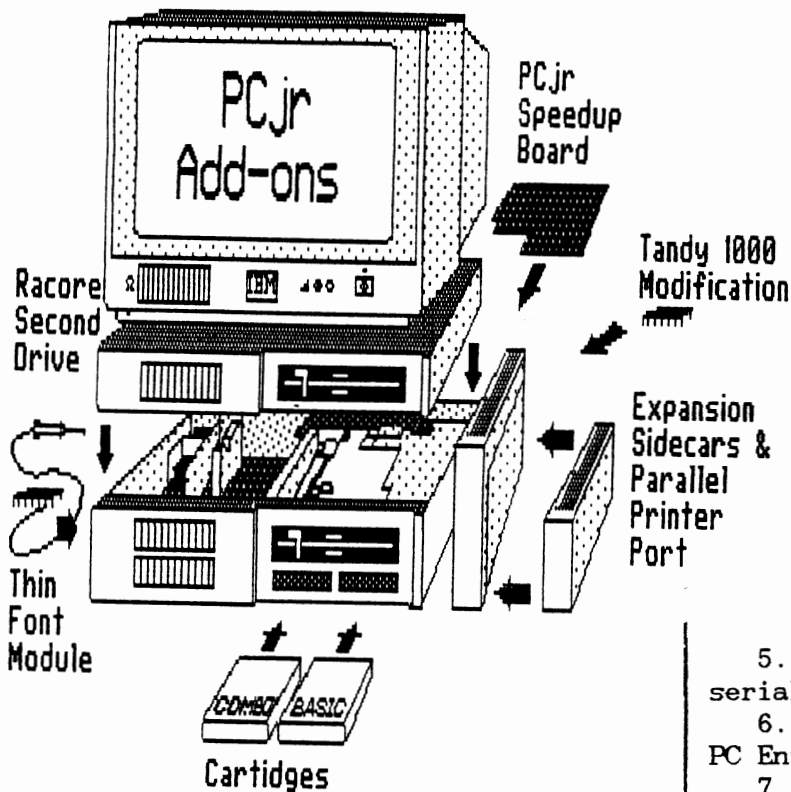Reprinted from the Metro PCjr Journal

* * UPDATE * *
THE JUNIOR-JUNIOR PRESENTATION WILL BE BY BEN PAGE

Ben's computer interest area is game programs. He will give you a taste of the fun that is in store for you if you get any of his three latest acquisitions:

1.) *Space Quest III* by Sierra On-Line is a 3-D animated adventure game which takes place   as you travel through outer space.

2.) *Silpheed* also by Sierra On-Line is a Japanese space battle arcade game from the makers of *Thexder*.

3.) *Zork Zero* by Infocom is a graphic interactive fiction game. It takes place in the Great Underground Empire - location of Infocom's previous Zork series (*Zork I, II, and III and Beyond Zork*).

A Dick Page Original Graphic

PCjr
Add-ons

PCjr
Speedup
Board

Racore
Second
Drive

Tandy 1000
Modification

Thin
Font
Module

Expansion
Sidecars &
Parallel
Printer
Port

COMBO BASIC

Cartidges

*** HARDWARE ADD-ONS ***

DICK PAGE'S PRESENTATION FOR THE FEBRUARY MEETING

At the February meeting I will be showing the configuration of my home PCjr and discussing the general topic of PCjr hardware add-ons. If you are at all curious about the pros and cons of expanding your junior, I think you will get some benefit from hearing about and looking at some of my sucesses --> and failures.

My junior will be set up next to the club's junior in order to help demonstrate some of the improvements that resulted from the additional hardware. Along with showing you some of the pleasant aspects, I will discuss some of the heartaches and frustrations which inevitably occur with those kind of changes. We will take my junior apart so you can see the actual alterations.

To give you a better idea of "where I am coming from" with my junior, this is a chronology of the changes I have made:

1.) Purchased Junior in Nov 1984 - IBM's "PCjr Pre-Christmas Special." (It was really a fire sale. Lots of us bought our PCjrs through that "special.") It was a 128K PCjr with one drive, a PCjr Color Display, Cartridge BASIC, DOS 2.1, a few games and IBM Writing Assistant. (Sound familiar?)

2.) Got a Key Tronic KB 5151jr keyboard and a Okidata 92 9-pin dot matrix printer.

3.) Purchased a Microsoft 256K PCjr Booster memory expansion sidecar.

4.) Replaced the Microsoft sidecar with a Racore second drive and memory expansion to 640K with DMA.

5.) Bought a used Mouse Systems serial mouse for an IBM PC (not PCjr).

6.) Installed the Thin Font chip from PC Enterprises.

7.) Added a restart button on the front of Junior.

8.) Bought the PC Enterprises PCjr 10 MHz Speedup Board and installed it with a PC/PCjr switch on the front of Junior.

9.) Set up Junior to run with a PC Enterprise COMBO Cartridge (version 2.0).

10.) Replaced my 9-pin dot matrix printer for an Okidata 390 24-pin dot matrix printer.

11.) Installed the Tandy Mod. (with a PCjr/Tandy switch in the back).

12.) Just ordered a Systems Peripherals Consultants 20 Meg hard drive (and hope to have it up and running by the time of the meeting).

I think you will enjoy seeing some of the options and hopefully learn something from hearing me talk about both my successes and failures in trying to tweak the max out of my Junior.

Next month I will write a summary of the comments I will have made at the February meeting for those of you who are unable to attend.

However, remember: Be there or be square!

A MAGNETIC "ATTRACTION"

Have you ever thought about how stable and extremely reliable the magnetic media is that we use with our Juniors? Most of us use our DOS disk or our copy of Writing Assistant that was purchased as long as five or six years ago without any thought about the condition of the bits and bytes on the surface of the diskettes. Helen Olberg, editor of Fox Tales, the publication of the Fox Valley PC Association, published some excerpts from a 3M publication about how these magnetic fields on our diskettes can be damaged. Here are some of the points outlined in her article:

1. Magnetic fields of high intensity can erase the data on a diskette. Some magnetic fields drop off by the cube of the distance from the source. This means you have to be very close to the magnetic field to cause erasure. A spacing of only a few inches is usually all that is necessary to totally protect a diskette from even extremely strong magnetic fields.

2. Utility magnets and "refrigerator" magnets are strong enough to erase data from a diskette if direct contact is made between the magnet and the diskette.

3. A magnet such as one described above, when affixed to a file cabinet, would not be able to cause any erasure to the diskettes inside the cabinet.

4. Diskettes cannot "conduct" the magnetism applied by a permanent magnet. If a stack of diskettes were contacted directly by a magnet, only the closest proximity areas could be erased, and not the entire stack.

5. Heat cannot cause erasure until about 850° F. This normally won't be encountered, but high heat can damage the polyester base of the diskette media and PVC jacket, causing readback problems.

6. Static electricity discharge cannot cause diskette erasure. There is no magnetic field associated with static electricity, and extensive testing has shown no erasure. Lightning discharge in close proximity to a diskette through a pipe could generate a magnetic field strong enough to erase a diskette (and probably destroy it as well). Static discharge into a computer with a diskette in it could cause information to be recorded, thus static strips and mats are recommended.

7. Radar and microwave transmissions cannot affect magnetic media unless they are directly in front of the antenna (this would be a burn hazard to humans).

8. X-rays cannot erase magnetic media. Theoretically, this is impossible because X-rays do not have any magnetic fields associated with them, and extensive testing has not found any erasure evident with high level exposures.

9. Metal detectors do not have a high enough field to erase magnetic media. These devices will require posting if they evolve to higher level fields that could affect magnetic media, hearing aids, pacemakers, etc.

So, there you have the straight skinny! Thanks, Helen. . .and you, too, 3M. If you would like to begin getting your own copy of Fox Tails, membership in the Fox Valley PC Association is only $24 a year. You can send to the FVPCA at P.O. Box 294, Plainfield, IL 60544.
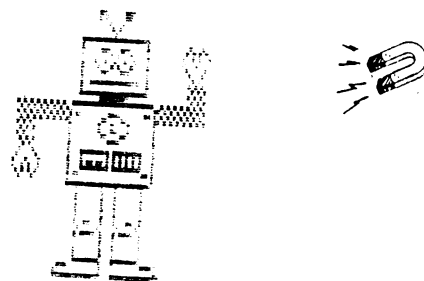
PERSONALITY PROFILE
By Elleen Levy

JOEL and CLAUDIA BRODSKY

New members of our club are the Brodsky
family. Joel and Claudia have two sons--
Jordan who is six years old, and Zev, who
is three. They live far enough out of
town to raise chickens which lay brown
eggs.

Both Joel and Claudia are students.
Claudia is studying accounting, so she
uses Lotus 1-2-3 most of the time. Joel
is a geography major. He prefers Word-
Perfect for his research papers. At
school he is learning a computer program
called GIS (Geography Information System)
which has different layers of informa-
tion. Unfortunately, a hard drive is
required for this program.

Zev doesn't use the PCjr that the
family has had a little more than two
months, but Jordan enjoys playing games
once in a while.

We want to extend a hearty WELCOME to
the Brodsky family!

Dear Dr. DOS:
by Steve Bass

Every time I sit down at the computer
I feel a great sense of discomfort as
the time seems to speed by very
quickly. Just what is happening?
Whoosh, NYC

Dear Whoosh:
Computer time is different from other
time. Time pieces seem to become
inaccurate when you're at the
computer. For every five minutes at
the computer, 25 minutes goes by on
the clock.

It's a simple recalculation based on the
number of time splices your computer
uses. For example, a computer running
an 8088 has an internal clock that ticks
about 18 times a second (Mean
Greenwich Time). This time factor
(8088s only) pushes time ahead 25
minutes for each 5 minutes of real or
actual time. The ratio of 5:1 is obvious
(except to you, Whoosh).

An AT class machine (80286) pushes the
time factor to 10:1 while the new 80386
machines will provide an even faster
30:1 ratio.

Experiment with these machines in
conjunction with your spouse. "Dinner
is ready," they say. "Five minutes,
Honey," you respond. Take careful
note of the strong relationship between
the time factor of 8088s and 80386s and
the length, depth and substance of your
marriage.

Credits: From SLO Bytes, San Luis
Obispo UG, reprinted in Monterey
User's Group Personal Computer
newsletter for January, 1989 from the
Twin Cities PC User Group Newsletter,
July 1988. We pick it up from our
"Mother" Group, the Eugene PC User's
Group. (If anyone reprints this, you're
on your own as to how you give
credits!

HEARD ON THE STREET
by DICK PAGE

MICROSOFT FLIGHT SIMULATOR
UPGRADED TO VERSION 4.0

The latest version of Flight Simulator
[version 4.0] is out and runs well on a
PCjr in four colors. If you have the
Tandy-to-jr video hardware modification,
it will run in 16 colors. There are many
improvements - more realistic cloud
graphics, better looking "views", other
planes show up that you have to avoid,
airports have more detail, and night
flying is much more realistic. Also, you
can now practice glidder flying with a
German-designed glidder. The only thing
they left out is the simple software
patch that would allow PCjrs to operate
in 16 colors! [Foowee on you -
Microsoft!]

Info taken from
the Dec '89 issue of
jr Newsletter

NAME THAT SYMBOL!

Which of the following is another name for the slash mark (" / ")?

    a.) Solidus
    b.) Division sign
    c.) Virgule
    d.) Shilling

(The answer is on page 8.)

RACORE INFO UPDATE

In a conversation with Racore, their technical rep., Shawn, stated that Racore is definitely not making any new hardware products for PCjrs. Instead, they are now concentrating their efforts on developing products for Local Area Networks ("LANs").

Shawn indicated that Racore is continuing to manufacture and support their PCjr second drives and memory expansion units, but that is all. He said that PCjr owners should rely on other manufacturers such as Paul Rau, Systems Peripherals Consultants and PC Enterprises for new PCjr products.

Currently, the most frequently asked PCjr question Shawn gets is "How do I get ?????? software program to run?" If he doesn't think they are having a Racore hardware problem, Shawn suggests they subscribe to jr Newsletter and/or join a local PCjr users group. He has a listing of most of the user groups and tries to direct the caller to the one nearest the caller's home town.

If you want to install a Systems Peripherals Consultants hard drive in a Junior with Racore's second drive with DMA, you must disable the DMA. An article in the Jan. '89 issue of the jr Newsletter describes ho to accomplish this simple task. Racore will send you a new disk drive controller ribbon cable and a copy of the jr Newsletter article (only if you ask for it) for $10.00.

Racore has no toll free phone line. For technical information you may call them at 1-801-596-0265 from 8:30 to 4:30 MST (Salt Lake City, UT).

KEEP ON YOUR TOES WITH YOUR PROSE

Feel your writing is shaky? Want to communicate your thoughts more effectively using your Junior? Then "*The Write Stuff*" article in the December PC/COMPUTING magazine is something you will want to read. It's a terrific, indepth, 17 page look at word processing and writing by a wide variety of writers.

The article is appropriately subtitled *"5 ways to use your PC to write better, plus 32 PC tools that give you the power you need to defeat the terror of the blank page - and tips from pros like Roy Blount, Jr."* It's slant is towards business writing, but much of the information is relevant to any writing purpose.

Divided into five sections, the article reflects the processes and sequences in which most effective writing is done.

    1.) Brainstorm
    2.) Outline
    3.) Write
    4.) Proofread
    5.) Get Feedback

Suggestions are made regarding which software programs are best suited to each writing task.

Writing tips abound. An example is the tip called "Four Techniques for Better Proofreading".

" Print out documents to proofread on paper as well as on screen. If you have time, store the document for a day or two and then come back to it. Both tricks let you look at your work with a fresh perspective.*
* Save your copies of originals and interim versions under new filenames before revising them.
* Build a personal dictionary of words you often use.
* Do not let proof reading and grammar-checking software dictate your style."

[I will have a copy of the magazine at the next meeting for your perusal. I'm sure there is some aspect of the article which you will find of value.]

BATCH FILES FOR SETTING UP YOUR PRINTER

We had the flattering compliment of one of our articles being quoted in the November '89 issue of the Fox Tales newsletter from Plainfield, Illinios. Appended to our article titled "*Unusual Filenames Can Be Helpful*" from our Oct. '89 issue were suggestions from Fox Tales' editor for sending special ASCII codes from the keyboard to the printer in order to set the printer up for specific kinds of printing.

Two ways were suggested for changing an IBM proprinter to condensed printing:

1.) Keyboard

Type the following at the A>
COPY CON LPT1:
<ALT><15><F6><ENTER>

This will copy ["COPY"] what you type ["CON"] on the second line to the printer ["LPT1:"]. (The greater than / less than keys aren't typed. They only indicate which keys need to be pressed.) "<ALT><15>" sends the special ASCII code number 15 to the printer [this turns on the compressed print mode]. "<F6>" and "<ENTER>" tell Junior that this is the end of the file. After that Junior should return to the A prompt.

2.) BATch file

Type the following after the A>

```
COPY CON CONDENSE.BAT
ECHO <ALT><15> >LPT1:
<F6><ENTER>
```

This will copy the contents of the second line to a file with the name CONDENSE.BAT.
Then, when you type at the A>
CONDENSE
the code will be sent to the printer (redirected by the ">" symbol before the LPT1:) and turn on condensed printing (providing CONDENSE.BAT is on the disk in the drive you are using).

[Non-IBM Proprinter users: These techniques can be used with any of the special printer codes used by your particular printer. Just check your printer manual for the proper codes and use different names for each BATch file. Use <ALT><27> in place of the ESCape letters. Ask at the next meeting, if you need help with this. Please bring along your printer manual.]

QUICK GLARE FIX

The January 1990 issue of PC/COMPUTING magazine has a good, free tip for decreasing glare on your screen. The only requirement is that your program must have the flexibility to let you set the screen colors.

They suggest you use dark letters on a light background because:
"Glare is more noticable against the default black background that many programs display. Since white or cyan backgrounds are closer to the shade of the reflections of windows or overhead lights, those reflections are not as noticable."

If glare is a problem for you, why not give this a try!

REPAIRING YOUR PCjr's BLACK BRICK TRANSFORMER

The January 1990 issue of *Fox Tales* newsletter has a great article titled: *PCjr Power Problems and Repair (Part I)*. It deals with diagnosing and isolating power failure problems from either the "black brick" or the internal power supply card.

Part I deals specifically how to open up the black brick in order to replace a blown tranformer fuse.

Part II (next month?) will focus on repairing the power supply card.

[Fox Tales newsletters are available from our documents library.]

Ed's note: Look at Helen Olberg's article on page four for the address of The Fox Valley PC Association; you may want to subscribe to Fox Tales!

THANK YOU to those who helped construct the Membership questionnaire: Christine Brown, who volunteered to "chair" the project and create the format; Dick Page, who made sure the right questions were asked; President Phil Janz, who ended up making three "final" copies camera-ready. All of you make the Editor's job a piece of cake!

JOIN OUR CLUB!

ANSWER TO:
NAME THAT SYMBOL!

All are correct!

a.) **Solidus** - A term used in printing industry. Synonomous with virgule.

b.) **Division sign** - the obvious answer.

c.) **Virgule** - A printer's term for the symbol used to separate alternatives ("and/or"), to replace the word "per" ("miles/hr"), and to indicate the separation of lines of verse ("Candy/Is dandy."). It's from the Latin word *virgula* meaning small rod.

d.) **Shilling** - A term used in printing industry. Synonomous with virgule.

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