MEETING AGENDA

The March meeting of the Eugene PCjr Club will be held at the Church of Christ, 2424 Norkenzie Road, on Thursday, Mar. 14th. Setup will begin at 6:30 and the meeting at 7pm.

The main program for the March meeting is "Software Faire." *Jenny's Journey* and *Math Blaster Plus* will be reviewed.

OFFICERS

President . . . .
            Charles Coury
Vice President. . . . .
            Patti Tanner
Treasurer and Company
    Store. . . . . **Phil Janz**
Disk Librarian. . . . .
            Mike Ruiz
Modem Captain. . . .
    Gordon LeManquais
Commercial Contact. . .
            Dick Page
Social Director . . . .
            Helen Fry
Newsletter Editor . . .
            Louie Levy
Publisher and Production
    Staff. . . . . **Warren and
        Juanita Hampton**

Association
of
Personal
Computer
User
Groups

Charley's Corner

by Charles Coury

Dear Friends of the PCjr,

Last month's well attended meeting took us farther into the world of the Internet with the help of Sean Shanahan from the Eugene Free Net. Sean graciously spent the evening with us. He did a great job keeping his explanations at a level we could actually follow (no small feat considering the gulf between us). Despite the usual demonstration glitch (in this case not being able to hook up properly with Eugene Free Net despite an evening of trying!) we learned a great deal.

Sean started with the slender box arrayed with little lights called the modem. He explained that the modem does two things. First, it takes digitized computer signals and converts them to analogue or wave signals that can pass along the phone lines. Second, the modem converts them back again. (Is it like an electronic three hole plug--two hole plug converter?)

Then we learned about the modem software, in this case a software program called Telix -- available in the Club Library as Disk P-504. Just like we need DOS to run our Juniors, it takes software like Telix to run the modem. You can dial up a telephone number through your Junior key pad using this software just like you would if it were a phone.

You know you've connected with Eugene Free Net after you dial 687-2996 and get the distinct "Scratch, Siren, Wagawaga" sound that means you've hooked up your Junior with another computer; that you've gone on-line. You can log on either as a guest, or use your *nom de computer* -- in my case ccc. Type in your password *et voila*! you've just entered the world of EFN and the Internet.

Sean explained that EFN is a node computer, which means it gives you access to the Internet. Sort of like finding the entrance ramp to the interstate highway system. He explained about the World Wide Web, Gophers, E-mail, Bulletin Boards, and other amazing features of this latest computer development. And the PCjr is right in step once again traveling the Electronic Superhighway in style. I'm looking forward to hearing from each of you as you log onto EFN.

Another great meeting is in store this coming month with Patti Tanner and Phil Janz presentation of *Software Faire*. What a great way to try out some new software. See you at next Thursday's meeting.

Charlie

February Meeting Recap -

If you missed last month's meeting due to all the flooding in the area, you missed a good one. Brandon Bacod was all set to demonstrate *Nyet Plus Two* from the Club Library along with Mike Ruiz, who was also going to give a demo of a new library disk. "PJ" Jameson had a trick up his sleeve, waiting for just the right time to spring it on us, but time ran out on all these guys. We appreciate all the time they spent getting prepared, but time ran out. In March, all of them will be first!

Even with all the water, we had a good turn-out, and six visitors! The phone connection was pretty poor, but even with the "garbage" coming in over the line, Eugene Free Net's representative made sure the meeting wasn't a "washout." Sean Shanahan fashioned his presentation in such a way that all of us in attendance were able to plant our feet firmly in cyberspace. In case your memory slipped back a notch once you got home, or if you weren't at the meeting, here's a recap of what went on.

Sean explained the confusion some have with OPN (Oregon Public Networking) and EFN (Eugene Free Net). OPN is a non-profit organization that is dedicated to providing the community with low cost, complete access to the Internet. EFN is operated by OPN and is a free computer network designed to help people in the community do research, communicate and to learn. EFN has a few paid workers, but there are many volunteers such as Sean that make EFN work and to help keep costs down.

EFN provides the community with Electronic Mail, Usenet news and the World Wide Web. It has free access. (Aren't you glad you live in Lane County?) Of course, free access means that access is limited, especially during prime time, so you may get some busy signals. As EFN is non-profit, you can apply for Priority Access by making a $7 donation each month and this will give you access to all the available phones and modems that EFN operates.

Already confused? Here's a recap of what is FREE. Basic access. This includes being able to send and receive e-mail, log onto news areas and do file transfers (copying files and information from other machines connected to the Internet to your address at EFN or to your home computer). You can log onto telnet, do gopher searches or surf the World Wide Web.

For the vast sum of $7 a month, you get easier access by having more phone lines available. That's it. There is a suggested donation for new accounts of $15. It is only suggested, but we highly recommend it as EFN and OPN go to a lot of effort to give us all these freebies and they really need it to keep up the great service

OPN has other services, but they are for folks who can use Windows and stuff like that. They have services for businesses and technical assistance.

So, get Telix, Disk P-504, or ProComm, Disks P-504A and B, from the disk library, and use one of them to connect your modem with the outside world. Set the modem protocol to 8 N and 1 (you'll see that on both programs' menu), and set your communications port to COM 1 if you're using the PCjr internal modem, or set it to COM 2 if you're using an external one. Put Eugene Free Net into the dialing directory (687-2996), and dial. *CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE>>*

When EFN answers the phone, you will hear some noise coming from your modem. This is your Junior and EFN trying to communicate with each other. When the two of them connect, the noise stops, unless you are using Telix. Telix gives off sound effects when you connect!

EFN will ask you to "log on." There will be some text telling you that if you are a guest, just key in "guest" (with no quotes). EFN will then present you with some options. We highly suggest that you begin the registration process. They will let you do most anything you want to do right away even as a guest at this first session, but you will need to be registered before you have an "account." A day or so after you log onto EFN, you will receive some paperwork that you need to fill out and return to them so EFN will know who you really are.

Go back and re-read our President's article in last month's newsletter. Charlie told us that he is "CCC" on the net. These are his initials. You need to pick a name you can remember and you should give it some thought. Sean told us that people wanting to rename their account names is a big headache with EFN. So, give it some thought before you log on. I picked one I can remember: I am PCJRCLUB. Charlie's e-mail address is ccc@efn.org. My e-mail address is pcjrclub@efn.org. See how easy it is?

You will also have to provide EFN with a password so other's can't use your account. This password must be a six letter word, but must be something that isn't in the dictionary. "Junior" would be nice, but it's in the dictionary. "Punior" isn't, though, but it may be hard to remember it.

So, get with it! When you're on, the first thing you should do is select M for mail and then C for compose. Send Charlie a note. Key in his address, ccc@efn.org, press enter until you get down to the text portion of the screen, or use the down arrow key. Key in Hey Charlie! (Enter) I'm on the way! (Enter) and then key in your name. At the bottom of the screen, you'll see that all you need do to send the message is to press the Control key and the s key to send. EFN (actually PINE is the program you are using) will ask "send mail? Y/N" or something else like cancel. Press Y and it will say "mail sent." If you want to send me the message too, do the same thing, but put me, pcjrclub@efn.org, in the information block. Both of us will get it. And, we'll send you a note back!

This was such a big hit at the meeting that we now need someone to write articles, like this one, for the newsletter. A short article each month that will walk us through the things that are available. Things like chat, the WorldWideWeb, PINE, Gopher and all the rest of the stuff. How 'bout YOU? Don't send me a note saying you'll try; send me an article about your experiences for the newsletter!

Louie Levy

The Lane County Old Computer Museum?

Many companies now have computer museums, including Intel, the maker of the main processing chip in our Pcjrs. Even the Smithsonian Institution has a computer display. The Boston Computer Museum draws more than 130,000 visitors each year.

Someone, I won't say who, said that Lane County has its own computer museum. But, be advised, you won't see dust and cobwebs there; you may even see folks surfing the net! If you want to visit this museum, we meet the 2nd Thursday of each month. We're known as the Eugene PCjr Club!
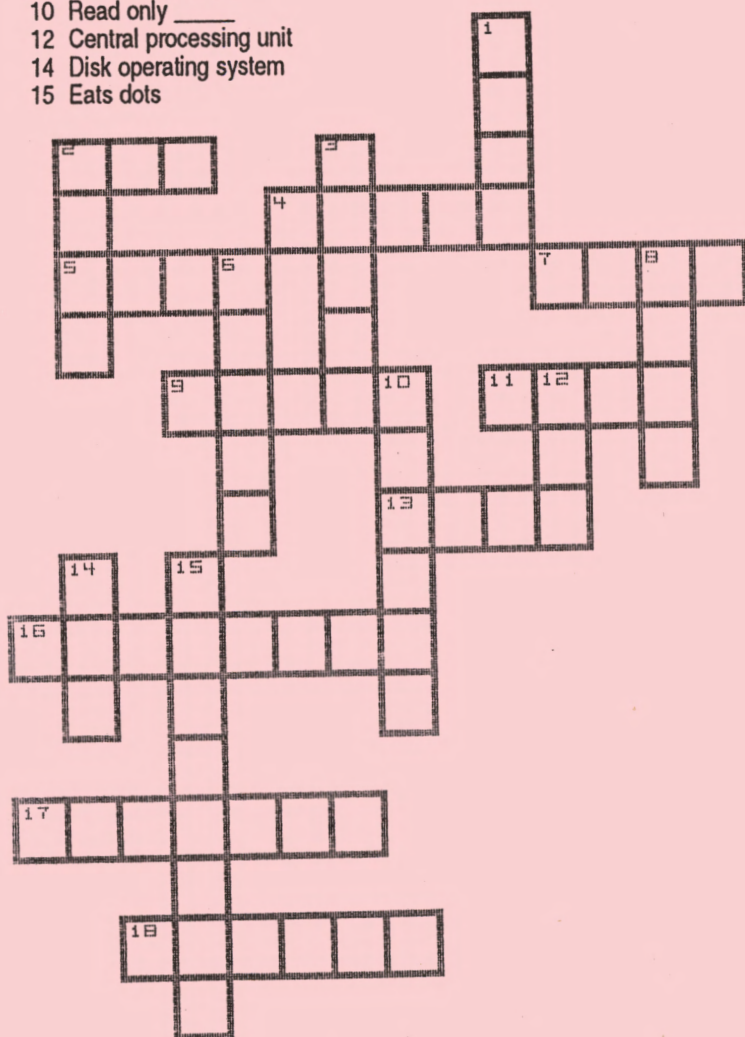
Peanut Crossword Puzzle
by Phil Janz

Across
2 Smallest piece of information
4 What a printer does
5 Preset spaces on a screen printout
7 A thin, square object containing software
9 Used to connect computers by phone
11 Small IBM PC
13 Used to select options
16 An electronic machine
17 Having to do with numbers
18 Language named after a famous mathematician

Down
1 Leaving a program
2 Eight bits
3 Disk _____
6 Save
8 Arranging in order
10 Read only _____
12 Central processing unit
14 Disk operating system
15 Eats dots

THE ANSWERS ARE ON PAGE SEVEN

Health Watch

Louie Levy

We haven't had any readers of our Newsletter report they have ever contracted a computer virus. (Ed's Note: Well, maybe two of us in the local area have!) Are we all just lucky, or are we using safe computing techniques? Whatever the case, it's time we read that "warning label" again before we all become too complacent.

RULE ONE: Put those little write-protect tabs on your original software disks. Actually, there is never any reason to remove them. If you need a working copy of your *Writing Assistant*, *Print Shop*, *King's Quest* or other copy-protected software, use one of the commercial back-up programs to make a copy--do not use your original disks for everyday use. (The big guys need to use one of the shareware utilities to make backup copies of their 1.77 Meg disks for *Windows 95*.)

RULE TWO: Purchase anti-virus software. . .and use it. Scan any software you use in your Junior. If you don't own any anti-virus software, always reboot your computer with a known clean DOS disk after you have used someone else's program or file disk in your Junior. The disk your friend brought over just may have had a virus on it.

RULE THREE: Scan all disks any family member brings home from anywhere: school, church or work. This also applies to any files you download from any BBS or E-Mail file you get.

We are lucky that we use the PCjr--and especially if we don't own a hard drive! I know that's somewhat hard to comprehend, but because so many of the viruses attack the boot sector of disks, including DOS's hidden files, IBMDOS. COM and IBMBIO.COM, we are generally safe. This is particularly true if we always keep that little write protect tab on our DOS boot disks. Any virus that attacks Junior's memory will go away as long as we reboot after using a suspect program.

Modem News

The latest "I thought everyone knew that" comes from member Elmer Hungate in Missouri. Did you know that Junior's serial port can handle up to a 9600 baud modem? I thought it was limited to 2400 and that you needed a "high speed serial port" to handle any more than that. Not so. Now that the 14.4 and 28,800 baud screamers are more in demand, you can find a few 9600 baud external modems at resonable prices.

There is one downside in that many of the older communications packages we may be using may not support speeds of 9600 baud. Elmer says that he hasn't had any problems using Prodigy and their software. But, you do need to contact them and let them know that you require 360K disks for Junior. You can do that by calling 1-800-PRODIGY. Tell them that you need 360K double-sided, double-density disks for your computer. And, no, you don't need Windows!

March Software Faire

Want to know what ☁ balloons, 🖥 computers and 👥 people have to do with Junior? Come to our March Software Faire to find out. And. . .be sure and put your name in the glass bowl for a chance to win the 🎁 door prize!

Patty Tanner

The PCjr and Obsolescence
By Clyde Dodge

The term "obsolescence" is one that should be familiar to every PCjr user. Immediately after IBM said it was abandoning the jr, every writer in every computer magazine started saying that this little computer was obsolete. People like John Dvorak said some other derogatory things such as the fact that it is slow and it had am odd scheme for writing to the screen. EVERYbody chimed in on this theme. If you were a jr owner, you began to wonder if perhaps you HAD made a mistake.

I worried about that for a while. Then my younger son brought home a computer program from one of his classes in the Master's degree program at Stanford that would not run on his Laser 128. So, he started up my jr and soon moved away from the chair and started to read the evening paper. "Don't touch it; it's working," he told me.

I went over and sat in front of the computer. The screen looked just like it does when it locks up; the cursor was not visible and the screen was blank. "The disk light isn't on," I told him.

"That's OK," he replied.

"Are you sure?" I asked.

"Just don't touch it, and it will be through in a few minutes."

He went back to the paper. I sat there for a few minutes and finally decided he must know what he was talking about, so I went back to fixing dinner. But, I kept an eye on the screen. After about 20 minutes the disk light came on and the screen came to life. The results of the calculations were stored on the disk and so he copied the results to the printer, decided it looked OK and so, he turned off the computer.

"What was that all about," I asked.

"It is a program to calculate wing offset dimensions at chord stations for a problem in one

of my classes," was his response. The program was designed by one of the graduate students to run on the PC since no one has a Stanford mainframe at home. "I set the parameters and the computer runs the calculations."

At that point I stopped worrying about the PCjr becoming obsolete. In the intervening years, I have had to admit that 4.77 MHz operating speed is not very fast when you read about 20 or 25 or 28 MHz operating speeds on the newest computers. But, what does that mean to me? This computer stills runs faster than I can think, and if it seems slow to you, that is OK with me. It gives me time to think about what is going to happen next before it flashes past me, leaving me wondering if I missed something. (My number one son has an Apple IIC. I think he told me the operating speed is less than 2 MHz.)

I have added Ed Strauss's jrHotshot board for additional memory and have inserted an internal modem which I use EVERYday. The San Francisco PCjr User's Group had a workshop to show me how to add a second disk drive. I did the necessary internal wiring changes right there and then plugged in a new cable. The first try was all that was necessary. I have about $1,600 invested including the original cost plus the IBM Graphics printer.

Of course, the machine is approaching six years of age. I got it in October of 1984. I have to acknowledge that the science of computers is marching rapidly past the point where this machine represented the latest in computer technology. One of the first impacts of this development occurred last spring when I tried to use the J.K. Lasser income tax program for my 1989 tax report. I had used these programs for the previous three years without any hangups, but this new program would not work. I sent a letter post haste to Simon and Schuster. I explained what the problem was and sent them a printout of the screen at the fatal point. I also asked for my money back. At the same time I bought the AMTAX 89 disk at one of the local computer shows. But, before I filed the report based on that work, Simon and Schuster called me from New

York one morning to tell me the problem was that I needed to use DOS 3.3. I got a copy of that from the INFERNO BBS sysop in Monte Serreno and I was back in business.

Another point of interest is that one of the boys sent me a Sierra On-Line game for Father's day. Unfortunately, it took forever to load and then ran at a snail's pace and the colors were not like the King's Quest colors I have been used to. Upon returning it, I was informed that Sierra is no longer writing games that fit the slow speed and peculiar internal programming of the PCjr.

So, there it is. The computer works fine for the programs that were designed to work on its operating system. But, the bottom line for programmers is not going to be adequate if they don't work with the faster computers. Willy-nilly, the PCjr is being left in the dust of advancing technology. In the future, it will be like driving an old Pierce Arrow down the street. It works fine for what it is, but if you try to use a modern unleaded gasoline in it, it simply is not going to work very well.

(Editor's note: At last report, Mr. Dodge's "Pierce Arrow" is still doing well. . .and will soon have given him twelve very enjoyable, and perhaps sometimes frustrating, years of loyal service.

Q A few years ago I noticed that my PCjr Color display was getting a little difficult to read when I used Writing Assistant. I added the Thin-Font module which seemed to clean things up. Now, things are getting fuzzy again.

A The Thin-Font character generating chip either works or it doesn't work. Sounds more like the focus on your monitor needs adjusting. While this is relatively easy to do, the cover of your color display needs to be removed to make the adjustment. We don't recommend you do this yourself as there are a kazillion volts in the monitor--enough to make you a past member of the club.   (answer continues >>)

We can make a "house call" and focus your monitor if you give us a call (and live within 50-miles). Or, you can take it to most any TV repair shop. A repair shop may want your whole jr so they can see what the "picture" looks like.

Increasing Disk Buffers
Often Speeds Up Software

If you have more than 256K on your PCjr you may want to experiment with an increased number of disk buffers to gain speed for certain software.

What are disk buffers? You may not be aware of it, but every time you boot, DOS reserves a certain portion of Junior's RAM for disk buffers. Usually about .5K, a disk buffer is a part of your computer's memory where DOS can temporarily store information that it is asked to read or write to disk. It generally does this when the information it is asked to read or write is not the same size as a disk sector. When the buffer gets full, DOS will write the information on disk.

The upshot of this is that if you are using software that reads and writes to disk very often, Junior will be able to operate that software faster if you tell DOS to reserve more than the usual two disk buffers. Generally, database and spreadsheet software benefit from a higher number of buffers. But it depends upon how the software is written. So, the best thing to do is experiment with the software you use most often.

The way to set the number of disk buffers available for DOS is to put the line

BUFFERS=nn

in your CONFIG.SYS file. (nn stands for whatever number you select.) Although theoretically the greater number of buffers the better, when using DOS 2.1, you will find that the optimum number is usually somewhere between 10 and 20. DOS 2.1 tends to become bogged down with more than 20 buffers. DOS 3.0 and higher, on the other hand, can handle up to 50 or 60 buffers without getting bogged down.
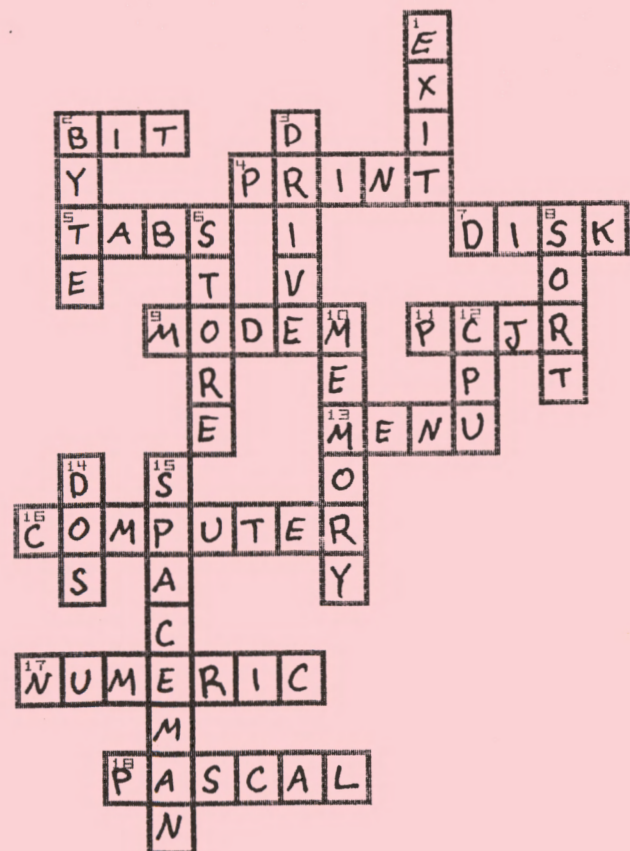
For those of you who are not familiar with

modifying your CONFIG.SYS file, you can do it with any word processor. Just add the line BUFFERS=10 (or whatever number you want to try.) Or, you can write a CONFIG.SYS file from scratch, either with a word processor, or by typing at the DOS prompt: COPY CON CONFIG.SYS.

Then type the lines you want. When you are done press F6 or Control C, then Enter. If you use the copy con method, you will be starting from scratch, which means before doing this you should have a record of what your existing CONFIG.SYS file says. You should preserve the other parts of it while adding the buffers line (as a separate line.)

From an article that appeared in the *jrReport*, 1987

Don't Peek!

Quadram/Racore's PC-JR Switch

Many Junior owners use a Quadram or RACORE expansion unit that gives them a second disk drive and more memory. These units have a toggle switch on the rear enabling them to select either a "jr" mode or "PC" mode. Problems can arise with some software when this switch is not where the software needs it to be.

Spreadsheet, word processing and other business and technical software usually don't care which mode you have selected. The programs that usually care are those written especially for the PCjr. Some of these programs require PCjr's special abilities in so far as graphics and sound routines go. Because of this, you are generally better off running these programs in the "jr" mode. Because the "jr" mode is so compatible, many people leave the switch in this position all the time.

Some problems can occur if your boot disk's CONFIG.SYS file is not the right one for the switch position you have selected. This conflict is easily avoided by following the installation instructions provided with your unit and then keeping track of which configuration you are using. One member uses a magic marker to place a red dot on program disks that require the switch be placed in the "PC" mode. No dot means the program runs with the switch placed in the "jr" position.

You Get More From A Club When You
Put More Into That Club

EUGENE PCjr CLUB

1011 Valley River Way 116-B, Suite 220
Eugene, OR   97401

PCjr LiVES!
courtesy, RACORE corp.

FIRST CLASS MAIL