Association
of
Personal
Computer
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Groups

Lynn's Logo Goes Here

by Lynn Miles

Hello Friends,

Well, it seems we waited a long time for summer to really arrive and then it came with a Fahrenheit! One thing about the heat, the garden really grew and now I am paying the price with frequent trips to harvest the results. I hope your summer was pleasant and rewarding. Although we enjoyed the heat and "no rain period", I think we are all ready for our normal Oregon weather to return. Well, the first sign of that is always our September meeting at River Road Park. Yum, chicken, beans, and corn on the cob are just a part of our great potluck. Be sure to mark your calendars and DO COME! We will also receive an overview of what the new year holds in store for PC Junior meetings.

I personally want to thank those who planned the meetings last year. We had a neat year full of informative programs, and from what I hear, this year will be even more outstanding.

I really learned a lot from the "Internet" meeting, and found myself finally connecting and writing almost daily to my daughter and family in Kalimantan, Borneo. I am looking forward to continued frequent letters this year as they have moved to Daharan, Saudi Arabia. (That's right, about 40 miles from where the bomb went off.) It should be an interesting year thanks to Internet and e-mail and Eugene Free Net.

I peeked at this year's agenda and saw that there is at least one meeting on Internet and its use. So I am looking forward to learning more about the computer highway and how to get the most from it. Isn't it wonderful that Junior can take us there too. I realize that there are lots of "state of the art" computers functioning out there, but I get up in the morning and turn on Junior and check to see if I have any mail from overseas, and reply if I do. Later in the week, I turn on Junior and check to see if a certain check has cleared and what my current balance is in my banking institution. Then, I write several letters and maybe produce a bulletin. Maybe once a week my grandchildren come over and play a game, or make a card or banner on Junior. Sooo, what more can you ask of life?

Hope to see you in September!

Lynn Miles, Vice President

What the Heck Are We Still Doing Here?

Louie Levy

Well, who would have thought? Here it is September of 1996; over eleven years since IBM brought out their answer to the home computing world, the PCjr. It wasn't very long after Junior's release that Dick Page and Bill Roy began the Eugene PCjr Club. These two local visionaries saw early on that a support group would be needed for those who owned the little "peanut" if they were going to use these computers to their full potential. Both the PCjr and the Eugene PCjr Club are still around. The club is about the same size now as it was in its beginning. We even have a few of the original members still actively involved, still using their Juniors like nothing has changed in the computing world.

But we all know that much has changed. The computing industry hasn't stood still over the years and computing technology has expanded rapidly. If Junior's 8088 main processing chip was "state of the art" back then, the Pentium chip that is all the hype today must be Junior's great, great grandson. And, great this new CPU is! It processes data as soon as the key is pressed. The speed of these new chips is more than phenomenal as it can do so very much while it's doing so many other things. Our poor old Junior is such a slow-poke that it doesn't even compare to the speed of these new machines.

Just read the advertisements in most any computer magazine: "Upgrade to a 4X (or 6X or 8X) CD ROM drive with a 16bit sound card..." or "1.6 Gig IDE hard drive" or "32 megs of 72pin memory for..." I don't know; nothing in these advertisements will even fit into Junior anymore.

Now, I'm not saying that you shouldn't be reading these magazines or that you shouldn't be keeping up with the latest technology. We all need to stay abreast of what's happening in the world. My wife has a cell phone and a beeper. As an on-call nurse for Springfield School District, she needs to be able to be contacted if she's needed. She needs the new technology in her job, but we don't need even call-waiting at home.

Everyone needs to be in tune with what's available on the market today, but we don't need to buy the new model of everything when it come out. I still drive my 1986 truck. I know that a newer one would get me to the Club meetings faster and safer. At least a newer truck may have a tape deck. (Read "4X or 6X CD ROM drive with Sound Blaster etc., etc.") But, my old truck is paid for, it's still running good, I wouldn't be able to haul any more stuff than I do now and I don't really need a new truck.

And Junior: my old 1986 Junior is still running. Like Lynn's it is still cranking out letters, documents, bills for my little book business, mailing labels, postcards, keeping track of all the books, what little is left of my coin collection, still making "Help Feed The Hungry" flyers for a local soup kitchen that a church my wife participates in sponsors, keeping track of stocks we wish we owned in IBM, Microsoft, Yahoo, Intel and Netscape and, using Junior, I have just finished redoing our wills. While I can't leave my son my old 586 computer with gigabits and megabytes that I don't have, I'm sure he won't mind; he's still agonizing over getting Windows 95 to run all his old (paid for) software on his two year old "state of the art" computer.

Actually, I did get that "new model" computer a few years ago. I needed to make multi-page, multi-column book catalogs and didn't want to do "cut and paste" to get it done. But, I haven't gone out and bought a new model each year or even upgraded the motherboard. With my Junior, I can send and receive e-mail with other book dealers, my children and my grandchildren while keeping a positive bank account.

Sure, most Junior owners could afford to buy a new computer; in fact, some members do use other computers. They could also afford to move to a newer, larger place to live, but why? There's a

lot to be said for being comfortable, reasonable and content with what you have. Who was it who made the bumper stickers that said, "I LOVE MY PCJR"? I have never seen any that say I love my XT, AT, Pentium or I Love My MAC.

So, the Eugene PCjr Club is still here. Go in there an look at your Junior and ask yourself, "Why has this little computer lasted so long?" Then, tell it how much you appreciate it!

Louie Levy

Lots of Software, 1996

Over the years the Club Library has changed hands from one Librarian to the next. My memberships have been for an average amount of time, so I haven't known all the past Librarians. I feel there have been at least five beside myself. As a result, our club has an outstanding variety and number of programs available to members.

Today, we have EIGHTY-SEVEN disks in the Library. We have programs related to subjects like education, games, productivit, and utilities. We have word processors, pinball games, Printshop® graphics, spreadsheets and databases. We have programs for both children and adults. Just about any subject a person can think of we have computer programs to match. We owe this collection of software to past members who worked hard so that we all have lots of software and support.

This new PCjr Club year will bring more software to the Library. Like past Librarians, I will do my best to continue this legacy. My goal this year, again, is to add a disk a month to the Library. We have a lot of disks to look through and evaluate. And, although all that are examined don't meet Library criteria, I look forward to disks people offer to the Club as possible candidates. Remember, we can only offer shareware. Our club Library is the only one of its kind, and could possibly be the best source of software suitable for PCjr users.
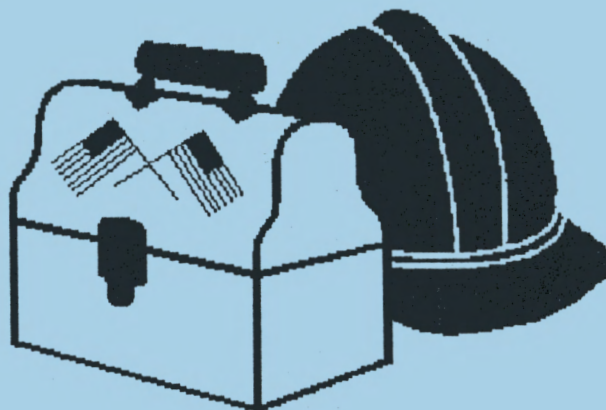
Throughout this next year anyone having problems with software or members that have questions about applications, please feel free to give me a call. My number is printed on every newsletter. And, anyone interest in evaluating software come forth and let me know.

I am looking forward to the picnic, and seeing familiar faces.

Mike

Our Library is the only one of its kind.

Labor Day - 1996

Your PCjr, EFN and the WWW   Part Two

Over the summer I am sure that many of you were able to begin surfing the net. I know that quite a few club members are using e-mail as the Club has been answering questions and general correspondence getting to us at our address on Eugene Free Net.

Using Junior on the World Wide Web has cause us to learn a new vocabulary. We were doing pretty well over the years with just knowing what a Bulletin Board was. Now, there's more.

When you get through checking your mail and close out *Pine*, the program that our local provider here in Eugene uses, press the W key to go to the World Wide Web. When you are there, look at the bottom of the screen and you see a menu of the options available.

One option is G for GO. When you key that in, you will see the message "URL to open:". This is your signal to key in any address that you would like to go to. The address can be as short as www.orst.edu to get to Oregon State University, or as long as www.well.com/user/brekke/aaac.html to get to one of my book dealer friends. Just remember that you must start the address with http:// and then key in the address.

One thing to remember as a Junior user is that we have very little working room for file transfers. Our disks only hold 360K of data while EFN, our local provider, allows us 500K of storage space. Should you download some information that is larger than 360K, you won't be able to get it onto a floppy. Also, at 300baud, or even 1200baud, we may go over our allotted time. If you find information or a file that you feel you would like to have, contact a member of the club or a friend who has a faster modem and ask them to download it for you.

Fortunately for me, some of our members know how to transfer, or forward files. When they see something they feel would be good for the newsletter, they just forward the whole article to "pcjrclub@efn.org" and we get it.

For instance, member Judy Young read a neat computer jargon glossary over the summer on the net. It was from Steven Lee on the EFN News so Judy just forwarded the whole article to me. Here it is:

"When I went to college in the 1980's, I heard a lot of words like 'data input' and beta version.' They confused me. I wanted desperately to know what people were talking about, what Big Secret resided in the computer industry.

"Now that I've worked in a computer company for the last few years, I've gained an insider's perspective. I decided to share my knowledge with the uninitiated by creating the following brief, handy glossary:"

Alpha: Software undergoes alpha testing as a first step in getting user feedback. Alpha is Latin for "Doesn't work."

Beta: Software undergoes beta testing shortly before it's released. Beta is Latin for "Still doesn't work."

CPU: Central Propulsion Unit. The CPU is the computer's engine. It consists of a hard drive, an interface card and a tiny spinning wheel that's powered by a running rodent -- a gerbil if the machine is a 286, a ferret if it's a 386, and a ferret on speed if it's a 486.

Default Directory: Black hole. Default directory is where all files that you need disappear to.

Error Message: Terse, baffling remark used by programmers to place blame on users for the program's shortcomings.

File: A document that has been saved with an unidentifiable name. It helps to think of a file as something stored in a file cabinet -- except when you try to remove the file, the cabinet gives you an electric shock and tells you the file format is unknown.

Hardware: Collective term for any computer-related object that can be kicked or battered.

Help: The feature that assists in generating more questions. When the help feature is used correctly, users are able to navigate through a series of Help screens and end up where they started from without learning anything.

Input/Output: Information is input from the keyboard as intelligible data and output to the printer as unrecognizable junk.

<u>Memory</u>: Of computer components, the most generous in terms of variety, and the skimpiest in terms of quantity.

<u>Printer</u>: A printer consists of three main parts: the case, the jammed paper tray and the blinking red light.

<u>Reference Manual</u>: Object that raises the monitor to eye level. Also used to compensate for that short table leg.

<u>Scheduled Release Date</u>: A carefully calculated date determined by estimating the actual shipping date and subtracting six months from it.

<u>User-Friendly</u>: Of or pertaining to any feature, device or concept that makes perfect sense to a programmer.

<u>Users</u>: Collective term for those who stare vacantly at a monitor. Users are divided into three types: novice, intermediate and expert.
  - Novice Users: People who are afraid that simply pressing a key might break their computer.
  - Intermediate Users: People who don't know how to fix their computer after pressing a key that broke it.
  - Expert Users: People who break other people's computers."

We got more articles this summer from others in the club; thanks to everyone who helped by furnishing things for the newsletter!

TechNet Updates

Over the summer the Club received its new TechNet CD from the Microsoft User Group Program. Be sure and take time to look it over if you are using Windows 3.1 or Windows 95.

Also received was the *Microsoft Press Computer Dictionary*. This 442 page lg8vo size book is a welcome addition to our resource library. Our old one was published nearly 10 years ago and is a paperback. This new generous gift from Microsoft will be available at the September Picnic and the October regular meeting for your perusal.

The Heros Among Us
. . .and in our Club!

Over the summer, Eileen and I attended an Elderhostel at the Mayo Clinic. Rochester Minnesota is a beautiful city and we learned quite a lot of new medical information. For those of us over 55, Elderhostels are always fun and the folks who put this one on kept us busy most of the time.

One thing they did was to provide us with some books we could "check out" and read in our hotel rooms while we weren't taking tours or attending classes. The book I picked out was <u>Heroes Among Us: Uncommon Minnesotans</u>.

Among the 46 people listed to be heros we found folks like Hubert Humphrey, Walter Mondale and even the creator of the cartoon *Charlie Brown*, Charles Schulz. You would have been just as surprised as I was when I came across one of our club's Charter Members in their list. All of us who know Carol and Dick Page have always known that they both were "special" people, but Carol was picked from many, many Minnesotans to be listed in this book of heros.

The era of the 60's was very turbulent to many Americans particularly to those with loved ones involved with the Viet Nam conflict. I won't go into the details of what makes Carol a hero, but she has given many of us insight into our own emotions. It has taken some of us quite some time to come to a healthy realization of our feelings about this conflict, and thanks to Carol's insights, many have been able to "get on" with their lives.

We salute both Carol and Dick; they are both "heros" to us!

What To Do When Your PCjr Breaks Down

By Carl Haub

BeepBeep. Ever get that sound when you boot and nothing else? What do you do? What if you turn on Junior and nothing happens at all? These are problems which may well confront you, particularly as your PCjr gets on in age. While unsettling at best, many of these problems can be diagnosed and even fixed by you, the user.

This article is written, not by a technician, just by a PCjr user who can't tell a resistor from a transistor, but who has futzed about by trial and error, and who also came across an unusually detailed list of IBM "error codes." If I can do it, you can too.

First, don't be afraid to have a look inside jr, even if you never have before. Lift the lid by popping it off with a quarter. What's inside? Working from left to right as you look inside Junior from the front, the first circuit board is the power supply. You may have either the older "short" card or the newer "long" one which reaches to the front of the machine. A failure here is often caused only by a blown fuse. Just to its right, in a metal RF shield is the 64K memory board which brought your original machine to 128K. The first 64K chips are on the motherboard, the large board which completely covers the bottom of the machine.

Just to its right are two "slots." The first holds the jr's 300 baud internal modem, if you have one. The second will have the disk controller card in it with a flat grey cable that runs to an edge connector on the disk drive. The cooling fan sits on the back of the disk drive. Both the fan and the disk drive are connected to the power supply card, which is how they get their power(!).

The square silver "box" just behind the little round hole in Junior's front is the infra-red sensor which accepts input from Junior's cordless keyboard. You can remove this by gently pulling upwards if you never use batteries in the keyboard. It saves a little strain on the power supply and keeps the machine a bit cooler.

If you get the "two beeps" when you boot, it indicates some sort of problem. But, the problem may not be serious. It could indicate that a connector such as the light pen or serial port (which you may not use) has a defect. Bent pins from careless attachment of plugs are a common problem. Or it could be something else.

You can troubleshoot Junior yourself. Try removing one board at a time. Turn off the machine. Work from right to left. Unplug the disk drive from the controller board by removing the flat grey cable. Reboot. No beeps? The problem was something in the drive circuits. Still two beeps? Remove the controller board. Then try taking out the 64K memory card, then the infrared sensor. If the problem still exists with all of that stuff removed the problem is in the power supply, motherboard, or monitor. Often, simply removing these components (and possibly cleaning the slot contacts with a clean gum eraser) will put your machine right back into operation. Dirty contacts, likely in an older machine, are a common source of failure in electrical components.

The error codes, if any, shown on the monitor screen provide more clues. During the Power On Self Test (POST), these codes appear on the screen and normal use can often be continued by hitting the enter key if the failed part is not essential. The following details the possible error conditions you may encounter.

1. Two beeps and a horizontal line across the top of the monitor screen and that's all. Errors in CPU registers, ROM chips, 64K memory on motherboard and/or 64K memory board, or something called an 8259 Interrupt Error. This usually calls for replacement of the motherboard. "Chip-level" diagnosis can, however, often locate the problem part for replacement at less cost. Few shops are willing to perform that type of detailed repair. This could also be a bad power supply, frequently fixed with a 50 cent fuse.

2. "Error A" shows on the screen. Memory error on motherboard, 64K card, or memory sidecar. If the latter, this can be caused by dirty pins on the attachment bus on the sidecar. Try removing and blowing any dust away or cleaning the pins. On Tecmar boards, this can be caused by looseness in the plug on the heat sink (the flat plate inside the sidecar).

3. Two beeps and "Error B" on screen. Almost always, this is because you touched a key during while booting. This is a no-no; don't know why, but it is. It can also indicate a bad infrared receiver, however. If it happens again when you didn't touch the keyboard, that's it. Replace with one from the Club Store or get a keyboard cord.

Error B can also refer to the monitor, a little known fact. If none of the above seem appropriate, B may be indicating an error in the CRT/CPU page register logic (gate array, 6845, or associated TTL glue). In other words, like many Club members, your monitor is has gone over the hill. DO NOT attempt to repair a monitor yourself unless you know what you're doing. CRT's store large, potentially fatal, voltages. REPEAT, leave the inside of the monitor alone.

4. Two beeps and "Error C." Unlikely since it indicates an error with a cassette tape storage "wrap back." Who uses cassettes?

5. Two Beeps and "Error D." Serial port ("S plug") on back of machine failed. Bad news only if you use an external modem or a serial printer (the more usual dot matrix uses the parallel port).

6. "Error E." Modem failure. At least it's (probably) not your Junior.

7. "Error F/G." Error F means an error in ROM on the motherboard (the chip can be replaced). G, more specifically, indicates an error in the ROM cartridge space. The high order byte is shown following the letter.

8. "Error H." Disk Drive error. It's the disk drive.

If nothing at all happens when you turn on the machine, it's probably a power transformer (the "black brick"). These are available from the Club Store and, sometimes, from thrift stores in your local area.

In our user group, jr owners can bring their nonworking machines to our meetings and someone in the group will try to help. One owner had a jr which worked fine except that it wouldn't format disks. Inspection showed an LED swinging freely above the disk drive. We pushed it back into the hole in the locking arm on the drive and all was well. Apparently, this LED senses the indexing hole on the disk to begin the formatting process and won't work when it's out of position. The point here is that none of the assembled group that day knew that problem existed, but it was fixed.

On another day, a woman had a Tecmar jrCaptain that did not seem to work. Turned out that the machine she had bought from a friend had a bent pin on the sidecar bus. That was that. Bent pins, by the way are a very common problem. An Achilles' heel of the jr is the flimsy pin connectors on the back. When plugging things on DON'T reach around the back and just shove it in. Make sure that you have the plug right side up and in the correct port. Use a good light if necessary and don't force a recalcitrant plug. The pins can sometimes be repaired, but not always; and, that means a new motherboard.

There, that's it. A brief tour through the problems I hope you don't see. Hardware problems often cause unneeded anxiety. You may not be able to repair the problem, but the chances are quite good that you can at least isolate it and get the offending part fixed.

(This article first appeared in the Metro PCjr Journal. It has been edited for inclusion in the Eugene PCjr Newsletter.)

DON'T MISS OUT!

FOR SALE

12th Annual Peanut Picnic

Helen Fry and Pauline Bacard

For many of us, now that school has started again, Summer is over. It's time to get the Club meetings going again and we are starting with our Annual Picnic! We will meet at the same place as always, Pavillion One at Emerald Park (River Road Park), 1400 Lake Drive in Eugene. If you don't know where that is, call Phil (343-1059), Louie (343-7592) or Helen (689-2575).

The Club will be providing the chicken and beverages. You need to bring a hot dish, a salad or a dessert. You also need a place setting for each member of your family. Bring your appitite and be prepared to have some fun this year! No matter what the weather holds for us, we'll be ready. Sure hope to see all the "old timers" and our new members and guests, too!

Helen and Pauline

Are you stuck? Is that software giving you fits? That computer won't work? Call for **HELP:**

BASIC or WordStar = Paul Bonney at 344-1501   WordPerfect = Louie Levy at 343-7592
PC-FILE +, 5 or 6 = Dick Page at 342-3193   Name Pal = Phil Janz at 343-1059
PC-FILE III = Louie Levy at 343-7592   Communications = Gordon LeManquais at 746-1594
Writing Assistant = Phil Janz at 343-1059   Spreadsheets and WordPerfect = Mike Ruiz at 687-8361
Hardware Problems = Dick or Louie   Parts and Supplies = The Company Store (Phil Janz)

"Whoever said good help is hard to find has never called the Help-Line of their local Computer Club!"

EUGENE PCjr CLUB

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