EUGENE *PCjr* CLUB

NEWSLETTER

P.O. Box 50024, Eugene, OR 97405

Mike's Message

December 1998
Merry Christmas!

Time to get out the Christmas lights. . . the Thanksgiving holiday has gone by. As we begin winter, the last month before the year 1999 is upon us. As the PCjr Club moves close to 1999, it seems amazing that we are still alive. There is definitely something about Junior and our membership that has kept us viable. I could imagine a New Year headline that reads: *"Kept together by a small band of dedicated computer users, PCjr still lives."* We are getting close to being in existence 14 years. . .WOW!

It seems like only yesterday our small local group met at the Church of Christ -- the second week of November. What an exciting evening it was. We saw for the first time the Eugene PCjr Club's "Store Catalog" -- Number One! And what timing. The catalog comes to you just in time for Christmas. Your club has many items in its club store just waiting to find a good home. I encourage everyone in our club to read over this catalog as soon as they can. Also, at our November meeting, we demonstrated a PCjr that had been upgraded with a 2-drive RACORE Expansion Drive 2 unit and that had an external Paul Rau 30 MB hard drive. The system that was demonstrated worked flawlessly. It turned out so well a member bought it at the meeting! It amazes me that Junior is still capable of impressing people after all these years. It's a great machine.

Well, it's time for our December meeting and the PCjr Club's Annual Christmas Potluck. This month's meeting is one I always look forward to. There was a time when our Christmas Potluck included 46 members present! We may never see those numbers in attendance again, but I'm sure the day will be very festive and successful. Hopefully, you are able to attend ~ see you there!

Mike

Windows 98 is Here

Before anyone asks, the answer is "no, it won't run on your Junior." According to Mindshare Update, The requirements for 98 are:
⇨ 486DX/66 MHz or higher processor (Pentium processor recommended)
⇨ 16 MB of Memory (RAM)
⇨ 120-295 MB of available hard-disk space required; 195 MB for typical installation
⇨ CD-ROM or DVD-ROM (3.5" HD disks are available)
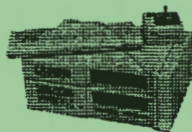⇨ VGA or higher-resolution monitor

Things you may want to think about:
⇨ Second monitor and video card - Windows 98 allows you to use multiple monitors (up to nine) so you can "spread papers across your desk for simultaneous viewing)!
⇨ TV tuner card - for receiving television and Internet broadcasts
⇨ On Now hardware - lets you start your computer in as little as 5 to 10 seconds. . .like a Junior

Did you know Microsoft is now 23 years old? And another thought: why are we putting this in the newsletter? In the last issue, we asked about including articles on "other platforms" or operating systems. Overwhelmingly, the answer was NO, stick to Junior. This answer was for the newsletter and not for general support. It seems that those who get the newsletter want it because of the PCjr specific information and not for general information about other computers. Several people who responded to the article said they belong to local computer clubs in their area and get support there, but not for their Junior.

So, if you want any information for your "other" computer, drop us a line and we'll try to help via snail-mail or e-mail.
This newsletter will stay a PCjr Newsletter.

The Monthly DOS Tip:
Printing Directories

Most of us use labels on our diskettes to identify what program or files are on them, but many times there are just too many files to list. A copy of the directory, listing all the files that are on the disk, would be nice to include inside the disk sleeve. One of the simplest ways to make a printed copy of the directory listing of a disk is to type at the A> prompt:

        DIR >PRN   (ENTER)

This will "redirect" the directory to the printer, giving you a printed copy of the current directory of the diskette in the A drive of your computer. And, it works no matter what computer you are using: your Junior, your laptop or your office computer with WINDOWS 98 (or whatever).

If you want to see the directory as it is being "copied" to your printer, first press the Fn and the E (echo) keys (on your PCjr keyboard) and then type at the A> prompt:
        DIR (ENTER)
If you do this, don't forget to press the Fn and E keys again to turn the echo off.

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JUNIOR and EDLIN
                                        By Clyde Dodge
One of the things I have always felt about computers is that a computer is a strange concept for the human brain to accept. Heretofore, the brain has held full sway over the rest of the world. But now there is something that can do the work of the brain and do it faster and even repetitiously and most importantly, without error.

Viewing this record, the brain tends to shy off and entrench itself behind the attitude of OK, PROVE IT. And in so doing, the brain falls away from any close contact with the OPPOSITION. And of course when this happens, it tends to conceal the fact that it is still the human brain that runs the computers.

Once this fact is fully accepted, then the brain can begin to dance around the maypole holding firmly to the ribbons that represent the brain's lines of control. To accomplish this it is necessary for the brain to recognize that it can fiddle with the controls and make the computer do whatever it wants. For the beginner, this is a scary step to take.

My personal introduction to this world began with a study of the EDLIN program. EDLIN.COM is on the DOS 2.1 Program Disk that came with Junior. It was with EDLIN that I found I could create lines that would control the action of the computer. Later it became clear that this same program could change what was already set. This is all covered in the introduction to the subject on page 6-3 of the pink DOS manual. (Mine is pink; yours may be gray or even some other odd color.)

The main attraction here, to me, was that if I made a mistake, all was not lost. There would be a backup file of the unchanged original. With this caveat in mind, I began to experiment. I have long since forgotten what my first use of this program was, but the examples included in the text of section 6 are enough to show what you can do.

For example, suppose you want to write a batch file that will cause your computer to start a certain program when you hit just one key. Let's say that PROCOMM is too much for you to type when you could simply type a p and the computer would use the batch file to start that program. Let's also note that the PROCOMM disk is in the B drive.

Before we begin, it should be noted that the program EDLIN.COM should be on the disk you have in your A: drive. With this in mind, the first step is to open a new file. So, you type:

EDLIN p.bat

and press the enter key (carriage return, or CR) and off we go. As seen on page 6-6 of the DOS manual, you get a line saying NEW FILE and on the next line the asterisk prompt for EDLIN appears.

Before you can start typing in a new file, you have to use the insert key, so type an

I

after the asterisk and hit the CR key. You get a displaced 1 and the asterisk. Now, nothing will go right until the computer is sent to the correct drive, so you type

B:

and a CR.

What else do you need to tell the computer to do? You want it to start PROCOMM EXE so on the second line, you type

PROCOMM

and a CR.

Now, you are set to go on line 3. What else do you need to tell the computer? That's all? You are through? OOPS, one more thing; tell the computer to STOP inserting lines by using Control/break. (This means that if you are using Junior's keyboard, tap the Fn key and press the B key (Break):

Fn/B

OK, now turn to page 6-20 in the DOS manual and see how to end the file. Fine, type an

E

and that's it.

Now, look at the directory of files on the A: drive. You will find a file that has the name p.bat.

You have now written a batch file that will do some work for you. Go ahead now, and type a p at the A> and press CR and see what happens :-)

Checking Out Your PCjr

by Colin Tuttle

Did you know that the PCjr has a feature that new Pentiums or 486 computers don't have? It is a feature that can be essential to proper performance of your computer, yet many people have forgotten that it exists. It is the internal diagnostics test program which you can call up by pressing the Control-Alt-Insert keys of your Junior simultaneously.

The first thing the test checks out is Junior's memory. Next, Junior displays a menu on its screen listing some of the test options. With this menu, you can check out the Disk Drive, the Video Display, Light Pen, Joysticks, Sound, Keyboard, Modem and Printer.

This internal diagnostics test program will check your Junior and will tell you if each item is working properly, and if anything is wrong, the test will suggest that you take your computer in for service. By using the tests associated with this program you can get an idea as to which item on your computer is acting up. For more information on the internal test program that is built into the PCjr check your "Guide to Operations" (the "Red Book") which came with your Junior. If you don't have this important book, check the Club Store.

If you're a bit more technically inclined, and like to repair your own computer, you can also use the test points to tell you in greater detail what is wrong with your Junior. To get this added information, you will need to purchase the IBM Hardware Maintenance and Service Manual for the IBM PCjr, IBM Number 1502294. It is getting difficult to locate this manual, but it is still obtainable through some mail order companies and it can also be purchased from the Club Store.

If you get the service manual, you receive several strange looking plugs, which plug into the connectors in the back of your PCjr. When these plugs are used, you get additional codes on your test screen. You can then look up these codes in the manual, and determine what could be wrong and possible corrective measures. The only real disadvantage of the manual is that many times, the corrective measures given are to replace the whole system board, rather than replacing a specific chip on the system board. They are however, for the most part, not extremely difficult fixes. You are told to replace a board

or part, as opposed to soldering a wire or chip, and all of these parts are available from the Club Store. The manual also shows diagrams, how to replace most parts of the computer, as well as how to make some adjustments.

This manual is the manual used by technicians to diagnose any problem you encounter with your computer. If you feel comfortable opening up your PCjr (after all it has been out of warranty for ten years) and taking it apart to try to fix it, then you should definitely get a copy of the Hardware Service Manual. If, on the other hand, you are intimidated by your computer, and would rather never look inside the case, then you should definitely avoid looking at this manual, as it shows you exactly how to dismantle your PCjr, and even more importantly, how to re-assemble what you have dissected.

(Adapted from an article that was originally published in the OKC Jr Orphans Chronicle.)

Can You Relate to This?

"I'm not actually a *new* member to the Club, but I still have some problems with how things are run at the meeting and in the newsletter. The presenters at the meetings and the authors in the newsletter all seem to take it for granted that we are technophiles when it comes to computers and that we all speak the same jargon. Am I the only one in the Club that "just doesn't get it?" Several words have always caused a problem with me. . ."

Well, this is where we begin a new series of articles just for you. But, really, this series is for all of us. Never feel like you are alone when it comes to 'computering' as no matter how little you know, there are those who are near and dear who know less. . .much less. And, at the other end, no matter how much you know, there will be those of you who think you know nothing. Actually, the

more you know, the more you realize you know very little!

Some clubs have catchy names for these articles. Things like "beginners' corner" or "for the new user." Well, as you were the first to let us know, and *I know* you have been a member for. . . well, quite some time, I'm going to call this new column, "Tell Me When You've Had Enough." We'll stop the column when we hear from someone with "I've had enough!"

BASIC Programs.

The first thing to note, and to realize, is that the word is not *basic*. The word is in all capital letters, so it really isn't a word at all; it's an acronym. The letters in the acronym stand for Beginner's All-purpose Symbolic Instruction Code. It is actually a high level programming language that was used to create the program, or software.

Nearly always, a program that was written in BASIC has the file name extension BAS. So, a program called PACMAN.BAS is a software program called "Pacman" that was written in the BASIC programming language. The . between PACMAN.BAS is a period on your keyboard. Lately, with the World Wide Web, we have been told that the . isn't a period but is instead a "dot." Our grandson has taught us to use the word, "whatever." So, whatever. Programs like "PACMAN dot BAS" are programs that are written in the BASIC programming language.

BASIC is still around, but has gone through several improvements. We have CBASIC (Compiled BASIC), BASICA and GW-BASIC. There is also Quick BASIC and nearly everyone taking computer courses today is learning to use the Visual BASIC programming language.

To run a program with our Juniors (or on any other computer) written in BASIC, we must use an interpreter that will recognize and be able to execute ("run") the commands that have been written with the BASIC language. Most Junior owners use Cartridge BASIC, the BASIC cartridge that fits into one of the slots

in Junior's front case. When you have the BASIC cartridge inserted in the front of Junior, programs that require a BASIC interpreter, will find it always available.

If you have never acquired a BASIC cartridge, they can be purchased from the Club Store for about $15. If you don't want to spend any money, you can use programs like GWBASIC or even the BASIC program that is on the DOS program disk, but you'll have to first rename it. One idiosyncrasy of the PCjr is that it feels it MUST use Cartridge BASIC and when it can't find it, it will tell you "cartridge BASIC required." I think all of us have seen this message at one time or the other. Member Paul Bonney even has made up a neat disk for those of us who need BASIC but don't own a BASIC cartridge. This disk allows us to run programs written in BASIC on our Juniors without having to use the BASIC cartridge.

If you need more help or assistance with BASIC, GWBASIC, Cartridge BASIC or would like a copy of Paul's BASIC, drop us a line.

Turn-on, Boot and Re-boot.

So, what's the difference between these terms: turn Junior on, boot Junior and reboot Junior? Or, what about cold boot and hot boot?

Whenever we turn on the juice to Junior. It doesn't make any difference if it's a Junior or not, that's the way we start all computers; we boot them.

The term boot comes from Booker T. Washington's expression of pulling oneself up by the bootstraps. Few of us wear boots nowadays, at least those that have boot straps, so this may be a question for askbill@microsoft.com. At any rate, when we boot our computers, we begin the Power On Self-Test that all computers, no matter what brand, do. This is the POST test.

A computer's POST test will check the memory installed. It will count up, or off, the memory on the screen. In Junior's case, if you have 640K of memory, the POST test will

display this, ticking it off in 64K increments. Remember that while POST will check the memory, it does nothing to allow you access to it. For instance, with Junior, you will only be able to use 128K no matter how much memory the display shows. In order to use any of the additional memory you may have, you will have to use memory management software in your configuration system file. More on that, soon.

POST will next check for installed devices. You will see the drive light on your disk drive or drives light momentarily while POST checks them out. If you have a printer attached to Junior, it will come to life, also. After Junior completes its POST test, the computer will look in the disk drive for a file named CONFIG.SYS

All of these things are controlled by the computer's ROM BIOS chip; all computers do this. We tend to think that the PCjr is, well, obsolete. But, all computers really operate about the same now as they did back "then."

So, the ROM (Read Only Memory) BIOS (Basic Input/Output System) chip that's on the computer's main system board, the motherboard, tells the computer to look to the drive it's programmed to look to for instructions. With Junior, we have no choice; it's our A> drive.

But, we're getting ahead of ourselves. We were talking about booting -- turning Junior's power with the switch. This is booting your computer. This is also known as a cold boot. Junior was off and you zapped it with power; you just did a cold boot.

If Junior should lock up, or if you have decided to change programs and want to just start all over without actually turning Junior's power switch off and then back on, you would do a "hot boot." Junior doesn't have a reset switch, but if you press the C'trl, Alt and Delete keys you will do about the same thing that a reset switch does. The way to do this is to press and hold down the Control and the Alternate keys with your left hand and then tap the Delete key with the right.

Junior, like some other computers, may at times tell you that it doesn't want to listen to anything you have to say. Nothing you key in from the keyboard will show on the screen. Even the C'trl, Alt, Delete won't work. At times like this, you need to re-boot the computer.

Most computers have a "reset" button so you can re-boot the computer when they lockup or get "uppity." Junior doesn't have this feature (though it is easy to install one; ask us!). When Junior locks you out, you have to turn Junior off and then back on again. . .you have to re-boot Junior.

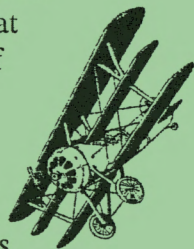## The Janz's Find A Jewel on Their Alaska Trip

by Rosie Janz

It would have been most impressive if the reason past-presidents Phil and Rosie Janz drove 8,500 mile round trip to Alaska this past Summer was to meet and greet fellow PCjr Club member, Lucretia Carter, who lives in Soldotna on the Kenai Peninsula. Although that was not the primary purpose of their very long and enjoyable journey, they did take time to have a very pleasant lunch and visit with Lucretia.

As a person in a far away location with an interest in finding other PCjr users, Lucretia searched the Internet and found our Club. A number of years ago, soon after finding us, she became a member. Since that time, Lucretia

has edited a cookbook for her church. Several members of the PCjr Club have purchased the cookbook and were very pleased to discover that on the credit page, Junior was given recognition for his part as a valuable production tool.

To let you know what interesting people you can meet if you seek out other PCjr Club members in "far away places," here are some pertinent facts about our new friend from Alaska. Lucretia is a retired primary teacher. She is actively involved in her church and in the activities at the local Senior Center. A brief visit to her home reflected her many and varied hobbies and interests. As she spoke about her interest in flying, Lucretia's eyes lit up. She owns and flies a Cessna single engine plane! She is an active member of a Retired Women Military Flyer's organization.

Next time you go traveling, take a look at your PCjr Club membership list to see if your path will cross that of one of our out-of-town members. Who knows, you might find a new friend. . .Phil and Rosie did!!

Q We have a gentleman who is looking for a BASIC compiler for his Junior and some programs that he has written. If you can help, drop Bob a note at: bobnretha@prodigy.com

Q I have been doing some disk copying and have noticed that several of my older disks have problems. Sometimes I get an "error reading drive A" message or one that says "error writing drive B" message.

A One possible solution to read errors is to format a new disk and then use the COPY *.* command to copy the files from your source disk to the new disk. This may work flawlessly. At the very least, it should copy most of the files from your source so you don't lose everything on that diskette. Another option is to just wait until tomorrow and try again. More than one problem we've

encountered with Junior has disappeared into the night.   :-)

OUR CLUB STORE AND DISK LIBRARY

Phil Janz, Club Store Proprietor

Providing support for the IBM PCjr has always been one of our primary Club goals. As the last organized computing group solely supporting the little "Peanut" in the U.S. and Canada, we continue to make every effort to serve our club members and "Jr" users wherever they may be. Our Club web page has generated a great deal of interest from folks out there who need answers, software, hardware, or just a security blanket. . .

For those of you who didn't get to the November Club meeting, we have included with this December issue of the newsletter our first CLUB STORE CATALOG of available hardware, "pre-owned" software, supplies, and books. Looking for Christmas goodies to put under the tree for "Jr"? Browse through this unique catalog to find just the right gift!

Also included with the newsletter is the revised CLUB DISK LIBRARY CATALOG describing shareware for "Jr." Within these catalog pages you will find programs that WILL run on "Jr"! You will find many great entries under the headings of Educational; Games & Entertainment; Graphics; Productivity and Utilities. Some have even been made into self-booting disks for your convenience, and all are "Jr" oriented!

Thanks to Louie Levy, our Newsletter Editor for the many hours of keyboarding and page design in order to get these documents ready for distribution during this holiday season.

"Jr" GOES OUT TO PLAY WITH THE BIG BOYS!

Here it is the day after Thanksgiving and we are getting ready to "outreach" again, but in a very special way.

Setting up PCjr's in local homes is exciting and fun, and both single parent families and low income families appreciate the opportunity to have a hard working, reliable computer placed in their home. "Jr" is a terrific entry level computer for families that really can't afford to fit a computer into their budget, but realize the need in today's world for computer literacy. Both the kids and adults take to "Jr" quickly because it is so user-friendly and our Club is able to support the little "peanut" with workable software, maintenance and any needed hardware.

Now, back to the "special" outreach. We are replacing a standard 640K, 2-drive "Jr" that has a 1200 baud external modem with a donated 640K "Jr" that has 2-drives (the standard 5 1/4-inch AND a 3 1/2-inch drive), plus a 30 meg hard drive and a 9600 baud external modem for their e-mail! The family is so excited that they will have the opportunity to work with a hard drive, constructing menus, sub-directories, work with that C>, and still stay with their familiar approach. Writing Assistant has been the word processor of choice with them, but now listed on their menu they can call up WordPerfect and ProWrite along with their old familiar friend, Writing Assistant with the stroke of a key.

The Club thanks Mr. Joseph Pastore who donated and shipped his complete set-up from Ohio to Eugene. It is good to know that such advanced technology was able to move so far in the "Jr" world of computing and that this "cutting edge" "Jr" has found its way back into family use computing again.

The Club will be placing another "Jr" later this month into a home where there isn't a computer. We want to thank Mr. and Mrs. John Quinlivan of Seattle for this donation. The Quinlivans brought their "Jr" all the way down from Seattle.

Our Club has very much to be thankful for this Holiday season. We are thankful for our membership and especially to those who have made it possible for our Club to "reach out and touch someone."

Phil Janz

A Junior is Looking For A Home

There is a Junior near Youngstown, Ohio that is looking for a good home. The monitor is a little shaky in that the images are somewhat distorted, but everything else is fine. It has the 2nd disk drive, added memory, Lotus 1-2-3, Managing Your Money (has never been used), some games, Joy Sticks. . .the normal things that all Junior users normally have.

The owner says, "I don't want much for my old Junior, just enough to cover the cost of packing and shipping to it's new home. Drop me a line if you are interested and maybe we can work out something before Christmas--it'd make a nice gift. Thanks!"

Robert Gillette - 32 Audubon Lane - Poland, OH 44514-1922

Don't forget to RSVP for the Christmas Potluck! Call Chris now if you are going to attend this gala event! 689-5782