PCjr gallery

Spring Issue 1985

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Volume 1, Issue 2
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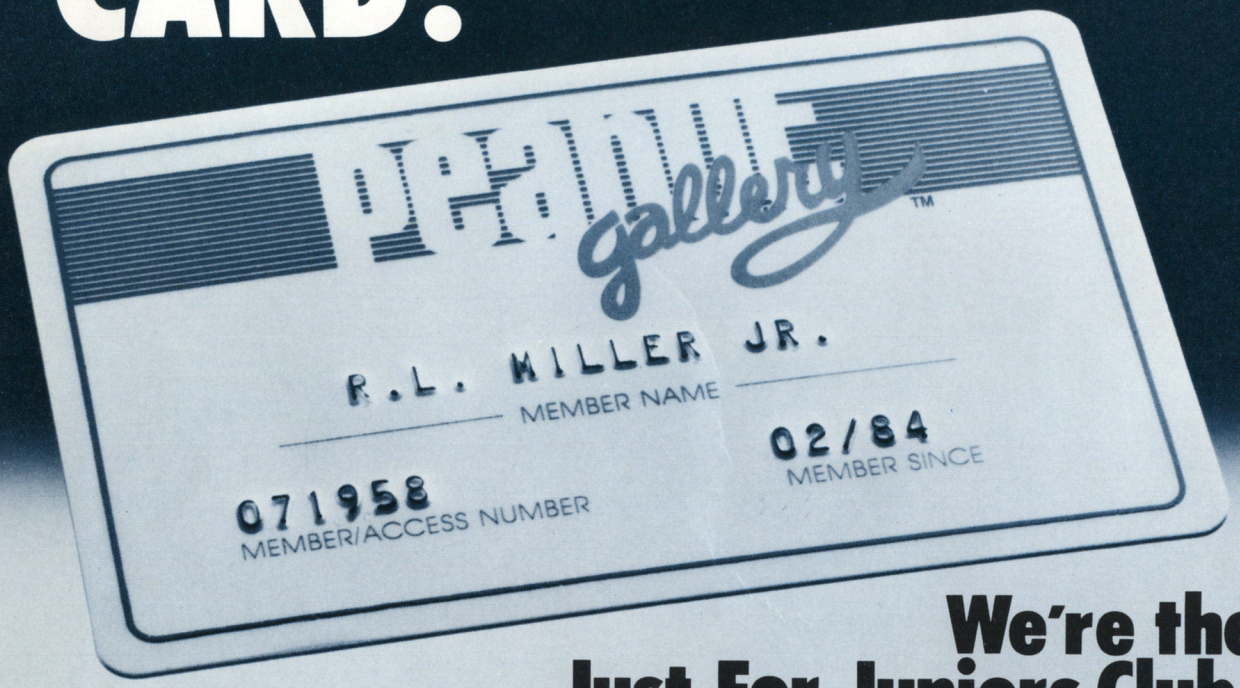

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LATE NEWS

OVER

LATE NEWS

On March 19, IBM announced that it will stop manufacturing the PCjr at the end of April. Dismal first quarter sales were cited as a primary reason. IBM said that they will continue to make spare parts and accessories, for Junior.

SWEDGE LTD. will not abandon PCjr or the PEANUT gallery. Over 300,000 PCjrs have been sold across the nation. Ample expansion products are available, and thousands of software packages are compatible with Junior.

Rest assured.

You can continue to count on the PEANUT gallery to help you make the most of your IBM-PCjr. **They** may have given up, but **we** have only just begun.

PEANUT gallery™

Inside...

Editorials 2
- Publisher's Statement

News/Features 3-4
- Call Me, Junior
- Books
- More Books
- BBS Listing
- By Any Other Name
- Legacy Lowers Its Price
- Typewriters That Interface
- Public Domain

New For Jr 5-6
- AST Introduces Expansion Cards For Junior
- LANs For PCjr
- Impulse Introduces 2nd Drive Co-Processor
- 10M Hard Disk From Racore
- Build A Book About You
- Don't Look Now. . .Another 2nd Disk Drive
- Infocom Introduces Database Manager

Questions & Answers 7

Comments From The Peanut Gallery 8
- On PC-File III
- Report Card For Impulse

Education 9
- Making It Work For You
- Installing Your Own Memory Chips Is Easy

Product Evaluations 10-11
- Spotlight on Electronic Arts
- Word Processor For PCjr
- Keyboards for Junior

Classified 11

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Editor: Brian Mintz

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SWEDGE Is Expanding

Due to requirements for additional space, SWEDGE LTD. is expanding its offices. We are adding a 600 square foot shipping and receiving office. Our address remains 26200 Greenfield Road, Suite 6, Oak Park, Michigan 48237.

Please continue to direct all correspondence to our post-office box:

SWEDGE LTD.
P.O. Box 1587
Troy, MI 48099

Products returned must bear an authorization number, or they cannot be accepted.

Our customer service telephone number is:

(313) 967-3134
EXT. SWEDGE

Technical support is available Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon, and from 4:00 p.m. until 7:00 p.m.

Orders and new memberships may continue to be placed using our 24-hour toll-free telephone number, which is listed in your membership portfolio, and on our advertisements.

Notice of Price Increase

Effective April 1, 1985, the cost of membership in the PEANUT gallery has increased to $45 per year.

Your membership will be renewed free of charge for an additional year if you accumulate at least $150 in product orders during the term of your membership.

For explanations and details, please refer to the editorial on page 2.

editorials

Publisher's Statement

This magazine marks a turning point in the annals of SWEDGE LTD. Our first 550 members (as of March 1) have provided us with considerable insight regarding the expectations of our PEANUT gallery membership.

Most significant is the level of technical support required by our members. We are currently spending a good three hours every business day consulting with members and interested parties across the country. Some ask us to solve their technical problems (and we do), many others ask our opinion of the various products available for Junior.

We have been hailed by third-party PCjr product manufacturers as the foremost experts on the IBM-PCjr in the nation. We are by far the largest contingent of PCjr owners. Together, we own virtually every peripheral and software package designed for Junior thus far! Thanks to our members' technical questions, **and also your solutions,** we are also the most knowledgeable.

The PEANUT gallery is growing by leaps and bounds. We are mailing complimentary copies of this magazine to thousands of PCjr owners in an effort to boost our membership. If our response ratio holds true, we anticipate over 1,000 PEANUT gallery members (total) by May.

Producing a quality publication for PEANUT gallery members requires extraordinary amounts of time and money. In fact, our first newsletter ended up costing an average of six dollars per member! Further, the time necessary to provide competent technical support for our members (both by telephone and in writing), has forced us to hire additional employees to perform the less technical tasks.

As a result we have decided to make some changes in our membership policy. In order to continue to provide the quality of service and support the PEANUT gallery membership is deserving of, as well as maintain our low product prices, SWEDGE is increasing the PEANUT gallery membership fee to $45. We will also require a minimum of $150 in accumulated product orders over the course of the year to qualify for free membership renewal for the next year.

Further, instead of publishing a bi-monthly newsletter, we are shifting to production of a quarterly magazine. The magazine will continue to grow, and its quality will only improve.

For our existing members who were promised a bi-monthly newsletter, we will extend your first term of membership an additional six months; so that you will receive six magazines. Also, your minimum order requirements will remain as detailed in the membership guidelines for the first year.

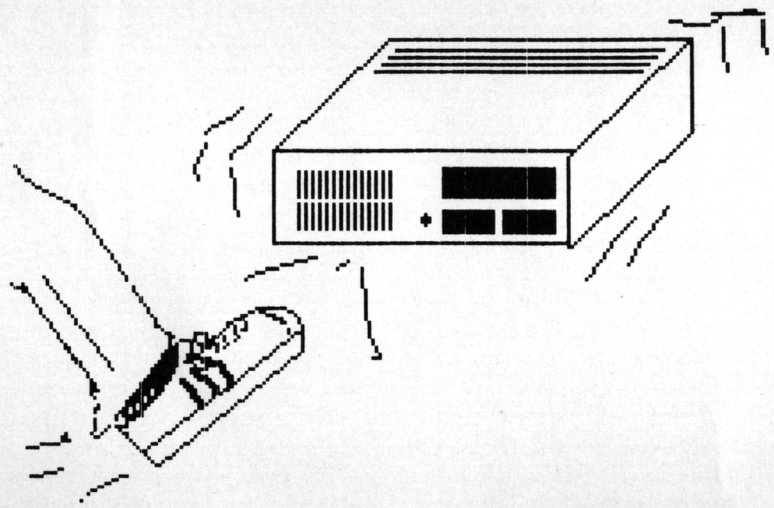
In order to provide all of our members with the best service possible, we request that your correspondence be mailed. We promise that an acknowledgement (if not a personal reply) will be mailed within 48 hours of receipt.

Our technical support lines will be open from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon, and from 4:00 p.m. until 7:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. We believe these hours will best accommodate our members in all time zones.

Our on-line computer system is almost ready. We will provide up-to-the-minute reporting of news and information about Junior. Our technical hot-line will answer your questions fast. And our on-line ordering system will bring the latest products for Junior right to your door. SWEDGE plans to make this announcement in the Summer issue of "PEANUT gallery."

In conclusion, the PEANUT gallery is **your** club. Despite our membership price increase, the cost of joining the PEANUT gallery is less than that of the average software program. We will continue to provide you with quality service, top-flight support, and a prime source for all your PCjr needs.

popcorn



BOOTING THE SYSTEM

News/Features

Books

Whether you are a novice computerphile or an avid user, there is always something more to learn. Even in this age of ever-growing magnetic media storage, the greatest source of information still resides in print.

Books about computers can teach you everything from choosing the right system for you, to programming in machine language. So, when your eyes grow tired of phosphor beams, turn to good old-fashioned books.

SWEDGE is pleased to introduce **SAMS'** books to its product line.

SAMS offers an excellent introduction to Junior in their **IBM PCjr User's Guide.** This 400 page book discusses Junior's anatomy in sophisticated detail, yet with an assumption of no previous knowledge about computers.

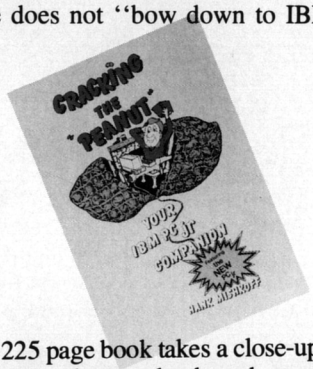
Five chapters introduce the novice to the basics of PCjr BASIC. Seven chapters discuss DOS in depth. The book closes with an insight into choosing software that will meet your particular requirements.

All in all, SAMS' **IBM PCjr User's Guide** is a superb reference guide, worthy of a Junior owner's library.

SAMS' books cover topics such as **IBM PCjr Graphics, Basic Programming for the IBM PCjr, and IBM PCjr Assembler Language.** SWEDGE will continue to expand its listing of books about PCjr and general computer literature.

More Books

PEANUT gallery member, **Hank Mishkoff** has just authored a book on PCjr entitled, **"Cracking the Peanut"** . Mr. Mishkoff's book features the new Junior, and he does not "bow down to IBM."



This 225 page book takes a close-up look at assembly, the new keyboard, computer terms, available options from IBM *and others*, software specific to PCjr, BASIC programming, and telecommunications.

Cracking the "Peanut" retails for $15.95 (SWEDGE price $12).

BBS Listing

Thanks to our friends over at **Hawkeye-PC** in Iowa, SWEDGE has acquired a **long** listing of bulletin board systems for our members to access.

The listing is too long to enumerate here, but members may write us for a printout, free of charge.

You may also dial into Hawkeye-PC (300 or 1200 BPS) at:

(319) 363-3314

Read bulletin # 1 for the same listing. (By the way, SWEDGE does **not** own stock in AT & T).

Call Me, Junior

New PEANUT gallery member, **Bill Oakes,** is using his PCjr to provide a very special service to Junior owners. Bill has formed "jrBBS," a computer hotline that provides general and technical information via modem to PCjr owners.

jrBBS may be accessed at 300 Baud, using a word length of seven (7), one (1) stop bit, and even parity. The service is available to everyone, and is free of charge (except for your telephone billing).

Bill bought his PCjr one year ago last December mainly for its musical and graphics capabilities. He has recently enhanced his system with both Rapport Drive Two, and IBM's expansion sidecar, bringing his system memory total to 640K (the maximum supported by DOS). Seeing a need for a service like jrBBS, Bill plugged in a 300 Baud modem, and began (mostly with friends) providing a forum through which computer owners could share information and ask questions.

Bill is currently the Director of M.I.S. at the national headquarters of P.I.P., a large printing company, based in Los Angeles, California. (They use 20 IBM AT's for processing and data entry.) Prior to that, Bill computerized the Cambridge Plant; manufacturers of diet milkshakes.

Bill is originally from Monterey, Calif. He is 26 years old, and resides in Los Angeles.

Seeing as he does not charge for access to jrBBS Bill's compensation is the satisfaction he receives from helping other Junior owners.

When a new user dials into jrBBS he/she is asked to enter an ID or to indicate a new user. Then, certain information is requested for input, such as your name, city, and state.

Once you get past the preliminary brouhaha, you may choose from a variety of bulletin boards jrBBS has to offer. A menu selection provides for general information. The technical information arena allows users to ask technical questions regarding their computer and software. Bill does his best to answer all questions. He then posts them on this board. Users may review all the questions, and even provide answers, if they have some.

Another feature of jrBBS is its software reviews. Anyone wishing to leave an evaluation of any software program that runs on Junior may do so here, for the benefit of others. Bill also provides a For Sale board, a Forum (for anything you want to say), as well as a Movies bulletin board, for users to leave reviews.

Bill also has a special club for his personal friends to communicate through. It is password controlled.

Bill has been tinkering with jrBBS for several months now, but has only been on-line full time since December 10. He presently has mostly local users but some from across the country.

Bill contacted the PEANUT gallery in an effort to increase his user base. We expect that Bill will soon have to invest in a hard disk drive, and additional telephone lines to accommodate eager PEANUT gallery members.

The access number for jrBBS is:

(213) 659-7187

The service is open 24 hours.

By Any Other Name

Rapport Corporation, manufacturers of the famous second disk drive enhancement package for PCjr, has officially changed their name to **Racore Corporation.** The name change was prompted by the fact that a British company had already (oops) registered the name "Rapport."

In case anyone was wondering, the word "racore" has no meaning, other than its continued association with the previous name. The company's logo will remain as is.

Racore Corp. president, **Rod Crisp** (formerly. . .) told "PEANUT gallery" that they began shipping their 10 megabyte hard disk drives February 11, and to stay tuned for more exciting new products from Racore.

Crisp also asked that all Drive Two owners send in their warranty registration cards, so that when the inevitable upgrades for that product are ready, Racore can make them available to as many users as possible. Crisp said that there will be a minimal charge for the product upgrades, solely to cover the costs of production.

Technical services manager **Danny Clay** told "PEANUT gallery" that the 10,000th Racore unit was shipped in the early part of February, prompting a celebration.

"PEANUT gallery" is sponsoring a contest in search of a more descriptive (or at least better) name for the Racore Corporation. Remember, your choice must begin with the letter "R". The best answers will be published in the next issue. The grand prize winner will receive a Rapport (oops Racore) Audio Speaker.

Typewriters That Interface

You have a dot matrix printer, but find that the print quality is not good enough for important documents, and you just can't see fit to invest in a letter quality printer. We have a solution for you.

For some time now, typewriters have been manufactured specifically to interface with personal computers. SWEDGE is pleased to introduce the **CASIO** line of interfaceable typewriters to our ever-growing product line.

CASIO CW-110

These typewriters function as well as any electric typewriter, and allow you to print off documents from disk at a rate of approximately 18 cps.

Casio typewriters (OEM Brother) come with a built-in parallel interface. If you already have a parallel printer, then you will either need a second parallel port, or a data switcher box (to control two parallel printers from one port).

Casio typewriters range in price from $599 to $1299 retail (SWEDGE price $489 to $1049).

Legacy Lowers Its Price

LEGACY TECHNOLOGIES, LTD. has just announced a price decrease on its entire line of PCjr expansion products.

In an effort to remain competitive with other manufacturers, Legacy has reduced prices an average of 20 percent.

Legacy II, their second disk drive unit, now sells for $595 retail, instead of $795 (SWEDGE's new price is $489). Their 10 megabyte hard disk drive is $300 dollars cheaper (SWEDGE price $1395). And their new 20 megabyte hard disk drive sells for $2295 (SWEDGE price $1869).

Legacy remains the most expensive add-on for Junior. Marketing manager John Patterson explains that "we are the top-of-the line. Legacy is the **last** expansion you will ever need for Junior."

Legacy's primary market is business users who want the power of an IBM-PC for the price of a PCjr. Surprisingly, Legacy is selling nearly as many hard disk drives as second disk drives.

Legacy's expansion chassis has slots to hold four expansion cards. Available are 256K memory cards, clock/calendar with parallel port, and hard disk controller cards.

Soon to be released is a monochrome adapter card that will support the higher resolution monochrome displays from the PC.

On the drawing board is an 8087 math co-processor for Junior, as well as a single memory expansion card that will hold 512K using 256K chips.

Public Domain

As a service to the PEANUT gallery membership, SWEDGE now offers selected public domain software for just the cost of media, plus delivery.

If you liked the **"Allendale Educational Diskette,"** PEANUT gallery member **Gary West** has compiled a sequel entitled **"Games and Such"** for Junior owners. Gary's games include Blackjack, Yahtzee and Othello.

A printer spooler is available as public domain. In addition, SWEDGE has acquired a patch to allow PC-Talk III users to download and upload files (see Q & A section). Also, the Racore JRVIDEO.COM file is still available for second disk drive owners who did not receive this file on their original Rapport disk.

A list of public domain software may be found in the current price list. Once SWEDGE finishes its on-line members-only system, megabytes of software will become available.

New For... jr.

LANs for PCjr.

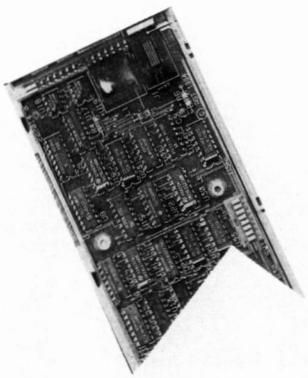
Happily, we at "PEANUT gallery" eat our words from last issue. **AST RESEARCH, INC.** has just announced a Local Area Network (LAN) for the IBM-PCjr.

AST-PCnet IIjr allows you to link your IBM-PCjr with other PCs — whether they are jrs, PCs, XTs, ATs, or compatibles - to share data and peripherals.

Using the familiar sidecar attachment, AST-PC net IIjr permits networking of up to 32 PCs per 500 foot bus segment. Two-wire twisted pair bus topology allows easy connection of Juniors via "telephone-type" RJ11C plugs.

AST-PCnet IIjr comes with utility software that includes sophisticated print spooling, and synchronized time and date setting.

At least one PC, XT, or AT is required on the network as a file server. The network is 100% compatible with PCnet applications software.



AST-PCnet IIjr single station LAN retails for $495 (SWEDGE price $379). The starter kit LAN retails for $1090 (SWEDGE price $829).

CORVUS SYSTEMS also has developed a networking system that works with Junior, PCs, and even Apples. No further information was available at the time of publication.

AST Introduces Expansion Cards For Junior

In a related story, **AST RESEARCH, INC.** has jumped into the PCjr expansion business. The **jr COMBO series** marks the latest addition to Junior's expansion capabilities.

jr Combo 128K is their premier product, retailing at $395 (SWEDGE price $298). Using 256K chips, jrCombo 256K and 512K retail for $695 and $1295 (SWEDGE prices $529 and $1056), respectively.

All jrCombo products include a parallel printer port and a clock/calendar. Software for RAMdisk and printer spooler are also included.

jrCombo is not available with 0K, however the chips are snap-in, allowing the end-user to replace the 64K chips with his/her own 256K chips at a substantial savings from AST prices.

AST Research, Inc. has long been known for their high-quality expansion products for the IBM-PC, the most famous of which is the **Six-Pack-Plus** multifunction board, a de facto industry standard.

10M Hard Disk From Racore

As of the end of February, **Racore Corporation** began shipping ten megabyte hard disk drives for Junior.

For novice users, ten megabytes of data storage is roughly equivalent to 27 double sided floppy diskettes.

The new unit is not compatible with the Drive Two package. The hard disk replaces the second disk drive.

According to **Sandra Hunsanger,** marketing director at Racore, a ten megabyte drive that will piggyback the Drive Two will be available by May.

Also due out from Racore within the same time frame will be a 1.2 megabyte floppy disk drive, compatible with the IBM-PCAT, as well as (hopefully) DMA for PCjr.

IMPULSE Introduces 2nd Drive Co-Processor

IMPULSE COMPUTER PRODUCTS, of Salt Lake City, Utah, has just announced the availability of a second disk drive attachment for PCjr. This marks the third such unit readily available for Junior owners.

In keeping with their tradition of providing the least expensive enhancements for PCjr, Impulse 210 retails for $390 (SWEDGE price $349).

Components include a board, which must be soldered onto Junior's disk controller card in four places. The drive itself sits alongside Junior, in it's own case.

The controller card may be purchased separately, and is compatible with any IBM-PC compatible 5-¼ inch diskette drive.

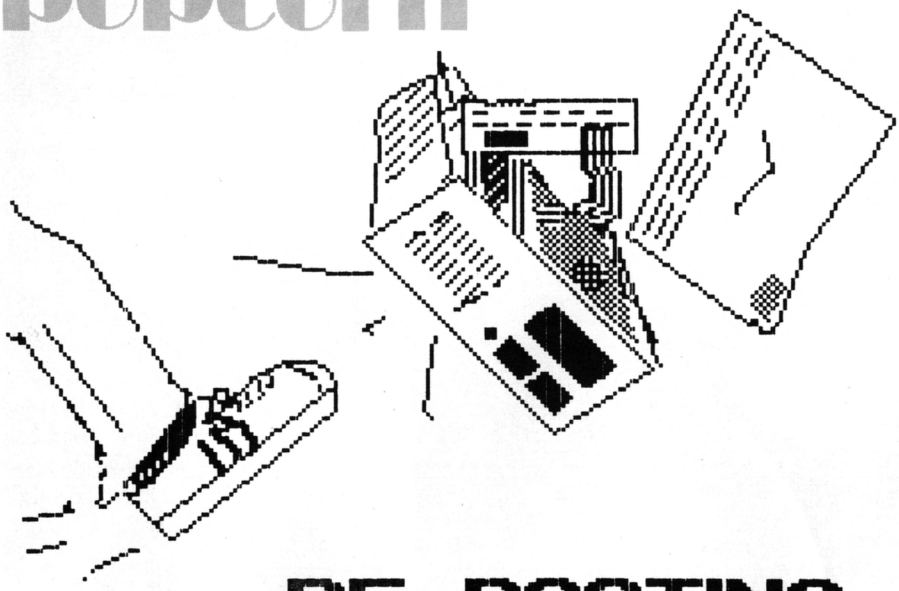
A major drawback to Impulse's drive is the fact that the internal modem slot is disabled by the installation. An external modem connected to the serial port will still function properly.

Another potential problem with the unit is that by soldering the extender card onto your IBM disk controller card, you will more than likely void IBM's 12 month manufacturer's warranty of that card (unless you have a very understanding friend at the computer store.)

In other news from Impulse, an 8087 math co-processor chip is available now. The chip plugs into the system board, and allows for faster, more accurate processing of mathematical functions in software programs that know to access the chip. Borland's "Turbo Pascal," for example is available in a 8087 version. The Impulse 8087 retails for $330 (SWEDGE price $319).

Impulse is reportedly developing an internal modem for Junior. The modem will function at 1200 BPS.

popcorn



RE-BOOTING THE SYSTEM

DON'T LOOK NOW... ANOTHER 2nd DISK DRIVE!

The PEANUT gallery welcomes **XETEC,** a Kansas-based company introducing the newest second disk drive enhancement package for PCjr.

Xetec's **FX-500** is a 5¼ inch floppy drive system that sits on top of Junior in much the same manner as the Racore unit does: take off Junior's top, snap in the Xetec, and cover Xetec with PCjr's top.

The FX-500 unit does not require an additional power supply. The manufacturer claims that you can plug in anything else you want into Junior, and it will operate perfectly.

Xetec's FX-500 unit does not come with any memory add-on capabilities or a printer port. It is compatible with all existing sidecar attachments.

Xetec FX-500 retails for only $399.95 (SWEDGE price, $333). This makes Xetec the lowest priced, second disk drive unit available for PCjr.

Build A Book About You!

Here's a fun, new computer program designed by **The Scarborough System** for children ages 2-12. It is called **"Build a Book About You."**

This new educational software interacts with your child. It asks questions like "What is your name?", "Where do you live?", "How old are you?", "What is your best friend's name?", etc.

Then you remove the pages from one of the two hardcover books included, and insert the pages into your printer (most are compatible). And, presto — out comes a book about you!

Complete with scratch 'n sniffs, this program produces beautifully personalized books that your child can treasure for at least fifteen minutes.

The two production kits included with the starter package are **The Mystery of Scented Mountain,** and **The Holiday Dragon.** Retail price is $39.95 (SWEDGE price $29). Each 8 ½ X 11 inch book contains 32 full-color illustrated pages and a durable, washable hard cover. The software also has other stories you can make later.

According to Scarborough, "Research shows personalized books are read 20 times more than ordinary children's books. Creating and reading Build a Book encourages creativity and nurtures the growth of essential reading skills."

Infocom Introduces Database Manager

Rumor has it that **INFOCOM** began its business with the product **CORNERSTONE** in mind. In order to finance the project, they decided to sell a few games. . .

CORNERSTONE is billed as "the sophisticated database system for the non-programmer." They have accomplished just that. With its flexible database design, built-in calendar, help key, interactive report writer, and software compatibility, Cornerstone is a truly superior database system.

Cornerstone databases are easy to build, easy to modify, and allow the user to add notes, memos and comments to their files whenever they want. INFOCOM also provides a customer support line for questions about Cornerstone.

Cornerstone requires 256K memory, and two disk drives (or an electronic disk) to run. 512K is recommended. Retail price is $495 (SWEDGE price, $359).

PC - Talk III Solved!

How can I get **PC-TALK III** to run with my IBM internal modem?

—Everybody and their mother

Dear Members,

After long and careful study of this particular problem, we are proud to offer our solution.

First of all, PC-TALK III is a "FREEWARE (TM)" program, designed by ***Andrew Fluegleman*** *of the* ***Headlands Press, Inc.*** *based in Tiburon, California. The author encourages users to make copies and distribute the program free to friends. If a "bootleg" user finds PC-TALK valuable, then he/she may send a $35 check to the author in a gesture of appreciation. Those appreciative users become registered users, and are therefore entitled to receive telephone support for the product.*

The default configuration of PC-TALK III is designed to work with Hayes and Hayes-compatible modems. The IBM internal modem is not entirely Hayes-compatible. Therefore, Junior owners must correct the modem dialing command while running the program. Here's how:

First start up PC-TALK III according to the instructions in the manual (it is a 70 page document stored on the disk).

When you see the "Proceed" cue, depress ALT-D to enter the dialing mode.

Once in the dialing mode, type "R" to revise an entry. Then type "M" to revise the modem command.

Now comes the good part: depress CTRL-N (it will show up as a bright "N") followed by a space, then type the word "DIAL" followed by another space (if you need pulse dialing only, type "I" next). Now hit the ENTER key, and you will be able to dial and connect.

Unfortunately, there's more. If you want to send and receive files from diskette while on-line, PC-TALK III will not work as-is. According to the PCjr Technical Reference Manual, "Asynchronous communications input cannot be overlapped with the IBM PCjr diskette I/O. Since diskette I/O operates in a non-DMA mode any asynchronous data received during diskette activity may be overrun (and lost). Thus, applications must insure that the diskette is not active while receiving asynchronous communication data. This can be done by pacing the asynchronous device (tell it to hold from sending)."

Luckily, The PEANUT gallery has found a patch, written by Michael Borgoff (thank you Michael, wherever you are), that will allow Junior's internal modem to send and retrieve files. This patch, entitled "PCT3JR.MRG" is available from any number of bulletin board systems along with documentation (PCT3JR.DOC). Of course, you will not be able to download the file until you have installed the patch. SWEDGE offers this merge file and documentation to PEANUT gallery members, complete with instructions, for the standard media and delivery fee of $2.50. Cartridge BASIC is required to accomplish the merge.

I own a RACORE second disk drive, and I understand that certain programs will not run with it. Can you help me by providing a list of the programs that will and will not run?

—Danny Clay

Dear Danny,

Given time, you have answered your own question. While there are thousands of programs that run on PCjr with the Racore unit, a certain few seemed to cause problems.

Specifically, "Dollars and Sense" by Monogram, and new-style (laser hole) copy protected programs would simply not run properly on Junior with Racore installed. These programs would run on Junior without Racore.

We have been compiling a list of programs that would not run with Racore. All the while, the technical service people at Racore had been working to solve the problem.

What seems to be the case is that by changing some capacitors on the memory board, the problem of program incompatibility is overcome.

Quoting Danny Clay in his letter to us of March 7, "Recently an incompatibility problem has been recognized in ***SOME*** *second drive packages. The type of problem encountered might be diskcopy errors, format errors, system "Hangs," or drive recognition problems. Not all systems are affected, but it is suggested that end users return their memory boards for modification update to make their system more compatible with certain software packages. ("Dollars and Sense" will now operate.)*

"No return authorization is needed, and it will not be necessary to remove any extra memory you may have installed. At your convenience, ship your memory board (Racore or Quadram) to:

RACORE CORPORATION
2070 N. Redwood Rd.
A55
Salt Lake City, UT 84116
Attn: Service Dept.

"UPS Blue or First Class mail shipments will take priority and will be returned within a few days."

SWEDGE also has a few repaired memory boards in stock and will coordinate a same-day exchange with PEANUT gallery members.

Questions and Answers

Stumped, or Smart?
Direct all correspondence to:

"Peanut gallery"
Questions and Answers
c/o SWEDGE LTD.

We will do our best to help you. If we can't answer your question, we will leave it to the PEANUT gallery membership to solve.

Comments from the... PEANUT gallery™

On PC-File III

by Gary West

When I first began using my PCjr at my office, I wrote a BASIC program that would allow me to input information about the students with whom I worked. The program also allowed me to see individual records for students in the files I created. But the program never really provided all the features I wanted in a file management system (and my sorting routine took a long...long time).

In one of the now-defunct PCjr-oriented magazines was an advertisement for "public domain software" for the PC and PCjr; so I sent a few dollars (to cover the costs of copying and shipping) to the software library and, after a short wait, I received ten disks, each full of programs. The first disk contained a series of programs collectively called PC-FILE.

After reading the "READ.ME" file on that disk, I was able to print the manual from the disk and could use the program immediately. The program was exactly what I'd been trying to write for myself--except that it is so much more than I'd even thought to include in my program. And I had gotten it for just the cost of the disk it was copied on.

The manual explained the "user-supported software" concept and requested that, if I found the program to be of any value, I send a contribution to the program's author. **Jim Button,** of **ButtonWare,** acknowledged my contribution with a copy of PC-FILE III, which is not "public domain" but is copyrighted. Users are, however, encouraged to share copies of the disk.

The latest version of **PC-FILE III** is Version 3.0. It includes a set-up program that allows you to set colors for the screen display and to set printer parameters for whatever printer you are using. It also includes a fix program that modifies existing files so that the new verison can read them.

One of the most positive aspects of PC-FILE III is its documentation and the user support provided by the author. The manual is written concisely yet clearly and is written in the most logical sequence for use by someone who has never used a file management system before. The program itself is so easy to use, you can probably take good advantage of it without even using the manual. Jim Button mentions in the manual that after using the program for a while (so that you understand its gross operation), the manual will provide you with little insights that will enhance its operation greatly. You'll want to read it in those brief minutes between using the program.

The major drawback to the program is that it does not deal specifically with the use of one-disk systems, like the PCjr. There are some minor inconveniences involved, the most common being the display of the DOS prompts (to switch disks) in locations where other program prompts overwrite only parts of the DOS prompts. The result is sometimes a bit confusing to the new user.

However, PC-FILE III is a reliable file management system that is completely adaptable to your individual needs. It works well with the one-drive system after you understand the function of the program disk in relation to your file disk. The inconvenience of disk swapping is something that PCjr people have generally accepted and adjusted to, and PC-FILE III is worth making the swap for.

Report Card for Impulse

I thought you might like my observations after my initial use of the Impulse 128KB board and software.

First, the good news--

1. The hardware and software perform fine; I could detect no bugs.
2. The bundled software includes an installation program a memory configuration program and a RAMdisk program for the memory board, and a copy of "PC-Write" and a program called "Easy DOS It."
3. You can adjust the size of the RAMdisk within the range of 10-512 KB.
4. The instructions for installing the hardware are quite good.
5. The hardware includes a clock/calendar which performs quite nicely, and a parallel port.

Now, the not-so-good news--

1. Despite Impulses's claims the software does **not** include a program to set-up a printer buffer in RAM. This is particularly disappointing since this was one of the main reasons why I wanted a memory expansion board.
2. The software for the memory board and "PC-Write" do not come with any documentation. The documentation exists in text files on the disks. There are no instructions for printing the documentation. I was able to produce print-outs by using the "echo" and "type" commands *[editors note: try COPY file.ext LPT1:].* If you don't have a printer, you're out of luck.
3. While the documentation is quite good for installing the memory board programs, it offers little guidance in their application. With the RAMdisk program in particular, it is strictly a process of trial and error.
4. I found the "Easy DOS It" program, which is supposed to facilitate the entry of DOS commands, to be worthless.

Overall, I'm satisfied with the operation of the Impulse memory board and software. The major attractions of the Impulse boards are price, two-year warranty, no need for an additional power supply, and the ability to upgrade RAM by merely replacing the chips in the board. However, had I to do it again, I believe that I would opt for the proven Tecmar board with the more comprehensive software.

—Jack Carson

COMMENTS

Got something to say, and your friends are tired of listening to you? Or do you just want your name in print? We'll publish anything (almost). Send all comments to:

"PEANUT gallery"
Reader Comments Section
c/o SWEDGE LTD.

Making It Work For You

Now that you own a computer, what do you want it to do? Many possibilities exist. Are you using your computer in the manner you intended to when you made that big decision to buy a PCjr?

Following is a check-list of questions to answer that will help you take inventory on your computer and yourself.

1. Are you comfortable with your word processor?

Do you compose your writings on your computer?

Are you manually typing fewer documents?

Do you use at least half of the function keys?

2. Has your computer better-organized your personal life?

Is your checkbook register on computer?

Do you maintain appointment calendars on computer?

Do you log your expenses (mileage, bills, etc.)?

Is your family's address book computerized?

Do you keep recipes on computer?

3. Are your children's (or your) grades improving?

Are the games they play educational?

Does software help them learn school subjects?

Do they ever submit computer-printed papers?

Do they paint or compose music with PCjr?

4. Can you manipulate computer data readily?

Do you archive disks with all your important data?

Can you download program files with your modem?

Can you print off files from DOS?

Can you print graphics?

5. Are you aware of the vast resources at your disposal?

Do you own a modem?

Can you talk to your work or school computer?

Have you ever tied into a bulletin board service?

Have you ever downloaded files to your Junior?

If you answered "YES" to any of these questions, then you are well on your way. Remember, your investment in a PCjr is one that will only pay for itself if you use it.

Installing Your Own Memory Chips Is Easy

Memory expansion products are expensive enough without the added cost of memory chips. Prices for these little wonders are dropping precipitously, as the competition among manufacturers grows fierce.

Unfortunately, expansion board manufacturers never quite seem to reflect these price decreases promptly, for the chips help to boost their profit margin in a very competitive business.

You can buy most of Junior's expansion boards with minimum or no memory, and install these memory chips yourself.

There are two basic types of memory chips for PCjr: 64K and 256K chips. **Eight chips are required to fill a bank of 64 or 256K.** (9 chips are used in an IBM-PC, the extra chip is required for parity checking).

64K chips have been around longer, and are quite inexpensive now. Most computer boards have been designed for these chips, however, the 256K chips will work just as well in their place.

256K chips hold four times as much memory, and therefore, less of them are required to populate your memory to DOS's 640K maximum.

None of the memory boards require soldering, thanks to built-in, connectors that allow you to simply snap-in the chips.

It is important to make sure that all of the chips are lined up in the same direction, according the instruction manual. Most chips have a little "lip" on one end to aid in visual inspection.

Equally important is to make sure that all of the little legs are seated properly in the connector. Simply line up one side, and gently fit the other in the connector with your finger. Then, snap them into place by pressing on the chip with your thumb. One tiny leg out of place will cause the entire bank of memory to fail. When you are finished installing them, it is a good idea to have someone else inspect your work for mistakes.

If you do make a mistake, and find a leg out of place, don't panic. You should buy a tool called a "ROM PULLER." It is shaped like tiny ice tongs, and is available at most electronics stores. The ROM puller has little lips on its ends, and to remove a chip, you gently fit the tongs under the chip, and work it out of the socket. If a leg is bent, you can usually straighten it out and fit it back in place.

Product Evaluations

Spotlight On Electronic Arts

"Awesome, simply awesome" is the only way to describe **Electronic Arts' best-selling basketball game, "One-on-One."**

ELECTRONIC ARTS™

Developed by **Julius Erving** and **Larry Bird** (with help from **Eric Hammond),** "One-on-One" is the most realistic computer basketball game this reviewer ever played.

"One-on-One" incorporates the particular playing styles of "Dr. J" and "Bird," as well as a not-so-perfect referee; fatigue factors; streaks; and "Out of my wayin', game-delayin', backboard-swayin', glass is flyin', Robin Zein's cryin', CHOCOLATE-THUNDER DUNKS!"

You will amaze yourself over the moves you make to the hoop, as well as those last-second three point shots to win the game.

"One-on-One" can be played against the computer on your keyboard, or by two players with a joystick and the keyboard. Junior's dual joystick ports allow two friends to really test their skill. Retail price is $39.95 (SWEDGE price, $29).

In addition to a fine repertoire of games, Electronic Arts also produces a fully-integrated word processing system entitled **"Get Organized!"**

Integrated with an excellent word processor, is an address book, mail-merge, telecommunications, autodialer, calendar, calculator, and notepad.

Documents are stored in ASCII files, so you can send and receive files into your word processor, and also utilize many popular spellcheckers. Some DOS commands can even be accessed from this software's menu.

Incredibly, "Get Organized!" retails for $99.95, and requries only 128K and one floppy disk drive to run.

Word Processor For PCjr

Editors note: Many word processors are available for PCjr. Some require expanded memory or second disk drives to operate. Others function perfectly on a standard Junior.

SWEDGE lists seven programs for the 128K PCjr, and two that require additional memory. Prices range from $29 to $299.

If a word processor doesn't have a companion speller, then Hayden's "The Speller" functions nicely with ASCII files (which covers all of the word processors in question here).

We at "PEANUT gallery" try to evaluate products objectively, providing our members with enough information to make their own decisions.

We have found it difficult, however to spend enough time with each system to become familiar with it, and offer a fair evaluation.

We invite our members to contribute evaluations of their particular word processor for Junior.

*This issue, member **Gary West** offers his evaluation of **"PC-WRITE,"** the "Shareware" package from **Quicksoft.***

"PC-WRITE" is written by **Bob Wallace** and distributed by Quicksoft. The most current version is Version 2.3. It is part of the "user-supported" software that has become popular during the last year and a half. User-supported software is copyrighted software that users can get for nothing, copy and share with friends, and use as they see fit. Each user-supported program suggests that, if a user finds the software to be of any value, a contribution be made to the author. For a $75 registration fee, users receive a bound manual, one free update, plus unlimited telephone support.

"PC-WRITE" is a full-featured word processor that can be used to full advantage with the PCjr. It can be used with the PCjr's one-drive system with ease by using the program disk, or by using a separate disk for your files. PC-WRITE's editor is totally RAM-based, so that the

(continued on page 11)

Keyboards For Junior

There isn't much to say about keyboards, you simply press the keys and they appear on the screen.

IBM offers a decent keyboard for Junior now. Actually, it is hardly different from the chicklets keyboard, except that the keys are fatter, and the symbols are printed on the keys. To this user, the touch is still the same.

KEYTRONICS offers a complete line of keyboards for PCjr, all with a superb touch.

Their numeric pad works well enough, except that the cable to the system is not included.

(continued on page 11)

classified

GOLF HANDICAPPER

BASIC program computes, stores, updates USGA handicaps, prints handicap cards, lists players alphabetically, or rank ordered by handicap, assigns random foursomes, plus much more. 75 player capacity. Ideal for groups, leagues. Not copy-protected. $49.95 postpaid. Moneyback guarantee.

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WORD PROCESSOR (cont. from page 10)

program disk can be removed after the editor is loaded (making room for your file disk). You can also designate drive B: as your file drive and DOS will instruct you about the need to insert the file disk.

PC-WRITE is actually two programs: the editor is used for composing and changing your documents, and the printer program is used for printing your documents. Each program takes advantage of DOS commands and their utilities so their operation is fast and easy. In fact, I had not realized how slow the [IBM] "recommended" word processor was until I began using PC-WRITE. (As an example, you can move from the top of a 40,000 character document to the bottom before you can blink your eyes twice.)

Typing your document is an easy task. You simply type. When your text reaches the right margin, the word wrap feature moves any word that extends beyond that right margin to the next line as you continue typing. You press the enter key only at the end of a paragraph.

After your text is completed, editing is also easy. You can move the cursor one character at-a-time, word at-a-time, line at-a-time, paragraph at-a-time, or immediately to the top or bottom of the document. You can move and/or copy parts of your text from any location to any other location simply. If you need help at any time, you can press the [FN 1] combination, and receive up to seven screens full of information about editing and printing your document. Eighteen other keys are assigned special functions and can be used by themselves, with the [FN] key, with the [SHIFT] keys, with the [ALT] key, or with the [CTRL] key to provide immediate editing functions. (A summary card is provided with the printed manual.)

You can use imbedded printer commands in your document so that your text can be printed as you'd like. The same is true for the font commands, which can be used to print various parts of your document in different sized or emphasized characters.

To print your document, you must exit the editor program and return to DOS. Then you load the print program.

The original PC-WRITE program disk contains more than thirty files that control different printers. In order to use a printer other than the IBM Graphics printer, you can simply copy the appropriate printer file into the printer control file.

In conclusion, PC-WRITE is a fast and reliable word processor that can be used by beginning and advanced writers. Its only drawbacks include its inability to display a disk directory, or to print your document without exiting to DOS. However, those two minor inconveniences are easily tolerated when compared to the speed and power of the program itself.

KEYBOARDS (cont. from page 10)

Both the KB5150JR and the KB5151JR provide the professional touch to data entry. 51' offers separate numbers and arrows. Both have LEDs to indicate number and caps lock. The greatest drawback to the LEDs is Junior's fault. Since Junior does not use DMA (Direct Memory Access) for disk reading and writing, whenever the disk drive is active, Junior ignores all typing. Therefore, if you depress the CAPS LOCK while the disk is running, the light will light, but you will still be in lower case.

Perhaps the best value in keyboards is offered by Racore. They sell an adapter cable that allows you to plug in an IBM-PC keyboard to Junior. So, if you have an IBM-PC, too, why not buy the fancy Keytronics for it, and use the PC keyboard with Junior!

One last comment: If you are doing a great deal of typing, particularly while not watching the screen, you might find it helpful to listen to the feedback from Junior by depressing the [CTRL] [ALT] and [CAPS LOCK] keys simultaneously. You will usually know when you miss a click.

Swear by your modem. Not at it.

If you have used ordinary modems before, you know what we are talking about. Those mixed up numbers and text, errors caused by noisy phone lines. You know the type of phone line too. Like when you called your Aunt Betty last Christmas in Kalamazoo. You spent more time trying to hear over the noise and static than you did talking yourself.

Picture what all this can do to your delicate data! The fact is that noisy lines can make it almost impossible to send data to another computer. And even worse, it can totally change the data you are sending. So the inside tip that the winning lottery number is 66-98-70 comes out on your screen, 61-28-70. Goodbye vacation home in the Bahamas!

Forget about these problems; get Microcom's 1200 baud modem for the PCjr. It's the only modem that gives you error-free communications on anybody's phone service, even on those discount ones.

Because our modems use a special error-correcting protocol called MNP, you won't waste time and money with extra phone calls making sure it all got there in one piece or resending.

If that's not enough, then consider these points. Microcom's modem for your Junior is the world's only 1200 baud modem that fits inside your PCjr. That means you can save money and space over outboard designs. And Microcom gives you everything you need to get up and running in one package. No more worries about what software to buy, or if it will work with your modem. Finally, if you're worried that using a modem is difficult business, stop worrying! A Microcom modem is as easy to use as pushing a button.

So stop swearing and get a Microcom modem, we'll get your data through, even to your Aunt Betty's PC in Kalamazoo. If you would like more information about our modem for the PCjr, please call 1-800-372-0200. Microcom, Inc. Norwood, MA 02062.

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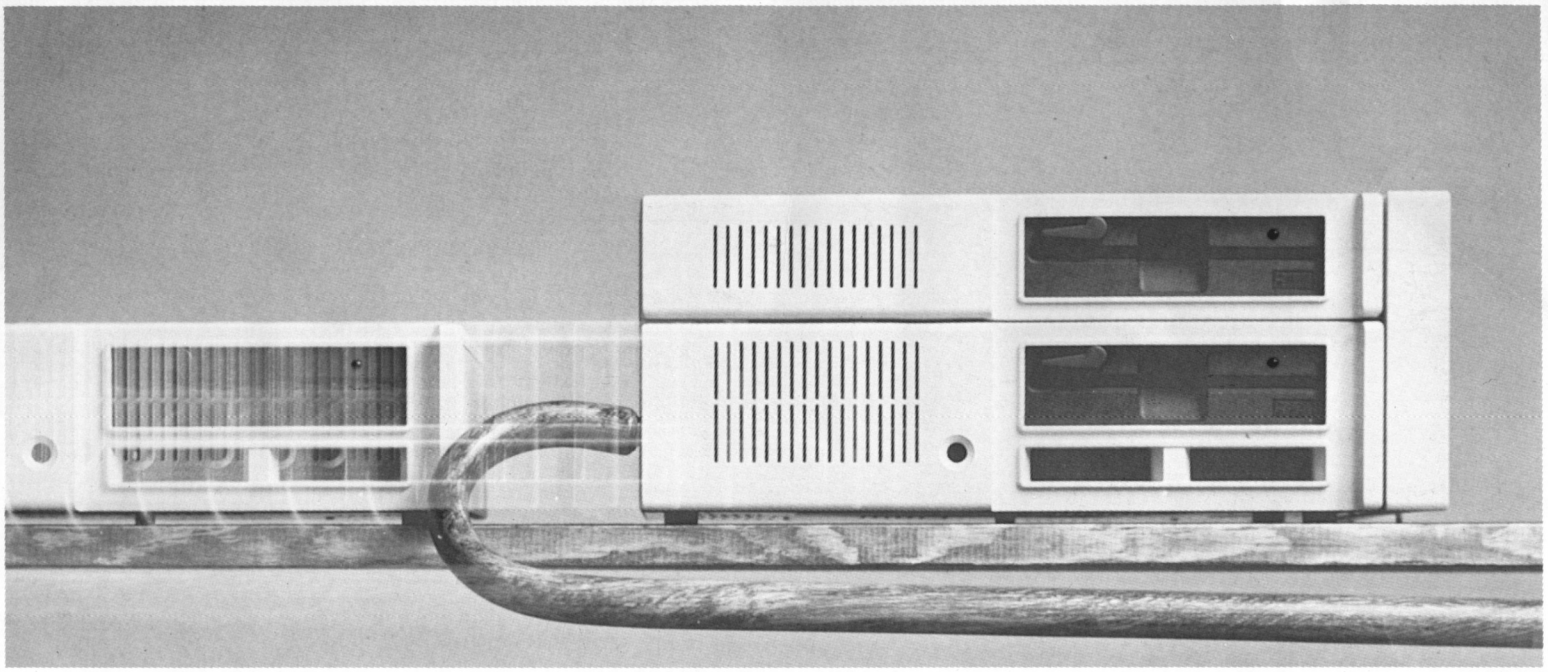

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Racore products are available from computer stores nationwide, and backed by a one year limited warranty.

SUMMARY:
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For the dealer nearest you, call (800) 325-1833.

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