

EUGENE

PCjr CLUB

NEWSLETTER

P.O. Box 50024. Eugene, OR 97405

VOLUME XVI  
NUMBER 3  
SEPTEMBER 2000

MEETING

AGENDA

The September meeting of the Eugene PCjr Club will be held at Emerald Park, 1400 Lake Drive in Eugene on Thursday, September 14.

Members and friends are invited to attend this event that will start at 6PM.

OFFICERS

- President . . . . . Mike Ruiz
- Treasurer and Club Store Phil Janz
- Social Director . . . . . Lynn Miles
- Newsletter Editor . . . . . Louie Levy

*Mike's Message*

As I write, I realize summer is really coming close to being over. You wouldn't believe what is going on at my workplace and what needs to happen before the Fall Term begins. The college where I work is in the middle of major remodels and new building construction. In fact, we are currently constructing two major new buildings and have just begun a major remodel. All are happening at the same time. Things are hectic but we are all excited about what the outcomes will provide. And, amidst all the hustle and bustle, my family and I took a quick vacation week to southern California. For me, the time was very much needed!

During the summer I haven't had a chance to see or talk to many of our club members. Hopefully all of you are well and everyone had a great summer. It would be great if your summer wasn't as hectic as mine, and I hope that all of you had some time for relaxation. I can suggest some of my favorites for this time of year. I suggest getting away to the coast for a weekend or going to a river to fish. I'm still trying to find the time to go to garage sales and discover some treasures.

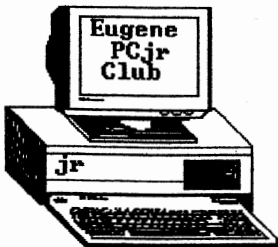
Rosie Janz, our Outreach Coordinator, was busy over the summer. Between taking time to camp and canoe with Phil and some friends at the Willapa National Wildlife Refuge on Willapa Island in Washington state, I understand Rosie took in some nice donations for the club. She has been busy matching those donated computers with some families in the local area that don't have computers. We all owe Rosie a vote of thanks for her tireless efforts to both the PCjr Club and to the local community.

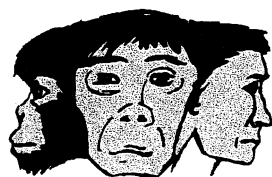
Because I've been so busy, it seems the summer has gone by very quickly. It won't be long until some of us see each other again at the PCjr Fall Picnic. Members will faithfully gather and enjoy homemade dishes and hopefully that wonderful fried chicken. One of my favorites is the corn on the cob; nothing is sweeter than Willamette Valley corn this time of the year! I'm looking forward to the beginning of the 2000/2001 PCjr Club year. Remember, each of us adds life to the club. Keep in touch and help keep Junior alive. For now, have a good time and I hope to see most of you soon.

*Mike*

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## Evolution of the Peanut

by Louie Levy

During the past several years many of the messages coming into the club have been from people wanting to find out what to do with their no-longer-needed PCjr computers. Things have changed somewhat.

We now have a new group who have started making inquiries about joining the club. Some of these people have been asking if we are a "PCjr collector's club."

While most of us don't think of our computer as a collectable, this small group of people seem to feel they have gotten in at the beginning of a collecting phase. They have been buying some of the older, earlier computers, specifically the PCjr. They are not doing so due to Junior's excellent track record of dependability, but because of Junior's potential collector value!

Many of us are collectors, and some of us actually purchased our PCJRS to help us in our collecting endeavors. We wanted a computer to help keep track of our coin or stamp collections or as an aid to manage our collection of books or recipes.

If you're a collector of anything you are aware of the online auctions such as eBay, Yahoo and Haggle just to name a few. If you collect one or two categories of things and watch them as they are sold at these auctions sites, you begin to notice trends. Items thought to be scarce seem to be more in abundance while other things can't be found at any price.

One can learn a lot by doing a search for "PCjr" or "pc jr" at these auctions sites. Those of us who have been watching PCjr stuff at these sites over the past few years are seeing trends. Some Junior parts and accessories, games and other software that have had little or no value in the past have moved up in value.

Indeed, many times our little peanut isn't being listed under "computers" but is listed under the "vintage computers" category. I knew Junior was special, but I never realized my old buddy

was a "vintage" computer. Makes you give it a little more respect than using the word "obsolete."

Junior has moved into the collector category. And, Juniors do indeed seem to be commanding higher prices--especially if they have their original packaging.

Cartridge games have always been popular with Junior users. There are several reasons for this that are worth mentioning. ROM cartridges load faster than programs on disks and they are less susceptible to damage from dirt, dog hair or jelly-coated fingers.

Many of the cartridge games like *Mouser*, *Touchdown Football* and *Scuba Venture* originally sold in the \$30 to \$35 price range. These programs would only bring a couple of dollars just a few months ago at eBay, but now sell rapidly with multiple bidders in the five to six dollar range.

Other programs, such as *King's Quest*, have always been popular with Junior owners and, as Junior owners moved up in computer technology, so did the complexity of *King's Quest*, with newer and newer versions added to the series. Now, the original *King's Quest* that was developed by Sierra exclusively for use with the PCjr is moving up in price due to its scarcity.

A complete 128K Junior with monitor and a box of software would be hard pressed to bring \$15 or \$20 only a few months ago at auction. Possibly the main reason for such low prices is that the packing and shipping charges would be added to the bid price. These "hidden" charges can be considerable.

As an example of hidden charges, the club accepted the generous gift of a complete Junior setup a few years back from a donor and we



agreed to pay the packing and shipping charges from the Seattle, Washington area down to Eugene. By the time the club paid for the commercial packing and shipping of the Junior, the monitor and assorted software, we had laid out nearly a hundred dollars for the donated 128K Junior.

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Times have changed some as a complete Junior outfit sold at eBay recently for over \$85-- and the buyer agreed to pay the shipping charges. In assessing this eBay auction we need to remember that the person who had the top bid won by overbidding someone else by only a dollar. The next highest, and loosing, bidder lost the Junior at \$84.00. In this particular auction there were 19 bids. The same week, an IBM thermal printer sold for \$20.50 plus shipping, an item the club sells to our members for only \$5.00.

Why are these items selling so well? One reason, I believe, are the adjectives being used in the descriptions. Rather than selling an "old" Junior, they are selling a "vintage" Junior. The 300 baud IBM internal modem is listed as an "original" modem. A Microsoft Booster is listed as "rare" while joysticks are "IBM brand in their original box." Marketing at its best!

Why is the club selling things so inexpensively in the Club Store? Why not sell some of our items at eBay or Yahoo so the club can make a profit?

Phil Janz, club treasurer and volunteer proprietor of the Club Store, reminded me that while it appears that prices are beginning to move upward and demand is greater, the purpose of our maintaining the store is to make equipment available to members at a reasonable cost. As many items in the store are actually donated to the club, the prices should be less than one would expect to pay elsewhere. Even the things that have been purchased by the club for resale must be lower than the prevailing prices elsewhere or our members wouldn't be getting bargains.

Phil also reminded me that we are a not for profit club. He reiterated "club." We are not a commercial venture, but a computer club. And, the recent inquiries to the club shows us that we do indeed have an eclectic membership.

The Eugene PCjr Club is strong because it is made up of all kinds of folks who have as their main interest the PCjr. It doesn't make any difference if we use our Junior everyday for work, if we are trying to run a gigahertz side-board from a USB port via a ZIP modified SCSI connection, or if we are just trying to accumulate everything that IBM made as an accessory to the PCjr. All of us

have the same interest: preserving the legend of the old peanut!



## Using Flight Simulator to Its Fullest

(Part One: Introduction)  
Adapted from an Article by  
Carl Haub

Flight Simulator, (FS), is a great program. It is one of the greatest entertainment software packages yet developed for the computer. Many users enjoy flying about buzzing the Statue of Liberty or the Sears Tower, but many leave FS's real power untouched.

A frequent comment is "Yeah, it's really super, but I've never really LANDED the darn plane." Too bad, because FS's real value lies in its completely faithful duplication of an aircraft's control "feel" and its reaction to the pilot's actions.

The difficulty many have with landing is a direct result of the program's realism - one must fly it like a real airplane if one wishes to plant the wheels on the runway without fuss. That is, in fact, not difficult for the heads-up pilot with some basic flight instruction who flies "by the numbers." By the numbers simply means operating the aircraft within a fixed set of parameters, such as RPM settings, flap positions, etc. - and not deviating from these procedures.



Since it's relatively simple to fly and land using FS, this three part series will cover some of the fundamental aspects of flying. This first part covers an introduction to the FS program along with what's inside the cockpit (the basic instruments you need to fly the aircraft). The second will cover actual flying and the third will cover getting the airplane back home and safely on the ground.

The original - version 2.X of FS, the one in the green ring-bound manual - will be used as a

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reference since many Junior users do not have the newer versions. (Ed's note: this is the version in the Club Store catalog.)

If you're brand new to FS, review the keyboard diagram foldout on page 113 in the manual or on page 115 if you are using a regular PC-type keyboard. FS can be used without a joystick, but it is much easier with at least one joystick for turns, banks and climbs.

A second joystick can be used for throttle in the free-movement (non-centering) mode and allows throttle adjustment without taking one's eyes from the screen (nice during those last sweaty moments on final approach).

### INSTRUMENT PANEL

First things first. Of all the dials on the panel (page 111 in the manual), only six are needed for basic flight. Beginning at the top left, the **airspeed indicator** is of paramount importance. It give speed through the air, not over the ground. In the calm wind conditions we will use, however, the two are the same.

Normal cruise speed is about 100 knots -

check it often. Higher speeds mean that you're diving while a lower speed may indicate the approach of a stall. "Stall" means

that the plane is no longer flying fast enough to maintain lift and it will drop. Stall occurs at about 70 knots; a loud horn will sound to warn you of an approaching stall.

To the right of the airspeed indicator is the **artificial horizon**. This ingenious device displays the plane's attitude vis-a-vis the horizon! The roll, ascent or descent of the horizon is depicted and will reflect the view out the window. This is a vital instrument to accurately judge the plane's pitch (nose up or down), roll (wings level or banked), and yaw (nose pointed left, right or straight ahead). In short, a three dimensional report in a single instrument. Study its reaction in flight carefully.

Next on the right is the **altimeter** which may need little introduction. It's clock-like hands report altitude above sea level. The short hand clicks off altitude in thousands of feet while the long hand indicates hundreds of feet.

Directly below the altimeter is the **VSI** or **Vertical Speed Indicator**. The VSI is an important instrument to spot check, particularly during landing. This instrument tells how fast the plane is going up or down vertically. On landing, this should indicate a descent of 500 to 750 feet per minute; a speed of 1000 or higher will likely result in much bouncing or worse.



One fault of the VSI is its noticeable lag in an accurate reading after a change in attitude or engine RPM setting. It will take a bit for the VSI to adjust, so give it some time.

To the VSI's left is the **heading indicator**. This instrument returns an accurate indication of the plane's compass heading and will be quite important when flying a landing pattern.

Lastly, the sixth vital instrument is the **engine RPM gage** in the bottom right corner of the panel. Idle speed is 600 (you will notice that FS always adds 5 to RPM readings; why, no one knows), and full takeoff power is 2500 RPM. Cruise power for level flight is from 1750 to 1800 RPM.

There is one other important panel instrument. Actually, it is one that doesn't normally appear in real airplanes. The **control position indicator** between the VSI and the heading indicator shows the position of the elevators and ailerons with little arrows. These should be in the centered position before takeoff with controls neutral, i.e., "hands off."

If you use a joystick for flight controls, select it in the editor (see pages 34-35 and 56-57 in the manual) and then calibrate them by hitting the "K" key. You can also use the adjustment wheels on the PCjr joy stick for "trim." After hitting the K key, both arrows on the control position indicator should be centered. Don't take off if they aren't!

Become familiar with these indicators and the special keys on your keyboard. In the next issue of the Newsletter we'll push down the runway and take off. Hope you'll join us!



## Economical PCjr Auto Phone Dialer

More and more people are letting us know the varied ways they are putting their

Juniors to use. Here is one novel idea.

There are less Internet Service Providers now who will support the 300 baud internal PCjr modem nowadays and even if they did, we couldn't recommend your using it on line. But, there is another great use for it. It makes a handy phone dialer, and as such, it works well.

It may be especially handy if you are using one of the older unprotected versions of Sidekick which supports the PCjr's internal modem. Other communication programs will work with the 300 baud modem, but be sure to remember that it wasn't called "infernal" modem for nothing. Check the club store for the latest price on this "rare collectable."

**Q** We are using Zip Drives on the computers at the college I attend. It would really be nice if I could put one of these little jewels on my Junior? There has been a lot in the newsletter about adding a hard drive to Junior so how about a Zip Drive?

**A** Well, here is one we don't have an answer for. Looking over the README file that comes with the Zip software, it does look like you can use a Zip Drive with DOS, but not DOS 2.1. So, we'll put the question out to our membership. How about it, can a ZIP drive be used on Junior's parallel printer port?

## Hang On To Your Hat and Your Laptop!

According to the insurance company Safeware, there were over 300,000 laptop computers reported stolen



in 1999. Here are some quick tips they suggest to prevent loss and to recover your computer equipment in the event they are stolen.

- Never check your computer with your luggage at an airport
- Be especially careful at the conveyer where carry-on luggage is checked
- Tape a business card or stick one of those many return address labels everyone gets on the **BOTTOM** of your laptop
- Put these labels **INSIDE** your home computer and on the bottom of your monitor and keyboard.

MYRON SMITH 3/00  
123 MAIN STREET  
ANYTOWN GA 30346-1234

## When Are My Dues Due?

Take a look at the above mailing label. We can see from the date after Myron's name that he was paid up to March of 2000 (3/00). That's the date that his membership in the Eugene PCjr Club expired. Myron will still get this month's newsletter and, with luck, will get a Post-it Note on his newsletter as a reminder that he's past due.

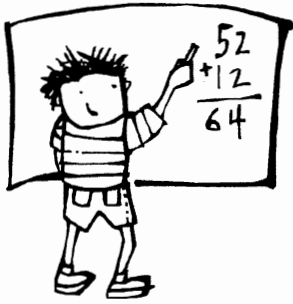
Take a minute and look at your label and see if your dues are due. The club doesn't have anyone sending out dues notices, so we're pretty much on our own. If you are due or will be shortly, take another minute and get a \$12 dues payment off to the Club now. We'll all be glad you did!

## Helping Children Learn on the PCjr

Young children, especially those ages two or three through eight, enjoy learning with the PCjr. In fact, if you have a lot of software and make it easily accessible for them, many will chose the interactive computer over the television. Software can be both fun and educational and can go a long way in teaching them the alphabet, elementary math and logic.

Continued on next page





Yes, it does work. Most children who have had access to a computer in their homes are at least a grade level above average in reading and in math.

But, in some families, these younger children barely use the computer. Their parents are afraid they will "hurt" or damage the main computer in the house, or they are afraid they must have constant supervision to prevent them from finding things on the net they shouldn't see.

These same parents want their children to use computers not only for the skills that many educational programs introduce and reinforce, but also because computers are now an integral part of their schooling and future careers. Here are a few ways that may be effective in making the PCjr a useful tool for teaching children.

#### AVAILABILITY:

There may be several people in the family who are vying for time on the family's main computer. Mom needs it for her special chores; Dad needs to use it for his projects; older brothers and sisters need it for research and school work. All of them need it for *FreeCell*. Because of these higher priority needs, smaller kids in the family may give up altogether asking to use the computer.

Setting up a PCjr just for these younger learners will make a computer available whenever they want to use it. And, they feel a sense of pride in having a computer "just for them."

#### LOCATION:

Another thing that encourages the kids to use the computer is its location in the house. Many adults spend much of their time in and around the kitchen in the evenings.

Locating the PCjr on a table in the corner of the kitchen, or near the kitchen, places them "near the action" and will give them something to do other than just feeling like they are underfoot.

Also, someone will be close should they need help.



#### FREEDOM TO INVESTIGATE:

When we purchase software for our children, the first thing we do is try to learn how to use it ourselves so we can teach our child how it works. Few of us would ever admit that we NEVER really learn to use our own software let alone someone else's.

One member tells the story of how she brought home *Donald Duck's Playground* one day and started playing it with the directions and her six year old daughter by her side. Mom was having trouble trying to catch things in the "produce bin." While she was struggling with the program and the manual, her daughter kept wiggling and saying, "let me try it, let me try it!"

Mom finally gave up and let the daughter have a go at it, thinking she'd get back to help her after supper. After supper, the daughter taught her mom how to use the program. It is one of the best programs this family has and the daughter demonstrated it at a PCjr Club meeting.

Children approach the computer with no fear. They have no inhibitions about trying things. They explore, find things, and use the computer very creatively. They have much better hand-eye coordination their parents.



Once you show your child how to turn on the computer and how to handle floppy disks, you need to give them free access to the PCjr and all their programs. All Juniors love kids and will never lead them astray.

#### ALTERNATE MEDIA WITHIN A

#### LEARNING ROUTINE:

One member with preschool and elementary school age children has found scheduling a set "computer time" to be effective in using the computer to teach mundane skills. Each morning and every evening, including weekends, they spend 30 minutes with school work. On a rotating basis, one of them is allowed to use an arithmetic, spelling or vocabulary game on the computer for that period. The ones who are not using the computer read books or work in work-books for reading or math skills.

Continued on page 7

They all look forward to their turns on the PCjr for the sake of variety in learning methods. Their enthusiasm carries over to their free use of the computer during the rest of the day.

#### VARIETY OF PROGRAMS:

When children have only a few games to play over and over, they may come to view the computer as a dose of medicine. Therefore, a large collection of educational programs and games is essential. You should have programs for learning geography, math, reading, spelling, matching skills, numbers and so on.

Some of these may be obtained at no cost from the Internet by using your modem to download Shareware and Freeware. Member Niel Balsino provided us with some excellent addresses for downloading software in the last newsletter. There is a large variety of programs in the Club Software Library at very low cost, and there are excellent commercial programs listed in the Club Store catalog.

As we know, and most of us remember with our first *Writing Assistant* or *King's Quest* disks, with kids accidents do happen. Make sure your

children are using copies rather than the original software. There are several programs that will make copies of some of the early software that was copy protected so your children won't have to use the originals. Also, it is very easy to make many of the programs "self-booting" so your child can just put the program disk in and go; no need to get help from an adult.

Remember that the Eugene PCjr Club has many members who are more than willing to help set up a Junior in your home for your children. At last count, we had at least five local members who are teachers or are retired teachers who will help you select software for your young student.

Send us an e-mail if you have any questions or suggestions. Our kids deserve all the help we can give them!



## The September Potluck Extravaganza (A.K.A. Peanut Picnic)

As we wind down our summer, we once again bring your attention to our Annual Fall Picnic. As much as we hate to say goodbye to these vacation days, we always look forward to meeting with all our friends once more at Emerald Park in Pavilion One for a nice meal and pleasant conversation.

Our picnic is planned for September 14<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 PM with the Club providing chicken and beverages. You will need to bring your own place settings, and choose a hot dish, salad or dessert to bring along to share with others.

In past years, the food has been yummy, the company refreshing and fun, and it is so good to renew our support for each computing member.

If you are planning to join us on September 14<sup>th</sup>, please give a phone call to Lynn Miles (484-5063) or to Rosie Janz (343-1059) so we will have an idea of how many might be attending.

**DIRECTIONS:** Driving South on I-5, get off at the Beltline Road exit and go West. Take River Road exit and turn left (South) onto River Road. Approximately .6 miles, turn right (West) at the 3<sup>rd</sup> red light onto Howard Avenue. Go .2 miles and turn left (South) onto Lake Drive. Emerald Park is .1 mile on your right. Driving North on I-5, get off at the Beltline Road exit, driving UNDER Beltline Road and then up the ramp onto Beltline Road. Follow the above instructions.

From downtown Eugene, go out 6<sup>th</sup> (Highway 99) and make a right (North) onto Chambers. Go across the Chambers Street Connector onto River Road. After 2.6 miles, turn left (West) onto Howard Avenue at the red light. Go .2 miles and turn left onto Lake Drive. Emerald Park is .1 mile on your right.

## HOW TO REACH THE EUGENE PCjr CLUB

### FOR MEMBERSHIP:

Membership is available for \$12 per year per household. Membership provides each member of the household access to the Club Disk Library, individualized help and support. It also includes a subscription to the Newsletter. All Club General Meetings and Board meetings are open to every member. To become a member, send payment to The Eugene PCjr Club, P.O. Box 50024, Eugene, OR 97405-0966.

### CHANGE OF ADDRESS:

To change your address please inform the Club by mail to the Eugene PCjr Club, P.O. Box 50024, Eugene, OR 97405-0966, by phone (541.343.7592) or by e-mail ([pcjrclub@efn.org](mailto:pcjrclub@efn.org)).

### NEWSLETTER ARTICLES:

Submission of articles for the Newsletter is vigorously solicited and copy may be sent to the Eugene PCjr Club, P.O. Box 50024, Eugene, OR 97405, or via e-mail ([pcjrclub@efn.org](mailto:pcjrclub@efn.org)). Permission to reprint is freely given.

### QUESTIONS and/or INQUIRIES:

Requests for catalogs from the Club Store and/or Disk Library, and questions or inquires about the availability of parts or supplies may be sent to the Eugene PCjr Club, P.O. Box 50024, 97405-0966, or via e-mail ([rp\\_janz@efn.org](mailto:rp_janz@efn.org)). Questions about software, operation or repair of your Junior, may be sent to the Club's PO Box or via e-mail ([pcjrclub@efn.org](mailto:pcjrclub@efn.org)).

### Contact These Club Members:

BASIC or WordStar:

Paul Bonney - [Pbo314159@aol.com](mailto:Pbo314159@aol.com)

PC-FILE III or WordPerfect:

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Mike Ruiz - [ruizmj@juno.com](mailto:ruizmj@juno.com)

Spreadsheets or WordPerfect:

Mike Ruiz - [ruizmj@juno.com](mailto:ruizmj@juno.com)

The Disk Library, Parts and Supplies:

All in The Club Store

Phil Janz - [rp\\_janz@efn.org](mailto:rp_janz@efn.org)

*"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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Phil and Rosie Janz 12/00

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FIRST CLASS MAIL