

# The Orphan Peanut

The Chronicle of the Atlanta PCjr Users Group

## Why PCjr?

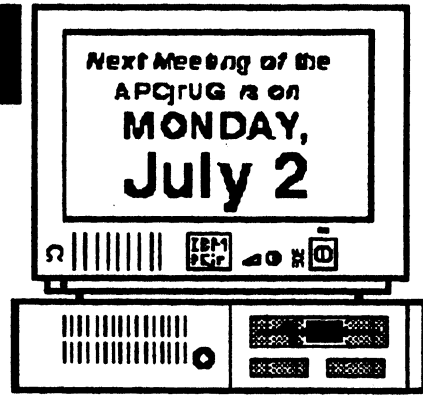
### RANDOM THOUGHTS ON FIVE YEARS WITH JUNIOR

by Dick Page

[Editor's Note: This article was written by a founding member of the Eugene, Oregon, PCjr Club. We happily and shamelessly plagiarized it from the May, 1990, issue of that necessity of PCjr life, The Jr Newsletter. Dick has expressed better than we can most of our feelings as long-term Junior owners, so we thought we'd pass them along to those of you who don't get Jr Newsletter.]

There are many reasons why the PCjr didn't "die" when it was orphaned by IBM:

- \* It had a large enough base of machines manufactured and sold. It was, after all, an IBM (with all the real and mythical benefits which come with anything named "IBM".)
- \* It was well constructed - in order to withstand the rigors of use in a classroom or home.
- \* It had a flexible design which allowed for alterations and expansion (in ways even IBM hadn't anticipated).
- \* It had many unusual, unique features not found on any other IBM compatible computer on the market. I embrace all the general reasons mentioned above, but I also have more personal reasons for having purchased and kept my Junior these past five years:
  - \* Challenge. Working with Junior hasn't always been the "user friendly" experience I was told it was going



to be (from the marketing hype IBM put out in 1984). Quite the contrary. There have been many times of frustration (and a few times of rage). But usually I have seen the PCjr's quirks as challenges, puzzles to solve, hurdles to overcome. And that (Continued on Page 3)

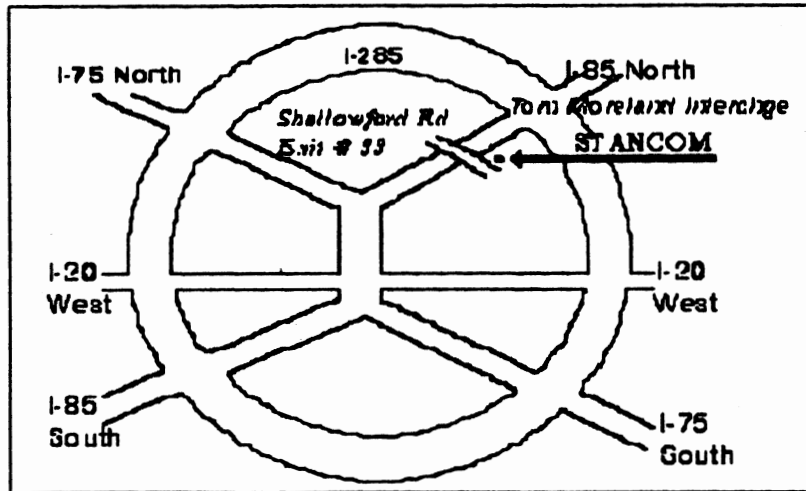
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## HOW TO GET TO THE MEETINGS



### OFFICERS 1989-1990

*President*

David Blagg

*Vice-President:*

Beth Geiger  
\*872-0242

*Secretary:*

Carol Burns  
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*Treasurer:*

Hunter Medney  
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*Disk Librarian:*

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*Sys Op:*

Terry Markert  
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David Wilson  
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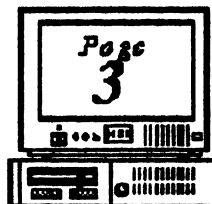
*\*Designates Membership  
Committee  
Contact Person*

### *If you're outside the Perimeter (I-285):*

Just follow I-285 around Atlanta until you reach the Tom Moreland Interchange (I-285 and I-85 North). Go South on I-85 toward Atlanta until you reach Exit 33, Shallowford Road. Exit onto Shallowford Road and turn left to cross over I-85. Immediately past the traffic signal on the East side of the overpass you will see a building on the left with STANCOM in large letters on the front of it.

### *If you're inside the Perimeter (I-285):*

Get on I-85 heading North from the city. Watch for the Shallowford Road exit, Number 33, and leave the Interstate highway there. Turn right on Shallowford Road, get in the left lane and prepare to immediately turn left into the STANCOM parking lot.



## Why PCjr?

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has been fun, interesting, and rewarding.

**\* Hobby.** My PCjr has carved out a special niche in my life. It has become an enjoyable distraction from day-to-day working world. Five minutes quickly turns into an hour and an hour magically becomes three.

Junior has enough flexibility built in for many of its limitations to be circumvented and its many unique attributes taken advantage of. The efforts of many individuals, user groups, and third party manufacturers and suppliers to "push Junior's envelope" have kept my Junior alive and well. And I am thankful for that.

Apparently I am not alone in being transfixed by its magical mesmerizing powers. It has touched a chord with lots of people. Without that fact I know my PCjr would have died a quick and lonely death.

**\* Antici pation.** There is a pleasure I seem to derive from seeing what's around the corner, what's up over the next hill, what's in the latest catalog. It tickles me to see that inventive souls keep puttering with their PCjrs and thus find ways to help keep Juniors current with this special world of ever-changing computer technology. So...I look forward to each monthly meeting, each catalog, each Junior-oriented Newsletter I receive.

**\* Addiction.** While I have at times been labeled "miserly", I have spent quite a few dollars on my Junior. Manufacturers continue to dangle new mouth-watering carrots in front of me. And I have bitten. (Sometimes to my wife's chagrin.)

The "if only..." mentality easily sets in. You probably know well what I mean.

--> "If only I had 256K of memory."

--> "If only I had a second drive."

--> "If only I could get it to run in sixteen colors like a Tandy."

--> "If only..."

--> "If only..."

I am hooked. A genuine dyed-in-the-wool Junior Junky.

And last-but-not-least:

**\* Companionship.** With the feeling of abandonment by IBM in 1985 came the need and desire to band together with other PCjr orphans. So I helped start our local users group, the Eugene PCjr Club.

Our club, for me, has turned into a social support group as much as an orphaned computer support group. There is the commonality among us that both attracted us to the PCjr and has kept us interested in using it ever since. Our "oneness" as PCjr orphans has made the monthly meetings, the frantic calls, and the shared gallows humor very enjoyable. The bonding that has resulted has led to deep life-long type of friendships.

And so, here I sit. Staring at the beige box I have stared at so many times over the past five years. I wonder, "How much longer will this 'Junior love affair' go on?" I wrestle with "When will I stop putting money into Junior and buy a 'real' computer?" I worry, "Will Junior crash in the middle of something important?"

I don't, however, have a crystal ball. So I'll just have to go on - waiting, working, worrying, and playing. Looking forward to another day of staring at that little blinking white rectangle on a 14" IBM PCjr Color Display. Wondering what will be in store for me and this orphan that is so much a part of my life.

You can learn more about the EUGENE PCjr USERS CLUB by writing them at the following address:  
EUGENE PCjr USERS CLUB  
1011 Valley River Way  
Suite 220  
Eugene, OR 97401



Volume 3, Number 1  
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# Practical Telecommunication

by John King

You've heard about electronic mail, electronic banking, and computer bulletin boards (BBS). Your PCjr can let you join these networks. Have you thought about trying it out?

Computer bulletin boards can be a source of information, free software, and fun. Our San Francisco PCjr Users Group has a BBS which PCjr owners call from all over the country. They leave messages, which everyone who calls can read, with questions or answers about software and hardware for the PCjr. They can also obtain programs from the BBS directly over their telephone line.

This month, we'll cover the easiest and cheapest ways to "get on the boards" with your PCjr. Easy and cheap so you won't waste time or money setting up something you might decide you don't need. We'll start from ground zero and assume you know nothing beyond how to boot your computer. That's where I started a couple of years ago.

First, you will need a modem. A modem is a phone for your computer. We humans talk, so telephones convert sound to electrical signals and back for us. Computers produce digital electrical signals, so a modem converts these to electrical signals compatible with telephone equipment and back. You connect the computer to one side of the modem and the phone line to the other.

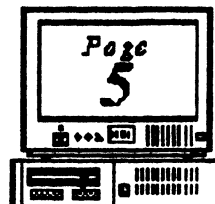
The phone line you already have will be

fine. You don't need a special line or to notify the phone company that you have a modem. Since most homes and apartments have the small, plastic modular jacks now, connecting the modem is easy. Measure the distance from your PCjr to the nearest phone wall outlet, and buy a phone extension cord a little bit longer. If one isn't long enough buy two. Don't worry about the length. Your system will work fine even if the cord is 100 feet long. Just be sure that the cord or combination of cords ends up with a male connector on both ends because the wall outlet and the modem have female connectors.

For the best arrangement, buy an all female Y-connector, and put it on the end of the extension cord. Using short cords, attach the modem to one side of the Y and a phone to the other. This will allow you to listen on the line while testing you modem.

You can use your PCjr and a modem to dial calls to other computers or humans. If you are calling a person,  
(Continued on Page 5)



**Practical Telecommunication (Continued)**

*(Continued from Page 4)*

them are too complicated to make it easy to get started.

Get a copy of **JRTELE.COM** by Ueckert Software Systems from our disk library. This is a shareware program specifically for the PCjr. It will run on a 128K PCjr. It has the commands built in for the internal modem and a Hayes compatible external modem. It checks to see which you have and automatically uses the right commands. No other program can make beginning communications this easy. A registration fee of \$20.00 is requested if you like the program. I have registered my copy. *[Ed. Note - Alan Ueckert, a Marietta resident and occasional visitor to the PCjr WORKSHOP, no longer supports JRTELE, but he also no longer requests that you register it - if you have questions on its use, Terry Markert, the SysOp can handle most of them.]*

The documentation for **JRTELE** is straight forward, only ten pages long, and comes on the disk. A 32K video buffer is recommended. This is handled automatically if you have a 128K system, but check your memory management program if you have more than 128K total RAM. **JRTELE** can handle all the sending and

receiving of files that I normally do on my computer.

If you want to try a larger program, I recommend **PROCOMM**. There are two shareware versions, **PROCOMM 2.4.2**, and **PROCOMM PLUS TEST DRIVE**. The documentation is nearly one hundred pages long to cover all the powerful features. These come set up for a Hayes compatible modem. You will want to get the set up files from our library if you are using the PCjr internal modem.

Large communications programs like **PROCOMM** have their own programming language, permit extensive keyboard macros to automate repetitive instructions, include many protocols for file transfers, and allow your computer to become a miniature BBS. You may want these features but probably not right away.

In setting up the software, there are several pieces of information you may have to provide depending upon the package. First, what COM port are you using? The internal modem uses COM1, all external modems use COM2. Second, what communication parameters do you want to use? The IBM PC BBS standard is 8-N-1. All mainframe computers, such as banks have, use 7-E-1. You don't need to know that this means 8 data bits, No parity, 1

*(Continued on Page 7)*



**Practical Telecommunication (Continued)**

*(Continued from Page 5)*

stop bit and 7 data bits, Even parity, and 1 stop bit. The software will take care of all the bits for you. Finally, what protocol do you want to use for file transfers? Just pick X-modem, it will do the job. Later you can learn about others.

Now, you have the hardware connected and the software set up, and you are ready to enter the world of telecommunications. It's time to make the first call. Find the phone number of a local BBS. Ours is published on the last page of the newsletter. Many more are listed in the back of Computer Currents, MicroTimes, and Computer Shopper, three computer magazines which are available locally.

Enter the phone number in the dialing directory of your software package (the instructions will tell you how to do this), and give the dial command. Listen on the telephone for the dialing tones. If you don't hear them, recheck the instructions and connections. If you can't hear the modem dial, the phone company can't either.

If you are on a pulse dialing only line, you will have to set your software to do pulse dialing. Most programs are set up initially to do tone dialing, and you will hear the tones, but the call will not be processed by the phone company equipment.

If you are having trouble, call a nearby phone, perhaps a friendly neighbor. He

can tell you whether or not his phone rang. When you have this working, you can call anywhere in the world - for a price.

Most computer bulletin boards are free. If there is a charge it is stated clearly when you first call, and you will not be charged for any part of the call without a clear warning. The major danger is in becoming a long distance BBS addict. This can be expensive, so watch for the signs: complaints that your line is always busy and phone bills over \$500. There is no "Modems Anonymous" or "BBS Enders" to turn to if you get hooked.

When a BBS answers, you will see a CONNECT message on the screen. You may have to tap the Enter key several times before anything else happens. This is to let the answering BBS know that you are alive and well and wish to proceed. At that point, the BBS will begin sending information to your computer. Read it and respond. Typically, you will be asked for your name, city, and a password to identify yourself for future calls.

Pick a simple password that you will remember the next time you call.

*(Continued on Page 7)*



## Hard Drive Blues

By Terry Markert, SysOp

Well, it looks like when it rains it pours. I received a call this month from David Wilson telling me that he



was having problems with one of his hard

drives. He told me he was gradually losing sectors and what not when he ran CHKDSK and was getting read/write errors, etc. Well, he apparently was having a drive that was slowly crashing on him. So he took the drive out (after getting it backed up, of course) and took it to a place in Forest Park called H and W Micro. They took it as a trade in on a re-furbished one for a modest fee. The reason I have mentioned this is because it looks like the same problem has been encountered here at the Workshop. Fortunately it is the drive that houses the file directories. So I would be extremely cautious on any file downloaded from the system.

Hopefully, I will be able to get it repaired or take it to Forest Park and purchase a re-furbished one like David did. I am anticipating at least a two day ordeal with getting this problem taken care of. The BBS will be down while I take the drive out of the system. It will be brought back up with the file areas

being disabled, except for the Recent Upload area which doesn't reside on the bad drive. Of course, this will be an out of pocket expense so there is no time table for this to be done. So, you might say that the Workshop will be crippled for awhile. ENJOY!

### Practical Telecommunications

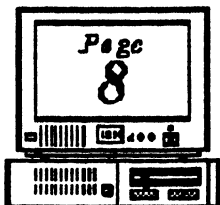
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The name of a family member or pet is good. This is not top security stuff, so make it easy on yourself and use one password everywhere.

Once you have logged on, the BBS will have help commands to explain how to use the services. You can read messages, enter responses or new messages, and download or upload files.

Download means to have the BBS send you a file at your request. Uploading is when you send something to the BBS. I upload my monthly column to our BBS. The newsletter editor then downloads it to include in that month's issue.

Don't worry about making mistakes. You can't break anything! It will take a bit of practice to get comfortable with this new form of communications, but you can learn in the privacy of your own home.



Volume 3, Number 1  
July, 1990

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# Meeting Notes

The June meeting of the PCjr Users Group was held Monday, June 4, at the offices of STANCOM. There were 16 members present. David Blagg, President, called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m. and

## Secretary

asked for the officers' reports.

David Wilson reported that 78 copies of the *ORPHAN PEANUT* were mailed - 63 to members and the rest to prospective members or complimentary copies. The cost of printing and mailing is still less than \$1.00/copy. He told us to look for a new format next month since he got his upgrade to First Publisher 3.0.

Len Brown, Librarian, was not present at the meeting. Carol Burns, Secretary, asked that the minutes be accepted as published in the newsletter. Hunter Medney, Treasurer, reported that we have a positive balance in the treasury.

Old business was the next subject. The revised constitution was presented to the membership and a vote was taken to accept it as rewritten.

There were no announcements or new business. Future meeting topics are:

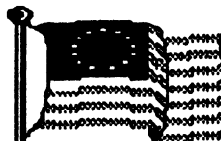
July - question and answer session  
August - open  
September - swap meet

The subject of the evening was a presentation of *Personal Ancestral File* by Allan Bentley. Allan told us that the software is sold by the Church of the Latter Day Saints at a cost of \$35. To run the program 512K, DOS 2.0 or greater, and 2 drives are necessary. A printer and mouse are helpful. [Ed. Note - because of the 5000-character limit, we've removed the remainder of this program description. We'll print a revised version of it as a program review in a future issue.]

After a most enlightening evening David adjourned the meeting at 8:50 p.m. and the members present then engaged in their usual repartee.

Respectfully submitted - late but very complete,

Carol Burns, Secretary







# A>DIR

**David Blagg, President, APCjrUG**  
I have written here before about questions and answers, and I intend to do it again. But before I do, have you seen the latest Prodigy free trial offer in the mail?

The company offers an attractive package of services which are on-line and useful in the home. Atlanta was one of the original test markets, and we PCjr owners "did 'em proud." After all, the PCjr was an IBM product made for the home, and IBM was--and is--one of the Prodigy partners. Many of us accepted the original Prodigy software with a great deal of initial excitement.

But Prodigy did not run on the PCjr, at least not in its official release. Even if you have received the latest free trial offer, that is all you will get--an offer. As APCjrUG president, I sometimes hear a rumbling about a new release which will support our lovable orphan. But nothing ever seems to materialize.

However, there is a point to be made here. Prodigy WILL RUN on a PCjr under certain conditions. For example, you will need lots of memory. You will also need some software which patches the Prodigy programs so they will work on the PCjr. Better yet, you can obtain a utility program called NOBEEP which fixes the PCjr's problems with Prodigy and other programs as well. But you will not know any of this if you do not ask a question about it. You might even ask where you can find the software patches (answer: in

the APCjrUG disk library, and on the PCjr WORKSHOP BBS.)

Which brings me back to where I started. Our meeting in July will be a question and answer meeting. It is an opportunity, one which we repeat from time to time, to ask other APCjrUG

## *President*

members for information or help on a topic of concern to you.

Your questions can be about software, hardware, the user group, repair services, Prodigy, PCjr bulletin board systems, vendor experience, or any one of many other broad areas of concern. You also have an opportunity to share your experience in response to someone else's question. In either case, you get to enjoy the company and fellowship of other people who own and use the PCjr. And you may strike a lasting friendship with someone who shares your particular interests.

See you at the meeting July 2nd!



**The PCjr WORKSHOP**  
 The Official BBS of  
 The Atlanta PCjrUG  
 (404) 740-1916  
 300/1200/2400 at N,8,1





**GOOBER PEAS**  
EDITOR'S PAGE

You may have noticed that there's a new look about the PEANUT this month. This is the first issue of our third year, and First Publisher came out with their latest upgrade a couple of months ago, so



here it is. The new page sizes and layouts have been developed to allow a little more flexibility in performing some of the desktop publishing operations,

but I have no idea whether or not it's going to work out better than the old way or not - we'll just have to wait and see.

People sometimes ask why we use so much graphics and artwork in the PEANUT, and there are actually several reasons: I like them, and I'm the editor; they help break up what would otherwise be a boring expanse of black letters on white paper; and First Publisher won't allow more than 5000 text characters on a single page, no matter what size font or page size you use. This last restriction can be very annoying in cases such as the long John King article in this issue - there was actually room for the article on one of our pages, but

the limit had been reached and I had to plug

in the last section elsewhere. This problem, of course, was further complicated by my unfamiliarity with the quirks of this particular version of the software. Hopefully, it'll straighten out as we go along.

If you have questions or comments (complaints, even!) about the PEANUT, I wish you'd call me and let me know. I sometimes wonder if anyone ever gets or reads it, and I certainly don't know what the vast majority of recipients think of it. If you'd like to make a comment, call me at 255-2731 (no collect long-distance calls, please) and tell me about it.

The Atlanta PCjr Users Group's

**BEGINNERS KIT**

is now available to members for the astonishingly low price of

**\$10.00**

(or to nonmembers for only \$15)

Consisting of printed articles and two disks jammed with information that will help you make the most

use of your PCjr. use

**CALL 255-2731 NOW!**



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