

The Orphan Peanut

The Chronicle of the Atlanta PCjr Users Group
Vol. 3, Number 6 - News Stand Price \$1.00 - December, 1990

The Night

Before ...

A parody by David Wilson

'Twas the night before
Christmas,
And under the tree,
Was a brand new computer -
A replacement to be.

For our Junior is old,
And it isn't too fleet,
And with all the new puters,
It just can't compete.

So we got us a bargain -
It was still in the crate -
And we chortled and giggled
We just couldn't wait.

But when morning arrived,
And we rushed to our loot,
We found something strange
For us to compute.

For a message appeared
ON our new toy so fine;
It was terse, it was
pointed,
And it rattled my mind.

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December, 1990

The Orphan Peanut

INFORMATION, PLEASE

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The ORPHAN PEANUT is the official newsletter of the Atlanta PCjr Users Group, a distressingly non-profit organization dedicated to the health and well-being of the first Orphan and first "clone" from IBM - the "Peanut". The Group's single purpose is as stated in Article 2 of our Constitution:

"...to provide a forum for members to share information, experiences, and techniques of use that will help other members derive maximum benefit and enjoyment from their PCjr."

The ORPHAN PEANUT is designed, laid out, and entirely created on a PCjr with 736 KB of RAM or 8 MHz of clock speed (but not both together), a Microsoft Mouse, a second floppy drive (3.5") from PC Enterprises, and two 20-megabyte hard disks from RIM via Paul Rau Consulting. There's other stuff as well, but we forget. Software used includes **TEXTRA** word processing and **QEdit** text editor, **PFS:First Publisher** desktop publishing, and sundry other programs of varying usefulness.

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'twas the Night...

(From Page 1)

"Now, here is a 'bargain',
It said with a sneer,
"That will probably cost
Lots of money this year.

"For the reason you're
CHANGING
AND GETTING this trash,
Is to 'improve on' your
JUNIOR
AND save you some cash.

"But the truth is, it won't
save
So much of your money;
By the time that you finish
It won't be too funny.

"It's a bare, stripped-down
model
(and a cheap one, at that)
With an 'XT processor' -
You've already got that.

"Your Junior has features
You have to add to this lump
AND they all cost you extra
So don't be a chump.

"Examine your needs
AND chart them with care.
If you won't use those extras

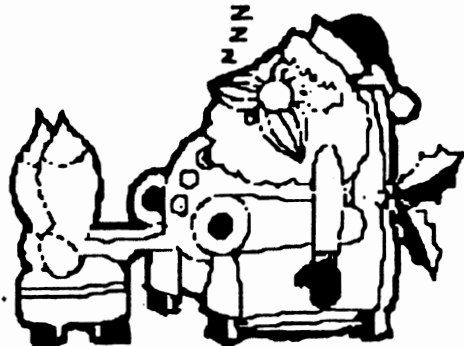
DON'T put them IN there.

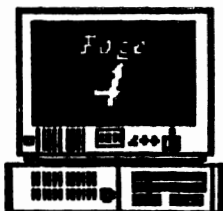
"It frequently happens
When you add up the cost,
Expanding your Junior
Will profit you most.

"So take my advice
and don't even pause;
Return this tomorrow.
Sincerely, S. Claus"

Well, we did what he said -
We examined our plight;
AND we saved lots of dollars
Because, you know, he was
right!

So replace it with caution;
Make sure that you're right;
Think 'Upgrade!' this
Christmas,
AND have a good night.





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Negotiating Mergers

How to Merge Files Using DOS Commands

WHTAMESS.ART.

from jr Newsletter

Believe it or not, *jr Newsletter* has recently received three letters from readers asking basically the same question: "Can I combine several files from one directory, or from different diskettes, into one file?"

The answer is, yes you can. And it's not hard. Suppose you wrote a daily diary on your PCjr, writing about the exciting things that happened to you or the fascinating thoughts that occurred to you each day. After a year or two of this, you decided some of your experiences would make great magazine articles. So you want to combine several files on similar subjects in order to edit them.

The way to combine all your files about trainwrecks you've seen, would be as follows: At the A>, type

```
COPY TRNWREK.382+CARSFALL.185
+OFFBRDGE.686 WHTAMESS.ART
```

The above command will add the files in the order you name them so they become a new file, in this case a file called WHTAMESS.ART. This will be the file with the three entries from your diary about trainwrecks. You can now edit and rewrite those files into one blockbuster of an article for magazine publication.

The general principle here is that you put a plus sign between all the files you want to join and they will all be copied, in order, to a new file with the name you put after a space. There must be a space before the name of the file you want the others to combine into. Files from different drives can be joined in the same way by typing the drive before the filename, with no space between the drive and the filename. You can also combine several files into an existing file by placing the name of that file after the space. In the above example, then, to get all your trainwreck entries into one existing file, you would substitute the name of that file for the new file in the example,

Using Wildcards

If you have many files with the same prefix or extension, you can combine them using the * symbol. Let's say all your diary entries about trainwrecks over the years have the file extension WRK. In order to combine them all into one file, you could type

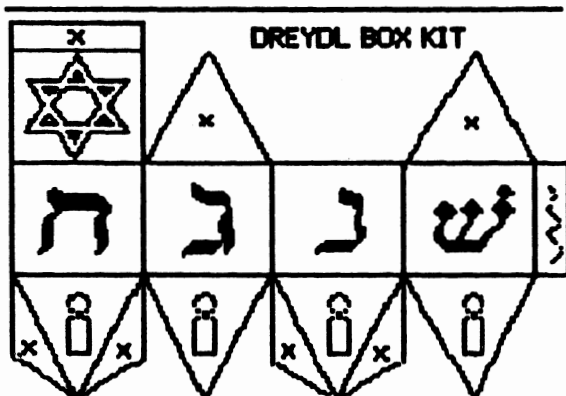
```
COPY *.WRK WHTAMESS.ART
```

Once again, all your trainwreck entries would be combined into a file called WHTAMESS.ART, ready for you to polish up for submission to LIFE Magazine.

You can also use the ? as a wildcard to stand for any single character in a filename or extension. Let's say all your diary entries were in files called DIARY with the extension consisting of the number of the month and the number of the year. To combine all entries for the?-year1986 you could type

```
COPY DIARY.?86 DIARY.ALL
```

Thus you would quickly have all months for 1986 combined into one file instead of having to type COPY DIARY.186+DIARY.286+DIARY.386, etc.





What, Me Program?

To Program Or Not To Program ...

References to programming are everywhere. Schools teach BASIC programming in their introductory computer courses. TV and newspaper journalists mention programming regularly in their reports on computers. Publishers produce a constant flow of new books on programming.

Writers compare the merits of BASIC, Pascal, C, Assembler, and other languages for personal computers. With so much coverage programming must be important.

Does this also mean that all of us who use a computer for more than playing games must learn to program? I believe the answer is yes, at least, if we want to use our computers well. However, very few of us will ever need to learn any of the languages listed in the first paragraph.

Those complex languages take years to learn well. Even for an expert, it takes months to develop, test, and debug a new program. Large programs may be the

work of many programmers. Certainly, you could write your own wordprocessor, spreadsheet, or database program, but it would take a tremendous amount of time and effort. It makes more sense to pick an available program that suits your needs rather than write your own. In short, if you want

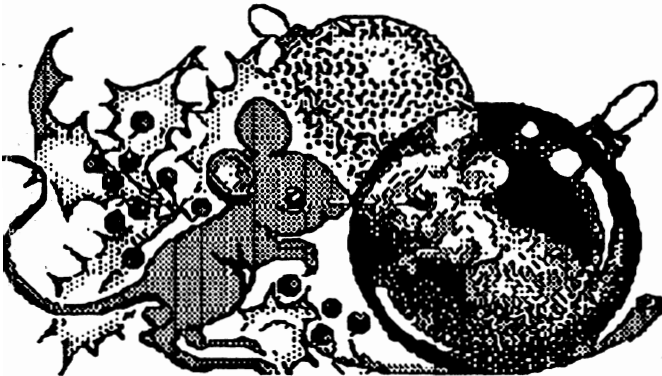


good software, leave the programming to the professionals whenever you can.

There may be times when you have to do it yourself. If you need special programs which are not available, you'll have to learn how to write them. A control program for a robot, or programs for a very uncommon computer are examples of programs you might have to write yourself.

You might also decide to learn a programming language just for fun or personal satisfaction. This might be the first step in becoming a professional programmer or the beginning of a new career teaching computer programming. If you don't have one of these or similar needs or interests, you probably won't ever have to learn one of the formal languages.

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What, Me Program?

(From Page 4)

If you just want to understand more about how your computer works, even though you don't intend to be a programmer, I suggest learning a little Assembler. This is down at the fundamental operating level of the machine and is great for understanding how it works. Assembler is also available at minimum expense because DEBUG which comes with DOS assembles and unassembles code. Buy a book on assembly language programming, and you're in business. DEBUG is also useful for making minor alterations to programs written by others, a procedure called patching.

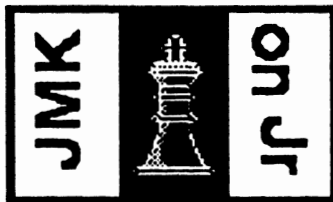
Although we won't have to learn a lot of BASIC, Pascal, C, Assembler, or similar languages, we still need to learn how to program. Through programming, we can give the computer a set of instructions once which can be carried out many times, now or in the future. This can simplify using the computer and increase our efficiency. If we don't use one of the complex languages, how do we program? What else is there?

First, there are batch files. The batch file commands are part of DOS and described in your DOS manual. This simple language is used to load programs, provide on-screen reminders, and generally automate many repetitious operations.

An AUTOEXEC.BAT file will be run when you turn on your computer. It can contain all the commands you would give to get started. Once written, the commands are processed automatically each time you boot up. Now, that's a real convenience.

I wrote a simple batch file to copy several files for my wordprocessor to a ramdisk. The batch file programs the computer to copy all

the necessary files. It never forgets which files to copy, and I don't have to type in every COPY command each time.



A spreadsheet, such as Lotus 123 or Quattro, is really a way to program your computer.

Typically, you build a new

spreadsheet by first entering a bunch of numbers. This is data entry, not programming. Next, you enter a formula, perhaps to add up the numbers in a range of cells. Now you are programming your computer. If you change one of the numbers, the computer will automatically calculate the new sum. With the wide selection of mathematical operations possible in modern spreadsheets, this is powerful programming.

Wordprocessors don't resemble spreadsheets, but many have their own macro programming language. When you turn on the macro function, the wordprocessor memorizes every keystroke until you tell it to stop. This is keystroke programming. When you run the macro by typing a key combination such as Alt-A, the memorized keystrokes are repeated. If you are writing a letter, macros can type in the date, set the margins, add a greeting, and close the letter with your name and address. As you can see, macros can be real time savers.

(Go to Page 5) Databases are another



What, Me Program?

(From Page 5)

class of software which allow us to program our computers. Let's take a computerized address book as an example. The entry of names and addresses, the data, into the database is not programming. This is just the raw material for the program to use. However, when you specify a report format you are programming.

One report might list the names and addresses of people outside of California to whom you write because long distance calls are expensive. Another report could provide the names and phone numbers for friends within California. The database program will use the data you entered differently depending upon which report you ask for. When you add new data, it will appear only in the appropriate reports. You have programmed the computer to report the data the way you

want it.

Communications programs such as PROCOMM and QMODEM can be used entirely manually, or you can program them.

The manual method works fine if the particular computer bulletin board system (BBS) is simple and you don't call very often. You dial the number and follow the prompts for your name, password, and the BBS area you want to use by typing in each response.

If the BBS is complex, like Compuserve, or if you call frequently, you can write a special file to provide the responses automatically as they are requested. A file which does this is called a script file and is your personal program. Scripts can be simple, just enough to get you signed in, or they can be complex and automate a whole session including file transfers.

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It's In The Book--

WHAT DO THEY MEAN BY THAT?

(As defined in *Webster's New World Dictionary of Computer Terms*)

Address: An identification, such as a label, number, or name that designates a particular location in storage or any other data destination or source.

Memory Board: an expansion board that adds RAM to the system, making it possible to store and use additional information.

Memory Management: The technique of effectively controlling and allocating memory resources. [Essential for PC/r memory expansions; software normally provided by vendor]



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What, Me Program?

(From Page 7)

If the BBS is complex, like Compuserve, or if you call frequently, you can write a special file to provide the responses automatically as they are requested. A file which does this is called a script file and is your personal program. Scripts can be simple, just enough to get you signed in, or they can be complex and automate a whole session including file transfers.

A modern salesman might send in his new orders electronically and receive a list of messages and calls to make the next day. A script file could automate the log on and file transfers and make him more efficient.

Although this particular example may not apply to you, there may be times when script file programming could make your life easier.

There are many other related examples of programming. Mail merge instructions in a wordprocessor are programming. Programs such as PROKEY and NEWKEY let you build keyboard macros which replay a whole series of keystrokes within any program. I'm sure if you think about it a bit, you'll discover other ways to program your computer for greater effectiveness.

None of the programming illustrated by these examples requires you to learn a complex language such as BASIC or C. The programming is mostly done within an application you have selected for a job you want to do with your computer. Often, the programming is optional, but it greatly increases the usefulness of your computer.

Without a doubt, we all need to learn to program. As a matter of fact, you're probably doing so already.

ELECTIONS TO BE HELD IN DECEMBER

Monday, December 3, is the date of the 1990 elections - a process that may be the most important one the APCjrUG has yet undergone. As you'll see below, most of those nominated by the Nominating Committee appointed at the September meeting are incumbents, as are the appointed officers: your SysOp, Disk Librarian, and Newsletter Editor. This is a good situation as far as continuity is concerned, but there's a nagging problem that needs to be considered: most of those who are on this list will not be candidates a year from now. As we've been emphasizing in our commentaries for some time, the APCjrUG needs participation at all levels, and now is the time to start considering it. Here are the nominees for the four elective offices for 1991:

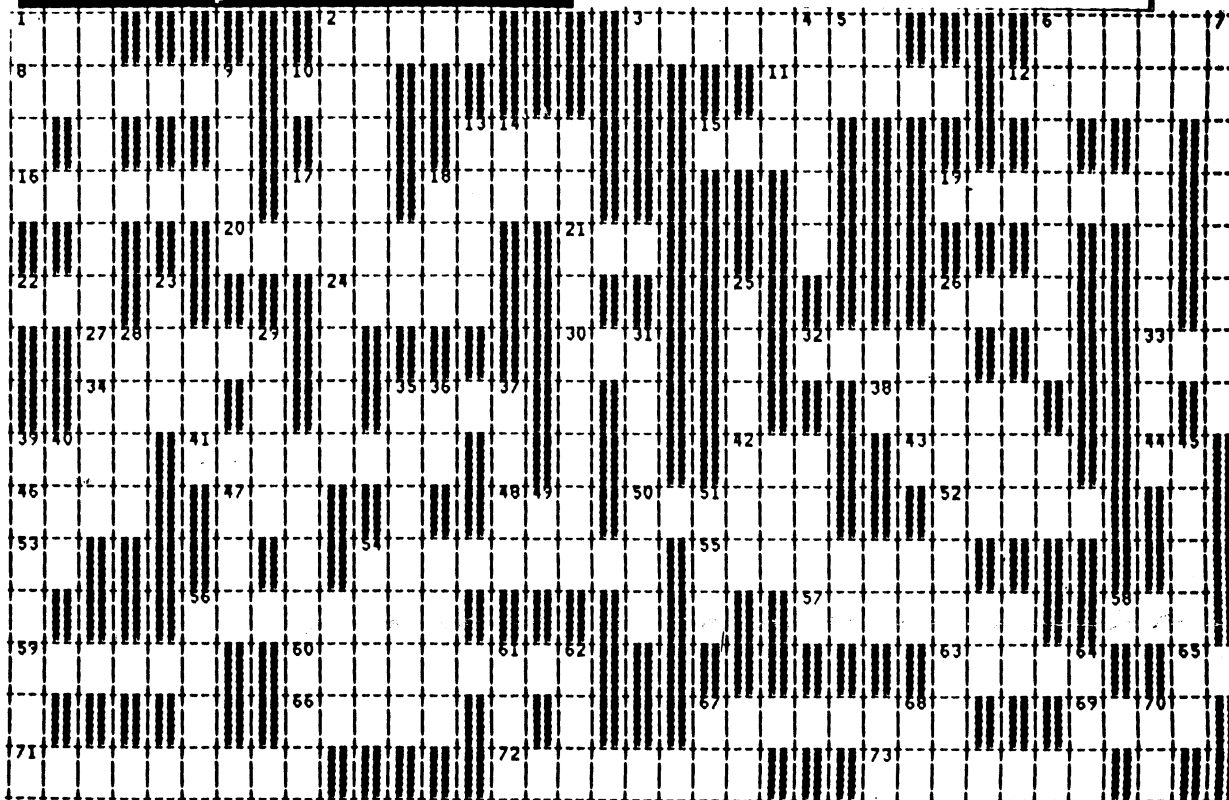
President - David Blagg;
Vice President - Beth Gelger;
Secretary - Carol Burns;
Treasurer - Dick Anthony.

Don't forget that nominations may be made from the floor, so feel free to make one or more December third.

MERRY
CHRISTMAS

The Orphan Peanut

PEANUT CROSSWORD PUZZLE NUMBER 2



+++++++ ACROSS+++++++

1. Big Blue
2. Rodent-like I/O device
3. Data transmission rules (i.e., XModem, YModem)
6. *The ORPHAN* —
8. — Processing Unit
10. DOS: "Contents" of disk
11. DOS: examine disk
12. DATASTORM comm pgm
13. Fixed, or — disk
15. — SYS enables extended
16. Across top of keyboard
17. Abbr. for video display
18. DOS pgm. - remove insect
19. "Virtual" drive or disk
20. Instructional Program
21. A type of color monitor
22. DOS: Rename file (abbr)
24. BBS Operator

26. John —, guru from SF
27. "Abort, Retry, —?"
30. CPS: Cycles — Second
32. Acronym: "plain text"
33. PK-compressed file ext.
34. DOS: duplicate a file
35. Power On Self Test abbr
38. DOS's Line Editor
39. Arrange data
41. Use to move cursor
42. DOS: remove file
43. Use to telecommunicate
44. -/1: the new PCjr?
44. — off: Batch command
47. Executable file extension
48. Abbr. PaulRauConsulting
50. File transfer TO remote
52. Language on Cartridge
53. Carriage Return - Abbr
54. WordStar: Word —

55. Low-level Language
56. DOS: "Clone" a disk
57. LPT1: is the — port
58. Graphical User Interface
59. Little — Junior
60. Those 2 slots hold these
63. Meg. you don't want t
65. Artificial Intelligence-Abb
66. AUTOEXEC - a — file
67. Coming to "Big A" -1996
69. Ohio-based Jr. vendor
71. "Try First" software
72. Move data betw. sites
73. Computer instructions

+++++++ DOWN+++++++

1. Little picture
2. DOS publisher
4. Integrated circuits
6. Sears/IBM Service
7. A:> is one

9. Buerig's file reader
13. Alt-H or Fn1 gets this
14. Switch between devices
23. Hardware error check
25. Microsoft's Op. Sys.
28. Batch cmd: proceed to
29. Software publisher
31. <ENTER>: Carriage —
36. BASIC prompt
37. DOS: display a file
39. Basic storage unit
40. Optical Character Recog
45. COM1: is a — port
49. - 232: Serialconnector
51. Local Area Network
54. Into or out of computer
61. — Matrix printer
62. — Graphics Adapt
64. Read Only Memory
70. Abbr. Word Process.7



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The *Geek* *Peanut*

PS/1-The Last Word

Well, much as I hate to admit it, the demonstration of IBM's PS/1 which APCjrUG member Steve Mark presented at the November meeting impressed me. I don't think I'll get one, but for those who are newcomers to computing and don't want to get involved with all the intricacies of DOS, it certainly has a good deal to offer. If it's half as well built as its predecessor, my beloved PCjr, it'll be worth consideration for neophytes, but for those who need, or just want, the superheated performance of the 80386 or 80486 "screamers", it just won't meet their requirements. As

Steve pointed out, however, those people aren't the market at which the PS/1 was aimed - it's for those who might very well never buy any kind of computer unless it's friendly as it can be. That's how the PS/1 struck me: almost puppyish in its friendliness and desire to please.

John Dvorak, the self-proclaimed pundit and columnist, has proclaimed that the PS/1 won't be a success. He bases this declaration on: (a) his vast knowledge of the personal computer market (personally, I think it's half-vast); (b) some ideas he has on what a "home" computer should be (everything but inexpensive); (c) his undeclared but perfectly obvious aversion to all things with the IBM logo (heck, I don't think he even likes the sky when it's blue because he thinks IBM is trying to take over Heaven). If his "analysis" were any less an expression of his venomous anti-IBM bias, I think he might have written a kinder and gentler review.

It does point up one danger in relying on such reviews and opinions in making your purchases, however, if you don't get a fairly wide sample of opinion. John Dvorak, for

example, doesn't apply his prejudices in all his work - only to products of Big Blue and a few other corporations who have made some kind of mistake and incurred his wrath. Other writers might as well be employed by the companies whose products they review, since they never say anything negative about the product. The point is, watch out when you rely on other people's opinions.

Even mine - I'm strongly pro-PCjr expansion rather than replacement, but you knew that.

Didn't you?

Anyhow, our thanks to Steve, who took time away from an activity he loves to come and demonstrate the PS/1 to an audience he knows will probably not buy one. We appreciate it.



The Atlanta PCjr Users Group's

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is now available to members
for the astonishingly low price of

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Consisting of printed articles and
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The Atlanta PCjr Users Group

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NUMBER	DISK NAME	PRICE

Blank Disks - (5 disks: \$3.00; 10 disks: \$5.00) Quantity _____

APCjrUG Beginners' Kit-(\$10 Members, \$15 NonMembers)

Postage & Handling (\$1.00 for each 5 disks ordered)

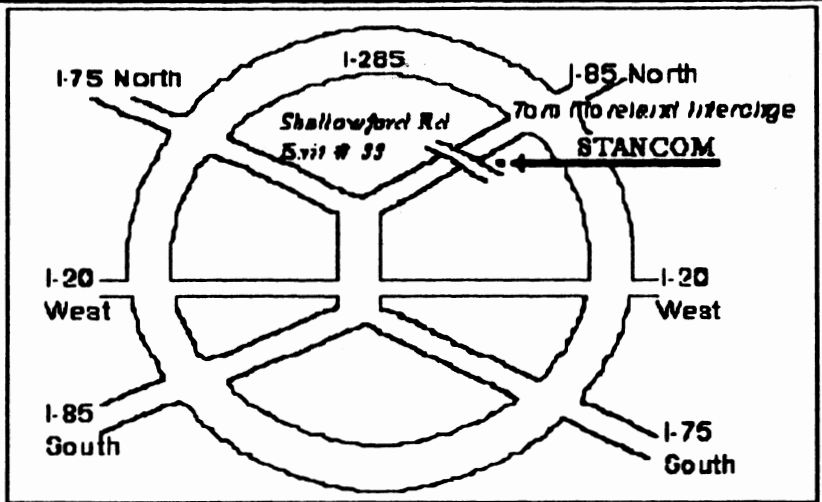
TOTAL 

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Note: Disks will be mailed to the address listed on the label on the reverse side of this form unless another address is specifically requested.

GETTING THERE

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.

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The Chronicle of The Atlanta PCjr Users Group
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Atlanta, GA 30328



Happy Holidays from APCjrUG

