

The Orphan Peanut

The Chronicle of the Atlanta PCjr Users Group

Volume 3, Number 10

Newsstand Price \$1.00

April, 1991



HELP!

by David Wilson

A Brief Compendium of Some Sources of Help For Many of Your PCjr Problems

Okay, you've got this PCjr. You know it's an old, obsolete computer that is slow, sometimes temperamental, and frequently frustrating to operate; and when you try to ask for some help with a problem you may have, you get all the encouragement that Darth Vader gave the Rebels. Often, you think Lord Vader was a kinder, gentler obstacle than you're facing, right?

Well, we won't pretend that the Junior is a glamorous new superstar, but we do think you can still accomplish a lot on the little devil if your needs are not for the hottest new software or hardware "bells and whistles". There's no denying that sometimes you encounter problems that need advice or assistance from others, and finding someone who'll give you their attention - not to mention their help - can be a real trial. This article won't cover all the possible sources of that help, but we do have a few suggestions about what to do to learn about your computer and its needs. Many of these suggestions have been seen in **The PEANUT** in past issues, but there may be a few you've overlooked. Here are a few Yodas:

The ATLANTA PCjr USERS GROUP

The APCjrUG is the only organization around which not only promotes the PCjr, but also has no other function than to support and sustain the Orphan. If you've got a Junior and aren't a member, you ought to join. We offer advice,

assistance, a shoulder to cry on when things aren't going right, and a pat on the back when they are.

The ORPHAN PEANUT- Hey, we realize that if you didn't know about us you wouldn't be reading this dissertation, but we do want to emphasize that we can, and do, solve problems and make suggestions. We try to be responsive to
(Go to Page 5)

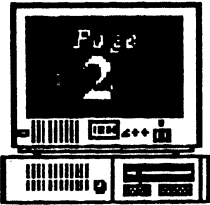
INSIDE THE APRIL, 1991 Orphan Peanut

HELP I	1.
SysOp Corner	3
Setting COMSPEC	4
A>DIR_	9..
Directory Organization	10
Goober Peas	10

To U.S. Forces in the Persian Gulf:

WELL DONE!





INFORMATION, PLEASE

~ OFFICERS ~ 1990 - 1991

President

David Blagg
475-3017

Vice-President:

Beth Geiger
*872-0242

Secretary:

Carol Burns
396-5675

Treasurer:

Dick Anthony
992-1868

Disk Librarian:

Leonard Brown
822-0113

SysOp:

Terry Markert
664-5056

Newsletter Editor:

David Wilson
*255-2731

Landlord

Stan Mislow
636-2179

* *Designates Membership
Committee
Contact Person*

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 (ver. 6.0) and **QEdit** (2.1) text editor, **PFS:First Publisher** (3.0) desktop publishing, and sundry other programs of varying usefulness.

Permission is hereby granted for the abstraction and republication of any and all original articles in this publication, with the dual provisos that the sense of the article not be changed and that proper credit be given the author and *The ORPHAN PEANUT*.



SysOp Corner

By Terry Markert

Well, it's that time of the month again! The BBS is undergoing some minor changes due to the upgrading to version 1.0 of Remote Access. The exciting news is that the software is now registered - yes, I did say REGISTERED. The software has a lot of neat features now that it is paid for.

The menus are changing somewhat. Nothing really major, but there are some new commands in the message and file area menus you may want to check out. The majority of the changes have come in the message area. They are outlined as follows:

- You have the capability to combine your message areas and read them all at once, instead of changing to a different message area each time
- You have the capability to download your messages through a mail door called RAMail. This allows you enter and reply to messages off-line which will save you time, etc. This does require that you use an off-line mail reader such as SLMR (Silly Little Mail Reader), which is available on system as SLMR105.ZIP. This enhancement was added in order to be set up for receiving the Relay Network.
- You have the capability to toggle to either the (P)revious or (N)ext message area instead of changing by area number each time.

The changes to the file area are outlined as follows:

- You have the capability to toggle to either the (P)revious or (N)ext file area instead of changing by area number each time.
- The file request option has changed as well. Instead of going through a request door you will be leaving me an E-Mail message for the file you are requesting. The system will prompt you for the subject, then key in a message containing the file you are requesting from the File

Request Only directory.

- Shows the user his file statistics as part of the menu display.
- File directories listings are sorted each night to ensure that the listing and actual files in the directory are listed. This includes the Recent Upload area. The complete listing is available for download in the Recent Upload area.
- Downloading and Uploading is now done through RAccess instead of using a File door.

This is all that has changed to this point. Other changes have been made but are minor or cosmetic. Both of the areas have a help screen to assist you while you are on-line.

I believe it is time for the membership to encourage the installation of the RelayNet mail conferences. There is a PCjr conference along with some others such as Telex, SemWare (QEdit), plus a multitude of others. The cost of this endeavor is minimal to the group. It would be an excellent addition to the BBS and should strengthen it to become one of the premier BBS'es operated on a PCjr. So let's encourage our officers to make this happen.

I will try to continue to inform every one through this article or through the PCjrWBBS wire service that is now present on the BBS of changes that are being made to the system.

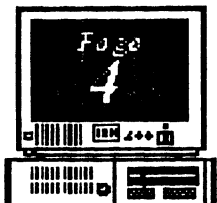
Enjoy !



The PCjr WORKSHOP

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





A HANDY TIP

How to Avoid the *Insert Disk with COMMAND.COM* Message.

by John M. King

In many cases, after you exit a program, the message "Insert disk with COMMAND.COM in drive A: and strike any key when ready" will appear. This is a nuisance, especially on a one disk drive computer, and requires extra disk swapping.

According to the DOS 2.1 manual, page 2-130, it should be possible to have DOS look for COMMAND.COM on a drive other than A:, say a ramdisk, by issuing the following command:

SET COMSPEC=d:\COMMAND.COM

in which d: is a second disk drive or a ramdisk containing a copy of COMMAND.COM.

Unfortunately, there is a bug in DOS 2.10 which prevents this from working.

One solution is to buy DOS 3.x or 4.0, but that's expensive. A second solution is to first issue the above SET command, and then invoke a second command processor with:

COMMAND d:

in which d: is again the drive containing a copy of COMMAND.COM. The DOS manual, page 1-11, offers an explanation of sorts. This is quick, but it wastes 3,264 bytes of memory for the otherwise unneeded second command processor.

A neater solution is to use either DOSPATH.COM or COMSPEC4.COM which waste no memory, and do the same job. The command format is:

DOSPATH d:\COMMAND.COM
or
COMSPEC4 d:\COMMAND.COM

where d is the drive or ramdisk with a copy of COMMAND.COM. This utility, is now in our PCjr Users Group Library. This is not a patch to DOS 2.10 because nothing is changed on your DOS disk.

DOSPATH.COM changes DOS in memory only and must be run each time you boot your machine. Also because this program does not change the

COMSPEC = statement,

it is a good idea to issue the SET command shown above, so that what DOS will do is reflected by SET.

In my AUTOEXEC.BAT file, I set up a ramdisk, copy COMMAND.COM to it, then issue the corresponding DOSPATH and SET commands. Now I go from program to program with no unnecessary disk swaps. One WARNING is needed! If you use either a second command processor or DOSPATH.COM to have DOS look on a ramdisk for COMMAND.COM, be sure that it is there. Otherwise you will receive the message to insert the disk with COMMAND.COM in the ramdisk. That's impossible, so your machine is locked up and must be rebooted.

I hope this is clear enough. I've found it a real convenience when using Lotus and my word processor.





More of HELP !

(from Page 1)

the needs and wishes of our members, so if you have a request, for Heaven's sake, make it!



As a supplement to *The PEANUT*, the APCjrUG also offers its **Beginners Kit**. This is a collection of several of the best articles on PCjr printed out and placed in a folder, together with two - *Count Them!* Two! - floppy disks containing memorable and helpful articles from the past issue of *the PEANUT* and elsewhere. Most, but not all were published in our newsletter, but all are as useful as we know how to make them. They cover the gamut of PCjr questions, from telecommunications to Tandy Mods, and there is an astonishing amount of information, opinion, and advice packed into these disks. [Editor's Note: We're currently revising the contents of the *Beginners' Kit* to include some of the newer lore that has come our way in the last couple of years. It should be ready to distribute around the first of May, so watch for an announcement here and on ...]

The PCjr WORKSHOP is the APCjrUG's very own Electronic Bulletin Board System (BBS). If you have a modem and a membership, you can log onto it for up to an hour a day, with no limits to the number of helpful files you can download (transfer from the BBS to you), including catalogs from several

jr enhancements and peripherals. System Operator (SysOp) Terry (the Guru) Markert and his befuddled assistant Igor the Ineffable will do all they can do to answer your questions and provide a welcoming atmosphere. This is a truly valuable source of information, and we hope it'll be even more so in the near future. Watch for an announcement on this subject soon. We hope.

ORGANIZATIONS

The Atlanta PC Users Group - our "parent" organization, this Group provides a multitude of services, including a Newsletter, LPT1:Atlanta, and a superb Electronic Bulletin Board System, COM1:Atlanta, (call 879-5985) with more than 80 megabytes of programs available for members and supporters. Sorry, but the BBS does not support 300 baud calls - just 1200 baud or faster. The APCUG also maintains a number of Special Interest Groups (SIGs) which explore all kinds of computer activity in meetings separate from the main Group. For information on the APCUG or any of its SIGs, such as the "How-To" or Beginners Groups, call the VoiceMail line at 393-1629 and follow the verbal prompts to get the latest word on when and where.

The On-Line Atlanta Society (OAS) is an organization specializing in Telecommunications which holds monthly meetings and offers a very nice BBS. If you have a communications question aside from those pertaining strictly to the PCjr's unique setup, you can probably get a definitive answer here.

The METRO PCjr Users Group, of the Washington, D.C. area, is the most prominent Users Group in the country. With a membership of more than 230 cultists, the Metro PCjrUG operates a BBS with the latest and best PCjr information (call 301/468-0984), and distributes a Newsletter, the Metro PCjr Journal, that has a well-deserved reputation as the premier User Group publication of them all. They have several members in

(Go to Page 6)



Still More

(From Page 5)

other states, including Georgia, and offer a "Survivors Kit" on disk at a nominal price; they also maintain a "store" with Junior parts and peripherals at a very reasonable price to members of any PCjr Users Group. This is an extraordinarily helpful group of people and we owe them a considerable debt for their kindness in helping us get started. For information on the Metro PCjrUG, call 301/926-4185 between noon and 9:00 PM.

There are several other PCjr Groups around the country with whom we maintain contact. They're located in Eugene, Oregon (home of the genial and hard-working Louie Levy); suburban Chicago (Fox River Valley); New York City; and Central Connecticut (Coventry). If you have an interest in these or other PCjr Groups, contact the Editor and we'll try to establish a contact with them.

PUBLICATIONS

jr Newsletter - The only remaining national publication dedicated to PCjrs and their owners exclusively. Publisher (and APCjrUG member) Tom Crider does a great job of including old as well as new stuff on our Orphans. They also have a Disk Library of Shareware programs which have been thoroughly tested on various PCjrs and which you can get for \$6.00 a disk plus shipping. (Please remember that you are paying only for a "trial disk" and that you are expected to compensate the author for his work if you decide to keep and use the program. We'll also point out that many of these same disks are available through our own Library; for details call Len Brown.) You can subscribe to jr Newsletter by sending \$20.00 for 12 issues to: Jr Newsletter, P.O. Box 163, Southbury, CT 06488. There isn't a better use for your money - except for your APCjrUG dues - that you can make in optimizing your PCjr.



Atlanta Computer Currents - published monthly, this freebie has articles on many aspects of general computing as well as personalities, both local and national, and items of interest to computer nerds in the Atlanta area. Computer Currents is available at the APCjrUG meetings and at many other locations around the metro area.

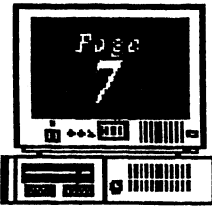
PC Novice Magazine - A "slick paper" publication put out by Peed Corporation. It's written in a style and on a subject level that will help the novice user understand what he or she is trying to accomplish and how to go about doing it. Not much PCjr-specific information, but very helpful at the beginners' level. *PC Novice* has a sister publication for more experienced computer users called *PC*

Today, and if you find that you belong at the other magazine's level rather than that of the one to which you have subscribed, a simple phone call will switch you to the appropriate publication. You can subscribe to either for the annual fee of \$24.00 for twelve issues. Send your check and name and address to: PC Novice, P.O. Box 85380, Lincoln, Nebraska 68501-9815.

Other periodicals, such as *PC Magazine*, *PC World*, *PC Computing*, *Computer Shopper*, etc., are very good in their niche - none of which include the PCjr as a rule.

For the most part, they aren't for beginners or even moderately advanced PCjr owners unless you run major applications such as Lotus 1-2-3, dBase IV, or Windows on your office AT or 386 machine. In that case, you probably should be at least looking them over; if you just run Writing Assistant and New Print Shop on your 512 KB Junior, save your money - these guys won't help. If you're looking for a new printer or other standard peripheral, however, the reviews published in these magazines can be of great assistance in determining

(Go to Next Page)



of HELP!

ust which one suits your needs best. Watch for the "roundup issues" to get a comparison of the major brands.

BOOKS

There are an awful lot of books published about computers and computing, so I won't waste a lot of time reviewing them for you. If you want to know more about the workings of your PCjr, you might try to find copies of the Peter Norton books entitled *Discovering Your PCjr* and *Exploring Your PCjr*. They're extremely hard to come by, but lucid and written in English rather than computerese. You may be able to find them at your local branch Library - I know that the Sandy Springs Branch of the Fulton County Library had both of them for several years and they may still be there.

No subject is more confusing and intimidating to the average non-expert than is DOS. The Disk Operating System designed to run on a PCjr is DOS version 2.1; either MS-DOS or PC-DOS will do, since they are essentially identical. You don't really need a higher-numbered version of DOS unless you get a hard disk, and even then you won't absolutely have to have it - but that's another subject. There is a pair of references that I have personally found invaluable in my struggles with DOS over the years, which I can recommend to anyone who wants clear, readable, and accurate treatment of what seems sometimes to be a deliberately obscure subject. They are both by a writer named Van Wolverton: the first is called **Running MS-DOS** and the more advanced

text is **Supercharging MS-DOS**.

Both have been released in several editions as new versions of DOS have appeared, so be advised that if you get one of the copies including DOS 4.01, for example, you'll probably find a good bit of material that is extraneous to your copy of DOS 2.1. I don't want to say or even imply that the Wolverton books are the only ones of value to a novice, but I will say that I have found them clear and extremely helpful for several years. Check 'em out.

KIND OF MISCELLANEOUS SOURCES

OOWL (no, I don't know why the extra "O" is there) Software of Columbus, Ohio, has a nifty package similar to, but more advanced (and slicker) than our own Beginners' Kit. Called **PCjr POWER** version II, it also consists of printed matter and two floppy disks, and it can be ordered from OOWL Software. The cost is \$19.95 plus \$3.50 shipping; see the accompanying sidebar for the address and 800 number.

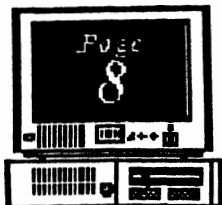
COMPUSERVE, the national BBS, has a PCjr "Forum" which allows interplay between Junior owners from all parts of the country and provides a central location for distribution of PCjr-specific programs, files, and information. As far as I know, none of the other on-line services, including PRODIGY, GENIE, and DELPHI, maintain a specific area or conference reserved for Junior and its uses and problems.

PCjr PRODUCT VENDORS

There are still a number of companies which provide products and services for the PCjr. On page 8 we've included information on how to contact those we know about. We have to point out that inclusion on this list does not constitute a guarantee of any sort except this: to the best of our knowledge, they are all reputable companies which deliver exactly what they promise at the price they advertise. If you know of any exceptions or additions to the list, please let us know by writing or calling the vast



editorial offices of the aforesaid PEANUT.



HARDWARE

And Maybe some Software, too

Clip this list and save it. If you call any of these folks, please tell them where you got their name

Hardware Vendors

COMPUTER RESET 2 (214) 276-8072
ATTN: DEPT-METRO
P.O. Box 261782
GARLAND, TX 75046-1782

CREATIVE FIRMWARE (214) 783-0336
P.O. Box 850064
Richardson, TX 75085

DOLPHIN COMPUTERS 1 (415) 566-4400
309 Judah Street, Suite 214
San Francisco, CA 94122

MENDELSON ELECTRONICS
(PCjr External Power Supplies)
(800) 422-3525
340 E. First Street
Dayton, OH (ZIP not known)

MBC 2 (717) 633-7745
P.O. Box 592
Hunt Valley, MD 21030

OOWL SOFTWARE 1,2 (800) 322-0219
1435 Burnley Square North
Columbus, OH 43229

Paul Rau Consulting (PRC) 1,2
(209) 745-9284 (Voice 9-5 PST)
P.O. Box 682
Gall, CA 95632

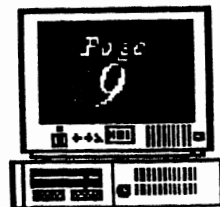
PC DIMENSIONS (507) 288-1396
2700 56th Street, Suite 1-4
Rochester, MN 55901

PC ENTERPRISES 2
(800) 922-7257 (922-PCJR)
P.O. Box 292
Belmar, NJ 07719

SYNECTICS (408) 281-7780
(Keyboards, other peripherals)
P.O. Box 53501
San Jose, CA 95153-7780

Legend

- 1) Catalog on file-PCjr WORKSHOP
- 2) Also perform repairs- call for details first



A>DIR

by David Blagg, President, APCjrUG

Spring is a good time of the year to take inventory of what one has on hand. Among other things, it allows planning for the months ahead so that one's time is used to best advantage.

Some years back our editor, David Wilson, wrote a challenge to the group and asked "Where do we go from here?" That was the beginning of an inventory process which continues to the present day.

I have written here many times that as a group we have many strengths and resources. Very shortly after we got organized we had an official Bulletin Board System, the PCjr Workshop. Sysop Terry Markert has constantly upgraded his PCjr and the supporting software in order to provide one of the better BBS systems in the country dedicated to the support of the PCjr.



Not long after that, David Wilson got started on The Orphan Peanut. David's interest in desktop publishing has allowed our group to enjoy a high quality newsletter. And if you have followed its pages from the very beginning, you will recall the several improvements as David tried different software and

experimented with the format.

And, of course, we have our library, now in Len Brown's good hands. As an offshoot of our library activities we have the New User Kit for those new to the PCjr, and we have good generic disks for sale at the meetings.

I'll also speak a good word for the elected officers, past and present. When we started we had little organization, a ragged set of by-laws, and no particular focus for our meetings other than our common interest in the PCjr. Through a lot of dedicated work, these people have forged a group structure which gets things done, at least the things we need to survive as a user group. If there is any doubt about survival, please be aware that we have programs planned through JUNE!

But where DO we go from here? We can not rely on our past accomplishments to carry us in the future. We need new ideas for our agenda of things to do. And these new ideas must come from our members, for we are far too few in number to try a "hit or miss" approach.

So accept this challenge: please give some thought to our ongoing activities, then come to our next meeting and share your inventory of thoughts with others. Bob Tomassi will be presenting things to do with Print Shop and other programs with graphics, so there will be something for everyone.

It's In The Book--

WHAT DO THEY MEAN BY THAT?

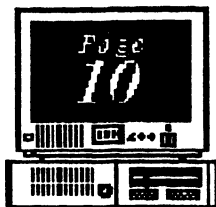
(As defined in Webster's New World Dictionary of Computer Terms)



HELP (Screen): A handy function available on many systems. It supplies the user with additional information on how the system or program works. *Note: the most common means of accessing help screens are through the Fn - 1 or ALT - H key combinations.*

O.E.M. : An abbreviation for **Original Equipment Manufacturer**. A company or organization that purchases computers and peripheral equipment for use as components in products and equipment that they subsequently sell to their customers.

TERMINAL: A keyboard/display or keyboard/printer device used to input programs and data to the computer and to receive output from the computer.



Organizing Your Disk Directories

by David Blagg

One of my early frustrations with personal computers came in the form of directory listings which did not seem to make logical sense. I mean, my files often did not seem to hang together, especially after I put several of them on one disk. Alphabetizing sometimes helped, but if I had renamed a .COM file and not the associated .DOC file, they tended to drift apart. This was most annoying when I was trying to make a custom disk "just so" with additions and deletions. One day I was treated to a new experience. I entered DIR and saw a listing something like this one:

```
Volume in drive A has no label
Directory of A:\
---LOOK -- 0 1-01-80
VIEW COM 2432 5-06-87 1:24a
BROWSE COM 960 2-22-86 4:58p
BROWSE DOC 1656 2-22-86 5:58p
---WRITE -- 0 1-01-80
TED COM 2984 11-15-88
ENVED COM 8584 5-31-87 10:29p
---PRINT -- 0 1-01-80
RESET COM 11 2-13-90 2:08p
FF_LF DOC 618 2-13-90 2:38p
--MEMORY-- 0 1-01-80
FRAM COM 207 5-18-87 8:42p
```

...and so forth through the whole listing. I knew how to create an order of files on a disk, but I did not know how to include the visual separation created by the "zero size" file entries. The procedure I learned is simple. It uses the abbreviated DOS REMARK statement and file redirection. For example, at the A> prompt, typing

```
REM > --STUFF.--
```

will create an entry similar to the ones above. Notice that the input conforms to the DOS requirement for eight characters in the filename, and three in the extension (i.e., filename.ext). If you omit the dashes, the entry will include blanks and will be left aligned in the directory column. If you like this idea, try it. With thought and practice you can become very adept at creating and using these "zero size" entries.

~RANDOM ACCESS~

Thoughts that occur to me as I sit here typing;

To the best of my recollection, *The ORPHAN PEANUT* has never published a review or evaluation of a game or educational software program. The problem is that very few of us who contribute articles and reviews have children who are the right age for these games, and those who do have them don't contribute.

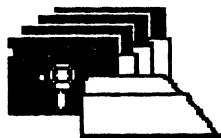
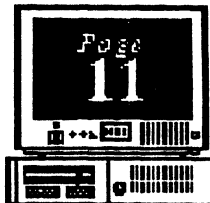
This was brought home to me recently when a friend's 6-year old started to ask for software that would run on a PCjr. Her mother of course asked me for my recommendations and I discovered that I have absolutely no idea of what is satisfactory and what doesn't work. She really wanted programs that are *both* - learning vehicles that are fun to use for a bright child. I couldn't help her.

Now, I'm certain that such programs exist. I can't



believe that educators, programmers and publishers haven't seen the potential that exists in this market. Besides the obvious financial benefits to those in the production and distribution chains, there's the opportunity for kids to learn about computers and computing while they're still young enough not to be intimidated. Like them or not, computers are the wave of the future, and our children need to be capable of using them without fear.

We need parents who are concerned to help us get more involved in this area. If you can contribute something of this nature, please call me. We'll work it out painlessly.



APCjrUG DISK LIBRARY

Please Send your orders to:

Leonard Brown, 2139 Crystal Lake Drive, Lawrenceville, GA 30244

Members cost: \$2.00 a disk (\$5.00 for custom Disk); Nonmembers \$5.00 each (No Custom)

LIBRARIAN'S CHOICE: Disk of the Month

Please Call LEN BROWN at (404) 822-0113 for Library Information

The Atlanta PCjr Users Group

DISK LIBRARY ORDER FORM

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



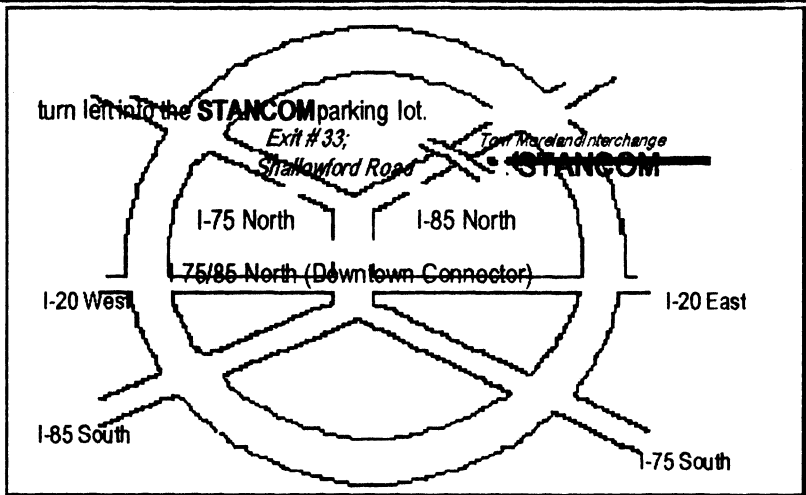
Note: Disks will be mailed to the address listed on the label on the reverse side of this form unless another address is specifically requested.

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

The Orphan Peanut

The Chronicle of The Atlanta PCjr Users Group
6575 Amberglades Lane
Atlanta, GA 30328

