

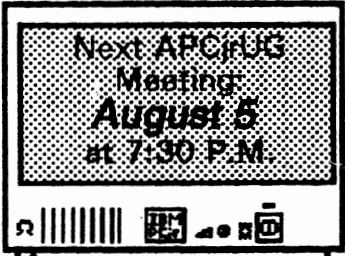
The Orphan Peanut

THE CHRONICLE OF THE ATLANTA PCjr USERS GROUP

Volume 4, Number 1

Price \$1.50

July, 1991



JRCONFIG:

"THE ULTIMATE PCjr UTILITY"

by Carl Haub, Past President, Metro PCjr Users Group, Washington, D.C.

READ THIS!

There will be **NO** July General Meeting of the Atlanta PCjr Users Group. None. At all. The next meeting will be the regular August one - August 5, at 7:30 PM at the vast international headquarters of STANCOM, Inc. If you have a comment or question, call David Blagg, or better yet call the PCjr **WORKSHOP** and leave a message for others to see. We thank you for your support.

Yr Ob't. svt.,
Ye Ed.

Larry Newcomb's JRCONFIG program has become the configuration system of choice for PCjr's with expanded memory, and with good reason. The program can be used on jr's with 256K of

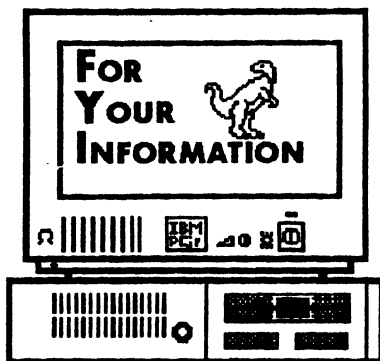
RAM, but really comes into its own with 640K or 736K machines. JRCONFIG is an excellent example of a "better mousetrap" shareware program. This package offers significant improvements on the software included with jr expansion boards such as Tecmar, Microsoft, Racore, or IBM. JRCONFIG's value lies in its quick boot time and the large number of options it will initialize each time you boot your PCjr.

What is JRCONFIG and why do you need it? To begin with, one of the more important differences between the PCjr and the "big" PC is that, on the PCjr, expanded memory and added disk drives cannot be recognized via hardware switches on the motherboard - because there aren't any. That is, one cannot

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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 (ver. 6.0) and QEdit (2.1) text editor, Power Up! Software's *EXPRESS PUBLISHER* 2.0 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**.

~ OFFICERS, 1990-1991 ~

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Disk Library News



Beginning with this month's *PEANUT* we're going to try to present a capsule summary of several of the disks available from the APCjrUG Disk Library each month. We're not going to attempt a full review of each program - just a line or two of general description, together with the memory and disk drive requirements of each. Many of the programs will also be available as downloads from THE PCjr WORKSHOP, so we'll also try to include the ZIPfile name from THE WORKSHOP whenever possible. If you'd like to be a part of this effort, let us know by calling David Wilson or Beth Geiger at the number listed on page 2 of each *ORPHAN PEANUT*. We'll see if we can figure out what to do next.

Here are a few summaries:

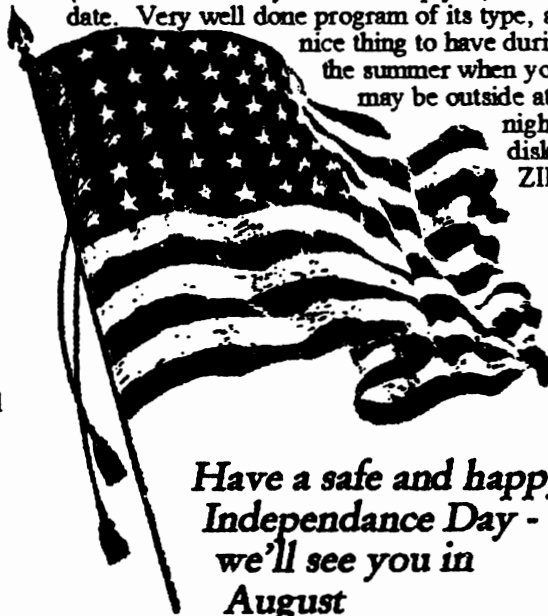
AMY'S FIRST PRIMER; requires 1 disk drive, 128K RAM, BASIC Cartridge. One of the nice things about PCjr is this preschool educational /game program. It was written on and for a PCjr and is an early introduction to reading, writing, and math skills. If you have kids in the 4-6 age bracket, take a look at this. 1 disk.

GALAXY, version ; requires 1 disk drive, 256K memory. A full-featured word processor that operates almost entirely in RAM and thus is much faster than most. Drop-down menus, spelling checker, and other refinements. Worth a look if you need a WPprogram but can't afford Word Perfect. Program fits on one disk.

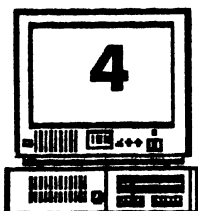
GEORGIA LEGAL FORMS; requires 1 disk drive, 128K memory. A collection of sample legal forms and documents written by APCjrUG member Glen E. Ashman, an attorney and judge in East Point. Includes Living Will, other important documents. Glen cautions that use of these forms is not a substitute for one drawn by an attorney for your personal, specific needs, but this disk provides some valuable assistance in making decisions. 1 disk.

SKYGLOBE, version 2.5; requires 1 disk drive, 128K. A nifty astronomy program that'll show you the night sky from any latitude/longitude (there's an index by cities to help you) and any date. Very well done program of its type, and a nice thing to have during the summer when you may be outside at

night. 1
disk; 2
ZIPfiles



*Have a safe and happy
Independence Day -
we'll see you in
August*



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July, 1991

The Orphan Peanut

New Software!

By David Wilson

As some of the more observant among you may have already surmised, *The ORPHAN PEANUT* is being produced this month (and in the future) using a new desktop publishing program. It's EXPRESS PUBLISHER, from Power Up! Software. This is version 2.0, and it incorporates several features that our old familiar DTP program, First Publisher, from SPC, lacks.

It's faster and easier to lay out pages in the new program. No longer is it necessary to count lines and estimate distances - at least, not as frequently or as much by guesswork as before. The pages are flexible and easy to manipulate as far as placing graphics and special effects are concerned; and the special effects are much more spectacular. Expect to see a lot of fancy stuff in the next few months as I get accustomed to the new ways of doing things and learn what is possible with this program.

Graphics? EXPRESS PUBLISHER will import and handle most of the popular formats, such as PCX, GIF, TIF, First Publisher's ART, and MAC files. This capability makes selecting and using a graphics file much easier and simpler for the once-a-month publisher like me. I'll probably even try using Stan's scanner to capture a picture in one of these formats and see how it reproduces as part of a story. Watch for it.

Maybe the most welcome feature of all, though, is that EXPRESS PUBLISHER doesn't have the iniquitous 5,000 - character per page limit. In the *PEANUT*'s First Publisher format, each full legal-sized sheet (for example, pages 6 and 7 in any issue from the past year) is a page, not the

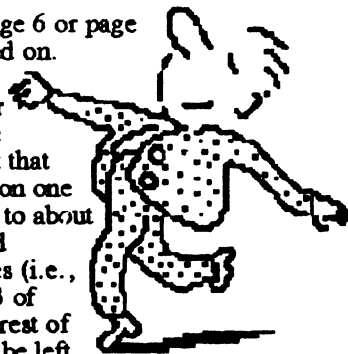
half-sheets (page 6 or page 7) we've settled on.

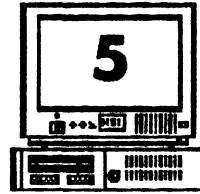
Accordingly, First Publisher has limited the amount of text that can be placed on one of these pages to about one and a third *PEANUT* pages (i.e., page 6 and 1/3 of page 7). The rest of the page must be left blank or filled with a graphic of some kind.

We've gotten around this problem in a variety of ways which I won't go into now, but suffice it to say that they were without exception a pain in the whatever and as time-consuming as all the other operations combined. Now they're gone and I won't miss them.

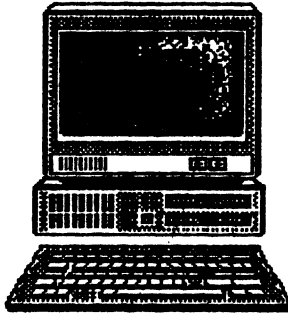
There is also a new capability to manipulate text to provide special effects such as the very simple shadowing effect used in the headline above this column. We hope this ability (when I learn how to use it) will keep *The PEANUT* from being too much of a visual drag. We may not be the best newsletter in the world, but we'll try like crazy not to be the most boring. We'll keep scouring the earth for interesting articles as well, so stick with us.

Those are only a few of the differences. I won't regale you further with this enumeration of features; if you're interested, call me or grab me at the meeting and we'll get into some detail. I'm happy about it, and that's what I wanted to let you know. You may not notice the difference, but you'd better believe I will!





A 3.5" BOOT DRIVE FOR JUNIOR



By Dave Tursan

(Dave Tursan is a stalwart of the Metro Washington, D.C. PCjr Users Group. This article was originally published in their newsletter, The Metro PCjr Journal, Maestro John Dimsdale, Editor.)

When the 5 1/4" drive in your PCjr needs to be replaced, consider installing a 3 1/2" unit. You not only get the benefit of twice the storage capacity, but also you find that many more programs will run on the PCjr. The "trick" to the installation is in the boot up process. But before I get ahead of myself, let me tell you about some recent events at our Metro PCjr Users Group meetings.

The subject at both Virginia and Maryland [Metro PCjrUG] meetings was the options for the installation of a second disk drive. A 3 1/2" unit was demonstrated. One of the questions asked (and discussed for the next 10 minutes) was how one could install a 3

1/2" unit as the A: drive. The consensus was that it could be done but no one

knew for certain how to get it to work. A few days later I "borrowed" a 3 1/2" unit and popped the lid on the junior. It looked like the unit could fit and the connections seemed to be in the right place so I did a trial installation.

The 5 1/4" A: drive in the PCjr is held by four screws to a plastic tray. This tray has the fan attached to it and snaps into two holes located near the rear of the drive. The connections for the power cable and the disk cable are matched. They will only connect one way and you cannot hook them up backwards. So far so good.

The 3 1/2" disk drive comes with a set of face plates in brown or black. You choose the plate and snap it onto the drive and check to see that the drive is terminated to go into an XT unit (an 8088 unit like the PC-XT). The drive slides into the tray and matches to the

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A 3.5" BOOT DRIVE FOR JUNIOR

(Continued from Page 5)

four holes which held the original 5 1/4 unit. In less than fifteen minutes I installed the drive and powered up the PCjr. It came up in BASIC because I did not (yet) have the boot disk.

I needed a friend to help finish the setup. In order to make up a boot disk I had to create a 360K 3 1/2" disk and then copy the files from my 5 1/4 disk

***'With the 720 K as your A:drive
a whole world opens up to you.'***

onto the 3 1/2" disk. I used a friend's computer to create the disk using DOS 3.3 and this command: *Format a:/s /4*. The /s option installed the system files needed to boot the PCjr and the /4 option made the disk a 360K disk. Then I copied all of my files except for Command. Com. Next I copied DRIVER.SYS from DOS 3.3 onto the disk and then added this one statement to the CONFIG.SYS file:

DEVICE=DRIVER.SYS /D:0.

This is where I tricked the PCjr. DRIVER.SYS is a program that tells the computer how to handle additional

devices. The /D option tells DRIVER.SYS that the unit is a 3 1/2" drive with a disk capacity of 720K and the :0 option says that the unit will be the A: drive. *[Editor's Note - We haven't tried this technique, but it would seem feasible as long as the jumper on the new drive is set in the A: drive configuration. Most are set this way when they are sold, so it shouldn't be a problem. More on that at another time.]*

So here is what happens. You install the 3 1/2" disk and use the new boot disk. While the PCjr is booting, the DRIVER.SYS command gets executed and reconfigures the A: drive. It stops being a 360K unit. Instead the A: drive is configured as a 720K unit (/D:0).

With the 720K as your A: drive a whole world opens up to you. One disk programs can now use the same A: drive for storage of working files. Your data-comm program can use the A: drive for both the programs and the downloaded files. Two disk software programs run with no disk swaps.

As you can see, a 3 1/2" bootable drive presents some attractive options and expands the possible uses for your PCjr.



JRCONFIG - "The Ultimate PCjr Utility"

(From Page 1)

install an expansion memory board, set a DIP switch, and be done with it, the way you can on a PC. The PCjr must be told at each bootup that some extra memory is present or that additional disk drives have been added. Lacking hardware switches to do that, software must obviously be called upon to do the job. This unhappy situation is probably due to IBM's very early notion that the PCjr would not be expanded beyond 128K or one disk drive.

Expansion board makers were then saddled with the task of providing software to do a relatively simple task. RACORE provided JRVIDEO.COM, Tecmar CONPCJR.COM, IBM JRMEM.COM, etc. All of those programs worked well, but Larry Newcomb saw many holes in them and set out to produce the "ultimate" PCjr config system. He succeeded.

At boot time, any PC looks for two important files on your boot disk: AUTOEXEC.BAT and CONFIG.SYS. These two files do just what their names imply. AUTOEXEC "automatically" executes a series of commands that the user would normally need to type in by hand: MODE 80, to change the display to 80 columns, a utility such as SETPRINT to give memory resident printer control, or any command normally executed at a DOS prompt (i.e., A >). An AUTOEXEC.BAT file can be used with any command to boot the computer in a particular configuration AND that configuration can be changed at any time at a DOS prompt by just typing in the command. If, for example, your AUTOEXEC boots the machine in 80 column with "MODE 80," but you now want 40 column mode, just type "MODE 40" at a DOS prompt. In short, any command in AUTOEXEC can be overridden manually; all AUTOEXEC did is type it for you.

CONFIG.SYS is a little different and here is where JRCONFIG comes in. CONFIG.SYS sets up system parameters for the computer - memory, number of disk drives, etc. - but only at boot time. Once brought up in a certain way by CONFIG.SYS, the machine stays that way until rebooted. For that reason, you may want to have several boot disks available, each of which brings up PCjr in a different way.

To use JRCONFIG.SYS, do the following. Copy the files on the JRCONFIG disk to a bootable disk, i.e., one formatted as a system disk using the /s command. Then, using DOS EDLIN, or any wordprocessor that produces clean ASCII output, such as PC-Write or Wordstar in "nondocument" mode, write a CONFIG.SYS file to the disk. It will be most helpful to print out the documentation for JRCONFIG first by typing "TYPE JRCONFIG.DOC > PRN." Using DOS EDLIN, type "EDLIN CONFIG.SYS," and begin typing the file. (See pp. 6-1 through 6-44 in the DOS 2.1 manual for details on EDLIN.)

To jump ahead, a typical CONFIG.SYS file for a 640K PCjr with two floppy disk drives will look like this:

```
DEVICE=JRCONFIG.DSK -c -d2 -o -t3 -w78 -v32
DEVICE=ANSI.SYS
DEVICE=RAM.SYS
FILES=20
BUFFERS=20
```

This CONFIG.SYS file tells the system to load a device driver, JRCONFIG in this case, and to execute the options specified. In order, the options are:

-c turn on "keyboard click" (this can also be turned off and on with the Ctrl-Alt-Caps Lock key combination at any time).

-d2 causes DOS to recognize two floppy drives

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JRCONFIG- "The Ultimate PCjr Utility"

(From Page 7)

-g reads the date and time from a battery-backed clock (works with Tecmar jrCaptain, may not work with some expansion boards)

-t3 sets display mode for 80 x 25 color

-w78 sets the spinning ram disk indicator in screen column 78

-v32 reserves 32K of RAM for video memory

The above parameters are generally self-explanatory, except perhaps for the reason for the -w option. JRCONFIG.DSK automatically installs a "ramdisk" of about 91K in low memory. A ramdisk is an electronic disk which, in a sense, fools DOS into thinking that the machine has another floppy drive attached. JRCONFIG assigns this drive a letter one higher than the number of disk drives actually attached. If your machine has two floppies, a: and b:, the ramdisk will be c: If you have a single floppy, it will STILL be c:, however; this allows you to use the single floppy drive as both a: and the "phantom" drive b:, something single floppy owners (and their wrists) are very familiar with.

JRCONFIG creates the ramdisk in the first 128K of memory for a good reason. This process of filling up "low memory" causes your programs to load above 128K where they run noticeably faster! This happy result is due to the fact that your programs no longer must share memory with the PCjr's video. With most programs, this feature is only of practical use on PCjr's with 640K of RAM since filling up the lower 128K, when you only have 256K to begin with leaves little room for anything else. Other expansion software filled low memory to cause a PCjr to run in "compatible mode," but the lower memory was unused. JRCONFIG, sensibly, uses it for a ramdisk. My PCjr runs at 5.5 Mhz in

this configuration, 4.28 without it. The -w option, mentioned above, adds a neat feature: a spinning indicator shows whenever the ramdisk is being accessed by DOS; the "78" simply places it in column 78 in the top right corner of the screen.

The ramdisk created is 91K (in DOS 2.1, 79K with 3.1), but that's only by default. If you want a larger one, the -smn option will change the size at boot. Using "-s360" will set up a 360K ramdisk. The size is only limited by memory. To maximize available memory, you could make it as small as 10K, but that will cause the gained speed advantage to be lost.

The JRCONFIG package contains a number of other goodies, among them a utility to create a resettable ramdisk without reboot. This is the reason for the line "device=ram.sys" in the above CONFIG.SYS file. This installs a "high ramdisk" driver in memory which, in turn, takes the next higher drive letter. On a one or two drive system, it's d:, on a three drive system e:. The size of this drive is set by typing "setram d 250" for a 250K ramdrive d:, for example. To change the size, type "setram d" and then specify a new size. But BEWARE: any files not saved to a ramdisk first will be lost.

The difference between the ramdisks available can be a bit confusing at first. Some users (not the writer, of course!) do not immediately realize that "device=ram.sys" installs a second ramdisk beyond the one initially set up by JRCONFIG. And, "device=ram.sys" can be used more than once to set up even more ramdisks, a capability that can come in handy at times. Experiment with different combinations: you may want to use the -s option to create only a small 10K ramdisk and use the resettable one to fill lower memory.

JRCONFIG contains another version for



A > DIR

by David Blagg, President, APCjrUG

Organization politics can be nasty business. I mean, oftentimes when things happen in an organization it appears to the average observer that "things are as they are supposed to be." But to those in the know, things are not always what they seem to be.

I'll share some heretofore little known secrets with you.

Shortly after I was first elected President of our group, I convened a meeting of all the officers. We gathered at the Wilsons' house since it was centrally located. We discussed at length the needs of our young user group, and our ability as officers to meet those needs. Each of us accepted one challenge or another to get our group moving toward the greatness which was its manifest destiny. In no time we were growing in members, we had an electronic bulletin board dedicated to the PCjr, and we had a nationally recognized newsletter.

My contribution included the arrangement of topics and speakers for our monthly meetings. And this is where the politics becomes evident. On one hand, it was absolutely necessary that we have a topic for each meeting so as to avoid sitting around discussing trivia. Don't you agree? On the other hand, nobody who arranges these things wants to disappoint the members, especially if the arrangements are made month after month. So...I began to ask you all what you wanted to hear about. As luck would have it,

most of the time we have had topics for our meetings. And most of the topics have addressed legitimate concerns of PCjr users. By the way, I

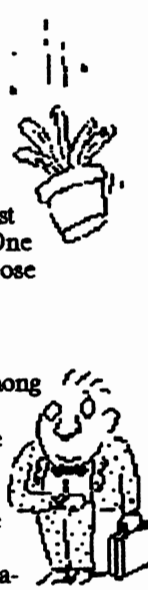


appreciate the suggestions which keep rolling in from time to time.

But now I am awash in confusion. At our June meeting, just before we began our main event, I asked for items of interest for the July meeting. Jeepers. One meeting in advance is about as close as we ever come to not having a topic, and I was getting panicky.

Then it happened. Some one among you who were there raised your voice and suggested that we have NO meeting. The movement caught fire, and before I knew it you voiced your collective desire not to meet in July. In less than thirty seconds my personal dedication to getting a topic became... well...irrelevant.

So have it your way. We won't meet in July. But I already have a topic for August. We'll have to have a meeting, but I think you will enjoy it. That's politics.





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JRCONFIG: "THE ULTIMATE PCJR UTILITY"

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hard disks which insist upon being drive c:, JRCONFIG.NRD (not nerd, the NRD means no ramdisk) will not install the low ramdisk. (It does install the code to operate it, however. The included device driver LOWRD.SYS can be used to access the ramdisk code installed by JRCONFIG.NRD with "device=lowrd.sys.") One good reason to use JRCONFIG.NRD in conjunction with "device=ram.sys" is that the ramdisk installed to fill low memory will also be resettable.

Some other JRCONFIG options: (a condensed version of the program docs; "n" indicates a user-specified value)

- an* or -*bn* moves the screen position *n* spaces left or right
- fnm* changes screen color where *nnn* is 0 to 255. The included program COLOR.COM shows the three digit code
- e* changes directory entries allowed on ramdisk from the default of 16 to 32, 64, or 128
- f* helps some communications programs find COM2 correctly with an external modem
- +* sets Caps-Lock (keyboard lights NOT turned on)
- +* accesses RAM above 640K (for 736K equipped PCjr's)
- m* turns off internal speaker (programs may turn it back on)
- nnn* sets amount of memory reserved for the video RAM. This important option can determine if certain graphic programs will run. Programs which use "two-page" memory, such as Reflex, will need a full 32K. This is analogous to the -p2 option used with Tecmar's CONPCJR program. If you do not use graphics at all, you could use use -v4 to maximize available RAM.
- +* quiets 3.5" disk drives
- +* installs the jrSynchro cartridge

The current version of JRCONFIG includes even more bonuses. STATLIN.COM, a public domain utility, will place a "status line" at the bottom of the screen in line 26 (by shrinking the other 25 slightly) and show the status of Caps, Num, and Scroll Lock, date and time, and spinning ramdisk indicators. It will also install a

screen blanker with selectable delay to save the life of your screen phosphors.

Finally, the package includes the utility COMSPEC.COM which enables you to redirect DOS to look on a ram disk for COMMAND.COM. Why would you want to do this? If you often get the annoying message "Insert COMMAND.COM disk in drive a:," you'll know why. When exiting a program, DOS often looks to the disk drive for COMMAND.COM and, if unfound, forces you to swap disks. By telling DOS to look for it on a ram disk, you will rarely have that annoyance again. The following lines in your AUTOEXEC.BAT will do the trick:

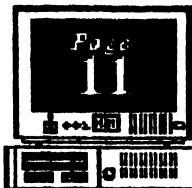
```
SIT COMSPEC=C:\COMMAND.COM  
COMSPEC C:\COMMAND.COM  
COPY COMMAND.COM C:
```

This assumes your ram disk is c:, if not, use the appropriate letter. As long as COMSPEC.COM is on your boot disk, you're all set.

One difficulty with this arrangement, however, can arise with programs that contain a "DOS shell" which allow one to "jump" to DOS temporarily. GALAXY wordprocessor, for example, cannot find the redirected COMMAND.COM and that feature of the program is lost. Here, again, you may wish to have several boot disks, one which redirects COMMAND.COM and one that does not.

It must be clear from all of the above that JRCONFIG is the "complete" config program for the PCjr. And that it is. If you use it - and it would be difficult to imagine any PCjr owner with expanded memory who wouldn't - be a good egg and send Larry the requested \$10 shareware donation. Who knows what marvels he may be thinking of next?

This is the ultimate utility for PCjrs



APCjrUG
DISK LIBRARY

Please send your orders to:

[LIBRARIAN LEN BROWN HAS MOVED - WE'LL LET YOU KNOW WHERE ASAP]

LIBRARIAN'S CHOICE: Disk of the Month

Please see the article on Page 3

THE ATLANTA PCJR USERS GROUP DISK ORDER FORM

Number	Disk Name	Price

Blank Disks (6 disks for \$3.00 or 10 for \$5.00) QUANTITY _____

APCJRUG BEGINNERS KIT (Members \$10; NonMembers \$5)

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

Total

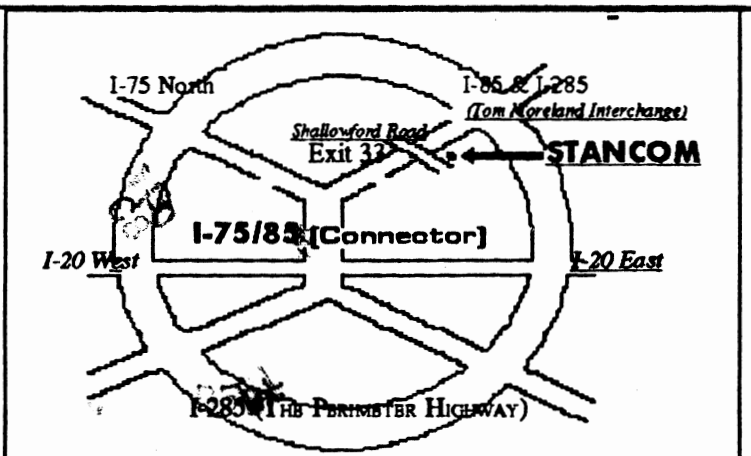
Note: Disks will be mailed to the address in the label affixed to the reverse of this form unless another address is specifically requested.

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

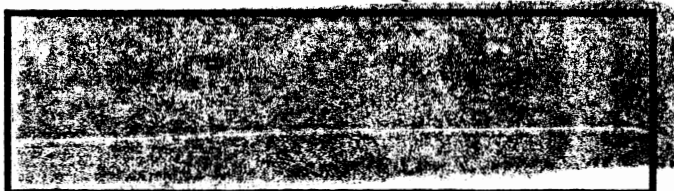
the overpass you will see a building on the left with **STANCOM** in large letters on the front of it.

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.



The Orphan Peanut

The Chronicle Of The Atlanta PCjr Users Group
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HAPPY BIRTHDAY, USA!

