

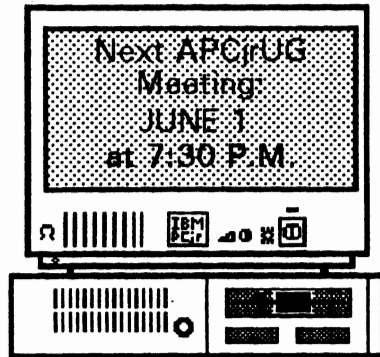
# The Orphan Peanut

THE CHRONICLE OF THE ATLANTA PCIR USERS GROUP

Volume 4, Number

Price \$1.50

June, 1992



## A LITTLE HELP FOR OUR FRIENDS

by David Wilson

The day we had the 'civil unrest' in Big A, I was called by Blucher Cooper, the President of The Atlanta PC Users group (and one of the world's great con artists). Blucher told me he had been contacted by a lady who works for the DeKalb County Library as a coordinator for Story Hour, a service to some underprivileged kids. It seemed that they had been given an old PC and were looking for some help in upgrading it so it would provide an educational tool for the children.

And what, you ask,  
is in the  
JUNE, 1992

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PEANUT?**

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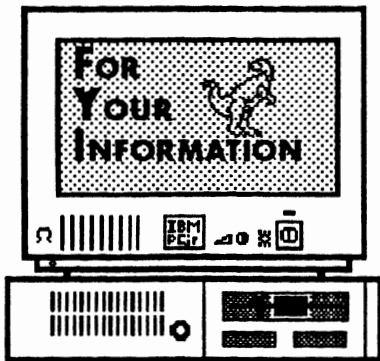


"Great, Blucher", I said without thinking. "That sounds like a truly worthwhile project. Let me know how it turns out." Fool that I am - I know better and I *still* said it. He hypnotizes me.

Now, I haven't known Blucher for a long time - just a couple of years - but I have noticed a few things about him, and I should have been on my guard. Blucher never, *never*, *NEVER* just tells you about something like this; you always wind up the conversation by saying something like. "Sure, glad to help out. Thanks for giving me the opportunity to do something I had absolutely no intention of doing when we started this conversation. Would it be okay if I donated my firstborn, too?" That's what's made him a great APCUG President. And so it went this time. Before I knew what happened, I was committed (and maybe I should have been, too).

Sure enough, at five o'clock that afternoon I was on the downtown connector in Blucher's car, heading straight through what the radio was confidently predicting would be a full-scale riot any minute now, going to a church on Moreland Avenue, to meet someone I never heard of a few hours ago and do something

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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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\* Designates Membership Committee





## A LITTLE HELP FOR OUR FRIENDS

(From Page 1)

I still didn't comprehend my part in.

"Blucher," I quavered from the floor of his car where I had taken refuge, "would you tell me again what we're doing? And then explain why *I'm* doing it?"



"That may be", he said remorselessly, "but you're the only one I could get, and you're here with me, and I don't think you want to get out right now. See those twenty-five radio and TV station helicopters overhead? Film at eleven."

"Well, if you'll stop trying to dig up my floor mat to hide under, I'll tell you. You'll also have to cut the volume on your whimpering, too. Between your lily-livered moaning and the sirens outside, I can hardly hear myself think, and this traffic jam requires a little concentration" he replied as he cut between two semis and deftly squeezed into a space three lanes over that I wouldn't have thought a cockroach could manage to fit in. Ignoring my color changes, he continued, "We're going to install some new equipment and set up some software for the CCC Homeless Women and Children's Shelter. They've got a new computer -well, actually, it's an old one, but it's new to them - and they just need some advice and hands-on help to put the finishing touches on. It won't take a bit of time to complete and then we'll be on our way. You're here because of your experience with PCjrs. If you can make one of them work, it should be a piece of cake to get this one up and running like a top."

"Blucher! A PCjr is a far more advanced, uh, somewhat different computer from a original PC", I yowled from under the front seat. "I don't know anything at all about PCs! Hundreds, nay, thousands of people will tell you I know from nothing about a PCjr, either! You don't want me; you want Bob McDearnid or Mark Strelecki or Bob Nye or Tim Farley (gurus all), but not me!"

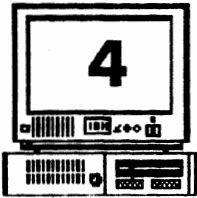
Hey, I'm no idiot. After he refused to turn around (well, okay, I know you aren't supposed to do that on the Connector, but I was desperate), I settled down to cringe on the floorboard and closed my eyes until we arrived at the Moreland Avenue location.

Well, I want to tell you folks something. I met some of the nicest people that afternoon that you could ever hope to meet. Several of them are young people of great promise who just haven't got an adequate channel through which they can realize their potential. Although the people who run the shelter provide a surprising amount of the basics on a very limited budget, most of their time and effort are of necessity channeled toward simple survival and trying to make their budget stretch to provide subsistence for the maximum number of those in need; they just don't have the assets to provide the nice classroom and computers these kids need. The kids, of course, don't complain. (It's been my experience that kids don't. They simply make the best of what they've got, but there's really very little they can do, given the number of potential users and the equipment available.)

Here's their setup. At the moment, there are two computers, a Commodore 64 and the aforementioned PC in a storeroom with one wall outlet and a bunch of other



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## A LITTLE HELP FOR OUR FRIENDS



(From Page 3)

stuff. There's a Star dot-matrix printer, but since there isn't a parallel port on the computer, there's no way to hook it up. (The single serial port is taken up with mouse, joystick, etc., so that isn't really available either.) The PC has five expansion slots, but these are filled with memory expansion, I/O, and graphics cards. Software is minimal. They could use most kinds of educational software, anywhere from grades K through 12. The Commodore is working, although someone spilled a soft drink into it and the color display is now monochrome. Weird. They need software, preferably games of all kinds, for that one, too.

The kind lady who has sort of initiated the project, Betsy Doty, has spent her own money and huge blocks of her "free" time working to expand the computer capability, but she's not an expert on computers and it's pretty tough sledding for her. She could use some help, if you've got time, talent, or old equipment you can donate.



As we left after several hours (Blucher having churlishly refused to let me ride in the trunk), I realized that I had enjoyed myself greatly. I can remember the refugee camps we set up and administered in Vietnam, and although there are a lot of differences, many aspects are the same. There are still people who need help, and many of them have done nothing to deserve their current situation except be in the wrong place at the wrong time. I was glad to have helped, and I told Blucher so.

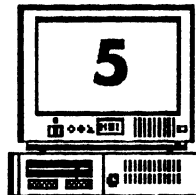
"Ha!" he snorted. Well, actually it was something else, but I'm not supposed to put that sort of stuff here. "All you did was swill lemonade

and play games with the kids while I worked and sweated over that !@#% ^&\*() PC. I'll never ask you to do anything again!" I told you, I'm no idiot.

*(Since this article was written, Peachtree Presbyterian Church and the Atlanta PCjr Users Group have collaborated to donate a PCjr with BASIC, some game and educational software, and some books on computing, PCjrs, and basic BASIC programming. They can, of course, use more. There's another shelter in the area around Emory that needs the same kind of support, so see if you can come up with some meaningful additions - an old but serviceable printer, for example, or a working PCjr Joystick or perhaps a bus-type mouse.*

*There are many other similar organizations and services in the Metro Atlanta area - one of them probably close to where you live, work, or got to church. You know you don't need that old PC, XT, Commodore, or Atari, but it could surely do some good when it gets in the hands of someone as hungry for it as many of these displaced families are. You can get a tax break in some cases, but the major benefit is that it makes you feel that that old friend you learned to run a spreadsheet or database on is still doing some good.*

*There's no doubt that the computer is one of the bases for the future of this country, and these people could use a shot at being part of the future solutions instead of the problems our luckier kids will have to solve. When you upgrade your computer, think about passing your old one along to someone who'll benefit by it as much as you did.)*



## The '92 PCE CATALOG: The Empire Strikes Back!

by David Wilson

Just when I think it's safe to say that there really isn't much more you can do with a PCjr, the folks at PC Enterprises do it to me again. I just got their new catalog (Spring/Summer, '92), and it is a dandy! Not only is the catalog filled with the devices and goodies they've always offered, they've developed a whole slew of advanced stuff for the PCjr this year, and the array is really impressive. As the guy in the commercial says, though, "But wait! There's More!" In recent years, the PCE Catalog has had some of the best explanations of PCjr construction and requirements that I've ever seen, and this issue is the best yet. It's 112 (yes, one hundred twelve!) pages filled with intriguing products, some sales pitches and discussions of why you should keep your Junior, and non-technical discussions of technical subjects. These last discussions are in themselves reason enough to get the catalog if you, like I, are frequently confused by the use and misuse of computer terminology when we try to get some answers.



I'm not a salesman for PCE, and I don't get anything for a favorable report here, but I have to tell you that this is An Important Document if you have a PCjr and think you want it to do more than it does now. Read on.

There is a multitude of newly developed hardware that uses the Small Computer System Interface (SCSI, pronounced "scuzzy") technology to provide the connecting point for users. SCSI is the hottest and most versatile interface technology currently on the market, and it permits the computer to use the same controller to

run all kinds of Input/Output devices without any modifications or additional controllers. "Such as what?", you say? I'm glad you asked that question. I'll elucidate a little:

- (1) Floppy Disks and Hard Disks - pretty much any size you want
- (2) CD-ROM Drives - Yes! And since the speed with which you can search for and display data on a CD-ROM drive is a function of the drive and not the computer, it runs just about as fast on a PCjr as it does on a 486/33. (Screen writes are slower, of course.)



- (3) Removable Cartridge Hard Drive Systems - A complete hard drive you can simply plug in and use in any machine equipped with a compatible system. The ultimate security system for your data: you just remove the entire hard drive and take it with you!
- (4) Internal and External Tape Backup Systems. The external system just plugs into ANY parallel Port, so you can use it on any system you have - laptops included - if you have a printer port and cable.
- (5) A "Floptical" Drive System - this is technology I don't know much about, but the promise is exciting. It is a 3.5" drive that will read either 720K or the High-Density 1.44 megabyte disks such as you use on your 386... but it does more: it'll read and write to a 21 MEGabyte floppy disk (a special one, naturally!). The possibilities are mind-boggling.

Keep in mind here that these are all SCSI devices. What that means to you is that you could run one of EACH of the products listed

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## PCE CATALOG: The Empire Strikes Back

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above on your PCjr using the same controller! When you consider that the Junior's original equipment includes a controller that allowed access to a roaring one (1) floppy drive and no more, you can begin to appreciate this new stuff. There's a picture on

Page 109 of the catalog showing a Junior with six cabinets stacked on top of each other. It's weird-looking, but the things it can do rival many workstations in major businesses.

There's an awful lot of stuff in the catalog that isn't "scuzzy" and isn't new. You can get the standard cables, memory expansions, conventional floppy drives, and so on, but I guess the most intriguing non-SCSI gadget I came across is one which isn't yet available - the "Underground Parking Garage" for your sidecars. This is a neat widget that looks very much like a standard PCjr cabinet and fits tidily under your CPU. What it does is severalfold: it holds up to eight standard one-level PCjr sidecars or six sidecars and a huge power supply plus four PCjr Cartridges, and it also can house a power distributor and surge protector. This can end some of that "urban sprawl" that you get when you add memory, mouse, printer port, DisplayMaster VGA, and other expansion modules that come in sidecars and tend to take over the desk surface one inch at a time. You can also add IBM Power Supply Sidecars if you elect not to purchase a big power supply. This intriguing doodad is not yet available, but has reached the final stages of development and should be on the market soon. I can't wait.

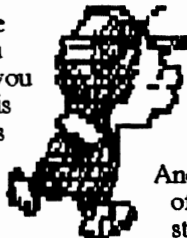
Another neat item is the PCE Compatibility

Cartridge. It's hoped this will eliminate most, if not all, problems the PCjr encounters when trying to certain software that was written for Tandy machines and some IBM PC/XT/AT programs (such as DOS 5.0) that were either severely restricted or just wouldn't run on a Junior in the past. I can't tell you how it works yet, but I will another time - I'm supposed to have one in the pipeline as I type.

An item that many Junior owners will covet is the Game-Master or Game-Master Plus sidecar. This'll let you play some of those games you've been wishing you could get for your own use, and a number of other things as well. It's compatible with SoundBlaster and AdLib (now defunct, but still a lot of stuff out there) sound effects, and the CGA graphics have been somehow upgraded - it's still CGA, but sharper and clearer than before.

Guess what? You can now add an optical scanner to your PCjr. It was previously not feasible because they all come with an expansion card, and you know about Junior's lack of expansion slots, don't you?

There are tons of other things in the catalog: you can create a network including a PCjr or Juniors with other computers, get IBM's "Writing to Read" educational software, and buy books and software that have all but disappeared from other sources. It's a fun thing to just kinda browse through it and see what you could do, given time, inclination, and funds.



And that brings us to the point where some of the fun goes out of things - when we start talking money. I haven't given any



# PCE Catalog: The Empire Strikes Back

prices in the discussion above, because, as I said, I don't work for or receive any compensation from PC Enterprises. You'll have to get a copy of the catalog and peruse it yourself for ideas on how much it'll cost you to add that ram or widget to your old, slow, obsolete machine. It can be a shock to consider the cost of adding some things to your Junior, because you've seen how much (or how little, really) a new computer will cost. I can't tell you what to do, but I will say that you should first consider what you have a computer for and what you want to do with the upgrade or new machine. It may be that an augmented Junior is all you need or want, and in that case you might want to add some of these things. Keep in mind that many of the "deals" being offered aren't so great - that "XT Clone" being offered for \$499 is only a little faster and won't do a single thing that your PCjr won't (with the sole exception of DMA operations); it has the same Central Processing Unit, or "brain" as your li'l guy does, the Intel 8088 or 8086. Video? You usually have to buy a VGA monitor to go with the cheapo card they've installed, so if video is what you want, get yourself a DisplayMaster from PCE and add that same monitor. You'll save around \$300, which you can then apply to a Game-Master and have SoundBlaster audio as well. Just think it over before you do anything.

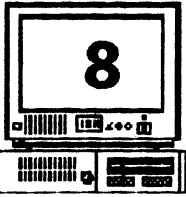
PC Enterprises has always had a couple of "knocks" put on it by its critics (me included): their prices are high and their enhancements are frequently not compatible with other manufacturers' stuff. Correct on both counts, but there are reasons for each that may be pertinent. First of all, PCE does all its own research and



development, so all the costs are borne by them. That increases prices, as do their 800 telephone order number and their technical help staff. Compatibility is very desirable from their point of view as well as yours, because they would like to sell their products to all Junior owners, not just their previous customers. With the acquisition of the Racore line as well as their own, they can now assure a greater degree of compatibility between those two products lines, so many of your problem areas will disappear in time. Some compatibility problems will always exist, to be sure, but they will be fewer in the future.

Finally, let me mention a couple of things that are of great interest to me. PCE has received permission from Larry Niven, the author of "the ultimate PCjr Utility", the JRCONFIG memory management program, to upgrade and modify his work - and they've done so. If you don't have JRCONFIG, get it. For PCjrs with 256K or more of memory, it's just what the doctor ordered, and if you have a PCE SCSI drive, it's essential. This dandy little program solves a host of PCjr problems that you know about, and a bunch more that you don't. You can order it on the PCE Utilities disk - just ask the operator when you call to place an order or request a catalog.

The other thing I wanted to mention is that in a "Letter from P. Joseph Calabria" (the founder and CEO of PC Enterprises) at the beginning of the catalog, there's this line: "Would you like to



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add a 286 or 386SX for less than \$200?  
How about a 486? Soon your wishes may become reality." Elsewhere in the document, he says that the 386 will be available later (this year?). THAT'S why I get excited about this stuff. It just keeps on keepin' on.

## No Fooling



How would you like your very own PC Enterprises Spring/Summer 1992 Catalog, just like the one described in the pages of the legendary ORPHAN PEANUT? You can get one just by being one of the first twenty members to attend the next meeting of the Atlanta PCjr Users group on June 1, 1992, at STANCOM. Come on over, attend the meeting, and browse through the most incredible collection of PCjr stuuf you ever saw! Hey, would I mislead you?

## HAIL AND FAREWELL

(This column continues an article started on Page 1). If you want to make any sense of it, go there and start from the beginning.)

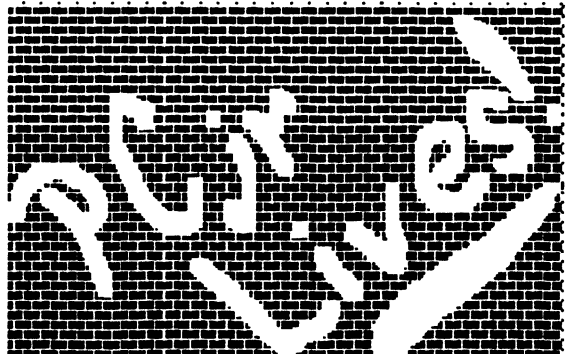
gotten together, even for this brief time, and I would have missed one of the more rewarding and challenging experiences of my life.

I initiated this editorial column several years ago by a quotation from an old Civil War song my Confederate soldier great-grandfathers knew well called "Goober Peas", which extolled the magical qualities of the Peanut for the Georgia Militia of that time. Let me close it out now with the last verse of the song:



*"We think this song has lasted almost long enough;  
The subject is most interestin', but rhymes are mighty rough.  
When this war is over, free from rags and fleas,  
We'll kiss our wives and sweethearts...  
And then we'll gobble goober peas"*

I think the time has come for me to kiss my wife and head on over to the the peanut bowl for a little gobbling. Keep the faith, y'all.







# HAIL AND FAREWELL

by David Wilson

Way back at the November meeting, I announced that the June, 1992, issue of The ORPHAN PEANUT would be my last as Editor.

Well, the time is here and this is it. After I get this one in the mail to you, I'm outta here.

Every one of the last forty-eight months I've connived, cajoled, whined, laughed, cussed, and sweated to get my baby out to the diminishing PCjr population, and I'm 'plumb wo' out'. I'm not mad or in any kind of a 'snit'

about it - I'm just going stale and there are some other activities I'd like to pursue for a while.



This doesn't mean that I'm abandoning the Atlanta PCjr Users Group. Far from it - one of the projects I'd like to get into more deeply is the reorganization and reissue of the APCjrUG's

Beginners Kit; another is the continuing effort to get unwanted Juniors into the hands of people who desperately want them and who can benefit by exposure to them. I just won't be your Editor/Publisher/

Printer/Circulation Manager/Reporter/Office Boy any more. I intend to contribute to *The PEANUT* (if there is one) regularly, but I just don't want the responsibility for it any more. And, no, I have no intention of being drafted into another office, either elected or appointed, for some time. This Group needs new insights and new directions if it is to survive as an independent organization, and if it isn't - well, I just don't have the heart to assist in its breakup; I've put too much of myself into making it whatever it is today.

A lot of thoughts run through my mind as I peck out my last Editor's column. Mostly, they're positive ones, but there are some negatives as well. For instance, I think that you, the members of the Atlanta PCjr Users Group, need to do some thinking. Our numbers are slowly declining as members, for whatever their reason, fail to renew their membership. Despite our efforts to attract and hold families as well as individuals, we have virtually no participation by young PCjr users, and zilch for family activities.

Nobody (with a very few notable exceptions) wants to hold office or to participate in Group activities, and that will be the death of this Group

if it continues to be the case. Traffic on the BBS is practically nonexistent, and what little there is comes from non-members dropping by to have a look around. If things don't pick up there, and soon, I think Terry may well close it down.

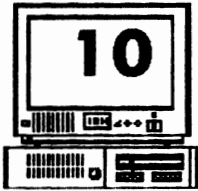
Well, nobody and nothing that lives is immortal (again with a couple of fairly notable exceptions), so maybe the time is upon us for letting go. Is that what you want? If so, let your Officers know; if not, you'd better get cracking. As a guy named Omar Khayyam observed several centuries ago, "The bird of Time flies swiftly, and the bird is on the wing." (Of course, he wasn't talking about the APCjrUG, but we have to introduce a little culture now and then.)

Positive thoughts? Oh, yeah, you bet, I've got a bunch of 'em. Here are a few:

- (1) It's been a real education to have been as-

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## HAIL AND FAREWELL

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sociated with an organization dedicated to the PCjr. I mean that in the nicest possible way. I've learned a great deal about an interesting subject because I've been forced to do so in order to be the Editor of this newsletter. Anytime you learn something from an experience, that experience can't be all bad, and this was almost 100% good.

(2) I've learned a real appreciation for those who get out publications on a regular basis. It's an art as well as a science, and well worthy of respect for their technical ability and imagination, whether you like the content of their product or not.

(3) People. Oh, boy, have I met some of the nicest people in the world! Folks like Louie Levy of the Eugene, Oregon PCjr Club, who is my buddy as well as a colleague and correspondent; John M. King, the San Francisco Treat, a very busy, talented and articulate man as well as an extremely nice one and a good friend; John Dimsdale and Carl Haug of the Washington, D.C. area - guys who advised, encouraged, and sympathized with me at the very beginning of it all and stayed with us throughout; and Tom Crider of the wonderful Jr Newsletter, a member of APCjrUg for several years and the source of an awful lot of The PEANUT's material. There are many others - people from 35 different states and three foreign countries who wrote or called during the last four years, and who were uniformly delightful, even if we didn't establish a long-term relationship.



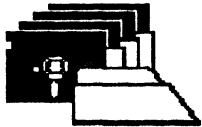
I won't try to list all the local folks who've enriched my term as Editor. A couple have to be especially thanked, though, for their special contributions toward making this a (mostly) happy time: Terry Markert, who got me into this and who has put in an awful lot of time, effort, and money to make The PCjr WORKSHOP the best li'l PCjr BBS in the world, bar none; David Blagg, our Noble Leader for the last couple of years who has put up with an awful lot from me - and from his own circumstances - and kept on ticking; and Wesley Mercer, a relative newcomer who has been willing to jump in and help, and who is being rewarded by having *The PEANUT* dropped in his lap (don't worry, Wes - I'll be around to help when you need it). Stan Mislow, our Jovial Landlord, who asks nothing of us other than that we not trash his business when we meet there each month, has provided me with great inspiration in learning about new software. Don Fourman, Dan Lambert, Stan Keahey, and a couple of my favorite ladies, Carol Burns and Beth Geiger - the list just goes on and on. It's been a lot of fun working (sometimes) and laughing (every time) with all of you. There are many others, of course, but we just don't have the space to acknowledge them as they deserve. I'll just ask that they accept my apologies for leaving them out as well as my assurances that I didn't forget them.



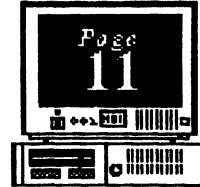
(4) Finally, my thanks to the IBM PCjr. Without the li'l Orphan, we would never have

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*The Orphan Peanut*



*APCjrUG*



**LIBRARIAN'S CHOICE: Disk of the Month**

**APCJRUG DISK LIBRARY ORDER FORM**

QUANTITY	Disk Name	Price

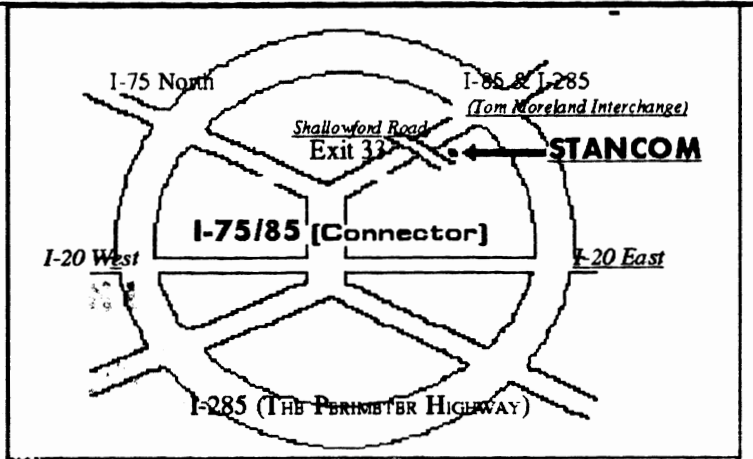
Beginners Kit @ \$10/Members; \$15 Nonmembers  
(Sorry, the Beginners Kit is not presently available)

Please send requests and orders to:  
**Mr. Leonard D. Brown**  
Disk Librarian, APCjrUG  
537 Lone Oak Drive  
Lithonia, GA 30058




# GETTING THERE

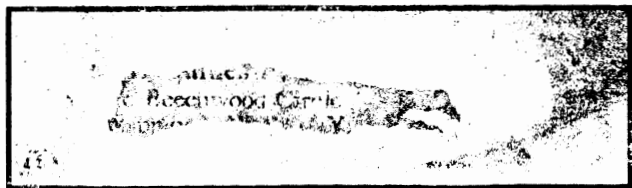
If you're outside the Perimeter (I-285): Just follow I-285 around Atlanta until you reach the *Tom Moreland Interchange (I-285 and I-85 North)*. Go South on I-85 toward Atlanta until you reach *Exit 33, Shallowford Road*. Exit onto Shallowford Road and turn left to cross over I-85. Immediately past the 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, # 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  
6575 Amberglades Lane  
Atlanta, GA 30328



So long... it's time  
to be on my way