EUGENE PCjr CLUB

NEWSLETTER

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Mike's Message

by Mike Ruiz

Yes, it's the third month of 1998. March is supposed to start like a lion and end like a lamb. With El Nino at our back door, that scenario is certainly possible this year. It has been very wet here in Eugene. It's the kind of weather that keeps people indoors a lot. For many of us that means time can be spent working on our computers. I suspect our Juniors have been busy in the last month, and will be so in March. If not, there is still time to get to work. Spring is just around the corner. Good weather means that Junior may have to take a back seat to outdoor activities.

It's a good time of year to do some work over the telecommunication lines. That is to say, how about using Junior to access information? There are, as most know, millions of possibilities over a huge information network/ highway out there, and we all can access it. Last month we learned a little more about modem use and got a chance to see how E-mail works. Thanks Lynn. At our March meeting Rosie and Louie will give us a peek at some other access possibilities. With a modem hooked up again, Rosie will show us how to access the bank and Louie will show us how to access the library. I'll say it again, working over a phone line to access things like the bank, library and the Internet still amazes me. It amazes me how all those bits of information can come to our homes over a small electrical/phone line. March's meeting sounds exciting to me.

Access brings a subject to mind that I must share. New technologies, especially computer technology, have come a long way since 1984 when Junior was introduced to the world. Things have changed since those first club meetings. Perhaps over the years many of our club members have become more experienced and are now accessing the club for needs differently now than in past years. Perhaps new technologies are so close to us now that accesses, like E-mail, are replacing physical correspondence. We all know that this is happening, big time, in the bigger picture--the world around us. Is it happening to us?

At the next board meeting I will be bringing up an issue that may be of concern to our members. The issue to discuss is physical involvement vs. virtual or remote involvement by our membership. Remote access to computer support and to our club store have increased while interest in our club meetings seems to have decreased. At our next board meeting I will suggest answers to the issue. Ideas such as having club meetings less frequently and creating a catalog of our store's merchandise will be

discussed. Perhaps publishing this newsletter every other month, and making it larger, may be desirable.

These ideas are not intended to be perceived as negative. In fact, I want everyone to keep in mind that *Junior Lives* and our club is still viable. However, setting up meetings can be cumbersome especially when only a handful of members are attending. A new way of approach may be at hand. A way that is in line with new technologies. . .Please write me or E-mail me if you agree or disagree. Otherwise I'll initiate discussion on the subject on these few assumptions.

Another important event needs to take place at our next meeting. Our nomination committee will announce who has been nominated for Vice-President of our club. And, other appointed positions will be announced, if needed. I want to re-affirm the value of our club for its teaching and support to Junior owners. The club remains viable as long as each of us participates in some way. You don't have to be a computer genius to contribute to our success. Every member can add something--even in this new technological world.

See you at the March meeting,

Mike

Banking and Your PCjr--

According to some recent statistics, it costs the average bank $1.00 to $1.25 to process a typical trans-action by a live teller. Using one of the automatic teller machines, the cost drops to only .45 cents. By phone, the costs are even less: .30 cents. By far, the cheapest cost to the bank and to the account holder comes when the transaction is done by computer.

Still, only six to nine percent of households with computers are handling their banking online. Over 41 percent of these households that have computers are using the Internet. Are you included in any of these percentages?

People are resistant to computer banking. We make enough errors as it is without putting our bank accounts at risk. But, as many local banks and credit unions only allow you to transfer funds within your account (from checking to savings or savings to checking), it would be hard to get yourself into too much trouble. Some banks allow paying bills, but in our local area, it is relatively only a few and they are limited to paying utility and credit card bills.

Just how safe is using online banking and just what do you do to get started? Banking from a web site on the Internet is pretty straight-forward, but what about banking with our Juniors? What special things do we need?

Using Junior and Telix or Procomm, your Junior dials the special telephone number your local banking institution has provided you. When the two computers are communicating with each other, your bank will ask you to enter your account number and your "personal identification number." This PIN number normally is not the same number you use with one of your credit cards. This extra safe-guard provides you with some added security.

After the bank's computer checks to see if the two numbers match the ones they have listed for you and your account, you will be able to choose several options. You can check the balances of any savings, loan or checking accounts you may have. You can also see what the present interest rates are at your bank. The value of any CD will be shown. You can usually print out this data, or import it to

your computer in most of the popular spreadsheet formats such as Quicken. You can transfer funds from one account to another or you can check your account's "history." This will allow you to see what checks or deposits have cleared your account.

    While many of us may not want to do all our banking by computer, I do urge you to at least check into using this fast, easy way to let Junior help with your banking. At this month's meeting, Rosie Janz will be showing us just how easy it is to use Junior to access our bank.

Louie Levy

FILE EXPRESS

A REVIEW BY CLYDE DODGE

This program came on a pair of shareware disks I got at a local computer faire. At first I didn't know what I might use *File Express* for. My first use of it was to create a record of my photographs. I had been keeping the film and prints together, but I always had a big hunt whenever I wanted to use one particular shot.

    It was an easy task to set up the various fields to enable me to record the necessary details to define the pictures without having to see them. At first, I was dismayed at the terms used to describe the steps used in setting up the various files. The first problem I ran into was, I didn't know what a "field" was.

    I think this was the first time I ever had to print the documentation in order to know what was happening. The documentation included on the disks was 26 pages long! Well, there was no getting around it, as I did not know how to read the file without printing it. However, the documentation included tutorials, so I learned a lot before I started typing.

    First, I found that a field is a main division of data. If I want a list of names and addresses and telephone numbers, those are three fields. If I add birth dates, that is a fourth field. Well, it looks as though this data base business isn't going to be all that hard to understand.

    Next, I learned that once the data is entered into the data base, it can be sorted. If you had four fields for the address part of the data base, you could

sort by state, by zip code, or even by state AND zip code (by using sequential sorts.) I already had a copy of 1-2-3 by LOTUS, but it sounded as though this *File Express* was a lot simpler to use.
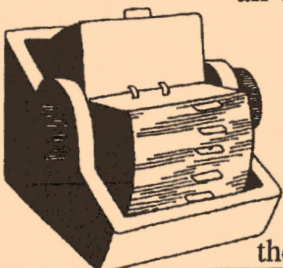
    One of the early pages in the doc (I'll use that short form for documentation) listed several ways the database could be used:

        Mailing lists
        Order processing
        Sales journals
        Billing and Accounts payable
        Inventories
        Summary reports
        Checkbook records
        Budgets
        Personnel

The list went on, but I could see that any listing that involved several elements of data could be easily supported by this program. The capacity of the *File Express* program was hard to perceive. It said it was limited to 16 million records per data base.

    [Just for kicks, I ran a calculation: if I can count to 240 in one minute at 4 counts per second, I could probably also do 250 in that time. That is 4 minutes to get to 1000. That means it would take 16 x 4 minutes to get to 16000. At that rate, 64 minutes to count to 16000, it would take 64000 minutes to get to 16 million. Since there are 24 x 60 minutes per day, I am going to be counting for 6400 (24 x 60) minutes which your calculator will tell you is equal to 44.44 days, assuming you could stay awake that long and do nothing but count!]

    Well, now, once I had used *File Express* for the photographs, I got to thinking

of possibly transcribing parts of census data for genealogical purposes. This worked out ideally because after I had typed up the census, I could sort it alphabetically. This would make it much simpler to find the name of a relative if present in the data.

In summary, I have used *File Express* on all of my computers, including the PCjr, a Compaq 286, a CompuAdd 386 and my own assembly, a 486DX4-120. Obviously *File Express* is a useful program to have around.

Louie will be giving a demonstration of *File Express* at the meeting in April. I thought he was going to do it this month, but he just procrastinated too long!

Get to Know Some of Our Members

Darlene Gotzman was born and raised in Oregon. She graduated from McMinnville High School. Darlene traveled with relatives to Charleston, SC, where she met and married Roy Gotzman. Roy was a Yeoman in the US Navy and was from Wisconsin.

After he was discharged, Roy and Darlene moved to Klamath Falls where Roy attended Oregon Tech. After graduation, they moved to Eugene where Roy worked for the Eugene Planing Mill cabinet shop for 31 years.

During this time, they raised their three children with Darlene finding time to attend the University of Oregon where she earned her BS in Health Ed with a minor in Home Economics. She has been working as church secretary at the Church of Christ, where we meet, since 1964.

Roy and Darlene have traveled to Israel twice. The first time was with 1,000 folks of the Jewish faith from New York, where they learned one side of Israel much different from what they would see on their next trip. Their next trip with a group from the University of

Maryland. This group helped on an archeological dig at Caesarea by the Sea.

In 1984 and '85, Darlene ran in six marathons and many 10K races. Now, she says it's too hard to just run to the store.

The Gotzmans got their first taste of computers via the PCjr Club. While Roy still watches TV, Darlene watches the computer screen. She is the editor of a family newsletter, *Remember Me*, which is in its third year. Their eight grandchildren are the staff writers, and Darlene's 82-year-old mother is the guest writer. Starting out mailing nine of the newsletters, she now mails out 29 each month to family members.

The Eugene PCjr Club appreciates being able to meet in Darlene and Roy's church. It is through their efforts that we have a permanent place to hold our monthly meetings and our annual Christmas dinner.

The first and probably the most important thing for you to do when you have acquired a new software program is to MAKE BACKUP COPIES OF THE PROGRAM DISKETTES. Then you should put the master copies in a safe place other than where your computer is located. As several of our newer members have asked how to do this, here is a reprint of:

HOW TO MAKE A BACKUP COPY OF A DISKETTE

DOS is real good at trying to expand our vocabulary. When you copy disks, DOS calls the original, or master diskette, the "source" while the blank disk onto which you are going to copy, DOS calls the "target" diskette. This target diskette you use can be a brand new disk or one that you no longer are using. Like VCR tapes, computer disks can be used over and over. The Club recommends that you place a write protect tab, one of the little "stickers" that comes with new diskettes, on your source disk just to insure that you don't get the two mixed up!

Make sure your DOS diskette is in your A: drive. If you are using one of the Club's "Max-Memory" boot disks that you made at a DOS workshop, you should place this disk in your A drive. From the DOS A>, key in the following command:

DISKCOPY A: B:

Note that there is a space between DISKCOPY and also between A: and B:. But, it doesn't make any difference if you use capital letters or lowercase ones as DOS doesn't care. Once you have keyed in the command, press the ENTER key. This tells Junior to execute the DOS command "diskcopy.com." You will then see a message similar to the following:

Insert source diskette in drive A: and strike any key when ready

If you have two disk drives on your Junior, you would get the message:

Insert source diskette in drive A: and target diskette in drive B: and strike any key when ready

After getting this message, remove your DOS diskette from drive A: and insert the source diskette that you wish to copy. Again, if you have two disk drives, you would place the target disk into your B: drive. When you have done this, press any key.

The disk copying process will take a short time. If you are using two drives and have 640K, the disk drive light will only come on once while it reads the source and then the B drive light will come on until the copying process has finished. The duration of the lights will depend on the amount of memory your Junior has, so if you have, say, 256K of memory, you will get more "reads" and "writes" than if you have 640K. If you are using 128K, Junior will have to read and write several times before copying the whole disk. Be patient and insert the disk that DOS calls

for, remembering that the source disk is the disk you are making a copy of, and the target disk is the new one.

When the process is done, DOS' DISKCOPY program will ask:

Copy another (Y/N)?__

You are to reply "yes" or "no" by typing Y or N respectively. Press N (unless you want to make another copy). When you have finished copying, remove the source diskette from drive A: and put it in a safe place. Place a label on the copy you just made and, using a felt-tip pen to avoid damage to the thin diskette cover, write the name of the program. It is a much better idea to write on the label BEFORE you stick it on the diskette. Then, try using the newly made disk to insure it works!

Most people will format all disks as soon as they buy them to make sure the disks have no bad sectors or damage that will prevent their use when needed. The DISKCOPY command can tell when a target diskette hasn't been previously formatted and it will format it while it makes the copy. FORMAT will lock out any problem areas of a diskette, leaving you with one that is very usable, but with a little less space on it. But, DISKCOPY won't tell of these problems. Instead, if DISKCOPY finds any problem areas, it will tell you that the copy may not be usable or that it may be damaged. Use another diskette should you get these kinds of messages while disk copying.

Q When I moved our Junior to a new location, I did the unforgivable. I bent one of the pins sticking out in the Monitor plug-in (or whatever they are called) on the back of my Junior. After bending it back and forth to get it lined up right, it BROKE OFF! Now, I'm dead in the water. Luckily, I found an old black-and-white

monitor that plugs into the V connector, but it really isn't the same. Do I need to buy another whole mother board?

AWe have to say that the pin connectors on the back of Junior have been a problem over the years. They are easily damaged and IBM, early on, came out with what was known as "socket protectors." In most cases, these protectors did insure proper alignment when inserting the plugs and they did a lot to prevent side strain on the pins. Unfortunately, these protectors are difficult to find.

Now that the pin has broken, we suggest that you disconnect everything from your Junior and move it to a well lighted area. Remove the top and all of the cards inside (power supply, 64K card, disk drive controller card and disk drive). Locate the broken pin and, using a small pair of wire cutters, snip off the pin about 1/4-inch above the mother board and remove the lose end.

Next, locate a pin from one of the unused connectors, like the C connector, and cut one of the pins off from it. With small needle-nosed pliers, pull this pin out of the connector and insert it into the vacant hole of the D connector where you just removed the broken pin. Align this new pin up with the 1/4-inch part of the old pin and, using a low wattage soldering pencil, solder the two pins together. (Use caution to prevent excessive heat damage to the mother board.) If you feel uncomfortable doing this, don't do it! Most any hobbyist who works on small electrical items should be happy to do this for you.

Melatonin Junior

Some of our readers have taken me to task for my "fixation" with thrift-store computers. I must admit that I have trouble passing up some of them even though, as my wife says, I "don't need them." Both my wife and my friends are correct: I don't <u>need</u> them. Still, I buy some of them. They are just too hard for me to pass up!

When most of these "great buys" first hit the market, they were selling for over a thousand dollars; some for over two thousand dollars. These prices were way, way out of my range. In fact, even the fifteen hundred dollars we spent for our first Junior was way out of our range and had to be financed. (That was the "initial" cost; there has been much more spent on Junior since that time!)

Our Junior has lasted us well and has earned its place next to our other computers. Actually, the "other" computers have only muscled their way into and next to Junior. I touched my Junior one time early on to place a reset switch in its case. After buying another motherboard for this effort, it was quite a long time before I did any other experimenting.

But, moving up in time ten years, a Junior can be picked up VERY INEXPEN-SIVELY at a thrift store. If you spent ten bucks on an old Junior, you have another mother-board, disk drive, power supply and several other parts that would have been very expensive to have purchased only several years ago.

What I am saying here is that now is the time to play! I can put in a reset switch on a Junior in no time, now! Switch out a drive, fix broken pins. . .whatever. Now, you can pick up a ten dollar Junior and experiment to your heart's content and not worry about incapacitating your Junior. You can work on the "clone."

Speaking of "clones," those clone-Juniors, the IBM XT, some 286 computers and the likes are cheaper than Juniors! Our local Goodwill store had IBM PS-2 computers in stacks the other day from five to thirty dollars each! These were two and three thousand dollar computers in their day. What fun it is to rummage around inside these computers to see how they work. What a wealth of information in these old machines; even in our old Juniors!
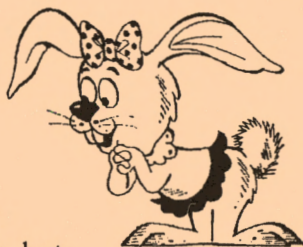
Nearly all of these old cheap clones have a floppy drive that will fit Junior, if it ever goes out, but they also have hard drives.

Soon, I'll get an old hard drive running in one of these old Juniors! But, even if I can't, it is sure fun playing with all of this stuff. At least my wife always knows where she can find me: Junior and I are out in the shed "playing."

PCjr Loves EFN

I don't know about your Internet Service Provider, but our's is GREAT! Eugene Public Networking is still letting us on at speeds less than 14,400 baud. They allow us to check our e-mail and do all sorts of things at 9,600, 2,400 and 1,200 baud. . .even at 300 baud with our internal PCjr modem.

Last month, Lynn Miles gave us a demo of just how easy e-mail and Junior work. And, at this month's meeting, Rosie will show us how to use Junior to do much of our banking. I understand that it won't make deposits for us, but. . . Also, Louie will show us how to get online at the local libraries.

What I need to tell you about now, is the new area of Eugene Free Net. I know that we can't take full advantage of this with our Juniors, but you can by accessing Eugene Free Net from it's Public Access Terminals around town. These FREE use terminals are located at the Eugene Public Library, at the LCC Downtown Center and at the main campus of LCC. Soon, there will be 10 (yes, ten!) 486 computers at the Willamalane Senior Activities Center in their Public Access Site.

What GREAT people these folks are! I think they have three paid employees and all the rest are volunteers.

But, everyone who does have access to the Internet can visit them at www.efn.org and once there, just mosey around. Take a look at the /justbecause site. Everything is there for "special" people. Veterans, the homeless, physically challenged, those in love and just about everyone else. Find your old Air Force buddies or that guy who served with you back

in the "big one." Read the names on the "wall." Find out about the free use computer in the EFN office that is wheelchair accessible and uses a touch-pad instead of a mouse. This is a wonderful site.

Everyone should bookmark this spot on the World Wide Web for future reference. And, while you "out-of-towners" are at the EFN site, check out the public download area. You can get files that will help you get going with your own Internet Service Provider.

We really are fortunate to have Eugene Public Networking. When you get a chance, e-mail them and tell them! If it wasn't for them, most of us Junior users in the local area would not be on line.

Using A VCR With Your PCjr

Have you ever wondered what those mysterious jacks on the rear of your PCjr labeled "V" and "A" are for? The "Guide to Operations" calls them composite Video and Audio outputs, but what good are they to you when you have a color display attached to your Junior? Well, those of you who have used, or own a VCR may have noticed that this, too, has jacks labeled "Video"and "Audio" input. These can be used to link your Junior to your VCR via cables equipped with standard RCA or phone plugs.

After connecting the computer to the VCR, set the VCR to "Record" and be sure you have inserted a tape. The images shown on the Junior monitor will be recorded on the VCR tape.

What's the real use of this? You can use the setup to save pictures or text created with such programs as PCjr Color Paint or PC Paintbrush. You can even save a game as it is being played and then replay it for analysis. Later you can use it for a Video slide collection, or to add titles to your video tapes. One note is that you shouldn't be worried if the colors on your monitor look a little different when replayed on the VCR.

Originally from John Hawkins
- Venture PC Users Group

HOW TO REACH THE
EUGENE PCjr CLUB

FOR MEMBERSHIP:

Membership is available for $20 per year per household. Membership provides each member of the household access to the Club Disk Library, individualized help and support. It also includes a subscription to the Newsletter. All Club General Meetings and Board meetings are open to every member. To inquire about becoming a member, contact The Eugene PCjr Club, P.O. Box 50024, Eugene, OR 97405.

FOR "OUT-OF-TOWN" MEMBERSHIPS:

Newsletter subscriptions are given the fancy term, "Out-of-Town Memberships." This type of membership is $12 per year and brings 12 issues of the Newsletter to your mailing address. Requests for an Out-of-Town membership may be mailed to The Eugene PCjr Club, P.O. Box 50024, Eugene, OR 97405.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS:

To change your address for any type membership, you may inform the Club by mail to the Club's Post Office Box, by phone (541.343.7592) or by e-mail (pcjrclub@efn.org).

NEWSLETTER ARTICLES:

Submission of articles for the Newsletter is vigorously requested and copy may be sent to the Club's Post Office box or via e-mail. Permission to reprint is freely given.

QUESTIONS and/or INQUIRES:

Questions and inquires about the availability of parts or supplies may be sent to the Club's Post Office Box or via e-mail (rp_janz@efn.org). Questions about software, operation or repair of your Junior, may be sent to the Club's Post Office Box or via e-mail (pcjrclub@efn.org). All orders for parts or software from the Club's Disk Library should be sent to the Post Office Box.

ADVERTISEMENTS:

Classified advertisements for the newsletter are free to the membership, but must be limited to PCjr related equipment. Rates to nonmembers are $1. The Newsletter Editor reserves the right to accept, reject or edit all advertisements submitted for publication. Advertisers must have their mailing address on file with the Club. Write for display advertisement rates.

COMPLIMENTARY COPIES and/or BACK ISSUES:

If you know of anyone who may like to receive a complimentary copy of the Newsletter please send us their mailing address. Back issues of the News-letter can be obtained for $1 each depending on availability. Address inquires to our Post Office Box.

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