EUGENE *PCjr* CLUB

NEWSLETTER

P.O. Box 50024, Eugene, OR 97405

Mike's Message

Our June meeting will bring the 1998/99 Eugene PCjr Club year to a close. Through concern, major change and now a new schedule, we are still a club. Some may say that in this fast paced technological world our club is amazing. Just think, we are the <u>only</u> PCjr club in the world and each of us who use a PCjr is more unique than gold. Personally, I know our club is truly special. I believe it is still important in one way or another to all PCjr users.

I own a PCjr. And, although I have a newer faster machine, Jr has a place on a desk in my computer room and is ready to work whenever I might need it. Today I'm using Jr to write this message. I use WordPerfect on Jr in hope that Louie can read what I have saved to a disk. I really believe that as long as I live I will keep and use my Jr. Jr still amazes me. It never breaks down, and when I use it I reminisce about the days when I first began computing. It has been eight years now since I first went to a PCjr Club meeting and my Jr has been loyal ever since. When using Jr I daydream about all of the nights and days I struggled writing class papers in college. I think of the good people I have met at the Eugene PCjr Club meetings. I'm confident that there will always be a PCjr Club of some sort and that there will always be someone like me who will always own a PCjr.

This year we have made major changes to the club. The changes are so great they may test our membership. It seems our club's viability may lay in the hands of just a few. I now believe that those few will keep the PCjr Club purpose alive as long as there is a Jr user in need. I look forward to the club's future and say to myself, I'm fortunate to have come across my PCjr and to have found the Eugene PCjr Club. And, I'm fortunate to have met the people in our club and to have remained their friend. I am fortunate to be a part of the PCjr Club's success. I will always remember all that we have done.

Next Thrusday, June 10th, we will meet again. This meeting will be our "general meeting" and we will elect officers. This meeting will be "casual" as we are no longer haveing our "formal" meetings. At this meeting we will also take our traditional look under Junior's hood. We will be opening up a Jr and take a look at what makes it tick. If you will, please bring your Junior's CPU—we will also be explaining how to clean Jr. It is spring and I'm sure there are some Jrs out there that really need some spring cleaning. There will be refreshments and interesting conversation for all that attend. Each year I look forward to this last meeting before we break for summer. I hope you can attend.

See you there,   *Mike*

FOR $5 YOU TOO CAN LOVE JUNIOR!

They're beginning to fill up the shop, closets and garage and even spill out on the floor in my office; computers by the armful, box full and if I'm not careful, by the pickup full in the very near future!

Old computers such as the dependable and loveable IBM PCjr raises eyebrows from the cutting edge crowd. But such machines are still perfectly functioning, powerful computers, versatile machines that many of us once spent well over a thousand dollars on.

Now they're available for next to nothing at Goodwill and St. Vincent de Paul stores, garage sales and electronic auctions everywhere.

With a little luck you can even buy, as I have many times now, a computer for under $5.

Did you do a double take on that? Yes, a computer for $5 or less. Such a buy challenges reality and it seems has gone mostly unnoticed in most communities. Sure, computer prices have been in free fall over the past few years, but it seems logical to me that we're experiencing something completely new and different from the less than $500 after rebate Pentium Super Duper (Monitor Not Included) of the Sunday ad supplements.

The $5 or less computer world consists mostly of abandoned names from our computing roots, 8-bit systems still powerful enough to run a small business: Commodore 64's and Atari's, Apple II's by the bushels, AT&T 6300's, IBM PC, XT's, their shadowy clones, and of course the venerable IBM PCjr! These are the horse and buggy rigs of home computing, now disregarded by those swimming in the cyberspace stream as "boat anchors."

But you know what. . .they still run. Adopting a "Jr", as I have done is heady stuff. They still process words and numbers as well as the "big boys" do. Not quite as fast, but they still produce a solid product. More than that, quiet voices from the past subtly lead one into some open doors that have swung quietly closed over the past few years.

The $5 and less computer brings back some of the subtle excitement of those good old days, when computers represented pure, unchallenged potential. People were writing programs that did anything and everything, simply because they could. Zany programs. Useless and useful programs. Fun programs.

Never mind that cataloging your book collection was something that would never have occurred to you to want to do. Or if it had, doing it on a typewriter was too daunting a task. Now it was possible, and so, in some sense, necessary. Computers were a wonderful solution in search of a problem.

The market was rich with publications in the early 1980's that allowed entry level involvement for such computer owners. The "Software Construction Set for the IBM PCjr" laid out techniques and ideas for designing and building user-friendly software in the confines of your home! Trust me, you won't find "Software Construction Set for Windows 98."

But there is more to the $5 and under computer than historical wishful thinking. This computer now is expendable. You can experiment to your hearts content. For example, with the PCjr you can take the top off and there is no warranty to void! Pull out the cards, drive and mother board knowing that a mistake can be corrected by reaching out and grabbing another "Jr" and replacing your "tactical errors." This is true of any of these venerable old machines.

So, for the first time, I've been prying computers open and playing with their sacred innards, learning the strange but simple

language of electronics components, undeterred by the fear of financial ruin.

I've gotten many of these wonderful "Jr's" on-line with an internal 300 baud modem, watched WordPerfect and Lotus 123 strut their stuff, became fascinated at how Flight Simulator allowed me to crash over and over with no real damage except to my ego, and on, and on.

Gathering in these $5 and under computers, in my case the IBM PCjr, and tinkering with a solid, dependable machine until it is again ready for computing use before placing it in a new family setting where such an entry level machine is appreciated is most satisfying. I know that I am not alone in surrounding myself with these "oldies" but "goodies".

This is a fertile "bargain basement" market now and I hope that there are many more tinkerers and rememberers still frequenting thrift shops and garage sales. . . revisiting DOS as the key to our treasure trove.

So, if we're lucky, many of us with the history of the 80's still fresh in our minds are remembering the involvement of the "good ol' days" with our IBM PCjr's, Commodores or XT's that are now gathering dust on a shelf somewhere, brooding in solitude about what might have been. Let the treasure hunt begin while you seek out your $5 and under prizes!♪

Phil Janz

WHO is the PCjr Club???

The PCjr Club's membership is made up of a lot of folks. Some members are "techie" and some are not. (By far, most are not.) Some of our members belong to the Boy Scouts (like Brandon Bacod) and

some belong to other clubs and organizations. But, one thing we all have in common is our use of the IBM PCjr computer!

We have some pretty young members in the Eugene PCjr Club, and we have some pretty senior senior citizens! While some of our "junior" members learn things from our older members, most of the time it is the other way around! One thing we have all found out in our quest is that age isn't relative to Junior; Junior appeals to those of all ages!

We have members who do nothing with their Juniors but play games! But, we have many who do nothing but word process with their Juniors. Most of us do both! And, a few even use Lotus 1-2-3, PC-Calc and As-Easy-As. There are a lot of us who use Telix, Procomm and even JrTele and send e-mail every day to friends, colleagues and relatives.

We have one member who is *still* trying to get that SCSI hard drive going with his Junior. Another that is "networking" several Juniors to another computer; his "server." And, several years ago, the unlimited hydroplane *Miss Budweiser* had a PCjr on board. And, if that doesn't get you going, did you know that one member has several Juniors helping doing "ghost-busting" duty by taking scientific measurements during psychic phenomena and para-normal events! Really!

If you are using a PCjr (or just have a Junior hiding in your closet) and are not a member of the Eugene PCjr Club, you should join this versatile, eclectic group. We'd like to hear from you and about how you are using your Junior!

So, Why Are They Still Running?

Upgrading to a new computer when the one you are using quits is using hindsight. Upgrading BEFORE it quits is using good sense. So, why in the world are so many people, even those who have upgraded time

and time again, still using their old Juniors? Well, they haven't broken yet. We don't talk about sentimental attachment.

To keep your Junior (and most any other computer, for that matter) happy and running for a full life, try some preventative maintenance.

When was the last time you had the lid off of your Junior? When did you last vacuum the dust from the air vents in your monitor's case?

How many paper clips would drop on the floor if you turned your keyboard upside down and shook off the dirt from between the keys?

Doesn't anyone clean their disk drives anymore? No one oils the rails or cleans the heads on any floppy drive; we just replace the drive if it starts "acting up."

We all know that heat is the #1 enemy to our computers. How cool is your cooling fan keeping your computer? Look at the back of your case and see just how much dust is back there! That little fan can sure pull a lot of dust, dog and cat hair and potpourri smoke into the computer right through the disk and other drives in the front of the case, over the memory chips, video card, modem and who-knows what other components and then eject most (I hope) of it out the back of the case so it can settle on your monitor and printer.

Remember when the Club had those "Spring Cleaning" meetings where we would all take a Junior apart? We'll be doing that again at this month's meeting! But, back in "the olden days" we even watched Dr. Dick Page do some soldering for reset switches and other exotic modifications. Well, we all still need to do Spring Cleaning.

If you have forgotten how to disassemble and reassemble a PCjr, or if you have never thought about doing it, you need to take a look at the Club's publication "Care and Cleaning of the IBM® PCjr Computer." Many of our membership have this nifty eight-page pamphlet that was available at "Spring Cleaning" meetings in the past. But if you don't have a copy and

would like one, send us a stamped self-addressed business size envelope and we'll get one right out to you.

The booklet covers *How To Take Your Junior Apart, Cleaning the Keyboard* and a section called *Quieting Junior's Drive*. No Junior owner should be without this handy and informative guide. It doesn't tell you how to replace the fuse in the monitor or adjust the raster, but it will go a long way in helping Junior to live a long and productive life. (As if it hasn't already!)

Hangman For The Superintelligent

This is the name of the new disk that has been donated to the Disk Library. It's a souped-up version of Norland's *Hangman*. This newer version is 5.25 and it works well on a 128K Junior.

It is like the older version except the user has more control over the different games that are available. If your child has vocabulary words to learn, you can use them in "custom" hangman. Disk E-124 in the Club Disk Library.

Some Facts About DISKCOPY

The DOS command DISKCOPY is one way to copy the information from one diskette to another, but keep these points in mind:

* It makes a "carbon copy" of the diskette you are copying from. This means if you use a single sided diskette as your source, your copy will be formatted as a single sided disk, too, no matter if it was a double sided disk to begin with. (So you won't be able to add files to it once the single side is full.)
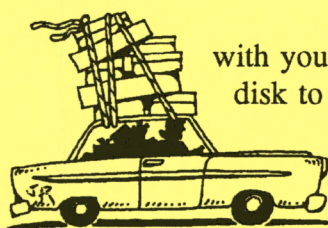
More on the Next Page:

* Unlike the COPY *.* command, if there are any bad sectors on your target diskette, DISK-COPY will still try to write to them and may give you a copy that is less than perfect.

The preferred way to copy diskettes is to FORMAT a diskette first and then use the COPY *.* command. It's slower, but your copy will be more reliable.

When DISKCOPYing Keep RAM Free

The time it takes to copy diskettes when using the DISKCOPY command will be reduced if you keep your RAM memory free. When you are DISKCOPYing, DOS transfers data from your source diskette into memory before dumping it to your target diskette. If your memory is occupied or otherwise not acces-sible, there will be less space for the transfer, and the copying process will require more steps.

If your Junior has more than 128K, you can see this very easily. Boot with a "plain" DOS disk and then make a DISKCOPY. Count how many times you have to switch disks.

Next, reboot Junior with your "max-memory" boot disk to give you access to all of Junior's memory and then do another DISKCOPY. Notice how much quicker the process is when you have access to "all your marbles."

Watch Out for File Fragmentation

The organization of files on a diskette that has been used for a long time with many file modi-fications, deletions and additions can become very inefficient. This is caused by the storage of more recent files in the spaces left by previously deleted files. One file may be frag-mented and the different parts of it stored in several places on the diskette, requiring DOS to skip around in order to find all the information.

The diskette will still function, but DOS will take longer to handle the files on it. This can slow down both your Junior and you, particularly with word processing or spread-sheet files.

One way to reorganize these files is to format a new diskette and then use the COPY *.* command to copy the old diskette's files to a new diskette. The files will be copied con-tiguously, making the job of handling them easier and faster.

On your "other" computer, when you use programs like "defrag" or "speed disk" to "optimize" your drive, you are doing the same thing only you are doing it to your hard disk. When your disks, floppy or hard, are not frag-mented, you are computing at its best.

How to Label Your Diskettes

Have you noticed when you do a DIR of a disk you will get a message somewhat like this: *Volume in Drive A has no label*
If you want to put a label on your diskette (not the kind you stick on the outside, but one appearing above the directory), use the FORMAT B:/V command. This will enable you to write an eight character label or volume label which will appear each time the DIR command is given.

Also, DOS has programs that will enable you to change the volume label of a disk. VL.COM and LABEL.COM are two such programs. If you have them, just key in VL B: or LABEL B: (or whatever drive the disk you wish to label is in). The program will read the disk, display the present label and ask you to key in the new one.

The Powerful FORMAT Command

The DOS FORMAT command is used to init-ialize, or prepare, a diskette to accept DOS information and files. It can be issued as a command on its own, or automatically invoked
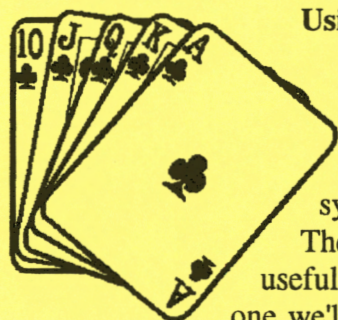
when using the DISKCOPY command and the "target" diskette has never been formatted.

When used on its own, FORMAT will tell you if there are defective tracks on the target diskette. This does not mean the diskette is unusable, just that those tracks should be avoided (which the COPY *.* command will do, but DISKCOPY will not).

If you add /S after the drive specification, you will have a copy of the operating system on the target diskette, making it bootable.

The addition of /1 will format only the first side of the target diskette.

Adding /V enables you to write a volume label, to appear above the directory.

Using Wildcards to Find Files

DOS allows the use of two wildcard symbols, the * and the ? These symbols can be useful in many ways, but the one we'll discuss here is using wildcards with the DIR command to find files quickly and easily.

Each of the symbols means something different. The * will match any number of characters, while the ? will match just one character.

Here are some examples:

If you type DIR *.DOC, you will get a listing of all the files on your disk with the file extension .DOC.

To get even more specific, if you type DIR M*.DOC, you will see all files whose names begin with M and whose extensions are .DOC.

Since the ? represents a single character, if you type DIR FILE.DO?, you will get a listing of all the files named FILE with extensions that have DO as the first two letters.

If you keep these wildcards in mind, you can not only speed up your searches for files, but you can create file names and extensions that will help you organize and find them later.

Ribbon Re-New

As our Juniors get older and older, so do our printers. Sure, some of us have purchased new printers, but many of those old Epson, Okidata, Seikosha and others are still going strong. Our only problem is that many times ribbons for these older printers are difficult to find.

A product much overlooked is Ribbon Re-New made by V-Tech, Inc. After getting the last newsletter and seeing how lightly printed his name and address was, one of our members sent us a bottle of this product to try.

Ribbon Re-New comes in a little bottle that is just right for about 30 applications for the average nylon ribbon.

The best thing about the product, we believe, is that the ink they use is REAL computer printer ink. This ink has special lubricant in it that keeps the printer's printhead clean and will help prevent pin sticking.

If your old ribbon was a generic one that used cheap ink, you will find that after only a few uses, your printer will again be producing quality work. No more WD-40 thanks to member Tom Dadey!

One word of warning, though. Do NOT let your teenage son reink your ribbons for you. If you do, make sure there is plenty of newspapers around where the reinking is going on. You wouldn't believe the mess a kid can make with this stuff!

NEED HELP? Give These Club Members a Call:

BASIC or WordStar: Paul Bonney
PC-FILE III or WordPerfect: Louie Levy or Gordon LeManquais
Writing Assistant & Name Pal: Phil Janz or Lynn Miles
E-Mail: Lynn Miles, Judy Young or Rosie Janz
Communications Programs: Mike Ruiz or Gordon LeManquais
Hardware Problems: Louie Levy or Mike Ruiz
Spreadsheets or WordPerfect: Mike Ruz
The Disk Library, Parts and Supplies: Phil Janz

Our "helping" crew:

Paul Bonney:	(541) 344-1501	pkby@juno.com
Phil Janz:	(541) 343-1059	rp_janz@efn.org
Rosie Janz:	(541) 343-1059	rp_janz@efn.org
Gordon LeManquais:	(541) 746-1594	oreauctioner@efn.org
Louie Levy:	(541) 343-7592	pcjrclub@efn.org
Lynn Miles:	(541) 484-5063	kathrynM@efn.org
Mike Ruiz:	(541) 687-8361	ruizmj@juno.com
Judy Young:	(541) 343-0584	judy_y@efn.org

Easy-To-Use Batch File Speeds Up *Writing Assistant*

by Larry Schreiber, Davenport, IA

Recent articles in your newsletter have dealt with tips on using IBM's *Writing Assistant*. For those that have enough memory but maybe not the expertise, the enclosed AUTOEXEC file may be helpful. Once set up, even the spouse that won't go near the computer will be able to use the word processor by simply turning on the machine. The speed of everything including the spell checker is greatly enhanced.

Many of the commands to boot and create the 360K RAM disk are generic to my Tecmar Captain and Cadet (640K). My Junior still has only one drive. After booting, a diskette to store documents is placed in the A: drive. This diskette must have a copy of the autoexec.bat file on it to function continuously. (Do not type the words in parenthesis. They are just there to explain what certain commands in the batch file will do.)

```
CONPCJR -D3            (Boots with three drives active)
echo off
MODE 80                (Changes Junior's screen to 80 column)
DOSTIME
memdisk c:             (Creates the 360K RAM disk)
copy write.* c:        (Copies write.exe and write.swp to the RAM disk)
copy wrdprf.wdl c:     (Copies the two dictionary files to the RAM disk)
copy printers.lc c:
c:
echo" ********************************************
echo" *                                          *
echo" *  Place Assistant Series Data Diskette in Drive A  *
echo" *                                          *
echo" *   Be sure to save any letters with  A: before the  *
echo" *          filename. That is, save as A:filename.  *
echo" *                                          *
echo" ********************************************
pause
write                  (Starts the Writing Assistant program)
echo" If you did not save your file as A:filename, copy it from
echo"   Drive C to Drive A before you turn off the computer.
echo"             Otherwise, it will be lost forever.
A:                     (Returns to Drive A:)
```

Question/Suggestion

If you have a question about your Junior you would like to have addressed, send it to us either by e-mail (pcjrclub@efn.org) or drop us a line to the Post Office Box address on the front of this newsletter. If you want a personal answer, enclose your name and address; otherwise, we'll address it in an upcoming edition of this Newsletter. We are always open to any suggestions you may have on how to improve the Newsletter, the Club, Junior, the World or anything else.

HOW TO REACH THE
EUGENE PCjr CLUB

FOR MEMBERSHIP:
Membership is available for $12 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.

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.

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 Newsletter can be obtained for 50¢ each depending on availability. Address inquires to our Post Office Box..

QUESTIONS and/or INQUIRIES:
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.

All of us missed Paul Bonney at the March meeting. We have since learned that Paul fell and broke his hip. Now, after a hip replacement, Paul is back on the "active" list. We look forward to seeing him and are all glad to hear that he's back on line.

EUGENE *PCjr* CLUB

P.O. Box 50024, Eugene, OR 97405

Phil and Rosie Janz 12/99
155 34th Place East
Eugene, OR 97405-3883

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