



EUGENE NEWSLETTER

PCjr CLUB

Volume IX
Number 2
FEBRUARY 1993

1011 Valley River Way, Suite 220, Eugene, OR 97401

FROM THE OVAL OFFICE

By Frank Ratti

MEETING

AGENDA

The February meeting of the Eugene PCjr Club will take place at the Northwest Natural Gas Bldg., 790 Goodpasture Island Road on Thursday February 11th. Setup and disk sales will begin at 6:30 and the meeting will start at 7pm.

OFFICERS

President Frank Ratti
Vice President Christine Brown
Treasurer Phil Janz
Disk Librarian Paul Bonney
Ass't Disk Librarians Lindsey Hoffman
Cindy Page
Simon Ratti
Documents Librarian Dick Page
Modem Captain Gordon LeManquais
Commercial Contacts Warren Hampton
Juanita Hampton
Social Director Rosemary Janz
Newsletter Editor Louie Levy
Newsletter Coeditor Barbara Caselton
Contributing Editor Dick Page

Since absence makes the heart grow fonder we should all be eager to attend our monthly club meeting in February. Due to the seasonal cancellation of last month's meeting we have accumulated an avalanche of agenda items for our next get together. This year's winter weather is the first in several that has been living up to historic Oregon standards. We followed local school districts' example by canceling last month's meeting due to icy driving conditions. I hope we were able to notify each of you by telephone that afternoon. Please let me know if you were not notified and braved the weather only to find a locked door and darkened room. I wish to personally apologize if anyone was so inconvenienced.

We can only look forward, however, and hope you are too. Our club has much to celebrate in richness and longevity as "Dr." Levy so eloquently expressed in last month's New Year, 1993 Newsletter. The headline event for the coming meeting is a demonstration on spreadsheets that can be used on PCjr presented by a local teacher/author, Robert Specht. He teaches mathematics and computer science at South Eugene High School and has written a book about computers. So if you have struggled to understand spreadsheets despite numerous presentations and workshops over the years by various experts, maybe the problem was not the message, but the messenger. This time we have a person, who's profession is teaching. Bob may be the key you need to finally understand the power of the computer spreadsheet. He has been sampling PC-CALC, AS EASY AS, and LOTUS 123 and will explain how they work and their application so we will all be able to calculate our own refinancing of mortgages and income taxes on our Juniors.

We also want to accomplish as much of January's agenda as possible in the time remaining of our February meeting. This includes a demo of a library disk, BRIDGEPAL, by Paul Bonney, exploring the mysteries of expanding Junior per Dr. Richard Page, and a consumer report on modems by Gordon LeManquais. As you can see, you will need to come to the meeting alert and ready to absorb much knowledge. If you are a visceral learner we will provide the opportunity for hands-on learning on a club computer.

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Finally I want you to consider the future of the Eugene PCjr Club for the coming biennium. We are approaching the election process for various officers including President, Treasurer, Disk Librarian, Contributing Editor, and Commercial Contact. This election will make or break our club for the coming two years. The first event will be the appointment of a nominating committee to recruit nominees for each of these positions. As you very well know, anyone who accepts a nomination is unanimously approved by the members. Thus, the nominating committee is very important to insure good officers. I ask you to consider which office you would be willing to serve, particularly those of you who have invested your valuable time and resources in this club since 1984. Consider the value of the club's educational program to the community and its support to PC Junior owners. Consider the arsenal of computers and equipment you have amassed over the years. And consider the friendships you have made in this club that go very deep. See you at the February meeting.

FDR

Columns, Rows and Your PCjr



As you can see from our President's note, February is spreadsheet month for Junior. If you are presently using an electronic spreadsheet in your home or office environment, this is a program you won't want to miss. And if you are among those who don't even know the meaning of the word spreadsheet, you will be pleasantly surprised to find all the answers

to your financial dilemmas.

Electronic spreadsheets are programs that allow you to use Junior to lay out cells defined by lettered rows and numbered columns like a ledger pad. The big difference is that you can put in formulas to act on different columns and rows so that totals will be adjusted automatically. You can place any information you wish to use on your on-screen work sheet: text, numbers, names and/or addresses or mathematical formulas.

Using an electronic spreadsheet, you can average students' grades for classes, do your home budgeting, keep track of your checking account and your home mortgage, or do your 1992 income taxes. Changing one number anywhere on the work sheet will automatically recompute everything all the way to the end. This makes using spreadsheets great for "what-if" situations and projections.

How would it affect your taxes if you put more money into your IRA? How would selling 100 shares of IBM impact your tax obligation? What would happen if you sold that 1000 ounces of silver and donated the proceeds to the American Diabetes Association? These and other what-if situations are easy to compute if you are using a spreadsheet. They can save a tremendous amount of time and, as a result, can also save you more than the cost of the software. Also, if you do your taxes with the programs, the cost of the software is tax deductible!

Many spreadsheet programs are available that run well on your PCjr. If you are limited to 128K, you shouldn't be too dismayed. Two programs you can run include the early versions of PC-Calc from Buttonware and the PCjr Cartridge version of Lotus 1 2 3. If you have added additional memory to your Junior, you can use the PC versions of programs like Lotus 1

more --->

2 3, QubeCalc or AsEasyAs to name a few.

The gentleman who will be making the presentation at the meeting Thursday on spreadsheets and Junior is Bob Specht, local teacher and author. Bob will show how easy it is for us to use spreadsheets with our Juniors-- even those of us with mental blocks toward math!



JANUARY MEETING PUT ON ICE

Members and newsletter subscribers in the Lane County area were called last month and informed that the January meeting was being canceled because of poor driving conditions. This marked the first Eugene PCjr Club meeting ever to be canceled.

A lot of calling and discussion was held to determine if the meeting should be canceled or moved to the following Thursday. It was decided to forget the meeting for January, but not the meeting agenda. So, after the spreadsheet discussion, we hope to have a scaled-down version of what was to take place in January: Modems, memory expansions and a demo of BRIDGEPAL. And YES, the meeting will end at nine!

WHAT?? BACK-UP A JUNIOR?



Are you one of those who say that since you have a PCjr you don't need to "backup?" What is backing up, anyway? All of us have heard

about those hard disk crashes where data is lost, never to be seen again unless the drive had been backed up. Most of us feel that, as we own Juniors and only a handful of us have hard drives, these scare stories do not pertain to us. Oh, ye of too much faith!

Are you using your only copy of Writing Assistant or Bank Street Writer? Do you have a spare copy of your PC-File disk that contains the mailing list of those members of your church discussion group, or mud wrestling club? Would it bother you to lose your Christmas mailing list?

Many of us feel we do not need to make backup copies of our software especially if we have the original copies on the shelf. And actually, little of what we have in our disk storage tubs needs to be copied. Most of the disks we have could be reformatted and wouldn't be missed. But, a second copy of the software we use could be very cheap insurance someday. If you need another working copy of your favorite program and place the original copy in the wrong drive, you could end up copying the blank disk to it, ending up with no copies.

But backing up doesn't always mean making copies of our software. It also means saving your work in progress. Many who use PC keyboards on some computers and also use the Junior keyboard on their PCjr, know that typing habits can conflict. If you have been working on a long text file or spreadsheet and haven't been backing up your work from time to time, you know how exasperating it can be when your keyboard locks up and won't let you do anything. The same thing can happen if your husband turns on the microwave at the same time your daughter turns on the hair dryer. The lights dim and Junior's screen goes dim, and 12 pages of your novel go out into oblivion.

please turn page >>>

It isn't necessary to back up everything you do. You probably will never need a copy of that letter you sent to your aunt, but it may be nice to have a copy of the one you sent to the IRS last year. And remember that backing up doesn't mean just copying what you have finished. It is very easy to save your work to disk every ten minutes or so while you're working on important chores. If some unforeseen misfortune happens before you finish, you won't need to start all over again if you have been making timed backups. Some more powerful programs allow you to set the time for "timed backups" when you run the software, eliminating the need for quick saves while you work.

So, remember that even though you may not have a hard drive you are still subject to floppy disk or system "crashes." Safe computing involves backing up!

SOFTWARE STORES TO RELINQUISH FREEDOM!

FREEDOM!, a game marketed by a company know as MECC, has been taken off the market. The game portrayed the players as enslaved African Americans in the South during the 1830s. The object of the game was to reach freedom in the North while gathering as much food and money as you could along the way. If you got caught, bad things happened to you.

FREEDOM! met with much negative response, and parents who met with school administrators were successful in their demands that the game be removed from their children's elementary school.

According to an Associated Press release, a spokesman for MECC said "The reaction (to the "game") has been a surprise. We honestly had

every good intention."

Each of us must be diligent in our responsibility to inform software companies who publish games that may be offensive or that show a lack of sensitivity toward one group of people.

JUST WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS?

The editor and any party and/or persons associated in any way with this publication in any shape or form, or morph, are solely responsible, but not accountable or liable for any mistakes, misprints, bugs, screw-ups, criticisms, guesses, opinions, thoughts, and/or problems with this newsletter. Still, feel free to voice any complaints.

"Give Me A Hint!"



I can't believe the number of people who are still trying to "crack" King's Quest I. Must have something to do with handing down this older version of Sierra On-Line's program to some of the newer members in hope that they will become hooked on this popular game series. Well, here are some hints that we ran a few years ago, and we hope that they will help those who are starting out.

KING'S QUEST I HINTS & HELPS

- 1.) You'd do well to go under water ("dive").
- 2.) Sticks & stones can break big bones.
- 3.) Watch your step when your head is in the clouds.
- 4.) With luck, you'll be left alone by the leprechauns.
- 5.) A bird in hand will take you to new heights ("jump").
- 6.) Trolls love eggs even more than human flesh.

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7.) Mushrooms often put things into proportion.

8.) How do you quench a dragon's thirst?

9.) One way to see the forest is from the trees.

KING'S QUEST II:

1.) Pray that you have a silver cross to protect you from evil.

2.) It's not polite to look under beds unless invited.

3.) Shell-collecting is a profitable hobby.

(from Family Computing Magazine)

TORTURE TEST YOUR JUNIOR?

In their syndicated column "Computer Report," writers T. R. Reid and Michael Schrage suggest four BASIC programs to torture test NEW hardware that is still under warranty. Still, you may want to consider using these programs prior to purchasing any used computer.

To torture test a CPU's math processing, use this program that endlessly computes the cube of every integer from zero on up:

```
10 Z=X*X
20 PRINT X,Z
30 X=X+1
40 GOTO 10
```

To torture test the input-output circuitry to make sure that what you type gets to the micro-processor and then to the screen use this program that will cycle through every character your computer knows:

```
10 FOR A=1 TO 255
20 PRINT CHR$(A):NEXT
```

To put your printer through its paces, slightly change the above program (using the LPRINT command) to output the results to

your printer:

```
10 FOR A=1 TO 255
20 LPRINT CHR$(A):NEXT
```

To make your disk drive work up a sweat, first create a short file called FILE.DAT (or some other name you want to use with the test) on a disk in the desired test drive. When typing the program remember to add the proper drive designation if you have more than one drive (ie., B:FILE.DAT to test the "B" drive). To ask your disk drive to read this file 25 times, type the following program:

```
10 FOR A=1 TO 25
20 OPEN "I",1,"FILE.DAT"
30 CLOSE 1:NEXT
```

(from the Eugene Register Guard)

Commodore, Northgate 486,
PS/2, Apple or PCjr

"Let's get past hardware or software chauvinism once and for all, by recognizing that any tool that gets the job done the way you want, needs no defense. If it works for you, and you're happy with it, what else matters? Do you look down on your friend who drives a Chevy, if you drive a Buick? Who prefers Porter-Cable power tools while you swear by Craftsman? Who goes to one church while you go to another? Or none? I hope not!"

Bob Lay, editor, Q-Bits, Quad-Cities Computer Society, Davenport, IA

UPGRADE DOS AND/OR JRCONFIG??

Few Juniors are being operated these days with DOS 5.0. There just aren't many reasons to use a command interpreter that is nearly 44,000 bytes larger than old DOS 2.1's COMMAND.COM. Even folks

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with big Junior clones don't use DOS 4. As for the versions of DOS 3, unless you are using a 3½-inch disk drive, or a high density 5¼ drive, why decrease the amount of available memory in your Junior by using newer versions of DOS?

This means that if you are using any computer, not just a PCjr, with 640K or less memory, only one or two 360KB floppy drives and you have no hard drive, 3½ floppy or high density disk drive, DOS 2.1 may be your best bet for a disk operating system. Our reason for saying this is that DOS 2.1's COMMAND.COM is only 24,688 bytes in size.

Let's do some basic (no pun intended) calculations. A 128K Junior has 131,072 bytes of memory. There are 1024 bytes to a K byte, so 128 times 1024 equals 132,072. When you boot, COMMAND.COM and the two hidden files, IBMDOS.COM and IBMBIO.COM, load and the resident portions of these three files leave you with only 90,112 bytes of memory available for programs. Going to the library shelf and using other versions of DOS to boot a 128K Junior gave the following results:

DOS 2.11	88,288 bytes free
DOS 3.0	77,824 bytes free
DOS 3.2	71,040 bytes free
DOS 3.3	70,944 bytes free

If you have a 640K PCjr you must use some type of memory management software to recognize the memory above 128K. Most of us are using Larry Newcomb's JRCONFIG, a shareware program in the disk library. You will get the following results if you use Version 2.14:

DOS 2.1	520,352 bytes free
DOS 2.11	520,608 bytes free
DOS 3.0	519,664 bytes free
DOS 3.2	519,552 bytes free
DOS 3.3	512,432 bytes free

But if you use the newer version 3.02 of JrConfig that has been copyrighted by PC Enterprises, you get the following:

DOS 2.1	602,273 bytes free
---------	--------------------

DOS 2.11	602,528 bytes free
DOS 3.0	585,200 bytes free
DOS 3.2	585,088 bytes free
DOS 3.3	577,968 bytes free

You will note that this is a big jump! Some who have purchased this newer version of JrConfig have mentioned that it seems to be directed toward PC Enterprises hardware, making their products more compatible for Junior users. And, it is true that the documentation for Version 3.02 includes much discussion of PCE's hardware, and one wonders if it was created by Larry Newcomb for PCE or for those of us who don't have any PCE hardware on our Juniors. But numbers don't lie.

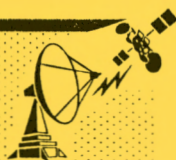
Your editor has no PCE hardware attached to his Junior. It has a RACORE Drive II expansion, a V-20 chip; the SI Index with version 3.02 JrConfig is 1.8. An unmodified Junior has an SI index of .7, so I must say again, numbers don't lie.

If you are using DOS 2.1 or 2.11, and are not using any of the hardware that requires other versions of DOS, why move to a "newer" version that will give you less memory? And, if you are still using JrConfig 2.14 to recognize the additional memory you have added to your Junior, why? It seems to me that recovering 83KB of memory is well worth the price to move up to Larry Newcomb's version 3.02 of JrConfig --even with the PC Enterprises hype that's in all the doc files. I'm sold!

Still, I'm not a "techie" person, so all readers of this newsletter would appreciate any comments you may have on this article. Drop us a line.



Modem News No. 3



Well, this last month went real fast and I did not have too much time to work with Junior. (I think he is mad, as I work on other things other than play with him and his Christmas toy, the modem.) I was on the Lawyer's Law Bulletin Board this month so I will talk about it a little.

The Lawyer's Law BBS is an area BBS that is operated by Bob Lawson, a Eugene-Springfield attorney. (No, Bob doesn't give legal advice on the BBS. . .if you need legal help you have to call his office like anyone else.) The BBS has a file section like most of the area's BBSSs. Many of the files are related to law, and there is also a message area that has local messages. It has a USA-Europe link also which means you can talk to people in other countries besides the USA.

I have found that by using Lawyer's BBS I can talk to people in other countries and learn about them. It doesn't cost to use the USA-EUROPE message area, but the E-mail area does cost so much per minute. With this area, you pay a deposit of \$20, and when you send a message so much is taken off your balance.

This BBS also has both a Spanish and French message area. If you use these areas, you should key your text in that particular language.

There is also a message area where you can leave notes to the System operator. All BBSSs have a message area for the System Operator where you can either get a message to you or leave one from you should you encounter a problem on the BBS. When this happens, you should leave a note, telling what the problem was or what

happened. When you log on the next time, you will have an answer if the Systems Operator has had time to get back to you.

Also, there is an area where you can Yell or Page to talk to the System Operator if he or she is around. If they are there to answer, you can talk to them with your happy fingers on the keyboard.

There is a lot more; this is just some of the basic things that Lawyer's Law BBS has. Every BBS is a little different and that's what makes using the area BBSSs fun.

I will try to spend more time with Junior next month, so maybe I will have a little more information, and will report about another area BBS. Until then, Happy Modeming....

Gordon LeManquais

"Number Crunching"



Spreadsheet Workshop

There are several "seats" still available for our February Spreadsheet Workshop. At the February 11 Club meeting a comprehensive overview will be presented on the electronic spreadsheet programs of PC Calc, As Easy As and Lotus 123. This overview will allow you to see and hear about the value and use of getting personally involved with an electric spreadsheet program.

The workshop will attempt to meet your needs by giving you hands on experience with one of the above programs.

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We are anticipating a one night, \$6 "boot strap" operation to get you up and running with number crunching for home or small business use. The tentative workshop date and time is February 18 at 7:00 p.m. Class members will have the opportunity to shift the day and time to one of more convenience if needed. Call Phil Janz (343-1059) to reserve your spot at the "learning table" now!

WE'D LIKE TO HEAR FROM YOU!

**Sign Up For the
Number-Crunching
Workshop Now!**

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