



EUGENE

NEWSLETTER

PCjr CLUB

Volume 4
Number 5

MAY 1988

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

MAY MEETING AGENDA

Let's Learn DOSAMATIC Together
Randy Williamson

Thinfont by PC Enterprises
(replaces the character generating
chip on Junior's motherboard, giving
you the option of screen lettering
with either one pixel or two pixel
wide lines.)

Dick Page

PRESIDENTIAL RAMBLINGS

By Mike Luttio

Boy is it quiet around my disk drives lately! Last month's maintenance workshop was well attended and most informative. We cracked open quite a few Juniors and went step by step to clean them up. Louie Levy was the main guide for the evening, providing the procedures and tools needed to perform delicate operations. There was a wide variety of machine configurations brought in by members and condition varied from fairly clean to pretty dirty. Some dirt was removed, the read head tracks were lubricated, the drives were cleaned out and analyzed. Even a couple of printers and keyboards were cleaned out. Evidence of the success of the evening was the new sounds coming from my original IBM drive, mainly a great reduction in noise. Anyone who missed this meeting can get a refresher course the same time next year.

A Guest Editorial:

ON THE JUNIOR COMPATIBILITY FRONT
"Bad News and Good News From Borland"

The following article will probably be of most interest to anyone interested in programming, but it also serves as an indication to all Junior owners of the uncertain status of an orphaned computer.

It comes from the "Living With Jr." column in the Capital PC Monitor and describes how Borland International is making an effort to allow version 4 of Turbo Pascal to run on the Junior. This wasn't the case just a few short weeks before its announced release. At that time Borland said in some pre-release publicity that version 4 not only wouldn't work on the Junior but that programs compiled with it on other computers wouldn't run on the Junior either.

This caused a storm of complaints on Borland's CompuServe support SIG from Junior owners who said the company was abandoning some of its best customers (shareware programs written in Turbo Pascal include the communications program Qmodem, the spreadsheets AsEasyAs and Qube-calc, the Galaxy word processor and the desktop organizer Desk-team).

Borland president Philippe Kahn saw the messages and asked that version 4 be made compatible with the Junior. It's very interesting to note that the fix involved

continued on next page

turned out to be minor--one that could have been made at the very beginning with no strain and no pain on Borland's part. Instead, they didn't even bother trying until they were convinced otherwise by the CompuServe complaints.

Now Borland says it will make its Turbo C and Turbo Basic packages compatible with the Junior. This is especially good news for Basic programmers since Borland and Microsoft are now engaged in a knock-down, drag-out fight for the low-end Basic compiler market, and their offerings keep getting better all the time.

Just as with Borland, Microsoft has made no effort to make the latest version of its compiler, QuickBASIC, compatible with the Junior. (Version 2 runs fine on the Junior, but Microsoft says that's just the way it worked out, not from any effort on their part.)

Version 4's compiler also works OK on the Junior, but the editor program included in the package does not. There's a patch program available, but what happens in later versions? It looks like they may or may not work on the Junior, and programs compiled with them on other machines may or may not run on the Junior. Sound familiar?

Microsoft says (and Borland said) that they already have enough compatibility problems with the various clones and a whole new line of IBM machines to bother with the Junior. But after all those complaints on CompuServe, Borland discovered that it wasn't all that much trouble to take the Junior into account. Actually, they rediscovered it, since all the earlier Turbo Pascal versions had been Junior-compatible. How quickly they forget.

The shame of all this is that there's really no excuse for it. Here's the main reason for the incompatibility: since both companies are locked in deadly combat for the Basic compiler market, both are looking for ways to make their programs run faster (one big complaint about Basic, even compiled, has been slow execution speed).

One way to go faster is to bypass the computer's BIOS for screen updates, addressing the video hardware directly. Since the Junior's video RAM is at a different memory address than the PC's, most such programs won't work on the Junior. But it takes just a few lines of code to tell a program to look elsewhere for screen memory if it knows it's working on a Junior. Lots of programs have been doing this for years, not least among them Lotus 1-2-3 and PC-Write.

Microsoft evidently needs another reminder. Let's hope it's as responsive as Borland was.

from OKjr *.* , Jan/Feb '88.

Ed Note: You can write MS at:
Microsoft

Attn: Product Support
16011 NE 36th Highway
P.O. Box 97017
Redmond, WA 98073-9717

WEATHER EYED OBSERVER

At last month's meeting, during the Clean-Up and Maintenance Clinic, a couple of us observed that different Juniors had power supplies of different sizes, and wondered why. In looking over the Club's file of The Junior Report, I came across the answer in a reply to a letter from T. Garrett of Chicago, in the January '88 issue. There were **two** power supply cards used, and the earlier models have a "3/4-length" card, about 7"

long (the card is in the far left slot inside your Junior), and is part #8654399. Newer models have a full-length power supply (11" long), part #6135986, and it has more power output.

Now, umph, ...if...I can...just find someplace to...set this...monitor...I can find out which I have.

(I seem to recall someone saying "don't put the monitor on top of the CPU, way back when. Is there anybody who doesn't keep it there?")

Bill Roy

[Bull-ed note: Bill Roy...hey, I remember him! The Eugene PCjr Club CoFounder, First Editor, etc. Boy, is it good to hear from you!]

SOFTWARE REVIEW

I recently obtained a copy of **Labels Unlimited** by Power Up! It has a lot of flexibility and was priced in the \$30 range at Egghead Software, both of which were aspects that appealed to me! The apparent versatility was the clincher. Besides, these are some of the "guys" that acknowledge the PCjr on their package: "PCjr requires 256K"!

The first order of business is to print the dozen pages of the Reference Guide and three pages of examples in the 16 available formats. There are Help and Instruction screens (F1 and F2, respectively). Define Label Format is the next step, and then you can create and save a series of up to 400 labels. The formats include various combinations of vertical, horizontal and vertical-label-printed-horizontally, etc., with some options having both on the same label. The formats will accommodate labels up to 13" wide, by 11" high in size, adjustable in 1/16" increments. Once a format is set, you must use it for that WHOLE series.

Once Label Sizes are selected, including distance between labels, you may test the format with F8. The number of text lines varies with label size and with the size of type selected. There are five sizes available from **Small** (Condensed), to **Giant** (@ 1/2" high), and individual lines may be centered or justified right or left. There are quite a number of editing keys and commands. There is also an "auto-incrementing" number that may be used to serially number successive labels from 0000 to 9999, which can be set for single digits or more, and can be set to start at any number. The most elaborate possibility in numbering is "Part Number 388-0600-500," where any of the three groups can be set to increment.

I am using the program to print labels for my disks, for file folders, and most importantly, for a series of model kits that I manufacture; now, if I could just locate some printable silver metallic foil labels on tractor-drive stock!

Bill Roy

Ed note: How about a demo, Bill??

JUNE PICNIC

The Eugene PCjr Club annual picnic will be held on June 9. There will be more information about the time and place in next month's newsletter. However, it is not too early to start thinking about what to bring. Last year the menu was a little heavy on desserts, so in order to have a more balanced meal, the refreshment chairman is asking that you let her know ahead of time whether you want to bring a main dish, salad, or dessert. A sign-up sheet will be passed around at the May meeting. Those who cannot be present at the meeting, but are planning to attend the picnic are asked to call Elleen at 343-7592.



"HEARD (HERD?) ON THE STREET"

by Dick Page

RAM CHIP PRICES TRIPLE

In 1986 there was a glut of RAM chips on the world market. This drove the prices down (and drove some companies out of business).

In the past three months, however, the price of DRAM chips, short for dynamic random access memory, has tripled, and a shortage is putting the pinch on computer manufacturers and dealers.

Several U.S. firms, which abandoned the market to the Japanese in 1986, now plan to resume making the sought-after chips. Motorola, Texas Instruments, Micron Technologies and National Semiconductor are all gearing up manufacturing operations.

Meanwhile, a 256K DRAM chip that cost \$2 last spring and \$3 last November is currently selling for as much as \$9.

"The price of the average personal computer has gone up about \$200 to \$300 because of the shortage," said Steve Miller, with Boulder, CO retailer Computer Source.

Newer computers requiring greater memory have caused an explosion in demand just when supply is short. And a new form of memory device that will replace the older chips has run into technical problems.

As a result, large buyers are having trouble getting enough chips at any price. Industrial experts predict the shortage won't ease until this fall.

from The Denver Post
April 1, 1988

COLUMN PLUGS JUNIORS AS GOOD BUY

The nationally syndicated newspaper column, Computer Report, by Brit Hume & T.R. Reid, praises the PCjr in its March 27, 1988 article: "Software Trade Lively for Orphan Computers." Part of the article states:

"One of the most interesting orphan computers is the IBM PCjr, which was introduced with much fanfare in 1983, but flopped. It was too much like an IBM PC to be a hit as a home-games computer, and too underpowered to be much of a business computer. But IBM made one-half million PCjrs and has gradually sold most of them, many at cut-rate prices to IBM employees.

"This has helped create a sizable market for products that expand the PCjr's power in ways IBM never imagined. There are PCjrs with self-booting hard-disk drives, add-on floppy drives, memory expanded above 640K RAM, turbo boards that boost processing speed, and snap-in cartridges to speed screen writes, quicken the computer's start-up time and even add a clock-calendar...."

The article goes on to plug PC Enterprises as a good source of PCjr products and jrNewsletter and The Junior Report as publications with good PCjr information.

The article goes on to praise user groups:

"Perhaps the best source of support for an orphaned computer is a user group...

"The best thing about user groups is that they are usually led by people who know all about their computers and have been through the troubles you may be having. There's normally a membership charge, but you get more than your money's worth in advice about how to get the most out of your computer for the least cost...."

[Thanks Brit and T. R. We couldn't have said it better!]

SELECTIONS FROM OTHER NEWSLETTERS

SFPCjr User Group Newsletter
Vol 3, Issue 8, Feb 88:

--> Article says DOS 3.0 thru 3.3 "make the original disk drive on my PCjr sound like a machine gun." Suggests a simple program to quiet the drive down. Notes that DOS 3.2 is about 20% faster than DOS 2.1 is disk operations due to better programming of DOS functions.

The Junior Report
Vol 4, No 3, March 1988:

--> Use Anchor Lithkemko solvent to remove gummy label adhesive from printer platens. (Wet a piece of paper with it and roll the paper back and forth until the stuck label comes loose.)

--> Good report about the 20 MByte hard disk kit (Diskitjr 20C) from System Peripherals Consultants. Emphasizes that you should ask for S.P.C.'s backup program as some commercial ones don't work. [The OKjr *.* newsletter mentions that the 20 MB SPC is very quiet, but notes that it won't run with RACORE DMA.]

--> The article about installing Astrojr's 3.5 inch internal diskette drive from Astro System, Inc. is helpful because the drive is good, but difficult to install using only the manufacturer's instructions.

--> F.Y.I.: It is possible to install all Sierra On-Line programs in a RAM drive except King's Quest I and II.

--> They recommend DOS 3.2 over DOS 3.3 as there are problems running 3.3 on PCjrs (and some other machines as well).

--> If you want to run WordPerfect 4.2 in a RAM drive, this issue has a good article on how to do just that.

Central CT PCjr Group Newsletter
April 1988:

--> For those interested in bulletin Boards this issue has a very extensive listing of junior-specific boards in operation as of June 1987. [Anyone game to update it?]

--> This issue also has a great in-depth summary of the history on the PCjr and IBM and why it still is a great machine.

OKjr *.* Newsletter
March/April 1988:

--> Along with getting the dust out of your CPU and keyboard, you should give your PCjr Color Display a good dusting periodically. In order to remove the display's backing you have to remove the two screws on either side of the power cord as well as the four more obvious screws.

Fox Tales Newsletter
Vol 2, No 17, March 88:

--> There is a free patch to make Starflight, by Electronic Arts, run on PCjrs. Just call their technical support number listed in your documentation.

Don't stop; turn page...

--> A patch is also necessary to run Softlogic's DoubleDOS. It's available from Jr Newsletter, Box 163, Southbury, CT, 06488. Ask for disk #56 and send \$9.

BUYER BEWARE!

In the comments to letters section there is a discussion about repairs, voiding of the warranty and use of third party parts. A rep from Compaq says their warranty can be voided by use of third party parts when repairing their machines. The repair stores don't always inform customers of this fact.

Make sure you ask for authorized parts only for equipment under warranty. Third party replacement parts are generally older and could have serious defects because they often are manufactured to lesser standards.

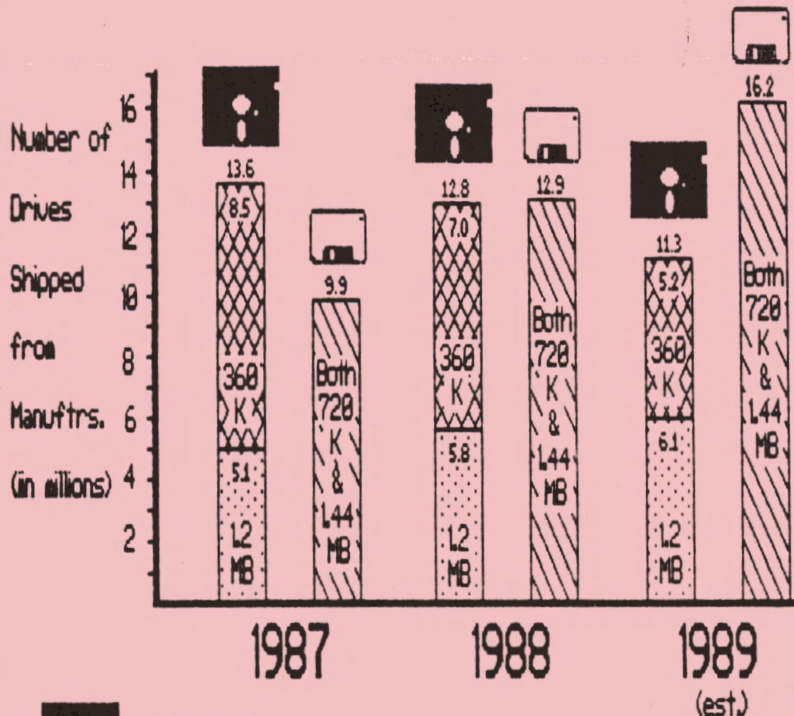
from PC World, April 1988, p. 214



MAXI RAM!

For those who thirst for more extended memory, Lotus, Intel, and Microsoft are coming out with Expanded Memory Specification 4.0 (EMS 4.0) that allows users of IBM PC's, XT's and compatibles to access up to 32 megabytes of expanded memory! Makers of expanded memory boards, such as AST, Boca-Bocaram, and Quadram are working to create the EMS 4.0 software drivers for their expansion units. The first of these should be appearing soon.

from COMPUTE!, May 1988, p. 90

When you write to a company mentioned in our newsletter, tell 'em where you saw their name!



 = 5 1/4 inch disk drives
 = 3 1/2 inch disk drives



Reprinted from INDY PC NEWS, Indianapolis PCUG, January 1988

The data for this chart is from Disk/Trend's 1987 "Report on Floppy Disk Drives" as mentioned in PC World magazine, March 1988. They speculate that the next size "microfloppy" will hold 16 MB's!

CAT ON A HOT TIN ROOF

The following is from the NW Oklahoma PCjr Users Group Newsletter:

Recently I left a box of diskettes in my car and had them ruined by the heat. The jackets were severely warped and the diskettes could not be read. Because of the importance of the information they carried I tried an experiment. I slit the bottom of one unusable diskette with a razor blade and very carefully removed the magnetic media. After repeating this process with a new diskette, I inserted the damaged disk into the new jacket. I put it in the disk drive and it worked! I then copied the contents of the damaged disk to a new one. I realize that if I had been more careful this would not have been necessary, but using this technique, I was able to salvage all but one file on the 10 damaged diskettes."

Q. We all appreciate your efforts in doing the newsletter, but how 'bout something other than those simplistic articles for only novices?



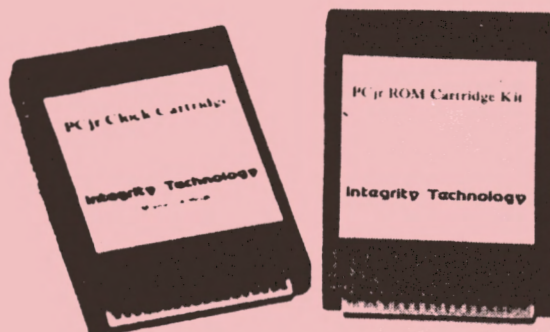
A. Gee, do I wish we could do that! But, as I'm only a novice myself, it would be very hard for me to write for the "techies" out there. But YOU can! We have had

some great articles in the past on advanced subjects from around town and from up in Corvallis (you know who you are). How about getting out your pen, pfs, WA, WP or anything, and put something together for the newsletter. Let's upgrade this publication so there will be something for everyone!

PCjr Clock Cartridge

Self-contained Clock Calendar inside PCjr Cartridge. Included programs to automatically set time & date at power-up or boot.

and PCjr ROM Cartridge Kits



Also, PC/XT No-Slot Clock Modules
Dealers inquiry welcome

Integrity Technology

105 Serra Way, Suite 230, P.O. Box 360604, Milpitas, CA 95035-0604.
Phone: (408) 262-8640, Telex: 6972396, MCI Mail: 2098377.

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EUGENE PCjr CLUB, 1011 Valley River Way, Suite 220, Eugene, OR 97401. Please furnish the following:

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____
Zip _____ Phone _____

The EUGENE PCjr NEWSLETTER accepts advertising at the following rates:

- 1 Page - \$18.00
- 1/2 Page - \$ 9.00
- 1/4 Page - \$ 5.00

Classified "For Sale" ads in this section of the Newsletter are \$2 for 25 words or less to non-members and free to members on a one-time basis.

Ads should be placed at least two weeks before the next club meeting, and all payments should accompany the ad request.

Mistakes

Editor's Note: In the interest of publishing an error-free document, all articles in the Eugene PCjr Club Newsletter have been run through "spell-check." This has eliminated all spelling mistakes.

FOR SALE: 128K Junior, PCjr Color Display, joy stick, parallel printer port and misc. software. \$550 takes all. Call Jay at 344-3199 evenings or 686-4680 days.

FOR SALE: 128K RACORE expandable memory board for a Drive II. Randy Williamson, 550 Polk #A, Eugene, OR 97402.



Are you missing any issues of the PCjr Newsletter? Back issues are available...all the way back! Drop us a line telling us which ones you need and enclose a quarter for each to cover Xeroxing and mailing.



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