FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK
by Phil Janz

The PCjr Club Board of Directors met on September 21 and took a serious look at our fall/winter programs for all club meetings. The gathering was enthusiastic and produced numerous great ideas for zeroing in on and servicing varied aspects of our club members interests.

How can you help at this time? Mark Thursday, October 12 on your calendar and participate in our 7 p.m. meeting at Ida Patterson school (see you in the library). Dick Page will kick off the season with a comprehensive program on "Utilities"! He will be supported by our Disk Librarian, Cindy Hoffman, as she ties the program to our disk library - just think, you will be getting the best of both worlds!!!

Connecting proposed programs and presenters is always the hat trick in any organization. Fortunately people volunteered to head up programs through January:

- October - UTILITIES - Dick Page and Cindy Hoffman
- November - GRAPHICS - Christine Brown and Lindsey Hoffman
- December - THE MODEM - Mike Luttio
- January - CARTRIDGES AND ADD ONS - Louie Levy

I can't begin to tell you how rewarding it is for me to meet and work with the Board of Directors (Elleen Levy, Christine Brown, Cindy Hoffman, Lindsey Hoffman, Mike Luttio, Jack Hart, Juanita Hampton, Louie Levy and Dick Page). Interaction, participation and follow-through are their "buzz words" and such involvement makes the Eugene PCjr Club a class act!

Support your club. Let your "love affair" with jr be open and up front. . .share your secrets with us on October 12!

The **October meeting** of the Eugene PCjr Club will be held in the Ida Patterson School Library, 16th and Polk, on the 12th. Set up and disk sales will begin at 6:30 and the meeting will start at 7pm.

U·til·i·ty (yōō til⁄i tē), n., pl., -ties, adj. --n. 1. the state or quality of being useful; usefulness. 2. something useful. 3. subject of this month's program.
From: The Random House College Dictionary.

Dear Editor: Here I am again! I've been having trouble with configuration commands. I was able to find my "lost" memory, but have been unsuccessful in trying to locate a file called "Config-Junior" or "Junior-Config". I can't find it in the DOS Manual anywhere. Am I the only member at large with this problem?
Al in Sacremento

It's not in the DOS Manual, Al, it's in the Club Library. Dick Page, as usual, has all the answers to your questions. Turn the page and read Dick's article on JUNIOR POWER PACK II.

JR POWER PACK II
A GREAT UTILITY DISK!

by Dick Page

My goal when I discuss Jr Power Pack II at the October meeting is to convince everyone there to get this utility disk from our club library. Jr Power Pack II is a GREAT DISK! It's jam-packed with programs each of us can put to good use. It doesn't matter if you are a Junior greenhorn or veteran hacker. It doesn't matter if you use your Junior for word processing or communicating via a modem or spreadsheets or games. There is something really special just for you on Jr Power Pack II!

Definition of a "Utility":

What is a "Utility" you ask. It's any small program which helps you get your main computer work done faster, better, or in a more appropriate fashion. These utilities are like little extra tools that help you get the job done right.

If you are building a cabinet, you probably can make it with a hand saw, a tape measure, and a 16 oz. hammer. However, having some glue clamps and a carpenter's square to use would be nice. A 10 oz. hammer would also help when setting the nails. The clamps, 10 oz. hammer, and square are "utilities" which enhance the job to be done.

That's what "utilities" are all about. It is often the little extras that make life enjoyable.

J.P.P.II has lots of utilities:

CLEAN2 makes head cleaning diskettes do a better job of cleaning your dirty drive heads.

Find it hard to remember those crazy DOS commands? Want quick and easy ways to manipulate files? DELBUT, DIREX, FILES, LIST, POPSCLJR, and SDIR to the rescue!

Tired of black and white screens? JRCOLOR lets you choose border colors to spruce up the look of your monitor.

Want to get full use of your Koala Pad? Jr Power Pack II has the program for you.

Need a simple word processor that doesn't hog much memory? Try TSCRIPT. It was custom made for Juniors on a IBM PCjr.

Have a noisy disk drive even after lubricating it at our club's Spring Cleaning? STEPRATE to the rescue.

And last-but-not-least we have JRCONFIG. This is a great program which customizes the setup of your Junior. When you turn on your Junior this program is automatically run.

With JR CONFIG you have lots of neat options. You can adjust your screen position, make a clicking sound with the press of each key, or set up extra disk drives and RAM drives.

JRCONFIG lets you set the time and date from your battery-backed clock chip, set up Junior's serial port for proper modem communication, or look for extra RAM above 640K. It will turn off Junior's internal speaker or set the screen to display 40 or 80 columns as well as choose black & white or color screens.

The program can also display a great information line on the bottom of your screen which will tell you whether the <Caps Lock><Num Lock><Scroll Lock> keys are active. In addition, the line tells you the time and date and the status of any RAM drive you install.

If you don't type anything for over 3 minutes, Junior can be made to go blank automatically but will show the screen again with the press of any key.

If programs you use terminate with the requirement that you switch to your DOS disk and press any key, JRCONFIG can eliminate that aggrevation.

If this all seems Greek to you (and you don't know the Greek language), then come to the October meeting on utilities. Hopefully I can translate all this into a reality you can put to good use.

Be square or be there!
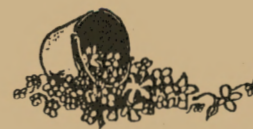
PCjr Lives

It isn't often that we come across an exposè, but this article by Brit Hume was too good to pass up. It has already been published in both the Jr Newsletter and the Metro PCjr Journal.

How I Became a Junior Fanatic
by Brit Hume

Few people can enter the basement room that houses my home computer system without gasping at the rat's nest of wires that hangs from the rear of it. This is not what IBM had in mind when it designed the PCjr: a 736K system with two floppy disk drives (one a 3 1/2-inch), a 20 Megabyte hard disk (it boots the system), an 84-key AT style keyboard and a NEC P6 printer. The monitor is a Sears model that is also a very good 13-inch TV.

This is not what I had in mind either, when I bought the computer during IBM's Christmas promotion of the PCjr nearly four years ago. I just wanted a system that my kids and I could learn on, and that could be expanded to meet greater needs if anybody ever had any greater needs.

For a while, it didn't appear that anybody would. After spending weeks researching the question of which computer to buy, I bought the PCjr, set it up, and forgot about it. My son played games on it, but that was the only use it got. Then I read in the paper in March, 1985, that IBM had decided to stop making it.

I was furious. One of the main reasons for buying a PCjr, instead of an Apple II or a Macintosh or a Tandy, was the IBM name and the insurance it implied that the computer would have lasting support. IBM promised to continue to support the PCjr, but didn't. Everybody else unceremoniously dropped it immediately. Two magazines devoted to it immediately ceased publication. Software development specifically for the jr stopped overnight.

Now I was interested. There was something about trying to make something of this orphaned computer that appealed to me. When I started trying to expand the system and realized all that IBM had done to make that difficult, the project became even more appealing. And the one benefit to IBM's announcement was the PCjr products were selling at fire-sale prices.

I got an internal modem for $67, down from $200. A 128K Tecmar memory board with clock-calendar and printer port was only $129, down from $399. I got it expanded to 512K for only $90 more. (Tecmar and IBM said you couldn't expand these boards, that you had to buy more.) Another disk drive cost $230, but that came later.

First I had to find software for the modem because IBM's offerings expensive and not very powerful and most commercial programs didn't work with my modem. Somebody gave me a copy of PC-TALK III, patched to work with the PCjr modem. The dialing directory had a PCjr bulletin board. I was on it constantly for months and reaped a harvest of technical knowledge about the PCjr, plus some useful software downloaded (gradually) at 300-baud.

I also found out about the Metro PCjr Users Group and went to a meeting. A guy was passing around a copy, with bound documentation, of a word processor called PC-WRITE. I'd heard about it on the bulletin board. You could get it, like PC-TALK, free and pay for it if you liked it. I got it, liked it, paid for it and have been using it ever since.

I didn't know it, but I had joined what might be called the computer underground. Its inhabitants are people who paid for hardware and software with their own money and were eager to share their knowledge with others. They might use their computers to make money by day, but at night they just wanted to indulge their passion for the technology.

At the PCjr user group, there was another common passion. An intense distrust and dislike of IBM for its abandonment of the PCjr and its generally arrogant attitude toward individual users. As I continued to expand my jr, I kept having visions of uniformed men in IBM blue banging on my door in the middle of the night, demanding to inspect my computer system, then charging me with getting the PCjr to do things IBM never intended.

Certainly no one at IBM ever told me that the PCjr's DOS-addressable memory could be expanded to 736K (IBM said 516K was the limit), or that it could be outfitted with a hard drive that would boot the computer or that its sluggish video routines could be greatly accelerated with a little ROM cartridge designed for the purpose. Or that, with enough memory, it would run virtually any business application written for the PC.

Those are discoveries made during my adventure with the PCjr. No doubt I have spent more money than if I had simply waited a while and bought a PC clone. But it has been a thoroughly enjoyable and satisfying experience. While I have since bought a more powerful system that I use at work, the jr still serves me well at home. As for the monitor and other spare parts left over when I replaced all those PCjr originals, they enabled me to take a barebones PCjr bought at a clearance sale for $110 and convert it into a two-drive 640K system with color monitor for about $500 total. I keep it at one of my offices. It works fine.

My next project is installing a new $79 accelerator board that will boost the PCjr's processing speed to as high as 8 MHz, depending on what kind of memory expansion board is in use. That will make my PCjr the equal to any of the XT clones that continue to sell briskly. Somebody also brought out an inexpensive new cartridge that helps out the jr's boot time dramatically by speeding the memory test. I'm a little short on cartridge slots these days, but I'll figure something out.

I'm also looking forward to the next update of JRCONFIG, a program written by Larry Newcomb of the jr user group to get the PCjr to recognize added memory and disk drives. It also does all sorts of other useful things. My adventure with the PCjr, it seems, is not over.

OCTOBER IS UTILITIES MONTH!
Notes from your Disk Librarians,
Cindy and Lindsey Hoffman

From the number of utilities we have in the Disk Library, it almost seems like utilities are the private domain of public domain software. There have always been more utilities available to us than anyone ever felt were needed.

A couple of years back, we purged the Library of all but about 30 of the most useful utilities and combined them onto one disk: E-Z Utilities (Number 5). We added a Norton Utility clone, Ultra Utilities (Number 10), and more recently, the Baker's Dozen (Number 33), user-supported software from ButtonWare.

Now, at the October meeting, we will introduce yet another disk-full of utilities designed specifically for jr owners called JR POWER PACK II (Number 63). This diskette is full of programs to help you get the most out of your PCjr.

Dick Page will teach us how to "utilize" the hidden potential of our juniors with JR POWER PACK II at this month's meeting. Don't miss it!

PERSONALITY PROFILE
by Elleen Levy
[In order to better know our members, each newsletter this year will have a few paragraphs on a jr owner (or family). This is the first of a series.]

PAUL BONNEY

When the Southern Pacific Railroad decided to change its method of keeping "track" of the railroad cars in the yard by computerizing their system, one of their employees, Paul Bonney, says he was fascinated. Back then, Southern Pacific used a 32K computer, and Paul says that it seemed wonderful.

Since his retirement from the railroad ten years ago, Paul has continued his interest in computers. He took computer courses at Lane Community College and has owned his jr for three years. Since acquiring his jr, he has doubled its memory from 128K to 256K and hopes to add more in the future. Paul uses it mostly for word processing and BASIC language programming, and he also enjoys playing PC-Chess that he bought from the club's library. Like many members of the club, Paul uses a Citizen 120 D printer which he really likes because it is so versatile.

Paul says he learned about the Eugene PCjr Club when he noticed one of our ads in a local newspaper, and that he enjoys the club meetings and programs. We are glad that one of the ads we placed last year paid off and brought us this valued member.

PC-DESKTEAM

A Review by John King

PC-Deskteam is a Sidekick clone which outdoes the original. Deskteam provides nine utilities: alarm clock, calculator, phone book, auto-dialer, appointment calendar, DOS commands, notepad, printer control and typewriter. Deskteam can be used as a stand-alone program or made memory resident, in which case it occupies 64K bytes. I use it both at home and at work. Here are some highlights of the various features.

The alarm clock is the first I've seen which puts "10:41pm" on the screen without anything blinking or changing every second. You can turn it off entirely or just have it chime on the hour.

The calculator is a four banger with one memory. In addition, if you type a list of numbers into your word processor and call up the calculator, it can enter the numbers without retyping them and print the results back to your document.

The notepad, phonebook and calendar use the same simple commands which are all available on help screens. The notepad is great for writing batch files quickly with full screen editing and for making notes while doing something else with Junior.

The DOS commands are DIR, COPY, DEL, RENAME, TYPE, PRINT, CHDIR and check on available disk space. You can't format a disk or run another program within Deskteam.

The printer control makes it easy to set up on/off toggles for five printer functions of your choice. Complex, multiple codes can be sent if necessary. Configuration files for Epson and Okidata printers are provided.

Typewriter turns your $2,000 computer into a $250 correcting typewriter. Why? Because it is great for addressing envelopes!

Finally, the options in setting up the clock display, calculator, dialer, printer, and screen colors can be changed easily at any time.

There is a fifty page manual available on the disk. Look it over, but don't bother printing it out. This program is so well done, with such good help screens, that you won't need it.

Deskteam is a shareware program. You can copy it freely; and if you like it, Alternative Decision Software, Inc. requests that you register your copy for $25.

(jr Report, March 1989)

Deskteam is available on Library Disk 47

UNUSUAL FILENAMES
CAN BE HELPFUL

One way to "protect" your files from easy changes or accidental deletion is to use the ASCII characters found in the "extended range" (those with ASCII values above 128). A keyboard error is less likely to happen because you have to go through the extra effort required to enter the character. This is accomplished by holding down the <Alt> key and typing the character's ASCII value on the numeric key pad. (With a PCjr keyboard it is done by holding down the <Alt> key while pressing the <Fn> key, then the <N> key, and then the number keys for the ASCII character desired and then releasing the <Alt> key.) The extended range character will now show in your filename.

Most printer manuals tell you if they will print the extended range of ASCII characters. They usually have a listing of those characters and their ASCII decimal values. (A list is also found in Appendix G of the BASIC manual which comes with cartridge BASIC.)

Greek letters such as alpha (with an ASCII value of 224) and beta (ASCII value of 225), work well as filenames.

Another example is the use of ASCII value 255, which looks like a space. The normal space bar created space can't be used when naming a filename, but it works when using <Alt>+<255>.

(A simple way to visually separate words in a filename without using the <Alt>/Numeric keys is to separate the words with an underline. "MY_WORK.DAT", for example.)

Also note: While most word processors now make use of the ASCII extended character set, Writing Assistant only displays extended range characters from ASCII decimal value 128 thru 173.

HEARD (HERD?) ON THE STREET
by Dick Page

PRINT SHOP IS NOW "THE NEW PRINT SHOP"

Broderbund has announced a major upgrade for PRINT SHOP with more than 20 new features such as: greater graphics flexibility, including higher resolution; multiple images per page; the ability to place graphics anywhere on a page; flipping, resizing, and centering capability; and WYSIWYG page previewing. Signs can be created as large as 9 by 6+ feet! It also now includes the calendar creator and mouse support previously found in the Print Shop Companion.

Current Print Shop owners can upgrade for $20. However if you upgrade within 90 days of purchasing an original version of Print Shop, the upgrade is free.

Broderbund is also replacing its Graphics Libraries with three new ones: Sample Edition, Party Edition, and School & Business Edition.

If you want more info call Broderbund Software Inc. at 1-800-999-3256.

from PC Magazine, Aug 89
PC Resource, Aug 89
Compute!, June 89

[Ed.: Is Broderbund responding to the heat of competition from feature-laden PRINT MAGIC by Epyx? Let's hope so. An improvement of Print Shop was long overdue.]

THE HAND-WRITING IS ON THE PAPER (WALL?)

IBM is working on a paper-like surface which displays text from your computer and also is a writing surface which (through computer hand-writing analysis) can be an input device to your computer. This would be particularly useful for writers editing text because the computer could recognize editing symbols and automatically make corrections to the text. The computer could also respond to other symbols in order to execute user-specific commands.

from PC Publishing, May 1989

PC-FILE+ IS UPGRADED

For all you faithful PC-File+ users who thought you were being left in the dust when ButtonWare upgraded PC-File+ to the power-hungry, PC-File:dB which won't run on a one or two 5-1/2" floppy system-don't despair! ButtonWare realized there were a lot of users out there who wouldn't or couldn't upgrade to PC-File:dB. They have now upgraded PC-File+ to version 3.0.

Some of its improvements are: better graphing; more choices in PC-Label; improved editor; easier cloning (and the entry screen can be altered without cloning the whole database); increased records and reports capacity; etc.

You can now supply a description of your databases, report files, graph files, and letters which is always displayed with the file selection menus. (You don't have to rely on the cryptic filename you concocted. Your description plainly tells you what is really is.)

PC-File+ sells for $69.95. Registered owners can upgrade for $30.00. There also is a $5.00 shipping charge per order. ButtonWare's phone orders number is: 1-800-JBUTTON.
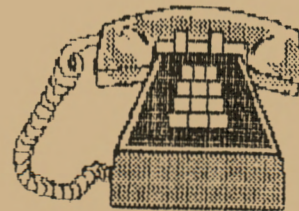
A TIP FOR MODEM USERS

The call-waiting feature on some phone systems can interfere with downloading of BBS files. Fortunately there is a toggle feature that works with most systems.

Dialing *70 on 12 button phones, or 1170 on 10 button phones should turn off the call-waiting feature. Repeat the procedure when you want to turn call-waiting back on.

from JrNewsletter, May 89

[Ed.: This tip might come in handy for anyone wanting to make any phone call during which they don't want to be disturbed by the call waiting feature.]

CAN YOU TURN ON YOUR COMPUTER COMPONENTS ALL AT ONCE USING YOUR POWER STRIP ON/OFF SWITCH?

According the PC/Computing magazine, (June 1989, page 261) it isn't harmful to turn all your computer equipment on at once using your power strip's on/off switch. It saves wear and tear on the computer switches and won't harm your computer.

"The admonition that the monitor should be turned on first dates back to IBM's original monochrome display, which could be damaged if left on while the computer was turned off. To prevent this IBM designed its monitor so that it couldn't be powered on unless the PC was powered on also.... Most monitors now are designed to work properly with or without an input signal from the PC."

SAVING YOUR WRIST - INEXPENSIVELY

If you are a heavy-duty computer user you can develop wrist problems because of how you hold you hands while typing.

A simple, inexpensive way to give your wrists the support they need utilizes a tubular piece of foam water-pipe insulation (which is readily available in most hardware/lumber stores).

Buy a piece equal to the length of your keyboard. Split the tubing lengthwise. Push the opened tubing over the edge of your computer desk's overhanging lip. Wha-la. Wrist support!

Tip from James D. Minchey
Jackson, TN
in PC/Computing, Aug 89

MERGER PLANNED

Spinnaker Software and Springboard Software are merging and retaining the Spinnaker Software name. Springboard will become the Springboard Publishing Group, a division of Spinnaker. The new company will focus on the home-office, small business, and education markets.

from Compute!, June 89

JOIN US

DISK LIBRARY SOFTWARE PRICES:
Members $3 each or 2 for $5. Nonmembers, $3.50 each. Give Cindy Hoffman, the Club Disk Librarian, a call at 688-6069 or drop us a line at the Valley River address to place an order. If your are requesting that the programs be mailed to you, an extra dollar for postage and packaging would be greatly appreciated!

TELL YOUR

FRIENDS ABOUT US

WANTED: Donate your UPC codes from
Memorex floppy disks to the club this
month. We are collecting them to get
software for door prizes.

DISKETTES for sale   Memorex 2S/2D
diskettes are going like hotcakes at the
Junior meeting; they're only .55 each!
But hurry as there is less than a hundred
left.
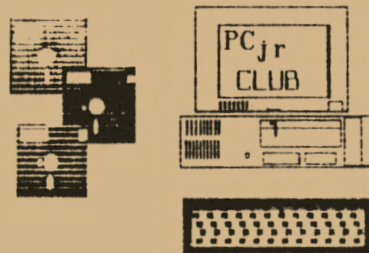
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