

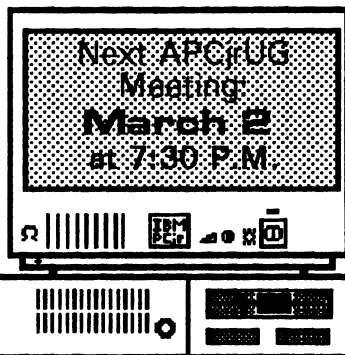
# The Orphan Peanut

THE CHRONICLE OF THE ATLANTA PCjr USERS GROUP

Volume 4, Number 9

Price: \$1.50

March, 1992



## Dr. STRANGEPUTER

or, How I Stopped Worrying and Learned to Love My Bomb

by David Wilson

"You're going to actually put a 286 Board in a PCjr?" snickered the Eminent Authority On All Things Electronic, P.C. Maven. (Maven, you know, is referred to as the 'Guru of Gigabyte' because

*This piece of whimsy originally appeared in the September, 1989 issue of The ORPHAN PEANUT as a direct result of the comments I received when I mentioned to some of my non-Junior friends that I was considering an upgrading to the Mesa286 board, an add-on that actually made many Juniors into small ATs. I tried it and mine was one of the unfortunate PCjrs it just wouldn't work on (sigh). Anyhow, the article is as appropriate today as it was then, so here it is - DGW*

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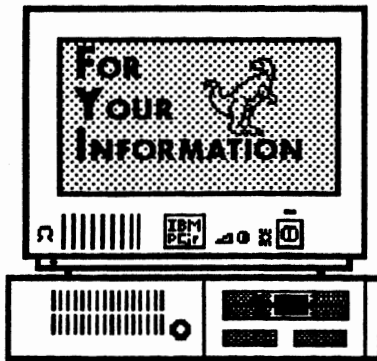
of his fanatical devotion to the principle that if more is better and most is better yet, then too much must be best.)

"Well, yeah," I said, a little sheepishly, "I was thinking about it."

His brow furrowed in concentration and his eyes got that glazed, concentrating look you see on cats in a litter box as he searched for, retrieved, and delivered his latest zinger.

"That's like, ummmmm, putting a Z-car motor in that raggedy old Honda you wheeze around in. No matter what you do to it, it'll still be an obsolete clunker with a few extra features that'll never challenge my Porsche. Why don't you trash both of them and get with it? You might be able to get enough out of the Honda to, yuk, yuk, buy a set of high-speed floormats for a Porsche; and you might be able to use the PCjr as a, har, har, boat anchor."

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## *The Orphan Peanut*

is the official newsletter of the *Atlanta PCjr Users Group*, a distressingly non-profit organization dedicated to the health and well-being of the first Orphan and first "clone" from IBM - the "Peanut". The Group's single purpose is as stated in Article 2 of our Constitution:

to provide a forum for members to share information, experiences, and techniques of use that will help other members derive maximum benefit and enjoyment from their PCjr.

**The ORPHAN PEANUT** is designed, laid out, and entirely created on a PCjr with 736 KB of RAM or 8 MHz of clock speed (but not both together), a Microsoft Mouse, a second floppy drive (3.5") from PC Enterprises, and two 20-megabyte hard disks from RIM via Paul Rau Consulting. There's other stuff as well, but we forget.

Software used includes *TEXTRA* word processing (ver. 6.0) and *QEdit* (2.1) text editor, Power Up! Software's *EXPRESS PUBLISHER 2.0* desktop publishing, and sundry other programs of varying usefulness.

Permission is hereby granted for the abstraction and republication of any and all original articles in this publication, with the dual provisos that the sense of the article not be changed and that proper credit be given the author and **The ORPHAN PEANUT**.

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## Dr. Strangeputer...

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I'd been waiting for that, and I really let him have it. "Oh, yeah?", I snapped crisply, "Uh, well, uh, er, um, well, I, errrrr, oh, yeah?"

And, having demolished him with that crushing sally, I followed up with my best in months: "So what?". I'm not sure he heard me over his laughing, however - he must have thought of something funny to overcome his dismay at being bested in the verbal joust.

P.C. Maven's reaction to the idea of upgrading the PCjr is typical of many in the Personal Computer world. Most see the Junior as a failed experiment by IBM that ranks somewhere around the Sinclair and Texas Instruments offerings of the early 80's, but this isn't really the case. The PCjr had (and has) some oddities and peculiarities that set it apart, but there are very few of these compared to the similarities it has with the rest of the IBM and clone spectrum. Since this is a short article, I won't detail the similarities and differences in more than a few instances, but most of the problems can be overcome easily with a simple patch or fix.

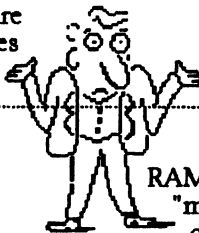
Most people who give the matter any thought at all assume that IBM "dropped" Junior in 1985, but this isn't quite accurate - what happened was that IBM removed the PCjr from its "currently marketed" list and ceased manufacturing it, but it remained on the list of computers still in the inventory. Whatever their reasons may have been, Big Blue did not drop the PCjr from its inventory until February, 1989 - that's right, 1989 - and has pledged parts and warranty support for five years from that time. In case you haven't noticed, this means that the PC was

actually dropped from the product line before the PCjr, despite the perception that the opposite is true.

"Still," Maven expostulates, "the PCjr was a design and marketing disaster from the first. How about that infamous 'Chiclet' keyboard? The lack of expandability? The program incompatibilities?"

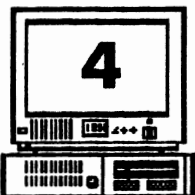


Well, we're glad you asked those questions, Maven. Most Junior owners have never even seen a 'Chiclet' keyboard, but it was introduced with good intentions and bad market research (as is frequently true of IBM offerings), and was unceremoniously dropped in favor of an improved model that has been durable and trustworthy for years. The new keyboard incorporated several design features that were unusual at the time, but which have since appeared in many of the more heralded models since then.



The PCjr came out with 64 KB of RAM and two expansion slots, plus a "modem" slot. One of the expansion vacancies was immediately filled with a second 64 KB memory expansion, leaving only one available for other uses. Since IBM did not intend for Junior to be competitive with the PC, this slot was probably deliberately designed so that it would not accept PC or XT expansion cards - only those designed specifically for the PCjr. This was a considerable handicap, but third-party designers dove right in and came up with a plethora of add-ons that can use the single expansion slot. (Many are now filled with controller card/memory expansions designed espe-

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cially for Junior.) Since the IBM PCjr Internal Modem is not really satisfactory, many designers have created expansion products that interface at the Modem slot. Other products are attached using "sidecars", which are plugged into a bus on the right side of the computer, and which can be stacked so that several expansions may be attached at the same time.

"Okay," snarls P.C. Maven with an ugly grin, "now weasel out of the software incompatibility problems." We'll try.

First, let me say that 90% of the programs that most PCjr owners want to run will do so right out of the box with little or no extra effort. Probably 7% of the remaining 10% will run with a little "tweaking", such as installing patches or hardware fixes; but there may be as much as 3% of the total MS-DOS software that simply won't run on a PCjr. Mostly, this is caused by the Junior's lack of Direct Memory Access (DMA), or by the unique PCjr video arrangement, and simply is not worth the effort to overcome when you consider the size of the potential market. DOS 4.x, OS/2 and all its derivatives; most hard drive backup programs are in this last category, and it's unfortunately one that is growing as OS/2 gains in popularity.

(For that reason, many of us are considering the new \$325.00 upgrade to an 80286 processor as a short-term solution to the problem. Let's face it -why would anyone spend even \$1000 on an AT-class clone any more when you know that you're going to have to have an 80386 to run the stuff that's being written now for release in the future? And that's why I'm considering an 80286 upgrade for my obsolete, obstinate, beloved Junior. Stick that in your Model 50 and process it, Maven.)

Just keep in mind that the PCjr was conceived and marketed as a "home computer", one that would run the kids' games and let the family do low-level word processing, budgeting, and such domestic tasks. It does a very nice job of that - so much so that Tandy Corporation has made a substantial sum of money with its near-clone of the PCjr, the 1000-series computers. IBM, perceiving this as a lucrative market, has tried to re-enter with its "PS/2jr", the Model 25, but has made some of the same mistakes and several new ones in doing so. The point is this: the PCjr is not and never was a machine for the "power user"; it was and is an admirable little computer that does most things as well as any other 8088 powered computer around, and does some things better than most. Don't try to compare it with the latest "screamer" from Compaq, because they aren't competitive with one another.

If you need a home computer, consider Junior - the price is right these days. Just don't try to run Windows 386 on it. And if you see P.C. Maven in his Carrera, take cover quickly. He can't drive that, either.



### JUNIOR STUFF FOR SALE-

4 PCjr Joysticks @ \$15 each or 2 for \$25  
1 Parallel Printer Port sidecar - \$50  
1 Cable connector for TV - \$10

Call David Blagg at 671-0500 evenings.



ECLIN CONNECT, VERSION 2.0 - A GOOD  
TELECOMMUNICATION PROGRAM

Software Product Review by J. Wesley Mercer, Sr.

SUMMARY

You have the need to efficiently and productively access CompuServe, GENie, Dialog, other sophisticated information services, your local area networks, and the BBS networks, I believe a new telecommunications software Eclin Connect will meet your requirements. Reasonably priced at \$49.00, this software is a full featured communications package which will facilitate full time broad band access to other computer systems, and the accessible network.

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

Eclin Connect will operate on any IBM compatible 100% compatible with 384K of RAM; mixed or matched 5.25 and 3.5 Drives or one Drive and a hard drive, which is recommended; MS-DOS or PC-DOS version 3.0 or higher; printer, monochrome, or LCD monitor; Hayes Smartmodem or compatible modem; and an optional Microsoft Mouse or 100% compatible mouse with serial or bus interface.

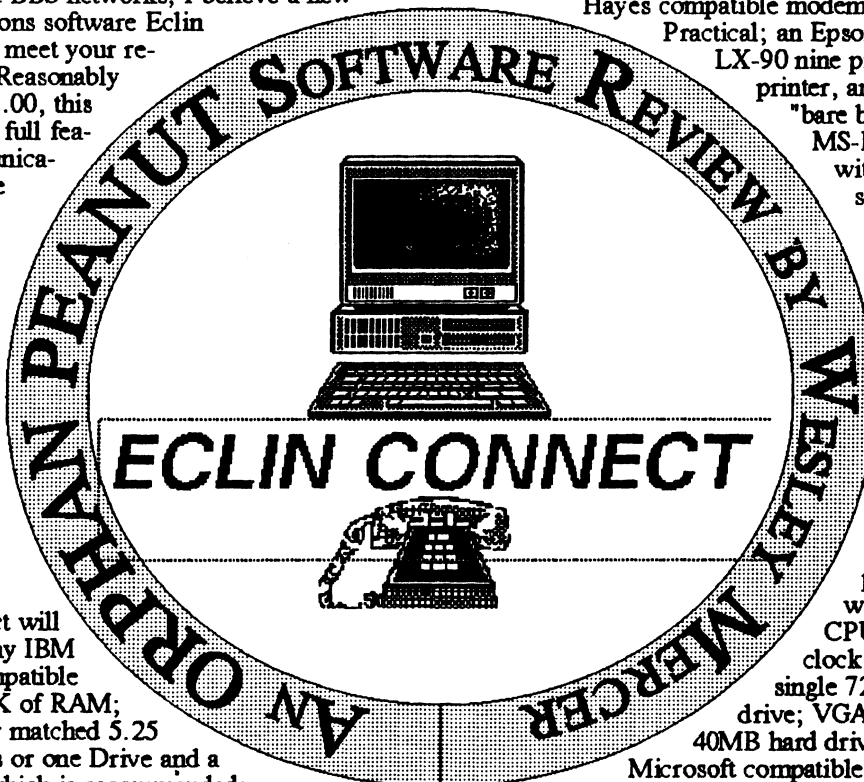
The first phase of this review was conducted using a PCjr which has been enhanced with a Racore Companions(TM) Drive Two Plus sidecar (memory expansion to 640K, a second 360K drive, and DMA); a 2400 bps stand alone

Hayes compatible modem by Practical; an Epson Spectrum LX-90 nine pin dot matrix printer, and a 78K "bare bones" 3.1 MS-DOS "Boot" with only essential Racore memory management commands.

The second phase of this review was conducted using a Headstart IBM compatible PC with a 286SX CPU; 25mhz clock speed; a single 720K 3.5 drive; VGA Monitor; a

40MB hard drive; a Microsoft compatible mouse; MS-Dos 3.1; and a LX810 Epson, nine pin dot matrix printer.

QUICK INSTALLATION





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Eclin Connect uses an INSTALL program which copies the software either to a floppy disk or to a hard drive. During installation there are a series of logical and easy to follow prompts which guide the user to configure the software to their particular system. Through THE OTHER SETTINGS MENU default settings are prompted for: Designating TERMINAL TYPE; Setting LOCAL ECHO and LINE FEEDS; Customizing the PRINTER, SCREEN and MOUSE SETTINGS; Assigning special functions and tasks to KEYBOARD SETTINGS (MAC and naming default file names for the FILE/DIRECTORY SETTINGS; Establishing MEMORY MANAGEMENT instructions for BACKGROUND FILES TRANSFER and executing external programs during files transfers; Activating the USAGE RECORD, SOUND EFFECTS, and certain automatic features of the Zmodem protocol.

#### TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

I called Eclin Technical Support and met Chris who quickly developed a fix to overcome the fact that the Eclin Connect manual did not include instructions for installation on a computer with two 360K disk drives and no hard drive like my PCjr. In a two drive PCjr system with the "install" program in the "B" drive and a blank formatted disk in drive "A", the "install" program cannot access the DOS file it needs without an adaptive change to the "boot" disk. Chris told me to modify my "boot" disk to include commands to set up a virtual drive "C" in RAM with 64K; copy the DOS Command.com to the virtual drive "C"; and to set Comspect=C:\Command.com so that the "install" program would look for the DOS system files on the virtual drive "C". Of course no such

change is required for any system having a hard drive. I give A++ to Eclin and Chris for their customer support!

#### UP AND RUNNING

After problems installing Eclin Connect on my PCjr were corrected, all of Eclin Connect's features were easily utilized on both the PCjr and the Headstart 286 systems. Eclin Connect uses character based short cut key commands with sufficient information on the screen that no further reference is really necessary. However, highlighted bar menus constantly remind the User of the status of the current operation and the highlighted, on line F1 help key quickly brings up plain explanations, practical tip sufficiency of related information to permit the most inexperienced to make the right move. HELP FILES Help screens are readily available and are clear and easily understood. The HELP screens are organized very much like the Users Guide and are functionally responsive, clearly written, and contain useful tips and practical suggestions. The HELP screens are as comprehensive as the 103 page handbook size User's Guide. The GUIDE is logically organized, well written, and easily understandable.

#### USAGE RECORD

To conduct this review, I logged a little over nineteen hours of Eclin Connect use during a seventeen consecutive day period. Twenty-eight local and long distance systems were connected manually and by SCRIPT sixty eight times. One system was connected using SCRIPT to automatically upload a message, to download a file, and to connect and disconnect the system beginning at a preset time. I know this because it is recorded in my USAGE RECORD. The Usage Record and Phone Book functions work

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ther as a relational database. As systems are added from the Phone Book, selective data from the Phone Book together with all the connection activity facts are transferred to the Usage Record. This function records the full name and the number of the systems connected together, the dates, beginning and ending times, total connection times, number of connections made for each system, and all files active including full file name, its drive, a directory. The more active the systems connection activity, the more valuable this Usage Record function becomes.

## PHONE BOOK

PHONE BOOK automatically alphabetizes systems as they are first entered. As systems are added for dialing from the PHONE BOOK the systems' full identity and configuration settings are displayed on a split screen. Each PHONE BOOK entry displays the total number of calls, the date called, beginning and ending times of call, and the total time usage for all calls made to that system. While in this split screen, customized changes to a system's PHONE BOOK entries may be made and these are automatically copied to the PHONE BOOK. The reverse is also available, in that, while in use the PHONE BOOK may be changed and the changes are automatically available for current in use applications.

SCRIPT may be included in a system's PHONE BOOK entry for automatically accessing another system. Transfer Protocols, if different than the default Protocol, may be included in the system's entry.

## SCRIPT

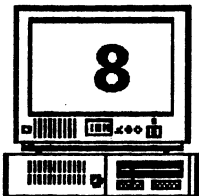
SCRIPT makes repeated calls to a given system, automating those calls is a tremendous help to

Users. Automating access to systems is easily accomplished with the Eclin Connect SCRIPT utility. With SCRIPT one may simply log on automatically; or, one may elect to log on, select one's favorite conference, and then proceed to upload or download bulletins, messages, and files, and then log off the system with all the steps being automated by using SCRIPT. What is more, one may preset the time for one's computer to automatically execute SCRIPT while one sleeps at a time when the phone rates are lower. SCRIPT may be prepared from scratch using common sense commands that are easy to remember.

SCRIPT may also be recorded while connected to another system and later these recordings may be edited in the built in EDITOR to perform the functions one may wish to have performed automatically. SCRIPT may be added to the PHONE BOOK entry for a specific system and automatically activated with the dial function. A SCRIPT WATCH function permits easy debugging, monitoring, and trouble shooting a SCRIPT. Syntax errors are displayed during PLAYBACK for correction and some errors of syntax such as punctuation are automatically corrected during PLAYBACK.

## TEXT EDITOR

To me one of the more productive of all the Eclin Connect's features is the built in TEXT EDITOR. I used the EDITOR primarily to write messages for later upload. Text created within the EDITOR may be sent directly to another system without first having to save the text to a file on another disk. ASCII files may be loaded into the EDITOR to be edited and sent by file trans-



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fer to another system. The EDITOR may be used to edit or create text. While the EDITOR is not a full function word processor, it does provide fifteen full screen editing functions.

#### FILE TRANSFER

File transfers may be accomplished with any of eight transfer protocols; Xmodem, Xmodem-CRC, Ymodem, Ymodem-Batch, Ymodem-G, Ymodem-G-Batch, Zmodem, and ASCII. Easy to remember character based short cut keys and menus which one may use intuitively activate the down load or up load of files. As the transfer takes place there is a status window which clearly reflects the transfer progress.

#### TEXT REVIEW

Text Review is a function which permits review of previously transmitted screen text. While still in Eclin Connect, even if disconnected from a system, the last transmissions from the disconnected system may be recalled for review or to save it to a file.

#### BACKGROUND FILES TRANSFER

This is a great function. It is particularly useful for those who have a hard drive and who may copy from such services as CompuServe, GENie, or Dialog. Sometimes long unavoidable waits occur while large files are being down loaded. With this function, the computer may be used productively while transfers are being accomplished in the background.

**MACROS** Over forty MACROS may be defined using the F2-F10 function, control, shift, and alternate keys alone and in combinations. Incorporating MACROS into manual operations and SCRIPT reduces keystrokes and greatly in-

creases the speed of access to other systems.

#### MOUSE SUPPORT

The Microsoft compatible mouse is an optional, but, highly desirable feature of Eclin Connect. I loved the speed and ease with which the mouse wished me through all of the Eclin Connect functions. While using the mouse I was able to take a number of short cuts by clicking on the status bar buttons, the highlighted characters in words, the highlighted keywords in menus and the scroll bars which are abundantly available in all Eclin Connect functions.

#### PRODUCT PRICE AND GUARANTEE

In addition to free User support Eclin states that it offers a 30 day money back guarantee. At the present time, the price of this communications program is \$49.00 plus \$5.00 for shipping and handling of one copy. If you wish additional information about this product or you wish to place an order write or phone:

Eclin Technology  
172 West State Street  
P.O. Box 2041  
Trenton, N. J. 08607  
Tel: 800-22-ECLIN  
Tel: 609-393-0577  
Fax: 609-393-1990

#### COMMENTS ARE WELCOME

Your questions and comments regarding this review are welcome. You may reach me by leaving me a message on the PCjr BBS.

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My mother fell down the basement stairs a couple of weeks ago and, as her surgeon said, "lusted up her knee and leg big-time". She's okay - no complications, no problems, all we need is time for the healing process to complete itself - but I've been pretty busy driving my 87 year old father around. That huge block of several hours each day combined with several other commitments made "before the fall", have prevented me from putting in the time needed to do a good job on *The PEANUT*. I'm very grateful for Wes Mercer's review of *Ecliptic Connect* - it made putting this issue together much easier, since I didn't have to go out and buy BBS and other newsletter files to get a readable article. I certainly didn't have time to write one, either, even if I had had a good idea of what I was going to say, which I didn't. (As you may have noticed, my syntax seems to have slipped a bit as well.)

I got a letter the other day from a member who lives in another state. She's very interested in the mechanics of a program to provide computers

those unable to buy one for themselves. I'm in the process of putting together a reply, but I'd like to say that I really appreciate feedback on my activities. It helps us to decide what is effective and what isn't; what should be continued and what shouldn't be; and what you, the PCjr owner and user, feel is important. As we've learned many times in the past, we can't give you what you want and need if we don't know what you want, and the effort required to be interesting, helpful, and informative is magnified when we don't know what our members feel about whatever we're doing.

I'm particularly interested in the reactions to the PCjr donations program. The more I talk about it and hear comments about it, the better I feel about it. I hope you do too, and I consider donating your Junior to this or another deserving cause if and when you finally grow it. Many owners are determined to ex-

tract some kind of compensation for their Juniors, but most have far

higher expectations than current market conditions warrant. In other words why not just donate it and receive the satisfaction of doing something that will be appreciated for years to come? And, yes, I'm going to do so myself. I have a Junior that's sitting on a shelf in my office that is going to be my contribution as soon as I can arrange with Dan Lambert (404/381-1893) to hand it over. I don't really have any idea of how well (or even if) it works, but it'll be useful as a source of parts even if it doesn't.

Several people (well, okay, a couple) have asked me about GEOWORKS, the program I referred to in last month's issue. What is it, how does it work, and why am I in such a snit because I can't get it loaded on a PCjr? Fair enough.

GEOWORKS is a GUI (Graphical User Interface) that, when loaded on a hard disk, allows the user to use the

"point-and-shoot" method of file and program management. It superficially resembles both the MicroSoft WINDOWS and Macintosh environments, but it really isn't exactly like either of them. The reason I got so excited about it is that it works in as little as 512K of RAM; unlike WINDOWS or IBM's OS/2, you don't have to mortgage your house or sell your firstborn to pay for the hardware to operate this program. It also runs - slowly, to be sure, but hey, we're PCjr Users; we understand slow - on an 8086/8088/V20 processor, and that's nice. It does require EGA or better for color operation, but we're now only a sidecar away from that, and many of us could live with the monochrome if we had to. We'll have an article about it next month, I think, but in the meantime you might want to take a look at it in a store or at a friend's house. GUI is the future of software, and this might be Junior's path to GUI. Stay tuned.

**GOOBER PEAS**  
EDITOR'S PAGE



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# A > DIR \_

by David Blagg, President, APCjrUG

Several times in this column I have made reference to those individuals who serve the group in one official capacity or another. I have thanked them for specific accomplishments or expressed gratitude for their ongoing efforts. For I am aware that serving the APCjrUG often means extra time apart from the regular meeting taking care of business. It also means coming early for the regular officers' meeting. And perhaps two or three times a year there is a special called officers' meeting. They have done--and continue to do--a good job.

There is one person, however, who began making a quiet contribution to our group about three years ago. The impact is obvious and important, but rarely recognized. That person is Stan Mislou.

When our group got started a few years ago,

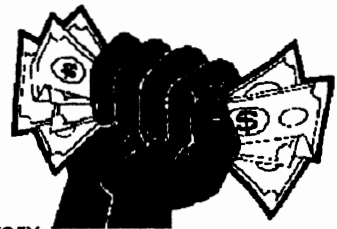
there was a PCjr placed at the head of a dining room table. The entire membership would sit around the table and address the guest of honor. That custom was abandoned in 1988 with the rapid growth of the group. We explored several alternatives and tried two or three of them. None met our needs for one reason or another. At the time Stan was a new member himself; he understood our problem and realized he had a possible solution.

Stan offered the use of his business conference room for our group meetings. In that moment of goodwill we obtained space with table and chairs, parking, and a convenient I-85 location. All he has asked in return is that we not smoke when we are there, and pick up after ourselves when we leave.

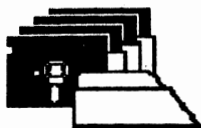
Thanks, Stan. The APCjrUG is grateful for your generous contribution to our purpose.

## **QUICK 'N EASY TAX HELP**

It's just about Tax Time again, and APCjrUG member Don Fourman has an offer for members of the Group that you may want to consider. Don got hold of a small (384K, 2-floppy) Spreadsheet application called CRUNCHER a while back and set out to create a simple Income Tax worksheet on it. He says it's in Lotus 1-2-3 format, so if you have a Junior version of that program or any other that uses the .WKS format, it should run very well - you simply plug in the appropriate numbers for income, deductions, and the like, and the program calculates your tax. You can't print out an IRS-acceptable Form 1040 with it, but it only takes about 10 minutes to copy the information to an acceptable form, and you can't beat the price - it's free! It'll be available through the Library and as a download from the PCjr WORKSHOP after March 5, so if you'd like to do some taxes and learn some spreadsheet stuff, take a look! Don points out that CRUNCHER can be found at the \*\*\*\*\* Software store on Jimmy Carter Avenue, Norcross, for \$10.00, so that, too is a good deal.x



*APC jrUG*



**LIBRARIAN'S CHOICE: Disk of the Month**

**Don Fourman's CRUNCHER/LOTUS Tax Worksheet (See page 10)**

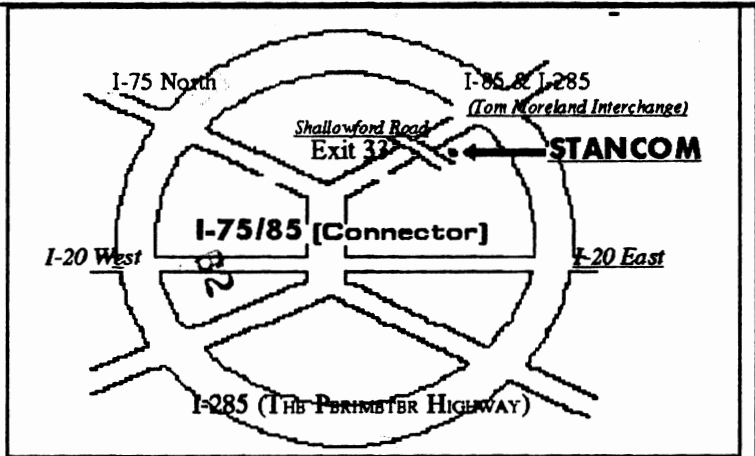


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# GETTING THERE

If you're outside the Perimeter (I-285): Just follow I-285 around Atlanta until you reach the *Tom Moreland Interchange (I-285 and I-85 North)*. Go South on I-85 toward Atlanta until you reach *Exit 33, Shallowford Road*. Exit onto Shallowford Road and turn left to cross over I-85. Immediately past the traffic signal on the *East* side of



the overpass you will see a building on the left with *STANCOM* in large letters on the front of it.  
If you're inside the Perimeter (I-285): Get on I-85 heading North from the city. Watch for the *Shallowford Road exit, Number 9 33*, and leave the Interstate highway there. Turn right on Shallowford Road, get in the left lane and prepare to immediately turn left into the *STANCOM* parking

## The Orphan Peanut

6575 Amberglades lane  
Atlanta, GA 30328

