

The Orphan Peanut

THE CHRONICLE OF THE ATLANTA PCjr USERS GROUP

Volume 2, Number 8

Price: \$25.00

December, 1992



PCJR SIG!

The APCjrUG is suddenly the PCjr SIG of the Atlanta PC Users Group. How'd we get from there to here? And is that bad? Or good? Some reflections and analysis await you inside Ye Last Peanut.



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**.

~ OFFICERS, 1991-1992 ~



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Dear PCjr Owners,

Welcome to the Atlanta PC Users Group. We're delighted to have you as new members and we hope you'll find that we offer enough benefits that you'll renew your membership when this current one expires. We understand that the PCjr - and the PCjr owner - is unique in many ways and we'll try to offer the kind of support that you require.

Most of the advantages to membership in APCUG are discussed elsewhere, but I'd like to emphasize one of our most helpful, the nationally recognized COM1:Atlanta Bulletin Board System. We plan to maintain a PCjr Conference and File Area on our BBS, along with the huge selection of other files available for download and the national and local Conferences on almost any subject. You may connect with the BBS at any of the standard baud rates, including the now rare 300-baud, so if you have only the PCjr Internal Modem, you won't be locked out.

We haven't worked out the details of the PCjr Special Interest Group (SIG) as of this writing, but as they are decided on they will be published in LPT1:Atlanta, our newsletter, and posted to our Voice Information Line at (404) 393-1629.

Again, welcome to the PCjr SIG of the Atlanta PC Users Group!

Jack Bolton, President



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A > DIR

by David Blagg, President, APCjrUG

So this is it. One more time I turn on my PCjr, put in the APCjrUG disk, and call up the file named ADIR.MSK. It gets me started with the title and by-line. The rest is up to me.

But I have already shared my many thoughts about our group, where we have been, and where we are going. That is history. There is not much left to go.

The Atlanta PC User Group--the big group--has welcomed our members as part of the transition through dissolution of the PCjr group. On behalf of the APCjrUG, I am grateful for the warm response from APCUG President Jack Bolton, the officers and members. You will hear more from them soon.

We will be supported for a while as an active SIG of the big group. In a few months there will be a review of our ongoing activities and a new decision made regarding the level of SIG

support.

The activities we supported as a user group are scheduled to be shut down. This is the last issue of the *Orphan Peanut* as we have known it, and the jrWorkshop BBS will disconnect on December 31. There are plans to provide a PCjr Conference on the APCUG BBS system, but they are not final as this is written. Our library will be included in the donations to a local shelter for the homeless. And after we attend to our final expenses, all remaining funds will be turned over to the APCUG.

That's it. I send my "thanks" for good friendship to all of our members--past and present--who joined us in the journey of the last few years. I have special warm regards for our officers, and "thanks" for their special efforts.

Since this is not really a "good-bye," I will paraphrase the memorable Jimmy Durante and simply say, "Good night, PCjr, where ever you are."

In Sympathy

The Atlanta PCjr Users Group would like to extend our heartfelt sympathy to one of our Founding Members, SysOp Terry Markert, on the tragic loss of his son, Jamie. Nothing can take away the pain, but he and Donna are in our thoughts and prayers.



COMMENT

AND THEN THERE WAS ONLY ONE...

by Bob Gauthier, Editor of the Newsletter of the Central Connecticut PC (PCjr) Group

Editors Note: Bob Gauthier and his newsletter have been one of the constants in the ever-shifting map of the PCjr's fortunes. We thought he summed up the PCjr experience about as well as we've seen it, so as part of our exit we'd like to pass on his comments. Enjoy them, and thanks for everything, Bob!]

7 years ago there were literally hundreds of PCjr user groups scattered across the United States. Virtually every major city had at least one, and more often than not, two PCjr groups. IBM had just pulled the plug on the junior and users were forced to pull together on their own to gain the support that they needed and deserved.

During the years that followed, believe it or not, the popularity of the junior actually grew. There were so many users that were not content with letting the junior do what it was designed to do (very little). They wanted to push

junior. far beyond that. They wanted junior to become a machine that one could do more than just play cute games on.

When hardware and software vendors caught wind of this they all realized that there was a bunch to be made in a marketplace where there were over half a million potential buyers.

Soon you could see products that made jr. behave more and more like its big brother, the IBM AT. Sure, with each of these new enhancements you had to know little tricks to get the junior to perform with them but just the fact that you could get them to run with, say, a hard disk or a second floppy drive gave the user a sense of accomplishment that is far too complex to put into words.

When new technology was developed for the rest of the industry, somewhere, somehow, somebody would come along and design a way to make that technology work on a PCjr. That "never give up" attitude gave the PCjr users a reputation of being strongest diehards that the computer industry has ever known - or ever will know, for that



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matter.

But things began to happen in the computer market. First there was the 386 machines. With these new machines on the market the prices of 286 machines began to drop. With all the effort by third party vendors put towards making the junior a 286 machine doing all the things that a "true" 286 machine at almost the same speed, pricing began to come into focus. For what you would spend to upgrade the junior to a 286 machine you could go out and buy a "true" 286 machine and eliminate having to know any special "tricks" to get it to run; compatibility was not an issue on a "true" 286.

But I believe that the real straw that broke the camel's back was when the 486 machines hit the market and the industry started pushing the dreaded program called Windows.

To make Windows run properly you need at least a 386 machine with TONS

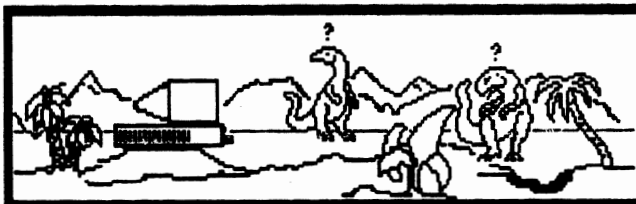
of hard disk space and TONS AND TONS of extended memory. These are some things that the junior will never have.

But you might be saying "so what, I don't need a 386 machine and I don't

want to run Windows". That's fine, but with the 486 machines on the market and the next generation

586 machines on the horizon, vendors are just about giving away 286 machines (if you can find somebody that still sells them). This poses the question of cost effectiveness. In the marketplace today you could actually pay less for a brand new 286 machine complete with all the trimmings than it would cost you to upgrade your present PCjr to a comparable machine without the question of compatibility.

Now don't get me wrong. I'm not knocking the junior. It was and still is a fine machine. I still own mine (though it's not my primary machine) and most likely will hang onto it until it dies. I just gave you that brief PCjr history lesson so that you might better





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Understand what I am about to say, or at least understand why what I am about to say has come to be.

Like I said at the start of this story, in 1985 through about 1990 there were hundreds of PCjr groups nation wide all bonded together with one thing in mind. That was to keep the junior alive and make it do far more than it was designed to do. These groups were all successful, but by the end of 1990 there were only a handful of true PCjr groups left.

During 1991 I knew of only 4 pure PCjr groups across the U.S. that were still in existence. Most had disbanded and some had merged with, and become SIGs (Special Interest groups) of larger PC user groups. By mid 1992 that number had dwindled to 2 groups, the Atlanta PCjr User group of Atlanta, GA, and the Eugene PCjr Club of Eugene, OR.

But now there is only one. The Atlanta group announced in their last newsletter that they were planning to call it quits. They were undecided as to what would become of the group (whether to merge with the larger Atlanta PC User Group or disband altogether) and that was to be decided at their October 5 meeting.

Whatever action is taken will become official on the 31st of December, 1992. That's when the Atlanta PCjr Users group, as we know it today, will cease to exist.

It is sad to see a group such as the Atlanta group have to call it quits after so many years. I have reprinted several articles from their newsletter in this newsletter because they always had interesting and helpful articles. They will be missed dearly by myself and by anyone else associated with the PCjr. But like the PCjr itself, even they are a vanishing breed, their legacy will go on forever because deep in our hearts we all know that no matter what happens.....





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THE CLOSEOUT SALE

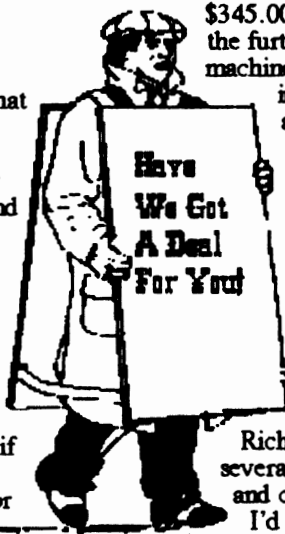
SOME FINAL THOUGHTS ON IMPROVING PCJRS AND PCJUNIORING...

by David Wilson

For those who have been thinking that prices on PCjr products are still awfully high, I've got a couple of suggestions. The first is to write or call a man named Elmer Hungate and ask him to send you his catalog. He's got some of the best prices on new and used PCjr products you'll ever hope to see, and that includes 512K jrHotShot and sidecar memory expansions for \$110. Here's another example: he's offering "previously owned" PCjr motherboards for a measly \$35.00 (if you want a board with the "Tandy Mod" installed, he'll provide that for an additional charge of \$15.00).

There are other offerings, of course, but I'll let you get his catalog to see them. Here's the address: Elmer Hungate; R.R. # 1, Box 103; West Concord, MN 55985; Telephone (507) 527-2363.

Another Really Good Deal is being offered by Systems Peripherals Consultants (SPC), a longtime supplier of quality hard drive expansions for the PCjr. This is a new product, not designed specifically for Junior, called the Quarterpounder, and external hard drive that just plugs into your parallel (printer) port and runs on batteries or AC current. According to his ads, you can get hard disks in all sizes at pretty reasonable prices - since this is a PC accessory that just happens to run on a PCjr, the pressures



of the marketplace apply to keep the price down. A 60-megabyte unit is currently priced at \$345.00, and that is not bad, since you can get the further benefit of swapping it between machines if you need to transfer data. I would

imagine that you could use STACKER or another disk compression utility to effectively double your capacity. It's a lot less expensive than buying a whole new computer, and when/if you DO get a new one you can just unplug the Quarterpounder from your Junior and stick it on the new machine's parallel port. Kinda neat, when you think about it... and it's my understanding that you don't lose the use of your printer port for printing, since a parallel port is included as part of the setup. Bob

Richard, the President of SPC, has for several years had a reputation as an effective and cooperative supplier of PCjr products, so I'd be inclined to believe his claims of product compatibility. SPC's address: SPC; 7950 Silverton Avenue; San Diego, CA 92126; ATTN: Bob Richard; or call (619) 693-8611.

Now that *The PEANUT* is no longer going to be available, I strongly urge all who have not done so as yet to consider subscribing to *jr Newsletter*, the last comprehensive source of information concerning your Junior. Although Publisher Tom Crider has recently found it necessary to raise the price of a year's subscription to a steepish \$29.00, it's still in my opinion a worthwhile expenditure if you want to keep track of developments affecting your Junior. Send your check to: *jr Newsletter*, P.O. Box 163; Southbury, CT 06488.



PCjr SIG: What It Is...

by David Wilson

Okay, now we have become a SIG. What does this mean to us, and what can we expect for the remainder of our APCjrUG Membership? Those are some reasonable questions and I'll try to give you a thumbnail sketch of the more commonly used benefits of belonging to the Atlanta PC Users Group.

GENERAL MEETINGS. These are held on the second Wednesday of each month at the Holiday Inn, Buckhead. This hotel is located in the Tower Place Development at the northwest corner of the intersection between Piedmont Avenue and Peachtree Street, about half a mile south of Lenox Square. The meetings are typically from 7:00 to around 9:00 PM. Here are just some of the reasons for attending:

The Meeting itself is normally worth the effort required to attend. Usually, a manufacturer, publisher, or vendor uses this forum to introduce a new product or a new version of an old one. For example, in recent months we've seen DOS 5, Ami' Pro, and Micrografx' entire line before they were released for sale. Frequently, these presentors will offer the new product at a User Group Good Deal Special Price - and they really are good deals.

There are two "WORKSHOP"-TYPE SESSIONS preceding each meeting - one for Novice users and one for more advanced users. Both of these are conducted using an informal "Q & A" format, and they are extremely useful if you have a specific problem or just want to listen in and learn a little. There's no PCjr-specific

information at these sessions, however.

A JOBS CORNER is available at each General Meeting. This is an area set aside for the exchange of information between potential employers and members looking for jobs in the computer and computer-related industry. There have been a number of positions filled here, so don't overlook this feature if you're job-hunting.

DISK LIBRARY. Although the Group does not presently operate a comprehensive Disk Library, there is an arrangement with a shareware vendor, D.O.S. Library of Macon, GA, who sets up several tables in the foyer. There is an incredible number of disks for sale at the low price of \$5 per disk, and the APCUG gets a percentage of each disk sold.

DOOR PRIZES are offered at each General Meeting. These can be - and often are - extremely costly software or peripheral products, usually one or more package of the programs being demonstrated at the meeting.

THE WATSON VOICE INFORMATION LINE (404 / 393-1629) is available to touchtone telephone users 24 hours each day. A menuing system allows you to access information concerning activities of APCUG and its SIGs with the touch of a button.

THE SIGs. Membership in APCUG confers membership in any of its Special Interest Groups at no additional cost. Such areas of interest as PCjr (naturally) and AT&T computers, WINDOWS and several WINDOWS



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applications, Spreadsheet Users, databases, Genealogy, and a number of other areas of specialized interest have their own groups, which meet on a regular basis and get specific. All you have to do as an APCUG member to participate in these sessions is show up. The *WINDOWS SIG* (aka *The Atlanta WINDOWS User Group*) is a little different in that it has very much the same format and procedures as the General Meeting, including handsome and valuable door prizes.

THE MENTOR PROGRAM is a listing of APCUG Members who are expert in various computer related fields and who are willing to share their expertise with others. A new list is compiled periodically and published in the Group's Newsletter as well as placed in a file on the BBS. You just figure out what you need help in, look up the appropriate name, and give the Mentor a call. It's a big help when you get bogged down in that new program or equipment installation.

We've said in previous issues that plans are to establish a PCjr Files Area and Message Conference on *COM1:Atlanta*, **THE APCUG'S FINE BBS**. Those plans haven't changed, so please put down the following telephone number in your dialing directory: (404) 879-5985. Although there are five different lines going into the different PC's that make up the BBS, you need only to dial this one; the various Nodes are automatically connected as they become available. All will accept calls at 300 baud - although they aren't particularly thrilled at the prospect - but if you have 9600 baud or faster modems you may want to do a little research into just which line or lines is compatible with

your modem (V.32bis works fine on all five, by the way). On your first call to *COM1: in 1993*, leave a message to *Donna Talipsky*, the Treasurer, requesting that you be upgraded to Full Member status; she, or Paul Sponaugle or Bob McDearmid, the SysOp and Assistant SysOp respectively, will do so right away but you have to request the action. You'll find that *COM1:* is one of the best administered BBS around, with a full gigabyte of files available for download, and as a Member you won't have any restrictions on the size or number of files you can download as long as it will fit into your 60 minute time limit.

THE APCUG NEWSLETTER, *LPT1:Atlanta*, is what I always wished I could make the *PEANUT* look like but couldn't manage. It's slick as a whistle and has an amazing amount of information within its pages. Unfortunately, there are no plans for an extensive PCjr area, but Mark Strelecki, the Editor, is perfectly willing to publish an occasional PCjr-only piece if we can get one to him. There will be a monthly wrapup on the doings of the PCjr SIG.

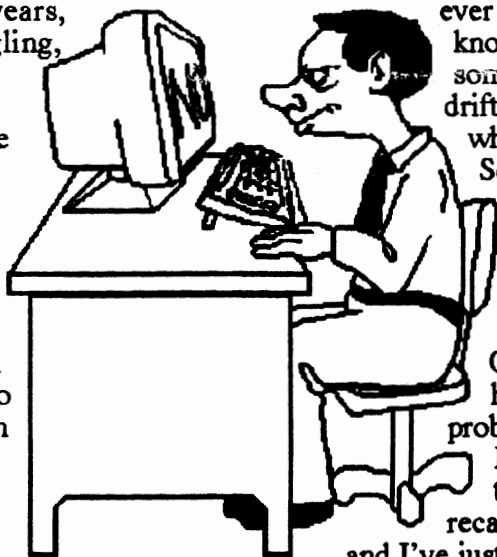
This Users Group is intended to be a source of help and encouragement to newer PC (or PCjr) users as well as a resource pool for those who are computer professionals. There's informal networking of all kinds going on constantly in addition to the more formal SIG setup. As PCjr People, there's absolutely no reason why the Atlanta PC Users Group is not at least as useful and enjoyable to you as our now-defunct APCjrUG once was; but it's up to you to get what you need from it when you need it. ENJOY!

The Last Word

by David Wilson

Well, here it is: the last page of the last PEANUT. I knew from the first time I cranked up First Publisher that this time would come, but it still feels funny to know that next month, for the first time in four and a half years, we won't be struggling, laughing, cursing, sighing, and panicking to get the little darling in the mail in time to be delivered before next month's meeting. I don't know whether to laugh, cry, or suck my thumb so I'll do what I always do in such a situation - living it!

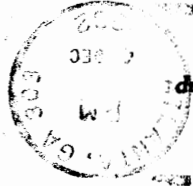
I don't think my conscience would allow me to close out this project without acknowledging the immense contributions made by several people over the years. I won't list them, but folks, you are not likely to see a group of just a few individuals carry an undertaking of this nature as far and as



smoothly as these people have. If you weren't aware of the problems they were encountering, then that just proves my point. Along the line, as I've mentioned before on many occasions, I've been privileged to rub literal and figurative elbows with some of the best people I've ever had the pleasure of knowing, and I'll regret that some of them will inevitably drift in a different direction from wherever it is that I'm going. Some, however, will cross my path again, and I'll be delighted to see them, believe me. Good friends are a precious commodity.

Ol' Junior will stay right over here along the wall and will probably last longer than I will. People just don't understand the loyalty that the recalcitrant little beast inspires, and I've just quit trying to explain it. It's loyal to me and I am to it, and that's all there is to be said on that subject.

For those of you who won't make the portage over to the APCUG, goodbye and good luck. For those who will give it a shot, hey, let's go!



The Chronicle of the Atlanta Pgr Users Group
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