News, Gossip, and Innuendo From the
Western Pacific

PCjr INTRODUCED: in November IBM's long-rumored "Peanut" project was formally made public under the name "PCjr." The "entry level" system, priced at $699, features 64K of memory, an 8088 processor, and a "calculator" style keyboard similar to the original Texas Instruments 99/4. Battery powered, the keyboard uses an infrared beam (instead of a cable) to communicate with the main system box. Two slots for ROM (read only memory) cartridges are also included, but no software or screen. A more expensive version, at $1,269, offers 128K of memory and one slim-line disk drive operating under PC-DOS 2.1. This new operating system is only partially compatible with standard PC-DOS, and cannot support most IBM PC and PC-XT programs (they require more memory). Deliveries for all models will begin "early 1984." [Several analysts said it was criminal for a $32 billion a year company to charge $1300 for a computer with a keyboard inferior to Commodore's $79 VIC-20. Others pointed out the IBM PC and PC-XT have terrible keyboards, too, and 700,000 have been sold. One observer said it was all a practical joke -- "they're holding back the real PCjr to take everyone by surprise." Most competing computer firms were pleased with the PCjr. As an Apple executive put it, "It makes our products look that much more attrative by comparison." Skeptics noted this view might be optimistic, since few IBM customers bother to comparison shop.]

APPLE II MS-DOS PACKAGE: Apple Computer Co. and Rana Systems have jointly announced a package, called 8086/2, which will allow Apple II computers to use the MS-DOS operating system. The package consists of an 8086 co-processor, 256K of memory, and dual 360K floppy disk drives, all priced for around $2000. Neither Apple nor Rana claim this package will allow the Apple II to run IBM PC software, but both did guarantee "data compatibility." The package will be available starting "early 1984." [Some analysts reacted to the announcement by noting that, for $2000, you could buy an entire computer.]

NAVY BUYS ZENITH: Zenith Data Systems has signed a $29.3 million contract to provide a minimum of 6000 desktop micros to the Navy, Marines, and Air Force. The Z-100 series micros will include dual disk drives and feature both an eight bit 8085 running CP/M and a sixteen bit 8086 running either CP/M-86 or Z-DOS (Zenith's version of MS-DOS). The contract also covers applications software, including word processing, spreadsheets, data base managers, graphics packages, and languages. Peripherals available include 10 Mbyte hard disks, Diablo printers, Houston Instruments plotters, and Hayes modems. [A discussion covering the contract and the Z-100/H-100 series micros will be held at the next meeting. Several commands are looking for micros, and the Z-100 is easily one of the best.]

APPLE/FRANKLIN SUIT: The Third Circuit Court of Appeals, in Apple vs. Franklin, destroyed any chance of unlicensed Apple "clones" being legally sold in the U.S. Franklin claims it will fight Apple's damage claims in the lower courts, but has privately suggested it may drop the Apple market entirely and go after IBM. [In spite of the ruling, Franklins continue to sell well. Most store owners were unaware Franklin had lost, and had made no plans for selling other machines.]

MS-DOS SYSTEM FROM TANDY: In November Radio Shack announced the TRS-80 Model 2000, an 8 MHz 80186-based machine operating under MS-DOS, featuring 128K (expandable to 768K), two 720K floppy disks, and many other standard features, for $2750. Radio Shack has made a point of stressing this is not an "IBM PC clone," noting the Model 2000 offers higher graphics resolution, much more disk storage, and, because of the advanced 80186 chip, is between three and twenty times faster than the 8088-equipped IBM PC. Initial software offerings include MS-Windows (Microsoft's answer to VisiOn and Lisa), Microsoft-Word, dBASE II, Multiplan, several languages, and around two dozen business packages, games, and utilities.
[Brochures on the new Model 2000, as well as computer catalogs covering the rest of Radio Shack's line -- the Model 4, 12, 16, 100, Color Computer, and Pocket Computer series -- will be available at the next meeting.]

COMPUTER ABANDONMENT: A recent survey by Link Resources Corp. discovered 25% of all personal computer owners were not using their computers. A breakdown by brand showed 36% of Atari owners, 20% of TI owners, and 19% of Apple owners had stopped using their machines, compared to only 13% of IBM PC owners and 11% of Radio Shack owners. A similar study for InfoWorld suggests the reason might be

ease of use and performance, as only 9% of those who spent $1000 or more on a system abandoned them, while 50% of those who paid less than $300 have stopped using their systems.

DONATIONS: Recent additions to the club include a large number of magazines and several dozen cassette tapes filled with programs for Radio Shack computers. The donor of the tapes may, depending on the POM (Phase Of the Moon), help transfer programs to Model I, III, 4, LNW-80, or PMC-80 disks.

PRESENTATIONS: The January club meeting will feature a presentation on word processors -- different kinds, what to look for, and what you can do with them. In February, there will (tentatively) be a presentation on new technology and new machines.

Survey

Please help improve the Yokosuka Computer Club by answering the following questions on the enclosed preaddressed card:

1. What would be the best time and day to hold club meetings? (Meetings are presently held the second Wednesday of each month at 7:30 p.m.)
2. Should meetings be held more frequently than once per month? (1, 2, 3, 4, ??)
3. What subjects or projects should the club discuss or undertake?
4. Would you like to help with the operation of the club by giving presentations or holding office?
5. Meetings are currently held at OEC (top floor, Barracks "C"). Do you know of a place which could serve as a more permanent club home?

The next meeting of the Yokosuka Computer Club will be Wednesday, 11 January 1984, at 1930 in the OEC (formerly HRMD), 3rd deck, Barracks "C" (same building as Tours and Ticketing and Stars & Stripes). We need your attendance to set the course of the club.

Thank you.
J.R. Lee, Pres.

Computerese Simplified
[Selections]
© 1981 Lawrence I. Charters
[Reproduced with the author's permission.]

8-BIT MACHINE -- A computer selling for four quarters.

16-BIT MACHINE -- A computer selling for two bucks.

6502 -- The year you will finally pay off your computer.

6800 -- The year you will finally pay off your peripherals.

8080 -- A much larger caliber than .3030.

68000 -- The year your spouse will forgive you for buying a computer.

ACOUSTIC COUPLER -- Lips.

AD/DA -- Computer equivalent of the missionary position.

ADDRESS -- Type of attire worn by some female programmers (and even some males).

ADVENTURE -- Complex game involving puzzles, mazes, uncertain goals, and huge waste of time. Also known as "debugging."

ALGOL -- Husband of Polygol. Their missing daughter is Polygon.

ALGORITHM -- 1. Musical beat used in computer music. 2. Form of birth control used by Algol.

ALTAIR -- 1. A place where computers are married. 2. A place where computers are sacrificed.

ANSI -- Troubled by insects.

APL -- An Apple computer after it has been dropped from the roof.

APPLE -- Computer for hard-core programmers. A PET is a computer for soft-core programmers.

APPLESOFT -- Similar to Microsoft. MICROSOFT -- What your nephew says after melting your computer.

ARRAY -- A blast from a CRT.

ASCII -- Usually used in pairs, it is ideal for travelling down snowy mountain sides.

ASSEMBLER -- Person who puts your computer together after it has been aligned by a computer club. COMPUTER CLUB -- 1. Baseball bat used for aligning data in a computer. 2. The group of people that spilled beer all over your keyboard.

ATARI -- Famous John Wayne movie involving elephants. "ATARI 800" is the large theatre version in 70mm stereo; "ATARI 400" is the 8mm silent version.