

DALLAS ATARI COMPUTER ENTHUSIASTS

VOLUME 6 ISSUE 8 AUGUST 1985





President's Perspective  
Dateline, Dallas: 20Jul85

Hello!

Welcome to the August meeting of DAL-ACE. It was just a few weeks ago since we last met. Even so, many interesting and important things have happened. Read on and I'll share more!

#### September Meeting At The Infomart

Here's the latest scoop on our move to the Infomart. REMEMBER, FROM NOW ON, ALL DAL-ACE MEETINGS WILL BE HELD AT THE INFOMART! See elsewhere in the newsletter for the directions and times.

Information booth. This is the first contact with ANYTHING that you'll have when you enter the Infomart. There will be information booths for each group as you enter the building. GO IMMEDIATELY TO THE ONE MARKED ATARI!

This booth is where you get your badge and can find out the schedule for the day. VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED to man this booth. Please see me or any of the officers if you can give us some time. Remember if EVERYBODY contributes a little then we ALL can enjoy the day a lot.

Badges. You MUST WEAR a badge while in the Infomart. Stop at the information booth on the way in. You'll be given either: a) A permanent badge, if you're a paid-up member prior to August, or b) A temporary badge if you have recently joined or are bringing guests. The permanent badge is yours to keep and must be brought with you each time you visit the Infomart. Temporary badges are good only for the day. Please bring guests and family members!

Vendors. The vendors will be on the first floor in an area designated for them. Ask at the information booth where that area is this month.

Club Sales. Club sales (disks, t-shirts, etc.) will also be on the first floor. Again, ask at the information booth where that area is this month.

Garage Sale. Our garage sale tables will be SUSPENDED FOR THE SEPTEMBER MEETING. This is to allow us a little time to evaluate how our new schedule and home

is working. Stay tuned to the newsletter for an announcement of its resumption.

All meetings. There will be easles set up at key places around the Infomart. They will list the schedules and meeting rooms for ALL meetings for ALL clubs (including us) during that day. Check there for the whereabouts of the meetings. Check also at the information booth if you have questions.

SIGs and Classes. If you are a SIG leader or (in the near future) a class instructor and you want to hold a meeting, please see the Vice President for scheduling a room. If this is to be a continuing event, inform him of that also. It will make his life easier.

Loose children. THERE WON'T BE ANY! You are invited to bring your children to the meeting with you. Remember, you are responsible for their behavior. It is within the rights of the Security Officers, the Dallas Computing Council, or any officer of DAL-ACE to ask an individual to leave if they exhibit unreasonable behavior. This pertains to both adults and children. Please work with us on this.

#### 520ST News

As I write this, I have heard that Atari has shipped the first truckloads of the 520STs to the distributors. They should be in the hands of the retailers when you read this.

The 520STs will be in very limited supply, though. They will include a monochrome monitor and GEM (Graphics Environment Manager) on disk. GEM will NOT be in ROM as has been rumored. I don't know if (or when) there will be any possibility of an upgrade from GEM on disk to GEM in ROM. Stay attuned to our vendors for news.

I have had a limited amount of exposure to the 520ST but what I've seen is impressive. The clarity of the monochrome graphics is superb. The speed of the disk drive (for me) is satisfactory. I only wish I had a few hundred dollars to spend...

#### Change of officers and volunteers

With our emergency elections last month and other people entering and leaving the club, there have been some changes in personnel. Here then, is a rundown on tasks and the people to see.



--- Task or Activity ---	-- Person --
Bulletin Board	Howard Chang
Disk library	Jeff Golden
Newsletter co-editor	John Pellet

Coming Attractions

By Dave Gillen and Morris Stephens

General complaints, compliments and suggestions	Tim Clarke
	Bob Dain
	Roger Markley
	John Olson

Hello there. Welcome to the meeting! This is the column you should check first to see what we are planning for demonstrations, speakers, clinics, and other broohaha.

Your name & address	Tom Burke
Your money	Don Adams
General questions about the bulletin board, disk library or newsletter	John Pellet

We need your help for many of these things. In the Next Month and Future Topics categories, we need volunteers to demonstrate software and hardware. Please help us! Ever used some package that you thought was the greatest thing since sliced bread? Well, demonstrate it!

Meeting demos and scheduling	Morris Stephens
Where the buck stops	me, Dave Gillen

If you feel a bit uncomfortable about talking before a group of folks, don't worry! There's nothing to it. You really do know more than you think!

Closing

Once again, I want to thank you for reading my perspective of things. And remember, you really DO know more than you think! Enjoy your club.

On with the show.

Dave

This Month (3Aug85)

INFORMART MAP  
X MARKS THE SPOT

11:30am, A meeting of the Adventure SIG. This meeting will be held in Meeting Room D.

12:00pm, Demonstration of new disks in the club library. These will be on display at the front of Meeting Room E.

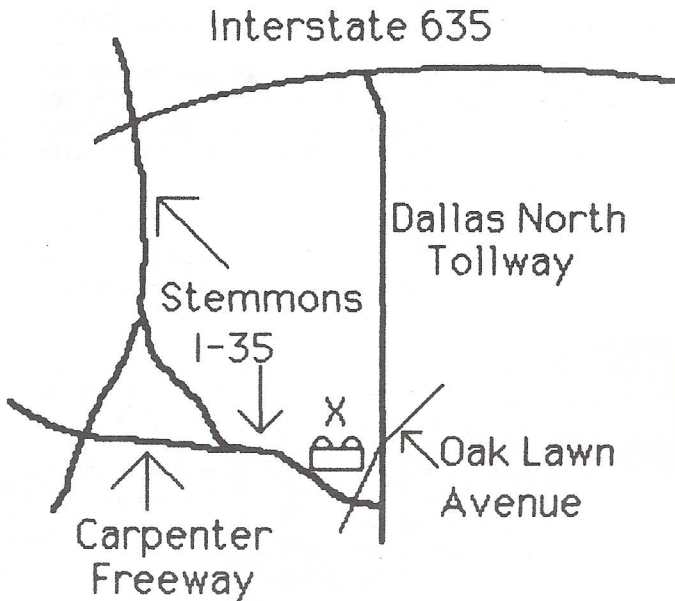
12:15pm, A New Member Get Together. If you're new to DAL-ACE or to computers in general, this is the meeting for you. We hope to answer some of your deepest questions and clear up some of your darkest fears about that expensive plastic box that you bought. This meeting will be held in the Meeting Room D.

12:30pm, The business meeting. This will be held in the Meeting Room E.

1:30pm, Demonstration of Super Sketch. This will be held in Meeting Room D.

2pm, Demonstration of some animation programs. This will also be held in Meeting Room D.

3pm, The Board of Directors Meeting. This will be held in the Meeting Room D.



Be sure to ask plenty of questions at the demonstrations. After all, this is your club. Finally, a big THANK YOU to everyone that gave some time for the demonstrations.

#### Next Month (14Sep85)

The theme for next month is more graphics!

This is a subject that is nearly inexhaustible. We will continue in September with demonstrations of various screen dump programs.

There is also the possibility that a mystery guest speaker may preempt these demonstrations. At press time we don't know which will happen but both promise to be a good time.

#### Future Topics

At press time we were in the process of changing positions. We don't know exactly what the offerings will be for the next few months. As always, though, it should be a good time.

Again, if you have something that you want to see or want to show, please call us at home or talk with us at the meeting.

#### Caveat

All of the above is subject to change at the last minute without notice (yeah, we know but we had to say it). Always check this column for updates or check the "Topics of the Day" sheets that are posted at the meeting.

Thanks and Enjoy.

#### Meeting Schedule

Mark on your calendars these dates for future DAL-ACE meetings:

Saturday, 14 September 1985, 11:30am  
at the Infowart

Saturday, 12 October 1985, 11:30am  
at the Infowart

Saturday, 9 November 1985, 11:30am  
at the Infowart



### COMMUNICATIONS COLUMN

by John Pellet

I would like to thank everyone who signed one of the volunteer lists at the July meeting. We appreciate your willingness to help. You will hear from me. Now here's the news this month.

Newsletter News - Not much is happening this month. Mark is still out of town and we're putting it together without him.

Disk Library News - We now have a new disk librarian. Jeff Golden is going to be replacing George Rodenheiser. Jeff volunteered and I think we can expect improvements in the library. George simply has too little time to do the job he and I wanted. The disks this month are:

#61 - WINNER, a 317 sector graphics demo. This is the winner of Antic's color-the-cover contest. Also included are the DOS 2.5 utilities (SETUP, DISKFIX, & COPY32) which are now also on #56 (the DOS 2.5 and MAGIC LANTERN disk). These utilities were not on the original #56 disk.

#62 to #64 - MOVIE PLAYER and multiple movie files. For additional information see Steve Supinski's article elsewhere in this issue.

BBS News - There are now 106 members with passwords. We've added about 35 new member passwords since June 1.

In the month of June about 950 calls were made to the BBS. Total usage was about 8 hours per day, with 70% of that time between 4pm and 2am. Almost three-quarters of the time the interval between calls was less than 10 minutes.

Downloads are now restricted to 3 per session. Also, users must upload a file or leave 2 messages for every 9 downloads. Both of these changes should encourage submissions.

If you haven't signed on recently you will see additions to the database section, streamlined sign-on process, and clarified the private mail function.

We hope to increase the disk space available in the near future by 600K. This should allow a larger message area plus more download space online. Stay tuned for future improvements.

BYE FOR NOW!



# ANNOUNCING

THE GRAND OPENING OF

## COMPUTER DISCOVERIES

331 PARK FOREST SHOPPING CENTER

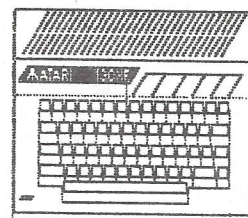
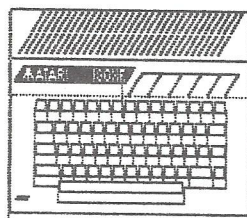
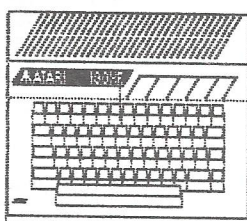
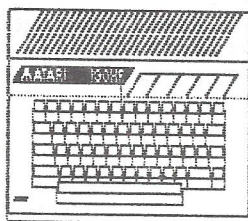
SOUTHEAST CORNER OF FOREST AT MARSH

(INSIDE PARK FOREST TV)

\$5.00 OFF ANY PURCHASE OF \$100.00 OR MORE

WITH THIS AD - AUGUST 5TH THRU AUGUST 17TH

### 520ST'S NOW IN STOCK



CALL: 956-9391

## PRICE LIST

(Effective August 1, 1985)

520ST (w/monochrome monitor).....	\$769.95
520ST (w/color monitor).....	\$969.95
130XE.....	\$179.95
800XL.....	\$ 69.95
600XL.....	\$ 29.95
400 (w/16K).....	\$ 24.95
PANASONIC 1091.....	\$274.95
STAR 5610 PRINTER.....	\$259.95
INDUS GT DISK DRIVE.....	\$259.95
1010 Tape Drive.....	\$ 19.95
TEKNIKA MJ-10 COLOR MONITOR.....	\$259.95
EDUCATOR KIT (w/Basic & 410 Tape Drive).....	\$ 19.95
1030 ATARI MODEM (w/Antic Software).....	\$ 69.95
MPP 1000E MODEM (1 ONLY).....	\$ 79.95
1025 DOT MATRIX PRINTER (DIRECT CONNECT, W/FREE PRINTER STAND).....	\$159.95
1027 20CP5 LQ PRINTER (DIRECT CONNECT) W/FREE PRINTER STAND.....	\$159.95
1020 COLOR PRINTER/PLOTTER (DIRECT CONNECT W/PRINT & DRAW GRAPHICS)....	\$ 64.95
CARDCO LQ3 LETTER QUALITY DAISEY WHEEL PRINTER.....	\$174.95
MINDWHEEL (SYNAPSE).....	\$ 34.95
HALLEY'S PROJECT.....	\$ 34.95
WISHBRINGER.....	\$ 24.95
TYPESETTER GRAPHICS & FONT PACKAGE (BETTER & CHEAPER THAN PRINTSHOP)...	\$ 29.95
PRINTWIZ.....	\$ 24.95
MEGAFONT II+.....	\$ 19.95
BASIC TUTORIAL II (5 TAPES, W/MANUALS).....	\$ 19.95
HOMEPAK.....	\$ 34.95
RAMROD XL/KE.....	\$ 44.95
RAMROD XL/KE W/OMNIMON.....	\$ 74.95
PAPER, CONTINUOUS FEED, LAZOR CUT, 250 SHEETS.....	\$ 5.00
** BASIC KE (DOUBLES AVAILABLE MEMORY).....	\$ 74.95



## MOVIE MAKER

### An Easy Way To Animate

by Steven Supinski

For those who enjoy creating animation sequences by computer, Movie Maker is remarkable. Without using Atari's player missile graphics, the Movie Maker program allows up to 6 "actors" on the screen at one time. Each "actor" can have up to 16 completely independent "pages" which an actor "flips through" at a speed(0-16) chosen by the animator. Each actor is independent from the rest and may be directed around the screen at varying speeds under joystick control; all the while flipping through its independent sequence at a unique speed as well.

The program is broken down into 4 parts. First, shapes must be drawn with which to define actors. Each actor can have 16 shapes at most. A preview option is provided which allows the animator to see what the defined sequence looks like at various speeds. If there is anything wrong, the actor can be redefined (his shapes may be rearranged) and any or all shapes may be redrawn. At this time a background is also created. The background in no way affects the performance of the actors, just as if they were player missiles (but they aren't). Handy features include: outlining pieces of a screen and moving them around (duplication and concatenation), zoom, color switch, mirroring, restore, and inserting color. The shapes and background are defined on separate pages, moving images between them is easy.

The second part of the program is the record section. In this section, the animator has 300 frames in which his actors can change positions. It's similar to a video recorder in that you can playback what you record instantly, no waiting for processing. Each actor is recorded separately, one after another, and may be repositioned by frame or rerecorded entirely. The actors movements are controlled by joystick and keyboard. For instance, I may record at a frame rate of 6 (six frames per second) while my joystick moves the actor a distance of 3 pixels per frame and my actor flips through his sequence at a quickness rate of 9. Many variations are possible.

The third section is the smooth section. After an animation sequence is defined it is still slightly jerky. It doesn't have any flicker but the sequencing of the actors is not as smooth as it could be. The smooth section corrects this. After smoothing an animation, it can be played back by the fourth section of the program. Furthermore, the speed of the final animation is alterable even in its finished form. It can even be stopped on any frame or advanced at a very slow speed (one frame at a time).

The program does have limits:

1. Only four colors - What else is new?
2. Sixty-four shapes - Furthermore, all sixty-four shapes have to fit on a single graphics 7 screen. This is obviously a memory problem. Even though the number of shapes is limited to one page, each frame of an actor can be made up of any part of the graphics 7

screen and the actors sequences can be redefined in the middle of a recording, making the number of possible variations limitless.

3. Three hundred frames per animation - Again, a memory problem. The duration of each animation depends upon the frame rate at which it was recorded, the number of frames used, the number of actors on the screen at any given time, and their size. 30 seconds is perhaps a top end for normal speed. But an animation may be made to loop, effectively making it endless.

The only real fault in the program is the manner in which it allows you to draw shapes and backgrounds - with a joystick, pixel by pixel! This can be overcome however, by drawing with Micropainter, Micro Illustrator, or Paint, and then converting the image to a Movie Maker format (a very easy process). I have used this technique to draw sequences of walking, running, skipping, jumping, and shuffling men. To increase the duration of the animation, I video tape each sequence and edit them together with titles and credits as well. Instead of using the program's sound system, I prefer to edit sounds onto the final video tape instead.

Supposedly, the IPS people are working on a new version of the program for the new computers. Already, they have a version for the 800 which works in high resolution with 16 actors, but they don't sell it commercially. It's leased for around \$4000 or contracted out for a percentage of all profits made from the use of the program. I still haven't seen the professional version, but I can't believe that it's that good.

Incidentally, Family Computing is sponsoring a Movie Maker contest. Animations can be sent to the magazine or uploaded to CompuServe. The grand prize is \$300 with 3 previous awards for best animation received to date and runners up. The total prize money is \$1500 and the most that any one person could win is \$900, assuming he had the best animation to date all four times.

To see the program in action, be at the August meeting. I will demo it then.

(EDITOR'S NOTE: Per Steve, Movie Maker is now in the public domain, so it can be found in our library!)

## 8 BIT FOR THE STAR SG10 PRINTER

by Morris Stephens

In upgrading from the old Gemini series printers to the new SG, SD, SR series, many new nice features were added and several dip switches were added to support those features. Unfortunately, the 8-bit on/off dip switch was omitted. Consequently, the 8-bit mode, which is necessary to translate inverted text into readable characters, is addressable only from the computer with the use of control codes. The proper codes are: 8-BIT ON: "ESC >" or [CHR\$(27) CHR\$(62)] and 8-BIT OFF: "ESC =" or [CHR\$(27) CHR\$(61)].



## THREE-COMPUTER WORK-STATION, \$99

by Jeff Golden

Some of you, no doubt, will need a place to park your new 520ST. So, I felt that this was the right time for a work station article.

The station that I'm about to describe is a big one that is capable of holding more than one computer. It can also double as a book case, or as a writing desk. The unit fits compactly up against a wall, and it provides a large amount of storage in a small amount of space.

The main desk top is 80 inches wide, and it comes in several different depths. There are three 18" shelves mounted above the desk top, and all of the horizontal surfaces are adjustable.

The decor is early Phillipine Mahogany Veneer. The unit can be varnished to a furniture finish, or you may choose to paint it.

Like most of the ready-made computer tables, this unit comes knocked down, and you have to screw it together. Total construction time is about two hours, (not counting the painting). Putting it together is so easy, a thirteen year old could do it, so it sounds like a great learning project for a youngster.

If you are still reading this, your next question probably is, "Great. Where can I get one of these big, \$99, work stations?". You haven't seen them in the stores have you?

I would be willing to bet that you have walked past these work stations many times. Every lumber store has a few. For some crazy reason, they call them doors.

You know, the light-weight, hollow-core, interior kind. Tie six of them together and you have a beautiful work station kit. No sawing or sanding necessary.

The doors come in various widths. The eighteen inch doors are perfect for the sides of your work station, and for the shelves. An eighteen inch door costs \$11.99, at Payless, which is less than you would pay for a low-grade closet shelf. Be sure you get the doors with the wooden edges, (some doors come with composition edges).

I used a twenty-four inch door for my desk top, but I now realize that a wider door would have been better.

Doors are cheap, so I will probably go buy a bigger one.

Now comes the beauty of building your own work-station. You can build the station to fit you, and your computer. No ready-made can make that statement.

A typing desk top should be a little lower than a normal table top. To find the most comfortable height, do a little experimenting.

Take two kitchen chairs and some stacks of old magazines. Place the desk top on the chairs and magazines. Get out your computer keyboard, and then proceed to adjust the height of the top, until it is at the best typing position for you. Measure the distance to the floor, and then mark off that distance on the side panels of your station.

Now that you know where the desk top will be, you can figure out where to place the remaining shelves. This will depend on the measurements of your computer equipment, the length of your cables, and your personal needs.

The following is recommended: Allow plenty of space above your components for ventilation, five or six inches above a TV set or monitor, and two or three inches above a disk drive. Disk drives should be at least six inches from the monitor. A good place for them is on a shelf above the monitor. The transformers can be hidden behind the drives. The daisy chain cable coming from the drive may be a little short, but it can be routed to the keyboard by means of an intermediate unit such as, an 850 interface.

There are many ways of fastening the shelves to the sides of the station. I used three-inch brass corner brackets made by Stanley. They came with screws in packages of four, (\$2.99 at Handy-Dan). Fasten the brackets close to the edges of the doors. The hollow center of the door will not hold the screws.

Using screws and brass brackets to assemble the station has several advantages. They look nice, and it will be easy to move the shelves for that next computer. Someday, you may also want to take it apart and move to Atlanta. The assembled station will not fit through a doorway, so a wise move is to assemble the unit in the room where it will be used.

After screwing the sides and shelves together, your unit may still be a little weak in the knees. It may sway from side to side, due to the lack of cross





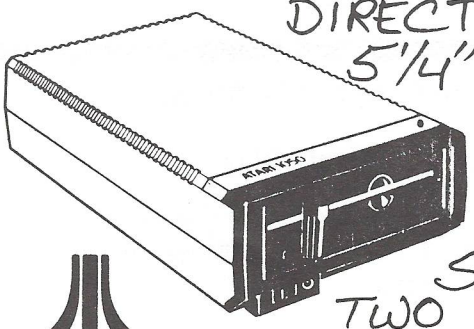
# KOALA PAD FOR ATARI

DRAWING TABLET WITH SOFTWARE!

INCRECIBLE GRAPHICS LEARNING AND RECREATION CAPABILITIES! ALSO GREAT PROGRAMMING TOOL!

**\$39<sup>95</sup>**

# 1050 DISK DRIVE



DIRECT CONNECT 5 1/4" DISK DRIVE! FRONT POWER SWITCH!



TWO PORTS FOR EASY DAISY CHAIN CONNECTION!

SUPER LOW PRICE!

**\$179<sup>88</sup>**

# PRINTSHOP FOR ATARI



NEW!

MAKE FORMAL AND FUN CARDS, LETTERS, AND SIGNS EASILY! COMPLETE WITH STATIONARY!



Bridgerbund Software™

INCRECIBLE LOW PRICE!

**\$32<sup>88</sup>**

# STARTING APRIL

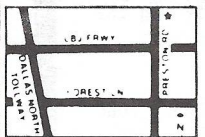
20% OFF ALL RETAIL PRICES ON ALL SOFTWARE!

AN ADDITIONAL 5% OFF WILL BE MADE FOR REGISTERED USER GROUP MEMBERS!

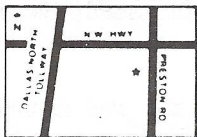
ALL SOFTWARE INCLUDED!

# VIDEO LAND

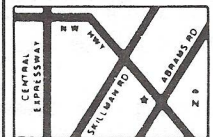
BRAND NAME ELECTRONICS AT LOW PRICES EVERY DAY



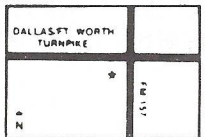
**NORTH DALLAS**  
661-8974  
1340 PRESTON RD.  
NORTH OF LB.  
ACROSS FROM SEARS AUTO



**PRESTON CENTER**  
780-7619  
8301 PRESTON RD.  
7 BLOCK SOUTH OF  
NORTHWEST HWY.



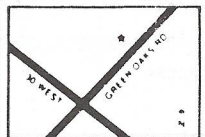
**MEDALLION CENTER**  
348-2836  
309 MEDALLION CENTER  
NORTHWEST HWY AT ABRAMS



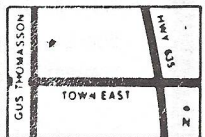
**ARLINGTON, TX.**  
440-8844  
550 LINCOLN SQUARE  
130 & HWY 157 ACROSS  
FROM BLACK EYED PEAL



**HURST, TX.**  
598-1003  
904 MELBOURNE  
ACROSS THE STREET FROM  
NORTHEAST MALL



**FORT WORTH, TX.**  
731-9181  
5827 GREEN OAK RD.  
ACROSS THE STREET FROM  
RIDGMAR MALL



**MESQUITE, TX**  
686-6997  
2131 N TOWN E BLVD  
AT GUS THOMASSON



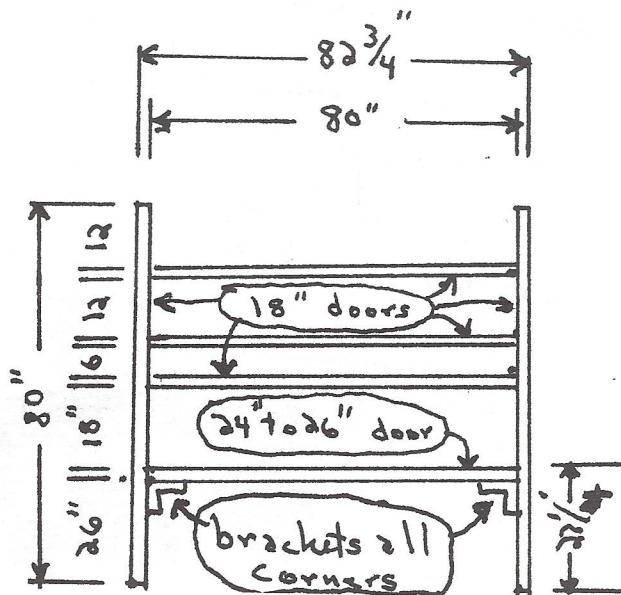
bracing. Cross bracing is provided by nailing a panel on the back. The back panel does not have to be very strong. A quarter-inch thick hard-board panel will do.

The lumber company will be happy to cut off one end of a standard 4' X 8' panel for you. They have a special saw frame for this purpose. The finished size you need is 48 inches by 82 and one-half inches.

You will want to cut some holes in the back panel to thread the cables through. Running the cables behind the panel conceals them from view, particularly the ones that dangle from the upper shelf.

You may want to fasten the unit to the wall so that it cannot be tipped over. Children have been known to climb up on things when they want something. This includes visiting kids, so the danger is there, even if your kids are grown and gone. Never mind the kids, think about what could happen to all those computers.

That about does it. It has taken me longer to write this article than it did to build the work station. I hope that this idea will be of some value to you, as it has been to me. Happy computing.



\*\*\* SIGS \*\*\*

Here are the SIG leaders and their phone numbers. Questions relating to SIG activities should be directed to the appropriate person below. Questions relating to starting a SIG may be addressed to the President.

Adventure SIG	-----	Steven Markley,	231-6918
Beginning BASIC SIG	-	Leo Scott,	681-1791
C SIG	-----	Pat Moore,	557-3713
Communications SIG	--	Ken White,	226-6374
Graphics SIG	-----	Steve Supinski,	243-6888
Pascal SIG	-----	David Miller	391-1926

## RAM DISK FOR THE 800XL

Here are some simple instructions downloaded from Compuserve that set up a RAMDISK in the 800XL. Note the warning on space limitations.

```

<1> BOOT WITH DOS 2.5
<2> POKE 1802,PEEK(1802)+128
<3> GO TO DOS
<4> BINARY LOAD RAMDISK.COM
<5> FORMAT DRIVE 8
<6> WRITE DOS TO DRIVE 8
<7> DELETE DOS.SYS FROM DRIVE 8
<8> GO TO BASIC
<9> POKE 5439,56
<10> GO TO DOS
  
```

If everything has been done correctly, the DOS menu should appear almost instantly.

If you use MEM.SAV, create it on D1: and copy it to D8:. Then delete the D1: version. Having MEM.SAV on D8: makes going to and from Basic super-fast!

COMMENTS: Step 2 adds D8: to the list of active drives. Step 9 tells DOS to look for DUP.SYS on D8:.

CAUTION: D8: has only about 110 sectors available - not the 499 that the directory shows!

If you write more than D8: can hold, it will destroy itself. However, you can restore it by re-formatting D8: and repeating steps 6 and 7.

If you don't need to go back and forth between Basic, you can omit steps 6,7,8,9 - and use the entire D8:  
...JLP



Legs for your Epson  
by Jeff Golden

Some time ago an inventive genius designed and marketed a set of legs to raise an Epson printer 3 or 4 inches off the table top, thereby making room for the paper.

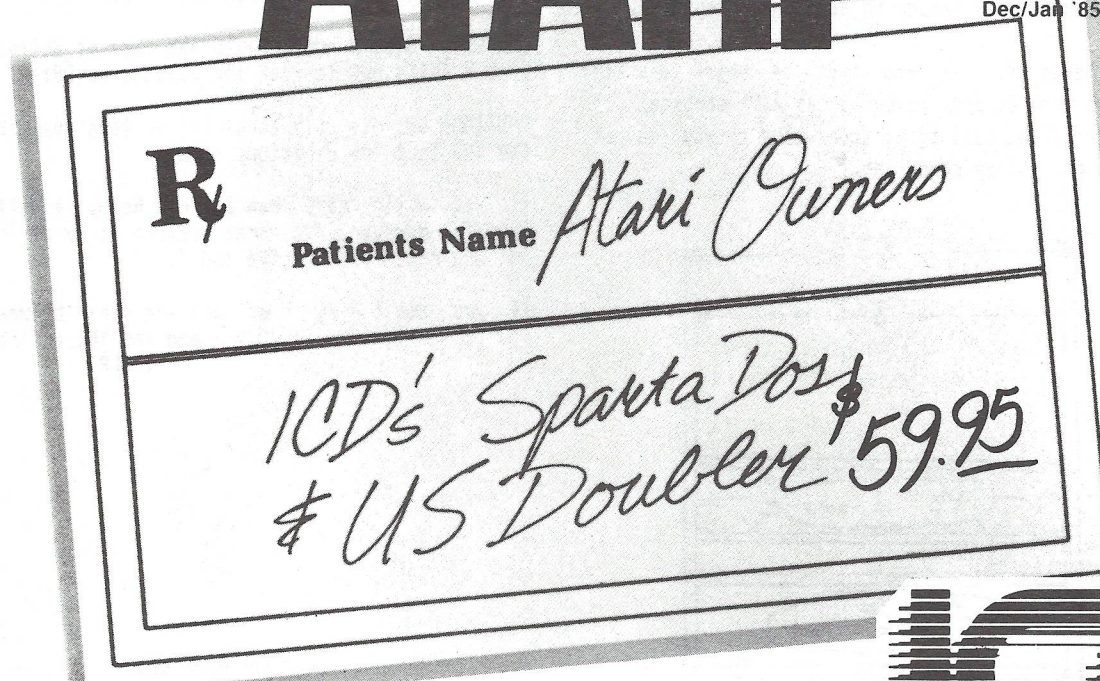
You can make a set of these legs yourself in about five minutes. The Epson has four deep holes on the bottom for the case screws. A 3/8ths inch dowel, (49c at Handy-Dan's), will fit into these holes and when pressed, will stay there. Finish the job with 3/8th inch crutch tips, (also 49c at H.D.).

It's amazing how much better your printer will stack paper.



# "IT ADDS NEW LIFE TO THE ATARI"

- Peter Ellison  
ROM Magazine  
Dec/Jan '85

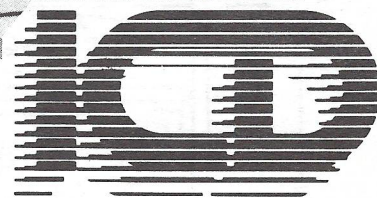


Rather than hearing *our* claims for ICD's SpartaDOS and US Doubler, we think you'd rather know what others say:

"ICD has done something I didn't think was possible... a product so revolutionary it adds new life to the Atari... SpartaDOS is the best I have ever used... (it changed) my Atari's whole concept of what a Disk Operating System should be.

"Besides that, they created two chips (Ultra Speed Doubler) that will make your 1050 disk drive store almost twice as much data on a single disk and run much faster."

Thanks, Peter. What more can we say?



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## PAPERCLIP

Reviewed by John Pellet

PAPERCLIP by Batteries Included (BI) is the latest and greatest full-featured word processor for the 8 bit Atari line. It packs a huge list of features. A great looking package from one of the hottest software houses in the 6502 world (Atari, Apple, Commodore, ...).

If you need a full-blown word processor, beyond HOMETEXT or ATARIWRITER, then PAPERCLIP (PC), WRITER'S TOOL (WT), and LETTER PERFECT (LP) are the only choices that I know of. We've had good reviews of all 3 of these in the last 6 months, the latest being Morris Stephen's rave PAPERCLIP review last month. I'd like to throw in a few words of caution about the current version of PAPERCLIP. As everyone knows who has used an early version of LP, WT, PC, or other major applications software (for the Atari or any other machine), there tend to be MANY "undocumented features" (i.e., bugs that survived beta testing). Each major revision of serious applications packages for the Atari has fixed bugs AND added substantive features (e.g., LP in 80 columns in version 3 and dictionary in version 6). PC will do the same with its scheduled mid-summer release.

The bugs I've encountered or heard about are briefly described below.

The control codes seem confusing and very jumbled at first. Similar keystrokes do very different things. For example, <CNTRL>R is block right and <CNTRL><SHIFT>R is read disk. No command reference card is supplied.

The use and customization of printer drivers is far from clear. For example, the master disk contains 6 Epson drivers with no discussion anywhere about the differences or which works best. The custom printer driver construction routine works but is very awkward - it has a HUGE set of menus that must be gone through serially, with no way to skip to the one menu you want. To change a single byte you have to hit the return key over 150 times!

The manual says the program supports microspace justification (pad each character with extra space not add spaces between words) but with my Prowriter plus a couple of other printers I've heard about or tried, it adds microspaces between WORDS. Unlike LP v. 6.0x, it does not support proportional spacing (i.e., each character MUST be the same number of dots wide).

The manual is NOT indexed. I, for one, find this a serious flaw in applications software.

There are MANY ways to lose text. For example, hit RESET and the buffer clears. In general, destructive buffer or disk manipulations do not require confirmation. Those that do seem to use the START key but are slow - when I ask it to delete a file, type the filename, then hit START nothing happens until I hit it again about 1 second later, or wait about 2 seconds to hit it the first time. WHOOPS!

I am not a touch-typist but several people who are have complained about dropping characters when the fingers start flying. Based on my limited playing around with the BI key (discussed below), the program MUST READ THE JOYSTICK PORT BETWEEN EACH KEYSTROKE for more than one response. Sounds like a probable cause to me.

The program does not allow you to directly embed control codes in the text (a la LP's <CNTRL>V or ATARIWRITER's <CNTRL>O). You have 4 printer macros that can be setup via the driver program but that's it.

The block operations (move, copy, and delete) are very size limited. I routinely used the block features of LP to move half-pages around but PC seems much more limited.

There is no "outdent" feature, that is indent all lines of a paragraph except the first (a la LP's <CNTRL>Fa). This is really usefull for numbered lists.

PC is copy protcted. PC uses a hardware key that plugs in joystick #2. Extra keys are available only directly from BI for \$30 - half the cost of the program. This scheme does not work properly with a small fraction of early 800's due to a "marginal" PIA chip (per BI).

The disk itself is not protected and you are encouraged to do so. But PC contains its own internal DOS and cannot be used with any other DOS. There goes the RAMDISK and "Enhanced Density" operations on the 1050. The master disk will NOT back itself up.

PC is reported to have trouble changing pitch or print options within a single line of text on some printers. Since I have not had this problem, it may be printer or driver related.

Finally, and I know this will sound strange, if you are writing along and the program word wraps to a new line, you cannot always correct with the backspace key beyond the line you are on - when you start to back up to the previous line the cursor will suddenly scroll back to the middle of the previous paragraph and wait for you to mess up your text. This doesn't happen every time but is startling when it does.

After reading this you may be wondering why anyone would use the thing. Well, I've converted over from LETTER PERFECT and I'd like to briefly describe why. First let me state that I truly believe if LJK had setup LETTER PERFECT to use a standard DOS file structure PC (and WT) would never have been marketed. If I were still writing only for my own use and never sending text over the phone then I would have stayed with LP. But I'm not and I REALLY needed DOS file compatibility. LJK's file utility is awkward and does NOT work with the XL/XE's. Now for the things I like about PC.

It looks GREAT! The font on the screen uses true descenders and more. It tells you both where you are in the buffer and how much space you have left. 2 text windows are normally available. Print preview works well. In general, screen functions and appearance are



well-thought-out and attractive.

Help is available online - a complete list of all control keystrokes - if you have the master in D1: and are not using the 2nd window.

2 column printing is WUNDERFUL if you're producing a newsletter or similar job.

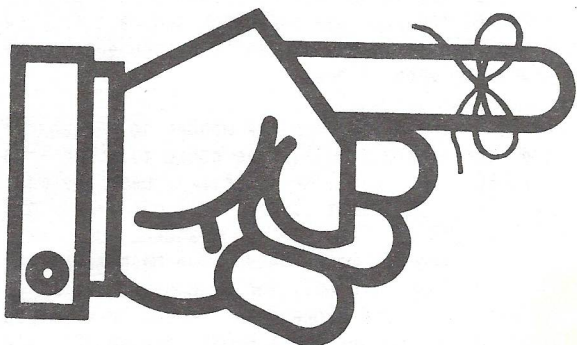
Support is TREMENDOUS. So far all of my questions not answered by the manual have been answered within 24 hours by leaving a message on SIG\*ATARI on Compuserve - both authors and BI management are active online.

The program will print formatted output directly to disk, useful if you're transmitting files. Most program features are user-adjustable.

PC supports using any key as a macro and creating and saving macros is very easy. You can even have multiple macro files available (although only 1 can be active at a time).

In general, I find this program VERY nice. The update due this summer that supports the extra RAM in a 130XE, fixes several bugs, and supports the forthcoming BI 80 column board will make me like PAPERCLIP even more. No software is without bugs but BI seems really anxious to find and fix them. If the problems discussed above are those you can live with then I recommend paperclip heartily.

PAPERCLIP is available from Computer Discoveries for under \$60. See the newsletter for more information and additional suppliers.



**DON'T FORGET!**  
Contribute an article this month.

#### BOARD ACTIONS

by Tom Burke, Sec'y

July 13, 1985 board meeting

BBS SYSOP advised the board of BBS activity during the past month. SYSOP also advised board of intermittent equipment malfunctions. This resulted in board passing motions (1) to expend \$125 max for a new 8" drive, (2) exchanging club's 800 computer for Tim Clarke's 800XL, and (3) setting up committee (VP Commun. & SYSOP) to review BBS future needs and present plans report at OCT board meeting (this committee will consider 8 bit machines, hard disks, and ST machines).

Passed motion that club purchase 1000 sheets paper and a Epson ribbon for Jim Chaney, whose house, equipment and supplies have been used for approx. 2 years in newsletter production. (The club wishes to extend its gratitude to Jim. Thank you).

Passed a motion that club pay \$0.30 per side for library disk duplication and \$0.20 for label furnished, printed and applied to library disk.

Passed a motion that Morris Stephens be the DAL-ACE contact person for "Batteries Included", a software publisier.

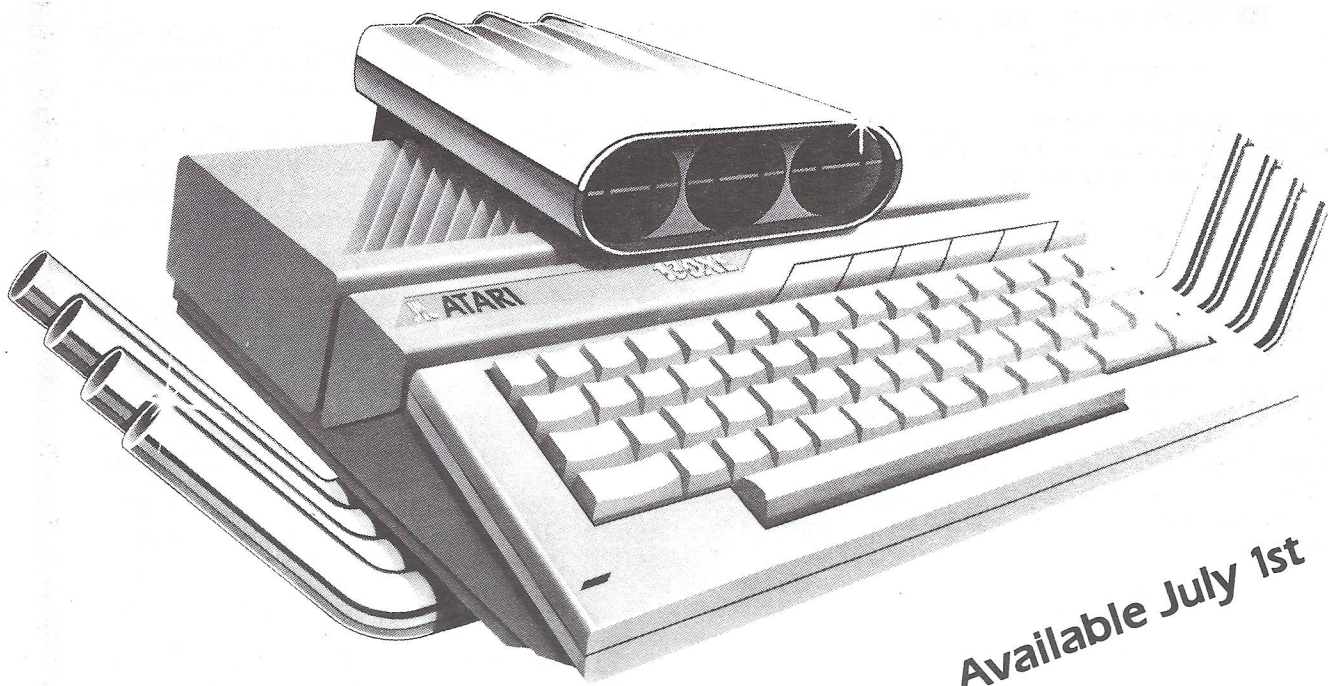
Passed a motion that DAL-ACE treasurer and secretary work out a procedure and staffing plan for new member signup at the Infomart meetings.

Passed a resolution of the DAL-ACE board of directors (REF: Dallas Computer Council) that: (1) authorizes club pres. and sec'y as primary reps (2) authorizes VP Commun. and any board member as alternates (3) and that those reps will (a)...report all DCC actions, decisions and plans...in a timely fashion...(b)...are empowered to represent DAL-ACE...and...act in behalf of the DAL-ACE board within limitations...(c)...obligate DAL-ACE to annual expenditures, not to exceed \$100. for the normal operation of DCC (d)...obligate DAL-ACE...not to exceed \$150. .. for the use of ...Infomart.

Accepted a volunteer to investigate DAL-ACE's agreement for the sale and distribution of "MYDOS" written by club member Charles Marslett.



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THE MPP SAGA

THE PASSING OF MPP - JUNE, 1985

by Morris Stephens

MPP (Microbits Peripheral Products), has filed for Chapter 11 under the bankruptcy laws. Initial rumor is that liquidation is certain to follow.

MPP (featured in the July issue of "Antic" Magazine is that company which has for years provided some excellent modems and interfaces for the Atari computers. If you ever hoped to buy one of their excellent modems you may want to do so now while they are still available. Most of the distributor's inventories have already been depleted. No one seems to have any of the interfaces left. This is bad news at a time when Atari is really beginning to pick up again. No one seems to know what will happen to either the old products or the newly developed products. We can only hope that another company will pick up their excellent products.

GOOD NEWS BELOW!!!

MPP REORGANIZES AS SUPRA CORP - JULY, 1985

by Gigi Bisson, Antic Assistant Editor

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Antic got the news that Microbits Peripheral Products was going into a reorganization just as our August issue with the story about the company was about go on the press. Frankly, we had time to pull out the story although it might have made the issue a day or two late. But Antic publisher Jim Capparell made the decision to let the MPP article ride, for the following two reasons: First, our information made it seem likely that the widely used MPP product line would continue to be produced - even if perhaps under a different corporate name. Second, even if MPP did shut its doors permanently, the existing product inventory will be available in stores for a year or more. And MPP printer buffers, interfaces, memory expanders and modems are still among the best buys for the Atari. Now that the dust has settled, here is what happened to the Albany, Oregon third-party Atari peripherals manufacturer.

Microbits Peripheral Products, Inc. was purchased by Supra Corp. - which is owned by the 22-year-old co-owners of MPP, Alan Ackerman and John Wiley. Legally, MPP is out of business, but Supra says that the Microbits product line and even the brand name will live on. According to Supra Vice President Ackerman, MPP's bank - worried about the current computer industry slump - shut down Microbits in May and threatened to liquidate their assets.

Ackerman says this has been a tough time for some

third-party Atari manufacturers. "No stores were ordering anything for the old Atari computers," he says. "They're all waiting for the 520ST to come out."

Supra Corp. managed to purchase the bank's share of MPP - essentially just the brand name. Microbits is now a subsidiary of Supra and the partners have swapped titles. Wiley, formerly Microbits V.P., is now President of Supra Corp.

"I'm not sure exactly how much the MPP warranty will have to be changed," Ackerman says. "Some warranty work that used to be free will now have a handling charge."

It will also be harder for users to get through to the Customer Service Department. "Be patient," Ackerman says, "There aren't as many phone lines as before." As of now, the MPP phone number remains (503) 967-9075, but Ackerman says Supra will be moving to another building this summer.

Supra Corp. still plans to release the new line of MPP products described in the August Antic. Supra is currently taking orders for the MPP 1200A plug-in 1200 baud modem and the MicroNet system that enables as many as eight Ataris to share printers and disk drives. Anticipated for September is the MicroPort, an expansion port that will enable hobbyists and experimenters to build clocks, power supplies and other add-ons for their Ataris.

The 10-megabyte \$800 hard disk is delayed, but still on the way, according to Ackerman.

Dealers and distribution networks will be most affected by the reorganization. "Hopefully the end user won't see noticeable changes," says Ackerman.



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Atari 800 with OMNIMON/OMNIVIEW, BASIC, manuals, WICO joystick, & 2 cart. games - \$160 firm.  
IF INTERESTED CALL JOHN PELLET @ 791-3175



## EDITORIAL STAFF

The current newsletter staff is listed below. The titles are reasonably self-explanatory. We need articles, programs, and volunteers. Call any of the people listed below, PLEASE!

**Co-Editors:** Mark Maxham, 238-5949  
John Pellet, 792-3175

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**Software Editor:** John Pellet, 792-3175

**Hardware Editor:** Mark Maxham, 238-5949

**Programming Editors:** Jeff Golden, 252-3268  
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**Production Manager:** Jeff Golden, 252-3268

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Cathy Barros, 368-8499  
David Miller, 391-1926

**Advertising Manager:** Morris Stephens, 214-525-6483

**SIG Editor:** \*\*\* Vacant \*\*\*

**Book/Mag. Editor:** \*\*\* Vacant \*\*\*

Call John Pellet 792-3175 to volunteer. And the next time you see one of these people, say THANKS!

## NEWSLETTER SUBMISSIONS

Submissions will be accepted in any form. However, it is extremely helpful if your submission(s) can conform to the following format:

Condensed print (16-17 CPI).  
Column width: 56 characters per column (3 7/16 inches).  
Column length: 9 inches (6 or 7 LPI - 6 preferred).  
Right margin justification used with text.  
Submitted to newsletter both printed out and on disk.

## NEWSLETTER PRODUCTION SCHEDULE

**SEPTEMBER Newsletter:** Copy should be turned in to one of the editors above by August 24th. FINAL deadline and production meeting will be August 24th at 1:00 PM at Jim Chaney's house, 916 E. Berkeley in Richardson.

## \*\*\* VENDOR RESERVATIONS \*\*\*

Vendor Reservations for Infomart are handled through the Dallas Computer Council. For information on rates and availability please call Gary Sewell at 214-727-6567

## \*\*\* MEETING INFORMATION \*\*\*

## INFOMART - DALLAS, TEXAS

**DIRECTIONS:** From north Dallas, take either Stemmons (I-35E) or the Dallas North Tollway SOUTH. If you're using Stemmons, take the Oak Lawn exit, turn left (east) and park at Infomart, on the left just after you go under Stemmons. If you're using the tollway, exit right on Wycliff, go left on Harry Hines to Oak Lawn and turn right. Infomart will be on your right. From the south, take Stemmons north to Oak Lawn, then follow above. Its the big white steel and glass building near the other 'marts. The main entrance faces Stemmons. Guests are WELCOME!!

## MEETING AGENDA

11:00 - 12:00 CLUB SALES - 1ST FLOOR  
11:30 - 12:00 NEW MEMBER SIG  
12:00 - 1:00 BUSINESS MEETING  
1:00 - 2:00 CLUB DEMONSTRATION(S)  
CLUB SALES - 1ST FLOOR  
2:00 - 4:00 DAL-ACE SIGS

Meeting rooms and additional information will be posted at the DAL-ACE booth at the main entrance, which will be manned from 10AM to 4PM. Final details on SIG times, newsletter dist., new member signup, library sales, etc. will be worked out and posted at our booth. GARAGE SALES WILL NOT TAKE PLACE AT THE SEPTEMBER MEETING - but should resume in October.

**OCTOBER MEETING:** The meeting will be October 12, 1985 at Infomart - schedule next month.

## NEWSLETTER ADVERTISEMENT

Personal FOR SALE or WANT ads are free to current members.

## COMMERCIAL RATES:

Full page (7 1/2" H by 9" V) ..... \$35.00  
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Commercial ads must be camera ready. Ad deadline is the 15th of the month. Mail or deliver copy to DAL-ACE Newsletter, P. O. Box 851872, Richardson, TX, 75085-1872 or call Mr. Morris Stephens at 214-525-6483.

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The material contained in this newsletter reflect the opinion of the authors. Members are encouraged to offer opposing opinions at any time. We will not, knowingly, publish fraudulent or malicious material. The purpose of this newsletter is to present information for your consideration. The reader is the final judge of any product or advice presented. ...JLP



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DAL-ACE is an independent, user education group not affiliated with ATARI, INC. This is the official newsletter of DAL-ACE and is intended for the education of its members as well as for the dissemination of information concerning ATARI computer products.

DAL-ACE membership is \$16.00 per year. This newsletter is written, edited, and published by club volunteers. Its availability and/or distribution may, at times, be subject to circumstances beyond the control of the club officers. Members will note that their membership renewal month appears as the first three (3) letters on the address label.

Other ATARI user groups may obtain copies of this newsletter on an exchange basis.

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