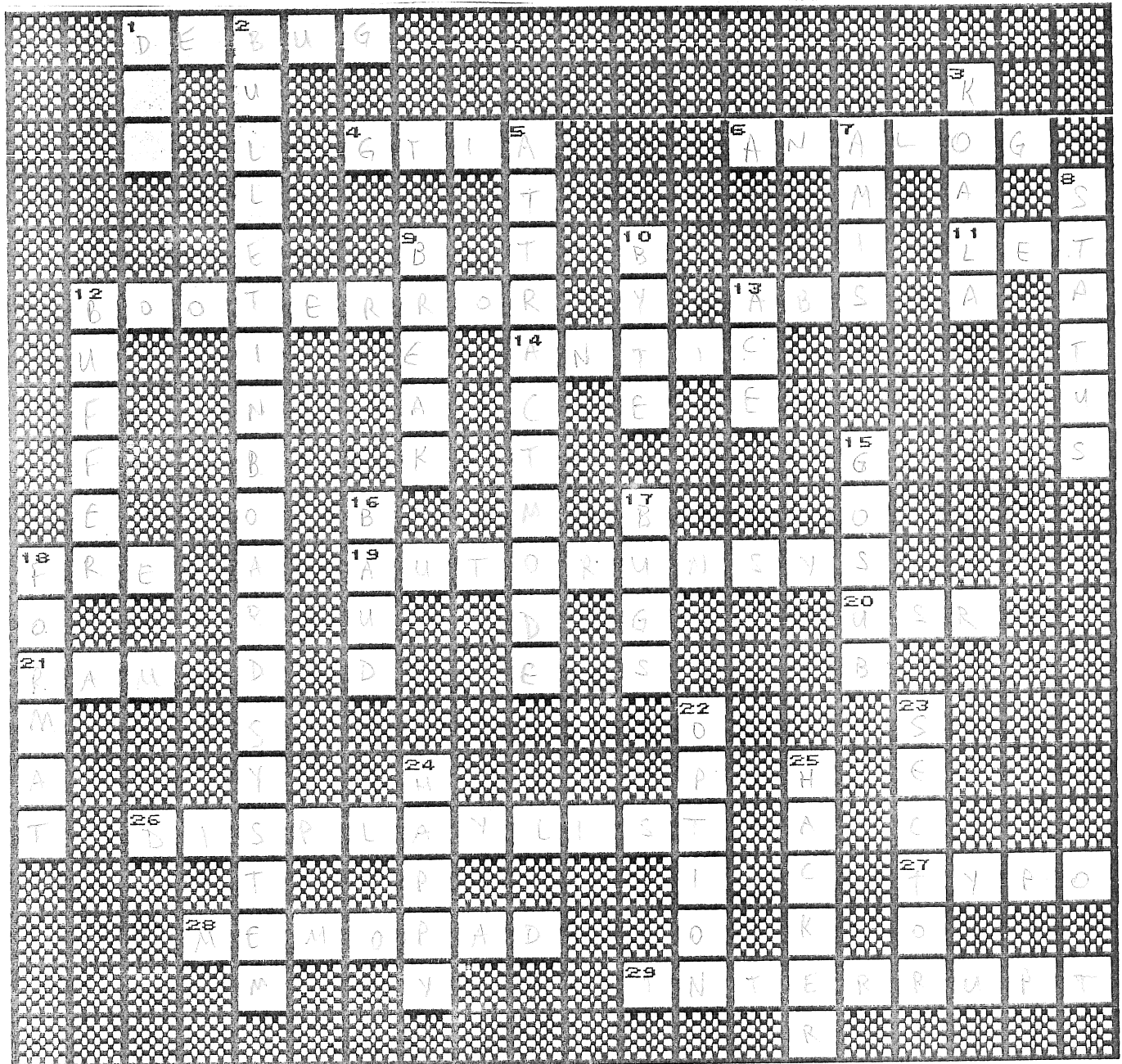


# ACEC



Published by  
Atari Computer Enthusiasts of Columbus, Ohio

This newsletter is distributed for current ACE of Columbus membership. Dues are on an annual basis and entitle the members to all club benefits (Newsletter, Disk or Tape of the month, group discounts, etc.). Monthly meetings, at DeSales High School (Cafeteria) on Karl Road are open to nonmembers.

Upcoming meeting dates at 7:30 pm are:

June 9  
July 14  
August 11

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# ATARI PUZZLE

## ACROSS CLUES

1. ELIMINATION OF STRUCTURE AND LOGIC PROGRAMMING ERRORS.
4. GRAPHICS ADAPTER CHIP
6. POPULAR ATARI MAGAZINE.
11. KEYWORD TO ASSIGN VALUES IN BASIC.
12. DISPLAYED WHEN DISK IS NOT FORMATTED.
13. ABSOLUTE VALUE FUNCTION IN BASIC.
14. VIDEO DISPLAY CONTROL CHIP.
18. BASIC COMMAND TO CHECK AVAILABLE MEMORY AMOUNT.
19. FILE NAME TO MAKE SELF BOOTING DISK.
20. BASIC COMMAND TO CALL MACHINE LANGUAGE.
21. VOLITILE MEMORY.
26. PROGRAM FOR ANTIC CHIP.
- . KEYING ERROR.
28. MODE ENTERED WITH BYE COMMAND.
29. CAUSES MICROPROCESSOR TO STOP AND BEGIN NEW TASK.

## DOWN CLUES

1. LINKS COMPUTER TO DISK DRIVE.
2. BBS IS ACRONYM FOR.
3. BRAND OF DRAWING PAD.
5. COLOR CYCLING TO AVOID SCREEN DAMAGE.
7. POPULAR ATARI BBS.
8. BASIC COMMAND TO CHECK ON RESULT OF INPUT OR OUTPUT.
9. USED TO STOP BASIC PROGRAM WHILE RUNNING.
10. SINGLE GROUP OF EIGHT BITS.
12. SECTION OF MEMORY FOR TEMPORARY DATA STORAGE.
13. ACRONYM FOR GROUPS OF PEOPLE THAT SUPPORT ATARI COMPUTERS.
15. COMMAND USED TO ENTER A SUBROUTINE FROM BASIC.
16. DISCRETE SIGNAL EVENTS PER SECOND.
17. LOGIC OR STRUCTURE ERRORS IN PROGRAM STRUCTURE.
18. DONE TO A NEW DISK.
22. USED TO DISABLE BASIC ON POWER-UP.
23. HOLDS 128 BYTES.
24. USED TO COPY SOFTWARE.
25. SOMEONE THAT HAS GIVEN UP MOST NORMAL INTERACTION WITH SOCIETY TO PLAY WITH COMPUTERS

Time to sharpen your pencils and put on your thinking caps. See how many of the hardware, programming, and Communications terms you can identify from the clues above. Answers will be published in next month's newsletter.

P.S. There is a FREE box of disks waiting for the first member that turns in a properly completed puzzle to the Newsletter Editor. One entry per member. Good Luck!

SIG Notes  
by Dr. Warren Lieuallen

The April meeting of the ACEC Special Interest Groups were held at a new location last month--the Main Branch of the Columbus Public Libraries. We can thank Don Bowlin for making the arrangements, which were to everyone's satisfaction; Charles Brown even got his own grand piano!

Despite this, the next meeting will be at another new location--the Whetstone Branch of the Columbus Public Libraries, located on North High Street, just north of the Park of Roses. The meeting will be, as always, the last Thursday of the month, which places it on Thursday, May 29th. Again, I'd like to start at 7:15 p.m., just to maintain continuity with our main ACEC meetings.

Getting back to the April meeting, both the communications and the basic BASIC groups had lively discussions. Charles Lusco reveiwed the uses of several of the more popular terminal programs: Express 1030 and Amodem. To sum it all up, I think we will have several new users of the local bulletin boards!

Charles Brown continued his very educational series of Atari BASIC presentations, discussing the various numbering systems used by computers and their users, namely binary, decimal and hexadecimal. After a brief interruption by yours truly, he then continued by delving deeper into the concept of character sets, and how they are represented numerically within ROM and RAM.

The language SIG formed briefly to discuss several of the available Disk Operating Systems available, particularly an unfamiliar one called Mach DOS, which features a 1050 enhanced density compatible sector copier (or so I was told!).

Further discussions were hampered by the lower than usual attendance, which I attribute to both the remarkable pleasant weather, and the different location. Let's see more of those faces at the Whetstone meeting!

As if you haven't already noticed, all of our regular SIG instrucors are named Charles. I have checked the ACEC By-Laws thoroughly, and have come to the conclusion that this is NOT a requirement for participation in the SIG discussions. Surely some of you non-Charles's have something to contribute! I would really like to see increased participation by the membership in giving short demos, both at the SIG meetings, and at the regular meetings to boot. These demos certatinly don't have to be incredibly involved or complicated-- just some program or application that you

are familiar with, and can talk about for a few minutes. No one can know everything about all the facets of using the Atari Computers, and everyone knows something. So, please, share the wealth! Personally, I would like to see a dramatic expansion of the Language SIG, particularly the compilation of several "Language Disks", viz. a Logo disk, a Pilot disk, an Action disk. These could serve as the starting point for our Disk Librarian to put together demo disks of each available language. These would be VERY valuable to someone new to any of these languages, or to someone looking to acquire another language for his system. It's up to you....

I'm open to suggestions for my "Demo of the Month". There seemed to be some interest in a repeat of the series on custom fonts, and their varied uses. A comparison of the various 256K upgrades would be nice. Perhaps a brief review of some of the better programs for children? The sky's the limit (hey, I could do Flight Simulator!); just let me know what you'd like.

See you all on the 29th!

#### A.C.E.C. PUBLICATIONS LIBRARY

##### COMPLETE LISTING

May 12, 1986 by Bill Morgens

These publications are available to be checked out by MEMBERS ONLY at no charge. We request that library items be returned at the meeting following check-out so that others may share. This listing will be updated periodically.

The A.C.E.C. Publications Library eagerly solicits your donations of no-longer-wanted magazines and books. Also wanted are Xerox-type copies of Atari-related articles of general interest appearing in other magazines such as COMPUTER SHOPPER.

##### ANTIC MAGAZINE

1982 - Apr, Jun, Aug, Oct/Nov, Dec/Jan83  
1983 - Feb/Mar, Apr, May, Jul, Aug, Sep, Oct, Nov, Dec  
1984 - Jan, Feb, Mar, Apr, Jun, Aug, Sep, Oct, Nov, Dec  
1985 - Feb, May, Jun, Jul, Aug, Sep, Oct

##### ANALOG MAGAZINE

1983 - #10 Feb/Mar, #11 Apr/May, #12 Jul/Aug, #13 Sep/Oct  
1984 - #15 Jan, #16 Feb, #17 Mar, #18 Apr, #19 Jun,  
#23 Oct, #24 Nov, #25 Dec  
1985 - #28 Mar, #29 Apr

ATARI EXPLORER - April/May 1985

DR. DOBBS' JOURNAL - June 1985

CREATIVE COMPUTING - Sep 84, Jan 85, May 85

COMPUTER SHOPPER - Apr 86

BYTE - Sep 81, Feb 84, Jun 84, Oct 84

COMPUTE! MAGAZINE

1984 - Nov, Dec

1985 - Jan, Feb, Apr, May, Jun, Jul, Aug, Sep, Oct, Nov,  
Dec

1986 - Jan, Feb

#### BOOKS

STIMULATING SIMULATIONS - C. W. Engel - Twelve unique  
programs in BASIC

ATARI BASIC - Bob Albrecht et al

INSIDE ATARI BASIC - Bill Carris

ADVANCED ATARI BASIC TUTORIAL - R. A. Peck - A "SAM'S" book

DE RE ATARI - A guide to effective programming

ATARI OPERATING SYSTEM SOURCE LISTING - Atari Corp.

MOSTLY BASIC: Applications for your ATARI - Howard Berenbon  
- Books I & II

KIDS AND THE ATARI - Howard H. Carlson

We are currently exchanging bulletins with several other Atari groups around the country and there are several issues available for check-out. There are some quite good articles in these exchanges and this is an excellent way to keep up with what Atarians are doing around the country. We hope to be able soon to publish excerpts from some of these bulletins.

GENERAL MANAGER AND OWNERS DISK  
FOR MICRO LEAGUE BASEBALL  
by Charles W. Brown

Earlier, I reviewed a game called Micro League Baseball. This time I am going to review a companion program called the General Manager and Owners Disk. You can play the original game without this addition, but it will make your baseball games much more interesting and fun.

The General Manager disk will allow you to change the data on the different teams you have. This process is menu driven and not too difficult, I will try to explain the different options for you.

The first option is the copy mode. In order to do any changes to your teams the data must be on the General Managers disk. The copy mode enables you to copy the team data from another disk to the GM disk. The other disk could be the actual game disk or a team data disk that you acquired separately. First you will be told to put the source disk in drive #1, and hit return to display the teams on that disk. You can then select the desired team by entering it's letter. When the team is loaded, just put in the GM disk and press return to save your data. You can continue using the copy mode until you have copied all the teams you need.

The Delete option is fairly straight forward, it allows you to delete any unwanted teams from the GM disk.

Verify mode lets you check on the status of your teams. It will show which teams are finished and which aren't. If you pick a team that is unfinished the program will show you what is missing and what you need to make a complete team. This is a nice feature to help you keep track of your teams.

The Directory option gives you a quick overview of which teams are currently on the disk. This function works on any disk, not just the GM disk. It is very handy when trying to find a certain team that isn't on the GM disk.

Probably the most powerful option is the Edit feature. This function alone is probably the main reason I bought this program. With this option you can edit the statistics for each player on your team. You can even trade players back and forth between teams. There is a reserved list to send the players to. Edit even allows you to create your own players and teams if you so desire. You could even do a whole league!

Another handy feature is the Rename mode. This allows you to rename the various teams. For example, say you wanted to have three different versions of the Cincinnati Reds-75. You could change the City, Nickname, or Year. This way you

can have three different versions of the team and keep them separated.

The final option allows you to create your own custom team from scratch. You can use players from other teams or create brand new ones. This way you can make your own very distinct teams and leagues.

There aren't any 'perfect' programs and this one does have some faults. One problem is it won't allow you to save off a revised team, you would have to go out and buy another GM disk to do it. If you fill up your GM disk you really don't have any other choices. I feel you should be given the option to save a revised team on another disk, even if it was restricted to another Microleague disk. Another nice feature that is lacking is a way to print out your players stats, it would be nice to be able to see all your players data at a glance.

I don't even like to watch baseball, but with this and the game disk I can really enjoy playing it. It gives me the chance to think and decide my own fate instead of just pushing a joystick back and forth and depending on the fate of a random computer program for the results.

Atari 1020 Color Plotter  
Command Summary  
by Dr. Warren Lieuallen

Text Mode:

Esc Ctrl-P	20 column print
Esc Ctrl-N	40 column print
Esc Ctrl-S	80 column print
Esc Ctrl-W	select international characters
Esc Ctrl-X	deselect international characters
Esc Ctrl-G	Go to Graphics Mode

Graphics Mode:

A	Go to Text Mode
Sn	Size of characters (n=0 to 63)
Qn	Rotate text (n=0 - normal n=1 - down n=2 - upside-down n=3 - up)
P	Print following text using 'Q' orientation
H	Home (pen to 0,0)
I	Initialize (current position = 0,0)
Cn	Color



```

(n=0 - black
 n=1 - blue
 n=2 - green
 n=3 - red)
Ln      Line type
      (n=0 - solid line
      n=1 to 15 - dotted line size)

Dx,y;x,y... Draw to x,y
Jx,y;x,y... Relative draw x,y units
Mx,y       Move to x,y
Rx,y       Relative move x,y units
Xn,a,b     Draw scale axis
      (n=0 - Y-axis
      n<>0 - X-axis
      a=unit scale distance
      b=number of marks)

```

All commands are issued as print statements following the opening of an I/O channel (viz. OPEN #2,8,0,"P:", and then ? #3;"command").

Any command may be combined with any other by separating them with an asterisk (\*) in the print statement.

At power-up, the graphics 0,0 point is on the left margin. The x values may range from -480 to 480, and the y values from -999 to 999, depending on where the margins are. You may not move past the margins, and wrap-around is not supported.

#### THE ATARI MACRO ASSEMBLER EDITOR by Charles W. Brown

When I turned in my last machine language article. It had a program included with it that takes a users input and prints it on the screen. I mentioned in that article that the program was different in that I did not use the Atari assembler editor, instead I used the Atari Macro Assembler. The Macro Assembler is similar to the regular assembler but is much more powerful.

The macro assembler uses almost the same commands as the regular assembler. There are a small number of exceptions. In the regular assembler you would use \*=\$600 to store the the object code in page 6. With the macro assembler the command would be ORG \$600, but for the most part the commands are the same.

So what is the big deal about the Macro Assembler? With

it you can write programs a lot faster and easier. That is because it lets you use macros and systext files. With those you don't have to type near as much code.

What is a macro? A macro is a bunch of commands grouped together under a title word and stored on a disk file. Once this is done you can use this in your main program. A macro is like a subroutine in BASIC but a macro is stored on a separate disk file. I will try to give you an example. Let's say that you want to print something to the screen. First look at the macro that does this.

```
PUTREC: macro address,lenlo,lenhi,valx
    ldx %4
    lda #9
    sta iccom,x
    lda #low%1
    sta icbal,x
    lda #high%1
    sta icbah,x
    lda %2
    sta icbll,x
    lda %3
    ixblh,x
    jsr $e456
endm
```

The first word you see is PUTREC. This is the title for this macro. It is the word we will use to call this macro from our main program. The next phrase is an optional name for the first value passed to the macro from the main program. In this example it is the name of the variable that will be printed on the screen. The next word is another optional name for the 2nd value passed from the main program. It will be the low byte of the length of the variable we are printing. The 3rd is the same as the 2nd except it is for the high byte. The 4th one is going to be the channel we will be printing to. Down below where you see the actual commands you will notice some percent signs followed by some numbers. They mean to use the value that corresponds to that number. For example the first command is ldx %4. This simply means to load the x register with the 4th value passed from the main program. The last command (endm) simply tells the program that the macro is done.

Now lets look at the main program that will use this macro.

```
    org $3000
    putrec mess,#16,#0,#0
stop: jmp stop
mess: db 'HELLO ATARI USERS'
```

I just typed in 4 lines for an assembly language program. If you remember in regular assembler editor I had to type in at least 15 lines. In the 1st line I just told the program to store the object code at 3000 hex. In the next line I tell the program to use the putrec macro. The 1st word that follows is mess. That is the name of the variable that will be printed. The #16 that follows tells the macro the length of my variable. The 1st #0 is the the high byte of the length. Since the length is under 255 we set it to 0. The last #0 tells the computer what IOCB channel we will be using. Since it is a 0 then the message will automatically be printed on the screen. The next line down is telling the program to jump to itself. In basic it would look like this 100 GOTO 100. The last line defines the variable mess. This way the program will know what to print. If you remember what the regular assembler program looked like. You would have to type in all those lines for each line you wanted to print. With the Macro Assembler you would just type in the one line. The computer will do the rest.

What is a systext file? It is simply a separate disk file where all of my frequently used variables are defined. This way I don't have to define the same variables in my programs. If you look at the macro that I have included. You will notice the different names (iccom, icbal, icbah, icbl1, icblh). These are variable names for memory locations in the computer. You will also notice that I did not tell the computer what they stood for. That is because they are already defined in my systext file. As long as I use the same names the computer will now what those variables mean.

Lets say that I saved my little 4 line source code off and wanted to assemble it. I would load in the AMAC which is the assembler program. Then I would type in the following

```
PRINT.ASM S=D:SYSTEXT S=D:MACLIB.001 H=D:PRINT.OBJ O=$3000
```

Print.asm is the name of the source code that I typed in. Systext is the name of the file that has all my variables defined. Maclib.001 is the name of my macro file. This is where the putrec macro is. The H=d: print.obj tells the computer the name of the object file. O=\$3000 tells where the object code is to be stored into memory. When the program is assembled the computer will use the 2 files (maclib.001, systext) to get the information it needs. This way I save a lot of typing and time.

I hope that you understand a little bit about the power of this assembler. I hope you can see that it is easier to use than the old one. I hope to explain further in future articles, until then if you have any questions feel free to ask. If I don't know the answer I will try and find out for you.

CENTRAL OHIO BULLETIN BOARD  
SYSTEMS

Most are in the Columbus area and toll-free. Most will have been verified. Some have been known by more than one name and are I.D.'d by "a.k.a." [ ver. 5.8; 5/4/86 ] Please leave E-mail for me on any Atari BBS with updates/corrections.

PLEASE RESPECT POSTED HOURS!

ATARI BBS's

A.C.E.C.	268-0405	24 hrs.	verified
300/1200			
Badness II	836-5900		
Bear Swamp(Marysville)	513-644-0714	24 hrs.	verified
300/1200/2400			
Chat Express	471-9209	3-10pm	verified
Computech BBS	253-6136		
Crazy Burt's Back Room	866-9777	24 hrs.	verified
DR. DOWNLOAD	(1)587-3774	24 hrs.	verified
300/1200	a.k.a. RACCOON	A.C.E.	
Klingon Tactical Cmd.	866-4722	24 hrs.	verified
12 Meg 300/1200	a.k.a. Entropy	BBS	
Four B Computer	890-8966	24 hrs.	verified
300/1200			
Kanawha BBS	253-6136	7pm-2am	verified
NCC 1701 (ENTERPRISE)	837-1990	6pm-6am	verified
Niteline BBS	252-4751	8pm-8am	verified
Ninja BBS	DOWN til	mid summer	
Relay	1-397-3190	weekends only	
Seashore (PlainCity)	1-873-8167	irreg. hrs.	verified
Small World	875-2484	24 hrs.	verified
Technology Terminal	836-2124	24 hrs.	verified
Village BBS	237-2791	Down Sun noon-mid	
300/1200			
W.W.F. BBS	871-4848	Sun-Thur 9pm-6am	
Fri&Sat 10p-noon			

The following Atari BBS's are no longer in service:

After World	ATARI BBS
Crossfire BBS	Dark Fortress
Dark Alley	Planet Polock
Delta House	G.R.A.B.

Ian's Place  
Modem Castle  
Temple of Apshai

Land of Sosoria  
Runway One  
Underground Empire

#### OTHER COMPUTERS

There hasn't been as much time as I would like to keep current with the following, but most are still valid.

Andes Msg Serv	253-1028	24 hrs.	verified
Apple Cider	855-9141	24 hrs.	verified
Apollo 3	878-1481	24 hrs.	verified
a.k.a. Stellar Outpost			
Apple Tree	891-2647		
Armada	855-7230	24 hrs.	verified
Bandit BBS (APPLE II)	895-7209	24 hrs.	verified
300 & 1200 baud			
Billy the Kid's (C-64)	875-2777	24 hrs.	verified
a.k.a. Alliance, Dial Your Match, Phantom's Mansion			
C.A.H.S.	267-2009		
Camelot	876-8550		
Caves of LaManzana (APPLE)	846-0200	ad lib hrs	verified
a.k.a. Micro Cottage			
Cent Ohio Colorama	548-6034	24 hrs.	verified
Chat-A-Rick	436-7744		
Chillicothe	(1)773-8950		
Chillicothe E Net	(1)774-6683		
Coconet TRS-80 Color	475-0047	24 hrs.	verified
a.k.a. Sports Connection, The Cellar			
C.O.C.U.G. (C-64)	274-6502	24 hrs.	verified
Colossus (IBM)	263-0422	24 hrs.	verified
Columbia Connection	864-8898		
Combat Zone	965-4378	24 hrs.	verified
a.k.a. T.T.Line, Electrode World			
Commodore Corner	861-7671	24 hrs	verified
a.k.a Silicon Shop			
Commodore 64 Exchange	868-0222	after 9 pm	
Compute (APPLE)	239-7621	24 hrs.	verified
a.k.a. Franklin County Line			
C.O.R.E.	864-2673	24 hrs.	verified
C.O.V.U.G. (C-64)	891-9231	24 hrs.	verified
a.k.a. Teleport 64			
C.P.C.U.G. (IBM)	761-1179	24 hrs.	verified
(FidoNet)			
Crystal Palace	443-0711	10pm-7am	verified
FRI, SAT, SUN ONLY!			
Dave's Place (C-64)	262-6776	6pm-7am	verified
Delaware C-64	(1)369-2636		
Delaware County	(1)363-1018		
Dragon's Domain	866-8972	24 hrs.	verified
Dream World (C-64)	451-5198	24 hrs.	verified

a.k.a. Combat Zone, Electrode World, 64 Express  
 TRS BBS 235-5806  
 U.B.I.X. (APPLE) 866-4392 verified  
 (Ham Radio Oriented)  
 Valley Express (APPLE) 866-9194 irregular verified  
 The Wall (C-64) 294-5710 11pm-8am verified  
 Wallbanger 235-6395 verified  
 down 4pm-9pm daily  
 Warez World (APPLE) 875-7399 24 hrs. verified  
 a.k.a. Dragon's Nest  
 Wendy's (see No Change #12)

ACCURAY 261-2140  
 BATTELLE 424-5851  
 MCI MAIL 221-3451  
 TELENET 463-9340  
 TYMNET 221-1862  
 UNINET 461-6640

List compiled by Bill Morgens

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REPORT FROM THE WEST COAST COMPUTER FAIRE -- PART 1  
 by GIGI BISSON, ANTIC ASSISTANT EDITOR

"Not much."

The burned-out exhibitors and jaded computer journalists said it again and again. After three major shows in Europe, the West Coast Computer Faire in San Francisco looked like a swap meet in comparison. Press grumbled that there were no real innovators as ample crowds swarmed around a slim display of new products.

But for Atari users, "not much" was enough. The industry is beginning to take Atari Corp. and the ST computer seriously, and it is refreshing not to have to hunt for Atari products at a show. The only hunting I did was burrowing through dense crowds to get a glimpse of the ST and 130XE in action.

THE 520 MAC

The thickest crowds were clamoring around the San Leandro Computer Club users group booth where Dave Small demonstrated Apple Mac Paint on an Atari 1040ST. Small's invention, the Data Pacific MacCartridge, allows the one megabyte ST to run software written for the Apple Macintosh. It's an eerie

sight watching MacPaint appear on the larger 1040ST screen as Small zips through window after window at speeds 20% faster than the Mac.

Small has a prototype of the cartridge up and running -- with one minor hitch. It requires the Apple Macintosh ROM chip. Data Pacific president Joel Rosenblum says he purchased the chips off the shelf from an Apple dealer, but his small company is destined to have trouble getting permission from Apple to license the ROM chips. Apple has already turned down ROM chip requests from corporate giants General Electric and AT&T.

DataPacific could conceivably have users install the ROMs in cartridges themselves. "This could be a shrewd move for Apple," Small says. As Mac users trade in their 256K chips for more memory, Apple is accumulating a supply of old ROMs that could be then resold to ST owners at a profit.

"I was bored with programming, I needed a challenge," says Small, an Atari programmer and writer who co-authored the "Guidebook For Winning Adventurers" with his wife Sandy Small.

Why bother making the ST Macintosh-compatible? "It's anarchistic programming," Small says. Indeed, Small's hardware tinkering may be the hacker's equivalent of windgliding off Mount Everest. He started in November of 1985. "I code-named the project MAGIC, because that's what I thought I was doing," Small says. "Then I began writing code, and writing code...and writing code."

By Christmas, all he had on the ST was a Macintosh frowning face. "Of course it was sad," Small says, "It was running on the wrong computer."

By January, he had "Welcome to the Macintosh" on the ST screen. "My first rule of programming is: No pain, no gain," Small says. So he subjected himself to pain alright: "I played all of my Neil Young live albums."

Five months, and 7,000 lines of machine code later, David Small finally hacked his way into the Mac. To run the MacCartridge, Small first runs a RAM disk to kick GEM out of the ST memory, then runs 7,000 lines of assembler. And yes -- like magic -- the ST becomes a Macintosh.

"I've looked at this program for a month, so it no longer impresses me," Small said as he played with MacPaint on the ST and created a Macintosh bouncing ball. "But for some reason, everytime I look at this I think of Neil Young singing: 'Hey, hey, my, my...'"

Then someone in the crowd asked: "Isn't this like putting

TRAMIEL NEWS FROM "ATARI RESURGENCE"  
PANEL AT WEST COAST  
COMPUTER FAIRE  
BY NAT FRIEDLAND, ANTIC EDITOR 4/10/86

"The Atari Resurgence," a panel organized by the San Leandro Computer Club, was a highlight of the West Coast Computer Faire. The April 6 panelists were Atari Corp. president Sam Tramiel, Atari Software Development Vice President Leonard Tramiel, Antic Publisher James Capparell, Bill Wilkinson of Optimized Systems Software and Antic Writer-Award Winner Matthew Ratcliff. The moderator was Antic Contributing Editor David Small, who also demonstrated his plug-in Macintosh ST cartridge at the Faire.

One of first questions from the standing-room-only audience (which included Byte columnist Jerry Pournelle) was about Atari's commitment to the 8-bit product line. The Tramiels stated flatly that Atari would have a major commitment to the 8-bit computer business for "a long time to come." Sam Tramiel specified several breakthrough 8-bit developments coming later this year. These developments include:

- A plug-in 80-column card including a parallel printer interface, due this summer at a price of \$79.
- Memory chip expansions such as Apple is preparing for the IIe.
- 500K memory 3.5-inch disk drives for the 8-bit line, with a new Disk Operating System being written by Optimized Systems Software.
- New national mass-marketer distribution agreements -- the first one signed with Toys R Us -- that will also greatly improve the availability of third-party Atari software.

To this discussion, James Capparell added that Antic's recent experience shows the popularity of the new ST line is also bringing about a resurgence of interest in the 8-bit Ataris.

#### COMPOSITE ST

Sam Tramiel stated that the 1040ST and the newer 520ST support composite color monitors as well as RGB monitors. He said that Atari hopes to be running Lotus 123 on their IBM PC expansion box at COMDEX next month. The Atari 20 megabyte hard disk is just going into production, he added.

Leonard Tramiel said that major improvements are underway in a revised ST BASIC and also in the GEM tools. Sam Tramiel said that the long-awaited AMIE sound/speech chip is "almost alive and well" after extensive re-engineering.



a Hot Rod Chevy engine in a Ford?"

"Oh, no," Small replied, "It's quite the opposite."

#### FLYING ONLINE

One of the most intriguing products at the West Coast Faire didn't exist yet. NEXA Development demonstrated a Macintosh version of Falcon, the first flight simulator that can be flown by two or more users simultaneously. Whether next door, or thousands of miles away, two users on separate computers can fly with each other, or compete in mid-air dog fights by communicating with a modem.

Originally designed for the Japanese market, the Japanese debut of Falcon featured a national "fly off" with dozens of users playing simultaneously, according to NEXA president Gilman Louie. The Berkeley, CA-based company plans to develop a color ST version which will be distributed by Spectrum Holobyte this summer.

#### USERS GROUPS GET IN THE ACT

Atari didn't have a booth at this show, so, along with a few third party software developers, they demonstrated their products in the San Leandro Computer Club (SLCC) and ABACUS users group booths. SLCC showed the Silent Butler personal finance program and Atari Planetarium for the 130XE 8-bit computer and the Atari 20-megabyte ST hard disk drive, demonstrated the Hippovision B&W video digitizer, the Shanner International 3.5 inch ST disk drive, and Holmes and Duckworth H&Dbase, an ST database management system from Mirage Concepts. The club anticipated a demonstration of the Atari ST CP/M emulator, announced last month at the Hanover Faire in West Germany. However, Atari decided to wait until the Spring Consumer Electronics Show to unveil that product in the U.S.

#### MULTITASKING FOR THE ST

The West Coast Faire also marked the first appearance of MicroRTX, a \$69.95 Atari ST multitasking operating system. (Not to be confused with Micro C Shell, a \$49.95 UNIX-like programming environment.) The developer, David Beckemeyer, claims MicroRTX can run standard ST programs out of the box, be used as a printer spooler, or allow a user to run a bulletin board and use the computer for a separate task at the same time.

"Multitasking has been a thorn in Atari's side ever since the release of Commodore's Amiga," says Beckemeyer. He's shooting for a summer release date.

