$ 1.50

DAL-ACE

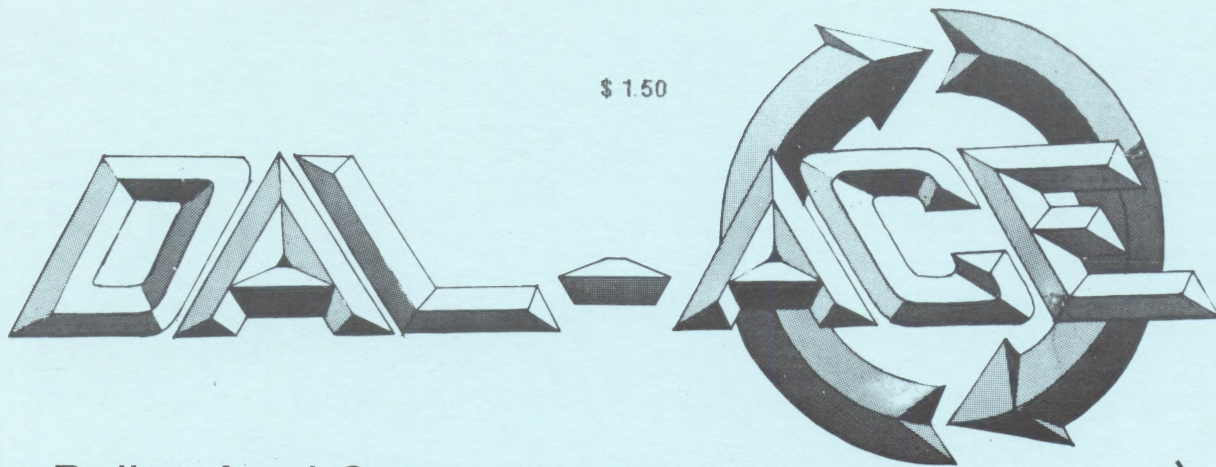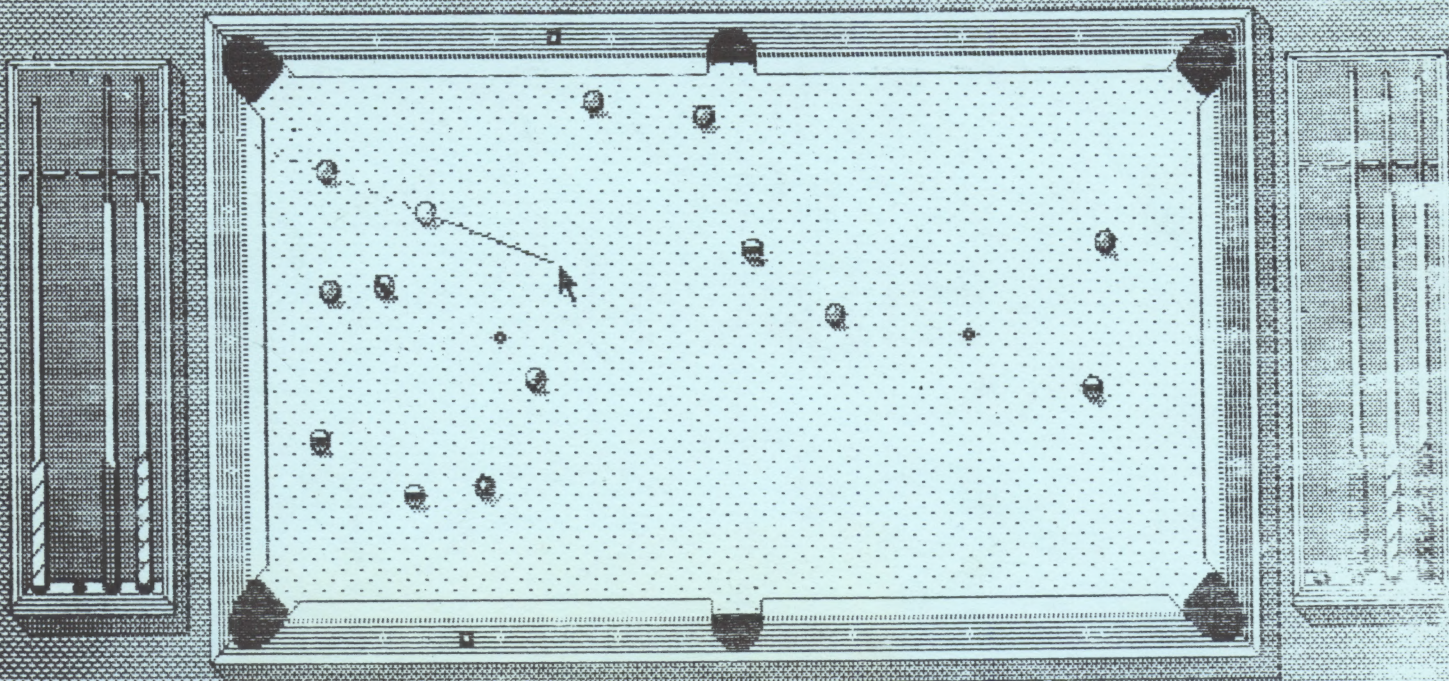## Dallas Atari Computer Enthusiasts

January , 1988

EightBall
Reviewed Inside!

Player 2 - Shoot

Jim

upFred

NEXT MEETING: JANUARY 16

1988 ELECTIONS HELD!

At our December meeting, the board of officers for 1988 was elected. Results are as follows:

PRESIDENT: Donny Arnold

VICE PRESIDENT: Joe Camblin

VICE PRES. OF COMMUNICATIONS: Rachel Duke

SECRETARY: Anita Uhl

TREASURER: Rene Tucker

MEMBERS-AT-LARGE: Marcus Arreguin
Duane Dauphin
Michael Duke
Nolan Terrill

We wish you all the best.

THANK YOU, DAL-ACE
by Donny Arnold

I would like to thank the members of Dal-Ace for electing me as club president for 1988. It will be a definite pleasure to help each and every one of you with your computing needs and to aid in the building of one of the best user groups in the North Texas area.

It is my intention to pull this club back together and increase its membership to the 350+ it was just a few months ago. Any and all suggestions from you, as members, are certainly welcome and solicited. I would also like to say that if any member has any questions and/or problems that your Members-at-Large are unable to help you with, I would like to invite you to call me at any time at the number provided on the back of your newsletter.

May I also add that your decision in voting in the other board members was done in excellent taste and, in my opinion, Dal-Ace and you will definitely benefit by their positions as board members. I, myself, am looking forward to the privilege of working with them. Once again, thank you Dal-Ace.

VP COMM'S REPORT
by Rachel Duke

By the time you read this, you will have already welcomed in the New Year along with the 1988 Dal-Ace officers. Yep, that's right, you're stuck with me for another year. The only change from last year is that I'm now Vice President of Communications. I'm the one in charge of making sure that the newsletter, BBS, and Disk Libraries all run smoothly.

First the newsletter. This is the official announcement that we now have an editor. I'd like to extend my thanks to Angela Burns for filling the position. Some of you will remember that for a while she and Scott Phelan co-edited the newsletter. Well, she's back and ready for articles -- let's not disappoint her this early in the year. If you have any suggestions, comments, complaints, etc. feel free to contact me or Angela via phone or at one of the meetings.

Second, the Dal-Ace BBS. I think we all need to let Michael Trombley and Gary Fuquay know how much we appreciate their work as Sysops. And, let's not forget Douglas Fuller for letting us house the BBS equipment at his home. The BBS is looking great! If you haven't been on lately, log on and take a look -- you'll be pleasantly surprised. To those who log on regularly, don't forget to post or upload that new PD program you have. Again, any suggestions, comments, complaints, questions, etc. feel free to contact Michael, Gary, or myself.

Third, but just as important, are the Disk Libraries. Michael Duke has been the 8-bit Disk Librarian for about a year now. Unfortunately, Michael will be giving up the library very soon. Brenda Arnold and Billy McLean have agreed to take over, so make sure you let all three of these people know how much you appreciate their work for the club. The St Disk Librarian, Joe Camblin, is now our Vice President. Due to his new position, he won't be able to continue full-time as Librarian. We need someone to take over the ST library with Joe working as an assistant. Anyone interested let me or Joe know.

I wanted to take the time to say thanks to Marc Salas for heading up the annual Toys for Tots program again this year. And a special thanks to all of the volunteers -- without you a lot of children would have been disappointed Christmas morning. The auction brought in $1150.00 and the Midi-Maze contest went over well.

Now it's time for my plea for volunteers. The following positions are open :

Kiosk - We need four people per meeting to man the kiosk in the downstairs lobby of the Infomart. We would only need 30 minutes of your time, and it's a great way to meet people interested in the same type of computer you are.

Laser Printer - We need someone to laser print the newsletter once a month. Pick up a newsletter distributed before the March, 1987 issue and compare it to a later issue. The improvement is because we're using a laser printer now. The person would need to go during business hours to Megamax in Dallas and spend one to two hours printing the newsletter masters.

Advertising Manager - We need someone who is willing to contact software and/or hardware companies about advertising in our newsletter. The person would need to keep track of current advertisers and see that the editor gets the advertising copy for each production meeting.

Finally, I want to remind everybody that the next meeting is January 16, 1988. The February meeting date has changed to the third Saturday in February -- February 20, 1988.

Dal-Ace Vice
by Joe Camblin

'Twas the night before Christmas and all through the house, not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse. (I promised myself to use only the keyboard for this article.)

My stocking was hung by the chimney with care in hopes that a hard disk soon would be there...Well, you get the idea.

'Twas the night of Christmas, around eleven o'clock, and there ain't no hard disk in that big old red sock.

Enough of that! By the time you read this Dal-Ace will be in its seventh year with a whole new slate of officers. I'm really excited about being Vice President for 1988. I feel alot of enthusiasm from the new officers that I've met and all seem to agree on one thing...WE'VE GOT TO MAKE THE GROUP BETTER!

How???

>Increase the visibility, thus increasing membership of Dal_Ace.

>Make the monthly meetings something members don't want to miss.

>Keep improving:
    The quality of our newsletter.
    The organization of our software
        libraries.
    The information on...and amount of
        people using our BBS.
>These are just a few of the ideas already being tossed around, and you'll be reading and/or voting on many more as the year progresses.

I hope everyone had a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year and were able to pull yourselves away from your computers long enough to get to know your families and friends again.

That's it for now (after all it is Christmas) but keep those suggestions coming and let's make it work.

See you at the January meeting.

Joe

TOYS FOR TOTS A SUCCESS!

Our annual Toys for Tots benefit, held this year on December 19, was a resounding success.

Attendance was about average, which was outstanding considering the weather. They came wet, dripping, and bedraggled, but they came!

After the business of the regular meeting was taken care of, we all settled down for the auction. There were some great software and hardware buys to be had, and the bidding got fierce on several items. The 8-bit products were especially sought after.

Also during the auction, there were several raffles. We gave away some good stuff to a number of lucky attendees. Then, there was the Midi-Maze contest, also very popular.

Everyone had a good time. But, more importantly, we raised approximately $1150.00 for toys for needy children! You can all be proud of yourselves this year - you made a lot of children happy on Christmas morning.

TOYS FOR TOTS SPONSORS

We at Dal-Ace would like to express our sincere appreciation to the following companies, who made Christmas so much nicer by participating in our annual Toys for Tots benefit. Our heartfelt thanks to you all.

ANTIC
COMPUTER DISCOVERIES
ELECTRONIC ARTS
HYBRID ARTS
JEFFERSON SOFTWARE
MICHTRON, INC.
SOFT LOGIK CORP.
SRM ENTERPRISES
TIME WORKS

VOLUNTEERS!

Dal-Ace would like to thank the following people for volunteering to help with the Toys for Tots benefit.

MARC SALAS for letting us twist his arm until he agreed to oversee the whole affair once again. (We didn't have to twist very hard, though.)
JAMES DUKE for tracking down sponsors.
MICHAEL TROMBLEY for being our intrepid auctioneer.
DONNY & BRENDA ARNOLD and MARC SALAS (again) for undertaking to buy the children's toys with the proceeds. (I'll bet THAT was one heckuva shopping trip!)
All the members who so graciously donated software and/or hardware for the auction

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK
by Angela Burns

Well, some of you may have noticed (or maybe no one did, I don't know) that I haven't been around since about last July. There have been a couple of reasons for this. One of them was my "big project". Those of you who saw me at the December meeting know just how "big" it is getting to be! Someone has to be on the ball about producing future members for Dal-Ace! Anyway, now that I have that project well under way, and the other reason for my absence has taken care of itself, I'm back. Yes, just when you thought it was safe to read your newsletter... I thought now would be a good time to tell you about what I hope to be able to do with your newsletter while it's in my care.

NEWSLETTER NEWS

First of all, I have some good news. Newsletter production meetings are now, for all practical purposes, a thing of the past. Since we have been doing the whole thing on Publishing Partner, for which James Duke gets almost exclusive credit, there is practically no more cut and paste or any of those other messy jobs. We just import your text files into the body of the document and play around with point sizes and layout until we're happy with it. Since rarely did anyone ever come to the production meetings, you may be wondering why it's so fantastic that we're not having them any more. The answer is simple - if I don't need you there, you don't have to listen to me whine for volunteers. That's my Christmas present (a little late) to you. Enjoy it, because I'm still going to whine for articles. Hey, you can't have everything.

Secondly, I want to talk a little about involvement. In the fourteen months I've been in the club, about twelve people have done 95% of the work for the club and gotten a decent case of burnout doing it. There has been a lot of apathy on the part of the majority of the members - a problem that many clubs have, but totally unnecessary. There are a lot of you out there; it's not like we're down to our last twenty members or anything. If each one of you were to write ONE article, review, etc. per year, we could fill the entire newsletter every month with no problems, and never have to reprint ANYTHING just to fill space. ONE piece a year - just three or four paragraphs. And there are a number of different types of things you could write - it doesn't have to be a review. Many of you have technical knowledge; let us learn from you. Others may have a sense of humor; write us a joke or a funny article, or draw a cartoon. Still others of you may have a unique application of a standard program that we would enjoy hearing about or find useful; don't be stingy - share it with us! (I once read an article by a man who had used his 8-bit to generate a high-pitched sound that drove away the neighbor's pesky dog - an ingenuous application, to say the least.) You may have an opinion that you want to voice about the club or some facet of it. Write an article, or even a letter to the editor.

I guarantee that everything written by a club member that is at all printable WILL BE PRINTED. This is YOUR newsletter, and it should reflect your feelings and efforts.

I'm going to try to split the content of newsletter articles as evenly as possible between material for the ST, the 8-bit, and throw in whatever I can find that applies to all users equally. This isn't going to be easy unless I get a little more response from 8-bitters in the way of articles. I'm not putting anyone down - far from it. I'm still playing around with my 8-bit when my husband doesn't steal the monitor to watch movies in the middle of the night at work. But as I'm writing this on the day after the deadline for submissions, I have three reviews from club members for ST programs and only one article from an 8-bit member. You've got to help me out if you want me to have stuff in here for you. I may not always have reprints available to even things out with; or I may get enough submissions from club members to fill the newsletter, and it will be all ST material. I will accept material IN ANY FORM I CAN GET IT IN, so loosen up those fingers and get typing.

We're going to try to get the newsletter to you in the mail BEFORE the meeting dates, so the deadline for newsletter submissions has been changed. it will now be the Wednesday after each meeting. This will make it easier for some of you to get your articles in, too. Just give them to me or a board member at the meeting.

1987 OFFICERS - THANKS!

Another thing - I think that last year's board of officers deserves a healthy round of applause. They did an outstanding job, sometimes under adverse circumstances and without much in the way of thanks. At December's meeting, I saw indications that more people are ready to volunteer and give a little of themselves for the good of the club than I have for a while, and that's encouraging. I hope it keeps up. But don't forget the ones who did it all (practically) last year. Three cheers for the 1987 officers, and good luck to those of 1988. (Yeah, rah, rah, clap, clap, etc.)

I won't be so verbose after this; don't think I'm going to subject you to all this every month! Just had some catching up to do; that's all. So until next time...

CREDIT:
EVERYONE SHOULD HAVE SOME

Have you done something good for Dal-Ace lately? Or do you know someone who has? Well, I'd like to know about it, because I think they (or you) should get credit for it. No matter what it is. Did you donate a disk for one of the libraries? Or lead a SIG? Or volunteer to work in the kiosk?

Volunteers should get all the credit they deserve, which is a great deal as far as I'm concerned. Becasue without our volunteers, we would have no club at all! Please let me know what you're up to out there, so I can give credit where credit is due.

"ATARIANS AT LARGE!?!"
by Michael Duke

I've just read an article about 8-bit apathy. A prominent member of a local Atari club was the author. His point was that if the users of the 8-bit Atari computers don't bother to support the machines they use, then why should Atari? I will admit, it was a sharp point (OUCH!), since I use an expanded 800XL exclusively for my computational needs.

I do plan to buy an ST in the future, when finances permit. Does this mean I intend to abandon my trusty 8-bit for the speed and memory of the ST? I hardly think so.. My purchase of an ST will be for the same reasons I acquired the 800XL: the excellent price/performance ratio and superb graphics capabilities. Just another loyal Atari owner expanding my horizons and supporting Atari.

Supporting Atari: what does that mean? Would you say that buying their machines & software on a continuing basis is an apt definition? Or perhaps a more popular view: buying ONE machine, none of their software, and complaining about a lack of customer support? A serious question with serious implications. I would say that this second "definition" applies to more Atari owners than we would like to admit. One might point out that Atari's software offerings have in the past been marginal in quality compared to those of third-party developers. A point well taken, at least until now. At long last Atari has begun to release software for both machines that compares favorably with the competition's. The current problem is trying to get the local dealers to carry it. This is more of a problem for the 8-bit users, I am afraid. Couple this with Atari's acquisition of Federated, and matters quickly become complicated.

Having read a few exchange newsletters from Atari groups in widely varying areas of the country, I have deduced that the distribution of 8-bit VS STs is largely dependent upon the economic climate of the area. Several Atari groups have no ST users, simply because the members can't afford them. This circumstance has not prevented the formation of active users' groups with enthusiastic members. On the contrary, it seems that the type of people who buy Ataris get so enthusiastic about the machines, they can't help but want to share -- their knowledge, not their computers.

The Dallas metropolitan area has just enough technically-oriented employers to provide a number of people with the interest and the resources to purchase ST's. It is only natural that these people would want to join the local Atari users' groups. This has spurred at least one ST-only group and has divided some of the other groups. It takes a well-organized group, with enthusiastic members, to cater to the needs of both ST and 8-bit users. I think the 8-bit users should be glad that the economy allows the ST to be available in our area, and especially the fact that they become more affordable every day. But since Texas has felt the national economic crunch as much as any other state, there are many computer enthusiasts that can't afford anything more than a 65XE, 130XE, or 800XL. Some can't even afford disk drives. This is why the organization we call the "users' group" is so important.

So, as a loyal Atari users' group member, what is a person to do? Buy new software. Use it. Tell someone about it. Before you know it, you could be an "expert". Don't be greedy; the help you need usually comes in proportion to the help you give. On the flip side, don't be afraid to ask that "stupid" question. The only stupid question is the unasked one.

Now for the hash and the re-hash: BUY THE SOFTWARE AVAILABLE NOW! I am not suggesting that anyone should sell their car or pawn the washing machine in order to buy every title in sight [LADIES: software acquisition is not valid grounds for divorce]. But if at least one half of all Atari owners would buy just one title every quarter, the software manufacturers would surely stand to make enough profit to release new and exciting titles on a timely basis.

And now here are some little known facets of computer health:

1. A computer needs diversity -- The use of one software package to the exclusion of all others will cause the computer to get bored -- imagine watching the same episode of "Leave It To Beaver" seven million times with no commercials. This syndrome can be detected by a close watch of the screen: messages like "Don't press another key" & "Stand by...chip reorganization in progress" are indicative of this all too common malady

2. Computers need game time -- Everyone knows computers were invented to play video games. If you don't regularly engage in video combat, your computer will wither into oblivion.

3. A Computer is vain -- It likes to hear you brag about your latest software acquisition that makes it shine -- if you don't have anyone to brag to, just tell the computer how much you like to use it (even if you have to lie now and then).

Don't worry if this article doesn't seem to make sense, the editor forced me to write something. The sales pitch was: "Once you start writing articles, you won't want to stop!"

WE'LL
SEE
ABOUT
THAT!

Tales of the Unknown Volume 1:
The Bard's Tale
Reviewed by Marcus Arreguin

Electronic Arts
1820 Gateway Dr.
San Mateo, CA 94404

The Bard's Tale is a fantasy role-playing game taking place in the once peaceful country town of Skara Brae when magic was at its peak. The evil wizard Mangar has overtaken the town with his powerful magic and blocked off any outside help by casting an eternal winter upon the surrounding wilderness. In the game, you wander through Skara Brae, trying to find the means to stop Mangar and his monster allies, who continue grow in size and number. For those of you not familiar with fantasy role-playing games, the object is to assemble a party of one or more members to achieve certain goals. Most fantasy role-playing characters, including these ones, have different attributes such as strength, dexterity, IQ, etc. to determine the outcome of battles and other things.

You start the game in the Adventurer's Guild, which is the only place where you can create characters, add them to your party, delete them, and save the game. Of the six characters in your party, the first three may fight with weapons and the last three may fight with magic and act as backups if one of the first three dies. The game comes with six premade characters that are second level, but their attributes are barely adequate for some of the tougher dungeons.

later on in the game. If you wish, in the Adventurer's Guild you can also save your party so you don't have to re-form it every time you load up. After you create new characters, you'll want to go to Garth's Shoppe and get outfitted. He sells all sorts of different weapons, armour, and shields and will identify a special item for you. His shop is also the only one of its kind in Skara Brae.

Certain characters are more important than others in this game. A good party consists of a Rogue (thief), a warrior-type, a martial artist, a Bard, and two magic users. A Bard is a former warrior singing of past glories and fortunes. He is very important, because his songs have magical affects on the party. The Bard starts out with one song on his lips and learns a new one for each level he gains. He can play one song without his throat drying out on the first level, two on the second level, and so on. When a Bard loses his voice, it's time to visit a tavern and have a few rounds of beer so he can play another few songs. To get characters' levels raised you must go to the review board where they judge whether you are worthy of a higher level.

The Magic system of The Bard's Tale is unique. There are four classes of Magic users: Conjurers, Magicians, Sorcerers, and Wizards (Wizardry being the strongest). There are seven spell levels, and two experience level equals one spell level. Each magic user has different spells, and after each spell level, you gain all the spells for that level. Beginning adventurers may start out with either a Conjurer or a Magician and have a class change after the third spell level to become a Conjurer, Magician, or a Sorceror. After you have learned a second magic class, you may change class to any of the four magic users. An Archmage, one of the most powerful personages in the world The Bard's Tale, is the combination of all four of the Magic classes with knowledge of all the spells. You'll have fun time trying to get one because it takes a combined 52 experience levels for one mage to achieve it.

The city exploration part is well done. Instead of seeing a top view of where you are located, you walk through realistic 3-D streets! The manual purposely neglects to tell you where the Review board is, so you must search Skara Brae to find it. Even the map (included in the package) of Skara Brae's streets and landmarks doesn't help, because it's not shown there. Should your adventurers get beat up badly, withered, poisioned, or killed you can go to one of many temples to get healed. Another realistic element is night and day. After you exit the Adventurer's Guild it's early morning and the sky is bright. As time progresses it begins to get darker, and during the night many monsters come out to prey on helpless victims.

When you engage in combat, the screen shows a well detailed picture of your foe, and you are given a chance to fight or run. If you decide to fight, a menu appears showing your battle options. You can attack foe, defend, attack possesed party member, cast a spell, or use items. After you decide the battle orders, a scrolling window tells you what your characters did,

COMPUTER SKILLS

how many hit points they took from the enemy, how many hit points the enemy took from them, and shows what spells were cast and the result. If both sides still stand, you must continue fighting until you run away, defeat the enemy, or get killed. Once you kill the monsters you get gold, experience points, and other booty.

To find certain objects, you must descend into dungeons or ascend into towers or castles. Powerful monsters called Guardian Statues guard these important places. Should you want to pass by one, you must first kill the monster. In the Dungeons, you have a 3-D view similar to the town, and you must wander around looking for stairs or portals to go to the next level. As you would expect, monsters abound in dungeons, but sometimes a monster comes in peace and asks to join your party. Should you get stuck trying to figure out a way into Kylearyean's tower or where the energy re-generation zones are in the dungeons, either overtip a bartender or take a look at the clue book that Electronic Arts offers for around $10.

I have a few minor complaints about The Bard's Tale. You can only inspect the six members of your party. When adding or removing characters from the party your data disk must be inserted, but when inspecting a member you must insert the picture disk to get a look at him. Due to the program's excellent graphics this isn't really a legitimate complaint, but having two disk drives gets rid of swapping. There is an error in the command summary. It states that there is a pull down menu acessed by the right mouse button, but the "pull down menu" is actually a set of pictures with their letter equivalent drawn on them. For instance, if you wanted to know where you were in the city, just press the right mouse button, then click the left button on the picture that represents a map and it'll tell you the direction you are facing and the street you are on. This is helpful if you get lost.

Overall, I think that The Bard's Tale combines excellent graphics and a good challenge to either a beginner or an experienced player for an excellent addition to anyone's collection.

XEVIOUS
Reviewed by Randy Roach

Requirements: Atari 520/1040 ST
Color Monitor,
Joystick
(WICO Command Control Trackball works well too!)

I like this game! It's a faithful translation of the arcade version, is fast and furious, and has very good graphics. Another selling point is the price... just $24.95. I think that's a bargain for a game of this quality.

XEVIOUS comes from Mindscape, Inc., whose slogan is "Software that challenges the mind". Eager to have my mind challanged, I opened that package and pulled out the instruction sheet. The instructions: "Fly up the screen and destroy anything that threatens your progress".

OK, so maybe it's not mentally challenging, but it sure is a good test of hand/eye coordination! The ultimate goal of XEVIOUS is to fly your Solvalu fighter through a wide array of air and ground defenses and destroy the immense Mother Ship of the Xevian aliens. These defenses range from spinning saucers and rotating monoliths in the air, to anti-aircraft installations and moving tanks on the ground.

The scenery gets more interesting as you progress towards the Mother Ship, and it's the graphics which raise XEVIOUS above the level of most shoot-em-ups. You can get a preview of them in the demo mode. In some of the more populated screens, the scrolling becomes a bit jerky, but it shouldn't interfere with game play.

Controls are simple. Press the fire button or any key to start the game. Your ship is shown at the bottom of the screen, and a cursor (for bombing) is displayed in front of it. Holding down the fire button delivers a steady barrage of bullets and bombs. To destroy ground targets, maneuver the cursor over the target and fire!

The back of the package claims XEVIOUS has "full-screen scrolling battlefields", but in the ST version only the left two-thirds of the screen is used, in order to provide the same screen ratio as the arcade version. The right third of the screen is used to display the XEVIOUS logo and keep track of how many ships you have left and the current and high score. XEVIOUS does not save the high score, however.

An interesting side note... XEVIOUS can be customized somewhat. The scrolling field, scores, and ships left are laid over a standard NEO screen, so that right third of the screen can be personalized. Since the music XEVIOUS uses is from .SNG files, these could also be changed to your own tastes. Hmmm...hunting aliens to the tune of "Peter Gunn" might be fun!

THE NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS
ATARI VERSION

By Sandra Higgins-Hanna
c1987 sandra higgins-hanna

'Twas the night before Christmas, when all through the house
Not a 'puter was humming, not even my mouse!The stockings were hung by the disk drive with careIn hopes that St. Nickolas soon would appear!

The floppys were nestled all snug in their beds
While visions of STs danced in our heads!
And me with my 8-bit and he with his floppy
Were thinking of making a little hard copy.

When out of the system there rose such a clatter
We sprang from our menu to see what was the matter
The screen all of blue - like night-fallen snow
Gave the luster of azure, our faces aglow.

Then what to my screen-glazed eyes should appear
Sprang a miniature 8-bit and tiny reindeer,
With a little old hacker, so lively and quick,
We knew in a glitch it must be St. Nick!

He was chubby and plump, a right jolly old cruncher
And we smiled at this Famous Dal-Acer, bar none, sir!
A glint to his eye and a port on his head
Soon gave us the nod there was nothing to dread.
He spoke not a batch and without a glitch
Stuffed all of our stockings - chips, joysticks and disks!

And laying a finger aside of our modem
Then punching "Return", out the system he drove 'em!
He sprang with the 8-bit, to his deer gave a whistle
And away they all shrank to the size of a pixel!

But we heard him exclaim, ere he logged-off, forthright
Merry christmas to all, and to members-"Good Night"!

To all my new friends at Dal-Ace from the Hanna Family, Sandra, Bill and Sierra... And a Happy New Year!

Test Drive
A Review by Gary Fuquay

Your name is Donnie Frump, occupation, entrepreneur extraordinaire. You have just made your first billion and are well on your way to becoming the worlds' first quintillionaire. You have everything your heart desires, money, power, fame; but wait, there is one small thing gnawing at your insides. You have always had a secret yearning, an almost insatiable, "desire, to be Pres..., uh, no! that's not it! Your secret desire is to own a fleet of the worlds most exotic race cars.

One morning, on the way to your penthouse office atop the World Trade Center in your Limited Edition Cadillac stretch limousine, you happen to see Big Als' Import Emporium, Americas' largest foreign car dealer. You signal to the chauffeur to pull in the drive. As the valet opens the door and you step out, your breath is taken away by an incredible sight. There, in a magnificent showroom, is a fantastic display of five of the worlds' most extraordinary sports cars. They are all handsome, but the one that catches your eye right away is the Lamborghini Countach.

You walk over to it, admiring its fleet aerodynamic styling, and Big Al comes over and says "Why not take it for a Test Drive?" A catch comes into your throat as you reach out and lift the door catch and the door slowly glides up, revealing the plush interior. You slide in and turn the ignition key and the engine roars into life. You feel the power pulsing through the frame as you rev it up and put it in gear. You pop the clutch and roar out of the parking lot and head for the country. You can hardly wait to get out onto the open road so you can see what this baby can do!

An hour later, you're sitting at the bottom of a mountain called the Rock, with a 50 mile stretch of the most rugged road imaginable. It is full of hairpin curves and sheer drop offs, and would test the skill and endurance of even the most experienced driver. You put it in gear and rev the engine to about 6000 rpm's and pop the clutch. Tires scream in protest as the tach almost pegs out. You quickly shift into second before the engine blows, and before you know it, the speedometer shows 120 and still climbing!

Test Drive by Accolade is both a game and a driving simulator for the ST. If you liked Pole Position, you will be absolutely wild about Test Drive! The graphics are superb, and the scrolling and animation are the smoothest I have seen in any game I have played on the ST. It also makes good use of music and sound. Test Drive comes on two disks, and will work on one or two drive systems. It is auto boot and is heavily copy protected. I have not found any copy program that will make a back-up yet. It is slow loading, and cries out for a hard disk or ram disk, but alas, it is hard coded for the A drive.

After getting past the opening credits, the car selection screen comes up with a specification sheet and picture of a Porsche 911 Turbo at the top of the screen. You select the car you wish to drive by pushing the joystick up or down to cycle through pictures of the five cars. The spec sheet tells you all
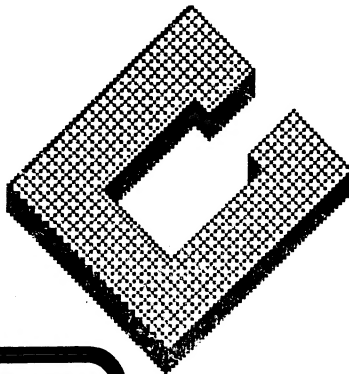
you ever wanted to know about each of the cars, and maybe a little more! Such things as approximate price, acceleration, engine displacement, brake horsepower, type of transmission and even the size of the tires front and rear.

After selecting the car of your choice, press the fire button and you will be prompted to load disk two in any drive, and the game will load. When the playing screen comes up, you are sitting in the cockpit of the car, looking out at the road in front of you. To your right is a sheer cliff and to your left is a drop-off and blue sky with clouds lazily floating by. All of the instruments are, as far as I can tell, exact replicas of the real thing. There is even a rear view mirror so you can see the Smokies coming up behind you. To your upper left, there is a radar detector with LED lights to warn you when you have been picked up on radar.

The attention to detail that has gone into this program is apparent when driving along and suddenly you see a speck appear down the road and a bug splatters on the windshield! Each car drives and handles differently, just as real cars would. If you are chased by a Smokie, and fail to outrun him, he will pull you over and give you a ticket. Better not try to pass him, or you will rear end him. He doesn't like that, and the game is over.

Test Drive
By Accolade

Requirements: Color system
               Joysticks

RATINGS:
     Depth: 10
     Documentation: 10
     Speed: 8
     Addictiveness: 10
     Value for your money: 10
     Overall: 10

ON THE FRITZ
HARDWARE TRICKS AND TIPS
FROM BOB FRITZ
Reprinted from WAUG, 11/87

(NOTE: Bob Fritz is a certified Atari service repair person and is president of CP Technologies in Whitmore Lake.)

Q) I own a 520 ST and want to upgrade to 1 meg. I also want the ability to later upgrade to 2.5 megs for sure, possibly 4 megs, without losing the original upgrade. What upgrade would you recommend and why is that one better?
A) I have personally installed two of this type of upgrades, both being able to go from 1 meg all the way up to 4 megs depending on your budget. They both are touted as no solder for the 1 meg version and trace cutting for the 4 meg version. As for recommending one over the other, I would have to recommend the one from Tech-Specialties over the one from E. Arthur Brown because of the way they pick up the data lines to access the extra RAM. That, and the fact that you can get an internal clock on the upgrade board as well. Addresses:

     Tech-Specialties
     909 Hodgkins, Suite A
     Houston, TX 77032
     (713)590-3738

     E. Arthur Brown
     3404 Pawnee Dr.
     Alexandria, MN 56308
     (612)762-8847

Q) Is it possible to make a detachable keyboard for my 130XE? I think it can be done, but a friend of mine says I'm nuts. How hard would this be to do and what would be involved?
A) First off, it would be possible - but kind of hard, and not very pretty when you are done, as the XE does not have a keyboard processor like the ST. Which means you'd have to have a connecting cable that had 25 lines on it with a connector at each end.

Q) My mouse keeps getting all kinds of junk on the rollers from the rubber ball. What's the best way to clean this stuff off? Is there any way to prevent this buildup? Also, my mouse buttons stick once in a while. Replacing the mouse would cost $50! Is there any way I can get a cheaper replacement?
A) The best way to clean the mouse rollers is to use a cotton swab, isopropyl alcohol, and a small fingernail file. Swab the alcohol on the rollers, then use the nail file to carefully scrape them side to side as they turn. Do each roller until you've got it all. Using a mouse pad with a Teflon coating can greatly reduce the crud. I'm now using a track ball modified to work with the ST so I have a stationary "mouse" and the only thing that touches the ball is my hand. The track ball is $20 cheaper than replacing the mouse, also. Address for track ball:

     Zebra Systems
     78-06 Jamaica Avenue
     Woodhaven, NY 11421
     (718)296-2385

MORE 8-BIT VS. ST
by Billy McLean

If there's an 8-bit vs. 16-bit controversy, I can't see it. Computer users, like all people, grow and change; this is good. Perhaps you own a 400, 800, 1200XL, 600XL, 800XL, 65XE, or 130XE. Count 'em, folks - no less than seven machines. Obviously 8-bitters are a large percentage of the Atari population. So why do you see ST, ST, ST? The answer is simple and obvious. ST users are more active. Sorry, but it's true. A lot of the old hard core Atari 8-bit people were the ones who worked, taught clases, wrote great programs, volunteered for just about every activity and made this club! Many of these people have only moved on to new challenges and hardware. But they're still "Atarians", loyal as ever.

Then I hope you can see it's not because of their shortcomings but yours that you don't see more 8-bit news. Want to change this and feel good about yourself and this club? Then help!

Has anyone stopped to think just how much public domain software exists out there? Many of these programs have never had a proper review. So think! Try something. No one will criticize a person who makes an honest effort to participate.

To all our ST friends: please hang in there and don't give up on us. The bottom line is: WE DO THIS FOR FUN TOGETHER!

EXCUSES!
by Billy McLean

After four months of inactivity in Dal-Ace (even so far as to let my membership lapse), I'm back, more enthusiastic than ever! But an explanation is due. You see, I'm one of those club members who always took but never gave. Oh, I had good excuses: work hours were long, three children and a wife to tend, etc. We all know about excuses, don't we? This type of thinking finally took its toll. I became bored then frustrated with the club and my Atari. And then, in one more act of ignorance, I boxed up the whole system and loudly proclaimed, "I'M GONNA SELL IT ALL!!!"

As the days passed, I kept stumbling over those boxes. Memories of the people I'd come to know on the club BBS and the delight of meeting them face-to-face at Dal-Ace meetings. What a great equalizer it was to come to know someone when visual impressions had no influence. How a hard day could be forgotten in the intensity of seeking out that damn bug or spending several hours surviving Lord British's snares.

Well, there was the truth - my own failure to make even the smalles effort to be a part of something I once cared so much for. Slowly it came back, that good feeling like unpacking my first 400.

You're asking where all this is leading? For one thing, it's the first article I've ever written and it didn't hurt a bit. My system's up and so am I. If any of this hits a note, please take note! Don't let yourself and the club down. All you have to do is just give a little. It feels good. Try it.

THE ADVENTURE OF THE FLOPPY DISK:
A Review of 221B BAKER STREET
by Dave Arlington (with apologies to Sir Arthur Conan Doyle)
Reprinted from the Roughwriter

It was a sweltering, hot day in our little flat at 221B Baker Street. Holmes and I were just considering hailing a hansom cab to the cooler confines of the Royal Botanical Gardens in Regent's park when our landlady, Mrs. Hudson, announced we had a visitor.

A gentleman of some distinction rushed into our flat. "Begging your pardon, Mr. 'olmes, but I've something 'ere that I thought you would want to see right away!"

Holmes waved a hand and said to our guest, "Pray, sit down, my good man, and tell me all about the Atari 8-bit game from DataSoft that you have."

It would be quite a contest as to [who had] the most amazed look - our guest or myself. "Really, Holmes," I exclaimed. "Surely this borders on some sort of psychic abilities on your part! He made no mention of any sort of thing!"

Holmes had a bemused look of contentment on his face as he started to explain. "Really, nothing of the sort, Watson. Just start at the source, and the inexorable flow of logic will eventually carry you to your destination. Let me demonstrate. This article is appearing in an Atari computer publication. Therefore, I reasoned that it had something to do with Atari computers. The gentleman's obvious superior breeding sets him apart as an 8-bit owner, and the callous on the inside of his right thumb is obviously from a joystick, not a mouse. 'So,' I asked myself, 'What good news could an 8-bit owner have for me that could not wait?'

"Surely, Atari could not have released any of their vaporware hardware products. Therefore, it had to be software. I next queried of myself, 'Who is still releasing exciting new software for the Atari 8-bit machines?' With titles like Alternate Reality: the Dungeon, Mercenary, Theatre Europe, Video Title Shop and more, I assumed, obviously correctly, that this was another new offering from DataSoft."

Holmes having thoroughly cuckolded me again, we settled down to try this new piece of entertainment. Holmes booted up his trusty 130XE sitting next to the memento from "The Adventure of the Dropped Bit". 221B Baker Street was the name of the software, and it is based on a popular board game by John Hanson and Co. Each player took the part of a different character. Holmes and I played ourselves, respectively; while our new-found friend found himself as Inspector LeStrade, and Mrs. Hudson filled in as Irene Adler. I thought I saw some slight discomfort on Holmes' part at her inclusion in the game, but I couldn't be sure.

After a disappointingly brief game, which, of

course, Holmes won, he asked me what my opinion of the game was.

"Well, Holmes, to be quite frank, it is almost an exact copy of the board game, including the simulated rolling of a die. The characters move to different locations in London, acquiring clues to one of the thirty cases that are included. The cases are very interesting, and the players are asked to discover different things each time, such as who did it, with what, and for what reason. Players can lock locations from other players with keys from the locksmith and unlock them with badges from Scotland Yard. When players think they have a solution, they return to 221B Baker Street, where they are given a multiple choice quiz to determine if they have the right answers.

"While I do think it is an excellent adaptation of the board game, it does cost almost twice as much. I think the question is whether it is really worth twice the price to get a computerized version of the board game."

Holmes chuckled and said, "As usual, Watson, you see but do not observe. The computerized version has many enhancements to the board game. Being able to play a main character from one of your trifling stories, for instance. The animated graphics are very well done, and at any time you can call up a map of the whole city. Even you must admit, Watson, a slight chill in the spine when you heard the speech synthesis of my voice come over the monitor saying, 'Quick, Watson. The game is afoot!'

"But, most interesting is the fact that they've included some changes that would have made the board game better. Players must now have a badge from Scotland Yard to enter 221B Baker Street at the end of the game. This makes their use a little more judicious in game play. They've added two secret passages that take you to random locations that might vastly help or hinder you. Best of all, clues can either be printed on the screen as they are, or in one of twenty different secret codes. You know how I love cryptography, Watson, and now I can practice it in game play. This method of clue-giving is a vast improvement over both the board agme and other computer mystery games that have been available for other computers before, such as Murder by the Dozen."

"You mean..." I stammered.

"Yes, Watson. This is an excellent entertainment value for anyone who enjoys these small matters of interest. I heartily recommend it. But now, Watson, I must relax. If you would be so kind as to hand me my..."

"Violin?" I interrupted.

Of course not, Watson! My Star Raiders cartridge!!"

COLORASAURUS
Reviewed by Dave Thorson, NWPAC
Excerpted from Nybbles & Bytes, 12/87

Colorasaurus is an 800/XL/XE program for those beginning life in a computer world. The program is suggested for ages three to six, but my 2 1/2 year old LOVES it. What better recommendation is there?

The program features three "games" involving dinosaurs and, you guessed it, colors.

First is a simple matching game, where colored dinosaurs march onto the bottom of the screen and, using a joystick, you grab them and place them in a jungle of a matching color. At first, the three dinosaurs appear in widely different colors, like brown, green, and yellow. As the game progresses, the matching gets harder: different shades of purple, for example. When all the dinosaurs are safely in their own jungles, the ground shakes, the screen scrolls left, and new reptilian dancers strut onto the screen accompanied by some catchy music.

If a bad match is made, the program is quiet about it. The dinosaur falls to the bottom of the screen with no razzes, beeps, crashes, or other sonic bloodshed. I get tired of children's games that encourage failure by making it amusing to do the wrong thing. Colorasaurus never drops to that level.

In game two you place three dinosaurs into their corresponding jungles, only this time there are six jungles to choose from. The program then juggles the jungles and the young archaeologist must remember which colors contain dinosaurs.

Game three presents a large dinosaur for painting. You can select red, yellow, or blue paint; and only areas within the dinosaur are painted. You can also choose white or black to make different shades of a color, and by mixing colors you can get a wide range of hues.

All in all, the program appears to be effective at teaching colors, matching concepts, left/middle/right, joystick fundamentals, task completion, and color mixing. Different ages are sure to get different educations. If only more educational software were this good!

Colorasaurus is by:

The Learning Company
545 Middlefield Road
Menlo Park, CA 94025

I picked it up at Sofware for $15, a real bargain for this 1984 program.

EIGHT BITS' WORTH
By Gordon Totty (MACE)
Reprinted from Michigan Atari Magazine, 12/87

The August issue of ABACUS, the newsletter of the Atari Bay Area Computer Users' Society (San Fransisco), contained an interesting article by Charles Cherry. Cherry reviewed the Antic Catalog for us. I paid particular attention to his views because he is a former Product Manager for the catalog; also, he writes for Antic and does occassional projects for the catalog. Some might consider him biased; I felt I was getting good "inside" advice from a fellow user group member. He especially liked the following products:

COLORSPACE - weird, wonderful, "best demonstration of what Atari graphics can do", "should be required for all Atari owners." I have ordered this on his say-so, but it is no longer listed in the catalog, and so now I do not know if I will get it. Cherry did not comment on the incredible shrinking Antic 8-bit catalog, which has been apparent over the past few months.

CREATIVE PROCESS - the only outline processor for the Atari, and recommended for research papers and other writing where outlining is helpful. The catalogue lists this for $19.95 and warns that stock is limited.

ENVISION - "OK, it's a font editor. We never said that out loud at Antic. But, it really is more than that. Buy it, even if you already have 12 font editors. Buy it, even if you don't know what a font editor is. Some day, you'll thank me." My copy is on order, Charles. I'll be happy if this is half as good as you think it is. List, as available, $19.95.

SEVEN CARD STUD, CRIBBAGE - "Everyone should have some card games on their computer. These are my nominations." Neither is listed in the latest catalog.

Charles Chery probably wrote his article in June; I'm writing in early November. You can see that the catalog has shrunk. By the way, all of the items listed above were given four stars by Cherry. His three-star recommendations are listed below.

RAMBRANDT - "The most powerful drawing package for the Atari." $19.95.

SOLID OBJECT MODULE - A 3-D modeler for Rambrandt. $15.95.

ORBIT, A TRIP TO THE MOON - I have this one in my collection and will try to let you know what I think of it when I get around to using it. At a glance, it looks like a very serious simulation. The author, John Reagh, is a Lockheed aerospace engineer. It's $15.95 at present; I think it used to cost more.

BLUE TEAM BRIDGE - "The best bridge game on the Atari." $15.95.

COLOSSUS CHESS 3.0 - "No longer the most powerful game on the Atari, but I think it is the most playable. If you are serious about chess, get Colossus." I have the old Atari chess cartridge and more recently obtained The Chessmaster 2000. So, I'll pass on this, even though it is listed as a catalog best seller at $15.95.

THE RHYTHM COMPOSER - a drum machine. I couldn't find it listed, but sometimes the bi-focals let me down. To order Colorspace, I called the toll-free number and got the item number from the person who answered. You might want to try that.

SPELL MAGIC - a spelling checker. Works with PaperClip and AtariWriter. $19.95. (ED NOTE: It also works with Word Magic, which is not a bad program.)

PRINTER DRIVER CONSTRUCTION SET - "Best of its kind." Requires AtariWriter cartridge. I almost bought this when my Mannesman Tally Spirit 80 and I were not getting along. I switched to AtariWriter Plus instead.

ASTROLOGY - I couldn't find it listed.

FLOATING POINT PACKAGE AND EXTENDED DDT - "... get this now, it's a steal." These work with MAC/65 and are sold as a package for $19.95.

THE DRAGON'S TAIL - "I'm responsible for putting this into the catalog. It is eccentric and poorly organized, but it is unique and undeniably powerful. If you program in BASIC, you will find much to like here, and some to hate." Such honesty from Charles Cherry sent me right to my order blank. I've got to see this one. Presently listed in the bargain section for $5.95, was $24.95.

AMIS XM10.BBS FROM MACE - "A first-rate bulletin board for the Atari 300 baud modem." Golly, one from us! Public domain, $10.

130XE HI-RES DESIGNER - Not that great, according to Cherry, but it is the only 8 paint program available. It works only on the 130XE. Pubic domain, $10.

TRIVIA QUIZ - Public domain, $10.

PERSONAL FINANCE AND EDUCATION - Public domain. I couldn't find this listed.

If I counted correctly, Charles Cherry gave five items a four-star rating and gave three stars to 15 items. Eight items received two stars. Seven items got one star. Four items got no star. To illustrate his objectivity, I should point out that one star was defined by him as "forget it." No stars were given to products he knew nothing about.

I think he wrote an excellent review which performed a valuable service. As he pointed out, some of the catalog stuff is well worth owning, but you hear very little about it. First, Antic does not review it in their pages, nor do competitor magazines. People might buy more of this software if they knew more about it.

FLYING THE ST
TOS ERROR CODES
Reprinted from MACE Journal, 5/87

A growing number of ST owners and users have been asking about the meaning of those annoying TOS error messages you get when everything does not go according to plan. Here is a verbose listing of the most commonly encountered ones that should help you.

TOS ERROR CODES

0 - OK. (No problems.)

1 - GENERAL error.

2 - DRIVE NOT READY. Device was not ready or attached or has been busy too long.

3 - UNKNOWN COMMAND - Device did not understand you.

4 - CRC ERROR. Soft read error.

5 - BAD REQUEST - Device could not handle the command, although it understood it. Check your system parameters.

6 - SEEK ERROR. Drive could not perform a seek.

7 - UNKNOWN MEDIA - Attempt to read unformatted or foreign media. Usually caused by a trashed or zeroed boot sector.

8 - SECTOR NOT FOUND. The requested sector could not be found.

9 - NO PAPER. the printer is out of paper.

10 - WRITE FAULT. A write operation failed.

11 - READ FAULT. A read operation failed.

12 - GENERAL MISHAP. Reserved for future errors.

13 - WRITE PROTECT. You attempted to write to a write protected disk.

14 - MEDIA CHANGE. The media has been changed since the last write.

15 - UNKNOWN DEVICE. The operation specified a device that the BIOS could not recognize.

16 - BAD SECTORS. A format operation detected bad sectors.

17 - INSERT DISK. A request for you to insert disk.

GEMDOS ERROR CODES

32 - EINVFN. Invalid function number.

33 - EFILNF. File not found.

34 - EPTHNF. Path not found.

35 - ENHNDL. No file descriptors left. (Too many files are open.)

36 - EACCND. Access denied.

37 - EIHNDL. Invalid file descriptor.

39 - ENSMEM. Insufficient memory.

40 - EIMBA. Invalid memory block address.

46 - EDRIVE. Invalid drive specified.

49 - EMNFIL. No more files.

64 - ERANGE. Range error.

65 - EINTRN. Internal error.

66 - EPLFMT. Invalid program load format.

67 - EGSBF. Setblock failure due to growth restrictions.

DE-ARCING ST FILES WITH ONE SINGLE-SIDED DISK DRIVE
copyright 1986, 1987 Robert J. Retelle
Reprinted from Michigan Atari Magazine, 12/87

While using the ARC utility to join and squeeze related files into one easy to download file can be a great advantage, it can also create some VERY large files on your disk.

Many of the ARChived files that are available were created by people who are using double-sided disk drives, and thus the final files may be large enough to cause problems for single-sided disk drive owners. The following method of de-ARCing files onto a single-sided disk drive has been successfully tried with two large ARC file groups, namely: BUBBLES.ARC and XMASDEMO.ARC.

When using ARC.TTP, the greatest problem is the inability to re-direct the output of the process onto a different disk from the one the ARChive file resides on. thus your disk must have enough room free for *both* the ARChived version, *and* the final, normal versions of the files. In many cases, this is not possible.

What saves us in this case is that it is possible to re-direct the input of the de-ARCing process, that is, to take the input from somewhere else. If you use the DCOPY 1.90 utility, you *can* re-direct the output of the de-ARCing process, but you must have two disk drives to do it.

The answer to the dilemma of the single disk drive owner is to create a temporary second disk drive by using a RAM disk in memory. Here is the step-by-step process for the ttwo large ARChives that were tried; others should follow the same general procedure. Note that it *may* be possible that some ARChived groups just cannot be done at all on a single-sided drive.

DE-ARC (continued)

First of all, turn off your computer. On a 512K 520ST, you'll need all the RAM you can get. Then boot up, using a disk with *no desk accessories* on it! This is important to save memory, and because ARC does not seem to like sharing the computer with anything else...!

Next, install a RAM disk in memory. I use the one called FASTRAM.TTP. If you use that one, install it like this: click on its icon or filename. A dialogue box will appear... type in d250. (This indicates you want the RAM disk to be drive D and want ti to be approximately 250K. This should handle most of the ARChived files we have. If it is bigger than 250L, indicate a larger number in the dialogue box. Much bigger, though, and it probably won't fit on a S. S. disk drive when de-ARCed.)

The disk drive will spin, and you should see a message that a RAM disk of 250K has been installed. Then the screen should go back to the desktop. Click *once* on the Disk Drive A icon (so it turns black), then go to the OPTIONS menu on the desktop, and click on INSTALL DISK DRIVE.

A dialogue box will open... press the Esc key to erase the disk drive identification letter (it will say A right now), then type in D (Do NOT press RETURN here!). Move down and click on the button marked INSTALL in the dialogue box. A new disk drive icon will appear just to the right of the existing ones on the desktop. If you have any windows open, you may have to close them or move them out of the way to see it. You can then drag the new icon into line with the other disk drive icons.

Your RAM disk is now installed. Now, put the disk containing the ARChived file which you want to restore to its normal, runnable condition into your disk drive, and copy the file into the RAM disk. (Don't do anything to the disk containing your original .ARC version of the file until you're certain that the de-ARCing process was successful, just in case!)

Next, take a blank, formatted disk, and copy the program ARCX.TTP onto the new disk. (ARCX.TTP is a special version of ARC.TTP, used only for de-ARCing files. It is about half the size of the regular ARC file, and can be obtained as part of the ARChive file called ARC.ARC., or by itself.)

At this point, you should have the ARCed file you want to de-ARC in a RAM disk called disk drive D, and a new blank disk with only the program ARCX.TTP on it, in your floppy disk drive.

Open the disk directory window for drive A, and click on ARCX.TTP. A dialogue box will appear. Type in: D:\XMASDEMO.ARC, then press RETURN. (Of course, substitute the filename of the ARCed file you are processing. For example, you would use D:\BUBBLES.ARC for the Shiny Bubbles Demo.)

Your disk drive should start up, and the regular ARC messages should begin appearing on your screen as the de-ARCing process proceeds. When the process is complete, the program will return to the

desktop. You can then delete the ARCX.TTP file from your disk, and you should have a running version of the ARCed file. The RAM disk will still be in memory, taking up space, and the new disk may not run, so the best way to remove the RAM disk is to simply turn off the computer and re-boot it.

NOTE: The Shiny Bubbles Demo is *so* big that it takes a little more work to get it de-ARCed properly. The de-ARCing process will halt with an error message: Write fail (disk full?) because there isn't enough room to finish the process with the ARCX.TTP utility still on the disk. However, the huge data file will be intact.

To finish the process, delete the partial file SB>PRG and ARCX.TTP from your disk. Then remove the disk, and copy the program ARC.TTP from a floppy disk onto the RAM disk, drive D...

Open the directory window for drive D, and click on ARC.TTP. A dialogue box will open. Now type: xh BUBBLES.ARC SB.PRG. Note the spaces between the filenames. You're telling ARC.TTP to *extract and hold the display*, from the ARchived file BUBBLES.ARC, ONE of the files that are contained in the ARC, in this case SB.PRG.

This will de-ARC *only* the SB.PRG file from the ARC file, *into the RAM disk!* Once the process is finished, replace the disk with the Bubbles Demo files in your disk drive, and copy the file SB>PRG onto the disk from the RAM disk. That should give you a running copy of the Shiny Bubbles Demo, on a single-sided disk.

This technique can be used for other large ARCs. It may take a little experimentation, or moving of files between disks, but generally, it *can* be done.

Also, these techniques only cover the very basic operations involved in using the ARC utilities. There are GEM based "shell" programs which make all of the steps a lot easier to use, but which take up memory and disk space which may be needed on a minimal system to be able to de-ARC a large file at all.

The DCOPY 1.90 utility can also be used to de-ARC files between a RAM disk and a single disk drive, but again, it takes up memory. It's a long process, but just think of all the money you've saved on downloading connect time charges... money you can put toward the purchase of a double-sided drive!

VOLUNTEERS

NEEDED!

DO YOUR BIT!

THREE FOR THE ST
EIGHTBALL, MATCH POINT, & CARDS
A Review of ST Games from MICHTRON
by Angela Burns

There are a few comments that can be made about nearly all MICHTRON software, so I want to cover those before I go into detail about the individual merits of the above mentioned games.

1. PRICE: MICHTRON software is some of the most affordable I have ever seen. Some ST software is prohibitively expensive. I know we are paying for all that development time, etc., but that doesn't make it any easier to pay for the stuff. This is a problem that doesn't enter the picture when dealing with MICHTRON. I like that. A lot.

2. DOCUMENTATION: A MICHTRON product isn't full of slick, amusing little magazines, pamphlets, and doodads. As a result, it isn't quite as much fun as the stuff that comes with other companies' software. BUT (and this is very important) MICHTRON's documentation booklets are clear and concise. They provide you with all the information you need to use the software efficiently, in a manner that is ALWAYS easy to understand. Not like some instructions that leave you saying, "HUH?"

3. GRAPHICS AND SOUND QUALITY: Excellent. Whether you're using color or monochrome, the display is always clear, sharp, and pleasing to the eye. Sound is realistic.

4. COPY PROTECTION: These games are not copy protected, so you may make backups with ease. I know you probably get tired of my raving about this, but I am so enraged when I can't make backups and so incredibly grateful when I can, that it borders on the pathetic. So thanks, guys. I'm glad for software developers who care about what we, the consumers, need.

These points apply equally well to all three of the games below. That said, let's get to 'em!

EIGHTBALL
A POOL SIMULATOR

EIGHTBALL is a realistic simulation of the game of eightball as it is commonly played in countless bars and basements across this great land of ours. It is the standard two-player game where one player chooses the striped balls, one the solid balls, and each tries to pocket all of his/her balls before shooting for the black eight ball.

The game works in either color or monochrome (a definite plus in my book). I particularly like the way the balls roll on the table - much like they do on a real pool table. And, if you're

not any better a player than I am, they fly off of it in a most realistic manner, too! Although it is much easier to knock the balls off the table in this game than in real life. Even I have only done that once.

Although set up to be only a two-player game, you may play alone by either playing against yourself or by choosing the practice option.

Game play is simple; just position the "cue stick" and press the left mouse button to shoot. There are four options to choose from when deciding what counts as a "scratch" (besides pocketing the cue ball, which of course is always a scratch).

There are also three special function keys. UNDO will put the balls back into the position they were in before you took your last shot if you want to try it over (unless you scratched - that would be cheating). HELP will get you a brief help message. ESC will stop the current game and return to the set-up screen.

That's it. Five minutes with the instruction booklet and you'll be a real "shark", as they say back in the hills. Even if you've never played the game before. EIGHTBALL is a good piece of software and I recommend it.

MATCH POINT
A Tennis Game Simulator

This is simply tennis. Not much to say about it really. There are two players on screen who play tennis according to the standard rules, switch sides of the net at appropriate times, and do not act like John McEnroe. There's a little referee in his chair at the side of the court, and the crowd swings their heads back and forth to watch the action, cheering when someone scores.

An intriguing feature of this game is that you may play it in either color or monochrome AND in either English or French!

After the appropriate version of the game has been loaded, choosing options is just point and click. From zero to two people may play at novice, amateur, or professional level. You may use either joysticks or the mouse, or one of each, or the keyboard, to control the action.

Typing an asterisk (*) will pause the game, and hitting ESC will end it, returning you to the option screen.

CARDS
FIVE ST CARD GAMES

This is my favorite of the three games, and I believe the best value for the money. Included are FIVE card games, enough to keep you busy for quite a while.

In BLACKJACK, up to four people may play at once. After you enter each player's name, total

cash, and bet, the game commences. The program counts the cards for you, and you simply choose to hit, stand, double up, or split your pair by pressing 1, 2, 3, or 4. A tie between a player and the dealer results in a "push", meaning that the player's bet is neither won nor lost. You may add or delete players at any time. Very well done.

I can't say much about CRIBBAGE, since I have no idea how to play the game. However, I can at least tell you that the game is part of CARDS, and scoring is automatic.

KLONDIKE is a particularly difficult form of Solitaire. It resembles the most commonly played Solitaire game, with seven building piles and four base piles. It is also played the same way, with one important exception. You play red on black and vice versa, building your piles from the king down on the building piles and the ace up on the base piles. But you can only go through the draw pile (one card at a time) ONCE, so for heaven's sake don't mess up. You pay $1 per card in the deck to set up, and you win $5 per card that you place in the base piles. If, as happens VERY rarely, you reach a winning position (all cards in the base and the building piles revealed, and the draw pile empty), the remaining cards will play themselves. This is an extremely challenging and enjoyable game.

POKER SQUARES consists of a five card by five card grid. As the cards shuffle past, click the mouse to choose one, then place it in the grid so as to form poker hands in each row and column. When the grid is full, the game is over.

SOLITARE (come on, guys, spelling, SPELLING!) is a form of the game I have never seen before. It took some getting used to, but once I got the hang of it, it became my absolute favorite. I have never been able to intelligibly explain the rules, but here goes. All 52 cards are dealt to the board, face up, in groups of three. There are four empty piles for your base piles. Only the top card of each group can be played. You may play a card onto the next higher card of the same suit or onto the next lower card IF IT IS ALREADY IN THE BASE PILE. As cards are played, the next card down in the pile is made available for play. You may redeal all cards that have not been played twice. The game is over when all cards have been played to the base piles or when no further moves can be made and both redeals have already been taken. I know all this sounds ridiculously complicated, but it's really not, once you get used to it.

All ten function keys can be used to choose which game to play and use some of the options of each game.

As I said before, CARDS is my favorite of the trio reviewed here. It provides you with a great deal of variety for a reasonable price and is a very well put together game. I give it my highest recommendation.

THE GREATEST HACKER OF ALL TIME
by Dave Small
Reprinted from Current Notes, 9/87

The question comes up from time to time. "Who's the greatest hacker ever?"

Well, there are a lot of different opinions on this. Some say Steve Wozniak of Apple fame. Maybe andy Hertzfeld of the Mac operating system. Richard Stallman, say others, of M.I.T. Yet at such times when I mention who I think the greatest hacker is, everyone agrees (provided they know of him), and there's no further argument.

So. let me introduce you to him, and his greatest hack. I'll warn you right up front that it's mind numbing. By the way, everything I'm going to tell you is true and verifiable down at your local library. Don't worry - we're not heading off into a Shirley MacLaine UFO-land story. Just some classy electrical engineering...

The Scene: Colorado Springs, CO.

Colorado Springs is in Southern Colorado, about 70 miles south of Denver. These days it is known as the home of several optical disk research corporations and of NORAD, the missile defense command under Cheyenne Mountain. (I have a personal interest in Colorado Springs; my wife Sandy grew up there.)

These events took place some time ago in Colorado Springs. A scientist had moved into town and set up a laboratory on Hill Street, on the southern outskirts.The lab had a two hundred foot copper antenna sticking up out of it, looking something like a HAM radio enthusiast's antenna.

He moved in and started work. And strange electrical things happened near that lab. People would walk near that lab, and sparks would jump from the ground up to their feet, through the soles of their shoes. One boy took a screwdriver, held it near a fire hydrant, and drew a four inch electrical spark from the hydrant. Sometimes the grass around the lab would glow with an eerie blue corona, St. Elmo's Fire.

What they didn't know was this was small stuff. The man in the lab was merely tuning up his apparatus. He was getting ready to run it wide open in an experiment that ranks as among the greatest, the most spectacular, of all time.

One side effect of his experiment was the setting of the record for man-made lightning: some 42 meters in length (130 feet).

The Man: Nikola Tesla.

His name was Nikola Tesla. He was an immigrant from what is now Yugoslavia; there's a museum of his works in Belgrade. He's a virtual unknown in the United States, despite his accomplishments.

I'm not sure why. Some people feel it's a dark plot, the same people who are into conspiracy theories. I feel it's more that Tesla, while a brilliant inventor, was also an awful businessman; he ended up going broke. Businessmen who go broke fade out of the public eye; we see this in the computer industry all the time. Edison, who wasn't near the inventor Tesla was, but who was a better businessman, is as well remembered as his General Electric.

Still, let me list a few of Tesla's works just so you'll understand how bright he was. He invented the AC motor and transformer. (Think of every motor in your house.) He invented 3-phase electricity and popularized alternating current, the electrical distribution system used all over the world. He invented the Tesla coil, which makes the high voltage that drives the picture tube in your computer's CRT. He is now credited with inventing modern radio as well; the Supreme Court overturned Marconi's patent in 1943 in favor of Tesla.

Tesla, in short, invented much of the equipment that gets power to your home every day from miles away, and many that use that power inside your home. His invention made George Westinhouse (Westinghouse Corp.) a wealthy man.

Finally, the unit of magnetic flux in the metric system is the "tesla". Other units include the "faraday" and the "henry", so you'll understand this is an honor given to few. So, we're not talking about an unknown here, but rather a solid electrical engineer.

Tesla whipped through a number of inventions early in his life. He found himself increasingly interested in resonance, and in particular, electrical resonance. Tesla found out something fascinating. If you set an electrical circuit to resonating, it does strange things indeed.

Take, for instance, his Tesla coil. This high frequency step-up tranformer would kick out a few hundred thousand volts at radio frequencies. The voltage would come off the top of his coil as a "corona", or brush discharge. The little ones would put out a six inch spark; the big ones throw sparks many feet long. Yet Tesla could draw the sparks to his fingers without being hurt - the high frequency of the electricity keeps it on the surface of the skin and prevents the current from doing any harm.

Tesla got to thinking about resonance on a large scale. He'd already pioneered the electrical distribution system we use today, and that's not small thinking; when you think of Tesla, think big.

He thought, "Let's say I send an electrical charge into the ground. What happens to it?" Well, the ground is an excellent conductor of electricity. Let me spend a moment on this so you understand, because topsoil doesn't seem very conductive to most.

The ground makes a wonderful sinkhole for electricity. This is why you "ground" power tools; the third (round) pin in every AC outlet in your house is wired straight to, literally, the ground. Typically, the handle of your power tool is hooked to ground; this way, if something shorts out in the tool and the handle gets electrified, the current rushes to ground instead of into you. The ground has long been used in this manner, as a conductor.

Tesla generates a powerful pulse of electricity and drains it into the ground. Because the ground is conductive, it doesn't stop. Rather, it spreads out like a radio wave, travelling at the speed of light (186,000 miles per second). And it keeps going, because it's a powerful wave; it doesn't peter out after a few miles.

It passes through the iron core of the earth with little trouble. After all, molten iron is very conductive. When the wave reaches the far side of the planet, it bounces back, like a wave in water bounces when it reaches an obstruction. Since it bounces, it makes a return trip; eventually it returns to the point of origin.

Now, this idea might seem wild. But it isn't science fiction. We bounced radar beams off the moon in the 1950's, and we mapped Venus by radar in the 1970's. These planets are millions of miles away. The earth is a mere 3,000 miles indiameter; sending an electromagnetic wave through it is a piece of cake. We can sense earthquakes all the way across the planet by vibrations they set up that travel all that distance. So, while at first thought it seems amazing, it's really pretty straightforward.

But, as I said, it's a typical example of how Tesla thought. And then he had one of his typically Tesla ideas. He thought, when the wave returns to me (about 1/30th of a second after he sends it in), it's going to be considerably weakened by the trip. Why doesn't he send in another charge at this point, to strengthen the wave? The two will combine, go out, and bounce again.

And then he'll reinforce it again, and again. The wave will build in power. It's like pushing a swingset. You give a series of small pushes each time the swing goes out. And you build up a lot of power with a series of small pushes; ever tried to stop a swing when it's going full tilt? He wanted to find the upper limit of resonance. And he was in for a surprise.

The Hack: The Tesla Coil

So Tesla moved into Colorado Springs, where one of his generators and electrical systems had been installed, and set up his lab. Why colorado Springs? Well, his lab in New York had burned down, and he was depressed about that. And as fate would have it, a friend in Colorado Springs who directed the power company, Leonard Curtis, offered him free electricity. Who could resist that?

After setting up his lab, he tuned his gigantic Tesla coil through the year, trying to get it to resonate perfectly with the earth below. And the townspeople noticed those weird effects; Tesla was electrifying the ground beneath their feet on the return bounce of the wave.

Eventually he got it tuned, keeping things at low power. But in the spirit of a true hacker, just once he decided to run it wide open, just to see what would happen. Just what was the upper limit of the wave he would build up, bouncing back and forth in the planet below?

He had his coil hooked to the ground below it, the 200 foot antenna above it, and getting as much electricity as he wanted right off the city power supply mains. Tesla went outside to watch (wearing three inch rubber soles for insulation) and had his assistant, Kolman Czito, turn the Coil on.

There was a buzz from rows of oil capacitors and a roar from the spark gap as wrist-thick arcs jumped across it. Inside the lab, the noise was deafening. But Tesla was outside, watching the antenna. Any surge that returned to the area would run up the antenna and jump off as lightning.

Off the top of the antenna shot a six foot lightning bolt; the bolt kept going in a steady arc, though, unlike a single lightning flash. And here Tesla watched carefully, for he wanted to see if the power would build up, if his wave theory would work.

Soon the lightning was twenty feet long, then fifty feet. The surges were growing more powerful. Eighty feet - now thunder was following each lightning bolt. A hundred feet, a hundred and twenty feet; the lightning shot upwards off the antenna. thunder was booming around Tesla now (it was heard 22 miles away, in the town of Cripple Creek). The meadow Tesla was standing in was lit up with an electrical discharge very much like St. Elmo's Fire, casting a blue glow. His theory had worked! There didn't seem to be an upper limit to the surges; he was creating the most powerful electrical surges ever created by man. That moment he set the record, which he still holds, for manmade lightning.

Then everything halted. The lightning discharges stopped; the thunder quit. He ran in and found the power company had turned off his power feed. He called them and shouted at them - they were interrupting his experiment! The foreman replied that Tesla had just overloaded the generator and set it on fire; his lads were busy putting out the fire in the windings, and it would be a cold day in hell before Tesla got any more free power from the Colorado Springs power company! All the lights in Colorado Springs had gone out.

And that, readers, is to me the greatest hack in history. I've seen some amazing hacks. The 8-bit Atari OS. The Mac OS. The phone company computers - well, lots of computers. But I've never seen anyone set the world's lightning record and shut off the power supply to an entire town, "just to see what would happen".

For a few moments, there in Colorado Springs, he achieved something never before done. He had used the entire planet as a conductor and sent a pulse through it. In that one moment in the summer of 1899, he made electrical history. That's right, in 1899 - darn near a hundred years ago.

Well, you may say to yourself, that's a nice story, and I'm sure George Lucas could make a hell of a movie about it, special effects and all. But it's not relevant today.

Or isn't it! Hang onto your hat. Next month: the Strategic Defense Initiative and the Tesla Coil.
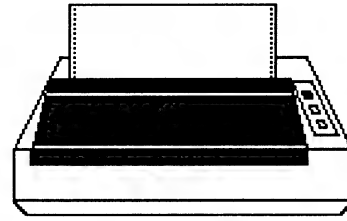
GETTING LONGER LIFE FROM YOUR RIBBONS
by Neil Van Oost, Jr. - JACG
Reprinted from the JACG Newsletter, 11/87

About a year ago I purchased a reinking kit from Raven Systems of Oakland for my Centronics printer. The Infinity Kit ^{TM} sells for $5.00 and consists of two felt pads and a 30 cc. (1 oz.) jar of ink. refills of ink will cost you $3.00 plus shipping and handling. The ink comes in blue, black, brown, and red.

Installation was rather easy and not too messy, although I would recommend using gloves for the initial inking. Following the instruction sheet, you locate the take-up side of your ribbon cartridge and look for a flat place to mount the felt pad. The pad must be mounted where it will not interfere with the print head. Also, it must protrude approximately 1/16 inch so as to allow the ribbon to make contact as it is being rewound. For mounting, use two or three drops of Krazy Glue ^{TM}.

It took me about half an hour to get the ribbon reinked initially. First, I wrote a little program to make the print head travel back and forth with a minimum of printing. The object was to keep the ribbon in motion over the felt. The instructions say that the initial reinking will use approximately 30 to 40 drops of ink, and that is just about what I used. After that, three to four drops of ink on the felt every 30 pages or so will keep your print nice and dark.

Remember to shake the ink up before each application. This is important, because the ink contains oil (as do all printer inks) which lubricates the print head.

A couple of weeks ago, I tried to purchase a ribbon for my Star NX-10. The popularity of this printer is not the only thing that has risen over the past year. The cost of ribbons for it have gone from $6.00 and change to $8.00 and change. so last week I installed The Infinity Kit ^{TM} on it, also.

With the number of posters and banners I print over the course of a year, I figure I have saved the cost of ten ribbons for my Centronics. Depending on the amount of printing you do, the ink contained in The Infinity Kit ^{TM} should last several years.

For more information, write:

Raven Systems of Oakland, NJ
P. O. Box 253
Franklin Lakes, NJ 07417

ATARIWRITER+ ALERT
Reprinted from the Mid Michigan Atari Magazine

Some of us are horrified to discover that AtariWriter Plus operates from a built-in version of DOS 2.5. That means it formats a 1050 into the alien "dual density" and can't be used in true double density or plain old single density.

Well, you can get out of this mess by replacing the DOS on your AtariWriter Plus disk. Yes, even though it's copy protected and will not show a directory (from itself), there is a normal set of DOS, DUP, etc. files on the disk.

It is a little scary to do it to your original copy, so get someone who has a Happy Modified drive to make a copy and then write your favorite DOS to the back-up. Don't worry about getting a bad sector error when it writes the DUP.SYS file, as that's a part of the copy protection. Besides, AtariWriter Plus doesn't use DUP.SYS, anyway.

I used SmartDOS, and presto, I have a true double density and auto density changing AtariWriter Plus, with no dual density nonsense.

This works on both regular and 130XE versions. (You may need to change the name of the autorun file to be usable with your new DOS.SYS.)

MORE ATARIWRITER PROBLEMS!!!

Although the manual is very specific about the need to end a file with a RETURN, you probably still forget sometimes - I do.

What happens next? When you try to print the file, you get a mysterious "FILE LENGTH ERROR" at the bottom of the screen instead of printing.

The solution is quite simple. Just go back and add a RETURN to the end of the file and try it again.

HAPPY NEW YEAR!
FROM DAL-ACE
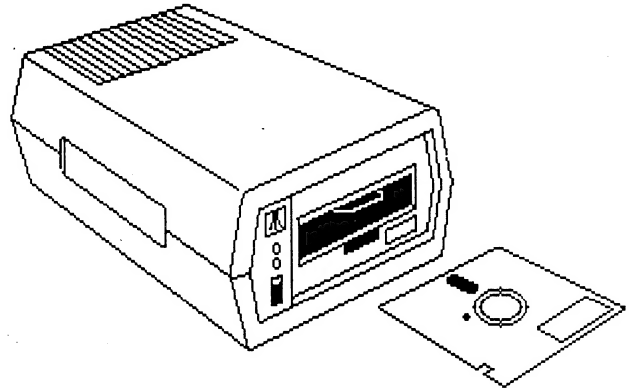
1050 DRIVE BLUES
Compiled by John Nagy, CHAOS BBS
Reprinted from AELIEN Transmissions, The Information Exchange Newsletter of the Atari Exchange of Louisville

Get a SLOWWWW boot error, or sometimes just can't the !@#$^%*%^*(%^ thing to read? The most likely problem is *no disk rotation*. This can be due to belt problems, a loose flywheel, or insufficient *squeeze* on the disk.

Diagnosing the belt problem is easy once you open the drive. Just look at what is happening when the motor runs. Sometimes, the belt is lying in the bottom of the drive. Sometimes, it looks okay, but won't stay on any more! New belts are hard to find, so try buying a small "O" ring that can replace the belt.

If the flywheel center attaching screw is loose, that's another easy fix.

The hard one to tell about is when the disk just isn't being squeezed enough by the turn-down handle mechanism to grip and turn the disk reliably. I put a few thicknesses of paper labels under the part that pushes down when the handle is moved to see if it would grip tighter. It worked so well, I haven't gone back into the drive to see if there is another way to increase the grip... but I suppose the paper will wear out someday. Until then...
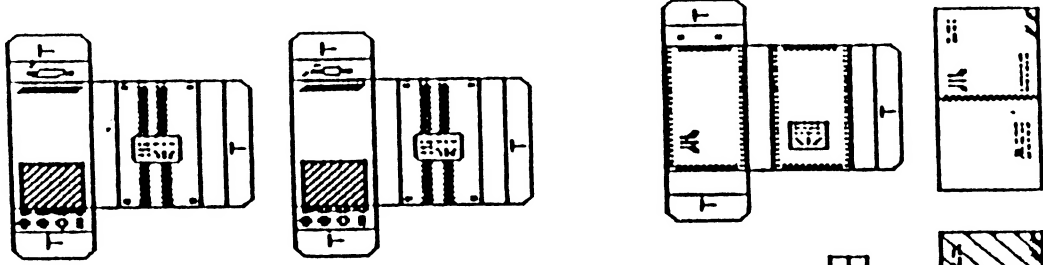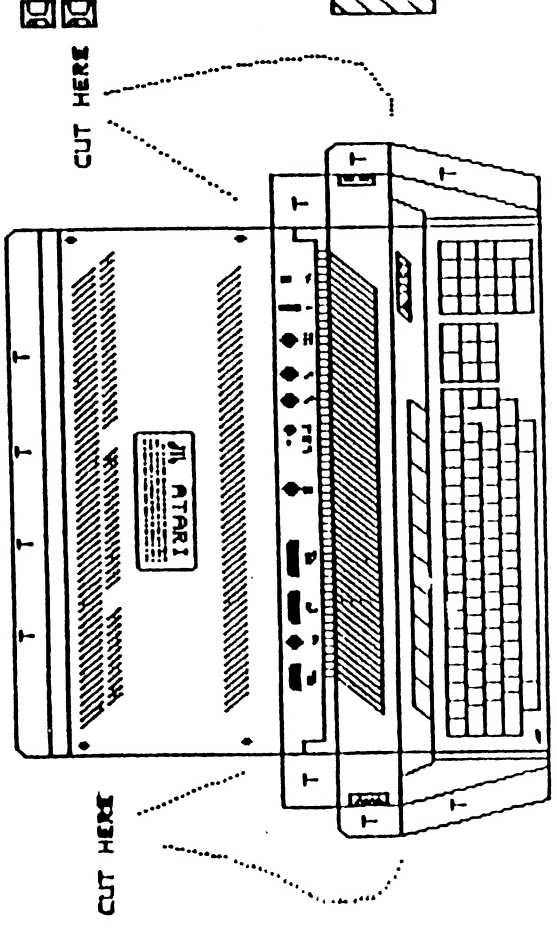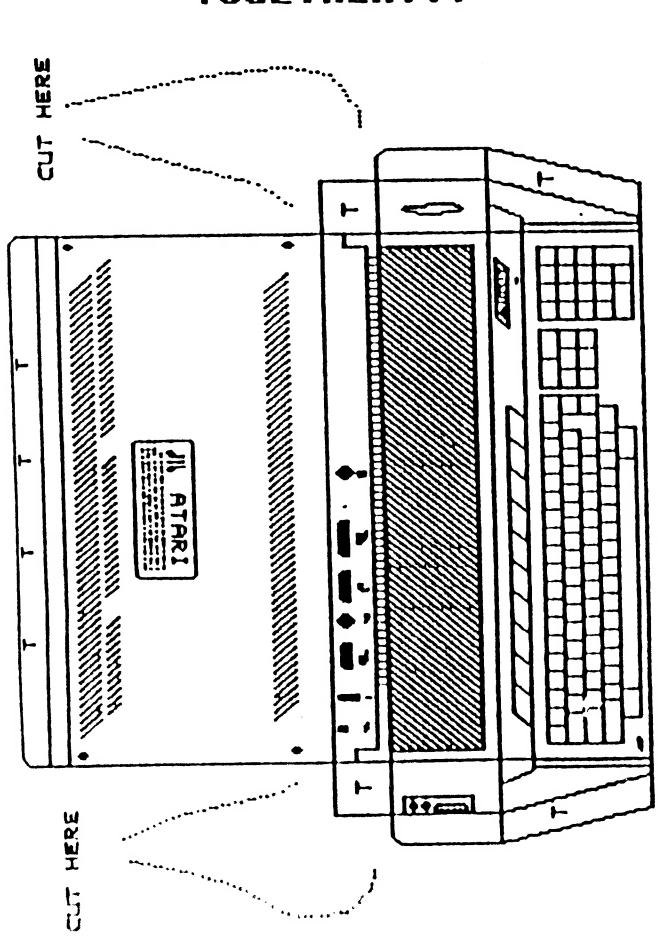
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Submissions are welcome in any form. It is, however, extremely helpful if submissions conform to one of these formats:

1. ASCII files with no formatting information
2. On ST disk format
3. Uploaded to the DAL-ACE BBS
4. Publishing Partner file

It is requested from any 8-Bit user the he/she upload articles to the club BBS. (Number on back page). Articles will also be accepted if they are printed out and given to one of the officers or editors.

CURRENT DAL-ACE SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Saturday, January 16, 1988 - Main Meeting at Infomart

Saturday, February 20, 1988 - Main Meeting at Infomart

As always, all dates more than 30 days in advance are tentative. Please call for more information.

INFOMART DIRECTIONS

From North Dallas, take either Stemmons (I-35E) or the Dallas North Tollway south. From Stemmons, take the Oak Lawn Exit, turn east and park at the Infomart. If you are using the tollway, exit right on Wycliff, go left on Harry Hines to Oak Lawn and turn right. From the south, take Stemmons north, then follow above. Infomart is the big, white steel and glass building south of the other 'marts. GUESTS ARE WELCOME!!!!!!

NEWSLETTER ADVERTISEMENTS

Personal sale ads are free to all current members. Please see the editor for details.

COMMERCIAL RATES

Full Page	$35.00
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Ads must be CAMERA READY. Copy must be received prior to the production meeting. Mail copy to the address on the back page, or contact the advertising manager. Copy received after the production meeting will be run the following month. For contract advertisers, if no new ad is received prior to the production meeting, the most recent ad will be run.

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MEETING INFORMATION

10 :00 -	11 :00	8 Bit Sig
11 :00 -	11 :30	Disk Sales
11 :30 -	12 :00	Main Meeting
12 :00 -	12 :30	BBS Users
		New users
		Newsletter Exchange
12 :30 -	2 :00	ST Sig

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

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