PORTLAND ATARI CLUB

(Not affiliated with Atan, Inc)

JUNE 1984

GENERAL MEETING MONDAY, JUNE 4TH, 7:00 PM

> BPA Auditorium 9th and Holladay, NE

PAC BULLETIN BOARD SYSTEM 24 hours 7 days 1-503-245-9405

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JUNE 1984 NEWSLETTER

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Membership is \$20 per year and includes a subscription to this newsletter and access to members only functions. Single copy price of the newsletter is \$2. General meetings are open to the public and are held at 7PM on the 1st Mon. of each month (2nd Mon. in the case of holidays) on the date and at the location listed on the cover of this newsletter.

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PORTLAND ATARI CLUB

Club Business and Activities

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN Lloyd Suiter

Its hard to believe that almost half of the year has gone by already.

If you missed the last club meeting you missed a really great one. I would like to give a special thank-you to Ed (V.P.) for getting our special guest speaker Jim Little (KGW News). I would also like to thank Jim for coming and sharing his humor and insight into computers and weather prediction.

Bob Lindstrom (Oregonian) was as straight forward as always in his review of the Electronic Arts Music Construction Set. Even if the program has a few problems for a serious musician it was worth the price of admission (\$0.00) to hear Bob do a number on it (both musical and satirical). Thanks Bob, I really enjoyed your whistling.

Well it only took six months to get a new disk out and it looks like a good one. The calender program by our own David Pelinka is an outstanding piece of work, thanks a lot David. Even though the disk is a good one there seem to be a few minor problems. If you have the XL series I'm told it will not load. Also the address program will not load on my 800. I haven't been able to talk to Dan about this yet but I'm sure that these difficulties were not present before Dan took the disk to the copier. If you run into a problem with a PAC disk be sure and give Dan a call and see if you can get your problem straightened out. The PAC does not want to put out to our member a disk of questionable quality. I hope to have a corrected copy ready for the next meeting.

I also seem to get many complaints about the lack of documentation of programs on club disk. First, I want you to know that we are trying to create doc. files for our older disk and hopefully all of our new disk will have documentation on them. Second, if you feel you have a concern about the quality of documentation on a disk make sure Dan knows about it. He makes up the disk. Third, instead of complaining about the situation why don't you join Dan's disk group and help correct the situation.

I'm sure that if we all work together we can make the Portland Atari Club one of the best clubs in the nation.

On the positive side, the very first PAC coffee house got off to a roasting start on Mother's Day. When I got over there about 3:00pm there were about 13 people there (not bad for Mother's Day). Remember this is a place were you can go and meet members of the club in a casual atmosphere and learn about the inter-workings of

the Atari computer. It is designed for the new user who has questions about his machine and not for hours of game play. If you just want to play games then I suggest you join the game SIG. The PAC Coffee House is located in the basement of I.B. Computers (a special big thank you to Ivan) across the street from the Cedar Hills Shopping Center in Beaverton (no it is not part of the Beaverton Atari Club - What Is the BAC?). The coffee house is held on the 2ND and 4TH Sunday's of each month, from 12:00pm to 5:00 pm (thanks to Chuck for a super job).

At the last meeting we had a look at a large screen projection system by Sony. It was sure a beauty. We will be previewing other models during the next few months to try and decide which brand we should buy. If you know of someone who would like to sell us a system at a good price and is willing to let us preview it at a meeting please give us a call. If you know a guy who knows a guy who knows a guy and your not sure if they will let us try it out then we're not interested. Please check it out a little to help us save a little leg work, especially when we don't know who we are talking to.

I'll be looking forward to seeing you at the next meeting. Keep beating that keyboard.

Later LLOYD

PAC HELP HOTLINES

The following people have generously offered to take telephone queries in the areas indicated.

CASSETTE OPERATION Lee Gassaway 642-	2455
DOS OPERATIONS Steve Deutsch 648-	2017
MODEM OPERATIONS Gary Lippert 233-	7069
BBS USAGE Russell Schwartz 643-	1089
BASIC PROGRAMMING Nick Yost 981-	0838
Lee Gassaway 642-	2455
OPERATING SYSTEM Nick Yost 981-	0838
Leroy Baxter 653-	1633
ASSEMBLY LANGUAGE Leroy Baxter 653-	1633
FORTH Ricky Wooldridge 224-	7163

BOARD MEETING NOTES Sharon Berry

The April board meeting was held April 30 in the basement of IB Computers. Attending were Lloyd, Ed, Clyde, Dan, Dale, Gary, Chuck, Jim and Sharon, Dave Pelinka, Jean Hall, Karl Anthony and Jim Stibik.

GRIPES AND SUGGESTIONS

Several problems regarding the general meetings were discussed by Board members and Mr. Stibik who feel that some topics and presentations are too advanced for beginners. A special effort will be made in the Beginner's Corner and during the meeting to meet the needs of novices. The Beginner's Corner still needs people willing to answer questions. We also need volunteers to teach a beginning class in BASIC. Please, we know you're out there!

JUNE MEETING

Jim Berry spoke of plans for our June general meeting. He has contacted Greg Preston from Micro Peripherals, who may speak. His topics would touch on their modem with interface and the NEC 8200. Walter has prepared to demonstrate the CPA, in conjunction with Tom Brown's demo of Home Accountant.

BIG SCREEN TV

Karl from Video Showplace described the capabilities of his Panasonic projection TV. It will project 5 feet diagonally, has audio, and is very compact. One person can put it into his or her trunk. It will project onto a wall or flat screen. In two years, none of his units has needed service. These models can be serviced locally, however. Karl is likely to allow us use of his hardware at the June general meeting. The price of Sony is, at this time, prohibitive. When it comes to other, lesser known brands, reliability is questionable.

NEW SOFTWARE

The new club utility disk is ready for sale. It is a home and business management applications disk. It includes a calendar, property management and stock programming programs. Chuck is reworking a new, double density, menu. Russ and Ed are reviewing a music and a Forth disk, results of Dan's Boston trip. Watch for a trade-in offer on your old utility disk!

NEWSLETTER NEWS

Clyde and crew would still appreciate contributions, especially program listings that are public domain. Look for brain teasers in future issues. The board is considering providing newsletters to businesses as a way of advertising. Look for a revision of the cover and a table of contents in the future.

BBS BUSY, BUSY

Lloyd and others are very frustrated by not being able to get onto the bulletin board at a reasonable hour. Russ is working on a method of tagging names of people who connect, in order to avoid monopolization. Members will be allowed a longer connect time than non-members, especially during prime hours. The 1200 baud modem is still being pursued.

COFFEEHOUSE - AT LAST!

IB Computers has (been) volunteered for the coffeehouse location. The basement is fairly roomy, quiet and carpeted. The first open door will be Sunday, May 13 from noon to 5 p.m. Thereafter, it will be open each second and fourth Sunday during the same time span. We need volunteers to answer questions, so....

QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

Jim reported that only 54 of you returned your blue survey sheets. I mean, really! If you still have them, it's not too late. Check under your sofas, guys. Here are the results. Those willing to pay admission to general meetings: 19 yes, 26 no, 8 abstain. Those willing to pay parking: 8 yes, 35 no, 10 abstain. Comments included these: meetings should start on time, meetings are boring, business portion too lengthy. Several people commended our newsletter staff for their fine product.

TREASURER'S REPORT

As of this writing, our general fund contains approximately \$3800. Of this amount, \$871.50 is dedicated to the large screen TV. At April's general meeting, we took in \$360 from membership dues and \$318 from software sales. From the software sales, \$79.50 went into the TV fund.

UNCLASSIFIED ADS PAC Members

Wanted: File Manager 800 or File Manager +. Call Frank Myers at 241-9283.

FOR SALE: Rana 1000 disk drive, brand new. Epson FX-80 printer, low mileage. Call Larry Eikenberry at 641-6850 for more info or to make a deal.

SUNDAY COFFEEHOUSE Chuck Hall

Our first Sunday Coffeehouse was a success. But only because you made it so. We started a little slow but by the end of the day, were were well pleased at the turnout. Besides myself, Russ Schwartz and Clyde Pritchard were there to assist the whole time. Our president Lloyd Suiter, stopped by and jumped in to help. Other members who showed up were always jumping in to assist where we could not. This is what the coffeehouse idea is all about.

You know it's really strange. We had a donation box set up by the coffee pot. Those that came in, and spent a little time, and had just a couple of questions, donated the most. Others that were there all day, took up most of our time, gave nothing. Doesn't seem right does it? The donations are used to meet the expenses and help compensate the leader of the coffeehouse for that day. In my case, anything after expenses goes to the Big Screen fund. I wish to publicly thank Bob Oesterling for his very generous donation.

Remember, we will be at IB COMPUTERS, the second and fourth sundays of each month, from 12 noon to 5:00 PM. The store will be open (we are in the basement) for your convenience also. We thank IB for there generous contributing in letting us use their premises for this activity.

SIGS Chuck Hall

I am very gratified by your response to new Special Interest Groups. The ball is now rolling. Jump On. Lets have some fun.

We have enough people now for an Assembler Group. Details on the first meeting and as to who the SIG leader is, will be forthcomming. We have great interest in putting together a FORTH group. We need a couple of more names, and a place to meet. We have a volunteer to lead the group, and I will pass any names on to him.

We also have a nucleus started for the following:

BASIC XL

ACTION

ATR 8000 / ATARI CPM

D & D (Dungeons & Dragons)

If you want to participate in these please give me a call at 293-0552, leave a message on the Bulletin Board, or catch me at one of the Club functions.

PAGE SIX Clyde Pritchard

As indicated by its late arrival, this month's newsletter production did not go by the book. We had several contributors with major conflicts, and I had to put in quite a few hours of overtime the weekend we normally put out the newsletter. We really had no choice in the matter, and hope to avoid these kinds of conflicts in the future.

June looks like a short month, so here is the production schedule for the July issue:

6/04 - Normal Deadline

6/05 - Commercial Ad Deadline

6/07 - Newsletter Meeting

6/08-6/09 - Final Deadline

6/09-6/10 - Production

6/11-6/12 - Final Layout

6/13-6/15 - Printing

6/18 - Mailing

Remember that all members can submit copy for "Unclassified Ads", computer items for sale or wanted to buy. We are also looking for subject matter for "The Help Key" column. For the last several months David has been developing his own material, which is great, but it seems that some of you must have some good questions or ideas for the column. It doesn't have to be something that helps you, it just needs to be something that will help someone in the club. We also like to hear any other ideas you have for reviews, columns or anything else that might help us make the PAC newsletter better. We also accept letters to the editor, or whatever you want to call them. Also, we will be happy to add you to our list of contributors if you come up with a review, article, program, etc. The more people that contribute, the more flavor and color newsletter will have.

I was glad to see our last general meeting get us on an upward swing again, and the coffeehouse looks like a hit also. We will be needing more people to help out with the coffeehouse, so give Chuck a call and let him know how you can help. You will be surprised how good you will feel when you are able to help someone else see the light, and you don't need to be an expert to do it either.

I have noticed that a lot of people wait until something they see as a problem with the club makes them so mad that they can't express themselves well. It seems like a much better idea to bring it up right away, rather that letting it fester. It's just like voting, if you don't express yourself, you shouldn't complain about the results.

News and Reviews

UP AND COMING Walter Germer

I hope you haven't been waiting at your computer store for all the new software that I've told you about. It seems like the last four months I've been talking about what's **UP** but nothing **COMES** out. The problem is simple and it makes me a little upset.

When the Atari was new, the Apple computer dominated the marketplace and the minds of software, producers. After two long years the Atari's popularity reached the point software houses realized that their days of producing software for one type of machine were over. Soon many previously Apple-only houses began marketing Atari software and when these were added to the packages produced by Atari-only producers, Atari owners found themselves first or second on the waiting list for the latest titles. Now there has been a third change. The C64 has moved in front of Atari on the software release schedules. The order is becoming Apple, Commodore and finally our old faithful Atari. The question is not if we will be getting new software. but when.

Examples: Music Construction Set released first for the Apple. Two months later came the C64 version, and then finally the Atari. Other examples are ONE ON ONE BASKETBALL. SUBLOGIC FLIGHT SIMULATOR, MUSE PROFESSIONAL WORD PROCESSOR, HOMEWORD and AZTEC. All excellent programs have already come for the Apple and C64 with the Atari version still COMING. The future is still a question mark and in the hands of the marketing people. On the bright side, Activision will continue to bring out their games for the Atari first.

Lets see what's really coming for the Atari. MICRO FUN (an Apple software house) will be releasing their latest titles for the Atari. In THE HEIST you become agent Graham Cracker as he goes undercover to find the keys which are hidden in 90 different rooms. Each room is boobytrapped and if you fail, the fate of the whole world is your responsibility. Also from Micro Fun comes DINO EGGS, a hatching experience.

SCREENPLAY is leaving adventure games for awhile to produce PLAYFUL PROFESSOR, their first educational program. This one teaches addition, subtraction, multiplication and division with some fantastic graphics.

SPINNAKER SOFTMARE's latest packages are almost impossible to keep track of. With two to three new titles each month the stores don't even try to keep up. In KIDWRITER, kids ages 6-10 can create their own stories. In RANCH they create

and animate their own ranches (ages 5-10). In ALF IN THE COLOR CAVES children lead Alf around the many different rooms to learn colors (ages 3-6). BUBBLE BURST teaches the relationships between cause and effect (ages 4-8). In ADVENTURE CREATOR you can design an adventure game that everyone can play or the computer can create one (ages 12-adult). Finally there's AEGEAN VOYAGE, an adventure game the whole family can sail into (ages 8-adult).

Be looking for the new software from WEEKLY READER FAMILY SOFTWARE (Xerox Education Publications). Their fourth release will be BEACH LANDING, a very colorful educational game.

All indications are that the June CES show will be something of a disappointment for Atari computer owners. Atari had planned a big meeting for all Atari dealers prior to the show but it was called off at the last minute. The only news I have is in the game machine line. A super cartridge may be introduced for the 2600 capable of up to 48K ROM. In addition there's talk of a new game machine called the 780 which is reputed to be hot stuff but no details have been released. Let's hope the show brings at least one or two exciting software releases for the computer line.

BULLETIN BOARD NUMBERS Clyde Pritchard

The following information on how to get a list of BBS numbers is from the March 26, 1984 Infoworld.

A downloadable list of over 600 verified free-access BBSs located in the U.S. and Canada is available via the On-Line Computer Telephone Directory (OLCTD), an information service for communications enthusiasts. The OLCTD information exchange also answers questions frustrated users regarding communications software. modems, and other "modeming protocols, mysteries." The service is available 24 hours a day at (913) 649-1207 and can be accessed with either a 300- or 1200-bayd modem.

DRAGONRIDERS OF PERN Clyde Pritchard

Dragonriders of Pern, from Epyx, is based on a series of science fiction - fantasy novels by author Anne McCaffrey. The series is excellent, and should be interesting to all readers, SF/F fans or not. There are seven books in the series so far, Dragonflight, Dragonquest, The White Dragon, Dragonsong, Dragonsinger, Dragondrums, and most recently Moreta, Dragonlady of Pern.

For those who haven't read the series, the 13 page instruction book starts out with a three page synopsis of the story and history of the planet Pern and the Dragonriders. This prologue is written by Anne McCaffrey, and tells you more than enough to be able to play the game. In fact, those people who haven't read the books may be better off in playing the game, because they won't have a preconceived notion of Pern and its people. The manual also has a map of Pern and glossary of terms.

The basic story is that Pern was colonized by people from Earth, everything was going well, and then the planet was assaulted by destructive spores from one of Pern's sister planets. The spores, called thread, destroyed anything they contacted, and caused staggering losses to the colonists. The ships had been cannibalized early on, so there was no way for them to escape the menace. They had the ability to do genetic engineering, so they developed a race of fire-breathing dragons who could destroy the thread as it fell from the sky. The dragons were manned by people with telepathic ability, which allowed them to communicate with the dragons.

Obviously there is a lot more to the story, but I hope it's enough to let me talk about the game without losing those who haven't read the books.

Epyx has a coding system for their software that indicates the degree of emphasis in each of three areas; action, strategy, or learning. This game was given a rating of two units of strategy and one unit of action. The game is disk based and requires 48K. The keyboard and joysticks or paddles are used for input. It supports from 1 to 4 human players, and 2 to 5 computer players, for a total of six active players. The game has two major phases; Negotiation/Intrigue and Thread Fighting. There are three variations; Standard Game, with both phases, No Thread Fighting, and Thread Fighting Practice. Next you select Slow, Average or Fast game speed. You then select the number of levels of thread for the Thread Fighting phase; 1. 2 or 3 levels. These levels are depths of thread, meaning that the number of levels you select will appear at the same time, and you will have to move between them. You also select the length of the game in Pernese years, from 1 to 99. Each year takes 10 to 15 minutes of play. The game won't end exactly in the number of years you select; the program ends the game +/- 2 years from the time entered so no player can benefit from knowing when the game will end.

The Negotiation/Intrigue phase of the game involves making allies with other player and non-player characters on Pern and dealing with randomly generated events. Time is moving as all these things occur, and you interrupt the program to enter information as to who you wish to negotiate with, etc.

At the end of each year, you enter the Thread Fighting phase of the game. Each human player takes a turn fighting thread. Learning to fight thread takes some practice, especially at two or three levels, so the Thread Fighting Practice option is very nice. Thread fighting becomes more difficult as the games progresses, also adjusting its difficulty to each player's skill level.

After Thread Fighting, you can continue to the next year of Negotiation/Intrigue, or save the game and continue play later. The score of each player is also displayed at this point.

The game ends when one of the following occurs; 20 or more settlements are thread infested, a player has received 20 victory points, or time expires.

Victory points are earned by skill in both phases of the game, so its not enough just to learn how to fight thread. Actually, no points are earned in thread fighting, but your success in thread fighting affects how well you can negotiate.

This game was of interest to me because I am a big fan of the book series. I haven't been able to play it much yet, but it looks like it will provide entertainment for some time to come. It seems to be well-written, has good sound. very good graphics and an above average instruction book. It is probably a good idea to see a demo before you buy, because I don't think this is a game for everyone. The combination of adventure, strategy, text and graphics is very interesting. but may not appeal to you. Chuck Hall told me that this game was coming out, and I bought it the first time I saw it. Last I knew, Chuck didn't have it yet, but I'm going to get together with him and play a few sessions, so maybe you'll hear his comments in a future issue.

SPELLING CHECKERS Clude Pritchard

There are three spelling checker programs available for use with Atari computers; ATSPELLER from APX, SPELL PERFECT from LJK and SPELL WIZARD from Datasoft. Spelling Checkers are used in conjunction with Word Processors and help in the proofreading process by checking your spelling against a disk based dictionary. They do not check composition, punctuation, etc., but having something to check for misspellings can help even the best speller. This is because even a good speller may not be a good typist, and even the best typist can have a finger check now and then.

ATSPELLER

I don't have access to ATSPELLER, but I read a review of it in The Atari Connection magazine. It apparently works pretty well, although much slower than the commercial packages. Its latest version can be set-up to work in real-time with Atariwriter, but this means that you have much less memory available for your document. It also costs the same as SPELL WIZARD. Therefore, unless you want your spelling checker integrated with Atariwriter, work only with small documents, and aren't in a hurry, ATSPELLER may not be the best choice.

SPELL PERFECT

Mike Casady loaned me his copy of SPELL PERFECT (SP) so I could write this article. SP is a companion product for LETTER PERFECT, also from LJK. Letter Perfect was the first Atari word processor that I used, so I was able to deal with SP without much trouble. I don't have the latest version of Letter Perfect, and use it only for the mail-merge function, doing all other word processing with Atariwriter.

Anyway, SP is very similar to Letter Perfect and Data Perfect, LJK's other principle products for the Atari. They are menu-driven, fairly well-written. but all have borderline documentation. They also use a special LJK DOS rather than Atari DOS 2.0 or any other standard Atari DOS. The disk directory and VTOC have been relocated, and a special technique is used to track sector linkages rather than standard sector chaining. This means that you cannot easily transfer files to and from these products and other programs that use a standard DOS file format. LJK does offer and conversion utility for document files, and it is a must if you need to communicate with the outside world. This means that if you are using Atariwriter, Text Wizard, or any other standard Atari DOS based word processor, you will have to purchase another

program to be able to use SP as your spelling checker.

SP comes with 2 double sided disks. One is the program disk with side one for 40-column operation, the other for 80-column operation with the BIT-3 80-column card for the Atari 800. The other disk is the dictionary disk with one side being a double density version and the other being a single density version. The 80-column and double density features are what make LJK products the more professional, business oriented products.

Another unique feature is that SP has options for creating backup copies of the software and dictionary disks. In fact, the manual starts off with the backup process. This is the kind of feature that all software packages should have. Combined with documentation that can't be copied, you have a reasonable way to provide the legitimate purchaser with a backup method without the need to resort to pirate backups.

When you boot SP, the first few prompts are for system configuration, 1 or 2 drives, and single or double density. Next the Main Menu appears, with options to Spell Check a file, do functions, Dictionary File Maintenance functions, Change the System Maintenance Configuration, or Quit. The File Maintenance Menu has options to Save, Lock, Unlock, Delete, Format, Backup and Return to the Main Menu. The Dictionary Maintenance Menu has options to Add Words, Add a File of Words, Delete Words, Print the Dictionary, Backup and Return to the Main Menu.

To check the spelling in a document, you select the Spell option on the Main Menu. The program then loads the file, and counts the total number of words and total number of different words. The total number of words is the total number of words with more than three letters, because the program does not check words like "and", "the", "guy", etc. After all, who ever makes a typo on simple words like these? We all do, don't we? SP also checks possessives by truncating all letters after the single quote. This may not be a good idea either. I'm not sure what it does with hyphenated words, it may ignore them too. The program searches the dictionary next, giving a total of unlisted words and repeats the count of different words. Next, you are in correction mode. The program scrolls the document through a small window and stops at the first misspelled word and highlights it in

inverse video. You have the following options; Ignore the word and go to the next unlisted word, Match the word with words in the dictionary, Change the word, or Quit and return to the Main Menu. The Match option returns a list of similar sounding words from the dictionary. LJK calls this the SOUND(R) method. It does not seem to be a standard phonetic technique, because often the list of words displayed have little or no relationship to the word you are trying to match. At the hospital where I work, we use a phonetic encoding technique for our patient identification system, and it does a very good job. The first thing it does is restrict the search to words (names) with the same first letter. technique doesn't, and although this would seem to be intended to resolve problems like leaving the "p" off of psychology, it doesn't. Here are some examples. Word: foreward (forward). The list returned included forward (glad to see that). priority. overhead. and Word: saterical (satirical). List returned: historically. historical, hysterical (for sure), straggle, struggled, struggles, struggling, struggle. Word: third. No matches found. Word: workings. List returned; organizes. That should give you an idea of what I mean. When the list is displayed, you can ask for More words, Select a word from the list, or Quit and return to the previous prompt. If you select a word, you can edit it, change your mind, or accept it to replace the unlisted word. You cannot replace a single word (two words with no space for example) with two words.

After the entire document has been reviewed, the Save file prompt appears with a directory of the data disk. You can enter the original filename or choose a new name for the file. You are returned to the Main Menu after the file is saved. If the file cannot be saved because the file is locked or the disk is full, an error message is displayed after which you can return to the Main Menu and select the File Maintenance Menu. The File Maintenance Menu will allow you to unlock the file or format a new disk. You could also put in another disk and use the Save file option.

The Dictionary Maintenance Menu allows you to add words to, or delete words from the dictionary. Because the program does not keep track of unlisted words, you need to do this yourself so you can add them to the dictionary later. A small list of words can be entered via the Add Word option, or if you have a large list, you can key it as a document and use the Add File

option. Words can be deleted only by entering them in a mode similar to the Add Word option. The Print Dictionary option seems to be of limited use, because it prints words by the "page" of the dictionary in which they occur. Because the dictionary is in "phonetic" rather than alphabetic, this is even worse. It's not real likely that you would want to print the dictionary anyway, but it would be nice if you could do it in a usable manner.

This leads us into the next area related to dictionary maintenance, how do you know what words you have added, and how do you verify that you spelled them correctly? Good question. There really doesn't seem to be a way to do this. You just have to be very careful.

The SP dictionary can span multiple disks, up to 255 in fact. This is real nice to a point, but do you really want to swap disks that many times?

The documentation for SP comes in a very nice, padded, full-size three-ring binder. It is written as a tutorial which may make it nice for a total novice, but makes it rough on a function oriented advanced user. The tutorial uses a demo file that comes with the program, and does seem to cover each and every feature.

If you have a one disk system you will have a certain amount of disk swapping to do, but the manual seems to show an adequate number of prompts for disk swaps. The tutorial includes separate sections for one and two disk users.

SPELL WIZARD

I have a copy of SPELL WIZARD (SW), which I use on the newsletter, and my wife uses in her word processing service. SW is a companion to Datasoft's TEXT WIZARD word processing program, but works with any word processor that uses standard DOS file format. It can be used with other word processors like Letter Perfect, if their files can be converted to standard format and back to whatever special format the program uses.

SW also comes with two disks, the program disk and the main dictionary disk. It does not support 80-column or double density operations. If your system can automatically configure itself for a single density program/dictionary disk and a double density data file disk, it seems that the program could handle it. SW does not have a backup option.

When SW boots, it displays a prompt based on the number of drives on your system. After loading the appropriate disk(s), you press return to display the menu. SW has just one menu with the following options; Proof a Document, Print Dictionary, Search Dictionary, Exit Spell Wizard. You use the Option key to select the desired feature, and press the Start key to execute it.

To Proof a Document, press Start and the directory of the document disk will be displayed with a prompt for entering the file to be proofed. SW loads the file and gives you a count of the total number of words in the document and a count of the number of unique words in the document. Next SW searches the main dictionary. and gives you a count of the total number of dictionary words loaded into memory. This total is dependent upon the number of unique words in your document. Then you are prompted for a search of a user dictionary. You can have SW search as many special dictionaries as you have set up. We have a special dictionary for the newsletter and separate dictionaries for some of Debble's customers who are in businesses that use special terminology (aircraft, medical, etc.). After the words are loaded from the special dictionaries, you are asked if you want to correct the words. This seems like a totally ridiculous prompt, because after all, we are proofing a document and what else would you want to do. It can't be just an escape point, because you can use system reset for that at any time during the process. When you reply "Y" to this prompt, SW reads your document again and displays it in a small window with the first word that wasn't found in the dictionary highlighted. You now have the options Continuing to the next word, Making a correction to the word or Searching the dictionary for the word. When you choose to make a correction, you are prompted to enter your correction and press return when done. Then you are asked if you wish to accept the correction. If you reply "Y", the word is changed and the program advances to the next word. If you reply "N", you are returned to the previous prompt and can either enter another correction or search the dictionary. The only problems in this area are that the entry for continue is "C" and the entry for make correction is "M", and you must press return after entering the letter. It takes a bit of practice not to enter "C" to correct a word, rather than "M". I guess they thought that you would look and think before you hit return, but it really doesn't work that way. You have to press return after all "Y/N" prompts also.

When you choose to search the dictionary, you are prompted to enter a word or a wild card

search argument. This means that to find the spelling of the word "forward", you can enter "for*" as the search argument, and the program will display all words on the dictionary the begin with the letters "for". This allows you to find a word as long as you know how it begins, provided that it exists on the dictionary."

SW does check spelling on all words, no matter how small, so you don't have to worry about transposing letters in "and", "the", etc. It also has many hyphenated words and standard verb contractions in the dictionary. It does not check for capitalization, the words "oregon" and "Oregon" are both considered to be correct. The only exception to this is for the following five usages of "I"; "I", "I'm", "I'd", "I'll" and "I've". SW flags all words with "'s" and "s'" (if they aren't in the dictionary). It also flags all non-alphabetic characters.

After you finish proofing your document, you are asked if you wish to save the corrected file. This prompt occurs only if you made changes. SW saves the file under the original filename, you can't enter a new filename. Next you are asked if you want to add the words that weren't in the main and/or user dictionaries to your dictionary. If you reply "Y", you are then asked if you want to review the words or have them automatically added to the dictionary. Normally you want to review them, because if you had any one character "words" that you skipped over that weren't really words, it will add them too. Also, it adds all words that weren't found, even if you corrected them. It does not add the corrected word, because it may already be in the dictionary. After the words are added to the dictionary, you are returned to the main menu.

Because SW has separate user dictionaries, and doesn't allow you to add words to the main dictionary; you can easily review the words that you have added to the dictionary by loading your user dictionary into your word processor. You can then correct or delete any bad words, add new words. or print a listing of the words.

The menu options to Print and Search Dictionary work alike, except that print is for hard copy, and search is for screen display. Both work for the main dictionary only, and you specify a starting word or wild card argument to begin each process. You can pause the display by pressing the space bar, and abort the listing by pressing the escape key after pressing the space bar. To continue the display, press the space bar again.

ZORK LIVES ON Steve Billings

The exit option allows you to boot another program without powering off your system. Just put in the disk to be booted and press the start key.

The SW documentation comes in a padded, 8 by 10 three-ring binder. A reference card is provided, but it is just a reprint of the on-screen prompts. The manual is in a tutorial format, but is so short (only 15 pages) that it works ok as a standard reference guide also. It really could stand a little more detail in some areas, but overall is good, concise and usable.

For the purpose of a comparative test for this review, I ran Lloyd's column through both programs. SP took 11 seconds to load the file, 1:35 to search its dictionary, counted 536 total words, 283 unlisted words, and 33 unlisted words. It didn't find common words like "copies", "third", "don't", "roasting" and "previewing". SW took 11 seconds to load the file, 1:28 to search its dictionary, counted 715 total words, 336 unique words and read 7343 words from the dictionary. It didn't find common words like "copies", "Sunday" and "guys".

In any case, performance of the two programs is very close. You will still need to have a regular dictionary close by, but the main thing is that the program finds words that may be misspelled so you can check them out. SW does a better job of this because it checks all words, not just those over three letters. I also like the separate dictionaries of SW better, and prefer its dictionary search and print functions. In terms of the word correction, SP has two benefits; it corrects all occurrences of a word automatically whereas SW flags each occurrence as an error and makes you correct each one. SP also lets you select a word from the dictionary search list rather than making you key it in as SW does. SP's major problem seems to be its wierd SOUND(R) word matching technique.

Both of these products seem to do the job they are intended to do. The main considerations are file compatibility and price. SP uses its own file structure but does have a conversion facility. SW uses standard format files, and a Letter Perfect user can use the conversion utility to allow file transfer between the two programs. SP costs \$79.95 and the conversion program is about \$20.00. SW and ATSPELLER are \$39.95.

Infocom Software, which is by now famous for their Zork adventure series consisting of three parts, Zork I, II, and III, appeared to have run out of sequels to this their best selling text adventure. Their products since the Zorks have been other adventures and mysteries too numerous to mention, but all done in a consistent fine style and flair. All is not lost however, two recent arrivals are actually wolves in sheep's clothing. The games Enchanter and Sorcerer may appear to be a new series by their names and covers, but a closer look exposes them to be none other than Zorks!

In reading some of the hype put out as The New Zork Times by Infocom, they admit that these two games were originally titled Zork IV and V. In the obscure realms of the marketing and advertising back rooms the titles were changed, but if you look closely at the games and their packaging you will find some references to their true identities. Check the address on the Popular Enchanting magazine in Sorcerer. It starts the address with Z5. Zork V? They probably thought they could slip that one by me. Seriously, in the games themselves there are references to the old GUE, Frobozz, and of course the Excessive Dimwit Flathead among other ancient legends.

The content of the adventures is similar to the previous Zorks with many rooms to explore and strange puzzles to unravel, except now you have progressed to being no lowly adventurer, but rather an aspiring magician. (See, all that work did pay off.) Now, if you can find them, the booty is spells and potions rather than mere material possessions.

To be honest I have not progressed to what seems to be anywhere near the completion of either adventure, so do not expect me to give away any of my hard earned secret tips in this article. If you find a way to get up the winding stairs though, let me know.

Either game is complete within itself and can be enjoyed by the first time adventurer, but it adds to the enjoyment to have progressed through the Zork trilogy and have the lore and history of the Great Underground Empire in mind.

So if you have a couple of years worth of evenings and weekends to spend start at the beginning. Of course by then there will likely be more sequels to conquer, so do not waste any more time, jump in wherever you feel comfortable. There are no pretty pictures or player/missiles in these games, but the best video game may just be inside your own imagination.

How To Bo It

THE ATARI EXECUTIVE: PART ONE David Pelinka

Do you ever wish your Atari was smarter? I do. It's great to be able to use Atariwriter or dial up another computer with a modem or play an exciting game, but sometimes I wish my Atari would listen to me more. In fact, it would be nice to have it talk back once in awhile if I was in the mood to listen. Someday the personal computer may become so sophisticated that it will act as friend and advisor. For now though, I'd like my trusty Atari to be more responsive and not so picky about what it understands. This series of articles will discuss a type of program called an executive (exec for short) which is one way to expand and improve the communication between the user and the computer. By the time we're done your Atari might be so smart that it will want a three piece suit and a briefcase.

When we're not running commercial software, most of us use BASIC and DOS as our main means of telling our computers what to do. While both of these programs perform their chores well, the user is limited in both the number of functions from which he has to choose and the method or syntax he must use to perform them. With no program loaded in Atari BASIC, the only useful commands are RUN, LOAD, ENTER, and DOS. BASIC XL is a great improvement over Atari BASIC as a programmer's tool, but only adds a few DOS functions to the choices you have when you see the "Ready" prompt. DOS gives you more options. but can slow you down since many commands prompt you for more information or verification. Menu loader programs are easy to use but severely limited in utility. (I think I can do more than pick a number.) OS/A+ and DOS XL are not bound to the menu format, but are not very user friendly. Finally, there have been many excellent programs, utilities and hints which exploit the Atari's many capabilities and provide a good interface, but they're scattered everywhere and their functions haven't been combined into a single, easy to use system. Our task then is to combine the most useful tasks that these programs can perform with a human interface that will be easy to use for the beginner, but not so simple as to slow down the advanced user.

The term executive comes from the function the program performs. It acts as a supervisor between the operating system, the user, and the application programs. In the Atari, the closest thing to an exec is DOS. For simplicity we can picture the computer software in layers. The operating system and DOS are on the bottom. They perform all the tasks required to start the

computer, move data around, and talk to other devices like the disk drive or printer. On top of this is the exec. It takes direction from the user (via the keyboard) and calls on the OS and DOS to perform tasks requested by the user. The exec is what you see when the computer is not running some other program. The top consists of the application programs which are called by the exec on request from the user. BASIC and the programs it runs are examples of these. When an application program normally returns control to the exec which waits for new input from the user. Some housekeeping programs may be included in the exec itself. In our exec this will save time by preventing us from having to load another program from disk for simple tasks.

Let's jump ahead now and cover some specifics of the features our completed exec program should have. These are still preliminary but we need to know where we're going if we expect to get there.

1. INTERFACING: This is the most important part of an executive. If the program is hard to communicate with it is no better than the programs it replaces no matter how many features It has. Our exec will respond to single word commands. (We may eventually be able to have it respond to sentences too.) Our exec will have "input recognition". This means that if we type In part of a command or program name, the program will recognize it for us if it's unique. This will save us keystrokes as well as help us decide if what we're typing is really what we want. We'll have a ? command which will list the command choices and a HELP command which will display text on any program or feature. We should be able to enter input in upper or lowercase. The computer responses will be explanatory words and sentences, not error numbers. Finally, we'll provide a brief mode which will help in speeding things up for the advanced user.

2. COMMANDS: Our Executive will provide all the DOS commands as well as be able to run any program by simply typing in the program name (or part of it). No more RUN "D:filename" stuff. In addition we want to have settable options. Examples are screen margins, colors, response to control characters, pause, type of cursor, a keyboard buffer, and whether we want full or brief responses to our input. We'll also provide for definable filename extensions which will allow us to standardize our programs by type.

2. EXEC PROGRAMS: We'll start with a program

to set and display the time, and a fortune cookie program. These programs will be restricted in size and complexity. Other useful system programs which will be loaded and run are a file comparison program, a simple program text editor, and a copy program for archiving files. Strictly speaking, these are application programs to the exec.

3. ACCESS & COMPATIBILITY: We'll set the exec up to autorun and make it reachable from BASIC or DOS. BASIC and DOS will also be reachable from the exec. It will run with or without the BASIC cartridge and will be capable of running binary as well as BASIC programs. (A BASIC cartridge will have to be plugged in to run a BASIC program of course.) Finally, it will be compatible with Atari BASIC, BASIC XL, Atari DOS, MYDOS, and single or double density.

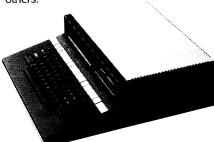
4. MODIFICATIONS: We'll attempt to make it easy to add new commands by leaving "hooks". The settable options and definitions will also provide for much flexibility.

Whew! After looking at all that I'm not sure I'm ready to tackle it. Remember that no program can do everything. Any program that tries to probably ends up doing nothing well. We may have to leave a thing or two out, or we may find a feature more useful than one of those mentioned. I'm open to suggestions from the floor. Obviously, I've suggested many features than I can cover in a single article. What I'll do is separate the program into parts. Each article will contain BASIC or poked machine language code that you can type in and use along with a discussion of the features of that part. I'll include instructions on how to add the current part to the previous parts. When we're finished, I hope to make available a complete compiled version that will run without the BASIC cartridge and provide the paths to and from BASIC and DOS that I mentioned.

Next month I'll present a machine language command parser with input recognition along with as many commands as I have space (and time) for.

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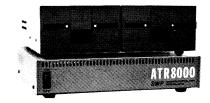


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DOCUMENTATION AID Chuck Hall

This program provides a convenient method for presenting documentation to the user from text stored on disk.

DOC is a BASIC program which reads in any normal BASIC REM statements which have been LISTed to the disk, and displays them on the screen. To use, insert the BASIC cartridge, and type in NEW. Then enter the REM statements you wish to have displayed. You may initially enter them as periods and the BASIC cartridge will convert them to REM's during the LIST process.

Some commands are provided for centering and skipping to the next "page" before displaying. To turn on automatic centering, just enter REM .Cl on a line by itself. After that, each line will be centered until centering mode is turned off. To turn off centering mode, enter REM .CO on a line by itself after the last line to be centered. To "page eject" your data, just enter REM .P on a line by itself.

10 REM Documentation Program

20 REM By Norm Draper

25 TRAP 1000

30 DIM A\$(64),FN\$(20)

40 ROW=656

50 OPEN #2,4,0,"K:"

60 CENTER=0

65 EOF=0

70 PRINT "tDocumentation Program"

80 PRINT " By Norm Draper

90 PRINT

100 REM TRAP 170

110 OPEN #1,6,0,"D:*.*"

120 INPUT #1;A\$

130 IF LEN(A\$)<17 THEN 120

140 IF A\$(11,13)<>"DOC" THEN 120

150 PRINT A\$(3,10)

160 GOTO 120

170 CLOSE #1

180 PRINT :PRINT "Enter one of the program names

190 PRINT " or position cursor over one and press RETURN."

200 FN\$="D:"

210 PRINT :INPUT A\$

220 FN\$(3)=A\$:FN\$(LEN(FN\$)+1)=".DOC"

230 REM TRAP 490

240 OPEN #1.4.0.FN\$

250 PRINT "t";

255 IF EOF=1 THEN 470

260 INPUT #1;A\$

270 LA=LEN(A\$)

280 FOR I=1 TO LA-2

290 IF A\$(1,1+2)="REM" THEN X=1+4:1=LA-2

300 NEXT 1

305 IF X>LA THEN A\$(X)=" ":LA=X

310 IF A\$(X,X)="." THEN 440

320 IF CENTER=0 THEN GOTO 360

330 FOR I=1 TO (40-LA)/2

340 PRINT " ";

350 NEXT 1

360 PRINT A\$(X,LA)

370 IF PEEK (ROW) < 19 THEN 260

380 POSITION 2,23

390 PRINT "RETURN for next page or ESC to exit";

400 GET #2,A

410 IF A=155 THEN 250

420 IF A=27 THEN 470

430 GOTO 400

440 IF A\$(X+1,X+1)="P" THEN 380

450 IF A\$(X+1,X+1)="C" THEN

CENTER=VAL(A\$(X+2,X+2))

460 GOTO 260

470 CLOSE #1

480 PRINT "t":POSITION 15,10:PRINT "THE END"

490 POSITION 3,23:PRINT

"RETURN for more, or ESC to exit";

500 GET #2.A

510 IF A=27 THEN CLOSE #2:PRINT "T";:END

520 IF A=155 THEN 60

530 GOTO 500

1000 ERR=PEEK (195)

1010 LN=256*PEEK(187)+PEEK(186)

1020 IF ERR<>136 THEN 1500

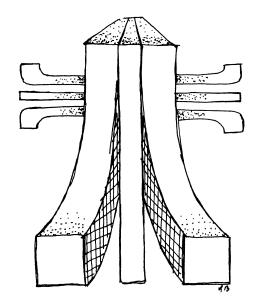
1025 TRAP 1000

1030 IF LN=120 THEN 170

1040 IF LN=260 THEN EOF=1:GOTO 380

1050 PRINT "ERROR "; ERR; " AT LINE "; LN

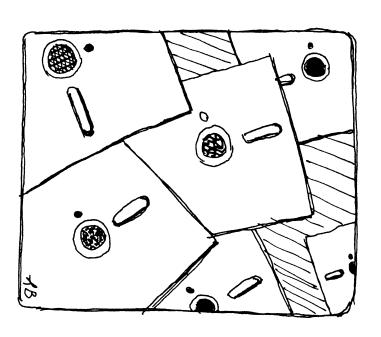
1060 END



EPSON RX-80 NOTE David Pelinka

I've been the proud owner of Epson's newest printer, the RX-80, for three months and I don't know how I ever got along without it. Some of its many features are Roman&Italic print fonts, six different pitches, two kinds of bold printing. underlining, super/subscripting, six graphics densities, and programmable line spacing down to 1/216th of an inch. It chugs along at a respectable 100cps and comes with an excellently written 284 page manual and a quick reference card. (Epson doesn't make you go out and buy a book to learn how to use their product like some computer companies do.) The manual also contains a control code comparison chart showing the RX-80. MX-80 and FX-80 to answer vour compatibility questions. These will be because there are few differences. The print quality is very good and can be made to look semi-letter quality in enhanced and double-strike modes.

As for drawbacks, there are few. The DIP switches are badly placed, but you probably won't have to fiddle with them once you get it running for the first time. The model I have only has tractor feed. Friction feed is available but at quite an increase in cost. And lastly, the RX-80 only has a 1 line buffer and doesn't provide for downloadable character sets like the FX-80. Don't let these details bother you though. I still haven't explored 1/10 of the things I can do with this beauty and have never wished it could do something it can't. In short, the RX-80 offers all the features most users will ever need. There still may be some around town for \$299 and at that price you should run, not walk, to your local computer store to get your own Epson.



RAMBLIN Chuck Hall

The RANA saga has not yet come to an end. When hearing of my problems, they told Computers Etc., they had a new drive coming out. It would have a new motor, chips and a new operating system. I could exchange my drive, and they would throw in the operating system for free.

Even after all my problems with RANA drives. I still like what it could be. I am going to give this one a try, and test it thoroughly. I will keep you informed as to my success. If it still has problems, you will also be among the first to know.

For those of you who are not aware of It, this newsletter accepts "Letters to the Editor". Clyde will be glad to print your comments (pro or con) on anything in this publication, or anything else (related) you care to comment on.

The inkwell is a little dry this month, so I will refrain from discussing anything else. I did overlook a couple of stores last month in my article about magazines. The magazines mentioned (those worth getting) are also available from Software Plus in Oregon City, and from IB COMPUTERS is Cedar Hills. IB also has several back issues which you may want to get.

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REAL PROGRAMMERS DON'T EAT QUICHE

(PAC Ed. Note: This material is reprinted from the Huntsville (Alabama) Atari User's Group Newsletter. I don't have the whole issue in which it appeared, so I don't know if someone in their group wrote it, or if it came from another source. It uses some terms that are more common in the mainframe world, but Pat and I thought that you might enjoy it.)

Real programmers don't eat quiche. They like Twinkies, Coke, and palate-scorching Szechwan food.

Real Programmers don't write application programs. They program right down to the base metal. Application programming is for dullards who can't do systems programming.

Real Programmers don't write specs. Users should be grateful for whatever they get; they are lucky to get programs at all.

Real Programmers don't comment their code. If it was hard to write, it should be even harder to understand and modify.

Real Programmers don't document.

Documentation is for simpletons who can't read listings or the object code from the dump.

Real Programmers don't draw flowcharts. Flowcharts are, after all, the Illiterate's form of documentation Cavemen draw flowcharts; look how much good it did them.

Real Programmers don't read manuals. Reliance on a reference is the hallmark of the novice and the coward.

Real Programmers don't write in RPG. RPG is for the gum-chewing dimwits who maintain ancient payroll programs.

Real Programmers don't write in COBOL. COBOL is for COmmon Business Oriented Laymen who can run neither a business or a real program.

Real Programmers don't write in FORTRAN. FORTRAN is for wimp engineers who wear white socks. They get excited over finite state analysis and nuclear reactor simulation.

Real Programmers don't write in PL/I. PL/I is for insecure paranoids who can't choose between COBOL and FORTRAN.

Real Programmers don't write in BASIC. Actually, no programmers write in BASIC after reaching puberty.

Real Programmers don't write in APL unless the whole program can be written on one line.

Real Programmers don't write in PASCAL, ADA, BLISS or any of those other sissy computer science languages. Strong typing is a crutch for people with weak memories.

Real Programmer's programs never work right the first time. But if you throw them on the machine they can be patched into working order in "only a few" 30-hour debugging sessions.

Real Programmers don't work 9 to 5. If any Real Programmers are around at 9 a.m., it is because they were up all night long.

Real Programmers don't play tennis, or any other sport which requires a change of clothes. Mountain climbing is OK, and Real Programmers wear climbing boots to work just in case a mountain should suddenly spring up in the middle of the machine room.

Real Programmers disdain structured programming. Structured programming is for compulsive neurotics who wear neckties and carefully line up sharp pencils on an otherwise clear desk.

Real Programmers don't like the Team Programming concept. Unless, of course, they are the Chief Programmer.

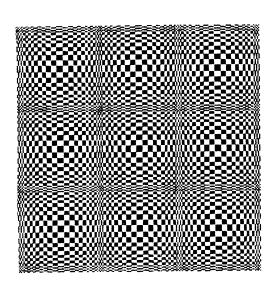
Real Programmers never "write" memos on paper. They "send" memos via MAIL.

Real Programmers have no use for managers. Managers are a necessary evil. They exist only to deal with personnel bozos, bean counters, senior planners, and other mental midgets.

Real Programmers scorn floating point arithmetic. The decimal point was invented for pansy bedwetters who are unable to think big.

Real Programmers don't believe in schedules. Planners make up schedules. Managers firm up schedules. Frightened coders strive to meet schedules. Real Programmers Ignore schedules.

Real Programmers don't bring brown-bag lunches. If the vending machine sells it they eat it. If the vending machine doesn't sell it they don't eat it. Vending machines don't sell quiche.



WORD FIND ATARI COMPUTER

WORD FIND KEY Clyde Pritchard

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Q	F C	P	R F	Ó	Ü	Ī	P	J	T	A	Ü	Ĕ	M	Ů	Q	Å	S	þ	Š
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Sat. June 16 - Jim Horten
10am-2pm Jim Link

Sat. June 16 - David Dillwer
2pm-6pm Ron Dunagan

Sat. June 16 - Burr L. Crouch
6pm-10pm Donn Rutschke

Sun. June 17 - Dale Chipman 10am-2pm Dan Heims

Sun. June 17 - Burr L. Crouch 2pm-6pm Trudie Mishler

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MENU * TIMECLOCK * DISASSEM * ERROR TRAP * SUPER COMPARE * PEEKER * DISK/TAPE * AUTORUN CREATE * RPM TEST * FILE INDEX * VARIABLE LIST * RENUMBER * EXAMINE * STRING CREATE * CASS. AUTORUN * JOYSTICK MENU * TRANS/PRINTER * DATA STATMENT GEN. * MEMORY CHECK * BOOT COPY * BACKUP

DEMO 1 (16K)

CHOPSTICKS MUSIC * ELLIPSE * ETCH-A-SKETCH * GIGGLE * JAZZ * LOGO * MESSAGE GEN. * MAGIC * PUFF MUSIC * DIALOG * NIGHTMARE * VEGAS * SCROLL * FUGUE * STARSHIP PIC. * SOUND STICK * STRING ART * DIGITAL CLOCK * STARWARS MUSIC * BIOGRAPH * CHRISTMAS TREE

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