



Atari Computer Enthusiasts

San Leandro Computer Club

Journal

April, 1984

The Newsletter of the San Leandro Computer Club for Atari® Microcomputers

President's Report

Bob Barton

We have decided to test some P.C. diskettes so that we can offer a discount on double-sided, single-density and double-sided, double-density diskettes for a reasonable price. These diskettes will be available at the next meeting for those of you who are interested in trying them. There are only a few of these diskettes available. If they meet the Club's specifications and requirements we will be ordering more.

Because of Bill George's efforts we were able to obtain a booth at the West Coast Computer Fair for Saturday and Sunday. I would like to thank Jim and Nate Hood for being able to man the booth at such short notice on Saturday. Also, thanks to John Manning for tending the booth on Sunday.

Due to the lack of interest of The Pill, The Protector and The Silencer we are not going to be able to receive the discount on these products. We would need approximately ten more people to sign up for these products to receive the discount.

As you will see in the editor's column, it is almost time for elections. We are going to expect that everyone get involved with the nomination process. We will have time set off for nominations at the next two meetings.

We are going to try to start a new Logo special interest group (SIG). There have been some individuals (some of whom are teachers) that have shown an interest in starting this SIG. If you are interested, give me a call.

There still seems to be a lack of interest in the Hardware SIG. There are many important ideas discussed at this SIG that you may need at some time. If you are having hardware problems, if you want to see the insides of your system, or just want to learn more about your Atari, you should give it a try. American TV has offered their building to hold future meeting. Make sure to contact Tom Bennett if you have an interest.

We will try to have a special Bay Area Atari ACE meeting in August for a very special meeting. We will fill you in on the details in the near future. We are all very excited about the program, but unfortunately cannot give out any information about the meeting at this time.

West Coast Computer Faire

Tom Bennett

As a result of the very special efforts of Bill George and Dwayne Stuart, the San Leandro Computer Club was the lone representative of the Atari Computer Enthusiasts at the 9th annual West Coast Computer Faire in San Francisco. After complaining to Atari that almost all other computer systems were represented by users groups except Atari, their persistence paid off with a booth at this well known Faire. Thank you Bill and Dwayne.

Some of you may have been a bit disappointed at the lack of retail support for the Atari, but if you were able to squeeze in and speak to some of the vendors you would have come away from this faire on a very optimistic high about Atari. This report is a compilation of talks with vendors, product developers, marketing individuals, and a most supportive Atari staff.

First, news from Atari. There was a large attractive booth on the main floor that previewed the new and established software and hardware available through Atari. We were able to see the Atari light pen demonstrated (and it is a very impressive product that looks ready to go to market), the new Learning System, the Plato System, along with many games. APX was also represented, although their future existence is in question. It was confirmed that the APX will no longer exist as it is currently is, but that the top 20 titles will be absorbed by the "main line" of products. The APX product acquisition is said to be discontinued, and that the products that were going to be marketed for this period have been cancelled.

Chris Crawford's departure from Atari was confirmed, although no reasoning was given.

There were some 15,000 850 interfaces produced and are ready to ship. The product is discontinued after this quantity is sold, so if you are in the market for an 850 interface, buy it now.

Now the word on the product you have all been waiting anxiously for. Thea Cain, the Product Manager of the 1450XL (yes, there still is such an animal alive and well), spoke to the officers of the Atari Users Groups that attended the Computer Faire. She filled us in on the following

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information:

- * The 1450XL is scheduled for shipment in the second half, 1984 (barring an act of God or parts suppliers that often require 60 week lead time for delivery of parts)

- * It will include TRUE double sided/double density drives

- * It will be expandable to 128K

- * It will include a 300 baud built-in auto-dial/auto answer modem that can be upgraded to a 1200 baud modem through the expansion box

- * An improved voice synthesizer (SC02 chip?) that will be capable of "singing"

- * An 80 column board will be available on the 1450XL introduction that can be used in the expansion box (an thus on the 600 and 800XL's)

Now you can dispell all of those "the 1450XL is dead" rumors and gear up for an impressive product introduction. Keep in mind, though, that Atari will not put this product out until they are sure it is ready. They intend to have all of the support ready on introduction, and not months or years later.

The expansion box will be available second half, 1984.

Some 1050 disk drives were sent out with DOS 3 that still had bugs, and that a call to the 800-number will get you an easy fix that will permanently patch your DOS.

The Plato package is scheduled for the 3rd quarter of 1984.

There were some interesting new and future products available at the faire. The Amdek 3" Micro-Floppy Disk Drive for the Atari line sounds like a very good product. It can store up to 360K bytes of on-line storage capacity (180 bytes/side x 2 drives), using double-sided cartridges (which allows the AMDC drive to give you 8 times the storage available on a single density 5 1/4" disk). It can be used with and 5 1/4" drive to boot the Atari-compatible software that you already own with 100% capatibility. The designer of this drive, Bob Martin, makes the compatability claim. He is an ex-Atari employee that wrote the ("G") ROM for use in Atari's own in-house 810's. He says that he was very qualified designing the drive with a very strong knowledge of the Atari drive's system. Look for an article by Mr. Martin in a future issue of the Journal discussing the development of this drive.

OSS Software said that the Action Cartridge will be supported by a newsletter called "Top Level Tarry". Call OSS for information.

Microbit Peripheral Products (better known as MPP), a company run by the president of ACE of Eugene, Kirt Stockwell, said that there will be a modem-driver (\$20.00) that will make the 1000-C modem compatible with most software. He said that they are about ready to release some new products that include:

- * A new interface that plugs into the serial port and can have a 4K buffer added

- * A new 3D package that is supposed to be smooth and fast. From this product will come programs that look very much like the arcade versions of

(cont. next column)

Battle Zone and Star Wars that may be released in June, 1984

- * A new software package (that may be called MicroBanker) that will allow you to print checks and deposits, and that will have budget analysis and graph capabilities

- * They showed their MicroFiler that is a cartridge that is a new database program for the home and

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San Leandro Computer Club

Journal

The San Leandro Computer Club for Atari Microcomputers is an independent, non-profit organization and users' group with no connection to Atari Corporation, a Warner Communications Company. Membership fees are currently \$20 for one year, or \$12 for six months. Membership includes access to the computer library, subscription to the Journal, and classes when held. Permission to reprint articles in any noncommercial publication is permitted without written authorization, provided proper credit is given. Opinions expressed are those of the author and do not represent the views of the S.L.C.C.

S.L.C.C. OFFICERS

PRESIDENT	Bob Barton	352-8118
VICE PRESIDENT	Bill George	538-2449
TREASURER	Nai-Hsien Mao	582-6630
SECRETARY	George Herres	351-2008

EDITOR	Ron Seymour	537-3183
ASSISTANT EDITOR	John Manning	276-2615
SOFTWARE CHAIRMAN	Trey Pitruzzello	483-6098
LIBRARIAN-Tape	Dan Chun	471-9286
ASSY LANGUAGE SIG	Frank Daniel	632-7181
BASIC LANGUAGE SIG	Mike Sawley	482-5061
HARDWARE SIG	Tom Bennett	276-4466
MISCELLANEOUS SIG	George Herres	351-2208
PROGRAM CHAIRMAN	Tom Bennett	276-4466

NEWSLETTER STAFF:

Connie Guy
Mike Silveria
Tom Bennett

CORRESPONDENCE ADDRESS

c/o Bob Barton
15614 Calgary St., San Leandro, CA 94579

NEWSLETTER EXCHANGE

c/o SLCC NEWSLETTER EXCHANGE
17642 Via Rincon, San Lorenzo, CA 94580

Newsletter printed courtesy John Manning,
DBA Copy Quality.

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retails for \$49.00.

We were also able to make some contacts who will be willing to come to speak at future meetings. They include the Director of Advertising of Atari, who may speak at our June meeting provided PR and scheduling permit; the national sales manager of Romox that may speak to us at our July meeting and will try to arrange for a free cartridge to the first 200 members to that meeting, and the president of SSI that may speak to us in the fourth quarter of this year. A representative of LCSI, creators of the Atari Logo, will also speak to us this year.

Finally, after the show on Saturday, the Atari Users' Group Support Program hosted a hospitality suite for the officers of the ACE groups attending the faire, and this informal meeting proved to be a positive end to a fun, informative, and encouraging day at the West Coast Computer Faire. Dave Wilson, Atari's Director of Customer Relations, Earl Rice, Bill Bartlett, and many other individuals involved with product support were there, answering our unending questions, fielding our jabbs at how Atari should be running their business, and giving us the encouragement to keep on supporting them in return. We were able to meet many other individuals with the other ACE groups and to pass ideas around that will help us all.

Bravo, West Coast Computer Faire. And bravo Atari!

The Game Room

George Herres

At the last meeting, I was glad to see your interest in the VideOlympic Tournament. It's nice to know that there are people out there who have competition in their blood! All who are interested in this should come to the Miscellaneous SIG meeting on April 14, at 7:00pm, and sign up.

Today, I am going to tell you about a game that offers great graphics and maneuverability (not to mention nasty enemies). Cosmic Tunnels is a game that you can't just play once and then put it away. This game offers a lot to the eye, as well as timing and reflex.

You start out in your ship. Taking off isn't easy all the time as fiery meteorites fall from the sky. If one hits, the ship will stop and energy is lost. Aim yourself to one of the four tunnels that are in the sky and wind up inside of it. Once inside the tunnel, alien ships fly towards you. They must be destroyed or you lose power as they pass you.

After the tunnel, the ship has landed safely and it's time to do your assignment: Bring all the platinum bars back to the base in the beginning of the game. Sounds easy, but watch out for the aliens. Four different alien swarms will try to protect the bars the best they can - by melting you with a single touch. Watch out for the holes in the ground, too. If the spaceman or the aliens get too close to these holes, it's 'Good-bye, Charlie'.

Be talking to ya' real soon.....

Best Buys

As a member of the SLCC, you are entitled to discounts at some local computer stores by showing your membership card.

This month you may find some super buys if you act fast. Two stores are closing-out their software line for Atari's (Yes, two more bite the dust to the toy-store business), and are offering some good discounts. The Software Center is marking all Atari software at 50% off, limited to stock on hand. The Computer Store of San Leandro, a long time Atari source, is selling all Atari software at 30% off, and all Atari related books at 20% off, again limited to supplies on hand.

3E Software of Hayward will no longer have a special monthly discount sheet for the club, but will accommodate us on quantity buys with discounts of 20% on buys of 5 to 9 purchases on one software title, and 30% off on 10 or more. Rising Sun Software in Oakland offers "mail-order prices at a retail outlet". A new and little known store in Hayward, Ektype Office Systems on 22793 Watkins, will offer club members 10% off on single purchases, 25% off on purchases of 5 to 9, and 33% off on 10 or more purchases on a group buy. (They were reported to have an 850 in stock!)

American TV will offer discounts on Atari parts (IC's, boards, etc). They are located in San Leandro on Washington. (3E is also considering carrying replacement and upgrade parts.)

Support your local Atari vendors, and let them know you heard of their business through the San Leandro Computer Club.

Now That It's Plugged In...

Denzil Tipps

DENZIL'S CRYSTAL MONITOR 1.79MHZ

Looking into the future, I see that our first Beginners S.I.G. was a roaring success. And, being that the Journal deadline is before that christening night, I must beckon on foresight and other talents to give you this encouraging, yet tautological report.

I say success for three reasons: the third being that this is our latest addition to the Special Interest Groups and that that points to a vigorous growth and a healthy involvement of club members. I'm felicitous, with Thesaurus in hand, to be involved with a club that strives to meet the pressing needs of those of us whom technology is passing by. If you have questions or even answers that you would like to share, please feel free to join us at the San Lorenzo Library on our new meeting night, the third Thursday, April 19th, at 7:00pm. The first and second are that this is in print and that you are reading it!

Library/Floppy Update

Trey Pitruzzello

As the drugs began to take effect, I remember the oral surgeon saying...."I'm going to take four wisdom teeth out Trey, and you're not going to be able to go to your club meeting tonight." As the operating room darkened and spun around me, I remember mumbling back to him...."Just hurry it up, Doc. Nothing keeps me from my computer meeting!"

It seemed like only moments later that I woke from a heavy sleep to find that I was home in my own bedroom. Darkness outside the window informed me that it was evening, and a mouth full of gauze let me know that the surgeon had finished his work.

It was then that I noticed the many familiar faces gathered around my bedside. The infamous SLCC Software Committee had come to visit, and they did not seem too pleased. There was Doss, and her twin sister Doop, with their cute little indentical extenders. And there was their friend from the Orient, Men-Yoo standing next to them. As I focused through the demerol induced fog, I couldn't help but notice the huge, bulky form standing at the foot of the bed. It was Otto Run, and he looked real mad! His obese cheeks were puffing out, and lines of rage creased his forehead. I attempted to sit up, but the muscles wouldn't work. I tried a smile, and asked, "Uh...did I miss the meeting?" "If you hurry, you can still make it", he bellowed. "What kind of chairman are you?", he hissed. "Get your carcass up, and get GOING!!!!!!" "O.K.,O.K.", I replied. "Give me a minute", as I swung my feet over the side of the bed. Just then the door opened, and my dear wife came in. I remember her warm touch as she lifted my feet back up and tucked them under the blankets, and her sweet smile as she said, "You can't go, Love." "But these guys are giving me a hard time," I complained. She replied, "there's no one here but you and me. Go back to sleep now." The last thing I remember as the demerol fog rolled in and engulfed me, was the rage on Otto's face, and the white knuckles on his hands as he shook the bed post.

My special thanks to Paul Gifford, for taking my place at the meeting, and making sure that the Floppy of the Month got into your hands!

Speaking of the Floppy of the Month.....
HAVE WE GOT A GREAT SELECTION FOR YOU THIS MONTH!!!

BANNER

This program will write anything you want to your printer in GIANT letters, Banner style!

BOWLING!

One to four players try to bowl a 300 game! Neat graphics, and lots of fun!!

EUDSONG

What's bowling without beer!? Sing along to the famous brewery theme song!

CASTLE-HEX

Another superior STAN OKERS game!! A graphics adventure inside a castle! Great Graphics and Sound!!!

DISK TRANSER

A VERY POWERFUL PROGRAM! Transer a whole disk, sector by sector, over your modem. Menu driven, and easy to use. Complete with documentation.

FONE-LIST

Very nicely done telephone directory database by Antic Magazine. Menu driven, and fast. (Even though it's in BASIC!)

PLAYER MISSILE AID

Create you own players and missiles with this great program!!!

RAMDISK

Yes, you read right! This is a software program that let's you use your upper memory space to store your programs in. It acts as if it were an extra disk drive!! Read the documentation first.

SECTOR CHECKER

This little utility will sequentially check all the sectors on any disk and find the "bad" ones for you.

SOUNDER

How is this a good one!!! Generate any sound you like, then use the sounds in your own programs!! Very impressive graphics display, and of course....GREAT SOUNDS!!!!

SPIFFY-MENU

Paul Gifford wrote the basic loader for this wonderful utility. Create a VERY FANCY Autorun.Sys menu for your binary load programs. I'm not going to tell you any more about it, except it's FANTASTIC!!

SUPER-DOS

Another WOW of a program!!! A basic program that's actually a DOS!! It's got lots of features you won't find on any other DOS!!

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

SPECIALSPECIAL***

For your listening pleasure we now have TWO NEW ADVANCED MUSIC PLAYER DISKETTES!!!!!!

AMS DISK #3

Rock 'n Roll on both sides!!!

AMS DISK #4

Side A: Classical Music!!!

Side B: Contemporary Pop!!!!

(There's a little Rock on this one too!)

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Hope you enjoy this months selections brought to you by...

THE SLCC SOFTWARE COMMITTEE...and...
Toothless Trey!

Hardware Ideas

Paul Lew

To Re-ink Or Not To Re-ink

At the West Coast Faire of 1983, I purchased a product called the Le Ribbonizer to re-ink my Prowriter ribbons. At the time of the purchase, the prices for new ribbon were \$9 to \$15 while the cost of the re-inker was \$40. The purchase is worth it even though the ribbons may now be purchased for \$5. Another re-inker is available from Mac-Inker at a higher price. The ribbon re-inkers are printer specific and you must purchase the correct one for your printer.

The art of re-inking requires that the ink be very good quality- printer's grade. Le Ribbonizer feels that a \$4-\$7 ribbon may be re-inked 10 to 20 times while Mac-Inker claims that they may be re-inked 100 times. I believe a ribbon may be re-inked as long as the ribbon does not show any sign of fraying. There are horror stories of re-inked ribbons wrapping around printer heads but it is probably due to the use of cheap regular ink and re-inking the fabric beyond its lifespan. The inks provided by the companies contain lubricants and thus possibly extend the life of a printer head.

The actual process of re-inking is extremely convenient and not as messy as polishing one's shoes. The instructions are complete and maybe easily followed by a "fumble fingers". For Le Ribbonizer, one places the spooled ink pads in the sockets, add ink, place the ribbon cartridge on the re-inker, wrap the ribbon around the ink spools in a S shape then turn on the motor from the switch on the line cord. Oh yes, one must have plugged the power cord to a wall socket beforehand. The re-inking time takes 15-20 minutes depending on the length of the ribbon; ink may be added to the pads during inking. Being somewhat an unbeliever, I let the re-inking run 30 minutes while adding ink; however don't over-saturate the ribbon as it may produced smeared print from saturation of the paper. So far I have not had bad printing problems and the quality of the print seems better than one newly purchased, possibly due the unknown shelf life of the ink.

Storage of the renewed ribbon should be stored in a sealed plastic bag overnight to allow the ink to distribute evenly over the surface of the ribbon. This entails no problems as I have 2 cartridges and just replace the previously re-inked ribbon on my printer. The re-inking products are a blessing as I no longer try to extract the maximum readable print from a ribbon; I just re-ink if I feel the print quality is the least bit unsatisfactory.

If I am able to re-ink a ribbon 10 times, the cost of the ribbonizer is Justified. I no longer have to worry about unreadable print. There is no more need to rush out and purchase a new ribbon or two.

Le Ribbonizer may be ordered from Ben Torres Ribbon Service, 416 East State Street, Redlands, CA 92373, (714) 792-0831. Mac-Inker is manufactured by a company in Oregon and the advertisement may be seen in magazines specializing in CPM and the its cost is \$54. Even though the prices for

Prowriter/NEC ribbons are now lower, I believe that the cost of ribbon renewal is cost effective; no more excuses for faded print!

Our Next Meeting

Tom Bennett

Forget everything we heard last meeting from the Atari Program Exchange (APX).....or do we?

Well, if you have not heard, Atari has gone through another lay-off (or cut-off) and APX was caught under the axe! Only a day or two after our meeting, Fred Thorlen left APX, perhaps knowing something was in the works. Around March 19, the balance of the staff was apparently laid-off except for a skeleton crew to clean things up. Nobody seems to know what is going to happen to APX, although some people have suggested that the stronger moving programs will be absorbed by the main product line.

The last lay-off included "about 300 workers whose jobs are 'redundant'", according to a report in the San Jose Mercury News. "At the same time, the company is hiring about 100 engineers and sales executives", according to James J. Morgan, Chairman of Atari. Another hot rumor is that Chris Crawford was also caught in a lay-off. After his enthusiastic "sales" pitch on the Atari at one of our meetings, it can be only Atari's loss if the rumor is true.

Regardless, the APX presentation was an interesting one. Thanks, Fred, for the time spent coming up to see us.

Our next meeting will be our second attempt at an open agenda. We will be having Kim Ellison from 3E Software giving us a 45 minute presentation on the touch tablets and chalkboards, and Dave Lucky will be giving us a 30 minute demonstration of the much acclaimed ATR-8000. We will also be taking nominations for club officers at this and next meetings.

The May meeting will have Gary Carlston from Broderbund. You will not want to miss this meeting!

ANNOUNCEMENT: Reserve August 7, 1984, for a very special event. This general meeting will be open to all of the local Atari ACE groups for a VERY special guest who is a prominent figure in the world of Atari's.....Stay tuned!

I am working on those requests for guest speakers you have asked for. (You want Alan Alda? Ah...er...um...I don't think so. But who knows?) If you have more requests, let me know at 276-4466.

BaSIG Info

Michael Sawley

If you have been getting the Disk of the Month lately, you have been treated to a very nice menu when the disk is first booted. This menu not only lets you take a look at the programs on the disk, but also lets you take care of the most common housekeeping chores so that you rarely need to access DOS.

The BASIC command that is the key to this is OPEN. It has the following format:

```
OPEN #channel, num1, num2, "dev"
```

In BASIC, you have channels 1 to 5 inclusive for your own use and can set them up as you like. Channels 6 and 7 are used by BASIC, but with care, they are also available. Channel 0 is permanently reserved for use by BASIC.

The first number (num1) 'conditions' the channel for the task you want to perform. You can have an arithmetic expression or a variable here as long as it evaluates to the proper number for the task. The read (or input) task is 4, the write (or output) task is 8 and for reading and writing on the same channel the task is 12. In regards to the menu program, we want to have a look at the disk directory so we would need to use task 6.

The second number (num2) is rarely used and in most cases is set to 0. One application is sideways printing with the Atari 820 printer. Then num2 would be 82. For short inter-record gaps with the program recorder you would need 128.

The last parameter specifies the device. If you want to use the printer then specify "P:"; the program recorder needs a "C:". To read the disk directory we need to specify the disk drive and the file name(s) we are interested. We can use wild cards just as with DOS. To read the entire directory we would specify device "D:*,*". Please note that the quotes are needed.

A file name in the directory will always contain 17 characters, no matter how long a name you gave it when you saved the program.

Let us DIM a string to 17 so we can INPUT a file name and print it to the screen. Since we can have from 0 to 64 file names on a disk, we can take the easy way out and set a TRAP to END the program when we get to the last entry. We can now just keep reading in file names until an error occurs. A simple program might look like this:

```
10 PRINT CHR$(125):REM CLEAR THE SCREEN
20 DIM FILENAME$(17)
30 TRAP 1000
40 OPEN #1,5,0,"D:*,*"
50 INPUT #1,FILENAME$:REM GET FILENAME FROM DISK
60 PRINT FILENAME$:REM PUT IT ON THE SCREEN
70 GOTO 50:REM GET FILENAMES UNTIL ERROR
1000 END
```

This will print file names along the left margin of the screen. As you know, there is a lot more that can be done. We'll add a few enhancements next month.

Be sure to check the calendar in the Journal for the date of the next BASIC meeting.

TV News

Nolly Ruiz

As some of you are aware, we have have been working for about three months now trying to put together a computer show for broadcast on community access television (cable area: San Leandro, San Lorenzo and Hayward). Eventually the program may be broadcast to a much larger area. The format we have chosen is one of a magazine; similar to the show "Evening Magazine."

To date, we have taped and edited a segment on the San Mateo Computer Swap. Also we have taped some software reviews, which now require editing. In early April we are going to a major software house to do a story.

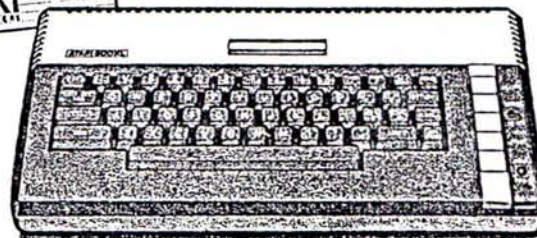
While the energy to get just this far has been considerable, we feel that the final product (the show: "Computer Connection") is worth the effort. At this time we are planning to air the thirty minute show once a month; with the first show airing in late May or June.

If you have suggestions or would like to actively participate in the production of the show, please feel free to call me at (415) 782-4187 (nights). The more help we can rally the more likely we are to succeed.

At this time I would like to thank all of you who have participated thus far; especially Tom Bennett, Greg Roll, and Peter Norman.

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From The Editor's Desk

Ron Seymour

Elections are just around the corner for the San Leandro Computer Club. By casting a nomination or by just voting you can make a difference.

Nominations are for the offices of President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer. The nominations will continue through the months of April and May. With elections being held in June.

Two of the four officers will be stepping down at the ends of their terms. The offices will be that of Vice President and Treasurer, which were held by Bill George and Nai-Hsien Mao, respectively, who did a fine job over the past year. This will allow these offices to be more widely open to nomination without an incumbent officer running for the position.

When thinking of nominees for the offices of this club, please take into account the duties and responsibilities that will be associated with that office.

Nominees for the office of President should be of strong leadership material and should be able to delegate authority when needed. The Vice President will be the one in control of the general meetings, and assist the President in the running of the club. The office of Secretary should be one of an organizer, who does not mind recording the minutes of the meeting and making up the calendar for the next newsletter. The Treasurer is a person with one of the biggest responsibilities, namely the keeping of the books and of the number of members in the club.

Now is the time for all the members to really have a voice in the workings of the club. If you think that there is someone in the club who could qualify for an office, it is time to speak up. Your nomination of these people could change the outlook of our club and insure a smooth sailing organization. If you think that you should be nominated for a specific office, ask someone to nominate you for that position.

Nominations for the particular offices will be made during the regular general meeting so as to give exposure to the nominees. The names of the nominees will be published in the June newsletter, so as to give each of the nominees a fair and equal chance in the voting. So remember to nominate who you think would make a fine candidate for the offices of this club.

The deadline for the next newsletter will be on April 20th. Please turn in those articles because we really could use that input from the membership. If you have anything for the newsletter give me a call at 537-3183.

Secretary's Report

George Herres

8:05 Vice-President Bill George opens meeting by introducing Club Officers and newly appointed Secretary George Herres, who had just stepped out to make a phone call and missed his cue!! Better luck next time.

8:07 Paul Gifford, who was standing in for Software Chairman Trey Pitruzzello, announced the current Floppy-of-the-Month.

8:10 Cassette Librarian Dan Chun discusses rental policy of the Club and announces new releases available for this meeting.

8:13 Phil Mitchell officially resigns as Secretary, explaining in detail the circumstances on how he was offered the position of Product Support Consultant at ATARI in Sunnyvale. We wish you the very best at your new career, Phil.

8:18 Genreal membership was reminded of the Special Interest Groups (SIG's) meetings available to them through out the month. All are welcome to attend these SIG meetings.

8:20 Tom Bennett introduces guest speaker Fred Thorlen from APX, who along with two of his associates, demonstrate a tremendous amount of software. Some of the software included Draw It, which can save 9 pictures on the same disk and has zoom capabilities; Get Away, a cops and robbers game; Dandy, a maze game that lets you make your own mazes; Didget Bowl, an educational game; and Atspeller, a program that enhances the AtariWriter. This program checks your spelling and contains over 30,000 words.

9:30 Meeting is adjourned for a break, allowing members to buy Floppies and Cassettes, get refreshments, and chew the fat with other members.

9:55 Bill George brings the meeting back to order and introduces Mort Ernsen from the Livermore User Group, who tells about the group he's in. He offers the SLCC a cartridge for programmers that contains two 16K EROMS that can hold programs you make, for a modest \$20.00.

10:00 Bill George re-introduces Club Officers for the benefit of late comers and answers questions about the SIG's.

10:05 Secretary George Herres announces the progress of the VideOlympic Tournament and gets positive feedback from the membership.

10:08 Fred Thorlen mentions a few items for sale at the West Coast Computer Sale, March 23-25, and answers questions about APX. He also mentioned the "4 Quality Contest" in which you could win up to \$3,000.00, being sponsored by APX.

10:17 Bill George announces the Translator Disk for the XL owners is available to Club members for \$5.00 from Software Chairman Trey Pitruzzello.

10:27 Meeting adjourned for this month. Hope to see all of you at the next meeting.

A new computer crime bill just introduced in Sacramento could largely shut down all free, public-access computer bulletin boards in California.

The bill (AB2551) makes it a misdemeanor to knowingly access a computer "without authorization" for any reason, even with no malicious intent. The reason for the misdemeanor is to make it easier to prosecute "hackers" who break into computers but don't try to do any damage. (Vandalism, theft of information, etc. are already felonies under an existing California computer crime bill.)

The problem for free and open bulletin boards: how can new users know with confidence that they aren't committing a crime? Not by any message on the boards, since even the attempt to log on would be a crime if the system turned out not to be authorized. Not by messages on other systems, since those could have been written by anybody. Not by lists in computer magazines, which publishers could not verify without lots of expense since even the press couldn't try out the numbers to see if they were legal. System operators would have to go to paid ads, or set up mail-order operations in permission chits. But these boards are free, volunteer systems.

Note that commercial services such as the Source, CompuServe, Dialog, etc. will be immune to the law. Since they charge money, accounts are arranged in advance; written authorization is automatic. Only the network of public forums - a most innovative part of the computer world, but one with little political clout - may be destroyed. Not by any threat to its operators, but by threat to its users.

This bill was introduced Feb. 1 by California Assemblyman Sam Farr (D-Carmel); for more info see the UPI story in the Feb. 2 newspapers. I called Farr's office and was told that the bill will be amended. But it's hard to see how amendment would help short of fundamental rethinking. The bill's central purpose and its central problem are too close.

Please help transmit this message to all other boards so that the threat can be known. If you have friends in the press, etc., give them a call. We need widespread discussion on how legitimate security concerns can be handled without destroying the free marketplace of computer communication.

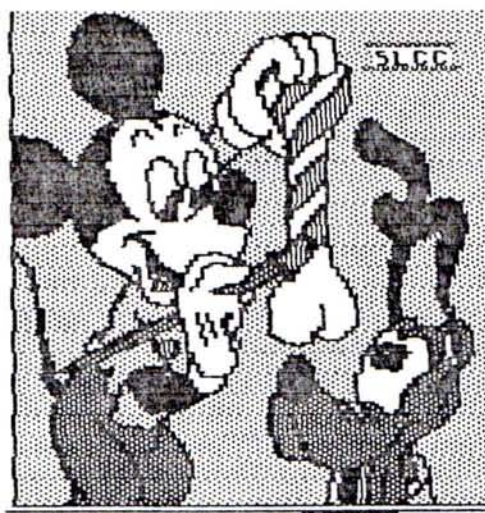
John S. James

P.O. Box 1807

Los Gatos, CA 95031 (408) 335-9250

I am the developer of The Conference Tree BBS software, and have run my own board for three years. Last year I volunteered to help Sam Farr's office set up its own test BBS for communication with constituents on legislative issues. I knew nothing of this bill until it was in the newspaper. There was no mention on the BBS.

 *** Originally from ***
 *** CONFERENCE-TREE #3 ***
 *** Hayward, Ca. ***
 *** 415/538-3580 ***



Hardware Review

AT-846 Printer Interface

from AXIOM (\$99.95)

by Abe Petrow

I was hesitant to purchase an AXIOM product after being very disappointed in the appearance of the lower case letters produced by their AT-100 printer (Seikosha GP-100a). However, I was anxious to hook up my new Centronics 739 parallel printer, and there were no 850 interfaces in sight. The MPP 1150's had been back-ordered for months, and the new 4K buffer interface from Interfast was more than I needed, so I decided to give AXIOM another chance.

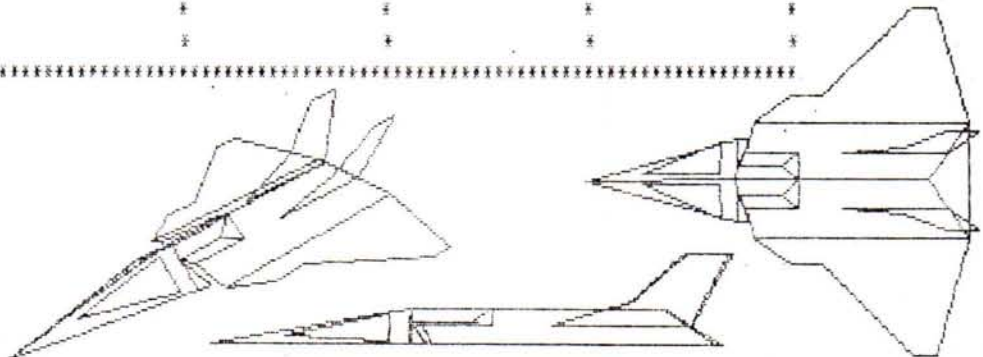
The AT-846 comes with a Centronics plug printer cable. The 5V 300mA powerpack that came with mine did not work, but I wasn't looking forward to using it anyhow after many VCS powerpack failures. Fortunately the instructions describe an easy (no soldering) jumper-wire switch inside the box. This switch does away with the powerpack entirely and powers the AT-846 directly from the printer, if the printer has a +5V or 250 mA driver (check your printer manual). You also need the revision B ROM set in your Atari. If you do a PRINT PEEK (58383) and a value of 0 is printed, you have revision B.

The manual is reasonably clear, and includes a text screen dump. AXIOM claims that this interface is just like the 850, without the four serial ports. There is an open 13-pin socket for daisy-chaining other peripherals. I am completely satisfied with the operation and price of the AT-846. This product, combined with the MPP 1000 modem, apparently has eliminated any foreseeable need for the elusive 850 interface.

(Available from ACCESS TO SOFTWARE in Concord.)

*** THE SAN LEANDRO COMPUTER CLUB ***

APRIL 1984

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 "APRIL FOOL"	2	3 0800 PM GEN. MEETING S.L. LIBRARY	4	5	6	7
8	9	10 0800 PM ASSY' LANG. SIG BOB'S 352-8118	11	12	13	14 0700 PM HSIG/GAMEROOM PHIL'S 351-2208
15	16	17 0800 PM BASIC LANG. SIG NAI-HSIEN'S 582-6630	18 0800 PM HARDWARE SIG ? <i>PAUL T. 910</i>	19 8:00 P.M. Beginner Sig. Denzil's 538-2227	20	21
22 " SUNNY DAY "	23	24 8:00 p.m. Exec. Meeting Bob's House 352-8118	25	26	27	28
29	30					

S.L.C.C. Interface

The SLCC Interface is our monthly 'input-output' column in which you may make a short comment on club related issues, or buy-sell an item. This is not available to commercial outlets.

Also you may ask those technical questions and get them answered. All technical questions may be addressed to Frank Daniel at 632-7181. Basic language questions can be addressed to Mike Sawley at 482-5061. Buy-sell items may be submitted to Ron Seymour at 537-3183.

* * * *

FOR SALE: Used Atari 800 and 810 disk drive for only \$425.00 or best offer. Call Damon at 622-9463 (days), or 897-6937 (Novato-eves).

FOR SALE: LJK Letter Perfect (disk version): \$85.00. Call 797-2220 days. Ask for Roger.

FOR SALE: Small computer table (walnut color): \$35.00. Call 276-4466. Ask for Tom.

HELP: I need to learn how to use my modem and telecommunications programs more effectively. I will trade you blank disks and/or non-prime time on Comp-U-Serve or a home cooked dinner in exchange for assistance. Please call Cyndi at 521-0165 (leave message).

The S.L.C.C wishes to congratulate and extend a warm greeting to the following new members:

Sidney Freeman
Bob Pratt
Richard Rufer
K.C. Hua
Sherman T. Carter Jr.
William Nixon
Joel Hawkey
Marc Potter
R. F. Foley
Kenneth C. Mobert

San Leandro Computer Club

Journal

15614 Calgary St., San Leandro, CA
94579

NEXT MEETING:

April 3 8:00 pm
San Leandro Community Library

TO:

