# SLCC JOURNAL

San Leandro Computer Club March , 1990

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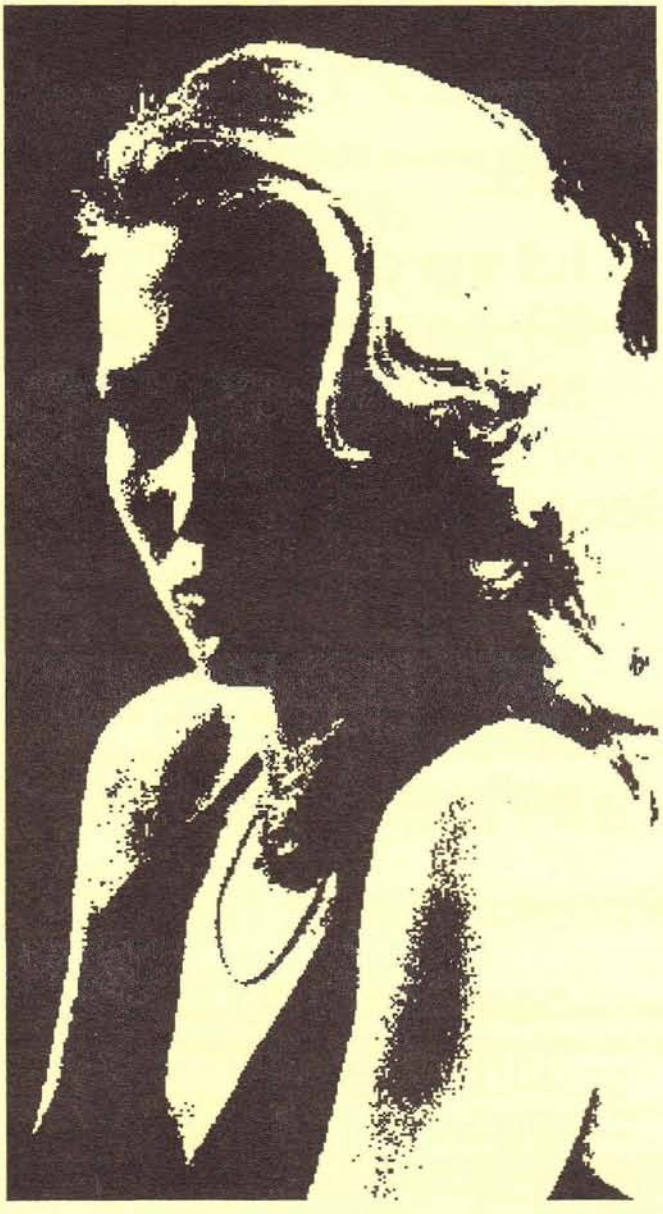

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**Many thanks to those who take the time and effort to contribute to this publication!**

**San Leandro Computer Club**
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San Leandro, CA 94577-0374

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SEE YOU AT THE MAIN MEETING
March 6

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**Review: 16 BIT Revolving Revolving Computers! Computers**

**by Dave Coffill**

Do you hate bombs, crashes, time consuming saves and loads, quiting and reloading every time you finish with one program and go to another? Well, I hate to wait, and it seems like that's all I do when Desktop Publishing. Wait for the program to load; wait for the file to load; wait for it to print. Then wait some more while I quit PageStream and load UltraScript. **Oops....the computer crashed**! Darn! Now I have to wait some more while I load UltraScript again and the file, then wait while it prints out. Well, you know what they say about success.....FIND A NEED AND FILL IT. Until real multi-tasking is available on our STs, I think I have found the best answer to the waiting game! I'm pretty sure you have heard of **REVOLVER** before, but you may not know just how good it really is!

First of all, it does allow you to switch between virtual computers in the same machine. **Up to 8 different partitions** may be set up and used at the same time. They can all have the same memory allocated, for instance a Mega 4 could be used as four 1040K computers, or each machine can be different sizes. It is a simple process to configure the system.

**Start up is so easy** I couldn't believe it. All you have to do is run RevInstall.Prg and choose the drive you boot from. It will copy Revolver to the Auto file folder (you may have to use Auto-sort.Prg to make sure it is the first one in the folder). You say you don't have an auto folder? Don't worry....RevInstall.Prg will create one for you. See, I told you I was lazy.

The default is two identical systems, which is just fine for what I normally do. So in effect **I sit here in front of two Mega 2's** and I don't even have to turn in my seat to face another screen. WOW! Just press Control/Shift/Alt and in less than 2 seconds I'm at my other computer.

Worried about crashes or resets? DON'T.....If you crash or lock up the partition you are in, just press RESET or use the built-in warm start in the Revolver menu and presto....There is your partition again. But what about the other partition? Oh No! Switch to it by pressing Shift/Alt and there is your program up and running just as you left it. Press Shift/Alt again and you are back in the partition you just had the problem with or in your 3rd, or 4th, or 5th if you had that many.

Revolver is a switcher, but it is much more if you want it to be. There is a "**Rollin and Rollout**" feature that lets you save a program to disk, then roll it back in just as it was when saved. This is another time-saver in the fact that you don't have to load the program again just "Rollin" from another partition and in seconds there's your game or file just as it was before the crash. Speaking of crashes, **I was not able to get this thing to crash once!** But using PageStream and UltraScript it happened all the time before the magic of Revolver. There is a menu for disk commands that is unbelievable! **Copy files, move files, append, delete, rename, show, make folder, delete folder, hide file, lock file, un-hide/unlock file, directory, search disk, format floppy**.....had enough? No? Then let me mention that Revolver also has a VT-52 Emulator, a view partition mode that allows you to see the other partitions without switching to them as well.

**Does it have any limitations?** Well.....yes! *I don't think the program will do you much good with a 520* because **it won't work**! But, even a 1040 can be better sometimes if it were two 520's. But the more memory you have, the better this program will be for you. For me.....I can now stay lazy and happy too!

---

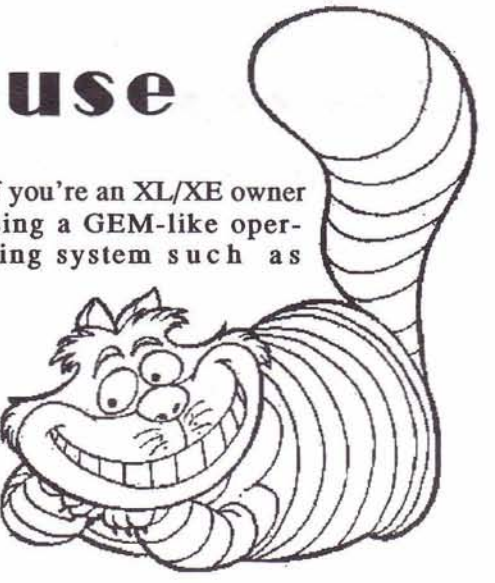
## "Revolver has been one of the best-kept secrets in the software world!"

---

Still not convinced? How about if Richard throws in a **reset proof Ram-Disk and 40 folder fix, a configurable print spooler, time and date set, and even a mouse accelerator that you can set from 1:1 up to an 8:1 ratio.** There is so much more that this single program will do, that you could probably use it for years and not get to everything. Revolver has been one of the best kept secrets in the software world. It can be found for around $40.00 or less. I think that makes Revolver....byte for byte, one of the best software buys you can find for 1 meg machines and higher. Hope you enjoy it!

**REVOLVER**
by
**Richard J. Plom**
**Intersect Software Corp.**

# The Best Mouse



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BEST Builds a Better Mouse
New Mouse Available for ST/Mega and XL/XE Computers
By Bill Rayl

I've never been totally satisfied with the design or durability of the ST mouse provided by Atari Corp. On the design side, the ST mouse is a bit too large and oddly shaped for comfortable hours-long usage. As for durability, I've found from my own personal usage that an Atari mouse, if properly cleaned on a regular basis, still ceases functioning properly in less than two years.

I consider myself an average to heavy user of the ST, putting in at least 20-30 hours per week in front of the computer. In the last three years, I have repaired or replaced the Atari mouse three times. Dungeon Master alone did one of the little rodents in!

Because of the almost constant cleaning, repairing and replacing of the mouse, I had a modified trackball added to my ST system. This solved the durability problem, but a trackball isn't the most comfortable thing to work with after a few hours either. Add that to the fact that some operations are just plain easier to perform with a mouse than a trackball, and I was looking for a better alternative. I've used the MicroSoft(tm) Mouse on the IBM and I found its design and near maintenance-free operation to be far superior to my Atari's mouse. "Now why hasn't someone produced a mouse this good for the ST?" I asked myself.

Well, now someone has! BEST Electronics of San Jose, California has built a mouse that I believe even puts the MicroSoft(tm) mouse to shame.

Retailing for $49.95, the same price as the Atari mouse, the BEST mouse is designed with the user in mind. From its sleek design that fits comfortably into your hand to the replaceable teflon "mouse feet" that make the device glide over your computer desk, the BEST mouse is a joy to use. No more cramped fingers and tired hands after a few hours of Desktop Publishing! The mouse buttons are responsive and quite firm -- much better than the Taiwan- or Korean-produced Atari mice.

The BEST mouse also boasts a high resolution photo tracking of 200 pulses per inch, making this mouse approximately twice as fast and responsive as the Atari mouse. When using the BEST mouse, you don't need a mouse accelerator!

Not to be outdone by the exterior, a look inside the BEST mouse instantly shows this mouse lives up to its name. The rollers that contact the mouseball do not seem to be prone to the dirt build-up you get with the Atari mouse. No more scraping gunk off the rollers each month! Overall, this means better performance with less maintenance. And, if something ever does break down, BEST Electronics carries replacements for every part in the mouse.

If you're an XL/XE owner using a GEM-like operating system such as Diamond OS from ReeveSoft, the BEST mouse offers you a better alternative to purchasing an Atari mouse. For a comparable price, the BEST mouse is truly the better buy!

Using the BEST mouse on a spongy mouse mat yielded less than satisfactory results. When I used the mouse directly on my desktop, or on any hard surface, the BEST mouse performed beautifully. This seems to be because the mouse feet actually lift the mouse slightly from the mat or desk surface, allowing the mouse to skate effortlessly over the desktop. Using a spongy mouse mat, the BEST mouse simply isn't able to glide -- sort of like roller skating on a carpet.

If your mouse is on its last legs or you're tired of the constant maintenance and repair of the Atari mouse, take a good look at the BEST mouse. Chances are you'll decide the BEST mouse really is the best mouse available for your ST/Mega or XL/XE. For more information, see your local Atari dealer or contact BEST Electronics, 2021 The Alameda, Suite 290, San Jose, CA 95726 or (408) 243-6950.

*Buy your own / Share what you know / 8 bits are plenty*

# Probably the 8-Bit Beginner Boogie

by Dave Morel SLCC

Hi, Bunky. Some days it seems as if everything goes wrong. You stubbed your toe as you got out of bed this morning. In pain, you hobbled into the kitchen and learned you were out of coffee and that the cat had thrown up on the table. And then, as if that weren't enough, you looked out the window and found that mutant lizard-men from Mars had invaded the Earth and were stalking up your driveway. Darn.

OK, so you ran out the backdoor in your pajamas, with nothing but your trusty Atari under one arm and your monitor under the other, and now you're lying in a ditch in the Oakland hills while Martian monsters search for you in the freezing rain, laser weapons at the ready. Tough times, tiger, but it won't do any good to grump. Just wipe off that frown, put on a happy face, and take a positive approach as you go about the business of saving the world from extraterrestial tyranny.

Building a small generator to power your Atari from sticks and stones and woven grass and an old soup can is easy enough (and Bob Woolley is planning an article on this in the near future for those of you who are electrical ignorants). What's hard is deciding which of several options stands the best chance of succeeding in stopping these saurians in search of you for lunch.

One aid in solving this and other questions of a like nature is simulation of the problem. What you do is make a model which includes all the possible outcomes of a given situation and run the model a large number of times, keeping track of how often each of the possible outcomes occurs. If the number of your trials is sufficiently large you should have a close approximation of the probability that any of the outcomes will happen in real life.
Sure, I can hear you saying, but running a large number of trials can take a long time, and if I use a mathematical formula I can get an exact answer much more quickly. True enough, but even if you use an algorithm you might still want to do a simulation of your problem just to make sure you didn't add and divide when you should have multiplied and subtracted. And, of course, if you don't have the math skills for a problem, simulating it is your only hope for an answer.

However, it isn't enough merely to simulate a problem--you must simulate it correctly or all you'll do is program yourself into an r-o-n-g result. To help you learn to make good simulations I've assembled a few problems for you to practice with:

(1)A man goes into a pet store and sees two parrots. He asks the owner if at least one of those parrots is a male and the owner says yes. What is the probability that both parrots are male? A: 1/3.

(2)If a woman bears four children, what is the probability that they will be evenly divided as to gender? A: 3/8.

(3)A strange woman comes up to you and says she has one sibling. At this point what is the probability that her sibling is a brother? If she then tells you her sibling is younger, what is the probability that her sibling is a brother? A: 2/3 And 1/2.

(4)A man shows you three cards. The first is white on both sides, the second is red on both sides, and the third is white on one side and red on the other. He puts them in a hat, shakes them up, and draws a card at random, sliding it onto a table in such a way that neither of you can see the bottom of the card. You both look down and see that the top of the card is white. What is the probability that the other side is also white? A: 2/3.

(5)You take a standard pair of dice, close your eyes, and throw them. A friend then says you have thrown at least an eleven. If that is true, what is the probability you have thrown a twelve? A: 1/3.

(6)You are at the track and see that in a certain race a steady performer is up against three erratic horses, each of whom the steady performer will beat about 60% of the time. You are offered three-to-one odds. Is this a good bet for you? A: No. The steady performer will win only 21.6% of the time.

For some of you the answers given are immediately obvious and you aren't likely to get any good out of doing the simulations. Others of you will be tearing your hair and cussing every %&@#$! thing in sight because the answers don't make any sense to you and you can't get the results of your simulations to match the solutions given. You are the ones for whom this article was written.

After fiddling with these puzzles awhile you may be tempted to give up, but I'd like to talk you into staying with them until you succeed. Cross my heart and hope to die, these problems are all straightforward, no trickery or word games are involved, and no complicated programming is required. But although these problems are simple, it's important that you learn to simulate them correctly because what they teach you about how probabilities work will apply to more complex situations that you may want to resolve in the future.

If you'd like to look at these problems as they originally appeared, you can find them in Aha! Gotcha, by Martin Gardner (1 & 4); How to Take a Chance, by Darrell Huff and Irving Geis (2); Innumeracy, by John Allen Paulos (3 & 5); and Getting the Best of It, by David Sklansky (6).

## Pounding on the 8-bits

### by Bob Woolley SLCC

I was kind of curious about Dave's Boogie this month. It is somewhat different than his previous efforts since he is really drawing the reader into trying something on his own rather than just providing information. This is a little tricky since many users aren't really aware of some of their machines uses, nor have they been exposed to simulation applications. So, I thought maybe I could try some of this stuff right here - now, pay attention!

Let's take the dice simulation (#5). Before we can start trials, we need to know how to accurately simulate a dice roll, right? First, you need to know that a die has six sides, any of which is equally probable to be face up after a roll. If you were paying attention in the January Boogie, you should know that the RND() function is used to get random numbers - and, if you were really sharp, you would use D=INT(RND(0)*6+1) (otherwise, you would include 0 in your results which is not possible). Good, now we have the function..... or, do we? How can we test this?

We test it with a simulation, of course. What we can do is roll our imaginary die say, 10,000 times and keep track of how many times each face occurs. Like this:

```
100 A1=0
110 A2=0
120 A3=0
130 A4=0
140 A5=0
150 A6=0
160 Other=0
170   For N=1 To 10000
180   D=Int(Rnd(Z)*6+1)
190   If D=1 Then A1=A1+1:Goto 260
200   If D=2 Then A2=A2+1:Goto 260
210   If D=3 Then A3=A3+1:Goto 260
220   If D=4 Then A4=A4+1:Goto 260
230   If D=5 Then A5=A5+1:Goto 260
240   If D=6 Then A6=A6+1:Goto 260
250   Other=Other+1
260   Next N
270 Print A1,A2,A3,A4,A5,A6,Other
280 End
```

Lines 100 - 160 are very important in any program - they initialize the variables to their starting values. Our Atari BASIC does this for us and I could leave it out, but you must not forget them when you use some other, not so forgiving, language. Line 170 sets the number of trials (N) at 10,000 (notice that N is not used anywhere in the loop - it just serves as a counter). Next, we have our expression for a die roll in line 180 setting a value into variable called D. Lines 190 thru 240 add +1 to our result counters for each face. Or, in line 250, we add +1 to the OTHER value, indicating that we got something other than an integer between 1 and 6 (which means we goofed somewhere - <or the die landed on an edge...?>). Once we get all through doing this 10,000 times (line 260), we print all the variables to the screen where we can check our answers (line 270). This all takes a little time to run, of course, so get a sandwich (or have a cigarette if you're in the Oakland hills - Martians can't stand tobacco....).

I got A1=1629 A2=1671 A3=1689 A4=1654 A5=1622 A6=1735 and OTHER=0 when I ran the program (took maybe 5 minutes with BasicXL). Looks like Dave was right - each face got around 1/6th of the total and we got no OTHER values. You could run this three or four times if you aren't absolutely sure about it. Or, three or four hundred times if you like. And, you could have the computer store all the results on your disk drive while it's doing it so you could go on vacation. At any rate, you will eventually be secure in the knowledge that someone won't make you feel dumb by pointing out some basic flaw in your expression (like including 0 as a result). And, when you try #5 in Dave's article, you will at least know the die is "fair".

So, how about the next DOM? Uhhhh,,,, who knows? We have a great new communications program called BobTerm that works better than Express! It will run the terminal section in both 80 columns on an XEP80 and 40 columns on your monitor at the same time! 19200 baud is provided for transferring files between computers as well as new super high speed X-modem and Y-modem routines. There is also MyDOS 4.5, now in PD, which does just about everthing you'd ask of a DOS with minimum effort. Another Tetri* version showed up. And another 1040 form. And Daisy-Dot III demos. And TextPro 4.54. And APAC, a 256 color (All Points - All Colors) editor and generator.

FLASH!!

I just talked to an 8-bit hacker that has an IBM keyboard hooked up to his Atari! He is interested in selling little plug-in kits that work on any 8-bit and it looks like the mod will be at both the March meeting and the WCCF (March 1-4). Drop in!

Did you know the number 1 Atari ST dealer in the United States is right in the bay area/ That's right, Microworld has the largest selection of ST software anywhere. Of course, we do discount, especially for user groups, but the REAL reason to shop with us is LOYALTY. We support your computer, and we support it before all other computers. That's why we appreciate yuour loyalty so much. Thank you and we look forward to seeing you soon.

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·WORDFLAIR, the new integrated program from Blue Chip is probably the best new program on the St, and it was developed right in the bay area. Get this one NOW if you have one meg and 2 drives, you won't be dissapointed. And if you want a hard drive, how does a NEW 20 meg for just $429 sound?Plus 48 megs for just $635

# MORAN'S MINUTES

**General Meeting--February 6, 1990**

The meeting was convened at 8:15 PM by President Sammons with all Officers in attendance.

Ralf Herman reported receiving his copy of "PC DITTO II", which was immediately installed in his MEGA 4, only to have it bomb out. He will keep the club advised as to resolution of the problem.

The President advised that the "PC SUPERCHARGER" sent for Demonstration at tonight's meeting also failed to work. Maybe next month. *(Editor's note: Berkeley Microsystems has tested it since that time and had no problems with it.)* **Volunteers are needed to work the club's booth at the West Coast Computer Faire** to be held March 1st through 4th. ATARI is going to assist us with the show as they have in past years.

Bob Brodie, ATARI User Group Representative, reported that "MIDI-TASKING" has been put out to developers and should be out by June. This Multi-tasking environment and it's 6 windows are looking very good.

Bob continued his report on the latest doings at ATARI with the report that the new "STE" should be available by April and the desktop version of the new "TT" (68030) will cost about $3000.

A skinny little mouse in the far back row said that he heard that the first 500 desktop "TT's" would be ready to send to developers in April. Ole' very substantial Brodie was struck deaf, dumb and blind about then and refused to comment.

NOTICE

In all fairness and to keep these minutes absolutely accurate (as always) it should be noted that my reference to one 300 pound rumor monger in last month's minutes might have been in error (at least he thinks so). So in the future instead of calling him a 300 pound rumor monger, we will attempt to use more accurate descriptive terms. ( You the members can decide what to call a 5' 3" person with size 52 pants).

To further liven up the meeting, Bob Woolley, with the able assistance of Bob Scholar, demonstrated some of the programs on the 8 Bit disk of the month. The first item on the disk is full information on the Gumby Upgrade, which is a modification of the 8 Bit to install a second sound chip. Bob made this modification and showed just how fancy an 8 Bit could play stereo music. The Gumby info, songs and player program are all on the DOM. Also on the disk are assembly editor docs which explain in plain language how to use the assembly editor cartridge, a Visi-Calc works file for an IRS 1040 tax form and last but not least a TETRIS type game which Bob Scholar demo'd. A Motion was made and passed to send a dollar to this game programmer for each disk sold.

Shortly before and during the evening's break Peter Norman demonstrated the EPYX game "Devon Aire". This game has been around for a while and is a fair deal seeing it is available cheap.

When the meeting resumed after a short break it was announced that our faithful editors, Frank and Jennie Kliewer , are leaving this post within the next 90 days. Anyone who is interested in being considered for the editor's job should phone Jim Hood for particulars: 534-2197.

Berkely Microsystems who donated a couple of their 5 1/4" drive cables for the evenings raffle mentioned that they had a few more cables for sale and also they would be able to build up a few 20 Megabyte hard drives for the unbelievable price of $225.

A motion was made, seconded and passed, for the club to to fund a booth at the West Coast Computer Faire. Cost about $500 / $600.

Being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 10:10 PM. Respectfully Submitted - Jim Moran - Secretary.

Several members, who live in Oakland, have had some problems with the following after the quake:

1)Unexplained losses of data.
2)Scrambled information.
3)Unexplained keyboard lock up.
4)Distorted monitor display.
5)Failure of chips and boards.

Jim Hood, the Kliewers and Ken Hinton have all had PG&E out to check the voltage to their houses and in some cases, transformers have been upgraded.

There is a free booklet from PG&E called "Protect your equipment against Momentary Voltage Fluctuations".

# March SLCC CALENDAR OF EVENTS 1990

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | 1 West Coast Computer Fair | 2 West Coast Computer Fair | 3 West Coast Computer Fair |
| 4 West Coast Computer Fair | 5 | 6 Main Meeting 8:00 P.M. San Leandro Library | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| 11 | 12 ST Meeting 8:00 P.M. San Leandro Library | 13 Telecomm Sig 8 P.M. | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 |
| 18 | 19 Midi Sig 8 PM | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 Journal Deadline | 24 |
| 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 ST Beginner's Sig 7:30 P.M. | 29 | 30 | 31 |

**Special Interest Group (SIG) leaders and their phone numbers are on the Table of Contents page.**

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## Membership Application for the San Leandro Computer Club

Yes! I would like to receive 12 months of the SLCC JOURNAL along with other membership benefits, including software discounts, training, technical assistance and much, much more - all for the low, low price of $20.00 (or $40.00 if I am outside the US or Canada).

Name:_____ Date:_____

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(Street) (City) (State) (ZIP)

Home Phone:_____ Membership No.
(Optional)

Computer(s)_____

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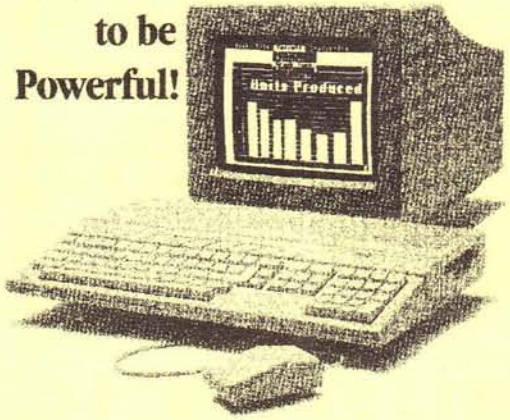


| | |
|---|---|
| 1040 ST MONOCHROME .... $799.00 | 1040 ST COLOR $979.00 |
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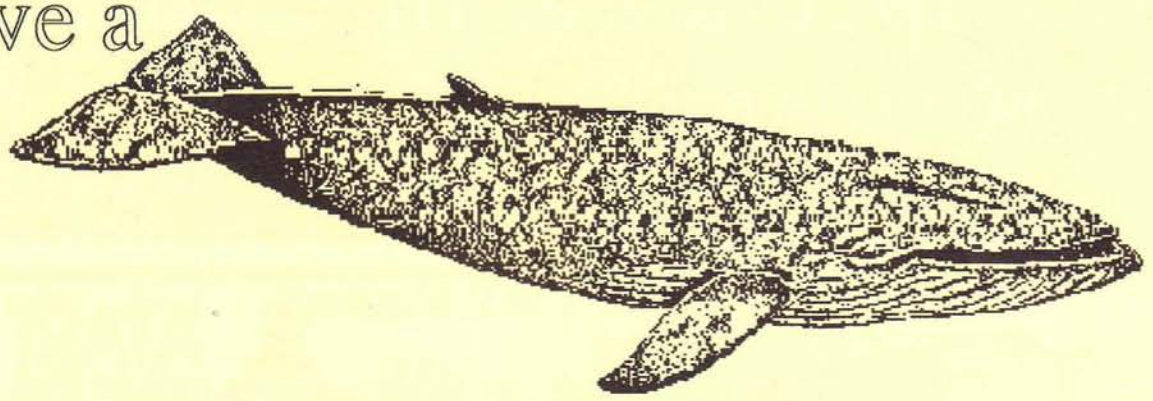

of a good time at the West Coast Computer Fair.

San Leandro Computer Club
P.O.Box 1506
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General Meeting:
March 6, 1990