



P.A.C.E. WORLD



NEWSLETTER OF THE
PENINSULA ATARI COMPUTER ENTHUSIASTS

AUGUST 1986

OF VIRGINIA

VOL. 5 NO. 7

COMING
EVENTS
FOR
AUGUST

COMING EVENTS

1. DEMO OF INPUT DEVICES

a. bring your favorite device
i.e. joystick, paddles,
lightpen, touchpads, or what-
ever you like.

2. BY-LAWS VOTE

IF ENOUGH PEOPLE SHOW UP

3. PICNIC - SEPT. 14, 1986

AT NASA. MORE INFO AT MEETING



4. WE WILL MEET IN THE LAB THIS TIME.

NOTICE: ATARI 400, 800, 1200XL, ETC AND THE FUJI SYMBOL ARE TRADEMARKS OF THE ATARI CORP.
P.A.C.E. IS AN INDEPENDENT USER'S GROUP AND NOT ASSOCIATED WITH ATARI CORP.

NEXT MEETING ON AUG. 15, AND SEPT. 5, 1986

CLUB OFFICERS

PRESIDENT: BOB KOSTER 838-9614
VICE-PRES: MIKE FAZZI 838-5680
SECRETARY: STEVE FISHER 877-1225
TREASURER: CHESTER MORRIS 766-0454
LIBRARIAN: MARIA CAMPBELL 596-5179

ASST. LIB: LINDA MORRIS 766-0454
EDITOR: VINETTE DEPHILLIPS 723-0417
ASST. ED: JOE CULLEN 838-5326
LAB CO-ORDINATOR: LYNN CHAPMAN 851-6292

AUGUST

1986

SUN**MON****TUE****WED****THU****FRI****SAT**

					1 SWAP & SHARE 6:00 PM GLORIA DEI	2
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10	11	12	13	14	15 MEETING 6:00 PM GLORIA DEI	16
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HELL...?

Just about every group I've been associated with (not just computer groups, either) has entered a summer doldrum period during which not much gets done. PACE is in a similar period right now, but not as bad as I've seen before. Meeting attendance is down a bit, but we have had some good newsletters lately, and both the 8-bit and 16-bit libraries are growing well. We have acquired lots of software recently, public domain and purchased, and we are finally getting down to organizing all this stuff. We just bought a Voice Box voice synthesizer for you to borrow and play with, which we demoed last meeting. So don't mope around the house complaining you don't have anything to do, come to the meetings and get involved with some of this stuff.

Speaking of meetings, I'd like to share some basic Users' Group philosophy with you. We tend to emphasize the meetings, and concentrate our efforts on making the meetings as fun and interesting as possible. However, the real strength of our group is not based on how entertaining the meetings are (although that ranks right up there). We are not a random collection of people devoted to running meetings. We are a (loose) confederation computer users with common interests who just happen to gather periodically to our mutual benefit. We don't HAVE to get physically together to derive full benefit from PACE. Our true strengths are our membership list and this newsletter, both of which you can get without leaving the comfort of your keyboard. Use the newsletter to get general information about Atari and PACE, and use the membership list to get acquainted with each other. Look on the list to see if there is another member living close to you, and give them a call. Ask a PACE officer (me, for example, I love to get calls!) for the names of other members who might have your interests, or who have that particular peripheral you're having trouble with. By becoming a PACE member, you have voluntarily added your knowledge to the common pool in hope that you will receive more than you give, which is what always happens. PACE is a tool you can use to learn more about, and have more fun with, your computer. If you just attend meetings and don't get to know your fellow PACE members, you're not getting your money's worth. You, there, that's right, YOU. You know I'm talking about you.

Thanks to everyone who contributed to July's newsletter and meeting. Unfortunately, it's the same old people who contribute just about every month. Folks, we need input from new blood. Actually, that's the topic for the August meeting, INPUT. We'll look at the tremendous variety of input devices for the Atari. Please bring

your favorite device (Joystick, light pen, controller, whatever) to the August meeting, we'll try them out and compare notes. If you can plug it into a joystick port, BRING IT! In keeping with the evening's topic, we'll output some input devices to the members present in the form of our monthly prize giveaway. Don't miss it! (but if you do, give another member a call to find out what happened!)

The ST SIG meeting, by the way, will be on the 2nd Friday of each month at the Gloria Dei School, around 8:30PM. Come if you have even the slightest interest in STs, it'll be a good time

IN THE MEANTIME, HAVE FUN!

dkos

OFF THE WIRE...

Here's a real quick summary of the best stuff from other group's newsletters.

ALAMO AREA ATARI COMPUTER ASSN., JULY 1986 - Repeats the CompuServe conference on software theft, explains how to get a cheap mouse for your 8-bit machine, and describes a fix for the 800's 256K RAM upgrade. This group's May issue told how to fix keyboard problems on the 130 XE.

CURRENT NOTES, WPACE, JUL/AUG 1986 - This issue, as usual, has too many good reviews and articles to mention here. Make sure you take a look at this excellent NL at the meeting!

BAAUG NEWSLETTER, MAY 1986 - Current and prospective ST owners/operators, don't miss this informative NL. This issue could be used as a jump-off point for a commercial ST magazine, based on it's content alone.

ATARI USER GROUP NEWS, ISSUE #1, APRIL 1986 - The real thing, straight from Atari Inc. Need I say more?

MID MICHIGAN ATARI MAGAZINE, JULY 1986 - A real nice newsletter, great articles, professionally produced.

You'll find these and many more at the friendly neighborhood PACE meeting. We just about give them away after three months, so take a look now and set your sights on some.

dkos

Good news!! We have located a place that will sell the club members printer ribbons at wholesale cost. The prices are as follow:

EPSON RX/MX/FX80	\$2.50
EPSON LX	\$3.00
CENTRONIC 739-1 (700 SERIES)	\$2.00
PANASONIC 1090/1091/1092	\$4.50
ANADIX	\$4.50
PRONWRITER 8510	\$3.00
HPS 801	\$4.50
HPS 803	\$4.45

If you have a printer not listed, let us know and we will try to get a price. Call Chester or Linda at 766-0454 to place an order, or let us know at the next meeting.

LFM

Treasurer's Report by CLM

Pace now has 88 members. Four (4) memberships will expire next month. If your name appears in the following paragraphs, please bring your checkbook (yes we do accept cash) to the next meeting or mail your renewal to PACE Treasurer, P.O. box 7628, Hampton, Va. 23666. Remember dues are \$15.00 per year.

Memberships expiring in August:

William Edmunds, Charles Hopper, John Klassa and Dennis Patron.

Memberships which have expired:

William Davis and William Miller.

Enough of money talk....Last month we gained four (4) new members!

Joe East, J. J. Falkenhan, David Graham and Hugh Whisted.

To you four (and those of you I haven't seen at the meetings) I shall close with this simple Irish Rhyme.

Come in the evening, come in
the morning,
Come when expected, come
without warning;
Thousands of welcomes you'll
find here before you,
And the oftener you come, the
more we'll adore you.

Until next month,

This month there are 2 new disks in the public domain library. One is a disk-of-the-month from S.D.A.C.E. with demos on one side and movies made with "Movie Maker" on the other side. The other new disk contains an updated version of the word processor TEXT-PRO. Both disks are available now for copying.

Now for a more serious subject. I would like to thank all the club members who contacted me to help fill in the blanks in our database. I would LIKE to, but the truth is not one person volunteered help or comments. In the last newsletter I asked for help. I also asked for opinions on whether or not I should go to the trouble of rearranging the programs into more logical groupings on the disks (games with games, utilities with utilities, ect.) and still I got no response. Apparently everyone is happy with the database and library as they are.

LFM

Books!!

Have you read any good fantasy/sci-fi books lately? I have. Just the other day I was reading one of my favorite oldies and I came across this conversation between two of the characters. One is fighting for his life. He must answer all the riddles correctly while thinking of a riddle too hard for the other to answer correctly, in order to be shown the way out of the caverns. One of the riddles is as follows:

It cannot be seen, cannot be felt,
Cannot be heard, cannot be smelt.
It lies behind stars and under hills,
And empty holes it fills.
It comes first and follows after,
Ends life, kills laughter.

Can you answer this riddle? Do you know who the 2 characters are? Do you know which book it's from? Hope to hear from you soon!

Chester

MICRO FLYTE JOYSTICK FLIGHT SIMULATOR SCENERY

One of the most popular recreational software packages in the past couple of years has been SubLogic's Flight Simulator II. One accessory for the program is the MicroFlyte Controller produced by Microcube Corporation, a control device designed to eliminate the need for keyboard or dual joystick control of the plane.

The MicroFlyte truly makes flying much more enjoyable, and although I still haven't been able to land the plane, it is much, much easier to fly.

The Joystick Driver is booted prior to the program, setting up the program to recognize the controller, which includes buttons to increase or decrease the throttle and raise and lower flaps (or use the gun) and a reset button which puts the plane into proper trim for takeoff. All other flight control is handled with the controller's joystick, the same type used in RC (radio control) controllers.

MicroFlyte also plans to release additional program drivers for other flight programs, such as the F-15 Strike Eagle disk.

A second add-on for Flight Sim is the set of six scenery disks for the Western United States, finally being released for the Atari in late August. The six disk set, which has been available for the Commodore and IBM computers for almost a year, includes maps, radio frequencies and airport charts. The disks are also going to be available separately with each disk covering three or four cities.

Although not yet available for Atari, SubLogic has released (for Commodore) the first of a series of "Star" Scenery disks. The "star" series provides much more scenery for smaller map areas. The first disk of the San Francisco Bay area highlights the Golden Gate and Bay Bridges as well as San Francisco buildings and much more detailed airports.

TOUCHDOWN FOOTBALL

One of the better software bargains released recently is the Electronic Arts release of Touchdown Football. Although similar to GameStar's Starbowl Football, Touchdown Football has 3D Animation and more variety in play selection.

On offense you are the quarterback, calling the plays and running or passing, becoming the receiver after the pass is thrown. On defense you are the rover back, also calling the defensive sets.

The game offers options of player vs. player, player vs. computer or computer vs. computer.

Touchdown Football is included in the Electronic Arts current summer promotion which includes many older programs (such as Seven Cities or One on One basketball) for \$14.99. The Atari version of TD Football, although just released, was included in the promotion, and at \$14.99 it's truly a bargain.

QUESTIONS FOR THE ANSWERMAN

I am considering purchasing a color monitor for my 8-bit Atari system. There are several questions that need answering so that I can make an 'intelligent' decision.

1.-Is the ST monitor compatible with the 8-bit Atari? (In case I would like to upgrade to the 16-bit system at a later date.)

2.-What is the difference between 'RGB' and 'composite' monitors?

Which is best? Are there any special hook-up cables or special wiring necessary to use either type?

3.-What color monitors are available for the 8-biters? What does each cost? Which one(s) is recommended?

Thanks,
BHM

I have a QKIDATA 10 color printer. I have yet to get a color picture printed on the system. When I asked the dealer why I wasn't getting color, he told me that I had to have an Atari XL and my Atari 800 wouldn't work in color with this printer. What is the 'real' story?

Thank You,
J.M.

MEAN 18 for the ST

Simulation of "human"-type activities is one of the more popular things we do with computers. Flight simulator programs sell like hotcakes even on dull machines like the IBM compatibles. Considering the cost and effort involved with general aviation, it seems a lot more sensible to sit at home and let your imagination fill in the details.

The same thing applies to the game of golf. I'll grant you it's sometimes fun to get out to the course and hit that little ball around. Oftentimes, however, it's not that much fun, and you usually can't tell if you're going to have a good time until you've played a few holes. By then it's too late to turn back, and the next 4 hours become pure drudge. Golf is a prime candidate for computer simulation, and MEAN 18 from ACCOLADE is one of the better attempts.

You get two 3.5 inch disks with MEAN 18, one with the golf and course architect programs, and the other with three famous courses: Pebble Beach, Augusta, and St Andrews. Double click on the golf program and a nice title screen comes up while the prg is loading. You then tell the simulation which course you want to play, how many players (up to four), pick match or stroke play, then select for each player either regular or pro tees and beginner or expert mode. The beginner mode acts like a caddy, pointing you in the right direction every time and recommending which club to use. After you set all this, you can hit some balls on the driving range, go to the putting green, practice a hole, or head off to the first tee.

Your view of the game while hitting is as if you were standing right behind yourself looking down the fairway. The mouse is all you need to play. Change the direction you are facing and the view scrolls horizontally. The distance to the pin is always displayed, so pick your club and swing away. Clicking the mouse button once starts your backswing, clicking again starts the club back down (you don't have to powder the ball every time), then clicking the mouse the third time at exactly the right instant will send the ball straight down the fairway. A moving scale on the side of the screen helps you time your swing. If you try for more distance by overswinging, or click the third time too late or too early, the ball will hook or slice into the rough (or behind a tree, my favorite spot). Once behind the tree, you can then intentionally slice your way back to the fairway and amaze your friends.

If you're fortunate enough to eventually find your way to the green, you are greeted with an overhead view of yourself (that's you with the bald spot), the ball, and the hole. You must use the mouse to set the direction you will hit the ball, compensating for the slope (shown as little arrows). As with driving, click once to draw back your putter, again to bring it forward, then again to (hopefully) send the ball in the direction you pointed it. *PLOP* "Nice Putt!"

This game meets the most important test of simulations. You tend to forget it's a game and lose yourself in "golffy" thoughts. You're not thinking about the game mechanics, but instead you're concentrating on how to get the ball along toward the cup. The rewards and frustrations are about the same. The graphic presentation of the course is colorful and detailed (you cannot use the monochrome monitor).

If you tire of making 3-under at Augusta, the course architect allows you to modify an existing course (straighten out the "Amen Corner", for instance) or start from scratch. My friends and I are presently entering two local courses. The architect has most of the features of a drawing program, and makes it very easy to input or modify a course. However, creating just one new hole takes 15 to 20 minutes, which is a testament to the detail you can insert.

MEAN 18 is an outstanding golf simulation, and the ability to play "real" courses like Pebble Beach and change the courses and make new ones is just the icing on the cake. There are naturally a few obligatory gripes, like the slightly slow redraw time (golfers are famous for their patience) between holes and the lack of some distance gauging mechanism ("...just how far away is that trap?"). The fact that I had to read playing instructions for the dreadful IBM PC and PCjr didn't bother me TOO much, for ACCOLADE was nice enough to include a little card for us second-class computer citizen Atari owners.

Pardon me, I must go now, it's tee time. *SWISH*thwap!...oh, shoot, it's going left...FORRRRE!...BOUNCE off! (TUNK!) that a boy...well, it only went 40 yards, but at least I'm on the fairway. It's gonna be a LONG day! Let's go...

DAVE KOSTER

SPELLBREAKER by INFOCON

I have just struggled through the latest in the Interactive Adventure Games by Infocon. I say "I" but really mean WE as I enlist the aid of fellow adventurers Dick Powell and Brian Higgs. This one was SOOO TOUGH that another adventurer was added to the list of those trying to defeat the EVIL ADVERSARY in Spellbreaker. This brave soul came from the world of IBM. (You see the Infocon adventures transcend the mortal [and puny] world of computer prejudice.) His name is unimportant but the fact that he purchased the INFOCON SPELLBREAKER HINT BOOK is very IMPORTANT! Yes, dear readers, the ADVENTURERS were reduced to asking for help from the SOURCE itself. Usually, we can muddle our way through an adventure on our own but not this time. After discovering the 'answer' to a puzzle from the hint book, a good Adventurer will always say, "I was on the right track!" or "I tried that! and it didn't work the first time!" or "Of course, I knew that would work. I was trying something different!". There are other answers that I have used but you get the idea. SPELLBREAKER is the last of a trilogy. You have moved from ENCHANTER to SORCERER to SPELLBREAKER. The last one is truly the hardest. All have been entertaining and are highly recommended. Infocon adventures, as you know by now, are all text games that are 'interactive'. The story-line is displayed on the computer screen and awaits your response to each situation. The text might say, "The cave is blocked by an ugly ogre." You can respond in plain english in many ways-such as-"Examine the ogre." The program might answer, "It is just a run-of-the-mill ogre with purple nose, green feet, and orange hair." If you give an action demand-"Kill the ogre with the knife."-you might get, "The ogre is unhurt but becomes very angry and stomps you to dust! You have died. Do you wish to restart or restore or quit the game." In each game, you have a quest, such as, find the kidnapped princess or collect treasures or, as in this case, find out who has turned your friends into newts and toads and the meaning of the strange white cube left by the mysterious hooded figure. You have progressed up the scale of magic makers and are being groomed for the job of chief magician and, therefore, have a number of spells under your control. As you follow the trail of the hooded one, you discover scrolls with ancient spells written on them to be added to your spell book for later use. Also, you find additional white cubes, each with the ability to transport you to a different part of this weird kingdom. The quest in SPELLBREAKER is somewhat a mystery in itself. You aren't sure that you are not being used by some superior force--and you are! Whenever you 'die', you are given another chance by this shadowy figure with the admonition to do better the next time and the thought that he may have chosen the wrong magician for the job! The puzzles in the game are good but hard in most cases. There was something, however, that I didn't like about some of them. The action that you must take requires that you know in advance what action the characters are going to take. For example, there is a magic white cube in the mouth of a statue of a rodent-god.

You can't quite get the cube out between the statue's teeth so you cast a spell that will temporarily animate the idol. You notice that the rodent yawns when you cast a 'sleep' spell on him. You can now go back (if you have 'saved' a game at a previous convenient position) and retrace your actions and by casting the 'sleep' spell at the right time, catch the idol in mid-yawn when the 'animate' spell expires. This requires that you have pre-knowledge of events and in my opinion is not the best type of puzzle! (In fact, one of my partners went right through this puzzle and didn't know that the spell had to be perfectly timed because he happened to hit it right the first try!!) There are a number of this type of puzzle in the game and they are somewhat detracting but the overall game is so good that it is soon forgotten.

It was brought home very clearly with SPELLBREAKER, just how important it is to have some to talk to (work with) while playing these games. If you are stumped it sure helps to have someone to cry to-or interest may be completely lost and the game returned to the dead-disk file! We discuss the progression of the game and inform each other what works and what doesn't work! When we were really out of ideas, the HINT BOOK was used. (I wouldn't want to say this out loud-but-each of us wants to get a 'leg up' on the other for bragging rights even if it's only for a little while!!)

It gets boring saying that Infocon has another winner, this time in SPELLBREAKER, but it's true. (I have never met an Infocon that I didn't like!) My recommendation is, however, that you work your way through the trilogy before attempting SPELLBREAKER. By doing this you will progress as your alter ego character progresses--from apprentice enchanter to the one who BREAKS the SPELL of the magicians and turns the world back to reason and SCIENCE.

GEORGE

P.S. SPELLBREAKER was made more difficult to play because of a faulty disk. From time to time, gibberish came up on the screen. Being a seasoned ADVENTURER, I thought that it was some type of code and part of the game! I had progressed quite a ways into the game before I suspected that the disk was bad. It was my association with an IBM copy of SPELLBREAKER that made me realize my error. The disk was returned and another Atari copy was obtained. That one was also bad! The third copy proved to be O.K. Watch out--There is no 'secret' code in SPELLBREAKER.

P.P.S. Infocon has been sold to ACTIVISION. I hope the team stays together--it is unbeatable! The overall quality of Activision games has been on the upswing lately and hopefully the Infocon mystique will add to their reputation. We'll be watching! Infocon certainly ain't broke and don't need fixin'!

