P.A.C.E. WORLD

NEWSLETTER OF THE

PENINSULA ATARI COMPUTER ENTHUSIASTS

DECEMBER 1986 VOLUME 6 NO. 12

PLEASE NOTE!

SEND NEWSLETTERS TO:

P.A.C.E. WORLD
JOE CULLEN, EDITOR
834 CHURCHILL TERRACE
HAMPTON, VA 23666

HAPPY NEW YEAR

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR

P.A.C.E. OF VIRGINIA

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VICE PRES:	**VACANT**	
SECRETARY:	STEVE FISHBEIN	877-1225
TREASURER:	CHESTER MARKS	766-0454
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NL EDITOR:	JOE CULLEN	838-5326
EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT:	LINDA MARKS	

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

WELL...?

We had excellent turnout at the November business meeting, lots of new faces. The meeting, which reviewed the major word processing packages for our machines, was pretty good, too. It was the first time I had seen most of those programs. When you get right down to it, the programs were pretty much alike, but it's those little differences that make us prefer one over the other. Even after seeing the highly developed commercial packages, I still think TEXTPRO is the way to go.

It has most of the standard features, some fairly unique and powerful capabilities, and the price (free) can't be beat! Now if I could only break myself of this AtariWriter habit...

We've signed up a bunch of new members and had some renewals this month, so Welcome! and Welcome Back! You have tapped into the best Atari resource in the area. Make sure you get the most out of it by putting as much as you can in. Give us a call!

If you don't already have a modem, you should treat yourself to one for Christmas. Not until you get online will you understand how fun and useful modems are. Now that we have a Bulletin Board we can call our (mostly) own, there has never been a better time. The magic ODDX/PACE number, for those current modem users who have spent the last month in the Bahamas, is (804) 596-2710.

As I mentioned last month in this column, December is my last month as PACE President. My thanks to everyone who have kept the PACE spirit of friendship and cooperation. The group is in very capable hands of your Executive Committee, as always, and I'll continue to contribute as much as I can, time permitting (as should everyone!). Nonetheless, don't hesitate to jump right in and do a little to make PACE better. Write articles, review stuff at meetings, help with the newsletter or other projects, donate ideas. We're all in this together!

Once again, thanks for your support during my 18 months or so as a PACE officer. We laughed, we cried, we had some fun, we learned. That's what it is.

From me and my family to you and yours, have a great Christmas Season!

dave koster

FROM FAZZI

VICE PRESIDENT'S NOTES

P.A.C.E. will not be having a business meeting this month or a Swap-N-Share night in January. These meets were cancelled due to the close proximity of these dates to the upcoming holidays. I am anxiously awaiting these holidays for more reasons than one.

I have been spending entirely too much time programming for school and not enough time programming for pleasure. When I started programming in 1982 it was for fun. I took some night classes at the Community College. I spent my nights trying to convert TRS-80 Basic into Atari Basic and then back again (the school had TRS-80's). The programs were useless exercises that only taxed my patience but it was still fun.

As time passed, I began studying Electronics and Computer Programming. When our government decided to make the telephone industry better by deregulation, I was one of the first 1000 to get a permenant pink slip. So, naturally, I went to school full time (nobody wanted to pay what Ma Bell paid unless you had a Phd.).

I came to the conclusion that if everything became electronic, with computer controls, there was a need for someone that knows how the hardware works and also knows something about software. I asked some specific questions at Old Dominion University and before I knew it I was hooked on programming on those big machines they have. (I was amazed with some of the nice facilities they have.) I talked to many faculty members about my plans and they all told me that engineers with computer science education would be in great demand.

With all that encouragement I started taking classes in Computer Science in addition to my Engineering classes. I learned Pascal. Now, Pascal was intended as an academic language, a teaching tool. But I have found that Pascal is a very powerful tool to the programmer. The point is that I have been programming for more hours than I care to count and the code that I have written is utterly useless. As a matter of fact, I have written code just to prove to the professors that I can write code. It serves no other purpose. I wish that these same professors could think up something that would be both educational <u>AND</u> fun that would get and hold the interests of all of the students.

I am sure that there are plenty of useful projects that would meet some of the local businesses needs. If the educational community would put out the effort to solve some "real world" problems it would give the students a better taste of what is needed in the "real world". I wonder what would happen if someone with a genuine problem got 66 solutions to it.

So, as a New Year's resolution, I refuse to program anything that isn't fun. (I will graduate Dec. 14!)

Happy Holidays to everyone. See you in January.

Mike Fazzi

TREASURER'S REPORT

Pace has 85 members. Nine (9) 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 reneval to PACE Treasurer, 21 Sacramento Dr. Apt 7A, Hampton, Va. 23666 (For faster service). Remember, dues are $15.00 per year.

Memberships expiring in December:

Jim Bishop, Louise and Terry Bohlinger, Nathan Burgess, Scott Cline, Todd Kievit, Gary Knight, Kathleen and Chet owak, Georgia Scott and R. D. Watkins.

Memberships which have expired:

Orrie Flynt

Memberships which have renewed:

Ed St. Denis and John Wallace.

For your information:

Last month (Nov) PACE purchased Qwik-Pix from White Lion Software (see article in this issue) and our new checks.

This month we picked up three new members, Blake Patterson (ST user) Delbert Drennon (8-bit) and William "Bill" Tennis (8-bit). Let's all welcome them to the club both here at Gloria Dei and Joe East's home (ST User see sig 7 of the ODDI/PACE BBS at 596-2710 for meeting times and directions).

Until next month.....

Chester Marks

LIBRARIAN'S CORNER

‡‡LIBRARIAN'S CORNER‡‡

Merry Christmas & Happy Hanukkah to all! Ah, December is finally here, and let it snow, let it snow, let it SNOW! Maybe we'll be lucky this year and get a 'white' Christmas! Last month Tim and I went on vacation to upstate New York, and did we ever have a blast!

We ran into some snow (6 inches!) and the folks up there called it a "dusting!" Am I glad we took our chains- with all that ice! Of course Sunny had a real ball, with the cold weather and snow!

Our NL editor, Joe Cullen was so right about NY being full of Atari products everywhere-in the city Atari is certainly numero uno! However, it is still a mystery where the new Atari 1200 baud modems are: they are advertised everywhere, but we didn't see not a one, anywhere!

All of the salespersons that we talked to said that they were 'expecting the shipment any day now...', now where have we heard THAT before!?

The PACE library has a couple of new disks for our library: a Txt. Adv. demo, a new P.D. disk from our own Dave Koster, and an excellent P.D. Print-Shop/Synapse demo disk from one of our sister clubs, SBACE of Santa Barbara, California.

These disks will be available for copy on Swap-N-Share night, and for checkout at the regular business meeting of January 16, 1987. This is because Linda and I will be working on the data base this month.

By the way, we need all of the P.D. disks that are out so that we can complete the new data base in time for the January meeting. If you have any disks belonging to PACE, this is the time to return them, please. You can bring them to the meeting, or drop them off at the school. Your cooperation will be appreciated on this matter.

Well, that's about it for this month. I hope that everyone has a safe and very happy holiday season.

Happy Holidays!

‡‡Maria‡‡

FROM THE ASST. LIBRARIAN

I'M BACK TO TALK ABOUT THE LIBRARY DATABASE, BUT THIS TIME I HAVE GOOD NEWS. AFTER MUCH RANTING & RAVING ON MY PART, WE'RE FINALLY MAKING SOME HEADWAY. IN ADDITION TO FILLING IN THE MISSING INFORMATION ABOUT THE PUBLIC DOMAIN PROGRAMS, WE HAVE DECIDED TO DO A MAJOR DISK OVERHAUL. THE END RESULT WILL BE TO HAVE ONLY ONE TYPE OF PROGRAM ON EACH DISK. FOR INSTANCE, UTILITIES WILL BE TOGETHER, GAMES WILL BE TOGETHER, ECT. WHILE THERE ARE SOME DISKS LIKE THAT NOW, THE MAJORITY CONTAIN A MIXTURE OF PROGRAM TYPES, WHICH MAKES IT KIND OF HARD TO FIND THINGS.

OBVIOUSLY, THIS WILL TAKE SOME TIME, AND IT WILL TAKE EVEN LONGER TO MAKE THE CHANGES TO THE DATABASE, BUT ONCE IT'S FINISHED I'LL HAVE NEW HARD COPIES AVAILABLE. UNTIL THEN, IF YOU ARE A NEW MEMBER TO OUR LITTLE GROUP, CONSIDER YOURSELF LUCKY TO HAVE MISSED MY COMPLAINING OVER THE LAST FEW MONTHS, AND LET ME KNOW IF I CAN HELP YOU FIND ANYTHING.

LINDA MARKS
ASST. EVERYTHING

HAPPY NEW YEAR

Beyond the Basics
By Jeff Cleveland

Welcome to my new monthly (hopefully!) column on advanced programming. Just how advanced you ask?

Well, I'm not going to go so deeply into stuff as to leave everyone totally confused after the first paragraph. I want to spend time on some topics such as advanced graphics (including player missile graphics, display lists, display list interrupts and scrolling) and use of the fantastic operating system that is built into each an every 8-bit Atari. Mostly the kind of stuff that you would ordinarily pick up by reading through some lengthy manual. (If you could find which manual is was in!)

I will present topics so that the beginner can pick up additional information about how their machine works and the more courageous programmers out there (are you out there?) can pick up a trick or two to add to their programming skills.

What languages will be used? I program mostly in Action! and assembly language, but I may go off into some Pascal (I have the Kyan Pascal compiler), although the structure of Pascal is too restrictive to do most of the things that need to be accomplished when using graphics. If too many people say that they don't have Action!, then I may switch to BASIC, but only as a last resort. (I hate BASIC.)

That's about all for the ground rules, except that I will take some space to answer questions that may come up as things progress. Next month, I'm going to take a quick look at what's inside the Atari 8-bit machines and the basics of assembly language.

One last note: Anyone who has a printer that's a couple years old (my Prowriter is 3 and a half) that hasn't been lubricated may want to consider it. My printer recently started hanging up while positioning the head. I took it to Pete Ness at Turnkey Microsystems and he lubricated it for less than $10. The problem is that the shaft that supports the head attracts dust, and over the years this dust had become gummy, and it was keeping the head from being positioned properly. Since then I've had no problems.

PACE POLL

PACE POLL RESULTS!!!!!

That's right - the votes have been tabulated and the results can finally be made known!! So here is a summary:

1. 50% would prefer we change the meeting night to Thursday, while the other 50% as happy with Friday.
2. 75% would prefer starting the meeting at 7:PM, 25% like 6:PM.
3. A full 100% like our meeting location!
4. 25% said the meeting dealing with BASIC was their favorite.
5. 25% did not like the meeting dealing with games.
6. 25% would like our newsletter to contain more articles on word processing, 25% would like more software reviews.
7. 25% would like to see more SIG's formed.
8. 0% (yes, that's ZERO percent) said they'd be willing to write an article for the newsletter!!
9. And lastly, there were only 2 actual complaints about the club, but neither were important enough to mention.

Now, this all sounds like everyone is basically pleased with the club, the meetings, the newsletter, topics covered, and future plans, right? But unfortunately, we basically know no more than we did before. Out of approximately 75 polls sent to local members, only 4 (that's FOUR) were ever returned. I wonder what that means.....

LINDA MARKS
ASST. EVERYTHING

SEASONS GREETINGS

STOLEN FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

The new format for the newsletter has been postponed until sometime in the near future, there were more bugs to be worked out than we originally figured.

The members are actually starting to send in articles-THANK YOU!!(Remember you can send your article to me via mail, call me and give it to me voice or by modem)

The January issue should be a giant issue-The holidays will give us much more time to work on it.

I wish to welcome all the new members of P.A.C.E. along with the old. As members, feel free to use this newsletter as your bulletin board to the rest of the members and to other clubs.

Anyone wishing to complain about anything, Please call Linda Marks-she is the Assistant Everything.

HAPPY BAH-HUMBUG,
Joe Cullen,
Acting as Editor

CLUB NEWS

CLUB NEWS...CLUB NEWS...CLUB NEWS ...

Month after month the EVIL BURGERMEISTER that delivers the newsletter to you charges us an exorbitant fee. The Chancellor of the Ex-Checquer (Treasurer) breaks out in a cold sweat when faced with the bill for the delivery charges. You ask "What are those charges"? Well, every month we mail out about 200 newsletters to local members and other user groups. That means we are spending about $44.00 a month just on postage.

The club's Executive Assistant pondered over the matter and came up with a solution. So next month, January, we are going to get a BULK MAIL permit for the club. There is a $50.00 fee to buy the permit, an annual charge of $50.00 to use it, plus postage. Postage will be about $.15 per item.

Due to the cost of the permit, our first-year savings will be about $120.00, after that we should save the club about $170.00 a year. I'm sure we can find something better than stamps to spend the money on!

Uncle Scrooge would be proud!!!

RON'S REPLY

Of all the nerve!

I've been hanging around for quite awhile but this is the first time that anyone has questioned my existence. I've been told to get lost a few times but never this! A mystery? A phantom? Me? Are you sure you're talking about little ole ME?

Just because I'm not the go to meetings type you want to make me the grand prize in a scavenger hunt. What did I ever do to deserve this? You guys must be desperate for something to do. I can't think of anything anymore boring than that. Oh well, whatever turns you on. I would like to clear up a few small errors that my former friend, George, made in his article about me. (now I know how Johnny Carson feels when he reads The National Enquirer.)

First of all, I do exist! I'm every bit as real as Mr. Spock. Joe Cullen I'm not too sure about but me,(ouch) yes I'm real.

Second, I'm not an expert on anything. If I happen to know something which is not very often I'm happy to share it. The fact is that I learn just as much from you as you do from me, if not more. I look forward each month (well I used to anyway) to the new issue of PACE world.

Third, I do not know every nook and cranny of every BBS that was ever used. I probably use the help file more than any of you. Just recently I had to ask the REAL Atari guru, Kevin Johnson, how to change my user parameters on the Connection BBS. One point that WAS true was the fact that I have no money so if you have any please send it. As far as the 520ST goes...well, I keep jumping back and forth between spending what little money I do have on an ST system or on upgrading my 8-bit Ataris. There is so much stuff comming out for both systems that its really hard to make a choice.

I am still a member of PACE. I guess?? Of course you never know what goes on at those planning meetings. You guys could have sold my membership to JACE or MACE or who knows what. I must also take exception to the fact that none of you except for Kevin Johnson can confirm my existence. Just ask Joe Cullen if he remembers who it was who showed him what software he needed to get his new modem and 850 interface up and running. Just ask Chester Marks if he remembers who showed him how to quit worrying and learn to love (like?) SpartaDOS. In closing I would just like to point out the fact that even though none of you have ever (really) seen Santa Claus, you still believe in him. If you didn't, you'd be using IBMs instead of Ataris.

Merry Christmas,
[Ron]

One Meg ST Upgrade

A couple of months ago a friend of mine, Dave Koster, called and suggested that he and I upgrade our Atari ST's to one meg of RAM. That sounded good to me so I asked who we were going to get to do it. He replied that he was confident that we could do it ourselves and at a much lower cost than what was being advertised in the trade magazines. It certainly sounded like a good idea especially since I have made a lot of silver jewelry and am well acquainted with soldering. Well I was in for a real surprise.

Dave asked around and found several other people that were interested so he went ahead and ordered the necessary memory chips. He had also picked up some instructions from a bulletin board that gave rather detailed step-by-step instructions on how to make your 520ST act just like your everyday 1040ST (Haven't you also been envious of those people who owned a 1040?). It took about two weeks for the chips to come in and in the meantime I had forgotten about the whole thing. I mean, I'm like most everyone else in that I was used to the old 800 series Atari's and anything more than 48K was more than adequate for my needs, or so I thought.

One Friday afternoon Dave called and said that it was time to do the upgrade and how did Saturday sound. Sure sounded fine to me because I was ready to move in with the big guys. One meg of RAM...WOW! Four years ago I was sitting in Saudi Arabia waiting for the mail to bring me my plug-in modules to upgrade my Atari from 16K to 48K. At that time 48K sounded like somewhat of an overkill. That turned out not to be the case. The whole computer industry whizzed by 48k as if it never existed. The first thing you knew we had to have a minimum of 64k and there were rumors that pretty soon we would have 256K in our table-top, home, micro- computers. Now, we are talking one meg of RAM...that's truly star-wars.

On Saturday we were set up and ready to go in very short order and Dave gave the order to start taking the machines apart. Everything was fine until I saw that huge printed circuit board with all those black things that I had no idea what they did nor what they were called. I felt better when Dave started calling all those little black square things by their names. At least one of us knew what he was doing. When we started looking at the boards, all of a sudden it dawned on us that there was a difference between mine and Dave's. I had bought my machine about three months before Dave bought his, and it looked like mine was Atari's experimental model. It had wires going every where and some really awful solder joints. Dave's, on the othe hand, was just as clean as it could be. He quickly pointed out that they (Atari) had obviously made some major changes since they made my machine. For some reason his remark was not very consoling. He quickly pointed out that the instructions covered the older versions so we were quickly on our way to piggy-backing RAM chips to the boards. Much to our surprise the instructions were very clear (to Dave, not to me.). He said to solder that chip there and that wire there and the first thing I knew, it was time to reassemble the components for a test boot. Within 10 to 15 minutes we had Dave's up and running, but not mine. We had followed the instuctions meticulously and were convinced that we had followed the instructions to the "T". The system would boot but it had this bad habit of talking to both of the disk drives at the same time. It also failed to boot a couple of times. What do you do now?

Purposefully enough I wasn't worried. That's hard to believe but I had watched Dave work on those machines and was convinced that he knew what he was doing and that we had not turned my machine into a "nonworking piece of art". (Is the rumor true that old computers are sent back to the factory to be turned into radios?) I'm really just kidding, because I never had a doubt that Dave could make it work no matter what the problem was.

The first thing I knew we had found the problem. It was a bad solder joint. No, not ours...one from the factory!! The joint was fine until I had handled the board and had shaken it loose. What was interesting was that I am convinced that someday that joint would have come loose and I would have had a major repair job had we not done the upgrade. We found it, fixed it and now I have a very solid piece of equipment...with one meg of RAM!!

So what's the big deal? Isn't having one meg of RAM like owning a sports car? Not true.

You can do a lot more with your one meg machine than you can with a 512K machine. For example, you can use an autoload folder to automatically load a ramdisk and very quickly throw files in and out of RAM so fast you can't see it. That means that the programs that are constantly accessing the disk can now be run from a ramdisk and you won't have to wait for an upload from the floppy disk. You can't do that as efficiently with a 512K machine because the ramdisk takes up too much room. One other advantage is to being able to brag about having a one meg machine.

Dave Koster still has some of those chips and is ready to make your machine into something extraordinary. No, I don't work on anyone else's machine, I leave that to those that are highly qualified, like Dave. I will, however, show you how to create the autoboot and ramdisk. For those of you that plan to have it done, you are in for a real treat. I'm sitting here typing this in 1st Word and tossing files in and out of the ramdisk. It's fun!!

Joe East

THE PACE INTERVIEW

This month PACE World features an interview with a software pirate. To protect Mr. Dave Culmarbein's identity we have filmed this interview in low light and filtered his voice.

PACE: Could you tell us the size of your collection?
MR X: About 35 disks.

PACE: That doesn't sound like much?
MR X: 35 disks for my hard drive!

PACE: Could you tell us which are your favorite games?
MR X: I really don't know. I spend all of my time just keeping track of what I have.

PACE: It doesn't sound as if pirating is much fun.
MR X: It isn't. There are lots of other problems, too.

PACE: Such as...
MR X: Well, if it doesn't work there's no guarantee and no manufacturer to complain to....and did you ever consider how many blank disks you have to have.

PACE: Any other problems?
MR X: It's pretty hard to use programs without instructions! And not everybody has a copy machine.

PACE: The software publishers say they lose hundreds of thousands of dollars. How do you feel about that?
MR X: How do they come up with figures like that?

PACE: Well, if you have 2000 programs you haven't bought they've lost at least $40,000 if you figure each program at just $20.
MR X: Do they really think I'd have spent $40,000 - I'd be dead broke!

PACE: That would make their claims a bit exaggerated.
MR X: See what I mean.

PACE: Where would you draw the line between purchasing and pirating?
MR X: Well, to be honest (which is difficult for a pirate) I think if a program is used regularly it should be purchased.

PACE: Do you have any other observations?
MR X: Yes. It's pretty hard to decide whether you want or can use a particular program and no way to really find out. That leads to looking at a friend's copy and then getting a copy for yourself.

SEASONS GREETINGS

ATARI AND THE ORGANIZATION

by Steve Fishbein

As a member of PACE there are numerous ways I've been able to use my computer, but the value is even greater if you are a member of a club or group outside of the "user group."

I have been active with the Peninsula Wrestling Association, an organization that benefits youth wrestling programs as well as sponsors the Virginia Duals Wrestling Tournament.

As treasurer of the PWA I have used my Atari and financial programs to keep track of the organization finances and provide monthly statements, minimizing the bookkeeping because of the computer program.

With a mailing label program I have been able to provide the organization secretary with mailing labels as well as maintain membership records.

I also serve as media director for the Virginia Duals tournament. I have used word processing programs, Print Shop and other graphics programs to prepare news releases, media guides and other forms and materials.

I have also been able to write this article for the PACE newsletter and advertise the Virginia Duals, January 9-10, 1987 at the Hampton Coliseum. Sixteen of the nation's best college wrestling teams will be participating along with 24 high schools.

Books!!

Read any good fantasy/sci-fi books lately? Last month I, "Mr. always on time", had to "EDIT" my article (in case you didn't notice) because of time restraints, some editors are sooo understanding (HA!!!). Oh well, maybe this month's question will be easier.....

There's no place like home, even for Science Fiction characters. Your job is to match each of the following 6 characters with his/her/its home planet.

CHARACTERS

1. Paul (Maud'Dib) Atreides
2. Spock
3. R. Daneel Olivaw
4. Yoda
5. Hope Hubris
6. Monat Grrautut

HOME PLANETS

A. Vulcan
B. Caladan
C. Ghuurrkh
D. Dagobah
E. Callisto
F. Aurora

This month questions were taken from my mundane library (all 7 books). The answers are in this month's newsletter (depending on how the editor feels about me) so all I can say to you is to be sure and read the entire newsletter before placing in the "circular" or "round" file.

Chester Marks

Answers:
1-B, from the book "Dune" by Frank Herbert.
2-A, from the short story "Amok Time" by Theodore Sturgeon.
3-F, from the book "Robots of Dawn" by Isaac Asimov.
4-D, from the book "
5-E, from the series Bio Of A Space Tyrant "Volume 1: Refugee" by Piers Anthony. (My personal favorite writer)
6-C, from the book "To Your Scattered Bodies Go" by Philip Jose Farmer.

STEVE FISHBEIN
163A WINDSOR CASTLE DRIVE
NEWPORT NEWS, VA 23602

DEAR PACE MEMBER:

Reviewing a computer program while trying to use it can be difficult if the program is complex. In the case of Quik-Pix the program is easy to use and some things it can accomplish are readily visible.

ATARIWRITER AND PRINT SHOP MERGED!

Programmers Ira Brickman and Brad McColl have developed a program to convert Print Shop icons into a form recognized by Atariwriter. Graphics can now be inserted within Atariwriter copy, as demonstrated with this article.

The heart of Quik Pix, which works with Epson printers and printers with Epson protocol, is the conversion of a Print Shop graphic into a series of control codes that re-draw the graphic.

The conversion, in any of three forms, takes only a few seconds. The letterhead above is one example. The other graphics are simply picture conversions. The third form is a mailing label. The programmers also provided 12 borders, one of which is shown here, to be used in letterheads.

Placement on the page is accomplished by changing the left margin code to center the letterhead or a graphic. The "D" in Dear had to be shifted seven spaces to the right to match the left margin of other copy. The most difficult placement is putting copy to the left of the graphic.

Page length must also be changed, because the line spacing is smaller where graphics are used. It is a trial and error process because even a form feed control code is "fooled" by the graphic lines.

Originally written for Atariwriter, Quik Pix is now available for Paper Clip, as well. (To fit the format of this edition of the newsletter, the full page was copied and reduced.)

ST SIG

ST SIG MEETING REPORT

On 14 Nov 86, the Atari ST Special Interest Group (SIG) of PACE met for the third time and had a very successful meeting. Dave Koster, chaired the meeting and covered some very necessary points. One of the important issues addressed was the necessity to insure that no one shared copyrighted software at the PACE meetings. This was addressed because of the new paricipants and, of course, is in the interest of everyone since it is illegal and hurts software development. Making sure our club keeps everything above board is everyone's responsibility and will help create pride in what we're doing.

Enough of that! At the meeting we signed up one new member and had three other attendees express serious interest. There were three people present that had seen the flyer we put up at the GAMES & GADGETS store in the Coliseum Mall in Hampton. That was a worthwhile effort as it proved to be a good place to get the word to potential ST SIG participants. The flyer we developed was done with Typesetter ST, which is a very fine unfriendly program that we managed to master in short order. It proves one more time that advertising is the only way to go and that you can use your computer to help get the word out.

One of the individuals that showed up was a 17 year-old exchange student from Finland named Magnus. He has an excellent knowledge of computers and contributed greatly to the meeting. He says he has asked his father to send him money for an ST and a modem. His father has responded by saying that he will send him the money for a modem now and the money for a computer later. Needless to say that creates a rather curious situation. Maybe Magnus can hook the modem up to the TV until he can get his computer. I'm not making fun of Magnus or his father; it is just an amusing situation we often find ourselves in. At the meeting we tried to organize the two STs we were running so everyone had something to do all the time. We demonstated the use of the modem by getting on the ODDX bulletin board and downloading a file. Surprisingly enough there are plenty of people out there that don't have a clue as to what a modem is used for or how it works. They are always surprised when they realize how simple it is to use. In fact, when you think about it, the modem is one piece of equipment that is well documented, fairly complex, yet very easy to use. Everyone seemed to enjoy the demo.

We also demonstated some of the more popular games--Mean 18, Ultima II, Time Bandit, Crimson Crown, and some of the never slide Demos to name a few. Ultima II was in our inventory due to the fantastic sale recently at Toys R Us. They were selling the program for only ten dollars. That put it in the reach of most of us and we hopped on it. It is a very interesting game that can keep you busy for a long, long time. Discussions about the game pointed out that Ultima II is in the family of games where learning how to play the game is part of the game. This makes it important to have a friend that is also learning how to play so you can exchange hints on how to play and do a lot better. I have no idea how to win Ultima II but it's fun trying to find out.

The game demos took so long and were so much fun we didn't get into functional applications that the ST does so well, i.e., word processing, spread sheets and data management. At the next meeting we are going to cover these important programs. I personally believe that 1st Word is one of the finest home word processors there is. Of course, I'm not aware of what is out there for other types of machines, but I can't imagine a program that is easier to use. 1st word certainly satisfies my requirements. At the next meeting we will go over the pluses and minuses of these popular application programs.

The next ST SIG meeting will also be at my home at 1039 Windjammer Dr in Hampton. We aren't trying to draw a crowd, but if there are some other Atari or other brand computer owners that would like to join us they are certainly welcome. We have a good time and learn a lot too. What better combination is there? Most of us are like Winston Churchill in that we "like to learn, but we don't like to be taught". That is what I believe makes home computers so appealing. A person can "hack" his way through the learning process and doesn't have to be bored to death by being taught.

See you at the next meeting!
Joe East

A CHRISTMAS CAROL? (STARRING THE UNSEEN RON HUNT AS THE THREE GHOSTS OF CHRISTMAS)

Ebenezer Koster and Kevin Marley had been partners for years. Marley was Koster's only friend. Koster was a tight fisted old man who never felt the slightest warmth, even at Christmas. It was Christmas Eve and would you believe that Ebenezer Koster had poor old Steve Cratchit working on the Secretary's report late again this holy night.

The warmth of the office was disturbed by a chilling wind as Ebenezer Koster's nephew, Chester Scrooge, entered the office. "Hello good-fellow Steve Cratchit, how are you this fine Christmas Eve?" Cratchit replied "Merry Christmas Sir." Ebenezer interrupted with his famous "Bah-humbug!!" "Uncle," Chester said, "won't you come to dinner tomorrow night?" "I wish to be left alone!", Koster grumbled.

Meanwhile, back at the ranch, Cratchit's wife, Maria, was consoling Tiny Joe. "Is anybody bringing me a new Atari program today?" Tiny Joe, depressed, was still thinking about that 1450XLD computer he was promised three years ago. This year his dream was of the new Atari 1200 baud modem so he could communicate with Ron Hunt.

Ebenezer Koster, who didn't believe in Christmas, Ron Hunt, or Toledo announced his intention to leave the OFFICE. "I'm leaving now, Cratchit. Make sure you finish before going home. I suppose you will want the whole day tomorrow?" "Please Sir, its only once a year and I am taking Tiny Joe to Jerry Falwell to get healed."

Ebenezer arrived home and called the Pace BBS. He was surprised to find a message from Kevin Marley, considering Marley had been dead for several years. Marley's message read "You will receive three programs from Ron Hunt." "Bah" said Ebenezer as he deleted the message and proceeded to the download section of the BBS. Koster downloaded three new programs named Past, Present, and Future which someone with the initials K.M. had uploaded.

After signing off the BBS, Ebenezer decided to look at his new acquisitions.

The first program required the old basic (revision A) and took a while to boot up. The program was a graphic depiction of Koster's childhood when he was involved with the Fazziwigs. "Why it's old Mike" cried Koster with excitement, "Bless his heart!" Mike's face faded out and the screen returned with a "Ready". "My, those were such good old times, how I miss those days and ... Fazziwig..."

Koster, intrigued, excitedly loaded the next program. A series of pictures (not Print Shop compatible) flashed across the screen. A lonely old man hunched over his computer, Tiny Joe limping to a sparse dinner table, and Ebenezer's nephew, Chester and Chester's wife Linda at the dinner table with an empty place in front of the ST. "What does all this mean," he thought. Suddenly, his Alien voice box interupted the silence. "Load the third program and your question will be answered!"

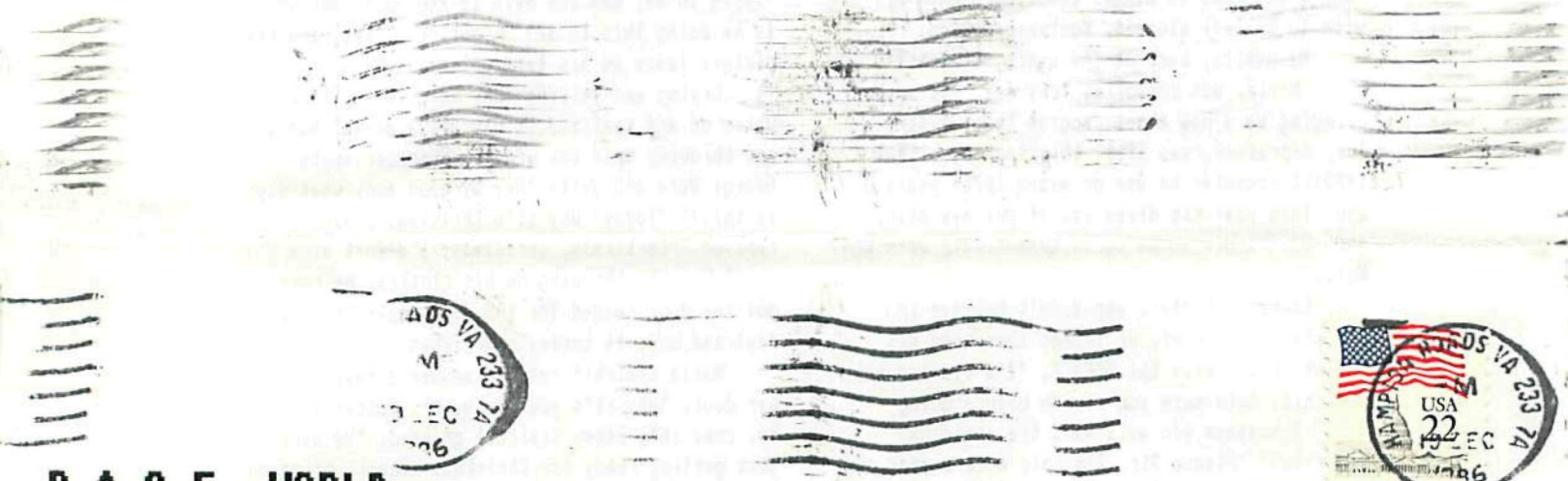
Eyeing the voice box nervously, he booted the third program. A dark gray screen appeared with the October issue of P.A.C.E. World, showing a tombstone with his initials. "No, no this can't happen to me; Who the heck is Ron Hunt? And why is he doing this to me?" Lighting stikes, and the picture fades as his terminal melts.

Crying and yelling "Why Ron, why?", Koster wakes up and realized it was all a dream. Running and throwing open the window, Ebenezer spots George Ware and yells "Hey my good man, what day is this?" "Today? Why it's Christmas", George replied. "Christmas, Christmas, I didn't miss it!!" Quickly throwing on his clothes, he runs out the door headed for the 7-11 (open Christmas day) and buys 14 turkey sandwiches.

Maria Cratchit rose to answer a rapping on her door. "Why it's your boss, Mr. Koster". "Come in, come in", Steve Cratchit greeted. "We were just getting ready for Christmas dinner, bring on the Spam wife". "I brought turkey and presents for everyone. I have something special for Tiny Joe!", Koster cried. As he handed the present to Little Joe, Hoss, Candy, and Ben Cartwright, OPPS WRONG STORY, Tiny Joe, with tears in his eyes exclaimed "Merry Christmas and God bless us everyone".

CAST OF CHARACTERS OR WHO THE DICKENS

EBENEZER KOSTER	- PRESIDENT
MIKE FAZZIWIG	- VICE PRESIDENT
CHESTER SCROOGE	- TREASURER
KEVIN MARLEY	- SYSOP
STEVE CRATCHIT	- SECRETARY
MARIA CRATCHIT	- LIBRARIAN
LINDA SCROOGE	- EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT
TINY JOE	- EDITOR



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