

SPACE

NEWSLETTER for December, 2006



President's Corner by Michael Current December, 2006

It's the holiday season, it's getting cold, it's dark 22 hours a day, so what does that mean? That's right, it's time for the SPACE Christmas party! Some of the main dishes have been determined (see Greg's article), but this is still essentially pot luck. So, bring yourself, bring your spouse or family member(s) or friend(s), bring your cash to buy the latest, greatest DOM(s) (one for each of you!), and bring a dish to share with your Atari-minded friends at SPACE. Should be a fun and festive time!

Congratulations to our new Vice-President, Nolan Friedland, and to our new Secretary, Steve Peck! It's a good sign for SPACE to have the four Executive Board positions occupied by four different people for the first time in years!

Thanks to Greg for serving as Vice-President for many years, and to Nolan for serving as Secretary for several years. We all appreciate it!

And thank you once again for the loyal crew of Glen, Mike, and Nolan, who continue to volunteer their time and efforts to keep the membership database current, to produce outstanding Disks of the Month, to publish the SPACE Newsletter, and to run the SPACE BBS and web forum. Where, Oh Where would SPACE be without you??

Thanks, keep using that Atari, and come to your next SPACE meeting (and Holiday Party!), Friday December 8, 2006.



Treasurer's Report by Greg Leitner For November, 2006

Elections are over and the results are in. For 2007 here are the officers for SPACE:

President:	Michael Current
Vice President:	Nolan Friedland
Secretary:	Steve Peck
Treasurer:	Greg Leitner

Dom Librarian:	Glen Kirschenmann
BBS Operator:	Nolan Friedland
Membership Chairman:	Glen Kirschenmann
Newsletter Editor:	Michael Schmidt

Thanks to all the officers and chairmen for taking a huge part in keeping SPACE alive and very well going into another year. We have the energy, will, and the funds to start off another great year for SPACE.

Here is how the Treasury breaks down for the month ended Nov 30, 2006:

Beginning balance for November 1, 2006:	739.09
Receipts for the November meeting:	
Membership renewal	15.00
Dom sales	18.00
Auction sales	43.00
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Total revenue for November 2006	76.00
Expenses for the November meeting:	
BBS for two months	20.00
Balance at November 30, 2006	795.09

As I said last month these next few months were going to add to our Treasury because our only monthly expense to pay out is the BBS for \$10.00. The next billing for room rental will not come until after New Year. We have decided not to use SPACE funds for our December Xmas party so I can't see any other expenses coming our way for the rest of 2006.

Don't forget the Xmas party next month. Lance will be bringing chips and barbecued little wieners, and I will furnish plates, napkins forks etc. and also pop and another main dish which I haven't decided yet. Please help out and bring something for all to share.

I hope we have a big turnout for the Party. With only eleven current members it's hard to say how many we will have, but don't hesitate to bring a guest along. Let's make it another festive SPACE Xmas Party. See you all next month.



Secretary's Report By Nolan Friedland For November, 2006

No Meeting Minutes were submitted for last month.



BBS Corner
By Nolan Friedland
For November, 2006

If anyone has any comments, suggestions, ideas, or submissions for the BBS Corner column or the SPACE BBS web site, you may email them to me, Nolan Friedland, at the address shown on the back of this newsletter under the "CLUB OFFICIALS" section.

A-T-A-R-I
 Answers, Tips And Relevant Information
 by: Paul V. Alhart
 1993.2

Upgrading the 1050

The Atari 810 and 1050 disk drives, although no longer in production, are still probably the most common storage devices in use today by us 8-biters. As a result, there have been several commercial and home-brew modifications for these drives. One that I had never seen however, was the addition of a Write Protect Light. A W/P light indicates if a disk is write protected or not. My Rana drives have W/P lights. Although they are not a necessary item, I have really come to depend on mine to help avoid mishaps during operations that require heavy disk swapping. W/P lights can also be found on Indus and Trak drives.

This month's column will deal with the installation of a W/P light as well as a Write Protect Switch to your 1050 drive. The W/P switch lets you select any one of 3 different Write Protect modes at any time. (There is NO need to turn power off or even wait for the "BUSY" light to go out, when switching modes.) Be aware though, if the drive is switched to the PROTECT mode during a write operation an error will be generated and the write operation will be aborted. The 3 modes are:

Mode 1 "UNPROTECT" This mode allows you to write to un-notched disks or disks that have Write Protect Tabs on them. It will also allow you to write to the "flip" side of disks without having to cut a new notch.

Mode 2 "PROTECT" This mode will force the drive into Write Protect mode even for notched disks. All disk writes are disabled.

Mode 3 "STANDARD" This mode sets the drive for normal (unmodified) operation. Only notched disks can be written to.

Although either modification could be done separately, you can add them both for only about \$5.00. Together they will give you 100% control over the drives write protect function along with a visible indication of the write protect status.

What's required?

- 1ea. SPDT 3 position "ON-OFF-ON" switch-
Radio Shack # 275-325
- 1ea. 330 ohm 1/4 watt resistor
- 1ea. Light Emitting Diode "LED"-Radio Shack # 276-026
- Approximately 2' of insulated hook up wire.
- Rosin-flux solder.

Although there are several sources for the above items, I have included Radio Shack part numbers for your convenience.

Getting started

Before you even remove your drive from your system, stop and look things over. Decide where the best location for the switch and LED will be. Since you will have to drill mounting holes in your drive's case, you want to get this right the first time. For my setup I found the best location to be on the downward sloped bevel on the right side of the front panel. Wherever you decide, make sure there is clearance inside the drive case for your components before drilling any holes.

On this months Atari Classics DOM you will find two files, MOD1050.BAS and MOD1050.PIC. When MOD1050.BAS is run it will load and display MOD1050.PIC. This standard 62 sector picture file is a schematic of both 1050 W/P modifications. If you have an Epson graphics compatible printer on line, the schematic will also be dumped to the printer. Use of the schematic is not necessary, but can be used in conjunction with the text instruction presented here to help avoid confusion. As a bonus, MOD1050.BAS can be used to View/Print any standard 62 sector picture file. Just change FN\$ in line 300 to the filename of your picture file.

Going inside

Remove the drive from you system and flip it over. Remove the 6 screws that hold the case together. Flip the drive back right side up and lift the top half of the case off. The front panel usually comes off with the top case half and can just be unsnapped from it if desired. Before going any further, get a paper and pencil and make note of the orientation of the 7 connectors that connect the drive mechanism to the printed circuit board (PC board). There are 5 connectors on the left rear side of the PC board, 1 on the right rear side and 1 on the right front side. They will have to be removed, and if you reconnect them backwards or the wrong order you could cause permanent damage to your disk drive. Using a small pair of pliers, grasp the plastic portion of the connector (NOT THE WIRES) and pull it straight up off the PC board.

****CAUTION**** Most problems encountered when performing mods to 1050 disk drives occur at this point. The wires can easily be ripped from there connectors if they are pulled on. Be careful. After all the connectors have been removed from the PC board, lift the drive mechanism straight up and out. Grasp the drive mechanism by its sides. Never lift or hold it anywhere near the head assembly. Set the drive mechanism aside in a safe clean place.

ESD CAUTION

Although you won't be removing any ICs, you will be working directly on the PC board. Take normal precautions against ESD (Electro Static Discharge). If you don't know what I am talking about here, STOP! There have been many good articles written on the subject of ESD. Read one of them before you proceed. If necessary, I will be glad to cover ESD further in a future article. Many of the component in your system are static sensitive and could be damaged if you are careless in this area.

Spread the two plastic clips in the lower case half that hold the front of the PC board in the case. Remove the PC board from the case. Remove the RF shield from the PC board by straightening out the 4 metal tabs on bottom side of the PC board. Locate U11 and J7. They are located on the PC board in the area that had been covered by the RF shield.

Installing the W/P Switch

If you are installing the W/P switch remove J7. Find the solder pad of J7 that is common with the pad of J6. This is the pad toward the rear of the PC board. From this point connect a wire to the center contact of your W/P switch. Connect a wire from the other J7 pad to one of the W/P switch's end contacts. Connect a wire from the contact on the other end of the switch to U11 pin 7 (GROUND). All that is left to do now is mount the switch. I found that positioning the switch so that UNprotect was on the left and Standard was on the right made its operation easy to remember. Just think of the shipping outfit UPS when making a selection. I guess Uninterruptable Power Source would do just as well.

Installing the W/P Light

Connect U11 pin 13 to a 330 ohm 1/4 watt resistor. Connect the other end of the resistor to the cathode of the LED. The cathode is the longer of the LED's two leads. Connect the other lead of the LED (the anode) to U11 pin 14 (+5V). Mount the LED and you are done. A small amount of RTV or glue may be required to hold the LED in place.

Wrap Up

Reinstall the RF shield. NOTE that the notched portion of the top piece is over U14 and R43. Insure that the added wires are not pinched by the RF shield. Install the PC board in the lower half of the case. Set the drive mechanism back in place on its mounting pins. This can sometimes be the most challenging part of this whole project. Now plug the 7 connectors back onto the PC board. Again, be careful here. Be sure they are positioned correctly. Replace the top case half and front panel, flip the drive over, and replace the 6 screws.

Testing

The drive is now ready to test. Before putting the drive back in your system, connect the power supply and turn power on. The busy light should light for a few seconds during which time the head stepper motor and drive motor can be heard. If the drive motor doesn't run or won't stop, or the busy light doesn't light or won't go out, Turn power off. Recheck all the connectors to make sure they are positioned correctly and that none of their wires have not been pulled loose. After insuring everything is OK to this point, put the drive back on line. With the new W/P switch in the center position the W/P light should be ON, indicating the PROTECTED mode. Flip the W/P switch to one of its end positions and insert a write protected disk. If the W/P light comes on, this is the STANDARD mode. If the light does not come on it is the UNPROTECT mode.

Both of these modifications are the type that after a few weeks you will wonder how you ever got along without them. If you feel uneasy about opening your drive and poking around with a soldering iron, find someone capable to help you. As a service to Atari Classics readers I am offering installation of both 1050 W/P upgrades for \$25. This includes parts, installation, cleaning and alignment of the drive mechanism, and return shipping. To take advantage of this offer or if you would like to see similar upgrades published for other disk drives, let me know.

Paul V. Alhart
524 North Zee St.
Lompoc, Ca. 93436

Does your 1050's belt keep falling off? Stay tuned to A-T-A-R-I to find out the fix for this problem and more Answers-Tips-and-Relevant-Information.

From: Michael Current [hunmanik@earthlink.net]
Sent: Friday, November 24, 2006 9:07 PM
Subject: Bushnell interview from redherring.com

This is an extended excerpt from an article by Ryan Olson that appeared on <http://www.redherring.com/>. Visit that web site for the complete article.

November 7, 2006

For the past four years, Nolan Bushnell has been working at the helm of another company. A digital entertainment shop dubbed uWink, the company marks Mr. Bushnell's latest foray into the restaurant business. Last month the company quietly opened its first bistro in Woodland Hills, California, near Los Angeles.

Featuring touch-sensitive screens at each table, visitors submit their own food and drink orders.

uWink's tabletop displays also give patrons a plethora of entertainment options. From poker to trivia games, the chain aims to use casual games and food to create a fun, social atmosphere.

Red Herring recently caught up with Mr. Bushnell to chat about uWink and hear his thoughts on the current state of the gaming industry. Excerpts from the conversation follow:

Q: So you're returning to the restaurant business. What key things did you think about when building uWink?

A: I saw a very large and untapped market, which is the entrepreneur's dream. There was no real venue for social games. Games got violent in the mid 1980s... that lost women. Then they got long-form and complex. That lost the casual gamer.

There's always been this desire to play games. What you really want when you're out and about is a social [experience] using games. It's an easy thing to create a whole suite of entertainment around a gaming structure. Having fun... with a beer in one hand.

Q: Let's change direction for a bit. What areas of the game industry are you following?

A: I'm very curious and interested in the Nintendo Wii. I think it may expand the market beyond the hardcore [18- to 24-year old]. Xbox Live is interesting because it potentially becomes the platform for the living room.

Q: What do you think of Atari? It's much different from the company you founded in 1971.

A: It really isn't a part of today's gaming world in any meaningful way. They lost the cachet of being a leading technology company in the games space.

Contact the writer: rolson@redherring.com
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