# ROUND TABLE

*"Members Helping Members"*

## Lake County Area Computer Enthusiasts
# Board of Directors
### 2000-2001

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**lindashrub@juno.com**

**MIKE McENERY -** Vice President
News Journal Editor
**mmcenery@core.com**

**TERRI HANLON -** Secretary
**TerHanlon@aol.com**

**DWIGHT J.J. JOHNSON** - Treasurer
**jj1450xl@ix.netcom.com**
847.623.3815

**CORKY BELL** - Program Coordinator - Webmaster
**corky@foxvalley.net**
815.344.1271

**DONNA BELL -** Membership Chairperson
**donnabell1@juno.com**
815.344.1271

**LESTER LARKIN -** Public Relations Chairperson
**LesLarkin@NetZero.net**

# VOLUNTEERS

**VIC FALKNER -** Assistant-News Journal Editor
**rvf@se-iowa.net**

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## Lake County Area Computer Enthusiasts

**L.C.A.C.E.**
c/o Group Ambassador
409 S. Elmwood Ave.
Waukegan, Illinois 60085-5219

### Membership
Membership for L.C.A.C.E is open to all individuals and families interested in personal computing. Annual dues are $20.00 per individual/family. Associate membership is only $10.00 (out of state, unable to attend meetings). Membership includes a one year subscription to the L.C.A.C.E. News Journal and access to all club libraries, and functions. Applications for membership may be obtained at the monthly meeting, by request on the club Hotline and is now available on our WEB site at http://inf-net.com/lcace.

### Meetings
L.C.A.C.E. meetings are held on the second Saturday of each month at the Grant Township Meeting Hall 411 S. Washington Ave. Ingleside, (Fox Lake) Illinois. The meeting location opens at 11:30a.m, and the formal meeting begins at 12pm. All meetings are open to the public. Bring a friend!

### Advertising
Ad rates per issue: Full page - $25, Half page -$15, Quarter page - $10, Business Card -$5. Discounts are available on advance purchase of multiple issues. Please send Camera-ready copy and payment to the club address by the 21st of the month preceding publication. For more information on ad pricing, please call our Hotline. Ads are **FREE** to all paid members.

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### ARTICLE DEADLINE
**The deadline for all articles being submitted for the News Journal is the 20th of each month. Send your articles via E-Mail to Mike McEnery mmcenery@core.com or Vic Falkner at rvf@se-iowa.net or the Club's E-mail at lcace@inf-net.com**

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# L.C.A.C.E. HOTLINE

**Voice: 847.623.3815**
**Fax: 413.521.7052**
**E-Mail: LCACE@inf-net.com**
**Web Page: www.inf-net.com/lcace**

# ATARI
## *Did You Hear Anyone Say "Goodbye"?*

*by Donald A. Thomas, Jr.*
*October 4, 1996*

Jack's introduction of the 16-bit computer was initially hearty in the United States but it went extremely well in Europe. Europeans were not accustomed to "affordable" technology and although the Atari computers were not IBM compatible, it didn't matter because people could afford them. Jacks' private laugh was that the computers were sold at prices much higher in Europe than Americans were willing to pay. As a result, most of the machines made were being shipped to European destinations to capture the higher margin. This enraged the people in the United States that had been Atari loyalists. While waiting months for stores to take delivery domestically, international magazines were touting ample supplies. Those in the know within the U.S. became dismayed. The remainder never knew Atari was slowly abandoning the value of Atari's name recognition as it became easier and easier to forget some assuming Atari had long filed for bankruptcy.

On a technical level, Atari 16-bit computers were designed beyond their time. For less than $1,000, consumers could enjoy "multimedia" before the phrase was ever really widely used. The icon-based working environment proceeded Windows popularity although the essential attributes of the two environments were very similar. MIDI was built-in and became an instant hit in the high-end music industry. Tasks were activated and manipulated with a mouse and the system accepted industry standard peripherals such as printers, modems and diskettes.

With all the genius that went into the technology of the machines, very little of equivalent genius went into the promoting and marketing the machines. Mr. Tramiel was the founder of Commodore Business Machines. When he introduced the PET computer in 1977, Jack discovered he didn't have to call a single publication. Instead they all flocked to his door demanding an opportunity to see the product. News magazines. Science Journals. Business newsletters. Newspaper reporters. They were all there with microphone, camera and pen in hand. And they kept coming back. Adding a switch, announcing a new 4K application or signing a new retailer were all big stories the press wanted to handle.

Today, a new video game announcement may generate a request from any of the dozens of gaming magazines for a press release, but a lot of costly work has to be done to assure fair or better coverage. Editorial people are literally swamped with technical news. Samples are mailed regularly to their attention. Faxes fly in through the phone lines and e-mail jams up their hard drives. It takes a lot to grab their attention.

While Atari retained hopes to be successful with the Jaguar, Atari's marketing people were fighting established standards in the industry with severe handicaps. Since cartridges (the Jaguar was/is primarily a cartridge-based system) were so expensive, editorial people were required to return them before new ones would be sent. Editorial people like to assign review projects. So finding cartridges they sent out was not always easy to do. Additionally, reviewers often love their work because they get to keep what they write about. Regardless, the few magazines willing to cover Atari products were more often turned away because of a lack of programmable cartridges or any number of other indecisive barriers. In-store signs and posters were sometimes created, but many retail chains charge premiums to manufacturers that want to display them. Some direct mail campaigns were implemented, but Atari often could not afford to keep those things being advertised on schedule. Therefore, the advertisements were published and distributed, but the product was not available.

Clearly, Jack's experience with the world beating a path to the door of a company making a better mousetrap no longer applied. The world had revolved a few times beneath him and he never noticed. The tactics used to successfully sell Commodore computers were simply antiquated notions from the past. Meanwhile, Sony launches the PlayStation with over $500 million in marketing funds. Today, the PlayStation is considered the most successful next-generation gaming machine throughout the world. Sony bought the market. Tramiel's Atari never learned how to do that. Actually, they never could afford it anyway.

After the 1990's got underway, Europe as well as the rest of the world, discovered that IBM-compatible computers were becoming more powerful and more affordable. The world always did want computers at home just like in the office and companies like Dell and Gateway exemplified the industry's trend toward home-based office computers. As a result, companies like Commodore, Atari and Next couldn't compete any longer. While the dedicated user base of each of them felt abandoned by these companies having to leave the computer market, the inevitable prevailed. Commodore jumped ship, Next changed business goals completely and Atari invested what they had left in the Jaguar game system. Even today, Apple is kicking and screaming. As good as Apple was at creating a huge niche for themselves, they focused more heavily on education. When kids grow up and get jobs, they want business machines. IBM was always the business standard.

When one examines the history of Atari, an appreciation can grow for how many businesses and people were a part of the game over the years. Chuck E. Cheese Pizza was started by Atari's founder, Mr. Nolan Bushnell. Apple Computer was born in a garage by ex-Atari employees. Activision was founded by Ace Atari programmers. The list goes on and on.

But for some pathetic reason Atari's final days came and went with no tribute, no fanfare and no dignified farewells. Why? Where did all the talent go? Where are all the archives? Where are the vaults? Where are the unpublished games and where are the originals of those that were? Why has no company stepped forward to adopt the remaining attributes Atari has to offer? Where are the creditors? What has happened to all the properties and sites? Where are the databases, warranty cards, promotional items, notes on meetings, unanswered mail? Who owns P.O. Box 61657? Who goes to work in Atari's old offices? Where do consumers have their systems fixed? Who is publishing new games? Who still sells Atari products? Why are there still a lot of people talking about Atari on-line?

I'm an ex-Atari employee and proud to have been. I'm still an Atari devotee and proud to be. To me, these are questions which all deserve an answer, but who will ask them?

The best people to ask these questions are those who have exposure to the public. If you believe Atari left us without saying goodbye, contact Dateline at

dateline@nbc.com. If you *really* believe, then send this article to 10 of your friends in e-mail. *And* if *you really, really* believe, mail a few to newspapers or other news programs. A letter in your own words would be great!

I'd spend money for a thorough retrospect on Atari. Wouldn't you?

Wouldn't it at least be nice to say "Goodbye"?

*Don Thomas*

## Discussions
## From  Last Months Meeting

1. Vote on the new Bylaws was tabled for lack of a quorum.
2. We are still looking for a new meeting place more central in lake county.
3. Mr. "G" congratulated the new Officers and asked the new members to introduce themselves.

# Reminder



**If you have an article for the News Journal, it must be submitted to the Editor before the 6pm on the 20th of each month.**

# Thank You Corky

Thank you corky for the past six years as News Journal Editor.  Your dedication and hard work have been greatly appreciated.  I look forward to following in your shoes.

# The Myth of Broadband

## Will broadband ever become the standard?

By *John C. Dvorak*
*May 31, 2001*

Personally, I don't see broadband dominating the online scene anytime soon; an unspoken, de facto standard stands in the way. Everyone talks a big game when it comes to standards, but how many of us understand what real standards are? With computers, we think of Microsoft and Windows right away. When we dig deeper, we might think of USB or maybe IEEE 1394. Bluetooth and other committee-designed or officially designated standards crop up a lot, too.

There are other standards, however, which evolve on their own with no help from any company or governing body. These de facto standards are often ignored by the marketplace and result in failed business plans. Right now, the most important example is the standard Internet bandwidth I/O of around 34 Kbps. Ignoring this number is ignoring reality.

34 Kbps, the typical speed produced by a dial-up connection (plus or minus 10 Kbps), is a true standard. It's easily as important as Microsoft Windows, as many bankrupt companies that banked on broadband can testify. Standards such as Windows are established by the economic model of increasing returns. As the popularity increases, OSs attract more developers because of the larger market size. This scenario doesn't apply only to operating systems. It can apply to processors, applications (Word), or even bandwidth.

The concept that bandwidth itself is a standard is

not generally acknowledged. Bandwidth is mistakenly seen as something that is moving ahead, and if you can jump ahead of the so-called learning curve, you can get a jump on the competition. But bandwidth, like Windows, is a standard, not a product. And also like Windows, it does not follow the learning curve. Windows is not on any learning curve of change. The OS gets upgraded and debugged, yes. But that's all. Standards are maintained, not changed--or at least, they are not changed easily. This is why broadband is going to be a long time coming.

This occurred to me at a recent ISPcon event in Baltimore, where Charles Ardai, CEO of Juno, told me that dial-up subscribers are increasing in numbers, not decreasing. With all this talk of broadband, you'd think that the tide would have turned by now. And when Web site operators or Internet-centric companies look at the facts, they are forced to design and optimize systems for dial-up users. Because dial-up is so cheap and with services designed for it, you end up with the increasing-returns phenomenon. Compare this situation with Windows and Linux: Windows is dial-up, and Linux is broadband--a niche market.

Most activity targets the dial-up user, making broadband just a luxury. And in some cases, it may be an unnecessary luxury, as full-speed feeds to broadband users are fairly rare. I have a megabit line into my home office, and when I view a streaming video feed, I still get a herky-jerky 20-Kbps stream. The true advantage of broadband is realized only on FTP sites or peer-to-peer, where downloading is optimized for speed.

As for surfing, I prefer broadband, because the overall Web experience is improved. But I've noticed recently that the dial-up connection I experience when traveling is not as dreadful as it was in the past. The backbones have improved, and dial-up is more tolerable than before. I think this indicates the standardization phenomenon taking hold--at around 34K.

What does this tell me about the future of broadband? A typical DSL connection costs about $600 a year--something not everyone can afford. We heavy Internet users see things differently and as-

sume that everyone wants to be like us. But the AOL phenomenon should give us pause. Technology mavens saw AOL as training wheels for the Internet, yet AOL now dominates the online world, with over 20 million users--many of whom still use dial-up.

Much of the DSL service is sold to small offices, where it is shared among lots of employees. Sure, there are a few of us with DSL or fixed wireless and a few million homes with shared cable. But it's still a niche (like Linux) when compared with dial-up users. None of this bodes well for broadband becoming commonplace. Nobody today can produce a Web site and not care about the dial-up user. So everything gets designed and optimized for the lowest common denominator: 34K.

It's very difficult to unseat a standard once it is established. Broadband may be decades away.

**IF THERE IS ANYTHING, COMPUTER RELATED, THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEE PRESENTED AT A MEETING, PLEASE NOTIFY ANY BOARD MEMBER.**

## WEB SITE OF THE MONTH

Are you a weather Geek, or just want to know what it's going to be like out this weekend? Well I have a site for you.

**www.weatherbug.com**

Check it out. You will have a live forecast always available on your desktop.



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"It's the latest innovation in office safety. When your computer crashes, an air bag is activated so you won't bang your head in frustration."

# Directions to Our Meeting



Grant Township
411 Washington Ave.
Ingleside, IL

# Computer Country Expo

## UPCOMING SHOW

### August 5, 2001
### 9:30am - 4:30pm

**Great prices!**
**Bargains galore!**
**Save up to 70% off retail on everything computer!**

### A VIRTUAL ONCE A MONTH CARNIVAL FOR COMPUTER USERS

Once a Month Thousands of Computer Users Gather at the Computer Country Expo to Shop with 80 Vendors from across the Midwest with "Everything Computer", Talk with Computer Clubs and Network with other Computer Users, Listen to Live Midi Enhanced Entertainment, Attend Workshops, Check out Demos, Have a chance to Win computer products in Hourly Raffles, Get help from A+ Technicians for computer upgrades and repairs, Pick up FREE Magazines! Come Join the Fun at the Computer Country Expo!!

We will have Certified A+ Technicians at the show who will help people as personal shoppers and take them around the show and make recommendations for what they are looking to purchase. Buyers can also have their products installed and/or tested by the technicians __FREE__ of charge at the show.

### Holiday Inn
### Main Ballroom
### 6161 W. Grand Avenue
### Gurnee, Illinois 60031

**$6 Admission**

**All L.C.A.C.E. Members who present their membership card will receive a $1 discount.**

## See our WEB Site at

## www.ccxpo.com

**Print this page, fill out the form below, bring it with you to the show, and get $1.00 off the entry fee!**

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zipcode: _____

Telephone # _____ FAX # _____

E-Mail: _____ WEB Site: _____

### August 5, 2001

# E-Mail Addresses

The following is a listing of available LCACE members' E-Mail addresses:

| | |
|---|---|
| Ruth Donahue-Allison | rallison98@juno.com |
| Jim Ashworth | Blue_unicorn@netzero.com |
| Corky Bell | corky@foxvalley.net |
| Bobby Bell | Bozo160@hotmail.com |
| Donna Bell | niteangel85@hotmail.com |
| Bob Berry | tberry64@aol.com |
| Jay Bitterman | bittjayl@aol.com |
| Kerry Broughton | kerrybroughton@hotmail.com |
| William & Diane Brumbach | bbrumbach@cs.com |
| Linda Busch | lindashrub@juno.com |
| Bob Carpenter | bobc@in-motion.net |
| Lisa Carter | onedrwmn@juno.com |
| Rich & Pat Crocker | RCPC75@aol.com |
| Randell Durk | randell@voyager.net |
| Vic Falkner | rvf@se-iowa.net |
| Tom Fitzsimmons | tomfitzsimmons@juno.com |
| Jack Frost | jfrost@megsinet.net |
| Mr. & Mrs. G | MrG3165@aol.com |
| Phil Grimm | pgrimm@surfree.com |
| Joe & Mary Griesemer | moraine@netwurx.net |
| Arnie Gudyka | arngood1@juno.com |
| Marta Mata-Guzman | marta59@aol.com |
| Terri Hanlon | Terhanlon@aol.com |
| Tom Hudock, Jr. | TEEPEE21@aol.com |
| Dwight (J.J.) Johnson | jj1450xl@ix.netcom.com |
| Donna Kalinoski | donnaleek@juno.com |
| Steve Kostelnik | steve_kostelnik@usa.net |
| Lester Larkin | LesLarkin@NetZero.net |
| John Lawless | jay@iwc.net |
| LeRoy & Bernice Long | Roylord@msn.com |
| Mike McEnery | mmcenery@core.com |
| John Nabors | jog@nomad.net |
| Larry Nixon | nixonl@earthlink.net |
| Lee Nordstrom & Family | LeeNord@mw.sisna.com |
| Jeffrey J. Notter | jnot@email.com |
| Anna Ross-Rodgers | Anna.Ross-Rodgers @ReliaStar.com |
| Ken Rogers | drken@enteract.com |
| Marcia Rose | Mrose74801@aol.com |
| Bruno Rusanowski | BRFJR@earthlink.net |
| James Rutledge | jrutnet1@home.com |
| Leslie Salsburg | leslie164@juno.com |
| Paul Schintgen | paulj@theramp.net |
| Walter Sheets | wsheets@kiwi.dep.anl.gov |
| Gerald Straw | pilotgks@iwc.net |
| Bob Tuttle | btuttle@ix.netcom.com |
| Bruce Welsch | brwelsch@hotmail.com |
| Steve Yeaton | hiflyer9@bigfoot.com |

**As much as we try, we do make errors. Please advise us if there is a mistake in your E-Mail address or if it is not incuded in this listing.  Send E-Mail to lcace@inf-net.com with the additions and/or corrections. Thank you.**

# Members Web Sites

**Corky Bell**
**http://users/foxvalley.net/~corky**

**Phil Grimm**
**http://public.surfree.com/pgrimm**

**JJ**
**http://easyfoto.com/jj_johnson**

# Time to Renew

**The following members need to renew their membership.  This information will be published in the News Journal and will be posted on our  WEB site which is:**

**http://www.inf-net.com/lcace**

**If it is time for you to renew your membership, please fill out a new Application and a Member's Profile Sheet. These forms can be obtained at the meetings or  downloaded from our WEB**

## See the CLUB PICTURES at:

**www.picturetrail.com/jj_Johnson**

## Take a look, you just might see yourself

# L.C.A.C.E ONLINE

## View our Sites
www.inf-net.com/lcace
http://lcace.tripod.com

## E-Mail Us At:
lcace@inf-net.com

## Club Photos
http://ww.picturetrail.com/lcace

- ♦ LCACE E-mail addresses
- ♦ LCACE information,
- ♦ LCACE history and pictures
- ♦ LCACE meeting location and map
- ♦ LCACE members e-mail addresses
- ♦ LCACE online membership application

# Next Meeting!!!

**August 11, 2001**

**Grant Township Meeting Hall**
**411 S. Washington Avenue**
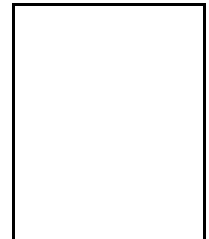**Ingleside, (Fox Lake) Illinois**
12pm - 2p.m.

**This month:**

This month's Demo is
**LCACE Round Table**
**Have your questions ready**

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## L.C.A.C.E
*Lake County Area Compuer Enthusiasts*
**5414  W. Westshore Drive**
**McHenry, IL 60050**

**ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED**