

EDITORIAL

EXHIBIT

N-46

What ever happened to the March/April issue?

You may or may not have noticed that the issue of *Atari Explorer* you hold in your hands is dated Spring 1990 rather than March/April 1990, as you might have expected if you remembered that the last issue you received was dated January/February 1990. You may also remember that your last issue arrived quite a bit later than you expected it to.

Well, these phenomena are related—related, but not indicative of impending demise or disaster. We are *not* trying to cut corners to save money in our death throes as you may have seen other magazines do. We are simply trying to minimize the damage done to our dealers and our advertisers by one penny-pinching sycophant in Atari's accounting department.

It all started with an overdue print bill—for the now-defunct *Atarian*, not *Explorer*. Certain managers in Sunnyvale, apparently feeling little obligation to pay for the printing of the last issue of a magazine they had chosen to discontinue, ignored the bill for an unconscionable period.

The printer, justifiably using the only leverage he had, refused to put the January/February issue of *Explorer* into production until the bill was paid.

Finally, after protracted negotiation, someone agreed to pay the bill, and the presses started to roll—only to be brought to a screeching halt when the agreed-upon payment was not received on schedule.

Several calls to corporate headquarters later, we learned that the check had been cut, but that the aforementioned penny-pincher—seeking, perhaps, to earn a few brownie points with the rabidly anti-FedEx Tramiels or, perhaps, just because to such people petty nastiness is its own reward—had dropped the envelope containing it into the chaotic maelstrom that is the first class mail stream during the weeks before Christmas.

The upshot of all this was that the January/February issue was a month late being shipped to newsstands and subscribers.

New Expire Dates

I won't discuss the economics of magazine publishing here; if you really care, you can refer to a similar editorial in the Spring 1987 issue. Suffice it to say that dealers, advertisers, distributors, and even the magazine itself would have lost money if we had mailed the March/April issue on schedule—a month after the ultimate departure of January/February.

To minimize financial losses for all concerned (remember that we did save about \$10.00 on the mailing of that check) we have elected to combine the March/April, May/June, and July/August issues into Spring and Summer and return to our regular production schedule with the September/October 1990 issue.

If you are a subscriber to *Explorer*, you are, by now, probably muttering something about a one-year subscription turning into five issues. Not to worry. Your subscription, although we refer to it as a "one-year" obligation for the sake of convenience, is actually an obligation to deliver six issues. And that we will do.

If, for example, your subscription was due to expire with the September/October 1990 issue, it will be extended to include the November/December 1990 issue. This change should already be noted on your mailing label.

Apologia

It is very embarrassing to have to offer an explanation of this sort—rather like having to tell your friends that you can't go to the dance, not because you absolutely *have* to wash your hair but because your mean old ogre of a father says you're too young.

We could have made up something that would have sounded much more plausible and considerably less absurd. But, there is already an intolerable amount of dissembling and obfuscation in this industry, and we decided not to add to it. This is the straight scoop—stupid but straight—and we appreciate your sticking with us in spite of it. ■

By BETSY STAPLES