

# The Embedded Muse 38

Editor: Jack Ganssle ([jack@ganssle.com](mailto:jack@ganssle.com))

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## ESC

Next week the 10<sup>th</sup> annual West Coast Embedded Systems Conference will be held in San Jose.

I remember the first of these conferences, held in the beautiful Sir Francis Drake hotel in downtown San Francisco. The cable cars stopped outside, their cheerful bells sounding out to us as we sat in the few classes then offered. A mere handful of vendors had nothing more than small tabletop displays.

This year almost 300 vendors will parade their latest nifty embedded tools, software and gadgets. Don't miss the 150 classes on all aspects of embedded development.

This is a highly recommended event. Come and visit the show floor and attend the sessions. I'm looking forward to Clifford Stoll's keynote address: "Stalking the Wily Hacker". You may have read his most famous book, *The Cuckoo's Egg*.

I'll be giving two classes on debugging ISRs (Monday and Wednesday). Monday at 7:30 AM I'm hosting the Shop Talk session "Debugging Tricks and Techniques for 8 and 16 bit Processors". This is a chance to sit around and share your coolest debugging ideas; it's NOT a lecture!

See [www.embedded.com](http://www.embedded.com) for more info.

## Thought for the Week

Once upon a midnight dreary, fingers cramped and vision bleary,  
System manuals piled high, and wasted paper on the floor,  
Longing for the warmth of bedsheets,  
Still I sat there, doing spreadsheets,  
Having reached the bottom line, I took a floppy from the drawer.  
Typing with a steady hand, I then invoked the SAVE command,  
And waited for the disk to store,  
Only this and nothing more.

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Deep into the monitor peering, long I sat there wond'ring, fearing,  
Doubting, while the disk kept churning, turning yet to churn some  
more. "Save!" I said, "You cursed mother! Save my data from before!"  
One thing did the phosphorous answer, only this and nothing more,  
Just "Choose Abort, Retry, Ignore?"

Was this some occult illusion? Some maniacal intrusion?  
These were choices undesired, ones I'd never faced before.  
Carefully, I weighed the choices, as the disk made impish noises,  
The cursor flashed, insistent, waiting, baiting me to type some more,  
Clearly I must press a key, choosing one and nothing more,  
From "Choose Abort, Retry, Ignore?"

With my fingers pale and trembling slowly toward the keyboard bending,  
Longing for a happy ending, hoping all would be restored,  
Praying for some guarantee, timidly I pressed a key,  
But on the screen there still persisted, words appearing as before,  
Ghastly, grim, they blinked and taunted, haunted, as my patience wore,

Saying "Choose Abort, Retry, Ignore?"  
I tried to catch the chips off-guard. I pressed again, but twice as  
hard I pleaded with the cursed machine. I begged and cried and then I  
swore. Now in desperation, trying random combinations,  
Still there came the incantation, just as senseless as before.  
Cursor blinking, angrily winking, blinking nonsense as before.  
Reading "Choose Abort, Retry, Ignore?"

There I sat distraught, exhausted, by my own machine accosted,  
Getting up I turned away and paced across the office floor.  
And then I saw a dreadful sight; a lightning bolt cut through the  
night, a gasp of horror overtook me, shook me to my very core,  
The lightning zapped my previous data, lost and gone forevermore.  
Not even "Choose, Abort, Retry, Ignore?"

To this day I do not know the place to which lost data goes,  
What demonic nether world is wrought where data will be stored,  
Beyond the reach of mortal souls, beyond the ether into black holes,  
But sure as there's C, Pascal, Lotus, Ashton-Tate and more,  
You will one day be left to wander, lost on some Plutonian shore,  
To "Choose, Abort, Retry, Ignore?"

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## **About The Embedded Muse**

The Embedded Muse is an occasional newsletter sent via email by Jack Ganssle. Send complaints, comments, and contributions to him at [jack@ganssle.com](mailto:jack@ganssle.com).

To subscribe, send a message to [majordomo@ganssle.com](mailto:majordomo@ganssle.com), with the words “subscribe embedded *your-email-address*” in the body. To unsubscribe, change the message to “unsubscribe embedded *your-email-address*”.

The Embedded Muse is supported by The Ganssle Group, whose mission is to help embedded folks get better products to market faster. We offer seminars at your site offering hard-hitting ideas - and action - you can take now to ***improve firmware quality and decrease development time***. Contact us at [info@ganssle.com](mailto:info@ganssle.com) for more information.

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