Background Notes for the January, 1991 Release of Pixie Scheme:
The View from the Twenty-First Century

This document briefly describes the *very* archival release of Pixie Scheme which it accompanies. Read carefully ...

Actually, that shouldn't be so much "archival" as "historical", or perhaps "obsolete" would be more honest. This very old release will likely be of interest only to folks who collect and love old Macintoshes. Or who knows, maybe there are a few very old Macs out there somewhere, still doing useful work. And I believe I do have a commitment to support users, at least with advice, in case there are any Pixie Scheme users left. In any case, it wasn't much effort to put up a Pixie Scheme download on my web site, so I did; if anyone has any use for it, enjoy.

What is here is the January, 1991 release of Pixie Scheme, an implementation of the Scheme Programming language -- a dialect of Lisp -- for the Macintosh as it existed in the late 1980s and early 1990s. There will be a few problems using it today. In particular ...

This release was developed under version six point something of the Macintosh operating system; it is unlikely to run on anything much newer.

This release was developed at a time when all Macintoshes used Motorola microprocessors. Power PC? What's that? Intel? They made processors for IBM PCs. They were the bad guys. I mean, segment registers — eew.

This release was developed using a version of the Macintosh Programmer's Workshop (MPW) development environment that did not generate correct 32-bit code. Early Macintoshes, such as the original Macintosh, the 512, the SE, some versions of the Macintosh II, and a few others, only addressed a 24-bit address space; this release ran fine on them. But on Macintoshes that used the full 32 bits, it crashed rapidly, typically on launch.

Not only could I not fix the problem, I couldn't even duplicate it. I did not even know anyone who owned a 32-bit Macintosh, much less own one myself.

I could probably fix the code just by recompiling it in a better compiler, and indeed, I have done so. Much of Pixie Scheme runs unchanged as Wraith Scheme, a Universal Binary application that runs on OS X 10.4 or better. See my web site for details. Unfortunately, I no longer own a vintage-1990 Mac, or any

compiler at all that will generate code for one. So Pixie Scheme per se is limited to 24-bit Macintoshes, and it is unlikely that there will be any fix other than running Wraith Scheme on a newer Macintosh.

But who cares? A 16-Megabyte address space should be enough for any conceivable purpose, right?

Anyhow, what is here is the entire content of the original distribution. I have even unstuffed it for you. (And I must give credit where it is due: The current Stuffit software worked fine with my fifteen-year-old archives.) I haven't attempted to change anything.

I haven't moved since 1991, so the Post Office Box given for my address in the documentation is still correct. I do have a new EMail address, and also a web site. They are:

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                         -- Jay Reynolds Freeman, February, 2007