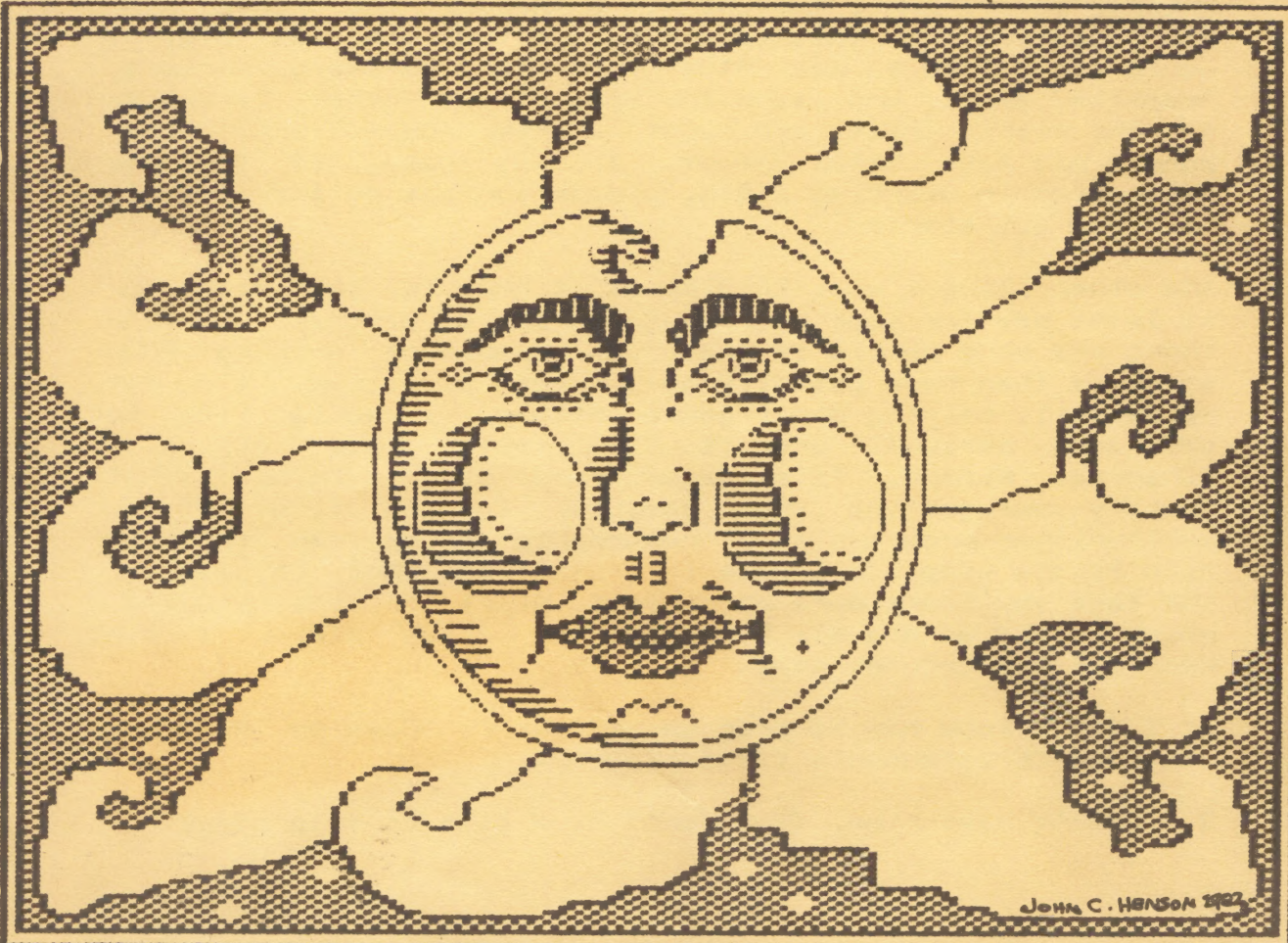


DALLAS ATARI COMPUTER ENTHUSIASTS

VOLUME 4 ISSUE 7

AUG 1983



## PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

Gary has been out of town the past several weeks and has asked me to write his column this month.

First of all, I would like to discuss a subject which can really benefit the membership, the special interest group (SIG). A special interest group is a more specialized group within the club that addresses the more specific interests of the individual members. Some members are interested in the gaming aspects, some in business applications, some like to tinker with the hardware, some are interested in programming, some are not, and some just want a place to go to share experiences. These are all things we try to address in the group as a whole, but with 400 people of varying skills and interests we are limited as to what we can cover.

Enter the SIG. With a SIG, members with common interests can get together and share their experiences in a more intense environment. Current SIG's include the FORTH SIG, the Education SIG, the Kid's SIG, and the Business SIG. I would still like to see SIGs form for hardware hackers, Graphics, Music, and maybe for some of the other languages for the Atari. These are just a few suggestions. Other people may have other needs. In any case, if you are interested in starting a SIG, please contact me and I will help you get started.

The other thing I want to discuss is how to get rich (or at least pay for your equipment). Write a program. I know there are more people in the group capable of writing GOOD software than have actually have been published. I'm not necessarily talking about games either. I would like to see more personal productivity tools like Visicalc, Financial Wizard, Filemanager, and other things that justify your getting your computer in the first place. Well-written programs at a reasonable price can fetch a nice little sideline income in royalties. Not to mention the fact you learn more about your Atari in the process, which is why we are all here in the first place. I can hear all the excuses now:

- 1) I don't know how to program very well. (Caverns of Mars was Greg Christensen's first program).
- 2) I don't have time. (You don't have time to make money?)

3) I don't have an idea for a program. (Call me. I have of list of pending projects that is long enough to keep the whole group busy).

4) I don't know how to market my programs. (Sounds like a good seminar topic or SIG).

5) I'm not smart enough to program. (BALONEY. Anybody can program. See excuse #1).

6) I just don't want to. (OK).

I expect to see a lot of good things coming out of this group in the next few months. Maybe we should form an Author's SIG. Let me know if you have any interest.

Happy programming and SIGging

Tom Schaeper

#### WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

The following new members joined DAL-ACE in June.

Robert S. Aldridge	(h) 231-5980
Steve Arntz	(h) 485-5623
Richard Caldwell	(h) 239-8008
Jeff Casbeer	(h) 494-6789
Charles R. Dardon	(h) 267-9049
Jose A. Diaz	(h) 324-9975
William E. Gay	(h) 350-0480
G. R. Hardesty	(h) 267-0225
Mark Harris	(h) 487-8477
Randall Keylor	(h) 991-4276
Robert L. King, III	(h) 867-8035
John P. Olson	(h) 278-0814
Mark Parachini	(h) 528-2017
Paul L. Pakchar	(h) 669-2061
Jerry Pennington, Sr.	(h) 223-8132
Frank H. Taylor	(h) 242-4958
Donald L. Wilcox	(h) 235-1854
Marshall Wilsdn	(h) 253-7182

## SECRETARY'S REPORT

If you were not at the June Regular Membership Meeting, you missed something really special. Representatives from ATARI were here filming the entire meeting. ATARI's plan is to film various Users' Groups around the country and then to edit the film into an advertising piece. We were promised a copy for the Club. See what you miss when you don't come to the meetings.

As I reported at the June meeting, the Board has voted to change the Club's dues structure. Instead of all dues becoming payable in January, and prorating dues quarterly for those new members who join after January, all memberships will now be for 12 full months, no prorations, with renewals due in the month you joined. In order to help you keep track of just when you did join, the abbreviation for the month in which you need to renew will appear on your mailing label next to your bulletin board password and number. If you are confused, just see me at the meeting. Of course, for all you members who joined prior to May, your renewal will still be in January. This new method will allow the Club to have continuous income throughout the year instead of an avalanche in January and nothing in July.

Some of you may remember last Christmas when the Club tried to sponsor a "Toys for Tots" type game contest at one of the area malls. Entry fee for contestants was to be a new toy. The winner would have received an ATARI 400 and needy children around the area would have received Christmas presents. However, we did not start the process early enough and were not able to bring it about. This year we are starting early. Gary Sewell will contact Collin Creek Mall to see if we can set up a contest there in December. Should be a lot of fun. If any member has any suggestions on how to run the contest or where we might be able to hold it, please contact any Officer. We will keep you posted on our progress.

Susan Henderson

## PRODUCT REVIEW PRINTER BUFFER

by Bill H. Yarborough

I use my Atari 800 Computer with my Epson MX-80 printer in my law office every day. The main documents that I prepare on the computer and printer are letters, billing statements, and legal documents. Most of these papers are prepared with the printer in the double strike and emphasized mode of print. This mode of printing in my opinion gives satisfactory letter quality results; however, the printing speed is relatively slow and a significant amount of time can be wasted while waiting for the printer to complete its task. Also, when an extra copy is needed additional computer time will be used while waiting for the printer to complete the copy.

In my occupation time is money. I estimated that I was waiting on my printer for a total of 30 minutes to 60 minutes each day while it was completing a printing task before I could resume using the computer again. After determining how much time I was losing I then decided that the solution was to buy a printer buffer.

When considering which printer buffer to purchase I determined approximately how much I wanted to spend and what features would be important to me. My choice was a Microfazer manufactured by the Quadram Corporation. The model I got cost around \$200.00 and is a parallel to parallel model. The model I have has 32K storage capacity which I figured was close to the total usable capacity of the memory of the Atari 800. It is my understanding that this buffer has a capacity of 8K up to 256K and it can be easily expanded to the maximum capacity. One of the important features that I like about the buffer is a copy button on the front panel. After the printer completes the printing of data the copy button can be pressed and another copy can be printed. Copies of the same data can be reprinted as many times as desired simply by pressing the copy button each time the printer stops printing. When you are ready to load another group of data into the buffer you press a reset button on the front panel and the buffer is then ready to receive more data. It was necessary to connect the buffer to a power supply to operate it with my printer. The printer can be modified to supply to the power to the buffer but I chose to connect it to a power supply instead. Another reason that I chose this type of buffer is the fact that it can be used with any parallel printer or buffer. If you do very much printing then I feel that a printer buffer is a time saving peripheral that is well worth the money.

## Software Review

## TYPIT

Reviewed by Gary C. Arey

TYPIT is a new word processing program written in machine language for an Atari Computer with a disk drive and at least 24K of memory.

The program is available through A.P.X. for \$17.95 plus shipping and represents an exceptional value at that price for what it delivers. Among its features are instantaneous response to commands and a "Help" screen which may be accessed by pressing "Start" at any time and then pressing "Start" again to return to the text mode.

An interesting feature of the program is that it produces text in a 80 column mode and scrolls across the screen using a 40 column window to the text. This is the method used by the original Atari Word Processor, however it is done much more effectively by TYPIT. The typed text is edited using the editing commands of the Atari Computer such as:

- Control B - go to beginning of text.
- Control Insert- insert one space.
- Control Delete- delete one space.
- Shift Delete - delete line.
- Shift Insert - insert line.

There are also keys for setting Tabs and Margins and a special code (Control X) to save the set margins and tabs along with the document. This allows default forms for letters or special types of documents to be created, saved to disk, and called up for use on a later document.

Text files are saved to disk with the (Control W) command and given a seven character name with a three character extender in the same manner that a file is normally saved to disk; D:LETTER.FOR would be an example. The (Control R) command reads the disk and places a file into the text screen for editing or printing. A 24K machine will store only about one page, and a 48K machine will store approximately four pages of text.

TYPIT does not provide for word wrapping at the end of a line, so a RETURN must be executed at the end of each line just as though one were using a typewriter. Line spacing is controlled by the number of returns executed at the end of a line such as two returns for double spacing.

For convenience in editing and preparing text, markers are placed at the beginning of the screen and at every 65th line to simulate an eleven inch sheet of paper.

TYPIT is a simple word processor and editor for those who will not be writing long documents, and who do not have a need for the functions of a sophisticated word processor.

The program does allow the creation, editing, and storing of text with ease and simplicity. Its 80 column format with 40 column window enables the user to see the text exactly as it will print on the paper without the need for complicated formatting.

TYPIT is recommended for those who are in need of a simple and inexpensive text editor and word processor.

#### FORTH MEETING

The next FORTH MEETING will be held 07-7-83 at 7:30 the home of Ron Tinnell. 2221 Windy Dr., Garland. 995-5409

#### DAL-ACE Business SIG

The next meeting of the DAL-ACE Education SIG will be held July 14 at the home of Rich Greenlee, 512 Copher Court, Euless, Tx 267-7428. 1/2 mile S. of 183 off Main ST. exit.

#### DAL-ACE EDUCATION SIG

The next meeting of the DAL-ACE Education SIG will be held the Wed. prior to the regular Saturday meeting at 7:30 at Software etc., 14400 Dallas Parkway (across from Ewing Buick).

#### YOUNG PEOPLES SIG

This group meets 1 hour before the regular club meeting. Open to members 8 to 16. contact Chris Magid. 241-7320.

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#### DISCLAIMER

The articles and ads contained in this newsletter do not necessarily reflect the views of this newsletter or of the club. (You the reader are the final judge on anything you read.)

**EDUCATIONAL SOFTWARE REVIEW**

PROGRAM NAME: FACEMAKER

SOFTWARE HOUSE: SPINNAKER SOFTWARE CORPORATION

PRICE: \$32.25

TARGET AUDIENCE: 4 TO 12 YEARS

**ATARI SYSTEM SPECIFICATIONS:**

MEMORY: 16K

FORMAT: DISK

LANGUAGE: MACHINE

INPUT: KEYBOARD

REVIEWER'S NAME: RICH GREENLEE

**REVIEWER'S COMMENTS:**

FACEMAKER IS AN EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM DISGUISED AS A GAME. CHILDREN CAN MAKE A VARIETY OF FACES AND ANIMATE THEM. EYES CAN BE MADE TO WINK, EARSWIGGLE, AND LIPS MOVE IN ANY ORDER THE CHILD LIKES. THE COMPUTER WILL EVEN PLAY A MEMORY GAME WITH THE CHILD. THE COMPUTER WILL ANIMATE THE FACE THEY HAVE CREATED WITH A PARTICULAR ORDER OF WINKS AND WIGGLES AND THE CHILD WILL HAVE TO RESPOND BY PRESSING THE KEYS WHICH REPRESENT THE SAME PATTERN. THIS ACTION INTRODUCES THE CHILD TO INFORMAL COMPUTER PROGRAMING AS THEY LEARN TO INSTRUCT THE COMPUTER TO DO WHAT THEY WANT. THE CHILD DEVELOPES A FAMILIARITY WITH THE KEYBOARD INSTEAD OF THE JOYSTICK OR GAME PADDLES. THE CHILDS ABILITY TO REMEMBER VISUAL SEQUENCES IS ENHANCED BY THE USE OF THIS PROGRAM, AS THEY MUST BE ABLE TO RESPOND TO A SERIES OF FACIAL EXPRESSIONS AND RECREATE THESE ACTIONS IN THE SAME ORDER AS THEY WERE SEEN. EACH SERIES OF FACIAL EXPRESSIONS PRODUCE SOUNDS WHICH CAN BE HELPFUL FOR THE CHILD TO REMEMBER KEYBOARD RESPONSE SEQUENCE.

ONCE THE CHILD HAS RECEIVED THE OPERATIONAL INSTRUCTION OF THE PROGRAM VERY LITTLE SUPERVISION IS REQUIRED BY THE PARENT. FACEMAKER THEN TENDS TO ALLOW THE CHILD THE OPPORTUNITY TO BE CREATIVE.

ALL IN ALL, THE PROGRAM IS AN EXCELLENT EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM AND A GOOD VALUE.



CHESSE 7.0 by Larry Atkin  
from Odesta

Retail 69.95;Discount 49.95  
Requires 48K and 1 Disk  
Optional paddle input  
Reviewed by Harry Hafele

It doesn't matter if you are a chess master or just have a slight interest in chess this is the best chess program I've ever seen! Now since chess programs have been around almost since the beginning of computers this may be a bold statement but this is much more than a program that plays chess.

I constantly read articles about how games for the computer should be written and heard countless comments on the subject and the criticisms that I most frequently hear are: you have to start from the beginning every time, no way to save a partial game, no way to practice a particular level, only one level (either too hard or too easy), too easily mastered, cannot be mastered, and once you know how to do it you might as well trade it in. The authors of this chess game have addressed these problems extremely well.

Let's say you just bought your game, you take it home and you are READY to play. You put the game in the computer and turn it on and what do you get. On the screen is a chess board (of course) and on the right hand side is a list of options. But the program immediately begins a demo that illustrates all of the options (27 of them). The demo will run forever or until you touch the fire button on the paddle (keyboard can be used but I used the paddle). So the demo stops. You move a cursor over the options by turning the paddle until you reach BOARD. Hit the button and now your cursor is on the chess board. You twist the paddle and the cursor moves over the pieces so you can select which piece you want to move. (Here is where you begin to appreciate the workmanship of this program.) The cursor will only land on those pieces that can move! For instance, in the opening game only the pawns and the two knights can move. Those are the only pieces that you can select. (Good for the beginner.) Then you select a piece by hitting the button. Now the cursor will indicate where you can move the selected piece and only those squares that are legal for that piece. (Again, a very good way to teach how to move.)

So you make a few moves and then you do what you always have done, you make a dumb move and that unforgiving computer leaps in without so much as a thank you. You are frustrated and wondering why you bought this thing. Easy. You switch back to the options and select BACK and the computer takes back its move, you select BACK again and it takes back your move. Now you return to the board and try a better move.

This program is so friendly that it will even suggest moves for you or you can switch sides at any time. Play in manual mode (two humans) or totally automatic (computer against itself). There are 17 level of play. You can vary the time the computer can think or the number of moves it can look ahead. (Upto 11 move look ahead.) You can play blind or key in situations and practice all you want. You can even FLIP the board, putting the white pieces at the top and black at the bottom. At higher levels of play the computer will make use of a library of opening moves.

I give this game my highest marks on design and gamemanship.

It's a good idea to pinpoint exactly what functions don't respond. You can trace this by running this simple program:

```
10 PRINT STICK(0),STRIG(0):GOTO 10
```

Using the Atari Reference Manual check to see if you get the appropriate response from all directions and the fire button. If you are having problems with a direction it is likely you also have problems with its corresponding diagonals, but this may not always be the case.

Open the joystick as previously described and remove the circuit board. Now test the program by directly pressing the pressure pads. Direct yourself to the inoperative pad and examine it. You will probably find that the concave metal disk has slipped. If not, then check the connection at the lower half of the circuit board. If the disk has slipped (it may not be very apparent) then peel back the clear plastic coating starting from the edge that is closest to the damaged pad. Being carefull not to upset the other disks, move the slipped one into the center of the circuit and lower the plastic down over it. Using the check program to confirm that it is aligned properly. It is a good idea to tape the plastic down so it doesn't peel back. Rebuild the joystick as outlined earlier.

The idea of a left handed joystick is quite easy to install. Simply rotate the connections on the circuit board as outlined (from a recent Compute! issue):

ORANGE--FIRE BUTTON STAYS ORANGE BROWN BECOMES WHITE WHITE BECOMES GREEN  
GREEN BECOMES BLUE BLUE BECOMES WHITE BLACK IS POWER & REMAINS SAME

So if you're fed up with your Atari joystick and are about to run out and pick up a metal one try these suggestions. At two dollars a repair it sure beats a fifty dollar metal joystick!

ATARI  
JOYSTICK  
MAINTAINANCE

OK, so you've had your Atari for some time now and you're beginning to discover that the joysticks don't feel the same as they did when you got them out of the box.

Does the response seem sluggish? Maybe the hand grip is too flexible? You might even find that the fire button works only half the time you press it, or even less. All these problems are typical of the Atari joystick. But wait! There's no need to go to a repair shop (and pay \$10 a crack!) for these problems, you can quite easily remedy them all yourself, for FREE!

When Atari made their joystick, rather than build one which was all metal and cost upwards of fifty dollars, they built one with a simple, plastic, replaceable part to take care of all our problems...almost. first we will deal with the replaceable Joystick Insert.

The handgrip of the joystick is hollow and extremely flexible at the base. This part never contracts the pressure pads to connect the circuit. Instead the plastic joystick insert which slips inside the handdrop does. With numerous vigerous games of Star Raiders & PacMan behind you the insert encounters plastic fatigue (depending on how hard you lean on your joystick) and sometimes breaks. This causes the sluggishness and increased flexibility of the joystick.

The solution is to replace the insert. These can be bought at any Atari computer store and usually retail at about two dollars each. Next we proceed to open the joystick. Hold the joystick upside down and using a Phillips screwdriver remove the four screws. Flip the joystick over and lift off the top. Keep your eye on the fire button as you should immediately put it and its small spring someplace safe. Simply remove the old insert and replace it with the new one. Turn the insert to align the largest protruding nib either north or south with the joystick and it will 'lock' into place. Now holding the handgrip upside down lower the fire button into its hole and place the spring around the fire button's nib. Next take the circuit board out of the bottom half of the joystick and lower it down on the two posts of the upper half. Take the bottom half of the joystick and carefully lower it onto the top half and before replacing the screws test the fire button to see if it springs back up. If not, then the spring fell out and you will have to try rebuilding it all over again. You should be able to feel the difference in the joystick response immediately.

If you find that the joystick won't respond in certain directions or that the fire button doesn't react properly then first test the connections at the computer. Wiggle the plug around to see if it helps. When this fails you will have to resort to a little surgery using scotch tape.

CONTINUE ON PAGE 10

From the Editor  
or  
If You Knew What I Know  
Would It Make Any Difference

As every one must know by now Atari has announced their new line of computers due to come out between now and December, some sooner than others. Rumor has it that they are in the warehouses but I haven't seen one. On the other hand I don't hang out at the warehouses. (I wonder who told me that rumor?) According to the magazines (Antic and the Atari Connection) these little machines have great promise. They are reasonably priced and come with an impressive set of built in features. Also a new line of add-ons such as printers, plotters, disk drives, etc. For complete details come to the meeting or read one of the magazines.

For myself, I am interested in a couple of the new announcements. A lot of the new equipment will be usable on the existing Atari computers, and all of the software is upward compatible. (at least in theory.) There is a Touch Tablet in the \$80 price range that plugs into controller port #1. Also something call the AtariLAB SCIENCE SERIES. A starter set at \$90 contains an instructional manual, an AtariLab Interface, and the Temperature MODULE. Later modules at \$50 will be Light; Biofeedback; Timekeeper; Lie Detector; and Mechanics. I hope that it works on my 800. Enough of that, just keep your ears open because it is coming.

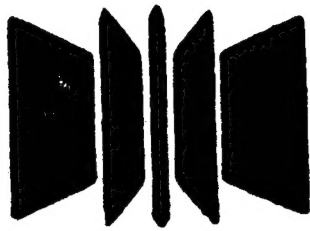
Before I forget I wish to thank John Henson for his contribution of original artwork (developed on his Atari, of course) for the cover of this months newsletter. I am always interested in ways that people use their Atari or any computer for that matter. Here are a couple of examples that I ran across recently. I recently had cable hooked up and discovered that there is a program called Personal Computers. They did a segment on a person who built an alarm system for his home using an Atari 400. Anytime a window or door was opened an alarm, using the Atari sounds, was given and the time and location was recorded. Just think if he also had an Alien Voice Box.

Another example was a doctor installed a 400 in his office for the convenience of his patients. No, not to play games. It was programmed to answer questions most asked by his patients. It was also programmed to educate his patients in various health topics. In the case of this doctor, he is a Oby-gyn, the programs informed about different forms of birth control, the relative merits of each method and how each method works.

These are just a few ways that people are using computers. If you know of other ways like these I would very much like to know about them. Either drop me a note, give me a call or tell me at the meeting.

# FREE SOFTWARE

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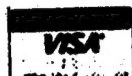
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# 348-8901



NEXT MEETING -

~~HOLIDAY INN - 1735 N. 35E FRWY~~  
TAKE VALWOOD EXIT OFF 35E NORTH.  
CONFERENCE RM 1  
TIME: 2:00 PM DATE: AUG 4, 1983

MEETING AGENDA

1:00 TO 2:00 SALES  
2:00 TO 2:30 BUSINESS MEETING  
2:30 TO 2:45 GENERAL QUESTIONS  
2:45 TO 3:15 TECHNICAL QUESTIONS  
3:15 TO 3:45 BREAK, NEWSLETTERS AND SALES  
3:45 TO 5:00 DEMOS ETC.

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(Must Be Camera Ready Copy!) Full Page - \$35.00  
Deadline: 15 th of each Month Mail to Editor, c/o DAL-ACE

\*\*\*\*\*

Purchasing : Jack Withrow 680-8947  
                  Ed Kobus 492-2922  
Education : Jeff Rutherford 1-727-2945  
BBS : 817-589-1254  
Library : Ernie Runyon 817-595-2243

The clubs Technical Reference Manuals are available for \$5.00 + \$1.50 shipping or pick up at club meeting. A real good deal for a 104 pages that are nicely bound (spiral spine).

\*\*\* New prices on club disks !!! Club library disks are now \$5.00 each. Take advantage of a package deal and buy 3 - get one free.

FUTURE MEETING AGENDA

JULY - MISC. BUSINESS PROGRAMS TO INCLUDE VISACALC AND THE BOOKKEEPER.

AUGUST - DATA BASES FEATURING FILEMANGER 800, DATA PERFECT, AND THE DATA BASE PROGRAM IN THE LIBRARY.

SEPT - GRAPHICS - FEATURING GRAPHIC PROGRAMS SUCH AS GRAPHIC MASTER, PAINT, MICRO-PAINTER, ETC.

DALLAS ATARI COMPUTER ENTHUSIAST  
(DAL-ACE)

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Subscriptions are \$16.00 per year, good for 12 months, with renewal shown on newsletter label. Other user groups may obtain free subscriptions with the exchange of newsletters.

All material may be reprinted in any form, provided that DAL-ACE and author, if applicable, are given credit.

DALLAS ATARI COMPUTER  
ENTHUSIASTS

OFFICERS

President : Gary Sewell  
1-727-6567  
V-President: Tom Schaeper  
242-2483  
Secretary : Susan Henderson  
817-497-3877  
Treasurer : Ed Kobus  
492-2922  
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