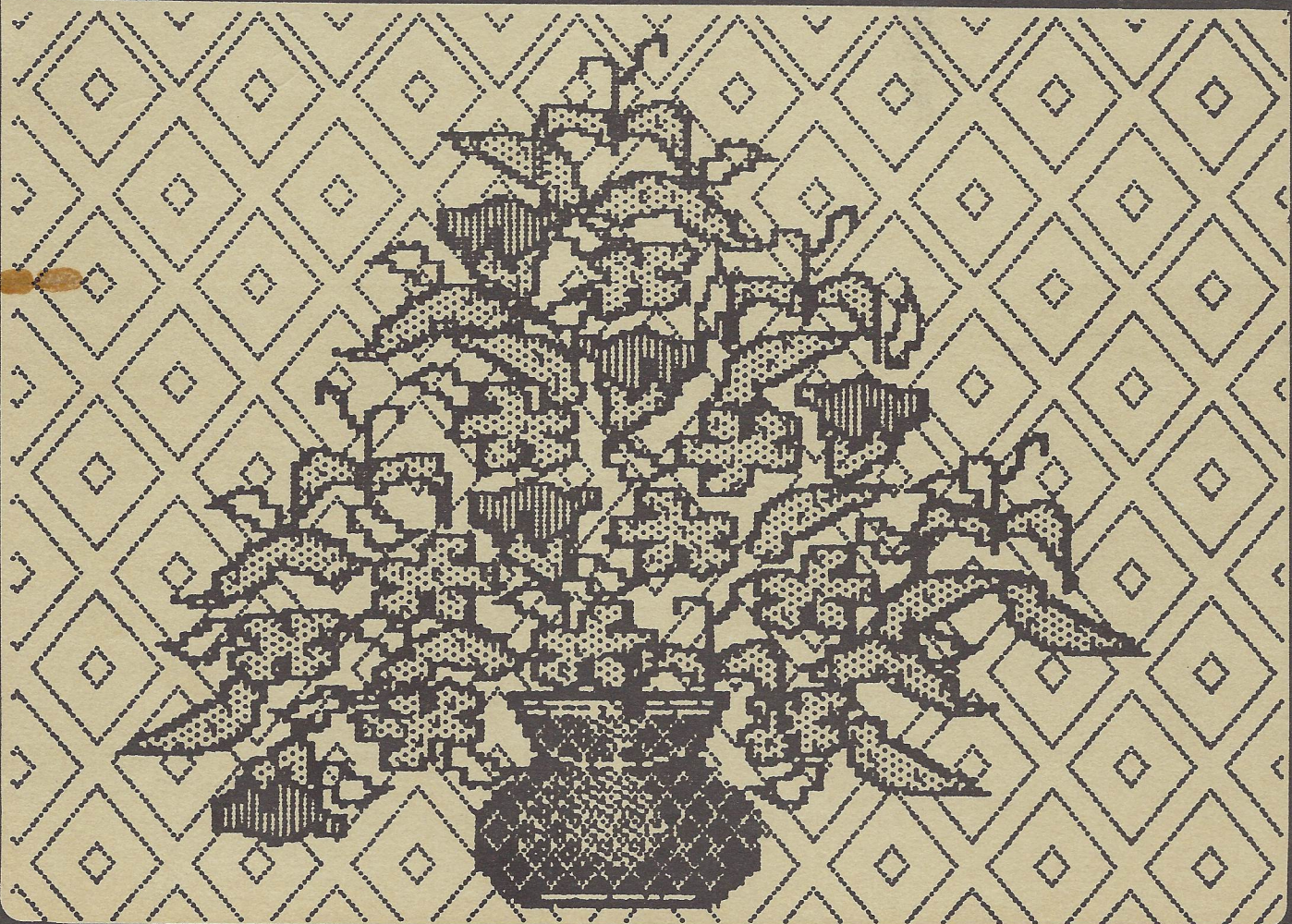


DALLAS ATARI COMPUTER ENTHUSIASTS

VOLUME 5    ISSUE 6    JUNE 1984





**PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE**

If you missed the June meeting, then you missed the biggest news item of the month! Or perhaps you would consider Atari's new machine more news worthy than the new meeting format. If you attended the June meeting and still missed the new meeting format, then we do have a problem!

**NEW MEETING FORMAT**

The Board of Directors (fancy name for your officers, now that we are incorporated) really went out on a limb this time! For years and years we have had the same meeting format. How dare they be so radical! By the time you read this article they may well be tarred and feathered. But it sounded so good when we discussed it at the meeting. The theory behind this radical move was: maximum utilization of space and time (an admirable goal).

We have two separate rooms at the Richardson Civic Center, so why not use both of them at the same time? We wanted to parallel the meeting with vendor sales. One room is small and one room is large. The small room is too small for all the vendors, so the small room is for the meetings. What kind of meetings? (Nobody voted for a 5 hour business meeting!) The range of meetings will vary from month to month, but in general they will be Demonstrations, Classes, SIG Presentations, Speakers, Clinics, and (of course) the business meeting. Each of these segments will last approximately one hour (even the business meeting). You, the member, will be free to roam between the meetings and the vendor area (it's called freedom of choice). I hoped it worked and that you enjoyed the change, if not, we will try something different next time. If you have a suggestion, call one of your members-at-large and share it with him.

**NEW GAME MACHINE**

Atari's new **GAME MACHINE**, the 6800, is the latest and greatest thing on the home video market! Yes, that sounds like a PARTY line. But, I'll go along with it until I can see it myself. According to the press releases it will "play" the other game cartridges (5200 games will require adapter) as well as its own. Its own cartridges are rumored to go as high as 32K and be as good as the arcades. HMMMM! Then the real kicker (and why I am writing about it): a keyboard expansion!!! The keyboard expansion will put it into the **COMPUTER** arena. Now mind you, they are talking about a 4K (yes, FOUR K) computer. Very interesting. I suppose that puts it in the kindergarden category. (It may also open up some game option or educational possibilities.) I can see it now: the FOUR K SIG (for the 4 year old members). All kidding aside, I am interested in seeing it. If you can get your hands on one, write a review article and get it to the Newsletter Staff (Jeff Rutherford) quick!

**RESIGNATION**

As president of DAL-ACE, one of my duties is to accept resignations. This was a particularly sad experience in the case of Sandy Gadell (Newsletter Editor and Public Relations Chairperson). Sandy's contributions to the Newsletter and the organization in general will be greatly missed. Sandy's commitment to her professional

endeavors are demanding more and Moore of her time (no, that was not a misspell, she works for MOORE Computer Centers). Thank you very much, Sandy.

Respectfully, Your President ... Jim Chaney

**GAME DESIGNERS COME TO DALLAS**

Though Origins is traditionally a gaming convention aimed at board wargames, role playing games and miniatures this year's show in Dallas will be different. A special panel discussion has been arranged with a number of notable computer designers. Chris Crawford of Atari (designer of Eastern Front, Legionnaire, etc); Dan Bunten of Electronic Arts (designer of M.U.L.E. and SSI's Computer Quarterback); Richard Garriot aka Lord British (designer of Ultima); Sid Meier of Microprose (designer of Hellicat Ace, and NATO Commander); and Mike Cullum, product developer for Avalon Hill's Microcomputer Division. Moderating the panel will be Russell Sipe of Computer Gaming World magazine.

Additional seminars will be given by Chris Crawford on "State of Computer Wargaming" and "Fundamentals of Computer Wargame Design".

Origins will be held at the Dallas Market Center on June 21 - 24, 1984. If you wish further information send a S.A.S.E. to:

Origins 84  
P.O. Box 59899  
Dallas, Tx. 75229

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## AN INTRODUCTION TO THE DAL-ACE BBS

BY ERNIE RUNYON

As most of you are aware of, I have not updated everyone properly of the use of the new Bulletin Board software we have been using. I apologize. Now that it's reached the 1-10 priority level on my list (and due to a shortage of articles this month), my writing talents, though miniscule are ready to take another beating and even more verbal abuse, but alas, I do try... (hint).

Anyway, to the subject at hand. The last article I did for the newsletter was on the old ARMUDIC BBS we were running at the time (don't you dare flip through back issues to see how long ago!) so I figure it's WAY overdue to get you updated. If you haven't called the BBS for awhile (a while is defined as a week by my numerous hackings and updatings of the code) you are in for a real treat! Graphics have been added to the welcome message, but can only be appreciated if you log on using ATARI ATASCII mode. This feature can be selected by the 'T' option on most AMODEM program menus (see news of Tandy Penn's MODEM class!). Also, if you haven't logged on since the old system FORGET the old member number/password that are on your newsletter label are not used on the BBS anymore. First time callers (or if you don't have a current password) MUST hit the RETURN key and fill out the necessary information, DO NOT log on as a guest or you never will get a password!

Following is a quick rundown of most of the niceties of the FoReM BBS. I even included some of the technical details for those of you who have been wondering how it works. On the BBS, there is a more detailed HELPFUL file that can be accessed by the 'H' command and I do recommend you 'capture' it somehow and keep it for later reference instead of wasting your precious 27 minutes doing a '?'.

In this system the terms 'message base', 'conference' or 'board' are used interchangeably. This system will allow up to 26 message bases provided there is the disk space. Each message base can hold approximately 46 messages. Each password uses 50 bytes of disk space and each sector has 125 data bytes available. This is simply to pre-allocate disk space so that as the system acquires uploaded files, it does not crash when attempting to save a new password. The system will automatically increase the size of the password file if it tries to save a new password past the current end of file. This system uses indexed sequential message files which are accessed by the ATARI random access NOTE/POINT routines. The SYSOP has priority when a caller is online. All system output that the caller sees is also echoed to the screen. When the system is waiting for input from the caller, the SYSOP can locally type over the callers' input. In this way, the SYSOP can enter commands for him.

Level 0 security will not allow the user to upload or to enter messages. This is done to deter system crashers. The user will automatically be logged off if there is no input in approx. 3 minutes.

There is a small amount of 'command stacking' available. When changing conferences, you can use Z-x;from-to or #;#;# where x is the conference number and from and to are numeric values or where # are valid message numbers. Z-x;e will route you to enter messages on board #x. Z-x;m will change boards and take you to the main menu. When in the read message section, at the [R]ead [I]tles [Q]uit prompt, you can use r;[list] or t;[list] where list is either a message range or list of individual message numbers and are used for full forward(+) or reverse(-) read.

Also, when reading messages, the [R]eply [D]elete or [W]ait parameters at the end of a message can be queued so that d/r/m, d/r, d/m, r/m, r/d/d and r/d all work. m must always be last. As of this moment, P cannot be used in a queue. It is preferable that the d go before the r so that an extra message is not rolled off the index queue.

When uploading or downloading, in any place where a d or a u is requested by a prompt, you can use the d or u followed by a delimiter and then the filename. I.e. D;AMSPRAY or U;TITAN (a space can also be used as a delimiter instead of ;).

LITTLE THINGS THE SYSTEM DOES: There is a SYSUSR option on the user system. If a message is addressed to SYSUSR:x (where x is a password level from 0 to 24), the message will be flagged as mail to any user with a password level >=x. If the message is locked, only these users will be able to read it (this function is reserved for SYSOP only). This system maintains the message files automatically. There is enough memory in the system to index approx. 46 messages. This is a 46 element queue so that as the 47th message is entered, the first one is lost. However, it is only eliminated from the index file. This is also true of a message that is deleted, it is only deleted from the index. AMIS has a program that allows you to edit out messages and compact the file. FoReM is totally automatic. At 4am, or if a caller is on at 4am, immediately after he logs off the system will compact automatically the message data files only if a message has been deleted from the index. In addition, in AMIS, if a message is attempting to save past the end of the random access data file, AMIS will generate an error and not save the message. FoReM will save the message in a file called MTEMP.DAT, delete the first 5 messages from the front of the index, compact only the message-base in use, and then re-save the messages.

The SYSOP paging system is automatically toggled off between midnight and 7am. and at other times when the SYSOP isn't available.

This system supports multiple drives without any code modifications. It can run up to 8 drives in any mix of 8", 5.25", SS, DS, DD etc. System logic is as follows; For downloads, the system will scan from drive #1 to drive #8 looking for the file. For uploads, the system will start at the highest number drive it finds online and scan backwards until it finds the first drive that has the room for the upload.



The system will not allow an upload that will leave less than 30 free 128 byte sectors (15 double-density) for message and password file growth. It is most likely that the only reason you will ever get a full disk message is that the system is loaded to capacity.

#### PURPOSE OF THE USER LINE LENGTH PARAMETERS:

The system asks the user for his maximum line length. This does not add a CR/LF at the end of that many characters of output. Many users with 80 column displays do not like to be restricted to 40 column lines when entering messages. If a user selects a line length of 41 to 80 characters, he will be allowed to enter messages of 15 lines of that many characters. If he selects 40 or less, he can enter messages of 30 lines of that many characters. A message to SYSOP defaults to 15 lines of 80 characters.

This system has a full featured-line oriented text editor patterned after the IBM CMS editor, but obviously only in command style. It allows line goto's, string replacement, line insertions, up, down, block delete, etc.

Access to message bases is restricted to the users Security level. Club members are set at 8 or greater. Access is restricted to users with an Security level <= the conference number. The boards not open to the user will not appear to them in mail check or in the list of boards to switch to. This program fully supports the enhanced XMODEM of AMODEM PLUS and MOOSE MODEM terminal emulators. Up/downloads of more than 255 sectors are permitted, but only with those two programs. Uploads are not allowed without using XMODEM.

I hope this information has been helpful and not too far over the new users head and not too boring for the more advanced. At any rate, if you experience problems trying to access the BBS, having problems online or whatever, just leave a message for the SYSOP or call me.

I decided to go ahead and add the menu command help file to save you from having to capture it from the BBS, so it will follow shortly, but first a word from our sponsor... The BBS needs more user interaction and message entering!!! We may have the most cadillac BBS software in town, but let's face it, DAL-ACE is BORING when it comes to the messages (or lack thereof). C'mon folks, I'm sure that out of all you members there are a few that have something to say!! It doesn't have to relate to club stuff, we can get some really controversial subjects started!! Just leave a message to the remote SYSOP Mark Maxham saying what low life he is and I'm sure some sort of controversy will follow. Please don't do this, Mark helps out from time to time, so if your password doesn't work, you can blame him.

\*\*\*Helpful Hints\*\*\*  
5/24/84

'A' is the Ascii/Atascii toggle. If you are using an Atari computer and are not running 'Downloader' or 'Teletalk', then you should be in ATASCII translation mode to get the most out of this system. If for some

reason, you are not in ATASCII mode when you log on to the system you can switch to it by using option A. If at anytime you change translation modes without using option A, the system will no longer recognize any commands. The use of ATASCII translation will allow you to send and receive inverse video characters (such as in prompts). This is a MUST when downloading ATASCII files.

'B' command displays the main bulletin that you see when you log on. This should be checked every once in a while to check important news. SYSOP doesn't care much for people who sign on doing a 'CTRL-C' right away, therefore not reading the bulletin, then paging or leaving SYSOP a message asking something that may have been mentioned in the bulletin. Please check it frequently.

'D' is the download command. This is to be used when you already have the list of download files. This way, you do not have to wait for the file directory for each download.

'E' is the command used to enter messages or E-mail. To use this function, a valid password is required.

'F' is the directory of download files. The directory will tell you what type of program the file is, its length, language and translation mode. Any file can be downloaded in ATASCII mode, however only ASCII files can be successfully downloaded in ASCII mode. If you are using X-modem protocol, the system will automatically switch to ATASCII and then back to ASCII at the end of the download. Option F will initially prompt you for a subgroup of file categories. You can bypass this prompt by pre-selecting it at the command prompt. For example to get a menu of games: \*Select: F G or for all: \*Select: F A.

'G' This command logs you off DAL-ACE. If a new user, BE SURE to reply 'Y' to the 'Save password for future use' prompt or it won't be there the next time you call!!

'H' You're reading it now!

'L' Lists all current ATARI BBS's in North America, if you have any updates to this file such as disconnections or number changes, please notify Mark Maxham our remote SYSOP so he can implement the changes.

'M' This command is primarily for those that wish to send SYSOP a VERY private message, as it goes to the printer. New users or those that hold a security level of 0 should use this to communicate with SYSOP when the 'Y' function is turned off.

'P' Use this function to make changes to your personal profile, like if phone number changes, or you feel that security has been breached and think your password is not secure any more, and lastly, if you wish to change your terminal settings.

'R' is the command to read or scan messages. You can save time with this command and bypass additional prompts, but pre-selecting a range or sequence of messages to read. An example is probably the best way to proceed.



Ex. (1) \*Select: R 100-1

(2) \*Select: R 10-20

(3) \*Select: R 1;3;9;5

(4) \*Select: R +

(5) \*Select: R - (You may use space-bar as delimiter)

1) will read all messages in reverse order from #100 to #1 inclusive.

2) will read all messages from #10 to #20.

3) will read message 1 then 3 then 9 and finally #5. You can selectively read messages in any order forward or backwards.

4) will read all messages in an ascending order.

5) will read all messages in a descending order.

NOTE: A control-N during a message read function will stop reading the current message and go on to the next message selected.

'U' This command will allow you to Upload or send a program to the BBS. Please follow the prompts carefully. You can upload only using X-modem protocol.

'Y' Use this command to yell for SYSOP. If he's home and not busy, he'll be glad to chat with you.

'Z' This command is used to access the other boards and various special interest topics. Once this option is chosen you will be prompted for input from the menu. Simply select the NUMBER of the topic you wish to go into.

What is Xmodem? Xmodem is a handshaking technique used to obtain better accuracy in file transfers. Basically, it breaks the files into 128 byte sections, sending them one at a time, and asking the receiver if the section was received correctly. If it was not, the system will attempt to send the section up to 9 times. If at the end of 9 tries, there has been no success, the system aborts the transfer. Xmodem will also automatically save the file for you so you don't have to worry about extra prompt characters at the end of the file. This is very useful for non-listed Basic programs. In order to use this, you must have some version of the program AMODEM which is available for download on this system. To upload, use 'Send' and to download, use 'Receive'.

SYSOP ... ERNIE RUNYON

### DAL-ACE OFFICERS OVERWHELMED BY RESPONSE TO CALL FOR BRAIN POWER

At the October meeting, a plan for providing a crew of volunteers to help answer user-questions was described, and the Executive Committee asked for DAL-ACE members to sign up to be a part of the "Ask the Experts" Committee.

Response to that request was terrific. Twenty-six people volunteered to share their expertise, and the Executive Committee is tremendously appreciative. Everyone on the Committee is aware that we have lots of know-how in the group, and the officers are extremely pleased to learn that people are SO willing to share their expertise with others.

Originally, the plan was to have a new set of volunteers each month or two, but these plans have been changed due to the fact that so many people have agreed to help out. Instead, we will publish the entire list in the newsletter each month, and will revise the list as circumstances change.

Members who have volunteered to serve will find their names listed on a repeating basis, unless they request to have their names removed. Anyone who would like to be added to the list will be welcomed with open arms. Please let one of the editors know about your interest.

Recently we have noticed a special need for people who have expertise concerning the ATR8000 and CP/M. Please talk to the editors if you are knowledgeable in these areas and would like to help out. (This includes people who are already listed below, as well as newcomers. We will try to identify these people more specifically in the next issue of the Newsletter.)

#### HOW TO USE THE "ASK THE EXPERTS" LIST

Select a name from the list below. In order to somewhat equitably distribute the workload, we suggest that you select the name that is closest in the alphabet to yours. You will notice that each listing includes a letter in parentheses, either a B or an I. The letter B indicates that the volunteer is willing to help users at the Beginning level, and the letter I indicates help for users at the Intermediate level.

Most of these people work during the day, so we suggest calling during the evening. Also, please don't call after 9:00 p.m. unless you have already made such an arrangement with one of the volunteers.

#### PRINTER FOR SALE

LETTER QUALITY Dynax DX-15 (Brother HR-15) 13 cps daisy wheel printer, 10, 12, 15 cpi or proportional spacing. 3K print buffer with re-print. Uses easy-change cart. ribbons and print wheels. New cost \$600, will sell for \$400 or best offer. Jeff Rutherford 1-727-2945



\*\*\*\*\*  
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 \*\*\*\*\*

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 Dallas, TX 75214

Diskettes: (10/box, in cardboard boxes, soft sector)		
TDK brand: 5.25" SS/DD		\$24.00
5.25" DS/DD		\$33.00
Sentinel: 5.25" SS/SD		\$20.50
5.25" SS/DD		\$22.00
5.25" DS/DD		\$28.00
Mailing Labels, 1 or 2 across:	1000 ct	\$ 4.50
	5000 ct	\$18.00
	10000 ct	\$32.00
Fan-fold paper, white 9.5" by 11" pin feed:		
	15#, 3200 ct per box	\$31.00
	20#, 2400 ct per box	\$28.00
Disaperf (clean edge) 20#, 2500 ct per box		\$36.00
Diskette mailers (stiff, anti-static foam lined) for 5.25" diskettes:	10 for	\$ 8.00
Diskette library cases, sturdy plastic, holds 10 5.25" diskettes, available in Beige, Grey, Red, or Black - mix & match	5 for	\$12.50
Flip 'n File/50 - holds 50 5.25" diskettes, lockable, stores disks horizontally		\$26.00
Ribbons:		
Epson MX-80 (FX, RX 70/80)		\$ 5.00
C. Itoh Prowriter I, II (8500, 1500)		\$ 6.25
Okidata ML 80 thru 83A, 92, 93; Gemini		\$ 2.90
Anadex 9500		\$13.00
NEC Spinwriter, multi-strike or cloth		\$ 5.50
Diablo Hytype II, " " "		\$ 5.00
(most others available, write for prices)		

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 Satisfaction guaranteed!

I accept cash, check or money order. Note: The address above is not a store-front -- orders taken by mail only. If you have any questions, drop me a note with your phone number and I'll get back with you.

Thanks!

Shipping and sales tax are included. Allow ten days for delivery.



## SOFTWARE CLINIC

by Dave Gillen

Ever had a program with a bug that you just couldn't find? Or how about a program that worked fine in the store but does some very odd things now that it's at home? Well DAL-ACE is about to embark on a new service that may give you some relief.

Called the Software Clinic, it's a free consulting service that will be initiated at the August meeting. The ENTIRE August meeting (remember this is a Friday night meeting) will be devoted to working on software problems that you have.

## DETAILS

Here's how it will work. At the Friday evening meeting we will set up some "plain vanilla" Atari systems, man them with some fairly knowledgeable folks, and work with you on your software problems.

What you do is to come to us with one of the following:

1. A program with a bug. Please bring it on an Atari DOS 2.05 formatted diskette. A listing would be a good idea, too, but isn't required.
2. A piece of purchased software that doesn't work quite right on your system.
3. A question about a programming concept that puzzles you.

We will work with you on the available systems to try and find the bug, determine if the purchased software is at fault, or illustrate the concept that puzzles you. Like all things in life, this is not a sure thing. We'll give it our best.

If this turns out to be a success, we'll try and make this a regular (although much smaller) part of our monthly meeting.

## RULES OF THE GAME.

Now for some hard and fast rules for this venture.

1. This is FREE!

2. The Software Clinic is an attempt at a new service. If insufficient interest or "knowledge support" is available, we will not be able to have the clinic.

3. After the August meeting, the Software Clinic hours may vary. Stay tuned to your newsletter for the details.

4. The Software Clinic is open to members of DAL-ACE, only!

5. There will be absolutely NO copying of diskettes permitted as part of the Software Clinic. Even though the Software Clinic will have the ability, diskette copying is prohibited to more effectively use the Software Clinicians' time and TO DETER PIRACY.

6. You may use the Software Clinic in a variety of ways: a) Assistance in debugging of code, b) Verification that a package of yours works, c) Illustration of a point that may be confusing to you, or d) Answering of a question. The Software Clinic WILL NOT "test" suspect user hardware. Hardware is a sticky wicket that requires more than we can afford both in time and effort.

7. The Software Clinician has the right to refuse to assist you. This is not as cruel as it may sound. The philosophy of the Software Clinic is to help out you (the neophyte programmer) who has lost your way in the software woods. The Software Clinic will NOT be used by anyone who is trying to get a software product to market and has that "one last bug" to fix. Contractual consulting services are called for there, not the club's freebies.

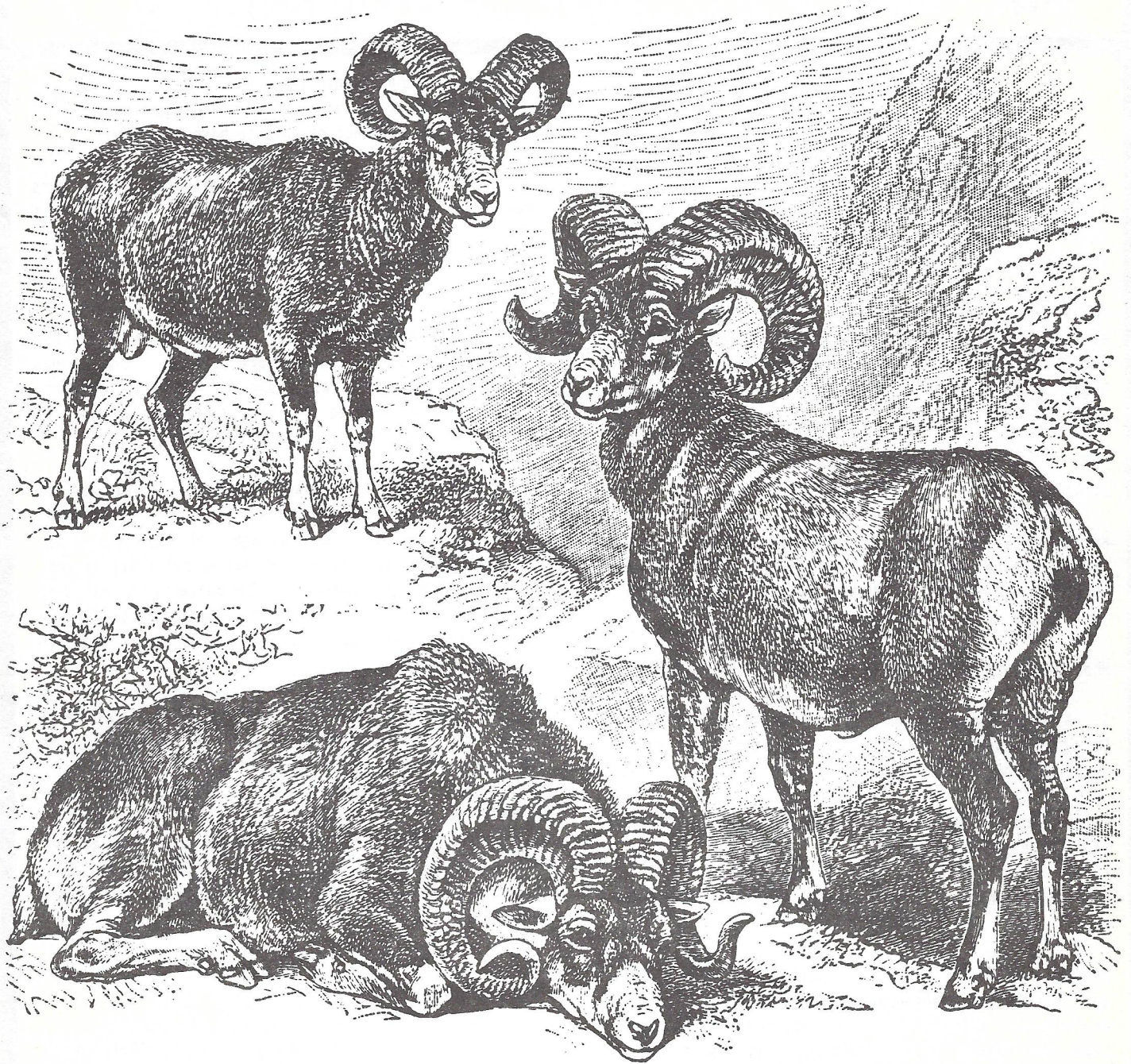
## WHAT WILL THIS TAKE?

I would like to say that I have everything that I need for this project but I don't. In order to make the Software Clinic a successful project I need the following:

1. Between 5 and 10 volunteers. Don't be afraid, step forward. You know more than you think! This project will happen, even if I'm the only one manning the table! It will mean fewer ulcers for me, though, if I get a little help. C'mon, give it a try, what do you have to lose?
2. Computer parts to form some plain vanilla systems. Got a spare 400, 800, 810, or TV set? You don't have to supply a complete system, just label what's yours. We'll make 'em into a complete system.



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**FORTH Bits And Augers**

One mistake that I have made more than once is to edit a screen and lose the bottom line -- the line which usually contained "-->" or "BASE !". In either case, when I next tried to "LOAD" that screen the "BASE" would unexpectedly change to whatever the screen had set it to. The results of that were comical but not at the time.

Finally, I got fed up and fixed the problem by writing words which would set the base and then restore it when the current word completed execution. In the case of loading screens, they set the "BASE" until "LOAD" completes.

**DCX**

No inputs, no outputs  
Set BASE to decimal.

: DCX DECIMAL ;

**<BASE>**

No inputs, no outputs

Sets base to whatever is on top of the return stack.

: <BASE> R) BASE ! ;

**<HEX>**

No inputs, no outputs  
Sets base to hex until current word completes execution.

: <HEX>

```
R) ( get our return address out of the way )
BASE @ >R ( put the current base on return stack )
  <BASE> >R ( put <BASE> on return stack )
  >R ( put our return address back )
  HEX ; ( set the base )
```

Now I set the base on a screen with "<HEX>" or "<DCX>" and never have to worry about restoring the base, that's done automatically!

Having done that, I also defined a few simple utility words.

**H.**

Input: N, no output  
Prints N in hex without changing the current base.

: H.  
<HEX> 0 <# # # # # # # #> TYPE SPACE ;

**X.**

Input: N, no output  
Prints N in decimal without changing the current base.

: X. <DCX> . ;

**?BASE**

No inputs, no outputs  
Prints the current base in decimal without changing the current base.

: ?BASE BASE @ X. ;

That's all the tools for this month. Remember, "If you don't like it, fix it!"

- Eric Weeren

\*\*\* SOFTWARE REVIEW \*\*\*

by John Pellet

**Public Domain Terminal Emulators**

There are several excellent public-domain terminal emulators that are commonly available on the local bulletin boards, most in several versions. The ones I have used are: 1) JTERM, 2) ATERM, 3) SMART, 4) COMM4080, and 5) AMODEM. This review is a brief attempt to describe some of the strengths and weaknesses that I see in each.

JTERM was the first emulator I used and is an excellent basic program. I have and have used JTERM 3.2, 3.6, 3.8, 4.0, and MJTERM (which is supposed to support autodialing, although I could not get it to do so with my Signalman). The major strengths of the program (in any of its guises) are: 1) it is very user friendly and 2) it provides a large buffer for downloading text (over 30 K in version 4.0 in my system). It accomplishes this, however, at the cost of a couple of weaknesses. Most importantly, it does NOT support xmodem protocol, which makes downloading object files nearly impossible due to the inclusion of extraneous characters in the download. This is the really glaring problem I have with this emulator. A minor inconvenience is that JTERM gets its large buffer partially by clearing the setup portion of the program during initialization. This means that to rerun the program you must GOTO the right line number. Also, 3.8 is the only version that supports 1200 baud. With the lack of xmodem, I have not spent much time on MJTERM or 3.8. In summary, this was the program I routinely relied on until I started downloading object files which made xmodem a necessity.

ATERM is only occasionally available and it has two features that I find worthwhile. When it writes the buffer to a selected device it does not clear the buffer, allowing you to save a file to disk then print it without going thru DOS. A nice feature. Also, it has an online help file available at all times. I think its setup is not quite as friendly as JTERM. It does not support half-duplex operation, xmodem protocol, 1200 baud, or autodialing. A nice program but it does not do enough special for me.



SMART is a new program to me. I have only had a copy for a couple of weeks and I haven't used it much because of AMODEMPLUS described below. I did notice a couple of nice features during this limited exposure, though. It has a nice setup routine that will allow the user to select one of several object systems (like Talk to Atari/Apple/Timesharing/AMIS/etc.) and it sets up things like translation and parity. It does support 1200 baud but not xmodem protocol or autodialing. Again, a nice program but not enough for me.

COMM4080 uses a software based 80 column text generator (VIDE080) as the basis for a JTERM-like terminal emulator. If you have a monitor or good B&W TV and your needs include a true 80 column system then this is an inexpensive, attractive way to go. Also, COMM4080 supports autodialing. It does not support 1200 baud, half-duplex operation, or, most importantly, xmodem. Also, it is object code which prevents simple user modification. A nice program, and one I use for a couple of hosts that demand 80 columns, but it can not replace AMODEM described below.

AMODEM is the final program I want to discuss since it is the one I use now. I have had version 4.2 for some time and have always used it for downloading object files since it supports xmodem protocol. For those who are new to telecommunications, the "xmodem protocol" discussed in this article is a system which allows two communicating computers to transfer information about the download in progress such as buffer status or transmission errors. It was originally implemented on CP/M systems (I think?) and has made its way into the Atari world. I feel that it is a necessary feature for serious telecommunications. However, I did not use 4.2 for non-download telecommunicating because its human interface is much more awkward than that of JTERM or ATERM. There is a new version of AMODEM, usually called AMODEMPLUS or AMODEM.EN(hanced) that resolves my human interface concerns about 4.2. In addition to supporting xmodem and 1200 baud like 4.2 it also supports autodialing with an unlimited phone list (limit is free disk space). This is a real plus if you have a Hayes or compatible modem. Another plus is that the program is written entirely in basic which makes user customizing very simple. The only weakness is that with all of the new features PLUS only has about 15-20K of buffer available (15K with MYDOS and Atari Basic, 20K with DOS XL and BASIC XL from OSS). And believe me it is a lot easier to fill a 20K buffer at 1200 baud than at slower speeds. Version 1.0 of the autodial setup program also has some bugs in it but version 2.0, which is out now, appears to correct them. In any case, once you see a sample of the text string it generates it is easy to duplicate it with any text editor (especially WORDMAN). In summary, AMODEMPLUS is the emulator I use first now.

None of these are perfect programs, but who said they had to be? I have not seen any need to buy a terminal emulator with such a wide selection of good software available in the public domain. One or the other of those above has always met my needs.

### DAL-ACE RESOURCE EXPERTS

Bailey, Bill. 271-4784. (B)  
 Chan, David. 495-8207. (B)  
 Clarke, Tim. 960-7372. (B)  
 Davis, Bo. 270-5544. (I)  
 Dunayer, Adam. 680-9018. (I)  
 Gillen, Dave. 245-2732. (I)  
 Greenlee, Rich. 267-7428. (B)  
 Hafele, Harry. 348-7745. (I)  
 Maxham, Mark. 238-5949. (B)  
 Mullens, Dow. 272-3004. (B).  
 Newell, Wes. 423-1781. (I)  
 Oradat, Cecil. 690-3155. (I).  
 Parker, Travis. 840-9586. (B)  
 Penn, Tandy. 276-8796. (I)  
 Pennington, Jerry. 223-8132. (B)  
 Rabinek, Tom. 681-2280. (I).  
 Runyon, Ernie. (817) 485-0871. (I).  
 Rush, Jeff. 661-1289. (I).  
 Sadow, Phil. 644-3325. (I).  
 Sagor, Fred. 424-0291. (I)  
 Scott, Ron. 436-0297. (B)  
 Sladeczek, Joe. 276-1443. (B)  
 Taylor, Frank. 242-4598. (B)  
 Wiant, Jim. 690-4188. (I)  
 Williams, Edmund. 341-9297. (I)  
 Zegub, Tom. 234-1958. (B)

### \*\*\* HARDWARE GALORE \*\*\*

by John Pellet

I recently found a source for 400/800 parts at very attractive prices. I have not ordered from them yet but I intend to since some of their prices are too good to pass up. Below is a sample from their latest catalog along with address and phone number for ordering.

AMERICAN TV  
 15338 Inverness Street  
 San Leandro, CA 94759  
 415-483-7988

10K OS Board w/ chips.....\$16.00  
 16K RAM Board.....\$24.50  
 800 Motherboard w/ IC's.....\$26.50  
 CPU Board w/ 3 LSI's incl. 6T1A.....\$24.50  
 Pokey chip.....\$4.50  
 800 Power Supply Board w/ RF Mod.....\$10.00

If you want more information or have any experience with this group please see me at the next meeting.



# The Latest Innovations From CDY For Your Atari System

## OMNIMON! Resident Monitor

**ANTIC July '83** review by David Duberman:

"OMNIMON! by David Young is a machine-language monitor that should have come with the ATARI. In fact, every microcomputer should have this sort of hardware based monitor installed. Most, however, do not. Now, for a relatively low cost, you can equip your ATARI 400/800 with a truly sophisticated programming tool. Whether you're an experienced programmer or a wondering beginner, OMNIMON can, if wisely used, help you to fully understand the working of your computer."

**ANALOG July '83** review by Brian Moriarty:

"OMNIMON! can be a great addition to your ATARI computer if you know what to do with it. The ability to "freeze" a running program on-the-fly and examine the hardware registers is invaluable for testing and debugging; the sector-level disk functions are alone worth the price of the board . . . OMNIMON! might be one of the smartest investments you can make."

**September '83:** "Those of you who read my review of OMNIMON! in issue #12 know what a godsend it is for serious programmers. This ROM-resident monitor has saved me many hours of program development and debugging time, and recently made it possible for me to recover several otherwise unsalvageable text files that were lost when my word processor accidentally destroyed a disk directory. Ironically, the review you are reading is one of those salvaged files! Three of the ATARIs in our offices are now equipped with OMNIMON! boards, and more are on the way. Staff programmers Tom Hudson and Charlie Bachand both swear by OMNIMON!"

### What is OMNIMON!?

OMNIMON! is a PC board which plugs into your 400/800 (soon to be available for the XLs also) and gives you complete control of your computer. Even though it is always available (by pressing SELECT and SYSTEM RESET) it takes up no user memory because it resides in the unused 4K block at \$C000. Use it to interrupt, examine, and manipulate any program in memory whether it be disk, cassette, or cartridge based. It is especially good for program development or customization of existing programs. The flexible disk I/O allows you to write to or read from disk in either single or double density. You can edit raw sector data or even load a file without DOS. Many debugging tools are at your disposal: Display / Alter memory or 6502 registers, Disassemble memory, Search memory, Hex / Char modes, Single Step execution, JSR or GOTO address, Push / Pull stack, Printer dump, etc. After interrupting a program with OMNIMON!, many times it is possible to return to the program as if you had never left it (e.g., BASIC, DOS, etc.). Instructions are provided for the addition of a simple toggle switch to make OMNIMON! invisible, thus making it compatible with all software. An external cable is now provided to eliminate the need to solder directly on the board.

### New 8K OMNIMON! Upgrade

This enhancement, which is available to all OMNIMON! users, includes a substantial number of features not available in the standard version. The 8K OMNI resides in an 8K ROM which has been modified by the addition of a switch for selecting either of two 4K banks. The additional features include Hex Conversion and Hex Arithmetic, Block Move, a Relocater, and a Line Assembler. A Binary Load command allows you to load any binary load file without DOS and doubles as a disk directory command which prints out the start sector of each file. Lockup recovery allows you to recover from system lockup, meaning that when your computer freezes, you can usually salvage the program or text file in memory by popping into 8K OMNI and dumping memory to disk. Advanced users will like the user extensibility feature which allows them to make use of the interface routines of 8K OMNI in their own software. One of the most exciting features of the 8K OMNI is the resident Ramdisk handlers. They allow AXLON Ramdisk owners to use this powerful device with any DOS which uses standard SIO calls and even with boot programs like word processors and games which access the disk a lot. Several additional features make this version very valuable for advanced programmers, but if you have a Ramdisk, 8K OMNI is a MUST!

## New OMNIVIEW 80 Column Upgrade

Did you know that for most applications you do not need an expensive, slot consuming 80 column board to enjoy the power of 80 columns? Would you 400 owners like the convenience of 80 columns? OMNIVIEW takes advantage of the high resolution graphics mode built into the ATARI to generate an 80 column screen editor essentially identical to the ATARI screen editor (E:, S:). Thus, you can use OMNIVIEW in any environment where you would normally use the 40 column "E:" (e.g., BASIC, Assembler/Editor, etc.). The 80 column "E:" of OMNIVIEW has been optimized for speed so that it is not significantly slower than 40 column "E:". In addition, the character font was specially designed to be legible on an ordinary TV set! A monitor is recommended, but not really necessary for casual 80 column operation. The Bit-3 version of LJK's 80 column Letter Perfect has been modified to support OMNIVIEW and other programs are sure to follow. CDY, for example, will soon publish an 80 column screen editor similar to MEDIT for use with OMNIVIEW.

## New OMNIMON-XL and OMNIVIEW-XL

600XL and 800XL owners will soon be able to equip their computers with OMNIMON and/or OMNIVIEW. In addition, the Newell enhanced operating system and Fastchip floating point package will be included at no extra charge. This will essentially turn your XL back into a 400/800 compatible machine and allow it to run most of the software which the XL-OS will not. A switch will allow you to select the XL-OS when needed. Call for availability.

### Pricing

<b>Hardware:</b> Standard OMNIMON! Piggyback Board	\$99.95
OMNIMON-XL / OMNIVIEW-XL	CALL
<b>Enhancements:</b> (subtract \$5.00 if ordered with board)	
8K OMNIMON Enhancement	\$45.00
8K OMNIVIEW Enhancement -	
(4K OMNIMON with 4K OMNIVIEW)	\$45.00
4K OMNIVIEW Enhancement	\$30.00

### Newell RAMROD OS Board

This is a new operating system board which replaces the existing OS board. It allows you to use EPROMs in place of the ATARI OS ROMs and comes with an enhanced OS which includes additional graphics modes and a fast cursor. It also has a socket which will accept any version of OMNIMON and thus is an alternative to the OMNIMON! piggyback board. For the 800 only.

RAMROD OS Board with Standard OMNIMON	\$149.95
RAMROD OS Board with 8K OMNIMON or 8K OMNIVIEW	\$189.95
Same as above with Fastchip Floating Point Package	\$209.95
Fastchip Floating Point Package by itself	\$29.95

### How To Order

We accept checks, money orders, or credit cards (Visa or MC). COD must be paid with cash or MO. Our toll free order desk is (800) 227-3800 ext. 561. Call this number only if you know exactly what you want and be explicit! They can answer no questions. For faster service or if you have questions please call or write:



CDY Consulting  
421 Hanbee  
Richardson, TX 75080  
(214) 235-2146



DEALER INQUIRIES SOLICITED



## PRODUCT REVIEW AND COMPARISON

By Morris Stephens

Rana 1000 vs. Indus 6T

In last month's newsletter, Sam Scott provided a very thorough review of the Rana 1000 Multi-Density disk drive. I own a Rana and an Indus 6T disk drive. Both are good drives which promise to be very popular with Atari owners. I would, therefore, like to offer my thoughts on both drives and make a few comparisons. Someone more technically minded than I, could, I'm sure, do a better job of this, but I will endeavor to do the best that I can anyway. Perhaps someone will offer a more technical review in a future issue.

First of all, my experience, or more correctly, experiences, with the Rana have not all been pleasant. (I say experiences because I am now on my third Rana - and not by choice.) When I bought it I kept hoping that my Rana would be one of the models (if such a model exists) that looks like it's pictured on the box and in all the advertisements; but, of course, it wasn't. What I refer to is the clumsy mechanism installed as an access door. I find it a real pain-in-the-neck. Not only is it difficult to open and close but it is not self-seating, i.e., it does not seat the disk when closed. Rana even has a special error code to note that either the door is not properly closed or the disk is not properly seated. This is a problem I have never before had with either the Atari 810, Apple, Tandon, or Percom drives. It is a problem I experience frequently with the Rana - sometimes even after successfully performing other operations without ever touching the disk or drive in between.

I was, as was Mr. Scott, disappointed that Rana doesn't provide a DOS for their drives, but I knew to expect this. My disappointment was short-lived though after only a few minutes of using MYDOS.

I was also disappointed that Rana doesn't have the confidence in their product that Indus has in theirs (and apparently, for good reason), for a glaring difference in the drives is the Warranty provided. Rana's is for 120 days (4 months). Indus provides a full year.

As mentioned above, I am on my third Rana. The first one had several defects which prevented it from operating properly. The second one did not work at all and blew two power paks. The third seems to be

operating OK, but still exhibits some rather annoying idiosyncrasies.

The Rana & Indus are very similar drives with features that are almost identical. They are both about the same size and weight and have similar appearances. (I have heard that one or more people now producing the Indus were formerly with Rana.) My opinion is that the Rana is a good drive and an excellent buy. But, ... it isn't as good as the Indus 6T] The Indus is, essentially, a very much improved version of the Rana. The Rana is small, compact, and attractive. The Indus is small, compact, and more attractive. The Rana is fast and quiet. The Indus is faster and quieter. In fact, compared to the 810, the Rana is almost unsettling. The Indus is unsettling. If it wasn't for the display lights, one would never know it was operating. The Indus is as quiet compared to the Rana as the Rana is to the Atari 810.

Both drives have function lights and switches on the front panel to control the special drive functions and to provide information to the user. In addition to the power and busy indicators, both drives provide a two digit display to show track number, error codes, density, and other information. They both also have control switches for Protect, drive type, track, and error display. The Rana has one additional button for drive identification. (The Indus combined the drive ID with the drive type.)

Among the most noticeable improvements made by the Indus are the changes on the front panel. Indus provides a simple lever for each access to the drive opening. (Just like the lever pictured on all the advertisements for Rana.) This lever also "seats" the disk insuring that when it is in the down position, the disk is properly aligned and will turn freely. The Indus provides real button type switches on the front panel, not membrane type as provided on the Rana, which usually require one to push them two or three times before finding the proper pressure point. The digital lights and panel switches on the Indus are slanted upward for easy viewing. One has to have the Rana at eye level to read the indicators. And on the Indus the lights are brighter and clearer for easier reading. Finally, the Indus comes with a hinged, soaked-plastic dust cover over the panel and drive opening. This is an extremely nice feature, especially for users with young children, as it prevents roving, inquisitive fingers from touching all the wrong buttons at all the wrong times, without preventing the user from viewing the display lights.

Both drives read and write in three densities:



June, 1984

**PLANO-TARI**

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single, double, and 1.4 for atari 1050 formatted disks.

Both drives are "density smart", i.e., they will automatically adjust to the density of the disk in use. Another feature that Indus provides that Rana does not is the ability to change the density of the drive solely with the use of the panel switches.

One cannot help but be impressed with the packaging of the Indus. It comes with its own black, molded, high impact carrying/storage case. Dividers are provided to allow the user to use the case for storing and carrying up to 80 disks. Also included with the package is the much ballyhooed DOS XL, and three software programs: Wordprocessor, Spread Sheet, and Data Manager. My initial excitement over this windfall was considerably damped when I actually tried using them. Now, DOS XL may be the greatest modification of an original program since Ms. PacMan, but to me it's slow and awkward, and too complicated to use. Compared to MYDOS, . . . Well, that's another story. Maybe someone will make these comparisons in another issue.

The wordprocessing program is also complicated and difficult to use. It is also annoying slow in keyboard response. Any attempt to type over 20-25 words a minute results in nothing but gibberish as it simply omits letters and words that are typed in too fast for it. Also the program allows for only a partial viewing of the typed lines. To view an entire 40-80 character line requires horizontal scrolling. One can never see the entire line at one time (unless one limits all lines to 39 characters).

The Spread Sheet and Data Manager programs were left out of my package. In their place was a note promising shipment as soon as the Warranty Card is received.

It is nice that the Indus provides all this lagniappe with their drive, but I think their product is sufficiently superior that these extra items are not necessary to persuade the buyer to purchase it. Instead, I would prefer they leave them out altogether and reduce the price accordingly.

The one feature that the Rana has that is not provided on the Indus (in spite of the fact that three dealers informed me that it did), is the diagnostics functions. The most important of these is the ability to independently format disks. The problem with these functions, called the "tool box", is that to switch to the diagnostics mode requires one to take a sharp pointed instrument (pen or pencil) to flip the dip switches (presumably named after the inventor), located

in a recessed hole in the rear of the drive. And, what Rana doesn't tell us is that while in this mode, the drive is completely disengaged from the computer. No activity is possible between computer and drive until the dip switch (or switches) is reset.

Since I really don't have much need for the functions provided by the "tool box", especially since it is rather inconvenient to use, I would, frankly, prefer having two Indus drives. (Was there ever any doubt?) But since the dealer is now defunct, I seem to be stuck with the Rana.

I ran some comparative times on different functions in both single density and double density. Figures are average times for running each function 10 times: average DD format time for Rana - 40.2 sec., for Indus - 29.9 sec.; SD format time for Rana - 40.5, for Indus - 28.9 sec.; average copy time for 126 sector program SD and 63 sectors DD, for Rana - 45.1 for DD to DD and 1.05 min. for SD to SD, for Indus - 45.2 sec. for DD/DD and 1.01 min. for SD/SD. Delete times for the same programs: Rana SD - 30.7 sec., DD - 16.4, for Indus SD - 31.8 sec., DD - 16.2 sec. I think it is important to know that the average times for the Rana did not include the time wasted opening the access door and reseating the disk 5 of the 10 times the copy program was run in DD format. This usually took an additional 15 to 20 seconds to recognize the problem and then correct it.

All in all, for the price, the Rana is, as I said, a good drive. It is certainly a better buy than the Atari 1050, which operates only in single density and "enhanced" density. But, for those that can afford the extra \$75 to \$100 I think the Indus GT is the better buy. One of the biggest advantages it has over the Rana, at least over my Rana, is reliability. The Indus has been absolutely problem free. In fact, the only complaint I have with the Indus is that the access opening is not big enough, i.e., the slit is too thin. Some disks are thicker than other disks, and if one is using both sides and putting labels on the disks, they get hung up and are difficult to pull out. This is a minor annoyance which I solved by keeping a pair of tweezers handy. Based on my experiences so far, I would not hesitate to recommend the Indus GT to anyone wanting another drive. However, I reserve final judgement until later to determine their long term reliability and serviceability.



--> SIG <--

"SIG" is the acronym for "Special Interest Group". These groups are composed of members having a common interest in a specialized area of the general computing field. These specialized areas range from languages, to applications and special features of the ATARI. Join in with one of the groups listed below and get more out of your computer! If you would like to start a new SIG, send your name, phone number, and a description of the subject to Jim Chaney, DAL-ACE, 916 E. Berkeley, Richardson, Tx 75081. Deadline for all SIG information is the 15th of the month.

--> FORTH <--

The next meeting of the FORTH SIG will be held on Thursday, June 14, 8:00 p.m. at the home of Eric Neeren, 2118 Teton Drive, Carrollton. Eric's home phone is 245-245-7429.

FORTH SIG meetings usually consist of two parts: (1) an exchange of information about the FORTH computer language, especially on ATARI computers, and (2) a general show-and-tell discussion about anything relating to ATARI computers. Everybody is invited!

--> BUSINESS <--

The BUSINESS SIG is interested in applications such as Word Processing, Bookkeeping, Spreadsheets, Accounting, and Other business applications. Call Rich Greenlee at 267-7428 (Metro Number) for more information on this SIG.

--> EDUCATION <--

The next meeting of the EDUCATION SIG will be held the Wednesday prior to the regular DAL-ACE Saturday meeting at 6:30 P.M. at Software Etc., 14400 Dallas Parkway (across from Ewing Buick).

--> GRAPHICS <--

Members interested in the GRAPHICS SIG, please contact Sandra Stephens, 827-0493.

--> CP/M <--

The next meeting of the CP/M SIG will be held Tuesday, June 5th, at 7:30 P.M. in the home of Jim Chaney, 916 E. Berkeley, Richardson. Any questions you might have, please contact Ed Bohneemann at 495-1803. Hope to see some new faces at this next meeting.

-->TELE-COMMUNICATIONS <--

Contact Ernie Runyon (817)485-0871 for additional information on this SIG.

NEXT MEETING - JULY 14, 1984

RICHARDSON CIVIC CENTER - RICHARDSON, TEXAS

DIRECTIONS: From LBJ (635), take Central Expressway (Highway 75) North to Arapaho Road in Richardson. Turn left (West) on Arapaho Road. The Civic Center is on the left between the Highway 75 service road and the Richardson Public Library. Guests are WELCOME!!

MEETING AGENDA

MAIN HALL (12:NOON TO 5:00 P.M.)

- NEWSLETTER DISTRIBUTION
NEW MEMBER REGISTRATION
DAL-ACE EXPERT TABLE
SIDEWALK SALE TABLE
DAL-ACE MEMBERS ONLY
USED EQUIP. OR SOFTWARE
NO CHARGE TO MEMBERS
BULLETIN BOARD TABLE
GENERAL VENDORS

MEETING ROOM (12:NOON TO 5 P.M.)

- HARDWARE & SOFTWARE DEMONSTRATIONS (12 TO 1)
CLASSES (1 TO 2)
BUSINESS MEETING AND NEW MEMBER QUESTIONS (2 TO 3)
PROGRAM (3 TO 4)
SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS (4 TO 5)

VENDOR RESERVATIONS

Vendors may reserve table space prior to the meeting by calling Jim Chaney (231-4402). Fee collections and table assignments will begin at 11:45, after which the vendors may begin to set up their areas. Those tables which have been reserved but not yet claimed by 12:30 may be purchased by other vendors at that time. Prepaid reservations will not be released. Space assignments will be on a "first come, first served" basis, unless prepaid. The current meeting facility allows for approximately 30 vendor tables.

NEWSLETTER ADVERTISEMENTS

Personal Classified ads will be published free of charge for current members. Commercial rates are \$35.00 per full page (7 1/2" horizontal by 9" vertical), \$25.00 per half page (7 1/2" horizontal by 4 1/4" vertical), and \$15.00 per quarter page (3 1/2" horizontal by 4 1/4" vertical). Commercial ads must be camera ready. The deadline for all ads is the 15th of the month. Mail or deliver copy to DAL-ACE Newsletter, 916 E. Berkeley, Richardson, Texas 75081.

\*\* DISCLAIMER \*\*

The articles and advertisements contained in this newsletter reflect the opinion of the respective author. Members are encouraged to offer opposing opinions on any subject (relevant to computing) at any time. We will not, knowingly, publish fraudulent or malicious material. The purpose of this newsletter is to present information for your consideration ... you, the reader, are the final judge on any product or advice presented.

--EDS

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DAL-ACE membership is \$16.00 per year. This newsletter is written, edited, and published by club volunteers. Its availability and/or distribution may, at times, be subject to circumstances beyond the control of the club officers. Members will note that their membership renewal month appears as the first three (3) letters on the address label.

Other ATARI user groups may obtain copies of this newsletter on an exchange basis.

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