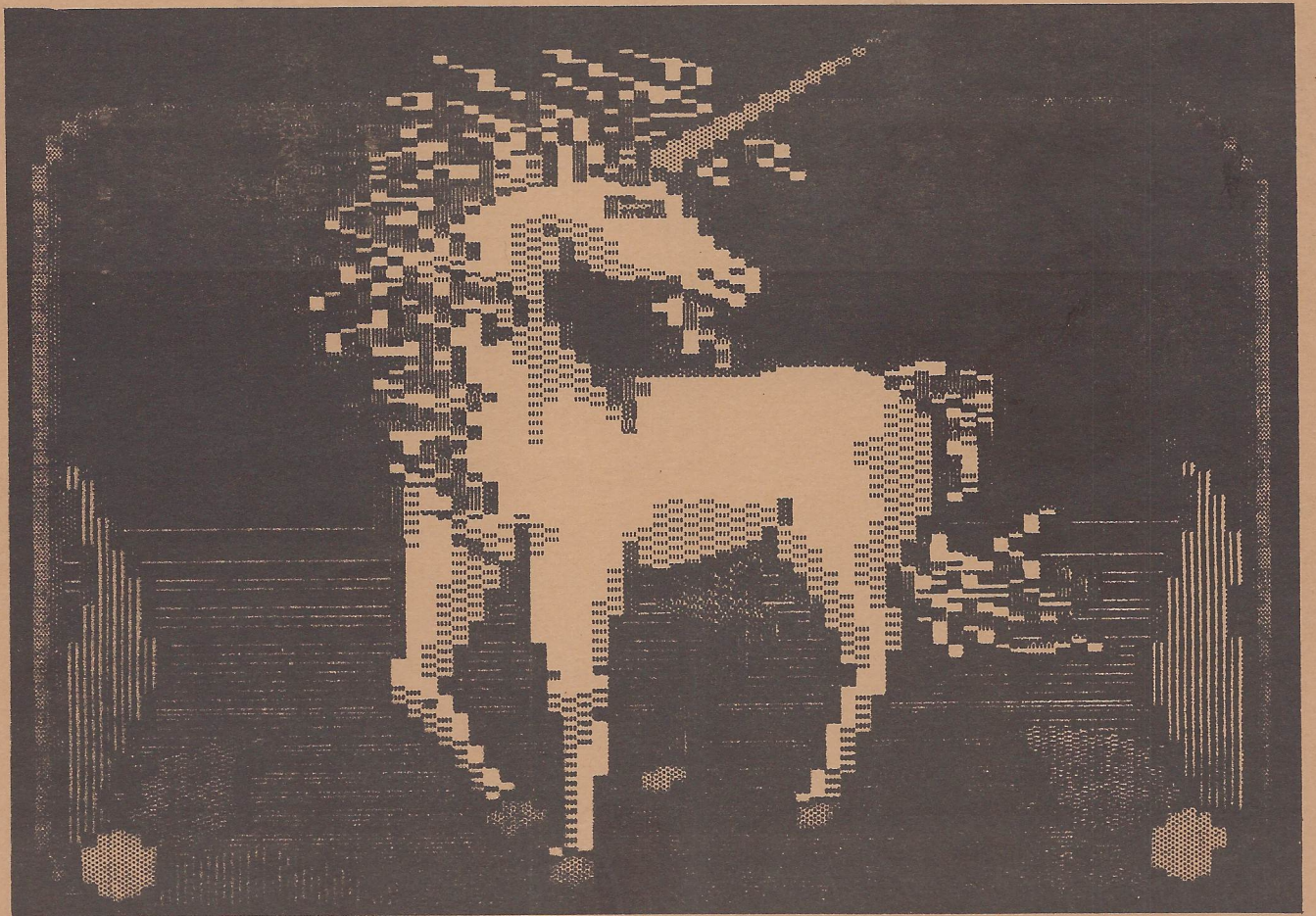


DALLAS ATARI COMPUTER ENTHUSIASTS

VOLUME 5 ISSUE 10 NOVEMBER 1984



PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

Where, oh where, has little olde Atari gone? The rumors fly, but there is little or no real facts to report. Both *Antic* and *The Wall Street Journal* have run articles indicating that Atari will continue to produce the XL series beyond the end of the year. According to *The Wall Street Journal*, Atari has expanded and enhanced its production facilities to produce the XL Computers and the Game machine (2600) at even lower costs. They also state that Atari will have a new, low cost computer, early next year (possibly January), that will support both software and peripherals made for the current line. THAT'S GOOD NEWS!. There has been little or no comment on the PROSYSTEM game machine (256 colors per line and 100 players). THAT'S BAD NEWS! There has also been no word regarding a User Group Support activity within the new organization. Oh well, we will just have to wait and see what happens.

NEWSLETTER

The Board has voted to open the Disk Library to the members of the Newsletter Production Committee (NPC). What does that mean? The NPC meets once each month to put the Club Newsletter together. This is a voluntary effort for which there has been no compensation. As of the September meeting, the members of this committee will be allowed to make copies of the Disk Library disks at no cost (they must supply their own disks). This activity will take place at the end of the production meeting and is limited to about an hour. If you would like to get in on these activities (both the newsletter production and the disk copying) contact the Newsletter Editor (Myron Walters). The purpose of this offer is to increase member participation in the Newsletter Production meetings.

'C' LANGUAGE SIG

The first meetings of the new 'C' language SIG have been quite successful! The SIG is distributing DEEP BLUE C (Compiler Disk and Documentation) for a \$17.00 contribution to the SIG finances. The group has selected "C PROGRAMMING GUIDE" by Jack Purdum (published by ORE) as the reference text. The disk and documentation will be available at the next few club meetings and will always be available at the SIG meetings. The SIG is currently meeting twice each month. The next two meeting dates are October 10th and 24th at the home of Jim Chaney starting at 7:30 P.M. (those are Wednesday evenings). All interested members are urged to attend. You are welcome to attend even if you do not want to buy a 'C' compiler at this time.

NEW OFFICERS

It is that time of year again! A proposed slate of new officers will be published in the January issue of the Newsletter. But now is the time to volunteer your services to the club! Write your name and phone number on a card or slip of paper (or any type of writing material) and hand it to one of the officers. Or you may mail it to DAL-ACE, 916 E. Berkeley, Richardson, Tx 75081. You can also offer you friend's name for consideration (be sure they agree). WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT!

NAME & ADDRESS LIST

The name and address list for DAL-ACE members is currently being prepared for distribution. You have the option of NOT having your address listed. In order to have your address (or even your telephone number) omitted from the membership list, contact Jim Chaney at 231-4402 prior to November 1, 1984. All member names will be published. However, address and phone numbers are optional. The membership list will be distributed only at the January, February, and March DAL-ACE meetings (it will not be mailed, except by special arrangement).

REPAIR SERVICES

DAL-ACE is currently seeking the names of companies or individuals that can/will repair Atari equipment. If you know of such, please send name and address to the Newsletter Editor for publication. Also let us know of any company or individual that renders unsatisfactory service. In the latter case we will need specific information before we can publish your experience. In addition, the club is pursuing sources for hardware components (such as chips, boards, etc). We will make these components available as soon as possible.

DISK CATALOG PROGRAM

The Disk Catalog/Index Program finally made it into the Library! It supports both Atari DOS 2.0S and MYDOS Disk Operating Systems. The program is very fast and will support up to 100 disks or 1000 files. Many thanks to Cecil Oradat for his work on this program. (NOTE: Cecil finished his part of the program many moons ago. The "delay" in getting this program into the library was due to the lack of activity on the part of an un-named party!). The same library disk also contains a copy of SECTORMAN, a disk utility program that is the prototype of a commercial system. Both of these programs are fine additions to the DAL-ACE library and I think you will enjoy them.

RESPECTFULLY Jim Chaney

EDITOR'S STRING\$

The response to request for Newsletter articles has been good. Not super fantastic you understand, but GOOD. You'll see articles from several new contributors, some old contributors and of course our regulars this month.

DAL-ACE is on several corporate mailing lists and we receive their advertisements to pass along to our members. In the past this was not done. Some of the ads are for items not advertised nationally and not available locally. Beginning with the October meeting these ads will be kept in a three ring binder on a table at the meeting. Feel free to copy any information you want. But, please do not remove them from the binder. We want them available to all members attending the meetings.

Congratulations to Doug White his July SOUND ADVICE article was reprinted by the Lawrence (Kansas) Atari Computer Club in their August Newsletter....mlw

GLORY CALLS

by Jeff Golden

Your mission, as a volunteer pilot of an un-armed, high-altitude spy-plane, is to fly deep into enemy airspace, and photograph their secret military bases.

Apparently, your marital problems have affected your thinking, since you do not seem to mind that the enemy will be using you for target practice.

Fortunately, the enemy missiles contain American microchips that were tested in Taiwan, before being shipped to Sweden. Now, they are sending them back.

The enemy has decided that the best way to determine which missiles are defective, is to shoot them all at you. You will find that the missiles are easy to avoid, but the game will be all over if just one of those chips is a good one.

Press the red panic button when you run into trouble. No, we will not tell you what it is connected to.

Your light aircraft has a limited fuel-supply, so you must rendezvous with the KC-135 tankers, and refuel.

You will collect bonus points, towards your posthumous Medal of Honor, by passing over and photographing the enemy installations.

One last thing, please make out a will before leaving.

```

100 GRAPHICS 0:SETCOLOR 2,0,0:COLOR 1
120 P=20:SCORE=0:POKE 752,1
140 FOR FUEL=100 TO 0 STEP -1
160 A=65:B=RND(0):IF B>0.8 THEN A=199
170 IF B>0.9 THEN A=77
180 B=10+RND(0)*20:POSITION B,23
190 PRINT CHR$(A)
200 FOR SPACE=1 TO 3
220 POSITION 1,0:PRINT "F=";FUEL;
240 POSITION P,0:PRINT "Y";
260 POSITION 31,0:PRINT "S=";SCORE;
280 POSITION P,1:GET #6,A
300 IF A=199 THEN FUEL=FUEL+30
310 IF A=77 THEN SCORE=SCORE+100
320 IF A=65 THEN GOTO 520
340 C=STICK(0)
360 IF C<B THEN P=P+2
380 IF C<12 THEN P=P-1
400 IF P>29 THEN P=29
420 IF P<10 THEN P=10
440 IF SPACE<3 THEN POSITION 0,23:?
460 NEXT SPACE
480 NEXT FUEL:POSITION 0,20
500 ? "OUT OF GAS ";:GOTO 540
520 POSITION P-2,0:? "SMASH";
540 IF STRIG(0)=0 THEN GOTO 100
560 GOTO 540
    
```

NOVEMBER MEETING

IT'S DISK DRIVE TUNE-UP TIME!!!

There will be a special hardware program for the November DAL-ACE meeting. Bring your disk drive and/or computers and we will clean, grease and set the speed on your drives and do memory tests on your computer. A clean well running drive is the key to a dependable computer. If your drive matches everyone else then you can exchange disks without worrying about errors. There is also the possibility that some copy-protected programs will not run if your disk speed is off. So bring your systems to the DAL-ACE "service bench" for a complete checkout at the November meeting.

See you in November!

Doug Verkuil
Vice-President in charge of Programs

*** PERSONAL ADS ***

Personal Ads are printed free of charge for any paid up member of DAL-ACE. If you have something to sell (COMPUTER ORIENTED PRODUCT) or need something for your system, send your "copy" to the newsletter address by the 15th of the month for publication.

FOR SALE:

EPROM Eraser \$ 40.00
MPC EPROM Programmer \$100.00
NEW Delta 10 Printer \$390.00
CALL Wes Newell at 423-2697

FileManager 800+ (new) \$ 35.00
CALL Myron Walters at 691-3401

JOYSTICK JOCKEY CHAMPIONSHIP

Maybe you can't run a 4 minute mile, or do a triple somersault with a half twist off the horse, but I bet that you sure can slay those aliens in the latest arcade game. The question is "Who is the club champion?".

Who is the USA champion?... Who is the World champion? Maybe some of the other clubs would like to get in on this contest. Who knows, maybe someday we can promote it as an Olympic event. After all, there is a great deal of physical skill involved, and a heavy dose of natural born agility as well. Who is to say that playing arcade games, at a championship level, is any less demanding than riding a horse or playing volley ball.

Heretofore, choosing the joystick champion has been made difficult by the fact that there has been no common denominator, no common game that is both challenging, and demanding. A game that requires concentration and endurance of the highest level. One that does not have a top limit to the score, and will not let up until it defeats its human challenger.

The game must also be affordable. Not everyone is willing to put \$5225.25 into Pac-Man machines, in order to achieve a high skill level.

With this criteria in mind, we are open for nominations for the championship game. However, just to get things started, I would like to nominate, and start with, the "Glory Calls" game that is published in this issue. The game is crude, but it is a challenge and everyone can play it. It's free.

The rules for the contest are as follows:

1. No prizes will be awarded, except for the satisfaction of knowing that you are the champion. (You do not want to lose your amateur standing, do you?)
2. Everyone is eligible, including the club officers, members of their immediate families, the public at large, and the residents of Afghanistan.
3. No fair modifying the game or disabling attract. Attract mode is one of the unplanned "features" of the game. (It simulates an emergency situation, right in the middle of the attack, and it is quite often fatal).

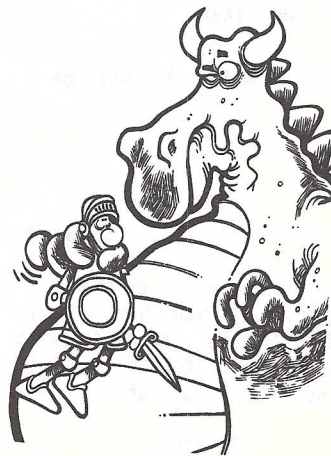
4. Pressing the space bar to turn off attract is permitted, but only AFTER the lights go out, NOT BEFORE.

5. Record your top score and fuel level. (fuel level will be used as the tie-breaker). If you run up a large score, one that exceeds the positions allotted on the screen, you can read the score, by hitting RESET, and typing in ? SCORE when the READY message comes up.

6. Call in your score. We will accept your word for it, and will print the names of the top ten finishers each month, that is, until the interest dies out. The number to call is (214) 252-3268.

The newsletter print deadline is 2 weeks before the meeting, so get your calls in early. Call in your score anyway, even if it is not very large. We would like to know how many are playing, and will publish the count of calls.

Honorable mention goes to the first person who calls in with a score of 0, fuel 0, and swears that they were really trying to score and refuel.



Are your program BUGS getting too big?

CALCULATE YOUR CHECKBOOK BALANCE

by Harold S. Poelchau

Here is a short BASIC program that's useful not only as a fancy calculator to do your checkbook balance but also to demonstrate a few neat tricks in BASIC programming. Let's go through the program step by step to show what it is doing.

Line 50 is where the balance from the previous calculation is kept. The first time through this is 0.

In 60 through 80 we give the user an opportunity to change the old balance if it is wrong. Note how we OPEN the keyboard for INPUT in 70 to receive the answer (Y/N) without the need for pressing the RETURN key. We then test only for the ATASCII code for N (=78) since in most cases the balance would be right.

Line 90 asks for the next check item. The TRAP prevents the program from aborting if non-numeric data is input.

Lines 110 and 140 calculate the balance and print it. Note how we can line up all the balance values with the decimal point in the same position. This is done by calculating a tab value (T) from the string length of the integer portion of the balance (in 120) and poking it into memory location 201. Line 130 prevents us from ever poking 0 into 201 which could have disastrous consequences.

The last part of the program contains a trick to save the final balance for the next time we want to run the program. When finished with the balancing just input 0, and line 100 detours to 160. The next lines set up some text messages and write on the screen the new line 50 with the value of the final balance, followed by the command to save the program on disk. Line 200 positions the cursor on the "text" of line 50. All you have to do is hit RETURN to incorporate the line in the program, and then hit RETURN again to save the changed program.

```

10 REM CHECK BOOK BALANCE CALCULATOR
20 REM BY H. S. POELCHAU
30 REM JUNE, 1984
40 REM *****
50 BAL=0
60 GRAPHICS 0:?:?: "OLD BALANCE IS ";BAL:?:
CORRECT(Y/N)?"
70 OPEN #2,4,0,"K":GET #2,A:CLOSE #2
80 ?:?: IF A=78 THEN ? "OLD BALANCE":INPUT BAL:?:?
90 TRAP 90:?: "ITEM":INPUT I
100 IF I=0 THEN 160
110 BAL=BAL+I
120 T=20-LEN(STR$(INT(BAL)))
130 IF T<1 THEN T=1
140 POKE 201,T:?: " ",BAL
150 GOTO 90
160 GRAPHICS 0:POSITION 2,5
170 ? "HIT RETURN TWICE TO":?: " SAVE FINAL BALANCE.":?
180 ? "50 BAL=";BAL
190 ? "5. ";CHR$(34);"D:CKBOOK.BAS"
200 POSITION 2,7:END

```

ACTION! Toolkit Errata

by Bo Davis

At the last meeting of DAL-ACE, I purchased a copy of "The Action! Toolkit" by OSS. You can imagine my disappointment when the first program I ran, MUSIC.DEM, displayed "S: Error 145." But the problem wasn't a program error. Instead, this program was written for the 800XL and contained the instruction "Graphics (15)" which just wouldn't compute on my old Atari 800.

I was determined to make this program run, so I made the following changes to the source code:

1) Just ahead of the procedure "MAIN," I added this new procedure.

```

PROC Graphics15()
CARD sdstl=#230, dlist, cntr
Graphics(8)
dlist=PeekC(sdstl)
poke(dlist+3,$4E)
FOR cntr=dlist+6 TO dlist+196
DO
Poke(cntr,$0E)
OD
RETURN

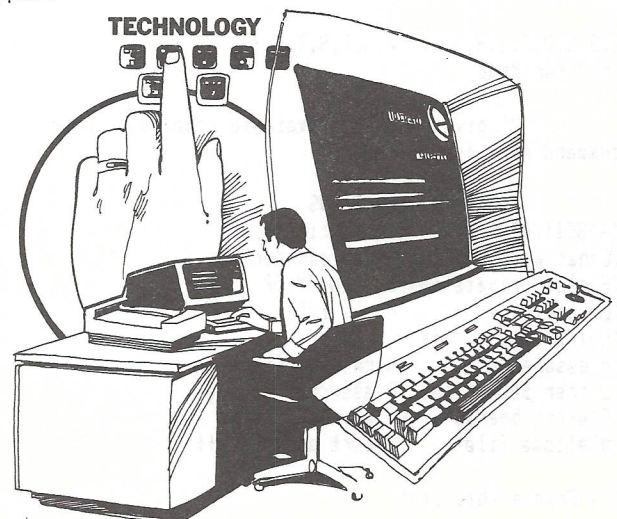
```

2) I changed the instruction "Graphics(15)" the procedure "MAIN" to "Graphics15()".

By making the above changes, you can compile and run this interesting program on your Atari 800, too.

One other error I have discovered in the documentation. In the section "PMG.ACT," the command to set the color registers for the player/missiles should be "PmColor," not "PmSetColor" as stated.

Also, while running the demonstration program "KALSCOPE.DEM," try pressing the space bar and see what happens.



*** Using the Dal-ACE BBS ***
 helpful hints from
 co-sysop Mark Maxham

Thanks to Lance Nelson, the new Dal-ACE bulletin board is up and running. Lance decided on a change of software because he is familiar with AMIS and felt he could keep the board running best with software he knows. With this new program, you, the users, will have to become familiar with using AMIS, since it is quite different from the old software, FOREM.

Logging in is much the same as with FOREM. Once connected, hit RETURN so that AMIS can determine which baud rate you are using. It will then ask you to switch into ATARI mode and hit RETURN again. If using AMODEM, this means switching into ATASCII or Jterm into NO TRANSLATION. Anything I'm not familiar with just go ahead and use the default setting. ATARI mode allows you to receive inverse characters, but other than that it's no big deal.

It then asks you if you have a password. If this is your first time to log on, type 'N'. Then you will be asked for name and phone number, and the password you'd like to use. This will allow you temporary access until Lance can make you a full member of the board, which usually takes only a day or so.

If you do have a password, type 'Y'. Note: the passwords from the old Dal-ACE are not still there! Then you will be prompted for the last four digits of your phone number. Once you enter this you have access to Dal-ACE.

Upon entry to the system, you will see the welcome message. To pause press control-S, to restart press control-Q, and to exit reading (abort) press control-X. This works for every sort of read, such as a message or file, so remember it.

Past the password, you are now officially in the system. You will be prompted with:

General Topics Time: 22:56:24

A,B,C,D,E,G,H,I,L,M,N,O,P,S,T,W,X
 or ? for Menu >

A '?' gives you the available commands. Here is the command menu for Dal-ACE:

DAL-ACE FUNCTIONS

<A>SCII/ATASCII ulletins file
 <C>hat with SYSOP <D>ownload section
 <E>nter private message to SYSOP
 <G>oodbye <H>elp file
 <L>inefeeds on/off
 <M>essage base <N>ew user file
 <O>ther BBS's list <P>assword, please
 <S>witch boards <T>ime on system
 <W>elcome file <X>pert mode on/off

<?> Prints this list

And now a review of the commands...

<A>SCII/Atascii--if you are in one mode and wish to change to another, use this command. Operation is explained above in the logon sequence.

ulletins--this is the second text file you read when logging in. This has any news or pertinent information concerning the BBS.

<C>hat--this command sends Lance a couple of buzzes, indicating you would like to type to him. If he's around, you'll get a 'SYSOP online' message, and he'll start typing.

<E>nter message to sysop--if you have a little note or something that really doesn't need to take up disk space, leave a message to Lance on his printer with this function.

<G>oodbye--when you are finished, use this command to leave the system. If you accidentally bump it, never fear; it asks you to confirm your departure.

<H>elp file--text file concerning the operation of the board, very similar to what you are reading now.

<L>inefeeds on/off--self explanatory.

<N>ew user file--again, similar to what you're reading now.

<O>ther BBS list--a list of other Atari bulletin boards nationwide. If you've got some money to blow on long distance bills, you might find something interesting on the out-of-state Atari boards.

<P>assword--use this the first time you log on to make your official request for a password.

<T>ime on system--tells you how long you've been on.

<W>elcome file--the first text file you see when logging in.

<X>pert mode--when an xpert user, you don't see the main menu printed out every time you are returned to the command mode. Use this when you get familiarized with the system.

You probably noticed I skipped the <M>essage base, <D>ownloads, and <S>witch message bases. These I will cover in greater detail.

<M>essage base takes you to where the action is--the messages. Here you can read and respond to the other users on the system, ask questions, place ads, et cetera. Here is the menu you get when selecting this option:

Loading General Topics

General Topics

35 Messages. Numbered 66-100

(R)etrieve
 (E)nter
 (Q)uick scan
 (S)ummary
 (K)ill
 (M)ain menu

<?> Prints this list

And now for a summary of these...

<R>etrieve--this allows you to read all public messages, and private messages addressed to you. You will be prompted with something like the following:

First Msg 66 - Last Msg 100
Msg# (From-To) or RETURN >

For full forward scan, type 1-999. I think 999 is the highest we'll get, anyway. For reverse scan, type 999-0. If you remember the last message you read when you were last on, you can start right in the middle with something like 82-100, and get all new messages. Note: this prompt will pop up in <Q>uick scan and <T>itles, so refer here when I mention it again.

<Q>uick scan--gives title, author, and date posted of a message. Useful for finding where you left off without having to read all the old messages. This uses the same prompt as <R>etrieve.

<T>itles--gives only the titles of the messages, again with all options for scanning that the <R>etrieve option has.

<K>ill message--if you have a private message you read and have no use for, go ahead and use this to remove it to free up disk space for the board.

<M>ain Menu--returns you to the main section of the board.

<E>nter message--allows you to type in a message to either a specific person or all users. You enter title and recipient. If it's a public message, enter "ALL" for recipient. If private, you will be asked to confirm privacy. Type your message, then hit two RETURN's to exit. You will then be prompted with various save options, such as Save, Edit, List, and Continue. Save saves the text as-is. Edit allows you to make changes in the lines of your message. If you choose this option, you will be asked for the line you wish to retype. List lists your message as it is now. Continue allows you to add on to the end. It's not as good as FOREM, but passable.

<D>ownload section takes you to a sub-program which handles sending and receiving files. Upon entry to the download section, you will see this menu:

DOWNLOAD SECTION MENU

```
<A>scii/Atascii    <D>ownload a file
<F>ile directory  <G>oodbye
<I>ndex file      <L>inefeeds on/off
<M>ain BBS       <T>ime on system
<U>pload a file   <X>pert mode on/off
```

<?> Prints this list

Download section Time: 22:57:56

A,D,F,G,I,L,M,T,U,X
or ? for menu >

New commands introduced are:

<D>ownload: this allows you to receive files from AMIS. There are a lot of them; Lance has a whole 8" drive for them. You will be asked whether or not you are using xmodem protocol. Xmodem is a series of checksums designed

to make sure the sender and the receiver have identical data. If you have this in your terminal program, it will appear on your function menu of your program. If not, you'll have to use a text capture, which is subject to glitches since the transmission is not checked like it is in xmodem. After loading as much of the file as memory will allow, AMIS will prompt you with "Hit any key to begin" or "Xmodem ready". If you are using xmodem, give your program the signal it needs to start the receive routine. If using a text capture, hit a key and then turn on your capture mode. Xmodem will automatically save the file after transmission is complete, but if you use capture you must watch for the end of the program and then turn off capture and dump your buffer to a file.

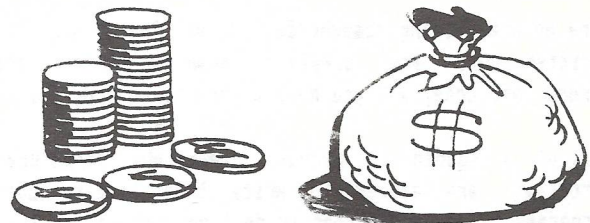
<F>ile directory gives a list of all the programs available for downloading. You can see all of the files at once, or you may just view one type of program, such as games or utilities. The file length is given in 253-byte sectors, so multiply by 2 to get the number of single-density sectors the file will occupy to make sure you have room on your disk.

<U>pload file allows you to send a program or file to AMIS. It is similar to <d>ownload, but in reverse since you are the sender. You give the file name, and number of sectors so AMIS can check to see if there is enough room on the disk. Again, you will be prompted with either "Xmodem ready" or "Begin upload", depending on mode of sending. After AMIS receives the file, you will be returned to the download section menu.

<M>ain BBS returns you to the primary AMIS program and the menu first shown.

This article may contain a few minor discrepancies, but for the most part is accurate in ideas and commands. If you see an error, though, feel free to call it to my attention. Or call it to my phone, along with any further questions you may have. My phone number is in the experts list. Any ideas for future articles would also be appreciated.

Thanks to Lance Nelson for idea and prodding. Additional thanks for to Bob Sigafos for a little inspiration.



PROGRAMMING

by Jeff Golden

Howdy. This is a continuing discussion about programming techniques and styles that was originally started in the July newsletter.

The topic for today's discussion is "Top-Down-Design", and the direct relationship between top-down-design and structured programming.

Programs are usually written to meet a need, solve a problem, or perform a task. A time-honored method for solving large problems is to attack the problem in a binary fashion. Break it in half. If the pieces are still fairly large, then break the pieces in half. Eventually, you reach a point where each piece is small enough for a human to handle.

The process of dividing the task into segments is called top-down-design. You state what you want to do in a requirements statement. Then you break that statement into a series of functional specifications. Each function is then broken down into sub-functions. A sub-function, on the final level, should require less than a page of code.

If you were to write your design on a large sheet of paper, it would resemble a tree structure, with a single main item at the top, several intermediate functions, beneath the main item, and many sub-functions at the bottom level. This is where the name top-down comes from.

For those of you who read last month's column, the above statement should ring a bell. It is also a description of a structured program. The only difference is that a design is written out in English, and the program is written out in code.

Now we are getting somewheres. After The design is written out, you simply sit down and convert the prose into code, and you have a structured program.

All of a sudden it becomes clear why structured programs are easier to write than linear coded programs. The programmer is dealing with a smaller segment of the problem. His only concern, at any given moment, is limited to a small section of code.

Last month, I told you about some of the advantages of structured programs, the fact that they are smaller, faster, easier to write, and easier to maintain. Let me add one more attribute.

Structured programs are quite often bug-free, or almost bugfree. I know of several large programs that survived 3 years of use by 60 different installations with no reported bugs. The secret lies in the fact that the programmer was only dealing with one small section of code at a time.

Back to top-down-design. We mentioned above, writing out your design on a large piece of paper. Don't do it. If you are working on the design for a 10,000 line program, composed of several modules, you would need an enormous piece of paper.

Furthermore, we told you back in July that change is way of life in programming. Large sheets of paper do not accept changes very well. Like everything else, there are many solutions to these problems. Let me describe two of these solutions.

About the best design aid, that I have ever seen, was at a customer location. They had a blackboard that was about 15 feet high and 40 feet long. It was equipped with rolling, library-style ladders. The programmers sat at their terminals, facing the blackboard.

The entire design, for just about anything, could be laid out on that board. Each individual could see just how his piece fit into the big picture. Since it was a chalkboard, it was easy to change any part of the design.

If you are serious about programming, get yourself a chalkboard, the bigger the better. The way to perfection is being able to refine your design before you commit it to concrete. (i.e. Code it).

A big chalkboard is indispensable when more than person is involved in the design. If you want to produce a marketable product, it is a wise move, to bounce your ideas off at least one other person, a person who is not afraid to shoot you down. A chalkboard is a great communicator, which is something most programmers are not.

A second way of getting around the big-paper problems are Hypo-Charts. Hypo-Charts are portable, notebook-sized sheets of paper, that are written to conform to the rules of top-down-design and structured programming.

Page 1 of a Hypo-Chart describes the top goal of your program, and provides an enumerated list of the high-level processes, or functions, that are needed to achieve that goal. The simple prose used to describe

the functions is similar to that of an outline.

Page 1.1 describes, in greater detail, the first high-level function from the list on page 1. It also breaks that function down into an enumerated list of sub-functions. Page 1.2 does the same thing for the second item on page 1.

Page 1. 1.1 describes the first sub-function from the list on page 1.1, and so forth.

In this fashion, it is possible to break down your design to any level of detail, and to record it all on small pieces of paper.

I know of one instance where a team-leader was able to keep four programmer trainees coding like crazy. He was providing them with low-level hypo-charts that he had completed the day before. His own productivity was multiplied by a factor of 3, and the coded results were perfect, in spite of the inexperience of the coders, who were working on their first project.

A hypo-chart page is divided into three vertical columns. The center and largest column describes the process. The left column describes the input for each of the steps in the process, and the right column describes the output from each of the steps.

I have seen Hypos messed up with fancy arrows and God knows what, but this is totally unnecessary. Simple prose, (remember "Keep It Simple Stupid"), is all that is necessary. Loops are depicted by lines in the list that read something like this:

5. Repeat steps 6 thru 10 until end-of-file.

Since we are dealing with structured programming, such a loop should never leave the page.

Hypos are easy to change. Only the affected pages need to be changed, and any text-editor can be used to create, or change, a Hypo.

Hypo charts have a final use. After the coding is done, they become the maintenance document. Someone can pick it up, a year from now, and figure out how the program works. Since Hypos are written in logic, not machine code, they can also be used for converting the program to other machines.

Next month, I would like to take up the subject of testing your programs. Would you believe that structured code, top-down-design, and hypos all tie into making it easier to totally test your code?

REVIEW

By Bob Felice

SOFTWARE REVIEW: Dimension X, Synapse, \$35.00 Category: Shoot 'em Up Game. GRAPHICS: Excellent SOUND: Excellent USER INTERFACE: Excellent

You have seen bits and pieces of Dimension X before. The battle is fought on the desert world of Jaraloba. Your Desert map displays twenty five sectors in a five by five grid. One sector is the capitol, which you must prevent the Rigillians from surrounding. Another sector is your base, where you get your ship repaired and refueled. You travel from sector to sector using your Automatic Boosters (shades of Star Raiders).

Some of the sectors are empty, some contain the nasty Rigillians, and some are unknown until you navigate your ship into or adjacent to them (just like a few Star Trek games I know). Once in a sector, your Quadra Scan (which looks suspiciously like the one in Battle Zone) helps you to locate the enemy (although it is of more use in spotting the Rigillians sneaking up on you than it is in the forward direction).

The planet surface is like nothing you have ever seen (unless you have seen Ball Blazer. This is one case where Dimension X was the borrow-ee, and not the borrower.) Until you see this game in action, you simply will not believe how rapidly a computer can update a screen! In moving between sectors, you find yourself in a trench, avoiding electrified Delta Gates, as well as the walls of the trench itself. (If this is beginning to sound to you a little bit like Star Wars, you're right.)

To protect you against damage, you have five shields. They wear out as they take damage, (and, at more advanced levels of play, they wear out very quickly!). In addition, various parts of your ship can be damaged, including your fuel tank, Quadra Scanner, and Desert Map. Take too much damage, and the game is over. Shoot enough bad guys, and the Federation awards you with a decoration (so far, I have yet to do better than Advance Warrior Class 4).

Every time you play the game you get a different Desert Map. You can set various play parameters to more or less balance the game to your own abilities. Despite having seen so much of Dimension X before, I still enjoy it. In fact, I would consider it a worthy successor to Star Raiders. If you like games of this Gen're, by all means give Dimension X a try.

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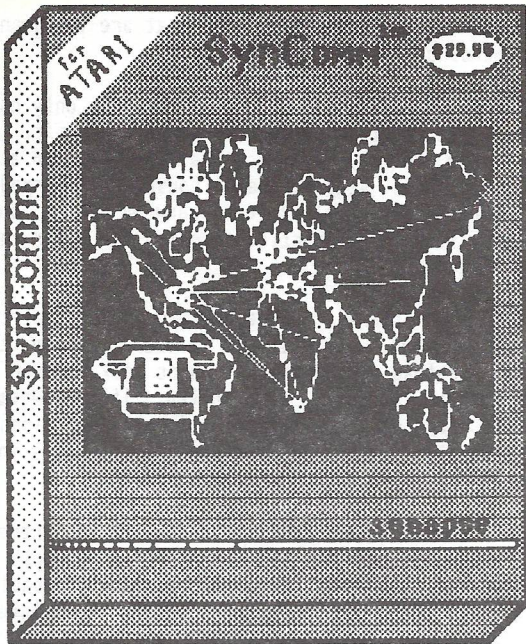
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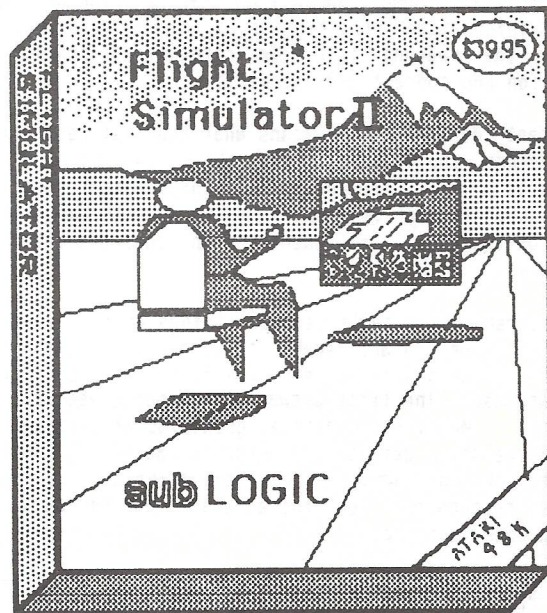
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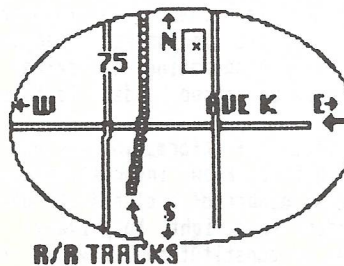
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Information And The Right To Privacy, A Perspective

By Dave Gillen

Welcome back! Today I'd like to depart from my usual technical forums and talk about information and privacy. I hope that you'll read on since this topic affects everybody. If it sounds too boring, well, there are a lot of other articles to choose from.

First off, let me state that these are my opinions. They don't reflect the opinions of the board of directors or of DALACE. Whew, now everybody else is safe!

I decided to write this article after our September meeting (once again) touched on membership lists. Being a lousy public speaker, I've turned to discussing this issue in print. Should you be interested in expressing an opposing view, I'm sure that Myron has plenty of space!

Now for some meat. I don't believe that a membership list should exist (for membership/public distribution)! Pretty harsh, eh? Read on and I'll explain why.

There are several reasons for this opinion. Some may be fairly trivial. Some can only be seen if you work with computer information on a regular basis. I would like to classify the reasons into two categories: content of information and concept of information.

The content of information means what the list is telling you. Whether you know it or not, the membership list can tell quite a bit. The concept of information is a bit more vague. To me it means how the list relates to a member of the club. It touches on an individual's right to privacy.

The membership list tells several things on the surface. Obviously your name, some telephone numbers, and (optionally) an address. Who maintains the accuracy of this database? The first answer everybody gives is, "the secretary." Well, Susan does a great job at keeping our club membership database current. But she doesn't fabricate the information. You, the members, are really the ones responsible for the accuracy of the database. Have you done your jobs?

To be quite honest, even I haven't! Yes, it's true. There's bogus data about me in our club database. Why? Because it changes too frequently! I've had six work numbers in the past six months. My job dictates a lot of mobility. I can't keep the data current because it changes too fast. I know I'm not alone.

What about the integrity of our database and equipment? I know that Filemanager gets finicky and is fairly limited when it comes to large databases (300 - 500 records is "large" here). Sometimes the computer systems like to take vacations, too. Generally at the wrong times, though. When either of these events happen (and they have) the membership database has to be reconstructed. It is never quite as good as the original, either.

The membership database isn't perfect. It's good enough for the operation of DALACE but I wouldn't use it to

deliver my payroll check! I think that it serves its purpose. Why do we want to give it out to the public?

"Public? Why we just want copies for the club's members."

Gee, I've heard that before. So what are you gonna use it for? Sending Christmas cards?

In the two years as a member of DALACE, only one person has sent me something using the membership list. And that was in the last two months. What do you need an address for? You gonna stop by their house? I learned that it was courtesy to call before showing up on somebody's doorstep (it's more practical, too). You never know, they might have moved!

Ahh and then there's phone numbers. This one has some (limited) value. Yes, it is easier to flip through a listing instead of the Dallas phone book. Given that we don't issue the lists very often, it's sometimes more accurate (and easier) to call Information. Then there's always paper, pencil, and the question, "what's your phone number?" Obviously, I'm not convinced.

So what else does the membership list tell? There's still more! Did you know that you're telling the world that you have at least \$500 of disposable income? Probably closer to \$1000. Tally up the cost of your complete system. Yes, you could have lived without the Atari but you felt you had the extra money.

Extra money? You wouldn't tell what your annual gross salary is to a stranger, would you? Yet you've just broadcast that you had extra money. You may have it again next year, too! Well gee, you might also have other goodies in your home. If you bought an Atari, you might also have a color TV, or maybe a VCR, or even a nice stereo...

Think about it for a moment. That's a lot of information that you wouldn't normally tell the man on the street. Yet you've allowed that same information to be printed. Do you trust everybody that picks up a copy of that list? Not me!

So what would prevent someone from selling this list? Nothing. There are companies that are dying to know that you have disposable income. Why, you might even buy their product next year. There are also companies that are in the business of telling other businesses who might be willing to buy their products. These folks are very interested in lists of people. Lists like our membership list. Do you want more junk mail?

To summarize, then, the information content of our membership list is subject to accuracy problems, integrity problems, broadcasting of "extra" information, and may wind up in undesired hands. Is this what we want?

The concept of information is not as clear cut. Who has the right to know information about you? Just because you're a member of a club (like DALACE) does that mean you surrender your right to privacy? For those of you that thrive on constitutional law, is the right to privacy in the spirit of the Bill of Rights?

Privacy (cont)

When I joined DALACE I wanted to share my knowledge of the Atari with others (and share in what they knew). When I want to share, though, I want to be the one that controls who knows my whereabouts. I did not automatically grant to DALACE the right to spread my name, address, and phone number to everyone. I still retain that right. Granted I may be the extreme case (the term is paranoid, I believe) but I believe I'm not alone.

Think in terms of the daily ritual of our lives. When we sign up for telephone service, we may surrender some privacy so that others can call us. We might also get an unlisted number so that only selected individuals can call us, allowing us to retain control of that information.

If we have magazine subscriptions we only want to give up enough of our privacy so that we get the magazine.

In both cases, we only surrender enough of our privacy to get something done. We have not given the telephone company or the magazine the right to use the information for anything else. Although they don't always see it that way. In this sense, it is our responsibility to keep the phone company and magazines in line!

When it comes to our DALACE membership, we have only given up enough privacy so that we may receive a newsletter. That's it! Any other club functions are subject to our consent. We have made no other agreement and have surrendered no other rights.

Before I close, we should also consider controlling information after we give it out. Normally, we keep addresses and the like current with a change of address notice. When the information leaves our immediate realm of control we can no longer guarantee its accuracy. Yet we are still bombarded by its existence, correct or not!

The concept of information, then, is what value we place on data and what value we are willing to give up to go about our daily living. It is also the level of control that we maintain over its accuracy. I believe that I should not be giving up my privacy to share my knowledge of a home computer. It isn't worth it to me. I therefore feel that a club membership list should not exist.

If you feel otherwise, let's hear about it. After all, it's your information and your rights!

LIST.BAS -- A BASIC Utility

by Bob Felice

The other day I had occasion to print a BASIC program listing. This was a modem driver program that was giving me some trouble, so I thought I'd look at it to see what was wrong. But I couldn't list it very well -- it was littered with inverse video comments, and assembly language subroutines imbedded in strings. All of these non-printer into fits! What to do?

First, I saved the program as a .LST file. This is the uncompressed form that saves the program as an ATASCII file. Then I wrote LIST.BAS. This program reads in your .LIS file, and translates it into standard letters. All of the inverse letters are turned into normal letters, and all of the non-printable characters are turned into "*". This allowed me to list my program.

Later, I discovered another use for LIST.BAS: I could run message files that had been downloaded from bulletin boards through it before printing them.

```

2 Rem CONVERTS ALL NON-ASCII CHARACTERS TO PRINTABLE ASCII
  "*"
3 Rem INPUT MUST BE A .LIS FORMAT
10 Rem PROGRAM LISTER
20 Dim Input$(256),Output$(256),File$(15),Temp$(1)
30 Print "ENTER NAME OF BASIC.LIS FILE"
40 Input File$
50 Trap 70:Open #1,4,0,File$
60 Goto 100
70 Print "ERROR Nr.:";Peek(192):Stop
100 Trap 200
110 Input #1;Input$:Output$=""
111 ? "IN=";Input$:If Len(Input$)=0 Then 110
120 For I=1 To Len(Input$)
130 Temp$=Input$(I,I)
140 If Asc(Temp$)>126 Then Temp$=Chr$(Asc(Temp$)-128)
150 If Asc(Temp$)<32 Then Temp$="*"
160 Output$(I,I)=Temp$
170 Next I
171 ? "OUT=";Output$
180 Lprint Output$
190 Goto 100
200 Close #1:End
    
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*** SOFTWARE/HARDWARE REVIEW ***

RELAX

The Stress Reduction System

Review by Bob Dain

Because *RELAX* is a kind of special system for the ATARI, different from the usual Business, Utility, Educational, and Game software we've come to know and love, maybe I should start this review by blowing my cover a bit. While most of you know me as a mild-mannered computer nerd of the gross amateur class, in real life I am a clinical psychologist. Therefore, I have been waiting patiently/impatiently for some hardware/software which would really be useful to people who might want to use the computing power of the ATARI for psychological/behavioral change. There is a lot of such software for almost all of the other popular computers, but for some reason ATARI is still considered primarily a game machine. But let me get off that particular soapbox for the nonce, because thanks to Synapse and one of our friendly vendors, MCP, I finally have my hands on the *RELAX* package, which I have been very eagerly awaiting since the first announcements, several months ago.

RELAX turns your ATARI into a bonafide biofeedback machine and really contains just about everything you might need to learn deep relaxation skills. To do all this the *RELAX* system utilizes an EMG (Electromyographic) unit and a headband with three contacts to monitor muscle tension signals from the important *frontalis* muscle in the forehead. All of this is translated via software into 1) a continuous line graph sampling at one of 8 rates from 60 to .25 per second, and averaging over several different time periods, if you wish; 2) a "sensoral kaleidoscope" with sound, which makes a kind of "semi-hypnotic" visual imagery; and 3) a balloon game in which you control the flight of a balloon with your tension level to catch balloons and avoid pins.

Disk and cassette software are both included in the package (with Commodore software on the reverse of both). Also you get an instructional audiotape which starts you out and gives some relaxation instructions and a 200 page book (costs extra) which is really a pretty complete self-help manual on all of the important dimensions of stress management.

Is there anything wrong with it? Well, the graphic display is purely relative, so that you have only subjective evidence that you are getting more relaxed when you pick it up from day to day. Along the same

lines, the "fine" control on the EMG unit not only lowers the trace when moved down, but also decreases its variability as a function of resistance. However, I don't think this is very important for the intended non-professional user, and even has the positive virtue of decreasing the likelihood of getting too competitive with one's self, part of the killer stress response.

I've tested the system with a number of people now, including my family, and find it pretty universally liked. If you, or someone else you care about, is serious about stress reduction and will devote 15-20 minutes a day to practice with *RELAX* for several weeks and will read the book and follow its suggestions, I'm pretty sure you will get many times your money's worth.

RELAX: The Stress Reduction System lists for \$99.95 and is available to DAL-ACE members at Metropolitan Computer Products for about \$75.00.

KING CRIBBAGE

Reviewed by Bo Davis

Cribbage is a card game that dates back to the early 1600's and was very popular with servicemen during WW II. Now Hayden Software has made this game available on the Atari.

In this version of the game, you play against the computer. The computer also takes care of shuffling and dealing the cards. There are two options for scoring -- let the computer keep score or you can figure your own hand. For those of you not familiar with the game, if you miss some points in your hand, your opponent can claim them and the computer never overlooks anything.

The program also has fifteen levels of difficulty. This should satisfy anyone from beginner to expert. The higher the level, the longer the computer takes to decide his play, but the delay isn't very long.

One word of warning. Remember the old saying -- don't believe anything you hear and only half of what you see. The illustration of the game screen on the packaging showing a multicolor, high-resolution graphics display is not what you get with this program. What is actually displayed is in graphics mode zero using a redefined character set. This display is good, but was still a disappointment since it was not what the vendor had advertised.

The cost of this program is also very nice. It was available for under \$9.00 at a local discount software store. At a price like that, I am definitely getting my money's worth out of it.

If you have enjoyed playing cribbage in the past or would like to learn a new game that is both easy and challenging, I highly recommend King Cribbage. If enough members become interested in this game, perhaps a tournament can be arranged.

NEWSLETTER PRODUCTION SCHEDULE

NOVEMBER Newsletter: Copy should be turned in by October 20th. The production meeting will be Saturday, October 20th at 1:00 pm in the home of Jim Chaney 916 E. Berkeley, Richardson.

DECEMBER Newsletter: Copy should be turned in by November 17th. The production meeting will be Saturday, November 17th.

--> 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 <--

Contact Eric Weern at 245-7429 or Fred Sagor at 424-0291 for information about the October meeting.

FORTH SIG meetings usually consist of two parts: (1) an exchange of information about the FORTH computer language and (2) a general discussion about anything relating to ATARI computers.

--> 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 PARKWAY COMPUTING, 14400 Dallas Parkway (across from Ewing Buick). Contact Tim Clarke at 960-7372 for information.

--> 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, November 9th, at 7:30 P.M. in the home of Jim Chaney, 916 E. Berkeley, Richardson. Any questions you might have, please contact Ed Bohnemann at 495-1803.

--> ADVENTURE SIG <--

Contact Ed Kobus at 492-2922 for additional information on this BRAND NEW SIG.

--> "C" SIG <--

"C" is a language SIG. There will be two Wednesday meetings in October, 10-10 and 10-24 at 7:30 at 916 E. Berkeley. Contact Gary Sewell at 214-727-6567 or Jim Chaney at 231-4402 for information on this BRAND NEW SIG.

NEXT MEETING NOVEMBER 3, 1984

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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 Hwy 75 service road and the Richardson Public Library. Guest are WELCOME!!

MEETING AGENDA

NOON TO 4:00 SALES (VENDORS & CLUB)

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12:00 TO 2:00 SPECIAL PROGRAMS (in small room)

DEMONSTRATIONS

2:00 TO 3:00 BUSINESS MEETING

3:00 TO 4:00 SIGS (in small room)

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.

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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, 4033 Southwestern Blvd, Dallas, Texas 75225.

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

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