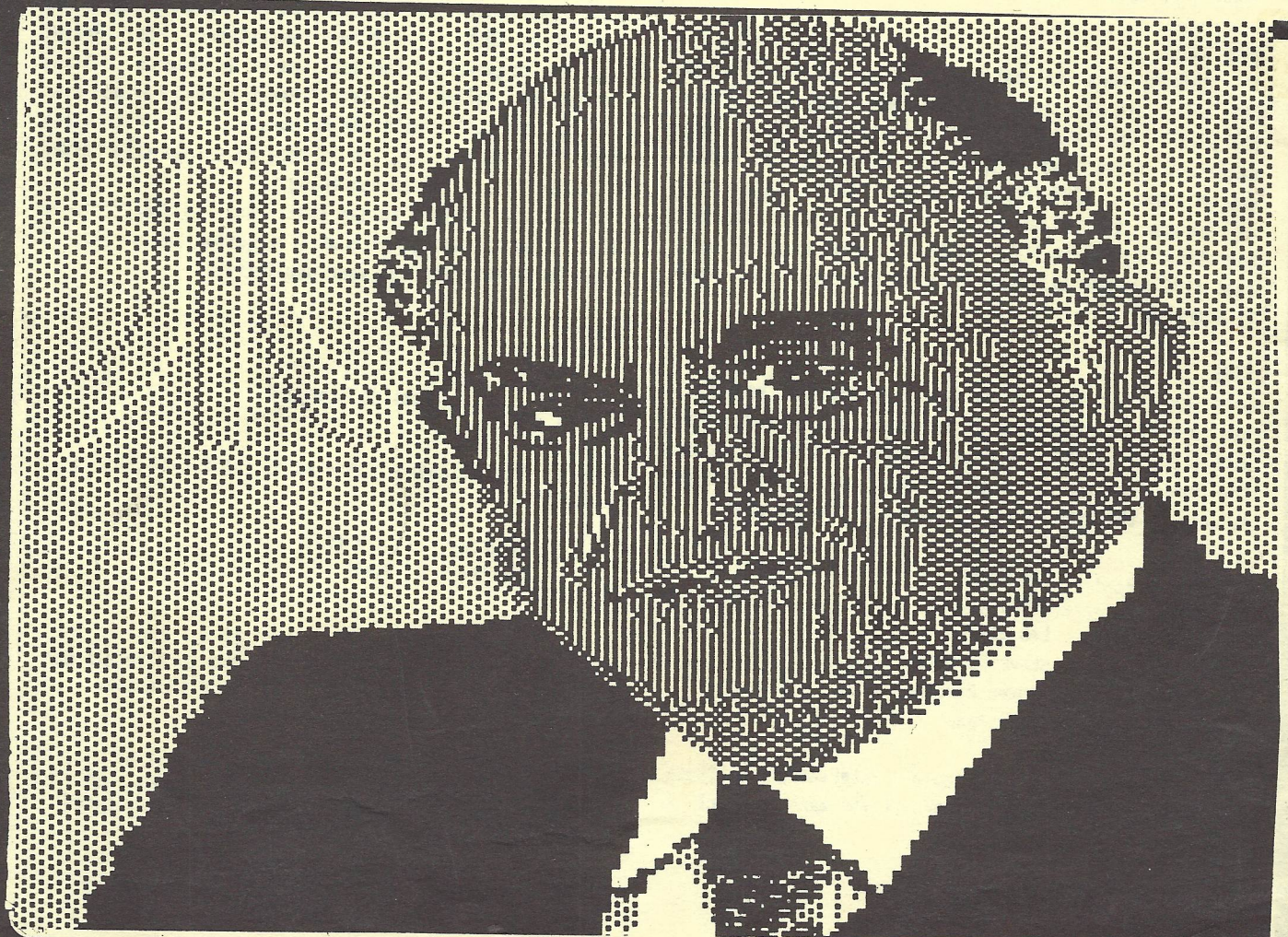


DALLAS ATARI COMPUTER ENTHUSIASTS

VOLUME 6

ISSUE 6

JUNE 1985



PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

InfoMart here we come!!! Yes, the club voted to move to the new InfoMart starting with the September meeting. The new location will allow us to grow as we never have grown before.

Because of the requirement of other users' groups to meet there also, there will be a lot of volunteers needed to help in setting up and running the meetings. Also, the InfoMart needs a complete list of our users in order to make name tags. These name tags are required to get inside. Because some members don't like giving out this information, we will need for you to tell us so we can create a separate list. This list will be at the entrance and you will have to get a visitor pass.

The name tags will be good up to your normal club expiration date. The date will be on the tag.

The IBM group will be the first to move in on 22 June, and they have asked us to join them for that date. The main thing is that we need to use the cafeteria as much as possible because it gives InfoMart a good showing of numbers of members which attend.

ATARI NEWS

The latest news is that Atari WILL be at the CES in Chicago. This may mean that they are ready to release the 520ST. The latest date is still around July. In one magazine, Atari had lowered the price of the 520ST system down to \$799 from the original \$899. This could be because the first units will not have the GEN operating system in ROM. Could this mean that it will cost \$100 and you will have to send the unit in to have it upgraded?

SIGS

Good news! Our sigs are on again. At the last meeting I had a meeting with about 20 members, and we came away with 6 new sigs. This is only a start. Once we set up at the new location I think that many more will follow because of the extra room. The new sig leaders are:

C..... Pat Moore
 Pascal..... David Miller
 Beginning BASIC... Leo Scott
 Graphics..... Steve Supinski
 Adventures..... Steven Markley
 Communications.... Tandy Penn

Contact these members if you are interested in these SIGS, are one of your officers if you want to start a new SIG.

Happy Atari Computing,
 Gary

Editor's Notes

When I (with my youthful gullibility) accepted this position, the board confronted me with "Are you SURE??" It sounded like it was going to be a lot of work, a lot of responsibility, and a bit of a hassle. It is.

But after two months as Editor, I must say I enjoy my job. I am glad to contribute to this organization, and hope that my efforts are appreciated just a bit by you, the reader. Getting to read the newsletters from all over the country is a real treat, and it gives me a better perspective on what is going on out there in the world of the Atari.

Also, I cannot thank enough the crew which helps me with my position. John Pellet and Dave Gillen have been particularly helpful, and I truly appreciate the articles from our contributors. You're just making my job that much easier, and doing a little something for your fellow members.

I will be in California for seven weeks starting June 13th, studying at CalTech for the summer. It will be a good experience, but needless to say it will render me unable to edit the next two newsletters. Mr. Pellet will be "organizing" the next two in my absence. I say "organize" rather than "edit" because John has no wish to be associated with the Editorship. I don't blame him. Try to make the job as easy as it was this month by submitting a little something.

In closing, I'd like to say that I hope to contribute to this club a fraction of what I've gotten out of it. I hope to do this through your newsletter.

Mark

Meeting Schedule

Mark on your calendars these dates for future DAL-ACE meetings:

Saturday, 13 July 1985, noon
 Saturday, 3 August 1985, noon

These dates were the best we could get for the Richardson Civic Center. We would love to have all our meetings fall on the first Saturday of each month. Unfortunately, we're not that lucky.

Effective with the September meeting, we will be gathering in our new home, The Infomart! The exact date and times have not been established. Stay tuned to your newsletter for further details.

If you are dissatisfied with these dates AND you can find a better facility, please contact one of the officers.

BOARD ACTIONS

by Tom Burke, Secretary

Meeting date : May 11, 1985

A Quorum of board members was present.

Below is a brief summary of actions taken. For more information, or for your input on these actions, see any DAL-ACE officer or member-at-large.

* The board discussed the membership vote that DAL-ACE move its meeting site to the InfoMart effective with the September meeting. The board stressed that DAL-ACE's best interests be protected by maintaining an active role in the Dallas Computer Council. This role will help:

- 1) Prevent larger user groups from dominating space allocation.
- 2) Continue our members' "garage sale" activity.
- 3) Continue club income via disk sales.

* The board voted to cancel the previous plan for additional rooms at the June meeting. This action was influenced by the InfoMart move.

* It was passed that the club librarian review club disk sales and remove from inventory those disks not selling. The library will make those numbered disks available on a special order basis--delivery at next meeting.

* The board voted to make the club disk prices:

- 1-4 disks \$5.00 each
- 5-7 disks \$4.00 each
- ALL disks \$200.00

(Note: purchase of all disks does NOT include ANALOGs)

* On behalf of the club BBS, the board reviewed various offers for the loan and sale of disk drives to the club. Reviewing past experiences with drives in the BBS service, wishing to minimize financial liability with borrowed equipment, and responding to club member desires to upgrade the BBS, it was voted on and passed that the club spend \$100.00 for an 8-inch drive with case and power supply as offered by Jim Chaney.

* The board briefly reviewed the SIGs and volunteer leaders :

C Language.....Pat Moore
 Pascal.....Dave Miller
 Beginning BASIC....Leo Scott
 Graphics.....Steve Supinski
 Adventures.....Steve Markley
 Communications.....Tandy Penn

ELEMENTARY P/M GRAPHICS

by Jeff Golden

This is installment three of Elementary P/M Graphics. Installment one and two were published in the April and May issues. You may want to go back and reread those articles.

Previously, we presented a "bare-bones" program that placed a player on the screen, and then moved it horizontally across the playfield. We then explained how to reserve some memory for your player/missiles, how to tell the ANTIC and GTIA chips about your player, how to draw the player into memory, and then how to position the player on the screen.

Following that, we added statements to the bare-bones program to demonstrate the P/M options. Some of the options demonstrated were, one and two line resolution, double and quad widths, poking color values, and the fact that P/M graphics will work on text screens as well as graphics screens.

Today, we want to add three more players to the basic program, and after that, I think it is about time to recap what we have been doing.

Starting with the bare-bones listing, add or change the following statements:

```
200 POKE 704,88:POKE 705,88
210 POKE 706,88:POKE 707,88
```

```
250 PLAYER1=PLAYER0+256
260 PLAYER2=PLAYER1+256
270 PLAYER3=PLAYER2+256
```

```
280 Y1=130:PLAYER=PLAYER1+Y1:GOSUB 1000
290 Y2=140:PLAYER=PLAYER2+Y2:GOSUB 1000
300 Y3=150:PLAYER=PLAYER3+Y3:GOSUB 1000
```

```
380 POKE 53248,X:POKE 53249,210-X
390 POKE 53250,X+20:POKE 53251,230-X
400 NEXT X:GOTO 360
```

Then run the program, and come back here for some explanations.

Lines 200-210 provide the GTIA chip with the desired colors for each of the four players. However, a strange thing seems to happen on the way to the paint store, (on my machines at least). We used the same

value, 88, for each of the players, but only players 0 and 1 have the expected pink color. Players 2 and 3 are yellow. None of the charts that I have seen, make any mention of this difference. They all describe the formula that we presented in article two.

I think that the difference may have something to do with the differences between the CTIA and the GTIA chips. If your machine behaves in the same fashion as mine, you can get any color you want, including pink, by playing around with the order of the bits that you poke into 706 and 707. I will not attempt to map it out here. The formula works OK for locations 704 and 705, players 0 and 1, and it may, or may not, work on your machine for players 2 and 3.

Lines 250-270 locate the storage locations for players 1, 2, and 3. Since each player has 256 bytes of memory space, (in one-line resolution), you simply add 256 to the address of a preceding player to get to the address of the next player.

If you are using two-line mode, add 128 for each player, since each player is assigned 128 bytes in two-line mode.

Lines 280-300 use the common draw-player subroutine to draw the additional player shapes into their respective memory spaces. You can use the Y0, Y1, Y2, and Y3 variables to control the vertical positions of the four players.

Lines 380-400 alter the perpetual motion loop to include the horizontal position pokes for the new players.

And, that is all that it takes to add three more players to our basic program. Easy wasn't it.

Now that we have four players running about the screen, everything is beginning to fall into place. By examining our program, we can now make some generalized, statements about P/M graphics -- a memory map written out in prose if you please:

1. We tell Antic to use one-line resolution by poking location 559 with a 62. If we want to use two-line resolution, we poke this same location with a 46. Two-line resolution makes the player twice as high. The single poke affects all the players.

2. We poke color values for the four players into consecutive memory locations, 704, 705, 706, and 707. Each player can be set to a different color.

3. We poke horizontal position values for the four players into consecutive locations 53248, 53249, 53250, and 53251.

4. We can change the width of each player by poking the consecutive locations 53256, 53257, 53258, and 53259. Use a 0 for single width, a 1 for double width, and a 3 for quadruple width.

5. We turn on the players by poking 53277 with a 3.

6. We tell ANTIC where our players are, by poking location 54279 with the memory page number of our 2K block of reserved memory.

7. We address the first player's memory space by multiplying the memory page number by 256, and then by adding an offset of 1024. (Add 512 if in two-line mode).

8. We address the second, third and fourth players by adding 256 to the address of the preceding player. (Add 128 if in two-line mode).

How about that. Did you realize, before now, just how much you have learned about player/missile graphics? There is more to come in next month's issue. See you at the meeting.

The Bare-Bones Listing:

```

100 PMBASE=PEEK(106)-16
120 POKE 106, PMBASE
140 GRAPHICS 8+16
160 POKE 559, 62
180 POKE 54279, PMBASE
200 POKE 704, 88
220 POKE 53277, 3
240 PLAYER0=PMBASE*256+1024
320 Y0=120: PLAYER=PLAYER0+Y0
340 GOSUB 1000
360 FOR X=35 TO 210
380 POKE 53248, X: NEXT X
400 GOTO 360

1000 REM DRAW PLAYER SUBRTN **
1020 POKE PLAYER, 0
1040 POKE PLAYER+1, 102
1060 POKE PLAYER+2, 255
1080 POKE PLAYER+3, 231
1100 POKE PLAYER+4, 231
1120 POKE PLAYER+5, 255
1140 POKE PLAYER+6, 102
1160 POKE PLAYER+7, 0
1180 RETURN

```

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SPECIALIZING IN DISCOUNT PRICES ON PRODUCTS FOR THE ATARI

SAMPLE PRICES

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TO DAL-ACE MEMBERS.....\$170.95
STAR SG10 PRINTER.....\$259.95
PRINTER PACKAGE:
WITH INTERFACE & BUFFER..\$329.95
INDUS GT DISK DRIVE.....\$259.95
130XE PACKAGE:
WITH INDUS DISK DRIVE....\$419.95
UPRINT PRINTER INTERFACE,
WITH 16K BUFFER.....\$ 79.95
GMODEM 300-BAUD DIRECT CONNECT
HAYES COMPATIBLE
UPGRADEABLE TO 1200-BAUD.\$129.95

SOFTWARE

PRINTSHOP.....\$ 34.95
HOMEPAK.....\$ 34.95
SYNICAL.....\$ 34.95
SYNFILE.....\$ 34.95
PAPERCLIP.....\$ 69.95
GRAPHICS LIBRARY (PRINTSHOP)...\$ 19.95
BOUNTY BOB STRIKES BACK
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BONUS: MINER 2049er FREE.\$ 39.95
SYNCHROMESH WITH MANUAL.....\$ 10.95

JUNE SPECIAL

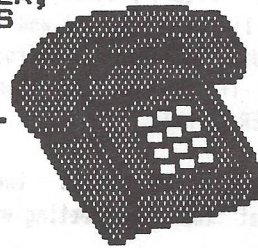
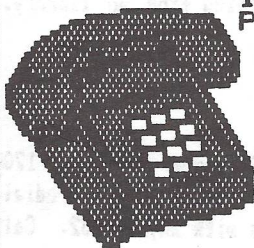
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COMMUNICATIONS COLUMN

by John Pellet

As the old chinese curse goes, "May you live in interesting times!" Well, the times, they are a changin'. Here is a quick look at the changes in the board, library, ad newsletter.

The newsletter is now under the firm control of Mark Maxham, our new editor. I'm sure great things are in store to make the newsletter better than ever. Best of all, it's not mine anymore! If you, the members, would like to see changes, additions, or deletions PLEASE speak up - or better VOLUNTEER!

As everyone should have noticed, the library has become much more active in recent months. We've had great graphics demos, a word processor (albeit rudimentary), a home finance database, a new DOS (2.5), Koala/Artist files, and a NEW C compiler that is clearly superior to Deep Blue C. More will be seen in the future - like a freeware DOS, a new version of MYDOS, a new 1030 modem program, and some utility files for DOS 2.5, just to name some likely candidates. If there is something you can contribute OR something you want that is not in the library then call George or me. We also may be pruning some inactive disks from stock so there may be some great sales in the near future.

The BBS is now up, and downloads may return by the time you read this. Howard is trying to get 600K of additional disk space online. The new phone number is 540-3270 (METRO 817). This SYSOP swap cost the club about \$100 plus the board authorized purchase of BASIC XL and a SSDD 8" drive for about \$160. This means the BBS has cost about \$250 in the last month. My preference would be to stop non-routine expenditures for the near future since the 520ST line is rumored to be shipped soon and it may be a better hardware investment. This will limit download space for the time being. We have 76 members with passwords and are averaging 25 calls per day. Club meeting minutes, adventure forum, and product review forum are being added as space permits. Future projects may include a library catalog (in a limited fashion) and an expert forum. This detailed information came from Howard Chang, our new SYSOP. If you want something else let us know - or VOLUNTEER to help.

That's all for this month - the upcoming communications demos at the June meeting will be fun - see you all there.

LET ME KNOW - GOOD OR BAD!

U-PRINT INTERFACE AND BUFFER

Reviewed by John Pellet

Last month I reviewed the Centronics buffer by Digital Devices and bemoaned the fact that it did not work with my 850. I concluded by saying my quest for a lotta buffer for a little green would continue. The U-PRINT buffer and interface by the same company has ended my search. This nice device plugs in the Atari daisy chain and has a Centronics connector on the other end. It works GREAT in my system even with my 850 in the chain, powered, with no printer attached. I don't understand how or why it works - 2 devices named "P:" with no system problems confuses me - but it does. So if you are tired of waiting for your printer to catch up to your computer this may be for you. A 64K buffer installed for under \$100 certainly meets my needs.

PLEASE NOTE: I am talking about 2 very different devices here. The "PRINTER BUFFER" reviewed last month fits between 2 CENTRONICS devices - like the output of the 850 (or IBM printer output) and an Epson parallel printer. It is AC powered and has no user controls except a power switch. The UPRINT reviewed above is BOTH an interface AND a buffer. It plugs in and draws its power from the Atari daisy chain and then outputs to a parallel printer. It has a copy button (which allows multiple copies) and a buffer clear button. Both products are from Digital Devices and cost about the same. Since the PRINTER BUFFER does NOT work with the 850, most Atari users are liable to be more interested in the UPRINT - a nice product at a nice price.

Both are available from Morris Stephens by phone or at the meetings for about \$80.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Keep me happy. Buy club disks. We've got a bunch of great public domain programs, and the price is hard to beat. Do yourself, me, and most of all, the club a big favor and check out a little something from our library.

QUICKIE USER SALES

For sale : Prometheus 1200 moden. Hayes 1200 compatibility and much more: clock, auto-redial, expansion slot available. Works with any RS-232. Call Mark Maxham (yes indeed, the editor) at the phone number listed on the back cover.



KOALA PAD FOR ATARI

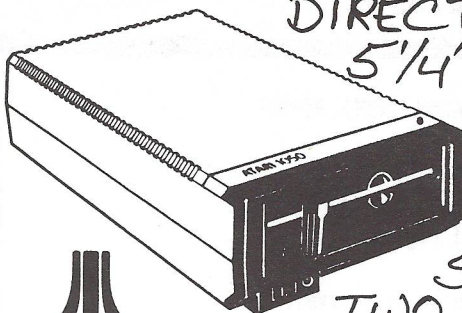
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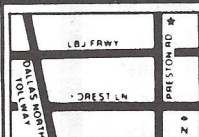
20% OFF ALL RETAIL PRICES ON ALL SOFTWARE!

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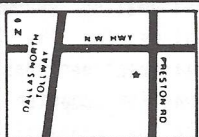
ALL SOFTWARE INCLUDED!

VIDEOLAND

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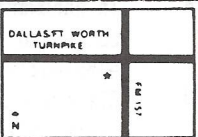
NORTH DALLAS
661-8774
3340 PRESTON RD
(NORTH OF LBJ)
ACROSS FROM SEARS AUTO



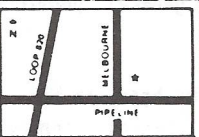
PRESTON CENTER
780-7619
8301 PRESTON RD
(1 BLOCK SOUTH OF
NORTHWEST HWY)



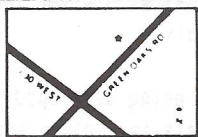
MEDALLION CENTER
368-2834
309 MEDALLION CENTER
NORTHWEST HWY AT ABRAMS



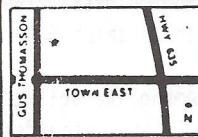
ARLINGTON, TX.
460-8866
550 LINCOLN SQUARE
1130 & HWY 157 ACROSS
FROM BLACK EYED PEAL



HURST, TX.
898-1003
904 MELBOURNE
ACROSS THE STREET FROM
NORTHEAST MALL



FORT WORTH, TX.
731-9351
5827 GREEN OAKS RD
ACROSS THE STREET FROM
RIDGMAR MA...



MESQUITE, TX
686-6977
2131 N TOWN E BLVD
AT GUS THOMASSON

ANALOG COMDEX REPORT

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Atari Pursues Dealers, Software Developers at Comdex

(May 7) Atari Corporation was in full force at Comdex this week, pursuing software developers and computer retailers with vigor.

In attendance at the Atlanta, Georgia-based computer show were Jack Tramiel, James Copland, Sig Hartmann and several other Atari employees, spreading the gospel of the new Atari, "Power Without The Price." At a press conference, Atari officials answered numerous questions concerning both the XE and ST line of computers, future marketing plans, as well as current strategy.

James Copland, Vice President of Marketing, kicked off the press conference by explaining that "Atari decided only five days before the show to attend Comdex." Copland stressed that Comdex was a show in which Atari could court specific distributors, both hardware and software, software developers, and mass marketers. In that regard, it made more sense for Atari to attend Comdex than to compete with stereo manufacturers at CES.

After Copland's talk came Sig Hartmann, President of Software. Hartmann said that "around 230 companies" were developing software for both the 8-bit XE and the 16-bit ST computers. When quizzed about the number of packages available, Hartmann replied that he expects there to be "over 100 pieces of software" available for the STs by September. ST systems for software companies are now being shipped at list price, a substantial reduction from Atari's original (and unpopular) ST package price of around \$5000.

As per earlier announcements, the first STs are to be shipped to Atari user groups for beta testing in a week or two. BASIC and Logo will be included, although we hear conflicting reports as to whether GEM will be on ROM or disk. The first STs for the general public are to be shipped in July.

Among the software being developed for both the XEs and STs are spreadsheets and other applications programs, from various manufacturers. VIP Technologies, of Goleta, CA has developed a package for the XE called

VIP Professional. According to the company, VIP Professional combines all the features of Lotus 1-2-3 with some additional features, all for under \$100. The program can be either mouse or keyboard-driven, and utilizes icons and "drop down" menus, similar to GEM on the ST. The program is slated for delivery in July.

For the ST, Haba Systems of Van Nuys, CA has two programs: Haba Works, with a series of applications, such as WORD, FILE, CALC, GRAPH, COM, and HIPPO C COMPILER. Haba Solutions comes with such files as How to Start Your Own Business, How to Create Your Own Legal Will, Business Letters; Business Forms, and the Haba Check Minder. The programs retail for \$59.95 and \$49.95 respectively.

In a joint announcement, Atari and Rising Star Industries, of North Hollywood, CA, intend to market Rising Star Software products for the ST. The products will be distributed through Atari's dealer/distributor network.

According to Rising Star president Gale Carr, the company is converting its Valdocs line of integrated applications, to be made available on Atari hardware both as a complete package and in individual software modules. Sig Hartmann stated that "We knew from the start that the price/performance advantage of our hardware would only be half the battle. The bottom line is the utility per dollar we're bringing to the buyer; that's why others have lacked in this market, and it's also why Rising Star's software tools are a valuable asset."

Rising Star's integrated color graphics modules, Valdraw and Valpaint -- using Atari's high-resolution color display -- are marked for availability with early shipments of the computer. The company's electronic spreadsheet and other applications are scheduled to follow shortly thereafter.

The 520 ST keyboard may be configured to emulate the Valdocs HASCI format through programmable function keys, allowing single-key access to all Valdocs applications and primary system and file management functions.

In hardware news, one of the most amazing announcements concerned Atari's marketing plans for the 520 ST. Apparently, there will be two different versions of the ST: one for mass marketers and one for computer stores.

Internally, the machines are to be identical -- only the cosmetics of the machine are to be altered. The mass market ST would be the original configuration,

whereas the computer dealer version should have a different keyboard and case. Computer retailers will sell a package consisting of the modified ST, a monitor, and half-megabyte drive for \$799.

As far as future projects are concerned, Atari is working on a CD (compact disc) ROM, able to store 512K of memory, for under \$500. This CD ROM, as well as a new 3 and 1/2 inch drive, are being developed in conjunction with North American Philips, the Netherlands-based electronics giant. Atari owners may recall that Philips' name was tossed around early last summer as a possible buyer of Atari, before Jack Tramiel and crew took Atari's reins.

The subject of Atari's 32-bit computer was not ignored by the press, either. Atari's rumored "CAD/CAM" system was referred to as a "graphics workstation" by Jack Tramiel, who added that the machine should be released "late this year or possibly early 1986." This would make it just in time for the January Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas. The 32-bit machine will be sold only through computer stores.

At a private dinner for members of the press last March, Leonard Tramiel told ANALOG Computing publisher Lee Pappas and managing editor Jon Bell that "the 32-bit machine is a reality." While Tramiel would not confirm what CPU chip the machine would have (either the Motorola 68020 or the National Semiconductor 32032) he did have an interesting anecdote about the machine. Apparently, Atari's engineers had hoped to get several prototypes of the 32-bit machine working specifically on developing chip designs for Atari computers, including the STs. Unfortunately, the engineers couldn't work on the 32-bit machine at the expense of working out any bugs on the ST. Instead, the engineers made use of a rather extensive amount of chip development and design equipment left over from the old Atari.

And finally, Atari's decision not to have a display at the Consumer Electronics Show in June was met with negative publicity and rumors concerning the company's financial state. Jack Tramiel emphasized that Atari did not bow out of CES "simply to save \$500,000", but that Atari would be represented by a private press conference in Chicago. It should be pointed out that a number of hardware and software companies (Infocom, Electronic Arts) are also not attending the show, but are instead having private press showings and parties to promote their products.

Additionally, Atari officials "lack of comment" over

the decision not to have a display at CES was due to said officials attending the Hanover, West Germany Computer Fair. According to sources at the Fair, the showing of Atari's ST computers was "a smash." Overseas dealers and computer owners are reportedly ecstatic over the ST, citing its power, the GEM operating system, and most importantly, its cost. Foreign buyers who have been looking at the Macintosh with envious eyes but can't afford its high price (especially considering the strength of the American dollar) are considering the Atari ST. Jack Tramiel said that he intends for fully half the ST market to be overseas.

In conclusion, the message from Atari at Comdex was, "Today, the U.S. Tomorrow, the world!"

HOMEPAK TIP

by John Pellet

Here is a short set of patches for HOMEPAK users to allow the DOS 2.5 ramdisk to be used. This patch was downloaded from Compuserve and works fine for HOMETERM, the terminal emulator. I have not had any success with the patch to HOMETEXT but maybe someone else will. If you get the ramdisk working with HOMETEXT please let me know. These patches may be made with any sector/RAM editor like DISKSCAN, DISK WIZARD II, or OMNIMON.

HOMETERM PATCHES

Search for the following byte strings:

70 4C C9 70 15 B1 2D B4
Change byte B4 to B8

4C 78 79 AD E1 71 C9 35
Change byte 35 to 39

4C 73 82 AD EF 7B C9 35
Change byte 35 to 39

HOMETEXT PATCHES

Search for the following byte strings:

BB 45 60 FF 15 B1 2D B4
Change byte B4 to B8

4C 23 93 AD 50 8D C9 35
Change byte 35 to 39

That's all for now!

SYNFILE+

A subjective evaluation.

by Harald Poelchau

Maybe I am asking for too much - but I am disappointed in this new database system by Synapse for the Atari. Its predecessor, FileManager+, had some good points and some faults. Well, they fixed some of the faults but also dropped several of the good features. Let me explain.

FileManager+ had a very limited page size: whatever fields didn't fit on the first screen were put on the second screen, where they were nice and save. They could be looked at but not printed! SynFile+ is much better; the page size is so much larger that what took me two pages on FileManager+ fits on one screen with room to spare.

FileManager+ could write reports (lists, labels) only to screen or to printer. With its rather limited formatting capabilities you didn't have much choice what your hard copy looked like. Now, on SynFile+ you can direct the report to a disk file and mess around with AtariWriter or other word processors to get it into the shape you need. But even without that trick there are plenty of options to arrange the information on the screen or page.

SynFile+ has some other neat features that are improvements over FileManager+. You can bring in data from disk files in DIF format. No retyping of large files of information! But beware, it takes forever to process the file into SynFile+ files. (If you need to move old FileManager+ files to SynFile+, get Dave Fuller's conversion program - it's public domain). One of my old FileManager+ files took almost an hour to crank in; and it had only some 70 entries with 13 fields. Another improvement is the capability to arrange the fields for a record any way you want to on the screen. A nice feature is the "look-up" type of field that lets you specify the legal entries (like a dictionary list) and displays the entries in the proper place when you push the Atari key.

So much for the good news. There's bad news too. FileManager+ kept your report format and the retrieval criteria in memory (at least during the session). That way, if you wanted to change something and rerun a search or a report, you could go back without having to reenter the entire list of field names. No such luck in SynFile+ - you start from scratch for each new search

or report. Not only that, but you have to type in the full field name (no typos please). Remember how nice FileManager+ was: all you needed was the unique beginning character(s) of a field name, and FileManager+ would fill in the blanks. You would think that Synapse might have learned something from other database systems to let you store report formats. But no, it's even less efficient than good old FileManager+.

Do you have two disk drives? Forget it - you have to swap SynFile+ disk and data disk in drive 1. That's not that bad, but each time you want to go to the utility program part to create or edit a form you have to swap disks several times. Why can't we have our data in drive 2 like we used to in FileManager+?

Another FileManager+ nicety that they dropped: you could print one record at a time using the START key. This was handy to print mailing addresses directly on a postcard or envelope. It allowed you to skip the ones you didn't want to print. Looks like you can't do it on SynFile+ (at least I haven't figured out how) unless you take your file to disk and use AtariWriter with a page length of 3 lines and the end-of-page wait (N).

Well, I guess you can't have it all. But it has been a disappointment, especially after the super job Synapse did with Syncalc.

ATARI 130XE

Reviewed by John Pellet

I said I wouldn't buy it but I did. This is my 4th Atari computer. I've bought a 400, 800, 800XL, and now a 130XE. Finally Atari has created a worthy successor to the 800. This machine is GREAT. I prefer to my 800 as factory-equipped. I fell in love when I saw the RAMDISK. Now I've even been using it in place of my Omniview-equipped 800. Here's a brief list of the MAJOR reasons for the swap:

1.) Ramdisks are wonderful. Those lucky people with IBM PC's, 128K CPM machines, or packed 800's know this is nothing new, but for me it is a revelation. I use my machine about 50% for telecommunications and it is really nice to be able to save a 10K download file with NO disk time (or at least less than 1 second halt for each file transfer.

2.) The keyboard feel is much more like the terminal I use every day at work. While I originally felt it probably was not quite the equal of the original 800 keyboard, a couple of weeks of use have changed my mind. It is stiffer and has a much more positive feel.

While I would prefer an even stronger tactile feedback (like the IBM PC) this one is very nice.

3.) The machine is physically smaller than even the 800XL, or at least it seems so. It is MUCH smaller than the 800. It fits in my layout much better than the 800.

4.) The video output is MUCH better than the XL's, and seems to be slightly better than my 800.

5.) The machine seems (no supporting data) slightly faster than my 800XL, but not up to my Fastchip 800. The key repeat and BASIC in general seem slightly improved.

6.) Finally, I think the little machine looks GREAT.

It is not perfect, however (but what is?). The major debits, in my view, are:

1.) The translator disk is required, just as in the XL's - not that I expected otherwise.

2.) The cartridge slot is more difficult to use than the 800. While the rear location undoubtedly contributes to the slim looks, it is harder to install a cartridge. At least there is room for something even larger than the big orange monsters.

3.) The console keys are not nearly as easy to get to as on the 800. Flush-mounted keys along the top of the keyboard are intrinsically more difficult, to me, than the big yellow buttons of the 800. Maybe I'll be able to hit the one I want without looking by the time you read this, but I can't now, when I'm writing it.

4.) Still only 2 joystick ports (M.U.L.E. parties still use the 800).

5.) The gray case matches nothing else in the system.

In all, a short list of small debits compared to the goodies above. I think this is a GREAT 8-bit machine that is a good harbinger for Atari's future. My last 8-bit machine (now where have I heard that before?).

EDITORIAL STAFF

The current newsletter staff is listed below. We need your help. The same half-dozen people can't do the whole job every time. If you won't help in some fashion you can expect this newsletter to go downhill FAST. We need articles, programs, and production workers. Call any of the people listed below, PLEASE! Note that several names have been dropped from this issue - if we're not getting anything from you, you're not listed.

-JLP

Editor:	Mark Maxhan,	238-5949
Co-Editor:	??? VACANT ???	
Art Editor:	John Henson,	691-4154
Software Editor:	John Pellet,	792-3175
Hardware Editor:	Mark Maxhan,	as above
Programming Editors:	Jeff Golden,	252-3268
	Dave Gillen,	245-2732
SIG Editor:	??? VACANT ???	
Book/Mag. Editor:	??? VACANT ???	
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Distribution Mngr.:	Roger Markeley,	231-6918
	Steve Markeley,	as above
	Cathy Barros,	368-8499
	David Miller,	391-1926
Advertising Mngr.:	Morris Stephens,	214-525-6483

Call John Pellet at 792-3175 to volunteer for one of the vacant positions. The pay isn't great, but there are a lot of intangible rewards that come from making contributions to the club.

NEWSLETTER SUBMISSIONS

Submissions will be accepted in any form. However, it is extremely helpful if your submission(s) can conform to the following format:

Condensed print.

Column width: 56 characters per column (3 7/16 inches).

Column length: 9 inches (either 6 or 7 lines per inch).

Right margin justification used with text.

Submitted to newsletter both printed out and on disk.

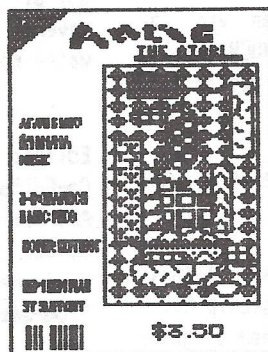
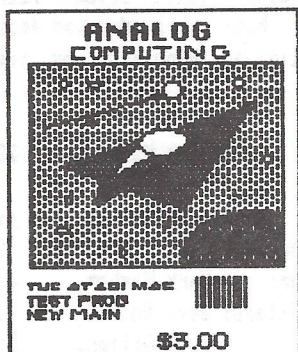
NEWSLETTER PRODUCTION SCHEDULE

JULY Newsletter: Copy should be turned in to one of the editors above by June 12th. [However, being early never hurts.] FINAL deadline and production meeting will be June 22 at 2:00 PM at Jim Chaney's house, 916 E. Berkeley in Richardson.

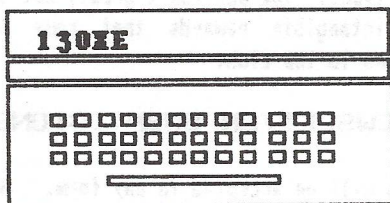
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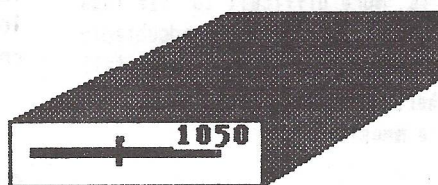
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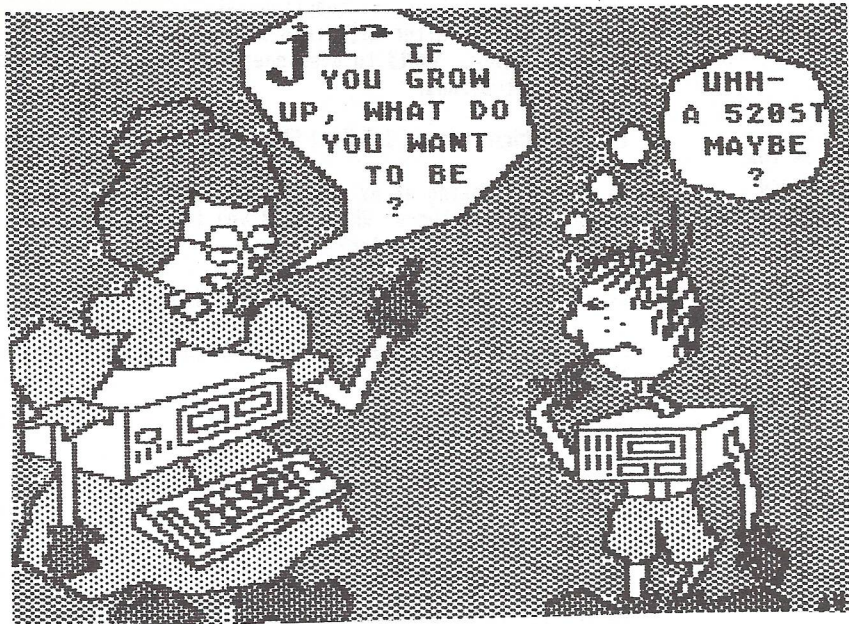


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EDITOR'S NOTE : Sorry if that's not exactly what you expected in the newsletter, but our Fearless Leader of Graphics (John Henson) did that up for me and I got a good chuckle out of it.

An Atari Tip

Here's a tip for you new (and perhaps some of you old-time) users of any Atari computer. How often do you backup your diskettes?

I'm talking about making copies of important data and programs. It's easy to make excuses for not doing it now but when a diskette becomes unusable (and they do) the data is gone!

How often should you do this? Well if it's a new program that you know you will use regularly, you should copy it as soon as you've opened the package! In fact, many programs will tell you to do so as the first step in learning how to use the program! You should then put the original away and use the copy. For data diskettes or your own programs, copy them as often as you change them. Yes, this is being over-protective but think how long it would take you to recover from a

bad disk. How many changes must you retype? Would it take you hours to recover, days, weeks, never?

The simplest way to copy your disk is with the "J" option in Atari DOS 2.05. It is also the slowest.

Now you may be wondering (wonder wonder) "What about those disks that you can't copy?" My personal advice is to stay away from any product that you can't backup (whether you use DOS or the product itself). Can you afford to lose the original? If you can't, why court disaster with just one copy? You have to decide this.

My goal with this tip is not to promote piracy, "copy anything" products, or to deprive anyone of a profit. My goal is to promote some common sense when you use your computer.

Pass it along!

Coming Attractions

By Dave Gillen

Hello there. Welcome to the meeting! This is the column you should check first to see what we are planning for demonstrations, speakers, clinics, and other broohaha.

We need your help for many of these things. In the Next Month and Future Topics categories, I need volunteers to demonstrate software and hardware. Please help me! Ever used some package that you thought was the greatest thing since sliced bread? Well, demonstrate it!

If you feel a bit uncomfortable about talking before a group of folks, don't worry! I don't like to do it either and that hasn't stopped me yet! I'll help you out if you help me out. You really do know more than you think!

On with the show.

This Month (1Jun85)

12:15pm, A New Member Get Together. If you're new to DAL-ACE or to computers in general, this is the meeting for you. We hope to answer some of your deepest questions and clear up some of your darkest fears about that expensive plastic box that you bought. This meeting will be held in the Small Meeting Room.

12:30pm, The business meeting. This will be held in the Large Meeting Room.

1pm, The theme for this month is telecommunications. There will be several demonstrations on this subject:

1. What do you need? What do the "buzzwords" mean? Here we will tell you about modems, interfaces, terminal emulators, bulletin boards, and more.
2. How does the DAL-ACE bulletin board work? How do I use it? Here we will demonstrate how to access the club's bulletin board and what to do after you "press RETURN".
3. What else is there? Besides the club's bulletin board, there are companies that have computer systems with vast amounts of information at your disposal. The equipment you have to use the club's bulletin board may also be used to access this information. We'll demonstrate how.

These demonstrations will run approximately 2 hours. They will be held in the Small Meeting Room so that all may hear and see. BE PROMPT because seating is limited!

3pm, The Board of Directors Meeting. This will be held in the Small Meeting Room.

Be sure to ask plenty of questions at the demonstrations. After all, this is your club. Finally, a big **THANK YOU** to everyone that gave some time for the demonstrations.

Next Month (13Jul85)

Oh my! On looking at my schedule book I see that there's nothing there! What would you like to see? What do you have to offer?

We will have a demonstration, even if I have to dredge up an old Voice Box and make it sing! Before we resort to that, though, how about a little help for your old President of Vice?

Future Topics

These themes are in the works for future meetings:

August, Graphics

September, Welcome to The Infomart

Again, if you have something that you want to see or want to show, please call me at home or talk with me at the meeting.

Caveat

All of the above is subject to change at the last minute without notice (yeah, I know but I had to say it). Always check this column for updates or check the "Topics of the Day" sheets that are posted at the meeting.

Thanks and Enjoy.

FLASH! FLASH! FLASH!

Here are 2 GREAT NEWS messages from CompuServe downloaded on the evening of May 16.John Pellet

*** 5-15-85 ***

NEWS FLASH !!!!!!! Moments ago, Jim Capparell, Publisher of ANTIC magazine, called SIG*ATARI with the news that the 520ST has ****passed**** the FCC tests and has the green light to be released in the USA. More details as they are available.

COMPUSERVE SIG*ATARI SYSOP*Ron Luks

16-May-85 18:01:51

Fm: SYSOP*Ron Luks

Speaking today with Allan Schlosser, spokesman for CES, Gary Vost, marketing mgr of ANTIC magazine, received confirmation that ATARI will be participating at CES. They will have a 30x50 booth in McCormick plaza, about 20 yards from ANTIC's. Schlosser was "pleased to announce ATARI's participation in this show", and cited ATARI's "history of participation over the past 18 shows dating back to the Bushnell days..."

A WORD FROM THE EDITOR

Now that I have more or less established myself in this position, I would like to get a little feedback from the readers.

We've had this format for a LOOOONG time. It has been suggested to me that I change it. You can look at it two ways:

- MODERNIZATION! (Yeah, go for it, new format)
- TRADITION! (If it works, don't fix it!)

I can see it both ways. What counts, though, is how you folks see it. If I can get a word in edgewise at the next meeting, I'd like to discuss it a bit with a few of you. Also under consideration:

What kind of articles do you want to see?

Would you like to see some reward for newsletter submissions? (I've been sort of pushing for this one a bit myself) Say maybe a club disk?

NEXT MEETING: SATURDAY, JUNE 1, 1985 at NOON

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

MEETING AGENDA

- 12:00 TO 12:30 SALES (VENDORS & CLUB)
DEMONSTRATIONS
NEWSLETTER DISTRIBUTION
NEW MEMBER REGISTRATION
SOCIALIZING
NEW MEMBER CLINIC**
- 12:30 TO 1:00 BUSINESS MEETING**
- 1:00 TO 1:30 DEMONSTRATION OF CLUB DISK**
- 1:30 TO 3:00 OTHER DEMONSTRATIONS**
- 3:00 TO 4:00 BOARD MEETINGS**

JULY MEETING: SATURDAY, July 13, 1985 at 12:00 noon

Should we have an upper limit on ads? There were only three full-page ads this month, but we have the potential for possibly five or six.

Remember, this newsletter is an extension of the body of DAL-ACE. However, it doesn't have to be the small body of people whose names are at the top of most of the articles!

I look forward to hearing from you.

Mark

VENDOR RESERVATIONS

Vendors may reserve table space prior to the meeting by calling Gary Sewell (214-727-6567). 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 ADVERTISEMENT

Personal FOR SALE or WANT ads are free to current members.

COMMERCIAL RATES:

- Full page (7 1/2" H by 9" V) \$35.00
- Half page (7 1/2" H by 4 1/4" V) \$25.00
- Quarter page (3 1/2" H by 4 1/4" V) ... \$15.00

Commercial ads must be camera ready. Ad deadline is the 15th of the month. Mail or deliver copy to DAL-ACE Newsletter, P. O. Box 851872, Richardson, TX, 75085-1872 or call Mr. Morris Stephens at 214-525-6483.

**** 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 ... the reader, is the final judge of any product or advice presented...JLP

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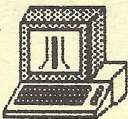
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DAL-ACE membership is \$16.00 per year. This newsletter is written, edited, and published by club volunteers. Its availability and/or distribution may, at times, be subject to circumstances beyond the control of the club officers. Members will note 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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