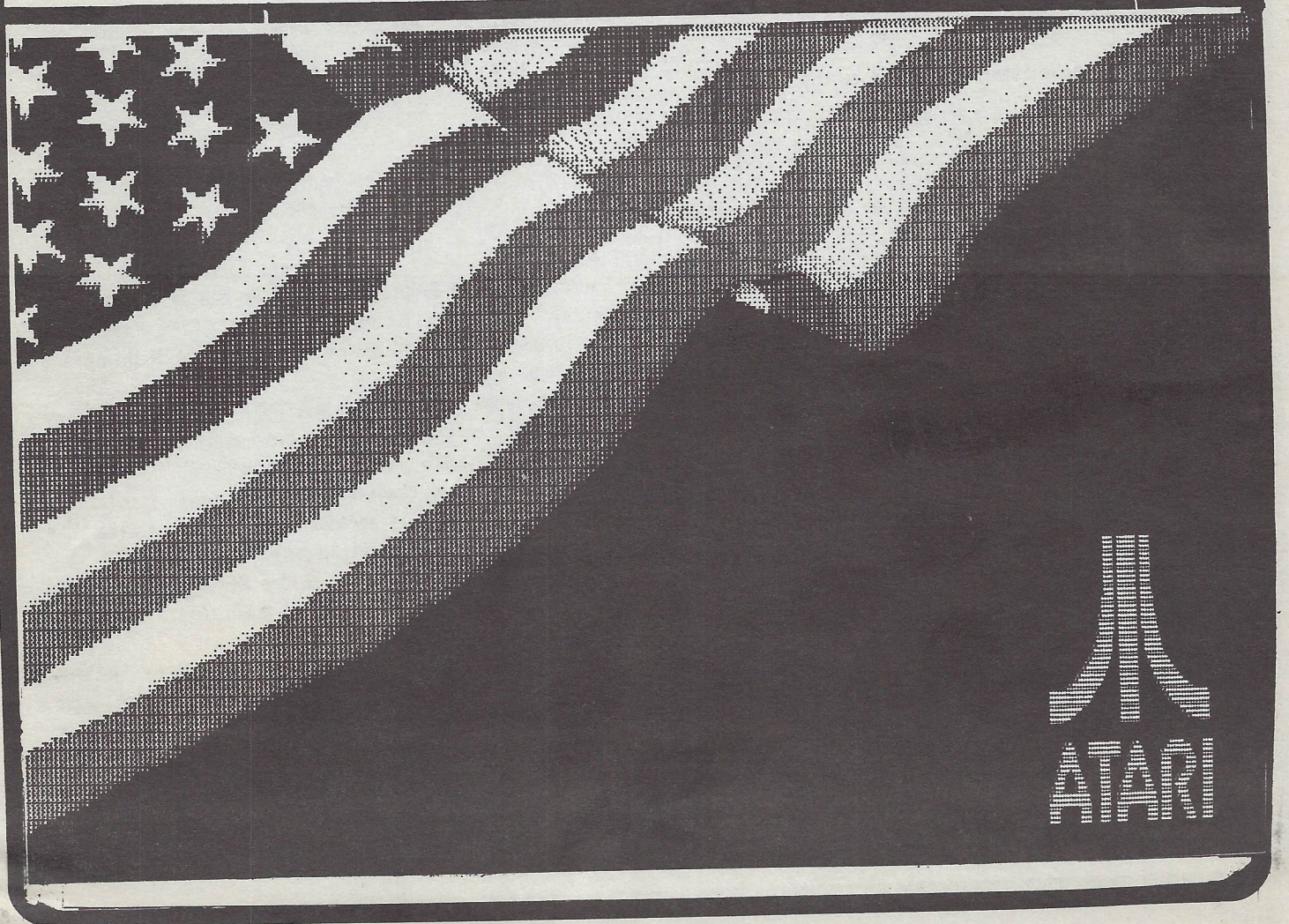
DAL-ACE

DALLAS ATARI COMPUTER ENTHUSIASTS

VOLUME 6 ISSUE 10 OCTOBER 1985



President's Perspective
Dateline, Dallas: 28Sep85

Hello!

Welcome back to the Infomart. Here are the news items that I have to report to you this month.

Tom Burke Resigns

Our Secretary, Tom Burke, has resigned. He has accepted a new job which will take him to the wilds of Pennsylvania. Tom has done an excellent job as our Secretary and I feel sad to see him leave.

I hope you will join me in wishing Tom and his family peace, happiness and good fortune with their lives up north.

Yet Another Emergency Election

With Tom's departure, we now have an opening to the board of directors. According to our bylaws, this shall be filled at our next regular meeting (which is the 19Oct). Therefore, we will be conducting an election at this meeting. Potential candidates will be announced at that time and nominations from the floor will be taken.

Infomart Items

I have some random items pertaining to the Infomart.

First, THANK YOU! Both for coming to our new home and for volunteering some time. Oh, you say you didn't volunteer any time? Well, shame on you! Please help out your fellow club members by giving some of your time: to man our kiosk out front or at our club sales tables. Please see Bob Dain (for the kiosk) or John Pellet (club sales) to give a little bit of your time.

Second, Remember The Badge! If you received a permanent badge last month, proudly wear it! If you didn't (either because you were new or the badge was damaged) be sure to check at the kiosk to pick yours up.

Third, Where is everything? Check easles on the floors and overhead projectors in the Atrium for the rooms for our meeting and SIGs. We WON'T have the Auditorium for our business meeting this time.

Garage Sale

Our garage sale will remain suspended. The reason for this is to best determine how to integrate the sale into the Infomart. Presently, we are pursuing these possibilities: a "many-computer swap" through the Dallas Computing Council, rent a couple of tables in the vendor area for you to sell, hold the sales at the back of our meeting room (not especially attractive), having just a yearly garage sale, or canceling it altogether (the least attractive).

In any case, stay tuned to the newsletter and the bulletin board for more details. If you have any suggestions, please contact one of the officers (in person, by telephone, or leave them a message on the bulletin board).

ST NEWS

HERE'S THE OFFICIAL STORY. We are in the process of forming an ST SIG and expanding our library for ST software.

For the SIG, no one is the offical leader yet. If you are interested in participating or leading, please contact me. Since the ST machine is emerging as Atari's flagship we must forge ahead to provide a forum for our users.

Our club library will slowly begin to have ST offerings. Of course, how much we have to sell depends on how many original programs and pictures YOU contribute.

Toys For Tots

It is fast approaching the Christmas season and our traditional project, the Toys for Tots event, is about to begin. But wait! Is there any interest out there in DAL-ACE land for this project? Would any of you like to contribute some time and ideas to this project? We will bring this up at the 19Oct meeting for general discussion. Be ready!

Closing

Once again, I want to thank you for reading my perspective of things. And remember, you really DO know more than you think! Be enthusiastic and enjoy your club.

Dave

Editor's Notes

Ah, another month, another newsletter. And I ask myself, why am I doing this? I've had my interview at Rice, and sort of impressed them with my extracurriculars, so why bother to mess with this sort of thing anymore?

Is it because of my responsibility? It it because of my dedication to a task? Is it because if I don't do it, it won't get done? (most probable answer)

Perhaps it is some combination of the above, but I think the reason I do it is because I enjoy it. I like the club members, I like a little power (boy! LITTLE!), and I get to read the newsletter before anybody else. Plus I like to help out, and I know I'm helping. Ask John Pellet, he'll tell you.

I certainly appreciate all the help I've been getting and think I'll take all contributors out to lunch next month. (See! Since pleas appealing to your moral duty and soft hearts don't work, I'm trying bribery!) By the way, don't try to hold me to that offer.

In closing, I thank you all for your support.

Mark

Morris E. Stephens

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520ST with color monitor	$999.95
520ST with monochrome monitor	$799.95

Prices on above systems includes: CPU, monitor, single sided drive, mouse, Operating System on disk, Basic, Logo, and, 5 free disk full of public domain software (ST Writer, Neo-Chrome (even better than McPaint), S-Term, 3 disks full of super graphics, and many others).

Disk Drive, 3 1/2" for 520ST	$195.95
Disk Drive, Double Sided	$295.95
Disks, 3 1/2", package of 10	$ 24.95
RGB Monitor for 520ST	$395.95
Monochrome Monitor for 520ST	$199.95

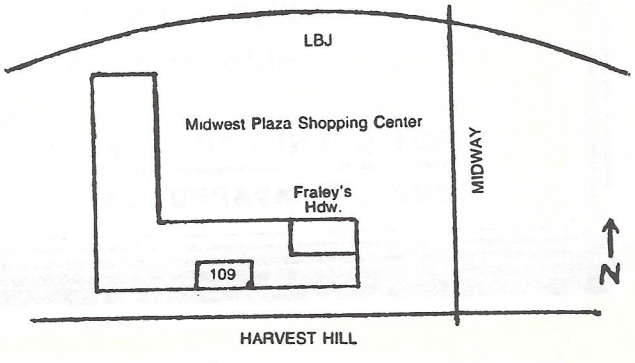
ST SOFTWARE

SoftSpool (RAM printer buffer)	$ 34.95
M-Disk (RamDisk)	$ 34.95
Mudpies	$ 34.95
HEX	$ 34.95
HABA Writer	$ 69.95
HABA Hippo "C" Compiler	$ 69.95
VIP Professional ("Similar" to Lotus 1-2-3)	$ 99.95
Flip Side	$ 34.95
EXPRESS	$ 49.95
All InfoCom Games	$ 34.95

HARDWARE AND 8-BIT PRODUCTS

130XE	$169.95
130XE with Basic XE	$229.95
BASIC XE for 130XE	$ 69.95
Atari 1050 Disk Drive with DOS 2.5	$179.95
Atari 1030 Modem with CompuServ Starter Kit	$ 89.95
Atari 850 Interface	$ 89.95
Cable, Parallel Printer for 520ST	$ 24.95
Cable, Modem for 850 Interface	$ 12.95
Interface, Uprint A +16K	$ 79.95
Syncalc	$ 34.95
Synfile	$ 34.95
HomePak	$ 34.95
PaperClip (New Low Price)	$ 49.95
Print Shop	$ 34.95
Print Shop Library I or II	$ 19.95
Hacker (new from Actvision)	$ 34.95
Karateka (new from BroderbundJ)	$ 29.95
Panasonic 1091 Dot Matrix with NLQ mode	$274.95
Panasonic 1092 Dot Matrix, NLQ, 180 cps	$429.95
Star SG10 Dot Matrix with NLQ mode	$259.95
LEGEND 808 Dot Matrix with NLQ mode	$199.95
Atari 1020 color Printer/Plotter	$ 49.95
Print & Draw for 1020 Plotter	$ 14.95
1020 Printer/Plotter with "Print 'N Draw	$ 59.95
1027 Letter Quality Printer	$ 89.95
800XL Computer	$ 99.95
600XL Computer	$ 29.95
400 Computer	$ 19.95
Omniview XE/XL	$ 49.95
RamRod	$ 39.95
RamRod with Omnimon	$ 74.95
Educator Kit (410 tape drive, Basic, States & Cap...	$ 14.95
Typesetter Graphics & Font Package	$ 29.95
Page Designer Graphics	$ 24.95
PrintWiz	$ 24.95
Megafont II+	$ 24.95
Humpty Dump/Bear Trap	$ 39.95
Super Zaxxon	$ 34.95
Sargon III	$ 39.95
Disks, 5 1/4", DS/DD, and quantity	$ .90

‡‡Many other items available but not listed.
‡‡‡Items not in stock can be special ordered.
Check our prices before buying elsewhere.



METROPOLITAN
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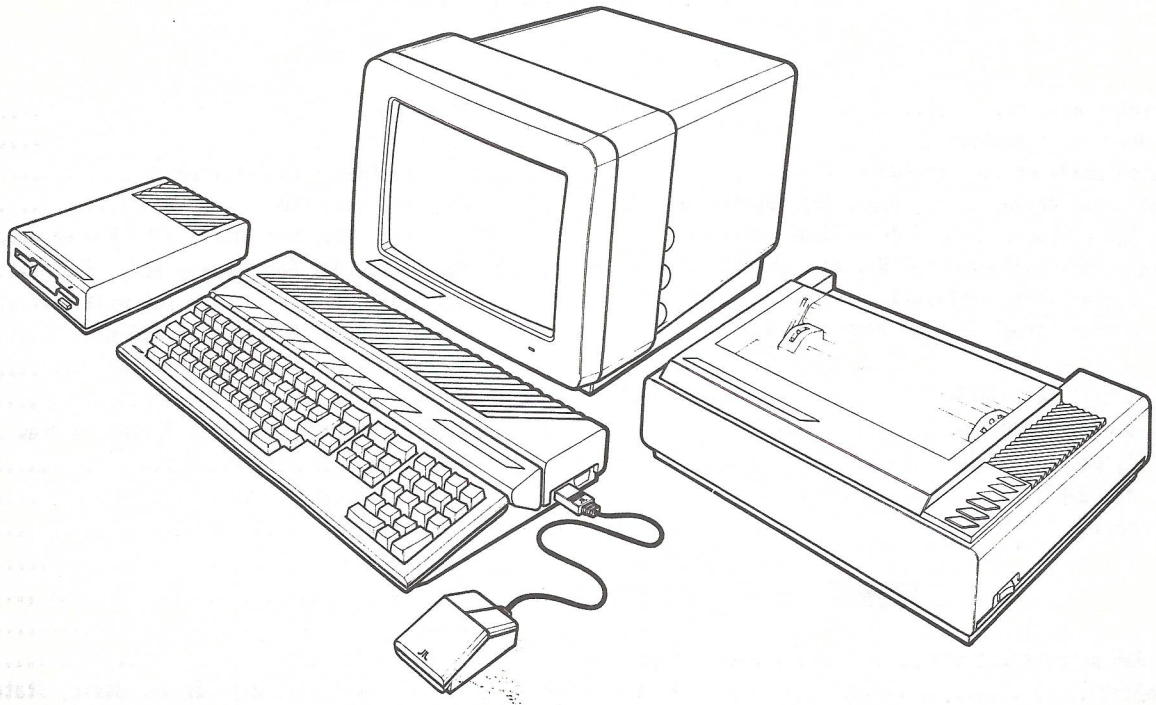
NOW IN STOCK!

ATARI 520ST



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BOARD ACTIONS

Meeting Date: August 20, 1985

The following actions were taken by the Board at a regular Board meeting on the date above.

* Bob Dain is coordinating volunteers for the kiosk at the entry to Infomart. DAL-ACE should man this booth during our meetings at Infomart. If you can help for 30 minutes or an hour please call him or leave a message on the BBS.

* The DAL-ACE representatives to the DCC are Dave Gillen and Roger Markley.

* There is not enough time for a Board meeting at Infomart. The Board will return to meeting separately from the regular meeting. The next Board meeting is set for Thursday, September 26, at 7:30 PM, at Bob Dain's.

* The Board authorized expenditure of up to $300 for newspaper advertisements about the September meeting. An advertising committe consisting of Dave Gillen, Morris Stephens, and John Pellet was established to handle this effort.

* The Board authorized expenditure of up to $250 for 2 DSDD disk drives with case and power supply for the BBS.

* The Board authorized buying Bulletin Board Construction Set for the BBS (cost < $30).

* The club needs a transportable system to use at meetings. If you have any ideas about integrating a 130XE, 1050, 1030, and color monitor, please contact one of the officers.

* The Board eliminated the non-member access fee for the BBS. From now on, full BBS access is open to DAL-ACE members only.

* The Board authorized expenditure of up to $50 for entertaining the Haba representative during his visit.

BOARD ACTIONS

26 September, 1985

The Board of Directors took the following actions at the meeting on the above date. A quorum was present.

* The next board meeting was set for Thursday, October 24 at 7:30 PM at Bob Dain's house.

* Tom Burke, Secretary, submitted his resignation from the board, effective immediately, since he is moving out of the area. Roger Markley and John Olson have both volunteered to fill the unexpired term. The board selected Roger Markley as the board candidate for Secretary and Jeff Golden to fill his unexpired member-at-large term, if necessary. Elections will be held at the October meeting. Nominations from the floor will be accepted.

* Toys for Tots needs to be organized. If you are interested, please contact the President.

* The board authorized expenditure of up to $60 for up to 20 3.5" disks to start the ST library. ST disk #1 will be available at the October meeting.

* Jim Chaney will be teaching a "C" class starting October 22. See further details in this issue.

MAGAZINE DISK POLICY

by John Pellet

The board has been investigating policies of the various Atari magazines with respect to disk versions of published programs. The results to date are listed below.

ANTIC - No programs bearing their copyright may be sold or otherwise used in any manner without explicit permission. This means that the BBS CANNOT store for download any ANTIC-published programs. Their disks of the month are for sale and the club CANNOT reproduce copies for members regardless of whether they subscribe.

ANALOG - The club may reproduce ANALOG disks-of-the-month for all club members who either subscribe or have the issue for which they are requesting a disk. ANALOG requests that magazine programs not be placed on any BBS until they are more than 30 days old. Any BBS use should meet the disk requirements also.

This means that as of now:

* NO known ANTIC files are on the BBS.

* If you want to purchase an ANALOG disk, you must bring with you either your subscription label or your copy of the issue you want.

We intend to pursue availability of the ANTIC disks only if YOU want them. Note that this would probably be more expensive than our current products since we would be buying each copy from ANTIC!

ST-C CLASSES

Classes for the 'C' language will be taught by Jim Chaney beginning Tuesday (October 22,1985), 7:30 to 9:30, at 916 E. Berkeley, Richardson. The classes will run for 6 weeks. Registration fee is $10.00 (payable to Jim Chaney) and will cover the cost of all handout materials (an unpublished course manual). Students may bring their own refreshments (for 15 minute break at 8:30) or purchase Classic Coke at cost.

In addition to the fundamentals of the 'C' language, the course will cover the basic layout of the 68000 registers and data manipulation techniques. This course is designed for BEGINNERS and will NOT cover the more advanced aspects of 'C'. Course examples will be based on the HIPPO-C compiler capabilities. The latter portion of the course will address the ST defined C functions (for those having the DRI compiler and C libraries). Students may sign up at the meeting or contact Jim Chaney (231-4402). Class will be limited to not more than 15 students. Addition beginner classes will be formed if demand warrents. Advanced classes will follow in the near future.

COURSE CONTENTS

1. Introduction to C
2. Data/Varible Types
3. Statements and Operators
4. Decisions and Looping
5. Modular Programming
6. Arrays
7. Pointers and arrays of pointers
8. Structures

SPACEBAR CLINIC

Do you have an 800 that works great except no SPACEBAR? At the October AND November meetings, Roger Markley will bring the tools to fix such keyboards for free! Take your keyboard out of your computer and bring it in. A free fix may restore that closet computer to full functionality at a price that can't be beat. So, if you've got a spaceless 800 bring your keyboard (NOT the whole machine!) to the October or November meeting.

COMPATIBILITY PROBLEM NOTICE

To: Owners of Digital Devices, U-PRINT.

It has been brought to my attention by Digital Devices that the U-PRINT models A16 and A64 don't work with PrintShop and Bank Street Writer.

This problem will be fixed in the future. I don't know whether or how they will retrofit to owners of existing models.

COMING ATTRACTIONS
By Morris Stephens

This month's demonstrations will be devoted to more graphics. Mark Corona will be demonstrating Neo-Chrome, a "mac-paint" type art program, on the 520ST, and some other graphics capabilities of the 520St will also be demonstrated. I would like to have some additional graphics demonstrations on one of the 8 bit computers but I was unable to find any volunteers. However, the paint program is extremely impressive. It can do things never done on an Atari computer before. Mark has had extensive experience with Neo and has created some very interesting art works. I think everyone will enjoy this, and, if we are real lucky, his very talented wife will also be there to demonstrate her prowess with "Doodle", another art program available for the ST. Several of her contributions are already circulating among ST owners and are in great demand.

Meeting Agenda for October 19th

11:00 - 12:00	Club Sales - 1st floor
11:30 - 12:00	New Member SIG
12:00 - 1:00	General Meeting
1:00 - 2:00	Demonstrations
2:00 - 5:00	SIG meetings

Times, as usual, are subject to change. Check the updated agenda posted at the DAL-ACE booth at the main entrance.

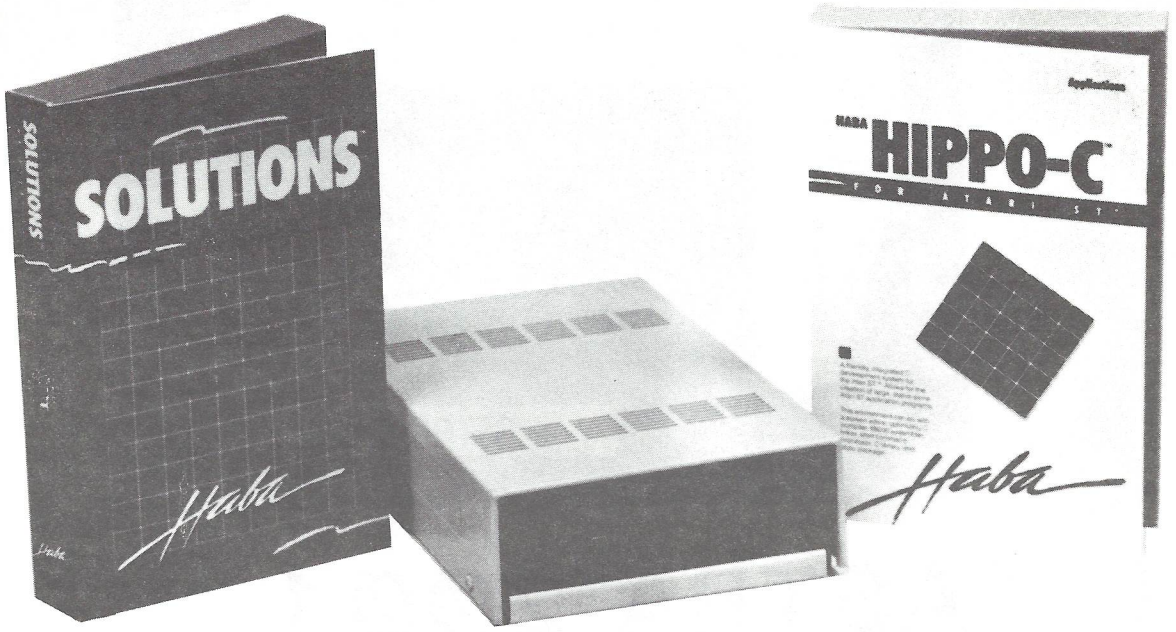
Next Month

Next month I hope to have a demonstration of some additional graphics and art programs for the 130XE and other 8 bit computers (hopefully Page Designer and Typesetter), if I can find volunteers.

Call for Volunteers (Again)

Once more I am asking for volunteers to put on demonstrations. At this point, we are experiencing considerable difficulty in finding volunteers. If no one is willing to donate a little of their time to put on some sort of a demonstration, then we simply will not have any demonstrations. The demonstrations are an important part of our meeting agenda and it would be a real loss not to have them. Surely, there are some of our members that is familiar enough with one of the new graphics programs to be able to show the rest of us how it works. For instance: typesetter, or Humpty Dump, or Megafont, Print Wiz, etc.

YOU'VE GOT THE ATARI 520ST



YOU NEED THESE!

HIPPO-C

A Development System for the Atari 520 ST

A friendly, integrated C development system for the Atari ST. Allows for the creation of large standalone Atari ST application programs. The compiler follows the Kernighan and Ritchie C standard (excluding floating-point). You can combine your own assembly routines with C. It allow allows you to view and modify the assembler output from the compiler.

HABADISK 10 MEGABYTE

Atari 520 ST Hard Disk

The HabaDisk for the Atari 520 ST is a 10 megabyte Winchester plug-in hard disk. HabaDisk stores the equivalent of more than 12 dual-sided 800K diskettes and retrieves information in seconds. A necessity for programming and large application uses.

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- Atari compatible (including Atari Desktop, GEM DOS and Mouse)

CHECKMINDER

Personal Money-Management Program for Atari 520 ST

CheckMinder is an inexpensive, simple to use home accounting program designed for those of us who'd like our computer to help us keep track of our money. CheckMinder displays and works with all the objects already familiar to most users: checks, deposits, drafts, checkbook register, etc. It will remind you when bills are due, automatically record payments and deposits, reconcile balances, and generate reports for tax deductible expenses. CheckMinder can automatically arrange your checkbook by number, date, payee, or expense category, and will even print your checks for you too ... all with just a few clicks of the mouse!

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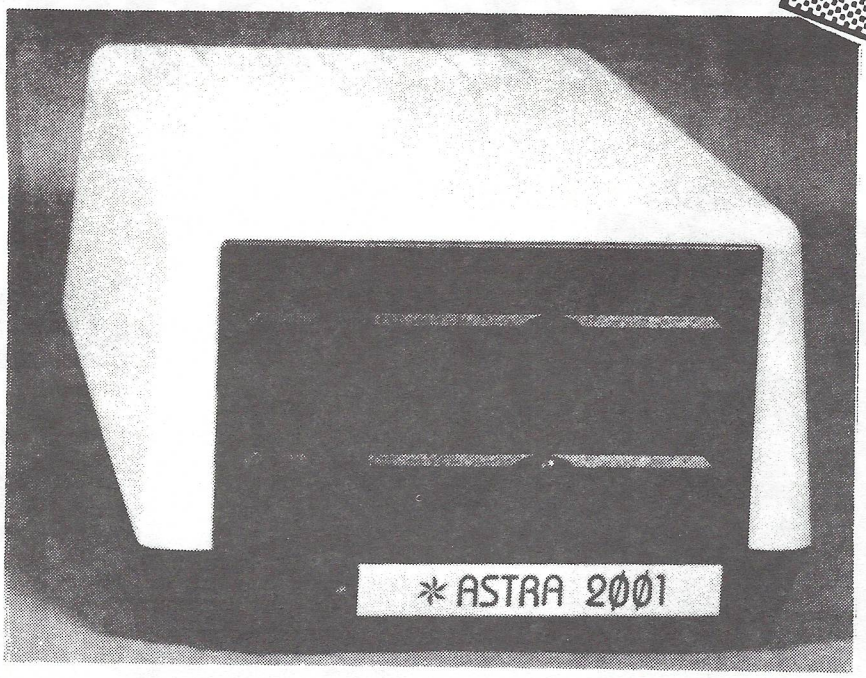

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THE QUARTER-MEG 800XL

by Jeff Bolden

In the September 1985 issue, BYTE magazine published an article, by Claus Buchholz, which to me, was worth the entire year's subscription price. They described how to easily install 256K chips in an 800XL, giving you eight 32K pages of RAM memory.

Now what could you do with eight 32K pages? Let's see; when you boot up BASIC w/DOS, you have 32,418 bytes of user memory available. A 32K memory page is actually 32,768 bytes. Does this mean that it might be possible to wire up a system that could possibly run eight basic-sized programs at once? Mind boggling, but it would be fun trying to get two or three of them going.

Byte also provided some public domain RAM disk software, (available from the library). So, we are off to a running start, towards making this new memory space useful. After installing 256K in two machines, (both have 2 drives), I'm finding that the RAM-disks are totally replacing the second drives. I might as well turn them off and put them in the closet. As a disk librarian, with a need to make multiple copies of multiple disks, I'm finding that the throughput of the RAM system is about two and one-half times the throughput from a system using two drives.

Oh happy day for the disk librarian, but copying disks is not your thing, so what else can it do? Well, right now, on the other machine, there is a modified copy of disk #67 running. Disk #67 is an animated story that uses Koala pictures. The pictures load slowly, line by line, from the regular disk, but from RAM disk it takes less than a second to change screens. 130XE owners know all about this from Magic Lantern, but the RAM disk in the 256K 800XL can be a full single or a full double density disk. There is no way you could load disk 67 into the RAM disk on an XE, its not big enough.

Installing the 256K change is fairly easy, (duck soup, if you have any prior experience with IC circuits). The 256K RAM chips plug into the existing 64K sockets. In addition, you have to construct a small two-chip board that plugs into another existing socket.

The author of the BYTE article provides two circuits, a simple circuit for the newer 800XLs and a more complex circuit for older 800XLs. Of the two machines, that I have opened up so far, both machines were fairly old, but could still use the simple circuit.

My first board was built from Radio Shack perfboard and discrete wiring. This turned out to be a bit tedious, those pins are close together and my eyes aren't what they used to be.

For the next machine, I got out the old Koala Pad, and drew up a printed circuit board layout. I used the Radio Shack Printed Circuit Board Kit to etch the second board. Assembling this board was much easier than the first, and the results were much neater.

The printed circuit layout, (Koala Picture format), will be put on disk #66 together with the RAM disk. Some of you may want to try etching your own boards. It was a fun thing to do.

There is more space on disk #66, so if anyone comes up with some 256K goodies, let's have them. Right now, I'm looking for a simple way of addressing the RAM disk as the default disk, D:. I have a complicated way of doing this, which is allowing disk #67 to show its pictures, but there ought to be a better way.

You know, maybe we haven't heard the last of 256K yet. We could play with this thing for months to come, and making our machines dance is what hobby computing is all about. Maybe we should start up a 256K SIG...

THE DISK LIBRARY

Many, many thanks to my helpers at the last meeting. I don't know what we would of done without you. Thanks again to Anita Uhl, Susan Henderson, Raymond Rakowitz, Paul Miller, Steven Fauble, and Butch Youngblood. You all come back again next month, you hear.

No less than six new disks for this month. Thanks to Steven Fauble, the three missing Analog disks are here, no more excuses, and Jim Chaney, our regular provider, has presented the library with disk A-35. Please bring us proof of your Analog subscription, and help us to remain on good terms with Analog. We will record your expiration date, so you only have to bring in your proof of purchase once a year.

Thanks to Charlie Parker's Software we have two double-sided shareware disks now in the library. #67, "Caveman Joe", and "The Noisy Giant", are animated stories. The kids will love them, and the graphics story techniques are of interest to all of us. #68, "Music Major", is an interesting educational disk that teaches a number of things about music. The back side has a S.A.M. tutorial.

See you at the meeting -- Jeff

USR Courier 2400 Modem

by Ron Spatafora and Betsy Simnacher
All Rights Reserved

Manufacured by: US Robotics
1123 West Washington Blvd.
Chicago,Ill 60607
312-733-0479

When the long-distance clock is running and Zap Mail is too slow, those on the cutting edge of communications technology are turning to 2400 baud modems.

Bulletin boards are beginning to add 2400 baud as a option for their callers along with 1200, 300, and, in some cases, 450 baud, but the high-speed modems are still very much the new kids on the block.

This particular modem has not been the subject of much comment yet. That is not a reflection on the product, but rather an indication of its newness to the telecommunication market. You will be hearing a lot more about it in the future. The USR Courier 2400 represents the next wave of high tech, higher speed modems.

From the very beginning, on unpacking it from its shipping box, one gets the impression that this is one special peripheral and USR is proud of it. You will immediately note the manual bounded in a hardcover binder with side jackets and a professional look.

The modem itself gives one the impression of uniqueness, and yet there's something strikingly familiar about it. And for good reason, for the lettering and color of the case are that of a Hewlett-Packard calculator. The external dip switches mimic the Prometheus Promodem 1200, and of course the Courier is 100 percent Hayes command set compatible. Would one get the idea that USR "borrowed" the best features from the industry leaders?

SPEED

The Courier is an asynchonous modem capable of 0-300, 1200 and 2400 bps (baud) transmission. It meets Bell 212A/103 - CCITT V.22 standards and will operate in either half or full duplex. The speed is controlled by the modem software via Hayes Smartmodem commands. The unit defaults to full duplex 2400 baud.

COMPATABILITY

The latest problem with 2400 baud modems is compatability with existing software. Ironically, standard-setting Hayes altered their registers for their 2400-baud modem, making it no longer compatible with existing 1200-baud RBBS/BYE bulletin board programs.

The Courier 2400 does not exibit this problem. Instead, it has the Hayes 2400 command set and maintains the 1200 Hayes compatability. This has been confirmed on several key software programs (RBBS124A1, BYEIII and TBBS).

AUTO-ANSWER

The Courier is a super smart modem in that it will auto-answer and change speed to match the incoming call, regardless of the caller's speed or the Courier's former settings. This is a most useful feature, once again, for the RBBS system operator (sysop).

AUTO-DIAL

The Courier will auto-dial, redial and auto-sense the type of phone service (tone or pulse). You may set the unit at 2400 baud, and call either a 2400 or 1200 system and the Courier will shift speed to accommodate. However, for 300 baud systems, you must command the Courier to downshift to 300 baud before calling.

To dial letters, like "DIAL USR," you can input the phone letters and the Courier will convert them to the appropriate "numbers."

Do you have a need to transfer the computer call, using what is known as "flash hook" (depressing the "hook" once to tell the phone center to transfer)? You can command the Courier to do that as well.

What about those long distance services? Some will put out a tone after you call the network. The Courier will call the network, wait for the secondary tone, input your account number, password, etc., and the number you want to call. Up to 40 characters can be entered as a string command.

Want an indication of the status of your call? You may select the advanced call-progress mode and the Courier will indicate a BUSY, NO ANSWER or VOICE response as well as the standard CONNECT, CONNECT 1200, CONNECT 2400.

STANDARD FEATURES

Users will find the same basic Hayes command set available, including speaker mode, hook mode, etc.

Additionally, with the self-diagnostic command, the Courier will check itself out and report (via the "Inquiry" command) on the modem status, current settings, duration of last call, results of RAM and ROM tests and even specify the 3-digit product code. There's even a LED indicator for the analog loop test.

HELP!

The Courier will provide three Help screens (ala the Prometheus) upon command: Command Help, S-Register Help and Dial Command Help. These screens and the ever-useful reference card, provide the user with answers to most, if not all, questions.

DIP SWITCHES

There are 10 user-selectable dip switches located, very conveniently, on the bottom of the unit. One need not have the manual nor reference card handy to set them, since the bottom is imprinted with switch instructions.

Placement of switches in an easily accessible location with nearby instructions is one very impressive feature. The settings are identical to Hayes' Smartmodem, plus two additional switches (9 and 10). Switch 9 controls the escape code enable/disable (another important feature for bulletin board sysops). Switch 10 is for future expansion.

CONSTRUCTION

Unlike the Hayes Smartmodem and its clones, the USR Courier 2400 case is plastic. Some comments have been made comparing its durability to the extruded aluminum used by Hayes, and most other modems. Unless you plan to use the Courier as a door stop or to shim up a desk, I regard the plastic case as more aesthetic and quite durable. The eight conventional LED indicators (the ninth is for the analog loop test) are located behind a sloped gold panel, providing optimum viewing from extreme angles.

Two phone jacks, one for connection to the wall jack and the other to a phone device, attest to US Robotic's forethought. Well done! Otherwise, the Courier is the same basic size as the Hayes Smartmodem, but half the weight. So much for extruded aluminum.

CONCLUSION

The Courier 2400 was the first 2400 baud modem available in mass quantities in Dallas. This is no suprise since US Robotics got the jump on the 2400 baud chips, when most manufacturers were debating whether to get into the 2400 baud market (some still are).

At $699, 100 percent Hayes 300/1200/2400 compatible and all the other features, one cannot help but be VERY impressed. It's a very well-designed next generation modem.

With $50 300 baud modems on the market, is the Courier worth the price difference? At eight times faster than 300 baud, how many long distance phone calls will it take to make up the delta? Very few! As for 2400-baud communication, well, once you have 2400 baud ... 1200 is a drag and 300 makes you want to use the mail.

ATARI EXPLORER SPECIAL OFFER

Atari now has a special user's group offer for subscription to the ATARI EXPLORER magazine. The UG collects the money and addresses and sends payment and a subscriber list to Atari. At a substantial savings. The regular subscription rates are: 6 issues @ $15.00 and 18 issues @ $39.95. The special rates are 6 @ $12 and 18 @ $29.95, a savings of 20-25%. If you're interested, we should have a signup list at the meeting. Be prepared to pay if you sign up. ...JLP

WARNING! ST BUG ALERT! WARNING!

by John Pellet

WARNING! The bug described herein CAN and WILL destroy entire disks beyond recovery!

I was writing a text file and decided to store the current version, so I told EXPRESS to do so. Then I noticed my text disk was not in the drive - my working copy of EXPRESS was. The program asked me if I wanted to retry, since the program disk was write-protected. I thought "here's a chance to put in the right disk, so I did and retried the write command. It wrote my disk file fine. When I left EXPRESS I found, to my horror, that my text disk now had the directory of my program disk! My new file was fine, but everything else was GARBAGE! At first I thought, "just another EXPRESS bug" but I was wrong. To confirm the problem I started a file copy on a write-protected disk. When the retry dialog box opened I swapped disks to a newly formatted disk. T. O. S. should have come back and said file not found. It wrote the old directory on the new disk then said it couldn't copy the file (which wasn't there, of course).

In summary, NEVER, NEVER, NEVER change disks when a dialog box is open!

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* *

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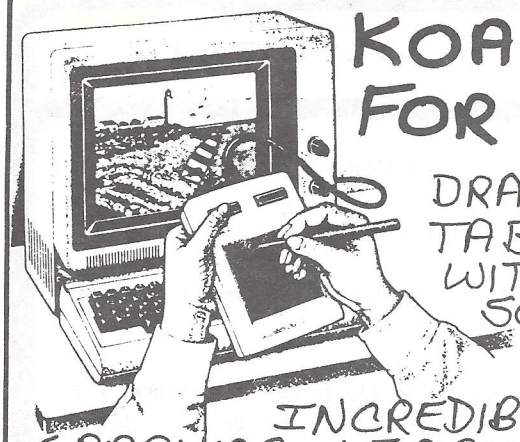

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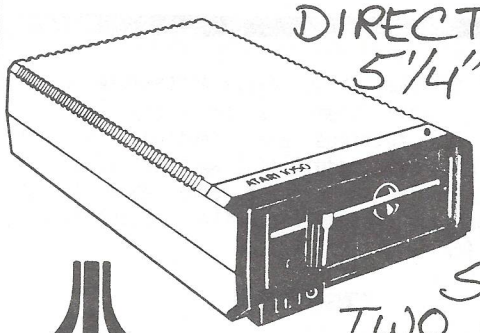

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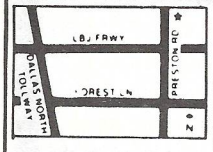

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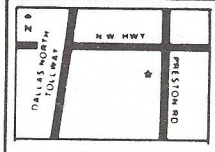

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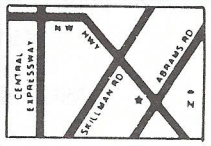

MEDALLION CENTER
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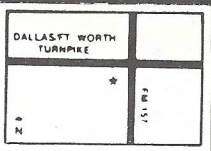
309 MEDALLION CENTER
NORTHWEST HWY AT ABRAMS



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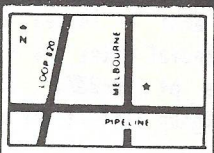
FROM BLACK EYED PEA)



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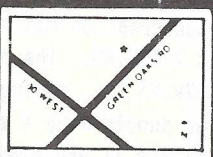

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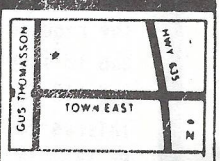

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COMMUNICATIONS COLUMN

by John Pellet

Well folks, we're not mailing the newsletter this month. The grand experiment with the "snail" system of delivery failed. Based on feedback at the September meeting, as much as 10% of the membership did not get the newsletter. Also, mailing before the meeting simply adds too much lead time for us - the November newsletter deadline would be the week before the October meeting if we were going to mail in time for delivery before the meeting. Therefore, newsletters will be picked up at the meeting and mailed the week after.

If we don't hear from you then we'll assume you don't care. If you do - either way - let someone know.

The disk library actively solicits member contributions, BUT all submissions must either be in the public domain or include permission of the copyright holder for us to legally reproduce it. This include magazine programs. ANTIC specifically states that all of their programs are copyrighted unless otherwise stated and may not be copied. COMPUTE makes a similar statement. We are currently pursuing this issue with ANALOG. I hope we know more by the time you read this.

A second issue facing the library is ST software. Currently, 3.5" disks are MUCH more expensive than 5.25". If you know a source of double-sided 3.5" disks for under $2 each, please call me. Right now there is little public domain software for the ST but that should change when BASIC is released (scheduled late Sept.). If you'd like to help get the ST library going then call me or Jeff Golden.

Finally, BBS news. Unless you've been on a desert isle, you know that the BBS now has more disk space online. Now we have to decide on the next step. Is a major expansion in the best interests of the club - and is it worth $1500-2000? If you have an opinion, please let someone know. Some of the questions the Board is addressing include: Should we support 2 systems? Is an ST system appropriate? Do the members want to spend the $$$? If you've got a comment, leave a message on the BBS, write a letter to the editor, or call someone. We may have some proposals published here next month.

That's about it for this month! Have fun!

EXPRESS LETTER PROCESSOR (for the 520ST)

Reviewed by John Pellet

Well, believe it or not, after a too long wait, the Atari ST's are finally here! As a matter of fact, I am writing this on one, a color system, courtesy of Computer Discoveries. Now the wait for great software begins. I hope this wait is not as long.

This review is being written on the first third-party software available in the Metroplex - EXPRESS LETTER PROCESSOR from Mirage Concepts. According to the messages on Compuserve, EXPRESS was developed using the Dragon FORTH language, one of the first development languages out for the ST's. It is an integrated package containing a "letter processor", mailing list, and terminal/typewriter emulator. Each piece is simple and straight-forward, but lacks features commonly found on competing packages. For example, the word processor does not support centering, right-justification, or block text moves. One of the real joys of life has to be manually justifying and centering text, which I did for this review.

I have not used the mailing list, so I cannot comment on it. The terminal emulator, except as noted below, seems fairly useful, as long as you don't need some form of error checking protocol. It also allows sending escape codes to the printer.

Now for the fatal bug! All forms of this program absolutely CRASH if they ever see a line longer than 80 columns. This crash will take you all the way back to GEM. It may even trash disk files. This bug can be avoided in many cases by properly setting up the systems you access, but it will occur occasionally even then, especially at 1200 baud. Based on limited experience, uploading may also trash disk files - so make sure your source disk is write-protected.

The program IS useful. In fact, I used it to write three articles for this issue of the newsletter. I used it because I wanted to use my ST and it is all there is. I'm sure that by the time you read this EXPRESS will be relegated to the back shelf. But right now I will continue to use it until something better comes along.

NOTE: The code for this program is about 130K - for the whole set on the disk, almost twice that. This seems incredible coming from the 8 bit world. If this is the wave of the ST, then larger drives are sorely needed, and a hard disk is almost essential for serious use. ...JLP

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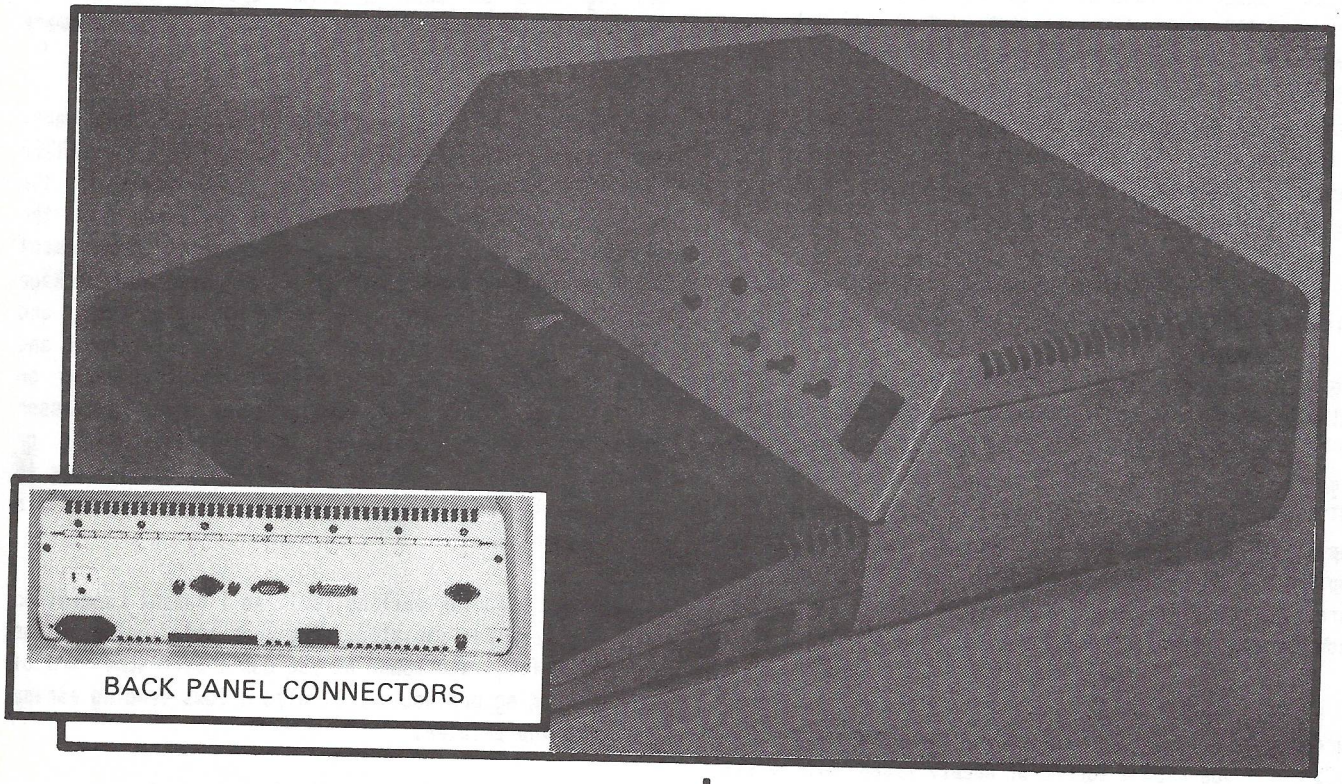

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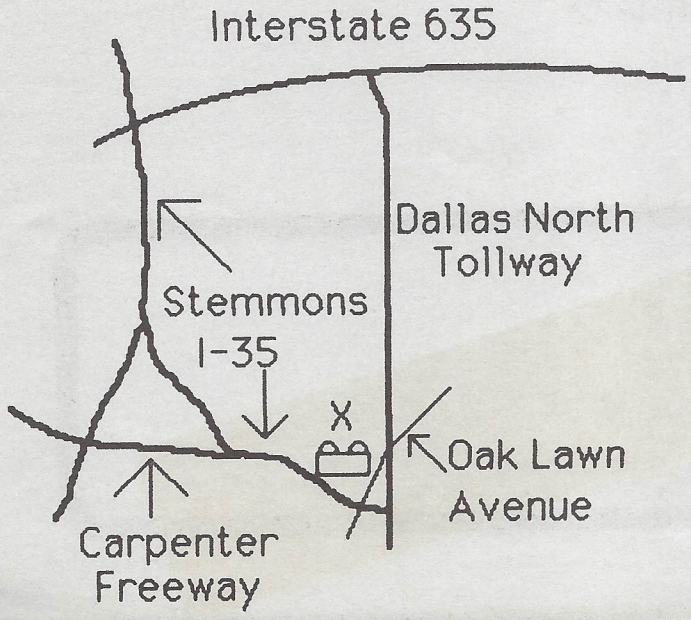
Submissions will be accepted in any form. However, it is extremely helpful if your submission(s) can conform to the following format:

Condensed print (16-17 CPI).
Column width: 56 characters per column (3 7/16 inches).
Column length: 9 inches (6 or 7 LPI - 6 preferred).
Right margin justification used with text.
Submitted to newsletter both printed out and on DOS format disk.

NEWSLETTER PRODUCTION SCHEDULE

NOVEMBER Newsletter: Copy should be turned in before the production meeting. All advertising copy should also be turned in by then. The next production meeting will be at 1 PM, October 26, at Jim Chaney's house, 916 E Berkeley, in Richardson.



*** MEETING INFORMATION ***

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9:00 - INFOMART opens
11:00 - 12:00 Club Sales / Newsletter Pickup
12:00 - 1:30 Business Meetng / Demos
2:00 - 3:00 Club Sales / Newsletter Pickup
2:00 - 4:00 SIGS: Schedule posted!

Meeting rooms and additional information will be posted at the DAL-ACE booth at the main entrance, which will be manned from 10 AM to 4 PM. Membership signup, cards, and guest passes will be at the booth. Library sales and newsletter distribution will take place at our club sales area, normally near the vendor area. GARAGE SALES ARE POSTPONED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE!

NOVEMBER MEETING: The next meeting will be Saturday, November 9, 1985 - 3 weeks after the October meeting.

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