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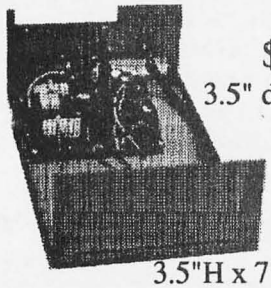

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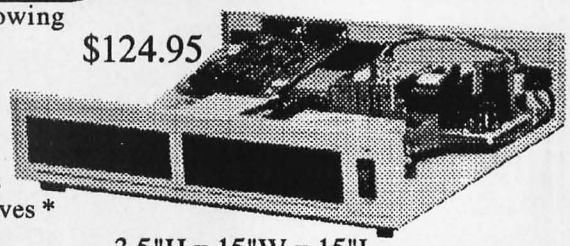

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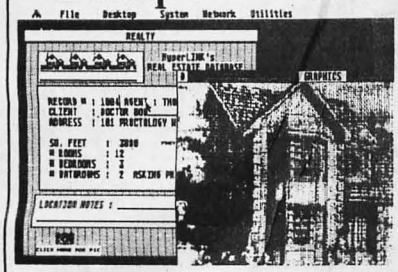

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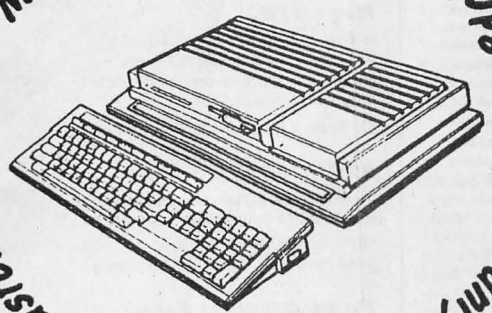

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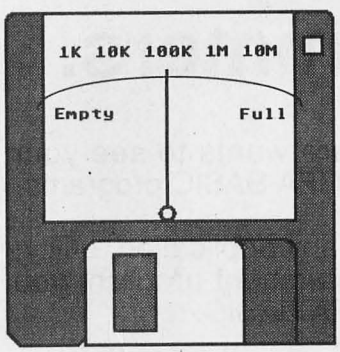

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#935 - Desktop Publishing Utilities
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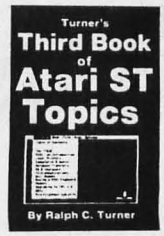

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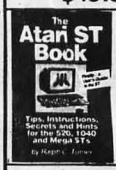

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AtariUser

■ January 1992

Welcome to a new year!

Join us and Atari Corporation for a look back and a look ahead as we enter 1992 together. Atari President Greg Pratt offers his view in our HIGH RESOLUTION column, and I take a whirlwind tour of the last 13 months in "1991: The Atari Year in Review." I think you'll find something new in the collection of the old. I did!

As you read this issue, you'll notice that we've changed a lot of the way we look here at AtariUser. Publisher and Art Director Steve Lesh has totally redesigned our presentation for even a better, more polished look than we had before. I've got to hand it to him, he surprised me by taking the very good and making it still better.

Our content continues to be fine-tuned as well. We've got more "meat" for you in this issue than ever, despite the continuing advertising drought that's hitting all the computer magazines. It's keeping us smaller than we'd like to be, but don't fret, we aren't dropping any part of our Atari product coverage. We just won't always have every column in every issue.

The LYNX is turning heads for Atari all over the world, and TV advertising for it has become commonplace. A flood of new Lynx games has caused a review backlog that we'll catch up on this month. Robert Jung has the lowdown on the latest titles in a special ALL-LYNX review section, and Clinton Smith reports on the hot news coming out of the Chicago Atari Entertainment division.

We found that there was just too much "upgrade" information to fit in the December issue of AtariUser, so this month we offer a few more items on how to get more than you paid for into and out of your Atari. Our focus on Desk Top Publishing will come next month, with a RESOURCE of fonts, helps, and programs designed to help your home and professional printing needs.

Upcoming issues will cover Telecommunication and MIDI in depth. Don't miss them, and BE SURE TO TELL OUR ADVERTISERS THAT YOU SAW THEM IN ATARI-USER. In the relatively small Atari market, that information makes far more difference than you can imagine!

—John Nagy, Editor-in-Chief, AtariUser Magazine

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AtariUser Editor John Nagy takes you on a tour-d'force of what our favorite computer company did, and didn't, do last year. Just rememer... Those who do not learn from history are doomed to repeat it.

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Revolution

Greg Pratt: The past and future of Atari...

On the evening of November 23, the President of Atari U.S., Greg Pratt, addressed a sold-out banquet audience at the Chicago Computerfest by Atari. Here are excerpts of his talk that may be of particular interest to our readers...

"This is an especially important group, comprised of dealers, developers, and most important, you loyal Atari users who have been loyal to Atari even in times when it seemed as though Atari was ignoring you. I think you are owed some insight as to the dynamics of what has been happening at the company.

"This is the beginning of my second year as President of Atari Computer Corporation. ...I stepped into a situation that was, quite frankly, very confused, with no particular direction. We had a situation where many developers were abandoning the platform, we had products that we had promised that had not been delivered... We had to have a dealer program, we had to have a developer program, we had to have a user program.

"We put together something called the Aegis Partnership Program... whereby we would recognize that Atari, together with a strong developer group, together with a strong dealer group, would be able to offer end users a superior solution. We identified those particular solutions where we excelled over everyone else, then pushed them to our maximum...

"We've done other things that we needed to do to make the Atari a viable platform on the professional level. Things like going out and getting General Electric support for our products, so that we now can offer on-site support for business applications. Things like... to install a leasing program such that businesses who want to lease Atari product will be able to do so.

"We added certain key staff members, people like Bill Rehbock who came on about the same time, Bob [Brodie]... Don Mandell, James Grunke, Mike Groh, Art Brysinsky, Don Thomas, and John Jainschigg with the Atari Explorer magazine who has done a fantastic job... We needed... to give people the flexibility that they needed in order to get the job done...

"We did things with developers — to try to hold developers over, the ones who were weak for whatever reason, or needed assistance, and tried to figure out ways to help them. We came up with developer co-op plans, and today when you see Atari ads in magazines, in music magazines, in DTP magazines, it's not just a glamour ad of Atari products, it's Atari products doing something.

"We did things in the dealer area to strengthen it. We have the samples program... a co-op program, floor planning, the lease program. We extended the warranty — all Atari computer products now bear a one-year warranty.

"We even shipped new products in 1991. [Laughter, then applause.] The Mega STe, the TT030, the SLM605, products that we had been talking about for a long, long time, we finally got out the door.

"1992 will be even more interesting. We'll have new products that we'll focus on to take us to the next level... If you stopped over at the booth, you saw some very excellent color boards... We are talking true color, 24 bit color boards — this is going to get us into a whole new level, a new positioning such that we are now talking about being able to use Atari equipment in the presentations graphics segment of the market... and we will be there in real time, not coming in a year after the fact, but rather on time, and in fact, leading the way.

"There will be other new products... You know we are working on 68040 products [with] their initial introductions at Hannover [in April 1992]. You'll see probably a nine to eighteen month gestation period, depending on how quickly the Codeheads can get their act in gear... [Laughter] and certain other people. This time there are some wonderful development tools that will go along with the product that will reduce time to market...

"But I caution you that the TT030 will have to be the machine that we will have to rely on for the next two years. It should be the backbone...

"We are also not ignoring the broad base. Today, we have the 520 Discovery pack and the 1040 Family Curriculum pack. These are packages that we put together with the other English speaking countries of the Atari world... These particular packages are very viable, and we hope to sell just thousands of them.

"Because we have such a wide product diversity... we find ourselves in the situation where there is no one particular channel that we can use exclusively to get these product to market... At the very top of the pyramid, we have VARS, OEMs, independent hardware and software resellers. Then we have a middle section that is comprised principally of computer dealers. Then at the base of the pyramid, we have mass merchants and the consumer end...

"Jack [Tramiel] is still very much involved in setting the strategic direction of this company, and he is committed to having a consumer products oriented company. We are the "Volks Computer Company". We are the people's computer company. Our principles remain unchanged, we believe in offering the most power at the best price. We want to try to have the best value relationship that we can possible have. Another quote from Jack is that he believes in "selling to the masses, not the classes." So anything that we do today that's at the top of the pyramid, our objective is within three years, or whatever the development cycle, to have it at the base of the pyramid... so that we can offer it to the most people we possibly can, just as soon as we possibly can. And that overriding concern reflects the fact that the end user is ultimately our boss."—*Greg Pratt* ■

■ Greg Pratt has been with Atari Corporation for many years as the Chief Financial Officer. He came to Atari to follow the Tramiel family from Commodore, and in November 1990 was named President of Atari USA.

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AtariUser NewsEdge

NewsEdge

Atari's Pets

The latest buzz words at Atari make you wonder what kind of zoo you might be visiting. Falcon, Marlin and Jaguar are the in-house monikers for several Atari Computer projects. "Code names" for projects in progress follow a fauna format: fish names for all PC compatible projects, birds for 680X0 computers, and cats for games. While many of the in-house labels aren't likely to grace the front panels of final products, one such name is already in production—the Lynx. Considering the amount of pre-announcement rumors about Falcon (the 68040 computer) and the Jaguar (the 64 bit game console), these names may also become final. But we hesitate to recommend similar follow through with the PC line. Imagine a 486DX Trout on your desk...

Sales Down—Profits Up

Atari Computer's 1991 third quarter earnings and sales figures show that sales totals were down nearly half from last year's comparable period (to $49 million from $89 million). But earnings were $1,634,000, up $4.6 million from the earnings deficit shown in the same period last year, although the report in 1990 also added $6 million in debenture repurchase profits in order to net a $3 million overall profit, higher than this year's. Atari has had fair success at downscaling operations and production during the recession that is ruining many other company's profits.

Where's the STylus?

The pad-based ST that was said to be the future of computing and was at one time expected to be the "WOW" unit at COMDEX has been tabled at least for now by Atari. Market studies show that everyone is interested in pad computers, but few expect to buy one. Adding to the disincentive, the memory cards to be used like disks are currently very expensive, driving the cost of operation far above that of the purchase price. Rather than offer a machine without a market, Atari is putting the project into mothballs until and unless the market shows that money is to be made. Despite the 98% accuracy of the outstanding Atari handwriting recognition software as compared to the 75% accuracy of most PC based units, the STylus is presently judged to be a novelty whose time has not yet come.

Where's the CDAR?

According to Bill Rehbock, Director of Technical Services at Atari Corporation, the announced and expected CDAR505 will NOT be produced any time soon. Intended for a fall 1991 release, the unit is really a Chinon CDX451, readily available at many dealers today. The sole Atari influence was to be the silkscreened name on the front panel and the METADOS driver software to be included. It now appears that these additions, along with Atari packaging, would drive the minimum price of the CD ROM players to about $50 above what everyone else can get the drive for, making it a loss proposition for Atari. Instead, Atari plans to promote the use of the 500+ megabyte storage devices by encouraging production of disks and software. Rehbock says Atari will release METADOS into the community as freeware. This will enable any Atari user to buy any SCSI CD player and use it immediately on any TT, or with a host adaptor, on any ST. ICD is expected to release a revised HOST software system shortly that will allow their Advantage series of host adapters to address the CD devices without effort or confusion. Chinon brand drives are currently available at prices under $400.

Real Soon Now... Not

Atari's President, Greg Pratt, said while addressing the banquet crowd at Chicago's Atari show, that the new machines coming in 1992 from Atari will be shown at the Spring CeBIT show in Germany, and will be dazzling. However, he then added that the machines will then see a 12 to 18 month development before commercial availability, and that the current TT and Mega STe will be the mainstay of Atari for most of the next two years. This realistic comment throws cold water on some of the hopes of the Atari community who expected an Atari Falcon 68040 on their desks in 1992. See excerpts of Pratt's comments in the HIGH RESOLUTION—VIEWPOINTS page in this issue of AtariUser.

Toss Your TOS

Atari announced that new TOS 2.06 chips will soon be available for the MEGA STe, ST/STe product line. The update is to fix some of the bugs still left in the earlier releases such as flow control and delayed boots.

Like the TT TOS 3.06 reported last October in AtariUser, the new TOS for the STe features: Atari ICON (Fuji) displayed at Boot; System memory check after a cold boot, pressing any key aborts test to reduce attendant delay; a shrinking bar is displayed at boot, during hard disk initialization, pressing any key aborts process and attendant delay; pressing the Control key at boot bypasses the auto folder preventing the loading of .ACC, NEWDESK.INF and DESKICON.RSC files; holding down the ALT key and typing a decimal number on the numeric keypad inserts an ASCII code character into the keyboard buffer; media change detection on floppies works better; less floppy spin-up delay in systems with a hard drive; vacant drives detected sooner with quicker time-outs; floppies with only one FAT are supported to allow greater compatibility with some DOS disk formatters; serial port functionality improved; some programs that use Timer-A will work better (compatibility improvement); multiple AES events (double clicks) when scrolling are reduced. TOS 2.06 is available now as an upgrade for STe computers.

TOS 3.06 is said NOT to be slated for upgrade sales, presumably because a new MULTITASKING TOS for the TT is to be released in the second quarter of 1992. A hardware adapter to use TOS 2.06 in any Atari ST or Mega is available in Germany now, and will be in the USA in January (details are in the Press section, below).

Chicago Computerfest—By Atari

The first ever commercial joint venture by Atari and a user group to stage a computer show was by all measures a success, if a moderate one. Despite 20 degree cold, 40 mph winds, and "horizontal snow," over 2,300 people attended the event in Chicago's O'Hare Ramada Inn November 23-24, managed by Chicago's L.C.A.C.E.. The show literally took over the sprawling hotel, using ten rooms in all, and selling out the 700 room facility for the weekend.

The Chicago show had more machines than anything of its kind ever before. Fifty each of TT030's, Mega STe's, 1040STe's, 520STFM's, 70 color monitors, 45 Lynxes, and over 100 XEGS 8-bit computers traveled by several trucks to Chicago, many to be used in the show itself, others to become backup sales stock for the retailers at the show. A complete TT030 system was given away as a door prize, won by Todd Latam of Windsor, Canada. There were also 25 Atari personnel, more than at any user group event, anywhere, ever before. For the first time, Greg Pratt, the President of Atari Corp. addressed the general public at a banquet (see excerpts elsewhere in this issue). Also in attendance were Bob Brodie, Bill Rehbock, Mike Groh, Mike Fulton, Don Thomas, Geoff Earle, James Grunke, Don Mandell, and more. The ST BOOK and UNIX were shown at the Atari booth, as was the Professional Systems Group's repertoire.

Equally dramatic was the vendor turnout. The list of 60 plus booths read like a Who's Who, and is too long to include here. New products were premiered by Gribnif (XBOOT, Arabesque), Codehead (MegaPaint, Genus, and a preview of MIDI SPY), WizWorks (The Tray and SCAN LITE), Migraph (preview of OCR, Merge-it and Tray), Hybrid Arts (GenEdit 2, SmpteTrack Gold), Missionware (preview of Flash II), D.A. Brumleve (instant Fuji tattoos), and more. Sales were generally good, although most dealers said that the show underperformed the exceptional sales done at WAACE and Glendale earlier in the year. Dave Small was expected as a late addition, but in the end didn't come due to illness. The Atari Discovery Xtra and Family Curriculum bundles were eyed by the non-Atari owners who were tempted to come by promotions that included radio station Lynx giveaways with custom game cards. The radio station's name and logo appeared on the opening screens, and were a big hit on the air.

The Chicago show experimented with new twists. A huge gaming area, where users could play MIDI-MAZE or use a Lynx for $2 an hour. A full 8-bit computer sales room. Two swap rooms for private or used sales. And there were more seminars than normally allowed by law, almost certainly more than made any sense. In all, 54 seminars were scheduled, although at least two were canceled and others were combined at the last moment. Many seminars had only a few in their audience, and some had more panelists than witnesses. Others had standing room only.

And this show explored other concepts not often seen at Atari events: hands-on training on Pagestream and Calamus DTP, by the developers of the software itself. These value-added classes sported a fee for participation, but offered class materials worth far more than the $15 charge. Despite 20 workstations (provided by Atari), the classes were full and an additional Pagestream class was scheduled.

The Midwest Atari Regional Council (MARC) awarded appreciation plaques to CodeHead, Double Click, and Soft-Logik, to honor them in their support for user groups and the entire Atari marketplace. Contact Hank Vize for more info on MARC via GEnie at H.VIZE.

The cooperative effort pioneered the upcoming shows for Atari. This experiment not only paid for itself, but turned a profit for Atari and L.C.A.C.E. even after all the expenses were tallied. That's a first for Atari, who has often spent many thousands to support shows that only others profited by. There'll be more, but probably limited to three major events a year.

Atari Acadamia?

Atari Canada is in negotiations with several Universities to install 1040STe computer labs. The equipment is to be donated free of charge in hopes that it will generate sales to students. One site already approved for the labs is the Royal Conservatory of Music at the University of Toronto. Those wishing more information please contact: Murray Brown, Atari Canada, 90 Gough Road, Markham Ontario, Canada, (416) 479-1266.

Help for New Users

A 24-page two-color booklet from the Independent Association from Atari developers premiered at the Chicago Computerfest in November. An impressive layout of offerings of the many IAAD members, the book is a primer for showing the scope of available products for Atari computers. Of course, phone numbers and addresses of the developers are included. The booklet will be included with all new computers sold, and should go far to keep "Discovery" bundle buyers from using the machine for the proverbial doorstop. Atari Corp. paid for the production of the booklet in support of the IAAD.

Drive On...

Atari's move to standardize their ports and accessories has born fruit in the closing of a support deal with PLI, billed as "the most trusted name in removable hard drive technology". Atari will be added to Apple and NeXT in the lines that PLI will offer Syquest technology removable drives, hard drives, rewritable optical library systems, and more. The sexy and tiny PLI boxes are as affordable as any in the market, and the Atari name and symbol will begin appearing on all PLI literature between those of Apple and NeXT. SCSI devices, the PLI units work instantly with a TT and Atari's HDX software, or with a host adaptor, on any Atari. CO-OP ads with PLI and Atari will begin appearing in magazines in January. PLI, 47421 Bayside Parkway, Fremont CA 94538, 800-288-8754.

Atari Fourplay

Warner Brothers Records has released a jazz album featuring four superstars called "Fourplay" where this credit is given: "Atari Programming by Harvey Mason Jr."

New Chips—More Juice

Motorola has introduced new low power, low cost microprocessors to be available in 1992. The 68340V operates on only 3.3 volts and is designed for portable low priced consumer market computers. The new chip is being evaluated by Sony, Apple, and Atari. Motorola is also attempting to strip down the 68000 in an attempt to make it give "near" 68000 performance and compatibility at prices as low as one dollar. The EC series of processors will be available in versions of the 020, 030 and 040, and eventually even of the 68050. The largest single difference in the E series chips is the elimination of the on-chip MMU and/or floating point units. Reportedly, the 68EC020 is now being designed into a new Atari arcade game. Reduced processor cycle time in the new chip will mean a 25% increase in graphic performance at a lower price.

Could this be part of the "Jaguar" to come later this year? (See the LYNX column in this issue of AtariUser for more on Jaguar.)

Developers set "Eyes" on Windows Market

A new corporation has been formed by Double Click Software and Rimik Enterprises, two Atari developers. Eye See, Inc. is intended to be a channel into the IBM PC marketplace for developers of Atari products. Venture capital is available for full scale marketing and world-wide representation of PC converted ST software. According to Rimik's Rich Betson, Eye See Inc. will allow ST developers to remain in the Atari market that they enjoy by allowing the PC market to fund them. Contact Eye See at 619-630-1217.

■ Some of AtariUser's News and Press information is provided by the Z*Net International Atari News Service, a division of Rovac Industries, Inc., P.O. Box 59, Middlesex, NJ 08846, (908) 968-2024 voice, (908) 968-8148 BBS, GEnie: Z-NET, CompuServe: 71777,2140.

Hybrid Arts—The Return

After years of restriction in Atari support due to a CEO that appeared to have a grudge against it, Hybrid Arts is happy to announce that a new boss and a new outlook is allowing a new growth and support for Atari. One of the pioneers in MIDI software and hardware, Hybrid "fired" their old boss and replaced him with Chris Pelzar. The result is a complete turnaround of attitude, support, advertising, and development for the Atari platform. Genedit 2.0 (more on it below) was marketed many months ago in Germany, but was withheld from the US market by the old Hybrid. It was shown and sold to enthusiastic musicians at the Chicago Atari show. Digital Master is also going over big, part of a new effort by Hybrid to sell what they have rather than what they thought they could eventually produce. Efforts have also begun in payment of royalties and fees that have been owed for years to some developers of Hybrid's early products. Hybrid Arts, 8522 National Blvd., Culver City, CA 90232, 310-841-0340.

The Portfolio Thrives

Don Messerli, David E. Stewart, and AtariUser's own B.J. Gleason have been hard at work writing programs for the APORTFOLIO/Compuserve Programming Marathon. During the months of November and December, the three programmers made sure that there was at least one new program a day available for downloading. Other members have been joining in to help them out, so there have been almost three new Portfolio files to download every day. By the end of the marathon, December 31, it is expected that there will be 600 files available in the Portfolio Forum on Compuserve. The PBASIC Editor, a program to allow users on a PC to write programs using B.J. Gleason's PBASIC for the Portfolio, has been upgraded to version 2.0. The major improvement is that the editor now provides emulation for those "Portfolio Only" features. You can now view PGC graphics, as well as Boxes, Sounds, and Menus on the PC. This should help speed up Portfolio software development. The PBASIC editor is available on Compuserve in the APORTFOLIO forum as PBE20.ZIP. (See the SOFTWARE IDEAS column in this issue of AtariUser for details of accessing CompuServe.)

Yikes! Modems Beware

The Federal Communications Commission ("FCC") has adopted rules that will increase by up to five-fold the price of local telephone lines that use new network features to provide access to information services. The new rules could have as serious an impact as the FCC's 1987 access charge proposal, which was successfully defeated through a massive letter-writing campaign. Any information service provider that wishes to take advantage of new network features must start paying the higher charges, and they will undoubtedly pass it on to the subscribers. GEnie, CompuServe, Prodigy, BTNA (formerly Tymnet) and others have petitioned the FCC to reconsider its rules. You can help by writing to Al Sikes, Chairman of the FCC, and sending copies of your letter to his fellow Commissioners, and your own U.S. Senators and Representative). Honorable Alfred C. Sikes, Chairman, Federal Communications Commission, 1919 M Street, N.W., Room 814, Washington, D.C. 20554.

Fixin' the GCR Blues

Jim Allen of Fast Technology has a fix for TT and GCR/Mega disk drive woes. Some drives won't format Mac disks. He has found that by adding a second 7406 driver chip piggyback on top of the original chip that the TT's or Mega's floppy drive problems would clear up. The twenty-five cent 7406 (not "LS" or "HC", etc, just a 7406) is the driver that sends all the info to the floppy drive. Boosting output by using two of them seems to help improve the signal. The same circuit is in the STe and TT.

Can They be Saved, Doc?

How to make games work on a TT030 or Mega STe when they won't cooperate? Mike Fulton of Atari says that part of the problem may be that the newer TOS versions make the computer wait for the hard drive to take over, and that this may upset the game load from bootable disks. Use the bypass keys to avoid hard drive booting, or use the freeware program NOROACH to modify your game disks to force a no-wait bootup (do this only on a copy of non-protected disks!). He also advises how to get Flight of the Intruder (from Spectrum Holobyte) going on a TT030. It may also work on a Mega STe: "First, have absolutely NOTHING active in the AUTO folder, and NO desk accessories. Second, put the machine in ST-low rez. Third, turn the 68030 cache off. (Try 8MHz, with no RAM cache on a Mega STe). Fourth, run the program.

Fifth, have a blast. Flight is VERY smooth on a TT030, and screen updates are marvelous."

Graphics Software Wars Begin

Gribnif Software has released Arabesque Professional, a complete BITMAP and VECTOR illustration application. It will edit up to 20 pages in memory, draw points, lines,

CodeHead—New Graphics Arts Powerhouse

CodeHead Software is moving into the Graphic Arts more and more with three new products imported from Europe, forming the "CodeHead GT" line of graphic tools. Avant Vector is an object-oriented graphics program, with sophisticated automatic tracing abilities. Avant Plot contains extensive plotter support. Repro Studio is available with or without a hand-held scanner (256 gray level) and is the first ST graphics program to let you create and edit images with true grey tones. Avant Vector is $495, and Avant Plot, $895. Repro Studio retails for $195, or $895 with the greyscale scanner. MegaPaint Professional is an incredably complex bit-map and vector graphics tool. Up to four planes of color separation may be manipulated, overlaid, viewed with varied intensities, and printed to a color printer. It's modular, so new features can be added as you go. One already available is the SCANLITE scanner interface accessory from WizWorks, allowing any scanner to be used to load MegaPaint.It runs on any ST/TT with a monochrome monitor from 640x400 up to 8192x8192. $175.

GENUS, a full featured font editor for Calamus typefaces will import Publishing Partner or PageStream fonts for conversion to Calamus fonts, and includes five fonts—$175. The Cherry Font Collection is now being distributed by CodeHead as well. Thirteen "font packs," some containing more than one typeface, are $42.95 per pack. A poster showing all fonts in the collection is available on request. CodeHead Software, PO Box 74090, Los Angeles, CA 90004, (213) 386-5735, fax (213) 386-5789.

Bezier polygons (2D or 3D), B-Splines, circles, ellipses, arcs, and rectangles (with or without rounded corners) in Bitmap or Vector mode, mirror, rotate, bend, increase contrast, invert, contour, smooth, pattern, enlarge, and more. Support for Calamus Outline CVG files is included, as well as IFF, IMG, GEM/3, NeoChrome, Doodle, Degas, and Arabesque's own compressed formats. It will convert vector graphics to bit images (with gray scaling options). One meg and a mono monitor is required. Arabesque Professional, $199.95, from Gribnif Software, P.O. Box 350, Hadley, MA 01035, (413) 584-7887, Fax: (413) 584-2565.

Right Write

Goldleaf Publishing, Inc., makers of Wordflair II, is now the exclusive distributor of the German company COMPO Software Products in North America. Immediately available are That's Write, and its sister product Write ON, word processors that are considered among the best in Europe. Features include WYSIWYG (What You See Is What You Get) display on screen, proportionally spaced fonts and a unique printing technology that can use two different printing mechanisms in the same document. You can use the fonts in your printer for fast printing of the majority of your text, then add bit map fonts for distinctive headlines or special characters. Other features run from the standard in good word processors to unusual outlining functions. That's Write is the full package, including a spell checker and features like automatic index and table of contents generation. Write ON is a simpler version. Several upgrades to That's Write and Write ON are currently scheduled for release in 1992. That's Write is $199.95, Write ON is $99.95, and users will be notified of upgrades. Goldleaf Publishing, Inc., 700 Larkspur Landing Circle suite 199, Larkspur, CA 94939, (415) 257-3515.

More RAM for your TT

GE Soft of Germany has begun selling its TT RAM board, with available SIMMS RAM configurations of 4MB, 8MB, 16MB, 20MB, and 32MB. You can also supply the RAM as you want (and can afford). The board is larger than the Atari unit, and some alteration to the shielding may be required on earlier TT's. Contact Keith Brooks at New Horizon Computer Systems Ltd., Calgary, Alberta Canada. (403) 225-1160, FAX (403) 271-1398.

True Color for your TT

The maker of AlberTT and the ISAC resolution and color enhancement boards Jay Craswell brought his just-completed "LEONARDO 24" card to the Chicago Atari show. Using a standard monitor, it gives over 16 million colors on screen at once! To be bundled and sold with Lexicor's software by Lexicor, Jay offered a $400 price for the first 50 buyers of the board. The final price will be higher, but has not been set as yet. The pictures shown by Jay in the Atari booth were incredible. Unlike the AlberTT and ISAC boards which offer increased resolution and more colors available from a palette, the 24-bit Leonardo card works within a 512 x 512 frame but offers all the colors at one time. It will drive a multi-sync or an Atari 1224 Color monitor in Video Mode. Lexicor has begun the waiting list for the cards, which must be pre-paid. The units will begin shipping about a month after the first group of 50 are ordered. This unusual arrangement is due to the substantial costs of production in a limited market. Lexicor assures any buyer that they can drop out and get a refund at any time before delivery. To reserve your place on the list call LEXICOR at 415-453-0271.

Double your Disk!

Double Click has released "DC Data Diet," a software-based system for nearly doubling the capacity of your disk drives, both hard and floppy. When in use, Data Diet automatically compresses saved files as you save them to disk. When you read the compressed file, Data Diet decompresses it in real time upon access. It's all done in the background, and the byte count you see in directories is the "original" size. Any file over 1K can be "dietized." Average space savings on a hard drive can effectively double the size of your drive. You can specify what file types, size, directories, and disks to dietize or omit, which of two processes to use, etc. Equivalent programs on other platforms (PC, Mac) have been available and hot products for some time. Data Diet includes Double Click's "DC Squish" to compress executable (.EXE, .PRG, .APP) files and "Data Diet Tools" which batch-compresses all the files on your system. $74.95, Double Click Software, P.O. Box 741206, Houston, TX 77274-1206, (713) 977-6520. ■

Quill Welcomes New Staff

Quill Publishing Co., AtariUser's parent company, welcomes its two newest staff members, Matthew J. Sheldon and Brian Eliassian.

Sheldon, moving from a San Francisco based marketing firm, will head Comp! magazine's (Quill's PC oriented publication) marketing department. Eliassian, traffic manager at the world-famous Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena and long-time Atari maven, is taking over the Coordinating Editor position at AtariUser magazine. He'll be handling the day-to-day office responsibilities for AtariUser. Quill Publishing, 113 W. College St., Covina, CA 91723, (818) 332-0372.

RE:Views by Robert Jung

Lots'a Lynx

Bill and Ted, QIX, S.T.U.N. Runner, Viking Child, Hard Drivin', Ishido

RE·Views

Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventure

Lynx ■ Who says Death doesn't bear grudges? In retaliation for B&T's abuse in the latest movie, the Grim Reaper has kidnapped Bill and Ted's girlfriends. However, the ladies have scattered music from the band's song during their abduction, and now the guys must rescue them. In this action/adventure game, you travel through maze-like lands protected by creatures. You must collect enough notes to allow travel to other times, while finding objects and meeting historic figures in need of favors. For more fun, two players can work together with the ComLynx.

The time-traveling potential of this game is thoroughly used. Many puzzles are solved by taking something from one era and using it in another. Also, time paradoxes must be avoided. If you find a note to yourself that you have written, you must later go and leave that note in an earlier period. The puzzles are challenging and rely on finding the right object for the right situation.

Like the movie, Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventure emphasizes non-violent fun. The guys don't fight, but subdue enemies with musical instruments. Similarly, if caught by a creature, you are sent back to an earlier position no worse for wear. The only problem is that the game can become tedious in some places, as you use several tries to get by random monsters. A detailed password system saves your current game.

Sights and sounds are serviceable, but not much more. Graphics are done in a cartoony style, with a moderate amount of animation. There is good use of color and detail, especially the subtle changes across different lands. The few game sounds are very basic, and while background music plays in each time period, you can shut it off.

Regardless of your feelings towards the movies, this game is a fun package. It has enough action with lots of rock-solid puzzle solving, and the time travel puts a unique twist on things. Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventure earns its name. Atari Corp., $39.95.

QIX

Lynx ■ Telegames, the first developer of third-party Lynx games, strikes again with QIX, an adaptation of an ancient arcade game from Taito. The player's goal is to draw and claim boxes on the playing field, restricting the movement of the Qix, a swirling helix of lines, while avoiding contact with various enemies.

QIX was a simple game, and the Lynx version plays exactly the same. There are 256 levels, and a password feature allows you to skip earlier levels. Two players can compete by alternating turns.

A few flaws diminish the Lynx version somewhat. It uses only one button to draw, which is awkward. The controls are overly sensitive, where a wayward diagonal can cause the marker to jam, leaving you vulnerable. Finally, the Qix is larger on the Lynx than in the arcade, making the game slightly harder.

QIX on the Lynx offers no more and no less than the original. Whether younger players will like it is questionable, but longtime arcade devotees and fans of unusual games will probably enjoy this title. Telegames, Inc., $39.95.

S.T.U.N. Runner

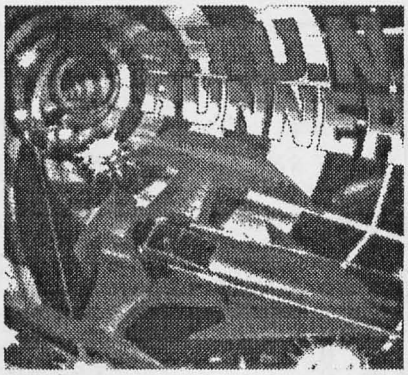
Lynx ■ Take the New York subway system, throw in a hovercraft going 900 MPH, and you have S.T.U.N. Runner, the latest Atari Games' arcade sensation adapted for the Lynx. You must drive a S.T.U.N. sled through a twisting maze of tunnels, trying to finish before time runs out. Complicating the matter are other cars trying to ram you, course obstacles, and bombing jets. There are over 20 levels, each with its own variety of twists, branches, jumps, and obstacles.

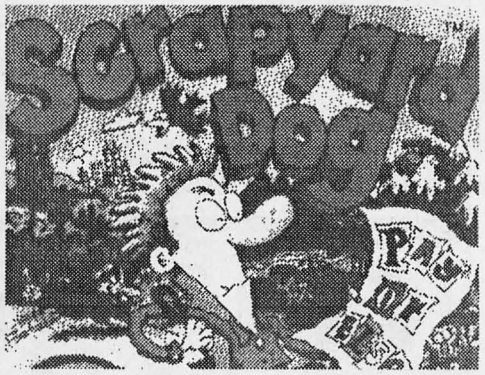
Lynx S.T.U.N. Runner is both a thrilling game and another shining translation. The action is fast and furious, requiring you to negotiate the track, destroy opponents, and go for bonuses all at the same time. Time limits are tight, requiring careful driving to succeed. Furthermore, all the original features are retained, with the same tunnels, ramps, and layouts. Opposing vehicles are varied and tenacious, and challenge stages throughout offer opportunities for extra points.

The steering controls are a little sensitive, but players will adapt to them in a short time. Turning improperly into a curve will slow you down significantly, making the Lynx version harder than the arcade. Still, neither of these flaws are enough to ruin the game.

The Lynx graphics engine is completely exploited, with the original filled polygon display replaced with scaled sprites. The result is not as sharp, but the action is extremely fast, and truly convey the sense of supersonic speed. Distinctive-looking enemies and detailed scenery complete the visual effects. Sounds are also very good, with a constant barrage of blasts and screeches pulling you into the action. Even better, digitized voices and sounds have also been lifted directly from the arcade.

This is a quality production throughout, with all the excitement and speed of the coin-op game. The Lynx is pushed to its limits, making this version of S.T.U.N. Runner an action-packed extravaganza and the best





adaptation now available for any machine. S.T.U.N. Runner, Atari Corp., $34.95.

Viking Child

Lynx ■ The Norse god Loki, worried about some prediction of future greatness for Brian, has kidnapped his family and dared the boy to rescue them. As THE VIKING CHILD, Brian, you'll explore the side-scrolling landscape, hoping to survive long enough to save your family. This action-adventure game is adapted from the European computer title.

VIKING CHILD is essentially a run-and-jump game with adventure touches. Brian loses health in fights and over time, while victory earns money and points. Passwords allow starting at later stages.

Weak points: Brian travels at a modest rate, while monsters run all over the place. Fights are simply poking creatures with a dagger or throwing weapons. The gameplay is basic, with none of the complexity of other games. In its favor, VIKING CHILD is a very hard game.

Game graphics are well done, with good use of earth-tone colors and detail. There are also elegant static screens and humorous touches. Game sounds are very few and basic.

VIKING CHILD is a pleasant diversion, but lacks the refinements of greatness. Its appeal is in exploring the land and trying to survive, but it should not be mistaken for an epic adventure. Atari Corp., $34.95.

Robotron: 2084

Lynx ■ Shadowsoft, a newcomer to the Lynx, takes video gamers back with an adaptation of an arcade oldie. In a plot similar to the Terminator movies, ROBOTRON: 2084 has you play a laser-firing mutant who must save the last humans from being exterminated by the mechanical Robotrons. It's fast and tough. The action is seen from overhead, and you must navigate around Robotrons and obstacles to save humans and stay alive, with five game difficulty settings. The sights and sounds of the arcade are duplicated exactly. The moody title tune and the death-knell effect are done in stereo.

In the arcade, two joysticks were used, allowing you to move and fire independently. For the Lynx translation, Shadowsoft has provided three alternative control schemes, using different methods of aiming and firing. Each player can decide which works best.

Though the odd controls are a minor nit, ROBOTRON retains all of the intensity of the classic title. If Shadowsoft's future works are as good, Lynx owners are in for a good time. Shadowsoft Inc., $34.95.

Hard Drivin'

Lynx ■ HARD DRIVIN' is an adaptation of the arcade title: drive around a track, dodge traffic, and try to finish before time runs out. What's different, though, is that HARD DRIVIN' is a true simulator, complete with physics, momentum, and 3-D polygon graphics. Turn too hard and the car skids, and a jump at the wrong speed will result in a fiery collision. Choose a flat speed track or a stunt track complete with drawbridge jump and other hazards.

It's not as fast as the Atari ST computer version, but the Lynx handles the many mathematics rapidly enough to keep HARD DRIVIN' at an acceptable rate. But the "feel" of your car is wrong; it's very hard to tell where your edges are, which makes collisions hard to avoid, but a more severe problem is in the controls. Steering, braking, and accelerating are incredibly oversensitive. Anything more than a tap sends you into a sharp turn, and your speed rises and falls too rapidly. Option buttons shift gears, adding to the confusion.

Game visuals are simple and effective. Filled polygon effects are done well, and lend realism. The instant replays are the best part of the game, using reverse angles to show you the cause of your latest crash. Aside from a title song, the main game sounds are the roar of the engine and a few digitized clips.

Overall, HARD DRIVIN's awkward controls and inaccurate physics make this ambitious title into a disappointment. It will take dedicated enthusiasm to enjoy the game. Atari Corp., $34.95.

Ishido: The Way of the Stones

Lynx ■ The Lynx travels to the Orient for a strategy game. This time it's ISHIDO: THE WAY OF STONES, a conversion of a home computer title. The objective is to place 72 tiles, each with a specific color and figure, on a board next to other matching pieces until either all tiles are used or no more moves are possible.

Scoring options, solitaire, alternating with a computer or human opponent, or a tournament play with any number of players are all available. During play, you may take back moves, ask for legal moves, and view the remaining stones. You can also select the tile patterns and set a time limit for moves. Then there is the Oracle; Make a four-way match, and the Oracle offers "ancient wisdom", excerpts of insightful thinking similar to the I Ching.

Visually, the game is stunning, with beautiful imagery. ISHIDO: THE WAY OF STONES proves that a game does not need many rules to be sophisticated. The concept is simple, yet each new move offers a wealth of possibilities, making this a perfect game for the deep-thinking strategist. Atari Corp., $39.95. ■

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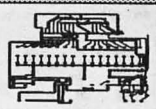

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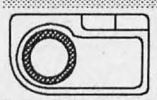

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News & Comment by John Nagy

1991: The Atari Year In Review

❖ *Yet another year has slipped away from us, somehow. They say that those who cannot learn from the past must repeat it. So, let's take a look back at the major stories in Atari news through 1991, and see if they can tell us anything about the future... For the most part, this review will only cover Atari activity. Third-party events and announcements are omitted for space reasons, not because we're implying that they aren't important...*

❖ Setting the Stage...

In late 1990, Elie Kenan had left his position of General Manager of Atari USA, Canada, and France, and Greg Pratt was appointed President of Atari USA. Although anticipated by some, the Mega STe was introduced as a surprise at the November COMDEX, ahead of anywhere else in the world. It was shown in Germany for the first time in December.

As we began 1991, our optimism was high for the year ahead. The new TOS desktop and the 32 MHz TT030 were a reality, and Atari announced that the Mega STe had passed FCC Type B testing. The TT030 was still Type A (commercial only), but began shipping to US dealers for $2,995 in the 2 Meg RAM, 50 Meg hard drive version.

December

DECEMBER 1990

Atari Corporation reports a third-quarter (ending Sept. 30, 1990) net income of barely over three million dollars on sales of $89 million, compared to a loss of $5 million on sales of $81 million for the same period last year. This year would have been a $3 million loss except for an offset of a $6 million gain from Atari repurchasing debentures at a favorable term.

Antonio Salerno, Vice President - Applications for Atari Corporation, resigns December 6, 1990. James Grunke, technical man for the super group BEACH BOYS, leaves the band to replace Frank Foster at Atari as the Music Industry Representative and MIDI promoter. Formerly of NEOCEPT, defunct makers of WORD UP, programmer Mike Fulton is hired in Atari's customer and developer support area. This fuels earlier speculation that Atari may eventually buy and support Word Up as an Atari brand product.

Atari gives Jimmy Hotz the marketing rights for his full-size Hotz Midi Translator, also known as the Hotz Box. Atari retains the rights to marketing any consumer version.

Word spreads in Germany that the head of Atari Germany, Alwin Stumpf, will leave Europe to go to North America to pilot the Atari Corporation. No official comment or confirmation is available from Atari.

Atari-New Zealand is promoting the $999 (NZ) Atari Discovery Pack, a 520 STFM with a colourful box sleeve and software bundle, in time for Christmas 1990.

Atari donates LYNX video game systems to Operation Desert Shield to alleviate some of the boredom in the armed forces on alert in the MidEast.

Software cards from Paragon Technologies offer Portfolio users high-power flight planning and navigation databases. They can even file the flight plan from the Portfolio.

Rumored for 1991: A new 68000-based game machine called the PANTHER; a Unix-compatible TT with multiple slots; a smaller, cheaper version of the LYNX; a new, smaller STacy.

Atari stock is down to $1¼ at the close of 1990.

January

JANUARY 1991

Calamus Version 1.09N is made available. Calamus S and SL are in beta testing in Germany, and are anticipated for an early March release.

Atari's Manager of User Group Services Bob Brodie begins a continuing column for STart Magazine, the largest US Atari-specific magazine.

Sales VP Bill Crouch's last day at Atari was Friday January 4, 1991. There has been no official response from Atari on his departure, but low fourth quarter "numbers" may have played a part in his leaving.

Atari Canada announced a full one-year warranty on all computer products, up from the old 90-day standard.

The Atari DEMO CONTEST is announced, with a TT030 first prize for the best demo for the STe and TT computers.

Atari relocates the entertainment division to the Chicago Area and names Lawrence Siegel as its president.

Reworking the marketing plan, Atari fires all of their full-time sales representatives and lets most of their contracted rep firms go as well. Pacific Software begins offering one-day shipping of all Atari hardware except the TT030.

Atari shows selected developers and distributors their PANTHER game console, still in development, at the Consumer Electronics Show.

Atari and third-party developers unveil 14 new software titles for the Portfolio.

Atari Entertainment begins a media campaign using cable and syndicated television and targeted spot radio ads for the Lynx. Sixteen titles are available and another 14 are slated.

Atari Canada announces the Mega STe 1, a minimum version of the computer without a hard drive and with a low price. Upgradability is promised, using any third party

■ Jimmy Hotz and his "Hotz Box"

drive and user RAM.

The 1991 Winter NAMM (National Association of Music Merchandisers) Show features Atari with the largest computer company display among 600 music exhibitors. MIDI developer C-Lab and Atari announce a joint marketing and dealer support program.

ST JOURNAL from Quill Publishing stops production of their bi-monthly magazine while a re-evaluation of the format and marketplace is being done. A smaller, all-Atari product monthly magazine is suggested to replace the ST specific magazine in April.

February

FEBRUARY 1991

Atari Canada lays off approximately 30% of its staff in a restructuring of Atari in North America. Atari still refuses to comment on Alwin Stumph and the Atari North America plan.

Editor Tom Byron says STart Magazine will begin a bi-monthly publishing schedule beginning immediately. He expects that STart will return to a monthly schedule at some later date if the industry picks up. Subscribers are assured of getting the number of issues they paid for, and that each issue will be larger and feature more in-depth articles.

Atari USA President Greg Pratt attends a GEnie live teleconference and announces reduced prices on hardware. He defends the overhaul of the distribution network.

Director of Technical Services Bill Rehbock announces a revised Developer plan with two tiers of support on a CompuServe teleconference.

CompuServe is named an Official Support Site for the Portfolio computer by Atari. Over 200 files are available in the CIS APORTFOLIO Round Table.

An Atari portable STacy computer becomes a new regular band member for the popular ARSENIO HALL SHOW, clearly visible many times in the program.

Electronic Arts announces a series of seven new games for the ST and other computers scheduled for early 1991.

Atari CEO Sam Tramiel is the guest of a special free conference on CompuServe. He discusses UNIX (to be shown in March in Germany), the PANTHER (to ship early 1992, with Lynx interfacing), a notebook ST, and MIDI-TASKING (to be ready when it is finished).

March

MARCH 1991

Don Mandell takes the position of Vice President of Sales. Mandell is a long time associate of Jack Tramiel, owner and chairman of the board of Atari, and worked with Jack at Commodore years ago.

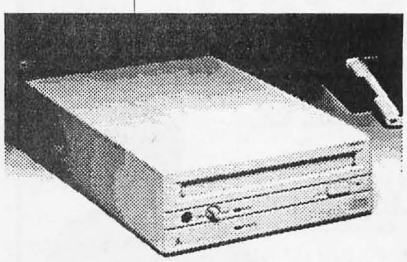
It becomes known that the Mega STe is not FCC approved, contrary to Atari's announcements. Atari says that the lab that had tested the unit was decertified, causing the Mega STe to have to be tested again. The Mega STe 1 is found to be deliberately crippled, with a unique hard drive cover that must be replaced with a new one from Atari in order to install a hard drive. The cover is not available without Atari's complete hard drive kit.

Quill Publishing, former publishers of ST JOURNAL MAGAZINE, announces its replacement, ATARIUSER, to be distributed free internationally through computer stores, Atari dealers, developers, distributors, and registered Atari user groups. The premier May issue should be released in late April.

Darek Mihocka of Branch Always Software (Quick ST) confirms rumors that he has a functional 68000 emulator working on an IBM platform. He calls it the GEMULATOR, and it requires a 386 or higher CPU. Darek says that further development of the Gemulator will wait for this summer after he completes and ships Quick ST version 3.

▲ Bob Brodie

Atari attends CeBIT in Hannover, Germany. It's the largest computer show in the world—about 500,000 attended. Atari surprises everyone with their announcement and demonstration of the portable ST BOOK and ST PAD computers. The ST Book is the smallest 68000 computer ever built, and at 4 pounds, still has a 40 meg hard drive and 4 megabytes of RAM, sealing the fate of the heavy STACY. A "vector pad" motionless mouse uses technology developed for the Hotz Box. The ST PAD, also called the STylus, has handwriting recognition and no keyboard. Production of both units is forecast for the end of 1991. A new CD-ROM was introduced, to be available Fall '91 for about $400. Atari shows and promises UNIX by the middle of April.



▲ CDAR 505

Atari Corporation reported a fourth quarter 1990 net income of $8.8 million with an 11% decline in sales for the period. Sales for all of 1990 were $411.5 million, a decrease of 3 percent from 1989. Net income for 1990 was $14.9 million against 4.0 million dollars for 1989.

April

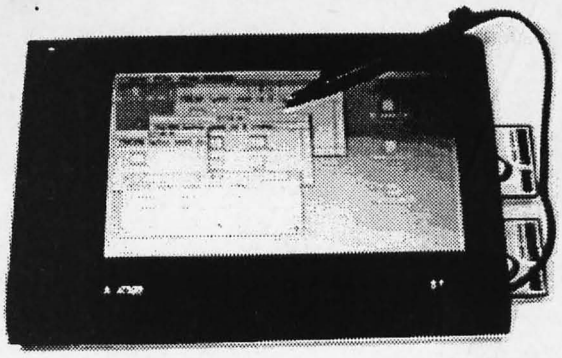
APRIL 1991

PD JOURNAL, a German Atari magazine, interviews Alwin Stumph and asks his responsibility in Atari: "My range of responsibility concerns all of Atari's divisions, including the U.S. That means my role in the U.S. is practically the same as in Holland, Austria, or Germany. The section heads report to me." This was Alwin's last public interview as President of Worldwide Marketing and Sales.

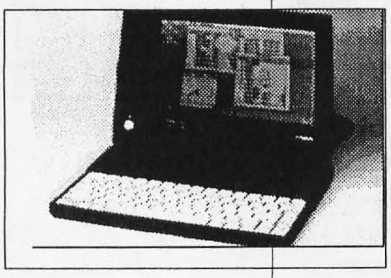
Atari plans to set up a huge multi-million dollar factory to build computers in Israel, according to the Israeli Trade

1991: The Atari Year In Review

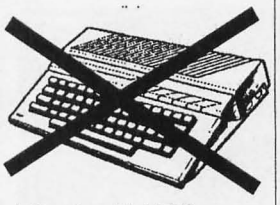
AtariUser



■ ST Pad



▲ ST Book



▲ Bye bye Eight Bit

▼ STart, the "Big Gun" goes out with a *wimper* instead of a bang

May

and Industry Ministry. Investment costs are expected to total $150 million, which will be shared by Atari and the Israeli government.

CEPS, the Corporate Electronic Publishing Systems trade show, is graced with Atari's premier of the "Professional Systems Group", a division of Atari devoted to the very high end of publishing. In cooperation with Soft-Logik, ISD, Goldleaf, and others, the "Direct To Press" campaign begins. It includes tools for every phase of pre-press work from document processing and design, to photo retouching and imagesetter film output.

AtariUser Magazine's premier issue is released before deadline and goes to 30,000 users.

May

MAY 1991

Atari's Bob Brodie and Mike Fulton announce that the long awaited scalable font GDOS will very likely be sold to existing users at a price "under $100" and that it will include a full single font family of Ultrascript fonts. Plans also are to include it automatically with new Mega STe and TT computers, already installed on their hard drives.

Atari purchases the source code and rights to WORD UP, a graphics and word processing system that pioneered the document processing field in the Atari market. It is possible that the eventual Atari product resulting from the purchase will be made available as an upgrade for WORD UP owners.

Word Perfect gives notice that they intend to abandon efforts to produce a major upgrade for the Atari platform for their high-end word processing system, currently at version 4.1 on the Atari and 5.x on most other platforms.

Atari Canada's General Manager Geoff Earle announces a new trade up program for owners of Atari 8-bit computers to a 520STFM for $250. The 8-bit computer line is admitted to be discontinued.

Under 1,000 people attend the Windsor/Detroit Atarifest, sponsored by user groups WAUG of Ann Arbor Michigan and WAUG of Windsor, Ontario Canada. Sales are slower than hoped, partially due to fears of customs charges at the international border. MultiGem premiers in America, shown and sold by Rimik Enterprises.

On May 15, it is confirmed that Atari magazine STart will NOT publish another issue. Amidst debts to writers and subscribers, Antic Publishing remains silent while continuing production of their PC HOME JOURNAL magazine with the same staff as did STart..

Richard Miller, Vice President of Technology at Atari Corporation, holds an online conference on GEnie. He discusses coming technology and announces that the Mega STe finally passed FCC Class B approval.

June

JUNE 1991

The game design center in Chicago says that Atari has completely dropped development of the PANTHER game machine. Atari staff say that they are now working on "other exciting projects." The Jaguar, a yet higher technology game unit under Atari development, is then rumored to be the project that bumped off Panther.

Z*Net Monthly, an extension of Z*Net International Atari Online, produces its final issue. It served over 40 user groups as a newsletter supplement, and was to be subsidized by proceeds from STart Magazine's contracted use of Z*Net News material in their own magazine. With an unpaid debt, revenues lost to STart cripple the project.

ISD's Nathan Potechin says Calamus S, the modular replacement for the current Calamus 1.09N, will be available as an upgrade in July for $69.95 (U.S.).

The long awaited SOFTSOURCE KNOWLEGEBASE opens on the GEnie Telecommunications Service. The database of "all" Atari hardware and software is planned to include demonstration versions of most applications, downloadable from the database. Only a few hundred entries are now in the database, which was conceived and announced nearly two years ago. The project is also to spawn a CD ROM disk with every known product and demo on it, for real-time use at dealers.

Atari announces that it has signed a contract for the sale of its property in Taiwan. The facility will be sold for $60 million, and closing is scheduled for later this month. Atari noted that assembly operations have been relocated in a move to increase efficiency and reduce costs. It now contracts with three plants in Taiwan alone. Production will be up, and cash flow is greatly improved. A portion of money will be used to reduce bank debts of $27 million.

Atari Corp. releases the new XCONTROL panel for the STe and TT as freeware on the telecommunications services. The arced file contains full documentation and the CPX control files. It is required for use with FSM GDOS, promised to be available soon.

The Atari Portfolio saves the world in the new Schwarzenegger blockbuster, "Terminator 2: Judgement Day." It's a Portfolio that is used to break into a bank's automatic teller machine and later to open an electronic locked door.

The Pacific Northwest Atari Festival nets under 900 people in the Canadian suburbs of Vancouver. Expected to be a major show, the turnout is disappointing. Hardware, both Atari and third party, sell BIG and FAST, with Atari Canada exceptionally pleased. Software, especially

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▲ Big to-do's in Europe

▼ Sam

established titles, sell slowly. Omnimon Peripherals demonstrates their new DEKA interface for the first time, and Gribnif premiers Cardfile and STeno. Darek Mihocka shows and sells Quick ST for the TT030, another first.

July

JULY 1991

A hard disk unit for the Portfolio is available from the BSE Company. Flashdrive connects to the Portfolio via the Parallel Interface. The 20MB version sells for $499. XoteriX has been offering a similar $899 unit, but they build them as they are ordered rather than having stock available.

July 3 marks the SEVENTH anniversary of the Tramiel Atari Corp. It was in 1984 that Warner Communications gave up trying to sell a machine they didn't understand to a market that Jack Tramiel had personally shaped via Commodore.

GEnie's Atari ST Roundtable releases the 20,000th file to be uploaded to the service. GEnie typically gains between 50 and 100 files every week, with "hot" files gathering 500 or more accesses in the first weeks of availability. Atari's official presence and Darlah Pine's dedication as RT System Operator have made GEnie the most popular online service for Atari users.

PageStream 2.1 is released as a dramatic upgrade of the first fully professional desktop publishing program for the Atari ST. Starting as Publishing Partner, it now offers outline font technology and screens that really reflect a WYSIWYG environment.

Former STart magazine editor Tom Byron begins a new position in promotion at SPECTRUM HOLOBYTE.

The BRACE show in Asheville North Carolina and the MIST Atarifest in Bloomington Indiana each have small and satisfying turnouts of about 500, redefining what an Atari show needs to be to be considered a success. Big is fine, but small seems to sell product quickly and efficiently. Bob Brodie attending a speaking at each caps the experience for areas that can't hope for a major show.

August

AUGUST 1991

The Professional Systems Group, a division of Atari Computer Corporation, kicks off the AEGIS Strategic Partner program at the AEGIS Symposium, held August 5 and 6. Thirty-five attending dealers find dramatic sales possibilities via the program and call it "the single most encouraging and invigorating event ever in Atari dealer relations." According to Atari, "the AEGIS Strategic Partner program nurtures the development of both vertical-market and cross-discipline solutions, resulting in a strong and effective national sales organization." MIDI and DTP are the targeted areas for sales expansion opportunity.

Atari is back advertising in Keyboard magazine, the most widely read professional musician's magazine in the

▼ Bill Rehbock

country. In the August issue (with Yes keyboardist and Atari user Rick Wakeman on the cover), Atari has co-op ads with C-Lab and Dr. T's.

Plans to build a plant in Israel are failing as Atari seeks to borrow money from the Israeli government for building the plant. Officials in Israel and Atari blame each other for foot-dragging.

Lexicor Software, makers of Phase-4 animation products, starts a series of online animation classes. The free classes are held each Saturday on CompuServe. The classes are not Atari-specific and deal with concepts and information useful to all computer animators.

Atari ST User Magazine (U.K.) reports in it's August 1991 edition that Atari has secretly developed a version of the ST with a PC emulator plugged in and a switch to swap between operating systems. Product Development Manager Richard Miller is quoted as stating "Absolutely no comment."

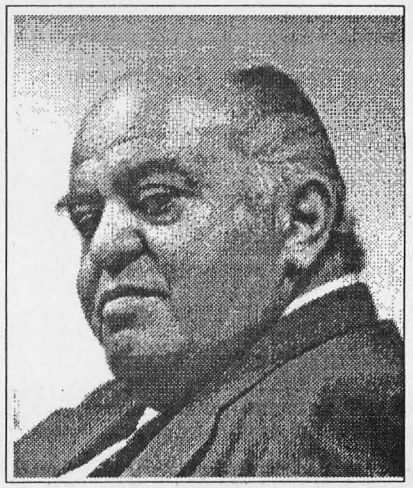
The LYNX II, a smaller, cheaper, and sexier Lynx, makes it to the distribution network at $99.

Publisher/Editor of *Atari Explorer Magazine* John Jainschigg says that their production schedule is finally set and that they will be producing issues on a monthly basis through the end of 1991, making up the normal yearly total of six issues. Jainschigg also announced a discount on subscription rates to Atari user-group members.

Financial results for the second quarter of 1991 show sales revenues dropped to $49 million from last year's $85 million, but net income is up to $30 million (from $1.5 million last year). While that sounds great, it includes $40 million in gains from the sale of their Taiwan plant—meaning that without the sale of the plant, Atari would have posted a $10 million dollar loss. Nevertheless, Atari is now cash rich and their important debt-to-equity ratio is lower than ever.

TSR's 4-day GenCon Gaming Fair and Convention held at the MECCA in Milwaukee draws in excess of 15,000 participants, many of whom see and use Atari computers in MIDI-MAZE rings throughout the show. More than 50 Atari computers stay busy in competition.

The CDAR505 won't be as predicted—it won't even work on an ST machine as shipped. Instead of having the ACSI/DMA port and a SCSI port as announced, it will have only the "pure SCSI" port that is the industry standard. It'll plug right into a TT or a MAC, or any computer that has a SCSI host adaptor. Price will be "under $499" as things look now, and they are to arrive in quantity, for sale, FCC Type B approved, by the end of



■ Jack

Lynx

8 Bit

September.

The mother of all Atari shows is held in Germany, August 23rd to the 25th. 30,000 or more Atarians from around the globe convene on Dusseldorf, Germany, for "AtariMesse." Atari brings no surprises, but five production models of the ST BOOK notebook computer are shown and availability is forecast for October or November. The STylus or ST PAD is there but with a later availability being forecast. Most of the action is "cross pollination" of East with West developers, exchanging ideas and products for each other's marketplaces.

SEPTEMBER 1991

The Connecticut AtariFest brings another small scale success with over 300 in attendance in Bridgeport.

H.A.C.K.S. and John King Tarpinian's Southern California Atari Computer Faire version 5.0 ("the Glendale Show") brings nearly 3,500 visitors to the biggest Atari event in America in the last several years. Over 50 vendors and developers participate in one way or another, breaking all prior US records for variety and support. Sales are "phenomenal". Gribnif premieres STalker 3, Codehead introduces Multidesk Deluxe and Avant Vector, and Small and Allen face off in speed tests of their 68030 upgrades.

Atari is engaged in negotiations to make General Electric Service Centers the worldwide walk-in and depot repair centers for Atari computers. Preparation included a redesign of the TT motherboard to meet GE's specs. The deal should become effective in January '92, and Atari's warranty period will be expanded from the current 90 days to 6 months or a year.

The waiting is over for Atari's Font Scaling Manager, FSM GDOS. The first commercial copies are sold at the Glendale Atari show, as part of WordFlair II. A license fee of $35 is charged at the show for the new system. Stand-alone commercial copies will be available within weeks, as only the packing box itself is not ready for shipping.

The Atari TT030 computer at last passes the FCC certification process as a Type B consumer device, allowing unfettered sale and distribution to approved dealers. New TT computers include a 1.44 megabyte floppy disk rather than the 720K unit shipped to date. Upgrades will be available "soon" for existing TT and Mega STe owners at "under $100."

HACE sponsors a one day computer show in Houston. "Atari Safari" '91 features a visit from Mike Groh of Atari Corporation.

Atari Corporation's board of directors approved the repurchasing of up to $5 million of its common stock from time to time in the open market, considering the depressed prices.

OCTOBER 1991

The Direct to Press division of Atari Corporation makes another impressive presentation at the SEYBOLD Electronic Publishing Show, the first time in two years that Atari has attended this top publishing show.

WAACE's Atarifest dazzles vendors with the best sales on record but only 1,600 people do all the buying in the Washington, D.C. area show. More Atari staff appear than ever before. Nathan Potechin gives the banquet speech and turns over the reigns of the Independent Association of Atari Developers to Nevin Shalit of Step Ahead Software, the new President of the organization. DC Data Diet is shown and sold for the first time. ICD's AdSpeed STe sells out, as does much software. Vendors are happier than the WAACE promoters.

Atari Canada announces that it will ship UNIX for the TT qualified UNIX developers in October. The product consists of a kit, including various RAM upgrades to bring existing TT computers to either 8 or 16MB. In addition a choice is available for either a 212MB or 340MB SCSI hard drive.

COMDEX showings by Atari include the ST BOOK but no STylus, plus a new line of Atari MS-DOS machines, including 20 and 40 MHz 386 machines, and a 386SX Notebook, to be available under the "ABC" label. Announced informally is the "Multitasking TOS", projected for a March '92 release on the TT030 machines. MIDITasking is admitted to be a dropped project that didn't work. Jimmy Hotz shows his software, without his box, now designed to run on any normal synth.

Atari announces version 3.06 of TOS for the TT dated September 24, 1991. It will not be available as an upgrade but will soon be installed in all new TT machines in production. This new version fixes previous bugs in TOS 3.01 and 3.05, and a few new features have been added.

▼ Atari goes vertical

DIRECT TO PRESS

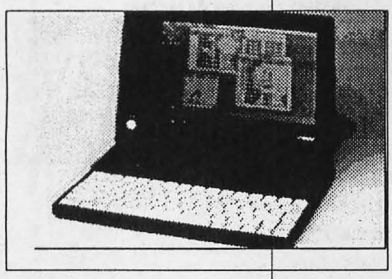
NOVEMBER 1991

Atari Canada announces that new TOS 2.06 chips will soon be available for the MEGA STe, ST/STe product line. A hardware adaption for older computers will be made available, enabling any ST owner to upgrade to the new TOS and desktop.

Essex Marketing Services, (203) 651-8284, releases a FORTH compiler for the Portfolio. There is also a version available for the PC to allow for easy program development.

Atari Computer's 1991 third quarter earnings and sales figures show that sales totals were down nearly half from last year's comparable period (to $49 million from $89

1991: The Atari Year In Review



▲ ST Book

▲ CDAR

▲ ST Pad

DECEMBER 1991

Antic Publishing, Inc. is said to be planning to dissolve the corporation at year's end, 1991, taking its debts with it. PC HOME JOURNAL, Antic's other publication, is expected to be spun off to a legally new and unrelated corporation as of January 1, 1992.

The announced and expected CDAR505 will NOT be produced at any time soon. Intended for a fall 1991 release, the unit would be identical to cheaper drives already on the market, making it a loss proposition for Atari. They will now promote the use of the 500+meg devices by releasing METADOS into the community as freeware. The user can roll their own players just as they do hard drive now.

The STylus pad-based ST that was said to be the future of computing and was at one time expected to be the "WOW" unit at COMDEX is tabled by Atari after market studies show that buyers are curious, but not willing to buy one.

Darek Mihocka searches for a buyer of Quick ST as he prepares to leave the ST market and finish development of his Gemulator, to allow ST software users to follow him into the PC marketplace. Now working for Microsoft, Darek has become an advocate of MS-DOS.

The Lynx is finally a major hit, with demand outstripping production ability. New dealer penetration will have to wait until after Christmas, as all current production is already pre-sold.

FSM GDOS is about ready to go to market, as soon as the packaging is ready for dealer sale. It is expected in early January at about $50.

The Portfolio is selling well, at double the rate it was before the double-priced and well promoted competition arrived from Hewlett Packard.

The winners of Atari's STe/TT demo contest are announced. Noel Saw and Arvin Castillo win an Atari TT030 for their massive entry.

Calamus S is scheduled to be released by ISD on December 15.

Atari stock is down to $1¾ at the close of 1991.

THE FUTURE

News, like the history it attempts to document, repeats itself. If you saw the same stories several times in what you read above, it's no surprise.

As we begin 1992, our optimism is high for the year ahead. New products are promised to be shown, if not available, in 1992, including the 68040 "Falcon" computer and the "Jaguar" game console. A Portfolio promotion based on the Terminator 2 movie is planned for the winter. The ST Book should see distribution in the early months of 1992.

This is the stuff Atari dreams are made of...

—John Nagy ■

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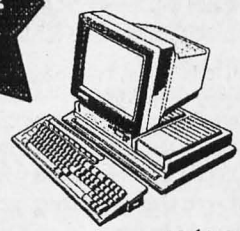

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John Nagy

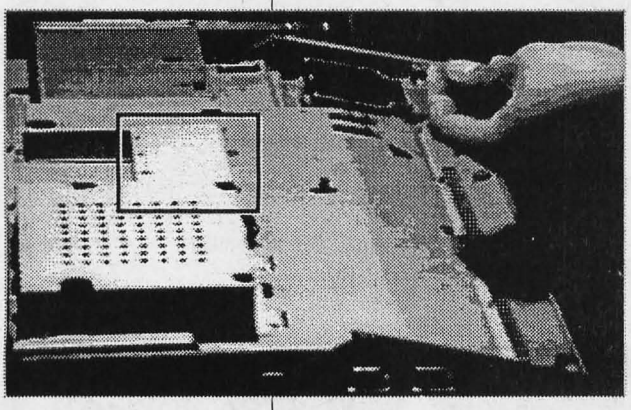
Thanks for the Memory

Upgrading your ST RAM, maybe by yourself!

■ **These days, half-a-Meg isn't enough** for the better games, let alone serious applications. Word Writer in 512K won't let you use the spell checker on a document long enough to bother checking. Calamus in 1 Meg won't allow any desk accessories, and limits you to a short, simple layout. You can't use an Atari Laser Printer with only 1 Meg. So you want more memory. Hard to imagine, isn't it, that it was only a few years back when 48K in our Atari 800 was plenty of room!

Probably the number one upgrade for Atari computers is the addition of more memory. Most of us bought a 520ST or 1040ST and soon found that we needed/wanted MORE MEMORY. There are lots of how-to articles detailing the installation of more RAM. Many companies offer kits for you to upgrade your memory yourself, and most dealers will do it for you for a price. But what do you get, and how should you choose?

You might consider doing your own upgrade without a kit. Instructions for several upgrades can be found on Genie, CompuServe, Delphi, and BBS systems, or from your club library. But beware: there are lots of ST board revisions within each model, and plans that are written for one may NOT work for another. Atari kept things interesting by re-using board revision letters on different revisions. Except for the very competent (or adventurous) hobbyist, only a few models of Atari computers should be considered for kitless upgrades.



▲ **Inside the STe** "Getting there is far more than half the work. Once an STe is open, the cover and keyboard off, you'll see the shields covering the RAM cards at the center of the machine."

Plug 'n Play

The newer-generation machines (Stacy, TT, STe) have sockets for plug-in memory cards. Upgrading memory is as simple as changing or adding cards. You should be able to do an upgrade based on this article, but *AtariUser* (and I) can't be responsible for any damage you might do to your machine while trying to follow these directions. If you're in doubt, don't do it yourself.

For any work to be done inside a computer, take special care to avoid static electricity. One little snap can end the life of a computer. Working on a foil-covered table, preferably grounded, and always touching the foil before touching the computer board can help. Don't work over carpeting, and of course don't work on the innards when the power is on or attached!

Getting inside Atari computers is no big challenge. The screws that have to come out are usually in squarish holes. Other ones can stay, at least until you are inside. Little bend-tabs or more screws hold most of the internal shielding together. I won't go into further detail—if you get lost before you get inside, stop!

On ANY STe machine, the memory cards are common plug-in modules called "single in-line memory modules", or SIMMs. These can be bought through most electronic supply, computer supply, and swap meets. "Page mode" SIMMs are used, by far the most common and inexpensive, and the MAC SIMMs are the same. Atari uses 8-bit wide, but the 9-bit wide (with parity bit, used in IBM) can be used without modification. The cards are available in 256K and 1 megabyte sizes.

All STe machines appear to have four SIMMs sockets (despite scattered scare reports to the contrary). Memory configurations can ONLY be 512K, 1 meg, 2 meg, and 4 meg. The TOS can tell what memory is available, but can't use any in-between sizes, so mixing cards for intermediate memory totals can't be done. In a 520 machine, a 256K card will be in slots 1 and 3 (counting from the front of the sloping unit). In a 1 meg machine, all four slots will have 256K (you CAN'T do one meg with one card!). A two meg setup has a 1 meg card in positions 1 and 3, and a 4 meg setup has all four with a meg each. Those are the ONLY combinations that work. But it's as easy as plug and play!

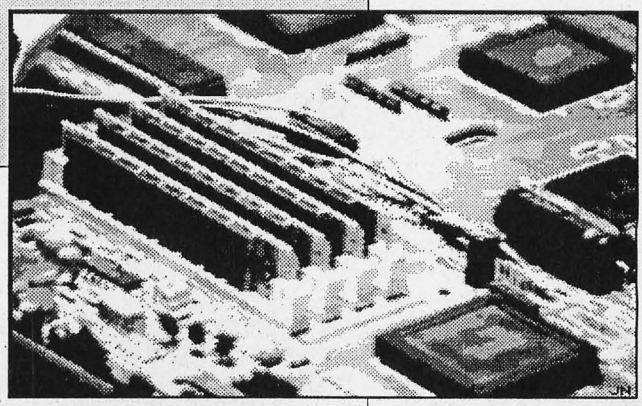
Getting inside Atari computers is no big challenge. The screws that have to come out are usually in squarish holes.

A few things to watch out for, however, include some memory cards (even the ones that may come in your Atari) that have through-pins protruding past the circuit board far enough to touch another card in a full installation. They don't matter if you have only 2 cards, but to use them with 4, you may have to trim those pins with tiny clippers. Just look it over carefully, and beware static electricity when handling and clipping.

STACY 2 machines are different, using more rare low-profile "SIPS", or "single in-line package" RAM, using wire leads instead of the bulkier card-edge connector of SIMMs. The Stacy 4 machines are not socketed, but the 2 meg model is. The Stacy 1 is a rare animal, but at least one company (JRI) offers a special board to upgrade it to two or four meg. But just getting inside a Stacy portable ST is involved enough to scare most of us off. This is a good one to let the dealer do.

In the new TT series, memory upgrade is easy but pricey. Both "ST RAM" and "TT RAM" for the TT is on special proprietary circuit boards, and can't be populated with common swap meet chips. Atari list prices: 2 meg ST RAM, $379.95; 8 meg ST RAM, $1,199.95; 4 meg TT FASTRAM $759.95; 16 meg TT FASTRAM $1,999.95.

ST/TT ALERT ■ RAM prices continue to fall. One Megabyte DRAM chips are at or below $7 most anywhere, while 256K chips are around $2 (You need eight of these to make a Meg.) One Meg SIMMs cards can easily be found for $50, and as little as $30 each at swap meets, but look out for USED CARDS that might not be stable. 256K SIMMs (only good for bringing a 520 STe up to a meg) are only about $15, but hard to find... except from other STe owners who have upgraded above 1 Megabyte. For use in a normal ST or even an 68000 accelerated machine (not a 68030), any "speed rating" of 120 nanosecond OR LESS is fine. The smaller this number, the faster the memory, being able to properly record and deliver data in shorter times without error. These days, 80nS is a common rating.



Aftermarket TT memory boards are just beginning to appear at more competitive prices and with a wider range of size options—up to 32 meg so far! (Check the product releases area in this issue of AtariUser.)

Other Kitless Upgrades

Making a 1-meg machine out of most 520STFM units is nearly as easy, but takes soldering and some technical advice. These computers are (usually!) just like 1040STFM's but with 16 chips missing. The printed chip outline and solder holes are there, but usually soldered closed. Add the 256K x 1 RAM chips (getting almost free these days!), resistors or capacitors if they aren't there already, and change a pair of memory control lines. That's the catch—the control traces are different on each board revision. You'll need a more thorough set of directions that we have room for here, sorry. But the electrical traces on the circuit board are VERY delicate, and can be burned right off the board with the wrong technique or too hot an iron. Use a small soldering iron, 30 watts or lower, anytime you work on computer circuit boards.

Similarly, most Mega 2 computers are just Mega 4's waiting to happen. You'd add 16 one meg chips—sometimes! A few late production Mega 2 machines had no traces or places for the additional RAM chips, making it impossible to simply "finish" it into a Mega 4. Also, some machines (mostly later production) have an MMU or buffer chip that can't quite deal with more than 1 or 2 meg, even though it was fine as built. You might have to replace one to get your unit running. Get detailed technical help or documentation before you start.

It's said that "real" Mega 4 computers that failed a memory test in the high banks during manufacture were sometimes "repaired" by knocking them down into Mega 2 machines via a couple of trace cuts. If you happen into one of these, you might find that an upgrade will cost you only one or two chips and a trace repair. Finding the bad chips(s) on the board would be your only challenge.

Kitless upgrades for other Atari configurations require desoldering existing parts, cutting traces, adding jumpers, piggybacking chips on each other, and a variety of other frightening procedures that each are able to turn your computer into a doorstop if done wrong. Kids, don't try these at home. Buy a kit.

Kits

You'll see plenty of memory upgrade kits offered for sale in this and other Atari publications. One meg, 2.5 meg (a really nice working size!), and 4 meg sizes are offered, and many of them let you do a little now and add to your memory later. All of the current crop seem to be quite operational and satisfactory, but each has its fans and its idiosyncracies. Here's what is said of each, but these are neither endorsements nor condemnations. Check the ads and talk to the dealers to find the one you want.

JRI: Using SIMMs and an all-soldered-in arrangement, this is the favorite of many shops as a dealer upgrade, but is more work.

TECH SPECIALTIES: The company's anti-customer attitude was the worst part of this early unit, preferred by many.

ZUBAIR: A pin-grid arrangement for attaching to the MMU requires hot glue to be stable, plus a leg-insulation scheme requires extra care. Not as easy as advertised but good docs.

AERCO: An early favorite, sometimes leaves a gap in the case of 520/1040 units. Documentation was poor.

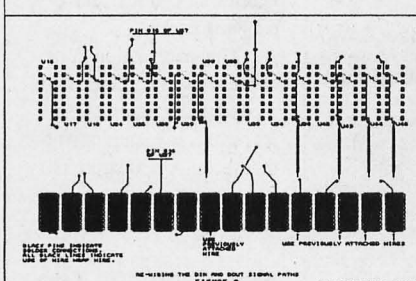
EZ-RAM: A pronged device that pushes into the MMU socket works but can creep out and be difficult to get into the socket. The company (Terrific) appears to be defunct.

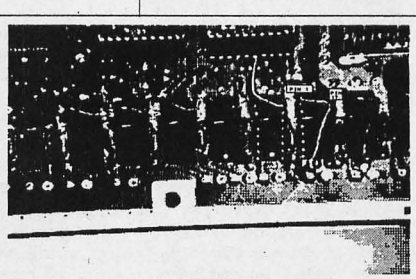
XTRA-RAM: Imported, "solderless", uses SIMMs. Requires a reconfiguration of jumpers for different memory that can be confusing. Still good overall.

Dealar Installation

For most of us, here's your best choice: let your dealer do the dirty work, and you won't have to worry which method or kit he uses. Any of them will work fine if installed correctly, and that's the dealer's job. And dealer installation is the only way you get the peace of mind called a warranty.

I contacted a dealer local to me who installs the JRI unit into 1040 machines, 2.5 meg for $259, and 4 meg for $359. He prefers the soldered unit because "they never come back, no matter how the machine is handled," but says that other units using clips and less solder might be better for a novice to install. Call around; most of the dealers you see advertising in *AtariUser* will do upgrades via mail. —*John Nagy, with special thanks to Tony Lee of the Computer Network, in Glendale, California, (818) 500-3900.* ■





▲ Simms in STe
"The memory cards, called SIMMS, are in sockets. On Atari STe computers, all you need to do is install the memory you want, and re-assemble the computer."

▼ Circuit board
"This is where the work is - on older machines, you have to earn your upgrade through lots of hand work and soldering. Or, buy a kit."

▼ Plans
"Here's a sample of the detailed plans that are available on GEnie, CompuServe, Delphi, and BBS's. This one came from a 520STFM upgrade by Mark L. Dodge. He'll send you a set or consult for a $25 shareware donation. His GEnie address is M.DODGE2, or call (evenings) at (512) 923-2811. That's J & M Computer Specialties, 907 Dodic Place, San Antonio, TX 78221."

▲ John Nagy is Editor in Chief of AtariUser Magazine. He's written for over a dozen computer magazines in the last five years, and claims he ain't afraid of no stinking deadlines.

Clinton Smith

Showtime—Lynx

Lynx at the Chicago Computerfest

LYNX ALERT ■ Need some help to beat a Lynx game? Who you gonna call? Atari! A new hint number can save you: 1-708-CRY-LYNX (that's 1-708-279-5969). **The LYNX GAMING PACKET is an 84 page** newsletter filled with codes, helpful hints, level maps, special tricks & secret games within games to play. If you're interested in receiving one of these packets, send $15 to Lynx Packet, 4353 Vista Place, La Canada, CA 91011, 818-248-7398.

Just over a year ago at the 1990 Chicago Atarifest, the only Lynx action was at my table where we had two Lynxes set up. Only nine Lynx games were available at the time, so we had a real treat when Steve Ryno of Atari Entertainment brought by some upcoming carts like RoadBlasters, Zarlor Mercenary, and Rampage.

What a difference a year makes! At the November 1991 Chicago Compterfest by Atari, Atari Entertainment had 12 Lynx systems setup in the main room running their latest titles including four with Checkered Flag ComLynxed into multiplayer action. The Gaming room, run by the MilAtari user group, had about 20 Lynxes. For $2, you could rent the use of a Lynx for an hour, and play as many games as you wanted. Thirty titles were available, including "Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventure" which had just begun shipping on the Saturday of the show. Lynx tournaments, including a five player Checkered Flag race and a four player Warbird contest, were also featured. It's always interesting to watch people competing against each other and not some faceless, computer opponent.

The rental Lynxes received quite a bit of use from kids, as it was *cheap* babysitting—or appeared to be. For many parents who parked their kid at a Lynx, the price of the services almost always escalated into the purchase of a unit! Most adults were checking the Lynx out on the main floor, and many wound up buying the special holiday Deluxe Lynx package available for $125. It's the new model of the Lynx, AC adaptor, Comlynx cable, California Games, and a carrying pouch.

The information table at the show's entrance had an updated version of the 32 page Lynx supplement that recently appeared in Electronic Gaming Monthly.

■ The Commodore Handy?

A few years back, David Morse (then president of Epyx) wanted to produce an advanced game system. Morse had originally founded Amiga and then sold the system to Commodore, naturally contacted his old friends RJ Mical and Dave Needle, who had developed most of the Amiga system. They came up with a high powered, 16-bit, portable color system they called the "Handy" (you see why they design computers instead of names). Then Epyx ran into financial trouble and they contacted Commodore to see if they were interested, since the development system was based on the Amiga. Commodore wasn't keen on entering the video game market and passed. Atari picked it up, and the LYNX was born!

News from the Top

A real high point of the show for Lynx enthusiasts was a talk that was given by Atari Entertainment's National Sales Director, Bob Schuricht. Bob filled us in on what's going on with the Lynx and the Jaguar.

More Lynx retail locations: If you've been wanting to see the Lynx in more stores you'll be glad to know that it's availability will be improving in '92. The big problem is that Atari has only been able to produce enough systems to fill the needs of their current dealers. Production will be increasing this year so there will be enough to go around.

TV Tuner: While other portables tout their ability to turn into a tv, Atari has decided against one. Through market research, Atari discovered that while many people thought a tuner was a neat option, very few actually would purchase one.

Lynx sales: 1 million Lynx systems have been sold worldwide.

Pinball Jam: Atari's multi-game pinball cart (in development) will include an Elvira pinball contest. The staff claims that's why they've been acquiring so much Elvira stuff for the office. Right. Wink wink, nudge nudge.

What a difference a year makes! At the November 1991 Chicago Compterfest by Atari, Atari Entertainment had 12 Lynx systems setup running their latest titles.

Jaguar: Surprisingly, decisions are still being made concerning what kind of processor the system will be running on. It will at least be 32-bit and they are shooting for an under $200 price point. Jaguar software development is slated to begin first quarter of '92.

Eye of the Beholder: Role playing fans can look forward to a Lynx version of SSI's Dungeons and Dragon's game. It's being developed by SSI and will be the biggest memory Lynx card yet at half a megabyte or more!

Batman Returns: The caped crusader will bring his crimefighting skills to the Lynx in a tie-in with the upcoming movie sequel.

Manual/Poster: If you're not a fan of the instruction posters, you'll be happy to hear that they're going back to manuals. If you are a fan of the posters, you'll be happy to hear that a poster will be included with the manual.

NFL Football: This long-awaited sports title will finally be showing up in February. The title was finished a couple times but was taken back to the shop because the designers still weren't happy with it. Also coming in February will be Hockey, Baseball Heroes, and Basketbrawl. These sports games will be supported by a TV spot.

Psygnosis: Rumors about Psygnosis doing games for the Lynx have persisted over the past year but there hasn't been anything said officially... until now. Psygnosis is developing their hits, Lemmings and Shadow of the Beast, for play on the Lynx. Shadow of the Beast, a graphically lavish side scrolling beat'em up should be showing up around March. The extremely popular Lemmings, which requires you to lead a pack of suicidal animals to safety, will be coming to the Lynx in the Fall of '92. —*Clinton Smith* ■

▲ Clinton Smith lives for his Lynx. His APE NEWSLETTER is all about the Lynx and is published 5 times a year now. Contact Clint at APE, 2104 North Kostner, Chicago , IL 60639, or on GEnie at C.SMITH89.

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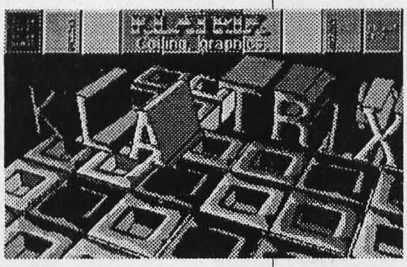
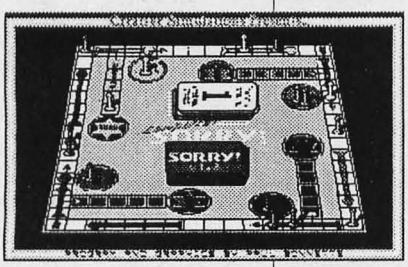


▲ **KLATRIX.LZH**—This shareware import combines Klax and Tetris. Klatrix stretches the programming language STOS to its best performance with excellent graphics and sound.

I don't know how all Atari owners spend their leisure time, but I do know that many of us spend many hours of it playing computer games. And why not? As long as Atari is thought of as "a game machine" by most of the people that recognize the name at all, shouldn't we allow at least some of those folks to be right, at least some of the time (grin)? You can access thousands of games at little or no cost, via modeming or PD disk services. But which ones should you look for? This is Part Two of a report designed to help you win, cheaply. Part One was in the the November issue...

Space

Within the world of games, space is hardly the last frontier, rather, it is one of the first. SPARROW.LZH features "Operation Sparrow," a vertical scrolling shoot'em that has you battling tanks, stealth bombers and all sorts of aliens. Very good graphics and sound with multiple levels.



▲ **SORRY.LZH**—Computer Sorry! features lots of graphics and good play value, and is a good example of "old" board games converted for new dimesions of play on the computer.

PEGASUS is proof that the "war" became more dangerous. Due to the immensity of enemy forces, you'll now be required to colonize planets in order to defeat the enemy. Jump through hyperspace, search for planets, terraform them, colonize them, and support them. NOVAGAME.ARC features a great version of the arcade classic, "Galaxian." From Europe, it's well done and one of my favorites.

Strategy games and board games are also favorites. KARMA - A STRATEGY GAME is a two player strategy game, somewhat similar to Othello. SEAWAR13.ARC lets you secretly deploy fleets of ships with the goal being to gain control of enemy bases. It uses digitized sound, animation and more, and can use Michtron's four player adapter. AKS.ARC requires strategies similar to those used in Chip's Challenge on the Lynx. Your task is to move crates around a warehouse. Sound easy? Think again, and again, and again! Super challenging fun for adults, or older children. CRISSLE is a pretty tough puzzle game. You have to render a bomb harmless by moving boulders around it.

Old Games Anew

And, how about the games we "used" to play as kids? RISKY is a computer version of the popular board game. This version has several different maps to choose from, besides the basic world map. STRABBLE.LZH is a great clone of Scrabble. It has a 45,000 word editable dictionary and allows up to 6 human or computer players. BINGO, CROSSWORD PUZZLES (the London Times and Sun are included), TIC TAC TOE ACCESSORY, PBM CHESS, and YAHTZE20.LZH are all in this category.

A host of games have taken their motivation from TV programs. CONCENTRATION, MOUSE OF FORTUNE, NAME THIS TUNE, ST SQUARES, BATMAN, and JEPARDY3.ARC, to be the final version of this ultimate game for Jeopardy TV fans. It now includes a "dispute" key!

History too, provides motivation to game designers. TIANEMEN SQUARE allows users to "enjoy" crushing the demonstration in Tianemen Square. WARSHIPS.ARC lets you recreate a battle of a different kind—ship to ship combat during the Napoleonic period is the focus. SADDAM.LZH (Desert Shield Campaign) and WHOSANE.ARC are also consuming.

For very serious gamers, DANDY.ARC is a dungeons and dragons fantasy role playing type game. BUBLEM.ARC features three unique arcade games packed into an amazingly small program. Start in a bubble feeding a monster (lunar style screen), move to caverns fighting guards and lasers (much like bezerk) and finally reach a cavern, avoiding falling rocks and rising lava to get the energy crystals. OMEGA075.ARC is the latest all text role-play game, with lots of improvements over others like NetHack, Larn, and Moria.

For the Kids

TURTLES.ARC is a children's graphic adventure game written with TALESPIN. It features the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. HAWKS.LZH is a shoot'em up game similar to Duck Hunt on the Nintendo. TETRISIDE V. 1.1 is a two player Tetris type game, DREIDEL is a two-person game of chance for ages 3-11. KV_PARK.LZH is a game for very small children that shows a park setting, with cursor as a butterfly. AIKEN.ARC - "MAKIN' AIKEN," is a sing-along program for children ages 3-11. Build a silly man with food for body parts.

Don't miss PATIENCE, the SOLITAIRE GAME PACK, CARD GAMES BY CHARLES BAILEY, and MINIGOLF.ARC, a mono PD game. Also, EXTENSOR is a real nice lightcycles (of Tron) game. In TRAFFIC.LZH, you try to direct automobile traffic through a crowded city with the fewest delays. SBREAK.ARC is not just "Breakout" but, SUPER Breakout!

New 'n Hot

The most recent postings of new games include MAZE.LZH, an amazing 3-D maze game, best for two players. A nice touch is that the music (Ludwig) can be played on a MIDI device. LUNACY31.LZH, similar to Tetris, was winner of 1990 Canadian STOS Contest. REACT2.ARC is an excellent strategy game, the sequel to REACTION with improved graphics. AMAZE2.ARC is a random maze generator and solver. And finally, DUNGEONZ.LZH, a low resolution Strategy/Arcade game written in STOS. —*Ron Berinstein* ■

■ CodeHead BBS maven **Ron Berinstein** does his aperiodic AtariUser appearances between his other committments as a nightclub manager, pasta factory owner, concert performer manager, and pet counselor.

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Chuck Steinman

Taking Advantage of System Upgrades

8-BIT ALERT ■ Chuck Steinman has recently been promoted on GEnie as a CoSysOp, sharing duties with Craig Thom. If you are a GEnie subscriber, feel free to drop into the Atari 8-bit Bulletin Board, Software Libraries, or Real-Time Conference. The Atari 8-bit RTC is held from 10:00 pm to 11:00 pm each Thursday. Please drop in! OOPS! We printed the wrong phone number in the October AtariUser 8-Bit Alert. Let's try it again! **Wanted: 8-bit Atari's! Dr. James Hooper is Director of Medical Services** for an Alabama hospital for mentally ill offenders. He's given his own 800XL to the hospital, and patients are eagerly lining up to learn reading, typing, and computer literacy. Funds are not available for buying more, and Dr. Hooper asked AtariUser to solicit fully tax-deductible donations of Atari 8-bit equipment to expand his program. Individuals or vendors: contact Dr. Hooper at Taylor Hardin Secure Medical Facility, 1301 River Road Northeast, Tuscaloosa, Alabama, 35404, 205-556-7060. Yes, this is the REAL number.

While the stock Atari 8-bit system provides the features needed for many applications, expansion options (especially of the XL/XE series) allow a system to become more powerful and easier to use.

One of the most popular upgrades for the 800XL and 130XE is a memory or RAM upgrade. While plans for do-it-yourself RAM expansion are readily available in club and BBS libraries, it's nearly as cheap and much easier to buy a kit. The Newell 1 Megabyte upgrade has recently been released for under $50, excluding DRAM. Newell also offers a 256K version for the XL at under $30 (excluding DRAM). While there are few applications which directly support these type of upgrades, most applications allow them to be used as large RAM Disks. Newell upgrades are distributed by American Techna-Vision, 15338 Inverness St., San Leandro, CA 94579, 800-551-9995. B&C ComputerVisions at 3257 Kifer Road, Santa Clara, CA, 95051, 408-749-1003, also carries Newell and other similar RAM upgrades.

If you own an XF-551 drive, Computer Software Services (CSS) has two upgrades for you. The single-drive upgrade will allow you to replace the 5-1/4" drive with a 3.5" drive. With the new drive mechanism and a compatible DOS (SpartaDOS or MyDOS for example) you will be able to format 720K bytes per double-sided diskette. A utility is included which will allow you to read IBM or ST diskettes. This upgrade is available with a Sony mechanism for $99.95 (plus $8 S&H), or without for $59.95 (plus $5 S&H).

The CSS double-drive upgrade is similar to the single-drive, except the 3.5" drive is connected in addition to your existing 5-1/4" drive. This will allow you to use both types of diskettes for only a small additional hardware cost. The basic upgrade package with a Sony mechanism costs $139.95 (plus $8 S&H), or without for $79.95 (plus $5 S&H). Another version is available for an additional $20 which allows use of two 3.5" drives, providing total storage of 1440K bytes. CSS, P.O. Box 17660, Rochester, NY 14617, 716-429-5639.

■ CSS offers an operating system (OS) upgrade which not only adds advanced features, but also contains a 400/800 compatibility mode. The UltraSpeed+ OS allows you to communicate with high speed floppy drives in their high speed mode, with any disk operating system (DOS). It also lets you reboot from any drive, including a RAMdisk. There's a built-in handler, which emulates a real disk without additional drivers. UltraSpeed+ OS is $69.96 (plus $5 S&H), available from CSS.

TransKey (TK1), a small microprocessor-based keyboard interface board, connects an IBM-type keyboard to your Atari 8-bit system. TK is mounted inside your 400/800/XL/XE computer and the original keyboard retains full functionality whether the IBM keyboard is connected or not. With the recent 2.4 upgrade ROM, you can now enter macros (key sequences) from the keyboard. The ZRAM option ($13 extra) will retain those macros in memory even while your system is not powered. The basic solder-in (14 total solder connections) version of TK is $47.00, while a version with a PoKey piggy-back board is $10.00 more and reduces your work to four solder connections. TK is manufactured by DataQue Products, Post Office Box 134, Ontario, OH 44862 (USA).

While plans for do-it-yourself RAM expansion are readily available in club and BBS libraries, it's nearly as cheap and much easier to buy a kit.

Another popular product from CSS is the Black Box (BB) interface.

This upgrade for 600XL/800XL/130XE provides a myriad of peripheral interfaces, and a few tricks. Not only does the BB provide a parallel printer port and an RS232 serial port capable of 19.2K baud, it also is a hard drive host adapter. By adding a power supply, controller, and hard drive, you can have a complete drive system with exceptional speed. The BB also has built-in screen dump and mini-debugger software. The BB is $199.95, and there's several options.

One of the more popular offerings from DataQue Products is the Turbo-816 upgrade. Similar to an upgrade which was offered for the Apple][(prior to the introduction of the Apple //gs), this upgrade adds 16-bit processing power, while still maintaining compatibility with current software. Turbo-816 is $104, which includes the adapter board, connecting cable, replacement OS ROM, and user diskette, and can be used with Atari 600XL/800XL/1200XL systems. SRAM cards are available in 64K byte ($53) or 256K byte ($104) sizes, or a real-time clock version including 32K bytes of battery backed SRAM ($73) and drivers in ROM (prices include S&H).

There are too many upgrades available for the 8-bit Atari systems to list here. While some popular items may be out of production, they're often still available from distributors like American Techna-Vision, B&C ComputerVisions, and Best Electronics. Atari and ICD Inc. still have limited supplies of 8-bit stock on hand as of this writing, and should be contacted for more information. — *Chuck Steinman* ■

▲ **Chuck Steinman**, your 8-bit representative here at AtariUser, would like to hear from you! He can be contacted on GEnie at username DATAQUE, or Compuserve PPN: 71777,3223. He is also available at his recently opened Audio/Video/Computer sales and service store called Lex-Tronics, now the exclusive distributor of DataQue products, from 1pm-5:30pm ET at 419-529-9797.

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▼ Word on the Street...
Sales of the Portfolio and its accessories are very slow at Atari dealers, but good elsewhere. Atari's new STe Family Curriculum Package is selling well with its great low price. It includes a 1040STe, color monitor, and a dozen or so programs for about $600. The new Lynx games are hot!

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