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* SILENT SERVICE BY Micro Prose *

There is a new game out by Micro Prose called Silent Service. It is a submarine simulation game and I really like it. I will try to describe it to you.

When you load the game up you are given 3 choices: Gunnery and torpedo practice, convoy actions or war patrols. The 1st option lets you shoot at 4 old warships anchored off of Midway island for practice. The 2nd option lets you try to take on 1 enemy convoy. The 3rd option is the hardest, it lets you go on a whole patrol by going after several different convoys and ships. If you pick the 3rd option you will need the manual. The program will show you 4 different silhouettes of destroyers and then give you a letter to look up in the book. You have to look at the right silhouette in the book and match it up with the right one on the screen.

Your main screen will be the conning tower. This is also your main menu. From this screen you will pick your different options of what to do next.

The 1st option is the periscope/binoculars. Using this option you can get a close up view of the enemy ships. You will actually see the ship and also get some important data. You will see the heading of your sub, the angle your looking at and different data about your enemy.

The 2nd option is the bridge. You may only use this option if your sub is on the surface. It is almost the same as the periscope view. You will not get all the needed data on the enemy ships though.

The 3rd option is maps and charts. This will show you different maps of the Pacific Ocean. This all depends on which map you choose and how close you need to see the area. This option is very useful when you are too deep to use the periscope. It will show you where you and the enemy are.

The 4th option is the quartermasters report. This will show you what ships you have sunk in your game and it will show you how many, what type, and total tonnage. The latter is used to rate how well you did.

The 5th option is the damage reports screen. This will show a diagram of your sub and what damage was sustained. It will highlight the areas of the sub affected and list the different damages. It will show how much water is leaking into the sub. This screen will also be helpful in determining how bad off your sub is, and what it can and can't do. It will help you decide to keep attacking or retreat and recover.

The 6th screen is instruments and gauges. Here you will be looking at the different gauges to see how your sub is doing. One of the

important ones is the depth under the keel. This shows the distance between your sub and the ocean bottom. You have to keep a close eye on this dial around land masses. If you don't you can run aground or worse become beached and captured.

This game has a lot of different options to it. There are even different reality levels to make your game harder. The different scenarios are supposed to be based on actual WW2 missions. It is not another shoot em up. I think that it is very interesting game that you should consider.

by CHARLES W. BROWN

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*****  
*      RAMDISK for the Atari 800 XL      *  
* submitted by Dr. Warren G. Lieuallen *  
*****
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The RAMDISK.COM utility furnished with DOS 2.5, which allows a virtual disk drive within the 130 XE, can be easily modified to work on the 800 XL. This internal disk drive can hold multiple files (up to 64), just like a "real" disk drive. The only limitation is that although the directory will claim that it has a total of 499 sectors (as it does in the 130 XE), in the 800 XL only 101 total sectors are actually available. In addition, as with any Ramdisk, all RAM memory is cleared when the power is turned off. However, the greatly increased speed of this technique makes it quite valuable for applications requiring substantial disk access, or programming sessions where DOS needs to be accessed frequently. For example, with DUP.SYS on the Ramdisk, total "load" time to get to the DOS menu is just under two seconds! Here's how to use RAMDISK.COM on your 800 XL:

1. From BASIC, enter "POKE 1802,(PEEK(1802+128))".
2. Enter "DOS".
3. Use the "L" option to load RAMDISK.COM from disk.
4. Use the "I" option to initialize the Ramdisk (use "D8:").
5. Use the "H" option to write DOS.SYS and DUP.SYS to D8: (If you don't want instant access to DOS, you may use the "D" option to delete D8:DUP.SYS afterwards.).
6. Use option "B" to return to BASIC.
7. Enter "POKE 5439,56".

← typo!

RAMDISK for the Atari 800 XL

submitted by Dr. Warren G. Lizaullen

Corrected Version (2/23/86)

The RAMDISK.COM utility furnished with DOS 2.5, which allows a virtual disk drive within the 130 XE, can be easily modified to work on the 800 XL. This internal disk drive can hold multiple files (up to 64), just like a "real" disk drive. The only limitation is that although the directory will claim that it has a total of 499 sectors (as it does in the 130 XE), in the 800 XL only 101 total sectors are actually available (only 22 sectors if both DOS and DUP are left on the RAMDISK!). In addition, as with any RAMDISK, all RAM memory is cleared when the power is turned off. However, the greatly increased speed of this technique makes it quite valuable for applications requiring substantial disk access, or programming sessions where DOS needs to be accessed frequently. For example, with DUP.SYS on the Ramdisk, total "load" time to get to the DOS menu is just under two seconds! Here's how to use RAMDISK.COM on your 800 XL:

1. Boot a DOS 2.5 disk which contains the RAMDISK.COM file.
2. From BASIC, enter "POKE 1802,(PEEK(1802)+128)".
3. Enter "DOS".
4. Use the "L" option to load RAMDISK.COM from disk.
5. Use the "I" option to initialize the Ramdisk (use "DB:").
6. Use the "K" option to write DOS.SYS and DUP.SYS to DB: (IF you don't want instant access to DOS, you may use the "D" option to delete DB:DUP.SYS afterwards.).
7. Use option "B" to return to BASIC.
8. Enter "POKE 5439,56".

You're done! You now have a 101 sector disk drive built in to your computer, and if you use FRE(0), you'll see that you've lost little to NO memory (the value should be 32418)! Quite a neat trick, huh?!

I hope you enjoy your free disk drive! I actually haven't used it all that much, but I have done it a few times, so I know it does work.

You're done! You now have a 101 sector disk drive built in to your computer, and if you use FRE(0), you'll see that you've lost NO memory (the value should be 32418)! Quite a neat trick, huh?!

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*****  
* Atari 1200XL to 800 OS Conversion *  
*****
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Bummed out with the hassles built into the 1200XL OS?

Wanna burn your translator disks, but can't shell out \$80 for a Boss?

Follow these simple instructions to replace the nasty 1200XL OS with the nice old 400/800 OS, for \$16.50 or less!

1. Pull the Rev.B ROMs out of the motherboard of a 400, or from the 10K ROM board of an 800. Make sure that the chips function properly!

2. If you can't find a set of ROMs, order them from:

American TV,
15338 Inverness St.
San Leandro, CA 94579

415-352-3787

They charge \$16.50 (including shipping) for the chips.

3. At this point you should have three chips, marked C012399B, C012499B and C014599B, respectively.

4. Place the C014599B piggyback on the C012499B chip with the notched ends facing the same direction. Solder pin 1 to pin 1, pin 2 to pin 2, etc. for all 24 pairs of pins.

5. Open the 1200XL using a small Phillips-head driver on the screws, and a needlenose pliers to pull the pop rivets that hold the RF shield together. This step is completely non-destructive: there is nothing to cut, unsolder or mutilate.

6. Locate the two 24-pin ROM chips on the 1200XL board near the cartridge slot. Notice that they are marked U12 and U13, respectively, in white letters on the board. Notice also which way the notched ends of the chips are facing.

7. Remove these ROM chips and give them to someone you don't like.

8. Pop the chip marked C012399B into the slot marked U12, with the notch facing in the proper direction. Place the piggyback chips in slot U13, with the notches properly oriented.

9. Test the board before putting the 1200 together again.

You now have an 800 with a 1200 keyboard, the best of both worlds. This mod was created by Brent Borghese of the ACE of Columbus, Ohio.

* Son of PaperClip! *
 * Re-reviewed by Dr. Warren G. Lieuallen *

In last month's newsletter, I had a review of PaperClip, version 1.0. While there are a few bugs in the program, I still think it is one of the better word processors for the Atari computer.

However, I have now discovered an even better word processor--PaperClip version 1.2. This version is everything that 1.0 is, and more. There is now a type-ahead buffer, so that even if you occasionally type faster than the computer can handle, no characters will be lost (as sometimes happens in version 1.0). Also, the 'dancing cursor' problem has been fixed. In addition, a new command has been added, which allows a different paragraph format wherein the first line is 'outdented' several spaces, rather than indented (meaning that it sticks out instead of in!).

This newer version also comes with a revision for the 130 XE, allowing use of the extra memory to provide a 90K text buffer (that's 12,000 words!). All other aspects of the program should work on any of the other Atari computers, though (they do on the 800 XL).

Several new utility files have been included, as well as six new printer drivers. There is now a program to create an index of selected words and their page numbers (useful to construct a Table of Contents, I suppose). A second program allows the use of multiple custom fonts within a file, but apparently ONLY with the Epson FX80 printer (it doesn't work with my SG-10, but just give me another few weeks or so!). Another utility allows a dump of the printer driver files, so that you can see just what commands are being used, and better understand just how this thing works! Finally, there is a demonstration file which includes most of the special formatting commands of PaperClip, so that you can see exactly how to use them.

Unfortunately, the new printer driver for the SG-10 printer doesn't work worth a darn. For reasons I don't understand, as it is now constructed, this file always initializes the printer into Near Letter Quality, and does not allow this feature to be turned off. Therefore, most of the other features (italics, super and subscripts, etc.) don't work!

However, I have constructed my own version of a printer driver for

the SG-10, which does work! I would be happy to provide a copy of it to anyone who needs it, and can explain how it works to anyone who would like to further modify it.

With the arrival of this newest version of PaperClip, there is no longer any doubt in my mind about the absolute best word processor. I whole-heartedly recommend PaperClip, by Batteries, Included to anyone who has need of a serious and powerful word processor for the Atari computer.

For any and all interested parties, I am still planning to have a Word Processor Comparison Demonstration at a future ACEC meeting (February or March?). If anyone has any particular program they'd like to see included, or if you'd like to do a short demo yourself, just let me know. I currently can discuss: AtariWriter and AtariWriter Plus; PaperClip; HomePak's Hometext; The Writer's Tool; Letter Perfect; Letter Wizard; and SpeedScript, a public domain program on side two of DOM #32. To keep the demo to a reasonable time-length, only four or five programs will be presented.

Wednesday, November 20
By Jack Powell

Las Vegas, NV -- Covering a huge, three island display area in the center of the West Hall of COMDEX, the largest computer trade show in the US, Atari and its third-party developers are easily the busiest attraction of the show.

Atari was clearly aiming at a show of force in the 68000 world by gathering its supporters under a collection of plum-colored banners identifying each ST stalwart. Over forty software companies were provided display areas and ST machines by the Tramiel operation.

In the center of the Atari action, the the ST, the Amiga, and the Macintosh were lined up side by side. The familiar Amiga bouncing ball was running identically on both the Amiga and the ST, (actually, a bit faster on the ST), while the Macintosh displayed only a black and white disk icon bearing a question mark. The price tags over the machines told the story: \$1795 for the Amiga, \$2795 for the Mac and \$999 for the Atari ST.

Not to be outdone, the 8-bit Atari 130XE was also displaying a bouncing ball demo. It was, however, the only Atari 8-bit machine on display at the Atari space. Except for the Amiga at the Atari exhibit, Commodore was not represented at the show.

Perhaps the most impressive graphics demo was an animated parrot, also from Atari, which flies across the screen while a graphics slide show continues in the background.

The list of software companies is so extensive, we'll just have room in this installment to briefly mention the companies and their products. Stay with us in the next few days for detailed updates.

ANTIC displayed its new ST

catalog software, including The Cartographer, Murray and Me, and the Metacomco Macro Assembler. Of particular interest was a demonstration of a new program by Tom Hudson which displays three dimensional objects in both wire-frame and solid -- with adjustable light source!

Activision is showing both Hacker and Borrowed Time.

If you've seen Hacker on the 8-bit machine, you're in for a pleasant surprise. The travel through the underground tunnel is graphically real; complete with railroad lanterns hanging from the rock walls.

Llamasoft was showing a brilliantly colorful psychedelic light show called Colourspace. Sierra-On-Line has its Ultima II on the store shelves. We saw King's Quest II, the animated graphics adventure. On the ST the hero can move at three different speeds and the program can take advantage of two disk drives. Sierra-On-Line will also soon release Winnie the Pooh and ST-One-Write which, they say, is the number one small business accounting system for the Macintosh.

Hippopotamus Software has its Backgammon on a full-color screen with excellent graphics right down to the reflections on the pieces. Academy Software has an ST version of Typing Tutor, and Xlent Software is showing The Typesetter -- a Print Shop-style program.

In addition to its Regent Word word processor, Regent Software announced a spelling program named, logically enough, Regent Spell. Batteries Included was showing off the colorful graphics of DEGAS, and a company called Computer Curriculum is adapting their dedicated education software, originally designed for a mini-computer, over to the ST.

GST Holdings LTD, from England, is showing a C Compiler, a Macro Assembler and a MacWrite-like word processor. Spinnaker Software is introducing its line of graphics adventures and educational software. On their screen was Perry Mason and The

Migraph is demonstrating Easy Draw, an object-oriented graphics program. Among its many options is an "almost-infinite zoom."

TDI Software, is currently offering Modula-2, a favorite language of computer scientists. They will also be demonstrating Andra, a professional typesetting program which was written on their own Modula-2.

BMB Compuscience is demonstrating a database management package with LAN (Local Area Network) which will allow users to transfer data to and from the IBM and ST. They expect this to be available in March or April.

Mirage Concepts is also showing a Database in addition to their disk utility program by Holmes and Ducksworth. And Portable Software is showing a property management system which operates under BOS (Business Operating System). This is going to be a high-end system for the vertical market.

Right next to Portable Software Softronics which was displaying the first element of a complete integrated package. Their terminal program was truly impressive. Practically any terminal can be emulated, and if that's not enough, you can define your own and compile it to disk. Among their other modules, Softronics plans a intelligent CAD/CAM system which can analyze a plan and determine the success or failure of the structure!

As you can see, there's a lot of excitement and a lot of software support for the ST. What we have seen so far is solid product. And most of it will be on the dealer's shelves by Christmas.

Reaction to the ST by the professionals here at COMDEX is very positive and it looks like a good year for Atari.

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vember 21, 1985

TRAMIEL PUTS CD ROM ON HOLD

Las Vegas, NV -- Jack Tramiel, president of Atari, told ANTIC today that Atari will not release a CD ROM player for the ST until manufacturer's prices drop. He saw no release of the massive storage peripheral for the ST in the immediate future.

CD ROM players by Phillips and Hitachi were on display for IBM and Apple II, priced \$1,500 and up, at the Grolier booth, publishers of the first and still only CD ROM software, the Electronic Encyclopedia (\$199). CD ROM on the Atari ST is to be demonstrated at the MGM Grand tonight, but not by Atari.

Tramiel, when asked about the noticeable absence of the CD ROM at the Atari exhibit, said that until he could find lower prices for the basic driver mechanism, he would not sell the machine. "I will never release it for higher than \$600," he said.

He went on to say that consumers are used to paying \$199 for CD audio digital disk players. Why should they pay \$1000 for the same mechanism just because it's a CD ROM? "I'm definitely not willing to lose money."

Tramiel felt that the CD ROM would be a big boost to the personal computer industry in general, but he felt no compulsion to be the first company to release it. When asked again when he thought he might have one ready, he replied, "You'll have to guess and I'll have to know."

Tramiel also avoided setting a specific date for when the GEM operating system for the Atari ST would be placed in ROM. But he said it was a "matter of days, not months." Also, despite the current disagreement between Apple Computer and Digital Research regarding the appearance of the GEM desktop,

Tramiel stated the ST desktop would not alter in appearance. Atari, he said, was working with DRI and their attorneys and he saw no problems down the line. DRI, Tramiel said, has indemnified Atari.

Several hard disks were being used at the Atari exhibits -- including at the ANTIC display. Richard Frick, Atari Marketing Director - Software, was handing them out to the exhibitors like candy. ANTIC Marketing Director, Gary Yost, described his experience adding the hard disk to his demonstration system. "It was incredible. I brought the whole thing up and partitioned it in fifteen minutes. It usually takes an hour to do this on an IBM. I moved ten disks of our demonstration files to the hard disk with no problem."

According to Tramiel, hard disks are currently being shipped to developers and he expects them to be available to the end user by the first quarter of 1986. No firm price has been set, but he hoped to keep it under \$600. (The night before, Sam Tramiel told a group of over forty developers that a \$699 20-megabyte hard disk would be shipping to retailers by the last week of December, or the first day of January.)

Tramiel was very pleased by the reception his ST was receiving, both at COMDEX as well as globally. "We have over 1,000 developers worldwide." He also said he expects total sales of the ST, by year-end to reach 100,000, worldwide. Sales, he said, are strongest in Germany. We asked him what he attributed that to, and he said, "Obviously, the Germans are smarter buyers."

Tramiel was also proud of the fact that the 520 ST had become, during the month of October, the number one selling personal computer in Germany. In addition, a poll of 12 European computer magazines hailed the 520 ST as the PC of the year.

BORLAND BUYS ST'S

Sig Hartman, President of Software at Atari, confirmed that Borland International, developers of the phenomenally successful Turbo Pascal, had just purchased three 520 ST's. "Borland is committed to write software on the ST," said Hartman

A top Atari official at one of COMDEX's many nocturnal parties, told us that Philippe Kahn, president of Borland, after returning from the October Munich Computer show, went directly to Atari and handed over a check for three ST's. Hartman went on to say that the important thing Atari was demonstrating at COMDEX was the obvious show of support by third-party software developers. And the forty-plus developers at COMDEX were just the tip of the iceberg, "We have more than 800 development systems out right now."

Michael Katz, ex-president and CEO of EPYX software, and Atari's brand new president of the Entertainment and Electronics Division, described Atari's upcoming Christmas advertising strategy.

Starting December 1st, each ST sold will include a free giveaway package of five pieces of software, to include BASIC, LOGO, a game called Megaroids, a word processor and a database. The identity of the last two items has not yet been decided upon.

More importantly, Atari plans to blitz the Christmas advertising scene with a "co-operative" advertising campaign. Advertising print pieces have been designed by Atari to be made available to local retailers for the Christmas season. Atari will place the ads in some publications, but the same advertisements will be available to retailers for local placement. During a period from December 1st to December 31st, Atari Corp. will reimburse up to 80% of the dealer's cost of placing these ST ads.

Again, on the second day of COMDEX, the crowds in the West Hall were thickest at the Atari booths. Even now, as the doors begin to close at the end of the day, television crews are covering the packed Atari action. Watch this space for further details on individual ST products and other Atari news.

November 22, 1985

COMDEX ST SOFTWARE- A CLOSER LOOK

By Jack Powell

Las Vegas, NV -- COMDEX fever continues to grow in this unseasonably chilly desert resort. Hotels and taxis overflowed today as 80,000 computer business people jammed the seven halls of the convention center dedicated to the show, and more are expected for the weekend.

In the West Hall, Atari interest continued strong. ANTIC was able to pick out some impressive products among the exhibitors.

Okidata is currently working with Atari to configure the software for its new Okimate-20 color printer for the ST. At COMDEX, the Okimate-20 was printing rich, full-color screen dumps of ST Neochrome and DEGAS pictures.

The Okimate-20, which is scheduled for a late January release, can print 15 of the ST's 512 possible colors. With the help of its 24-pin print head, using a 14 x 18 matrix, Okimate-20 printouts are very close to the ST screens. The colors are rich, solid and accurate. In ANTIC's eyes, this looks like a sure hit for the color printer company.

Because of the high density print head, the Okimate-20 will not be compatible with the Atari 8-bit line. But Okidata representatives told ANTIC that Okidata will continue to support the 8-bit owners with its Okimate-10 color printer.

Not all the ST exhibitors were in the Atari area. Sublogic had its own large booth displaying Flight Simulator for the ST and other computers. The new simulator, with a planned release in the first quarter of 1986, and a tentative price of \$49.95, has many new features.

You may choose to fly a prop plane, Lear jet, or World War I biplane. The program is completely

mouse-controlled with drop-down menus and a choice of up to three point-of-view windows, through which you may choose a cockpit view, a view from the tower, or a view from a spotter plane. You can then watch your flight from all of these views simultaneously.

From the tower view, you may zoom in on your plane no matter how far away it is. In spotter view, you may choose where your spotter plane will be in relation to your own plane. The version ANTIC saw was beta and the programmers had included some fanciful pyramids on the landscape because, it was explained, they were tired of looking at mountains.

Michtron had several of their games and software utilities displayed. But the most impressive of their products was a new game called Time Bandit. This was a final beta with a planned release date in mid-December at \$49.95.

Time Bandit contains arcade action in a fantasy-roll-playing maze background. There are 20 adventuring areas with 15 levels each. The terrain is an overhead 3-D view with some of the finest game graphics we've seen. A dual-player mode is included so that two players can play simultaneously, each with their own window.

GST, Computer Systems Limited had the best MacWrite clone of the show. 1st Word is a full-feature word processor written specifically for the GEM interface.

Up to four document windows can be displayed and manipulated from the desktop. Function key commands are represented by icons at the bottom of the screen. You can press the function key, or click on its icon with the mouse. Writing functions are mostly keyboard controlled, while editing functions -- such as cut and paste -- are handled with the mouse.

While fonts are not yet provided, an interesting feature of 1st Word is its system font tablet which contains all of the special characters in the ST font. Normally inaccessible

by other software, you can choose the special characters with the mouse and paste them into your document.

1st Word is expected to be available at \$99 in approximately two weeks.

THIRD PARTY MONITORS

When the Thomson company (which makes monitors) was setting up their booth, they had Apples and IBMs to display the clarity of their products. They thought they had a pretty good display -- until they wandered over and saw the ST demos at the Atari exhibit. So they borrowed an ST and one of their IBMs was slipped under a table, out of the way.

Then the Thomson people spotted the robot and rocket demo running on the 130 XE. Another ST, they asked? Oh no, replied Atari, that's our 6502 computer. So now the Thomson display contains an ST and two 130 XE's. And two Apples and an IBM PC are gathering dust under a table.

EIGHT-BIT ATARI

Though the main Atari focus at COMDEX was the 520 ST, Atari's 8-bit line was also represented. As previously mentioned, the Amiga bouncing ball was pounding away on the 130 XE.

John Skrutch, Director of XE Software at Atari, told ANTIC the program had been given to him the night before the show. It looks remarkably similar to the Amiga demonstration, but runs in under 8K. "This will run on an Atari 400," said Skrutch. The program is available for downloading from CompuServe's SIG*Atari.

Also being shown for the 8-bit line was Atari's XM301 300-baud modem featuring direct hook-up, auto-answer and phone number storage, and Russ Wetmore's XE-Term software. Thousands of the units are currently being shipped. Retail price is \$49.95.

And PLATO is finally shipping! After more than a year of anticipation, the educational on-line service is

available in the Atari Learning Phone package. According to Skrutch, the Learning Phone includes the LP cartridge PLATO terminal emulator, a one year free subscription to PLATO (normally \$25) and one free hour of on-line time (normally \$7.75). Atari is releasing the full package for \$24.95.

Atari 8-bit owners may also look forward to a home finance program called The Silent Butler -- available at the end of the month for under \$30 -- and a spectacular educational program called the Atari Planetarium which Skrutch expects out by Christmas at a price under \$50.

The Atari Planetarium displays the sky patterns in any time zone from 10,000 years in the past to 10,000 years in the future. You can choose your observation point from a map of the world, show the sky with or without constellation lines, and search for and track objects. This should be popular software in the school market.

Given the above collection of 8-bit software, it's evident Atari is aiming at the educational market with their low-end machines.

ANTIC also spotted a few of the new Atari XMM801, dot-matrix printers in use, one at the VIP Technologies booth. These printers are said to be Epson graphics compatible with a print speed of 80 CPS. They should be shipping next month with an approximate price tag of \$299.

SERIOUS SOFTWARE

VIP Technologies was showing the VIP Professional. Yes, we saw it. Full, glossy, 250-page spiral-bound documentation and all. VIP evidently decided to do away with GEM entirely to create a complete simulation Lotus 1-2-3, right down to the last detail.

Because the program has been designed as a Lotus 1-2-3 clone, you can use the same keystroke commands and create Lotus standard macros. Any macros written about 1-2-3 will pertain to VIP Professional. The VIP Professional will sell for \$179.95.

FTL stopped by the ANTIC booths to show Sundog: The Frozen Legacy. The game is in final beta and looks absolutely spectacular. This is going to be a hot game on the ST! The graphics are meticulously detailed as are the strategic elements of the game itself.

We were taken on a quick tour of one of the Sundog worlds. As we slipped into a hotel lobby, we observed such details as the accurately tacky carpet design and -- over in the equipment shed hung a tiny cheesecake calender with a five-pixel pinup girl.

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November 23, 1985

THE GRAY FLANNEL ST
By Jasck Powell

Las Vegas, NV - Regardless of college football, the Vegas action this Saturday was still at COMDEX, where thousands of footsore attendees trudged gamely through labyrinthian aisles estimated to total 15 miles.

The powerhouse team of the show is definitely IBM, with all its clones and software feeders. But the "story" of the show is definitely Atari's ST, according to BYTE reporter Jerry Pournelle. Jaded industry bigwigs who toured the Atari enclave have been impressed to see the wide range of ST products, with expensive professional software aimed at the vertical market displayed adjacent to coin-op-quality, full-color-graphics games.

Among the strong new Atari players is Philon, exhibiting several new languages for the ST. Philon -- an old hand at developing compilers for the 68000 processor -- plans to convert all their languages to the ST. The first three to appear will be the Fast/C Compiler, Fast/Henry BASIC, and Fast/M-BASIC. ANTIC interviewed Philon spokesman, Walter Betkowski, about the two BASICS.

M-BASIC -- or Micro-BASIC -- is a compiled BASIC with extremely fast end code. This five-pass compiler has full-english error messages. The program was brought over from the "megaframe 68000 world," so this is a full-size language capable of handling serious software design.

Although no access for GEM VDI or AES is currently implemented, any language -- including C -- may be called from this BASIC.

The compiler uses the Digital Research linker, which is provided with the package. We watched it compile a 40K file in approximately six minutes. According to Betkowski, ten iterations of Erasthenes Sieve can be performed, without display, in five seconds.

Fast/Henry BASIC is an interpreted BASIC, but even so, its source code is compatible with the M-BASIC compiler.

We spoke with its programmer, Henry Massalin, who told us that the program acts like an interpreted BASIC, but is really a compiler. Any editor can be run from within it. But when you type "RUN", the code is quickly compiled and then run.

Henry described his BASIC as slow for a compiler, but fast for an interpreted BASIC. Future releases should include access to GEM calls, but the current product does not contain this.

Henry BASIC will retail for \$49, and M-BASIC for \$99. Both products are expected to be ready for Christmas.

Philon Fast/C will not be ready until the first quarter of 1986. At this time, it should retail at \$149. Again this product uses the DRI linker. It is a full implementation based on the Kernighan and Ritchie standard, with extensions.

Fast/C includes a floating-point package and structure passing. It will not have GEM VDI/AES or any of the BIOS linkage files and the company has no schedule to develop

these.

THE GIGA BASE

BMB CompuScience has developed the fullest-featured database system we've seen on the ST. The product, called The Manager, was snapped up by Atari and will be released through them sometime in January. No price is yet available.

The Manager is a fully relational database including a built-in procedural language for full flexibility. It's completely disk-based, but the access time on each record is extremely fast.

The software has a phenomenal capacity; over two billion records in a file and 1,024 fields in a record. Searches can be position dependent or independent. Or you can use a "hunt" wherein the program searches anywhere in the database for the item.

ANTIC was shown a very thorough report generator which can be completely customized by using The Manager's built-in language. The package looked professional and would give any IBM database a run its the money.

There was no shortage of practical business software at the Atari booths. Right next to BMB was Execon, showing its fully-integrated business package called Taurus.

Taurus consists of three modules: an invoicer, an account program, and an inventory control program. All three may be used as stand-alone modules, but the entire bundled package is expected to sell in the neighborhood of slightly over \$500, and be available in January.

The software, supported by a hard disk, can handle 32,000 customers. A single-sided disk will hold 2,000, and a double-sided disk can do 7,500. But since data disks can be chained, floppy owners are not limited in the number of customers the package can keep track of. Execon is also designing for the vertical market. Their next project is a printer's

estimation/ quotation system. Opportunities for other vertical applications are clear and rumors on the COMDEX floor suggest that the ST is already making inroads on the Macintosh market.

Batteries Included -- which 3 booths in both the Atari area and at the MGM Grand Hotel -- took the opportunity to not only display their new ST graphics package, DEGAS, but to announce a special DEGAS graphics competition to be judged by ANTIC. Rules can be found in the DEGAS package, or in the February issue of ANTIC. All you hotshot graphics artists, here's your opportunity to win \$2,000 worth of prizes.

DEGAS was written by Tom Hudson, and it certainly sets the standard for ST paint programs.

Congratulations are in order for Michael Reichmann who was recently promoted to the position of President and CEO of Batteries Included. Reichmann was previously VP of Development and Marketing for BI. Alan and Robbie Krofchick, co-founders of BI have become Chairman and Vice Chairman of the company.

Stoneware Software was showing their ST version of DB Master. Atari licensed this database as well. Rumor has it that it may be part of the ST's bundled software, though no firm decision has yet been made.

DB Master takes full advantage of the GEM interface and mouse control. The database is very easy to use, but extremely fast and powerful. Since the entire program is RAM-based, record input is blinding fast.

Progressive Computer Applications was showing a demo of Graphic Artist. This is a high-end business/ graphics package. At its heart is a full-featured CAD system. And because the software is vector-graphic based, it will use the highest density of any output device. Printing done by a laser printer, for example, will look type-set.

The program includes a spreadsheet and word processor which

manipulate data created by the graphics portion of the program. An optional language module permits extension and customizing of the system. Price of the main package is \$495. The language module is \$245. No release date has been set.

Xanth is an organization with broad interests. It is a retail sales store in Seattle, a software developer, and an Atari user-group supporter. One of their programmers even created the bouncing ball for the 8-bit Atari.

They've also been working with BOS, the British high-end Business Operating System, and developing a legal time and billing package for the vertical market.

Xanth has discovered the ST makes an excellent, low-priced terminal for other systems. At COMDEX, they had an ST hooked up to a four-phase Motorola mini-frame. "We have customers using the ST with their VAX," said a Xanth spokesman.

BOS is on 85 different computers throughout the world, including IBM, Burroughs, and Sage. Software is easily ported between machines when designed for the BOS system. The software is very high-priced -- up to \$1500 per module. On the ST, however, this same software should cost about \$550.

Xanth has also created a cabinet for the ST power supplies and disk drives. Called Media Mate, a number of retailers have shown interest in this product which makes the ST look a little like an IBM. The product was designed by an experienced Macintosh cabinet designer and it leaves room for the ST unit and mouse to slip under the main box.

Sierra-On-Line was showing King's Quest II, which is an animated graphics adventure recently available on the Apple and IBM. The adventure is similar in appearance to other Sierra-On-Line products, except that the hero can move throughout each screen, and various elements of the picture -- such as flames, or banners -- are animated. Graphics are

excellent and look a little like the Disney classic, Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs.

Also from the Sierra crew is Ultima II. But if you've seen this on other computers, you're in for a surprise on the ST version. They've got it working under GEM with drop down menus, multiple windows, and mouse control. You can pull down a menu for weapons or armor, or to cast a spell. It looks good! No wonder Sierra people are reporting such high sales on this item. Ultima II is shipping now. King's Quest II will be ready for Christmas.

Kuma Computers, LTD., a British developer, was showing three strong products.

They will be releasing, through the ANTIC catalog, a RAM disk called A-RAM, a spreadsheet called A-Calc, and a fast and convenient macro-assembler called A-Seka.

We spoke with Tim Moore, Director of Software at Kuma. He told us he had personally been interested in 68000 processors since 1980 and knew it was only a matter of time until it became available to the mass public.

Meanwhile, he and his company began to learn about the processor on a Sage-2. By the time Atari came along with the ST, Kuma had been developing 68000 product and was ready to adapt to the ST.

The hardest part of doing A-Calc on the ST, said Moore, was putting it under GEM. The spreadsheet uses a complete GEM interface with multiple windows and mouse controlled cells.

A-Seka is an entirely self-contained, RAM-based macro-assembler. From within A-Seka, you can compile, disassemble, link, debug, display and modify memory, and run your program without ever returning to the desktop.

The caveat, of course, is that you are restricted to available memory for your development. When GEM is in ROM, this should be of little concern.

A-Seka is extremely fast. It can compile a 100K source file in eight seconds! British programmers who have had the opportunity to use it have become addicted to it. It's a speedy, convenient program aimed primarily for the design of high performance entertainment software.

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November 24, 1985

COMDEX - THE FINAL DAY
By Jack Powell

Las Vegas, NV -- On the last day of this massive electronics marathon, the COMDEX crowd finally began to thin as distributors, retailers, exhibitors -- and those lucky consumers who had finagled a show pass -- stuffed their suitcases and equipment into the scarce Las Vegas taxis and headed for the airport.

Some exhibitors cleared their booths early on Sunday, hoping to avoid the long lines of traffic jamming the approaches to the airport.

Weary, computer spokesmen displayed their wares with slightly less enthusiasm than previously in the week. Their bags were packed and one red eye was cast longingly toward home and a warm bed.

But COMDEX is only one of two huge annual electronic shows in Las Vegas, and conversation on the last day of the convention was already swinging to talk of the next show. CES would be packing the casinos in only six weeks.

A surprise of this year's show was Commodore's absence. The financially troubled company had planned to appear -- and was listed as an exhibitor in the COMDEX guide book. But no Commodore booth was to be found, and the few Amiga's at the show were used primarily as monitor displays.

At the Atari booths, spirits were high. This had been a successful show for the Tramiel organization. Industry experts considered this COMDEX

a "must-show" for the struggling firm and Atari had come through with flying colors, demonstrating enormous third-party software support for their new machine.

One Atari official hinted at exciting new hardware for the Atari line to be unveiled at CES. There may finally be 80 columns of screen display, and some new, smaller, disk drives.

But Atari was not exhibiting hardware at this show. The 520 ST's Atari provided exhibitors were identical to those currently sold in retail outlets. GEM was still in RAM and rumors of a new desktop or a "mega-byte" ST with built-in disk drive were unfounded.

The story Atari wanted to tell was software support. And they told it. In fact, there was far too much software to be able to adequately cover in our five ANTIC On-Line installments.

So, the following is a list of the ST developers who came to COMDEX. Those who first supported the Atari 520 ST with their presence and demonstrated their belief in the machine with a display of diverse and powerful software. These companies were showing product -- not just press releases. Print this out, put it in your wallet, and support them as they've supported your machine.

THE ROLL CALL:

BOS - Business Operating system
Rising Star
Imagebank
Softronics
Mirage Concepts
BMB CompuScience
Batteries Included
ANTIC Publishing
Hippopotamus Software
Stoneware
OXXI, Inc.
KUMA
Haba Systems
Digital Research, Inc.
Migraph
GST Holdings, LTD.
Xanth
Regent Software

MichTron
VIP Technologies
Progressive Computer
Applications
TDI Software
Philon
Quickview Systems
Word of God Communications
Xlent Software
Activision
Execon
Lasersoft
Spinnaker
Okidata
Sierra On-Line
FTL, Inc.
LlamaSoft
Computer Curriculum
Academy Software
Sublogic
Coincidence Software
Portable Software
AM Software

(The above list was compiled from notes and from documents provided by Atari Corp. ANTIC apologizes in advance for any participating companies we may have left out.)

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12/10/88