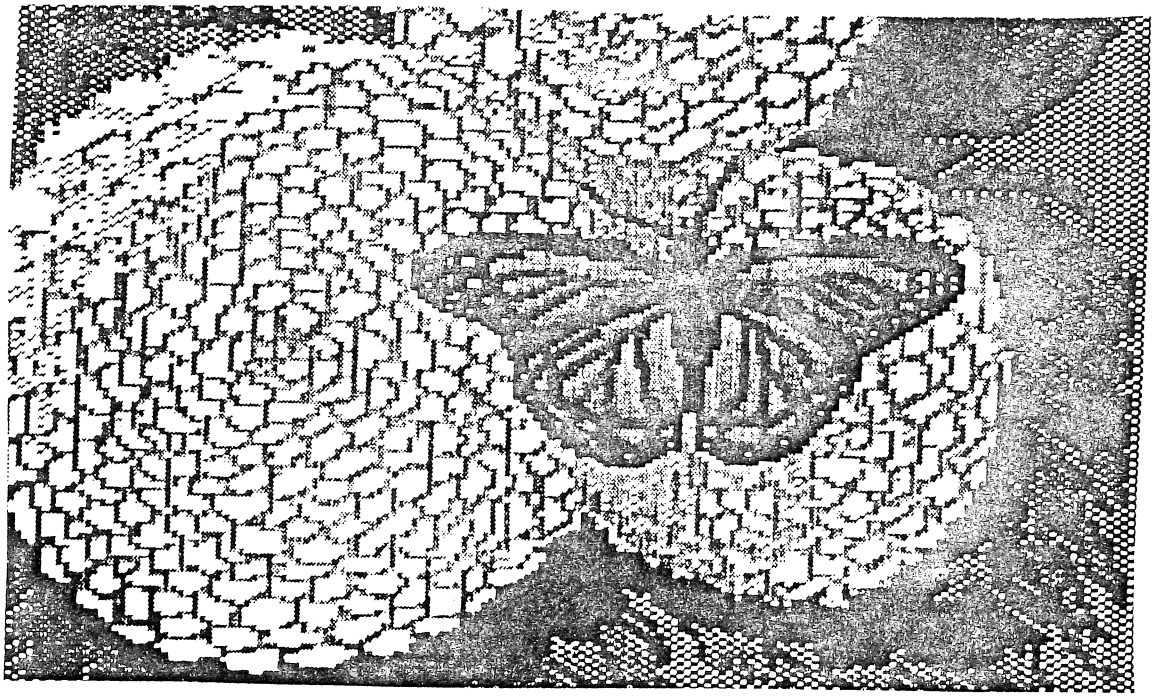
FUJI FACTS

Newsletter of the
Atari Computer Enthusiasts of Columbus

Volume 5, № 5

May, 1987



MONARCH.PIC

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

The Editor's Column
The Atari Light Pen review
Ogre review
Your Atari Computer (The Blue Book)

This newsletter is written and published monthly by the Atari Computer Enthusiasts of Columbus (**ACEC**). ACEC is an independent, non-profit organization interested in exchanging information about any and all Atari Home Computer Systems.

Our main meetings are held on the second Monday of each month at 7:15 p.m., at DeSales High School (on Karl Road, just south of Morse Rd.), and are open to the public. Other Special Interest meetings are held as announced at the main meeting.

Dues are $12.00 per year, and entitle members to all club benefits (Newsletter, Disk of the Month, Publications Library, SIG meetings, group discounts at selected area merchants, etc.).

Fuji Facts welcomes contributions of articles, reviews, editorials and any other material relating to the Atari computers, or compatible hardware devices and software packages.

ACEC is not directly affiliated with the Atari Corporation; "ATARI" and the "Fuji" symbol are registered trademarks of the Atari Corporation. All other trademarks, copyrights and service marks are registered with their respective owners.

The statements expressed in this newsletter are solely the opinions of the authors, and do not necessarily reflect those of ACEC, its officers or its members. Material contained in this newsletter may be reprinted provided credit is given to both Fuji Facts and the author(s).

The cover of this month's newsletter was printed with a Star SG-10 dot matrix printer, using XLent Software's TypeSetter 130. The newsletter itself was printed with a Star PowerType daisywheel printer in elite pitch, using Batteries Included's PaperClip version 2.0 on a 256K RAM modified Atari 800 XL.

Our permanent mailing address is:
P.O. Box 849
Worthington, OH 43085

PRESIDENT:
Charles Lusco
4624 Channing Terrace, #C
Columbus, OH 43232
863-4016

VICE-PRESIDENT:
Dave Beck
1194 Country Club Road
Columbus, OH 43227
863-8600

PUBLICATIONS LIBRARIAN:
Don Bowlin
230 Orchard Lane
Columbus, OH 43214
262-6945

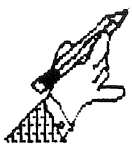
MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMAN:
Mike Compton
1342 Gumwood Drive
Columbus, OH 43229
885-3757

NEWSLETTER EDITOR:
Warren Lieuallen
1652 Hess Boulevard
Columbus, OH 43212
488-3977

DISK LIBRARIAN:
Paul Pelfrey
2199-D Cortside Drive
Columbus, OH 43232
866-1454

TREASURER:
Dave Feeney
2665 Blue Rock Boulevard
Grove City, OH 43123
871-0524

SECRETARY:
Don Bowlin
230 Orchard Lane
Columbus, OH 43214
262-6945



The Editor's Column

The times, they are a-changin´
- Paul Simon

Well, another month, another newsletter! Last month, I started a tradition of less fluff and more meat in Fuji Facts (translation: my editorial was shorter!). I have every intention of maintaining this tradition.

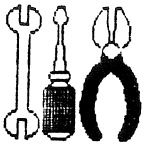
They say no news is good news. I don´t know why, they just say it. That works out well for me, though, because it means that all I have to report here is good news! Due to several unforeseen and uncontrollable incidents (my wife and kids!), I was unable to attend last month´s meeting. So, in short, I haven´t the foggiest idea what´s going on (not that this is all that unusual for me!). I´m looking to expand Fuji Facts into something resembling its pre-depression days look, and have already lined up a guest editor for next month to improve the layout and design of these pages. Also, watch for regular advertising from some local retailers. Please, give your support to those who support us.

Despite my severe page number limitations, I find myself once again running short of articles. If you´d like to have a Fuji Facts next month, please help out by writing part of it! It doesn´t have to be all eight pages of it; any short (or long!) article, on any topic related to Atari computers would be very welcome.

Warren Lieuallen

continued from page 6

I am sure you can see that this book covers a lot of information about our computers. It is probably the biggest book I have seen (458 pages). Many other books show you how to use your computer. This book also shows how to use the other parts of your computer system. I don´t know if there is any one best book for the Atari. Each one has it´s own advantages and disadvantages. Nonetheless, The Blue Book is one you should certainly consider.



Hardware Review

THE ATARI LIGHT PEN
and ATARIGRAPHICS SOFTWARE
by Charles W. Brown

This time, I will try and describe an older program for the Atari. As I mentioned in another article, I have always enjoyed music. I just wish that I could create my own. There is however one thing that I enjoy even more than music, and that is art. If memory serves me correctly, I took three years of art in high school. It still didn´t do me any good. I have the ideas in my head; I just don´t have the touch to get them down on paper (Charles is way ahead of me here. At least he´s got the ideas! - Ed.).

As with the music programs, I went out and bought almost all of the artistic programs available. I have tried them out, but still can´t draw or paint worth anything. At least with the art programs, I can draw on the screen and correct any mistakes. It is hard to fix a mistake if you already have it on paper.

In this second review of art programs for the Atari, I will try my hand at the Atari light pen and AtariGraphics software. A light pen is a pen-like (or penlight-like! - Ed.) device that is hooked up to your computer. It is used to draw on your TV or monitor screen. It is very similar to using a Touch Tablet or Koala Pad, except you just touch the tip of the pen to the screen itself. The light pen is plugged into a controller port just like a game controller.

If you plan on saving your art work to a disk file, make sure your drive is turned on and have a formatted disk in it when you boot up the program. Otherwise, you will only be able to save your pictures to a cassette tape. When the program starts, you will see a blank screen with four white tabs on the left side. You can touch any one of these tabs to bring up one of the four cards. These different cards that pop-up contain menus use for making many different selections (So this is where the idea for the ST´s GEM started! - Ed.). These cards can come and go as you need them. You can do that just by touching the tab with your pen. You

can draw on the other parts of the screen while the cards are up.

The first card (starting on top) is the graphic works card. You use it to choose what type of drawing you will be doing. The choices from this card, like those in other graphic programs, are free hand drawing, select color register, clear the screen (which also changes the background color) and line smoothness. When making your creation, you can choose to do freehand drawing, squares, parallelograms, circles, zoom feature, mirror effects and fill.

The second card from the top is the storage card. You use this card to either save or load in your creations. When this card pops up, you see three boxes. The top box is for your cassette recorder. The middle box is your picture. The bottom box is for your disk drive. There are small arrows that point to and from your picture box and the other boxes representing the storage devices. When you want to choose an option, you just put your pen on the desired arrow. For example if you want to load in a file from disk, you would put your pen on the arrow that sits on the disk box and points at the picture box. Then follow the prompts.

The third box from the top is the color mixing card. You choose this card to pick the four main colors you will be using. When you see this card, you will see four white boxes with a color bar on top of them. The four color bars that you see show you the four colors that you are using at that time. To change a color, point your pen inside one of the boxes and move the pen around. Moving the pen from left to right changes the color, while moving the pen up and down changes the luminance.

The fourth and last card is the pattern palette card. This is where you can choose the patterns for your fill function. The top of this card shows 15 different patterns that you can choose from by touching the pen under the desired box. Then you have eight boxes at the bottom left of the card. You use these boxes to change the different patterns. Then at the bottom right part of the card you have 22 more boxes. You use these to change the color combinations for your patterns. With these features you have a wide choice of patterns to choose from.

There is one nice feature I discovered that this program has. I never realize that it even had it. This feature is the ability to add text to your pictures. I have never tried it, but the instructions seem simple (This feature is lacking in many other art programs. - Ed.).

The program is unique with it's pop-up menu cards. As with any program, it has its advantages and disadvantages. One bad thing is that it does not show you a listing of your disk files. This is always a useful feature, as it can show whether or not you have the right disk. Also, you can see the file names you've used, and that way you can make sure that you type them in correctly. Also, I have found that it is hard to choose your proper color. When using the pen in the box method, I have found it hard to hit the right spot in order to get the desired color.

One very nice advantage is the fill mode with multi-colored patterns. In other graphic programs, once you filled in a space with a multi colored pattern, you could not change it. You would have to erase that part of the screen and start over. With this program, if you have a multi-colored pattern, you can cover it with another one. This allows for easy changing of your pictures. I hope to have given you an insight in to what this program is all about. Perhaps you will find it suits your needs.

FOR SALE

COMPLETE ATARI COMPUTER SYSTEM

including:

Atari 800XL with Rambo 256K RAM
Atari 1050 Disk Drive with DOS
Atari 1030 Modem with software
Atari Touch Tablet
Atari 1020 Printer/Plotter
Sanyo Composite Color Monitor
Supra 64K RAM Printer Buffer
Supra Printer Interface
Omniview 80 Custom OS chip,
(with 80 column software)
Monitor interface and cables
Atari 410 Program Recorder
all power supplies and cables

PLUS:

All of this software!

- The Writer's Tool
- Flight Simulator II
- ACTION! and ACTION! Toolkit
- Print Shop
- BASIC XL and Toolkit
- Atariartist
- B/Graph and Enhancements
- Zork I
- Microsoft BASIC II
- AtariWriter cartridge
- English TurboBASIC/Compiler

MORE! MORE! MORE! MORE! MORE!

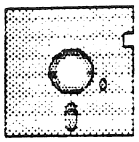
The total value of my system is over $1400. It is in mint condition, and includes all original packaging and doc's. Many other extras can also be included in this package deal.

The price for this entire system is $700.-- that's right, HALF PRICE! And, the price is negotiable.

So, if you are interested in a complete home computer and entertainment system, please call:

Dr. Warren Lieuallen, at
488-3977 (eve's before 10 pm)
292-5661 (days before 5 pm)

Serious inquiries only, please.



Software Review

OGRE
Reviewed by Sean Kelly
[CIS PPN: 72505,1316]

The game itself is not what is really the turn-on point for this program. The fact that it is an excellent reproduction of Steve Jackson's wargame of the same name is not either. The fact that it comes with your own 6502nd Infantry Division radiation badge (that really works) did not really pique my interest. The formidable artificial intelligence included with the program is another good point, but was not what gave me its attraction. Why, the packaging was even a... simple cardboard box. Yet, begging good ole' Saint Nick for an ST for Christmas was to no avail. But, I received something that would make up for the loss, and keep me going until I could get enough cash flow for, at least, a Mega ST1. OGRE makes wargaming on a computer a dream by giving icons, pull-down menus, dialogue boxes — all those neat features on bigger and better machines — on a simple graphics 8 screen, 8-bit game program!

OGRE by Steve Meuse
Atari version by Dave Lubar
From Origin Systems, Incorporated.
340 Harvey Road
Manchester, NH 03103
Versions available for Atari XL/XE, Apple II+/e/c, and Commodore 64/128. Atari version reviewed here (of course!).

In the 21st century, tough tanks and fast hovercraft traverse the battlefields, targeting the enemy with nothing less than tactical nuclear devices, hurling them across miles of crater and rubbled terrain. But a new type of tank has been employed, a cybernetic fighting robot without the measure for compassion or mercy. They were never referred to as 'she,' as with some vehicles, or for that matter as 'he,' unless it was on your side. For any other occasion, one would call the Cybertank an 'it.' As for a proper name, it was taken from lark myth: OGRE.

This is your enemy in this game. You have a scarred map worth two screens through which you may scroll, and a command post, placed as far up on the map as possible, then your forces, to defend your humble base. Howitzers, launching long range missiles; Heavy Tanks, rather fast, tough and hard-hitting, but limited in range; Missile Tanks, weak, slow, but with a better range than the Heavy Tanks; Infantry, wearing jet-assisted power armor, of course; and Ground Effect Vehicles (GEVs), the fastest things on the battlefield. All this, against one Ogre.

Rather than reading the instructions (I have little patience when it comes to new computer games), I proceeded to boot. Met with the usual question (IF THE TOP LINE IS BLUE, PUSH Y, etc.) and continuing from there, the title screen appeared, probably meant to inspire a little fear. A blue background with a gigantic Ogre permeating the scene, with matching Ogre letters at the top. I put the fear down quickly (It's only a game). After selecting joystick as my input device (two choices: keyboard and joystick), and regretting that it doesn't support Zobian's Super-RAT, which it should (it's perfect for it), the main screen appeared. The traditional war gamer's hexagonal-grid map appeared at the left, with the piece icons at the right, and two menu titles at the top: MENU, and OSI. Selecting the OSI (Origin Systems Incorporated?) menu allows the user to 'see information' (containing nothing more than title, authors, company and version number of the game), or the user may 'set preferences' (sound effects, reminders, skipping of empty turns, message speed, etc). Moving the arrow-pointer and selecting things, dropping down drop-down menus, and dragging icons are all just like on your favorite 'desktop' style operating system. The one in Ogre probably conforms best to the MacIntosh method.

The main menu lets the user play a game, load a field, save a field, load a game, save a game, edit the field, clear the field, clear the pieces, or quit. After loading a preset field and then selecting to play a game, the program requested that I select number of players (1 or 2) and Ogre type (Mark 3 or Mark 5, with the latter being the tougher). Quickly choosing Mark 3 Ogre, I quickly lost the game. The fear that was inspired before returned. The intelligence programmed into the Ogre must have taken into account every play possibility. The Ogre, in this game, is as the scenario

describes, a pure killing machine, well versed in the arts of destruction. I maybe got only 2 hits on the Ogre, before he destroyed my command post and the rest of my forces. The game ends with a hi-res picture of your base burning, with a dialogue box appearing giving the game analysis (COMPLETE OGRE VICTORY), followed by a friendly 'OK' button.

The game comes with two books: instructions and strategy. I certainly should have read the latter book. In any case, the reading of either is slow, probably because I would much rather be playing the game than reading. Once in the game, the player follows through several phases of game play (like any wargame). First, the OGRE movement phase, wherein the player watches the Ogre run over his vehicles and infantry. The OGRE fire phase follows, where the Ogre then 'fires' at your units, who turn into beautiful red explosions and then disappear. Now, it's the player's turn to move, taking his time with 15 to 30 pieces that each want to be in a 'good, strategical location.' Now, the player fires futively at the Ogre, perhaps doing some good damage, if s/he is an experienced player. Then the player's Ground Effect Vehicles (GEVs) can make a second move (simulating their 'high speed'). Then the cycle repeats until someone wins.

I do not really want to get into the actual progressive detailed flow of the game, but I will say that the graphics are OK. Maybe a little better than that. Perhaps they merit some acclaim. Still, the graphics need not be too realistic for a wargame. Ultimately, the only thing the player is doing is moving his/her pieces and the computer is being the other player. The sound effects: OK. Not really too good, I must admit. The explosions are fine. But the 'running over of people' could be a little more realistic, rather than a crrrrh sound. The end graphic pictures, showing either an Ogre blowing up, or the command post doing the same, could also be a little more realistic. The pictures just seem too empty.

The program really needs to support a mouse. The whole operation with a joystick just does not 'feel' right. Playing the game with the joystick can get a little slow, too, especially when firing many units at the Ogre's treads. The player must jump back and forth with the pointer to his/her unit, dragging to the target unit, selecting a target on a dialogue box, OK'ing the box, and moving to the 'Fire' button on the side of the screen. Luckily, the computer allows keyboard entries to quickly 'jump' the arrow-pointer to selected locations (O for OK, F for fire, C for Cancel, D for Done, etc).

On the whole, OGRE seems to be a fairly good reproduction of Steve Jackson's board game. The GEM-like operating system makes it easy to play. The graphics and sound are not actually scintillating, but they do. And the Ogre itself (in 1 player mode) is certainly smart. The ability to make your own fields, which I use to make a battleground consisting of hundreds of forces, allowing me to beat the Ogre, makes the game complete. I shall therefore give the game an A.

Oh yes, the radiation badge: the instructions say that it the yellow sticker that you place on the badge shall turn red in the presence of a variety of energy stimuli, but especially from gamma radiation from Cobalt 60, and electron beam radiation. In fact, large doses of radiation may make the red color disappear completely. Sunlight should also change the color. I've been keeping mine in the south window sill, and it certainly is red already. Only, if you are wearing the badge and all of a sudden it turns red, indicating you have been exposed to radiation, what are you supposed to do? If there is anyone to whom this has happened, and you are still alive, leave me a message.

---

continued from page 7

The next chapter shows you how to access the Atari sound capabilities. You first learn about the sound commands, and how the different sound values compare to actual musical notes. Then you learn about the other values in the sound command and what they are for. This chapter even shows you some sample programs for creating different sound effects.

The last chapter is a very valuable one. It gives you an alphabetical listing of all of the BASIC commands and their usage. This would give anybody a good review of the commands. There are commands in BASIC that I have never used, simply because I never had a use for them. If I ever come across a time, I might need them however. I may have to use this book to look them up.

This book has a good collection of important tables in it. This includes error messages, status codes, trigonometric functions, all the different characters and how to use them, abbreviations for BASIC commands, memory usage, frequently used memory locations, and hex to decimal conversion.

continued on page 3

Book Review

YOUR ATARI COMPUTER
A GUIDE TO ATARI 400/800 COMPUTERS
reviewed by Charles W. Brown

This time out, I'll be reviewing The Blue Book. It is called: Your Atari Computer, A Guide To Atari 400/800 Personal Computers. It is published by Osborne/McGraw-Hill. Although it sounds like it is just for the 400 or 800 computers, it does contain information that is used for all of the Atari computers.

The first part of the book contains information for the first time user. It explains in simple terms the different basic parts of the computer system and what they are for, including the program recorder, disk drive, 850 interface module, and the printer. The book also explains what the special keys are for in a very clear and understandable way. This lets the beginner really understand how to use his computer. The first part of the book gives a brief review on the types of cassette tapes and how to handle and write protect them. Then it gives a short introduction to disks; what type to buy, how to handle and write protect them, also. It also gives a small introduction about using DOS and the DOS menu. As you can see, this book can help out a beginner quite well (In fact, it sounds like the manual that should have come with the computer in the first place! - Ed.).

The next chapter gives you an introduction to BASIC programming. It starts off by showing the use of the PRINT command. It shows how the PRINT command has two different functions: the first is to print a character, word, or a whole message on the screen; the second is how to use the print command to do different math functions. You then learn the difference between the immediate mode and the deferred or programming mode. You will even learn about line numbers, multiple commands on one line, listing lines, deleting lines and erasing the entire program from memory.

The chapter goes on to show you the fundamentals of BASIC programming, and deals with variables, strings and arrays. Then, the next chapter shows more advanced programming functions. This includes use of strings, cursor control, subroutines, advance inputs, use of the IOCB channels, formatting displays and use of the controllers (joysticks and paddles).

Chapter five goes into detail about the use of the program recorder. It first gives a short refresher on how to use it. Then it goes into a lot more detail as to what is going on. You learn about the various commands for saving and loading programs. In this chapter you also learn about the variable name table and how to update it. You'll learn about the cassette buffer and the cassette file format.

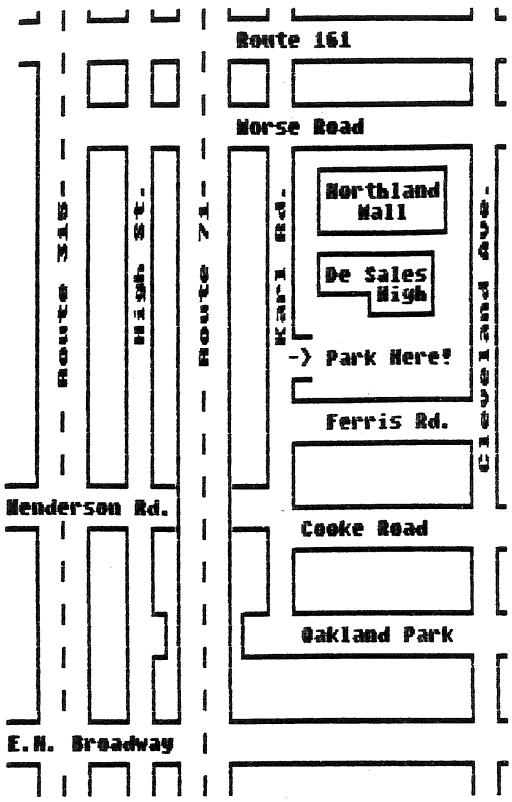
In the next chapter you learn about another part of your system: the printer. Being an older book, you only learn about some of older Atari printers, which I don't think are even made any more. At least you will learn the principles about the use of a printer. First, you learn how to list a program to the printer. Then the chapter goes into opening a channel to the printer and sending data over it. The rest of the chapter concentrates on the specifics of the Atari printers. If you have an Atari 820, 825 or 822 printer, this part would help you.

The next chapter gives pretty good instructions on the 810 disk drive. Reading it, you will still see how to use any type of drive, however. You even get an introduction to hard disks and what they are for. You learn about disk files and how to use them. Then the chapter gives some pretty good information about using the basic DOS menu. Even though there many different DOS packages, they usually they have the same basic format and commands (copy is copy is copy...). This chapter even goes into machine language files and how they relate to the disk drive.

The next two chapters show you how to use the Atari graphics commands. You first learn about the different colors that you can use, and about the different graphic modes. Then the chapters go into the graphic commands from BASIC. You even learn about the more complicated graphic functions, including redefined characters, the display list, display list interrupts, and some good information on player missile graphics and how to use them.

continued on page 6

(not to scale)



An official Users' Group, the Atari Computer Enthusiasts of Columbus meets on the SECOND MONDAY of each month. The meetings are held at 7:15 p.m., at De Sales High School on Karl Road. Meetings are open to the public, and consist of demonstrations and short tutorials of products for the Atari Home Computer Systems. Dues for ACEC are $12.00 per year, and include a subscription to Fuji Facts, and more!

NGL '87

Fuji Facts Newsletter
Warren Lieuallen, Editor
1652 Hess Boulevard
Columbus, OH 43212

TO:

MEETING: June 8th, 7:15 pm