

CURRENT NOTES

The Newsletter for ATARI Users of D. C. and Northern Virginia

Volume 2, Number 11
November, 1982

DC CURRENTS

Nov. 16 highlight: NECing with David Geller

Here's what David Geller has to say about the program he will be presenting at the DC group meeting on Tuesday, November 16:

"During the past year and a half there have been many new products, both hardware and software, that have become available for microcomputers. Such a growth affords the hobbyist computer user the ability to make intelligent choices, based upon both quality and price, when buying new equipment. In particular, ATARI computer users are finding that there are now worthy substitutes for such things as the 810 drive and the 825 printer. At the next meeting I will be demonstrating a fairly new printer, the C. Itoh Prowriter 8023A, which is the generic version of the NEC 8023A. I have used this printer for about three and a half months and have found it to be the best small printer I have used to date. In my opinion there should be little comparison between the C. Itoh/NEC and such printers as the Epson or Okidata series and especially the ATARI 825. I'll have on hand my printer so that I can provide you with an in depth look at the Prowriter. I'll also have on hand a piece of my software called "The Wizard's Apprentice" which will allow an 8023A owner to use all of the features of Text Wizard without having to wait for version 2.0. So come ready to ask me plenty of questions, because I'll be ready to answer them!"

The meeting will be held in the same place as the last couple of DC meetings, Room 1240 of the NSF offices at 1800 G Street Northwest. This is the building on the south side of G Street between 18th and 19th with signs for the Madison National Bank. Closest subway stop is Farragut West, on the Orange and Blue lines (take the 18th St. exit and walk 3 blocks south). There is parking available in the building for a (large) fee; entrance is on the west side of 18th Street between F & G. The meetings begin about 5:30 and last until about 8:30 or 9:00 PM.

(over)

NOVATARI NOTES

Nov. 14: "Master, I can talk!"

What Tim Kilby in these pages once called his "mute friend" is no more. It's still his friend, I guess, but I mean it's no longer mute. After a year and a half of being talked about, the Atari computer will itself be the featured speaker at the Novatari meeting on Sunday, November 14, assisted by three speech synthesizers now on the market which work with the Atari. Besides "Type 'n Talk", which has been around for awhile, two new products will also put in an appearance: the Voice Box, and S.A.M. (Software Automatic Mouth). (There is a fourth synthesizer available, by Echo, but we don't know who has one; if you have access to one, bring it along to show.) The speech demos proved enormously popular at the October meeting of the DC group, so I think you have a treat in store.

We have a NEW MEETING PLACE. We've finally outgrown the Warner Amex Cable TV studio where we were born, and are moving to the Greenbriar Community Center, in the Chantilly area. The Greenbriar Community Center is on Stringfellow Road (645) 1.4 miles south of US 50. To get there from the Beltway, take I-66 west to US 50, then 50 west a couple of miles to the traffic light at Stringfellow Road, where you turn left. The map inside gives further details.

We have the meeting room available from 6:00 to 9:00 PM. The speech synthesizer presentation should begin about 7:00.

ANOTHER IMPORTANT THING: in December, our meeting will be on the first Sunday, December 5. This is because we couldn't get the meeting room for December 12. This is for December only; starting in January we will return to meeting on the second Sunday on a regular basis. I'll try to have a newsletter out ahead of the December 5 meeting, but I can't guarantee it.

DC Currents (cont'd.)

The Treasurer Speaks

Fred Stollnitz, the DC treasurer, sends the following items.

The DC group's first order of disks, announced at the September meeting, was so successful that a repeat performance was called for at the October meeting. In each order, 20 boxes of Control Data Corporation's 5 1/4 inch flexible disks were obtained for a cost of \$19.55 per box, including shipping. Because CDC is packing 12 disks to the box, our cost per disk was only \$1.63. Our thanks to Jim Hare of Transaction Storage Systems for the price break and to Lew Grotke for handling the October order.

The DC group has also ordered three disks of programs from Antic Publishing (two disks of games, one of utilities) and a disk-duplication program (SCOPY 810) from Alliance Software. All of these programs will be available to members when received.

The DC group's treasury had a balance of \$311.91 on October 29. Your Treasurer proposes that the group discuss financial matters, including the 1983 dues, at the November meeting.

Local Girl Makes Good

Another DC member has made the big time of publication in a national magazine. Gretchen Schabtach (aka Gretchen Kolsrud) has an article in the November Compute! The article, called "A Fill-In on XIO(FILL)", deals with ATARI graphics. Well done, Gretchen.

CLASSIFIED

FOR SALE: Atari Microsoft Basic. Like new in original box. Used only a few times. \$50.00. Call Dick Kalagher, 938-2544 evenings or 827-6216 days.

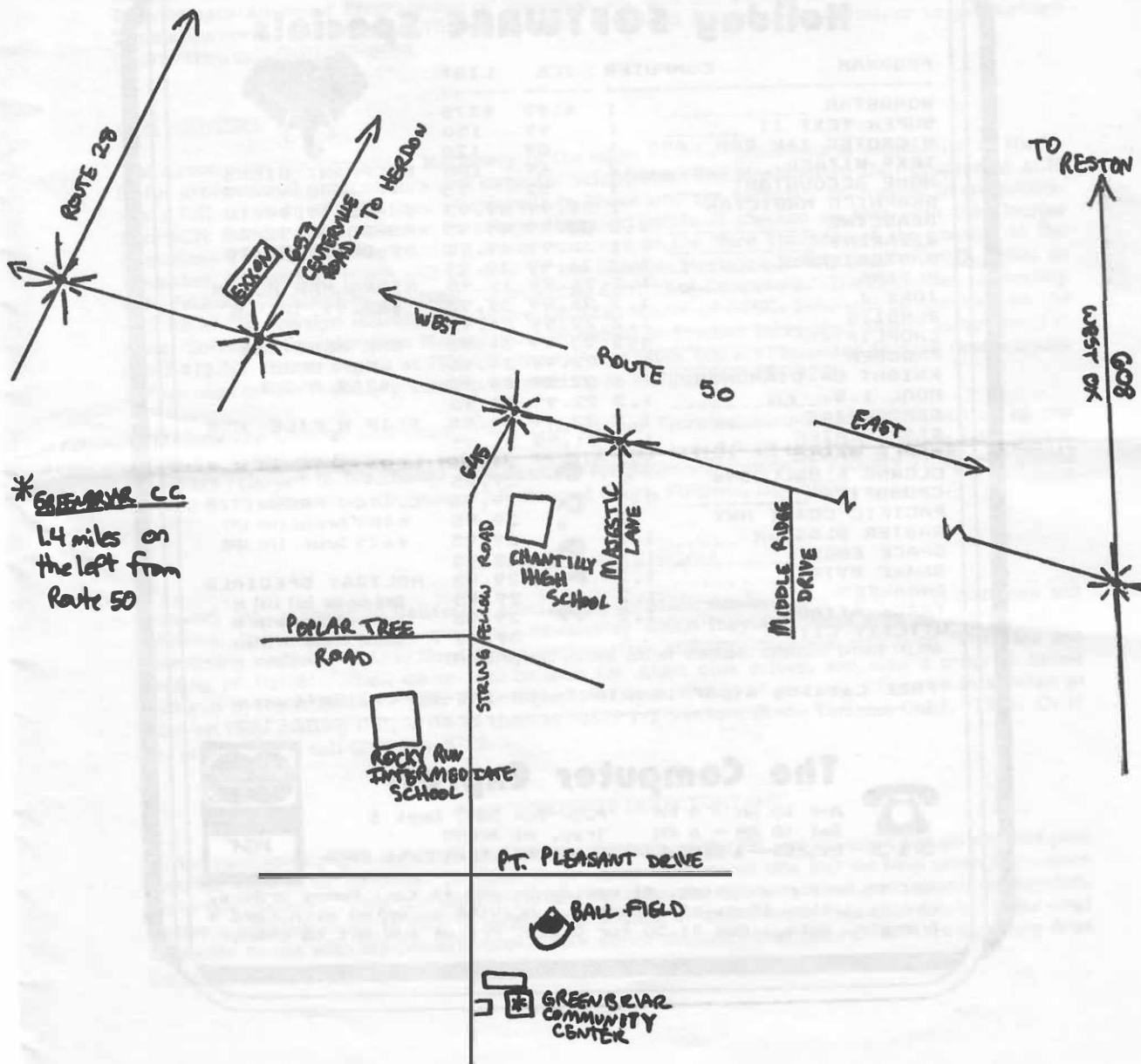
CURRENT NOTES is the monthly newsletter sent to members of the ATARI Club of downtown D. C. and Novatari (the Northern Virginia ATARI Users' Group). Both of these organizations are independent groups for computer users, and neither group is affiliated in any way with ATARI, Inc.

The Editor of **CURRENT NOTES** is Paul Chapin, 2159 Golf Course Dr., Reston, Va. 22091, telephone (home) 476-5950, (office) 357-7696. News items, short articles, original programs, classified ads, and any other material of interest to the membership are eagerly solicited.

Membership dues for both groups are \$15.00 a year, which includes subscription to **CURRENT NOTES**. Dues are payable at the beginning of each calendar year. Dues for new members joining during the year are reduced \$1.00 for each month which has passed since the first of the year. Dues may be paid at any meeting, or be sent to the editor. Persons living outside the metropolitan Washington D.C. area may subscribe to **CURRENT NOTES** for \$12.00 per year.

Advertising policy: classified ads are free to members. Commercial advertising rates are \$10.00 for a page, \$5.00 for a half page (no other fraction available). Advertising for any month's issue must reach the editor by the 20th of the preceding month. Advertising must be in the form of xerox-ready copy, on an 8 1/2 x 11 sheet for a full page or an 8 1/2 x 5 1/2 sheet for a half page. Full pages are reduced to 7 x 8 1/2, half pages to 7 x 4 1/4. Copy should be accompanied by full payment. Make check payable to Paul G. Chapin.

MAP FOR GREENBRIAR COMMUNITY CENTER



TCE Presents

Holiday SOFTWARE Specials

PROGRAM	COMPUTER	TCE	LIST
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HAPPENINGS

Atari Programming Course

As we go to press, Tim Kilby says there is still space available in his "Exploring Atari Basic" course. The course is in two Saturday sessions, Beginners' Programming on November 13 and Intermediate/Advanced Programming on November 20. The course will be held at the Ramada Inn Tysons Corner. The fee is \$29.95 each session, or \$49.95 for both. To enroll, or to get further information, call (703) 987-8054.

ACM Activities

The Association for Computing Machinery is the major national professional association in the U. S. for professional programmers and computer scientists. The Washington, D.C. Chapter of ACM has a full schedule of activities of interest to those who are seriously interested in computers. Non-ACM members are welcome to attend these activities (I checked on this with the Chapter Chairman). The Chapter has monthly dinner meetings on the third Thursday of the month. At the November 18 meeting, which will be held at the Rosslyn Westpark Hotel, Dr. Harlan D. Mills, an IBM Fellow, will speak on the topic "Intellectual Control of Computers." The December 16 meeting will be at the Rosslyn Holiday Inn, where Dr. Stan Siegel of CTEC, Inc., will be speaking on the topic "Software Configuration Management: Investing in Product Integrity." Dinner is optional; it costs \$12.00. Dinner begins at 7:00 PM, the talks at 8:00. You are requested to make reservations before noon on the Tuesday preceding the meeting by calling (202) 296-4221.

Next June the Chapter will sponsor its 22nd Annual Technical Symposium, which will be on the intriguing theme Microcomputer Systems: Tools or Toys? The organizers are inviting submissions of papers relevant to the theme. The deadline for paper submission is January 7. Papers should be sent to Mr. Stewart A. Grossman, 2 Fallswood Court, Potomac, Md. 20854.

GOOD READING

Unicomm, Inc., a dealer in California specializing in Atari, Apple, Vic-20, and CP/M machines and software, has inaugurated a quarterly newsletter which they will send free of charge, as an advertising medium. Vol. 1, No. 1 has a well-written and very complete article on "The Care and Feeding of the 810", i.e., minor maintenance for Atari disk drives, and also a program called "Autorun Systems Builder." (and several pages of advertising, of course). If you're interested in being on their mailing list, write to them at 18639 1/2 Ventura Blvd., Tarzana, Calif. 91356. Or if you're in a hurry, call (213) 996-5722.

MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY

On the next three pages are lists of all of the members of the DC and Novatari groups who had paid dues for 1982 as of November 1, 1982. In previous editions of this list we have given just names and phone numbers. This list adds state and zip code, for two purposes: so that you can identify members who live close to you, to arrange car pooling or whatever, and so that you can know what area code to use with the phone number. Your editor suggests that you extract this directory from Current Notes and put it in a findable place.

DC MEMBERS

LAST	FIRST	M	ST	ZIP	PHONE
BAKER	JAMES	VA		22207	524-3727
BEVERIDGE	BRUCE	H	MD	20744	292-6840
BISCOE	A.	B	MO	20854	424-7408
BOTT	WALTER	E	MD	20904	890-8146
CADY	JOHN	C	VA	22204	920-2601
CALABIA	FLORENTINE	M	DC	20015	244-4679
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CHIN	LON	C	DC	20011	829-6398
CHYBINSKI	JEAN	VA		22304	751-1816
COURTNEY	MARK	MD		20658	753-6909
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DOZIER	CHARLES	M	MD	20801	474-2535
DRUMHELLER	GEOFFREY	DC		20011	291-3771
FILIPPELLI	LAWRENCE	J	MD	20748	423-5705
GELLER	DAVID	DC		20006	676-2076
GERBER	RICHARD	DC		20036	657-9126
GERLACH	HARRY	VA		22305	683-3646
GILLIO	JIM	MD		20907	585-7400
GOLDBLUM	CHARLES	E	DC	20036	338-3465
GREENSPAN	MIKE	DC		20005	857-0350
GRIFFIN	DENNIS	M	VA	22206	920-8168
GROSS	STEPHEN	DC		20008	244-0113
GROTKE	LEWIS	E	MD	20706	345-5096
HALL	STEPHEN	VA		22207	671-2951
HALLADAY	MICHAEL	L	VA	22205	241-4062
HARRIS	F. ALLEN (TEX)	VA		22101	632-8102
HARRISON	PHIL	ON	M5M	4L6	
HAYEK	LEE-ANN	C	MD	20910	588-2344
HEAD	ROBERT	V	VA	22554	659-5316
HUBAND	FRANK	L	VA	22201	527-4770
INGALLS	BRUCE	H	VA	22170	430-3287
JACKSON	BARRY	DC		20020	392-7293
JONES	FRANK	C	MD	20902	593-1056
KOLSRUD	GRETCHEN	S	VA	22314	683-4388
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LANFORD	JAMES	G	DC	20011	723-1327
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LAUER	JOHN	C	DC	20335	599-1621
LEE	FEE	H	DC	20002	
LIEBENBERG	DON	H	DC	20550	357-9787
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PRAKOP	DONALD	VA		22314	324-5938
RAMIREZ	JOHN	F	DC	20037	467-6596
REED	RON	DC		20009	232-7921
RUTLEDGE	BENNETT	VA		22204	521-7259
SANDERS	LAWRENCE	O	VA	22301	548-5579
SMITH	CRAIG	S	MD	20784	577-3557
STOER	NICHOLAS	S	MD	20854	340-7807
STOLBERG	HAROLD	J	VA	22207	533-1205
STOLKER	BUD	VA		22304	370-2242
STOLLNITZ	FRED	MD		20902	357-7949
TALKIN	HERBERT	W	DC	20005	232-6448

TOOMER	EDWARD	DC	20006	223-8156
TRAGER, JR.	EUGENE	A MD	20901	593-5827
VENABLE	RICK	DC	20009	234-6258
WALSH	TOM	MD	21114	261-3563
WHITE	JAMES	A NY	11795	587-5603

NOVATARI MEMBERS

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BAILEY	BRIAN		VA	22021	327-6965
BARTELT	THOMAS		VA	22091	476-8385
BOLTON	NORM		VA	22091	476-9690
BORRELLI	JOHN	A	VA	22015	323-8284
BROWN	RICHARD		VA	22033	378-6188
BROWN	ED & MARY		MD	20912	891-2574
BURTLE	STEVEN		VA	22090	435-5892
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CAFUTO	CHRIS		VA	22070	476-4229
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HUMFELD	GEORGE	R	VA	22091	860-0390
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JAMES	JAMES LAWRENCE		VA	22031	281-4671
JOHNSON	PAUL		VA	22020	830-9714

KALAGHER	RICHARD	VA	22180	938-2544
KAZUBA	C. DENNIS	VA	22030	830-2375
KILBY	TIM	VA	22740	987-8054
KIRKHAM	JOHN	VA	22030	273-2519
KRUGER	RUSSELL	C VA	22003	978-3743
KURTZ	ANDREW	J VA	22151	323-8175
LAZARUS	EARL	VA	22070	437-1273
LILLEY	EARL	VA	22180	281-9017
LORD	BILL	VA	22032	278-8031
MALIK	FRED	VA	22030	830-2132
MANDELBAUM	CHARLES	R VA	22091	860-2223
McELROY	BOB	VA	22003	425-7186
MOORE	HERMAN	C VA	22312	354-2894
MORIAK	TED	VA	22020	830-2364
NALLS	BILL	VA	22205	241-0648
NESTER	PAUL	VA	22079	274-8015
NEWLON	DANIEL	H VA	22091	860-9114
NICKELS	JOHN	VA	22091	860-1739
OSMAN	S. MICHAEL	VA	22091	476-8684
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SEFTOR	LARRY	VA	22091	476-6106
SHEA	PAUL	A VA	22180	938-9049
SKOKAN	BRYAN & BONNIE	VA	22020	830-3460
SMITH	ROY	VA	22110	368-0452
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STEVENSON	JIM	VA	22033	378-4093
STILLSON	RICHARD	VA	22091	860-0019
STYGAR	PAUL	VA	22101	430-3766
SUMMERS	GEORGETTE	A VA	22046	573-6066
TAYLOR	DYER JUSTICE	VA	22180	938-6777
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NEWEST SOFTWARE -- JUST ARRIVED!

S.A.M. (Software Automatic Mouth speech synthesizer disk).	50.00
BASIC Commander programming aid disk(MMG Micro Software)	30.00
RAM Test diagnostics disk(MMG Micro Software)	30.00

THE FIRST FORTH COLUMN

by John Chapin, Novatari

When our family was at the Mid-Atlantic Computer Show in the D.C. Armory last week, we picked up a version of FORTH called ValFORTH, from a vendor called The FORTH Dimension. For those of you who don't know, FORTH is a computer language about 10-20 times faster than BASIC, yet much easier to write in than assembly language. ValFORTH is an upgrade of the popular FORTH sold by the Atari Program Exchange, and is as far as I can tell the most powerful and most fully implemented version of FORTH for the Atari. I've decided that I am going to learn FORTH and become a FORTH programmer (whatever that implies). Over the space of the future issues of this newsletter, I hope to share some of my discoveries, successes, trials, and tribulations. I don't mean to present a tutorial on FORTH; for that I refer you to Starting FORTH, an excellent introduction to the language and its concepts by Leo Brodie. For this time, I'll be sharing the trauma over the decision of how much to buy (ValFORTH has about seven different packages), and my first utility program.

Buying the System

When we first decided to buy a copy of ValFORTH, we were faced with a dilemma. How much did we actually need to form a working system? The packages available include the system kernel, a utilities and editor package, a player-missile graphics, character, and audio editor package, a display formatter, a turtle and Val-graphics package, a text compressor, and a special DOS (whew!). After studying the documentation for a while and asking the representative a few questions, we came to the conclusion that all you really need is the basic system kernel and the General Utilities and Video Editor package. The ValFORTH people will protest that all you need is the basic kernel, but I have to differ. The reason is the editor. The editor on the general utilities disk is quite nice and very good for program development, while the (I hate to call it) editor on the kernel disk is almost unusable. For those of

you who have used CP/M, it is the difference between ED and WORDSTAR. If you will be doing any program development at all, you will have to have the General Utilities and Video Editor package. Taken together, the two packages you need for a basic system list at \$85.00 (less than the list price of Atari Microsoft BASIC). Not a bad bargain for a high-speed development system.

We also bought the Player/Missile Graphics package, because of my interest in doing game development. Atari has been writing its arcade games almost exclusively in FORTH for over 2 years.

Some Notes

You can get information about ValFORTH by contacting either:

Val-Par International
3801 E. 34th Street
Tucson, Arizona 85713
(800) 528-7070

or:

The FORTH Dimension
P. O. Box 8397
Silver Spring, Maryland 20907
(301) 585-8924

The ValFORTH software comes only on disk, but it can be copied, and by purchasing it you are given the right to distribute software written in ValFORTH as long as you include a one-line message saying that "this software was written, in whole or in part, using ValFORTH . . ." The documentation is excellent, with a "strolling through" and an in-depth section on each segment of the language. The index is complete, and there is also a glossary of all the words, and a handy reference card for each package. My only quibble with the manual is that it is printed very faint blue on yellow to discourage copying. This makes it difficult to read in places, particularly the index.

My First Utility

After I had set up the system and played around with it for a while, I found to my dismay that there was no disk directory function! On any ValFORTH disk you buy, they follow the convention of listing a "Table of Contents" in Screen 170 (a FORTH Screen is 4 sectors). However, this just tells you the load points for the different programs (or vocabularies, for FORTH purists) contained on the disk. Unfortunately this information only remains consistent with the rest of the disk until you write something else, at which point you either need to update this manually, or to try to remember where you put your program (ever try to do that?). The program below is a directory program I wrote to deal with this problem. What makes my program feasible is that the ValFORTH people also followed the convention of describing the contents of each screen on the first line of that screen. What my program does, given a range of screens, is to list the first line of each screen with its number. To run the program, type #1 #2 DIR, where #1 is the first screen to list, and #2 is the last one. You could also modify the DIR program to take (START COUNT) for its parameters by replacing the 1+ SWAP on line 4 of screen 175 with O+S.

```
Scr # 174
0 ( Disk Dir: BSAV,BRES,SGET,LINT)
1
2 : BSAV      BASE @ <ROT ;
3             ( N N -- B N N )
4
5 : BRESTO    BASE ! ;
6             ( B -- )
7
8 : SCRNGET   4 * BLOCK ;
9             ( S -- ADDR )
10
11 : LINTYPE   32 TYPE ;
12             ( ADDR -- )
13
14
15                                         ==>
```

```
Scr # 175
0 ( Disk Directory: DIR )
1
2 : DIR      ( START END -- )
3           BSAV DECIMAL
4           1+ SWAP
5           DO
6             I SCRNGET
7             CR
8             I 3 .R
9             SPACE LINTYPE
10            ?EXIT
11          LOOP
12          BRESTO
13          CR ;
14
15
```

[Editor's note: For those of you to whom the foregoing may seem somewhat esoteric, this article from the August issue of Keeping P.A.C.E., the newsletter of the Pittsburgh Atari Computer Enthusiasts, may be useful.]

FORTH: An Introduction by Ron Stein, P.A.C.E.

What is Forth, you may ask? Forth started out as a programming language, but due to its uniqueness it has become more than just another language. Forth was created about 12 years ago by Charles Moore, and is continually gaining popularity, almost like a cult following.

Forth is a totally self-sufficient programming language or tool. Most versions contain the standard definitions (commands), an Editor, Assembler, and some special utility packages. There is no need for a DOS because Forth also handles all disk I/O. Not bad, for the price of one language. Speaking of prices, APX has a very good version for \$40.

A command in Forth is called a word, and words make up the Forth dictionary. The dictionary contains every word available in a particular version. Here's where Forth really shows its uniqueness--the dictionary is in no way limited to just the words that are in the original copy. You can define (compile) new words into the dictionary at will. This means that if your particular version doesn't have some commands that you'd like to have, you just create them, defining them in terms of already defined words. You can then create a bootable version containing your own words that will be present in the dictionary when that version is booted up. This means that you can create a variety of Forth's to suit different applications.

The Forth Editor and Forth programs are dealt with in data blocks called "screens". A program is made entirely of Forth words and may occupy from one to several screens. The manipulation of the screens between Forth's own buffers, monitor screen, disk, and printer can be carried out simply by executing one or two words. Assembly language routines can be created and given a defining word like any other dictionary entry, except that calling that word will cause the executing of a machine code segment. No actual assembly or locating (or even relocating) need be done, Forth handles it all.

Forth is also quite fast and memory efficient. Most versions will run with 16K of RAM. There are, however, a few drawbacks, in that there are some peculiar (at least at first) conventions which must be adhered to, and the syntax can appear quite cryptic.

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