

CURRENT NOTES

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

Volume 3, Number 12
December, 1983

NOVATARI NOTES

December 11: What's My Line

At the December meeting of the Novatari Group, Tim Kilby, our devoted secretary, will be demonstrating Safty Line and Story Line, two programs by Maximus, Inc. in McClean, Virginia. These are educational programs for children. They have voice syncrinized lip movement with graphics. Tim will go through the how the programs were written, produced, developed, and marketed. This should be especially interesting for educators.

Also at this meeting, Rene Hertz will demonstrate the Trac and Percom disk drives with built in printer interfaces.

NOVATARI MEETINGS

are on the second Sunday of the month. Novatari meets in the Greenbriar Community Center, on Stringfellow Road in Chantilly, Virginia. Stringfellow Road, also known as Route 645, runs south from US 50 a more than two miles west of the Bair Oaks Shopping Mall, which is at the intersection of I-66 and 50. There is a traffic light where Stringfellow Road meets 50. The Greenbriar Community Center is on the left-hand side of Stringfellow Road, 1.4 miles south of 50. There is a small parking lot in front, and a larger on just north of the center (that is, just before you get to it), which is connected with a walkway. The meeting room is available from 5-9 PM. The first couple of hours are normally unstructured, open house style, with people free to come and go and chat with one another as they wish. Organized activities--the business--begin about 7:00 PM, and usually last about an hour, after which there is some more free time before closing.

DC CURRENTS

December 20: ATARI LOGO

The new Atari language LOGO will be demonstrated at the December meeting of the DC Group. Frank Huband will also be discussing his experiences with the Intec Clock and other new hardware and software products. A program chairman is desperately needed. If you are interested, please contact Frank.

DC GROUP MEETINGS

are held on the third Tuesday of every month in Room 543 of the National Science Foundation offices, 1800 G Street NW, Washington, DC. The closest subway stop is Farragut West, on the Blue and Orange Lines. Take the 18th Street exit, and walk south (against the flow of traffic) down 18th Street for 3 blocks to G Street. The building is on the corner of 18th and G; it can be identified by a sign for the Madison National Bank on the corner. Front entrance is in the middle of the block. Parking is available in the building, for a fee. The entrance is on the west side of 18th Street, between F and G. Meetings begin at 5:30 PM and usually last until 8 or 9.

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EDITOR'S NOTES

Staffan Sandberg, Editor

Hello there again. I've got several things that I would like to talk about this month. First of all, I would like to wish you all a happy holiday. It's that time of year that we all love. Time to go out and buy presents. All that shoving and pushing in crowded stores. Trying to figure out what to get everyone. I can't help you with all your shopping, but if you or the person your shopping for is an Atari addict, you'll find three pages of suggestions in the back of this issue of CURRENT NOTES. I hope you find some good hints there.

Second, I would like to point out that the new Membership Directory can be found at the center of the newsletter. It is accurate as of December 1, 1983. If you were left out for some reason, please contact me as soon as possible. For your convenience, the directory has been placed so that you can easily remove it.

The third and final thing that I would like to talk about is the future of the newsletter. I need people to write articles. It would be nice to have someone do Software Reviews every month, etc. I would like to have people who are responsible for getting writers, and people who write monthly columns.

Thank you very much and have a happy holiday season!

The Dues are Due

The dues for this coming year are now due. You'll be happy to know that there will be no increase this year. Please send (or hand) your respective treasurer (Fred Stollnitz for DC and Curtis Sandler for Novatari) your \$15 sometime before December 20 or you will not receive the next issue of the newsletter. Thank you.



"No thanks, Miss Lee. I'll wait for the electronic version."

CURRENT NOTES

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

The Editor of CURRENT NOTES is Staffan Sandberg, 11804 Magruder Lane, Rockville, Maryland 20852, telephone (home) 301-881-7437, (office) 301-468-6686. 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 DC area may subscribe to CURRENT NOTES for \$12.00 per year.

Advertising policy: classified ads are free to members. Commercial advertising rates are: 1/4 page - \$15.00, 1/2 page - \$25.00, full page \$40.00. Camera ready copy and payment must reach the editor by the 15th of the preceding month. Make checks payable to Staffan B. Sandberg.

DATA SHEETARMUDIC UPDATE

by John Brophy, SYSOP

The last of the equipment for the Armudic BBS has arrived. The system should be transferred by December 4, 1983. Remember, the new number will be (703) 425-6698.

ANALOG Update

by John Brophy, ANALOG Librarian

The ANALOG Compendium is available for group purchase. We are looking for at least 20 orders. There will be no discount on the Compendium itself, but the disk will be available for about \$2 from the ANALOG Library for those who purchase the Compendium. The price of the Compendium will be about \$16.95.

DC Library News

by Bob Danson, Disk Librarian

At the October DC meeting two disks were released. D018 contains a mixture of programs, including games, two good copy utility programs, and some graphics demo programs. D019 contains all music programs - one in machine language and ten BASIC codes.

At the November DC meeting two additional disks were released. D020 contains three menu programs for binary load files, three binary load games, programs, and code to create, save, and dump to a printer various graphics screens, and other utility and demo codes. DFIX is a special purpose volume containing programs useful in the inspection, analysis, and modification of disk files, directories, and sectors. DFIX contains a modified version of DUP.SYS with new commands, a modified version of ANALOG magazines' DISKTOOL, and a disk analysis program called DOSMIZ. DFIX comes with seven pages of documentation.

These new disks were made possible almost entirely through contributions by DC members - Stan Sulak, Allen Lerman, Bruce Ingalls, and Bruce Blake.

UPCOMING EVENTS

November 28-		
December 2	COMDEX	Las Vegas
8-11	Southeast Computer Show	Atlanta, CA
January 7-10	Consumer Electronics Show	Las Vegas
February 20-22	Office Automation Conference	Los Angeles
21-23	Softcon	New Orleans

CLUB OFFICERSCurrent Notes

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Armudic BBS

John Brophy	SYSOP	(703) 425-6698
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ATARI Macro Assembler Revisited

by Bruce Blake

There were a few things left out of the AMAC Information Sheet 1, published in the August CURRENT NOTES, that need to be spread around.

The first thing is that a Macro call that is labeled may cause an error. In the two examples below, only in the second one will the label be put in the symbol table.

```
LABEL PRINTER ARG1,ARG2
```

```
LABEL
    PRINTER ARG1,ARG2
```

The first one will not cause an error unless LABEL is referenced. It is an "iglab", ignored label, as they would call it in the manual. No where in the AMAC manual did I find this restriction mentioned.

There is a bug in the machine code of AMAC. In sector \$E3 (227) line \$2B a byte needs to be changed. Byte \$2C is a \$0A and should be changed to a \$20. This will make the default "PS" work right for 11 inch paper. You can use DISKTOOL to do the job. It will be necessary to put a notch in the disk before you can write the corrected sector back to the disk.

OLD LINE

```
$2B 20 20 20 9B 0A 9B 20 20
```

NEW LINE

```
$2B 20 20 20 9B 20 9B 20 20
```

If you change byte \$04 in sector \$E0 (224) from \$2B to \$33, the disk drive will not snark when AMAC is loaded.

In the manual it says that the maximum length of the TITLE and SBTTL lines are 32. It's really 50 characters maximum per line.

The code produced by AMAC is in 256 byte chunks. If you want it to load as fast as possible, a compactor program must be run on the OBJ file that AMAC produces. I have written such a program and it will be in the club library soon. By the way, this compactor will make SPELL WIZARD load faster too.

I'm not sure why, but when entering the command line, DELETE can be used to correct an error but the cursor control functions cannot. This can be a real pain when the error is at the start of the command line.

What follows is a list of all the command line commands that are allowed by AMAC:

```
H=0          No Object Code
H=(Dn:filespec.ext) Object Code Destination
LO           A strange command, try it and see
L=0         No Listing
```

```
L=S:         Listing to Screen
L=P:         Listing to Printer
L=(Dn:filespec.ext) Listing Destination
L           Same as L=P:
O           Run Vector
PS          Page Size
SL          Standard Line
S=0         No SYSTEXT
S=(Dn:filespec.ext) System File Name
S           Same as S=D1:SYSTEXT
R=0         No Reference Map
R=S         Short Reference Map
R=F         Full Reference Map
R           Same as R=F
```

LO, L, and R are not documented in the manual. S is not documented correctly, it does not mean D:SYSTEXT.AST

If PS is less than 10, a short crossreference map will be generated automatically.

There are also some assembly commands that are not documented. They are as follows:

```
REPT same as ECHO
endm same as ENDM
INCL same as INCLUDE
PAGE same as EJECT
.PAGE same as TITLE
```

A function called IDENT exists. It is like a comment function, anything you put behind it is ignored by AMAC. It is of the form:

```
(iglab) IDENT Anything at all
```

There is also a MSG function. It is of the form:

```
(iglab) MSG 'Text String'
```

What it will do is print the text string to the screen during pass 2. I guess it is there so the programmer can see where he is in pass 2. There are also the following instructions that I have not figured out what they do.

```
DBE      DCE      REAL4
EXT      ENTRY    REAL6
```

REAL6 has a bug in it. When a REAL6 value is defined, the program and location counters are set to \$4000 plus the low byte of the current counter. After the first in a

Continued on Page 5

(ATARI Macro Assembler Revisited - from Page 4)

series of REAL6 values, the counters are only incremented by \$06. There must be a way to get around this, but I have not looked for it yet.

None of the files referenced while compiling a program can be locked; not SYSTEXT, the source code, or any of the INCLUDE or LINK files. I don't understand the logic behind this restriction.

All-in-all, AMAC is a very good assembler with a lot of power, but you must talk its language exactly. I have just scratched the surface of it myself. If you find out anything new and wonderful about the AMAC, tell me and there may be an AMAC re-visited!

FUNNY AD

by Staffan Sandberg, Editor

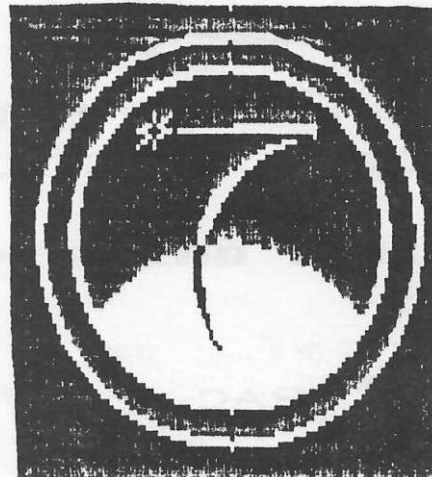
I recently recieved an ad in the mail from a company wanting to sell one million new "mini-computers" for the incredible price of \$5 apiece. The "mini-computers" were described as "so smart they can prepare your Income Tax Return and balance your checkbook." The product boasts a full sophisticated 24-pad keyboard with full computer memory.

I thought this sounded incredible. After checking into it, I found that this extraordinary "mini-computer" was nothing more than an ordinary hand held calculator that could add, subtract, multiply, and divide. Beware of things that sound too good, they usually are!

THE SAGA OF PLANDEFRON SEVEN THE FOX FIGHTS ALONE

Planetary Defense Squadron Seven had just proven itself as a fighting unit. Only two days before they had driven off an attack upon Collins Base and its vital stores, but at a terrible cost. Now with only one of the eight ships... Foxtrot, "the Fox"...able to fight, the entire system lay in grave peril...

for the sentinel posts had just reported an incoming craft, its zigzag maneuvers a certain prelude to attack. Then the outposts fell silent.



SEVEN FOX is a game for one to five players of varying skill levels who each take a separate action station as the crew of the FOX in its desperate bid to intercept this attacker bent on destroying an entire planet. The game requires an ATARI* computer with at least 16K of memory, (24K with 810 Disk) a model 410 Program Recorder, a BASIC language cartridge, a pair of knob ("paddle") controllers, and a pair of joysticks.

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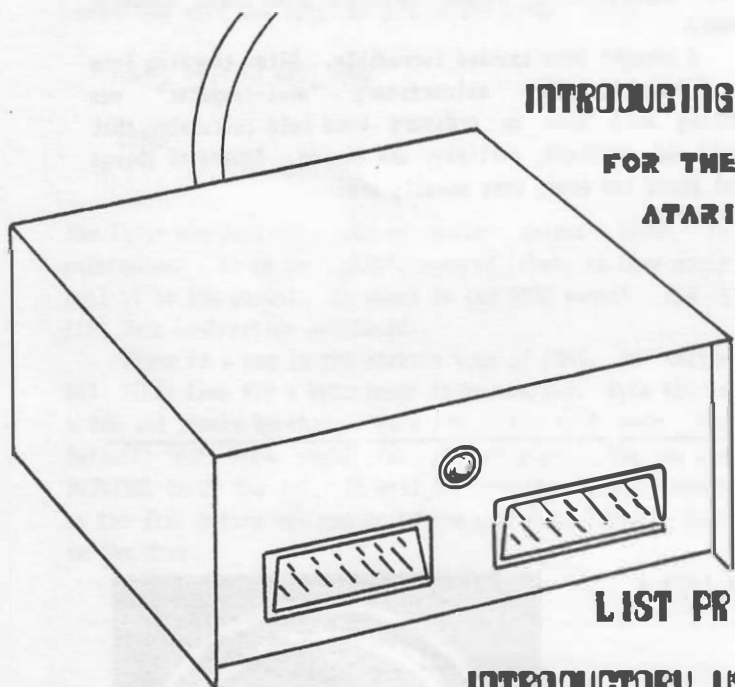
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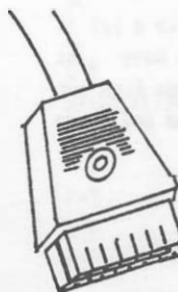
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December, 1983

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Current Notes

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Arabic BBS

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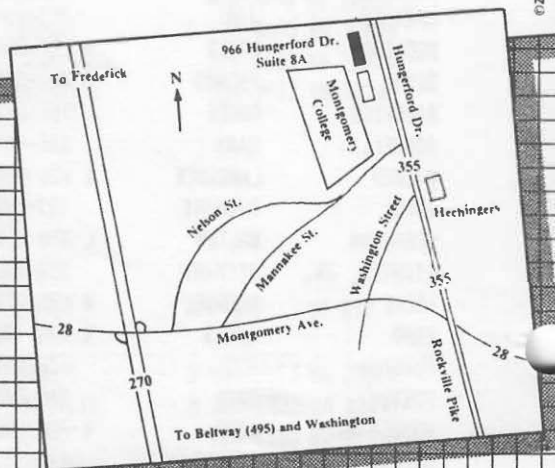
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(arcade game) - Sierra On-Line
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(home business) - Sim Computer Products, Inc
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(utility) - Eclipse
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(printer buffer) - Advanced Interface Design, Inc
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Reduce your printing time with this buffered programmable (4K) printer interface. It is compatible with the Atari 850 interface and dumps program listings and text files within a few seconds. Advanced printing applications such as graphics characters are also possible and a special utility disk is available.

The DataSaver

(power backup) - Cuesta Systems, Inc
\$395.00 - 90 watt
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Don't let interference or power outages destroy all your programming efforts. This battery-powered backup unit is available in 90 watt and 200 watt capacities. Both versions utilize a precision frequency standard and provide overvoltage suppression and ENI noise filtering.

Critical Connection

(CP/M interface) - USS Enterprises
\$75.00

The Critical Connection allows you to run CP/M via hardware and software on your Atari. The hardware connects to the serial port up to 15 feet away. The software replaces the disk drives, printer, and keyboard, simulating up to four drives. The entire system can be easily installed via a simple plug-in and one software command.

Spare Change

(arcade game) - Broderbund Software
48K - diskette - \$34.95

Watch the zany antics of the Zerkas as they dance and play in this simulation of a coin-op arcade. In this game, you are the owner of a video arcade and the Zerkas are your irresponsible business partners. When you put tokens into a machine, many colorful comedy routines appear.

Single Stroke Cursor Control

(hardware) - Wiser Electronics
\$37.00

Save time and effort with this single stroke cursor control for the Atari 400/800. The small keypad fits above the clear and insert keys providing you with cursor control in one step. Complete installation instructions included and no soldering is required.

RAMCRAM plus 48K

(memory expansion module) - Axlon, Inc
\$229.95

ATARI 400 owners can expand their memory to 49,062 bytes of RAM (48K) with this new, easy-to-install module. This plug-in compatible board requires no soldering and you need only a screwdriver to begin using it in ten minutes.

Wingman

(arcade game) - Microprose Software
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This aerial combat simulation for one to four players comes as close to real-life dogfighting as possible without risking life and limb. Programmer Sid Meier flew regularly with fighter pilots from the National Guard for three months before he wrote the program. The screen is divided into two independently scrolling horizontal displays. Your wingman protects you on raids.

Movie Maker

(graphics Utility) - Reston Publishing Co
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TID BITSText in Graphics 8

Program by Chuck Delp - ABACUS, September, 1983

```

10 REM PUT TEXT ON GRAPHICS 8 SCREEN
15 REM SUBMITTED BY CHUCK DELP
20 REM TT=CHARACTER HEIGHT
30 REM XX=X POSITION (0 TO 39)
40 REM YY=Y POSITION (0 TO 185)
99 REM
100 DIM T$(40)
110 GRAPHICS 8+16:COLOR 1
120 DL=PEEK(560)+PEEK(561)*256: D1=PEEK(DL+4)+PEEK(DL+5)*256
200 PLOT 20,30:DRAWTO 300,30: DRAWTO 300,166: DRAWTO 20,166:
DRAWTO 20,30
210 TT=40:XX=8:YY=60:T$="SINGLE HEIGHT CHARACTERS":GOSUB
9900
220 TT=80:XX=8:YY=34:T$="DOUBLE HEIGHT CHARACTERS":GOSUB
9900
230 TT=40:XX=9:YY=84:T$="UPPER CASE lower case":GOSUB 9900
240 TT=40:XX=4:YY=98:T$="SUBSCRIPT: X SUPERScript:
10":GOSUB 9900
250 TT=40:XX=16:YY=101:T$="3":GOSUB 9900
260 TT=40:XX=35:YY=94:T$="6":GOSUB 9900
300 GOTO 300
9900 FOR U=1 TO LEN(T$):D2=57344+ ((ASC(T$(U,U))-32)*8):IF
D2>=57856 THEN D2=D2+256
9910 D3=D1+YY*TT+XX+U-1:FOR Z=0 TO 7:POKE
D3+Z*TT,PEEK(D2+Z):NEXT Z:NEXT U:RETURN

```

Digital Clock

reprinted from the I/O Connector - October, 1983

```

10 ? "ENTER TIME (H,M,S)";
20 INPUT H,M,S
30 GRAPHICS 18
40 POKE 18,0:POKE 19,0:POKE 20,0
50 IF PEEK(20)<60 THEN 50
60 POKE 20,0
70 S=S+1
80 IF S=60 THEN M=M+1:S=0
90 IF M=60 THEN H=M+1:M=0:GOSUB 200
100 POSITION 5,3
110 IF H<10 THEN ? #6;"0";
120 ? #6;H;" ";
130 IF M<10 THEN ? #6;"0";
140 ? #6;M;" ";
150 IF S<10 THEN ? #6;"0";

```

```

160 ? #6;S
170 GOTO 50
200 VOL=15
210 SOUND 0,132,10,VOL
220 VOL=VOL*0.96
230 IF VOL>1 THEN 210
240 SOUND 0,0,0,0
250 IF H>12 THEN H=1
260 RETURN

```

DATA PERFECT files to DOS

by Norm Draper - DAL-ACE

The following BASIC programs will convert a DATA PERFECT database into a file of standard Atari DOS format. This allows a person to manipulate, or do special reports using BASIC (or other language) programs. I am including two versions of the program. One is for single disk drive owners, the other for two drive owners. The single drive program, as written, will convert any database that is 30,000 characters, or less, in length on a 48K RAM system. The two drive version can convert any size database. The output file consists of fields of data in the length specified when the database was defined to DATA PERFECT.

```

10 REM Convert Data Perfect disk to
20 REM Atari DOS format
30 REM by Norm Draper
40 REM (single drive version)
50 DIM C$(1),T$(128),A(1),I(1),S(1)
60 DIM L$(FRE(0)-50)
70 ? "Insert Data Perfect disk in drive 1":INPUT T$
80 I=1
90 READ A
100 IF A=999 THEN 130
110 POKE 1535+I,A
120 I=I+1:GOTO 90
130 S=32
140 POKE 769,1:REM set to drive 1 input
150 Z=USR(1536,S,ADR(T$))
160 FOR I=0 TO 127
170 A=PEEK(ADR(T$)+I)
180 IF A=0 THEN 270:REM find end of file
190 IF A=2 THEN 240
200 IF A=3 THEN 240
210 C$=CHR$(A)
220 L$(LEN(L$)+1)=C$
230 ? CHR$(A);
240 NEXT I
250 S=S+1

```

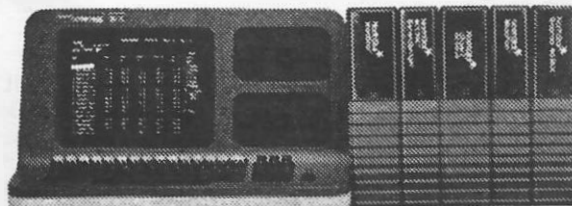
```

260 GOTO 140
270 ? "Remove Data Perfect disk"
280 ? "and insert DOS 2.0 disk"
290 ? "and press RETURN"
300 INPUT T$
310 ? "Enter filespec for output file":INPUT T$
320 OPEN #2,8,0,T$
330 ? #2;L$
340 CLOSE #2
350 END
360 DATA 104,104,141,11,3,104,141,10,
3,104,141,5,3,104,141,4,3,169,82,141,
2,3,169,64,141,3,3,169,128,141,8,3,169
370 DATA 0,141,9,3,32,89,228,96
380 DATA 999

10 REM Convert Data Perfect disk to
20 REM Atari DOS format
30 REM by Norm Draper
40 REM (Two drive version)
50 DIM T$(128)
60 ? "Insert Data Perfect disk in drive 1":INPUT T$
70 ? "Enter filespec for output file":INPUT T$
80 OPEN #2,8,0,T$
90 I=1
100 READ A
110 IF A=999 THEN 140
120 POKE 1535+I,A
130 I=I+1:GOTO 100
140 S=32
150 POKE 769,1:REM set to drive 1 input
160 Z=USR(1536,S,ADR(T$))
170 FOR I=0 TO 127
180 A=PEEK(ADR(T$)+I)
190 IF A=0 THEN 270
200 IF A=2 THEN 240
210 IF A=3 THEN 240
220 PUT #2,A
230 ? CHR$(A);
240 NEXT I
250 S=S+1
260 GOTO 150
270 CLOSE #2
280 END
290 DATA 104,104,141,11,3,104,141,10,
3,104,141,5,3,104,141,4,3,169,82,141,
2,3,169,64,141,3,3,169,128,141,8,3,169
300 DATA 0,141,9,3,32,89,228,96
310 DATA 999

```

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