

PORTLAND

NOVEMBER 1984

ATARI CLUB

NEXT GENERAL MEETING

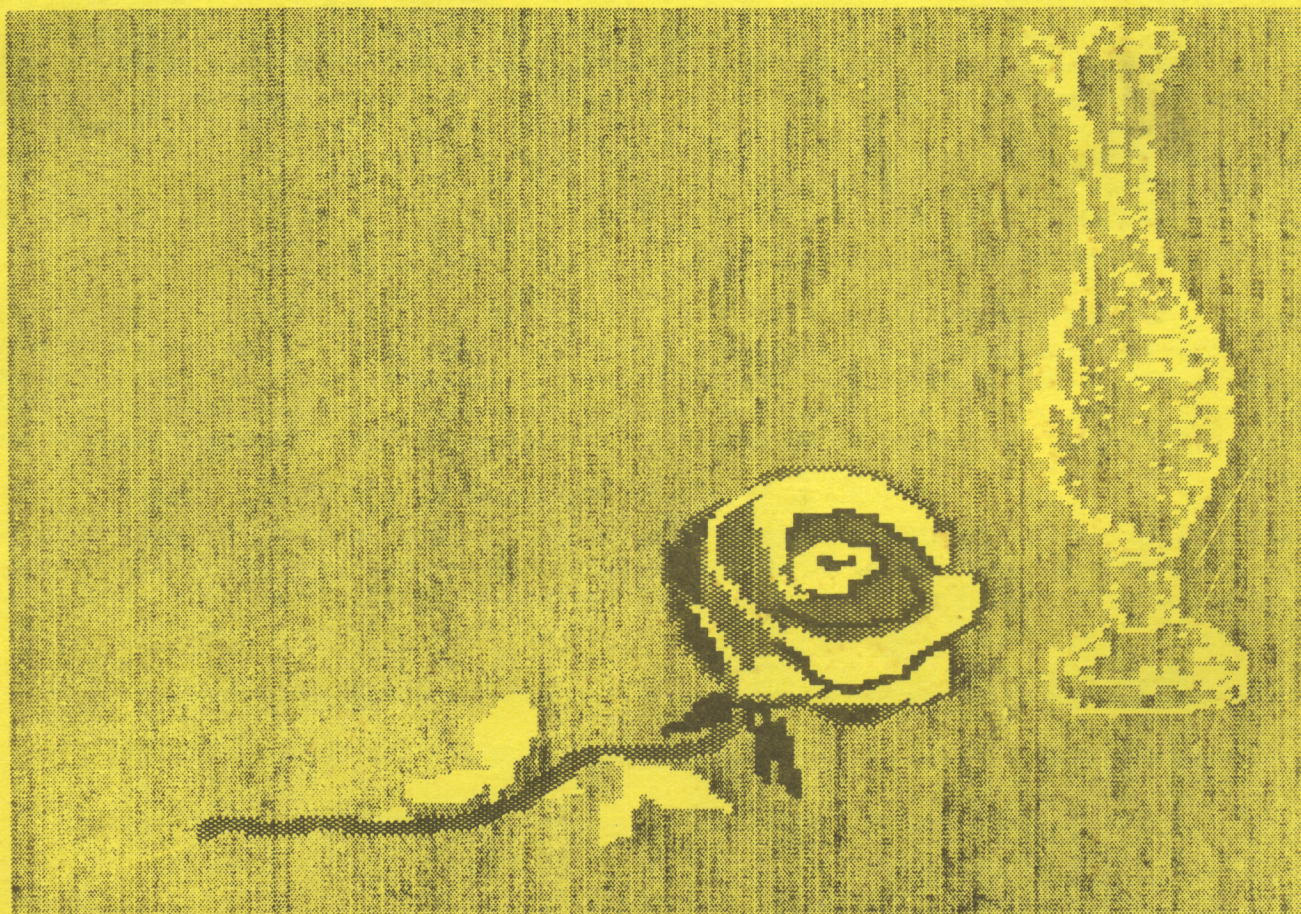
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 1984 - 7:00 PM

BPA AUDITORIUM, NE 9TH AND HOLIDAY

PAC BULLETIN BOARD SYSTEM
300 BPS - 24 HRS - 7 DAYS
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PORTLAND ATARI CLUB
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NOVEMBER 1984 NEWSLETTER

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Membership is \$20 per year and includes a subscription to this newsletter and access to members only functions. Single copy price of the newsletter is \$2. General meetings are open to the public and are held at 7PM on the 1st Mon. of each month (2nd Mon. in the case of holidays) on the date and at the location listed on the cover of this newsletter.

Exchange newsletters, articles, correspondence and advertising should be sent to the following address:

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CLUB BUSINESS AND ACTIVITIES

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN
Lloyd Suiter

What's the big news with Atari this month? Who knows! The rumor mills are slowing down and only the same old stuff is coming back to the surface.

I went into K-Mart last night and low and behold not only was the 800XL lower in cost than the C-64 but the new 1050 Disk Drive was also lower in cost than the Commodore drive. To my knowledge this is about the first time you could go into a store and pick up an Atari Computer System for less cost than a Commodore system.

The first part of the rumors that surfaced last month are beginning to come true. Atari is going to take the price battle right at Commodore. I now hope that the volume of computers will be available to meet the demand this Christmas, and that Jack does a good job of advertising to promote a superior product.

The end of the year is rapidly approaching and the PAC will be looking for new board members to take over the roll of leadership in the club. As I said earlier that I will no longer be the President of the Portland Atari Club. I will be running for a position in which I feel I can be of service to the club and still give my family some of the attention which they deserve. I plan to run for the position of Disk Librarian. I will make sure that new program disks become available to the club at a greater rate than they have in the past. This is one area that the new members to the club really look forward to and I'm sure I'll be able to provide the kind of service that they will appreciate. Remember your club is only as good as the people who run it. I know I can add to the value of the club by serving in the Disk Librarian position.

There are still a few open positions on the board that no one has spoken up for. If you would like to give of yourself for the PAC please come to the November meeting to put your name before the members. The final vote for new board members will be in December.

We should be having raffles during both Nov & Dec meetings. The grand prize for one will be a Color Composite Monitor and the other will be for an Atari 80 column printer. So bring a few extra bucks and help the club get that projection TV.

I think the name tag thing went well last month. We had some people who were not to happy with it, but then again we use the building for nothing so I don't feel we can be to picky.

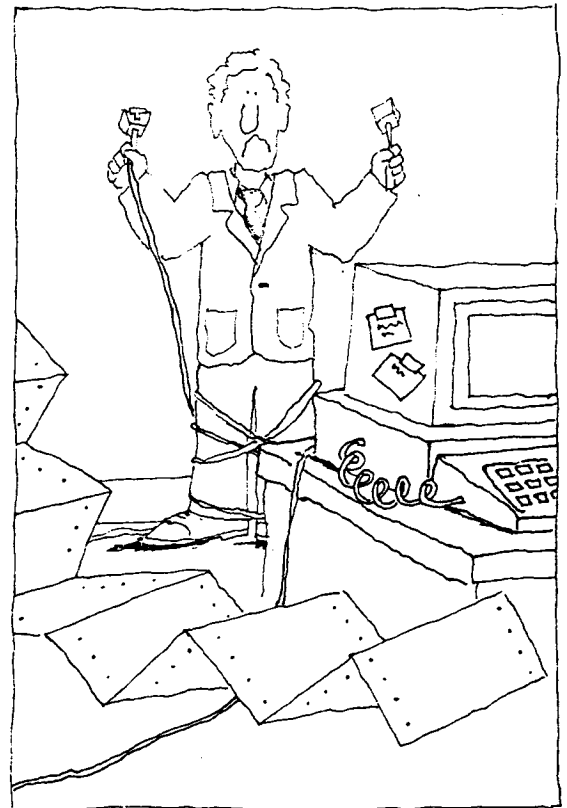
One of the complaints was that people will lose their cards and holders. Well they might and if they do it looks like there will be a small charge to replace them.

A suggestion was made to collect the cards as people leave and then hand them out again as they come back next month. Not a bad idea but who is going to collect the 300 or so cards and then how do you store them in order so they can be given out next month and even more important who is going to put the cards in order every month. Not an easy or very quick task. So for the time being it will stay the same.

We hope to have some surprises in store for you at the December meeting. I thinks it will help with the Christmas spirit.

The mid-night oil is just about gone so I'll sign off now. Thanks for tuning in.

Roger and Out - LLOYD



BOARD MEETING NOTES *Sharon Berry*

The September board meeting was held September 24 at 7 pm in the basement of IB Computers. Attending were Chuck Hall, Dan Heims, Jim Berry, Sharon Berry and Jim Harton. This was a brief meeting, due to absenteeism.

PRINTER

The 825 printer, purchased for the club some time ago, should be ready for the raffle at the end of the year. There was a slight flaw in it, which Mike Faunce will repair. Phil Bock also most kindly donated an 825 printer of his own. Thank you so much, Phil.

SYSOP

Steve and Debbie Billings will soon take over the management of our BBS. Pacific Northwest Bell will install a line to their house in the near future. Russell Schwartz and Chuck Hall will assist in setting up the hardware once a phone line date has been set. Clay Gradis, once named as sysop, has been invited to participate. Russell will help Steve and Debbie cope with any problems which may occur.

CLUB SHIRTS

Chuck Hall has been looking into the manufacturing of logo shirts to sell at our meetings. He has found some of the best prices from Better T Shirt Company. The tee and golf shirts are made by Hanes, and the sweat shirts by Russett. Polo shirts would cost us \$9.95 each in quantity of 50. Tee shirts, in lots of 50, would cost \$4.25 each. Rugby shirts, for 50, would run from \$13 to \$17.50 each. Lloyd will check his school for a cost comparison.

EDITOR...WHERE ARE YOU?

Clyde has been planning to step down from the Newsletter Editor's position at the end of the year for several months. There will be enough hands available to keep the production work going, but someone is needed who can pull it all together. Without an editor, we risk losing a valuable product.

OMSI FAIR

Last minute details for the OMSI fair were made straight. By this reading, the fair is past history. Thanks to all volunteers who generously donated their time.

MONITOR OR TV???

Dan asked Mike Faunce about the feasibility of modifying our 400 to run a monitor. Mike has performed this task, a time-consuming one, before. However, he has not been satisfied with the results and does not care to tackle it again. Consequently, we will be looking for a reasonably-priced tv to use with the Club's Atari 400.

COFFEEHOUSE

The coffeehouse time may still be changed to a week night. Several problems have occurred. The present PCC location is not that easy to find. The turnout has been small. Also, as usual, volunteers have been scarce. Do we want this event to continue?

There not being a quorum, nor more pressing items to discuss, the meeting adjourned.

TREASURER'S REPORT

As of this writing, our checking account totals approximately \$3700. Of this total, \$1514 is dedicated to the big screen tv. In September, software sales totaled only \$95. We gained eight membership fees at this meeting.

SCREEN CENTER *Steve Burns*

This simple program inputs a string of characters and centers it on the screen.

```
10 DIM MESS$(39):GRAPHICS 0
20 ? " ":? :? "MESSAGE";:INPUT MESS$
30 CENT=20:REM CENTER OF SCREEN
40 LG=LEN(MESS$)
50 CENT=CENT-LG/2
60 ? CHR$(125):POSITION CENT,5:? MESS$
70 GOTO 20
```

To modify for other graphics modes, change:

- 1) Line 10 - The graphics statement.
- 2) Line 20 - The center point of the screen.
- 3) Line 60 - The print statement. (? #6).

ED. NOTE: This article is taken from the Dal-Ace Newsletter, Dallas Atari Computer Enthusiasts, April 1984 issue.

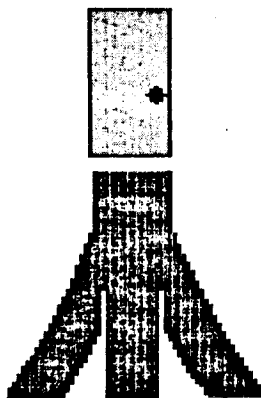
SPECIAL PROJECTS

Gary Hansen

Well, another year is about gone, and our display booth is neatly tucked away in my basement. We set the booth up twice this year; once at the EXPO, and again at OMSI. Once again, I want to all of you who helped staff the booth; I couldn't have done it without you. Several people wanted to join us, but couldn't because of schedule conflicts; and a couple of others volunteered at the last minute to fill any vacancies, but there were none. I hope these people will get a chance to participate next year because we did have fun.

The other project which I have helped assist on is the big screen TV. With Christmas coming on, we are going to do a few things that will be beneficial to the club members as well as our big screen fund, which should leave the \$1500 mark in the dust. We are working on items for the raffles that will be attractive to all of us. We've had some contact with a large computer business with could help substantially and we should have something for everyone in attendance at the November meeting. I really hate being vague on this matter but Clyde has these dog-gone deadlines before I will know for sure. I could say nothing, but then I will feel bad when there turns out to be something nice and useful for each one of you in attendance and you didn't attend because you didn't know that some good things were in the works. Anyway, be there!

I got a call the other day from one of the video stores telling me a new product similar to the Sony 1020 is out at a greatly reduced price. I hope that it will be available for use at this meeting. If it is acceptable to us, then the gap between the fund level and what we need will be reduced greatly. Much excitement, I hope to see you at the meeting.



SIG GROUPS

Chuck Hall

For those of you who did not stay for the second part of the meeting I will repeat the announcement here that you missed. We now have two new SIG groups to help serve you. The first is the long-awaited ATR8000 group. Jim Scott has volunteered to lead this group and help to get it organized and off the ground. Jim will be holding the meetings at his home at 2543 NE 31st Avenue. The first meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, the 23rd of October (which you have already missed if this is the first you have heard of it). Subsequent meetings will be held depending on the outcome of the first meeting. I have talked to Jim about this group and some of the aims it may have. One idea was to publish a list of what software was compatible with what version/upgrade/level of the ATR. There have been a lot of questions about why someone should get an ATR and this group is where you can go to find out the true scoop. If you wish to participate in this group and have not yet been contacted, then please call Jim at the number listed at the end of this column. He will be the primary contact point and be the best one to give you the information you need on the SIG group.

I do not have much information yet on the second new group that is going to start. It will be a beginners group for those of you who feel you need a helping hand to get started, or just want to join in discovering what a great machine you really have. I have not yet set up the first meeting with the volunteer leader but will be doing so quite soon. The first meeting will be in November and I will have all of the information at the November meeting. If you are interested in this group then give me a call at my number listed below and I will add your name to the list. Everyone on the list will be contacted prior to the first meeting.

A third group may be forming soon. There is quite a bit of interest in what are called "Adventure" Games. If you have purchased any of the Infocom, Adventure International, or other games you know what I mean. If you are interested in joining a group that will be reviewing, playing, and exploring these games then you can call me (at the number below) or Russ Schwartz at 646-6418. If we get enough response we will get this group going immediately.

The assembler group still meets on the second and fourth wednesdays of each month at the Sylvania Campus of the Portland Community

Continued.....

College. We are attempting to find how to attract more people to this group, including those that originally turned out, and have not returned. I again repeat that no matter what your level is you will learn and get something out of this group. We cannot be a tutorial service to those who need that kind of teaching. The best way to get that is to attend a class at one of the local schools or get together with a friend who knows assembly language and work with him. But you would be surprised how much you will learn just by listening and paying attention to those at the meetings who are going through programs and code they have developed or found. I learn more every meeting.

The Business Applications meeting is held the third Wednesday of each month at Allstate Leasing on the corner of NE 16th and Sandy. This group will be having their first meeting for two months on the 17th of October. The November meeting will be held the 21st unless the holiday gets in the way.

The Portland Atari Club Educators (PACE) meet the Tuesday before the general meeting. Use the numbers at the end of this column to contact them as to where the meeting is to be held this month (and next).

The Newsletter Sig meets the Thursday following the general meeting at Roundtable Pizza at the intersection of Barbur and Capitol Highway. We are always looking for more people to participate in putting out the Newsletter. It is a lot of work and takes quite a bit of time for the same people to do it all of the time. We have had a couple of new people lately and we really appreciate their interest and help. Once you get started working on the newsletter, you will see how much fun it really is. And you don't have to know anything to start. I didn't. Not that I know a lot now, but I feel more comfortable with my participation, and the people in the group are a great bunch. If you want to mix with a group that really enjoy the ATARI and all of the different types of applications that it can be used for, then this is the group for you. There is a possibility that this group will now be meeting on Wednesday versus Thursday. Check with Clyde Pritchard or there may be a confirmation of this elsewhere in this issue.

We may have a new SIG group forming shortly that will work with the PAC Bulletin Board. Steve and Debbie Billings are our new Sysops, and doing

one whale of a new job. Several people have expressed interest in helping out with the board, but just did not have the time or facility for running the board themselves. If there is enough interest in forming a group of this type then let me know and I will add your name to the list. If nothing else let me know at the meeting and we can discuss it.

I realize this has been a little lengthy this time, but one of my aims when accepting this position was to get more people involved with the club, and help them to enjoy their computers more. With SIG groups we can join with others that have the same interests. It is a rewarding experience to find that you are not all alone out there. I have enjoyed working with these groups and will continue to do so in the future, but not as the SIG Coordinator. I feel I have made a good start here and now wish to move on to something else. This position will be available come the election, and we are looking for someone to carry on this work. If you are interested then please contact myself or one of the other Board members (listed on the front cover) and let us know. See you next month.

SIG CONTACT LIST

The following is a list of our current groups and the contacts for each:

ADVENTURE GAMES	
Russ Schwartz	646-6418
SIGASM (ASSEMBLER)	
Clyde Pritchard	648-0461
ATR-8000	
Jim Scott	281-6724
BEGINNERS	
Elaine Schlichting	285-4471
Chuck Hall	293-0552
BULLETIN BOARD	
Steve & Debbie Billings	246-1751
BUSINESS APPLICATIONS	
Chuck Hall	293-0552
NLSIG (NEWSLETTER)	
Clyde Pritchard	648-0461
PACE (Portland Atari Club Educators)	
Trudie Mishler	230-9545
Chris Fouts	206-687-4951

PAC BBS IS BACK Steve Billings

245-9405 - The Portland Atari Club bulletin board is now back up and running at full steam! Thanks go to Russell Schwartz, the previous sysop, for his help in setting things up, and for organizing the FoReM BBS so nicely, it made it easy for us to take over. Debbie Billings and I are your new sysops and while this is a new venture for us we seem to be getting familiar with the system.

For those who might not be familiar with the PAC BBS, it consists of the following equipment:

- 1 Atari 400 with barely adequate B-Key keyboard.
- 1 ATR 8000 hooked up to 2 double sided, double density disk drives (the equivalent of 8-810 drives.)
- 1 850 interface connected to a Hayes 300 baud Smartmodem.
- 1 Star Micronics Gemini 10x printer.

As you can see, this is a high quality system put together to serve you users and abusers out there.

By now we hope that we have gotten everyone back on line with their passwords and correct security level. If you are a club member you should be at level three which allows you to access the download files. If you are not at the level you think you should be leave the sysop a message. We try to read all the messages every day, and are here to serve you.

We are always looking for new files to put on the BBS, so do not hesitate to upload any public domain file you have come across that would be of interest to others.

If we can get permission from the publishers, we may be able to start putting listings from Atari magazines on the board. More on this later as things develop.

One small complaint from this side of the BBS. Please put your messages in the correct message base! If your message is directed to just one individual put the message in the "PERSONAL" message base. Other users do not like to go through the general messages and see a lot of private messages. If you have something for sale

put the ad in the "FOR SALE" section. Help keep your board neat and tidy.

Debbie and I are usually home in the evenings if you want to chat, but we are both real shy, so keep trying if we don't answer every time you call. Also we are not wiz-kids, just plain folks, so we might not know why your modem rattles when you shake it up and down, but we will listen.

Some callers have been complaining about bad connections to the BBS. This results in unwanted characters on the receiver's screen and difficulty downloading files. It's not a problem on this end, so it must be in the phone system. If you have had problems please let us know what the problems are, where you live, and what phone company you have, and hopefully we can do something about it, so we can all use the system to its potential.

So long for now. See you on the BBS.

PAC HELP HOTLINES

The following people have generously offered to take telephone queries in the areas indicated.

HARDWARE OPERATION	Steve Deutsch	648-2017
CASSETTE OPERATION	Lee Gassaway	642-2455
DOS OPERATIONS	Steve Deutsch	648-2017
MODEM OPERATIONS	Gary Lippert	233-7069
BBS USAGE	Russell Schwartz	646-6418
BASIC PROGRAMMING	Nick Yost	981-0838
	Lee Gassaway	642-2455
OPERATING SYSTEM	Nick Yost	981-0838
	Leroy Baxter	653-1633
ASSEMBLY LANGUAGE	Leroy Baxter	653-1633
FORTH	Ricky Wooldridge	224-7163

NEWS AND REVIEWS

PAGE SIX
Clyde Pritchard

This month's issue started out looking like it would be a snap to put together, plenty of material and lots of time. It looked so easy that I managed to waste a lot of time on Saturday, then Sunday came and the time started to disappear. Next I started having disk drive problems again. It seems that my "good" drive gets hot and tired after a few hours and wants to take a break. What a joy. The other drive is just plain a pain, so we decided to take a break ourselves and give the machines a rest. Now here it is, 9:30 Sunday night, and we still have several hours of work ahead. Oh well, maybe next month will be better.

This month we have reviews of the three latest releases from Synapse; SynChron, SynComm, and SynStock. These programs continue the series that started with SynFilet, SynCalc, and SynTrend. Synapse started development of these programs on their own, and ended up signing a deal with Atari to have the programs marketed as having been "Developed Exclusively for Atari". Now, with the sale of Atari to Jack Tramiel, there have been a lot of rumors about Atari reniging on the agreement. I'm not sure what the facts are, but it seems that Synapse is now marketing the programs themselves. The packages, documentation, etc. still say "Developed for Atari", but I have seen direct offers from Synapse for the programs.

Anyway, I guess that doesn't matter, the programs are available, and for the most part are some of the best non-game programs available for the Atari. What I want to talk about here is the overall quality of these programs versus what we, the Atari user community, felt the programs would do for us. When the rumors about these programs first started, things sounded great. Finally we were going to get some super software. Then we (PAC) got a live presentation from Brian Lee of Synapse. Things looked and sounded even better. At the time, the deal with Atari was not final (I think), and the series was supposed to include a word processor. The various programs were to have interfaces to pass data among them when appropriate, and this made them sound great too. When the deal with Atari was announced, the word processor was dropped from the series. The rumors said that a new version of AtariWriter would come out, in order to provide support for the Synapse

programs. This didn't happen, but it turned out that AtariWriter had a "hidden" feature (mail merge), which was what we needed to interface to SynFilet.

When the first three programs came out (several months later than expected), we took a look and said that although they were pretty good programs, it seemed like they should (or could) have been better. Well, this is probably true, but I think that part of the problem is that there was a long time between the initial rumors and announcement, and the programs actually becoming available. While we were waiting, we managed to build up our expectations for these programs so high, that there became almost no chance that we would be satisfied with the final products. I think that this is too bad for us, the users, and for Synapse. It is bad for us because all we hear about are the things the programs won't do, rather than what they will do. Because of this, many people decide not to get the programs, and thereby lose out on the benefits that the programs do offer. Synapse suffers because we don't buy the programs, and if we don't buy the programs, Synapse and other software companies will have little reason to write or improve their non-game products for our Atari computers. Remember the good old physics quote, "for every action there is an opposite, and equal reaction"? We all have to "call them as we see them", and some programs are turkeys, no matter what company they come from. Just remember that one person's turkey is another person's Thanksgiving dinner. Most of these programs do have benefits to offer, so if you need a program that does one of these functions, you should consider these before you buy something else.

We have not reviewed SynCalc or SynTrend in the newsletter yet, but I hope to have a review of SynCalc for you next month. I am still looking for someone who has, or would like to review SynTrend, so let me know if you are that person. From people that I have talked to, SynCalc is a pretty good spread sheet program compared both to other Atari spread sheets, and IBM PC spread sheets. I don't have it myself, but if I decide to get into spread sheets, I probably will. SynFilet, which has been reviewed in the newsletter, is a good database. The area in which it needs improvement is reporting, you can do

only fairly simple reports with it. This may not be a problem for most home users, so take a look at it. I am happy to have it in my program library. SynChron sounds like a good appointment calendar program. I would consider adding it to my program library too. SynComm is worth considering if you need a communications program, see my review for more information. SynStock seems to be toward the bottom of the list of good programs in this series. I'm not into stocks myself, and haven't looked at the program, so I can't say for sure. Take a look at the review and get a demo of the program at your dealer if you are interested in this kind of program. SynTrend is the other program in the series that I have heard very few good things about. I guess you'll have to wait for a review, or go get a demo if you want to do statistics and graphing.

I guess that's about enough on the Synapse series, but I just want to say that you really need to try out a program before you buy. Don't depend totally on reviews (good or bad), you may find that you like a program that a reviewer didn't, and you may hate one that the reviewer raved about. Personal experience and opinion have a lot to do with program acceptance.

The same problems that caused us turmoil over the Synapse programs seem to be happening with the Plato System communications software. It was hyped in Antic magazine, then Atari was sold, and we wonder where the software is. As I tried to say at the last meeting, I read a short piece about the Plato software in another newsletter, and it sounded like the software will be available soon. The article in the July Antic said that the software was to be released in the third quarter of '84, which has just ended without much visible evidence that the program exists. This doesn't mean that we won't see it, because such deadlines are rarely met. The sale of Atari must have had some impact on the Plato project, so I'm going to be patient. It seems to me that even if Atari decides not to release it, either the people who helped develop it, or CDC, the company that operates the Plato network will take over the project.

If you want to do something to help make this come true, start writing letters. Write to Atari, write to CDC, write to Antic, Analog,

Compute, Byte, or some other publication. If they get the word that people are interested, they are sure to take some kind of positive action. Nothing will happen if you sit back and "let the other guy" do it. I will contact the other Atari group whose newsletter had the information on Plato and see what they have to say.

As far as other educational software for the Atari goes, from what I see in the magazines, there is plenty of it available. All you have to do is go to your dealer and buy it or have them order it. As with the games, the Atari version isn't always the first one available, but companies haven't written off the Atari yet.

Speaking of magazines, there may be a few people out there who are not aware of the magazines that support us, the Atari users. Two magazines are at the top of the list, these are ANTIC and ANALOG, which are for the Atari only. Both are excellent, and contain a lot of useful information in almost every area of concern to an Atari user. ANTIC has started a project to help ensure continued support for the Atari in spite of the sale to Jack Tramiel, so help support yourself by supporting ANTIC. COMPUTE is another magazine that covers the Atari, but it also covers Apple, Commodore, TI, and the PC Jr. Family Computing has a lot of information on computing in general, but also has some information on the Atari. Compute also has several books dedicated to the Atari computer. Creative Computing has some Atari information also. Byte, one of the first micro magazines, has very little on the Atari, but has a lot of information in its Sear's Christmas Catalog sized issues. It gives you more information for your money than any other magazine on computing. A lot of it can be technical, but if you really want to learn about computers, it can help you.

There are many books available for the Atari computer, and we have run information on them in the past. We are planning a summary of the best books for the near future, so if you have some input, let us know.

One more item for this month. We still don't have a new person lined up to take over as Newsletter Editor, but I have decided to continue for the time being. I will continue looking for

Continued.....

IMPORTANT TERMS

someone to take over the job, and hope to find someone by the time I have spent two years on the job. With the support that I get from the other people who help put this newsletter out, the job is very enjoyable most of the time, and I need something to do in my "spare" time anyway. Having a good set of people on the board of directors helps make this job easier too, and we seem to be having a problem (again) finding people to take on these jobs.

As I (and others) have said in the past, and will continue to say in the future, the best way to get something out of the Club is to put something in, so stop waiting for someone else to do it and do it yourself. If you want the S.S. PAC to take a new direction, the best place to be is on the bridge or at the wheel, not down in the cargo hold. We can have a better Club if we all have a positive attitude and help each other, but each of us have to put forth a little effort to make it happen. Those of you who are starting out in management, or are planning to enter the business world and become a manager, can profit by becoming involved in the management of the Club. The Club gives you a place with less pressure, and where your decisions are not as critical, where you can learn how to be a better manager by being part of the Club's management team. You can learn how to speak to a group of people comfortably, which is something that you will need to do sometime in your career. Participation in organizations like PAC is something that you can put on your resume. Companies like to see people who do things to serve the community, rather than people who stay home and watch TV. Be a doer and a giver, not a sitter and a taker, you'll feel better and benefit in more ways than you can imagine.

Due to the holidays in November, the production schedule for the December newsletter will be tight, and here are the dates:

- 11/05 - Commercial Ad Deadline
- 11/05 - Normal Article Deadline
- 11/07 - Newsletter Meeting
- 11/10 - Final Article Deadline
- 11/10-11 - Production
- 11/12-13 - Final Layout
- 11/14-19 - Printing
- 11/19 - Mailing

ASSUMED DECIMAL POINT - Located two positions to the right of a programmer's current pay in estimating his own worth.

BIT - The increment by which programmers slowly go mad.

CHAINING - A method of attaching programmers to desks to speed up output.

CORE STORAGE - A receptacle for the center section of apples.

COUNTER - A device over which martinis are served.

DISASSEMBLER - An unattended five year old child.

ERROR - What someone else has made when he disagrees with your computer output.

EXTERNAL STORAGE - A wastebasket.

FIXED WORD LENGTH - Four-letter words used by programmers in a state of confusion.

FLOATING CONTROL - A characteristic exhibited when you have to go to the restroom but cannot leave the computer.

FLOATING POINT - The absolute limit before floating control is lost!

FLOW CHART - A graphic representation of the fastest route to the restroom.

INPUT - Food, whiskey, beer, aspirin, etc.

MACRO - The last half of an expression of surprise: "Holy Macro".

MEMORY DUMP - Amnesia.

PROGRAMMER - A red-eyed, mumbling mammal capable of conversing with inanimate objects.

ED. NOTE: This collection of terms is from The I/O Connector, the newsletter of the San Diego Atari Computer Enthusiasts, September 1984 issue.

SYNCHRON - PERSONAL APPOINTMENT MANAGEMENT

David Pelinka

SynChron is the latest in Synapse Software's family of application programs which includes SynFile+, SynCalc, SynTrend, SynStock and SynComm. This program is a computerized version of a large datebook containing monthly calendars and a blank page for each day's reminders and appointments. Except for one disappointing omission, it is a well designed program that could be quite useful. As with a database program, how much use you get out of it depends on what you put in.

Your data is entered in paragraph form just as you would enter it into a datebook. You are allowed up to 100 39 character lines of text for each day. A novel scale is displayed on the right side of the screen that instantly shows your position in that day's text. It's easy to scroll up and down or go to the beginning or end of the day's notes. There are also selectable word-wrap, margin and insert modes to make your entering task easier. Any items you would like to be able to search for later can be keyed by pressing control K. The program then establishes the next six characters as a keyword. For example, you could use key words like BIRTHDAY, HOLIDAY, APPOINTMENT, or TO-DO; whatever is most helpful to you. When you've finished entering or changing a day's notes, just press START to save them to disk.

SynChron will store data for two years on one data disk. You can view your schedule for one year at a time in three different ways. First, you can display a yearly calendar that shows all 12 months. Here, each day is shown by a dot on the screen. Any day with a reminder stored for it is lit up in white. All other days are shown by green dots. To see a calendar for one month, you move the cursor to the desired month and press return. Again, days that have reminders are marked. Finally, to read the actual text you stored for any day, you move the cursor to that day and press return. You can also select the other year, execute a keyword search or return to the main menu. To make it even easier, you can use a joystick to move around the main menu and through the calendar. The speed and ease of moving from screen to screen is one of the best features of the program.

You can search your calendar by keyword over an entire year or a single month. Then, only the days that contain the specified keyword will be marked. This criteria remains in effect until you change it. To help you keep track of your keywords, a menu selection lists or sorts them for you. This will help you remember which words you used. It's important to keep keywords consistent for accurate searching.

Can I use my printer, you ask? Sure, and there are some neat things you can do with it too. First, you can search and print by date and by keyword. As the program searches through the calendar, it displays the date it is working on as well as the text it is printing. This allows you to see what's going on without having to look over at your printer. You can abort the process at any time. Next, the print format menu allows you to select the line length, indentation and to imbed printer control codes for headings and text lines. This way you could print the date headings in expanded type and the text in bold for example. All text will be printed in paragraph form and carriage returns are ignored. Any lines you wish to remain separate must be preceded by a "bullet".

Other features on the main menu allow you to define a password which will be required before any data disk can be used, replace the earliest year with a new one, and switch to a different data disk. When you start a new year it is completely blank, just like a new datebook. You can't copy data from an old year to a new one. The unfortunate omission I mentioned is that you can't print out a calendar. For my money they could have left out the password feature and included this instead. One other shortcoming is that there is no way to see data for more than one day at a time unless you have a printer.

After having reviewed Atari's TIMEWISE and my own calendar program, I can say that SynChron is the most flexible. The 100 lines you are allowed for each day's notes means you can use this program for diaries and other record keeping as well as for simple reminders. SynChron requires 48K and a disk drive. A printer is recommended and a joystick is optional. The price is approximately \$30.

SYNSTOCK
Steve Billings

SynStock is another new program released from Synapse Software. Synapse has been excellent in producing software for the Atari and this is yet another in the series of products for the at home user. Synapse has produced this and other programs exclusively under Atari Corporations license. Hopefully Atari will be able to continue this nice relationship into the future.

The purpose of SynStock is as its name implies, it is intended for people who are interested in charting the prices of publicly owned corporate stocks. This is in fact all the program really does, but it does it nicely.

This program also comes in the slick little grey binder, like the other Synapse programs in this series, which fits nicely on the book shelf. The documentation is good, it assumes you are an amateur at using your computer and walks you through each step.

Now, to the software itself. The program is designed to chart stocks and this is exactly what it does and all it does. You enter a stock symbol and then enter the high price for the day, then low price, then closing price, and finally the volume of shares traded. After entering this data for a period of time you can then have the program draw a graph of the input. I entered the example data in the documentation and you can see the printout below as it appears on a Gemini printer. It prints out in a full page 8 1/2 * 11. The example below has been reduced.

From this data chart the program can run a couple of analysis. It will figure things like moving averages and oscillators. Don't ask me what those are. They have something to do with determining the movement trend of the stock. The manual does not go into what they mean, but does give some outside references at the end which probably explain the value of such information.

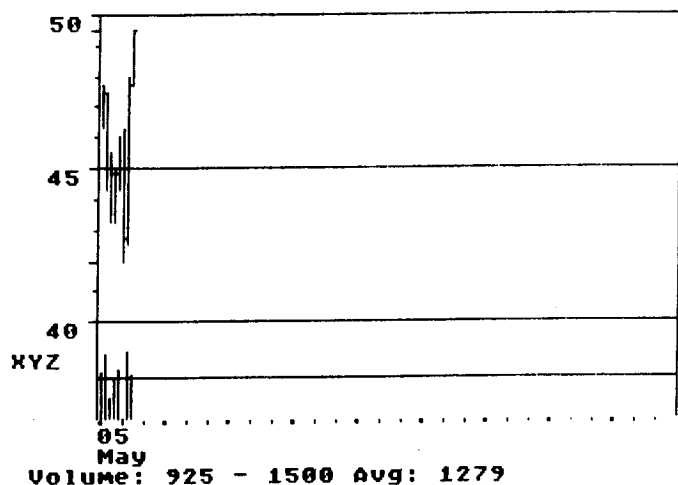
Well, I have a few problems with all this. For one thing, you're going to have a hard time

finding the required input data in the Oregonian. The local paper does not print the low and high bid on the stock reports. If you do bother to type in all this data for a number of stocks, it would be nice to see a concise graph, but by then you will probably have a pretty good idea whether you lost your wad or missed the boat anyway.

The value of charts like this escapes me. I have dabbled in the market a little and have found it is much more meaningful to have a simple program that keeps track of transactions and tells you what you bought it at and how much you have gained or lost since purchase. This I found in an old program in BASIC from APX that I bought for \$15 a while ago, called Stock Manager.

The Synapse program also has a sort of modem program built in with which you can call up CompuServ and get direct download of stock results each day, circumventing the need to manually type the info in. Great, but don't forget the additional charge from Compuserver for using this service. By the way, Microbit modems will not work with this, because their modem only works with their own software, you have to use a modem hooked up through an 850 interface with SynStock. Better yet, call your stock broker and have him send you the Value Line sheet on the stock you are interested in and get an expert analysis and chart for free. You will have to buy the stock through a broker anyway, so put him to work.

To sum up, I was not satisfied with this effort from Synapse. I expected much more from them. This program should do much more than draw graphs. It should also keep track of buys and sales and profit and loss and have have some means of corporate analysis to help the speculator evaluate an investment instead of just making piles of charts.



SYNCOMM
Clyde Pritchard

SynComm is one of the three recent releases in a series of six packages for the Atari Home Computer System by Synapse. It is a communications program for use with your computer and modem, and allows you to connect your system to other Atari computers, computerized Bulletin Board Systems (Atari or non-Atari), information services like CompuServ and The Source, or other large computer systems.

SynComm gives the beginning user who wants to get started in the world of communications just about everything needed to get the job done, except perhaps a feeling of confidence and an understanding of how to actually use SynComm to communicate with another system. Although the documentation is written in a fairly simple, somewhat tutorial style, and has a glossary of terms, it does not provide a coherent, step by step tutorial on an actual communications session. It has most of the bits and pieces of such a tutorial, but it seems to be left to the user to put them all together like a jigsaw puzzle. This will be a problem only for a user who is a complete novice in communications, and who is fairly new to the micro world in general. Anyone who has used other communications programs should have the confidence and knowledge required to pull everything together and get on-line with SynComm. Another part of the problem with the documentation is that while it explains WHAT each feature of the program does, it often fails to explain WHY the user would want to use that feature.

It seems that the appeal of a program like SynComm would be greater to the novice, because it is a professionally written and documented program, rather than less "friendly" and perhaps undocumented public domain program. The problem with the documentation seems to be that Synapse was afraid that if it was too thick, it would scare the novice out of buying the package. This could be true, but not when the entire manual has only 68 pages, and when less than 40 of them are for the novice. I'm not saying that the program is impossible for a novice to use, just that Synapse could have done a little bit more to make it a lot more easy to use the program.

What about the experienced user? Well, SynComm provides just about everything required

for basic communications needs, but once again, the documentation could be a problem. The overview style of the manual is nice, but when you get into the "advanced" features, it would be nice to have an advanced, in-depth explanation of each feature, how it works, and how to use it. I spoke to Russell Schwartz, our former BBS Sysop, who bought SynComm as soon as it came out, and he indicated that he was not real happy with it. He was trying to use the system configuration utility, specifically the feature that allows control of the DTR (Data Terminal Ready) line of the RS232C interface, and was unable to make it work the way he wanted to. I'm not sure of exactly what he was trying to do, but I played with this feature too, and I couldn't seem to get the right result either. It's possible that both of us were doing something wrong, but if the manual gave a detailed explanation of how to use this feature, we might have been successful. Even if some of this detail had to come from other sources, like the 850 interface and modem manuals, it would be ok, but the SynComm documentation does not have any specific references to other material as back-up to the advanced features.

Now, on to the actual features of SynComm. The SynComm program disk has the main program on side one, and side two has a configuration utility and several optional configuration files.

When you boot the main program, it comes up in "terminal mode". This is the screen from which you do your actual communications activity. The top line of the screen is an information line with an elapsed time clock on the right side. The clock starts running as soon the program finishes booting. You can reset the clock at any time. The clock is one of the nice touches included in SynComm. It is especially helpful when you are communicating with a system like CompuServ that charges you by the minute, or a "free" system that is costing you long distance phone charges. The next line is a title line with "SYNCOMM" in the center. Lines 3 through 22 are the "text window", and are used to display information received from the system that you are connected to. Initially this area contains a title, author, and copyright display, and a "cute" line that says "Open for Business". Line 23 is called the "echo" line, and this is where everything that

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you type while in terminal mode appears. When you have typed enough to reach the end of the line, information scrolls off to the left. Line 24 is a "status" line, and always contains the amount of free memory available.

As you receive information, it is displayed in the text window using a smooth vertical scrolling technique. Also, if a word will not completely fit on a line, the program uses "word wrap", and displays it on the next line. Once the text window is full, the information at the top scrolls out of view, and cannot be seen again, unless you have used the "memorize data" feature to store it in memory. The smooth vertical scrolling technique is accomplished by using the fine scrolling capability of the Atari computer, but it causes time to be lost waiting for the screen to fill. This is fine when you are connected to a free, local call system like a BBS, but if you are connected to a system that charges you for connect time you are going to pay more for the information that you receive. Information received at 300 BPS (Bits Per Second - which translates to 30 characters per second because it takes 10 bits for each character) is displayed slow enough for most people to read as it is received without having a program slow it down even more. The program also slows down a little bit at 1200 BPS, but it's harder to notice than at 300 BPS. I'm not sure what the total time loss would be in a one hour communication session, but it concerns me a little bit.

The other features of SynComm are available through a Command Menu. The Command Menu is displayed by pressing and holding the OPTION key. Then you press the key of the first letter for the selection you want, and release the OPTION key. The prompt or menu for the function selected will appear on the screen. Once you have learned which letter is used for a function, you can execute it directly by pressing and holding the START key, then pressing the letter, while still in terminal mode. After you complete a function, you press RETURN to get back to terminal mode.

The functions available from the Command Menu are; Memorize Data, No Memorization, Block Delimit, Read Block, Write Block, Send Block, Abort Send, Go on Sending, View Block, Erase Block, Configuration Menu, Load Configuration,

X-Modem Transfer, Disk Operations, Zero Clock Time, and Fresh Screen.

The Memorize Data function allows you to store the information that you receive in memory. Once it is stored, you can save it to disk, print it, or review it while on-line. When this function is active, the status line at the bottom of the screen displays the word "storing".

The No Memorization function turns off the Memorize Data function, but the information received while Memorize Data was on is still stored in memory. If you turn Memorize Data back on, the new information received will be stored with the data already received unless you use the next function, Block Delimit.

Block Delimit allows you to store the information that you receive in separate "blocks" of memory. This is a very nice feature because by using it, you can store the function menu from a BBS in one block, and the help screens for each function in other blocks. Then you can display them with SynComm rather than having to request them from the BBS, which should save you some time. You can also save them to disk or print them from memory. SynComm assigns a number to each block, and you need to remember (or make a note of) what is in each block. You can use Block Delimit when Memorize Data is on to "close" a block and start storing information in a new block without turning Memorize Data off. Using No Memorize to turn Memorize Data off does not close the active block, and this is what lets you add information to the last active block without having to store everything that you receive. Once you have closed a block with Block Delimit, you cannot re-open it and add more data to it.

Read Block allows you to load a file from disk into a block in memory. You can use this when you want to upload a file to a BBS that supports non-XMODEM uploads, or if you saved the BBS function and help screens to disk, you could load them into memory blocks to help you use a BBS more effectively before you become an expert. SynComm also allows you to create blocks with the Atari Screen Editor. To do this, you specify "E:" at the "file to read from" prompt. This allows you to create files for uploading, or notes to yourself about how a particular system works.

Write Block lets you save blocks from memory to disk, or print them on your printer.

Send Block is used to upload a block to a system that supports non-XMODEM uploads.

Abort Send is a sub-command of the Send Block, and X-Modem Transfer Functions. It allows you to "change your mind", and stop sending a block (Send Block) or file (X-Modem Transfer).

Go on Sending is also used with Send Block and X-Modem Transfer. In Send Block, it is used to restart after using Abort Send. In X-Modem Transfer, it is used to get the process started if the system that you are sending to does not properly support the XMODEM protocol.

View Block is used to display blocks stored in memory for review. The program displays a list with the number of each memory block that is available for viewing, and you are prompted to enter the number of the block that you want to see. Blocks that contain information that you received are flagged with an asterisk (*). If the block is longer than one screen, you can pause the display by holding down the START key. Once part of the block has scrolled off the top of the screen, you can't look at it again unless you review that block.

Erase block is used to delete blocks from memory once you no longer need them, and need to free up some memory for storing new information. As in View Block, you are given a list of block numbers, and must enter the number to delete a block.

The Configuration Menu function causes a new menu to be displayed. From this menu, you can set various transmission options. You can also save a configuration to disk for use with the Load Configuration function. I won't go into the functions on this menu, but it allows you to set just about every option that you will normally want to change.

Load Configuration lets you load a configuration file created by the Write Configuration function on the Configuration Menu or the Configuration Utility program.

The X-Modem Transfer function allows you to Transmit and Receive files using the Christenson X-Modem Protocol. It uses the true protocol, which allows it to communicate with other systems whether or not they use the complete protocol. This function takes a little practice if you are used to programs that don't use true X-Modem, but it's nice to have a program that follows the rules.

The Disk Operations function lets you get a directory of files on each drive, delete files, rename files, and set a default drive number. It is missing only one thing, an option to format a disk. This is stupid, because formatting is a simple call to the operating system.

The last two functions on the Command Menu are Zero Clock Time and Fresh Screen. The first resets the elapsed time clock that appears on the top line of the terminal mode screen, and the second clears all information from the terminal mode text window. It does not clear the echo line.

The Configuration Utility that is booted from side two of the SynComm program disk allows you to build configuration files. It lets you set all of the options shown on the SynComm terminal program Configuration Menu, plus several more advanced options. It also lets you change the colors that will be used for the terminal mode screen. After you set all of the options the way that you want them, and select the Write Configuration to Disk function, you are given a blank screen to write documentation for the configuration. This documentation is displayed when you use the Load Configuration function in the main program. This is a very nice touch.

Does SynComm work on the 800XL? Yes, but at first I wasn't so sure. Because I wanted to see whether SynComm would use the extra RAM in the 800XL, I hooked my 800XL back up. I held down the OPTION key as the manual told me to, but rather than releasing it as soon as the program started to boot, I kept holding it down. Normally, this is not a problem, however SynComm decided that something was wrong. The screen went blank and the disk drive stopped spinning. The system was locked up, not even system reset would work. The

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AQUATRON *Clay Gradis*

manual said that you could release the OPTION key as soon as the program started to boot, but it didn't say that you had to release it. Anyway, SynComm does not use the extra memory in the 800XL. This seems to be a real waste. SynComm does require a 48K system, so if you have a 600XL or other system with less than 48K, you will need a memory upgrade.

For the most part, SynComm is an above average program. It seems to be well written, and is easy to learn even though the manual could be better for both the novice and the experienced user. Once again, the problem seems to be a matter of high expectations for this series of programs from Synapse versus the reality of the programs themselves. SynComm is the best commercial communications package for the Atari that I have seen. Others have some features that SynComm doesn't, but overall SynComm offers more functionality. Only one of these other programs (Chameleon from APS) supports the XMODEM protocol, which is required for uploading and downloading programs reliably. SynComm supports autodial modems, but doesn't have autodialing support per se. However, it does have features that allow you to implement your own autodialing system fairly easily.

If you are an experienced user, and are happy with the program that you are using, you may not be interested in SynComm. However, if you are a novice, and want a good, well-rounded program for basic communications, SynComm may be for you. If you need some help getting started, there are many people in the Club who will be happy to help you, including myself. In spite of my gripes about the manual, it only took me about 15 minutes to read the manual and get on-line with this program. It is easy to use, and everything seems to work as advertised, with the possible exception of the advanced feature involving the DTR line. That feature is not something you should ever need anyway, so don't let that stop you from seriously considering SynComm.

Aquatron from SierraVision, is a new arcade game of the "Defenders" type. As the box says, Aquatron is the best of both the air and sea battle arcade games. In the game you control a fighter which can fly in the air and sail through the oceans. The fighter has blasters, proximity missiles, and shields to help deal with the many types of enemies.

The enemies are varied. There are bombers which release parachutes that turn into submarines, the submarines in turn fire missiles attack your craft in the air. There are escort fighters that guard the bombers by firing missiles at your fighter. Then there are the interceptors that come out of hyperspace to attack you. The destroyers are huge, rapid firing guerrilla ships that attack with blasters, and then flee. Finally come two types of mines; the power mine that tries to absorb the energy from your shields, and the contact mine which explodes when you hit it.

The game play is considerably like that of Atari's Defenders except that it has the added dimension of being able to go under water. There are some other nice differences too; there is a day-night cycle in which you can see the sun climb the sky and then watch the moon come out. The screen colors change accordingly. Also, when you destroy one of the enemies, it blows up in a spectacular explosion. Another neat touch is a special demo mode. Most games have demo modes but this is the first one where I've seen the computer write its name on the high score board when it did well.

Unfortunately, the game has more drawbacks than it has nice features. For instance, there is no difference in play no matter what level you are on, it's always the same shoot-em-up play and the same enemy craft. Also, there is no theme music, I always enjoy hearing a new theme when I boot a game for the first time.

The major drawback then is the lack of play value. If you love Defenders then you will love Aquatron. If you want a little more, then this game will grow old on you. Because of this I am giving Aquatron a 5 on our scale of 1 to 10. The game looked promising but it just didn't make it.

Ed. Note: Clay wrote this review for commercial publication, but has given the PAC newsletter permission to print it. It may not be reprinted without his permission. He can be contacted through the PAC mailing address.

REVIEW CORRECTION *Clyde Pritchard*

In the October issue, the review of "Star Wars" by Clay Gradis said that the program was from CBS Software, it is from Parker Brothers.

RAMBLIN...
Chuck Hall

This will be a short column this month. I am still suffering from writer's cramps for last month's column. And as usual, I have waited until the last minute to get this out. When will I ever learn? This has been a pretty busy month for myself and my computer. First there was a warehouse sale where I was able to pick up some good deals. They plan on having the sale again on the weekend of the 20th and 21st at 2108 SE 10th. Lots of disks, ribbons, paper, disk holders, print heads and etc. It is really worth while stopping by if you get the chance. Of course by the time you get this it will be over and will have scarfed up on all of the goodies myself. I will be decent enough to put the word up on the board though so some of you will hear of it. Which brings up another point. For those of you who have not yet bought a Modem so that you can use our Bulletin Board, are missing out on one of (do you realize that that is 4 words in a row that start with the letter 'o'. Amazing..) the primo benefits of your membership. If you would like more information on this service please check with our Sysops (System Operators) Steve and Debbie Billings who are doing one whale of a job. They stepped into it with a little intrepidation, but now are really enjoying it. They have really picked up on knowing what they are doing, and the board is doing great. They will be glad to help you with your problems, if it deals with the board, or on how to use it. They should also have a column in here somewhere.

This weekend also saw the Grand Opening of the Software Center (yes that is spelled right) on Beaverton Hillsdale across from the Beaverton Fred Meyer's. They gave out free disks to each person returning a coupon from the Oregonian, plus a card which allows you to get a free disk every month. Just like the free battery cards that Radio Shack is famous for. They don't carry a lot of Atari software, but they usually have a pretty good selection of books. When we went in yesterday, the quantity of books available had dwindled, but then at 15% off, they were moving quite well. I bought two and will tell you a little about them. The first was wanted primarily by Jean (my wife). It is called "The Book of Adventure Games". It is a description of 70 of the main adventure games available today. It has all of the INFOCOM games except Seastalker. It has all of the Adventure

International games except the latest graphic adventures; it has Ultima I, II, and III plus many, many more. It gives the maps for the games, some clues to those really tough situations, and list of the required treasures and/or points. When I first looked at it I thought I really did not want it, because it was going to give it all away. Guess again dungeon vermin. It helps a little, but you still have to solve the game yourself. I started playing one of my games, and used the book with it. The book helped to keep me on track somewhat, but I really did not get much farther than what I already had before. But, now I think the book to be invaluable. There will be a second edition out in late 1984 according to the last page in this book, which will give even more information on each game. I think that this book is going to be a must for all serious or curious adventurers. The price is \$19.95. It's in a softback 8 1/2 x 11 size, with 479 pages. A little costly, but if you really want to get through those games or help others to do so, it should be worth it. If nothing else put it on your Christmas list, and make sure that everyone sees it.

The second book I bought was for me. It is called "Atari Graphics and Arcade Game Design". When I saw it, I just had to have it. It starts out describing graphics modes, color registers, GTIA/CTIA, display lists, character sets, and everything else you would want to know about graphics. It includes many programs that describe exactly what they are talking about. They are well documented and most should have little trouble understanding them. The programs in the first part of the book are in BASIC. The authors then start using Machine Language. But they do it in a way, that you don't have to know machine language to start with. They help teach it to you. The really great part is, that they show you how to use all of those memory locations, registers, and special chips that make up the ATARI computer. The book is written for all of the ATARI computers including the XL's. If you only have a 600, I suggest you get a memory expansion before tackling too much. I think it is going to be a great book and I recommend it to all of those who are frustrated with the general run of the mill ATARI books. I am placing this one on my shelf right next to "Your Atari Computer" (the bible), and "Mapping

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the ATARI" from Compute books. By the way, for those of you with XL's, the "Your ATARI Computer" book is now available with your machines included. I saw it on the shelf at the Software Center. After I finish reading my new one, I will attempt to give a complete review of it here in the Newsletter.

There is going to be another Grand Opening on the 20th up in Vancouver. For those of you who have attended our last two meetings, you heard Terry Sutfin announce that he was opening a new store there. The address is 11504 S.E. Mill Plain Road, Suite C. He will be supporting the ATARI and its peripherals. If you are in Vancouver or happen to be heading that way, you might stop in and see what he has to offer. Remember, the more we support the dealers in our area, the more support we are going to be able to get from them.

On that note, a couple of other thoughts. Super Stereo Stores no longer carries much of anything for ATARI. A few supplies, Rana Drives, and monitors, but that is all. Fred Meyer's seems to stock quite a bit of stuff, but you will have to have a lot of patience to wait for a decent sale price on something. If you are thinking of buying there at retail, why not buy from one of our dealers instead. They will appreciate it more, and give you much better service. If you see something you want at the dealers, do not be afraid to ask for a demonstration or a chance to try it out. I think they all will be glad to let you see what it is really like. If not, I would go somewhere else.

On to something else. Many of you have asked whether I was planning on running for President this year. I have involved myself in the club a great deal because I enjoy it. I was planning on running for a different board position this time, but not for president because I thought that Lloyd Sulter, our current president is doing a fine job. When he made his announcement that he was not going to continue as President, I had to re-think my position. I have now decided to seek that office. I believe that I can lead the Portland Atari Group effectively and help make it one of the best Users Groups around. My philosophy on what is needed for the club, may be a little different than some, but I think that we need to get back to more basic

things for the members and be able to support the beginners and advanced beginners more. More on all of this later. I'm not really here to campaign at this time.

I said I was going to keep this short this time didn't I? Well, you know how wordy I get at times. I will continue my writeup on system development in the next issue rather than make this any longer. See you all at the next meeting.

LIST PROTECTOR Steve Burns

Have you ever written a really nifty program, and then wanted an easy way to prevent others from listing it and discovering all your "trademarks"? If so, then this is for you.

Type in the following program. Then LIST it to disk or tape. Next, LOAD (or CLOAD) the program you want to protect. Then, merge in the protect program with the ENTER command. Now, do a GOTO 32500. When the READY message reappears, try listing your program. Presto! Instant garbage. Run it. The program works just fine.

What happened? Well, deep within a BASIC program there is a table called the Variable Name Table. BASIC stores all of the names of your variables in this table. What the protect program does is change all the variable names to carriage returns, (character 155).

For additional information about the Variable Name Table, and to learn how to make a listing of your variables, refer to the ANALOG COMPENDIUM, Volume 1.

WARNING: Use a different filename when you SAVE the protected program. You will destroy the good copy of your program if you use the original filename. Be careful!

```
32500 TSTART=PEEK(130)+256*PEEK(131):
CADDR=TSTART: REM FIND POINTER TO V.N.T
32510 VARNAME=PEEK(CADDR): IF VARNAME<>0 THEN
32530
32520 ? "VARIABLE NAME TABLE STARTS AT: ";TSTART:
? " AND END AT ";CADDR: GOTO 32540
32530 CADDR=CADDR+1:GOTO 32510
32540 FOR I=TSTART TO CADDR: POKE I,155: NEXT I:
REM CHANGE VARIABLE NAMES
```

ED. NOTE: This program is from the DAL-ACE Newsletter of the Dallas Atari Computer Enthusiasts, April 1984.

GYRUSS *Clay Gradis*

"Battle stations! Battle stations! Code red! This is not a drill! Repeat, this is not a drill! All personnel prepare for incoming enemy!"

The battleship Gyruss became battle ready within seconds. Suddenly the space around the ship was teeming with darting enemy space craft. The great gun on the Gyruss opened up and began decimating the enemy. Still the enemy, due to their great numbers, scored hits on the Gyruss. Only the excellent maneuvering by the navigation officer saved her.

Finally the Gyruss defeated the enemy squads.

"Congratulations men, we made it safe this far, only sixteen more warps until we're home. It'll be a tough battle but I know we can handle it."

At each warp re-entry point the Gyruss was met and tested by swarms of the enemy fighters, yet still she drew closer to saving her home world, Earth.

Gyruss is a new game which will be out soon from Parker Brothers for the Atari home computer line. Gyruss is a fast paced action arcade game. The battleship Gyruss moves in a circle around the screen with her cannon pointing towards the center.

The enemy come out of warp from the enter or one of the edges and fly past the Gyruss firing missiles at her. After flying around for a short period of time they settle down in the center of the screen, form a circle and continue to fire missiles towards Gyruss. If all of the enemy are hit while they are flying before they settle down, a bonus is awarded.

If Gyruss survives through the number of warps required to reach a planet, then the planet is shown and Gyruss sinks towards the planet. At this point the player is given a chance to rest and to earn some bonus points. This is the chance round, the enemy cannot hurt Gyruss, but you can destroy them. By killing all of the enemy you earn special bonus points. In a chance round, like in the regular warp rounds, several squads of the enemy fly past. If every enemy is shot on

his first fly by then a bonus of 10,000 points is awarded, if a few are missed then the bonus points are 100 points per enemy shot.

After each chance round new types of enemies face the Gyruss.

The object in Gyruss is to warp through the planets Neptune, Uranus, Saturn, Jupiter, and Mars to reach and save the Earth from the attacking enemy.

The game itself, although very good and fast (and extremely tough in the upper levels) becomes (like any other arcade game) monotonous after a while of playing it.

The music and the graphics are Gyruss's redeeming features. The theme song is comparable to that in M.U.L.E. The graphics are some of the flashiest in currently available software (the best effect is when Gyruss is sinking towards a planet, it's fun to spin her around while she's doing this). I give Gyruss a 8 because of the over all play ability and for the graphics and sound. This is a welcome release from Parker Brothers, their best so far, but hopefully not their best in the long run.

~~~~~

#### UNCLASSIFIED ADS

For sale: Hayes Smartmodem, model 300 (300 baud). In the box with manual. \$160. Call Pat Warnshuis at 246-3724.

For sale: Osbourne Executive. Z-80 CPU, 128K RAM, CP/M+ (CP/M 3.0, RAM bank select), Amber screen, 2 Single Sided / Double Density 5 1/4" disk drives. Extended warranty available. Software: WordStar, M-BASIC, C-BASIC, SuperCalc, Personal Pearl. \$895. Call Jim Stibik at 646-3467.

For sale: Okidata (80) Moduline Printer \$150.00; File Manager+ \$30.00; 13" 'Sears Best' Black/White TV \$45.00; Call Frank Meyers at 241-9283.

# CROSSWORD CLUES

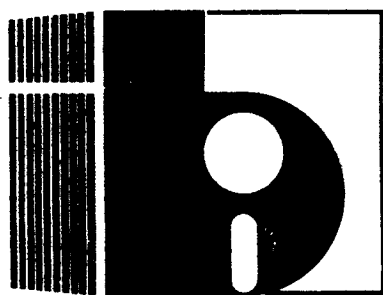
Larry Brigman

## ACROSS CLUES

1. Forth, Pascal & C in one package.
3. Read only memory
5. Custom Chip that handles player missile graphics
7. Cold start
8. 48K of \_\_\_\_\_
12. Filing type program
13. Your computer
14. Used to access the disk drive
15. To be a member of the club you must own one of these.
21. Turtle programming language
23. Flexible storage medium
24. Smallest word the computer uses
25. Most people think an atari is a \_\_\_\_\_ machine.
26. A \_\_\_\_\_ checker program
28. Mass \_\_\_\_\_
30. Goes with 'then'
31. Various useful programs
33. Egyptian sun god
34. Custom sound chip
35. Priates do this often

## DOWN CLUES

2. The Portland Atari \_\_\_\_\_
3. Random Access Memory
4. This type of program is used the most
6. Hardcopy device
9. First language most people use
10. used to get to work
11. RPN type language
16. Finish command: "\_\_\_\_\_ x got 0"
17. First Atari educational programming language
18. Used to write fast programs
19. Tape storage device
20. Club's vice-president first name
22. Circle on a disk
24. Smallest useable portion of byte
27. The atari has a built in screen \_\_\_\_\_
28. Operating \_\_\_\_\_
29. Custom display chip
32. Finish command: "\_\_\_\_\_ X to "

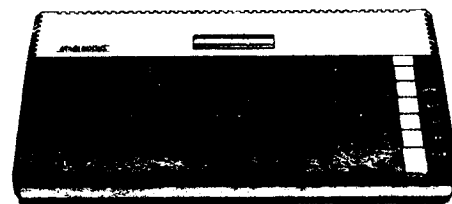


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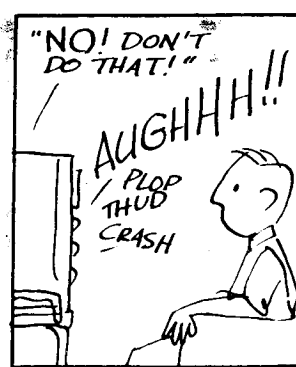
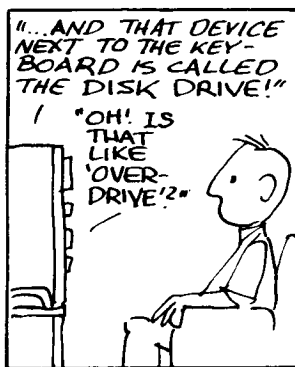
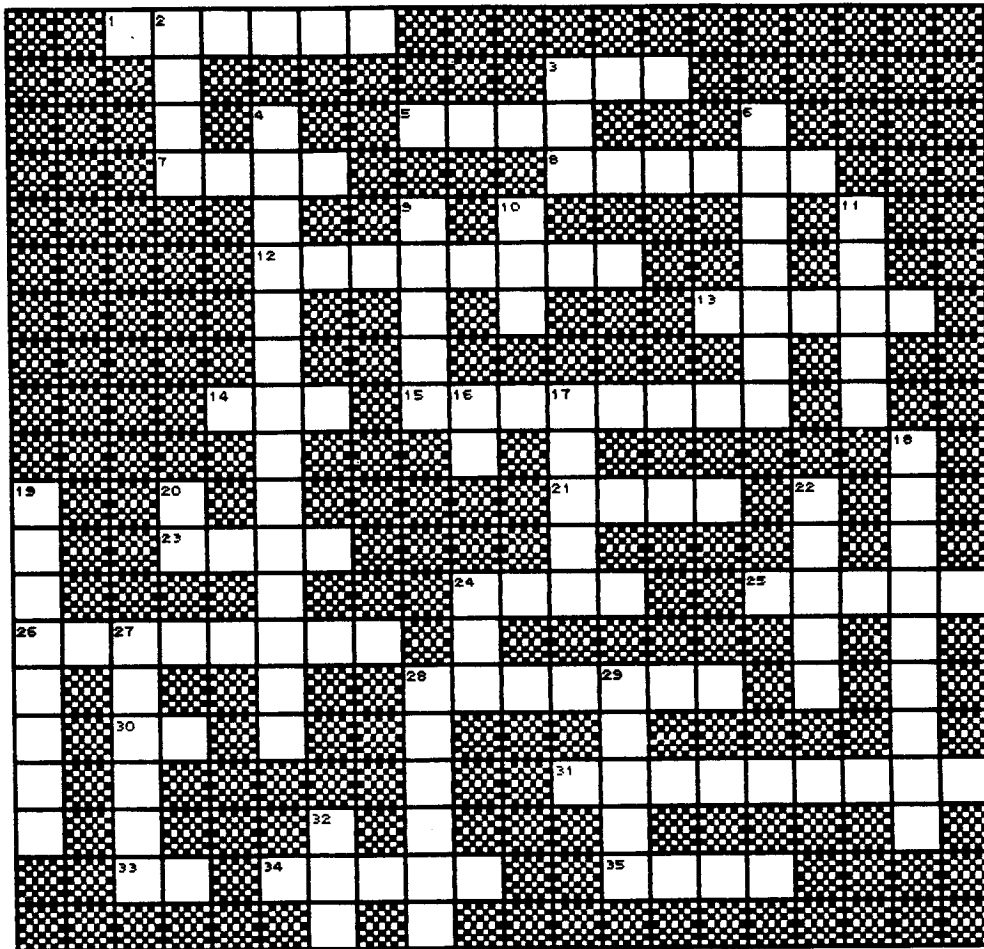
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CROSSWORD PUZZLE  
Larry Brigman

ATARI



# AMAZING ASSEMBLER

Chuck Hall

This month we are presenting a small program that was developed by a member of our Assembly Language Sig. The accompanying listings are first, an Assembly listing, and second a Basic listing. Of course the Basic listing is just a routine to punch the machine language code into Page 6. If you would like to you may rewrite the program in true Basic and see what one of the main differences between the two languages is. Believe me, you will see a large difference.

Here is the source code:

```
10 WSYNC = $D40A
20 COLP2 = $D018
30     *= $0600
40 LOOP INC X
50     STX WSYNC
60     STX COLP2
70     JMP LOOP
```

The BASIC program source is:

```
10 FOR I=1536 TO 1545
20 READ A
30 POKE I,A
40 NEXT I
50 X=USR(1536)
60 DATA 232,142,24,208,142
70 DATA 10,212,76,0,6
80 END
```

At the end of this article will appear the Assembled listing of the program. This is just a small example of what you can easily do in Machine Language. Now try to do the same thing in real BASIC and watch the results. I am sorry that those of you don't have an Assembler yet won't be able to try this in true machine language, but the Basic version above should work fine.

If you really want to see what the function of WSYNC (D40A) is, then remove line 60 from the Assembly source program or take out the fifth thru seventh decimal number in the BASIC DATA statements. Also, in the BASIC program, change the 1545 to 1542.

As you can see, the function of WSYNC is to re-align your left border on each screen scan line. It does this by causing a delay until the current scan line has been restarted on the left side. Neat Huh?

The author of this program is Dennis Griffith who is one of the founding members of our Assembly Language SIG group. Nice going Dennis.

Assembler Output

```
=D40A    10 WSYNC = $D40A
=D018    20 COLPF2 = $D018
0000     30     *= $0600
0600 E8   40 LOOP INX
0601 8E18D0 50     STX COLPF2
0604 8E0AD4 60     STX WSYNC
0607 4C0006 70     JMP LOOP
```

SYMBOLS

```
=0600 LOOP
=D018 COLPF2
=D40A WSYNC
```

## CROSSWORD SOLUTION

Larry Brigman

```
*****
* ACTION *
* L ROM *
* U W GTIA P *
* BOOT MEMORY *
* R B C I F *
* DATABASE N O *
* P S R ATARI *
* R I E T *
* DOS COMPUTER H *
* C N I A *
* C E E LOGO T S *
* A DISK O R S *
* S S BYTE GAMES *
* SPELLING I C M *
* E D N STORAGE K B *
* T I F G Y N L *
* T T S UTILITIES *
* E O F T I R *
* RA POKEY COPY *
* R M *
*****
```

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NOVEMBER

11/05 - PAC General Meeting  
11/08 - Newsletter SIG Meeting  
11/14 - Assembler SIG Meeting  
11/21 - Business SIG Meeting  
11/26 - PAC Board Meeting  
11/27 - PACE Meeting  
11/28 - Assembler SIG Meeting

DECEMBER

12/03 - PAC General Meeting  
12/06 - Newsletter SIG Meeting  
12/12 - Assembler SIG Meeting  
12/19 - Business SIG Meeting

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