

\$1.50

PORTLAND

MARCH 1985

ATARI CLUB

NEXT GENERAL MEETING

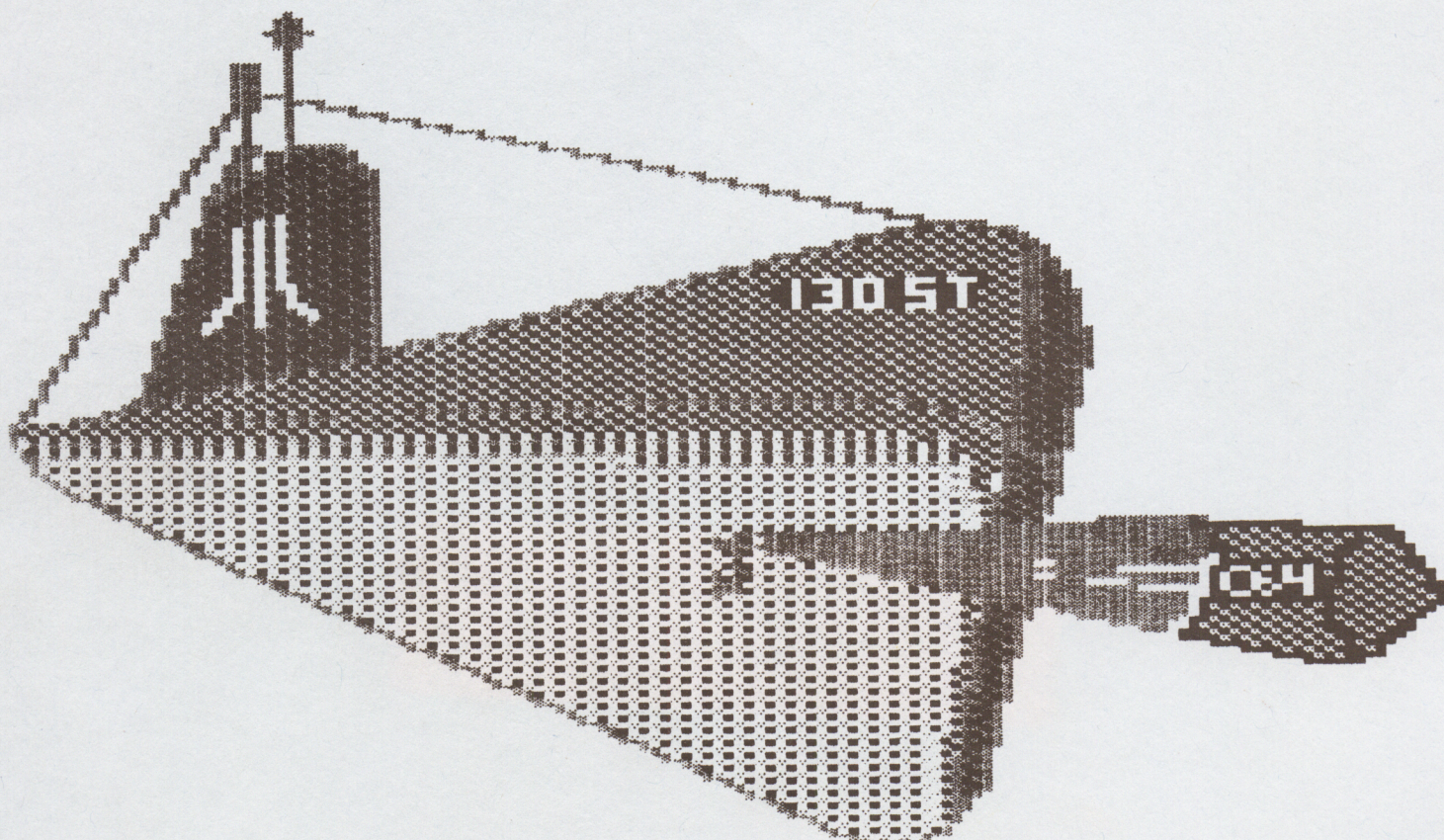
MONDAY, MARCH 4, 1985 - 7:00 PM

BPA AUDITORIUM, NE 9TH AND HOLLADAY

PAC BULLETIN BOARD SYSTEM
300 BPS - 24 HRS - 7 DAYS
503-245-9405

IN THIS ISSUE

President's Column, Chuck Hall -----	1
SIG Contact List -----	2
Board Meeting Notes, Dan Gibson -----	3
Since You Asked, Chuck Hall -----	4
Membership Secretary Notes -----	5
BBS Update, Steve Billings -----	6
The Writer's Tool, Clyde Pritchard -----	8
BASIC XL Toolkit and Runtime Package, Don Adams -----	12
Look Out, Yukon Yohan!, Larry Brigman -----	15
PAC Help Hotlines -----	15
Basic Debugger Review, Chuck Hall -----	16
DISKWIZ-II, Bill Pike -----	18
Running a BBS, Jason Brunson -----	19
MPP1000C MODEM File Transfer, Samuel Atkinson	20
Dealer's Corner, -----	20



PORTLAND ATARI CLUB

(Not affiliated with ATARI, Inc.)

PAC Board of Directors

President:	Chuck Hall	293-0552
Vice President:	Jim Link	232-1138
Secretary/Treasurer:	Dan Gibson	665-6912
Membership Secretary:	Debbie Pritchard	648-0461
Program Director:	Jim Berry	223-3712
Club Librarian:	Lloyd Suiter	648-2274
Special Interest Groups:		
Special Projects:	Dave Holliday	642-4717
Newsletter Editor:	Clyde Pritchard	648-0461
Advisor:	Lloyd Suiter	648-2274

PAC NEWSLETTER STAFF / SIG MEMBERS

Clyde Pritchard, Editor - Pat Warnshuis, Editor Emeritus

Steve Billings	- Art Director, Final layout
Debbie Billings	- Final layout
Larry Brigman	- Member
Tom Comerford	- Member
Chuck Hall	- Technical Editor, Columnist
Jean Hall	- Production, Mailing Assistant
Dave Pelinka	- Advertising Manager, Columnist
Ruth Pettinger	- Mailing Coordinator
Debbie Pritchard	- Production Coordinator

This newsletter is written and published by members of the Portland Atari Club (PAC), a group of people with a common interest; the Atari Computer. All articles are written and donated by members or are reprints of public domain material from other groups. Opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the opinions of PAC or those of any other organization. Material appearing in this newsletter may be reproduced for non-commercial use, providing credit is given to the author and PAC or other originating group. Commercial use must be coordinated through the editor. Material for publication may be submitted in the following formats; Atari DOS II text files, LJK text files, Atari Cassette text files, printed, typewritten, or legible handwritten copy. Media may be sent to the editor at the address below and will be returned to the submitter. Contact the editor for instructions on uploading submissions to the PAC BBS.

Commercial Advertising rates are; full page (7 X 9 1/2) - \$50, half page (7 X 4 1/2) - \$25, quarter page (3 1/4 X 4 1/2) - \$15. Ads must be prepaid and a 1/3 discount is given for 3 consecutive ads. The copy may vary in content, but the space must be the same in each issue. Send camera ready copy and check payable to PAC at the address below. Contact David Pelinka, Advertising Manager at 503-659-1969 (evenings) or the Editor for other arrangements. Ad deadline is the 5th of the month prior to publication. Only Authorized Atari Dealers may advertise Atari brand products.

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 ads should be sent to the following address:
Portland Atari Club, Attention: (appropriate board member), P.O. Box 1692, Beaverton, OR 97005

Printing done by SAME DAY PRINTING, 2528 S.W. Spring Garden Street, Portland -- 244-1146

CLUB BUSINESS AND ACTIVITIES

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN
Chuck Hall

I want to start off this month by apologizing to those of you who come up to talk to me during the meeting break and do not get much of a chance to talk or ask your questions. There are a good number of folks who take that opportunity to come up, and there just is not enough time to talk to all of you at length, as much as I would like to. I try to give everybody an equal shot, and if I seem short with you, or maybe do not appear to be really interested in what you are saying, it is because I try to get to everyone who does come up. We do not have a large amount of time during the break, and I try to get to as many of you as possible. I am interested in talking to each of you and get your ideas, so I want to let you know that I do care. I also want you to know that I am usually at the auditorium by 6:00 PM on meeting nights and am available at that time. I am also the last one out at night, so I have some time after the meeting. We do have to be out of the auditorium by 10:00 PM. You also have my number in the newsletter. Please feel free to call. I only ask that you do call between 7:30 PM and 11:00 PM. If I am not able to come to the phone, leave your name and number on the answering box and I will get back to you.

The next thing I want to talk about is that we have two openings on the Board of Directors. We are still looking for a Special Interests Group (SIG) Coordinator. This person helps to keep the groups going and provides a point of contact between individuals, groups, and the Board itself. This person plays a very important part within our group, and until we have a volunteer, we are not providing our membership a valuable benefit. If you think you might be interested or you just have a question about the position, then give me, or any board member a call. It really is not that difficult of a job, and if you are interested in participating in the running of the club, then this is your opportunity. The second position we have open is a new one. We are seeking an individual to act as a Master at Arms. This person will be responsible for the door at the meetings, keeping the quiet during our presentations, and making sure that there is no wrong doing within the auditorium. Again if you are interested in either position, please let us know as soon as possible.

As I mentioned during the last meeting I received a call from Sigmund Hartmann last January 19th. Mr. Hartmann is the President of ATARI

Software. To say the least, I was very surprised, and pleased. The call was result of a letter I had sent to him which introduced myself and the Portland Atari Club, and explained what some of our desires and needs were. (I also sent letters to 6 of the other officials at ATARI, but Mr. Hartmann was the only one to respond). Mr. Hartmann assured me that Atari would keep us informed as to what was going on. Also if there was anything we have not been able to get that originally came from ATARI, we can let him know and he will try to get it for us. He has a warehouse full of video and computer software he would like to move. Any suggestions would be welcome. Of course we are all interested in any computer software if we can get it at a low enough cost, but I don't know what to say about the video software. Maybe some of you that still use those machines could come up with something. Anyone having ideas for software, whether new or upgrades of current offerings; or if you are developing something that you think might be of interest to Atari, then let him know. They are looking to support individuals and firms with solid ideas of software development. I plan to keep up a steady dialogue with Mr. Hartmann, so if you want to pass your ideas on to me, I will see that he gets the information. I will also insure that you get full credit. You see, he also gets our newsletter so he will read this also. (I hope). We also discussed the possibility of Beta testing or evaluating new products. I told him I would pass on names of those that were interested, after they let me know what their interest was. So if anyone is interested, I will need a written application from you. It should include the following:

- 1) Why do you want to become involved in this task.
- 2) What is your background that makes you believe you are qualified for testing and evaluating Atari products.
- 3) What type of products would you like to evaluate.
- 4) What form will your evaluation take.

I want people that are willing to do this for Atari as well as for themselves. Keep in mind that you will be acting as a representative of the club in this activity. Again, let me remind you that this is just a possibility and nothing firm at this point. But get your application to me and I will pass them on to Sigmund Hartmann.

I have already sent a second letter to Mr.

continued...

Hartmann concerning several ideas I have had for software and those of others I have talked with. I have also passed on the names of our dealers and some of the folks in our club that have developed software that bears looking at by Atari. I feel that it is very important to keep this channel of communication open and will continue to try contact other officers at Atari Corp. I would really like to get someone from Atari to come up and speak at one of our meetings. Who knows, maybe some day.

We will be taking a closer look at the large screen projector we used at the last meeting. If we can get a better demonstration than what we had last Monday, then maybe we can show you the machine in a better light next time. I am not making excuses for the machine, but I think that if we know more about it and how it really works, we should be able to come up with a better picture. For those of you that are new to the club, we have been looking for a large screen projector to use at our meetings for over a year now. We have been renting one each night, but now are in a position to purchase one if it is reasonable. We have \$3000 in our fund and this latest machine, even with the purchase of a screen to go with it, falls well within that. I did not have any trouble seeing it from the back of the auditorium or from the aisles. It might mean that those of you sitting in the side sections will have to move towards the middle of the auditorium more, but there were plenty of seats available last meeting. If anyone has any suggestions towards this subject please let us know.

We did have a good turn out at the last meeting. I did not get a head count, but would estimate that we had at least 400 people there. The one surprising thing is the number of new people we had. That means the word is getting out. And you are responsible for that. I want to thank you for your efforts. Usually at the first of the year, we drop approximately 150 memberships, then work all year to get our number back up again. Well, this year was a little different. We dropped only 63, and most of those are already back. Plus we are adding 10 to 20 more members more per month. I do not believe that we are going to have much trouble in reaching my goal of 500 family memberships this year. Maybe I was being too conservative. Anyway keep up the good work.

We will have new membership cards for you at the next meeting. Debbie Pritchard, our membership

secretary will have more on that for you later in this newsletter. Please be sure to read her piece and get the latest information on what you have to do to get each member of your family their own card.

That is enough for this time. I hope you are all enjoying our meetings and the new offerings that we are attempting to get out to you. Keep your suggestions and comments coming. We can only get better if you help us.

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	
Elanna Schlichting	285-4471
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

BOARD MEETING NOTES
Dan Gibson

The January board meeting was held at 7pm on January 23rd at IB Computers. Attending were the following, Lloyd Suiter, Jim Link, Tom Comerford, Clyde and Debbie Pritchard, Chuck and Jean Hall, Dave Holliday, Dan Gibson, and Steve and Debbie Billings.

VANCOUVER CHAPTER OF PAC

Forty seven of our members live in the southwest Washington area. There was a meeting on January 27th in Vancouver to gather information on establishing a Vancouver Chapter of the PAC. The thought is, we would provide the same benefits as regular PAC members receive; Club Newsletter, Discounts on Club Software, etc. and pay the normal \$20.00 per year dues. We could possibly support and regulate a BBS for them and provide space in the newsletter. Chuck attended this meeting and reported back that they will form their own chapter and hold their own meetings.

DOING OUR OWN DISKS

The board decided to do its own disk duplicating in house instead of paying an outside vendor. Volunteers should contact Chuck Hall. This will save us 99 cents per disk.

GOING PUBLIC

This is the year that the PAC will be going public like never before. We would like to set up a booth in shopping center malls and piggyback other public events and use video tape demos, projection TV, as well as computers to get the message out. We need to contact the malls to get more information. We will discuss this in further detail at the next board meeting.

THE BUDGET

Our secretary treasurer will be developing a budget for the 1985 year and will also be investigating interest-bearing accounts for PAC funds. This will be completed by the next board meeting.

AN INSIDE ATARI CONTACT

Chuck sent letters to various Atari officials and received a telephone call from Sigmund Hartmann, Atari's software president. Mr. Hartmann seemed genuinely interested in providing our user group with as much support as possible. There is a good possibility that the PAC will be used as a Beta tester for new Atari hardware and software. Chuck will be taking applications of those interested. He also indicated that Atari has a warehouse full of software that it wants to get rid of and would be willing to help us get any Atari software that we might want. Mr. Hartmann

would like to arrange for a meeting of heads of Atari user groups sometime this summer and would like our input for new software ideas. He also said Atari is switching from a computer game company to a micro computer company and will publish entertaining and easy to use productivity programs. Atari will be very selective about games, only publishing games that they believe have a real chance to become major hits. He will be providing us with the new DOS 2.5 when available as well as keeping us informed as to what is going on at Atari. Finally, Mr. Hartmann said he would like to visit our general meeting after the Germany show this spring.

FEBRUARY MEETING

We will be testing out the two new projection TV systems from Sony. Bob Lindstrom, of the Oregonian, will report on the winter CES show. Lloyd will demonstrate two new PAC disks, PAC adventure games, and PAC games 5. Lloyd will also introduce the disk introduction contest. Duane Bolster will demonstrate his two fine programs (The Midas Touch and Sign Language Fun - Advanced Finger Spelling). Finally, the HomePak Word Processor, Communications, and Filing System will be shown.

MISCELLANEOUS

We would like to appoint a Master at Arms to control membership card check-in. We are going to be issuing an I.D. card to each member in a family. We will be selling cassettes for 50 cents each for blank ones and \$1.00 each for those containing software.

TREASURER'S REPORT

As of this writing, the balance in our checking account stands at \$5,281, which includes \$2,996 for the big screen TV fund. At the last meeting software sales totaled \$280 and T-shirt sales were \$52.

SINCE YOU ASKED...
Chuck Hall

J.S. wrote and suggested:

You should seriously consider breaking into two groups - West side and east side. The club as is, is really too large. This discourages people from attending and makes getting to know other people difficult.

Dear J.S.

Our club is a large organization, and we are constantly growing. I feel that we will continue in this trend for some time to come. Since we are so large, providing a social forum for the membership is a problem that is under constant discussion. We realize that it is very hard for some people to get to know each other within the confines of a monthly meeting, especially one that is somewhat structured. We have taken a couple of steps to hopefully help with this. I am trying to get the meetings opened up some. By leaving the business part of the meeting to the newsletter, we can bypass most of the boring type of stuff we used to have at the beginning of each meeting. Now you just have to put up with me, and special announcements we may have to make from time to time. We want the meetings to become more free and enjoyable. Secondly, I have put a large amount of emphasis on the development and continuation of SIG groups. This is the real place where you can get to meet the people that have the same interests (or not) as you. These are normally smaller size groups at different individuals homes or places of business. Check the SIG section of this newsletter and give one of the leaders a call. They will be more than happy to have you join their next meeting. To address your question more directly: This is the Portland Atari Club. I don't recognize any difficulties for people from anywhere in our metropolitan area to attend any of our club functions. I have lived in cities much larger than this one, and believe me, the small amount of time it takes to drive from one part of Portland to another is miniscule compared to some areas I have lived in. There is one exception I have made to this. We have many members (47 at last count) that live in SW Washington. As far north as Longview and Kelso. We have initiated the possibility of forming a Vancouver or SW Washington chapter. They will be nothing more than a large SIG group in reality. I truly believe that that is where the social functions of our club thrive. Join or start a group, and really begin participating in the club.

(For those that always ask - SIG stands for Special Interest Groups).

My second letter this month came as a response to J.R.'s (no not from Dallas) letter last month. He wrote again as follows:

Dear Chuck:

Thank you for your reply to my questions. I would appreciate some amplification, however.

I still question whether or not the Club needlessly spent \$40. I am somewhat familiar with bulk mailings. When you took out your mailing permit in Beaverton last November, didn't you have to pay \$40 for your permit number and \$40 for your mailing fee? And then didn't you have to pay another \$40 to renew your permit for 1985? If so, it looks to me like the total cost that could have been avoided had you waited until 1985 to switch would have been \$40 plus the \$6.67 lost on the Portland permit for a total of \$46.67. Is this correct? I await your answer and I'll enclose a self-addressed stamped envelope for your convenience.

Regarding the AMTYPE service: while it may be true that you never denied the source of the programs, isn't it also true that neither did you openly state the facts? Let's be honest, there was only one reason that this thing was called the "Club Typing Service" and that was to make people think that the actual typing was done by the club. This subject is certainly not earth-shaking in its importance but is like the tip of the iceberg: how much more of the same kind of thing is hidden from view?

Thanks again for your answers.

J.R.

Dear J.R.

By the postmark on your letter, it looks as though you work for the Post Office. No wonder your interest. Yes you were right about the extra \$40 for the 1985 permit fee. We were under the assumption that the fee ran for a year from the time you purchased it and not annually beginning January 1. This only came to light about the same time I received your letter. As with the rest of our club officials, the newsletter staff also has turn-around, and we don't know 'all' there is to know about what we do in our efforts to provide the best service to the club. None of us are in

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY'S NOTES
Debbie Pritchard

this as full time professionals. We were not aware at the time we made the change that we would have to pay another \$40 fee at the first of the year. If we would have had more people, that were knowledgeable of this operation to help us out, then we would not have made this error.

As far as AMTYPE was concerned, we never intended for anyone to think that we were actually doing the typing ourselves. That thought never crossed our minds. We thought we would try to provide this service and see what response there was. It was just a small money making venture that was very successful. The response was surprisingly great. We usually sold out immediately. The fact that AMTYPE is no longer supplying us the disks, is the only reason we no longer offer the service. We have had many requests from members to provide this service in other ways. We are open to offers from members who would like to participate in this activity.

As far as your suggestion that this is something that we are hiding from our members, that it may be only the tip of the iceberg: I take great personal offense along with the rest of our Board of Directors. Our meetings are open to the public at all times. We publish the date, time, and place of the meetings and any club member that wishes to participate may. This has always been the case and will continue to be so. The only people that have a right to accuse anyone in this club of wrong doing are those that care enough about how the club is run to participate. I will not take this type of accusation from someone sitting in the background and trying to pick apart the work we do. This is a labor of love on the part of those that are trying to make this club successful. If you do not like the way we do it, you certainly have the right to express your opinions, but we will not condone any personal attacks on the integrity of our officers or membership. We give everybody in our membership the opportunity to help us run this club and to make it better for everyone. Charges from one that doesn't know what it is to work with this group month after month, only belittle the person making them. Subject closed!

C.H.

Ok folks, that is all for this month. Please keep your questions and comments coming. As you can see, I will respond.

As we promised, we are working on converting to a membership card system that will let us give each family member a card. One of the problems we have to deal with is how to get the names of your family! This is where you come in. We need HELP! Please supply us with the names of those people in your family that require a card. Elsewhere in this issue you will find a form for you to fill out that will supply us with this information. Please complete the form and return it by mail to the P.O. Box listed, or bring it to the next general meeting. One question we have been asked is how do we define "family membership", as most other organizations do, your immediate family, i.e. parents and children under the age of 18.

One of my concerns was how to keep this project from becoming a nightmare to keep track of, I believe that we have found a way to get these cards to you with a minimum of confusion. At first, we planned to pass them on to you at the March meeting, however, when we thought about the confusion that would cause we came up with plan B. We will take all of the forms and the original list and complete the membership cards that have been requested, then in your April issue of the newsletter (delivered to you approx. the third week of March) you will find an envelope stapled inside with your cards. I will need the form returned by the first week of March.

I appreciate your assistance with this project and your patience. After this is in place I am positive that the maintenance will be easy to control.

Once again I would like you to join with me in extending a welcome to the new members and their families. We hope your association with the Portland Atari Club will be long and fruitful.

David Akers	Sam Kranzthor
Valentin Alver	Frank Long
Peter Martin Arneson	Robert F. Lyons
Thomas A. Brown, Jr.	Bill Markwart
Art Cashin	J. Walter Matson
John Dahl	Craig L. Morris
Mike Doktor	Kathy Neuharth
Steve Elia	Quinten J. Rippey
Howard Foreman, Jr.	Tom Ruddy
Mike Gurry	Kurk Spendlove
Bruce Henke	Leroy Swanner, Jr.
Tom Houston	Woodland Elem. School
John M. Johnson	

BBS UPDATE *Steve Billings*

The P.A.C. Bulletin Board has been running well lately. We are getting to know its little eccentricities, so we are having less trouble keeping it running smoothly.

The callers list is now up to about 275 users, that is quite a few and it makes it difficult to call in sometimes. We ask that you limit calls to one a day, and restrict the number of downloads to one or two at the most each call, so that other users have more opportunity to call in. Thanks.

Of the users about 125 are P.A.C. members. The BBS has helped generate a number of new members for the club. Only members are allowed access to the download files, so curiosity gets non-members to ask questions about the club and its other advantages.

Some people who, I guess, are still contemplating adding a modem to their system, have asked what is available on the BBS download files. For their enlightenment and as a reference to users there follows a list of the sections and filenames. Keep in mind that this list changes often as new files are added and old ones taken off. We are trying to keep a library of all the files that appear on the BBS, it is not very organized yet, but if there is a public domain program that you missed or are looking for let the sysop know and we will try and find it.

COMMUNICATION FILES

FILENAME	TRANSLATE	SECTORS	LANGUAGE
----------	-----------	---------	----------

AMODEM52	ATASCII	0129	OBJECT
MAXTERM	ATASCII	0127	SAV BAS
MAXMAC	ATASCII	0008	SAV BAS
MPP1000	ATASCII	0018	TEXT
TERM	ATASCII	0062	ACTION!
TERM1	ATASCII	0042	ACTION!
TERM2	ATASCII	0024	ACTION!
BLK10	ATASCII	0014	ACTION!
X185D0CS	ATASCII	0016	TEXT
X185PLUS	ATASCII	0137	SAV BAS

DEMO FILES

FILENAME	TRANSLATE	SECTORS	LANGUAGE
----------	-----------	---------	----------

NORAD	ATASCII	0085	SAV BAS
MFWB	ATASCII	0062	ACTION!
GRAPH3D	ATASCII	0018	LIS BAS
BOUNCE	ATASCII	0022	ACTION!
TLT2	ATASCII	0046	ACTION!
LOGO	ATASCII	0066	ACTION!
GODD	ATASCII	0006	OBJECT
CES	ATASCII	0151	OBJECT

GAME FILES

FILENAME	TRANSLATE	SECTORS	LANGUAGE
----------	-----------	---------	----------

DARKHRSE	ATASCII	0099	SAV BAS
ADVENTX5	ATASCII	0101	SAV BAS
MEGAMAN2	ATASCII	0105	LIS BAS
TOWERS	ATASCII	0038	SAV BAS
GAMBLER	ATASCII	0159	SAV BAS
HIDDENMZ	ATASCII	0016	LIS BAS
HIGHSEAS	ATASCII	0080	SAV BAS
CHES	ATASCII	0080	SAV BAS

MUSIC FILES

FILENAME	TRANSLATE	SECTORS	LANGUAGE
----------	-----------	---------	----------

AMSMKE	ATASCII	0099	SAV BAS
STRWAY2	ATASCII	0111	AMS
EWOK2	ATASCII	0042	AMS
PRESSURE	ATASCII	0123	AMS

APPLICATION FILES

FILENAME	TRANSLATE	SECTORS	LANGUAGE
----------	-----------	---------	----------

WEATHER	ATASCII	0038	SAV BAS
LABELER	ATASCII	0058	OBJECT
MATTEDIT	ATASCII	0109	SAV BAS
DISKBLR	ATASCII	0024	SAV BAS
BANNRPTR	ATASCII	0016	LIS BAS
KEYPAD	ATASCII	0026	SAV BAS
CHECKBK	ATASCII	0099	LIS BAS
INFOBITS	ATASCII	0018	SAV BAS

TEXT FILES

FILENAME	TRANSLATE	SECTORS	LANGUAGE
DOSWZDOC	ATASCII	0054	TEXT
ACTNTERM	ATASCII	0042	TEXT

UTILITY FILES

FILENAME	TRANSLATE	SECTORS	LANGUAGE
ASM2BAS	ATASCII	0024	SAV BAS
RESXLDOS	ATASCII	0020	SAV BAS
HBUG	ATASCII	0038	SAV BAS
SYSTAT	ATASCII	0032	SAV BAS
DISKCAT	ATASCII	0028	SAV BAS
DISKPEEK	ATASCII	0062	OBJECT
DOSWIZ	ATASCII	0111	OBJECT
EXAMDOS	ATASCII	0010	LIS BAS
POLYCOPY	ATASCII	0032	LIS BAS
MICRODOS	ATASCII	0012	SAV BAS

There are obviously too many files to try and describe them all and to tell you the truth I have not tested them all since some were already on file when I took over the system. If you download a file and find that it does not work or if you cannot figure out what it is for, let me know so that I can remove it from the listings or try and determine if it does what it is supposed to.

Contact us if there are any improvements or changes you would like to see on the BBS. We are open to suggestions and would like to hear any of your suggestions, comments, and questions. Please, contact Debbie or me through the BBS or by letter to the club Post Office box.

Thanks for calling and see you on the board or at the meeting next month.

ComputerolaComputerolaComputerolaComputerolaComputerolaComputerolaC

o
m
p
u
t
e
r
o
l
a
C
o
m
p
u
t
e
r
o
l
a

COMPUTEROLA HAS IT ALL

CALL

239-4315

DRIVES...MONITORS...PRINTERS...SOFTWARE...HARDWARE

o
m
p
u
t
e
r
o
l
a
C
o
m
p
u
t
e
r
o
l
a

239-4315**239-4315**239-4315*239-4315**239-4315**239-4315**239-4315

NEWS AND REVIEWS

THE WRITER'S TOOL
Clyde Pritchard

The Writer's Tool is a word processing program from Madison Micro and Optimized Systems Software. The package includes an OSS Super-Cartridge, a Utility and Printer Driver Disk, and Documentation. The documentation is in a bright yellow, 7" by 9" 3-ring binder, and includes a Tutorial section for beginners, a Reference Manual for advanced users, and a command reference card. The price of the package has just been reduced from \$129.95 to \$99.95. The package will also include a utility to create printer drivers, and a spelling checker in the near future. I learned this from Mark Taketa of OSS Customer Relations and Marketing when I spoke to him a few days ago. The "near future" may be by the time you read this review, so keep your eyes and ears open. All current users that completed and mailed in the Software Registration Form for the Writer's Tool will receive the new Printer Driver Utility and Spelling Checker at no cost as soon as they are available, according to Mr. Taketa.

The Writer's Tool (hereafter called "WT") gives the Atari user another option in the selection of a word processor. It is definitely one of the best Atari word processors, but like each of the others, has its own advantages, disadvantages and quirks. As I have said in the past, one person's advantage is another person's disadvantage, and vice versa.

When the WT has finished booting, you are in Edit Mode. Edit Mode is used to create a new document, or to modify an existing document. All standard Atari screen editor functions are supported except clear screen. Additional editing functions allow you to select text insert or type-over mode, select a block or underline cursor in type-over mode (a vertical bar cursor is used in insert mode), convert lower case letters to upper case and vice versa, move the cursor to the beginning or end of a line, move the cursor to the next word, scroll forward or backward one page, scroll to the beginning or end of your text, restore the last deleted line, insert a large block of space (used in type-over mode to insert large amounts of text), a text join command to remove extra spaces between words, turn word wrap on or off, and block mark, copy and delete functions. Another nice feature allows you to use the cursor movement keys (up, down, left, right arrows) without holding down the control key. Once

you get used to this, it is real nice (you use the control key to type the characters -, =, + and *.) There is a status line at the bottom of the screen that tells you when you have selected this mode, called "cursor exchange", and also if you are in "caps lock" or "inverse video" modes. There are also commands to toggle the display of this status line off and on.

Back to type-over mode versus insert mode for a short explanation. Both of these modes have specific uses. Insert mode is used when you need to insert some new text within the body of a document. However, if you want to rewrite a section of the document, and have only insert mode available (like AtariWriter), you have to delete the old section and then type in the new words or sentences. When you have type-over mode, you can just start typing over the top of the text you are rewriting, without the need to spend time deleting the old text. The other problem with insert mode, especially in a long document, is that the program is spending so much time pushing down the text after the point of insert that it can't accept keystrokes very quickly. This means that your typing speed slows down, sometimes to the point that you get quite frustrated, and the closer you are to the top of the document, the slower things go. This is where the function to insert a large block of space comes in. You use this function to open a "window" in the document, then use type-over mode to enter the new text. Then you use the delete space to next character (text join) function to get rid of the section of the window that you didn't use. The text entry in type-over mode is done at top speed in this window, even if you are close to the top of a very large document.

The block commands supported by the WT allow you to mark a block of text by entering control-M at the beginning and end of a block of text. Then, you can copy the marked block by moving the cursor to the point that you want the block to be copied, and entering control-C. The block stays marked until you delete the block markers by moving the cursor to each marker and entering control-Delete. To move a block, you do a block copy, then enter control-X to delete the marked block. The ability to move a block with a single command would be a nice addition to the WT. Marked block appear in inverse video with a block marker at each end. You cannot copy a block past the end of existing text,

but you can enter a "RETURN" at the end of your document to bypass this limitation.

The WT Main Menu (selected with the OPTION key or by typing control-0), is used to call up the Search, Diskio or Print Menus, Clear Text before or after the cursor location, or return to Edit Mode. The Main Menu instantly pops up at the bottom of the screen when selected, and any function you select is executed just as fast.

The Search Menu prompts you for string search and search/replace functions. You can use any valid Atari character with these functions; this means any normal, inverse or control character. I know that AtariWriter doesn't allow you use control characters, and I don't think that Letter Perfect does either. If you use the search only function, the program finds the first occurrence of the search string, puts the cursor at the beginning of the string, and puts you in Edit Mode. Then you can change the text or continue searching. If you change the text, you can resume the search by entering control-S (you don't have to re-key the search string.) The search/replace function locates the first occurrence of the string, and then allows you to verify that you want the string replaced, skip to the next occurrence without replacing the string, or quit and return to Edit Mode without making the replacement. Unfortunately, there is no global search/replace function to let you replace a string throughout the entire document, you have to verify every replacement by pressing "R" (you don't have to press "RETURN", so you can just hold down "R" and get the job done fairly quickly.)

The Diskio Menu takes up a full screen, and allows you to select a disk Directory, Load a file, Save a file, Delete a file, Initialize (Format) a disk, or return to Edit Mode. All of these functions work on drives 1-4, although only drives 1 and 2 are listed on the directory function prompt. Single, Enhanced (1050), and Double density drives are supported by the WT, which supports "virtually" any Atari compatible DOS. The Diskio Menu also includes a status display that shows the position of the cursor in the document, the number of characters in the document, the end of the document buffer, and the amount of space available for entering more text. The WT gives you a document buffer of just over

24,000 characters on a 48K Atari 800. I don't know if you get more space on an 800XL or an 800 with more than 48K. The cursor position is important, because it is used by the Load and Save functions. Files are loaded and saved starting at the cursor position. This "feature" allows you to append a file from disk to the document in memory. If the cursor is not beyond the end of the text in memory, you are prompted to verify that you understand that the file to be loaded will destroy any text following the cursor. If you don't want to do it, you can abort the load at this point. The reason that the Save function also uses the cursor position is that if you want to merge a file from disk rather than append a file, you must save all text after the point you want to merge in the file from disk to a temporary file, then load the file from disk (which writes over the text after the cursor), then move the cursor to the new end of the text in memory, then append the temporary file. I wish the WT had a real merge function like AtariWriter, because it is less work, and safer too. When you save a file and the cursor is not at the beginning of the text buffer, you are prompted to verify that you want to do a partial save. If you don't want a partial save, you answer no, and the entire buffer is written to disk. The other prompt in the file save process is the filename prompt. The program keeps track of the last filename (and drive) used, and asks you to verify that it is the one you want. If you answer no, you are prompted for a new filename. After the file is saved, the directory of the disk to which the file was written is displayed, and a one line Diskio Menu appears at the bottom of the screen. The directory function displays the directory of the selected drive in two columns, and the one line version of the Diskio Menu appears at the bottom of the screen. To print a directory, you hold down the SELECT key while pressing 1, 2, 3 or 4 for the directory display, and release it after printing starts. The only thing missing from the Diskio Menu (other than the merge function) is a file rename function.

The Print Menu also takes a full screen. Most of the screen is taken up with a display of the default format parameters, and a status line that shows the active printer driver file and the number of words in the document. The last line on the Print Menu is a function prompt that allows you to change the format parameters, print the

continued...

file, link files, change the default format parameter or printer driver file, or return to Edit Mode. When you select the change format parameters option, you are prompted to enter one or more format commands. You enter the commands exactly as you do when you embed them in your document. This function also allows you to set the view/print option, which serves two purposes. First, it allows you to preview the entire file on the screen before printing. This print preview function is probably the poorest feature of the WT. All you get to see is the left side of the "printout". AtariWriter's print preview is the best that I have seen on the Atari, and even Letter Perfect's wrap-around method is better than this one. The second purpose of the view/print option is to allow you to start printing a document after page 1. It doesn't allow you to stop printing after a specified page number, but the print function supports a "quit" function. Once you have your format the way you want it, you can use the Print option to print your document. You can use single sheets or continuous forms depending on how your format is defined. Once the file starts printing, you can pause printing by pressing "P", abort printing and return to Edit Mode by pressing "E", or abort printing and return to the Print Menu by pressing "Q". The pause and abort functions are quite nice, and the aborted printout always finishes at the end of a line, rather than somewhere in the middle. The next function on the Print Menu is Link Printing. This allows you to print a document that is too large to fit in memory, and therefore has been saved in multiple sections. The link print feature of the WT doesn't require you to use a file chaining method like some systems do, where you put the name of the next file to be printed at the end of each file in the chain. You can do that if you like, but the WT allows you to set-up one file that contains only link commands, and then print your files using it as a "program" to drive the print process. Link print commands can be nested too. The last function on the Print Menu is Merged Printing. This is a "mail merge" function, and allows you to use a template document and merge in data such as names and addresses at print time. This feature loads a utility routine from disk. The merge print feature is another thing that the WT could do better. It supports only a simple one for one merge just like AtariWriter, versus the capability of Letter Perfect to have one field in

the "database" repeated multiple times in the document (or not printed at all. The WT merge function does support "databases" with repeating groups of data, such as invoices, where each customers record can have a different number of line items. This does seem to be an exclusive feature of the WT versus other word processors for the Atari. The merge function of the WT also lets you create a "database" by defining a template and direction the output to disk rather than the printer. It does not allow you to direct other printed output to disk.

Another nice print feature supported by the WT is double column printing. If your printer supports it, and a printer driver for your printer is one of those supplied by the WT, it will work automatically. Otherwise, you will be in manual mode, and have to roll back the paper to print the second column. Right now, I have to use manual mode, but I hope that the new printer driver utility will resolve that problem for me. Double column printing sure is nice for the newsletter staff, and helps us put the newsletter together faster with less work.

The WT also supports Soft Hyphens, which allow you to specify where you want a word hyphenated if it won't completely fit at the end of a print line. You can specify soft hyphens in hyphenated words, and only one hyphen will print if the word has to be split between two lines. You can also specify "hard spaces", which can be used to keep the right justification feature from inserting extra spaces where you don't want them. It also supports split justification, which allows a line to have the left side left justified, and the right side right justified. You can also specify that the left and right sides be alternated from page to page; for example, you could set-up a footing line so that the page number would always print on the outside edge of each page, with the chapter title on the inside edge.

The WT allows Heading and Footing blocks to be any length you want, as long as they don't add up to more than the total page length. You can specify special formats for the headings, footings, and the body of the document, so the WT seems to give you all of the flexibility needed to print almost anything you could come up with.

As I mentioned earlier, format commands can be specified in a default file, on the Print Menu, or embedded in a document. The format commands are entered on format lines, which begin with a period (with the exception of heading, footing and comment lines.) You can specify the page length, line spacing, starting line of the footing block, page ejects, printer font, left margin, indentation, line length, tab columns, page number, line centering and print pause in addition to other options mentioned earlier. There is also a conditional page eject option, but I won't get into that in this review.

The disk based format default files are created by a utility program. The utility program is written in BASIC, therefore the format files are set-up "off-line". This means that you need to be sure of the values that you want to use, because if you aren't, you will be rebooting time after time until you get them right. Remember though, you don't have to use a default format file, there is a built-in set of defaults, and you can also change the format parameters on the Print Menu or within the document. The purpose of the default format files is to allow you to set-up your own default file or files in order to customize the WT for yourself. In addition to print format settings, the default file also allows you to specify which speaker (console or monitor) the program will use, the cursor flash rate, and the color and luminance of the screen foreground, background, and characters. The default format file can be loaded automatically when the WT boots, or you can load it from the Print Menu.

The WT supports many of the "popular" printers used with Atari computers. This means that there are pre-defined printer drivers supplied with the package. This support allows you to use features like Emphasized print, Double-strike, Italics, Double-wide, Underline, Superscript and Subscript without having to enter the actual escape/control code sequences. If your printer is not supported, you enter your escape/control code sequences between a pair of shift-control-P characters (at least until the printer driver generator utility is out.) For those of us used to doing this in AtariWriter, it's no big deal. The reference manual has an appendix to help you figure out what keystrokes to

use for each control code.

The documentation for the WT is very good, both in appearance and content. The table of contents is complete, and there is also a combined alphabetical index for the Tutorial and Reference Manual.

Well, believe it or not, I haven't covered all of the in's and out's of The Writer's Tool, but I hope that I have given you some understanding of its features and capabilities. I may be giving a presentation on it at the next meeting, but I can't say for sure at this time.

The latest word processor for the Atari was demonstrated at the meeting last month. It is part of the Home-Pak system by Russ Wetmore, and is marketed by Batteries Included, who is also supposed to be coming out with another word processing program for the Atari, called Paper Clip. Home-Pak includes a word processor, a communications program, and a filing program. It looks pretty nice, especially with a price tag of only \$50. Paper Clip is billed as a "professional" word processor, but we'll have to wait and see.

These word processors, as well as AtariWriter, Bank Street Writer, Letter Perfect, Text Wizard (the new version is called Letter Wizard), and The Writer's Tool are worth your evaluation. You can find people that swear by (and at) any one (or all) of them, you just have to make your choice based on your needs and experience. If you don't know your needs, and don't have experience with word processing programs this can be quite a chore. Your best bet is to find a dealer (or friend) that will let you try before you buy. I know that it can be hard for a beginner to give a word processing program much of a tryout, but you should give it a shot. In any case, you may have to buy your first word processor on faith, and use it to learn enough to make a better choice, unless you happen to pick the one that's right for you the first time (it's possible.) If you have some questions about The Writer's Tool, or any other Atari Word Processor, give me a call and I'll try to answer your questions.

BASIC XL TOOLKIT AND RUNTIME PACKAGE

Von Adams

The BASIC XL Toolkit is a group of programs written to demonstrate some of the features of BASIC XL and to teach some of the basic features of BASIC programming. The diskette also contains the BASIC XL Runtime Package, which is a stripped down version of BASIC XL. More on this latter. Also included is an enhancement to BASIC XL, which when used will give you 6 new commands (keywords) for BASIC XL.

First of all, I would like to comment on the thorough job that OSS Precision Software has done in the documentation for this toolkit. I get the feeling that OSS feels that the users of this toolkit will be beginners and not the advanced user. Each program has a good description of how the program works and what it is trying to accomplish. The other two toolkits that are produced by OSS (the MAC65 Toolkit and the Action Toolkit) are not this thorough, even though they contain sample programs. It's unfortunate that they can't spend the same amount of time and money to produce good documentation for these other programs, since advanced users can use good documentation too.

The Runtime package that comes with this toolkit is BASIC XL without the editing capabilities of the cartridge. The command set is complete except for the commands LIST, NEW, RENUM, TRACEOFF, ENTER, DEL, TRACE, AND LVAR. If you name the runtime package as the AUTORUN.SYS file on a disk and then name the BASIC XL program AUTORUN.BXL, your program will be automatically loaded on booting of the system. THIS IS THE ONLY WAY THAT YOU CAN GET THE BASIC XL RUNTIME PACKAGE TO LOAD A PROGRAM WHEN FIRST RUN. If you wish to run a group of BASIC XL programs, you will have to create some kind of a menu program (or use the one on the disk) and call that menu program AUTORUN.BXL. Then you can chose which program you want from the menu.

The runtime package will handle any trapped errors properly and any untrapped errors will give you the message to hit START to perform a RunTime Restart, which is the same as typing RUN if you where using the cartridge BASIC XL. The only incompatibility is the fact that the runtime package cannot use the bank select ROM that the BASIC XL cartridge uses, so instead of being 8 kilobytes long, it is 11 kilobytes long. This

could cause some problems if your program is large.

The sample programs included with the toolkit are written so that they will run without errors, but they are not totally trapped like a commercial program should be. They are written so that you can study the techniques used to demonstrate the particular programming problem. The subroutines used could be used in your own program as is, or you could modify the programs to fit your particular needs. OSS recommends that you change the programs to make them work better. This is an excellent way to learn programming. So many times, people ask me for answers to questions that they have. Many times they indicate that they have an idea how the change should be made, but they are afraid to make the change. If they made the change, they would many times find out that it would work. Don't be afraid to experiment. I learned to program by typing in programs, and then changing them. If you can change it to do what you want, you probably understand how it works.

The example programs include SNAILS TRAILS, GTIATEST, CIRCLES, and LEM (these are game or graphics programs), PICOADVENTURE (an adventure game), CONFIG, and DISKIO (disk drive access and configuring programs), BLACK BOX (an application program that demonstrates random access and keyed-access files), and MENU and MAKEAUTO (two utility programs).

Each program is documented in the manual that comes with the BASIC XL toolkit. Many of the programs have descriptions on a line by line basis of the operation of the source code. Very useful for beginners and advanced users alike.

The program BLACK BOX is a mailing list program that uses the NOTE and POINT commands of BASIC XL. This program demonstrates how to create a small data base management system. I remember the first data base management system that I wrote about 2 years ago. It took me about 3 months. I knew nothing about structured programming so the source code is a nightmare to try to read, even today. I kept running into certain problems, such as how to append another name onto the data base, and would spend every night for about 5 hours for a week trying to get a particular section of code to work. I now know why the code didn't work. It

is a bug in the Atari DOS. The documentation that deals with BLACK BOX goes into a great amount of detail in what a random access file is and how the Atari operating system really doesn't support random access, but supports indexed sequential access.

They explain the difference between the two types of data files. They then tell you how to set up index files and data files. They tell you the most efficient way to store the locations of the record in the index file. The explanation is extremely clear and concise. I wish that I had had this type of information when I set up my first data base. I didn't use some of the techniques that they used, and if I was still using that program I would go back and change the format of my index file. They also show the difference between BASIC XL's RGET, BGET and RPUT, BPUT.

The other demo files are explained equally well.

The extended commands that are available on the toolkit disk deal with sorting and procedure calls. What are extended commands? Well it seems that OSS, in it's infinite wisdom, saw fit to include some "hooks" in the BASIC XL cartridge that a programmer could use to add some more commands (or keywords). This makes BASIC XL even more flexible than originally thought.

The sorting commands include SORTUP and SORTDOWN. These are two sort commands that can be used only on string arrays. The sort routines sort on the basis of the characters ATASCII code. For those of you unfamiliar with the ATASCII code, let me point out some problems that this can create. If you have in a string array with the string elements apple, Zebra, and Z00, you would probably think that they would appear in the above order (assuming that they are being sorted in ascending order). If you use the SORTUP command on this string array, the order that you will receive is:

1. Z00
2. Zebra
3. apple.

Oops, what happened. If you will pull out an ATASCII chart you will find that the order of the ATASCII code is upper case letters, lower case letters, and numbers.

All this means is that you will have to use some caution on how deep you sort (how many letters of the string variable you will use in your sort) and what case the letters are in. You may want to convert all of the letters to upper case for instance.

The SORTUP and SORTDOWN functions allow you to specify what part of the string you want to sort. For instance, you could sort an string array starting with the 2nd element in the array, and sorting the 4th through the 8th characters of each string. This will give you great control over the use of the sort commands.

One other thing of interest with the sort functions is the fact that you cannot directly sort numbers with it. If you tried to sort the group of numbers 1, 2, 3, 5, 22, 333, and 444, you would get:

```

1
2
22
3
333
444
5

```

Hardly the results that we wanted. The way around this is to pad the string with zero's so that the length of the string is the same. This way when the sort is done, the zero's will be insignificant.

An example of some code to do this would be;

```

300 DIM STRING$(5,10)
310 FOR I = 1 TO 5: INPUT N:
    STRING$(I;) = "0000000000"
320 STRING$(I;11-LEN(STR$(N)))=
    STR$(N): NEXT I
330 SORTUP STRING$

```

This will allow the sort to proceed in the correct manner. You may want to get rid of the leading zeros before you print the number. If you use the VAL statement, the leading zeros will be ignored and you will once again have a numeric variable.

The usefulness of this function can be seen quite easily, but it has very little power if you compare it to the other functions that are

included in the extended commands of the BASIC XL toolkit.

The procedure oriented extended statements are:

```
PROCEDURE
CALL
LOCAL
EXIT
```

They are used to set up PROCEDURES similar to a PROC or FUNC in Action. Instead of using a GOSUB statement with a RETURN, you may name subroutines with the PROCEDURE command. This is a very easy way to make your code very readable, and therefore easy to modify.

The PROCEDURE command will define the starting location of the subroutine. It also may define several variables that may be passed to the PROCEDURE. This makes it so that you do not have to define a variable before you use it in a subroutine. The PROCEDURE will treat all variables named within it as LOCAL variables. This means that any variable within the PROCEDURE will not change the value of any variable outside the PROCEDURE, even though it may have the same name. If your variable is acted on inside the PROCEDURE you can make it return the value that was assigned to it while inside the subroutine. The manual goes into a lot of detail about how PROCEDURES treat variables and how you can cause some real problems if you are not careful.

The CALL command allows you to call a PROCEDURE. This is similar to the GOSUB command. The line number would be similar to the PROCEDURE name. One of the problems with the CALL command is that they are slow, especially if you are passing several variables to the PROCEDURE that you are calling. The manual warns that a GOSUB with the FAST command will be faster than the CALL command. If you are passing a large amount of variables to the PROCEDURE, the CALL command may be faster than the GOSUB command in the normal mode. This means that the FAST command will not work with the extended commands.

The LOCAL command is used to define local variables. These can be used in a certain area of your program to represent one thing and in another

area to represent something else. They will not interfere with each other so they will act like two different variables. This can be useful when you are getting close to the 128 variable limit that BASIC XL and Atari BASIC place on a program.

The EXIT command is used to signify the end of a PROCEDURE or the end of an area where a LOCAL variable is defined. The EXIT command can return a value to a certain variable.

The BASIC XL Toolkit contains a lot of information on how to use BASIC on the Atari computer. I learned a lot by just reading the manual. The way that each sample program is documented is a real help to understanding the way a program works. I am not sure how much I would use the Procedure commands, but they are an interesting concept and could be very useful under the right conditions. The SORT commands on the other hand could be used in a lot of places and would cut down on the time necessary to load my machine language sort routine from a BASIC program. I would recommend the package to anyone that wants to learn more about using the BASIC XL cartridge.

By the way, for those of you that don't have BASIC XL, what are you waiting for? I don't use Atari BASIC for anything anymore!

Editor's Note: The list price of the BASIC XL Toolkit is \$39.95. The Extended Commands supplied with the Toolkit require BASIC XL version 1.02. If you don't have version 1.02, and sent in your Software Registration Form for BASIC XL, you can get an upgrade for \$15.00. Instructions on how to do this are included in the Toolkit documentation. Getting this upgrade seems a little easier than most, because if you buy the Toolkit first, and set-up a disk (or 2, or 3 or ...) with the RunTime Package, you can still run your programs while the cartridge is in transit.

LOOK OUT, YOKON YOHAN *Larry Brigman*

Yukon Yohan(*) is on the loose again and is hidin' out in the lower reaches of Uncle Ned's (Nuclear Ned that is) gold mine. You have been deputized by the Royal Canadian Robot Police to reclaim Nuclear Ned's mine and bring back Yukon Yohan.

Now that I have everyone's attention, on with the review. Big Five Software has released a new addition to their ever-expanding game selection; "Bounty Bob Strikes Back(*)", starring, who else but Bounty Bob(*) himself. There are also token appearances by Yukon Yohan. The game is in a cartridge that contains a massive 40K program (pretty big, huh?) for \$49.95.

* Bounty Bob, Yukon Yohan, and Bounty Bob Strikes Back are registered trademarks of Big Five Software.

After installing the cartridge and powering up your system, you are greeted with an animated title page that uses birds to place the credits on the screen. As far as I have seen (and that is now up to level 8); the birds prove to be the best animation in the program. But, the program still is very enjoyable.

Some of you may ask; "Does it play the same as **Miner 2049er**?" No, Bob now has a variable size jump instead of only one. This is accomplished by pressing the fire button and waiting until Bob reaches the desired height before you move the joystick in the direction of your choice. You will use this often, so learn it well. If you don't get the hang of it, watch the demo mode, at the top, during the first set of jumps.

As you play the game, you will encounter inventions of Nuclear Ned's, and one that he bought for his nephew Knucklehead Ned. With each new level of success, you will be looking for the operating instruction. With 25 different levels, there are quite a few gadgets to learn how to work.

The instructions are a cartoon wall poster showing some of what you can expect. The instructions are at the bottom of the cartoon and are just enough to get you started operating all the equipment.

The high score factory is almost as much fun as the game itself. A nuclear reactor supplies power to the bulldozers and the hoist. You control the bulldozers to push up to seven characters onto a conveyer belt. The characters are carried over to the hall of fame where the birds decide where to put the letters and score.

If there were ten scores on the list; the lowest one is moved to the floor and crushed by the bulldozers.

The game has an option menu to vary, well, just about everything except collision detection. The play levels range from easy (default) to c'mon (you got to be kidding) which starts the timer at 1000 less than normal, which doesn't leave much room for mistakes.

In my opinion, this game is worth a look for the arcade addict in all of us.

One note I would like to add, Big Five Software is now selling **Miner 2049er** for \$10.00. This offer is available directly from Big Five Software only.

PAC HELP HOTLINES

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

Adventure Games	Russell Schwartz	646-6418
Assembly Language	Leroy Baxter	653-1633
BASIC Programming	Nick Yost	981-0838
	Lee Gassaway	642-2455
BBS Usage	Russell Schwartz	646-6418
Cassette Operation	Lee Gassaway	642-2455
DOS Operations	Gary Lippert	233-7069
FORTH Programming	Ricky Wooldridge	224-7163
Hardware Operation	Gary Lippert	233-7069
Modem Operations	Gary Lippert	233-7069
Operating System	Nick Yost	981-0838
	Leroy Baxter	653-1633

BASIC DEBUGGER REVIEW

Chuck Hall

This review is for beginning and experienced programmers alike. One of the many frustrations in programming in Basic, is that your programs soon become very unstructured and hard to work with. In the trade we call this spaghetti code. Usually you have good intentions of writing a structured program, but soon you end up adding new things to it and it really becomes a bit messy. It is almost impossible to begin finding your way through it once you have set it down for a few days and then come back to it. For example trying to find all of the uses of a variable could take a considerable amount of time. Trying to remember if you used a certain variable name before can be frustrating. Looking for a certain string of characters also is time consuming.

There are several 'debugging' or 'enhanced Basic' tools available to assist with these tasks. The product this review is about is called BASIC DEBUGGER. It was written by Robert Martin and published by MMG Micro Software. I have never used one of these tools before on my Atari, but saw this one on the shelf and decided to see what it was all about. Being a professional programming type, I have relied on Cross Reference listings as a debugging tool for many years. I guess that is the one thing that made me decide to look at this package. But lets start at the beginning.

There are six primary functions within this package. Some of them have many options that really increase your ability to debug a program. First, just what do we mean when we say 'debug'. This is a term that is used when we want to find a solution to a problem in our programs. Problems are usually referred to as 'bugs'. I have heard a couple of different stories as to why they are called 'bugs', but if you hear anyone talking about bugs in their programs or hardware, they are talking about problems. Now back to the primary functions.

The first one is being able to use an alternate screen. This is a simple toggle. How often have you been programming along, when all of a sudden you have an idea about something you want to try. But, you don't know if it will really work. You are in the middle of your program, and you don't want to stop, save it to disk, and then write a routine and test it before adding it back into your program. With the alternate screen feature you only have to hit the toggle command (CTL Z) and you have a new screen and program

area. You can create your routine, test it, list it to disk, return to your original screen, enter the new routine from disk and keep going. I can think of many times I wished I could do that. Especially handy if you just want to preview a calculation, or look at something in memory without leaving your program. All kinds of possibilities.

The second feature is 'split screen'. Remember the times you performed (GOSUB or GOTO) a routine in your program, but you wanted to be in both the calling area of your program and the subroutine at the same time. Now you can. This feature allows you to be in two different areas of your program at once. You can make changes in both sections of code and have full editing capabilities at the same time. It is initialized with a SHIFT/CTL/D key sequence.

A third feature works very well in this mode. Or you can use it in a normal screen mode also. That is the ability to scroll through your program with a single key entry. The scrolling is initialized with a key sequence of SHIFT/CTL and one of the up or down arrow keys. Then you just use the arrow key for the direction you wish to go. As I mentioned before you can also use this feature in the split or alternate screen mode also. It makes it a lot easier to run through your program and look for something specific.

The fourth feature is the 'Trace' function. This feature has many options making it quite powerful. In its simplest form you would key CTL/T and hit RETURN. The primary screen will show the normal execution of the program, while by going to the alternate screen (CTL/D) you will be shown the line numbers as they are being executed. This allows you to map exactly what path your program is taking. That in itself is great. There have been many times when I have gone through a program inserting print statements to let me know if I have gotten to a certain part of the program yet. Now with this program you won't have to. But that is just the beginning. Suppose you just want to start tracing at a certain line number. Ok, then just enter the line number you wish to begin at, and you will have initialized the trace at that point. Or if you want to begin your Trace at a certain line number after the program has executed so far, just enter the option "R" before the line number. The program will RUN until that line number then begin its trace. While the trace is in process, you can stop it any

time by entering 'S'. If you want to start up again at that same point, you enter a CTL/T to initialize the trace, and enter 'C' to continue where you left off last. A entry of 'S' following the CTL/T will allow you to trace through your program one line at a time by hitting the space bar. An entry of 'T' during the single line tracing function will return you to full tracing. If you want to see the entire line being executed, instead of just the line numbers, you can use the 'L' function. How often have you included print statements in your program to look at the values of variables while your program is executing. The trace function has a 'V' option which allows you to specify up to five variables and the number of lines you want to see the values printed out for. That will really be a help if you need to see what a group of related fields contained while you proceed through your program. But maybe you only want to do a Trace while a certain value is equal to, greater than, or less than some value. You can do that also with the 'W' option. If you want to list all of your primary screen to the printer while in the trace mode (that is where your regular execution is taking place) you can use the 'P' option. It will only print Graphics 0 text though. If you want your auxiliary screen to be sent to your printer then use the 'PA' option. Oh yes, I almost forgot, any sequence of options may be used together. Just enter them as a string and all will be used.

The fifth feature is the 'Search' function. You may specify any string of characters you wish to search for, and it will print out the lines that contain that string. If you want to make a change to those lines, go ahead. You are still in the editor.

The final feature is one of my favorites, and that is the Cross Reference function. By entering Shift/CTL/R you will be able to print out a total listing of all your variables and the line numbers which use them. The listing can be sent to the printer. This allows for a good piece of permanent documentation for your program. If after some time you want to come back and make modifications to your program, you then have a listing of the variables you used, and each line where it is used.

Sounds pretty good so far doesn't it? Well, it's not all good. When you load the disk you only have 22K left for your basic program. In most cases that should be plenty, but if you have a

large program, you could be cut short. I also have not been able to get it to work with Smart DOS which I almost use exclusively. The disk contains ATARI DOS 2.0, but when you call DOS from your program, you lose the Debug program. I did see another program from MMG on the shelf that gave you an extended Basic capability. Maybe they will work in concert. I might review that one later and check it out.

I have seen many of these features as separate utilities. Only then you have to load each one in and make sure that you have the line numbers set up right, and make sure that you delete those lines before you do your saves. Or they reside in low mem, which is fine, but then you have to load and use each one separately, or get them all together in a package like this one. As I mentioned earlier, this is the first software of this nature I have evaluated. I don't know at this point if there is something better out there or not. I hope to find out in the coming months. In the meantime, I like this package. It fulfills many of the functions I have been looking for and does them well. The documentation is well written, and easy to read. It is not overdone, as is the case of many products, but lets you start using the product immediately. It has its own demo, and walks you through all of its features and functions very satisfactorily. I loaded it up, and within a half hour it was almost like I had always been using it. There is an error in the documentation. They tell you to hit ESC/SHIFT/CLEAR to clear any of the screens you are currently in. In Atari you really just want to use CTL/CLEAR as always.

If you are interested in this product, you can purchase it at IB computers where it is listed at \$31.95. A bit costly perhaps, but after seeing the power of it, it might not be a bad investment. For those of you who are really into programming in Basic or for you beginners who want to, this could be a valuable aid.

With the continuing growth of our club, and the now emerging trend towards productivity software, I will try to review similar type products in the future. In the meantime, check with your dealers and see what they have. If you see a particular product that you would like to see reviewed, give me a shout.

DISKWIZ-II *Bill Pike*

Diskwiz-II from Allen Macroware is a set of disk examination/repair utilities for single or double density disks, but won't work on ATARI DOS 3 disks. It will run on all Atari computers with at least 16K and one disk drive, and costs \$30. As with any utility there are strengths and weaknesses, but in this case the strengths make it a good investment.

The strengths are: (1) a fast MAP function, (2) ease in fixing duplicate filenames, (3) the Renumber command, (4) selectable directory sector display, (5) the excellent charts in the appendix, (6) the Graft option, (7) the ease of recovery from a operator error.

The weaknesses are: (1) no prompts for available commands during sector examination and writing, (2) lack of a easy file recovery command, (3) the VTOC update only turns on/off a adjacent string of sectors, (4) you have to remember that the [L]ist command returns you to the menu, (5) if you have a Epson compatible, NEC or Prowriter printer, you must use the [G]raft command rather than the [P]rint.

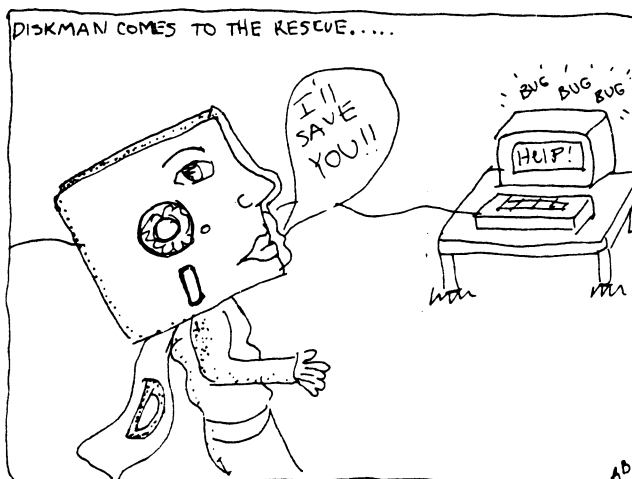
Now to get to the GOODIES. First turn on the disk drive, then put the Diskwiz-II program disk in the drive, use the BASIC program on cart or for the XL on-board and boot the program. You will see the ready prompt on a black screen and the program will continue to load, when it is finished loading remove the Diskwiz-II disk, you won't need it again until the next time you decide to do a number on a disk.

Now to get down to business. The [M]ap function alone makes this utility worth the \$30. It makes a map of the entire disk by sector telling you if the sector is in use (inverse video) or not in use (normal video), according to the VTOC, and what FILE the sector thinks it belongs to. Remember the deleted file recovery. There is only one rub, and it is that DOS reuses the file number of a deleted file sometimes. Anyhow you can usually recover all or most of the file by reading the sectors one by one and writing, with the [R]enumber command, them to a new set of sectors then resetting the sector links [S]. You can also ask the program to [M]ap a area of sectors rather than the whole disk.

If you have inadvertently given the same name to two files on the disk this is easily fixed with the [E]ntry: Dir.File that allows you to give a new code to the file. Contrary to popular belief the [F]ormat command doesn't format the disk it

puts the information from the sector read into disk-directory format. The [G]raft option is for Epson or NEC compatible printers only, and gives a ATASCII graphics output to the printer. Here is another goodie [H]ex-Dec-ASC conversion you put in HEX or DECIMAL or the ATASCII symbol and receive back the equivalent in the other symbols. Here is one to remember; the [L]ist command is the menu command. [P]rintout is for the rest of the printers. [R]enumber changes the location of any sector or group of sectors on the disk to a different area on the same disk or to any group of sectors on a second disk. [S]ector Link Ptr causes a sector or group of sectors to be linked together. [T]race traces a file from a starting sector. [U]tility is the utility menu to change from single to double density, change printer type, and change source disk-drive number. [V]toc allows you to write any sector in the vtoc as in-use or not-in-use. [W]rite Sector does just that. After you [A]lter a sector it writes the change to the disk. [X]DISASSEMBLE allows you to convert a sector written in ML to source code. [Y] is the drive speed check. [Z] is the search for String command. The [A]lter sector command lets you alter in either HEX or ATASCII but doesn't write to the disk until you use the [W]rite command.

All in all, I find that the most valuable features of this program are the double density capability and the ease of escaping from the operation by either the ESC key or the System Reset (which doesn't delete the program.)



RUNNING A BBS *Jason Brunson*

From the Mouth of a Sysop.

Most of you with modems should know me, I'm the Sysop of The Dungeons of Dracore BBS. Weird name I know, but it sounded catchy. If you don't have a modem, you really don't know what you are missing out there.

Enough gab about boring stuff. I have been running the Dungeon since about late June, and it has picked up very well, considering I run it on only one 810.

The system runs on the following equipment:

- Atari 800 with 48k
- Atari 810 Disk Drive
- Atari 850 Interface
- Atari 1027 Printer
- Hayes Smartmodem 1200

(Please note, I do not run at 1200 bps at this time, I have not gotten around to fixing the software yet.)

Not much for a real good system, but it gets the job done.

One thing that is a MUST for a system, is lots of patience, this is especially useful in pesky users who have the bad habit of hitting the 'Y' command to 'Yank the Sysop', (especially at 1:00 am!). And other users who upload programs that are 20 years old, and that everyone has. Another thing is those ever popular pirate files; those are not allowed at all. And then there are those users who bother Sysops for higher levels, on my system, there is only 4 mail levels out of the possible 25, level 0 for when you first log on, level 1 if you are a not an Atari computer user, (Heaven forbid!!), level 4 for Atari computer users, and download, and the final level 25, that is only for me, so don't get your hopes up on achieving this level...

Most people find this nerve racking, but I run my system on my home phone line, so I get plenty of callers before the time the system is up, but I get a real kick out of chewing those users out, but most of them hang up. It seems though that Atari users hardly ever break this rule; in fact, in the last 2 months, I have had only Commodore users breaking rules. The phone line problem can easily be eliminated by getting your own line for the computer, but I am waiting for donations before I do this.

I have also found that asking for a fee to use your system results in fewer people using it. I had heard the sysop of the now off-line

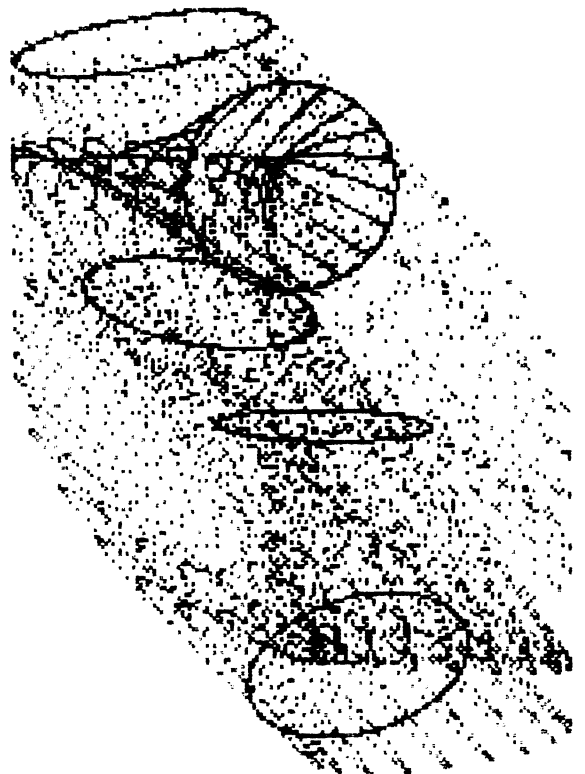
West-side network say how this affected his system; he only got \$10, (only 2 users) and no one called the system anymore. As for my system, I only ask for donations, this way I do not lose the respect of my users.

Now you may ask what my system has to offer, it offers a public domain up/download, 4 message bases consisting of Public & General, Private, Buy, Sell & Help, and a special C-Sex & Jokes section which seems very popular. My system also offers a Graphic/Demo section, (The '*' command).

And finally, What are the hours, and the number? Well, I run from 9:00 pm till 6:00 am weekdays, on weekends I run from 9:00 pm till 8:00 am in the morning, that is because I like to sleep in, and let the board run for a while.. and finally the number: 648-5499 (Hillsboro).

Give 'er a try, and feel free to leave me a message, or chat with me (but only at reasonable hours please!)

Editor's Note: Jason is a Sophomore at Glencoe High School in Hillsboro, and a member of the Portland Atari Club. I tried not to do too much editing of his article, which is very well done, although its tone may be a bit rough in a few spots.



MPP1000C MODEM FILE TRANSFER *Samuel Atkinson*

DEALERS CORNER

The Microbits 1000C modem owners that are having trouble getting on line to the Portland ATARI Club BBS can ease their log on pain with a few tips.

1. The MMP1000C menu has options for direct ATASCII communications. Press (H) on the menu before log on. This will only work with ATARI BBS's. All other BBS's will use the ASCII Data transfer.

2. X-modem protocol works in the same way as A-modem protocol. The modem data is sent in blocks of 128 bytes. The transferred blocks are compared for total data bytes. If the block is different than 128 bytes the block is sent again. Press (I) X-modem protocol for the PAC BBS.

3. Downloading programs directly from the download program file using A-modem and ATASCII.

- A) Press <start>
- B) Select (B) direct modem to disk
- C) Chose Option (1) and enter D:file name.ext
- D) Press <return> This will put you back to " 1 " in the Terminal mode automatically if the filename was entered right.
- E) Press OPTION once! The BBS modem then will begin to send blocks of data and your disk drive will save one block at a time until all the blocks are sent. Then you will get a message (end of transfer) or something showing an end of transfer. Press start.
- F) After the file is transferred Press <start> to close the file. Your disk will now have a file. (NOTE! Do not press caps option, that will only erase the file during loading.)
- That's all there is to be done. Check file after you are through with (A) on menu.
- G) When off line. (1) Some files are entered files these are the same as batch files and will not run in Basic until converted to a SAVE file. To run a entered file, ENTER "D:file.ext" <return>. Then SAVE "D:filename.ext" to disk as with any Basic file. (2) Some music files may have to be locked, to come up on the menu and run as an ENTERed file.

I hope this helps clear up communications problems that new users such as myself have had.

- | | |
|--------------------------|------------------------|
| *Compusource | *Computers Etc. *** |
| 11504 Mill Plain Suite C | 1513 NE 122ND (Halsey) |
| Vancouver, WA 98684 | Portland, OR 97230 |
| (206) 254-5849 | 252-0179 |
| *Computerland | |
| (Meier and Frank Dwtm) | Computerola |
| 621 SW 5TH | 6224 SE Main (resd.) |
| Portland, OR 97208 | Portland, OR |
| 241-5201 | 239-4315 |
| *I B Computers ** | *Video Show Place |
| 1519 SW Marlow | 2029 NE Burnside |
| Portland, OR 97225 | Gresham, OR |
| 297-8425 | 661-1946 |

* Discount is available to PAC members. You will need to ask for it, and show proof of membership to get it.

** IB Computers has a new offer for PAC members only. Each month, there will be an item available at a special discount price. You will need to ask about it, as there will be no notice in the store.

*** Computers Etc. seems to be getting out of the Atari business. They still have some Atari items on sale, but you should give them a call before making a long trip there.

The chains which also sell ATARI include; Sears, Fred Meyer, and Toys'r'Us

Supplies:

- | | |
|------------------|--------------|
| Comp-u-desk | Wisco |
| Beaverton Mall # | 2108 SE 10TH |
| Beaverton, OR | Portland, OR |

Also in Washington Square 2 (Too?), Jantzen Beach Center and Clackamas Town Center.

At COMPU**SOURCE**

Our commitment begins before the sale...

Finally... Support for the home user!

- Support for home, business, education
- Word processing for correspondence
- Home accounting and financial planning
- Resource material from data banks
- Hours of enjoyment and pleasure

We offer:

- Comprehensive training
- Extensive hardware and software selection
- You try the hardware and software before your buy!

Exclusive Software Exchange Guarantee*

When you hold a software package in your hand, you have an idea of how it should work. But, before you take it home and test your application, you must spend your money.

At CompuSource we say, purchase the software, take it home, and test your application. Take up to 30 days if you like. If the software isn't what you wanted it to be, just return it to our store in salable condition and get yourself an exchange.

*offer not extended to game programs

Dealer for—

Atari	MSD
Commodore	Amdec
Columbia	Zenith
Sanyo	Juki
Percom	Panasonic
Indus	Gemini
Hayes	Legend
& Mannesman-Tally	

Plus Furniture from

Gusdorf &
O'Sullivan

1-205 Commerce Center at Mill Plain, Vancouver, WA

COMPU**SOURCE**

(206) 254-5849



SUPPORT
IS
EVERYTHING

297-8425

IB COMPUTERS

CEDAR HILLS SHOPPING CENTER



WE KNOW ATARIS

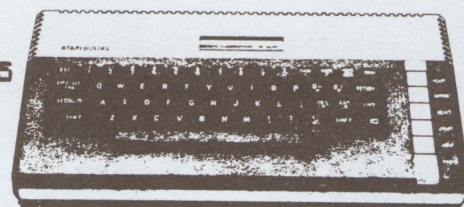
800XL \$99.95

PREVIOUSLY OWNED ATARI 800'S
ATARI 1050 DISK DRIVES—\$189.95

INDUS DISK
DRIVES
SOFTWARE

SPARTA DOS:

\$39.95



SAVE \$\$\$

SWP

ATR 8000

LEGEND 880 PRINTERS SALE \$249.95

US DOUBLER FOR ATARI 1050: \$69.95

TANDON & OTHER DRIVES DS \$199.95 CASE EXTRA
SPECIAL PURCHASE SAVE NOW SS \$99.95 CASE EXTRA

SYNICALC	\$49.95
SYNFILE	\$49.95
SYNTREND	\$49.95
ATARIWRITER	\$54.95

MINDSET

SALES AND SERVICE

Rana**Systems**
SAVE \$\$\$

PAC CALENDAR OF EVENTS

FEBRUARY

WED 02/20 - PAC Board Meeting
Wed 02/20 - Business SIG Meeting
TUE 02/26 - PACE SIG Meeting
WED 02/27 - Assembler SIG Meeting

MARCH

MON 03/04 - PAC General Meeting
MON 03/04 - Normal Article Deadline
TUE 03/05 - Commercial Ad Deadline
THU 03/07 - Newsletter SIG Meeting
THU 03/07 - Beginner's SIG Meeting
SAT 03/09 - Final Article Deadline
SAT 03/09 - Newsletter Production
MON 03/11 - Newsletter Final Layout
WED 03/13 - Assembler SIG Meeting
WED 03/13 - Newsletter to Printer
MON 03/18 - Newsletter Mailing
TUE 03/19 - ATR SIG Meeting
WED 03/20 - Business SIG Meeting
WED 03/20 - PAC Board Meeting
TUE 03/26 - PACE SIG Meeting
WED 03/27 - Assembler SIG Meeting

PAC SOFTWARE LIBRARY

Sorry Folks, but we ran out of room to print the regular listing of PAC Software titles (which is out of date anyway), so this will have to do for this month. The PAC Library includes the following Disks; Games I, Games II, Games III, Games IV, Games 5 **, Adventure 1 ** (games), Card Games, Education I, Education II **, Education 3 **, Utility I, Utility II, Demo I, Demo II, Demo III, Home and Business (applications), Modem, BBS, and SCOPY 810 (Sector Copy) - Copy MFT (Multi-File Transfer). The disks (we don't do cassettes anymore) marked with ** are new, and all disks are now only \$5.00 for PAC members (\$10.00 for non-members.) We are trying to come out with at least one new disk each month, and will be updating some of the older disks too. If you have any ideas for the library, or have a program to submit, contact Lloyd Suiter, Club Librarian. He will also be happy to answer any questions you have about any disks or programs in the library.

PORTLAND ATARI CLUB
P.O. Box 1692
BEAVERTON, OR 97005

BULK RATE
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
BEAVERTON, OREGON
PERMIT NO. 242