Portland Atari Club

$1.50

MAY 1985

NEXT GENERAL MEETING

MONDAY, MAY 6, 1985 - 7:00 PM

BPA AUDITORIUM, NE 9TH AND HOLLADAY

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

CLUB BUSINESS AND ACTIVITIES

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN
Chuck Hall

This has been quite an eventful month for both myself and the club. First of all my wife and I took a weeks vacation and went to San Francisco to attend the 10th annual West Coast Computer Faire. I had heard a lot about this affair, but had never visited anything like it. From what I've been told, it is the largest show of its kind, (outside of CES), on the West coast. When I first heard of it, I had heard that ATARI was going to be there. As it turned out, they were not - officially. There were two Atari user groups in attendance, the San Leandro Computer Club (SLCC) and the Atari Bay Area Computer Users Society (ABACUS). Atari was well represented by these two groups.

But let me start at the beginning. We left Portland on Thursday with plans of arriving in San Francisco early Friday. Well, you know about "best laid plans..." and etc. We got stopped by ice in the Siskyou Pass, and were delayed for awhile. Then my power steering went out. We got an extended stay in a small town called Davis. Anyway, we finally got to SF late Friday evening. We were supposed to call a member of the San Leandro club before 4 PM and go over and help set up their booth, AND get a first look at the 520 ST before the show started. By the time we got checked into our room and unloaded, all we could think about was dinner. So we went out for a bite to eat. The gentleman I was supposed to call was the ex-president of the SLCC. His name is Tom Bennett (Hi Tom) and thanks to him we had a great time. First of all, while we were out to dinner he dropped of a couple of surprises for me at the motel. Come to the meeting and I will show you some of my souvenirs. The following morning we went to the fair and started enjoying ourselves. I first went up and introduced myself to Tom and the others at the SLCC booth. That in itself was no mean feat. No booth, and I mean NO booth could match the popularity of the two Atari user group booths. My hat is off to these two clubs for the work they did in representing ATARI. Of course they had a little help. What kind of help? How about the new 520 ST's we have been hearing so much about. Yes, they are real. They do run. They are fantastic. Do I want one? YES,YES,YES. I am not going to go into too much detail of what they are since I know you have been inundated with information on them so far. We still have a small wait to actually get them in our hands, but it will be worth it. Did I say a small wait? By the

time you read this, (especially since we are running late) we may have them. The official answer when we questioned ATARI about their availability was "second quarter". And we did ask ATARI, but more on that a little later. Back to the show. When I mentioned earlier that the two user booths were the most popular, I meant it. Most of the time, people were standing up to 10 deep to get a peek at the new machines. Of course there were some other incentives also. How do you keep a crowd of people together around your booth? Why, you give something away. And that they did. You will have to come to the meeting to actually see some of the items they were able to give away. And I don't mean just something once in awhile. The first day was primarily given to pith helmets, (no I didn't learn to lisp in SF) with an "ATARI Safari" sticker on them. There were also various bags, such as tote bags, shoulder bags, and etc., with the ATARI logo on them given away. Later there were t-shirts for the youngsters (I had gotten two, but they have already been claimed by my nephews) plus rugby shirts for the adults. I was able to spirit two extra of those away and will auction them off at the meeting. There were also mobiles representing ATARI software products given away, along with some folders, stickers, and etc. ATARI really came through in helping these two clubs attract people to their booths. So, what does that mean to us you ask? I have talked to ATARI about supporting us in the same way. Their initial response was in favor of doing so. I will get back to them with the plan for our show, hopefully a picture of what our booth looks like, the number of people our show draws, plus other information to help convince them, that there will be a positive payback for any support they can give us. ATARI has hired a gentleman as User Group Coordinator. If any of you had ever called Synapse and asked to talk to someone about Synfile or Syncalc you probably talked to this gentleman. His name is Dave Duberman (Hi Dave), and he has the job of trying to feed information to and placate all of the user groups in the country. You will understand why this is going to be some job later in my article. Dave spent a lot of time at the show, explaining the new hardware to the public. In fact if it wasn't for him, we would have been at a loss quite often in answering those questions being asked. He did a marvelous public relations job while there. You will notice that I use "we" a lot in talking about the booths at the show. I had

the privilege of working the SLCC booth on Tuesday, the last day of the show. This group made me feel as at home, as if I was a member of their club. If you are ever in the Oakland or Bay Area, look them up and try to attend one of their meetings. If you do, say Hi to Tom Bennett for me. I am getting ahead of myself here a bit. Back to Saturday, the first day.

It wasn't enough to just attend the fair, and see the new machines, and touch the new machines (I want one....), but then we had to go to a party. Not just any party mind you. But a birthday party. This was a party hosted by Antic Magazine in celebration of their third anniversary. We were told it was just a couple of short blocks from the Moscone center to the new quarters of the magazine. I don't know who was doing the counting down their, but it was more like two miles. Last time I'll walk that. But we finally got there, all winded and foot-sore, but elated about what was to come. Then we had to walk up the stairs to their offices. Whatever happened to 45 or 60 degree stairs? These were more like a ladder. Straight up. But again, it was well worth it.

We had been joined by another PAC member, Ron Dunagan, his brother-in-law and a friend. We were among the first to arrive. Not too fashionable I guess to get there early, but then we got first peek at everything. The beer and soft drinks were free and well appreciated. I met so many people that I will never remember them all. But I will mention a few names later. A lot of my time was spent talking to the ATARI Corp people there. Who were they? To start off with, I met a marvelous gentleman who I had written a couple of letters to, and had talked to on the phone; Mr. Sigmund Hartmann (Hi Sig). As I mentioned earlier in previous articles and meetings, I had written letters to ATARI and others, to let them know we existed. They read the letters. Mr. Hartmann knew who I was, and we talked at length about ATARI, the Portland Atari Club, and the direction both were going. He is a very honest, straight forward gentleman. He answered my questions as fairly and completely as he could. And I believe I have found a friend. Mr. Hartmann was only to visit for a short while, but ended up staying longer than I did. And we were there until after 8 PM. Another gentleman I met, was Sam Tramiel (Hi Sam). This is a person, that if you put him in a room, soon all will gravitate to him. He exudes a sense of power, but does it so charmingly and charismaticly, that

you feel very comfortable with him immediately. He too, knew who I was, and applauded the club on their support of ATARI. I have been sending him our newsletter ever since I became President, and was pleased that he did enjoy reading it.

And speaking of newsletters. While I was talking to Mr. Hartmann, and Mr. Tramiel a person walked in wearing a t-shirt and ATARI ball cap. He looked about 18 at first, and I thought he must be some local Atari hacker. (Hi Neil) True, but so wrong. He was identified to me as Neil Harris, the editor of the ATARI Explorer magazine. Talk about being dumbstruck. I had expected to meet an older, very "establishment" type of person. As soon as I started talking to Mr. Harris, my first opinion of him changed immediately. I did talk to him again on Monday at ATARI, (yes, folks - I got to go to the real ATARI and look around, but more on that later.) where he was wearing a shirt and tie, and looked very much the professional person I had expected. He also reads our newsletter and complimented us on our quality. In fact he passed along a comment from Jack Tramiel concerning our ability to print pictures and news releases about the new machines for $1.50 just days after they did. So that means that Jack Tramiel also looks at our newsletter. We keep pretty good company don't we?

More about what all of these people were gathered here for. For those of you who read ANTIC, - and for those of you who don't, you should - (OK Jim?) you may have noticed some talk about a Worldwide Users Network (WUN) being sponsored by ANTIC. This is an attempt by them to try and bring together in a consolidated voice, all of the user groups, clubs, and organizations that support ATARI. With all of the ongoing reorganization at ATARI, changes in development plans, and chasing down rumors and stories galore, Jim Capparell (Hi Jim) is undertaking to bring us all together in one voice. Of course this will help his magazine, but it also gives us in the user community a single contact point we can go to for information. They have their own area on Compuserve, where you can go and get the latest news and reviews of what is going on with ATARI and other related developments. I will talk about this more at the meeting and in the future as it becomes a solid organization. I also met Gary Yost (Hi Gary) of ANTIC who is the person responsible for coordinating all of the user groups for WUN.

The party was to celebrate the anniversary of

ANTIC, plus it was the inaugural meeting of WUN, plus it gave us in the User groups a first chance to meet the brass from ATARI. In all three respects it was a resounding success. Not only was I able to meet the people at ANTIC, ATARI, and the local user groups; but I was able to talk to many of the user groups presidents from across the country and exchange ideas and thoughts as to what ATARI was all about.

Sunday was spent at the fair, seeing all of the things we didn't get a chance to see Saturday. We only did half of the show Saturday and now we got to do the other half. A few comments on the show itself. It was very well attended and there was a large variety of vendors and developers present. Unfortunately, for the ATARI owner there wasn't a whole lot there. Other than the two user groups, there was Broderbund and Electronic Arts as the only major third party developers. There was no sign of those companies we normally associate with the ATARI name. Even though most of them are from the Bay area. The Microbits people from Albany were there with their latest products. Included was the hard disk for the existing XL and XE machines. (Yes folks, the XE's are out and available. Look elsewhere in this newsletter for info.) They were able to demonstrate the hard disk for us at ANTIC, and I understand that it will be ready for the public in about 60 days. It will probably come packaged in a couple of different ways, and I will wait until I see something in writing before commenting on prices and etc. There was a couple of single person software developers there who I met and talked with. And that was about all for ATARI. There were numerous large discount dealers there peddling printers, monitors, interfaces, gimmicks and etc. I have heard people talking about the great prices and deals they were able to make, but when I compare those prices (+ tax) with what we can get here, I saw no deals at all. Most of the dealers wouldn't dicker at all, and most of them were aimed at the more expensive PC and Apple market. I came away with the impression, that they were really trying to unload everything they had for Apple before it was too late. I saw one sign that said "How to upgrade your Macintosh to 512K of only $599". As I walked by I commented loudly that all they had to do was buy a 520ST. Talk about a dirty look from the vendor. Ron Dunagan kept stopping at the Apple booths and asking when they were coming out with color for the Mac. No one

knew or would even venture a guess. (The 520ST comes with color). The show was very PC oriented. IBM was there in spectacular fashion and so was ATT.

One new magazine I did find, which we hadn't seen before is Computer Gaming World. They publish 6 times a year and cover computer gaming for ATARI, Apple, and Commodore (ugh ugh). I can give you more info at the meeting if you would like to see a copy. Will also pass information on to our dealers, so if you are interested ask them to stock it. My wife also picked up a ribbon that allows creating t-shirt transfers directly from our printer, so look out for some pretty far out t-shirts from yours truly. Also picked up a small disk notcher that enables punching the backside of disks without having to first take weight lifting to build up your hand and wrist muscles.

We enjoyed the show immensely, but I think it was a little bit of a letdown from what I imagined it would be like. It was by far the best I have ever been to, and I may go to another one some day, but I found it not to be a whole bunch more than what we have here each summer. True, the big names were there in all of there splendor, but I have seen them here also for the office and products show. There were no knock-em-dead deals, and I have seen people here get better deals on equipment. There is no arguing that all in all, our show can't totally compare, but with some work and marketing by the Portland people, they could almost match what we saw down there.

Monday we spent at ATARI. It was most interesting and I will comment on that visit at the meeting. I did get one thing I had wanted. Remember when I mentioned first seeing Neil Harris, and he was wearing a ball cap? Well, it was an ATARI ball cap. I was willing to get on my knees and beg for one if necessary. I almost did. When my wife and I went to ATARI we joined with the president of the Milwaukie and the Pittsburg groups and talked at length with Dave Duberman about User Group support. I believe that ATARI is now making the effort to support the User Groups in whatever fashion is feasible. They believe that we are a strong marketing tool to be used in selling their products. We will probably be hearing more on that later. I will continue to talk to ATARI and continue offering our services to them to help in any way we can with new products and releases. And as you will see at the next meeting, if you haven't already seen me, I

got me a ball cap. Very nice one too.

My wife and I also attended two user group meetings while in the Bay area. The first was Monday night when we went to the Bay Area Users Group (BAUG) meeting. The meeting was to be held in the DYSAN auditorium, but DYSAN had just been sold and the facility was no longer available. Hey - no problem. This is California right? Why not have the meeting in the parking lot? OK. So they did. Only in California...

The second meeting we attended was the SLCC meeting in San Leandro. We stopped here on our way out of town. While there I got to listen to David Small talk. (Hi David) Talk about a speaker. A very dynamic person. For those of you who are thinking you've heard that name before, look at you Creative Computing magazine. He writes the ATARI column for that magazine. David is now working on some things with ATARI and I expect to be hearing some things from that quarter in the near future. David is also the president of a Colorado users group. If we can ever get him up here to talk to us (at your own expense David) you would be very appreciative. I look forward to meeting with David in the future again. He's one sharp cookie.

There were many more things that we did and learned about while in California. But this is getting so large that our Editor is going to yell and scream at me for ramblin on this way. But I really want to whet your appetite for what is coming from ATARI. It looks very exciting and I am greatly enthused. I was out of town this past week, and missed a phone call from Sig Hartmann. I tried to get back to him, before he left town, but he was already on his way to Europe for the Germany show. I am now sitting on pins and needles wondering what he was going to impart to me. Oh well, a little patience I guess. After all, we have been waiting a long time for something new from ATARI. Please come to the next meeting for the latest scoop on what is coming. See you there

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS
Thomas Brown

ATARI ST SIG

I'm very happy to announce that Pat Warnshuis, former Editor of the PAC newsletter, and a very capable leader will be leading this group. The first meeting is Thursday, April 25, 1985 at 7:00 PM at Pat's home 3116 S.W. Evelyn Street, Portland. Phone 246-3724. This will be an introductory meeting. Future meetings will be on the 2nd and 4th Thursday of the month.

Communications SIG

No meeting is planned at this time. We are slow getting started with this one, because we are still looking for someone to lead this group. I would like to hear from anyone interested in sharing his/her communications knowledge, so give me a call and I will be happy to sign you up. This should be a good group, because much emphasis is being placed on telecommunications in the business sector, hardware for it is changing almost overnight.

Thank You

Special thanks to Debbie Pritchard, Steve & Debbie Billings and Dave Pelinka for their help with the Beginners SIG.

Joining a SIG

Interested in one of these new groups? One of the other SIGs? Please let me know, or contact one of the SIG Leaders listed on the SIG Contact List.

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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 March board meeting was held at 7pm on March 20th at IB Computers. Attending were the following, Jim Link, Clyde and Debbie Pritchard, Chuck and Jean Hall, Dave Holliday, Dan Gibson, Lloyd and Floyd Suiter, Jim Berry, and Steve and Debbie Billings.

Back Room Sales

The Board spent a considerable amount of time at the beginning of this meeting discussing ways of controlling the number of people in the back room. The Board feels that we could be in violation of City Fire codes if we continue to allow that large a number of people back there. It was also felt that PAC members should have greater access than non PAC members. We then proceeded to discuss ways of resolving the problem. The ideas that were brought out included limiting the back room to PAC members only, issuing sales permits and restricting the number of people in the back room, and close down the back room altogether and allow time at the end of the meeting for sales in the auditorium. The board decided to table any decision until we could get more input from the rest of the membership.

West Coast Computer Faire

The next order of business that stirred quite a bit of discussion was Chuck Hall's trip to the West Coast Computer Show in San Francisco. A motion was made that we reimburse Chuck for part of his expenses on the trip, specifically, pay for Chuck's lodging. The board was split on this motion. The argument against was that the club has never paid for this type of expenditure in the past and that it might not be received well by the members. Those in favor pointed out that we are entering a new age for Atari in that user groups are going to be the major support group and good relations with Atari management are essential to a group's success. It was felt that Chuck would be making important connections with Atari management and would open many new doors for the Portland Atari Club. It is hoped that we would be chosen as a Beta test site for the new Atari computers and we would have first access to new software and peripherals. Those in favor also felt that Chuck would be making important new contacts with the Bay area user groups, which could lead to more public domain software and other user group related items for the PAC. A final consideration was that Chuck would be using his own vacation time and be picking up all other expenses on the trip. The board voted in favor of the motion.

S.W.A.G.

The Southwest Washington Atari Group will be forming a coordinating committee to unify its present membership of 53. They are looking for bulletin board system support from PAC and we discussed various ways of handling this, including providing a system outright or leasing a system from them. A current review of our system will have to be done before a decision can be made on what system we will support for them. S.W.A.G. will be doing their own marketing and promotion in the Vancouver area. The PAC by-laws will be reviewed and ammended to accomodate a S.W.A.G split-off in the future. We need to determine what rights and benefits they have as well as what future responsibilities PAC has.

April Meeting

At the April general meeting a motion will be brought before the membership to disband the Portland Atari Club and go over to Commadore (just kidding, you April fool). All seriousness aside, Dan Heims will be presenting the best and the worst Atari software chosen by you, the members, last month. I have inside information that the best was M.U.L.E. and the worst is too horrible for me to mention. In addition, Ernie Negus will be demonstrating an excellent new program called Print Shop. Hopefully, we will also get an update from Chuck on the West Coast Computer Show.

Miscellaneous

The Board has appointed Floyd Suiter as master at arms to control membership card check-in and control unruly types. We are continuing to persue other avenues of presenting the Portland Atari Club to software houses and dealers. We still need volunteers for the upcoming CEE Show at the end of May. We have ordered four Lots A Bites Disks for the PAC library.

Treasurer's Report

As of this writing, the balance in our checking account stands at $3,112, after purchasing our projection TV system for $2,080. At the last meeting software sales totaled $190.

BEGINNER'S SIG
Elanna Schlichting

On April 4th, in response to a cry of desperation, mild mannered Dave Pelinka came to the rescue of the PAC Beginners as SuperProgrammer, able to explain PAC Utility Disks in a single evening. Dave went through Utility #1 and #2 and demonstrated the main programs on each disk. He compiled the following documentation for the disks which we share with all who weren't able to come but also cry out in desperation, "What is this stuff?"

PAC UTILITY DISK PROGRAMS
(#) = Pac Utility disk #

A. UTILITIES FOR BASIC PROGRAMMERS

1. TIMECLOK (1)
     Displays a real-time clock in the upper right corner of the screen.
2. ERORTRAP (1)
     Prints a short description of the first error encountered.
3. SUPERCOM (1)
     Compares to list format files and creates a third file with the differences.
4. PEEKER (1)
     Displays the contents of memory locations.
5. VARIABLE.LST (1)
     Displays a list of the variables currently in use.
6. RENUM.LST (1)
     Renumbers a BASIC program.
7. DATASTMT.GEN (1)
     Makes it easier to enter DATA statements into a BASIC program.
8. BLINK (2)
     Causes the cursor to flash.
9. GEMPRINT.BAS (2)
     Prints a formatted program listing on a Gemini printer.
10. AUTONUM.DOC and .BIN (2)
     Automatically displays a line number to speed program entry.
11. DOC.BAS (2)
     Display documentation about BASIC programs.

B. UTILITIES FOR COPYING PROGRAMS

1. DISKTAPE (1)
     Copy disk files to cassette.
2. BOOTCOPY (1)
     Copy an autoboot cassette to disk.

3. BACKUP1 (1)
     Copy files to disk or cassette.

C. UTILITIES FOR HARDWARE CHECKING

1. RPM.PAC (1)
     Tests your Atari 810 disk speed.
2. MEMTEST.BAS (2)
     Tests RAM memory.
3. STICKTST.BAS (2)
     Tests your joystick.
4. RPM.NEW (2)
     Tests Atari and non-Atari disk drives.

D. UTILITIES FOR MACHINE LANGUAGE PROGRAMMERS

1. DISAM (1)
     Disassembles memory and displays opcodes.
2. STRING.CRE (1)
     Creates a BASIC string containing machine code.
3. CASDUMP (2)
     Get EXE code from cassette and display it on screen or printer.
4. DATAGEN.BAS (2)
     Translate binary load files to BASIC data statements.

E. DISK EXAMINATION UTILITIES

1. EXAMINE.UTL (1)
     Examine disk sectors.
2. DOSWIZ.DOC, .BIN (2)
     Full feature disk examination.

F. MISCELLANEOUS

1. AUTORUN.PAC (1)
     Creates a disk autorun file.
2. FILEINDX.PAC (1)
     Maintains disk library indexes of programs and files.
3. AUTORUN.CAS (1)
     Autoboot from a cassette.
4. MENU.JOY (1)
     Select from a menu with your joystick.
5. CHARALT.BAS, .TXT (2)
     Alter graphics zero characters with a joystick and save them to disk.
6. SCRNDUMP.BAS (2)
     Dump a screen to a disk file.
7. SYSTAT.BAS (2)

Display a system status.
8. DSKLABEL (2)
   Print a disk directory onto a disk label.

All in all, we discovered quite a few gems on the two disks.

Dave's presentation was followed by one by Scott Burr on two public domain programs, Polycopy and Atari program Library. These programs had been distributed at an earlier Beginners meeting and were powerful enough to require a bit of explanation. Polycopy is a dynamic file copier which allows you to copy more than one file from one disk to another, thus simplifying the copying procedure. Atari Program Library allows you to sort and store a list of all your disk programs.

And now a reminder, the Beginner SIG meets at seven on the first Thursday and third Tuesday of each month. At: Q.L. Poly Products
         4701 N.E. Portland Hwy.
         Portland, Oregon
         287-8820

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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

SLIPPED DISK
Lloyd Suiter

So far this year I have produced 6 new disks for our disk library (we only had 4 all last year), and it looks like we are going to have several more. When I put together a disk I would like to add some colorful introduction that would boot up automatically. So far we only have 2 such programs. One by Duane Bolster (the PAC rocket) and one by Pat Warnshuis (the PAC city).

I brought up the idea at the January meeting of having a new contest for the Portland Atari Club. What I would like to suggest is a contest to see what kind of new introductions to our disk we can come up with. It would be nice if we could introduce the Portland Atari Club and display some of the attributes of the Atari Computer and at the same time.

I know that there are a lot people out there that are good programmers or want to become programmers but have a difficult time trying to decide what to write. This contest will give you some ideas and a direction for your programming.

I am also thinking about having different categories for entries to help give all members an even break in the contest.

The prizes have yet to be decided but it will be worth your effort and besides our disks are making their way around the world and you could be right there on the front. Beats spray painting on trains. Start writing and I'll have more info later. Please help out your club and give it a try. Direct all entries to me.

New Disks added so far this year are: Games 5 (some very nice basic games), Adventure Games 1 (If you like adventure games you get 4 with doc. for only 5 bucks), Education 2 (stimulating simulations in education), Education 3 (4 ed programs - Lemonade was the big apple education program), ExtenBasic 400/800 only (adds several progamming functions to basic - a super deal for the cost), and the XL Translator (a must for XL owners to make sure they can boot up 400/800 programs)

You will find a complete directory of all the disk in this newsletter. c u lloyd

NOTES
Chuck Hall

I have received a special offer from Indus for a new board for their drives. It is a 64K ram board which will work with the Z80 processor in the drive. They have also announced a contest for software development for this board. If you have an Indus, or would like to get more info on this, give me a call. Price of the board is $50.

I have received a card from Syntel, advertising rebuilt 300/1200 baud modems for $129. Cable is $14.95 extra, + $5 for shipping.

I have received an offer from one software company that will give us up to 70% off retail on their products if we purchase a minimum of 40 items. I will prepare a list for the next meeting and see what level of interest there is in these products.

I have also received some brochures for an adult oriented BBS. If interested in these see me.

The 130XE's are in town. You may see them at IB Computers and at CompuSource. They are very nice.

I have obtained the latest copy of DOS 2.5 from ATARI and will make distribution of it at the meetings. You may purchase a copy for $1.00 to cover the cost of the disk, or you may bring your own disk, with your name and number on the label, and I will make you a copy and have it available at the next meeting. I will also demonstrate this DOS at the next meeting.

From the Microbits people we hear of a new 300/1200 baud modem coming out for under $200. About time the price on these started coming down. This one sounds good.

Word from Electronic Arts is the Adventure Construction Set for Atari, is due to be released in June. Look for it.

I will have a special price list from Educational Software at the meeting. Some good prices on the Tricky Tutorials and other related software.

Also have received a special offer from AXLON for the ANDY robot. This Bushnell's latest (not quite) product. If we order 3-5, we can get 10% off the price of $119.95. If more than 5 then we get 15% off. If interested please call.

I traded our disk library of a like number of disks from the Bay Area Users Group and San Leandro Computer Club. We now have a large selection of new software that is soon going to be available from our library. I think you will also be very pleased with the quality and format of some of the new stuff we are going to have coming

out.

There is a new SIG group starting the 25th of April. It is for those interested in the ST computers. The group will be looking for a name. One mentioned so far is "ST elsewhere". Please help!

We are looking for a leader for a new group to cover modems, telecommunications, Bulletin Boards, and all of that good stuff. Our current sysops are already extended pretty thin and cannot help at this time. If you are interested please contact our SIG Coordinator Tom Brown. If we don't find a volunteer before long, I WILL APPOINT SOMEONE, so watch out!

Have a special offer of a new math game that I looked at down at the fair. If you might be interested let me know.

I have received an offer of a new book to be used in teaching LOGO. There is no copyright infringement for making copies of this book. It is intended for those who wish to teach LOGO, but could be of value to all. Remember that LOGO will probably be the built in language for the ST's. Price is about $30. If enough are interested, we can spread the cost over many, and get it for only a few bucks apiece.

Languages planned for the ST: LOGO, FORTH, BASIC, C, ASSEMBLER/DEBUGGER. FORTH and LOGO now available.

Might have an ST at the meeting. NO promises, but am trying. Better stop by and check it out.

I am attempting to write a review of the MMG Basic Compiler. Will probably have it ready for the next NL. If you have any comments on this product please pass them on to me.

If you are interested in colored ribbons for your Gemini printers, see Terry at CompuSource. He has 5 different colors; green, blue, brown, violet, and red.

Have received a price list from a company called Gemini Enterprises in NJ. One item in particular caught my attention. 850 Interface for $99.95, + $4 shipping.

I noticed that CompuDesk has changed their brand of generic disks. I had not found a bad one tell this last batch. If anyone has had trouble with the latest brand of generic they are selling, please let us know.

The club needs an 810 transformer if anyone has one laying around.

IN THE MAILBAG
Chuck Hall

At the last meeting (actually the February meeting for me) I commented that I had sent out 112 letters to third party developers of ATARI software, hardware, and etc. I took the names of the companies from ANTIC, ANALOG, and Compute. The response from them has been quite good. Since my Presidents column is quite long this time, I will not recount everything I have received, but will hit the highlights now, and go into more detail next month.

From KRENTEK Software we received two games for review. Both are Strategic military type games; Napoleon at Waterloo and Rome and the Barbarians. Both games are interesting and should be enjoyed immensely by those into strategic simulations. I have looked at them both and they both perked my interest. If only I had the time. I will eventually pass these on to someone to review for the newsletter. Any volunteers may give me their name and number at the meeting or just call me. From Microcomputer Games of Avalon Hill, we received a copy of Gulf Strike and Maxwell Manor. We have been enjoying Maxwell manor in preparing our review of it, and from others I have heard that Gulf Strike is excellent. From Dorsett we received a sample pack of their educational cassettes plus player cartridge. I will check with our PACE group to see if they are interested in reviewing this. I have received catalogs and literature galore and will have all extra copies available at each meeting until exhausted. I will eventually list any special offers I receive and pass these on to you as soon as possible. Look for offers on the the Bulletin Board often also. We are supposed to have two light pens and software coming but haven't received them yet. You will notice more advertising in the newsletter in the coming months (check out the SWP ad this month) also due to this letter writing campaign. I will have more letters going out this month, and will continue to contact any party doing work for or with ATARI. In this way we can keep up on what is coming out for the ATARI line. I am already receiving new releases from Electronic Arts, Epyx, Broderbund, and many others. I will continue this next month when space allows. Keep tuned for future good deals.

PAC DISK LIST
Lloyd Suiter

Disk #1 Home and Business

ADDRESS	, AUTORUN SYS,	LENDARDOC,
CALENDARRUN,	CALMAIN BAS,	CALSORT BAS,
LOAN	, PROPERTY ,	STOCK ,
TINYEDIT	, TINYPLAN ,	

Disk #2 Utility 1

AUTORUN CAS,	AUTORUN PAC,	AUTORUN SYS,
BACKUP1 ,	BOOTCOPY ,	DATASTMTGEN,
DISAM ,	DISKTAPE ,	ERORTRAP ,
EXAMINE UTL,	FILEINDXPAC,	MEMLOW TOP,
PEEKER ,	RENUM LST,	RPM PAC,
STRING CRE,	SUPERCOM ,	TIMECLOK ,
TRANSL DAT,	TRANSL PTR,	VARIABLELST,

Disk #3 Utility 2

AUTONUM BIN,	AUTONUM DOC,	AUTORUN SYS,
BLINK ,	CASDUMP ,	CHARALT BAS,
CHARALT TXT,	CHARSET BAS,	DATAGEN BAS,
DELETE LST,	DIRECTRYBAS,	DOC BAS,
DOC DOC,	DOSWIZ BIN,	DOSWIZ TXT,
DSKLABELBAS,	GEMPRINTBAS,	LJKDIR BAS,
MEMTST BAS,	RPM NEW,	SCRNDUMPBAS,
STICKTSTBAS,	SYSTAT BAS,	

Disk #4 Scopy & MFT
    A super fast copy programs (2)

Disk #5 XL Translator A and B

    To help XL owners load programs written for the 400/800

Disk #6 ExtenBasic

    Adds many basic programing functions to basic (renum, delete, dir, and others) 400/800 only.

Disk #7 Games 1

ALIEN ,	AUTORUN SYS,	BOMBERS ,
CONCEN ,	GALLERY ,	HORSERACE ,
INTRO G1 ,	PRICE ,	ROBOTWAR ,
ROCKET ,	SMASH ,	TICKTACKTOE,
TOWERS ,		

Disk #8 Games 2

AUTORUN SYS,	CLEWSO ,	ELECTRIC ,

GUNINTRO	,	GUNNER	,	INTRO	G2	,
INTRO	OBJ,	INTRO1	DAT,	MAXIT		,
STARWARP	,					

Disk #9 Games 3

AUTORUN	SYS,	BATS	,	FROGGIE	BIN,
GOBBLER	,	GRUBBS	,	INTRO	G3	,
INTRO	OBJ,	INTRO1	DAT,	MYRIAPEDBIN,
SHERLOCK	,				

Disk #10 Games 4

AUTORUN	MEN,	AUTORUN	SYS,	CHICKEN	,
DEFEND	BIN,	FILLERUPBIN,	HARVY	BIN,
INTRO	D2	,	INTRO	OBJ,	INTRO1	DAT,
LIVWIRE	BIN,	MANIC	BIN,	MAZE	,
UXB	,	VULTURES	,		

Disk #11 Games 5

AUTORUN	SYS,	BLOCKADE	,	CARRACE	,
CRYPTO	,	DOGGIES	,	FROG	,
LUNAR	,	SLOT2	,	SPACEATK	,
SPACERES	,				

Disk #12 Card Games

AUTORUN	SYS,	BINGO	BAS,	BLKJACK	,
BRIDGE	,	CRIB	CHA,	CRIB	DAT,
CRIBBAGE	,	STUDCMP	BIN,	YAHTZEE	,

Disk # 13 Adventure Games 1

ADVINTRO1	,	AUTORUN	SYS,	BLAKHOLE	,
BLAKHOLEDOC,	KLONDIKEDOC,	KLONDIKEDSK,
WINDSLOE	,	WINDSLOEDOC,		

Disk #14 Education 1

AMERICAS	,	AUTORUN	SYS,	BEGINTYP	,
BIOCHART	,	BIORITHM	,	CALENDAR	,
HANGMAN	,	INTRO	ED1,	LIGHT	,
MATH2	,	MATHDRIL	,	MATHPKG	,
METRICS	,	SIMON	,	STATES	,

Disk # 15 Education 2

AUTORUN	SYS,	EDINTRO	PAC,	MAKCHANG	,
OREGON	,	SQUARE	,	STATES	,
VOLCANO	,				

Disk #16 Education 3

| ABOXES | , | AUTORUN | SYS, | FRACTION | , |
| LEMONADE | , | PAKJANA | , | | |

Disk #17 Demo 1

AUTORUN	SYS,	BARGRAPHDEM,	BOXDEMO	,
CHOPSTIX	,	CLOCK	DIG,	DIALOGUE	,
ELLIPSE	,	ETCHSKCH	,	FUGUE2	,
GIGGLE	,	INTRO	DEM,	JAZZ	,
LOGO	,	MAGIC	,	MESSAGE	,
NITEMARE	,	PUFF	,	SCROLL	,
SOUNDSTK	,	STARSHIP	,	STARWARSMUS,
STRINGAR	,	VEGAS	,	XMASTREE	,

Disk #18 Demo 2

AUTORUN	MEN,	AUTORUN	SYS,	GRAPHICSGTI,
HYMN	MUS,	INTRO	D2	,	INTRO	OBJ,
INTRO1	DAT,	MAGIC	DEM,	MESSIAH MUS,
NUTDANCEMUS,	SGDEMO	BIN,	SHUTTLE PIC,
SSELECT	,	SUNSET	DEM,	SUPERGR BAS,
TITLE	GEN,				

Disk #19 Demo 3

ATARILOGO1	,	ATARILOGO2	,	AUTORUN	MEN,
AUTORUN	SYS,	BOXDEMO1	,	BOXDEMO2	,
BOXDEMO3	,	CUBEDRAW	,	ETCHASKETCH,
FAUCET	,	HDEM	CHR,	HIWAY	,
HORSE	DAT,	HORSE1	,	HORSE2	,
HORSE3	,	INTRO	D3	,	INTRO	OBJ,
INTRO1	DAT,	KSCOPES	,	MICROPIC	,
OCTADRAW	,	PENCILS	BIN,	SNOWFLAKE	,
VOYAGER	PIC,	WATERFALL	,		

Disk #20 Modem Disk

AMISTERM	,	AMODEM	DOC,	AMODEM5	,
ARMUDIC	DOC,	AUTORUN	SYS,	BACKWTR DOC,
CBBSHELPDOC,	CREATO	,	DSKTRANSFER,
JONES	,	JONES	DOC,	JTERM	,
MINITERM	,	SEPERATE	,	STRIP	,
TNUMBERS	,				

N E W S   A N D   R E V I E W S

HOMETEXT VS. ATARIWRITER
Jim Link

HomeText, and AtariWriter are word processing programs for the Atari computer. HomeText comes on a disk and will only work on computers with at least 48K. AtariWriter comes on a cartridge and will work on any machine, with disk or cassette.

Neither program can match professional word processing programs such as WordStar in features and flexibility. But they also don't match them in price. HomeText is one of three programs from Batteries Included that comes in a package called HomePak. The list prices is $49.95. AtariWriter is distributed by Atari and was originally a hundred dollar program. Now it is discounted to as little as $35 mail order.

AtariWriter has been around long enough to be something of a standard for Atari-based word processors. Therefore, I thought it would be useful to compare HomePak's HomeText to it. I will compare the following features: The instruction manuals, what you see on the screen, coding structure, block usage, speed of use, and preview/printing modes.

The manuals.

The HomeText instruction manual has several photos of the screen to illustrate its instructions, and these instructions are easy to follow as you go through the manual. However, the publishers of HomePak have committed one sin I consider unpardonable: there is no index! If you forget how to do something you will either have to thumb through the manual or search all the pop-up menus the program provides, looking for the feature you want. (These pop-up menus can be useful, but I suspect they are part of the reason the program takes up so much valuable memory, leaving so little space left for text.)

The AtariWriter manual is an excellent document with lots of illustrations and how-to examples, and you can always look in the index if you forget how to do something.

What you see on the screen.

HomeText uses a modified character set. This takes some getting used to, and its readability really depends on the quality of your monitor or TV. However, it is possible to change the background color and brightness; a feature I found necessary.

AtariWriter uses the standard Atari character set we are all used to on a darker background. I also prefer the AtariWriter cursor (a blinking underscore character; HomeText uses the inverse of whatever character it is over). If I took my eyes away from the screen while using HomeText, I sometimes had to move my cursor in order to find it again.

Coding structure and general usage.

One of the features I really appreciate about HomeText is the ability to choose between insert and overwrite modes. AtariWriter only allows insert mode, so if you want to change part of a sentence, you must delete what you don't want, then type in the new copy. With overwrite mode, you merely type over what you no longer need.

A severe drawback of HomeText is the limit of RAM left over for your documents after the program is loaded. The manual claims you should have about 8350 bytes available, but I was able to access only about 6620. What does this mean to the user? As an example, a single page of double-spaced output requires approximately 2000 bytes. So, HomeText allows documents of only up to three pages in a single file. By contrast, AtariWriter has more than 20,000 bytes free when using DOS (more if using cassette), allowing documents of up to 10 pages.

Block usage.

AtariWriter has the edge here. HomeText requires that you redefine a block every time you want to duplicate it. The block can only be up to one screen long, and you cannot do anything else (such as search for the location you want to move a block to) while in the middle of a block function.

AtariWriter allows up to 30 lines for a block duplicate, move, or delete; and, because you use block markers, allows all normal word processing functions to proceed as usual. HomeText also does not allow blocks to be moved between files-- a real problem, if you want to move a paragraph from page 5 to page 2. Such a document is possible by "chaining". Chaining is a function in both programs that allows more than one file to be accessed from the disk instead of RAM for a particular function, such as printing or previewing.

Speed of use.

HomeText is way ahead here. I am a typesetter by profession, so I tend to type fast. I never worried that HomeText would keep up with me and I was satisfied with the speed of cursor movement. AtariWriter reacts more slowly, occasionally dropping a character. The speed factor is significant to make up for many of HomeText's drawbacks.

Other points.

For a program as extensive as HomeText's, it is surprising that the error messages are the same ones you will find in Atari BASIC. AtariWriter gives a brief explanation when an error occurs.

Do NOT hit reset with HomeText. Unlike AtariWriter, you will lose everything, including the program.

Printing/preview modes.

A nice feature of HomeText is that it tells you which page is being printed (or previewed) as it goes along. Unfortunately it does not allow you to print or preview a partial document, nor can you print the disk directory.

AtariWriter's preview mode allows you to see the actual text (through horizontal scrolling), while HomeText only gives facsimile representation of what a page looks like (using dotted lines). This makes it very difficult to pick out a specific line, should you so desire. Also, since HomeText's buffer is so small, even a file as short as a single page cannot be previewed at all while in memory. It is possible to preview such a file, but you must save it on disk, because you must clear the buffer first; this makes it difficult to make quick changes.

Special features

HomePak includes a "database" program called HomeFind which can be used for a mail merge function. I found it to be so limited as to be of no use. Also, HomeText does not allow merging of text except at the beginning of a line. That means you can have a name with address, but no "Dear xxx." AtariWriter's mail merge features are also limited (and not fully documented in the manual), but are more useful.

Both programs allow appending (or merging) of files, and they work equally well, but you have to be careful when merging files using HomeText. If you overflow the buffer you will get only a partial load and additional keystrokes will overwrite your text, even if you are in the insert mode.

When I first started using HomeText I was impressed with some of its features. The pop-up menus allow some use of the program without the need to memorize the commands; but this is just as well since the lack of an index makes it difficult to find information on a specific feature in the manual.

Nevertheless, the overall performance is satisfactory for a light user of word processing.

If you already have AtariWriter, stick with it, at least for now. If you are looking for a first word processing program, then HomeText is worth taking a look at.

The bundling of software as with HomePak's HomeText, HomeFind, and HomeTerm makes this an attractive offer if you need all these features, but make sure you know the limitations first.

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KOALA PAD MUSIC
Von Kreil

PAC Editor's Note: This item is reprinted from the R.A.G. BAG, the newsletter of the Redwood Atari Group. I hope that you enjoy it as much as I did.

This little BASIC program translates input from a KOALA PAD into sound, and displays the stylus position on the Koala Pad as a dot on the screen for each note. The dots remain on the screen until you press a Koala Pad button. The program should also work for paddles. Try it for some interesting audio and visual effects.

Program Listing

```
10 GRAPHICS 23
20 S=PADDLE(1)-3
30 SOUND 0,S,10,10
40 COLOR INT(S/(S+1)+0.5)
50 PLOT PADDLE(0)*0.69,PADDLE(1)*0.41
60 IF PTRIG(0) AND PTRIG(1) THEN 20
70 GOTO 10
```
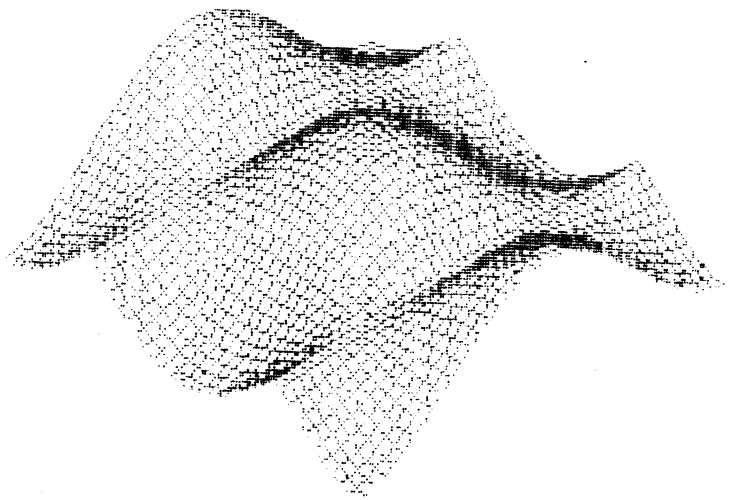
THE PRINT SHOP
Steve Billings

Atari may have been last in line again, but definitely not least! The Print Shop is a piece of software that has made the rounds of the "other" computers and has finally come out from Pixillite c/o the distributer Broderbund Software in an Atari translation.

For all those who did not stick around for the demo at the club meeting on April fools day, Print Shop is a graphic and font creating software tool for use with a dot-matrix printer, here is what Print Shop does:

1. Make a greeting card.
2. Make a sign.
3. Make a letterhead.
4. Make a banner.
5. Look at kaleidoscopes and print or write on top of and print.
6. Draw your own or modify the graphic pictures.

There is a note in the documentation that indicates the program will not work satisfactorily with the revision 'A' OS ROM found in older models of the Atari's, due to some bugs in the OS. To modify your ROM will cost about $20 for chips and dips and next to nothing for amateur labor if you can find it, or a couple bucks for professional labor that will know what it's doing.

The Print Shop comes with the following printer formatting capabilities. If yours is not on the list it may be similar to one that is, or check with your dealer and see if he knows or will let you test it out on your printer. If Print Shop is not compatible with your printer, there is not much you can do.

Admate DP-10
Axiom SLP
Blue Chip
BMC
Centronics GLP
Citizen MSP15
C. Itoh 8510
Delta 10
Epson MX, FX, RX (80 or 100), JX-80
Old Epson with Graftrax 80
Legend 880
Mannesmann Talley Spirit 80
NEC 8023A
Okidata Microline
Panasonic KX-p1090/1091
Radix 10
Star Gemini 10X/15X (Older Gemini 10 seems to be missing. Check it out before you buy, there are those who have reported problems.)

I will briefly describe what each of the functions of Print Shop do, but I think the titles given above are pretty much self explanatory.

Greeting card makes a small greeting card on an 8 1/2 x 11 sheet that you fold twice into a booklet or card. You can put a graphic and about 5 lines of text on the cover and also on what becomes the inside page. There are 8 lettering fonts to choose from, they apparently cannot be altered or added to. There are also 60 graphic pictures and patterns supplied on the disk, and you can alter any of them or even create your own with the graphic editor.

Sign lets you put a graphic and message of your choice on an 8 1/2 x 11 size sheet of paper. The documentation suggests using this for announcements, lists, report covers, etc.

Letterhead lets you create a title block with graphics at the top and bottom of a sheet of paper. You could put your name or company name at the top of the page with your logo and address. (If you do this on bond paper don't forget to turn off your end of paper default beeper on you printer. Or it will really mess things up.)

Banner will print out a long message on fanfold paper, sideways. You have the option of printing a big graphic at the beginning or end of the message. This is great for printing banners for home coming soldiers or kids from computer camps.

Screen magic has two kaleidoscope makers that make pulsating and constantly changing patterns on the screen. If you see one you like you can capture it, save it, print it, or superimpose lettering on it and print that.

Graphics editor allows you to create or modify a graphic picture. The Graphic editor allows you to use a keyboard, joystick, or touch pad to work the cursor. The editor is nothing slick and I found it difficult to use the touch pad. (No special circle or box making features to use with the pad.) I found it easiest to use a combination of joystick and keyboard. Any graphic you create can be saved on to another disk and incorporated into any of the other functions.

Setup is used to select the type of printer you are using. It is simple to use. Just select printer you are using from the list and hit return. It then does a little check printout to verify that all is well. A great feature is that it then remembers what printer you have and the next time you boot up Print Shop it is already set

DISKEY
Bill Pike

up for your printer. If you change printers simply redo the setup routine.

The entire creative process is menu driven. To get started does not require reading thick documentation. In fact the first page of the booklet that comes in the package says "You don't need to read this manual". This is quite true, I found it fairly easy to make up a poster my first time through after only glancing through the manual, but it will require reading the manual or some fumbling around to discover all the features of the program.

The creation of one of the cards or posters is structured. There is a particular format to follow, but there are enough options to allow many combinations and styles. The only limitation that really bothered me was the paucity of lettering fonts. Although you can create new graphics, you cannot add to or change the fonts, and there is apparently no option for even the software company to come out with another font disk. (Marketing error.) The fonts that do come with the disk are capitals only and while not bad looking are nothing very fancy.

I created a greeting card to check the time involved in using the program. To design the card took approximately 6 minutes, I didn't hurry, and I didn't fuss around too much either. Actually printing the card took about 9 minutes on my Gemini 10X, for a total time of about 15 minutes. This is less time than it takes my wife to drive to Fred Meyer's and try and pick out a card. I don't know if I would want to create 50 personalized Christmas cards, but it would work for a birthday card. Creating a banner would be a longer operation, and a letterhead takes less time to print.

Also included in my software package were about 30 pieces of robins egg blue fanfold paper and about 8 matching envelopes. Also there was a brochure for ordering more colored paper, envelopes and colored ribbons, and a discount coupon if you order more than $50 of paper and ribbons. (Hint, hint)

This program has a lot of potential for creative uses and is easy enough for children to use. The few drawbacks such as the finite number of fonts and plain jane graphics editor are minimal, and detract little from a practical utility package that is a lot of fun to use.

DISKEY by Sparky Starks is published by Adventure International. The list price is $49.95. I won't be giving a full account of all of its functions as there are 57 of them and the review would take up most of the newsletter if I did.

The strongest features are the number of commands and the power of the commands available. Some of the best are; [cV] VTOC update and repair (this reads the disk to see what sectors are labeled as in use and then resets the Volume Table of Contents to reflect what is actually on the disk),[cN]Modify sector file number reference (changes the file number reference for a particular sector), the [d*] series of functions (these have to do with directory entries),[T] tape to disk (changes a single load tape to a auto-boot disk, [cE] erase disk without reformat (deletes all files from the disk, good for those people who are using the back side of disks even if their drives won't format back sides), [FL] & [FU] lock and unlock file from repair program (how many times have you tried to work on a disk that has the file locked that you want to work on?). [cS] file copy without directory reference from source disk.

Now the bad features. One is the long time that the program takes to load and the (music?) that tells you that it is ready to do something. One other problem is the number of key functions available, there are just to many. While other disk repair programs may take one or two operations for a function, DISKEY may take 6 or 7. The best section of the program, the file management section, works by file name; but if you have accidentally named two or more files the same forget it, especially if one of the files has been bombed. This program works Single Density only and working with two drives is rather a pain. There is a fair amount of re-inserting the master disk as you change work with it.

Using this program requires a fair amount of knowledge about the structure of disks and how the files are organized. The documentation is NOT for those who don't have this working knowledge either.

Summing things up. I don't feel that this program is for the intermediate or beginning computer owner as the level is just to high and there are other programs such as DISKSCAN, DISK WIZARD 2, etc. for the serious programmer that can accomplish much more.

MICROSTUFFER
Clyde Pritchard

The MicroStuffer, from Microbits Peripheral Products in Albany, Oregon, is a 64K Printer Buffer. It has a 1 year warranty. The list price is $149.95, but it can be purchased locally for as little as $120.00. It is designed to work with any computer that uses the standard Centronics parallel interface. For the Atari, this means that you need an 850 Interface, or one of the other parallel printer interfaces to use the MicroStuffer. I have used the MicroStuffer on my Atari 800 with the 850, an IBM PC, and a KayPro 4. It seems to work fine on all of these systems.

The installation of the MicroStuffer is quite easy, because it is an external unit rather than an internal unit that requires installation inside the printer. To install the buffer, all you have to do is unplug the printer cable from your printer, plug it into the back of the buffer, then plug the cable from the buffer into the printer, and finally plug in the buffer's power supply. The power cord is at least six feet long, but the cable from the buffer to the printer is on the short side, only about two feet in length.

One note on the Centronics interface cable. It must follow the standard exactly, or it will not work with the MicroStuffer. Microbits includes a special notice about this for the 850 Interface, because the Atari defined cable connections for the 850 are not correct. They tell you what needs to be changed in case your cable was made with the Atari specs rather than the proper Centronics spec. The best thing to do is to install the buffer and try it out before worrying about the possible cable problem. If your cable was made by someone who was smart enough to make it right the first time, you will be fine. If not, you will need to make (or have) a minor change made.

Now, for those of you who aren't sure what a printer buffer is, I will give a short (hopefully) explanation. A printer buffer is (in most cases) a hardware device that contains RAM (Random Access Memory), and is installed between the computer and the printer. The buffer receives the information to be printed from the computer, stores it in RAM, and sends it to the printer for printing. The primary benefit is that the buffer can receive the information much faster than the printer, which means that your computer will think the printing is done long before the printer stops. This is true as long as the amount of RAM in the buffer is large enough to hold everything you are printing. If so, you are able to go on to your next task on the computer while the buffer and printer keep working away. No more long waits for the printer to finish that letter to mom, you can start playing your favorite game right away!
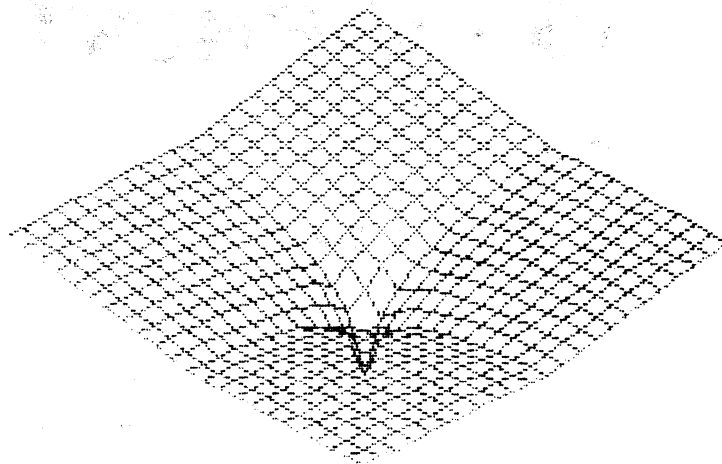
The MicroStuffer has only three switches. First is the power on/off switch. Next is a switch to clear the buffer before you start printing your next document. The third switch is a copy switch. This lets you send one copy of your document to the buffer, then use the copy switch to print further copies. You can also use the copy switch to reprint something if you had a paper or ribbon problem the first time. The copy function only works if what you are printing is smaller than 64K.
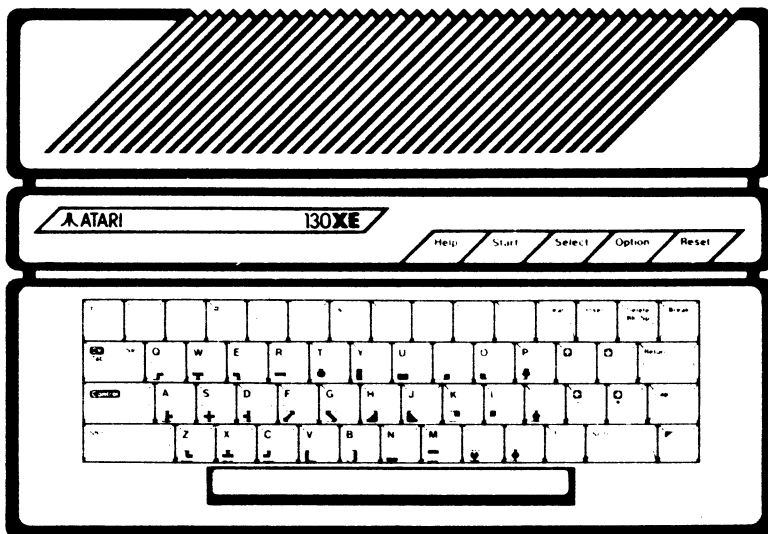
There are also two indicator lights on the front panel. One of them indicates how full the buffer is getting by flashing faster and faster as the buffer fills. The second light comes on if the buffer has been overflowed, which means that you cannot use the copy function.

The MicroStuffer comes with a six page instruction booklet. It covers installation, operation, buffer self-test and has information of printer cable connections.

There is no discussion of RAM expansion in the manual, and I haven't had time to contact MPP to see if it can be done, but 64K is more RAM than most of us have in our Atari computers, so it will be adequate for most things that we do at home.

If you have any questions about the MicroStuffer, give me a call and I will try to answer them.

H o w   T o   D o   I t . . . .

WHAT TO DO WHILE WAITING TO GET ON
THE BULLETIN BOARD
Steve Billings

The club bulletin board has been running well, with very little down time. The phone lines have been busy with an average of about 50 callers per day on weekends and 20 or so on weekdays. The busiest time of day is from about 4PM to 10PM. If you can call at other times you will have the best luck getting through.

By far the most common complaint I get regarding the bulletin board is "I can't get on!". I admit that it is busy much of the time, but don't give up just yet. While waiting to get onto the board myself I thought up some things to keep you busy so that you don't get bored.(pun intended)

Your time spent waiting to get on line need not be wasted staring at a uninteresting tv screen while you modem dials away in vain. Following are some suggestions to put this potentially precious piece of time to good use...

1: Read the documentation of all the software that you have bought, that you did not bother to read the first time because the program was obvious and docs are boring. Now that you take time to read it you might just discover that the software does work like it is supposed to. Ah ha! This idea can reap a lot of benefits and will probably keep you busy for quite awhile.

2: Balance your check book. This is not something you need your computer to do. All you need is a pencil and a calculator and an eraser. There are programs that will balance it for you, but they are more difficult to use than a pencil and they cannot figure out what to do with the 12 cents that are left over.(hint-eraser)

3: Pay your bills.(see #2)

4: Read the club newsletter. You never know, you might find other excellent constructive articles like this one that will improve the quality of your life and make you a productive person again.

5: Mix up a batch of cookies. When you finally get on the board, run over and put them in the oven. When you are done the cookies will probably be done too! This works with other foods also, such as tv dinners and frozen pizzas, but cookies are the best because they take longer to mix up thereby allowing more time for your auto-dialing modem to get through to the bulletin board.

6: Get a second computer and play games while you wait for the phone line to clear. This is an expensive option and I have not tried it yet, so it is only theory, but it seems like a good idea. The only drawback I can think of is that the modem may signal a connect at a bad time in the game and the bulletin board will hang up on you if you don't get to it right away. Don't forget though that most games do have a pause option, be sure to read your documentation. (see #1)

7: Turn up the volume on the tv or modem and take a nap. This also allows you to stay up later into the prime modeming time of 2AM to 5AM when the phone lines are cleanest and rates lowest. Of course this necessitates an auto dial modem that can wake you up when it connects. Contact an electrician if you are a heavy sleeper and think this may be a problem. He will likely be able to come up with a simple device that will effectively bring you to full consciousness quickly.

8: Start your own BBS. This allows you to get on line anytime you want. Simply turn off the modem and any caller is cut off immediately, allowing you access to the board as often and as long as you like. This works great and the caller thinks they did something wrong. If they call again they are very careful not to abuse the board. Don't over-use this privilege though, because people will stop calling and you will soon tire of reading messages left to yourself.

9: Make up dumb lists. There are many lists to be made; shopping lists, lists of friends, lists of bulletin boards, undiscovered planets and of course lists of things to do while waiting to get on a bulletin board. If you can think of anything that I may have overlooked drop me a line on the PAC BBS or send a letter, if you can't get on the board, to the club P.O. Box. I think I have covered the subject pretty thoroughly, but if you have any other ideas let me know and I will put then in a column next month. Till then, keep modeming!

GLORY CALLS
Jeff Golden

PAC Editor's Note: This interesting little game program is from the November 1984 DAL-ACE Newsletter.

Your mission, as a volunteer pilot of an unarmed, high altitude spy plane, is to fly deep into enemy airspace, and photograph their secret military bases.

Apparently, your marital problems have affected your thinking, because you do not seem to mind that the enemy will be using you for target practice.

Fortunately, the enemy missiles contain American microchips that were tested in Taiwan, before being shipped to Sweden. Now, they are sending them back.

The enemy has decided that the best way to determine which missiles are defective is to shoot them all at you. You will find that the missiles are easy to avoid, but the game will be over if just one of those chips is a good one.

Press the red panic button when you run into trouble. No, we will not tell you what it is connected to.

Your light aircraft has a limited fuel supply, so you must rendezvous with the KC-135 tankers, and refuel.

You will collect bonus points toward your posthumous Medal of Honor, by passing over and photographing the enemy installations.

One last thing, please make out a will before leaving.

Program Listing

```
100 GRAPHICS 0:SETCOLOR 2,0,0:COLOR 1
120 P=20:SCORE=0:POKE 752,1
140 FOR FUEL=100 TO 0 STEP -1
160 A=65:B=RND(0):IF B>0.8 THEN A=199
170 IF B>0.9 THEN A=77
180 B=10+RND(0)*20:POSITION B,23
190 PRINT CHR$(A)
200 FOR SPACE=1 TO 3
220 POSITION 1,0:PRINT "F=";FUEL;
240 POSITION P,0:PRINT "Y";
260 POSITION 31,0:PRINT "S=";SCORE;
280 POSITION P,1:GET #6,A
300 IF A=199 THEN FUEL=FUEL+30
310 IF A=77 THEN SCORE=SCORE+100
320 IF A=65 THEN GOTO 520
340 C=STICK(0)
360 IF C<8 THEN P=P+2
380 IF C<12 THEN P=P-1
400 IF P>29 THEN P=29
420 IF P<10 THEN P=10
440 IF SPACE<3 THEN POSITION 0,23:?
460 NEXT SPACE
480 NEXT FUEL:POSITION 0,20
500 ? "OUT OF GAS  ";:GOTO 540
520 POSITION P-2,0:? "SMASH";
540 IF STRIG(0)=0 THEN GOTO 100
560 GOTO 540
```
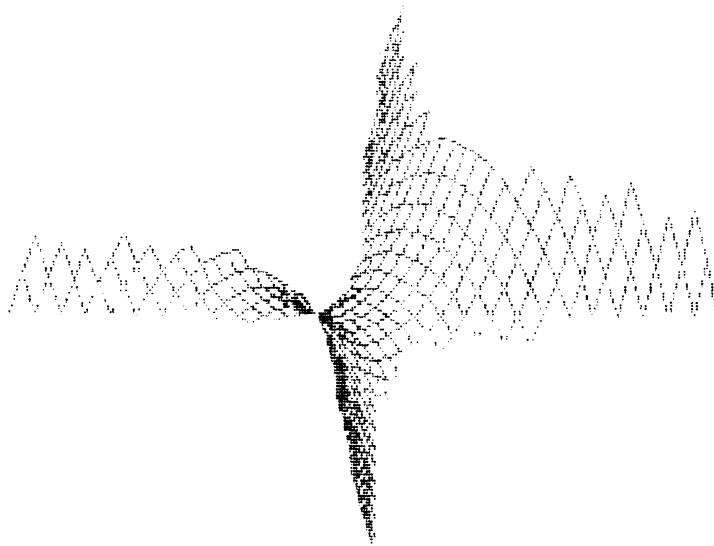
End of Program Listing

SPECIAL PROJECTS
Dave Holladay

If you have been to any of the last few meetings you have heard that the Computer and Electronics Expo is coming up. This is the biggest computer show in Portland during the year and a excellent chance for us to promote the club through our display booth. If you have been a member of the club for any amount of time you also know that the booth is manned (or is that personed) by the general membership of the club. Being a Atari owner of extraordinary talent is not a requirement to work at the booth. Just be a person who is willing to talk to others about the club. This can be what you get out of being a member or how being a member can be beneficial to an Atari computer owner.

A lot of people have signed up but we can always use more. The show runs from Friday May 31st thru Sunday June 2nd. The show will be open thirty hours during this time. That means we will need at least 2 people for two hours at a time or a total of thirty. This is really a minimum because we always can use alternates or an extra person during heavy show times. If you have not signed up and would still like to, please give me a call. I need to know soon because a list of people working at the show must be submitted so

that they will get a badge allowing free entry to the show.

Now a few words to those people who have signed up. I will have a list showing what times I would like to have you at the show. I know everyone would like Saturday 10 to 12 but we need people at all times during the show so please be a little flexible with the times that you will be able to come. I will have this list at the next meeting (May 6th) so if you have signed up please be there so we can finalize the schedule.

Finally one last item. We now have the use of our projection TV and would like to use it at the show. The problem is because of the number of people and the chance for damage, the projector needs to be enclosed in a unit similar to a home projection TV. This will keep people from touching the unit. If you feel you have some skill in making such a unit please give me a call. I can supply the materials and some labor, what I need is the expertise to make it work.

I think the show was very successful last year and I feel we have the resources and people to make it even better for the club this year. I'm looking forward to working with everyone to see that this goal is accomplished.

PAC CALENDAR OF EVENTS

APRIL	MAY	JUNE
WED 04/24 - PAC Board Meeting	WED 05/01 - Assembler SIG Meeting	MON 06/03 - PAC General Meeting
TUE 04/30 - PACE SIG Meeting	MON 05/06 - PAC General Meeting	
	MON 05/06 - Normal Article Deadline	
	THU 05/09 - Beginner's SIG Meeting	
	THU 05/09 - Newsletter SIG Meeting	
	FRI 05/10 - Commercial Ad Deadline	
	SAT 05/11 - Final Article Deadline	
	SAT 05/11 - Newsletter Production	
	MON 05/13 - Newsletter Final Layout	
	WED 05/15 - Business SIG Meeting	
	WED 05/15 - Newsletter to Printer	
	MON 05/20 - Newsleeter Mailing	
	WED 05/22 - PAC Board Meeting	
	TUE 05/28 - PACE SIG Meeting	