



Atari Computer Enthusiasts

San Leandro Computer Club Journal

May, 1984

The Newsletter of the San Leandro Computer Club for Atari® Microcomputers

President's Report

Bob Barton

As our club has grown, we have seen it change from the "San Leandro Computer Club" to something that really represents the East Bay Atari Users. Now that the membership is over 200 people, it was felt that we should look into renaming the SLCC into something more representative of our current membership.

As a result, we are going to hold a contest for a new name for the SLCC. Between now and our July meeting, we will be taking entries for a new name for our club. The prize for the winning entry will be the Text Wizard word processor (courtesy of Datasoft). This is an excellent word processing package that would be a worthy addition to anyone's software library. You may submit your entries to any officer of the club in writing or by phone. The executive committee will then make their decision before the July meeting.

After we have decided on a new club name, we will hold another contest for a new club logo, with the prize being a Micropainter program.

I hope to see you at our next meeting.

From The Editor's Desk

Ron Seymour

This month will be the second month that the club will be holding open nominations for officers.

Nominated for President were, the current President Bob Barton and Software Chairman Trey Pitruzzello.

Nominated for Vice President were, Paul Gifford and Trey Pitruzzello. Nominated for Secretary was George Herres who is the current Secretary.

Nominated for the position of Treasurer was Jim Hood.

Remember that time is running out for nominations, for the up coming year's officers. If you know of someone, even yourself, that you think will do a good job now is the time for that nomination.

Now for some unfinished business that should have been taken care of some time ago. You may or may not know that my assistant editor is John Manning, who has been doing an excellent job. He makes sure each and everyone gets their

current copy of the newsletter. John has the grueling task of making copies of the newsletter. This is a thankless job, but somebody has to do it, and he does it extremely well. Without John it would be an almost impossible duty, needless to say the quality would suffer.

I would also like to take this time to welcome a couple of new people to the newsletter staff. They are Connie Guy and Mike Silveira, who contributed their time and effort in what we hope is an improving newsletter for the best Atari user group in Northern California.

The deadline for the next newsletter will be on May 23. Please try to submit an article or even an idea of what you would like to see in way of articles in the newsletter. If you have something for publication, in the newsletter give Tom Bennett or myself a call.

Our Next Meeting

Tom Bennett

Gary Carlston, Vice-President of Broderbund Software, will be the guest speaker for our next meeting, Tuesday, May 1. Broderbund is a leader in games software marketing, with hit titles like Choplifter, Lode Runner, A.E., the Arcade Machine, and Sea Fox. Gary will be showing us some of their new software along with discussing the opportunities Broderbund offers to software developers. This will be a meeting you will not want to miss.

In this episode of "who is not working at Atari now", we are sad to report that Mark Cator, head of Users Group Support has left for a job with another computer company. I am not sure where that puts the user group support program but we hope we continue to receive quality support in the future by a competent individual.

I have been coordinating the newsletter exchange with the other ACE clubs in the world (yes, ...we get international newsletters) and will make these available for members. The newsletters will be kept in binders by two months of issues. You can check them out by giving me a call at 275-4466. The names of all of the clubs are too numerous to list here but they contain a wealth of information that equal any magazine. A \$10.00 deposit is required, which is refunded to you on the binder's return. There is a one-week due date on checking these out.

Secretary's Report

George Herres

MINUTES OF GENERAL MEETING SAN LEANDRO COMMUNITY LIBRARY APRIL 3, 1984

8:05 Vice-President Bill George calls meeting to order, introduces Club Officers and asks new members to introduce themselves. Smokers were asked to refrain from smoking at their seats as respect to the non-smokers.

8:10 Software Committee Chairman, Trey Pitruzzello, describes the current Floppy of the Month. A 'Spiffy Menu', as well as Disk Transfer and SuperDos, are among the many great programs to be found on this month's edition. Also discussed were the new disks available starting next month that will contain programs from ANALOG and ANTIC magazines. These disks will be sold to club members for \$5.00. You need to provide proof that the magazines were purchased. Trey will have special disks prepared for those who only purchase one or two of the magazines. Blank disks are being sold to the members for \$18.00 per box of ten.

8:20 Tape Librarian Dan Chun expressed his disappointment with some members who have not returned tapes that were borrowed and asked they be returned so other members can enjoy them, too.

8:23 Vice-President Bill George discussed the upcoming elections and opened nominations. Presidential nominees are Trey Pitruzzello and Bob Barton. V.P. nominees are Trey Pitruzzello and Paul Gifford. For the position of Treasurer, Jim Hood is nominated. George Herres is nominated for Secretary. Nominations will be open again at the May meeting, and elections will be held at the June meeting. If you think someone should be nominated, do it!!!

8:30 Tom Bennett tells the success of the Computer Faire and special thanks went to Bruce Jarvis, Jim and Nate Hood, and Bob Barton for their time and effort in making the Faire a successful event. Tom reads a letter to the club from David Wilson of ATARI User Group Division thanking the Club Officers for their participation at the Hospitality Suite after the Faire. Tom also arranged to have the Chief Executive Officer of ATARI, Mr. James Morgan, as our guest speaker in August, so don't miss that meeting.

8:50 Guest speaker, Kim Ellison, from 3E Software tells about his company and demonstrates some software available. Koala Touch Pad, Micro Illustrator and Power Pad highlighted his demonstration. Kim then answered questions about his company and software for the members.

9:30 Breaktime..... Along with the usual selling of IBM disks, the club also offered raffle tickets to win Astro Chase and Canyon Climber diskettes.

9:57 Vice-President Bill George brings the meeting back to order and introduces Dave Lucky. Dave explains and demonstrates the ATR 8000 Interface Module and it's capability with Atari computers. The ATR 8000 allows the operator to use non-Atari peripherals without any problems. It is a Z80 based computer module that comes in 16K or 64K

and includes a printer buffer, and accepts CPM and other operating systems. More information can be found in the Dec.'83 issue of BYTE and ANTIC magazines, and also the April '84 issue of ANTIC magazine. Dave answered questions pertaining to the ATR 8000 and related areas.

10:28 Meeting is closed. We are glad that you could attend and hope to see you again next month.

San Leandro Computer Club

Journal

The San Leandro Computer Club for Atari Microcomputers is an independent, non-profit organization and users' group with no connection to Atari Corporation, a Warner Communications Company. Membership fees are currently \$20 for one year, or \$12 for six months. Membership includes access to the computer library, subscription to the Journal, and classes when held. Permission to reprint articles in any noncommercial publication is permitted without written authorization, provided proper credit is given. Opinions expressed are those of the author and do not represent the views of the S.L.C.C.

S.L.C.C. OFFICERS

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| MISCELLANEOUS SIG | George Herres | 351-2208 |
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DBA Copy Quality.

Guest Input

Transition SUCCESSFUL

The story of one man's struggle

As my age increases, I find myself becoming more comfortable with certain things in my life, those old slippers of mine, the noise my car makes, and my old Atari 800. Having purchased my first Atari 800 back in '79, comfortable might not be the right word, attached or inseparable might better describe the feelings of passion and accomplishment achieved through the man-machine bond that evolved over the past 5 years or so. Imagine, if you can, how I felt when my boss walked into my cube, one morning and announced that I should try using this new 800 XL computer.

"Never, It's too small," I complained "Only 2 joystick holes (I haven't used all 4 ports in a long time), I'd need a Translator disk, no right cartridge slot, computers shouldn't look cute, they should look like massive banks of information, like my old 800." Needless to say, the Boss is always right, and the XL moved in and occupied the hallowed spot on my desk where an old friend once lived.

Well, about a month has elapsed since I adopted my new little brown & cream computer, and some interesting things have happened since then. Like, I never forget to remove a cartridge anymore before I boot a program, and even as I type this I can see the words ATARIWRITER staring me in the face (even if it does say left cartridge on the top) and I've come to like not having to insert the old basic cartridge to run a short basic program. It's convenient.

My peripherals don't seem to mind the change, the 810, 1050, 850, and even my Epson can't tell the difference. There seems to be a lot more room on my desk (that's not a problem). The Translator isn't really a problem anymore, True, I can't use any of those spiffy autorun.sys menus on my disks anymore, but I have found suitable replacements and I'm sure they will start writing new "XL" menus. But most programs work without the translator, much to my surprise.

Now don't get the wrong impression, all has not been perfect. Filemanager 800+ still needs the translator, but that's ok. Holding the OPTION key to lock out basic is a drag, but I'm adjusting. I really dislike the sound that the TV makes when you press a letter, but I can shut that off with a poke statement. And I keep hitting the help key when I want the start button, that doesn't hurt anything. AND there are some things I really like, for instance, the XL keyboard is great, I love the feel of the keys, The size is neat too, now I can clean under my computer during my bi-annual desk cleaning. And the expansion port, sometimes I remove the cover and just look at it, I bet some neat stuff is going to connect to it in the future.

All in All, the transition has gone extremely smooth. O.K. I like the XL machines, I'll admit it just don't tell some of my user group friends I said it. alright? Now when I look at my old 800, I feel the same as I do when I see a 66 Mustang drive down the street. "I used to have one, and loved it. but I got a new model now, and don't want to change (except maybe, for a 1450 XLD).

** MSIG UPDATE **

The last Miscellaneous Special Interest Group meeting held Phil's house turned out to be a big success. Along with a demonstration of Atari Writer and the Attspeller programs, Tom Bennett showed off his recently purchased "Music Construction Set. And Jim Hood, Frank Daniel, and President Bob Barton provided an impromptu seminar on string handling from basic, using debugging techniques that any beginning programmer would have benefitted from. I wonder if Jim ever got the program working?

I now have the documentation for the mail merge option of Atariwriter, and apologise for forgetting it Saturday night. Please contact me if anyone needs it. Perhaps at the next meeting, we will take a look at DOS 3, for the benefit all you 1050 owners.

Special thanks go out for the Mrs. Fields Cookies that appeared, yum, their my favorite!!!. At its peak I think 20 or 25 people showed up, to give the meeting that feeling of interest in the machine, and in each others needs, that represents what makes the San Leandro Club stand out from the other area groups and makes me proud to be a member. See you again next month.

*** COMPUTER BUZZWORDS ***

ANSI- A hacker who can't sit still.
BATCH- A minor gripe.
BUFFER- A nude computer user.
CURSOR- A hacker who BATCHES alot.
DISK DRIVE- A popular address in Carmel.
END USER- Programmers who sit alot.
FREQUENCY- A disease suffered by video game freaks.
GIGABYTE- A painful sting on the giga.
INDUSTRY STANDARDS- Nonconforming guidelines.
LINE FEED- "I've never met anyone as interesting as you before, etc."
MACHINE LANGUAGE- Zoom, putt-putt, chug-a-lug, clank clank clunk.
OHM- Is were the 'eart is... "OHM SWEET OHM"
QWERTY- To be a little strange.
RAM- Where most of the bugs are kept.
ROM- Where you put all the bugs that won't fit in ram.
SOFTWARE- What programmers wear under their hardware.
TERMINAL INTELLIGENCE- To be so smart it kills you.

Library/Floppy Update

Trey Pitruzzello

Maybe it was his hot breath on the back of my neck that woke me, or maybe it was the guttural way he called my name, but now I was startled awake and somewhat disoriented. A dazed look about the room informed me that I was still at my desk in the study. The room was dark except for the light above the computer, and the clock on the shelf read 3:00 am. A dozen or so diskettes scattered about the desk told the story quick enough. The SLCC Disk-of-the-Month was still not finished, and the deadline was drawing near. I ran a hand through my mussed hair as I felt the confusion and frustration building inside me again. It was then that I remembered that I was not alone in the room. The hot breath was still on the back of my neck, and it smelled strangely of garlic and peanut butter. A hand was on my shoulder, and a quick glance at those short, fat, stubby fingers gave my visitors identity away in an instant. It was Otto Run, leader of that strange and motley crew of computer nerds that call themselves the SLCC Software Committee! "I'm doomed", was my first thought. I slowly looked up and partook of his grotesque countenance, as he prepared to speak. His face screwed up in a fierce frown, and his nostrils flared as he took a deep breath. Pizza crumbs fell from his chest as his lungs expanded, and an empty jar of Skippy toppled out of his shirt pocket. Papers flew, and disks scattered all about the desk, as he bellowed in his loudest voice, "WHY ISN'T IT FINISHED YET, SQUIRT!!!" I shrunk from him in an effort to get away, not from fear of this menacing man mind you, but from the stench of the anchovies he had obviously put on his pizza. "Look, Otto, I've got a little problem here", I replied. "You see, there is just too much GREAT software this month to fit on just ONE Floppy!" "You gotta be kid'n'!?", was his reply. "Show me!" "Well look here", I said. "The new Telecommunications program is 265 sectors long, and the Q-Bert lookalike is 203 sectors long! The Disk Library Database is another 100 sectors, and the Fast-dup Archiver is 122 sectors! And look at all the rest of this great software. There's even two special programs written by members of the SLCC here, and you know that they ALWAYS get top billing!!" Otto's anger was diminished as his interest in the Floppy peaked, and I could see that he too was caught up in my dilemma. Just then a little light went on above his head. It was a dusty, sooty light, and only a 5 watter at that, but it was a light just the same, and I could tell that he had an idea. "The solution is simple he said. All you need to do is.....use the back side of the disk!!" "Oh come-on", I said! "That's alot of work!!" "Listen", was his reply. "Use both sides. Call it a Special Five Dollar Issue, and pack it full of GREAT software! The members will LOVE it!!" Well I've certainly got the great software, and going double-sided this month would solve my problem. "O.K. I'll do it!" I said. "Good!" was his reply, as he grabbed my BEST joystick. "Now, let's see that Q-Bert lookalike!"

I left him there at the computer, as I tip-toed off

to buy. And well that I'd have to throw my favorite ~~SLCC~~ the garbage in the morning. It would be ~~just as~~ just as ~~possible~~ to clean.

O.K. Gary!! ~~to~~ to the program descriptions, but before I ~~do~~ do ~~what~~ what was announced at the last general meeting.

The Disk ~~Library~~ Library has been revised as such:

1. You may ~~swap~~ swap ~~one~~ one per month for another disk in the SLCC Library.
2. The disk ~~you~~ you ~~must~~ must be "one of ours", and must be in perfect condition. ~~No~~ No smudges, wrinkled sleeves, writing or labels on ~~them~~.
3. The ~~new~~ new ~~disk~~ disk carries a value of three (3) dollars. Therefore, if ~~you~~ you ~~want~~ want to swap for a \$5 disk, you must supply an ~~additional~~ additional \$2.

Now here is ~~what~~ what ~~you'll~~ you'll find on the Special, Double-Sided, May 1984 Issue of the ~~SLCC~~ SLCC Disk-of-the-Month!!!!

PAINTER!

Written by Mike ~~Salen~~ Salen, the leader of the SLCC Basic SIG, this program ~~will~~ will load your favorite "Micropainter" masterpieces ~~right~~ right to the screen. It uses machine language subroutines, ~~etc.~~ etc. strings to make it especially speedy! A ~~straight~~ straight version of Mike's program is used to load ~~the~~ the ~~main~~ main screen of this month's Disk-of-the-Month. ~~Mike!~~

CRYPTO!

Do you like ~~to~~ to ~~do~~ do cryptograms?! This program, written by Richard ~~Leandro~~ Leandro, Programmer Extraordinaire of the San Leandro Computer ~~Club~~ Club will help you do just that! You enter the ~~cryptogram~~ cryptogram, and the computer plots a letter frequency chart ~~to~~ to aid in unscrambling the puzzle! Just the thing ~~to~~ to ~~shorten~~ shorten the hours you might spend pondering that ~~cryptogram~~ cryptogram word puzzle!! Thanks Richard!!

OP-ART!

You'll NEVER ~~see~~ see any other computer but the ATARI do anything ~~like~~ like this!! Fine vertical and horizontal scrolling, plus ~~fantastic~~ fantastic GTIA graphics, make this demo absolutely ~~fabulous~~ fabulous!!

DISK-O-LINK!

And yet another ~~exceptionally~~ exceptionally fine Modem/Communication Program graces ~~our~~ our floppy this month! Even if you ~~don't~~ don't have a modem yet, ~~test~~ test up this program and take a look! The programming detail and smoothness are awesome! Then rush out and buy that modem you've been wanting all these months! Note! This program takes all 48K of your memory. You will need to ~~remove~~ remove the Basic Cartridge, and load this program ~~with~~ with the "1 Option" of your DOS ~~menu~~ menu. Once you have it up and running, read the "Help File" for further directions!

SHAZZY-DEMO!

Just like the title suggests, this demo is ~~SSNNAAZZZZZZYY~~ SSNNAAZZZZZZYY!! Just take my word for it, and see for yourself!!

LEMON-LIST!

If you have an Epson, this nicely written program will aid

Library/Floppy Update

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to bed. And I knew full well that I'd have to throw my favorite joystick into the garbage in the morning. It would be just too impossible to clean.

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

O.K. Gang!! Let's get on to the program descriptions, but before I do, let me recap what was announced at the last general meeting.

The Disk Swap Program has been revised as such:

1. You may swap one disk per month for another disk in the SLCC Library.
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FAINTER!

Written by Mike Sawley, the leader of the SLCC Basic SIG, this program will load your favorite "Micropainter" masterpieces right to the screen. It uses machine language subroutines, and long strings to make it especially speedy! A stripped down version of Mike's program is used to load the opening screen of this month's Disk-of-the-Month! Thanks Mike!!

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Do you like to solve cryptograms?! This program, written by Richard Rufer, Programmer Extraordinaire of the San Leandro Computer Club, will help you do just that! You enter the cryptogram, and the computer plots a letter frequency chart to aid in unscrambling the puzzle! Just the thing to help shorten the hours you might spend pondering that Sunday paper word puzzle!! Thanks Richard!!

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SNAZZY-DEMO!

Just like the title suggests, this demo is SSNNAAAZZZZZZYY!!! Just take my word for it, and see for yourself!!

EPSON-LIST!

If you have an Epson, this nicely written program will aid

in dumping your program listings to the printer. Menu driven, and easy to use! You'll love it!!

STAR9, STAR11, & GTIA10.TUT

These three tutorial demos go hand-in-hand with the brand new "Trey's Tutorial" column in your newsletter. Read the column, run the programs, and who knows.....maybe you'll learn something you didn't already know!!!! I did!!!!

K-BERT!

"Oh com'on. This can't really be in the public domain!", was my reaction when I first saw K-Bert booted up! This Q-bert look-a-like is written entirely in BASIC, and has fantastic graphics, sound, and MUSIC!! You'll enjoy it....all 203 sectors of it!!!!

TEXT-DUMP!

The name is a little misleading, but Textdump is actually a collection of subroutines written by Bob Wilson of Irata Press Ltd. The subroutines will help you to dump any graphics mode and text to most printers. These programs were written for and used in the famous E/Graph program by Irata Press of Toronto. They've been placed in the public domain by their generous author. Please read the REM statements at the top of the program for information!! (P.S. What's Irata spelled backwards??)

MONOPOLY!

Yup, it's true folks!! The classic game is now in computer form! One to four people can play, and be prepared to spend the usual HOURS to finish!!!

FAST-DUP!

Written in machine code, this program will help you back-up your precious diskettes. You'll find this one to be very valuable, as it has a unique way of handling those notorious "bad sectors".

DISK-FILE!

Your library of diskettes is all mixed up, and you never know where to find anything when you need it. Never fear, because this is the program you've been waiting for. Completely menu-driven and easy to use, Diskfile will organize your library to no end! Each disk gets a number all it's own, and the list is sorted and alphabetized. This is not just a copy of your disk directories! Each program gets a description as well! You'll love it!!

CREATE-A-FONT!

If you liked the Player/Missile Generator in last month's Disk-of-the-Month, you'll love Create-a-Font! Impressive graphics, sound, and simplicity of use, make this special font generator a joy to program with!!

MAKE-MENU!

Another FABULOUS Auto-run menu maker for your binary files. This one uses full screen rainbow colors and graphics 2 characters!!

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****FLASH**FLASH**FLASH****

Please take note of the fantastic opening screen on this month's Disk-of-the-month! The fabulous artwork was done by Jim and Nathan Hood! You may have seen some of their "Microscreen Artwork" published in recent Antic Magazines!! There are celebrities amongst us, folks!!

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SPECIAL EDITIONS!!!

That's right my friends, there are TWO NEW SPECIAL EDITIONS available this month!!! The contents of these public domain diskettes is a secret at this time, but I'll demo them for you at the next meeting, and your sure to want both of these double-sided specials in your own library!!

See you on May 1st!!!!

The Game Room

George Herres

This month, I am happy to disclose one of the most colorful games to come along for home use. From Nintendo, the creators of Donkey Kong, comes none other than POPEYE, the Video Game!! Along with stars such as Olive Oyl, Bluto, Wimpy, Sweet Pea and even Sea Hag, make this a game to be truly enjoyed by kids both young and old alike.

This three-screen creation begins as you try to maneuver Popeye around a scene that features staircases and a ladder with Olive Oyl on the uppermost level where she is tossing down hearts. The object is for Popeye to catch these hearts before they fall to the bottom level and break apart. Watch out!! Bluto is not going to let this be easy for you, chasing you around, reaching for you whenever he is close enough. And if that's not enough, Wimpy comes popping out of nowhere to throw bottles at you which must be punched out of the way, less they be knocking you out of the game. But all is not lost as you have your ultimate weapon....SPINACH!! All you need to do is find it, get to it, and then you can give Bluto his just reward.

After collecting all the hearts, you are promoted to the next screen, this time the Sea Hag makes her debut instead of Wimpy to throw bottles at you. Bluto is here, too, and so is Olive Oyl. This time she has changed her tune, throwing little notes for Popeye to catch. The scenario is more difficult and the pace is a little faster. Catch the notes before they fall and break apart to advance to the final screen of this level (don't forget to find the spinach).

As the last screen appears, Popeye finds himself on a ship. Olive Oyl is stuck up in the crow's nest, running left and right, dropping little letters spelling the word H-E-L-P. Catch the letters in order to save poor little Olive Oyl from the clutches of Bluto. Keep away from the evil vultures that swoop towards you, as they can cost you the game.

As mentioned earlier, the graphics are this game's strong point, but the background sounds and interludes only add to the overall impact. Even if you never cared for the one-eyed pipe smoking seaman, POPEYE does offer very interesting playing strategy that is more than complemented by the cosmetics. Ahoy there, mates. I be shipping off now to the blue seas, har-har. Well, blow me down if I not be talking to ya' next issue!!!

Trey's Tutorial

Trey Pitruzzello

Welcome to the classroom, students!! This is the first installment of a new column in which we endeavor to bring you titillizing tid-bits of obscure information concerning your most favorite technological wonder, THE ATARI!

For your never ending amazement and amusement, each "tutorial" will be accompanied by a program, or group of programs, that you can actually run on your own computer. These marvelous bits and bytes of electromagnetic media can be easily found on the fabulous SAN LEANDRO COMPUTER CLUB DISK-OF-THE-MONTH! (You will recognize them by their "TUT" extender, which of course stands for "Tutorial".)

If you live in the far reaches of "Tim-buck-too" and don't have access to the Disk-of-the-Month, never fear! A P.O. Box will soon be available, and you will be able to order the disk through the mail! Stay tuned to this spot in the future for the address!

And now, on to this month's tutorial....

UNDERSTANDING THE ELUSIVE... GTIA GRAPHICS MODES!

The GTIA chip allows three extra graphics modes, 9, 10, and 11. Modes 9 and 11 are complimentary; they work the same way, except that mode 9 has one hue and sixteen luminences, while mode 11 has one luminence and sixteen hues! Mode 10 combines the player and playfield color registers, so that nine registers are available at once!

In mode 9, the single hue is set in the background register, with the statement, SETCOLOR 4,hue,0. In mode 11, the single luminence goes in register 4:SETCOLOR 4,0,luminence. In both modes, the color statement selects one of the 16 variations of luminence (mode 9) or hue (mode 11). The STAR11.TUT and STAR9.TUT programs demonstrate this technique.

Mode 10 combines all the player and playfield color registers, so that nine registers (1 background, 8 foreground) can be used at once. Since player registers cannot be set by SETCOLOR commands, it is best to set all nine register with POKE commands. The locations are 704-712 (decimal). 704 controls the background color. You can then select a register with the COLOR statement, 0-8.

The resolution in all three modes is the same, 82 by 192. Each pixel is one scan line high and four color clocks wide. In contrast, a mode 8 pixel is one scan line high and half a color clock wide. A picture drawn in a GTIA mode looks similar to one drawn in mode 7, although the individual pixels are a different shape.

Mode 9 is appropriate for the simulation of depth and 3-D effects, since the many luminances allow fine shading gradations. Mode 10 can be used to provide an illusion of motion, by cycling colors through the registers, as shown in the GTIA10.TUT program. Mode 11 allows more colors to be displayed at once than any other mode, without resorting to machine-language programming! For a thorough discussion of how these modes are selected by the ANTIC Chip, refer to Appendix E of De Re Atari!

Assembly Line

Frank Daniel

Gone for two months and guess what...I still have to fight the #BX# deadline! Ah, the evils of procrastination.

Well first, since there have been two meetings I am required to report on and I'm trying to finish a program for this month's floppy, I am going to be somewhat abrupt.

March Meeting:

At this meeting we discussed the ins and outs of the CIO, how to set up an IOCB (Input Output Control Block), the Operating System's requirement for it, and its functions and error control.

April Meeting:

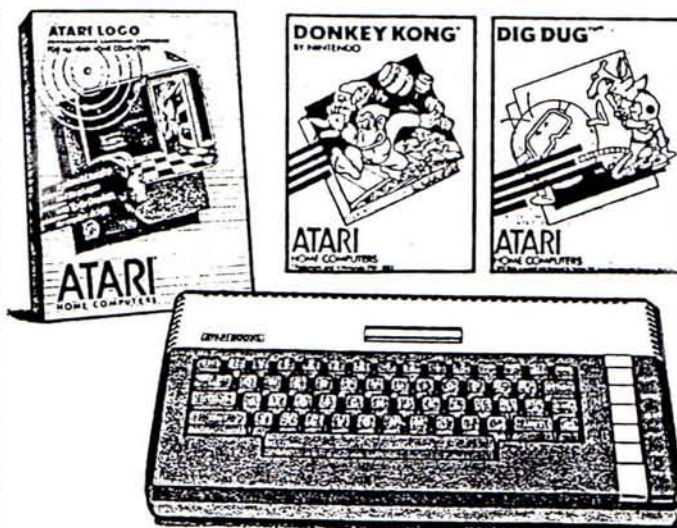
The April meeting covered the various methods of converting a high level language such as BASIC into commands that the 6502 (ie., the ATARI) understands. We also covered the differences between an interpreted, compiled, and assembled language.

All of this brings me to a somewhat sore subject. (I can NEVER find a soap box when I want it.) Although the March attendance was pretty good (almost didn't have enough chairs), the April attendance was A LITTLE LOW!

So until we meet again at the May meeting...may your programs be optimized and your disks never crash.

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If you have been getting the Disk of the Month lately, you have been treated to a very nice menu when the disk is first booted. This menu not only lets you take a look at the programs on the disk, but also lets you take care of the most common housekeeping chores so that you rarely need to access DOS.

The BASIC command that is the key to this is OPEN. It has the following format:

OPEN #channel, num1, num2, "dev"

In BASIC, you have channels 1 to 5 inclusive for your own use and can set them up as you like. Channels 6 and 7 are used by BASIC, but with care, they are also available. Channel 0 is permanently reserved for use by BASIC.

The first number (num1) 'conditions' the channel for the task you want to perform. You can have an arithmetic expression or a variable here as long as it evaluates to the proper number for the task. The read (or input) task is 4, the write (or output task is 8 and for reading and writing on the same channel the task is 12. In regards to the menu program, we want to have a look at the disk directory so we would need to use task 6.

The second number (num2) is rarely use and in most cases is set to 0. One application is sideways printing with the Atari 820 printer. Then num2 would be 82. For short inter-record gaps with the program recorder you would need 128.

The last parameter specifies the device. If you want to use the printer then specify "P:"; the program recorder needs a "C:". To read the disk directory we need to specify the disk drive and the file name(s) we are interested. We can use wild cards just as with DOS. To read the entire directory we would specify device "D:*,*". Please note that the quotes are needed.

A file name in the directory will always contain 17 characters, no matter how long a name you gave it when you saved the program.

Let us DIM a string to 17 so we can INPUT a file name and print it to the screen. Since we can have from 0 to 64 file names on a disk, we can take the easy way out and set a TRAP to END the program when we get to the last entry. We can now just keep reading in file names until an error occurs. A simple program might look like this:

```
10 PRINT CHR$(125):REM CLEAR THE SCREEN
20 DIM FILENAME$(17)
30 TRAP 1000
40 OPEN #1,6,0,"D:*,*"
50 INPUT #1,FILENAME$:REM GET FILENAME FROM DISK
60 PRINT FILENAME$:REM PUT IT ON THE SCREEN
70 GOTO 50:REM GET FILENAMES UNTIL ERROR
1000 END
```

This will print file names along the left margin of the screen. As you know, there is a lot more that can be done. We'll add a few enhancements next month.

Be sure to check the calendar in the Journal for the date of the next BASIC meeting.

MAY