

S.L.C.C. JOURNAL

October, 1984

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

President's Report

TREY PITRUZZELLO

Well, I'd never thought it would happen to me. I usually try to think of myself as a cool, calm, and rather well collected individual, but this week I've really flipped my lid!! I just can't seem to keep my wits about me. I'm just not good for much of anything this week, and as much as I can figure, it all started at just about four o'clock in the morning on Monday. You see, that was when my lovely wife Jodi did the sweetest, most wonderful thing she could ever do for me, by giving birth to our very first child!!! He's a hefty little guy, checking in at 7 lbs. 15 oz., and 21 inches long. We've named him Trevor Joseph Pitruzzello, and he's a real joy!

I'd just like to thank all of my friends in the club who have sent such nice congratulatory remarks via the club BBS, "The Key System". Thank you very much. All of your messages have been saved to disk, as a permanent remembrance of our happy day!

October will prove to be a fantastic month for the SLCC!! Tom Bennett, our Program Director Extraordinaire, has lined us up with a truly "once-in-a-life-time" speaker for our October General Meeting, Mr. Leonard Tramiel of Atari Incorporated. Ron Seymour, our Editor and Chief, has sent you another "A-1 First Class" newsletter publication. The Key System, our very own Club BBS, underwent a MAJOR software upgrade just today, as it climbs its way up the ladder to become the best Atari based BBS EVER!!! And our many talented Special Interest Group (SIG) leaders are all fired-up and ready to have their interesting and exciting meetings in their own homes all through the month of October!! So hop-too, and stay tuned, 'cause here we gooooo.....

Now if you'll excuse me, I've got to go play Daddy!

From The Editor's Desk

RON SEYMOUR

Just nine short months ago, with the help of Tom Bennett (alot of help). I began my stint as the newsletter editor. Since that time we have built up a great reputation as an outstanding newsletter. This has been primarily a two person job, with John Manning doing the copying of the newsletter. The quality of The Journal has only improved. Last month was the first issue that John did not do the copying.

When I first took over the duties of editor, time was plentiful. I was able to give more to the newsletter. This was needed, since each issue was the sole responsibility of just Tom and me. These issues are more than just a two man operation, it takes more than this to put it out. In the past I have asked for help, with some success. What it took, was for Tom to ask for help at the general meeting. He asked for the help of the members to type articles from other newsletters. The reason for this is to help inform the membership of the goings on of other clubs. The response was very good, with eight members signing up to help. Tom and I would like to thank Sam Salinas, Sherman Cater, Marshall Lessa, Richard Scott, Bruce Jarvis, Gordon Wong, Tom Johnson, Rich Senzig, and Roger Cone for their up coming work. If any more of you are interested in helping us by retyping articles from other newsletter in our future Journal expansion, please contact us or any officer. Thanks are also extended to Jim Warren who has helped the last two issues.

If you are wondering where all this is going, well let me tell you. My time is being cut into because of a part time job. I would like to continue with the position that I now hold. There are going to be some limitations that will be imposed on me. These limitations will make it very difficult for me to maintain my present schedule.

Now the hard part: asking for your help in the construction of the Journal. I need someone to work with me so that I will not have to resign. All I really need is just one or at the most two people. This will help take some of the pressure off Tom and myself. With the additional help I think that the newsletter will even get better.

(cont. p.2)

In the past I've asked for help, but now need it more than ever. Remember, this is your newsletter. If you think you can help, see me at the meeting or call me. The newsletter is more than you may think to me, it is part of my life. I take great pride in it and would like to stay in my position if possible.

I would also like to see some articles about things that could help the club. These articles can be about anything that could peak the interests of any of the members. This will help in the production of the newsletter and could possibly be reprinted in other newsletters.

Thank you for listening to my current problems. If you want to help or have a solution to the problem see me at the meeting. Until next month, good luck and may everything turn out the way you want.

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S.L.C.C. JOURNAL

The Newsletter of the San Leandro Computer Club for Atari Microcomputers

The San Leandro Computer Club for Atari Microcomputers is an independent, non-profit organization and users' group with no connection to Atari Incorporated. Membership fees are currently \$20 per 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 non-commercial publication is permitted without written authorization, provided proper credit is given to the San Leandro Computer Club and the author. Opinions expressed are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the views of the S.L.C.C.

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JOURNAL SUBMISSIONS

The SLCC Journal will accept any articles written by members on any topic found pertinent to the club. We will accept articles in any form, although we would prefer articles be submitted on Atariwriter files. The following Atariwriter parameters are used:

B12 D1 G2 I5 J1 L10 R44 S2 T2 Y132

Our Next Meeting

TOM BENNETT

We were hit again by the SLCC curse for our next October meeting: Mr. Jon Loveless, our previously announced guest speaker, has left Synapse. It came as a bit of a surprise, since he was an Atari supporter from way back (one of the original founders of ABACUS along with Antic Publisher Jim Chapparel) and a featured guest speaker last year. The curse has now changed to hit our guest speaker before the meeting on even months, and after the meeting on the odd months. But there are still a few survivors of the curse out there. The big question is "who will be the victim on the next even numbered month?"

Kidding aside, we have found THE replacement for Jon that we have been waiting for. Mr. Leonard Tramiel, son of Jack Tramiel, and now the head of the software group at Atari, has agreed to speak at the the SLCC on an exclusive basis for the October 2 meeting. We had originally envisioned a big combined ACE meeting for Leonard, but he would prefer that this time around we limit it to just the SLCC. YOU WILL NOT WANT TO MISS THIS MEETING. There are certain limits as to how much will be said by Leonard at this meeting, because there are still many plans at Atari that are not ready to be announced. I have no new news to report from Leonard, so you will have to come to the meeting and hear him for yourself. If by chance you cannot make the meeting (I will be in New York on business...the curse hit your program chairman this month instead of the speaker), we will have a comprehensive report by one of our officers next issue!

"But what if the SLCC curse strikes again?", I hear you thinking. I have taken care of that as well. Should some unforeseen problem arise, honorary SLCC member Mr. Chris Crawford will step in to save the day. He is scheduled to be our November speaker, but agreed to speak in October if we get stuck. Leonard or Chris will prove to be great speakers either way!

You might be wondering what Chris Crawford is up to nowadays. He said that he is sitting in front of his Macintosh and Lisa computers doing programming for those machines. "What about the Atari?" I asked. He responded that there are not many (any?) publishers right now that want to buy new Atari software or books right now. He was a bit hesitant to speak to us directly about Atari because he did not think that he would be too qualified to have any additional timely information. He feared that he would also be painting a rather bleak picture for the Atari third party software situation. He originally agreed to speak to us on "What Is The State Of The Computer Gaming Industry" which would have included Atari software. It would have made for an interesting topic, but he gave me a call back and has changed the focus to "The History of Atari, and Why it

Collapsed". Now that will be a hot topic!

We have also scheduled Electronic Arts for December and then I will hand over the duties of program chairman for 1985 to Mr. Richard Scott. Richard has generously offered his time to take over my duties. He will be able to pick up where I left off because he has experience in doing this type of speaker recruiting.

* * * * *

Et Cetera: I received a call from Alex Leavens of Fremont, an independent software developer, and he reported that Broderbund software is not taking new submissions for Atari developed software right now. This seems to be contrary to what Gary Carlston of Broderbund said to us a few months ago. You say, "well what does that matter, we have other good software companies like Synapse.....". Guess who just bought controlling interests in Synapse? According to Bill Zinn of ABACUS, it is Broderbund!!! Let us hope that Alex was just getting a brush-off from Broderbund and not a policy statement!!!

Mr. Leavens has offered to speak to the club and show his wares. He said that he is selling his adventure games "nearing but not quite" the quality of Infocom games, for only \$16.00 per disk or \$13.00 in a group buy from the club. If you have an interest, give Alex a call at 790-9129. Tell him that you heard about his software in this column (and maybe he will give you an additional discount).

Alex also heard that Antic Magazine is having a little cash flow problem and the plans for that great Atari Buying Guide that Gary Yost spoke of may be shelved. To Phil Mitchell: is this all part of the great home computer industry shakeout that you have been predicting? Maybe you should give us "Le Grande Phooooey" next month on the shakeout!!

The last topic is the Byte Computer Show. For those of you who missed our main meeting last month, we are sorry if you went to the show looking for the SLCC and could not find us.

The Interface Group (the people who ran the Byte Show) refused to let us do any fund-raising in the booth. I called the coordinator of the show and asked why, stating that this was the primary reason we were able to get volunteers for the four days. He made a statement that, although he was not accusing users' groups in general, there was a chance that some group might sell pirated software. I said that our library would be open for inspection to show that we are above boards with our public domain floppies, but they would not budge.

The SLCC, ABACUS, and Diablo Valley Atari Users all pulled out from the show in protest and refused to endorse it as a group.

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BYTE THE BIG ONE

PHIL MITCHELL

As if I didn't have enough to complain about, along comes Byte Magazine and their big computer show, recipient of this month's "MEGA-PHOOEY".

The San Leandro Computer Club has gone to alot of trouble to maintain it's reputation as a Legitimate, Honest, and Reputable organization in the community. And it really burns me up when a company like Byte, in this instance, all but accuses us of selling illegal software. What kind of reward have we received for being honest? I mean we might as well have put "Ball-Blaster" on the Floppy of the Month, 6 months ago when it first got "Pirated" out of Atari. Now don't get me wrong, I never claimed to be an angel, but I never sold any thing other than Public Domain programs, and neither has the club I represent as a member and an elected officer.

This month's "Man of the Hour" award goes to Tom Bennett for telling Byte to stuff it. I think that if Byte wants to get in touch with the computer-users of this area they better watch who they accuse of what. Guess who's not going to renew their subscription (after all that great free publicity we gave the the show too). Phooey!!! (I couldn't resist one last phooey on Byte).

Another thing I can't stand is someone who complains all the time and then doesn't do what he said he would do. Like me! Everyone was having so much fun at the last MSIG meeting that I just never got around to organizing the game or pizza contests (I hate to interrupt people who are enjoying themselves). So if you were really excited about either one of the contests mentioned, call me and say phooey, I need that once in a while. All in all the MSIG turned out to be a pretty successful gathering lasting till the wee hours of the a.m. (I'm thinking of changing the name to M-PARTY). I am glad that Byte Magazine didn't show up though.

WHAT'S IN A NAME DEPT.

I've been hearing some rumblings on the horizon lately (Don't I always?) about the name of the Club B.B.S. "The Key System" has only been "on-line" for a few weeks now but I guess some people would like to see the board have a catchy-zinger kind of a name. Well, you can't blame them for wanting to be proud of the club, but then again what's in a name? My feelings are that the board belongs to those who invest their time in it, so if you agree that we should call the board something spiffy or not, I advise you call our (excellent) B.B.S. and let your feelings be known. If enough users want it I'm sure Mike would accommodate or even have a "Name the Board Contest" but if not, then don't

bitch, it's hard to find people who will work for the club, and after all, fair is fair.

I DON'T BELIEVE IT DEPT.

A few days ago this reporter was sobered to the cold hard truth, by our Grand Exalted Treasurer and all around nice-guy Jim Hood, who interrupted one of my famous "How Atari has always ignored us" speeches, with this question: "But wasn't the old Atari better than what we have now?" Well, I had a hard time sleeping that night, and I guess I have to agree. The old Atari did make an effort to reach us (a poor one, but an effort none the less) and I have to say to Mr. Morgan "Thanks, at least you had a user-group department" which is a whole lot more than I can say about the New Atari. Meanwhile I sit waiting to hear from Mr. Traniel or one of the two people who comprise the customer-relations Dept. of the New Atari (that use to employ more than one hundred customer service reps and a toll-free 800 line). I guess those were really the good ol' days. Maybe.

More Computer Buzzwords

Alpha Flux- a tingling, ticklish feeling causing wiggles.

Analog Gate- a yard boundary, as in "a rough-hewn fence analog gate.

Assembly Program- what you went to in High School.

Beeper or Pager- The next best thing to being there.

Bipolar- a large white bear that swings both ways.

Bit-Slice-Processor- a Cuisinart

Bond, Ultrasonic- the star of the movie Moonraker.

Bubble Memories- what Valley Girls have.

Chip Burnout- a surfer from L.A.

ENIAC- the first computer, made from old Frigidaires & DeSotos.

Fetch Routine- what Spot does with a stick.

Phase Jitter- the Heebie Jeebies

PROM- (what else) a high school dance.

Radio Shack- kind of an electronic 7-11 store.

Total System Dump- the electronic equivalent of the effects of ex-lax.

UNIVAC- ENIAC's daughter, not to be confused with carpet sweepers.

Library/Floppy Update

NATE HOOD

Ha! I finally figured it out! After three months I've finally figured out how Trey got the disks to float into the drive. I'm not sure if I'm doing it the same way as he is or not, but at least I can get the disk in there! It's so simple that I didn't believe it... all you have to do is go down to your local Radio Shack and buy a nine volt one hundred ounce electro-magnet. It works great, but it has a tendency to erase disks... I still can't figure out how he got them in there without erasing them (Think that I should just ask him how he did it?) Well, I'd better tell you about the floppy before it gets bad sectors on it.

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THE JUNE FLOPPY

* * * * *

Tunnel Master

Well, this month's pinball machine is a little harder than last month's. People have been complaining that they can never get the ball into play... remember to push the joystick up before you shoot the ball into play. This decreases the spring pressure and keeps the ball from being 'eaten'.

FIX XL

For all of you XL owners out there, this program will temporarily turn your XL into a 'normal' Atari. Now you can run all of your software!

RAM TEST

Wait! Before you throw away a ramboard because you think that it's a bad one, run this program and find out for sure.

SECTOR UTILITY

Lets you write to sector 720. Put the name of your disk, your name, date, and disk serial number on sector 720 and you will be able to catalog all of your disks... or, if you're creative, copy protect your disks.

AMODEM MPP

For all of you MPP owners, you can finally use Amodem 5.0 with no problem. Isn't it about time you had a break from Smart Terminal?

-Warning! Occasionally this program will write and erase your disk!!! Please copy this program to another disk and rename it Autorun.sys- After it's an autorun file, it shouldn't give you any problems. (Weird huh?)

HANDLER 835

The handler to be used with Amodem 835. Binary load this program.

AMODEM 835

If you have an 835/1030 this program should do the trick! Telelink is even worse than Smart Terminal!!! Remember to load the handler first.

DIR

From the maker of the sound effects for the July floppy comes DIR. (The name is about as good as his sound effects) This is a neat program that will allow you to print directories to the printer, format disks, delete files, and a few other useful things.

-Look forward to a new version of menuplus soon-

HORSE

A neat graphics program that draws a picture of a horse and makes him run... In graphics mode zero!

FROGGIE

The classic Frogger game. A very well done version of the classic arcade frogger.

PENCILS

A really good GTIA demo of pencils. I know, it doesn't sound very interesting...but let's see you say that when you boot it up!

CHOMPERS

A (pacman?) look-a-like.

ONSLAUT

Another space shoot-em up!! Try to shoot all of the aliens without killing yourself!

* * * * *

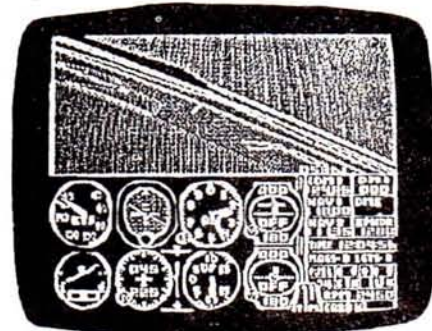
If you have not fallen asleep yet, I have a nice surprise for you. Starting this month one floppy will be different from all of the others. This one floppy will be free!!! If your floppy tells you that you have just won a free floppy, then let me know and it will be free!!! -Good luck!- Hope you enjoy the Floppy!

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Programming Tips

PAUL GIFFORD

A NEATO AND FUN GUIDE TO ATARI 400/800 PEEKS AND POKES!

The following are a list of memory locations and an explanation of what they do. I picked them because they are fun, easy to use, and most of all, useful. These are the ones I use most often, and I am quite a prolific BASIC programmer, even if all I write are short utilities for myself (in defense, I DID write a BBS program). To use them, type POKE (loc), (v). For example, in BASIC, from the READY prompt, you would do this:

POKE 752,1

If you were to use it in a program, it would look something like this:

10 POKE 752,1

I have left out from the list the ones that require a lot of thought and are quite complicated, like how to re-locate the character set.

The main thing is to experiment; that is the ONLY way to learn! Remember, you can't hurt the machine unless you are so surprised you spill your coffee on it or something. Have FUN!!!

18-20 Real time clock. What is that? Just a counter. Location 20 goes up by 1 every 1/60 of a second. When it hits 255, it turns to zero, and 19 goes up by one. When 19 gets to 255, it turns to zero and 18 goes up by 1. Try:
10 PRINT PEEK(18),PEEK(19),PEEK(20):GOTO 10

65 Hate the beep beep beep of the disk or scratching of the cassette? Type:
POKE 65,0
to turn it off, and
POKE 65,3
to turn it on again.

77 Attract mode flag. You know, when the Atari cycles the colors to save your TV/monitor. Type:
POKE 77,128
to turn it on, and, in a program, have:
POKE 77,0
to prevent it from going into attract mode.

82 Left margin. BASIC sets it up at 2. Type:
POKE 82,0
to position it at the very left edge of the screen.

83 Right margin. Used same as above (82). For fun, type:
POKE 82,19:POKE 83,20
To fix it, type:
POKE 82,2:POKE 83,39

195 In a program, this will tell you the error number that caused a TRAP to function. To read it, type (in a program)
A=PEEK(195)

564 For those of you that have light pens, this tells you the horizontal value of the location of the pen.

565 Light pen vertical value (see 564).

588 Coldstart flag. If you POKE a 1 here, when you press SYSTEM RESET the computer will re-boot. If a 0 is POKED here, it will not re-boot.

624-631 Values of paddles 0 through 7. Will return a value between 0 and 228 when you PEEK here.

632-635 Values of joysticks. Returns same numbers as the STICK(X) command when PEEKed.

636-643 These locations return a 0 if the button on paddles 0-8 is pressed (636=paddle 0...) and 1 if not pressed.

644-647 Buttons on joysticks, 0 if pressed, 1 if not pressed.

752 POKE a 1 here to turn the cursor off, and POKE a 0 here to turn it back on.

755 Character mode register. Poke with the following numbers to obtain the following results:

0=normal inverse characters
1=inverse characters are printed as blanks (spaces)
2=normal characters (default)
3=solid inverse characters (inverse characters are printed as solid spaces)
4-7 are the same as 0-3, but the characters are printed upside-down!! Always a good trick on an unsuspecting family. 'Look, the computer broke!'

764 Last key pressed. 255 means no key has been pressed. You will have to experiment with this to figure out the numbers returned. Try:
10 PRINT PEEK(764):GOTO 10
Run that and press various keys to see the numbers returned.

766 Display flag. Poke here with a 1 and when you hit the arrows to move the cursor, ESC, backspace, etc. they will display a graphics character instead. Poke 0 here to go back to normal mode, or hit BREAK.

838,839 POKE 838 with 166, and 839 with 238 to send everything to the printer instead of the screen. You must a) have a printer, and b) type it like this:
POKE 838,166:POKE 839,238
Type:
POKE 838,163:POKE 839,246
to make it normal again.

3818, 3822 POKE 3818 with 33, and POKE 3822 with 123. This will modify DOS so you can use lowercase letters, and punctuation in filenames. Use DOS function 'H' to save the mods. (3818 is the lowest ATASCII character you can use, and 3822 is the highest).

53770 PEEK here to get a random number between 0 and 255.

OTHER FUN THINGS TO TRY ON A FRIEND'S COMPUTER!

Type:

X=USR(58487)

This will cause a coldstart (reboot the system).

X=USR(61530)

This will make the buzz sound when you use the CLOAD command. Hit SYSTEM RESET to turn it off.

That is about it...Most of these will work on the XL models. Don't be afraid to experiment; you cannot hurt the computer! If this column has gotten you interested in memory locations, rush out and buy:

MAPPING THE ATARI

by Ian Chadwick

published by COMPUTE! books.

That book has taught me soooooooo much, it is well worth the \$14.95 price. Invaluable to anyone who does any programming!

NOTE: The program examples may look strange due to the printer formatting. If you have any questions, give me a call! My number is 351-4336.



"I want a sympathy card for my mom. My dad just bought a home computer."

Creative Computing

Assembly Line

FRANK DANIEL

Well I guess I'll have to get the ol' soap box out again! I keep seeing the same people at the ASSEMBLY SIG. Now I know what you're saying, things like.... 'Assembly is hard', or 'Ya gotta be a math wiz to do Assembly'. Then there's my favorite... 'But ya gotta know alot about the machine and the O.S. before you can write in Assembly'. BUNK!!!

First off, sure, Assembly is hard, but so were your first steps as a child. Secondly, who's a math wiz? I'm lucky if I get the right answer nine times out ten when adding 2 and 2!! And lastly, where the (explicative deleted) do you think you find out about the ATARI????

Oh well. Enough of this circulating of hot air (had too much of it this week anyway).

Now where was I in my tutorial... ooOH yes. Last month, if I remember right, I said that the OS does not do anything about the disk handler. Well that's not entirely true. There is one exception. The operating system will give a disk drive some special consideration during power up.

During the 'POWER UP' routine, if the OS finds that there is an active disk drive on the daisy chain, it will attempt to load the boot record. Failing this, (ie. not a boot disk or a bad disk) the 'BOOT ERROR' message is displayed and another attempt to read the disk will be made.

By the way, there is no maximum number of retries, so this can go on forever! The best way of getting out of this situation is to press the [RESET] key rapidly a number of times. Turning off the computer WILL occasionally put garbage onto an unprotected disk! This problem is one of the few drawbacks with using smart devices.

Back to the boot record. The boot record is found on the first sector of a bootable disk. It contains some basic information about what is required for loading the program (DOS, Landscape, Blue Max... etc), and normally the beginning of the program or a short initialization routine.

It is the first six bytes of the sector that we are the most concerned about at the moment. These first few bytes tell the computer where and how to continue the boot.

The first byte is the flag byte. It should be set to zero.

The second byte is the number of 128 byte (not 125!) sectors that need to be read for the boot process. The range is from 1 to 0, with the zero standing for 256 sectors.

The third and fourth bytes are the address where the program is to be loaded, including these first six bytes.

The fifth and sixth bytes are the address to the routine which the OS will pass control to after all the boot sectors are read in. This is also the address where control will be passed to whenever the [RESET] key is pressed, via DOSINI (\$C) vector.

Well, I'm running out of time so I'll have to say that's all for this month. Next month (barring unexpected additions to the family) I'll put all this together and show how to actually produce a booting disk.

Secretary's Report

PAUL GIFFORD

San Leandro Computer Club
General Meeting Minutes
September 4, 1984

2003 The Trey Comedy hour starts with a joke (joke?). Mr. Prez then talks about the First Annual SLCC picnic on the 22nd, which we all had a great time at!

2012 Phil Mitchell talks about the raffle, which was done by choosing a filled out questionnaire. Roger Cone was the winner of that immortal program, Floyd of the Jungle. Roger received his prize after being revived; he passed out from the excitement.

2024 Nate Hood, software chairman, demo'd the disk of the month, even getting off a few jokes despite his nervousness. Great job Nate. Nate could also use an aid in the disk copying aspect of the floppy; contact any club officer if you are interested.

2027 Trey takes over, and talks about the DOM (disk of the month) a little more, and turns the show over to Tom Bennett.

2029 Tom talks about next months guest(s)...Great meeting!!! He also talks about us dropping out of the Byte Faire, and the reasons for it. It's just as well; the Faire sucked. (Can I say that in a family newsletter?)

2035 Mark Rose from OSS starts to speak (Bill Wilkinson weaseled out). He demo's Basic XL, and gives a little sales pitch. He then answered many questions and went on to talk about Action!.

CHADS!
BREAK!

Floppy sales (which also go on before the meetings now!), raffle, and Kim Ellison from JE takes money and orders for great buys on Action! and Basic XL. Incidentally, OSS donated a piece of software to the club for the raffle...Thanx!

ORDER AGAIN!

Mark Rose answers more questions, and at 2215 the janitor sweeps out the remaining die-hard club members.

This will (probably) be my last column...I am undergoing delicate brain surgery (installation) ... Seriously, I am forced to resign, because of my work hours. I don't have a job yet, but because of school it will be an evening job. Thank you for electing me, and I hope my columns have lived up to the high quality standards of the best club in the universe, the SLCC!!!

BBS News

MIKE SAWLEY

Last month we had a short look at the history of the original Key System. We found that it was one of the most fascinating inter-urban rail networks in the nation.

During the past month, one caller and club member, John (his REAL first name), has asked why I named the BBS after a train system. The reason is two fold.

First, the original Key System opened up a whole new world for the average person of the East Bay, especially with the completion of the Bay Bridge and the switch from ferry boats crossing the bay to trains utilizing the bridge. For the first time a person could travel all over the East Bay and into the city of San Francisco with ease and speed that was never before possible. The area he could cover in a given time was greatly expanded and so the number of people he could communicate with was increased. With the opening of The Key System, the number of Atari users that can make a local call to an Atari BBS is greatly increased and so the number of Atari users you can communicate with is increased. (Until about a year ago, the only Atari BBS's were in the West and South Bay. Now there are three in the East Bay - The Wolves Den, A-LA-BBS, and The Key System.)

John commented that this is fine for someone knowing something about the original Key System. He felt that if an Atari user is also a train buff, then he could see the connection. But for someone who doesn't know about the original Key System, what connection is there? I have to agree with him on this point, and that is why I wrote last months article about the original Key System.

But what if someone still does not see the connection? What if someone didn't get a copy of the article? Then what? This is where my second reason fits in. Suppose I wrote the name like this - the KEY system. Now what does it suggest? Keep in mind that you have no previous knowledge of the above. Does it suggest something along the lines of the CENTRAL system, the MOST IMPORTANT system, the BEST system? I hope so. Because that is what the system is going to be someday with your help. Just as the club itself is going to be the most important Atari user group one day - if not already.

John has suggested that we put it to the general membership. What do you think the BBS should be named? SLCCBBS has been suggested, but I find that too dull and common. ABACUS calls theirs ABACUS BBS, BAABUS has the BAABUS BBS. I would hope that something more interesting and snappy could be invented.

Please put some thought to it and during the November meeting (October is out because of the speaker.) we will ask you to submit you ideas.

Logo SIGnal

LOIS HANSEN

A computer is, of course, different things to different people. Some of us enjoy playing games, whether arcade-type or adventure-simulations. Others want our computers to be a useful instrument for home finance, record-keeping or word processing. Still others think of their computer as a dandy tool to drill the children in basic skills (or BASIC skills!) We all know that computers are used by universities in mathematical and artificial intelligence research, but probably assume that our 48K Ataris are not big enough to do anything in those fields, even if we understood what the research was about. In this month's column, I want to tell you about a relatively new development in mathematics that you can explore to some extent on your Atari, both in Logo and BASIC.

The subject is FRACTAL GEOMETRY, which has been theorized by mathematicians a century ago who felt that Euclidians were wasting their time trying to describe Nature in terms of classic geometric shapes, such as squares and circles, when so much of what appears irregular, such as clouds and coastlines, can be described much more effectively in terms of patterns of very short lines which repeat themselves. However, the representation of these "fractal curves" was nearly impossible until the computer came along.

A French mathematician named B.B. Mandelbrot began this representation of fractals on the computer in 1975. By 1977 he published his first book on the subject, followed by another in 1982 (so you don't have to be embarrassed that you never heard of fractals, I thought it was just another part of math I had missed by daydreaming in school!) I have not tried to locate, much less read Mandelbrot's books, which are probably too technical for a layperson; what I have learned is from the article in the September *Byte*, "Fractals, by Peter R. Sorensen, and from David D. Thornburg's book, Discovering Apple Logo, An Invitation to the Art and Pattern of Nature. Thornburg's book has two chapters on fractals, as well as procedures that run in Atari Logo as well as Apple, to generate various fractal curves. I am not going to try to reproduce the contents of these mathematicians' thoughts, as I am no kind of a mathematician. I refer you to them so that you can see for yourself, not only the beauty of recursive forms, but how much some of them resemble shapes seen in Nature, such as trees and mountains. You will begin to realize that much of what we thought was "random" can be shown not to be by the computer, which can "window" us out far enough to make the pattern visible. By now we're getting away from mathematics into metaphysics and speculation on the nature of the Universe! Pretty good for a 48K game machine!

Anyone who wants to try some fractals on the computer in BASIC, see page 172 in September *Byte*. This program is in Applesoft BASIC so it will require some modifications to run. Notice how long it is, and what kind of extra mathematical gyrations you have to go through to produce your shapes, compared to the following Logo procedures from

Thornburg, op. cit. (All the K's refer to the fact that what you're going to draw is known as "Koch's curve" in math.)

```
TO K0 :SIZE
FD :SIZE
END
```

```
TO K1 :SIZE
K0 :SIZE / 3
LEFT 60
K0 :SIZE / 3
RIGHT 120
K0 :SIZE / 3
LEFT 60
K0 :SIZE / 3
END
```

```
TO SETUP
PJ
SETPOS [-120 -60]
PD
RIGHT 90
END
```

Having defined those procedures, draw your first curve by typing:

```
CS
SETUP
K1 243
```

To draw the second level, enter the procedure below, and substitute K2 243 in the above:

```
TO K2 :SIZE
K1 :SIZE / 3
LEFT 60
K1 :SIZE / 3
RIGHT 120
K1 :SIZE / 3
LEFT 60
K1 :SIZE / 3
END
```

I trust you can see how, by this time, you could go on forever with K3, K4, etc., limited only by your screen resolution and Ram size. This is recursion, the main selling-point of Logo. Can you guess how to write this only one time, making the computer do the K1, K2, K3, etc.? (Hint: give it a stopping point in the first line or it will go berserk.) (Hint #2: see p. 114, Thornburg if you give up.) And come to the next LogoSig meeting on Wednesday, October 17 at 7PM to discuss this. Call me at 482-2222 to leave a message, although I'm home in the evenings now. I'll pick up the phone if I'm around.

Programming Tips

JIM WARREN

OK, so you have created a screen full of text or control graphics using the copy option of DOS. How do you get this text off the disk and on to the TV screen under program control? Piece of cake! In ACTION! just one phrase, READPAGE("D1:FILENAME"), could accomplish the task by calling the following procedure:

```
PROC READPAGE(BYTE ARRAY FILENAME)
  BYTE LINECOUNT
  BYTE ARRAY FILELINES
  GRAPHICS(0) POKE(82,1)
  SETCOLOR(1,0,0) SETCOLOR(2,0,6)
  SETCOLOR(4,9,4)
  CLOSE(1)
  OPEN(1,FILENAME,4,0)
  POSITION(1,0)
  FOR LINECOUNT=0 TO 20
    INPUT$(1,FILELINES)
    PRINT$(FILELINES)
  NEXT LINECOUNT
  CLOSE(1)
  RETURN
```

What's that you say? You don't have ACTION!? You say that you program in early babylonian and don't have time to learn one of these newfangled "structured" languages! Well... I'm still working the bugs out of the babylonian version, but perhaps you could use a BASIC imitation of the above procedure? BASIC is not a structured language, so we will have to go around the barn once and three steps and then stand in the hay loft for a while. Come with me, the exercise will do us both good. First go to DOS and use the copy option and the file name "READPAGE" to enter the following lines of code (let the cursor wrap around and hit RETURN only when I tell you):

```
SETCOLOR1,0,0: SETCOLOR2,0,6: SETCOLOR4,9,4: POKE
82,1:CLOSE#1: OPEN#1,4,0,FILENAME$ (HIT RETURN HERE)
?CHR$(125): POSITION 1,0:FOR LINECOUNT=0 TO 20:
INPUT#1;FILELINES$: PRINT FILELINES$: NEXT LINECOUNT:
CLOSE#1: RETURN (HIT RETURN HERE...THEN DO A CTRL 3)
```

Now we have a lineless(immediate mode) BASIC list with a RETURN on the end saved to disk with a name that matches it's function. The following lines of code, inserted into a BASIC program will call READPAGE from the disk to read a page of text from the disk and put it on the TV screen:

```
10 DIM FILENAME$(15),FILELINES$(40)
100 GOSUB 101:GOTO 110
101 FILENAME$="D1:FILENAME":TRAP 110:ENTER "D1:READPAGE"
110 REM PROGRAM CONTINUES WITH THE CONTENTS OF THE TEXT FILE
DISPLAYED ON THE SCREEN
```

Of course, line 10 must be executed only once. Also, the procedure READPAGE and the file containing the text to be read must exist on disk for this BASIC procedure calling scheme to work, but it works well and consumes little memory. Notice that in line 101 we tell READPAGE the name of the file we want read and set a TRAP to the next line in case READPAGE runs out of file to read and BASIC tries to stop the program with an end of file error. This parameter passing is accomplished more elegantly in ACTION! by putting the parameters between the left and right parens "(" following the procedure name.

SHOULDERS AND TOES

JIM WARREN

I have heard it said that engineers stand on each other shoulders while programmers stand on each others toes. The engineer's hard work often ends up in some clever little device(sub-assembly, microchip, machinetool, etc.) that other engineers can use to implement their own projects. The programmers hard work often gets deliberately hidden from other programmers behind a fortress of copy protection or in, the case of the amateur programmer, lost in an unreadable, unreuseable, maze of BASIC GOTO'S. I have been a willing party to several of those little beauties! There is, of course, a better way to go!

GET INTO ACTION!

An ACTION! group is forming. I have already prepared material for an initial meeting. I invite you to call me regarding time and place. If you are new to ACTION!(and who isn't?!), you may find a nice tall shoulder to stand on. If you are an old hand to structured programming, perhaps you can lend a shoulder to the cause.

If you are interested in adventure and strategy games, you just might find that structured programming (ACTION! makes it very convenient to do such programming) is the most satisfying game of all.

JIM WARREN
352 7744

P.S. Shoulder pads not included.

Software Review

SGT. SLAUGHTER

Hello All you gamers!!

Wow! When I asked you for comments, you really went crazy! I have been getting all sorts of interesting ideas for my column...you will see 'em in the future, you can bet! Thanks for the constructive criticism...keep it up!!!

This month's column's gonna be about 2 new pieces...Archon II, and H.E.R.O.

* * * ARCHON II * * *

To start off with, I would just like to comment about maybe the best game makers in Atari history. You probably know as well as I who these people are. Yes, its Electronic Arts. Game after game comes from their hallowed halls, and I have yet to be really disappointed by them. Archon II is definitely not an exception.

Archon II is a completely different game from the chess-like Archon I. In this game you must build an army with your 4 spell casters, the adepts. You can play the side of Chaos or Order, sort of like the Yin-yang concept of Archon. Each adept is on a different "plane"(one is fire, water, etc. of each different element) and there are two black holes called the void. Each adept is capable of casting several spells in his/her plane...the most important

Archon II...will reward the hardy gamer
many hours of enjoyable gaming.

one is summon, which is how the adepts make their armies. When the adept casts this spell, he/she can choose from a list of 8 monsters to summon (4 elementals that fight better on their element and 4 demons that can fight anywhere). On the corner of each plane, there is a power point that shifts from one plane to the other. On the opposite side of each adept as they are playing or casting is the famous "powerline", which indicates how much power the adept has. Every time the adept casts a spell or teleports out of his/her plane, the bar is lowered. Every time an adept is on a power point, wins a battle or has a demon or elemental sitting on a power point, he/she gains power. Once an adept team gets a lot of power built up, he/she can decide to cast apocalypse, a spell where the citadels of good and evil are embodied by the adepts. The stronger adept usually wins, and the game ends. Using up all your energy can cause a loss, as well as getting the computer to concede (yes, you can get it to concede...but it takes a very skillful player to do that...). Other than that, the premise is simple. Get the power point. Crush the opposition. Get power. Crush the citadel. Barbaric, but simple.

Another fascinating part of this game is the way each piece has a radically different way of attacking. Firebirds resemble the familiar phoenix, as well as giants resemble golems...but the rest is completely different. For instance, the chimera has 3 different modes of attack... first shot is fire, second shot is a wide, short ranged mist and the third is a close combat bite, devastating to almost any opponent. The players will have a lot of fun conjuring up battles to see which opponent will fight which better, and that is a major factor in the playability and duration of this game.

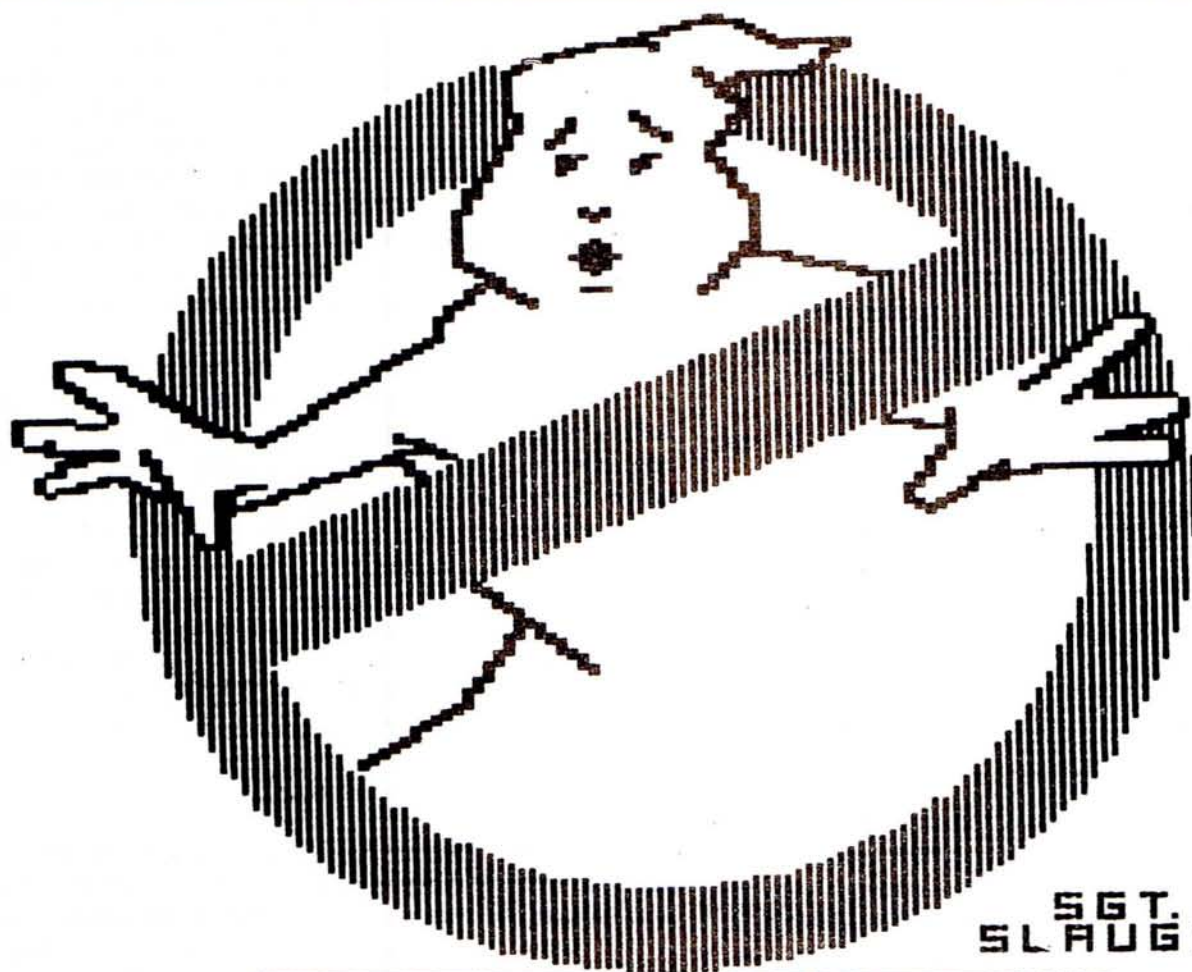
All in all Archon II won't let us gamers down. It lacks a real strategy motive because you can conjure up so many monsters, you don't feel too pressed to make the best out of your monster. It is somewhat complicated to learn at first, which might discourage players, but if you stick with it you will love it. Another interesting feature this game has that Archon sorely lacked is that it has a difficulty option, which you can access by pressing the spacebar during the option part. Archon II, while being a bit far from the definitive strategy-arcade game, comes very close, and will reward the hardy gamer many hours of enjoyable gaming.

* * * H.E.R.O. * * *

Ahhhhh yes. And now for the really gratifying part of my column for many readers as it is for me...this time it is my misfortune to review to you H.E.R.O. by Activision. Is it bad? Whew! Is it ever!! HERO is a game where you take a helicoptered hero down into the depths of a cave to rescue a stranded miner. You have dynamite you can explode walls with by pulling down the joystick. Better not stick around to watch cause the dynamite will blow you away! And you have laser vision: little 1 inch lasers that kill the cave creatures that stop your path. But as you know I always do, I am getting honest with you. The game is boring. Bo-ring. The lower levels are so simple you can do them with the monitor off. The upper levels, you might as well have the monitor turned off because you don't have a chance! Either way, this game is a true blue loser in all respects. I have yet to play it again after my first 2 or 3 tries. The graphics are strictly VCS quality, and the sounds seem like they came from an Apple. No saving graces with this one, Activision. Get your act together. I don't usually get down on one company, but I think in this respect they deserve it. All of their titles range from bad to worse, and if they expect to hear ANY sympathy from me and the other Atari using public, they had better start producing better games.

That's all for my column this month. See you next time with more reviews, and if you have any comments or ideas for what I should make for my column, leave it with the Key system bbs or at the Wolves Den (895-5786). Good bye and Good gaming!!!!

At Ease,
Sgt. Slaughter



SGT.
SLAUGHTER

HAPPY HALLOWEEN

FROM THE

SLCC JOURNAL



ATR 8000 SIG

BILL GEORGE

RESPONSES TO LETTERS

SLCC's ATR8000 SIG has received ten inquiries from ATR 8000 owners around the country about our club and the ATR 8000 SIG this month (September). Here are some answers.

"How can I find out more about the ATR 8000" is the most common question. The SLCC newsletter publishes an ATR 8000 column every month. For those using Atari software on their ATR's (as opposed to CP/M or MS DOS), our newsletter is one of the best in the country. A regular annual membership in

"How can I find out about the ATR 8000?"

our club is \$20. For out of area people a special \$15 membership is available. This entitles you, for one year, to receive our monthly newsletter and to purchase any of our (monthly) public domain floppies at \$7 each.

"How can I find out more about CP/M software" is asked by those owning the ATR CP/M upgrade. There are literally hundreds of public domain disks available for CP/M users from several groups around the country. Almost all of the programs will run on the ATR's CP/M 2.2. Our SIG is picking the best of these CP/M programs and making them available on SMP's 5 1/4 standard format. So far we have put together two utility diskettes.

Programs included on these two diskettes are disk cataloging, file manipulation, disk zapping, library creation utilities and more. These are available for \$7 each (shipping included) to regular or out of area members of SLCC.

One writer wants to know how to avoid Atari's 'snail' I/O while using the ATR with MYDOS (or any other DOS). As you all know, the Atari disk I/O through the serial cable is quite slow due to Atari's attempts at meeting FCC requirements. The writer has experimented with doing this I/O through the ATR, but doesn't want to reinvent the wheel. I haven't heard anything, have any of you?

Co-Power 88 NEWS

I just purchased the Co-Power 88 board w/256K and CP/M 86. I have some preliminary experiences to share with you. Microsoft Basic for MS-DOS is not included with the Co-power, nor is it available from SMP. The programs on the CP/M 86 diskettes I received do not work although the operating system boots up OK. I think there were copying problems at SMP. I will report more on the CP/M 86 problems next month. MS-DOS programs that use IBM special characters

or IBM graphics do not seem to work. This is probably due to the terminal rather than the Co-Power, but all we can use as terminals are the Atari or other standard RS-232 terminals. At this moment, programs that do work like Wordstar and dBase II, seem to display characters to the screen at about 300 baud. This is a very perplexing problem that will be followed up on with SMP. On the brighter side, the Co-Power's 256K of RAM is terrific when used as a RAM DISK under CP/M 2.2. The Co-Power is worth the money for this feature alone.

CP/M ATR NEWS.

Dave Lucky, an ATR CP/M user in our club, is working on something called ZCPR version 3 for CP/M 2.2 on the ATR 8000. This is an upgrade to CP/M that is sort of in the public domain. ZCPR has to be modified and reassembled for each brand of computer it's used on. I hope to get Dave to submit an article on his work.

**VOLUNTEERS
FOR THE
SLCC BOOTH
AT THE
NORTH WEST
COMPUTER SWAP
OCTOBER 20
ARE NEEDED
SIGN UP AT
THE NEXT MEETING**

S.L.C.C. Interface

The SLOC Interface is our monthly 'input-output' column in which you may make a short comment on club related issues, or buy-sell an item. This is not available to commercial outlets.

Also you may ask those technical questions and get them answered. All technical questions may be addressed to Frank Daniel at 632-7181. Basic language questions can be addressed to Mike Sawley at 482-5061. All buy-sell items go to Ron Seymour at 537-3183

FOR SALE

Big sale is being held by David Swartz. An 800 computer, 810 Disk Drive, and a MP1150 Interface. With over 30+ pieces of software with the documentation. Fifteen books and magazines (Compute, Analog, and Antic). The system also comes along with four joysticks and a set of paddles. The value of the system is \$3500.00 and is being sacrificed at \$1500.00 or best offer. The system will be sold as a set and will not be broken up (possibly). So give David Swartz a call at 592-9807 aft. 5 pm..

Slave drive (5 1/4) for Percom or ATR-8000. \$185.00. Call Dan Chun at 471-9286.

***** NEED HELP *****

If you need help with adventure games such as Infidel, Starcross, Witness, Zork I, Suspended, Planetfall, and Sorcerer call Corky at 537-8432.

***** NEW SIGS *****

Anyone interested in starting a Forth SIG please call Pichit Sakultapanich at 681-0888.

Anyone interested in joining an ACTION! SIG please call Jim Warren at 352-7744.

** CONGRATULATIONS **

Congratulations to Trey and Jodi Pitruzzello on their new family member Trevor!!!

** UPCOMING MEETINGS **

OCTOBER: Leonard Tramiel
Atari Incorporated

NOVEMBER: Chris Crawford

DECEMBER: Electronic Arts

S.L.C.C. JOURNAL

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

15370 Tropic Court #35
San Leandro, CA 94579

NEXT MEETING:

October 2 8:00 pm
San Leandro Community Library
300 Estudillo Ave.
San Leandro, CA

SPEAKER:

LEONARD TRAMIEL

from

ATARI INCORPORATED

TO:

85/04/30

