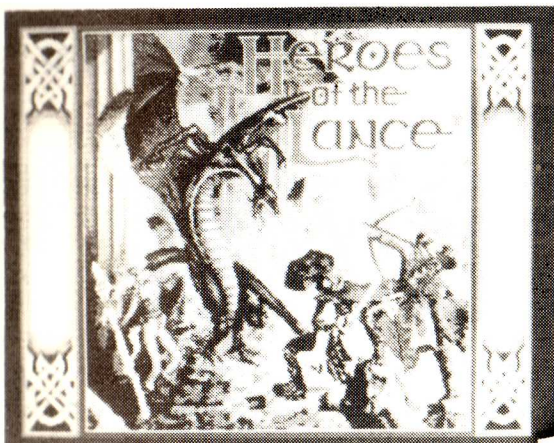


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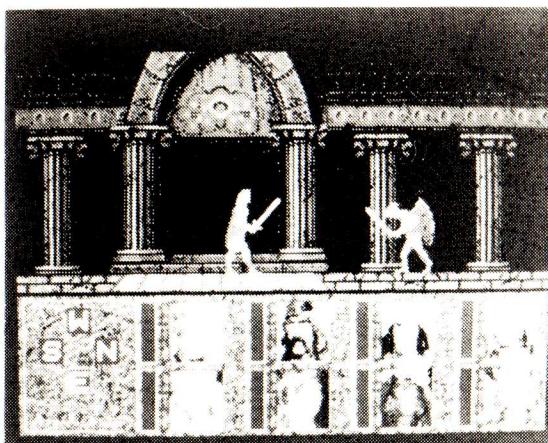


Your Connection to the Atari User Community



Heroes of the Lance

D&D Adventuring from TSR, Inc.
and Strategic Simulations



Also in this Issue...

Atari 8bit

NewsRoom
Inside the XF551
UltraSpeed Plus OS
Installing an Alternate OS
in your XE
SpartaDOS X Cartridge

Atari ST and Mega

Reviews of Stellar Crusade and Street Fighter
SuperBase Professional
NeoDesk 2.0 — The ST Desktop Alternative Just Got Better!

and MORE...

MUZAP

An AUDIO/VIDEO Game!
A MUSIC Learning Station!

For the ATARI 520ST & 1040ST
Color or Monochrome Monitor

MUZAP combines the entertainment aspect of the game program with the learning process of the educational one.

The object of **MUZAP** is to **ZAP** musical notes before they **ZAP** you and, in the process of playing, improve your skills in musical notation and cultivate your musical ear.

MUZAP is a collection of games, each complete in itself. **MUZAP** teaches music while you're having fun.

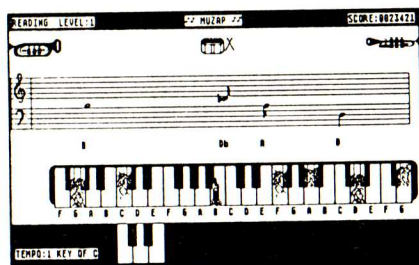
Mouse Driven Piano

In all the **MUZAP** games notes are **ZAPPED** using a mouse driven piano keyboard.

The little rocket moves on the displayed piano keyboard using the mouse until it is on the appropriate key of the piano and then click to **ZAP** the note.

Multi-Level

MUZAP includes different levels, different tempos and different keys. **MUZAP** is for all types of players, young and old, musicians and non-musicians alike.



READ AND PLAY

The two main games, **SPEED READING** and **EAR TRAINING**, exploit the theory and experience of music. In the first, the player determines the pitch of a note from its proper position on the staff (i.e. musical notation), while in the second, the player finds the pitch from the tone of the sound (i.e. musical dictation).

Both these games can be played using either a **Random Note Generator**, for the rudiments of musical theory, or a **Melody Generator** for the experience of playing music.

The **Random Note Generator** is an arcade type game which values speed and dexterity. The user must quickly **ZAP** the traveling notes and sounds before they crash onto the piano keyboard, leaving cracked keys.



LEARN A MELODY

The **Melody Generator** provides 50 melodies, ranging from simple children's and Christmas songs to more complex classical pieces. Here the player must reproduce the melody correctly, respecting the duration of each note.

The score will reflect the player's performance and scores can be saved for a number of players.

Languages

MUZAP comes with manuals both in French and English, and either language can be selected on the menu.

Suggested Retail Price: \$49.95 Can.
\$39.95 U.S.

Logiciel
PHILOS inc.
Software

C.P. 1322,
Succ. Des jardins,
Montréal, Qc.
H5B 1C4
Tel.: (514) 766-6029

For more information contact:

Philippe Thérien at (514) 766-6029.
Micheal Taylor at (514) 466-5360.
Erik Wynn (Ottawa) (613) 235-4456.

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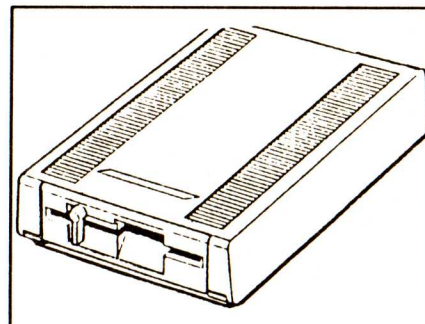
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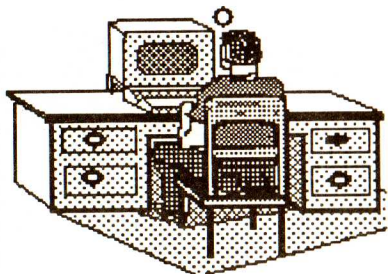
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Editorial Ramblings

Welcome to the first issue of Atari Interface Magazine. We're pleased to introduce this publication which is dedicated to Atari users in general, and specifically, to the many Michigan User Groups who participate with this publication.

Our publication of AIM marks the end of the Michigan Atari Magazine, which is no longer published. In the publication's expansion beyond the borders of Michigan, it's only natural the name should reflect this change. Since January is the beginning of a new year, we thought it a fitting time to introduce our new magazine.

You may notice in this issue the names of Donovan Vicha and Bob Woolley. Bob Woolley has written an article for us detailing his experiences with the XF551. He is the editor of the SLCC Journal for the San Leandro, CA User Group. Donovan Vicha is a contributing author submitting articles he originally intended for ST Applications, a now defunct ST publication. We hope to bring you many more articles from Donovan in future issues. We also have a review of SuperBase Professional written by CIS Atari SysOp Dave Groves.

Besides the articles from Donovan, Dave and Bob, we have reviews of News Room, Heroes of the Lance and Street Fighter, an update on the latest version of NeoDesk, a review of an alternative operating system for the 8bit, a hardware modification article from Don Neff on how to install three separate operating systems into your 130XE, plus the rest of Keith Joins article on the SpartaDOS X Cartridge.

We'd like to take this opportunity to congratulate Keith Joins of MACE for his recent appointment as a SysOp in the Atari8 Forum of CompuServe. If you have an account on CIS, you may wish to drop in each Sunday night at 9 p.m. (Eastern) and chat with him in a weekly informal conference. CIS also has a weekly informal conference in the Atari Arts (ST) Forum each Thursday night at 10 p.m. (Eastern). Hope to see you there.

We hope everyone had a safe and pleasant holiday season, and wish all our readers a very happy, peaceful and prosperous new year.

Bill & Pattie Rayl

People Who Make It All Possible

Managing Editor: Patricia Snyder-Rayl

Editor: Bill Rayl

Art Work & Comic Strip: Steve Volker

Photography: Bob Retelle

Contributors: Asti, Ted Beauchamp, Bill

Boles, Dave Groves, Keith Joins, Jeff Kyle,

Don Neff, Clinton Pierce, Donovan Vicha,

Steve Voker, Bob Woolley, and all the parti-

cipating clubs.

What We Are

The Atari Interface Magazine is a monthly magazine which also serves as the official newsletter of several independent Atari User Groups and is not affiliated with Atari Corp. in any way. AIM is published by Unicorn Publications, 3487 Braeburn Circle, Ann Arbor, MI 48108. For advertising information, please call (313) 973-8825.

Authors: When submitting articles, please provide both printed and magnetic form when possible. Atari Writer/ST Writer or ASCII preferred. Submissions may be uploaded to the Treasure CheST BBS. (313) 973-9137 (3/12/2400 baud). Deadline is the 17th of each month for inclusion in the following month's issue.

Subscription Information

A subscription to AIM is included in membership in any participating club or from Unicorn Publications for \$18 for 12 issues. Add \$8 for Canadian and \$10 for foreign subscriptions.

Please include information concerning your computer hardware and experience and name of User Group(s) to which you belong. Make checks/money orders payable to Unicorn Publications. For User Group discount subscription rates, please write or call.

It's Not Our Fault

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Opinions expressed within articles printed in AIM are solely the views and responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the opinions of AIM or of any participating group. Atari, the Fuji symbol and names of various Atari computers are trademarks of Atari Corp.

AIM is produced with a modified 520ST, Timeworks' Publisher ST, Easy-Draw/Easy-Tools and a Hewlett Packard LaserJet Series II printer.

From the Reader's Viewpoint



From John Nagy, CHAOS Newsletter Coordinator and former publisher of MAM

I am pleased to hear Bill and Pattie Rayl have seen the wisdom of christening a new entity. This will end disputes and clarify the status of Atari Interface Magazine as a wholly-owned commercial venture of Unicorn Publications and not a user group publication. User groups will appear in AIM, but it is as customers, not as owners or operators.

While the change in magazine identity closes a number of issues recently addressed in the MAM December Editor's column, a response is still required. From my involvement as founder and first publisher of Michigan Atari Magazine, I am able to respond about several matters.

Bill and Pattie begin their editorial with a statement "after being approached by John Nagy to take over publication of MAM, we informed him we would only take the magazine if the publication could be produced independently from the clubs." This statement is dually misleading. I did not approach the Rayls, and their intentions were never stated as neatly as this. The Rayls were among a group that met at the September, 1987 Detroit Atarifest, where we all discussed newsletters and MAM. I had produced MAM for over a year and mentioned I hoped not to past an additional year. Bill and Pattie produced a newsletter for WAUG, showed interest in taking on MAM, but said that they wanted it sooner if they were going to do it. Additionally, they assured me if they did MAM, several Detroit clubs would join it, something I believed was a very positive thing (and MACE and GLASS indeed did join later).

The Rayls also made it clear that they wished to publish MAM as a commercial venture. I had no problem with that, as long as the clubs were happy and knew what they were getting into. The clubs could certainly contract with the Rayls for publishing work if they wanted to.

After extensive talks, I decided to encourage the clubs to take the offer being made by the Rayls, rather than wait and perhaps not get as qualified or motivated candidates later. Bill and Pattie made a tour of several clubs, promising timely delivery of the magazine, higher quality for the current price and a bigger circulation. Little was said about rights or authority and even less was said about ownership.

Shortly before November, 1987, I received a letter from the Rayls' attorney, asking me to sign a bill of sale transferring ownership of the name Michigan Atari Magazine to Unicorn Publications. I immediately called both the attorney and the Rayls to explain my view that MAM was a co-operative publication, owned by the clubs jointly, and that I had

absolutely no ownership to sell or give away. I explained that it was my expectation that the clubs would want to keep it that way, but any transfer that might be negotiated would have to be by agreement with EACH of the clubs. I supplied no letter purporting to transfer any portion or share of ownership of MAM to anyone, and to my knowledge, the Rayls never again discussed their obtaining ownership from any club.

My initial intention in drafting the proposal, printed last month, was to reach an end to the ownership question. The Rayls (who claim not to take well to ultimatums) stated they would NOT continue to produce their publication if control or authority of any kind was reserved by the clubs. The proposal would transfer unconditional ownership to the Rayls, who would in turn allow the clubs to form a committee with advisory power. My document included a set of premises and positions summarizing the discussions at the October meeting, followed by the proposal itself. Bill and Pattie chose not to include the support information in MAM, and as a result, the proposal looked quite foolish. [Ed: The text of the proposal itself was promised to be printed for discussion, not the editorializing accompanying it.]

I took personal offense to the statement saying I called Bill and Pattie after the proposal was drawn up and, out of the blue, "John stated that he felt he could no longer support the proposal, but he gave no reasons as to why." The principal reason I withdrew my support of the proposal was it was based on an assumption of good faith efforts to reach a co-operative resolution, with honesty and candor being pivotal to its operation.

The Rayls had made efforts to enlist out-of-Michigan clubs as MAM member groups. While this is certainly not offensive in itself, Pattie had volunteered to outside groups' officers that the name of the magazine would "of course" be changed as soon as the first outside group was added. Although outside groups have yet to respond to the offer, the plans, indeed the commitments to change the makeup and name of MAM were never mentioned at the committee meeting.

Quickly attending to some last details: * absolutely no clubs from Michigan ever were turned away from MAM while I was publisher.

* On the (two) occasions when a non-Michigan club inquired about affiliation, it was indeed brought to Presidents of participating clubs for a decision (to remain all-Michigan).

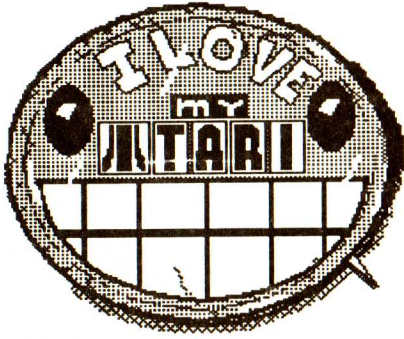
* When people (all four) asked to subscribe to MAM directly, they were indeed "funneled" to CHAOS as members instead. I encouraged inter-

ested readers to take a membership in ANY of the clubs rather than to involve me in subscriptions (and have to keep my own database and mailing label support!). It obviously worked, as all the clubs gathered long-distance membership during my publishing. Additionally, CHAOS had regularly supported and donated money when it was necessary for the magazine, and they had far better facilities to keep track of the four wayward subscribers that didn't take the hint. Now, the Rayls promote direct subscription in competition with membership in the clubs, and claim that non-club circulation is equal in number to those getting it through a club membership. Which procedure is better? I don't know, but the editorial's implication that mine was dishonest was offensive and uncalled for. [Ed: Concerning our non-club circulation, Mr. Nagy's comments are misleading. The facts are that we have only three in-state subscribers and less than 20 subscribers total. The majority of the non-club circulation figures come from store sales and exchanges with Atari User Groups. Though we do offer outside subscriptions, we do not PROMOTE those subscriptions to the detriment of the clubs. In fact, in the Feb. '88 issue of the Michigan Atari Magazine (in response to Leo Sell) we stated that readers "can get the magazine cheaper by joining a club (plus lots more benefits, too!). That never changed for the year we produced MAM.]

A matter of concern that has not yet been discussed is that of the new commercial status of the magazine and how it impacts the use of reprinted material. All of the news delivered via the national telecommunications services and much of the material in exchange newsletters is permitted for reprinting only by non-profit or club newsletters. As the Rayls' effort is no longer in that category, use of this material may either be barred or given by some mistaken impression that AIM is a user-group owned publication. [Ed: Material is unprintable only if a publication does not first obtain permission. This does not mean AIM cannot reprint articles. In fact, CIS and Delphi make no restrictions on reprinting of news items and many articles state they may be reprinted (by ANY publication) so long as the copyright notice is intact in the reprint. However, we don't often have a need to reprint articles since we have such a wealth of original articles that equals or exceeds the quality to be found elsewhere.]

I sincerely hope that the Rayls' new venture, AIM will put disputes behind us and wish AIM the best of luck regardless of whether my own club chooses to be included in the new venture.

[Ed: Rather than comment further on this matter, we would rather let this issue come to a close.]



Atari News and Comment

by Bill Rayl

Welcome to 1989, the year Atari promises to take the US market by storm.

Positive Signs

There have been some very positive signs in the past few months which indicate Atari may well keep this promise. Though next to no national product advertising is being done for the 8bit or ST computers, Atari's co-op dealer advertising has been seen in New York, Michigan, Florida, California and elsewhere. There have even been television ads for the ST and Mega line in the Oklahoma City area. In fact, it seems that advertising in the New York Times has enlisted a few new dealers in that area. Many stores are also reporting that they are now getting shipments of 1040STs and Atari has been filling orders for 520STs and Megs.

Atari is also showing some healthy funding for research and development, with R&D funding equal to or exceeding the days that produced the ST computer.

Atari Stock Watch

After falling to \$4.875 per share in Mid-November, Atari stock is quickly making a healthy comeback and is now hovering around \$6 a share. On the day of this writing, ATC stock closed at a price of \$5.75 with 42,000 shares traded.

The Federated Albatross

Atari's prediction at the start of 1988 was Federated would be breakeven by year's end. Unfortunately, Atari has not been doing well in the prediction department (I wonder who runs that division of Atari, anyway :->). Federated posted a

loss of \$9 million, prompting many observers to speculate if something is not done soon, the Federated chain may drag Atari down with it. Perhaps "Federated ball and chain" would be more appropriate?

COMDEX

Atari, accompanied by a plethora of third-party developers, filled with 6,000 square-foot Gold Room at the COMDEX show held in Las Vegas. Contrary to expectations, Atari did not show a 68030 machine (though Atari is saying such a machine will be available in mid-1989) and the Atari Laptop (nicknamed STacey), was shown only briefly in the Gold Room. (Reports are it took two people to carry it in!)

Even with these "minuses," Atari had a very good showing at COMDEX thanks to the third-party developers showing everything from a hand-held scanner and OCR (optical character recognition) software for the Spectre 128 Macintosh emulator. Atari had its a few things to show as well, such as the Desk-Set II DTP program allowing use of CompuGraphic typesetters with the ST and UltraScript, the Postscript clone for the Atari Laser. The Atari Work Station (ATW, formerly the ABAQ) and PC clones, PC1 to PC5, were shown. In addition, Fleetwood Mac drew in lots of spectators to the Atari booth with their performance, showing off, in part, the MIDI abilities of the ST.

Toronto Atari Show, Nov. 5

Just one week before COMDEX, the Toronto Atari Federation sponsored the first Canadian user group AtariFest. Atari Canada was present with a well-staffed and excellent booth highlighting the history of Atari. A few highlights of the

show included Gribnif Software showing version 2.0 of NeoDesk, CodeHead Software selling G+Plus and MultiDesk (once the airline found their luggage!) and an educational game called MuZap from Philos Software, which was reviewed in the December issue of MAM.

Darek Mihocka hosted a seminar in which he demonstrated his Xformer 8bit emulator for the ST. With a cable recently designed by Darek, ST owners can now use 8bit SIO hardware directly. I purchased one of these cables, and Darek's newest version of XFormer, and I'm impressed! The cable works beautifully and the software has a built-in Degas screen shot feature (designed as an aid for Darek, but great for editors!).

There was much, much more to see from Regent Software, Sierra On-line, Joppa computers, Saved by Technology and others. User groups were well-represented at the show, with groups from Toronto, London and Kitchener, Ontario. PACE from Pittsburg, PA and GAG from Flint, MI also had booths at the show.

Unfortunately, the show had very little for the 8bit Atarian as far as developers. USA Media showed Celebrity Cookbook and the Diamond OS for Atari 8bits.

Graphic OS updates

For those of you who have been following the development of ST-like environments for the 8bit Ataris, here's the latest info! USA Media, formerly Merrill Ward, has gone through yet another change of name, this time to Merrill Software. At last report, Merrill Software was still marketing Diamond by Alan Reeve.

On the GOE Cartridge front, David Sullivan is shipping the first batch of cartridges as I write this. When we spoke to him, David had just received the

manuals, and the cartridges were already in the hands of the distributor.

Add a 720K 3.5" Drive to Your 8Bit

In his many hacks into the XF551, Bob Woolley of the San Leandro Computer Club in California has come up with a modification allowing XF551 owners to use single or double-sided 3.5" drives. The modification requires reprogramming of the ROMS inside the drive, but a kit is available from Innovative Concepts (IC) in Warren, MI that gives you everything you need (modified ROM, adapting cables and step-by-step instructions) for only \$34.95 (plus \$3 s&h, MI residents add 4% sales tax). The kit even allows you to use either the original XF551 drive or the 3.5" at the flip of a switch. And, best of all, Bob Woolley gets royalties from each kit sold! IC also offers complete installation for those not "hardwarely" inclined. You can contact IC at (313) 293-0730 or CompuServe, 76004,1764, for more information.

On-line ST Magazines

The on-line publication ST Report is no longer affiliated with APE, Inc., publisher of the 8bit on-line magazine Zmag. Ralph Mariano, publisher of ST Report, said the split was friendly. ST Report has begun reporting on the Amiga, IBM and Unix worlds in the new CPU Report section.

ST Profile, another on-line ST magazine produced by Genie RoundTable staff, has been gaining praise from its readers. Featuring original articles from a wide variety of authors, ST Profile looks to be a real winner.

GFA on the Move,

GFA, the German-based company that produced GFA BASIC has recently announced they will no longer be marketing their products through Michtron of Pontiac, MI. It seems, from recent reports, that Antic Software has become the new distributor. Michtron has stated they will continue to support GFA BASIC on GENIE, as well as their new Hi-Soft and Power BASIC packages. Hi-Soft, and its lowend counterpart Power BASIC, are packages giving compatibility with MS-DOS BASIC. Looks like the BASIC market for the ST may be heating up again!

Games to Start the New Year Off Right

Just when you thought it was safe to go back in the dungeon, FTL releases "Chaos Strikes Back," the long-awaited sequel to Dungeon Master. In Chaos Strikes Back, your party of adventurers are called on again to battle the nasties. A spokesperson for FTL stated the game should begin shipping after the first of the year. Unlike the multiple levels in Dungeon Master, FTL is describing the layout of the game as "octopus-like."

Want Color For Under \$100?

Unlock the Power

VIDEOKEY

RGB to color composite converter for the Atari ST

With VideoKey, now you, too, can experience the fantastic color and sound of Atari's games and graphics on any television, big screen or composite monitor! Its design provides the highest quality color composite video and RF output possible for any Atari ST, not just those that are RF equipped. Standard RCA jacks allow for easy hook-up. Optimized for low resolution use.



*plus shipping and handling

 Practical Solutions

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602-884-9612



For 520ST, 1040ST, 520STfm and MEGA MEMORY: EXPANDABLE Hard Drive Kits:

Expand your ST's memory to ONE Megabyte, TWO and ONE-HALF Megabytes or even FOUR Megabytes with the tech-specialities plug-in memory modules. All memory boards fit under the R/F shield. The CPU is completely available for any future enhancements (blitter, coprocessors, speedup kits etc.). No soldering is required.

520ST modules use 256K DRAMs for upgrades to 1 MB and 1 Megabit DIPs for 2-1/2 and 4 MB upgrades. All boards are fully socketed and the expandable boards can be configured for either 256K or 1 Mb chips. This means that you can start by upgrading your 520 to one Megabyte and later move up to either 2.5 or even 4 Megabytes--the maximum for any ST, even the Mega! Installation is completely solder-free. Comes with detailed illustrated instructions and a one (1) year limited warranty.

Upgrade your 1040ST or 520STfm just as easily as a 520ST! Send us your 520STfm and we will install the second bank of memory complete for only \$269 plus shipping. Or install one of our 1040 memory boards and upgrade your ST to 2-1/2 or even 4 Megabytes.

Limited space above the 1040 motherboard prohibits the use of conventional sockets in one bank. Optional "ZERO Height" sockets allow you to have this bank socketed too, so you can plug in or exchange the expensive 1 Mbit chips. The "ZERO-Height" socket kit is also available separately so you can install it at any time!

520A:Socketed, no RAM	\$ 129
520B: 1 MB, socketed	\$ 299
520C: 2.5 MB, socketed	\$ 595
520D: 4MB	\$ 995
520-1:1 MB, non-expandable	\$ 249
1040A: 1 Bank sockets, no RAM	\$ 110
1040B: Fully socketed, no RAM	\$ 149
1040C:2.5 MB + 1 bank sockets	\$ 595
1040D: 4 MB	\$ 995
1040K: Kit w/all parts, no RAM	\$ 68

Clock Option on Memory Board \$ 30
Clock, stand-alone for 520/1040 \$ 38

We ship COD (\$3) or prepaid, sorry no credit cards!
Add the following amounts for shipping and handling:
memory upgrades - host adapters: 1st unit \$5, add. u. \$2
hard drive kits/CPU cases without drive \$10/20, h. d. Kits with drive need special shock resistant packaging \$20/30
Texas residents add 8% state sales tax.

Above prices correct on 12-19-88. Prices of populated boards subject to chip adjustments to meet fluctuating DRAM prices.

520ST, 1040ST, 520STfm and MEGA are trademarks of ATARI Corp.

All kits come complete with software and all parts needed to get the system operational, 1 year ltd. warranty. There are right now four different case styles available:

1. 10" wide x 6.8" high x 15" deep (desktop) with full SCSI interface and 'DMA-through' connector
-150 W PC power supply with fan
-room for up to 5 half-ht hard drives or combination - full/half height
-mounts on floor, under desk or on desktop
-can power up 520ST and external floppy drives.
-optional delay circuit for CPU allows fully automatic power-up!

No Drive--Install your own - \$385
10 MB - \$485 30 MB RLL - \$695
20MB 48 ms - \$595 40 MB ST251\$795
30 MB f. ht. 45 ms autop. CDC - \$745

2. 13.25" wide (same as MEGA) x 15" deep x 3.8" high with full SCSI/DMA through host adapter
-ready for up to 3 1/2 ht or 1 each full/half ht. hard/tape/floppy drives
-55 W power supply with 115V-fan
-can be placed under monitor

No Drives--Install your own \$295
10 MB - \$395 30 MBCDC - \$565
20 MB 48 ms - \$525 40 MB ST251\$745
65 MB 22 ms autopark RLL drive \$845

3. 4.5" wide x 6" high x 13" deep with single port host adapter
-ready for 2 1/2 height or 1 full height drive
-55 W power supply
-optional fan available (add \$18)
No Drives--Install your own\$249

10 MB - \$349 30 MB RLL 48ms - \$570
20 MB - \$485 40 MB ST251 - \$645
63 MB h. ht.22 ms auto parking - \$795

4. CPU CASE, 18" wide x 12" deep x 8" high.

Upgrade your 520/1040 to the MEGA standard, separate CPU and keyboard, gain space for 3 each 3.5" and 5.25" half height floppy and/or hard drives in two separate drive bays.

* 150 W power supply with inbuilt fan supplies power for all possible combinations and keeps everything cool.

* a reset button on the keyboard makes a warm reset easy.

* an adjustable circuit delays the CPU on power up, allowing a totally automatic bootstrap.

* Your monitor can be switched on or off automatically, using an optional cable - complete One switch operation for the whole system is possible

* The plane immediately above the ATARI motherboard is reserved for future expansion. A 68020/68881-2 coprocessor board with sockets for up to 8 MB of high speed 32 bit memory is currently being developed.

Kit contains all parts for standard 520ST/1040ST/520STfm, please specify machine type - \$295
Hard Drive kits for CPU case:

10 MB - \$295 20 MB 48ms - \$398
30 MB full ht. CDC 45 ms - \$465
Please note that you get back about half of the CPU case costs after buying a Hard Drive Kit.

Host adapter cards are also separately available and come with software, either bare or with case and 6' long round shielded SCSI cable with embedded power supply lines. Up to 20' cable length and additional connectors, made to order available!

Two different types are available, both are full SCSI versions with DMA through connector, the higher priced one has also a real time clock.

Prices after the "/" are for host adapters with cas/cable..

\$79/119 with clock - \$119/159

Space limitations don't allow a more detailed description. For complete catalog contact:

tech-specialities Co.
909 Crosstimbers, Houston TX 77022
(713) 691-4527/8

Distributors for:

Australia
Tech-Soft, 460 Stirling Hwy, Suite 37
Claremont, Western Australia 6011
Tel.: (09) 385-1765

Canada (East)
Computer Country, Paul Wilson
148 Waterloo Street, Stratford, Ont., N5A
4B4, Tel.: (519) 273-1011

West Germany
ING.-B. Dipl. Ing. M. Krompasky
Schillerring 19, 8751 Grosswallstadt
Tel.: (06022) 24405

Inside the XF551 Disk Drive

by Bob Woolley

It has been almost a year since I first got my hands on an XF551. Busy little hands...

Of course, the first thing I did was to tear the thing apart to see how it was put together. And, maybe do a little "put"ing myself. As a result, I have made a few modifications that may be of interest to other XF551 owners. You will not be able to successfully make these changes unless you have reasonably decent electronic skills, so don't gamble with your new XF551 unless you know what you are doing. Most User Groups have skilled members that will be happy to guide you if you need help.

First, a few facts

But, before I get caught up in details of the drive, I would like to clarify some points on the XF551. The drive IS double sided and can read and write in single, enhanced or double density. The "book" that comes with the drive is incorrect. MyDOS, SuperDOS and SpartaDOS can all format the drive as double sided and double density.

Previous Atari drives did not use the INDEX hole on the diskette, which allowed us to flip the disk over and format the back of the media. The XF551 uses a standard, bone stock, IBM style drive. It uses INDEX. It will not FORMAT the back of a diskette unless the disk jacket has two index holes. It WILL read and write to the back of any disk. Guaranteed! On side one, the tracks on the disk are written from the outer edge in, from 0 to 39. On side two, the tracks

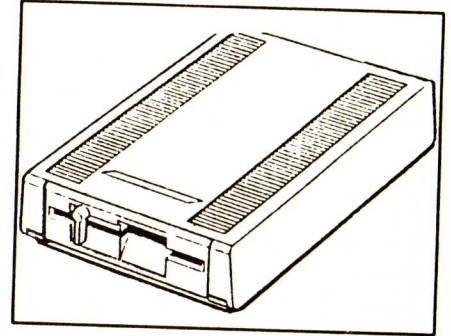
are written from the inner edge out. This allows us to read the first 40 tracks of a DSDD diskette on a SSDD drive. The second side is not backwards nor could it be read on a SS drive even if you changed it.

The speed of the drive is NOT 288 RPM, the speed you are used to seeing, but 300 RPM, the industry standard. The XF551 compensates for the difference by using a clock frequency 4% (.33mhz) higher than it should be. This will read and write the data in exactly the same place on the diskette as your 288 RPM drive, although programs that measure the speed of the drive will read 300 RPM.

Talking To The Drive

The XF551, as it comes from Atari, has the ability to format a diskette in any of three configurations: single density (SSDD-88K), 1050 density (SSED-127K) and double-sided, double density (DSDD-360K).

The DSDD format has a standard skew (skew is the physical sequence of



the sectors on the disk) and a high speed skew option available to the user. This extra skew layout allows faster data transfers on the SIO buss, much like the ICD Doubler upgrade on the 1050. For those of you interested in programming, the DSDD format SIO command is \$23. For a high speed skew format in DSDD, you just need to turn on bit 7 for a value of \$A3 (the SSSD and SSED formats do not have a high speed skew, although the drive will transfer data at high speed in those densities).

To transmit data at high speed to and from the XF551, just set bit 7 of the command to "1" again (a get sector (\$52) with bit 7 on is \$D2). You must still send the command frame at the normal SIO rate (\$28 in \$D204) and then set \$D204 to \$10 for high speed operation during the data frame. The drive will also recognize the Put (and Get) Option Table command (\$4F and \$4E), which are similar to the Percom configuration table operations. Only bytes 4-8 are changed by the Put command, however, and only the three supported formats will be recognized. Even if you sent the Option Table a 512 byte sector size, you would only get 256 byte sectors.

A number of the newest DOS versions (SpartaDOSX, SuperDOS 5.0, DOSXE...) now have XF551 support built in. Also, a file is available in Atari8 on CompuServe that will modify SpartaDOS 3.2D for the XF551 features (in DL3 - XF32D.BAS). Using any of these

Having 360K is nice. Having 720K is even nicer. Putting a 720K, 3.5 inch drive in place of the stock drives is not too hard.

methods will transfer data almost twice as fast as DOS 2.0.

Into The Hardware.

The first thing you notice about the ICs in the drive is the one in a nice socket, the ROM. Makes it a lot easier to burn an EPROM (use a 2764) to make code change if you can just plug and unplug your devices. I didn't see the ROM source code printed anywhere, so I wrote a simple disassembler for the 8050 MPU used as the brains of the drive.

It was very nice when Atari used a 6507 (which uses 6502 OPCODES) in their drives but, no more. Everything Atari comes out with now seems to use a different chip and this 8050 stuff was a bear. Finally, I got most of the program logic worked out and designed some changes.

One upgrade that was available for the 1050 is a ROM change that will re-address the drive as D5: through D8:. This can be done on the XF551 ROM by altering location \$0095 from \$31 to \$35 (\$33 gives you a range of D3: to D6:, etc.).

Having 360K is nice. Having 720K is even nicer. Putting a 720K, 3.5 inch drive in place of the stock drive is not too hard, so let's start with the ROM. There is a little bug in the code that allows the drive to start writing the track before it has reached operating speed. To remedy that, change \$528 from \$90 to \$00, \$C1D from \$88 to \$80 and \$E25 from \$88 to \$80.

The 720K drive has 80 tracks per side which requires you to change \$680 from \$28 to \$50, \$80F from \$30 to \$60 and \$811 from \$FD to \$FA. A 3.5 inch drive uses a 3ms seek time — change \$53D from \$00 to \$03, \$57B from \$18 to \$13, \$9D1 from \$08 to \$03, and \$B15 from \$18 to \$13. Finally, the 3.5s use write pre-compensation — change \$61D from \$F6 to \$F4, \$621 from \$F6 to \$F4 and \$D0D from \$A2 to \$A0.

For a drive, I used a unit from JDR Microdevices (MF353B Mitsubishi) that plugs right into the 5.25 connectors and uses the same mountings as the larger drive. This simplifies the installation quite a bit. When you go to plug in the 3.5, you may notice that the 34 pin cable is too short. I de-soldered the connector and added a longer cable, but one hacker, Joe Wyks, managed to pry the top off of the board connector and crimp his new cable into place without soldering. The power connector can be adapted with cables made for that purpose, if necessary.

That's about all that's needed to run a 720K 3.5. Format a disk using SpartaDOS XINIT, option 7 (DS 80 tracks) and start filling it up! You now have 2820 DD sectors.

Bob Woolley can be reached on CompuServe at [75126,3446] and is the editor of the SLCC Journal. We wish to warmly thank him for contributing this article and sharing his knowledge of the 8bit and the XF551 disk drive with us.

ASTI Talks About... The "ST Party"

I was talking with my cantankerous partner, the Dictator, about this month's article, and he wants to know why no-one ever has an "ST Party." What is an "ST Party" you ask? Well, it's no wonder you haven't heard about them, the Dictator invented them but failed to tell many people about them.

It all started back in September of 1985 when the Atari ST first came out. I was (proudly) the Dictator's VERY FIRST computer, and a brand new model to boot! So, he didn't know where to go to get any information on how to use me or hear about the new software that was slooowly being released.

Well, after hanging around the store where he bought me (enough to be a free salesman and ST promoter), he managed to locate several other new owners. Not having a club or user group to go to, the Dictator invited these other owners to his home in groups of two and three (or more!) to share fun, information, opinions, news and experiences about the ST. After realizing what a good time could be had by all, a phone call to a few of these new friends about an "ST Party" soon turned into a weekly affair.

Now the Dictator is all-consumed by a user group, but the idea is still very valid for all of you to consider. How many times have you said to yourself or your ST friends that there is never enough time at the user group meetings? Try inviting a couple friends over for some ST time. Get to know some of the other user group members better and learn a lot about your machine.

The Dictator's parties included everything from game playing to programming and using business software. It's a great way to get a first-hand review and opinion. And two or more heads can explore a computer and it's hardware & software much better than one. Give it a try.

On another note, being cooped up here with the Dictator gets rather boring. It would be really nice if some of you could find the time to drop me a line and let me know I'm not talking to empty space. Ask questions, give opinions, tell about experiences, or just say "HI."

We all function better if we get a little feedback (or as one of my friends would say "need more input") to inspire us to continue.

Please write to:

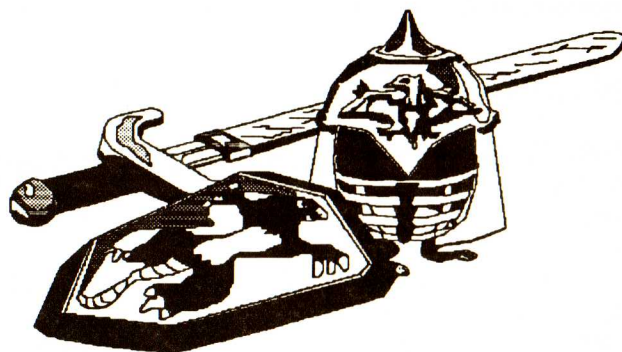
ASTI & the Dictator

P.O. Box 99737 Troy, Mich. 48098

and I promise to answer all letters in this article.

ASTI (and the Dictator!)

Heroes of the Lance



by Steve Volker

When I select a game to buy, one of the primary motivations is great graphics. There are a lot of well thought-out, enjoyable games out there I never really consider because the pictures on the box or in the ads just don't thrill me. (Silly, huh?) So it was when I saw an ad for the fantasy game, *Heroes of the Lance*, by Strategic Simulations Inc and TSR, I just HAD to have it!

Besides the beautiful cover of a lanced warrior riding a majestic, fire-breathing dragon through the skies of Krynn, I was happy to see the familiar US Gold emblem displayed in the lower left corner of the package. (US Gold is the trademark of GO America Ltd., which has had a part in so many fantastic games of late — like *DIVE BOMBER!*) Inside were three disks, labeled A, B, C, and a 25-page, well put-together manual. I curbed my overwhelming desire to immediately boot the first disk, and actually READ the manual.

Heroes of the Lance is based on the TSR *Dragonlance* series of books and roll-playing games, and the first few pages gives an enticing overview of the history and basic plot of this, and where you are in this saga while playing the game. (I think I just decided to read the books.) Your nemesis is the Queen of Darkness herself and her Draconion minions, along with an ample mixture of giant spiders, wraiths, and several little known creatures from the *Dragonlance* saga...oh, and of course the Dragons.

The manual goes on to describe your goals, (to recover the Disks of Mishakal

and restore the waning faith in the gods), how to use the joystick during the normal game mode and in combat, (the ST version does not make use of the mouse — I tried!), and how to prepare your disks for play (involved). There is also a half-page description of each of the eight pre-designed characters, you use in the game. Finally, time to BOOT THE FIRST DISK!

One of the disadvantages of all great graphics games, is the time it takes to finish loading, but to my money — it was worth it! Wow! The title screen is a...well, it's enough to remind you why you're an Atari ST owner. Oh, and there's more! After this comes a portrait and mini-description of each of the primary "players," (each is a beautiful, colorful rendition of the original Larry Elmore paintings for the *Dragonlance* Series), and all are worth just enjoying. Then comes the copy-protect section.

I have a few impressions of the way in which SSI protects this program. First, I applaud the fact there is NO copy protection on the disks themselves. We've all known there were better ways to discourage pirating, and SSI may have found one. Second, to get past this you must find a key bit of information in the manual about a character or whatever, and key it in to continue with the game. I purposely made a typing error during this process, and found it unforgiving — causing you to reboot to try again, but my main problem with this is that whenever you die, regardless of whether you have saved a game or not, you must go through this (and a reboot) to start on your adventure again. This is frustrating and takes a lot away from the playability of the game (especially if you play like I

do). It is surprisingly easy to lose all eight characters in the first TEN minutes!

After entering the main program, and getting used to the joystick controls and general lay-of-the-land, the actual play is easy, stimulating, and gives you quite a few options. Anything outside of movement and combat, are done by scroll-down menus you can reach by pressing any key. Some options are: run, dodge, jump, use range weapon, take, and actual close combat. There is also a good measure of magics used by either side. Oh, and the way some of the creatures die, crumbling to dust, exploding, etc., is something to watch. From here you continue to fight, explore and gain experience, until you've found the secret to killing Khisanth, the ancient and terrible black dragon, and recovering the Mishakal disks (which you also have to find!). Along the way are potions, magic staffs, exotic rings, and miles of tunnels and rooms to explore.

When all is considered, I found the game to be interesting and stimulating, with my favorite part being the startling graphics. Though somewhat too arcade style for me, I appreciated the detail and continuity of the story, and the ease of play. I think you'll find it worth looking into.

Heroes of the Lance comes on three, single-sided disks. It requires a color monitor, (or TV for the FM crowd) and will run on a 512K system. Though it is published by Strategic Simulations, 1046 N Rengtorff Ave., Mountain View, CA 94043, (415) 964-1353, there is a note in the December 88 issue of *START* that ordering should be done through Electronic Arts, at the number 1-800-245-4525.

The SpartaDOS X Cartridge

by Keith Joins (MACE)

[Editors' Note: We continue with the second half of Keith's SpartaDOS X Cartridge review. See the December issue of the Michigan Atari Magazine for the first half.]

Several other environmental variables are available that you can set with the SET command. One of these is the DOS prompt. You can specify the format of your prompt by using certain "meta" characters. The letters L, N, P, D, T, and R, preceded by a dollar sign, will be replaced by the drive Letter or Number, the current directory Path, Date, Time, or a Return. You can also use an underline, which will be replaced by a space. For example, "SET PROMPT=\$L:" will give you a prompt of A: for drive one. If you are in the GAMES directory on drive one, you could "SET PROMPT=\$T_D\$N :>\$P>" and your prompt would look something like this:

```
11:25:42am D1:>GAMES>
```

The normal Dn: prompt is set up with the command "SET PROMPT=D\$N:".

PATH can be set to cause other directories to be searched when a command or file is not found in the current directory. Entering PATH with no parameters will show the current search path. Note: the search path is NOT the same as the current working directory!

To see what your current directory is, enter CWD (or CHDIR, or CD) with no parameters. This takes the place of the ?DIR command from earlier versions of SpartaDos.

The FORMAT command presents a

menu type screen and allows you to format a disk in any density you want. You can use the high speed skew for the new XF551 drive, the US skew for the Indus or a doubled 1050, or a standard skew. You can format the disk in either Sparta-mode or Atari mode. Atari mode allows you to use enhanced density if you so desire. This formatting menu shows up whenever a format-disk command is issued — even from within a program!

The FIND command will search all connected drives and all directories for the specified filename. Wildcards are of course accepted. You can limit the search to one drive by including a drive number in the filename.

The keyboard buffer is not loaded as a default. You must select KEY ON to load the file from the cartridge and activate the buffer. Subsequent KEY commands will toggle the buffer off and on.

The LOAD command has the same effect in SDX as in the disk-based version of SpartaDos. This will load a file but not run it. However, you can also use it to load an external command file to keep it resident in memory. The COM files in the cartridge are loaded each time they are called. You could load one or more of them into memory with the LOAD command and they will stay there until you use LOAD with no parameters, which will remove all non-installed programs from memory.

The SWAP command will allow you to swap your drive configuration. SWAP 1,8 would swap drive one with drive 8. SWAP with no parameters will display the current drive map. MIO users should take note that the MIO menu swap configuration must be considered when using this command.

The X command is used to load and run those programs that require all cartridges be removed. Express, Determ, Textpro, Discom, and the disk-based ARC are examples of programs that must be called using the X command.

A couple of nice features are the PEEK and POKE commands. These work pretty much like the Basic commands except you don't need the comma to separate the address and the value in the POKE command. Also, you can enter the address and value as either decimal or \$hex numbers. These two can come in very handy at times, believe me! For example, my AUTOEXEC.BAT file contains the commands POKE 82 0 and POKE \$2DA 1 to set the left margin and cursor repeat rate as soon as the system is booted.

Another command that is nice is CLS for clear screen. This is good for some programs that exit to DOS leaving you with a screen full of the program remnants. There is also an RPM command, which allows you to easily check the speed of your disk drives. (The standard speed for an 810 or 1050 drive is 288 rpm. My Happy drive registers about 900 rpm, and an MIO ramdisk clocks in at around 23000!)

The next feature I will cover is one of the most impressive. SpartaDos X contains a licensed ARC program that will also handle Alf-Crunched files. Here is the format and commands used:

SpartaDOS X ARC ver 1.1

Usage: ARC cmd[opt] arcfn [flist]

Where "cmd" is one of: a : add file(s) to archive m : move file(s) to archive, then delete from current location u : update

file(s) in archive, keeping the newest versions (according to the time/date stamp) and adding any source files from flist that aren't in the archive
 f : freshen file(s) in archive, keeping the newest versions but not adding any files that aren't already in the archive
 d : delete file(s) from archive
 x,e : extract file(s) from archive
 p : print file(s) to screen
 l : list file(s) in archive
 v : verbose list of file(s)

Valid "opt" options are:

b : retain backup copy of archive
 s : suppress compression
 w : suppress warning messages

n : suppress notes and comments
 h : high speed (screen off)
 g : encrypt/decrypt archive entry (followed by password - must be the last option, as in ARC AHGtwister TEST.ARC *.*)

"arcfn" is the archive filename (drive, path, and ext are optional).

"flist" is the list of files to extract, add, list, etc. in the archive. Wildcards are allowed in each filename. " *.* " is assumed if no filename is given.

This is a fully featured ARC as you can see, and works the same way as the ARC utilities for IBM and ARC.TTP for the ST. It is also extremely fast! The first time I used it to unarchive a file I thought it must not have worked properly since it finished so quickly.

The program will automatically determine whether a file is in ARC or Alf-Crunched format when extracting files, and when compressing will use the most efficient ARC format it can. Anyone who is a frequent downloader of programs that have been compressed will really like having this program always just a command away.

Most other commands remain the same as they were in the disk-based version of SpartaDos. Some have additional features such as DIR and TYPE. They can each accept some optional parameters. Remember the discussion of the ATR command? The Attributes can be included with these commands. DIR +S will show only subdirectories. DIR +H will show hidden files. You can also use a /P or /C. with DIR. DIR /P will pause the display and wait for a keypress after giving you a full screen of filenames. DIR /C will give you a count of the number of entries in that directory. DIR /PC will do both. TYPE can also use the Attributes and the /P. Also, TYPE is no longer limited to text files with 64-character lines. You can now TYPE any file to the screen.

PRINT has been dropped and the entire I/O re-direction scheme has been changed. Batch files are only read by the command processor and cannot input information into a Basic program since they are no longer system wide. You can divert output of a single command by using > such as DIR >PRN:. This would redirect the directory display of drive one from the screen to the printer. DIR >A:FILENAME would direct the display to the file on drive one. Similarly, you can use <A:FILENAME to specify input from a file instead of the keyboard.

As I already mentioned, SpartaDos X looks for a file called AUTOEXEC.BAT at boot rather than STARTUP.BAT. This batch file would include any system set up commands you need (like the POKEs mentioned above).

You can execute a batch file from the command processor with the -filename entry. You can also pass parameters to the batch file. As an example let's suppose that you have set up your MIO ramdisk as drive one but that you frequently want to change the file that you are using as your CONFIG.SYS. You have a floppy in drive two that has a library of CONFIG.SYS files named FILE1. FILE2, etc. Here is our batch file, named CHANGE.BAT:

```
COPY %1 %2 COLD
```

Now we would execute this batch file as follows:

```
-CHANGE B:FILE1 A:CONFIG.SYS
```

This would copy FILE1 from your library of CONFIG.SYS files in drive two to drive one and re-boot the system using the new CONFIG.SYS file.

This is not the best example in the world but it does give you an idea of what can be done. You may pass a total of nine parameters to the batch file.

While speaking of batch files and CONFIG.SYS files, a nice feature in creating and editing these files is that COPY CON: does not clear the screen as COPY E: does. You can TYPE the file out, issue a COPY CON: CONFIG.SYS, move the cursor to the display of the file and edit what you want while hitting RETURN after each line, and then press CONTROL-3 to close the file. This can be a real time saver when setting up various CONFIG.SYS files.

And now a note to TURBO BASIC users. You can now use TB with SpartaDos! However you will need an expanded memory system since you must load the handlers into BANKED memory. That will leave the RAM under the OS available to TB. While I haven't tried it, it might be possible to load the handlers into normal RAM and run TB on a stock XL but it would drastically reduce the memory available for any programs to use.

Well, this has been a brief overview of the SpartaDos X cartridge. In my opinion it is well worth the long wait. While there still could be bugs lurking around in SDX somewhere, if they are there they are extremely subtle. The only problem I can see will be the occasional program that is not compatible with SDX. In the course of beta testing we've found a few such programs, but ICD has quickly remedied this. If you discover a program that doesn't work, report it to ICD and use the disk-based version with it until the next upgrade.

Whatever you do, don't miss this one!

ICD, Inc. 1220 Rock St.
 Rockford, IL 61101-1437
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The NewsRoom by Springboard Software, Inc

Desktop Publishing for the 8bit

by Ted Beauchamp (TAG)

The NewsRoom is a desktop publishing program for the Atari 8bits with at least 64K and a 1050 compatible drive. The package consists of a main program disk and one clip art disk with over 600 different pieces of clip art.

The manual is 97 pages long including the 10 pages that show all the different pieces of art. This makes it very handy to find an appropriate picture to use. The pictures are grouped by subject into panels that have several different pictures to choose from. I think you could find a picture for almost any subject or occasion, but if you cannot there are other clip art disks available.

Enough about the clip art, after all this is supposed to be a publishing program. The main menu has five choices to pick from; the banner department, the copy desk, the photo lab, the press room, and the layout area. It seems that the programmer wanted to give you a feel of the workings of a real newspaper.

The program is almost a simulation of a newspaper's creation from start to finish. As you write your story and create your pictures, they are divided into panels. An 8-1/2 X 11 Sheet will have a banner across the top and two columns of three panels or just two columns of four panels. As you save each panel, you should note the final order you want each to appear on your sheet or your story will be scattered all over the place. This does offer the advantage of inserting pictures or diagrams where you want them or of continuing stories on later pages if you are creating a multi-page paper.

The banner is the top portion of the page where the name of your paper will appear. To create this, you pick the clip

art icon from the sub menu, find the name of the page you want from the directory displayed and pick the picture you want off the page. Then you position it on the banner layout and alter it if you want to using the crayon icon. This will put you into what is called the Graphic Art Tools menu. You can create your own picture, alter an existing one, fill areas, draw lines, circles, and boxes using different pen styles and erase any goofs.

The next step is to add the text using one of several fonts and sizes available. The banner is then saved to disk to be called back later. The photo lab operation is similar in use to the banner section except that you can create photos of any size up to a full panel large by making a box around the photo as large as you need. You can add a caption to the photo and use the same Graphics Tools to alter or create art work. When finished the photo must be saved to disk to be called back later at the layout desk.

The copy desk is where you write your stories. This is where I had the most problems. The text editor is not very good. You must first select a font, then you start to type, if you want to move the cursor it is done with the joystick before typing or the arrow keys after starting to type. The problem is the movement is too fast and erratic to allow for easy editing.

If the cursor is moved outside of the text, it changes to the pick up icon and moves more than one text line at a time. Moving back into the text causes it to jump several lines making it necessary to bring it back. The Delete key does not work unless you hold down the Shift key, but the manual does not tell you this.

There does not appear to be a way to type over text, the old text moves down and must be deleted later. There is supposed to be a way to move, copy, and

delete blocks of text, but it does not work as described in the manual. Text can be copied to the end of the existing text, but when I tried to copy a line of text to a different location, it would only go to the end of the old text.

As you type, the text is fit around any photos that are already on the panel. If you do like the results you can move the photo and the text will reposition itself to fit the new panel layout. You must be careful doing this however, because if the text you had entered will not fit it is dumped into a buffer. If this happens, you can put the photo back where it was or try a different position.

You may find it necessary to retype some of the missing text because there does not appear to be a way to retrieve the buffer. You should also be careful not to overfill the panel you are in because any overflow will be lost. You must save each panel before starting a new panel.

The next area is the layout area. This is where you reassemble the panels into their final position. This is a fairly simple task provided you remember the names and order of the panels you want to use. You can save the page for printing later, and you can save the page format for use next time also.

The last area is the Press room. The menu gives you a long list of printer configurations that you choose from and then you give the name of the page you want printed and PRESTO there it is.

In closing, I give the program's clip art disk a very high rating, but the drawing and text editor a low rating. The ease of use is not very good and the division of the program into different tasks is okay as a study into newspaper publishing but just makes using the program more difficult. The manual is good but not great. Overall Rating (Standard. 1-10 Scale) = 7

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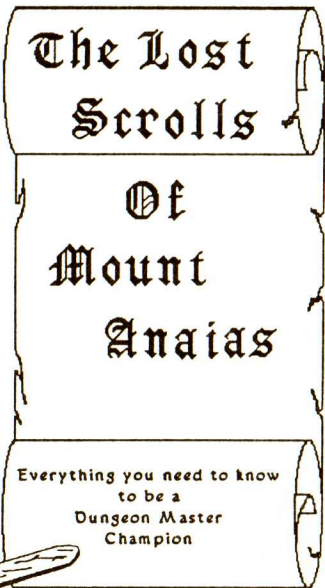
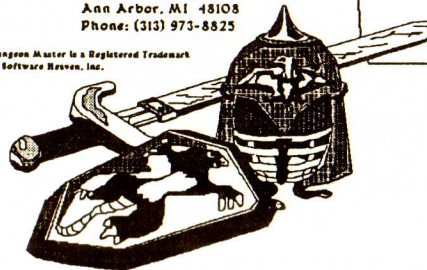
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Put aside your joystick and put on your thinking cap if you plan on tackling this complex computer game of galactic conquest. Set up for play on either a solo basis or between two live opponents, *Stellar Crusade* is a very impressive simulation of interstellar exploration, exploitation, and conquest in the Kiffryn's Cats star cluster. You can choose to play as the Corporate League or the People's Holy Republic, and from there the levels of complexity grow. You command colonies and fleets of starships, taking part in two war scenarios or short and long campaigns. You can choose from 5 levels of difficulty or let the computer randomly (and secretly) choose the difficulty level. In addition, reality levels have been added concerning the maintenance of your ships and training of troops,

and the hidden movements (the fog of war) of enemy ships, which should be off for when you're just getting started. This one's tough enough to get a handle on at the start, that none of these controls make a difference at first, but they represent

the kind of attention to detail that is the hallmark of first-rate simulations. Even though it's more science fiction than your average SSI wargame, there is enough military structure to make the jump from reality-based naval-battle simulations to interstellar battles rewarding. Previous experience in such simulations is recommended, but not necessary to get into the swing of *Stellar Crusade*.

Since I mainly play RPG and adventure games, the mechanics of this game drew no better parallel, other than with SSI's board-based simulations, in my experience than with *Balance of Power*. You basically gather data and make choices via a GEM bar menu setup with an interactive map of the star cluster, where flags mark the loyalty of each system. From the

simple GEM menus, you will access a variety of screen menus that illustrate, as well as textually provide, information about fleets, ships, and planets in great depth. Choices are either keyed in or clicked upon by mouse. The same mental muscles are exercised by *SC* and *BOP*, but with divergent political intentions, rest assured.

As a simulation, this game has no concrete goal like getting the Firestaff or saving the universe; instead, rules of victory according to the scenarios and campaigns provided on *SC's* data disk are your measures of success. *Stellar Crusade's* design and purpose is to make you feel as if you were in command of a large-to-vast star fleet, an overseer of starsystems in conflict with another such overseer (played by the computer or a friend who is similarly endowed with delusions of grandeur, or at least has a very literal Napoleon complex). In order to bring this macro-role the approximation of reality, the details of your command are many and varied. The short scenarios are provided for the beginner to get a taste for the movement and combat aspects of the game. Once you've mastered these games, which are going to

provide months of playability in and of themselves, you move onto the campaigns, where extra levels of your command are played out in the exploration and development of planetary systems, as well as handling the aggressive tactics of your opponent.

I have to confess an inability to condense what the excellent docs take 35 pages of two-column text to describe into something that gives you a better idea of what this game is about. All the little details are what makes simulation games attractive to serious wargamers and scare the rest of us off. So for those who like listings of details, I'll oblige right after handling the mundane usuals that reviewers are required to describe.

The packaging of this game is properly representative of its type. From the actual screenshots on the back of the box, you see excellent graphics without being lead to believe this is *Star Raiders: The Empire Strikes Back*. My only grumble is that while the text description of the game is fair and accurate, the order of activities undertaken in the game are presented in reverse order as far as you can actually play the game. You learn to conquer first, then exploration and building are added on, when I would have liked to explore and build first. No scenario supports that activity without the element of conquest rearing its complex head. That's a bias on my part, but also a bug in my ear that whispers "This is not logical," thus tainting my sense of the simulation—but it's really a matter of chickens and eggs coming first.

A Word of Explanation

This review was originally prepared for *ST Applications*, which is no longer with us. I haven't talked to Bill Petry, the editor, but from conversations with him over the previous two years, and especially the last few months, it seems he just couldn't get more than about 6,000 readers to buy the magazine. And with that small a base, he couldn't get advertisers. I think it's a shame to have lost that magazine, which along with *Current Notes*, provided the most timely information and reviews on the ST scene. It also provided columns on programming, desktop publishing, MIDI, and a platform for the irascible Dick Biow, who previewed *pc ditto* and *Turbo ST* before anyone else knew they existed. It also carried a column on freeware/shareware written by yours truly and I feel bad that such a vital scene isn't being covered with encouragement for users to support these freelance programmers and to show the value of the shareware concept to the ST community. The last issues were among Bill's best—a testament to his constant goal of improving the content and coverage of his magazine. I think it's a shame we lost that editor.

Well, this section of *A/M* is Mine! And so the freeware/shareware columns (and some reviews) live until I've exhausted what I'd prepared. After that I'll have to see. I've paid for all the shareware I use, but I got paid only for the columns that were published. Frankly, I'm a freelancer and in the same position as a shareware programmer—the work's hard and the pay's cheap, and one has to weigh the costs and benefits. I'm still writing for a commercial magazine that goes by the name of *STX-PRESS* and I sure hope you and your ST friends will support it (as well as *A/M*, of course!) by subscribing and telling software publishers you read it there/here first when you register your software. That will encourage me to write about my various encounters with the world of the Atari ST, and to keep this "interFACE" going.

Otherwise, SSI knows its business when it comes to packaging.

Both the program and the data disk are not copy protected, but to run a scenario or saved game, you must refer to the manual for a word selected by the computer in order to continue. Thus, you can run the game from a hard disk or two drives without a key disk. You can also buy the game now that I've exposed its protection method and photocopy the docs and sell/trade it with your friends. Be a jerk all of your life, too.

The docs are complete and written jointly for the ST and the IBM PC XT/AT, whatever that is. No need to translate up from IBM here, it's for us, too. Maps, tables, and orders of battle necessary for

scenarios that need them are included here. I would have liked to see some of the command screens represented, but since they all act like help screens anyway, better just to get the textual explanations over and boot the disks, right?

That covers the usuals. Now a little bit more about the game structure. The combat scenarios introduce you to the game's handling of your fleets, determining among transport, attack, or reserve missions; accessing the four levels of command for training, escort, raiding, and special support; choosing composition and movement of fleets; and seeing the effects of long- and short-range combat.

During the movement phase, you can access the game's Quick System Display to track the condition of a star system with pie charts and symbols without leaving the main map screen or you use the GEM bar menus to access the detailed screen menus to handle the aforementioned commands and also the usual file management tasks for starting, saving, loading. You also access the resolution phase, which will present information-oriented graphic depictions of fleets in battles you've initiated, whether off-planet or on the ground.

Again, this is a cursory description. You also handle transfers and reassignments of troops and vessels, determine what kinds of cargo (from colonists to mining equipment) and weaponry to place on ships, and send spies to disrupt the economy of your enemy. As you get into the tapestry of details involved with exploration and colonization, you'll be designing and building starships and working to win the loyalty of the planets under your rule and improving their productivity.

Thus, when you get to the campaigns, you deal with special system characteristics, which include the presence of gasworlders, Oort People, Aborigines, Spiders, and paleotechnology, among other things. Each characteristic affects how well a planet will fit into your crusade. As mentioned, you will read the systems' attributes charts and know whether cargo should include farm kits or factories, and whether belt colonies would work better than protected colonies. Once the details shift

from counting stars conquered and ships vanquished, the rules of victory also shift to including production and economic points.

Returning to the levels of difficulty, realism can be enhanced through the Maintenance choice, and thereby having the computer check all ships for wear and tear, each ship having about a 10% chance of *failing*. Don't forget the fog of war, too. Hey, without the details it's not a simulation, right?

And this is a good one. *Stellar Crusade* has an excellent interface, which in addition to making the task of conquering the universe as simple as such a complex task can be, it also allows you to set the colors of its screen menus if so desired, although the four-color treatment of text is very appealing as well as functional in accenting and distinguishing types of information being presented.

There is nothing flashy onscreen here, but this isn't a graphics adventure. The graphics are quite appealing and serve their functions well. The flash is in the imagination and attention to details, and in the challenge and playability, measured by levels of difficulty and the flawless error-handling of the program.

VANITYWARE

A long time back, before Intersect and Randy Mears went commercial with their excellent terminal program, *Interlink ST*, they put out a nifty ramdisk accessory that allowed you to set the size of your ramdisk with sliders. It was a true Macintosh-type accessory and very attractive compared with the

plethora of other such programs. I never used more recent versions of that accessory so I don't know how it was improved over the intervening years. But now Intersect has given us RAM Baby that is capable of handling larger amounts of RAM and allows setting up a print spooling partition to the RAM disk. Again, it is a very attractive (and noisy, if you leave the sound on) GEM screen device that lets you click on a button to designate the drive label (A-P), configure it to automatically install at bootup, and flush the print spooler.

That's really about all it does. It is not reset proof, nor does it have any autoloading features that are available with less aesthetically configured ramdisks. I'm really not certain why they bothered with the plethora of ramdisk programs available as shareware or freeware. I like having the option of having a ramdisk as an accessory rather than an autobooted program, and de-installing RAM Baby appears to return most of your memory to the system, which its earlier version did not. I tend to look at this area of software as no longer a viable commercial market, so it's more a matter of pride in seeing how many people download your product and see your name on it. And if that's the case, then the features I've mentioned should be added to RAM Baby if Randy Mears desires the full vanityware effect.

As it stands right now, the accessory takes up too much memory for the features it offers/lacks. \\Donavan Vicha

Street Fighter

Review by Bill Boles (MACE)

By now, many of you may be getting bored with my reviews about Martial Arts games (Karateka, World Championship Karate, etc., etc.). But I promise that this shall be my last such review (honest). The reason I wanted to write about Street Fighter, which is published by Capcom Co. LTD. for the ST computer, is that this is a game which is very similar to Epyx's World Championship Karate, but better than the afore mentioned title in some ways and not as good in others.

In the game, you play the role of Ryu... a high kicking, judo chopping karate expert whose task is to do battle with the toughest fighters of Japan, England, Thailand, China and the United States. The game begins after you select which country you wish to begin with.

Control of play is almost identical to Epyx's karate game, that is, half of the moves are controlled by moving the joystick and the other half by moving the stick and pressing the fire button. One difference in this game is the characters you will meet are much more varied and each requires a different approach in order to defeat them. These include characters who are good with their feet, are armed with Judo sticks, and even one who comes equipped with throwing stars and can vanish and reappear at will.

Probably the best fighter in the game is an English chap named Birdie. Don't let the name fool you...Birdie (a charming looking fellow with a Mr. T haircut) is almost twice your size and can put you away real fast. His favorite tactic is to whirl around and ram you with his head. Your strength, along with that of your opponent's, is represented by a red bar at the top of the screen. When this runs out,


you lose, and if you get beaten twice by the same opponent the game ends.



And now, you would probably like to know how this game compares to World Championship Karate. First, as mentioned above, the controls are just about the same. Second, the scenario is the same — fighting all comers to gain points and earn the title of number one fighter. And lastly, there is a part between matches with each country in which your character must break a stack of bricks to earn extra points.

Street Fighter is somewhat better than the other game due to it's excellent graphics, the music which fits the mood

perfectly and all of those different fighters to battle with. However, there are a few minor problems such as when you change the disk (this is a two-disk program), the drive starts spinning again before you can get the disk in. Another problem is that the characters move a bit slower than one would like, and finally, your high scores are not saved to disk.

Despite these few problems and the fact that this type of game has been done a thousand times (especially on that "C" computer) Street Fighter is one of the better ones, and I would recommend it to anybody who has never purchased a Martial Arts game.



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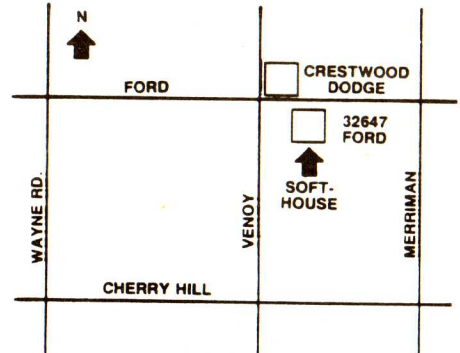
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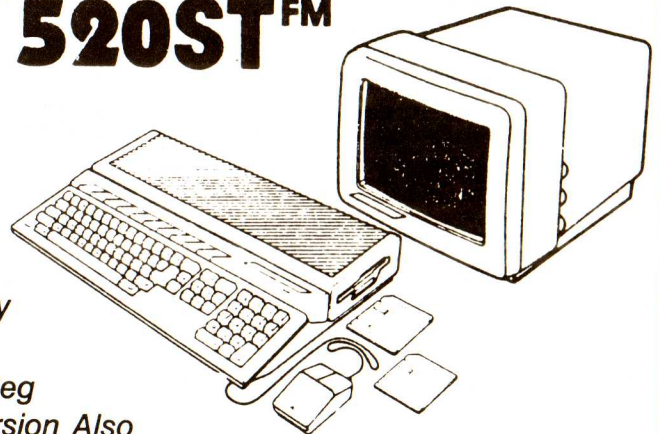
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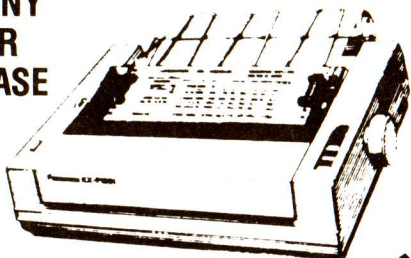
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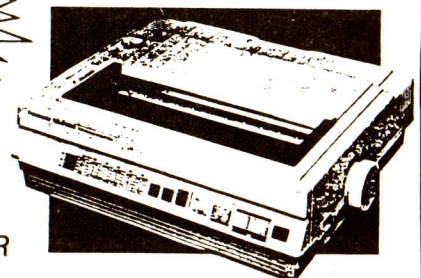
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Install an Alternate Operating System in an XE

by Don Neff (MACE, WAUG)

When I use my Atari XL I have three Operating Systems (Omnimon, Omniview and the original Atari OS) available by the flick of a switch. The installation of these alternate operating systems was an easy job in the XL. They reside on a small printed circuit (PC) board which is plugged into the socket of the original Atari OS.

When I bought my XE I wanted to install these same OS chips in it too but ran into problems. First the XE OS chip is soldered in place on the mother board. Second, it is located under the keyboard and does not have enough overhead room to permit the installation of a socket and the other OS chips on their PC board. My solution was to give up the Omniview and piggyback the Omnimon chip on the XE OS chip.

What is an Alternate OS?

Several people make replacement operating systems for all the Atari 8bit

computers. My favorite alternate systems are Omniview and Omnimon by C. David Young.

Omniview is an 80 column system for the 8bit. Yes, you read that correctly — an XL/XE 80 column word processor (OmniWriter) has been available for several years. You can also use 80 column telecommunications with it and, if that's not enough, it utilizes your 256K or 320K memory enhancement. You can switch between 40 and 80 columns any time with just two keystrokes.

Omnimon is a powerful hacker's delight. It is a resident machine language editor/monitor, a disk sector editor, a Hexadecimal calculator, and much more. I will probably never discover all the things this OS can do. Omnimon will also run all the old Atari programs without the need for a translator disk.

Installing Omnimon in the XE

Open your XE and locate IC chip U5, the Atari OS. Gently unsolder pin #20 and lift it from its hole in the PC board. You must be very careful or you will destroy the thin copper traces in the area. An easier method of removal might be to cut

the pin with small diagonal cutters or a sharp Xacto knife, near the surface of the PC board. Bend the pin up until it sticks out parallel to the PC board surface as shown in Figure 1. Solder one end of a 12 inch piece of wire (RS #278-1307) in the hole from which the pin was removed. Solder a second 12 inch piece of wire to pin #20 of IC U5.

Gently bend up pin #20 of your Omnimon chip so it sticks out away from the other pins just like pin #20 of U5. Place the Omnimon chip on top of U5 in piggyback fashion, as shown in Figure 1, and look carefully at all the pins. All the pins on the Omnimon chip must make good contact with their corresponding pin on U5, except pin #20. Remove the Omnimon chip and bend the pins as needed to insure good contact. When all 27 pins have good contact with the pins of U5, you can solder the matching pins together using as little solder as possible.

Solder one end of a third 12 inch wire to pin #20 of the Omnimon chip. Solder one lead of a 4.7K ohm resistor (RS #271-1330) to pin 28 of the two piggyback IC chips. Solder a fourth 12 inch wire to the remaining lead of the resistor. Cut three 1

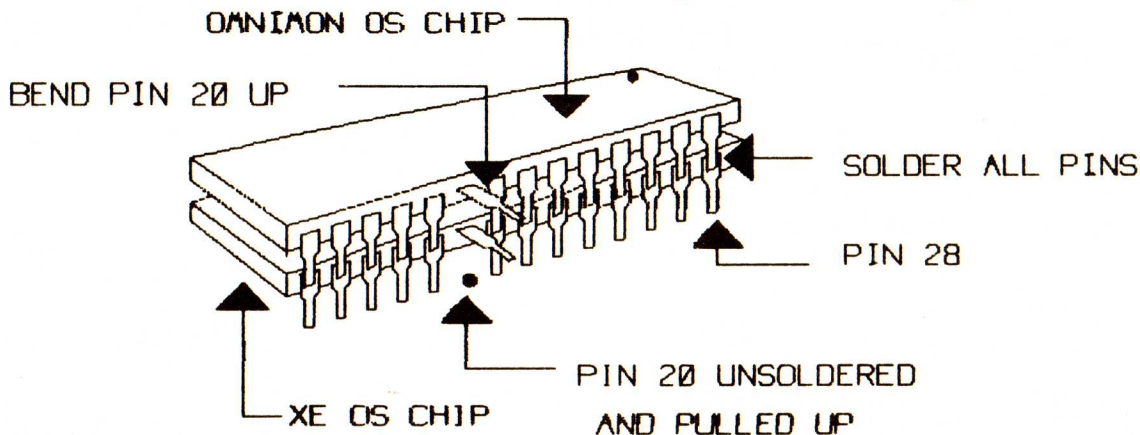


Figure One

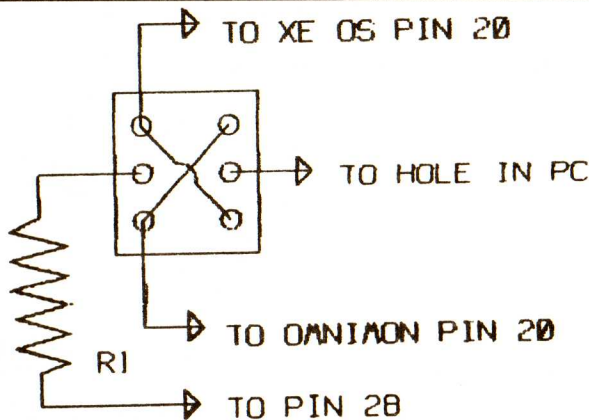


Figure Two

inch pieces of insulating tubing (RS #278-1627) and slip them over the appropriate wires to cover the resistor leads and the two IC pins. Use the heat of your soldering pencil to shrink the tubing so it won't move later. Just hold your tip near the tubing without making contact. If you touch it with the tip, the tubing will melt and you will have to replace it.

Connect the four wires to the switch (RS #275-614) as shown in Figure 2. The wire from the hole in the PC board goes to one of the center terminals on the switch. The wire from the resistor goes to the other center terminal. The wires from the IC chips (pin #20) go to the end terminals (both on the same side) of

the switch. Use two short pieces of wire to connect the opposite end terminals of the switch as shown in Figure 2 (the jumpers are not connected to each other where they cross).

Drill a 1/4 inch hole in your XE case, mount the switch in it and reassemble your computer.

Testing the System

Boot up a DOS disk as you normally would. Hold down your Option and Select keys together, and then press Reset. Release the Reset key first and then release Option and Select keys. You should see a new screen display without going through a reset. If your computer just resets itself, flip the new switch to its other position and repeat the steps described above. The switch position which causes a normal reset should be labeled as the XE position. The other position should be labeled as the Omnimon position.

Where to buy an Alternate OS

Omnimon, Omniview are available from: CDY Consulting, 421 Hanbee, Richardson, TX, 75080

Boss is available from: Allen Macroware, PO Box 2205, Redondo Beach, CA, 90278

Write to both companies and request their free product flyers or refer to their ads in Antic or Analog.

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by SysOp*Dave Groves, CIS

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It is here and for the HD User who will get the most out of it, it is not (in spite of what the manual says) copy protected! We are talking version 2.03 software, thoroughly tested and bug-free, from a major British producer, with parallel production in use on both Amiga and MS-DOS machines.

For its maiden voyage on my system, I used it to catalog and index a 4200 record, 12 field, 700 bytes per record listing of CIS Atari Forum files, and it performed like a champ!

Nobody has yet proposed a good "benchmark" series for ST Data Base Management programs, so I am not able to present any meaningful comparisons for speed in use, though it is as fast or faster than any other system I have seen to date.

The beauty here is that in setting up "filters" (formulae to select which records to operate on in a group of records) the formulae can be input by mouse.

This makes printing reports and finding data by odd groupings super easy, and readily do-able without heavy-duty program writing. In two weeks of use, I have scarcely scratched the surface of the power of this package.

If you have a major database interest, SuperBase Professional is THE database management system of choice on the ST. It allows direct conversion of DB II through DB III+ MS-DOS *.DBF files into *.SBF (SuperBase) files, though dBMan and other ST db manager files will have to be converted to ascii delimited files and imported. (A very simple task in most cases).

If you are not a "numbers cruncher" like me, you will still find that SuperBase is worth its weight in platinum. It allows you to display "External" files. What's an External file? Oh, how about a *.IMG GDOS picture or a *.PC1 DEGAS Elite picture, associated with descriptive data and other information? Or some generic text files. This is power.

With its GDOS implementation supplemented with G+PLUS from Code-Head, you have as close to a desktop publishing operation as any database ought to get.

In addition, the Forms Editor of SuperBase allows you to build input screens that make the old Haba Checkwriter screens look wimpy (remember, you can play with fonts and type styles available under GDOS as well as with colors and patterns, and a host of lines, boxes, and areas).

Couple all the facilities together and you have a 4th or 5th generation database system of outstanding quality. It has mail merge functions forms printing capacity, and will output metafiles.

Indeed, the ONLY weakness I have found in the entire system is the onboard text editor. The way everything else in the package works, I expected a full-fledged word processor!

Precision points out, very carefully, in the manuals that the test editor is precisely and only that. It is a decent text editor, 'ala an early EMACs, and performs the function adequately. I give SuperBase Top Rating for any relational database system on any computer today.

SuperBase is provided as a 4 disk set with 2 spiral bound manuals in a hard-shell stand-alone case. Manual 1 covers the basic database operations, the text editor and a tutorial. Manual 2 covers the forms editor and programming language.

The manuals are well edited and well indexed. They are clear, concise, yet comprehensive. The four disks include a Program disk, Forms editor disk, Data Disk (with helpful examples galore), and a GDOS System disk.

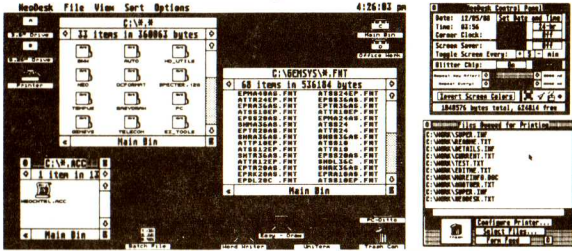
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Dave Groves can be reached on CompuServe for comments at 76703, 4223.

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Many people have asked which Mailing List program we use at Best Electronics, we currently use Super Mailer+ from Royal Software. Super Mailer program (D) \$39.95

XL to XE Software Compatably Mod by Tom Lawless. This two chip/switch mod is for enhanced 800XL computers (256K-512K). \$8

Hardware upgrade kits and P.C. boards that require the 41256K ram chips have been put on hold because of the high price of ram chips. We hope to ship again once ram chip prices start to drop down!

UltraSpeed Plus Operating System for the 8bit

by Jeff Kyle

Do you use an expanded 1050 or an XF551? Do you have more than 64K? Do you use a translator often? If so, or even if not, then you need the UltraSpeed+ OS package from Computer Software Services (CSS), sold for \$69.95.

The US+ OS is a collection of three operating systems for your XL or XE machine. It contains the standard XL/XE OS, the UltraSpeed+ (US+) OS, and the XL-Fix+ OS (XLF+).

The XLF+ OS is an OS that is as compatible as is possible with the 400/800 OS. This lets you use all the programs that would normally require a translator by just flipping to the XLF+ OS.

By the OS being ROM, it is also possible to use 400/800 cartridges that normal translators can't handle. Some commercial programs won't work with a ROM-resident translator, though. An example of this is the older Electronic Arts programs.

However, by booting up and holding down SHIFT, the OS will be copied to RAM as if it were a standard disk-based translator, allowing these programs to run also.

Also included in the XLF+ OS is a built-in Mach Ten Menu and writer. This is a program like the public domain Fenders that will load and run binary files from disk. When you boot up with SELECT held down, you'll enter it. It will let you load any of the first 22 files on a disk, get a directory from any drive, and write out a shorter form of Mach Ten menu to the disk. The shorter version will

only let you load files from drive one. The OS also reverses the standard use of OPTION, in other words, to enable Basic, hold down OPTION, to disable Basic, don't hold down OPTION. It also speeds up the keyboard response.

The UltraSpeed+ OS is much more. However, all cassette routines, the 1200XL function key routines, RAM and ROM check at bootup, the international character set, and the relocating handler routines have been erased to make room for more features. You'll probably never need them, but if you do, just switch down to the standard OS.

If you have a high-speed drive, the US+ OS will automatically enable the high speed on 1050s with a Super Archiver, Happy Enhancement, US Doubler, Duplicator, Klone, and Density Doubler, or the unmodified XF551 drive. If you have one of those drives and are not using the high speed, this alone is worth the price of the OS.

Now you can use UltraSpeed with any unprotected disk you own, and use it in any DOS you use. This allows you to do things like take an Infocom adventure and copy it to a high-speed formatted disk and run it in high speed, speeding up the disk access by approximately 3X. Once you've used UltraSpeed for a while, you'll never go back.

The OS also gives you flexible command over the high speed. Pressing SELECT-OPTION will disable the high speed, and START-OPTION will reen-able it. Also, holding SHIFT or SELECT when formatting will format the disk in standard slow skew instead of high speed skew.

If you've expanded your XL or XE to 256K or beyond, the US+ OS will auto-

matically configure your RAM as a standard, configurable single or double density disk. The nice thing about this is being able to have a standard RAMdisk, compatible with anything.

It's easy to format it and write out DOS to it, so whenever you want DOS, you can boot from RAM. Also, it is set up to use the standard 130XE 128K RAM banks last. What this means is that, if you have 320K or more, you can have a full RAMdisk and run a program that uses 128K (such as Video Blitz, 130XE Koala Viewers, AtariWriter Plus, etc) without worrying about damaging anything in RAM.

As in the XLF+ OS, the US+ OS reverses the OPTION key, speeds up the keyboard response, and darkens the background color. However, now you may change some of these along with doing some of the things the 1200XL owners could do with their function keys with your US+ OS, by using CONTROL-n or SHIFT-CONTROL-n. This is what you can do:

CONTROL-8 will lock or unlock your keyboard, in case you don't want people messing with it.

CONTROL-9 will toggle the internal Basic. This command only goes into effect upon RESET.

CONTROL-0 will restore the normal background colors and slow cursor.

SHIFT-CONTROL-0 will turn them back.

SHIFT-CONTROL-7 will toggle the disk I/O noise on and off.

SHIFT-CONTROL-8 will turn the screen DMA off, speeding up most processes by 30% or so. Any other key will reen-able it, preferable SHIFT-CONTROL-A, which causes no character.

SHIFT-CONTROL-9 toggles the keyboard click.

There are other custom keyboard functions with the US+OS; one is the modification to press SHIFT-CONTROL-Clear instead of SHIFT or CONTROL-Clear to clear the screen. The only problem is that with Action!, SHIFT-CONTROL-Clear will normally bring you to the left side of the screen. This will no longer work in the OS. If you need it, just flip to the standard XL/XE OS, then switch back after you've used the key.

Also, you may now press CONTROL-4, 5, 6, 7 as well the CONTROL- \leftarrow , \rightarrow , \uparrow , and \downarrow to move the cursor up, down, left, and right. Also, by pressing CONTROL-Caps, you not only can use the normal graphics characters, but also use the cursor keys without holding down CONTROL.

By either pressing HELP-RESET or pressing SHIFT-ESC then pressing RESET, you can force a cold start of the computer. This is useful when you've got important files in the RAMdisk and the computer won't let you RESET out from a program normally. One powerful feature of the OS is it's ability to reconfigure drives for different numbers and boot from any drive, including RAMdisk. When you hold down START after a RESET (warm or cold start), you'll enter a menu that has lists drive 1-9 and what each is assigned as.

Normally, they are all assigned to themselves, except drive 4 which is normally RAMdisk. Say you wanted drive 4 to be drive 1 and drive 1 to be drive 4. You'd press RESET and START. You then press C for configure, enter the original drive (1), then the drive you want it to be (4). Then you repeat the procedure for drive 4. It's that easy! With this menu, you can also change your RAMdisk number just with R for RAMdisk, then enter whatever drive you want it to be.

Also built into the menu is a small sector copier, mainly for drive-to-RAMdisk or RAMdisk-to-drive copying. It will read the density, format the destination in the density, and copy the disk a sector at a time. If you want, you can do normal drive-to-drive copies, but because of the one-at-a-time approach, it won't be as fast as a standard sector copier.

If you've entered the menu from a coldstart, you may also temporarily boot from any drive, just by pressing the drive number. This will swap the drives. By pressing SHIFT-CONTROL-6, you can "unswap" the drives and restore the drives to the original configuration. This won't reset everything, it just swaps back the drive you booted from. For instance, if you booted from drive 3, you could still use drive 1 if you referred to it as drive 3. Pressing SHIFT-CONTROL-6 will reset it so that drive 3 is drive 3 again and drive 1 is drive 1 again.

Occasionally in the standard OS, an OSS "supercartridge" can be ignored due to it's bank selecting. The US+ OS sends a command to "wake it up" to eliminate this problem. You can also easily install an external switch to swap the RAMdisk and drive 1. With this switch, you can make RAMdisk drive 1 at any time.

Unfortunately, if you use SpartaDOS, the reconfiguring will have no effect due to it's using custom routines, bypassing the OS. Also the Virtuoso player will always go to the "real" drive 1 instead of whatever is configured as drive 1. Also SpartaDOS will not boot from RAMdisk, allow the keyboard functions (without a KEY OFF command), or allow high speed with the XF551 drive. But if you MUST use this DOS, it is easily modifiable with a built-in patch called by a simple USR command that will modify SpartaDOS to allow these things.

The new OS has removed the standard Self-Test routines and put in a RAM check supporting up to two megabytes. This is also the FASTest RAM checker I've ever seen. Also, in the same vein, the US+ OS frees up pin 17 on the PIA for easier one-and two-meg upgrades. Doing so will disable the self test and the standard XL/XE OS, but it will work.

Before the OS, there was a problem if you turned your machine off and back on very quickly, because of the way the high-density RAM chips retain their memory for a few seconds after the loss of power. With the new OS, this problem has been eliminated.

The US+ OS also supports a separately sold RAMdisk write protect switch which will protect either your RAMdisk memory or all of the extended memory from writes. The documentation that comes with the OS is satisfactory. It explains all the functions in detail with many examples. It explains the functions and the installation completely. It would be nice if it told more of the technical information, but it is better than most information that comes with other custom OSs.

Installation? I can't really say about the difficulty as I had mine installed by the author. But looking through the instructions, mainly it should be easy on the 800XL. On the XEs, most of the time the OS is not socketed in, but soldered in. If it is soldered in, you must desolder the OS, which requires a bit of soldering skill. Other than that, it is mainly soldering a few wires to some of the chips, plus drilling a 1/4" hole for the 3-position switch to switch between the OSs.

And that's the OS! I have found very few compatibility problems, but when they do arise, it's as easy as switching back to the regular XL/XE OS. Having all the special functions available is handy, as well as being able to boot from RAM.

However, there have been problems when switching from the standard XL/XE OS to the XL Fix+ OS. Because of different locations, switching can occasionally make a program point to something that can screw up your RAMdisk. This is rare, but it is a good idea to back up your RAMdisk before just jumping into the XLF+ OS.

Other than that, I've had very few problems with the OS. It works as stated, and the keyboard functions work with most programs. At \$69.95, it's a great buy. So if you'd like high speed with your drive, better RAMdisk control, or just plain more power over your computer, don't wait. Buy this OS!

The Sport of Sorts

by Clinton Pierce (GAG)

In this installment, we're going to look at one of the most fundamental problems in computers, sorting.

Human beings, as a rule, have an amazing sense of geometric perception. They will sort index cards with names on them by placing the names in relative order on the table (A is a lot farther away from P, than M is), and doing fine adjustments as they go along. Computers aren't human. They must sort using absolutes. You must tell them what is to be sorted (records), how it is to be sorted (keys), and where it is to go to (output). And they can only compare (again, as a rule) two things at a time.

The first sort is the standard Hey-I-learned-that-in-BASIC sort: the bubble sort. The bubble sort compares two elements in an array, and if in the wrong order, switches them around. It is finished when either n^2 repetitions have occurred, or when no more switches are made in an entire pass.

The next sort is Shell's sort. A Pseudo-BASIC program follows for an array a, N elements long:

1. M=N
2. M=Intger part of M/2, If m=0 then the sort is done else: J=1, K=N-M
3. I=J
4. L=I+M, If a(i)<a(l) then goto step 6, else: T=a(i), a(i)=a(l), a(l)=T, I=I-M, if I<1 Then goto step 6
5. Goto Step 4
6. J=J+1, if J<=K then goto step 3
7. Go To step #1.

This sort is fairly fast, and is fairly uncomplex. However, it has its problems. Two identical elements will be switched (always). Because of that, if the list has many similar elements, find another sort. (About line #2, a one element array, by definition, is sorted).

Next, we have the Selection sort (which, as we will see in the future lends itself to recursion). Take the same array A with N elements, and set a pointer Q equal to the number of elements. Algorithm: If q=1 then the array is sorted, else: Find the largest element in the subset (1..Q-1) and switch it with the Qth element, decrease Q by one, go back and repeat it again. This sort is fast, but does not deal well with an already sorted list.

The Insertion sort can be done one of two ways, with one array, or two. For simplicity, I'll present the two-array version. Clear the second array Z, and set the pointers Q & X to 0. #1

Move the first element of A into Z, and increase the pointers. #2 Take the Xth element in A, Find out where it goes in Z, and move everything in Z > a(x) down one element, make z(q)=a(x), Increase X and Q. #3 Go to step 2 until q=N. This sort is moderately fast.

Next, Quicksort, is the fastest sort I've dealt with. A complete algorithm will not be given until the unit on Recursion. But here's how it works: Given an array 1..N, arrange the array so that all values < a pivot value, are first, and > pivot are last. Then, the pivot is in its proper place. It is then done again, and again, using each smaller region until the array is sorted. The sort is incredibly fast. The number of passes needed is only N times the Base-2 log of N. (Where bubblesort would use 4096 repetitions, quicksort uses 384).

Until next time....Hasta Luego.

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NeoDesk 2.0 Now Available

The ST Desktop Alternative Made Even Better!

by Bill Rayl

It's here! With more features than you will know what to do with, NeoDesk version 2.0 is everything an ST owner could ask for! In fact, the new features in this alternative to the ST desktop should leave even the most stalwart critics of version 1.0 grinning from ear to ear.

The improvements made to NeoDesk, which was originally reviewed in the June '88 issue of Michigan Atari Magazine, were taken directly from the "wish lists" of registered owners of the product.

The biggest drawback to the original version was that it took up about 145K of precious memory at all times, making execution of memory-intensive programs nearly impossible on less than a 1040ST.

Gribnif has solved this problem via a "master program" or shell that runs NeoDesk. The shell allows the user to optionally configure NeoDesk to get out of the way before loading a program and then automatically reload after execution of the program. By using this option, as little as 24K of your system's memory is used by NeoDesk while you are executing that database or desktop publishing program! On a hard drive system, NeoDesk is back up and running in less time than it took you to read this sentence!

For those unfortunate ST souls who don't own hard drives, the "master program" has features just for you. If the shell cannot find the NeoDesk program (i.e. you've removed the disk from the drive when you booted another program), you will be prompted to insert your NeoDesk disk. There's even an option for specifying an alternate path for the Neo-

Desk files, designed for those who wish to keep the files in a RAMdisk.

Probably the second-most-heard complaint about version 1.0 was the lack of a "Show as Text" feature for directory windows. That feature has been added in the new version. And, as should probably be expected, programmer Dan Wilga gave more than anyone asked for! There are actually a number of ways to "Show as Text" in NeoDesk: one column or multiple column output, small or large text, and any combination of file size, creation date and time to be listed after the name. Using the small text size and multiple column output, the user can get up to 132 files displayed at one time in a window!

A number of other limits that had applied to version 1.0 of NeoDesk have been expanded or removed completely. The limit of 112 files per directory level has been removed by allowing the user to select whatever upper limit he/she chooses. Up to 32 icons, including up to 16 program or data icons, can be placed onto the desktop at one time instead of the old limits of 18 and 10, respectively.

As for the custom directory window routines in NeoDesk 2.0, they just have to be seen to be appreciated. The text that appears in the information bar (such as number of files and size of files in bytes) can be scrolled from left to right, allowing the user to read all the information without resizing the window. There is also a new button allowing a window to be sent to the bottom of a stack of windows. Windows that are buried in a stack can be resized or selected without making them the topmost window. And, finally, each directory window displays the disk volume name at the bottom of the window (finally, a practical use for disk volume names!).

Speaking of disk volume names, NeoDesk 2.0 allows for up to 20 characters to be used and the names can be created, modified or deleted with ease.

Another nice feature that has been added to the program is the ability to load a D.E.G.A.S. or NeoChrome picture to be used as the desktop background. This is a perfect way to spruce up your desktop.

In addition to the ability to auto-execute batch files, NeoDesk now can run any program, including .TTP files, at bootup.

Another very handy feature is the ability to MOVE files/folders as well as copy them by simply selecting the file and dragging it to its new location. Either COPY or MOVE can be user-selected to be the default mode, or the "Ask" feature tells NeoDesk to prompt for the type of operation to be used.

There is no longer a problem with programs that do not restore the mouse pointer when exiting, such as ST Writer and Publishing Partner. No more "mouse-droppings!"

There are many more enhancements to this excellent product, far too many to mention. A few of the additional programs that come with NeoDesk 2.0 do deserve mention, though.

First, the Icon Editor has a couple minor changes. The user can create a pattern for the desktop background to be used if no picture background is selected. Also, upon Quitting from the editor, the user is asked if he/she wishes to Save the icons *only* if the icons were actually changed and not saved. The previous version of the editor *always* asked, even when no Save was necessary.

The printer queue program has also been improved, allowing the user to set the type of printer, an option to output to

the RS-232 serial port (including screen dumps!) and the ability to output a form feed after printing each file.

Finally, Gribnif has included a control panel that takes up less memory than Atari's control panel while giving at least twice the functionality! The control panel contains:

A corner clock supporting all existing third-party clock chips and the clock built into the Megs. The corner clock can be set to display AM/PM or military (24-hour) time. A screen saver can be set for one to nine minutes of no mouse or keyboard activity. A blitter chip control feature, mostly for Mega owners. The standard color palette, key repeat and keyclick, mouse speed and bell ON/OFF control options found in the Atari control panel.

The entire package comes in a bound, 100-page, illustrated manual that you will find indispensable until you get acquainted with the many features this package has to offer.

The suggested retail price for NeoDesk 2.0 is \$49.95, but owners of version 1.0 can upgrade for *only* \$14.95! Simply send in your check or money order (as well as your original installed NeoDesk floppy for version 1.0 owners) for the appropriate amount. Add \$3 for shipping and handling. Owners of version 1.0 that did not send in their registration cards should fill out the card and include it with their order of NeoDesk 2.0. For more information, contact: Gribnif Software P.O. Box 350 Hadley, MA 01035 (413) 584-7887.

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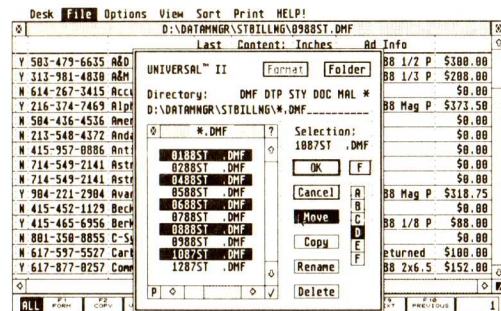
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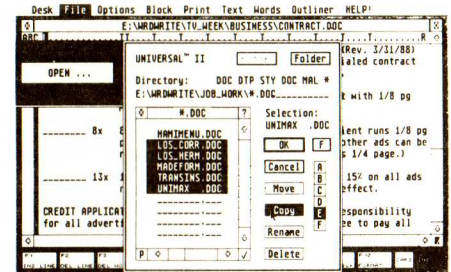
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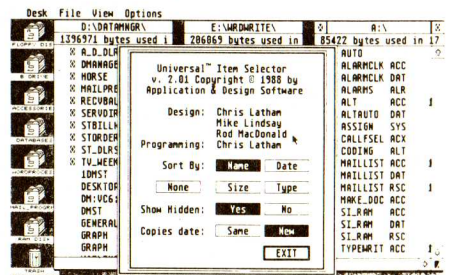
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Cascades Atari Computer Enthusiasts (CACE) is the Atari club in and around the Jackson County area. The main purpose of the club is to help inform new users and to promote the use of Atari computers in the community.

President	Brent Fisher	764-4599
Vice-President	Bob Kingsbury	789-7533
Secretary	Joe Cripps	782-0199
Treasurer	Craig Schaff	
Editor	Jim Boyce	522-4074

The current membership dues are \$10 per year, or \$14.80 if you wish to subscribe to Michigan Atari Magazine, and are payable at any of the CACE monthly meetings, or by mail. Club membership includes access to the entire club software and publication libraries, along with a monthly published newsletter. Any written communication with CACE or payments by mail should be sent to: CACE, P.O. Box 6161, Jackson, MI 49204. Our meetings are held on the second Sunday of the month, from 1 pm to approx. 4 pm. The meetings take place at the East Side Lounge, on the corner of Horton and Gansom Streets in Jackson, MI.

Fishin' Around

Well, I have to admit that I'm feeling pretty good about this last month's meeting. We had the biggest turn out that we've had for several months. And we all had a blast playing MIDI maze on the three STs that were there at the meeting. Hopefully, next month we can have another MIDI maze challenge.

Ok, a little good news, it looks like Musicians Warehouse will be opening its doors again soon, and it's also said that they still intend to carry Atari software and some hardware.

I realize that the board was supposed to be up when you received your newsletter last month, but unfortunate circumstances prevented that from happening. Harold has been working on the BBS program so the board should be up by next week (my typing time) or by the time you read this. The hardware is all set up, all that needs to be done is to have the software installed. So at this point I can give you the number and the location. The board will temporarily be at Craig's house and the number is 787-4011.

One thing that I forgot to mention at the meeting was about the modem so if you have any input please let us know. Silence will be interpreted as consent.

Those of you with STs good news, those with 8-bits bad news. It looks to me that Atari Explorer is now a ST only or at least 98% ST. Recently I received an offer to update my subscription. I'm positive that will not happen. If Atari Explorer does again put in more 8bit material I might change my mind. But I just can't see getting a magazine that is all ST when I don't own one.

MAM or Michigan Atari Magazine is changing their name to AIM or Atari Information Magazine. Pattie Rayl has assured me that this in no way means a change in format or in price.

I am afraid that this will be a very short newsletter this month, but hopefully next month our regular columnists will back for next month. Before I forget our next meeting will be Sunday, January 8th at 1 pm till about 4 pm. See you all at the meeting.



CHAOS is the Capitol Hill Atari Owner's Society, serving the Atari community of the Lansing, Michigan area. The Campus Hill Atari Owner's Society is the Michigan State University chapter of CHAOS.

Membership dues are \$15.00 per year and entitles members to a 1-year subscription to the Michigan Atari Magazine, a free disk from our regular library, and access to our libraries and other resources. Dues may be paid at any CHAOS meeting or by mail. If not using an official membership application, please include your name, address, phone and a list of your equipment and interests.

Sysop John Nagy and CHAOS invite you to call one of the country's finest BBSes at 517-371-1106, 300/1200/2400 baud, 24 hours a day (Atascii/Ascii) serving both 8 and 16 bit Atari computers. Send inquiries regarding CHAOS, mail orders, memberships and so on, to: CHAOS, PO Box 16132, Lansing, MI 48901.

General meetings of the membership take place several times a year. 8bit and 16bit Special Interest Group meetings take place monthly. The S.T. Interest Group meets on the second Saturday of the month. The 8bit S.I.G. meeting, for 400/800 and XL/XE owners, takes place on the third Saturday of the month. The meetings take place at the MSU Physics-Astronomy Building, Physics Road, Room 118. Meetings begin at 10 a.m. sharp and last until 1 p.m.. Members and guests are welcome to any SIG meeting that interests them. To get to a meeting, take East Grand River to the Collingwood Entrance for MSU. The first available left turn is Physics Rd. The Physics-Astronomy Building is about 1 block from the corner, on the right hand side. Park in the gated lot just past the building.

Illegal copying, or any violation of copyright laws, is not condoned or allowed at any CHAOS-sponsored function, including the club BBS.

President's Notes by Leo Sell

Time for congratulations (I think). As some of you know, I have now joined the ranks of ST owners. I know, I've been a long time holdout, but Maggie Mae (the wife who puts up with these things) conferred her blessing on the idea of getting an ST just when the unbelievable deal came along. I don't have any experience with it as I write this since I just picked it up and we might reserve it for Christmas. So, I'll take all the advice and suggestions you have for me. I'll need to know what PD programs to use, what games and utilities to buy, how to best utilize the capabilities of this splendid 1040ST. Feel free to pass on your advice!!

On other fronts, The Colossal Computer Sale we sponsored was a qualified success. For the most part the vendors seemed happy, the attendees seemed VERY happy - most carrying at least some bargain back out with them - and the club made a little money. Thanks everyone for your support and help.

Congratulations to the Rayls and Unicorn Publications on their new venture, Atari Interface Magazine (AIM). Ceasing the publication of MAM, and starting their own, wholly owned publication should serve to clear the ownership, policy, and authority questions that have dogged MAM since the Rayls took over as publisher. Properly handled, the new venture should completely eliminate those problems. As a commercial, for profit enterprise, with user groups as one group of customers, the relationship should be much more straightforward.

Just over a year ago, CHAOS transferred PUBLISHING duties for Michigan Atari Magazine to Bill and Patti Rayl. Until that time, MAM was owned by the participating clubs and published by CHAOS. John Nagy acted on behalf of CHAOS as publisher and manager of MAM, and as the representative of CHAOS to the newsletter.

Only the production and management was transferred ("publishing"), - ownership never changed. CHAOS and the other participating clubs never transferred their ownership to the Rayls nor to Unicorn Publications, nor were they ever asked to do so. However (and this is the key to all the troubles and dispute), the Rayls began to CLAIM ownership, and further, defined it in a way that has never been discussed with the clubs. With their new, commercial venture, they are able to rightfully claim ownership and I'm glad to see the question come to an end.

With the continuing "ownership" problem CHAOS experienced various disputes and discourtesies which are not so bad when taken individually. But taken collectively they revealed a mindset that made us increasingly reluctant to deal with the Rayls. I hope summarizing them here will help you readers understand better our side of the dispute even as the situation is resolving. Please consider them collectively, as a pattern of behavior rather than separately.

The earliest problem that comes to mind is our request to include "FORWARDING AND ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED" in the mailing area of the newsletter. We requested the statement so that we could be certain

that our members who move would receive their newsletter and that we would receive their change of address. Without the statement, a bulk mailed item is thrown away by the Post Office and we are not aware that a member didn't receive their newsletter until the member contacts us. When that happens the 80 cents or more the club paid for the newsletter(s) has been wasted, and often re-expended in order to replace the member's missing newsletter. In other words, not placing the statement on the newsletter can cost the club \$1.60, \$3.20, or more for every wrong address. If a forwarding request is on the newsletter, the additional cost on mis-addressed mail is a one-time 30 cents. Even though we offered to reimburse them for the notices, the Rayls would not place it, citing the additional cost. That has never seemed reasonable since previous experience showed only 4 to 6 such notices altogether in a typical mailing run. Frankly, we're concerned that now dozens of newsletters are lost every month, one after another to a dead address.

Another problem arose last August after a member made a trip to California. During that trip, our member was shown a copy of a letter soliciting subscriptions to MAM. It's not that the solicitation was a problem, but rather that we were not given any information about it. As owners, we should have been kept fully informed by the publisher. And it would be simple courtesy to send a copy of such communications to participants, regardless of any ownership.

As mentioned last month, in the summer I was called and TOLD that the price to the club per issue of the magazine would be raised to 95 cents. I was rudely turned down when I asked for proof of need (information CHAOS had a right to as an owner). Yet, within a month, the information appeared in a letter from the Rayls printed in ZMAG (the online Atari magazine). Incredibly, when I asked why it was ZMAG's business and not ours, their defense was that while they had presented it to ZMAG as true, the information they had provided was incomplete and really meant nothing. Then they deferred further questions about finances, stating that as a private business, they had no obligation to disclose their costs or profits.

The October meeting itself was the first of its kind despite promises for regular meetings and contact right from the beginning. Even this meeting was called by the Rayls only when it became obvious that CHAOS would call one to try and resolve the policy dispute and ownership questions if they didn't. Until that meeting the only contact we had from the Rayls was in the form of phone calls, usually announcing price increases.

At the meeting, the Rayls issued their own ultimatum, stating that they owned MAM and that they would not publish MAM unless their TOTAL control and authority was recognized by the participating clubs. We debated the name/ownership question, and almost nothing else, for more than two hours. That five hours (including an average 3 hours travel time) turned out to be wasted when we found out a week later that the Rayls had already committed to changing the name of the magazine when talking to out-of-state groups.

At one point during the meeting, it was generally agreed (even by the Rayls) that the use of the name MICHIGAN ATARI MAGAZINE is key to any dispute of ownership. It was even suggested by Bill Rayl that one option for them would be to withdraw from publishing Michigan Atari Magazine, which they have now done, and publish a new publication, making fresh agreements with any club wishing to participate. It's a shame that since they had previously committed to such a change, they let us waste all that time debating the issue when they could have told us that the question was moot.

In another attempt to resolve the issue, John Nagy (not knowing of the out-of-state contact) suggested that the ownership issue could be put to rest if all the clubs signed away their ownership rights, perhaps in return for a formal advisory board. When I asked about authority or veto power of such a board, the Rayls flatly stated that anything but advisory capacity was unacceptable. I DID NOT expand my question any further. The words of the quote attributed to me, demanding "full veto power...including but not limited to who participates in MAM, where the magazine is sold and printed and the overall style and content of the publication", belong to the editorial writer and NOT to me.

I was also misquoted regarding "support" for the proposal. I expressed my reservations, but stated that I would not oppose it if the majority of the groups supported it. Not opposing it does not mean I committed to voting FOR it and not opposing the proposal is far from "supporting such a proposal if the other clubs were willing to do so". I only finally rejected the proposal, after finding out about the contact with the out-of-state club and discovering that the entire ownership debate had been a waste.

Then there is last month's editorial, berating me personally and CHAOS by extension. I've already mentioned several misquotes that created a false impression about me and my positions. Another direct misquote appears after the question of if I had discussed the CHAOS position with the membership at large. I did

NOT SAY, as quoted in the editorial, "we don't do things that way". What I told Patti was that our participation in MAM is a Board decision. I did however, bring the situation to the attention of the membership, as we had done most of the summer, and then took a vote on our position. As written in the editorial, the membership overwhelmingly supported the positions I have taken.

My position regarding ownership has stayed consistent. I have insisted on protecting property rights the clubs have never given up. I do NOT claim that the clubs USED to own the MAM, but that the clubs' ownership continues and will continue unless expressly given up. The editorial writer's note that most representatives at the meeting did not know of their joint ownership was a deceptive observation, and even if true, would not have revoked the clubs' true ownership. It is true that some of the clubs represented at the meeting were not participants when the publishing duties were transferred, and apparently were not informed by the Rayls that their clubs were part of the actual owners. Also, some of the older participant's representatives are new since the transfer and were not aware of their club's owner status.

As for the editorial addendum where I "threatened legal action". When I contacted the Rayls I was initially conciliatory, letting them know my opinion - since they had already committed to publishing under a name other than Michigan Atari Magazine, they should do so and thereby render the ownership question a dead issue. By publishing a different magazine, as they now choose to do, they could negotiate completely the terms of participation with all of the parties with no questions of previous ownership. It was after they rejected my constructive advice that I told them we were prepared (approved by vote of our membership) to take legal action if necessary to defend our ownership rights. I would not have made such a statement unless I believed we could win - either alone or joined by other groups.

Even in the publication of the proposal itself, there was yet another disagreement regarding whether and when the proposal to transfer ownership would be printed in MAM. Committee members I spoke with were very clear in their understanding that the proposal would be printed in the December issue. Since my column dealt so much with the proposal, I called to confirm that it would be printed. I was flabbergasted when the Rayls denied any commitment to print it, at least not until it was passed. I advised them that it would be in their best interest to follow through on the understanding that several of us had and print the proposal. They did so, but without any of the explanatory notes that John had included with it in the original. By leaving out the discussion summary, they made it appear as if the proposal was coming completely out of left field with no rhyme or reason for it at all.

The proposal was an attempt to draw this dispute to a close and bring all parties to agreement, even if some of us felt it was less than satisfactory. Fortunately, with the new publication, it is no longer needed.

To wrap this up, let me make it clear that my motivation in this controversy has been solely to defend CHAOS's ownership rights - NOT to put CHAOS back into the newsletter business. It would have been easier to stay quiet and let someone else do the work, but sometimes principles are more important than expediency.

Now, with the advent of AIM, we will evaluate our options and see which will best serve our needs, including participating in AIM, the terms of which are not yet finalized, participating in Energy, which would limit by far the amount of Atari information our members would receive, or publishing our own newsletter - alone, or in cooperation with other Atari user groups. We'll discuss the options at the January meetings. I hope you'll be there and express your preference and willingness to pitch in and help with whatever alternative we choose. With your help, whatever we do, we hope to do better than ever.

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The Genesee Atari Group is a non-profit group of Atari owners in and around Flint, Michigan. Our purpose is to provide assistance to users of Atari personal computers. This organization is not affiliated with Atari, Corp.

GAG meets on the second Wednesday of the month at the Neithercutt school, located at 2818 Crestbrook Drive, Flint. Meetings begin at 6:30 PM. Membership is \$15 for one year. For information contact: Jerry Cross 736-4544 FACTS BBS 736-3920 or write: Genesee Atari Group PO Box E Flint, MI 48507

President's Report By Jerry Cross

As many of you know, there was a proposal in the November issue of MAM to pass control of the newsletter over to Unicorn Publications. I hope you all had a chance to read both the editorial and the CHAOS section also. By a unanimous vote of those who attend the meeting, this proposal was rejected. There were several reasons for this, most of which can be traced directly to much confusion about many points in the proposal and the general feeling that this is pretty much a power struggle over control of the magazine. From our club's point of view, it doesn't matter who controls MAM, but that whoever it is, must be responsive to each of the clubs needs and accountable for what goes into each issue. It was felt that the overall management of publishing the magazine should be given to one person (or group), but to give away all rights and input would not be in our best interest. The proposed "advisory committee" was not acceptable because none of the committee's recommendations would, or could, be implimented. Therefore, we can not accept the proposal in it's present state. I have requested that another meeting be held to try and iron out some of the problems that have developed.

This does not mean that our members will no longer receive MAM. I still think it is an excellent publication, and will continue to use it as a source to keep you informed about what is happening in GAG. If and when another alternative newsletter becomes available, I will decide what path we will take. It is sad that we must do this, since our club was one of the very first to join MAM. It has come a long way, and with luck will continue to do even better.

On to other stuff. Due to the increased cost in disks, we are forced to increase the price to \$3 (up from \$2.50), and 10 for \$25. We hope this will only be temporary and will only last a few months. Also, for those who attend next month's meeting, Gil will be giving away one free disk with each purchase (limit one free disk only). If you haven't attended a meeting in a while, now is a good chance to stop by.



GKAUG meets the second Saturday of each month at 11 am in the Dewing Hall, room 305, on the Kalamazoo College Campus, Corner of Academy & Monroe. Dues are \$25/yr.

President:	Frank Fellheimer	657-6106
Vice President:	Dan Youngs	
Treasurer:	Dave Bryant	
Librarian	Dale Vincent	
Archiver:	Dave Oldenburg	
SysOp	Alex Stevens	
GKAUG BBS:		(616) 657-2665

Unfortunately, I was not able to attend the December meeting since I had to work. It seems the boss is supposed to show up on Saturday over-time for some reason. Really seems silly to me. However, the Vice President and the Secretary took care of business for me and Bryant left the following information for me:

We just got our first good winter snow and I thought it would hinder the attendance at this meeting (Boy, was I wrong). You can't keep the devoted users down. We had 14 people attend, out of the 28 registered members we have. We postponed the Officers Election till the January 14 meeting, so please attend! One position will be vacated, Dave Bryant is leaving the treasurer's post, so we need another member to volunteer. The treasurer's duties are mainly keeping track of the funds, maintaining the members records, and mailing the labels for the MAM newsletter.

General discussion about the change of the local CompuServe phone number and what was the latest version of the ARC program followed. If anyone knows the answer to either of these, please contact one of the officers.

We demonstrated the new programs that are on the clubs BBS (we finally figured out the problem we were having with the download area, so things should be working by the time you read this.) We hope to have a online game soon.

Also a modification for the XF551 disk drive was shown. It allows you to format and write to the backside of a disk (like the 1050 drive) without having to notch a write protect hole on the disk. It also solves the problem with the index hole, which the XF551 looks for when it does a format or write.

Well thats all for now. Have a Happy Holiday, and see you at the next meeting (January 14).

**** David Bryant ****

Next meeting is scheduled for 14 Jan 89. I have the new "Converter" program to demo. Lets you convert Printshop Icons to ClipArt and Awardware. Makes many more icons available for my ClipArt collection.

Also, we had to bypass the elections this month since I wasn't there to count the votes. We will try again next month. We are looking for a new Treasurer to handle the checkbook and mail labels for the AIM magazine. We got "Perks" for you.

Frank Fellheimer

Great Lakes 'GLASS', Michigans only!
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 ST Support I ♥ MY ST!

From The Desk Of The President... December 12, 1988

So much to do and talk about and so little time! But first, let me start out by wishing all of you a very merry Christmas and happy and prosperous New Year!

By now the December meeting is over and the nominations for the officer positions have been made. The actual elections will take place at the February meeting with the elected officers taking their seats at the February PLANNING meeting.

The 1988 year went fast and furious and 1989 promises more of the same. Even the Atari Corp. seems ready to promote and support the ST and Mega line in and for the USA. Writing about all of the things that have happened in the ST world would take volumes, as can be shown just by the list of successful publications. So, what is the "theme" for this article? Well, I'm not going to write about all of the news and rumors, there are others that can do that much better. Nor am I going to mention the software, which includes some excellent titles, both new and old. The hardware available (did you see the fax-modem at the meeting?) is overwhelming and better represented by the experts. No, I want to talk about YOU, the user and your user group. (This article is directed also at non-GLASS members and other Atari User Groups and their ST members.) <....now he gets up on his soap-box....>

I. Software Piracy..please, please, please, examine your own conscience and consider the damage you are doing to yourself and other users when you buy, accept, trade, give and download pirated software...it hurts all of us!

II. Shareware..it really does pay to support the good shareware programmer, if you use it after a reasonable trial period send a donation to the author, it's worth it!

III. Non-user group ST'ers..not only can you learn a lot about your machine and how to better use it but you also stay in touch with people, and there are a lot of friends to be made out there. User groups can be informative and FUN!

IV. User group members...support and contribute to your group. You have as much to give as you get, just by your presence. Submit an article about your experiences. Write a review of your favorite software, even if it's been done before. Some others are also new at this and haven't had a chance to see old reviews and your experiences and opinions mean something to them. Try being an officer of your group for a year, we need the new ideas you will bring, and we don't ask that you be experienced. We offer "on the job" training.

V. User group officers..I realize that 99% of all of your clubs started out as 8bit clubs but you have to realize that the 16bit machine is a different computer. I've watched many of you languish because you didn't quite know what to do to this new sister. Bring her into the family and support her. The 8bit machines will always be with us and rightly so, the support

should never end. But you are cheating both systems if you think you can cover them in the time you used for only one. If you are going to be a two machine club, you can't do justice to either unless you provide enough time to both, meaning you should consider meeting twice as often, twice as long, or have separate clubs under one officership. Don't die out because you can't adapt, we need you! <he climbs back down from the soap-box...>

Well, misty-eyed, I bid fond adieu to 1988 and look forward with excitement to what 1989 might bring...Atari Shows?...New hardware and software?...Better knowledge of the use of my machine? Peace On Earth. Good Will Toward Men?

Steve Mileski <GLASS>



Meeting: Wednesday, February 1, 1988, Wyoming Public Library, 3350 Michael S.W., Time: 6:30 P.M.

George Nosky	President/Treasurer	(616)942-1527
2440 Parkridge Dr. S.E.	Grand Rapids, Mi.	49506
Gary Heitz	Vice President	(616)676-0112
Marvin Waid	Secretary	(616)866-1998
Chuck Baughman	Librarian	(616)795-7373
Tim Feenstra	Membership Chair	(616)784-6230

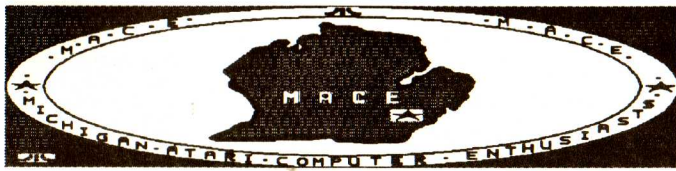
I hope everyone had a very merry Christmas, and I wish all a happy, healthy and prosperous 1989. By the time you read this, you will have elected your officers for the new year. Results of the elections and your newly appointed directors will be printed in the February issue of MAM. This is my last "newsletter", so I want to take this opportunity to thank each one of you for the help and support you have given me and your other officers and directors this past year. Without your help we would not have been able to accomplish any of the successes?? we may have had. I can't recall of a single instance when someone was asked to do something that there was any hesitation. Matter of fact, whatever the request, you gave it 110%. I just said "when asked". This is not entirely correct -- many people volunteered. THANK YOU VERY MUCH. You made it a fun year.

GRASS welcomes Terry Reine. Terry lives in Grand Rapids.

Gary Heitz and Tim Feenstra are continuing their Basic Seminar. I've heard many favorable comments on their presentations. Don't forget, we want to get these classes started at 6:30 P.M. on our normal meeting night. If you missed our December meeting, you missed Gary Heitz's outstanding demo of GEine. Since we don't have a telephone line available in our meeting room, Gary used his VCR to tape almost an hour's program for us. He walked us through the various menus and services GEine provides. He then gave us an indepth demo on how to use GEine. This was one of these 110% efforts I talked about earlier.

It's getting close to dues time again. Your dues run out at the end of February and your MAM subscription runs out after the February issue. We will discuss this at the January and February meetings.

See you at the next meeting.



Michigan Atari Computer Enthusiast members receive, as part of their dues, Atari Interface Magazine, a monthly magazine keeping them informed of what is new in MACE and the whole Atari community. Members are also entitled to purchase disks from the 8bit and ST public domain software libraries. 8bit disks are \$3 each and ST disks are \$4 each, and if you buy three disks from either library and you can choose a 4th disk absolutely FREE! Non-members may purchase disks at a slightly higher rate. Mail order is also available. For a catalog of current disks in our libraries, send \$2 for either an ST or 8bit catalog to the MACE address below. Please indicate ST or 8bit when sending in your order.

The most important benefit you receive is the help and support from (and interaction with) other Atari owners. If you're having a problem, need advice about a software package or whatever, your fellow MACE members can and will help. That's what a user group is all about -- helping each other get the most from our computing.

MACE meets on the third Tuesday of each month from 7:30 to 10 pm in Room 115 of the Southfield Civic Center at 10-1/2 Mile and Evergreen Roads.

MACE can be contacted at PO Box 2785, Southfield, MI, 48037 or by calling Bill Rayl at (313) 973-8825 or Bob Retelle at (313) 483-7358.

Any MACE member who contributes an article which appears in Atari Interface Magazine is entitled to a free disk from the library of his/her choice.

Future Meeting Dates:

January 17	April 18
February 21	May 16 (MACE Birthday Party)
March 21	June 20

MACE BBS Numbers:

MACE WeST	(313)582-0657	(3/12/2400)
MACE East	(313)978-1685	(3/1200)
The College Board	(313)478-9647	(3/12/2400)
Down River Outpost	(313)675-4660	(3/12/2400)
Molin's Den	(313)420-0407	(3/1200)

Christmas Meeting Minutes

The December Christmas Party meeting was called to order at 7:45pm by Meeting Coordinator Bob Retelle, who recognized the following companies for donating door prizes:

Software Trends (Renegade, COLR Object Editor), Accolade (HardBall), Alpha Systems (MagniPrint II, Basic Turbocharger, Your Atari Comes Alive, Schematic Designer, Scanalyzer & Cheat), ICD (T-shirts), Intracorp (Murder on the Atlantic), Total Control Systems (GOE Cartridge), Rite Way (30 8bit disks, 2 cases & a Wico Boss Joystick), Rentertainment (First Word, Trivia Challenge, 10 ST & 10 8bit disks, and 1 case), Sector One (Haba Wills, House Estimator, H&D ToolBox, APX Software, 2 cases and 2 mugs), Word Perfect Corp. (WordPerfect v.4.1), Soft House (Better Dead than Alien, Haba Writer and Micro League Wrestling), Regent Software (Regent Word II), Merrill Ward (Celebrity Cookbook), Michtron (Slaygon, PinBall Factory, GFA Basic & Object, Major Motion, Jupiter Probe and GoldRunner) and Unicorn Publications.

Member Mike Lechkun discussed an article he had read in a newspaper stating that Atari is suing Nintendo. Mike noted the suit is the action of Atari Games, NOT our beloved Atari Computers.

Member Brian Wilmuth gave an impromptu demonstration of his BBS, showing off his MIO and hard drive.

Gordon Mella, of Word Perfect Corporation, led a discussion

of the Word Perfect ST system and fielded questions from the members regarding current and future support. W.P. Corp has placed all future support plans "on hold" however "Word Perfect Corp will address whatever product is popular within the industry." (*Sounds like the same "hint" that Atari users have been expounding for many moons now... Hopefully someone at Atari is listening.*) Gordon also announced that the User Group Promotional Discount price of \$155 was good only until 12/31. Gordon's "bag of tricks" contained a variety of gifts which he distributed amongst a very attentive audience. Not having a cable to connect the club ST to the projection TV made it difficult to demonstrate this incredible word processor to the entire group, however Gordon graciously led a smaller discussion while the meeting broke for intermission.

President Bill Rayl announced there would be a formal election to fill the position of Convention Manager in the January general meeting. The purpose of this position will be to pursue the possibility of MACE hosting an AtariFest in May. The decision to hold this convention has not yet been formally approved by the membership.

Door prizes were distributed by random drawing, the most notable of which included Word Perfect ST and the GOE cartridge. Other prizes included boxes of paper, disks and holders, T-shirts, library disks and software. Home-made cookies (courtesy of Pattie) and soft drinks were enjoyed by all until the meeting adjourned at 10 pm.

From Your President

The December Christmas Party was a success! I'd like to extend a sincere THANKS to **Gordon Mella** of **Word Perfect Corp.** for his excellent presentation under less than optimum circumstances (where is that Zenith Beam cable, anyway!?).

For those of you that missed it, Gordon told us a bit about the history of Word Perfect Corp. and the current freeze on ST development. He also gave away lots of goodies!

I'd also like to take this opportunity to personally thank each and every one of the local and national contributors that donated gifts for our party. Special THANKS go to **Total Control Systems** for donation of the 8bit grand prize of a *GOE Cartridge* and to **Word Perfect Corp.** for donation of *Word Perfect 4.1* for the ST.

Congratulations to MACE member **Randall White** who was the lucky winner of Word Perfect 4.1 and member **Joseph Nietupski**, the proud owner of one of the first GOE Cartridges available.

Looking ahead to our January meeting (Jan. 17), we hope to have a representative from **Soft-Logik Publishing** to talk about their *PageStream* DTP package for the ST. Also scheduled is an in-depth look at the GOE Cartridge for the 8bit.

Also at the Jan. meeting, we will be taking nominations and voting on a Convention Manager to help plan the Atari show which is tentatively scheduled for May 6 and 7 at the Airport Hilton in Romulus.

Hope to see you all at the meeting!

Bill Rayl



TRI-CITY ATARI GROUP

The Tri-City Atari Users Group meets the first Saturday before the 18th of every month at 2:00 pm at the Rudy Zauel Memorial Library on the corner of Shattuck and Center in Saginaw. Upcoming meetings are scheduled as follows: January 19, 1989, February 11, 1989

LeRoy Valley	President	686-6796
Marty Schmidt	Treasurer/Sec.	792-6029
Al Jennings	ST Disk lib.	790-1980
Ted Beauchamp	8 bit Disk Lib.	686-8872
Char Davis	8 bit Editor	686-4170

Club dues are \$20 per year. For this fee you get the Atari Interface Magazine, support for both the 8bits and ST's, and full access to the clubs public domain library. We currently have 150 8bit disks and 70 ST disks. 8bit disks cost \$1 each, and ST disks cost \$2 each. Check your mailing label. If you need to renew or you haven't even joined yet, then do it now!

STill to Come!

MIDI and music is the topic for January! Mike Ranger volunteered to bring in his Yamaha PSS 680 keyboard and demo it along with EZ-Track on an Atari ST. This should be an interesting demo as the Yamaha has drum pads and contains over 100 different sounds! On the 8bit side, Ted Beauchamp will be demoing a public domain music program which supports the Atari Touch Tablet. The program offers more than 16 different instruments, and performs well with the touch tablet. I'll also endeavor to bring in a disk of the month containing (what else) music related software. This feature will be called 'Music Madness.'

The December Swap Meet and Christmas party turned out very well. We had a fresh pot of coffee (no surprises this time — Pattie — You know what I'm talking about!) and lots of goodies to eat. (Loved that apple coffee cake and all the cookies!) There was plenty of software and hardware for sale for both the ST and the 8bit. As usual, many people were taking advantage of the great deals and having a good time. It's merely a coincidence, but the swap meet is held just prior to Christmas. But poor Margaret, her hubby came along to keep watch over her after last years buying spree. And he did an admirable job!

The only surprise at the meeting was the Discovery Cartridge that LeRoy Valley brought. This cartridge allows you to back up ALL of your software. It handles everything that I've tried it on (which is more than I can say for the new version of ProCopy — 1.60), and also gives you the capability to read actual MacIntosh disks and convert them into Magic Sac format! This \$200 cartridge offers more than the the \$300 Translator!

Ted Beauchamp demoed NewsRoom for the 8bit. This program lets you create your own newspaper, and comes complete with over 600 graphics! won it. Congratulations Mike!

8 bit Equipment Volunteers for December: Ted Beauchamp, 800 XL, Disk Drive, Atari Touch Tablet Gerry Reno, Monitor ST Equipment Volunteers for December: Dan Mazurowski, 520 ST & Disk Drive LeRoy Valley, Monitor Neal Demo, Yamaha PSS 680 & EZ-Track

Remember, if you're bringing equipment, please bring all of the necessary cables (such as power cords, monitor cords, mouses, etc.).

USER GROUP INFORMATION FORM

Name: _____

Address: _____

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Phone: _____

If you wish to receive information about one or more of the AIM participating groups, such as membership forms and disk catalog information, please complete this form and return it to:

Unicorn Publications
User Group Information
3487 Braeburn Circle
Ann Arbor, MI 48108

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| <input type="checkbox"/> MACE | <input type="checkbox"/> TAG | <input type="checkbox"/> WAUG |

I own the following equipment: _____



The December meeting of the Washtenaw Atari Users Group was held at State Street Computer. The meeting was called to order at 8 p.m. by President Jon Brode who announced the feature topic would be Games/Entertainment. Jon also announced that WAUG has been approved as an officially recognized student organization at University of Michigan, which means the meetings will likely be moved. (The January meeting will be held at State Street as usual. Watch for further announcements!)

Jon reviewed some of the latest news concerning Atari computers, including a discussion about the ST Laptop. Librarians Mike Millage and Russ Crum announced disk specials, and Treasurer Dick Selke reviewed membership and financial status.

There was a demonstration of a game on two 8bit computers connected via joystick ports to allow opponents to play against each other. The game, Dual-Duel, is written in a graphics programming language called RGL. The author of the language submitted the programs for review to some members several years ago, then never returned to hear the results. (Aaron Pratt, if you're still alive, please contact WAUG!)

Several games for ST and 8bit were given out as door prizes, along with coupons for free library disks. The remainder of the evening was Free Form as members generally wandered around chatting and playing games on the computers in the store.

The feature topic of the January meeting will be Telecommunications, a great place to "get started" for all the people who acquired modems for Christmas.

Happy Holidays to All, From WAUG!

From the Prez...

Greetings fellow WAUGsters! It's a few weeks early for the State of the Union address, but AIM waits for no constitutionally prescribed dates. Things have gone well in the last year and we hope to make this year even better. We are on the verge of becoming an official student organization at the University of Michigan. If things work out, we will be provided with a meeting place, free of charge, and be given lots of money to play around with. We'd like to thank Robin Warner, proprietor of State Street Computers for allowing us to meet in his store while we were looking for a new home.

The topic of the January meeting will be Telecommunications. If you haven't come to a meeting lately, try to come to this one. We have had some excellent demonstrations recently, but unfortunately, attendance has been disappointing. So come to the meeting and bring along your favorite piece of telecommunications software to demo. We can't do it all by ourselves, we need your help. Special thanks to Harry Price for donating many disks to our 8bit library. Until next month, Jon Brode
From the Treasurer:

Our renewals for December were; Bob and Derek Fritz, Ken Antkowiak and Bill Root. These people know a good value

when they see it! WAUG membership fees are \$15, and may be made payable to: Dick Selke, 31139 Cooley, Westland MI 48185

From the Editor:

The next meeting of WAUG will be at State Street Computers, on January 10th, at 7:30. Information or answers to questions about WAUG can be obtained from the following two BBSs:

Molin's Den 420-0407

'Tari Forest 455-5616

Both of these BBSs support ASCII/ATASCII at 3/1200 baud, and are available 24hrs. Please upload any submissions to this column to 'Tari Forest by the 14th of the month. Use the ASCII save option of your word processor if available.

If you don't yet have a modem, you're missing out on a lot of free software, information and advice. Come to the January meeting for a sample of what you are missing!

Anton Malje, WAUG! editor

GLASS would like to thank the BASE Users Group (Bakersfield Atari Computer Enthusiasts) for permission to reprint.

The Creed

In the beginning there were fingers. And then there was an Abacus. And it was a start.

At this point in history, it was a long wait for silicon. We had to wait for a lot of small things like Ben Franklin, frying himself on a kite, Marconi, Jobs, the WOZ, and Bushnell.

And lo and behold, Bushnell discovered an Egg. And the Egg was called "PONG." And thus, the Home Video Game was born. And this added to the power that had been laid down by The Great Hackers That Came Before.

And finally Home Computers were born. And it was good.

But there was a dark cloud.

Once in their new homes, the Home Computer gave birth to the User. And the Users were alone in the wilderness. And they cried into the void. Finding no answer, they found themselves.

And the User Groups were formed. And it was good.

And they banded together. Tribe unto tribe. Each seeking it's own maker (or third party manufacturer). Apple unto Apple, Atari unto Atari, Commodore unto Commodore, IBM and it's clones, and Orphan unto Orphan.

A lucky few tribes found their makers. Most found nothing. Others were abandoned and know so. But still they came together. And it was good. The User Groups survived when the makers had forsaken them.

The User Groups came together in the dark and will be there until the door of obsolescence squeaks its hinges for the last time.

If you trust in the maker and he forsakes you, turn to your brethren. They will not forsake you. Seek ye out thy brethren for they shall help you find the light.

Yea, there are many soothsayers and false prophets that shall cause many doubts in your path and faith. Put your faith in your brethren for they have not designs on your soul (or wallet).

We banded together because we had no choice. We of the silicon tribes declare our allegiance to ourselves and our brethren.

"Let it be known from this time forward, we of the tribes do not bow down to any self serving God. For we will survive as we have always done, relying on each other and ourselves. Do not lie to us, for we talk to each other more than you will ever realize. Demi Gods come and go, trademarks last longer but even they can fade. Above all, we demand respect. For we are NOT the children of the computer industry. We are its FUTURE!"

If you would like to write to the BASE Users Group their address is PO Box 40203, Bakersfield, CA 93384.



Ask Tim
by Tim Sharpe

I would like to thank my readers for the large volume of letters I receive each and every month. Regretably, I can't answer them all—but I shall try my best. And now, a question about computer piracy:

Q Last week I stopped at a convenience store to pick up some junk food on the way to my local computer club meeting. As I was coming out of the store, I nearly dropped a load of Twinkies as I watched three men quickly load my computer system into the back of a black pickup truck and take off. Has this happened to any of your other readers?

A Yes. It seems that computer piracy is at an all time high. The next letter demonstrates just how ridiculous this piracy problem has gotten.

Q I recently had a very unusual and frightening experience on my way to a computer club meeting. I had all my computer equipment loaded into the back seat of my car. At a stop light, a black pickup truck with a Jolly Roger insignia painted on the side pulled up next to me. Three men in pirate costumes carrying swords jumped from the back of the truck onto the top of my car. Two of them then jumped to the ground and entered the back seat of my car, while the third held his sword against my throat. After the two in the back seat had taken all of my computer

equipment, the pirate holding me at bay withdrew his sword and slapped me in the face with a fresh fish. He then joined the others already in the truck and they all took off. Who WERE these people?

A Sounds like Bluebyte the pirate has struck again. This notorious villain is currently being sought by the FBI. He has no crime pattern and can strike anywhere at any time. So lock your doors and watch your back!

Q Is there something wrong with my computer if it smokes?

A No, but you should tell your computer that it is ten times more likely to suffer a premature death than a non-smoking computer. (You KNEW that one was coming, didn't you?)

Q I would like to enhance my ATARI 410 cassette recorder so that it runs faster. How would I go about doing that?

A You could try threatening it. If that doesn't work, buy a disk drive.

Q I have an opportunity to get an ATARI XL or a Soviet K1 computer system. Which should I buy?

A Take the ATARI XL. My Russian sources tell me that the Soviet K1 has only one kilobyte of RAM, one sound channel and can only be hooked up to a monochrome monitor. It's limited also by the fact that it is designed to run only Communist Party programs.



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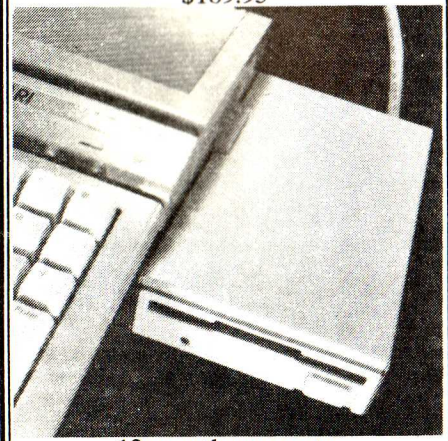
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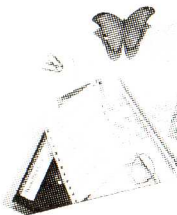
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