

June Issue

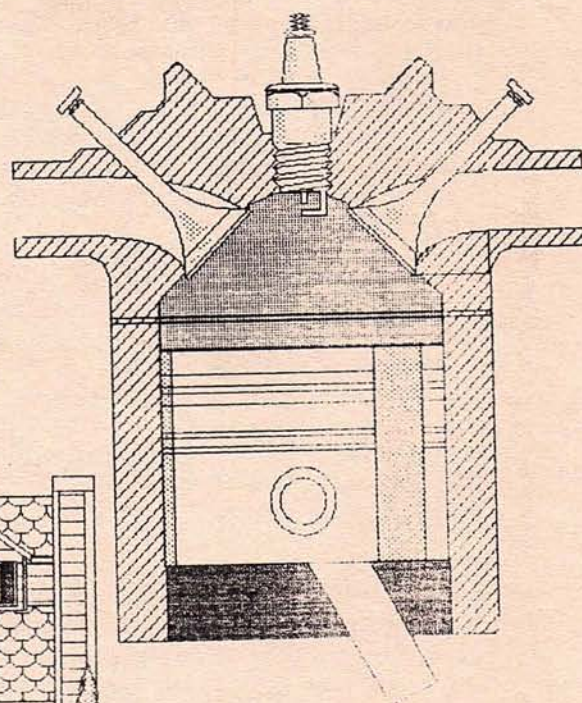
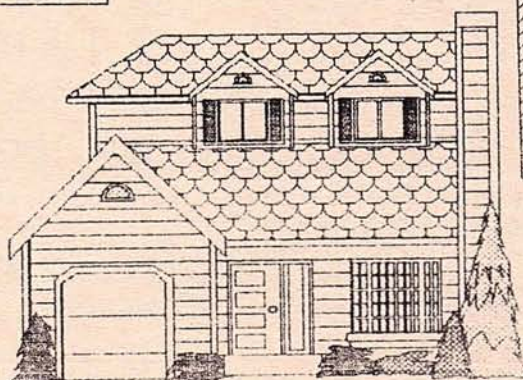
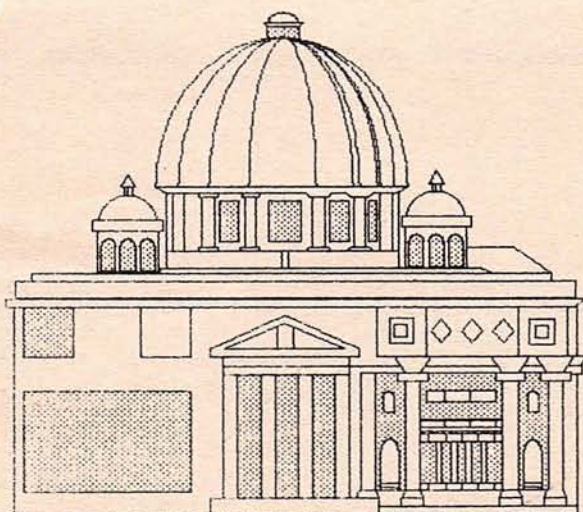
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G.I.S.T.





President's High Horse

Well, AtariFest is over and I believe it was a success. I wish to thank all of the people who helped make it what it was and especially the organizing committee and its chairman, Bill Bailey.

Everyone in both clubs worked very hard, and the results were worth it. The only sour note came when Atari did not show up with the laser printer; and several people became extremely upset, which I don't understand. We had no contractual agreement with Atari which required them to bring any special equipment; and, therefore, they were under no obligation to do so, no matter what anyone said.

True, N. Harris did make some promises as to what would be there, but he is a **MARKETING** person; they will promise anything and should never be counted on to do more than 10% of what they promise, at best. If you look at it from that point of view, it is amazing that we had the blitter, because that is about 33% of what was promised by marketing, and we should be grateful for that. I don't think Atari is any better nor any worse than any other computer company in the announcing, promising, and advertising of their new products before they exist or can be delivered. Even IBM does it. They just announced a complete line of computers that their customers cannot use to their full capabilities and probably won't be able to for a couple of years. All the computer companies do it. It is part of the training marketing people get at birth. If you mention something to a marketing person that you are thinking of making, he/she will be selling it the next day, even though they know it does not exist. I think we were pretty lucky to have the blitter there. It even worked!

There was one other thing that surprised me, and that was the total lack of understanding of the principles of marketing a product. Some people seem to think that Atari is favoring the Europeans in the introduction of new products. I can't understand why - five times the sales, no FCC regulations, people who purchase based on value and not brand name! But I don't think that's true; they just go where the market is.

Well, that's enough about Atari and the fest; it's all over 'til next year!!!??? We, as a club, have been going through some difficult times; the changing profile of the members and the new products have conspired to inject divisiveness into the club. Also, several of the movers and shakers, who in the past were the driving force behind the club, have decided that they needed a rest or just

got fed up. This summer will be a slow and difficult time for us; but I believe that in the fall some of them will return. The announcement of new products and their availability for purchase will inject a renewed optimism in ATARI and in DAL-ACE, and we, as a club, will grow and prosper. So, to those of you who are still attending meetings and SIGs - keep it up and please let me and the rest of the committee know what you want from the club. We will do everything to see that you get it!

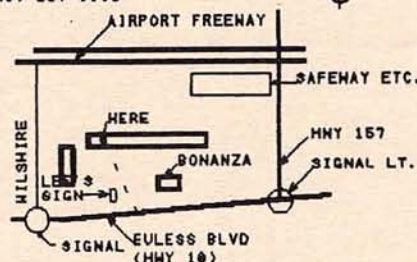
SPECIAL THANKS

We would like to thank **COMPUTER DISCOVERIES** and **ASTRA SYSTEMS** for their generous donation of an ASTRA 20-MEG hard disk with built-in double-sided drive, for use on the BBS.

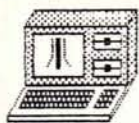
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Texas AtariFest A Biased Report

By John Pellet

Whew! It's over. What follows is my report on AtariFest. Good and bad. Others may have a different opinion.

The Bad

Might as well get the stink out of the way first. Atari didn't bring the Megas or the laser printer. At times the hall was jammed to the extent that you couldn't actually see the exhibitors' wares, or go from one end to the other (or is that good?). And that's all the bad, as far as I'm concerned.

The Good

First off, thanks to all the volunteers, without whom this wouldn't have happened. Especially those hardy souls who stayed late Saturday loading the truck.

Atari did bring the 80 column card for the 8 bit machines, and it looked great. Also, the blitter for the ST was on display, both what it did, and what it looked like inside. But, for my money, the big news at the show was not in the Atari booth.

Broderbund, in their first Atari show, demoed what appears to be a great graphics animator, some nice games, and the fabulous news that Print Shop will be out soon for the ST (hopefully the new color version?).

Hybrid Arts brought their marvelous midi machines, including the stunning Midi-Maze interactive maze game, using networked STs.

WordPerfect came for the first public showing of WordPerfect for the ST, due to be released in August. It looks like the IBM product, except it fully supports the GEM interface, including pull down menus and multiple windows, plus it retails for \$100 less.

ANTIC came with the really neat Stereotek liquid crystal shutter 3D glasses, CAD-3D, and the rest of their line.

SoftLogik came to demo their new image scanner, which looks like a real steal at under \$100, much less the show price. They also showed Publishing Partner hooked to an Apple Laserwriter, making many, including yours truly, green (It left me wondering how I could afford a laser printer. After all, it's only twice as much as the rest of my system.).

Tech-Specialities brought their memory upgrades for the 520 and 1040, along with some of the lowest software prices in the building.

ICD showed their MIO interface for the XEs. If you want 80 column, hard drives, and so forth, it looks great.

BEST Electronics had a booth full of stuff, ranging from Atari ashtrays to ST service manuals.

Spectrum Holobyte was showing GATO, their WWII submarine simulation, plus introducing Fleet Street Publishing, which looks like a really good competitor for Publishing Partner. If only it weren't copy protected (using the key disk scheme).

Computer Skills came over from Euless, with their usual assortment of neat stuff, including the Magic Sac and the only multi-megabyte machine in the hall: a 4 meg ST, complete with a detached keyboard.

Computer Discoveries had their normal full line of hardware and software, at special show prices. Plus Frank Cohen of Regent Software spent much of the show there, demonstrating his word processing and data base applications.

In addition, the area user groups had well-attended booths. While I can't speak for NTAAT or NTSTU, DAL-ACE people I spoke to were pleased.

Plus, more than 1000 people paid to get in over the 2 day show, many of them being exposed to Atari for the first time.

And, due to unexpected generosity by exhibitors (and other manufacturers unable to attend), more than 50 door prizes were awarded, including a 520ST color system graciously donated by Atari.

So, if you missed it, you really missed it!

A Commentary

In my opinion, the several people who criticized Atari for what they left behind are wrong. Certainly, I would have liked to see the Mega STs, but since they are unlikely to be available before late summer, I am just as glad they were not shown. The same thing applies to the laser printer. Showing products not even close to being available on the retail market in a public show like AtariFest is STUPID! It simply kills the current models. Despite being personally disappointed, I am glad they came to show what they have. It is better for our cause.



ACTION! GAME DISK

review by Marcus Arreguin

ACTION! Game Disk (AGD) is an interesting collection of 6 games written by David Plotkin and previously published in such magazines as COMPUTE!, ANTIC, and ANALOG. AGD costs just \$9.95 and will run on any Atari computer with 48k and the 400/800's need BASIC. When you boot up AGD you will get a menu for loading in the games on the disk. AMAZING is a maze game in which the object is to use your "X" to munch the dots on the grid playfield. While collecting dots, there are three bad guys out to get you. One touch from them proves fatal for Mr. X and takes one of five lives you start out with. Fortunately, you get four mines you can drop by pressing the button; they destroy the bad guys when they run into them. If you don't like where you dropped a mine, you can always pick it up by running back over it. AMAZING is incredibly fast-paced, so much so that to turn at an intersection you must usually move the joystick before you get there, and it is tough to get adequate control because of the speed. One complaint I have is sometimes when I kill a bad guy I'll go by a corner and he'll reappear the split-second before I get there. Overall, I think it is a great game and holds a younger person's attention longer than an adult.

FRUIT LOOPS is an original game in which you have to capture the fruits bouncing around on the screen. To capture a fruit you must move your fire button activated line around a fruit and connect another part of your line. Scoring is in direct proportion to what level you are on and how many you looped. For instance, 3 fruits on level 2 would bring in 6 points, 4 on level 3 would get 12 points and so on. You start out with five lives and there are two ways to lose them, either by touching your own line before looping a fruit, or by a fruit touching your line. I have discovered that if you try to make the loop too big you will start following the end of your line because it is only so long and it has to stop somewhere. To make it clearer you could compare it to a dog chasing its tail, not to mention the frustration. When you get into the higher levels it adds a raisin for each level and then the fruits speed up. FRUIT LOOPS is a highly enjoyable game and my friends and I can't seem to get enough of it.

In SURFACE RUN you pilot a fighter plane which flies over the surface of your home planet. Your job is to use your fireballs to destroy the enemy space ships that randomly warp in. To destroy an enemy space ship, you must first hit the left engine, then the right, then the middle engine. The enemy ships fire tracker missiles at you

which follow you all over the screen. SURFACE RUN is good, but after a while blasting the enemy ships out of the sky gets boring. What this program needs is different types of ships or other planets such as allies in trouble to help.

In SNEAK ATTACK you command an army gun base under attack by helicopters which drop parachute equipped robots. You fire controllable missiles that come out by the hordes at the pararo-bots and helicopters supplying them. To stay alive, you must keep the robots from landing on your base or four of them from landing on the ground. If there are any robots on the ground, you can hit a robot directly above it and he'll drop down and destroy the other robot. After I got to the 9th, level I started wondering if my arm was made for such punishment. Although there is a lot of repetition involved, the higher levels really give a big challenge with all the robots those helicopters pump out.

SQUEEZE lets you run along the middle of the board, with shapes coming at you from all sides. The object is to push back the converging shapes with your missiles. If two rows of shapes meet in the middle of the screen, then the game is over. SQUEEZE is a great game, but it is also another arm-breaker.

I don't know much about ANALOG MAN except for what is in the instructions. The program must first be compiled with ACTION! before being run and, since I don't have ACTION!, I could not play the game. This is a nine screen climbing game. You must walk over each of the special sections of the girders, causing them to fall to the level below. Your joystick controls the movement of your little character. You may climb up and down the ladders and jump through the holes without getting hurt. You are getting chased by three enemies who look like the symbols of OTHER computer companies you all know so well. Pressing the button puts up a temporary paralyzing force field, which stops any enemy dead in its tracks. They will flash for a while then reappear at their starting positions. You only have a limited supply of these force fields. Drop a girder on one of the enemies and it will be paralyzed for a short period of time. If one of the enemies touches you, one of your lives is used up and you reappear at your starting position on the screen.



ADVENTURES IN THE MAGIC SACDOM

Magic 4.0 ... and Beyond

by Jeff Greenblatt

REPRINTED FROM CURRENT NOTES 5/87

MAGIC 4.0

It was approximately 3:30 pm on March 9, 1987 when my wife called me at the office to ask whether I ordered something from Data Pacific. Since my answer was no, I asked her to open the package. She opened it and said that it contained a disk and a letter from Dave Small. The disk is labelled 4.0 beta. Three hours later, I arrived home and immediately snatched up the disk and accompanying one page letter. The letter briefly described that the disk contains a beta version of 4.0, suggested that I read the REV4.DOC file, and asks me to test it out and report any bugs to Dave Small.

After gobbling down my dinner, I made a bee line for the ST, inserted the disk in the drive, booted up, and clicked on the drive A icon to view the files on the disk. Most of the files didn't look familiar. Finding a file entitled MAGIC4H.PRG, I clicked on it and the drive began to run. A few seconds later a sign-on page appeared on the screen and I stared at it for a few minutes It was totally new! At this point in time I decided that I better read the REV4.DOC file, as suggested in the letter, before I went on any further. I rebooted and printed out the file which ended up being ten pages long.

The doc file described all the new features and files on the disk, and also described some of the features to be implemented in the future. The file also contains portions of the documentation found with versions 3.5, 3.0 and 2.0 for some odd reason. Briefly, the following is a list of some of the new features or files on the disk:

- * A new GEM Format Utility which formats double-sided disks to 800k.
- * Two New GEM Copy Utilities for both 1 and 2 drive systems — both copy single and double-sided disks.
- * Improved disk speed.
- * Finder 5.3 and System 3.2 now work (sort of) with 4.0.
- * The return to Finder (desktop) bug has now been fixed.
- * The MacWrite 2.2 search function crash has now been fixed.
- * Switcher 5.0 now works.
- * All versions of Font/DA Mover now work including the new 3.4 version.
- * The notepad, clipboard and scrapbook all work.

Also mentioned is the fact that the bug that crashed Notepad and Font/DA Mover could have crashed other applications like Superpaint which now works fine. If

an application crashed with a "PC=FFFFxxxx" (xxxx being any number), it probably will work with 4.0. Another noteworthy item is that Motivator is no longer supported. Motivator worked well until you ejected your startup disk, inserted a new disk and ejected it only to find that the new disk has been overwritten by the contents of what was in the Motivator.

Now that I had read the doc file, it was time to get at it. The first thing I decided to do was to format a disk double-sided. I found a file entitled MCFORMAT.PRG and clicked on it. The drive ran and a few seconds later I got an error message that it is "Unable to locate Formatter.RSC file"...back to the desktop. Browsing through the files on the disk I found a file entitled MCFORMAT.RSC, so I clicked on the format program again and the same error message appeared. I tried changing the name to FORMAT.RSC and FORMATTER.RSC and got the same message. It was 8 pm by then and it was too late to call Dave Small to find out what was wrong.

I decided to continue on, figuring that since I would call Dave in the morning, I may find something else to discuss with him. The next thing I tried was the new copy utility. I clicked on MCCOPY2 (2 drive system) and a new window appeared, see Figure 1. This copy utility worked fine and is much improved over the old version. You will be able to make as many copies as you want before exiting back to the desktop.

28:08



Figure 1. New Disk Copy Utility

Now back to that 4.0 sign-on page. As you can see in Figure 2, there are several new features that have been added to it. However, the new features (light gray) have not been implemented yet; more about this



later. Note that the Motivator is gone as mentioned earlier and the old 896k system is now 828k.

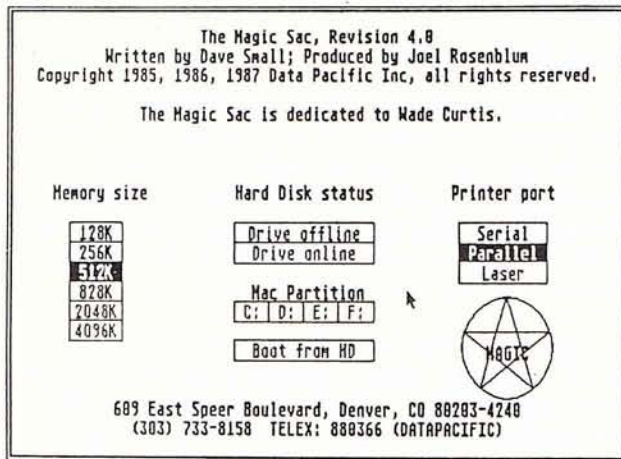


Figure 2. Magic 4.0 Sign-On Page

Now that I had set the system to 512k with a parallel port, I clicked on the MAGIC button and got a new page identifying it as a beta version of 4.0, which instructed me to insert my startup disk. It's now 11 pm, three hours later, and I had tried everything I can think of that crashed on me before including those mentioned as being fixed in the doc file. This revision is a vast improvement over the previous versions. Some applications still crash when booted up, like FullPaint, but other applications now work fine (see list at the end of this article). My guess is that any application that has illegal instructions will never work. Dave points out in the doc file that MacWrite 4.5 will never work due to illegal instructions and that Apple can't get it to work with their Mac II either. Now if I could only get that format utility to work.

I called Dave in the morning and he wasn't in. He returned my call in the early afternoon and told me that the file was incorrectly named and that I should rename the file MCFORM.RSC. Oh well, it is a beta copy. Incidentally, Dave is great at returning phone calls, he always does. Now that I had renamed the file, I clicked on MCFORMAT.PRG again and a new window appeared giving me a choice of drives and single or double-sided format, as illustrated in Figure 3. This utility is just what the doctor ordered, 800k of free disk space. Now when the system folder is on the disk, there will be plenty of room for lots of files.

By now you are undoubtedly asking, "When will it be available?" Well, there are still a few bugs in it that need to be fixed before its released. My guess is early May and it will most likely be version 4.2. Why version 4.2, you ask, because I'm supposed to get version 4.1 for beta testing by mid-April. Data Pacific will most likely make it available for a nominal upgrade fee of \$5 or \$10 in exchange for your old 2.0 or 3.0 disk.



Figure 3. New Disk Format Utility

..... AND BEYOND

Back to the sign-on page. Those new features not yet implemented will be in version 5.0. To support the added memory of the MEGA ST and ST's upgraded to 2.5 and 4 megs, 2048k and 4096k systems will be supported. Can you imagine, running switcher and ramdisks simultaneously with these size systems.

Hard drives will also be supported in version 5.0 which will allow you to boot up the Sac from the hard drive. The choice of memory partitioning will most likely be 400k, 800k, 1.6 meg or 3.2 meg Magic disk sizes.

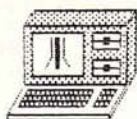
How about auto error recovery? Instead of getting the crash page and rebooting the system, auto error recovery will continue the application from where it crashed. You'll never know the application did something illegal. The most common error (crash) is the Zero Store crash. Auto error recovery has been tested and handled a "disk full" Zero Store error in Finder 1.0 and it worked.

The reason why the 896k system was reduced in size by 64k to 828k was to reserve the 64k for hard drive and auto error recovery support. The 64k may also be reserved for that mysterious "Laser" in the printer port box.

The translator box that will read and write Mac disks is in the prototype stage. This device will fit between the ST and the drive. My guess is that it will be available late May or June. I'll try to get more information about this device from Dave Small by next month including its tentative price.

SOFTWARE THAT WORKS - UPDATE

Many thanks to Bob Childress of Dallas, Texas; Dave Glotfelty of Seabrook, Maryland; Bill Price of Vienna,



Virginia; Norm Walker of Fort Worth, Texas; and Sam Wang of Clemson, South Carolina for calling in and reporting what software works and what doesn't. The following is a list of both:

Application Program	Works	Doesn't Work
Comicworks.....		X
CalendarMaker.....		X
Dungeons of Doom 4.0.		X
Excel.....	X	
FileMaker Plus.....	X	
FullPaint.....		X
GraphicWorks.....		X
MAC6800 Dev. System..	X	
MAC3D.....	X	
MacBillboard.....	X	
MacDraft.....		X
MacDraw.....	X	
MacInTax.....	X	
MacPaint.....	X	
MacPlaymate.....		X
MacProject.....	X	
MacWrite 2.2.....	X	
MacWrite 4.5.....		X
More.....		X
Microsoft Basic.....	X	
Microsoft Word 3.0...		X
Microsoft Works.....	X	*
Phoenix 3D.....	X	
Ready, Set, Go 3.0...	X	
Reflex.....	X	
Spellwell.....	X	
StatView 512+.....	X	
Superpaint.....	X	
TK Solver.....	X	

* The Telecommunications portion of Microsoft Works crashes after making the terminal settings; Spreadsheet, Database and Word Processing portions of the program appear to work fine.

All the above were tested using Finder 4.1 and Magic 3.5 or 4.0. The above applications are all unprotected; protected software will not be tested until the translator box is released by Data Pacific. If you're uncertain as to whether your software is protected, I have a list of several hundred commercial products which tells whether they are protected or not, so give me a call. I will continue to update the above list every month as long as readers continue to report new information. So give me a call at 703-450-6462 (between 7:00pm - 10:00pm EDT weekdays, or any reasonable time on the weekends) or drop me a card at 804 N. Argonne Ave., Sterling, VA 22170.

ATARIFEST TURNOUT

Thanks to the following companies (in alphabetical order) for making our ATARI FEST such a memorable occasion:

ANALOG
ANTIC
ASTRA SYSTEMS
ATARI CORPORATION
BECKMEYER DEVELOPMENT TOOLS
BEST ELECTRONICS
BRODERBUND
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*COMPUTER SKILLS
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HYBRID ARTS
ICD
*MEGAMAX
MICHTRON
SOFTLOGIK
SPECTRUM HOLOBYTE
SUBLOGIC
TECH-SPECIALTIES
WORD PERFECT

Special thanks to the above companies, marked with an asterisk (*), who are from the D/FW area. Local support means a lot to us, and we were very happy to have them with us. SEYMOUR RADIX, of Irving, was also at the SoftLogik booth, showing their image scanner for the ST.

Thanks also to NTSTU (North Texas ST Users), our co-sponsor for the event. Not that the local groups were the only supporters of our FEST. We also had several members from LACE, the Louisiana users organization; and 23 members of the Little Rock Atari Addicts from Arkansas. I'm sure there were others, but at this writing I don't know who they were.

Last, but certainly not least, thanks to all the club volunteers, without whom we would never have gotten off the ground.

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LET'S TALK FUN !

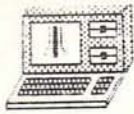
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LET'S TALK TURKEY...IT'S AT YOUR DEALER NOW !



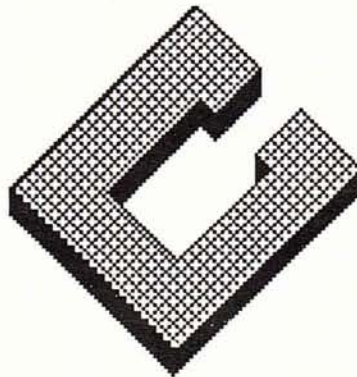
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MEGAMAX FOR THEIR
HELP IN PUBLISHING
THIS NEWSLETTER

RAM



Zoomracks II: Another View

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From The

February issue of the Atari Journal

If you are looking for a data base system for your ST, but you don't have a lot of time to set it up and learn how to use it, then Zoomracks II may be just the program you have been looking for.

Due to the unusual nature of Zoomracks, some explanation is required before you can really tell if it will fill your needs. Zoomracks arranges data at the highest level into Racks. A rack corresponds roughly with a data file. Within the racks are Quickcards, which are similar to data records. The final item is the Fieldscroll which resembles the data field used by most data base systems.

It's at the lowest level where the most major differences in Zoomracks are most apparent. In most data base systems, you have to predefine the exact nature of your fields and exactly how large each field is. If at some future time you need to redefine this field, you will more than likely be facing a major conversion effort or even loss of your data. In the case of Zoomracks, a Fieldscroll can hold up to 250 lines of 80 characters per line. If you need to have more room in the fieldscroll, you simply enter the extra data and the definition of the Fieldscroll is updated throughout the Rack automatically. To make matters even simpler, you have a good set of editing commands you can use while you enter data. Some of these are: Cut, Paste, Tabbing, Margin Setting, Line Split and Join, Search, Insert/Overwrite Toggle and Reformat Paragraph. Needless to say, you can put so much information in a Fieldscroll you can defeat the purpose of a data base (organizing data into a useful and retrievable format). The actual data in the Fieldscroll can be as simple as the date, a zip code, or a 250 line biography on a friend.

The next level up is the Quickcard. A Quickcard is best thought of as an index card or a card in a Rolodex. The main difference is that a Rolodex can't hold nearly as much information. The Quickcard basically displays your Fieldscrolls to you. The display can optionally be set to remove letters from words (only in the display, no data is removed), so that you can have multiple Racks on the screen and still have a good idea what a particular Fieldscroll contains. Another nice feature of Zoomracks is contained at this level. If you don't like the way the data is arranged on the Quickcard, you can simply move the Fieldscrolls around wherever you like and the data in the rest of the Rack is rearranged as

needed (without any loss of data).

At the very top level is the Rack. The Rack is best described as an actual Rolodex or even a rack of time cards. You can have up to 9 Racks in memory at one time. They can be displayed or hidden as you see fit. The data in the Rack is by default sorted on the first line of the first Fieldscroll and is presented in a Rack view format. This means you see the first line of each Fieldscroll in the Rack (remember those timecards). You can, if you wish, Zoom in on the rack and have the entire Quickcard displayed. The data in the racks can be Sorted, Copied, Moved from Rack to Rack, Edited, Marked, Cut and Pasted. This is one of the places where Zoomracks really shines. I have never seen a data base system that allowed such easy data manipulation.

Well, that fairly well describes Zoomracks. Now to tackle just what makes Zoomracks II so much better than Zoomracks I. As I mentioned before, Zoomracks provides one of the most flexible data manipulation interfaces I have ever encountered. What it lacked was a good way to extract this data from the data base and present it in a usable form and a way to manipulate large amounts of data within a given data base. Also lacking was the ability to extract numerical or statistical information from your data base (for example, how many people in your data base have the name Jack Durre'). Fortunately for me (a long time user of Zoomracks I), along came Zoomracks II. I can once again put off really learning dBMan till some future date (sigh of relief).

The first new feature is its report generation capabilities. In the old Zoomracks, you had to rearrange your Fieldscrolls to fit your output format. If you didn't want to print everything, you had to create a new Rack without the unwanted information.

This was, to put it mildly, a royal pain. The new implementation allows you to define your output form in detail and print out only what you want. It also allows you to define fully free-form headers and footers for your reports (or labels). Some of the things it allows are: Centering, Insert Date, Insert Time, Print one line of Fieldscroll Fixed Length, Full width or right Justified (defaults to left justified), print full Fieldscroll (or selected line) with the same options, Number Pages, Select Single Sheet Mode, Offset Left Margin, Define Page LENGTH and Send specific printer initialization codes. The only problem I have found is that only one form can effectively be kept with the rack. If you have additional forms they need to follow the main one and then be cut and pasted as the first form to use. I hope a future enhancement will allow several forms to be selected at will.



The next area of enhancement was in the Macro support that Zoomracks provides. Macros are built by simply selecting a letter, doing the operation you want the macro to do and then telling the program you are done. The operations you did are recorded in a special macro rack that can then be edited at a later time. The main improvements are the additional commands that can be added to the macro to make it more effective. Some of the functions are: Delay, Show Message (prompt), Goto Fieldscroll, Begin-Until loops, Loop till last Quickcard is read or the last line of a Fieldscroll is processed. Accept keyboard input, and Wait for input. These allow you to do things like select a subset of data and move it to another rack for additional processing (without risking the original data). The only rub here is that the documentation could be much better on how to construct a macro and how to edit an existing one. One hint, what you edit is the name of the Fieldscroll (which is where they store the macro). It is an extremely powerful feature but expect to spend a couple of hours mastering it (with little help from the manual in this case).

Another of the new features is the built-in calculation facility. It provides you with two registers which you can add, subtract, multiply and divide with each other. In addition, values can be loaded to and from a line or lines of a Fieldscroll or the entire Rack. The search capability now has a global option that allows you to effectively "mark" all Quickcards with a particular attribute for further processing.

A great deal of effort has also been spent in the Zoomracks II user interface. It still uses an IBM-like interface (very little use of GEM and the mouse), but the selections you can make are presented in a much cleaner way. You can even pick your own screen colors now. They have also provided a Quick reference card and a template for the function keys. The manual is very good and contains enough examples that a tutorial is hardly needed (though one is provided). The only place the manual fell short of my expectations was in the section on Macros. During the time I owned Zoomracks I, I received excellent support, update information and even a completely re-written manual.

In conclusion, I must say that I was very pleased with Zoomracks II, and have converted all of my Zoomracks I applications over to it (easy to do), and intend to continue using it for my applications. Be warned though, you can't use Zoomracks to build a fully automated accounting and order entry system or other advanced systems of that type. For those, look to dBMan or Regent Base. If, on the other hand, you have membership lists, mailing lists, research notes or other masses of related data you want to keep organized without spending days

setting it up, I think Zoomracks II will more than fit the bill.

THE HULK GREEN VALLEY PUBLISHING by Angela Burns

THE HULK is one of the famed Scott Adams adventures from Green Valley Publishing. Others feature SPIDERMAN, THE HUMAN TORCH, and THE THING. They're just the thing for the youngster or comic book freak on your list. The price is only \$5.95 locally; for that you could provide entertainment for dozens of comic book aficionados!

What about documentation? There is none. Zero. Zilch. Nada. Nothing. All is not lost, though. You don't really NEED any instructions to play this game. That's the beauty of it.

THE HULK is a text adventure based on the Marvel comics character. You begin the game as Dr. Bruce Banner, tied to a chair. Before you can go adventuring, you must become the HULK and escape. At the risk of angering those of you who HATE clues, I'll tell you that the first thing you must do is LEAN OVER. When you do, you will fall off the chair, hit your head, get angry, and become the HULK. Why the hint? It took me, two brothers, a sister-in-law, a husband, a kid, and a neighbor three days to get out of that chair.

Once you get out of the chair, the game actually is as simple to play as the package says it is. The parser is not the most advanced (about 100 words), but there are usually enough clues in the pictures and screen prompts to keep you going.

A nice feature is that if you get killed, you seem to be in Heaven (or some such place), where there is a sign telling you that you made a bad move and a staircase leading back down to earth and the game. Death is not permanent here.

If you are heavily into adventure gaming, this may not be the game for you; it's overly simplistic and doesn't offer much variety in its situations or graphics. But for those die-hard comic book fans, and of course for the kids, it can be fun.



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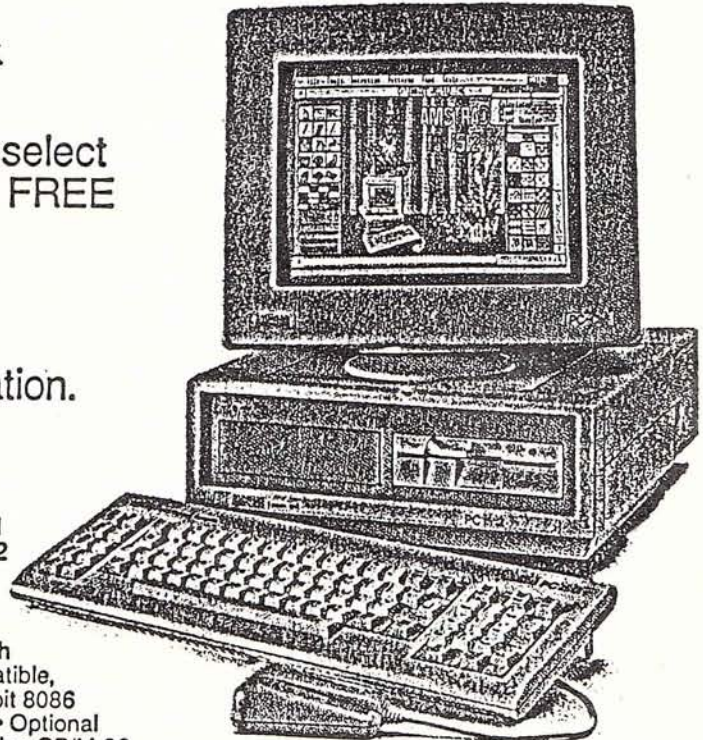
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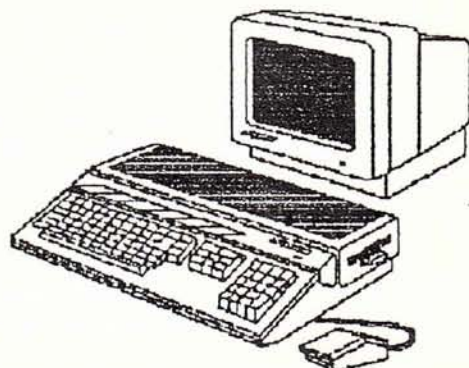
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THE "NEIL HARRIS" SEMINAR

FRIDAY 12:30 PM: Atari's Neil Harris was scheduled to start off the round of speakers and demos. However, despite promises made to us (as well as the radio-listening public), Harris was a no-show for his speech. Instead, we heard from a much-beleaguered Sandi Austin and Dave Staugas (who is in product development).

Sandi and Dave discussed a variety of subjects. Atari's stock is doing well, especially for a company that's been public for less than a year.

Several people expressed concern that with the debut of the MEGA STs that ATARI might abandon the 520 and 1040 lines. Sandi said that as long as people are buying the ST line, ATARI will continue to offer it.

In answer to questions about the IBM emulator, Sandi said a company in Florida called AVANTE GARDE is offering one. ATARI has its own plans for the IBM emulator, but not much information was forthcoming.

As for the 8-bit emulator for the ST, quote Sandi, "The best eight-bit emulator is an eight-bit." So far, any eight-bit emulators have been slow-running and costly, especially when compared to the cost of an eight-bit system.

ATARI will no longer sell from toy stores, hopefully removing some of the "game-machine" stigma from the computer end of the company. Still, it would be stupid for ATARI to discontinue the game machine line, since that part of the business is a money-maker.

No plans are in the works to expand the eight-bit line, unless you count the 65XE game machine with detachable keyboard. This product is to serve as an introduction to computers for the game machine buyer.

In response to a very well-phrased query concerning the absence of both Neil Harris and the laser printer, neither speaker had much to say. Sandi stated that there were not enough ATARI employees to build enough prototypes to take to all the computer fairs. She said that the laser printer that was to be at our ATARIFEST had gone to England, never to return. No word on why Neil Harris bothers to promise these things in the first place if he's not going to follow through.

Miss Austin was very emphatic on the question of mail-order vs. local dealers. She feels that every time we buy from a mail-order company, we are putting a knife in the back of the local dealers. As to the scarcity of ATARI dealers, she

stated that if mail-order were killed off, there would be an abundance of dealers on the local level.

When asked what they would like from ATARI, the overwhelming majority of attendees responded, "MORE USER SUPPORT!" Most agreed that a toll-free number for ATARI would be nice. The response was, "Why should ATARI have a toll-free number when you can get all the information you want from GENIE for \$5 per hour?" Come on, now. Do they really expect us to pay \$5 an hour to get information that even the lowliest soap companies have toll-free numbers for? You bet they do. Yes, folks; you can pay \$4 for a bottle of hair dye and get a toll-free number where they'll spend an hour advising you on its use. But shell out \$1000 for a 1040ST and you've got to subscribe to GENIE to get the same from ATARI.

The expected questions about the settlement between ATARI and Commodore were met with the expected non-answers. After all, one of the terms of the settlement was that the terms would not be revealed, evidently not even to ATARI employees. Suffice it to say that Commodore had to part with a large sum of cash and was allowed to continue to manufacture the Amiga. That's all we're going to get out of them.

I don't mean to shortchange Dave Staugas' part in the conversation; but he was in charge of the more technical answers, 95% of which I didn't understand in the least. When I got home and read my notes, I still didn't understand them. He was very helpful to a number of people who had technically oriented questions for ATARI. Sorry, Dave.

DAFFYNITIONS

PERIPHERAL VISION: A dream about disk drives, printers, modems, and other peripherals. Often experienced by people who have just bought a new peripheral and can't stop using it, even in their sleep.

MODEM: Phrase meaning "more of them", especially in the Deep South, i.e., "Pass me some MODEM yams, Billy Jo Jim Bob."

I/O: One of the moons of Jupiter.

TERMINAL EMULATOR: An emulator that is about to die.



Confessions of a "User"

by Ducky

(Reprinted from the RAM GAZETTE, April 1987)

My name is X_____, and... >sniff!< I started using when I was about twelve... >sniff!< in school. I had friends who could get the stuff for me from the dealer -- it wasn't anything major, y'know... >koff! koff! sniff!< like 8-bits or anything like that. I said I wasn't going to do that stuff. Nah, they could get like 2600's, Colecos, and they had a steady >sniff!< supply of like... carts...

Man, and they were rakin' in some bucks, too, man... Like, they'd get them from this dealer dude for nothing, and sell them for ten times as much. <bukoff! koff! wheeze! sniff! sniff!< They was kickin'.

I tripped off on carts about 4 times a day... An' sometimes, I'd even have a lunch-a-la-cart, too. It got to where I was up to ten carts a day when I first O.D.'d.

Man, I was flyin' that night... >sniff!< I was rollin' millions on PAC and Missiles, and I just blew my brain, man... It was like... I couldn't let go... It just held me...

I'm lucky they found me that night before it was too late. I didn't know what was goin' on 'zactly, but there was this, like, doctor I guess, and he was pullin' the cord on the T.V. and >koff! koff!< like my older brother was there, man, and he hadn't seen me so tripped out before.

An' my brother, man, he had the good stuff, too, and, like, he was really into it, man. He'd do like 100 lines a day, man, and then he would totally space out with his 800. He was usin' Raiders, 'Fenders, and some kinda PAC that was too trippin' for me. He had floppies, and carts, and sticks, and cables, and hardcopies.

I kept >HATchoo! sniff! sniff!< kept tellin' myself, I wasn't gonna get into that stuff, but, like, it happened, man. When I was like, 15, in high school, my brother was pushin' software he was piratin' off a dealer he was workin' for. He kept showin' me the stuff, and how to use it, and I got hooked, man. I mean, they had the stuff all around school, practically in every room, man... CRTs, Trash, Vics, Tandy-Candy, Apples, Commies, Atarias, Eyebeams... the teachers was teachin' the kids how tah do 'em! I ain't kiddin' ya. Man, they practically taught classes on usin' the stuff.

I was trippin'. I knew I had to get, like, help. So I went to this rehab place called CRC (Computer Rehabilitation Center), and they sat me down, and told me to calm down... They took my pulse, and did a few examinations, and checked my eyes... They

asked me my name, and wrote all this stuff down on a paper. They asked me when I had last used, how long I had been usin', and if I had been doin' lines, and other crap. They wrote it all down, and then the Doc said, "Enter all this into the database."

Man, I thought, the whole world's trippin'! These guys are rehab, and they're databasin'!

I tore outta the rehab and ran to the forest, where I was sure I would be able to kick the habit.

>Koff! Sniff!< Them first few weeks was rough. I was convulsin' and writhin' all over the place. I was losin' speed, and I had a bad case of the RUNs. My hands were bleedin' bad, and I got the chills. But now, I'm okay. >sniff!< Whenever someone asks me to do it, I can say no. I've been straight for almost... one hour!

It is a proven fact that computers can cause severe mental illnesses, physical diseases, social disorders, and emotional instability. Many cases have been reported where computers have broken up families, caused loss of jobs, and have driven people mentally insane.

Just remember...YOU HAVE A CHOICE! Before things get too out of hand, say NO to pushers, pirates, dealers, programmers, hackers, and other people who try to offer you computers or computer accessories. If you can't seem to quit, there are devices on the open market now to help you get over those urges and temptations, such as the Rubik's cube, pencil and paper, the abacus, books, board games, sex-drugs-and-rock-and-roll. Face it, nothing is worse or more expensive than a computer habit.

SYNFILE+ BRODERBUND/SYNAPSE by Angela Burns

When it comes to database programs for the 8-bit ATARI, SYNFILE+ is the best I've seen. Although not a new release, it is still widely available from software dealers and by mail-order. BRODERBUND/SYNAPSE sets the retail price at \$49.95; but the local price is a little less, and through the mail it can be had for as little as \$30.



The documentation is also among the best. There's a businesslike vinyl notebook containing all the instructions you'll ever need. The first page is a fold-out reference card summarizing all commands. After the introduction, the rest is divided into six chapters and takes the form of a tutorial. The last chapter consists of a glossary and explanations for error messages. There are error messages specific to the SYNFILE+ program, as well as the standard ATARI error codes.

I think one of the marks of a first class program is when you can sit down at the computer and use the thing **EVEN IF YOU NEVER LOOKED AT THE DOCUMENTATION**. With SYNFILE+, you can do this quite easily. It's menu driven, and the prompts are easy to follow even when you were in too big a hurry to read the background information. I wouldn't recommend doing this for long, though. You miss so many of the special features that way.

SYNFILE+ is compatible with SynCalc, SynTrend, AtariWriter, VisiCalc, and PaperClip. You can use this to great advantage for combining text and data for reports or for a mail-merge in a multiple mailing. It's also a lot of help when someone else has the data you need but in a different program format.

The program will format your disks for you in your choice of single, dual, or double density; and it will support up to four disk drives! This holds down disk swapping somewhat, if you have more than one drive.

With SYNFILE+, you can put together files to organize just about any type of data that need organizing; and one file can be spread over up to sixteen disks! The screen format is free-form: you can put your files together any way you like, with a limit of 66 fields per record. If you work with a file for a while and realize you should have done it a bit differently, there is a feature that allows you to edit the form and merge the one containing all your data with the new form. It's nice to know that you don't have to re-enter each piece of data when something like that happens.

Entering fields is easy when you know how, but you need your documentation here to take advantage of the full capabilities of the program. There are eleven different field types you may use in classifying your data fields. Here's a short summary of them. TEXT, NUMERIC, DOLLAR, and DATE are just what they sound like. So is INTEGER, but you must remember to keep integers in the range of

-32768 to +32767. CUMULATIVE fields keep a running total of the information stored in them. LOOK-UP fields are confined to those in a user-defined table of entries, thus preventing you from entering unwanted data (such as when you want to get all those state abbreviations right). RECORD # fields are automatically assigned - you guessed it - a record number by the computer. (Numbers will begin with one and increase by ones.) COUNTER fields are similar to RECORD # fields in that they, too, have a sequential number assigned to them. The difference is that with a COUNTER field, you decide the starting number and the increment. A CONDITIONAL field will contain a particular entry depending on the outcome of a relationship between two other fields. For instance, if the amount in the SALES field is greater than that in the EXPENSES field, you may wish to have a conditional field contain the word "PROFIT". A COMPUTED field will perform mathematical or relational calculations on other fields and give the result of those calculations. For example, "QUANTITY" times "PRICE" might be "GROSS SALES".

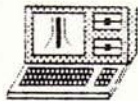
Before you enter any records, the program asks what fields you would like to index on. If you choose your index fields well, it saves humongous masses of time when you want to retrieve data later. And if you find that it would have been better to index by last name than by telephone number, you can re-index at any time.

After you have entered your records, you may retrieve them with only a couple of keystrokes. You can use wildcards here, too, which makes it easier to find things. You can look for JONES, *NES, JO*, or *ON*; all of these will find JONES for you. You aren't limited to one search criterion, either. You can look for all the Joneses in Texas who are age 37 and have red hair, if that's what you want.

Another plus is that you can change a record while it's on screen and it will be saved to disk in its new form as soon as you press <START>. While it is on screen, you may also delete it or send it to the printer.

You can use SYNFILE+ to print reports in the form of lists and labels, as well as for printing out individual records. Lists have the field names across the top, with the information from each field in columns beneath. Labels can be put together any old way, free-style. You may write your reports to screen, printer, or disk. This is handy for mailing labels and for tables in those school reports, among other things.

Just because a program has been around for a while doesn't always mean it's been outclassed by the competition. I would recommend SYNFILE+ for any 8-bit owner who has a need for a database program.



CEBIT '87 ST REPORT

By Christian Schmitz-Moormann

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What is CeBIT?

The CEBIT fair at Hanover supposedly is the world's largest show in bureau and information electronics. CEBIT stands for: Computer, Electronics, Bureau, Information and Telecommunication. On an area of more than 205,000 square meters in 12 halls more than 2200 firms showed their products.

This year's show had snowstorms causing chaotic traffic situations so even the usually reliable Bundesbahn (federal train service) had delays of up to 6 hours. For this reason the show was nicknamed 'Schnee-BIT' (Schnee is German for snow). But anyway, though we arrived late, we finally got there and it became a very interesting day.

HARDWARE...

ATARI presented itself in its newly adopted white-and-blue look and on 50 1040s the software-houses presented their new products.

Before looking at the software I was pulled to the new MEGA-STs and that experience was great. The design was appealing and the keyboard a lot better than my 1040's. Alas, the MEGA's won't hit the stores before May or even June due to a slight timing problem with the shifter (blitter?) chip.

This error results in small vertical black lines on the display. The delay in the MEGA's will probably also affect the PC since ATARI said they would only put out the PC after the MEGA's to show their preferences. But with Jack Tramiel one never can be certain. The last all new product was the laser printer. Connected to one of the MEGA's it was turning out page after page.

The quality was as can be expected from such a machine. The printer emulates a Diablo 630 and supports GDOS. According to a German ATARI representative, they are working on Postscript.

Naturally ATARI was not the only to show new products. On the hardware side there was also HEISE, a German publishing house, that showed its new version of the real time language PEARL/RTOS system which was developed at Hanover university. It was simultaneously showing a graphic (a more sophisticated version of the only too well known

jumping ball) and controlling a robot that balanced a glass of water.

BASIS-O, who formerly built APPLE compatibles, showed an interesting new integrated scanner/printer/plotter and telecopier. Within 4 minutes it is possible to send or receive a letter in handwriting or with graphics on any public or private telephone. The device incorporates an acoustic coupler and can be run on rechargeable batteries. The resolution is 4096 pixels per line and 1125 lines per page.

PRINT-TECHNIK presented its 3rd generation digitizers. Their new Realtizer digitizes a picture with up to 16 gray levels in less than one second. It now plugs into the ROM port.

Its big brother, the PRO 87, digitizes 1024 pixels in 512 lines and 128 gray levels. Both digitizers come with a toolbox software and the PRO 87 also includes the necessary hardware for real color images. PRINT-TECHNIK also offers a Genlock interface for the ST.

Other products are a Meteosat weather satellite receiver, a sound digitizer and a memory oscilloscope.

GTI, a Berlin based society, presented a VME bus interface that plugs into the DMA port and includes a full bus arbitration logic and supports interrupts. The DMA port is pulled through so that a hard disk can still be used.

Another bus that opens your ATARI is produced by RHOTRON. It is plugged onto the CPU and has eight slots.

Since installing the bus voids the warranty RHOTRON also offers a PC-like case in which the ST and the bus and a stronger power supply are incorporated.

Rhotron offers several cards to fill the slots, from 2 Meg RAM to multifunction cards they have just about everything, or how about a math coprocessor?

A bar code reader can be obtained from CDS in Freiburg/Rhine valley. Bar codes invade our lives, they tell you what is in a specific product, which film you just rented and with such a reader you can find out yourself.

LINDY, a maker of printer cables and other computer add ons also presented an oscillograph. It can be used as a sound sampler or as a digital oscilloscope.



The last interesting hardware I wish to present was not on the show, but since Desktop Publishing is becoming more and more important, I feel it should be mentioned.

HEIM-Verlag, another young publishing house, that was the first in Germany to have a magazine purely dedicated to the ST line (STcomputer-mag), offered a program and interface to connect an ST to a CompuGraphic-MCS-layout station called 'transmit'. They use it to make their magazine. And as far as I can tell it seems to work pretty well.

LANGUAGES AND BUSINESS SOFTWARE...

There was very interesting software for the Atari at CEBIT '87 too. I tried to look for things that haven't (yet) reached the other side of the Atlantic. Let's start with new languages. Although there are many already, even more languages are offered for the ST.

Some people even say that there is no other computer with more different languages available - languages not only for developers.

Again, HEIM-Verlag has something for us. It is a powerful version of PROLOG that also supports GEM. The package consists of a compiler/interpreter system with around 140 functions. It is called SALIX-PROLOG and costs around \$120.

More sophisticated is MProlog by Berlin based Epsilon. MProlog is also available on other computers like VAX, Macintosh, IBM etc. It costs around \$500 (?), and is designed for professional use.

SMALLTALK-80 in its version 2.1, which has been ported to the ST by a group from Dortmund-university, is an object oriented language which means that all is done by sending messages between objects.

Another language with an unusual concept is FORTH. LMI put out its FORTH-83 compatible version for the ST. This version is also compatible with other LMI-Forths for other computers. Alas, it does not support GEM, but it at least supports the TOS functions.

A language that becomes more and more interesting for the hobbyist is MODULA-2. MEGAMAX is turning out its version and probably will be a worthy competitor against TDI.

Not only new languages were shown. BASIC in new and more powerful versions enjoys a glorious revival. Three different BASIC systems were shown.

First there was GFA who showed version 2.0 of their interpreter and the almost final version 1.71 of their compiler. Frank Ostrowski, the author of GFA BASIC is now busy writing a GFA Macro Assembler, lets wait and see. GFA will be represented in the US by MICHTRON.

The second BASIC shown was OMIKRON BASIC which comes on a plug-in board for the ROM port. It is even faster than GFA BASIC in most functions, it calculates up to 19 decimals, supports matrices and a C standard GEM interface. It is MBASIC compatible and there only is one problem. By the time it was published, most people had already bought GFA BASIC.

The third newcomer has another nice feature. True-BASIC is available for ATARI, IBM, AMIGA and MAC and between these it is fully portable. Like OMIKRON it offers matrices and it supports the full new ANSI standard. It also has a special library for 3-D graphics.

BUSINESS...

There were quite a few applications presented, but most programs were dedicated to the German market with special attention to the German tax system and other uniquely German necessities. Among those that are useful for any businessman was LOGISTIX, an integrated software package which includes a spreadsheet, data base, time planner and graphics. The demonstration was quite impressive, and the product seems very capable, but I'm not an expert in spreadsheets.

dBMAN was presented in a German version which still has some of the old bugs, of which the most prominent is failure to turn off the blinking cursor upon exiting. But apart from this dBMAN is a very powerful piece of software and especially the incorporated programming language with its abundance of commands and functions hardly leaves any wishes.

Another data base was presented by ATARI itself. ADIMENS-ST is fully GEM integrated (well almost), extremely fast, powerful and a high quality product. To bad it still lacks a programming language, which for me as a developer is indispensable. ATARI said it is underway, though, and should be available by July.

A real goody was a piece of integrated software which was presented by a Yugoslavian firm. Its name is 'STEVE' and it is the most flexible spreadsheet I've seen, yet. One can do everything and nothing with it. It can be used as a spreadsheet naturally, a data base, text editor, graphic editor and



mailing list facility. It allows user definable function keys, two keyboard tables, several fonts, abbreviations and dictionary in the text editor and more. The program will retail in Germany for around DM 250, which is about \$110, but that was the maximum price. I'm waiting for this program!

WORD PROCESSORS, TOOLS, & MODEM SOFTWARE

CEBIT '87 had plenty of Atari word processors to offer. DATA-Becker (their products are sold by ABACUS in the US) presented their new BECKER-text, the new version of TEXTOMAT ST (TEXTPRO). There are no more control codes in the text (WYSIWYG) and it features an indexing function as well as an automatic table of contents. Graphics can be included and computation and tables are incorporated.

Most functions can be reached by either the mouse or a key combination. It still has the C Source option and now offers different fonts.

As usual DATA-Becker has produced several books, some of them are new versions of old titles, and I found several addressing the 'professional' programmer, who still can learn a lot from these books. Of course they have a lot of books for beginners as well, but I don't know which books ABACUS will publish and which are just for the German market.

Again, ATARI offered an alternative to the just described program. I'm talking about the finally released '1st Word Plus'. This program cures most of the errors and oddities of the original 1st Word and adds some nice new features as well. It is going to be really difficult to make a choice between 1st Word Plus and BECKER-text since both have nice features the competitor does not have and as well there are still wishes I have for both.

A third text editor which was not on the show, but has caused a lot of noise is SIGNUM! which is retailed by Application Systems in Heidelberg. SIGNUM! stands somewhere between a word processor and a Desktop Publishing system. It allows up to seven fonts of 128 characters each at the same time. A character can be just about everything and an editor to create new character sets is included. SIGNUM! offers macros and very powerful placing utilities. A reviewer called it a calligraphy system. (Calligraphy is the art of embellishing writing).

TOOLS

G-DATA, based in Dusseldorf, has been known over here for its quality utility software. They have improved some of their old programs and added new ones including a program to make a hard disk capable of auto booting and several programs to make backups of a hard disk which has some nice features including data compression, and file size of more than disk size.

The most powerful tool for disk repair and editing is T.L.D.U. by FOCUS. This firm has made disk monitors for years. T.L.D.U. is fully programmable and the disk comes with some example macros which offer a good way to learn the necessary commands. The programming language is very C-like. The current release does not read or write some copy protected disks, but an update has been promised for June. T.L.D.U. also includes a disassembler and an extensive manual.

KUMA presented its late releases of K-SWITCH and K-RESOURCE.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Finally there is some movement in the German mailbox and telecommunication community. Some good programs were at the show. DELUXE-Term supports GEM and is somewhat equal in comfort to FLASH, but it is possible to use 1200/75 baud which is necessary for BILDSCHIRMTEXT, the German version of videotext services.

Another program, again offered by ATARI themselves, is 1st Terminal, that is completely GEM based in conjunction with PROFIBOX, an excellent mailbox program. It is even possible to select from the PROFIBOX menus using your mouse when utilizing 1st Terminal.

Both programs, the box and the terminal program have been written by Brain-Works from Rosenheim in Bavaria.

CAD GRAPHICS & MIDI SOFTWARE

Harm-Bastian (HABA), which resides in Hamburg, has released its HABACAD-PL layout program. The program addresses only professional hardware developers and the price of DM3000 (\$1200) seems rather hefty. No GEM support, but powerful routing routines.

Quite a bit less expensive and for different customers is CAMPUS V 1.1. This program is fully GEM integrated and has made quite some enhancements to GEM. It is quick and definitely a



very usable drawing tool. Its price of DM700 (\$330) may seem high, but it is really worth it. If only I had a use for it and a plotter!

On the lower end of the price scale is STAD a drawing program for 2-D and 3-D objects. There are up to 15 2-D pages and an extra 3-D part. STAD offers the usual and some extra functions including sending/receiving via the serial port. The 3-D part is object oriented like in Easydraw, the 2-D part is not. However, it is possible to interchange data between the parts, thus allowing for a 2-D object library. STAD also includes animation and 'realtime rotation'. STAD retails for DM 179 (\$90).

Only for color monitors are the two Director programs ART DIRECTOR and FILM DIRECTOR by ANDROMEDA. This Hungarian firm has always been good for terrific programs and these two programs are among their best. The ART DIRECTOR is a drawing and painting program, but it offers most unusual features and is very flexible. The FILM DIRECTOR could be described as a slide show program. But it is much more. Objects that have been created using the ART DIRECTOR are put together in several thousand frames, a background and music can be added and you have made your first animation picture.

If you have the breath, it can take up to three hours. The directors import all kind of other graphic formats and when you add a video digitizer there is no limit to your imagination.

SOUND

Talking of music. There are some powerful new programs that allow even the non-musician to create nice melodies and sound effects.

MUSIX 32, already in an enhanced version, allows programmers to add sound and music to their programs, which is played in background and interrupt driven.

Besides putting in the score it is possible to define the dynamics, the soundwave and to perform transformations. Once you are done you can make a printout and incorporate the music in any C, Pascal, or GFA program. Other languages can also be used. MUSIX 32 has been created by the famous team of TOMMY SOFTWARE.

If you are interested in synthesizers and own an ATARI you won't get around STEINBERG. This firm has produced software and hardware already in the days of Commodore 64, but their ATARI programs and add ons are first rate. They offer everything from a sequencer (TWENTY-FOUR 2.0) to score

printing programs (MASTERSCORE), editing kits (pro16+) and their SOUND WORKS series, powerful tools for several synthesizers which help in designing new sounds, editing and mixing samples and much more.

GAMES

Although CEBIT is dedicated more to the office than to leisure there were some games. MICRODEAL showed among more serious pieces of software their KARATE KID II and ELECTRONIC POOL programs. TOMMY SOFTWARE showed their products TRASHHEAP and DIZZY WIZARD which seemed quite interesting.

FINISHING UP

A program I could not classify, but which I found a very appealing possibility to learn is 'SKYPLOT plus'.

Just about anything that has to do with astronomy is in this program. Calculate eclipses, conjunctions, trails of selected comets or planets and stars. Two data bases for the stars, one with 610 and one with 15,383 stars are integrated. It is possible to find out how the night sky above your house looks like, by putting in your geographical position. This program has much more possibilities. It retails for DM 200 (\$100).

I know that many things were described much too superficially, but this report was intended to give you an idea of what is happening in ATARI's stronghold. ATARI has sold over 120,000 ST's (all models) in Germany alone. ATARI Germany has made up for almost 30% of ATARI's sales in 1986.



8-BIT VS. ST WHAT'S ALL THE FUSS?

by Angela Burns

On ATARIFEST Saturday, I heard an ST owner say to an 8-bit owner that she wouldn't be "smart" until she had purchased an ST. Later that same day, I heard an 8-bit owner remark that the STers just abandoned the old faithful earlier machines, along with their users, as soon as they had the chance.

When are you guys out there going to stop fighting? Is someone going to notice that each machine has its advantages and disadvantages? That owning an XL or XE or even an old 400 doesn't mark the user as hopelessly outdated and even senile? That, by the same token, ST owners are not automatically techno-nerds with ice in their hearts? GET REAL, PEOPLE!

As the proud, new possessor of a 520ST, I am naturally excited with the expanded memory, the enhanced graphics capability, and other neat features of my new "toy". I even get a kick out of the incredibly quiet drive; instead of listening to it grind, I have to watch the light to see if it's really working. I'm in love!

HOWEVER, as the still proud owner of a battle-scarred 800XL without so much as a memory upgrade, I'm not ready to set it out with the trash next Thursday! There's still a lot of life in the old lady, even if she doesn't look like much any more. We're happy with all our addresses, magazine collections, and disk indexes on SYNFILE+. There are still things I write with TEXTPRO, an outstanding public domain word processor (available in our club library). And we just indexed the video tapes last week (on another club disk). Not to mention the zillions of games we've got!

There are some distinct advantages to keeping the old machine after springing for an ST. If my drive goes out, I no longer have to suffer agonizing withdrawal pains while it's away. (By the same token, I don't have to worry so much what the kids are going to do to the XL next. I can live until it gets fixed.) Neither do I have to stare at the same six pieces of software until my disk library grows; I have plenty of variety in the last two years' worth of software choices. And, perhaps best of all, I can spend as much time as I want on the ST without feeling like a rotten mother for not letting the kids on; they can use the XL.

I don't just think it would be stupid of me to let the XL go; but given today's prices for 8-bit systems, I think many ST owners could do worse than to pick one up while the picking's good! They can be very handy to have around, whether you

have children or not.

So let's quit all this silly squabbling, shall we? What we have here is two marvelous examples of modern technology, each superb in its own way. If we must feel snobbish about something, let's pick on the poor you-know-what owners who paid over seven bucks per K! They're in worse shape than any ATARI owner I've ever come across.

HOW TO SEW A BUTTON ON A FRIED EGG

by Calamity Jane

(Reprinted from the RAM GAZETTE, April 1987)

Now that I have your attention: The continuing saga of "The Care and Feeding of Your Computer..." About five months ago, Dan Bates gave a talk on surge protection that made everyone who didn't have protection on their computer system feel guilty.

Every day, all the time, small and large power surges are eating at the guts of our ATARIs. To get a proper surge protector, you don't plunk down ten bucks on one you find mixed with that "last minute", "must have" jumble of stuff at the check-out line at K-Mart!

With the purchase of an ST for the BBS, I decided now was the time. I mean, it's one thing to fry a 130 but quite another to find the ST and hard drive have become crispy critters.

So... taking Dan's advice and hoping to take him up on the discount he offered Club members, I headed toward ComputerLand.

I left with the feeling of doing all I could to protect my electronic friend. Tucked under my arm was a Brook's Surge and Noise Suppressor. (Model AT6-6 for those who like details.) There are 45,000 thunderstorms in the world every day... for those of you who want even more detail! With a six-outlet power strip, the three-stage surge protector specifies being, 1>6 zener diodes, 2>3 metal oxide varistors and 3>1 gas tube arrestor. Response time <5pico seconds (sounds fast)! Maximum voltage will not exceed 400V plus 25% for a 10,000 AMP surge due to the gas tube arrestor.

Surge Dissipation: common mode 140 joules, normal mode 70 joules. Gas tube arrestor will short any surge >6000 volts, therefore limiting surge dissipation to a maximum of 140 joules common and 70 joules normal mode. Some of this last paragraph didn't make a whole lot of sense. It sure impressed the Gunning's Fog and Flesch's Index, though! To make some sense of all that:



STAGE 1 - the zener diodes offer fast response time and low clamping level.

STAGE 2 - Metal Oxide Varistors (MOVs) absorb and dissipate high voltage surges.

STAGE 3 - The gas tube arrestor absorbs and dissipates severe power surges.

The noise filtering system is designed to provide the widest range of noise filtering.

To convince you even further: a surge is a brief, intense increase of electricity. A severe surge can melt heat sensitive microprocessors. A good surge protector instantly dissipates harmful surges, filters out noise interference, and produces a "clean" flow of current. The surge protector, however, will not protect against a direct lightning strike.

For the Brook's Surge Stopper Hot-Line call 1-800-523-1551. \$114.95. Made in the U.S.A.!

G.I.S.T.

Antic Software

Reviewed by Ed Seward

Reprinted from the June issue of Current Notes

G.I.S.T. is by Gary Levenberg and Lee Actor. This is the product whose prototype was the basis of their column in the Winter START magazine. The purpose of G.I.S.T. is to provide an easy means of designing better sounds and then including them in a program.

The package comes with the GEM based sound editor, 50 sample sounds and the code necessary to use G.I.S.T. for five C language systems: Alcyon C (and thus Mark Williams C), GST C, Lattice C and Megamax C. After some begging, pleading and groveling, I learned that Antic will be adding the code for using G.I.S.T. with OSS' Personal Pascal. This addition will be placed in the public domain, since it will be useless without the G.I.S.T. package itself.

On first viewing the directory of the G.I.S.T. directory, one sees five folders and three files. There is a folder, labelled for four of the C's, that contains the code for using G.I.S.T.. There is a folder just containing the code for the demo program and another folder containing the 50 sample 'SND' files. The three files are the G.I.S.T. program, resource and documentation.

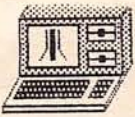
The first thing I tried was G.I.S.T..PRG, the sound editor. The screen comes up with three boxes on the left side of the screen and the menu bar. The boxes allow one to play a sound or sounds in a continuous cycle and to vary the length of one cycle. The next box down allows one to set the duration of a sound. The bottom box allows one to change the note being used for the sound or sounds.

The menu bar has four main headings besides the 'ACC' column. The headings are 'File', 'Edit', 'Play' and 'Misc'. The 'File' heading is pretty standard. The 'Edit' offers one a reminder on quick commands for editing the volume, frequency or noise. Besides the quick commands, one can also just double-click on the appropriate part of the display for a sound, and one will be shown the editing screen for the volume frequency or noise.

The first thing I did was to load in one of the sample sound files. One should allow a LOT of time to waste with this. There isn't any problem - the sounds can be modified so easily that I spent some hours just fooling around with various combinations. While there are 50 sound samples included, I must mention that through the monitor speaker about 15-20 of them sounded so alike as to be indistinguishable. That group is variations of a piano. The reason for this is that it makes it much easier to know which parameter to change. I found the way the editor is set up to be very friendly and simple to use. Within the editor, one can load in up to three sound files at any one time. The sounds can be played either individually or 'ganged' so that all of them are used. I should mention, before I forget, that G.I.S.T. will accept input from a MIDI keyboard and play the sounds back through the MIDI.

When a 'SND' file is loaded, a window pops up displaying the ADSR (Attack, Decay, Sustain and Release) envelope, the LFO (Low Frequency Oscillator) for both frequency and volume, the frequency curve and the noise settings. All of these can be very easily edited using the mouse. I should mention that G.I.S.T. makes use of three ADSR envelopes and three LFO's per sound channel. This replaces the single envelope generator that is burned into the sound chip.

Now, what would you use G.I.S.T. for? Well, I sure hate to construct the code for sounds from scratch. Also, as I mentioned above, G.I.S.T. reprograms the sound chip and helps provide what the programmers NSQ - "Near Synthesizer Quality". If one is designing a game, then one can easily get away from the 'Asteroids' type of sound effects which seems to be very common in the public domain and some commercial products. The disk is not copy-protected, and the package works in both medium and high resolution. In my opinion, most people working on adding sounds to a program they are writing will benefit from using G.I.S.T. both in time savings and the resulting quality of the sounds.



NEWSLETTER SUBMISSIONS

Submissions are welcome in ANY form. However, it is extremely helpful if submissions conform to one of these formats:

1. ASCII files with no formatting information
2. On ST format disk
3. Uploaded to either of the DAL-ACE BBS's
4. Publishing Partner file

CURRENT DAL-ACE SCHEDULE

Sunday June 28 Newsletter Production
Meeting - 1:00 P.M.
James Duke's house

Saturday July 11 Main Meeting

Sunday July 26 Newsletter Production
Meeting - 1:00 P.M.
James Duke's house

Saturday Aug 8 Main Meeting

INFOMART DIRECTIONS

From North Dallas, take either Stemmons (I-35 E) or the Dallas North Tollway. From Stemmons, take the Oak Lawn exit, turn east (left) and park at Infomart, on the left just after you go under Stemmons. If you're using the tollway, exit right on Wycliff, go left on Harry Hines to Oak Lawn and turn right. Infomart will be on your right. From the south, take Stemmons north then follow above. Infomart is the big white steel and glass building south of the other 'marts. The main entrance faces Stemmons. GUESTS ARE WELCOME!!!!

*** MEETING INFORMATION ***

11:00 - 12:00	Club Sales
11:00 - 11:30	BBS Users Meeting
12:00 - 1:00	Main Meeting
1:00 - 1:30	New Users Sig
1:00 - 2:30	ST Sig
1:30 - 2:30	8 Bit Sig

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Personal sale ads are free to members.
See editor for details.

COMMERCIAL AD RATES

Full Page	\$35.00
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Quater Page	\$15.00

Long term rates are available. Contact our advertising manager for details.

Ads must be CAMERA READY. Copy must be recieved PRIOR TO the production meeting. Mail copy to address on back page, or contact the advertising manager. Copy received after the deadline will be run the following month. For contract advertisers, if no new copy is received by the deadline, then the most recent ad will be re-run.

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Editors Scott Phelan 492-2731
 Angela Burns 790-2643
Ad Manager ... Don Adams 350-2206
BBS James Duke(ST) 986-7753
 Michael Trombley 255-8833
8 Bit Library ... Michael Duke 414-1132
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Dallas Atari Computer Enthusiasts

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