XIO3

Inside

ATARI®

NEWS AND RUMOURS

by Rowland Grant

*T*here are rumours that all the assets of the former Atari Corp may be sold soon to one buyer. Other rumours say that Jack Tramiel is carrying out the negotiations for JTS. Up to now JTS has licensed rights to various game titles and other items, although the games Asteroids and Battlezone may have been sold to Activision. However the rumours suggest an outright sale of everything, a transfer of ownership of Atari's remaining assets.

It's probably a good idea to sell Atari before JTS goes bankrupt, rather than afterwards. JTS might survive, but it needs a miracle. JTS Corporation reported a net loss of $60.6 million for the third quarter ending November 2nd, 1997. This is a loss of $0.37 a share. The loss is more than the company is worth on the stock market (currently 19 to 25 cents a share). Of course the book value of JTS may be greater. But figure in the secured debt, and a bankruptcy court wouldn't find much to pay the other creditors.

Part of this large loss is a charge of $38 million for the abandonment its 3-inch hard drive models. JTS had pinned its hopes on selling these drives for use in portable computers. While lower in cost, the 3-inch drives are wider and thinner than the usual 2.5-inch drives. So a laptop computer would have to be redesigned to use the JTS drive. It seems that few portable computer makers were prepared to tie their manufacturing and design to one hard drive supplier. JTS does have a line of standard hard drives, however the market for these is glutted. All the major hard drive makers are reporting reduced profits. Seagate, the industry leader, is closing one of its manufacturing plants. While JTS does undersell the US makers by a small amount, I've noticed that some Korean and

GCACE EXECUTIVE

President: Gordon Hooper	475-0857
E-Mail: ua558@victoria.tc.ca	
Vice President: John Picken	598-2386
Secretary: Rowland Grant	598-3661
Treasurer: John Towler	382-5083
E-Mail: j.towlerl@genie.geis.com	
Editor: Gordon Hooper	475-0857
ST Librarian: Ted Skrecky	598-6173
E-Mail: ud264@victoria.tc.ca	
8-Bit Librarian: Cliff Bouvette	598-3904
E-Mail: yd556@freenet.victoria.bc.ca	
BBS Sysop: Bob Nex	642-6358
E-Mail: bobnex@direct.com	
Director: George Rose	652-0572
Director: Craig Carmichael	384-2626
E-Mail: omen@islandnet.com	
Director: Bruce Funk	656-1709

CREDITS

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MEMBERSHIP

Membership dues are $25 per family per year. Membership includes a subscription to this newsletter, access to over 1000 8-bit public domain disks and 199 ST disks and increased time and upload/download ratio on the club BBS, Pothole. It can be reached by modem at (604) 642-6795.

MEETINGS

Meetings will be held in the Nellie McClung branch of the Library at 3950 Cedar Hill Road (corner of McKenzie) on the fourth Thursday of each month. All meetings are at 7 pm. There is no meeting in the month of December.

EDITORIAL

The reason that the newsletter is late this edition was that your intrepid editor took a 1 week vacation in the Victoria General Hospital because my diabetes was out of control. Due to the many cutbacks in beds caused by lack of government funding, I was released from hospital while still unable to eat and requiring an IV, which caused another week spent in bed at home. And people wonder why I advocate overthrowing our B..C. government and Vancouver Island seceding from Canada, setting up as a separate country. It would be a duty-free port and the Legislature would be turned into a casino, high class cocktail lounge and low cost brothel. Rich Yankee tourists would flock here to embellish our economy and all would be well here in La La Land.

FOR HELP CALL:

Club Information:	Gord Hooper	475-0857
	Rowland Grant	598-3661
8-Bit Applications:		
Bellcom disks	John Picken	598-2386
DOS & Operating System	John Picken	598-2386
Games	Ted Skrecky	598-6173
Programming	John Picken	598-2386
	Bob Nex	642-6358
Word Processing	John Picken	598-2386
16/32 Bit Applications:		
Desktop Publishing	Gord Hooper	475-0857
Games	Ted Skrecky	598-6173
Telecommunication	Ted Skrecky	598-6173
TOS & Operating System	John Towler	382-5083
Word Processing	Gord Hooper	475-0857
Hardware:		
Repairs, Sales, Upgrades	Steve Lemmen	595-7811
Modem & printer setup	John Picken	598-2386
Other Computers:		
Apple Macintosh	John Towler	382-5083
Commodore Amiga	Ted Skrecky	598-6173
IBM's and clones	Rowland Grant	598-3661
	Bob Nex	642-6358

PEEKing Around

by Gordon F. Hooper

...Welcome to new corresponding member MEL MOFFAT from Inglis, Manitoba. Mel has been in Victoria recently, and has attended a couple of meetings, but will be going home shortly. Also welcome back to renewing members ARNOLD NAPP and BOB AHRENS... After our elections at the January Annual General Meeting, we have the usual reprobates back as the executive, with the happy addition of BRUCE FUNK as a director. I couldn't talk him into running for president, but now I have a year to work on it. If I fail, I'm considering declaring myself Dictator-for-Life and making some fundamental changes to our constitution. I may not have liked Trudeau, but I liked how he ran the country to his own advantage and will attempt to run the club the same way until I am deposed...

BOB NEX says he is still working on restoring the hard drive so he can run the Pothole BBS again. We'll probably see it back about the same time he shows up at a meeting and pays his back dues... I did the unthinkable and bought an I Burn Money machine, but I will use it only for work. My TT still is in my main computer station and will be used as my everday computer. I now understand why Mac and Atari owners complain about Windows 95. It truly bites the big one... GEORGE ROSE is off on another leg of his never-ending holiday, this time setting down in Hawaii. I find it interesting that he always seems to end up at beaches. Enjoying life, aren't you, George?... JOHN PICKEN is taking a course on business. I'm anxious to hear the language from John the first time his teacher informs him how to use the mouse on the computer. The teacher will learn a lot of naughty words as John explains why command lines and batch files are superior to mice and icons... Don't forgot to ignore your standards of decency and spy on fellow GCACE members, then phone GORD at 475-0857. If I can sink to these depths, I expect SOME of you to follow...

Videogame Machine Review '98

by Doug Skrecky

*T*he editor's of Electronic Games Magazine have once again this year come out with a video game buyers guide. As in previous years there were several reviewers rating videogame machines. I have used the average of these to give an overall rating for individual machines over the past 4 years.

The general rule seems to be that when EGM's rating of a machine dips below 5, the machine is discontinued the next year. Of the 11 machines with ratings of less 5, no less than 9 were RIP the next year. The only exceptions to this rule were Sega's Genesis and Atari's Jaguar, which took two years to self-destruct, possibly helped by a legal settlement Atari recieved from Sega.

The biggest surprise this year was the demise of Sega's Game Gear. This was ditched after Sega came out with a portable version of its Genesis home unit, which is itself getting a little long in the tooth. Seems it is possible to pump a little life into an old system by remaking it into a portable.

Nintendo seems to have followed this strategy one step further, by reworking its Game Boy portable into an even smaller "Pocket" Game Boy. For videogame machines small is beautiful. Too bad Atari never saw this, or its Jaguar game machine might still be around.

What strikes me the most is the high mortality rate among the videogame machines which never sold in large quantities. Without exception these have proven to be busts, possibly because of a lack of software.

When I look again at the price of the

MACHINE	RATINGS			
Home units	1995	1996	1997	1998
Sony PlayStation		9.3	8.4	9.1
Nintendo 64			9.0	7.8
Super NES	8.9	7.5	8.1	7.1
Sega Saturn		7.3	7.0	6.5
Sega Genesis	7.3	5.3	4.2	5.1
Neo-Geo	7	6.8	4.7	RIP
3DO	7.5	6.3	3.4	RIP
Sega 32X	7.8	2.8	RIP	
Jaguar	4.5	2.5	RIP	
Sega CD	5	2.5	RIP	
Philips CD	6.3	RIP		
Laseractive	3.8	RIP		
Amiga CD	2.3	RIP		
NES	2	RIP		

MACHINE	RATINGS			
Portable Units	1995	1996	1997	1998
Nomad			6.6	7.3
Pocket Game Boy			6.6	6.3
Game Com.				4.8
Game Gear	6.8	7.3	5.7	RIP
Virtual Boy			5.3	2.4	RIP
Game Boy	5.5	4.8	RIP	

Without exception these have proven to be busts...

other asiatic manufacturers can match its prices. Trying to survive, JTS has reduced its production and reduced its staff. It is still grasping for the elusive profit. The hard drive industry seems to go through a 3-year cycle, and it's near the bottom. JTS has not been able to make a profit over the last three years when the market was good. Now what?
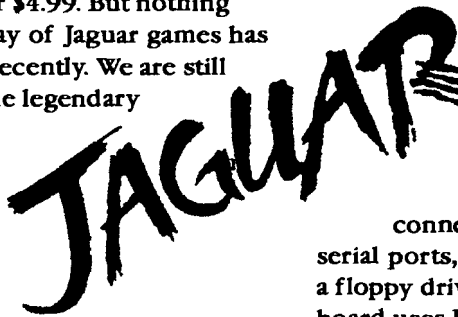
Atari game fans are hoping that the JTS Atari division will find a buyer and a saviour. Reviving Atari is probably too much to hope for. The residual Atari market has become very thin. Jaguar game systems and games have been selling at very low prices during the holiday season. New Jaguars and new JagCD's were selling for $29.95, and Jaguar games were costing $9.99. One store sold Jaguars for $19.99 and games for $4.99. But nothing new in the way of Jaguar games has been issued recently. We are still waiting for the legendary BattleSphere. And the thors are doggedly continuing to work to its final perfection and completion (in their spare time). They vow that Battlesphere will be released. If so, I suspect that it will be the last Jaguar game. There is still a small loyal Jaguar following. They have pre-ordered sufficient numbers of CatBox interfaces from ICD to justify a production run. Tom Harker had difficulties getting the CatBox cases on time, but I understand that the orders were filled before the end of the year.

The developers of the original Jaguar game console and a few kindred spirits began their own project shortly after they left Atari. This has become known as project X, a game machine. It was recently reviewed in Next Generation magazine. The technology is quite advanced, two years ahead of all the others, they say. The project X team was looking for a sponsor. Now they have found one in Phillips, a company that has released at least two game systems in the past. You'd think that Phillips would know better. However, seeing how much Sony (its CD partner) made on the Playstation system, perhaps Phillips felt that it is time for another turn.

There are other projects of greater interest to Atari computer users. A new clone that will run TOS software has been displayed at the Atari Messe in Germany. This is the Milan 2000 by Falke Verlag. So far the Milan seems to be a completed motherboard and an attractive brochure showing the Milan 2000 in a tower case. The Milan 2000 will use a Motorola 68030 running at 50 Mhz or a 68040 running at 64 Mhz. Like most computers nowadays, the motherboard is populated by a few large chips and plenty of expansion slots. The Milan has 4 slots for EDO SIMM cards, 3 ISA card slots, 4 PCI slots, 2 IDE connectors, a parallel port, two serial ports, a keyboard connector and a floppy drive connector. The mother board uses ET4000 graphics cards. TOS 6 is provided in flash ROM. Falke Verlage announced that they had acquired the rights to TOS 4.92 and also the rights to continue developing this TOS. I presume that TOS 6 is a modified TOS 4.92 which can handle the 68040 and the additional slots. In addition, TOS 6 is supposed to handle long file names, and use the right mouse button on icons to get a pop-up menu. Disk file operations are handled in the background. Falke Verlage is working on a PCI card that will enable the Milan to handle Falcon software. There are no MIDI or SCSI ports. One has to get standard PCI cards for these. The price quoted for the Milan is 1500 DM or less than $1000 U.S. However it is not clear what one gets for this. Perhaps no more than a populated motherboard with a 68040 processor. The Milan 2000 looks like an economy version of the HADES computer. If it is actually produced, the Milan will be a welcome addition to the TOS computer family.

Apparently the Atari Microbox was a design similar to the Milan. The Microbox was a Falcon using the Motorola 68040 and a 32bit bus. It required expansion slots for MIDI, sound, SCSI etc. Unfortunately, Atari never got it to work properly. I understand that Steve Cohen of Wizztronics now has the prototype Microbox. Steve is trying to buy up TOS. He has the rights to TOS 2.06 and 3.06, and can sell them unmodified. He also has the rights to TOS 4.04 and 4.92, and he can sell modified versions. One difficulty is that Atari cannot assign its rights to modify GEM, since GEM is (was) the property of Digital Research (DR). But DR was sold to Novell Inc. The CEO and founder of Novell, Ray Noorda, left to start a new company called Caldera. Ray doesn't like Microsoft and he felt that DR had suffered from Microsoft's practices. So he bought DR's assets from Novell and began lawsuits against Microsoft. The former DR-DOS is now very much enhanced as OpenDOS. This is available free to private users. GEM source code is freely available also. One would assume that permission to alter GEM could be obtained. But then there is DR's agreement with Apple from which only Atari was exempted. It all gets so complicated (sigh!).

In the meantime, Wizztronics is making new ISA type ROM boards for Emulators Inc. They are to be used with the new Gemulator 98 software. This board has sockets for TOS ROM chips. It also has sockets for Macintosh ROMs. That's right, Gemulator also emulates the Macintosh, and it supports system 7, something that Dave Small didn't manage with Spectre. Gemulator 98 only supports Atari ST and STe emulation at present using TOSes up to 2.06. And it only emulates the older Macs using 128K ROMs. However, there are ROM sockets for the TT and the Mac II series. Software emula-

tion of these 68030 systems is promised in a future upgrade. The new Gemulator 98 was demonstrated at Macworld in San Francisco in January.

The Macintosh is respected as a powerful graphics oriented computer. Adobe and others have released excellent software for graphics and publishing for the Mac. Software titles such as Pagemaker, Photoshop are almost industry standards. However, I understand that comparable software is available for TOS computers. Software good enough not only to justify retaining your old TOS computer, but even to upgrade to a Hades or other TOS clone. Products by Digital Arts in Germany can match and (maybe) surpass Adobe's software. They have now released version 6.1 of DAUs Layout, in English too. The complete Layout software costs about $1000 US (much like the competition). However the software is made up of a number of modules that can be bought separately. So depending on the job you wish to do, Layout could cost much less. Chris Krowchuk of Computer Direct has set up a division called Digital Arts Publishing (North America) to market DA's products. He has also moved Computer Direct to a new location in Edmonton, but the phone numbers are unchanged.

A number of users have reported difficulties using the Wensuite integrated internet package. Produced by OXO systems in France, the latest version (Wensuite 2.30) seems to be getting better reviews. ST Magazine praises Wensuite for its speed, ease of use and low price. However they found that its browser was not as powerful as CAB 2.5 (sold by ASH). OXO has released other software such STudio 1024 for the Falcon. This seems to be a very precise sound digitiser. OXO also handles hardware. They seem to be an agent for Hades computers. In addition, OXO sells what looks like the

motherboard of an improved Falcon called Falcon Evolution. They use the original Atari chip set to ensure Falcon compatibility.

Wensuite sells for a fairly modest 290 francs. However, if you succeed in getting various programs to work together, Internet access could cost a lot less. A good combination of freeware and shareware would be STinG, CAB 1.5, Antmail and Newsie. There are other combinations available too. At least one user reports that he has given up on using the commercial PPP-Connect program that comes with CAB 2.5, and has started using STinG for dialling and connecting to Web providers. Atari Times newsletter has rated Peter Rottengatter's STinG package as the best PD software of 1997. Mind you, CAB 2.5 was rated the best commercial release. I notice that Systems For Tomorrow have sold out their shipment of CAB 2.5/PPP Connect, in fact most of it was pre-ordered. Obviously there is still a demand for good quality TOS software.

Systems for Tomorrow is also selling chro_MAGIC's RAM Gizmo 14MB upgrade card for Falcon computers for about $100 US. This reflects the recent drop in RAM prices (but they are going up again soon I hear). It does not signify the demise of chro_MAGIC Software, which is still producing and supporting its MIDI software titles such as Pianistics and Guitaristics. chro_MAGIC also carries software from other sources such as the Electric Cow MIDI Series, CAB, MagiC and HD Driver.

UMAX is a maker of PC and Mac clones. It also makes a series of lower priced SCSI scanners. Homa Systems is providing software drivers, under the ScanX label, so that TOS computers can use these scanners. Drivers for the UMAX Astra 1200 and Vista S-12 series are available from Homa, or Systems for Tomorrow, priced at $49.99.

While TOS computers don't attract virus makers very often, Richard Karsmakers is continuing to upgrade his software to handle the latest threats. Now called Ultimate Virus Killer 2000, his software has reached version 8. It

would seem that there are over 100 viruses that can disrupt TOS computers. Ultimate Virus Killer can get 'em all. And it's only $10 from the author.

Sadly, Oregon Research is closing. It is liquidating its inventory of Atari hardware and software. The owner (Robert Luneski) can no longer make a living selling Atari (or Amiga) software. He and his co-workers have been forced to take other jobs. Oregon Research was an agent for HiSoft products in North America. It also produced its own software: Diamond Back and Diamond Edge utilities for disk and hard drives. Even the source code for the Diamond utilities is for sale.
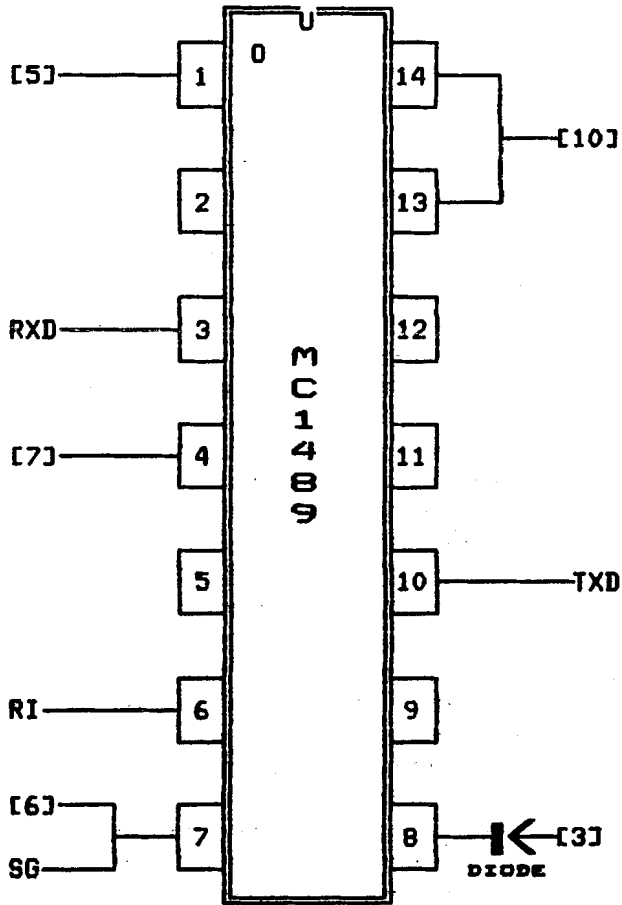
Others producing TOS software have had a similar experience. Version 3 of the impressive Apex Media drawing and animation software may never be released. The main programmer at Black Scorpion Software has left to get a more secure job doing PC stuff. However, Titan Designs/Black Scorpion Software is still in business selling other software such as DA Layout in Britain.

I was loaned a copy of ST Magazine no. 121, November 1997. It is published by La Terre du Milieu in France. This magazine is in French of course. It is an attractive magazine, printed in full colour on glossy paper, all 84 pages of it. ST Magazine is sold by subscription and on the newsstand. There is nothing like it available now in the English speaking world. There are articles in all areas of interest, each has its own "notebook". For instance there is music, communications, utilities, graphics, publishing, demos, programming, peripherals, shareware, games and hades computers. Under the title "divers" there is an interesting illustrated article showing how to put a Falcon computer in a tower case. There are two ways: the easy way and one "pour les plus courageux". They also mention that Woller and Linker have developed an interface that enables you to attach a parallel Zip drive to a ST. It uses the cartridge port, as the ST's parallel port

The Rick Cortese SIO2PC Interface

From comp.sys.atari8 26 September 1995
Atari SIO pins are indicated by number in brackets; PC connections use RS-232 designator. Use the table opposite to determine which pins to use on the PC.

```
              _____ U _____
  [5]——————| 1  0      14 |——┐
           |              |  ├——[10]
        ——| 2          13 |——┘
           |   M          |
  RXD——————| 3  C       12 |
           |   1          |
  [7]——————| 4  4       11 |
           |   8          |
           |   9          |
        ——| 5          10 |——————TXD
           |              |
  RI———————| 6           9 |
           |              |
  [6]——┐   |              |
       ├——| 7           8 |——►|◄——[3]
  SG———┘   |_____|   DIODE
```

If the cable is never to be used with other peripherals like a 1050 you can omit the diode. If you do use a diode (recommended), ensure that it has low forward voltage. Any germanium diode, and probably, most small signal diodes like the 1N914 will do. Bob Nex and I have built these. The performance is excellent, especially under SpartaDOS.

Pin-Outs For DB25 and DB9 Connectors

DB25	RS232	DB9	USAGE
2	TXD	3	Transmit data
3	RXD	2	Receive data
4	RTS	7	Request to send
5	CTS	8	Clear to send
6	DSR	6	Data set ready
7	SG	5	Signal ground
8	CRX	1	Carrier detect
20	DTR	4	Data trm. ready
22	RI	9	Ring indicator

Atari Serial Port (looking in)

```
        2   4   6   8   10  12
      /  0   0   0   0   0   0  \
     /  0   0   0   0   0   0   0 \
       1   3   5   7   9   11  13
```

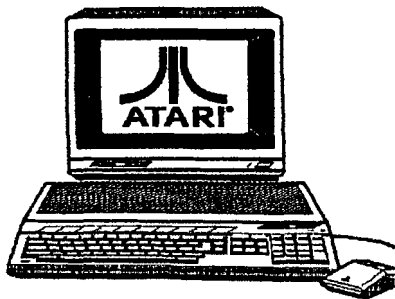| PIN	USUAL COLOR [1]	USAGE
1	Brown	Clock in
2	Pink	Clock out
3	Orange	Data input
4	Black	Signal ground
5	Green [2]	Data output
6	Bare wire	Chassis ground
7	Violet [3]	Command
8	Yellow	Motor control
9	Light blue	Proceed
10	Dark blue	+5 V/Ready
11	White	Audio input
12	Red	+12 V [4]
13	Grey	Interrupt

[1] Open the plug housing and verify these colors for your cable
[2] Is dark green if two green wires
[3] Is light green if two green wires
[4] Not connected on XL/XE computers

SIO2PC

by John Picken

is incomplete. The interface and the software cost just under 600 francs (about the price of a SCSI interface).

La Terre du Milieu, also sells TOS computers, associated hardware and a very wide range of Atari software. So ST Magazine does serve as a valuable advertising outlet for the publisher. But the Atari market must exist as there are a number of other advertisers. La Terre du Milieu also organized the third Forum des Applications Atari which took place in Paris in December. The Forum had 3000 visitors last year. This year they lined up forty exhibitors of which twenty-five are from France. One exhibitor, Image Application, is from Canada. It has been a few years since this size of Atari exhibit has been possible in North America. As so much TOS software comes from Germany, we tend to ignore the activities of the Atari community in France. It is still very much alive.

While Atari made very little impact on the business market in North America, some companies did buy ST's and many are still in use. Curt Vendel noted that Pitney Bowes, the postage meter company, is still using Atari Mega STE's extensively. Martin-Eric Racine reports that Reseau Admission, a ticket vending network in Quebec, still uses ST's for book keeping and ticket printing. It may be that these companies are using custom software. In that case, there would be little reason to switch to another computer as long as the ST's keep running. And they do seem to keep running.

8-BIT AFFAIRS — CDROM For The 8-Bit!

by Rowland Grant

Atari 8-bit publications in English seems to be fading. New Atari User has not been published for awhile. Then Page 6 Publications did not attend the All Micro Show for the first time, even though the show took place not far from Stafford (Page 6's home). This stimulated rumours that New Atari User was finally defunct. However, it seems that editor Les Ellingham will send out the next issue in January, and subsequent issues are promised on a more regular basis. New Atari User is now a part time activity for Les. In North America, work is still underway on issue No. 8 of Atari Classics. Editor Bob Woolley assures us that it will be published and distributed eventually.

The ICD web page has begun to advertise Atari 8-bit products. I understand that ICD was advertising Rambo-XL memory upgrade boards for $14.95. Apparently ICD stock of Rambo was bought up by one person a couple of months ago. However Tom Harker of ICD is reported to be considering a run of SpartaDOS X cartridges. Now ICD did sell all of its 8-bit interest to FTe a few years ago. However, FTe has gone out of business and Mike Hohan (or Hohman) has gone into hiding. There are rumours that Mike didn't complete all the financial aspects of the deal, so ICD repossessed its copyrights and patents.

There has been discussion about establishing a web site devoted to Atari 8-bit documentation. I noticed that someone is working on posting De Re Atari (corrected and modernized) in instalments. Some time ago there was a project to put Mapping the Atari on the web. Author Ian Chadwick supported this venture, but nothing has been heard of it since. Ernest Schreurs is still looking for more material for Pooldisk 2, a CD of 8-bit material. Ernest points out that it would be useful to have all the 8-bit text material on CD as well as online. He is suggesting that 8-bit text

articles would be welcome additions to his Pooldisk project, including past articles from Atari user group newsletters.

Marty Van Nisselroy reports that he completed Thomas Grasel's "Two Computer Interface". This allows one to connect two Atari 8-bits to one chain of SIO devices. The interface electronically switches the device chain to the computer in use. Bob Woolley reports that he set up similar arrangements for local schools. No electronic components were required if 1200XL's were used. Of course for a real network one requires Bob Puff's MUX system. With MUX, up to seven different 8-bit Atari's can be connected together to share any device attached to one master computer. I believe that our own Bob Nex demonstrated a MUX system some years ago at a club meeting, but I haven't seen it since.

Editors Note: Ernest Schreurs sent e-mail to me asking for contributions from GCACE's PD 8-bit library. I replied that he would probably be more interested in the fact that we had the entire Bellcom backup library, which we would be happy to contribute. He replied that his first CDROM had some Bellcom disks included, and sent a list of what was on it, stating he would be eager to receive copies of files that weren't on it. The GCACE executive is currently working on copying disks to be sent to Ernest. He is willing to send us money for disks and postage to cover our costs. He is devoting a lot of time, money and effort to keep the memory of the Atari 8-bit alive.

8-BITS FOREVER!

Downloading On The Freenet

by Ted Skrecky

A couple of months ago, the Victoria Freenet changed over to a Web-type system. It is Lynx-based which means it is text only so it doesn't allow you to view images and hear sounds while online. Programs such as Cab/STik, Netscape and MicroSoft Internet Explorer can not be used. Dialing into the Freenet is the same as before. You still can use comms software such as Interlink set to VT100 emulation in order to connect. The main advantage of the new system is that it is now possible to download software from Web sites and also from FTP sites. The main negative is that the new software which Freenet is running-on has vast quantities of bugs. I think it is going to be along time before everything is fixed-up, however, even with its current problems, Freenet is still worth using.

One thing I have noticed is that a lot of garbage characters end-up cluttering the screen after accessing different menus on the Freenet. When new text is printed to the screen, the old text from the previous screen is not being completely cleared. I have checked the settings for my comms software and everything looks ok. On the Freenet it used to be possible to type "go config" to change line size and other screen-type options. Unfortunately, the "go config" command doesn't work on the new and improved Freenet! I tried looking around various menus in order to find out how to change some of those configuration options but have had no success locating them. This garbage character problem is annoying but I have decided to just live with it. At least, while using Pine, the Freenet text editor, the screen redraws do clear the old text completely which is kind of nice.

One of Freenet's features which I am making good use of is the book-mark function. It is possible to create your own list of favourite web sites. You can also add your favourite web search engines such as MetaCrawler to this list. When you are logged-on the system, hit the "O" key to list "O"ther commands. Hit the "O" key again and you will see "Bookmarks V)iew A)dd R)emove." Anytime you are on the Freenet, just hit the "V" key to "V"iew your list of Web sites/search engines.

Adding web sites and such to your bookmark is quite easy. I will give one example of how to add the MetaCrawler search engine to this list. At the main Freenet menu, select "6 - Library Information Services" and then select "5 - VTN World Wide Web server". You will now have to hit the "SPACE BAR" three times and then select "21- WWW Search Tools". Search for the word MetaCrawler and then highlight it. Hit the "A" key to "A"dd and then hit the "L" key to "L"ink to bookmark file. MetaCrawler has now been added to your list so you can hit "V"iew and then select this search engine anytime you want to. Web sites and also FTP sites can be added by using "A"dd and then "L"ink. I have found some Atari web sites that have links to FTP sites which contain Atari ST software such as Umich and Funet. I have added some of these file sites to my own bookmark. The Atari SIG on the Freenet has a small listing of some Atari related web sites. If you check the Computer Dungeon web page, you will find a link to Umich which you can add to your own book-mark.

When you are on a Web site or on an FTP site, you may find a file that you would like to download. The bad news is that Freenet doesn't have X-modem and Y-modem file transfer protocols anymore. The two protocols that can be used are Kermit and Z-modem. I have checked most of my ST comms software and have not found any pro-grams that support Kermit. However, at the last club meeting, Mel Moffat pointed-out that there is some type of Kermit program in our GCACE ST library catalogue but I haven't had time yet to check into this. So far I have only been playing with Z-modem.

The comms program I am using is Interlink. It doesn't have a Z-modem protocol built into the software but Interlink does allow me to run external programs. On Disk #190 there is a Z-modem program called ZFlash. I have used ZFlash on many occasions in the past to download files from various BBSs. Strangely, though, I have been having a totally insane number of problems trying to download files from the Freenet while using ZFlash. Not long ago I was talking to Gary Nicholls and he mentioned that he had very few problems downloading files from the Freenet with his IBM PC. I decided to try my own PC computer and basically had the same kind of problems with Z-modem as I had on the ST. Just before I was ready to give-up and jump-out the window of my apartment without a parachute, I noticed that the PC comms program had another Z-modem protocol called Z-modem/R. I tried this and was amazed when I suddenly had a greatly increased success rate with downloading files. Having discovered that not all Z-modem protocols are the same, I next used my PC to get onto Umich, found another Z-modem protocol program for the ST and downloaded it.

ZMDM Version 1.6 was written by Jwahar Bammi. I have tried this Z-modem program with the Freenet and have had quite a bit of success with downloading files. Problems still do occur, though. Transfering of files that are over 150K have been known to "time-out" while in the middle of downloading. I suspect that this must be a problem with the Freenet soft-

Wine With A Solvent Quality!
by Rowland Grant

*T*he November Meeting featured Craig Carmichael, who demonstrated some of his most recent software developments. The most interesting was his continuing work on imaging and printing. Our humble Atari equipment can render remarkable colour images using Craig's clever image dithering. Craig also has developed a full featured word processor for OASES, however he didn't get to show it at the meeting.

There is no General Meeting in December. However the Executive Committee does meet. This time the executive combined its meeting with the social SIG at George Rose's place. Somehow Ernest Schreurs got

to know that we have the Bellcom backup set. Ernest is assembling a second Pool Disk CD of Atari 8-bit files. He does have some of the Bellcom set, but would like to include the remainder in Pool Disk 2. We agreed to send him the files from the disks requested, but how? John Picken proposed that each Bellcom disk be made into a file. This file would be compressed and stored with others on a 360K disk. By this means we could minimize postage costs to Holland. Sending files online, with our limited access to a currently unreliable local freenet, was deemed out of the question (maybe some day). John Picken has possession of our Bellcom library, and therefore was assigned the job of making the copies. Excuses that

his 8-bit power supplies weren't working were ignored. We hope to have the Bellcom files in the hands of Ernest Schreurs in time, and if not, how about Pool Disk 3?

George Rose served refreshments including his famous beer. He also served wine which had a peculiar solvent quality. It dissolved the knees before it moved upwards to tackle the brain.

The General meeting in January is our Annual General Meeting and elections. The constitution allows an executive committee which nowadays could accommodate half the membership. Almost a club within a club, please join us. The fun outweighs the duties

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ware still being rather buggy.

For anybody who is interested in downloading files, I will explain what to do. When you have found a file on the web or an ftp site that you want to download, hit the "D" key. You are then given three options... 1) Save to disk 2) Kermit 3) Z-modem. If you select option #1 (Save to disk), the file is saved to your own file area on the Freenet. The other two options will result in you downloading the file direct to your hard drive or floppy disk. I usually go for option #1. If you also decide to select this option, the file will be quickly saved and you can continue to look around and perhaps find a few more files to add to your own Freenet file area.

When you have finished snooping around the web and/or the ftp sites, go back to the main Freenet menu. Select "9 - Post Office" and then select "6 - File

Services". Next, go into "2 - Manipulate Files in your Directory". This will give a listing of the files available for downloading. Highlight the file you want to download and then hit the "D" key. Z-modem will allow you to download numerous files at the same time but at the moment Freenet only allows you to download one file at a time. After hitting "D", you have the option of downloading with Kermit or with the Z-modem protocol. Select "2" to download with Z-modem. The name of the file you want to download will appear on the screen. All you need to do is hit the "RETURN" key and everything will be ready to go on the Freenet side. The only thing left to do is to switch back to your comms software and run the external Z-modem program.

If you are using Interlink, hit the right mouse button to toggle-back to your comms program. At the top of the screen, use your mouse to select "File"

and then select "Execute Program". An item selector will then appear. Find the file called RZ.TTP and run it. The file transfer will start automatically. As long as the file isn't too big, you should be able to download all of it before one of those annoying "time-out" problems occurs.

In other news, Freenet's text editor, Pine, has a new feature. You can use Pine to read Usenet newsgroups such as comp.sys.atari.st. When in Pine, hit the "L" key to get to the folder listing. Use the cursor key to highlight "News-collection <News on news>" and hit the "RETURN" key. You can then hit the "A" key to subscribe to a newsgroup. Type-in "comp.sys.atari.st" and that newsgroup will then be added to your listing. If you want to know what other newsgroups are available in the comps.sys.atari category, after hitting the "A" key, type-in "comp.sys.atari" and a listing of

Atari SIG On The Freenet

by Gordon F. Hooper

As has been noted many times before by your faithful scribe, the world is going to Hell in a handbasket. What brought about this latest bout of pessimism was the Victoria Freenet changing its software so that the entire Freenet is now on the World Wide Web (WWW). This means that everytime you want to access anything on any of the innumerable menus on the Freenet, the software has to read that page off the WWW. Under ideal conditions, that takes a few seconds.

Of course, when the Freenet was using the old software, the majority of things you wanted to access were on the Freenet's hard drive, and it appeared instantaneously. Now the time you wait can be the previously mentioned few seconds to God knows how long if the Freenet or the WWW is being heavily used. The Freenet has 40 phone lines in, and if that was all it had to contend with, there would be no problem. However, it can also be accessed by all computers at UVic,

Camosun College and all other computers connected to the Internet worldwide by direct connection, not phone lines.

I would like to outline how you can get on the Atari Special Interest Group (SIG) on the Freenet. This is sponsored by GCACE and has Ted and myself as Facilitators. This is a fancy name, but simply means that we have a special number to login with and we are supposed to look at the SIG every day and if we find any problems, notify the Freenet. Ever have the feeling you might be impotent? I do on the Freenet.

So how do you find us? Glad you asked. First, log on to the Freenet using your number and password. If you haven't got those yet, phone me and I'll aid you in getting on. When you're on and have the main menu, type in number 13, Special Interest Groups. When this menu comes up, pick number 14, Science and Technology. At the next menu. pick number 3, Atari Computer Users. Congratulations! You're at the GCACE Atari SIG.

Now you have a new menu offering you the following choices: 1. "GCACE

(Club Information)". This is a blatant attempt (written by me) to suck unwitting Atari computer users to join our happy throng. Nobody can post messages to this area except Ted and myself. This is our only power on the Freenet. 2. "Victoria Freenet Atari Chat and Info". This is an area where any registered user of the Freenet can post any thoughts or delusions they may have. 3. "Atari Usenet Newsgroups". Choosing this brings up a menu with 5 choices, the most active being comp. sys. atari.st If you like 8-bits or technical talk, you can go to these areas also. comp.sys.- atari st has messages posted by anyone with a computer worldwide who has access to the Internet. I have posted in this area and have received messages from such varied places as Moscow and Santiago, Chile. 4. "Atari World Wide Web Pages". This lists a number of WWW sites concerning Atari computers. What is nice about this area is that you simply pick a number off the menu, type it in, and because of the work Ted has done, it automatically connects you to that Web address. In other words, you don't have to spend time typing in the full address, such as http://www.god.i get tired of.spending my time.on the www. typing in this.crap.

Since Amiga computers also use the Motorola 68000 chips and Ted bought one, there is a section on our SIG for these computers. GCACE is very tolerant towards inferior computers.

Now that the Pothole BBS is down, the executive proposes that we use the Victoria Freenet to conduct our online business, such as communication between members and sending articles for XIO3 to the editor.

If you're not on the Freenet, I guess you'll just have to pick up the telephone and communicate the old fashioned way.

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all the atari newsgroups will appear. Selecting one will add it to your list of newsgroups.

Most of my spare time has been spent just trying to figure-out how to use the new Freenet so I haven't done too much work on the ST Library. While wandering around Atari web and FTP sites I have managed to download some new software but haven't yet really had a good look at this new stuff. I will try and get an ST catalogue update done by the next time XIO3 is ready to be published. Also, at the next meeting, I will bring along a copy of the ZMDM Z-modem program so, if you want it, bring along a blank disk and I will make a copy of it for you.

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units it is apparent that inexpensive machines, tend to last longer. By rights both the Super NES and the Genesis should have been toast long ago, but if the price is low enough it seems a machine will continue to sell. This reminds one of Atari's initial success with its cheap Atari VCS machine.

Now for the fun part: predictions! The Game.Com portable seems slated for an early demise, as does the Genesis. I think the Super NES might last another year, but then a portable version of it might extend its life quite a bit. Sega's Saturn is looking vulnerable.

In the long run I expect that cheap PCs will impact on the sales of expensive home videogame machines. To stay alive the big three; Nintendo, Sega &

Sony, will have to reduce costs to continue to undercut the PCs.