XIO3

GCACE

Garden City Atari Computer Enthusiasts
1003 Amphion St. Victoria, B.C. Canada V8S 4G2

MARCH/APRIL 1996

March 28th Meeting!

The March 28th meeting will feature a demonstration of MIDI, which a number of members have expressed an interest in. We will be pleased to welcome Bob Smith, a professional musician, who will show us the intricacies of making music with a computer.

March also has another Social SIG, ably hosted by George Rose. George always has lots of food and drink available for our enjoyment (thanks, Marlene). Come to George's house at #508 - 2850 K.O.A. Road between noon and 4 pm on March 31st.

Inside

ATARI®
NEWS AND RUMOURS

by Rowland Grant

The day after I posted my Rumours column for the January XIO3, I got the news that Ted Hoff had resigned from Atari Corporation. This occurred on January 12th, less than two weeks after he had announced the establishment of the Atari Interactive game software publishing division. The other news is that the Tramiels are back, all of 'em, with 'ol Jack in charge. When Hoff left Atari about twenty employees left with him (voluntary or otherwise). Following this there were persistent rumours that Jack Tramiel and his family have lost interest in the computer game business and want to get out. There were other rumours that the $50 million cash held by Atari would be invested in a computer hardware firm.

Ted Hoff was quoted as saying that "... Atari's long-term intentions were not to continue in pursuit of videogame developing and publishing, neither for Jaguar nor Atari Interactive." This brought a response from August Liguori, Atari's financial officer: "We were in the video game business a long time before Ted joined us. Just because he has gone does not mean we are quitting the business. The story is not true." However it has become clear that the last layoffs eliminated most of Atari's remaining potential to continue as a videogame publisher. Atari has only about 30 employees left in the U.S., and of these only a handful are involved in game contract administration. This small staff is still at the Borregas Avenue building in Sunnyvale. In 1989, the building held 600 employees. Now Atari has announced a move to a smaller office, not surprising. Also there are rumours that Atari will vacate its California warehouse before April. None of this leaves one with any confidence in Atari's long-term intentions.

The rumours continued. Atari was going to merge with a disk drive manufacturer and get out of the video game business. There were all sorts of denials, but obviously something was afoot. There were rumours that a meeting was held with the surviving staff to explain the situation. These rumours didn't hurt Atari's stock prices, which moved up above two dollars. But more interesting, the Lindner Fund, holding a large block (several millions) of

See *News and Rumours* on Page 4

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XIO3 is a publication of the Garden City Atari Computer Enthusiasts, 1003 Amphion Street, Victoria, B.C. Canada V8S 4G2

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MEMBERSHIP

Membership dues are $25 per family per year. Membership includes a subscription to this newsletter, access to over 300 8-bit public domain disks and 155 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

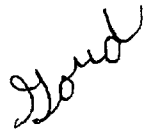
Meetings will be held in the Nellie McClung branch of the Library at 3950 Cedar Hill Road (corner of McKenzie) on the fourth Thursday of each month. All meetings are at 7 pm. There is no meeting in the month of December.

EDITORIAL

Spring has returned to Victoria! Actually, it returned sometime in February. That month we went from a day of snow to cutting the lawn. I really resent cutting the lawn when in the rest of Canada the lawn is under four feet of snow. I'm afraid Quebec doesn't have a chance of being named a Distinct Society. The City of Victoria deserves Distinct Society status because of it's winter climate. Where else in Canada do you get only one day of snow a year? That's truly distinct.

Pages 6 to 9 in this issue were submitted by Craig Carmichael as camera-ready copy. At least someone has pity on the poor hard-working editor. All I have to do with camera-ready pages is add the page number footers. Thanks, Craig. John Picken threatens to send camera-ready copy of his next article done on his venerable 8-bit. They may be ancient technology as far as computers go, but they still are capable of most everything the new computers can do.

Don't forget the Social SIG at George Rose's house on Sunday, March 31st, from noon til 4. Everyone welcome to come share some beer and B.S.!



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MIDI:	John Towler (ST)	382-5083
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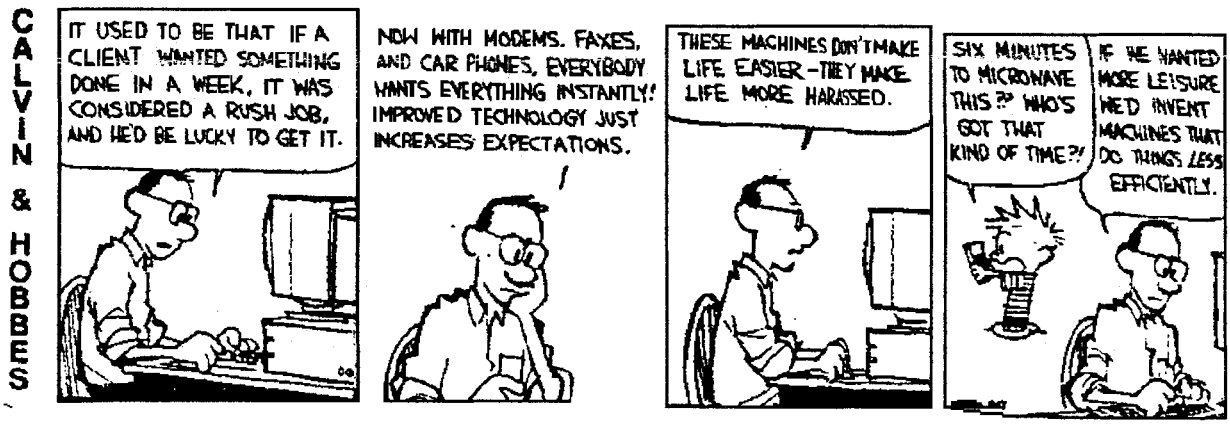
PEEKing Around

by Gordon F. Hooper

... BOB NEX was quick to inform me that JOHN PICKEN admitted to actually playing a game on his computer ... Speaking of Bob, there was a real cute picture of his daughter Michelline in the Times Colonist recently. Too bad Bob was in it also. Ruined the photo ... MURRAY KUCHERAW of London, Ontario, left me e-mail saying he wasn't quick enough to pick up his copy of ST Format magazine. TED SKRECKY offered to send Murray his copy after he and ROWLAND GRANT had finished reading it. Garden City A.C.E. helps members even if they live in Ontario! ... Ted also has been having trouble blowing floppy drives on his Mega ST. Guess he made the computer God angry by bringing Commodore computers into his once-pristine ST-only condo ... Rowland had a bout with the flu recently, but at least he has his priorities straight. He dragged himself out of his sickbed to attend the executive meeting, unlike JOHN TOWLER, who used the excuse he had to go to work ... RICK SKIPP going to Phoenix for a holiday. I was afraid he'd bought a clone when he advertised two of his systems for sale on the Pothole, but it turned out he bought BUD MAINDONALD'S Mega4 STE. ... DENIS BATE and ARNOLD KNAPP hoping that the fellow will make it this time for the MIDI demonstration at the March 28th meeting. They're both interested in learning more about MIDI ... NOEL BLACK being laid low with continuing health problems. Maybe there's a software program that could help computer geeks who are ill? If there isn't, there should be ... CRAIG CARMICHAEL demonstrating a way to stop piracy of OMEN. He uses a colour code that is under a dark, smoked piece of plexiglass. When held to a strong light, it is visible, but it can't be photocopied ... We're still waiting for another submission to XIO3, ALEX CHAMBERLAIN ... DAN MOEN wasting his time at the Legion. How'd I know? He lured me there with promises of lots of vodka ... PHIL PARSONS was looking for a harddrive, and ended up buying a complete ST system advertised in the newspaper ... GEORGE ROSE madly brewing beer to keep John Picken entertained at the March 28th Social SIG ... Phone GORD at 475-0857 with news of the misdeeds of fellow GCACE members. If I don't answer, check the Legion. They really do have lots of vodka ...



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Atari convertible bonds, suddenly decided to convert the bonds to Atari shares. They wouldn't do that unless they knew of something that would drive up Atari's share prices soon. The merger rumour became more credible all the time.

On February 13th the other shoe dropped. A news release announced that Atari would be merging with JTS Corporation, a manufacturer of disk drives. Atari will issue 40 million new Atari shares to JTS as a kind of purchase of the privately held JTS. This will give Atari shareholders approximately 60 percent of the outstanding shares of the new company (and that gives the Tramiels 25 percent). The new company will be JTS, and the management will be the current JTS management. Atari will be a division within JTS. For all this, Jack Tramiel will get a seat on the JTS board of directors. In addition, Atari has extended a loan of $25 million to JTS. Of course, shareholder and regulatory approvals are required, but it is expected that the merger will be complete before June. If the deal doesn't go through, the loan will be convertible into JTS preferred stock. Hah, Atari buys JTS and dissolves itself into the purchased firm. The rumours were right. The Tramiels are desperate to drop Atari. And they're doing it cleverly.

So what is JTS? This is a company founded by Jugi Tandon in 1994 when he bought up the assets of Kalok Corp, a defunct disk drive company. Previously, Tandon founded Tandon Corp, of Los Angeles, and was a major disk drive maker in the 1970's and 1980's. When IBM cancelled a deal, Jugi got mad and switched to making PC clones. Unfortunately, the big PC price war in 1992 forced Tandon corp into bankruptcy in '93. Jugi Tandon still had his personal assets of course, and decided to get back into disk drives. Jugi Tandon is chairman of the board of JTS, Tom Mitchell is president. Tom Mitchell is co-founder of Seagate Technology Inc, now the world's largest hard drive producer. Mitchell left Seagate in 1991 to become president of Connor Peripherals, another major hard drive manufacturer. Before Connor was acquired by Seagate, Mitchell moved to JTS. The company has grown rapidly. It currently has 160 employees in San Jose and 1300 workers at a hard drive production plant in Madras India. JTS has experienced good sales, but the current market is too competitive to make much of a profit, if any, on the standard hard drive types. However, JTS has a new type of compact hard drive that could possibly dominate the laptop computer market. JTS needs cash to launch its new products, and that's where Atari comes in.

... slowly fading away ...

Tom Mitchell worked under Jack Tramiel as Commodore's general manager in 1978 and 1979. Jugi Tandon was Commodore's main supplier of disk drives. There are lots of Tandon drives in Atari products as well. No doubt these men have kept in touch with Jack Tramiel. No doubt they were well aware of Atari's diminishing prospects and its cash rich situation. Serious discussions must have begun months ago, certainly by November 1995, when all the rumours started.

The deal is good for Atari share holders. Even before the announcement Atari's stock began to move upward towards $2.00, and after, several rating agencies put ATC stock in the accumulate category. On February 15th, ATC closed at $2.75. On the 16th, the shares jumped up over a dollar to $3.875 with heavy trading. And so it went, with prices eventually going to $5.00 before they dropped back a bit. What is really happening is that JTS is going public, without any expense to itself, through this merger. The speculation is on JTS's future, not Atari's. There are rumours that it was the Tramiels who bought that large block of ATC stock from Time Warner late last year. There is also a rumour that the U.S. Securities Exchange Commission might be interested in their activities. The latter rumour is unfounded and from a hostile source, but you never know.

And what will happen to Atari's Jaguar and Atari game publishing? From what I have seen so far, it is hard to imagine JTS leaving any cash available to further such development. There are rumours that Atari has been trying to license its video game assets and patents to some other company. Apparently they would like to get rid of the whole works at once. Another rumour says that Ted Hoff wanted to take the Atari Interactive division private, but the deal didn't work out. There was even a rumour that Nolan Bushnell, Atari's founder wanted to take Atari back again. But it turned out that he was only interested in Time Warner Interactive (formerly Atari Games Inc), and anyway TW Interactive has been snapped up by another arcade game company, WMS Industries. At the moment it seems that Atari can't unload it's video game business and is resigned to carry on. After the merger announcements, Atari released Jeff Minter's avidly awaited Defender 2000 game (to rave reviews). At the same time Atari stated that it (as JTS) would support the Jaguar system through 1996. That's about as much as one could expect.

Even though JTS spends most of Atari's cash on disk drives, it should be possible to keep the promise to Jaguar users. The overhead has been slashed almost to nothing. Jaguar production has ceased (according to rumours), but 75,000 Jaguars are in stock for 1996. Existing game development contracts that are near completion will go ahead, and games will be released slowly throughout the year. Two games, Fight for life and Mutant Penguins are known to have gone through final production and are sitting in the warehouse. There are rumours of several other games finished but not in production. Finally, having met most of its expenses, Atari may start making a profit on its Jaguar. As far as I know, Atari has not yet published its fourth quarter financial statement. But it must look better than usual. Atari reports that it delivered 200,000 Jaguar units to dealers in the USA in 1995. At least 150,000 of that stock was sold in 1995, and there are indications that dealers have cleared much of the remaining inventory by now. While the total number of Jaguar units sold to date has not been published, it is estimated to be around half a million world wide. At $99 per unit, Atari didn't make anything off Jaguar sales, but some profits must be coming in from the new games. There are rumours that Sega and Sony didn't make a profit from their new game consoles in 1995 either. Compared to the rough and tumble of the video game

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market, the cutthroat hard drive industry might seem quiet and refined.

I have numerous reports about Jaguar dealers who have experienced good holiday sales, but are clearing out their remaining Jaguar stock. There are reports of others that have sold out, re-ordered, and are giving the Jaguar a prominent location in the store. If enough of these dealers hang in there, Atari might be able to sell out in 1996. Lacking the marketing staff, it may be more than difficult to keep these dealers happy. However, a steady stream of games would help.

Atari is struggling away at it. Rebellion has finished Skyhammer and it should be out by Summer. Towers II has been finished since last November, but there seems to be some hang up in production, according to JV Enterprises. Fortunately third parties, like Readysoft, are also releasing Jaguar games. Space Ace for the JaguarCD came out in February. This also included demos of Brain Dead 13 and Dragon's Lair II. And Brain Dead is also due out in March. Unfortunately the avidly awaited Phase Zero with its very advanced graphics has been withdrawn from the Jaguar lineup by the authors. Apparently they will be porting the game over to the PlayStation instead.

When Atari finished the development of the Jaguar, work began right away on the Jaguar II. Introduced in 1993, the Jaguar was to run for about three years and be replaced in the fall of 1996 by its successor. If all had gone well with more good games and good marketing, the Jaguar user base should have reached critical mass by 1995. Profits would then propel the continuation of the Jaguar and launch the new Jaguar II. Software developers would need at least one year's lead time, so the Jaguar II developers kit should have gone out by the summer of 1995. And all new game development contracts would have gone to the new platform. Alas the Jaguar did not become profitable, and the Jaguar II kits were withdrawn, with an excuse. So Atari's strange behaviour last fall, when it refused new Jaguar game proposals, would have made sense even in a successful situation. In keeping with the long range plan, this is the final stage for the Jaguar. The end may be near for Atari too, even as a brand name.

It has been pointed out that the Jaguar's chip set is remarkable for its power at such a low cost. The competing machines all use an adaptation of some work station RISC chip. These chips are expensive, and you pay the price for the power. Under the Tramiels, Atari has delivered excellent technology at very attractive prices. However there has been the continual assumption that the excellent hardware would sell itself. It did too, but not enough. The lack of marketing ensured failure. And this I believe was engendered by the attitudes of the Tramiels themselves towards Atari's customers and dealers. Still, the Tramiels are no fools. We are now seeing them trying to extricate themselves from the humiliation of failure and from personal financial loss.

GCACE MEETINGS

Annual Report

by Rowland Grant

The January General Meeting is the official annual meeting at which a new executive is elected for 1996. As it turned out the new executive is the old executive. It was a nice vote of confidence, but there is room for new directors at large if anyone wants to join our merry throng. President and Editor is Gordon Hooper, Vice-president is John Picken, Secretary is Rowland Grant, Treasurer is John Towler, Librarians are Noel Black and Ted Skrecky, Directors at large are Craig Carmichael, Bob Nex and George Rose.

The Secretary (that's me) reported on the various Atari user groups that we send newsletters to. At the moment there are 14 groups. We also send out five newsletters to friends who have been helpful to us in the past. Each year the Secretary makes up an official Annual Report that must be filed with the Registrar of Companies, since we are registered under the Societies Act. The report gives the names and addresses of officers, the number of members and a financial statement for the preceding year. Looking back at copies of our reports, one can follow the trends in membership. Drawing a graph one sees that membership peaked in 1988 at 124 and then dropped rapidly to 50 members in 1991. From then on we have experienced a rather slow decline in membership to 37 on our current report. At the present rate we should still have a significant membership by the end of the century.

Treasurer John Towler circulated copies of the Annual Financial Statement for the year ending December 31, 1995. It was duly accepted as presented by the membership. The statement is published elsewhere in this newsletter. There was some discussion about the financial future of the Club. We seem to be getting by with small deficits which we can cover through past savings. Further to those discussions, John Towler made up some trial budgets for 1996 when the executive committee met in February. The executive decided that the call forward line to the Pothole BBS would run us a deficit of more than $100 this year, so the line has been discontinued. John Picken has kindly offered to let us use his phone to call forward from Saanich to Sooke in the evenings. Thanks to John Picken we save about $180 a year.

The February General Meeting was supposed to feature a MIDI demonstration, however there was a cancellation at the last moment. Bob Nex and John Picken stepped in with a demonstration. Bob had just received a copy of the PoolDisk CD-ROM, and with John's help he offered to show how one can use this disk. The PoolDisk contains an almost complete collection of

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OMEN Announcements: ...written in *OMEN*

Name Change *OMEn* is now officially *OMEN-UOS*: The Open Multitasking Environment - Universal Operating System. There are several reasons for this, but it's Still *OMEN* for short!

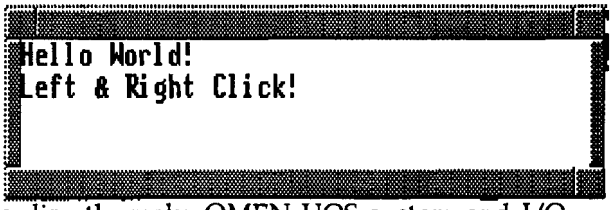
Macintosh *OMEN-UOS* for Macintosh and power Macintosh is now out! It looks and operates virtually like the Atari version except there's no scrolling display since there's no hardware for it. A software display scroll may be added in the future. Mono, 256 and 32,768 colour display modes are supported. It uses all Mac-mounted disks or Atari/DOS disks with the OMEN filename enhancements.

Improvements The interface has improvements over previous versions: The Key Window (for typing) is shown at the top, it's easier to move and stack windows, and File-Director has several improvements, especially File Function Icons and an instant "Goto" menu for any directory you've set as a "bookmark".

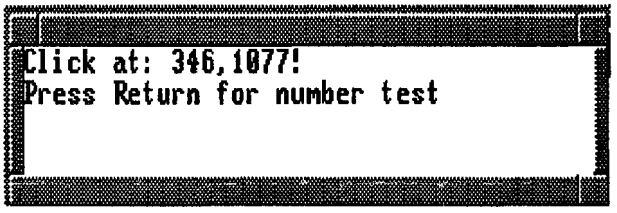
Writing *OMEN-UOS* Software in C: A Simple Example Calculator Program

Here's a sample program written in C for OMEN. It has to be written & compiled on an Atari computer since there is no OMEN based C compiler as yet. But once written, the program also runs on OMEN-UOS on Macintosh and PC identically to the Atari.

The Program



This program was written as an example and a test for using C language for OMEN. Since there is as yet only a very limited library of C calls for OMEN, it was necessary to use the OMEN- UOS call interface to directly make OMEN-UOS system and I/O calls, per the calling conventions in the programming manaual. Listing 3 is the source code for the program.



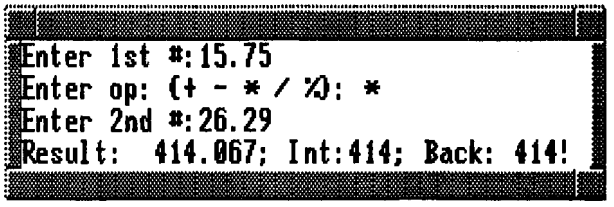
The program has three main sample features:

1) A left-button mouse click prints the co-ordinates within the window where the click occurred.

2) A right-button click draws some sample graphics in the window.

3) Pressing ENTER (RETURN) starts the calculator. It asks for the first number, an operation (+ - * /), and the second number. It prints the result: first in floating point; then as converted to an integer; then as converted back to floating point from integer.

   The calculator thus tests all the number conversions as well as scanf(); and printf();.
   An optional commented-out section tests integer arithmetic instead of floating point.



Software Support

C_TEST_4.PRO(G) is supported by two other software items: OMENINIT.C and FloatPt.SCRL.

OMENINIT will be the first file to link in any OMEN based C program. It contains the boot-up code and the OMEN-UOS system and I/O call interface. OMENHDRS.H is a global definition of the required Reg array for setting up the "processor registers", and is required by OMENINIT and your program. Both the original OMENINIT.C and its compiled form OMENINIT.O are supplied in the OMEN-UOS software development kit. (OMENINI2 is an updated OMENITIT)

FloatPt.SCRL is an OMEN-UOS "library scroll" system extension. It is required by all C-compiled software and can also be called from assembly language. It contains the floating point arithmetic and number conversion functions, plus C functions scanf(); and printf();. Having these functions in the library scroll means that the code does not have to be compiled into each individual C program, making them all smaller, and accessable in any language, as well.

Compiling

The Gulam shell was used as a development system shell.

Alice ("A LIttle C Editor") or OMEN's Micro-Word were used to edit the source file. The source file was titled "T4.C", and a corresponding "T4.G" Gulam batch file was used to compile and link the program, which was titled C_TEST_4.PRO (listing 1). (OMEN automatically extends .PRO into .PROG, its four character file extension for an executable program.)

A second batch file "GO.G" (listing 2) was used to start up OMEN for testing the program. When OMEN is exited, the drive-cache purge process takes us to the root directory of each disk, so GO.G also puts us back in the C language directory after returning from OMEN.

Craig Carmichael can be reached at Esquimalt Digital, (604) 384 0499, omen@islandnet.com, or web http://www.islandnet.com/~omen/homepage.html

Listing 1: The "make" Batch File (Assumes all files are in working directory. The "Status" stuff doesn't work right, at least not as shown. If it did, "GO.G" would have been part of "T4.G")

```
echo 'Compiling t4.t...'
ccom t4.t
if status == 0
 echo 'Linking c_test_4.prog...'
 ld omenini2.o t4.o -o c_test_4.pro
endif
echo 'Type "go" to enter OMEn.'
```

Listing 2: The "GO" Batch File (Adjust for your own file paths)

```
d:\omen335
cd c:\c_stuff
```

Listing 3, The Program: commences on following page.

```
T4#include <C:\C_STUFF\OMEN328E.H>;
#include <C:\C_STUFF\OMENSTUF.H>;

#define nil 0L ; /* Zero, Long */
#define FALSE 0;
#define TRUE -1;

/* #include <C:\C_STUFF\OMENINIT.O>; -- We'll link to it instead */

/*
   All co-ordinates (below) are specified in 1/600ths of an inch. The
   current display manager positions and sizes windows to the nearest
   100(Y):60(X) position, the size of a default mono-spaced character,
   for internal operation reasons. Future display managers probably
   won't do this.
*/

int TheWw[11] = {
 200,              /* Top-of-display to Top-of-window */
 120,              /* Left-of-display to Left-of-window */
 600,              /* Height-of-window (4 character rows) */
 60*40,            /* Width-of-window (40 characters) */
 100,              /* Top-margin 1 char row tall */
 60,               /* Left-margin 1 char column wide */
 -100,             /* Bottom-margin 1 char row up from Window-Bottom */
 -60,              /* Right-margin 1 char column left of Window-Right */
 0,                /* Window Style (not used; Reserved) */
 0,                /* Window Flags (actually 2 bytes,see Prog.Ref.Man. */
 0                 /* Window ID number. App's main Window normally 0 */
  /* (If app opens more windows, they must have different ID numbers) */
};

struct Regs Reg;  /* Array of Registers for OMEN sys. & I/O calls */

/* I can't find a way to put in the equate names "usemargins" ($97),
   "clrtoeol" ($C2), "ClrToEop" ($CC) etc, into a text string!
   They can't even be entered in HEX; they have to be converted to OCTAL
   (What's the point of being able to define constants if there's no way
    use them once defined?!?)
*/

char *TheText = "\227Hello World!\302\nLeft & Right Click!\314\n";

/*
   This is what the above WOULD say if it could:

   MoveHome,"Hello World!",ClrToEol,Newline
   "Left & Right Click!",ClrToEop,Newline
*/

char *ClickText = "\227Click at:\302\ny=\325\200; x=\325\201\314";

/*
   And, decoded:

   MoveHome,"Click at:",ClrToEol,Newline
   "y=",PrRegVal2,RegD0," x=",PrRegVal2,RegD1,ClrToEop
*/

int DoRedraw()
{
        /* If message was "redraw Window" */
      Reg.D0 = 0x00ff0000;       /* Then draw the border */
      Call (borderww);           /* And print the contents (text) */
      PrintStringEOT(TheText);
      return(55);
};


main()
{
 char opc;
 long a;
 long y;
 long x;
 long j;
 long error;
 long pii;
 float fp1;
 float fp2;


 Reg.D0 = openww;
 Reg.A0 = TheWw;
 Call(display);

 DoRedraw();

  do {

EventLoop:
    Reg.D0 = waitinput;      /* Command to wait until there's a message */
    Call(post);              /* Send that command to the mailbox mgr. */
    a = Reg.D0;              /* What message did we get back? */


    if (a == redrawww)
    { DoRedraw(); goto EventLoop; }

    else if (a == 0x000A) {

      /* Call floating point arithmetic test */

      printf ("\\x97Enter 1st #:\\xCC");
      scanf ( "%f",&fp1);

      printf ("\nEnter op: (+ - * / %%): \302");
      scanf ( "%c",&opc );
```

```
      printf ("\nEnter 2nd #:\\xC2");
      scanf ( "%f",&fp2);

      printf ("\nResult: ");
/*
 This section to test floating point arithmetic
*/

      if      (opc == '+') { fpl = fpl + fp2; }
      else if (opc == '-') { fpl = fpl - fp2; }
      else if (opc == '*') { fpl = fpl * fp2; }
      else if (opc == '/') { fpl = fpl / fp2; }
      else if (opc == '%')
      { printf("%% (mod) is only for integers!"); break; }

      x = fpl; fp2 = x;

      printf("%f; Int:%Ld; Back:%f!\n",fpl,x,fp2);
      goto EventLoop;

/*
  This section to test (Signed Long) integer arithmetic
      if      (opc == '+')   { x = x + y; }
      else if (opc == '-')   { x = x - y; }
      else if (opc == '*')   { x = x * y; }
      else if (opc == '/')   { x = x / y; }
      else if (opc == '%')   { x = x % y; }

      fpl = x; y = fpl;
*/
      goto EventLoop;

      printf("%Ld; F.P.:%f;\\xCC",x,fpl);
      printf(" Back %Li!\n",y);
      goto EventLoop;
    }


    else if (a == click) {
/* D2 is the Y and X of where we clicked at... */
      y = Reg.D2 >> 16;
      x = Reg.D2 & 65535;
/*
      Reg.A0 = &ClickText;
      Call(prstreot); /* Call OMEn's string print facility
*/

      printf( "\\x97Click at:%L-4d,%L-4d!\302\nPress Return for number test")

      goto EventLoop;
    }

    else if (a == shiftclick) {

      Reg.D1 = lightgray;
      Show(setbgcolor);    /* NEW display I/O calls method */

      Reg.D1 = green;
      Show(setfgcolor);

      Show(clrHome);

      Reg.D2 = 0L;
      Reg.D3 = (200<<16) + 500L;
      Show(line);          /* NEW display I/O call method */

      Reg.D2 = 200<<16L;
      Reg.D3 = 500L;
      Show(line);

      Reg.D0 = gold;
      Reg.D1 = blue;
      Reg.D2 = (25<<16) + 120L;
      Reg.D3 = (175<<16) + 350L;
      Call(drawtile);      /* NEW system Call method */

      Reg.D1 = white;
      Show(setbgcolor);

      Reg.D1 = 0L;         /* black, LONG 0. */
      Show(setfgcolor);

      goto EventLoop;
    }

    else if (a == closeww) {
      for ( a = 0; a < 20000; a++ ) { }
      /* stupid delay for nothing */
      CloseTask();
    }

  }

  while(-1);
}
```

Continued from Page 4

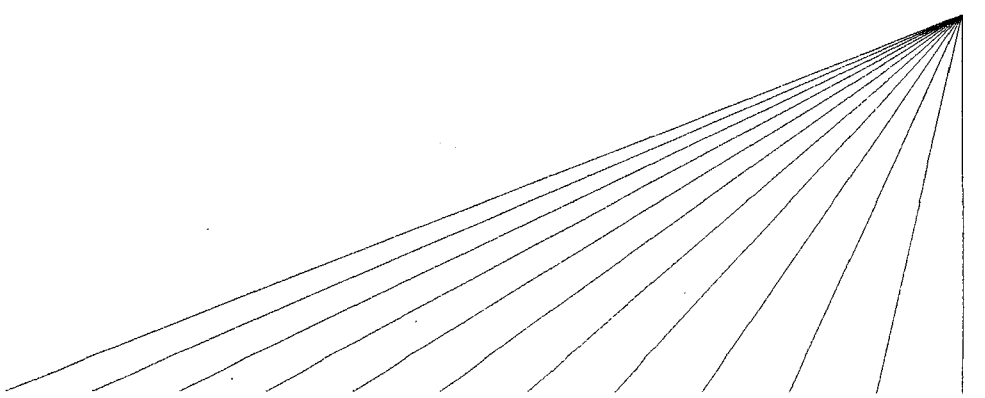
Atari 8-bit public domain software. Some of it is in 8-bit file format (thousands of files), but most of the material is in disk image format representing over 1700 disks! Unfortunately, there is no special hardware to allow an Atari 8-bit to directly access material on a CD-ROM disk. However one can make PC computers act as slave hardware to Atari 8-bit computers. So there it was, a loaded '486 computer being run by and running for an Atari 130XE. The XE is connected from the SIO port to the PC's serial port by an SIO2PC cable. The cable contains a simple chip to buffer the two different machines. The SIO2PC software is run on the PC at which point the PC becomes disk drives and other peripherals for the XE. The XE doesn't need a disk drive to start, it can boot off of SpartaDOS on the PC. When all was running, Bob showed how the XE could load a file off the CD ROM and then run the program. One can also copy a disk image file from the CD-ROM to a disk in a 8-bit disk drive. The PoolDisk CD-ROM is a vast library of PD disks. Some of these could be made available on the Pothole BBS. As well as the SIO2PC software, Bob also demonstrated the APE system. APE has a very attractive menu on the PC, but it didn't like the type of chip we use in the SIO2PC cable, so it wouldn't transfer any files. Thanks to Bob and John for a very impressive demonstration.

John Picken announced that he has released version 4.1 of his XL2 software. In this version John has cleared up a number of bugs that were found by other users. He hopes that this is the last of it. John says that he now will turn his attention to something easy, like writing a new operating system for XL/XE computers. And speaking of operating systems, Craig Carmichael announced that his OMEn universal operating system is running on a colour Macintosh as well as all ST types. Craig has developed a graphic interface that is quite different to the Mac's interface or GEM. It is very powerful, but its procedures are not always obvious to GEM users. It's not obvious to 8-bit users either. John Picken has added an ST to his stable of Atari computers and is asking for OMEn with a command line interface, something like SpartaDOS. Ya can't win!

1995 Financial Statement

GARDEN CITY A.C.E.
Annual Financial Statement
for the year ending December 31, 1995

ASSETS		
Cash on hand	5.00	
Bank of Montreal	582.15	
Prepaid expanses	176.55	
Total		763.70
LIABILITIES		
Total		0.00
INCOME		
Membership dues	850.00	
Coffee fund	43.10	
Donations	15.00	
Bank interest	1.46	
PD disk sales	12.00	
Total		921.56
EXPENDITURES		
Magazine subscriptions	35.00	
Newsletter printing	171.36	
Newsletter postage	226.08	
Other postage	48.84	
Room rental	176.55	
Society Act fees	15.00	
Office supplies	33.39	
Bank charges	11.40	
Miscellaneous	153.10	
Coffee expenses	16.11	
Disks	88.29	
Total		975.12
SURPLUS/DEFICIT		
Deficit		53.56



8-Bit Feeding Frenzy!

by Rowland Grant

The Atari 8-bit world is alive and functioning. I wouldn't call it well, but the efforts of a few are keeping things going. The January-February 1996 issue of Atari Classics arrived. This is news, as publication is irregular and the wait between issues is often long. Bob Wooley carried the main burden this time with three articles, all very interesting. Ed Hall wrote a very useful article on PaperClip word processor. I agree with Ed. I have used all sorts of word processors on all sorts of computers, and I find that PaperClip is up there with the best of them. Bob Wooley admits that while they would like to print six issues of Atari Classics in a year, so far they can only manage three or four. Bob is also asking 8-bit users to consider writing something for publication. He says that he really enjoys the articles that he gets.

As far as new hardware from Fine Tooned Engineering is concerned, there has been no news for months. The company may be functioning but there have been no reports from it or about it until recently. James King reports that Mike Hohman called him about another secret project that is under way. Hey, what about all the other projects? We've been waiting years for the MARS board. What about the IDE hard drive interface?

A new version of BW-DOS has been released. This is version 1.30. it has a number of bug fixes and improvements. For instance, it is more compatible with DOS 2 types and with Turbo BASIC. New E: drivers can be installed using the NEWED command. So BW-DOS can use 80 column handlers for XEP80 for instance. The TYPE command now will display text files of any size. Bugs are fixed in the COPY and UNERASE commands. One interesting feature is RAMBOX. Apparently there is a RAM cartridge containing up to 4 MB of RAM. It is sold by JRC in the Czech Republic. The BW-DOS RAMBOX command sets up the cartridge as a RAM disk and formats it. Nelson Nieves, who recently released some utilities for SpartaDOS, has turned his attention to SpartaDOS itself. He has found some problems with Sparta's ERASE and DELDIR amongst others and is working on replacement routines for ERASE. So whether or not Fine Tooned Engineering is continuing to develop SpartaDOS, others are.

Tom Hunt of Closer to Home BBS reports the he has been monitoring an interactive fiction group on Internet. He finds that they are creating new quality text adventure games. These are much like the famous Infocom games of the past. This group uses a compiler called "Inform", created by Graham Nelson, that works much like the Infocom Zilch compiler. Infocom compiled all its games in a standard format and then made a special interpreter (they called it a Z machine) for each computer type. Games compiled with Inform can use the Infocom interpreters to run the games. So in theory, one could run an Inform game using the interpreter which is on one side of an Atari 8-bit Infocom disk. In practice, most Inform games are usually compiled for a version 5 interpreter. Unfortunately, Atari 8-bit Infocom games use a version 3 interpreter. However, Tom says that the Inform compiler can compile for version 3 and he has managed to get four new games that will run on the Atari 8-bit. They have titles like Alice3, Oedius, Toyshop and Adventure. Tom Hunt is posting these on his BBS. Tom reports that these games are of high quality. He is trying to get more authors to compile for version 3. And it seems that they are. Tom has just reported receiving another text adventure game called Paper Chase. It's about a college student trying to earn a degree. It was written by Chris Skapura using Inform on a Unix computer.

Older text adventures are turning up again. Apparently twelve original Scott Adams text adventures have been posted on a new Atari 8-bit news group (set up to exchange binary files). These have been posted with Scott Adam's permission. While not as sophisticated as Infocom games, the Scott Adams adventures were fun and usually had illustrations to go with the text. Some enthusiasts are setting up a Scott Adams International web page so that any computer user can enjoy these old games again. Scott Adams thinks that this is a wonderful idea.

There is enough interest in Atari 8-bit systems in Europe that an Atari 8-bit Trade Show has been organised. It is to be held on the 28th of March at Schreirsgruen Germany (somewhere between Zwickau and Hoff). They have lined up all sorts of hardware and software vendors from around Europe. Local ABBUC chapters are also involved. I gather that there will be talks and demonstrations about Atari on the internet, the Xformer, SIO2PC and other topics.

Emulation of the Atari 8-bit with its several unique microprocessors is not easy. The Xformer emulator on PC's still needs improvement. Some users are still reporting that only a limited selection of software will run. Darek Mihocka is doing upgrades, but he seems to be tiring of the project. Chris Lam has updated his Rainbow 8-bit emulator for the Macintosh. Version 1.1 has more capabilities such as better sound and full screen displays. Still, these emulators have a way to go before they can completely replace an original 8-bit.

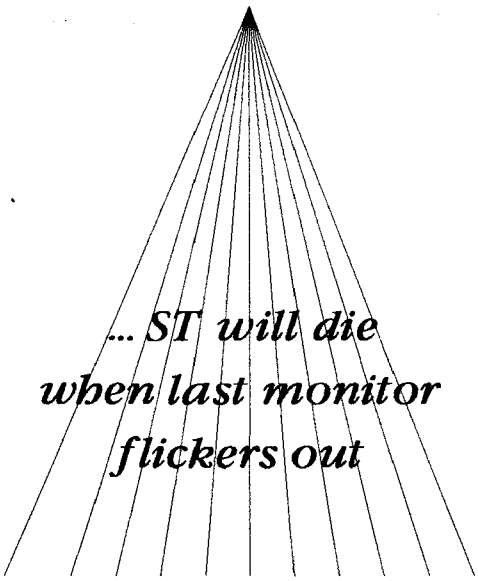
Locally our Atari 8-bit users are replacing original 8-bit equipment with more original 8-bit equipment. Former members of GCACE, Mike Harrison and Mark Collins, have gone on to other computers. And they have kindly donated their 8-bit systems to the club for distribution to interested members. The result was a feeding frenzy among the 8-bit sharks with everyone going away with something useful. If you want to keep an old car on the road, it's handy to have a few wrecks available for parts. This applies to Atari 8-bit computers too. If you're in it for the long haul you'll need something in reserve. Thanks to Mike and Mark, a few remaining Atari 8-bit users will be able to keep on for a while longer.

Game Monsters!

by Rowland Grant

Doom has been such a success on PC computers that a similar game is under development for Falcon computers too. This freeware game is called Bad Mood. It is being developed by a number of persons who exchange code over Internet. So far they have developed a 'world' for the game with textured surfaces and such. Now the player can 'walk' through this vast world. However, the monsters and game play are still far from complete. An artificial intelligence engine for the monsters is the present focus of the project. Ideas on the monsters are being solicited. The Bad Mood project needs the true colour graphics and the DSP capabilities that are available only on the Falcon. However, it might be possible to produce a version for TT's and their clones. Others are exploiting the game capabilities of the Falcon too. New Beat Development have released a playable preview of a platform game called "Willie the Adventurer". It features parallax scrolling, 64 foreground colours, four background colours, 8-channel 8-bit sound and Jaguar Joypad support. The preview is a kind of beta version. They are hoping for comments, bug reports and suggestions. Another Falcon Game is called Killing Impact. It was created by Rebel Vision, and is distributed in North America by Crawly Crypt; price is $45 US. This is a Joust type game with multi-directional scrolling.

Atari Compendium is the complete guide for programming Atari ST and TT computers. Previously available in book form, it is now on CD ROM. The disk is padded out with a huge amount of PD software, files and images. The Atari Compendium part is present in two formats for printing, so you can make your own book if you want. To read disks like this, Anodyne Software has released version 2.3 of ExtenDOS Pro. However, ExtenDOS handles audio CD and photoCD media as well and will support a wide range of CD ROM drives including changer mechanisms. With certain drives, ExtenDOS allows the copying of sound segments from CD directly to hard disk. Another publisher, Homa Systems House, has released Atari CD Master for Infopedia 2.0. The Infopedia CD contains the complete 29 volume Funk and Wagnalls New Encyclopedia with 27000 entries and 8000 photo or sound clips. Stuffed in with it is Hammonds World Atlas and the 1955 World Almanac. Ordinarily this disk can only be read by PC's. However Homa System's CD Master software makes it available on a 4MB ST (although a Falcon is recommended for best results). The CD Master software and the Infopedia CD together cost $119 CDN. CD Master software is available for a variety of other popular CD ROM disks as well. Both Anodyne and Homa Systems are based in Canada.



I noticed some comment about the monochrome SM124 high-resolution monitor. It was originally used by NCR as a monitor on it's bank machines. It was built in Asia by Goldstar. So this excellent quiet screen was designed for banks, not for Atari. The SM124 was bought off the shelf from Goldstar and repackaged for the ST. Atari made a good choice. Replacement parts may be a problem. The non-standard flyback transformer is still available from Best Electronics. However the cathode ray tube has been out of production for years. I suspect that the last ST will cease being used when the last Atari monitor flickers out. While Atari sold off most of the accumulations in its warehouses some years ago, the remainder has to go now. Atari is vacating its head office and remaining warehouse. I understand that Best Electronics has acquired most of this stock. However, other dealers have picked up some stock as well. This is the end. There will be no more computer stock and parts from Atari.

The STOS programming language, a form of BASIC, has been very popular in Britain. While the original authors seem to have abandoned STOS, others are still supporting its use. STOS originally would only run on TOS 1.0 machines. Then a fix was issued for TOS 1.4 and 1.6. Now Anthony Jacques has released his Generic STOS Fixer that allows STOS programs to run on most current versions of TOS including TOS 2.6 and later versions. And the STOS Users have established a STOSSER web page with lots of files of STOS programs. Like STOS itself, the web page works best in low resolution colour.

There is still lots of enthusiasm for the ST in Europe. The Swedish Atari User's Association will be holding its Nordic Atari Show 1996 on 14-16 June in Lundby Gymnasium in Goteborg, Sweden. It will consist of commercial exhibitions, seminars, demonstrations, competitions, games, eating and drinking. Sounds like fun, but they didn't mention the cloudberry ice cream this year. Closer to home, Atari Safari 96 was held in Houston Texas on February 24th. Also the Sacramento Atari Exhibition 96 will be held on March 23rd at the Towe Ford museum in Sacramento California.

The name Tom Hudson came up recently. He was on the staff of ANALOG magazine about twelve years ago. He is a superb programmer, and published many games and utilities in ANALOG for the Atari 8-bit. I recall one program in which the user draws a simple image from the top and sides, providing cartesian coordinates for the points where there is change in direction. The program would then create a 3-dimensional image that could be rotated and viewed from any angle. Later when the ST came out, Tom was one of the first to publish a program for it. Using his experience with his simple 3-D program he created his superb CAD 3D software, as well as CYBER Paint and the CYBER family of graphics programs for the ST. Tom also created the Degas drawing software that set the graphics standards for the ST. More recently Tom has published "3D Studio" for the PC. Apparently it has sold very well. That's it Tom, give those poor PC users some real software.