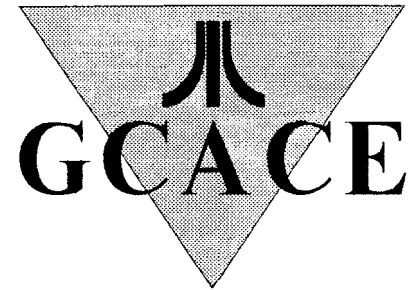


# XIO3



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

November/December 1995

## November 23 Meeting!

The November meeting will be a demonstration of Public Domain text editors and commercial word processors. If you have questions about a particular word processor, bring it on disk to the meeting, and we will try to answer your questions about it. Don't forget, there is no meeting in December. There will be a Social SIG meeting on Sunday, November 26th at George Roses's house from noon til 4. Phone George at 652-0572 for directions. Everyone welcome!

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## ATARI® NEWS AND RUMOURS

by Rowland Grant

Atari has released its financial figures for the third quarter (July to September) of this year. Sales were \$4.1 million, but Atari lost \$13.8 million. Atari seems to be spending about \$6 million a month but it takes in only about \$1.3 million (gulp). For the third quarter last year, Atari had sales of \$7.2 million and suffered a loss of \$4.2 million. So Atari is spending more than last year and earning less. I understand that Atari still has \$53 million in cash. But at the present rate of loss, Atari will be out of cash within a year. What has happened? Several new and quite acceptable games were released in July and August. The Jaguar CD finally got into the stores, and much of the CD inventory was sold. The game Rayman was a great success. But Atari was selling mostly to the converted. Sales of new Jaguar units were slow. The profit on each unit was slashed when the price was dropped to \$150. At the old price of \$250, the third quarter Jaguar earnings might have looked much like last year's. Another thing, the gaming world was awaiting the North American release of Sony's PlayStation game system in September. More expensive than the Jaguar, but heavily supported by a large corporation, the PlayStation is taking its share of a somewhat limited market. There's still the last quarter, the Christmas season. No doubt Atari's sales will improve, but Atari needs to make a profit, badly.

Atari's shares hovered around \$2.50 for most of the summer. However they went up well over \$3.00 in September with heavy trading. Perhaps this was the influence of Ted Hoff's news

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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. Copying of club ST public domain disks is done at meetings. Bring a blank, formatted disk for each PD disk you want. For 8-bit copying, please phone the club 8-bit librarian.

## EDITORIAL

We have another jam-packed issue of 18 pages for November/December. John Picken has finished the latest version of his XL2 software. The club has mailed it to interested 8-biters in other countries. Garden City Atari has correspondance with many clubs and individuals, who contribute software and advice to us. It is nice to be able to send something back. John has been working on this program for years and should be justly proud of his work.

Ted Skrecky has an updated listing of public domain software which has been added to the GCACE ST Library. He also regales us with news of his new Amiga. Fortunately he hasn't reported trying to fix it with his trusty steak knife like he did with his Commie 64.

Also contributing a software review this month is Bob Lussier from Vancouver. He is not a member of our club, but we have been corresponding with him for years and are happy to see him send in an article.

I know it is a little early, but Happy Holidays to all our members and their families. Don't forget there is no meeting in December and try to make it out to George Rose's place for the Social SIG on November 26th from noon till 4 pm.

*Good*

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### General Information:

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John Towler 382-5083

### Hardware, Repairs & Sales:

Steve Lemmen 595-7811

### Games:

Ted Skrecky See above.

# PEEKing Around

by Gordon F Hooper

... Welcome to new member LARRY EGGLETON, who uses his ST to help with another interest, ham radio. BUD MAINDONALD, DAN MOEN and GEORGE MCGUIRE renewed for another year. George also has an interest in ham radio ... ROWLAND GRANT at the September general meeting learned a lesson I learned long ago. When you have something electronic that doesn't work, ask a kid. ANTHONY SKIPP quickly determined the reason the joystick wouldn't work during Rowland's demonstration - it wasn't plugged in. Maybe I can get Anthony to come to my house to set the time on my VCR ... Corresponding members JO and PEGGY DZIEWULSKI made the trek down from Duncan to attend the September meeting. It was good to see them ... ED JONES, who lives in Courtenay, attended

the October meeting and brought greetings from MIST, the mid island ST club we regularly exchange newsletters with ... The CyberTurncoat, TED SKRECKY, is at it again. This time he spent his hard-earned dollars on an Amiga. The CyberDeserter reports that the graphics are superior to the ST, but, in CyberWords, "the operating system sucks" ... I've been talking via e-mail to our Portland corresponding member, ALEX CHAMBERLAIN. He promises to send in an article for the next issue of XIO3, making us truly international. It would be nice if other corresponding members could contribute to the newsletter. Tell us about a favourite piece of software, or a hardware hack, or just the state of Atari computers in your town ... MICHAEL DAVIES learned the wisdom of the Number



1 computer rule, Always Make a Backup, the hard way. CRAIG CARMICHAEL helped in recovering some of Michael's files. Don't feel too bad, Michael. Forgetting that rule comes up and hits every computer user with a 2 by 4 every now and then ... JOHN O'NEILL has been playing around trying to get a 14.4 modem to cooperate and be friendly ... RON LUKAWITSKI came to my house for some PD software because he works on Thursday nights playing bass in bands ... Start skulking around back alleys and send the dirty deeds you discover fellow GCACE members engaged in to GORD at 475-0857 ...

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## David Ewens,

*Tyne & Wear Atari Users Group, UK*

Newsgroups: comp.sys.atari.8bit  
Subject: A Great loss to all  
Atarians...

Hi, I don't know how many of you have heard of TWAUG, it is a UK Atari group that does a wide selection of PD titles and has a bimonthly newsletter. The editor and main person of the group was Mr. David Ewens, a friendly person and was my main Atari contact for getting me back into the swing of Atari again, when I thought no help was available anymore.

Unfortunately, I received the sad

news last Saturday when I tried to telephone him, that he died last Thursday. He was 58. Collapsed when he was out in the town and died instantly. He was a good friend of mine and to many others also, always willing to help out in any matter, Atari related or otherwise.

His address can be found under T of the Atari Vendors and Developers I think that his passing has been a major blow to UK/Irish Atarians and he will be sadly missed by all of us. For the moment anyway, TWAUG will continue but it would be inconsiderate to ask

about it too much at this delicate time.

May he Rest In Peace and continue to help Atarians on the other side...

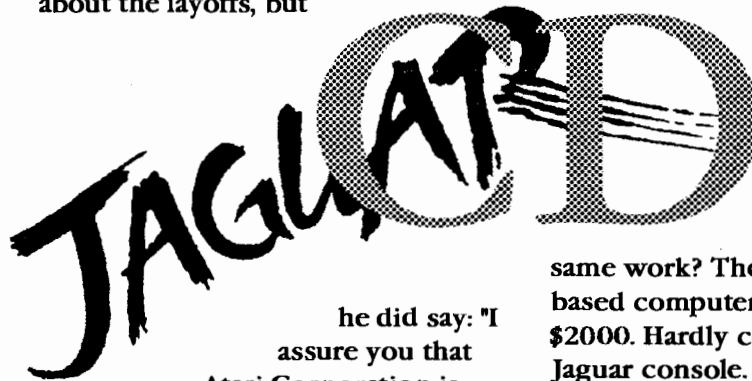
Francis Byrne, Dept B2G IBM  
North Harbour, Portsmouth, UK.  
Email: F\_BYRNE@UK.IBM.COM

David will be greatly missed by Atarians far removed from the British Isles; we have lost a tireless supporter. We, in Garden City Atari Computer Enthusiasts, have lost a good friend.

John Picken

conference and the release of new Atari products. In October, Atari shares began to decline and then suddenly dropped, selling near \$2.00. It turned out that Time Warner had sold a block of 6.6 million shares, representing 10.4 percent of Atari's shares outstanding. Time Warner has been doing big deals. It needs cash. And Time Warner has lots more shares to sell (about 9 million). But someone has bought 6.6 million Atari shares. In spite of the disappointing third quarter figures there are those who are at least a little optimistic about Atari. One reason for optimism is that the Tramiels seem to have slipped into the background, and Ted Hoff has taken over Atari's affairs in North America. Ted is a new broom, and he has begun to sweep. First there were vague rumours that everyone was being fired at Atari in Sunnyvale. Not everybody it seems, but about thirty of Atari's product development staff were laid off for reasons unknown. Some reasons became clear when Bob Brodie posted a message following a chat with a contact at Atari. He said that artists, game producers, most of the development staff (all of the old TOS engineers) and the music department personnel were laid off. Even Atari veterans such as Bill Rehbock had to go. Bob said that anything related to the Jaguar will be contracted out. Atari is going to go after the PC entertainment market as well. Bob notes that this is a policy that many other companies have followed successfully, but it leaves Atari's commitment to the Jaguar in question.

When this news reached Britain, there was a different spin. An article in the Sunday Times (Oct 29) stated that Atari is considering abandoning the Jaguar because of poor sales, and that Atari would concentrate only on video game software. Also Atari will not be producing a virtual reality system. The day after the Times article, Ted Hoff issued a news release. He made no comment about the layoffs, but



he did say: "I assure you that Atari Corporation is moving forward with Jaguar support and development as hard as ever. ... Your continued support is our mandate for the future." Ted Hoff's words began to sound a bit hollow a week or so later, when John Mathieson announced that he would be leaving Atari to join a new start-up company. John Mathieson is the designer of the Jaguar and the Jaguar-2. John was not forced to leave, but he sees a better future for himself elsewhere.

Programmer Francois Bertrand is very highly regarded, but he was one of those laid off by Atari. Apparently he doesn't like doing PC games. This brought claims that Atari had let go all the talent and that its ability to create in-house games would be compromised. It may not matter. Looking at Atari's list of games in progress I see that Atari has only eight in-house games left. There are rumours that one or two

of these have been dropped and that the rest are completed. On the other hand, Atari has already contracted out at least 49 new titles. I believe that the layoffs are only a step in a policy that has been in force for some time. As far as PC games are concerned, it is known that PC versions of Atari's Tempest 2000 and Highlander have been under parallel development. These PC games use the same artwork, music and game algorithms as the Jaguar. Why not expand the market and get more profit from the same work? The current fast Intel based computers cost more than \$2000. Hardly competition for the Jaguar console. Sega is issuing some of its games under the Sega PC label, so why not an Atari PC label too. The PC games must be on CD ROM. This means that in the long run most Jaguar games may be on CD ROM as well.

One can see now why Ted Hoff decided to release the JaguarCD, even without a satisfactory lineup of CD games. In order for a developer to do CD games for the Jaguar, the CD capability must be in the hands of the game buyers. Previously, Atari coyly promised developers that the Jaguar CD was ready to go, but wouldn't release it. Ted Hoff delivered the goods. According to its list of games in progress, Atari has contracted 23 CD games for the Jaguar, and where the title is new, a PC version will probably follow. Independent developers are working on possibly as many as 27 more CD games for the Jaguar. There are lots of cartridge games in the works too.

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Atari has contracted for 26, and the independents may be working on 41. Of course a lot of these games will not make it to market, but there should be a few winners among those that do.

Atari's in-house game development is not held in high regard by outsiders. Its development tools are known for their lack of quality, particularly in sound and 3-D rendering. Third party developers have had to resort to creating their own tools. Also some of Atari's in-house staff have been badmouthing the efforts of 4Play, the independent team developing Battlesphere. And ICD's Catbox interface has also been disparaged. They said that "the Catbox has yet to pass long term compatibility tests with various revisions of the Jaguar". Weasel words. No Catbox user has reported any problems with it. The modest accomplishments of the in-house developers and the feuds with independent Jaguar supporters was probably the last straw.

Ted Hoff has an uphill battle. Atari and the Jaguar are little known nowadays. In *Newsweek* (Oct. 9) there is the reference: "... Atari, the now defunct video-game manufacturer". Worse, a recent issue of *BusinessWeek* had an article on the latest video-game systems. Most of the comments about the Jaguar were negative. It turns out that the Jaguar unit sent to *BusinessWeek* for the review did not work. Much has been made of mass marketers such as Sears and Walmart carrying the Jaguar.

However, as Atari adds new distributors it seems to lose current ones. Microplay has dropped the Jaguar because Atari seems to have dropped Microplay.

In our town, Microplay couldn't get any new games or consoles. Locally

the Jaguar is dead. Elsewhere, there are continuing reports of the lack of current games, CD units or even Jaguar consoles. The smaller stores seem to be rationed, getting one or two items at a time. Maybe Atari sales are poor because it doesn't have much inventory to sell.

*BusinessWeek* criticised Atari's spotty marketing. This kind of marketing helped kill Atari ST computers in the U.S. It may be killing the Jaguar too.

In September, Atari announced that it had retained the services of a new, creative advertising agency known as Ground Zero. I guess the old one didn't pan out. They are targeting males 12-34 with fast-paced, In-your-face ads on cable (that's what they said). The campaign will get into full swing in mid-October and run on through December. The cable ads (comedy, sports and SciFi channels) will be supplemented with print ads. Atari has released a promotional video tape showing clips from 20 games due for release. Reviewers have reported that at least five of these games are outstanding. Atari has taken part in the video game Super Tour to shopping malls in eleven cities in the U.S. New games will be demonstrated, the public will be invited to try them and give their impressions. The Tour runs through September to mid November. Atari is teaming up with Electronic Gaming Monthly to appear for three

nights on the USA: Up All Night program. Atari will give away five Jaguars bundled with three top games as prizes. Atari has finally

... *BusinessWeek criticised Atari's spotty marketing*

established a World Wide Web Domain

called JAGWIRE. The web site was created by ATOMIX, a Hollywood media house. JAGWIRE features graphics, animation, audio and descriptive text for web browsers. Atari is also using CompuServe as its Jaguar commercial on-line support site, providing 24-hour access. Ironically, it's going to be very difficult, if not impossible, to access CompuServe in the future using any Atari computer.

Atari and Run PC, a computer and game systems retailer, are opening a Jaguar Mall Store. This is a large, temporary cubicle in the middle of the mall. The prototype store in Longmont Colorado exclusively demonstrates and sells Atari Jaguar and Lynx systems. They sold out their initial inventory in two days. Nothing like hands-on experience and a dedicated staff to sell a good product. Other Jaguar Mall Stores are being planned. In most places, the Jaguar is sold by video game stores that deal in all brands. The staff frequently have their own agenda as to what they want to sell. Where the Jaguar is given reasonable display space and the staff are not negative towards it, the Jaguar seems to sell very well. There is one report of a Babbages store in which each brand of game console was operating. Four customers were clustered around the Jaguar, playing Rayman, two customers were at the Sega Saturn.

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The two Sony PlayStations demonstrated in the same store were being ignored.

In Britain, Atari started its sales campaign with displays of new games at the ECTS show in London. One game called Zero 5, exhibited graphics and control equal or better than on any other platform. There were comments like: "I had no idea the Jag was that good". Another popular game was the weird and humorous Attack of the Mutant Penguins. Atari UK is packing the Doom game with Jaguar consoles for Christmas. They are rumoured to be negotiating with Ubisoft for Rayman as a pack-in as well. The British TV ad campaign will start in November on all channels. Major British game outlets such as Software Plus, Dixons and Future Zone all stock the Jaguar. The British are enthusiastic video game players. This is a market that Atari must give a lot of attention to.

I am aware of at least 38 game titles that have been released for the Jaguar. In September, the Jaguar CD unit was finally available with two CD games, Vid Grid and Blue Lightning. Vid Grid is a puzzle game. It is available on the PC, and was not considered very good. However the Jaguar version has been found to be a very enjoyable game. Blue Lightning, a flying shooter type game has received mixed reviews. Most users enjoyed playing it. However, Blue Lightning does not do the Jaguar system justice when it comes to graphics. Things began to look up when Rayman, by Ubi Soft,

arrived in the stores. Rayman has been rated as one of the finest platform games yet. It has been released for several game machines. The Jaguar version of Rayman is considered the best of the bunch. Then Power Drive Rally was released by independent developer TWI. This too was judged to be of quite acceptable quality. Pitfall is a game that goes back to the days of the Atari 2600 game system. It was a very popular platform type game where the game character swings on ropes like Tarzan. It was created by an independent programmer who at one time had worked for Atari. Now Pitfall has been redone for the Jaguar as a cartridge game, apparently with great success.

In October, two CD games were released. The first was Hover Strike CD. This game had been rendered as a cartridge game last spring. However, the CD game is not only larger in scope, but the game play has been improved considerably. So far nobody has complained about it. The second game is Highlander I, an animated adventure type game. The backgrounds are reported to be stunning, however the moving characters have not been rendered as finely as they might have been. Highlander is enjoyable and not too hard to get through. Early in November, Ruiner Pinball was released in cartridge form. This game was created for Atari by High Voltage Software.

There are rumours of more games in production. Myst, a very popular game on the PC and Macintosh, was bundled in demo form with the Jaguar CD. Now Myst seems to be in production and should out be in time for Christmas. Attack of the Mutant Penguins, the game that amused people at the ECTS show in London, may be ready soon also. Ted Hoff said that about four more CD games and an equal

number of cartridge games should be out before the end of the year. The much awaited Defender 2000 by Jeff Minter (Llamasoft) was delayed a bit when his father died and Jeff returned home. However, Jeff recently reported that the game is finished and is going to testing. Atari has not dismissed it's game testers, at least not yet.

There are disturbing rumours that Atari has given up. That Atari will abandon the Jaguar at some convenient time. That the story of Atari becoming a videogame publisher for other platforms is a deception. That the actions and words of Ted Hoff are just a "Happy Face" cover until Atari closes its doors. Probably these rumours arise from very serious discussions within Atari's management. The high end game player market has turned out to be much smaller than was anticipated. And the market is too crowded. Nobody seems to be making a profit on the 32/64 bit consoles, at least not outside of Japan. Atari was hoping to move into the low end game mass market when it reduced the price of the Jaguar to \$150 (US). But Atari didn't supply the necessary skills and resources to enter a market dominated by Sega and Nintendo. Atari has sold over a quarter of a million Jaguar consoles in two years. The established game publishers use the figure of one million consoles (or is it 2 million?) as the minimum for a profitable market. With its low price and lots of new attractive games, the Jaguar should sell well this Christmas. But before Atari's money runs out, the number of Jaguars sold must reach a point where game sales become profitable. I suspect that Atari's managers have already decided at what point they will cut Atari's losses if they have to.

Hang on, it's going to be a rough ride!

# *XL2 - Finished?*

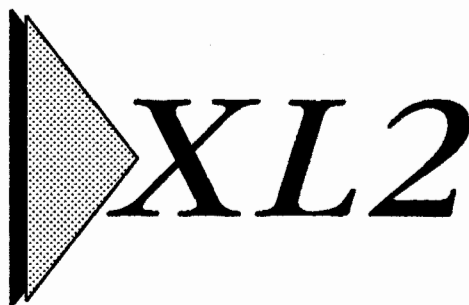
*by Rowland Grant*

Steven Tucker's Atari Peripheral Emulator (APE) software makes an IBM type computer act as an Atari 8-bit peripheral. With this software and a SIO2PC cable, the 8-bit can make use of PC disk drives, hard drives, CD ROMs and fast modems. The original SIO2PC software would do this too, but APE is a more extensive second generation version. From all reports, APE seems to work very well, particularly if the PC is running under DOS. APE doesn't seem to work under Windows 95 or Windows NT, but lots of software doesn't. The SIO2PC cable includes a bit of electronics. Not everybody would want to make one. So Steve Tucker is proposing to have a supply of these SIO2PC devices made. He needs 20 pledges of purchase to start the project. Steve will also supply free registration of the APE shareware package to the first 20 purchasers of his SIO2PC/APE cable.

Ernest Schreurs in Holland reports that he has been working on a CD for Atari 8-bits for the last two years. He has made an extensive collection of PD and shareware programs. The 8-bit disks are converted to disk images in the SIO2PC ATR format. More than 1500 disk sides have been converted. There was lots of room left on the CD so the Umich archive was added. Initially there were no plans to sell the CD's outside of Holland and Germany. However, Ernest is open to requests from abroad if there is enough interest. The CD will

cost about \$35 (US) plus shipping. And about disk images, Rob Satonica of Creative Software Systems will convert your 8-bit disks to disk images and transfer them to 3.5 inch 1.44 MB disks. Rob will create images in PCXformer of SIO2PC formats. He charges \$10 for 50 disk sides plus shipping. Rob has a catalogue of 8-bit software disk images that he has collected. He also sells PC software to help manage these disk image files.

If you want extra program storage, you don't have to use a PC and disk images. A Black Box interface from CSS will enable you to handle SCSI devices. These can be hard drives, CD-ROM drives and others. The IOMEGA ZIP drive



stores up to 100 MB of data on a special 3.5 inch disk. There are reports that ZIP drives will run using the Black Box and Sparta DOS. Bob Puff operates CSS, but he has not been easy to reach lately. It is rumoured that Bob is working on PC projects, since the Atari market is rather slow. The bulletin Board for CSS seems to have been disconnected. This is not a good sign. I expect that Bob will continue to sell CSS products while there is some interest, but for how long?

Mike Hohman of Fine Tooned Engineering was "on the road" and

unavailable for a month or more. He says that he sent out a "pseudo-catalogue" to his customers, and in it he explained that he would be away. There have been complaints that some Sparta DOS-X ROM chips shipped recently did not work. Mike is trying to get that straightened up. He hopes to have the Mars board and MIO II in production before Christmas. The catalogue will be published, and the phone support service will resume in November or December, or when Mike gets back from his next trip (or when ever). Roland Buehler in Germany has also developed an IDE hard drive interface that plugs into the parallel bus of the XL or 130 XE computers. This interface will only handle one IDE drive, but it can use its full capacity by splitting the 512 byte PC sectors into two 256 byte sectors. This interface is said to support up to eight partitions of 16 MB each (let's hope that it can do better than that). It runs under SpartaDOS, MyDos and BW-DOS.

BW-DOS version 1.21 has been released. This update allows redirection commands and batch files to work with 80 column peripherals such as XEP-80 and Hyper-E. BW-DOS also handles the allocation of directory pointers somewhat better than Sparta DOS. There have been some requests for BW-DOS to be altered such that it can handle high capacity hard drives etc. However, Jiri Bernasek has been working on BW-DOS for the last couple of years, and I understand that he would like to take a break from it. So there may be a pause before the next update.

Our own John Picken has

See XL2 on Page 13

# RAM/ROM Control on XL/XE

by John Picken

Let's first look at what you've got to play with as far as extra RAM, how it's done, and what kind of problems you can run into. No matter how much memory is installed in your computer, the 6502 can never access an address outside the range 0-65535 (64k). With BASIC off, this limits normal RAM to 48k as the Operating System (OS) and hardware chips take up the last 16k. With BASIC on, or a cartridge installed, you lose yet another 8k.

Software like SpartaDOS and Turbo BASIC utilize another 14k of RAM by deselecting the OS. As far as I know, nobody ever produced 6, 14, or 62k chips so there has to be another 2k of RAM in there. The only way you can deselect the hardware registers is with the power switch.

Since the 6502 can't "see" extra memory, you have to trick the computer into believing it's not seeing what it is, which is how all software that uses extra RAM works. It operates by "bank switching", a concept more understandable with a memory map so here's a rough picture of the 64k address range in your computer broken up into four 16k "banks": See Illustration #1

Usage indicates the only bank which is almost always all RAM and can safely be switched in or out is number 1, which is exactly how the 130XE is designed. Its extra RAM is divided into four 16k banks, each of which can replace normal memory in bank 1. In effect, the 130 memory map looks like this: See illustration #2

Compatible memory upgrades are mapped in the same way. The only difference is that there are more extended banks--up to 64 with 1 meg. Each bank when switched in, appears as main bank 1. The diagram

Bank #	Address Range		Usage
	Dec	Hex	
0	000000 16383	\$00000 \$3FFF	RAM for OS, DOS and user programs
1	16384 32767	\$40000 \$7FFF	User RAM. Some ROM if self-test enabled
2	32768 49151	\$80000 \$BFFF	User RAM. Top half is ROM if BASIC on
3	49152 65535	\$C0000 \$FFFF	OS ROM + i/o chips User RAM if os off

Illustration #1

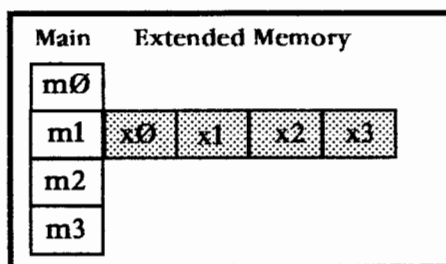


Illustration #2

is slightly misleading in that it implies the extra banks sort of slide into place one after another -- they don't. Any one can be selected in any order you wish.

Switching RAMs and ROMs is physically simple. Almost all control is handled by a single hardware address known as PORTB (54017 or \$D301). The bits in PORTB have the following functions on a 130XE:

Bit #	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0
Usage	T	y	x	E	j	i	B	O
Dec.	128	64	32	16	8	4	2	0

Bit 0 (0) if high enables the OS ROM

Bit 0 is used by Sparta and Turbo to toggle between RAM and ROM to make use of that hidden 14k. This requires a juggling act since the OS interrupt handlers are in ROM and must be re-enabled, 60 times per second, to avoid a crash, or else the program must provide its own interrupt handlers. Additionally, since Antic updates the screen before the 6502 gets to process the interrupt, it is necessary to use an alternate character set in lower memory or to copy the ROM one into RAM at the same address.

Bit 1 (B) if low enables the BASIC ROM

To figure values in PORTB

you add the decimal values under each bit to be set to 1. Since, with all bits set, the total is 255, it's often simpler to subtract. PEEK (54017) in BASIC will produce 253 meaning everything's high except bit 1. The same PEEK with Turbo gives 255 as the BASIC ROM is off. This is the only bit you normally see change.

Bit 7 (T) if low enables Self Test ROM

As with RAM, there has to be 2k of ROM left over. There is, and it's used for part of the Self Test routines. When bit 7 is low, it's enabled. Since hardware registers can't be deselected, this portion of ROM deselects and replaces RAM from \$5000-\$57FF in bank 1. Unless you're really into listening to simple music, a really slow and incomplete RAM test, or watching keys flash on an image of a 1200XL keyboard, you can consider this 2k of ROM to be free space if designing an OS upgrade.

See RAM/ROM on Page 10



# ZIP Drives for ST!

by Rowland Grant

Atari News and Rumours was originally a universal review of events and products involving Atari. I later separated the Atari 8-bit news into a new column. Since Atari is no longer involved in computers I have decided to separate the ST component. This should make things easier for our glorious editor too, although he didn't actually demand that I do this. Most of all, the new column should help you, the reader, since smaller articles are less likely to be chopped up and scattered at random throughout the newsletter.

Several major software publishers for the Atari ST are expanding into the profitable PC and Macintosh markets. Calamus, a popular Atari desktop publishing program, has been released to run under Windows 95 and Windows NT. Of course, Calamus continues to be available for Atari computers. Pagestream, the main competitor to Calamus is also being released in PC and Macintosh versions. While Soft-Logic is not upgrading Pagestream for the ST, it has re-issued Pagestream 2.2 with a new manual. The price for this version is only \$39 (US). This is quite a bargain when you consider that it used to go for \$299.95. I should mention that Calamus SL has also dropped in price from \$700 to \$200 (US). Christian Nieber, developer of the popular document processor Papyrus, reports that Papyrus version 4 is ready for beta testing. This version is a major re-development. Papyrus is also

being developed to run on OS/2 and Macintosh computers. Christian says that while the Atari market is small, Papyrus's share of it is sufficient to retain an interest in the ST version. Another publisher, Arnor, has gone out of business, but the original programming team is still developing Protext. The latest ST version of Protext is available from Compo. However, there are rumours that future developments of Protext will be for the PC market only.

Previously I reported that Atari was developing a new computer called the MicroBox. I speculated that the MicroBox might be a fast PC with a Jaguar development card and the proposed Falcon card. Apparently the Atari MicroBox shown in a Dutch magazine actually exists. It is the prototype model of a new Atari computer which was under consideration about two years ago. According to some, the project was discontinued when Atari decided to concentrate on the Jaguar. Others claim that the Atari MicroBox is still under development, and is supplied with all the latest hardware peripherals. A return to the computer market by Atari doesn't make much sense. But I suppose it doesn't have to.

While there may be no new computers from Atari there is lots of hardware available to increase the power of existing Atari computers. I mentioned that ICD was developing software to handle the new ZIP drives. There are reports that special software is not needed for these drives. The standard ICD software that comes with ICD Link interface will treat a ZIP drive like any other hard drive. Apparently ICD is writing special

software for ZIP drives to provide write protection, passwords and such. The SyQuest EZ135, is a competitor for the ZIP drive. The EZ135 also uses a 100 megabyte 3.5 inch cartridge, and the price is the same. Unlike ZIP drives, The EZ135 has a standard 50 pin SCSI connector and a built-in terminator. Thus it seems possible that ST users could use the EZ135 as their only SCSI device. Toad computers is advertising the SyQuest EZ-135 at \$209 (US). The 100 megabyte disks are \$24.95.

The 720K floppy disks used by the older ST's are becoming scarce and expensive. Most of the Macintosh and PC computers use high density 1440K disks. These can be formatted and used as 720K disks in ST's. Success seem to depend on the model of drive in the ST and the nature of the high density disk. Pre-formatted HD disks don't work very well when they have been formatted again on the ST. I have some HD disks that work just fine (made in Canada), but other brands won't format or the files on them fade rapidly. A high density drive can be installed in a ST but it can only handle 720K disks. To format, read and write high density disks, the Western Digital drive controller chip in the ST has to be replaced. Atari marketed a special chip called AJAX that controlled high density. AJAX can be obtained from Best Electronics for around \$40 (US). Now I see that Computer Direct in Edmonton is offering a high density disk drive kit for ST's, complete with the drive and all necessary electronics, for \$149 (CDN). It doesn't use the Ajax chip. Apparently the Western Digital

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Bit 4 (E) if low enables extra RAM

Bit 4 is the master switch for extra memory. No matter what values are in the other bits, the 6502 will always use normal memory when this bit is high.

Bits 3 and 2 (ji) select one of four 16k banks

These bits together determine which one of the four 16k banks is enabled. They simply count from 0 to 3 in binary where, if j is set you add 2, and if i is set you add 1:

j	i	bank
0	0	0
0	1	1
1	0	2
1	1	3

Here's what the memory map would look like with bits 3 and 4 low (remember the 6502 only "sees" the RAM in the "Main" column). Illustration #3 follows:

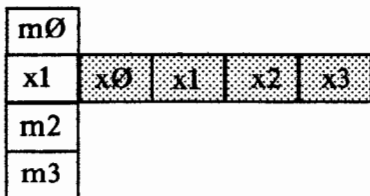


Illustration #3

Bit 5 (x) enables Antic access

On a 130XE, each of the four extra banks can be assigned individually to either Antic or the 6502 or to both, a setup that is rarely used--forget about them if you only have a 130. On the 130 these bits are normally set to one.

Bit 6 (y) does nothing  
**BEYOND THE 130**

Once you exceed 64k extra

RAM you need more bits so the upgrade designers took the bits that I just told 130 owners to forget about. Bits 6 and 5 (yx) select one of four 64k blocks. These work similarly to 2 and 3 except that you use them to select one of up to four 64k blocks and within each of these, you use bits 2 and 3 to select one of the four 16k banks (just as for the 130). Because the 130 normally keeps these bits high, their sense is reversed from that of 2 and 3. Don't worry about the difference, all you need to know is which values work for your upgrade. The following bit patterns work for 256XL upgrades:

y	x	64K Block	Available On:
1	1	0 (130XE)	All
1	0	1	All
0	1	2	*B/P/R
0	0	3	Newell

\*Bucholz/Peterson/Rambo

**256XL PROBLEMS**

With a Bucholz/Peterson/Rambo 256XL you can run into a significant problem enabling the third extra block. If your software is set up for a Newell, not only will you not be able to use the third block, but any attempt to do so results in various other main banks showing up as main bank 1. What you end up with is a mapping like the following which results from attempting to access extended bank x8 using Newell bit patterns:

Main	64K Blocks											
	0	1	2									
m0	Extended RAM Banks (hex)											
0	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	A	B
m2												
m3												

Obviously, this is a prelude to disaster as trying to write to bank x8 will overwrite DOS or the OS low RAM storage. Similarly, attempting to write to bank B could write to the hardware chips. With the Newell

upgrade, wrong bit patterns enable Antic access to the extra RAM which should be harmless as the display list and screen RAM are rarely in this address range. It still however, restricts extra RAM usage to 128k.

So if you're having RAMdisk problems with a 256XL, odds are you're using the wrong software. ICD put out separate versions of their RD handler to address this and you need to obtain the correct one. With MYDOS you won't have a problem if you use the default RD configuration (menu item "O") but if you select a custom sequence or enter one manually, you must be aware of which banks are available.

**UP TO A MEG**

If you've been keeping count, you can see there's no more bits available in PORTB. To get past 256k, the designers decided to take over the BASIC bit, and to go to a meg, the Self Test bit.

B if 0 enables the second 256k.

T if 0 enables the second 512k.

If both of these are high, you're in the first 256k. If bit 7 is low and bit 1 high, you're in first half of the second 512k (third 256k), etc.

**BEFORE YOU UPGRADE**

You might run into a problem with bit 7 if you have installed a custom operating system chip: It may be used, by the chip, for other purposes such as switching in its own RAMdisk handler or display handler. Check this out before investing in an upgrade past 576K. Also, there are some XE's on which the 1-meg upgrade does not work. I have not experienced this personally but have read message traffic about it which implicates the model of the Antic chip installed. If you're unsure, ask questions first.

**ACCESSING THE BANKS**

Rather than figure bit patterns, it's a lot simpler to use a table. The one following gives the access value for every possible bank up to 1 megabyte. The values are with the OS on and BASIC (if present) off. They are given in hex and are exactly the values needed to set up a MYDOS RAMdisk for the banks you have and wish to assign to the RD.

**RAM BANK ACCESS TABLE  
64-1024K**

PORTB	Available on Type
E3,E7,EB,EF	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8
C3,C7,CB,CF	2,3,4,5,6,7,8
A3,A7,AB,AF	2, 4,5,6,7
83,87,8B,8F	3,4,5,6,7
E1,E5,E9,ED	5,6,7
C1,C5,C9,CD	5,6,7
A1,A5,A9,AD	5,6,7,8
81,85,89,8D	5,6,7,8
63,67,6B,6F	6,7
43,47,4B,4F	6,7
23,27,2B,2F	6,7
03,07,0B,0F	6,7
61,65,69,6D	7
41,45,49,4D	7
21,25,29,2D	7
01,05,09,0D	7

Type	Upgrade Mapping
1 = 130 XE	
2 = 256 XL	Buch./Peter./Rambo
3 = 256 XL	Newell
4 = 320 XE	Peterson
5 = 576 XE	"
6 = 832 XE	"
7 = 1088 XE	"
8 = 768 k+	" (BASIC on)

Note 1: The documentation by Scott Peterson on his one meg upgrade indicates that only 128k is available in XE compatible mode (Type 8 above). Two more 64k blocks are available as indicated though not all RD handlers find and use them.

Note 2: Based on the article by Jeff McWilliams in the April 1993 edition of AC, it appears the Newell 1-meg upgrade is mapped similarly to the Peterson.

Note 3: With version 2.1 of the SpartaDOS Wedge, Ed Bachman describes a simple fix for Peterson upgrades to reenable Antic access to extended RAM. It is definitely worth checking out, even if you don't use Sparta.

**MAJOR RAM - MAJOR GLITCH**

Taking the BASIC bit caused a serious problem which has not been well documented. I found it the hard way: trash and crash. When the computer boots, the OS does not test to see if BASIC exists and is available. The result is that even though pointers for the screen and so on are correctly set, bit 1 in PORTB is set or cleared based solely on the Option key. The BASIC flag is similarly set so that PORTB is restored to the booted value on Reset.

With a 512k+ upgrade this means the instant you enable extra RAM by dropping bit 4 in PORTB, you're in the second 256k instead of the first. If you use your extra memory only as a RAMdisk this mixup might not cause a problem depending on the handler code. But unless it's fixed, before using any other program which accesses extra RAM, 99% of them will trash your RD if they don't completely crash the computer.

**FIXING IT**

You can't just correct PORTB since Reset restores it. You have to get a non-zero value into BASICF

(1016 or \$03F8). The problem is compounded under SpartaDOS which maintains an eight byte stack of PORTB values for exit from various internal routines.

One solution is to hold Option every time you boot. Under SpartaDOS with no cartridge, a BASIC OFF followed by a Reset should fix it. With a cartridge, find a way to stuff a non-zero value into BASICF and then press Reset.

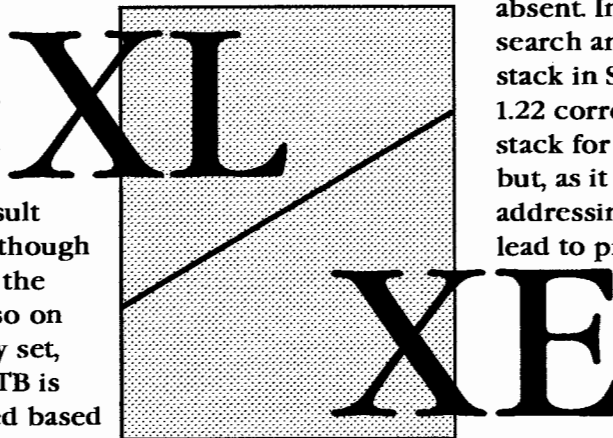
I, personally, always build in a test routine to programs which are going to manipulate RAM/ROM to ensure that BASICF and PORTB are correctly set if BASIC is off or

absent. In addition, I search and correct the stack in Sparta. BobTerm 1.22 corrects the Sparta stack for version 3.2d/f but, as it uses absolute addressing, this might lead to problems with later SpartaDOS versions. So if you have a problem with BT and Sparta, the

answer might be to switch to version 3.2d/f.

The way I find the stack in Sparta is to look for a LDA PORTB instruction, followed by a STA ADDRESS,X where ADDRESS will be the address of the stack. With version 3.2+ you should find it on page 7; with version 2.3, it's on page 9. Once found, it's a simple matter to set bit 1 in each of the eight values correctly.

**Continued Next Issue**



# ST Catalogue Update

by Ted Skrecky

The following is a complete listing of the new disks that have been added to the GCACE Atari ST Public Domain & Shareware Software Catalogue:

## **GRANDAD 2 2DSK**

#166-Grandad II: In Search of Sandwiches. 2 Disks. Shareware graphics adventure. Has great title music!

## **TOWER POWER 1DSK**

#167-Tower Power. Archon clone. 2 to 4 players. Deluxe mode activated if you have 2 megs or more RAM. Tons of digitized sound samples.

## **SHOCKER 2 1DSK**

#168-Shareware 1 or 2 player game. Collect the hearts on each level. Mono Only. Good game. Some rooms have gravity. Help built into the game.

## **NISHIRAN 2DSK**

#169-Nishiran. 2 disk action/adventure game with 3D Dungeon Master type graphics. This game will run on Atari ST & IBM PC machines. No need to rub your eyes, in disbelief, both systems will run this game!

## **ARGH\_ANI.LZH 605K**

#170-Kinetics animation player & an absolutely amazing digitized .FLM animation demo. Program also runs .DLT files. **WARNING:** You need 927K of disk or hard drive space to decompact this file. Also, you will need more than 1 meg of RAM to run the included demo.

## **G\_TIPS.LZH 66K**

#170-Great collection of tips for various ST games.

## **SMOOTH.LZH 103K**

#170-Smooth talker demo.

Medium Rez. Type text, sit back and listen to your computer speak.

## **ARTPRINT.LZH 14K**

#171-Prints your clipart. Good for cataloging. Mono Only.

## **DANGMER1.LZH 206K**

#171-Dangimere RPG game. Rather like Alternate Reality: The Dungeon for the Atari 8-bit computers.

Interesting game. However, doors only appear as doors if you are directly in front of them. Everything looks like a wall from a distance.

This file is Disk #1 of 2.

## **DANGMER2.LZH 287K**

#171-Dangimere RPG game. This file is Disk #2 of 2.

## **DDP.LZH 15K**

#171-Disk Directory Printer. Includes all sub-directories. You can send the results to disk instead of to a printer.

## **ROBERT.LZH 156K**

#171-Robert in the fire factory. Platform game. Collect dots. Perhaps not the most original game concept but it is a challenge.

## **SEAWOLF.LZH 76K**

#171-Seawolf game by Dave Munsie.

## **B\_MOUTH.LZH 26K**

#172-Board Mouth III. Talking terminal program/Text file reader. Love that voice!

## **NOLIMIT2.LZH 506K**

#172-Shareware pinball game from Germany. Runs on STe machines only.

## **ULT\_AREN.LZH 231K**

#172-Ultimate Arena. Demo of a Mortal Kombat clone. Has digitized fighters. Runs on STe machines only.

## **FRANK\_ST.LZH 475K**

#173-Frantick Shareware game by Dave Munsie. Lots of action in this game. Pay shareware fee if you want the full version.

## **PGST2\_2B.LZH 316K**

#173-Update to Pagestream DTP program.

## **CLIPAR10.LZH 396K**

#174-43 clipart images.

## **SOLUTION.LZH 341K**

#174-Atari ST game solutions for many of the older graphic & text adventures & some RPG games.

## **CLIPAR11.LZH 444K**

#175-Various clipart files converted from the Mac.

## **SUBDEMO.LZH 279K**

#175-Substation demo. 1st person perspective game in a real-time gourand-shaded 3D world. Similar to Wolf 3D. For Atari STe & Falcon computers.

## **1STGUIDE.LZH 70K**

#176-Accessory. View graphics & text. Listen to sound files.

Recognizes the following formats:

.RSC, .IMG, .IFF, .JPG, .MPG, .GEM, .SAM, .SND, .AVR, .DOC, .OUT & text files. Note: You can change the font

size of the text in the window by holding down on the left mouse button & then selecting the size.

## **CLIPAR12.LZH 396K**

#176-Clipart images.

## **XLATOR2.LZH 259K**

#176-German to English & English to German text file translator.

## **AESFUNC.LZH 4K**

#177-Applications Environment Services Functions. Hypertext file.

## **AES\_LIB.LZH 21K**

#177-AES Overview. Hypertext file.

## **GEMENV.LZH 9K**

#177-Gemenv Version 1.1. Hypertext file.

## **GLOSSARY.LZH 55K**

#177-The Atari Glossary. Definitions for Atari Users. Hypertext file.

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released the next version of XL2, the neat hack that allows you to set up an Atari 130XE as two virtual Atari 800XL's. With it, you seem to run two programs at the same time on the XE and switch between them. Actually, one virtual XL goes on hold while you work on the other. There's a lot more to it, but John should be doing the writing. Like Jiri Bernasek, John has been working on XL2 for at least two years, and he says that he is looking forward to starting some new programming projects.

More reports have been coming in on Rainbow, the Atari 800 emulator on Macintosh computers. To use it you have to copy files over to the Mac using a null modem. Not all programs will run on this system, but there have been reports that at least 80 percent will. David Firth has released his latest version of his

Atari 800 emulator for Commodore Amigas with the AGA chipset. It will also run under Unix. In this case, David supplies the C source code for his emulator. This is to be compiled into a program that will run on the computer being used. David Firth's emulator seems to use much the same method of file transfer as does Rainbow on the Mac.

The September/October issue of Atari Classics has arrived. It has a good mix of topics and lots of advertisement (also a great article on computer chess by Ed Hall). Bob Wooley is promising to air his IDE hard drive hack. In this issue he has an article on his SmartOS, a software and hardware hack that will be needed if an IDE drive is installed. Bob also noted that AC has among its assets a complete set of Bellcom disks. He would like to have someone keep this collection up to date with new programs. AC will even put the Bellcom collection on a

hard drive for a serious volunteer. He asks that readers send in any new PD (or shareware) programs to AC. This idea of a central software library was discussed by Bob Wooley at SLCC and others at NWPAC some time back. Now it could become a reality.

I had hoped that it was just a rumour. But I have some confirmation that David Ewens died suddenly on October 12th this year. He was 58. David was one of the founders and a leading personality of the Tyne and Wear Atari User Group or TWAUG. I only knew David through correspondence, but I visualized him as a friendly, perceptive and thoroughly enthusiastic 8-bit Atari computer user. In less than three years, David and his friends have made TWAUG the most significant 8-bit user group in Britain. I do hope that they can carry on without David, although I realise that he cannot be replaced.

## ST Update

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**HARDWARE.LZH 49K**

#177-Atari Hardware. Hypertext file.

**MIDL.LZH 12K**

#177-Midi. Hypertext file.

**MINT.LZH 56K**

#177-MiNT. Hypertext file.

**OCR\_E.LZH 25K**

#177-Optical Character Recognition. Hypertext file.

**STGUID4E.LZH 190K**

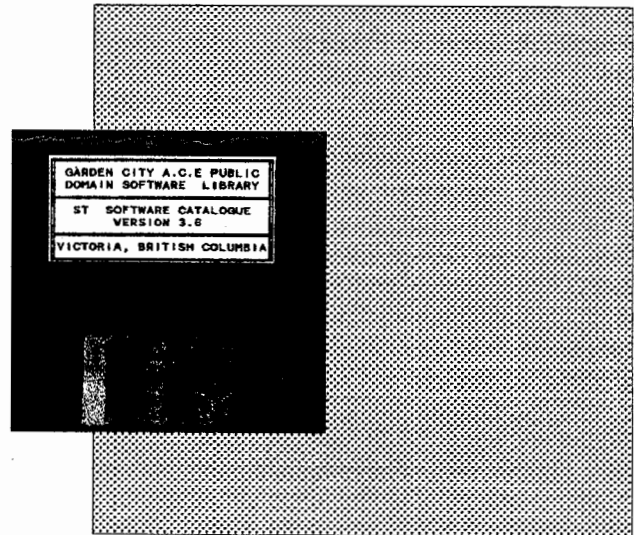
#177-ST-Guide Utilities &amp; ST Guide English docs in Hypertext format.

**STGUTI4E.LZH 77K**

#177-More ST-Guide Utilities.

**ST\_GUI4.LZH 292K**

#177-ST-Guide Hypertext system. Presents information in small chunks with cross references to other parts of the hypertext. Docs in German. Mono or Medium Rez.



WD1772-02-02 will work just as well. A special utility will be required to format high density disks on ST's using TOS below version 2.06. For the PC and Macintosh, it is common now for computer games to be supplied on CD ROM disks. Now Silmarils of France has issued Robinson's Requiem and Ishar 3 for the Falcon in CD format. This is a first for Atari computers, let's hope that it is not a last. Apparently these games have been greatly enhanced with more detailed graphics and animation.

To change the subject, a new version of Junior Office 3.04 has been released with English documentation. Junior Office is multi-tasking Fax software for any Atari ST type computer and Class 1 or Class 2 Fax modems. Junior Office is shareware, registration costs 16 pounds (UK). Programming software continues to be released for TOS computers. The popular computer language STOS would only run under TOS 1.0 and in some instances TOS 1.2. Later a few patches (modifications) were issued to enable the use of STOS on STe computers. When the Falcon computer arrived, the market for STOS had declined to the point where the publisher lost interest in further upgrades. Now Anthony Jacques has released the STOS Falcon extension. This not only allows STOS to run on a Falcon, but adds many commands specific to the Falcon hardware. Included are commands to access the Falcon's sampling hardware, creation and handling of sprites in true colour, hardware scrolling control, MIDI controls and much more. STOS Falcon extension is shareware with a registration fee of 5 pounds (UK). Another popular

language is GFA BASIC. Jabran Akhtar has announced the release of Mnilu Tranquil, a freeware compiler for GFA BASIC. It will compile a GFA BASIC version 2.0 program into a stand-alone .PRG file. The latest version will compile most GFA BASIC 3.5 programs as well.

Another new utility for programmers is "Interface" from Gribnif. This is a program that edits resource files. Resource files have the extender .RSC and are used by other programs to draw GEM dialogue boxes, menus and all the fancy things that you see on the GEM desktop. Neodesk and other programs by Gribnif are heavy users of .RSC files. Resource files are difficult to set up without the help of special utilities. Interface works with all Atari TOS computers including multitasking systems. This utility originated in Germany, however I presume that the new 175 page manual is in English. I have noticed comments from several sources that David Small is at work on a new Macintosh emulator for TOS computers. It is supposed to work under System 7 and emulate colour Macs. While Gadgets by Small has gone bankrupt due to a lost lawsuit, the rights to the Spectre GCR code was held by David and Sandy Small personally, so development can continue. Another hoped for development is a new TOS. C-Lab bought the rights to develop the Falcon and TOS. However, when C-lab took on the Falcon, all its programmers left to form their own company. C-Lab has the beta (test) version of TOS 4.92, but it does not intend to sell it. Now C-lab is looking for programmers to revise and complete this TOS, which it will then release as TOS 5.

*Current Notes* is back. The publisher is Robert Boardman of Hands on Communication. the managing editor is Howard Carson.

The articles all involved TOS computers, the Jaguar or general topics. However, Robert Boardman is standing in as 8-bit editor for the time being. At least three of the previous contributors are back, including David Troy of Toad and David Barkin. It looks like they had the next issue lined up before they began publishing. As well as interesting articles, the new *Current Notes* has lots of advertisements including a number of Canadian dealers in things Atari. Annual subscription is \$35 (CDN), payable to *Current Notes*, 559 Birchmount Road unit #2, Scarborough, Ontario, M1K 1P8.

And about Atari magazines, I was in a local grocery that has a rack of imported magazines. One attractive magazine for Macintosh computers showed a picture of the editor on the mast head. It was none other than Vic Lennard, also editor of Atari World. Now I hear that Vic Lennard is on the sick list, small wonder! Andrew Wright, ST World's assistant editor has taken over the ST part of the operation. Bob Lussier sent us a copy of Atari World issue #2 which he obtained from Falcon Systems in New Westminster (thanks Bob!). Atari World is very impressive. There are 84 full colour glossy pages of serious and substantial articles along with lots of attractive advertisements. It has all the features of the old ST Review including the Sid and Scuzzy cartoons. There was an excellent, minutely illustrated article on the new Eagle TT clone. But the article on colour printing using food colouring as ink in a HP540 deskjet was one of the high points. Along with Atari world came two slim magazines of 16 pages each, Atari Pro and ST Source. Atari Pro was devoted to programming, and this issue was edited by Offir Gal. Andrew Wright edited ST Source, a

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# *Adventures in AmigaLand!*

*by Ted Skrecky*

Wild rumours have been flying around recently at club meetings and at executive meetings that the person who is currently the GCACE Atari ST Librarian is not the same person who was elected to that position back in January of 1995. "He is an impostor and should be burned at the stake", says one member of the GCACE executive. While Gordon F. Hooper is busy using his limited intelligence in a vain effort to discover how to light the fire for my execution, I would now like to take the time to let everybody know that my mind has not been taken over by aliens from another galaxy.

The reason I purchased a Commodore 64 system was to discover what it was like to own and use a computer that was manufactured, strangely enough, by aliens from another galaxy. Having played with the C64 for the past few months, I have come to the conclusion that those aliens are seriously weirded-out creatures. However, I guess I found the Commie to be sufficiently interesting as just a few weeks ago I decided to boldly go where no Atari user has gone before. After becoming thoroughly lost in the ghastly dark dungeons of Commodore, I finally figured it might be a good idea to turn on my flashlight. Not long afterwards, I encountered a glib-talking salesclerk with flaming red hair, 6 arms and 3 legs. For \$200 he/she/it sold me a complete Commodore Amiga computer system. However, as soon as I was about to leave, the

clerk began to make threatening gestures and started ranting about the need to assimilate me into the Commodore collective. I frantically flipped-open my communicator and shouted "Mr Scott, one to beam up... and make it fast"!

Back on board the U.S.S. Atari, I sat down and immediately began the arduous task of figuring how to turn the Amiga on. It took a lot of flipping through manuals and a few late nights but I did finally make the important discovery that the on/off switch is located on the power supply, not on the computer which is where it should be. The only reason I can think of why the switch is on the power supply is because owners of Amigas worship their computers and it is part of their religion to get down on their hands and knees and kiss the ground before turning their computers on.

"So", you ask, "what do you get when you turn on an Amiga". Well, when I activated this machine for the first time, I was rather hoping a genie would appear and give me three wishes. This didn't happen. Instead, I got something called Work Bench. I must say that Work Bench certainly was in no rush to appear on my monitor screen. The reason for the delay was because, unlike the ST which has GEM & TOS built into ROM (Read Only Memory), the entire Amiga operating system must be loaded from floppy disk. This is a very slow process!

Once Work Bench was on the screen, I thought I could now take the system disk out of the internal drive and toss it away. I quickly found that I was sadly mistaken.

Work Bench constantly reads from the system disk. Every time you want to perform tasks, even if they are simple, the Amiga always has to consult with the stupid system disk before proceeding. If you own an Amiga with just one disk drive, before long, say a couple of minutes, you will be pulling all the hair out of your head as you find yourself constantly taking the system disk in and out of the disk drive. Fortunately, the computer system I purchased came with an external drive. I consider myself to be truly blessed as I am sure, if I didn't have this extra drive, the next time I appear at a GCACE club meeting I probably would look like a Kojak clone.

I believed, wrongly I might add, that Work Bench was somewhat similar to GEM on the ST so I didn't waste much time playing with it. Almost immediately I loaded a terminal program and downloaded a couple of Amiga files from a BBS to my external drive. Being eager to check the new files, I clicked open the window for this drive and was gripped with terror when I discovered the window only contained a Trash Can icon. Where did my files go to? Try as I might, I could not get the files to appear. The only solution I could think of was to read the manual.

I should now warn everybody reading this report to take a few minutes to firmly strap yourself into your chair before continuing as what I am about to say is absolutely shocking. If you aren't properly prepared, you may find yourself involuntarily falling out of your chair from the sudden impact of learning the true nature of the

See *AmigaLand* on Page 16

Commodore Amiga personal computer. For those who are hypersensitive, I suggest skipping down to the next paragraph as the shocking truth could cause you to be flung violently from your chair, bounced off the nearest wall and thrown out the nearest window. Unspeakably evil as it is, here is the truth: (drum roll, please).... the Amiga is, in reality, a command-line MS DOS type system! Yes, you heard it right. The Amiga does have some windows and icons which you can play with but, in order to do anything remotely useful, such as get a complete directory of a disk, you have to enter satanic messages on a primitive command-line. By the way, I did find those files which previously were "missing in action" but I had no choice but to use the Amiga equivalent of MSDOS. After some practice, I have become fairly good at using the Amiga. However, when compared to the user-friendly, easy-to-use windows environment of the Atari ST, it is really hard to believe that the Amiga could possibly ever have been more popular than the ST. Total lack of marketing on the part of Atari Corp. probably helped to give the Amiga a huge chunk of the market. The ST was also not helped much by the fact that Atari Corp. is run by the Tramiels, total lack of intelligent decision-making being one of their trademarks.

Although I am not impressed with Amiga's Work Bench, I must say that this system does have some merits. The stereo sound on this machine is really quite

amazing. The Atari ST can't win in this department. The graphics capabilities of the Amiga is also better than the ST. I have tried a few games which I have on both systems and sometimes the graphics on the Amiga version is better but usually not by that much. The area in the graphics department where the Amiga is at its best is with displaying colour digitized images. I have seen some good pics done with Spectrum 512 on the ST but the Amiga can usually do a better job.

Now that I have said some nice things about the Amiga, I feel I should "dump" on it again. I have been the ST Librarian for GCACE for many years and I have always found public domain & shareware ST software to be easy to use. Over in Amigaland, I have encountered all sorts of problems. Some programs crash because I don't have the AGA graphics chip set or I don't have enough RAM but what really annoys me are programs that insist on installing mysterious files on the system disk before allowing me to run the program. If you have more than one copy of the system disk, you have to make sure you boot the right one which has the installed files on it or that PD or shareware program you try to load will start complaining. If I find one more program that wants to desperately write files to the system disk, I am going to take that disk and feed it to the killer, zombie poodle that lives just down the street from me.

As you can probably tell from reading this edition of "ST Library Report", I haven't been doing too much ST work just recently. I am getting back into the swing of things now. I have heard there is a colour web browser now available for the ST. I can't use it with the

Freenet but I am planning on scooping a copy from the Internet just in case there are club members who want to try it out on one of those other Internet services such as Islandnet. While investigating Amiga FTP sites on the Internet, I have discovered Amiga clipart images in .IFF format. I talked to Gordo, our editor, and he mentioned that Calamus can load such files so I picked up an .LZH file worth of .IFF images. I have uploaded this file as CLIPIFF1.LZH to the C64/AMIGA file area on the Pothole BBS and, in future, I will be uploading more .IFF clipart. There is a new issue of ST Informer at Tesseract Software. The last time I checked they still had 4 copies left. If you happen to have a dot-matrix printer, you have another good reason to visit Tesseract. They can get new ribbons put into old ribbon cartridges. The price is half that of a new cartridge. Best of all, the ribbons in the recycled carts last just about as long as a new cart. I did complete an ST catalogue update not long ago. If all goes according to plan, there should be a listing of all the new files in this issue of XIO3. As usual, there is disk copying of library disks at each meeting so just bring along some blank disks if there is anything in the listing that looks interesting.

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ST News

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guide to learning more about your ST. Issue #2 of ST Source featured various desktop programs. Even these thin extras had advertisements (five pages in each). The ST market in Britain may be declining, but it still has considerable vitality, more perhaps than the Atari ST market has ever had in North America.



# Fun and Games!

by Rowland Grant

The September meeting featured 8-bit games on the Atari 800, to be followed by a demonstration of 8-bit games on the Commodore 64. What, a Commie at an Atari meeting? Well Ted Skrecky just wanted to show us the Atari 800's competition. The Atari 800 and the '64 were set up side by side so that they could use the same monitor. I started by demonstrating cartridge games on the '800. The first selection was Tennis. It is a neat tennis simulation. I can't play tennis very well and I need lots of practice, even with a video game. Anyway, first off, I couldn't get the game to respond to my fancy Kraft joystick, no matter what I did. Eventually I noticed that there was a Kraft joystick plugged into the Commodore too, and that I was holding it. So I learned the valuable lesson that you can't

control an Atari 800 with a joystick plugged into a Commodore 64. Finally the demonstration was underway. I showed Pole Position, a driving simulation; Centipede, a two dimensional shooter against dropping, dodging objects; Pac Man, a maze strategy game; Dig Dug, where you dig your own maze; Defender, a side scrolling shooter.

Finally I showed Star Raiders, where the Atari computer and the monitor become the controls and viewing screen of a space ship moving rapidly among the stars. The object of the game is to hunt down and

destroy the enemy before they destroy your bases. You are armed with neat photon torpedoes. All movement seems to be in three dimensions. To win you must use a combination of strategy, economy and concentration. There have been hundreds of adaptations of this plot over the years, but Star Raiders remains fresh and fun. Two of our younger members were present. They had never seen these games before, and Star Raiders captivated them. I turned the controls over to the kids. They continued to play for most of the evening, until Ted replaced the '800 with his Jaguar running Hover Strike. We never did get to the Commodore 64, we didn't need it anyway.

Ed Jones dropped in on our



October meeting. Ed is a member of MIST, the Mid Island ST users group in Courtenay. Only a few days before the meeting, we had received the MIST newsletter. This had been edited and published by Ed Jones, using Timeworks Publisher ST and a dot matrix printer. Ed used to live in Victoria, and it turned out that he knew some of the members present. John Picken demonstrated his latest version of XL2, the software that tricks an Atari 130 XE into functioning as two virtual 800XL computers. With extra memory, a RAM disk can be set up that is available to both virtual computers. John showed different programs running in each virtual computer

and demonstrated the RAM disk. A number of other clubs and individuals have requested copies of John's XL2. John has prepared a package containing everything about XL2 and its associated utilities, including source code. We will be sending XL2 packages to enthusiasts as far away as the Czech Republic, France and the United Kingdom.

At an executive meeting, Craig Carmichael mentioned that he had begun his programming career doing games. Over ten years ago he crafted a commercial game for the Commodore 64 which was published. Since Craig still had a copy of it, we decided to let Ted bring his (confounded) Commie back to the next meeting for a demonstration. Craig's game is called Viking Raider. It was

published by Interphase. The game required both cartridge and disk, and thus had never been pirated. It began with an impressive title screen. The game itself was an Ultima type where the animated character moves through various scenes, acquiring needed objects, avoiding hazards, and fending off adversaries. There were more than a hundred screens of scenery on each level. Craig hasn't played the game for a long time. In the course of his demonstration, his character got toasted by a dragon (and a very neatly drawn dragon too).

Craig's OMEN operating system is arousing interest in the computing community. Also there was a two page review of OMEN in the October *ST Format*. Our Vancouver correspondent, Bob Lussier, has been sending us copies of PD disks for the ST library. Most recently we have the Before Dawn

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# PC-Mask!

by Bob Lussier

Now you can have the best of both worlds, the Atari and the IBM PC with this NEW software emulator. The following are some of the features of the ultimate software achievement for the Atari:

- 1) Now supports Microsoft Windows
- 2) Up to 703K of RAM of usable memory on a standard 1 MB Atari 1040 ST/E
- 3) No additional hardware needed
- 4) Supports all TOS systems with speed
- 5) Supports IBM Monochrome, Colour and CGA Graphics on

all Atari monitors

- 6) Supports & recognises generic EGA/VGA monitor connections to your ST
- 7) Imitates fixed disk adaptors, if hard drive is used
- 8) Optional DOS boot from hard drive
- 9) Supports optional external 5.25-inch 40 track disk drives
- 10) Dedicated cursor/page keys & numeric keypad
- 11) Adjustable colour palette
- 12) Supports Atari mouse, Microsoft mouse compatible and more!

Run thousands of IBM software

titles from commercial to shareware! The package includes: The full PC-Mask software, users documentation, MS-DOS 4.01, users exercise disk, bonus IBM utilities for both MS-DOS and Atari GEM. The price of PC-MASK is \$135.00 including PST/GST. If you are interested in more information on this great package contact:

L.T.P.D.,  
2300 South Millway, Unit #424,  
Mississauga, Ont.  
L5L 2P5.

This company is a very good source for Atari software, including used software at a good price.

## Games

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Screen saver, Fisherman's Database, Gardener's Database and Homework (a child's word processor). Also Bob sent two programs that are ST simulations of the game Monopoly. One is called Monopoly and was done in GFA BASIC. The other is a demo of the commercial game Payday. Bob would like to know if anyone has come across other versions or variants of the Monopoly game for the ST. If you have, he would like to know where they could be found. Also we have a copy of the LTPD catalogue disk. LTPD is a Canadian company that seems to have a collection popular British PD disks, among other items.

Thanks to the January, 1995 MIST newsletter!

