HBO ATARI USERS' GROUP

GAZETTE

NEW!

The Hamilton, Burlington, Oakville ATARI Users' Group Newsletter
for 8-Bit and ST Atari Systems

Christmas
1995

Ho Ho Ho From the H.B.O.!!!...

Executive for 1995

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The H.B.O. Gazette is a publication of the
Hamilton, Burlington, Oakville, Atari Users'
Group P.O. Box 35543 StrathBarton Postal
Outlet, Hamilton, Ontario L8H 7S6

Membership

Membership Dues are $20 per person per year
or $3 per meeting. The first meeting attended
is free! The executive reserve the right to
waive this policy for specified meetings.
Membership includes a Gazette subscription
and enhanced access to the club BBS, H.B.O.
Online at (905)573-3704 and preferred pricing
of the club public domain disks.

Meetings

Meetings are held in the Blue Flame room in
the Union Gas Building at 20 Hughson Street
South in Hamilton at 7:30 on the Second
Tuesday of each month from September to
June. There are no summer meeting nights.

Our Location

N

King St.

James St.

Hughson St.

John St.

Main St.

Union Gas
Building
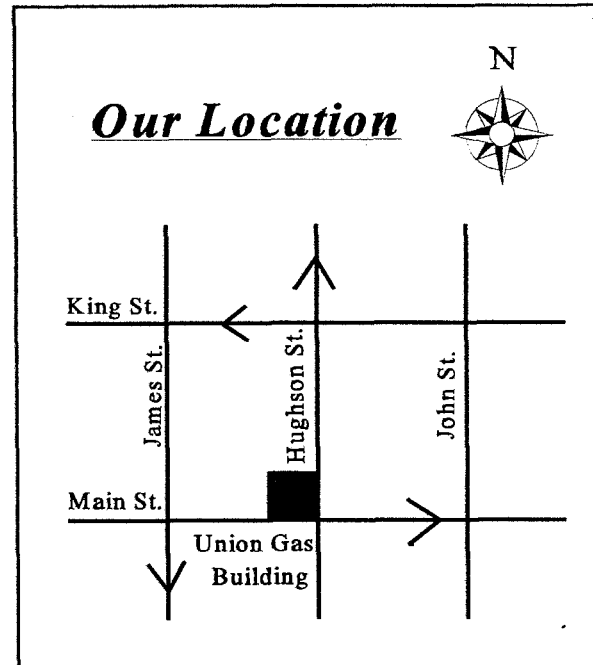
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Message from the President

Welcome to the Christmas edition of the H.B.O.A.U.G. Gazette! This issue is jam packed with information on your Atari. It is quite big, and it is a Christmas present to our members.

I remember when Atari computers were still quite popular. Every Christmas, magazines would publish a shoppers guide to Atari products. There seemed to be an endless array of items! I remember how Antic and Analog would list gifts for the "Atari user who had everything". It was interesting to note that Commodore monitors were high on that list. Now, many of these monitors can be had for a (Christmas) song! <Grin>

If you still actively use your Atari, why not buy yourself an Atari Christmas gift? You will be doing yourself and companies who still support Atari a favour. May I suggest SARA, Search and Retrieval Atari for ST users, and Sweet 16 for 8-bitters? These are two very fine products which have been recently developed by two companies who still support Atari computers.

This January, we will be having our club elections. If you have been thinking of becoming an Executive member, please let other members know so you can be nominated! We will be having nominations submitted at our December meeting. Hopefully, we will be able to find the time to collect the nominations between rounds of MIDI maze! December is our traditional games night. We hope to have games set up on Atari 8-bits, ST's, and even Jaguars. There will be prizes for high scores. Don't miss it!

Now, I will take the time to wish all Atarians, on behalf of the Hamilton, Burlington, Oakville, Atari Users' Group 1995 Executive, a Very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! See you next year!

Cheers!
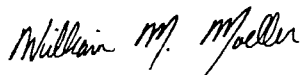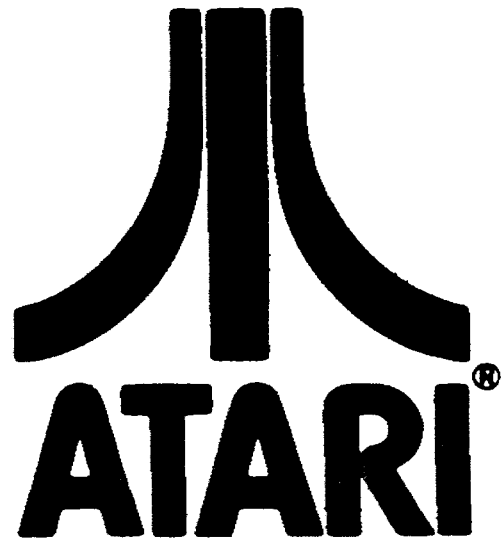William M. Moeller
President H.B.O.A.U.G.

Table of Contents

Next Meetings:
Tuesday December 12, 1995
Tuesday January 9, 1996

H.B.O. Happenings

The H.B.O.'s September meeting was well attended. Five new memberships were sold. A lively discussion was held on the topic of video for the Atari. The club president brought a Prism Studio II in and described what it's function to the membership. Steve Kinsella spoke about his ST hooked up to a Multi-synch monitor.

The October meeting was on the topic of mass storage for Atari ST's and 8-bits. A talk about host adaptors, SCSI drives, and Adaptec controllers was given. Also, there was a discussion about adding 1.4 meg HD floppy drives to the Atari ST. This included discussing the dangers and benefits of trying to format HD disks in lieu of the hard to find low density 3.5 inch floppies.

This December will be games night. MIDI Maze, a multi player, multi computer game will be featured on the Atari ST. Two Jaguars should be connected for multi player DOOM. And, the 8 bit Atari will feature Megablast, a phenomenal two player shoot em up. Prizes will be awarded for the high scores in each category. Please see an executive member to arrange to bring your ST for the multi player Midi Maze game.

January will be HACKERS night. Hardware hacks for both Atari lines will be featured. This will include memory upgrades, serial port upgrades for the ST, and video upgrades for the 8 bit Atari. The WINTER Gazette should have these Hacks in print so you can follow along at home!

January is also elections month. Nominations are being taken at the December meeting for executive positions for 1996. If the September and October meetings are any indication, it looks like our Users' Group is growing back to a viable size.

Richard Horachek has agreed to become book librarian for the club. This non executive position will allow members to examine our holdings at each general meeting and borrow what they like for one month. A five dollar deposit will be required for each book borrowed.

Glen Atwell is looking to find a Jaguar owners who are interested in ordering Catboxes in a group to avoid higher shipping and taxes. Individual orders are subject to a $5 Customs charge by Canada Post, as well as any extra shipping charges that will be incurred by shipping to Canada. Please speak to Glen to arrange to be part of the order. The order is being planned for just after Christmas.

Call H.B.O. Online at 573-3704

Internet Bits

From: brasoft@coho.halcyon.com   (Darek Mihocka)
[1] Re: Xformer version?
Date: Tue Oct 10 19:11:02 EDT 1995
Organization: Branch Always Software

In article <4580hu$1ru@sundog.tiac.net>, Eric Palm <eretic@tiac.net> wrote:
>Could someone let me know what the latest version of PC Xformer is as of
>you reading this.

Why don't you check the Branch Always Software web page? The latest versions of both Gemulator and PC Xformer are always listed and registered users of the current major version can download them for free. (Note: you must have directly registered your product with Branch Always Software)

- Darek

= =
Darek Mihocka, god of PC Xformer and

Gemulator, email:brasoft@halcyon.com
c/o Branch Always Software, 14150 N.E. 20th
St. #302, Bellevue, WA 98007
phone:206-236-0540   fax:206-236-0257
WWW:http://www.halcyon.com/brasoft/

From: atari-announce@lexicor.com (BlowUP)
[1] BLOWUP - FX (falcon extender)
Organization: Lexicor Software Corporation
Date: Wed Sep 27 13:07:23 EDT 1995

Finally BlowUP-The Falcon Company has finished it's ultimate extension-card for the ATARI Falcon030:

```
FFFF X   X
F     X X
FFF    XX
F     X X
F    X   X   the Falcon Xtender
```

And these are the Features:

FastRAM-Expansion (max. 32)

●* 4 SIMMxSlots onboard (fits into original case)
●* 4 additional slots on optional daugther-card
*● 1MB and 4MB SIMMs, two-by-two
●* The original 4MB of the Falcon stay active.
*● With only 2*4MB and 2*1MB inserted, your Falcon then has 14MB!
** Memory over 14MB is organized virtually.
** With speeder: data throughput up to 20MB/s   (standard 8MB/s).
** No soldering for RAM-function needed!
** Expansion-port daisychained!
Tested with NOVA & FalconSpeed!

Hi-Speeder: CPU, DSP & Systemclock:

** Systemclock 32, 36 or 40MHz
●* CPU/FPU-Clock 16,18,20,32,36 or 40MHz
*● DSP 50 instead of 32 MHZ
** Switchable by software.
*● Soldiering needed.

Resolution-Expansion BlowUP Hard I

The original with the Video-Mode-Generator with improved bus timing high resolutions/refreshrates   in   256 colors/TrueColor.

Installation:

If only the RAM-option is to be used, no soldering is needed for installation. The card is simply plugged into the expansion-slot, which is daisychained, so that other expansions might be used in rebuilt (tower-)Falcons. Only a small piece of the shielding has to be removed in normal Falcons. For the speeder-option soldiering is needed as with other speeders available, so that rebuilding from those other Speeders is easy. Soldiering should only be made by routiened people.

Fast-RAM:

The Fast-RAM follows the Falcon RAM (4MB) the original 4MB-RAM-PCB in Falcon will still be used! There are 4 SIMM-sockets on the FX-card giving you two 16bit memory-banks. With an optional daugther-card two further Banks are available (fits only in rebuilt Falcon e.g. tower). The memory-banks may be filled with 1MB or 4MB SIMMs. This is an easy way to get 14MB with only 2 x 4MB and 2 x 1MB SIMMs.
Our FastRAM can be used for all functions ,including DMA-access, except video. As there are no video-accesses on the FX-RAM it is up to 50% faster in color modes. The FX-RAM normally has no problems with installed Speeders. If the Speeder on the FX-card is used, a special Page-mode will be used for RAM-access in the 32/36/40MHz-modes. This allows RAM-access with no waitstates and increases the memory throughput from normally 8MB/s to max. 20MB/s. If you don't need the speeder FX is a simple "plug'n play" memory-card.

If more than 10MB is inserted into FX the upper part is switched by the MMU an the FX-logic. The management of the extended memory is done fully invisible for all applications with the PMMU of the 68030 CPU. The speed-loos with this is minimal compared to virtual RAM on a harddisk. This optional configuration allows a maximum use of 32MB. So that 8MB are standard FastRAM (no video-access) and 24MB

are EMS-RAM.
For standard applications there is no difference.

CPU-Speeder:

The Speeder included on the FX-card increases the system-clock from 32 MHZ to 36 or 40MHz. The CPU then can run with 16MHz (normal), 18MHz, 20MHz, 32Mhz, 36MHz or 40MHz. With the special FX-logic now nearly all Falcon can use the 40MHz clock. The clock may be switched on booting or later with a CPX-module. We have also solved the problems some programms had with the DSP if the CPU ran at 40MHz and the DSP at 50MHz. Soldiering is needed for installation.

DSP-Speeder:

Increases the DPS speed from 32MHz to 50MHz! Superb for MPEG-Decoder. Solved problems with CPU at 40MHz. Soldiering is needed for installation.

BlowUP Hard1:

The well known and time-tested resolution expansion also found a place on the FX-card. With the comfortable Software and super resolutions (e.g. 800*608 at 84Hz ni, 1024*768 at 104Hz l). Soldiering is needed for installation.

Technical data:
size ~160mm*65mm, simply plugged into the expansion-slot (put trough) power taken from expansion-slot
4 SIMM-sockets onboard for 1M*9/1M*8/4M*9/4M*8 SIMMs (min 70ns), with changed FIRMWARE 16M*9 can also be used 4 additional SIMM sockets on daughter-board with 2*4MB and 2*1MB SIMMs power consumption of ~200mA. Controllerchip reprogrammable by software (Hardware-update by Software possible)

And even better!!   the price:
349,-DM
Order information:

FX is now available from all ATARI dealers, our distributors in the UK, France, Sweden and the U.S.A. If you have problems to get it, order directly from us:

Either by normal mail - including a cheque or by normal mail or FAX - paid by CREDIT CARD (VISA or DINERS don't forget to include card-number and Exp. date) -

Please state the way of delivery you prefer:
UPS expedited or air-mail (with insurance - w/o insurance)
e.g. U.S.A.   90DM 45DM 30DM
e.g. London   40DM 30DM 20DM
BlowUP - A.E.S.GbR
Eslarner Str. 34
81549 Muenchen
Germany
Fax: 0841-86480
e-mail: acher@informatik.tu-muenchen.de

From: rmax99@ix.netcom.com   (RALPH MADDOX)
[2] FREE CATALOG 8-BIT PARTS, SOFTWARE, BOOKS
Date: Sat Sep 23 02:18:17 EDT 1995

AMERICAN TECHNA-VISION HAS A HUGE STOCK OF NEW REPLACEMENT PARTS (POWER SUPPLIES, INTEGRATED CIRCUITS, CIRCUIT BOARDS AND MORE), PLUS DOZENS OF FIRST RATE COMMERCIAL TITLES AT GREAT PRICES. WE ALSO HAVE A GOOD

SELECTION OF REFERENCE BOOKS. TO REQUEST A FREE CATALOG EMAIL ME AT rmax99@ix.netcom.com or phone 510-352-9227. PLEASE INCLUDE YOUR NAME, STREET ADDRESS AND ZIPCODE.
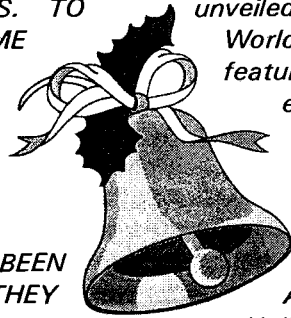
P.S.: TO ALL THOSE THAT HAVE BEEN WAITING FOR OUR NEW CATALOG - THEY HAVE BEEN MAILED. - RALPH

From: llamaman@ix.netcom.com (YaK)
[1] Re: Rob and the VLM
Date: Sat Oct 07 03:15:14 EDT 1995

> Yeah, so I'm not first on the 'net. Big
>whoop...
> Grabbed the Jaguar CD today and have been >playing with it for a while. I'll probably write >up formal reviews in a little while, but right >now
>I just wanted to comment on the Virtual Light
>Machine.
>
> In two words: HOLY SH*T!
:-)
Glad you guys are enjoying it!
:-)
(:-) - hell I've only been working on this stuff since '84 hehe

From: robert.l.hugoh@p10.stacken.ct.se
(Robert L Hugoh)
Atari Unveils New Webpage (PRESS RELEASE)
Date: Fri Oct 06 03:16:05 EDT 1995

CONTACT: Pattricia Kerr or Jennifer Hansen
        Shandwick USA
        310/479-4997 or 800/444-6663

For Immediate Release

Atari(R) Corporation Unveils New World WideWeb Site, Names CompuServe(R) as Official Commercial Support Site
Type http://www.atari.com on the World Wide Web or GO JAGUAR on CompuServe

SUNNYVALE (October 6) -- Atari Corporation unveiled this morning their new JAGWIRE(tm) World Wide Web Domain. JAGWIRE features the creative integration of eye-popping graphics, animation, audio and descriptive text for web browsers to enjoy in the leisure of their homes or office. The site was created by ATOMIX, Inc.; an Emmy Award-winning new media house in Hollywood, California. The JAGWIRE Web Site URL is http://www.atari.com.

The installation of the JAGWIRE Web Domain is an anchor for a network of official support offered to gamers throughout the world. In concert with the explosive trends of the Internet and the World Wide Web, Atari has named CompuServe as their official Jaguar 64 commercial on-line support site. CompuServe access is as little as $9.95 a month and offers full access to the Internet and the World Wide Web as well as exclusive features not available on any other system; such as the Atari Jaguar forum. Type GO JAGUAR to access 24-hour on-line support on CompuServe or call toll free (800) 848-8990.

Two independent online publications have also pledged a bond to the JAGWIRE network by offering exclusive news, reviews and previews of Jaguar 64 products in each of their issues. Atari Explorer Online offers in-depth coverage of Atari products from cover to cover. Silicon Times Report is distributed worldwide each week and features computer and video game coverage of interest to everyone. Both publications are downloadable from CompuServe or can be found through direct links with Atari's JAGWIRE Web Site.

"Atari has made the commitment to make shopping and obtaining support for the Jaguar 64 as simple for modem users as possible," states Donald A. Thomas, Jr., Director of Atari Customer Service Marketing. "To do that, we have installed the best domain created by the best creative people, accessible through the best access lines (T3) and supplemented by the best commercial on-line services of CompuServe, and the best on-line publishing

support. Users can sample game images, hear game sounds, find out where to buy them and make buying decisions based on reliable and accurate resources."

Jim Pascua, Marketing Manager of CompuServe, adds that his company has also made serious commitments to the evolution of global access at economic rates and with maximum access. "New updates to our on-line software will revolutionize how users can access the Internet and the finest commercial on-line service in the world simultaneously. We are proud of Atari's designation and we feel it is in step with the direction this industry is taking."

Atari's new JAGWIRE Web Site is installed NOW. Web Browsers may be set to the URL of http://www.atari.com. The site features easy access icons to a great deal of product information including game descriptions, screen shots, release schedules, ordering information and real time registration in Atari's mailing list. CompuServe's Jaguar forum features downloadable magazines, screen shots, reviews, software, conferences, contests and a very active message base to host non-stop interaction between Jaguar enthusiasts and Atari personnel.

From: gholder@emory.edu (Gary Holder)
[1] "Now defunct videogames manufacturer"
Date: Tue Oct 03 01:33:18 EDT 1995

Anybody else see the current issue of Newsweek (Oct. 9), p. 67, 3rd column, 2nd paragraph? It's an article on a guy (Bob Stein), who runs Voyager Co. (a CD-ROM multimedia producer). In summarizing his history it says, "Stein worked briefly at Atari, the now defunct videogame manufacturer." Sounds like Atari marketing is working just as well as it always has, eh?

Gary Holder

Atari 8 bit Hard disk Emulation on a PC and other PC utilities

By Fred Edwards

I was getting sick and tired of swapping disks on my 8 bit so when I was offered an SIO-PC cable in a trade I jumped at it. After a few weeks of running around trying to locate the chips I ended up with a working cable. The SIO-PC cable is a method of connecting the serial port on any PC and the SIO port on any Atari 8 bit. Once you have the cable there are a couple of PC shareware packages that allow the use of the PC as a "hard drive".

SIO2PC [now up to version 319i] and works well as a disk emulator, it allows you to load up to 4 virtual disks (of up to 16 meg each). SIO2PC comes with an 8 bit program called remote.com which allows you to mount un-mount the virtual disks from the atari keyboard. SIO2PC has been around for a while and seems to be bug free. If you want disk storage at a budget price the SIO2PC is the way to go, any old XT with a serial port will work fine.

There are problems with the program though. The disk IO is still very slow compared to a real hard drive (but it is still twice as fast as floppy loads). All SIO access to the PC are to the virtual disk files, you cannot directly access PC files. The SIO-PC software / hardware combination has a problem when converting DCM files to a virtual drive so you have to un-diskcomm & then convert to ATR format. (or use a separate utility). You are limited to the 4 virtual drives.

The other shareware package (APE) is relatively new and addresses many of these shortcomings. APE stands for "Atari Peripheral Emulator". APE [up to ver 1.06D] uses the same cable as the SIO2PC software but allows for up to 8 virtual disks (or optionally 7 virtual disks and real access to the PC-hard disk). You may now store Atari com files directly on the PC hard drive and load them directly to the 8

bit or copy them to a virtual disk or to an atari floppy. APE's I/O is up to 5 times faster than the SIO2PC software and is compatible with spartados and Happy drives "ultra-speeds". [My version of the cable will not allow the faster disk I/O] . Ape does even more though. It allows you to use the PC as an 850 device. You can print through the PC parallel port and use an internal PC modem with the 8 bit. The shareware version only allows 2400 baud but the registered version is enabled at 19200. Ver 1.06D has the ability to allow the virtual disks to emulate protected disks so that many copy protected disks may be stored on the hard drive in ATR format, the shareware version can read but not create protected disks. The version available now has no remote access to the PC but the author assures me he will be supporting at least as much remote control as the SIO2PC software.

There are several other PC files that make using a PC with an Atari 8 bit easier. ATARIDSK. allows access to side 1 of double density XL disks on a PC with a 5 1/4 drive DCM2DSK2 turns DCM files into ATR files TXTCONV converts ATASCII to ASCII and back SIOCOPY describes how to make a cable & allows you to connect a 1050 drive to a PC parallel port then read & write to the 1050 drive.

APE
Steven J Tucker   Orders: (216) 237-5308
9897 York Road
North Royalton, Ohio 44133 USA

SIO2PC
Nick Kennedy
300 South Vancouver St
Russellville, AR 72801 USA
501-967-3843

If you are considering building your own cable the following message describes the simplest design I have seen. Or if you are thinking of purchasing one the author of APE will give you a free registered APE with the purchase of a cable. All of the files in this article are available on local BBS's.

from comp.sys.atari.8bit

[1] Another SIO2PC Cable
Rick_Michael_Cortese@cup.portal.com

OK, another while I was resting. I was sweating if I should redo Nick Kennedy's design, which is a first rate solid design, so its straight ASCII and a little easier to understand or say screw it & tell people to just go ahead & make my 74HCT00 version of the cable

Since my design was a compromise that assumed you couldn't find the MAX232, suggesting people should use it wasn't exactly a good solution. So... got out my data sheets & settled on a MC1489. This has got to be the ultimate in simplicity & everything except the CMD line is completely legal. The CMD line's polarity will be right, but it will swing from around 0-5V vs -9 to +9. This should be alright since I have the specs for the 1489 sitting on my lap & it makes it's transitions from .75V to 1.25V & in ALL likely hood, your clone's serial port will have a 1489 or compatible part doing the level switching from RS232 to TTL.

```
ATARI=>()           IBM=>[]
SIO CABLE          9 pin serial
             ------U-------
         :*                 :
(5)------1:in-:
:14------(10)
             :  \ /              :         :
  *NC    2:    o   1     :-in:13  ---
             :    :   4  \ /    :
[2]------3:out   8     o   :12    *NC
             :        9     :    :
(7)------4:in-:             out:11    *NC
             :  \ /              :
  *NC    5:    o         :-in:10------[3]
             :    :        \ /    :
[9]------6:out            o   :9    *NC
             :              :    :
(6)&[5]--7:              out:8--:<--(3)
             :                :  *DIODE
       -------------
```

*NOTES: If you're positive the cable will never be used with other peripherals like a 1050, you don't need the diode. If you do use a diode <recommended> make sure it has a low forward voltage. In the prototype I tried one with a 1.2V forward drop & it failed to operate,

but a diode with a .65V forward voltage drop worked like gang busters. This means you can surely get away with any germanium diode & probably most small signal diodes like the 1N914. NC means not connected, you don't tie it to anything. Only pins 13 & 14 are tied together. If you feel bad because the thing is too easy, you can add a few more parts like a .1 Micro Farad disk capacitor between pins 14 & 7 for decoupling. The funny \o on the 1489 are just an attempt to show the inverting logic of the 1489. All parts can be had from your local Radio Shack, but once again, I hate Radio Shack & would recommend going anywhere else. The SIO pin out when looking at the back of the Atari is

2 4 6 8 10 12
1 3 5 7 9 11 13

Colors I've found in addition to what Nick Kennedy found 4 & 6 Black & or bare wire. Both of these are grounds, one logic & the other shield. If you really want to be sure you have a good ground you can use both of them. Black wire is pretty safe if you're in a hurry & don't want to bother. 10 +5V Blue in every cable I've seen. 5 DATA OUT It's Green or Dark Green on cables with two green wires. 7 COMMAND Violet on some, light green on others. 3 DATA IN & I don't think it comes in any color but orange. That's it, 5 connections to the Atari serial cable, 4 to the IBM serial cable, 1 chip, 1 diode. The IBM connector will have the numbers on the plastic, but you may need a magnifying glass to see them. If somebody wants help building a cable, you're better off asking me about this one vs the MAX or 7400 as I'm quite bored with them & this circuit is IMO: The obvious way to go.

Atari Video Gaming Scene

By William Moeller
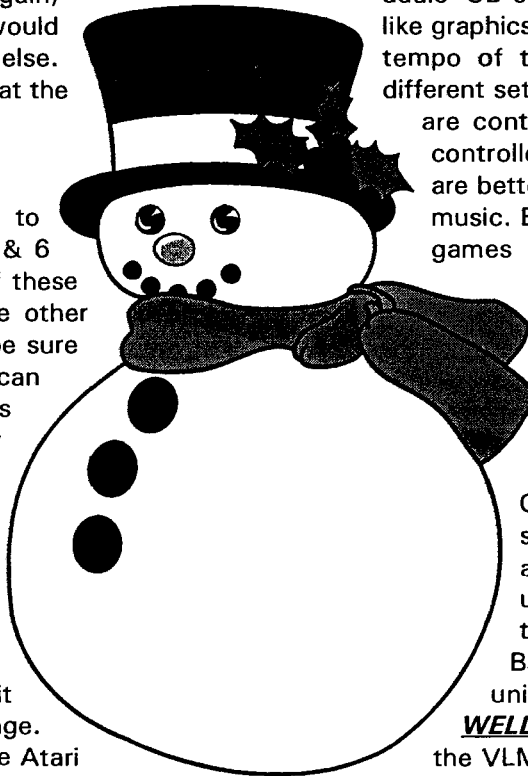
Larry Popa has taken some time off from this column, so I thought that I would fill you in this issue on the state of the Atari video game division. There is some good news and bad news. First, the good news.

The Atari Jaguar CD is OUT! That is right. It currently sells locally at the Babbages at Limeridge Mall in Hamilton, for $199.99 Cnd funds. It comes with Blue Lightning, Vid Grid, Myst Demo CD and the Tempest 2000 sound track. Built into the Jaguar64 CD is the Virtual light machine. This VLM as it is called, takes audio CD's and displays kaleidoscope like graphics in response to the beat and tempo of the music. There are many different settings to choose from, which are controllable from the Jaguar 64 controller. Obviously, some effects are better suited for certain types of music. Experimenting is the key. CD games available now include Highlander and Hover strike CD. Babbages expects Dragons Lair any day now, and should be available by the time you read this. Curiously, Myst is not one of the first releases for the CD unit. Memory carts which save positions on CD games are available now. The CD unit is selling well according to the sales people at Babbages. I own one of these units and can say that It is _WELL_ worth the money just for the VLM alone!

In addition, many new releases have been showing up the last month or so. Recent releases include Pitfall the Mayan Adventure, Ultra Vortek and Rayman, just to name a few. More releases seem to be hot on the heels of these recent offerings.

Now the bad news. Time Warner recently dumped nearly 7 million Atari shares, which it had promised to do earlier this year. However, in my opinion, this will cause a loss of confidence in Atari by investors. In an unconfirmed report, rumour has it that there

was a VERY recent purge of personnel. Most all in house development will cease and be contracted outside the firm. Other rumours tell of the sudden cancellation of the virtual reality attachment for the Jaguar 64.

Despite these setbacks, there seems to be more software coming for the Jaguar 64 than ever before, at a faster rate than ever before.

The Atari Lynx may seem all but dead to some, but there has been talk of two recent releases on the Internet. Lets hope that Atari relaunches this fine product. There are literally dozens of titles for the Lynx. However, most seem to have been released AFTER stores such as Compucentre dropped the Lynx.

On the Internet, there are entire news groups dedicated to collecting Classic Atari Video Game systems such as the 2600 Video Computer System, the Atari 5200 Super system and the Atari 7800 Pro System. With more and more of these systems showing up at garage sales and thrift stores, collecting hardware and software for Classic Atari Video games has become quite a past time with people who are trying to recapture their youth. Larry Popa will be writing an article on the ins and outs of this new hobby of Classic Video game collecting.

'til next time.

H.B.O. Treasurer Report

By Randy Charlebois Secretary/Treasurer

H.B.O. ATARI USERS GROUP
FINANCIAL REPORT
OCTOBER 1995

For the month ending October 1995 our fiscal balance was $244.83 with no outstanding debts. This is due to new and renewed memberships, which included six singles and one family. A warm welcome to our new friends and fellow users. If you have not renewed or joined the H.B.O. yet, why not?

Our funds are adequate at the present to continue our club. More memberships and involvement by our members will allow us to support new and old users. Donations of Raffle prizes would be appreciated.

A.R.CHARLEBOIS
SEC/TREASURER
8-BIT LIBRARIAN

Hamilton-Wentworth FreeNet (HWFN) & Atari

HWFN is free to all people living in the area and it's an access to the internet/World Wide Web. Since I have an Atari ST, I will write from that point of view.

You'll need your Atari, a modem, a communications package (set to 8 data bits, no parity and 1 stop bit .. the usual setting) and an emulation of vt100 (Atari comes with vt52). I use "VanTerm", but I hear that "Storm" is better. For emulation of vt100, I use the "ANSI_ST.ZIP" I got free from the Mohawk College BBS at 575-2129. Simply, when you unzip "ANSI_ST", you'll find "ANSI_ST.PRG", put it into the "AUTO" folder of your boot disk and reboot. (It seems that ANSI and vt100 are the same thing.) Editors Note: Technically, they are NOT the same things but are very similar.

You're ready to call HWFN at 540-5000 and when asked for login, type "guest" in lower case letters. This is very important. The system will only respond to lower case for login and passwords.

The most important commands you need to get started are: "-" for previous page of document, not arrows "L" for last document, now it doesn't matter if capitals or not "Y" for history, so that you can choose a number to go back to "tab" to get from one section of page to another

At a prompt, type "g register" and RETURN. For the most part, follow the directions. To get from one section to another, or to indicate

you have finished with that line, use "Tab". When you get a checkbox, use "ctrl n" to choose. Once you are registered, you will be given a number such as ae345 and a password. Don't lose these. The next step is to get validated. Download the user agreement after registering, fill it out, photocopy some I.D. and mail it in. I used a personal cheque for I.D., it has my name and address on it.

To get onto the Internet, I use the following: From the first menu choose "(4) Explore ..", "(8) Beyond our borders", "(2) McMaster WWW", "(21) Search", and "(6) Web crawler". This will get you into search mode. Try typing in "Atari", lots out there.

Adding A Hard Disk To Your 8-bit Computer

By William M. Moeller

This article is for anyone who has had the idea that he/she wanted to add a Hard disk drive to their 8-bit Atari, but did not know what was involved or where to start.

When I purchased my first Atari in 1982, I settled for an Atari 400 with 16k and a 410 tape drive. I slowly built up my collection of software, and eventually even upgraded the memory of my 400 to a whopping 48k! In all that time I dreamed of having an 810 disk drive. The tape drive was slow, and the access was not random. One had to queue up to the proper spot on the tape and then wait for it to load. Data bases and such, were almost impossible. Eventually, I ended up saving enough money to buy the new Atari 1050 disk drive. After that, my tape days were through! The only time I used it, was when I had software that I had to transfer from tape to disk.

I remember this now when I think of running a hard disk on my 8-bit Atari. Now I rarely use my floppy drive, and I shudder thinking of being without a hard disk. Hard disks are like a microwave oven. You can get along without one, but once you use one, you wonder how

you ever did. I also own an IBM clone, and I believe that if I did not have a hard disk attached to my Atari, I would not use it for much more than Star Raiders.

So, what options does one have? First off, lets qualify what we are going to discuss here. Some of you no doubt have heard of a neat device called SIO2PC, which allows one to use an IBM as a slave. This will be the way that many people go, as more and more obsolete IBM PCS are found in dumpsters across the country. However, I feel that the BEST hard disk is one that connects to your 8 bit directly. Therefore, this article will not address the strengths or weakness of SIO2PC, but will be exclusively about hard disks that work with the Atari 8-bit directly.

Let's briefly cover what a hard disk system includes for an Atari. There are three main components one must consider when assembling a hard disk system. The components are a host adaptor, SCSI hard disk mechanism, and external case and power supply. Also required of course, are cables and the software to format the hard disk. We will cover all of these components in our discussion.

The most important of these components is the HOST ADAPTOR. The host adaptor is the item that interfaces a hard disk mechanism to the 8 bit Atari. All of the most common Atari 8 bit host adaptors use the parallel bus. Therefore, your choice of 8 bit model is limited to the Atari 600XL, 800XL, and 130XE since these are the only models with a parallel bus. The models of host adaptors that attach to the PBI (Parallel bus interface) include the SUPRA/KPI hard disk interface, the MULTI I/O from ICD, the BLACK BOX from Computer Software Services, and finally the as of yet unreleased Multi I/O II from Fine Tooned Engineering.

The first hard disk to come out for an Atari 8-bit computer was by a company named CORVUS. They produced a hard disk system that attached to an Atari 800's four joystick ports. This is a rare item that I have never seen. I suspect that there are very few of them

around, as they sold for vast amounts of money! Still, it is the only practical way for an Atari 400/800 owner to run a hard disk drive. Typical Corvus systems stored 10 megabytes which by todays standard is very small. Even by Atari 8 bit standards this is not very large.

The next hard disk interface to come along was the Supra hard disk interface. This interface connected to the Atari 600xl/800xl parallel bus. There was also an adaptor for use on the electrically identical but physically different 130XE enhanced cartridge interface. This interface does not include an RS232 port. However, it does include a printer port. This unit can utilize SASI/SCSI hard disks (more on that later). It can also use a second drive. However, because of design limitations, they must be IDENTICAL drives. That is, they must have the same number of heads and cylinders. This limit, coupled with the lack of an RS232 modem port, make this interface the low man on the interface totem pole. The advantage of this interface is the price. It is still being manufactured by K-Products of Salt Lake City Utah, U.S.A. and sells for $110 U.S. funds. A revised SUPRA/KPI interface has been rumoured to be under development which will address its' shortcomings.

Shortly after the introduction of the Supra

interface, ICD of Rockford IL, designed a breakthrough product for the 8-bit Atari, the Multi Input/Output or MIO for short. The MIO connected to the PBI of the 600xl and 800xl and the ECI of the 130XE with adaptor board. The MIO added new capabilities to the XL/XE computers. The most important of course, was the SCSI port. In addition an 850 type interface was included that furnished a 19.2 RS232 port, and a Centronics printer port. The MIO used the same cables used by the Atari 850 interface, and the modem port went faster than the 850. This allows the use of high speed 14.4 modems with the MIO. Also, there was Random Access Memory in the MIO in two sizes. One model was 256k and the other had 1 Megabyte of RAM. This allowed one to use the RAM for a RAM disk and/or Printer spooler. The MIO had other capabilities. It could swap partitions around. In other words, one could have a floppy drive number 4 believe that it was drive number 7 for example, and that the Hard disk partition number 2 was drive number 1. With this feature, it is possible to instantly boot from Hard disk, ANY floppy drive, or RAM disk easily. A port for 80 column video is seen on some early models but the add on never saw the light of day. The MIO is no longer manufactured but is still reasonably expensive. Used models sell generally for about $110 U.S. funds if you can find one for sale. FTE owns the rights to the MIO and has the facility to repair MIOs but will only do so if you whine and complain a lot to them! The reason is that they are a pain to repair.
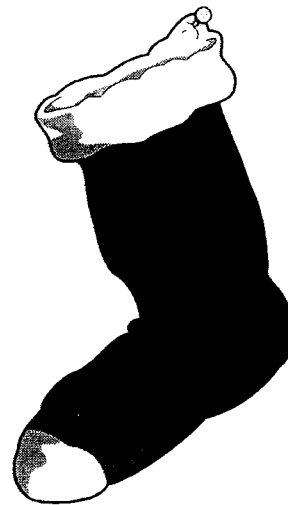
Bob Puff of Computer Software Services studied the workings of the SUPRA/KPI interface and came up with his own version with (of course) expanded features. He called his host adaptor the "Black Box". I have heard a rumour it was called the "Bob Box" during it's development. The Black Box was released shortly after the MIO. It includes an RS232 port running at 19.2 K baud, Centronics compatible printer interface, SCSI hard disk port, and a Floppy disk port for Black Boxes equipped with the Floppy Board. The BB/FB is the least professional looking 8 bit Host adaptor currently out, but most functional. It is sold without a case, (cheap looking Black Cases are

available for $39.95 US), and plugs into the ECI interface of the 130XE. There is a ribbon cable for 600/800XL connection included with every Black Box, so no adaptor board is necessary. There are a few options for Black box owners. Customers can purchase their model with a printer spooler on board, Floppy drive interface board, and the Black Box enhancer. The Floppy board mounts inverted on top of the Black Box, and allows the use of High density 1.4 meg, 1.2 meg floppies, as well as low density 360k, 720k floppies and even 8 inch CP/M era disks! The floppy board is really helpful for transferring data between your IBM and your 8 bit, as there is a utility included to do exactly this. Every Floppy board comes with a Black Box enhancement. This enhancement allows one to screen dump images to the printer. It also includes a "TASK MASTER" program that can sector copy hard disk partitions, sector edit disk partitions as well as some other useful utilities. Some of the advantages to the Black Box over the MIO is that it can read MIO formatted disks, has HARDWARE FLOW CONTROL for High speed modem use, has the ability to control floppies, uses MORE models of SCSI drives as it will work with hard disks with 512 byte sectors compared to the MIO NEEDING hard disks capable of 256 byte sectors, and of course the
task master. Also, the Black box has "card edge" connectors for its' printer, modem, and floppy ports. One can crimp on appropriate connectors to ribbon cables. There is no problem making cables with the Black Box. The basic low end model of Black Box without case, Floppy board, Spooler RAM or Task Master is $199.99 U.S. funds and as far as I know is still being manufactured.

The last of the Host adaptors I will talk about is the soon to be released MIO 2 from Fine Tooned Engineering. Mike Hohman, the owner of FTE, has taken quite a bit of flak for delaying the release of the MIO 2 from 8 bitters who have eagerly awaited this product. However, to be fair, there have been reasons. Fine Tooned has other products it has been developing such as the 16 bit CPU upgrade, the Sweet 16, and the MARS 8 super upgrade board that allows all the ICD/OSS super carts to be resident in your

800xl. The reason the MIO 2 was delayed was that it had to work with all of these other upgrades. The MIO 2 is primarily a Hard disk interface. Where as all of the other hard disk interfaces I have mentioned use SCSI drives, the MIO 2 is unique in that it uses the very common IDE hard disk. This item should be a boon to hard diskless 8 bit owners. As far as I understand, the MIO 2 will not have an RS 232 port in order to keep costs down. I have heard rumours of an SIO high speed modem port from CSS. Perhaps this is a product that FTE will develop. I have been told by Mike Hohman that the MIO 2 will be a complete hard disk system for the 8 bit Atari. Adding an IDE drive will be all that is necessary. No external case, power supply will be required. Projected shipping date is for December 1995.

The second component of the hard disk system is the hard disk mechanism itself. For the BB, MIO, and Supra/KPI interfaces, a SCSI drive is required. A SCSI drive can be recognized by the fact it has a 50 pin connector. IDE drives have a 40 pin connector. Now, this should be pretty straight forward. One should be able to get a SCSI drive and hook it to your SCSI host and have it work......right? Life should be so simple! Unfortunately, all of these host adaptors for the 8 bit Atari were developed in the 1980's and we are already at the mid 1990's. There are a few problems to look for when shopping for a SCSI hard disk for your Classic Atari. The first and most common problem is many of the newer drives will not use 256 byte sectors. This rules out using the KPI and the MIO which need drives with 256 byte sector capability. Many of the earlier SCSI

drives such as the Seagate ST225N WILL work however. Secondly, the newer drives come with parity enabled. Classic Atari interfaces DO NOT work with SCSI drives with the parity enabled. However, most of the new drives do not even have a jumper to disable parity! It is permanently enabled! The bottom line is to stay away from these drives. Thirdly, as many of the capacities of the newer drives go up, so does the number of heads and cylinders in them. This has the unfortunate effect of exceeding the Black Box's firmware fields for heads and cylinders. This has a resulting effect of not being able to tell the formatting software the correct number of heads and cylinders. So, what should I do you ask? I have two suggestions. The first is to obtain an Adaptec 4000a or 4070 board. This board "adapts" obsolete MFM and RLL drives respectively to the SCSI format. What is fortunate for us is that all of these host interfaces work with these Adaptec boards and more importantly, they supply formatting software for these boards. Since MFM and RLL drives are obsolete, obtaining them should be a breeze! The adaptecs may not be so easy to get, however. Ask around on Atari specific BBS's. Adaptec 4000a boards are easily found in Atari ST SH204 cases along with an MFM drive. These are great because they come with a nifty "shoebox" case and power supply and have everything you need. Just unplug the Adaptec 4000a from the Atari ST host adaptor, and plug it directly in to your Black Box or MIO and away you go! The second suggestion is to search for older "embedded" SCSI drives. You see, an MFM drive connected to an Adaptec really is a SCSI drive. It can be assigned

one of 8 SCSI addresses. However, an "embedded" drive is a drive which has the controller as part of the mechanism. So do the newer ones. They too are regarded as "embedded" SCSI drives but we should steer clear of those for reasons I have already given. Ask around before buying a used drive to make sure it works with the host that you own or are going to buy.

The third consideration is cables and case and power supply. When searching for a suitable case for your hard disk system, one must consider what type of hard disk mechanism one has. For example is it a "full height" drive or "half height"? If one is going the Adaptec 4000a route, a typical IBM case and power supply is suggested. Don't go out and buy one......any IBM XT case will do. Since only the hard disk will be in it, almost any size power supply will do the job. No need to get a new case with a 200 Watt supply in it when a 60 Watt one can be had for next to nothing. A desk top XT case also makes a fine monitor stand. As mentioned earlier, "Shoe box" cases are nice. However, many of these cases such as the SH 204 only hold one "half height" drive. Since the Adaptec 4000a can control two drives, the IBM case may be the best way to go. The cables required for Adaptec controllers are the 50 pin SCSI cable, of course, and a 20 pin MFM cable which are easy to find. The third required cable is a 34 pin "card edge" to 34 pin "card edge" connector. These can be built fairly cheaply using crimp on connectors to 34 pin ribbon cable. The way to find pin one on these ribbon cables is to look for the (usually) red coloured side of the cable. This red strip helps to get the cables plugged in properly. Plugging cables in
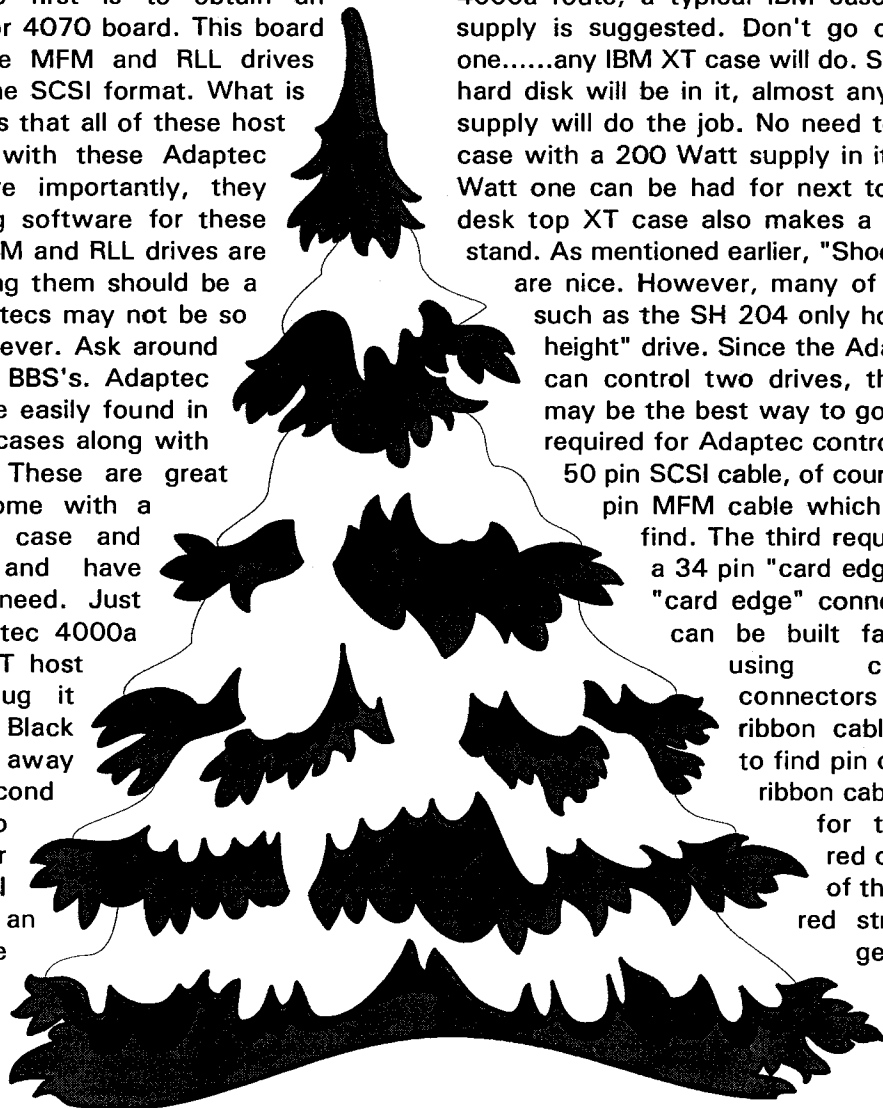
wrong can have unfortunate results. One other important consideration is "termination". What is termination? It is very similar to what it sounds like. Each end of a cable must be "terminated" with resistors to prevent problems with signals on the ribbon cable. .Devices in between these ends need to be non-terminated, and ones at the ends, need to be terminated. On one end is the host adaptor, and it is always terminated. If running one disk drive, it is required for it to be terminated. However, if you are running a few SCSI drives on the same cable, you will have to remove the "terminating resistor packs"from each drive between the ends of the cable.. Each drive has them in a different location, and finding them may be a chore. The best advice is to ask around on online services.

We have now covered all that is required to connect a hard disk system to the Classic Atari. However, there are a few CAVEATS that we must cover. I have been fortunate enough to have had access to 3 different MIOs and 3 different Black Boxes since starting my Classic Atari BBS in 1990. In that time, I have had some strange wierditudes show up in my various system configurations. In some cases I have had hard disks that would work with the Black box but not the MIO and vice versa. There have been computers that operate fine on their own, but when a Black Box or an MIO is attached, "flake out". What do I mean? Really erratic behaviour. For example, when I first bought a Black Box/Floppy board combination, my upgraded 800xl would "work" but the floppy drive would NAK out at the oddest times. It was especially aggravating when I was doing a copy. Some computers would work fine and then all of a sudden try to read BOTH floppies at the SAME TIME!!!! Well you can imagine the swearing and the hair pulling at this! After speaking with BOB PUFF, the creator of the Black Box, he informed me that my CPU was "marginal" and that things would be better if I swapped in a new CPU. After many swaps of 6502 chips, I eventually found one that .would work with my BB/FB combination. But, there were a lot of computers
I had that just plain REFUSED to work with a

fully functional Black Box or MIO!

I have thought about this problem for quite a long time now. I feel I have finally figured out what the trouble is. You see, I believe that the designers of these two interfaces failed to include "buffers" on their hosts. What is a "buffer"? It is sort of a signal booster that amplifies the signal from the 6502. The net result is that an "overloaded" bus may cause trouble with some CPU's. The bottom line is that if you get one of these hard disk interfaces, it may not work with your specific Classic Atari. The best advice I have is that once you find a particular computer that works with your Classic Atari host adaptor, don't move it around and STICK WITH THE SAME CONFIGURATION!
Good luck with assembling your own hard disk system!

THE FALL AND RISE OF A 130XE

By George Edrupt

It all started when I heard a sharp crack like an electrical discharge - twice. My 130XE stopped working. The screen was a white blank; no blue screen with grey border; no "READY" prompt. I took the unit apart and looked for obvious damage, but couldn't find any. I tried to work out the supply circuitry. I found the 5vDC is first smoothed by a group of seven capacitors in parallel then that supply divides into three

separate 5v lines, each through an LC (choke/capacitor) filter circuit. So there is a main feed to the majority of the chips, a separate feed to the crystal and one to Q2, which I figure is a switching transistor. Trying to read the part number on the side of the transistors I saw that another transistor, Q1, had small holes in its side! Eureka! Problem solved! I changed all three 2N3904's and switched on - blank white screen! Disappointed, I took my usual course of remedial action; I stuck it in the closet!

Some time later, noticing one of my power supplies wasn't working, I took it apart. Fortunately it was one of the old style big jobs rather than the later encapsulated ones. I found part of the circuit board with smoke marks and discovered that the 4700uF smoothing capacitor connections were loose! So I presumed that this was the power supply I had been using with the now defective 130XE and that that was where the discharge noises had come from. I was pleased to find that resoldering remedied the situation.

Since I have two 130XE's it occurred to me that swapping chips might uncover whether the sparks had damaged any components. My second 130XE, which worked, had sockets for the main 40 pin chips. Unfortunately the faulty unit only had sockets for the OS ROM and FREDDIE chips. I swapped these and found the FREDDIE was defective! Putting the good FREDDIE into the faulty 130XE produced - a blank white screen, so there was another problem. In order to try the swap method on the rest of the major chips I had to add sockets for the other 5 LSI chips (CPU, ANTIC, GTIA, PIA & POKEY). I also added sockets for BASIC & MEM MGT. Swapping the chips proved that the problem was elsewhere as both sets of chips worked OK in the good 130XE! But on the faulty 130XE - a blank white screen!

I had to accept the possibility that my soldering may not have been effective when I added the sockets. If so I might never find the original problem. The obvious solution was to check for continuity between the shoulder of each of the 244 terminals and its destination! But where does each go? It took me two weeks to trace and make a drawing of the mother-board

circuitry! The drawing, although larger than life, was difficult to read in a few places because of the congestion of circuit traces. So I spent a few more days creating a table of point-to-point connections. With this drawing and table I was able to determine that after all that, my soldering was OK, and I still had a blank white screen.

Because the 5v supply splits into three, one of which feeds the crystal, I thought the crystal may have been damaged. (I have no idea what the crystal does or what the effect is of having a bad one). Each crystal has four pins, one at each corner. Having unsoldered both, and in the middle of devising some post and crocodile clip scheme for swapping, it occurred to me that the pin locations were probably on the same 0.1 inch grid as the chips. I removed all but the corner pins of a 14-pin socket, soldered this to the good board. Both crystals worked fine.

So maybe the problem was in the RAM chips. But both computers had soldered-in RAM. I made a poor decision; I decided to remove the 16 RAM chips from the GOOD 130XE and add sockets. When I plugged the chips back in I found I now had TWO defective 130XE's! So I had to start all over again - had I damaged a chip during desoldering, or had I done a poor socket soldering job? Then I wondered if I could check each RAM chip in my 800XL, which has socketed RAM. I plugged a 130XE RAM chip into the 800XL and the 800XL still worked! Each of the RAM chips proved to be all right so I rechecked the socket soldering and discovered that one of the socket pins had bent when I was inserting them. I corrected this, plugged in the RAM, and I was back to having one good 130XE!

Unsoldering the RAM chips, one at a time, from the defective 130XE, I plugged each into the 800XL. The seventh chip proved to be defective. I replaced this and I now have two working 130XE's. Hurray!¢¢So I have concluded that a dry joint in a power supply can result in a capacitor discharge spark which can have an adverse effect on a computer's components. In my case I lost a FREDDIE chip,

a RAM chip and possibly a transistor. But at least I ended up with a little more knowledge about an 8-bit computer, a drawing of a 130XE mother board and a table of interconnections, so next time ....

George Edrupt
Hamilton, Ont

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STATE OF THE ST LIBRARY

By Roger Perrie
Club ST Librarian R.Perrie@Genie.Com

Currently, the ST Library is somewhat of a shambles! I am busy re-editing all of the original disks. That means that I have to "REVITALIZE" the disk. This is a method of restoring the magnetic properties of the original media so that I can actually move or use the programs on these disks. When the media gets to be over five years old, this becomes a major problem.

Of course, compounding this problem is the use of non-standard formats on the earlier Library

disks. Some disks are formatted 720k, some are formatted as high as 880k. As the disk media deteriorates, these non-standard disks fail fast because they were only designed to work with nominal 1 Meg unformatted, or 720 formatted disk capacities.

Once the disk has been restored, I must find all of the relevant files for each of the programs listed. All of the early club disks had everything on the root directory, nothing was put into folders! When I find all of the relevant files, I put them into a folder named with the program name and then use STZIP to compact the file for storage. I then make up a short "ASCII" file with a short description of the program contained in the .ZIP file. I give this file the same name as the STZIP file has but change the EXTender to ASC(for ASCII).

This gives me two files with almost identical names. Eg. Program.ZIP and also Program.ASC. The first is the actual archived files contained in it's very own folder. The second is it's description file for immediate viewing. No need
to Un-Arc the .ZIP, just read the file marked ASC.

These two files are then put onto the Hard Drive, in the appropriate folder. Again, by appropriate, I mean Games go into the GAMES folder, or maybe into the folder within a folder such as >GAMES>COLORGAM, or >GAMES>MONO. Once this is accomplished, the original disk is returned to the library for now.

The current master disks will remain in use until all of them have been repaired and the files extracted and archived. Descriptive files made up and stored along with the actual compacted file. When this is accomplished, the files will be put onto disk once again, but in "THEME" disks! This means that if you buy one of the archive disks, it will contain similar programs. It may contain only games, or possibly two or more word processors. Due to the archiving process the original ten, single sided 360k floppy disks have been edited down to one single IBM formatted double sided 720k

disk. This will be the club standard in the future. I might add that the disk holds 52 programs of all descriptions, along with the ASCII file description and a little blurb about the HBO. The only other thing you will need is a copy of ST-ZIP. Preferably version 2.6, as that's the version that I used to compact these files with.

If you have trouble with ST-ZIP, it is available on a disk, set up to run from the club library. It has been set up to run on a 520ST with a double-sided disk drive, so it should work well for everyone. If your system differs from this hypothetical setup, just open up the config area and change the system to suit yourself.

At the same time I am still producing a disk, or disks of the month. I will try to release these in batches about every two to three months. The current monthly disks, will have the files stored in a similar way, with the exception that the file itself will be in a self-extracting .TOS format. Simply put; you just copy the file to a blank, formatted disk and then double click on it to start the extraction process. Sit back and watch, or go for a coffee. It should not take too long to extract. You will end up with the self-extracting file, and a folder with the same name on it on that disk. You can delete the .TOS file now, and open the folder. READ CAREFULLY ALL OF THE .TXT, .DOC OR .ASC files that you find inside of the folder. These tell you how to operate the program you have just un-arced.

When all of this is accomplished; the Library will be honed down to just the various theme disks and the last twenty-five disks of the month. By this I mean that as soon as the disk of the month has become one year old, it will be discontinued and the files will be placed on one of the theme disks. This makes it easier to catalogue the individual files.

8-BIT LIBRARIAN REPORT

By Randy Charlebois

This month there are several disks available with downloads of the ATARI 8-BIT INTERNET feed. They cover roughly the last two months of messages. Check them out for the latest news and views of our computers.

For those of you who have ANALOG or ANTIC magazines the library now has most of the monthly disks that came with these. If there is a disk you want to go with your magazines see the librarian at the meetings or give me a call before hand and I'll have the disks ready for you. There were a lot of good programs on these disks. The library is missing a few issues, so I'll swap disk for disk for them if you have the missing ones.

It seems all 8-bitters in the club have all the programs they want or need so sales of the 8-BIT library disks are almost non-existent. As new programs are few and far between I'm treating the library as a archive of all programs that are out there for the 8-BIT. If I find anything new I'll let you know and would appreciate any leads or donations of programs.

Next issue I'll cover the Utilities section of the library which covers Archivers, Copiers, Menus, Sector Editors and Upgrades.

An interview with Michael Hohman of Fine Tooned Engineering

Conducted April 2, 1995 at the Atari Canadian Exhibition By William M. Moeller

WM: Welcome to Canada! We are glad that FTe decided to come to ACE '95.

MH: It really is a vacation. I have been holed up in "the cave" for the past year.

WM: Where is "the cave"?

MH: It is a professional office in Scotts Valley, a small town of about 10,000 people. Borland and Seagate are there. It is still considered part of Silicon Valley (*FTE has moved since then to Arizona -Ed*).

WM: You have been criticized for working on the MIO II and Sweet 16 before finishing the Mars 8. How do you respond?

MH: The products cant be separated. They work together in tandem. I did not foresee an 816 upgrade or an IDE hard disk interface. Before I could release one product, they ALL had to work together. As a result, they have only gotten better. You can't dictate innovation!

WM: How close to completion is the Mars 8?

MH: Production models should be ready in May 1995. The board only works in the 800XL. The 800XL is the only machine that lends itself well to putting in a Simm. Show me where there is room in the 130XE!

WM: What will the price be?

MH: Watch for the press release.

WM: What new items are Fine Tooned shipping now?

MH: A C.S.S. MUX compatible Express cart, the "X-PRess!", and the Sweet 16.

WM: Will the MIO II be in an original MIO case?

MH: No. The drive will mount directly to the board. There will be no need for an external case and power supply. All you will need is the drive.

WM: Many people missed the point of disk based Sparta Dos going shareware, didn't they?

MH: A few did, and they tended to be the most vocal about it. I felt Sparta should be able to become the defacto 8-bit Dos standard, without restrictions, and those who did not have Docs could get them at an extremely reasonable cost. They would also be insured to get the latest revision of the Toolkit. Not to mention they would feel good about supporting Shareware.

WM: What is RealDos, and how is it different from 3.2G?

MH: RealDos was completely unauthorized and was put together without the original source code. It is not supported by FTe and should only be used at your own risk. The only thing that is "REAL" is that ego can be a destructive thing.

WM: Is Sparta Dos 3.2G stable?

MH: Absolutely!

WM: What plans do you have for SpartaDos X?

MH: X is hands down, the BEST disk operating system for any 8 bit computer. It is NOT going to remain dormant.

WM: You own the Express! cart from Orion don't you? How did that come about?

MH: I called Keith because I wanted to include it on the Mars 8.

WM: How did you get all of the Newell rights?

MH: I called Wes Newell because I wanted to put Omnimon! on the Mars 8.

WM: Wow! What will FTe do next?

MH: Take an even longer vacation!

WM: You have been hard to get a hold of. Why?

MH: By voice, maybe.....But, I am extremely active on GEnie and the Internet, and I respond to 95% of my E mail. FTe also has a FAX.

WM: What is your vision for the Atari 8-bit community?

MH: I can have a vision for what _I_ am working on. But, what happens to the 8-bit community is up to you guys. It is not my place to say.

WM: Thank you. Enjoy your vacation!

Sparta Dos X Tutorial Part II

By Larry Popa

It's been quite a while since I wrote my last article on Sparta Dos X, but none the less here I am once again writing another Sparta tutorial. Last time I discussed creating a customized Config.sys for optimal performance. Now, I will take the next logical step; Batch Files.

Most people create an Autoexec.bat file to load in certain programs at boot up and that is it. Batch files can be used on their own for a multitude of purposes. To load any batch file from the Dos prompt, type;

-FILENAME[.EXTENDER]   PARAMETER   1 PARAMETER 2 ...etc

An extender of ".bat" is automatically assumed and is not necessary to be typed in. Since batch files can be loaded from the Dos prompt at any time, it is then possible to easily write

your own Sparta commands. If you create a Dos> directory and use the following command in your Autoexec.bat,

PATH CAR:;D1:>DOS> (Or wherever else you put the directory)

then you can essentially have a myriad of your own commands that can be called up easily at any time. The batch file can be created by using the "COPY CON: FILENAME.EXT" command from the Dos prompt or using Text Pro. The following is an example of a typical batch file command:

```
;NUKE.BAT By Larry Popa
;
DEL %1> *.*
RD %1
```

This batch file (named NUKE.BAT) will delete all of the files within a subdirectory then delete the directory. This makes hard drive maintenance a lot easier since whole directories are often needed to be deleted at once. To use NUKE.BAT type the following at the Dos prompt:

-NUKE DIRECTORY NAME

Here's another useful batch file;

```
;MOVE.BAT By Larry Popa
;
COPY %1 %2
DEL %1
```

This file will move a file from one location to another then delete the original. Since the file is moved from one location to another, the file is called MOVE.BAT To use it, type the following at the DOS prompt;

-MOVE SOURCE DESTINATION

As you've probably noticed by now, there are a lot of %1s, %2s, etc in the batch files. These figures represent the first parameter, second parameter, and so on. Up to nine parameters can be used this way.