

# CompuClub

Where Atari owners belong.

## LOW COST SOFTWARE

### LOTS OF BYTES

With increasing success of the very low cost software we decided to take a look at what is offered and what is really delivered.

Before we begin, we should look at a term or two and make sure that they are clearly understood. "Public Domain" refers to software that is owned by "the public". That means, among other things, that someone cannot sell this software. Many user groups have copies of public domain programs in their libraries. The programs may be free for the taking, or a nominal copying charge of about \$5.00 may be charged by the club.

So, how is it that people are charging for this stuff? If you read the ads really closely, you will usually find that they are charging you a "copying fee" to pay for the disk. For example, CompuClub now charges members \$5.00 per copy for the Atari "Translator".

With that all behind us, there are three companies we chose to look at:

**LOTS OF BYTES:** large ads in AN TIC and other magazines. Price \$7.95 per disk, All "public-domain" software.

**ANTIC:** A fairly large number of "public-domain" programs are included in their software offerings.

In fairness, it should be noted that Antic placed many of these listings in the public domain in the first place.

**BROWN BAG SOFTWARE:** A new company that sent us seven software packages to review, ranging in price from \$7.50 to \$20.00. A few of these were public domain and labeled as such. Most

were low-cost new software. Six of the packages sell for less than \$20.00.

#### LOTS OF BYTES

We ordered three disks from these folks, to sample what they had. We received three disks and found:

NO documentation

NO DOS on the disk

NO more than 75% of the programs debugged enough to run.

### ANTIC

It appears that many of the titles on these disks were typed in from AN TIC, ANALOG, or COMPUTE "as-is". In this case "as-is" means, including typos. If you knew where the program had originally appeared, and could get the documentation from that source, you might be able to determine what the program was supposed to do.

If you didn't have that magazine to refer to, you are pretty well lost. At the very least, it is a whole lot harder to debug a program when you don't know what it's suppose to do.

#### ANTIC

We ordered several disks from Antic with somewhat better results. Delivery was slow, ~~nearly six weeks~~. When the products did arrive, they all ran, and they had documentation.

We found some of the same titles on the Antic disks that we found on the Lots-of-Bytes disks. Antic' programs, however, ran properly.

We were happy enough with the Antic offerings to start carrying most of them. We will, despite Antic's slow delivery schedule, try to keep most titles in stock so that you do not have to wait. We will, of course, be selling the AN TIC titles at our standard 25%-off-list price.

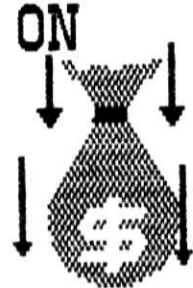
#### BROWN BAG

Brown Bag proved to be the most interesting of the three. This company offers an interesting mixture of software. Some started life as public domain, and has been enhanced to the point where it is hard to recognize. Some of the programs are 100% original. All of it seems to be well written and well error trapped.

Titles run a gamut that ranges from the novelty to functional. The titles we have seen are listed in another section of the Newsletter.

As with the Antic offerings, we like these products and will be keeping them in stock.

## PRICE REDUCTIONS!



## ELECTRONIC ARTS OSS MPP

<u>TITLE</u>	<u>PRICE</u>
MPP 1000E Modems .....	\$90.00
MPP Microfiler .....	\$22.45
MPP 1150 Interface .....	\$62.00
MPP Microprint .....	\$49.95
Archon .....	\$24.00
Archon II .....	\$28.00
Cut & Paste .....	\$24.00
Dr. J and Larry Bird .....	\$28.00
(One-On-One)	
Financial Cookbook .....	\$30.00
Hard Hat Mack .....	\$20.00
Mule (800/400 only) .....	\$24.00
Murder on the Zindernuff ..	\$24.00
Music Const Set .....	\$24.00
Pinball Const. Set .....	\$24.00
Realm of Impossibility ....	\$24.00
7 Cities of Gold .....	\$30.00
Word Flyer .....	\$29.00
Worms .....	\$20.00
Basic XL .....	\$59.95
Writer's Tool .....	\$74.95

**\* ATARI 130XE'S IN STOCK \$159.95 \***

## PRINT SHOP

BRODERBUND / DISK ONLY  
 LIST PRICE \$44.95  
 CLUB PRICE \$33.70

It's not often that we see a program as good as "The Print Shop."

This is a printer utility program that will become a standard by which others are be judged.

Print Shop gives the user the capability to design and print an impressive array of graphics and text in four different standard layouts. The program has been designed to allow the user to create greeting cards, banners, signs, or letterheads. Each of these basic choices allows you to work your way through a group of sub-menus offering various graphic and text alternatives to enhance your design.

The degree of your involvement with each piece you create with The Print Shop is entirely up to you. You can, for example, simply print out a ready-made greeting card personalized only with the name of the recipient. Or, you can print your own creation: a card personalized from front to back with your own graphics and words. You can even add your own credit line on the back of the card, right where Rustcraft or Hallmark would normally be printed.

At the heart of the Print Shop are its specialized menus leading to a choice of design elements. There are simple to elegant border designs, graphics and artwork suitable for many purposes. Also, there are stylish typefaces which makes the job of turning out spectacular work quite simple.

In addition to a large library of graphics included with the Print Shop, you have the ability to create you own artwork

using the KOALA PAD or the Atari Touch Tablet. (See our sale pricing on the KOALA PAD elsewhere in this newsletter.)

One of the nicest features is the fact that it will do so much so easily. You don't really need to use the instruction book to run the program. It's that well designed! We used it in preparing this Newsletter.

A couple of warnings:

The Print Shop will only work with the following printers:  
 EPSON MX,FX,RX,JX80, AND OLD EPSONS WITH GRAFTRAX  
 MANNESMANN TALLY SPRIT 80, NEC 8023A  
 OKIDATA MICROLINE 92,93  
 PANASONIC 1090/1091, PROWRITER, RADIX 10  
 STAR GEMINI 10X, 15X, ADMATE DP110, AXIOM SLP  
 BLUE CHIP, BMC, CENTRONICS MSP15, C.ITOH 8510, DELTA 10

The Print Shop **will not work** with the Rev. A operating system in the old '800 and 400' models of Atari.

## NITELITE BBS SYSTEM

DISK ONLY FOR ALL MODEMS  
 CLUB PRICE \$70.00

BBS software for 850 interface, MPP1000 E or C Modems and the Atari 1030

As you will read elsewhere in this newsletter we are setting up a BBS.

In the process of searching software to run the board, we came across what I think is the best BBS software I have ever seen for the Atari. The software is not a fully set up BBS, but rather a system for setting up any of board you would like to run.

The software provided functions as a BBS interpreter. You are given a list of 24 commands. All you do is create your menus, and the software will execute whatever command you have allowed the caller to enter. This gives you a board that is simple to run, yet has more flexibility and power than the more standardized packages that are now being sold. There are 26 levels of passwords offered, so that you can enable people to have whatever level of access you chose.

One of the best options, for the experienced BBS operator, is the fact that the board almost takes care of itself once it is up and running. The message base is a rotating file. Therefore, the oldest messages are automatically deleted as new ones come in. We have set our board to hold 300 messages before the oldest ones are deleted. Therefore, there will be quite a large message base for any caller to access.

The package also includes a hardware device which improves the carrier detect, allowing the board to notice the loss of a carrier as soon as the caller hangs up.

Many boards will lock up if the caller hangs up while the program is in certain parts of its menu. Not true with NITELITE boards. The package is available for systems using the Atari 850, MPP 1000 E or C modems or the Atari 1030 modem. Please let us know which system you have, when ordering.

## COMPUCLUB BBS

ONLINE MAY 1, 1985  
 617 788 0024

WITH APPROXIMATELY ONE MEG. OF DOWNLOAD FILES.

CHECK THE LATEST IN CLUB SPECIALS AND REVIEWS. (WE WILL POST THEM HERE, BEFORE THEY GO INTO THE NEWSLETTER.)

EXCHANGE TECH HELP WITH OTHER CLUB MEMBERS. PRIVATE MESSAGES AND OTHER SPECIAL FEATURES INCLUDING AN 'ST' BOARD WILL BE AVAILABLE TO MEMBERS.

COST, NOTHING BUT THE PRICE OF THE CALL

# DELIVERED DELAYED DELETED

The following programs have just been, or will be, released within the next week or two.

MR DO

PRINT SHOP GRAPHICS LIB.

NITELITE BBS SYSTEM

AUTO MECHANIC

PLATO (The Learning Phone) Due out by May 15

The following programs have been **delayed**

PROGRAM	NEW SHIP DATE
ULTIMA IV	----- LATE AUG.
ALTERNATE REALITY	-- MID SEPT.
KENNEDY APPROACH	---- END OF MAY
ADVENTURE CONST.SET	--EARLY JUNE
CROSSWORD MAGIC	---- MID MAY
TAPPER	----- LATE MAY
COMPUTER QUARTERBACK	-JUNE 20
VIDEO SCREEN MAKER	- MID MAY

The following products have been **canceled**

SPELL WIZARD

CHAMPIONSHIP LOAD RUNNER

The following is a short program which will let you read LJK Disk Directories. With very little work, you should be able to expand this to make a program that reads from one DOS (LJK) and writes to another (ATARI)

- 10 REM Routine to read disk directory
- 20 REM from LJK DOS disks
- 30 REM Credit to Donald Nelson
- 40 REM from ANTIC, Apr 84
- 50 DIM FILES\$(20)
- 60 POKE 4226,107
- 70 TRAP 200
- 80 OPEN # 1,6,0,"D:\*.\*)"
- 90 PRINT
- 100 FOR I=1 TO 64
- 120 INPUT #1,FILES\$
- 130 NEXT I
- 200 POKE 4226,105
- 210 CLOSE #1
- 220 END

**WEST COAST COMPUTER FAIR**

WEST COAST COMPUTER FAIR  
WEST COAST COMPUTER FAIR  
WEST COAST COMPUTER FAIR

ATARI: By now the news of ATARI's offer to Atari User Groups should be public. If you haven't heard what Atari is offering is:

An Atari ST520 (520k of Ram) along with a disk drive. These units will be shipped to users' groups, before they are generally available to the public. The details of this offer are not yet firmed up, and users' group offices should call the ATARI BBS (408-745-5308) for further updates. Shipping dates for general sales are now said to be about mid to late June.

The Atari portable (XEP) and the ST130 have been canceled for the short term future. There is a rumor that Atari will introduce an even higher powered version of the ST at the Summer CES.

**News from MPP:**

The long-awaited MPP hard disk interface will be available (according to MPP) around the beginning of June. The interface alone (you provide the controller card, power pack, and hard disk) will sell for around \$250.00. A second version of the unit, complete with either a 5-megabyte or 10-megabyte hard disk, is expected to retail for under \$1000.00. This is all the information we have at this time. We will report more information, when we get it.

The MPP 1200-baud modem is also moving quickly toward being market ready. First shipments of these \$199.00 units is expected by mid summer. The unit will be offered in three versions; RS232, Atari, Commodore. In each case, the unit will have a built in SIO interface.

**Batteries Included:**

Has delayed shipping on its "Paper Clip" word processor, until the end of April, at the earliest.

**NEXA:**

This company was again showing what many consider the best sports game ever seen on the ATARI system at the fair. However, for the second year in a row they said it's not quite complete, and they are not ready to market. In fact, they are looking for another company to market it for them. Anyone want to become a software mogul

**Impressions from the show:**

The ATARI booth (actually manned by people from a local user group) was far and away the hit of the show. While the giants like IBM showed products to one or two people at a time, the people at the ATARI booth were piled at least six deep throughout the show. In fact, the steadiest visitors were the three lonely reps from the Commodore booth. I overheard one IBM representative asking a friend: "What machine is creating those great graphics?" "Is it the ST, he said. "No," he was told. "It is just an old 800."

His reply: "It's too bad a cheap machine does such great graphics."

Guess he would like it better, if ATARI would just raise the price 200 or 300-percent. (Thank God, Atari wasn't purchased by IBM).

**OUR CHOICE****FLYING ACE**

FLYING ACE  
Avalon Hill  
Arcade/32K  
Disk or Tape  
List Price: \$24.95  
Club Price: \$18.75

The unanimous opinion of our staff on viewing this program was: "Give me a break!!!". The space used to review this program has been well spent, if you DO NOT BUY THIS PROGRAM

**RESCUE ON FRACTALUS!**

EPYX/DISK ONLY  
LIST PRICE \$39.95  
CLUB PRICE \$29.95

As some of you know, this is not really a new title. But, it is a long-awaited landmark achievement, representing some of the finest graphic capabilities of the Atari. To say this is game is excellent is an understatement.

Rescue on Fractalus is a one-player real-time arcade adventure program requiring strategy and finely tuned "space-fighter" reflexes.

You will fly a "Valkyrie-class" rescue fighter on a mission of mercy to pick up "Ethercorps" pilots shot down and stranded on a hostile planet.

I must warn you, it will not be easy. Not only must you dodge laser gun emplacements on the ridges and peaks of Fractalus, but you must also outwit and destroy suicide saucers and enemy aliens. There will be times when you must fly at night with only your experience and wits to save you. Trying to memorize the terrain will do you little good in this master arcade game, since it has the ability to create new terrain as you play. This game is a must for the arcade player who feels ready for a real joystick challenge!

COMPUCLUB NEWS  
COMPILED AND EDITED  
BY COMPUCLUB STAFF  
USING LETTER PERFECT  
AND THE PRINT SHOP



**CLUB NOTES:  
UPS SHIPPING WILL BE  
\$2.50 AS OF MAY 1,**

**CLUB BBS IS UP THE  
# IS 617 788 0024**

**>>ATARI 130XE'S<<  
NOW IN STOCK!!**

**PLEASE DON'T RETURN  
PRODUCTS WITHOUT AN  
RA #**

## WHY OH WHY?

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS  
BY  
HARVEY BOJARSKY

Here we are in a new world of ATARI. In the last few months ATARI has announced what is being dubbed 'Jackintosh.' Herb Brooks is out of work. And, we are discussing modems.

This column's question is from German Rivadeneira of Simi Valley, California, and it concerns modems. Before we get to the meat of the matter, I should point out what may be called 'caveat questioner'. Part of this month's question concerns the use of a program called E.I.Term. There are thousands of programs available for the ATARI. I do not know the E.I.Term program, and, therefore, cannot offer solace or aid. If I know a program, I will try to help. But, specific software questions are hit or miss.

German's letter quotes the ATARI 1030 Modem manual as saying; "An ATARI 810 or 1050 Disk Drive may remain connected to your computer system. However, the disk drive must be turned off while you're operating the Atari 1030 Direct Connect Modem with Modemlink." The letter goes on to ask, if a non-Atari drive can remain on.

The answer to this question lies in a strange decision on the part of the ATARI software designers. In telecomputing, there are two main concepts, 'Uploading' and 'Downloading'. Uploading is the act of sending data from your computer to another computer. Downloading is what you are doing, when you receive data. When you download data, you can theoretically direct it to any device (screen, disk, printer, etc.). To accomplish this directing of the downloaded data, you need software capable of addressing the appropriate device. ATARI, in it's

infinite wisdom, has never marketed a communications program which can address a disk drive. The reason that Atari says not to turn on the drive is that the software will not address it. (Technically, the Atari software looks for one device. If the drive is on the modem would not be recognized by the software.) The type of drive is unimportant, in this case.

With the configuration described, you need software which supports a direct-connect modem (specifically the 1030), and downloading to disk. I believe that HomePack's terminal program (also asked about in the letter) has these capabilities.

To summarize, software (as usual) determines which devices are used, and in what way they are used. The disk drive is kept off in the above mentioned configuration because of the program. It has nothing to do with the type of drive.

Finally, Christmas was good to ATARI. Many machines were sold, and some new owners may be reading this. This column is here to answer questions on life, the universe and everything (most center on ATARI though). If you have questions, want to see your name in lights (or typeset), or just want to try to stump me, send your letters to;

Q&A  
PO Box 652  
Natick, MA 01760

## BOUNTY BOB HINTS

Tried Bounty Bob yet? If you have, then you'll appreciate this hint column. Most of it comes from one of the hot-shot game players of ABUG (Acton Boxboro, MA Users Group). Some it was worked, we hear, with much cursing and swearing. The hints are deliberately vague, so as to not spoil the game for new players. If you have played this game for while, I think this hint list will help a lot.

On screen one, try: "start plus 5 after the flowerpot." Later look for ..... The last password will do no good. So here's the next to last password which will get you to the last one. You'll understand what I'm talking about when you get there!

- DO ALL OF SCREEN 1
- ON SCREEN 2
  - GET ALL THE MEANIES
  - GET PAINT ROLLER PRIZE LAST
  - PRESS 3 & START
- DO ALL REMAINING LEVELS
- ENJOY LEVEL 26

Some other things that are worth trying:  
Go to the OPTIONS screen, and enter SPECIAL CODE #100.  
Press "\*\*", and hold it down.  
Press the OPTION key.  
Then press START.

Also try the numbers:  
5,6,100,2049,666,69,213,782,686,818.  
There must be other more useful numbers, but these will get you started.

## A QUICK LOOK AT THE ATARI 130XE

As I write this I am sitting at the keyboard of a new Atari 130XE. Let me start by telling you, its a nice looking machine. The colors are soft and easy to look at. The design of the keyboard makes me think that it's going to be a pleasure to type on. The best news is not the machine, nice as it is. The really good news is the documentation that come with it. One hundred and thirty pages of useful information for the new user!

Now, for the machine itself. There have been a number of small but appreciated improvements. The New Atari Corporation has added the graphic characters the machine can produce to the keys. No more must you them up in a chart. Just look down at the front of the keys and there they are. (I have to admit that its one of the things I liked about the Commodore).

The keyboard is, as it looks to be, 1000% better than the XL. Keys are sculpted and at a better angle for a touch typist. However, they don't spell any better. The last little improvement is the reworking of the cartridge slot to eliminate the silly trap door and put the cartridge out of the way in the back. Of course there are major improvements but its going to take some time to learn about them. More on that in the future.

## CLUB SPECIAL!

**BOUNTY BOB  
STRIKES BACK  
&  
MINER 2049ER**

**\$33.70  
FOR BOTH**

## THE ATARI COLUMN

### MMG BASIC COMPILER

MMG SOFTWARE/DISK ONLY  
LIST PRICE \$99.95  
CLUB PRICE \$74.95

By Paul W. Shahood  
BBS System Phone #(617)481-5324

The MMG BASIC Compiler was introduced in 1984 and the ads made some pretty impressive claims. The claims are true. This is a very fast and relatively easy-to-use package. The seven unsupported keywords (CONT, CLOAD, CSAVE, ENTER, LOAD, NEW, and SAVE) will probably not cause anybody grief. It compiles to true machine code, which will give your BASIC programs dramatic increases in speed and new character!

You also have the option of retaining the assembler source files (generated in pass 1 of 3).

Support of single and double density is provided on one disk, as is integer or floating-point math.

The manual is brief, but concise. It covers quite a bit of technical detail and error handling.

There are two areas that bear mentioning that may, or may not be, considered drawbacks. The first point, that could be major to some, is that constants must be used for line number references. If you are in the habit of using variables for line references or indexes in GOTO's or GOSUB's and you want to compile a program that uses them, then you will have to convert them all to constants.

The second point has to do with disk storage. In order to compile a BASIC program, you must have a disk with five (5) times as many free sectors as your BASIC program. Obviously, this can be dealt with, and is not as much of a problem, if you have multiple disk drives. This is even less of a problem, if you have (true) double-density drives.

Generally speaking, I feel the MMG BASIC COMPILER is a very nice product and recommend it highly. The extremely fast compile-time and the support of the majority of BASIC keywords make it very handy.

**THE ATARI BBS**  
**408-745-2504**  
**DAVE DUPERMAN**  
**SYSOP**

Welcome to the first entry of The Atari column. A fascinating little diversion in which I will share with you anything I have learned about the machine, as well as attempt to demonstrate some little used features.

The address for requests, questions, or submissions is:  
Tom Arena  
11 Richgrain Ave.  
Waltham, MA 02154

To start off with, I will assume some experience with BASIC. Therefore, I will start with the "SOUND" command. (Editor's note: Several good books providing information about Basic can be obtained from: Compubook, P.O. Box 169, Roxbury, CT 06783.)

#### SOUND

When you type a command such as "SOUND 0,23,10,12" what actually happens is the following:

1. A '0' is put in location 53768, and a '3' is put in location 53775. These two numbers initialize the sound chip for normal operations, they are not taken from your command.

2. Using the first number in the command: voice'0' is selected (Voice '0' resides at locations 53760 and 53761).

3. Using the second number in the command: a '23' is put in location 53760 (This is the pitch location).

4. Lastly, using the last two numbers: The tone number '10' is multiplied by 16 (resulting in '160') to which is added the volume number '12' (resulting in '172') this result is then put in location 53761, and sound results.

The reason for the computations in step 4 is that the tone and volume must share the same byte. In this case the TOP 4 BITS hold the tone value (times 16) and the bottom 4 holds the volume. Thus, two values each a

NYBBLE long, reside in one BYTE:  
(TTTTVVVV Tone/Vol).

Now type this command 'SOUND 0,100,10,5'. Wait a moment and then type in the following:

POKE 53760,255:.lower the tone.  
POKE 53761,162:.lower the vol.  
POKE 53761,170:.raise the vol.  
POKE 53761,106:.change TONE.

Here follows a chart which may help you understand the sound registers.

53760	Audio frequency Voice 0
53761	Voice 0 control (tone/vol)
53762	Audio freq. Voice 1
53763	Voice 1 ctrl. (t/v)
53764	Audio freq. Voice 2
53765	Voice 2 ctrl. (t/v)
53766	Audio freq. Voice 3
53767	Voice 3 ctrl. (t/v)
53768	All voice ctrl. (set to 0)
53775	Serial ctrl. (set to 3)

Voice ctrl.=(tone\*16)+vol

Please note that these locations are for POKing to only. They have entirely different uses when PEEKed (for instance, PEEKing 53760-67 yields the values for the PADDLE command.

Also, don't bother to set the last two locations in the list. Just use the command 'SOUND 0,0,0,0' which will do the job, without you having to remember the numbers.

I'll leave you with this chart to experiment with for now. Next time, "The END of the SOUND Command!"

Tom Arena.

## ATARI NEWS

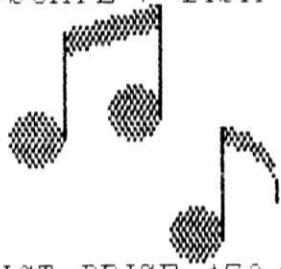
### ASTRA BIG D

TWO DOUBLE-SIDED, DOUBLE-DENSITY DRIVES IN ONE UNIT  
CLUB PRICE \$600.00

One of the real pleasures I've had had in setting up our new BBS system over the last month has been using the ASTRA Big D disk drive. This unit consists of two double density, double sided drives in one case. What that translates to is 720k of storage running off one plug. Eight Atari 810's per Big D!! The units (we are using two) have been running nonstop for about two weeks (24 hrs a day for 14 days). We've yet to have the slightest sign of a problem. It's almost hard to understand the amount of storage these units offer if you are accustomed to 810's or 1050's.

These drives are a great solution if you are running a BBS or any other application where tremendous amounts of storage are needed. At \$600.00 each for 720k you are paying only \$0.83 per 1k of storage. By comparison 4 Indus GT's will cost you over \$1,000.00 or \$1.38 per 1k of storage. An ATR 8000 with 2 double sided double density drives at \$200.00 each including wrappers and power packs would cost well over \$750.00. Enough said these drives are well built and a good deal for anyone who really need storage!

BANK STREET MUSIC  
MINDSCAPE / DISK ONLY



LIST PRICE \$39.95  
CLUB PRICE \$29.95

A FEW NOTES ABOUT BANK STREET MUSIC WRITER.

By Reg McCeery

Bank Street Music Writer by Mindscape is a full-feature music system for your ATARI that is easy to use and powerful enough for even accomplished musicians.

Editing and composing music is simple with the notes instantly displayed on the screen. Even a novice at reading music can enter and edit, even complicated compositions, with relative ease.

The manual is well done with a beautifully laid out tutorial. There is a comprehensive section on music notation. There is also a quick reference card to make entering music quick and simple. One of the features I most like is the print-out capability. Complete music staves can be printed on just about any ATARI-compatible dot-matrix printer. The quality of these print-outs is very good.

Another feature that is fun to play around with is the OPIION screen. When you enter this screen, you can shape the notes in each of the four voices. Note shaping gives different qualities to the play-back of the music. All of this is graphically represented on the screen, while changes are being made.

There are few negative things about the Bank Street Music Writer. I use a TV for a monitor. Some TV sets won't display images that are close to the edge of the screen. There were some screen prompts I couldn't see at all. I think software authors should be more considerate of this difficulty, when

they design displays. Also, the screen changes are somewhat disconcerting, until you get used to them. However, these problems are minor.

The Bank Street Music Writer includes also includes a number of completed pieces of music, on the back of the disk.

This is a well done program. If you like music at all, and who doesn't, you'll like Bank Street Music Writer.

## BROWN BAG SOFTWARE

LOW COST DISK BASED SOFTWARE

The first shipment of Brown Bag software should be arriving here by the end of April. For those of you who haven't heard about Brown Bag, this company is offering a pretty full line of low-cost software. We have had the chance to preview several titles over the last few weeks. These have to be among the best values in new software we've seen in years.

The titles we are expecting are:

### AUTO MECHANIC

disk only  
List Price \$12.95  
Club Price \$8.50

Auto Mechanic is a complete data base for keeping track of automotive repairs and maintenance. The Program offers full-color and plain-English instructions, to make data entry a snap. Also included, are support programs to calculate gas mileage and auto loan expenses

### KIDS' DOS

disk only  
List Price \$19.95  
Club Price \$14.95

At last someone is offering a disk utility that the kids can use and understand. KIDS' DOS replaces DUP.SYS on ATARI DOS 2.0 and gives simple terms for all the DOS functions. The screen is in full color. Many functions can be selected with a joystick. Some of them are even animated!

### TYPOS

disk only  
list price \$12.95  
club price \$ 7.50

This handy little disk contains every magazine "typing checker" you will ever need. There are "typo" programs from ANTIC,

COMPUTE, ANALOG, AND SOFTSIDE. Each one is cataloged with the issue number the program was first used or the date the publication changed to that version of the program. Simple and handy for the person who doesn't have a disk subscription to one of these magazines.

### LINERS

disk only  
List Price \$12.95  
Club Price \$8.95

This disk is crammed with BASIC & MACHINE language routines that can be used in your own programs. Brown Bag has collected one of the widest collections of routines we have ever seen at anything close to this price. There is a full text description of each program. This is not a bad collection of routines to study as a programming primer.

### PATCHES #1

disk only  
List Price \$19.95  
Club Price \$14.95

PATCHES #1 extends Basic by adding commands that can be used in your own programming. Select from the library of files. Commands include: AUTO LINE #, LINE RENUMBER, LINE DELETE, SCREEN PRINT, DISK DIRECTORY, LOCK/UNLOCK, RENAME, DELETE, AND BINARY LOAD, all from BASIC

### PATCHES #2

disk only  
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PATCHES #2 is designed to extend your ATARI DOS 2.0 by customizing the DUP.SYS file. You can add commands to the DOS menu by selecting them from the library of modules included. Third library includes SECTOR COPY, SPEED CHECK, UNDELETE, AUTORUN MAKER, SECTOR DUMP and more.

### VIDEO SCREEN MAKER

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This nifty little package allows you to create great title screens for your programs or VCR. You type your titles directly on the screen. Animation can then be added by a simple selection from a library including: RAINBOW, CURTAIN, LETTER ROTATE, MOVING MESSAGES, and SOUND. The program includes a well-written set of instructions that make using it child's play, or even better adult play.

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## KAMPFGRUPPE

STRATEGY BY SSI / DISK ONLY  
LIST PRICE \$39.95  
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By Wally Newell

Another strategy success for SSI. This is by far one of the most detailed strategy/tactical simulations that has been released to date for any personal computer!

Kampfgruppe recreates the Eastern Front on a platoon level. You will need to spend a lot of time to plan your offense and defense in this game. The details are so well thought out, you must consider the armor thickness and the relative firepower of each unit that you send into battle.

This program is for the advanced war-gamer. It can be played in three different modes: 1. solitaire; 2. two-player; 3. computer against itself. You may also build your own scenarios, to offer a greater challenge.

## GULF STRIKE

STRATEGY BY AVALON HILL /DISK  
LIST PRICE \$39.95  
CLUB PRICE \$29.95

By Wally Newell

A welcome surprise from the folks at Avalon Hill. This is an excellent program, for those who might wish to play out their personal strategies in the Middle East. Gulf Strike is a joystick-controlled, challenging simulation of the balance of military power. And, it is thought provoking.

This will not likely win any awards for graphics. But, the game does make of the Atari's fine graphic capabilities.

You are allowed "stacking" of your units, a touch that adds greater realism than the earlier programs by other publishers. This program is aimed at the beginner to intermediate level user. And, it's well done.

## CRUSADE IN EUROPE

MICROPROSE SOFTWARE/DISK ONLY  
LIST PRICE \$39.95  
CLUB PRICE \$29.95

Crusade is one of two new titles from MicroProse, a publisher with a good reputation for its flight simulators.

You will not be disappointed for trying this one. Sharp graphics and the use of the joystick to control your cursor for examining and giving orders to each unit provide a high degree of playability.

One unique feature is the choice of either using icons or the traditional markers. You may also enter most orders with your joystick. I would like to mention that the cursor is much easier to control in this program than in Nato Commander, by MicroProse.

Like all of this publisher's simulations, you will need the manual to become proficient at Crusade in Europe. This program is suited for the novice to intermediate user. It is easy to learn, but hard to win.

## TRIVIA ARCADE / TRIVIA QUEST

TRIVIA ARCADE, DISK, CLUB \$22.45  
TRIVIA QUEST, DISK, CLUB \$29.95

If you take your trivia seriously consider adding either or both of these games to your collection.

In Trivia Arcade, players can choose to earn their right to answer questions by first capturing a category symbol using a joystick. The task requires quickness, as the players must beat a clock that can be set for "slow," "medium," or "fast" timing. This can become tedious for those not skilled or interested in this type of play.

However, the game includes an option for a straight question-and-answer version with the computer making random selections. Keyboard play is also an option.

The "number of pints in a gallon; The name of Elvis Presley's first record label; Alexander Graham Bell's birthplace; and the name of the "largest emerald in the world;" are among the the questions encountered in a test run on the medium skill level. Players choose from four possible answers, with an option to display the correct response. Additional question disks are available.

The musical score is pleasant, but somewhat repetitious. Due to a lack of contrast, the graphics were somewhat hard to see, and the questions, at times, hard to read even when viewed on a color television.

The more elaborate, "Trivia Quest," game puts the players in the role of servants to

mighty kings of yore.

To complete the quest, a "page," "knight," and "prince" from each kingdom must make it around the board and back to his home castle.

To begin the journey, players must win the gold and food necessary to mount an expedition by answering questions. Progress around the board is determined by correctly and quickly answering.

Once on the road, there are dragons to fight, using a joystick. And, there are wisdom duels in which the opponent can win by default.

The graphics and musical score provide lasting entertainment.

The game can be set so that each of the up to four players competes at a selected level. This helps even the odds between older and younger players, and allows for the true "trivia buff" to compete with novices.

In a two-player game with one playing the "tournament" option and the other playing "random," questions encountered included: "Where was the first skyscraper built?; What is the season when leaves change?; and the site of the "1912 Olympiad".

An impressive option, is the inclusion of musical questions in which a player must identify a brief selection played by the computer.

Included in the colorful package are the game disk and instructions and a second disk with additional questions. In all the package includes three "sides" of questions, a big plus for regular players and those who want variety. Supplemental questions disks are available.

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## POKING FUN

BY  
TOM ARENA

\* When you write a machine language routine 'X=USR(number)' if your routine places the low/high byte of a number into locations 212,213 (\$D4-D5) then that value will be placed in the 'X' variable when you return to BASIC.

\* Poke 65,0 to load programs, data, or pictures silently.

\* Location 182 holds the number of the DATA elements in each line. It points to the first, second, third, etc. element as they are read. Use of this location would allow you to pick a random datum from a particular line!

\* Locations 183-4 hold the low/high byte of the line number of the last piece of DATA read. Use it in conjunction with loc. 182.

That's all for now. I'll return next newsletter with more sound, locations, and programs. See you next issue, when my topic will be program protection.



## THE PLAYFUL PROFESSOR

SCREENPLAY /DISK ONLY

LIST PRICE: \$29.95

CLUB PRICE:\$22.95

By Allen Glick

Barbara Walters often likes to ask her guests a question such as: "if you were to be in a hospital for a long stay, and could choose anyone in the world to share your room, who would you choose?"

Well, if Barbara Walters were to ask: "Allen, if you were marooned on an island with your daughter and your computer, what one piece of software would you want to have? You guessed it, "The Playful Professor," (tm) MATH TUTOR by SCREENPLAY.

What makes this software package such a delight? Well, first of all, the packaging itself is great. There is a colorful front cover, and on the back is a concise and well written explanation of the program. Upon opening, the box you find both a diskette and a cassette version of the program. I wish more software producers would see the wisdom of packaging their products in this fashion. Also included is an excellent, well-written manual.

The manual provides loading instructions and information about the use of the special control keys. A thorough mathematics review section, provides step-by-step instruction for addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. Addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division of fractions is also covered.

After loading this valuable educational tool, you find the professor and his chalkboard. Credits are put on the board with a piece of chalk, reminiscent of "Seven Cities of Gold." The animation is slow, and I found the screeching sound irritating. However, the program comes to your rescue,

because by pushing "Esc" and either 1, 2, or 3, you can control the speed with which the chalk writes during your game. By pushing another escape option, you can eliminate the sound. I also found that at the higher speed, the sound didn't bother me at all.

Next, there are several menus which require keyboard input:

- 1)Number of players - 1 or 2. Return causes the restart menu to be displayed.
- 2)Number of joysticks - 1, 2, or keyboard option. Return brings back the main menu.
- 3)Name of player(s), Input and return is necessary.
- 4)Type of arithmetic: addition, subtraction, multiplication, or division
- 5)Levels of difficulty: There are four basic and three fraction levels to choose from. Name input is utilized in menu choice, after you have placed it in.

Next, you get to look at the castle where all the action takes place. You will also see the clown and it's moving eyes and some other nifty graphics like waving banners, the elusive ghost holding a key, the player(s) waving from their starting positions, and the rushing wind darkening the rooms.

The magic chalkboard now appears and sets up a problem from the options chosen earlier. Moving left to right, you follow a blinking question mark to fill in the answer. If the wrong answer is given, the professor will guide you to the correct answer with different colored jellybeans. In higher levels, only the correct answer is given. In multiplication, you fill in line-by-line. In division, a real division sign is used. This game is designed the way I'd want to design a math tutor program.

If the correct answer is given, you are allowed to play the game part of the program. The object of the game is to take a key from the ghost, who haunts the castle, and find

your way out. The rules are as follows: you are allowed two moves for each correct answer. There is an elusive ghost roaming around the castle. The ghost has the key that opens the door to the outside. A magic wind passes through the castle, darkening rooms that you can't enter. By using your joystick, you can move up and down a ladder as you try to get the key from the ghost or a second player. You then then must return to your starting place to open the door and win the game.

One of the nifty things about this game is that each player can choose the math function that they will be tested on and the degree of difficulty. Try playing an eight year old adding 2+2, while your trying to figure out 45688/23457 divided by 56789/23498. Take my word for it - don't play for a new bike - you'll lose!! This game grows as your child grows, and is a great aid in learning mathematics. if there is a better source of educational software out there, I haven't seen it, and I have been looking.

One personal note: Staci Alison, "I love you," (still).

Editor's Note: "Staci," Allen's daughter, is the proud owner of a new bike.

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