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PORTLAND

SEPTEMBER 1985

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NEXT GENERAL MEETING

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 1985 - 6:30 PM

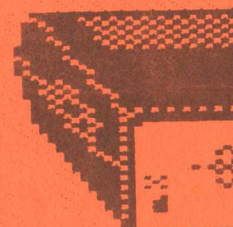
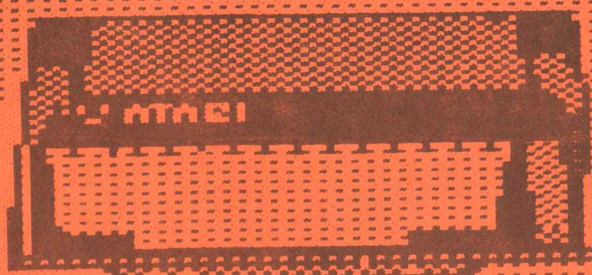
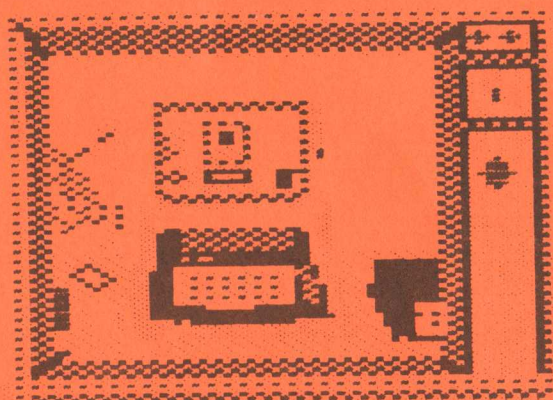
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Commercial Advertising rates are; full page (7 X 9 1/2) - \$50, half page (7 X 4 1/2) - \$25, quarter page (3 1/4 X 4 1/2)- \$15. Ads must be prepaid and a 1/3 discount is given for 3 consecutive ads. The copy may vary in content, but the space must be the same in each issue. Send camera ready copy and check payable to PAC at the address below. Contact the Editor for other arrangements. Ad deadline is the 5th of the month prior to publication.

Membership is \$20 per year and includes a subscription to this newsletter and access to members only functions. Single copy price of the newsletter is \$2. General meetings are open to the public and start at 6:30 PM on the 1st Mon. of each month (2nd Mon. in the case of holidays) on the date and at the location listed on the cover of this newsletter.

Exchange newsletters, articles, correspondence and ads should be sent to the following address:
Portland Atari Club, Attention: (appropriate board member), P.O. Box 1692, Beaverton, OR 97005

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CLUB BUSINESS AND ACTIVITIES

President's Column *Chuck Hall*

I start off this month with an apology. In my last column I made a remark about the Moore Co. which was not responsible. I, along with them, and others were quite frustrated on what the warranty policy on the ST's was going to be. As an officer of this club, and as a contributor to this newsletter, I have a responsibility to report only that which is factual and well founded. I do let my personal feelings get into my columns at times and I need to learn to hold back on that type of writing. Especially when what I write can influence your thoughts and actions. So I apologize for the knife-in-the-back remark. If nothing else it raised a few danders. And I think it also brought out some of the feelings being felt by myself, the Moore Co., and those who may be connected with the warranty service. I also feel that the Moore Company should aid in keeping us informed as to what is going on, as far as they are able without causing possible damage or loss of business to themselves. Most of my info. comes word of mouth. The Moore Co. and I have initiated a dialogue now, and I hope that that will be beneficial.

I hope that you are all able to make our first annual PAC picnic. It will be on Sun. Sept. 15. There will be a small charge for each person. For your \$1 you will get to eat all you want for as long as it lasts. The club will provide hot dogs, hamburgers and soft drinks. If some of you would supply relishes, etc. it would be appreciated. You can buy your tickets at the next meeting or from any club officer. Contact Dave Holliday for more information.

Things are a little slow now as we enter into the heat of summer. A couple of last-minute cancellations at the last meeting resulted in a rather long, warm, (dull) meeting. Sorry about that. But we do need your help in bringing speakers and articles of interest to our attention. Let us know what you want to see and/or hear and we will do our best to provide it. I am still working on bringing Jack Tramiel and Sig Hartman up, but don't know when it will be possible. They do read this, so how about it guys?

We reached a milestone at the last meeting which I did not expect to meet so soon. Our membership now exceeds 500. Thank you. But we can't slow down now. By our diligent efforts we can become the largest and best user group of its kind. There are a lot of Atari owners out there who could benefit by being members. See you in September.

Special Projects *Dave Holliday*

The special projects we have coming up in the next couple months need some club involvement. At the August meeting I mentioned a show at Washington Square using the club booth. It was tentatively planned for Labor Day weekend. I didn't get a tremendous response from the membership about being able to help that weekend, (2 people volunteered), so I've decided to postpone it until later in the year when the weather is not as adventagious for outdoor activities. If you would be interested in helping I'll be taking names again at the next general meeting. If you can't make it to the meeting you can always give me a call.

The next item was a club picnic. I had mentioned a weekend in September either Sunday the 15th or 22nd. I asked how many people would like to have a picnic if the club bought hamburger, hotdogs and soft drinks. The membership would need to bring salads and desserts. Again there wasn't a overwhelming response. I'm going to reserve a area at Cresten Park, 42nd and Powell, for the 22nd of September. Tickets will be \$1.00 per person and you'll need to buy them by the September meeting. A picnic requires a lot of planning and work so since the club has almost 500 family memberships, at least 100 tickets need to be sold or it really wouldn't be worth the effort. I think a club picnic would be fun, we had planned on some prizes, a softball game, and Cresten park is a really nice park for kids. They have probably the best playground equipment I've seen in a public park. A picnic also offers you the opportunity to meet other members which isn't always possible with the short amount of time available at the club meetings. I hope you plan on attending. If you can't make the meeting but still would like to go to the picnic you can contact any club officer and they will be able to arrange tickets.



*Board Meeting Notes
Dan Gibson*

The July board meeting was held at 7pm on July 24th at IB Computers. Attending were; Jim Link, Clyde and Debbie Pritchard, Chuck and Jean Hall, Dave Holliday, Dan Gibson, Floyd Suiter, Jim Berry, Steve and Debbie Billings, and Clay Gradis.

The PAC BBS

Last month, the board gave Steve Billings a \$600 budget to purchase a 1200 BPS modem and software for the BBS. Steve purchased a Hayes 1200 for \$390 and has modified the software to support 300 and 1200 BPS. We are now ready to support two BBS's. The second BBS will be at Pat Warnshuis home. It will be an info. BBS only, no uploading or downloading. It will have a 20 min. time limit. The third drive on the main BBS is acting up again. We will have to fix or replace it.

August Meeting

The August general meeting will begin at 6:30 with PAC software sales until 7:00 to 7:15 when the main meeting will start. This month we will have two 520ST's running demos. Ernie Negus will be demonstrating Basic XE (Ernie was ill on the day of the meeting and will demonstrate Basic XE at the September meeting). Steve Billings will give us a review of Mindwheel from Broderbund. This is a text adventure that begins with you having to read a book to get the necessary background before booting the disk. We will be soliciting ideas for making our newsletter even better. Supra Corp. who bought out Micro-Bits will tell us about new products coming out including a \$799 10 meg. hard disk drive for the 8-bit machines. Supra is offering a 20% discount to the Portland Atari Club on all purchases. Dave Holliday will be putting together the plans for the picnic. We are now looking at a mid-September date at Delta Park. More on this at the next meeting. Jerry Anderson will be telling us about the Kerr Center and how we can help the children there.

Miscellaneous

We still have a large supply of T-shirts left and will be pushing them at future events. We are working on setting up a booth at Washington Square on Labor Day weekend. Of the 26 520 ST's ordered by the PAC members, four had problems and had to be sent back. Because of a mix-up we had to accept a color monitor in place of a monochrome.

Treasurer's Report

As of this writing, the balance in our checking account stands at \$2,387. At the last meeting software sales totaled \$177 and memberships \$500.

*Page Six
Clyde Pritchard*

Page Six? What does that mean? Well, that means that this is where I get to do and say whatever I like, just as you can use page 6 of your Atari's RAM for whatever you like without having the Operating System or BASIC step on you.

Item 1 - This newsletter is a little on the short side, especially compared to those of the last couple of month's. Considering that the NL staff has usually taken a month off in the summer, you can consider this a bonus issue.

Item 2 - Much of this issue comes from sources other than PAC members. To change this, we need you to submit items for publication. We need programs, reviews, comments, questions, letters, hints, news, cartoons, artwork and anything else that you have that helps make the NL interesting to you and the rest of the club. This is the way to make the NL better, not just making suggestions. Although we like to hear ideas, they are much more helpful if they come with or are followed by some "meat". In other words, give a bit (or a byte, or a page).

Item 3 - My thanks to those of you who have and are giving your time and efforts to help with the newsletter. You are what makes this newsletter what it is, and you deserve much more than you get for your work. Please keep it up!

Item 4 - As I mentioned last month, Ruth Pettinger is "retiring" from her position on the newsletter staff after over two years of excellent work. Given that her participation began due to her son's membership, her support was fantastic. Thanks again, Ruth.

Item 5 - David Pelinka, who has also given a lot of time to the NL has also gone into retirement (at least for a while), and I give my thanks to him too.

Item 6 - You may have noticed that there is no Calendar of Events this month. Well, we got tired of pulling dates out of the air, so if you are a SIG Leader or Board Member and have an event for the calendar, give it to me and we will print it.

Item 7 - I finally made it through level 25 of Bounty Bob Strikes Back. That was at the "easy" setting, so now I have to work on "medium", "hard" and "c'mon". I still have to get through the top five difficulty levels of Miner 2049'er, so this could take a while. How are you doing? By the way, which level do you like the least? I dislike level 23, "Advanced Pulverizers", and level 24, "Mutants on the Move", but can't decide which is worst; however, I suspect it is 24.

*Special Interest Groups
Clyde Pritchard*

Not much word from SIG leaders this month, but here is what I have right now. Call the SIG leader of your choice for more (or any) information. You can also call Tom Brown, SIG Coordinator for information on existing or new SIG's.

Assembler SIG - Now meets on the second and fourth Tuesdays from 7:30 to 9:30. Meetings were on Wednesdays, but that seemed to conflict with several other activities. Call for info on meeting location.

Modem and Communication SIG - September meetings will be Monday the 16th and Monday the 30th. Call for info on meeting location.

*Unclassified Ads
Clyde Pritchard*

We haven't had this item in the newsletter for a while, so I'll explain the situation as a reminder to you old timers and as information for the newcomers. We will print ads from members for computer related items if space is available in the newsletter. There is no charge for this, it's one of your membership benefits. All you have to do is call me, write me (at the club address) or send me a message on the club BBS. Its that easy, and may help you sell some of your surplus goodies. These ads are for personal items only, not dealer sales. If you are looking for something, we will print your request here too. Here's this month's ad.

For Sale

- ATARI 400 W/48K\$ 50.00
- ATR8000 W/64K & CP/M\$350.00
- Dual Digital SS/DD Drives .\$200.00
with case & power supply
- Tandon DS/DD Drive\$200.00
also with case & power supply
- Okidata Microline 80 Column
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- BASIC XL W/Documentation...\$ 45.00
- NEC Green Monitor (13") ...\$100.00

Combination of ATR8000 & Drives given special consideration. All prices 'fairly' negotiable (within reason). All equipment is in very, very good condition. If interested, call Mike Smith at 253-6509

*Membership Secretary's Notes
Debbie Pritchard*

August was once again a successful meeting for memberships. We have added 22 new families to the P.A.C. membership rolls, and we say welcome.

We welcome each of you to the Portland Atari Club.

- | | |
|------------------|-------------------|
| Brain Hunt | Judy Dotson |
| J.R. Snook | Bob Lockwood |
| Matthew Kaehler | Ronald Hodges |
| Arthur Nielsen | Keith Kinunen |
| John Seger | Chuck Murray |
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| Wayne Knapp | Roscoe Hauatter |
| Milt Ingram | Donna Neevel |
| Brain Gulleff | Sam Jones |
| Anne Verhoeven | Juliette Gallucci |

SIG CONTACT LIST

The following is a list of our current groups and the contacts for each:

- ADVENTURE GAMES
Russ Schwartz 646-6418
- SIGASM (ASSEMBLER)
Clyde Pritchard 648-0461
- ATR-8000
Jim Scott 281-6724
- BEGINNERS
Elanna Schlichting 285-4471
- BULLETIN BOARD
Steve & Debbie Billings 246-1751
- BUSINESS APPLICATIONS
Thomas Brown 644-6674
- MODEM & COMMUNICATION SIG
Jerry Andersen 655-3914
- NLSIG (NEWSLETTER)
Clyde Pritchard 648-0461
- ST SIG
Pat Warnshuis 246-3724

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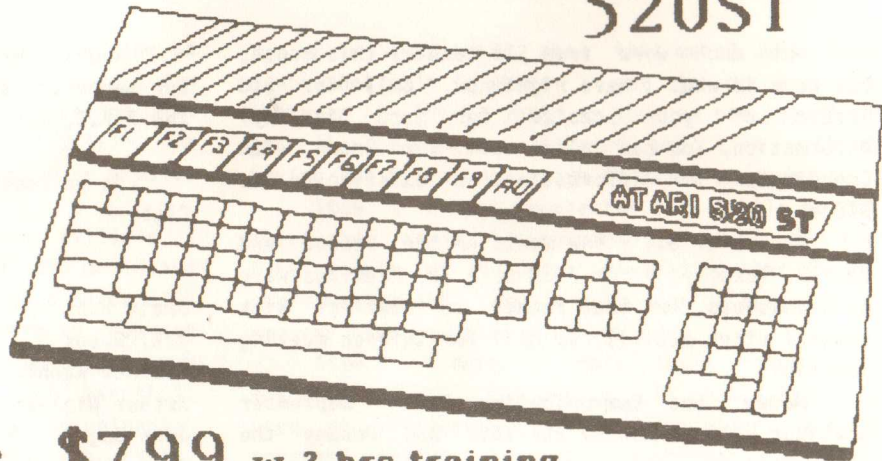
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Disk Holders
\$ 4

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NEWS AND REVIEWS

*MPP Reorganization
ANTIC On-line News*

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MPP Reorganizes as SUPRA Corp
by Gigi Bisson, ANTIC Assistant Editor

7/11- Antic got the news that Microbits Peripheral Products was going into a reorganization just as our August issue with the story about the company was about go on the press.

Frankly, we had time to pull out the story although it might have made the issue a day or two late. But Antic publisher Jim Capparell made the decision to let the MPP article ride, for the following two reasons:

First, our information made it seem likely that the widely used MPP product line would continue to be produced -- even if perhaps under a different corporate name.

Second, even if MPP did shut its doors permanently, the existing product inventory will be available in stores for a year or more. And MPP printer buffers, interfaces, memory expanders and modems are still among the best buys for the Atari.

Now that the dust has settled, here is what happened to the Albany, Oregon third-party Atari peripherals manufacturer:

Microbits Peripheral Products, Inc. was purchased by Supra Corp. -- which is owned by the 22-year-old co-owners of MPP, Alan Ackerman and John Wiley. Legally, MPP is out of business, but Supra says that the Microbits product line and even the brand name will live on.

According to Supra Vice President Ackerman, MPP's bank -- worried about the current computer industry slump -- shut down Microbits in May and threatened to liquidate their assets.

Ackerman says this has been a tough time for some third-party Atari manufacturers. "No stores were ordering anything for the old Atari computers," he says. "They're all waiting for the 520ST to come out."

Supra Corp. managed to purchase the bank's share of MPP -- essentially just the brand name. Microbits is now a subsidiary of Supra and the partners have swapped titles. Wiley, formerly Microbits V.P., is now President of Supra Corp.

"I'm not sure exactly how much the MPP warranty will have to be changed," Ackerman says. "Some

warranty work that used to be free will now have a handling charge."

It will also be harder for users to get through to the Customer Service Department. "Be patient," Ackerman says, "There aren't as many phone lines as before." As of now, the MPP phone number remains (503) 967-9075, but Ackerman says Supra will be moving to another building this summer.

Supra Corp. still plans to release the new line of MPP products described in the August Antic. Supra is currently taking orders for the MPP 1200A plug-in 1200 baud modem and the MicroNet system that enables as many as eight Ataris to share printers and disk drives.

Anticipated for September is the MicroPort, an expansion port that will enable hobbyists and experimenters to build clocks, power supplies and other add-ons for their Ataris.

The 10-megabyte \$800 hard disk is delayed, but still on the way, according to Ackerman.

Dealers and distribution networks will be most affected by the reorganization. "Hopefully the end user won't see noticeable changes," says Ackerman.



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Ghostbusters Steve Billings

Someone, please, tell me is there anything worth seeing beyond the portal? I have played this silly game till my fingers hurt and still have not been able to get past the bouncing marshmallow at the end of the game. I have amassed great fortunes, but apparently have not succeeded in ridding the world of ghosts.

I have not seen the movie "Ghostbusters", so I do not know how faithfully this game portrays the movie. I can only relate to you how the game plays as an arcade game, not how it stands up as a cultural symbol.

Games that are take-offs from movies and tv have been notorious for being real 'dogs', remember E.T.? Well, "Ghostbusters" by Activision, is probably one of the more successful exploitations of a movie. Although it has its playability problems it is rather original and well done graphically.

You start the game by getting a franchise in a city to run a ghost extermination business. With \$10,000 seed money you are able to buy and outfit a car equipped to hunt down and capture ghosties that haunt the town and seem determined to take it over. You have several choices in cars from a clunker to what looks like a TransAm. The better cars are faster and can carry more equipment, but cost more and make it more difficult to pay back the franchise company. If you can't pay them back they take your business away from you at the end of the game. I found it impossible to earn enough to pay back both the sports car and laser confinement system. The station wagon and a bunch of regular traps worked best for me.

After you have your equipment you start driving around town trying to capture the ghosts haunting the buildings. There are also ghosts floating about the streets that you can try and capture with the vacuum cleaner attached to your hood. The game starts out slow. You spend most of the time early in the game waiting for something to happen, either a ghost to make itself known or a floater to enter the screen far enough that you can suck him up. The time spent driving to a new location to find the ghosts is rather boring and the Ghostbuster theme music repeats over and over in the background. The music is well done, but eventually you will lunge for the volume control on your monitor to turn it off before you go nuts.

When you do find a haunted house you have to try and "bust" the ghost. You do this by setting a trap on the ground and then corralling the ghost with an ion beam, then springing the trap to catch

him. Catching the ghost is somewhat a matter of chance. If he dodges the trap at the last second you get slimed and he gets away. I was successful about 60% of the time and was feeling frustrated the other 40%.

Eventually the pace picks up and ghosts start appearing all over. Marshmallow monsters appear and if you are not paying attention and stop them they will cause a whole bunch of damage and lose the game for you. I found that the marshmallow monster is the determining factor in achieving financial security.

Finally if you make enough money busting the ghosts, the Gatekeeper and Keymaster meet at Zuul and then the screen changes and your are in front of Zuul facing a hopping marshmallow monster. You have to try and run between the marshmallow man's legs to get into Zuul. I have managed, through sheer luck, to get one man through, but you have to get two through to do whatever happens next. Maybe there is a trick to it. I haven't figured it out. I found it very frustrating to go through half an hour of playing the first part of the game only to spend a few seconds at the second phase. I lasted at the portal just long enough to get knocked down and end the game.

The game is not too bad, like I said, but you are presented with the same thing every time you play. You can essentially buy everything you need and want the second time you play if you made good money the first time. There are no new challenges or opportunities that I know of as the result of making money except having lots of invisible money, and that won't even get you in to see the movie. The scenario, like the music, gets boring after awhile. If there is something super cool behind the door to Zuul maybe I will keep trying to get in. Some joystick jockey out there, please, let me know if I am missing something.

Well, I sort of liked the game, maybe I should go see the movie...Nah, it probably wouldn't be as good. The movies never are.

PaperClip
Mike Dunn, Eugene A.C.E.

(PAC Editor's Note: This review is from the July/August issue of the Eugene ACE Newsletter. I started my own review of PaperClip last month, but this one covers the main points without taking up a lot of space, so this will be it. As far as a comparison with AtariWriter and The Writer's Tool, PaperClip is definitely more sophisticated than AtariWriter, yet almost as easy to learn. I really like The Writer's Tool, and it is a real toss-up as to which of them is better. Once again it comes down to personal preferences and opinion. Try them both before you buy.)

For several months I have been receiving advertisements about this new word-processor for the Atari and how it was as good as or even better than the "big" word-processors such as WordStar, Perfect Writer, etc. Then the results of a contest in Canada among various computers and programs costing up to \$20,000, reporting that the Atari version of PaperClip was not only the "Best Buy", but comparable to the big boys. Other than thinking that Batteries Included should be congratulated for being one of the very few companies coming out with a major new product for the Atari I thought that they were sending me a lot of "Hype".

I finally received a copy, and can say they do have a real winner, about as good for most uses as the "big boys".

You begin reading the very clearly written 155 page manual, which first tells you to back up your disk! The program comes with a "key" which plugs into your joystick for protection, allowing you to make back up disks. Similiar to the key from the Syanpse program Filemanger 800, which is not too surprising since one of the authors of PaperClip is Dan Moore, the author of SynFile+.

You can then customize your word-processor to your needs, setting many items such as screen margins (with scrolling to a larger than 40 column screen if you like), the size of the two windows, color of screen (I like the black letters on white background), printer features for most any printer, including allowing you to make a custom one with microjustification, Macros, and many other items. You can even use an AutoSave to disk and use the editing arrow keys without the control key if you want. You can then save your options, and they will automatically come on each time you boot up your disk.

When you start typing, the first thing you notice is the beautiful character set with true descenders which are very easy to read.

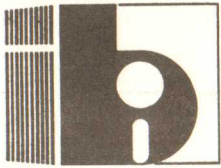
Besides the usual editing functions which all word-processors have, there is an Undo command, Multiple Global Substitution, Tags, insert/overwrite toggle, and a Letter Swap toggle allowing you to transpose letters as well as a Word Swap Toggle-feature I really can use but have not found on an Atari Word-processor. For students, there is a word count.

There are the usual Printer formatting functions as well as some unusal ones such as MicroJustification, three lines of Headers or Footers or both, and the ability to use a conditional page break (eg. to make sure a table is all on one page). There is also a very nice print preview option. Unlike many other word-processors, the editor options are different from the printer formatting, so you can make both the same or both different. You can use a 40 column screen and an 80 column printer, or an 80 column scrolling screen with an 80 column printer Double column printing is done by printing both columns at the same time, and you can print to the disk drive for modem use.

There are also some special functions available - a nifty calculator for math functions which prints the answer, ability to make a Table of Contents and User defined commands, are just some of them. Mail merge is easily done, as well as Macros for "boilerplate" (repeating the same phrase with a single keystroke).

If all this is not enough for your \$50, there are some utility programs thrown in, including a very extensive printer driver maker, and a graphics dump allowing you to display and print Koala or Atari Tablet, LighPen, SynTrend, B/Graph, Fun with Art or Atari Paint picture either with your document or by itself.

What doesn't this program have compared to other? It does not have a spelling checker, you can only get 80 columns on the screen by moving a 40 column window, and when typing very fast (faster than I cn type but Jim Bumpas can type 80 words a minute) it seems to lose an occasional character. There are so many commands that it is difficult to remember them, although the prompt line on the bottom helps a lot, as well as the bultin in Help files. I understand that a spelling program will be available soon, as well as an 80 column cartridge - then PaperClip will have everything! I have not used the Writer's Tool (O.S.S.) which is Jim's favorite, but PaperClip would be hard to beat.



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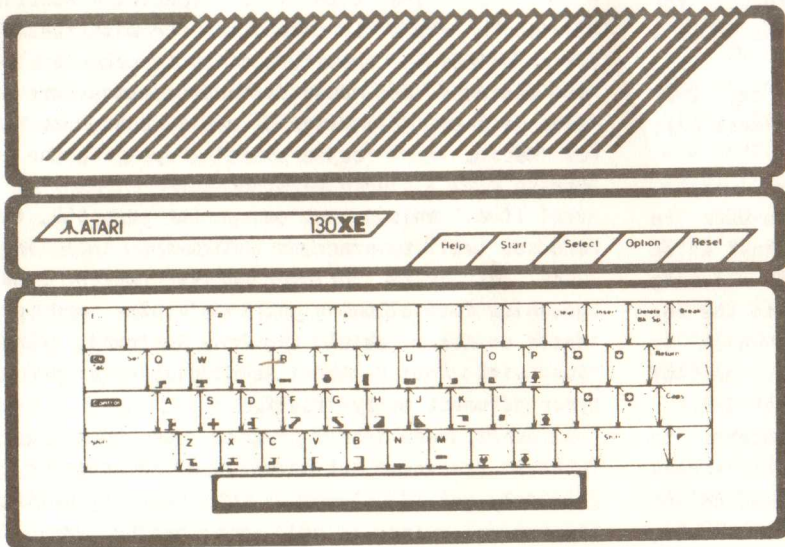
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Omniview XE
Mike Fulton, A.C.A.O.C.

(PAC Editor's Note: This review is from the July 1985 issue of OrnJuce, the official newsletter of the Atari Computer Association of Orange County.)

When I got my Atari 130XE, I wanted to get an Omnimon/Omniview for it as soon as possible. For those who don't know, Omnimon is a resident machine monitor, an extremely valuable tool if you do Assembly language programming. Omniview gives you an 80-column display by drawing the characters in graphics mode 8. They come on read only memory (ROM) chips which are installed permanently in your computer, where they are always available to you. Well, I've not yet got the Omnimon, but I recently got the Omniview XE, from Cal Com and CDY Consulting. My thanks to Roger Hillman from Cal Com (714 994-2678) for the opportunity to review the Omniview XE.

Omniview XE generates an 80-column display via software instead of hardware. This can be used with almost everything that uses a standard 40-column display, such as BASIC, BASIC XL, BASIC XE, Mac/65, and so on. There are even specially modified versions of the Letter Perfect word processor and the Data Perfect database manager program which work with Omniview XE to give you an 80-column display. No spreadsheet yet, but I'm still hoping!

There are several ways to get into 80-columns, and all are quite easy to use. The easiest way is to just type a Control-A, and then hit the Reset key, but this can't work with programs that are not reset-proof. However, if you can't get around that problem, then you probably can't use the program in 80-columns anyway. You can even change the screen colors by pressing Start-Reset. This way you can get the best combination on the display you are using.

In all respects, the 80-column feature of Omniview XE seems to work identically with the Omniview enhancement for my Omnimon in my 800, except for being able to get to 80-columns with the Control-A/Reset key press. It might be my imagination, but it seems as though Omniview XE prints a bit faster than the Omniview in my Atari 800, so perhaps the routines have been improved a bit.

The 80-column display is hard to read if you are using a normal color television, so if you will use it often, I recommend that you use a monochrome or high quality color monitor. If you opt for the color monitor, if it's possible, use

the separated chroma and luminance outputs instead of the composite output, as it will give a sharper picture. A good black and white television is also quite acceptable.

Besides the 80-column display, Omniview XE also has built-in Ramdisk handlers which take the extra 64K of an Atari 130XE and fools DOS into thinking that it is a disk drive. The real trick here is that you don't have to use only a certain DOS to use this. You can use Dos XL, or Smartdos, or MYDOS, or whatever you want. The Ramdisk handlers can be used with virtually any DOS whatsoever.

The usual way of activating the Ramdisk handlers is to press the key of the drive number that you want the Ramdisk to be and hit Start-Reset. If you want the Ramdisk to be drive four, then you type a 4, then hit Start-Reset.

One drawback to using the Ramdisk handlers is that after you activate them, you still have to format the Ramdisk using DOS. When you do this, instead of showing that the Ramdisk has 499 free sectors, it shows 707 free sectors. Unless you are careful, you could get disk errors when trying to write to non-existent Ramdisk sectors. I'm working on a program that will initialize the handlers and format the Ramdisk, and then change the Ramdisk VTOC so that it shows only 499 free sectors.

Once installed, the Ramdisk operates extremely fast. For those people with only one disk drive who do a lot of programming, the speed and convenience of the Ramdisk is reason enough to buy the Omniview XE. Even if you have more than one drive, the extra speed of a Ramdisk makes life much easier.

Another feature of Omniview XE is Newell's Fastchip. The Fastchip is a replacement for the floating point ROM in the Atari, and is considerably faster with most routines. This means that even good old Atari BASIC gets speed up, since it uses the floating point routines for almost everything, including figuring line numbers. Programs written in BASIC that have a lot of GOTO and GOSUB statements, or For/Next loops, will be speeded up quite noticeably. For some functions, the Fastchip routines are almost four times faster than the regular Atari floating point routines! Combined with BASIC XE, a 130XE with the Fastchip can give an IBM PC with its BASIC a run for the money!

The last, although certainly not least, feature of Omniview XE is the OCS operating system. As you probably know, the XE and XL series

computer use a different operating system program than the old 400/800 series. A few programmers took short cuts that they shouldn't have, using entry points into routines that were not guaranteed not to change, and as a result, some programs that work fine on the 400/800 won't work on an XL and XE.

Atari's solution to this is the Translator disk. This disk loads the old 400/800 operating system into an XL or XE. This works, but has a lot of problems. For example, you have to run it every time before using an incompatible program, which is time consuming. Also, it does not work properly with some programs because the reset key does not work the same, and so on.

Cal Com's solution to the problem is a bit different. Instead of a disk that needs to be loaded everytime, they have included the OCS operating system on the same chip as the Omniview XE. This operating system is far closer to the original 400/800 operating system, and will allow you to run incompatible software without first booting the Translator disk. The various entry points were kept the same as the 400/800 operating system, even the ones that some programs illegally used. So far, out of all the programs I've tried, I've seen only one program that will not work with the OCS, and that's the new SpartaDos Construction Set. Some programs which can use the extra memory under the operating system may be fooled into thinking that your 130XE is an 800, however. PaperClip can use the memory under the operating system, but when using the OCS, it thinks it's on an 800.

At any rate, you don't have to give up the original operating system in your 130XE. You can, when you install it, wire a switch on the chip socket which holds the Omniview XE. This provides you with a choice of operating systems at the flip of a switch. One way, you have the OCS, with Ramdisk handlers, Fast chip, 80-column display, and compatibility with older programs, and the other way you can have the regular 130XE operating system.

Another feature the OCS has is the ability to copy the operating system from ROM (Read Only Memory) into RAM (Random Access Memory). This way, even the programs (Like Electronic Arts) that check for ROM at the \$C000 part of memory will run. This also gives you an extra 4k of memory at the \$C000 range, but no Omniview, since it is in the \$C000 range of ROM. The extra memory can be used by programs like VisiCalc, or SynFile+, or

even to store routines and data for BASIC programs.

One other feature of the OCS that I particularly like is this: instead of holding down the Option key during power-up to get rid of the built-in BASIC, you hold down the Option key to get the built-in BASIC! Since I don't usually use the built-in BASIC, this is much more convenient. Another nice touch is that in order to stop the screen from scrolling, instead of Control-1, you now can use the Help key! While this is a bit hard to get used to at first, in time you may find it to be much easier.

ATR-8000 owners will be glad to know that there is a built-in terminal emulator for using with CP/M. You first get into 80-column mode, then just hit Start-Select-Option all together, hold them down, and hit any key on the key-board. Your drives will reset and the ATRMON header will appear. Type in "B" (return) and you will be in CP/M before you know it! There are other nice features of ATRMON which are described in the documentation.

Because of all the extra features that had to be crammed into a small 16k area, something had to be left behind. However, I don't think too many people will cry when I tell you that something was the cassette handler. In order to be able to have extras like the ATRMON and Ramdisk handlers, space had to be made somewhere. I don't think that too many people will miss this.

The installation is explained fairly well. The 130XE is very uncluttered inside to begin with, so getting to where you install the chip is easy. However, the chips in the XE series are soldered in place instead of being in sockets, so I suggest that you get the Omniview XE installed when you buy it. That way, you are spared any headaches. One thing that the installation instructions don't mention is how to hook up the switch to allow you to choose between operating systems, but this will be added to the documentation soon. Bear in mind, this kind of modification to your computer will void the warranty, regardless of who installs it. You may want to wait until the warranty expires to make the addition.

The documentation clearly describes how to use the various features of the Omniview XE and OCS. There are instructions for modifying various versions of Data and Letter Perfect to make them work with Omniview XE, but this should be done by someone who knows how to use a sector editor. One

thing I'd like to see added, however, is a list of legal entry point into routines for setting up the Ramdisk, and doing various things in the 80-column mode.

All in all, with a price of only \$59.95, the Omniview XE with the OCS operating system and the Fast chip is nothing short of a bargain. The features are all very easy to access. The compatibility with older programs that you can alone is worth the price. Personally, I found it a pain to have to boot the translator disk every time I wanted to use an incompatible program with the XE. Now, I just flip a switch! Actually, even that isn't usually necessary, since it is almost always set to the Omniview XE and OCS in the first place! Also, after using one for so long, I don't think I could function without an 80-column word processor. Omniview XE lets me use the same version of Letter Perfect on both computers, not to mention Data Perfect. I hope that more commercial software will start taking advantage of the Omniview XE. It would be nice to see an 80-column SynCalc or SynFile+ that could also use the extra memory! Or perhaps a new version of Letter Perfect that can use the extra memory might appear.

PAC HELP HOTLINES

The following people have generously offered to take telephone queries in the areas indicated.

Adventure Games	Russell Schwartz	646-6418
Assembly Language	Leroy Baxter	653-1633
BASIC Programming	Nick Yost	981-0838
	Lee Gassaway	642-2455
BBS Usage	Russell Schwartz	646-6418
C	Randal Schwartz	643-1089
Cassette Operation	Lee Gassaway	642-2455
DOS Operations	Gary Lippert	233-7069
FORTH Programming	Ricky Wooldridge	224-7163
Hardware Operation	Gary Lippert	233-7069
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*Slipped Disk
Lloyd Suiter*

One of the nice things about working with the club library is that it gives you insight into the design of games and programs from the professional computing world. You become aware of what it takes to make good programs and are on the watch for information that helps you understand the programming world.

Last week I came upon an interesting article from a magazine that is dedicated to computer strategy games. This magazine was not an Atari magazine, but a magazine that was written for people who love strategy games and interaction with all the main types of computers. The article was concerned with why programs or games in this case are so different on each different type of machine and why these differences occur.

According to the article, a typical designer will create a design for a particular machine and then convert that design to other types of computers. This converting to another type of machine is called porting. The word port can be used as a noun as in "we have just finished the Apple port of Seven Cities," or it can be used as a verb as in "we will port it to the IBM next."

Each machine has its own strengths and weaknesses. It therefore becomes very difficult to design a program that will run as well on all the machines. One strategy for handling this problem is to write the program for the lowest common quality such as a text only program. The best example of this is Infocom programs.

There are other types of low quality programs that include graphics and sound. These primarily revolve around designing games on the Apple and then porting them to the other machines. Some of these ported programs are very good but they are many more examples where Apple programs were ported to the Atari or Commodore computers and so much more could have been done with the graphics and sound.

Faced with problems of how to turn out a quality program and make money at the same time, the designers at Ozark Softscape and Free Fall and many others have decided to design for the highest featured machine and then cut the design as necessary to fit the other machines. When they start to design a game they use either an Atari or Commodore computer. When they port the game to

either an Apple or IBM they have to give up extra colors, reduce their sound capabilities, and replace sprites or player missiles with bit shapes and live with the reduced performance.

When it comes to making a game for a specific computer, the designer is limited to the hardware specs of the machine. That is why on some programs the Atari version will have four voices while the Commodore has only three voices and the apple has none.

When looking at games in the computer store, try to decide if the original was written for your machine or if it was just ported over. If it looks like a port but is still a good game then buy it. However, if it's a shabby port then gripe to the publisher, write to computer magazines and let them know you want quality software for your machine.

The next time you run into an upsetting Apple owner, ask why his machine is so good and see if he has any valid reasons.

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** Each month, there will be an item available to PAC members at a special discount price.

*** Computers Etc. seems to be getting out of the Atari business, give them a call before making a long trip there.

How To Do It

Beginning With BASIC Bob Pettapiece

(PAC Editor's Note: I misplaced the newsletter that we got this article from, so all we can do is credit the author. My apologies to the editor of whatever newsletter this came from.)

The following program and accompanying assignments have been used in my classes to teach beginning BASIC programming to high school students for a few years. There is no one set of assignments that will teach BASIC best, but these seem to work well for most students.

This program can also serve as a self-teaching device for beginners and provides ways to teach simple math. My only regret about this approach to learning BASIC is the emphasis on math, I think that when people first learn programming in a math atmosphere, they may feel that they must be a math whiz to be successful. With that possible shortcoming in mind, here is the program and the assignments.

The Program

```
5 DIM A$(3):REM DIMENSION ATARI STRINGS
10 PRINT "THIS IS AN ADDITION GAME"
20 PRINT "ENTER A NUMBER"
30 INPUT A
40 PRINT "ENTER A SECOND NUMBER"
50 INPUT B
60 C=A+B
70 PRINT "WHAT IS THE SUM OF ";A;"+";B;"=?"
80 INPUT G
90 IF C=G THEN 120
100 PRINT "WRONG!! TRY AGAIN"
110 GOTO 70
120 PRINT "THAT'S RIGHT!!! WANT TO TRY AGAIN"
130 INPUT A$
140 IF A$="YES" THEN 20
150 PRINT "THAT'S ALL, GOOD-BYE!"
160 END
```

Assignment 1

1. Enter THE PROGRAM and RUN it.
2. Change the program to an operation other than addition. (It might be suggested to try division or powers at this point.)
3. Add CHR\$(125) to line 5 to clear the screen, it makes a neater program. Be sure to put a : between the two statements.
4. Debug the program and get it to run.
5. SAVE the new program.

Assignment 2

1. LOAD in your program from Assignment 1.
2. RUN it to be sure there are no bugs in it.
3. Replace lines 20-50 with the following lines:
20 DATA 2,4,56,32,91,76

```
30 DATA -1,2,-4,-5,0,0
```

```
40 READ A,B
```

```
50 IF A=0 THEN 150
```

4. Also, change line 140 to go to line 40, not line 20.

5. RUN the program to understand how it works. Run the program at least once until it stops itself.

6. Change the program to another operation.

7. Debug & RUN the new program.

Assignment 3

1. ReLOAD your program, debug if necessary.

2. Replace lines 20-50 with:

```
20 PRINT "LET ME PICK TWO NUMERS"
```

```
30 FOR T=1 TO 2000:NEXT T
```

```
40 A=INT(25*RND(1)+1)
```

```
50 B=INT(10*RND(1)+1)
```

3. RUN the new program, debug it and try to understand what happens in lines 30-50.

4. Change the program to another operation.

5. Change 2000 in line 30 to various other numbers to see what happens.

6. SAVE your new program.

Assignment 4

1. Reenter your program from Assignment 3.

2. Replace lines 20-40 with:

```
20 PRINT "WHAT IS YOUR NAME?"
```

```
25 INPUT N$
```

```
30 PRINT "HELLO ";N;"."
```

```
40 A=INT(10*RND(1)+1)
```

3. Change line 5 to be:

```
5 DIM A$(3),N$(20):PRINT CHR$(125)
```

4. Change line 120 to:

```
20 PRINT "THAT'S RIGHT ";N$;"! WANT TO TRY AGAIN?"
```

5. Add these lines:

```
125 N=N+1
```

```
135 PRINT "YOU HAVE ANSWERED ";N;"PROBLEMS CORRECTLY."
```

6. Change line 140 to ...THEN 40.

7. RUN the program & debug it if necessary.

8. Change the program to do multiplication or subtraction.

9. Add a personal touch, N\$, to the wrong responses.

10. Add a counter, like N=N+1 for the wrong responses.

11. RUN, debug and SAVE your program.

Assignment 5

1. LOAD your program from Assignment 4, RUN & debug it.

2. Make the following changes to the program:

```
120 GOSUB 200
```

```
128 PRINT "WANT TO TRY AGAIN?"
```

continued...


```

200 X=INT(5*RND(1)+1)
210 IF X=1 THEN 300
220 IF X=2 THEN 320
230 IF X=3 THEN 340
240 IF X=4 THEN 360
250 IF X=5 THEN 380
300 PRINT "GOOD WORK, ";N$
310 RETURN
320 PRINT "FANTASTIC, ";N$
330 RETURN
340 PRINT "YOU ARE GETTING THE IDEA, ";N$
350 RETURN
360 PRINT "YOU ARE HOT, ";N$
370 RETURN
380 PRINT "THAT IS CORRECT, ";N$
390 RETURN
    
```

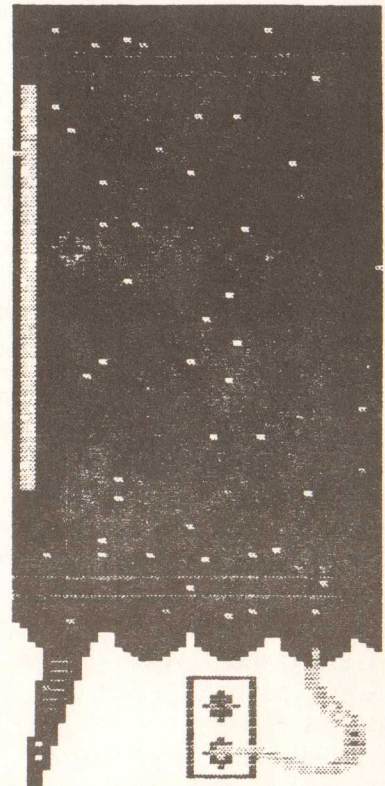
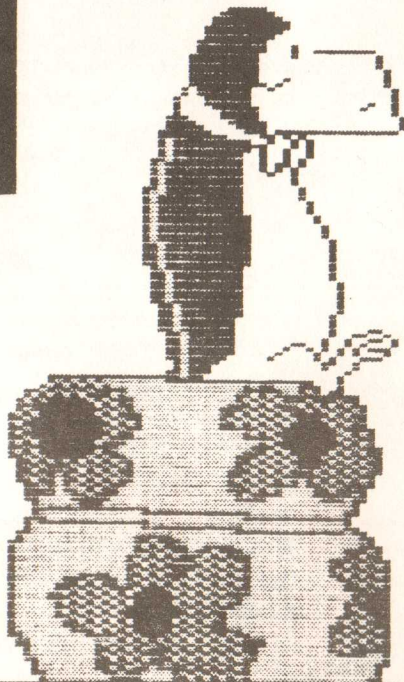
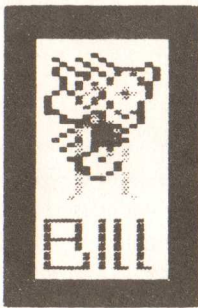
3. Debug & RUN the new program.
4. Change the program to a different operation, and
5. Put in comments for wrong answers, similar to lines 300-390.

Programming Notes

1. If you have not discovered by now, you may use ? for PRINT in those lines that have a PRINT statement.
2. If you do not understand RND(1), type ? RND(1) and hit the RETURN key to see the result.

3. Also, try ? INT(10*RND(1)) a few times to see the resulting random numbers.
4. The last step in every assignment in the classroom is to show it to the teacher. This is important, because sometimes students forge ahead without really finishing an assignment.
5. The Atari can use ?, ", ESC, shift-CLEAR (these are the key strokes) at the beginning of a PRINT statement instead of CHR\$(125) to clear the screen.
6. BASIC commands, like RUN, are capitalized in the directions.
7. Within the " " of a PRINT statement you may choose to use U/L case for better readability.

(PAC Editor's Note: The RND statement in ATARI BASIC is really RND(0). RND(1) works, but it isn't used as it is in non-Atari BASIC's. These other BASIC's allow you to specify a number in the () to tell them to give you a number from 0 to the number specified. Atari BASIC's RND function always give you a number between 0 and 1. Another way to get a random number on the Atari is to PEEK location 53770. This will give you a random number between 0 and 255.)



Text Data in Graphic Modes
Jeff Golden, Dal-ACE

(PAC Editor's Note: This article is from the February 1985 issue of the DAL-ACE Newsletter.)

The following BASIC subroutine will enable you to paint character data on your graphics screens.

Plotting characters, pixel by pixel, with BASIC code is not very fast, but there are some advantages. You can place your characters anywhere in a picture, and you can also use upper and lower cases at the same time. Painting a message slowly across the screen can give a static picture a little bit of animation.

As mentioned, the routine supports upper and lower case. It also supports graphics and inverse characters and punctuation. The routine should work in any of the graphics modes that are supported by the BASIC PLOT command.

On line 540, the value entered into TXT\$ is in inverse mode. Also the first and last characters within the quotes are spades, (control-semi-colon).

On line 760, the character between the quotes is a control-X

To print characters, set X and Y with the PLOT location of the upper-left corner of the first character, set TXT\$ with the character string, and GOSUB GRTEXT, (line 140). An example is in lines 580-600.

Program Listing

```

100 REM *** TEXT in Graphics ***
120 DIM TXT$(20):GRTEXT=160:GOTO 500
140 REM *** TEXT SUBROUTINE ***
160 CHARSET=PEEK(756)*256
180 FOR TXT=1 TO LEN(TXT$)
190 CHAR=ASC(TXT$(TXT)):INVERSE=0
200 IF CHAR>127 THEN CHAR=CHAR-128:INVERSE=1
210 IF CHAR<96 THEN CHAR=CHAR-32
215 IF CHAR<0 THEN CHAR=CHAR+96
220 CHAR=CHAR*8+CHARSET:YY=Y:XX=X
230 FOR LINE=CHAR TO CHAR+7
240 MASK=PEEK(LINE):BIT=128
250 IF INVERSE THEN MASK=255-MASK
270 IF MASK>=BIT THEN MASK=MASK-BIT:PLOT XX,YY
280 IF BIT>1 THEN BIT=BIT/2:XX=XX+1:GOTO 270
300 YY=YY+1:XX=X:NEXT LINE
310 X=X+8:NEXT TXT:RETURN
500 REM *** TEST FOR GR.TEXT SUB. ***
520 GRAPHICS 7:COLOR 3
540 TXT$="*DAL-ACE*":X=47:Y=32:REM STRING FOR TXT$
IS INVERSE. *'S ARE CONTROL SEMI-COLONS
560 GOSUB GRTEXT

```

```

580 TXT$="Dallas, Texas":X=30:Y=45
600 COLOR 1:GOSUB GRTEXT
620 COLOR 2:X=10:Y=25:GOSUB 800
640 X=75:Y=7:GOSUB 800
660 X=140:Y=25:GOSUB 800
680 PLOT 52,60:DRAWTO 52,65
690 DRAWTO 112,65:DRAWTO 112,60
700 PLOT 102,65:DRAWTO 88,78
720 DRAWTO 77,78:DRAWTO 62,65
740 TXT$="00":X=75:Y=67:GOSUB GRTEXT
760 TXT$="*":X=79:Y=73:GOSUB GRTEXT:REM STRING FOR
TXT$ IS CONTROL X (IN PLACE OF THE "*)
780 END
790 REM *** DRAW CACTUS SUBRTN ***
800 PLOT X,Y:DRAWTO X,Y+8
820 DRAWTO X+8,Y+12:DRAWTO X+8,Y+18
840 DRAWTO X+12,Y+18:DRAWTO X+12,Y-5
860 DRAWTO X+8,Y-5:DRAWTO X+8,Y+8
880 DRAWTO X+3,Y+6:DRAWTO X+3,Y
900 DRAWTO X,Y:RETURN

```

End of Listing

DOS 2.5 RamDisk Modification
Clyde Pritchard

The following program will create a binary load file that changes the drive number of the DOS 2.5 RamDisk from D8 to D4. Actually it modifies things so that you can address the RamDisk as D4 or D8. I didn't disassemble it to see how it works, but it seems to work fine. You can even put it on your DOS 2.5 disk as an AUTORUN.SYS file, and save having to go to DOS and load it.

I got this program off of the PAC BBS, but there didn't seem to be any mention of who wrote it. My thanks to whoever did the job.

Program Listing

```

10 OPEN #1,8,0,"D:D8TOD4.OBJ"
20 FOR X=1 TO 27
30 READ B:PUT #1,B
40 NEXT X:END
50 DATA
255,255,0,4,14,4,72,165,33,201,4,208,4,169,8,133,3
3,104,76,101,8,203,7,204,7
60 DATA 255,3

```

End of Listing

*Undocumented Error Messages
M.A.C.E. Journal, July 1985*

Error Messages Atari Never Told You About

(After the mass firings in Sunnyvale when Jack Tramiel took over, certain documents marked "Top Secret" were found in a trash can at a rest area on I-80 East. The MACE Journal is proud to be the first to present this valuable information to the world of Atari users.)

Note: The following error messages result from external malfunctions, including operator error, and are only implemented on machines containing the experimental PSI (Pretty Small Integrated) chip. To determine if your machine has the PSI chip installed, set up a loop to read location 53770 (\$D20A), the random number generator. Concentrate on a number between 0 and 255; if you can force the output of 53770 to equal your chosen number more than 87.45% of the time, you are one of the lucky few with the PSI chip.

Error 256 - Operator Negligence

You failed to stare intently at your 410 or 1010 recorder during the entire CLOAD process. Rewind the tape to within .01 mm of the original recording position, take a deep breath, and hold it while watching the tape grind through the recorder. It has been shown that blinking during a cassette load can set up shock waves sufficient to knock that tape head out of alignment and abort the load.

Error 257 - Keyboard Adhesion Error

There is peanut butter or some other stick substance underneath your keycaps. (This error does not occur on Atari 400's with original membrane keyboard). You can try to pry off the keycaps yourself and clean up the mess, or face ridicule by bringing your machine to the service department of your local computer store.

Error 258 - Disk Damage Error

Your toddler has been trying to play your disks on his Fisher Price Record Player. This error can also occur when disks have been used as Frisbees, coasters, or to jimmy a lock.

Error 260 - TMF Error

A Transient Magnetic Field has erased all of the data on your disks and/or tapes. You are now the owner of 253 flat black plastic squares which can be used (with little success) to tile your rec room floor.

Error 261 - Release Date Shock

A previously-announced Atari product has been released on time; the shock was too much for your computer, which will be inoperative for the next three months, thereby bringing things back to normal.

Error 262 - Poor Programming Technique

You have aggravated your BASIC cartridge by writing "spaghetti code", full of tangled GOTO statements. In retaliation, it has renamed all of your variables as carriage returns (CHR\$(155)). No recovery possible.

Error 263 - Late Night Error

This error most often occurs at 4 am and is due to the fact that the computer is being put to sleep by your yawns. Grinding No-Doze between the cartridge and its connectors will prevent this error, as it will totally disable your system and you will be able to get lots of sleep in the next few months while you are waiting for your machine to be repaired.

Error 264 - Fed Detected

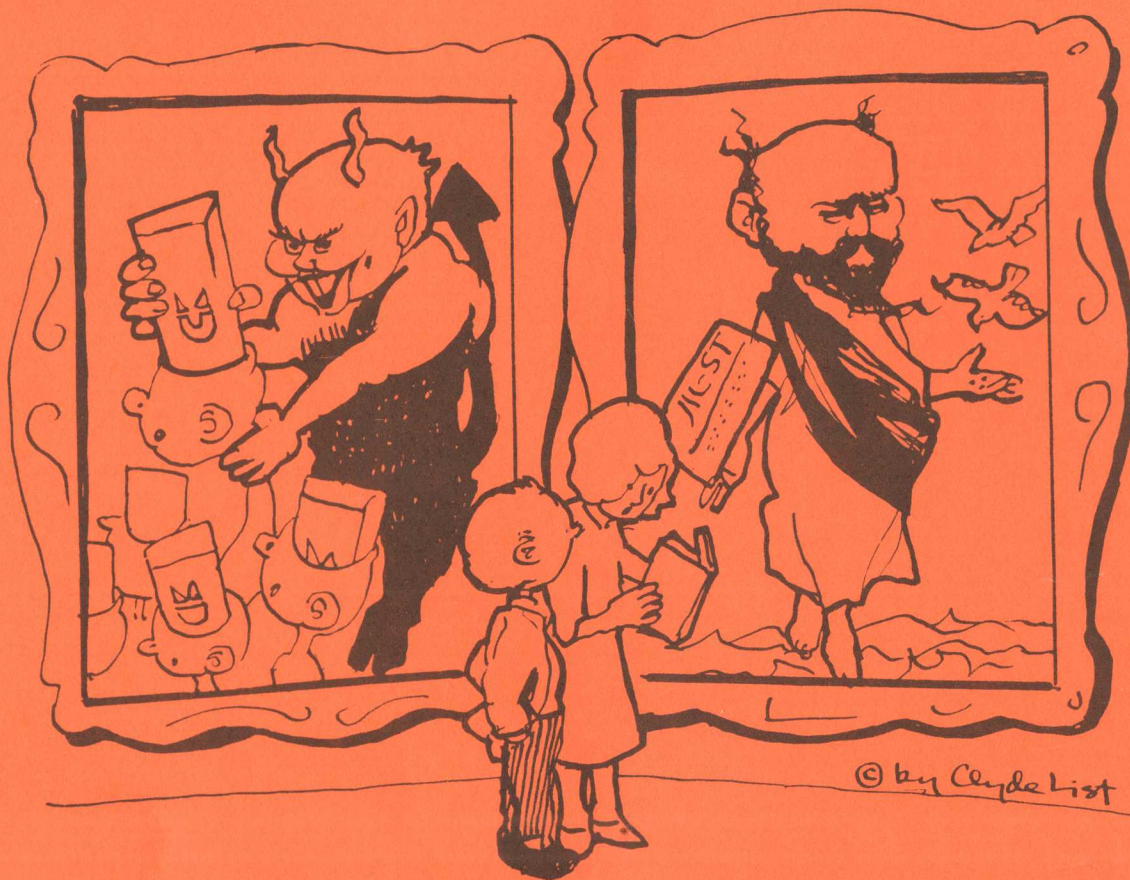
An FBI informant has tapped into your phone line and is monitoring your pirate downloads. For \$59.95 (plus \$2.00 shipping and handling) you can buy an Honesty Chip which will immediately switch the transmission to a public domain program. The Honesty Chip is available from I.M. Cott, Cell Block 534, San Quentin, CA 94013.

Error 265 - CUI Error

The operator is guilty of Computing Under the Influence of proscribed substances. Power down and wait for operator detoxification before attempting further operation.

Error 266 - Malfunction Timeout

It has been too long since an error has occurred, so the Error Generator, ERRGEN, at location 49155 (\$C003) has chosen to spice up your life. This error is seldom seen because of the unlikelihood of operating your computer for more than 15 minutes without an error.



"AND THIS ONE IS OF HIM AFTER HIS
VISION OF ENLIGHTENMENT!"

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