

SPACE

NEWSLETTER for October, 2004



President's Corner by Michael Current October, 2004

Okay, sometimes I can get obsessed with my Atari interest, in various ways. In the past couple weeks I've been delving into Atari history again. In recent months I've come across a couple "rumors" that ran quite contrary to the Atari history "as we know it." It's one thing to decide whom to believe, it's another to go out and prove it! As a professional librarian with complete runs of all the in-house Atari magazines, and access to a great deal on online business research resources such as corporate annual reports and SEC filings (more than currently available at sec.gov), along with deep access to historical newspaper, newswire, magazine and trade publications, I set out to greatly enhance the "History of Atari" section of my 8-bit Atari computers FAQ, hoping along the way to clarify some of the information I've recently heard. Though there will always be questions, I've pretty happy with what I've pulled together.

A Usenet poster claimed the 1984 breakup of Warner's Atari, Inc. left all hardware rights for all home computer and game systems with Atari Games Corp. rather than Tramiel's Atari Corp. Well, the agreement (between Warner and Tramiel) itself does not seem to be a public document, but all media reports, subsequent SEC filings by Warner, and subsequent SEC filings by Atari Corp. (once they went public on 11/7/86) would all seem to dispute this. For example, after the sale, Warner told their shareholders that they had sold to Atari Corp.: "the "Atari" name and "Fuji" logo, along with intangible property rights (patents, trademarks, and copyrights) owned by Atari in conjunction with its computer and video game businesses, all for exclusive use in all areas other than coin-operated video game use." Do you think that includes hardware rights? It reads that way to me.

Another form of "proof" might be the purchase agreement that sent Atari from JTS to Hasbro on 2/23/98. This agreement IS a public document. I downloaded a copy; it's very long, you don't want to see the whole thing in this newsletter. But as you wind your way through the legalese, it becomes clear that the agreement describes hardware as well as software rights.

One can always claim that Jack Tramiel kept pulling fast ones on everyone, but I would say that Warner Communications and Hasbro probably had some pretty good lawyers. While I doubt believers in alternate realities can ever be swayed, at least I can convince myself.

Another "claim" I've heard recently was that Jack Tramiel

secretly controlled Atari Games Corp. (the arcade maker) along with Atari Corp. of the XE/ST etc. Regarding this, I am unable to prove one way or the other, for the period during which Atari Games Corp. was a privately-held entity. The possible time frame is limited, though. Warner most definitely sold controlling interest in the Atari Coin-Operated Games division of Atari Holdings, Inc. (the remnants of the old Atari, Inc.) to Namco (of Japan) in February 1985, which changed the name of its new business unit to Atari Games Corp. So Tramiel did not own Atari Games initially. However, "a group of Atari Games employees" bought out Namco sometime in the second half of 1986. Is the claim that this "group" was a code-name for Jack Tramiel? What we do know is that in 1993, Warner (now of Time Warner) re-acquired controlling interest in Atari Games. (Atari Games went on to Midway Games in 1996, was renamed Midway Games West in 2000, and Midway Games West was shut down and absorbed by Midway Games in 2003.)

At this writing, I'm still looking for the first formal announcement of the 400/800 computers in 1978, and any official announcement of the abandonment of the XE from Atari Corp. (around 1991-1992). Any help would be appreciated!

SPACE home page counter update: as of 9/24/04, 3:40pm:
2,266 page views since June 7, 2003.

Thanks, keep using that Atari, and come to your next SPACE meeting, Friday, October 8, 2004.



Treasurer's Report by Greg Leitner For September, 2004

What a beautiful evening we had for the September SPACE meeting. It was so nice I think some members took advantage in their own way and couldn't make the meeting. I don't blame them because we haven't had that many days as perfect as Friday was.

We started to set everything up for the meeting when a lady came in and said they had the room for the evening so that they could lay out materials for an election meeting that must have been planned for Saturday. So we moved everything into the conference room and lo and behold she was gone in five minutes and didn't return the balance of the evening. Since we weren't sure what was going on we just remained in the conference room for the duration of the meeting. It worked out quite well since we only had six SPACE members that attended.

Here is the breakdown of what little activity there was for the September 2004 SPACE meeting:

Beginning balance as of September 1, 2004: 728.25
Dom sales for the month 12.00
No expenses for the month
Ending balance on September 30, 2004: 740.25

As you can see there wasn't a whole lot going on this month, but wait till next month. At least three members have committed to renewing their memberships including myself. I also will announce an auction for the month of November. We really don't have a lot of stuff right now, but with a few things I can rustle up at home and the items we have in storage I think we can make a go of it.

We don't have a lot of expenses right now so I believe our treasury will most likely grow in the next few months. Also, I have to tell all the members that couldn't make the September meeting that you are really missing out on some good info. Lance and Rich really make our meetings interesting with their vast knowledge of Atari memorabilia. It really makes you wonder how Atari failed so badly when you hear what could and should have been.

Oh well. Here we still are and here we will be for a long time to come. So don't give up on Atari. Just keep reading the news and you will find that Atari is not going away. With the announcement that a new version of the old 7800 system is in the works and a new Atari anthology for the PC is due out we aren't going anywhere. We just sit back and say see what everyone has been missing all these years. I just hope the new Atari doesn't make a design mistake by not putting a cartridge port on the new model 7800. They must know that a lot of cartridges are still sitting around and could really make a big impact on their new system if people could just plug them in. Right now the plan is for only twelve games to be built into the system, and this would kill the long-term possibilities of what could be a great addition to the Atari fold. I hope they realize their mis-guided thinking and make the design change that every game player would want.

Enough said for one month. Please join us next month and we will continue to follow up on the new 7800 and more of what's going on in the Atari world. See you all on October 8.



**Secretary's Report
By Nolan Friedland
For September, 2004**

Minutes Submitted By Greg Leitner.

Meeting started at 7:35 P.M.
In Nolan's absence I read the minutes from the August SPACE meeting, and then gave a brief summary of our treasury which ended in a balance of \$728.25.

Glen presented another dom once again from Page 6, and gave a paid up membership count of 14. It was expected to climb back to 16 after our October meeting.

No old business to discuss, and under new business we talked a lot about the news of Atari introducing another version of its 7800 game system. Lance gave a great overview of past history of 8-bit and 16-bit products that kind of got left in limbo.

Without the presence of Nolan we passed on the BBS update and hope to catch up on all the details next month when we hope Nolan will be able to attend. Sorry to hear about all the bad luck Nolan has endured the past couple of months. We closed the meeting at approximately 8:45.



**BBS Corner
By Nolan Friedland
For October, 2004**

Nothing Received This Month For The BBS Corner.

A-T-A-R-I
Answers-Tips-And-Relevant-Information
by: Paul V Alhart
paulalhart@hotmail.com
1988.12

As promised, this month I will present you with DefaultWriter+ Companion #2. First though, I want to let you in on one of those undocumented SECRETS of AtariWriter+. When chaining files, DO NOT save the files with the "SAVE ASCII:" option. When you SAVE ASCII the Global menu values are not saved with the file. Since the Global values from the first file in the chain are used by AtariWriter+ for all the files in the chain one would think it didn't matter, BUT.. Although the Global values in the chained files are not used, AtariWriter+ assumes that they are there and lops off the first several bytes of each chained file to get rid of them. If you saved the files without them, AtariWriter+ will lop off the first few sentences of each chained file when you try to print or preview. I discovered this only after several frustrating hours of head scratching and trial & error. Maybe it will save you from a headache or two.

Now on to DefaultWriter+ Companion #2. DWC #2 allows you to boot the 48K version of Proofreader with the buzzer set to OFF. It will also let you change the length of the buzzer just like DWC #1 does for AtariWriter+. DWC #2 has an extra default setting though. Whenever you type in a CORRECTED spelling, Proofreader always asks "ARE YOU SURE Y/N?" It doesn't matter because it is going to check the spelling of this new word anyway. DWC #2 will allow you to do away with this waste of time dialogue. After you type in the word and hit RETURN Proofreader will immediately check the new spelling, flag it if it doesn't like it or continue on with business if it does. No more Y/N prompts.

As with DefaultWriter+ & DefaultWriter+ Companion #1 the new settings are permanently made to your original AtariWriter+ & Proofreader files. Of course you can change them back or to any default setting you like any time you want with DW+, DWC #1 & DWC #2.

Copy PROOF to a freshly formatted single density disk and RUN DWC #2. After you have things set the way you like, copy PROOF back to your original AtariWriter+ disk and your done. Happy AtariWriting!

```
1 REM DefaultWriter+ Companion #2
2 REM by Paul V. Alhart
3 REM
4 REM This Program will allow you to change the BUZZER
Default and (Y/N) Prompt settings of PROOFREADER
(48K).
5 REM
6 REM
10 TRAP 100:DIM IN$(1):OPEN #1,12,0,"D:PROOF":NOTE
#1,Q,W:S1=Q+27:S2=Q+27:S3=Q+38:B1=117:B2=121:B3=
35
20 POINT #1,S1,B1:GET #1,A:POINT #1,S2,B2:GET
#1,B:POINT #1,S3,B3:GET #1,C:IF C<>32 AND C<>96
THEN 90
30 ? CHR$(125):? "THE BUZZER DEFAULT SETTING IS
";A:?" 208 = OFF 240 = ON"
40 ? :? "BUZZER DURATION IS SET TO ";B;" JIFFIES":? "
NORMAL = 32"
45 ? :? "THE (Y/N) PROMPT IS ";C:?" 32 = ON 96 = OFF"
50 ? :? "DO YOU WANT TO CHANGE THESE
SETTINGS":INPUT IN$:IF IN$<>"Y" THEN CLOSE
#1:END
60 ? :? :? "ENTER 208 OR 240 FOR BUZZER
DEFAULT":INPUT A:IF A<>208 AND A<>240 THEN 60
70 ? "ENTER BUZZER DURATION":INPUT B
75 ? "ENTER 32 OR 96 FOR (Y/N) PROMPT":INPUT C:IF
C<>32 AND C<>96 THEN 75
80 POINT #1,S1,B1:PUT #1,A:POINT #1,S2,B2:PUT
#1,B:POINT #1,S3,B3:PUT #1,C
85 GOTO 20
90 CLOSE #1:?"USE FOR 48K VERSION ONLY"
100 CLOSE #1:?"ERROR ";PEEK(195)
```

December 13, 1982, Monday
NEW YORK, Dec. 13 /PRN/ -- One of the most dramatic breakthroughs in home computer technology was unveiled today when Atari, Inc., a major consumer electronics company, introduced its new competitively-priced state-of-the-art 1200XL computer featuring 64K of memory.

At a press conference here, Atari presented its new generation home computer which has the capability of utilizing existing Atari computer software and peripherals.

The Atari 1200XL has 12 user programmable function keys, including an international character set which provides:

-- Shifting the keyboard into a European character set (from

the regular graphics set) that includes special symbols for currency and grammar.

-- Disabling the operation of the keyboard to assure that as programs are being run they aren't interrupted by the accidental touch of a key.

-- Turning off the screen to preserve the quality of the monitor when the computer is left on and unattended for extended periods.

-- A "help" key that provides the user with helpful instructions on selected programs used with the computer. The "help" key also performs self-diagnosis -- as requested by the user on the memory, audio visual and keyboard to assure that all components are in peak operating condition and that all external wiring connections are intact.

In addition, The Atari 1200XL home computer incorporates a number of design improvements including:

-- The program cartridge slot has been shifted to the side of the new computer. And to make it simpler to insert, there are no longer doors to open and close.

-- Two additional lights on the computer indicate whether the specific functions of the locking keyboard or shifting to the European character set are in use.

-- One touch cursor controls to streamline cursor movement.

-- A spectrum of 256 colors available for display on the monitor as well as four distinct sound "voices" covering 3-1/2 octaves on the computer's built-in speaker.

-- Two controller ports to use with the same joysticks and paddles as well as numerical keypads.

The Atari 1200XL home computer also works with any television set or monitor. Raymond E. Kassar, chairman and chief executive officer of Atari, Inc. said, "We believe that the Atari 1200XL will set the standard for a new generation in home computing and, once again, positions Atari on the leading edge of electronic technology and creative computing.

"Its sleek, polished metal, low-profile package is perhaps the first computer specifically designed for the home as an attractive item of furniture in any decor. To maintain an integrated systems look, future peripherals for the computer will feature the same styling. "With its user aids and beautiful packing, the Atari 1200XL is one of the 'friendliest' computers ever built -- and at an affordable price."

Atari said the retail price of the 1200XL home computer will be announced in January, 1983, at the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas. Initial deliveries will take place during the first quarter, 1983.

Atari, Inc., is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Warner Communications Inc., and is a leading designer and manufacturer of home computers and peripherals in home video games, coin-operated games, and programs for a variety of applications.

June 8, 1982, Tuesday

SUNNYVALE, Calif., June 8 /PRN/ -- Atari, Inc., one of the

fastest growing consumer electronics companies in the world, today announced a new generation of Atari home video computer games: the Atari 5200(TM) Home Entertainment System. The Atari 5200 is the state of the art by which all other game systems must be measured. Detailed graphics painted in spectacular colors are combined with dramatic sounds of incredible realism to provide the most sophisticated and challenging games ever produced for home play.

The Atari 5200 has far more power and memory potential than the Atari Video Computer System(TM) -- or VCS(TM). This new power gives the games an audio and visual quality comparable to arcade video games. The Atari 5200's suggested retail price is \$299.95.

The new 5200 is not a replacement of the ever-popular Video Computer System. It is a new generation of video games. "We have created two home game systems in the same spirit in which an automobile manufacturer builds different models to suit different tastes," explains Michael Moone, president of Atari's Consumer Electronics Division.

"The Atari 5200 was created for those players who demand state-of-the-art video game technology," Moone continues. "We will continue to support the VCS -- the most popular home video system in the world -- with fantastic new games, comprehensive service and the strongest advertising in the industry."

The Atari 5200 will be available to the public in October 1982; along with 10 game cartridges. By Christmas, the game cartridge total will be 14. The game cartridges will fall into two price categories: \$31.95 and \$39.95.

In order to provide owners with their favorite software right away, Atari has updated and enhanced such all-time favorites as Pac-Man (trademark by Bally Midway Mfg. Co. licensed by Namco-America, Inc.), Super Breakout(TM), Space Invaders (trademark of Taito America Corporation), Asteroids(TM), Missile Command(TM) and Star Raiders(TM), the space odyssey game pioneered on the Atari Home Computer System.

Also included will be sports games -- Baseball, Football and Soccer -- of unprecedented realism. No other home video baseball game, for example, can match the player skills and options of Atari's Baseball game cartridge. Pitchers can throw fast or slow, inside or outside. They can also slip a knuckle ball in. And there's a relief pitcher warming up in the bullpen, ready to replace a bum starter. Batters not only hit the ball, they deliver pop flies, line drives and grounders. Base runners can slide, steal and even tag up on high fly balls. Crafty coaches can maneuver their teams into different defensive positions. Fielders can run all the way to the fence to make leaping catches of bleacher-bound balls. Even the sounds will be real baseball: crowd cheers and the crack of bat against ball.

A host of other exciting games from the arcade realm will be ready for the Atari 5200 by Christmas. These will include the ever-popular Centipede(TM), Qix (trademark of Taito

America Corporation) and Defender (trademark of Williams Electronics, Inc.), one of the top arcade video games of the year.

Setting all the above features into action will be easy with the new universal game controller. The universal controller combines the operation of joystick, paddle and keyboard into a single hand-held unit that fits comfortably in a child's palm. The control stick moves game figures in any direction instead of the usual eight. It can also be used to control the game character's speed. A pause button lets the player put the game on "hold" at any time. Though the universal controller commands complex game maneuvers, it is child's play to use.

The Atari 5200 is distinguished by its streamlined console that features a single electrical cord and built-in storage areas for the controllers. For maximum convenience, a new switchbox automatically switches from television programs to game play -- once the system is in place, the back of the TV set need never be touched again. And, for the first time, there will be no rasping static from the TV when the game cartridges are removed from the console. Instead, the screen will black out and the set go silent.

By 1983, two revolutionary features will be available for the Atari 5200: a Trak-Ball(TM) controller and a Voice Synthesizer module. The Trak-Ball will give players the precise 360-degree control of the best arcade video games. The Voice Synthesizer will become an integral part of game play, not just a sound generator. Voices from the synthesizer will interact with the player for the ultimate in video game realism.

Atari will also have a special adapter ready by 1983 which will allow all VCS game cartridges to be played on the Atari 5200. Atari is a leading producer of home and coin-operated video games, and home computer systems and computer software for a variety of applications. Atari is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Warner Communications Inc.

--From: Thomas Richter

--Date: 20 Sep 2004 08:51:40 GMT

Hi folks,

the new 1.40 release of the C++ atari 8 bit emulator for Linux and Win32 is available for download at:

<http://www.math.tu-berlin.de/~thor/atari++/>

This is mainly a bug-fix release, no new features have been added yet.

Fixed issues in the emulator:

- The random generator was broken in the win32 implementation (the VS provided random generator is really rather poor, providing only a 15 bit entropy source)

Fixed issues in the built-in operating system (Os++):

- Fixed the generation of the attract-mode in general.
- Fixed attract mode for the "GTIA modes plus text window" (Graphics 9+64, 10+64, 11+64)

The source code for Os++ is separately downloadable at this side under "ROM Sources". Note that this is not the original Atari ROM but the emulator implementation.

So long,
Thomas

--Date: Sun, 26 Sep 2004 18:31:17 -0700
--ST Magazine Subscription News

Nick Harlow has announced:

Well only a week late but here are the details for the Subscription of 3 , 4 or 6 Issue of this translated from French magazine.

You can check out whats available here <http://stmagazine.org/>

3 Issues normally cost £10.50, now on subscription rate only £10.00
4 Issues normally cost £14.00, now on subscription rate only £12.50
6 Issues normally cost £21.00, now on subscription rate only £18.00

This rate includes postage and packing for the UK.

For USA, Australia and other English speaking Countries please add another £1.00.

For French speaking countries please refer to <http://stmagazine.org/>

You can start you subscription from Issue 132, whilst it's in stock or just email me with your preferred start Issue number.

I know you will enjoy this magazine and it is written by enthusiasts for enthusiasts.

Subscription can be made through the 16/32 Webshop and just click to the Atari Magazine Section and go to your preferred section.

<http://www.1632-sales.zenwebhosting.com/acatalog/>

[This news item courtesy of Atari.org - <http://www.atari.org>]

--Subject: ST>CT60 firmare updated
--Date: Sun, 26 Sep 2004 18:31:59 -0700

Didier Méquignon has released v1.02 of the CT60 flash TOS/BIOS.

Improvements include:

- New boot features:

* Add identify device procedure for SCSI and IDE drives, the boot wait if a removable drive is not ready.

* Add IDE slave support (device 17).

* Add CompactFlash support.

* Add combined MSDOS/TOS root and partition support, this feature support byte swapping needed by MSDOS format and search a *.SYS for load the disk driver.

* Add speed test for bootables devices.

- Check and fix modecode get from NVM.

- 4 choices inside the boot order (SCSI and IDE).

<http://ct60conf.atari.org/>

[This news item courtesy of Atari.org - <http://www.atari.org>]
