Saint Paul ATARI Computer Enthusiasts

SPACE

An independent computer user group

JANUARY - 1985

Nibbles From the Pres.

Well, I can't top the news of last month, but here's the latest I've heard (which isn't much). The February issue of ANTIC says that one of the new XL compatible computers will have a built-in disk drive and color monitor - sounds better than the defunct 1450XL. They also say the ATARI Learning Phone (i.e., PLATO) will be out soon. Incidentally, my source of information seems to have dried up. Infoworld magazine hasn't arrived at my house in about 3 weeks (its a weekly - or is that weakly?). Does anyone know what happened? Maybe I've lost out again on another magazine. I would suggest to all to never subscribe to a computer magazine for more than 1 year at a time.

That isn't much news, but I should have more from the CES show. Notice that this month's column is "Nibbles". I'll have a newsletter addendum ready for the meeting with the latest "Bytes" fresh from the CES show. So, be sure to be at the meeting to receive your copy. There will be no mailing of the addendum.

I understand that we had our best month ever last meeting for disk and cassette of the month sales. This is very helpful to the club. We are arranging for trades with other clubs so that we can continue to get new public domain software for the club. I also understand that almost our entire paper & educational software library was borrowed last month. This is also very gratifying. Does anyone have a contribution to make to the paper or educational software library? Or, how about a suggestion of a good book we might buy for the library.

Our group is now registered with ANALOG and ANTIC magazines. So, I'm sure we will be getting a flurry of offers and literature in the near future.

For those still looking for AtariWriter printer-drivers, here is the phone number of a mail order place reputed to have them: At-A-Glance (201)-267-0988

Will someone who owns the new Okidata color printer please write a review for the newsletter. This printer was discussed a little at one of the meetings, but a review would be much nicer. Thank you.

Thank you Chris Kruger for taking the TV for the club. We also appreciate the program donations to the club library. I hope you don't mind my calling you Chris Crawford - I must have been very impressed with your programming.

CONTINUED -->

I think we'll have a swap meet at the February meeting. We will try to divide the room up somewhat to accommodate swapping, demos and beginners group (see below).

Look for our SPACE advertisement in #505 of the St. Paul Pioneer Press Want Ads for January 6. We hope to attract some of the new Atari owners from Christmas.

The final item is about the meeting agenda this month. We will run the meeting pretty much as usual, except we will take a 5 minute break before demos. I would like those interested in demos to move to the front. Those not interested should try to vacate the rear of the room. We will be setting up a second computer in the back for a beginner's session. There may be a large number of beginners this month due to Christmas. We may do this in February, too, depending on the success of this month. I would also like to put together a list of "resource people" available to handle questions at the meetings or over the phone. For instance, I can handle the FORTH language, someone else might handle printers, or modems, or BASIC, or machine language, etc. Please sign up with me as a resource person at the meeting - you don't have to be a big expert, just willing to give a little time and advice.

Also, I've started a new column this month called Beginner's BASICS. I don't wish to write this column every month. I want you to help out. I think most of you can remember some of your early trials and tribulations. It should be easy for most of you to write a guest column once in a while. I have enough ideas for this month and next, but I'm stumped after that. At the very least, hand me a note at the meeting with a suggestion. Thanks.

See you at the meeting unless I lose my shirt at the show.

The Pres.

December Meeting Minutes

by Joanne Floyd

The last SPACE meeting was held on Friday, December 14. Bob Floyd, the president, thanked the club members who demonstrated Atari hardware and software and answered questions at the Science Museum computer show. Their efforts resulted in several new members for SPACE. Bob also brought up the question of club support for the TAIG-SPACE bulletin board. New hardware and software is needed for the bulletin board, and money is also needed for repairs for existing equipment and charges for the phone line. The TAIG officers suggested that SPACE and TAIG share expenses for the bulletin board on a proportionate basis. (Since TAIG has many more members, it would pay a proportionately higher share of the expenses.) The club voted to allocate SPACE money to support the bulletin board.

Several announcements of interest to SPACE members were made. The Courage Center is looking for volunteers to help organize a computer club for the handicapped. Computer Line, the call-in computer show on the radio, has moved to WWTC AM 1280 but is still broadcasting at 9-10 on Sunday mornings. Bruce Haug, the vice president, reminded new members that old disk/cassettes of the month can be ordered. A listing of the programs on these old disks/cassettes can be examined at the meetings. 800XL owners may also like to purchase a translator disk which can be used to run old Atari 400-800 programs on the 800XL. The disks can be purchased from Bruce for $4. Disks ordered at one meeting can be picked up at the next meeting.

Several new software programs were demonstrated. Todd Burkey demonstrated the SPARTA DOS, a DOS system that can read single, 1.5 and true double density disks. It can handle true double density on the 1050 drive only, plus it can I/O 2.5 times faster than standard Atari DOS

Bytes From the Pres

January 11, 1985

NEWS FROM THE CES SHOW

Your roving reporter has returned, with shirt intact, from the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas. There is so much to report, all of it good, that I've taken the chicken's way out and made copies of the specification sheets on the new ATARI computers for everyone. I've also posted (at this meeting) CES news bulletins from Antic magazine that I downloaded from Compuserve. So, what I will try to cover are things not covered by Antic or the spec. sheets.

Best Quote: "We are not a game company. We are a microcomputer company. We will produce productivity software and educational material."

New Slogan: POWER WITHOUT THE PRICE.

XE Series: The XE series of computers are compatible with the 800XL computers. ATARI has consolidated PC boards and chip functions to produce a "less expensive, more reliable" computer. This is good news to all of us who already own ATARI's. The case of the XE machines looks very nice and sturdy. The 2 joystick ports are on the right side. The cartridge plugs in through the back. The power switch and rest of the connections are in the back. Antic says that the parallel bus has been saved for the 130XE model. I'm not sure how this can be done with all the connections in back, so I'm a little skeptical. This also means a change in the case which may not be economically feasible.

I saw 3 of the machines listed on the spec. sheets - 65XE, 65XEP and 130XE. Pricing is supposedly $100, $400 and $200, respectively, according to Antic. The 65 XEM was not ready for the show. The XEM (M for music) is reputed to have the best sound chip of any personal computer ever. It should be ready soon. In talking to the ATARI people milling around, I found out that of the 4 XE machines, the XEP was the only one uncertain of being produced - it will depend on interest from the market.

I saw a number of 130XE's (the 128K version). They demo'd a new ATARI integrated software package that used multitasking capabilities with extensive window overlaying capabilities. This was very amazing for an 8-bit machine. A new release of Atariwriter called Atariwriter+ is due soon. It will have 80 column capability, built-in spelling checker, larger file capabilities, etc. The bad news is that the integrated software and Atariwriter+ require the greater RAM of the 130XE. This gives us current owners reason to upgrade - especially at the suggested price of $200.

The XE machines are scheduled to go into production in March, so don't expect to see them on store shelves until at least June.

800XL: The 800XL will gradually be phased out as the XE's are phased in. Since there is compatibility between the 2 machines, software availability won't be a big concern.

XF521 Disk Drive: I saw this drive at the show even though it isn't listed in the spec. sheets. It is the same size and shape as the 1050 drive, so I suspect that it is a 1050 in a new case to match the XE line. However, I wouldn't be surprised if it used the "doubler" and SpartaDOS for 180K storage capability. The rep's said that the choice of DOS has not yet been decided. However, it will be called DOS 2.5 and can handle ATR's (supposedly), the Sony-type 3.5" drives and the standard disks of any of the 3 densities.

1050 Drive: The 1050 drive will be phased out in favor of the XF521. This is alright, too, since no compatibility is lost.

3.5" Mini Drive For XE's: I didn't hear about this drive at the show.

According to the Antic article, it is supposed to be compatible with all of the 8-bit machines using DOS 2.5 . This sounds good, but also bothers me a bit too. If software companies start putting out programs on this format, what about the rest of us? At the suggested price of $180, this may not be too bad.

Printers: I saw the XTC201 (color) and STM504 (black only) printers. Both printers are direct-connect and are available as color or black only. The third letter designates color capability - C for color and M for black. They were very small! I could hardly believe the simplicity and smallness of the XTC201. I also saw the XMM801 printer. I think this is also direct-connect. See spec. sheet for details.

Monitors: The monitors were on-hand, but kept behind smoked glass so that I couldn't see the model numbers. The monitor with 80 column board might have been there, but it was not demo'd or discussed while I was there. See spec. sheet and Antic article for more info.

Modem: The XM301 modem was shown. It was 300 baud only. It was very small and direct-connect type. There was no 300/1200 baud modem shown or listed in the brochures.

ST Computers: The 130ST and 520ST computers were both shown. They were incredibly impressive! They are 128K and 512K RAM, respectively. That is the only difference. Both use GEM for icons, windows, mouse control, etc. The 130ST cannot be upgraded to 512K. There are 2 joystick/mouse ports on the right side. They are configured to use standard joysticks as well as the new ATARI mice. Every other imagineable connection (see spec. sheet) is in the back, including a 128K ROM cartridge port. The operating system ROM is 192K. Both machines are available with either BASIC or LOGO built in, but not both. It can talk to a hard disk or Sony-type 3.5" drive. The demo was incredible! It looks just like a color MacIntosh. Screen memory requires 32K RAM. An IBM-PC looks slow and cumbersome compared to these machines. In fact, they were so impressive that I wonder if people need such a machine at home. This may be one of the pitfalls. The other pitfall is the available software. As we all know, a computer does not become viable without a large amount of various software available. ATARI is addressing this well and I hope they are successful. The suggested list prices of $400 and $600 should help a lot. Both machines go into production in March and should be in the stores around June, or so.

Mouse: The ATARI mouse controllers have 2 buttons for more utility.

SF324 & SF354 Drives: These drives were shown at the show. They looked nice and seemed to work well. List price is in the $180 area. The SH317 hard disk drive was not shown. It will list for about $400.

SDM124 & SDM804 Printers: Both of these printers were present. See spec. sheet for more info.

Games: At ATARI, I saw Millipede, Moon Patrol, Track & Field, Skywriter (educ.) and Final Legacy (tactical). I liked Moon Patrol best.

At Epyx, I saw Ballblazer and Rescue On Fractalus. I liked Ballblazer best. It is like Rugby between two spaceships. You try to steal the ball and guide it into the goal. Graphics are 3D. It requires 2 players to oppose each other. The screen is split horizontally so each player gets their own view.

Elsewhere, I saw Mr. Do's Castle, Tapper (great), Super Zaxxon (a letdown), Froger II (easy - OK for young kids).

I also saw a very impressive new game machine from Nintendo. Software was good with the latest arcade titles. The machine featured a "light gun" which I think is a light pen useable from about 6 or 8 feet away. This is the best game machine I've ever seen.

DISK OF THE MONTH

The disk/tape of the month contains programs from the club library. The tapes can be purchased for $3 and the disks for 4. The group makes a small profit from the sale of these which go toward supporting some of the things the group does. Each disk/tape usually contains eight to twelve programs. Most of these programs are games with some utilities and demos mixed in. The programs are obtained from trading with other user groups and from submissions from local members. Members who submit a program will receive a disk or tape of the month free! What a deal!!

D.O.M. JAN 85

The disk and tape of the months are all set ready to go!! This is the brand new 1985 model.

1.OUTERSPA.CE space invaders type
2.FAWCETT you have to see it!!
3.SABOTAGE text adventure
4.WHEEL graphics demo
5.REBOUND joystick game
6.HEARTS color puzzle
7.PICTURE lincoln & mona lisa
8.CAVEKING arcade type game
9.SPACELAN.DER joystick mod by Bob Floyd

Survey time again!! This time for D.O.M. and T.O.M., come to the meeting and fill out a survey, one per computer. Also sit down and write the names of the three programs which are your favorites from past D.O.M & T.O.M. and bring this list to me at the meeting, listing them #1, #2, and #3.

BRUCE HAUG D.O.M.

TIPS'N'TRICKS

Put a POKE 202,1 in a BASIC program so that anyone who presses BREAK or SYSTEM RESET will erase the entire program in memory.

Don't eat, drink, or smoke around your computer. It could damage the funtioning of the keyboard.

Related to above. Don't take apart your computer (esp. keyboard) if it is working fine (don't fix something that's not broken).

What tricks have you found? Let us all know.

S.P.A.C.E. Membership Application

Name_____Phone_____Date_____

Address_____City_____State____Zip_____

Equipment/System-Used_____

Area of interest _____

_____

WANT ADS

It is possible for members to place 'Want Ads' in this newsletter. The ads may be for selling used hardware, used software, tutoring services, or just about anything that has to do with Atari. The rates are as follows:

6 Lines	$1.20	216 Letters
1 Line	.25	36 Letters

The following is a list of advertising rates for vendors or individual members.

Full page	$18.00	7-1/2" X 10"
Half page	10.00	3-5/8" X 10"
Half page	10.00	7-1/2" X 5"
1/4 page	5.50	3-5/8" X 5"

All advertisements must be paid for when they are submitted. Deadline for ad placement is two Mondays before the meeting. To place ad or for more information, call the editor.

WANT ADS

FOR SALE: ATARI 800 COMPUTER W/BASIC CART.; ALL MANUALS; 48K RAM; RANA 1000 DISK DRIVE; ATARI 410 CASSETTE RECORDER; VARIOUS GAME CARTS.
GENE EDDY 770-1427 $495

FOR SALE: ATARI 800XL; 1050 DISK DRIVE; COMPUTER DESK; ALL BRAND NEW/IN BOX. RANDOM SECTORS 781-3136

FOR SALE: VISICALC $40; NEC COLOR MONITOR MODEL JC1215 $200. CALL MR. YOSHI 379-1952

Bob Floyd . .	President	487-2627	Jon Nelson . . Edi[illegible]
Bruce Haug . .	Vice-Pres	774-6226	Max Feuer. . . Tr[illegible]
Bruce Haug . .	Disk Lib.	774-6226	Bruce Haug . . C[illegible]
Jim Schulz . .	Paper/Ed. Lib.	537-5442	Joanne Floyd . [illegible]

SPACE/TAIG Bulletin Board . . . 544-[illegible]

Homepak $35

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