

SPACE

NEWSLETTER March, 1996

President's Corner

By Mike Fitzpatrick

This month I've contacted an avid Atariian who is making a WEB Page for the Atari Computer and any Clubs that are based on the Atari. He's been given the data on our Club and how to contact us. When his task is complete he promised to give us a call and inform us of where we can see what is still left for the Atari computer.

Have had some folks interested in the Atari, both 8-bit and ST, contact me, one through an intermediary. The interest is varied. One wants to have both games and educational benefits for their children; the other is interested in setting up a business using an Atari. SPACE member Lance Ringquist should be smirking by now.

There was a vender listing u/loaded to the BBS and made available to the Newsletter Editor showing current Atari Venders.

I've seen some neat software about, one program <type in> was u/loaded to the BBS.

We should have a fun meeting in March; hope to see you there.

Minutes Of Space Meeting

Mike Fitzpatrick reported that the minutes of the February meeting were misplaced and unavailable in time for the Newsletter.

BBS News

Finally isolated the problem to why user slots are overwritten and lost. It is the 3rd party F-mail and how it is used. Put in a revised version that is not so sensitive and am in the process of ordering a newer version that should be bug free, at least for f-mail.

Have been having some problems with users who terminate calls by disconnecting at their end instead of letting the BBS perform the disconnect. Sometimes what will occur is the board not recycling to the wait call mode. It is a pain for other users <unable to access> until I get up in the morning or come home from work to restart the BBS.

Also, it has come to my attention that there is an unhappy user. This user wants a different BBS Sysop. That is fine if we have a volunteer who is willing to provide a phone line and take the time to set up, on the club's equipment, the BBS strictly for SPACE.

While we are on the BBS issue; let it be known that there are very few SPACE members who call on a regular basis. This might be a way to save the club some funds. Shut down the BBS and send data to the Newsletter Editor and DOM Chairman via U.S. Mail. This in itself would save the club about \$300 per year. Just a thought.

Let's discuss this issue at the next SPACE Meeting.

Treasurer's Report by Greg Leitner

The February meeting was very interesting as the CD-ROM drive for the 8-bit Atari surfaced again. I would really like to know more about the hardware connections and what software will be available. This could be the very thing that will bring new life into the 8-bit world of computing. Also, come to the meetings and see what Lance has to offer. I understand that Atari is still cleaning out their warehouses and Lance is right there getting his share of the hardware and software at unbelievable prices.

The February meeting went quite well even though we only had about fifteen members present. We could really use the support and input from all our members. I just wish you would let us know what we can do to get you all to the meetings on a regular basis. It was mentioned at the Feb. meeting that demonstrations could be done if the members were interested. If you have some suggestions about what you would like to see demonstrated please let us know. This is what the User Groups were meant to do and be, how we increase our knowledge about the system we choose to use, our 8-bit Atari's.

As far as our financial situation for February goes, our balance in our bank account stands at \$434.64 up from last month by about \$25.00. We took in \$52.50 and only paid out \$28.74, that for the monthly BBS billing. We still owe Mike Schmidt for the great Newsletter he put out in Feb., just before he ditched the cold weather and headed for Hawaii, but that expense will only be about \$15.00.

March could be a good month for us in that we don't have any major expenses due, but we need your support and presence to accomplish this. So please try to save one day of the month on March 8 and make it to the meeting.

The Following article was re-printed from the Star Tribune, Wednesday, February 14, 1996.

Atari to merge with JTS Corp. in deal valued at \$78 million.

Game firm joins disk-drive maker

Sunnyvale, Calif. -- Atari Corp., the multimedia games Company, said Tuesday that it has agreed to merge with JTS Corp., a privately held maker of disk drives in a deal valued at around \$78 million.

Atari, maker of the popular video game Jaguar and other titles playable on Atari's dedicated platform, has met with stiff competition from other games makers such as Sega Corp., as well as from personal computers.

An Atari spokesman said the company was looking for a strategic investment.

"We had \$50 million in the bank", Said Spokesman August Liguori, from Atari headquarters Sunnyvale, Calif.

He said that in the past, Atari has sold computers, printers and other computer components. "To some extent we are going back into the computer business" by merging with JTS.

The new entity will be known as JTS Corp., but Atari will remain as a brand name.

Under terms of the deal, Atari, which has about 63 million Shares outstanding, will issue an additional 40 million shares to JTS shareholders.

As a result of the proposed transaction, Atari stockholders would hold about 60 percent of the new company's outstanding shares after the merger, it said. The transaction is structured to qualify as a tax-free reorganization and would be accounted for as a purchase.

JTS Chairman Jugi Tandon will be chairman of the merged company. He founded JTS in 1994.

Atari Chairman Jack Tramiel will become a JTS board member.

Under terms of the deal, Atari has extended a \$25 million bridge loan to JTS. In the event that the merger is not completed, the loan would be convertible into JTS Series A preferred shares.

Both Atari and JTS anticipate the transaction will close toward the end of the second quarter. The Atari entertainment business and the JTS disk drive business will operate as separate divisions of the new merged company.

Atari stock was up 18 3/4 cents at \$2.06 on the American stock Exchange.

MidWinter Madness Show '96

The Mid Winter Madness Show was once again held at the Blaine Sports Center in Blaine Minn. It was held on February 10, 1996 from 7:30 am. to 2:30 PM. I ventured out to the show at around 11 am. Finding the sports center isn't that hard. A person has their choice of going highway 65 or using 35W to get there. There is parking available for a few dollars or a parking area for free parking, with a shuttle bus that will bring you to the front of the building, where the electronic show is held.

Every year it is fun to go to this show to see friends, look for bargains, or just to have a fun time. I hit the flea market area and found a lot of computer books related to IBM computers, but the show was really bare of Atari software and hardware. I don't know what has happened to the Atari stuff. Anyway there is always the Amateur show in July '96 at Aldrich Arena in Maplewood, MN. See you all at the next Space Meeting on March 8, 1996.

Mike Weist

Word Search

This month is JOLT

U X O G Y R K J T P V N T G T V T K
D J O L T H J V E O G A K C O H S T
T I M G R A K M S E A I G T A B D T
A H T I V H S U P H V S I U H J G A
G K A N E V T N U T S R T M I V N H
P K N A Y J D I H S T I D O T Z V N
U I P R B U R K W U U L N G U V I K
M B T D E W O B L E N R B O G N N A
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H J N A V B T K D T G I M R C S E I
I Q U C E V B T K T D G L K I K A Q
T D D X Q G H R K W T O O L A S J B
Q I G J H V U V M V D U V H O A E L
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JAR
JOSTLE
NUDGE
SHOCK
STUN

ASTONISH
SURPRISE
ELBOW
KNOCK OUT
COLLIDE WITH

SHAKE
ASTOUND
PUSH
UPSET
YANK


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+-----+
|               Larry's               |
|               ACTION! TUTORIAL       |
+-----+
#21               FINAL EPISODE...
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Up to now I have discussed the different aspects of a program for the computer. Now its time to discuss how to turn those programs in the computer, to files on the disk for everyone to enjoy.

After you have typed in a program, you are required to enter the Monitor to compile and run the program. The Monitor will also save the compiled code to disk. The file produced from the Monitors write command (W "D1:MYPROG.EXE") is executable from the disk. After you have written a program file to the disk from the Monitor, you can then call up DOS and run the file from the command line prompt. If you have supplied all of the necessary code for execution, you will be able to run the file even without the ACTION! cartridge installed. Those files are the type of files you can send to your friends, who may not have the ACTION! cartridge. For a discussion on how to get programs to run without the cartridge, refer back to my column #11.

The DOS file system has a method of determining what type of file is stored on the disk. By using the first two bytes in a file, it can determine if the file was meant for direct execution, or for use with the BASIC cartridge, and so on. If the file begins with two 0's, it is probably an executable file, BASIC uses 255, 255 for its tokenized form. The next four bytes in the file tell DOS where to put the stored data in memory, and how much to put there. By using the two CARD values as the start and stop memory addresses of the code segment, it can load the executable code anywhere in memory. The Monitor supplies all these bytes for you when you use the write command. DOS also allows for the appending of files, so that some code may be loaded in at one address, and other code may be loaded in elsewhere. When the computer has loaded data into the last (stop) address, DOS checks to see if there is more data in the file. If it finds more, it checks to see if the next two bytes are 0,0 (which does happen when files are appended). If not and there is still more data in the file, DOS will assume the next four bytes are the start and stop addresses of another segment of code (or data, depending upon who put what, where!) This process will repeat until there is no more data in the file.

The ATARI operating system also has two special addresses for use in handling the executable files. These addresses are RUNAD (Run Address = 736, 737) and INITAD (Init Address = 738, 739). When data is loaded into INITAD, the ATARI Operating

System (OS) interrupts the load process and begins executing code at the address pointed to by INITAD. When that code has finished (via a RETURN statement), the loading process resumes. When data is loaded into RUNAD, the loading process is allowed to complete, then execution of code begins at the address pointed to by RUNAD. You might now see how professional programmers put a little title screen up while their program is loading. A short program to put text on the screen could be loaded in, the INITAD could be used to run that code, then loading of the main program could proceed. Using ACTION! it is real easy to do things like this. When the Monitor writes a program to the disk, it also includes a short segment to load INITAD with the starting address of the main procedure. Appending files written by the Monitor will always act in the manner stated above, some part loads and runs, then another loads and runs, and another, and another, as many times as there were files appended together. Try it yourself, and put it to good use!

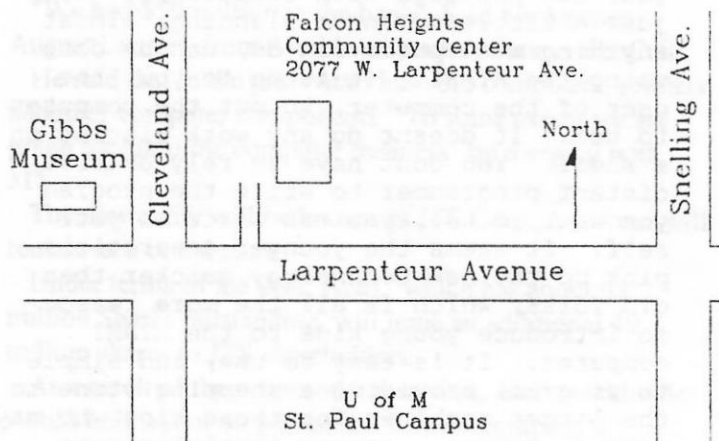
With all the routines and tips I have let you in on, you are now ready to undertake your own projects with confidence. With just a little advanced planning, almost anything a computer can do, can be done using the ATARI. It is up to you, the user of the computer, to put the computer to use. It doesnt do any work sitting on a shelf. You dont have to rely on some distant programmer to write the program you want to use, you can write it your self. It seems the younger generations pick up the new technology quicker than old folks, which is all the more reason to introduce young kids to the ATARI computer. It is easy to use, and simple to program, providing a stepping stone to the larger machines for those kids who may want to pursue a career involving some aspect of programming a computer. The bulk of computer programming is done by those who have a need. The limits of what a computer can do is bound up only by the imagination of those people willing to attempt the programming of their computer. My advice; reach for the stars!

It has come time to close this column and move on. I want to thank Mike Schmidt our newsletter editor for the great job he has done organizing, printing, and mailing our club newsletter to all our members. All the people in the club who volunteer their time to help SPACE provide support for the ATARI community, deserve a hearty thanks. Its the members, who support SPACE through membership and the purchase of DOMs, that are to be congratulated on keeping this group together for so long. Nice going. This is my last submission, I had a fun time, I hope you gained a little more confidence in your own efforts.

CLUB OFFICIALS

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Saint Paul Atari Computer Enthusiasts (SPACE) meets on the second Friday of each month at 7:30 PM in the Falcon Heights Community Center at 2077 West Larpentour Ave. Doors open at 7:00 PM.



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SPACE BBS

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Co-sysop: Open Position

Supporting:

ATARI 8-Bit Computers

ATARI ST Computers

