

SNACC

SOUTHERN
NEVADA
ATARI
COMPUTER
CLUB

8-88

SNACC MEETING

Sunday, August 7, 1988
4:00 to 6:00 pm

Peter Pipers Pizza
Boulder Highway and Nellis
across from SAMS TOWN

SNACC OFFICERS

President:	Chuck Ferraris	367-2669
Vice Presidents:		
8-Bit	David Scheller	641-8191
16-Bit	Pete Cahill	451-2617
BBS Sysop:	Kelly Hall	453-5562
Librarian:	Dan Wess	458-2035
Treasurer:	Ron Fred	452-1784
Secretary:	Doug Thompson	254-0245
Newsletter:	Harvey Cannon	459-4089

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Southern Nevada Atari Computer Club BBS

-----8 MEGS ON LINE-----

ZMag-ZMagST News, 7 Msg-Bases,
Reviews, Library/Database, Hints,
Mods and Lot's of D/L's

BBS EXPRESS! PRO * (702) 438-2208 * 300/1200 BAUD

THE PREZ SAYS

Well, it's that time of year again.... Time to prepare for elections, for the 1988-1989 year, and we have a problem. It seems that there are no members that are interested in running for any of the elected offices... Right now, there are openings that have no nominations for the following offices:

President
8-bit Vice President
Secretary
Treasurer

Our current 8-bit Vice President has been nominated for 16 bit Vice President, there are many members of the club I feel could serve well, but are either to shy, or don't feel as if they should contribute at this time. To those people, I can only say "That there is no time like the present to get involved with the club". If you are a member in good standing, you are eligible to be elected to any vacant office... I have yet to hear of anyone wanting to run for president or any other office, I would be willing to work with anyone who is interested in any position. If you would like to run for a position, contact me before Sunday's meeting so that preparations can be made for elections...

From the pen of Chuck Ferraris

CHIPS

Atari recently settled it's suit with Micron Tech, details of the settlement were not released. Could this mean the end of the current DRAM shortage?

The shortage of 256K and 1 megabit chips is expected to ease this summer as a result of increased U.S. production. With Motorola as the primary producer. Hopefully, chip prices will ease off by the fall so Atari users can upgrade their machines at a reasonable price. With the new graphic animation programs over 2 megs may become manditory.

The current DRAM shortage has not affecting IBM, as they manufacture their own 1 megabit chips.

8-BIT MOUSE

For those of you who wish that you had a mouse, listen up. The commodore 1351 mouse works great, hold down the right mouse button and it's a rolling joystick. I use it with Atari paint, First ExInt word processor, and a few games. A mouse makes it easier to use your computer and saves time. In fact, once you've become accustomed to using a mouse you'll wonder how you ever got along with out it.

It can be found at TOYS R US for around \$40.00 compared to the RAT which goes for \$114,00, and it is nice to have.

Doug Thompson

* * *

SUPERDOS

Reviewed by John Nagy
Downloaded from Zmag

As the "BIG" software companies continue their move OUT of 8-bit computer support, imports, small companies and "basement operations" are taking over, often with innovative and very low price offerings. Three recent releases for the ATARI 8-bit line continue this trend: a new DISK OPERATING SYSTEM, "SUPERDOS"; an operating environment, "M.T.O.S."; and a machine-language users utility, "PROGRAMMER'S PAL".

SUPERDOS is an AUSTRALIAN import, written by Paul Nicholls. U.S. distribution is by

TECHNICAL SUPPORT
205 Peoria Street
Daly City, CA 94014

The price is \$20 plus \$1 shipping. As a marketing tool, many ATARI user groups have been offered "distribution rights" by which they may ALSO charge \$20, keep \$5 for their effort, and send the balance to TECHNICAL SUPPORT along with a registered user list. Being registered gets you on a "future upgrade list"

Unlike some "DOS" replacements, SUPERDOS does NOT use the the DOS kernel from ATARI DOS 2.0 or 2.5. SUPERDOS does have the same DOS.SYS and DUP.SYS structure, but it is all new code. Also included is an AUX.SYS file for the seldom used features, and menu utilities for running BASIC or BINARY programs.

So what makes this DOS anything you would want? Plenty. First, it supports ALL THREE "normal" ATARI disk densities, with automatic sensing and reconfiguring. It sets up its own RAMDISK, checking first to see if it should be any configuration up to 320K - even AXLON RAMDISKS for use on 800's! THATS a new one.

It will automatically copy any file with a .RAM extender into its RAMDISK at bootup, and will switch to RAMDISK for any input/output if DRIVE #1 goes offline. That means you can copy files to RAM (which will be called by anything from D5: to D8:), shut off your D1: and the program will run from RAMDISK with no device number errors. NEAT.

It'll TRACE and RESTORE deleted files, as well as attempt to PATCH damaged sector files. You can use lower case, inverse, and numbers in the filenames. BINARY SAVE will even save a CARTRIDGE to DISK. It will copy to and from CASSETTES. A true SECTOR COPY feature skips empty sectors. DOS 3.0 (ARG!) is even supported for conversion to DOS 2.x format using one or two drives. Set your key repeat rate, verify, buffers, etc. from the menu without pokes. XIO support has been added for access to the higher functions of SUPERDOS from BASIC or ML programs, all with good documentation.

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All this PLUS those things we have gotten used to on the up-scale DOS's, like single keypress menus, resident DUP.SYS, menu-top indicators of drive densities, double column file directories, high-speed and skew I/O support for the U.S. Doubler and SUPERMAX, and a lot more. All this with a memo BELOW DOS 2.x!

So how is it to use? It feels a lot like DOS 2.x or SMARTDOS, using a menu. The screen keeps changing colors according to the process underway (which is at once a good warning and very distracting). Most operations are nicely prompted, with only a few too many "ARE YOU SURE" messages. But if you don't want to see them, most operations can suppress the verification prompt by adding /N to your filespec. Similar nice touches include the good sense to cause only a SINGLE filename to be changed when trying to undo that familiar curse of accidental duplicate filenames.

So, is there anything bad about SUPERDOS? Not exactly. At \$20, it is a good buy, but performs short of the ROLLS ROYCE of DOS's, SPARTADOS (by ICD/OSS CORP). What do you lose (compared to SPARTADOS)? Subdirectories, Double sided disk support (XF551, anyone?) TIME/DATE stamping of files. HARD DRIVE support. Plus, many unique utilities are made exclusively for SPARTADOS.

But SPARTADOS is quite a different animal, and at \$39.95, is more than some people need. Many users, if not most, will not need the advanced SPARTADOS features. SPARTADOS is also

SIGNIFICANTLY harder to learn to use, and many casual users NEVER master it. Nor will some want to use a different DOS version in their 800 than they use in their XE (as SPARTADOS requires).

All in all, SUPERDOS is a SUPER product, maybe the BEST "DOS 2 type" DOS available (MYDOS users will have fit when they read that!). At \$20, it is a perfect upgrade for an intermediate computer user who doesn't need or want to learn to use SPARTADOS and, since SUPERDOS version 4.4 is dated February 1988, it is likely to still be in active development. Registered owners might soon be offered an upgrade for use with the XF551 double sided drive, the current lack of which is the only shortcoming I view as serious. To get SUPERDOS, contact your local ATARI support group, or write to TECHNICAL SUPPORT at the address above.

* * *

NEWSROOM NOTE

HARD TO BELIEVE, but true: Spinnaker's NEWSROOM publishing program for the ATARI 8-bit, so long asked for and awaited, WON'T work using a real 850 ATARI printer interface! Although it WILL work using almost anything else. The company has assured us they will try to find a solution "as soon as they can get an 850 from somewhere to test it". Yikes. Buyers can get a refund if they can't wait. More reasons to consider other newspaper-layout programs include NEWSROOM's inability to import graphics or text from any other source.

John Nagy

PUBLIC DOMAIN RELEASE
NEWEST FILE COMPRESSION UTILITY

Downloaded from Zmag

I can't begin to tell you about ALL the goodies that are newly available for our 8-bit ATARI's, but several are particularly exciting right now.

ALFCRUNCH - Not a way to smash furry aliens, this is finally a BETTER file compactor than ARC (ARCHIVE). For about a year, ARC (programmed for the 8-bit ATARI by Ralph Walden) has been the protocol of choice for "making little ones out of big ones", because it would:

- 1) (Fairly) reliably take multiple files of your choice and make them all into one file for later extraction, with filenames as in the original.
- 2) Save as much as 50% in total file size over the originals.
- 3) Use the same format as the IBM and ST ARCHIVE, allowing interchange between machines.

The reduced size and recovery of the original filenames is very important to users of MODEMS to transfer files, and also has application for backing up your important files in a minimum of disk space. The DOWN side of ARC has been occasional "CRC CHECKSUM" errors making the output files NOT match the input, a buggy user interface on the 8-bit ARC and UN-ARC programs that can cause lots of lost time and effort, and the SSSLLLLLLOOOOOOWWWW performance of ARC on our 8-bit ATARI.

ALFCRUNCH, by ALFRED of the PROGRAMMER'S AID BBS (416) 465-4182, provides a remarkable alternative to ARC. I don't know how it works... but it WORKS GREAT! Distributed on most of the telecom services and BBS's by now, get it quick. Alfred, whoever he is, doesn't even call this work "SHAREWARE" or ask for donations... although few have been more deserving.

When I first tested ALFCRUNCH to compact a list of files, I was CERTAIN that it had errored out or was somehow "faking it", since it was done in 30 seconds! The same list later took almost four minutes to ARC. It was even faster UN-ALFING (?) the compacted file ...only about 20 seconds!

DE-ARCING its mate took over 3 minutes. And the bottom line: ARC saved 26% compared to the total of the original file sizes, while ALFCRUNCH saved 45%! YIKES! ALFCRUNCH is actually FASTER than the ARC used on an IBM or ST! (How long before "ALFRED" makes a version for the "other machines"?)

I could NOT coax ALFCRUNCH into making any errors of its own... and the documentation that comes with it is VERY thorough. It will pass parameters on the SPARTADOS command line, or run in a full prompt mode on ANY DOS, even with BASIC enabled, Amazing.

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The output file from ALFCRUNCH (version 1.2 and higher) can also be "viewed" with any of the many ARC-VIEW programs floating around the BBS circuit, allowing the file contents and restored sizes to be examined without processing the file to a disk. Although the main reason for the popularity of VIEWERS was that ARC took so LONG to run, ALFCRUNCH users will still appreciate the ability to peek into their stored files.

SO, ALFCRUNCH solves ALL of the problems of ARC except the compatibility with other type computers. As a result, I can only see TWO cases that would make you choose to use ANY other compaction method:

- 1) When you KNOW your file must be later read by machines OTHER than your 8-bit ATARI, continue to use ARC;
- 2) When you must transfer a BOOT DISK or a DOS, use DISKCOM.

(DISKCOM by Robert Puff, now in version 3.2 or higher, is VERY friendly, fast, and reliable, but does nothing to reduce the overall size of the files. What it excels at is making a file which can later be restored to be IDENTICAL (byte for byte, sector for sector) to the original disk. "SCRUNCH" was once a popular format for this same purpose, but Robert's rapid-fire improvements to DISKCOM, plus its ability to make double- and "enhanced-density" (ICK!) disks have made it the clear program of choice.)

↑ ↓ ↓

SOLO FLIGHT REVIEW

Doug Thompson
SNACC

MICROPROSE, The largest manufacturer of flight simulation software has a large selection of flying simulators for the Atari. Like F-15 STRIKE EAGLE, Spitfire ace, Hellcat ace and the one I want to tell you about SOLO FLIGHT.

While looking for a cheaper alternative to Flight simulator II, which I've played on both 8 and 16 bit computers and like very much. I came across SOLO FLIGHT

SOLO FLIGHT, is a primary flight trainer and uses three dimensional graphics to provide realistic takeoff and landings (I especially like the little shadow of the aircraft). The new atari version only has kansas, colorado, and washington to fly in and there is no night flying, but thats OK with me.

Features include visual or instrument flying, full cockpit instrumentation, dual VOR navigation radios, an instrument landing system, and emergency procedure practice.

SOLO FLIGHT is a flight simulator with fun in mind. It's easier to fly than Flight simulator II and a lot more fun. The word that best describes Solo flight is FUN. It's for the pilot who doesn't want to spend lots of time reading a pilot training manuel, but just wants to play the game.

=====HAPPY FLYING=====

↑ ↓ ↓

PROGRAMMING TIP

Captured from CompuServe Atari8 SIG (Edited)

Subject: #NOTE/POINT

I recently decided to open my Dos 2.5 manual and I found the explanation of the 'NOTE' and 'POINT' command really lacking.

The manual (Dos 2.5) has a pretty bad explanation of how and what the NOTE and POINT commands do. I wanted a nice (and easy) explanation of them...

NOTE and POINT are your keys to the fast retrieval of data on disk. You can use NOTE to make a record of the precise spot at which data is stored on a disk. POINT will move the disk head to that precise spot to retrieve the data.

If you have to store a lot of data to disk, NOTE and POINT will allow you to retrieve data in a flash!

Here's a quick demo of their use from the old DOS 2.0 manual:

```

1 REM PROGRAM 1
2 REM THIS PROGRAM READS LINES OF DATA
3 REM FROM THE KEYBOARD AND STORES
4 REM THEM ON DISK IN FILE D:DATFIL.DAT
5 REM POINTERS ARE STORED IN FILE
D:POINTS.DAT
20 DIM A$(40)
25 OPEN #1,8,0,"D:DATFIL.DAT"
27 OPEN #2,8,0,"D:POINTS.DAT"
30 REM Read line of data from keyboard
40 INPUT A$
42 REM If RETURN only, then stop
45 IF LEN(A$)=0 THEN 10
47 REM See where the data will be

```

```

written
50 NOTE #1,X,Y
55 REM Store line of data
60 PRINT #1;A$
61 REM Store pointer to line of data
63 REM Let's show the location on your
screen
65 PRINT "SECTOR # = ";X,"BYTE # = ",Y
90 GOTO 40
95 REM Indicate End of File
100 PRINT #2;0;" ";0
110 END

```

Run this program and you'll end up with two files on your disk. One contains the actual data and the other contains the location of the data on the disk.

Use DOS Option C (Copy) to examine these files on your screen. (Respond to the 'from, to' prompt with filename, E:)

Now for the fun -- let's retrieve the data by reading the file backwards!

```

10 DIM B(20,1)
20 DIM A$(40)
30 OPEN #1,4,0,"D:DATFIL.DAT"
40 OPEN #2,4,0,"D:POINTS.DAT"
45 REM Read pointers into an array
50 FOR I=0 TO 20
60 INPUT #2;X,Y
70 B(I,0)=X:B(I,1)=Y
80 IF X=0 AND Y=0 THEN LAST=I:I=20
90 NEXT I
95 REM Retrieve file in reverse

```

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```

100 FOR I=LAST-1 TO 0 STEP -1
110 X=B(I,0):Y=B(I,1)
120 POINT #1,X,Y
130 PRINT SECTOR # = ";X,"BYTE = ";Y
140 INPUT #1;A$
150 PRINT A$
160 NEXT I

```

The ability to move to any point in a data file is important when fast data retrieval is a necessity and there is a LOT of data.

For example, I have to have quick access to a lot of court decisions on environmental problems. I associate a decision with a list of keywords and the keywords with a set of Pointers to the decision. When I search for the keyword, I get a set of pointers to the location of the decision on the disk and #POW#, my machine instantly displays the decision on my screen.

I could look for the keywords by searching the file from the beginning to the end each time. As a practical matter, I'd end up cooling my heels for a few minutes while I read the entire disk.

NOTE & POINT get me where I want to go instantaneously.

Give it a try. You'll be impressed with the power these commands give you, you'll make your disk drive dance to your command!

! ! !

UNIVERSAL FILE SELECTOR

by T."Rex" Reade, Edited from STmag

I recently examined the Universal File Selector, by Applications and Design Software and all I can say is "shame on you Atari!" Loaded into your ST it works with all application programs in place of the selector now found in GEM. No more leaving a program to perform disk manipulations. It's all at your finger tips! This program performs more than 16 different file functions at the tap of a finger.

Set Path	Variable Format
Create Folders	Full Print Functions
Disk Statistics	Move Folders
Move Files	Wildcards OK
Delete Folders	Lock Files
Rename Files	Unlock Files
Wildcard Delete	Wildcard Extensions
Wildcard Lock	

Complete instructions are included on the disk and the company offers full support to registered users. Active ST user will appreciate the convenience of this fine file and folder management tool. The best part is, ONLY 16k of precious memory is used.

UNIVERSAL FILE SELECTOR is a bargain at \$15.95.

For additional information contact:

APPLICATIONS and DESIGN SOFTWARE
226 NW "F" Street
Grant's Pass, Oregon 97526

(503) 476 - 0071 Noon till 5pm

! ! !

BBS NEWS

By Kelly Hall
SNACC SYSOP

The new BBS program (Express! Pro) has been up and running for a while now and has been getting about 25 or 35 calls a day. Not bad for it being summer time. The new games I've added are a big attraction and although none are as hot as Space Empire, we are expecting some new things any day now. Here is a rundown of the games on the bbs now.

Blackjack

You start with a \$100 bank and play against the bbs dealer. There is no splitting or doubling down, but the rest of the game is the same. There is a Top Scorer screen for those that don't go broke, and Right now Ray Scharton holds top position with \$2500. (Maybe he's a card counter)

Kingdom

Can you run your very own kingdom for 40 years? Keep track of your acres of land and how much grain to give the people. Hopefully you won't have too many natural accidents. Top score is presently held by our very own clubPresident with the score of 392,998,298!!

Scramble

Can you unScramble these words? This is a simple word game, with not so simple words to guess. You get 5 points for every correct answer. High Score is held by Jamie Pierce, at 170.

Life Expectancy

Not a game, but a questioner that will tell you, according to statistics,

approximately how long you will live. I'm looking good at 75, but Jamie Pierce has got it again with 82 years.

Chess Manager

Play a game of chess against another bbs caller. Sign up for a game by finding an available spot, White or Black, and leave a message advertising that you want to challenge someone to a game. An opponent will apply for that game and the game is on. After your move, you can leave a private message to your opponent and the bbs will tell him the move you made.

Another new feature to the board is FileMail. Fmail lets you send a File to another bbs user without any intervention from me. (Sounds to me like the perfect way to get news letter articles to the editor, Hint, Hint.. Editor.) To SEND Fmail, Hit (M) for the Mailroom at the main command prompt - SNACC> and select FileMail. You will be asked for the caller you want to send the file to. He will be Verified as a system user and then you can leave a private message about the file. The bbs program will then setup to receive the file. Upload it and when the addressee logs on, he will be informed that he has F-Mail waiting. After downloading you have the option of deleting now or at a later call. This is just in case you should have a disk error when saving. Thats it for now, Happy BBSing!

SNACC MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Individual membership, \$20.00 annually plus one time initiation fee of \$10.00.

Family membership, \$30.00 annually plus one time initiation fee of \$10.00.

Members have full use of the club BBS, disk and printed Libraries and receive a monthly newsletter.

Associated membership is available to those living outside Clark County, Nevada for an annual fee of \$12.00.

Direct all membership applications and fees, CHECKS PAYABLE to Ron Fred at the monthly meeting or mail to:

SNACC
P.O. Box 43628
Las Vegas, Nevada 89116

ELECTION TIME IS HERE

As stated in the SNACC Constitution and By-Laws, it's that time of year when we as members of The Southern Nevada Computer Club elect a new set of officers to lead our club thru the coming year. Any regular member, in good standing, may hold a club office. Nominations are opened and elections will be held during the August meeting, with the new board taking office effective in September. Nominations will be accepted for the following offices:

President
Vice President 8-bit
Vice President 16-bit
Secretary
Treasurer

Appointed Board Positions:

Software Librarian
BBS Officer
Newsletter Editor

Make your nomination at the meeting or give it to any current board member before the August meeting. For SNACC to continue as a viable ATARI users group we must have the participation of the members and that means having a board of directors chosen by you the members. Make your voice heard and run for or nominate someone for next years board.

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S.N.A.C.C.



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