

SNACC

SOUTHERN
NEVADA
ATARI
COMPUTER
CLUB

SNACC MEETING

Sunday, June 5, 1988
4:00 to 6:00pm

Peter Pipers Pizza
Boulder Highway and Nellis
across from SAMS TOWN

88-9

SNACC OFFICERS

President:	Chuck Ferraris	367-2669
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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

PRESIDENT'S PAGE

Chuck Ferraris

If you haven't been reading the periodicals or calling the bulletin boards lately, then you're probably unaware of a potentially damaging phenomenon called *The Computer VIRUS*. How does this affect us as Atari users? What is a virus and how can I rid my system of it?

A computer virus is a program that can cause a system to re-format it's drives, lock itself up, erase key files, and cause many other strange things to take place.

Where did the virus problem start? Many people think the virus started as a copy protection scheme so that a copywrited program couldn't be passed on without someone paying for it! Others use it for pranks.

If you run a BBS (Bulletin Board System), A virus could be deadly. If it attacks the DOS it could remain dormant until a certain program type is run, the DIR reaches a certain size or a particular command is given, then it comes to life and does its damage.

There are virus programs that attach themselves to the program that CHECKS for the virus it's supposed to detect.

Even worse, is the type that scrambles the FAT (File Allocation Table or Disk Directory) and leaves the files there with no way to access them.

How will I know if I have a virus? The easiest way is to look for changes in file size. If your DOS master disk says DOS is 17,300 bytes, and you get a directory that says DOS is 000 bytes SOMETHING IS WRONG!! Your DOS file should remain the same, EVEN IF YOU HAVE POKED SOMETHING FROM BASIC. If the disk drive spins for no apparent reason, this could be a bad sign. You should compare that disks files to those on a disk known to be vires free. Make sure you don't use your master disks as working copies, because once a virus hits your master disk you could be in for more than just an inconvince.

Who spreads the virus? Many people without even knowing it, although some do it intentionally. So, if you don't know a file, or if you have read about problems with a file, then don't bother to get it, you might regret it later. See you at the meeting.

Chuck Ferraris

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SNACC BBS System Information

Computer_____800XL 256k
 XE Compatible
Monitor_____NEC 1215 Color
Interface_____ATR 8000 64k
Drives_____8-meg Hard Drive
 Percom DSDD
Total Storage__8.5 meg
Printer_____Alphacom 80 Thermal
Modem_____Avatex 1200
Program_____B50 BBS:Express!
Dos_____SpartaDos

The SNACC BBS is run from a Shugart 8-meg Hard Drive, configured by software handlers into 7 double sided/double density 77 track drives for a total of 1,025,000+ bytes per single drive.

An ATR8000 64k interface is used to link the hard drive and the Avatex 1200 modem to the 256k 800XL. The Percom drive is used to bootup and transfer files to and from the hard drive. Through handlers, the system can be setup in two different ways:

In BBS mode, the 7 drives are numbered 1 to 7, with DB: as a 192k raidisk.

In TRANSFER mode, the hard drive is configured with the 7 drives numbered 2 thru 8 with the Percom recognized as D1:

Using SpartaDos, makes the job of
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System Operator very easy. As it supports 128 files per drive, compared to 64 for the Atari Dos's. It also has full subdirectory support and the number of files per drive is only limited by the size of the files on the drive.

The Express BBS program wasn't originally written with a hard drive in mind and only allows 8 file paths. This means there can only be 8 directories available for a total of 1024 files.

The SNACC BBS supports both 8 and 16 bit file transfers. When an 8-bitter scans the files no 16-bit files will be shown and visa versa, although both may be viewed.

I hope this helps you understand how the SNACC board is setup. If you have any questions, Please ask.

SUPER ARCHIVER
For the 1050 Disk Drive

Down Loaded from SNACC BBS

When I got my 1050 disk drive I knew I wanted to modify it for high speed and perhaps improved copying capabilities. It doesn't take long to learn that working with a back up copy is just good sense. The thing I really had to decide on was what kind of upgrade I wanted. After careful thought and comparison I decided to give the Super Archiver a try. I called Computer Software Services and talked with Ron. Just making the order was a special experience because Ron was so good to talk with. He wasn't just interested in taking my order and getting me off the phone. We talked for a few minutes about Super Archiver and what it would do. His information was very helpful and convinced me to give it a try. I placed the order and asked him to ship UPS Blue. There is a \$3.00 charge from UPS for this service but it is worth it. I placed my order on Tuesday and it arrived Friday of that same week. Not bad considering it was sent from Rochester, New York to Portland, Oregon.

Installation involved removing one IC and plugging the Super Archiver module in its place. There were also a couple of pins which had to be lifted and wires soldered to them. The whole process required 6 solder connections and took me about an hour. I could have done it faster but took my time and was careful. It worked as soon as I tried it. The first step was to test the drive with the cover off. The installation includes a speed control

pot which slows the drive down for some operations. This needed to be adjusted for the correct speed. All I had to do was watch the screen and turn the little control screw. The software with the package includes all the drive diagnostics to allow you to do this easily.

Super Archiver comes with two copies of the software disk. There is no way it can be copied so the two copies allow you to use one and save one for emergency use. Ron told me this was done in case one failed, you would have one to use while you notified CSS and they sent you another copy. Naturally I ask why I couldn't copy the disk and was told that the disk had been physically modified by laser. It was explained that the Super Archiver software was compatible with the original Archiver. (Note the original Archiver was not produced by CSS.) At any rate they didn't want to encourage piracy of their product. Yes, you can purchase the Super Archiver software only, for \$29.95. The software by itself will dramatically enhance your old Archiver and will also work with the Happy Archiver Emulator. Not only does it work with the Happy but fixes all the bugs.

Features include double density, ultra-speed read/write, automatic copying, extra memory support, and too many more to mention.

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XEP80 Review

by John Castravet

I waited a long time for release of the XEP80 80 column card for Atari computers. All the time feeding on speculative articles that appeared in ANALOG and ANTIC magazines. All that talk about a built in 16K or 32K of memory, increased horizontal resolution that would have made the 8 bit GEM a possibility.

Finally, a few days ago I received mine via UPS, was I disappointed. No 32K memory built-in, not even 16K. Horizontal resolution is still 320 in graphics mode. In text mode a matrix of 5X9, including descenders, makes itself barely noticeable. The text looks almost the same as any good 80 column software simulator in public domain and on most bulletin boards, well, maybe a little better. All this on a monochrome monitor, on a color monitor the quality is somewhat less, but the difference is not dramatic. If the signal is fed into the luminance input of a monitor with separate luminance and chroma inputs, versus the composite NTSC input of a color monitor, the quality is a little better. But still the picture is white on black. Oh yes, or black on white.

There was a hand written note in the package attesting to the fact that only software using legal CIO vectors to the E: and S: devices will work with the XEP80. This sounds like passing the blame to software authors. Of the little software that's left and supposedly working with the XEP80 (software that does legal screen or editor access) most will still not work, at least properly. Why? All the

features that made the Atari computer a superior 8 bit machine, Display List Interrupts, Vertical Blank Interrupts and Player/Missile Graphics are all gone. They probably went to join the SETCOLOR and DRAWTO commands. Although still accessible in the 40 column mode, but... Also gone is the <BELL> sound, CHR\$(253).

The note also said something about having to readjust the horizontal hold of the monitor. I had to readjust the vertical hold. While the horizontal hold just moved the picture to the right of the screen to bring in the 2 characters that were otherwise missing. The display is supposed to be 80 columns by 25 lines. A simple count revealed that a display 74 columns by 23 lines. Now, this can't be a problem with the monitor, since it displays the standard Atari video output in 40 column by 24 lines with ample border. Even when the 25 lines from ICD's RTime 8 are displayed there is still border left on the top and bottom of the picture. So the XEP80 is over-scanning. Incidentally, forget about the familiar time and date display if using SpartaDos and RTime 8.

Then there's the built in printer interface. I wonder how many Atari users don't already have some kind of Atari 850, P:R Connection or other type of interface. This feature will probably not get anybody to look at the XEP80, they might as well stick an LCD clock on the front of the box.

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WARNING

ARE YOUR ST DISK FILES SAFE?

Philip Hanze
Keeping PACE May 1988

In some of the newer STs there is a very important hardware bug. The disk drive does not recognize a change of disks. If you just bought an ST you should boot it up and open the drive window (double click on drive A). Put in another disk and press escape. If the drive window still displays the same files that were on the boot up disk then you have a bad drive. This can be a very annoying especially when using a program that stores data on disk. The computer never realizes the disk has been changed and doesn't change the directory when the new disk is inserted. It then writes to the disk in the place where it should have written if that first disk was there. If this happens...sorry, you probably just LOST EVERYTHING on that disk! My suggestion is, if you have this bug, BE CAREFUL and make sure the computer knows which disk is in the drive.

[EDITOR'S NOTE: *If you insert a new disk be sure to close the window and reopen it after the new disk is in the drive. This will help until the bug is fixed.*]

You may ask "What is the solution?" I don't know yet. I am going under the assumption CAL-COM (Local Dealer) doesn't know they have computers with bad drives yet, so if you call and ask to trade for another computer it may have the same bad disk drive. This bug is only in the newer computers that are supposed to have the blitter socket. Atari has supposedly found out about the problem and corrected it on models now coming out. I have written Atari and am waiting a reply. If you would like to call Atari their customer service line is (408) 745-4851, or write to:

Atari Service Center
P.O. Box 61657
Sunnyvale, CA 94088

Atari requests that you write the subject of your letter on the outside of the envelope.

[EDITOR'S NOTE: *Its also suggested that you send copies to the dealer you bought from and to the local Atari Representative.*]

TWO SYSTEM PRINTER TIP

Reprinter from SBACE Newsletter May 1988

Here's a tip which could be very useful for owners of two Atari computers, especially the ST and 8-bit systems.

When I bought an ST and installed it next to my 800, I naturally assumed that I could switch my faithful old Epson MX printer between the two computers without any problem. This turned out to be not quite true.

It seems that the 800 programs, like Letter Perfect and Data Perfect, do not send a "Line Feed" character along with each "Carriage Return". Instead, they demand the Epson automatically provide this action. The Epson is happy to do this as long as switch 2-3, inside the printer, is set to ON. Thus, the first thing everyone had to do when they bought an Epson for the 800 was to take it apart and set that switch.

Now comes the ST, and apparently most of its programs, such as the screen dump and Easy-Draw (but not Habawriter) provide their own line feeds. This requires switch 2-3 be set to OFF, because, believe me, Easy Draw pictures look very strange when printed out with an automatic line feed.

The answer to this is not to buy another printer or keep a crochet hook handy to probe inside the Epson for the switch. It turns out the line which carries this "Auto LF" signal from switch 2-3 is brought out of the printer through pin 14 of the Parallel Interface connector. To make use of this, try the following.

1. At some convenient place, probably the control box that switches the printer between the two computers, connect a wire between pin 14 and one side of a single-pole-single-throw switch.
2. Connect another wire between the other side of the switch and pin 19 (ground)
3. Open the Epson (for the last time) and set switch 2-3 to OFF (it will now match all of the other switches in that block).

When the new switch is closed it is in the "Auto LF" position and each Carriage Return will cause the printer to provide an automatic Line Feed, 800 Position. When OPEN the computer will provide the LINE FEED, ST Position.

(Continued from page 3)

One of the things I enjoyed most about using this product was the ease of copying most programs. After booting the program the first command is simply "C" (for copy). The prompt "insert source disk" (press start) is followed by a neat display as the entire disk is being read. You can see the sector map of each track as it is read and watch the copy protection techniques as well. It is important to note that that copies are not "broken" but are in fact duplicates of the original disk. Since the program supports memory upgrades it is possible to make most disks in one pass. I use a 320K 130XE or a 256K 800XL and have had only a couple of disks require more than one pass. These were very full disks.

So far I have been able to copy everything I tried except some Electronic Arts disks with a large number of short sectors per track. The ad clearly states this. In addition I have learned more about disks and tracks and sectors and such than I would have guessed. The neat thing is that there is a lot of untapped potential in this product for me. Not only do you have a very good copying device here, but a very usefull disk analysis tool. Did I forget to mention the built in disassembler? Like I said, there is a lot more to this than meets the eye. While it is easy to use for the person with limited knowledge, there is plenty here for the most advanced users as well.

I now own three modified 1050 drives and the Super Archiver has become my

favorite. I have really enjoyed using the product and am constantly learning more about it. If there is anything I could fault it is the documentation. It is not the fancy glossy stuff you get with some things and can be hard to understand at times. If you look it is all there, but you may have to read a bit. I talked with Ron about this and he explained that they spent most of the effort on the product and its quality. If you consider the price at \$69.95 and all the features, it is well worth it. As the old saying goes "a bargain at twice the price". If you have a 1050 drive I strongly suggest giving this product serious consideration.

Paul Gittins, PAC

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STATIC

Reprint from Modesto Atari Computer Club Newsletter

Concerned about static electrical charges in your computer area? Try using anti-static fabric softener mixed with water and sprayed on the floor around your desk. DO NOT spray the mixture on the computer! This mix will cut the static charge of the floor around your work area. One final warning: this will make linoleum floors slippery, so watch your step!

Mike Marcellin

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PRINT POWER REVIEW

by Doug Thompson
SNACC

HI TECH EXPRESSIONS, the makers of "Card Ware, Award Ware, Party Ware, and Heart Ware" now has "Print Power". A powerful and flexiable printing program for home, office and school. Print signs, cards, banners and stationary with both headers and footers. Design Options include:

6 type faces (fonts) with 7 possible variations, different type sizes from 8 inch for banners to extra small for stationary.

40 border designs in 2 different widths and 7 positioning options.

60 high resolution graphics with "freeform" positioning and variable size, graphics disk from Award ware may also be used.

On-screen templates, line by line text editing and text overlays on graphics.

Printer support is provided for about 20 different printers including the OKIMATE 10 and 20, which I really liked.

With Print Shop costing \$20.00 or more and extra graphics libraries at about \$10.00 each, Print Power is viable alternate costing only \$14.95 at National discount computer. I've also seen it at Toys "R" us and Software City.

For a Print Shop type program at half the price it's not bad at all and I would recomend it to everyone.

Good luck, and Happy printing.....

DOUG.

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(Continued from page 4)

I view the XEP80 more like a gimmick. Atari should have used the parallel port instead of the joystick port. It should have a separate chroma/luma as well as composite NTSC output, and been designed to maintain the reputation Atari computers have based on their graphics capability. It's true that Atari makes great computers, but when it comes to peripherals you should look somewhere else. The Percom, Indus and Rana disk drives, support true double density and were available long before Atari introduced their own "double density ?" 1050 drive, and now they come out with the XF-551, isn't it a little late?

We have one of the most powerful 8 bit machine there is. We brag about our systems everywhere, trying to attract new users while Atari comes out with things like the XEP80 or the XE GS (a full fledged 65XE computer without the keyboard that sells for more), the XF-551 disk drive with no DOS to utilize new features, the SX-212 direct connect modem with no handler program to make it usable. Sure all of these things can and have been corrected but by us the user not by the Atari the company. Come on Atari, give us a break, make us proud.

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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

SNACC MEETING

When: Sunday, June 5, 1988
4:00 to 6:00 pm

Where: Peter Pipers Pizza
Boulder Highway and Nellis
across from SAMS TOWN

Program: Software Demo of
Forms Generator
from 25th Century Software

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