

TARI COMPUTER ENTHUSIASTS WELLINGTON

Wellington Atari Computer Enthusiasts

MARCH, 1985

Dear members,

Herewith the third newsletter for 1985. Apologies for a rather scruffy note from the Secretary are tendered: a more "normal" version was prepared but a clerical error of major proportions caused the wiping of the relevant disk-file. So, this is prepared in haste.

NEXT MEETING! NEXT MEETING! NEXT MEETING!

Our next meeting will begin at 7.30 pm on Wednesday 10 April (but see Chris Caudwell's note on "Bug Busting"). Once again, it will be held at the "LOAVES and FISHES" in MOLESWORTH St (just behind the Anglican Cathedral) in central Wellington. At this meeting, two new tapes will be available for members. In addition to the usual "general" tape, the first "educational" tape of 1985, which has been prepared by Jenny Chisholm and some others will be distributed. Both will be well worthwhile. The third WACE disk will also be available. Tentatively entitled "Elasts from the Past", this disk is a compilation of the best programmes of WACE's 1983 tapes. Ron Pyne will, this time, demonstrate and take orders for his device which allows non-Atari tapedecks to happily work with Atari computers. Commercial software will again be displayed, and there will be plenty of time for members to "walk and talk".

LAST MEETING-THE AGM

The AGM, I'm told, lasted 7-8 minutes. In that time, the President's report and the Accounts for 1984 were discussed and agreed to and a new Committee elected. The full committee list will be published next time (the last first draft had it all beautifully set out), but the names of most immediate interest to members are as follows:

President- Michael Munro (ph Wn 793363)

Secretary- Desmond Rowe (ph Wn 736716)

Out of town Representative- Neil Upton (ph Wn 356505; Address- 15 Mercury Way, Whitby, Wellington)

Programme Librarian- Dennis Dawson (ph Wn 731176; Address 2/205 Cecil Rd., Wellington)

Book Librarian- Felix Bettelheim (ph Wn 759711; Address 207 Glenmore St., Wellington)

Tape Sales- Rogan Maxwell (ph Wn 660867).

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS

These are now due, having been set at \$20.00 per family by the AGM. Payments should be by cheque, made out to WACE and forwarded to P O Box 16011, Wellington. Alternatively, members can pay at our next meeting.

BUG BUSTERS

As was mentioned at the last club meeting we plan to try a different approach to meetings this year

We will add a special trouble shooting section before the usual club meetings. The bug busting session will now start at 7.00. and the main meeting will start at 7.45. If you have a problem with either software or hardware come along to the next meeting at 7.00.

On the other hand if you fancy the challenge of solving someone else's problems or you want to learn from other people's mistakes then you should come at 7.00 as well.

There is a catch. The committee can only provide one computer and that won't be enough to make the whole thing work. THEREFORE if you have a problem you want fixed please bring your computer and T.V. if possible.

The type of problems I envisage we might tackle are,

BASIC language instruction
ASSEMBLER cartridge instruction
instruction in other languages
typed in programs which don't go
Printer interface trouble
club tapes which won't load
dud disc problems
tidying up home grown programs
XL/non XL problems
instruction in running programs
etc

There won't be enough time to do very much program debugging so you will need to bring a copy of any program you want looked at so that someone else can take it home to work on.

A cautionary note.

DO NOT EVEN THINK OF TRYING TO COPY COMMERCIAL SOFTWARE AT THE MEETING.

The reasons for this are obvious. The committee is concerned to avoid any copyright infringements which could hurt us all. In addition the club needs the assistance of the retailers and will have nothing to do with pirating which hurts the software sellers. Please do not bring pirated software to meetings.

The plan at this stage is to have this earlier session replace the BASIC language classes we held last year. If you wish to start learning BASIC, I suggest you either purchase a "do it yourself" instruction book or borrow one from the club and get started. Jenny Chisolm can assist with book purchase and the club has an excellent range of books you can borrow. You can use this

Pre-meeting session to get help and meet others with the same Problems.

This session can also be used by disc users to obtain copies of Public domain discs from the club library. You must bring your own computer and drive Plus Preferably a supply of Pre-formatted discs. (You will be able to buy discs as usual). You can then make a copy of a club disc by paying the club librarian \$5.00.

Don't be concerned that three-quarters of an hour is not long enough. If experience shows that we need more time we can continue on longer quietly without disturbing the Presentations underway up the front.

WACE TAPES

The sale of club tapes is one of our chief sources of income. It enables us to keep membership fees down and an excellent supply of public domain software and written material available for members.

It has always been, and still is our policy to supply WACE TAPES with at least one usable program on a C10 cassette. To ensure this at least four are on each tape, for the price of one. (sometimes there have been 12 programs for the price of one!! and a C30 cassette).

With Atari's introduction of the 600/800XL series computers we now have members with these machines and the 400/800. Memories (RAM) range from 16K to 64K and the operating system used on the new XL's is slightly different to the others. This means some software will not run without a translator program, usually only available on disk. (It's in our library). Other software will require more than 16K to run.

Because of all these variables we can not guarantee that all programs on WACE TAPES will run on your machine. It is now physically impossible to check every program against all the variables.

If you have a problem, bring it up PUBLICALLY at the next meeting and someone may have the answer for you.

Before returning a suspect Tape, should you think you have one, check it out on a friend's machine first. Most "dud" tapes prove to be OK on test and we can't make up next month's tape if we are still checking last month's.

We look forward to providing some great software for your enjoyment in the coming months.

If any of the following are not familiar to you ask for help at the next meeting:- CLOAD; ENTER"C; LIST"C; CSAVE; BOOT LOAD; DISABLE BASIC:

After purchasing an ATARI computer on special at a very reasonable price I was reluctant to spend an additional \$160 on a special tape recorder when I knew I had several ordinary cassette recorders belonging to the kids and the stereo cassette deck at home already.

With the help of a few club members I was pointed to an article in an electronics magazine which showed how to make an 'interface' and then use an ordinary tape-recorder to 'load' and 'save' information through the ATARI computer.

In the first instance I was interested in why the Atari needed an interface when some other computers like Spectrum and ZX81 did not. I found that some computers have these built in to their circuit boards while others like Atari don't but they are needed in all cases.

What the interface does in fact is simply convert the two tone 'noises' that contain the coded information into either +5 volts or 0 volt signals. Simple? Yes: Cheap? Yes: There is now an IC (Intergrated circuit) to do the job which only costs \$15.00. A few resisters and capacitors are needed as well but the cost should not exceed \$30.00 as long as the interface is built into your computer.

If you do not wish to build it in then you will have the additional cost of an ATARI type 13 pin plug.

Like to know more and see a demo of the interface? Be at the next monthly meeting of the ATARI Club.

BARGAINS! BARGAINS!

Three shops were, at the time of writing, running bargains on Atari products. First, Microshop, of Featherston St., are closing one of their two shops and has, therefore, stocks they want to be rid of. Secondly, HMV-Vanvi, of Cuba Mall, have recently started stocking Atari and have some interesting deals going, especially for newcomers to the Atari. Finally, Einstein Scientific, of Willis St., has a number of deals going: the best thing is to get in and see them, in particular, Felix Bettelheim, who works there.

That'll do. See you at the April 10 meeting,
Yours sincerely,
Des Rowe
(Your ill-organised Secretary