Through the Keyhole
A VIEW OF ATARI WONDERLAND

Edward S. Baiz Jr. (Gamer)

A NUMBER of Atari programs were upgraded at the end of 2005. Upgrades are always welcome in the Atari world.

First there is **Zview**, the wonderful picture/PDF viewer program, which is now up to beta version 7. As far as PDF viewing goes, there has been a huge quality improvement in the PDF font rendering. To make things better, a zoom function for the PDFs has been added. There is complete EXIF 2.21 support for JPEG image (you can see useful information like when the picture was taken, if the flash of your camera was fired or not, the model of your cam, etc.).

zView can now extract the thumbnails embedded inside JPEG images created with a digital photo-cam. That means than the thumbnail creation is 20 times faster if the JPEG was created with a camera. It is now possible to skip drives like CD-ROM or DVD drives which can speed things up. There are more zoom levels for the pictures (25, 50, 100, 150 and 200%, previously 50, 100 and 200%). There are other new features and bug fixes.

I tried it out and it worked perfectly except for displaying the PDF of the IMAGE newsletter.

There are some letters missing, but it does give a much better display than beta version 6. To download the new program, go to http://the.zorro.free.fr. When you un-arc the file, you will find there are two versions—one for Mint and one for Magic.

There is a new version of Pierre Tonthat's **Dungeon Master** clone degem. New in this version are all the monsters and hand-to-hand fighting. In this version, the program needs more memory. Coming next will be throwing objects, casting spelling, atmospheric effects and more. To get the program, you can go to Pierre's website or directly in the folder http://rajah.atari.org/files/. This is a big file, about 1.7 MB, unzipped: 7 Mb.

There is a program which I demoed some time ago that I use daily. It is called **SETMMU** and it takes the place of the Hades accessory program. When it is loaded it does this l-o-n-g scrolling thing. Well Lonny Purcell, who also owns a Hades, has modified this program so that it still loads in, but does not do the scrolling. The author has given him permission to do this and it works great and does speed the booting process for my computer. If you have a Hades and want to try this out, you can go to Lonny's web site or contact Lonny at http://www.bright.net/~gfabasic/.

Speaking of Lonny Purcell, he has upgraded his great program AtarIRC. It is now up to version 2.04. Here is his list of the upgrades.

• Gui library completely reworked for XaAes keyboard navigation.

- Nearly all dialogs updated with newer object types. These objects require N.Aes, XaAes, or MagiC or compatible AES.

- New option to redirect /whois output to the console tab.

- 2 minor bugs fixed.

I tried it out and it works. If you want to get in on some Atari chatting on the IRC, Lonny recommends Server: irc1.us.ircnet.net Channel: #AtariScne. Probably somewhere between 2 p.m. and 6 p.m. our time is best. You can pick this program up at http://www.bright.net/~gfabasic/.

For 8-bit users, there is tool that will be coming out that will allow an Atari 8-bit machine to access a Fat32 Filesystem that is on an USB storage device. A preview can be downloaded at http://sourceforge.net/project/showfiles.php?group_id1428&package_id5280

Source code and short Command Summary USBDOS Program is available in the MicroUSB Wiki: http://www.strotmann.de/twiki/bin/view/Microusb/ProjUSBCartUsbDos.

As quoted in the article: "The current version is not really useful for Users. It is more a preview what will be available in the next weeks. This tool will be expanded in the next weeks and will hopefully evolve in a full DOS for USB FAT32 Devices. It will be possible to copy File from USB Device to the Atari and back in the next versions. This version can be used to explore the Device and to list the Root Directory on an USB Storage."
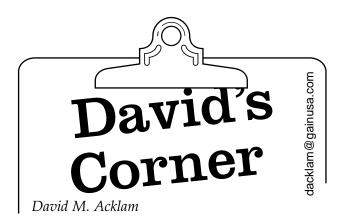
Meeting Memo

Ed Baiz

THE January IMAGE meeting was a good one in that we had five people present plus myself. I have been beta-testing the new DVD software from Anodyne and will explain fully what happened in the next newsletter since I am not completely done.

I also demoed the newest version of **Zview** and showed off its new zoom feature.

I ran a new Mod play program called **MxPlay**. Unfortunately it would not play the Mod files, as it is really intended for a Falcon or an Atari TT with DMA sound capabilities. My Hades has this and uses an old program called GSXB, but it does not work since my Hades contains the old motherboard even though it has been updated. Still, the program ran fine and looked good and I will keep trying to get things working.

See you all next time.

David's Corner

David M. Acklam

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WINTER in the Old Pueblo continues to be mild and very dry this year. It has been well over a hundred days since we had any measurable rainfall and there is no relief in sight. On the up side, our mild and sunny days and cool nights have kept the heating bill very manageable this winter.

When I pulled my column together last month, Christmas had not yet arrived so I wasn't able to mention that there was an Atari item under

our Christmas tree. My daughter gave me a Flashback 2 Atari game system—a throwback to the classic 2600 game system.

It came with two standard size joysticks that plug into a smaller but very similar looking control console. The console plugs into the TV using the standard A/V connectors and is powered by a small plug-in transformer power supply. Unlike the original 2600 system, the unit does not use game cartridges but comes with 40 classic games internally installed. I won't try to list all of the games but they a grouped into four categories which include Adventure Territory, Arcade Favorites, Space Station and the Skills and Action Zone.

My daughter and I played the game Combat and I was quickly reminded why I always enjoyed watching her and her older brother play these games rather than try to play them myself. My eye-hand coordination was terrible back in the 80s when the original 2600 system arrived in our home and this new system clearly demonstrated that after two decades, nothing has improved. But we did spend a good deal of time checking out the games and I really enjoyed watching my daughter demonstrate that she could still master many of her favorite classic games.

One of the games, Lunar Lander, was a game that I actually enjoyed a lot on the original 2600 so I did spend a good amount of time trying to play it on the new system. I have to admit, I had a lot of fun even though I failed to successfully land even once.

An interesting point about this Flashback Atari system is that it cost less than what we use to pay for a single game cartridge. I think my daughter said she picked it up at Best Buy for $19.95 plus tax. It is amazing how this gaming industry continues to advance and still reduces the price. I think it would be neat to see a Flashback Atari 800 computer or even an Atari ST.

On a different note, I had mentioned at the end of last year that I was being trained as a volunteer to operate the 16-inch telescope at the Flandrau Science Center here in Tucson. This training also included learning how to use the Apple IMac computer and several astronomy-related applications.

My training was successfully completed and I have already operated the telescope and observatory for public viewing last month and my second public session is scheduled for later this month. The big telescope is old but like our Atari systems, it still gets the job done. As for the IMac computers, they work just fine and get the job done too but they really didn't make me want to rush out and purchase one.

I have to admit the mechanical layout of the new IMac is a pleasant change from the typical gray box, PC design. Having everything but the keyboard and mouse built into the flat-panel screen is simple and interesting.
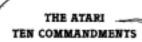
The one-button mouse gave me a few problems when running an astronomy application that I'm familiar with on the PC. I found myself constantly hunting around for the appropriate menu option that I usually have available with simply a right-click on the PC. I'm certain with practice I will figure out the IMac version of this application and will get used to the one-button mouse.

I haven't taken the time yet to see what the current cost factor is for the IMac. Years ago I looked into the Mac and was almost overwhelmed by how expensive the system and applications were. I don't see the IMac in stores where I see PCs so I'm assuming that one still has to go to an authorized Mac dealer.

We have one Apple dealer in Tucson and my last visit to this store was just last fall when I was looking for an external SCSI drive case. They no longer carried this type of product and I didn't stick around the store to check out any of the new Mac products. I might have to take the long drive up to this part of town again and get a feel for how the cost factor has changed in the world of Apple.

For now, my trusty old Atari continues to support my computer hobby, my wife's PC fills the gap for my on-line activities, and I'm content to continue to explore the IMac during my volunteer work at the Science Center.

Meeting This Month

February 20, 2006

7:00 p.m.

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