

THE ADAM

by Paul Pappas

Greetings To The Great White North

Canadian ADAM users probably noticed a decided lack of information about ADAM usage "north of the border." This was not due to a lack of interest on their part, but rather a lack of knowledge on my part. Recent letters and newsletters from Canada give me a much better view of the ADAM community there, a view I would like to share with you.

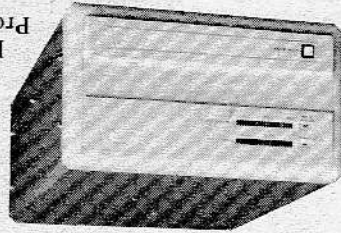
Two user groups were kind enough to send me copies of their newsletters: the ADAM User Friendly Group, 342 Nagel Ave., Orleans Ontario K1E 1R6, and Edmonton ADAM Users Group, 11720 University Ave., Edmonton Alberta, T6G 1Z5; 403-439-7808. Both AUFG and EAUG newsletters, the "AUFG Newsletter" (\$25 annual) and "ADAM's Leaf" (\$20 annual) respectively, are well written and informative. Two well-known ADAM Hackers, Tony Moren and Guy Cousineau are active members of AUFG. Both organizations have existed for several

years with a strong membership base and are well equipped to help ADAM Users from novice to expert.

Ron Mitchell, president of AUFG sent me a very enjoyable letter highlighting his groups activities. He included copies of letters he wrote on behalf of AUFG to Activision, American Design Components, and Telegames USA supporting further development of ADAM compatible products. The AUFG is an excellent example of the majority of and ADAM User Groups, concerned, dedicated, knowledgeable, and active! Keep up the good work, we all appreciate your efforts.

Not just user groups, but dealers sent me information as well. Dan Frazer of Electric Image, Box 890, Palmerston, Ontario, N0G 2P0, send their latest jam packed catalog listing supplies, hardware, retail and PD software, plus a few items available only from Electric City. "ADAM's Leaf" listed some other ADAM dealers, namely Hans Myer, 17 Pel Pk Gdns, Toronto Ontario M6N 1A7, and Trisyd Video Games, 26 Florence Cres, Toronto, Ontario, M6N

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4E4. Some retail chains which still carry ADAM items are Princess Auto, Canadian Tire, and Micro Play, Ltd.

If you represent a Canadian (or any other countries) ADAM user group or dealer I would like to hear from you. Of special interest are newsletters and catalogs which gives me some degree of insight concerning your organization. My goal is to cover the ADAM community wherever it may be, regardless of national boundaries. Viva le ADAM!

The Envelope Please

In the March '89 issue of the NIAD Newsletter, Jim Notini listed the top ten ADAM programs from 11/16/88 through 01/27/89 based on NIAD mail order sales. Jim plans to print a new list every few months. Since neither I nor anyone else can possibly review every ADAM product, this is an excellent way to determine which products ADAM users have voted "the best" by virtue of their hard earned dollars—the envelope please.

#1) Temple of the Snow Dragon by Digital Adventures; #2) PrintWORKS

by Walters Software; #3) Speedy-WRITE V2.0 by White Co; #4) Ghost Zapper by Pitman Software; #5) File Manager V2.0 by AJM Software; #6) ADAMLink III by Tom Clary; #7) (Tie) CopyCART + 2.0 by MMSG and Sub Raiders by Strategic Software; #8) PowerPAINT by Digital Express; #9) (Tie) Clipper and Chess Champ by Digital Express; #10) Pro Golf Champ by Superior Software.

Other programs which demonstrated high sales are Mind Over ADAM by Pittman Software; SmartDSK III by Walters Software Co., Las Vegas Craps by Al Roginsky Software; Sprite-POWER by Digital Express; Clip-Art Vol 1 by Wizards Lair Software; and RamBOOT by Walters Software.

As Jim points out, it's important to remember new products have an advantage over older products which have been on the market longer. Also keep in mind this listing is based solely on NIAD sales and does indicate a personal endorsement. These items (and many others) are available from NIAD, PO Box 1317, Lisle, IL 60532; 312-961-

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3529, and most other ADAM dealers.

Anticipating ADAM

Charlie Smith, possibly the "hardest working ADAM User" in the business, has located yet another company with the potential to create ADAM compatible products. Recently Charlie contacted Asgard Software, one of the largest and most respected producers of TI99/4A software, suggesting they consider adding ADAM software to their product line. Here is an excerpt of the response from Asgard's General Manager, Chris Bobbit.

"Actually, we have at one time or another contemplated producing software for the ADAM. In fact, I have an ADAM sitting around—actually an MSX machine manufactured in Japan, which as you may be aware, is quite similar to the ADAM. I have watched the ADAM world on and off for years. However, I'm not sure if (a) we have

anything we could offer the ADAM community, (b) what publications and/or dealers exist, and most importantly, (c) what we'd need to get started and where to get it."

"Unfortunately, I do not know any ADAM programmers, if there are any [who are] interested in producing software for publication by us, we'd be happy to hear from them, assuming we can find out the information I mentioned earlier."

I sent Asgard information concerning ADAM user groups, publications, and dealers. If you are interested in Asgard producing new ADAM software (you are interested, aren't you?) please send Asgard a short note indicating the types of software you currently purchase and what kind of software you would like to see them produce. Those interested in programming the ADAM for profit should contact Asgard as well. Contact Chris Bobbit, c/o Asgard Soft-

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ware, PO Box 10306, Rockville, MD 20850.

Developers take note. If the MSX computer is indeed similar to the ADAM it may be possible to convert MSX products to run on the ADAM, or produce ADAM/MSX products, thus increasing potential sales. At present I know nothing about the MSX but am attempting to locate relevant information on the system. If anyone has information on the MSX I would appreciate a copy.

You may wonder why Charlie and I often ask you to write letters. Simply stated, sufficient numbers of letters get the job done. Were it not for letters from ADAM Users to *Computer Shopper* magazine, "The ADAM Forum" would not exist. Letters do work! Demonstrate to a manufacturer is money to be made and a product will appear to fill the void. So splurge on

that 25 cent stamp, the computer you save may be your own.

More ADAM Dealers

In response to my listing of ADAM compatible printer ribbons, Otto Fielde of Allied Business Machines, 9281 Earl St, La Mesa, CA 92041, 619-461-6361, sent their latest catalog which lists not only ADAM printer ribbons but ADAMs, printers, ColecoVision expansion kits, disk drives, and a few other goodies. I'll save you a bit of searching by telling the ADAM products are listed on page 35 in catalog #GAC3368.

Allied Creative Engineers, PO Box 95, Clover, SC 29710, is a new company specializing in retail and PD software, with several entertainment titles of their own creation. I was intrigued (and pleased) by the opening paragraph of the catalogs introduction, written by Charlie Evans.

"Hi. Yes, we're new to the ADAM

world. It wasn't too long ago when I first read of the ADAM computer in the *Computer Shopper* magazine. Very shortly thereafter, I managed to find one and quickly began to accumulate peripherals and build a library of software. Now, I've even persuaded a couple of friends to get ADAM computers. We've been working hard for the past few months to put together a new line of software for the ADAM computer." Nuff said!

Jr. Pac-Man By Atari

According to reader mail those ADAM Users with Expansion Module #1 want reviews of the current crop of Atari 2600 games, while other ADAM Users don't seem to care either way. So, here is a short review of Jr. Pac Man.

Jr. Pac-Man is the basic Pac-Man game (which I need not describe unless you lived in a cave for the past ten years) with a few enhancements. The game screen scrolls up and down as you guide Jr. through the maze. There are seven different mazes in the game, each more complex than the last. "Toys" move

through the maze, changing the dots value from ten to fifty points, but don't let the toys eat your power pills! The game has four skill levels which indicate the speed and number of ghost bullies that chase Jr. The speed, graphics, and playability of Jr. Pac-Man are superior to both Pac-Man and Ms. Pac-Man for the Atari 2600. Even the documentation is well written. I never purchased Pac-Man or Ms Pac-Man because of their (very) low quality, but Jr Pac-Man is nicely done and a guaranteed hit with Pac-Man fans. Available for \$10—\$15 from most department stores which sell Atari 2600 games.

OpenFILER 3 + By Acolyte Software

OpenFiler 3 + (\$25) from Acolyte Software, 30 Arborway Dr., Scituate, MA 02066, 617-545-2107, is a utility which converts SmartFILER and RecipeFILER databases to a standard text file, suitable for import to other database managers (like dBase) or for use in word processing. Each database record is converted to a standard text record, with commas delimiting the data fields.



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Program documentation is stored in two SmartWRITER files, OpenFILER and OpenRECIPE for the SmartFILER and RecipeFILER sections of the program, respectively. The documentation is straightforward and very easy to follow. Instructions for using the converted database with SmartBASIC, SmartWRITER, CP/M text editors, and dBase II are included.

Written in SmartBASIC and machine language the OpenFILER media contains SmartBASIC 1.0 and loads via a HELLO program, with each processing option consisting of a separate program in a menu driven system. The package has seven primary options: #1) No Text Field Conversion—converts a range of records which do not use TEXT fields (or allows you to skip text fields); #2) Text Field Conversion—converts a range of records which use TEXT fields; #3) Select Records, No Text Field—converts individually selected records without (or ignores) TEXT fields; #4) Select Records, Text Fields—converts individually selected records with TEXT fields; 5) Exit to SmartBASIC—returns

you to SmartBASIC; #6) Exit to SmartWRITER—returns you to SmartWRITER. A final function converts Recipe FILER databases and functions in a manner similar to primary option 3.

OpenFILER prompts you for the source/destination drives and the destination filename. The database file structure (field name, length) may be listed on the printer if desired. After scanning the database OpenFILER reports how many records are stored. Options 1 through 4 let you specify a numeric range (e.g. 1 to 10) of active (not deleted) records for conversion. In addition, options 3 and 4 allow you to selectively scan and select individual records (viewed as they will appear in the converted file, minus text fields) with the following options: #1) Scan Deleted Records—view/select records marked as deleted for conversion; #2) Scan All Records—view/select all records for conversion; #3) Select All Records—select all records (deleted too) for conversion; #4) Exit Program—your last "legal" chance to abort.

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the option of removing any commas from the field. This is a very handy feature as SmartBASIC and dBase expect commas to delimit record fields, not text. On disk the program converts databases at a rapid clip, but tape to tape can take up to two hours (for a large database). This fact is documented but is not caused by OpenFILER, rather EOS file handler routines and the slower speed of the tape drives are the culprits.

There are a few minor problems. OpenFILER cannot tell if the source media actually contains a SmartFILER/RecipeFILER database. If you insert the wrong media the program will try to access the non-existent database and crash. However, the program seems to function normally if restarted by the RUN command and the correct media is inserted. The documentation warns you to make sure the correct media is inserted, but the program should perform some sort of test and reject the media if no database is found. Specifying which drive the media is inserted in can also be a bit confusing. Drive specifications are required by three different screens, but each screen requests the information in a different format. The source drive is specified by ADAMNET device number (8 for Tape #1, 4 for Disk #1); destination drive is specified by SmartBASIC device number (1 for Tape #1, 5 for Disk #1, etc); and after processing the drive in which the OpenFILER media is (re)inserted is specified by sequen-

tial numbers (1 for Tape #1, 2 for Disk #1). I would like to see drive specifications requested in one format. Further, the source drive is limited to Tape #1 or Disk #1, but the destination drive can be any of the four Tape/Disk drives. I would like to be able to specify any of the four standard drives for both source and destination media (I tried entering the ADAMNET device numbers for Tape #2 and Drive #2 to specify the source drive, but OpenFILER accepts only 4 or 8).

The program will list the database file structure on the printer if so requested. There is no facility for saving the structure listing to a file, an option I would like to see. The program assumes an ADAM printer is present and will not print to an external printer. This problem is bypassed by booting your working copy of SmartBASIC, loading an external printer patch (if not already loaded via a HELLO program, etc.), then inserting the OpenFILER media and running its HELLO program. OpenFILER will perform exactly as if you booted it directly and will print the database file structure on an external printer. Since several PD SmartBASIC printer drivers are available I would like the program to ask which printer you use and load a printer patch if required.

As I stated, these are minor problems and have little effect on performance. The bottom line is simple—if you need to access SmartFILER or RecipeFILER databases from other programs, Open-

FILER 3+ is an invaluable tool which will prevent many long hours (if not days) of frustration. I recommend it. OpenFILER 3+ is available from Acolyte and other ADAM dealers. Please call to verify current pricing before ordering.

Upgrade Notice—Early versions of the program contained a bug which caused errors when reading a RecipeFILER disk (only). If you purchased OpenFILER 3 or OpenRECIPE from MW Ruth, you may obtain a corrected version by sending the original media plus \$1 for postage to Acolyte.

To Err Is Human

In the April '89 "ADAM Forum" I incorrectly reported John Lingrel sold Orphanware to Ron Collins. Although negotiations for such a sale took place, Orphanware was not sold. I apologize for any inconvenience this may have caused. However, Orphanware is closing down shop. A limited number of hard drive interfaces are being produced as a final project. For more information contact Orphanware, 5665 Myers Rd., Akron, OH 44139; 216-882-4720.

The SmartLOGO printer patch listing in the April '89 "ADAM Forum" was "folded, spindled, and mutilated." For an accurate listing of the program send me an SASE with your request and I'll send you a guarantee correct listing. Digital Express' PowerPAINT will indeed print saved SmartLOGO screens on an external printer, but I inex-

plicably left that information out of the article. Bruce Crocker wrote that Orphanware's Fastpatch 2.0 allows SmartLOGO to print on an external printer, and sent a listing to prove it. Although my version of EVE's EOS printer patch does not work with SmartLOGO, later versions may.

In The Queue

Next month I'll review Steve Pitman's ADAM BOMB, the well received new game with thirty, count'em, thirty game screens. I'll also let you in on a few game secrets direct from the author.

Recently I have received many letters of praise for "The ADAM Forum," plus several nice comments in various newsletters. I just wanted to let you know those comments are noticed and appreciated.

I am always happy to hear from other ADAM users. You may reach me via modem on CompuServe (72277,3303) or American People Link (PAPPASPM). For a low tech solution try USPS to Paul Pappas, c/o Triangle ADAM User 2623-A Yanceyville St., Greensboro, NC 27405, 919-375-6159, or in care of *Computer Shopper*. Due to the volume of mail I receive you must enclose SASE if you want a reply (no exceptions). If you leave a message on my answering machine asking me to return your call, be forewarned I will call collect. Don't forget, I send a free game cartridge to the author of the most interesting letter (electronic or otherwise) I receive each month, stay in touch. ●