CLASSIC COMPUTERS   ADAM AD

THE ADA

by Paul Pappas

I recently asked the burning question; "Where is Sol Swift of Digital Express and GoDOS fame?". I'm happy to report he is alive and well. Listed below are excerpts from a letter Sol sent to "Nibbles & Bits" subscribers, which (partially) explains Sol's absence and his plans for the future.

"Hi. Sol Swift here; yep, I'm still alive."

"Where have I been? What has happened to GoDOS? Why am I not answering the business phone? What is the status of the DEI Bulletin Board?"

"I've made several mistakes in operating Digital Express. First my hiatus from publishing N&B for three months last year, though you were informed ahead of time. Then there has been my ongoing presales of unreleased commercial products (this is a major one that will not be repeated!!). Early this year, due to my naive, the company suffered a tremendous abrupt financial loss."

"I apologize for disappointing you. To some extent I owe each of you some money either for backordered products, unfulfilled subscriptions, and (for a few) outstanding orders for in stock products. I will make restitution to those desiring same. But, for the time being I am virtually drained of funds.

The situation has reached the point where I would rather you think of me as stupid than a crook."

"The big question is about the future? Refunds? Nibbles & Bits. Digital Express? GoDOS , and so on? What would you like me to do? Is it possible for me to regain your confidence in the light of this episode of irresponsibility?"

"To get everything cleared up, I'll need your help. If you'd just prefer a pro-rated refund on your newsletter subscription and/or any backordered item, please send me a statement for each (same envelope). On each statement include a priority code for the issuance of your refund, on a scale of 1 to 10. If you want the refund as soon as possible, use a code of 10. If you want the refund but you can wait a while, use code of 1, and so on."

"If you have an outstanding order for in stock items, please send me your order again or just give me your name and ID number and I will rush your items right out to you."

"For those who backordered items, it would help greatly if you would send me an index card for each item. I can then file and cross reference the cards for ease in processing."

I realize Sol's letter lacks specifics concerning his recent problems, but

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suffice to say ADAM users close to Sol indicate he weathered several related problems at once, and is sincere in his efforts to reorganize Digital Express. It may interest you to know Sol did arrive at the GCAUG meeting and demonstrated both GoDOS and GoBASIC, both of which were well received. It appears not only is Sol and DE back to stay but the fabled GoDOS is alive and well.

More CP/M Disk Format Conversions

Jugg'ler-128 ($20) from Herne Data Systems, Ltd (PO Box 714, Station 'C', Toronto, ON, M6J 3S1, Canada, (416) 535-9335) is a Commodore C128 CP/M program which reads, writes, and formats over 130 types of CP/M disks, including (you guessed it) ADAM CP/M. The program has the ability to analyze an unknown CP/M disk format and report possible matches from its internal database of disks types. The program supports the 1570, 1571, and 1581 disk drives plus it runs on the C128-D. Even if you don't have access to an IBM machine, easy and inexpensive CP/M disk format conversion may yet be yours.

New Telecommunication Service

Tymnet, one of the worlds largest telecommunication networks, now offers the StarLink outdial service and the Galaxy BBS. The StarLink outdial service gives you access to computer systems in over 130 major cities by calling a (in most areas) local Tymnet number. There is an initial sign up fee of $25, and a monthly service fee of $10. Users in the US pay $1.50 per hour of non-prime time usage (prices higher in Alaska, Hawaii, and Canada.) Baud rates up to 9600 is available in some cities.

The Galaxy BBS is $2 per hour (plus StarLink charges) and features multiplayer games, a chat lounge with private channels, US and World news, the StarLink member register, plus other features commonly found on BBS systems. StarLink members receive two free hours on Galaxy each month.

For more information on the StarLink/Galaxy network call (800) 321-0156 (voice) or (800) 343-7304 (modem.) When the system asks for an ID enter "NEW." My thanks (and a free game cartridge) to ADAM user Peter Ames for this information.

The ADAM Connection BBS

The ADAM Connection BBS may now be called tool free at (800) 282-8193. Due to the cost of the 800 number, a fee is charged for using the BBS. The suggested fee is $10 per month. Not only is the fee structure extremely reasonable, it is by far the least expensive

way for ADAM users all over the country to stay in touch. Unlike most fee-based service or long distance phone charges, almost all ADAM users can afford to use the ACBBS on a regular basis. This an active board frequented by other ADAM BBS Sysops and deserves your support. If your modem is sitting on the shelf due to the cost of telecommunications, now is the time to dust it off and call the ACBBS. Current hours of operation are 8pm to 7am Mon-Thu, 5pm to 10am Fri-Sun, with plans to expand to twenty-four hour service if usage warrants the change.

American Design Components

Several months ago I reported ADC expressed a genuine interest in creating new products for the ADAM, and requested you write Gary Lawrence at ADC with a list of items (new and old) you would like to see and the prices you are willing to pay. At present, ADC indicates response to their inquiry has been less than expected. If you want ADC to create new ADAM products you MUST write and make your voice heard. You and I know there is sufficient interest and demand for new ADAM products, but letters are the only way we can convince ADC. The ADAM community is letting a golden opportunity slop through their fingers. Please, please, please write ADC and let them know a strong market exists for ADAM products. You can make a difference. Write Gary Lawrence, c/o American Design Components, 815 Fairview Ave., Fairview, NJ 07002.

ADAM Bomb by Steve Pitman

ADAM Bomb ($20) is a new game by Steve Pitman, a name many of you will recognize as a top designer of ADAM game software. Via a short animated screen you are "beamed up" to a UFO by hostile Adamites and taken to the planet ADAM. There you are put to the test. If you wish to return to Earth you must complete thirty(!) games screens, but you may only make five attempts. There is no printed documentation, rather the self-booting program lists explicit instructions on the screen if requested (still, I would like to see printed documentation, or at least a text file the user could print.) Please note due to the size of the game a 64K or larger RAM expander is required.

Each screen is a maze throughout which diamonds and other items are hidden. The object of the game is to recover the diamonds. Each game screen may contain the following objects. Diamonds—25 points each; you must find all the diamonds to advance to the next level. Bombs—10 points each; these are your only way through the brick walls. Brick walls—80 points for each segment destroyed with a bomb. Keys—15 points each; these are your only way to unlock doors. Doors—there are up to three pairs, red, blue, and yellow; entering a door transports you to its corresponding twin, wherever it may be. Boulders—the original immovable object, indestructable. Trap 1—you may cross this trap once, after which it turns into a boulder. Trap 2—you may cross this trap twice, after which it turns into a boulder.

Most items and passages are hidden by "dirt" when you begin a new screen. Items become visible when you come in contact with them. You literally must "map" each section of the maze to determine your course of action. If your situation becomes hopeless (and sometimes it will,) press the right fire button and press any key on the controller. This sacrifices a man but lets you begin the same maze again (lets not make the

same mistake twice, ok?)

Don't be surprised if it takes several attempts to master each maze. Use up your bombs to enter an empty room, while diamonds still reside in other rooms, and the party is over. Each maze is a large puzzle, and like a puzzle, the pieces only fit together one way. Mastering a screen takes a bit of detective work.

But lets say you are a video game wizard and successfully navigate all thirty screens (yeah, right.) Do you put the game on the shelf to collect dust. Is the party really over? No, because ADAM Bomb comes with Bomb Designer, a utility which lets you create your own game screens. Even better, you may create multiple sets of screens, with up to thirty screens per set.

When you are finished designing a screen press any key on the keypad. Bomb Designer will check the screen for errors and either accept the screen or list an error condition (like no diamonds) for correction. You may view or edit any screen before saving the set.

Each saved screen set is given a file type of the diamond and has status bits set so only ADAM Bomb (or file utilities) may access the file. When you are ready to save the screen you may choose which icons you want hidden. When editing/viewing a screen set all icons will be displayed. You must rehide them when you save the set (somewhat annoying, but quickly accomplished.) You may also select the colors of the brick walls and the "dirt" which hides the objects until uncovered. Items are selected by pressing a fire button until the desired item is displayed in the cursor. A more convenient method would be to select the item from the displayed list, but the current method does work better than expected.

According to Steve, no one has cracked all thirty screens, so he let me in on two very helpful game secrets. Secret 1: Extra Men—Start the game with ten extra men. At the title screen (where it say "Press Fire to Begin") type "adam" and the word "EXTRA" will appear. Secret 2: Skipping Screens —You must get two bombs. Bomb any diamond twice, you will get both bombs back and bonus points. Also, when the current screen is completed you will skip ahead a couple of screens.

If you like to solve puzzles, you will love ADAM Bomb. Not only will Steve's devilish game screens make you sweat and strain, just think of the fun you'll have torturing your friends with game screens of your own design. ADAM Bomb is available from most ADAM dealers.

On The Horizon

Next time I'll produce the long over-due review of NZCOM, an excellent full featured CP/M replacement that any CP/M user can install and use, regardless of the level of expertise.

I am always happy to hear from fellow ADAM Users. Contact me in care of the Triangle ADAM Users, 2623-A Yanceyville St. Greensbooro, NC 27405-4407, (919) 375-6159. Due to the volume of mail I receive, you must enclose an S.A.S.E. if you expect a reply (no exceptions.) If you leave a message on the answering machine asking me to return your call, be forwarned I will call collect. I may also be contacted via E-Mail on American People Link (PAPPASPM), Compuserve (72277,3303), or in care of *Computer Shopper* Please note I lost my local link to FIDO Net's ADAM-GENERAL Echo, but hope to reesttablish contact in the future.