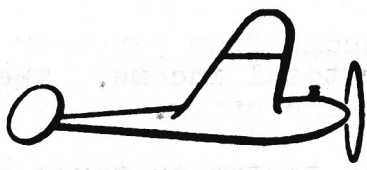


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June 14, 1979

Bob Fabris
3626 Morrie Drive
San Jose, CA 95127

Dear Bob,

Received your letter a couple of days ago. Your additions to SKYROCKET are terrific. I developed the program before I had fully puzzled out the &(9) function. The red vapor trail is just what the program needed!

The corrected correction for CHECKERS is much appreciated. It jumps men, now, but I can't get it to work with the computer's kinged pieces. They just sit in the back row, ignored by the computer entirely, even though the human player's kings work just fine. At the end of the game I played, the program gave up and said "YOU WIN" when I had reduced it to three king pieces in my back row. It never moved the kings during the game at all, nor did the piece reflect it's king status graphically. (The human players kings change from one solid bar to two thinner bars, stacked...)

I will be meeting on Wednesday, June 20 with Bally's national sales manager, who is coming to Evansville for a distributor show. At this time, I intend to get on his case pretty heavy about the keyboard expansion. This may be my only chance to influence Bally on this matter, so I had better make the most of it. The potential is there for Bally to wrap up a large hunk of the personal computer market, but they are blowing it by holding up the keyboard, by failing to provide adequate documentation for Bally BASIC, and by failing to properly promote the system, service current customers, and provide software. I have just seen information on ATARI's new system, and Bally is going to lose customers to this new system if it doesn't provide the keyboard FAST.

What more can you tell me about the new "language chip" you briefly mentioned in your letter? Is it for the current unit as a VIDEOCADE like Bally BASIC? Is it an extended BASIC or a new language altogether? Could they intend to put ZGRASS/GRAFIX on a cartridge in lieu of producing a keyboard?

I am encouraging all local Bally owners to write Bally encouraging a firmer commitment to expansion of the unit and demanding definite answers on the keyboard. If all 600-plus ARCADIANS would write, maybe it would make a difference. Unfortunately, Bally is in the unique position of being able to well afford to ignore public

OVER

demand, since their income from consumer products is only a tiny, tiny fraction of their total income. They just don't seem to give a damn one way or the other.

I've given your address to two or three Bally owners in this area that I contacted through the Evansville Computer Club. One man I talked to last night was frankly flabbergasted at all the information that was left out of the manual. I showed him ~~MEM~~ & (9), the music oscillator and vibrato controls, ABS(X), the PEEK and POKE functions, ROM subroutines, etc. and he nearly lost his teeth! He echoed the sentiments of so many others--"Why doesn't Bally let people know what they have here?" I wish I had a good answer. (His check, by the way, is no doubt in the mail to you...)

428-0015

P.S. Added 24 hrs. later - Two more new ARCADIAN memberships on the way today...

If you have any suggestions for things I can say to the sales manager, give me a call before Wednesday, June 20. My phone # is (812) ~~MEMMEM~~ 428-0015 and I am home after 7:30 CST on Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday nights for sure, and usually available after 10 p.m. all other nights. Alternatively, call me at work at (812) 477-9661 Mon., Tues., Thurs, or Fri. between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. local time. Don't call between 11:30 a.m. and 1 p.m. though as I am sometimes at lunch. Perhaps you have talked to him already in the past. If so, write me and we'll compare notes.



My light pen still won't work. I will have to breadboard the circuit to check it out. More delays.

This is unofficial and--as yet--not for publication, but I am negotiating with a major wargaming wholesaler in the East to supply him with game support software for the Bally system. He intends to become a Bally wholesaler, and will deal with Bally dealers by mail order if this goes through. I will be acting as his consultant on this project. Nothing is settled yet, but if it works out, we may be able to provide Bally dealers nationwide with a source of reliable software. If you wish, you may run in the ARCADIAN that I am ~~MEMMEM~~ interested in hearing from programmers who wish to license or sell their software. I can make NO PROMISES yet, though. It might help if I could give him some idea on these programs--availability, reliability and such. *Again P.S. Holdoff on this. Negotiations still proceeding, but slowly!*

So far, most of the Bally software I've seen is pretty amateurish in ~~MEM~~ terms of presentation and documentation, while being surprisingly sophisticated in terms of ~~MEMMEM~~ actual program writing. What is needed is a tutorial on documentation, and my submission for such an article is enclosed. An improperly documented program is almost as bad as no program at all.

A warning, also unofficial. (please don't quote me as the source...) Apple TV and Computing's software may not be the best quality... I've had a look at a friend's copy of some software he got from them. None of it is documented or comes with instructions, though some limited instructions are a part of the program. Some programs, like FUNANGLE seem to need no extra instructions, whereas most, like their FLIGHT SIMULATOR and SUB SEARCH, are very confusing without more explanations. The programs they offer do not show an authors name. Is Bob Weber in Michigan aware that APPLE TV is selling his programs? (I suppose they are his, as they have the same names...) Is he aware that they are selling them with no documentation and no author credit?