

BALLY OWNERS _ _ _

Thanks for your response to my ad. All the letters I've received have indicated interest in the Bally, some from non-owners.

What is it? The first package is just a TV game player, albeit a smart one. Each of the unit's controllers has a trigger and a knob. The knob gives you a rheostat control as well as a joystick with 8 directions of motion. The controller that is plugged into the leftmost receptacle also has remote capability for screen operations. Internal to the machine is a three-game package and a 4-function calculator. The only exciting thing here is the 92 line capacity and 10 memory capability. There is a lot of potential, but it is locked up inside. A color TV is a must, because you miss so much otherwise. This basic unit does not interface with anything on the market now, as far as I can tell. The initial cost of the package, with 4 controllers, was \$299. It is currently being sold for \$220, plus \$30. per pair of controllers. In addition to JS & A and NCE, WARDS also sells the unit, at \$250 with one pair of controllers. It is also available at local outlets, ERA 1, in Cupertino, Cal. has them here.

Some game cartridges (cassettes, whatever - they have no tape in them) are available now, between 20. and 25. dollars, with two to four games per item.

What's next? The first item coming is a stopgap, a Tiny BASIC cartridge that slips into the game slot, at \$50. Along with this is an overlay card to 'convert' the calculator keyboard. Thirteen keys will have a 5-fold function each, while three will have 4 functions each. This will give the equivalent of 77 keys, plus 6 more one-function keys, or a total of 83. This is accomplished by four 'color' keys that will select the function for each key. In operation, for example, the arrangement to get the command "GOTO", one might have to actually punch "BLUE, +" . The overlay will take care of this, but the system is awkward at best, and error-prone at worst. My understanding is that there will be a cassette control so that programs can be stored and recalled. This is not in any of the advertising. I ordered one of these on 4/10, and was told of a 5-6 week delivery by JS&A. The above is hardly a dent in the Tiny BASIC's capabilities.

After Tiny BASIC, comes the biggie, the "ADD-ON MODULE". This will be a keyboard with full BASIC, cassette drive, extra memory. Both JS&A and NCE offer a full trade-in of \$50 plus T.B against the Add-On's price of \$300 (no guarantee on this price yet) Orders will be taken in August.

Those who bought from JS&A prior to Feb 28 are also supposed to receive an extra 'goodie' when they buy the Add-On module, at no cost. This is called "Dial-a-Bargain" (!) that is basically a telephone modem and special cartridge. It's purpose is to allow computer-to-computer dialog, with the JS&A machine in Ill. The modem should be useful for owner-to-owner communication via telephone. In addition, another cartridge is to be supplied free that gives a self-diagnosis capability, identifying defective internal components. To others, this item is \$20.

A few words about myself - I'm a mechanically-oriented engineer with Lockheed at their Sunnyvale , Cal. facility. My interest in electronics lies toward radio operation, I am a licensed ham and registered CB owner. I'm heavily involved in collecting and restoring classic radios - the multi-band, multi-tubed, multi-dollar high performance receiver of the thirties, epitomized by the E.H.Scott.

What about this Group? We are all interested in knowing what we can accomplish with the Bally. It seems to have an awful lot of potential. We need to know the identity of each of the 50-pin connector leads, how the three-pin connector works (is it the cassette's interface), how to interface to a standard if the 50-pin job is not to S-50 requirements, what other mechanicals we can tie to, what retail outlet has the best "deal", etc.

We start off feeling around - As any of us discovers something, it should be shipped here for dissemination to the group. Also questions for someone in the group to answer. I would like to have Bally cooperation, as well as that of JS&A and NCE. I plan on a little wider publicity via the hobby magazines. KILOBAUD plans on an article reviewing the Bally.

Personally, I do not plan on digging deeply into my own unit, but I am willing to try out things that members of the group dream up to improve the unit (if they guarantee not to cause permanent damage!).

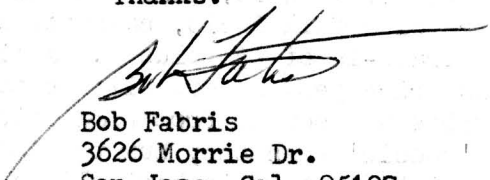
I plan on underwriting this for a while unless it blossoms out too fast and postage eats me up. It will be non-profit and will be entirely dependent upon your inputs - questions, answers, and ideas.

Next time you write, please indicate-

bought from:

serial number:

Thanks..



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