

# SPACE

## NEWSLETTER July, 2002



### **President's Corner** **by Michael Current** **July, 2002**

20 years ago, in 1982, when SPACE was established. . .

- Atari, Inc. had over 50 office buildings in the Silicon Valley and employed almost 10,000 people
- Mr. Jay Miner, quit his job at Atari, Inc. and formed his own company called Amiga. After heading up the chip design team for the Atari 2600 as well as the Atari 400 and 800 computers, Miner tried to convince Atari to consider building a computer based on the Motorola 68000 microprocessor. Atari declined based on anticipated costs which inspired Miner to go off on his own.
- Atari, Inc. reduced the suggested retail of the 800 home computer to just under \$900.
- Atari, Inc. released the 5200 gaming system. It featured 16K RAM and sold for \$299.
- Mr. Ron Luks convinced CompuServe to allow Atari user support forums on the online service. He created the SIG\*Atari forum for 8-bit Atari computer users.
- K-Mart offered home computers, peripherals and software by Timex-Sinclair, Atari, Commodore and Texas Instruments.
- Midway released TRON as a coin-operated arcade game based on the movie from Disney by the same name. The game went on to take in more gross funds than the movie itself.
- Texas Instruments, Inc. (TI) invested \$25 million promotional dollars, complete with celebrity spokesperson Mr. Bill Cosby, to push the new TI-99/4a home computer.
- Compaq Computer Corporation was founded.

- Electronic Arts, Inc. was founded.
- Sun Microsystems, Inc. was founded
- The Weather Channel was founded.
- Activision reported \$66 million in revenues.
- Apple Computer reached \$1 billion in annual sales for the year and was the first personal computer company to do so.
- Atari, Inc.'s sales for the year exceeded \$2 billion; 2/3 of the entire market. Atari International was ranked among the largest advertisers in the U.S. Atari was making back the price it paid to buy out Nolan Bushnell in 1979 at a rate of about every two days.
- Coleco Industries financially exploded with \$510 million in gross sales. Net income was \$40 million.
- Microsoft swelled with annual sales of \$34 million and 200 employees.
- Sun Microsystems, Inc. did \$8 million in its first year with 80% originating from the university markets.

[above data from I.C.When, ©1997-2002 - Donald A. Thomas, Jr., <http://www.icwhen.com>]

AND, in July 1982, a few St. Paul, Minnesota-area Atari computer users banded together to form a club, which they named S.P.A.C.E., St. Paul Atari Computer Enthusiasts. (SPACE was not the first Atari computer club in the Twin Cities, as TAIG, the Twincities Atari Interest Group had started in May of 1981.) By October 1983 (the earliest SPACE newsletter I have seen) SPACE had already grown to over 80 members, including President Chris Tiggemann, Vice-President Steve Berglund, Librarian John Benke, Newsletter Editor Steve Pauley, Treasurer Max Feuer, and Cassette Librarian Sherm Erickson. At that time the club met at the Minnesota Federal Savings and Loan building on Lexington Avenue near Larpentour, in Roseville. The big story that month was the new KOALAPAD & Micro Illustrator.

While TAIG disbanded in 1988, SPACE and its special interest group MAST, Minnesota Atari ST, thrived, though tension between 8-bit and ST users seems to have become something of an issue. Early in 1990 SPACE and MAST split in separate directions, including separate newsletters. It is not clear to me how long MAST lasted on their own, as I've only found a few issues of the independent MAST club newsletter.

SPACE, however, has continued on, serving primarily 8-bit Atari computer users but also welcoming users of the full range of Atari computers, for an incredible 12 additional years since splitting from MAST. And here in July 2002, we are STILL GOING!!

Come to this month's meeting/party to celebrate the 20th birthday party of SPACE. Already on the sign-up list:

SPACE (c/o Greg Leitner) - birthday sheet cake,  
submarine sandwiches

Greg Leitner - pop

Glen Kirschenmenn - ice cream

Michael Current - plates, forks, napkins

Nolan Friedland - chips?

Lance Ringquist - cookies?

Anything else you want to add to the mix, just bring something along!

Last month we had a relatively grueling discussion about the proposed Bylaws changes. Difficult, but important and well worth it. After all, this is YOUR club. SPACE would not have been here for the last TWENTY YEARS if you didn't care, so I say we are very fortunate to continue to have club members who care enough to try to make the club the best it can be. I personally would prefer to take a month off from that topic to that we can take the time to celebrate and party this month, but if people want to continue the discussion this month I would support that as well.

By the way, Atari, as a brand of international French software conglomerate Infogrames, here in 2002 now sports 10 new video game titles for PS2, Xbox, GameCube, and Windows PC. Meanwhile, SPACE remains in 2002 where it started in 1982: an independent Twin Cities area club of users (and friends of users) of Atari computers. Long Live SPACE!

Thanks, keep using that Atari, and come to your next SPACE meeting, Friday July 12, 2002.



## Treasurer's Report by Greg Leitner For June, 2002

Welcome back Red! Your input is very important to the Club and anyone who was at the June meeting would have to admit it was very spirited. This is exactly what our meetings needed, some new blood and ideas. I know Red will be going back to Arizona in a few months so we have to take advantage of our July and August meetings and get Red's input on many other Club activities. Thank you Red for taking an active role in the few meetings that you are able to attend.

The Club needs feedback from all our members on the topic of voting privileges and other matters that affect the operations of SPACE. This is needed because of the interest we are getting from out of the Twin Cities area about becoming a SPACE member. If you are confused about this issue you are not alone. Just come to the next meeting and you will find out how complicated what seems like a simple issue really can be.

We had eight members at the June meeting thanks to Red and Rich attending and renewing their memberships. Please keep those memberships up to date and remember to pick up a Dom that Glen puts a lot of personal time in each month. Here is the breakdown for the Club's treasury for the month ended June 2002:

Beginning balance on June 1, 2002: 1,088.02

### Receipts for the June meeting:

Memberships	30.00
Doms	<u>6.00</u>
Total receipts for June	36.00

### Expenses for the June meeting:

BBS phone	<u>10.00</u>
Total expenses for June	10.00

Ending balance for June 2002: 1,100.07

I know this balance is almost unbelievable for an Atari Club but I need to remind you that there are expenses that have not been billed and therefore have not yet been paid. Because this is not a financial statement these expenses have not been deducted from our balance. So expect a reduction for the second quarter room rental and

newsletters dating back to Sept. 2001. I will e-mail Mike Schmidt and get a bill for the newsletters so that expense should be in by the next meeting and I may have to call for the room rental bill as they always seem to forget to bill us. I am sure there are other groups out there who rent the room that are not very happy with me when I call for the bill. Sue always thanks me for reminding her about the billing not only for SPACE but for all their other groups that rent.

Don't forget the big Birthday bash next month. I guess this will be year number twenty. WOW!!! I am bringing the pop and the Club will splurge for the subs and a special anniversary cake. Other members have signed up for cookies, ice cream, chips and utensils. Anyone else attending should try to think of something to share. Potato salad, pickles, beans are just a few suggestions. Come join in the fun and experience the ongoing saga of SPACE.

**Picture  
Needed**      **Secretary's Report  
By Brian Little  
For June, 2002**

I Did Not Receive Any Minutes From The Secretary!

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--From: Kevin Savetz <savetz@northcoast.com>  
--Date: Fri, 21 Jun 2002 14:31:17 GMT

Halcyon Days: Interviews with Classic Video and Computer Programmers has  
is now available online. This is a book of interviews with 8-bit game programmers that I read years ago when it cost \$20. There's an Atari bias among the choice of interviewees, even including some authors of games only available through the Atari Program Exchange.

<http://www.dadgum.com/halcyon/>  
[This news item courtesy of Atari.org -  
<http://www.atari.org>]

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--From: Olivier LE BIHAN <olivier.lebihan@free.fr>  
--Date: Fri, 21 Jun 2002 02:19:00 GMT  
Hi There !

Here is a tool I made to help in Atari XL tape recovery and make it E A S Y !

Here are the tools I used you make my BASIC stuff work

on my PC:

- Save Atari program as ASCII (LIST "C:)
- Record it in a wav file on the PC
- Use WAV2CAS to generate a CAS file
- Use CAS2BAS to generate a BAS file
- Import the BAS file into a disk image with ATRUTIL
- Load the Atari program with XFORMER , using ENTER "Dn:...."

I included the source also , if anyone wants to continue it

<http://perso.wanadoo.fr/olivier.lebihan/tool/>

Enjoy !

Olivier

Olivier LE BIHAN

[olivier.lebihan@free.fr](mailto:olivier.lebihan@free.fr)

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--From: "Steve Thornton" <steve@micromiser.com>  
--Date: 1 Jul 2002 17:01:22 -0500

To: Everyone  
From: Steve Thornton, Pres.  
Micromiser Software

In 1993 - 1994, Ben Poehland posted several messages to this group trashing me personally, though still saying some nice things about our software. Since it looks like these messages will come up forever, I need to post my side of this story.

I first became aware of these messages a few years ago. I attempted a search for a way to contact Ben so that possibly we could straighten this out between us, now that we are older and wiser. I did not find a way, though I didn't spend a lot of time.

Long after the 8-bit Atari market was dead, long after having sold or receiving any support requests for 8-bit software, and long after I had forgotten about these 8-bit products, I received a call from Ben. He informed me that one program, Turbofile, was a great program and that a lot of loyal 8-bit Atari users would still like to use it. This was news to me, but of course I was flattered. Ben wondered if he could acquire the rights, etc. to the



program and distribute it, including as I recall, the source files. Well the "rights" were worth zero to anyone at that time. But I wanted to be compensated for my time to dust off one of the 8-bits to see if it would still work, find the disks in the garage, find the disks with the latest source files, and see if I could put something together that would still work as intended. Even fixing the one bug ever found in that program (but for which there was a work-around).

I estimated the hours this would take and gave Ben a figure based on these hours X my support rate at that time. That amounted to \$600 or \$800 as I recall, but could have been half or double that. In any case, that was fine with him. I don't know if Ben said at that point that he would like me to sign a contract, but if he did I would have said Ok.

I then spent a few hours dusting off the Atari's, etc., and finding all the resources for this program and verifying that I had something that would work. I think part the time I had estimated included commenting source files. I assume so because it wouldn't be worth much without those. These 8-bit programs were all cryptic as hell trying to jam everything into 32K, and comments gobbled too much room to be included in the source code. Of course the code read like English to me at the time I was still supporting it. I would need to create a separate file for this. Well, so far, considering my time I was a few hundred dollars in the hole already. But I saw in my files that Ben was a customer years before that, and he sounded pretty dedicated and legit to me, so no problem.

As I recall, I next received a contract that no software developer in their right mind would sign. Ben had spent days writing this, according to him, and I'm sure everything sounded perfectly reasonable to him. But Micromiser would have legal liabilities. I don't recall anything like the limits of liability you see all the time in software, like limiting incidental and consequential damages, etc. I think there was one or two other problems, i.e. some sort of liability for Micromiser, which I would have addressed, but can't remember. In any case, our deal did not compensate Micromiser for any liability, or any time beyond the activities I've described. After the exchange of resources, that was supposed to be the end of it. If there were no contract, it wouldn't have been an issue. But Ben wanted a contract, and that made it an issue.

Well, the part about the contract was fine with me, though I had never had a contract for anything this minor before. I could understand how Ben would worry about this or that, as it seemed the first time for him. By that time I had run a home building business, a Nightclub,

and a software company. I had lots of experience with contracts. In any original contract for one particular deal, it is routine and expected for it to go back and forth a number of times, as any lawyer or experienced business operator will tell you. (It was apparent to me that Ben was neither, though I can't know for sure). So I made a few changes or added provisions (I think Ben said three or so), and sent it back. It may have gone back and forth one more time, I can't remember. Now by this time, I'm more hours in the hole on this deal, but that's ok, everything's going along nicely in my mind.

Then, as I recall, I received a letter (or whatever) that amounted to a tirade from Ben about how great his contract was, how much time he spent on it, and how (pick any nasty word you like) I was to question it or want to change it. And if it did go back and forth a second time, he wanted to revert to the original and have me sign it with no changes whatsoever -- that part I will never forget.

Well, I don't know if I got steamed at this point, but I don't think I did. But one thing was for sure: I wasn't going to sign that original contract and then worry about lawsuits (or whatever other liability) from then on - with no compensation for same. Well, that was it for Ben too, because he evidently wasn't going to do business unless I signed his contract, in his words, without making any changes. Fat chance of me, or any business owner anywhere, of ever doing that. Ask any lawyer. This is just not how you do business.

Ok, at that point or shortly thereafter I was steamed. I had spent a lot of time, and had considerable enthusiasm, only to find out I had to sign this contract written by an amateur without being able to revise anything or add any provisions of my own. That was the end of the matter for me. I wouldn't communicate with Ben on any subject after that, just more wasted time in my mind. Whether words were said, I can't remember. I don't think I said anything to make the situation (and I'm sure Ben would have mentioned it if I did).

Ben has also posted that Micromiser had an agreement with ICD. What I had was a phone conversation with Tom Harker where he said, Ok go ahead and send one of those SpartDOS files out, no big deal. It was very casual and I trusted Tom to remember it and not to go back on it. Well, there was no reason for him too. I explained that to Ben. This is one thing I remember. It was clear that if he needed that file, and if he needed assurance about it, he would have to contact Tom himself. Now that I think about it, this may have been one of the provisions that I

couldn't accept, i.e. obligating ICD to something.

I'm recalling this as best I can. That was many years ago. But the substance of it is correct, and if you read Ben's own posts carefully, you'll see I had no motive to act as he says, but quite to the contrary. He says himself that he worked for a week on a contract that I would not sign. That alone should be enough for anyone with business experience to see the problem originating at his end.

I would like to point out that all messages from all posters were generally complimentary to both our software, support, and myself, including reviews (as I recall) specifically praising our support, which is and always has been our hallmark. Thank you!

I would also like to thank every 8-bit Atari user everywhere for using our products, and for so long! It is a great feeling! Believe me when I say I had no idea whatever that so many people still had an interest

in our products as late as 1994. I would have taken a lot better care of those disks. But I had no such feedback, and was not reading newsgroups at the time.

Also, if there is any Atari user anywhere still using one of our Atari products, copy them freely and do whatever you like with them! They make great frisbees too! I would have said this in 1994 as well if I had known about the persistent interest. Though I still would have charged for support time if that were required.

Thanks for reading my piece. Ben, if you're out there, I sincerely apologize for anything I said that offended you. Believe me it was not my intention. I would like to make up with you if that is possible.

Steve Thornton, Pres.  
Micromiser Software

Keywords: turbobase, turboword, turbofile, XEP80, XEP-80

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--From: MagerValp <MagerValp@cling.gu.se>  
--Date: 26 Jun 2002 18:53:12 +0200

The 2002 MiniGame 8-bit coding competition is now officially open, and ready for your entries. For those of you who didn't participate last year, the aim is to write a game in 1024 bytes of code, for one of the classic 8-bit home computers. The deadline this year is 16th of September, 12.00 GMT.

You'll find the rules for submission at  
<http://www.ffd2.com/minigame/>  
Questions and submissions can be sent to  
[minigame@cling.gu.se](mailto:minigame@cling.gu.se).

Co-organizers are needed! I'm somewhat clueless when it comes to Spectrums, Atari's, and Amstrad computers. Let me know if you're interested in helping out.

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|\_|\_|\_| + . . . . . Per Olofsson, arkadspelare  
o-o . . . o + MagerValp@cling.gu.se  
- + + . <http://www.cling.gu.se/~cl3polof/>

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--From: "FBI" <sintech@online.de>  
--Date: Wed, 26 Jun 2002 01:08:08 +0200

We just have finished our brand new price list from Sintech for various Software offers. It is an Excel-File but we cannot post it to this newsgroup. So if you want to see it now, just write us an e-mail. The list will get published at [www.sintech-shop.de](http://www.sintech-shop.de) but as some titles are rare and we have only low quantities, it might be better to check the list now before it is sold.

As for hardware, we are low of Atari-things, but if you are searching for anything, just ask us.

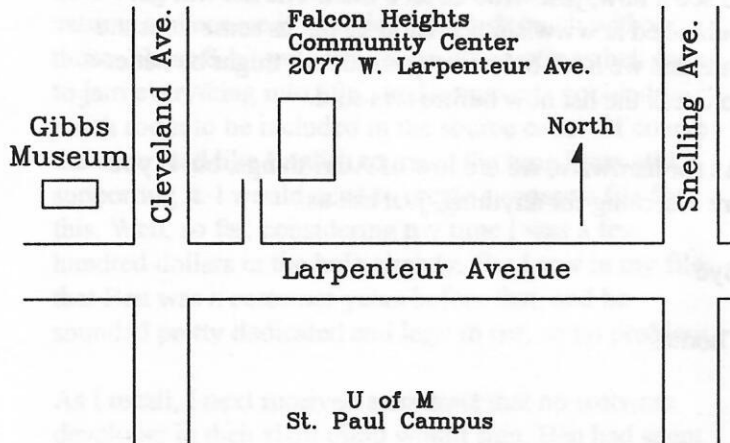
Bye

Thomas

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Saint Paul Atari Computer Enthusiasts (SPACE) meets on the second Friday of each month at 7:30 PM in the Falcon Heights Community Center at 2077 West Larpenteur Ave. Doors open at 7:00 PM.



S.P.A.C.E.

c/o Gregory Leitner  
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## DISCLAIMER

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You can find the Club's home page at:  
<http://Space.atari.org>  
Articles for Publication must be received by the Newsletter Editor two weeks prior to the Club's meeting.

## SPACE BBS

BBS:  
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Sysop: Nolan Friedland

Supporting:

ATARI 8-Bit Computers

ATARI ST Computers



55087+214

