

SPACE

NEWSLETTER for May 2014



President's Corner by Michael Current

Welcome Spring!!

Sounds like last month's run-in with the local police was smoothed over okay!

I don't seem to have any news again this month, so I'll share a couple recent "discoveries" of mine.

First, it's been a mystery to me for many years how much current was available on pin 12 of the SIO port on the 400/800. It was specified to be 12 volts, but undocumented current. It's well-known that the voltage was removed from that pin starting with the 1200XL, and everyone just accepted this was at least in part because no known devices had used it anyway. Perhaps because no one knew how much current to expect! Well, I was looking over the one of the Atari "Sweet-16" (the project that led to the 1200XL) product specification documents available online these days, and it jumped out at me: that spec sheet describes differences in the new machine relative to the 400/800, and it mentions the current formerly on SIO pin 12: 300uA (that's micro-amps). To those of you with more electrical intuition than I, does 12V / 300uA make sense? What kinds of devices could have utilized that as a power source?

My other, bolder deduction is that I now believe that the Z800/Sweet-16 project which led to the 1200XL was based in Atari Sunnyvale headquarters under marketing product manager Mark Lutvak, with an engineering team including Home Computer Division director of engineering Larry Plummer, while the "Liz" project which led to the 600XL/800XL was based out of the Atari NY Lab under engineer Gregg Squires. For many years, it has been claimed that the "Liz" prototypes from NY pre-dated the Z800 project, but the available evidence does not support this! For one thing, the NY

lab was not even staffed yet when the earliest product specs for the Z800 project had already been drafted. For another thing, existing "Liz" prototypes are labeled "600XL", a product name never mentioned in any of the various spec sheets for the planned two computer models that led to the released 1200XL. Also, just look at the machines: the 1200XL, 1400XL, and 1450XLD all have one style function keys and layout, while the 600XL/800XL clearly have a slightly different design heritage. Finally, working with my timeline, work on the "release version" of the 600XL is now claimed to have started in March 1983, which just happens to be about the same time that Larry Plummer and Mark Lutvak both departed from Atari. I'm betting that also corresponds closely to when Gregg Squires in NY was appointed XL product manager. Once you accept that "Liz" comes after the 1200XL was released, everything fits! Could I be wrong? I guess I could be. But I bet I'm now a lot closer to right than before!

Thanks, keep using that Atari, and come to your next SPACE meeting, Friday May 9, 2014.



**MEETING
MAY 9th 2014**



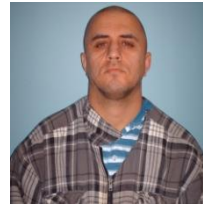
Treasurer's Report by Greg Leitner

Another nice evening in April for our SPACE meeting. Six members out of a possible nine showed up and 75% is a pretty good attendance. Everything was going along just fine until a police officer came in and asked where the tables are kept. I told them in the closet and he said he was going to put a table out in the lobby for a small group meeting. Later I got to thinking after seeing about four or five officers from my vantage point that something big may be going on so I mentioned it to Nolan and he got up and checked them out only to find there must have been at least twenty officers in the lobby. We asked them about where they were supposed to meet and they said in the room we were using for our Club meeting. Now we really felt bad and apologized for taking their spot, and after filling them in on our situation, they were very cool about the whole ordeal. The officer running their meeting actually said it was better that they ended up standing because he said if they had sat, they probably would not have gone back to work as soon as they did. My only concern is that one of the officers may mention this to the office secretary and it may come back to bite us, but the officer in charge was very understanding since he did not mention that they needed the room when he came in to get the table. My feeling is that he was glad to have their meeting over as soon as possible and get the officers back on duty.

As for the SPACE meeting, it went very well and the Club's treasury did the same. We started with a bank balance of \$155.48 and ended with a balance of \$172.48. We had two membership renewals for a total of \$30.00 and with Nolan catching up on the ST DOMs we took in \$39.00 in DOM sales. \$21.00 in ST and \$18.00 in 8-bit DOMs. We only paid out \$10.00 for the April website so we gained \$59.00 for the month. Excellent!!!

I won't be able to make it to the June meeting so I asked the members that were present to decide by the May meeting on our menu for the July SPACE Birthday Party. Of course, I already knew the answer so I will be bringing the fixings for the tacos, the tableware and the pop. The rest of you can figure what to bring from there. It's getting pretty routine!

My son, Tony, is going to Jagfest in Milwaukee this weekend and I will let you all know what he finds out at the May meeting. He usually comes back with a van full of software so we shall see what this year brings. See you all next month.



Secretary's Report by Steve Peck

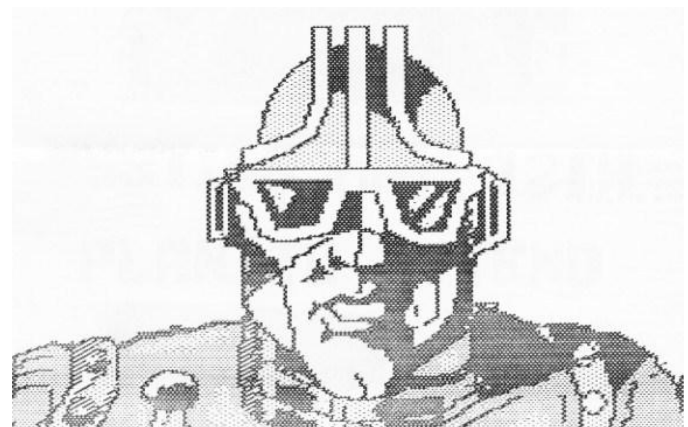
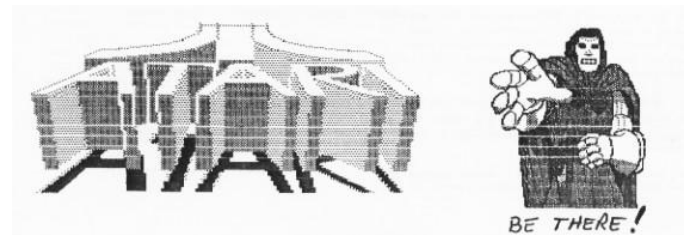
for April 2014

In the last meeting, Greg announced that he will be gone in June and will miss that meeting. The SPACE Birthday Party was discussed and tacos will be the main dish at the meeting. I think that along with tacos we should have other foods as well. I like tacos, don't get me wrong. But, we need a variety sometimes, too. My opinion, anyway. Well, maybe on Christmas we can have tacos and other dishes as well. Just a thought!

Anyway, I was told that the S-video upgrade was heavily talked about at the last meeting. Greg loved his purchase of it and sung its praises. :) Kudos to Lance and Nolan for their work on making this a reality. I think that it will be a hit in the Atari realm for 8-bit users. There was also talk of getting 3.5" floppies for the new Atari ST DOMs. Well, I have an idea. I can donate some of my disks from that uber-collection of disks that I purchased from the Auction one year. There must be over 100-150 floppies in that box. Just say it and I will donate some.

Well, that concludes the Secretary's Report. I close with my ending statement from my favorite illustrator...

EXCELSIOR!





8-Bit DOM Review

by Steve Peck

for April 2014

Well, here I am with yet another DOM Review for the 8-bit. Again, it is from the SillyVenture coding team in Poland. I looked through this DOM thoroughly and rated every program on it. Here are the results of my Review:



SIDE ONE:

We Are Retro (demo by Probe and Ripek): This clever demo has the works: scaling, 3D mesh polygons, splash screens showing fancy graphics with the slogan "We Are Retro". I thought it needed some work, but it was still an excellent demonstration of the power of the Atari 8-bit microcomputer. Here is my take on it:

Music/Sound: 8

Graphics: 8

Animation: 8

Total score: 24/30 points (30 is a perfect score for these types of demos).

Daffy Duck (game by Gonzo and Kjmann): This game is based on the famous Warner Bros. character of the same name. Similar to Super Mario Bros in gameplay, I found this game very unbecoming. It was very hard to control Daffy and it was too easy to lose all of Daffy's energy. Plus, there is only one life to play in the game. The graphics and music were good, but I thought the gameplay could have been much better. Here's my final report on this game:

Graphics: 6

Music/Sound: 9

Gameplay: 4

Animation: 6

Total score: 29/40 (40 being a perfect score for games).

Mylotremylaza Arebaliatypowa Sylfokudrola Wielkiego (music by Jakub Husak): This is a nifty piece of music and I always like SillyVenture's music demos. It is pretty peppy and up-beat so I immediately enjoyed it. This is what I think about it:

Music/Sound: 9/10 (10 is perfect for a music demo).

see my wings (music by wieczOr and lamers): Triumphant music and quite high pitch in some areas, this piece of music really gives the POKEY a workout. I like this one, too. Plus, it is in stereo this time. I thought the other music demo was just a little bit better. But, I think this is top notch as well. So, here is my final score:

Music/Sound: 8/10

Atari vs. PC (picture by Rocky and Madteam): This is a simple picture. It shows an Atari emulator on a Windows desktop screen. I thought it was good, but it could have been better. It doesn't give the Atari justice because the PC beats it out in the picture. But, on the flip side, it just shows that emulators cannot do the same things that a real computer could do. Here's what I think about it:

Graphics: 6/10 (10 is perfect for a picture demo).

Nowadays Venus (picture by HJB): This picture shows a torso of a woman seated. I personally thought it was a great looking picture (and not in the way that you guys may think, that's for sure! XD). I am giving this picture a perfect 10 for the graphics quality. Outstanding scan.

Rhetorical Question (picture by HJB): Although still an excellent scan, I think this is getting too much. A young woman holds two mugs of beer. But, it is quite racy. I will give it still a 10, however, for the scan quality.

Sniezka Mt. Observatory (picture by KAZ and ROHAR): This picture shows an observatory on a mountain, as the name of the picture implies. It even has the Polish flag nearby. I like this and will give it 9/10 points. Superb!

Thread of Life (picture by HJB): Yes, yet another racy picture. I give HJB another 10 for his contributions. It looks nice as a scan and a work of art. This is all I will say on that subject. :)



SIDE TWO:

Addicted (by *Desire*): This colorful demo has a lot of music and graphics. I like it a lot. Here are my scores for this demo:

Graphics: 10
Sound/Music: 10
Animation: 10

Total score: 30/30 (PERFECT).

X and Y (by *Probe*): This is a simple black-and-white demo showing cubes going across the bottom of the screen. There is no music. I will score it without the music and give it a 20/20 (honorable mention). It is as close to perfect as it will get.

Asteroidz (by *J. Croudy*): Another clone of Asteroids, this game is actually good. I like the theme song from 2001 at the splash screen. Pretty spiffy and fast.

Graphics: 7
Sound/Music: 7
Animation: 6
Gameplay: 8

Total score: 28/40

Silly Denture (by *Lisu*): Just as the name implies, this music is silly. It is good and it will get a perfect 10 for the effort, too. I love it.

Sweet Happens (by *Voyager and Lamers*): This is a strange and whimsical tune. It is pulsating and fun. 7/10 points for the effort.

Heavy Traffic (by *Bartek Wasiel, AKA BeWu/MSB*) I like this little three-minute tune, too. It shows the musician is quite good at what he does. 9/10 for the effort.

Megalomania (by *Rocky and Madteam*): This pic shows an island, possibly about a scenario that is like the classic games Tropico or Civilization. I will give this picture a 7/10 for the effort. It could be better.

Toronado Horse (by *KAZ and ROHAR*): Now we're talking! I love the colors of the sunset in the background of this picture. 9/10 for the effort. Great job!

Triumph of Architecture (by *KAZ and ROHAR*): This pic shows the Arc de Triomphe in Paris. I will give it an 8/10 points for the effort because it looks that good.

Zocker jung (by *Alien*): This picture shows a kid playing video games (and, boy, does he look addicted). It looks gray as if it is a really dark setting. I think that is supposed to be the tone. This is the same screen used in the beginning of the Addicted demo at the beginning of this side of the DOM. I will give it 7/10 points for the effort.

This concludes the DOM Review. Have fun with the DOM. I hope that you find this Review useful.

EXCELSIOR!



SPACE



ST DOM Report by Nolan Friedland

Greetings and welcome to another edition of the SPACE ST DOM.

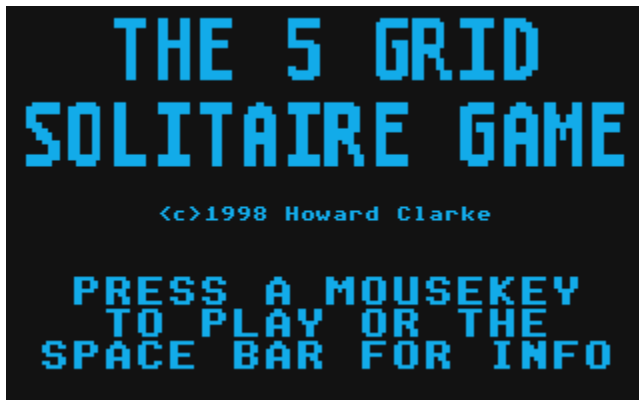


Enjoy!



In **Cross Slide**, although the grid only appears to be 10x10, it is actually 11x11 in size. A square which goes off the grid on one side will reappear on the other should the grid continue to move in the same direction. Similarly, one going off the top or bottom will reappear at the opposite end.

If you don't like the music, you can easily change it or delete it. The program will load any music file provided the name is correct, it is less than 30k long, is uncompressed and of a format recognized by the missing link extension. If you don't want any music, simply change the name and nothing will be loaded.



The 5 Grid Solitaire Game is a puzzle game in which you may swap any two blues or any two reds but one of them must be on the center grid.

You cannot move a blue tile on to a grid where the equivalent is; moving a tile on to a grid where the identical one is converts them to plain tiles. If you convert them all to plain, you win. If you cannot move you can press S to start a new game or Q to exit.



Gin Rummy is basically the computer version of the popular card game of the same name. The object of the game is to get four of a kind and three of a kind. For example, three kings and four aces.

You start off with seven cards, which is a different deal every time you play. When the message SELECT AN OPTION appears then you can select only two options: TAKE which allows you to pick you a card and SORT which allows you to put your cards in order. These are two of the six options on the menu bar on the bottom of the screen.

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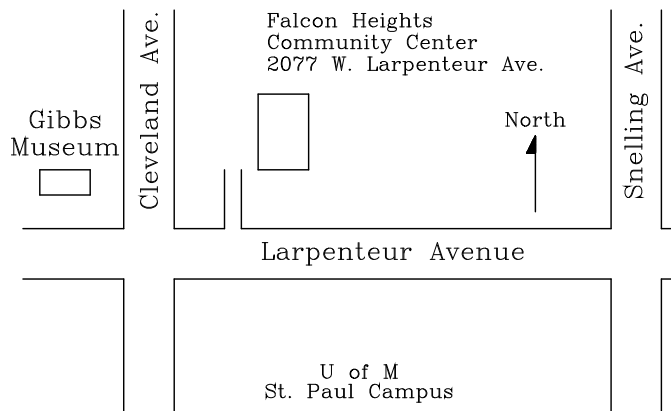
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Saint Paul Atari Computer Enthusiasts (SPACE) meets on the second Friday of each month at 7:30 PM in the Falcon Heights Community Center at 2077 West Larpenteur Ave. Doors open at 7:00 PM.



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The SPACE BBS is currently offline. We apologize for this inconvenience and hope to have it back online in the near future.

Articles for Publication must be received by the Newsletter Editor two weeks prior to the Club's next Scheduled meeting.

S.P.A.C.E.

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