NEWSLETTER for June 2015

President's Corner
by Michael Current

School's out, it's summer time!

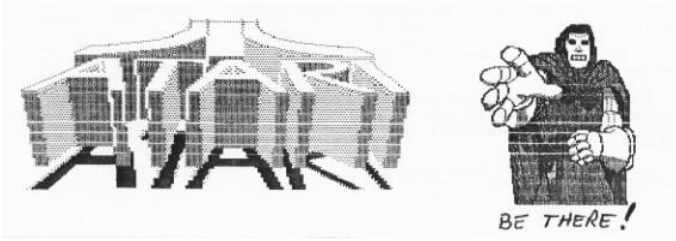
I just have to mention what I thought was one of the most fun games I can remember, from the January 2015 SPACE DOM. "Speed Maza" by Husak. Did you play it? I keep going back to it! It's so simple, SO fast, and fun! Go play it again!

Haven't heard a peep from today's Atari for a couple months. Makes you wonder...

Meanwhile, I recently found myself using Atari 800 schematics to compile pinouts of the internal slots (Personality and RAM) in the Atari 800. Have you ever seen such anywhere? I actually found it fascinating work... and some of the design elements to be absolutely genius. Do you know what lengths they went to allow any 8K, 16K, 24K (not that there were any of these) or 32K boards to work in either of the first two RAM slots, recognizing up to 48K every time? Consumer proof and all in hardware!

Also, I just learned a little bit about the "mysterious" Harry B Stewart, who is credited as one of the original designers of the 400/800 OS, and also as a consultant on the XL OS. Well, he was never employed directly by Atari, he was hired as a consultant, and in fact, that was his job, going back to 1970 running his own consultancy firm in the industry called Neoteric. Furthermore, I discovered that he was also the one who implemented Atari PILOT for Atari. Clearly an important figure in Atari computer history! I really enjoy shedding a little new light on personalities like that, it's great fun somehow and it seems important to do!

Thanks, keep using that Atari, and come to your next SPACE meeting, Friday June 12, 2015.



Treasurer's Report
by Greg Leitner

I was just thinking that already next month we have to decide on what we are doing for the SPACE Bithday Party in July. It's hard to believe that half of 2015 will be over by the time we meet again in June so I hope we have a good turnout at the June meeting so we can all decide.

It was nice to see Nolan at the May meeting and with him came all the ST DOMs that we were waiting to see. Nolan has indicated that he has changed his work schedule to free him up to attend SPACE meetings into the future. Since with Nolan in attendance we had five members present at the May meeting so with fifty percent of our total membership in attendance I brought up the fact that we needed a second member to be added to our bank account with TCF bank. I asked for one of the members present if they would volunteer and Nolan said that he would. Now he and I will have to find a meeting where we both can make it to the TCF bank at Har Mar Mall to accomplish that goal.

We had a lot more activity at the May meeting so here is how our account looks at this time:

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Beginning balance as of May 1, 2015:  235.49

Receipts for the May meeting:

     Membership renewal                15.00
     8-bit DOMs                         9.00
     ST DOMs                           45.00
                                      _______
Total receipts for May                 69.00

Expenses for the May meeting:

     Check printing for new account    19.95
     Web-site for January thru May     50.00
                                      _______
Total expenses for May                 69.95
```

As you can see it was a total wash for the month of May and we ended up with a balance of $234.54 (95 cents less than what we started with for May).

Just for your information for those with a Falcon. I was trying to find out how to load a program with an auto load on the floppy disk. That sounds like an easy thing to do but with the Falcon you really can't bypass the internal hard drive when you boot up so you can never get the floppy to run the program on boot up. I found a guy on the web-site with the same problem and he said to hold down the alternate key as soon as the floppy drive light comes on and then when the hard drive gets done booting hit the reset and hold down the alternate key again and voila it actually works. On reboot the floppy drive takes precedence and the auto load boots the program on the disk.

So that's all until we meet again in June.

Notes from the VP
by Nolan Friedland

Next month is July and you know what that means…

[Drumroll please]

In other news, all past ST DOM reviews from January 2015 through May 2015 have been completed and included as a separate special-edition newsletter, along with this one.

That about does it for the notes this month. Expect more tacos next month, too :)

See you all on June 12th!

Secretary's Report
by Steve Peck

Well, fellow Atarians, here I am again with yet another Secretary's Report. Let's get started, shall we?

The meeting commenced at 7:30 PM. Five members were present. We now have ten members paid up. One more membership and we will have all eleven members paid up.

I just wanted to reiterate that Nolan is the new co-person on the SPACE Treasury account with Greg. With the new ST DOM sales, our coffers should swell dramatically because we have enough ST DOMs until March 2016, I believe. So, that will help immensely. Thank you, Nolan, for coming through.

Also, Greg was wondering about how to auto boot TOS programs in a Falcon computer. If anybody has any info on that, please let the one of the officers know and then we can put it in the Newsletter or have it explained at the meeting.

Nolan will make a Special Edition ST DOM report for the months that he was not able to go to the SPACE meetings. I am looking forward to it because it should be quite impressive.

Lance said that the games that he will release through Video 61 are being debugged. They are still in the R&D phase. They should be out soon. There was also talk about the new smartphone games, like Candy Crush Saga and Farm Heroes Saga. In my honest opinion, the new games cannot hold a lit match to the 8-bit games. Even some Jaguar games can beat them out. I think that we took a step back in video game development in the twenty-first century. It is sad. Really.

The meeting adjourned at 8:16 PM.

So, that concludes the Secretary's Report. In the words of Stan Lee:

EXCELSIOR!

Tech Report
by Nolan Friedland

Hello! :)

Everything has been running smoothly the past few months with the website. I completed a somewhat major overhaul of the website software earlier this month.

I haven't heard anything regarding the counter SPACE has been using all these years so it looks like we'll have to dump it and go with another option. One of our long-distance members emailed a suggestion for a counter to use. Thanks for the tip – You know who you are :)

In addition, from the same member, they asked if the club has ever had a high score page in the Newsletter for various arcade hits as well as from some of SPACE's DOM titles. Don't think that's ever been done before… Sounds like an awesome idea! I'm sure something can be put together.

Some months back I mentioned the possibility of resurrecting the SPACE BBS at some point the future. That point may be coming soon in the next few months… I just need to get all the hardware and software sorted out.

Until next month… :)

P.S. I came across this image randomly one day. Not sure who created it but give it a try… It works :)

8-Bit DOM Review

by Steve Peck

for May 2015

Well, here we are again with another 8-bit DOM Review! So, let's get started with it.

SIDE A:

Lotharek Dance: This fancy demo has trippy graphics and interesting music. It shows someone's head (possibly Lotharek's) floating around on the screen amidst a plethora of colorful graphics in the background. The music could be better, but I love the graphics.

Sound: 8
Animation: 9

Total: 17/20 points.

Biedny Pies Antoni 3: In this game, you have to guide your character to the goal, a bratwurst (at least I think it is). But, you must find the shortest way to get there. If you do not, you lose the level.

Animation: 2
Graphics: 3
Gameplay: 5

Total: 10/30 points.

Hyperdrive: This music demo sounds like it would come from an ST computer. It is fast and has a nice drum beat. I quite enjoyed listening to it.

Sound: 10/10 points.

Lemon Chicken: This demo sounds more like it's 8-bit to me, but it's still fast-paced and delightful.

Sound: 7/10 points.

The Night Dancer: This sounds like somethings from the 1980s. It's pretty cool and all. I just think it could be a little more.

Sound: 6/10 points.

Dark Matter Trap: This music demo sounds techy, which the name kind of implies. I like it, but can be better.

Sound: 6/10 points.

Maus: This TIP animation shows a small elephant on the back of a large mouse jumping hurdles. I have viewed this image in a previous DOM. It still does not disappoint.

Animation: 10/10 points.

SIDE B:

AD 6502: This was starting to look like a great game, but unfortunately it had a PAL problem and could not be started. the sound and graphics were OK, but that was all we could see. The score for this game will be incomplete. Sorry, folks.

So, that concludes my 8-bit DOM Review. I hope that you have enjoyed it. Have a happy!

ST DOM Report
by Nolan Friedland

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

Enjoy!

Herman is a colorful Boulder Dash clone with some interesting things your character can do, such as swimming with sharks and even zapping enemies with a laser gun!

The aim of the game is to collect and search items, find hidden tools and survive!

May the Herman be with you…

Laserball 2014 is an updated version of Thomas Ilg's 1991 public domain puzzle game, inspired by Deflektor and sliding-block puzzle games. It's a well thought out and executed idea.

It was originally made in GFA Basic back in 1991 and is being reinvented and improved upon today. Probably one of the best thinking games ever released on the Atari ST.

The concept is simple. You must solve some neat puzzles by moving and turning the mirrors. To move and turn mirrors, move the mouse over a green mirror. Then, click with the left mouse button and the mirror will rotate. The mirror will keep moving until it is blocked by something else.

The X button brings you to the main menu at any time. You can restart your last level from there.

In addition, the game features a multiplayer mode. Use the left mouse button to increment and the right mouse button to decrement the number of participants.

Last but not least, there is a level editor. For full details, I have included the official Laserball 2014 PDF instruction manual with this Newsletter – It's in English but has been translated from German, so keep that in mind when reading :)

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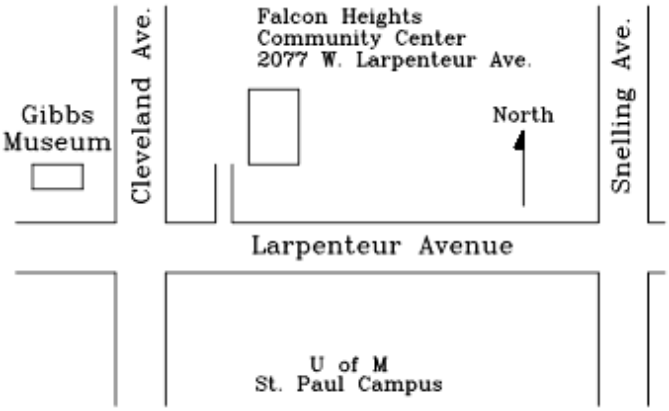
Saint Paul Atari Computer Enthusiasts (SPACE) meets on the second Friday of each month at 7:30 PM in the Falcon Heights Community Center at 2077 West Larpenteur Ave. Doors open at 7:00 PM.



S.P.A.C.E.

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Visit our website at: http://spaceweb.us/

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.