February 2016 Newsletter

FOREWORD
By Captain Irata:

"Listen Up! When I say score, you Atari gamers better ask how high! Hoo-rah!"

The President's Corner
By Michael Current

Well, I finally made the plunge. What plunge do I speak of? I upgraded my one-year-old Toshiba laptop PC from Windows 7 ("free downgrade from Windows 8") to Windows 10. Not bad, really. It looks very much like Windows 7 still, with an extra layer of phone-like GUI interface for the stuff you're most likely to use most. But the regular control panels and everything are still under there too, if you can find them. So it's not hard to get used to.

It's nice to be running a current OS for a change. And it really does start up much faster than before, as advertised. This, despite that I am unable to take advantage of the new UEFI (Unified Extensible Firmware Interface) / secure boot features in my situation. My laptop hardware supports these capabilities, but they had to be disabled in my BIOS in order for Windows 7 to work. Turns out that by doing the free upgrade to 10 from there, I'm still stuck without UEFI/secure boot. If I wanted them, I'd have had to change my BIOS settings, then do a new, clean install of Win 8 using the CDs that came with my machine, and then do the free Win 10 upgrade from there. Pretty much start over from scratch. It has to do with fundamental characteristics of how the boot disk is formatted, like messing with the partition table. Not worth to me, I decided. Win 10 runs fine using the old style BIOS.

I've also continued to bang my head against the wall about my Internet stopping every once in a while. I don't know if this is the solution or not, but this afternoon I noticed that my modem's time was wrong by hours. I fixed that, and have a hunch that server time inconsistencies could indeed explain wonky DNS behavior. We'll see...
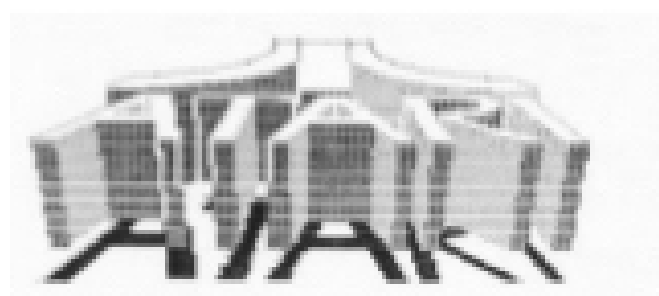
Other than a joystick button that gave out, my Atari gear continues to run flawlessly, with no problematic OS upgrades or network problems to solve. How nice by comparison!

Thanks, keep using that Atari, and come to your next SPACE meeting, Friday February 12, 2016.

BE THERE!

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Treasurer's Report
By Gregory Leiner

Sorry about getting this later to Steve than usual, but I wanted to wait until I got the room rental billing from Falcon Heights so that I could update our bank account before the next report. I got a call from them on the Tuesday after the meeting and they agreed that we only had to pay $25.00 per month as we always had. The same rate will apply for 2016. So our yearly room rental total will still be $300.00 instead of the $360.00 I feared they would charge.

We had only four members present for the January meeting, but we were pleasantly surprised by a visit from Roger Mier (Richard Mier's son). His Atari affiliation goes back long before I became a SPACE member and with long time members Glen and Steve Berglund there was a lot of history and stories to discuss. Too bad Michael Current and Lance couldn't make it because they would have had a lot to contribute to the conversations. As it was Steve Peck was able to name every author and acknowledged every project that Roger brought up. I am amazed at the knowledge Steve has of the Atari world then and now!

Know I should tell you about the reason I write this report;

the actual finances of our club. Since I paid the room rental bill for 2015 in January we take the big hit for the year. We started the new year with a bank balance of $465.54 and after the $300.00 room rental payment we had $165.54 in our account. We did add $15.00 for Richard Mier's membership renewal and sold four 8-bit and three ST DOMs ($12.00 and $9.00) respectively for a total of $36.00 deposit. This gives us a new bank balance of $201.54 for the month ended January 31, 2016.

Note that Nolan hasn't been around for a few months and we still owe him $50.00 for the last five months of last year ($10.00 per month). We also will owe Nolan for the website renewal for 2016.

Rich Mier is thinking about returning to the area and possibly opening up a shop to work on Atari computers again. We may see Roger around too as he seems to be very interested in getting back to using his STE. Let's hope this news comes to fruition as. We will all benefit from their experience.

That's all I got for this month so I hope to see you all in February (the 12th to be exact).

Secretary's Report
By Steven Peck

HELLO WORLD!

I will just go ahead and get started. The meeting commenced at 7:31 PM on January 8, 2016. There were four members present, counting myself. The membership count is at eight paid up. There was a lot of talk that night. We had a surprise visitor. The son of Richard Mier, Roger, came in, sharing Atari memories. Conversation really picked up when he came in.

In the old business, Steve B. brought in some components for the AtariLab Light Module for a little show-and-tell. He needs a cartridge, he said. In the new business, there was still talk about the 8 GB SD card drive upgrade for the 8-bit, and Roger Mier mentioned Lotharek and his business in Poland upgrading 8-bit Atari computers, including a 1 MB upgrade for the 8-bit.

Also, there was talk of Andre LaMothe and the "X" Game System, Steve Berglund's stock Falcon computer and how to repairing it, the FireBee Falcon clone (and it is top-notch, by the way), and the 68020 processor upgrade card being developed by Rodolphe Pineau for the ST/E/Mega line.

Furthermore, "ACTION!" source code has been released to the public domain which is welcome news to game programmers. You can find out more on atariage.com for more information.

Also on AtariAge, there is info on the Authoritative Star Raiders II, developed in secret by veteran programmer Aric Wilmunder from Atari's coin-op division, which would have been Star Raiders II if The Last Starfighter was not developed into the SR2 we are already aware of.

The meeting adjourned at 8:23 PM , lasting for fifty-two minutes.

That concludes the Report. In the words of my favorite comic book producer, Stan Lee…

EXCELSIOR!
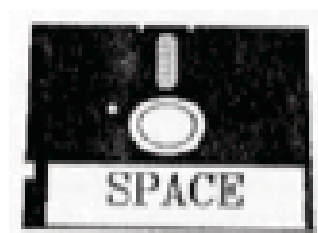
8-bit DOM Report

By Steven Peck

Hi again, fellow SPACE members! I am back with another DOM Review for the Atari 8-bit computer. There are only five programs on here, so it will be another short Review. So, I am going to get started.

SIDE ONE:

Ramp Rage, the only program on Side One of this month's DOM, is a game that involves steering a speedboat through treacherous waters. You have to avoid hitting obstacles in the water and other boats. You also have a limited supply of fuel. There are a couple good things, however. You can shoot at targets and collect fuel if it is low during the game. Also, there are ramps that you can utilize to leap over obstacles in the game. It is enjoyably difficult.

Graphics: 7
Gameplay: 9
Animation: 6
Sound: 7

Total score: 29/40

SIDE TWO:

There are four programs on Side Two: three demos and one game.

Boss: this animated black-and-white graphics demo depicts the boss from the first round of the classic arcade hit "R-Type" (which was a favorite of mine in the arcades; I even owned it for the Sega Master System and TurboGrafx-16). There is a message, "R-Type 3000," on the screen during the demo. Looking good!

Graphics: 8

Animation: 7
Sound: 7

Total score: 22/30

Lecie: NOTE: this demo has mild, implied nudity. Please be aware.

This demo has digitized graphics and smooth real-time animated typography. I thought that the graphics were pretty awesome and blew me away. I personally that this program is the best demo on the DOM. Kudos to whomever wrote it.

Graphics: 10
Animation: 10
Sound: 10

Total score: 30/30 (perfect score)

Lost in Space: Here is a game where you have to pilot a space ship to an orbiting base to get fuel. You will die if you lose fuel, crash, or go so high above the planet that you get "lost in space" (hence the name of the game). It is quite difficult to play and needs paddle controllers. It reminds me of "Lunar Lander," where you have to land on the Moon without crashing or losing fuel. It has an interesting premise.

Graphics: 4
Sound: 3
Animation: 5
Gameplay: 8

Total score: 25/40

Compo Filer 2: This is a nifty

animated demo of geometric shapes in real time. I liked it, but I wonder if the 8-bit can do WYSIWYG graphics. But, I guess that might create problems with the graphics limitations of such a small program. I think it is an excellent example of real-time animation on the Atari 8-bit computer. Amazing stuff, to be sure.

Graphics: 7
Animation: 10

Total score: 17/20

Well, folks, this ends the DOM Review for January. I hope you have a nice time and don't forget to read the next Review which will have more dynamite programs. See you later.

Atari News

Sent by Michael Current

January 31, 2016
From: playermissile

Announcing Omnivore (http://playermissile.com/omnivore/), the Atari 8-bit binary editor. It is a cross-platform app for modern hardware (running Linux, OS X and Windows) to work with executables or disk images of Atari 8-bit machines. It is a hex editor, a disassembler (with mini-assembler) and a map editor.

It is still beta-level code, so testing and bug reports would be appreciated! Thanks to Kevin Savetz of the ANTIC Podcast and Wade of the Inverse ATASCII Podcast for early testing and feedback.

Binaries are available for Windows (64-bit) and OS X (https://github.com/robmcmullen/omnivore/releases). Linux users currently have to install from source, see the README (https://github.com/robmcmullen/omnivore). I'm especially interested in feedback from Windows users as that version has been tested the least.

Features:

Opens .ATR, .XEX, .XFD disk images in single, double, and enhanced density formats
Save data in same format
Edit entire disk image or in logical segments
Unlimited undo/redo
Copy/paste
Built-in support for default Atari character set
Custom character set support
Custom color definition or default NTSC or PAL colors
Multiple views of the same data in different windows; changes are reflected in all windows
Hex Editor
Displays data in multiple forms: hex, binary, character graphics
Select regions and copy/paste
Operate on hex data in selected regions (logical functions, shift/rotate, set/clear, arithmetic functions)
Edit hex data right in the hex grid
Character map supports ANTIC 2 (Graphics 0), ANTIC 4 or 5, and ANTIC 6 and 7 (Graphics 1 and 2 large character mode)
Character map may display either ATASCII or internal ANTIC format
Edit character data right in the character map window
Displays 6502 disassembly with memory map for Atari 8-bit or Atari 5200
Includes a 6502 mini assembler allowing you to change the assembly code without needing a 6502 reference card
Smart search that matches in hex grid, character map, or disassembly comments
Highlights all matches, move forward and backward among them
Map Editor
Edit arbitrarily wide images
Rectangular copy/paste
Select drawing character ("ink") from character set palette
Draw freehand
Draw lines
Draw rectangle
Draw filled rectangles
Copy between different maps
Goals
save in different formats
attach notes to regions (for reverse engineering support)
add a character set editor
add a player/missile graphics editor
support editing MAME ROMs (including other 8-bit processors like the Z80. Long term, maybe even 16-bit processors like the 68000)
support disk images for other 8-bit machines like the C64 and Apple][

The Next Meeting is on
Friday, Febuary 12, 2016,
at 7:30 PM.
We Hope to See You There!

CLUB OFFICIALS

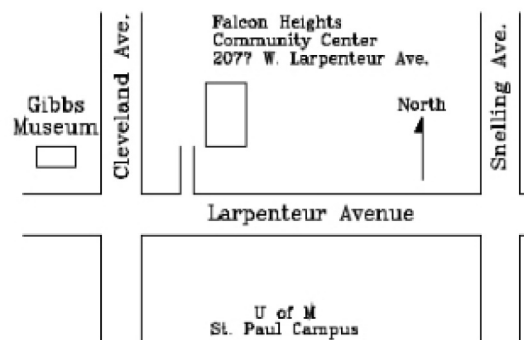| President:	
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Saint Paul Atari Computer Enthusiasts (SPACE) meets on the second Friday of each month at 7:30 PM in the Falcon Heights Community Center at 2077 West Larpenteur Ave. Doors open at 7:00 PM.

S.P.A.C.E.

c/o Gregory Leitner
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DISCLAIMER

Visit our website at: http://space.atari.org/

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.