



•Serving the Twin Cities Atari Community for Over Three Decades•

April 2016 Newsletter



FOREWORD

By Captain Irata:

"Your mission: to support your SPACE Club! So, BUY THOSE DOMs! Hoo-rah!"



The President's Corner By Michael Current

Last weekend my increasingly-unreliable home DSL Internet service finally quit altogether. I spent several late nights pouring over all the administrative settings of the modem, the router, and the PC, all to no avail. The modem would not acknowledge my PC, the router, or any hard-wired connection.. except for my OLD laptop PC that I pulled out of the closet. No sense whatsoever. Then the next morning I called up the phone company, and without doing

anything things started working again. What gives? Well, about 5 minutes after I got off the phone with support the modem gave out again. Call them back, this time we go ahead and get me new hardware, a new modem/router. So far so good! I'm hopeful that maybe my apparent DNS lookup issues over many months were actually my modem slowly failing, so that now I might have the solid Internet service I should have. That would be nice.

In Atari land, I've recently obtained some additional, rare variations of the standard Atari 400/800 C014319 power supply units, so my collection has grown some more. Do you know that the earliest 400/800 power supplies were quite a bit smaller than the rest? I had no idea! Even when I purchased one online, from a picture, I was still surprised when it arrives because it looks quite similar, it's just smaller in all dimensions. This unit would

have been made in 1979 or 1980. I also now have a weird unit from mid-1982 that looks like a C014319, but has the C017945 part number on it. No wonder it's been such a project to sort everything out! I'll bring some of these to the next SPACE meeting I'm able to attend, you'll see what I mean.

Thanks, keep using that Atari, and come to your next SPACE meeting, Friday April 8, 2016.



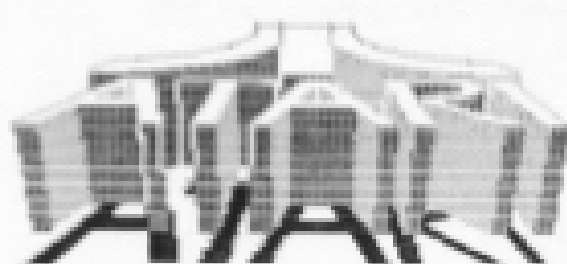
Treasurer's Report By Gregory Leitner

Three members made it to the March 2016 SPACE meeting and that was two more than the attendance at the February meeting.

I had mailed the keys to Glen in early February after I found out my granddaughter was going to state for dance. After seeing an email from Steve Peck that he was under the weather for the February

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meeting, I had a bad feeling that Glen might be the only member that would be there.

That was exactly what happened, and after opening up for the meeting, he waited until 8:00 PM for someone to come but he finally gave up and left. I felt really bad for Glen, but really thankful that he stepped up to help me out. Now, I hope everything will settle down and we can all get back to regular meetings.

Glen, Steve Peck, and myself had a short meeting in March, and both Steve and myself were able to catch up on our purchase of both ST and 8-bit DOMs.

So, March turned out okay as the Club took in a total of \$36.00 due to the sale of six DOMs for both formats. Nolan still hasn't made it to a SPACE meeting since last August, so we haven't paid anything out for the web-site. I haven't had any contact with Nolan since, and with him being a second signer on our bank account, we need to consider what our needs going forward are going to be.

We started out with a bank balance of \$201.54 in March and ended with a balance of \$237.54. If and when we hear from Nolan we may need to reimburse him \$80.00 for the web-site expenses for the last eight months.

So, let's put the last couple of months behind us and get going on the rest of 2016. With

only seven paid up members in March we really need to get past due members back in the current column. That would also help with our DOM sales.

One of the topics discussed at the March meeting was one of our out-of-state members taking on the production of our ST DOMs. Glen and I have questions we need to discuss about the feasibility of the cost to the Club about doing this.

Please try to make the April meeting and let's get back to making our SPACE meetings something to look forward to attending. See you in April.



Secretary's Report *By Steven Peck*

HELLO WORLD!

Welcome to the April edition of the Newsletter and the Secretary's Report!

This time, I was at the Meeting, and only three of us were there: Glen, Greg, and me. We demoed the latest SD drive and it was stellar, to say the least.

It loads quite fast and can store thousands of programs and games. The membership count is seven paid up at the moment.

We can get new ST DOMs soon, since our supply is exhausted of them and we need more. Lance has got it

under control and he will donate time, money, and resources for that. Also, we do have help with producing the ST DOMs, so that is not a problem either. I will let Lance answer any further questions the Club has about this topic.

The DOM Review is next right after the Secretary's Report. Thanks for reading the article.

In the words of my favorite comic book artist...

EXCELSIOR! 8-bit DOM Review

By Steven Peck

Hello, again! Welcome to another edition of the DOM Review. This time, since I was absent last month, there will be two DOMs reviewed. So, let's get started.

February 2016 DOM: Side One

The first program on Side One of the February DOM is the Glucholazy 2K15 Intro Demo. It shows an animated tape drive rendered so it looks like it is running Atari software on the screen. There are various characters around the rendering of the tape drive from famous Atari games, plus there is a ticker in Polish.

This was an invite to a party on August 24-26, 2015. Of course, the party is over. But, it is still fun to look at. Some of the music on the demo includes the "Pitfall II: Lost

Caverns" soundtrack, and it sounds like it is from the Sega arcade version of the game. It is a hoot! Great demo, but here is my take on it.

The graphics are excellent, but I think that they could have been better, with less choppy animation when the tape reels are turning. What really stood out to me is the sound. The music blew me away. It was digitized and sounded great. Very pristine audio. But the theme is great, too. Nostalgia works for me!

Anyway, here is my score for this demo.

SCORE:

Graphics: 6
Animation: 5
Sound: 9

TOTAL: 20/30

The next program, called "3Plex", is a game like "Tetris", or the Lynx puzzle game "Blockout". The object of the game is to match the colors with the blocks on the screen. This game is fun. I liked the gameplay on it, as well as the music. It has a great looking title screen, too.

It suffers a little bit in the animation, but that is not a big deal. Overall, it is a great puzzler. Here is my score on this game.

SCORE:

Graphics: 7
Animation: 2

Sound: 9
Gameplay: 9
TOTAL: 27/40

"Joystick Mastah" is the third title listed on Side One. All you do is time the joystick button so you can press it at the right time. It suffers in all categories, although I sort of understand the gist of the game. Here is my take on it.

It is so simplistically programmed (although in many ways, that is still a good thing however) that I think it lacks intrinsic beauty in its looks and animation. However, it is a logical game. So, it does not need fancy-schmancy graphics. I am trying to be constructively critical of it.

Great premise, but needs more "oomph."

SCORE:

Graphics: 1
Animation: 1
Gameplay: 3
Sound: 5

TOTAL: 10/40

The fourth program on this side of the February DOM is a music track called "A Sky Full of Fanta". This music lives up to its name. I liked it and it definitely has pizzazz and flair. Nothing much else to say about it.

SCORE: 8/10

Side One's last entry is a

picture called "Biased Decisions". This picture shows a woman's face and there are two places depicted in her hair on opposite sides of her face: Heaven or Hell. I guess the picture is asking where you might like to spend eternity. Interesting.

SCORE: 9/10

Side Two:

On the next side of this DOM, we have the "Derengeracj" (which, I believe, is the Polish word for "Degeneration") demo. It is another party invite. It has a great looking English text ticker, too.

It sort of "rolls" out to you like it is popping out from the screen. The only thing I do not like about it is that the ticker is hard to read.

Overall, this is great. I was enthralled by the presentation of the demo, and I am waiting for other, even better demos from Eastern Europe in the near future.

SCORE:

Graphics: 9
Animation: 10
Sound: 10

TOTAL: 29/30

The next program is a puzzle game called "Jim Slide". It is, in a sense like the game "Deflektor". You have to slide the character, Jim, to the goal, deflecting off of objects to get to your objective. If you hit

certain deadly obstacles, you will need to start the level over again. It is a fun game that presents a real challenge.

SCORE:

Graphics: 8
Animation: 8
Gameplay: 10
Sound: 9

TOTAL: 35/40

"Nordlicht Greeto" is another demo, done in real time with blocky text and a checkerboard background.

This is, in my opinion, the best program in the February DOM. The animation and graphics are totally stellar and they do not miss a beat.

SCORE:

Graphics: 10
Animation: 10
Sound: 10

TOTAL: 30/30

"PasIntro", the next demo on this side of the disk, is written in TurboPascal. It is done well. It has fitting music and smooth animation.

I am wanting more and gave this excellent demo high marks. Here are the results:

SCORE:

Graphics: 9
Animation: 9
Sound: 10

TOTAL: 28/30

The next program is "Quarrion", a strategy game. It was demoed in a previous DOM. In the game, you slide colored cubes around until they match.

Then, if they do match, they disappear. I think that the object is to not let the screen get too full of mismatched cubes. I thought it was somewhat easy, but I do admit that I did not play it all the way to the game over screen.

It is a really great game otherwise, however. It has cool music, good graphics, but has a PAL issue on US Atari computers. This is no person's fault and I will not count that issue as a detrimental score-changer, really.

SCORE:

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

TOTAL: 28/40

"Angry" is a NSFW (not suitable for women) picture file on the DOM that shows a partially nude cyborg brandishing weapons.

I gave this picture high marks because I liked the graphics. But, because of the nudity, some people might take offense. Good pic besides.

SCORE:

Graphics: 8/10

Now, we go on the the March 2016 DOM. Here are the programs in that disk:

Side One:

"Rescue" is a 3D wireframe animated demo showing a spaceship under attack and being destroyed by another ship. The guy that escapes the destroyed ship is then rescued by friendly forces in space. Then, it repeats.

Surely, the 8-bit does have its graphics limitations. But, I still think the demo could have needed some more polish to it. Especially the sound. Great demo, though. Needs more, in my opinion.

SCORE:

Graphics: 5
Animation: 8
Sound: 7

TOTAL: 20/30

"Space Panda Disco" is a dance track that is fast, has a nice beat, and sounds pretty good. I thought it was very interesting and liked it.

SCORE:

Sound: 8/10

"Don't Play With Fire" is another picture drawn on the screen. It shows a soldier with a dog brandishing a gigantic firearm. It is set in the future and seems to be in the European wilderness around winter.

This pic is really good. I can see it looking like the title screen to an 8-bit game. It looks that great. I tip my hat to the designer. Kudos!

SCORE:

Graphics: 9/10

"Bomber" is a game that is really the classic game "KABOOM!" with enhanced graphics. It shows well, too.

However, "Bomber" is not as fast as its ActiVision predecessor. It can also benefit from a joystick and paddle controller scheme.

That would make the game better, but it is still pretty cool.

SCORE:

Graphics: 8
Animation: 9
Gameplay: 7
Sound: 7

TOTAL: 31/40

"Toy Swap" is a puzzle game reminiscent of games like "Candy Crush Saga", for example. Move toys around on the screen and match toys to each other to clear them off of the screen.

It is not bad. At least it beats "Candy Crush Saga".

Side Two:

"Reloaded" is an animated demo set to real-time animation. It has high marks on everything. Excellent

graphics and a cool text ticker really make the grade in this file. I overlook the PAL problems, but I do wish that the European programmers would also make SECAM and NTSC versions of their software for compatibility worldwide.

SCORE:

Graphics: 10
Animation: 10
Sound: 10

TOTAL: 30/30

"Odin" is a picture showing an metallic android looking at a giant tactical thermonuclear explosion destroying a city.

It is good artwork, but I think that it could look somewhat better. I really do like it, though, anyway.

SCORE:

Graphics: 7/10

"Beyond the Stars" a music track, has a nice drum beat. But, also it seems somewhat mundane at the same time. So, it could be more.

SCORE:

Sound: 6/10

"Does Not Compute" is another music track that is upbeat, and that is a good thing. It still can be better.

SCORE:

Sound: 8/10

"The Great Escape" is based on the classic movie from the 1960s about one of the greatest war camp escapes ever devised during WWII.

However, it lacks instructions and is hard to play. Great graphics, animation, and sound, though.

SCORE:

Graphics: 9
Gameplay: 5
Sound: 7
Animation: 7

TOTAL: 28/40

"Chicken Dance" is a cute little experiment based on the classic polka dance by Werner Thomas. It uses very little code to do what it needs to do. So, it takes up less memory. But, it lacks in graphics as a result.

I am going to give this an honorable mention for ingenuity. Because it really is smart programming.

I will still score it.

SCORE:

Graphics: 5
Animation: 5
Sound: 5

TOTAL: 15/30

"The Authoritative Star Raiders II" is a looked over program that was originally from Atari. It was programmed under the radar by veteran Atari Games

programmer Aric Wilmunder. If he would have had his way, this would have been "SR2" instead of what was originally "The Last Starfighter", which later became the classic game that we know.

It is a prototype that functions, but it is not fully complete. But, it is playable and has a lot of elements in it.

It looks more like the original "Star Raiders", but has some graphical enhancements in it. Unfortunately, it was shelved before it came out.

Plus, the final program on this disk is written by Glen, our DOM Librarian, called "DocList". It is a document viewer that has the text on how to play this version of the "Star Raiders" sequel.

Thanks, Glen, for the effort in creating this viewer and the DOMs for the Club. You are a good egg, and I do like eggs! :)

SCORE:

Graphics:	8
Gameplay:	8
Animation:	7
Sound:	7

TOTAL: 16/40

Plus, special kudos to Glen Kirschenmann for his time in writing the "DocList" program. I think he needs to pat himself on the back for that one. :D

Well, this concludes the DOM Review. I will catch you later

in the Final Thoughts at the end of this Newsletter. Thanks for reading! ^_^

Atari News

Sent by Michael Current

Atari® Bundles 100 Iconic Games with Release of Atari® Vault, Available Now on Steam for PC

Atari Vault Incorporates Contemporary Functionality, Including Steam Global Leaderboards, Multiplayer Capabilities and Full Controller Support

NEW YORK – March 24, 2016

– Atari®, one of the world's most recognized publishers and producers of interactive entertainment, today announced the launch of Atari® Vault, now available for download on Steam for PC. The new title includes a complete collection featuring 100 of the iconic publisher's most popular arcade and Atari 2600 games. For the first time, players can experience these renowned games with the benefit of current technology, including global leaderboards, multiplayer modes, and full controller support.

For a glimpse of what players can expect in Atari Vault, check out the launch trailer:

<http://bit.ly/AtariVaultVideo>

To download and play Atari

Vault, visit the Steam page:

<http://bit.ly/AtariVaultSteam>

With the release of Atari Vault, gamers of all ages can relive – or experience for the first time – the titles that comprise the foundation of the modern gaming industry. Featuring games like Asteroids®, Centipede®, Missile Command®, Tempest®, Warlords®, and many more, Atari Vault combines the nostalgia of arcades and the Atari 2600 with modern gaming capabilities, including:

Updated UI: A sleek selection menu allows players to easily search through the full collection of games, while preserving the retro feeling of individual titles.

Global Leaderboards: See how scores stack up against players from around the world, in real time! Hold top scores across a multitude of Atari classics to become the master of a whole generation of video games.

Multiplayer Capabilities: For the first time, square off against other players from across the globe for the ultimate test of head-to-head skill in online and local multiplayer.

Full Controller Support: Experience a new level of control playing with your favorite controller. The touch-sensitive trackpad of the Steam Controller mimics the

original trackball, providing a new level of control for titles like Centipede® and Tempest®.

Archive: View interactive galleries that show original, detailed packaging, arcade machines in 3D with 360-degree views, and a wealth of historical press and advertising materials.

“Atari Vault grants convenient access to some of the most memorable titles in gaming history, and in delivering these games in their original state, it is introducing a new generation of gamers to some of the very first video games,” said Fred Chesnais, Chief Executive Officer, Atari. “It is our hope that the same excitement people experienced in the arcades and in their homes when these titles were first introduced can now be embraced again, and that newcomers can discover what made these titles so iconic.”

Developed by Code Mystics, Atari Vault is discounted 15 percent to \$16.99 USD for a limited time on Steam. For more information on Atari Vault, visit AtariVault.com.

Join the conversation on Twitter at @Atari or “Like” the Atari Vault Facebook page at:

<https://www.facebook.com/AtariVault>.



The next SPACE meeting is on Friday, April 8, 2016, starting at 7:30 PM. We hope to see you there!

Final Thoughts in Closing

By Steven Peck

Well, what a month in March. It sure went fast. But, next month, I am going to start something new in the SPACE Newsletter.

We are going to have a comics page. I said that I was thinking about it. So, I will do it. I am going to think of some things to illustrate about in the comics that I will write. Also, I will write reviews on the Atari game platforms. It is time to innovate the Newsletter some more and bring it up to snuff. I think that this will jazz it up.

So, thanks for reading the Newsletter, and thank God for rapid-fire controllers. See you on April 8th!



GET INVOLVED!



WE WANT
YOUR
ARTICLES!

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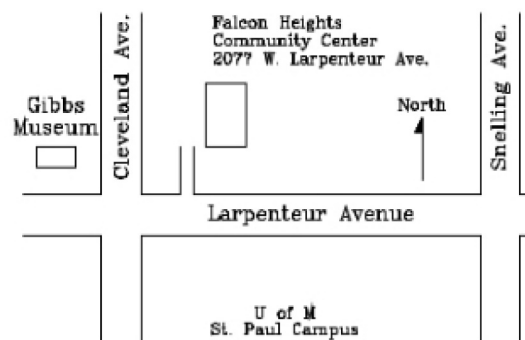
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Saint Paul Atari Computer Enthusiasts (SPACE) meets on the second Friday of each month at 7:30 PM in the Falcon Heights Community Center at 2077 West Larpenteur Ave. Doors open at 7:00 PM.



S.P.A.C.E.

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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.
