January 2017 Edition

Message from Captain Irata:

"Life is like an Atari game. You never know how random things are that can happen in it!"

HOO-RAH!

The President's Corner
By Michael Current

Welcome to the new year!!

This month I'll mention the new, BEAUTIFUL, coffee-table style book called The Art Of Atari, produced by Tim Lapetino.

At 10 inches wide by 11.25 inches tall, and 351 pages, the book is a masterful collection of examples of design art produced by Atari for arcade cabinets, home video game boxes and documents, and the like.

Furthermore, there are numerous interviews with the artists and industrial designers who created all these works.

I've never really been too familiar with this group of people, but I agree with Mr. Lapetino, these artists are themselves important contributors to the overall impact of the cult of Atari.

Get yourself a copy of this book! Available at booksellers everywhere (I heard it's at Barnes & Noble), or direct from the publisher, Dynamite, at:

http://dynamite.com/htmlfiles/viewProduct.html?PRO=C1524101036 (hardcover) or:

http://dynamite.com/htmlfiles/viewProduct.html?PRO=C1524102113 (deluxe).

Thanks, keep using that Atari, and come to your next SPACE meeting, Friday January 13, 2017.

Treasurer's Report
By Gregory Leitner

Here we are at year's end and the way we close off the year is to throw a SPACE Christmas Party.

It just so happens that we had the exact same members and spouses as we had for the July SPACE Birthday Party. Plenty of food for those who attended and some leftovers as well.

Not much to talk about except the very sad news of the death of Steve Berglund. He was a very nice person and a great value to SPACE. He will be surely missed and our thoughts and prayers go out to his family.

Hard to say when Lance and Brian will be back for our future meetings since Lance just had another surgery on his shoulder and can't drive for a few more months. Worst case maybe not until the fall.

He has a couple of new games he has completed and wants to demo them soon so he might have Steve Peck bring them in to look at.

As is always the case when food is waiting to be eaten we cut our December SPACE meeting short and just spent more time viewing the December 8-bit DOM. A couple of really cool games on this one and every SPACE member should own it.

We sold five 8-bit DOMs for $15.00 and once again had no expenses. We started the month with a bank balance of $534.54 and ended with a bank balance of $549.54.

We will be getting our room rental bill soon so that will reduce our balance by $300.00.

Still have not heard from Nolan so I don't know how we are going to take care of the web-site expense. We haven't had a web-site report for months so I don't know where we stand.

Well I hope you all have a Merry Christmas and a very Happy New Year. Hope to see you all on January 13, 2017.

TRIVIA TIME:

"Asteroids" creator Ed Logg once hacked his own game of "Asteroids." As a joke, he replaced the asteroids with turtles and called it "Turtleroids."

HELLO WORLD!

Happy New Year, fellow Atarians! It has been a somewhat cold 2017 so far, but it is still just January. December was a good month.

It was a great party too. Of course, there was the taco frenzy at the Christmas Party and there was a lot of camaraderie that night. I had a great time, and I hope that you all had one, too.

It was sad to hear of the passing of Steve Berglund. He seemed like such a clever guy. I enjoyed the Falcon he brought in. He really wanted to see that thing work properly.

RIP, Steve Berglund. I hope you are having fun at that Atari computer terminal in the sky.

Anyway, I will keep you posted on the developments coming our way from Video 61 and Atari Sales concerning new game releases.

I will need Lance's permission first before I can divulge any information. So, I am sorry folks. The news may have to wait until his approval. When it comes, I will give it to you.

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

EXCELSIOR!

Atari 8-bit
DOM Review
By Steven Peck

Well, as I had promised, I will have a double review involving two DOMs to catch up with November's hiatus. So, here we go!

November DOM, Side A:

The first program on the DOM is a game by the venerable Fandal called "Astro Road."

You have to go through a maze of yellow dots without hitting them. If you hit one, you are toast and the game is over. It is definitely a simple concept.

But, difficult to master. I like the simplicity of the play and its difficulty at the same time. It jitters, so there is an inherent PAL problem there.

Nevertheless, it's a great game. Here are my scores:

Graphics:	7
Animation:	9
Gameplay:	9
Sound:	7
TOTAL:	32/40

The second file on the DOM is a picture called "Other X." It resembles the heroine, Samus Aran, from the classic Nintendo game, "Metroid."

I personally think that it needs some polish, but it still looks good. It could be more colorful, but I like it. It does stand out anyway. Here is my overall score for this game.

TOTAL:	7/10

The third program is an RPG called "The Monk." You start off as a little guy with only your fists for weapons. There is a whole world to explore, but I found some stuff interesting about it.

First, the game view looks magnified and extremely pixellated. I also noticed the player's character looks a lot like Mario. Nevertheless, I think I would play this game again. Thumbs up!

Graphics:	6
Gameplay:	10
Animation:	5
Sound:	9

TOTAL:	30/40

"Freecell XE" is based and the classic Solitaire game. It is a great game, too. I love Solitaire and Freecell. I even won a game playing a test of Fandal's take on this game for the XE.

Just like the Windows version, you have to make four piles of cards in numerical order of each suit. If you do, you win. There you go: Classic Freecell. Here is my take on this game, and it is definitely worth playing.

Graphics:	7
Gameplay:	10
Animation:	5
Sound:	N/A

TOTAL:	22/30

Space Nomad: Episodes 1-3 are a series of pictures that depict what look like splash screens. Although they are black-and-white, I thought they looked quite impressive. I am going to give the same score for all three files:

TOTAL (for all three pictures): 8/10

SIDE B:

The entire next side of the DOM is a game called "Picross XE." In this game, you are stuck in ancient ruins and need to decipher a code to get out of there. Otherwise, you will be trapped forever in the ruins.

I really do not understand how to play this game. It seems challenging enough, It is definitely a great puzzler.

Graphics:	5
Gameplay:	10
Animation:	5
Sound:	10

TOTAL:	30/40

December DOM, Side A:

"Cubico," the first program on the December DOM, is a puzzler. You have to clear a screen of cubes by matching two or more cubes of the same color at a time. They disappear if you match

them. If you cannot totally clear the screen, the game is over.

I like the premise of this game. I have seen other games like it in the past, and all have been quite challenging. It also has a nice looking splash screen at the beginning.

Here's my score for this game:

Graphics: 8
Gameplay: 10
Animation: 4
Sound: 9

TOTAL: 31/40

"Bob Ross" is a demo that shows a rendering done in real time, but I think it suffers due to a PAL problem. I think it could have been a lot better.

All it shows is a bunch of spheres being rendered into a larger sprite on screen. I thought it was minimalist and am disappointed in it.

Graphics: 5
Animation: 6
Sound: 3

TOTAL: 14/30

"Freax" is another demo. It shows a bunch of goofy graphics on the screen from top to bottom, then starts over again. Again, it is minimalist.

Graphics: 4
Animation: 2
Sound: 3

TOTAL: 9/30

"Back in Time" is a fast-paced music demo in where it picks up the tempo in the middle of the song. It is pretty catchy.

TOTAL: 8/10

"Dither" is a real-time animated demo that shows wavy lines and sound to boot to match it. Pretty fluid animation and well worth watching. Pretty good demo.

Graphics: 10
Sound: 10

Animation: 10

TOTAL: 30/30

"After" is a picture showing a cyber-apocalypse scene with a terminator-like android haloding a skull and standing on a bunch of other skulls with a city in flames.

It is dark, but a good rendering. Here's my score on this picture.

TOTAL: 8/10

"Casiopea" is a picture of a young woman sitting by herself among abstract designs. I like it. It looks great, but I think it need some polish. It still is not too bad, though.

TOTAL: 7/10

"Lotharek" is a demo that has been on a previous DOM before that I have seen in the past. It shows a head floating in front of a flashy background. I like it and the music.

TOTAL   10/10

In "Mind Blast," a puzzler, you have to move spheres vertically or horizontally to match the colors perfectly. Once that is done, you advance to the next round. Another great title by the great Fandal.

Graphics: 9
Animation: 9
Sound: 9
Gameplay: 9

TOTAL: 36/40

"Back from Fractilis" is a music track. It sounds weird at first. It picks up, however. It sounds like it would be from "Rescue on Fractalus". I think that is where it is derived from, hence the title.

Nice sound to it.

TOTAL: 10/10

"Music in 256 Bytes" sounds really weird, but for its size, it is a great attempt. Weird music, but I love the file because it sounds humorous to me.

TOTAL: 7/10

"Icantation" is a great track to listen to. I like the drum beat in the background. I like the medieval-sounding music. It is simple and mellow. High marks for sure.

TOTAL: 10/10

SIDE B:

"Another World" is the only program on Side B of this DOM. It is based on the classic game in which you go to another universe and try to survive. I think that you have to get home, if memory serves me correctly.

Well, I like this game and I could sit and play it for hours on end.

Graphics: 8
Animation: 9
Gameplay: 10
Sound: 8
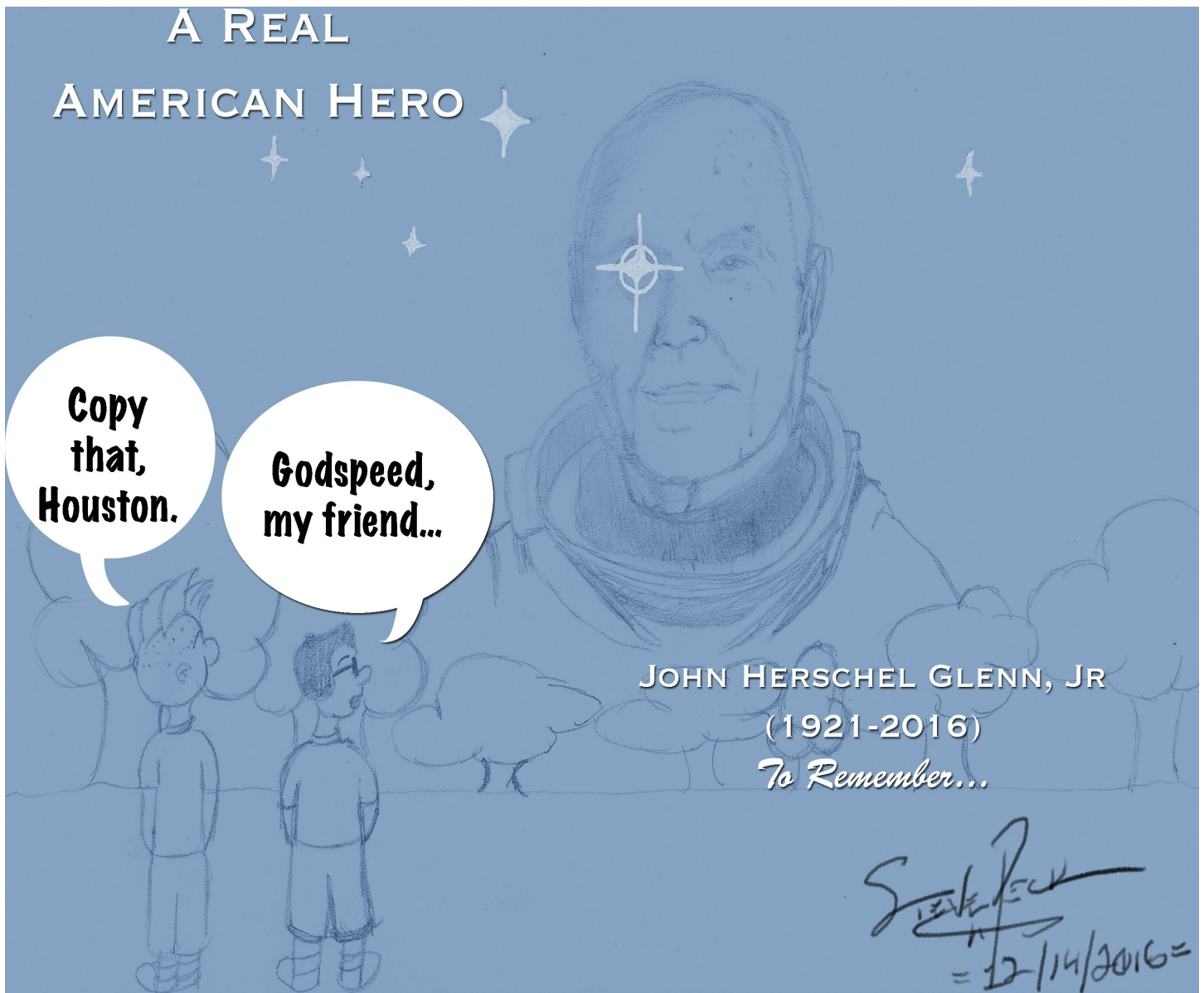
TOTAL: 37/40

This concludes the DOM Review. I hope that you find it useful. Carpe Diem, guys.

SPACE COMICS SECTION

RIP John Glenn…

The next SPACE meeting is on Friday, January 13, 2017.

We hope to see you there!

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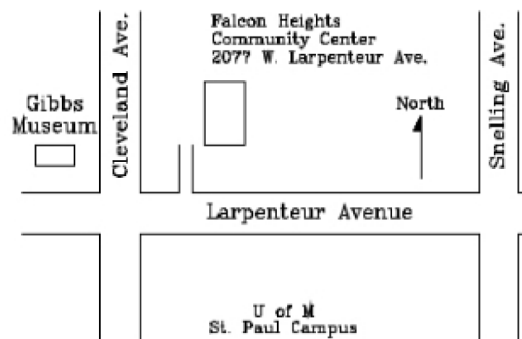
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Visit our website at: http://space.atari.org/

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.