



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

## February 2017 Edition



**Message from Captain Irata:**

**"Zero G, and I'm feeling like playing Atari is better!"**

**HOO-RAH!**



**The  
President's  
Corner**  
*By Michael  
Current*

Starting with the Atari 815 disk drive, remember reading about it?

The unit had two, single-sided, double density 5.25" floppy disk drives, for a total of four times the storage space of a standard Atari 810 drive.

The 815 was supposed to ship with DOS 2.0D, the double density version of DOS 2.0S. There are prototype 815's out there, but it never went into mass production.

Also, it is my belief that DOS 2.0D never really came out either. There are at least two different supposed versions floating about, but no one seems to have an original disk.

Now, many references have always said that on a double density Atari disk, the boot sectors are single density. Does this mean that the 815 writes single density boot sectors on an otherwise double density disk?

It was worth revisiting... and I've come to a different conclusion than I had before. On an Atari double density disk, the boot sec-

tors are not single density.

Rather, the boot sectors are formatted for double density like the rest of the disk, but only the first 128 bytes are used. On the Atari, 1 or more boot sectors comprise the boot record.

The boot record is read directly by the Atari OS, independent of any DOS that might subsequently be loaded from the disk. And, the Atari OS assumes that boot sectors are 128 bytes long, which would be the whole sector on a single density disk, but only half of a 256-byte double density sector.

Furthermore, I came to realize something I think is rather important about the 815. I believe the 815 was able to operate **ONLY** in double density mode. It could not read or write a single density disk.

This is spelled out in the DOS II reference manual, if you read it carefully. It would seem crazy now, but at the time the 810 was the only disk drive available, so it must have seemed ok to the original designers, though still a limitation.

It appears that the prototype 815 being double density only was the inspiration for Percom to enter the Atari market with a disk drive of their own, one that would be able to switch between single and double density operation. Percom invented the "Percom configuration block" in order to support density switching, and to create an advantage over the upcoming Atari 815.

I suspect that once the Percom was introduced, Atari realized that the Percom was far superior to the 815 for supporting both densities, and I suspect this to be the reason Atari decided to cancel the 815 before releasing it. What do you think, does this seem plausible?

Thanks, keep using that Atari, and come to your next SPACE meeting, Friday February 10, 2017.



### **Treasurer's Report**

*By Gregory Leitner*

We finally ended up with three members present for the January SPACE meeting, but it looked rather bleak when 7:30 rolled around and I was the only one there.

Then Steve Peck came and about fifteen minutes later Glen arrived. It seems Glen tried to reach me at home but I had already left and since I don't have a cell phone we weren't able to connect.

Glen had car problems and was just about to call it quits when he got it started and decided to get to the meeting. Steve had e-mailed me that he was coming so I was expecting him but I was getting a little worried when 7:30 was near and I was all alone.

So anyway we as I said we ended up with three members and spent the rest of our time going through the monthly DOM.

I did receive the 2016 room rental bill from Falcon Heights for the normal \$300.00 and signed up once again for 2017 for the same space at the same rate. We had a really good month for receipts even though we were only three and here is how our treasury looks as of the end of January 2017:

*Treasurer's Report Cont. on Pg. 2*

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#### **TRIVIA TIME**

*Atari filed a lawsuit once against Sega, claiming infringement concerning the Genesis and its closeness in design to the Atari ST. They settled for \$90 million and Sega agreed to buy 10% of Atari as a result.*

We took in \$54.00 on three membership renewals and the sale of three 8-bit DOMs. The members who renewed are our two out of state members and Rich Mier.

With our beginning balance of \$549.54 and adding the \$54.00 from our January receipts and subtracting the \$300.00 for our room rental our ending balance as of January 31, 2017 is \$303.54.

So we have a very nice start to the new year as we already have the 2017 room rental covered. I still don't know what expenses we will have for our web-site as no one seems to know the status of Nolan though the site is up and running.

I hope the weather holds up for our February meeting next month on the 10th so more members can make it. Hope to see you there.



## Secretary's Report

By Steven Peck

HELLO WORLD!

Well, three members did show up. I am glad Glen got there OK, as it seemed that he had some issues getting to the meeting. But, I am glad that all is kosher. We mostly talked about the DOM. Great DOM, too.

I hope that Nolan is doing better, since we have not seen him since his health issues. I know that he is having a tough time. My hopes are with him. Get better, Nolan. After all, you are still the Veep of the Club.

We can use your services, Buddy! :)

Anyway, I hope that Lance and Brian are able to come to the Club this time in February. Lance is getting better slowly and I wish him well, too. He might show up for the February meeting. Stay tuned!

As for the membership count, I believe that there are eight members paid up. That is, if I recall correctly. There really is not much to talk about, except that Greg brought some Egyptian cuisine from his neighbors.

Geez, I love that meat stuff those folks make for their Christmas celebrations. Well, that concludes the Report. In Stan Lee's words,

**EXCELSIOR!**

## Atari 8-bit DOM Review

By Steven Peck

Well, folks, it is one month into the new year of 2017. It is also time for another DOM review for the Atari 8-bit computer! Time is just flying, so I will not waste it. I will just get started on the Review.

January 2017 DOM – Side A:

The first file, Zamek, is a picture of an Eastern European castle. It is a drawing, so it shows some 8-bit quality in it. Actually, it is not really that bad. I like it and I will score it as such. So, here we go:

TOTAL: 8/10

The next picture, Sunny, shows a smiling sun and it is gorgeous. I love it! It reminds me of a Taquart file, only not animated. KUDOS to the guy who did this!

TOTAL: 10/10

The next file is a music track, called Falcon. This is a great soundtrack and it shows. It is fast and lively, clear and pristine. Who cares if it's only Mono and not Stereo?!

Good track, by the way.

TOTAL: 10/10

The next file is a demo, called Geom. It is exactly what it says it is: waves of spinning geometric cubes. I like the real-time animation, but there is no music. It does not really detract from it, but I still like it. Way to go!

Score:

Graphics: 9/10  
Animation: 10/10

TOTAL: 19/20

Hexagon XE, the next file, is a game like Chinese Checkers or Go. The goal: capture most of the board before your opponent beats you to it.

The game is definitely challenging and has a great splash screen. Nice touch, Fandal! Love it!

Score:

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

TOTAL: 34/40

Legend, the next file on the DOM, is another soundtrack, this time in stereo, as opposed to mono. It is definitely jazzed up, and quite lively and peppy. I loved it. I will score accordingly.

TOTAL: 9/10

Skyscraper is a really cool game where you have to build a tall building. You start off with wide stories, and they drop down from a crane. You must be precise with your timing, as the pieces must fit exactly.

If they do not fit exactly, the pieces get smaller and smaller, and the game gets faster and faster, until GAME OVER!

Although not an original game, as I have seen this concept before, I think it's the bees' knees, as the British say. I will score it now.

Score:

Graphics: 9/10  
Gameplay: 10/10  
Animation: 7/10  
Sound: 7/10

TOTAL: 33/40

Mehcaster, the next demo, is a bunch of animated colored lines, and they change color as they go up the screen. No music, which would have been a plus, but I think that was irrelevant to show the graphics.

Here is my score:

Score:

Graphics: 7/10  
Animation: 10/10

TOTAL: 17/20

Vantage, another demo, is a smashing demo showing a great splash screen and real-time animated dots in a chain moving around in the middle of the screen. I liked it a lot. I think that these guys discredit themselves.

They said it was not so great, but I think that they were being perfectionistic. Great job anyway.

Score:

Graphics: 9/10  
Animation: 10/10  
Sound: 10/10

TOTAL: 29/30

Reveries et Souvenirs is an unusual track in the fact that it was made to take advantage of not the POKEY, but the GTIA chip. It show marvelously. This is the best music demo, in my opinion on the DOM.

Kudos to QChan, the writer of the file.

TOTAL: 10/10

SIDE B:

Name this Game is the only game or file on the this side of the DOM. It is a game where you have guess from slides what Atari game is being shown on the screen. You get up to four tries per level.

If you lose, the game will say, "You should play more Atari games." Since I love trivia, I am going to enjoy this game. It is an instant homebrew classic. Cheers, ABBUC!

Score:

Graphics: 8/10  
Gameplay: 10/10  
Animation: 6/10  
Sound: 8/10

TOTAL 32/40

Well, fellow Atarians, this concludes another DOM Review. Carpe Diem, folks!



**The next SPACE meeting  
is on Friday, February 10, 2017,  
at 7:30 PM**

**We hope to see you there!**



**Another Message from Captain Irata:  
"OK, SPACE Cadets! Get to your Atari consoles  
and give me 50,000 points!  
SEMPER FI!"**

## CLUB OFFICIALS

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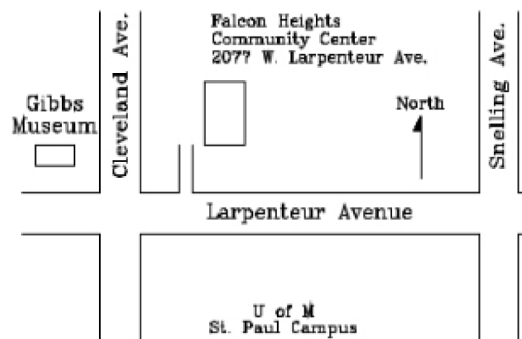
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Saint Paul Atari Computer Enthusiasts (SPACE) meets on the second Friday of each month at 7:30 PM in the Falcon Heights Community Center at 2077 West Larpenteur Ave. Doors open at 7:00 PM.



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S.P.A.C.E.

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

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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.

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