

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

February 2018 Edition



The President's Corner *By Michael Current*

It's possible I mentioned this before, hopefully not. Or if I did, maybe it's interesting enough to mention again.

For many years most people, including me, took the January 1979 Consumer Electronics Show as the site of the introduction of the Atari 400/800 computers. They were there for sure, but the 400/800 had actually been first introduced in a New York City news conference the month before, on December 14, 1978.

That approach also set the precedent for how they first introduced the 1200XL, also at a New York City press conference, December 13, 1982. So they were consistent in that way. I think this had to do with a desire to create more of an association between the corporate Warner Communications brand and the computers, and maybe to downplay an association of the Atari brand with the computers, at least at the very beginning.

And of course Warner Communications was headquartered in New York. If they started out with such a marketing strategy it sure didn't last very long. Few if any people would say something like, the 400/800 computers were developed and released by Warner Communications. But in a way, it would be true!

Thanks, keep using that Atari, and come to your next SPACE meeting, Friday, February 9, 2018.



Message from Captain Irata:

"Have joystick, will travel!"

HOO-RAH!

TRIVIA TIME!

The MARIA chip, the main CPU of the Atari 7800, runs at a speed of only 1.79 MHz.



Treasurer's Report *By Gregory Leitner*

Once again we had a good turn out for our January SPACE meeting. Five members were present and that made for another entertaining evening.

Everyone got to the meeting early enough to get a good look at all the files on January's DOM, another great DOM, and Steve will be giving his scoring of the files later in this newsletter.

For our treasury we ended 2017 with a healthy balance of \$678.54. Since then I have received the room rental bill for 2017 for \$300.00. That brings us down to \$378.54.

Then for January we added in our receipts of \$9.00 (three 8-bit DOMs). So we now have a final balance of \$387.54 at the end of January 2018.

As you can see we already have enough funds to pay for our room rental this year and we have eleven more months of receipts to add to our total.

It's hard to believe how well this Club has managed with around ten members. Thanks to all who keep their memberships up to date and to those members who buy the monthly DOMs.

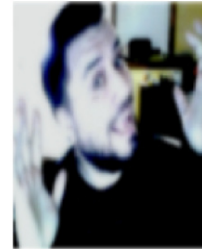
Just got done watching the amazing finish to the Vikings playoff game. An unbelievable ending to a game that was slipping away, but like they always say: it ain't over till the scoreboard time reads 0:00.

I really feel bad for the New Orleans defender because I am sure he was instructed to let a Viking make a catch but make sure he doesn't get out of bounds to stop the clock.

Any catch and tackle on the field would have run out the clock so no chance for a game winning field goal.

The defender thought Diggs was going to try to get out of bounds after the catch and stop the clock for the field goal, but Diggs crossed them up by keeping his balance and running down the field for the touchdown. Diggs has a lot of moxie for a second year player.

On that note I will see you in February with a Viking Super Bowl update. Go Vikings!!



Secretary's Report *By Steven Peck*

HELLO WORLD!

Hello again! Another month with another Secretary's Report commences. Here we go!

The meeting commenced at 7:34 PM, on Friday, January 12, 2018. There was talk about the DOM for the month of January. I will get into that later in the Review, but the DOM was quite astounding.

The Membership Count stands at nine members paid-up. If you are due, I cordially encourage you to renew. Then, you are supporting SPACE and helping a good cause, as we continue to keep the Atari legend alive.

The V61 game title, "Tile Smashers," was demoed with CX30 Evolved controllers, paddles which are tailor-made for the Atari 7800 and compatibles. It will also work on the A2600 and computers. Kudos to V61 for selling eleven copies of "Tile Smashers" in December 2017.

Stellar demo, by the way, as well. I think that the premise of the game will travel. The game can also use joysticks, the driving controller for the A2600, as well as the original paddle controllers for the A2600 and A7800. It is also Trak-Ball compatible.

The much-touted Hyeparkin Retron77, an A2600 clone that can play the original cartridges in HD resolution, was demoed at CES 2017. It will be released soon to retail markets and is receiving some notoriety already.

RetroBit are developing USB directional for Dreamcast and Genesis systems, originally developed by Sega, who are working closely with RetroBit on this development.

There was talk in new business about V61's A7800 version of the retro arcade game, Exidy's "Venture." It will be out soon, as it is under development as we speak. I will have more coming in the next few months concerning this development.

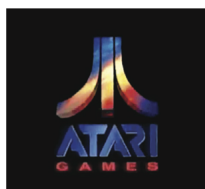
The meeting then adjourned at 7:58 PM, later that evening.

This concludes the Report. Thanks for reading and in the words of the great Stan Lee...

EXCELSIOR!

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Atari 8-bit DOM Review

By Steven Peck

Welcome to the 8-bit DOM Review of February 2018. There are a lot of good demos, music tracks, and a kicking conversion of an arcade game from Namco, made originally in 1981. NOTE: It is not Pac-Man, but it is from the same company.

Besides, Pac-Man came out in 1980 anyway. On with the Review.

January 2017 DOM, Side A:

The first file on here is a demo called Zig Zag, and that is exactly what it is. It is an animated zig zag wave going across the screen and looks kind of like a sine wave, like in trigonometric graphs. It is in real-time and moves quite fluidly because of that.

It is not much of a demo, but it exemplifies real-time speed in with the zig zag line, so it is not really too shabby. It is animated well. You can hear a buzzing sound as it moves across the screen. It reminds me of an oscilloscope.

It could be more, but for the way it is made it is looking quite good. Here is my score on that.

Graphics:	7
Animation:	10
Sound:	7
TOTAL:	24/30

The second file is also a demo of a spaceship flying in a corridor called Nabuchodosor 256b. It has choppy animation, due to the file size I assume, and you can hear the roar of the engine on the ship.

It is good for what it is. I understand the premise of it. It could have been a little bit better, but it still checks out fine. Here is how I will score it:

Graphics:	7
Animation:	7
Sound:	7
TOTAL:	21/30

The third file is a music track called Bytes of Blue 256b. It is a fast tempo with nice drumbeat and low-sounding bass. It sounds pretty good, and I will score accordingly.

TOTAL:	9/10
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The fourth file is the conversion of the arcade game, Bosconian. As stated before, this game is from Namco, made in 1981, and it rocks. I am addicted to this game because it is so good and difficult.

In the game, you pilot a ship that shoots in two directions, fighting alien ships and trying to destroy spacestations that will fire at you. It is tough and it is extremely close to its arcade counterpart.

If you choose to play this game, be prepared! It is addictive. Here is my score:

Graphics:	9
Gameplay:	10
Animation:	10
Sound:	10
TOTAL:	39/40

Humpatar is a music track that sound funny, peppy, festive, and fast at first. It slows down eventually, then picks up again. It reminds me of a band of musicians playing either woodwind instruments or a circus callopie. Pretty fun

TOTAL:	8/10
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The next file is a picture called My Dear Old Friend. It is reminiscent of Hamlet looking at the skull of Yorick, if you remember the Shakespearean play. Only, this time, it show a cyborg holding a robotic skull. Interesting take. Great graphics, too.

TOTAL:	9/10
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Rick's Revenge is a picture showing what looks like a fedora-wearing explorer surrounded by skulls and a cobra, with a Mayan pyramid in the background. It looks pretty good. Incredibly realistic for 8-bit.

TOTAL:	9/10
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The last file on Side A is a music track called Stange Garden. It has an eerie sound at first, then the tempo picks up. It sounds pretty good. I think it ranks up there. Here is my score on that.

TOTAL:	8/10
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SIDE B:

The next file is called 2 Twist 256b. That is exactly what it is: two twisting columns on a flickering background. The animation is fast and in real-time. It reminds of Silly Putty the way the demo looks. Very nice and fluid demo.

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

The next file, Balloons, shows hot-air balloons in a canyon around low sunlight and showing birds in the distance. There is detail in it, but I think it could be better in the way it was executed. But still, it works for me.

TOTAL:	7/10
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Buka, another pic and the next file on this DOM, shows a purple blob with the Atari as his nose. It is at nighttime, and there is a falling star in the background. It looks good. I like the cartooning in the drawing, but I think it could be better.

TOTAL:	7/10
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Short Film About Patience is, well, just what the title states. It is about a screen loading. It keeps loading. So, it is a practical joke. Funny. I like the joke. Although there is not too much to it, it does stand out in this respect: It is a joke.

TOTAL:	8/10
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Gretro Filler is a demo showing real-time animation, a moving background, and a bouncing ball next to the Gretro logo in the foreground. It is pretty good programming and has a lot going on. I will take it.

Graphics:	9
Animation:	10
Sound:	9
TOTAL:	38/40

IVI 256b is nothing but a text-ticker on the screen about SillyVenture 2K17. There is some music as well. Although there is not much going on here, it still has great and fast animation. Cute little demo. Kudos to the programmer.

Graphics:	5
Animation:	10
Sound:	7
TOTAL:	22/40

Last Minute POKEY Song is a POKEY track and it sounds pretty good. It has great sound and moderate tempo. It sounds nice and a little action-packed. Kudos to V0yager for making it.

TOTAL:	9/10
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Last Party 2017 is an invite to a party from late December of last year in Opalenica, Poland. The demo is cleverly made, has real-time animation, and funny but well-played music. Pretty cool!

Graphics:	9
Animation:	10
Sound:	10

TOTAL:	29/30
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Old Skool Pioneer is a tribute to a guy named Helios (I assume a programmer with a lot of experience). It shows the first motion picture frames (I think it is by photographer Eadweard Muybridge, who is famous among animators).

The music and graphics are top-notch. The animation is pleasant to look at. I think that we have a winner here. My score is next.

Graphics:	10
Animation:	10
Sound:	10

TOTAL:	30/30 (perfect score)
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Rock Dat Gabba is a music track that have a distinctive and funky tune to it. It sounds weird, but, it is quite pleasing. It could be better, but I will give it my score in this fashion.

Graphics:	5
Sound:	8

Total:	13/20
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Shaman is another picture on this DOM. It shows a Native American woman holding a wand. It is an interesting and colorful picture. I think that the face could be better, but the colors really stand out.

Here is my score:

TOTAL:	8/10
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Sound of Snow is the final file on the DOM, and is a music track. It is light and airy, but the tempo picks up like a fast snowfall. Pretty good track and it does sound like falling snow.

Kudos to the maker of this track.

TOTAL:	8/10
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This concludes the DOM Review for the Atari 8-bit. Until we meet again, Carpe Dlem, guys! Thanks for reading.



*The next SPACE meeting
will commence on Friday,
February 9, 2018, at 7:30 PM.*

We hope to see you there! Thanks!



ST DOM NEWS & REVIEWS

By Michael Allard

(Image Credits: Bill Bertram/Wikipedia)

It's February and Valentine's Day is drawing near. In the real world we would be giving our loved ones gifts to either win their heart for the first time or to continue showing our affection for them.

But, here it's a video game world ... and there is no such thing as Valentine's. In this world it's either kill or be killed. Nothing says love more than that, right?

Which is why this month's ST DOM has two games where all you have to do is blast everything that moves. Let's meet the games.

ELASTRON

Blastron is a clone of the William's arcade smash hit Robotron 2084. This game keeps some elements that hint back to the arcade hit but at the same time brings new things that keep it a bit original.

Your controlled player is a space ship instead of a human-like figure, bonus points can be obtained by collecting other humans wandering around (albeit aimlessly), and there are power-ups I will leave up to you to discover what they are and what they do.

Blastron uses joystick controls, has good graphics, arcade-like sounds, and is easy to pick up and play but may take a while to get into the swing of things. It also saves high scores so you can challenge yourself, family, friends, that annoying kid down the street ... you get the idea.

SEAWOLF

Seawolf is an arcade-style shooting game where you are blasting anything that moves. In this case the targets are boats, helicopters, planes, and a few other objects. All you have to do is keep your damage bar to a minimum. If it reaches 100% then the game is over.

Seawolf uses joystick controls. The title screen has instructions on what to do and how to play but ... to fire torpedoes just press the fire button and to shoot missiles at helicopters and planes pull down on the joystick while pressing the fire button.

You can move left and right but the game does have limits to where you can't move in a single direction any more, forcing you to move in the opposite direction.

Graphics look really good and use a multiplex visual which works really well. Sounds are good enough to be considered arcade-style, and the controls respond quickly.

CLOSING STATEMENTS

That's it for this month's ST DOM. I hope you enjoy it. Be sure to spend time with loved ones either before or after you get done blasting everything to bits.

There's nothing more important than spending quality time with a loved one. Well...except maybe spending quality time with a loved one on an Atari.



GET INVOLVED!



WE WANT
YOUR
ARTICLES!

A Message from our littlest
(and furriest) SPACE members:

Angel and Bandit,
The SPACE Spokes-ferrets!



"Remember us from the Election?
We want to say keep playing Atari!
Maybe one day, we can"*dook-
dook" it out on Crystal Castles, or
something. Don't worry! We have
been practicing! So, GRRR!"

TTFN until the next meeting!

**"Dook-dook" is the sound ferrets make
when playing around, by the way.*

Final Thoughts

Well, we know that the Vikes did not get to go to the Super Bowl in Minneapolis this year, but I think that you might have enjoyed the game anyway, as the Patriots were finally wasted by the Eagles (sorry, Mr. Veep, but I was hoping a change of venue).

But, it was fun while it lasted. It was a nail-biter, but the winning team pulled through. It was also the coldest Super Bowl Sunday on record in NFL history. Chalk one up for us!

But, on a serious note, I hope to be at the next SPACE meeting. I hope to see more people there and, who knows, maybe in the next year we can pick up a new member or two.

I was thinking. What if, somehow, we had a SPACE game tournament? This is an idea, and we do not have to go through with it, but maybe it could draw people to the Club. Just wishful thinking, I guess, but it is an idea. Hint?

That is just a thought I had. It could work, but it would be up to a consensus, of course. I am not gung ho about it, but it sounds interesting.

Anyway, I close. See you soon and hopefully we will have a great turnout at the next Meeting. Until then, Atari beckons! See you next time. Thanks.

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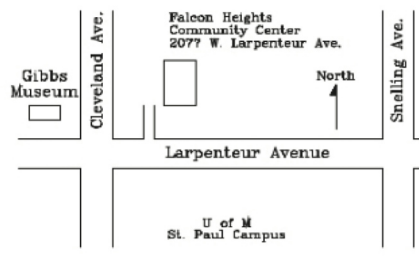
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The Saint Paul Atari Computer Enthusiasts (SPACE) special interest group meets on the second Friday of every month at 7:30 PM in the Falcon Heights Community Center at 2077 West Larpenteur Avenue. Doors open at 7:00 PM.



S.P.A.C.E.

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<http://space.atari.org>

We now have a Facebook page.
Please feel free to visit it at this URL:

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

SPACE BBS NOTICE:

The SPACE bulletin board service (BBS) is currently offline. We apologize for the inconvenience and hope to have it back online in the future.

NOTICE FOR AUTHORS OF SPACE NEWSLETTER ARTICLES:

Articles meant for newsletter publication must be received by the SPACE Newsletter Editor by two weeks prior to the start of the next scheduled SPACE Meeting. Thank you for your understanding on this.

