June 2018 Edition

The President's Corner
By Michael Current

Following up on the new Atari VCS, pre-orders open May 30th on Indiegogo. The fact that they're ready to take our money suggests it will end up a real product, does it not? We shall see!

I noticed our friends at Video 61 have recently released the new games Putt 18 and HeliCommander on cartridges, check them out!

Meanwhile, I've been most recently delving into the history of Atari in West Germany, both at the beginning (when it grew out of WEA Musik GmbH), and then how the company came under the control of Jack Tramiel in 1984.

I had more recently dealt with Atari in Germany from that point forward, but hadn't realized I had never done the earlier years. Complicated! And lots of Google translating to help me plod my way through the German language.

For starters, I thought I was seeing references to several different German subsidiary, but those Germans just typed the same company name out in several different ways. Now, I get it!

Thanks, keep using that Atari, and come to your next SPACE meeting, Friday, June 8, 2018.

Message from Captain Irata:

"Life is like a third-person shooter. You never know what will jump out at you at any time."

HOO-RAH!

Treasurer's Report
By Gregory Leitner

What a nice change from the unfortunate snowed-out April SPACE meeting. We had five members for our May meeting and it was a good one.

Glen provided both the April and May 8-bit DOMs and we already had both ST DOMs for April and May. I will let Steve give you the reviews on all four DOMs which should be in this month's newsletter.

At the May meeting I gave the members a listing of the auction items which we hope to have at the July SPACE Birthday meeting. Here is just a sample: a 130XE computer, two 1050 hard drives, all three of these hardware items were tested and run fine.

Mr. Novotny, who donated these items, kept them very clean and smoke-free. Other items include a large list of programming literature, such as: De Re Atari, Atari Technical Reference Guide, 400/800 System list, 6502 Software Design, Graphics Arcade Design, MAC/65 Instructions, Ramdisk setup and notes, and lots more!

You don't want to miss this auction. These items are hard to find and very expensive, so here is your chance to land a great deal.

For our treasury we started the month off with $447.54 and we added a membership renewal, sold six 8-bit DOMs and two ST DOMs, for a total of $39.00 as follows:

Membership renewal:	$15.00
8-bit DOMs:	$18.00
ST DOMs:	$6.00
TOTAL:	$39.00

This brings our ending SPACE bank balance to $486.54. Wow! We already have this years room rental paid for and one half of 2019 with seven months of 2018 still to come!

See you all next month and if you can't make it don't forget the auction in July. We need to discuss the fixings for the party at the June meeting so please try to be there for that meeting also. See you June 8th.

TRIVIA TIME!

The Atari ST application, "Cyber Studio: Stereo CAD-3D," was created by Thomas Hudson, who later created the now world-famous 3ds max, a 3D animation program published by Autodesk.

"Stereo CAD-3D," published by Antic, is the direct ancestor of 3ds max. It also uses a mathematical algorithm called delta compression for 3D objects that the application creates.

Secretary's Report
By Steven Peck

HELLO WORLD!

Steve here with another Secretary's Report! I am grateful for the amount of cash that has been accumulated from the SPACE DOM sales.

Thanks for supporting SPACE with your purchases, and assuring that SPACE can continue for yet another year, as well as for years to come. Kudos to the success of the ST DOM sales, as it has really made a difference.

Now, without any further delays, I will go on with the Report. Off we go!

The meeting officially commenced at 7:34 PM, on Friday, May 11, 2018. Five members were present, including your's truly, the SPACE Secretary. We recapped on the April 2018 blizzard that hit the Twin Cities Metro Area hard.

It was a real doozy, too! I do not have to repeat how snowy and bad the weather really was, as you already all know that.

The Membership Count stands at ten members. The SPACE Website has been going strong and smoothly, with no complaints that I am aware of.

ATARI VCS UPDATE: In the New Business, the Atari VCS began its crowdfunding campaign on Indiegogo, as was told to us by Michael Current, our intrepid SPACE President.

I can tell you of a surety, at this writing, that the crowdfunding is a colossal success so far. At this writing, the campaign is over 2,400% funded, with over 9,000 backers. The goal initially was to fund $100,000 for the Atari VCS. Today, at this writing it is over $2.4 million and growing.

I know for a fact that it will have an Ubuntu Linux-based OS, it will accommodate PC peripherals, and it will be PC-based technology. Well, the crowdfunding has been successful. Let us hope that the VCS will have the same success as its campaign on Indiegogo. Here is to hoping that, by July 2019 (the release date of the VCS indicated on Indiegogo), it all works out.

As far as everyone is concerned, I am hoping that we will have a great SPACE Birthday Party and a fruitful auction in July. There will be a lot of stuff to purchase, and I hope that the auction will go over very well. As Greg has mentioned before in the Treasurer's Report, there is good stuff that will be sold in the auction. We will see how it all pans out in July. The SPACE meeting officially adjourned at 8:22 PM.

So, that concludes the Secretary's Report. I will try to be there in June for the next SPACE meeting. Until then, in the words of the great master artist, Stan Lee...

EXCELSIOR!

Time-Limited Early Bird Pre-Sale Package to Offer Atari VCS Platform Starting at $199

NEW YORK, NY (APRIL 30, 2018) - Atari®, one of the world's most iconic consumer brands and interactive entertainment producers today announces that pre-sales of its new Atari VCS™ hardware platform will start May 30, 2018.

The pre-sale is exclusive to Indiegogo and features the time-limited Atari VCS Collector's Edition featuring the special retro-inspired wood-front.

In addition to the Collector's Edition, fans will have the option to pre-order the Atari VCS Onyx, a sleek black version. Early-bird Atari VCS packages will be offered, including the Onyx starting at $199 USD for a limited period of time.

Other packages will include the Classic Joystick and Modern Controller. Initial Atari VCS shipments are planned for Spring 2019.

Fans who have signed up for "insider" email alerts at AtariVCS.com before May 24, 2018, will be eligible for special purchase incentives during the pre-sale.

The VCS is a completely new Atari connected device, designed in California by Atari. The company has partnered with AMD who provides the Atari VCS custom processor with Radeon Graphics Technology.

The Atari VCS platform will offer support for 4K resolution, HDR and 60FPS content, onboard and expandable storage options, dual-band WiFi and Bluetooth 5.0, as well as USB 3.0 support.

A complete list of Atari VCS product specs will be posted with the pre-sale. The updated Classic Joystick and new Modern Controller for the Atari VCS are being developed in partnership with leading video game peripherals maker Power A.

Both items will be available in select packages and as standalone purchases. Retro-inspired, but not a "retro-box," the Atari VCS will be a fully customizable entertainment experience. This means access to a vast array of games, media and streaming content options.

As an homage to the past, Atari VCS covers the classics with the included Atari Vault of more than 100 classic games, including all-time arcade and home entertainment favorites like Asteroids®, Centipede®, Breakout®, Missile Command®, Gravitar® and Yars' Revenge®; a growing list of games, especially a full range of popular modern titles, will be announced at later dates.

"We continue moving forward on the Atari VCS project and are excited to see this pre-sale kickoff and to share more updates with our fans as we look toward the first shipments," notes Michael Arzt, Atari COO of Connected Devices. "We are building outstanding teams and forging alliances that will make this product great and truly worthy of the Atari VCS name. Expert hardware partners are helping make this project possible and we couldn't be more pleased with their contributions."

Atari appreciates the community's intense curiosity about VCS games and content, hardware specifications, production timelines and other key information, and is confident that it is putting the right pieces in place for a successful product and launch.

All Atari VCS branding and communications channels now reflect the product's official name.

Fans can follow Atari VCS on Facebook, Twitter @TheAtari_VCS and Instagram. Atari VCS photos and logos can be accessed here: http://uberstrategist.link/ATARIVCS-PressKit.
To stay up-to-date on all things Atari and retro-pop-culture, like us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/Atari, and follow us on Twitter @Atari and Instagram.

ABOUT ATARI

Atari is an interactive entertainment company. As an iconic brand that transcends generations and audiences, the company is globally recognized for its multi-platform, interactive entertainment and licensed products.

Atari owns and/or manages a portfolio of more than 200 games and franchises, including world-renowned brands like Asteroids®, Centipede®, Missile Command®, Pong® andRollerCoaster Tycoon®. Atari has offices in New York and Paris. Visit us online at www.Atari.com.

Putt18 Cart Now Available for the Atari 8-bit Cmputers

From peteym5

Posted Yesterday, 6:41 PM

Available for $39.95: Will run on any Atari 8-bit computer from 16K to 64K, 400/800, 600XL, 800XL, 1200XL, 65XE, 130XE, XEGS, with one or two joysticks.

This, along with HeliCommander, and our latest cartridge games designed to play on just about any stock Atari 8-bit computer, with intentions to port over to the Atari 5200, by limiting RAM use to the first 16K block.

Other games are still available are: Delta Space Arena, Megaoids, Amok Bots, Tile Smashers, and Laser Blast X. The game using the joystick to move the pointer/"putter club" around. There are two modes.

The default is that you set the pointer to where you want to aim the ball at, hold the fire button down for how hard you want to hit it, and release. The other is similar to how the Atari 2600 Miniature Golf works, the pointer/square bock represents a putter golf club, and how hard the ball is hit is based on the distance the club is from the ball.

I remember my brothers and I having fun with 2600 miniature golf and purposely put the square in the opposite corner of the screen and hit the ball just to see how long it will go bouncing around the screen.

Over the years, I made various miniature golf games using BASIC on various machines. I lost my original Atari BASIC version of the game. One day Video 61 suggested doing a miniature golf game in ML and put it on cartridge.

Since some of the options and controls for this game may cause things for odd behavior, I am putting this up as a technical support thread.

One thing people had some difficulty with is starting the game in "distance to putter" mode and when they point where they want to aim the ball at, when they press fire, the ball instantly flies away from the pointer.

To make this easy to know which mode you start with, The "Aim at Target" mode looks like a plus or cross, and "Distance to Putter" aka 2600 mode looks like a square with a plus inside it (inverted).

One feature this game does have: When you hit the space bar, a score card pops up. It will do that through the pause on the 5200. There is no point in having pause with a miniature golf game because you can just put the joystick down if you need to walk away to do something.

There are 4 different Miniature Golf courses, some holes are real challenging. The moving obstacles can disabled. The game using some Super-IRG so it can appear a few more colors are present. The majority of the holes only have a few pixels alternating at 50/60 frames per second.

I kept the luminance levels within 2 values of each other so there is no noticeable flicker on,PAL displays.,Wide Over scan mode with Horizontal Fine scroll is also in use, so on some wide screen displays the right screen static may be visible.

HOZSCR is set so the right screen static is down to one pixel. All the holes are drawn using the central 42 characters so there should not be anything off the screen.

http://members.tcq.net/video61/putt18.html

Thanks for watching.
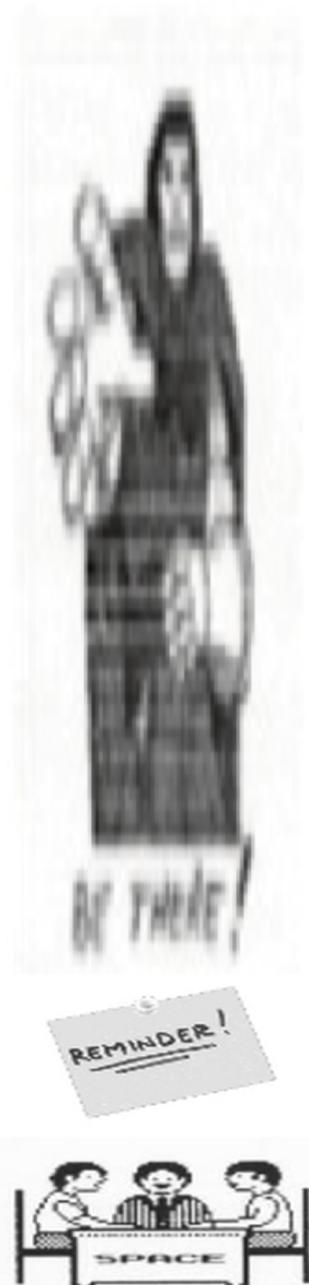
The next SPACE meeting officially commences on Friday, June 8, 2018, at 7:30 PM.

We hope to see you there!
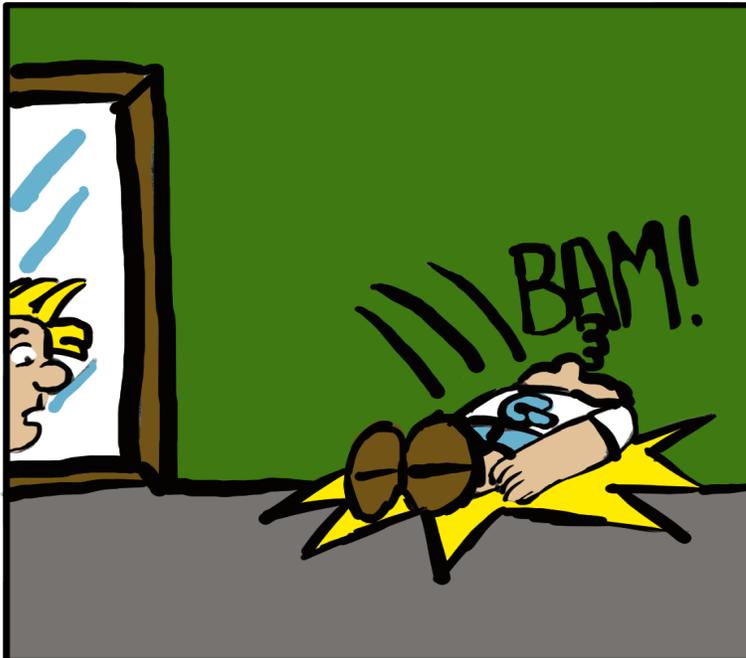
Thank you!

Atari Multi-Platform Game Review
By Steven Peck

Here we are with yet another Game Review for all Atari platforms. I am going to rate games from all Atari platforms and computers. You all know the drill. So, let's get started.

Atari 2600 VCS: "Off the Wall"

"Off the Wall" is a funny version of Breakout. You play a Chinese guy, in ancient China, that deflects the ball onto the brick wall at the top of the screen.

There is a dragon to destroy (you have to hit it multiple times), there are power-ups (like explosives), and in later levels there is a bird that can get in the way of your game play. If you hit the bird, the bird deflects the ball back at you very quickly, leaving you little time to defend yourself.

There are four difficulty levels, like from Peasant, to Student, and up to Master. You can clear a level by destroying the dragon or clearing all of the bricks in that level.

I think it is a great game, but it is supposed to be an arcade conversion. The arcade version is nothing like the A2600 version, as it has no Chinese theme to it. But, it is a great game. I like it anyway. Here is my score on this:

Graphics:	7
Gameplay:	10
Animation:	8
Sound:	6
TOTAL:	31/40

Atari 5200 SuperSystem: "Berzerk"

In "Berzerk," the rules are simple: destroy or be destroyed. You, the human character, fight vicious and knavish robots. You are in a maze where the walls are deadly to the touch. However, they can also zap the robots, and this can be a strategy.

Shoot as many robots as possible in a maze. You can escape a maze before you destroy all of the robots, and the melee will start all over again.

If you spend too much time in one maze, Evil Otto comes out as a smiley face. He is completely indestructible. Avoid him at all costs! However, he follows your moves, chasing you. The trick is to not confront him in the first place.

One thing that I like about the version of "Berzerk" is that it has voice. It is closer to the arcade version, as that version also has voice. The graphics are better than the Atari 2600 version, and it closely resembles the 8-bit computer version. It is a superb video game. My score is coming up.

Graphics:	9
Gameplay:	9
Animation:	9
Sound:	9
TOTAL:	36/40

Atari 7800: "Commando"

This is from the original video game for the arcades. It is almost a perfect carbon copy of the arcade version. It has phenomenal graphics, sound, and gameplay.

The rules, again, are simple: Shoot or throw grenades at all your enemies, and storm their bases. There are four levels to every tour of duty. As far as I know, there is no definitive ending to it. You just keep playing until either your lives are exhausted, or you get so good you tire of it and turn it off.

However, there are four difficulty levels. Each level is harder than the next. The enemy bullets travel faster and there are more enemies to shoot than the previous levels. I have tried to play the Expert level, and it is extremely difficult.

Great to play and pleasing to the eyes and ears, you will enjoy this game, Guaranteed!

Graphics:	10
Gameplay:	10
Animation:	10
Sound:	10
TOTAL:	40/40 (perfect score)

Atari 8-bit Computers and XEGS: "Blue Max"

This is a destined classic for the A8. You play a military biplane pilot. This is set in World War I. You get to shoot away at other planes, and bomb buildings as well as bridges. It is a well thought out game.

But, I think that the graphics could be better. The sound is fine. But, this is an 8-bit game. It does well in 8-bit as well.

The gameplay is great. It is a little bit of a learning curve sometimes for some people. It takes a little bit of getting used to. But, it is worth it.

Graphics:	7
Gameplay:	8
Animation:	7
Sound:	8
TOTAL:	30/40

Atari 16/32 Computers: "Pac-Land"

This is practically a carbon copy of the arcade version. It is a game where "Pac-Man" combines with "Super Mario Bros." to make a side-scrolling platform game.

Pac-Man jumps around avoiding the Ghost Monsters, who come at him in a variety of ways and in various vehicles.

It is set up a lot like "Super Mario Bros." because it has worlds similar to it. Only, "Pac-Land" came out first in the arcades. Nevertheless, this is a great game.

Graphics:	8
Gameplay:	8
Animation:	8
Sound:	8
TOTAL:	32/40

Atari Lynx: "Toki"

Your girlfriend is kidnapped by an evil wizard! What is worse is that he turns you from a man into an ape! Not good, but you are not vulnerable. You can spit bullets at your enemies, even fire!

There are multiple levels in this game. You go through the jungle and eradicate your enemies trying to save your beloved damsel in distress!

This is a great translation of the arcade game. I have always loved "Toki." It is challenging and fun. If you have this game for your Lynx, you will not go wrong. Here is my score on that:

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

Atari Jaguar: "Tempest 2000"

Here we are with the upper echelon of the Atari Jaguar library: "Tempest 2000." Jeff Minter, redesigned of Tempest for the Jaguar, outdid himself.

It is basically the same as in the arcades, but with enhanced polygon graphics. I have always enjoyed "Tempest 2000," and have made it over 40+ levels in the game. There are Flippers, Pulsars, Spikers, Fuseballs, Mirrors, UFOs, and need I say more?

It is a shooting extravaganza! It even has Bonus Warps. Excellent! This is a great game, excellent soundtrack, and outstanding gameplay!

Graphics:	10
Gameplay:	10
Animation:	10
Sound:	10
TOTAL:	40/40 (perfect score)

Well, this concludes the Multi-Platform Review. Thanks! I will be back soon with another Review in the next month. So Carpe Diem, and have a happy day! See you all soon!

Atari 8-bit DOM Review
By Steven Peck

Hi again! It is time for another double DOM Report. We will review the DOMs from April and May of this year, due to the closing of the April meeting. So, let's cut to the chase!

April 2018 DOM: Side A:

The first file on this DOM, "20 lat Pozniej" (or "20 Years") is a music track. It is a hip little track as well. It is light-hearted, peppy, and up-beat. I liked it and you might as well.

TOTAL:	8/10

Atari Dragon is a picture of a red dragon. It loks pretty good, design wise. I think that the resolution could have been better. But, it is still quite pleasing to the eye. Not bad, really.

TOTAL:	8/10

Blitzkrieg in Betelgeuse is another picture of futuristic Nazi tanks on another planet. I like the premise and the graphics are pretty sharp, too. I also like the design of the double-turret tanks. It is indicative of a depiction of WWII in another dimension.

Nicely done.

TOTAL:	9/10

Bonsai is a picture of a bonsai tree. Basically, it is a bonsai tree in a pot. It is clipped in the bonsai style. I thought that the pic looked pleasing and relaxed. The attempt to create a pleasing and tranquil image worked splendidly. It is very nice.

TOTAL:	9/10

Boulder Dash: Mugen 12 is yet another hack of the classic Exidy Corporation title of the same name. I have always liked the game and it has great graphics and sound. Need I say more about it? It is a great puzzle game and always has been.

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

Horror is a picture of a creature's face, and on the face it has a five-pointed star tattooed upside-down on it, and it has pointed teeth. Well, it is quite horrific. It has vibrant color and outstanding graphics. It is yet another well done picture.

TOTAL:	9/10

Jack the Nipper is a funny game where you play a mischievious little toddler that loves to irritate

adults. You can suffer setbacks, like getting spanked for being naughty and diaper rash. The object: be as naughty as possible.

It is a funny game, but I think that the graphics could have been better implemented. But, other than that, the gameplay is challenging and the music and sound are OK. But, nice game, really. It is cute, at best.

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

TOTAL: 29/40

To nie jest odry George 3 (or This is (Not) George 3), I am guessing, is a text adventure, but I could be wrong. It is in Polish, and since I do not really understand the language, I can only assume what it is. So, I think it is a text adventure.

I will give it a score, but I am not sure what to do with this file. Perhaps, someone can give us a clue here on it. Maybe, someone in Poland can write to us about how it works. That would help, thanks. Anyway, I move on.

TOTAL: 5 /10 (if applicable)

Old Tekkno is a music track, and it is an excellent one. I assume it is played by the POKEY, but I might be wrong. But, it has a nice, pulse-pounding beat to it. It, in my opinion, is the best music track onthis side of the DOM. Pleasant!

TOTAL: 10/10 (perfect score)

Snowman (Rocky) is a picture of a snowman decorating an Atari Fuji-shaped Christmas tree. It is delightful and cute. I like it and it is well rendered. Great job on the graphics.

TOTAL: 10/10 (perfect score)

Stars is a graphics demo by GRAwitajca in Poland. It move rather fast and has somewhat of an eye-popping effect. It is pretty cool, but it looks more like snowflakes on the screen to me. Nevertheless, it is really a good rendering job.

Graphics: 8
Animation: 10

Score: 18/20

Znowtwst 256b is a graphics demo and it looks really tantalizing to me. It has fast animation and colorful graphics and the speed is amazing, This is a pleasing demo and is very good to look at. Another great job.

Graphics: 10
Animation: 10

TOTAL: 20/20 (perfect score)

SIDE B:

The game, Dimo's Dungeon, takes up the entire side B of this DOM. In this game,, like Mountain King, you play a frog named Dimo. You have to find keys to unlock doors to get out of each level.

The game is really astounding, has mindblowing graphics, and a great soundtrack. and excellent animation. I love this game as it is challenging enough to keep you engaged. Wonderful job!

Graphics: 9
Animation: 10
Gameplay: 10

TOTAL: 39/40

May 2018 DOM: Side A

Happy New Year 2018 is a intro that has great graphics, parallax scrolling, and nice slow anima-

tion. It depicts snowboarders with a snowy scene, slowly scrolling across the screen on the bottom. Fantastic. I enjoyed every bit of it. Very nice demo.

Graphics: 10
Animation: 9
Sound: 9

TOTAL: 38/40

The next file is a game called Get Up! The object of the game is to avoid all obstacles and get the UFO up in the air as far as possible. It is a challenge, too. It has a great looking title screen and is fun to play. I enjoyed it and would love to play it again.

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

TOTAL: 36/40

The next game is called Great Green Adventure, where you play a green blob trying to avoid getting punctured in the maze. It is very challenging, and I had a hard time moving in the maze, but I think that was the fault of the joypad I was using.

Fun game, but I need to study it more.

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

TOTAL: 36/40

Distilled Implant Cleaner is a music track, and it sounds quite weird. I thought it could sound better, but that is just me. It kind of goes all over the place. I don't know. Here is my score on it.

TOTAL: 6/10

Atari Control Picture is a picture showing the range of colors on the Atari computer. It actually looks impressive. The colors blend very well. It is aesthetically pleasing. It mimics the palette of the A8 nicely.

TOTAL: 8/10

Last Train, another picture, shows a train with a skull ornament on the front of it going through a brick wall. Interesting, but graphically pleasing. I like the rendering. Nope. Nothing wrong here.

Great graphics. It truly looks nice.

TOTAL: 9/10

The next file, yet another picture, is called Road to Mountain. That is what it truly shows, too. It's a road leading to a mountain. It is very pixellated, though. That is my only complaint. Other than that, it is a great attempt. Nice job.

TOTAL: 7/10

Znowkfrs 256b is a file that shows waves on the screen set to sound. It looks a lot like an oscilloscope to me, at least that is what it reminds me of. Graphically, it is really cool to watch. It is almost a perfect graphics demo. Nice job!

Graphics: 10
Animation: 10
Sound: 10

TOTAL: 30/30 (perfect score)

Side B:

The final file on the May 2018 DOM is a game called His Dark Majesty, Part II. It is a strategy game based on a similar principle like Risk and Stratego. It is a thinking game, so it requires a lot of thought to play the game.

It is interesting, for sure. I think that if I had more time to play this, I could figure it out more. But, I like strategy games. This is fun. It is a challenging game for sure. Plus, it is pretty cool.

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

TOTAL: 31/40

Well, this concludes the Atari 8-bit DOM Review. I got to go, now. So, I will catch you later. Carpe Diem, guys, and see you next meeting!

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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.
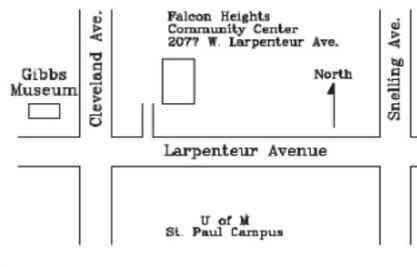
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http://space.atari.org

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 receive 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.

Saint Paul ATARI Computer Enthusiasts
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