



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

• September 2020 Edition •

SECRETARY'S REPORT

By Steven Peck

HELLO WORLD!

Welcome back, Atarians! In this Secretary's Report, due to the fact that we still have not had a meeting at Falcon Heights City Hall for months, I will try to keep you entertained.

A lot has been happening outside of SPACE. Video 61 is still active in game development, and there are other homebrews being released by AtariAge. I will keep everybody posted on future homebrew developments.

We are anxious to see what both Video 61 and AtariAge have in store to release to the community. Please keep reading and I will keep you informed.

In the meantime, I hope that everybody is still strong and healthy. We are still unable to meet because of the pandemic, as you all know. But, here's to hoping that we can meet soon at City Hall back in Falcon Heights.

After all, I miss the meetings we have had. I miss the camaraderie and Atari news from everybody. It is always good to hear what is under development in the Atari world. We will see each other again, but I just have no idea when.

So, let's hope that something turns the tide here. Atarians, unite!

Well, that is all I have to say for now. I will be back for another Report in October. I will talk to you then.

In the words of the late, great Stan Lee...

EXCELSIOR!

TRIVIA TIME!

In the game Pac-Man, when the player eats all four ghost monsters at once after eating a power pellet before its power wears off, the event is called a "smorgasbord."



Message from Captain Irata:

"Don't worry, be gaming! Be happy, too!"

HOO-RAH!

TECH TALK

By Steven Peck

Welcome! Today we will talk about emulation versus using real computer hardware.

Emulation is when software takes over the functions of hardware. This is an option where real hardware is needed, but harder to find because of availability. It can be needed if one can't afford the real thing as well.

There are many emulation options. For arcade game emulation, there are software solutions like MAME and OpenEmu. They take the actual ROMs of existing arcade games and make the computer ascertain that it is an arcade machine.

There are also emulators for existing video game systems, like Stella for the Atari 2600, Handy for the Atari Lynx (for example) and there are other types of emulators for other third-party game systems. The possibilities seem endless.

Emulation is certainly cheaper, and the accuracy is getting better, but there are caveats. Software is not as fast as hardware, and emulation has been through software, although FPGAs and systems-on-chip can do a reasonable job of replacing circuits and other functions.

But, even with software emulation, there can be bugs and even slowdown. Try Virtual Jaguar sometime. It emulates the chips on an Atari Jaguar base unit and needs gigahertz of CPU speed and gigabytes of RAM to get close to what the Jaguar did with megahertz and 2 MB of RAM.

Do I seem against emulation? I'm really not so opposed to it, but it isn't a cure-all either. I say a balance of emulation and hardware can do the job if you can't use real hardware all of the time.

Emulation is great, cool even. But, you must weigh the pros and cons wisely. I think that emulation is used too much. I think there should be a balance. I think that with our advanced technology, we should reverse-engineer the older hardware and recreate it with modern chips and use emulation only if we need to.

So, that is my opinion. Thanks for letting me share. Have a safe month. Please support SPACE and have a great day.

ATARI MULTI-PLATFORM GAME REVIEW

Welcome! Today, we'll review the game, "Planet Smashers," for the A7800. It's a space shmup, where you pilot your ship and shoot aliens that are trying to destroy Earth.

If you let aliens escape being destroyed, they will continue their assault to Earth, which is not seen but registered by a damage bar on the bottom of the screen. You can get power-ups to enhance your firepower and warp to bosses.

However, you have to match up the colors of the power-ups to make them available to your ship. You can also use a shield that lasts about twenty or so seconds to protect yourself with. There are also different difficulty levels from novice to expert.

This is a challenging game and the aliens are relentless. The graphics, especially the title screen, are top-notch for the A7800. You must not let any, and I stress ANY, ships escape, as too many

escaped aliens will critically damage Earth.

It's a fun romp, for sure, and if you like shooting games, you'll adore "Planet Smashers."

With this, I will score the game:

SCORE:

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

TOTAL SCORE: 39/40

So, I will see you in October, and I need to renew my membership to SPACE that month anyway. Here's to hoping the Club opens soon at our original location in Falcon Heights! Thanks.



GET INVOLVED!



**WE WANT
YOUR
ARTICLES!**

CLUB OFFICIALS:

President and Web Page Manager:

Michael Current

Ph: (608) 787-8548

E-Mail: michael@mcurrent.name

Vice-President:

Brian Little:

E-Mail: demomantna@gmail.com

Secretary/Newsletter Editor:

Steven Peck

Ph: (651) 462-5600

E-Mail: artisan213574@gmail.com

**8-bit DOM Librarian/
Membership Chairman:**

Glen Kirschenmann

Ph: (763) 786-4790

E-mail: kirschg@netzero.net

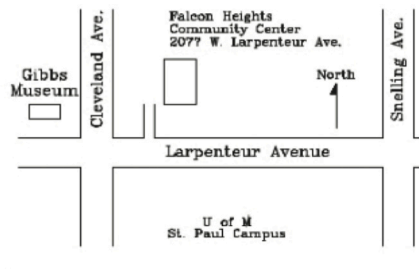
Treasurer:

Gregory Leitner

Ph: (651) 895-2223

E-Mail: greglites@hotmail.com

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.

c/o Gregory Leitner
3407 78th St E
Inver Grove Heights, MN 55076-3037

DISCLAIMER:

This newsletter is published by the Saint Paul Atari Computer Enthusiasts (SPACE) special interest group, an independent organization with no business affiliation with ATARI, Inc.

Permission is granted to any similar organization with which SPACE exchanges newsletters to reprint material from this newsletter.

We do, however, ask that credit be given to the authors and to SPACE. Opinion expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of SPACE, the club officers, the club members, or ATARI, Inc.

Please feel free to visit our website at this URL:

<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.

