• May 2021 Edition •

SECRETARY'S REPORT
By Steven Peck

HELLO WORLD!

Welcome back! It has been an interesting April. Things are going steady for me, and I hope everybody is doing well. I know it seems boring without our usual routine SPACE meetings. Bur, I hope everybody is keeping busy wirh something.

Anyway, I hope you all have been keeping busy with your Atari stuff. It is a great hobby, and a lot of fun. Those old machines hold a lot of nostalgia for everybody. I love reminiscing about Atari 2600 games and playing them in the 1980s.

After all, I have been an Atari game collector since 1982. Thirty-nine years already. Nearly four decade now. My games still work after all that time.

Try to explain that one with a more advanced game system. You would be at a stansdstill then. Of course, they have not been around as long as most A2600 games have been.

Sorry for the short report. I don't have much to say. So, I conclude, knowing this. I will have more interesting stuff in the near future.

In the words of the late, great Stan Lee…

EXCELSIOR!

TRIVIA TIME!

The compact disc was introduced by Sony in 1982. Four decades later, it is now a household name, used by millions of people worldwide and becoming a digital recording standard.

Table of Contents:

Message from Captain Irata:

"Be a trailblazer! Go play 'Oregon Trail!'"

HOO-RAH!

TECH TALK

By Steven Peck

Today in Tech Talk we are going to discuss the future of older software, and how it can be preserved for future generations. For years, people have been storing data on magnetic media. It was the best way to do it for a long time.

But, there are now other ways to store data, in the form of DVDs, CDs, Blu-Ray, and flash storage. Solid-state drives (SSDs) are becoming the norm and may be faster than traditional hard drives.

But, someday, the floppy disks and magnetic cassettes will grow so old that they will lose their magnetic integrity. That data can be lost forever if it is on those older disks. We are in danger of losing history here. So, what can we do about it?

Emulation can work for some of this stuff. The field-programmable gate array (FPGA) and the system-on-chip (SoC) technologies have worked wonders in keeping the original hardware somewhat alive. But, still what about the data?

It needs to be transferred to more durable media. It must be long-lasting and of archival quality. Sure, optical media can be more durable then floppy disks and other magnetic forms of media. But, even optical discs can be easily damaged.

I would like to see a movement to archive this old software for historical posterity. It would be for future generations to see. That way, it can be stored longer-term without loss of precious data.

The SSD and flash drive are long-lasting, if taken care of adequately. The trick is a long-lasting media and with no moving parts that can wear out. SSD and flash media are good examples. I implore engineers to develop something like that.

But, it should be made to last decades, if not for centuries. That is the real problem: longevity. It could even be stored on servers for people to download and enjoy.

My idea would be to save as much pertinent data as possible on more durable media. The original technology used to run that older media should be reverse-engineered and studied, so it can be run on real hardware as much as possible.

Maybe, sometime in the future, endangred floppy disks can be reinvigorated, preserving the integrity of the original disk's data. Digital archivists can research how to repair the remaining data.

It would be like digital forensics, but I don't know if what I am proposing to save old floppies can be done. It's really wishful thinking, and sounds something like science fiction. But, maybe, something can be done like that in the future.

I would like to see dedicated people donating money to preserve our digital history. It all goes back to the old saying: those who don't learn from history are doomed to repeat it.

I think that, if we learn from the past computing we did over the last half-century or more, and even improve on it, we will advance more from learning that older technology. It could be a template for even more advancements. Better ones.
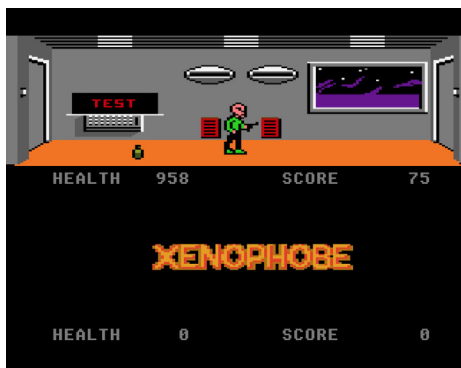
Thanks for reading. I will see you again next month. Carpe diem, SPACE Cadets!

BE THERE!

GET INVOLVED!

WE WANT YOUR ARTICLES!

ATARI MULTI-PLATFORM GAME REVIEW
By Steve Peck

Today we are going to review the Atari 7800 version of the game "Xenophobe."

It is set in space. You fly around to places infested with aliens and try to exterminate them. Sounds easy? Not really. There are various aliens, from little critters that latch on to you and drain your energy, to the Snotterpillars, which spit slime at you.

If you destroy the aliens in time, you will get bonuses for doing so. You can also get bonuses for collecting things, like disks, rope, and skulls and among things.

You can also collect weapons, like lasers, grenades, even a spray gun that kills aliens almost immediately. But, if you cannot get all of the aliens, the place will self-destruct. Don't worry, you'll get out in time, but you'll lose bonus points.

You can also get extra health by eating burgers and completing the levels successfully by killing all aliens in those levels.

Graphically, for an 8-bit game, "Xenophobe" for the A7800 is impressive. It is a lot of fun and challenging. There are four difficulty levels: Novice, Normal, Advanced, and Expert. It is very close to its arcade counterpart in many respects.

It could be better with more of the arcade characters to choose from. That is my only pet peeve. Aside from that, it's a classic and a great game.

Here is my score for this game:

SCORE:

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

So, that concludes the Game Review. I will be back with another edition in June of the Multi-Platform Game Review. Thanks for reading.
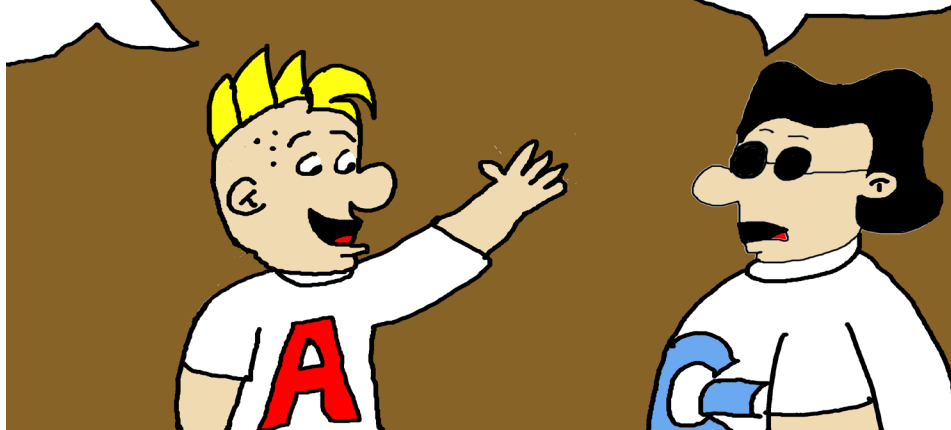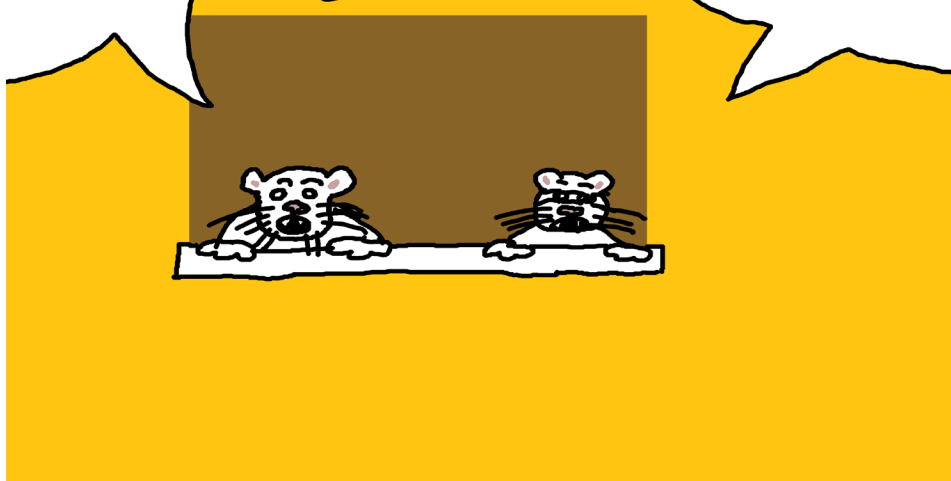

Hey! SPACE Cadets!

Got some ideas for punchlines for these comics?

Please feel free to contact me with your ideas! After all, I am the Editor!

THANKS!

Steve, Newsletter Editor

P.S. Let's keep it family-friendly! Thanks again!

A Special Notice About DOM Mailing:

I have been creating the DOM each month and was just looking at the supply building up. Then I got to thinking about how many DOMs I will have by next January or later. It could be a year or twelve months and that would be twelve DOMs at $3.00 each or $36.00 for twelve and some might be reluctant to pay that for year-old DOMs in addition to their past-due memberships.

So, I was thinking about mailing. I have about two dozen empty 3M disk boxes, and they had ten disks each but could easily hold eighteen. I put twelve disks plus some bubble wrap and brought it to the Post Office as a test, and it came to $4.60. I then asked how much for just the empty box she said $3.80. So, that comes to just 6.7 cents per disk.

The exact amount might vary depending on how many disks, but it would be close to $3.80 plus 7 cents per disk, so eight DOMs would be $28.36, or $3.00 per DOM plus $4.36 postage.

Each Member would have to email me as to which DOMs they would want and their current mailing address. Also, a personal check for your calculated amount should be sent to Gregory Leitner, then he could email me to acknowledge payment and I could mail the DOMs. For any difference in the actual mailing cost and your calculated amount could be carried on a ledger by Gregory to be resolved at a later actual meeting.

Sincerely,

Glen Kirschenmann
DOM Librarian and Membership Chairman
Saint Paul Atari Computer Enthusiasts (SPACE)

P.S. To pay for DOMs and membership renewals, you can send your personal check to this address:

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

Thanks! buy a DOM, renew your memberships, and support SPACE! See you soon!

 NOTE: This message will be posted in the newsletter until we return to normal meetings together

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:**

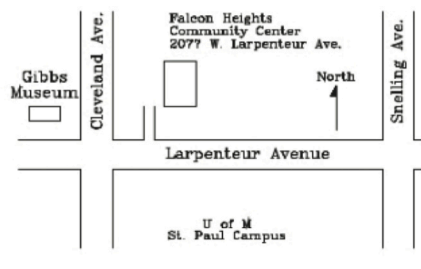**Glen Kirschenmann**
Ph: (763) 786-4790
E-mail: kirschg@netzero.net

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.

```
            Falcon Heights
            Community Center
  Cleveland Ave.   2077 W. Larpenteur Ave.    Snelling Ave.
Gibbs                        North
Museum

            Larpenteur Avenue

                 U of M
              St. Paul Campus
```

DISCLAIMER:

This newsletter is published by the Saint Paiul 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 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
SPACE
An independent computer user group