



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

• October 2021 Edition •



The President's Corner *By Michael Current*

Recently I've been revisiting RS-232 the standard, and RS-232 interfaces for the Atari. There weren't that many, starting with the Atari 850, and it's a relatively complex standard.

One thing I'm clearer on, every RS-232 device is one of two types, Data Terminal Equipment (DTE) or Data Communications Equipment (DCE). This is important because the pinouts are not identical, they are mirror images of each other! DCE are modems, while DTE is most everything else, including computers and serial printers.

The 850 provides the Atari with four DTE device RS-232 serial ports. But wait, there's more! On PCs, the standard RS-232 serial port ended up being DE-9P, but the 850 was designed before the IBM PC came out. On the 850 the serial ports are DE-9S. And it's not just the gender-opposite of the PC standard serial port, the pinout is different!

So any time we might be seeking to connect an Atari to an RS-232 device, such as a standard (old) modem, these are some details that have to be taken into consideration. Somehow I never quite got it sorted out in my mind before now! Is this all old hat to you?

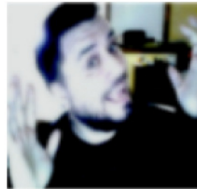
Thanks, keep using that Atari, and come to your next SPACE meeting: Friday, October 8, 2021.



Message from Captain Irata:

"Real Atarians persevere. They practice until they conquer!"

HOO-RAH!



The Secretary's Report *By Steven Peck*

HELLO WORLD!

Here we are with another Secretary's Report. Welcome back. Here we go with the Report.

Well, I went to the Meeting in September, but couldn't stay for long. I had to get going because my ride had to go. So, sorry about that. Also, I have to tend to my iMac because the hard drive conked out in it. So, it might take a little longer to produce the SPACE Newsletter.

So, that is what I have to deal with. I did see some awesome stuff from Tom and Roger before I left. They demo cool software and hardware for the Atari 800 and XL. I really want to get my Atari MegaSTE upgraded, but then there is this chip shortage affecting everybody, and that might be until 2023 when it ends.

Bummer for us and the world economy at large.

This means there will be fewer games and systems released until the chip shortage ends. So, here I wait on that. Also, it may take a while or my new hard drive to get installed for my computer. People have everyday things going on and I have to wait. Fortunately, I can work on the Newsletter and send it in.

So, again, sorry for the inconvenience. I will persevere here. It just will need to take time.

Once again, thanks for the reading the Secretary's Report. I will be back for another Report next month. In the words of the late, great Stan Lee:

EXCELSIOR!



The Treasurer's Report *By Gregory Leitner*

Another great meeting in September. We had six members and one guest attending. Our guest, Peter Hanke, donated his Atari 800 system to the Club, for our auction, which will take place at our December Xmas party meeting.

I was anticipating up to twenty boxes of Atari stuff, but was pleasantly surprised that he only had seven boxes. I think my wife would have gone through the roof if I had brought home twenty more boxes of computer stuff.

At least I was able to fit it all in my car to transport home. It was also easier to list the items as he had a few boxes of just disk and cassette drives. It looks like he got them from a school many years ago.

Here are a few items to be auctioned off:

- 800 computer (including a bare cartridge of monkey wrench)
- 1702 Commodore color monitor
- SC1224 color monitor
- 520ST computer
- Four 810 disk drives
- Four 810 disk drives
- Epson 740 color printer

Just a few magazines (thank God) that he had, that will add to many more I have been holding since the last auction. Also, there are other items we have auctioned off in the past that it seems every Atari user somehow always ends up with.

Our treasury is doing great. We started with a bank balance of \$931.74 (one membership renewal for \$15.00 and eight 8-bit DOMs for \$24.00), for a new balance of \$970.74.

We have a couple of membership renewals still coming before year's end, so we will be going way over the thousand-dollar mark. This has not happened for many, many years. Great job, members!!

There has been a lot to see and do at our meetings lately so please try to not to miss them, and I will see you all next month on October 8th.

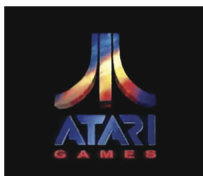
TRIVIA TIME!

The Atari Falcon Microbox was a prototype computer that could be upgraded to a 68040 CPU and had a 32-bit data bus planned for it.

Although it was never fully released, except as a few prototypes, the case design was somewhat realized in the Sony Playstation 2 video game console.

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Atari 8-bit DOM Review

By Steven Peck

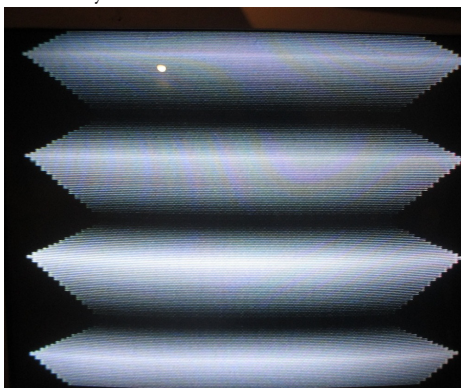
Well, here we are back with another Atari 8-bit DOM Review! Welcome to this triple-DOM review, the third one so far this year. We are going to review three more DOMs to keep up with the missing review we did not have in 2020-21.

I will start the Review with the September 2021 DOM. Here we go!

September 2021 DOM, Side A:

The first file on this DOM is called "Respirator," a 256-byte demo file by Marek Oglodek. It is a bunch of shapes creating an accordion effect with gradients and it is animated. It also beeps, like a respirator in hospital.

It has great animation and the gradients look good. The beep makes it sound realistic. It animates up and down, pulsating like it is pumping air. It actually looks fantastic. For 256 bytes, I am actually impressed. Here is a picture of the demo to see for yourselves.



As you can see, the gradient looks great and it looks better in action. It truly looks like a really good piece of programming. I will score this demo now for you all.

SCORE:

Graphics: 10
Animation: 10
Sound: 9

TOTAL SCORE: 29/30

The next file is another 256-byte demo called "Alive," by Agenda. First, it shows a flashing screen. Then, it gets better, with a warping graphic with patterns on it and strange sounds almost like music. Personally, I love it!

The moire pattern on the warping ribbon in the demo looks fantastic and the animation is really good. Very fluid animation, actually. It's really well done. It's a masterpiece in programming and has great graphics. Here is a pic to show you.



If you like computer graphics, then you will love this demo. I will score this demo now.

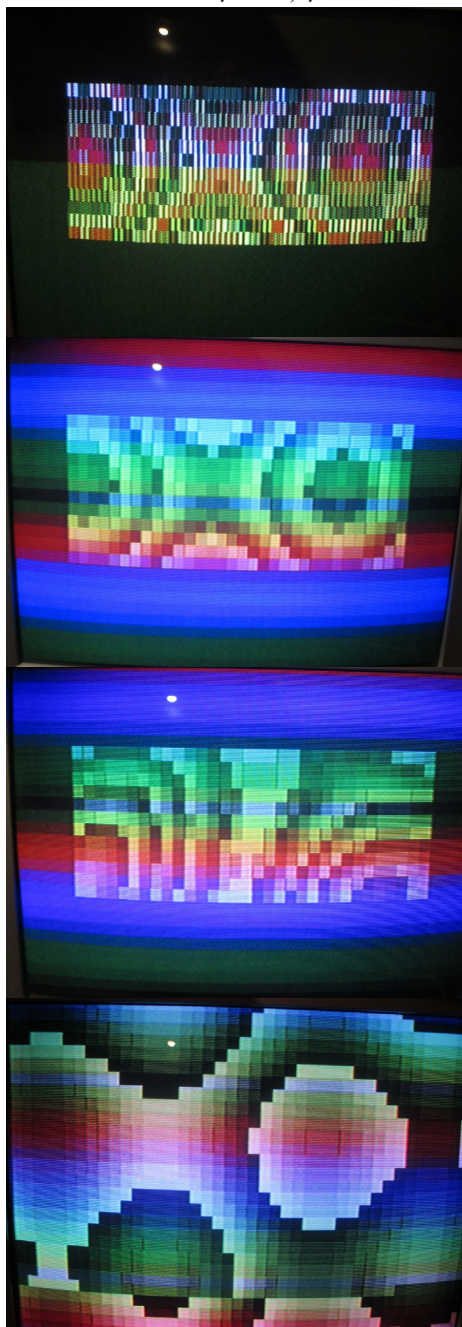
SCORE:

Graphics: 10
Animation: 10
Sound: 8

TOTAL SCORE: 28/30

The next file is a graphics demo called "Some Plasma," coded by PPS and with music from Mario Krix. It shows a bunch of colors cascading across the screen. The colors are great and there is great music in the demo.

The blobs of color are nicely engineered and it looks spectacular. We are dealing with programming pros with a lot of computer experience, especially in creating these demos. Here are pics of the demo in action for your enjoyment.



With that, I will score this demo.

SCORE:

Graphics: 10

Animation: 9
Sound: 10

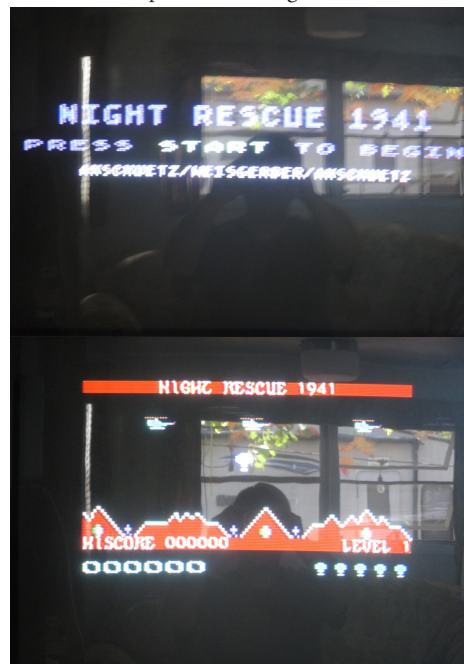
TOTAL SCORE: 29/30

The next file is a game called "Night Rescue 1941," by Anschuetz, Weisgerber, and Anschuetz. Your goal is to pilot a balloon and rescue people behind enemy lines.

You control the way the balloon moves by using the joystick and the fire button. The fire button helps you steer. But, don't crash into helicopters or anything else. You will destroy yourself.

The game is like Lunar Lander, but seems a little more complex. It is harder to steer the balloon with the increased controls, but this is what makes the game so challenging. If you collect all the people rescued, you will advance to the next level.

Here are some pictures of the game in action.



Sorry for the glare. I was in front of a window at day time. Anyway, I like the typography and the graphics, although simple, are OK. The game isn't about graphics, though, but challenge. This is what makes the game so good.

Graphics aside, it is a great little game. I think I will like it, and I think you will as well. With that, I will score the game.

SCORE:

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

TOTAL SCORE: 37/40

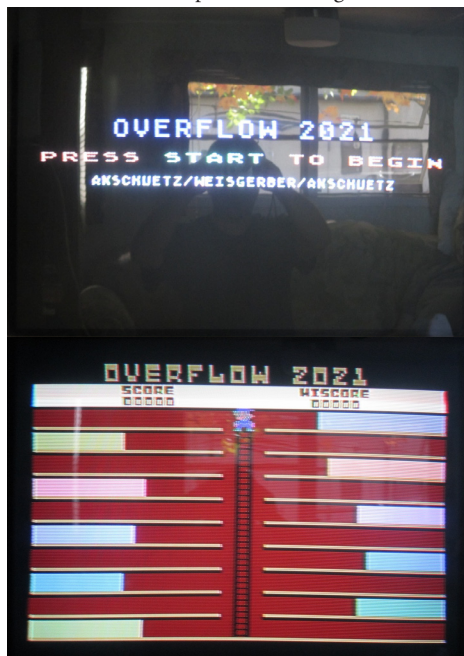
The next file is another game by the same trio that brought us the last game. This game is called "Overflow 2021." In the game, you play a plumber about to be washed out of a building by floods of water.

However, you can use plungers to to plunge the water back. You must plunge all of the water back on each floor of the building, or you will be washed out. If you are successful, good going! You did better than I did.

This game is pretty cool. It's a lot like a game called "Turmoil," which was released for the A8 and A2600 game systems. You have to keep everything from getting into the middle of the game screen. So, there are similarities.

It's challenging, that's for sure. I tried to play it, and it gets difficult very fast. Suddenly, you are overwhelmed by multiple floors of water coming toward you, and it gets too difficult in the end if you procrastinate.

Honestly, it is a great game. It's challenging and fun to play. It takes a lot of skill to beat the water. Plus, it's fun to try. The graphics are OK and so is the sound. Here are pictures of the game.



Overall, it takes a lot of strategy and practice to play this game. Lots of energy, too. With this, I will score this game.

SCORE:

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

TOTAL SCORE: 33/40

The next file is a music track called "Dikidoki-Kun Tasukete!" The music by AceMan is based on a Nintendo game in Japan. It rocks. It's peppy and it's great. You feel good listening to this tune when you play it. I will score this tune:

TOTAL SCORE: 10/10 (perfect score)

The next file is a picture called "Lost in Kyoto," by Tiger. It shows Japanese architecture in great spell-binding detail. Lots of color and time went into his picture, and it shows. Here is the pic for you to see for yourselves.

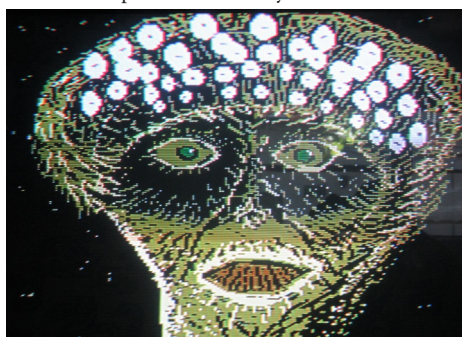


With that, I rest my case. I will score this pic.

TOTAL SCORE: 10/10 (perfect score)

The next file is another pic called "Panna Kowidowa," by AtariFan. It shows a weird-looking

woman with white dots on her head. She looks almost alien. It's a very strange picture to look at. Here is that picture for all of you to see.

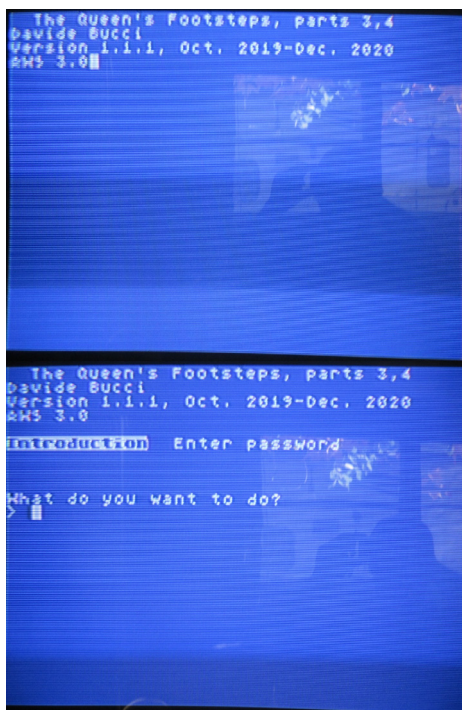


It's a very interesting picture indeed. I will score this pic now.

TOTAL SCORE: 8/10

The final file on this side of the DOM is called "The Queen's Footsteps, Pts. 3 and 4," A text adventure by Davide Bucci. This is a continuation of the text adventure series from the past few months of reviewing. Again, you play an archaeologist who is trying to solve a mystery.

No graphics? No problem. This type of game lets you use your imagination and your mind to solve it. Text adventures are extremely difficult by default because of having no pictures. This is a great game for strategy and thinking.



Here are pics of the game in action: With that, I will score the game.

TOTAL SCORE: 10/10 (perfect)

Now, onto Side B!

Side B:

This whole side of the disk is a sci-fi text adventure, called "Hibernation 1," by Stefan Vogt. It also comes with a set of instructions to play the game. It shows the commands in the game and the wherewithal to play the game.

It is vast, that's for sure. It takes up a whole side of a floppy disk. I love RPGs, and text adventures are interesting. They allow you to think more clearly because you have to fill in the blanks with your

imagination. That is why they are interesting.

With that, I will score this game.

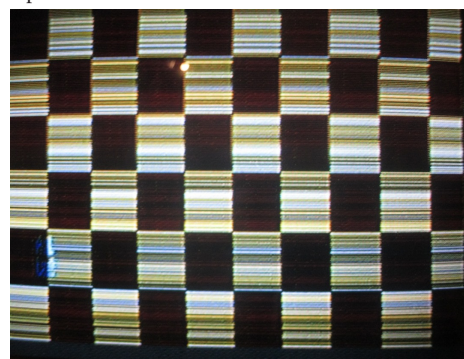
TOTAL SCORE: 10/10 (perfect score)

Now, onto the September 2020 DOM.

September 2020 DOM, Side A:

The first file on this DOM is called "Filla!" It's a 256-byte demo. It shows a flashy animated chess-board setting with the word "Filla!" The text is on the bottom-left corner of the screen. It has an interesting beat to it.

It has fluid animation, and sound that's kind of musical. It's an interesting demo and it looks OK. It's definitely flamboyant in its appearance. Here is a picture of it in action.



As the pattern moves, it goes from right-to-left. It just keeps moving. That is the gist of this demo. So, with that, I will score it.

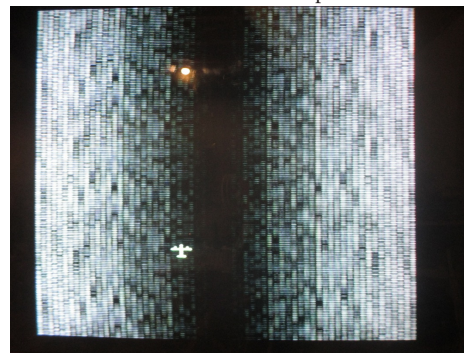
SCORE:

Graphics: 7
Animation: 10
Sound: 7

SCORE: 24/30

The next file is called "ScreamingWingsDifferentDimension," another 256-byte demo. This is a great animated demo, showing a plane flying above a cavern. There is fluid animation and parallax scrolling to give it three dimensions.

I like this demo because of the 3D in it. The top-down view gives it depth and so does the scrolling in it. The tonal gradations are stellar, too. For 256 bytes of code, this is a pretty good demonstration of what the A8 can do. Here is a pic of it.



I rest my case. With that, I will score the demo.

SCORE:

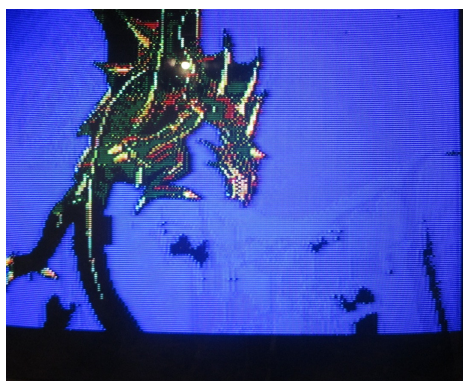
Graphics: 10
Animation: 10
Sound: 10

TOTAL SCORE: 30/30 (perfect score)

The next file on this DOM is called "Ei aus der Taiga 3," by Mario Krix. Again, the name is German for "Eye of the Tiger," but there is no refer-

ence to the famous movies about a certain boxer. It shows a picture of a dragon with an animated text ticker at the bottom of the screen.

It looks good. I like the look of the dragon. I like his choice for the picture. It looks interesting. You can imagine the sinister setting by the look of it. Here is a picture of the demo for you all to see.



Anyway, it's a great attempt to show a dark atmosphere. I think it looks foreboding, to say the least. That's a compliment, by the way. Here's my score:

SCORE:

Graphics: 9
Animation: 10
Sound: 8

TOTAL SCORE: 37/40

The next file is a game called "Major Blink," by Jon Williams. It's sort of a take on the game "Qix," where you have to trace around boxes on the screen and avoid the nasty robots trying to stop you from completing your task.

Each box has a point value. If you trace around the box successfully, you win the points listed in the middle of the box. If you beat the time when you finish the level, you get bonus points with the remaining time.

However, if you touch one of your enemies, you will die. So, you have to be careful in order to finish each level. This game is interesting. It is definitely a challenge avoiding the robots while tracing the boxes.

It looks great for an 8-bit game. It has challenge and is fun to play. I think you'll like it. Here are pics of the game.



I will score this game.

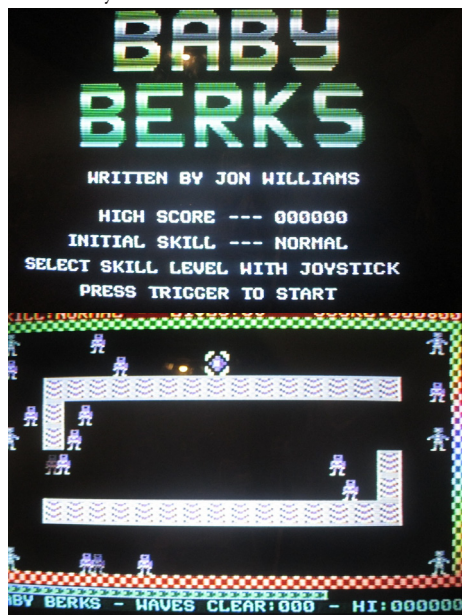
SCORE:

Graphics: 7
Gameplay: 8
Animation: 9
Sound: 8

TOTAL SCORE: 32/40

The next file is another game by Jon Williams called "Baby Berks." In the game, you must shoot the spheres that resemble eggs and shoot what is inside them. You can shoot the robots that are chasing you, but your shots only stun them.

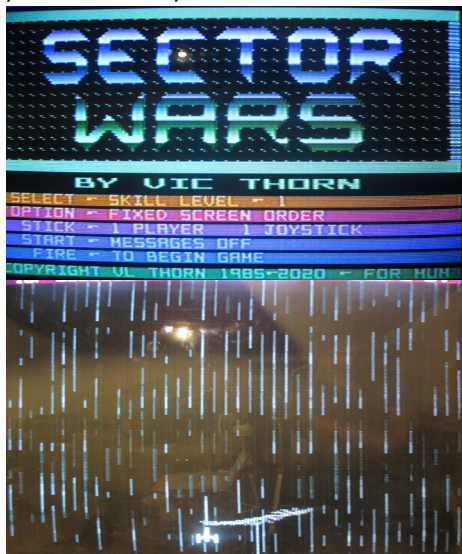
This will give you time to shoot the eggs and destroy what's inside. If you are not successful, you will lose lives. Here are screenshots of the game in action for you to see.



The next file is a game called "Sector Wars," by Vic Thorn. It resembles the game "Demon Attack" in a way. You have to shoot at aliens from your spaceship and it gets harder and faster at times.

The aliens are coming down at you and you need your reflexes in this game. This is because your weapons fire slowly and you must time the shots as exactly as you can to shoot your enemies.

The game is great. It could use a graphics upgrade, but it plays well. It's fast and challenging, so you're in for a treat. So, here are pictures of the game for you to look at for yourselves.



Sorry for the picture, as it was not timed correctly. It is showing a bird-like alien attacking the ship you pilot and the stars are not really lines on the screen, but individual dots on the screen.

I will score this game now.

SCORE:

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

TOTAL SCORE: 31/40

The next file is a music track called "Zoolook," by Michal Szplowski. It is a fast-paced little ditty, with some pizzazz to it. It sounds kind of peppy and has a certain seriousness to it.

I like the tune, and although I have heard better it still shines. I will now score this track.

TOTAL SCORE: 9/10

The last file on Side A of this DOM, a picture called "Konik" by Pawel Gugala, is a white silhouette of a horse with dots on the bottom of the screen. It's striking and it looks good. It looks traced on the screen, and it's spectacular.

Here's a picture of the rendering.



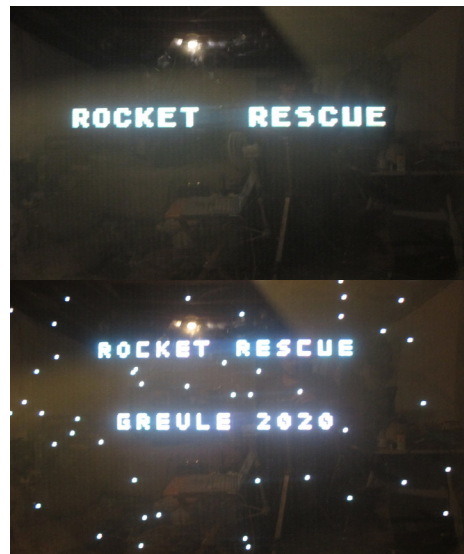
As you can see, it's a very good rendering. I will score this now.

TOTAL SCORE: 9/10

Now, onto Side B!

The final file on this DOM is a game called "Rocket Rescue." You pilot a ship that can't slow down. You must shoot alien ships coming your way. Avoid the mines. Don't speed up too much. Did I mention it isn't easy? I guess I just did.

Well, it is difficult. Graphically, it could be better. But, the gameplay is astounding. Here are some pictures of the game in action.





I think it's a great game. Simple in looks, yet challenging. It takes some thought to play it. I think you will like it as well. I will score the game now.

SCORE:

Graphics:	7
Gameplay:	10
Animation:	8
Sound:	7

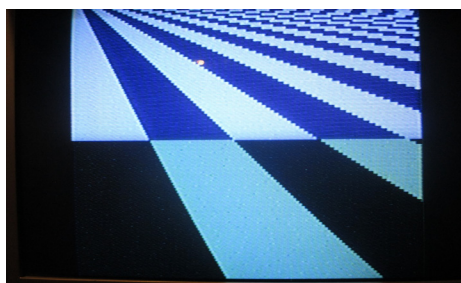
TOTAL SCORE: 32/40

Now onto the final DOM in our Review, which is for May of 2020. Here we go with that.

May 2020 DOM, Side A:

The first file on this DOM is a 256-byte demo called "Horizon," by Kamil Trzaska. It shows a checkerboard pattern in perspective moving back and forth with weird sounds. It looks interesting and the animation is fluid.

Although there isn't much to this demo, it looks good for 256 bytes. It isn't really entertaining. It's repetitive, but I like the animation in it. As I said, it's interesting. Here's a pic of the file.



The picture doesn't show much, but it looks like it's warping back and forth in perspective. I will score this demo now.

SCORE:

Graphics:	9
Animation:	10
Sound:	7

TOTAL SCORE: 26/30

The second file is called "Starfield244," by Krzysztof Dudek. It is a 256-byte starfield with the stars moving toward you in perspective. It isn't much, but it looks good for what it is. It looks and sounds like the screen to "Star Raiders," for all those who know what it looks like.

Here is a pic of the file in action.



Actually, the picture makes it look better because of the shutter speed on my camera. It doesn't really look like this in the demo. But, it's a simple demo with sound like you're flying through space. It looks cool. I will score this.

SCORE:

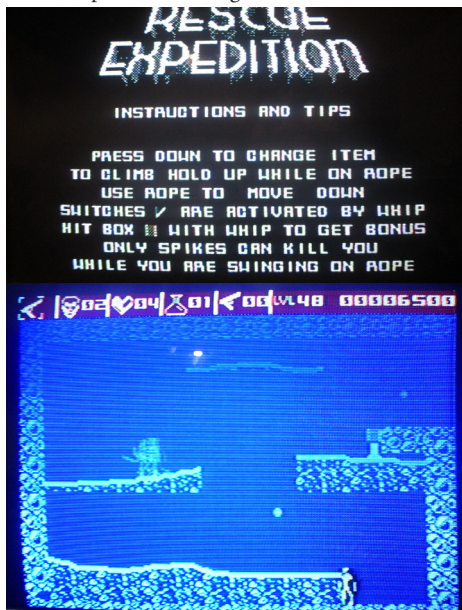
Graphics:	8
Animation:	8
Sound:	8

TOTAL SCORE: 25/30

The next file is a demo of a game called "The Rescue Expedition," by Brzezicki, Retronics, and Agenda. You play an explorer who must go through a cave collecting things and beating up monsters while avoiding spikes.

You can swing across caverns and climb up rocks as well to get to certain places in the game. I think it's a great game. The graphics are top-notch and it sounds great. Although there are only two levels, I can see this is going to be a great game.

Here are pictures of the game in action.



The picture may not do justice, but the game really looks great and will have music in it as well in the final version. I will score this game now.

SCORE:

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

TOTAL SCORE: 40/40 (perfect score)

The next file is a game called "Raymaze 2000," by Bobby Clark. It's a Pac-Man clone involving vehicles, where you pick up dots on the screen in a maze as well as power-ups that can speed you up or slow you down.

This looks like a great, challenging game. It has

pleasant graphics and sound. Plus, it has challenge and complexity. It looks like a lot of fun. Here are pictures of the game.



The next file is a music track called "Kotasekup." It is by Michal Radecki. It is pulse-pounding, somewhat chaotic, and fast. It reminds of the soundtrack to a horror game. It sounds active, for sure. I will score this track.

TOTAL SCORE: 8/10

The next file is another music track called "Bal-uf," by Przunk. It sounds like it's another pulse-pounding tune from a horror game. It sounds foreboding and sinister. But, it's pretty good. I will score this tune.

TOTAL SCORE: 9/10

The next file is a picture called "Memories," by Krzysztof Ziembik. It shows a joystick, a floppy disk, and an audio cassette tape with a green goblin-like character and a blue robot. It looks pretty good, for an 8-bit file.

Here is a screenshot of the picture.



With this, I will score.

TOTAL SCORE: 8/10

The last file on Side A is a picture called "Happy 2020," by Adam Powroznik. It shows a gnome standing next to a young woman transformed into a tree with birds flying around her. The gnome has an axe to chop the tree down with.

It looks really good. I like the graphics and it looks appealing. On the next page, I will show the screenshot of this picture. But, there is a lot of detail in it and it looks great.

Anyway, that screenshot now...



I like the cartoony look of the picture. Here's my score.

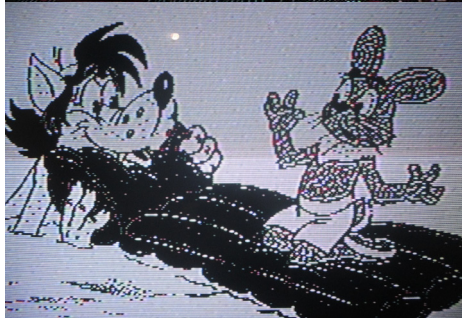
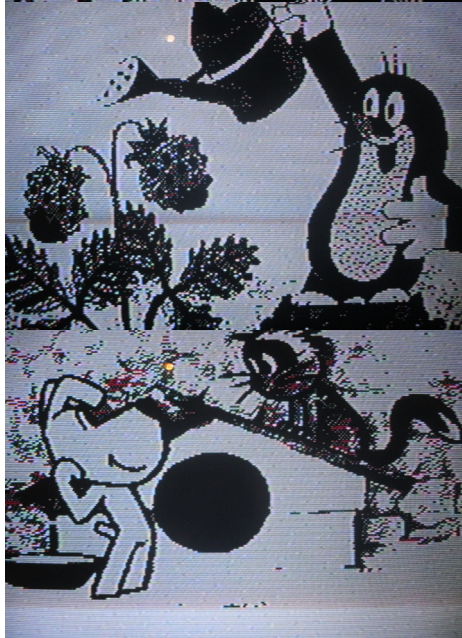
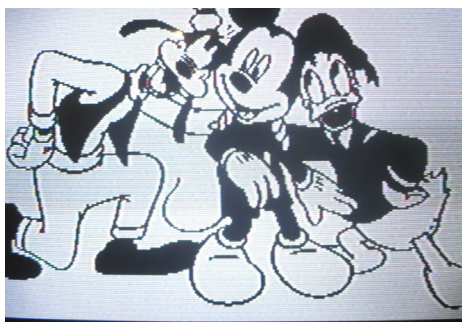
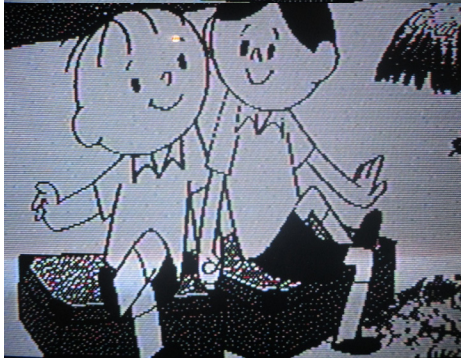
TOTAL SCORE: 10/10 (perfect score)

Now, onto Side B of this DOM!

The inal file on this DOM is called "Classic Cartoons Slideshow," by Sikor. It shows American and European cartoon characters, and some of the characters from Europe I recognize.

These screenshots look excellent. It took a lot of digitizing, I am sure. I was really impressed by the picture of the Wolf and the Rabbit from a Russian cartoon called "Well, Just You Wait!" Well, that's the English translation of the title anyway.

Here are those slides from the file.



What a spectacular set of slides. I will score this file now.

TOTAL SCORE: 10/10 (perfect score)

Well, that concludes the Atari 8-bit DOM Review for October. I will be back with yet another Review. Carpe Diem, Atarians! Thanks for reading.



The next SPACE Meeting will commence on Friday, October 8, 2021, at 7:30 PM!

We hope to see you there! Thanks!

FINAL THOUGHTS
By Steve Peck

Well, I was going to have Tech Talk and the Multi-Platform Game Review. But, I took a lot of time to produce this Newsletter. Plus, I ran out of room on the Newsletter because of the size of the A8 Review. So, they will be seen next issue.

Sorry for the inconvenience. It takes a lot of time doing triple-DOM reviews. I think I will stick to two DOMs for November's issue. I don't know if I will be at the Election next month.

But, if there is a Secretary that takes my place, and I am voted out, I will continue to produce the Newsletters. That's no problem for me.

Anyway, in October you will see me. I need to renew my membership then. So, I should be there. Anyway, I hope to be going again full-time soon. There are so many things to do it's hard to keep up. Again, my apologies for inconveniences.

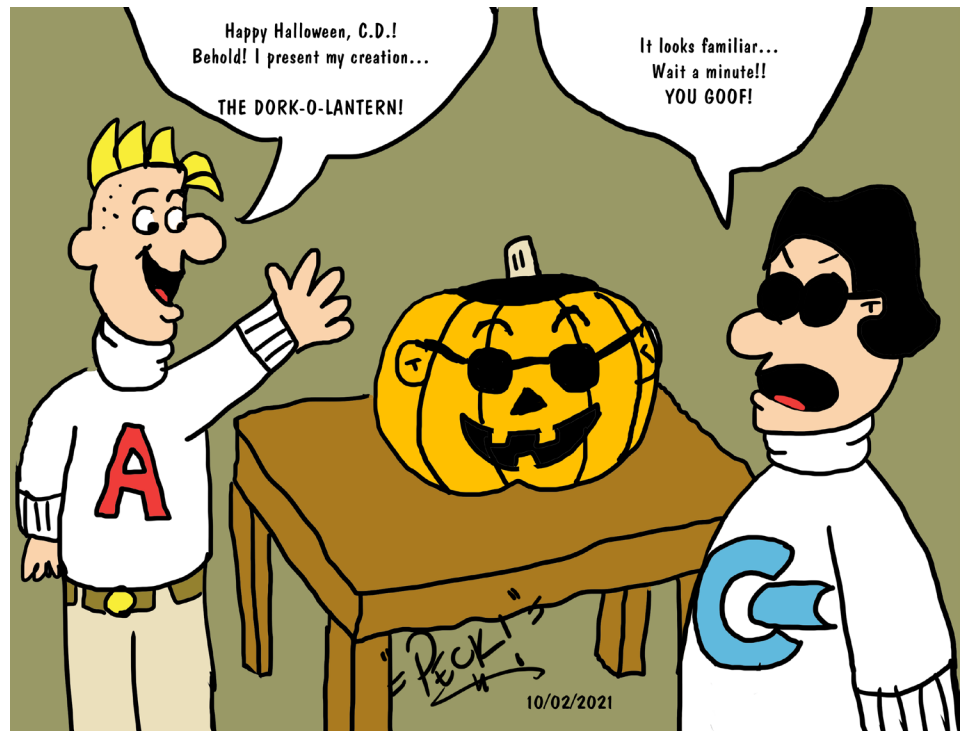
So, I close. I will see you in October and hope to be at the Election. Thanks for reading.



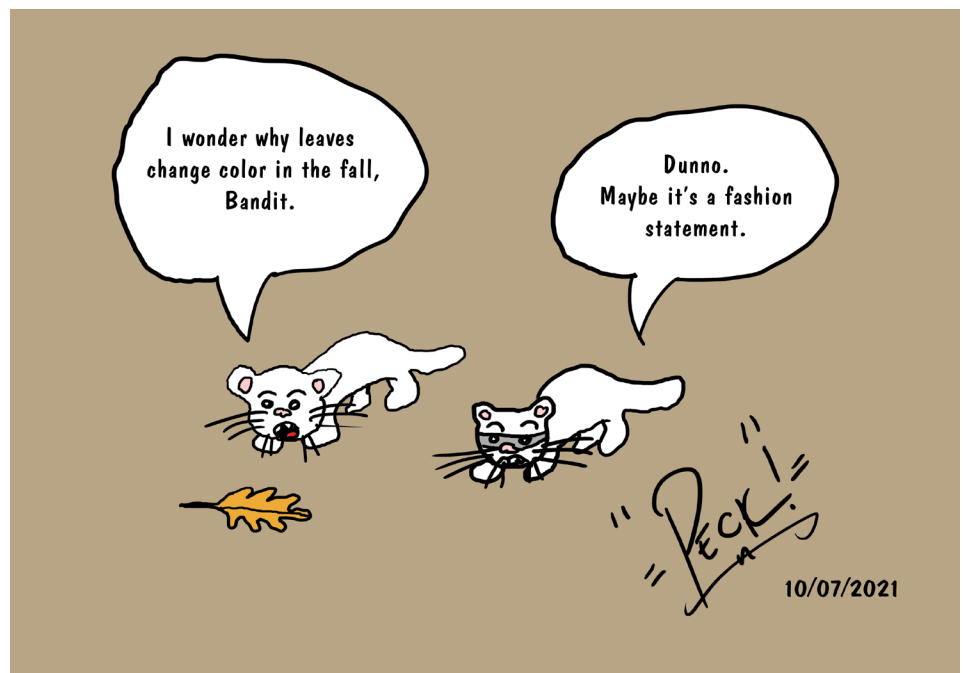
SPACE COMICS SECTION!

ILLUSTRATED BY STEVE PECK

The Misadventures of A-Man And C.D.



Angel, Bandit, and Their Ferret Fracas



GET INVOLVED!



WE WANT
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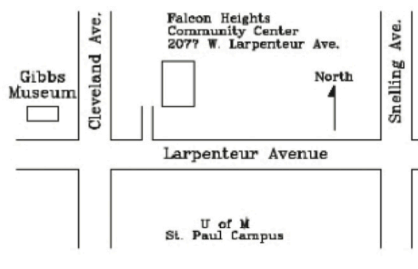
Treasurer:

Gregory Leitner

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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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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.

