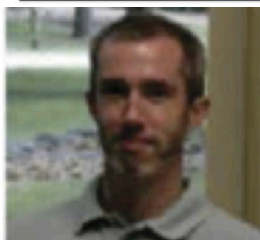


•Serving the Twin Cities Atari Community for Four Decades•

• NEW YEAR 2023 EDITION •



The President's Corner *By Michael Current*

Happy New Year, Atarians and SPACE members! What new Atari wares did you find under your tree this holiday season?

I got caught up on some of my multiple in-progress Atari research efforts. Maybe most interesting, I've been revisiting double-sided disk drives and controllers used with the Atari. The big deal is, while single-sided disks are exchangeable with any disk drives designed for the Atari, double-sided disks created with 2-headed drives for the Atari are far less so, because there were three different styles of numbering sectors on 2-sided disks.

"Percom" controllers would use a "side first" approach using all the sectors on the first side in track order, then starting over on the second side, also in track order. The Atari XF551 did something similar but not compatible - Same thing on the first side, but then number the sectors on the second side in reverse-track order working your way back out toward the outer edge of the disk and track 0. And there was a third method, "track first", where you use both sides of track 0, then both sides of track 1, etc., in a single sequence from tracks 1 to 40 toward the inner edge of the disk. The ATR8000 used this method with double-sided disks, and I gather this was normal in the PC world.

So it's a pretty simple issue, but double-sided drives other than the XF551 were always expensive and never big sellers, so it's just very difficult to find solid information about them. There just aren't many out there. Furthermore, I read documentation for the Micro MainFrame disk drives (rare themselves) which could take slave drives, including double-sided drives, where they describe the Percom double-sided format in detail, but not matching the way the Internet describes it. Instead they say Percom used the style that the later XF551 used. This was written in 1983. What gives? My guess is that Percom actually started out XF551 style, then changed to what we now call "Percom" style 2-sided formatting in about 1983. But there are so few examples out there, almost impossible to verify.

Do you have a double-sided disk drive for the Atari? How does your drive organize sectors on a 2-sided disk?

Thanks, keep using that Atari, and come to your next SPACE meeting: Friday, January 13, 2023.

TABLE OF CONTENTS:

PAGE ONE:

The President's Corner
Treasurer's Report
Secretary's Report

PAGE TWO:

Atari 8-bit DOM Review



Treasurer's Report *By Gregory Leitner*

We had four members present for the ATARI Christmas party along with my wife. The food was delicious and we all had enough for seconds and even thirds. Thanks to our members we also had mac'n cheese, root beer floats, and apple crisp for dessert.

No formal meeting again, so we pretty much went right to the food. It was nice to see Roger back to the meetings. Let's hope the weather cooperates in the coming winter months so we can have more members attend.

For our treasury we only had \$3.00 for one DOM sold and, after paying \$54.77 for the ribs and burnt pork ends, we have a balance of \$1,125.45. Hopefully, we can still hold an auction soon if we can get a better turnout.

With that, I and Jackie wish all of you a very merry Christmas and Happy New Year. Here's hoping for good weather in January so we can catch up on our meetings. We really need a forum to finalize our election.

So so hope to see you all on January 13th!

TRIVIA TIME!

The microwave way of cooking food was discovered when the inventor of the microwave oven went into a room where machines were emitting radio waves. He noticed a candy bar in his pocket melting when he was in the room.

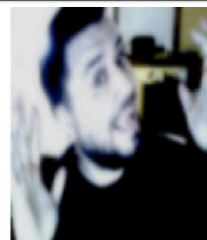
The rest is history. Today, there is almost no home in the US without a microwave oven.



Message from Captain Irata:

"What does VCS stand for? I forget! Doesn't it mean 'Very Cool System?!' Tell me now, SPACE Cadets, or you're all stuck with KP!"

HOO-RAH!



Secretary's Report *By Steven Peck*

HELLO WORLD!

Well, it is a new year! I wish everybody a Happy New Year in 2023, and I hope it is a happy and special year for everybody.

Here we are again. The dawn of a new year. I have noticed some positive news in the global Atari Community. I am looking forward to the new ST536 and PiStorm upgrades for the ST/E.

I hope the developers of the upgrades can squash the bugs and give something to help Atari users speed up their machines and make them more modern computers.

Anyway, how about the Atari VCS game system? It seems to be doing OK. People are buying it, and it does emulate games well. We shall see what happens with this. I would use the VCS as a computer and emulator of arcade games.

But, I still think that some of the games need to be improved for the system. Overall, though, the VCS looks OK. People were wondering at first if it was a scam in the making. Apparently not. I hope it breathes new life in the Atari genre.

I miss the SPACE club. Having COVID twice in two years has kept me from doing a lot, and it is for illness prevention. I still would like to come, but I will think on what to do about that.

I enjoy being Secretary of SPACE and, if we get a forum for the Election, would like to continue to be Secretary, and I will continue to be Newsletter Editor. Which, brings me to one thing.

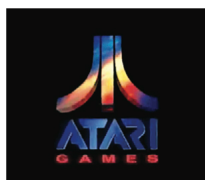
I could use some ideas for the Comics. Again, if anyone has any good ideas for the Comics, I am open to hearing them. Sometimes, I feel like I run out of ideas.

So, I am putting my feelers out to you, the Club. It would be a nice contribution and it might make the Comics sound better with new punchline material. Honestly, I never thought I would have so many ideas myself for the Comics.

I have to be on my toes with punchlines every time I create them. Also, I could use ideas for Trivia Time as well. Sometimes, I sputter with certain ideas for that as well. Just a thought, anyway.

Well, I am done for now. I will be back with another Secretary's Report in February. I will be back soon. I will attempt to in February. In the words of the late, great artist, Stan Lee...

EXCELSIOR!



Atari 8-bit DOM Review *By Steven Peck*

Welcome to yet another A8 DOM Review. I am pleased to present the first review of 2023 now. We will be reviewing the March 2022 DOM and see what files are on it. So, let's get started.

March 2022 DOM, Side A:

For the first file, we have a 256-byte demo, called "Le Game BooT," by K. Dudek. It shows a blue graphic with a bunch of dots moving around, possibly describing the innards of a program booting up. I am guessing anyway, by the title of the file.

I don't know really what this is supposed to represent. Judging by the name, I think it is a diagram of moving bits of data. I like the animation, as it is fluid. It's interesting to look at.

I think it could be more pleasing if there was more detail. I guess I am a stickler when it comes to graphical detail. But, on the same token, it is only 256 bytes of code.

Here is a pic. Take a look.



But, in order to see it as it should be, you would need to boot it up on a computer. So, I will score this now.

SCORE:

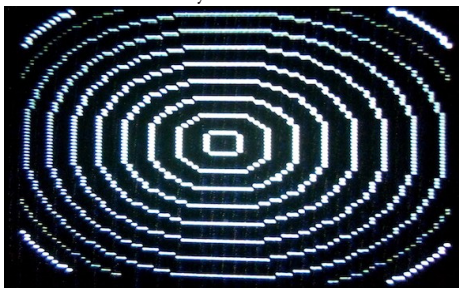
Graphics: 6
Animation: 10

TOTAL SCORE: 16/20 (80%)

The next file is called "Hyperloop," by F. Offenga. It shows the viewer going down a tunnel and the tunnel seems to be moving forward. Again, this file is also 256 bytes in size.

It looks pretty good. It is in perspective and is animated in appearance. It looks like it is moving down a Hyperloop track. So, it lives up to its name. It even has the roaring sound of the vehicle moving down the track for added nuance.

I like it. It is interesting. Creative for such a small file size. It seems accurate for a tunnel as the train is speeding down it. It is clever programming, for sure. Take a look for yourselves.



So, there you go with that. Here's my score.

SCORE:

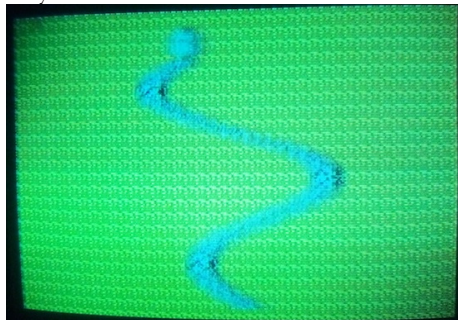
Graphics: 7
Animation: 10

Music/SFX: 9

TOTAL SCORE: 26/30 (87%)

The next file is called "Snake 256," by K. Kluczek. It shows a slithering snake against a tiled background. I like the animation, and the snake, although not really realistic in movement, does look like it is slithering. But, I like this.

It shows detail and prowess, being the file size it is. I enjoyed looking at the snake moving. It really is a great animation. It shows promise. Take a look for yourselves at this file.



It looks better animated. I will score this now.

SCORE:

Graphics: 10
Animation: 10
Music/SFX: 7

TOTAL SCORE: 27/30 (90%)

The next file is a demo called "Runout," by veteran coder Emkay. It takes a while to load because there is so much there on the file.

It shows a person leaning next to a DeLorean (I believe that is the make of the car), looking out at a sunset over the ocean. There is an animated text ticker, sending greetings and thanking others for their help in making this file.

It's colorful, the music is great, and the text animation looks superb. Take a look and judge for yourselves the beauty of this file.



This file is very well executed. I will score it now.

SCORE:

Graphics: 10
Animation: 10
Music/SFX: 10

SCORE: 30/30 (100%; perfect score)

The next file is a game called "Orson 2" by Joel Goodwin. It reminds me of the game "Boulder Dash." I think you have to move the stones into the flashing squares to make it through the levels in the game. So, it is like a puzzle.

It looks challenging and is a mind-bender, for sure. You have to clear each level in a certain amount of time. So, there is a certain amount of challenge to it.

It's appealing. I like the graphics and the fun fac-

tor. It takes a little bit of practice to understand how to play the game. I am just guessing on how to play it. I still need to delve into it. I see great potential for this game.

If you like puzzle games, you might be at home with this one. It has some good potential. Take a look at the pics and judge for yourselves.



I need to practice at this game more to see what the premise of the game is. But, I think I understand it somewhat now. Here is my score.

SCORE:

Graphics: 9
Gameplay: 10
Animation: 8
Music/SFX: 7

TOTAL SCORE: 34/40 (85%)

The next file is another game called "Final Assault," by M. Chorvat. It is a first-person 3D shooter. You must fight an evil sentient Artificial Intelligence. You have a store of weapons at your disposal to shoot robots and machines with.

This game looks really good. The 3D is excellent for an A8 game. Reminiscent of "Doom," this game is vast and definitely challenging. The game looks pixilated, but it has attractive graphics. Here. Let me show you!



It is absolutely amazing how this game looks on the A8. It has mind-blowing graphics and is extremely challenging to play. This is definitely a must-have in your DOM collection, and just for this game. I will score now.

SCORE:

Graphics:	10
Animation:	10
Gameplay:	10
Music/SFX:	10

TOTAL SCORE: 40/40 (100%; perfect score)

The next file is an invite to a SillyVenture meeting. It is called "NYD 2022," by R. Patschke. It has a text ticker, animated cars going across the screen, and the SillyVenture logo. It looks colorful and the graphics and animation are quite vivid.

I like the detail of the moving cars, and it shows the programmer has great knowledge of programming and design. It definitely stands out as a great-looking invitation. Take a look and then you can judge for yourselves.



The typography in the SillyVenture logo needs some work, but overall it is very entertaining. Unless there is a PAL issue with the graphics. I don't know that at present. But it still looks nice. The music is top-notch, too. So, I will score this now.

SCORE:

Graphics:	9
Animation:	10
Music/SFX:	10

TOTAL SCORE: 29/30 (97%)

The next two files on Side A of this DOM are music files. The first one is called "High Orbit," by K. Dudek. It has some techno-like sound to it, like a computer working in the background, and has a great tempo and beat to it.

I like the performance of this music. It really stands out. It even sounds like it is in outer space, which I believe Mr. Dudek was going for, judging by the title of the music track. I will score this track for you now.

TOTAL SCORE: 9/10 (90%)

The second music track is called "Acid Pigeon," by Mr. Holub. It starts off slow and pulse-pounding. The tempo is even and slow, like something is lurking around. I like this music, and for an A8 it is pretty good.

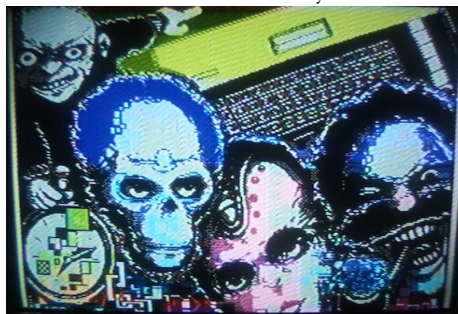
I will score now.

TOTAL SCORE: 9/10 (90%)

The last two files on Side A are picture files. One is called "Have You Played Atari Today?" It is rendered by Blasphemy. It looks like a bunch of evil-looking creatures showing an Atari 800XL computer in the background.

One of the creatures is pointing to the computer, as if motioning the viewing to play with it. Hence the title of the file. It looks very well rendered and sinister. But, I like the detail and graphics. This is very well done.

Take a look at this screenshot for yourselves.



Again, very well done with the rendering. I will score this now.

TOTAL SCORE: 10/10 (100%; perfect score)

The other picture is called "The Land of Wonders," by Pepe. It shows a geisha in a Japanese landscape, holding an Atari CX40 joystick.

Wonders never cease, either. I like the colors and the rendering. It is simpler in design than the last picture, but it is still detailed and looks more pleasant. Not as sinister as the last picture. Take a look at this screenshot of the rendering.



It looks charming and calming at the same time. I also like Mount Fuji in the background. I will score this file.

TOTAL SCORE: 9/10 (90%)

Now onto Side B! There are even more files to explore there. Let's take a look.

Side B:

The first file reviewed on Side B of this DOM is a 256-byte file called "SV2020-21," created by Grzegorz Zyla. It shows a tiled foreground with the SillyVenture text warping in the background.

The animation is smooth and fluid, but you can barely recognize the text warping in the background. I like the animation, but you have to concentrate to see the logo warping. It takes a little bit of observation, that's all.

Anyway, here's a screenshot of that file in action.



The animation is fantastic. Here's my score.

SCORE:

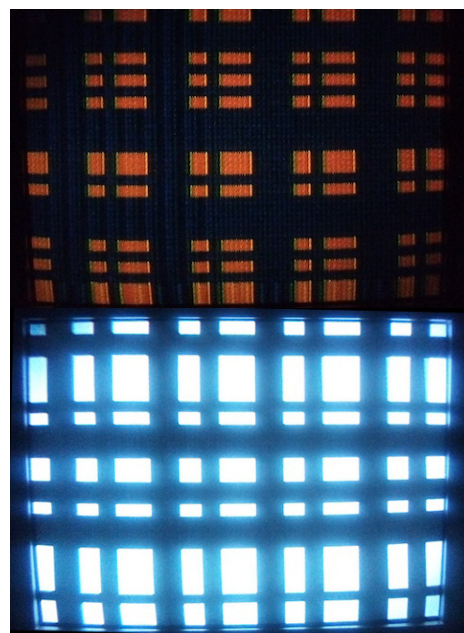
Graphics:	8
Animation:	10
Music/SFX:	7

TOTAL SCORE: 25/30 (83%)

The next file is another 256-byte animation called "XONOX Security System," by Kluczek. It is named after the game company that created double-ended cartridges for the A2600 game system.

It shows an animated plaid screen that flashes from red to white and back again. It has weird music as well. It kind of reminds me of a plaid shirt and it's almost like an animated Mondrian painting. It is bizarre, but nicely put together.

My only complaint is the music. It gets repetitive after listening to it for a few minutes. But the pattern is astounding. I like the effects. Here, take at these screenshots to see what I mean.



As you can see, the patterns look great. Of course, a Mondrian painting would have all of the primary colors, but I think you know what I mean. I will score this file now.

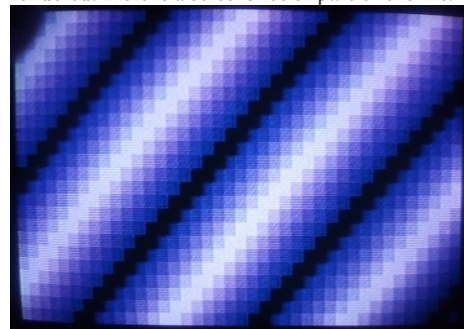
SCORE:

Graphics:	8
Animation:	8
Music/SFX:	8

SCORE: 24/30 (80%)

The next file also has 256 bytes of code. It is called "Approximation," by goblinish. It shows colored gradients and patterns on screen. It is also animated. I think this is the best of the first three files on this side of the DOM.

It shows the gradients well and the transitions are almost seamless. The animation is fluid and well-rendered. Here is a screenshot of part of the file.



It also displays in blue and gold colors as well. But, I am liking what I am seeing. The gradients blend well and they look well-shaded.

With this, I will score the file.

SCORE:

Graphics: 10
Animation: 10

TOTAL SCORE: 20/20 (100%; perfect score)

The next file is a demo by Emkay called "Run for Gold." It shows a pic of a spaceship flying above a city, and it has an animated text ticker. The animation is solid and the graphics are top-notch.

The spaceship scene reminds me of the game "Vanguard" in that it looks almost like the scene on the Atari game cartridges. It might even be digitized from a scanned source. What ever the case may be, it is a stellar file with no pun intended.

Take a look at this screenshot to see what I mean.



The artistry looks great, doesn't it? It looks like almost digital perfection. It's pixillated, but it is still quite clear in the visual. You can make out what is going on quite well. Very good rendering. I will score this file now for you.

SCORE:

Graphics: 10
Animation: 10
Music/SFX: 10

TOTAL SCORE: 30/30 (100%; perfect score)

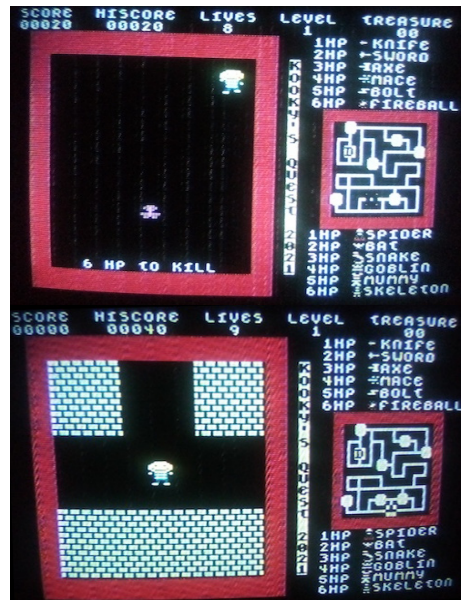
The next file is called "Kooky's Quest 2021," by Anschuetz, Weisgerber, and Anschuetz. It is a simple RPG-type game. You have a limited amount of six weapons in any level.

You need to fight six types of evil creatures in dungeons and take treasures after killing them. You start off with nine lives. You lose a life if you touch a creature. If you have a powerful weapon selected, you can kill creatures fast.

But, you lose weapons after using them. As you move along in the game, the creatures eventually start moving faster and get harder to kill. After you kill all the creatures in a dungeon and get the treasures, you are awarded with a key that you collect. You can then enter the next level with it.

The graphics are very simplistic, but the game is well done. It has a certain difficulty level. It does get more difficult in the long run. The game ends after you lose all nine lives.

Here are some screenshots of the game to show you what it is like to play it.



This game may not be the prettiest looking, but it sure packs a wallop! Let me tell you. Get ready for a challenge. I will score now.

SCORE:

Graphics: 7
Animation: 8
Gameplay: 10
Music/SFX: 9

TOTAL SCORE: 34/40 (85%)

The next game is called "Fallen Kingdom," an ABUC Software Contest entry in 2021 by Martin Simecek. It shows chess pieces and you have to move your piece to conquer other pieces in the game. It is like chess with barriers.

I think it is a two-player game as well, but I tested it all by myself. It looks and sounds very good. The music is nice and the graphics look very well-rendered. There are different levels in this game. To advance, you must land on your opponent's piece. That is how you complete a level.

Here are screenshots to look at of the game.



The typography of the fonts and the graphics are clear and excellent. This is a great strategy game to play, and I highly recommend it. With that, I will score now.

SCORE:

Graphics: 9
Animation: 7
Gameplay: 10
Music/SFX: 10

TOTAL SCORE: 36/40 (90%)

The next two files are music tracks, with the first being PG's "Why Do You Dance with Me?" As I listen to it, the track seems to have a fast tempo, and has a lot of action in it. Nice beat, too. It sounds pleasant, too.

The file is in stereo at 4X speed. It sounds marvelous and fast. I will score it now.

TOTAL SCORE: 9/10 (90%)

The next music track is called "7th Point," by Buddy76cd. It has some good fast tempo and nice beat to it. It even has some nice sound effects and fades in it, too. It's pretty good. I will score.

TOTAL SCORE: 10/10 (100%; perfect score)

The last two files are pics, "Lost Knight," by Tiger and "Nautica," by s0nar. I think "Lost Knight" looks really well-rendered and "Nautica" takes a simpler approach. Here are those pics for you to see for yourselves.



Here, we see the Lost Knight looking up at the castle walls. The pic is well-rendered and top-notch. There's a lot of detail in this pic.



"Nautica" looks great, too. It looks more like a cartoony illustration, but still well-rendered. It seems more abstract in appearance to me. But, indeed a great feat in graphics rendering on the A8. With that, I will score these pictures now.

TOTAL SCORE ("Lost Knight"):

10/10 (100%; perfect score)

"Nautica:"

9/10 (90%)

With that, this concludes the Atari 8-bit DOM Review. I will leave you now and come back with another Review in February. Carpe Diem, fellow Atarians, and thanks for reading!



**HERE'S TO ANOTHER
FIFTY YEARS OF
ATARI VIDEO GAME
ENTERTAINMENT!**

**FROM 1972 TO
INFINITY!**



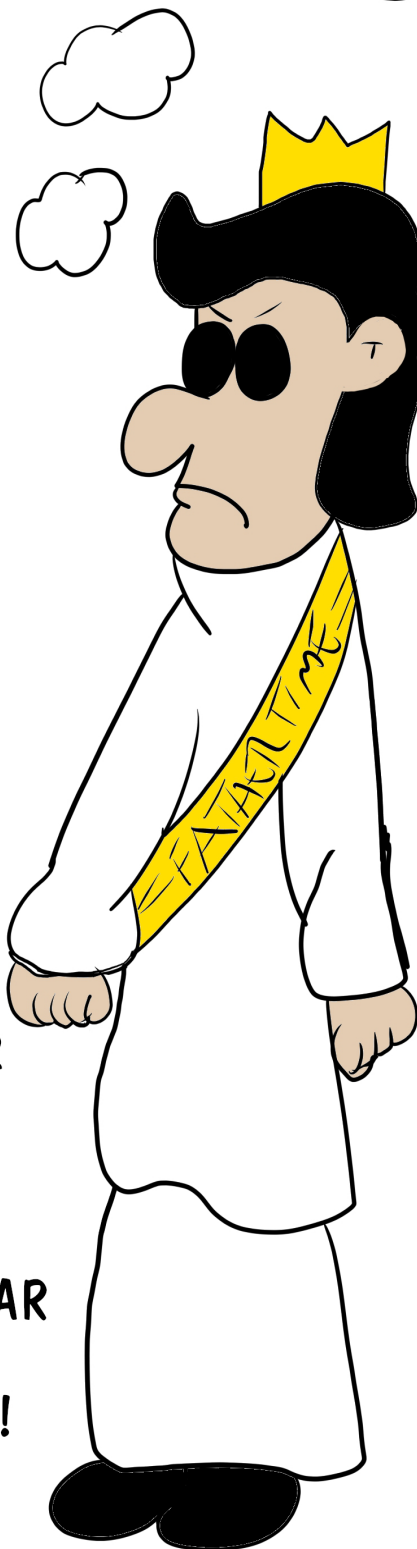
GET INVOLVED!



**WE WANT
YOUR
ARTICLES!**

In with the old and out
with the new!
Right, C.D?

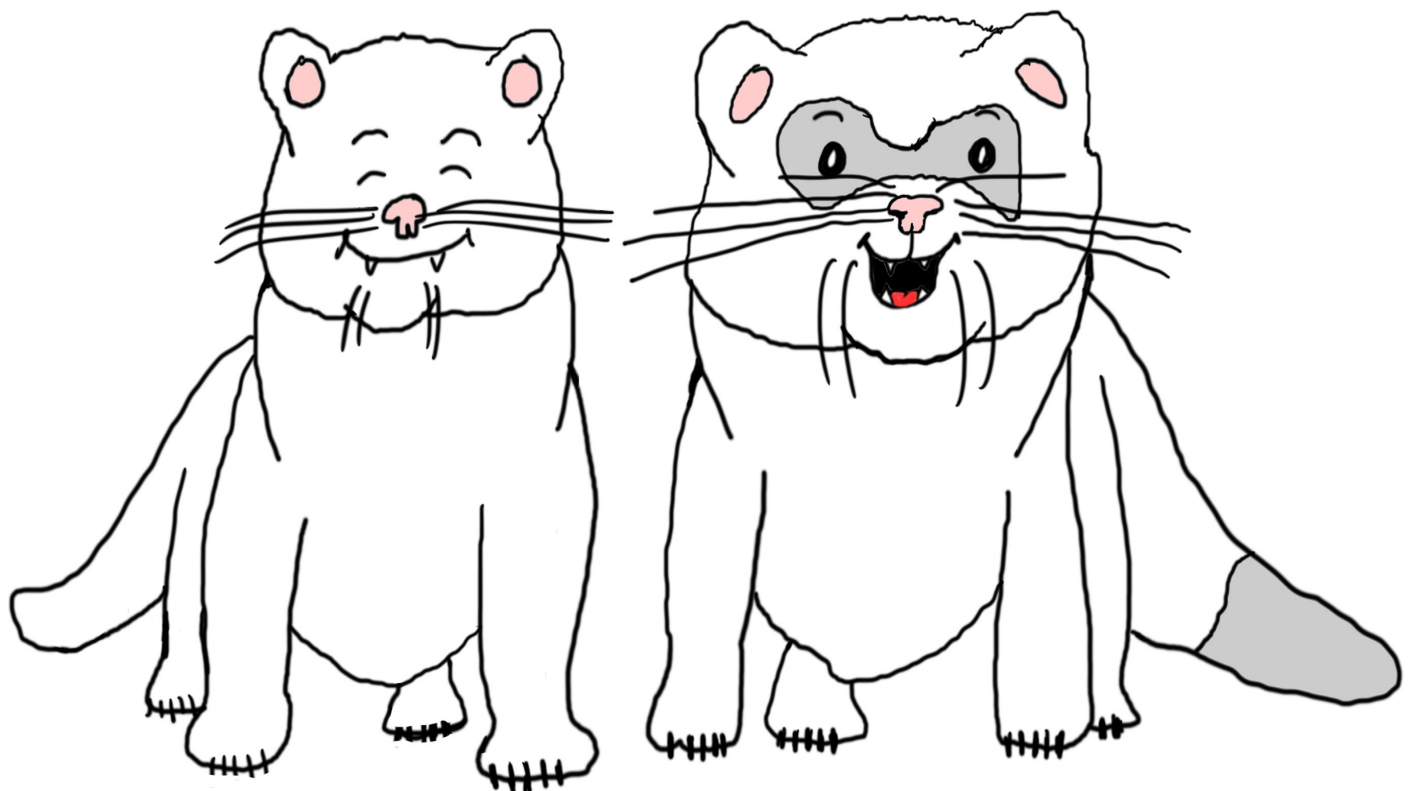
I will make you pay,
A-Man! Royally!



12/29/2022

HAPPY NEW YEAR
IN 2023
FROM SPACE!

**Also, Happy 2023
from Your Furry
Ferret Friends!
Be Well,
SPACE Cadets!**



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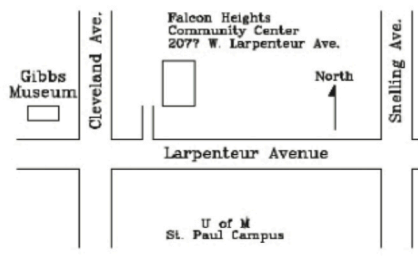
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The Saint Paul Atari Computer Enthusiasts (SPACE) special interest group meets on the second Friday of every month at 7:30 PM in the Falcon Heights Community Center at 2077 West Larpenteur Avenue. Doors open at 7:00 PM.



S.P.A.C.E.

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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.



*The next SPACE meeting will commence on
Friday, January 13, 2023, at 7:30 PM*

*We hope to see you there!
Thanks for coming!*

