• April 2024 Edition •

The President's Corner
By Michael Current

Yet another very late article submission from me, sorry about that, when will I ever learn??

I recently navigated my way around the rest of the "Atari 50" release from Atari, on Steam for PC. There really is a lot of cool stuff in there, including a lot of games. I can't say I've tried most of the games, but I was certainly excited to find that Tempest 2000 - the original Jaguar version - is included.

Years ago I picked up the original Atari Corp release of Tempest 2000 for PC. It came in both Windows and DOS versions. I never could get the Windows version to run on my PC, but the DOS version ran beautifully, and I played it extensively. Once I got a newer PC, I found neither version worked. Thanks to Atari 50, can I really play Tempest 2000 again? Yes!! And despite it running in a Jaguar software emulator, it plays well, though honestly not quite as well as the DOS version did.

It is cool to have all the sound effects as were in the Jaguar and Windows versions but partially missing in the DOS version, but I think the controls are ever so slightly not quite as responsive. Most frustratingly, I can't seem to make it through most of the bonus rounds successfully, I certainly never had that problem on the DOS version. Maybe an actual gaming PC would play a bit better? Perhaps I can improve with practice, not that I can afford the time for that!

Thanks, keep using that Atari, and come to your next SPACE meeting: Friday, April 12, 2024.

Message from Captain Irata:

**"I have a bug infestation issue at my house!
My programming skills are rusty!"**

HOO-RAH!

Treasurer's Report
By Gregory Leiner

Seven SPACE members were in attendance for our March meeting, the most we have had in quite a few months. We reviewed the monthly DOM from Glen, and Roger was there to try his hand at a couple of the games on the disk. Another winner from Glen!

Well, it's that time of the year and the time I can never wait for. First was the High School boys hockey tournament and naturally Edina took the Class A championship for the fourteenth time. I guess having a former NHL North Star's player as their coach gives them a huge advantage over the other teams who get their coaches from math and science teachers etc. Losing 1 to nothing for almost the whole game, Edina found a way to score two late third period goals to defeat Chanhassen 2 to 1. In 2A it was St. Cloud Cathedral who won another close game, defeating Hermantown 3 to 1.

On top of that, we have the March Madness basketball tournament and the High School boys and girls tournaments. And on top of that the WCHA college hockey tournament. So, I will be quite busy in March.

Now to why you are reading this article, we had a very good month for receipts at the March meeting. We started the month with a bank balance of $1,690.45, and we added $139.00 to that amount in the month. It breaks down to the sale of eleven DOMs for $33.00, and $106.00 for auction sales which brings us to an unbelievable balance of $1,829.45.

I think we can have a nice Xmas party in December, but I will leave that choice up to a vote in November. I will close this article with a thank you for your support, not only for your memberships but also for your buying the months' DOMs.

I could go on forever talking about the sporting events I have seen lately, but I know you are all not into them. Best time of the year for me, so I am off to watch the conference championship games this week! I hope to catch you all on April 12th for our next SPACE meeting. See you there.
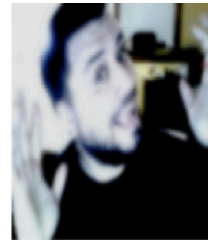
Secretary's Report
By Steven Peck

HELLO WORLD!

The year is going by pretty fast, isn't it?

I am back with the April 2024 Secretary's Report, recapping what happened in March. Let's get started. The SPACE Meeting commenced on Friday, March 8, 2024, at 7:34 PM. Here are the minutes from that meeting.

SPACE WEBSITE REPORT

With the exception of the last Newsletter being put up on the site, there's nothing remarkable to report. The Website is in good shape.

SPACE MEMBERSHIP COUNT

There are ten members paid up in 2024. There are no renewals due until April of this year. Seven of the ten members came to the Meeting, with a guest on Zoom.

OLD BUSINESS

No old business was discussed at this Meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

There was talk about the upcoming Atari 400 Mini, which could play games for the Atari XL, XE, and the 5200. The question is this: will games from other 8-bit systems work on this?

Also, a visitor made SPACE history at this Meeting. We used the teleconferencing app, Zoom, for the first time to link him to the Meeting because he couldn't physically make it there. Special thanks to Tom L. for doing that for his friend. We are grateful for this technology.

SPACE President Michael Current decribed reading from Atari engineer Joe DeCuir's notebook from 1978, discussing the steps leading to the evolution of the Atari 400 computer, created Summer 1978. It was an intersting discussion he presented and the steps in behind the 400's development and coming to fruition.

Apparently, there is a NOS (Network Operating System) being developed for the Atari 8-bit. It would be an OS working off of the Internet. I hve heard of this development being discussed on Discord. It is a very interesting development that has piqued my interest.

IN CLOSING

The meeting adjourned at 8:18 PM, lasting forty-four minutes. Thanks to Roger M. for showing his FujiNet to us that night. Kudos to him and Tom L. With that, I will adjourn after reporting about a great meeting. In the words of the late, great Stan Lee…

EXCELSIOR!

TRIVIA TIME!

During World War II, the Allied military came up with a creative description for liitle things getting glitchy in their airplanes. They blamed the glitches on little mythical creatures called "gremlins."
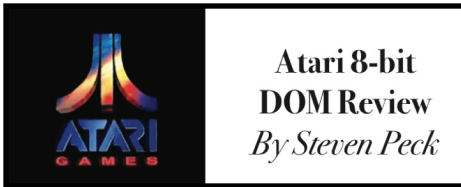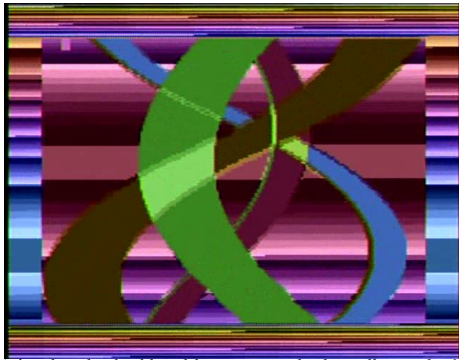
Atari 8-bit DOM Review
By Steven Peck

Well, we are back with the April 2024 edition of the Atari 8-bit DOM Review! It's going to be a great review, too. So, sit back, relax, and read! We will see some great stuff!

March 2024 DOM, Side One

The first file we are going to look at is called "Colored Sines," a 251-byte file by Ralf Patschke. It shows sine waves warping in real time, and in 3D.

They loook a lot like ribbons. But, it looks really good. It's an excellent artistic example of tight-coding and what it can do. The animation is superb and, as I stated before, in real-time. Very smooth movements.

This is very good programming. Very colorful, as the name of the file states. I love it. Here's my score:

SCORE:

Graphics:	10
Animation:	10
Music/Sound FX:	9

TOTAL SCORE: 29/30 (97%)

The second file is called "SillyVenture 2023 Unofficial Invite," by an unknown programmer. It is basically a sign with "SillyVenture" typed on it, commenorating the event. It's colored with colors of the rainbow. It looks really detailed and smooth.


I like the execution of this picture. It lookd almost mosaic-like. I like the 3D text as well. It's a still picture, but very well done. Excellent work! I will score this now:

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

The next file is a game called "Twin Snakes Run," by Michal Radecki. This game is challenging, because you have to find the path of twin snakes on TWO screens simultaneously. The paths must work toward the goal on both screens or you have to start over.

It's challenging, it's difficult and it's brilliant. I played it a little bit and found it a brain-teaser. It's not for the impatient, that's for sure. It can take a while to master the levels. Both snakes must meet the goal at the same time, and it can be hard to coordinate.
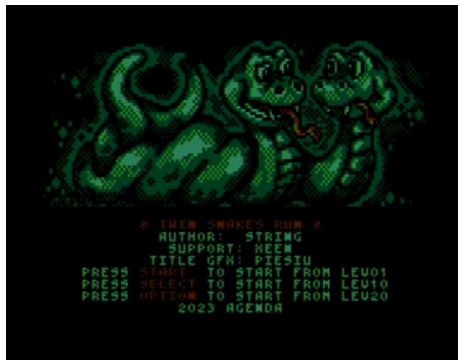
As you can see, it takes a lot of hand-eye coordination. Plus, the screens are different from each other, and that's on purpose. It takes a lot of practice and skill to do this.

Here's my score.

SCORE:

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

TOTAL SCORE: 37/40 (93%)

The next file is the game "Gold Diggers," by Filip Goweleski. It can be challenging, for sure. You must avoid someone chasing you in a maze and get to the gold. It get progressively more difficult over time.

This game was created for the Grawitacja event in Poland. It is based on another game called "Mummy Maze," by Popcap Games. It has a simple premise, yet can be tough to master. The graphics are good and the gameplay is great. You won't go wrong here playing this game.

With that, I will score this game now.

SCORE:

Graphics:	8
Gameplay:	10
Animation:	8
Music/Sound FX:	9

TOTAL SCORE: 35/40 (88%)

Next is "Boulder Dash 15," by Mugen, another hack of the classic mining game where you control Rockford the Robot and harvest diamonds without getting clobbered by boulders. It has amazing graphica and astounding gameplay. It's a challenge.

This game's a true classic. It's exciting and can be a brain-teaser. It looks great and is addictive. If you love puzzle games, this is a good one. I will score.

SCORE:

Graphics:	10
Gameplay:	10
Animation:	8
Music/Sound FX:	10

TOTAL SCORE: 38/40 (95%)

The next file is a music track called "Falling Block - Game 2," by A. Holik. It's a peppy and lively little tune. The tempo isn't too fast. It sounds pretty swell. Play it and you will se what I mean. Here's my score.

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

The next file is a picture called "E-THOT," by Robert Smolinski. it shows two androids. One is like a nude mannequin, and it looks like the nude mannequin is either being repaired or built.

It has a lot of detail to it. The colors compliment each other and it looks interesting, to say the least. The artist took a lot of time in detailing this picture. I will score it.

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

There is another picture. It is called "Synthia," by Zdenek Eisenhammer. It is a picture of a female android. It looks interesting and has great detail. It looks robotic in its face and the rest of the body is female.

I think it is quite striking. I will score this picture now.

TOTAL SCORE: 9/10 (90%)

This concludes the review of Side One. Now, to Side Two, which is even more impressive than Side One.

Side Two:

The first file on Side Two is a game: "International Karate RC," by the late veteran programmer Archer MacLean. This is apparently a version of the classic martial arts tournament game with souped-up graphics from the Commodore 64 version. It looks great and has pleasing graphics. It's also very challenging.

It's a karate tournament game. You fight your opponents in different world cities, with famous scenes of the cities in the background. Unfortunately, I could not take pictures of this game.

You see, I need a new video cable for my 130XE because it takes a 130XE to run it, and I need a video cable to run the video capture device with it. This is how I get my detailed pics of game sand other files on the DOMs.

Sorry for the inconvenience. But, I will score the game from what I have seen of it.

SCORE:

Graphics:	10
Gameplay:	10
Animation:	10
Music/Sound FX:	10

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

The next file is a Minesweeper-like game called "Blood Mary Lost Treasure," by Sikor, Miker and Kris3D. It is an interesting game where you must find the treasure in the ground. If you dig in the wrong spot, a bomb goes off. If you get the treasure before the bonus timer goes out (the timer dwindles each time you hit a bomb), you advance.

However, if you get too many bombs, the game is over. It has a challenge to it. You must try to beat the timer and get to the treasure in time, and it takes practice.

The game definitely has an appeal for those who have a lot of time on their hands. It does look like it takes a lot of concentration and a lot of thought. Let me score this.

SCORE:

Graphics:	8
Gameplay:	10
Animation:	7
Music/ Sound FX:	9

TOTAL SCORE: 34/40 (85%)

The next file is called "SV23WE Invite," by Christian Duesterhoeft. It's an invite to last year's SillyVenture event. It looks great, too. Very detailed and colorful.

The animation is smooth and in real-time. The grapjhics are colorful and superb. It is great eye-candy. I will score this now.

SCORE:

Graphics:	10
Animation:	10
Music/Sound FX:	10

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

The final file is a music track called "7th Level of Suffering," by Poison. It sounds great and has a gritty sort of tone to it. The tempo picks up and it works for me.

I will score this track now.

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

This concludes the Review. Thanks for reading. Carpe Diem, fellow SPACE Cadets, and keep reading. I will be back with another Review next month. See you then!

ATARI MULTI-PLATFORM GAME REVIEW
By Steve Peck

I decided to put in the SPACE Newsletter a Multi-Platform Game Review for this month. For the Review, we are going to review the Atari 2600 game "Star Trek: Strategic Operations Simulator." This is a conversion of the Sega arcade game from 1982.

It involves the USS Enterprise in a training simulation, protecting starbases from the Klingons and trying to clear sectors in space. To clear the sectors, you must destroy the Klingon starships. However, you have limited resources that can be replenished by the starbases.

You have limited deflector shields. Once they are gone, you are vulnerable to attack and total destruction. You also have photon torpedoes and phasers, which can be disabled if you aren't careful. However, when you dock with starbases, your damage can be repaired.

Every sector has a bonus round, where you have to avoid asteroids and dock with as many starbases as you can to replenish your phasers, shields and photon torpedoes. I forgot to mention you can akso go to warp speed. This is limited also, so it must be used sparingly.

In the last level in any sector, you must fight the NO-MAD probe. NOMAD is tricky and extremely fast. It also lays mines that you must avoid. You must time your attacks on NOMAD just right to destroy it.

Line up your sights and be ready to fire when you see NOMAD in them. Once NOMAD is successfully destroyed, you travel to the next sector. Each sector is more difficult than the other, so be prepared.

"Star Trek: Stretegic Operations Simulator" is actually a very good game. It's well-designed and the graphics stand out for an Atari 2600 game. There's a lot of action in it and it's very addictive. I liked the arcade version, and this version of it is very close to the arcade.

This version of the game is more colorful than the Sega arcade version, being that the arcade version has vector-based graphics. But, it is a faithful translation and for the 2600 it is top-notch in appearance and gameplay.

I really enjoy playjng this game on the 2600 console. It has challenge and looks gorgeous. It is definitely addictive and fun.I would recommend that, if you have this game, don't sell it. Keep it for your amusement. It's a great addition to anyone's collection.

Here's my score for this game.
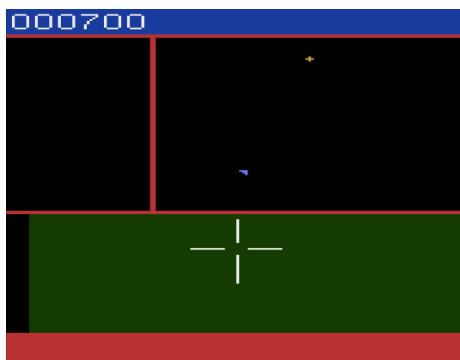
SCORE:

Graphics: 9
Gameplay: 10
Animation: 8
Music/Sound FX: 9

SCORE: 36/40 (90%)

Well, that's all for now. I will be back in the future with another Review. Unitl then, thanks for reading and see you later!

GAME SCREENSHOTS

FINAL THOUGHTS
By Steve Peck

Well, it has been fun writing these articles. It serves a purpose, and I am glad to serve. I love producing these articles and I am glad for your support in producing the Newsletter in general. So, thanks for your aricles and help in bringing these Newsletters to fruition.

I plan to continue this service. It's a pleasure. Please keep your articles coming and I will find ways to continue to improve the Newsletters with everybody's help. It is duly appreciated and acknowledged.

Anyway, I will see you in the next Meeting. I will be back with more news and articles. Until then, give your Atari systems some love, and see you soon. Thanks!

Yup! We need articles!

If you wish to channel your inner F. Scott Fitzgerald and want to send in an article, please feel free to send them to the SPACE Newsletter Editor!

Please try to send your articles within two weeks of the Club's occurence every month. They then will be posted.

The SPACE Newsletter Editor's contact information is, of course, on the back of every SPACE Newsletter!

Thanks for posting and for supporting your SPACE Club!

We hope to see more articles soon!

GET INVOLVED!

WE WANT YOUR ARTICLES!

WANTED!

Ideas (from SPACE Members) Suggested for Future Comics!

Please feel free to email The Newsletter Editor!

The Email Address is on the Last Page of the Newsletter!

Thanks!

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.
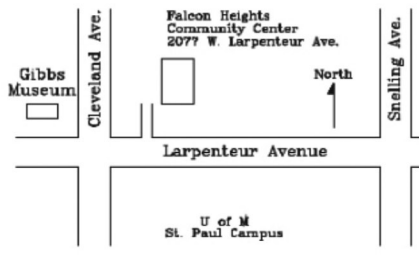
S.P.A.C.E.

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

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.

The next SPACE meeting will commence on Friday, April 12, 2024, at 7:30 PM, local time!

We hope to see you there! Thanks for coming!

Another Message from Captain Irata:

"That's all she wrote, SPACE Cadets!"

HOO-RAH!