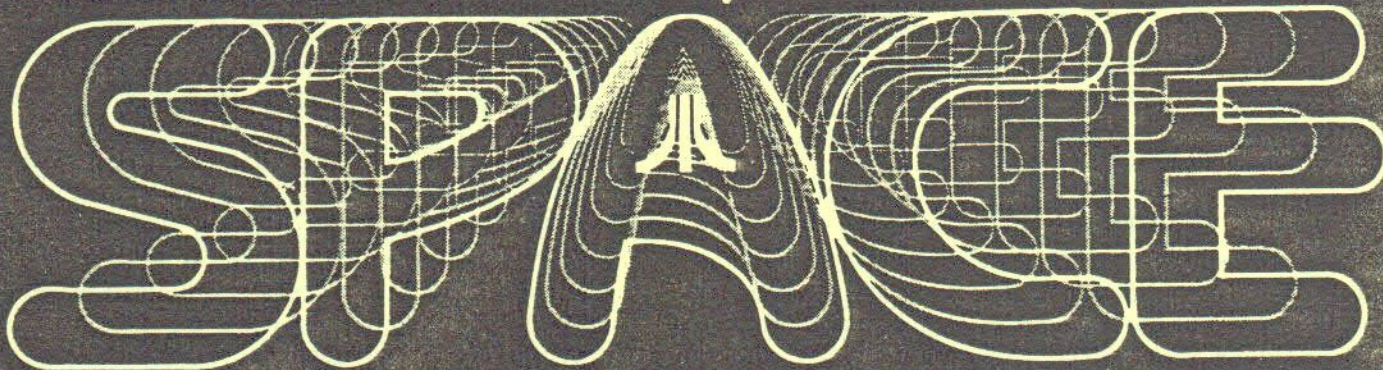


Saint Paul ATARI Computer Enthusiasts



An independent computer user group

APRIL 1986

This month's meetings:

SPACE
FRIDAY, APRIL 11, 7:30 PM
*** SWAP MEET ***

MAST-SIG
FRIDAY, APRIL 21, 7:30 PM

At the Falcon Heights
Community Center
2077 Larpenteur Ave. W.

Bruce Haug...President	774-6226	Bob Rhode....Editor	222-3593
Jim Schulz...Vice-Pres	537-5442	Bob Siede....Treasurer	489-3982
Frank Haug...Disk Lib.	774-6226	Bob Floyd....Secretary	487-2627
Jim Siede....Paper/Educational Librarian		489-3982	
SPACE/TAIG Bulletin Board...473-2897			

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BYTES FROM THE PRES BYTES FROM THE PRES BYTES FROM THE PRES

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* SWAP MEET		*
* APRIL 11th Meeting		*
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As you can see there will be a swap meet at the April meeting. This is a good time to get rid of that old game you never play anymore, or that old joystick that works ok but the new one you bought fits your hand better. Remember, "ALL SOFTWARE MUST BE ORIGINAL. NO COPS!" Also, software should be complete with documentation! We will have the club's 400 and 130xe available to check software on. Please just make sure it loads; don't play the whole game!

*****		*****
*		*
* DOOR PRIZES		*
* ONE CHANCE PER PAID UP		*
* MEMBERSHIP CARD		*
*		*
*****		*****

Bring your paid up membership card up to the president, and he will enter your name in the door prize drawing. The door prizes are donated by the vendors who sell at our meeting, and advertise in our newsletter: B&D Home Computer, Mindtools, User Friendly and Wizard's Work. The prizes include the following at this time: The PARTY QUIZ game, some 10-PACKS of DISKS, JOYSTICKS and other assorted programs. If your membership is out of date see Bob Siede, our Treasurer.

MAST members, WANT TO SELL 8-BIT EQUIP.??? Come to the 8-Bit meeting on the 11th.

THE PRES.

MARCH SPACE MEETING MINUTES by Bob Floyd

The last SPACE meeting was held Friday, March 14, 1986.

In "News/Rumors", it was reported that the 65XE is now available, since all the 800XL's have been sold. The "Learning Phone" (PLATO) cartridge is now available locally. Ultima IV will soon be here from Electronic Arts.

Vice President Jim Schulz reported on ST news (see MAST minutes). Treasurer Bob Siede reported a balance of \$953.15 and that the MAST group is almost breaking even already. ANALOG disk librarian Bob Floyd explained that he accidentally reversed the reasons for re-registering with him (SPACE renewal vs. ANALOG renewal). Bob will miss the next SPACE meeting, so Larry Vandenplas will be secretary

for the April SPACE meeting and Dianne Haug will handle ANALOG disks. Dianne will be handling ANALOG DOM's from now on. Frank Haug showed BOINK and FUJI Boink from the disk of the month. There was also a "moviemaker" double sided disk for sale. The BBS is up and running.

The ribbon re-inker got its first few customers. Cost for re-inking is \$1.00 and is for the wide cartridge Epsoms and spool-to-spool ribbons only, at this time. Bruce has information on where Rana drives can be serviced. There were complaints that purchased ANTIC Magazine software is unreliable. There will be a swap meet at the April meeting. Bruce Haug demo'd how to use a modem and call up a Bulletin Board. He used a VCR to show a session previously recorded at home so he could rewind and show things over again.

DOM (dah dum dum dumm)
By: Frank Haug

(Don't mind the spring humor please) Well, I hope you all had a happy Easter. It would have been nice to have had some Easter type programs, but we can't cry over spilt milk right?

I would like to thank all the people who have contributed to the DOM and I hope others will follow their example.

Enough of that. This month we will also be selling (for \$4) a MEMBER-WRITTEN program (yes, members do write programs; believe it or not.) called SMIL. It is a graphic utility that allows you to manipulate previously saved pictures from the Koala/Atari touch tablet. It has too many features to describe here in detail. But it comes with instructions, so fear not.

Now the moment you've all been waiting for...

On with the programs on the April 1986 DOM.

1.ACROBAT - Use the joystick to jump (push up),dive (push down) and somersault (trigger) past obstacles.

2.MINDBST.BAS - A nerve-racking dizifying pattern matching puzzle.

3.TRACER.COM - Tron light cycles for two players (needs two joysticks). Trigger speeds you up.

4.FUJISWAN.COM - Another Atari graphic demo.

5.BIGPLOT - Biorythm on screen w/ optional 1020 plotted chart.

This month we will have a UPDATED listing of the DOM library. Remember, if I don't have a copy of the past disk(s) you want, leave your name and the names of the disk(s) you want.

GMHIZ, a print utility for Koala graphics
by John Novotny

Recently, I provided SPACE with a copy of my graphics editor program for uncompressed KOALA-type disk files, to be made available to SPACE members. It is a BASIC program with machine language routines for all time critical processing, requiring 48K of RAM. Following is a summary of its capabilities:

- 1) Load and save full-screen graphics disk files. Disk directory access is provided.
- 2) Add text in default colors 1 thru 3. Text may be added in "Add" or "Replace" modes, with separate width and height options.
- 3) Exchange colors (color 0=color 3, color 1=color 2).
- 4) Shade any of the four colors separately, with four patterns available. Shading consists of replacing the selected color with color 0 pattern, except shading color 0 adds color 3 pattern.
- 5) Flip (invert) and mirror screen memory (useful for generating different attitudes of ICONs, see below).
- 6) Add grid to the graphics screen to provide coordinates for locating editing tasks.
- 7) All changes go to the temporary screen memory buffer (SC), and are transferred to a permanent buffer (S\$) under keyin control.
- 8) Print graphics using Epson RX-80 printer (the document on disk tells which 2 program lines have printer specific code). Print options are print colors 1-3, only color 3, or colors 1,2. A feature to change the graphics screen colors 1,2 to 3 may be used to see what a print colors 1-3 image will look like.

In addition to the above functions, the following partial screen (ICON) capabilities are provided. The basic ICON function is the ability to lift off any part (all colors or only color 3) of the current graphics screen (up to 90+% of the screen area). The uses of this are several, as follows:

- 1) Hold part of a picture while a screen function is performed. An ICON may be held in the ICON buffer while the screen buffer is reloaded with another picture or changed with any of the screen editing commands. In fact, up to 10 ICONs may be in the ICON buffer at any one time, as long as the sum of their areas does not exceed the 90+% of screen maximum.
- 2) An ICON may be put back to the screen buffer in "Add" or "Replace" modes, and optionally enlarged (separate width and height parameters).
- 3) An ICON may be rotated 90 degrees counter clockwise. The rotated ICON is a new ICON of area equal to

the source ICON - the largest ICON that can be rotated is 1/2 the maximum ICON size.

- 4) Any ICON may be deleted from the ICON buffer, with the remaining ICONs left intact.
- 5) ICONs may be saved and loaded to disk files. Width and height values precede the graphics data in the file.
- 6) Print ICON, with all the features as for print screen buffers.

The main idea behind the program is to prepare graphics for use with a future program which will generate documents by combining text and graphics files. The current print graphics feature is intended to give you a hard copy record of your graphics files (each print graphics is preceded with an ID, i.e. file-name or whatever you wish). Also to show you what the printer image will look like. Meanwhile, you may find some of the editing features useful just for screen graphics files.

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CHRIS-
Sorry. I'll run it next month.
-BOB

WORDS FROM THE CHAIR
by Bob Floyd

March MAST Meeting Minutes
by Bob Floyd

DOM sales - I'd like to thank all of you who are buying the disk of the month. The sales have been terrific and should put MAST in the black and earning money towards a club owned ST. The high number of disk sales is a reflection of the value of the disks, and the amount of time and energy Jim Schulz puts into it.

Texans - We now have 2 members from Texas thanks to an article I wrote for the 3M computer club newsletter. Bob Boren and Henry Kubicek of Brownwood, Texas are the first (and probably not the last) MAST members from out of state. They are buying the DOM's even though they don't yet own ST's (I think they're waiting on the 1040's).

Valworld Gazette - The "ValWorld Gazette" is a bimonthly publication that has been around for over 2 years. They were supporting the Epson QX-10 computer only, until now. VWG is now covering the ST and has sent us 6 or 8 copies to hand out at our meeting. It isn't too impressive because the information is somewhat light and outdated. But, it will probably improve greatly over the next few issues.

Mac Emulator - This is one of those good news and bad news situations. The good news is that Data Pacific has developed the "Mac Cartridge" for 1 megabyte monochrome ST's. The bad news is that it actually uses the Apple ROM obtained from service centers. I can't imagine Apple selling their ROMs in large quantities for use in an ATARI cartridge. Don't expect to see this one on store shelves. (Why do people work on things like this with such an obvious fault?)

No Lights - Sorry to those who couldn't find the meeting place on March 21. There was a mixup with the janitor resetting the automatic timers.

ST-File - From the makers of ST-Talk, here is the database I've been waiting for. It features many of the standard features and more. But even more importantly, it has the ability to read DIF (data interchange format) files. This means that I can finally (and easily) convert my rather large SynFile+ databases to the ST since both programs support DIF. Does anyone else know of Database programs for the ST that support DIF file transfers? If so, let us know at the meeting. I'm sure many Atarians would like to convert from SynFile+ (the most common 8-bit database) to a program on the ST.

The last MAST meeting was held Friday, March 21, 1986. There was alot of "News/Rumors". Here are the highlights:

The ROMs are here and almost everyone has them installed already.

The 1040STs are in California now and should be available locally by the end of March.

There will be a new version of TOS in ROM available by the end of summer. The CPM emulator should be on hand soon - it will run Wordstar and Microsoft BASIC.

The MS-DOS emulator that is being developed features an 8088 processor + 512K on board RAM. It will run Lotus and Symphony, among others. The price will be around \$200 without the 5.25" drive.

The new "bit-blitter" chip being developed will use a daughter board for installation.

The new LOGO that was shipped with the ROM's is faster than the original LOGO.

A wild rumor is that Amiga is working on an ST emulator and that Amiga is re-writing their operating system from scratch.

Someone is working on a 4 megabyte upgrade (where will it end?). Activision bought Infocom.

VIP and Shanner are still feuding.

A lot of Unix type products are on the way, some with multitasking capabilities.

The TT 32 bit machine will likely be shown as a ST add-on at the Hanover, West Germany show in April.

Scott Hutchinson will be the MAST secretary beginning in April (thanks Scott!). Jim Schulz made 4 amazing disks-of-the-month, plus a special disk on artificial intelligence. Jim polled members on their preference of picture disks for future release. A squeezed format will probably be used. Bob Floyd requested members with ANALOG magazine subscriptions to register with him so that we can get a club disk subscription in the future at a reduced rate.

The BBS at Mindtools is up and running (542-8980) and is available to MAST members. User Friendly also has a BBS (786-2458). MAST members are also welcome.

Wizard's Work is now an authorized ST service center. User Friendly is also authorized.

Demo's included an extensive look at the disk of the month by Jim Schulz. A fantastic beta copy of Joust was on one the disks. Todd Burkey of Mindtools showed Micro C-Shell, a Unix-like shell over TOS. It allows one to run programs, rename files, etc. in much the same way as Unix.

Disk of the Month - April

by Jim Schulz

After four disks last month, the big question is how can I top that??

This month so far public domain software has been in short supply but programs already slated for this month's disk of the month include: Cribbage in BASIC, Tiny BASIC for those who don't like ST BASIC, XLISP, yes another programming language, the underlying structure for LOGO. These are sure things.

The rest will come more into focus in the next two weeks as I start to comb the BBSs for the country for the best software for DOM. For those who don't know, MAST has a disk of the month which we charge \$5.00 for which is packed full of public domain software for the ST. All software programs are checked by me and documented in a READ.ME file in each directory so you are sure you get something that works. So far we have a library of eight disks after two months with more to come. The disks look like this so far:

February DOM #1 - Degas files, demos, GEM instruction articles, and utility programs.

February DOM #2 - Application programs, games, and music programs Atari TOS 2.0 - New version of Atari TOS on disk with a full disk of disk related applications and utility programs.

March DOM #1 - Utility programs.

March DOM #2 - Games and general ST information.

March DOM #3 - Application programs, Degas files, demos, and GEM instruction articles.

March DOM #4 - Modula demo, music programs, OSS Pascal information and demos, and ramdisk programs Artificial Int. - Demo of an very nice artificial intelligence program.

Well, that's what we have so far.

For more details, see me at the next MAST meeting. Other DOM news: For those who cannot make the meeting and still would like the DOM, I will mail them to you within one week of the meeting for the standard \$5.00 plus \$0.50 for postage and handling for each disk.

My address is: 3264 Welcome Avenue North Crystal, MN 55422

Neo and Degas picture disks should be available at the next meeting. Each disk will include squeezed picture files, the unsqueeze program, and a slide show program so that you don't need Neo or Degas to show off your ST.

Problems, problems, problems. I have recieved reports that some of last month's disks were bad. If you got a bad disk, bring the original disk to the next MAST meeting for a replacement. Also on the last disk one file was misnamed. The file CRABS.RSC on the March DOM #1 should be CRAB.RSC. If it is renamed, selecting the CRABS entry in the accessories menu will not crash your system.

Well, that's it for this month. I will see you at the next MAST meeting with at least two full disks of the best public domain software to be found from the last month.

Software Reviews

by Jim Schulz

Zoomracks by Quickview Systems

Did you ever see a program that was beyond description for its innovative way of attacking an application? Well, this is that program. This program is almost beyond description.

Zoomracks is a data base program that makes use of index cards to organize data into racks. Sound interesting?? I will go on. How about data base fields of up to 250 lines of data (3 pages in length)? Zoomracks also includes on-line help through the press of the help key, macros, up to 9 racks in memory at the same time, and multiple racks on the screen at the same time. Still sound interesting??

Well... Zoomracks might be an interesting program, but it does have its drawbacks. Zoomracks is not an easy program to learn. I don't know about you, but when I get a program I want to boot it and use it immediately. I don't want to read long manuals. I want to use the program. Zoomracks does come with a long manual, but in order to understand this program they tell you to use it. Others have said that the manual is useless. Well, I tried the program and it after booting up left up with an options screen. Two of these options are a tutorial of Zoomracks and a demonstration of Zoomracks. Hey, just what I need I thought.

Well... I ran the demonstration. I said to myself, "Boy, this program is really neat." The demonstration really whet my interest. I had to experiment with this program. That was my first problem. Once I went ahead and experimented, I got lost. Yes, lost in a computer program. Zoomracks does have a feature to allow you to undo your previous command. But I did two commands. My only out, exit the program.

Next I tried the tutorial. Very well done. I learned more about the program but I still don't feel comfortable with this program. Now for my conclusion. You ready. You think I hate it. You think I will never boot it again. You think that I have been humiliated, outsmarted by a computer program. Well... no on all accounts. I am still working at Zoomracks. Zoomracks is not the type of program that you sit down and learn and use in one night and I think the authors know this. The manual says it between the lines and the program says it. The program and the manual lead you through the program but they just give you too many options. Yes, too many.

For all it's problems, Zoomracks is a very good program and very powerful both in design and implementation.

Now the big question, do I recommend that you buy it??? Well... if you want to take the time and effort to

learn and use a very unique and powerful database, I would say yes, go buy it. If you want to sit down tonight and boot up the program and start entering data, I would say no, forget it.

Zoomracks reminds me of (oh no he is starting to drift into his 800 past) Data Perfect. Data Perfect is a powerful data base but often times too hard for most people to understand. Zoomracks is alot like this. It is a very unique, innovative program that is not for everyone.

Before I close this review, let me conclude with a few facts. Zoomracks was written by five programmers who own the company and are committed to the Zoomracks architecture. They are very responsive to us the Atari ST user and listen to our problems. I talked with them about my concerns and their response was to play with the program. Those who have used it and worked with say that it that grows on you. Well, that's what I will do and will get back to you on my progress.

Currently, there is no math capability in Zoomracks. This according to them will be remedied with their June release along with some other goodies. Also they said they are planning to use the Zoomracks architecture for other application programs, including a telecommunications package. Now that I have to see!!!

Also Zoomracks is not copy-protected. Thank you. But please don't misuse this or else. That's Zoomracks. I hope this will help you decide before you buy.

Solitaire and 21 by Electro

Now to switch gears, STs are not all work and no play. This program I will endorse wholeheartedly as one of the nicest ST game programs that I own. With this package, you get both solitaire and 21 which both use the GEM interface. You need help. Instructions are only a menu click away. I am a solitaire man myself and this game I keep right next to my computer to play before bedtime.

Solitaire gives you two options, one to redeal the cards and the other to set the number of cards to turn. 21 also gives the option to redeal and the option to set the amount of your bet on each game.

Well, there is not a lot that I can say about this program that is bad. Well... I did find one bug. If you get this game and play solitaire, keep your cards away from the top of the GEM window. If you card touches the top of the window, it is reboot time. But now that I know this I just watch out. In conclusion... buy this program. It is cheap for an ST program at \$19.95 list. No manual, but you don't need one. Not copy protected, need I say more. Also when you select either solitaire or 21 to start, it loads both. No additional disk access. Very nice. Need I say more...

Disk Library by Extended Software

If you have been reading Antic since the ST first

appeared, you probably saw an ad for this program, lauding a GEM interface and the ability to catalog your disks of ST software. I ordered this program after reading in an Antic CES article on Compuserve that this program was shipping in two weeks. It sounded good but I am always a little leery of magazine ads advertising programs. Programs are never done when they say they will be. This is no exception. I waited about five weeks and I finally recieved a disk in the mail. So I booted it up.

Now, custom icons.

Yes, they designed their own disk icons. I guess they didn't like Atari's. I then started to pull down the menus. Save files, merge files, load files,... All the standard file options. Display files by directory, file name, volume name, or all. Acceptable. Print files, change volume name, search for file. It offered exactly what it advertised. So let's go. I put disk one in and that worked fine. I put in disk two and that worked fine. I put in disk three and the program crashed with three mushrooms (pre-ROM days).

Well, I looked at this disk after rebooting and noticed that the program did not support a disk with all subdirectories and no files in the main directory. After playing with some more, I found some more bugs all not so easy to get around. But with the package, they promised an update in a month. I bet. Never.

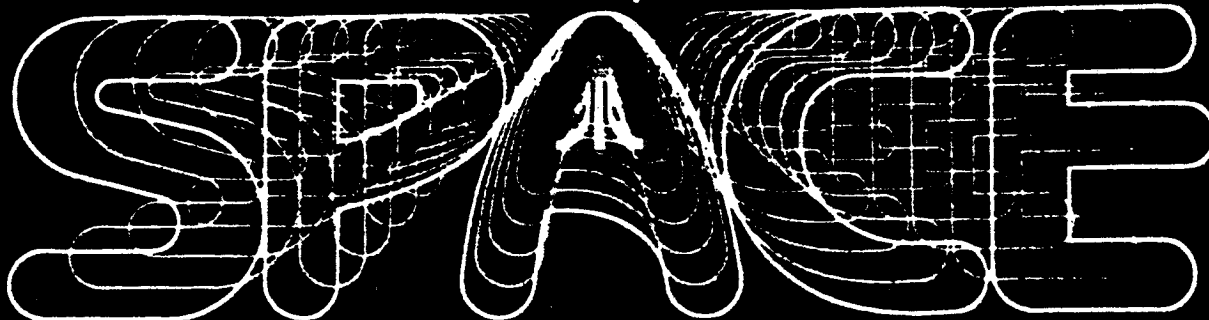
But a month later, I recieved an update along with a list of bugs that had been fixed from the first release. My subdirectory problem. Still not fixed. I wrote them a letter this time and I am sure it will be fixed in the next release. Other than that the program runs as advertised. You have probably seen this program in action and don't even know it. The DOM directory listing posted at the meeting are from this program. Very nicely done. Also another feature which I haven't used much yet is the ability to put a description with each program.

Now it's conclusion time.

Should you buy it??? The answer isnot now. This is a very nice program and very well written but I think it is just a little to buggy to start out with. If you are willing to live the bugs, I say go buy it. I'm glad I did. The way Extended Software supports it's users I think in one or two more months this program will most likely be bug-free. In meantime, I will live with the bugs and report them and wait for the next update to come.

Well, that's it for reviews this month. If I find time, next month we will read about King's Quest II, a very nice animated graphics adventure, Easy-Draw, a professional drawing program, and the Clock Cartridge, the first cartridge available for that hole in the left hand side of your machine. Until next month, happy ST computing.

Saint Paul ATARI Computer Enthusiasts



An independent computer user group

SPACE is an independent user interest group of owners of ATARI Home Computers. It has been organized by local owners of ATARI computers for the purpose of mutual self assistance and sharing of information. It is open to all interested computer enthusiasts.

The group has recently changed meeting time and location to accommodate the recent influx of new members. SPACE now meets on the second Friday of each month at the Falcon Heights Community Center, 2077 West Larpentour, at 7:30 pm. Meeting time and location can be confirmed by calling one of the officers listed below.

MAST is a SIG (Special Interest Group) of SPACE, and is intended for the owners of the new ATARI 520ST, information on other ATARI computers is not discussed at MAST meetings. There is no additional membership fee to become a member of MAST. The MAST NEWSLETTER is part of the regular SPACE Newsletter and is mailed to your home each month before the meeting date. MAST meets the third Friday of the month at the same above location and time.

Benefits of membership include software demonstrations, group purchases at substantial discounts, group projects, public domain disk of the month software at very low prices, book library, new educational software library with over 20 programs, personal contacts / learning, greater information/awareness on the world of ATARI, software at discounted prices from dealers at meetings, Question & Answer Session, etc. Come to a meeting to find out more.

-----FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT A CLUB OFFICER-----

Bruce Haug...President...774-6226 Bob Floyd....Secretary...487-2627 Bob Rhode....Editor...222-3593
 Jim Shulz....Vice-Pres...537-5442 Bob Siede....Treasurer...489-3982 Frank Haug...Disk Lib...774-6226
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