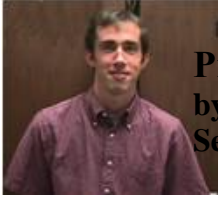


# SPACE

NEWSLETTER for Sept, 2007



## President's Corner by Michael Current September 2007

Things are looking good for some exciting SPACE meetings this fall. See Greg's article for details, but plans now are for major auctions at the October and December meetings. But some very important planning remains, so everyone's presence will be very important this month!

I can report that my Labor Day weekend adventures included retrieving that MEGA STE system from a former Atari in Madison. This is a MASSIVE system, which filled my car to the gills. In fact, at the moment, most of it is still in my car, but I sent some of it back to Shoreview MN with my brother. So we still have the not-so-insignificant matter of actually getting the system to SPACE so we can sort through it for auction. I'm well aware that it would be more than good for me to make the next several meetings myself, but we'll just have to see what I can do.

This month's Newsletter, if I'm not too late in getting these articles to Mike Schmidt, includes the promised Index to Paul Alhart's A-T-A-R-I column articles. I hope you find the Index useful. I know we all appreciated Paul Alhart's permission to reprint the entire run of his column in our Newsletter.

Thanks, keep using that Atari, and come to your next SPACE meeting, Friday September 14, 2007.



## Treasurer's Report by Greg Leitner For August 2007

We had a wonderful meeting in August with six members present out of a possible eleven current SPACE members. Just before the meeting started, Arnold Pagel showed up with a car full of Atari 8-bit hardware and software which he donated to the Club. Needless to say I had to take most of it home to sort out because our storage area at the meeting place is already packed with stuff for the next auction.

This brought up another interesting idea from Lance. What if we sent a mailer out to some of our past members to let them know about the auction with the goal of picking up a former member or two. I suggested that we hold the October auction for our current members only and then maybe sending out a letter to former members for the December Xmas party meeting and auction. We always seem to draw a big crowd when we have food around.

As you have figured out, the auctions will be in October and December this year. This will give me time to list all the stuff and split it up between the two auction dates. If Michael can get hold of the Mega ST and other ST stuff from the party in Wisconsin we will have quite a diverse selection for the two auctions. You should see this stuff that Arnold Pagel donated to the Club. A brand new Koala pad and keypad. A Percom drive and a Commodore (ouch) 1701 color monitor which is the perfect choice for any 8-bit Atari computer user. And too many other pieces of hardware and software to list. I guess you will just have to attend the auctions to see for yourself what all the goodies are.

Here is the detail for the SPACE treasury for the month ended August 31, 2007:

Beginning balance for August 1, 2007:	781.51
August meeting receipts:	
Memberships	15.00
Dom sales	<u>14.00</u>
Total August receipts:	+29.00
No August expenses	-00.00
Ending balance for August 31, 2007:	810.51

Pretty nice, huh!! Monetary problems are not an issue for now or for the foreseeable future. With the auctions coming up we are just going to see our Treasury grow. Please come to the September meeting and give us some feedback or new ideas on how to handle the auctions. My personal opinion is that we keep the auctions within our current membership, but I am not against the idea of trying to get old members back into the Club. What do you think? See you all next month with your suggestions!!

**Secretary's Report  
By Steven Peck  
For July 2007**

We had a successful meeting in July due to the fact that it was the silver anniversary of the founding of SPACE in 1982. It was a nice turnout, with approximately 14 people. It had been a better turnout for the party than most other months recently. Needless to say, the numbers were impressive.

Greg Leitner, the treasurer, had said that the SPACE treasury has been holding up very well until July. I believe he mentioned that the lot rent had not been paid yet at the time of the July meeting. More will be explained in the Treasurer's Report.

It was great to see Allen Noble at the meeting for the party. He has been recuperating, and I hope personally that he continues to be on the mend and that he can get out more.

There was still talk of an auction, but no set date has been approved for it as yet as I can recall. There will be stuff for the 8 bit Atari platforms in the auction, as well as one Atari 1040 ST and one Mega ST was mentioned. There was mention of whether only SPACE Members could bid at the auction, or whether it should be a public auction. We had also talked about other Atari groups in the city that rented hotel rooms just to network 16 bit Atari computers.

Whether or not the auctions become public seems still up in the air. But, I am sure that the next auction, with all the stuff we should be getting for it, should be a good one.

This concludes the Secretary's Report July 2007.

No minutes were submitted from the August 2007 Meeting.

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**BBS Corner  
By Nolan Friedland  
For Sept 2007**

If anyone has any comments, suggestions, ideas, or submissions for the BBS Corner column or the SPACE BBS web site, you may email them to me, Nolan Friedland, at the address shown on the back of this newsletter under the "CLUB OFFICIALS" section.

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From: Michael Current [michael@mcurrent.name]  
Sent: Wednesday, September 05, 2007 9:06 AM  
To: Schmidt, Mike; michael@mcurrent.name  
Subject: A-T-A-R-I for Sept

**INDEX to A-T-A-R-I Column  
Answers, Tips And Relevant Information  
by: Paul V. Alhart  
Original publication 1986-1997  
Reprinted in the SPACE Newsletter 2002-2007**

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Dec02	86.10	Introduction / Tips on ribbons & RESTORE
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Feb03	86.12	Cable cautions Save without DOS?
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 n/a 92.7 1050 Write Protect Upgrade AC  
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 Feb07 93.4 New screen fonts for AW+ (type-in)  
 Mar07 94.9 Add Audio to your Monitor  
 Apr07 95.1 More About UTIL.EXE  
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 Jun07 96.1 Programing your disk drives  
 Jul07 97.1 FIDO Net  
 Aug07 97.2 AW+ Sort/Unsort type-in  
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From: Michael Current [michael@mcurrent.name]  
 Sent: Wednesday, September 05, 2007 9:04 AM  
 Subject: Atari Is Down For the Count.....

Atari Is Down For the Count.....  
 - by Marty "Retro Rogue" Goldberg

The Atari curse strikes again? Or Just poor management?

Since 1972, the Atari "brand name" and properties have been managed by a number of different corporate entities. Each one has suffered financial defeat, starting with the spectacular collapse of the original Atari Inc. in 1982-1984 that lead to the collapse of the entire industry. Since that time, the various corporate entities have tried to revive the name and use the brand to promote their own vision of how to recapture a percentage of the market restarted by Nintendo in 1985 through 1986. Each one hoping public recognition of the Atari name will somehow equate their current product with the "glory days" and increase market share, only to ultimately fail through mismanagement, poor product lines, and ultimately financial potholes that turn in to pitfalls. The current owner of the IP seems to be no different in any respects.

#### The Plan

The current owners, Infogrames Entertainment, picked up the Atari brand from Hasbro in 2001 as part of the acquisition of Hasbro Interactive. Infogrames had been on a growth spurt and was snapping up more and more companies across the late 90's and early 2000's. Keeping the Atari division of Hasbro Interactive (entitled Atari Interactive), the folded it off as a separate corporate entity.

Releasing a few repackagings of classic game collections originally released under Hasbro, they soon announced their strategy: to use the Atari brand name (and its recognition) to promote new systems for two consoles. To "reinvent" Atari. Seemingly not understanding that the Atari name had not been high in the modern gamer consciousness for almost 20 years, and long since replaced by the likes of Nintendo, Sony, Microsoft, Sega, EA, Activision, etc., they pursued their plan. A plan that was not much different than the reasons past owners had bought Atari for....and failed. A plan that would need to rely on said "updated and modern" company releasing quality products to upgrade the name from its retro recognition. After all, what good is slapping a name on a game and trying to use that name's recognition if what you're slapping it on is crap? You need to create a symbiotic relationship between the two so they pump each other up, otherwise you risk damaging the reputation of that name even further and burying it further than the 6 feet under it already was.

They began by spinning off its American operations (Infogrames North America and consisting primarily of former discount software publisher GT Interactive) as a separate corporate entity and renaming it Atari Inc., the name of the original company that founded the brand. Its other world wide groups (Infogrames Europe, Infogrames Australia, etc.) simply dropped the Infogrames and inserted "Atari". And so it was that the "modern" Atari embarked on a schizophrenic relationship with its past, treating the previous brand holder history and its old IP's like the redheaded step child. Most times pretending neither existed, except to trot out a few rehashes of old 2600 and arcade games here and there as discount software for a few quick bucks.

#### The Result

Has it worked? If your top "modern IP" is the Dragonball Z series, what do you think? If you were consistently lambasted by gamers and the gaming press for putting out buggy software and well past their targeted release dates, is that building a quality reputation? If the best innovation for revenue you can pursue is jumping on the in game advertising bandwagon, can you really say you're raising the company's business profile?

As for raising the awareness of the brand name, ask the average person on the street or your casual gamer about Atari and they think it died long ago, having no idea about the current one. During one of Atari's more successful marketings of its legacy IP with the Flashback 2, it wasn't uncommon to get blank stares and "those guys are still around?" questions from people in the checkout line at Walmart. Never mind that many of Atari's "modern" titles were also available in the video games section of this modern chain that is the largest retailer in the industry. The fact that a retro product in limited release buried in a toy section drew more attention said it all. And the hardcore gamers, that prime target range of teens and twenty somethings for modern games - if the previously mentioned quality problems aren't enough to tell you, lets just say expensive mega flops like The Matrix: Path of Neo and brand mishandlings like with Marc Ecko have brought a smirk

to their faces when the Atari name is mentioned and they go back to Madden or Gears of War.

The schizophrenia with Atari's past didn't end with the classic IP's and brand history (which they finally came to terms with several years down the line). Atari management has had more changing faces and directions than a chameleon stuck in a room full of fun house mirrors. This is besides the fact that most of the fly by night management has come from Sony Music, the powerhouse of the video ga...I mean music industry. People from an industry notorious for being dragged kicking and screaming in to new technology and business models running a technology company and not succeeding? Who would have guessed? Not to mention you have two management teams tugging at the reigns - the people actually at Atari Inc. and the majority stock holder Infogrames Ent. board. Its a wonder any product ever got released in this environment.

So did their plan work? Apart from a few shining nuggets of modern games and innovative updates of their IP's through outside contractors, the important symbiotic relationship between name and product never reached critical mass. In fact, Atari's stock has been plummeting even after their recent stock split, and the Atari brand name has never been lower. It says a lot when you're making the Jack Tramiel Atari Corp. years look like the glory days of the management and product line.

Down for the count.....

Atari's down for the count, and that financial referee is about to ring the bell on it. This isn't the first knockdown, but the next in a long succession. The stock price for Atari Inc. has dropped since its creation in 2003, from a a high of about \$60 to less than a dollar last year when Nasdaq served notice to delist it. Atari bought itself some time by splitting the stock and in the interim changing management yet again. Even owner Infogrames Ent. cut its ties with founder Bruno Bonell. But the breathing room all this was meant to create turned out to be only a short gasp. Atari has missed both its annual report and quarterly report, and is being strongly considered for delisting. Its also fired a major portion of its remaining skeleton crew staff, and now it just cut its office space in half. Its beginning to sound more and more like history repeating itself as images of a rapidly shrinking and soon to be reverse merged with JTS Atari Corp. come to mind.

And much like the original Atari Inc. almost caused its owner Warner Communications to face bankruptcy, Infogrames Ent. isn't in good shape either. The once mighty up and coming software publisher went from a high of about 24 pounds (about US\$48) at the time of the creations of Atari Inc., to its current price of .20 pounds (about 40 cents on the US market).

Atari Inc. is meeting with the NASDAQ board on August 30th to decide its fate....at least its fate on the stock market, where its currently struggling to stay above \$2. One has to ask at this point if its really worth it to fight to keep a company listed that's so close to putting itself out of business? Why keep clinging to a name and persona that's been made far lower in reputation and value than it was when you first got it?

Infogrames would be better off selling off the Atari name and properties like it has with much of the rest of its major properties bought during its era of rapid growth and acquirement. Cutting ties with a very bad chapter and its history, and starting anew with out the stigma of the current brand association. Maybe the Nasdaq board will ring that final knockout bell or Infogrames will get smart and throw in the towel on its ill fated contendor to live and fight another day. We'll just have to wait and see.....

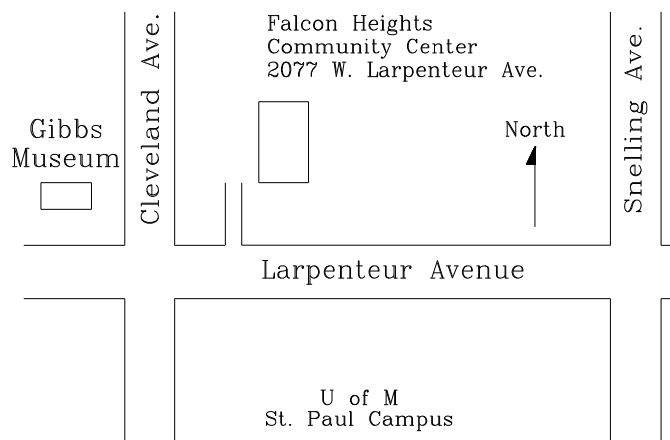
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Saint Paul Atari Computer Enthusiasts (SPACE) meets on the second Friday of each month at 7:30 PM in the Falcon Heights Community Center at 2077 West Larpenteur Ave. Doors open at 7:00 PM.



## S.P.A.C.E.

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You can find the Club's home page at:  
<http://Space.atari.org>

Articles for Publication must be received by the Newsletter Editor two weeks prior to the Club's next Scheduled meeting.

## SPACE BBS

BBS:  
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Supporting:

ATARI 8-Bit Computers

ATARI ST Computers

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