

RETROTIMES #15

The newsletter for the classic gamer in all of us!

November 1998

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Introduction

I was going to do a special issue devoted to the ladies of classic games, but so much has happened since the last issue, that I will have to put that off. With the IDSA making a stand in emulation and to a lesser extent, our new look web site, there is too much to talk about. Sorry ladies, but you will have to wait until next month. So get ready for another issue!

IDSA and the Future of MAME

While this is old news, I will repeat it. In case you haven't heard, the IDSA, which is the watchdog for the software industry, forced Dave's Video Game Classics to remove all commercial roms from his site. Why did they choose Dave's? Because his is the largest and most popular site for emulation. They wanted to make a statement that everyone would hear and like in a barfight, if you want to make a statement, take out the biggest guy.

You may be wondering what brought this about? The emulation scene has been going pretty smoothly without any major disruptions and we have been having it good. Maybe too good. Well, there are a few major reasons why the IDSA had to act. We all knew it wasn't a question if they would act as much as when. The problem is that the emulation scene stepped over the imaginary line in the sand and forced them to act.

First off, people weren't happy with just emulating classic arcade and console games. When they stuck to the old games, there wasn't too much of a reason for the IDSA to bother. The costs involved in trying to stop it were greater than the money saved. Most of the old games have little or no perceived market value. Aside from the occasional Microsoft arcade compilation or a Midway Classics, there wasn't much done with these old games. Some of the original authors were happy to see their games still being enjoyed. Since you cannot buy these games at retail anymore and very few arcades have them, there wasn't much lost revenue. But that changed. People kept asking for more and more games. Newer games were being emulated and things were getting too close to that imaginary line in the sand. Then from the

arcade end, you had the Neo Geo games and Mortal Kombat being emulated. The Street Fighter series was next. Suddenly you went from obscure titles to ones that have real value in today's market. While you may argue that the original Mortal Kombat may be old and it was harmless to emulate it, what would stop the emulators from doing the sequel? Or the third version? See what I mean? If they didn't put their foot down and try to stop emulation, it would continue to go crazy. It is perceivable that games at the arcade would be emulated soon after arriving at the arcades. Sure it would take an awful powerful computer to do it, but as the price keeps falling and the specs keep going up, it is only a matter of time.

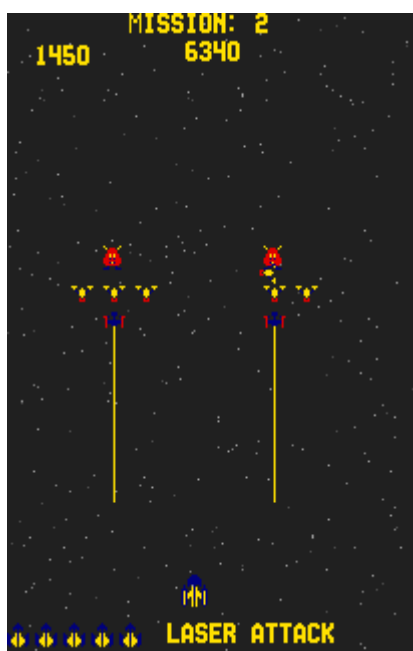
The second reason deals with the console side. When you emulated the Vectrex or Atari 2600, no one was being hurt. You could even argue that the Nintendo emulation had little effect, except on game resellers. But when they moved up to the Gameboy and Super NES, they began to go after systems that were still selling. If this wasn't enough, you add in that in development were emulators for the Nintendo 64 and Playstation and you have a real concern. Not only are you hurting the market for game dealers, but you are stealing from Sony and Nintendo, two companies you don't want to mess with. Both have very deep pockets and will make sure they nip this in the bud before it gets anymore out of control. The problem is that the IDSA and its members will not just try to stop the emulation of new systems and bring things back to where they were. Instead, they will try to get rid of emulation for good.

The last reason that IDSA was forced to act is the widespread problem of people selling collections of roms and emulators. It is bad enough to steal money from a company, but when you go and make money off their product, it adds salt to the wound. You may ask why they didn't just go after the warez groups that sell these CD compilations. I am sure they will, but like in a battle against drug abuse, it is more useful to go after the main supplier than the individual dealers. If they can get rid of the majority of the rom sites and make future web designers think twice before putting up rom sites, they can eliminate the places these warez dealers get their roms. Then when they begin to bust them, they can slow down the amount of new ones coming into the market. If they just went after the warez dealers, they wouldn't be able to get rid of them fast enough. They are like weeds in a garden, you can keep pulling them, but new ones will just keep popping up.

Will this mark the end of emulation? Of course not. Will it change it? Yes! What will most likely happen is that it will end up going underground. What will be interesting to see is if they go after the authors of MAME and other emulators. While they may have loopholes that can protect them, how many can afford a long court battle with someone like Nintendo and their 5 billion in the bank? The next few months will determine the direction of emulation. What effects this will have on future emulation projects and how the emulation world reacts to this will be crucial. Also what steps the IDSA takes next will also be very important. All I can say is to enjoy your emulators and you better get the classic arcade roms you want now as it may become very hard to find them in the future.

MAME Reviews

With each new version of MAME, comes new programs. But more importantly than that is when they finally get one of the older programs right. Sometimes it is fixed colors or high score support is finally added. But with these next two programs, it is something more crucial. It is added sound! You really don't realize how much of an impact the sound has on a game, until you play it without any. The sound can make a good game, great! Here are two examples where the sound and speech really add to the game! Thankfully now I can experience these games fully!



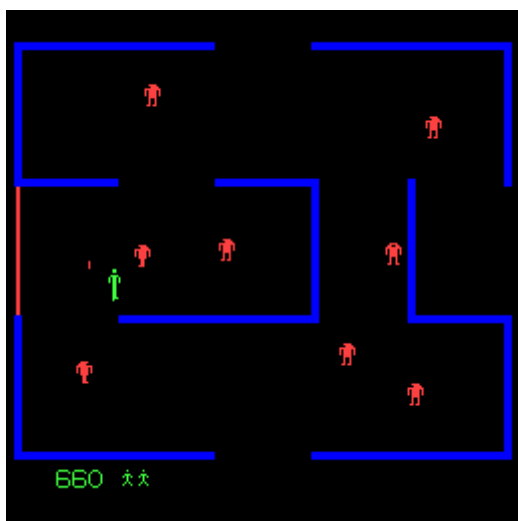
Gorf

I can still remember how much I enjoyed this game in my youth! It ate up a significant number of my quarters and I always came back for another game. It wasn't any one thing that captured me, rather a combination of many things that made this an irresistible game.

I can remember how excited I was to finally be able to play the complete version of this game! I had been on MAME for ages, first totally silent and then just with the voice, but no other sound. But with the latest version, I finally have the complete package! What a difference it makes! Gorf was one of the games that captivated me, partly due to the cool speech. "Long Live Gorf" and other little bits of speech still haunt me to this day. The computerized sounding voice with a touch of menace made me want to keep playing. Part of me always wanted to hear if there was something else Gorf had to say. I always hoped if I played long enough and made it through all the ranks, that he would surrender or praise me for my accomplishments. Of course he doesn't (not that I ever made it all the way through all the ranks), but it was one of the many dreams I had.

The other real exciting aspect of the game is that there were five different stages to the game. Unlike most games of the era, where there was one or two stages and you kept playing them over and over, Gorf offered you so much more! First there was the Space Invaders level. Then came one of my favorite levels with the death ray ships. It played a bit like Galaxian, but you had the two ships that shot the long and very deadly rays at you. Like all players, I always made it top priority to get rid of them ASAP. Third stage was a real Galaxian clone. The fourth stage was very unique as you sat at the bottom and these ships would fly very fast in a circle and kept getting closer and closer. This level was quite nerve wracking and many ships were lost here. Lastly, you had the mothership. As this big ship went back and forth, shooting at you, you had to try and shoot a hole and blast the core of the ship. This would result in a little show as the ship exploded and then you would go up one rank and do it again.

Gorf made me use logic when it came to playing games. It was logic of a youth, but it made all the world of sense to me. Why play Space Invaders or Galaxian, when Gorf gives me both games, plus alot more! Whether this was their intent or not, I don't know, but it did work on me. Despite this reasoning, Gorf was a very good game and one I still enjoy.



Berzerk

This is probably the first talking game, at least it was the first I ever played. Speech from a game was quite a novel concept and it was an instant draw for Berzerk. But like many gimmicks, if the game wasn't any good, then it wouldn't be enough to make a game a classic. But Berzerk does offer much more than just a gimmick and so that is why we still enjoy playing it.

I really feel it is the combination of the simplicity of the game and the tension the game creates that is the winning formula. Sure its graphics may seem quite crude by today's standards, but they do the job. Would it be a greater game if the lead character was a completely fleshed out character, instead of a glorified stick person? Would the robots be anymore menacing with texture mapping and in three dimensions? I doubt it as there have been numerous games about man versus robot and I have yet to find a single one that can get my blood pumping like Berzerk does. The sheer terror you feel as you are trying desperately to clear a path to the exit with numerous robots in way. Just as you seem to be getting control of the situation, here comes the ever grinning, Evil Otto. His smiley face, hiding a more sinister agenda as he prepares to annihilate you for good and will even destroy his minion robots to accomplish this task. That is one evil dude! Worst is that he is invincible. Talk about pressure!

While Evil Otto and his robot army are enough to keep you busy, there is a greater threat and one that still does me in to this very day. The electrified walls always seem to claim at least one of my crew as I try in vain to avoid them. This has to be one of the best and yet more frustrating elements of a classic game. It is memorable because no matter how many robots they throw at you or how quickly Evil Otto is coming, you have to remember not to touch those walls. Deep in the back of your mind, you must remember just how deadly this can be.

While the game is great, I still believe the gimmick speech was the cherry on top of the sundae. Having the game taunt you, just made you angrier. "Chicken fight like a robot" and "Got the humanoid, got the intruder" just made you madder. But when you would hear "Intruder alert", you knew that Evil Otto was on the way. This would send your heart rate up a bit.

Berzerk is truly a classic and now that it can be enjoyed in all its glory, I recommend everyone going back and trying their hand at a few games. See if that same rush of tension is still there. See if Evil Otto can still make that hair on the back of your neck still stand up. I am betting it still can!

eBay Lingo

One of the things you learn about eBay is the lingo that the people speak. Here are a few phrases and what they really mean.

1. **Combat "Rare"**- This does not mean the game is rare in the general sense. It

really means it is uncooked.

2. **Classic/Popular/Vintage**- These is a clever way of saying "lot of very common carts".

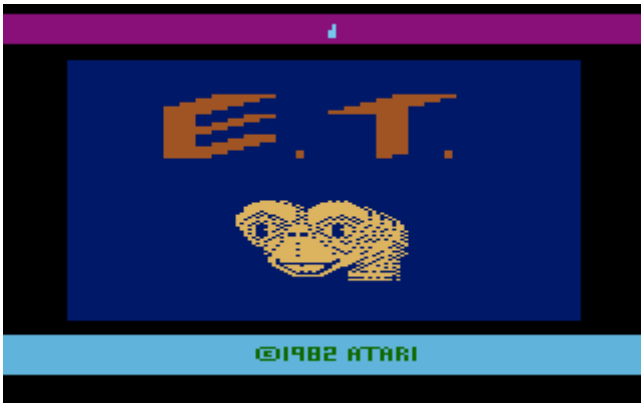
3. **No Reserve!**- This usually means the starting price is so high they don't need a reserve or the items are so common they are glad to get whatever for them.

4. **Hard to find Atari games**- This means that Combat, Pacman and others would be hard to find if you looked at Toys R Us, Babbages and similar stores.

5. **Ten Great Atari games!**- See #2

6. **Video Game Blowout!**- This really means that if noone bids on these common games, he will have to blow them out the door and into the trash.

7. **Ultimate Atari Deal!**- There is usually one of these a week. It should read "Ultimate Collection of Atari commons, with a single rare cart."



"Is ET Really That Bad?"

It seems that the majority of the classic video gaming community has some sort of disdain for the Atari 2600 ET game. Perhaps they ate too much popcorn at the movie. Or perhaps it is because the game shows up in thrift store bins all too often, especially when they feel there should be a Chase the Chuckwagon there instead. Or perhaps it is because they have never actually tried to play the game, they just presume it to be a stupid game, because "everyone else says it is." Well, I feel the final reason is probably the most prevalent one. It really is a decent game.

In case you're among the many who have never figured the game out, you play the role of ET, trying to "phone" home. There are three pieces to the phone and the first object of the game is to find all three pieces and put them together. Each piece is located in one of the various pits scattered throughout the "world" that the game is set in. There are various tricks one can use to make this part of the game easier and less painful, but that I will let you figure out on your own.

After finding every piece you must find the designated spot and phone home. Where is it? Well, the symbols at the top really are there for a reason. And the one you need looks sort of like a spaceship. After finding this and phoning home a timer shows up and you must find the landing spot before it runs out. This landing spot is also among many of the symbols at the top of the screen and it is in the forest where ET's journey begins.

There are various "nasties" that hinder ET from getting home, quite possibly the most frustrating part of the game. The detective chases ET wherever he goes and takes a piece of the phone if he gets too close and there is also some other guy which grabs ET and carries him away wasting precious time...very annoying. But what is cool is you can send them away if you're standing in a certain spot and you raise ET's neck (also designated by a certain symbol at the top).

This is a game that has alot to it, it just isn't obvious how to play it from the get go. Give it another shot or if you have never played the game, at least try to figure through it and you will realize this game isn't as bad as everyone makes it out to be. It isn't that hard, I was able to complete the toughest level when I had my original copy at age 8 or 9...go figure.

(Doug Saxon is an engineering student at the University of Cincinnati. He's mainly into 2600, 5200, Colecovision, and Intellivision. He's also a proud owner of a mint Chase the Chuckwagon cartridge which set him back \$1. He can be reached via email at saxondj@email.uc.edu. Doug is also looking to complete the Atari 5200 set and needs these games. Bounty Bob, K-Razy Shootout, Quest for Quintana Roo, Star Wars:ROTJ-DSB, and Zenji. If you have any for sale or trade give him an e-mail.)

Tom Bomberman

You may have read this story in the newsgroups, but now you will know the whole story. I recently sold an Odyssey 200 on eBay. I picked it up boxed at a thrift store only to discover that it was damaged. Everything look nice, the box was in very good shape, the manual was great and the system looked great, except one problem. The cord that goes into the rf box was cut. Not being a real mechanically inclined person, I decided to put it up on eBay and let someone more mechanically inclined fix it. I knew it worked as there were batteries in it and you could hear the pong going back and forth. I didn't know where the batteries were or how to remove them or I may to save on shipping costs and to make sure they weren't corroding the contacts. But since they still worked, I figured I would leave them. Well, little did I know what a problem that would cause. Here is the letter I received from the high bidder after he received the system.

"Hi Tom. I got the odyssey today, unfortunately it has been destroyed. This is entirely my fault, and I share this with you solely for your amusement (it is to mine, too bad a fine video game had to lost in the process, but I guess if you can't laugh about the little things, what else is there!) It arrived at work, and the receiving clerk had a bit of a panic. It seems the package was making an audible clicking noise. (probably got switched on in transit, and the speaker they had built in there sounded like a bomb) The campus was closed off and one building was evacuated. I happened to be at home with my daughter for the day, and received several panicked pages to call security!!! So I finally got hold of someone and they described a large package that was ticking. I figured the odyssey was small and silent, so I told them I was unsure of what it was, though I was expecting a video game. THEY CALLED THE BOMB SQUAD!!!. It apparently met all the qualifications of a bomb, so they blew up the box. They did save me the pieces and ask me never to have a personal package sent there again. Anyway, thanks. I'll be leaving you positive feedback, and I hope you have a great week!
Shawn K. Davis"

At least he knows that I was honest when I said that it still worked. Who would ever have thought a pong unit could wreak so much havoc? Well, to quote Paul Harvey, "Now you know the rest of the story".

Gonna catch 'em All ?

I often wonder if the game that is sucking up my time is popular just to me, or if it's the start of a trend. When dealing with the net, you can sometimes get a skewed viewpoint. I belong to the Saturn, Playstation and Turbografx mailing lists. When some of the last games appeared for the Saturn, you would have thought that the world was on fire for Panzer Dragon Saga or Shining Force 3. But in reality, except for the die-hard Saturn people, nobody really cared about these games.

But some things have happened that make me believe that we stand on the edge of a phenomenon.

What is you ask ?

Pokemon.

No really.

Stop laughing.

I'm serious. (well as serious as I get)

In case you don't know what I'm talking about. Pokemon (Short for Pocket Monster) is a Gameboy role-playing, creature-raising, and as a stretch, fighting game. You play the role of a young Pokemon trainer on a quest to become the best in your field, accumulate the most and strongest pokemon and defeat whoever stands in your way. Your "weapons" are the Pokemon. These are creatures that are similar to real creatures, but these creatures can have up to 4 special abilities or attacks that are at your disposal. An example is a "Squirtle". It looks like a anime-style turtle that can squirt water at it's enemies. You may have up to 6 pokemon with you at any one time, but you can store more for future use. As you use the pokemon, they will acquire new abilities and may even evolve to become different creatures. There are 150 different pokemon to find. If you want more info, check www.pokemon.com.

In a brilliant (from a business standpoint) move, Nintendo has made it impossible to find all 150 pokemon in one copy of the game. Oh no, they have provided us with two versions of the game; Blue and Red. The games have exactly the same story, but some pokemon are more available in one version than the other. And some can ONLY be found in one version of the game. So if you want to catch all of the pokemon, you must have access to two copies of the game and trade (a neat feature) with another "trainer" (that has the other color game) via a gamelink cable.

To back the game, Nintendo has a cartoon, called not suprisingly, Pokemon. It airs 5 days a week. Around here, it's on at 6:30am and 3pm (your times may vary.) It takes the characters, from the game and puts them into surroundings, from the game and introduces pokemon, from the game and is generally about the game. I think you see what Nintendo's plan is.

This Pokemon thing is big in Japan. It's more than big, it's huge. There are stores that carry nothing but Pokemon merchandise. From candy and stuffed animals to bubble bath and costumes. With 150 creatures to hawk (not counting the humans), Nintendo has quite a bit of material to work with.

Just because something is big in Japan doesn't mean that it will succeed here.

Tamagotchis

Big in Japan. (they even had Tamagotchi cemeteries)

Big here. (at least for a while)

Sumo Wrestling

Big in Japan.

Snickered at here.

As a side note, I heard that the first professional Sumo League has begun in Atlantic City.

Go ahead, snicker, you know you want to. You see an image of huge guys in diapers and you can't help yourself.

(Before anybody gets bent out of shape, I realize that Sumo has a tremendous tradition and that there are deep meanings to everything the these athletes do and wear. I mean no disrespect)

<snicker>

But my point is (and I do have one), is that not everything that makes it in Japan makes it here.

Pokemon will make it here.

"Why ?" you ask.

Because I like it ? No.

Because my 3 year old likes it ? No.

Because my wife likes it ? No.

It's because just about everyone that has been introduced to it likes it on some level. The creatures are cute (look out Furbies), the game is fun and the cartoons can be enjoyed by both the young and old. This product has legs. There is more to these creatures than the Tamagotchis, and look how long they lasted and how many they sold. But Tamagotchis don't have names, aren't easily identifiable and just don't look right on a sweatshirt. Pokemon do.

Is that enough ?

But some things have happened over the last week that convince me that Pokemon is going to be big.

I've met several adults (and I use that term loosely), that are playing the game.

A lot.

And they admit it.

I've seen kids reactions whenever they see a Pokemon.

Kentucky Fried Chicken has started selling beanie-style Pokemon. They were cleaned out in two days. And they haven't even advertised them yet. (The workers at KFC didn't even know what a pokemon was)

But what really drove it home was last night.

I was at the mall, and an employee of the mall was drawing Pokemon. (In his spare time)

And it wasn't that he was doodling pictures of existing Pokemon. He was drawing new Pokemon. Pokemon that he was creating. Pokemon that had their own special attacks that he created.

What a great thing.

This whole Pokemon thing is open-ended.

It's only limited by your imagination.

Now, this is where you come in.

I'd like to have a contest. The winner will receive 3 shrink-wrapped Intellivision games of my choice mailed directly to their homes.

FREE

And all you have to do is create a Pokemon.

Give it a clever name.

Describe it.

Give it some neat attacks.

Win games.

Here's an example.

Name: Rock-On

Description: It looks like one of those big cartoony diamonds, but with big eyes and a sly smile.

Special Attacks: Diamond Drill (Spinning attack)

Refraction (laser attack)

Shard-shot (pieces fly towards enemy)

See Thru (turns invisible/enemy can't find it)

There. That wasn't hard. If you've played the game or seen the cartoon, you can do it too. If you haven't, what are you waiting for? Check it out.

There's games to be won.

Please send your entries to

fcw3@postoffice.ptd.net

no later than December 4, 1998.

Winning entry will be posted in next month's Retrotimes.

Here's the scary part.

I'm the judge. All decisions are final. There will be one winner. Anyone can enter and you're limited to three entries.

So go ahead. Knock yourself out. Let your imagination run wild.

Fred has been playing games for over 20 years and actively collecting them for almost 10. The 2200 + games that he has takes up most of his home office and living room. He lives in Denver, PA with his understanding wife Jennie and his 3 year-old, button-loving son, Max. Sumo... <snicker>

Cincicon

Being from the great state of Ohio, I couldn't pass up a chance to attend a video game meeting that was only four hours away (even less if you drive like a maniac).

So I attended the Cincicon and really enjoyed myself.

To make the show a little special and to promote my site, I did a special issue of Retrogaming Times, the #1/2 issue (because it was about one half the size of the regular, online issue). I handed them out for free to all attendees. I do still have a handful of copies left (less than 10), so if you want one, just send a long, self addressed stamped envelope to the following address and I will send one.

Tomorrow's Heroes

P.O. Box 24369

Cleveland, OH 44124

If you want to include a quarter to help cover printing costs, it would be appreciated, but not necessary. I may put it up on the web site at a later date.

Back to the show, one of the highlights was an arcade game contest. They had a one shot, high score wins contest on an unnamed machine. This was to keep people from practicing. The machine turned out to be Xevious, a game I rarely play. Well, I ended up having the second highest score (109,000), but it was dwarfed by a score

of 269,000. There was no prize for second place, but first place received a nice selection of Turbo graphx games.

There were other tournaments, including a Bomberman tournament that my partner Dan and myself didn't do to well in. Oh well, we had plenty of fun.

Another highlight of the show was when we put in the ultra rare and prototype games and everyone had a chance to see games we only dreamed about. Dan Mowscan and his collection were the highlight. A great game called "Saving Mary" was shown and it was a really good playing game. Another really rare game, Polo was also shown and it also showed very good gameplay. The only known copy of Miss Piggy's Wedding was shown and unfortunately wasn't complete, so you really couldn't do much. But the highlight was a few rounds of X-Man, a ultra-rare adult title. The gameplay was actually quite good, considering it was an adult title. The between level scenes drew the most attention.

The only drawback to the show was that they decided not to run it on Sunday as originally planned. This was especially shocking as I left stuff there that I intended to retrieve the next day. I was able to locate the stuff and thanks to Doug for helping track it down and for bringing it back to Cleveland for me, especially my beloved Atari banner.

(Pictures of the show can be found on the [Video Game Connection web site](#). There is even a picture of me holding a copy of Retrogaming Times #1/2!)

Hey! What happened to the web page?

If you are reading this issue of Retrotimes and are not on the subscription list, you have noticed things are quite a bit different at Tomorrow's Heroes. You may wonder why I completely trashed the old site and started over again? It wasn't the sanest thing I ever did, but a move I felt was necessary.

The old Tomorrow's Heroes site was created for me. While it was a nice site and one I received alot of compliments on, it wasn't mine. Sure, I put alot of input into its development and did alot of work on it, but I wanted a site that I created. One that I could honestly say was my creation. Sure, I imported some of the stuff from the old site, but the majority of it was new.

The second reason for this change is the way the old site was set up, it made it very difficult to add new pages. I always envisioned a huge site, full of pictures, articles and more! I have access to 300 meg of space and was only using about 20 meg on the past site. I wanted to put more up and it was frustrating to do it. But now by using an assigned web theme and Front Page, I can quickly, easily and professionally add new pages. If you look around, you will see alot of stuff that wasn't on the old site. Stuff like the section for classic game ads, the Nintendo boxes, the FAQs and more. This is but the tip of the iceberg. I plan on adding plenty more in the coming months and want to make this a site people keep coming back to. I want it to be a site where it would take hours, if not days for you to see it all.

For a preview of some of the coming stuff, here is a list of some new features I have coming:

- More game ads! I am trying to secure some old magazines to get ads from for scanning. As I get more and more, I will be able to increase the number of ads.
- More Nintendo boxes. I still have another 200 or more I can scan and will be adding many more!
- Sections of classic game boxes. Not just Nintendo, but I will soon be scanning some of my classic game boxes to put up.
- Tom's One Minute Manuals. I am in the process of doing these. Quite simply, it will

be a very quick and easy interpretation of how to play the games. It is designed for people who want to know how to play a game, but don't want to wade through a whole manual. As the name suggests, it will take a minute or less to know how to play your favorite game.

-MAME game section. I will devote a section to talk about the different MAME games, including screen shots, game instructions and some tips.

-Atari Age tribute section. Now that I have the first eight issues of Atari Age, I will do a section where I show the covers and give some highlights of each issue.

There is a lot more I have planned, but not until some of this becomes a reality. I also plan on adding to many of the other areas, like more classic reviews and eventually making the Top 50 games into the Top 100. So stay tuned and see the evolution of Tomorrow's Heroes!

A Deeper Look.....

This month I will take a deeper look at two games that I really enjoy. They may not be classics, but are fun nonetheless. So sit back and enjoy these classic games!



Lost Luggage

It is just one of those fun little games that keeps you playing. I really feel it is the little stuff that makes this game. It plays a lot like Kaboom, only a different setting. Instead of catching dropping bombs, you are catching suitcases as they fly off the belt. Like Kaboom, as the game progresses, the suitcases get faster and faster. But here is where the similarities end.

One of the best features of the game is that when you miss a suitcase and it hits the bottom, it busts open and clothes fly out. All the other suitcases on the level also bust open and you get to see all kinds of stuff fly out. From shoes to underwear, there is a lot of different things in those cases. It almost makes you want to intentionally lose, just to see how many different clothes there are.

Another neat feature is that while you are frantically catching all that luggage, there are planes flying by and landing in the background. While this may seem trivial, it adds a little atmosphere to the game. Just a little something extra added to the game. While the game doesn't have the sheer reflex battle that Kaboom features, it does have the little extras which make it a worthy game and one I do recommend you adding to your collection.



Fast Food

In the classic era, there are many characters you get to control. From numerous

animals to all sort of occupations, you have a wide choice of heroes to be. But being nothing but a hungry set of teeth, is a new one. In Fast Food, that is exactly what you are. No body, no arms, just a big set of teeth that moves around and chomps all the items on the screen. Milk shakes, burgers and more are available for you to chomp. Simple enough if you remember one simple rule, AVOID THE PURPLE PICKLE!

While Fishing Derby has the shark and Centipede has the spider, the nemesis of this game is a purple pickle. One chomp and you come down with a deadly case of indigestion. Eat enough of them and your game is over. At first it is quite easy to avoid the little buggers as the game is moving pretty slowly, but after clearing a few boards, the game really speeds up and soon those pesky pickles are everywhere. Go up and there is a purple pickle. Go down and you encounter another. You get the picture. Plus, with regular pickles you can easily make the mistake and eat one of the deadly ones.

One of the neat features is that there really are alot of different foods for you to munch on. Unlike some games where you get a couple, there are bunches and they are all drawn quite nicely. But there is a dark side to the game. The game is downright rude and lets you know it! After you complete a board, it rudely tells you, "You are getting fatter". Not the most social game is it? Miss Manners would definitely object to this cart.

All kidding aside, this is a fun little game to add to your Atari 2600 library. It is a good reflex game and even has a built in pause feature (the next level won't start until you move the joystick, nice for when you want to get a real snack). While it is a rare game, you can usually find it for \$10.00 or less and worth the price!

Response to Last Month's Questions

I am not sure what it was, but last month was one of the worst as far as feedback is concerned. While the number of hits the game page received was up once again, very few people bothered to respond. I even asked questions, with little response. So here is the breakdown to the questions I asked last month.

1. **Doing a second newsletter for Neo-Classic games**-This one brought the most response, but still way below my usual amount of responses. While the general feedback was positive, there wasn't enough to go through with it. So, I will put the idea for 2nd Wave, the newsletter for the not so classic game systems on hold. I may reevaluate it next year sometime, but for now it is dead.
2. **Collected Edition of Newsletter**-The general response to this was it was a good idea, but they probably wouldn't buy it because they can get it for free. While this was a long shot at best, it is not a dead point. I will instead concentrate on my couple special issues I plan on doing for conventions and such.
3. **Another Game Story**-After the great response I received after I finished the Pacman story, I figured I would see what kind of demand there would be for another story. Well, this set a new record for Retrogaming Times! Not a single response was received regarding this. I guess the sound of silence was deafening and it left me with the impression that there is no interest. So there will be no follow-up story.

eBay Notes

The biggest trend on eBay and the most tiresome is the sheer amount of stuff being offered. The page count for the game section that houses the classic games as well as every game system from pong to Playstation has continued to go up each and every month. It now has gone past 110 pages on any given day and has been as high as 117. While this may not seem like alot to you, when I first discovered eBay three years ago, there were about 20 pages in the video game section. This just proves that eBay needs to split this section into at least two sections. While I have written them along with numerous other people, they still refuse to act. Every other

section that isn't nowhere as large as this has been fragmented into many smaller sections.

While this may not seem like much to most people, it gets quite annoying as we have to wade through tons of pirated Playstation games and hundreds of Nintendo games listed individually to find anything interesting. Sure you can use the search feature, but even that is getting crazy as a search for Atari brings up tons of links.

What can be done about this? Well, nothing really. Guess we can keep writing and ask them to consider splitting it, but until they finally come to their senses, we will have to wade through tons of junk to find a single item that we will probably be outbid on.

What's Happening in the Newsgroups?

While not alot to speak of in the newsgroups, there was a few things that caught my attention.

1. **The Auctions return!** -After a hiatus from seeing many newsgroup only auctions, there has been a string of them! While these once were a staple of the newsgroups and a good way to move items and especially pick up items, they have become more infrequent than ER carts at the thrift stores. As eBay grew and grew, so did the amount of carts that were sold there. Instead of being sold on the newsgroups, people decided to take the easier and usually more financially rewarding road. But in recent months, there has been a resurgence of these once plentiful auctions. I have personally been involved in a few of them and hope to be able to pick up some good deals!

2. **IDSA Battle** -As I talked about earlier, the IDSA's move to make Dave's Classics take the roms his page has been a very popular topic. From the future of emulation to what other sites have the roms to boycotting the companies that make up the IDSA, there were numerous threads going on this subject. There are very few classic gamers who don't have an emulator of some sort on their computer and many of us have a few of them. The thought of an end of emulators out there is enough to make even the calmest person want to take up arms.

3. **Territorialism** -One thing about classic game collectors is that they guard the location of their favorite thrifts like a fisherman guards his best spots. But with the growing number of collectors and profiteers entering the classic game market, more and more collectors are finding their once fertile grounds are being picked clean. What once may have been safe havens, now they are becoming quite contested and the early bird is getting the worm. The sad thing is that this is one problem that is going to get worse over the next few years. More and more professionals will be coming around and cleaning out all the thrifts to sell on eBay and other such places. Each time a cart sells for over \$100.00, there is someone taking notes and going the hunt. So be prepared to find your hunting grounds picked clean as your competition is growing.

Question of the Month

Last month, I asked if a rich relative would buy you any five classic arcade machines, what would they be? I received alot of responses on this one (unlike the other questions) and so I sat down and compiled a list of the top ten machines. Overall, I received 88 different responses with almost everyone putting down five different machines. A couple responses didn't list five machines and one listed the same machine five times (I only counted it as a first place vote). So here is the top ten most popular games!

1. Tempest
2. Robotron 2084

3. Centipede
4. Defender
5. Crazy Climber
6. Joust
7. Battlezone
8. Tapper
9. Donkey Kong
10. Dragon's Lair

Here is this month's question! Do you have someone to play classic games with now on a regular basis or are you forced to only play single player games?

I am lucky enough to have two people I can play the classic games with along with a few people who stop by periodically. My wife, Andrea, will always play MAME and she does like the Atari 7800. I can occasionally get her to play the Colecovision, but zero chance for the Intellivision.

I also have a friend, Jeff, who is an avid collector and big time game player. We have played numerous Coleco and Intellivision games. He is the one who first introduced me to Antarctic Adventure, Cabbage Patch Kids and Tower of Doom.

Conclusion

Another issue comes to a close. This one is a bit smaller than previous issues, mainly due to all the extra time I put in getting the new web site ready. Once the dust clears, I hope to get working on the next issue and try to get back to the size of issues #12. As always, your feedback is greatly appreciated! Tune in next month when I will try to do my dedication to the ladies of classic games. I will also give my review of the Digital Press price guide. See you in thirty!

[Tom Zjaba](#)

(All pictures provided by the Digital Press CD. Possibly one of the best deals out there. To get your own copy, go to <http://www.xnet.com/~skelly/> or <http://digitpress.com> and order one).