

TOMORROW'S HEROES

RETROTIMES #20

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Introduction

Welcome to the monumental 20th issue! That's right, we are out of the teens and into the twenties! Nothing can stop us now (except if we run out of ideas). So enjoy the issue and the many Top 20 lists! There will be some special surprises this issue. By the way, let me know if you like the new logo. If there are enough yes votes, we will keep it. I will also give you the name of the person who created next month (mainly because I have misplaced the email with his name, so email me if you are reading this).

Breaking the Law

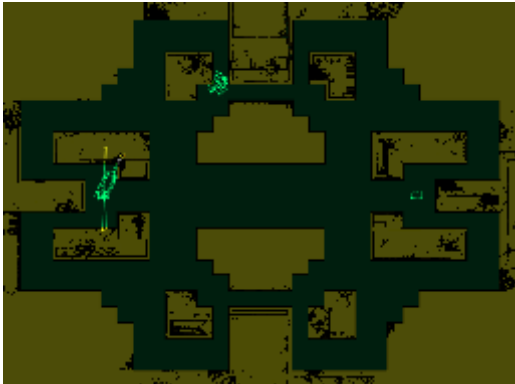
One of my early jobs was for a place called the Rib Factory. The majority of my job was to go around and hand out flyers. We would go to places like grocery stores and malls and put the flyers on car windshields. Very boring work. But the other part of my job was a bit more fun. Besides being a decent restaurant, the Rib Factory also had a very large arcade. I used to get a handful of quarters from the owner of the Rib Factory and go among the people playing games and keep an eye out for people using quarters on a string. For anyone who is not familiar, you would tape a string to a quarter (or the people who had access to power tools would drill a hole in the quarter) and drop it into the machine and keep pulling it up and down. This would give you a bunch of credits for a mere quarter. While the owner knew this was going on, he couldn't catch the kids doing it. But if he had someone go undercover, they could pick out which ones were doing it and report it to him. That was my job. I wasn't the only one, but I was one of them.

After awhile, we got the quarter on a string problem under control. But a new problem arose. Unlike the quarter on a string, I must admit guilt to participating in this one. What some enterprising people did was to take nickels and pound them into the size of quarters. Then you could get five plays for a quarter and it was next to impossible to tell who was using them. They worked on all machines, except the Atari machines (which were among the most popular). This problem became so widespread that something had to be done. So the owner did something extremely clever. I remember him coming up to myself and the other workers and telling us that the FBI was at the restaurant, looking for the people who were defacing the money. He told us that when caught, the guilty parties would be going to jail.

Word of this spread quickly through the neighborhood and soon the problem went away. Thinking back to it, I am quite sure there was no FBI. I am all but sure that it was just a very clever ploy to get us to stop it, and I must admit that it worked.

MAME Reviews

As promised, I am going to review a few of the new MAME games. I must admit to spending quite a bit of time playing these games (one reason this newsletter was almost late). Now we are all but a handful of games from MAME being as complete as I would want it to be. There are already more games than I need.



Armor Attack-This is one of those fun little two player games that only was ported to the Vectrex. Which is too bad as it is a very good two player game. Not much of a one player game, but a good two player game.

This time you are an army jeep and it is your job to take out tanks and helicopters. Doesn't seem fair to me, but you do have an advantage over the tanks. As you can probably guess, you are much faster and more mobile then they are. This is good as they can take you out with one shot. But they are the least of your problems. Much worse and quite a bit more unpredictable is the helicopter. That's right, death rains from above and this is one pain in the keister. It flies in swiftly and goes right after you. You can shoot it down, but it is a much harder target to hit than the tanks. Most of your frustrations will be targeted it at the helicopter and rightfully so.

Your playfield is a maze that is made up of destroyed buildings. There is a screen that you must download and put unzip into your "Artwork" folder. Without this, the game is practically unplayable as you cannot see where the buildings are and you are driving around blindly. So make sure to install this before you play the game.

As I mentioned before, the main draw of this game is the two player mode. With two of you working together, the odds seem a little better. You can actually use some strategies like have one person distract a tank, while the other comes around behind him and blows him away. Plus, two sets of guns will make quicker work of the pesky helicopter.

All in all, it is a very fun game. By yourself, it won't keep your interest for long, but with a friend it will be a very fun experience. So lock and load and get ready to kick some metal butt!



Crossbow

If you ever played the Atari 7800 version and grumbled about playing it with a joystick, then this version is for you! While the MAME version is not compatible with a lightgun, you do have an almost as good alternative, the mouse. With the mouse, you will find very good accuracy and you should easily top your Atari 7800 scores.

The main goal of this game is to keep your companions alive. Like a band of fools, they just walk right towards danger (I think they are soldiers from the Krull army as they are about as worthless). There are monsters, spells and other things flying at them and they just merrily march down the street. I personally would be ducking for cover, but maybe that is why I am not army material. So it is your goal to protect these people from harm. You must shoot your crossbow at the monsters and other objects that will kill them and allow them to cross the screen unharmed. As long as at least one person makes it across, the game goes on. But if you lose all of them, then its time for you to give up.

One of the neat features of the game is that you can actually choose your path. As you get past an area, you are given an option of two ways you can go. This helps to add to the replayability of the game. As far as I know, it is one of the first games to incorporate branching paths. While your goal remains the same, you can take different paths to reach it. A nice feature!

One problem I found with the game is that using the mouse actually made it too easy. I was able to zoom past levels without any casualties. It didn't take long for me to conquer the game. This was something I had great difficulty with on the Atari 7800. But at least now I have seen all the game.

While not a tremendous game, Crossbow was one of the more creative of the shooting games and one that deserves some play. And if you were like me, this may finally give you a chance to defeat the game.

Why I Hate Computers as a Game Platform **Or** **Why Console Gaming will Never Die** by [Fred Wagaman](#)

I finally got a computer with enough memory and horsepower to run the most recent games. Half-Life and Quake series were what I was looking forward to the most. I bought a completely configured system, loaded up the games and everything went fine. Played great. Looked great. At least par with my Playstation and N64, maybe a little better. But then again, I didn't have a fancy 3D accelerator card.

Until last week.

I broke down and purchased one of the new Voodoo 3 cards from my local EB. It was simple to install and everything was going fine until I turned my system on.

The point/counterpoint began between the voices in my head:

My ethernet adapter card was gone.

(No big deal you can just reinstall it)

My desktop looked different.

(No big deal, you can get used to it)

Quake looked great.

(For about 5 minutes, until the screen went scrambled)

Quake 2 looked great.

(Only in it's lowest resolution and color depth. Anything else caused the game to crash)

Half-life looked great.

(Same problem as Quake 2)

My DVD player now had this annoying tick-tick-tick coming through the speakers when a

movie played.

(I'm sure that will be taken care of in a patch)

That was it. The card came out at that point. Fortunately, I was able to take advantage of EB's 10 day return policy.

My worst fear had been realized. It "sorta" worked. Sure, I could do play pretty much all my stuff and things were tolerable, but I don't like fighting my hardware to get my software to work. For what this pretty-picture card cost, I could have bought a Playstation. An entire machine with equitable graphics, multiplayer capabilities and a built-in ability to hook to my TV.

And in the future, there would have been tweaks, patches and work-arounds for any new game I bought that didn't quite work right.

Great. Just what I need.

That's what makes consoles so great. You find a game you like. You buy it. You drop it in your machine. You play. Everything from the Channel F to the Dreamcast worked the same way. No muss, no fuss. PCs just aren't there.

The way it was 10 years ago is still the way it is today.

Consoles are for people that like to play games. PCs are for people that want to work to play games.

Fred has been playing games for over 20 years and actively collecting them for almost 10. The 2300 + 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.

The Voigt Monkey Trail: My final word on Donkey Kong, Jr. by [Geoff Voigt](#)

As I do sometimes when I'm bored, I went to Deja News (If you don't know the URL, I really feel sorry for you) and looked up my own name. Not only did I find out that I share the same name as the Motorcycle Safety Minister in Australia, (who knew?) but in my posts to rec.games.video.classic, a fair amount of them deal with Donkey Kong Jr., be it either the game or the character, a fact that caught me off guard. I've decided to get my opinions and beliefs about both off my chest, before I beat it into pulp. (Some really bad gorilla humor there, but I felt a sudden need. Please excuse me.)

Let's go back to a time, shall we? A time when MTV was actually entertaining to watch, Reaganomics, feathered hairstyles, and when we were collecting game systems and carts at full price: late 1982. I'm all of nine years old; I walk into _the_ place in town with my family for all the hottest coin-op games in town: a Pizza establishment named John's Pizza. We were waiting to be seated, and I slip off with my brother into the game room, to see the oddest sight: Pac-Man, Tempest, and Stargate aren't being played, and everyone's crowded around where Donkey Kong should be, but it's blue.... being nine, I rudely push my way to the side of cabinet, to see a small gorilla wearing what looks like an oversize diaper with a red 'J' on the chest climbing up vines, in both the side art and the screen. To further boggle my 5th. grade mind, I look at the top of the screen. Mario's there!

...and he's the bad guy, apparently having kidnapped the mighty Donkey Kong himself.

I had too much information that needed to be processed:

1: There's a sequel to Donkey Kong, one of my personal fave Arcade games.

2: Mario's not saving anyone this time around

3: Donkey Kong has been captured, and has a son...

I ate dinner rather quickly that night, I had to see this game some more! I get to the game room, the crowd's still there, and I play my Dad-approved two quarters of DK Jr., the game's good, as good as the original! Of course I only do as good as a 9 year-old can do, part way through the second screen, but I like it, I went home happy and continue to play it throughout the years, also later happy to see him in 1992's SNES game Super Mario Kart.

What I didn't know then in 1982 that I know now is that I was exposed to possibly the first attempts to add dimensions to actual video game characters; a weak Donkey Kong, a bad Mario. Now would be the time to mention Shigeru Miyamoto's aptitude for focusing on characters, but that's been done too many times, by too many people. I'm passing, No offense.

Fast forward to 1993, MTV is filled with people wearing flannel, Bill Clinton has just been sworn-in, hair is so greasy you could wring it to fry bacon, and classic collecting is a quiet secret held by a few people. I'm playing the Game Boy version of Donkey Kong, and I see a familiar shape on the screen, throwing poison mushrooms at me.... Those historically revisioning bastards! They turned a rather noble character into a pain in the rear! What happened to the little bits of character development that had happened in Jr.? I play the next to last final level of the game, halfway through Kong's tower, and the big N has taken the requiem for Jr and reversed the positions; Mario's now using the keys to lock up Jr, instead of an attempt to free Papa. I yell so loudly that my cats in the next room over bolt for a safer place, such as Siberia. Had Nintendo become so indignant to the idea that their mascot was once the chief bad guy in a one of their more popular games?

Later that same year: Donkey Kong Country comes out for the SNES, no mention of Jr. anywhere, while the game's fun, he's never mentioned nor appears. I'm a bit disappointed, but nothing big.

So I sit here wondering why I've become stuck on the character and game, and I've come to the following realizations.

1:I've put just too much thought into this topic; I should have just gone out thrifting instead.

2:Nintendo has every right to do whatever it wants to with its characters, even if I don't like it.

3:While I 've sometimes thought that the game has been ignored by N, I find myself retracting this thought, by looking at the output of the company: DK Jr. was one of the 4 Game&Watches reproduced by N this past year, Jr. showed up in Super Mario Kart, where as Donkey Kong (the game) only has one original Game&Watch, Jr has 3, (Donkey Kong 2, and two different versions of DK Jr. with diferent screens).

4:I could have it worse, I could be fan of Stanley from Donkey Kong 3.

So while I could bitch and whine about what N's done to Jr., I now know that this is a path better left untraveled. Instead, I'm just going to simply declare Jr. as my favorite Nintendo character, and wait for any further appearances by him in any future games.

Geoff Voigt is a painting student who's currently hunting for an Inty DK Jr. cart to complete his collection, and is waiting for Nintendo to put out Jr. and Princess Toadstool as a plush beanie.

Fans of Stanley can flame him at <gvoigt@ridgecrest.ca.us>

Why is it?

Why is it that when you see TI 99/4A games for sale and they say "10 games for the TI" or something like that, that half of them end up being educational or productivity titles?

Top 20 Multi-Player Classic Games We'd Like To See

by [Alan Hewston](#)

During one of our Retro Times chat sessions, we discussed single player games that we wish had a simultaneous, multi-player option. With contributions for Tim Roach and Tom Zjaba, I'm sure you'll like these ideas.

We give an honorable mention to both Millipede and Pit Stop. Why? Well there is a TWO-player 7800 version for Centipede, which is close to Millipede; and a sequel called Pit Stop II, and a great split screen game it was, came out on the 8 bit home computers.

Notes: (\$) means competitive game play, (%) means cooperative game play, and (*) means both competitive and cooperative game play. Also keep in mind that most of these will work as two player games, but some would even be better if 3 or 4 could play all at the same time. This would require a 5200 type system with 4 ports, but we can dream.

20) Star Raiders (%) Is nearly a two player game already, but not according to my friend Tim. He wants a true two-controller game, where one player steers and shoots, the other navigates and works shields simultaneously.

19) Battlezone/Robot Tank (%) Split the screen and both take on the bad guys.

18) Galaxian (%) Not a great improvement, but one player could help shield the other player's ship too.

17) Dig Dug & Mr. Do (*) Tunnel in tandem (%), or play cut throat (\$) and drop the boulders or apples onto your opponent.

16) Omega Race & Asteroids (*) Thrust and shoot in synchronicity (%), or up to 4 players in a free-for-all (\$). Both of these games are similar so once again I've combined them.

15) Missile Command (%) Get 15 bombs per round and protect 3 cities on your side of the screen. Optionally, get only 5 or 6 bombs per city remaining.

14) Jungle Hunt (\$) Race the others to save the babe. Don't fall behind or you die if you go off the screen.

13) Spy Hunter / Bump & Jump (*) Again, similar type games that I've lumped together. (\$) Drive and kill off your opponents, or just play a game where you cannot hurt each other (%). Work together and do the Malacci Crunch on the computer cars. ("Happy Days").

12) Turmoil (*) Almost total chaos when 4 of you go at it at once. Stay alive together (%) for as long as possible. Or, (\$) compete with identical ships, not knowing who is who. What torture/fun. One of my all time 2600 favorite games - had to be on this list.

11) Pac-Man, Ladybug, Ms Pac-Man, Amidar, Mousetrap, Alien. Et al (*) I wonder how many different home brew/clones had cool options such as two or more simultaneous players. Probably none. So we can either sprint (\$) to get the most points, or cover (%) your friend's @\$\$ (by eating a power pill). Lot's of wild combinations possible here.

10) Berzerk & Frenzy (*) Work as a team (%), but in order to escape [just like the 8 bit game "Realm of Impossibility "] you need to both push off the same edge of the screen at the same time. Or (\$) start at each of the 4 sides and try to escape on the side opposite. Rotate 90 degrees each round. Get points for stunning opponents. No fair just killing them - let Evil Otto do it for you.

9) Oil's Well (*) A great game made even better if played with 2. You get the right (top) side (%), and I'll get the left (bottom).

Have competing pipelines (\$) and try to snag the most oil. A favorite C64/CV game of mine.

8) Q*bert & Q*bert's Qubes (*) OK, give the end-of-round bonus to the most greedy (\$) player, but what if you are helping each other (%). Whatcha gonna tell him to do when every move changes a color the wrong way. Incredible teamwork would be needed in the higher levels - all while avoiding Coily. This game would really be chaotic with 4 players.

7) Adventure (*) You knew it was coming. First, a split screen battle (\$) with both players thrown into the same exact scenario. All the dragons and objects are in the same place and you have to decide to go the same way your opponent went or the other way. Catch a glimpse at what he's doing too, cause it may be the right way to go. Run through 10 rounds and see who has the shortest combined time. Oh yeah, gotta add that clock. Then move on to the 4-player faster, more challenging Adventure where you (%) work with your partner, but compete (\$) against the other team. You'd both have to move from room to room together. Billy, Bonnie, Bobbie and Barbie Block! The Block family.

6) Jr. Pac Man (*) The one player game is already difficult. Four players simultaneously won't last very long at all. Keep playing until all 4 are dead. Don't forget about screen scrolling, which will drive you all nuts if you're trying to work cooperatively (%). Throw in the "IT" from "Gauntlet" and you've got a real mess. The player (\$) who is "IT" will draw more ghostly attention than normal. Someone may always be IT, or have a quick 3rd party critter comes along and tag you. How about if you become IT if you eat a certain random block, or prize. Whoever is IT or was IT last gets to move and scroll the screen. Touch another player and they are IT. If you scroll the screen, then you are IT. Add in different colored power pills (one for each player), and you have one heck of a game. We can only dream, or is this a programmers nightmare.

5) Kaboom! (*) Oh my gosh! Lot's of crazy possibilities here. Up to 4 players, each with different (\$) or same (%) colored Mad Bomber and matching bombs. Cooperation allows all bombs to be caught. Competitive means you gotta catch your own colored bombs. Start a new round whenever someone dies. Display one score only as is Super Breakout below.

4) Super (Duper) Breakout (*) A veritable plethora of possibilities with 4 players. See Circus Atari below for even more ideas that would work here, and vice versa. Cooperatively (%) the balls are all the same color, started at the same time the points are combined, and anyone's paddle will work on any ball. Competitively (\$), you can only paddle your own colored ball, which scores points only for you. The balls can collide with each other and give you an unpleasant ricochet. Making the sounds unique to each ball would be a big audio bonus to alert you to which ball is yours. Only the highest score is shown, until the end when all 4 player's scores are repeated in order. Play until all 4 players have lost their balls.

3) Circus Atari (*) Yessiree! Bring on those paddle games for 4 players. This is the reason I wrote this article. Play as a team (%) and work together for one score - boring. Or go for broke and use combinations of these competitive (\$) variations. All airborne acrobats bounce off each other making for lots of deadly falls. Either everyone starts jumping at once, or jump in when you want to. He who waits until it is safe, may last longer. You know that 4 players all bouncing and colliding won't last very long. Play continues until all 4 players have fallen. Get the bonus life only if you are still airborne when the last balloon is popped. Get your opponents to keep bouncing you up there and get the most points. Only need to show the top score as in Super Breakout above. The the teeter-totters on the ground can move over top of each other, and you can always tell what color is where, by putting them on slightly different levels near the bottom. A neat variation would be a four-player, two-team battle. Each player gets one paddle and one of the 2 acrobats. Paddle control goes to the one NOT in the air. Imagine all the chatter, coaching on your teammate to move left and right, switch sides etc. None of those paddle advantages from Warlords.

2) Food Fight (*) The chefs can gang up on the computer opponents (%). Or . . . Let's put a player in each corner and turn them loose on the food (\$). Fight until only one remains, or you run out of food. Start with some computer chefs, or add them part way through. Maybe even have them bring in more food, for one really long food fight. I can feel the joystick pain now during an unlimited food supply, four player fight to the death.

1) Robotron 2084 (%) Now you've read the rest - imagine what this could be like. Start with a nice four-player (%) cooperative challenge to save all the humans. Then make it a two player game, with both players using a 5200 joystick coupler and two sticks each to play it just like in the arcades. Finally, finish this off with four players, two on a team. One player moves Robotron around, the other fires the shots.

With ideas like these, I wish I were a computer game designer/programmer, but I ended up as an Engineer. 3 Paddle games in the top 5? Why not! Those 4 players games are great.

Alan Hewston

Top 20 excuses for buying yet another video game

by [Fred Wagaman](#)

- 20) It's rare
- 19) It might be worth something someday
- 18) I think the kid will like it
- 17) I had this when I was younger
- 16) I could sell this for more than I paid for it
- 15) I need this to complete my collection
- 14) I need this to start my collection
- 13) I've never seen one of these before
- 12) A friend is looking for this and asked me to pick it up
- 11) I can use this as trade bait
- 10) Once I play it, I'll sell it
- 09) It's my birthday
- 08) I needed the box
- 07) I needed the instructions
- 06) It was cheap
- 05) I was afraid it wouldn't be there when I came back
- 04) It's in better condition than mine at home
- 03) It's a steal
- 02) Do you know how much this goes for on the internet ?

and...

- 01) I got this for you

Tom Speaks Out!

I have done different forms of this article for the past few months, but I didn't want to ruin my nice guy reputation by printing it. But there are some things I want to give my opinion on. Since I have a forum here, I decided to pull out a soap box and give my viewpoint. So read this and know that this is a much nicer version than I originally intended. I kinda like being the nice guy, just now I will be the opinionated nice guy.

1. **Prototypes**-There has been alot of discussion on whether or not prototypes should be released. On one side you have the gamers who want to be able to play these games and on the other side you have the people who own these carts and want to protect their investment. But there is a third group involved, one who is directly responsible for the prototype, yet has no say in the matter whatsoever. This group is the programmers who made these games. Yes, they are the people who actually programmed the game and yet noone seems to care what they think of their property. Think about it, some poor guy spent months of his life making this game so that people would one day enjoy it. But because of circumstances beyond his control, the game never was released and all his time was wasted. Sure he probably received financial compensation for the game, but we all know that you don't create something, whether it be a video game, a movie or a song for the money and nothing else. You want the satisfaction of knowing that people are enjoying the fruits of your labor. If it was only the money, would programmers like John Carmack and Sid Meier keep working? They both have made more than enough money to live comfortably. Would the Rolling Stones still be touring? Would Clint Eastwood bother with another movie? None of them need the money, but there is more to what they do than just the money.

You may say that these prototypes aren't very good or weren't finished, but does that mean the programmer should be deprived of seeing his creation being played like it was intended to be? No programmer goes into a project to make a piece of junk (though Froggo and Mythicon could make a great argument for it). Some games may end that way,

but the programmer didn't start the project with this intention. Unless this programmer has come forward and said he doesn't want this game to ever see the light of day, why should someone who neither programmed the game, came up with the concept or helped finance the game in any way control who can and who cannot play a game? Should the mere purchase of a game give a person the final say in something? While they may own the cart itself, they do not own the game that is on it. I wonder if a programmer could sue someone who owns a prototype and force them to have to release the game? Now this would be an interesting court case and really shake things up.

2. [Price Guides](#)-This is one area where I did a 180 on. I used to be opposed to them, but after some rational thinking, I came to the conclusion that they are more beneficial to this industry than they are destructive.

After I put the Intellivision Price Guide on the site, I began tallying feedback from it. I purposefully ask people to give me their opinion and depending on how the feedback came back, I would either remove it or do more price guides. Well, I received over 80 responses over the past so many months and out of that, I had a total of three people who were against it. Yes, that was THREE! What was their reasoning? Everyone had the same argument, it would make it harder to find games at thrift stores and they would have to pay more for it. That's right, the only real argument was they wanted to get their video games for less.

But I can give more arguments for price guides. First point is that rarity guides are not accurate enough. They have games with similar ratings that vary greatly in price. There is nowhere that they say how an extremely rare game for the Atari 2600 almost always has greater value than any other system. While most seasoned collectors know this, many of the novices don't. I know that people used to use this to justify trades they offered me in the past. The bottom line is that while there are a lot of fair and honest people in the industry, not everyone is like this. A price guide levels the playing field and gives people something to help make fair trades. I am not saying my price guides are the end all, they are not. I merely collect data from newsgroups, sites and especially eBay to come up with an average price. While many argue that eBay isn't a good judge for prices, I will argue that. Ebay is the best indicator of the real market. The newsgroups are actually the worst indicator for prices. First off, there are only a few hundred people who use are regulars in the newsgroups and most of these people already have huge collections of games. So they are not typical consumers. They have also been spoiled by very low prices for games. But on eBay, you have thousands and thousands of people, many of which are new to the market. They are actively buying the games and systems, some to relive memories or make new ones and some for investment or resale purposes. These people are the market's future, like it or not. While we would like to see the market stay small and the games cheap, that is a pipe dream and we all know it. Sure the market will change, but as much good as bad will come out.

Another reason for price guides is to make people aware of the value of carts. While you may think I am off base on this one, listen and see where I am coming from. Right now, classic video games are considered worthless to the general population. As long as this remains, thousands and thousands of games and machines will be thrown out. While this may not seem like a big deal to you, along with these games and machines will be prototypes, promotional material, extremely rare games and other stuff that we will never see because their owner didn't know it had any value. As long as they think the stuff is junk, it will be thrown out. If you listen real close, you can hear a garbage truck driving away now with some prototypes of games that were considered vaporware. Games that we could be enjoying (unless they got hoarded), are now rotting away in a dump, never to see the light of day.

The last reason for price guides is for insurance purposes. What would happen if your house burned down tomorrow and all your classic games were melted? How much do you think the insurance company would give you for that Chase the Chuckwagon or Condor Attack? The hundreds of dollars they are worth? Dream on! They would go around to some stores and after finding that noone wants to buy Atari games, they would probably give a dollar a piece or less for each game. You could tell them how they sell for more on

the internet, but without concrete proof in your hands, you have about as much chance of getting fair value for them as you do of finding another Chase the Chuckwagon at a thrift store. But with a recognized price guide, like the Digital Press, you can show them what these games are worth (provided you can prove you owned them) and get a fair amount.

A Deeper Look.....

This month I found two more little games to take a deeper look at. Both are here for reasons, as odd as they may be. So instead of filling space with my ramblings, let me ramble about the games instead!

A Deeper Look at Montezuma's Revenge

This game is being reviewed because quite simply I sold one to a customer and they told me it didn't work. So when they sent it back, I checked it out to see if I could find the problem. I first started by sticking it in my Colecovision and seeing what it did. Well, I stuck it in and lo and behold, it worked without a problem. I then tried it in another Coleco and no problem. Who knows why it gave this poor person problems? Anyways, I decided since I have it loaded that I would try it. I never really played this game much, so I figured this was a good opportunity.

The first reaction I got from the game is that it was very unforgiving. Take an extra step and you are dead. Don't plan that jump exactly and you are pushing up daisies. This can get very frustrating as you will die many times before you get this game down.

The game involves your exploration of a pyramid. But like actual pyramids that are void of living creatures, this one is teeming with trouble. There are snakes and spiders to avoid, bouncing and rolling skulls to watch out for and lots of other traps. This place is better protected than Fort Knox! Along the way, you must gather keys to get to other areas. There are also swords which allow you to hit an opponent and other items that aid your quest.

While the creatures will keep you busy, the real star of the show is the levels. Some of them have moving platforms, poles to slide down, lava pits, fires and all kind of other obstacles to get through. This can make for some serious aggravation as a few of them border on being unfair. But like most of these games, once you figure the level out, you can then conquer it. In its basic form, this is a game that is mostly memory with some quick reflexes thrown in. All you have to do is figure out how to beat a level and then it becomes second nature.

While this is a moderately expensive game, it is a worthwhile game. It is just hard enough to keep you from beating it right away, but not too hard as to make you give up.

A Deeper Look at Pengo

This game was one that I was testing before mailing out and found myself playing it quite a bit. The version I am speaking of is the Atari 2600 version and I was pleasantly surprised at what a good job they did of converting the arcade game to the 2600.

As most of you know, the basic concept of Pengo is to kick blocks of ice into the snowbees and clear the screen of them. One kick and a block of ice goes flying across the screen. But if another block of ice halts it from moving, then it will break up when you kick it. As you can guess, one touch from the deadly snowbees (guess even the artic variety of bees are deadly) means death. A secondary objective is to line up three marked blocks of ice to get big bonuses. Line them up on one of the sides of the screen and get 5,000 points, but if you can manage to line them up anywhere in the middle of the screen, you get 10,000 points! A very tough task, but not impossible.

The 2600 version captures all the thrills of the original, including the bonuses I mentioned above. The music is there, and the graphics are very good. I am still amazed at how faithful this translation is! I tip my hat to Atari on a wonderful job on this game! If you want a very faithful version of this game, but don't want to deal with the hassles of the 5200 joysticks, then this is for you! The only flaw with the game is that it is extremely rare and highly coveted and a loose copy will easily fetch \$40.00-\$50.00.

Results of Licensed Character Voting

by [Alan Hewston](#)

Here are the results from a few months ago.

The Best Superhero is a tie between: "Billy The Block" and "Superman".

The Most Famous Personality is: "Larry Bird".

The Best Animated / Cartoon Character is: "Scooby Doo".

The Best Vehicles is: "Snoopy's Dog House".

The Best Children's Star is: "Cookie Monster".

The Best Toughguys is: "Indiana Jones".

The Best Spaceships are: the "X-Wing Fighters".

The Best Monster or Villain is: the "Minotaur" and his friends from AD&D.

eBay Notes

I am going to do something different this time in eBay notes. Instead of giving info on systems and games that are going up or down, I am going to talk about the new categories. As everyone who frequents eBay knows, they have taken video games from one category and broke it down to five categories. The new categories are Atari, Nintendo, Sony, Sega and General. While some people may be upset at all the new categories to go through, I find it nice. Now I don't have to wade through tons of Playstation, Saturn, Genesis, Game Gear and other systems that I have little to no interest in.

Another benefit is that there will be less people going through the lists of games for auction, looking for a Playstation or Nintendo 64 game and seeing some ultra rare Atari game sell for a few hundred dollars. That is one less person who will suddenly think every game they see at a flea market is worth a fortune and begin to buy them all up and clogging eBay with tons of Combats and ETs for sale for some ridiculous amount of money. For the people who fear the market is getting ruined in a hurry, this should slow things down a bit.

But the best thing is now you have less pages to search through. I am one of the people who clicks on the ending today auctions and see what is available. Before, I would have to go through 40+ pages of stuff ending that day. Now my number is cut in half or more! So it saves me time! While I hope they fragment it further, it is a step in the right direction.

What's Happening in the Industry?

This month was marked by many heated debates. There were quite a few arguments that came out of topics in the newsgroups. Here is a overview of what went on!

1. [eBay Picture Swipers](#)-A new trend on eBay is for sellers to steal pictures other people posted on their sales. While one can debate how damaging this is, some of these sellers went a step further and actually put links to sites of people who put the pictures up. Did they ask for permission? Of course not! eBay is the modern form of the Wild West, where almost everything seems to go on. Well, a few people fought back and changed the pictures that were linked illegally. While there was debate (and some heated debate) on whether or not these pictures were copyrighted, there was no real course of action set. Some people are filing complaints with eBay, but it is still too early to see if they take any action. Others retaliated in their own way as mentioned above. It will be interesting to see what comes out of this.

2. [\\$500.00 tables](#)-This was the second most debated thread. It is over the tables at the CGE (Classic Gaming Expo) that is to be held in Las Vegas this year. The debate was over the price charged for tables, which is \$500.00 and whether or not this was pushing out the small guys. While alot of arguing went on, some people decided to split booths as a means to cut costs. While the people putting on the show have said that they will do what they can to help accommodate everyone, people still were not satisfied. While this is fairly steep for a show, people must keep in mind the location and the attendees at this show. With big names like Nolan Bushnell, Ralph Baer, the Blue Sky Rangers and some of the Activision programmers, to name a few, the show will draw alot of people. The chance to sell goods is very good! While I won't be setting up a booth (I am going to enjoy myself

and don't want to be stuck at a booth), I can sympathize with them. It would take a lot of sales to just cover table costs, let alone all the other expenses.

20 Great Games for the Commodore 64

by [Alan Hewston](#)

The gang from the recent Digital Press Commodore 64 chat session put together a list of the best 20 games for the venerable Commodore 64. I took the highest scorers that at least three of us agreed deserved to be there, or had at least played it. I then ranked them, but with a very small sample size, don't worry too much about their order. The main thing is that all of these games are good on the C64. Too bad only a handful are available on carts, but most or all of these can be played via emulation.

Archon I and II
The Castles of Dr. Creep
Bruce Lee
Jumpman & Jr.
Realm of Impossibility
Mario Brothers
Load Runner & Championship Load Runner
Summer Games
Maniac Mansion
Impossible Mission
David's Midnight Magic
M.U.L.E.
Boulderdash
Pogo Joe
Mr. Do, Mr. Do's Castle & Wild Ride
Spelunker
Pogo Joe
Gianna Sisters
Forbidden Forrest I & II
Winter Games

Games that got good votes, but didn't make the top 20 are: Frogger II, 3 Stooges, Air Support, Park Patrol, Battle Through Time, Elite. Choplifter, Law of the West, Shamus, Raid Over Moscow, Ultima Series, PSI-5 Trading Company, Mail Order Monsters, Zork Series and Oil's Well. Note: The author personally did not nominate very many text adventures - so these were probably slighted.

Sorry.

Alan Hewston is retro-addicted to nearly all the classic game systems and collects all Atari (400, 2600, 5200, 7800), XEGS, Bally Astrocade, C64, Intellivision, NES, Odyssey 2, Sega Genesis, SNES, & Vic 20. hewston95@stratos.net

Seeking out the Red Throated Intellivision and the Fan-Tailed Commodore 64 in their native habitat.

By [James Audobon.... I mean Geoff Voigt](#)

Have you ever been at a thrift, and seen something that just blew your mind? Like Decathlon, Gyruss, or Pitfall 2 for the Inty, or perhaps Empire Strikes Back or Dreadnought Factor for the C64? You buy the thing, rush home to look at your new Earth-shattering find, only to discover that ITS FOR THE WRONG SYSTEM....

You are not alone, my friend, there are many collectors out there that have made this mistake. C64 and Intellivision carts look amazingly alike, but there are some quick telltale signs you can use to discern if its a Inty or C64 cart, other than if the label says so, and here they are..

THE MEASUREMENTS:

Intellivision: 3 1/2" tall on bottom, 3 13/16" tall on top x 2 5/8" wide x 9/16" deep

Commodore 64: 3 1/2" tall x 2 5/8" wide x 3/4" deep.

Obnoxiously close, huh? Now you can see why they get mistaken for each other.

PIN COUNT

One of the first things to look at is the insertion side of the cart; most 64 carts have a thick plastic flange above the circuit, Intys don't. But even if that flange isn't there, it may not be an Inty. There is a foolproof way to know however, and that's to look at the pin count of the cart. Most Intys have a 17# pin count, distributed like so, seen with label up:

[IIIIIIII IIIIIII III]

7 pins, one blank, another 7, one blank, 3 pins, and then 3 blanks.

Not all Inty carts have this pin setup, like the Interphase or Coleco games, All 23 pins have a connection on them. But all those that don't have the 17 pin setup have the fact that they're for the Intellivision on them somewhere (from what I've seen in my hunts).

The C64 carts have one of two pin setups:

They either have all 22 pins contacted, (yes, another close call with the Inty) or they have the following pin setup:

[III II I IIIIIIIII]

3 pins, 4 blanks, 2 pins, 1 blank, 1 pin, 2 blanks, and then 9 pins.

If all else fails, then just remember: 23 pins= Inty, and 22 pins= C64.

LABELS:

Naturally, if the label says its for one of the two systems, then believe it. But the two companies most confused are Activision and Parker Bros, who never stated what system the game was for on their labels. But even then, there is a way.

Parker Bros Labels:

All PB labels for Inty have the dark gold color, and a picture label. thier cart cases also rest flat on a table label-side up. C64 PB labels have no picture, just the logo, and have a stone grey background color.

Activision Labels:

The labels for C64 are taken from the same graphics that are used for Colecovision, while Inty labels are somewhat less ornate, having a picture used only on those versions, with the name of the game in simple white text on the end label. They both have that semi-hourglass shape that was used for all Activision games except the 2600 and Atari 8-bit carts.

A Quick word on Imagic:

All the potential Imagic carts will be for Intellivision. The only Imagic game ever made for the C64 was Demon Attack, thier flagship game, and it came on a combo C64/Atari 8-Bit disk.

COMMON SENSE:

As groovy as it would be to think so, Dreadnought Factor, Empire Strikes Back, Tutunkhamun, Super Cobra, Worm Whomper, and Happy Trails didn't come out for the C64, (even though Tutunkhamun and Super Cobra, if seen for the Inty, should be snapped up quick) and Pitfall 2, Decathalon, Toy Bizzare, H.E.R.O., Gyruus, James Bond, Star Wars: TAG, and Frogger 2 never came out for the Intellivision. We'd all like to think so, but

it just didn't happen. Anyway, happy hunting to you all.

(Geoff Voigt has since gotten a hold of C64 Bounty Bob, and has occasionally been seen putting his C64 Congo Bongo into his Intellivision cart slot as wishful thinking. If anyone out there does indeed have Inty Pitfall 2, or C64 Tutunkamun, he would happily like to be proven wrong at (gvoigt@ridgecrest.ca.us)).

The Crystal Ball

by [Fred Wagaman](#)

Hello, this is Swami Fred. As we celebrate the 20th issue of Retrotimes, it's important that we not only look back, but that we also look ahead. Join with me on a journey into the unknown as I predict....

THE FUTURE

(Pardon me whilst I polish my Crystal Ball)

Prediction: There will be less hardware choices but more hardware manufacturers

One of the big three will not survive the end of the next generation of hardware, but will instead, focus on creating killer software for the machines that do survive. The machines that do survive will be licensed to other manufacturers.

Result: Goodbye Sega, Nintendo or Sony. Hello JVC Dreamcast or Panasonic Playstation 2

Prediction: Your Game machine will become more like your computer

With modems going to more or less be the norm on the next generation of game machine, the time you spends doing things other than playing on it will be greatly increased.

Result: Expect your future machine to have keyboard, mouse and disk drive options.

Prediction: "Set-Top" boxes will become a reality

A machine that plays games, plays and records movies, acts as a Pay-per-view and TV tuner, works as a video phone and gives you access to the internet is coming. Maybe sooner than you think. And it will look great on your new HDTV.

Result: You think phone calls are annoying now when you're playing games, just wait.

Prediction: Generally speaking, games will be the same

Even with the increased graphic and audio capabilities of the future machines, we'll still be force-fed the same driving, fighting, adventure, RPG, sports and shooting games we've had for the last 5-8 years. Nobody will want to take the risk on a title that might not meet critical mass.

Result: Tekken XVII

Prediction: The way you play those same games will change significantly

The continued increase of on-line gaming coupled with a significant increase in machine and connection speed will change our opponents in the games we play. Driving, fighting, adventure, RPG, sports and shooting games will have to adapt to the competitive and cooperative nature that shared gaming brings. Solitary gaming will be the exception rather than the rule. Game leagues will be like bowling leagues, only you won't have to change your shoes.

Result: Philadelphia vs. Cleveland for the Mech-War Championship of the world (1,000 players or more).

Prediction: Future Game shows will include at home contestants.

With those wonderful set-top boxes, you could be today's contestant. They download a test to your machine that you take in your spare time. Your results are uploaded automatically. The most qualified contestants are selected and displayed on TVs around the world via their video phone. Imagine the possibilities on the "Love Connection".

Result: "I'd like to buy a vowel please"

Well, it's time to end this journey. I hope you enjoyed the Swami Fred's visit to the future. Besides, I think the goldfish wants the crystal ball back.

Fred has been playing games for over 20 years and actively collecting them for almost 10. The 2300 + 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. He says that Philadelphia will totally squash Cleveland in that Mech-War thing.

Classic Gaming Trivia

One thing the Bally and the Intellivision have in common is that when each of them was taken over by a new company, Astrovision buying the Astrocade from Bally and INTV buying the Intellivision from Mattel, they both saved money by not renewing licenses and just renaming the games. With the Bally it was Space Invaders and Galaxian turning into Astro Battle and Galactic Invasion. With the Intellivision it was all the licensed sports games like MLB Baseball, NBA Basketball, NFL Football and PGA Golf (among others) being renamed Baseball, Basketball, Football and Golf.

20 Games I Couldn't Do Without!

With the 20th issue, everyone is doing Top Twenty lists, so here is my contribution. These are the twenty classic home video games that I couldn't do with. These are the games that I will die with. They are in no particular order, I just put them as they came to me. So here they are!

20. Keystone Kapers (2600)
19. Utopia (INTV)
18. Adventure (2600)
17. Antarctic Adventure (Coleco)
16. Cabbage Patch Kids (Coleco)
15. Fortune Builder (Coleco)
14. Frogger (Coleco)
13. Q*Bert (Coleco)
12. Turmoil (2600)
11. Thin Ice (INTV)
10. Tower of Doom (INTV)
09. Anteater (TI 99/4A)
08. Burgertime (INTV/Coleco)
07. Stampede (INTV)
06. Food Fight (7800)
05. Centipede (7800)
04. Star Trek (2600)
03. Beamrider (Coleco)
02. Munchmobile (TI 99/4A)
01. Diner (INTV)

The Valley of the Centipede

Chapter Three

Exhausted and weakened from the blood lost, I limp into the cave of Pangeon. I have come a long way to seek his aid and only hope he will make time for me. As I limp into the entrance of the cave, I see Pangeon sitting in front of the fire, roasting the leg of some beast. As he looks at me, he says in an almost laughter "Galaan, you have made it. I have been expecting you for some time." "H-how did you know I was coming?" I ask in bewilderment. He hasn't been in town in eons, so how could he know that I was one of the chosen. Until this day, I have never laid eyes upon his frail form. While I knew of him and

the general whereabouts of his abode, I never ventured there. At an early age we were warned of the dangers of Pangeon and to avoid any contact with him. "Don't fear me, the stories told of me are but exaggerations to keep people from the truth" he says as he points to a log next to the fire. "Sit down, sit down, there is much you do not know, Galaan" he tells me as I take a seat on the log. It feels good to rest my ailing leg. "I see you had some trouble along the way. Let me get some herbs to heal your wound" he says as he pulls his aged body up from the log and leans heavily on a wooden stick he uses for support. "Right in here I have some ointment already made" he says as he disappears into the darkness of the cave. After a few minutes, he emerges with a wooden bowl. He slowly walks over to me and sits besides me. "Let us get these rags off, they will only get in the way" he says as he unravels the makeshift bandage. After it is off, he dips his hand into the bowl and pulls out a handful of a green paste. He takes the paste and rubs it over my wound. At first it stings, but soon it begins to sooth. As I stare upon my wound, I have to check my eyes. Before me, the wound is closing up! What should take a week, is taking mere moments. The magic he uses is strong and I now know that I have come to the right place.

After a delicious meal of meat and wine, Pangeon looks over to me and says "You come to seek my aid in the destruction of the Centipede." Almost choking on my wine, I look at him in amazement. Was my mind open like a book for him to so easily read? How did things not said, become so known to him? "Yes, that is right. Can you help me?" I ask. "The Centipede is a great demon, a great demon indeed. But like you and I, he is but flesh and blood." he says as he struggles to his feet once again. "Long have I awaited one such as you. Long have I prepared for someone to come and rid the valley of the accursed beast." he says as he grabs my hand and leads me into the cave. As we make our way through the darkness, he continues "Long have I been to old to fight the creature myself. Long have I held the means to his end. But no one would question the elders, no one would stand up to the beast. That is until now" he says as he grabs a glowing wand and hands it to me. "Behold Galaan the Wand of the Stars" he says as he holds it up. The wand begins to glow even greater as he hands it to me. As I hold it aloft, I can feel its power. Like a raging river, I feel the power overwhelm me. It sweeps over me and engulfs me. Suddenly, the weariness of the day is gone. I feel like a new man, ready to defeat the creature who terrorizes my village. For once and all, the Centipede will die and our people will be free of its tyranny! Suddenly I am snapped out of my dreams and back into reality by Pangeon's words "While the staff has great powers, the powers are limited. Only can the light of the stars recharge them. So tomorrow when you go to battle, waste not any power, for it may be the difference between salvation and damnation." With that, I head back to the village, with a renewed sense of security. I now know that I will not have to die in vain, sacrificed like a sheep. I can and I will fight back. For tomorrow, the Centipede's reign of terror is over!

(Tune in next month for the thrilling conclusion).

The Final Issue of Retrogaming Times

I went into the future and pulled out the last issue of Retrogaming Times. So by [clicking here](#), you can read this monumental issue. Keep in mind that I transferred it this format.

Conclusion

Well, the 20th issue now comes to a close! For twenty issues now we have talked about the classic games we love so dearly. For twenty issues I have given you a forum to discuss and share your love for these timeless games. With the next twenty issues, I hope more of you will take advantage of this opportunity and share you stories, reviews and tips with us. As I say over and over, this is our newsletter and it is up to you the readers and contributors to determine its direction in the coming months. The market and the hobby is changing. Many changes are for the better like more shows and home brewed games and others are not so good like scams and overused rarity terms. But the market is getting bigger and I think this is a good thing. The more people who get involved, the more voices that can be heard. The more people collecting, the more chances of things like the Intellivision Lives CD happening. And in the long run, this can be a good thing..

[Tom Zjaba](#)

(None of the pictures were provided by the Digital Press CD this month (Mainly due to the fact that my kids misplaced the CD. So instead of having the DP CD, I have The Cat in the Hat. Not quite the same). 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).