

## Retrogaming Times

Issue #61 - September 21st, 2002

Want to find out when a new issue comes out? Check out these sites that post when a new issue of Retrogaming Times is released:

<http://www.arcadeathome.com/>  
<http://www.vg-network.com/>  
<http://www.classicgaming.com/>  
<http://www.emuhq.com/>  
<http://www.mameworld.net>  
<http://www.zophar.net/>  
<http://www.retrogames.com>  
<http://www.remakes.org/>  
<http://firebutton.org/>  
<http://www.smsforce.com/>  
<http://www.badvideogames.com/>  
<http://www.kinox.org>

If your site posts about Retrogaming Times on a monthly basis and is interested in joining the list of sites that help support this newsletter, email a link to your site and we will add you to the list! Thanks for all the support!



## Table of Contents

01.	<a href="#">The Results Are In!</a>
02.	<a href="#">Sites of the Month</a>
03.	<a href="#">Commercial Vault</a> by Adam King
04.	<a href="#">The Many Faces of...Choplifter</a> by Alan Hewston
05.	<a href="#">The Lost Many Faces of...Bump 'n Jump &amp; Burgertime</a> by Alan Hewston
06.	<a href="#">The TI 99 A Year Later and Some Thoughts</a> by Jim Krych
07.	<a href="#">Stardate 7800</a> by Adam King
08.	<a href="#">Where is the Classic Game Merchandise?</a>
09.	<a href="#">Letters to the Editor</a>
10.	<a href="#">Conclusion</a>



CINCICLASSIC  
OCTOBER 4-6, 2002

The Results Are In!

Our first poll is in and the results are amazing! With just over 200 responses, we can honestly say that Retrogaming Times is read worldwide! In 34 different states and territories and 23 different countries (not counting the US), that includes five continents, we proclaim Retrogaming Times a worldwide publication! Here is the exact totals. See how well represented your state or country is. By the way, I listed all the different cities or provinces of Canada (most of our Canadian readers also included their providence or city or both). By the way, the number in parenthesis after the state or country is the total number of responses that I received from that region. If there is no number, it means there was just one response.

I apologize for not personally thanking everyone who sent a response, but as you can see from the amount of people who took the time to email, I just did not have the time. I did not want to just send out a form letter, so I am taking this moment to just say thank you!

### [States and Territories](#)

Arizona (2)  
Arkansas  
California (12)  
Colorado (5)  
Connecticut (2)  
Florida (10)  
Georgia (3)  
Guam (2)  
Iowa (2)  
Illinois (8)  
Indiana (5)  
Kansas  
Kentucky (3)  
Maryland (5)  
Massachusetts  
Michigan (6)  
Minnesota (2)  
Missouri (2)  
Nebraska  
Nevada (2)  
New Hampshire  
New Jersey (3)  
New York (8)  
North Carolina (5)  
Ohio (8)  
Oklahoma  
Oregon (3)  
Pennsylvania (7)  
Rhode Island  
Tennessee (3)  
Texas (7)  
Virginia (5)  
Washington (6)  
Wisconsin (4)

### [Countries](#)

Argentina  
Australia (10)  
Brazil  
Canada (16) (Alberta, BC, Montreal, Ontario, Ottawa, Quebec, Toronto)  
Denmark (2)  
England (12)  
Germany (4)  
Greece  
Holland  
Hong Kong

Hungary (2)  
Italy (2)  
Japan  
Malaysia  
Mexico  
Netherlands (2)  
New Zealand  
Norway  
Scotland  
South Africa  
Spain (3)  
Sweden (3)  
Switzerland

## Sites of the Month

Do you like new games for the Atari 5200? Are you a fan of prototypes? Then these two sites are just what the doctor ordered! Once again, we have dug up two awesome sites for you to check out. So get your spidey suit on, websurfers and check out these sites.

### [Mean Hamster Software](#)

Did you know there was a new game for the Atari 5200? If you went to the CGE, you did. It was made by Mean Hamster Software and it is titled Haunted House 2 3-D. Want to know more about it and be able to order it? Then check out the site. They also offer some other games like Asteroids for the 5200, Polo for the 2600 and more. OK, I have gotten you excited enough, so go forth and get these new games, you will not be disappointed!

<http://meanhamstersoftware.com/>

### [Atari Protos.com](#)

We all dream of unearthing some rare Atari 2600 prototypes. Most of us will never have the chance, but we must dream. Well, here is a website with all kinds of information about the many different prototypes that have been discovered. Some have been released for others to play and others are being hoarded away, with only a screen shot or little blurb about the gameplay.

While this site is new and still being built, it does feature a ton of great information about Atari 2600 prototypes. Did you know that the once thought game, Alligator People is actually Planet of the Apes? Want to see some screen shots of the never released Charlie Brown game? It is all here and more! This site offers so much information that you will find that you are spending alot of time here (I know that I blew through about two hours, before I realized it).

<http://www.atariprotos.com/>

## COMMERCIAL VAULT

by [Adam King](#)

Greetings, gamers! With summer winding down, I thought some of you might be blue, and others might be headed to some foreign lands for one more quick vacation. So I have provided ads about both points. (yes, I admit I couldn't match up this month's "Many Faces").

### [M-Network](#)

The first ad was requested by someone named John (no last name). This spot was for the M-Network line of Atari games. M-Network was the label used by Mattel when they ported some of their Intellivision titles to the Atari 2600. Here we find several teenagers bored with their Atari, until several girls brighten their day (literally) with some M-Network titles. All the while a song is playing in the background which is a take-off of the 60s hit "Summertime Blues".

"Well, you dig your Atari but you're craving for new action, You want new excitement and you want satisfaction, Well you're gonna feel better when you hear the news, M Network is the cure for the video blues. Yeah...M Network is the cure for the video blues.



"I'm so blue..."



Remember that ZZ Top song?



"Nope. Still bored."



"Let's climb into our 50's car. Hurry!"



"Let's brighten up this scene with M Network games."



"Now we're having fun!"



Don't forget, they cure the video blues.

Of course the M Network label didn't last too long. Soon Mattel started using their own name for their last few releases. You can find this spot at Atari-Headquarters ([www.atari-headquarters.com](http://www.atari-headquarters.com)).

### Atari UK

Special thanks to Brett Gladson for pointing out this ad! This is an ad for the Atari 2600 that aired in the United Kingdom. Even though the 2600 was made in the USA it was also sold Europe and did moderately well. This ad features a British boy who receives a 2600 from his father, along with the Space Invaders game.

FATHER: "Well, this is what you've been asking me for in the last few months, the Atari video game, and Space Invaders."

BOY: "Thanks, dad."

FATHER: "Let's see how long that keeps you amused."

As the boy plays several games and their variations, the announcer says: "Discover the new Atari Video Computer System. Forty-five cartridges containing over 700 challenging, absorbing, and educational games.

By the time we get back to the boy, he's grown into a man, who now says, "Dad, I'm beginnin' to get a bit bored with this."

The aged father slaps the back of his head and says, "Typical. You never stick with anything now."



"Hey son, I got a surprise for you."



"Wow! Space Invaders!"



And so it begins.



The effects of playing 2600 Pac-Man



"Why are you still playing that game!"



What? Don't they Play Their Atari Today?

This foreign ad was pretty interesting. I guess they're trying to say that it'll take much time to go through all the games' variations. They probably forget that over 700 cartridges were released for the Atari system throughout its lifespan. How long would that take?

Anyway you can see the video on the Retrogamer website  
(<http://www.retrogamerfanzine.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/videos/videos.htm>)

Now I have something to ask you readers. For the December Issue of RT, I'm compiling a list of the Top 20 Game Classicgaming Commercials of all time. What I need is for you to send me what you say your favorite commercials are. I will accept ads from 1977 to 1990, which deal with Atari, Intellivision, Colecovision, and the lesser game systems. If possible I'll also accept early Nintendo and Sega ads. This will run from September 20th to November 30th. Once December rolls around I'll post the results. I hope to see what you guys think are the best commercials.

[Click Here to Send List of Favorite Commercials](#)

Until next time, always remember: M-Network will cure your video blues.

## The Many Faces of...Choplifter

by [Alan Hewston](#)

A while back, I decided it best to review "Choplifter" in September to reflect upon the 9-11 tragedy. Of games that fit this column, "Choplifter" is clearly the best '82 game with a theme of rescuing those in peril or need, and maybe of the entire classic era. I realize that there is some violence on the part of you as the pilot/hero, but this is only used to protect the innocent, and there are no points scored for destroying any of the enemies. Finally, I apologize in advance if this selection or timing offends anyone.

Broderbund, one of the most successful third party video game companies of all time, does not seem to get enough credit. "Choplifter" brings us not just a game, but 1 part of the greater whole the never-ending battle versus a common enemy - the Bungeling Empire. Are the Bungelings the first and maybe even the most well known classic era

common enemy to fight against? Battle them in "Raid on Bungeling Bay", "Lode Runner", "Championship Lode Runner", "Lode Runner -The Bungeling Strikes Back", "Lode Runner's Rescue" and more.

In this horizontal scroller, 64 UN delegates are held hostage by the Bungeling Empire. From the US command post (disguised as a post-office), you get 3 chopper sorties to fly into their territory, rescue all 64 hostages and bring them back home. The Bungelings start their patrol one tank at a time, but put more forces on alert once you'd saved any hostages. Eventually their full force can attack at once. 2 tanks, 2 jet fighters and 1 drone air mine (looks like a UFO). You can and need to destroy them but they always come back. Any enemy fire, or you landing on hostages will kill them and they do not come back. Tanks can only destroy you when you're on the ground, but any other overlap with the enemy or their weapon fire destroys your chopper. The jets attack less frequently, making one pass, then drop a pair of missiles. Finally, the drone air mine can move all about the screen, but can easily be outmaneuvered and outrun, but does not give up until it's destroyed. There are 9 chopper positions = 3 facing (L, middle, R) times 3 moving possibilities (L, stationary, or R). Your shots, when facing L/R will blast open the barracks and destroy airborne targets, but will kill the hostages. When facing middle, your dropped bombs will only affect the enemy, so fire away. The game's scoring is simply 3 numbers at the top of the screen: hostages: killed; onboard; & rescued. A perfect score of 64 rescued is very difficult but attainable. "Choplifter" was successful enough that Sega bought it, upgraded it and made it one of the first games to go from the home computer market to the arcade. More complex, the arcade game added chopper fuel units, 8 hostages max onboard, 20+ of 24 must be saved per level, and themes per each level. They added speech "Don't Leave" and screams when killed. See also RT issue #16 where Doug Saxon crowned the Sega Master System's arcade version with the MFof Gold. My review only covers the original version.



"A bit patriotic, but Americans love to display our flag"

Home Versions [list credits to Dan Gorlin]: First on the Apple 2 (Broderbund, '82 Dan Gorlin, who later founded Ariok Entertainment), C64 (Dane Bigham, Broderbund & Ariolasoft '82), Colecovision (Broderbund '84), Atari 8 bit (Broderbund '82, and then remade by Atari '83), Atari 5200 ('83 Atari), Atari 7800 (Atari '87 by Ibidine), TI-99 ('83 TI), Vic 20 (Tom Griner, Creative '83).

Rumor Mill: Atari 2600 (April '83 CES Kit), and also the Intellivision. Categories (10 points each for): Gameplay, Addictiveness, Graphics, Sound & Controls

Sequels: Arcade by Sega 1985, based upon and improved from the home versions.

Home Version Similarities: Except those in ( ): all home versions have: a pause (Vic); a pseudo 3-D perspective; background stars (7800,CV); 16 hostages in each of 4 barracks; begin play with 1 barracks on fire (7800); Bungelings gradually increase in number, from one tank, to up to all 3 enemy types, and up to 5 (all but the APlI) on-screen at once [2 tanks, 2 jets & 1 air drone]; anything hitting the hostages will kill them; gravity pulls the chopper down (Vic,C64), the chopper's destruction sequence is cool best if done airborne; there are no gameplay options (except on the CV which has 4 levels of difficulty); there is no high score but the current score is displayed until you reset (7800); angling the chopper blades onto the hostages will kill them (7800,CV). No version has a musical score, but the

CV added a short jingle for when hostages are rescued. All games end poorly saying "The End" or "Game Over" regardless of outcome.

1 vs 2 fire buttons: The Apple 2, CV, 5200 & 7800 use 2 buttons - one to fire & one to rotate the chopper. The others systems use one fire button both for firing (press and release) and rotate (press and hold move stick). Both methods work OK and neither is penalized other than as noted below. I had the most trouble on the Atari 8 bit Broderbund version.

### [Have Nots: TI-99 \(NA\)](#)

I thought that I had this version but didn't. My local TI club members were unable to help either, but I hope to secure one and review it eventually. A TI-99 medal may be unexpected for almost all TI games save those by Parker Brothers which as fantastic. But stay tuned for Star Trek: SOS!

### [Have Nots: Vic 20 \(34\)](#)

The venerable Vic has a cool intro screen with a swirling effect also seen at the ending unfortunately this does not help the Gameplay, which is very good (7). Everything's there to some degree, but a little different or limited. Primarily, a limit of only 1 tank, 1 jet & 1 drone air mine and no more than 2 at once. But then why do I even need to save hostages who can almost outrun me. They are chaotic stupid, and run around more like a group of line dancers until you land close enough to them at which point they promptly run aboard. Unlike the original, the tank fire can kill you slightly above the ground, but no higher. The Vic is unique in the addition of an audio chime warning of a jet's approach, which unfortunately looks a little like an A-10, and acts like one too, making a slow, steady pass, dropping about 4 bombs and then leaving. There is no deception other than a variation in altitude each appearance. The Addictiveness is cool (7), but no apparent pause and this may be the easiest version to score in the 60's on. Once you win, you may never play it again. The Sound is mediocre (5), almost annoying, especially the sound of the chopper just sitting. The Graphics are too large and the worst of the lot, but still respectable (6). Your bullets do skip off the surface and make added debris, which is neat, but not helpful. The Controls are well done (9), but somewhat sluggish when rotating or moving. A decent Vic 20 game.

### [Have Nots: Colecovision \(39\)](#)

The Gameplay is nearly complete (7), but somehow the drone air mines are completely missing and the jets come in so quickly that it is a matter of luck, not skill if you die. I may have been too generous scoring here since the gameplay is riddled with added difficulty maybe unintended. The Moon blocks your view, the barrack's fire is only deadly here, and the hostages truly have a death wish. Yes, they make an all out effort to get crushed by you, bombed by the tanks or to take you with them. This alone may not be bad, but then add in a hyperactive control scheme, gravity & then any landing other than soft and you'll autodestruct more on this version than all the others combined. The original only crashes if you hit hard and rear first. If it were not for the fact that there are 4 levels of difficulty and that the enemies on level one are slightly easier than most versions (definitely a change for CV), the previous added difficulties would really hurt the Addictiveness - but then some masochist would say "bring it on" and want these added challenges. Addictiveness scores superb (9), with the "" key as the pause. The Sound is effective (7) and complete. A bit odd sounding but that is overcomes with the added jingle upon each rescue landing. The Graphics are sharp (8), but may deserve worse due to the puny hostages & boring explosions. The Controls score an (8), since the game speed is so quick and jerky that it will take quite some time to hone those skills using the awkward CV controller. It might be best to use a Dreamcast & play emulation here not only for the controls but also due to its increased rarity. Available on both cart & cassette for the CV & Adam.

### [Bronze Medal: Apple II \(41\)](#)

This is the original system that the game was conceived on. It begins with a flashy Broderbund title screen and then followed by a demo only seen here and the Atari 5200 & 8 bit. The hostages cooperate fairly well and want to get rescued. The Gameplay is great

(9) and the best - hands down. But then in subsequent releases the goal was to duplicate the gameplay and not necessarily to improve upon it. Other versions did improve on other categories. It is frustrating as the AP II & 7800 are the only versions where a hostage can get killed off-screen. The others either do not keep track of it, or it is not possible to scroll fast enough etc. The original is also the only one where I've seen (& more than once) all 5 enemies hunt you simultaneously. Other versions may, but I've tried so many times that it must not be possible. Gravity makes it more realistic, but not significant to the overall physics involved. Only the Commodore versions, and Atari 8 bit original version do not have gravity. I did not penalize either way - it really just makes more work for your muscles. The Moon is visible but pretty much just keeps you from seeing clearly. All but the CV dropped the Moon as well. The Addictiveness is wonderful (9) with a pause "esc" key and you'll really want to save them all. The Sound is the downfall, but respectable (6). There is no chopper sound and as usual, everything would be better with external sound. The Graphics are nice (8) with good details, animation and colors. The Controls are super (9) but the button responses are slow or missed possibly in proportion to on-screen traffic. Using an analog stick can also take a little getting used to. This version is only on disk.

### **Bronze Medal: Atari 5200 (41)**

I concur with my predecessor that the analog controllers can hurt here, but using a Wico controller should help make them almost perfect (9) Controls. A point is lost either here or addictiveness as the pause is not easy to use. Also that due to the analog nature and maybe gravity, your chopper can appear to be down, but is slightly angled you do not notice this until a hostage runs into the blades. The Gameplay is complete and impressive (8), except I've never seen all 5 enemies at once, as is the case for all but the Apple 2 version. The hostages are cooperative for the most part, here and on the Atari 8 bit & C64 as well. Thus the Addictiveness is very fun (9) and the pause is the "pause" key. The Sound is pretty good (7) with nothing missing. The Graphics are sharp (8), but they have the red and blue colors reversed on the flag.

### **Bronze Medal: Atari 7800 (41)**

I'm guessing that when this came out the average player was hoping for the arcade version and may have been disappointed here. I'm sure that the 7800 could have handled the more complex arcade game, and too bad they did not compact both versions into this cart it might have been the first game ever to have both an original and revised edition of a game. Atari made sure to add in their logos here representing the border of the Bungeling Empire. The Gameplay is very good (7), but strays from the original, and still no added game options. The tanks shots go too high - making it more difficult and hard to get use to. There is only one jet, and I've never seen one when I'm in the air. it appears to only attack if you are on the ground. There is no passing pattern, no warning, just whomp there it is - on the screen and a guaranteed hit every time - with no chance to avoid it, or shot them down. The drone shows up in the same spot and is awfully big. It looks like 3 enemies are the most at once. Worst of all the hostages are dumb here too. The Addictiveness is very fun (8) with a pause button on the console. It is a very difficult or frustrating version (as mentioned above), but the better graphics and somewhat faster action make it easier to keep starting a new game. This is yet another one of those uncool 7800 titles that will not let you pause once the game is over, and then poof the score is gone. Gotta plan to pause just before you lose your last life just to see how you did. The Graphics are fantastic (9), clearly the best. The game certainly looks like it came from the Nintendo era with large multi-sprite tanks (too large for my tastes) boasting its graphics capabilities. Everything seems a bit big, making less room to maneuver and plan for landing. The stars and moon are replaced with scrolling clouds and mountains for better perspective and for a bright & cheerful daylight attack. The Sound is crisp (8) also the best, but mediocre for the 7800. The Controls are super (9), but over-responsive and also awkward to use those 7800 controllers (even the pad since the stick is too small to get the precise control needed). But you should eventually overcome most of this and deal with the jerky reactions and hyperactive movement of the chopper. I'm sure that I'll get the most negative feedback on this version, but it strayed too far from the norm.

### **Gold Medal: Commodore 64 (42)**

Similar to the Atari 5200 & 8 bit, with no major problems. The Gameplay is impressive (8) and complete, and more importantly, there are no changes or deletions that take away from the original. But . . . just as in the 8 bit and 5200, I've never seen all 5 enemies at once, so it may be a bit easier to win. The Addictiveness is great (9) with a pause button "run/stop". The Sound is very good (7) and nothing is missing or odd. The Graphics are simple, sharp and clear (8), not overdone. The Controls are perfect and responsive (10). Available on disk & cart.

### **Gold Medal: Atari 8 bit (42)**

There were 2 versions of this game released on cart. The original Broderbund version scores only (41 and would get a Bronze) and later Atari re-released it improving upon the controls, added gravity and some graphics a bit. I'm using the Atari version for comparison here, which scores exactly the same as the 5200 port save for the Controls are perfect and responsive(10). The pause button is the "break" key. Available on disk & cart. I guess I recommend the Atari 8 bit just slightly, only because it probably is slightly easier to find, plus add in that the 5200 is essentially the same and also not too hard to come by. Don't forget that this is a photo finish and one minor detail could make the difference - so only complain if you think the TI or CV is the best ;- ) Most of these versions are great games.

Thanks to [www.orphanvideogames.com](http://www.orphanvideogames.com) who got me the CV version CIB. Mention this review to them & save 20% off your next purchase. Also thanks go Tom Z. who saved me the best of Broderbund CV manual a while back. And recently I got the 8 bit cart from a good trader on RGVC, Ron Slaminko

I almost did a quick review of Super Breakout, but I have some very important errata from last month, which takes us to...

## **The Lost Many Faces of...Bump 'n Jump & Burgertime**

by [Alan Hewston](#)

**BUMP N JUMP**: One of our readers, IntelliSteve, told me that I forgot the C64. I've made that mistake before, but was pretty sure that I did my homework. So I checked with our C64 cart expert Mat Allen, who confirmed that "Burning Rubber", '83, by Colosoft, a game I have which is similar (but I didn't mention) was not an official release. Turns out Steve realized that he was thinking of "Up and Down", but this red flag was not for naught. Mat noted that the Japanese version of B&J was entitled "Burning Rubber". I checked the KLOV & sure enough it had the exact same description for both games. So "Burning Rubber" deserves credit as being an official release of B&J. Gameplay is impressive (8) and complete, with at least 8 car types & more roadways 32, & more information on screen than any other version but see below. The Graphics are very colorful & effective (7), but nearly all of the detailed on-screen text is horrible and unreadable (in purple). This keeps it from a gold medal. Addictiveness is very fun (8) with the "space bar" as a pause, and you can find out what your score is after the game, with a nice high score saving feature. Extra life every 70K. Sound has all the effects which are soft and mellow, but a very nice & long musical score making it nice (8). Controls are excellent (10). Overall (41) just missing the gold.

**BURGERTIME**: Just a bit too late I finally found a good site with Apple II game reviews including a nice review of Burgertime - so here is my update. Controls +2 to (9) since there is joystick control, just not on my version. Addictiveness (10). Joystick control plus continuation (see below), may make this one of the most addictive games of the era. As I hoped, there are indeed >10 maze patterns to play, all unique to this version. Once past level 10, you can "continue" - one level below the highest one completed. So you may eventually complete all (50?), If anyone has the "full" version of Burgertime on disk, PLEASE help me to get it so that I can take a run at this marathon game. Overall (44), sufficient for the Gold medal. My apologies, but at least I did give credit as best as I could.

Come back next month, assuming that I can finish "Pitfall!" on the Atari 2600, 5200, 8 bit, INTY, C64 & CV. Then return for "Dig Dug" in Nov and "ST:SOS" in Dec (to coincide with

the next Trek movie). Alan Hewston can be reached at: [Hewston95@stratos.net](mailto:Hewston95@stratos.net) or to trade see my new pages at: [http://my.stratos.net/~hewston95/Hewston\\_vg.html](http://my.stratos.net/~hewston95/Hewston_vg.html)

## **The TI 99/4A** **A Year Later, And Some Thoughts** by [Jim Krych](#)

We, my National Guard Unit-B Co. 112<sup>th</sup> Engineers, always seem to have Civil Disturbance training during the month of September. They have been in Ravenna and of course there is always rain! The past two have taken on a much more serious note. When you do room-to-room fighting, things get real intense. And, since 9-11 you really start taking your training extremely seriously.

Wow, one year later. Those events changed so much. Even retrogaming here in the Cleveland area was affected. Because we had used the Armory for the previous two CCAG's, we were suddenly without a place for the show and came very close to not having it for 2002.

One TI user, Richard Bell, was able to see for him self the events of 9-11 unfold. And I personally know buddies who have been called to active duty.

And, a lot has happened in year for me as well. The better visits with my son Treyton, the various reviews of the Devastator, Maximum PC and Geek.Com in particular, my Fiancé Lori, etc. And, other Treyonics related events. Plus, the soon-to-be-released Gyruss Story on Good Deal Games! I also was able to get a fully loaded Geneve!!! I am just waiting to get a proper monitor cable, from da boys from California.

I will eventually publish the bug's list that I have on the 99/8. This is a unique file in that it shows what TI was trying to fix with the 99/8, and their comments as well. With the new computer/game room downstairs being planned, we'll have the system set up fairly soon.

I am surprised that an ABASIC compiler is not available. At least one that runs on the PC for brute force and speed to generate 9995 code for the Geneve.

There was a show in Dayton not too long ago, and several TI users were involved. They showed off a TI and a Geneve, and it seems that the TI games were quite popular. And that is very true. Good game play extends throughout the generations. A comment about this was made and I would like to further it.

There have come these products that are Atari 2600 clones, NES clones, etc. I am wondering that maybe a TI clone with the most popular games, could be done as well. Or for that matter, a clone with the enormous PLATO library, and all of the educational material could be sold as well.

What appears to me is that the next step in emulation is the hardware emulation itself. While emulation on a PC will always be more inexpensive, it's really nice to have an actual piece of hardware to hold and play with. And, with more and more of our generation having access to the Field Programmable Gate Arrays, the tools to design them, and FPGA's that are ever-increasing in abilities, replication of the custom chips is becoming more and more a reality.

What used to take hundreds of thousands of dollars, or more, can be done for pennies. This bodes well for us, in both console and computers. I have even found a few sites where the TMS 9995 has been replicated, as well as the 9902.

What I would envision is a hand-held device with the top TI games, and enough buttons to handle the general inputs needed, plus a digital pad for control.

The TI's main strength lies in the educational software that was developed for it. I am really surprised no one has taken this as a possible product to the home school market, and day care as well. As easy as emulation is, it's just great to pick up a piece of hardware, attach it to the TV, turn on the power, and away you go.

I remember when we were able to bless a small school with quite a bit of TI gear. They used that hardware for several years and really enjoyed what the TI computers allowed them to do. Of course, I was happy to clear my house of the equipment. I still laugh when I recall that the guy came over with a small car, and my whole living room was full!!! We had to use my mini-van and his car to get the computers and extras to the small school.

Games! My favorite was Defender, Parsec, and Donkey Kong. And of course, we all enjoyed Tunnels of Doom. I still have floppies that have games on them that were left off many years ago, just waiting for someone to play them!

We have another Treyton visit coming up this weekend! I am enjoying every moment of ever visit. Even the scratches the little guy may leave on me-I paid a high price for them and it was worth it! And I know that when he grabs my hand and says "buttons" as we go towards the computer room, I know just what he wants to do! See ya soon little guy!

Hey, does anyone out there know how to cut plastic discs, thin material, and notch them? Please contact me.

I listened to music from the "Right Stuff", Josh Groban, and Dallas Holm while writing this.

"Hi, my name is Jim W. Krych. I am a 33 year-old electronics technician. I am also a 14-year veteran of both the USCG, active, and the Ohio Army National Guard, reserve with B Co. 112<sup>th</sup> engineers. I can be reached at: [jwkrych@adelphia.net](mailto:jwkrych@adelphia.net) or [jwkrych@n2net.net](mailto:jwkrych@n2net.net) I have a three year-old son, Treyton, and he is the CEO of Treyonics! I have also been blessed with a beautiful fiancé her name is Lori!!! I have founded my own business and, of course, I named the company after my son Treyton! Our flagship product is the Treyonics Home Controller System Model 9908. Better known as the...

*Devastator*

"Serious Gaming"

## **Stardate 7800**

by [Adam King](#)

Greetings, gamers. This month we're going to take a break from 7800 arcade ports and look at some ports of top computer games. Several top games on the Apple/Atari/Commodore systems made their way to the 7800. Are they just as good as their PC brethren? Let's find out.

Before we begin I need to make a correction. Last month I said the 7800 version of Food Fight was the only home version of the arcade game. Marco Nadal shot me an e-mail saying that a version was also released on the XE Game System. That's probably the reason I neglected it right there. Anyway, thanks, Marco.

### [Ballblazer \(Atari, 1987\)](#)

This computer hit was brought to life by LucasArts, and received raves from many sources. The 7800 is no different. Basically this game is much like soccer; the object is to hit a ball through goalposts. You and your opponent, wither a friend or the computer, control two machines that grab the ball with a force field. The game uses a split-screen and you view the playfield from the point of view of your pod. Once you grab the ball, move to the goalposts and shoot. If your opponent has the ball, you can try an knock it loose, or guard your goal. Obviously the person with the most points at the end of game time wins. This game has overtime for ties.

This game is one of the few 7800 titles to have decent sound. The title theme is excellent and the sounds during the game are pretty good too. You get a neat theme once you make a goal. This is because the cartridge has the 5200's POKEY sound chip installed to get around the limited sound capabilities. It's too bad programmers didn't keep doing it. The graphics are pretty good as well; very fluid and smooth. The color scheme could be better,

though. The controls are easy to learn and use. You may get confused because you can't wonder the field aimlessly. The camera always adjusts so you're always facing the ball, so watch out. This game is great for two players, and if you go it alone, nine skill levels lets anyone play. This version of Ballblazers is just as much fun as the 5200 and Atari 8-bit versions, if not more. Play Ballblazer!

Score: 9/10

### [Choplifter \(Atari, 1987\)](#)

The famous search and rescue game comes to the 7800 after a flyover on the 5200. You play a chopper pilot wh's out to rescue 64 world delegates that have been kidnapped by the Bungeling Empire (which can be found in many of Broderbund's games). However the empire has mobilized a squad of tanks and jets to stop you. Your chopper can fire back with its machine gun and bombs (while facing forward). You need to find each barracks and shoot it to free the prisoners. Sometimes the tanks do it for you. Once the prisoners are out they run aroun and wait for you to pick them up. You need to land and let them board your chopper. While you're on the ground tanks will try to shoot you so you can't stay too long. Be careful, you can acidentally kill the very people you're trying to save. Once you're loaded up fly them back to the base and drop them off. However if you're killed all the men on board are dead as well, driving up the body count.

The graphics are pretty good, with smooth animation, coloful images and some parallax scrolling, but the background looks a little featureless. Plus it's daytime instead of nighttime on the other systems. The sounds are less impressive. The intro music sucks and the sounds are pretty thin and uninspired. There are also some issues with the controls. First, you NEED a two button controller, so the standard 2600 stick is out. Using the 7800 joypad works but can get a bit squirley at times, so you may want to use the ProLine Joystick. 7800 Choplifter isn't the best version but it's still pretty fun to play every now and then.

Score: 8/10

### [Karateka \(Atari, 1987\)](#)

Now for the bad news. This popular computer game was designed by Jordan Mechnar, who went on to create Prince of Persia. In this 7800-only port you play a karate expert who's been chosen to infiltrate the fortress of the warrior Akuma and rescue the princess. You must face down guard after guard, and you don't even have any weapons other than your fists and feet. You have to use karate to knock down each foe before you can advance.

I'll say it right now: Atari ruined this for everyone. The graphics are decent with good backgrounds and characters, but the animation is jerky. The sounds are non-existent. There are sound effects during the fight, and some odd music during the opening story, but that's it. The worst part are the controls. Going from keyboard to joystick is hard enough, but something must have stumbled. You can hardy do anything since the controls won't respond much, so expect to see the THE END screen many times. Obviously this title should have spent more time in the dojo.

Score: 3/10

## **Where is the Classic Game Merchandise?**

As I look around toy stores, I see all kinds of toys being made for classic television shows, classic monster movies and even classic rock stars. From action figures to statues and more, there seems to be a big nostalgia kick going on. Whether it is HR Pufnstuf figures or a Freddy Kreuger set or even Ozzy Osbourne, I am amazed at all this stuff. But as I look at all this, I cannot help but think that there should be some classic video game merchandise. So I ask, "Where is the Classic Game Merchandise?"

If you look at the video game market you see that it is growing in leaps and bounds. A new record for sales is set each year. The market is even at a point where the sales of

video games is bigger than the amount of money that Hollywood brings in from box office sales (You will see some places where they say that video games are making more money than Hollywood, which is a major crock. It is doing more than box office sales, but that does not include video tape and DVD sales, licensing to cable and television plus merchandising and placement ads.) But there is little merchandising, especially in the rich history of video games. I cannot help but wonder why no one has tried to cash in on this potential gold mine. With this in mind, here are a few ideas for classic game merchandise.

### Action Figures

With the wide range of characters that came out of this era, it would not be tough to find enough different ones to create. From Peter Pepper from Burgertime to the Joust riders to Q\*Bert, there are plenty of great characters. And this does not even include the ultra famous Donkey Kong and Pacman (both of which may be tough to get licensing for). Besides figures, there could be playsets, where you would get a diorama of a video game. Take Joust for instance, you could get one of the riders (either the Ostrich or the Crane) along with some rock ledges, a lava pit with a hand coming out and an enemy. They could sell one for each character, with the other one having a pterodactyl instead of the troll hand. Now think about this for Q\*Bert, Burgertime, Robotron, Centipede and you have a ton of great possibilities.

### Handheld Game

Imagine a small arcade game that looked alot like the old Coleco handhelds. Now imagine that you could plug different carts into it. Each cart would have different games. You could buy the system for somewhere from \$40.00-\$60.00 and then buy the games for anywhere from \$10.00-\$15.00 each. Then you could play your mini arcade and switch between Frogger or Zookeeper or Berzerk. The system would have a joystick and two buttons, plus a start button.

### T-Shirts

They could come up with the Arcade series. Each shirt would have a cool drawing on the front of the main characters. On the back, there would be the original marquee. You could even put a little arcade machine on the sleeve with the name Arcade Collection or Arcade Series T-Shirts. They could start off with some of the more popular ones like Frogger, Asteroids and Burgertime and later add some of the cult classics like Crazy Climber and Pooyan. If the Atari shirts are all the rage with the youth of today, then this could also be popular.

## Letters to the Editor

Once again we have a reader who wants to know about a classic game from their past. So do your best to help.

***There was an arcade machine that was out at about the time of dragons lair, I think it used the same technology. It was a like a motor bike racing game but futuristic, you sat on the seat. I used to love the game when I was a kid, any idea what it could have been ?***

***Thanks.  
gridrunner (i hope )  
cheers lee***

I do not know what the game is, but our readers may. If you know, please email us and let us know. Thanks!

***Why are there so many bad games for the Atari 2600? signed Not an Atari Fan***

Actually, you could say the same thing about the Nintendo 8-Bit, the Playstation and any popular video game system. The bottom line is there are alot of companies that are willing to push out any old dreck, just to make some money. With the Atari 2600, the problem was greater, mainly because there was no quality control and no licensing fees. Anyone with an idea and some money could make a game for the Atari 2600 and they did. While

there are a lot of dogs on the Atari (all the Mythicon games to start with), there are also a ton of great games. Just look at the Activision library alone. There has to be a good 15-20 great games there. And that is only one company.

***I really like the Namco Museums and Midway collections on the Playstation. Any other game collections like these for the Playstation?***

Yes, there are a handful of others. Probably one of my favorites is the Konami Collection. With Gyryuss, Pooyan, Time Pilot, Roc n Rope and quite a few others, it has a bunch of good games. There is also the Intellivision Collection as well as the Activision Collection. Both are less than perfect in their emulation, but at the low prices you can find them now, they are worth picking it.

## **Conclusion**

A short issue, but it has been a hectic month. I had eye surgery and that took away quite a bit of time as I did some recovering. There were also fewer contributors as well. Hopefully next month will be bigger and better. Thanks again for responding to the survey and keep playing those classics.

-[Tom Zjaba](#)

(This issue was done while listening to Jefferson Starship and the Grateful Dead.)