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Phillyclassic - The Growing Pains

The fourth annual Phillyclassic came and went. Overall, it was a huge success. Attendance was huge again, there was a full complement of vendors, the selection of limited edition carts was overwhelming, the arcade was nice and there were some excellent guests. But beneath all the positives, there were some warning signs of things to come. The show really did experience some growing pains as it moves more and more from a small and friendly little show to a more larger and much more modern show. The Phillyclassic has truly made it and what it has gained in attendance and corporate sponsorship, it has lost in the small town feel that is such a part of classic gaming.

The first thing about Phillyclassic is that attendance was once again very robust. While total attendance was down a bit from the previous year (last year, the highest numbered tag I saw was 1105, while this year's highest number was 965). Granted, the attendance may have been a bit higher than this as I cannot see every number and that is still a very impressive number. And considering that the show was earlier in the year, in a year with such bad winters and also considering that we are still in a recession as well as a war, the attendance was extremely impressive. Hats off to David and the crew for putting the word out and getting the people to come. And with the show being spread over three days, it kept the crowds to a very tolerable level. While there were times when things got a bit hectic, there was always plenty of room to move around and you never had a long wait for an arcade machine. Once again, I must compliment the Phillyclassic crew for providing very wide aisles. It made navigating the show a breeze.

The arcade this year was smaller than past arcades and did not feature as many classics as the previous year's arcade, but it did have some of my favorite arcade games. Zookeeper especially was a favorite of mine. I was able to watch the world champ of Zookeeper and he showed me how truly average my top scores were. He was putting up scores of 5,000,000 and complaining about how bad they were. I have only topped 500,000 on one occasion and until Phillyclassic, I thought I was a pretty good player. Oh well, just another bubble burst.

Where the arcade was smaller, there were plenty of other systems set up for play. My personal favorite was the giant screen set up with the Gamecube. Playing Godzilla on a huge screen was great fun. Also the projector with the X-Box and the Halo matches was a favorite of show attendees. I also enjoyed playing some games for the Playstation 2 that

have not been released over here yet, like Chaos Legion. And on the classic front, I must say that I was extremely impressed with the Adventure game for the Atari 5200. The screens were beautiful and they kept the classic block look of the main character (as we call him, Billy the Block). It is looking to be a must have game for any Atari 5200 fan.

If you were into limited edition carts, you needed a very fat billfold to afford them all. Atari Age alone had about 30 games for sale. They ranged from \$20.00 up and there was some very nice games for sale. They really had one of the most impressive tables at the show and were among the nicest vendors there. And the special badges they made for everyone were very professional. They were without a doubt the class of the show. Bob Polaro returned to the show with a new game, Stunt Cycle in a very professional box. It was a bit pricey, but from the quality and time that went into it, it was well worth the price.

A big difference this year was guests. Last year featured one guest, Bob Polaro who returned to the show. This year offered two other guests who really made the show. The first was Cindy Morgan, an actress who starred in Tron and Caddyshack, two classic movies. She was one of the nicest and most down to earth people you will ever meet and made it her personal quest to meet everyone at the show. Not only was she a very nice person, she still is a very attractive woman and really lit up the room. The other big guest was Sid Meier who is one of the biggest influences in the computer world and a living legend. Unfortunately, he came quite late and his time at the show was very limited. But anyone who had a chance to meet with him (I was able to talk to him for a short period and will never forget it), left with a sense of awe. He was a very friendly person as well as a very knowledgeable person and I can only hope that he will return to the show next year and hopefully have more time.

The vendors were plentiful and the selection was enormous. Just about every system imaginable was represented from the common to the obscure. I saw systems that I rarely see there like Super Grafx, CDi and others. If you wanted something rare, odds are it was there. Prices varied from reasonable to pricey. With ebay, it is tough to get any real deals. But if you came back on Sunday, there were quite a few deals to be had. Overall, the dealers were very friendly and more than willing to answer any questions.

While the show was for the most part all positive, there were a few negatives that was there. These are an example of the growing pains that all hobbies endure. The first was something that is pretty much a rarity in classic gaming, theft. While I personally was not affected by this (at least to my knowledge), there were a few dealers that I spoke to that had items stolen. In the past, you could leave your table unattended and not have anything stolen. But as the attendance increases and the value of the games gets higher and higher, this problem will become more commonplace. If you go to coin, comic or card shows, these problems are big. So the low incidents at the show was more the exception than the norm, but that bit of innocence has been lost.

Another disturbing trend was the dumping of merchandise. The last few years were so brisk in sales, that noone really dumped anything. You had a person here or there lower some prices, but it was quite rare. But this year, there was plenty of price cuts and package deals, some bordering on insane. One stand was dumping out boxed games for the Atari 2600 for \$2.00 each. Another was offering 165 Atari 2600 carts, with many rares like Pitfall II, for \$150.00. Another had 50+ Nintendo games for \$60.00 with some good carts mixed in. If you were looking to open a video game store or website, you could find some great deals at this show. Almost every table was blowing out something or other as dealers tried to increase sales and minimize the amount of stuff they had to cart home.

A few things that I would change for next year's show is to shorten the hours of the show. The days were just too long and it did not allow vendors a chance to go out and get some dinner. Sure, there was food available in the lobby, but many of us consider this a mini vacation and want to go to a nice sit down restaurant and enjoy a meal. Grabbing some carnival style food at a stand and eating it quickly behind your table is not enjoyable. The show should end at 6:00 PM instead of the 9:00 they had it end on Saturday. Friday should have gone from 5:00 PM to 9:00 PM, instead of the 12:00 AM they had it end at. Maybe it is just me, but I do not want to be at a show until midnight. I must admit the free

food that David and Phillyclassic offered was a nice gesture.

Another change I would do is to dump the band. While the band they had playing were talented, they were too loud and made it hard to conduct business as well as just talk to others at the show. If they want to provide musical entertainment, they should hire a DJ to play songs from the era of video games, the 1980's as well as video game based songs and provide some funny commentary. It would be more enjoyable and easier to control the volume.

While I do enjoy the door prizes, I really wished they had stayed with one format for giving them away. In the past, they pulled numbers out of a bowl and this was the fairest way to do it. But this year it went from just picking numbers at random to doing a bizarre version of selection that eliminated people based on what color clothing they wore or their sex or height. While it is nice to experiment, I think the old tried and true method works best.

All in all, the Phillyclassic was a great show. It offered more than most gamers could want and gave everyone their fill of games. It is still the a great deal, despite the rising costs of attending as well as selling. But if they can continue to improve the show as they have the past few years, next year's show will once again be a bargain.

When Is Enough, Enough?

by Mark Scott

Come gather my children, and I will answer that age-old question of gaming.... When is enough, enough?

You know what I am talking about...your so-called "spare room" is overflowing into the hallway, there is carts, RF Cables, Things with the C= logo, and old joysticks all over the place. You find an Atari Lynx in the kitchen cupboard with the Cornflakes, and happily leave it there, because there just isn't anywhere else to put it. You feverishly have dreams about the ultimate storage facility to keep all of your games, carts, consoles, C=64's, Amiga's etc etc in the one place, but you realize building such a gamer shrine would probably bankrupt a small nation. Sound familiar?

My recent ponderings on this matter were caused by that most dreaded of phone calls, "The Parent Asking to stay at your house for a couple of days" call. Luckily between the time my Mother last stayed and this call, my spare room had assumed the above-mentioned "fullness", thus giving me a perfectly reasonable excuse to say no. However it did also cause me to go and look at the room in question.

Suffice to say, "Oh.....My.....Gawd!!" (with strong nasal Brooklyn accent if you watch Friends...and I do) was the mildest response I had. It sort of creeps up on you, like Old age, or Tinea. Once I managed to force the door open, I was confronted with Boxes and Boxes of crap. The aforementioned Old Joysticks filled an entire box of their own. There were Amiga magazines from the 80's (btw except for gaming, I hated the eighties...The music...the hair...ohh it was all so so bad). Empty boxes for my Dreamcast. NES games I forgot I had. A kitchen table. An old bass guitar. (How did those get in there? Taking up valuable room) Two Monitors (not 1084s unfortunately) that came with something I bought. 8 Amiga 500's. 6 Commodore 64's. 1541 drives in various states of disrepair. My "Spare NES" and in case the other 3 in the house don't work, A spare Atari 2600. Little Plastic Baggies with SNES carts in them. Two non working Sega Mega Drives (hanging on to them for parts you see). A Colecovision cart (Mouse Trap I think). Crap, rubbish, bits and bobs. Power supply's for all of the above times 10. I'm sure you're getting the picture.

As I forlornly sat amongst all this, gamely pretending to "organise" and "straighten up in here" I realized I didn't want to part with any of it. Each and every thing reminded me of a game, a person, a time, a place or just about an awful lot of fun.

So when is enough, enough? I remember thinking again of this question when my brother asked if I really needed the Sega Saturn that we spotted at the market, as this was yet another console, which we would need to collect for. A very valid question.

So when is enough, enough?

Never.

PS. I Bought the Saturn

Words & thoughts by Mark Scott, a 33yo gamer with far, far too many Commodore 64's, Amiga's, Atari 2600's and time. Written whilst I played Bounty Bob Strikes Back on a Commodore 64, in Perth, Western Australia. During the day I was a mild mannered Telecommunications Technician, but at night, I collect and enjoy C64, Amiga, Atari 2600, ST, NES, SNES, Coleco, basically just about anything involved with old style gaming. I can be reached at gene.simmons@optusnet.com.au (yes THAT Gene Simmons...still)

Sites of the Month

We always look for sites that deserve some attention. So if you have a site or know of a site that you think should get some attention, let me know and I will do my best to cover it here.

Atari Archives

This first site has sent me a ton of emails about new stuff on his site. While alot of it does not interest me personally, I think there is enough for the dedicated Atari fan, especially the fan of the Atari computer to find interesting. There is a ton of archived books full of information about the Atari computers as well as stuff from old freenets and other stuff. If you are at all interested in Atari, especially the computers, I am sure you can find enough stuff on this site.

<http://atariarchives.org/>

Ginger's Classic Corner

This is one of those sites that seems to have been abandoned (last time it was updated was 1999), but it has some cool reviews of arcade games as well as alot of attitude. Ginger may be a bit foul mouthed, but I do enjoy the reviews. I found it by accident when doing a search for Zookeeper and found myself reading quite a few of her reviews (I am assuming it is a her, Ginger is not exactly a man's name). So if you want to enjoy a bunch of reviews, check it out:

<http://www.geocities.com/TimesSquare/Lair/4798/index.html>

COMMERCIAL VAULT

by [Adam King](#)

Greetings, gamers. This month I have two commercials featuring the Atari 8-bit Computer line. Specifically the Atari 400. This computer, the younger brother of the 800, may be made for kids but many gamers still have fond memories of it. Here are two commercials, both of which can be downloaded at this website. Interestingly enough, both ads being with the phrase, "Atari is bringing the computer age home."

NOTE: I apologize for the poor quality of the screengrabs, the video clips I got are pretty bad.

Commercial 1

This commercial shows that the 400 can help children learn to speak foreign languages. Here we find a father using the 400 to teach his son French. Not that kind of French, so watch your mouth.



"Come on, son. Just listen to the Ataari."



"Watch me impressed my grandparents with my lingo."



"Our grandson can speak French. Yay!"

Commercial 2

In this spot, we find a father on his way to the office, then we see him using his 400 to check his stocks. That doesn't stop him from sneaking in a quick game of Space Invaders.



"Bye guys. Gotta go the the 'office'."



Working hard on the 400? Or hardly working on the 400?



Ha! Ha! Busted!

Now for the big announcement. When I asked about the idea of a Commercial Vault CD, the outpouring of support was amazing. So, I decided to go ahead with it. The Commercial Vault CD will happen, but I'm not sure when it will finally be released. I hope to have more details next month.

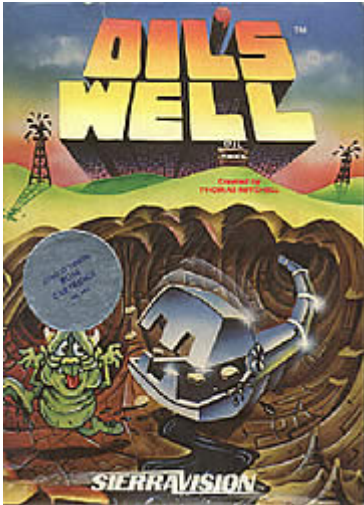
The Many Faces of...Oil's Well

by [Alan Hewston](#)

"Oil's Well", by Sierra, is my most beloved 8 bit video game that most people have never heard of. From the votes/ replies to my 1983 classic VG survey, those voting for it often voted for other home computer titles and seem to think that all you need to do it play it once and you'll be impressed. This text was possibly edited more than any other to date as I kept finding more information on a very similar title,

"Anteater", the 1982 arcade game by Tago. Then, just as I was almost done, this already

long review was extended further upon discovery of the missing link – “Ardy the Aardvark”, ’83 by Datamost. From its manual, it’s a 95% match to “Anteater”. So why would Datamost risk a lawsuit and copy “Anteater”? Even the title is only slightly different, as an Aardvark is a specific type of Anteater. Then I made the connection that the C64/AP2 author is none other than Chris Oberth, who wrote the original arcade game. I’d love to track down Chris Oberth today to get the full (no doubt interesting) story behind the tale of these three video games. 1982 and ’83 marked breakout years for original games on home computers and I hope to salute several here.



“Ardy the Aardvark” was here!

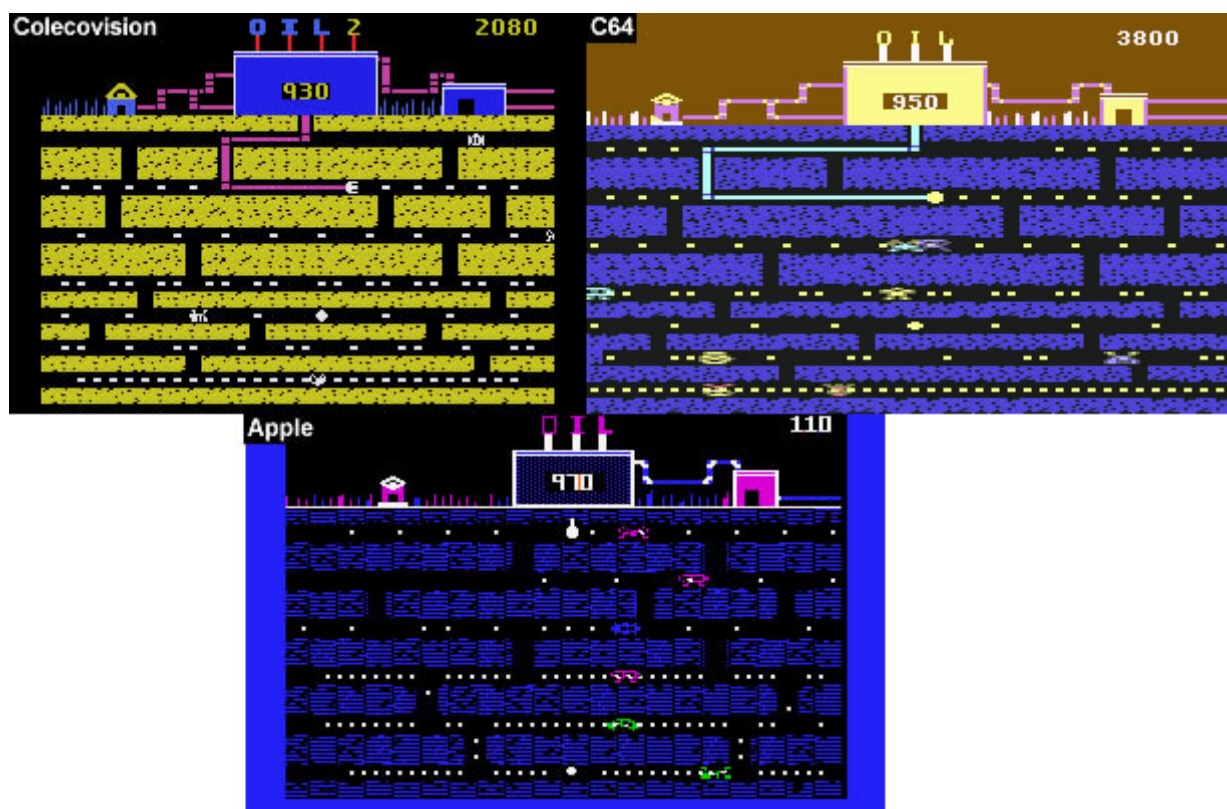
This 20th anniversary tribute for “Oil’s Well” would be more complete if combined with “Ardy” and “Anteater”, but of the other 6 versions, I only have the TI-99/4A port of “Anteater” by Romox. I lent / lost my C64 copy of Ardy. Unfortunately, the TI-99 cart is not even close to the same game as the arcade. The only similarities are ants & anteaters inside an underground maze with things to collect & avoid. A fair description would be that the Romex title plays like the rodent & cheese stage in the game “Evolution” (a 1983 title I must review later this year). Assuming that all Romex titles are ported identically (Atari 8 bit & Vic 20), then there is no official home version that is correct for “Anteater”. So look for the C64, Apple II or Atari 8 bit version of the much better “Ardy the Aardvark” - maybe we’ll review that title in RT issue #154.

All 4 versions of “Oil’s Well” are identical and very similar to “Anteater” as follows: one at a time, you must clear out 8 underground mazes (screen); movement is in 4 directions U/D/L/R; collect all dots on the screen (oil deposits) then move to the next maze; avoid some enemies with your Drill Bit, others do not let them touch the pipeline; collect a special power pill; bonus points; and earn extra lives; and most importantly, extend and retract your character/object. Every maze of “Oil’s Well” gives you a 99 count timer to complete each maze, with successive rounds get harder via more complex mazes and/or faster enemies. In “Anteater” the days get shorter and the nemesis, the Spider comes out earlier. There is no equivalent to the spider, which comes out of the Anteater and along its tongue. More realistic than the Anteater’s incredibly long tongue, is the Drill Bit and pipeline in “Oil’s Well”. The representation of your character (life) in both games is among the most unique ever. You are both the Drill Bit and the attached pipeline, which extends outward, but always remains connected to the surface (the refinery) at the top of the screen. Like “Surround”, wherever the head moves, the body (pipeline) is laid down in the tracks. Upon touching any deposits, they are instantly scored (and absorbed, back into the refinery). Each maze has cleared out paths, so you are not really digging, per se, but always move at a constant speed while extending and similarly a constant, but faster speed when retracting. But why retract?

There are many spots and paths on the maze and you’ll need to hit them all at least once. You’ll need to retract to protect yourself from or chase after enemies, get out of dead ends, snag the goblets and any enemies for bonus points, and finally because you cannot overlap your own pipeline. The fire button retracts your pipeline and Drill Bit for as long as you hold it. Land Mines are enemies deadly to only your drill bit, and not your pipe, whereas all other enemies, despite differences in appearance (12+ types), are identical, called Oozies – which are deadly to your pipeline. Munch the Oozies with your Drill Bit

and you get bonus points for eliminating them – more points the deeper they are. The enemies are not affected by the maze itself, but rather move at a constant speed, at the same depth as the horizontal channels of the maze – enter from one side (L/R) and drift along until they exit. Special oil deposits called Petromins (one per each screen) slow all Oozies for about 20 seconds, and (save for the CV) causes any Land Mines on-screen to explode harmlessly. Every 10K earns another life (Drill Bit).

“Oil’s Well” is easy to learn, contains sufficient randomness, is quick-paced, start out slowly and gradually build in difficulty, and highly playable – making for a great classic. But if you are not a maze game fan, then steer your drill bit elsewhere as your joystick will get quite a workout, from constant turning and maneuvering in this . . . dare I say this it - “severe” maze game. Take a pause when you want, but when the action is live, you’ll make more turns and moves per minute of play in this game than 99% of all maze games ever made. It’s not white knuckle time here, but harder you work, the better your score, and I like that. A nice feature that could have been added, and hopefully some day will be included in a remake is to include couple fixed, but randomly located invisible hazards. Perhaps some very hard rocks or corrosive chemicals, or lesser fire ants that would either damage (time lost off your clock) or destroy your Drill Bit. Better still, what if they included simultaneous 2 player action! Fighting over the oil deposits and prizes, yet still working together to complete each screen before time runs out. Cooperate and watch each other’s back at times, or if your lives were shared. Why not make some killer mazes where only one might survive the geometry due to a Land Mine along the top row and one of you will not escape. I hope that you found this review pretty slick (bad pun intended).



Clever artwork - the Drill Bit & pipeline weave through the instruction book.

Arcade: None, but similar to Tago’s ‘82 “Anteater” by Chris Oberth, later seen in Stern cabinets.

Home versions: All in 1983 unless noted, by Sierra (Sierra On-Line or Sierra Vision)

Commodore 64 & Atari 8 bit (Thomas J. Mitchell), Colecovision (’84 Don McGaflin) and Apple II (Ivan Strand & Brian Strand),

Have Nots: Apple II (41)

My first reaction was - the sound would keep it off the medal stand. Sure enough both the internal-only sound and the lack of a few of the sound effects makes the Sound only fair (5). The other 3 versions are all very good (7), with many nice effects and audio cues, but no actual music – just some background noise to help add some color to the sounds effects. The Gameplay is complete and all versions are identical and equally superb (9). A feature unique to the AP2 is that in the 2 player option, players can select a differing skill

levels. The Addictiveness is wonderful (9) on all versions. The gradual increase in complexity, a pause and choice of three starting levels (Unleaded, Regular and Premium) help to challenge you to play again until you complete a level. Then witness the completion of your refinery and the congratulatory screen - "Stock Certificate – 1000 Shares Oil's Well Refinery". Although it's not spectacular, it is very rewarding goal, and achievable if you are a decent VG player. The AP2 pause button is the <Esc>. Likewise the Graphics are outstanding (9) on all versions, with some fast action (12+ enemies at once) and the well done graphics of the Drill Bit & Pipeline. There are only a few places where the graphics detract or hide things visually. The Controls are outstanding (9) for the Apple II, as either poor programming or the analog sticks results in sluggish maneuvering - not ideal for an intense maze game like this. Even after much PT, you'll easily make more mistakes on this version than the others combined. The primary fire button is not used, instead the harder-to-use (unless you're a lefty) secondary fire button is used. Hmmn. There is no keyboard control option, and it's only available on diskette.

Bronze Medal: Colecovision (43)

My first reaction - too bad this excellent game came out late in the life of the system, and didn't spread to other consoles. The Sound is very good (7). The Controls are outstanding (9), just a little harder to use the CV controller for maze games. Unfortunately, even though there is a two player option and the <1> is the pause on both keypads, they are not always active. So you cannot have your pause and a non-CV stick at the same time. Combined, this deducts a point from Controls. The cart is a bit rare.

Gold Medal: Atari 8 Bit & Commodore 64 (44)

Once again a tie, but in this close race, all 4 ports are great to play..

Atari 8 bit

My first reaction is here's another one we need for the 5200. This was the first version made and is great. The Controls are perfect (10) and the pause is the <Esc>. Available on disk but semi rare in cart format.

Commodore 64

My first reaction was how much I loved playing this on diskette back in its day, then later to be thrilled to add the cart (albeit only uncommon) to my collection. The Controls are perfect (10) and the pause is <F7>.

I'm certain that "Oil's Well", "Anteater" or "Ardy the Aardvark" would all make a great remake on modern consoles, or home brew – like for the 5200, 7800 and INTV. With considerable effort, a semi-decent (playable) version may be achievable for the Vectrex, 2600, Vic 20 & O2. Special thanks go to Tom Zjaba for my first copy of the CV cart & manual, Stephen Knox for the Atari 8 bit version, and Tom McLaren for the Apple 2 port. Where would this column be without friends.

Sorry, no time (or space) for "Keystone Kapers" but come back next time for Indy racing month and another 20th Anniversary tribute to The Many Faces of "Pit Stop" and "Pit Stop II". The Atari 8 bit & C64 have both versions, but only the original is found on the CV & the AP II only had the sequel. Alan Hewston is can be contacted at: Hewston95@stratos.net or http://my.stratos.net/~hewston95/Hewston_vg.html

Protector Review

by [Daniel Foot](#)

The packaging is professional right down to the robust black box and the etched Protector symbol proclaiming the games individuality. Inside an original Vectrex cartridge, and although it looks brand new, must date back to sometime in the 1980's. Everything is so exquisite to the highest calibre; the simple yet informative instructions, the individually numbered cartridge and the outrageous bright pink overlay proclaiming "Protector" in authentic 80's font. This is RETRO to the maximum. There are only 100 of these babies released worldwide and I was lucky enough to get a hold of one to take for a spin. The game is based on the 1980 Williams Electronics "Defender" designed by Eugene Jarvis in which you pilot a craft and rescue "humanoids" from the savage and forbidding aliens. It's

a case of zap or get zapped as you come up against "Baiters, Bombers, Pods and Swarmers" who will go out of their way to make sure the humanoids stay in their evil clutches. This side-scrolling shooter is fast, I'm talking off the dial fast, and at times you'll need every last weapon of your arsenal to combat the enemy and just stay alive for the few frenzied minutes of intense in your face gameplay. Going on the age of the Vectrex she is likely to have heart failure when you unleash the fury and grandiose of this game upon her. Be advised. 9.7/10

This game produced in the U.K. by Alex Herbert. Alex will soon be releasing another new game called YASI and the release date shouldn't be too far away. Checkout the website: <http://www.herbs64.com> Reviewer: Daniel Foot.

What Color is Your Joystick ?

By [Fred Wagaman](#)

There is a fairly famous book called “What Color is Your Parachute” by Richard Nelson Bolles. In this book, one goes through self-examination to determine what kind of person your are and where you’d like to work.

I got to thinking about this and how it applies to people that are part of this hobby after a conversation with David Newman at the Philly Classic last month.

(The show was great. Please proceed to kick yourself if you missed it.)

Anyhow, we were noting the different kinds of people that were at the show. We noticed three major categories of people and combinations thereof.

The first category was the game players. These were people on the lookout for games they wanted to play. They spent a lot of time in the arcade or hanging by the game TVs. These people may or may not have had a list of games they were looking for. They weren’t concerned about game rarity, but more of its playability. They may have been looking for hardware as well as software and didn’t really care about looks and condition as long as it worked.

The second category was the game collectors. You could pretty much guarantee that these people had a list with them. The spent most of their time scouring the tables and looking under, over, around and through the stuff hoping to find something they didn’t have. Condition did matter to them. These were the kind of people that were willing to spend money just for empty game boxes. These people also took a lot of pictures of items or tables of items just to show what was out there. These people also brought things just to show (show off?) so that other collectors could see unusual stuff.

The third category was the businessperson. These people were at the show to make money. The only time they weren’t at their table was when they were looking for items from other people’s tables to resell. Many of them relied on experience or price guides to help them find things that they could buy low and sell high. There is nothing wrong about that practice, but their attitude was much different than the other 2 groups. Much more detached. It could have just as easily been stamps or Tupperware or Beanie Babies that they were dealing with. They may find a deal on something, buy it in bulk and then try to resell it.

Gross generalizations aside, there weren’t many people that fell into only one of these three categories.

There was the player/collector, player/businessperson, collector/businessperson and the rarest (maybe not) of them all, the player/collector/businessperson.

The Player/Collector was the kind of person that had a list of games they were looking for their collections, but weren’t afraid to buy something not on the list just to play it. They brought things to show, but also had stuff to sell. They might not have been the most organized and they might not have had all their stuff priced. They may have cut deals with kindred spirits so as to get things into another collector’s hands. These were the most

excited people at the show. They would find things for their collection and still buy something because it was cool or they had it when they were younger. These were the people working on an Atari collection, but would buy an Intellivision because they didn't have one.

The Player/Businessperson has all the attributes of the businessperson, but would buy a game or two for themselves to play. After they got home and after all of the receipts were deposited and after all of the merchandise was put away. This is a person that still appreciates a well made game, but has moved from the nostalgia aspect of the hobby. They like to use the business side of the hobby to justify and finance their purchasing side.

The Collector/Businessperson is someone with a large collection. Much of the charm of the hobby has been lost, but they still like to have it. They know how to wheel and deal and will do so to get something they want. Whether they'll get a chance to play it or not is another story. They too like to use the business side of the hobby to justify and finance their purchasing side. They are a little more detached than the Player/Businessperson because they have so much. They knew the value of what they were selling and knew what they were looking for.

Last but not least is the triple hybrid. The Player/Collector/Businessperson. These people have it all. The business acumen, the player's twinkle in the eye and the collector's hunt-it-down spirit. These were the kind of people that came to the show with a budget, spent it, made it back on sales and filled in the holes of their collection. They networked at the show and traded email addresses along with games. They also knew the values of things, but might spend a little more to get something to play, depending on which side of their split personality won out.

Now maybe these categories could use a little better definition. I certainly am not the final authority when it comes to this. You know how to contact me if you have any thoughts about it.

My wife fell into the businessperson category. She isn't much of a player or collector. She was there to help me sell stuff for the money. There is nothing wrong with that. I saw plenty of spouses and spousal equivalents doing the same thing on both sides of the tables.

I would have to guess that I fall into the player/collector category. I did buy some things to play (Metroid Fusion, Return Fire Maps O Death). Also I bought things I wanted for the collection (Sega Saturn Dragon Force, Telestar Combat). Even though I sold things just for the money that I thought they would bring in (Sega Saturn Iron Storm, Final Fantasy II), I'm not really that good at it. People wanted to know my website so they could buy stuff from me later on. Many were surprised that I don't have one and that I'm just another person like them.

So, what are you ? Are you one of these, or are you something else entirely ?

Fred has been playing games for over 25 years and actively collecting them for almost 15. The 2500 + games that he has takes up most of his home office and game room. He lives in Denver, PA with his understanding wife Jennie, his 7 year-old, Smash Brothers Melee-playing son, Max and his 3 year-old, 4th player, Lynzie. He would like to thank the people that pointed out that the Telestar Combat was a tank controller long before Steel Battalion was ever even dreamed of. He had forgotten about that one. Now he has 2 Telestar Combats (including one with the box!) thanks to the Philly Classic. He can be contacted at fcw3@mail.ptd.net

Stardate 7800
by [Adam King](#)

Welcome back to the 7800 Column. As we know, April is known for two things: spring sports and April Fools Day. On that note, this month I'm serving up a pair of unusual sports titles. These aren't your run of the mill carts, they both put interesting twists on common sports.

[Basketbrawl](#)

This basketball game is pretty much the ancestor to titles like Arch Rivals, NBA Jam, and NBA Street. The leaders of a tough city have organized a basketball league to hopefully curb inner-city gang wars. However, the players decided to take it up a notch. In this game, there are no rules, full contact is allowed. One or two players can go at it in 1-on-1 or 2-on-2 competition, either teaming up or head to head. You can control one of six tough players, each with their own abilities, plus you can play on three types of courts: the city, a junkyard, and a rooftop. Once the ball is thrown in, its streetball action all the way. As you try to score baskets, you can throw punches to knock out your opposition. The referee on the sidelines will throw knives at the players as well, so watch out. If you hit them enough times you can take them out of the game, leaving the other player to go it alone. However you can't take too much time fighting; you still have to work on getting the most points before time expires. Occasionally a power up will appear, such as milk to recharge your energy, and lightning to boost your speed.

This game is no NBA Street, but still manages to be an entertaining sports title. The graphics are good, with detailed players and some nice graphics touches. The sounds are the opposite. The only music is a horrible title theme, and the sound effects aren't too special. The game plays pretty well, with simple to use controls. While there's not much depth in terms of strategy, what's there is enough to provide some good two player in-your-face action. Plus it's just fun to knock out the other team and score points unopposed.

Score: 8/10

[Ninja Golf](#)

Ah, yes. The infamous Ninja Golf, a game you will only find on the 7800. For those of you who haven't heard of this interesting game, here's the lowdown. You're a ninja student who has almost completed his training to become a ninja Master. You just have one final test left: nine holes of Ninja golf! When you begin, you tee off at the first hole by aiming your shot and setting the distance. However, this isn't just PGA Tour Golf with a ninja. After you hit the ball, you need to go after it, but you have to battle other ninjas, as well as gophers, toads, and other obstacles along the way. Basically it's like Kung Fu Master on the links. Things get interesting if you have to cross over a sand trap or through a water hazard; now you also have to take out snakes and sharks. To battle your foes you can use kicks and a limited amount of ninja stars. Once you reach the ball, you do it again. When you reach the green at the end of each hole, you don't simply putt out. Instead you must battle a dragon to finish the hole.

The graphics are decent, but not great, with plenty of colors. Once again the 7800 fails to produce good music and sound effects. The controls work well, though the fighting can be tough at times, plus it's hard to jump and attack. As far as this game goes, it's not stellar, but its still pretty fun, plus it gets plenty of points for originality. Defiantly one to try out.

Score: 7/10

The lesson here is you don't always have to follow the standard rules to have fun playing sports carts.

Retrogaming Times Top 10 Video Games from 1983
By Alan Hewston

Here are the results of your votes for the best video games originally released in 1983. I searched various games databases and started with a list of about 50 games then asked the RT staff to narrow that list down to 40. I collected a whopping 85 votes this time. A 50% increase. I had the benefit of asking all previous voters to contribute and most of them did. I apologize to those who heard from me more than once, like Tony, but hey at least it was not Spam.



A 4 picture collage of these titles that I could gather. Alphabetically from the A's at 1 O'clock (the top right), then to the lower right, then lower left and finally, around the clock until T's at 12 O'Clock (upper left).

Every one of the 40 classics received at least one vote, and out of 85 voters, 72 voted for the full 10, but it was tough to ONLY pick 10. I was surprised to see “Crystal Castles”, and “Montezuma’s Revenge” make the top 10. Especially the latter, never having been at the arcade. Several voters mentioned that this list contained home computer games that they never heard of - all the more reason to praise those computer titles which finished in the top 15 - ie see who just missed it finishing 11th & 12th. Unfortunately, I’m sure that I missed a few cool games in my list of 40, but there’s only one that I am ashamed to have missed. “Beach Head” by Access. I betcha 10 of you will email me (and go right ahead) and ask to change one of your votes to “Beach Head”. My bad.

- (48) Star Wars: Arcade
- (44) Spy Hunter
- (43) Tapper
- (38) Gyruss
- (37) Elevator Action
- (32) Mario Bros
- (32) Montezuma’s Revenge
- (31) Crystal Castles
- (28) Dragon’s Lair
- (28) Track & Field

56% of all voters choose Star Wars: Arcade - just a hare fewer than “Robotron 2084” got in ‘82.

A note for the future. I will not put games on the list for 1984 that are text adventures, text/hires graphic adventures or RPGs. I’ll only put games on the list that were at the arcades, or at least released on 3 home systems. But . . . RPG’s with on-screen movement or action like “Gateway to Apshai” will be there. The readers here are mostly action/arcade game players, so RPG’s and text adventures games might get a nice share of votes, but it would not do them justice. Perhaps I should survey each of those categories some time later. Let me know.

Finally, thanks to all those who voted and look for another one this Summer for 1984.

For comments, questions or to ask for a complete set of results contact Alan Hewston at hewston95@stratos.net. OK here's the next 5, which just missed the cut (27) Archon, (27) Boulder Dash, (26) Food Fight, (24) Jumpman, (23) Discs of Tron. Final note, I just discovered that Jumpman Junior should have been on this list as well, so I probably should have merged them into one -which may be what the voters did anyhow. FYI: "Oil's Well" got 12 votes.

New Issue of 2600 Connection Available

The insanely late Sep/Oct 2002 issue of 2600 Connection is finally shipping.

#74 (Sep/Oct 2002) CGE Post-Show Thoughts by Lee Krueger, 5200 Haunted House II 3D Review by Jesse Hardasty, Skeleton Review by Lee Krueger, Atari 2600 Joystick Costume by Paul Slocum, News & Notes, Letters, Classifieds.

Ordering information

Subscription prices for one year (six bi-monthly issues): United States: \$9; Canada/Mexico: \$10.50; International (outside North America): \$12 (payment in U.S. funds please). I can also accept subscriptions for any number of issues at the rate of \$1.50 (US), \$1.75 (CN/MX) or \$2.00 (world) per issue.

I will accept cash, but prefer check or money order, payable to: Russ Perry Jr. Payments via PayPal are accepted if not from a credit card, and I will also accept 4 \$0.37 stamps per issue for US subs, but like cash, these methods are not preferred.

The 2600 Connection
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Letters to the Editor

With Phillyclassic done and the job of getting the site organized again, I have not had alot of time to answer emails. But I did manage to find a few gems between the hundreds (and I do mean hundreds) of requests for roms.

I was wondering what humans did before video games were invented? Life must have been pretty dull.

As a person who has lived part of his life without video games (I was about 10 years old before I got my first taste of video games in the form of a pong unit I received for Christmas), I can tell you that while I love my video games, they are something that mankind can live without. As far as what people did before video games, pretty much the same stuff that they do now when they are not playing video games. Things like reading, playing non electronic games, sports, watching television, etc... These kids don't know how good they have it.

Is Activision really the first third party company?

The first third? Sounds like the beginning of a math problem. Seriously, yes they were the first company that was not the manufacturer of the system to make games for the system. Pretty much every company out there from Electronic Arts to Infogrames to even 3DO owe a big thanks to Activision for being the first to venture out and blaze a trail.

My mom tells me that if I play too many video games, I will go blind.

Ha! Ha! Ha! How the stories change. When I was young, it was not playing video games

that would make you go blind or put hair on your palms. You can tell your mother that she is wrong. Video games will not make you go blind, they actually are quite good for you in reasonable doses. Unlike television, video games help build good hand/eye coordination as well as develop problem solving skills. Some video games also teach gamers about history (like the many Koei series) or mythology. There is quite a bit of reading in many video games which helps not only build reading skills and speed, but also reading comprehension. With different mazes and boss characters that require memorization of paths or patterns, they also build memory retention skills.

So while video games in high doses is not good (as can be said for just about anything), if you play them in moderate doses, they are quite good for you and one of the better leisure activities.

Conclusion

The month is coming to an end, but I still managed to squeeze out another issue. Enjoy it as the weather gets better across the country and now that the war is behind us. As I look over this issue, I realize that almost none of the top 10 games from 1983 were on my list. I had one, possibly two games from the list on mine. I am not sure if that is a reflection of my unique tastes in games or what? I think I was the only person who voted for Munch Mobile (I have a soft spot for the game). Oh well, I never was one of the crowd.

Check back next month for more fun and possibly some big announcements. We will have to wait and see.

-[Tom Zjaba](#)

(This issue done while listening to some very strange songs. I actually found and really like a Pokemon song that is about Jigglypuff. I have put it into rotation with some 60's psychedelic music and some theme songs like the theme to Jaws for a truly bizarre mix).