Retrogaming Times

Issue #84 - We are on a streak now! - June 2013

Table of Contents

01. Introduction
02. Video Game Hunter
03. Youtube Classic Gaming Videos
04. Sites of the Month
05. WOW Moment
06. Video Game Therapy - The Dig Dug Session
07. Conclusion

Introduction

Now that I have made it three months in a row, we can all breath a sigh of relief. I am getting my writing legs back and getting back in having a schedule. Heck, if I keep it up, I may actually get a few readers and who knows, maybe even a contributor. We can all dare to dream! But since I am not posting this anywhere on the internet (other than this site), it will take time to build. I want it to be one of those things that old readers just happen to pop on the site and go "What? Retrogaming Times is back? Cool!"

This month, I am going to try and add a few new things to the newsletter. I am going to slowly expand the size of it. But I plan on keeping the few articles that I have been doing since I returned, the Video Game Hunter and WOW Moments. I plan on adding to those, some articles that I used to have in the past. One being where I spotlight websites that deal with video games and the other where I will talk about fun Youtube videos that deal with video games. So sit back and enjoy the every growing Retrogaming Times and be happy knowing this added content will not raise the price. We will remain free (unless you want to donate, but I am not holding my breath) and well worth it!

Video Game Hunter

(A boxed TI computer.)

I was assembling my classic video game collection and enjoying all the new systems and games that I found. But one system from my youth that I had not come across was my first computer, the TI 99/4A. Yes, I cut my teeth on the Texas Instruments computer that was overlooked as an educational computer (thanks to commercials with Bill Cosby). While it was a very good computer for education, it also had quite a few really good games on it.

As I was growing up, my Uncle Ron bought a TI computer and that was my first experience to the computer. Many hours were spent playing Tunnels of Doom, Alpiner and Parsec. Later on, he went into selling TI computers and software. I picked up one from him later and it was my first attempt at programming.

Years later, I was looking through the classified section on AOL (yes, I have been on AOL for decades, go ahead and make the jokes) and I came across an ad that grabbed my attention. A man in a city about three hours away from me was giving away a bunch of TI 99/4A computers and accessories. He said it was free to the first person to pick it up. It was too much to ship and he did not want to be bothered by it. I sent him a quick email and within hours, I received a reply back that it was mine if I wanted to pick it up. I arranged to pick it up the next day.

(Alpiner, Crazy Climber on a mountain.)

The next day, I packed my son Alex in our car and drove the three hours to his house to pick it up. I figured that I had more than enough room as the trunk was empty as was the back seat. How much stuff could the guy have? Well, as I arrived, I found that I sorely miscalculated.

As I arrived at his house, he greeted me at the door and took me to a room in his house that was full and I mean full of TI computer stuff. There were at least six boxed TI computers, over 100 carts, hundreds of disks, magazines, disk drives, controllers and more. I was stunned by the sheer amount of stuff. To say this guy was a TI fan was an understatement. I asked him why he wanted to get rid of this stuff and he said he has moved on to PCs and he wanted to regain the room it was taking up. He knew it didn't have much value and didn't want to be bothered with trying to sell it and ship it.

Before I left, he gave me an email address of a person who emailed him and asked him if they could get a computer for their disabled child. Having a child with a disability, I could sympathize and told him that I would email them and gladly send them one of the computers.

When I was done filling the car, I had almost no room left. The trunk was filled to capacity. The back seat was overflowing. I even put a few things on the floor in front of my son. But I did fit all of it into my car.

When I got home, started sorting the stuff out. I put together a system for myself with one of each game. Then I made another set with the computer and a handful of programs and emailed the person and sent it out to them at no cost. I then started to make up sets and was able to trade the rest of it to different collectors to get games that I did not have for the TI and other systems.

(Sneggit, what a fun little game.)

Once the sorting was done, I had a marathon game session. I played games that I have not played in a decade. Games like Sneggit, Slimeoids and Anteater. It brought back so many memories of when I was young and enjoying these fun games.

Toutube Classic Gaming Videos

Time for the first installment of Youtube Classic Gaming Videos. This is where I pick a few videos on Youtube that deal with classic games or game related stuff and link them here for you to enjoy. Hope you enjoy these little nuggets and feel free to send me links to ones that you would like to see.

Pac-Man Meets Mario
Ever wonder what it would be like to see Pac-Man in Super Mario Bros? Me neither. But luckily this Youtube person did and made a fun little video. It is short and fun, I especially like what Pac-Man does with the flag. Here is the link - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jX2Vd6gZCbw

MegaFrogger
This is one of those videos that is so stupid, it is good. You essentially have someone dressed up like a frog, running across lanes of traffic. Do not try this at home or anywhere for that matter. I am not sure if the guy is drunk, but it would explain alot. Still good for a laugh. Here is the link - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Vb2brJkGhs

Sites of the Month

Here are the first two sites for me to turn my spotlight on. Feel free to send me any sites that would like to seen spotlighted.

Atari Arcade
Want a site where you can play Atari classics and it is all legit? Then look to Atari Arcade! It has 8 classic Atari games with updated graphics and they all work without any downloads! You have Centipede, Missile Command and even Yar's Revenge! And it is free! You can beat that deal. Check it out and have some fun. Here is the link - http://atari.com/arcade#!/arcade/atari-promo

Arcade Art Library
Want to see a bunch of Arcade Art from marquees to side art to control panel overlays? This site has a large selection of different ones for you to look at, turn into backgrounds on your computer or whatever. Here is the link - http://arcadeartlibrary.com/arcade_art/index.php

WOW Moment

I had experienced video games that talked before, but this month's WOW moment was a video game that took speech to another level. I can still remember the first time I heard Space Fury. I was at a comic show with my father at some mall an hour or so from my house. We were set up at the show and like I did at any show in a mall, once I tired of the comic show, I would go off with my cousin Dave and explore the mall. We looked for toy stores, book stores and arcades. Anything to kill the time until the show ended.

This mall had an arcade and we made a beeline for it. With some money left from the show (I had a paper route as well as getting money for helping at the show, so I always had some arcade money.), I went to see if there were any new games to play. I always liked to try new video games and a trip to a new arcade would often lead to a new gaming experience. As I walked through the arcade, I was greeted by the usual games that filled every arcade - Pac-Man, Space Invaders, Donkey Kong, etc... But I was looking for a new experience.

As I roamed around the arcade, I saw a giant alien head looking around on the screen. I was drawn to the game like a moth to a flame. Luckily no one was playing it, so I grabbed a quarter out of my pocket and dropped it into the machine. As I hit the start button, I was greeted by a talking alien. He was not just

talking, he was talking to me. I was floored! "So a creature for my amusement...prepare for battle!" he said as I became excited by the game.

I quickly cleared the first screen and was sent to the docking level. Simple stuff. But then the alien talked again. I was not used to a game where the speech fit with the game. In Gorf, it was just a few canned lines "Long Live Gorf", etc... but in this game he was talking right to me. Granted, I would find later on that the speech became repetitive, but at the moment I was amazed.

What really blew me away was when the game ended, he told me I was an adequate opponent. That made me want to play again and see if I could get a better ranking. Many dollars later, I finally received an outstanding warrior compliment from the alien. I felt satisfied that I had defeated the one eyed monster, even if he made me somewhat poorer.

While the game never had quite the same excitement as the first time, I do find myself playing it occasionally, even if it is nothing more than a mediocre Asteroids clone. But for a brief moment back in my youth, I really felt like the game was directly talking to me and challenging me. And that is truly a WOW moment.

Video Game Therapy - The Dig Dug Session

Yes, I am bringing back this section of the newsletter that was started back in the old newsletter days and later I took them to my other game site - Arcade After Dark, where I transformed them into a comic strip starring myself (if you ever cared what I looked like, you can see me as the therapist). Yeah, I was doing video game therapy way before Wreck It Ralph (and for that matter, I had video game characters go to the Tapper bar and even did stories about video game characters with lives outside of video games all the way back in 2006). Anyway, here is another installment of Video Game Therapy that I hope to turn into a comic strip in the future.

DigDug - Doctor, I am experiencing some personal problems.

Dr. Sane - What is your problem?

DigDug - I find it embarrassing to talk about.

Dr. Sane - You can relax here. I am here to listen, not judge.

DigDug - I know, but it is just that I have never experienced this problem before and it makes me feel like less of a man.

Dr. Sane - Let's start at the beginning, when did you first experience this problem?

DigDug - Well, I was going around my game, digging along as I always do, when I came across Fygar the dragon. He did not see me as he had his back turned to me. I was ready to pump him up and blow him away when it happened.

Dr. Sane - What happened? Please continue.

DigDug - It happened. My hose didn't work.

Dr. Sane - Your hose?

DigDug - Yeah, it's my weapon in the game. I shoot it into an enemy and then pump them full of air until they pop.

Dr. Sane - And this time your hose didn't pump?

DigDug - Worse, it wouldn't come out. I aimed it at him and I shot or so I thought, but it just laid there all limp and lifeless.

Dr. Sane - Did your get your equipment checked out?

DigDug - Yeah, I went and had it looked at and they said it worked fine.

Dr. Sane - So you think it is psychological?

DigDug - I don't know Doc. My hose has never let me down before. It was always there when I needed to pump up a villain.

Dr. Sane - Did anything happen before this that was different than in the past?

DigDug - I had a few rocks dropped on my head, but that is par for the course in my game.

Dr. Sane - Did any rocks hit your hose?

DigDug - Not that I remember, but then I don't remember much.

Dr. Sane - Any other traumas in your game?

DigDug - I have been burned numerous times by Fygar.

Dr. Sane - Burned?

DigDug - Yeah, he's a dragon that breathes fire.

Dr. Sane - That may be the problem. Your hose may have been damaged by the fire.

DigDug - I never thought of that. Guess, I will have to get it checked out.

Dr. Sane - Come back and let me know if this is the problem.

Conclusion

Another issue in the books! Hopefully I can keep this streak going. I am enjoying writing this again. See you next month!

Tom Zjaba (This issue was written while listening to Goo Goo Dolls, Beatles and the Doors.)

Tomorrow's Heroes©Tom Zjaba 1997 - 2015

This archive has been simplified from the original source for preservation - links have been removed.