Retrogaming Times

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CCAG, The Wrap-up

The show is now only a memory, but what a wonderful memory it is! The show exceeded our expectations and really came into its own. With over 125 attendees, almost 50 tables of stuff for sale, trade and display, the show really grew! For a complete look at the show, including a ton of pictures, CLICK HERE to see the full coverage!

By the way, we are planning on having the show a little earlier next year. We are looking at a late May date, so as not to compete with the Jagfest. This way, it will be a good month from the Phillyclassic and a month away from the Jagfest. So mark your calendars and prepare to attend another fun show!

Devastator, Just the Facts!

Last month, I gave a review of a new MAME joystick called the Devastator. Creator Jim Krych, a fellow Clevelander, dropped it off at my house for a good week to test. I was quite impressed with it and last month's review should attest to that. But alot of people wanted to know more. How much does it cost? When will it be available? Will it be Macintosh compatible? Well, I can answer all three of those questions and more for you! The cost will be $450.00 before shipping, it is available now and there will be an adapter to make it Macintosh compatible!

Now I am sure you will want to know where to find out more and where to possibly order the joystick, right? To show you how impressed I was with the stick, I have given Jim some webspace to promote it and will help with the orders. Since I am already set up for credit cards, it is much easier for him.

If you want more information about the Devastator and to see more pictures of the bad boy, then CLICK HERE!

Show Me

By Fred Wagaman

Millions and millions of Atari systems have been sold over the years. Tens of thousands are still in use. Supply is plentiful. Anyone that wants one can get one. Blah, blah, blah.

That's good news for any classic gaming fan. A quick look at ebay shows over 2000 Atari 2600 items listed. Most are going for reasonable, heck, even cheap, prices.

Chances are, if you are reading this, you already have an Atari 2600, lots of games and plenty of controllers.

Chances are, you are still finding Atari carts at flea markets, thrift stores and yard sales.

Chances are, you are still paying very little for these items.

Is there anything that is going to change that ?

Maybe.

Having been at the Philly Classic show and hearing about the one in Cleveland last month, I believe that there is something in the air that may change the way our hobby operates. Maybe not as much as ebay did, but significantly none the less.

During the last couple of years, shows have popped up. Electronicon in Philadelphia a few years ago had a couple of dozen attendees. The Philly Classic Show drew well over 200 this year. The show in Cleveland basically quadrupled their attendance in a single year. The Classic Gaming Expo (<http://www.cgexpo.com />) in Las Vegas started as the World of Atari in 1998 and has tripled the amount of space it uses since it began. This show has also become the place for classic gaming developers to announce new items. It is literally becoming the classic gamer's equivalent to E3.

So what does this mean to us as collectors and players ?

Over the next few years…

I believe that you, as a collector, will be buying and selling a lot of your stuff at a show.

I believe that you, as a player, will be buying new and fun classic game carts at these shows.

I believe that collectors, players and yes, profiteers will begin to accumulate things with the sole purpose of taking it to shows.

I believe that more and more collectors and players will network at these shows and will widen their connections when it comes to classic gaming.

I believe that there will be more shows, regionally and locally organized, with a single "large" gathering once a year.

And I believe that this will change things significantly.

And if you disagree, just wait. You can tell me how much you disagree with me when I see you at the show…

(Fred has been playing games for over 25 years and actively collecting them for over 10. The 2500 + games that he has takes up most of his home office and living room. He lives in Denver, PA with his understanding wife Jennie, his 5 year-old, button-loving son, Max and his soon to be 2 year old, 4th player, Lynzie. Fred can be reached at fcw3@postoffice.ptd.net)

Most Underrated Atari 2600 Games

By David Mrozek, The Video Game Critic

I've been an Atari 2600 fan since childhood, and I've seen too many games that never got the credit they deserved. Maybe it's because their graphics turned people off, or maybe they just didn't live up to their arcade counterpart. Whatever the reason, the purpose of this article is to highlight Atari 2600 games that never seemed to get the praise they deserved. For more classic game reviews, check out my site at www.videogamecritic.net. And if you have any comments, don't hesitate to send me an email at dmrozek3@home.net.

Donkey Kong (Coleco 1981) B-
The Atari 2600 version of Donkey Kong has been subject to an inordinate amount of ridicule over the years, which is a bit unfair. Granted, there are only two screens, but keep in mind that even the more advanced versions on other consoles only had three screens (at most). And the two that are included are very well done, with excellent control and flicker-free graphics. Sure, the ape and fireballs are cheesy looking, but at least Mario looks good. The main problems with this game are the sparse sound effects and only one skill level.

Galaxian (Atari 1983) A-
This classic space shooter is similar to Space Invaders, but features improved visuals and dive-bombing aliens. The 2600 version is impressive, with multi-colored aliens, excellent sound effects, and the same intense action found in the arcade game. There aren't quite as many aliens in the formations, but they are more spaced out and tougher to hit. Galaxian features nine skill levels, providing more than enough challenge. I only wish they hadn't programmed that cheesy orange border around the screen.

Dodge Em (Atari 1980) B-
This highly underrated game looks plain, but don't be deceived. Dodge Em is a very cool game. You race your car around a screen with four concentric squares filled with dots. The trick is to evade the crash car that is driving around the maze in the opposite direction. Avoiding the crash car requires quick thinking and good reflexes. The one player game, which usually only lasts about a minute, is surprisingly hard and strangely addicting. There is also a two-player mode in which a friend can control the crash car. Dodge Em is like a fast paced Pac-man. Don't be turned off by the minimal graphics.

Pressure Cooker (Activision 1983) A
This is one of those games that really justifies holding on to your old 2600 console. Pressure Cooker is fun, original, and even makes you think! The idea behind the game is that you are a cook with a list of orders. You need to catch condiments (tomatoes, cheese, lettuce, onions) and make hamburgers to order. When one is done, you must drop it down the correct chute. The neat thing about this game is that you can build several burgers at once, juggling the condiments while trying to keep track of the orders. The graphics are top

notch and the kitchen is well designed. Your chef looks great and the condiments are easy to differentiate. Even the control is perfect. This game was widely overlooked, which is too bad, because it's great! It’s the next best thing to working at McDonalds.

Centipede (Atari 1983) A-
I know what you’re thinking. Yes, I know. The graphics absolutely SUCK in this version of Centipede. There’s no getting around that. The mushrooms are little red squares, and your cannon is a big red square. Unquestionably, Atari should have put less effort into that fancy title screen and more into the in-game graphics. But in spite of the graphics, there’s simply no denying the awesome gameplay. The action is intense, and all of the elements of the original arcade game are included. The bugs look okay, although the centipede flickers quite a bit. Joystick control is fine, but using a track-ball is even more enjoyable. Centipede triumphs despite its poor graphics, thanks to the super fun gameplay.

Stampede (Activision 1981) A-
This is one of the most underrated Atari 2600 games of all time. You control a cowboy on a horse moving up and down the screen trying to lasso cattle approaching from the right. If a group of cattle starts to fall behind you, you can nudge them forward to buy yourself some extra time. When you let three cattle pass you, the game is over. The concept behind this game is very original; I’ve never seen another game like it. It’s also extremely challenging and addicting. And it seems like every time you play, you get a little better.

Boxing (Activision 1980) A-
People either love or hate this game. The simplistic graphics feature an overhead view of a boxing ring with a black and a white boxer. These guys look pretty goofy, but at least they’re easy to discern. One or two players can pound each other during two minutes of intense boxing action. Despite the simple controls, there is some subtle strategy involved. You can keep your distance with jabs, or go in for some ferocious combinations. Close bouts are a riot. The tension and excitement build as the last few seconds tick down. Will the boxer who’s ahead stay aggressive, or try to waste some time? On the down side, this game can make your thumb very sore. There are two speed settings. Never bet on the white guy.

Steeplechase (Sears 1980) C+
This Sears-exclusive game makes for some surprisingly good four-player fun. I pulled this one out when some friends were over, and we had a ball! Four horses run across the screen jumping hurdles of various sizes. Using the paddle controllers, you adjust the height and timing of each jump. It's not easy. The first horse to make it to the right hand side wins. There are three computer skill levels, but playing against three friends is the main draw. The primary fault with this game is that the jump height indicator is on the far right, and it's tough to keep an eye on both that and your horse. But if you’re looking for some four-player action, Steeplechase is worth checking out.

Crystal Castles (Atari 1985) A
Atari deserves a lot of credit for squeezing this elaborate arcade game into a 2600 cartridge. You control a cute little bear trying to collect all of the dots on the screen. There are a surprisingly large number of attractive, pseudo-3D stages. Your bear is faced with an army of colorful, detailed enemies including crystal balls, walking trees, gem eaters, bees, ghosts, skeletons, and witches. Not only did the programmers capture the look and feel of this game, but all of the familiar sound effects and tunes are also included. Impressive! As icing on the cake, there are eight difficulty levels and functioning difficulty switches.

Joystick control is good, but the arcade version had a track ball. How well does that work? Well, it's a mixed bag. While the track ball does allow for more exact control, movement is sluggish, making your arm do a lot more work. You'll probably want to use a joystick.

Dragonfire (Imagic 1982) A
I don't know about you, but I can't resist a game with castles and dragons. And I can't say enough good things about the graphics in this game! Everything is high resolution and multi-colored. You character is at least four colors, and the dragons really do look like dragons! (Adventure fans will appreciate that). The treasure is so beautifully detailed that it's actually worth risking your life for. The game alternates between two screens. In the first, you try to cross the castle bridge by ducking under and jumping over fireballs headed your way. The responsive controls even allow you to jump while kneeling. Kids, please don't try this at home! It sure looks goofy, but it's saved my ass many times. The second screen is full of treasure that you attempt to grab as the dragon at the bottom of the screen hurls fireballs at you. The castles and dragons have a nice variety of color schemes, and the challenge ramps nicely. This is my easily my favorite Imagic game, and one of my favorite Atari 2600 titles overall.

Stargate (Atari 1984) A
Stargate, also known as Defender II, is a far cry from its predecessor, one of the most disappointing Atari 2600 carts of all time. Fortunately the programmers at Atari learned quite between programming the original Defender (1982) and this masterpiece. Stargate's graphics are high resolution, the animation is smooth, and the sound effects are arcade quality. Better yet, no game features were sacrificed. In a wise design decision, the second joystick is used to activate smart bombs, inviso-shield, and hyperspace. All the enemies are present with minimal flicker. It's actually difficult to believe you're playing an Atari 2600 game! This took the 2600 to the limit.

The Many Faces of . . . Popeye

By Alan Hewston

This classic platform game is one of the top-ten all-time most "ported" classic video games on 8 classic home systems - all made by Parker Brothers!. Tied for ninth on my 2000 classic home video games list see: http://members.core.com/~hewston/2000VG.html

Popeye is a frustrated hero who is only allowed to defend himself, save for once per round where he grabs his can of spinach and fights back. I'd love to go a whack Brutus more than just once a round, but any contact with him (sans Spinach power), and you're sent overboard. On each round (screen), there are 4 different floors (platforms) #1 through #4, where #1 is at the top. In all 3 rounds, Olive Oyl, throws tokens from the top of the screen that you must collect. Hearts, then musical notes, then X's (smootches), and you must catch all 16 to 24 (varying with version and round) to complete the round. Brutus chases Popeye around the screen, and although he cannot access floor #1, he can jump upwards and grab Popeye, or reach or jump down to any floor below. On all rounds, and all floors, Sea Hag can throw bottles inwards towards Popeye from the left and/or right edges of the screen. Popeye can either move away from them or punch them and score points. Get hit and you lose a life. Brutus can also throw bottles at you, most often in combo with the Sea Hag. Time is also your enemy as you must collect the tokens before they sink beneath the water. After swaying left and right during their fall, the tokens will eventually hit the water, where a warning song is played - telling you that your time is almost up.

Round 1, Sweet Hearts: All floors but #1 extend all the way across the screen. Floor #1 has a "THRU" ledge or tunnel, that permits you to leave the left/right side of the screen and enter the other. Brutus cannot use this THRU. The other floors all have diagonal stairs going down/up at the edges. Floor #2 has a down ladder, which only Popeye can use. On the Atari 8bit, 4200, C64 and CV, once you move done, you fall down all the way. The other ports allow you to descend part way, duck a bottle or confuse Brutus and then come back up. Floor #1 has a punching bag in the middle that you can punch. A well-timed punch will send the punching bag into a large barrel (hanging there), and upset it so that it

falls straight down. Time your punch just right and trap Brutus inside the barrel. This will score you some bonus points and keep Brutus busy for a few seconds. Once used, the barrel only reappears if you lose a life.

Just as in the cartoons, Popeye's can of spinach will save the day. Once eaten, the Popeye theme will play, and if you chase down Brutus before the music ends, you score 3000 points. In round 1, the spinach randomly appears along the far left side of floors #2 and #3. In all rounds, there is only one can of spinach available.

Round 2, Love Notes: Olive now tosses out love notes. The THRU ledge is on floor #2. A sea-saw is at the left edge of the screen on the bottom of floor #4, upon which you can jump down from #3 and bounce up to #1 or #2. #1 is reached only if you time it right to touch Sweat Pea (or equivalent) hanging above floor #1. The spinach will be found on the sea-saw, but can only be retrieved while walking on floor #4.

Round 3, X's X's and more X's: Olive now sends out X's, or Smootches. Instead of a THRU ledge, floor #1 now has a large gap, that can be traversed via a slider. Step and slide over to the other side, or step and fall through to floor #2. Floors #2 & #3 have openings that only Popeye can use to move to the next lower floor, whereas Brutus walks on air crossing them. The spinach can be found randomly moving from far left to far right side on floor #4. Watch out for the Sea Hag's swooping Vulture attack, but enjoy the thrill of punching a vulture at 1000 points a pop.

Version Differences - Some versions have differences, that impact the Gameplay, but not too much: faster falling tokens on the C64; Brutus reaches down first, before jumping down, or cannot just jump down anywhere, Sweat Pea is missing completely or is not seen but there is still a bonus; the Atari 2600 round two has 2 trampolines instead of a sea-saw; Vultures may be missing; Bonus lives vary at 30K and 40K; ladders are an all or nothing move up/down - so learn each version - if the move is manual, or automatic.

[Wife Q: Why do I need ALL these versions? A: To be able to write the "Many Faces of . . . "]

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Arcade Game Designed in 1982 by: Nintendo

Classic Platforms: Atari 2600 (Joe Gaucher), 5200, 8 bit, Odyssey II, Ti 99/4A, Intellivision, Colecovision, Commodore 64 - all 8 versions by Parker Brothers.

No luck with any other programmer credits.

Categories: Gameplay, Addictiveness, Graphics, Sound & Controls

More info on Popeye can be found at:
http://147.208.187.228/popopedia/shows/arcade/ag1107.php

Disqualified: Odyssey II (N/A)
Being pretty much released overseas, this ER cart will not be in many of your libraries - which is the main reason I've disqualified it. Popeye alone will not justify me buying the O2

multi-cart. But the Digital Press guide notes that the Olive Oyl “Scalding” animation is present, and Brutus has acquired vomiting-power!!! Basing my experience playing the O2 version of Q*bert, dare I say one of the "better" O2 releases, Popeye, if done as well, would still have no chance to medal in this field. I would, however, expect it to be one of the best 10 games available on the O2.

We're Not Worthy: Intellivision (29), Atari 2600 (31)
At first glance the Intellivision port looks OK with decent (6) Graphics, but then you immediately hear the sound effects that are only adequate (4) at best. In fact all the sounds are down right irritable and annoying to the point that you want to kill the sick bird. The Gameplay is good (6), but really just has the basic elements with no pause or any options added. I penalized this score as Brutus is just too darn fast, making the game have more a dumb luck factor taking away from the strategy or Gameplay. The Controls are very good (7), and are take a lot longer to master the skills of punching and changing directions near the stairs and ladders. The Addictiveness is good (6), and it makes a great addition to the otherwise small Intellivision arcade library.

The Atari 2600 had no chance here mostly due to the mediocre Graphics (5) and Gameplay (5). The Graphics are almost too dark to play the second round, and the Gameplay lacks any options, and is missing too much. The Sound is decent (6), and the Addictiveness is good (6) enough to bring you back for more. The Controls are outstanding (9). I did not give any 10's this month, as I find that even though if you master the Controls to any version of Popeye, there is still a programming element or complexity to punching and climbing those ladders and stairs that makes you err a bit too often.

The Top 5:
To speed things up, let's take the remaining 5 versions and compare the categories individually. The Controls are superb (9) on the C64, Atari 8 bit, but only very nice (8) on the TI and CV, and then only if using a better stick than the standard controller. The 5200 is generously given a (7) as you'll be resetting this game over and over again due to the controller back-stabbing you. They work smoothly and seem great for a while, but then all-of-the-sudden you can't guarantee that you'll be standing still to throw a clean punch in self-defense. Any time you want to go down you need to push down, re-center, then down, re-center . . . for every stair. The Addictiveness and Sound are nice (8) for all versions save the 5200 which I had to knock down to (7) - you may get addicted to the reset button (I did) thinking that you'll actually figure out the faulty controls. The Graphics are very good (7) for the 5200 and 8bit; crisp (8) for the C64 and CV; and outstanding (9) for the TI. The CV Graphics are outstanding like the TI, but there is an obvious sprite detection problem that cannot be ignored. The Gameplay for all 7 ports have almost no additions from the arcade, but is very good (7) for the C64, 8bit, and TI; and even more enjoyable (8) on both the CV (adding starting rounds), and the 5200 (with the only pause button in this lot) - oh for shame Parker Brothers didn't program a little bit more.

Just missed it: Atari 5200 (37), Atari 8bit (39)
Who would have guessed that the only version with a pause button would be the Atari 5200. A nice bonus, but a pause doesn't help when you're reaching for the reset button constantly. I thought that the Atari 8bit would fair better, but its graphics are usually lagging behind. Nothing's really wrong with this version, which like the C64 (and I think TI), can also be found on disk. Play the 8 bit version if you enjoy the 5200, but are frustrated or controller impaired.

Gold Medal: Colecovision (40). TI 99/4A (40), C64 (40)
These guys are all winners, and I could not break the tie by 1 point. All 7 versions could have been improved in Gameplay with a pause, or adding any other options. Seems like Parker Brothers just stiffed Popeye as we all know that these machines are more capable. I'd need to play these games a lot more to pick a single winner, but I'm leaning towards the CV right now - despite its sprite overlap problem. I almost gave the C64 the Gold as its Controls pretty much warrant a 10 for the smoothness and fewest problems - but I "wimped" out. BTW, Wimpy does make his appearance in round 3. The TI made a fine first appearance here, and I know now how correct many of you are regarding the quality of the TI arcade games - they're really well done - based on the 5+ I have. I hope that my TI PE

box and new floppy drive ($6 at the CCAG 2001) will work OK, especially since a local TI group has some disk games and maybe cart games that will really help keep TI games showing up in this column. Finally, many thanks to Harry for getting me a TI 99/4A Popeye in time for this review.

(Come back next month when I either do a catch-up of missed opportunities on the TI 99/4A, and/or attempt to do a review of the Many Faces of Spy Hunter for the Atari 2600, Atari 8bit, Colecovision and Commodore 64. Alan Hewston, who's most wanted item is a 5200 Masterplay Interface, can be reached at Hewston95@stratos.net).

The TI 99/4A"Goodies"

by Jim Krych

Whew! CCAG 2001 is in the history books. What a dramatic improvement from last year-and still no problems with the Armory's power supply! I had to sweat a little every time a new person plugged in, and when we turned the arcade machines on!

A little bit of rain, but not bad at all. A very long 24 hours for me, with some interesting things going on in the background-such as a Bobcat machine left in the back corner of the Armory! Fortunately that was removed Friday evening.

Had a blast seeing everyone, and especially the guys from the UK. Nick and I got along great and we have similar backgrounds! Will be good to see him again next year. We also made the front page of the Monday Plain Dealer Business section! I was also told we came really close to being on the front page of the Sunday edition! To everyone who had a hand in CCAG-Tom, Thomas, Fred, Martin, Jeff, and Michelle, thanks a million! And, thank you to everyone who showed up!

But onward to the Devastator, and Treyonics!

The TI 99/4A has had a pretty good collection of stuff to buy for it. So lets just list what was mostly available. I am doing a separate article for the TI clones, so you Geneve and SNUG fans can breath easy!

Joysticks: Of course TI had to have a non-Atari compatible joystick setup. But, you could buy various adapters to play your favorite Atari stick on the TI. TI's own were not that bad, but for real power gaming, you could get much better. Ron Marcus still sells the Competition Joysticks and do well for the TI, check also Tex Comp Ltd too.

Speech Synthesizer: Great little product! TI originally planned a series of modules to go with this, but they were canceled. TE II cart with it's text-to-speech was a great add-on. Too bad it was never made for a faster baud rate. You could have speech in Extended Basic-and extend the vocabulary as well, speech editor, and many educational and game carts took advantage of the Speech Synthesizer. Rave made an excellent product that would put the Speech Synthesizer into your PEB! I have one of these, and it worked just great! And, less to connect to the side with as well! Also, this was the only way for Geneve and the SNUG people to get speech.

Side-Ad-On Peripherals: TI's original peripherals all connected to the side of the computer. Yiikes! Made for an EXTREMELY long desk! This included the 32K, Disk Drive Controller, RS232, PCODE, and even the Video Controller. A Hex-Bus adapter was also planned, and even advertised, but that never made it to the average user. Other third-party hardware makers did go with side peripherals, but combining the parts all together, which does make sense. Corcomp and Myarc are the major ones, and there was makers of third-party side RS232 and 32K as well.

PEB Peripherals: These cards go into the Peripheral Expansion Box. And most have a separate CRU address, and a DSR. These also include the Video Controller card and the PCODE card.

Floppy Disk Controllers: TI's own was able to have up to 3 180K dssd 5¼" floppies.

MYARC and Corcomp would allow up to 4 dsdd floppies, and boy at that time what a difference that was! The BWG card from Germany is a clone of the Corcomp card.

Ramdisks: Solid-state floppies! Horizon made many flavors. A group from Australia made an excellent one. Rave, Myarc, even Foundation's card could be turned into a more-usable Ramdisk.

Gram-emulators: Of course the Gram Kracker is a cartridge port peripheral. But they all operate the same: allow the operation of carts and often ROM's in the device. GPL programmers go nuts over devices like this, since the GPL interpreter is inside the TI, and you can have massive amounts of GRAM to play with. Horizon made one, Cadd Electronics made the Gramulator, and the SNUG group has an excellent one that is purely massive in scope. These also allow the famous "Review Module Library" feature of the TI.

Memory Cards: 32K cards, filling the lower 8K and the upper 24K of expandable memory. TI, Corcomp, Myarc, Horizon with the 32K option, AMD/Super AMS in PASS mode.

Supercarts: Putting memory on the cart space with a battery for an extra 8K. More a hobby item. But then again, what wasn't!

Hard Disk Controllers: Myarc and WHT. Myarc HFDC allowed you to have 3 hard disks, MFM, up to 134MB each. Trust me, even 20MB of hard disk is quite a bit for the TI. This also combined the disk controller, so you could have 720K floppies, 1.44MB on the Geneve. Plus, there was DSK1 emulation-setup on the home directory a directory named "DSK1" and the system would look to that first, then go to the floppy drives! Real nice feature. Problem was, the heat sinks on this were not good. Resolved the problem myself by putting an old TI metal clamshell card around it. I have heard horror stories of blackened PCB's from the power regulators. Also, you really were only good for 2 hard drives. WHT SCSI adapter allowed SCSI hard drives. Geneve owners got theirs to work first, by having MDOS to work with it, then the Germans fixed hardware bugs on the SCSI card to allow TI users to have SCSI hard disks.

Expanded Memory Cards: More than 32K, via bank switching and CRU/DSR control: RAMBO on the Horizon Ramdisks-but only the 8K cart space was banked. The AMS/SuperAMS cards were non-DSR, CRU only for MAP mode, expanded memory cards. They used a 74LS612(74HCT612 in the SuperAMS) memory mapper chip. A complete system was provided, or you could manually program the card. These live on in emulation and in the SNUG SGCPU card. Myarc's card could be turned into a 512K card for the Geneve, and Foundation allowed banking as well.

80-Column: These used either a V9938 or a V9958 chip with 128K-192K of video memory to allow TI users, with needed software, to have true 80-column displays. Mostly used for GIF viewers, and of course the word processing(Funellweb is the best known) and for terminal emulation(Telco). You could get composite out with the V9938-yuck, but usable in monochrome. Or you would need an RGB monitor, or the Video Turtle and an S-Video TV. (I am slightly biased in the later option) These were either cards-Digit's, or side cars, Mechatronics. Also, the TIM was an easy and excellent 80-column upgrade. You popped out the old 9918A chip, put in the TIM board, replaced some GROMS with the SOB(Son of a Board) and you were good to go. Unfortunately, the maker of the TIM./SOB had a bad habit of taking people's money to eat, and not delivering product! I guess I must have been luck with getting mine! A certain user group was so hurt by this, they cloned the entire TIM and SOB for themselves! The SNUG group also makes an 80-column card for use with there card system. Some internal changes were needed to set the chips up correctly, since you would always boot up in regular 9918A modes. And, TI didn't follow their own rules for VDP usage!

RS232 Cards: Finally, you need to print and to go online with these! Unless you got into some real deep programming, they all were basically the same. Yes Dan, I know about the Corcomp differences! TI, Corcomp, and Myarc. A parallel port, and a serial port that could have 2 devices. Note: you could have two RS232 cards in the PEB! And, the system was designed to have that! Just change a resistor and you could have a second card.

New PEB's: A company called RAVE 99 made alternative PEB's that used IBM PC power supplies. This meant modifying your cards, because the normal PEB power is unregulated, and the PC's are regulated. They came in several flavors, including one that allowed your TI to be put into it! These became a big blessing to Geneve and HFDC owners, since the weak power regulators were by-passed.

PC Keyboard Adapters: Rave 99 again made a fine line of adapters that allowed you to have an external keyboard that was IBM PC/XT compatible. All of the function keys were there, as well as several others. I used one on my modified TI in an Amiga 500 case. WHT made an adapter that allowed AT compatibility, that clipped onto your 9900 CPU.

Well, there are others that are prototypes, or proto cards for development(the original AMS was made on one), or limited in scope cards. I've decided to mention the ones that came out. I must say about the proto card though. It was a well done product that made development much easier. A little limited, but an excellent product.

That's it for now! I was listening to Gustav Holst "The Planets op 32" for this session. Especially "Mars Bringer of War"! I guess for the SNUG card article, I'll be listening the Wagner and Die Valkuer!

(Hi, my name is Jim W. Krych. I am a 31 year old technician, with an Electronics Diploma and a soon-to-be finished Computer Programming and Operations Diploma. I am currently employed at the finest maker of electrometers/nanovoltmeters/etc., and my particular product line that I work on is the Source Measure Unit(SMU) models 236,237, and 238. I have a 23 month old son, his name is Treyton. I enjoy retrogaming and things that go with that. :) My email address: jwkrych@n2net.net)

I have formed my own business! All other projects prior to this were carried by other companies, so this time it's all in my hands, with a lot of prayer and help from others! The company's name is Treyonics, in honor of my son!!! Our flagship product is the Treyonics Home Controller System, Model 9908, better known as the……...

Devastator

"Serious Gaming!"

2000 Classic Home Video Games . . . finally

by Alan Hewston

Follow the link below to see what it takes to make it on the list of over 2000 Classic Home Video Games. OK, it took me a while to get this massive project going, and Tom never expected me to waste my time like this. And then after I got things rolling I kept finding more things to research, and then waited a while for the Digital Press Guide V6 to be released...This list of over 2000 classic home video games would have been nice to arrive before 2001 did, but I never got my home page functional in time either. The list is in MS Excel format.

http://members.core.com/~hewston/2000VG.html

The content is work in progress, but hopefully can be improved with constructive feedback from you. Potential changes (you'll see my notes) are for some carts that may not really be games, or if listed twice, or are pirated games, or only have slight mods to an earlier game. Some may have multiple games within the cart, thus I need to expand and include all its games. I decided it best to keep this unpolished monster off Tom's site, until it looks a little more cleaned up. Hope that you enjoy it anyway, and feel free to tell me how many games I missed, not to mention all the rarer systems that I omitted, like Odyssey 3, Sega SC3000, Fountain...Maybe I should just delete all the systems with fewer than 25 games to make it simpler? Let me know.

(Alan Hewston, who really uses this li"st for the "Many Faces of " database, and has

shared much of this info to help revise Tom's "Arcade Conversions" can be reached at Hewston95@stratos.net).

Classic Gaming Expo News

Now that CCAG is done, it is time to promote the biggest classic game show! The Classic Gaming Expo is gearing up to be a major event! Here is some of the latest news:

*The developers of the new Dragon's Lair game will be on hand to debut the highly anticipated game! I know that I am highly interested in this game and look forward to hearing about it.

*There will be a ton of new classic games for sale at the show! Some new Colecovision games, including Pacman, Joust and Dig Dug! There will also be some limited edition games, that will only be available at the show.

*Ralph Baer, the father of video games will once again be on hand. If you have not met this true genius and gentleman, then you should plan a trip, just for this reason.

*A bunch of arcade games will be on hand to play! They are all set for unlimited play, so you have no reason to not try and set a new high score!

For all the latest information on the CGE, check out their official website at:

http://www.cgexpo.com

Sites of the Month

After a month hiatus, it is time to bring back one of the most popular columns. Once again we dig in our virtual bag of sites and pull out two more to shine the spotlight on. Check them out and keep suggesting sites.

Arcade Village
I am a sucker for these little Java games. You know the ones you play online without any downloading involved. Well, here is another site that has a stack of these little games to play. They have around 15 games to play, ranging from classics like Space Invaders and Q*Bert to the ever popular Tetris.

Have two players at your house? Well, they also offer some two player games for you! Plus, they also have some games you can download onto your computer. So if you are looking for some mindless fun and don't want to clog your hard drive, then check out Arcade Village. Here is the URL:

http://www.arcadevillage.com

Rob Patton's TI Page
While there is alot of different pages available on Rob's excellent site, the TI 99/4A page is among the best! Rob has a ton of great information, including a bunch on the great Milton Bradley MBX unit, which is both innovative and very collectible.

This section features a rarity guide of the TI, which is really cool! But it is the extensive coverage of the MBX unit, a unit that I am happy to own, that really caught my attention. Finding anything about this very rare unit is tough, but here is a plethora of information. If you are lucky enough to own one of these very rare units, you need to check out this page and find out a little about the MBX. By the way, check out the other stuff that Rob has on his site. While he is in the midst of moving stuff and redoing pages, the ones that are working are very good and well worth checking out! Here is the URL:

http://robpatton.com/ti994a.htm

Wanna Play Some Free Arcade Games?

This is an offer that any classic game fan would have a hard time saying no to. The chance to go and play free arcade games, especially classic ones is a dream come true! Well, if you are in Twin City area, at the Mall of the Americas, this weekend, then this is the show for you! Here is a press release about this great time and it is all free! Can you say "ROAD TRIP!!!!!"

Console, PC and Arcade Games Promoted at Twin Galaxies' Video Game Festival at Mall of America

To celebrate its 20th Anniversary, The Twin Galaxies Intergalactic Scoreboard has gone to the Mall of America in Bloomington, Minnesota to create a major party for the electronic gaming hobby: Twin Galaxies' Video Games Festival, which is a three-day celebration of the greatest games and gaming systems produced in the last twenty years.

Taking up nearly 5,000 sq. ft. in the Mall's Sam Goody Center during the weekend of July 20-22, 2001, the Festival will feature contests, prizes, famous video game superstars and lots of opportunity to play the latest, most popular titles. Filled with games galore - all on free play for the public to enjoy, the Video Game Festival will showcase hot new game titles not-yet-released as well as many of the gaming industry's most legendary games, from PC-based titles to classic console and arcade games of yesteryear.

Among the top events at the show are an Official Console Video Game World Championship.

In addition to tables and tables of home consoles set on free play, featuring a wide variety of game titles such as Tony Hawk's Pro Skater, Crazy Taxi and Gran Turismo, the public is invited to compete in The Official Console Video Game World Championship, which will crown World Champions on the following games: Twisted Metal: Black and SSX for the PlayStation 2, Super Smash Brothers, Mario Kart 64 and WWF No Mercy for the Nintendo 64, and Marvel vs. Capcom 2 for the Dreamcast. And, if there is enough demand, additional contests may be added on Perfect Dark, Golden Eye, Crazy Taxi, Tony Hawk's Pro Skater and many more.

Also, major contests are planned for PC gamers.

STOMPED.COM, a well-established web site that enjoys worldwide fame due to its local Minneapolis gaming center, The Stomping Grounds, will sponsor major championships on the world's top PC titles: Age of Empires, Counter Strike and Quake 3. The Counter Strike event, in particular, will be recognized as a qualifying event for the World Championships sponsored by the CyberAthlete League (CPL).

To see the complete list of events and sponsors, go to http://www.twingalaxies.com

Flea Market Fun

If you are reading this newsletter, then there is a good chance that you go searching for classic games. If you are lucky enough to have a flea market nearby, then you know that this can be a very rewarding or a fruitless place to find classic games. But if you are like the rest of us, even a flea market that is mostly barren, will keep us coming back with the hope of a big score. Well, this article will show you some games to keep you occupied and make a dreary trip to the flea market, a little more enjoyable.

The first game that you can play at a flea market is the timeless classic, the Scavenger Hunt! The first thing to keep in mind is that you only need to find the items and not have to actually purchase them. Noone should have to own New Kids on the Block items and I would never ask you to make such a supreme sacrifice.

I broke the Scavenger Hunt into three categories. They are Easy, Medium and Hard. You

get one point for each item in the easy category that you find, two for each medium and three for each hard. Tally up at the end and see how you scored. There are a few bonus items too.

Easy
01. Beanie Babies
02. Super Mario Cart for the NES (any of them)
03. Pokemon Cards
04. National Geographic Magazines (1 bonus point if someone is giving them away for free)
05. 8 Track Tapes (1 bonus point if you find a 8 track player for sale)
06. Hot Wheels
07. State Quarters map
08. Sports games for the Sega Genesis
09. Stephen King hardbacks
10. Homemade video tapes

Medium
01. Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle toys
02. Cabbage Patch Kid
03. Pogs
04. Star Wars toys (new or old, 1 bonus point for finding any old ones)
05. Comic Books
06. Nintendo Power magazines
07. Any Ronco item (potato slicer, sandwich maker, etc...)
08. New Kids on the Block memorbilia
09. My Little Pony
10. TI, Atari or Commodore computer

Hard
01. Any video game magazine other than Next Generation, Nintendo Power or EGM.
02. A T-Shirt you would actually consider wearing.
03. Any game system Sega Genesis or older in the original box.
04. A handheld that is older than 1990.
05. A Bee Gees album other than Saturday Night Fever or a Michael Jackson album other than Thriller.

High and Low
This second game is where you take an item and see what the highest and the lowest prices offered for the same item are. Here are a few items that seem to vary greatly in price. Feel free to add your own.

1. Beanie Babies
2. Nintendo games
3. Music CDs
4. Paperback novels
5. McDonald's toys

Hope you enjoy these games and feel free to email me your suggestions. We all know how boring a flea market can be, so hopefully this will help liven up your trip.

Conclusion

The countdown to issue 50 is underway. We are getting very near. I have not thought of anything special to do for the issue. If you have any ideas, please send them along.

I do apologize for not starting a prose story as I spoke of last month. Also, I never did finish the "Wild Cart Kingdom" story. Last month was hectic with the CCAG show and going on vacation, so I never did get around to them. But I will do them next month, honest!

Also, check back next month for a review of "Phoenix, The Fall and Rise of Video Games". Also, check back for a review of some of the classic game compilations that have come out recently. I will give you the skinny on the Atari Collection on the Sega Dreamcast, the Konami Collection on the Playstation and more.

Thanks for stopping by and reading another issue of Retrogaming Times. Until next month, keep those joysticks firing and clean your carts! A dirty cart is an angry cart and there is already too much anger in the world.

-Tom Zjaba

(This month, I have been enjoying a trip down memory lane. Decided to recapture a part of my childhood. I have purchased some Funny Face mugs off eBay. Anyone remember the competitor to Kool Aid? If not, look on eBay and see what new junk I am bidding on).