Retrogaming Times

Issue #60 - August 20th, 2002

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Calling All Retrogaming Times Readers

This is a call out to all readers of Retrogaming Times. I would like to do a very simple survey. I want to find out just how far reaching the newsletter is. So I need all the reader's help on this one. I would like you to just click on the email link below and answer one question. I want to know where you are from. Just put in the reply box the following information. If you live in the United States, just put what state you are from. If you are from Ohio, simply put Ohio and click send. If you are outside the United States, just type what country you are from and hit send.

This is done just for curiosity sake. I will not collect any email addresses or anything like that. I just simply want to know how far reaching the newsletter is. So please take a second and email what state or country you are from. I hope to have the results in an upcoming Retrogaming Times, so please send your responses. Thanks.

Click Here to Respond

A Milestone

This issue of Retrogaming Times marks a milestone. Not only is it the 60th issue, but it

also is the 50th straight issue that Fred Wagaman has contributed to. From his start back in issue #10, Fred has remained as a steady writer for Retrogaming Times. His combination of wit and wisdom about video games and coping with growing collections and understanding families, has remained a favorite of readers of the newsletter. We would like to take this time to thank Fred for all his articles and hope that he will continue writing. He is truly a great asset to the newsletter. If you would like to send a note of thanks to Fred or to congratulate him, here is his email address: fcw3@mail.ptd.net

Devastators Available!

Anyone who is a regular reader, knows how we push the Devastator joystick. As the host of the Devastator joystick, I am a big fan of this awesome accessory for MAME. Well, Jim Krych has sent along this message with an offer of two of the display models of the Devastator that are available for a lower than usual price. So if you want a chance to be able and play MAME with all the enjoyment of the original arcade games (two joysticks, trackball and spinner), then look at this limited offer. But remember that there is only one of each model available, so act quick!

"We have two Devastators ready for immediate sale! First off, we are selling the original Review and Loaner model, the one you see in the Maximum PC, PC Gamer, and Geek.com reviews plus here on the web site. This one has some frequent flier miles as it went to California, then to Colorado, then to North Carolina and finally back to me here in Ohio. Everything checks out and works fine. We are selling this one for only $275 obo (but be reasonable). This unit will also have the lifetime warranty for all 9908 Home Controller Systems. The second Devastator is the show model from the Philly Classic. It's all black and has been upgraded to the push-button joystick for stick#1. Lifetime warranty and only $450 vice $470."

For more information about the incredible Devastator, check out the website. Click Here!

You can contact Jim Krych at the following email address. jwkrych@adelphia.net

COMMERCIAL VAULT

by Adam King

Hello there. This month instead of Atari commercials, I'm reviewing two commercials for the Intellivision, since Alan Hewston is doing the Many Faces of Burgertime. After all, we can't do Atari ads all the time. The first ad is Burgertime, the second is another Data East classic, Lock 'n Chase, instead of Bump 'n Jump.

Both these ads can be found on the Intellivision Lives CD. It's a great product for all you INTV fans out there. Where else will you find a classicgaming disc with 75 games on it?

BurgerTime

This has to be one of the most famous ads of the classigaming era. BurgerTime joins the very short list of "Hit Arcade Games NOT Picked Up by Atari". That's right, Mattel got the home rights to the chart-topping classic, and they pretty much released it for almost every game and computer system, including a good version on the Intellivision. The very fact that Mattel actually beat out Atari for a hot game is a story in itself.

Anyway, this ad takes place in a fast food place. Two teenagers are driving up to the giant speakerbox and place an order for two burgers to go. In response they get a "Help me!" Inside we see a chef being attacked by giant food items, which are obviously actors in costumes, all while weird music plays throughout the ad. As he tries to defend himself, the narrator lays out the game for us:
"Introducing BurgerTime, the home videogame where you're a chef trying to make hamburgers. There's just one problem: the food is trying to make hamburger out of you. For Intellivision. This fall Atari 2600, Aquarius, Apple 2, and IBM personal computer. Burgertime, only from Mattel Electronics." The teens peer in the window and see what's going on, and in the end, a hot dog shouts,"We are closed now" and shuts the window.

Watch out, kids, this isn't McDonalds.

"Help! I'm being attacked by people in food costumes."

"You think this is what they mean by 'fast food'?"

"..so buzz off!"

What can I say? A pure example of 80s advertising. The Blue Sky Rangers said it was a sign of things to come.

Lock 'n Chase

Again Lock 'n Chase is another Data East game ported to the INTV, as well as other systems. Here he find a boy playing the game while his sister talks to him. All the time he stays fixed on the game screen, except for one moment...

GIRL: "What are you doing?"
BOY: "I'm playing Lock 'n Chase, a video game cartridge you have to buy separately to play on the Intellivision video game system."
GIRL: "Why are you talking like that?"
BOY: "They always do. Then they say your parents have to hook it up to the TV. After that you can start to pick up gold. Trouble is, (looks away from the screen at his sister) the police are coming. So you have to keep both eyes on the game-"
(looks back on the screen and sees his last man die)
"Oh brother."
GIRL: "Do they say that too?"
BOY: "Funny"
ANNOUNCE: "Intellivision Master Component from Mattel Electronics. Lock 'n Chase video game cartridge sold separately."

"Now's not a good time, sis."

"I said..."

"Now look what you made me do."

"Your parents have to hook it up."

Not much to this ad. Pretty straightforward actually.

Well, this'll do it for this month. If you've got an ad you want me to review, or know where I can find some more videos, (hopefully high quality), drop me a line at Hal_3000@rocketmail.com. Until next month, remember: keep both you eyes on the screen, or just use the pause function. Otherwise you could lose your last man like that.

Adventures on the 2600

By The Video Game Critic

Here are a few of my Atari 2600 adventure game reviews. Despite the limited capabilities of the system, some of these games were quite complex and broke new ground in the genre. If you enjoy these reviews, you'll find over 1600 more at www.videogamecritic.net

Adventure (Atari 1980) A
This game is amazing. Its rich gameplay transcends its primitive sound and graphics, creating an adventure full of strategy, action, and suspense. Your mission is to return a chalice to the gold castle. Your character is simply a square that you move around contiguous screens. The screens can be wide open or contain mazes. Some mazes are “dark”, so only the immediate area around you is visible (this effect was also used in Haunted House). There are three castles (gold, white, and black) that lead to even more areas. The castles look superb, and even have working gates that can lock objects (or creatures) in or out. Scattered throughout this virtual world are a magnet, bridge, sword, and three castle keys. Your quest is fraught with peril in the form of three dragons: the slow yellow Yorgle, the nastier green Grundle, and that vicious red dragon, Rhindle. These creatures aren’t much to look at; they look more like zombie ducks than dragons. Remember, this game was made when the programmers did their own artwork (yikes!). The dragons often guard items, but won’t hesitate to chase you around. I love how after a dragon eats you, you appear in its hollow belly, where you can continue to struggle (in vain). Add in an item-swapping bat that continuously redistributes items, and you have a very dynamic world. Variation #3, which randomizes the items, is a unique experience each time you play. If there was ever a good example of a sum being greater than its parts, it’s Adventure. This was the very first video game to feature an “Easter Egg” (hidden secret).

Recommended variation: 3AA.
1 player

Raiders of the Lost Ark (Atari 1982) C
This game has GOT to good - just look at the art on the label for goodness sake! Seriously though, Raiders broke new ground for adventure games. It's a cross between the classic favorite Adventure and those deplorable Swordquest games. In this action adventure, you must manipulate multiple items and juggle an inventory to solve puzzles. While the game will seem pointless and frustrating to many, the sense of accomplishment you get from finally discovering the Ark makes it almost worth the effort. The game is severely limited by the Atari 2600's capabilities, but I can't argue that it's well designed. Just like the movie, you barter with merchants, explore temples, avoid snakes and thieves, and try to discover the map room, which reveals the location of the Ark. Indy is armed with a gun and his trusty whip. The character is well animated and bears a striking resemblance to Harrison Ford. The snakes slither nicely, but the rest of the graphics are just awful. The programmer would have benefited from the help of a graphic artist. Characters like the thief, raving lunatic, and giant spider look so bad that you need to consult the manual just to know what you're looking at. There isn't much audio, although the Indiana Jones theme does play at the beginning and end of the game. Controls require you to use two joysticks: one to control Indy, and one to manipulate your inventory. You can hold six items at a time, and you'll need to strategically drop items to make more room. Items include weapons, a key, artifacts, money, a parachute, a watch, and a shovel. While it's fun to explore new areas, the game can be incredibly irritating. Thieves steal your items. Tsetse flies paralyze you. You're constantly falling off cliffs. Trying to figure out the purpose of items requires a great deal of trial and error. Patient gamers will appreciate the intricate complexity, but those with short attention spans will absolutely hate this game. The ending is remarkably lame, but programmer Howard Scott Warshaw (of Yar's Revenge fame) at least incorporated a few extra secrets like a hidden "Yar" and his initials.
1 player

ET The Extra-Terrestrial (Atari 1982) F
I can remember all the way back to 1982 when I got ET as a surprise Christmas present! I couldn't believe how lucky I was to get such an expensive game! And when I saw that awesome title screen and heard the ET theme, I thought for sure I had struck gold. I played it for days, and somehow convinced myself it was a good game. Denial is an ugly thing. Twenty years later, I've come to terms with my feelings. The truth is, ET is incredibly frustrating and almost completely devoid of fun. The object is to avoid bad guys whiles collecting phone parts hidden in pits. The problem is, these pits are EVERYWHERE! You can barely move without accidentally keep falling into one of these annoying things! Is this supposed to be fun? Who play-tested this crap? I've seen the movie, and I don't remember ET falling into ONE pit, much less 100 of them! When you're not in a pit, a symbol at the top of the screen indicates what you can do (call Elliott, eat candy, locate piece, etc.). The game has some nice animation, but gameplay glitches, poor design, and confusing controls make it a struggle from start to finish. This was obviously a rush job. Atari was ultimately forced to bury its inventory of ET cartridges in a concrete landfill. Believe me, they did us all a favor.
1 player

Riddle of the Sphinx (Imagic 1982) C+
This innovative adventure puts you in the middle of the Egyptian desert, where you must reach the Temple of Ra and provide the right offering to it. Along the way you'll encounter traders, rock-throwing thieves, scorpions, and two desert deities: the beautiful Isis and the evil Anubis. You'll find many useful items including tools, treasures, and artifacts. On your quest you discover pyramids, temples, the Phoenix, and the Sphinx. Many require specific offerings to pass. I have to give Riddle of the Sphinx a passing grade on concept alone - not many adventure games on the 2600 are this sophisticated. The graphics feature a nice white desert background scattered with palm trees, obelisks, and camels - a refreshing change of scenery. Your man moves across the bottom of the screen, and the scenery scrolls up and down above him - he never really touches anything. In order to trade with merchants or sacrifice to the temples, you need to approach them from below. This can be

problematic, because you often need to backtrack, and when you move downward you can't see what's ahead of you! I recommend staying to the far left when moving south. The riddles of this game mainly lie in the well-written manual. It provides hints as to what items each temple will accept, and they're not hard to figure out. The right joystick is used to control your inventory, and since you can hold a dozen things at a time, you won't need to do any tedious juggling. By toggling the difficulty and black/white switches, you can monitor your health, score, and time. Playing for score doesn't make much sense, since the longer you play, the more points you rack up. The main challenge is to complete game #3 in the shortest amount of time. Imagic did a decent job with this game, but I think they missed a big opportunity. By including some mystery items or locations (not documented in the manual), this game would have been much more intriguing. Still, Riddle of the Sphinx is an interesting game like no other.
Recommended variation: 3B.
1 player

Stardate 7800

by Adam King

Greetings, gamers. This month we serve up three more arcade classics from the Prosystem that we hope you enjoy. Two of these were featured in previous editions of "Many Faces" and both got gold medals. Let's see if I agree with Alan on that.

Robotron 2084 (Atari, 1987)
The infamous "panic" game, as well as another arcade fave, makes an appearance here(as well as the 5200 and Lynx). It's you against an army of robots in the near future as you try to protect the last human family from being killed. The screen is filled with many enemies, including regular grunts, invincible Hulks (which can't be destroyed), enforcer drones, tanks, and everyone's favorite, the Brain trons that reprogram the humans to kill you. You have to quickly eliminate all the enemies while rescuing the humans, and as you progress the screens gets more and more filled up.

Robotron makes a very good transition to the 7800. The graphics are very good and close to the arcade and the sounds have much variety. The screens gets packed up and yet there's no slowdown. My main issue is the controls. The arcade game was famous for using a two joystick scheme where one moves you and the other fires. Fortunately this same system can be found here; you can use two Atari joysticks to move around. You can also use just one joystick, but you have to press the button and the direction you want to fire in, meaning you're stuck shooting straight ahead. Despite this Robotron still manages to be an exciting game.

Score: 8/10

Asteroids (Atari, 1987)
The ultimate shooter in the arcades and the 2600 is brought here. The object is the same: you're in an asteroid field and you have to shoot the floating rocks as they pass by you. As you shoot them, they break into smaller pieces and fly faster. You also have to watch out for UFOs that soar in and shoot at everything. You can also use Hyperspace to reach another part of the screen.

While this version doesn't use vector graphics (did any home version use them), the graphics still do a good job, with 3D rotating rocks and a starry background. The sounds are good and feature that "heartbeat" in the background. The controls work well, even though the acceleration is a little quick. Just like Centipede, this version offers simultaneous two player action. You can either do Team Play or Competition, where you can shoot each other (like you'd want to do that). The game is slightly more challenging due to the pieces breaking apart in random directions. Once again Atari has improved on a classic game and produced another 7800 masterpiece.

Score: 10/10

Food Fight (Atari 1987)
This is another fun and original arcade game, but this one you'll only find on the 7800, not on any other system. You'll probably have the basic idea of what's going on if you ever watched the film "Animal House." You play a kid, Charley Chuck, who wants a delicious dripping ice cream cone on the other side of the screen. Trouble is, some angry chefs are blocking your way, and they're flinging foodstuffs at you. You need to avoid the chefs and get to the cone. You can defend yourself by picking up food items on the screen and throwing them at the chefs. If you hit one they'll be knocked out for a while, but they'll come back. Once you reach the cone and eat it (with a head that grows to twice its size), you go to the next level. However, if you touch a chef or if they hit you with a projectile, all the food on the screen splashes on you! You also have to watch out for open manholes as well.

ProSystem Food Fight holds up well against its arcade cousin. The graphics are very close to the original, though some detail has been lost in the chefs and food stuffs. The sounds are near-arcade perfect as well. Again, a little loss, but still close. The controls are great, and this is one of those game you can just pick up and play. Atari even included the Instant Replay feature found in the arcade, where if you do really well in a stage, it'll show a replay of your amazing feat. With this being the only home version of the arcade, Food Fight is still a blast to play, certain a game you can't miss.

Score: 9/10

There you have it. Two games indeed deserved the gold medals they received. It just goes to show you what might happen if the 7800 was given a better chance to compete. Until next month...

HYPERSPACE!

Have some Coco: (Part 3 of 3)

By Coco Enthusiast Curtis Boyle, with editing by Alan Hewston

Curtis is a regular RT reader, from Canada, who'd like to share his expertise with the Tandy / Radio Shack Color Computers (Coco for short). This month, we take a look at Curtis' programming efforts and using the Coco online etc.

RT: Did you ever write any games or programs for the Coco, and what other projects or uses did you drive out of these machines? (tell us the names of these award winning programs and some brief description. Did I get the categories correct, or were those the titles.

CB: I did quite a lot. In fact I placed in two of the Coco Rainbow programming contests (2nd place for both "RingQuest" in the Adventure category and "Olympic Decathlon" in the Simulation category). Ringquest was a graphical adventure game with some RPG elements, and Olympic Decathlon was a keyboard-wrecking of all 10 events (see http://www.sfn.saskatoon.sk.ca/~af960/RSDOS.html) for details, screenshots, and downloads. These will eventually be moved to my main games page). I also co-developed and sold the NitrOS9 operating system, (http://nitros9.stg.net) and did the OS9/NitrOS9 IDE drivers for Glenside Color Computer Clubs IDE interface. I wrote my own BBS system that I ran for about 4 years, plus lots of utilities, etc. This is something I want to get back into, when I find the time - especially hacking the OS. Nitros9/OS9 is a real-time, multi-tasking, multi-user system based roughly on Unix, but much more optimized for RAM usage, etc.

RT: Did your Coco help you in college and getting a job, and what do you do today?

CB: Yes, I did use it for 1st 2 years at the University of Saskatchewan), but then I left to work full-time at my job. Ended up running an internal email system, printer driving system, software development system on a NitrOS9 based 1 MB RAM Coco 3 system. Before it finally retired in 1998, it was running 10 terminals (mostly ADM 3A's and 22's), 4 parallel ports, 2 industrial speed line printers and 2 lasers (one 20 ppm, one 32 ppm), as well as

some estimating software that was written in house. I still work at the same company (Mercury Graphics, which bought out the previous company I worked at, McKenzie Ray Tickets), but the hardware requirements for some of our newer equipment was just too much for the Coco to handle (300 feet per minute inkjets, for example), and the hard drives were starting to die from use. I learned a lot of programming skills while there, especially in OS design and working with hardware at a low level, which I still use today on our Novell networked Windows PC's.

RT: Tell us about any Internet applications and your BBS programming and system?

CB: Actually, by using the local Freenet (up until they dropped dial-in last year, 2001), I used my Coco right up until then using a VT-100 compatible terminal program. I ran my own BBS for about 4 years on/off from 1983-1989, and I was active on Fidonet before the Internet took off. My BBS consisted of a couple of small messages bases, ASCII downloads, and several in-house designed online games (3 adventure games, and one space take-over-the-galaxy type strategy game).

RT: Were there good user groups near you, and what about today?

CB: Yes, for at least 5 years. I was president for 2 years for our local Saskatoon Club, and I am still an active member of the Glenside club out of Chicago.

RT: How much did the CoCo retail for and are there any compatibility issues with those made outside of North America?

CB: When the Coco 1 came out, the 4K RAM model was $549 Canadian, and I believe $399 US. The Coco 3 came out at $329 Cdn (128K RAM model), and was down to $89 by the time they quit producing them. The first floppy drive (including disk controller card) was a whopping $799 Canadian, that was down to a few hundred dollars later, with better, and bigger capacity, drives. The Coco was sold world wide, and the only real compatibility issue was the NTSC vs. PAL systems. The NTSC allowed artifact colors in the higher resolution modes, while European Australian PAL systems showed these simply as black and white. There is also the 50Hz vs. 60Hz power thing, but that didn't affect software compatibility. Games usually retailed for $9.99 to $29.99 for cassette, usually about $5.00 more for disk, and cartridges were $20-$40 US dollars. Official ports usually cost more, because of licensing fees (like Zaxxon, Pooyan, etc.) The Dragon system, as mentioned above, was mostly compatible.

RT: If I were to starting collecting today, what items should I look for, and which are mandatory to have a functional system to play games on? And how much would it set me back?

CB: The first thing would be to get a Coco 3 and preferably one with at least 512K of RAM. There are a couple of games that will not work on the 3 that worked on the 1/2, but there are a lot more Coco 3 games that won't work on the older models at all. A couple of joysticks (preferably 2 button deluxe models), as some games require both at the same time. A cassette cable (if you wish to play cassette based games)... any cassette deck should work, as long as it has an earphone jack. With an RF modulator, you can hook up to any TV. If you can find one, get one of the dual Composite/RGB analog monitors (like Magnavox 8515 type models, also used on the Amiga).. this will give you a better composite picture than a TV, with artifacting colors, as well as crisp RGB graphics, that can sync at 15.75 KHz (most modern multi-syncs won't). Failing that, a pure RGB monitor (like a Nec Multsync II, or Radio Shack's CM-8) and a TV (or color composite monitor) would work... the pure RGB monitors don't do artifact colors properly, and will show some games in black and white, so you would still want the TV/Composite monitor. I personally prefer to take the sound out from the back of the computer to a set of decent PC speakers (I use a splitter to get it out of both speakers), over using the ones built into monitors or TV's (unless you have good quality TV speakers). If you want to run OS-9 properly, a Multi-pak (hard to find) is highly recommended... you can mix floppy drives, hard drives, high-speed serial ports, sound cards (above and beyond the internal 6 bit sound), etc. this way. Games can be gotten off the web (there are programs to read/write Coco disks on a PC), or bought at Fest's, E-bay and the Internet. For disk drives, I usually recommend

making a dual floppy system, with a 5.25” DDDS (standard PC 360K drive) and a 3.5" 720K standard PC drive, as this will cover all the bases for getting software, and give you just over 1 MB of online storage for OS-9 to boot. A 2 button mouse would be nice for some things as well. A hard drive is nice, but not many games can make use of it, so not really recommended unless you really want to get into the Coco (or OS-9). If you can find one, the 6309 upgrade chip opens up some further games, and NitrOS9, which is a much faster version of OS-9 (including some OS-9 games). Very rare is the Sega Light Gun interface, along with it's two games, and these are in high demand and still fetch good prices. Multi-pak's usually do too. The Orchestra-90 Stereo sound pack is fairly hard to find, but not used by a lot of games. The Speech/sound pak is a little easier to find, and a fair number of games from Radio Shack optionally used it. Diecom games are increasingly hard to find (especially their later ones), as they were heavily copy protected, and not a lot of broken copies were floating around (at least, not around here). Oblique Triad games are rarer still, for the same reasons. Games from Sundog, the last major manufacturer of Coco games, are still available from Jim Davis on the web, for quite good prices. Getting OS-9 (the OS itself), with a complete manual, is getting to be a chore, but the software itself can be found on the web in several places. Quite a few authors that I have contacted have given permission to release games, and they are available on my Coco games website http://nitros9.stg.net/coco_game_list.html), and more are still forthcoming. Hopefully, eventually I can get them all released, as I continue to contact the original authors.

RT: Tell us about your web site and your efforts to get more games released to the public for free.

CB: My original homepages are at http://www.sfn.saskatoon.sk.ca/~af960, but most of that information will be migrated to the new page this year. The new page is at http:/nitros9.stg.net, with the main games page being http://nitros9.stg.net/coco_game_list.html.

Some authors had previously released their games through C.L.E.A.R. (http://ds.dial.pipex.com/town/estate/dh69/clear/rights.html), and I have been trying to contact other authors, and have had some success. Some, unfortunately, do not have any copies of their games anymore, and I don't have them either, so I still can't post them. Some I have to patch to run properly for the emulators, or to allow them to run properly on disk-based systems (as opposed to cassette), so I haven't put those up yet either. It's been a fun project, and I have had more than one author contact me out of the blue after doing a "vanity search" on a search engine (basically, searching for one's own name to see what pops up). I am trying to make this web page a complete list of all Coco games published, along with screenshots, author credits, Easter Eggs, year released, and what system requirements each had. In some cases, I put up some special knowledge of the game as well (developer stories, hidden messages in the games, etc.), where I know such exist. Since this is meant more as a master list, I do not go into extensive details, but allow others sites (like several Dungeons of Daggorath sites) to do so. I also allow other sites to borrow screenshots if they so wish (some Dragon sites are already doing this, for games that were released on both). I also try to have the screenshots from "unmodified" copies of the games; where I can, I revert author credits to the originals, instead of using any that were done by the person who cracked the game. I have been fairly successful getting author's permissions; of the 382 games I had listed as of March 29, 2002, 86 are available for download, and several others I have permission, but must patch them up a bit before I put them up. Some of the Coco 3 ones are still being sold, so those won't be up for download anytime soon, but some of those do have demo versions out (Pac-Man, Soviet Bloc, Gate Crasher come to mind) that are available on my site. There are some other sites starting up for documentation, etc., so I don't plan on duplicating those on mine (although, I may have links to them at a future date).

RT: What forms of emulation are available, have you tried them much, are there any neat projects like multi-carts or compilations disks with CoCo pictures and facts, FAQ’s etc. and what more do you plan to add or link to your site?

CB: There are multiple emulators available. David Kiel's, Jeff Vavasour's and MESS are all

Coco 1/2 compatible, and Jeff and MESS also support Coco 3. MESS even supports the 6309 chip upgrade, and thus, NitrOS9. MESS is available for Windows, Mac and Linux, and there is a Coco 1/2 emulator specifically for the Mac as well. Since I use both PC's and Macs, I usually use MESS on both, and that is where most of my screenshots are from. It seems to be the most active one as well, with bug fixes and add on's coming out every few months. It is my current favorite, although definitely not the fastest. MESS is also the most broadly compatible, but I wouldn't try running it on a 486 or low end Pentium... I still use the real thing a fair bit, as the Sega light gun does not work on any of the emulators, and hard drive support isn't quite their yet.

RT: Well Curtis, I'm sure that there is a ton more stuff out there that we can cover. We really appreciate your efforts here. If we get good questions from our readers and/or feedback, then we'll post your replies here and hopefully I can assist you in writing more for us. Thanks again for your time and enthusiasm - I hope that this small taste will encourage more readers to discover other classic game computers. Maybe our friend Aaron, down under will want to tell us more about the Fountain or Sega SC3000?

Curtis Boyle can be reached at curtisboyle@sasktel.net or visit his website at http://nitros9.stg.net/coco_game_list.html

Alan Hewston, can be reached at hewston95@stratos.net or his new web site at: http://my.stratos.net/~hewston95/Hewston_vg.html

The Time Machine

By Fred Wagaman

I was at Blockbuster last night. I rented the latest remake of H.G. Wells' Time Machine. I haven't watched it yet, but I will as soon as I'm done with this. But that's not the point. Like a lot of other things, it got me thinking.

Suppose I had a time machine. Aside from all the other time-paradox-inducing things I might do, what would I do video game related?

Tell Nolan Bushnell to never sell to Warner?

Warn Atari about licensing E.T.?

Tell Coleco to ditch the idea of the Adam?

Any of those would change video game history. If you are a Star Trek fan, you know that any of those would violate the temporal prime directive. I just couldn't bring myself to do that.

On a selfish note, if I could change one thing that I did video game wise, what would it be?

Buy more Vectrex 3D Imagers when I had a chance?

Buy some of those Atari club games when I had a chance?

Buy a bunch of Tengen Tetris games and sell them off when they were hot?

Not sure what I would do.

Given the opportunity, I would probably stock up on Vectrex stuff when it was being blown out. That and advise Sega to rethink their plan when marketing the Saturn. Temporal Prime Directive be darned !

(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 6 year-old, button-loving son, Max and his 3 year old, 4th player, Lynzie. Fred has recently purchased a Nintendo Game Cube. He says, "Bring on the good games. I'm ready".)

The Many Faces of...Bump ‘n Jump & Burgertime

by Alan Hewston

With the end of Summer upon us, that means back to school for some of you, but always a good excuse for a holiday and burger cookout. Let’s have a burger celebration - 20 years of “Burgertime”, and then “Bump & Jump” those other cars on your way back to school. I’ve suggested that Tom can blend these 2 games, so, we’ll see what he came up with. Both of this month’s classics were made by Bally Midway / Data East.

“BUMP ‘N JUMP”

“Congratulations you smashed 26 cars.” . . . and caused them to crash and burn. That’s the basic premise in “Bump ‘n’ Jump”. Smash or be smashed, accumulate points for driving distance and make sure to have enough speed to jump the water when the roadway ends or splits. Each vertically scrolling roadway gets progressively harder and it’s scenery and road conditions represent one of the 4 seasons (but not Frankie Valie). After a few minutes, you complete that roadway and have a brief pause at the gas pump to refuel and count your bonus points - then it’s off to the next harder roadway. Stay on the road and bump them when you can or go airborne and jump-crash-land on them. No one else can jump on you, but the 10+ different vehicle types varying in speed, power, maneuverability, and driving skill, will give you a good, bumpy race. You’ll need plenty of offensive & defensive strategy to cope with any combination of these enemies and/or road situations. Nevertheless, take out as many of the other cars as possible, but don’t get too greedy or you’ll crash too. Don’t forget to stay alert for the dump trucks, which love to unload debris right in front of you. And just when you though everything was going well, you’ll hear that sound and see the (yellow exclamation mark) warning that the road ends ahead. You’d better be going 100+ MPH before you get there, and be ready to jump again right afterwards. If you really work hard, and are lucky, you can earn a 50K bonus if no other vehicles crash on that roadway. But that takes the fun away from “Bump ‘n Jump”.

No one really loses in this race. 3 faces & 3 medal winners.

Arcade: Bally Midway, Data East 1982

Home Versions 1983 Atari 2600 (M Network), Colecovision (Coleco) and Intellivision (Mattel, Dennis Clark & Joe Jacobs). Rumor Mill (Atari 5200)

Categories (10 points each for): Gameplay, Addictiveness, Graphics, Sound & Controls

Sequels: None

Home Version Similarities: All the home versions are fairly well done with: a high score; speedometer; continuation option (to begin the next game at that roadway); musical score; 4+ different roadways (seasons); a 50K bonus for no cars getting crashed; water warnings - both audio & visual; islands to land on; and debris from trucks. The 2600 has only the basic vehicles; tractors, dump trucks, race cars, and skull & crossbones vehicles. CV has these plus a few more. The Inty has 10, which includes the basic 4, plus a cycle, yellow truck and cars that are green, white, brown and blue.

Bronze Medal: Atrari 2600 (37)
The Gameplay is very good (7) and fairly complete but has no starting options, and only 4 enemy car types. The game starts playing at power-up and the side roads around water areas end with a death trap - if you do not jump, they become too small and you'll crash. There is displayed (on-screen) an "OK" to jump sign when going > 99 MPH. The Addictiveness is cool (7) and, despite no pause, you'll have plenty of fun playing a different race every time. The Graphics are respectable (6) and do not detract from play. The Sound is fairly good (7) with all effects and even a toggle switch for the music [color & B/W switch]. The Controls are perfect (10). Overall, Mattel did a good job here making the 2600 version almost as good as their own.

Silver Medal: Intellivision (39)
A very nice effort here – the best MFof INTY score yet, with a very good Gameplay (7). There are no starting options, and no display that it's "OK" to jump. The Addictiveness is enjoyable (8) with quite a lot of variety and the usual pause [diagonals]. The Graphics are effective (7) and colorful. The Sound and music are pleasant (8). The Controls are super (9), but you may score them higher.

Gold Medal: Colecovision (42)
The Gameplay is the best, very nice (8), with 20 different roadways and enough cars and variety to delight. Nothing is missing. The Addictiveness is enjoyable (8) and you can "Bump 'n Jump" using any of the CV controllers, even the driving controller. The Graphics are sharp (8) with smooth scrolling. The Sound is pleasant (8) with everything sounding just right. The Controls are responsive enough to score a perfect (10) for most of the controllers.

"BURGERTIME"

Before a chef could have a "Food Fight", he first had to survive against the food in "Burgertime". As chef Peter Pepper, your mission is to avoid the deadly-to-the-touch food villains, the relentless Mr. Hot Dog, Mr. Egg & Mr. Pickle, and make all the burgers in each kitchen maze. There are 4+ plates at the bottom of the screen waiting for you to drop all the burger parts downward. The bun, topping, burger and bun are all lined up vertically in order – you just have to walk over them entirely to drop them down 1 level at a time. As parts are dropping, any parts directly below will get bounced down to the next level and so on. When you complete all burgers, you move on to the next round. Your best defense is a good offense whereby you drop the parts down when the villains are either on or below them. The villains are shaken up or smashed into the burger, but in short order are replaced by another of their kind at the corners of the screen. Smashing them earns you bonus points and even more when multiple villains are involved. When all else fails, your final defense is to use your pepper spray, to temporarily freeze the villains. You start with a small supply of pepper, but refills are earned by collecting the limited-time-on-screen food prizes (ice cream, french fries, ketchup and coffee). 1 pepper spray is also earned for completing each round, and 10K earns you another chef. Ladders connect the levels and platforms connect the vertical assembly lines. There are at least 6 maze patterns (varying in difficulty) and also variations in toppings (lettuce, cheese or tomato) from round to round.

Time to fill up the kitchen or grill with some Burgertime fixings.

Arcade: Bally Midway / Data East 1982

Home Versions Atari 2600 ('83, M Network), Intellivision ('83, Ray Kaestner, Mattel), TI-99 ('83, TI), Apple II (?), Commodore 64 ('84, Lee Braine, Interceptor Micros, music by Chris Cox), and Colecovision ('84, Coleco)

Categories (10 points each for): Gameplay, Addictiveness, Graphics, Sound & Controls

Sequels: Diner for Intellivision ('84, Ray Kaestner, Intellivision Inc. Intellivision)

and 1990 Super Burgertime (Data East, arcade, not successful).

Almost Sequel: Pizzatime (planned by "Nice Ideas" in '84 but canceled in favor of "Diner")

Home Versions Similarities – all versions: have several repeating maze patterns; display the number of chefs & pepper sprays; require you to build 4+ burgers – with 2 buns, a topping, and burger; let you drop the villains while atop the burger part; a bonus chef at 10K; and include various food prizes to earn extra peppers. Unless noted below, most versions have a pause; a choice of difficulty or start level; keeps track of the high score; gives you another pepper spray to start each new maze; lets you move and spray pepper at the same time; displays (on-screen) your points, bonus points and level or pattern number.

Have Nots: Commodore 64 (34)
I enjoy most classic maze & platform games, but never cared much for "Burgertime". After playing all these versions, I now know that my initial indifference was because my first version was the C64. One could argue that this version is incomplete, and thus the Gameplay is only a (6), good. The worst problem is that all burger parts on the entire maze are reset any time a chef is lost – this is the most frustrating feature of all time – I wonder if Bill Gates or Magnavox's Odyssey 2 started this trend. The mazes are smaller and less complex; there are no starting or difficulty options; the burger parts are always the same and do not fall 2 levels. The extra pepper is fleeting and hard to get, not to mention no bonus pepper is awarded after completing a round. There is no pattern counter. The Addictiveness is mediocre (5), with no pause and average gameplay, so, you'll not be too inspired to continue. The Graphics are very good (7) but weak for the C64. The Sound is decent (6), but has dull effects and no music other than during the intro/title screen. The Controls are perfect (10). Disk only.

Have Nots: Atari Atari 2600 (34)
2600 Mattel games often pale in comparison to the Inty & the same holds true here where the Gameplay is pretty good (7). You cannot move and spray pepper, in fact, you become momentarily frozen when you do. A pepper spray is not awarded after completing a round and the bonus prizes do not last long enough to collect much pepper. The game starts right up on the power up which is mildly annoying and there are fewer maze patterns (five). The color / B/W switch lets you chose easy or hard difficulty. The villains have been changed - there is still a hot dog & eggs, but a breadstick & cheese have replaced the pickle. The Addictiveness is better than average (6) with a slow to toggle pause button, the left A/B switch. With a reduced maze size and complexity, the Graphics are barely acceptable (5). The number of villains is fewer and their appearance is as plain as

it gets. Bonus points are temporarily displayed in place of the current score, and there is no pattern counter. The Sound is worth while (7) with music throughout and most of the sound effects are OK. The Controls are superb (9), but loose a point due to the poor graphics and ability to see and navigate the intersections.

Have Nots: Apple II (39)

This is almost a fantastic version! It's the most complete & best version that money cannot buy - a joystick for. Without any apparent joystick control - it falls down 3 places - otherwise say hello to the top of the medal stand. With a cool demo and nearly every element from the other versions, the Gameplay was darn near perfect (9). It's missing the pepper spray earned for completing each round, and has no pattern counter. The counter may be a moot point, as there may be an infinite (or large) number of patterns. There are 9 starting levels (maze patterns) to choose and maybe more thereafter. Level 9 is too tough for me playing without a joystick to see 10 or beyond. There are 3, 4 and 6 burgers per maze and burgers with 3, 4 or 6 ingredients each. Then there's the 4 burger by 8 ingredient super burger pattern. Some burger ingredients are unique color combinations within one ingredient (layer). There's what looks to be tomatoes with pickles or relish, and then lettuce with ketchup. A nice feature is that defeated villains restart on bottom (near the platters) and have to move towards a ladder to get onto the maze – not showing up on top of you. The Addictiveness is very good (7), but easily a 9 with a joystick, and maybe a 10 if there is large number of levels & creativity. The pause is the [esc] key. The Graphics are superb (9), the best of the lot. The pepper sprays outward and falls under gravity (also seen on the CV version). There is some flickering of the 6+ villains, but that also helps to give them a 3D/rotational look. The Sound is very good (7), but there's only music on the intro screen. The keyboard-only Controls are very good (7), but a real pain to play considering the game speed is extremely fast. The choice of IJKL instead of the standard IJKM takes some getting use to. Bad news is that once moving, you do not stop unless you hit the space bar to "stop". The space bar would have been the best key to use for the pepper spray, since the "S" key is not reachable while typing "IJKL". Thankfully, the programmers designed in an in-advance direction control – good for maze games. Type the key for the direction you want to go before you hit the intersection, and Peter turns automatically as soon as you get there. This is excellent, making it easier to reach for the pepper and pause, and fun enough to play that I beat almost every start level. Hit [h] to get the help menu. Disk only.

Bronze Medal: Intellivision (40)

One of the first home versions is still lots of fun with an impressive and complete (8) Gameplay. There are 4 difficulty settings and 7 maze patterns (the pattern counter shows up only after a chef is lost). Once villains are eliminated, a replacement appears on the corners of the maze without warning - no fair – but other versions do this as well. Regardless, the Addictiveness is outstanding (8) with the usual diagonals as the "pause". The Graphics are very good (7), but hold this port back from the others. A graphics glitch may be the cause for the pepper spray to shoot out past an oncoming villain so that he still gets you. With music throughout and everything sounding fine, the Sound is great (8). The Controls are outstanding (9) using the stickler, but still leave me wanting more. The title screen is animated, almost acting like a demo.

Silver Medal: TI-99 (41)

The TI continues to impress and this version makes it almost a tossup for the gold. The Gameplay is very good (8) but does not offer: start level options; ability to throw pepper and move at the same time; a high score display; and no bonus pepper for completing a level. Level 2 adds a 5 layer burger, with cheese being the fifth topping. The Addictiveness is enjoyable (8) and fun to watch the unique activity of the villains as they can get bounced or squashed and then get up and walk again. There is still a delay before they pursuit you. The Graphics are sharp (8) and the Sound is pleasant (8), complete with a musical score. The Controls are perfect (10) using an Atari joystick.

Gold Medal: Colecovision (42)

A close call but as you probably expected, the CV wins again, going 2 for 2 this month. The Gameplay is complete, impressive (8), with 4 difficulty settings and full gamut of mazes. It's outdone only by more options and creativity shown on the Apple 2 and TI-99.

The Addictiveness is cool (7), dropping a notch due to NO pause button. The Graphics are outstanding (9) and very well animated and detailed. A graphics glitch may be the cause for the pepper spray to shoot out past an oncoming villain so that he still gets you. But the spray is animated & gently falls and disappears quickly. The Sound is crisp (8) and complete with a musical score. The Controls are perfect (10) using an Atari controller, which doesn't cost you anything since there is no pause anyhow.

Come back next month for just one review, "Choplifter" on the CV, C64, Atari 5200, 7800, 8 bit, Vic 20 & Apple II. Plans for upcoming months are Pitfall!, Dragonfire, ST:SOS, and hopefully (trades pending) Dig Dug. Alan Hewston, already needs your help finding these '83 games for next years' reviews: Atari 8 bit Evolution, AP2 Jumpman Jr., & Track 'N Field, and Crossbow for the C64 & Atari 8 bit can be reached at: Hewston95@stratos.net or trades see my new pages at http://my.stratos.net/~hewston95/Hewston_vg.html

"The TI 99/4A"
"I Finally Have A Geneve!!!"

by Jim Krych

It has only taken me some 15 years after it has been available. When I had first heard about it, I could never have afforded it. And when I was in the Coast Guard I was involved with the AEMS Project, with Asgard. Had I gotten it earlier, I would never have gotten involved with expanded memory for the TI 99/4A. And of course, had I gotten it when it first came out, I would have been frustrated by it's lack of a usable OS.

After some 15 years, I finally have a Geneve!!!

For those who do not know, or haven't read my previous articles, the Geneve is a TI 99/4A compatible computer, and then some. The Geneve actually has two modes, that being TI Mode and that of pure MDOS. The TI Mode has been a stable method almost since the Geneve became available. MDOS only since the 1993 on has become a usable OS.

So, that I now own one of these, I stand on the shoulders of those who have done a tremendous amount of work to actually make this clone of an orphan computer, usable and enjoyable and ready to be played with and hacked!

The system I have comes with the PFM+, programmable flash memory and an extra 384K of SRAM, the 64K upgrade of Video RAM, MDOS 5.0, the RAVE speech card, a Cor Comp RS232, and the MYARC FDC with two 360k floppy drives. And, I also got a ton of disks, including ABASIC 4.0, and a whole bunch of Micropendiums. This will allow me to have my collection again, since my other Micropendiums were lost. The PEB also has an external fan.

Not bad considering the cost for shipping was three-times the cost of the equipment! Many thanks Matt!!!!!!!! But as a warning, do not ship with Fed Ex Home Delivery to a business address-it is a major pain in the rear! Maybe not as quite a deal as the guy who got an Amiga 4000 with Toaster/Flyer for only $25 at a Goodwill, but I'll take it!

First things first, the MYARC FDC is able to read my floppies that have all of the important 99/8 related files! The first one I checked has the 99/8 bugs list in it. It is my intent to transfer these text (DV-80) files to my Falcon030, and then to my PC for uploading. The Bugs list I intend on having in a future article. My PC doesn't have hyper terminal on it, so I am using a null-modem cable to my Falcon030.

What do I want to do with this computer? I am simply going to run it in native MDOS mode. I am quite familiar with the old command line interface, having had a Xerox 820-2 as my first disk operating system-with dual 8" floppy drives. The PFM+ boots my Geneve really fast, so I need not wait for the system to boot from floppy. Also, I have enough storage with my floppy drives for now, but I wouldn't mind an HFDC for a simple MFM hard drive.

I want to play around with ABASIC 4.0 with all of its features and pure speed, and maybe have some demos done. The Geneve lacks programs that run for pure fun. And, there is

speed enough to make it worthwhile.

The first thing I did when I got the Geneve is to put it into a half-clamshell to reduce the heat on the voltage regulators. Boy, do they get hot! Reminds me of some of my work units that get real hot. The lack of a usable set of prints for this computer is a great disappointment; I had thought that someone had actually gotten a set of schematics by ohming out the pins of the chips of the Geneve. Perhaps there is, anyone have it?

Also, there are the Tomy Tutor games that run from MDOS that I will review too, since this is a videogame magazine after all.

I want to thank Matt, Dan, Richard, David, James, and Larry for all the help so far. I am really looking forward to playing with this computer, and especially once I get the computer/game room done downstairs. This reminds me when I first got my TI, then the first floppy system, and then the HFDC and the TIM. I am like a little kid again! Kinda ironic that it just took all these years!

And, as for a display, well that is pretty simple. It's just a logical choice. I have the world's best Geneve monitor right by me! It's a 20" S-Video TV, and the….

VideoTurtle.

I wrote this while listening to quite a variety of music, from Dallas Holm to Pat Benatar. Hey, my son Treyton turns three this Saturday! Way to go little guy!!! Wow, where does the time go????

"Hi, my name is Jim W. Krych. I am a 33 year-old electronics technician. My products that I currently work on are the SMU models 236,237, and 238 as well as the 220,224, and 230. I am also a 14 year veteran of both the USCG, active, and the Ohio Army National Guard, reserve with B Co. 112th engineers. I can be reached at: jwkrych@adelphia.net or jwkrych@n2net.net I have a three year-old son, Treyton, and he is the CEO of Treyonics! I have also been blessed with a beautiful fiancé her name is Lori!!! I have founded my own business and, of course, I named the company after my son Treyton! Our flagship product is the Treyonics Home Controller System Model 9908. Better known as the…

Devastator

"Serious Gaming"

Classic Gaming Expo Games!

Wanted to attend the Classic Gaming Expo and could not make it? Well, here is your chance to own a few of the games that were available at the show. There is still a limited number left of games like Save the Whales, Pick Up and Crack'ed for the Atari 2600 and Cube Quest for the Vectrex. So if you want some new games for your systems, in professional looking boxes with great labels, then you better hurry over and get them, while the getting is good. Click Here!

Letters to the Editor

The emails keep coming and the answers continue to go out. I have a question of my own, why is Snow Bros such a popular game? I get emails every week from people who want to know where to find the roms for this game. It just amazes how popular this game is. It is a fun game and everything, but this is just amazing. Oh well, time to get to the work on hand.

I've been going mad trying to remember an old arcade game i used to play and have bought many compilations hoping that it was on, problem i don't know the name of it, i will do my best to explain it and see if you can shed any light on it. The screen is set in space with asteroids floating about, you have to shoot at the steroids to collect tiny balls, there is a baddies which from memory is a lions face with an outer layer like sun rays. The idea is to collect enough bombs to kill the big fellow, there is a radar showing you where the baddie is and in what asteroids the bombs are in, you can also move away from the baddie. When he eventually comes on screen he circles about you roaring at this point you bomb him. Does that ring any bells with yourself? If so what's it called and is it available on any current consoles. The timescale of this game is round about tempest, hunchback of notre dame and frogger so i am going back a few years. I hope you can advise and not take the mick as a lot of folk have done.
Cheers for now

It is always satisfying when you can help a fellow gamer. The game you are thinking of is Sinistar. To bring back some memories, the Sinistar creature used to talk and say "Beware, I Live!" Here is a list of the systems the game was made for:

<u>Sinistar</u>
Atari 2600 (Prototype)
Gamecom (Williams Arcade Classics)
Genesis (Williams Arcade Classics)
Nintendo 64 (Williams Arcade Classics)
PC (Williams Arcade Classics)
Playstation (Williams Arcade Classics)
Saturn (Williams Arcade Classics)
Super Nintendo (Williams Arcade Classics)

I keep hearing about the emulation scene on the Sega Dreamcast. Is it true that you can play classic systems like the Atari 2600 and Colecovision on your Dreamcast?

Yes, it is true. Since the Sega Dreamcast uses a Windows based operating system, they found it quite easy to port over many of the games and emulators from the PC. So there is a wide selection of emulators out there, including the Atari 2600, 5200/Atari 8-Bit (my current favorite), Colecovision, Odyssey 2, Nintendo 8-Bit, Spectrum and Sega Master System. This does not include the newer systems, like Gameboy, Gamegear, Genesis and Super Nintendo. There is also an emulator for MAME as well as a growing number of homebrew games. For more information about the Dreamcast and its growing underground market, check out the following site: http://www.dcemulation.com/. Remember that while emulation can never replace the actual game, it is an affordable way to play games that you may never be able to afford. Very few gamers will ever luck upon games like Coke Wins or Tooth Protectors and just as few will ever be willing to shell out the huge bucks for these games. But with emulation, you can try these games and enjoy the programmer's work, without mortgaging the house.

What do you prescribe for someone who has contracted Pacman Fever?

Back in my day, a full blown case of Pacman Fever could be quite devastating. The impact it would have on your wallet (unless you knew the patterns) was enough to wipe out most allowances. But nowadays, you young whippersnappers can easily go buy a PC game or a Namco Museum and get the fever under control. Now Tapper wrist is a whole

different animal.

Conclusion

As Fall approaches, the flea markets and garage sales begin to wind down (at least in the northern part of North America). Soon, we find ourselves indoors more and usually the game playing increases. What better time than this to enjoy your classic systems? It is a great opportunity to wipe off the dust and fire up your old Atari, Intellivision or Colecovision.

Onto a more serious subject. We have the one year anniversary of the September 11th tragedy. coming up. Now is a great time to take a moment and pray that this event comes without any further actions. While acts of terrorism are very likely to happen again on American soil, let us hope that they can be avoided.

See you next month and hopefully the worst thing that happens to any of us is we have a bad score on a video game.

-Tom Zjaba

(This issue was done while listening to the Doobie Brothers, America and the Doors.)