Retrogaming Times

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Introduction

Summer is behind us as we look forward to the kids returning to school. I still remember when summer vacation was the highlight of the year. It meant plenty of time to do all the fun activities like baseball, swimming and video games. Too bad that adulthood comes and we lose that three month vacation that was such an integral part of our childhood. With that in mind, here is another issue with the usual selection of classic video game goodness and some modern gaming coverage as well. I take a look at a couple games for the Ouya, my latest passion. So once you are done with the yardwork, sit down and read the fun and free newsletter.

Video Game Hunter

I spent the last two months talking about hunting misses. This month, I am going to talk about one of the biggest scores that I ever landed. And most of the stuff wasn't even video game cartridges.

As I ended up with more and more duplicates, I began selling them at my comic book store. I found that I did well by packaging an Atari 2600 with a dozen popular games (or as they are known in the classic game market - common games) and selling them as a package. I had quite a few people who would buy them for high school reunions. Anyway, one of my regular customers knew someone who had a bunch of video game stuff that they wanted to get rid of and he told them about how I bought and sold video games. So he came in one day and asked me if I would be interested in a large collection of video games and a bunch of memorabilia from Atari. I said that I would definately be interested. He was not looking for alot as he was more interested in getting rid of all the stuff and freeing space in his house. He said that he would be willing to sell everything for $500.00. I hoped it was not another person who inflated the size of their collection. So we agreed that after I closed the store, I would come over and take a look. This also gave me time to go to the bank and get the money out.

As I headed over to his house, which fortunately for me was only about ten minutes from my store, I came to the house and hoped for the best. As I went in, I was greeted by an immense and I mean immense amount of video game stuff. We are talking tons of carts, systems, controllers and more. The video game carts were a deal at the price. But they were only a small part of the whole deal. There was also piles of paperwork from Atari, much of it being memos and news releases. I could not get the money out of my wallet fast enough. I was more than satisfied with the purchase and he was happy with the having an uncluttered house.

It took three trips with two cars full each time to finally get all the stuff out of his house and into my store. Luckily my store had a large basement, so I could store it all there. If I brought it all home, my wife would have locked the doors and made me live in the garage with all the stuff.

It took months to sort through everything, but it is safe to say that I made a very nice profit. I also traded some stuff away. I traded a set of Atari pins and a bunch of the paperwork to someone who worked for Sony for a brand new Playstation and 15 games of my choice. In hindsight, it would probably be better to have kept some of paperwork, but when you want a new game system and your wife is complaining about spending the money on a game system, it seems like a great deal.

The deal is still giving as I just sold a handful of Atari computer brochures on ebay a few months back and received over $100.00 for them. And I have some great memorabilia that I have kept for myself.

WOW Moment

My favorite arcade game is Crazy Climber and it is the subject of this month's WOW Moment. I still remember the first time I encountered this game. No one was playing it, which was odd as it was a new game and there was usually a wait for any new game. I asked someone why the game was sitting there empty and he said it was too hard and ate quarters. I was always up to a challenge and figured that I had some time and quarters to waste, so I would give it a try.

My first game was a disaster. The dual joystick controls were so alien to me that I went through that first quarter in record time. The second quarter gave me a few more moments of gameplay, but not much. I was starting to see why no one was playing the game. But something about the game made me want to keep playing. It was on the third quarter that things just clicked. I had my WOW moment when suddenly I was able to coordinate my two hands and move my character in unison. While it felt so strange at first, it soon became so natural. With the two joystick control, you really could move your character and really gave you a feel of climbing a building (a very safe feel of climbing a building).

Once my right side and left side clicked, I was obsessed with getting to the top of the building. Soon, I was dodging flowerpots, crazy birds and even a giant gorilla. I was heading towards the top and unknown to me, I had an audience. People were starting to gather around the game to watch me play it. The game that no one wanted to play was not becoming the center of attention at the arcade.

I made it through the first building and was greeted by the next one with falling girders. It wasn't long before I succumbed to their might, but not before I had a crowd cheering. At that moment, I became hooked on the game and it is a passion that continues to this day.

Ouya Reviews

Last month, I talked a bit about my newest game system, the Ouya. Well, I figured that I would review a few of the games this month. While the system has its share of problems (I am nearly out of room on the built in memory and only had the system for a month), I am still very happy with the purchase. And a new emulator came out that emulates a bunch of systems (many of which were already represented on the Ouya). It is still very raw (you cannot stop playing a game without having the completely exit the program), but it adds some new systems including Sega 32X, Sega CD and even the Virtual Boy. It is fun to finally play some of the Virtual Boy games without getting eyestrain and a backache. While the system was one of the biggest bombs in video game history, I had fun with mine (bought it when they were clearance them out). There were some fun games on it, but trying to play them while looking through what felt like a viewmaster on stilts was a chore. Well, here are a few reviews of games that I bought and enjoyed on the Ouya.

<u>Munchface</u>
What if you took Pacman and mixed it up. I am talking about different powerups, coins that could be used to build up your character, different designed mazes and score multipliers? You may be thinking that I am talking about Pacman CE, but I am not. This game only borrows the basics from Pacman and then goes from there. You have your usual power pellets (or in this case, cubes) but you also have guns you can

pick up and blast the creatures anytime you want. And instead of dying, when you are hit, you lose one of your hearts but keeping playing. Only when you exhaust all your hearts does the game end. So you don't die and transport back to the middle of the screen like in Pacman. Instead you keep going. This can be good if you are close to finishing a maze or it can be bad if you are surrounded by bad guys.

There are multiple modes to play. The first one is an endless mode called Arcade Mode. Here you keep playing in the same maze until all your hearts are used up. You try to see what the highest score you can achieve. There is a high score list so you can see how you rank with other players. The second mode is where you finish one maze at a time. You try to finish four mazes in a row to get a bonus and unlock the next group of mazes. There are a total of 100 mazes to go through.

The game shows creativity to the upmost degree. Some of the levels are completely insane and the enemies do change, so you are not stuck with just the same ghosts over and over. The game is by far one of the best Ouya games out right now. Here is a link to their website - http://munchface.com/

<u>Knighmare Tower</u>
Take the endless running game and send it up a tower and you have the basics of Knightmare Tower. But what makes this game fresh is you have to keep going up the tower to save the princesses. And unlike Mario, these princesses are actually in the castle. As you go up, you gain gold that you can use to build up your character. Do you want to take more damage or do more damage? Those are the choices that you have. And unlike many games of this genre, there is a ending. A very hard ending that I have yet to defeat. And it isn't for a lack of trying.

The basics of the game is you are going up the castle while attacking different creatures. As you hit them, you keep moving up. But miss them and you start to slow down, which brings you closer to the lava that is moving upwards. So you want to keep hitting the creatures and keep ahead of the lava. After awhile, you will break through a wall and free a princess. This will then open up new powerups that the monsters may release as you defeat them. These can be more gold, bombs that blow up all the creatures or hearts to refill your health meter.

As you go higher and higher up the tower, you will encounter stranger and stranger creatures. Some have special attacks and defenses that make your job harder. Some have spikes pop out that will injure you and others shoot fireballs . There really is a good variety of monsters to fight, so it keeps the game fresh on your journey through the tower.

It is a fun pick up and play game that does not take too long to play a session, though you will find yourself playing for hours before you know it. It is quite addictive and a ton of fun. Here is a link to their site - http://www.knightmaretower.com/

The Lure of the Clearance Bin

Classic games and clearance bins have gone together like peanut butter and jelly. From the waning days of the Atari 2600 when you could buy games for as low as a buck, the lure of the clearance bin has been great. Just about every classic game collector will make a beeline towards a clearance bin at a game store. Sure, we have to wade through hundreds of copies of the Madden Football and just about every other old sports title, but we all hope to find a game that has escaped our attention at full price. That diamond in the rough that we find and cannot wait to brag to the world about.

My first experience with the clearance bin was the Odyssey 2. I received one for Christmas during its last days. The system was already on its way out as I received it. While I should have been upset knowing that the stream of new games coming for the system was about to dry up, I was instead thrilled that I could get two to three games for the system for the price of one game for the Atari 2600. And since the system was new to me, I only had a few games, so there were still plenty of new titles to add. It wasn't

long before I found some great bargain titles like Monkeyshines, Pick Axe Pete and the Great Wall Street Fortune Hunt. That was the beginning of bargain shopping for me and has become a lifelong obsession.

Before I went away to college, I remember going to Children's Palace to buy a Colecovision game or two to play for the summer. Instead, I was greeted by a big display of clearance Vectrex systems. They were only $50.00 and had their own screen! Great for college! The games were only $5.00 each. I soon grabbed ten games and the system and spent a little over a hundred bucks with tax. It was about the same price that it would have cost for two or three Colecovision games.

This obsession continued through the years. I remember scouring the mall for clearance Turbografx games. I remember how excited I was when I finally scored a copy of Order of the Griffon, after looking for weeks. I also found Gunboat, another very hard to find game.

Later it was buying up a Virtual Boy and one of every game that I could find. Yeah, the system was less than stellar, but it was cheap!

Even today, I will look for a bargain PS3 game. There are a few used game stores in the area where I found games as low as $2.50. Yes, the bargain bin bug is still very much alive.

Classic Youtube Videos

OHere are some more classic video game Youtube videos to enjoy!

Odyssey Game System Commercials
ne system that I picked up later and enjoyed for its uniqueness was the original Odyssey game system. It was cool to own the first home video game console, even if the actual gameplay left something to be desired. Here is a collection of Odyssey commercials and television appearances - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0MnRkPvIjKE

Odyssey 2 Game System Commercials
While we are dealing with Odyssey, here is a collection of Odyssey 2 commercials. This was the first game system that I ever owned. While I enjoyed the game system, I do not remember any of the commercials - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HWHAM-W8EPU

Sites of the Month

Let's make this a themed issue. I did not plan on having so much Odyssey mention, but here is some more.

Odyssey 2 Home Page
Here is a very slick website that deals with the Odyssey 2, everyone's favorite overlooked game system (or is that the Jaguar or the Atari 7800?). Anyway, you can find everything you could ever want to know about the Odyssey 2 here. From box scans to reviews to manuals to even news about new homebrew games like Mage 2. Is that cool or what? So check out and enjoy this site, I know that I did. http://www.the-nextlevel.com/odyssey2/

Odyssey Museum
Since we have a link to a website for the Odyssey 2, let's do one for the original Odyssey game system as well. Here is a bunch of information into the first game system and one of the most overlooked consoles of all-time (most people think the Atari 2600 or Pong were the first game systems). http://magnavox-odyssey.com/

Conclusion

Time to end another issue. I enjoyed the walk down memory lane and it was good to give the Odyssey 2 a nice mention. I did enjoy the system and one day I will buy another one and play it again. Hope you enjoyed the issue and look for another one next month. Who knows if we will theme it or not. If you have a theme, feel free to send it to me.

-Tom Zjaba (This issue was done while listening to Cat Stevens, the Spinners and Van Morrison).

Tomorrow's Heroes©Tom Zjaba 1997 - 2015

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