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Tom, The Classic Game Pimp!

To use a little slang, I have become the classic game pimp this issue! By that I mean that I am doing alot of promoting this issue. In other words, I am "pimping" everyone else this issue. From classic game shows to classic game products to websites, I am promoting it all! That is a big part of Retrogaming Times, to use the forum to let people know about all things classic games. We are living in a great time to be a classic game fan, with lots of great items to buy and great shows to attend and I will do my best to push them all here. So make sure to send information about any classic game shows or meetings you want promoted. If you have a new game or product, let me know and I will gladly give it a mention. Send me a note and I will pimp your show/product, whatever too!

The Many Faces of . . . Pengo

By Alan Hewston

"Cold as Ice" and "Ice, Ice Baby". Not quite songs about Pengo, but ice is what Pengo is all about.

It's still cold up North, and for the first time since November, we've finally gone more than a week without seeing ice. Pengo is one of those cute games from the early 80's that deserved more recognition for being so innovative. Not only is it a maze game, but one where you can actually change the maze, need to rely upon your memory a lot, use quick thinking and hand-eye coordination to eliminate your enemies, logic & strategy to figure out the puzzle of earning lots of bonus points, and then when all else fails you can still run away from the enemies. A great non-violent (minimal violence) game - you can tell your children that the Snow Bees don't actually die, they are sent into hibernation and will return the next level.

As Pengo, the penguin, you are trapped inside a maze of ice blocks where several Snow Bees are trying to sting you. If you can eliminate all the active Snow Bees, or survive long enough, the Snow Bees will eventually exit into hibernation, ending the level. Push the ice

blocks to squash the Snow Bees and score points - even more when multiple bees are squashed. Each level begins with all the Snow Bees inside different ice blocks which momentarily flash red. Remember where they are hidden so that you can eliminate them ASAP. A handful of them come right out (sometimes right next to you) to chase you. As long as Snow Bees are on the screen, the remaining ones can hatch any time - but not without the blocks with the un-hatched bees inside flashing red to warn you.

Movement is limited to U/D/L/R (no diagonals) and likewise for pushing blocks (use fire button when next to a block). A block slides across the play field until it hits another block or a wall, stopping there, in tact. If there is no room to slide, then the block is destroyed, scoring points as well, and even more points if there is an un-hatched Snow Bee inside. There are also three indestructible diamond blocks, which if aligned - three in a row nets you a huge 10K bonus (if away from the wall) or 5K (if along the wall). You can only get this bonus once per level, but it also causes all the Snow Bees to become frozen for a short time so that you can eliminate them by squashing or walking on them. Each level the bees get faster and smarter, and there are larger numbers of Snow Bees that can hatch. The quicker you complete a level the more bonus points you score. Bonus lives are earned with scores such as 40K and 100K. The final Snow Bee can be the most dangerous as it becomes faster while trying to escape to a corner (goes into hibernation). When along the walls, you can hit your fire button and bounce all the walls, thus freezing any Snow Bee also along any wall.

The 5200 manual states that the score rolls over after 99,999,999 points - Yeah - like anyone can (or wants to) play for that long. All home versions allow 2 player alternating games. This classic Arcade game made it home in cartridge format for the Atari 2600 & 5200 (both fairly rare), and on the Atari 8 bit (uncommon). I've yet to find the Atari 8 bit or C64 version on original disk. Thus Pengo is a bit harder to find/play on the home systems than most of the games that I review. But there is always MAME and other emulators.

Classic Platforms: Atari 2600, 5200, Atari 8 bit, Commodore 64.

Atari 5200 and 8 bit programmed by: Sean W. Hennessy.

Commodore 64 version released by Colosoft.

Categories: Gameplay, Addictiveness, Graphics, Sound & Controls

Have Nots: Commodore 64 (34)

The C64 version is fun to play but pales in comparison to the others. At first, the Gameplay appears to be the same as on the other games, but then there was something that I could not figure out. The Snow Bees (now called Snow Bows) seem to keep hatching endlessly. Even if that ice block was destroyed, they continue to appear. Guess that I should have tracked down those C64 instructions first, or perhaps this is a more challenging feature of the arcade game not present in the others. There is no pause that I could find. There is a break between levels where you are entertained by several differently colored Pengo's dancing. But this break is not long enough to do anything, and cannot be shortened either. I could not find a way to restart the game other than to wait and die, or reload from disk. There does not appear to be a way to select a difficulty, but you can continue the game - at the last level reached. Finally, any time you die, the maze starts all over again, and not where you left off. All this frustration downgrades the Gameplay to fair (5). The C64 does have the best, superb Graphics (9), and the color and details are all clear. No jagged

edges and no death unless you are completely covered by the Snow Bow. The Snow Bows that can destroy ice blocks are clearly discernable (having beaks) from those who can only chase. The other home versions offer no clue and you must assume that all Snow Bees can destroy ice blocks. The Sound effects and music are completely different (bland) from the other versions and are just OK (5). The Controls are very nice (8), but could be better if the response time were not so slow and sluggish. The Addictiveness score suffers, but still is pretty good (7). Too bad Atarisoft didn't make this instead of Colosoft.

Bronze Medal: Atari 2600 (41)
Simple, yet effective - as is often the case for the 2600 - and just a notch (barely) below the Gold medal.

The Gameplay is nice (8), but there is no pause, and it lacks in level selection. The lack of pause is more than compensated for between levels - where the game does not continue until you press the fire button.

Excellent programming! The joystick Controls are flawless (10). The Sound is cool (7), but the effects are limited compared with the computer versions & their nice musical score. The Graphics (7) are very good - simple, but highly effective. The Addictiveness score is outstanding (9) - I prefer playing this one over either of the gold medal winners.

Gold Medal: Shared between the Atari 5200 (42) and Atari 8 bit (42)
No reason to break this tie, as both games are

Come back next month when those of us sick of Winter just want to go Berzerk on our Atari 2600, 5200, 8 bit, Vectrex, and Apple II - and take on the most happy of all indestructible enemies - Evil Otto.

Eratta: I continue to discover more official classic versions of the games that I review. Imagic produced a handful of rarer disk versions of C64 games and I missed a supposedly good version of C64 Demon Attack. I recently added the CoCo cart for Demon Attack to my collection but still have no CoCo to play it on. Tapper was officially released on the Apple II, in case I missed that one as well.

(Alan Hewston is still looking for the Colecovision version of Pitfall II: The Lost Caverns - if you have one for sale or trade, Alan can be reached at Hewston95@stratos.net. Also planning to put the "Joystick Era" Classic Video Games 2000 list up next month - since the DP guide finally arrived - Wohoo!)

Classic Gaming Expo 2001

The biggest and best classic game show has begun to release information about this year's show and as always, it looks to be a great event! While there is still alot of information that has yet to be determined, like guests, events, etc..., there is still quite a bit of information about the show. The location will remain at the Plaza Hotel, which provides more than ample room. Also, the event will be in August and will feature a ton of great arcade games to play, plenty of new items offered.

So check out the official website by clicking on the banner above or by going to http://www.cgexpo.com for more information. Look for updates here in Retrogaming Times for this show, the Phillycon, CCAG and any others that may pop up.

Speaking of other classic game shows....

Northwest Classic Game Expo

Are you busy this weekend? Do you live in the Northwest (specifically, the state of Washington) or can make it to the area, then we have a classic game show for you! While I just heard about this show (Lee, send me a press release next year), it sounds like alot of fun! Too bad that I live a few thousand miles away and not enough time to plan the trip. But for anyone who wants more information, here is press release:

The NorthWest Classic Games Enthusiasts (NWCGE)
Invite you to join us for a weekend of Classic Gaming fun

Join us for our annual NWCGE Meeting and Exposition

February 24th

Remember joysticks, Pac-Man, Space Invaders and Atari?
NWCGE is an outlet for folks who are interested in the classic games of the pre-Nintendo era. Come share, play, trade, buy and sell games with fellow classic games enthusiasts

Where: 308 Fourth Ave South, Kirkland, Washington 98083 (Northlake Unitarian Universalist Church)
When: February 24th, 2001 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

More Info:
NWCGE Website : http://members.nbci.com/nwcge/meet.htm or Check out http://NWCGE.org
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NWCGE is also sponsor of the Atari Championship at the HI*SCORE ARCADE

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If you like classic games and you live in the Pacific Northwest come on by.

DO IT.... FOR YOUR OWN GOOD

The Things You'll Never Do

By Fred Wagaman

Why do we play video games ?

Is it because we like to be bathed in the warm glow of a electrically charged cathode-ray tube day in and day out ? Is it that we like acquiring interesting maladies like carpal tunnel and dry eyes ? Why do we waste hour after hour after hour with out little electronic friends ?

Is it because we're geeks, weirdos or social misfits ?

While those things may have some truth, the real reason many of us play games is that video games give us the opportunity to do things we never could in real life.

When I was younger, I rode a skateboard. I would deliver newspapers in my local area on my skateboard. Living in Amish country, I had plenty of races on Sunday mornings with the young men in their courting buggies. But I never had the guts, talent or locations to do some of the tricks I read about. Now that I'm older, I think it would be very unlikely that I could do anything short of balancing on a skateboard today. Thanks to games like Tony Hawk, I can be a rail-grinding, ollie-planting fool.

But if I took a lot of time and dedicated myself, I might be able to do some of the thing I've seen in Tony Hawk. Not many things mind you, but some.

Since I was a kid, I've had a fascination with space. Having grown up in the Apollo era,

watching the first men walk on the moon and being a fan of Sci Fi, I've always wanted to go into space. Not just the fantasy stuff, but the real deal. A few years ago, I had the chance to play a game called the Halley Project. Even through the rudimentary graphics on the Apple 2, I enjoyed flying to all of the planets of the solar system and many of their moons.

Recently, I read about a game that has outraged parents and politicians alike.

(Of course, that could be most any game when you think about it.)

This was a game you could download to you Palm computer.

In this game, you're a drug dealer.

You make buys, sell to your customers, and manipulate the price based on demand or busts of rival dealers. Heroin, Ecstasy and Crack. They're all there. You measure your success by how much money you have. You measure failure by being arrested, injured or killed. When you are killed, it's game over.

In games, I've traveled into space, slayed dragons, shot Nazis and did plenty of other things I could never do in real life. This drug game does nothing more than give the player a chance to learn financial concepts based on an economic system that is not unusual in today's society. Right ?

Why does this game bother me ?

It's not like I haven't argued that the games we play don't affect us in real life. If I play a game where I shoot Nazi's, I'm not more likely to go out and shoot my neighbors. Following that logic, a game where you play a drug dealer isn't more likely to cause you to sell drugs.

Grand Theft Auto allowed the player to carjack people, run from the law, shoot police officers and cause general mayhem in the streets. Some people were appalled, but since the game had the big black "M" on the label, there was nothing anyone could do. Except not buy it.

Instead Grand Theft Auto was a minor success. It spawned an add-on disk and a sequel.

I guess the day is coming. I can see it.

The Columbine Game.

"Take on the role of a jilted outcast. Gather your resources, clean your guns and build your bombs. Organize your attack and execute your plan (and classmates) during second period. Take as many of your classmates with you before your inevitable run-in with the cops. Don't forget to lay traps for fleeing civilians and incoming National Guard members. Points based on body count. Team up with a friend for double the fun.

Add-on packs will allow a player to create layouts based on their own high school. Digitally map your friends and enemies pictures onto potential victims. Remember, it's all in fun. (wink, wink)"

Do you think this game would sell ? Maybe a lot ?

Games, like any other media, has a wide range of customers. There are books that are made for children and there are books that are made for adults. There are movies that are made for children and movies that are made for adults. And there are games that are made for children and there are games that are made for adults.

But sometimes, there are books, movies and, yes, games that should be made for no one.

(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 18 month old, 4th player, Lynzie.

Fred heard about a great home for classic arcade games (see last issue's article). It's called FUNSPOT and is located in New Hampshire. Check it out http://www.funspotnh.com/ . Fred can be reached at fcw3@postoffice.ptd.net)

ODYSSEY 2 REVIEWS

BY THE VIDEO GAME CRITIC, DAVE MROZEK

Quest for the Rings, The (Magnavox 1981) C+

Wow, this game gets an A+ for effort! Part board game and part video game, Quest for the Rings comes with a nice game board, finely-crafted plastic and metal "tokens", a keyboard overlay, and an oversized, beautifully illustrated manual. Heck, even the box looks like a work of art. Evidentially a lot of resources went into creating the elaborate maps and engraved tokens. Too bad they couldn't spend more time on THE FREAKIN' VIDEO GAME! Geez! Quest for the Rings is a two-player cooperation game. Players traverse the map on the game board, switching over to the video game to hunt for rings in monster-infested dungeons. There are four characters to choose from: a sword-wielding warrior, a spell-casting wizard, a wall-penetrating phantom, and a "changling" who can turn invisible. It's nice to have a choice, but let's face it: without weapons, the changling and phantom aren't much fun. Before entering each dungeon, both characters are shown entering into a "time warp", depicted by some downright irritating visual and sound effects. There are four types of dungeons, each one screen in size. These can feature normal walls, moving walls, walls that are deadly to touch, or invisible walls. Monsters include the human-shaped orcs, giant spiders that look like octopuses, "bloodthirsts" that look like pterodactyls, and large fire-breathing dragons! These dragons put to SHAME those hollow ducks in Adventure! Unfortunately, only the orcs can be killed! In theory, a "dungeon master" is supposed to use the keyboard to specify the content of each dungeon based on board movement. But I'd recommend abandoning the board altogether and letting the computer generate random dungeons for you. Both players can work together, but the action isn't too deep. Getting to a ring usually requires one player to act as a decoy. Your characters move like snails and can only attack from the side, making them highly susceptible to monsters approaching from above or below. The collision detection is highly questionable, and close proximity to a bad guy usually means death. The graphics aren't bad, and when a large monster eats you, you can actually see your character being consumed (while his legs are still twitching!). That's a nice touch I haven't seen in any other classic games. But ultimately Quest for the Rings just isn't very fun, and that's too bad. Despite the numerous "extras", the gameplay rarely rises above mediocrity.

2 players

Pocket Billiards (Magnavox 1980) F

You know a pool game is bad when both players ROOT for each other to make a shot. But not as a sign of support - only to bring this God-awful train-wreck of a game to an end! Before you remind me that this is just the Odyssey 2, I should let you know that I HAVE played a very GOOD pool game on the Atari 2600 (Trick Shot)! The graphics and sound effects here are minimal. The physics and shooting angles are completely inaccurate and totally unpredictable. For some reason, the balls tend to roll either up-and-down or side-to-side. Every shot is soft; you can't even shoot the cue ball the length of the table! There are two game variations, eight ball and rotation, but both are two-player only. This is one SORRY game.

2 players

K.C. Munchkin! (Magnavox 1981) A
This thinly veiled Pac-Man clone is actually superior in every way to the Atari 2600 version of Pac-Man. The main character looks like a blue Pac-Man with antennae, and the ensuing "munchers" look like ghosts with antennae. But they weren't fooling anybody! This game was actually PULLED from the shelves after Atari sued Magnavox for copyright infringement. Despite the corny name, this is really a solid game. It plays just like Pac-Man, except you only get one life, and the dots actually move around the maze. You have your choice of mazes, and can even create your own! The graphics are very nice. The main character is well animated, and the ghosts do NOT flicker at all. The control is perfect. I found K.C. Munchkin to be HIGHLY enjoyable Pac-Man clone.
1 player

Alien Invaders - Plus! (Magnavox 1978) F
Can somebody please tell me what the "plus" is supposed to be? This is just a second-rate version of Space Invaders! Make that third-rate. The graphics are pretty bad. There are only two rows of aliens; one row look like people, and the other look like mushrooms. Only the large, one-eyed mother ship looks like it had any thought put into it. The game plays slightly different from the classic Space Invaders. Your mission is to clear ten waves. When your cannon is hit, it turns into a little person. You can then run under one of the three remaining invincible shields and turn it into a backup cannon. That means you get four cannons for each life. Multiply that by the ten "men" you get. It's like getting 40 lives per game! The game IS challenging, but only because there's a moving shield in front of the invaders, and the choppy movement of your targets makes it impossible to aim at anything. You just keep shooting and moving and hope for the best. Sound-wise, the game provides the standard Space Invaders cadence. The only score you're given is the number of waves you've cleared. There is no extra variations or two-player modes.
1 player

K.C.'s Krazy Chase (Magnavox 1982) A
After Magnavox was forced to pull K.C. Munchkin from the shelves, they went back to work on another Pac-Man style maze game. The result was an impressive Pac-Man/Centipede hybrid. This time your blue character must pursue a "Dratapillar" around the maze and eat its segments from behind (these also function as power pills). You can

also consume green trees scattered around the maze, which are reminiscent of the mushrooms in Centipede. The game ends when either the Dratapillar's head or one of the two roaming "Drats" touches K.C. There are some nice graphical touches in this game, including K.C. "waving" goodbye when he dies. In an apparent attempt to further differentiate itself from Pac-Man, K.C. "rolls" around when he moves. This game is just as fun as K.C. Munchkin, and even features voice synthesis (if you have the voice module). Actually the voice is pretty annoying, imploring you to "run!" and "hurry up!" on a constant basis. It adds nothing to the actual gameplay. K.C.'s Krazy Chase provides five mazes and gives you the option of building your own. It's a lot of fun.
1 player

Bowling/Basketball (Magnavox 1978) F
You have to be concerned when a video game company includes more than one game on a cartridge. It indicates that each game wasn't good enough to be sold on its own. Unfortunately, two bad games do not make a good game; two bad games make a bad game! The bowling and basketball games here are minimal to say the least. In bowling, the pins are square, and the ball moves side to side at the end of the lane. You initiate the roll and apply the spin. Pins simply disappear, so there's no chance to knock down spread formations. That's too bad since half of your rolls result in splits! Basketball isn't any better. The graphics are downright embarrassing! Two static players move side to side on a flat "court". The holes you try to shoot at look nothing like baskets. This makes the Atari 2600 basketball look like NBA Live. Painful!
1 or 4 players

UFO! (Magnavox 1981) B
This game rocks! Sure, at first glance it appears to be a pathetic Asteroids clone. The rocks are flashing asterisks, and the UFOs look like plates! You only get one ship, and it looks like a flying saucer surrounded by a ring of dots. A single glowing dot indicates the direction of your shots. Moving your ship causes your shooting trajectory to change, as the glowing dot moves clockwise around you. It all sounds like a really bad idea, until you start to play it. The shooting mechanism is awkward at first, but eventually you learn how to use it to your advantage, by moving your ship in one direction while shooting in another. Another neat feature is the chain reactions caused by the exploding asterisks. This game is very challenging, and I became addicted. The only serious reservation that I have is concerning the shooting "plates" that emerge pretty often. These things are fast, shoot rapidly, and will usually put an end to your game. I'm all for a challenge, but when you only have one life, that's just unfair.
1 player

FOR MORE REVIEWS FOR CLASSIC SYSTEMS, GO TO THE VIDEO GAME CRITIC'S SITE AT www.videogamecritic.net

(David Mrozek is 32 year old computer scientist living in Maryland. He has a wife and seven cats. Dave has been a video game junkie since the late 1970's and has owned most of the major video game systems since then. In his spare time, he loves to collect, play, and review video games, both new and old. His web site, The Video Game Critic www.videogamecritic.net *contains over 1050 capsule reviews covering 18 different systems. Although he prefers classic video games, he still keeps up with the new systems like the Dreamcast and Playstation 2. Dave enjoys hearing comments, suggestions, and alternate views, so feel free to email him at dmrozek3@home.net.)*

The TI 99/4A
"What Makes It Tick - An Overview"

by Jim Krych

I decided to make the hardware section into two separate articles. One will be “The Unknowns”, which deals with the TI-specific hardware, and then, “The Known”, which is pretty self-explanatory.

Like many home computers that were it’s contemporaries, the TI 99/4A shares much in common. What set it apart, was the use of it’s CPU, the built-in GPL interpretor (the REAL reason why TI BASIC is so darn slow!!!), the GROMS (and the Review Module Library), and the way TI designed the 99/4A to handle peripherals such as a disk drive, RS232, etc. And, to allow future hardware without the need to update the OS.

Mention a TI 99/4A, and many people will name one thing, the Speech Synthesizer. The TI was not the only computer to have speech, but certainly, this was designed from very early on to have speech. And, many an educational program, and a well-designed game, used this piece of hardware very effectively.

I remember the big debate over the size of the keyboard for the TI 99/4A. Funny, look at some laptop keyboards now! Or some palmtops. Commodore made a big deal out of this, and some of the reviewers did too, back then. I never really had a problem with it, except the infamous FTCN =, which meant bye-bye to any programming you were doing!

I have seen the early model, the 99/4, and I totally agree, the keyboard on that just plain sucked!

The TI was a 16-bit computer. BUT!!! The microprocessor, the TMS9900, was strapped down by having the data bus converted into an 8-bit bus. This accounts to the fact that TI had planned on using the TMS9985, in the Home Computer, and was not able to have that chip produced. Hence, the more-expensive 9900 was used, and the design crippled.

The TI had 16K of RAM, which was entirely Video RAM for the 9918A VDP. Only 256 bytes on CPU RAM was available, on the machine itself. This was 16-bit RAM. Regular memory expansion, not counting the memory mapping system or others, was 32K, which had two segments-the lower 8K and the upper 24K.

The TI allowed cartridges, as well as TI BASIC, upon power-up. You made your selection via a menu. Some carts would enhance TI BASIC. Like Mini-Memory, and others. Extended BASIC was available on a cartridge. And this gave you many more options for programming.

Expansion was available in several flavors. The original side-car expansion, with the ever-expanding desk width, the PEB, with the various Expansion Cards that were made available, and several third-party expansions that fit into the side.

The TI 99/4A had 16 color graphics, 256 x 192 resolution, with several modes, and 32 sprites. A joystick port was on the side, using TI’s, or a device to use Atari-compatible joysticks. Cassette, of course, was available for saving/loading programs. And the cartridges fit into the front, to the right of the keyboard. Only a few used the side expansion port, more memory available.

The TI also had a very familiar 3-channel with noise sound chip. The same found in MANY home computers, including the Coleco Colecovision/Adam, MSX, MSX2, the Atari ST line, and others. Not as good as the SID from Commodore, but better than other computers. Though, there was ways to get digitized sound effects.

What we will be going over in the next couple of articles is more in-depth reviews of the innards of the TI 99/4A. Especially with the CPU, GROM, and the DSR system. With the known, we’ll discuss the sound chip, the video chip, and the speech chip.

A side note for now, for those who are normally used to programming the 6502, the Z80, and or the 6809, the TMS9900 will come across as very strange. With it’s memory-to-memory architecture, the TMS9900 was VERY unique in the home computer field.

It was a shame that much of the needed hardware information only came about after TI had left the market. Especially the GPL language. We did have some reference manuals, in the areas of expansion and how to ensure that your card didn't conflict with TI's, or someone else's. And, which locations on the CRU bus were allocated already. Other than that, that was it.

I want to thank those who have written to me on this series. Writing about the TI 99/4A has closed up some loose ends, and has brought back many fond memories of this computer. Keep up the letters!

(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., in their troubleshooting/calibration department. I have a 18 month old son, his name is Treyton. I enjoy retrogaming and things that go with that. :) My email address: jwkrych@n2net.net.)

A Very Unique Offer

Every so often, I come across something so unique, so original, that I have to point it out. This is definitely a case where that applies. While working online, I was contacted by a person, via instant messages about a page on my site. As we talked a bit, he told me about his website and as I took a look at it, I found the idea quite intriguing and interesting and thought I would share it with the readers.

The site is called "Game For Website" and like the name implies, they will build and maintain a professional website in exchange for an arcade game. While they don't accept any old game, they are willing to listen to any offers for arcade games, pinball machines or jukeboxes.

While I don't have anything to trade them, I do admire their creativity. I always applaud someone who thinks up something original. So check out their site and if you have the need for a professional website and don't have the expertise, but do have a spare machine you may want to trade, you now know a place that keeps the fine art of bartering alive!

http://www.gameforwebsite.com/

You Will Worship the Woodgrain!

An item I have been meaning to order is the "Worship the Woodgrain" CD compilation for the Atari 2600. Made by Lee Krueger, it offers a huge selection of Atari 2600 games (the third edition has 396 games, with 99 on each CD) that are all playable through a Supercharger and a CD player (sorry but there is no cassette version with the 396 games on a hundred or so cassettes)!

The collection runs like a charm! The games load quickly and you get the great experience of playing them on an Atari system with real Atari joysticks! The only thing missing is all the cart swapping, but I will gladly live without that. Plus, you get a chance to play many games that you may never have a chance to play on your Atari system without spending a ton of money (either on the original or a multicart). Games like Mangia, Cakewalk and Condor Attack which would cost you a fortune, can now be enjoyed (a term used loosely with some of the extremely rare Atari games).

The quality of the collection is exceptional! From the psychedelic cover to the different artwork on each CD, everything is done professionally and you can see that alot of work was put into this package. I have to give a hand to Lee for a wonderful job!

There are a few problems with the collection, one of which can be remedied. Your Supercharger needs to be modified to be able to play all the games and while the modification isn't too hard, it does involve a soldering gun and if you are as inept as me, then there is a clause in your insurance policy that does not allow you to use one. If you do not have the modification done, there is still enough great games to make it worthwhile,

but alot of the most enjoyable games like the Activision games are unplayable.

The other very minor gripe I have with the collection is a few of the games that I would really want are not included, especially Crazy Climber, one of my favorite games for the 2600 (and a very expensive game to boot). But there are so many great games included that there is plenty of other games to play! Plus, all the games are listed in alphabetical order, so you can find games quite easily.

If you want more information about this great product, check out the following website and grab a copy before it sells out again!

http://home.earthlink.net/~resqsoft/

Digital Press 6th Edition, the Review!

If you are a classic game fan, then it is imperative that you get this book. This is the bible of the classic game industry and a must have for anyone who lists classic games as a hobby. Not only does it have the largest amount of information about all classic games, from rarity to price value to easter eggs and other tidbits, but it also has great stories from other classic gamers and lots of wonderful pictures!

As one would expect with any continuing publication, the quality of the Digital Press Guide keeps improving. From the much nicer and more sturdy binding to the easy to find sections, the guide keeps getting better and better. There is also more systems covered and more information about the different games. The Commodore 64, TI 99/4A and Tandy Color Computer are some of the new additions.

Once again we get some nice pictures of classic games as well as Joe Santulli's always enjoyable little quips. While many are the same ones from the last edition, there are enough new ones as well as more information on easter eggs and little tricks.

While there are new systems covered, a few sections had to be sacrificed. Gone are the list of collectors. Goodbye to the list of websites and goodbye to the glossary. Too bad as these gave the book a more personal touch. But I can understand the move as the book is already extremely huge.

For the most part, the prices are pretty accurate, with most of the prices close to what they were in the last guide. But there are still a fair amount of games that are low, especially the Nintendo games. A few examples are the Final Fantasy listed at $7.00, where it almost always commands twice that much, if not more. The Panesian adult Nintendo games are listed at $75.00 each, a steal for those games, which have sold for as high as $400.00 each. Also, River Raid for the Intellivision is listed at a measly $7.00 and has sold as high as $125.00 (though $35.00-$40.00 is a much more accurate price). But with 90-95% of the prices being very accurate, this is a minor gripe on an otherwise incredible publication.

The bottom line is that if you are serious about your games, then you need to buy a copy. There is so much great information included that you will be reading for weeks. To get a copy, go to the Digital Press website at:

http://www.digitpress.com.

Letters to the Editor

Here is some more letters for me to answer. Keep them coming and I will keep doing my best to answer them.

How are the Atari Remote Control joysticks? Are they very responsive? signed Tangled up in Wires

I have had limited exposure to the joysticks and while I found them to be fairly accurate, I

was not sold on them. You have to remember that you need to be in direct line of sight of the receiver and there is a limited range. If you can buy them for a fairly affordable price, they are fun to play with, but don't expect them to replace your regular Atari joysticks.

We all know you like the classic games, but are there any new games that you are currently playing? signed Modern Gamer

I get asked this quite often. I do love my classic games and play quite a few, but I love video games in general and must admit that the majority of my video game playing is done on the Sega Dreamcast (Sega, say it ain't so, don't give up on us). Currently, my favorite games are Phantasy Star Online, Typing of the Dead and Samba di Amigo (finally bought a set of maracas).

You are always talking about music you listen to, but how about some suggestions for classic video game music that I can listen to? signed Need some new tunes.

The first and most obvious suggestion would be to go and buy Buckner and Garcia's Pacman Fever CD! The whole album is based on classic video games (Frogger, Pacman, Donkey Kong and more). Other classic video game related songs include Weird Al's Pacman song, Uncle Vic's "Space Invaders" and you could always download the "Theme from Peter Gunn" which is the song used in Spy Hunter. Also, if you look around on Napster or other download servers, you can find techno versions of video games including Pacman, Galaga, Xevious, Mappy and others. Some are pretty cool and others are rather lame. I do not know if these are available in album form.

Sites of the Month

Turn on those spotlights as we have two more deserving sites to shine them on! Make sure to check these sites out and let them know that you heard about them in Retrogaming Times!

The Arctic Computer and Video Game Museum
Here is a site from Finland with a really cool mascot, in the form of a devilish joystick (Freud could have a field day with this). The site is very nicely done and has a ton of stuff to check out! My personal favorite section is the list of different video game and computers, most with links to pictures of the systems. There are currently 158 of them posted.

Make sure to fill out the survey for a chance to win a cool t-shirt! Also, while you are there, you may want to check out their cool e-cards! They have some very fun clever pictures and sayings and will be welcomed by any classic game fan. The website can be found at the following URL:

http://pkp.cjb.net/

Puck Man
No, this isn't some clone of Pacman, but a site dedicated to the actual Pacman game. As any classic game fan knows, Pacman was named Puck Man over in Japan, but the name was changed when it was brought over here due to fear that vandals would change the lettering to a profanity. Anyways, this site is dedicated to the original game and has quite a bit of stuff about it, including a ton of pictures of the original machine, in both standup and cocktail machines. So if you ever wanted to learn a little more about Puck Man, then check out this site:

http://www.vanschip.com/puck-man/

Conclusion

Let me start by apologizing for not completing the Temptation Island story. As I went back and read it, I found that it was pretty lame and decided to just can it. I tried to do it for this month and while it seemed like a pretty good idea last month, I just could not get myself to write anymore. Guess the effects of the Hamsterdance song had faded.

Now back to more pressing matters, hope you enjoyed the issue and look for more great information in the next issue. As always, make sure to email the writers and let them know what you think of their work, good or bad. Thanks for reading it and see you next month!

-Tom Zjaba

(This issue was written while listening to an eclectic collection of songs, including a little gem I found and really enjoy called "Bigfoot" by the Legendary Jim Ruiz Group.)

(Pictures of the Odyssey 2 games was taken from the Digital Press CD Rom. Check out the Digital Press website for more information on this great product!)