TOMORROW'S HEROES
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Introduction
This issue will be smaller than most. This is for numerous reasons, with good old summer being the main one. With everyone out enjoying the sun, my contributions have gone way down. Even my own desire to write articles takes a back seat to enjoying the nice weather (or dreading coming up to the computer room which is not air conditioned). So if you are looking to beat the heat, you can print this off and go read it under a nice shady tree with a cool glass of lemonade. Now that sounds like a plan!

Retrogaming Times Logo!
After I lost the initial email, I was finally contacted by the person who did the Retrogaming Times logo and so now I can give him credit! The person who designed it is Patrick O'Neill! If you want to contact him and let him know if you like it or not, his email address is: poneill@fuse.net.

While we didn't get alot of response from readers on whether they liked it or not, the response we did get was about 75% positive and 25% negative. So we decided to keep it! Billy the Block is quite happy!

Many Games, One Price
One of the best deals at my favorite arcade, Pleasure Time Arcade, was the Saturday Night Special! For $6.00, you could play all the games you wanted from 7:00 PM till the arcade closed at 10:00 PM. Three full hours of constant gameplay for one low price! There were a few minor restrictions they had like you could not get more than three credits at a time on a machine (they didn't want you to go sell them to other gamers or give them to friends) and you couldn't kick off a paying customer to play a game. So it was quite tough to get on the popular games at the time. But I used this opportunity to try all the games that I wasn't good at or never bothered with. Being a teenage boy, I would gravitate towards the more shooting orientated games like Galaga and Zaxxon and not bother with the cutesy games. While I would try any new game, I would usually make a very quick judgment on whether or not I liked a game and sometimes I let my male ego get in the way. So I used these Saturday nights to try those games. Games like Pengo, Ladybug and Pooyan were games that I would have passed over, but when I could play all I wanted to, I went back and tried

them again. Know what, I found these to be some very good games!

As I look back at those nights, while playing MAME, I found that my enjoyment of many of the not so popular games came during these sessions. So I guess I am somewhat indebted to this novel idea as it gave me alot of fond memories that I may have missed.

Remember When
.....Nintendo and Sega were only known as arcade game makers?

Where is George Plimpton?

The once popular spokesperson for the Intellivision systems, George Plimpton, is nowhere to be found. What has happened to this man who told all of us how the Intellivision was a superior machine. His ads were clever and his straight man pitch worked well as he was showing off the better graphics and sound of the Intellivision. But what happened to him?

I did some investigative research (my way of saying I let my imagination run wild) and found out that George Plimpton is still in the public eye. But he decided to change his name and move into a different venue. Instead of talking about video games, he now talks about baseball! That is right, George Plimpton is none other than Peter Gammons on ESPN! While Peter wouldn't comment to my letters, this only helps to prove the point. Listen to the voices and you will see that they are one in the same! There is even a similarity in looks! Believe it or not! While I cannot prove this, it is my story and I am sticking to it.

Lotsa Stuff

by Fred Wagaman

So you've been collecting for a while. You've got a good collection of games both boxed and unboxed. You've got loose manuals and overlays stacked around the house. The inevitable question arises, How do I store all this stuff ?

Well, fret no further my friend. I'm here to help.

First, you need to identify whether you want to store your games, or store them and show them off.

If you just want to store your games, there are several options. I've heard of people having great success with a variety of different sized Rubbermaid containers. These are readily available, relatively cheap and reasonably strong. They're water-tight and can safely be stacked. Experiment with different sizes depending on whether you need to store boxed or unboxed carts. A really cheap option is to visit a local liquor store. They generally get a lot of sturdy boxes. The down-side to this is not many of them are the same size or shape. Plus you look like a lush if anybody sees your storage area. What I do is get the 14x11 computer paper boxes from work. They come with a lid, are reasonably strong and are a consistent size for stacking and storage. They also have a convenient label on them for identifying what's inside.

Storing your games and showing them off is a whole different problem. Shelves are the most prominent choice. They can be mounted on the wall, or free standing. The problem with that choice is the expense of buying all of those chunks of wood. And if you do save some money by purchasing the wall-mount shelves, you're committed to where you install them. So choose wisely. I tried something that work successfully for me. I got 9 milk crates at the local home improvement store. (You could of course acquire yours through other methods, but you didn't hear that from me). I also picked up 3 9-foot long, white metal closet unit shelf pieces. I think they were about $10

each. (You could, of course, adjust the size of your shelves as necessary) These shelves are fairly strong and light-weight. What I did was route a small channel for the edge of the shelf to sit in on top of the milk crate. Then I used wire-ties to secure the shelf to the milk crate. I used a milk crate on each end and another in the middle. Then I put a second crate on top of the first, and secured that with another tie. Then I put the third layer on. What I ended up with was an inexpensive storage area for my games that was portable, but sturdy. I put my game magazines in the bottom milk crates to act as anchors. It's held up well now for three years.

Now, what to do with loose manuals and overlays ? You could just get a big filing cabinet and use hanging folders to store them. One idea I liked was people using comic book bags and backing-boards for their manuals. And then storing them in comic book boxes. What I did was get a large supply of ½ page baseball card holders. The kind that can go in three ring binders. These are basically 2 pockets per page instead of the usual 9. These held 90% of my loose manuals without a hassle. For the rest (the unusually large instructions), I picked up a few full page pockets and placed them in the same binder. Intellivision and Coleco overlays can be stored in the 9 pocket pages.

Loose carts are another problem. Again, I've seen people put the cart in a comic bag with a backing-board along with the instructions. This keeps them together, but makes it more difficult to store. Atari 2600, 7800, Intellivision and Coleco carts stack nicely, but you always have concerns over damaging labels. I'm afraid to say that this is one area that I don't have a real good suggestion. I've used the stack method, and also curio shelves to store loose carts. Both have had limited success. If you have good ideas for storing and showing off the loose carts in your collection, I'd like to hear them.

I hope this helps.

Fred has been playing games for over 20 years and actively collecting them for almost 10. The 2300 + games that he has takes up most of his home office and living room. He lives in Denver, PA with his understanding wife Jennie and his 3 year-old, button-loving son, Max. He can be mailed at fcw3@postoffice.ptd.net. Maybe next time, he'll tell you how to store 6 arcade machines and a pinball machine in the bathroom.

MAME Reviews

Time to take two more games from the vaunted list and give the once over to them. So let us get to the games!

Joust

Everyone knows about this very popular game. Joust is probably one of the all-time greatest two player games (as my friend Jeff can attest to as we always play it when he is

over). The simple controls and the sheer uniqueness of the game is what really makes it stand out. The best thing that can be said about Joust is that when you play it, you don't compare it to any other game. It is Joust and being an original is the best compliment!

One of my favorite things about the game is the birds you ride on and their animations. You are either riding an ostrich (in one player mode) or a crane/stork (in two player mode). It is neat to see them fly, but the way they walk is a nice little touch. The legs bend in like an actual bird and they can go from a slow step to a fast run! I applaud the programmers, who obviously have seen a real bird move and not just assume.

Another neat feature is the slow erosion of the play field. First there is the opening of the lava pits, including the lava slowly rising (something I never realized until recently, the little things we overlooked). Then as you progress further in the game, some of the land dissolves and you find the area getting more and more wide open. This can be a blessing and a curse. While the open spaces gives you more room to maneuver, it also does the same for the enemies! On later levels, this can be a royal pain in the neck as they fly around like they just drank down a few liters of Jolt cola.

While there isn't alot of variety of enemy, there is enough to keep things interesting. You have the basic rider, the blue rider who is much faster and more dangerous and the dreaded Pterodactyl. This stinking prehistoric bird will give you fits. As soon as you think you are in the clear, it will zip up and take a bite out of you! While you can kill it, good luck! Only a perfectly aimed lance will take down this bad boy and if you miss, he won't! Last, but not least is the lava troll. While we only see the dreaded hand of this evil beast, his presence is felt, everytime you get near the lava. He will grab anyone who flies too close to the lava and has an iron grip. You really have to flap fast to escape.

There may only be a few different characters to fight, but there are also alot of different themed levels. There is the bounty wave where a player gets 3000 points for killing the other player. Then there is the cooperative wave, where you get points for not killing each other. Add in the egg wave and the pterodactyl level and you have enough variety to keep you happy.

All in all, Joust is an all-time classic and a crowd pleaser. It is just one more reason why MAME is a great two player system and a reason to invite a friend over to play. If your friend is not familiar with the game, then they are in for a treat as they will discover one of the most original games ever!

Mappy

This little game has been haunting me for a long time. It is one of the games I really enjoyed after playing at the arcade during the "All You Can Play" nights. At first I thought it was a cute little game for kids. A mouse police officer being chased by cats? How utterly cute. Even on the bonus level, you were breaking adorable little balloons. Awww! Well, I soon found that under all that sugary gameplay is a very addictive and fun game!

Mappy is an exercise of fast movement and thinking ahead. Sure you can just run through it, but in order to maximize your score, you need to think ahead. But I am getting ahead of myself. The main gameplay consists of you grabbing all the treasure in the form of paintings, safes and other valuable objects while these criminal cats chase after you. If they touch you, you are dead and they can run faster than you, so you need to be cunning.

The first thing to do is learn the proper way to jump on the trampolines. One thing you will notice is that the trampoline changes color as you jump on it. With each leap, you are weakening it and after three jumps, the trampoline is ready to break. So be careful! Of course if you jump off the trampoline and then back on, it magically fixes itself, so long as it didn't break. So keep this in mind as you bounce up and down.

There are the loot laying around that you get point for, but with a little careful planning, you can really maximize your points! First off, there are two of each item on the level and if you grab one of the items, the other begins to flash. Grab a flashing one before you grab a different one and you get bonus points! The bonus keeps going up as you get more pairs. A great way to improve that score!

But there are other ways to build up that score! If a cat goes behind an item and stops there, you can run over the item and stun the cat and get a nice bonus in the process! But be careful as they only stay there a few precious seconds and if you don't hurry, you could be jumping in the jaws of an awaiting cat! There is also the flashing doors. These doors release an awful wind that carries away all the cats in its path. So these doors are a lifesaver as they will clear out the space and can be used to clear a path for you. Since you only see one section of three on the screen at a given time, there may be a cat waiting for you. Use the door and you can send those nasty cats packing! The more cats you catch in this wind, the more points you get. Plus, there is a few moments of peace, before the cats make another attack.

There are the regular levels, which vary some as you get to later rounds and then there are the bonus levels. These are a race against the clock as you must pop as many balloons as possible before the song playing ends. If you get all the balloons, you get a 5000 point bonus! This will help send your score up!

Mappy is one of those games that is alot more than it appears to be. While it may look like a cute platform game, there really is more to it and you will find Mappy to be very exciting. Just give it a chance!

Remember When
.....systems came with a game and two joysticks.

eBay Notes

A very strange trend is happening in the classic game market. There are bargains galore on eBay! We are not talking about small bargains, but some substantial ones! So if there is an item you were looking for, check out some of these bargains.

Vectrexes that were selling for $125.00-$150.00, just for the unit a few months ago are now selling for under $100.00, more like $75.00-$80.00. This is almost a 50% drop in price. Single games are also getting a smaller return. Games that were once selling as high as $25.00 boxed (like Star Trek, Berzerk, etc...) are now getting about $15.00.

But the Vectrex isn't the only classic item being affected, there are literally tons of bargains out there! Here are a few that I came across:

1. Odyssey 1 nearly complete with six extra games all boxed for $51.00.
2. Boxed Colecovision, boxed Super Action controllers and six boxed games and four loose games (including boxed James Bond, Wargames and Rocky) for $26.00.
3. Tomytronics Tabletop boxing for $10.00.
4. Oil's Well cart for the Colecovision for $9.25
5. Complete set of Atari Force comics for $2.35

Then there were numerous other ones that I just missed or found too late. Quite simply, there are bargains galore on eBay and now is a good time to build up your collection. You may ask why there are so many bargains and I think it is a combination of a few things. First off, there is alot more items on eBay than ever before. Vectrexes used to be pretty rare and now there is always between five to ten of them up there. So bidders are just waiting until one reaches the price they are willing to pay. Another factor is that it is summer time and alot more people are outside or on vacation. So there aren't as many bidders as before, but look for this to change when the weather gets cold. Also there are now many more auction sites and while eBay is still the king, they are starting to slowly making inroads. Before it was just smaller guys doing auctions, but now you have some of the big boys like Amazon.com and Yahoo. So you will see some serious competition in the future and it may mean some changes are coming.

Regardless of the reasons, you cannot expect this trend to continue. I have been tracking eBay since 1996 and there are always a few times when demand exceeds supply. But as the leaves change color and many of the northern states find themselves in more and more and the flea markets and garage sales come to an end, you will see that shift. So if you want an item, now is as good a time as any to look for it.

Overheard in the Newsgroups

This had to be one of the most interesting months in newsgroup history. While there were numerous topics being discussed, one topic dominated the bandwidth like nothing else. I will give you a small recap of it, but I will leave out any names as I don't have all the facts and don't want to make any judgments.

It all started with a small press release of two sentences. It pretty much said that Nolan Bushnell will not be attending the Classic Video Game Convention because if an unspecified problem with someone that was associated with the CVGC. This sent out waves of speculation to who it was and why. Then Namco, who was one of the main sponsors, all of sudden wasn't a sponsor anymore or at least they weren't listed as one anymore. More speculation pop up and many gamers who were planning on attending the show wanted some answers.

Then things got real interesting! Apparently a person who was part of the show, all of a sudden withdrew from it and was erasing newsgroup posts as well as sending emails using another email account. Talk of lawsuits arose from this and the debate heated. Then a very well done and popular Atari site was erased by a hacker or so we were told. The person who authored the site said he was done with the classic game market and was leaving. Then speculation on who would sabotage the site began. All the while, they were still trying to figure out who caused Nolan Bushnell and Namco to pull out of the show.

While alot of the questions still remain unanswered, the show will continue. While Nolan Bushnell was a drawing card, there are still numerous other guest that more than make the show worthwhile. We may not ever know all the facts involved in this matter and it is probably better that we don't. But the classic video game market has just experienced it's first real conspiracy, sorta a classic game version of Watergate, if you will. While there was damage done, hopefully it will not be long lasting and things will slowly get back to normal.

A Deeper Look

I receive alot of requests from readers to review games that either they want to know more about or favorites of theirs that they are curious my opinion of. I always try to give the reader what he wants and so here are a few more requests.

A Deeper Look at.....Munchmobile

I came this close to actually owning the arcade machine of Munchmobile, one of those obscure favorites of mine. But some internal disputes halted that (AKA: my wife didn't want it and made sure I knew the consequences of getting it, use your imagination). So I have to settle for the only conversion of this game (it isn't even on MAME). After I told a few

people about it (when I thought I was getting it), they all asked about the game. Seems almost noone has ever heard of this great little game.

Munchmobile, a game for the TI 99/4A computer is a driving game of sorts. You have to drive your car along a road and not go off the road. Occasionally, another car or vehicle will come and you cannot hit them, but it is not a typical driving game. The main goal of the game is to grab items on the side of the road and pull them into the car. it seems that you have a very long and flexible arm, think of yourself as Plastic Man, and you can stretch it very far to grab items. There are stuff like apples, bottles of pop and cans of gasoline. While the food items give you extra points, you don't need to grab them. But the gasoline is a different story. You have a gas gauge and if you run out of gas, the game is over. So it is in your best interest to grab the gasoline and keep the tank full.

A nice feature in the game is that after you pick up a food item and eat it, you have to discard the trash. You can be a litterbug and make Woodsy the Owl mad (he isn't actually in the game, but his spirit is) or you can be a concerned citizen and drop it in a trash can. You are rewarded with bonus points for being responsible and putting your trash in the proper place.

The biggest challenge in the game is being able to drive, while you grab the stuff. It may not sound hard, but actual execution can be quite tricky. The road curves and you need to stay on it. All the while, you are maneuvering your arm and trying not to get it hit by signs and other things that will injure it. If you do collide your hand with a sign, it will flash in pain and be stunned for a few moments. But then it is as good as new.

There are numerous little things that add to this game. There are bridges you cross (and jumping fish you can grab), different food items and a catchy little tune. While it isn't a bonafide classic in the same vein as a Centipede or Joust, it is a great little game and a good reason to keep that TI system, at least until a MAME version comes out.

A Deeper Look at.....HERO

When I first played HERO on the Colecovision, I couldn't figure out what I was doing. I didn't have a clue what I was doing. I heard rave reviews of the game, but I would fly down and come to a wall and stop. What do I do now? I had no manual and so I gave up quickly on the game and just put it aside. That was four years ago.

Fast forward to the present and I am playing my Commodore 64 computer (which I picked up for free at a garage sale) and one of the disks is full of Activision games. So I decide to give HERO another try. This time, I put a little effort into figuring the game out and soon I find out that it really is a great game! A little more patience and I could have been enjoying this game all along!

Your job in this game is to be a HERO. You have to go through some caverns and find and save miners. Along the way, there are all kinds of dangers to avoid. Creatures, lava and some very narrow paths. You fly around on your jet pack and come equipped with a laser

and some dynamite. Use the laser to zap creatures and shoot out smaller walls and the dynamite to blow out the bigger walls. Be careful when using the dynamite. Drop it and run like mad or it will blow you to bits.

The best part of the game is that there are all kinds of little obstacles around and you never know what to expect. The movement of the main character is very good and the graphics are quite nice. You will find yourself coming back to the game over and over, something that is almost expected from an Activision title. HERO is another fine example to why Activision was the first and the best third party company in the classic era.

Two Kinds of Price Guides

If you look around the Tomorrow's Heroes web site, you will notice there are six different price guides on the site. If you look even closer, you will notice that they are one of two different kinds of price guides. I am here to explain the whats and whys behind this.

The first price guide is the static price guide. This essentially means that the guide will remain relatively unchanged, with a few additions or price changes. The price guides that are static are the Intellivision, Colecovision and Odyssey II price guides.

The second type of price guide is the evolving price guide. This is one that changes more often and is being updated often. The price guides that are evolving are the Marquee, Handheld/Tabletop and the Memorabilia price guides.

The reasons for the different guides is mainly due to my interests. Since I collect marquees, tabletops and memorbilia, I have more interest in compiling the price guides and get more satisfaction out of them. On the other hand, the cartridge price guides are not as interesting to me and there is quite a few places where you can find prices, so this is not as interesting to me. Thus, I do them and only occasionally come back to update them.

Alot of people ask me if I plan on doing anymore price guides and what they may be. Right now, I am in the development stages of doing one static and one evolving price guide. The next static price guide will be the Atari 5200 and the next evolving one will be one for Pong units. When I will do them is unknown right now.

Here is a list and links to the different price guides and for the evolving ones, how often I update them.

Static
Colecovision
Intellivision
Odyssey II

Evolving
Handheld/Tabletop - updated twice a month
Marquee - updated weekly
Memorbilia - updated monthly

The Gaming Zone

Few games are as simplistic as Pong. You have two paddles and one ball. You must get the ball past your opponent 10 times before he gets it past you the same amount of times. Simple! But put two evenly matched opponents at the game and you will see a perfect example of the gaming zone! They will get so caught up in the game, that nothing else will exist. Same with someone as they really get into a game of Kaboom, they are oblivious to everything else. That is the gaming zone. It is that place that sits between reality and fantasy and only a game that is enthralling and absorbing can take you to this place.

Remember when you were younger and you would get caught up playing video games and your mother would be yelling for you to come to dinner? Remember how when you

finally came, she would say she had been yelling for ten minutes, yet you only heard her once? You were in the zone. Know that same stare you get now as your significant other is calling for you and you don't hear them? Bingo! the zone. But not every game can take you to the zone. Only a few select games have that ability to totally transfix you and make the outside world not exist.

What game is the ones that take you to the Zone? Is there still a game from your youth that would make you not realize your house is burning down around you? Tell me what these games are and I will try to compile a list of them. It can be new or old games, it doesn't matter. A great game is a great game, regardless of age or level of technology. It could be a game that captivated you as a youth or one that does it now. List as many or as few as you wish. This is just for fun and each gamer has their own zone games. If you wish to send stories about times when you were in the zone, I may print some of the interesting ones. Here are a few of the ones that have absorbed me over the years.

01. Q*Bert
02. Dungeon Master
03. Turmoil
04. Robotron 2084
05. Tempest 2000
06. Monster Rancher
07. Centipede
08. Antarctic Adventure
09. Pong
10. Missile Command

Recurring Nightmare

"Doctor, I keep having this recurring nightmare" the short man with the thick mustache explained. "Tell me about it" the psychiatrist said as he made notes in his book. "Well Doc, I meet this gorgeous woman and we fall instantly in love. Everything is going great, when this giant ape comes by and steals her. So I go after her and this ape is throwing barrels at me. I jump one barrel after another and finally I am up there, when the darn ape grabs her and takes off" the mustached man in the overalls explains.

"Very interesting, please continue" the doctor says as he leans back in his chair. "After the ape grabs my girl and hightails it, I go to another level and this time there is fire that comes after me. So I decide to loosen the building and dodge these living firebugs. After I get to the top, the big, dumb monkey falls on his head and I finally save my girl" he says with a slight smile over his face. Then he quickly adds "But before you can say "I Love You!" she is whisked away and it starts all over again" he says as he looks downward and begins to sob uncontrollably as he says "What does it mean Doc, what does it mean?"

After a few seconds, the doctor goes over and puts a hand on the man's shoulder to comfort him. He pats him slowly and says in a solemn voice "Mario, you must quit confusing fantasy with reality. This is not a nightmare, you are a video game character and this is what you must do. Until people quit putting quarters in, you will be forced to live out this existence. Now get some sleep, because tomorrow it will all begin again". Mario gets up and wipes the tears from his eyes as he says "You're right Doc, I just gotta accept that I am what I am". As Mario leaves the room and the door shuts, the doctor spins around in his chair and pulls off his mask. Beneath is Donkey Kong's face and he is smiling as he says "I just love messing with his head! And he calls me a dumb monkey, HAHAHA!"

Remember When
.....the hot debate was which system was better the Atari 2600 or the Intellivision (and the debates were done face to face, instead of over the internet).

Cannot Wait!

While there is alot of talk in gaming magazines about the many classic games that are being remade, like the Pacman Worlds, Sinistar Unleashed, Missile Command and Pong,

there is alot to get excited about! But one game has caught my interest and I cannot wait to see the finished product. Unfortunately, it is the game getting the least amount of press. The game in question is the new Dragon's Lair.

Before you say "Oh no, yet another CD version of the arcade game. Must every system have a version?" listen to me. This is a new game, not another copy of the arcade game. This one is more like a Mario 64 or a Tomb Raider. You will lead Dirk the Daring through Singe's castle, but instead of moving left or right and seeing what video comes next, you will be able to control him, I mean really control him! I cannot wait as I have been waiting for this for what feels forever.

I wish I could show you a screen shot or give you more input, but there is little about this game. More news should come out in the coming soon and I will try to let you know more as soon as I do. A free moving Dirk is a dream come true!

Conclusion

The close of another issue is upon us. Once again we looked at the market that is classic video games. Whether you are a collector, a player or even just someone who used to play them, I hope there was something for you in this issue. If not, let me know what you want to see and I will do my best to include it. Until next month, may the garage sales and flea markets be good to you!

Tom Zjaba

(One of the pictures were taken from the Digital Press CD. Possibly one of the best deals out there. To get your own copy, go to http://www.xnet.com/~skelly/ or http://digitpress.com and order one. If you haven't ordered one yet, you are either new to the industry or too cheap for your own good).

Retrogaming Times' logo was designed by Patrick O'Neill.