

Retrogaming Times

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A Cleveland Video Game Show?

Before you mark your calendars and start saving your money, this is just an article to see what kind of interest there would be in a video game show in the city of Cleveland, Ohio. I was approached by Mike Gedeon of Video Game Connection about helping him do a video game show. We have talked the last few years about doing one, but until now, we never were very serious. But I think it has potential and wanted to take this time to get some response from people and see what kind of interest there is. I know that this newsletter reaches a lot of gamers, so I should be able to get some feedback. Here is what we are proposing right now:

1. We are planning to have the show either in June or July. We are hoping for June as it will leave some time between the CGE and Jagfest that come later. We don't want to be in competition with these shows.
2. We are planning on having a selection of arcade games for you to play. The number and the titles is up in the air right now.
3. I was planning on putting my memorabilia collection on display. Currently over 200 different pieces.
4. We plan on having some contests with prizes.
5. We plan on having tables available for people to sell, show off and trade items.
6. I was planning either a special Retrogaming Times or possibly a compilation of all the issues either on disk or CD. I haven't decided what to do, but I was thinking of doing something different as a giveaway at the show.
7. We planned on having a television set and at the end of the show each night, to have movie night with classic video game cartoons, commercials and more!

That is all right now, but as you can see, we want to give people alot of entertainment for their admission price. What we would like to hear from you is the following:

- A. Would you be interested in attending and is June or July better?
- B. What would be a reasonable admission price and do you think this price should include a table to set up or should that be a separate fee, so people who are not planning to bring anything, don't feel like they are paying for something they don't need?

- C. If a table is a separate fee, what do you feel is a fair price?
- D. Any certain contests you would like to see?
- E. Any other suggestions?

If we are to do a show, we need to get as much feedback now, to make it as successful and as enjoyable as possible. So please send any feedback as all of it will be taken into consideration. Thanks!

CinciClassics, The Show

by [William Cassidy](#)

CinciClassic was great! I was only there on Saturday, but luckily I got to spend that entire day there. The first thing I saw when I walked in was a bunch of guys crowded around a Vectrex that was sitting on a table surround by a bunch of rare Atari 2600 games. I've just arrived, but already I can tell there's going to be tons of great stuff to see! Then I was surprised to see three arcade machines along the wall!

Unfortunately, only Tempest was functional. The others had been brought in hopes of getting them repaired. Still, it was cool to see an actual Donkey Kong Jr. and Asteroids cabinet again, even if I couldn't play the games. There were plenty of other games to try out!

After I set up the Odyssey2 system I brought, I talked to Michael Thomasson and Rob Mitchell, who were playing around with a Vectrex

There was so much other stuff to see: Import Sega Saturn games, NeoGeo CD games, Ted Brunner's Adventurevision(!), weird 2600 carts from Germany... I could list cool stuff all day! I got to try out the Atari 5200 Masterplay Interface and Trackball, saw Songbird's new Jaguar games in action, and got a complimentary issue of Classic Gamer Magazine, a very impressive publication. I plan to subscribe after seeing it.

The Bust-A-Move Tournament introduced me to this game, and now I must have it for myself! Beginner's luck allowed me to beat my first two opponents, but then I realized I hadn't eaten for like 14 hours, so I went to lunch and lost my place in the Tournament. Oh well--Mike

There was tons of cool stuff to buy, but I restrained myself from spending too much. However, I did pick up a Vectrex game (Clean Sweep), and a boxed Turtles! for the Odyssey2 (one of the last games I needed), and made a couple trades. Others made some major buys. I remember Dick Redwine saying how much he wanted Michael

The only drawback to CinciClassics is its impact on my wallet. Sure the show didn't cost anything to attend, and I didn't really spend much there, but I saw so much stuff there I want to buy that I could end up broke! Now I need to get Bust-A-Move, the fifth edition of the Digital Press Guide, John Dondzila's new Vecmania cart, and more. I nearly bought a

Next year, we'll ensure there will be at least one Astrocade set up, so we can play some head-to-head games of The Incredible Wizard and Dogpatch. I'll continue to bring Smithereens!, and I'd like to see a four-player Warlords game get going. CinciClassic occurred less than a week ago at the time I write this, but I'm already looking forward to the next one. Thanks to all the organizers, and I'll see you next year!

Pictures of Cincicon can be seen at <http://www.videogameconnection.com>.

[William Cassidy](#) is classic gaming addict whose current goal in life is to save enough money to purchase a full-sized MAME cabinet. While not pinching his pennies, he maintains The Odyssey2 Homepage! at <http://www.classicgaming.com/o2home>.

Video Games Taken Too Far

We all heard the horror stories about how impressionable youths would be playing Dungeons & Dragons and soon they would begin to live it. You know the urban legends about kids who would kill for the game and other such nonsense. Well, the same thing happened with video games, but because the video game companies were so huge, they were able to pay for the silence. These stories were swept under the rug and kept out of the national press. But no more, we have finally uncovered some of these shocking stories for you to read! These stories are real, only the names and locations have been changed to protect the innocent (yeah right).

The Q*Bert Experiment

Every so often, someone wants to bring a game to life. This isn't always a good idea, just ask little Billy from the state of Washington. He was a big fan of Q*Bert, especially on the Atari 2600. He played it and played, until his mother made him go outside to get some fresh air. Being completely addicted to it, he decided with some friends to build a pyramid of boxes in his back yard and to play real life Q*Bert. What should have been fun, turned to tragedy. Little Billy, in the role of Q*Bert himself, jumped off his garage roof and onto the pyramid of boxes. But unlike the world of Q*Bert, the rotund little boy fell right through the poorly designed pyramid and to the ground, where he broke his leg. He was rushed to the hospital and his mother promptly threw out his Atari.

Going Bezerk

Wild Rich, a truck driver and devout arcade nut, was especially addicted to Bezerk. One night after some drinking and an all day marathon of playing Bezerk (over 40 straight games), he finally snapped. He left the arcade and headed home to get his pistol. He then headed over to the local toy store and went in and began to blow away all the 2XL robots while yelling at the robots "Who fights like a chicken now, sucker?" He was soon apprehended and no one was hurt, but he was charged with firing a weapon in a public place and had to pay the hundreds of dollars worth of damage he caused to the robots.

Asteroids on Earth

Cousins, Charlie and Douglas thought it would be cool to play Asteroids for real. But since they were never going to get into space, they tried the next closest thing. Douglas "borrowed" his fathers pistol and they went off towards some small cliffs by their house. While Douglas was at the bottom of the cliff with the gun, poised for action, Charlie stood at the top and pushed large rocks down on him. Douglas was supposed to shoot the rocks and break them into smaller pieces, like the game. Well, his aim was terrible and he ended up with a broken jaw, fractured skull, concussion and zero points. He was later released from the hospital and gained the nickname "rockhead", which sticks to this day.

MAME Reviews

Before I begin the reviews this month, I must first make a correction. Last month, when I reviewed Crazy Climber 2, I said that the bird did not make an appearance in the game. Well, I was wrong. The egg dropping demon does appear, only he doesn't show up until the third building, which I was unable to get to at the time of the review. So blame my ineptness for the inaccurate review.

For this month's reviews, I decided to review some games that I was unfamiliar with. One was definitely a Japanese only game and the other two I am unsure of. But with the magic of MAME, we are able to experience these games without flying overseas! So unpack those bags and get ready for fun little games that you may not have heard of!



Hammerin Harry

While this game is pretty much another platform game from an era where platformers reigned supreme, especially on the consoles, it is a very fun platform game. One thing this game has is a touch of humor that is sorely missing from many arcade games. Couple this with some very colorful and animated characters and you have a game that will bring you back again and again.

You play the role of Hammerin Harry, a guy with a very big hammer. You go around and bash everyone in your way. The game starts out with some guys taking down your house and putting up a construction site. You then get your hammer and it says "Hammer Time". Then as the level starts, it says "Let's Get Busy" both of which should date this game for you. You then proceed through the levels, bashing people and objects to make your way along. One of the neat things is that you can whack an object and send it flying at the enemies. This can really ease your job.

But you are not confined to the ground only. You can also climb up utility poles and jump up on boxes to get at or away from the enemy. This will keep you busy as you find out what parts of the environment are accessible and what is just scenery.

The characters in the game are very large and very cartoony. This makes the violence seem more comical as a man with a huge hammer could be quite scary. But with these big headed guys, it seems more like a Three Stooges short or a Warner Bros cartoon, where the violence borders on silly. Of course as in all platformers of the era, you have a big boss at the end of each level.

While at the core, the game isn't much different than a Mario or Castlevania or even a Legendary Axe, it is a fun little game that really tries to be cute and fun and pretty much succeeds. So go download the game and "Let's Get Busy!"



Gun Dealer

This is one of those odd Japanese only games that defies logic. Everything about it makes no sense. But it is a very addictive and extremely fun game, despite its quirkiness. As I said, it is a game that wasn't available over here in the states, though I am sure that shareware versions of the main game play do exist over here.

First thing about the game is the title, Gun Dealer. From this title, you would think it is some Ikari Warrior clone or even an Operation Wolf ripoff. Even a Double Dragon, side scroller is a good possibility, but the game has absolutely nothing at all to do with the game play. The game is a tetris clone, where you get a deck of cards that fall one card at a time. You need to clear as many of the cards as possible before the deck runs out. You do this by making three in a row matches. They can all be the same suit or in numerical order or three of a kind. The more difficult the combination, the more points you get. Getting a flush (three of the same suit) will only yield you 10 points, where a 3 of a kind will yield 500 points. While you may not think that getting tougher matches does more than just pad your score, it is vital to your success. When the level ends, you lose 100 points for each remaining card. So the higher your score, the more cards you can have left. This compounds over the levels, so it is important to build up a surplus of points.

You may think that the game play sounds pretty normal and despite the odd title, it is a pretty basic game. But things get a little strange here. When you finish a level, you are treated to a screen of a practically naked female. Why they even have this in a game that could easily be an all ages game, is beyond me. I think this actually detracts from the game (but then I was never aroused by animated characters, not even Betty Boop or Jessica Rabbit). So you have a strange title, a normal game and a mature only bonus for completing rounds. Go figure! If you can ignore the brief glimpses of nudity, you are treated to a very addictive and enjoyable game. I highly recommend it as long as you are not playing in front of a minor.

Gift Suggestions for the Retrogamer

By [Fred Wagaman](#)

Greetings all and welcome to the first installment of the Retrotimes Holiday Gift Guide. I'm here to offer you some suggestions and explanations for gifts for the retrogamer on your list.

Well, maybe he doesn't have everything. What to get the guy that has a lot of something ? That's better. Finding games is difficult. Finding games he doesn't have is even more so. Finding games that he doesn't have and would want is next to impossible. If you come across a stash of Atari or Coleco stuff, what do you buy ? I can't help you there. I don't think there is any way, short of carrying around a list, that you can know what all he has. The gift suggestions on this list will have little to do with the games themselves. You're on your own if that's what you decide to buy.

So here we go.

1) **Multiplug Power strips** - Chances are he has more than a few machines and has difficulty plugging more than one of them in at a time. Get him a couple of the newer style power strips that can accommodate the large, bulky AC adaptors. These can be found at most office or computer stores. Some of these have a built in surge protector as well. Regular power strips can also be found at Wal-Mart and the like, but once you plug in a Coleco Adapter, there be no room for anything else. Expect to pay between \$8 and \$25 for each.

2) **Storage bins** - Does he have a lot of controllers, machines and games lying around ? Does it seem that they multiply like rabbits ? Pick up a couple of Rubbermaid Storage containers. They come in a variety of sizes. A good size to get is the one that can be fit under a bed. That way the stuff is available, organized and out of the way. Plus the airtight nature of these containers keep those controllers from being able to breed. These can be found at any Superstore. Expect to pay \$5 - \$15 for each. Maybe less if you catch them on sale.

3) **Shelves** - What retrogamer worth his joystick doesn't need shelves ? Shelves can hold games in boxes, games without boxes, boxes without games, machines, instruction manuals, and empty Pringles cans. As a

4) **GXTV** - The GX TV from Sanyo was built with one thing in mind-Gaming. There are multiple ports

in the back for hooking up the modern systems and a separate jack for hooking up your Retro RF switchbox. It has good sound and picture. It's only a 13-inch TV so it won't take over his living space. Might be a little pricey (~\$250), but he'll love it. These can be found lots of places. Try Toys R Us.

5) **Party coupon** - So you don't have a lot of cash. That GXTV is beyond the budget. I understand. How about a gift certificate for a Game Party? Let him invite his buddies over for a late-into-the-night blast-a-thon. Since he probably does this anyhow, the coupon should include complaint-free cleanup afterwards.

6) **One night of free gaming** - OK, #5 scares you. I understand. How about a coupon for one night of gaming. Nothing else. Just games. And you'll play with him.

7) **Digital Press/Atari 2600 Connection subscription** - If he doesn't get these already, he's missing out. For a low price, he'll get the gift that keeps on giving throughout the year. Sort of like the Sports Illustrated deal, but without the watch and tape of his favorite team. Check out <http://www.digitpress.com/> and <http://www.geocities.com/TimesSquare/Lair/9260/> for subscription details. I think Digital Press even offers an occasional swimsuit issue.

8) **Digital Press Price Guide/CD Rom** - Again, if he doesn't have either of these, he's missing out on a wealth of information. The price guide lists nearly every retrogame known to man and the CD version includes pictures of the boxes and even classic game commercials. Again, check <http://www.digitpress.com/> for details. Expect to pay between \$20 and \$30. You might need to ask about the availability of the CD.

9) **New joystick or paddles** - Even though you might not know what games he has, you can't go wrong by finding a new joystick or set of paddles for him at your local thrift store. And even if you're not as into these games as much as he is, you can still judge the condition of these items by looking at them and trying them. If they feel broken or spongy or jumpy or loose, chances are they won't work. Otherwise, you're set. Expect to pay \$1- \$5.

10) **RF Switch** - These are the little switch boxes that connect an older game system to a TV. These are always getting lost. Pick up this stocking stuffer at Radio Shack for around \$5.

11) **CDR/Zip Drive** - Ok, your Retrogamer is more of the emulator type. That's not a problem. Since he has a computer already what can you get him? Well, a Zip Drive or CDR unit is a perfect gift if he doesn't have one already. CDRs and Zips are a great way to backup his important computer stuff (like MAME, Roms, STELLAX, etc.). These units can be found at Staples, Office Depot and other office and computer stores. Prices range from \$99 - \$199 for Zip Drives and around \$200 for CDR drives. Prices for the disks for these drives varies depending on how many you buy at one time.

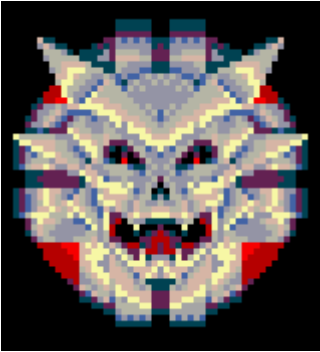
12) **MAME stick** - If your Retrogamer enjoys MAME on his computer, a true-to-life arcade stick will definitely make his holiday. You can find these sticks at a variety of web sites and for a variety of prices. Try <http://www.arcade2000.com/> or <http://www.hanaho.com/products/HotRodJoystick/>. Expect to pay \$150 to \$650 for one of these. Any MAME player will tell you that they're worth it.

13) **Clothes** - Chances are, if he is into games enough to be thought of as a retrogamer, he doesn't spend much on his wardrobe. Go out, pick him up some nice, comfortable clothes. He might not be as enthusiastic about your gift as he would be if it was one of the others. But believe me, you'll be doing him a favor. Use your best judgment on locations and prices.

Well, I hope that this helps you with your shopping for your favorite Retrogamer. You'd better get started. It might take you a while to find out what sizes he needs.

Fred has been playing games for over 25 years and actively collecting them for over 10. The 2400 + 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 4 year-old, button-loving son, Max and his newly acquired 4th player, Lynzie. He continues to be curious about the lack of female collectors out there. If there are men that collect Barbie dolls (as seen on CNN), there must certainly be women that collect video games. If you know of any or are a serious Retrogamer/Collectors of the female persuasion(>400 games), he'd love to hear about it at fcw3@postoffice.ptd.net.



(Tickle me and die!)

Tickle Me Sinistar

by [Geoff Voigt](#)

ANNOUNCER: "Hey Kids! there a new toy in stores! It's:..."

"I am..... Sinistar...." Picture of a throw pillow in the shape and image of Sinistar.

ANNOUNCER, again: "Tickle me Sinistar! Now you too can give all the love and cuddles you want to this well-known game character! He can sense your motion..."

Some kids are tip-toeing past the doll on a couch, when it starts to shake.

"ROOOOOOAAAAARR!!!!!"

The kids playfully run and scream around the room, and eventually hide behind another couch.

Announcer:

"And he makes a good sleepyttime companion, saying random things while your'e dozing off!" Young Boy in bed at night, holding the toy; Sinistar's eyes are glowing.

Sinistar:"Beware, coward! Beware.. I live!"

The boys cuddles Sinistar a little closer, and gives off a comforted sigh.

Announcer: "He's Sinistar! In stores now, and at your local On-line retailers! No family will want to be without him this Holiday season!" Cute little Girl, holding her Sinistar tight: "I love you Sinistar.."

Sinistar: "I hunger! Coward!"

Announcer: "Sinibombs sold seperatley"

(Geoff Voigt now openly hugs his 2600, and is busy working on a FAQ for RGVC. He is also working on marrying the gal of his dreams, who has already told him he can keep and expand his classic collection to an entire room. He hopes to get a few full-sized games eventually. Flames, agreements, debates, and other appropriate mail can still be sent to him at gvoigt@ridgecrest.ca.us)



Too Far Retro?

by [Kathy Hewston](#)

Has my husband lost it or what? This is all Tom's fault. Just look at the crazy idea that he came up with for his Halloween costume. I hoped that he would not go off the deep end like this, but he does love his video games, and the costume did look good. Especially the hat, found at a thrift store, which went great with this well-known character and popular game.

My husband created and strapped himself into a box for the Atari 2600 game Pitfall. Thus, for at least one day, he became Pitfall Harry, the character from the game. The hat was not part of the original Pitfall Harry, but who really remembers. Nowadays Pitfall is on all the new game systems too. He took out the insides of a Junior 2600, and he taped the case onto the box. He secured the actual 2600 Pitfall cart into the slot, added a joystick, and then taped a block of gold from the game. I could not believe that he'd spent 20 hours making this thing, but he sure got his use out of it, wearing it all weekend. Wore it to work, at our daughter's day-care costume parade, his costume contest/party at work, Boo at the Zoo: Cleveland Metroparks Zoo, and then trick or treating. Many people saw Pitfall Harry and most liked the costume, or else they admitted to remembering those old video games. Some of the younger crowd "didn't get it", but creativity is lacking in the younger generation. Turns out that this was an award-winning costume at his work, so I bought me some clothes with his prize money. Cool!



Is that authentic actiplaque or is it the camera?

I forgot to mention the scorpions barely visible on his hat, and not seen at all is a Survival Guide along the side of the box the manual. I have not "played Atari today?", as his signed asked. Next year return to normalcy - "The Mummy" costume at 75% off.

Kathy Hewston, when not getting upset at Pitfall Harry, (oops, now he's Elmo) and all his video

games, can be reached at hewston95@stratos.net. Caveat - some portion of this editorial ("or Way Cool"), and maybe the whole darn thing were originally written by Pitfall Harry himself.

Letters to the Editor

Not many letters this month, but we did get a few. So far almost noone wants to see their name in print. I keep getting requests to be anonymous. That is fine with me. So here are the questions for the month.

Is there any difference between the online version of the newsletter and the email one? signed Just Wondering

Yes, there are some differences, with most being cosmetic. The online newsletter has graphics, different font sizes and colors and links to other sites, while the email version is just text. Also, the email version tends to have more spelling mistakes as I clean alot of them up as I post the newsletter (Frontpage comes with a great little spell checker). I also sometimes add some to the online newsletter at the last moment as I reread over it (unless it is one of those last minute newsletters that happen occassionaly). So there are essentially the same, just one has more flash and polish.

Why isn't there more Bally coverage in your newsletter? All you seem to talk about is Atari. signed Bally Fan

I am always open to more coverage for the Bally and the other systems, but the problem is I don't currently have a system and I don't know of a Bally emulator. If anyone knows of a good emulator, let me know and I will do my best to give it more coverage, along with some of the other systems.

If you were to buy a system for someone who is new to classic games, what system would you recommend they start off with? signed Santa Mom

I actually get this question quite often. If I had to choose one system that is probably the best to start off with, I would have to give the nod to the Atari 7800. First off, you get the excellent collection of Atari 7800 games that includes many great arcade translations (especially Food Fight, Galaga, Robotron and Centipede) plus you get the ability to play all the Atari 2600 games. Another great reason is that you can get alot of really cheap games (like \$0.80 each, brand new) for both systems from O'Sheas and what would be cooler on Christmas than a big stack of shrinkwrapped games to go with your new system? Unfortunately, I cannot keep the systems in stock (they sell out in less than three days), but they are plentiful on eBay.

Sites of the Month

This month, I decided to choose two sites that I feel are fun and enjoyable for classic gamers. With the holidays upon us, we all need a little fun and these sites give us a reason to smile. So check them out and enjoy!

Atari Showdown

Ever wanted to know what was the best Atari game of all time? Well, Chris Cavanaugh did and he left it to you to decide. He is having different carts pitted against each other. It has just started, so you have plenty of time to get in and make your vote count!

I took the time to ask Chris a few questions about this. So here's Chris!

1. Who decided what games were in the showdown?

Chris- well,...um...I guess I did. I admit the list isn't perfect but I knew going into it I couldn't please everyone. I avoided the rare and obscure carts such as "Snoopy vs. The Red Baron" (correct title?) which is a fun game but hardly anyone has played it.

I'm also open to suggestions for the remainder of the contest. If there is some logical choice to a change in matchups, I'm definitely open to it. For example: Someone just wrote and said, "Hey! Where's Firefighter by Imagic?". So, point taken and I'll put it in there. In a nutshell: It's not set in stone, but the cement is drying so speak up!

I also wanted to make some tough choices in the beginning so they will only get tougher as it goes along. I caught a little grief about Yars' Revenge vs. Boxing because they thought Boxing could go the distance (bad pun) and didn't stand a chance against Yar.

Also, this has to be taken in the spirit of fun. I mean, I could reshuffle the matchups 1000 times and get 1000 different winners. I tried to make it somewhat interesting. If this is successful expect to see Intellivision matchups, ColecoVision matchups, etc...

2. How often are new challenges put up?

Chris- I'd like to change it every 24-26 hours based on the amount of responses. If it's a total blowout early, I may switch it. I also want to get several votings going on at once, but I'm having some technical difficulties with that right now. But expect to see 3 matchups in league one and 3 matchups in league two going on at once in the near future. That's to keep it speedy and to hold peoples interest.

By the way, you can also check out the great magazine, Classic Gamer Magazine, he does and order a subscription for yourself or another classic gamer. Makes a great gift and has zero calories and never is the wrong size or color!

<http://www.classicgamer.com/atarishowdown.html>

Fun Escape

Like classic games and don't want to download an emulator? Bored at work and want something to do (but watch out for the boss), then check out Fun Escape! They currently have 12 different games for you to play! Each is like an original arcade game, but there are some differences. None have to be downloaded onto a hard drive, you play them on the site! I tried a few of the games and really enjoyed them! I played the AI Pengo, Q*Bert and Time Pilot and was impressed with all of them. I will probably play a few more before this newsletter comes out and I suggest you go and try them. The setup time for the games is short and they are good fun! You even have a choice if you want sound or not, a nice feature for an office worker.

<http://www.funescape.com/>

THE GREAT WHITE NORTH OF RETROGAMES - INTRODUCTION AND ATARI 2600 PART ONE

by [Ryan Harrison](#)

Cultural label variations have always interested me for some reason - A Coke bottle from Germany, a roll of Kodak film from China, a box of Kellogg's Corn Flakes from Brazil - are all things that people would recognize for what they are, but something is wrong with them, something is different, out of place...I started to collect for my retrogame collection on the internet 4 years ago, but the majority of games offered or added to my collection from collectors worldwide were funny looking - something was wrong...just seeing the games I grew up with in different formats or languages just gives them sort of an "alien" feel. But what is strange to one person is normal for the next, that's why I want to present to you my world, for you it would be the strange world of video games I grew up in that hasn't really been covered before - the world of CANADIAN variations.

From reading some webpages, you'd think that Canadian Video Games were the same as the ones offered in the United States, with maybe "Zellers" games for the Atari 2600 being the only thing

Canada had different to add to the video game market. In fact, Canada is probably the most unique market to be a collector in - we have it all, a little bit of American stuff, a little bit of European stuff, and a whole bunch of uniquely Canadian items. This article over the next couple months (maybe YEARS!) will explain the "Who did what for who" in the Canadian market - and each system and company had their own game plans, which I will explain and intrigue you with. This article will be extremely interesting to any retrogamer from outside of Canada, and if your from a country like myself that doesn't get much publicity on your games, I'd like to see and hear from you what you think is "normal", as I'm sure many other collector's would like to also.

I am going to focus mostly on the systems I have collected - the Atari 2600, Intellivision, ColecoVision/Adam, Nintendo Entertainment System, and Nintendo Game Boy, with a quick review of the other systems that can be found in Canada.

ATARI 2600

This is my first system (well I had a Coleco Gemini Clone) and my favorite! Atari 2600 variations range from the "mild" to the extreme in Canada depending on the manufacturer. The Atari 2600 looked very much like it's American Cousin to the south - Canada uses the NTSC format like the US so a Canadian 2600 will work on a TV in the United States, and the only difference on the units is that there is a "Call For Service" label with Canadian numbers in English and French. The system is by far the most boring part to Non-Canadians. Canada has some language laws set-out in what is known as "Bill 101". These language laws require that packaging and instructions be in both English and French - so the box that the Atari VCS/2600 came in on the Canadian market has all French on one side, and all English on the other. I have one of these beauties in NR-MT condition, and it is beautiful - it still has the original price of \$289.99 Canadian Dollars, which at the time, the Canadian dollar was about the same price as the US\$. The Canadian market had the same pack-ins as the US - originally Combat was the freebie, then it was Pac-Man, then it was nothing when the Atari 2600 Jr. came out. I haven't managed to find a copy of French instructions for my 2600 collection yet, but they must exist somewhere in Canada. Other 2600 notable Canadian items were the Coleco Gemini, that not only came in bilingual packaging with bilingual instructions, the TV/COMPUTER switch was bilingual, and the system and Gemini controllers themselves had bilingual labeling! I'll talk about the pack-ins with the Gemini later in the "Coleco Games" section for the Atari 2600, but it was neat! I just wish I could go back in time and tell myself to save some of the neat-o extras! The Sears Video Arcade was also sold in Canada, I have not seen any with bilingual labeling on the system, but I did see the original French/English box in someone else's collection that is something to drool over. The Atari died around 1985 in Canada - there was no real crash on the market, just increased competition - all my friends and I moved on to the Commodore 64 for gaming, some switched to ColecoVision, and some bought into this new system from Japan called the "Nintendo" that took a few years to catch on. Atari 2600 games were still available on the market until a couple years ago through a chain called "Consumer's Distributing" in Canada, which is basically the same as Service Merchandise in the United States. Consumer's Distributing went out of business, taking away the last major source for Atari 2600 games in Canada.

Check back next month when we focus on Atari 2600 variations in Canada from Atari and Activision.

Here is a nice picture of the Coleco Gemini.

http://www.geocities.com/Colosseum/Field/5097/Atari/Gemini_2.jpg

Ryan Harrison is a 21 year-old collector from Brantford, Ontario, Canada, who grew up on a constant diet of Atari 2600, Commodore 64, Nintendo, and Game Boy. Known locally as the guy "who keeps wasting quarters on that old Ms. Pac-Man game" at the local bar, he's the Sumguy you'll run into at the local Thrift in Southern Ontario looking for new stuff for his collection and hopes Bira Bira will find him Sumgirl that will take part of his mind off retrogames. He currently makes his own "label variations" as a Packaging Engineer with 3M Canada. Ryan can be contacted at ryan.harrison@home.com

Video Game Therapy - The Joust Session

Today's therapy session is with the pterodactyl from the game Joust. He discusses with Dr I.N.Sane about what it is like to have to go through life with the moniker "unbeatable". Let's listen in and see what they have to say.

Dr Sane-"So what brings you here today?"

Pterodactyl-"Don't be frighten of me Doc, I am actually a pretty nice guy if you get to know me."

Dr Sane-"Why should I be frighten of you, besides the fact that you are a carniverous, prehistoric bird?"

Pterodactyl-"I have this rep, a pretty bogus one too. It is stuck with me and it keeps getting me in trouble."

Dr Sane-"Please enlighten me on this "rep".

Pterodactyl-"I am known as "unbeatable". A label the game designers stuck on me."

Dr Sane-"I see. So are you "unbeatable?"

Pterodactyl-"Heck no! A well placed lance in my mouth and whammo, I am out like a light. There was even a flaw where they could keep killing me and racking up the points. Talk about a tough day at the job. Some people complain about a little overtime. Let them try dying a few thousand times in a single day, talk about rough".

Dr Sane-"If you are so "beatable", then why does this "rep" stick with you?"

Pterodactyl-"First off, I am not that beatable. I am a pretty tough customer. As far as the "rep" sticking? I dunno, maybe most people suck so bad at Joust that they cannot beat me. Or maybe because a large, carnivorous, prehistoric bird does scare the begeebies out of people. But all I know is I cannot go into a bar for ten minutes without some redneck coming along and trying to prove he can beat the "unbeatable" pterodactyl. And dames really hate it, I never get a second date. Either I am too rowdy or if I choose not to fight, then I am too much of a wimp, I just cannot win."

Dr Sane-"Have you thought about disguises?"

Pterodactyl-"Yeah, but it is hard to cover up a body like mine. Look at the size of my beak, not some easy thing to hide. And it really hurts to have to fold up my wings and stick them in some coat."

Dr Sane-"What you need is a good public relation person. Someone that could let people know that you really are a nice dinosaur and not some bloodthirsty creature that is "unbeatable".

Pterodactyl-"That would be great Doc, think you could arrange it? I would really like a second date. Heck, I would like a fight free date."

Dr Sane-"Let me make a few calls and we will see what we can do. I was able to help Frogger get a second chance, so I think we can help you to."

Tune in next month when Dr Sane finds out why Zookeeper took an early retirement and why to this day, he cannot go to a zoo.

eBay Notes

People have been complaining about eBay and how it will ruin the market and drive up the prices of video game carts. This argument has gone on as long as eBay has been around and it has done the

opposite. Sure there are the occasional overpriced item (like the Mystery Science Theatre cart that can be bought new for \$16.00, which sold for over \$200.00). Well, to prove my point, I looked up some Extremely Rare carts that sold over the past month or so on eBay. The first number is what the item sold for on eBay. The second number is what Digital Press says the cart is worth. This will give you an idea of how over priced it is.

Atari 2600

Atari Video Cube \$26.75 & \$31.00/\$30.00
Chase the Chuckwagon \$76.00/\$125.00
Death Trap \$47.00/\$65.00
Demolition Herby \$49.00/\$35.00
Frogger II \$13.00/\$25.00
Gremlins \$28.50/\$20.00
London Blitz \$26.00 & \$21.00/\$25.00
Pooyan \$5.50/\$18.00
Room of Doom \$25.00/\$30.00
Rubik's Cube \$37.00/\$50.00
Submarine Commander \$9.50/\$30.00
Swordquest Waterworld \$63.50/\$75.00
Tapper \$12.50/\$25.00
Texas Chainsaw Massacre \$41.00/\$30.00
Wall Ball \$21.00/\$25.00

I did round the numbers as I didn't feel like dealing with odd change, but as you can see, there were some that went for more, some that were very close to the book price and quite a few that were bargains! And this is after eBay has been around for years and has completely destroyed the hobby. So I show you proof that while some stuff may go for more, most items can be found at a bargain. But the naysayers will just point out a single auction here and there and use it as an example. But do a little searching on completed auctions in any given month and you will see that there are always bargains out there, if you are patient and vigilant. Same as a thrift store or flea market, except there is a lot more stuff available! So have a little fun and you will also see that while eBay and any of the auction sites have their problems and are far from perfect, they are not destroying the market. If anything, they are actually bringing the cost of the carts down (not compared to the thrift store where you can find a cart for fifty cents, but if you add in all the time, gas, wear and tear on your car up, you will see that it costs a lot more than fifty cents for that cart, alot more).

The Menace From Outer Space!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

It has been awhile since I did my Centipede story and still get email about it, so I decided to do another classic video game story. I will not reveal what game it is based on until the second chapter, but any classic gaming fan will be able to guess it by the end of the first chapter. If you cannot guess, I promise you will know next month (or if you cannot wait, just email me and I will reveal it to you). So enjoy the story and let me know what you think!

Chapter One

I remember reading in school about how man first landed on the moon. How long ago that was. Wonder if man could ever have envisioned the importance of that act, of the entire space program? While their thoughts at the time were on conquering the moon and staying ahead of the Russians, they could never have know that one day they would have gone far beyond the moon and seen planets that were only specks in a telescope. But I doubt that they could ever imagine that one day they would face the wrath of a menace so great, that it threatened the very existence of mankind as we know it.

It all started back during my days of training to be a Space Pilot. I don't quite know why, but all I ever wanted to be was a Space Pilot. To fly in space and protect Earth from any invading hordes. Granted,

there weren't many problems, now that Earth had been defended against the attack where the alien invaders tried to turn our people into ravaging mutants. Since then, things have been pretty quiet, some would say too quiet. But I for one still wanted to be part of the Space Pilots. I knew there would be other space bound adventures and I for one wanted to be part of them. Life on Earth was pretty dull and even the newly colonized Mars didn't offer that much more excitement. Sure you had the thrill of claiming your piece of land and developing it. But even with the Terraformer, the planet was still not the same. All the plant and wildlife was brought from Earth and while some of it has mutated and evolved under the new conditions, they were all essentially the same. Sure a six legged rabbit that can leap thirty feet is pretty cool the first time you see one, but the novelty grows old. That is the problem with Mars, it is a playground for scientists. Without all the restrictions of Earth, they can go nuts. I still remember some cruel scientist who was developing a way to make life forms invincible. Well, he thought it would be funny to do this to lemmings. So once every year, you would have a bunch of invincible lemmings jumping off cliffs, over and over again. It is funny the first few times they try, but it soon is just cruel and you really feel for these poor creatures that want to die, but just cannot do it. While it may sound pretty sick, and it is, it has become quite a tourist attraction and every year, thousands of people come to Mars to watch the spectacle.

Enough about Mars, I craved the kind of excitement that only the mysteries of deep space offered. Little did I know that my wish was ready to come true. While I was in flight school, something happened that would change all our lives forever. Far off in space, the scientists noticed a cluster of what appeared to be asteroids, very large ones, to be moving at an unusual rate of speed and direction. They almost seemed to be moving in a set pattern, with the destination being Earth. While they were still a ways away, they were closing in fast. All the greatest minds that our planet had to offer, assembled for a meeting and began to come up with theories behind the mysterious asteroids and their path towards Earth. For days, these great minds met and after all that time, they came up with what any military leader could have come up with immediately. They decided to send a squadron out to photograph the asteroids and retrieve data. Then with this data, they could get a better idea of what they were dealing with.

The news of this spread very fast. With the ultranet and its instantaneous nature between the two worlds, news was everywhere, even on the colonies on the Moon and they are always the last to know. Soon, the deployment of ships is sent out to look into this strange phenomenon and to see what can be done to alter its course.

I still remember how I can remember how everyone stopped to watch the news broadcast of the launching and how we all felt proud and worried as we sent our best pilots out into the great unknown. I can also remember the jealousy as I wanted so badly to be part of that first group. I wanted the adoration and the glory that was bestowed on the brave heroes as they were so frequently called by the press. But I knew that a rookie pilot like myself would never be called upon for such a dangerous mission. I needed to prove myself as a pilot before I could ever get a mission of such importance. To quote an old cliché, I had to earn my wings.

A few days later, the first reports back from the pilots came. They were still a few days away from the asteroids and were letting everyone know they were safe. They were smiling as they all pulled into a refueling space station that was one of many that were sent into space. It was part of a major project that launched six such satellites in a three year period, to different parts of the galaxy as a means for these pilots to be able to refuel, rest and get any necessary repairs. While we were getting farther and farther into space, we still did not have fuel efficient ships. Even with solar panels added to the ships, they still needed fossil fuel to power their engines. Lots of fuel and so we kept building and deploying more and more of these fuel stations into space, each one further than the last. This way we could stay in space longer and go further.

While the other newscast were etched into my psyche, nothing would ever be more etched or haunt me more than the next newscast. It was a few days later that we had a live broadcast (actually it was

delayed as they haven't perfected instantaneous space transmission yet). The ships had just come up to the asteroids and were getting ready to fly in for a closer look. We watched as the ships flew towards these towering slabs of stone. As they neared, everyone in the barracks began to say stuff like "I cannot believe it" and "Did you see that?" As the ships got closer, there was a wall, a great wall, built into the side of the asteroid. Not even the scientists could try to pass this off as a freak of nature like that face on Mars. This was an actual wall, complete with giant bricks. It looked like some giant's castle from Jack and the Beanstalk or some other fairy tale. We held our collective breath as the ships flew up over the giant wall. What was on the other side? Was there some great beast waiting? Was there some conquering army? Maybe this was part of a dead planet, floating in space. No one knew for sure, but the suspense was killing us. We had to know and we were only moments from finding out. What would be on the other side of that wall?

Tune in next month for the second chapter.

Conclusion

Twenty seven issues down and only 23 to go until the big 50th issue! We all need goals and that is my big goal, to make it to fifty and hopefully one day to 100! I would like to take this time to thank the many people and sites that have been helping spread the word about Retrogaming Times. Thanks to Arcade@Home, EMUHQ, Vintage Gaming Network (formerly Dave's Video Game Classics), ClassicGaming.com, MonroeWorld, I.C. When, Retrogames, 2600 Nexus, Classic Gamer Magazine, Classic Video Game Nexus and any others that I may have missed! Thanks for all the support! It has always been my goal to reach as many gamers as possible. That is why I never charge for an issue and why I strive so hard to keep on schedule. I know how important this newsletter has become to many readers and how they look forward to the 20th, when a new issue will be up. I will do everything I can to make sure we hit our goal every month and provide you with a new issue.

There will be a small change that has gone into effect. Since we are now receiving a lot of submissions (and I appreciate every one of them), I decided to put a limit of one article per person per newsletter. This way we can allow as many different voices and opinions as possible and not let the newsletter get out of control in size. You can submit multiple articles, but I will just put one in the newsletter and save the others for future issues. I am trying to keep the newsletter from getting too large and have to break it into many parts, so I feel this is the best and most fair way to allow everyone who wants to write for Retrogaming Times the opportunity.

Tune in next month when I will do something that I have received a ton of email about. I will try to do an easy to follow guide on setting up, running and maintaining MAME. I will try to make it easy for people to get into MAME and see what all the fuss is about. Plus, we will have more great surprises as it will be nearing Christmas. See you in 30 days and keep playing those games!

Tom Zjaba