

# Retrogaming Times

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# CGE2K2

## COMMERCIAL VAULT

by [Adam King](#)

Hello there. This month in the vault, I thought I'd do something different. Instead of doing videogame commercials (stay with me), I choose to review two commercials that involve videogames. You're probably thinking, "Huh?" These two commercials aren't from game companies, but they do feature games.

Also for the first time, I actually got the links to where you can see the commercials yourself.

### [7-Up \(featuring Pac-Man\)](#)

This commercial is yet another testament to how far Pac-Man fever spread in the early 1980s. This is a commercial for 7-Up that takes place in a Pac-Man arcade machine. Here we see a red Pac-Man chasing ghosts around a green maze. Plus, instead of power pellets, Pac-Man guzzles bottles of 7-Up for an energy boost. Note that this ad is done with a tune that almost sounds like the 80's hit "Bette Davis Eyes."

"Play to win. You never lose when 7-Up is the one you choose.  
It's a natural kind of taste. Nothing else comes near.  
7-Up cools your thirst. 7-Up, the difference is clear.  
Does what only it can do. Nothing else comes near.  
It's a clean refreshing taste. 7-Up, the difference is clear.  
7-Up cools you. 7-Up suits you. 7-Up, the difference is clear."



What do you get if you cross 7-Up with Pac-Man



"Gee, the maze sure looks different today."



Is someone taking a bubble bath?



"Who needs power pellets. I got 7-Up."



The player is enjoying a bottle with Pacy.



Maybe if everyone drank 7-Up...



It sure is.

Special thanks go to Hans Reutter of Cyberroach for preserving this ad. You can find the

commercial at [www.cyberroach.com](http://www.cyberroach.com). Look in the Atari section.

### **McDonalds (featuring Atari)**

My next commercial comes from the fast food world. In this spot, we dig up an old promotion Atari had with McDonalds. In the early 80s Atari and McDonalds had a contest where someone could win some neat prizes. It was a standard "scratch the card to win" contest where if you uncover the right spots you win. Odd thing is, when the people in the ad scratch the cards, arcade scenes fly out of them. That never happened to me.

Thanks to Curt Vendel at the Atari Historical Society for letting me post the screenshots of the ad. You can find this commercial (as well as many others) at [www.atarimuseum.com](http://www.atarimuseum.com).

"Asteroids, Centipede, Missile Command, Star Raiders. The thrills of Atari are all at McDonalds. You can win Atari home video and computer prizes and McDonalds food. Purchase of Chicken McNuggets required to redeem food prizes. Just scratch the card and match two dots without getting zapped. Sometimes you win, sometimes.. (centipede sound). Because every card can be a winner. Taste the thrill of Atari. At McDonalds."



This girl's about to get a different kind of Happy Meal.



This isn't a scratch 'n' sniff card.



"Hey. Flying rocks."



"Dudes, you're getting missile blasts on my shirt."



"Rats. Stupid Centipedes."



Kind of says it all, doesn't it.

I wonder if anyone won anything good from this, other than medium fries. Also I'm pretty sure this is unrelated to the McDonalds game Parker Brothers planned for the 2600. Speaking of which, the mystery of that cart has finally be solve. Pop on over to Atari Age ([www.atariage.com](http://www.atariage.com)) for the inside dope.

Time to sign off for this month. If there's a commercial you want to see, let me know and I'll see what I can dig up. Don't forget to taste the thrill of Atari. He can be reached for comment by [clicking here](#).

## Have some Coco: (Part 2 of 3)

By Coco Enthusiast [Curtis Boyle](#), with editing by [Alan Hewston](#)

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

**RT:** Does Radio Shack or other companies still carry any games, supplies, support or peripherals for the Cocos? Or where can we find new (old) stock?

**CB:** Some stores may still have inventory kicking around, and a fair bit of the software was

still available through their mail order express catalog the last time I looked (admittedly, a couple of years ago). But, most of it would be gone by now. A few companies did buy large orders and still have some left (one company I know of bought 500 for an internal project, but the project eventually changed to PC and they were selling the remainder still wrapped in their original packaging), but most of those inventories are gone now too. As far as 3rd party, there are still a few companies selling hardware and software to this day (GCCC, Cloud-9, etc.), and CocoFest shows to buy/sell old/new hardware/software are still going on, including one coming up in May, 2002.

**RT:** What was your first computer experience, and the first classic computer or videogame system you owned, and what all do you own today?

**CB:** My 1st computer that I used was Commodore Pet, followed quickly by an Apple II+, but first one that I owned was a Revision "D" motherboard Coco 1 (with 4K RAM), back in Sept. 1981. The 1st game system would also be the Coco, since I never did buy any of the classic home game systems. Today I have a few others (A Mac Classic II, a Pentium 233MMX, and several spare Coco 3's).

**RT:** Which Coco systems or clones do you own?

**CB:** I bought the 2nd Coco 3 sold in my city (one of the Radio Shack Assistant Managers beat me to the first one) in October of 1986. I also bought the TC-9 when it first came out, and ended up co-writing the improved keyboard, sound and windowing drivers for it for it's parent company. I still use it to this day, and one Coco 3 system. I also have several spares, and spare parts.

**RT:** What are some of your favorite games for the CoCo, via cart, disk or cassette?



I dare ye enter . . . the Dungeons of Daggorath!!!

**CB:** Lots. For cartridge based games, Dungeons of Daggorath (popular enough even today to warrant several web pages of it's own, and now a PC port is in the works), Doubleback, Skiing, Project Nebula (Star Raiders type game), Polaris (Missile Command clone) and Super Pitfall were probably my favorites. For 3rd party cassette and disk based games, Deathtrap, Gates of Delirium, 7th Link (these two were Ultima 3-4 style



games), Leisure Suit Larry, Kings Quest III, Phantom Slayer (the first full screen, real time 3D shooter I know of... from early to mid 1982), Zenix (an improved Galaga style game), Crystal City, Gantelet II (Gauntlet II clone), Iron Forest and Medieval Madness (Sega Light Gun games), Donkey King, Photon, and many others. Some of these are not on my games page yet, since I don't have time to manually break their copy protection to be able to get in game screenshots, but a friend has lent me a PC card that should allow me to finally copy them for the MESS emulator, so they should be going up within the next month or two.

**RT:** What game enhancements were made for the CoCo? Did they make different controllers, MODEM games, RPG's saved to disk, game capture carts, multi-players games, paddles games, light guns, remote controls, and could any of these be used from other systems? Did most games come out on cartridges, cassette or disk, or all three? Were there good game magazines, walk-throughs, cheats, web pages/sites where fans devote it to a specific game or series of Coco games?

**CB:** Where to start! Early on, Atari 2600 joystick and other compatible controllers, (both single and double fire buttons) came out, so you could use any Atari compatible items. These did not work on all games, as sometimes the Coco's analog joysticks were required. Early on, 3rd party companies introduced light pens and other improved joystick designs (rapid fire, etc.), and Kraft's became so popular that Radio Shack eventually sold their Deluxe joystick themselves (X/Y axis adjustments, Spring back or free float independently on both axis). Single button mice from Radio Shack, & double button mice & joysticks for the Coco 3. One could convert standard PC joysticks fairly easily as well (up to two buttons, anyhow). Enhanced speech and sound cards also came out, although only the speech cards got a lot of game support; a few did use the stereo 8-bit sound card as well, though. Diecom Products came out with a hardware adapter for the Sega Master System's phaser light gun; 2 games for it were released (Medieval Madness and Iron Forest.. several others were in development, that I had seen at a trade show, before Diecom exited the Coco market). A 4 slot expansion pack (called the Multi-pak) allowed one to either switch between up to 4 ROM cartridges, or mix and match various hardware cards that could all be used simultaneously. I don't know of any cartridges that allowed saving games on the cartridge itself (although it was certainly possible... some of the earliest 64K RAM upgrades actually put the RAM in the cartridge instead of on the motherboard, and RAM drive cartridges of up to 1 MB were sold), but several allowed saving to cassette (Pinball, which let you save your own pinball board designs, and Dungeons of Daggorath are two that come to mind immediately). Lots of the larger disk games allowed saving games in progress as well. There were some hardware boards that allowed capturing all of RAM to disk file, which could save any game in progress, but they were mostly used to crack software protection, rather than save games. A simple hardware modification published in several magazines showed how to make a Halt Switch, which allowed one to completely pause the computer, at any time you wanted. Later OS-9 games were designed to be run off of hard drives (or RAM drives) as well. RPG's were quite popular even in the Coco 2 days: Gates of Delirium (an Ultima 3 style) game and Telengard are two just off the top of my head, although there were many more. The best one was The Seventh Link, a 3 disk, 40 track monster with 4 planets (all complete with dungeons, cities, etc.) to explore, and use the Coco 3's 16 color graphics. Games like

Kings Quest III and Leisure Suit Larry also somewhat qualified for this category. Modem games didn't really take off, as most people either logged into Compuserve to play MegaWars (on any Compuserve compatible computer), or played multi-player online games on BBS's (several of these actually ran on Coco OS-9 systems, and even allowed multiple players at the same time. One such I ran myself briefly, with 2 phone lines, plus a third player on the host system, in the late 1980's). Some games were designed for 2 players over the modem (or direct serial line), including versions of Chess, Checkers, and Othello, and P-51 Mustang Attack Flight Simulator. Modems at the time were fairly slow (300-1200 baud most common, and 1200 being several hundreds of dollars) when these came out, so they didn't really take off. Online single player games were quite common on BBS's, though... I wrote 3 or 4 of these myself for my board between 1983-1988. We had quite a few multi-player games, both of the "take turns" and simultaneous types. Most stopped at two players (2 joystick ports), but a few combined joystick and keyboard. Some examples of 3 player games were "Gantelet" (Gauntlet one clone) and Rampage, and "Gantelet II" actually did 4 players (two joysticks, two on the keyboard), but this got a little cramped on the small keyboard of the Coco 3. There were some paddles sold in the early days (1981-1983), but most of them disappear in favor of joysticks or mice. I don't know of any remote control joysticks, just joystick cable extenders. If a special joystick worked on the Coco 1/2, it usually worked on the Dragon 32/64 as well, and standard joysticks/mice also worked on the MC-10 (as long as they were single button).

Radio Shack, until the late 1980's, sold most of their titles on cartridge. As games got bigger and more complex, and would not fit on to the 16K ROM (Coco 1/2) or 32K ROM (Coco 3) cartridges, they switched to cassette, and then disk. Two games were released on "Super cartridges" for the Coco 3 (Predator and RoboCop, 128K and 64K ROM's respectively, using MMU hardware built into the cartridge, and up to 512K ROM cartridges were designed and specs released, but these got too expensive, and were dropped in favor of much cheaper diskettes. By the late 1980's, just about all Radio Shack games came on floppy. 3rd party rarely used cartridges, due to the cost (a few did; Microworks released it's Asteroid's clone, Star Blasters, on cartridge), and in the early 1980's, most were on cassette. As disk drive prices came down and became more popular, most offered both, and as games got more complicated, they started switching to disk only. Adventure games were hugely popular on the Coco... several companies specialized in both graphics and text adventure games. A newsletter called "Adventure Survivors" was published for years (may still be) that game tips/tricks, walkthrough's, etc. Rainbow magazine held a contest for 4 years for readers to submit their own adventure games; the 2nd year, I was one of the finalists with my game RingQuest. There are way too many to mention here, but Aardvark, Mark Data Products, Spectral Associates, and others made entire series of games. Ports with other computers included the Scott Adams adventures, most of Infocom's line, some of the Sierra ones, and Radio Shacks own Pyramid/Bedlam/Raaka-Tu, which were available on their other TRS-80's as well. Probably the most famous, which was a combination adventure/RPG/arcade style game is Dungeons of Daggorath. A search with a web search engine will reveal several web pages devoted to it.

**RT:** Thanks again Curtis. That's a wealth of good information and fun, I'm sure you could tell us loads more.



This ends part two of three. Come back next month when we look at Curtis' programming efforts and using the Coco online.

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## Classic Games of Summer

by The Video Game Critic

What constitutes a "summer" video game? Well, mainly it has to be set in a warm climate such as a desert, jungle, or beach. Water is a big plus. Here are some classic games I recommend you play to escape the hot summer heat.

### Atari 2600:

#### [Kool-Aid Man \(M-Network 1983\) B-](#)

The opening sequence of this game reminds me of those old Kool-Aid commercials in which that huge pitcher would come crashing through a wall just when the kids needed a refreshing drink. I always wondered why the kids looked so happy, when in fact they should have been utterly terrified. Let's face it; anybody who dresses up like a big pitcher and then trashes the local swim club is NOT someone you want hanging around your children. But I digress. Kool Aid Man is simple and fun. Controlling a big pitcher, your job is to eliminate the evil round creatures that try to drink all the water from a pool at the bottom of the screen. These troublemakers are only vulnerable when they're drinking, which is indicated by a long straw. Otherwise, they'll knock you all over the place. Fortunately, there are also power-ups that turn you into SUPER Kool-Aid Man, making you invincible for a few seconds. The left difficulty switch can be used to pause the action. The graphics are plain but colorful. This is a shallow game, but sometimes less is more.

1 player

#### [Chopper Command \(Activision 1982\) A-](#)

I remember the first time I saw this game, way back in 1982. My friend Andy and I went over Billy's house one morning because Billy had recently acquired both Chopper Command AND Defender (quite a coup back then!). At the time I was personally caught up in Defender-mania, so I wasn't particularly interested in this "Chopper Command" game, which I had never even heard of. But my attitude changed as we compared the two games. Sure, Defender had deeper gameplay, but those flickering, choppy graphics were borderline offensive. Chopper Command on the other hand was so easy on the eyes, with its solid, well-defined objects and smooth animation. And that tan desert background under the bright blue sky had to be the most gorgeous sight we'd ever seen on the 2600. Best of all, you could hold down the fire button for some serious rapid-fire action. Taking out those darting planes and helicopters didn't require much strategy but it was great fun. Although your mission is to protect the caravans of trucks on the ground below, you really don't have

any control over their safety. Chopper Command stands the test of time. Only recently did I come to realize just how challenging this game is. Even on the normal skill level it's difficult to last very long. Chopper Command is a terrific game, and every 2600 fan should own a copy.

Recommended variation: 1B.

1 or 2 players

### [Riddle of the Sphinx \(Imagic 1982\) C+](#)

This innovative adventure puts you in the middle of the Egyptian desert, where you must reach the Temple of Ra and provide the right offering to it. Along the way you'll encounter traders, rock-throwing thieves, scorpions, and two desert deities: the beautiful Isis and the evil Anubis. You'll find many useful items including tools, treasures, and artifacts. On your quest you discover pyramids, temples, the Phoenix, and the Sphinx. Many require specific offerings to pass. I have to give Riddle of the Sphinx a passing grade on concept alone - not many adventure games on the 2600 are this sophisticated. The graphics feature a nice white desert background scattered with palm trees, obelisks, and camels - a refreshing change of scenery. Your man moves across the bottom of the screen, and the scenery scrolls up and down *above* him - he never really *touches* anything. In order to trade with merchants or sacrifice to the temples, you need to approach them from below. This can be problematic, because you often need to backtrack, and when you move downward you can't see what's ahead of you! I recommend staying to the far left when moving "south". The "riddles" of this game mainly lie in the well-written manual. It provides hints as to what items each temple will accept, and they're not hard to figure out. The right joystick is used to control your inventory, and since you can hold a dozen things at a time, you won't need to do any tedious juggling. By toggling the difficulty and black/white switches, you can monitor your health, score, and time. Playing for score doesn't make much sense, since the longer you play, the more points you rack up. The main challenge is to complete game #3 in the shortest amount of time. Imagic did a decent job with this game, but I think they missed a big opportunity. By including some mystery items or locations (not documented in the manual), this game would have been much more intriguing. Still, Riddle of the Sphinx is an interesting game like no other.

Recommended variation: 3B.

1 player

### [River Raid Activision 1982 A](#)

This has got to be one of the top five Atari 2600 games of all time. As the first video game designed by a woman (Carol Shaw), River Raid is an exciting vertical shooter that requires precision flying and accurate shooting. You control a jet flying through a river valley, shooting ships, helicopters, planes, and bridges. Fuel barges help you maintain your fuel supply, and if you're slick you can destroy these *after* refueling your plane. In addition to shooting, you also need to navigate narrow channels without crashing into the sides. The game is expertly programmed, with crisp control, smooth animation, and tight collision detection. The colorful graphics feature multi-colored objects, nice explosions, and even scenery on the riverbanks. You can control the speed of your jet, and difficulty switches let you choose between straight and guided missiles. Best of all, it's easy to play and addictively fun. It doesn't get much better on the 2600.

Recommended variation: A

1 or 2 players

## Colecovision:

### [Jungle Hunt \(Atari 1983\) A](#)

This is one of my all time favorite classic games, and this version is the closest to the arcade I've seen. Originally entitled "Jungle King", the name and lead character were later changed when a movie studio sued over the "Tarzan" rights. So instead of Tarzan, we get some nerdy explorer wearing tan shorts and brown socks. What I like about Jungle Hunt is the variety of play. The first stage requires good reflexes to jump from vine to vine. Then it's off to a crocodile-infested river. I don't know why the crocodiles are red, but they die pretty easy when you stab them (even if their mouths are open). Back on shore, you'll leap over small rocks and duck under large square ones before reaching your final destination. Here you'll find your girlfriend tied up and hanging over a boiling pot, and you'll need to leap over two natives to rescue her. It all looks like the arcade, but it seems like there should be some kind of ending. During the second time through, a monkey appears on the vines, which is not found in most editions. The game is challenging, but at least after you die you get to pick up right where you left off, which is nice. I've played Jungle Hunt on many consoles, but this is my favorite version.

1 or 2 players

### [Congo Bongo \(Sega 1984\) C+](#)

With its colorful, psuedo-3D graphics, Congo Bongo made Atari 2600 fans of the early 80's green with envy. The game took some old ideas and gave them a new dimension. The first stage looks like a 3D Donkey Kong. Your explorer must climb a tiered cliff to reach an ape named Congo Bongo at the top. Along the way, he'll have to dodge coconuts, cross a bridge, slide down a hill, leap chasms, and avoid monkeys. The detailed graphics are an eyeful, although I would have preferred a green color scheme to the yellow/orange one. The splashing blue waterfalls look beautiful, and minor details like a little skull gives the game personality. Although the monkeys are mostly an annoyance, if both get a hold of you, they will hoist you over their heads and throw you off the cliff! If only the other two stages were as well designed as this one! The second stage is *much* less imaginative. It features a wide-open savannah with charging rhinos running around. There are some holes to take cover in, but I've found that if you just jump a lot, you won't need to use these. The last screen is like a 3D Frogger. You need to cross water by hitching rides on lily pads and hippos. The screen is attractive enough, but I found it frustratingly difficult. Worse yet, there's no payoff for capturing Congo for the third time. It's just back to the beginning of the game. Despite the uneven gameplay, Congo Bongo is a challenging, good-looking game.

1 or 2 players

## Intellivision:

### [White Water! \(Imagic 1983\) C](#)

White Water is really two games in one, but neither is particularly compelling. Still, the game deserves credit for originality. Half the time you're guiding a three-man raft through a

white water river valley, and half the time you're ducking into the woods to play a ridiculous "capture the flag" game with the local natives. Your goal is to ride the river and collect treasure in the shortest time. The graphics are first-rate. The meandering green river bank looks exceptional, and the water itself contains rapids (white ripples), rocks, shoals, whirlpools, barrels, and beaches. The rafting action is challenging and certainly original, but it's often more frustrating than fun. There are just too many obstacles, which in turn encourages you to go slow instead of taking chances. This tends to understate the thrill and excitement associated with white water rafting. The instructions provide the best advice: Don't try to steer all the time; let the rapids carry you. Hitting rocks can send men flying out of the raft, but at least you can try to pick them back up by moving over them. The beaches give you an opportunity to stop your raft and head into the woods to break up the monotony. The flag game is simple but provides some variety and introduces some much-needed strategy. White Water is great in concept, but I found it to be less than thrilling.

1 player

### [Shark! Shark! \(Mattel 1982\) A](#)

Sharks have fascinated me since I was a kid. I'd buy any game with the word "shark" in the title, so one with "shark" mentioned twice (with exclamation points no less) is clearly a "must have". In fact, this underrated game has become one of my favorites. Perfect to play on a hot summer day, the game takes place in the cool blue depths of an ocean, where you control a tiny yellow fish. Other fish of all shapes, colors, and sizes swim across the screen. Even the ocean floor is teeming with life, as crabs and lobsters creep through the swaying seaweed. Your goal is to eat other fish of smaller or equal size, which gradually increases the size of your fish. Ominous tones indicate the presence of the large, menacing shark. Although he's an intimidating adversary, he can be defeated. If you nip at his tail enough times, he will die and sink to the ocean floor. But be wary - the shark can turn around quickly and snap you up! As your fish grows bigger and more powerful, you also become a larger target for other creatures like jellyfish and seahorses. Adding realism is the fact that the other fish also eat each other, and shellfish even jump up to grab low-swimming fish. It's a challenge to grow your fish to full size, and each time you die, you go back to being tiny. But the game is enormously fun and addictive. Intuitive controls allow you to dash ahead or stop on a dime. Audio effects include realistic bubble sounds and harmonized music. Shark! Shark! is a killer game, and it even features a two-player simultaneous mode.

1 or 2 players

For more classic reviews, check out The Video Game Critic at

[www.videogamecritic.net](http://www.videogamecritic.net)

**Stardate 7800**

by [Adam King](#)

Greetings, gamers. Once again I have another trio of 7800 game reviews. Three more arcade ports are served up and here's how they stack up.

### [Centipede \(Atari, 1987\)](#)

Everyone's favorite bug-blasting game is up first. In this title (also released on the 2600 & 5200) you are lost in a forest of mushrooms and monstrous bugs are on the loose, including a Centipede that crawls around the mushrooms down the screen. You fight back using magic arrows and you must shoot all the segments of the centipede before it touches and kills you. If you hit a middle segment, the centipede splits into two, then three, and so on. Once you completely eradicate the centipede, you pop into the next level, with a faster centipede. You also have to watch out for spiders, as well as fleas and scorpions that poison the mushrooms. If the centipede touches the mushroom, it tumbles down fast after you.

Even though both the 2600 and 5200 versions were pretty good, the 7800 is even better. The graphics and sounds are almost dead on with the arcade version, save for a few sore spots. The controls are decent with the standard Proline Joystick, but you can also use an Atari 2600 Trac-Ball for a true arcade feel. There is one major thing that causes this version to stand out: simultaneous two-player action. Two people can play at the same time, in either team play or competitive modes. This definitely is a welcome feature. If you haven't guessed already, Centipede is one of the best arcade ports on the 7800.

Score: 10/10

### [Dig Dug \(Atari, 1987\)](#)

The classic digging game comes to the 7800, once again a welcome improvement over the 2600 and 5200 versions. For newbies, the game revolves around you digging in the ground for fruit and vegetable prizes. Trouble is the ground is inhabited by two types of creatures: goggle wearing Pookas, and fire-breathing Frygars. And they won't think twice about killing you. Luckily you're equipped with a pump which can inflate the critters until they pop. You can also try to crush them beneath rocks, but be careful, or else you'll be smashed.

The graphics are vibrant and colorful and the characters look good, although a little blocky. The sound is not as good. All the arcade sounds are here, they just sound wrong again. There are a few control issues at times, but for the most part the joystick responds well. This is a straight port of the arcade, and thankfully everything is included, right down to the bonus vegetables that pop up a second before the level ends. This certainly is the best version of Dig Dug on any Atari system.

Score: 8/10

### [Ms. Pac-Man \(Atari, 1986\)](#)

Even the first lady of the arcades is represented here. Ms. Pac-Man is one of the few arcade games to appear in some form on almost every system, from the 2600 to the Dreamcast. The 7800 is no different and features all the dot-gobbling and ghost-chasing action you'll find in the arcade sequel to Pac-Man. You'll even find the famous title screen and intermissions are included as well.

The graphics are very good, though Ms. Pac-Man seems to have lost some detail. You'll



notice that the arcade stage only takes up the middle part of the screen. This is to preserve the aspect ratio of the maze. It's better than stretching out the screen (Like the 5200 Pac-Man). The sounds are arcade perfect, despite some high pitches. The controls work well, but when you first play the game, you may notice a slight lag in the controls. This disappears as you get father into the game, for some reason. The main thing about this version is its speed. This title is FAST. You'll have to constantly think on your feet. Even though you may have played this on another system, if you're looking for the best Atari Pac-action, look no further than 7800 Ms. Pac-Man.

Score: 9/10

## **The Many Faces of...Robotron 2084**

by [Alan Hewston](#)

I'm giving up finding the rare TI cart, and will no longer delay the 20 year anniversary of "Robotron 2084" in this column. Hopefully my fellow TI enthusiasts will understand, especially since most readers would prefer that I review this arcade hit than all 3 faces of "Super Breakout". This futuristic game of "everything is out to get you" (perhaps a new genre could be called "Death from Everywhere") can easily stake a claim as the most action-filled game of all time. This is especially true if you weigh games based upon the average number of objects on-screen versus the computing (and graphic) power available at the time – it would surely be up near the top. Not to mention almost no break in the action. After conceiving and programming an incredibly successful arcade game, "Defender" in '80, and its sequel "Stargate" in '81, Eugene Jarvis and his Vid Kidz team came right back with yet another blockbuster hit in "Robotron 2084" in '82. OK, they were off by 2 years (from being 100 years), but I think the year AD 2084 was chosen in honor of the book "1984", by George Orwell.

As a classic game fan you know this futuristic setting pits you, a big green-eyed dude with a laser, against a horde of robots out to destroy or mutate all humans (clones actually). Atarisoft manuals tell that the date is June 5, 2084 when you receive your official communiqué on the Moon base. You alone must fight off wave after wave (up to 255?) of Robotrons, and save the remaining humans, all clones of "Daddy", "Mommy", and "Mikey". A simple touch of any clone & they'd be rescued (& disappear). The Robotron's "species" (as Atarisoft called them) were: Mindless Grunts; Indestructible Hulks; Sinister Spheroids, which spawned Enforcers, which let loose Enforcer Sparks; Giant Brains (every 5 waves) armed with Cruise Missiles and who's touch mutates the clones into deadly Progs; Cubic Quarks (every 7 waves), which beget Torturing Tanks, which then send Bounce Bombs in your direction. The entire screen is wide open, with no place to hide, yet cluttered with mines, galvanizing electrodes and other deadly debris to be avoided or destroyed. After every Robotron is destroyed, 'cept the Hulks, you move on to the next wave. To help survive this onslaught of charging robots and their firepower coming at you from every direction, the arcade game came equipped with an innovative means of control – two (8 directional) sticks. Left moved the protagonist & Right fired his lasers. Wow! Controlling two sticks really puts your reflexes to the test – also taking some getting used to. Most often this complexity caused gamers to love or hate this game - but most loved it dearly

usually drawing crowds to stand and watch the non-stop carnage.



Are these Many Faces pictures too small/blurry?

Arcade: Williams 1982 (Eugene Jarvis & Larry Demar et al)

Home Versions (all by Atari/Atarisoft 1983 – unless noted): Atari 8 bit, 5200, Vic 20, Apple II, Atari 7800 ('84), Commodore 64 (83 Tom Griner) TI-99 (83 Bill Parod). A CV & 2600 ports were at least planned.

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

Sequels: None, but the 1990's game "Smash TV", also by Williams was a revival to this theme/genre.

Home Versions:

There are NO simultaneous 2-player classic versions out there but just imagine the possibility of using all 4 joystick ports at once on the Atari 8 bit or 5200. The home versions are all excellent games, most including dual joystick control as the default option. All of the home versions include: all the Robotron species; a pause; and an electrifying screen shower of color when each wave is completed. Most versions have: a demo, 5 difficulty levels and keep track of both your current and high scores. If you do not have a joystick coupler, have no fear, use 2 suction cup joysticks & have at it.

### Disqualified: TI-99 (DQ)

I hate to disqualify a port, but it is too rare (or maybe unreleased) and I've not seen it in 5 years of searching. There may be a disk version to play, but for even serious gamers, the disk version is not practical. Although loyal TI fans will have all the necessary H/W to play a disk game, the average collector will not have found or want to keep the huge PE box just for disk games. If I ever get my PE box, drive card & drive all working and find the game on disk – I'll go back and review it. I also owe the TI fans a review of "Q\*bert" (missed out on Silver medal) & "Super Demon Attack".

### Have Nots: Vic 20 (40)

"Robotron 2084" for the Vic 20!! Unbelievable! Quite ambitious of Atari to risk not only

sales (on a near dead system), but also in making it a feasible game. Perhaps Atari had a small standing army at the time, ready to go with experienced programmers for every console. Atari made or attempted to make pretty much every big named title on every platform. The Gameplay is complete (8) and impressive, albeit with too few Robotrons attacking you. Having only 1 joystick also takes away part of the game strategy and tactics. See the C64 for commonality in Gameplay. The Addictiveness is outstanding (9) but would have been better with 2 sticks, more Robotrons and a better size ratio of Robotrons to the screen. The space bar is the pause. The Graphics are very good (7) but there are some collision detection problems and again - fewer Robotrons, which finally gets penalized here. The Sound is enjoyable (8) with a full pallet of effects. They are somewhat cheap and odd, but not enough to detract. The Controls are enjoyable (8) but the execution is lost with only 1 joystick. Too bad they did not use the C64 1-stick control scheme – but still one of the top 5 Vic 20 games ever.

### Have Nots: Commodore 64 (41)

No, this is not a Gamemaker version. Atarisoft must have felt like cheating C64 owners – with awkward colored graphics and sub-standard sound effects. The Gameplay is compete and very nice (8), and the C64 & Vic 20 have added a seldom seen starting option - a choice of starting waves 1 - 9 is given. This is cool as it allows a beginner to practice some game elements such as the Brain and Quark waves any time they want. But neither Commodore version has an actual demo and even more unfortunate, both are lacking the momentary delay during the wave setup - where the clones arrive first, just before the Robotrons. This is done on all other versions correctly so that you can see where you need to go to save the clones. The C64 does have an information screen with Robotron point values listed. Finally, there are too few Robotrons on the C64 and even fewer on the Vic 20.

The Addictiveness is outstanding (9) with dual stick control – but could have been better if not for the Sound, Graphics & lack of difficulty levels. Difficulty options are more related to re-playability and usually a nice feature to add. Neither Commodore version has these – being replaced in favor of the starting wave option. Darn, why can't all versions have both choices? The space bar is the pause. The Graphics are sharp (8), but a let down. The Robotrons are not plentiful enough, and although colorful, and sharp images, they just look wrong. The screen shower ending each wave is pitiful (but even worse on the Vic). The Sound (6) is good enough, but almost without feeling. Effects are missing and/or all wrong, it disappoints right from the start. On a good note, the Controls are perfect (10), using a pair of suction cup joysticks. Even with 1 stick, they are terrific as the programmer(s) use auto fire all the time and then when you press the fire button you change the direction of fire to the direction you are currently moving in. Let go of the button and keep firing that way, regardless of which way you move - an excellent use of code and H/W. This version is found on both cart (not in my library) and disk formats.

### Have Nots: Atari Apple 2 (41)

At first glance the Apple 2, having only one joystick port, may seem limited for games. Fortunately, many A2 programmers were innovative such as here and provided 4 ways to play: [joystick; keyboard; paddles; and joystick and keyboard combined]. I'm a newbie and cannot get my joystick buttons 0 & 1 to work – for this game only – so out goes option 1.

The keyboard version works, but yecch – not for Robotron. The paddles option sounds interesting (maybe like a spinner for direction), but then how would you move? Keyboard? Finally, the last option worked, but not right away. The demo tells which keys to use – only for the keyboard mode. When I realized that when they say “entire keyboard” - that’s what they mean. You use the stick to move and then literally bang almost anywhere on the entire keyboard to fire. The edges of the keyboard corresponding to the 8 directions - fires non-stop until you hit a key in the center of the keyboard (ie stop firing). It isn’t great, but works better than I expected. If the joystick alone option really works, then add 1 point to the Controls (8), which are impressive. The Gameplay is enjoyable (8), with a really cool demo that essentially provides an on screen instruction manual - introducing every member of the Robotron species. Hit the [escape] key to go right to the final screen, containing the keyboard mapping, or during play to pause. Bad news is that there is no choice of starting wave or difficulty. The Addictiveness is great (9), but a second joystick and any other options would have helped. The Graphics are outstanding (9), second only to the 7800. The detail and color is all there, and possibly the largest % (90%) of the screen is used, with just a sliver on the right side to display your score. This gives more up/down range, more like the arcade screens. Sound (7) is effective, but would be the worst, if not for the C64. There’s no sound effect for your shots fired and most other effects sound tinny, coming from inside the machine. Disk only.

### **Bronze Medal: Atari 5200 (44)**

Inside the game package was it’s own special 2 joystick coupler (also included in Space Dungeon). I was optimistic, but the 5200 sticks still got me down while playing it, so I scored the Controls as great (9). But you may consider it a (10) if you have no problems. Your challenge is not only to find the coupler, but also 2 sticks that work really well. Without them, you’ll not enjoy this version as much, but perhaps try a Wico controller, or just play it’s 8 bit cousin. Speaking of which, all remaining scores agree with the 8 bit below.

### **Silver Medal: Atari 8 bit (45)**

The DP Guide mentions that a coupler was also included in the game as well, but I could not verify this (I did check the Antic archives). My fault for not starting this article soon enough. There was a Sega adapter included the following (or 2) year (s) for the 2600 (& maybe C64) version(s) of Spy Hunter. [I think the Spy Hunter adapter housed the sticks with the fire buttons next to each other, one stick in front of the other with the forward direction next to the left direction (ie top stick was rotated CCW 90 deg) not side by side]. I wonder how similar the Atari one would have been, besides being side by side. And . . . makes you wonder why Atari didn’t ever get a cart and adapter out for 2600 Robotron 2084. Surely there were more 2600 owners at the time and the 2600 was a better machine to make Robotron on than the Vic 20. The Gameplay is superb (9) and everything is there as expected. The Addictiveness is excellent (10) as this game really rocks and you get 2 joysticks to hold as well. The pause is the space bar (or pause button on 5200). The Graphics are very nice (8), but take a hit here for poor collision detection and are just a little rugged. They are fairly well detailed, but nothing as sharp as the C64, or as perfect as the 7800. Fortunately a large number of Robotrons and their firepower readily fill your screen. The Sound is enjoyable (8), but again, not quite as audible as the 7800. Control is perfect (10) using two sticks with suction cup sticks (& should be for the



coupler too)

### **Gold Medal: Atari 7800 (47)**

Yeah Baby! We should expect to see more kudos about this game in an upcoming article of Stardate 7800. It ties the best score ever for this column. But first, set aside those 7800 controllers and use the 2600 compatible suction cups or use a coupler, just like on the C64 or 8 bit. The Controls are then perfect (10) and you'll really need it for all the action here. The Gameplay is complete and fantastic (9), with more Robotrons than you can count. The Addictiveness (9) was nearly perfect, but I am still frustrated since this is yet another 7800 cart without a high score feature. "Food Fight" and a few others do this as well. Arcade quality control went right out the window. Oh well. If you finish off a great game and then accidentally start another – forget about it. The Graphics are in a league of their own (10) and trash the competition. The Sound is wonderful (9) with so many distinct effects that you'll never get bored of them. Add a cool soundtrack, high score, starting wave options and a full demo like the Apple 2 and you've got a perfect (50). Very Impressive!

Coulda, Woulda, Shoulda done more with Controllers – like the C64 version did.

For those single joysticks with 2 distinct fire buttons like the Apple, 5200 & 7800 makes me wonder . .

why not have options like: 1 button toggles firing on (non-stop), the other to fire single shots; always fire non-stop, then have 1 button rotate the shots CCW, the other Clockwise; 1 fire button shoots as usual, the other behind you. OK, so hind-sight is 20-20, but if we can have 112 versions of Space Invaders, why not 32+ options for how to control the movement and firing of Robotron. Finally, if you enjoy playing MAME, then you really need to get a good controller - like the "DEVASTATOR" – IMHO it works the best for dual joystick games like "Robotron 2084" and many others with special/different controls.

Come back next month for some fun in the Sun and cookout time with the Many Faces of "Burgertime" and maybe "Bump 'n Jump" as well. Data East/Bally Midway classics found on the 2600, CV, and Inty, plus "Burgertime" versions on the TI, C64 & Apple 2. Stay tuned to see if I find those final TI-99 versions of Joust, Buck Rogers or Dig Dug (also need Vic 20) before 2002 ends. Alan Hewston, is reachable at: [Hewston95@stratos.net](mailto:Hewston95@stratos.net) or for trading see [http://members.core.com/~hewston/Hewston\\_vg.html](http://members.core.com/~hewston/Hewston_vg.html)

## **The TI 99/4A Some Thoughts on CCAG 2002**

by [Jim Krych](#)

This column normally deals with all things TI, but since we recently had the CCAG 2002 Show, I thought I would say a few things.

First, a moment of prayer for the family of the soldier from the 37<sup>th</sup> Armor Brigade, forever young at age 20.

AT 2002 went very well for us in B Co. 112<sup>th</sup> Engineers. We had really good training,



especially in the demolitions side, for my squad, and excellent vehicle training in the AVL B and the M548. It's so neat to drive 60 tons of tank and bridge around! Wow, what a rush!!!

Unlike a buddy of mine, who's AT is three weeks long, my AT was only two weeks at Camp Grayling Michigan. It's actually ironic that I used to be stationed up in Michigan, Grand Haven and Charlevoix for the Coast Guard. Things have gotten much more serious than last year's AT, in San Diego. This also included very tough policies for leaving and entering the post too.

Okay, about the CCAG 2002. I really had a lot of fun, but I was really glad when it was over. To be very honest, I was getting a little burned out because of the rushed schedule due to us barely getting a facility in time. But, we now have a year to start planning, and the facility we have allows for future expansion with plenty of amps for everyone to use.

It was great meeting Glenn and Charlie again. And this time Charlie had brought his TRS 80 Model 100's to show off. Glenn had the TI set up, and enjoyed the show. Fred won the arcade machine, and I am still surprised that his truck survived the trip back!!!

More than anything, it was also the people who made the Show very enjoyable, and meeting new ones too! Nicholas, from the UK, was back, and Adam Trionfo of the Bally Alley was here for the first time. Tom of course, and Mike-sans free Lynx games being tossed! And Vince Briel's home made arcade cabinet! And, we had a crowd around the Devastator's for play, of course!

Plus, the things we did after the Show was a blast too! Now, for next year!

Like I said, we have ample expansion for future growth. There are two hallways, one on the main level, and another up a few stairs. We also have use of the cafeteria, for show space, and a small classroom for seminars/demos. I will be sending a letter to the Church requesting the time and facilities, for CCAG 2003.

I talked to Charlie about this, and it would seem that the CCAG would be a great place for TI users to show their wares and systems too. And with the use of the classroom, having the demos that have made many TI shows memorable. So, there is now an open invitation to the TI community to show up at CCAG 2003!

It's our intent to have the Show on the Memorial Day Weekend of 2003, May 23 and 24<sup>th</sup>. Also, we still have the limitation of the time period. Because the church has a contemporary worship service starting at 4PM, which is why we had to leave the facility at a certain time. And, hopefully, no weddings at the same time, since that was a last minute yikes! Their Pastor is also a Chaplain in the Reserves, and since 9-11 he has been quite busy and schedules are hard for him too.

Unless we find another facility, or college, that will allow us what we need, at a reasonable price. Hey, miracles do happen! C's actually got her stuff out in about an hour or so! Okay, maybe an hour and a half. But, that is a miracle!

Some Interesting TI News:

From Scott L. Baker comes the following. (comp.sys.ti)

Hello,

I have recently completed writing a synthesizable VHDL model for the TI9900 microprocessor. A simulation of the VHDL model has passed a simple test of each instruction.

The design fits easily into an Altera 1k50 FPGA. For further testing purposes, I plan to build an FPGA adapter board and test it in a 99/4A.

Regards,

Scott L. Baker [scd@teleport.com](mailto:scd@teleport.com)

This makes for some interesting possibilities. Way back when I was with Chris Bobbitt in Asgard Peripherals, we had talked about an "A3" processor, for the TI 99/4A, an upgraded 9900. Back in the early 1990's, that would have been very expensive. Now, it is quite cheap to do.

It would be very interesting to also do the following: make a separate GPL co-processor that executes all GPL code at machine speed! And, a Radix 100 math co-processor! So all GPL code would be directed to the separate GPL chip, and all Radix 100 math would be sent to the math chip! And run this all at 20MHz or so!

This also, with VHDL programming, allows us to do the following project. My friend Dave Ormand and I, and a few others, have talked about something even bigger than a replacement 9900. I called it the "A4" Project back at Asgard. It would be a true 32-bit 9900 CPU! I even came up with the expanded "T" field to describe this processor.

Since the TMS9900 has only three hardware registers, and the rest is done through memory-to-memory architecture, a 32-bit 9900 would still have the registers off-chip. Instead of a BSS >20, for 32 bytes for your workspace, you would have a workspace of 1024 bytes. This means 32 registers of 32-bits in length, per each workspace!!!

It opens up some amazing possibilities! Even a design allowing for the new R11 to have 32 levels of subroutine calls!

Now, a while back I had talked about the 99/8 and the call to emulate it. Well, this is from the TI Online User Group, courtesy of Bryan Nicalek

Sir, TI is pleased to grant you permission to copy and distribute any TI copyrighted program written specifically for the TI-99/8 home computer, including the ROM for the console. This permission is conditioned upon your agreement not to alter the copyright notice in the program and to include the copyright notice with each copy you make and distribute. This permission does not apply to any program bearing the copyright notice of any party other than TI. You agree

to include a separate notice with each copy you distribute that such distribution is made under license from Texas Instruments.

TI makes no warranty with respect to the program and is under no obligation to provide any support or assistance with respect to the programs. TI is under no obligation to provide upgrades to the programs.

TI accepts no liability with respect to your use, coping or distribution of the programs

Regards,  
Herbert W. Foster  
Manager, E&PS Business Services"

Hmmm, now this would be very interesting. And, is excellent news! This is also the way, to approach companies for emulation purposes as well. Another subject for a future article. Hey guys, I have a whole bunch of dsdd MYARC formatted 5 ¼" floppies that have the 99/8 OS in source code! Anyone want it?

"Hi, my name is Jim W. Krych. I am a 32 year-old electronics technician. My products that I currently work on are the SMU models 236,237, and 238. I am also a 13+ year veteran of both the USCG, active, and the Ohio Army National Guard, reserve with B Co. 112<sup>th</sup> engineers. I can be reached at: [jwkrych@adelphia.net](mailto:jwkrych@adelphia.net) or [jwkrych@n2net.net](mailto:jwkrych@n2net.net) I have a two-year-old son, Treyton, and he is the CEO of Treyonics! I have founded my own business and, of course, I named the company after my son Treyton! Our product is the Treyonics Home Controller System Model 9908. Better known as the...

## Devastator

"Serious Gaming"

## Sites of the Month

Time to point out a few more wonderful web sites that are dedicated to classic games. Hope you find them as enjoyable as I have.

### [My Atari](#)

I always get people asking me if there are any other online websites with classic game newsletters. In the past, I have sent people to Cyberroach and a few others, but there never really was anything, at least on a regular basis. That is until now. My Atari is a monthly newsletter that has 20 issues to read! The information is a mixed bag of stuff for all the Atari consoles and computers, so you may find a 2600 article right after a Jaguar one. There is Atari 8-Bit and ST articles as well. But if you are like most fans, you want to collect everything Atari and this newsletter covers all the bases! It can be found at the following URL: <http://www.myatari.net/>

### [Twin Galaxies](#)

While we have mentioned this site quite a few times in this newsletter, I have never spotlighted it. Well, it is time to make up for that oversight. If you want to know what the high score is for any video game, then you need to go to the official site. Besides scores, there is news as well as list of upcoming events. It is the best place to find out about shows, contests and other items of interest for gamers. You can find the site at the following URL: [www.twingalaxies.com](http://www.twingalaxies.com)

## **Bizarre Blendings - JungleFrog**



Keeping with my bizarre blended games, here is another one that you can put in the very odd file. Take Jungle Hunt and mix in Frogger and you get JungleFrog! It is the story of a frog who must get to the other side of the jungle to save his girlfriend. Like Jungle Hunt, it will feature 4 levels, but they will have some Frogger themes to them.

The first level has you trying to swing the vines across the jungle. It will be top down view like Frogger, but instead of avoiding cars, you are dodging stampeding elephants, rhinos and other jungle creatures. You need to get to the other side to move on.

The second level has you swimming across the pond, while fending off crocodiles. You can also climb out of the water and ride on logs that float on top of the water. But once you leave the water, you fall prey to giant snakes and birds who try to eat you.

The third level is the same as Jungle Hunt, with you running and jumping over boulders that are rolling at you. Some do bounce up and force you to duck under them. The only difference is that there are insects that fly around and you can try and eat for bonus points.

The last level has you trying to jump over and save your girlfriend from two French chefs who are planning on making frog legs out of her. Beware as they have their very large knives and are really hungry.

## **The Tough Life of a Classic Game Fanatic**

Everywhere on the net, you read about the joy of classic games. How the nostalgia and simplicity make it all worthwhile. You read about the brags and new products and what a great hobby it is. For the most part it is, but there is also a dark side to the hobby. Beneath the gloss of cheap games and lots of choices is a side that is not so pretty. It is a side that until now has been kept hidden. But no more, it is time to expose the bad side of being a classic game fanatic.

The first thing to look at is the general hermit like existence of a classic gamer. Unlike most hobbies, classic gamers tend to hunt for their games by themselves. With fear of poaching on their turf, they sneak around, sometimes incognito to their thrift stores and flea markets. When prompted about their purchases, they will sometimes resort to lies

about buying it for their children or little brother. Some will switch to a tactic called "Playing Dumb". They will act like they have no idea what they are buying and that they really do not know the true value of the Chase the Chuckwagon that they just found. They are often forced to hide their emotions. Instead of doing a dance of joy over a great find, they need to "play dumb" so as not to tip off the seller about the true nature of the find.

Another side effect of classic game collecting is a mixture of hallucinations as well as paranoia. As their collecting broadens, so does their obsession. Soon, they are looking at everything for classic games. Where they once only looked at the video games, they now fearfully scrounge through the 8-Track tapes for an elusive Channel F cart. They frantically dig through cassette tapes in search of a Bernstein Bears or Smurf Saves the Day. Every stack of CDs may hold an elusive Turbo Grafx game. Every pile of magazines may conceal some Electronic Games or Joystick. Soon those monitors appear to be Vectrexes from across a room. As the paranoia grows, everyday items begin to appear as some video game item. An innocent answering machine begins to resemble a pong machine. Was that Thin Ice board game based on the Intellivision cart? Is that yellow Halloween costume Pacman or Big Bird? Your eyes play tricks on you. Your mind races with all kind of explanations. Everyone is trying to poach your games. You swear that bag lady just grabbed the last Atari carts. Is that kid wearing the Atari shirt, just a raver or is he a Sumguy?

So before you decide to become a full fledged classic game fanatic, think about it. Sure there is the joy of playing games you owned in your youth. Yes, it is great to come across a great find and be the envy of the newsgroup for a week. But think of the consequences. Think about the effects it will have on your mind. While it may seem like a harmless hobby, it does have its dark side. Consider this a warning. I know, I have been down that road. Bwahahaha!

## Letters to the Editor

The mailbag is not as filled as usual, but there are still some questions that are being asked. And please don't bother emailing about looking for a certain arcade game to play on the computer. I can show you where to download MAME, but I have no idea where to get roms. Honest, I cannot help you.

***I have had no luck finding any classic games at the garage sales or flea markets. Any suggestions to help me find something?***

With flea markets, it is best to get there early. I usually get there anywhere from 6:00-6:30 AM. I also try to go through the whole flea market twice, as there are always people just setting up. To be honest, most of my best finds are found on my second time through. Also, it doesn't hurt to wear an Atari shirt or something that lets people know that you are looking for games. It may tip off the sumguys, but it can help. Also, look closely as games can be stuck in boxes under tables. People tend to think of classic games as junk and will push them aside.

At garage sales, the secret is to ask. If you do not see video games, ask. If you do see



some, ask if they have more. I get many of my best finds by asking.

My last secret is a superstitious one. I found that I get my best finds after throwing some coins into a fountain and wishing for a good find. While most people will scoff at it, it works for me. Oh yeah, you need to throw in something larger than a penny, at least from my experiences.

### ***What are your favorite systems from the classic and modern era and why?***

From the classic era, it is the Colecovision. It was the first system that I personally purchased and it holds alot of fond memories. It also has a great selection of obscure arcade games as well as some great versions of other games. For the modern era, it is the Sega Dreamcast. With one of the most innovative lineups of games as well as the continuing underground movement, it offers the best selection of entertainment for your dollar.

### ***Why are so many special controllers only good on a few games?***

That is a problem that has plagued gamers for ages. Why do they not make more games for my Coleco Steering Wheel or Intellivision Voice or Atari 5200 trackball or whatever. There are a few reasons for this. One is that most controllers are set up to only work with a certain type of game. Plus, most systems are only on the market for about 5 years, of which they are usually only really popular for two of those years. Because of this short life span, as well as the high cost of special controllers and the amount of time it takes to make a game, it just isn't as economically feasible to give alot of support to these controllers. But for your money, a steering wheel is usually the most supported device.

## **Crown Jewel**

By [Fred Wagaman](#)

What would you consider to be the Crown Jewel of your collection?

You know, the one piece that if you had a fire, you'd grab along with the family photos.

Maybe it isn't your most expensive piece. Maybe it is.

Which piece in your collection would you keep above all others?

And why?

This question has plagued me for a while. Especially since I've considered pruning my collection.

Nothing I have is irreplaceable. Maybe it would be my Vectrex collection. Great machine, fond memories, complete collection (including 3d glasses).

Or maybe it would be my Supergrafx. I have all the games for it. It can play my PC Engine games too.

Maybe my Turbo Duo along with Dracula X. (Here's a link to a new review of Dracula X - <http://www.robotstreetgang.com/article.php?sid=46&mode=thread&order=0>)

I hope that I would never have to do it. But those would be my top three. How about yours?

*(Fred has been playing games for over 25 years and actively collecting them for over 10. The 2500 + games that he has takes up most of his home office and Living room. He lives in Denver, PA with his understanding wife Jennie, his 6 year-old, button-loving son, Max and his 2 year old, 4th player, Lynzie. He has nothing witty to say here.)*

## Conclusion

Sorry for the short issue, but with the summer here I did not find as much time to write. The nice weather was tough to ignore. But at least the streak stays alive. Thanks to all the people who help make the issue as large as it is.

I know I said before that Bit Age Times would be out, but it really will this month. It is almost finished and I could post it now with the amount done. So we really will have a new issue this month. Until then, keep cool and remember to keep your CD based game systems cool, heat is a killer on them.

-[Tom Zjaba](#)

(This issue was done while listening to sappy love songs by Luther Vandross, Melissa Manchester and Starship).