

# Retrogaming Times

Issue 35 - July 20th, 2000  
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## Retro Redo

By [Fred Wagaman](#)

Over the last several years, many classic games have be re-created, refined and re-released. Some have were good, some not. Some were successes, some weren't. (Good=Success and Bad=Failure are not always the case). Let's see what we've had:

Frogger  
Missile Command  
Asteroids  
Robotron  
Xevious  
Q\*bert  
Paperboy  
Pong

Several other classic characters have also made updated appearances in more modern designed games:

Mario  
Pitfall Harry  
Donkey Kong

And there have been quite a few classic game collections released. Just this week, I saw

that the Dreamcast had received its first collection. Namco released 5 discs worth. I'm sure we all have at least 1 of the Midway or Atari collections.

That's all fine and good, but I have to ask, what game will they redo next ?

Certain games just can't be redone. The genre has moved on. Even though the game could retain the name of the classic game, it wouldn't be the same. Pole Position is an example of this. There are plenty of racing games out there and new game named Pole Position just wouldn't be the same.

Are there other games that can't, shouldn't or otherwise won't be updated ?

Some games weren't successful enough to warrant an upgrade. Some game's play mechanics won't translate or wouldn't fit in this modern, 3D, polygon-infested world. A year ago, I would have used Pong as an example of this, but it is too late for that.

But there are some classic games that should and will be updated.

The one that I've heard that excites me is Dragon's Lair 3D.

The market is flooded with 3D exploration games. Lara Croft, Mario, Jersey Devil, Rascal, Spyro, Medieval, Tonic, Buzz Lightyear, et al have practically run the genre into the ground. But Dragon's Lair is going to be different.

I have recently played (at least tried to) the DVD versions of Dragon's Lair, Dragon's Lair 2 and Space Ace. Even though I stunk at the games, seeing the graphics, the worlds and the design that went into those interactive movies made them fun. When Dragon's Lair 3D comes out, we'll be able to explore that world, interact and (hopefully) be able to beat the various creatures not by feats of timing, but by skill, trickery and logic.

The story of "Save the girl" has been the subject of hundreds of other games, but the world needs one more.

And I for one am hoping that Dragon's Lair 3D is a success.

*(Fred has been playing games for over 25 years and actively collecting them for over 10. The 2400+ games in his collection 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 wonders if DL3D sells, can Space Ace be far behind? He can be reached at [fcw3@postoffice.ptd.net](mailto:fcw3@postoffice.ptd.net).)*

**TI Computer, The Overlooked Game System**



To most people who collect classic games, the TI might as well stand for "Totally Ignored". While many people collect the carts for the Atari 8-Bit and the Commodore systems, people tend to ignore the much maligned TI computer. Heck, the TRS color computer gets more respect. Think of the TI 99/4A as the Rodney Dangerfield of classic computer, no respect. If you are one of the people who has completely overlooked this machine, you have no idea what you are missing. The TI offers one of the best and most affordable selections of games of any classic system and should easily be considered with the Atari 8-Bits and Commodore 64 systems.

To understand part of the misconception of the TI computer (by the way that is short for Texas Instruments) is the fact that they really wanted to make a complete computer. While the Ataris and Commodores focused more on games than other areas, the TI put a lot of emphasis on educational and productivity programs. While this was a noble effort, it also put a stigma on the TI computer. Outside of the TI owners, it wasn't considered a very good machine for gaming. It was the system your parents bought for you to learn to do math on and for them to balance their checkbook. Just look at one of the old ads with Bill Cosby and you can see where this came from.

The thought that the TI computer wasn't a serious gaming computer was heightened by the early releases. Look at games like "The Attack", "Chisolm Trail" and "Blasto." While they are all fun games, none are exactly a good indicator of the quality of games that can be found on the system. These games were on par with the old Atari 2600 games and you didn't exactly shell out the kind of money a computer cost back then to play Atari 2600 quality games. Another problem the TI had early on was there weren't many arcade translations available. You have to remember that during this era, arcade translations could make or break a system. It was games like Ms. Pacman and Donkey Kong that sold systems and not having them was a kiss of death. While the TI did get a handful of arcade classics from Atarisoft and Parker Bros, their lack of other arcade games hurt them.

Another problem with the TI computer was the notion that there is only a handful of game carts for the system. Most people don't think there are many carts at all for the system, but there are over 300 different carts, with a good percentage of them being game carts. Most people only know of a handful of games, which is a pity as there are a lot of great games available.

Besides having a good selection of games, a big bonus with the TI computer is that you

LEVEL 2

MATTRESS	4	6	SEC.
MURCH	3	5	MM.
MICH	3	5	PTS.
HIGH	3	5	PTS.

SCORE

Think of this as a Crazy Climber type game where you are scaling a mountain, instead of a building. The game is one of the few that takes advantage of the speech synthesizer and this is really needed to fully enjoy the game. Without the speech, it is a very good game, but with it, it is a great game!

One of the best parts of the game is the speech. There is a man and a woman speaking and while the man is pretty laid back, the woman is downright annoying. You really want to reach that top of the summit, just to laugh at her. Her snippy little comments are enough to give you the determination you need to succeed!



One of my favorite games is this lost arcade classic. Munch Mobile is a simple game that should have been more popular, but for some reason was completely overlooked. You

drive your little VW bug (at least it looks like one in the arcade game) around and send out your stretching arm to grab food, drink and gas. The first time you see this odd game, you will swear that Plastic Man is driving that car. This guy's arm can really stretch, I mean it goes on and on!

While it may seem odd to grab items on the side of the road, you need to pick up gas to fill your tank. The other items are luxuries and are not necessary, but do greatly increase your score. Also in a nice touch, you get bonus points if you throw your trash in a trash can, instead of littering. While you are grabbing this food, be careful of objects on the side of the road. If your arm hits a trash can or something else, it will throb in pain for a few seconds.

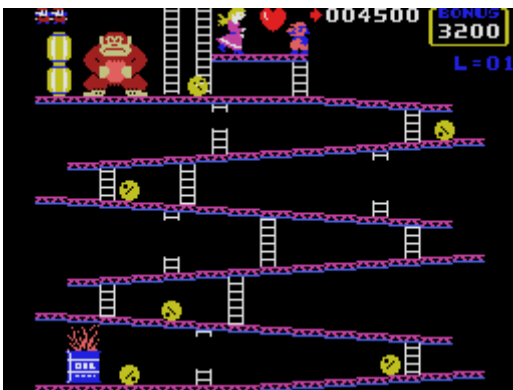
Besides grabbing stuff, you also need to watch out for turns in the road and other cars. This can get a bit tricky as you try to get that gas can and maneuver the car at the same time. This is quite a challenge, but one that any great gamer can handle. This is a fun little game that is only available on the TI computer.

### [Anteater](#)

This game brings back memories as it was a game that I saved my money to buy for my Uncle Ron, who turned me onto the TI computer. I thought it was a translation of the arcade game, but I soon found it was a different and unique game.

The game plays alot like Dig Dug where you dig tunnels and can drop rocks on your opponents (the anteaters as you are an ant). But unlike Dig Dug, where the goal is to eliminate all the enemies, this game has you doing a different task. At the bottom of the screen are a handful of sugar cubes that you need to retrieve, one at a time and carry to the top of the screen. Carry them all and you get to move on. Of course, as the levels increase, so does the amount of anteaters who are after you.

This is one of those fun little games that you will find yourself playing a few times. While it may be out for the Commodore Vic 20, I only know for sure that it came out for the TI computer. A great little game!



### [Donkey Kong](#)

While this game came out for almost all the systems during the classic era, the TI version is among the best versions out there! Besides sporting great graphics and good sound, you had something the Coleco, Atari, Commodore and even the Nintendo version was missing, the 4th level. That's right, if you wanted all four levels, you had to get a TI

computer to play them all. And let me tell you how shocked I was when I first played this and saw the elusive pie factory! It sorta of steamed me that my supposedly great Colecovision could only give me three levels.

Check back next month for reviews and more on other great TI games as we look at the forgotten game system! This month was merely the start of a long look at a system that deserves more respect and has alot to offer. Next month, we will look at some of the great

*(Pictures and some of the information were provided by Bryan Roppolo. Alot of thanks go to his help and he can be reached at: [brop99@hotmail.com](mailto:brop99@hotmail.com)).*

## Letters to the Editor

This month we have another selection of great letters from readers. They are more serious this month than in the past, but don't worry, I do get my share of strange ones too!

***I was wondering what is the best way to get your letter printed in the "Letters to the Editor" section? signed A Colorado Collector***

How about by asking a question like how to get your letter printed :) Actually, that only works for the first person who sends it, sorry. But here are the kind of letters I am usually looking to put in here:

1. Letters that ask questions that I can answer or find the answers to and would be of interest to my readers.
2. Letters that are either strange or silly.
3. Letters that include a bribe (just kidding).

The idea of this column is to be part informative and part entertaining, so if you can offer something that falls in either category, you have a good chance of seeing your letter here.

***Why don't you put the names of the letter writers in the column? signed Just Wondering***

Because I want to be just like my idol, Ann Landers. Seriously, I found it is much easier to print the letters than to ask for permission from the person to put their name in. If you want to send a letter here and really want to see your name in print, then make sure to include it in the email. As far as the names you see, they either are ones that the writer suggests or ones that I make up.

***Who came up with the dumb name for this column? Why didn't you call it something like Video Game Voice or anything other than "Letters to the Editor." signed Get a Clue***

Guess it is a little generic. Well, if anyone can come up with a better one (a nice little heading would be nice too), please send your suggestions and maybe I will put it in. I will also give you credit, if you want your name in print.



## eBay Notes

This month we deal with something that is more of a trend. I have been seeing more and more auctions of classic games and related stuff with very high starting bids. The days of the start it at a dollar and let the market dictate the price seems to be coming to an end.

There are many reasons for this new mentality. Part of it is that with so many categories and so many auctions, there really is too much choice. Unless you are selling a very, very rare item, the odds are there are probably a few others up at the same time, so it is safer to just ask alot and not take a chance of giving it away.

Another reason is with more and more new sellers coming in, many of them just have no idea what something is worth and instead of spending the time to find out, they put a higher price and figure if it sells great, if not, they will just relist it.

While there is nothing wrong with this, it is a bit depressing. Items in the past that I may have gotten cheap or at least had the illusion that I would (until that last second bid), are now out of my price range from the get go. Oh well, guess I should be happy with what I have.

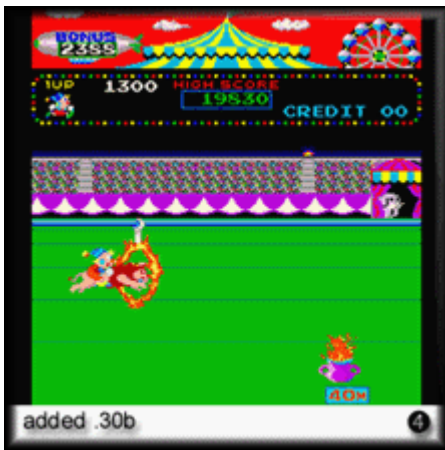
## MAME Reviews

Time to break out a roll of quarters and do a few more reviews! Oh wait, this is MAME reviews, so I can save those quarters for the vending machines. Anyways, here are two more well seasoned games just waiting to be enjoyed. So print this off and when you are done reading this, I order you to play these games or else! Don't even dare ask "or else what"!

### Circus Charlie

My first exposure to this game was on a Nintendo Multicart. I figured it was one of those games that was made for the Nintendo and had no idea that it was actually an arcade game. Too bad as it is a really cool game!

This is another game where you play the role of a clown. This time you have to get around the circus without getting hurt. The game is a side scroller and features a series of levels. But unlike alot of the side scrollers, it is alot of fun and does have some different kind of gameplay.



**(That is either one brave or one stupid lion).**

The first level has you riding the back of a lion as you jump through hoops of fire. The tough part is the hoops are coming at you and you need to time your jump so that you don't land on the hoop as it would hurt the poor lion and that would not be good. How they ever got a lion to let a clown ride on his back and jump through rings of fire is beyond me. That is one incredible trainer! But to make things harder, there are what looks like vases of fire on the ground. So you have to time your jumps, so you don't hit these or else you will be burned to a crisp.



**(Purple baboons? What kind of whacked out circus is this?)**

The second level has you on the high wire. Not only are you on the high wire, but you appear to be roller skating. You are no ordinary clown, you are super clown! This time there are a band of angry baboons who are blocking your path. You need to move along the high wire and jump over the dastardly beasts. While it is usually pretty easy, as you skate over the dumb monkeys, but occasionally a very fast monkey comes rushing at you and you need to avoid this one along with the slower ones.

The other levels are also just as varied, with Charlie riding a ball, a little horsie and other stuff. One nice feature is at the beginning of the game, you can choose which level to play. This way, you can see all of the levels without having to actually be really good. All in all, this is a fun little game. How can a game about the circus be anything but fun? Now pass the cotton candy!





## Penguin-Kun Wars

Another game that I was first introduced to on a Nintendo Multicart (gotta love those things). This is one of those games that I instantly knew I would like. I am as sucker for penguin based games and this one is definitely a penguin game. You play a penguin in this game as you are in a strange contest.



**(Looks like a beanie baby convention).**

The game itself is a strange combination of dodge ball (remember this from gym class?) and ping pong. You start off in a bracket with other cute animals. Your goal is to beat your opponent and keep moving up the bracket, to the championship game! The game itself has you and your opponent each starting with five balls on each side. Your goal is to pick up a ball at a time and throw it at your opponent. The person who has the fewest balls on their side when the timer runs out (a match is a minute long), wins. If you get all the balls onto one side, then you get a perfect score and win.



**(Who put a slinky on the playfield? Actually this is one of the obstacles that can change the flow of a game)**

Besides throwing the balls to the other side, you can throw a ball to deflect one coming at you. This will send them off in unpredictable direction and can really wreak havoc. One thing to keep in mind, if you are hit by a ball, you fall over and are stunned for a few seconds. If you are able to stun your opponent, use this opportunity to keep pelting him with balls and keep him down. This way you can get all the balls over to the other side and get a perfect score! But be careful as your opponent will try to do the same to you.



**(Don't cry little penguin, there is always another day).**

The matches are the best of three, with the winner moving on and the loser is left to sulk. The game is both simple to learn to play and a very fun game! I can always play one more game! I must admit that I was a whiz on the Nintendo version, but I am not so good on the arcade version. My first few games were quite humbling and I was ready to discard my home made crown. But I know some perseverance will make me the World Champ at both the home and arcade version!

## Classic Game Theme Songs - The Final Cut!

This will be the last installment of Alan's video game themes songs. He sent in a huge list and after last month, I decided to put in a handful of the fun ones. There were just too many to include all of them, but if you email Alan ([hewston95@stratos.net](mailto:hewston95@stratos.net)), I am sure he will gladly provide you with a complete list (he may have added some news ones). So sit back and enjoy these!

Game Title	Song Title	Artist
Popeye	Owner of a Lonely Heart	Yes
Private Eye	Private Eyes	Hall & Oates
Secret Quest	Secret Agent Man	Johnny Rivers
Sinistar	I'm Alive	E.L.O.
Smurf: Rescue in Gargamel's Castle	We Gotta Get You a Woman	Todd Rundgren
Squeeze Box	Squeeze Box	The Who
Star Wars	Dark Side	Beaver Brown Band
Take the Money and Run	Take the Money and Run	The Eagles

Tapper	One Bourbon, One Scotch, One Beer	George Thorogood
Tax Avoiders	Tax Man	Beatles
Truckin	Truckin	Grateful Dead
Turmoil	The Reflex	Duran Duran
Tutankham	King Tut	Steve Martin

## Conclusion

Hope you enjoyed the new two page format to the newsletter. As I saw the load times increase from issue to issue, I decided it was time to split this up. I planned on doing it a long time ago, but I never got around to it. As I decided to add more and more pictures to the newsletter, I figured it was as good a time as any to make it a two pager.

Come back next month when we continue our look at the TI computer. Also, there will be more great coverage of games from the classic era as well as more fun stuff. And I may start another prose story, if there is any interest in another one. Let me know which game you would like see made into a prose story and I will do my best to tackle it!

Try to stay cool and keep those joysticks a firing!

[Tom Zjaba](#)

(This issue was made with lots of help from my great team of writers, so take the time to send them an email and let them know what a great job they did).

(The music that inspired this issue includes such songs as:

"It Must Be Love" by Madness

"Raoul and the Kings of Spain" by Tears for Fears

"Just Like Heaven" by The Cure

"Hurricane" by Bob Dylan

"Let it Whip" by the Dazz Band and other fun songs!)

(By the way, after nearly finishing this newsletter, I found three boxed Combat carts that I bought at the last show I attended. So the days of being Combatless are over. Darn!)