Retrogaming Times

Issue #66 - Sometime before February Ends

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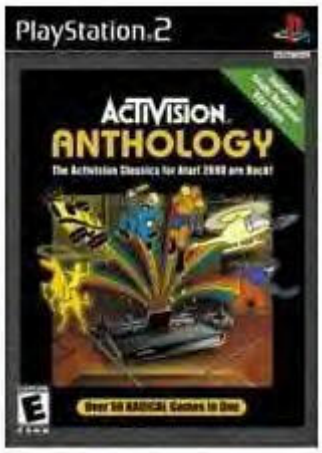
Activision Anthology - It's That Good!



With one title, Activision has done something that as a company they have not done in decades. They have raised the bar for a genre and made it so we will not accept wimpy, half-hearted compilations anymore. Activision Anthology is everything that a classic game compilation should be. It is chock full of games, it has lots of extras, it has unlockables and it shows a ton of love and dedication put into it. Unlike many of the lame compilations of the past, this one is a must have. If you are an Atari fan on any level, you need to own this compilation. It really is that good.

Let us start off with the games. What you have here is every major and many minor Atari 2600 game from Activision Not some of them or most of them as past compilations have given us (especially that forgettable one for the PS1, which was missing of all games, Pitfall II). You have over 40 games and they look and sound like they did back in their heyday. From the jungles of Pitfall to the waterways of River Raid to the prairies of

Stampede, every game looks and sounds great. Most also work quite well with the Playstation 2 dual shock controller. Granted some like Kaboom need a spinner, but it is still playable.

What you will soon realize about the compilation is the amount of care that was put into it. From the opening animation (which changes each time you play) to the wonderfully set up room. With photos of all the boxes and redone manuals which incorporate both the classic look (including photos of the programmers) of the originals as well as information set up for playing it with the Playstation 2 controller. It is a wonderful little feature and it shows great care.

The biggest draw for this compilation is the unlockables. While these are among the best games that the Atari 2600 had to offer, most do pale in comparison to today's games. A handful still stand the test of time (River Raid, Pitfall, Beamrider, etc...). but many are more nostalgic than fun. Do you really desire to play an archaic version of Chess or Checkers? As fun as Ice Hockey or Grand Prix may be, there are much better versions out there. But with the unlockables, you have incentive to play through all the games and unlock as much as you can. It offers a challenge as well as a sense of accomplishment. And with the vast amount of stuff to unlock, you will find yourself trying to shave precious time off Dragster or clearing a few more waves in Megamania. From virtual versions of the game patches that you had to send away for to the clever commercials and new game modes, there is a good chuck of stuff to unlock with almost all the games having one or more things to unlock.

Another nice addition is the soundtrack. There are a dozen different tracks from the 1980's, which is a good selection but will quickly grow tiresome. It is a nice addition and you will find yourself leaving it on the first few times, but after repeated listening of "Mexican Radio" and "We're Not Gonna Take It", you will find that you had enough. These are nice songs in small doses, but they are not the kind that you want to listen to over and over again. This is a place where Activision should have borrowed a page from Rockstar and copied from the Grand Theft Auto series. They should have added in a DJ who could have added some banter as well as did some news updates with some timely information. Imagine if they did some stuff like listed the top movies at the time or talk about the popular television series or about some of the hot arcade games. They could have added in some fictional commercials, including ones for Activision games and really added some length to the radio feature. It probably would not cost too much for someone to do a little research as well as some generic voice work. We're not talking Kasey Kasem here, just some average Joe or Joan with a decent voice. An hour of voice work could have done wonders. If they wanted to be really clever, they could have set it up to work with the internal clock on the PS2 and have one DJ for daytime and you would get a whole different DJ if you are playing at night.

One big gripe and one that you see in every review of this game is the omission of a high score table. This could not have been too hard to implement and would have added a ton to the game. It is one thing to tell someone you scored big on River Raid, but it is a whole different matter when you have proof. I do hope they redo this collection and implement this feature. This alone would get me to buy it.

Overall, it is a wonderful package and one that really needs to be in your collection (assuming you have a PS2, otherwise it will not of much use). It is reasonably priced ($29.99), offers a ton of replay value and has more big hits than any other compilation out there. About the only thing I can recommend is buying at least one cheap PS1 controller, so that you do not destroy your much costlier PS2 controller when playing Decathlon. It will make mincemeat out your $25.00 controller and have you singing the blues.

The Many Faces of...Atlantis and Dragonfire

by Alan Hewston

An Imagic double header this month!

Neither of these titles made our top 20 survey from 1982, but their home market success earns them a 20 year salute here. This will be my last review of games from 1982 (for a while) and we move on to 1983 next month.

<Imagic and their bright & shiny colors>

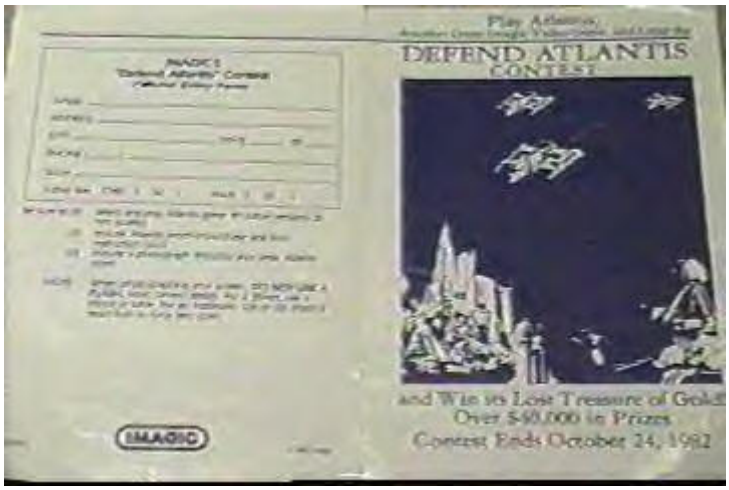
The Many Faces of ATLANTIS...

You already heard the above award winning TV commercial where the submerged city of Atlantis is under attack by these demon's called Gorgons. Defend the city of Atlantis, a few fathoms below the water surface and its 6+ subterranean installations. Rebuild those destroyed by the invading Gorgons and their endless fleet of fighters. They come, wave after wave, faster and faster, in formation every time, making a pass one ship at a time, lower and lower. Shoot an unlimited amount of ammo from your indestructible left & right sentry posts or the center of Atlantis, the Acropolis command center. Keep shooting, because once your force field is down, the remaining targets are easy pickings for these war mongers and their laser like death ray attack. Like a shooting star, the fast Bandit Bomber is worth more points and its explosion destroys all the Gorgon voyagers in the sky. The trick to seeing this real beauty explode is the timing of your shot. But alas . . .

"Atlantis, its last installation devastated, explodes into a fury of fire and radiation. But wait! A satellite streaks into space! Where is it bound? Did someone escape the Gorgon onslaught? Can the Cosmic Ark repopulate the ocean metropolis? The saga continues."

The biggest difference among versions is the center facility. The Atari versions could fire at will, and easy to use, but was the first target the Gorgons destroy. The Vic, Inty & O2 had no firepower, but on the Vic and O2 you are given one special weapon per round, the all-powerful Blitz Bomb, which vaporizes everything in the air. The Intellivision version is unique, having instead, a limited fuel, rechargeable sentinel saucer which is flown in the air using the controller to combat the Gorgons directly. It has its own unlimited ammo, but it must land and refuel or self-destruct. A new one is ready to go each dawn, if yours was destroyed. Instead of a preset angle for the L/R sentry posts, the Intv had crosshairs to move about the screen and the shot would follow that exact path - similar to Missile Command.

Imagic held an Atari 2600 “Defend Atlantis Contest”, where the contestants submitted photos of their scores. Imagic sent the high scorers a special cartridge (the now rare Atlantis II). The top four players from Atlantis II tournament would be flown to Bermuda for an Atlantis shoot-out and a chance to win $10,000. The graphics are the same, but it plays much faster and each kill was only worth 1 point. You could really get a Numb Thumb scoring points this slowly.



<Defend Atlantis Contest>

Arcade: None, first on Atari 2600 (’82 Dennis Koble)

Home versions: all by Imagic. Atari 8 bit (Dave Johnson), O2 (Jeff Ronnie), Intellivision (’82 Pat Ransil), Vic 20 (’83, Bruce Pedersen)

Sequels: Cosmic Ark is mentioned as a sequel, but only in spirit.

Home Version Similarities - all versions; you only get 2 shots active at a time; the choice of skill level is equivalent to a higher starting wave. Additional home version elements, with those Missing In Action (MIA) <listed here>: a shield protects the city until the command center is destroyed <Vic20, O2, Inty>; on the final pass, the Gorgon’s death ray would blast downward over Atlantis until it hit a target <Vic 20>; an extra facility is earned (one per level and/or for every 10K scored) & will be rebuilt if you survive the level <INTY>. the explosion of the Bandit Bomber destroys all other Gorgons in the sky <INTY, O2, Vic 20>; similarly the Blitz Bomb destroys all Gorgons in the sky <2600, 8 bit, INTY>; the Cosmic Ark flies away at the end <Vic 20, O2>.

Have Nots: Odyssey 2 (32)

My first reaction was - finally an O2 game where you are supposed to have only ONE life. The Gameplay is mediocre (5) but as good as the original 2600 version. The Addictiveness is decent (6), with 4 difficulty levels, but no pause. Graphics are good enough (6) to get you on the O2 bandwagon (well, maybe not). Sound is average (5), but missing a few elements, like the drone of the Bandit Bomber, but they've included the game ending sound effects of the Cosmic Ark flying (invisibly) out of the solar system. The Controls are perfect (10) - helped by what I call "locking in the shots". That is, on the Atari, when you fire, you must also hold the stick L, R or not at all (C) respectfully for the left, right & center sentry posts. On the O2, you hold the stick L or R the first time and then keep fire away shots (without L or R) until you want to switch sides, then hold the stick the other direction while firing. Great programming! Makes the timing very precise and less of a workout. A push forward will instantaneously ignite the Blitz Bomb. Like Demon Attack, this game is clearly among the best O2 games from the era and makes O2 fans wonder where was Dragonfire for the O2. This game/cart is somewhat rare, but also found on the multi-cart.

Have Nots: Vic 20 (34)

My first reaction was the manual shows an Atari joystick. Cool! But poor joystick programming almost does this version in. Instead of using the O2 control scheme of "locking in the shots", or the 2600, yet another was used. The fire button is now used only for the Blitz Bombs. Firing from the L and R sentry posts requires moving the stick left or right - for EVERY shot. Sounds OK, but moving left, then centering, then left, then centering over and over, hundreds of times in quick two shot sequences is terrible. It wears on the controllers and your body. What saves this version and makes the Controls (barely) perfect (10) is the keyboard, which works really well. Keys on the bottom row, left (right) work the left (right) sentry post, and the space bar fires the Blitz Bomb. Gameplay is acceptable (5), but more like the Odyssey than the 2600. One unique element here is the Gorgons death ray is different. On the final pass, the ship moves quietly over Atlantis, then stops at its target and fires downward for a few seconds disintegrating the target more slowly (also more realistically), then moves on. Addictiveness is very good (7), helped a bit by the pause feature <run/stop> and to re-activate <space bar>. Be careful not to hit <space bar> a second time as that would activate your Blitz Bomb. Graphics are respectable (6), just a shade off from the quality of the 2600. The Sound is decent (6), marginally better than the O2. Overall, an average Vic 20 game.

Bronze Medal: Atari 8 bit (35)

My first reaction was this is no upgrade. The Gameplay is fair (5) - matching everything in the 2600 version, including 2 skill levels. The Addictiveness is fine (6), but there is no pause and instead of adding options, has taken away the 2-player co-operative option. Graphics and Sound are both worthwhile (7), a little fewer audio effects & animation than the 2600. Controls are perfect (10), but see also the 2600. It can be found on cart & disk.

Silver Medal: Atari 2600 (36)

My first reaction was although this is the original, only the 8 bit port is the same game. Gameplay is average (5) with very little depth, strategy or changes throughout the game.

Simply respond quicker as the Gorgons speed increases. The Addictiveness is very good (7) with two difficulty levels but no pause. What makes this version more re-playable is a nice 2 player co-operative option. Graphics are very good (7) with lots of color, some animation and on-screen action. Sound is good (7) but nothing special, and no musical score on any version. Controls are perfect (10) and can handle this simple task. But this tends to be a tiring game, as the controls require holding the stick L or R while firing EVERY L or R shot.

Gold Medal: Intellivision (40)

My first reaction was that Imagic changed the game so much (for the better) that it is no longer the same. The Gameplay is impressive (8), with more elements involved due to use of two sets of fire buttons and other buttons on the more sophisticated controller. The above mentioned sentinel saucer & crosshairs for firing. Additional details such as daytime, dusk, nighttime, searchlights and pausing to congratulate you on another day survived. The only thing I would have liked to have seen would be to include the original (simpler) version of the game as an option & a two-player co-operative game. There is no center firing post, and thus no Blitz Bombs, no earning replacement facilities, and the Bandit Bombers do not destroy everything upon exploding. The Inty is the only version with a full demo - with shots fired! The Addictiveness is very fun (8), with a much more involved game and a measurement of your progress in days. Also note that the game difficulty increases a little slower, but there are still are three difficulty options. The use of 9 unique Gorgon ships, each having different attack/defense maneuvers is the final improvement that will keep you playing this version far longer than any other. The usual INTY pause function is available. Graphics are impressive (8), almost as detailed as the 2600, but having a lot more animation, activity, variety and better explosions. The fuel gauge timer is numerically displayed on-screen. Sound is pleasant (8), with good effects and some added music between rounds. Controls are very nice (8) and flexible, but are helped by the pause feature. Without it, this would be a hard game to play non-stop - ie a shoot ‘em up with lots of moving around. Despite the intense controller activity required, the programmer also helped by making your weapons explode into a cloud that lasts for a couple seconds - thus neither precise timing nor pinpoint location control is so crucial. The controller clearly allows the added depth, making this one stand out from the single fire button versions. Methinks such a version would likely score even higher - had they had been ported to the CV or 5200.

The Many Faces of DRAGONFIRE...

Daddy’s castle, Nova, has been overrun by dragons and as prince, you must storm the palace to reclaim your fortune. You’re in for some trouble as the treasure is guarded by 16 dragons, and your presence will disturb their restful slumber. Come to think of it, you’d rather be on a tropical vacation getting rest yourself. Fortunately you don’t have to be a safecracker to get inside each wing of the castle, just make some quick steps across the already open drawbridge, dodging a few fireballs & obstacles. Once across you’ll be in a store room riddled with treasures. Like Dracula, the white ice serpent is easy to see, but the black dragon beast is said to be invisible. The guards were not informed or not too bright as they fire arrows down upon you. Maybe they think you are a thief on a trek to

pillage their castle. Either way, I'd have replaced them with visible hatchling dragons atop the tower spitting out baby sized fireballs, which would have been cute, entertaining, and certainly more appropriate considering the premise.

<Reclaim your childhood with these treasures.>

Arcade: None, first on Atari 2600 ('82, Bob Smith)

Home versions: all by Imagic (& Tandy). Intellivison ('82, Alan Smith), CoCo (by Tandy, '84, Frank Ellis & Matthew Sarconi), Vic 20 ('83, Tim Yu), Colecovision ('84, David Ross), C64 (unknown)

Home Version Similarities - all versions have: No demo; 2 scenes - crossing the bridges & collecting treasures; give you 7 lives; a choice of 3+ starting levels - thus practice or see more of the dragons; fireballs must be jumped over or ducked under on the bridge; increased difficulty - more and faster obstacles each round; safety zones always available on the far right of each screen - which also provide the only means to take a pause (a break with no consequences).

Additional home version elements, with those Missing In Action (MIA) <listed here>: archers arrows on later bridges <Vic, 2600>; a troll carrying a sword patrols the treasure rooms <2600, Vic, INTY>; an arrow shot at you after some treasures are grabbed <2600, Vic, INTV>; part of the bridge slides open/closed <2600, Vic, INTY>; a way to determine what castle (level) you are on <2600, INTV>. The treasure rooms can torture you with multiple double-deaths. So plan to stop moving immediately after you lose a life, else you walk right out into another dragonfire.

Disqualified: Color Computer (NA)
Unfortunately I've never found a complete, working CoCo in the wild and my feeble ebay bids are easily squashed. I've picked up a few carts, like this one and hope that they can be joined with a CoCo & joystick. If anyone truckin' along to Philly Classics and has one (preferably a CoCo 3 with joystick) to trade or sell - I'd be obliged.

Have Nots: Intellivison (35)
My first reaction was the controls are its downfall. The Gameplay is pretty good (7), improving the original, but only with arrows on the bridge. Starting choices are castles 1, 5

& 9. The Addictiveness would be fun to play (7), if not for the frustrating controller. The standard Inty pause works, but all versions you can pause/hide. The Graphics are cool (7), with nice animation and color, but only a little better than the 2600. The Sound is effective (7) including some heroic music, but like the 2600, very few effects are needed/used. Controls are very good (7), but it is tedious to get the diagonals, even with a Stickler. From first (Atlantis all 8's), to worst (all 7's here).

Have Nots: Atari 2600 (36)

My first reaction was the silly manual (& also the INTY) to show/tell point values for each treasure, as if you were going to only grab certain ones. The Gameplay is fine (6), but subsequent versions added more and creative hazards. No version has the depth needed to make it a great game. Although it's fairly tedious to maneuver across the drawbridge. The Addictiveness is worth while (7) and will keep you trying to see all the dragons. Starting choices are castles 1, 3, 5 & 7. There is likely a very small margin of error and/or poor collision detection. Graphics are effective (7), but not as detailed as the others. Sound is OK (6), but few effects and no music. The Controls are perfect (10).

Bronze Medal: Vic 20 (38)

My first reaction - the 2600 with better graphics. Gameplay is respectable (6), in fact, despite only the basic obstacles, the bridge scene here is much more random and rewarding to pass. It's the only version having more than 2 fireballs on-screen at once. This alone makes the Addictiveness exciting (8). It also offers the largest range of starting castles 1, 5, 9, & 13, so that you can easily find even the invisible dragon. The action and speed really picks up in the treasure galleries as you'll whip back & forth like a tennis ball. The Graphics are surprisingly detailed and crisp (8). Flags atop each castle signify the dragon color, thus the level that you are on. Sound is OK (6). Controls are perfect (10).

Gold Medal: Commodore 64 & Colecovision (42)

These two games are very similar, with identical scores and most comments as well.

Commodore 64: My first reaction was this is a disk-only game and is also hard to find for emulation.

Colecovision: Despite it not being that rare, it is a hard cartridge to find.

Gameplay is impressive (8) where both versions have all hazards - the troll, tower archer, arrows inside the store room and the dreaded sliding bridge section. In addition, one cannot leap into the treasure room else one hits thyne headeth on the archway above. With a bonk and a splat you come to a halt and eventually slide downward into the moat. Quite cool, but painful looking. The treasure rooms are in psuedo 3-D but the dragon remains fixed on screen (bummer). The maneuvering margin on the drawbridge is quite slim and hard to leap and duck without a poor collision detection. Somehow if just in the wrong spot you appear to leap downward through the sliding opening - instead of up. The game ends with "Thou art done" or "finished". Addictiveness is very fun (8), and the added challenges more than make up for the problems. Starting castles 1 to 9 can be selected. Graphics are superb (9) and worth the price of admission - a little better on the CV. Sound is very good (7) with better effects and some music before and after. Controls are perfect

(10). On the CV use an Atari stick, but only after selecting the game and then swapping controllers. If given a choice, I'd suggest the CV. Despite being semi-rare as a cart, both it instruction manual and emulation can more easily be found online.

Come back next month after the snow & ice melts up North as we'll finally start our 20 year anniversary of games from 1983 with the Many Faces of "Space Shuttle: A Journey Into Space" - on the Atari 2600, 5200, 8 bit, C64 & Apple II (if I can find that one in time), Did you happen to notice all 24 Imagic game titles hidden (one word at a time) within this article? Alan Hewston is no microsurgeon, but would not mind being a moonsweeper or sphinx explorer either - can be reached at: Hewston95@stratos.net or http://my.stratos.net/~hewston95/Hewston_vg.html

From The Homeland Front
21 Feb 2003

by Jim Krych

All of the 112th Engineers who have been activated are now at there respective Air Force/Air National Guard bases. Speaking as one who is used to living out in the field under many different circumstances, the Air Force has been treating us very, very well.

We all thought it was funny when they told us here at Vienna that the quarters are actually sub-standard to what they are used too. I guess it's all a matter of perspective. I can't tell you how many times we had to stay in the old "tent city" in Ravenna. How you needed a tent-in-a-tent to stay dry during rainy nights! After our first night at the VOQ there, we joked with the Air Force guys saying we missed our dirt and shelter halves and sleeping bags!!!!

Vienna reminds me a lot of my Coast Guard School at Yorktown Virginia, small and easy to get to places on foot.

Our mobilization station was Fort Knox. The last time I was there was about twenty years ago with Boy Scout Troop 664. I never thought I'd be back as an activated member of the Ohio Army National Guard. We were there about a week, getting more training and paperwork done. Especially training. I finally got to taste CS, since I never had the privilege while on active duty with the Coast Guard. It's something I won't soon forget either!

I have read about soldiers from the past, and they would be pleased to know that despite the differences in the uniform, much hasn't changed.

The chicken poop still exists.

Flexibility is the key, what was said an hour ago isn't necessarily good to go now.

The language is often colorful and flavored with swearing.

And games of all sorts are played; not counting the teasing that goes on between soldiers.

(I have come to the conclusion that if I am being teased, it's all in the game-you're in and

nothing bad will be done to you. It's when things get quiet around you that you need to worry.)

But we also have our differences from our previous brothers in arms. Technology is the biggest change. Many have cell phones, and of course, laptops. Probably in six months, most of the guys in my platoon will own one. I plan on getting one as well.

A lot of the games played are card games, and a lot of the games played on the laptops are the war simulations (no kidding) as well as racing games; since a bunch of our guys also own motorcycles.

But, I have also made certain that arcade emulation is also available. MAME32 is very popular here. And I have agreed to help out in setting up the program as well. Many of the guys here remember playing the old games. One soldier's wife in particular loves the game Burger Time! His favorite is Galaga!

But in closing for now, some things also never change. That being when I am on duty, of thinking of my precious wife Lori, and my dear little son Treyton. Every time I am able to come home, reinforces what many blessings I have received. We are all proud to be here, doing our duty as augmenters to the 910th Security Forces here. I have had people come up to me while in stores thanking me for my service; it's very humbling to hear that.

We will do our job, all of us in the US Armed Forces either at the Front or the Homeland Front. This is our generation's call to arms. Let our predecessors know, that the torch we received from them is being held high and with pride.

"Things to remember for us,

A quiet night is a good night.

Pray for us,

And our families

And for that wonderful homecoming,

We all look forward to having.

In God's time."

SGT James W. Krych

B Co 112th Engineers

(910th SFS)

"Hi, my name is Jim W. Krych. I am a 33 year-old electronics technician. I am also a 14-year veteran of both the USCG, active, and the Ohio Army National Guard, reserve with B

Co. 112th engineers. I can be reached at: jwkrych@adelphia.net or jwkrych@n2net.net. I have a three year-old son, Treyton, and he is the CEO of Treyonics! I have also been blessed with a beautiful wife her name is Lori!!! I have founded my own business and, of course, I named the company after my son Treyton!

And now, Treyonics is proud to present the Treyonics Home Controller System, model 9908(RF/LF)!!!

Better known as the …

Letters to the Editor

One constant is the letters that I get. Granted the majority of them are people asking where to download this game or that game (Simple rule, if you email and ask where to find a game, the email is deleted. Sorry, but I do not know of any sites that host roms and do not have the time to look for them for you. Go to Google or another search engine and try to find them yourself.) or how much something is worth (go to digital press and buy a price guide is my generic answer). But I do get some people who have something interesting to say or sometimes something funny. Those are the ones that get printed here.

Why did the video game market crash?

One of the most asked questions in video game history. While there were many factors to this, you could boil it down to the fact that consumers lost faith in the video game industry. When Activision opened up the gates for third party publishers, they not only increased the number of games and the competition, but they also made it possible for anyone with some skills and a little money to publish a video game. Unlike today's market, where you have to pay a royalty to publish on a platform and your games must pass some scrutiny before being allowed to be published, back then anyone could create and sell a game. And if you look at some of the crap on the Atari 2600, they did just that. Companies like Mythicon and Froggo churned out one crap title after another. Soon the buying public got fed up with bad games (including some from Atari like Pacman and ET) and they responded by quickly pulling their disposable income from the video game market and spending it elsewhere. That is the simple answer to a fairly complicated answer as there is more to it. There is the drop in price and the rise in demand for home computers as well as other factors.

Do you think the video game market will ever crash again?

Honest, these are two different people. This is another question that I get asked quite

often. While it is possible for the video game industry to crash, I think it is very, very unlikely it will happen. The market is set up differently now and there is too much of a acceptance from the general public. Unlike the 1980's, video games are not considered just a child's toy by the general populace. They have become an acceptable form of entertainment. Also, the industry is set up so that the console makers can make alot of money. With the licensing fee, there is a steady stream of money coming back to the consoles and if they sell well, there is a good return on the investment. Also, video games have quite a few other avenues for revenue. From the sales of action figures and t-shirts to strategy guides as well as selling the rights to movies. With some successful video game movies like Tomb Raider and Resident Evil, the market for video game movies will increase. Look how many other video games are being optioned for movies, including sequels to the aforementioned games as well as House of the Dead, State of Emergency, Grand Theft Auto and others.

SIXTH ANNUAL CLASSIC GAMING EXPO SCHEDULED FOR AUGUST 9 AND 10, 2003

VALLEY STREAM, NEW YORK – February 7, 2003 – On Saturday, August 9 and Sunday, August 10, 2003 classic video game enthusiasts and many of the most famous pioneers of the video game industry will gather in Las Vegas for the sixth annual Classic Gaming Expo. At what has become the largest show dedicated to the preservation of video game history, attendees will get the chance to experience the rich heritage of video games through exhibits, presentations by the people who built the industry, and hands-on play of classic games. Show co-promoters John Hardie, Sean Kelly and Joe Santulli expect even more industry luminaries and attendees at this year's event.

"We're very proud to be organizing the sixth edition of the Classic Gaming Expo," said John Hardie, co-founder of CGE Services Corporation. "Each year the show has grown in attendance and support from the industry. We look forward to our biggest show ever this year and continued growth in the future"

The site for this year's Classic Gaming Expo will be Jackie Gaughan's Plaza Hotel in Las Vegas, Nevada. Highlights of the show will include: presentations by many of the video game pioneers who built the companies and programmed the games on which the modern video game industry was established; an incredible museum exhibit containing rare and influential video game hardware, software and memorabilia; vendors of classic gaming hardware and software; and the chance to actually play arcade and home video game systems from the classic era.

Additional information on Classic Gaming Expo is available at CGE Services Corporation's Web site: http://www.cgexpo.com. The site will be updated with additional information as special events are finalized and guest speaker attendance is confirmed.

COMMERCIAL VAULT

by Adam King

Greetings, gamers. This month I have a special triple feature from the Vault featuring games from Imagic, the other top third-party company, and the subject of Alan's "Many Faces Of" spot. Here are the ads for Atlantis, Cosmic Ark, and Demon Attack. Plus two of these games were made for both the Atari 2600 and Intellivision, so they're both represented here.

The Atlantis and Demon Attack ads can be found at The Old Computer Dot Com (www.theoldcomputer.com). The Cosmic Ark ad can be found at X-Entertainment (www.x-entertainment.com).

Atlantis

For our first ad, we take a look inside the Imagic Design Lan and find an Imagic executive talking with the creator of Atlantis, an alien who was there. As he demonstrates the game, he lays out what happened. After all, he was a survivor, or was he?

EXEC: "So You created Atlantis for Imagic."
ALIEN: "I was at Atlantis. The skies above the underwater city filled with Gorgon attack vessels. Three sentry posts fought desperately, but they were no match, for the Gorgon death rays."
EXEC: "But you're here. I though the Gorgons destroyed everyone at Atlantis."
(Suddenly a death ray appears and vaporizes the executive)
ALIEN: "WE DID! HA! HA! HA!"

Then comes the blurb: "Atlantis by Imagic for Atari and Intellivision systems."

Didn't your ma tell you not to talk to strangers?

"Watch how I-uh, try to save Atlantis."

"Don't look now, but there's a death ray creeping up behind you."

"So long, sucker!"

These cartridges are smokin', in more ways than one.

The lesson here is be careful which aliens you talk to, they may be hiding death rays.

Cosmic Ark

This ad for Cosmic Ark, the "sequel" to Atlantis. Here we find two kids who are playing the game and really getting into it, until their mother brings them down to Earth.

BOY 1: "TV."
BOY 2: "Check"
BOY 1"Cosmic Ark cartridge."
BOY 2: "Check"
BOY 1: "Power"
BOY 2: "Yeah, power."
ANNOUNCER: "Cosmic Ark is a cartridge for the Atari Video system."
BOY 2: "Meteors!"
BOY 1: "I got 'em"
ANNOUNCER: "The Cosmic Ark searches out strange creatures on distant planets."
BOY 2: "Beam them up."
"But the deeper the ark travels in space, the tougher it gets."
BOY 2: "We may never get back to Earth!"

MOTHER (offscreen)" "Boys, clean your room"
BOY 1(dejectedly): "We're back"
ANNOUNCER: "Cosmic Ark, by Imagic."

These two are on a mission.

This boy is determined to rustle up some aliens.

Men at work.

Reality can be a harsh mistress.

Enjoy the game, but clean your room first.

Demon Attack

Our last ad takes us to an Imagic boardroom, where another executive is meeting with several characters, each representing a different title (a fireman representing Fire Fighter, a knight representing Dragonfire, and so on). He wants to know which is the toughest game, and a demon answers with Demon Attack.

A meeting of the Imagic minds.

The demon hammers his point home.

"Dude, one word: mouthwash!"

I know I can say something about this scene.

Don't forget, it's TOUGH!

I'm still wondering about the three handed exec.

Time to sign off now, but I want to run something by all you readers. I'm considering putting together a compilation CD of all the ads I spotlighted in past issues, plus many more I haven't gotten to yet. What do you guys think?

Sites of the Month

Time to highlight a few more sites for you to check out and enjoy!

Lemon - Commodore 64 Heaven!
If you like the Commodore 64, then this site is for you! It is chock full of reviews, box art and more! It is one of the most comprehensive sites I have ever seen for the C-64, one of my personal favorite computer systems and the best game machine before emulation came out. Check it out and you will be happy!

http://www.lemon64.com

Pitfall Harry's Lost Video Game Cavern
One time writer or Retrogaming Times, Ben Valdes has a cool site that I accidentally stumbled upon. When I first heard of the site called Pitfall Harry's, I thought of Alan Hewston, the self proclaimed Pitfall Harry (when you are the first to get a perfect score on both Pitfall and Pitfall II, you earn the right to call yourself Pitfall Harry and wear an oversized cart costume). But when I saw it was an old friend of the newsletter, I was pleased. The site is quite nice and I did enjoy his stories and poetry. Check it out and you might enjoy some more info on one of the best games ever made!

http://members.tripod.com/~PitfallHarry/

Job Hunting and Classic Games (A Completely Untrue Story)

Reaching the prime age of 21 years old, I decided it was time for me to go out and find a job. The year is 1988 and the thought of staying in my parent's basement any longer is enough to drive me crazy. Tough to explain to possible girlfriend's that I still live at home. Also their not so subtle hints are beginning to drive me crazy. So I know that it is time to find a job and start saving for my own pad. But the problem is that my only skills are video games and they do not translate too well in the real world. But I decide to try and put some of my skills from the video game world to use in the real world. So with the want ads

and plenty of determination, I head out to make my mark.

The first place I decide to try is a strange ad for an Ostrich Farmer Assistant. I am unsure what an Ostrich Farmer Assistant is, but I figure with some serious high scores on Joust, I am qualified. So I drive my mother's station wagon out into the country and drive past fields of corn as I look for this farm. After an hour or so, I come across "Abe's Ostrich Farm and head in to apply for the job. When I go up to the door and knock, a very strange man comes to the door. He looks like he just walked out of a commune, with long flowing hair, love beads and a tie dye shirt. We speak for a few minutes about my experience with the large birds (of which I lie like a politician). I tell him how I have tamed some of the toughest birds and how I can get them to eat out of my hand. He is impressed and with his lack of applicants, he decides to give me a trial run. So to the back holding pen, we go. As we walk out back, I get my first glimpse of a real ostrich. My only experience with the birds is from pictures in books and Joust, both of which gave me the impression that they were much smaller. What I saw were some very large and scary birds. But as he unlocks the gate, I know that I must put my fears aside and go in and tame these birds. He tells me how I need to go in there and show him how well I can handle the birds. Time for my baptism of fire. I swallow hard and head into the fenced area. As I walk in, a few of the massive birds (we are talking 8 feet tall) walks over to investigate the new person. I try not to show fear as I know animals can sense that, or so I've heard. As they come over, I slowly walk around the bird and get to its side. The bird is too busy trying to figure me out to stop me. I then walk up to the bird and grab it by the neck and try to pull myself up to ride it. Big mistake! Instead of mounting the bird, I end up grabbing the bird by the neck, which scares it and sends it running, dragging me along. After a quick sprint, I let go and fall to the ground. Before I can get up, I am attacked by a flock of these birds, who start pecking me with their large beaks. The guy suddenly runs in and chases them away from me with a large stick. He drags me out of the fenced area and locks it back up. He then verbally berates me and tells me I have no idea what I am doing and to get off his property, only he is not so polite about it.

As I get into my mom's car, I drive off, with my pride and head still hurting from the whole ordeal. But I am unwilling to give up on the job hunt. My next stop is a popular bar that is right off the college campus. They are looking for a bartender and I know with my Tapper skills, I am a shoo-in. There are no huge birds to deal with here and I am ready to make my mark!

As I get to the bar, I am getting there right before Happy Hour, which is one of the most popular times. All the college kids head over to get the dollar beers and to forget about the classes they just finished. As I walk in, I meet the owner and tell him how quickly I can serve the patrons. He looks at the clock and after telling me how one of his bartenders called off sick again and he is short handed, he decides to give me a chance. I grab an apron and head over to start slinging beer.

The first half hour is pretty slow. I mostly sit around and wash glasses. But as happy hour begins, the crowd begins to pour in. I am given one end of the bar and the owner takes the other end. As the patrons line up, I begin filling mugs with beer and slinging them down the bar. The first few patrons are stunned by the beer sliding at them and a few

mugs get spilled, but soon my skills grow as I am sending them down with an accuracy that is nothing short of amazing. Soon, all the customers are coming to my side of the bar and lining up to catch their frosty mug of beer. At first the owner is stunned. I look over and smile at him as he stands there with a puzzled look. He must be shocked by my skills and probably a bit jealous. I am a natural and I owe it all to Tapper!

After a few minutes, the owner is standing behind me and watching me sling those beers down the bar. One by one, they go right to their destination and the cheers ring out with each successful delivery. Then the owner opens up my register and checks out the financial situation. Suddenly the look of bewilderment turns into rage as he quickly realizes something that I did not, I forgot to charge the patrons for the beers. I was so busy slinging them down the bar and working on my skills, I completely forgot that these beers need to be paid for. With that, I am soon sent packing with a swift kick in the backside. My career as a bartender is quickly over and lasts about as long as a well played game of Tapper. With that, I decide to pack it in and go home to regroup and work on my skills. With nothing to show for my wasted day, other than a much emptier gas tank and a sore fanny. Time for me to go home and play some video games. I need to get rid of the horrible memories from the day and I need to work on my skills for tomorrow's job hunt.

Conclusion

Made it before February ended and that in itself is an accomplishment. As you can by this smaller issue, many of the regular writers took a month off. Still, we had enough for you to enjoy and hope to see you again next month as I prepare for the Phillyclassic. Now that it is in the bag, I need to get back to unlocking some more stuff on Activision Anthology!

-Tom Zjaba

(This issue is done while listening to some different songs including "Buffalo Stance" by Nenah Cherry, "Moonlight on Water" by Kevin Raleigh and "Chuck E's in Love" by Rickie Lee Jones.)