

RETROTIMES #26

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Halloween and Classic Video Games

Halloween is coming and you need a quick costume! Here are some fast ideas for a person on a limited budget and running out of time.

Mr. Do

Grab a clown outfit and some makeup and voila, you are Mr Do.

Billy the Block

Put a big, square box on and paint it white and call yourself Billy the Block or just tell people you are a pixel.

Coiley

Take a stuffed snake (a stuffed animal not a taxidermist special) and cut off the head and tail. Paint both of these purple. Then get two hula hoops and grab an old bed sheet and attach it to the two hula hoops, with the sheet wrapped around it. Have one Hula Hoop at each end. Then paint it all purple, cut out holes for arms and eyes. Then tape a piece of cardboard that is also painted purple, onto the top of the hula hoop and glue the snake's head on it. At the bottom, glue the tail and then draw on lines for the coils. You are now Coiley or utterly ridiculous looking, depending on who you talk to.

Tapper

Put on a nice shirt and a bow tie. Then make a big, cheesy mustache (if you already have a big, cheesy mustache, you can skip this step and accept our condolences) and slick your

hair back. Grab a mug of beer and head out! Now you can drink in public and tell the cops that it is part of your costume. To really get the effect across, pull a keg behind you.

Pong Paddle

Take a refrigerator box or any large box (these can almost always be garbage picked) and cut it down to size. Make a rectangular shape suit and paint it white and write on the front, Pong Paddle. Watch how many laughs you get. Even better if you can get three people and have two paddles and a ball. Probably win a contest with that one!

Burgertime Hot Dog

On second thought, this may not be a good idea. If the dogs don't chase after you, then you would probably get beaten up by mothers who think you are something else.

Trick or Treat

by [Alan Hewston](#)

OK what shall I be for Halloween? I'd like to dress up as an Atari 2600 or other classic game cartridge, and fit a box around myself from my hips to my neck. Then, I'd decorate my head, hands, arms and legs to be part of a video game character in that classic cart's game. Sound good?

So, far, I've only considered doing Pitfall Harry, Mario Brothers, Indy Jones and a few others. Most of the popular games would be complicated, because the main character is a ship, or would require a lot of extra items to make which I do not have lying around the house.

Do you have any last minute suggestions? It's gotta be something easy to do, and of course, I'll have to blow up the cover art and use crayons or lots of printer ink to make the picture on a 3' X 3' box side. Plus some black paint, or crayon along the box (cart) side.

I'll probably chicken out and not do it, and regardless, my wife will think that I have completely lost it. Maybe I've acquired Fred's video game disease (see previous RT issues). Tom should take this idea and go as "Billy the block" from Adventure. He can credit me with the idea if he does so. Yeah right!

Anyhow, if I do follow through with this, you'll get to see pictures of me acting Retro. I vay!

Alan is still looking for a better way to play 5200 games. Got my Wico Command Control sticks want to be used, but I need a splitter from "5200" input to a split "5200 plus 2600" output. Got a spare one to sell/trade? 5200 multi-cart coming to me soon from Sean Kelly. Alan can be reached at hewston95@stratos.net

Top 10 Rejected Cart Names or Concepts

by [Geoff Voigt](#)

10: Pitfall 3: Pitfall Harry's Prison Shower Adventure

09: Tax Attorneys! by Magnavox

08: Donald Duck's Speed Boat

07: Turn off the TV, by Comma Vid
06: The Streets of San Francisco; a game with the Thrill of Discovery
05: Billy Bludgeon- *With Rapid Fire Action!*

04: E.T.; Special Director's Cut
03: Swordquest: Airworld
02: Kid Vid's "The Tramiels Save the Day"

...and the Number one Rejected Cart Name or Concept:

01: 550 in 1!

Letters to the Editor

We actually got some letters in! Keep them coming and here are this month's letters!

I am thinking of dressing up as a classic game character for Halloween, any suggestions? signed Out of Ideas

Dress up as Mr. Do. Clown outfits are easy to find, you will not have to explain what you are to every person you meet and you have an excuse to hit people with a ball! Or you can check out the article I wrote about quick and easy Halloween costumes!

My wife has threatened to throw out my video games, what should I do?

Hold her Beanie Babies as ransom! Seriously, give her a list of other things you can be doing with the time and money you are spending on video games, such as drinking, drugs, womanizing or collecting Beanie Babies.

Just been looking at your cool site and wondered if you could help me. I'm looking for an enlarged scan of the old Atari Logo which I want to make into a trace for a tattoo. I'm going to get it tattooed onto me arm as homage to the Video Gaming age which for me started with Atari. If you could let me know of anywhere I can get a reasonable sized logo from I would greatly appreciate it.

PS. If it had the TM sign next to it that would make a great added touch. Cheers Dobbalina

What could I do, but send him some images. Gotta respect a man who is willing to disfigure his body for his hobby. I will let you know if he sends me a picture of this boss tattoo!

MAME Reviews

A new version of MAME yielded some big time surprises! Three sequels or updates of games that I never knew existed were on the new version. I was in hog heaven! So read along and see what made me squeal with excitement (keep them prison jokes to yourself).



Crazy Climber 2

How could I, a diehard Crazy Climber fanatic, not know about a sequel to my all-time favorite game? Probably because it was a Japanese only release. When I saw it on the new version of MAME, I downloaded that faster than you could say "Jimmy Crack Corn". But would this live up to the utter devotion I have for the original? Or would it be another sequel that lets me down (like Q*Bert's Qubes)? Read on and find out!

After playing a game, I can say that I really do enjoy the new version. While the original is still tops in my book, this one does a fine job of capturing the spirit of the original. Many of the same elements are there, the falling girders, the giant gorilla and the sadistic people tossing stuff out their windows at you. But they no longer are content with tossing flower pots, they now are throwing appliances! Televisions, blenders and boom boxes are being tossed at you and these suckers hurt.

The first thing you will notice about the game is a major improvement in graphics. While the original Crazy Climber was simple in its graphics, there was a certain charm in the simplicity. The new one almost borders on gaudy as you have foregrounds, backgrounds and all kind of detail. Everything is well illustrated and full of color. You will find yourself losing a few climbers, because you get caught up in checking out all the detail. But once the thrill wears away, you will find that this is a tougher game than the original. Much tougher.

There are some new challenges to keep you from reaching the top of the building. The first one is pretty funny. There are laundry lines that you must avoid. It may sound funny, but you can get wasted by a pair of underwear. That would not read well on your tombstone.

While the giant gorilla is not a new adversary, he has a new trick up his sleeve and it is not a very nice one. This oversized ape now throws bricks at you. Not one brick and rest, like Donkey Kong and the barrels, but one after another. It is literally raining bricks and that will give you an Excedrin headache T----H----I-----S B----I----G! We are talking a major ouch! I find myself very lucky if I get past this brute without losing a guy. Very lucky!

One old foe that is absent and I truly miss is the big bird who used to bombard you with the ketchup and mustard droppings (easier to stomach than the alternative, red droppings, ewwww).

Each level is designed differently and takes advantage of the improvement in graphics that is so relevant in this game. The second building is Las Vegas and is as garish as the city itself. You even have flirtatious women luring you into their windows. While this does give you bonus points, be wary, as this is a good way to die. More than once, I have come out with hearts in my eyes, only to get clocked by a girder. Like the Sirens of legends, these women will lead you to your death. So keep your wits or you will have a major indentation in your face and that will not be very pretty.

This is one sequel that improves on some areas (graphics and variety of foes) and keeps to the formula of the original. The only real gripes are the increased challenge over the original (but they do give you a continue feature), the lack of the bird and how your climber seems to glide more than climb, but all of these are very petty issues and do not bring down an otherwise impressive game. So if building climbing is your game, Crazy Climber 2 will give you the challenge you are looking for.



[Arcade Classics](#)

According to MAME, this is a prototype of an arcade game. Whether or not it was ever released is unknown to me. But this is a game that every classic game fan has to download and enjoy! It is a godsend for two player fans like myself and another reason why I am hog wild this month!

Arcade classics is a 20th anniversary release for Atari. It features updated versions of two Atari classic arcade games, Centipede and Missile Command. Before you start screaming "Don't ruin my classics", try these gems and see what is a great improvement!

The first and most significant improvement for these games is the dual player feature! Like Centipede on the Atari 7800, you have the ability to play two people at once! Not only in Centipede, but also Missile Command! Is that cool or what?

While the two player feature is enough to warrant these sequels, you have more features, namely improved graphics! While it is minimal in Centipede, it is much more noticable in Missile Command. Not only do you have to save cities, but the cities are now named and have a distinct look to each one. Washington DC, Moscow and others are now targets and this adds to the game. There are also improvements in the explosions and the planes and ships that fly by.

While the games are pretty much the same as we all remember them, these small changes improve them greatly and will have you enjoying those old classics one more time! Too bad they didn't do this with more games.



Thoughts on Robotron and Life

by [Fred Wagaman](#)

The other day, as I began my umpteenth game of Robotron (just one more, then I'll quit), I began to think about how Robotron is a lot like real life. Here's some thoughts:

- 1)**Take care of yourself.** The most important thing in the game is your personal survival. The old cliché goes "If you don't have your health, you don't have anything". In Robotron, this is immediately evident in every level. You are surrounded and must immediately devise a plan to ensure your safety for the next few seconds.
- 2)**Family is important.** Since the points for rescuing each consecutive family member increase 1000 points (to a maximum of 5000) for each save, it is critical you save as many family members as possible without compromising your own safety (See #1).
- 3)**Deal with the biggest problems immediately, preferably before they multiply.** As in life, many problems, left undealt with, will spawn more problems. This is also the case in Robotron. Quarks and Spheroids will create Tanks and Enforcers. And these offer more of a threat than the robotrons that spawned them.
- 4)**Some problems can't be eliminated, just handled.** Hulks are indestructible and have a tendency to go after the family members. You can't destroy them, but you can push them away. But it takes effort. Just like certain problems in real life.
- 5)**Little problems are easily handled, unless there is a lot of them.** Grunts pose little threat to you in Robotron, unless there are 75 of them coming at you from 5 different directions.
- 6)**No matter how good you are, you still have your limitations.** You can only fire in 8 directions. Robotrons come at you from any direction.
- 7)**Just sitting around is not good for you.** In Robotron, don't allow yourself to be a sitting target. In life, you'll end up like the Pillsbury Dough Boy.

8)**There is no magic wand to make your all problems go away.** In Defender, you have the Smart Bomb. In Tempest, you have the Super Zapper. In Robotron and in real life, there is nothing that will eliminate all your problems at once.

9)**Your problems will never go away.** Next level please.

I'm sure I could come up with more. But I've got to play another round.

Fred has been playing games for over 25 years and actively collecting them for over 10. The 2400+ games that he has takes up most of his home office, living room and game room. He lives in Denver, PA with his understanding wife Jennie, his soon-to-be-4 year-old, button-loving son, Max and his newly acquired 4th player, Lynzie. He may be contacted at fcw3@postoffice.ptd.net. For another, way too serious musing about a video game, he suggests checking out the Philosophy of Sinistar at <http://users.erols.com/ermite/sinistar.htm>

One Collector's Story

by [William Cassidy](#)

For this issue of Retrogaming Times, I thought I would put to paper (well, virtual paper) the story of how I got started collecting classic video games. Naturally it's interesting to me to remember it, but I think it might be of interest to other collectors as well.

I started collecting in the summer 1995, slightly before the Internet was accessible by everybody and his brother. I had no 'Net access either, so it's largely by coincidence I started collecting when I did. I had no idea there was a collecting scene out there. I'm sure I would have found out later, after my first Yahoo! search for "Atari 2600," but before the Internet found its way onto my computer I was in the dark.

Although I started collecting in summer '95, it was really an event from late '94 that got me started. Like many other collectors, I had given up the games I originally owned in the '80s and moved on to newer systems. But in 1994, for some unremembered reason, I was talking to my father about really fun computer games. He asked me what my favorite was, and I told him Starflight--a great space adventure from the early 1980s that is still my #1 game of all time. I got thinking about my favorite games from over the years and thought it might be fun to try to list them all, from most favorite to least favorite, so that Starflight could sit prominently at the top of the list.

I knew it would be nearly impossible to remember them all, but I also knew it would be fun to try. So, I started a Microsoft Word document, and meticulously began to list the (at that time) about 500 games I had played over the course of my life.

It might have ended right there but for an apparently minor decision on my part. I decided not only to list the game titles and ranks, but the companies that released them as well. It seemed simple enough. But really, recalling game titles is one thing, but remembering what company released some obscure game 10 years ago? Impossible! Still, I tried my best, combing through old 5 1/4" floppies, hunting old instruction manuals, piecing together my video game history one company at a time.

One day I had some free time on my hands and decided to drive to the local "newsstand" to peruse some gaming magazines to try and scare up some more information. My home town of Portsmouth, Ohio, is small, and you could only really buy gaming mags at one place. I wasn't sure the newsstand was open (stores in Portsmouth close early), but I went anyway. It was open, and I found a rather uninteresting magazine with an interesting article. The fourth issue of FLUX Magazine, a video game/anime rag aimed at adolescent boys, carried an article called "The 100 Best Video Games of All Time." It listed the editors' favorites from Pong to Virtua Racing. Best of all, it listed some games from the Atari 2600 era, including the companies that released them! I bought this valuable resource and read the whole issue with interest. The list was fascinating, but the rest of the issue wasn't all that great, save for one small paragraph in the very back. It was so small, I missed the paragraph until I'd already leafed through the issue several times.

The paragraph was a blurb reviewing Leonard Herman's book "Phoenix: The Fall and Rise of Home Videogames." I nearly fell off my chair. For \$19.95, here was a book that talked about the Atari 2600, the Odyssey², all my lost favorites from years gone by that I was convinced were long gone. I sent Mr. Herman a check and promptly received his great book. I read it quickly, and was surprised to find out that some people were still interested in the old gaming machines (I thought I was the only one!). There were even fanzines and newsletters dedicated to them, and "Phoenix" gave addresses from some 12 or so of these publications. I sent requests for more information to about six of the fanzines.

While I waited for a response, I received interesting news from my parents. They were building a new log house, and were frantically looking for information on log homes and log home decor. They had stopped at our local Goodwill looking for related magazines. They knew I was searching for information on the old games, so they told me they had seen a few Odyssey² carts there, including my old favorite Pick Axe Pete! I went to Goodwill soon after. The O² carts my parents had seen were apparently gone, but I did find three Atari 2600 cartridges: Defender, Dig Dug, and some other extremely common game I've since forgotten. Looking back, it seems strange I didn't buy them, but I didn't have a console, and I didn't think I could ever get one. These things were almost 20 years old; where would I find one? But before I left, I did find one item I couldn't pass up: a boxed, complete Odyssey² Casino Slot Machine cartridge. When I was young, I spent more hours playing this game than I care to admit. Since it was complete with a cool-looking box, and it only cost 99 cents, I bought it, fully expecting it to be my one and only "memento" of pre-NES gaming.

Then, a sample issue of "The 2600 Connection" arrived in the mail.

The 2600 Connection opened my eyes! Yes, there truly were people still into the 2600! I was not alone! And you could still get old games (AND consoles) at thrift stores and flea markets! I rushed in my subscription payment and began wondering if I too could get into the collecting scene.

As luck would have it, my mother was planning to make a trip to a nearby flea market one weekend with her sister. I couldn't go for some reason, but I asked her to buy any old gaming stuff she saw if it was reasonably priced. I had high hopes of her maybe finding

one of my favorite games from the past; I never dreamed she'd bring back an actual Atari 2600 console!

For \$12 (the price seems high to me now), she bought an Atari 2600 with 2 joysticks, paddles, power supply and a Space Invaders cart. I got ready to hook it up when I noted the absence of the good old "TV/Game" switch from yesteryear. Being accustomed to the NES, I had nearly forgotten about the non-automatic RF switches from back then. So, I had to wait a few days until a trip to Radio Shack netted me a compatible switchbox. Armed with this, I hooked up the venerable VCS and--wonder of wonders--found myself playing 2600 Space Invaders (a game I had never owned but always wanted back in the day), in 1995! Space Invaders held my attention for a while, but I spent most of the evening marvelling about it. It was like I had gone back in time! It was a truly great moment: for just a few dollars, I had recaptured a piece of my youth. And just a month before I had considered the old games in my memory to be forever lost.

I started hitting the Goodwill regularly and soon added about 7 more common games to my collection. Of course I didn't know they were "common" games then, but they were fun and I enjoyed them. Then I remembered something a friend had mentioned to me a few months before. A local computer store owner supposedly had an inventory of old Atari games she was trying to sell. Sounded good to me, so I gave the store a call. Well, to make a long story short, I bought the collection for \$60 plus a couple of CGA video cards. It contained 104 Atari 2600 cartridges (the rarest was Pigs in Space), a boxed GameLine module, a shrinkwrapped Odyssey2 Atlantis, and more. A single purchase put me in possession of fully 10 times the number of 2600 games I'd had when I was younger! From that moment on, I was a collector in earnest.

It wasn't long after that when we got an Internet connection and I looked up the sites listed in "Phoenix." I found VGR's list and rec.games.video.classic and the rest is history. I've had lots of finds over the past four years, met lots of interesting people over the Internet and now I own more classic video games than I used to believe existed. But I still have that boxed Casino Slot Machine and that issue of FLUX magazine that got me started. I gave up my old games once; I'm not going to do it again!

William Cassidy is a classic gaming addict who is still recovering from moving over 500 games and 10 consoles across southwestern Ohio. When not moving, he maintains The Odyssey2 Homepage! at <http://www.classicgaming.com/o2home/>

Classic Video Therapy - The Jr Pacman Session

Today we check up on Dr I.N. Sane and his session with Jr Pacman. As we saw last week, classic video game characters have emotional problems like everyone else and sometimes these can cause deep rooted scars that need to be healed.

Dr Sane-So what is troubling you today?

Jr Pacman-Doc, I have an inferiority complex, or so my last shrink said, no offense.

Dr Sane-None taken. Did he recommend for you to see me?

Jr Pacman-Yeah Doc, he said you specialized in treating video game characters. Can you help me Doc?

Dr Sane-Let us get to the root of your problem. What makes you feel inferior?

Jr Pacman-Its my parents, Doc, they are like so famous and I am nothing but a footnote.

Dr Sane-And your parents are?

Jr Pacman-Pacman and Ms Pacman, two of the biggest icons in video game history. You would think the son of two such famous people would have it easy, but I don't. Everyone I talk to says "Why wasn't your game as good as your Dad's?" or "Must be great having such a hot momma" and this bothers me.

Dr Sane-I see. Please tell me more.

Jr Pacman-If that isn't bad enough, they had to destroy my self esteem for life.

Dr Sane-How did they accomplish that?

Jr Pacman-Look at this beanie on my head. You may think it is funny or kinda silly, but I am stuck with it. My darn parents stuck that thing on my head as a baby and I cannot get it off. So everywhere I go, people want to stop me and spin the beanie. It is like so embarrassing.

Dr Sane-Why can't you remove the hat?

Jr Pacman-First off, it is glued to my head. Yeah glued. My parents wanted something for people to identify me with and thought this was cute. I hate them, I hate them. The other reason is that I have no hands. Do you have any idea how horrible it is to go through life without appendages? An itch can be murder, I tell ya.

Dr Sane-Have you thought about having the hat removed, plastic surgery can do wonders.

Jr Pacman-The thought crossed my mind, but I am broke. I never got a sequel, there was no merchandise. If it wasn't for a court order, I wouldn't be here. But I got the courts to sue my parents and make them pay for the therapy. But the courts will not pay for the removal of the hat. There really is no justice in the world.

Dr Sane-That is all the time we have this session. Have my secretary make an appointment.

Check in next time when we look at pterodactyl from Joust. Was he really a bloodthirsty killer or just misunderstood?

Teens and Classic Gaming

by [Tom Crugnale](#)

It seems as this hobby gets older, more and more people are getting involved. Lately, it has been the teenage community to step up to the plate and get into the game. I am a

teen myself and I'll tell you how I got started.

Since the day I was born, I have been playing videogames. It all started with the Colecovision and then I moved onto the NES and better things. One day when I was 13, I decided to locate my old Colecovision and give it a try. That's how I got hooked. I found myself frantically searching for more and more games, which then led to me searching for information on these "old games" on the internet.

I also asked some other teens of the EFNet Channel #rgvc on how they got started.

Elimeno_P (Carl Klitzke) had to say this about how he got started.

"We got a vcs at a garage sale in '87 went thru a few of them then in '94, I had like 110 games so I figured I could call it a collection.

Started going to goodwill in '92 I think, got first games from there shortly after."

Intv-Sama (Chuck Whitby) had this to say about teenage collectors.

"They shouldn't even bother. A 15 year old kid starting to collect Classic Video Games is just a profiteer."

Just remember, we are the ones who are going to be carrying this hobby on into the next decades to come. Sorry the article was a bit short, couldn't get a chance to talk to most of the teens in #rgvc. Anyways, I might continue this one next month.

*Tom Crugnale is now in the process of getting an INTV. He also is living in a very dry area and is going through a major drought. But he still laughs over the .25 cent Q*bert Qubes (CV) at a garage sale many moons ago - email colecofreak@hotmail.com*

He's Back

by [Doug Saxon](#)

The scenario: The video game collector/player has been gone for 6 months, but he's expected back anytime now. So the anticaption begins...

2600 Pac-Man: Geez, is he ever going to come back, I'm getting bored here.

2600 Pitfall: Oh please, even if he DOES come back, what difference does it make to you? You never get played.

2600 Pitfall II: You should talk Pitfall, ever since he found me at that Flea Market, you haven't seen the light of day.

2600 Pitfall: I don't know, your label was just as dusty as mine before he left.

2600 Stargate: That's because he was always playing me.

2600 Pitfall II: Oh shut up Stargate.

5200 Kaboom: I don't know why you silly 2600 cartridges even argue about it anymore, why would he even consider playing you when he's got us around.

5200 Zaxxon: Yeah, you guys are nothin' more than a part of his collection. You never get played.

2600 Stargate: Perhaps. But just because you guys are bigger with better graphics, doesn't mean he's going to play you first. He's been gone for 6 months and I'll bet those stupid 5200 joysticks aren't going to work.

2600 Pac-Man: YEAH!

2600 Pitfall: I wonder if he is going to bring back any new games. Doesn't he have enough of us already?

INTV Tron: Yeah, for sure. I used to get played all the time, but now there is just too many of us.

Coleco Beamrider: Definitely. Life was so much better at my first home when it was just me and a few other dozen Coleco games. Now, there's hundreds of us all jumbled together in these boxes. I can hardly breathe.

INTV Tron: No kidding, why do awesome games like us have to share space with terrible games that he never plays. It just isn't fair.

2600 Pac-Man: Wait, shhh...I think someone is coming...OH MY GOD! He's back!

2600 Stargate: What? Where's he going. HEY, I'M RIGHT HERE. PLAY ME!

2600 Pitfall II: Oh geez. He's been gone for 6 months and of course he has to go to that OTHER box to make sure his stupid Chase the Chuckwagon is still there. Hello idiot...cartridges just don't get up and walk away.

Coleco Beamrider: Alright, will you put that stupid CTCW cart down already and play me!

INTV Tron: Calm down Beamrider. He's gonna play me first anyway.

2600 Stargate: OK, he's done drooling over that stupid CTCW cart. Here he comes!!

An hour later...

2600 Pac-Man: Wow, he's been playing everybody. He even played Sorcerer. I guess he must have really missed us after 6 months. But oh well, he still hasn't played me yet.

2600 Pitfall: Yeah, sorry man. That was really good. I really enjoyed it.

Coleco Beamrider: You really can't complain though Pac-Man. You were probably one of the most widely produced and played games ever, so you got your fair share of playing back in the day.

5200 Kaboom: Don't worry Pac-Man, he'll get to you eventually.

2600 Pac-Man: I don't think so. He never---Oh my goodness, here he comes. Wait, what's he doing??

SLAP

5200 Kaboom: Ooo...poor Pac-Man.

2600 Pitfall: Poor guy got all excited for nothing. Now he's stuck up there on that shelf with Combat.

5200 Kaboom: Why would anybody want to use video games as decoration.

2600 Pitfall: Well, when these crazy collectors have 50 Combats and 50 Pac-Man's, what else can they be used for?

5200 Kaboom: Good point. Well, I guess it's back in the box for us for awhile.

2600 Pitfall: Not for me...he'll be back playing me in no time.

Coleco Beamrider: Oh please Pitfall, he'll be playing me sooner than ever.

INTV Tron: Whatever Beamrider....

2600 Stargate: No.....

And the argument continued until he came back again. And Pac-Man and Combat just watched.

Doug Saxon obviously is still experiencing jet lag or had one lager too many, but we are glad to have him back. He can be reached at saxondj@email.uc.edu.



Game Manuals Teaser

by [Alan Hewston](#)

I've asked Tom if we can have a Classic Video Games Manuals theme issue. If so, we'll get the crack Retro Times staff of regulars to come up with some stories or good stuff to

tell about the various game system manuals. If you have any ideas to contribute, or questions to ask feel free to send them to myself or the Editor in Chief, Tom.

Pretty much all of the classic game system manuals are now typed up and available online, which is great . . . but sometimes a picture is worth a thousand words. Just like the cartridge or box art, the manual can be very creative or provide a lot more information than just a bunch of instructions.

The rarity of the manuals alone make them collectible, and nice to have to show off as part of your overall collection. And, for the real gamer, there may be something useful in the artwork or diagrams that cannot be described in words alone. So, do not throw out those manuals.

As a teaser, here's a couple pictures of the Colecovision Root Beer Tapper. Tom just traded this manual to me last week, and it is a piece of Art. If my wife agrees, then we'll iron out the wrinkles, frame it and add it to our wall art.



The instructions are laid out as a menu, and to the casual observer would look exactly like a menu. But then you read about scoring, lives, levels, bonuses, game options, pausing and more. This is truly a work of art, and the gang at Sega deserve a lot of credit for doing such a nice job. In my own manual collection, Sub Scan and Tac Scan, both by Sega, also provide a large fold out manual, but nothing so elegant as this.

Alan has begun his quest for more manuals. Although he has not quite reached 300 Atari 2600 carts, he's now up to 250+ 2600 manuals. Alan can be reached at hewston95@stratos.net

Site of the Month

While I did receive a lot of sites to be considered (and keep sending them in, as I will be expanding to two sites of the month, starting next month), I chose a popular and very useful site. Many people who are new to the hobby need to know about this site and veterans should take another look as there is a lot more there than meets the eye! I am talking about the [Classic Video Game Nexus](http://ClassicVideoGameNexus.com)! As I call it, the starting point for all classic gamers!

If you are new to the hobby, as many of the readers of this newsletter are, then you have to check out this site! It has links to almost every video game page on the internet. Whether you are into home or arcade games, Lee Seitz has links set up for you to check out! You can spend days checking out all the links and still not hit half of them!

But if you think this site is only links, you are doing yourself a great disservice. Lee has a stack of reviews up there for products like the Intellivision Lives CD, World of Atari video and more! He also has features for classic video game lunchboxes, board games, buttons and more. But more interesting than that, he also has a list of what companies own the rights to the classic game companies and a list of all the domain names out there that use classic games in their title.

But one feature that you cannot easily find, but with a quick use of his search feature, you can find Lee's tribute to the Atari Force comic books! While still under construction, he gives some good information of this overlooked series.

Lastly, he also has a nice feature where you can come back and ask for all the updates for a specific amount of time and it will give them to you. So you can always be on top of the latest links added!

As you can see, the [Classic Video Game Nexus](#) is much more than just a bunch of classic video game links. So stop by and see all that there is to offer and you just may be amazed!

What's Happening in the Hobby?

A pretty quiet month in the hobby. I don't frequent the newsgroups as much anymore, so I cannot tell you all that is going on. But one thing I would like to comment on and a reason I don't frequent the newsgroups is the high level of negativity. You cannot go for more than a few days without reading about how the hobby is headed to hell in a handbasket. People griping about eBay, others complaining about dealers, still others complaining about lack of newsgroup auctions. It goes on and on. Wake up group, you have it better now than at any time in the hobby and you are too blind to realize it. You may want to question my sanity on that statement, but listen to my reasoning.

First off, with the advent of the internet, you can now converse with thousands of other collectors. Game collecting used to be a very nomadic hobby, with little interaction with others, before the internet. Now you can get together in chat rooms and newsgroups and trade stories, easter eggs and make trades. Sure the prices of some games is higher than before, but most of us never knew or cared about these games before the internet came along. Honestly, how many of you actually heard of Glib or Eli's Ladder back in the 80's? But now you are not satisfied until you have something that you wouldn't even play if you did have it.

Second reason is that now you have access to stuff you would never have access to if not for the internet and the rising popularity of classic games. Five years ago there would be no "Stella Gets a New Brain" or "Intellivision Lives!". There are prototypes on these that you would never have knew of, let alone played.

The third reason is now you have tons of information at your disposal! Want to know how

to convert Sega controllers to the Vectrex? How about the story of how the video game market came into existence? You can find them on the internet, along with interviews, pictures and more! There are complete lists of all the games for any system you can imagine and even every game that every programmer ever did. Where else could you find so much information?

Don't like playing games on an old television or don't have the room? Now you can play almost every classic game, via emulation. Plus, thousands of arcade games are perfectly replicated on MAME! A few days of downloading and you can have tens of thousands of games at your fingertips and with the variety of joysticks out there, you can have a nearly identical arcade experience! All for less than the price of what one arcade machine would cost you!

While some people hate eBay, it has offered a place for collectors to move their extremely hard to trade commons. Throw a system with a stack of games up and get some of your money back, possibly make a profit. Plus, it has offered us an avenue to get items that you would never come across in the wilds. Sure, it may be costly for some items, but there are hundreds of deals everyday.

Lastly, you can find new versions of classic games. With a little searching, you can find unique versions of classic games done by amateur programmers. Pacman, Q*Bert, Frogger and more are given new life in games that are sometimes free and sometimes require a little money!

So as you can see, the hobby is better than ever! Sure you may never get all the Atari 2600 games, but who cares! You lived your whole life without these games and trust me, you can continue to live without them. These people keep talking about doom and gloom, but that is only because they are too busy whining to realize how good they have it. So lighten up and enjoy the hobby! If you cannot find something in this hobby to make you smile, then you obviously take this too serious. Games are meant to be fun and enjoyed, so play and game and spread the joy!

eBay Notes

One area that I follow closely is the marquees and I have seen some drops in prices. This is mainly due to the fact that the supply of marquees has outstripped the demand. So many bargains are available for anyone who is looking to collect these arcade treasures.

Many of the popular arcade marquees like Pacman, Defender, Donkey Kong and more are selling for anywhere between \$5-\$15 less than they were six months ago. Defender, a marquee that used to sell for \$30.00 on a regular basis, is now going as low as \$20.00. Pacman, a very popular and plentiful marquee has been seen as low as \$15.00, where you used to be lucky to find one for under \$30.00. While these prices are more the exception than the norm, with a little patience and some good timing, you can find some real bargains!

Another nice thing is that more and more different marquees are showing up! Ones that I never seen for sale like Munchmobile (was quite upset that I missed it), Kosmic Kroozer

(was lucky enough to get that beauty) and more are showing up more and more! On any given week, you can see over 100 different marquees available on eBay, with some at real bargains! So if you are interested in this unique piece of memorabilia, now is a great time to build your collection!

Question of the Month

While the response wasn't overwhelming last month, it was enough to warrant another question. This time I will ask a question that anyone can answer. It is purely your opinion and there is no right answer. Here it is!

What is your favorite classic video game joystick and why?

My personal favorite is the Prostick II. I like it for the sturdy design, the way it fits well in my hand and most of all for the 4way/8way feature. By moving a small piece of plastic, you can go from a 4 way only joystick, which is great for Q*Bert, Frogger and Pacman, to a 8 way for the games that use all 8 directions. This little feature has greatly increased my scores on Q*Bert alone!

Cinciclassics

The organizers of CinciClassic are proud to announce the date and location of their 1999 collector's convention! CinciClassic aims to provide classic videogame collectors from the midwest and worldwide with a fantastic, non-profit event. We are proud to announce that, for the first time, convention admission will be absolutely free!

This year's event, celebrating all classic videogames, will be the weekend of November 5-7, 1999 at the offices of C/2 Interactive Solutions (thanks, C/2!) in Cincinnati Ohio.

Also new this year is a constantly updated web site detailing everything you need to know about the event, including news, hotel information and a page detailing requests to share rides and accommodations. Check it out at <http://ic.net/~craig/cinci/>.

The first annual CinciClassic event, in 1998, was attended by over 25 people (this year we hope to have well over 30 people at a minimum), and attendee response was overwhelmingly positive. For pictures of the event, check our web site! Rare collectibles were auctioned off, great stories were told, scores of rare games were exhibited, tons of games were played (in tournaments and just for fun), and thousands of dollars of games were traded and sold.

If you can be in Cincinnati the weekend of November 5 - 7, and love playing and collecting classic videogames, you have got to come!

Conclusion

When I look back at the issue, I realize that I did less writing than usual. With so many people wanting to write for the newsletter, my job is finally getting easier! But somehow it feels funny to do less writing. But fear not, as I hope to start another classic video game

story next month. I am still determining a subject, so if you have any particular game you would like to see turned into a short story, send your suggestions. Also, this will be the last month were Bit Age Times is part of the newsletter. It will be given its own section on the website and its own release date, the 30th of the month. So remember to check back 10 days after reading this, to get the newest issue of Bit Age Times! Remember great games are great games, regardless of when they were made!

[Tom Zjaba](#)