

Retrogaming Times #29

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MAME Reviews

I know that I promised to do reviews of Turbo and Pole Position. And I will do reviews of them. But first, I found two games that just needed to be reviewed. Two games that were unknown to me a month ago, but now are playable. So I will do a special MAME Reviews with not the usual two reviews, but four reviews! I will do the first two in this section as usual and then I will do a head to head review of Turbo and Pole Position, later in the newsletter! So think of it as getting twice as much for your money! Since this is free, you really are getting quite a bargain! Now onto the games at hand! One is a sequel of a game that I didn't know had a sequel and the other is a strange game to say the least. But thanks to MAME, both of these relatively unknown games are available for play!



Hopping Mappy

One of my favorite games to play is Mappy. Controlling the little mouse as he tries to get

the stolen goods back from the cats is just plain fun! When I saw that there was a sequel to the game, I was stunned. I should be used to it as many sequels that were unknown to me a few years ago (like Crazy Climber 2 and Spy Hunter 2). This game falls in that category, unknown game that is a sequel of one of my favorites.

Hopping Mappy as you can guess by the title, deals with the little Mappy Mouse who is hopping this time. Instead of little trampolines that were the mode of transportation in the first game, this time you are riding on a pogo stick. Yes, a pogo stick! A mouse in a policeman's uniform, bouncing around on a pogo stick. Logic and video games do not have to go hand in hand. In fact, logic is often tossed out the window. This is the case here.

The game is quite similar to the original in that you are still trying to avoid the cats and collect the treasures that are scattered across someone's backyard. To keep things interesting, the cats are also on pogo sticks and are bouncing after you. But that is not the most bizarre thing. Instead of collecting stolen goods like televisions and paintings as in the first game, you are instead collecting snowmen, kitty cats and other stuff. Why these cats want this stuff and why they need pogo sticks to obtain it is a mystery to me. This whole game is a mystery to me.

The game retains many of the elements from the first game. If you collect the prizes in pairs, you get bonus points. There are also bonus rounds after you finished three levels, just like in the original. There is even the annoying "Hurry Up" message if you take too long. All like the original. But there is no closing doors, no bells to drop on them and the game is not as much fun. Not to say it isn't a good game, it is fun, for awhile. But the original was a great game and this one is not. You will find yourself playing it from time to time, but nowhere as often as the original Mappy, which is a classic.

All in all, the game tries to be a great follow-up, but somewhere they missed. Sure the action gets very hectic, especially on later levels when the yard is very big and there are cats on pogo sticks running all over. But, it just doesn't cut the mustard. Maybe that is why it was so unknown. Anyways, give it a try and come to your own conclusion.



[Streaking](#)

There are strange games and then there are really strange games. This is a really strange game. If you lived during the 1970's, then you know one of the popular events were people streaking around in public places. For people unfamiliar with the term streaking (and I am not talking about cleaning windows, though there may be an interesting game concept there), it means taking off all your clothes and running through a public area. Sometimes it was done for protest, sometimes to attract attention. Whatever the reason, it came and went, with the leisure suit. But it was forever captured in this very odd little game.

Streaking is in its most basic form, a Pac-Man clone. You must run around the screen as a naked woman, picking up these pellets that keep you from getting fatigued. If you go too long without eating these pellets, then you die from fatigue. There are also energizers of sorts that teleport you out of harm's way. They can be used once. You are being chased by policemen who are trying to take your naked self down to be detained in prison. But you want to be free and natural, so you must avoid them.

The game is sorta like Pacman meets strip poker in reverse. If you are confused, let me explain. As you run around, a piece of clothing will pop up that you can run over and clothe yourself. Your ultimate goal is to get all your clothes back on and get a bag of money. You will usually get about two articles of clothing per level, so it will take you about 5 levels to finish it.

Now all you horndogs out there are probably already off to find and download this game. Let me put your mind at rest. The character is so small and so poorly drawn, that the only way I could tell it was a woman was that the second article of clothing was a bra. Of course it could be a transvestite too, but I am guessing it is a woman. You have to be really sad to derive anything from this game, other than a few chuckles. It is pretty harmless and is more of a novelty. The gameplay is very basic and if it wasn't for the novel approach, noone would ever care about this game. You will find that you may play it a few times and show it to a few friends for laughs and then you will forget all about it. Just like the streaking craze, this game is very fleeting and quickly forgotten.

If There Wasn't Any Plastic?

I was watching television with my wife, when one of those commercials for plastic came on. You know where they tell you that the world would end without plastic. Anyways, my wife asks why are they bothering to advertise for plastic as it is so widely used. She then goes on to list tons of items made with plastic and a few of the items she mentions are video game carts and machines. This got me thinking about what video game carts would be made of if there wasn't any plastic. Here are a few suggestions and some humorous reasons why they would or wouldn't work.

Glass

Pro's-Can see through the cart and quite inexpensive.

Con's-Breaks easy and can cut you up. Broken pieces also can get stuck in machine, hands, feet.

Wood

Pro's-Durable, can be painted or stained, could burn commons to keep warm, can carve

your initials into it.
Con's-Fire hazard, splinters and termites.

Stone

Pro's-Would last forever, could use as a door stopper, many different types available (think of limited edition marble carts).

Con's-Very heavy, would smash machines, toes, etc...

Rubber

Pro's-Drop it and it bounces, can be made from recyclable tires.

Con's-Hard to insert cart into machine (keeps bouncing out), skid marks on the Atari.

Paper

Pro's-Very cheap and comes in many colors, can draw on your carts.

Con's-Crumbles easily, fire hazard.

Questions to the Editor

I missed putting them in last month, but this month I have a whole bunch for you! Check this first one out!

Subject: Final issue of the millenium????

You mean you won't be releasing issues all next year???

Surely you've only been caught up in the "Marketing for Idiots" frenzy that is erroneously calling this December 31st the last day of the millenium. Surely you are just catering to the morons of the world who may be reading your page. Surely you don't actually BELIEVE that the millenium ends this year.

RIGHT???

If, however, you are so uneducated as to buy this "Let's market everything we can as early as we can" claptrap, please see the following web page:

[<http://psyche.usno.navy.mil/millenium/whenIs.html>](http://psyche.usno.navy.mil/millenium/whenIs.html)

Don't give in to Madison Ave. Keep the Millenium accurate!!!!

Rob Morgan

(Editor-Millennium is spelled with two n's).

just a quick note - I'm sure others have sent as well:

In your article for setting up mame (which was good), you didn't know what the .inp folder was for. It is for recording your gameplay for highscore verification and playback. it's really a neat feature, check out the MARP site for details on how to use.

[<http://marp.retrogames.com>](http://marp.retrogames.com)

(Editor-Thanks! It is always great to learn about another nice feature of MAME).

The Future of Collectors

by [William Cassidy](#)

Join me now for Part 2 of my more-than-one-part series of articles wherein I will predict the future of the classic gaming hobby. Each article is chock full of prognosticatory goodness! Today's installment:

There's been a lot of speculation about this hobby becoming "mainstream," with tons of people collecting old games and profiteers driving up prices selling to all the new collectors who will hoard all the cartridges for themselves and not share them with the rest of us and making even Atari 2600 Combats become incredibly expensive and it just goes on and on until we all perish in apocalyptic fire. Others wonder if any new people will join the hobby at all, or if it will slowly shrink in popularity until the collector base is smaller than the audience for the UPN television network. I lean more toward the second outcome, but not entirely, because if I lean too far I'll fall over.

In order for a collector hobby to become widespread, it has to have mass appeal. Look at Beanie Babies (you won't want to look too long) or Pokemon. These have one thing in common: they're sickeningly cute. Women love cute. Children love cute. Women spend lots of money on themselves and on their children. There's your collector's market. Or, check out perennially collectable items: baseball cards and comic books. Kids (boys especially) love baseball and super heroes. It's almost universal. If ever a baseball player develops super powers, he could be the center of a major religion made up entirely of prepubescent boys. Boys grow up physically to become men who never grow up emotionally, but have money, so comic books and baseball cards continue to be strong sellers. Even us classic video game collectors are mostly men who never left adolescence.

But video games are a different story. Kids will always love video games, but they usually prefer the systems they grew up with. They will have little interest in the older games, which fail to have the mind-melting graphics and deafness-inducing sound effects of today's games. Many of them laugh at the technology level, the young punks. To be fair, I think all of us can understand this attitude. If I were deaf with a melted mind, I probably wouldn't appreciate old videogames either. However, we collectors are close enough to the old games to know the technological triumphs they represented at the time (Zircon Channel F's notwithstanding). A few whippersnappers will see the CRT light and become true videophiles who, like us, will rediscover the joys of Pong, but most will fondly remember their Playstations and Dreamcasts while forgetting the glory days of Coleco and Atari. I was at least alive when the 2600 first came out, though I'm too young to remember

the initial release. (My first memory is of Ronald Reagan's 1980 inauguration party being shown on the six o'clock news. Sad, really.) But now there are videogame-playing kids young enough to have been born after Atari discontinued the 2600. Why would they join our hobby?

So will no one new join the hobby? No. New collectors will spring up. There are still a number of people who haven't discovered the Internet. You may find that fact shocking, but face it: a lot of people haven't discovered SOAP. A handful of them will probably hit r.g.v.c. one day and get sucked in like the rest of us (we'll make them wash up first). However, I don't think this group will be that large since most gaming enthusiasts are also technophiles who started surfing the 'Net a long time ago. Many of them haven't stopped, even to eat. But new collectors will come from a variety of sources. We're still close enough to the time of the classics that a few of today's kids may have played an Atari or an Intellivision while growing up. Maybe it belonged to their older brother or the family couldn't afford a new system. These kids might become collectors when they enter the spirit-crushing 9-to-5 workforce and wish to recapture their lost youth, poor dopes. Like I said before, a few from the Sony/Nintendo generation will end up liking videogames so much that they'll want the "primitive" systems too. And let's not forget the other source of new collectors: our progeny. Shocking as it may be, we live in a society where even people like us are allowed to mate and have children. Surely a kid who grows up under a stack of 2600 carts may have an interest in them when he gets older. Maybe we'll find out classics collecting is a genetic characteristic. If your newborn immediately starts trying to rewire the sonogram machine to use composite video outputs, you know you've got a winner.

So will the hobby dwindle away? I don't think so. Regardless of how many new collectors show up, our hobby seems to have reached "critical mass," meaning that there are enough hardcore collectors to keep it going until it detonates in an atomic explosion. A lot of the new people who join the hobby from now on probably won't hang around for that long. They'll get bored and move to the next thing, while unloading their collections on eBay. But some will stay. Also, I think we can count on people who joined the hobby in the early '90s to keep on collecting. That's a sizeable number. Then, the collectors who have been in the hobby since before the 1990s will evolve into super intelligent energy beings who can create Crazy Climber carts by sheer force of will. And THAT will be an interesting time, indeed.

So why won't it go "mainstream?" I think the best answer is that it didn't. It's been 15 years since the Crash. The hobby has been alive and well for several years. It's been pretty well organized and had a strong 'Net presence for at least 5 of those years. Hasbro and Activision kept the classics' names alive by releasing emulators and remakes. And interest did rise, but still it's not mainstream. The window for going mainstream is closing, I think. There's just not enough interest. Why? In order to sound like I know what I'm talking about, I'm using the word "demographic." Our demographic is limited: mostly 18-30 year old males who owned Ataris while growing up. That's actually a lot of people, but not enough to create a mass market. Kids by and large aren't interested. Women don't care. Who's left to create demand? El cheapo males. Face it: men are cheap. Women think nothing of spending \$40 on one shirt. Men get upset when the 10-pack of T-shirts at Kmart costs more than \$5. Profiteers aren't going to be too successful with customers like that.

So, to conclude this section, I think you'll won't see a drastic change in the number of collectors. Probably the new ones who come in will only make up for the ones who leave. If anything, the number will grow slightly. And here I should probably make some sort of witty parting comment, but can't think of anything, so I'll just kind of trail off...

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



Plunge into Subterranea

by [Doug Saxon](#)

Here is an Atari 2600 game that has suddenly gained popularity and interest on Ebay and in the newsgroups. It has also gained interest in my home. This game is one of the most enjoyable 2600 games available. I picked this game up recently in a trade, and it is one of the best trades I have ever done because not only did I add a new game to my collection (which in itself is becoming a rarity), but this is a really FUN game.

The game is similar to most side-scrolling shooters, where you have a spaceship and all kinds of nasties to obliterate, but this game has a boss at the end of every level, and one of the nastiest bosses on any 2600 game. It's a demon-like creature called a "Hexuplex." It spits out these stealthy baby demons that track you while making this really weird sound that is pretty impressive for the 2600. To get to the Hexuplex, you have to clear your way through stages of flying enemies and then escape through these flashing laser pulses which is a real test of patience. When the game is over, the Hexuplex is shown on the screen changing colors and taunting you for another game.

Unfortunately, this game comes with a hefty price. Unless you are lucky enough to find this game in the wild, you'll probably have to fork over a stack of cash for it on the internet. The prices it has gone for on Ebay have been higher than I would expect, but then again, it is one of those games that won't just sit in your collection, but will probably be plugged into your system many times for play. If you don't have this game, it should be at the heart of your wantlist, because it is without a doubt one of the best 2600 games.

I have played this game many times and usually score around 20,000, but one time I made it up to 32,000 and haven't gotten anywhere close since. Let me know if you have done better!

Doug Saxon is a classic game fan with a complete Atari 5200 set (minus protos). All email can be forwarded to: saxondj@email.uc.edu.

Horse and Buggy Gaming

By [Fred Wagaman](#)

Is newer better ? That is a question that we retro fans have had to deal with each time a new and more powerful system arrives. "Why to you keep all those old games ? System X's games is soooo much better..."

You know, they're right.

One of the great things we enjoyed when Coleco, Atari and Intellivision were king was the arcade to home conversions. How wonderful it was to play some of those quarter munchers at home. Sure, they weren't quite perfect (many of them not even close to perfect), but it was as good as we were going to get. Pac Man, Qbert, Star Wars: The Arcade Game et al were a lot of fun to play. But would you play them now ? Given the opportunity to play the real classic arcade game on MAME, or playing them on the Coleco or Atari, which would you pick ? Think about it.

I know I'd pick the real thing on MAME.

OK, how about all of the sports games we enjoyed. Major League Baseball, Super Action Football or any of the Realsports games. How about those ? Well, sports games probably do the most to show just how far we've come. Compare graphics, sound, artificial intelligence and yes, playability of today's games against those of yesteryear and you'll see that there really is no comparison. It's like Jacksonville vs. Miami; a blowout.

All right, what about all of those original games that only exist on the retro platforms and just oozed playability and fun. Pitfall and Pitfall 2, Miner 2049er, Space Dungeon, Adventure, etc. etc. etc.

Bad news. The things that made those games such standouts then exist in today's games. Engrossing play and stories and excellent control with the addition of improved looks and sound. They're all there. There isn't a one-to-one equivalent from then till now, but those concepts are here. Compare Adventure to Final Fantasy VII. Compare Pitfall to Super Mario 64. The elements are all there... with improvements.

Shooting games ? The older games aren't even in the same league. Sit down and compare Solaris, Star Raiders, Demon Attack and Astrosmash against Einhander, Giga Wing, Raystorm and Radiant Silvergun. See which you'd rather play.

Licensed property games ? Movies and TV show games of the past were, as a general rule, bad. Did you ever play Megaforce or Porky's ? Many of the games of today that are based off of licensed properties are also bad, but that is only in comparison to the rest of today's games. And some of today's TV or movie based games are quite good. Not many, but some.

Educational games ? Please. Don't even try to compare them. You're getting desperate.

So why do people still play the old home system games ? (I'm not talking about the classic game collector, just the classic game player)

Is it the only or best way to play the classic arcade games at home ? No. MAME and the collections that are available for the modern systems offer a much better alternative to playing the games on the classic systems.

Are there a wider variety of games to choose from ? No. Whatever style of game you want, you can find one like it on the modern systems.

Are the games better ? No.

The classic game player is a dying breed. They are the people who insist on using the horse and buggy when the car is readily available. They are the people who shun modern conveniences like saving a game and control pads in favor of starting over each time and a joystick with one button.

They are the video game equivalent of the Amish.

How do you know if you are one of these persons ?

It's simple. Either you don't have a modern system (or don't have it hooked up), or you spend more time playing your retro system than you do your modern system.

You can have modern conveniences and still enjoy a trip into the woods now and again. I believe that most of us retro fans are that type of player. The one that primarily plays the modern systems, but takes an occasional vacation and "roughs it" with a classic.

What kind of retro fan are you ? Are you Amish or a weekend camper ?

(Fred has been playing games for over 25 years and actively collecting them for over 10. The 2400 + games that he has takes up most of his home office and living room. He lives in Denver, PA with his understanding wife Jennie, his 4 year-old, button-loving son, Max and his newly acquired 4th player, Lynzie. He can be contacted at fcw3@postoffice.ptd.net. If you want to find out more about the Amish, you can check out <<http://www.800padutch.com/amish.html>>)

THE GREAT WHITE NORTH OF RETROGAMES - ATARI 2600 **PART THREE - CBS & COLECO**

by [Ryan Harrison](#)

CBS

I remember being a kid and my friend had this "dark beige" cartridge for GORF. WOW! Gorf on the Atari 2600! It was weird - what was this CBS company? Was Gorf coming to Canada? Well, CBS dissed us Canadians and focused on ColecoVision a bit (see the ColecoVision section below) but they never even really tried in Canada. Many Canadians started to get CBS games in their collections, but that was only after a trip to the US. My

first CBS game was found at a flea market in Canada, and was Wizard of Wor - that was only 3 years ago, and they are still hard to find in Canada.



Coleco

Coleco is the coolest, they did everything right to sell in Canada to appeal to the French and the English. I mentioned above in my little chat on the Gemini something cool about the games, not only did they have uniquely Canadian labelling, they sometimes gave you a choice! How did they give you this choice? Well, they gave you a blank cartridge, and 2 labels - one in French, and one in English to stick on - most kids (including myself) put the English one on the game, and stuck the French one to something else. With some games they had bilingual labels if you didn't have the option, and some (Donkey Kong) have all 3 variations. Also, Donkey Kong and Mouse Trap is found with bilingual stickers stating that they are pack-ins with the Coleco Gemini clone. All Coleco games (even the english labelled) had a Montreal, Quebec address on them, and came with bilingual packaging and instructions. Coleco games like Donkey Kong, Mouse Trap, and Venture are easily found everywhere - and Donkey Kong is easily found more then Combat, Missile Command, etc. since the Gemini was huge in Canada - more then half the video gamers of the day had Gemini Systems since the Atari 2600 was much more and seen as too expensive. An easy game to find in Canada is Roc 'N Rope - rated RARE in the US, I'll keep picking them up and selling them to anyone on eBay who wants to fill my pockets! As you can see by the pictures, Coleco was one cool company in touch with Canadians - and they should be, since they made millions off every Canadian kid, not only from video games, but Coleco made the best Table Top Hockey games of the day!

Check back next month when we focus on Atari 2600 variations in Canada from Imagic and look at what Data Age and M-Network games did in the Canadian market.

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

Life as a collector in Ontario

by [Tom Crugnale](#)

Two issues ago, Ryan Harrison decided to discuss what variations are available in Canada and the differences between Canadian and American games. Well, now I will share with you how the life as a collector is here.

At times this hobby can be very nice to you. When I first got into collecting (Sometime around 95 or so) I started off finding a lot of great things. I could walk into the local thrift and usually could find at least 5 cartridges that I needed and I'd be on my way. Garage sales were very nice to me as well, like the time I found 2 of the Rarest Colecovision games and bought them for 50 cents. So far so good...

It started to turn sour around early 98 or so, the cartridges in the thrifts had jumped from 99 cents a piece to anywhere from 1.50 to 2.00 dollars. The selection started to go bad as well, it got really bad when I would go to the thrifts and come back empty handed and dissapointed at the sight of a wasted trip. The only things that seemed to pop up were common and low end uncommon games for Atari 2600, there wasn't really anything pre-crash that you could find.

I've never even touched a Vectrex in my life either. I hear they get sniped from the thrifts, even before they touch the shelves. Anything other than Atari 2600, Intellivision and Colecovision is hard up here. I don't even think I've seen one rare Colecovision game in a thrift yet!

Everything has caught on now, and everyone's trying to sell their "old Atari" from their attic for insane prices. You can blame eBay and other online auctions for this. However, it may not be the only thing to blame. We are part of the problem as well, we're the ones buying them, and we're the ones paying big cash for certain games. In this case, you can point the finger back as well.

In my opinion, things will never be the same. However, things are starting to get better, but I've had to start collecting other things to make the hobby more enjoyable....Mostly post-crash systems like Sega Master System, and Nintendo 8-bit...Even classic computers.

(Tom Crugnale is a teenage collector who plays his games in Caledonia, Ontario, Canada. He would also like to get rid of some of his duplicates of uncommon - rare Activision games to get some uncommon colecovision games. Email - colecofreak@hotmail.com)

Security Project #45

by [Geoff Voigt](#)

(From the personal log of Mr. Midway, Security Programming Specialist) We all work in Security, and most of us are computer specialists; we're not those "Crack Team" types you see on television, but we've developed a reputation that makes us proud. One of our specialties is Network Bot's; for the uninitiated, NB's are free-flowing programs that can be made to do a wide variety of tasks, some of you might use one for shopping and not even know it. Whereas those bots are equipped with a shopping cart and possibly you credit

card #, our bots go into the computer systems of our clients packing heat. That's guns, m'boy. They're lil' Policemen running through the labyrinth of computer systems looking for unwanted guests. One of our tricks for improving our own bots is to make counter-bots that try to collect information in our own test-networks; time them, review thier programming when they get one of our counter's, and check for glitches.

We currently have four prototype Security Bots that we're making for the Iwatani Information Systems in Japan, and they're doing quite well. Frank here named them, something I've never seen him do, he says that's because "they're special"; Shadow, Speedy, Bashful, and Pokey. Frank claims that's they're main individual traits. Anne (our assistant) calls tham Blinky, Pinky, Inky and Clyde, in her well-known quest to make all things cute around here. Me? I just like the watch the lil' bastards work; so far they've caught every counter-bot we've made for them. I think Iwatani will pleased when we show them the demonstration in a week.

August 18:

For the last two days those 4 things have caught every possible permeanation we've thrown at them. I think, in the name of progress, it's time to make a better Counter-bot, one that can learn from past experience, and know not to be caught by the four. If I can do this, then not only will we make the main Security bots better, but this may be the foundation for the next generation Bot after these four.

August 21:

Three days of programming and too much coffee have produced "My" new Counter-bot. We're giving it it's first test run in the test networks. It's beaten the old time record quite handily, and its going for the two-hour mark right now.

August 22:

An unexpected glitch has occurred! While we were demonstrating the Bots to the Iwatani guys, the Counter found one of the 4 areas of inboard memory that holds the actual source code for the main bots! What was even stranger was that after finding the code, it went on the offensive, and attacked the other 4... and won.. The Iwatani guests immediately stated calling it "Pacu-San", with Anne chiming in and mutating the name into "Pac-Man". Our guests are definitely interested in our work, but they seem to be more interested in "Pac-Man" than the main 4. Frank isn't taking this news too happily. I may have stepped on his toes professionally.

August 23:

Anne has altered the operational code of our test network; adding a periodical item of new and unusual code that Pac-Man (even the boss, Mr. Namco, has taken to the name) is drawn to. After reviewing her alterations, I find no problem with her additions, it adds some intrigue, but still her naming the new individual code bits after fruit is a little too "Anne" for my tastes. But the 4 bots have noticed the new code too, and because of this, Bashful/"Inky" caught Pac-Man; only about the second time that's ever happened. Frank is walking a little taller now after this event.

Sept 11:

Iwatani has made an order: for all 4 security bots, and Pac-Man, they say they want us to

alter him into a data cleaning bot. I say they want all of them so that they can watch the chase on the company dime. That's what Frank, Anne, and I've been doing for the last few weeks.

Sept. 20:

Frank is looking at me with murder in his eyes, and muttering, "I've been making some changes, I've been making some changes..." His mental state is starting to worry me. I was leaving for lunch today, and I saw a data folder on Anne's desktop, labeled.....

"Ms. Pac-Man"

It's going to be a fun few weeks around the office again.

(Geoff Voigt wanted to do a different take on Pac-Man, and wishes the "Potato chip that's chased by Smurfs" (First way it was ever described to him) a happy 20th. Anniversary. Anyone with free Upright Pac-Man machines can contact him at <gvoigt@ridgecrest.ca.us>)



(Pole Position 1982)



(Turbo 1981)

Video Game Challenge - Pole Position vs Turbo

Welcome to the Video Game Challenge! Today we will pit two of the most popular of the early racing games against each other to see which one is the champion! As the title suggests, the contestants are Pole Position and Turbo. Which one is the superior game? Read on and see what my opinion is.

First off, we will list the positives for each game. I will rate them in numerous categories, with a winner for each category. The winner of the most categories will be the champion! Here are the categories: Gameplay, Addictiveness, Graphics, Sound and Controls.

Gameplay

Pole Position-It does a wonderful job of capturing the feel of racing. The track, the opponents and the overall feel come together to make it an enjoyable and exciting racing game. Even though it is nearly 20 years old, it is a game that has aged well and still keeps your interest.

Turbo-Turbo decides to throw realism out the window and instead make a more fantasy

racing game. You jump from one type of track to another almost instantly with no regard of realism. One minute you are riding down a road and then you are swept to a narrow, cliffside road, then to a tunnel and then it is snowing. All in a matter of minutes. There must be a few hundred cars in this race and you even have an ambulance that pops into the race (with a super charged engine as is smokes you like a kipper). While this variety makes things interesting, it also makes it disjointed and you have no idea what to expect.

Verdict-While Turbo offers more variety, Pole Position offers better gameplay. Also, knowing there is a goal to achieve and having an idea of how many cars are in the race, makes for a more enjoyable game. Point for Pole Position

Addictiveness

Pole Position-You start off by trying to qualify. The better you finish, the higher up in the race you start. This alone makes for repeat gameplay. Sure, you don't have a ton of tracks, but you will want to finish first.

Turbo-I have no idea how many people are in this race and if there is an end. I just keep going and going. Plus, some levels are very unforgiving and will annoy the daylights out of you. While there is alot to look at, once you go around a few times, you have seen it all and the novelty wears off.

Verdict-Pole Position will make you come back again and again, while Turbo is more of a novelty and they always wear off. Point for Pole Position.

Graphics

Pole Position-Pole Position has a very clean look to it. The billboards are a nice touch with the ads for Atari, Namco, Centipede and other stuff. The explosions are top notch! The cars look good, a bit plain, but very good.

Turbo-This is the Magical Mystery Tour of racing games. Very over the top with tons of stuff to see and look at. You have building and trees zipping by, icy roads and dark tunnels to see. While it does offer more to visually look at, it may be too much. It borders on gaudy.

Verdict-Pole Position's less is more approach works and works well. Point for Pole Position.

Sound

Pole Position-From the start when you hear "Prepare to Qualify" to the first crash, the sound is all top notch. The sound of the car revving up is very good. There is a realistic sound here that overwhelms you and pulls you in.

Turbo-One thing Turbo does well is give you lots of sounds. From the sliding car on the ice to the oncoming ambulance, there are alot of great sounds to catch your interest. The problem is that while there are alot of different sounds, none of them are outstanding. It is a case of quantity over quality.

Verdict-Pole Position sounds are legendary, while Turbo's are adequate. Point for Pole Position.

Controls

Pole Position-The controls in Pole Position are not very forgiving. It is quite easy to run off the road and this makes for a steep learning curve. This also makes for a more realistic game.

Turbo-The controls are very easy as you just slide back and forth. It is easy to get into and anyone can dominate this game after a few goes, but this also makes it very unrealistic.

Verdict-Depends on your skill level on which one is better. While Turbo is easier to get into, I find Pole Position's more enjoyable because as I improve so do the controls. Point for Pole Position.

Overall score- Pole Position 5 Turbo 0

Final Remarks-Our first one and it is a sweep! While both games are enjoyable, Pole Position offers a much more believable and enjoyable racing experience! The funny thing is that I used to really like Turbo as a youth and never got into Pole Position too much. Guess I was really missing out.

Sites of the Month

Two more sites get the royal treatment! Don't forget to send me your choices for sites that you would like to see featured here.

Classic Video Game Cartridge List Server

Ever wonder how many games came out for a particular system? Well, check out the Classic Video Game Cartridge List Server and see lists for over 25 different systems. Everything from the Atari 2600 to the Vectrex can be found here! The lists were done by Dean Dierschow and the list was compiled back in 1994, when the internet was in its infancy.

While the lists are not updated, you can still find a ton of information on them. What is even nicer is that since they are all done in text, they load very, very fast. Remember that modems were extremely slow back then. So you have no excuse to not know what games came out for a particular system. Dean has put it together for you! Here is the URL:

<http://www.xocolatl.com/carts/>

KLOV

Are you a fan of arcade machines? Did you ever wonder who made your favorite game? Want to see what a Jungle King marquee looked like or a Dragon's Lair machine? Then check out KLOV (stands for Killer List of Videos), a site that has more information about arcade machines than should be allowed by law. There is over 1000 different arcade machines covered with date they came out, company, info on how the game is played and sometimes pictures of the machine and/or marquee. There is so much stuff listed on each game that it would take you years to read it all! This is one huge and informative site!

URL: <http://www.tc.umn.edu/~johns594/arcade/klov/>

eBay News

I took last month off from my view of the trends of everyone's favorite or most hated online auction site (depends on who you talk to). One trend that I noticed is some certain Intellivision games that are up over and over. They are the Intellivision games "Mr. Basic Meets the Bits and Bytes" and "Scooby Doo Maze Craze." These games are up every single week and the prices have been coming down. The copies are brand new in the box and sold by the same seller, meaning someone found a major stash of these. I have seen the prices go down from \$50.00+ each to a little more than half of that. At this rate, they should fall even further, though I have no idea how many copies this seller has.

There are two other games that have been dropping almost as fast as the demand for Y2K Prevention Kits. These are River Raid II for the Atari 2600 and Water Ski for the Atari 7800. Both of these can be found in plentiful supplies on eBay and there seems to be no end of the supplies. Both of these games used to get between \$30.00-\$40.00 each boxed and now can be had for as little as \$15.00 (though they sometimes still go for good money). Two more examples of games selling for less, thanks in part to eBay.

All is not going down though. In fact one item has been shooting up and continues to maintain the high price. This is the Intellivision II system, especially a boxed one. These get anywhere from 2X to 4X as much as a regular Intellivision system. While this may seem odd, I feel that part of this is due to the fact that the joysticks are detachable and many people are either tired of Intellivision having the controllers go out and having to pitch them. The other reason is people looking for controllers to add to the adapter for the Intellivision Lives! CD which allows you to use Intellivision controllers on your computer. Whatever the reason, expect to pay alot more for an Intellivision II if you must have one.

The Menace From Outer Space

Chapter Three

The next 48 hours were like a blur. We were given drugs to keep up awake and alert, so we could cram in as much information as possible. The first day consisted mostly of lessons on space flight, basic battle strategies and flying in formation. After each lecture, we were sent to virtual simulators where we were linked up in groups of five pilots and sent out on missions. We took turns playing different roles from squad leader to scout to wingman. The simulations ranged from battling a few ships to fighting hundreds of them in an all out space war.

The second day was even more strenuous than the first one. We were taken to ships and had to fly formations and then fly through an obstactle course. While the course was made up of nothing more than holographic projections, we were judged on how close we came to the canyon walls, buildings and other such structures. The reasoning behind the holographic images is that the military cannot afford to destroy ships and pilots, so this way you can get the kinks out, without costing the military a fortune. This was especially true in this day and age when the amount of ships and pilots were in very short supply.

At the end of the second day, we were allowed to quit at 8:00 PM and get a good night's sleep. Knowing that anxiety would keep us up all night, we were ordered to take a sleeping

pill. A tired pilot is not a sharp pilot and we needed our wits, if the human race was to have any chance. So we followed our orders and went to sleep. We knew it may be our last night of sleep. I personally could think of numerous ways to spend my final night. A night at the bars with the guys or in the arms of an attractive coed would be my choices over a night of sleep. But when you are outranked and your choices are sleep or being court martial, then you choose the good night rest. The military has a way of making your mind for you.

While I slept soundly, the drugs saw to that, I did have nightmares. Over and over I would see the Zaxxon come and destroy Earth. No matter what I did, the ending was always the same. When I awoke and recalled my dreams, I could only hope they weren't an omen of events to come. I prayed they were nothing more than the deep down fear I was feeling, manifesting itself into dreams. But no matter how much I tried to convince myself that they were only dreams, I could not help but dread the coming day. As I look around at my fellow pilots, I could see that I was not alone in my thinking. There was a very uneasy silence. The usual jokes and stories that were normally told during showers and over breakfast, were not present. Instead, there were looks of fear in the eyes of all the pilots. While I never been to a prison, I could only guess that death row must have the same kind of cloud of doom, hanging over it.

As we finish our meals, we are called into the main courtyard. The general returns and stands at a podium, while we all sit in chairs that were put there earlier. As we all salute him and sit down, he looks over the group. First he pans to the right and then back to the left. There is an unsettling feeling going through the group. But before we have time to worry, he speaks "Men, we have worked you very hard the last few days. We have driven you like no other pilots. But I do not need to remind you of the urgency of the situation at hand and the great importance that has been placed upon your shoulders. A few days ago, you were merely cadets, raw cadets that have been molded into fighter pilots." He stops to catch his breath and to stare over the crowd again. While he may be old, at least in his early sixties, he has a stare that would stop the greatest beast in its tracks. Once he is assured that everyone is on the edge of their seats, he continues "Today, you will go out and save the planet that you have called home. Today, you will venture forth and stop a menace so great that the human race has never faced such a challenge. Today, you will go out and KICK THE ZAXXONS BUTT ALL THE WAY BACK TO ITS HOME PLANET!" With that, everyone rose and cheered. The general may not be the best speechmaker in the world, but he does know how to get a crowd going. After a few minutes of cheering, he gestures for us to return to our seats. "Gentlemen, we are now going to draw names from a barrel. We will draw a total of three names. These lucky pilots will get a chance to fly experimental ships. While these ships have not been tested fully, they may spell out the last hope for the human race." he says as a few men bring up a raffle barrel. It is the same one that has been used at charity events and other social functions. The men turn the barrel and the papers with our names on it roll around and around. When it stops, the general sticks his hand in and pulls out three pieces of paper. He clears his throat and yells out "McIntire, Davis and Wallace, you have been chosen. Follow these men to your ships and may God be with you." As they walked off, I could not stop thinking if I was lucky or unlucky that my name wasn't chosen. There wasn't much time to worry about it now, as we were led to our ships. As we stood there and looked at them, some men in lab coats

walked over and said "There have been some minor modifications to your ships. We have tweaked the engines to increase your speed, improved the radar and beefed up the weapons. So she may handle a little bit differently than the ones you practiced on." After that, we were each shown to our ship. As I stared at my ship, knowing full well that it may become my coffin, I couldn't help but feel pride. As I looked over, I saw there were no cameras, no press. While this struck me as odd, I quickly guessed that this was a top secret mission and they didn't want to take any chances at tipping the Zaxxon off. I then saluted and walked up the ladder to my ship.

As we sat and waited for our clearance, I familiarized myself with the controls. I looked over to make sure I knew where everything was. While I have done it a dozen times, I didn't want a single mistake to happen. There was too much riding on our shoulders. Within minutes, we were given the clearance and we took off. As we flew in formation, we soon got our first peek at the experimental ships. Each one was different. One was totally black and looked a lot like the stealth planes of the 20th century. Another was very long and had very short wings. It also resembled a torpedo in shape. The last one had two sets of wings that rotated in all directions. Each one was to lead a squadron. The rest of us followed behind as we headed off into space. I followed behind the stealth one and tried my best to keep in the formation. We were in a classic "V" formation as we headed out to meet the Zaxxon. We knew we were mankind's last hope and no sacrifice was too great, even if it meant our lives.

Tune in next month for Chapter 3

Odds and Ends

Here are a few tidbits that don't quite fit anywhere else.

*You may notice that Alan Hewston did not write in this issue. He is recovering from surgery, so he could not contribute an article. Our prayers go out to him and we should see him back next month.

*We have a total of three jokes submitted so far. So if you want to win the patch, you have a good chance. Just get those jokes in and we will determine a winner next month.

*If you enjoy the MAME reviews we do, then you may want to check out the newest section on the website. I took almost all the MAME reviews and put them together in one section. Once I get all of them up there, I will do some new ones. Here is a link to it.

[CLICK HERE](#)

*Hasbro is dropping the Atari name from their arcade games and replacing it with Midway. Too bad as I will miss not seeing an Atari game at an arcade. Something just isn't right about that.

*A few issues ago, I spotlighted a site that had games you could play right on the site. The site was FunEscape and since then they have exploded! They now have 26 different games that you can play! Even better is that they keep adding new games! Here are a few of the new ones: Circus Charlie, Defender, Phoenix, Tron Tank Battle and more! Here is the URL once again: <http://www.funescape.com/>

Conclusion

This past month, I took a look around the internet to see if I could find any other classic video game newsletters. While I did find a few of them, ours is the only one that comes out on a regular basis. The others I found either come out sporadically or haven't been updated in months, sometimes years. I find this odd as there is a large demand for information about classic video games. The fact that there are quite a few print versions of newsletters is a testament to that. But on the internet, where you have an nearly limitless audience, there is only one that comes out with any frequency. Upon discovering this, it made it all the more important to me that we continue to maintain the monthly pace and come out on time. Rest assured that we will continue to bring you the unique content that can only be called Retrogaming Times.

If anyone knows of a newsletter that comes out frequently, please let me know. I would love to read it and give it some free publicity. The internet is a huge place and there is room for more than one newsletter. With that note, I will be signing off. Have a good month and see you soon!

[Tom Zjaba](#)

(This issue was done while listening to the 5th Dimensions Greatest Hits. You really didn't think I listened to Pacman Fever all the time, did you?)