Table of Contents

Attract Mode
by Scott Jacobi

Hello everyone. This month, I wanted to lead with a few cool bits of retrogaming news instead of an anecdote. It's true that the classics never die, and you don't get much more classic than Donkey Kong and Pac-Man. These two titles are seeing some new life on old systems courtesy of some dedicated fans. Have you ever played the arcade version of Donkey Kong and wondered what it would be like if they made more then just four stages? Wonder no more. He may not be Shigeru Miyamoro, but Jeff Kulczycki has stepped up to the challenge of developing four new complete and functional stages with the original arcade hardware. By the looks of things at http://www.jeffsromhack.com/products/d2k.htm he's doing an outstanding job. With names like Mixer, Foundary, Refinery, and Incinerator, Jeff is doing a great job continuing with the construction site theme. Entitled D2K: Jumpan Returns, it looks like we may be seeing a 2007 debut.

If you're more of a fan of the original levels, you will enjoy this next bit of fascinating news. Most retrogamers are familiar with emulation, whether they are fans of emulators or not. And the general rule is that you need a more powerful and faster machine to emulate older machines. So when I read that programmer John Kowalski successfully emulated arcade Donkey Kong on a Radio Shack Color Computer 3, I was sure someone made a mistake. But it turns out that it's true! John didn't emulate the arcade hardware in the traditional (i.e. MAME) sense. Instead, he hand translated the original Z80 arcade instructions into native Coco 6809 assembly. The result is amazing. See for yourself over at http://nitros9.lcurtisboyle.com/donkeykong.html. The ROM is available for everyone to enjoy.

Some of you might recall that in the 27th issue of RTM, I wrote an article covering some homebrew efforts to bring a more faithful Pac-Man to the Atari 2600. Well, another has surfaced, and it just might be the most impressive, if not necessarily the most faithful. Programmer Dennis Debro, designer of Atari 2600 homebrew title Climber 5, has released a 4K version of Pac-Man that he developed from scratch. The evolution of the game can be followed in this thread on AtariAge, and the game can be downloaded and tried out on emulators. If you give it a try, you'll notice a well proportioned arcade accurate maze, and cleverly designed eyes on each ghost sprite. It doesn't have all of the bells and whistles that Nukey Shay's Hack'em has, but for a mere 4K of instructions, Dennis has done an incredibly remarkable job, especially considering that the code was built from scratch.

And lastly, I'll leave you all with a link to something you can play with right away (but don't click on it until you read the rest of this fabulous issue!) Handheld (Game & Watch) simulators have been around for quite a while, and the ones that you can find and play in your web browser are getting rather impressive. I just discovered this rendition of G&W Donkey Kong II, and I was thoroughly impressed with the quality of the graphics. As with all handheld simulators, the timing is not precisely what I remember it being, but the end result inspires a great bit of nostalgia and makes for a great distraction. If you know of some other wonderful recreations that are flying below the radar, please bring them to our attention so that we can, in turn, bring them to everyone's attention!

The Many Faces of... Kangaroo
by Alan Hewston

I put a lot into reviewing the many faces of Front Line, but all for naught. Our editor gave me some schedule slack so that we'd find time to bring you this short review, the Many Faces of "Kangaroo". This continues to honor titles that are now 25 years old with this 1982 arcade game by Sun Electronics, which was licensed and distributed at the arcades by Atari. I intended to review "Front Line" as it would be an appropriate title for Memorial Day - here in the US. But I failed to realize that the C64 version was not an arcade port, as I had assumed it to be. I've seen it listed elsewhere as an

arcade port too, but it is my fault for not checking soon enough. With only 2 faces released in North America, we will never actually cover "Front Line". Instead, we leap upwards to give you all "3" faces of Kangaroo.

"Kangaroo" was clearly inspired by "Donkey Kong Jr" if not other earlier platform games. As a Mama Kangaroo, you hop, leap, punch and even climb your way up and across 4 heights of treetops in order to rescue your baby Joey who has been captured by a pesky gang of monkeys. Or maybe the political correct story is the baby was trapped by some human poachers and the game's enemies, monkeys, are just being themselves and throwing fruit and in general, monkeying around. There are ladders and ledges that you must traverse, some gaps to leap across, and even some bonus prizes to collect along the way. Humans must have been involved considering the ladders are mounted to trees, the baby is placed inside a building or structure and then there a Bell to ring, and even a cage. There are 4 screens of action, all of which have a timer / bonus that counts down just like DK Jr. Save your Kid Kangaroo on all 4 screens and begin again on screen one with an increase in tenacity by those monkeys but also more bonus fruit to collect. The touch of any monkey or thrown/dropped fruit means your death. Likewise, if you fail to make it across a gap or fall off a ledge, you will lose a life and have to start over again. Fortunately the fruit and bell remain as they were, but the countdown clock starts over again. The arcade version also has a Big Ape, a boxing Gorilla who will show up on some levels and try to steal your boxing gloves. You'd better punch him first or be defenseless. Finally, you'll see (but not hear) the young one cry out 'MOM' when it has been rescued. Points are scored for every fruit collected or punched, and for any monkey punched, plus the bonus points remaining on the timer. On the home versions an extra life is earned at 10k or 20k and then every 20k or 30k points thereafter.

Screen 1 has your Joey on the top (fourth) floor, and the only way up is to use each of the 3 ladders connecting the floors. Screen 2 is the hardest, looking nearly the same as screen 1, where each ladder starts in the same place, but part way up it has been taken away and only the end portion remains - but it has been moved to the other side of the screen. In between the start and end of the ladders are ledges that are slightly higher than the previous, with gaps in between them. Mama Kanga must Super Leap her way up and across each series of gaps, along the suspended platforms (look like swings on the arcade). The third level has the Joey trapped in a cage which is held up by a barrel full, oops, stack of 4 monkeys. Mama must punch (at least some of) them multiple times each to knock a monkey out, and eventually be able to reach her offspring. The top floor has a large stash of apples that you don't want to see (KLOV says if five monkeys climb up there) getting tossed down onto Mama. The fourth level has many ladders and platforms, with multiple paths to take to reach the fruit, but still only one path that ultimately leads your baby. The monkeys will drop apple cores and throw fruit even more unpredictably here.

Wikipedia says this about the game's music: '"American Patrol" by F. W. Meacham (background music during regular gameplay), "Oh! Susanna" by Stephen Foster (used upon screen completion fanfare), and "Westminster Quarters" (used when a bell is rung). Also, the music played during level intros is reminiscent of, if not directly inspired by, "Marcia Alla Turca" by Ludwig van Beethoven.'

Arcade: 1982 by Sun Electronics (unknown credits) - distributed by Atari

Home versions: all officially released in 1983 by Atari.
Atari 2600 - Kevin Osborn (GCC)
Atari 8 bit computer - James Leiterman - originally from the APX
Atari 5200 - GCC modified the 8 bit computer code by James Leiterman
Rumor Mill: None

Kangaroo arcade marquee courtesy of KLOV.com

Note: APX = Atari Program Exchange

To see more screenshots, visit Moby Games at:
http://www.mobygames.com/game/kangaroo/screenshots

Home Version Similarities - except those in < > all home versions have: no background music as was on the arcade; a demo mode that shows all 4 screens <2600 (only shows 1 screen)>; the demo mode comes back on and repeats when you are not playing <8 bit & 5200 only plays just after the power up>; a choice of playing either at the skill of a NOVICE (fewer monkeys) or ADVANCED (arcade like); a pause in the action <2600 & 8 bit>; a choice of two players alternating turns; monkeys throw apples either along the ground (jump to avoid), at your head (duck to avoid), or after the first level at your waist

(punch to avoid); monkeys can also roll special apples (cores) along the uppermost platform which will then magically sense your position below them and then fall downwards at you; you can punch left or right to hit any monkey on the platform (floor) you are on, and you can also reach those who are climbing on the left side of the tree only; your punch cannot reach to the right side of the tree; your punch and boxing gloves are easy to see <2600> and extend outward away from you <2600>; a punched monkey is then eliminated from the screen; alas more monkeys will keep coming on a regular basis to replace those who have been eliminated or go off screen; each will carry an apple - usually to be thrown at you when you are in their sight; they will climb down the tree and then back up the tree, hoping to catch sight of you along a platform; if they spot you, they will either throw their apple right away, move to the closer side of the tree and then throw it, or move towards you along the platform to a position about 1/3 the way across (same L/R spot on the screen every

"I don't know" why there are so few home versions

time) and then throw it; the monkeys will then move back to the tree and then continued back up the tree and exit to get another apple; there may be a safe zone along a ladder where you cannot be hit by a horizontally thrown apple, but on the ladder is the most likely place to get hit by a falling apple, dropped by the monkey on the uppermost platform; you can easily go up and down any ladder at any time; but you cannot go backward downwards anywhere else, even a very small step down without falling; when the bell is rung, any fruits already taken are then replenished by the next fruit in sequence (doubling in value each time); the bell can be rung 3 times and then goes away; the round ends when you save the baby Joey at which time you earn the bonus points left on the timer; if the timer reaches zero, then you lose a life; falling apples, when punched are worth twice as many points as those thrown horizontally; every time Kid Kangaroo is rescued, you can see that he says "MOM" <2600> on the screen, ending the round; the points earned when collecting fruit or punching a monkey are briefly displayed on-screen; when you lose a life, the timer resets, but the fruits and bell remain as they were; the Big Ape and the large pile of apples on screen 3 are both absent in all home versions. No version displays what round it is, or has a fully working (recycling) demo mode. There is music as noted for the arcade on all versions, except for the background music. There are sound effects for hopping L/R, jumping, ducking, climbing, punching, hitting a monkey, losing a life, collecting prizes, hitting the bell, apple being thrown, apple dropped <2600>, ending the round and gaining an extra life <2600>.

The KLOV notes that the arcade game's graphics have some glitches, so the home programmers were allowed to follow suit. Don't complain unless you've played the arcade version as well.

Bronze Medal: Atari 2600 (36)

My first reaction was: this'll be watered down a lot, but upon further review, most gameplay elements are included. Gameplay is very good (7) and has most features, but is lacking the 4th screen and each screen has fewer details. There are only 3 fruits and at level 2, the number of fruit remains at 3, does not increase. The monkeys on the 2600 are even peskier, as they have two apples that they can throw at you. Addictiveness is good (6), but there is no pause and this version is much too frustrating as there are several tedious jumps (ala the Scorpion from Pitfall!). Other minor glitches include getting stuck on ladders, some

Atari 2600 screenshot from Atarimania.com

collision detection problems, not much randomness (monkeys come out like clockwork), and a terribly short (hard to see) punch. With only 3 screens to conquer there's even less here to keep you coming back for more. Graphics are decent (6) with a fair amount of action, some color variety and a bit animation. But there is not a lot of detail, not much in background, limited action, and no multi-color. Sound is very good (7) with nearly all the music and effects from the other ports. Some of the effects are weird or stolen from other 2600 games and two are missing - a bonus life and apples being dropped. Controls (10) are perfect. Cart is fairly common.

Gold Medal: Atari 5200 & Atari 8 bit Computer (41)

My first reaction was: I assumed the 8 bit computer version is the same as the 5200, and that is true again except for the controls interface and the slight color changes in fruits. This was confirmed by Atarimania.com. Where Atari 8 bit programmer James Leiterman speaks . . .

"General Computer was contracted to only do a 5200 version. While at Atari, I had written a reverse disassembler that converted binary files back into source code with some documentation. I went

through and corrected the mistakes of the tool to build the 800 version and sent it over to APX. They published it with no credit back to me as I requested. So, essentially, it was an internal hack! Mine had red strawberries while theirs had a purplish red or some non-red color."

The official disk and prototype cartridge versions are slightly different:
- the cartridge release only works on early systems
- the released version has a *1982* copyright, the prototype says *1983*
- the title screen jumps to *ADVANCED* difficulty on the disk release
- the disk version has an additional demo mode
- the strawberries are not the same color.

The Atari 8 bit computer:

Gameplay is impressive (8) with most of the arcade's elements and action. AFAIK missing are the Big Ape and the pile of apples on screen 3. The demo mode comes on after the system power and plays continuously until you start a game. When the game is over, the screen stays frozen at the instant the game ended . . . until you select a different setting or play again, but you never see the demo again. The demo is actually very good, it shows 10+ seconds of action on each screen and cycles through all 4 screens. The demo is silent and the action shown is the same every time, but nice. Addictiveness is exciting (7) with all the action and few glitches, but no pause.   The action gradually gets harder, there are

Atari 8 bit (GCC) screenshot courtesy of Atarimania,com

no double deaths, and you can earn an extra life. Graphics are pleasing and colorful (8), but there is never a lot of high speed action. The displays are OK, there is good color and graphical variety, some details and backgrounds, with decent animation and good use of multi-color. But much more could be done to get it to the level of say DK Jr. Sound is enjoyable (8) with all the arcade music, jingles, effects and noises except for background music. Controls are perfect (10) control. Released only as a rare proto on Cart, and the original diskette version is very rare as well. So look for a disk copy or emulation, or the 5200 version.

Atari 5200:

All the same scores and notes, except as listed below. Addictiveness is improved (8) due to a pause <pause>. Controls (9) suffer from the 5200. Unfortunately the Masterplay Interface does not work - is not completely compatible. The analog controls will drive you crazy, even the Wico, trying to move exactly when you want to move and jump when you want to jump and stop when you want to stop etc. The cart is fairly common.

Atari 5200 screenshot courtesy of AtariAge.com

Acknowledgements, Updates and Errata since last month.
When growing up, we were told that Kangaroo means "I don't know" by the native Australians. Today Wikipedia says the natives said "I don't understand you". Close enough. I'm still looking for a disk copy of Apple][Xevious if anyone has one.

Come back next month for a Lost Faces review (not sure which), and then in 2 months (I need a break): for another 1982 release, currently planning the Many Faces of Xevious for the Atari 7800, Apple][, Atari 2600, C64, Atari 8 bit and Atari 5200. Contact Alan at: Hewston95@NOSPAMstratos.net or visit the Many Faces of site: http://my.stratos.net/~hewston95/RT/ManyFacesHome.htm
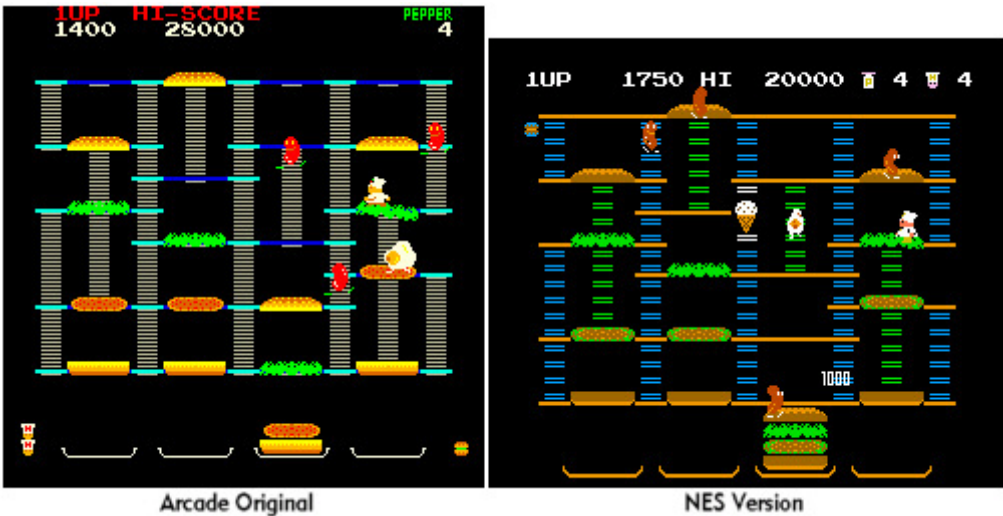
	NEScade -- Burgertime
	by David Lundin, Jr.

After taking a look at the awesome NES port of Joust last month, let us continue in the same fashion with another true arcade classic from 1982. While a game about making burgers may sound mundane, BurgerTime is in fact one of the most intense and hair-raising maze type games ever released. The player controls Peter Pepper, a short order chef with a knack for stacking perfect burgers. Buns, hamburger patties, lettuce, tomato, cheese - all Peter Pepper's specialty. However Mr. Hot Dog, Mr. Egg, and Mr. Pickle are on the run to prevent Peter Pepper from assembling his burgers. Armed with nothing but your wits and a pinch of pepper, it's up to you to guide Peter Pepper on his burger building escapades.

Each stage begins with a series of unassembled burgers spread apart on a series of platforms, linked

together by a network of ladders. Walking completely across a burger fixing will cause it to slip down to the level below. If there is another fixing on the level below, the falling fixing will knock it down a level as well. This domino effect will continue until there is at least a one level gap between the lowest fixing effected in the chain, or the lowest fixing bottoms out. These chain reactions can be exploited however, if one or more Food Foes are standing on a burger fixing being dropped then the fixing will fall further than a single level. This tactic is essential both because it builds the burgers quicker than dropping fixings one level at a time and because it wipes foes out in the process. Foes can also be stopped by dropping a burger fixing down atop them however this does not increase the number of levels the fixings will fall. Peter Pepper's only active defense against the Food Foes is a pinch of pepper, of which he has a limited supply. Throwing a pinch of pepper on a foe will temporarily stun them and allow Peter Pepper to walk by them without being hurt. Picking up bonus food items that appear at the center of the screen replenish one pinch of pepper as well as award bonus points. Once all burgers are assembled then the next stage begins, six different layouts in all with various types of burgers.

A game like BurgerTime, with simple graphics and straightforward gameplay, seems like a perfect title for recreation on the NES. In fact the only real possible hurdle is that BurgerTime was a vertically orientated game in the arcade, so no matter what one would assume a few things would need to be reworked in terms of scale. What's cool about the NES version is this really isn't the case. Sure there are some very slight distance tweaks, but all the burger fixing heights are accurate to how they were in the arcade. Each stage is recreated wonderfully and one can tell that a real attention to detail was paid to get the basics carried over as true as possible. Peter Pepper and the Food Foes are animated well and resemble their arcade counterparts perfectly outside of resolution and color differences. Over all colors are a little dark compared to the original but the game is still very colorful and nicely presented. The only real compromise are the ladder graphics, which have been drastically simplified but still do their job. Directional controls work perfectly with the directional pad and both buttons B and A are used to throw pepper. Background music and sound effects are perfect and the familiar tune of BurgerTime will bring back memories to any 1980's arcade patron.

Arcade Original   NES Version

Once again the NES proves that with a little time and care these arcade classics can arrive at home in style. I will bring something up concerning the packaging however. Disappointingly the screen shots on the back of the BurgerTime box are from the attract screen of the arcade version, not the NES port. This unsavory practice was somewhat common of the era but still irritates me a little every time I come across it. While the graphics of the NES version reproduce the stages to fit properly on a horizontal display, the vertical arcade screen shots simply aren't what you see in the game due to the orientation and graphical reworks for the NES hardware. The game looks great, Data East did a wonderful job on the conversion, that work should have been reflected on the box. A minor complaint but when the game is as well done as it is, finding faults is a difficult task. All the fun and excitement of the arcade original right in your home, you can't go wrong with BurgerTime on the NES. It is by far my favorite port of this game and will provide hours of arcade enjoyment to all who give it a play.

"InsaneDavid" also runs a slowly growing gaming site at http://www.classicplastic.net/dvgi

	Apple II Incider: The Apple II GS - Part I: In the Beginning
	by Donald Lee

(Happy Memorial Day to everyone. This may be a bit short, but covers what I want to talk about. More next month :)

The mid 1980's may have been a challenging time for Apple II owners or users to remain loyal to their machines. First, in 1984, Apple Computer introduced the original Macintosh (now known as the Mac 128) computer. While the first versions of the Macintosh used only black and white graphics, the improved resolution of the graphics, as well as the enhanced sound and graphical user interface of the Macintosh may have made many Apple II users jealous.

Despite the release of the Macintosh, the Apple II was not discontinued. Apple had always wanted to create separate lines for Home/Education and Business. The Apple II was still going to be marketed to home and educational markets while the Macintosh was going to battle the IBM PC in the business market. In fact, also in the 1984, Apple Computer released the semi-portable Apple IIc. The Apple IIc was basically an Apple IIe without the slots and there was no major upgrades in system capabilities.

However, in 1985, Commodore and Atari made major waves with the introductions of the Commodore Amiga and Atari ST series of computers. The Amiga and ST used the same 68000 processor as the Apple Macintosh but added color graphics as well. Many magazines I read at the time heralded the arrival of these new computers as the "next generation" of computing. With fast processors, good graphics and sound capabilities, these two computer lines were poised to make a big splash in the computer market.

Many Apple II users probably wondered what was next for them. Many Apple II magazines I read during the mid 1980's (A+ Magazine and Incider) thinned down considerably for a few months while the rest of the industry focused on the Macintosh, Amiga and ST computers. Despite this concern, Apple II users still had plenty of software and hardware to fall back on. Games that had been introduced for the Commodore Amiga initially were later ported back to the Apple II series.

However, unknown to Apple II users at the time, Apple Computer has been secretly working on a "Super II" project for quite some time. In September of 1986, Apple Computer's answer to the Macintosh, Amiga and ST computers had finally arrived. It's name: The Apple IIGS.

Next month: A overview of the IIGS capabilities and how they compared with the other "next" generation computers.

	Nintendo Realm: Mid May - Mid June 1986
	by Scott Jacobi

Aaaaaaaaand we're back. I hope that you enjoyed the look back on translating a ROM. But if you missed your monthly dose of Nintendo Realm, have no fear, we have six fantastic titles to run through this month, including one series spawning title, one title shrouded in controversy, and the first Nintendo title that *wasn't* released in Japan! Let's see which one's which.

Dragon Quest I released by Enix on May 27th, 1986. Released in American by Nintendo as Dragon Warrion on August 1989.
Dragon Quest is possibly second only to Final Fantasy in terms of influencing the modern day RPG. With the ninth sequel of the game set to be released on the Nintendo DS, the series is already over twenty years old, and it all started with this simple title. Developers of Dragon Quest were heavily influenced by titles like Ultima and Wizardry, and wanted to bring their favorite genre of video game to the masses on a console system. But moving from computer to console meant that the game had to be simplified and more tedious aspects of computer RPGs were removed. This created a winning formula that focuses on story and character development rather than food management and status maintenance. Being the first title in the series, it's obviously the simplest. You take on the role of a lone warrior (who can also wield a bit of magic) who must rescue the princess from a dragon, and defeat the fearsome Dragon Lord in order to rescue the kingdom. Though not as traditional in their selection of monster as Final Fantasy was (which drew largely from Dungeons & Dragons), the monsters were no less memorable thanks to the distinct artistic stylings of Akira Toriyama, of Dragon Ball and Dragon Ball Z fame. To this day, the tear dropped shaped slimes are the mascots of the series, even getting their own games in spin-off titles. Naturally eclipsed in challenge and size by the later games in the series, Dragon Quest I is still a fun game to mess around with, and doesn't require a large time commitment since it can be finished comparatively quickly.

Gumshoe released by Nintendo on June, 1986 in America and Europe, but not Japan.
In an unusual move for Nintendo, they released a Zapper title in American and Europe that was never published in Japan. No reasons are known for this decision, but it was speculated that the Zapper wasn't a big attraction in Japan while it remained a key selling point in the post-crash American video game market. So Gumshoe was released, and it turned out to be one of the weirdest Zapper titles

yet. Borrowing a note from a light-gun arcade game known as Crossbow, players had to shoot at a variety of obstacles and threats that stood in former detective Stevenson's way. Stevenson continued to make his way to the right in a desperate attempt to rescue his daughter from the evil clutches of mafia boss King Dom, and you were his guardian angle. If a bottle was headed for Stevenson's body, or a boulder was falling out of the sky and on to Stevenson's head, your job was to shoot it. Along the way, there are some balloons floating in the sky. Shooting Stevenson made him jump, and shooting him consecutively made him rise up in to the sky to collect those balloon, but watch out for the skull blocks floating above. A diamond would appear once per stage, and a buzzard would fly out of the sky, which would turn into a defensive power-up drink if you shot it. It took a lot of patience, a steady hand, and a sharp eye to guide Stevenson to the end of all four stages, but it was a nice, if unusual, departure from the usual rounds of duck hunting.

Dragon Quest   Gumshoe

Super Mario Bros. 2 released by Nintendo on June 3rd, 1986. Released in American by Nintendo as the Lost Levels on the Super Mario: All Stars collection
Here it is, the Super Mario Bros. game that almost got away. in 1986, Super Mario Bros. fever was still high in Japan, and Nintendo had just launched their Famicom Disk System. The Legend of Zelda had a great debut, but it was time to launch a sequel that the market was hungry for. Super Mario Bros. 2 was released as a disk system title, and it flew off the shelves in record time, thanks in part to the lower price tags that came with the disks. If any of you have played the Lost Levels, then you know what the content of Super Mario Bros. 2 was like: Super Mario Bros. 1 on crack. As far as the difficulty went, it literally started where world 8-4 of the first title ended. With the inclusion of new items like the poison mushroom which would shrink you or kill you, and super high-flying springboards, which launched you with or against the wind, Super Mario Bros. 2 was designed to challenge the greatest SMB players. You even had the choice of playing with normally moving Mario, or high jumping/slow stopping Luigi, the first time that the brothers were distinguished from one another by anything other than the color of their overalls. The game was considered so hard by some, that Nintendo of American thought it would be a mistake to launch such a difficult title in the States. Whether they were right or wrong may never be know, but they opted to use another more adventure like title known as Doki Doki Panic, and transform it into a Mario game for the stateside release of Super Mario Bros. 2 (That game was officially brought back to Japan in Mario form as Super Mario USA, and appeared as the launch title of the Game Boy Advance.)

Bird Week released by Toshiba EMI on June 3rd, 1986.
Someone somewhere thought it would be fun to make a game out of the life of a mother bird and her trials and tribulations over feeding her young. Someone was wrong. While there is a game of sorts here, it's not very compelling. For the most part, you fly about in a scrolling stage that circles back on to itself, trying to catch fluttering butterflies and bringing them back to the next to feed your young. Ironically, the young won't eat until they get hungry enough to start making a commotion in the nest, so if you arrive before they turn hungry, you'll have to sit and wait. Upon eating enough food, the baby bird grow up a leave the nest, and your stage is complete when the next is empty. There are the usual dangers that you would expect in the life of a bird, such as birds of prey and other predators who would like to have you for lunch. Only a few objects exist which can aid you in your defense like a mushroom which can be dropped on the hawk's head for a moment's reprieve. Other than that, there's not a whole lot to discover, so there's not a whole lot to enjoy.

Super Mario Bros. 2

Bird Week

**B-Wings** released by Data East on June 3rd, 1986.
B-Wings, in my personal opinion, is an aptly named B shooter (like a B movie). While it features most of the advanced concepts that were found in vertical shooters at the time, it doesn't feature any of them particularly well. It does contain a number of different weapons that can be applied to your ship, in the form of a variety of wings that attach to the fuselage. Your usual goal is to destroy everything in sight, and some wings help in that effort substantially, while others can be fairly useless. You also have the ability to drop below the surface of the air and dodge oncoming attacks, but in order to do so, you must sacrifice your wings, at which point you are reduced to a standard single fire gun. But replacement wings are sure to appear eventually. Early stage environments lack variation, and large end-stage bosses don't provide the player with any acknowledgement of getting hit and taking damage other than the main body of the boss changing color.

Star Soldier released by Hudson Soft on Jun 13th, 1986. Released in American by Taxan in 1988.
Star Soldier is an unofficial sequel to Star Force. It features very smooth vertically scrolling stages and a variety of interesting looking enemies. Power-ups come in the form of tiles that can be shot to reveal an S icon, which when collected, gives you rapid fire capabilities. Subsequent power-ups increase the number of shots that you can fire simultaneously. When you reach the highest level of power, you gain a limited shield and the ability to shoot in five directions. Unfortunately, this gun isn't as useful as the one immediately before it that fires two shots in a forward direction. The stages are composed of platforms which float through space. Some of the platforms contain tiles that can be destroyed, and depending on how you approach certain platforms, you may end up flying beneath them in which case, you'll be safe from attack until you end up clearing the platform. Each stage is guarded by a midboss that can be difficult to beat, and a final stage boss "brain." Hudson continued the series on the Turbo GrafX-16 with Super Star Soldier. Definitely worth a try.
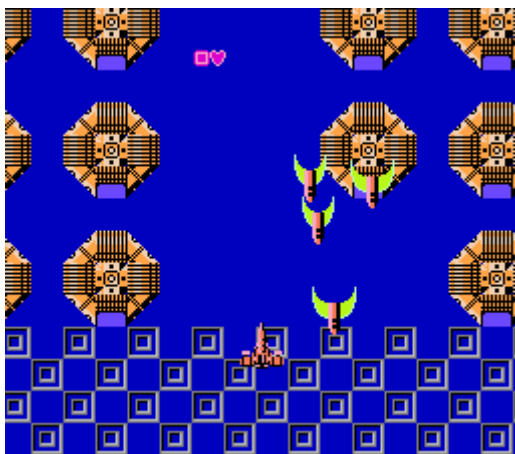
B-Wings
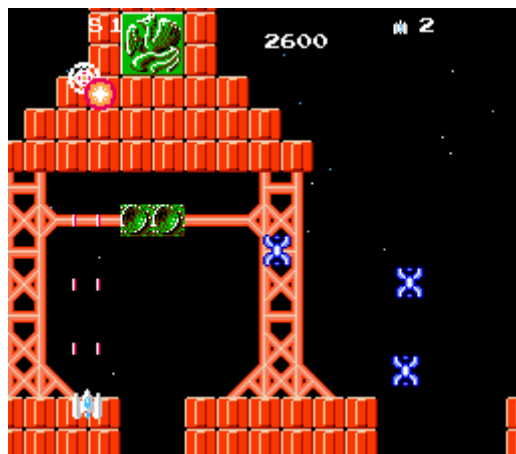
Star Soldier

Game Over

Thanks very much for reading this months issue. Remember, we're always looking for more contributors. If you've got something to say, and need a voice, get in touch with us! See you again in 30 days.