

Retrogaming Times Monthly Issue

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Press Fire To Begin[^]_^

by [Donald Lee](#)

Welcome to the Christmas Issue of Retrogaming Times Monthly. Due to some changes we were working on for RTM, the issue is a little late this month. The changes involved the layout of the magazine. This was worked on by Chris Osborne and hopefully you'll like them.

I'm also going to put out a request for anyone writing in writing for RTM to contact me. RTM is about the games but also the authors. Without the writers, the magazine does not exist. The fact that we have lasted so long speaks volumes for the quality of the magazine. I hope that others will step and contribute as many others have in the past.

Enjoy the issue and speak to you all again next month.

Apple II Incider – Wings of Fury[^]_^

by [Donald Lee](#)

Happy Thanksgiving all! As I write this, it is a Saturday evening and it's a couple days after Thanksgiving in the San Francisco Bay Area. I had a relatively uneventful Thanksgiving. I officiated an alumni basketball game for my old high school which is traditionally held the night before Thanksgiving. Thanksgiving day, I had lunch and dinner with my parents and chilled. Friday, I went out and shopped a bit and then hung out with some friends.

As for this month's game, I had to scramble for something quick and easy due to the holidays. After going through a few games, I settled on Broderbund's Wings of Fury.

I remember when I saw this game as a kid, I labeled it as a "must have" in my book. I'm not 100% sure why that was the case. Maybe it was the nice looking box the game came in or the pretty nice graphics that I saw on the back of the box.



In replaying the game tonight, I understood why I wanted the game in the first place. The graphics were solid and did their sound. The sound effects were about as good as you could get from the Apple II with sounds of machine gun fire, planes crashing and bombs dropping, among other things.

However, the thing that stood out was the game play. In the game you select what level of player you are and then you go on a mission. In the mission I got on to review the game, I was supposed to strafe and bomb the buildings and machine gun placements on two islands. All the while, I had deal with enemy planes attacking me at the same time. While I didn't get very far while playing tonight, I do recall that if you got past the initial levels, you had submarines and other things to contend with.



A couple of side notes regarding the game. When you start the game, you have a choice of picking bombs, rockets or torpedos. Additionally, if your plane takes a lot of damage or you need to replenish your weapons, you will need to land your plane on your carrier. That's a lot easier than it looks. I didn't have any luck at all tonight with that!

All in all, Wings of Fury was a great game to replay tonight. I'm actually looking forward to playing it more to see how much further I can get. 😊 It's worth checking out whether it's the Apple II or other versions that were released!

Dual Perspective – TMNT 4: Turtles in Time[^]

by [James Sorge](#)

Hello, and this is James Sorge back with Dual Perspective, the column that reviews games from both the playing and the World Record Perspectives. This month, the victim is "Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles 4: Turtles in Time", the port of the arcade game for the Super Nintendo Entertainment System and Arcade.

Graphics: 10/10. One of the best displayed games ever I think in terms of graphics. I still think its presentation today stands out among one of the best ever, and the SNES port still holds up. Great on both.

Sound: 10/10. You'll rock to this. The Starbase tune is also one of the best in video game history. You can't go wrong with this game's soundtrack.

Difficulty: 6/10. Not a terrible hard game to beat, even on Hard Mode, unless you have difficulty with Slash on Hard Mode. If you practice it, you'll do well.

Replay Factor: 9/10. You'll keep playing this over and over, especially on Super Nintendo, unless your name is PJ DiCesare or me, who have broken the game on points to no end.

The World Record Perspective: The arcade is extremely random, but there is some room for improvement, though the game seems to hose you around 300 points. Never say never on it. For the Super Nintendo, it's not maxed in either speed or points, but you will have a hard time catching up. You need to throw every enemy and essentially not get hit to tie the points version, and the speed run is quality as well. It's not maxed, but by no means easy and you might be better off finding another game to get your World Record on.

Anyway, for the #'s:

Arcade Points: 256, Brandon Pinkerton (done on MAME, no official arcade scores recorded)

Super Nintendo, Single Player: 1,793, Patrick "PJ" DiCesare

Super Nintendo, Speed Run (with glitches): 22:31, Mike Uyama

Overall Rating: 9.5/10. World Record Potential: 3/10. This is a great game to play for fun and in 2-player mode. The game is timeless in that regard. It doesn't get a 10 out of 10 because when you run it it gets tiresome and boring after a while. As for a world record, it is beatable, but you'd be better off finding another game for an easier record to obtain, as this one will probably take you at least 100 attempts, if not more, plus the first place and second place points holders have had better runs wiped out by the VCR tape going bad. Attempt at your own risk.

A Pixelated 21st Century[^]

by [Paul Zimmerman](#)

Hello Pixelated fans. "Pixelated Paul" is here to let you know about some of the retroware highlights for the month of November.

It was a very exciting "NeoGeo" month with 3 Virtual Console games. Plus, Robox for WiiWare and some great looking DsiWare games.

WiiWare

Gene Labs

Gods vs Humans

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EZskcl13_Hg

Robox

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ugpfiwqBOKE8>

DsiWare

Cave Story

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wDjuMlfoMj4>

Go Series Pinball Attack

Paul's Shooting Adventure

Supermarket Mania

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l0a_AgUI0RQ

Tetris Party Live

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Ui-lsU4J-A>

Virtual Console

Note: most of the videos for the games below are of the originals (meaning they not being played on the Wii). This is because the Virtual Console is emulating the original system and therefore they are identical.

Magical Drop 2 (NeoGeo)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MmH5g5ZKjLQ>

As you can see from this and the other reviews below the NeoGeo does not only have great fighters. It also has great puzzle games, platformers and sports games among other genres. This one is a fun puzzle game. It is a mix of Tetris (falling pieces) and Puzzle Bobble (launching bubbles from below to get rid of the same color bubbles from above). But, actually in this one you suck the same color bubbles from above (as many as you want) and then you need to launch them again at another bubble(s) of the same color to get rid of them. There are also special bubbles that do different things. The game gets hard fast, but is very addicting and fun. Colorful with great characters and music. All puzzle fans should check this out!

SpinMaster (NeoGeo)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AJk84zsYrI0>

A "pretty" fun platformer. Multiple weapons including your trusty yo-yo. There is a mine cart ride and a boat ride. Five stages(!) with boss fights. Co-op play is included. Graphics are cartoony and bright. Good music and sound effects. It might be short, but it can be hard. Fans of Metal Slug, Contra, etc. should check it out!

Street Slam (NeoGeo)

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5g_4XGyvAUU

Fun, arcade-style, 3-on-3 basketball game. A variety of teams from different countries to choose from, each with their own strengths and weaknesses. Many different courts to play on, each with their own visual theme. Colorful graphics and great animation. No fouls in this game! Fans of NBA Jam and Double Dribble should check out this game!

As always, send me an email and let me know if you purchased any of these games and what are your thoughts about the games.

I will see you next month for hopefully some more retroware goodies!

Obscure output: That mostly empty first CoCo stocking[^]

By [Mark Sabbatini](#)

Here's a little-known tidbit of potential interest to the Department of Christmastime Lawsuits: Zelda was a featured video game for the holidays way back in 1981 on the humble TRS-80 Color Computer.

Zelda Bat Bottle, written by Fred Scerbo of Illustrated Memory Banks, sends an aspiring protege capable of "magic blasts" on a quest to kill 10 bats and put them in a container appropriate for brewing into a potion. The faster the better, for those who care about keeping score.

The "original" Zelda is a type-in BASIC listing published in the December 1981 issue of The Rainbow, the sixth issue of what would become more than a 10-year run. The listing came with unusually dictatorial restrictions such as being able to save only two copies for your own use and nobody else's. It was part of Scerbo's overinflated opinion of his talents (partially fueled no doubt by The Rainbow's shameless and constant boosterism of him and his company), as IMB sold greatly over-hyped BASIC games for about \$20 each. Zelda, for those spending the hour necessary to type it in, involved little more than pressing the "1," "2" or "3" keys when bats appeared at the left, middle or right of the screen.

Still, the title...magic...irritating pests to defeat. Can you prove Shigeru Miyamoto didn't see the article before Nintendo released its "ground-breaking" game that begat a franchise?

Such was the state of the still-scarce personal computer market back when our family got one of the first 4K Color Computers for Christmas that year, due entirely to my non-stop pestering after seeing one in my seventh-grade science class. Dad was nice enough to buy a few cartridge games as well, but early pickings from Radio Shack were awful and within a month I was pretty much the only person using it (although nonstop at that).

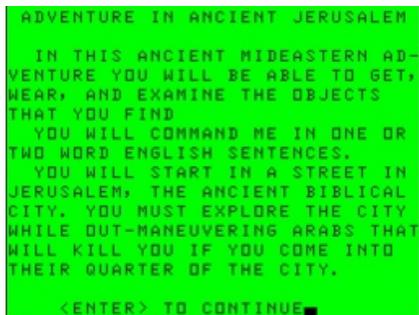
Somehow I managed to badger him into upgrading the computer to 16K Extended Basic as the "main" family present the following Christmas, with similar results. Within a few hours the family moved to the color TV that came with it to the living room to watch movies while I brought the beefed-up computer back to the basement and the old black-and-white set.

Writing a retrogaming column about great Christmas-themed games from back then is tougher than getting a room at the inn since, in all honesty, can anyone name anything on the early eight-bit machines that didn't completely scream "coal lump?" But scrounging through the Grinch-like crumbs in CoCo land reveals some merry tidbits and insight about an industry barely more mature than the Baby New Year.

That first CoCo December there wasn't a hint of anything with a theme suitable for the season, aside from something those observing Hanukkah might find appropriate called (alert: capsule review detour just ahead):

Adventure In Ancient Jerusalem (D)

One of the first monthly collection of programs sold by Chromasette for \$5 an “issue,” the game requires the player to find nine treasures while avoiding hazards such as “burning your eyes out in the Dead Sea” and murderous Arabs. Keeping in spirit with the season, there will be no 500-word off-topic diatribes about furthering stereotypes in young, impressionable minds – and that’s coming from someone who’s part-Jewish. It’s a plain text adventure with a limited vocabulary and lots of challenge, but not a whole lot of fun even if the xenophobic aura is overlooked. The big issue is the Random Death for wandering into “wrong” locations for the first time, a common but unforgivable sin of early adventure games. Another common plague is puzzles based less on logic than trying to guess whatever exact phrase is in the mind of the programmer. Finally, while it’s possible to wander an absurdly long distance in a given direction, doing so is ill-advised since it seems to do little but tally how far you’ve wandered from the “real” game map. A save/load option is offered (but may not work in most emulators), so at least those playing on real machines can make some trial-and-error progress, save at some point, and then not have to repeat the game tirelessly from the beginning. The game, playable instantly on the Mocha browser emulator (<http://members.cox.net/javacoco>) or on any regular CoCo emulator, is available on issue two of a Chromasette archive at http://rapidshare.com/files/212547925/28_Chromasette_Issues.rar. Documentation for all the issues is included and searching through them should turn up plenty of interest to most retrogamers.



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ADVENTURE IN ANCIENT JERUSALEM
IN THIS ANCIENT MIDEASTERN AD-
VENTURE YOU WILL BE ABLE TO GET,
HEAR, AND EXAMINE THE OBJECTS
THAT YOU FIND
YOU WILL COMMAND ME IN ONE OR
TWO WORD ENGLISH SENTENCES.
YOU WILL START IN A STREET IN
JERUSALEM, THE ANCIENT BIBLICAL
CITY. YOU MUST EXPLORE THE CITY
WHILE OUT-MANEUVERING ARABS THAT
WILL KILL YOU IF YOU COME INTO
THEIR QUARTER OF THE CITY.
<ENTER> TO CONTINUE
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Perusing through The Rainbow that December wasn’t much help, as there was no mention of Christmas or the holidays in any of the copy. The only whiff was an ad of “stocking stuffers” from Rainbow Connection (no relation), offering 4K BASIC games like Brickout, Biorhythm, Blackjack and Lunar Lander for “less than \$5” each. Grim pickings indeed.

Other publications with CoCo content weren’t much better, to the extent they existed, but their content makes entertaining reading these days.

There’s no mention of the holidays and, gasp, not even any games in the November/December issue of the Color Computer News. But it was probably the best publication at the time, at least a year beyond most competitors that eventually doomed it to obscurity through sheer subscribers. Modern retrogamers into revisiting magazines from the early days can find a “best of” collection of the 1981 issues at www.icepeople.net/pdfs/bestofcolorcompunernews1981.pdf. (Note: A lot of diehards will argue the magazine ‘68’ Micro Journal was the best and they’d be right, except it wasn’t strictly CoCo related and its content is technically beyond most consumers.)

A more extensive and far-reaching look into Tandy’s early computer (mis)adventures is found in the December 1981 issue of 80 Microcomputing. Arriving in mailboxes with a Christmas-catalogue heft of 420 pages, it was noteworthy for the continuing feud between publisher Wayne Green and Tandy executives.

But first, CoCo fans could rejoice their beloved machine was featured on the cover, albeit in a macrame hanging as part of the issue’s hobbyist theme. As with the other magazines there wasn’t much holiday content for any of the TRS-80 machines and the CoCo, despite its cover status, got little mention (one fragment was a letter from a reader wondering why there wasn’t more coverage for the machine).

Green’s lengthy month column, however, was the classic rant contributing to his reputation as the preeminent Tandy critic of the time. A few months early he made his infamous prediction Tandy was getting ready to discontinue the CoCo due to low interest, but despite that whiff he seldom gave ground on subjects where he proved right more often than wrong.

December’s roundup of ill will went after Tandy executives who, in their in-house magazine, blasted Green for suggesting saving money by purchasing computers via mail order. Like it or not, Green argued, Tandy had to honor the warranty if something went wrong despite the corporate bigwigs’ suggestion consumers would be left on their own with unreliable machines if they didn’t pay full price at retail stores. Then, in what his nemeses would surely call chutzpah, Green switched to complaining about Tandy’s refusal to carry his magazines in Radio Shack stores. He also said they needed to get more cooperative with third-party software and hardware sellers. While he was right about what became one of the company’s biggest pitfalls, it was also no doubt motivated by the fact Green was making an aggressive plunge into the third-party software market at the time.

But speaking of Tandy’s in-house publication, TRS-80 Microcomputer News, it actually had the most and highest-quality CoCo content for that first computer Christmas at our cabin in the woods. Half of the six CoCo programs was Christmas oriented, albeit non-interactive graphics/music showpieces. There were also a few columns offering a mix of useful information and flat-out marketing misinformation (a.k.a. lies) about such things as memory upgrades being done with 32K chips. This was one of their more infamous bits of hogwash, as the chips were industry standard 64K RAMs, but Tandy inexplicably decided to undersell their machine. In passing, the column also noted the upgrade would cause various bugs and incompatibilities with several programs and peripherals.

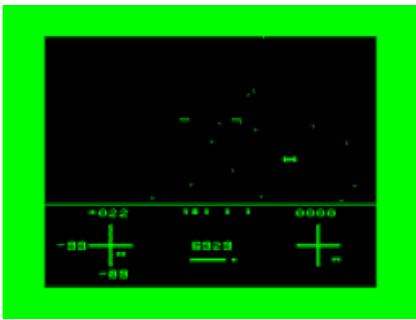
The real good news out of Fort Worth was a few new games were on the way, including the following two standouts (both are included in the Mocha emulator, so just fire that up when you’re in the mood for a quick diversion):

Polaris (B+)

One of the best home versions of Missile Command on any home machine, due to 1) the trackball-like positioning of Radio Shack’s otherwise dismal joysticks and 2) offering all three missile bases instead of the usual one on acclaimed versions such as those from Atari. Most of the coin-op’s elements are preserved including branching missiles, a center base that fires faster missiles than the side ones and all the usual enemies. The only thing missing is options, but those weren’t taken for granted the way they are today.

Project Nebula (A-)

This adaptation of Atari’s Star Raiders is among Radio Shack’s all-time best and consumed an enormous amount of my early teenage years. You navigate through a large map of space sectors from a first-person perspective, engaging in dogfights, suffering various malfunctions as you take damage and trying to reach space stations for repairs. There’s 10 selectable levels of difficulty, and everything from graphics to sound is unusually well done.



Finally, those looking to relive those early moments and many, many more can find a massive library of magazines and other content archived at an obscure site not easily found with search engines (call it this year's no-cost Christmas gift). The URL (deep breath) is: http://z80cpu.eu/mirrors/oldcomputers.dyndns.org/rechner/tandy/docs_from_www.trs-80.com/magazines.

Game Over[^]_^

I hope you all enjoyed our Christmas issue. It was a little late but we will turn around and get a January issue done in the next few days. From that point forward, we will aim to keep a regular publishing schedule as we have done in the past. We also hope you like the updated format of the issue. Due to a time crunch and also learning WordPress, I put this issue in a span of about 30 minutes. We'll work on improving the look and formatting as the months go on. Thanks for reading and see you all next month.

– by [Donald Lee](#), Retrogaming Times Roving Editor

[6 responses so far](#)

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