Table of Contents

Attract Mode
by *Scott Jacobi*

Hello again, and welcome back. It's been a crazy month, so I'm keeping the editorial short. The drama is over and the latest generation of consoles have made their holiday season debut, and the results have been surprising. But as a retrogamer, what I have been focusing on has not been the on the shelf (although Zelda Twilight Princess has been fantastic...), but rather what the companies are offering online. Between the 360's Xbox Live Arcade, and the Wii's Virtual Console, it looks like companies are finally starting to take the retrogame market seriously, finding new and easier ways to provide retro gaming experiences to the end user at affordable prices. Even Sony is getting in the act, that is, if you consider the first Playstation retro.

While many retrogamers feel that playing a game on anything other than the platform that a game was originally developed for is not the way to go, this is an easy and comfortable introduction to some of history's greatest hits for a new potential retrogamers and casual retrogamers alike. Each service has slightly different perks. The virtual console has a near inexaughstable library of Nintendo hits, along with several great Sega Genesis and TurboGrafx-16 selections, not to mention a specially created controller designed to work with the games (although the Wiimote will suffice for NES games.) While I personally prefer the Wii's selection, I have to say that the 360's achievment point system is rather appealing. Having a merit system to officially display your accomplishments to the world takes a classic like Pac-Man and infuses it with socially motivated replayability.

While true retrogamers will always prefer the original to a reproduction, I applaud Microsoft's and Nintendo's efforts to preserve the game play of the past that served to establish the game play of today. It will be interesting to keep an eye on these services and see what games are added to the growing list of classics that players can choose from. In our never ending search for new authors, we here at RTM would certainly appreciate anyone who would like to compare Live Arcade experiences to the original arcade, or to provide Virtual Console recommendations for the uninitiated. Let us know what you think of these services, and whether they do the original games justice.

The Many Faces of Bandits
by Alan Hewston

We continue our string of honoring titles that are now 25 years old - in the Many Faces of Bandits. This 1982 home computer game fits the "Death From Above" genre and was easily one of the best early clones of "Space Invaders" or "Galaxian". SI only made it onto Atari systems and Galaxians was delayed about 3 years so there was a void needing to be filled with no official arcade release. I'm pretty sure that if you get a chance to play this Apple][game by Sirius software, you'll be impressed. If not, then this review may overwhelm you

with verbiage in an attempt to do so. I figure that many of you have not played it, so I was very verbose this month. We'll be sure to cover a few more Apple 2 firsts in 2007.

Once loaded, the title & credits are raised up from the bottom of the screen by our little rocket, the one we employ throughout the game. An invader comes along and eats the Apple on the screen, leaving just the core. If you wait, the game will cycle through a full demo, repeat the intro and also display a screen depicting the enemies, their names and point values. All of the action takes place on one screen, but first we see the Bandits' mother ship - it moves upwards and off the screen, & then just the bottom portion of it is seen along the top left of the screen - the rest of the game. Each round the enemies deploy in a queue and then formations of them will be sent out, one group at a time. They maneuver quite a bit and drop bombs downward & eventually grab one or more of your "stores" from the bottom right of the screen. I call them stores - for lack of a better term. Each wave you begin with 5 stores to protect, losing them all ends the game. Those stores which are not lost in the enemy mothership, will tally up as bonus points at the end of each round.   Here's a partial list of the stores (& their bonus values) from the C64 sequence. Note that they vary from version to version. Grape(100), Orange(100), Pear(200), Apple(300), Screw(300), Cookie(400), Banana(400).

I believe the bonus remains fixed at 500 the rest of the game, and the stores seem to be randomized at this point and include: Submarine, Key, Hammer, Truck, Pencil, Light Bulb, Roller Skate, Evergreen Tree, Atari Joystick (my favorite), Television, Wedding Ring, Mug. Other stores from various systems also include: Dart, Straw, Plum, Lime, Blue Berry, Scissors & a Bicycle. There are probably more, regardless of what they are, this motivates you to make it to one more round, to see the next one.

The Bandits can move all about the screen whereas you (unlike the intro) are confined to moving left or right along the bottom of the screen. Each invader type makes their first appearance in a different round. Here is the order, the "Phalanx type I" or II up to 18 per wave; the "Menace", the worst enemy, a solitary but highly evasive and reappearing enemy; the floating "Carriers" and their droppings the "Nuisants" (or bouncing balls), and the "Torrents", long Centipede like formation with bombs on each segment. The Bandit gameplay is fully loaded, with an unbelievable amount of simultaneous on-screen action and creativity in attacks, enemies, combinations, formations and hazards, unmatched by ANY home game from this era - save Robotron. The action gets intense with something to watch in nearly all parts of the screen. You would easily be overwhelmed with these enemies, especially the bouncing balls, were it not for your shields. When the going gets rough, press upwards on your stick to activate your shields. Without an instruction manual, shields can be frustrating, and I may not have absorbed it all - to pass on to you. Shields lie in reserve (shown on screen) in blocks that last about 5 seconds each. Each activation causes 2 of your blocks to visibly drain, or about 10 seconds worth or invulnerability. All blocks can then be re-charged, but the duration you wait varies from system to system. The C64 takes the longest, at almost 20 seconds (plus this must be uninterrupted - i.e. cannot use shields) to restore just one, 5 second block. Others take <10 seconds per block. Time spent during the tallying of bonus points & between rounds also counts towards re-charging. Unfortunately shields can fail (before time is up), & portions of your reserves will instantly disappear (for no apparent reason). After lots of meticulous play testing, the shields always cut off (mid block) just as you hit the Menace - so watch out. And, after multiple contacts with the bouncing balls they may also cut off, and there may be some other reason why as well. Likewise, when many balls are present, I've seen blocks instantly disappear - on more than one system. So, these could be a fluke, or nasty programming, or a feature of the software, but I know that this is not to be confused with simply running out of shield power. That is, once all shields are drained, you have no more and they never regenerate. Good news is that when you lose a life, the next ship comes fully charged with all shields. The key to this game is to use shields only when necessary, but better to use a shield than to die. Bandits sits near the top of my want list for home brew ports to the Atari 2600 (a good challenge) or any other systems like the CV or 7800 hint, hint.

Arcade None. First on the Apple][home computer - all by Sirius Software.
Apple][1982 by Tony Ngo & Benny Ngo
Atari 8 bit computers 1982 by Tony Ngo & Benny Ngo
Commodore 64 1983 by Tony Ngo & Benny Ngo & Len Bertoni
Vic 20 1983 by unknown, but probably one of the above.

Home Version Similarities - except those in < > all home versions have: the title and credits are lifted by a rocket <Vic>; an information page showing each of the enemies <Vic>; and the demo mode is full, but silent; you have an unlimited supply of ammo to fire upwards; but only 3 (or 4) shots may be in action at once; a chance to pause the game any time; a quick reset button to start a new game <Atari 8 bit not so quick>; the game gradually introduces more enemies and difficulty; the action is non-stop <Atari 8 bit noticeable loading between every round> with only a brief break between rounds, with the tallying of bonus points & sometimes the restocking of the enemy Phalanx; the more stores you protect, the larger your end of round bonus; the bonus points per store saved starts at 100 and increases to a max of 500; unprotected, your stores will be captured and taken into the mothership by either the Phalanx or Torrents; if you shoot an enemy carrying a store, it is instantly returned to your stash; the enemies physically enter the mothership <C64> with the stores and then return to action; if you lose all of your lives or the mothership gets all the stores then the game is over; you earn an extra ship at 10k and every 5k thereafter; subsequent rounds increase in difficulty by adding all enemy types and then combinations of enemies, hazards and attacks; the behavior and attack formations of the Bandits are very random; up to 18 Phalanx (the main enemies) will populate each round; a single formation of 1 to 6 Phalanx will maneuver all about the screen as well as release up to 4 bombs or shots in your direction; these are both slow & fast moving bombs, plus a very fast low angled shot from near the bottom corners; after the stores bonus reaches 500, the Phalanx can send out a second formation while the current formation is raiding your stores, thus the second formation acts as a shield to protect what they stole (only verified on C64); the "Menace" is an independent invader that cries out when it arrives and again with every new dive run; there can only be 1 Menace at a time, but it releases up to 3 bombs and can only be hit while it makes its weaving attack (dive) from the top of the screen; the Menace is semi invulnerable (cheats) as it can move discontinuously from one spot to another dodging shots, or shots go right through it; it is always invulnerable & tiny during its ascent; as long there is one other bandit remaining, the Menace, as it's name implies, can return again and again; the "Carriers" appear as 4 balls on the ends of 2 rods aligned 90 degrees to each other & drop off "Nuisants" or deadly balls that bounces towards you; hitting a Carrier will split it into the 4 balls, which also fall and bounce toward you; Nuisants and balls (assumed to be the same) will bounce at least 4 times (up to 6 on some versions) before they disappear below the ground; bonus points are shown on-screen for each Nuisant; the final enemies are "Torrents" which come as 10 to 12 segments joined like the arcade game Centipede; Torrents weave across the screen, & downward, where at the bottom right they will grab your stores and follow the same escape route as the Phalanx - upward, then left to the mother ship's opening; each Torrent segment has a bomb that it will drop, which upon impact, forms a limited duration, sizzling acid bath that spreads out a bit, then dries up and vanishes; as is always the case, touching anything, such as a hazard blocking your path, means death; unlike Centipede, when you destroy the Torrents segments, they are gone, and the remaining segments continue in the predetermined path as if still joined; around the 18th round, Torrents arrive as individuals (only verified on C64), appearing every 5 second or so, and similar to the Menace, they keep on coming until all other enemies are gone; up to 40 hazards/enemies [No kidding] <Apple & Vic 20 (30+?)> can fill the screen simultaneously; the action is not even slowed down <Vic & Ap2>, and all the while, the screen is filled with dozens of colorful & twinkling stars, scrolling along at different rates; if you lose a life, your next ship is immediately activated, often causing you to die shortly thereafter, or if you are lucky your shields can save you; or worse, you die again (double-death) before you can even move, fire or activate a shield; your lives remaining, the score, and high score are all shown on-screen; there are several sound effects during the game for; the rocket in the intro <Vic & 64>; firing your missiles; hitting the enemy <Vic>; the enemies dropping bombs; you getting hit; activating your shields <Vic & 64>; the Menace starting a dive; enemy ball(s) released <Ap2 & Vic>; balls bouncing <Vic>; Torrents dropping bombs; bonus tallying of stores; end of round; end of game.

All versions are highly addictive with good randomness, a nice progression of difficulty, great creativity in combinations of enemies and attacks each round, plus bonus lives that are just within reach to keep a good game going - which keeps you wanting one more try to get to the next harder round. I did penalize the Addictiveness of all versions, a little bit for lacking an on-screen display of the round number, even more for the above noted problems using the shields and even worse for the double deaths. Without these setbacks, we'd be seeing some 10s. Likewise, I wanted to give all versions a 10 in Gameplay, as a 9 seems to low for a game so packed with action, complexity and depth. I wrestled with this, but my past reviews demand that

there be at least some gameplay options, and there are none here. No chance to practice a specific round, or change any setting or options or to set a greater or lesser difficulty. On all versions, there is no musical score and there are no sound effects for: starting the next life; the stores being stolen; or when stores are reclaimed.

Have Nots: Apple][(40)

My first reaction was disappointment that my version only permits keyboard control. I'm unsure if a joystick option exists, so for a keyboard I scored the Controls an (8) as they are hard to use & imprecise. The space bar works good for firing, but the "S" key is not a good choice to activate shields - it is not easy to be instantaneous - and you need to be, especially during rapid fire. The cursor keys are great for moving L & R, but the movements are programmed as discrete chunks, not continuous digital movement - really limiting your precision. Not to mention a buffer is used to store multiple movement commands, which when occurring during a graphics slow down, pretty much takes away

Screenshot from apple2games.com

any remaining control. The Gameplay is well-done and despite minor differences on every version, there is nothing significant missing from any versions so all versions scored a (9). The original is the most different - well OK, only in 2 or 3 ways. First, the shields operate only in 5 second chunks which will take some getting use to. 5 sec is not enough time to make a run from one side of the screen to other, or to break up all the bouncing balls in one pass. So, you'll be fighting to find and press the darn "S" button even more often here, whereas it is second nature to press upwards on a joystick. I suppose this is more of a controls and addictiveness setback anyhow. Second is that here (& the Atari) you can fire too rapidly, which makes preventing the Bandits from carrying off your stores too easy - reducing the skill/strategy element here. It appears that the max on-screen objects is around 30, but I did not find time to videotape & count. The Addictiveness is superb (9) and the pause is the <ESC>. There are some collision detection problems (the Menace is awful) & despite no reset button, it's easy to quickly lose your remaining lives to restart a new game. Despite disk access every round, it is always very brief & does not detract. Graphics are sharp (8) with good details, title screen, full demo, color variety, graphics variety, multi-colored ship, enemies, fruits, star field & backgrounds. There is some animation and OK displays, but there is also the action slow down. Even so, not many games have 30+ objects in motion simultaneously.   Sound is good (6) and most of the effects are in place as noted above in the similarities section. The AP2 & Atari also provide an audio effect when you try to use, but have depleted your shields. I did deduct some for the similar sounding and limited internal speakers. This game is found only on disk & originals are hard to find & unfortunately, there may not be a working ROM image online for emulation.

Bronze Medal: Vic 20 (42)

My first reaction was how cool there's at least 1 version on cart. Too bad this one is semi rare, so it may cost you $20. The Gameplay is superb (9) and all the action is here. Like the Apple, it appears that the max number of on-screen objects is around 30. This one seemed to have the best randomness & sequence of showing many rounds via the demo mode. Note the Nuisants bounce slowly & unusually high. The Addictiveness is great (9) with the <R/S> as the pause. There are some collision detection problems here too, as well as the action slowing. Quickly reset via <Restore>. The Graphics are very good (7) with loads of on-screen action, although slightly limited in number. The best features are the full demo, multi-colored star field and backgrounds. The details, color variety, and graphics variety are a bit lacking, but the displays and shields are good. There is no animation, no title screen or attract mode and not much multi-color. The Sound is very good (7) with most of the effects in place as noted above in the similarities section. Controls are perfect (10) and not affected by the graphics slow down.

Silver Medal: Atari 8 (43)

My first reaction was how cool to see the intro, where the Apple, when eaten, reveals the Atari logo inside. The Gameplay is superb (9) and all the action is here. Like the AP2, you can fire shots much too quickly. The Addictiveness is enjoyable (8) where <all keys> toggle the pause. There are

some collision detection problems here too, and no way to quickly reset the game. Actually one of the function buttons does, but like every aspect of this game, you must wait for the disk drive (every round and any time the screen needs to change). Every game will take longer to play on this version not too mention the added wear & tear on your drive. For this delay, I subtracted 1 point, but you may be even more critical. Graphics are very nice (8) with a title screen, attract mode, demo mode, plus loads of on-screen action (40+ objects simultaneously). There are good details, multi-colored ship, enemies, fruits, star field & backgrounds. There is some animation & the color variety, displays & graphic variety are OK. Sound is impressive (8), easily the best version, with all the effects listed above (& sounding good), plus more. They are . . . when the enemies arrive, when they

start a formation, when shields regenerate to full and when drained/empty, when the stores enter the mother ship and when you earn a bonus life. Best of all is the unique sizzling effect when the Torrent's bombs/acid is active. Controls are perfect (10). Only available on disk.

Gold Medal: Commodore 64 (44)

My first reaction was neat to see the words GAME OVER spelled out in cursive. The Gameplay is superb (9) and all the action is here. The Addictiveness is fantastic (9) where <R/S> toggles the pause and <Restore> to restart. There are some collision detection problems here too. Graphics are outstanding (9) just a bit better than the Atari, with a title screen, attract mode, demo mode, plus loads of on-screen action (40+ objects simultaneously). There are very good details, and good color variety, graphics variety, multi-colored ship, enemies, fruits, star field & backgrounds. There is some animation & displays are OK. The Sound is very good (7) with most of the effects in

place as noted above in the similarities section. Controls are perfect (10). Only available on disk.
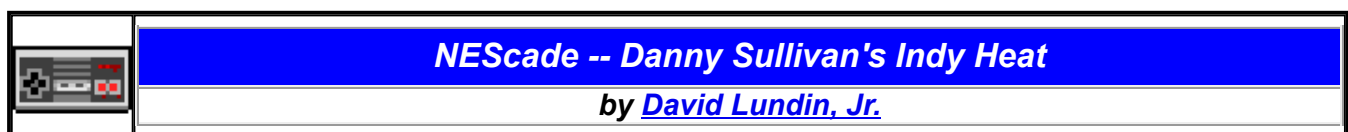
Acknowledgements, Updates and Errata since last month.
Apple 2 playing Bandits - Darn - I died by a stray bullet after completing a round, the bonus points were just about to tally up (which would have earned another bonus life) , but it was my final life and the game ended without giving me that extra life.

New staff writer Don Lee has already helped some with Apple][reviews and noted that in a recent review, Apple][Tapper, the left and right keys are assigned as <L> and <;>.
Many thanks to Apple][fan Sir Thomas McLaren for his enthusiastic support of the Apple][hardware, software and controllers.

Come back next month: where we plan to cover another Apple 2 first, with the Many Faces of "Serpentine" on these same 4 systems. Contact Alan at: Hewston95@NOSPAMstratos.net or visit the Many Faces of site:
http://my.stratos.net/~hewston95/RT/ManyFacesHome.htm

	NEScade -- Danny Sullivan's Indy Heat
	by David Lundin, Jr.

Over two years ago in my first RTM article I took a look at Super Sprint, which is still to this day one of my favorite arcade to NES conversions. A very similar game, released almost five years later, is Danny Sullivan's Indy Heat. The successor to Ivan "Ironman" Stewart's Super Off Road released two years earlier, Indy Heat replaced off road trucks with high speed Indy cars. The result is a game that comes back to the genre's roots,

fast and furious open wheel racing, while enhancing the overall experience with more realism. While Danny Sullivan's Indy Heat would never become as popular as Super Off Road, it was always the game I preferred to play between the two. Up to three drivers compete at fourteen different circuits with a total of five cars on the track at all times. Non player cars are drones and the yellow car is a force to be reckoned with, as it's driven by Danny Sullivan and has some decent artificial intelligence. At the start of the game each player enters their initials and selects a driver they would like to play as. This information is retained for the game's ranking system so it's possible to build your stats and lap records over many visits to an arcade. After each race prize money is awarded that can be used to purchase upgrades for your car and team. A year after the arcade release an NES version began to appear on store shelves, developed by Rare and published by Tradewest.

The NES version of Indy Heat was released around the same time as Nintendo's NES Four Score and NES Satellite four player adapters. Both these devices allowed up to four NES control pads to be connected to the control deck at the same time for simultaneous four player game play. To take maximum advantage of this, the NES version of Indy Heat supports four players over the arcade original's three. Non player cars are still cycled in as drones and Danny Sullivan is still at the wheel of the yellow car. Steering controls are remapped to left and right on the directional pad and control is silky smooth. The A Button controls acceleration, lifting off of it applies the brakes. The B Button is used to give your car a turbo boost granted that you have turbos remaining. Although the NES version features player registration just like in the arcade, this information is not retained once the power is turned off or the NES is reset.

Arcade Original   NES Version

Without a doubt the largest obstacle a port of this game has to overcome is graphic detail. The arcade version of Danny Sullivan's Indy Heat as the most lavishly detailed and colorful non laserdisc game that Leland ever manufactured. While their layouts may have been slightly different, the circuits really did suit their real-life counterparts properly in terms of location theming. One can tell a lot of care went into the graphic design of each venue to attempt to capture as much of the grand prix atmosphere as possible. There is no possible way this level of detail could have been translated onto the NES hardware, so it shouldn't be expected. What can be expected, and is delivered, is a recreation of the same over all circuit layout. Sure it's not as detailed but most of the key visual elements of each circuit and the surrounding areas are present in the NES version. It looks a little bare bones but all the important stuff is there. Most of the circuits from the arcade make the transfer over to the NES but the ones that do are renamed. For instance Vancouver is now Western Canada and Long Beach is now Southern California. In all, there are eight different circuits in the NES version, six less than the arcade original, but the ones included offer a good balance of fun and challenge.

Prize money is accumulated in the same way as it was in the arcade and is spent on the same upgrades: Turbos (more turbo boost), Brakes (faster stopping when off the accelerator), Tires (quicker turning speed and less sliding), Crew (faster pit stops), MPG (improves fuel consumption for longer runs between pit stops), Engine (improved acceleration), and Danny's Choice (Danny Sullivan purchases the most even assortment of upgrades you can afford). Sound effects are the same as they were in the arcade however the sparse speech that the arcade game featured is not present. Music is about the same as well with lazy little audio tracks playing in the background throughout the game.

While it may not seem like a stellar conversion it does bring the core of the game into the home. For this title to truly shine it needs to be played with four players. Danny Sullivan's Indy Heat and Nintendo World Cup are

the reasons I use my NES Four Score and NES Satellite. It's very easy to spend more than a few hours with friends playing this game and I honestly enjoy it more than the arcade original for one simple reason. In the arcade you could keep feeding the machine quarters to build a bankroll to purchase all the upgrades right from the start. This is something that can't be done on the NES, so there's a lot more challenge in building up your stats properly and it adds a lot of strategy to the game. Any fan of Super Sprint or Super Off Road would love this natural progression of this type of racing game, in the arcade or at home on the NES.

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

Apple II Incider
by Donald Lee

Welcome to the second installment of the Apple II Incider column here in Retrogaming Times Monthly (RTM). Hope everyone had a safe and sane holiday/Christmas/New Year season.

After submitting my first column to Scott, I thought about how I wanted to proceed with the column. While I am sure my gaming memories would be interesting, it might be awfully boring to see the same thing month after month.

I decied that While I will continue on with some more gaming memories this month, down the line, I hope to talk about other aspects of the Apple II beyond games. Just like other retro systems, the Apple II has a great history that deserves to discussed. I hope this is of interest to readers.

Continuing on with more gaming memories this month, let's look at a subset of games that could be best called edutainment. In the early to mid 80's, Apple pushed the Apple II's (primarily the Apple IIe) into schools around the country. With the huge base of computers throughout the country, it was inevitable that programs to educate and entertain kids would crop up.

The following are some good educational/entertainment games that I enjoyed in my youth.

Mastertype - Lightning Software
This was the first educational/entertainment title I recall playing after my parents bought our Apple IIe. The version I have is the original that was produced by Lightning Software. From the pictures I have seen online, it appears that Mastertype was acquired by Scarborough System later on.

What can you say about this typing tutor program which may have been one for the first ever? I guess I could say that since I fairly young when I played this (maybe 9 or 10 years old), I never thought of this as a typing tutor but more of a standard game. The graphics and sound may be primative now, but I thought they were fairly good for the time.

I don't recally going to the more advanced levels when I originally had Mastertype. I tried some of the higher levels on an Apple II emulator as I wrote this. Even today, with a ton of experience typing, the game is still a challenge and would give some other typists a good run for their money.

Lemonade Stand - Apple

According to stuff I read online, Apple included this game with Apple II computers throughout the 80's. Unfortunately, I guess I wasn't one of those who knew about it so I never played the game when I first got my Apple IIe.

However, fate would intervene as I was introduced to the game when I got to middle school. The game was fun but evoked a lot of giggles from my middle school classmates at the time. Many of them had Commodore 64's at the time and they got a laugh out of the primative graphics and sound that were part of the game. What could you say? The game was produced back around 1979 using the Apple II's low resolution graphics mode and sound has never been an Apple II strength.
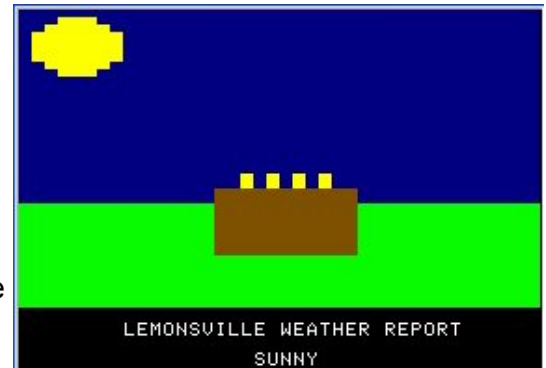
Even though everything about the game seems primative these days, the business concepts the game tries to teach is solid. Knowing your customers and knowing your business environment is essential to any business person. Some dot-comers could have probably used that lesson. Having gotten a chance to play the game again via emulator recently, Lemonade Stand brought back good memories of those good old days.

Where in the World is Carmen Sandiego - Broderbund
Originally released in 1985, Where in the World is Carmen Sandiego was a huge hit that has spawned numerous sequeals and even spinoff TV shows. The premise of the game was to track down a thief who had stolen a valuable artifact or item. The user was dropped into the city where the item was originally located. The user was expected to investigate and gather clues in the city to where the thief's next possible destination might be. Included items (I belive an Atlas or some other information type book) were included in the game package to help your investigation. If you tracked the thief's tracks correctly, you would eventually catch up and arrest them. Otherwise, you would run out time and the thief would get away. There was an ending to the game as you would eventually have to track down Carmen Sandiego herself.
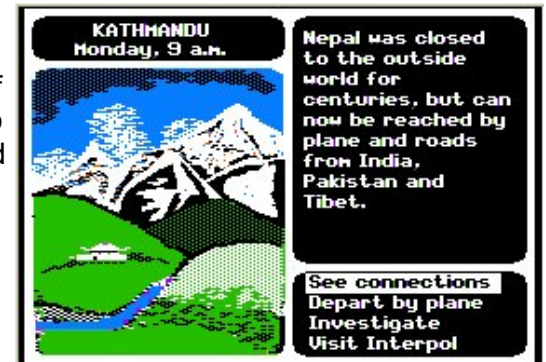
I forget how I was introduced to the game but this was definitely a great game and educational tool at the same time. For an older generation game, the user interface was simple enough that even really young kids could play the game. Like both programs above, I never really thought of this as an educational program. I was so enamored in tracking down Carmen Sandiego's henchman (and later Carmen Sandiego herself) that I never realized I was learning at the same time.

Now, if you asked me now to recite what I learned from the game, I probably couldn't tell you. However, I recalled spending many hours at the game and was happy to finally catch Carmen Sandiego at the end.

	Nintendo Realm - January & February 1986
	by Scott Jacobi
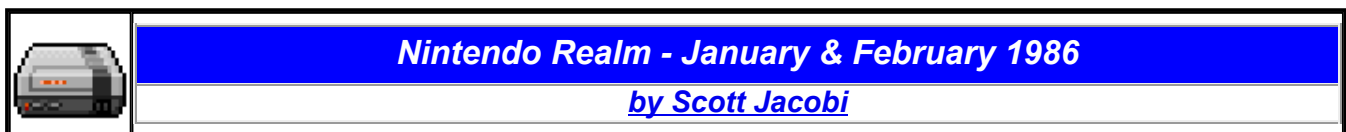
1986 started off like any other year for the Famicom, but Nintendo was facing a slight problem. They could not manufacture enough chips for their products. There was a general shortage of silicon at the time, and it was becoming extremely expensive to produce cartridges for the system, which was cutting in to their profits. So Nintendo created a plan B and designed the Famicom Disk System. The FDS sat beneath the Famicom and plugged in to the Famicom's bottom expansion port. It accepted slightly modified 3.5" diskettes. Games loaded in to the system's memory from the disk, and players would occasionally be prompted to flip the disk over to the other side. There was also a small writable space where games could be saved. There was only one small problem with the FDS; the games were extremely easy to pirate. And as soon as silicon returned in abundant supply, Nintendo dropped support for the disk format, but that wouldn't take place for roughly three years, making the FDS a mainstay for quite some time. As part of the FDS's launch, Nintendo released a handful of games that had already been released in cartridge format, but they also release a game that would

propel Nintendo's success, The Legend of Zelda.

Twinbee released by Konami on January 4th, 1986.
Compared to Gradius, Twinbee is a very light hearted shooter. Twinbee is supposed to represent a sentient air craft with boxing gloves for hands. With a nod to Xevious, Twinbee flies over vertically scrolling terrain and is capable of firing upwards through the air, or bombing targets on the ground. Unlike Xevious, the ground crosshairs only appear once a bomb has been launched. Ground targets can be bombed to reveal items that grant bonus points. Twinbee needs his arm to throw bombs, and if he is hit by an enemy's bullet, he loses them. An arm recovery item will appear only once after Twinbee loses his arms and must be picked up to regain bomb throwing power. Twinbee can power up in several fashions, such as increased speed, and trailing shadow images which increase fire power, but you have to work for it. As the level scrolls by, clouds appear on the screen. If you fire in to them, you may dislodge a bell. Bells are ordinarily yellow in color, and if you pick them up when they're yellow, you will be awarded an increasing number of bonus points if you never miss one. But if you continue to shoot at the bell, bouncing it back in to the air in the process, it may change color. Picking the bell up when it's a different color grants you a particular power up. The enemies are humorous and range from something as benign as vegetables, to something goofy such as toilet seat covers. The bosses take quite a bit of patience to defeat, and being powered up helps substantially.

Son Son released by Capcom on February 8th, 1986.
Son Son is Capcom's cartoonish representation of the famous Chinese tale known as the "Journey to the West" (which Dragon Ball Z was also slightly based upon.) Ported to the Famicom from the arcade game, player 1 controls Son Son, the magical staff wielding monkey, while player 2 controls the pitchfork firing pig Ton Ton (2 players play simultaneously.) Both players simply use their weapons like guns. The screen scrolls horizontally automatically at a constant speed, stopping occasionally for mid-boss fights. Son Son (and Ton Ton) can jump up or down to any level of ground, and some of the enemies have the same ability. Enemies typically appear in waves of groups, and the game grants bonus points for destroying an entire pack of them before they scroll off the screen. Enemies come at you in every direction, so no one position is safe. The stages blend in to one another, so there is no break in the action. The ground is littered with bonus point items, and some will only appear if Son Son walks over the ground where they are buried. A power item can transform enemies in to point items, so use it when there are a lot of enemies present on the screen. Mid bosses usually take the form of three floating warriors, whose shields must first be destroyed before they can be dispatched. This is a particularly fun early Capcom title.

Twinbee   Son Son

Goonies released by Konami on February 21st, 1986.
I have no doubt that many RTM readers will remember Goonies II for the NES, and remember it fondly. It was a rather well made adventure game, and it left many players wondering, "Why Goonies II? Where was the first Goonies?" Until I knew about this game, I always through Konami was trying to write the sequel to the original movie. Now I know that there actually was a Goonies 1, but it was never released in the U.S. Playing the original gives you a feel for how several of the concepts in Goonies II originated. Goonies is more linear than Goonies II, with each kid's rescue taking place on a given stage, and each stages must be completed in order to advance (although hidden warps exist, allowing players to bypass certain stages). Enemies such as rats and mobsters are your primary source of weapons, but special items, such as diamonds or power ups, can only be discovered by knowing the trick to make them appear in each stage. For example, in the first stage, you must kick the air where they should appear. Collecting eight diamonds refills

your life meter. Doors must be bombed in order to find the one Goonie and three keys necessary to complete each stage within the given time limit. Goonies one is much simpler, obviously, than the sequel, but it's quite enjoyable trying to discover all of the hidden items that each stage hold
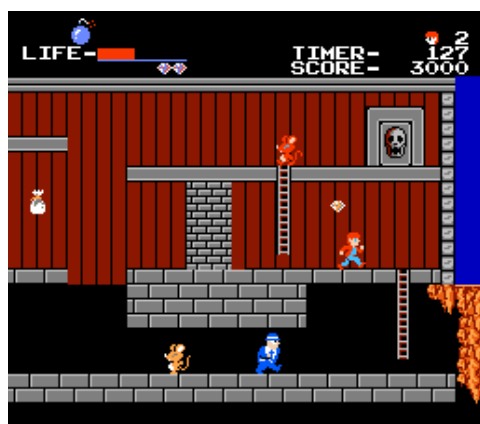
Baseball released by Nintendo for the Famicom Disk System on February 21st, 1986.
Tennis released by Nintendo for the Famicom Disk System on February 21st, 1986.
Soccer released by Nintendo for the Famicom Disk System on February 21st, 1986.
Golf released by Nintendo for the Famicom Disk System on February 21st, 1986.
At this point, I get to cheat a little and remind you that I already covered these games in previous RTM issues, So I won't be diving in to a detailed review of these games. Sufficed to say, along with the two games mentioned below, Nintendo saw fit to launch the Famicom Disk System with a plethora of sports titles, in a manner not unlike the very recent launch of the Wii, which contained the Wii Sports title. All of these games are good in their own right, although they would go on to be outdone in almost every respect by other third party publishers. But FDS disks were much cheaper than regular Famicom cartridges, so this afforded some players the opportunity to buy particular sports titles that they may have otherwise passed up in cartridge format.

Goonies

Baseball

Tennis

Soccer

Golf

Super Mario Bros. released by Nintendo for the Famicom Disk System on February 21st, 1986.
In the rare and unlikely event that a Famicom owner in Japan did *not* own Super Mario Bros., the Famicom Disk System provided owners with another opportunity to purchase the game at a cheaper price. Although I'm not sure why, it is possible that some people bought both versions, but this seems kind of unpractical since nothing changed in the disk version of the game except for the addition of loading time. Regardless, Super Mario Bros. was Nintendo's best seller so it was probably a smart move to introduce a new peripheral with a strong title. But it was the next title released for the FDS that would prove to be even stronger.

The Legend of Zelda released by Nintendo on February 21st, 1986. Released in the U.S. on August 22nd, 1987.

The Legend of Zelda needs no introduction, with it's award winning on-going series continuing to this day. As far as launch titles go, it doesn't get much better than this. Releasing the game on disk format was what really allowed the design of Zelda to permit game saving. The decision to include battery backed-up memory on the U.S. and European cartridges was a technological hurdle that had to be overcome in order to release the game in territories where the FDS did not exist (other games, like Metroid and Kid Icarus opted for a password system.) The Legend of Zelda was, in many ways, a representation of Shigeru Miyamoto's cave exploring youth in digital format. It was his memories of the feelings and sensations of exploring unknown caves and fields that inspired him with the design of this ground breaking game. For its time, the sheer size of the game seemed quite daunting, but the escalation of Link's power, through the discovery of a large inventory of tools and weapons, empowered players to explore territory with increasing danger. Even today, this game still holds a special appeal, selling quite well on the Wii's Virtual Console, allowing it to coexist with its most recent retelling of the story, The Twilight Princess. One significant difference between the Japanese version of the game and the American version, involves the use of the microphone contained in the control pad of the Famicom, which was used to defeat the Pol's Voice monster of the game by blowing or shouting in to the mic.

Super Mario Bros.   Legend of Zelda

How Much Is Your Collection Worth?
by Andrew Tonkin

How much is your collection worth? Have you ever wondered about how much your collection or individual pieces are really worth?

I recently sold off my NES collection and discovered that it was worth $2616 (Australian Dollars that is). Well, at least that is what I got by the time I sold off certain rare items privately and put the rest up on a series of ebay auctions. But is that really what my NES collection was worth?

The $2616 is what I received from a heap of interested buyers, but it doesn't take into consideration the hours and hours and hours I have spent over the last 8 years collecting NES games and hardware. It doesn't take into consideration the freezing cold mornings I spent trudging around garage sales and out-door markets. It doesn't take into consideration the vast tanks of fuel that I used up driving around to those garage sales, markets and second hand stores. It certainly doesn't take into consideration the way I have constantly had to bluff and manipulate and generally suck up to my wife every time I arrive home with yet another box full of "old computer game junk".

All of this is just part of the reason why you simply can't put a real price on our video game collections. The price can never accurately take into consideration the time spent accumulating the collection. More importantly, the price can never take into consideration the sentimental value of your most precious items.

Out of my reasonably large collection of classic video games, there are two items that I consider the most "valuable". The first is my Commodore SX64 colour portable in absolute mint condition. In actual dollar terms it is very valuable. It is a very rare item that is highly sought after by collectors. But what makes it even more valuable to me is that I had desired an SX64 for years and years, ever since I first saw one in a computer

magazine when I was just a teenager. At the time, the Commodore 64 was the ultimate gaming machine. So when I saw a fully portable Commodore 64, I just about wet my pants. And then when I saw the price, I think I did wet my pants. The price put it right out of my reach, but it remained my dream item for years to come. Fast forward about 20 years and I was finally able to acquire my very own Commodore SX64. My dream had come true and the SX64 takes pride of place in my collection.

But the most valuable item in my collection is a Commodore Vic 20 that doesn't work and has three missing keys. I have 11 Vic 20 consoles that all work perfectly, so what makes this broken one so valuable? It is the very first computer or console that I ever owned. My Dad bought for me in 1983, and it kept me company though all of high school. I even learnt to program my own games on it. I used this Vic 20 a few times a week from 1983 until it finally gave up the ghost in 1999. Even though it no longer works, I just cannot throw it out. It just has too many great memories. To someone else it is worth nothing. To my it is the most valuable item in my whole collection.

So how much is your collection worth? What are the most valuable items in your collection? What makes those items so valuable to you? I guarantee the actual value is far more than you would ever fetch on ebay!

NEWSBYTES

Retrogaming Fan Fiction: The Story of Gyruss aka "**From Neptune to Earth**"

One of our former Retrogaming Times Staff Writers, Jim Krych is a co-author of a fictional novel based upon the arcade game Gyruss. The book is now in print, and while I have only read the first few chapters, I can tell you that it is a unique book, with an approach to science fiction from a realistic military perspective - somewhat like how the new Battlestar Galactica series is on TV. I cannot say that it is for all readers, (and not the young) but it is a very in-depth look at an interesting storyline for the arcade game "Gyruss". If you like Gyruss, than give this one a look. Here are the details.

It is available now at Good Deal games and J2FGames
http://www.gooddealgames.com/ & http://www.j2games.com/

----- ONLY $9.99 ------ 300 Pages - 51/2 x 81/4
by David Cuciz, James Krych and Michael Thomasson

From Neptune to Earth
Inspired by the classic arcade game Gyruss, this military science-fiction book tells the tale of the thirteen Outer Colonies joining together and fight a bloody war to free the Earth from a ruthless and cruel enemy.This is the story of a single squadron during the Ideoclan War. Journey with them as they first meet during a "Call to Arms", become hardened veterans through exhausting campaigns, lose friends in battle, re-gain their edge, and in the process help win precious freedom for the Earth and eventual independence for their Colonies.
SEND US YOUR NEWSBYTES!

Game Over

That's all for this month. We hope you had a happy holiday and a safe and happy New Year. Perhaps Santa left you a bit of retrogaming goodness. If so, please tell us about it. See you next month!