

Retrogaming Times Monthly

Issue #38 - July 2007

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Attract Mode

by [Scott Jacobi](#)

I'm sure I'm not the only one. Every hardcore collector out there, whether of video games, or comic books, or toys... they've all done it before to. What am I talking about? An auction bender. A night of pure debauchery where the heart takes control of the wallet away from the brain. More than likely, you've experienced this the first time you tried eBay. Maybe you bid on one item. And you won, and it arrived and it was so easy that you bid on another, and another, and another. Until finally you realize just how much you've spent and you think, "oh deal lord, what have I done?" Yeah, eBay is an old story for me. Been there, done that. I've moved on to something more hard-core.

Sure, eBay is good for the casual video game collector. A few rare items pop up once and awhile, a lot goes up for auction that makes a good collection starter, that's all well and good. But what holds true for video game shops in Japan holds equally well for auction sites. While eBay never hit it off in Japan, Yahoo Auctions did. And if you could manage to perform a search on there, where an English search yields only a fraction of the results you could find if you knew the equivalent Japanese search, you'd find things. Things that are relatively common there, and sold for dirt cheap that never came out here in the United States. Things that might make you the envy of all your video game collecting fans. There's just one problem (well, besides the difficulty for a non-Japanese speaking customer to find what he or she is looking for): Most sellers won't ship internationally. So what to do?

Enter a site like <http://www.japanauctioncenter.com/> and all of a sudden the treasures of Yahoo Auction Japan become a little more available. Sites like japanauctioncenter allow you to place a bid on items found on Yahoo Auction Japan, and they will bid on your behalf. If you win, they will have the item delivered to their headquarters in Japan, and whenever you are ready, you can have the bundle of all of your winnings shipped together to you in the States. All it takes is a Paypal account, and an amount of money deposited to them up front. So what's the catch? Of course, they take a cut as commission. These days it's around \$8 plus 8% of the closing bid price, although it's actually calculated in yen. On top of that, you pay both the shipping from the seller to the headquarters, and the international shipping from the HQ to your home. It gets expensive, fast.

So here I am with a new found ability to purchase goods from Japanese auctions, and a moderately sophisticated way to search for what I'm looking for, (thanks in part to sites like Jim Breen's Japanese Dictionary Server) and what happens? I go nuts. A couple of hundred dollars later and I am the proud owner of a huge collection of Famicom game guide books, written completely in Japanese, none of which I can understand, and loaded with pictures of Japan's retrogames. How I ever thought I

could make use is these is unclear to me now, at least I still think that they're neat to own. And granted, isn't that why a lot of collectors collect? The concept that the ownership of the good is more valuable than their utility? I have to say that I enjoy flipping through the pages and seeing how games were represented differently by Japan than by our American magazine counterparts. The line between magazine and comic book was much blurrier in Japan. Nevertheless, I think next time, I'll keep my bids down to under a hundred dollars, and spare myself the shock of another auction bender.

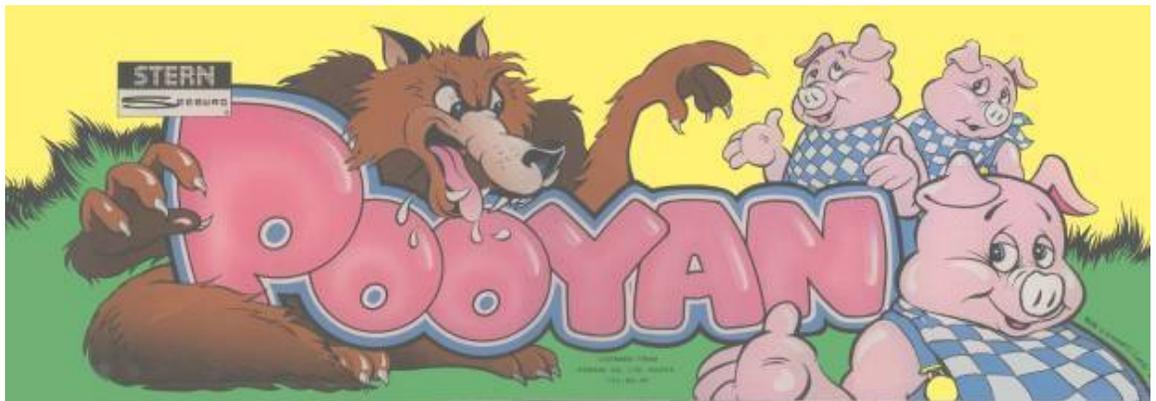


The Lost Faces of... Pooyan for the Apple][

by Alan Hewston

Taking a break here with only one new game review, but not quite, as this still ends up being a full report. We continue our reviews of 25 year old titles, honoring those games first arriving in 1982, and at the same time, we continue to catch up on Apple II titles that were not covered in the original review. I did not have a machine back then, so we call these missing reviews a "Lost Face" . . . of Pooyan. As you, the readers tell me, you love to see all the details, and looking way back almost 7 years ago, my review in Retrogaming Times Issue #39 was pretty sparse, almost lame. So with over 400+ reviews since then, the Many Faces of Pooyan deserves a makeover and some more accurate re-scoring as well.

Before we begin, let me tell you that this not-so-well-known title is one of those games that can really put you into the "zone" And . . . if there is ever an unabridged video game encyclopedia made, and I looked up the term "Peripheral Vision"



Cool Pooyan marquee courtesy of KLOV.com

this is a game I'd expect to see as a prime example. The Action may seem a bit slow to some folks, but there really is a lot going on. You need to focus and dodge not only those rocks coming at you, but also any wolves behind you on the ladder, plus keep an eye out for that wolf bait, all while using your "Peripheral Vision" shoot at and see if you've hit the ever descending multitude of wolves. This game really has a lot of action and gameplay depth and if there were a couple more unique screens to play, and a couple choices for difficulty, start round or other options, the Gameplay would be a "10". On a similar tone, this game and its action can be extremely addicting with a gradual increase in difficulty and intensity, and loads of randomness and varying attack. The rounds are challenging, lasting a few minutes, but not a marathon either. Great stuff - give Pooyan a try today.

Arcade: 1982 distributed by Stern, programmed by Konami

Home versions

Atari 2600 1982 Datasoft/Konami - unknown credits

Atari 8 bit computer 1983 Datasoft by Scott Spanburg, graphics Kelly Day

Apple][1984 Datasoft by Chris Eishaugle

Commodore 64 1983 Datasoft by Scott Spanburg

Still a lost Face - as I do not have any tape/disk games

or a drive for the CoCo.

TRS-80 Coco 1983 Datasoft (cassette only) by James Garon & Gerry Humphrey.

These two programmers made some great conversions onto the CoCo, so I suspect it is a very good port as well. Screen shots verify the Strawberry bonus round.

Not covered here: overseas port - I do not have this system.

MSX 1985 Konami/Hudson

To see more screenshots, visit Moby Games at:

<http://www.mobygames.com/game/pooyan/screenshots>



Coco screenshot courtesy of Moby Games.

Home Version Similarities - except those in < > all home versions have: a demo mode; a pause in the action <2600>; two different action screens, Pig's House & Wolf Valley; both action screens are similar, in that the Mother pig is on the right and can only move up/down on her open air elevator car, while the wolves move in from the left side of the screen <2600 they just appear on/with a balloon>; the wolves then move across and grab a balloon and then descend or ascend; the wolves can be on different color balloons, but AFAIK there is no significance to the balloon's color, other than the Boss Wolf (see below); additional balloons, I've seen as many as 5 balloons fly solo (sans a wolf) and ascend upward from Wolf Valley to run interference for the balloons that carry the wolves; these extra balloons also move upwards at different (i.e. slower) speeds to make interference even more effective; you still earn 50 points per each balloon popped; all points scored are displayed briefly on-screen <2600>; in later rounds ascending balloons can have multiple layers <2600> requiring a 2nd or 3rd hit to finally drop the wolf; such balloons, when hit, get smaller and thus float upwards even more slowly; the solo, or interference balloons never have more than one layer; wolves can carry along a rock or two to throw at you; they will initially throw the rocks straight at you, but in later rounds they learn to use a parabolic arc - making it harder for you to judge/avoid; if you are hit with a rock, you will fall and die; in later rounds wolves will also carry a shield that they hoist upwards in front of their balloon to block your arrows; as the game progresses, the frequency of their use of the shields and the number of wolves using a shield will both increase; one flaw in this defense is that your arrows, after hitting their shield will fall straight down, which then can break any balloon just below and/or slightly to the right of where it hit the shield; you can fire an unlimited number of arrows, but can only have 2 <2600 only 1> arrows in motion at a time; there are never more than 4 wolves descending or ascending at a time; your number of lives and the round are always shown; a counter <2600> shows how many move remain to be vanquished before the round will end; the number of "Wolves Remaining" each round begins at 24 (on round one) and reaches a maximum starting point of 48 <2600 (unknown)>; when the counter hits 5 or less, the Boss Wolf may appear; the Boss Wolf will have a distinct balloon color, usually a clear balloon, and requires 3+ <AP2 & 2600 appear to be unbreakable> hits to break his balloon; if the Boss Wolf makes it to the top, the "Wolves Remaining" counter will increase by 4 or 5; your best strategy is to save a wolf bait to throw at this Boss Wolf; any wolf that descends safely will cross the field to the right and climb up the ladders to attack you directly; there are never more than 4 wolves <2600 (1)> on these ladders behind you; the wolves behind you can be doing one of 3 things - (1) most of the time they just stand there, then (2) they get ready to lunge at you (watch for the difference), and then (3) just after they move, they will visibly lunge outward to grab you; they will hold this lunging posture for several seconds and if they grab and you are there, or if they are grabbing and you move up/down into them, then they catch you and you fall to your death; similarly, when the wolves are ascending to the top, they will move to the right and accumulate and work together to push a large boulder to the right; once 6 are up there the music will change and become frantic <2600, AP2 & Atari?> signaling your impending doom; when 7 are there, they then push the boulder over the edge which will crush your Mother Pig; fortunately, the instant your wolf counter reaches zero, the round immediately ends <2600 - waits for all objects to clear first>; after a couple rounds and every couple? thereafter, you get to play a bonus

round <2600>; in all bonus rounds you cannot be harmed, just collect more points, and if you are perfect, and collect them all, you then earned an added bonus; there are 2 different bonus rounds, which I hereby descriptively title as "Using Only Wolf Bait" (get all the ascending wolves using bait) and "Shooting the Strawberries" <AP2 (not seen?)> (hit all the Strawberries thrown by the wolves; during the regular rounds, you earn points for collecting the wolf bait, balloons hit, wolves falling and rocks hit; a bonus life is earned at various scores and multiples thereafter; between player turns/rounds a text display <2600> will tell you what player's turn it is or if it is a bonus round, or if the game ends; there is a short musical score for the introduction and when the game is over, plus some versions have one or more musical scores playing throughout; there are many sound effects, one each for nearly every event in the game - such as when you shoot, hit a balloon, hit a rock, hit a shield, when a wolf gets a balloon, when a wolf throws a rock, when you are hit by a rock, grabbed by a wolf, the boulder falls on you, when you acquire the wolf bait, when the wolves jump off to grab the wolf bait, and when you earn a bonus life. Some versions have repeated or similar sound effects, but nearly all of them are in place on every version. You'll probably notice a few effects heard from games made earlier on that system. No version has a choice of starting level, and only the 2600 has any difficulty or other skill related settings.

Have Nots: Atari 2600 (33)

My first reaction was that I was a bit too harsh on this title the first time around so some scores increased. But it now loses out on a medal. The Gameplay is (+1 from my initial review) (6) good enough that you can tell this is Pooyan. But it is lacking in several ways due to the graphical limitations of the system - which may have been better done if this came out a couple years later. You only have 1 arrow, there is no Wolves Remaining counter and the wolves simply come out at random they do no arrive and then deploy. So there is no planning or strategy - just shoot. There is only one wolf along the ladder, and he may even begin the round there. To make matters worse, he can move up/down and attack from any (all 6) positions, instead of only 4 on other ports. Thus there is no safe spot in between ladders as in the other versions. The blockiness and accompanying discrete (choppy) motion of the game really limits the fluidity of the game and you lose all sense of finesse or maneuverability. The motion or physics behind the game is extremely limited, and unrealistic, which also factors in on one's enjoyment or the score of the Addictiveness, which is (5) mediocre. There is not a whole lot to look forward to in this version. There is no pause, the action starts off fast and furious, with wolf shields firing up early and often, It is hard to tell if the game actually gets much harder, other than the rounds do last a bit longer. There are no bonus rounds, no on-screen points and no end of round/game or other breaks. There are the options for speed and rock trajectories, but those are not significant. There are additional elements added, such as the actively moving wolf on the ladder, plus the unique addition of interference balloons on the wolves descending screen. Why not gradually introduce a few of these new or different elements. Instead, the game begins at nearly full skill and simply flips from one screen to the next abruptly. Nothing much to look forward to after round 2. Graphics are (+1 from my initial review) (6) not bad, as you can tell what everything is. There are good color variety, plenty of objects in motion (albeit choppy) and good animation. The variety, and backgrounds are lacking, and the details are sparse but good enough to see the use of the shields, the rocks, the bait and the Boss Wolf. Sound is very good (7) with some introductory and round ending music, plus pretty much all the effects are there. The effects are not as well done and repeat but provide a decent job of enhancing your experience. Controls are (+2 from my initial review) (9) as there is still some sluggishness to the response and ability to fire and move nearly simultaneously. The game is so choppy that you do not feel like you are in control, but for the most part, you can move and fire when you are supposed to. My previously low controls score was counting the blockiness and choppiness twice. This cart is very hard to find, but is really cool looking and highly collectible. My thanks go to the Many Faces of Father, Tom Zjaba for (several years ago) finding and saving this cart for me to buy from him and add to my collection.



Pooyan 2600 screenshot courtesy of AtariAge.

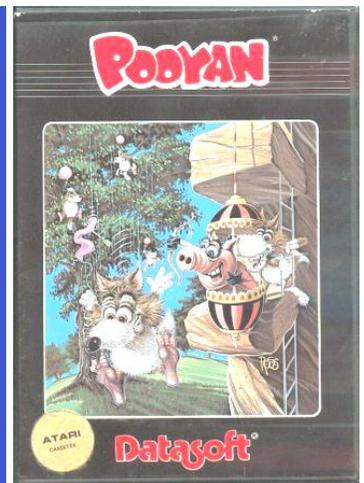
Silver Medal: Atari 8 bit computer & Apple][(44)

Atari 8 bit computer (44)

My first reaction was disappointment with the look of the game. The Gameplay is all there (9). The Addictiveness is (+1 from my initial review) great (9) with a pause and nothing that really detracts from the game. Not sure why I scored it lower previously, other than some collision detection problems.

Graphics are of good quality (8) but could be better.

There is a little bit less action on screen and the colors are unrealistic. Who's afraid of the big "PINK" wolf. The animation and details are lacking as are the displays and wolf counter - all of which could easily have been improved. The backgrounds, graphics variety and use of multi-color are all very well done. Sound is impressive (8) with all the effects in place and OK. There is a full musical score, but it is too annoying and that made the difference to me. It is not hard to imagine why they added a music toggle key. Controls are perfect (10) (+1 from my initial review). I think that I did not observe things as carefully in my first review and the arrows do fire precisely on schedule, and only when they are allowed to. Pretty hard to find on disk & cassette, so hopefully you can find a bootleg or use emulation. A later, European release is even rarer.



Atari 800 cassette box & screen shot courtesy of Atarimania.com

Apple][(44)

My first reaction was that I'm sorry I waited so long to get to this one. What a gem! One of the finest Apple][titles I've ever reviewed. The Gameplay is great (9), all there except for the Strawberry bonus round. The Addictiveness is (9) wonderful with a pause <Esc>. The action is really fast on this version, so you may like it more or less than the others for that reason alone. Graphics are great (9) with multiple on-screen locations filled with action. The most realistic color combinations, variety and backgrounds and the fastest on-screen action are all here as well. There are plenty of details, good use of multi-color, the best animation, and good displays. The Sound is enjoyable (8) with all the effects done well and music for the title screen and introductions.

Controls (9) still leave some improvement desired. The use of the analog controller will eventually haunt you (death) as you have to work too hard to make sure that you do not move when you want to remain fixed. I have been told that better joysticks do exist, so once again, if there is something better than what I use, you may see perfection here, but I doubt it. As is always the case, Apple][games are only found only diskette, and since Apple][originals are hard to find, an original AP2 is probably the hardest one to find.



Apple][screenshot courtesy of Moby Games

Gold Medal: Commodore 64 (46)

My first reaction is this title is most excellent, with a full musical score throughout with a different score for each screen, plus the frenetic music when 6 (and then 7) wolves are at the boulder. Gameplay is outstanding (9) with everything from the arcade. Addictiveness is (9) wonderful, with a pause <space bar> and gradual speed up in the

difficulty. Graphics are well done (9) with great action, good details, color variety, graphics variety & backgrounds. There are nice displays and animation plus the best use of multi-color for enemies, obstacles, you, plus some background effects. Sound is superb (9) (+1 from my initial review) with 2 full musical scores and all the effects sound great. Controls are perfect (10) (+1 from my initial review). Echoing my Atari comments, I did not observe things as carefully before, so there are no points lost. Likewise this version is only found on diskette (cassette in Europe) and probably pretty hard to find an original. Too bad as most of you have missed this one at the arcade and the only cart version, 2600 is its weakest link.



C64 screenshot courtesy of lemon64.com

Acknowledgements, Updates and Errata since last month.

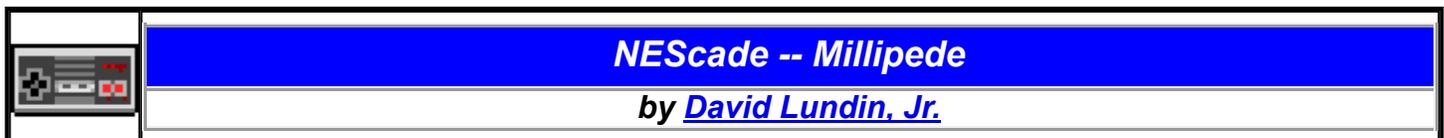
You might be able to tell that Pooyan is one of my all time favorite games. I hope that you give it a try as it really deserves more credit for a lot of depth to the gameplay, packs a lot of great action, allows for strategy and offers a most excellent challenge.

On KLOV.com, they say the name "Pooyan" means "little pigs" in Japanese, not German as I had reported in the past.

I've not verified this but, play a JAVA emulated version of Pooyan is located at:
web.utah.net/~nkehrer/JPooyan.html

I'm still looking for a disk copy of Apple][Xevious if anyone has one.

Come back next month for another 1982 review of the Many Faces of Xevious, released 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>



Amazingly one of the most forgotten arcade to NES ports is that of a game that was extremely popular in its day and still brings back fond memories to nearly all who have played it. The spiritual successor to Centipede, Millipede crawled its way into arcades in 1982 from Atari. You play the role of Archer, a sharpshooter armed with only a bow and arrow. Trapped in a garden of giant mushrooms, it's up to you to battle hoards of giant insects. Beetles, spiders, misquotes and more are on the attack but most terrifying of all, the mushroom field is home to giant millipedes which scramble down from the top of the screen. When the millipede reaches the edge of the screen it reverses direction and drops down one row closer, the same happens if it runs into a mushroom. As each section of the millipede is hit by one of Archer's arrows it becomes a mushroom and if the millipede is shot in the middle sections it will break off into multiple smaller millipedes. Strategy comes into play since when each destroyed section of millipede turns into a mushroom, the remaining millipede behind will hit that mushroom and instantly drop to the next row. Each section of millipede that reaches the bottom of the screen will cause an additional section to spawn in the shaded area at the bottom of the screen where Archer is able to move. Since Archer cannot leave this area, only move within it, things get frantic fast once additional millipede sections begin to appear. Keeping this area

clear of mushroom growth is extremely important so that fresh millipede spawn won't have a shortcut to the bottom, there by spawning even more millipede sections. To help Archer out DDT pesticide bombs appear throughout the mushroom field. Shooting one of these causes a cloud of DDT to be released which destroys anything in its blast area including mushrooms and otherwise indestructible flowers. Once the millipede is completely destroyed either by Archer's arrows or DDT pesticide bombs the next level begins. After every few levels a swarm of airborne insects will swoop down on the playfield, causing massive mushroom growth in their path. This of course gives the millipedes quicker routes to the bottom of the screen on the subsequent levels unless the growth is thinned out by arrow shots or DDT.

Six years after the original arcade release, Millipede appeared on the Nintendo Entertainment System courtesy of HAL Labs who also ported the arcade classic Joust to the platform. HAL really had a knack for converting these arcade titles to the NES and Millipede is no exception. The first task at hand is reworking the control method. Millipede in the arcade used a trackball to move Archer around, of course this isn't possible on the NES. However if you didn't know better you'd swear this game originally used a joystick - the control on the NES version is that good. It is precise and smooth with the directional pad and perfectly responsive. The single fire button of the arcade is mapped to the NES control pad A button. Aside from the added pause feature, that's it, controls are perfect. Sound is done equally as well, with nearly every sound effect from the arcade recreated on the NES including the marching of the millipede and the unforgettable sounds of Archer dying and the mushroom field regrowing. When the game is running it really does sound as if the arcade machine is in your home.



HAL also did a wonderful job at recreating the graphical feel of the game. Everything is nicely detailed from Archer's arrows to the mushrooms themselves. Every enemy from the arcade is brought over and behaves exactly as they did in the arcade. Spiders randomly bounce around the lower part of the screen, inchworms slow down the action once hit, bees rapidly drop down the screen leaving trails of mushrooms in their wake, it's all done perfectly. The playfield is scaled down and moved off center so that the vertical presentation of the arcade can be recreated as properly as possible on a standard horizontal television. Score and remaining player status fills up the remaining space on the right side of the screen. While the levels don't perfectly recreate what one would see in the arcade version, they're close enough and the game over all just feels right. I will say however that NES Millipede seems far easier than arcade Millipede. Possibly the slight differences in screen dimension are what make the difference, perhaps it's the control method. Either way I've always been able to rack up far higher scores on the NES than in the arcade. Regardless, the game still has the same frantic pace and fun as the original, and that's really the point after all. One missing feature is the ability to begin the game with a higher starting score and difficulty based on the previous round of play. On the NES this feature has been replaced with a more difficult starting setting selectable from

the title screen. This basically doubles the difficulty for the first dozen or so stages until the difficulty of the normal mode catches up to the "B" setting.

It is a shame that the NES version of Millipede seems to have been swept under the carpet and forgotten over the years. Without a doubt it is one of the highest quality conversions of any classic arcade title, especially given the hardware platform. While it may not be a perfect verbatim recreation of the arcade original, it hits enough of the sweet spots to make it just as fun and entertaining. Millipede is one of the greatest classic arcade games, there's no arguing that. When building an NES arcade collection this game is simply a must have. It's fun, plain and simple, the cornerstone of the arcade era itself.

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



Apple II Incider: The Apple II GS - Part II: IIGS vs. The Competition

by Donald Lee

Welcome to this month's column. As I indicated last month, I am focusing on a relatively unknown members of the Apple II line, the Apple IIGS (Graphics and Sound).

Apple Computer released the Apple IIGS in late 1986. This was Apple Computer's response to the challenge of the new Commodore Amiga (later known as the Amiga 1000) and the Atari 520ST.

The following are the published technical specifications of the three computers. Thanks to OLD-Computers.com (<http://www.old-computers.com/>) for having the information so readily available for access!

APPLE IIGS

Detached 80-key full stroke with 10-key numeric pad and mouse connector

CPU: Western Design Center 65C816 (16 bit)

2.8 MHz, switchable to 10 MHz

256 KB RAM expandable to 8 MB

128 KB ROM expandable to 1 MB

Text: 40 or 80 chars x 25 lines

Colors: Graphics: 320 x 200 (16 colors per line) / 640 x 200 (4 colors per line) + Apple II graphic modes (Low Resolution: 40x48 pixels in 16 colors. Double Low Resolution: 80x48 pixels in 16 colors.

High Resolution: 280x192 pixels in 6 colors Double High Resolution: 560x192 pixels in 16 colors.

Sound: Ensoniq 32 with 16 stereo voices (+ 64 KB on chip RAM to store sound data), one voice is reserved for the system beep

AMIGA 1000

full-size typewriter style, 89 keys, 10 function keys and numeric keypad

Motorola MC68000

7.16 mHz

Co-Processors: Denise (video), Agnus (memory manager, blitter & copper), Paula (sound and disk access)

256kb RAM, upgradable to 512k internally. Extensible to 8.5 MB with extension card (512 KB CHIP RAM + 8 MB FAST RAM) and to 10 MB

8 KB ROM (The Kickstart isn't in ROM but loaded at the boot in RAM, where it takes 256 KB)

Text: 60 x 32 / 80 x 32

Graphics: 320 x 200 and 320x400 (32 colors), 640 x 200 and 640 x 400 (16 colors)

Colors: up to 64 colors among 4096 (EHB mode). The Amiga can display 4096 colors simultaneously (HAM mode)

Sound: Four 8 bit PCM voices, 9 octaves

520 ST / ST+ / STM

Full-stroke keyboard with numeric and editing keypads

CPU: Motorola MC68000

8 MHz

Co-Processors: 'Shifter' and 'Glue' custom chips

512 KB RAM (520 ST/STM), 1 MB RAM (520 ST+)

192 KB ROM

Text: 40 or 80 columns x 25 lines

Graphics: 320 x 200 / 640 x 200 / 640 x 400 dots

Colors: 16 among 512 (320 x 200) / 4 among 512 (640 x 200) / monochrome (640 x 400) this last mode needs a special monitor.

Sound: 3 voices, 8 octaves

At first glance, there isn't a ton of difference between the computers. All three machines had high resolution color graphics modes, good sound capabilities and higher speed processors as compared to the 8 bit machines that had been sold during the early to mid 1980's.

However, at a closer glance, there were significant differences between the IIGS and the Amiga/520ST. In an interesting choice, Apple went with the Western Design 65C816 chip which was compatible with the 6502/65C02 chips that were being used in a good number of 8 bit computers (Apple II, Commodore 64) at the time. The processor speed was measured around 2.8 Mhz.

However, The main feature upgrades in the IIGS would be its graphics and sound capabilities. The capabilities were light years above and beyond what the 8 bit Apple II computers offered. 8 Bit Apple II computers had suffered with lower resolution graphics and poor quality sound for years. The Apple IIGS addressed these limitations in a big way with a 320x200 (16 colors) and 640x200 graphics (4 colors) modes out of a possible 4096 colors. While the initial specifications seemed a little limited, programmers discovered methods to display up to 3200 colors at a time on screen.

The use of a dedicated sound chip in the Ensoniq sound chip was also a huge boon. No longer would Apple II users have to listen to beeps and boops (or nothing at all) while playing their games. No longer would Apple II users have to buy external sound cards to listen to real music during games. The Apple IIGS's had plenty of power and then some to support great sound and music applications.

Yet with all of these positives, it became readily apparent the Apple IIGS didn't quite match up to its Amiga and ST counterparts. For one, the 2.8 Mhz processor speed was a huge limitation. Apple initially countered by saying the 2.8 Mhz speed in the 65C816 chip was almost equivalent in performance to the 68000 series of chips used in other computers. However, many users complained about the sluggishness of the IIGS and that eventually led to many accelerators being introduced.

The introduction of the IIGS with 256 KB of RAM also proved to be a major limitation. Unlike the Amiga and ST, the IIGS did not have a dedicated graphics chip to help with animation and or graphics oriented processor work. Those programmers would have to use more processor power to perform tasks that the Amiga/ST had dedicated processors for. The limited amount of RAM, on top of the sluggish speed of the IIGS slowed the development of software during the initial months of the IIGS introduction.

Next month: The Apple IIGS could have ruled the world. Why didn't it?





Nintendo Realm: Mid June - Mid July 1986

by Scott Jacobi

We're cruising right along, and I think this month's batch of games are a bit more enjoyable than last month's selection, so let's get right to it.

Makaimura released by Capcom on June 13th, 1986. Released in America as Ghost 'n Goblins on November 1986.

Although the original title may appear unfamiliar, out of all the games covered this month, this is the one game that needs no introduction. Ghost n' Goblins has been an NES favorite for so many, despite its reputed difficulty. How is it that a game so difficult, a game that so few people ever completed, is loved and cherished by so many? Was it the imaginative premise that straddled both King Arthurian nights and Transylvanian horrors? Was it the variety of weapons that you got to throw at all of the ghouls who unwittingly crawled out of the ground? Or was it the fact that your character would run around in his underwear after he lost his armor? More than likely, it was the sense that the game gave you that you *could* beat the game if only you tried a little harder. And of all the horrors that the game had for players, the worst by far was the fact that once you reached the last stage, you'd be forced to play it all once more from the beginning before being allowed to fight the final boss. The Ghost 'n Goblins series had several sequels, some of which are still being released on modern gaming systems, and it had a substantial reinvention with the Maximo series for the Playstation 2. And it all harkens back to this fiendishly difficult, but well loved games.

Super Chinese released by Namco on June 20, 1986. Released in America as Kung-Fu Heroes by Culture Brain

Based on an arcade game with the same name(s), Super Chinese is a fun, if a little repetitive, arcade action game. You control one of two monk brothers (two players can play simultaneously) and you must out-punch and out-kick the defending enemy army. You can even perform flipping jump and land on the enemy's head, knocking them out cold. Power ups would appear that gave you the ability to shoot long range fireballs from your fists, giving you a substantial advantage. If you had the time, you could punch the rocks in the garden to reveal more power-ups or money, or perhaps even a staircase to a bonus round where you could earn extra lives. The Famicom and NES versions even contained a manner of warp zone that allowed players to jump ahead several levels. But the most fun aspect of the game, by far, is simply jumping around and flipping all around the enemy monks, and knocking them out. It made a great two player game.



Ghost n' Goblins



Super Chinese

Spoon released by Irem on June 26th, 1986. Released in American in late 1986.

Spoon is a bit of an awkward shooter. While most shooters take place in outer space, this one takes

place underwater, where supposedly a part of the United States has sunk under the ocean. You control a submarine with the ability to fire unlimited amount of torpedos forward and bombs down at an angle. Throughout each stage, you will encounter glowing objects close to the ground by several of the buildings. When blown up, they reveal people who are awaiting your rescue simply by picking them up. There is some limit to how many people your submarine can hold, but you can easily grant them their freedom by rising up to the surface of the water, where I can only image they wait for further rescue. The play mechanics of Squoon feel a bit loose and sloppy. At first it's hard to tell what's friend or foe. The dolphins don't actually pose any threat to you, but they do kind of steal your rescues away from you. (What do they do, eat them?) This is one early NES game that doesn't show much of the polish that other games had begun to show by this time.

Choplifter released by Jaleco on June 26th, 1986.

On one hand, it's hard to understand why such an American classic as Choplifter was not converted to the NES if it came out in Japan. On the other hand, it's not hard to understand at all. By 1986, the game had been released on so many computer platforms that no one seemed to want to try to cash in on the game one more time on the NES. Nevertheless, Choplifter is another game that probably doesn't need an introduction to the many readers of RTM. Originally developed by Dan Gordon and published on a variety of systems by Broderbund, Choplifter pits a rescue helicopter lines in a death-defying mission to rescue several P.O.W.s from bunkers that lie behind heavily defended enemy lines. And when I say heavily defended, I mean heavily defended on both the ground and in the air. You had to reach the bunkers unharmed, drop down to rescue anyone who escaped from them (exposing yourself to a lot of fire), lift back off the ground and return them safely to your landing pad. While some versions were harder than others, the Famicom conversion of the game was right up there with the least merciful. While it does provide a nice facelift to the graphics, somewhat on par with the 1985 arcade release of the game (developed by Sega ironically), the game play experience may not be as satisfying as some of the older systems that the game was originally published for.



Squoon

Choplifter

Toukaidou Gojuusan Tsugi released by Data East on July 3rd, 1986.

The full title of this game roughly translates into the fifty-three post stations of the Tokaido, a highway that ran through Kyoto during the Edo period of Japan. And the gameplay is just as Japanese as the title is. And that's something that we're going to run into quite a bit as the Famicom gains more popularity over time throughout Japan, and the games get more complex. I'll tell you what this game is about to the best of my ability, although I have no doubt that I'll get some of it wrong. It appears to me that you are some early form of (rather slow moving) Japanese law enforcement, out to stop a gang of ninjas from terrorizing the Tokaido. You appear to start in some city at night where bystanders watch you either kill ninjas with bombs, or get killed by them. You can jump and toss bombs around. Besides killing ninjas, the bombs can also be used to reveal items like coins and swords and even

sushi power-ups that turn you into a human bowling ball weapon against the enemy. It's an interesting concept for an early game, but easily outshone by others.

The Tower of Babel released by Namco on July 18th, 1986.

The Tower of Babel was a puzzle game released by Namco exclusively for the Famicom. It involved a man who was attempting to climb said tower, and he could only do it if he positioned certain blocks in just the right way so as to reach a doorway that was usually suspended off the ground, and lead to by a vine. The blocks that you manipulated were not symetical and this had a big impact on the solution of the puzzles. If you picked up a block from a certain direction, you had to lay it down to the left or to the right, but it would change direction based on the direction you faced. To make matters worse, you have a limit as to just how many times you can pick up and move objects around before your strenght runs out. Blocks have a tendency to hang on each others corners, making the process of building staircases that much easier. However, most puzzle solvers will find the issue of orientation the most difficult aspect of the problem solving. This game was remade (again, in Japan only) on the first Playstation Namco Anthology disc, which contained four classic Famicom games right along side complete Playstation quality remakes of the same games.



Toukaidou



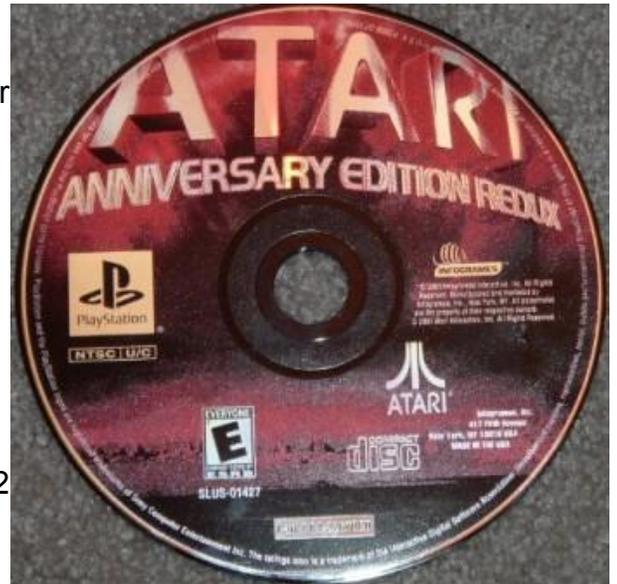
Tower of Babel



Old Wine in New Bottles: Retrogaming on Modern Hardware

by Jonathan H. Davidson

I had originally planned this month to cover the **Activision Action Pack**. Released back in 1995, this was one of the first - if not the very first - successful Atari 2600 emulator for the PC. Unfortunately, I was unable to get it running. It is hard-coded for 8-bit graphics (256 colour) and none of the hardware I have access to can use that graphics mode. Fortunately, all of the games included, with the notable exception of Private Eye, were later re-released in other collections and compilations.



Instead, the retrogaming collection this month is the **Atari Anniversary Edition Redux** for the PlayStation. This collection was released by Infogrames in 2001. It is relatively common; the Digital Press guide ranks it as an R2 rarity.

This collection includes an even dozen original Atari arcade games. These include both vector games (e.g. Asteroids, Battlezone, and Tempest) and raster games (e.g. Centipede, Missile Command, and Warlords). Presumably for nostalgic reasons, the original Pong is also included.

The quality of the emulation is generally very good. Various difficulty-related options are available, depending on the specific game. The default controls map intuitively to the PlayStation controller (and can be changed if desired). The screens include a border reminiscent of the original arcade games. A helpful feature is the ability to pause (and save) games in progress.

The main weakness is the emulation of the vector graphics. The graphics are just not as sharp as in the arcade originals and the colours are not as bright. The raster games look much better and closer to my memories of the original arcade games.

There is also some great bonus content: Most significantly are the interview clips with Atari founder Nolan Bushnell. He talks about the development of Pong and his role in origins of the video game industry. The graphics quality is unspectacular (it is probably a MPEG format), but the original PlayStation lacks DVD capabilities.

Other bonus content includes a lengthy excerpt from Leonard Herman's book *Phoenix: the Rise and Fall of Videogames*, again about Nolan Bushnell and the origins of Atari. While this is interesting material, reading many pages of text on the TV screen is not especially comfortable.

The most interesting bonus content consists of scanned images of various items related to the games in the collection. These range from advertising flyers and service manuals sent to arcade operators to buttons, pins, T-shirts, newsletters, and magazine advertisements. There are also some box scan and screenshots from Atari 2600, 5200, and 7800 versions of the games (where applicable). Some of this bonus content was later recycled in the **Atari: the 80 Classic Games** collection (reviewed in RTM #36). The material was scanned at a high enough resolution that the text can easily be read.

Next time, we will continue to look at arcade emulation on the PlayStation with the **Namco Museum** series.

Feedback on this column is most welcome; special thanks to everyone who have their sent comments and question. Please send e-mail to jhd@interbaun.com.



Thanks for coming around once again. We've had some recent interest expressed by new contributors, so check back next month for more of the same, and hopefully a taste of something new!

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