

Retrogaming Times Monthly

Issue #51 - August 2008

Table of Contents

01.	Attract Mode
02.	Coping with the Death of a Console
03.	Behr Bonz Multicart for the Vic 20
04.	Show Report -- California Extreme 2008
05.	Apple II Incider: The World of the Apple II Today - PART 1
06.	Old Wine in New Bottles: Retrogaming on Modern Hardware
07.	Who'd Win: Double Dragon vs. Bad Dudes
08.	Insert Groin
09.	Sega Memories
10.	Game Over



Attract Mode

by [Scott Jacobi](#)

We're two for two this month as we received a second guest editorial from Bret Dalgleish. Bret was directly inspired by last month's guest editorial by Bobby Lyle, and he too has fond memories of the SHMUPs that he used to play back in the day. Without further ado, here's Bret.

Last month's guest editorial by Bobby Lyle got me talking with an old high school friend as we lived through a similar experience, however I would like to cover the perils of what was C64 SHUMP gaming at the time.

My friend and I spoke for hours about the glorious eighties and how we both got a C64 bundle for Christmas which came with several educational programs on compact cassette, (The tape version being cheaper, not to mention the espoused educational benefits, helping us win over our parents to purchase it) also a Commodore branded game in cartridge format plus the dreaded Commodore joystick.

The terror began when you first played the C64 using the supplied joystick. It was best described as a hard rubberized triangular grip stick that didn't respond very well and its fire button was in the most anatomically impossible of positions. But to top it all off the shape of the stick dug right into your hand, thus ensuing rupturing blisters after only two hours of play!



We both put up with the stick until we could take it no longer (about a day) and then during an exasperating moment of pent up frustration caused solely by this malignant device, you flip out throwing the thing as violently as possible across the room! After all, it was the

exclusive cause of your demise in the game. The brittle plastic case disintegrated on impact and shards went flying throughout the room. I was still finding pieces of the joystick ten years later.

It was about this time that I realised my old Atari 2600 joysticks' were compatible thus solving the problem. But my friend had an Intellivision so he had to endure a joystick free existence until he managed to purchase a "Tac 2" model some months later.

How did he go for month's you may ask, well that was easy, due to the supplied C64 cartridge being the reviled game "Star Post"! Conversely my C64 was bundled with the much more tolerable game Lazarian; the Gods were truly smiling on me that Christmas.



After the phone conversation I decided to try and track down a dreaded triangular C64 joystick. After scouring the net for hours I had not even found a picture! I was starting to think every stick had been smashed before anyone even took a picture of one but then I found it...

On eBay of course, however the seller would only ship to the US of A so unfortunately I was excluded from the auction. How the hell did this stick ever survive the eighties? It was obviously never used.

As a consolation at least I now have a photo of this little psychotic episode inducing device. The final price was a staggering \$7.59 which is more than it's worth even if melted down into a paper weight, as my mate did (resultant from a ceremonial burning!).

In the interests of reminiscing I decided to see if I could track down the games I fondly remember from my youth, and found both games at www.c64.com. I then tried out a new C64 emulator on my Nintendo DS to my delight I managed to get it all working. I'm more than happy to write up my findings (or video) if you believe it would be of interest to your readers.

Regards Bret Dalglish

Thank you very much Bret. Once again, if you would like to be featured as a guest editorial writer,

simply send your submission to me. This is a great way for the readers of RTM to contribute to an issue without being a regular monthly writer. It's been a rough month for me, so I apologize for the absence of Game Archaeologist this issue. Enjoy!



Coping with the Death of a Console

by [Tom Zjaba](#)

Any long time video game fan will experience the death of their favorite video game console. The day will come when the hardware is no longer produced and the last game is released. It is a sad time for a gamer, but one that we learn to cope with. It is hard to support a system only to see it end. Many times, we do not notice the death because we are too busy playing a new system, but sometimes a system is struck down in its prime and the pain is hard to bear. There are some who will tell you that a video game system is never dead so long as people still play it, but that would only mess up the article, so I politely ask them to sit down and be quiet.

The first time I dealt with the death of a system was the Odyssey 2. It was the first video game system that I ever owned and while it was not my first choice (I asked for an Atari 2600, but instead received the Odyssey 2. It is the equivalent of being stranded on Gilligan's Island with Ginger and Mary Ann and ending up with Mrs. Howell.), I did eventually learn to love my system. There was some very good gaming, especially Quest for the Rings and Great Wall Street Fortune Hunt. These were two of my favorite games and I can still remember how much fun we had playing Quest for the Rings in two player mode. But then the day came when I realized it was coming to an end. The first sign was stores quit carrying the system. Then came the clearance games. I still remember going to a department store and buying Pick Axe Pete, Monkeyshines and more games on clearance. They were selling all games for half price! It was great to get two games for the price of one. For a short period, I was in gaming nirvana. So many games to play and the price was so low! But soon the games dried up and the system was pushed aside.

The second time I dealt with console death was the Colecovision. It was the first system that I bought with my own money. I used money I made from buying and selling Coleco stock. At first, I had two games for the system, Donkey Kong and Zaxxon. I am still amazed to this day how occupied those two games kept me. I look at my kid's and their stack of Wii games and think how long it took me to get close to that many games. I was lucky to have a paper route as a kid, so I could afford a new game a month if I chose. It was not long until games like Mouse Trap, Venture and Ladybug joined my collection. But after two years of fun with the Colecovision, I went away to college. While I was gone the system died. I was not there to experience the fall or to reap the benefit of clearance games. I only came home to find that games no longer were made for the system. And games that I looked forward to like Tunnels and Trolls, was never made. It was a sad day, but I was able to cope better with it. I guess not experiencing it first hand made it easier.

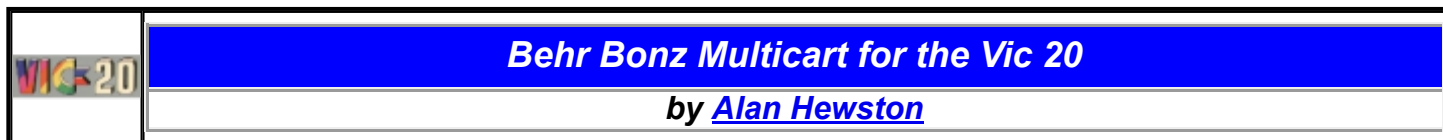
The next system that died was the Turbo Grafx. While I had a NES, I bought a Turbo Grafx 16 used off my brother. He wanted a Sega Genesis and was glad to sell it for money for his new system. I was glad to get a deal on it and found a ton of great gaming! Games like Bonk, Legendary Axe and especially the incredible pinball games, Alien Crush and Devil's Crush kept me captivated for hours. Later, games like Neutopia and Military Madness made me a life long fan of the system. It was a match made in heaven. But then the word came that they were pulling the plug on the American market. They could not compete with Nintendo and Sega. I remember finding games at closeout prices and stocking up. I was grabbing every cheap game I could, no matter the quality. Soon games like Pacland and Gunboat joined my collection. I did a dance of joy when I found Order of the Griffon. But once again, the supply soon ran out and with it being the days before ebay, it was hard to find more games. So I eventually settled for what I had.

While each system broke my heart, no video game system crushed me the way the Sega Dreamcast did. Out of all my loves, this was the one that broke my heart. My first exposure to the Dreamcast was seeing NFL 2K playing on a television at the game store. I was impressed but not enough to purchase it. I was still enjoying my Playstation and not quite ready for a new system. Then I visited my friend, Fred, and became hooked. A weekend of playing Sega Bass Fishing, NFL 2K, Soul Calibur and more games made me a diehard fan. I bought the subscription to the Official Dreamcast Magazine and waited for each issue. I bought dozens of games for it, hoping that my support would somehow delay its inevitable demise. I found the system to have one of the best lineups ever. Phantasy Star Online was my first exposure to online gaming on a console. I had many deep conversations with Seaman, never once wondering why I was sharing personal information with a fish with a human's face that had Leonard Nimoy's voice. I unlocked every fighter and area on Soul Calibur. I sailed through the sky with Skies of Arcadia. There was no shortage of quality games to play. Then as the games got even better, the first signs of death came. Some of us were too busy playing Shenmue to notice it and others of us tried to ignore it. Maybe if we bought more games and talked more friends into getting the system, we could have saved it. We talked online. We smiled when the Playstation 2 experienced shortages and disappointed parents bought their kids a Dreamcast instead. But it was all for naught. The system died an early death, way before it should have. And it left a list of great titles that were scrapped or moved to other systems. Games like Shenmue 2 moved to the XBOX while Half-Life, ToeJam and Earl and a 3 game combo that comprised of Jambo! Safari, Brave Firefighters and Emergency Call Ambulance were cancelled. The last one really hit hard as Jambo! Safari was always a favorite of mine. I still have a hole in my heart from that one.

After dealing with so much disappointment, one would think I would be done with game systems. But I follow the old advice, "If you fall off a horse, get back on." I will ride again and once again, I will deal with disappointment. Like shovelware and bad movie based games, it is a part of gaming. I just hope that my next love will have a chance to have a full life and we can grow old together. Until then, I will keep playing my Dreamcast. Anyone for a game of Ooga Booga?

Tom Zjaba

(What happens to a person who spent too much time talking to Seaman? He makes comic strips about video games. Seaman told me to do it and I had to listen. Check out over 300 pages of video game comic strips at Arcade After Dark - <http://arcadeafterdark.com/>.)



The answer to my greatest video gaming wish came true. Someone perfected the means to make a multi-cart for the Vic 20. The big challenge was working with so many different formats, and sizes, the 2k, 4k, 6k, 8k, 10k etc. sized memory for the various games/carts. I do not know all the details, but if a few of you ask me to do so, we'll follow up with the creator, Francois Leveille, and ask him how the project came to be and how he conquered various challenges. We'll seek an interview if he has the time, and myself as well.

OK, so go ahead and see the details on the Behr Bonz Multicart for Vic 20 can be found at:
<http://www.8bitcentral.com/>

Now that you are back, I must apologize and say that I got mine a few months ago and have been so busy that it is a shame that I did not review this for you sooner. There are a whopping 127 VIC-20 Games On A Single Cartridge! Francois did not just fill in these with any games, he pretty much cleaned up and grabbed all of those Rares and Ultra Rare games that we'll never find in the wild. This is just very nice for folks who prefer to play on the real system and not via emulation, and even better if you do not want to have 127 different Vic 20 carts filling up your home.

And other great news is the very cheap price. Only a little more than \$40 with shipping and you have nearly the entire library of Vic 20 carts all in one cartridge. Sweet. I'd betcha you'd pay \$2500 or more on ebay, not including shipping, not to mention the time to collect all of these carts individually. Total awesome and fantastic for me, so that I can review a few of the harder to find titles in my Many Faces of Reviews.

So, once you buy this cartridge, you simply need a system and controllers and can then play all the best and rarest Vic 20 cartridge released games any time you want. Of course, there are probably a whole lot more games that existed on tape or disk that might be pretty good games to play, but Francois had to draw the line somewhere. By sticking with those more easily found on ROM's, and stored in a cart format to boot, this was the way to go. Getting all those tape/disk games and checking them out and then converting them to a format that can be stored on a cart might be a huge undertaking. If I do catch up with him, I'll ask if such a project may be in the works for the next type of cart. And if it is, no doubt that he'd have to seek out the games and then also to survey the Vic 20 fans to ask what are the best 127 game to fit onto another such cart. But this is just conjecture, and it may not be so easily done, so do not wish too hard, but you never know. If you keep asking, as I did, maybe someone will do the research and also engineer it.

Now then, the only drawback to this cartridge, and this is pretty minor, is that the cart is shipped without a cartridge container/plastic case. So, if you want to protect it better, you'll need to open and empty one of your common carts and store the Behr Bonz cart in that shell instead. No big deal.

Plug this cart into your VIC and you are presented with a menu featuring 127 classic VIC cartridge games. This is fantastic, no need for dip switches and the menu is alphabetized and pretty fast. The web site says that so far the cart is available in NTSC, but that a PAL version is in the works. Here's a complete list of the games on the cart.

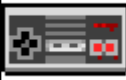
AE	Aggressor	Alien Blitz
Amok!	Arachnoid	Artillery Duel
Astroblitz	Atlantis	Attack of the Mutant Camels
Avenger	Bandits	Battlezone
Black Hole	Buck Rogers: Planet of Zoom	Capture the Flag
Centipede	Choplifter	Cloudburst
Clowns pour Joystick	Clowns pour paddle	Computer War
Congo Bongo	Cosmic Cruncher	Cosmic Jailbreak
Creepy Corridors	Crossfire	Cyclon
Defender	Demon Attack	Dig Dug
Donkey Kong	Dragonfire	Final Orbit + Bumper Bash
Frogger	Frogman	Galaxian
Garden Wars	Gorf	Gridrunner
IFR (Flight Simulator)	In the chips	Jawbreaker II
Jelly Monsters (clone of Pacman)	Jungle Hunt	Jupiter Lander
Keyquest	Krazy Antics	Lazerzone
Lode Runner	Lunar Leeper	Maze
Medieval Joust	Miner 2049'er	Mobile Attack
Mole Attack	Money Wars	Monster Maze
Moon Patrol	Mosquito Infestation	Motocross Racer

Mountain King	Ms. Pac-Man	Mutant Herd
Omega Race	Outworld	Pac-Man (original)
Paratrooper	Pharaoh's Curse	Pinball
Pipes	Poker	Polaris
Pole Position	Predator	Princess and Frog
Protector	Q-Bert	Radar Rat Race
Raid on Fort Knox	Rally-X	Rat Hotel
Renaissance (Othello)	River Rescue	Road Race
Robot Panic	Robotron: 2084	Scott Adams: Adventure Land
Scott Adams: Mission Impossible	Scott Adams: Pirate's Cove	Scott Adams: The Count
Scott Adams: Voodoo Castle	Sargon II Chess	Satellite Patrol
Scorpion	Sea Wolf	Seafox
Serpentine	Shamus	Sir Lancelot
Skibbereen	Skyblazer	Space Ric-O-Shay
Spider City	Spiders of Mars	Spike's Peak
Spills and Fills	Squish'em	Star Battle
Star Post	Star Trek - Strategic Operations Simulator	Submarine commander
Super Amok	Super Slot	Super Smash
Terraguard	The Sky is Falling	Threshold
Tooth Invaders	Topper	Trashman
Turmoil	Tutankham	Type Attack
Typo	Video Vermin	Videomania
Visible Solar System		

Interested? Don't wait, contact eslapion@vidoetron.ca ASAP. I'm not sure how long he'll make these cartridges, and hopefully the copyright holders do not get upset and go after him. Tell Francois that I sent you from the Retrogaming Times Monthly.

Staff writer Alan Hewston can be reached at: Hewston95@NOSPAMstratos.net

I contribute to nearly every issue and host the web site as well. Unfortunately, I've been very busy with family (Kathy - wife, Samantha - 11 & Timmy - 8) and slacked off lately, with vacations, and playing too many strategy & board games with friends and mostly with family. Hopefully I'll find more time get back to writing the Many Faces of reviews soon. I got part way on SW: RotJ Death Star Battle, but did not yet finish.

	Show Report -- California Extreme 2008
	by David Lundin, Jr.

As I've written many times over the years I grew up in Silicon Valley, just south of the San Francisco Bay Area. Growing up here in the 1980's was an amazing time, video games truly were everywhere and the arcades survived just a little bit longer than they did elsewhere. Even into the 1990's there were still some great arcades here, the Tilt in the Vallco Fashion Park Mall in Cupertino, Playland in Town & Country Village in San Jose, and my old stomping ground the Galaktican Arcade in West San Jose come to mind as my favorites. Heck, the Milpitas Golfland really hasn't changed much at all in terms of atmosphere and I was last there less than a month ago. So if one was going to have a show

celebrating classic arcades there really is no better place to have it than Silicon Valley. That's where California Extreme comes in. For twelve years now this all volunteer, absolutely non-profit expo has allowed the arcades to live again, even if only for a couple days a year. Now that I am once again a resident of the area I headed to Parkside Hall in downtown San Jose to attend my first ever CAX show. A nominal admission fee to help cover the cost of the show is all that is required for entry, there are no corporate sponsors at CAX, it truly is a collector created and run show that is made open to everyone. Sensory overload is often a term used to describe the show once one steps inside but for me, it was more like taking a step back in time.

Think of five classic arcade games and you'll find at least four of them here. Pre-registration grants you access to the show half an hour early and for those streaming inside during that special half hour, it really does feel like a time capsule. A frenzy of cameras popped out to grab images of the games and venue before it became crowded with arcade patrons. It is almost like prying the door open to an arcade vault and being one of the first to enter. There's so much to see, there's so much to do and there's so much to play. Then you turn a corner and it begins again with even more games and memories rushing back to the point where you become enveloped in the nostalgia and wonder that places like this used to create. It's simply beautiful to see all these vintage games and pins all running, their marquees shining, their start buttons flashing, their attract screens playing. Best of all they're all on free play or have a credit switch. It's almost as if the greatest arcade you could possibly imagine was laid before you and was at your disposal for play.



The show floor was laid out in U shaped banks of machines starting at the door which eventually followed the walls once passed two banks of machines. After that pinball machines lined one wall until they neared the corner where the mini-sized cabaret arcade cabinets took over. A few cockpit cabinets lined the back wall before reaching the Twin Galaxies high score and California Extreme pinball competitions in the adjacent corner. A few vendor tables took up the final wall until running back to the entrance where T-shirts could be purchased. The center of the room was reserved for cocktail tables, easily over a dozen of them. Just beyond the cocktail area a giant video screen played 80's music videos streamed off a laserdisc video jukebox. The rest of the hall was filled with a few more rows of pinball machines as well as a few more U shaped banks of arcade cabinets, in other words the place was packed with games.

And the games... amazing games in amazing condition. A few prototype cabinets show up every year

and I felt very fortunate to try my hand at the unreleased Marble Madness II: Marble Man, Hard Drivin's Airborne, and Beavis and Butt-head. Hard Drivin's Airborne was my favorite of the prototype games, imagine Hard Drivin' mixed with the flying cars from the film Back to the Future Part II, complete with a steering wheel that doubles as a flight yolk by pushing in and pulling out. It even blows wind in your face to simulate the feeling of flight. There was a good selection of laserdisc games although talking to one other attendee there were fewer this year than last. Just the same, I hadn't seen a Super Don-Quixote in practically forever but there was one there. Lots of my favorite games were at the show as well and those who are regular readers of my columns here at RTM will recognize some of the names. There was a good condition Paperboy upright, Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom, and two Joust cocktails which all got more than a few plays from me. I hadn't stood before a Xybots cabinet in years but there was one there and lots of two player action on it as well. By far one of my favorite machines at the show was a Bosconian cabaret, a game that never really was all that popular sadly but one I've always really enjoyed. Played quite a bit of another of my favorites, S.T.U.N. Runner, as well. I held high score on Galaga '88 all day Saturday (471,280 at 5-27, set it early in the morning) and Sunday (467,770 at 5-27 and then improved with 582,770 at 5-28) until during the last hour and a half of the show my score fell to 1,610,900 at 5-29 (game completion bonus). On the front Warlords cocktail I had team high score and single player high score all day Sunday. Speaking of Warlords, I must have spent a quarter of my entire time at the show playing on the cocktail tables, it was a complete blast playing against and talking to people over such a great game. For an added kick of nostalgia, at ten o'clock Saturday night the lights were dimmed for the last two hours of the show that day. It was moments like that which took the show from incredible to surreal.

While there were a lot of guest panels and events just across the way at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, the only one I attended was a candid presentation by Aaron Giles of the MAME project. It was really very interesting to hear him talk about the project and what drives him to continue working on a program that I personally use every time I write a NES'cade (and previously Titles of Tengen) column. I don't think it gets said enough but thank you to the entire MAME team for continuing to refine and expand a project that, allows us to dive into the past for analysis of games we otherwise wouldn't be able to take a look at. I know I wouldn't be writing here at RTM without it.



Probably the single thing I enjoyed most about the show was that the demographic was very much as it was during the height of the arcade era, everyone was there. Age or gender, none of it mattered,

everyone played together and socialized just as if it was the early 1980's once more. However California Extreme adds things you wouldn't see even at the peak of arcades. Where else can you walk down a row of vintage pinball machines (including one of my all time favorites, Hit the Deck), play a game of Kangaroo and then look over and see Todd Rogers playing Gorf, it's just insane. It's as if a collector let you into their room of vintage antiques just so you could manhandle everything on display. That right there is the amazing thing about California Extreme and why it should live on forever. The collectors that exhibit games there do so because they understand that the games they are collecting are meant to be played, and socialized around, and be competed at, and be photographed, and be enjoyed - that's why the games were created. My hat's off to them that maintain these machines, haul them down to the show, set them up, ensure they run all weekend, all just so others can enjoy them. It's another one of those instances where the video game hobby is populated with just the coolest people on the planet.

Yet with all these games comes temptation. Many collectors put their games up for sale, sometimes to thin out their collection a bit but for the most part many seemed to want to go after other games while introducing the hobby to others. My Pole Position MAME conversion had to be stored when I moved simply because there was no way I could get the bulky cabinet upstairs. Being without a cabinet after having one creates a void in your life so I was on the lookout for a smaller game at the show. Since that beautiful Bosconian cabaret wasn't up for sale I didn't want to bother anyone about it. There was a Gyruss upright for less than \$300.00 that peaked my interest. It had very small sprite glitches in the center of the screen and needed a little work but was in decent shape. However the bulk was the problem - for the current situation of my girlfriend and myself hauling the thing upstairs a cabaret would have to be the target size, or a cocktail - nearly impossible to find for my budget.

As the show wound down on Sunday night I made myself comfortable at the lone Galaxian cocktail at the show, a game that didn't seem get much play that weekend. I sat there and played the elegant space battle while listening to 80's music videos on the giant screen behind. My girlfriend joined me soon after and we sat there for almost two hours playing against one another. The machine was in beautiful shape and a little while later I mumbled out longingly, "this is really what I would like to have." However the price was more than double what the Gyruss cabinet was stickered at, and we had to work hard to budget the Gyruss price to begin with. I figured if anything I'd write down the contact information and maybe give the owner a call in a week or so once I had a better idea of what I could spend. With about an hour to go the owner showed up to pick up his machine. We got to talking and I basically was honest in what beautiful condition it was in but that I just couldn't afford it right now. He offered to work down the price a little but I told him I couldn't do it right on the spot. We took down his phone number and I told him I'd let him know later in the week. I sold some Japanese comics that had been packed away for almost ten years and were only taking up space to quickly raise the cash for the cocktail. After a couple phone calls it was all finalized, I would soon be the owner of a Galaxian cocktail table.



The gentleman that sold it to me was a class act and delivered it, even helped me carry it upstairs! He also made sure it was working properly, gave me the contact information of the person he uses for repair on his PCB's, went over any problems the machine has had since he owned it and went over basic usage. It is amazingly clean inside and has the cleanest power supply, monitor, board, wiring loom and other internals that I have ever seen on a vintage cabinet. He also sent me PDF's of the operations and troubleshooting manuals and I have a cocktail operations manual on the way. Galaxian cocktail table #0367 now resides with me and I couldn't be happier. I've wanted a cocktail table since the day I first stepped into an arcade.

I could go on for days about the experiences shared, the friendships made, and the entertainment had at California Extreme this year. However there's only one way to really understand just how excellent the show is - attend. After making this year my first I kick myself for wasting the past eleven years by not being in attendance. Now that I've been I'll never miss another. This show deserves to be supported and praised and to thrive. Thank you again to the organizers, exhibitors and attendees! It was the most fun I've had in years and I can't wait for the next one. NES'cade will return next month, at the show I played a whole lot of games that had NES ports I haven't looked at yet.

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



Apple II Incider: The World of the Apple II Today - PART 1

by Donald Lee

PERSONAL UPDATE

As I write this, it is July 27th. I hope everyone is having a great summer so far. First off, I would like to provide a personal update. As I wrote in RTM last month, I had a tough month of June with my job layoff and someone hitting my car.

Though I am still unemployed at the moment, I have been told (though my recruiter) that a company that I interviewed with two weeks ago intends to make an offer. I'm excited and hope that the offer does come through. However, since I have not received the offer as of yet so I am still pursuing other

opportunities as a backup.

As for my car, it took several weeks and two visits to get all the damage repaired. The total cost of repairing the damage to my car was fairly high. My friends were surprised my car wasn't scrapped. However, given my job situation, I was happy to be able to get my car back instead of having to go out and look for a brand new car. Despite the extensive damage to my car, the body shop did a good job. The car has been working well since I got it back.

In another odd situation, the LCD on my cell phone (over 3 years old) suddenly died two weeks ago. I could dial and receive calls but without the LCD, there was a lot of functionality that I was missing out on. Thus, in addition to all my job stuff I have been working on, I have spent a good amount of time looking at various cell phones in the past couple of weeks.

THE WORLD OF THE APPLE II TODAY - PART 1

Thanks to the power of the Internet, just about every retro video game and computer system has support resources available for users. The Apple II line of computers is no exception. For at least the next couple of months, I will go away from discussing games (too much) and focus on resources available for Apple II users.

USENET (comp.sys.apple2)

According to Wikipedia, Usenet was conceived around 1979 and the network was created in 1980. This makes it one of the oldest computer networks still in active use. For those who have never used Usenet, think of it as a bulletin board type system. Within the Usenet network, topics of interest were divided into what was called newsgroups. Users would go into these newsgroups and post messages relevant to the topic at hand. Think of Usenet as the pre-cursor to the web-based Internet message boards that exist today.

My first exposure to Usenet was in 1995 while I was attending San Francisco State University. I was taking a class in which the professor (a rather modern thinking professor) introduced us to Usenet. That led me to sign up for a free Internet account at my school and my first exposure to everything that was the Internet at the time. That included email, the World Wide Web (aka Internet today), in addition to Usenet.

While email was great and you could communicate easily with your friends far and wide, Usenet was just as important in bringing people together on topics of interest. My Usenet newsgroup topics of choice over the years has included the Golden State Warriors basketball team, the TV show Knight Rider, Asian Movies, Dance Music and finally my favorite computer system the Apple II.

comp.sys.apple2 is the main Usenet newsgroup devoted to the Apple II and probably has the most traffic. There are also several other newsgroups devoted to sub-topics related to the Apple II but are less active.

comp.sys.apple2 has changed quite a bit in the 13 years reading the newsgroup. In my early days of reading the group, there were plenty of flame wars between people who didn't like each other. The flame wars were a little distracting (but occasionally amusing to read) if you were looking for help or had questions regarding the Apple II. Despite the flame wars, there were still plenty of smart and intelligent people around. You just had to sort through the junk to find the information useful to you.

These days, the flame wars are part of the distant past. While there is probably less overall people active in comp.sys.apple2 as compared to 1995, those that remain are very helpful with people who have questions. All in all, comp.sys.apple2 remains a valuable resource to those who are interested in the Apple II computer. My participation in comp.sys.apple2 these days is rather limited. I drop by the

group every now and then and read postings of interest. Occasionally, I might post a message if there is something I can help out with.

For those who want to take a spin through Usenet, you can do one of two things. One, you can check if your Internet Service Provider (ISP) provides Usenet access. If so, you will need to use a newsreader program to access the Usenet. There are plenty of newsreading applications around. Use Google and look them up for yourself.

Alternatively, you can just use Google Groups, which provides you access to the Usenet via your web browser. You'll have to sign up for a Google account, but it is worth it. You can use your existing web browser and post messages on the Usenet like modern web based message boards.

KANSASFEST - <http://www.kfest.org/>

No matter if you're a Macintosh computer user, a Consumer Electronics junkie or just a retro-gamer, there's probably a trade show or convention out there for you. Macintosh users have MacWorld. Electronic junkies have the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas. While I'm not sure now how many Retro-Gaming trade shows are around, I know I have seen some postings occasionally for some in the Bay Area.

For Apple II users, there is KansasFest. KansasFest (originally the A2-Central Summer Conference) has been held annually for 19 years. In fact, the most recent session was just held this past week. KansasFest is a 5 day gathering of people actively involved in the Apple II community. Information sessions and product demos are usually held in the morning and afternoon while games and other activities go on into the evening (and beyond many times!).

Typically, new software and hardware products are introduced on the last day of KansasFest and a mini fair is held where vendors can sell their products to the attendees.

Interestingly, in all my years of using the Apple II, I have never attended KansasFest. I feel like I am just a regular user and might be out of place with all these hardware/software gurus who have created all sorts of outstanding projects using the Apple II.

I do have great fun in reading the summaries and seeing the pictures of people at the show. The website has archives of some of the recent year's activities, so check it out if you are interested.

JUICED.GS - <http://www.juiced.gs/>

The Apple II line of computers has been out of production for many years now. It may surprise people that there is still a PRINT PUBLICATION devoted to the Apple II (primarily the IIGS).

JUICED.GS was conceived and created by Max Jones in 1996. Thirteen years later, the magazine is still alive and kicking. The magaizne remains devoted to reporting the latest news in the Apple II world and helping users get the best out of their Apple IIGS machines. JUICED.GS is published on a quarterly basis.

Though the magazine has been around for 13 years, I have never personally subscribed to it as I used an Apple IIe and didn't think the magazine would serve any use for me. However, from reading the sample issues that are available online, the writing is top notch and well worth the money for those interested in pushing the IIGS to the max. In the future, I will discuss some of the Apple II magazines that I have read over the years.

Thanks for reading. Next month, I will discuss even more Apple II resources that are available on the Internet.



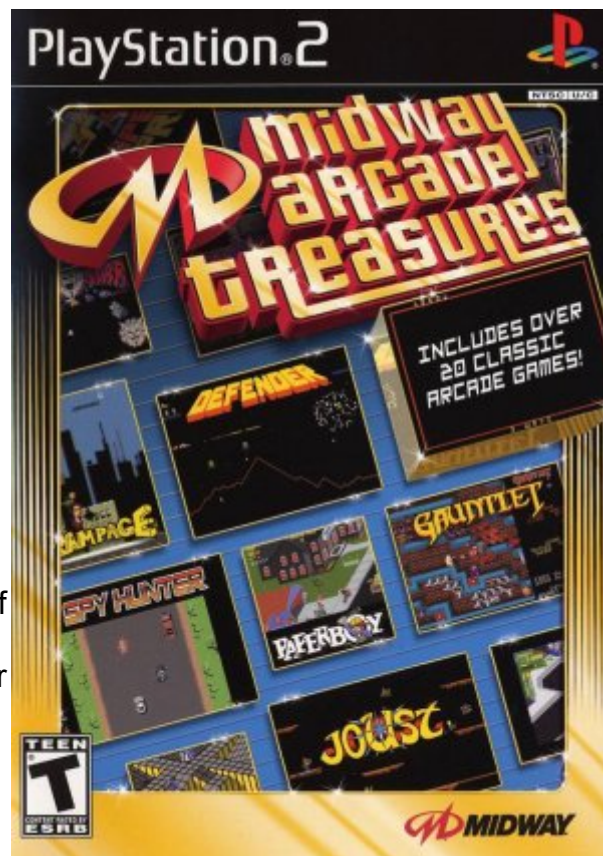
Old Wine in New Bottles: Retrogaming on Modern Hardware

by [Jonathan H. Davidson](#)

The retrogaming collection for the month is Midway Arcade Treasures for the PlayStation 2 (released in 2003). It was subsequently followed by Volumes 2 and 3.

This collection includes 24 arcade games, all originally released between 1980 and 1989. Despite the title, not all of these are originally Midway games: several were originally developed by Atari (e.g. Gauntlet, Rampart) and Williams (e.g. Defender, Bubbles). Unlike some retro gaming collections, there are arguably no "filler" titles; virtually all of the games are well-known - though I have never personally seen a few of them (e.g. Satan's Hollow, Toobin',) in an arcade.

Also unlike many other such recent PlayStation 2 compilations, there is very little bonus material or extra content. For most almost all of the games, there are clips of interviews with the original programmers and developers. There are often photographs of the original consoles and/or advertising flyers. A few of the better known games include interesting historical notes. There is apparently no unlockable bonus content or any extra games. Overall the bonus content is good. The interview segments are short, but very informative. The quality of the scanned images (e.g. sell sheets) is high enough that the text is easily readable.



In all cases, the graphics and sound appear to be accurate to the original games. Difficulty settings and other options can be easily adjusted before the game starts. Spy Hunter has been subtly modified to add a display showing the current weapons, gearshift, etc. - items handled by dedicated hardware in the arcade machine. My only complaint with the emulation concerns Joust 2. The sprites are all very small, and there seems to be a large border of unused space around the edges of the screen.

The biggest weakness with these games is the controls. Many of these arcade games originally had specialised controls including track balls (e.g. Marble Madness, Rampart), steering wheels (e.g. Spy Hunter, Super Sprint), and sometimes even stranger controllers (e.g. Root Beer Tapper, Paperboy).

Those games that use dual-joysticks (e.g. Robotro 2084, Smash TV) have adapted very well to the PlayStation 2 Dual Shock controller, but many others have not. Marble Madness, for example, is virtually unplayable - the joystick simply just does not provide enough fine control. Super Sprint is also very difficult with the joystick. Ironically, Defender is actually much easier with a joystick than with the button configuration used in the original arcade game.

Next month, we will review Midway Arcade Treasures, volumes 2 and 3. Feedback on this column is always welcome; please send any comments and/or questions to jhd@interbaun.com.



Who'd Win: Double Dragon vs. Bad Dudes

by [Andrew Vrba](#)

It's that time again! A new issue of RTM, which means a new installment of "Who'd Win?!" This month we'll be looking at the NES conversions of two classic arcade beat-em-ups. Bad Dudes, and Double Dragon. Upon release both games were ported to everything under the sun, and both games are oozing with late 1980s attitude! But which of these two brawlers is tough enough to win this round?



The sights:

What you'll notice right off the bat, is that Double Dragon is more colorful. It has a more cartoonish look, while Bad Dudes has a washed out, but more realistic look. Both games use a handful of palette swapped bad guys, but Double Dragon just plain looks better, despite some flicker issues. Bad Dudes doesn't look bad per se, it's just not as vibrant. Bad Dudes isn't without its own visual merit however, they pull off some neat visual tricks, like a level where you brawl on the tops of several moving semi trailers. But in the end Double Dragon gives Bad Dudes a black eye.

The sounds:

Both games feature the standard beat 'em up sound effects, Bad Dudes even manages to work in a digitized "I'm bad!" at the end of levels. That does give it a slight edge up in the effects department, but when it comes to music, Double Dragon busts it in the chops and sends it reeling! Bad Dudes tunes are kind of subdued and forgettable, but Double Dragon has music that is memorable till this very day! And it's music that you'll really get into as you play. Especially that legendary title screen music, that everyone over a certain age still remembers.

The substance:

Bad Dudes is a straight up arcade port, save for the fact that 2-play co-op has been removed. They really didn't cut any corners here considering the NES's hardware limitations. As mentioned before, they even managed to work in that digitized sample in there. The weapons are still there. The charge-up punch is still there too! It plays and feels like it's arcade brother! No more no less. Double Dragon on the other hand deviates from its arcade version somewhat, a slightly different back story, some changes in the levels, and like Bad Dudes no simultaneous 2 player co-op. But for the most part it feels like the original. Double Dragon does add something new however, there's a two player fighting mode. It's pre-Street Fighter 2, but it works surprisingly well. I would also like to note that on Bad Dudes you are limited to walking backwards and forwards, you can jump up and down levels, but it still feels well...flat, in comparison to the freedom of movement that Double Dragon gives you. Double Dragon is the genesis of the 8-way movement brawler. The beating it gives Bad Dudes continues! Both games feature weapons, and different attacks, but Double Dragon gives you more of both, and it

makes you earn those new attacks over time.

The cartridge:



We finally have an area where Bad Dudes comes out on top. Both of these carts are 80s-tastic, but Bad Dudes is more to the point! It features two bad dudes getting ready to beat some ass! Double Dragon's cart looks like a game of arm wrestling gone horribly wrong, with what looks like one of the brawl scenes from "West Side Story" playing out below. It looks very silly.

Well it's fairly obvious that Double Dragon lands the knockout blow in this fight. That's not to say Bad Dudes is a bad game, because it isn't. But it kind of disappeared after its debut. While Double Dragon spawned a good sequel followed by some bad ones, and a pretty sweet remake some years later on the Gameboy Advance. While Bad Dudes makes for a fine slice of 1980s attitude, Double Dragon is the better game. Next month I will be comparing two more beat em ups, but this time on the Sega Master System. Tune in next month as barbarians and werewolves collide, Altered Beast vs. Golden Axe.



Insert Groin

by [Coffee1970](#)

When it comes to games, classic games that is, I'm a sucker for two things....vector graphics and games that feature voice synthesis.

In today's games, speech and voice would not something listed on the box to help sell the game. But, there was a time (feeling old moment again...) that this was a new and exciting technology for us gamers.

Nothing would catch my attention more that walking by an arcade game and hearing a robotized voice challenging me and my quarter to battle this nemesis. It seemed like there was robots everywhere in the late 70's and 80's....films, music (Mr. Roboto), toys, etc. I loved it myself, playing with Micronauts and Shogun Warriors. Yes, there was the Star Wars figures, but really...you could line up your Rebel Alliance and with one swift blow of a Shogun Warrior's flying fist or Micronaut Battle Cruiser red-tipped rubber missile, you could wipe them all out!

I think these games from Bally were my first introduction to these voice enhanced games...



Of course other companies produced their own classics....Sinistar, Frenzy, & Astro Blaster



Even today I find these games a blast to play...sure the voice is unnatural sounding, but that's the fun of it...who wants to hear a real human voice while battling in space?

To reproduce the arcade feel in the home market, a few companies produced add-ons that would enable a programmer to add voice technology to their game.



The Odyssey2 had a few good titles that used it's unit which carts plugged directly into. The Intellivision was another console that you could plug games into the voice add-on...of course this looked silly if you didn't have the Intv I as the Intv II was smaller and white and not very attractive, but that's just me! And then we have the Atari 2600 with it's strange Quadrun games that blanked the screen just to say "Quadrun Quadrun Quadrun"



As technology became more advanced and cheaper, speech was almost expected in games. With the introduction of the CD-ROM and no space limitations, perfect dialogue was spoken and thus ended the unclear, robotized 1980's synthesized bad sci-fi that I loved so much voice. As far as the title of this article, walk by an old GORF machine. He's asking for your money, not your groin...no, really!

'Beware, I Live',
Coffee1970



Sega Memories

by [Money Man](#)

Hi all! I'd like to share with you some video game memories from my childhood. It all started back in the mid to late eighties. It was getting relatively close to my birthday (my 13th I believe) and my parents agreed to buy me a brand new video game system of my choice. For weeks I agonized over this crucial, life-changing decision! ;-) I found myself constantly looking at the Sears catalog trying to decide between three different video game systems: (1) the Atari XE Computer System, (2) the Nintendo Entertainment System (NES), and (3) the Sega Master System (SMS). Each had their own appeal to me. The Atari computer system was intriguing, as it had a game in it's library called "Star Raiders II", and Star Raiders just happened to be one of my most favorite games that I had for my Atari 2600 (I'm sure I'm not alone in this), not to mention the screen-shot shown in the Sears catalog actually showed the surface of a planet (in color!). The NES was, of course, the most popular system to have at the time, and it had the largest game library. The SMS was also appealing, as I had actually tried it (and liked it) at a friend's house a few months before my birthday (I played Ghostbusters, Hang-On, and Safari Hunt), and the system itself just looked cool. Anyway after much debate, I finally chose the SMS.



I remember the day I received it like it was yesterday. My mom and I took a cab to a department store not too far from the house to make the big purchase. It was on an EXTREMELY high shelf, and we had to wait what felt like an eternity for a store clerk to get one down for us. I remember the excitement I felt looking at the box, which had that awesome graph-paper like design! And the price was a whopping (for the time) \$120.00. It truly made one feel like they were purchasing a really futuristic piece of technology. And the company's eye-catching mantra was truly inspiring..."Sega, now there are no limits!" Incredible.

After playing the included Sega Combo-cartridge (Hang-On/Safari Hunt) to death for months after I got my SMS, I was successful in convincing my parents that it was time I got another game. I didn't know too much about the other games in the library, but Alien Syndrome looked intriguing. I must have called 6 stores in Brooklyn trying to find that game, and the last one had it. After having an early dinner with my parents at a diner on a Sunday afternoon, my dad drove to the store. I went inside, and to my dismay (and as fate would have it) the store in fact did NOT have Alien Syndrome. I was crushed. Even so, I looked at the other games that were in stock just to see if there was anything else that looked interesting. It was then that history was made, as I feasted my eyes on what would become my favorite shoot-em-up game of all time...Space Harrier! The game itself was one of Sega's elite "Two-Mega Cartridge" titles..which meant to me better graphics and greater depth of game play. I decided to throw caution to the wind, and buy it.



I really enjoyed playing Space Harrier in the weeks that followed. For someone used to the wonderful squares, dots, circles, beeps and bleeps, etc. of most Atari 2600 games...the colors, shapes, music, voices and (in my opinion) wonderful pieces of art (graphics) that came together to make the SMS version of Space Harrier was a God-send! As a young teenager, I was inspired by the quest to save dragon land from the floating rocks, one-eyed pink elephants, and multi-colored mushrooms, with the battle all taking place on a huge checkerboard! ;-) What's not to love? I also realized at the time that Space Harrier was an arcade game that I got a short glimpse of years before when I was a member of a kids bowling league. The bowling alley had it off in an obscure corner of the establishment. I didn't get that good a look at it, but I thought it was such an interesting concept to have a man running (and flying) across a checkerboard to fight enemy monsters. Now, the fact that I actually owned an arcade game was cool!

Fast forward a couple of years, and one of my friend's dad offered to drive my friend and I to a video arcade at the other side of town called More Fun. (Now bear in mind that I was an only child, and my parents were a bit over-protective of me, and at that point in my life I really didn't get out that much, so gaming was a great distraction for me.) When we got there my friend and I played a couple of the old classics (I believe Ms. Pac-Man was one of them.) We also played the first Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles arcade game, which to this day I still think is great (so much so that I currently own an original arcade board set for this game).



Then something happened...my friend's dad said that we would be leaving in about 15-20 minutes to go home, and I walked to another part of the arcade that I didn't explore earlier, just to make sure there wasn't anything that I missed. I was utterly blown-away to see an arcade machine with the words "Space Harrier" on the marquee. I immediately ran to it, and was shell-shocked to see that the arcade version was a lot different than what I remembered it to be in the bowling alley all those years ago...the graphics were utterly mind-blowing compared to the SMS version!!! First of all, 'Harrier ran a LOT faster than in the SMS version, was much more detailed (everything was much more detailed, for that matter). The music was the same song, but much better - like hyped up (and in stereo!). There were a lot more voices in the game, and when 'Harrier moved, the ENTIRE SCREEN moved as well; there were even detailed alien landscapes far off in the distant horizon, which changed as 'Harrier moved from left to right. I was in utter shock! And to make matters even more unbelievable, the machine (a stand-up) was for sale. I believe the price was \$200-\$250 dollars. There was no way in hell that I would be able to buy it (or convince my parents to buy it for me), especially with the lack of room our apartment offered at the time. Of course, I popped a bunch of quarters in and played it until

my friend and his dad virtually pried my hands from the huge arcade stick. That machine was all I could think about during the car ride home. And it was then that my naive butt realized that video games on home consoles were usually mere shadows of their arcade machine big brothers. I also knew that one day, even if I had to wait until I was an adult, that I would own the arcade version! I even hoped at the time that Sega would release a "Fifty-Mega Cartridge" called Super Space Harrier for the SMS that would be identical to the arcade version (LOL!).

Fast forward MANY years to the present, and I'm almost 33 years old. I have a good job, and a great wife, yet I still don't own a Space Harrier arcade machine...but I DO own the Sega 32X version of the game, which I'm sure many of you know is virtually identical to the arcade version. Yes, I know Sega Ages for the Sega Saturn, and the more recently released Space Harrier Collection for the PS2 have what many call "superior" versions of Space Harrier, which are a bit closer to the arcade version than the 32X one, but for some reason I just love the fact that one little 32X cartridge can actually hold virtually all of the excitement in graphics and audio that the original arcade machine contains! It took Sega two (in reality more like 1½) more game console releases after the SMS to have just one of my little childhood dreams come true! That is my story.



Game Over

A huge thank you to Tom Zjaba for the article that he submitted last month, and an equally huge apology for failing to include it in the 50th issue. Thanks for reading everybody. See you next month!

Copyright © 2008 Alan Hewston & Scott Jacobi. All related copyrights and trademarks are acknowledged.