



Printing Help



Retrogaming Times Monthly #93 - February 2012



- Press Fire To Begin
- Retrogaming News



- Game Over



- MAME Reviews - The Electric Yo-Yo
- NES'cade - Rampage
- Beyond The Plastic - The Flintstones - The Rescue Of Dino & Hoppy
- Apple II Incider - DOS BOX: Ultima IV / Shufflepuck Cafe
- Commodore Du Jour - Prince Of Persia
- The Pixelated Mage - Mega Man ZX
- A Pixelated 21st Century



# Press Fire To Begin

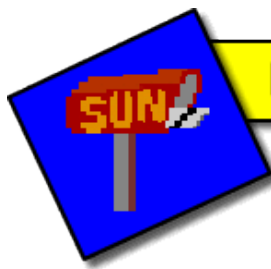
by Bryan Roppolo



Love is in the air and so is the latest issue of Retrogaming Times Monthly. There doesn't seem to be much in the way of gaming shows going on this month sadly, at least not many that I was informed about. However, I do have some news in that RTM will be sponsoring the [Carolina Games Summit](#) this month, so if you are in the vicinity of Goldsboro, NC be sure to drop on by the show.

In case you did not see the news on our Facebook page yet, the [RTM Article Index](#) is now open to the public. While it is in Alpha stage, you can use it to search for articles. No longer do you have to go through each and every back issue to find that column that was written back in 2005 that you remember. Just type in the name of the column or the author and you should be able to find what you are looking for. Eventually there will be Keyword searching as well as system searching and more. This is just the Alpha version that needed to go on-line so people could finally search through the wealth of information that RTM has to offer!

Hope you all have a great Valentine's Day and month of February!



# Retrogaming News

## [Carolina Games Summit 2012](#)

Saturday, February 4 10:00am – 8:00pm (Goldsboro, NC)

The Carolina Games Summit will be held 10 a.m.-8 p.m. on Saturday, February 4th, 2012 at Wayne Community College in Goldsboro, NC. Tickets are available to the public for \$10 each and may be purchased online or at the door. The event includes video game tournaments, industry speakers, educational sessions, and exhib...ition booths. An exciting mix of fun, academic opportunities and career exploration has been created for students, aspiring game developers, educators and professionals alike.

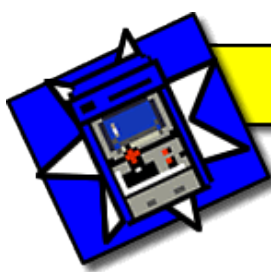
Attendees may participate in sponsored tournaments and enjoy unlimited free play on full-size classic arcades as well as the latest consoles.

Building on the continued success of past years over 17 tournaments and numerous speakers from a variety of game development firms and educational institutions will be featured. Due to overwhelming interest, organizers have scheduled two keynote sessions for this year's event.

Hands-on training sessions by industry professionals from companies like Redstorm Entertainment, Autodesk, and college educators will also be returning. Rounding out the event, the exhibition hall will be packed with industry and educational representatives.

Visit the official web site, [www.CarolinaGamesSummit.com](http://www.CarolinaGamesSummit.com), for a listing of events and additional details.

If you would like to have your event featured in Retrogaming Times Monthly, just send an e-mail to Bryan Roppolo at [bryan@retrogamingtimes.com](mailto:bryan@retrogamingtimes.com) and he'll make sure to announce it in a future issue.



# MAME Reviews

by Mark Sabbatini



## The Electric Yo-Yo

Video games enjoy a swinging lifestyle of endless nerd debauchery, where it's hard to name anyone who hasn't bred with everyone.

Genes don't necessarily determine the beauty of the offspring. Instead, whether matings result from love or money tends to be a huge factor.

The Electric Yo-Yo suggests at least intense lust just by its title – I found it while scrolling mindlessly through my all-inclusive ROM collection when a game I wanted to review for this month's MAME column wouldn't boot. A quick visit to The Killer List of Videogames confirmed it is indeed a playable game and, ever better, has that "most-rare" rating of one out of 100 that allows a columnist to feel mysterious wonders are being revealed to the world.

So for this Valentine's issue (what, you thought the sex references were gratuitous – Eu bless your dirty mind) we're taking The Thing With The Long String on a blind date and determining if it's an escort, one-night stand, lust-with-potential or future ball-and-chain.

The standard tell-me-about-yourself banality reveals The Electric Yo-Yo is the spawn of a short-lived affair between Pac-Man and Qix (a tabloid-scorcher since Pac's main squeeze was the world's hottest thing back in 1982). Qix appears to have initiated the liaison with perhaps not entirely romantic intentions – indeed, the most inquiring might suspect she was being pimped out by Taito as a pure money grab from an overwhelming successful dude who seemingly had a lot of illicit offspring.

But Qix possesses such beauty and intellect, and Pac-Man is ... well, Pac-Man, so this has to be an instance where genes ensure Mr. Yo-Yo possesses positive qualities despite being nurtured by a possibly courtesan mom (she did, after all, retain primary custody of him).

The physical qualities of both parents are evident, with boxes resembling Pac's dots deployed in various patterns on an open playfield resembling what Qix suitors explore their deft fingers on. The darker side of each parent comes from two creatures that can be temporarily disabled by passing over energized boxes (Pac's demon, obviously), and a larger baddie that roams faster, freer and is invincible (Qix's).

Right there, while our date is still on the appetizer course, it's obvious that while The Electric Yo-Yo inherits certain intellectual and creative elements of its parents, it's in a shallower and broader sense. But kids tend to pick up their own unique traits and that's the case here – so the big question is how positive or negative they are.

First, Mr. Yo-Yo is much athletic than his parents and he's got a nifty ability to latch onto things by tossing his yo-yo at them, much like Indiana Jones with his whip, and reel himself in to the object quickly. Instead of mom's studious absorption with geometry and art, one imagines the young Yo-Yo reading Spider Man comics and tearing around the



yard acting his hero's ambitions out. Maybe he didn't even mind his peers bullying him around later in life, since that was much of Peter Parker's persona as well.

Of course, mere mortals can't really do all that cool superhero stuff. In Yo-Yo's case, his tossing of his toy is limited to the four compass points and all he can latch onto are those small boxes that also serve as the "dots" he's consuming. He also can't let go, so an errant toss results in an unavoidable collision or other bad happening. Still, he can take out a row of boxes using back-and-forth tosses blazingly fast. But it's a single-tool kind of athleticism, since tossing his yo-yo when there's nothing to grab results in his taking a slow mopey step in that direction.

A career of zipping around eating boxes got his dad into the one-percenters, but Mr. Yo-Yo is a lot more in the "take a shower and get a job" Occupy crowd. He's a diminutive orange circle who's downright ugly compared to his father's simple attractiveness and his enemies are similarly in a far lower class. The two "worm" critters (merely two tiny eyeballs on a tiny green rectangle) roam haphazardly with none of the personality of Pac-Man's ghosts. When Yo-Yo touches an energized box that appears occasionally and then vanquishes a critter, it merely vanishes before reappearing shortly after. The indestructible "longer worm" foe (a short line of triangles with eyeballs at the front) roams in a slow, clumsy approximation of Qix's namesake.

The upshot of all this random meandering is Yo-Yo's success is determined as much by luck as skill, especially when he's zipping around at high speed. The monotony and shallowness of his quest in life also doesn't bode well for a stimulating long-term relationship.

All in all, not a terrible evening, but one of those dates where the end-of-night kiss gets an awkward pass and the phone gets ignored for the next few days in the hope they get the message in a nice way.

Interestingly, The Electric Yo-Yo has an uglier and less-intelligent sibling who seems to have gotten around a bit more, despite having to sneak out the window at night to do so.

Elk Attack, an illegitimate bastard (in the literal sense), is a resident of Atari 2600 land who lacks an official release certificate. Fathered by Mark Hahn in 1987 and ultimately finding his calling in the seedy world of internet bootlegs, Elk Attack is basically the same guy and the same enemies existing on a plane where the boxes are larger and arranged in small, simpler patterns.

The big problem is Elk's triumphs over his foes are much less impressive than Yo-Yo's, because the indestructible nemesis is nowhere to be found. Considering the blandness already rampant in the younger generation, this is a dinner date that would end at the restaurant.





## Rampage

Destruction - it's part of the very DNA of video games. Since the days of Spacewar! in 1962, you've been trying to blow up your opponent, outflank your friend's tank battalion, stop an onslaught of alien invaders, blast your way out of an asteroid field, and devour energizers so you can chomp your pursuers. It's all part of the competition that comes from games themselves, long before they were ever transferred to a video screen. Something else that has remained true from the start is that playing a game is always more fun with a friend. Rampage builds on the notion that destruction has a feeling of satisfaction attached to it, especially when a couple of friends can get in on the action with you.

Released to arcades in 1986, Rampage takes a lot of influence from classic giant monster movies, allowing up to three players to both compete and cooperate. Player one takes control of George (resembling King Kong), Player two controls Lizzie (a giant lizard reminiscent of Godzilla), and player three controls Ralph (a giant werewolf). All three monsters were once regular humans mutated into their monster forms by taking tainted mega-vitamins, bathing in a radioactive lake, and eating some sausage with a recalled additive respectively. After the injustices done to them it's time for revenge on a gigantic scale and all of North America is their playground. While it doesn't sound like anything special, the concept really is a complete reversal for the time. In a game where the premise is that giant monsters are attempting to level populated civilian cities, one would assume the objective would be to defend said cities from the attack. I've always thought this gameplay goal reversal is why Rampage had such appeal when it was released. It really was something different from the games of the time. Due to the unique premise, three player leave / join in gameplay, 128 cities to destroy, and the fact that you could always buy additional lives with additional quarters, Rampage was a tremendous success in arcades. Of course this meant it was released on virtually every home video game system and computer platform at the time, including the NES.

Aside from the premise the one thing that really stood out about Rampage in the arcade were the graphics. Everything had a very detailed high resolution look from the buildings to the vehicles, items, people and especially the monsters. This played up the comedic aspect of the game due to its over the top nature. The expressions on the monsters faces as they cover their eyes before falling from a building, eat something that doesn't agree with them or get electrocuted from hitting a neon sign really played up the B-movie feel of the game. This gave a light and humorous tone to a game where you pick up and eat people for bonus points. The visuals did a lot to keep the game appealing since in actuality you're really just doing the same thing over and over again. While the graphics on the NES aren't terrible, they really can't even begin to compare with what was seen in the arcade. Everything is still there it just looks really, really muddy. The monsters and vehicles tend to stand out too much from the background, giving the game a disjointed look as the buildings sort of feel flat against the backdrop. Human characters resemble little more than a few pixels strung together but due to their coloring it's still easy to tell soldiers apart from civilians. The items hidden within the buildings are really what will make you scratch your head though. Some items such as the skull or the dollar sign are easy to identify but others look like a mash of colors and shapes. "A woman in a bathtub? Oh, that's what that thing is supposed to be? I see it now... sort of." Rampage on the NES reminds me a lot of Paperboy on the NES in this respect. The objects are there but concessions made due to lack of detail and color depth mean that a lot of things look completely different than you'd expect them to. One can't expect the NES visuals to match those of the arcade, that's a given. However where the arcade was gritty and detailed yet vibrant and cartoony, the NES version just looks undetailed and unappealing. I will say that even though over all graphics package is unimpressive, the monsters themselves do have a decent amount of detail and expression.





Audio was never anything big with Rampage but the arcade version had a nice assortment of destruction sounds. Cars, trucks, tanks and streetcars all made appropriate sounds as they moved around the screen and helicopters made quiet little buzzing sounds as they flew overhead. Buildings rattle and crash to the ground and the monsters make a thud when they land but it's all very muted. Playing the arcade version with friends I never really noticed this adding or detracting from the gameplay. Then again, we were usually pounding away at the control panel and talking about what was happening in the game. The NES version has a rather mixed bag of sound effects, many that would sound more at home on the Atari VCS than the Nintendo hardware. To compensate, cover up, or both the NES version features background music, something the arcade original did not. However the music amounts to the same seven notes looping over and over with some slight variation in tone. This results in something that was originally an afterthought becoming an annoyance. Thankfully play control remains virtually unchanged with one button for jumping and the other for punching. Movement is very much the same but I do miss the rapid downward punching while climbing down a building that I used a lot in the arcade version. Collision detection is also more or less the same as it was in the arcade, although it can be more difficult to grab humans out of windows on the NES due to having to be at the precise correct height.

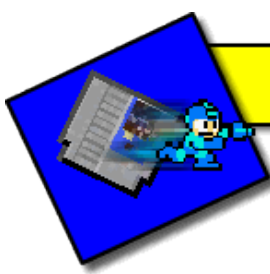
Sadly, the shortcomings of the NES version don't stop with the lack of visual appeal and mixed bag of sound design. How does a home arcade port of a game that has 33% of the main characters removed sound? Not that great I'd assume but that is exactly what we get here. Ralph the werewolf has been completely omitted from the game. While three simultaneous players in a game like this on the NES really wasn't expected at the time, the option to select from all three characters would have been nice. It's not like player one has to play as George, the NES version does feature a character select screen. I have no idea if the lack of Ralph is due to not having the proper colors for him available, not having the space on the cartridge for another character sprite, or simply deciding to only offer the first two player characters since the NES has two controller ports. Regardless of the reason, it just feels lazy. Every other version of Rampage featured Ralph, if not as a third player than at the very least as a selectable character for player one or two. Instead the NES version attempts to make up for it with some boring "find the object" bonus stages and a map screen which boils down to a map of the United States being punched out by a monster as you work through the game. Even the intermission screens are lackluster and feel lazy. Gone are the news feed printout intermissions of the arcade and nearly every other home version. While the arcade and NES versions both feature 128 days of destruction, no noticeable effort is made to make the cities match between the two versions. I suppose if there is one welcome difference between the two versions it is that the NES port actually has an ending, while the arcade version loops through all the cities a few times before resetting to the first day. I suppose the programmers on the NES version felt pity for anyone who wasted the six or so hours it takes to play through the entire game on the NES.

I guess it really comes down to Rampage, in its original form, really only works in an arcade setting. Playing with a couple of friends, with the more detailed visuals, trying to get your quarters to last is really what these type of games are all about. While playing arcade games at home has a lot of appeal, quarter munchers such as Rampage really need to be done spectacularly to maintain interest. After all, you really are looking at the same static screen made up of the same few buildings, with the same objective over one hundred times. When you lose a third of the social aspect of the game, the graphics are uninspired, the sound design is annoying at best and there's no penalty for losing a life -

a game just isn't fun anymore. Maybe if the graphics were better, maybe if you could have that additional player, maybe if it offered something to compensate for the differences from the arcade this could be at the very least a passable home conversion. Unfortunately none of these things can be found here. I'll never forget renting this game as a kid, Rampage being one of my favorite arcade games at the time. A friend and I planned on sitting down and playing through the entire game that night, we were going to see all the levels that we couldn't afford to in the arcade. As the hours of doing the same thing over and over again rolled by, what began as an exciting diversion quickly became a repetitive chore. Eventually the game was shut off and put back in the rental case, there it stayed until the weekend was over and it was returned to the video store. While we still played a lot of Rampage in the arcade, the NES version was one we never played again. Over twenty years later I can say that's the way it should have stayed.

*"InsaneDavid" also covers all types of video gaming at <http://www.classicplastic.net/dvgi>*





# Beyond The Plastic

by Elena García Méndez



## The Flintstones - The Rescue Of Dino & Hoppy

I feel nostalgic while recalling this game. It was one of those I used to play a lot as a kid. My dad always offered me a videogame for Christmas so as to keep me entertained until school started again. This one sure did the trick! I played for hours and hours and I remember I always got to the future level (my favourite) but never got past the mean Dr Butler.

Some months ago, I rescued my old NES and decided again to give it a go! What an accomplishment to finally see the conclusion of this classic game!

So now, let me tell me you all about The Flintstones—the Rescue of Dino & Hoppy!



### The Taito Corporation

The maker of The Flintstones—the Rescue of Dino & Hoppy started its life as an importer of various goods and a distiller of vodka in Japan in 1953. Taito then expanded into the manufacture of peanut vending machines. Over the following years the business extended to the leasing and sales of jukebox and amusement devices.

Taito created a subsidiary company, Pacific Industries, Ltd., in 1963. In 1971 they further expanded with their purchase of Japan Vending Machine, Ltd. In the following year, they formally named themselves Taito Corporation. Taito released the TV game Elepong in 1973. In 1978 came the world famous Space Invaders.

Taito joined the Kyocera Group and merged Pacific Industries and Japan Vending Machine in 1986. During this time, the company was developing and marketing karaoke machines. They continued with this portion of the business into the 1990s, as well as releasing the Densha de GO! game.

The dawn of the 2000s saw Taito merging with the Kyocera Multimedia Corporation and creating a cell phone contents division. In 2006, Square Enix Company purchased Taito Corporation. At this stage, they moved into music download systems. With the 30th anniversary of Space Invaders in 2008, Taito revealed special new content for the celebration.

Videogames which Taito developed include Bubble Bobble, Puzznic, Speed Race, and The Jetsons.

### The Story

Fred Flintstone and his family are enjoying their lives in Bedrock. One day, the evil Dr. Butler appears via a time machine. He is in search of dinosaurs for his zoo. He has kidnapped Dino and Hoppy, so Fred has to rescue them! He will need to gather pieces of the time machine so that Gazoo, his alien friend, can reconstruct the machine and take Fred and his friends to the future to rescue Dino and Hoppy.

### How to play

- Use Left or Right buttons to move Fred's character

- Use the Press Down button to hide Fred's head and avoid spikes and such like
- Use the Press Up + the B button to activate your special weapon
- Press Select to change your special weapon
- Press Start to pause the game or to call your friend Gazoo for help!
- Press the A button to jump
- Press the B button to use your club

On the bottom of the screen you will find the following information:

- **Lives:** This tells you how many lives Fred has left. You start your game with three.
- **Energy:** This indicates how many hearts you have left. You start with three full hearts.
- **Middle section:** Here appears the special weapon Fred is using. If you wish to change weapons, press the Select button.
- **Power:** This measures Fred's strength, that is, his ability to strike with his club. If you continue to press the B button, the power will reach its maximum and the enemy will suffer more damage.
- **Coins:** You need these in order to use the special weapons. You can find coins all along your way. Collect as many as you can; they are very useful!



## The objects

- **Heart:** If you pick up a heart, all your hearts will be replenished no matter the number you possess. The maximum you can have at one time is five.
- **Extra life:** Grab this one to get another opportunity to save Dino and Hoppy!
- **Bronto Burger:** This juicy burger will increase Fred's strength!
- **Steak ribs:** These will give you an extra empty heart for your heart meter. You will have to fill the heart, though.
- **Coins:** As explained before, use them to buy special weapons! The maximum number you can carry is 100.

## Special weapons

- **Axe:** You will need five coins every time you throw an axe at your enemy.
- **Slingshot:** This is very useful for long distance shots. It costs you three coins per shot.
- **Bomb:** This massive boomosaur egg will provoke a terrible explosion and damage to your enemy. Price? Ten coins per use.

## The basketball game

You will need to defeat your opponent Harry three times in this game. The rules are very simple: You must win! (Keep in mind if you end up with the same amount of points as Harry does, you will lose.)

To get the ball out of Harry's hands, press the B button. Fred will then hit Harry and you will have a chance to grab the ball. Quickly! Go to the pelican, and then use the A button to shoot. Make sure the pelican has its mouth open so that you score.

If you win, you will earn a special prize!



## Gazoo

Once you have defeated Harry three times, press the Start button to call Gazoo. He will grant you three possibilities to

help you during the game:

1. **Jump:** The Hopposaur can jump really, really far! Fred can ride him to reach some objects that are out of his reach. Using this animal will cost you five coins
2. **Wings:** Fred will turn into Icarus for a few minutes and will be able to overfly dangerous zones. However, every time you fly, you will be consuming coins like mad! To be more exact, it will cost you four coins for each flutter!
3. **Fins:** This aquatic suit will assist you in the water level. The cost for this suit is high, at four coins per kick

## The levels

There are eight levels in each game and they all follow the same dynamic. You must complete each level so as to earn a new piece for Gazoo's time machine.

In three levels, you will have to rescue your friend Barney, Betty and your wife, Wilma. Barney is trapped in the jungle, Betty in the ice village and Wilma in the village.

Pay attention to everything they tell you as sometimes they will give you tips to defeat each boss level or even give you special weapons!

Once you have gotten past the first level (Bedrock) and its boss (a purple dragon), you will then come across a wide map. You can move your Fred character at will, either left or right. You can start by playing a basketball game, or rescuing Barney or Wilma. If you choose the first one, you will later be able to play another basketball game and after that enter a castle. If you choose Wilma and clear that level, you can choose either a basketball game or rescue Betty. Either way, you will have to complete all the levels so as to keep on moving.

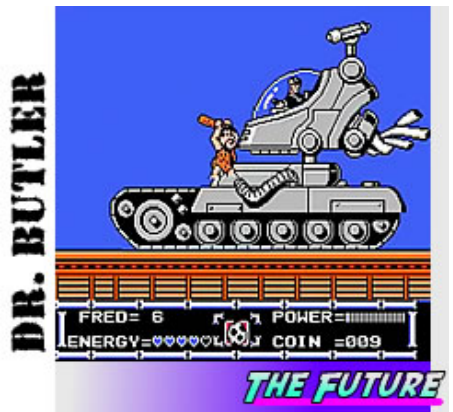
The boss levels you will encounter are pretty varied, as are the difficulty levels of the game (please note that in the water level there is no boss to defeat):

- **The purple dragon (Bedrock):** If you have an axe, you can defeat this boss with only three hits! If not, this boss can really get complicated and you will have to time your clubbing while at the same time avoiding the flames the dragon produces!
- **The gorilla (jungle level):** This mean gorilla will jump, throw coconuts and even fleas at you! Hit the coconuts that have fallen on the floor so that they shoot right back at him! As for the fleas that jump at you, use your club to get rid of them!
- **The hammer man (village level):** This prehistoric man looks like the Greek god Hephaestus, carrying his hammer all the way! He will approach you by jumping little by little, and if you're within his reach, he will hit you with the hammer! The easiest way to defeat him is by using one of the special weapons!
- **The mammoth (ice level):** This animal you will encounter in the ice level. He will move left and right of the screen, barely pausing. It's an extremely hard boss level to defeat and it can sometimes be frustrating. (Even if you jump, and try to avoid him, you will lose hearts!) Use the slingshot to give him as many hits as you can! Best of luck!
- **The Count (castle level):** This Dracula character will move either left or right in the form of a bat. He is however out of Fred's reach, as Dracula is secure in some upper platforms. But Dracula is not that clever. When he tries to hit you by sending some spiders at you, a part of his foot is left off of the platform! That's when Fred has to jump and get him! Other times, Dracula will come your way to the lower platform level. As soon as he does that, hit him as many times as you can! Once he's defeated he will turn again into a bat and disappear from your sight!





- **Sumo dinosaur (Asia level):** This huge dinosaur will come your way every time he sees you. The best weapon to defeat him with is the bombs. Soon you will get rid of him. You must climb to the upper platform where you will be out of reach of the dinosaur and from where you can drop the bombs on him!
- **Dr. Butler (future level):** You will have to defeat this doctor three times. The first time he will be carrying a bazooka, next he will be on a robot can deliver punches, and finally he will be on a big machine which shoots lasers. For all of them, the strategy is the same: Use Fred's maximum power and soon you will have finished the game!



Congratulations! You have saved Dino and Hoppy!

The final grading

Let us consider a few aspects before reaching the overall grading of The Flintstones—the Rescue of Dino & Hoppy.

First, the wide variety of play makes it really entertaining and fun. You will not find any levels repetitive and each boss level provides much challenge.

The basketball game is also a bonus, as you can use it to relax a bit between the levels.

This game also provides a new feature for the NES console, which is being able to play some levels in the order you may wish, taking away the always linear characteristic of the console.

As for the graphics, they are all quite clear and bright so it makes it attractive to the eyes. It will be impossible for you to not know or distinguish each character.

Regarding music, you will find it repetitive sometimes (the company has used the same tune for the jungle and ice level) and that, to my view, should have been avoided. However, some of the music might become catchy and soon you will be humming the tunes as you play! And I'm sure you will also recognize The Jetsons theme for the future level!

On the negative side, there are barely any sound effects in this game other than when Fred gets hit, obtains some objects or when he defeats a boss.

Following this, sometimes the controls will frustrate you. Even if you try hard to jump on a platform, there is no way to reach it without losing a heart. The same goes when defeating some of the bosses/enemies; even if you do think you have avoided being hit, it will not be so!

This game is also very short and you will probably finish it in about forty minutes—that is of course if you have familiarized yourself with it by playing it a couple of times. The level of difficulty is high in some sections and you might end up using a few of the continuations. When you lose a life, you may begin again from a restarting point, but you will consume a lot of coins, forcing you to play more carefully and even expend more lives while dealing with the bosses.

Based on all these aspects and considerations, I will grade this game with seven stars out of a possible ten.





# Apple II Incider

by Donald Lee



## DOS BOX: Ultima IV / Shufflepuck Cafe

This article is way late to Bryan's INBOX for various reasons. Simply put, there were the NFL Playoffs along with NBA Basketball to watch, Chinese New Year celebrations and dinners to attend and some basketball to play. All in all, I was just tied up with stuff all week long.

As I thought about what to write tonight, I had a great idea. RTM has plenty of different columns but none of which focused on PC games. Therefore, I would like to announce that I plan to write a column of PC games occasionally. As I have done with my Vectrex column in the past, I will try to either write a second column (if time permits) along with my Apple II Incider or just rotate between the different systems depending on what I am interested in during a particular month.

I should backtrack a little bit and explain how this idea came about. Literally a day or so after I wrote my column on Ultima IV last month, I noticed that a legal version (PC/MS-DOS) of Ultima IV was available to download from the Electronic Arts website. I had tried downloading a version from the Internet before but it had not worked. After I downloaded the legal version, I had to figure out how to play the game on my iMac.



It turns out I already had the answer on my hands. There is a project / program called DOSBox that emulates old PC machines so that many old MS-DOS games can be played on modern machines which otherwise couldn't be played. Also, DOSBox addressed the issue I had last week with some of the Apple II emulators. DOSBox automatically saved my progress for Ultima IV so I could play and not worrying about losing my place.

Alas I had forgotten I already had DOSBox on my iMac. I had used it to play some Champ games a year or so ago. As I had not used DOSBox in a while, I had to download an updated version. After that was done, I was off to play Ultima IV for a while.

I won't spent too much time on Ultima IV as I talked a little bit about the game last time. All in all, I found myself being a little impatient with it. I wanted to get to the point where I could finish the game and not have to start all over. Wanting to move things along a bit, I surfed the Internet for various bits to help me. I don't think I'm even 25% done with what I need to do, but I plan to see how far I can get.

To keep things fresh, I decided to write (briefly) about another game I played on DOSBox. The game is called Shufflepuck Cafe by Broderbund Software.



Shufflepuck Cafe is a simulation of the table game Air Hockey. While I have not played Air Hockey extensively in recent years, I used to play a lot in college. A lot of lunch times were spent playing against one of my best friends. The matches were intense and competitive but it was all in fun.

According to Wiki, Shufflepuck Cafe was released in 1989 though I don't think I saw the game until a few years later. I

do remember seeing the Mac version and an Apple IIGS version. I tried to play the Apple IIGS version for the Apple II Incider column but could not get the game running.

In playing the game a little bit, I was impressed with the physics. It played very much like Air Hockey though there was one major difference. In Air Hockey, you protect a small slot. In Shufflepuck Cafe, you are essentially protecting the entire width of the table (which isn't as wide as it appears). Also, the scoring of the game goes up to 15 points versus 7 points in a typical Air Hockey game.

Despite the differences, it felt very natural to play with my mouse. The first opponent I played was easy and I won by a score of 15-3. Unfortunately, I'm not 100% up to speed on navigating through options or DOSBox, so I have not figured out how to switch opponents.

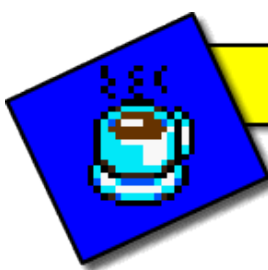
Graphically, the game is decent but not as colorful or detailed as other versions for the Apple IIGS, Amiga or Atari ST computers. Sound wise, the game reminded me of the Apple II. There was no music and only minimal sound effects.

Despite the graphics and sound limitations, the game played well and I'm interested in seeing how difficult it gets on the higher levels (assuming I figure out how to switch opponents!).

Overall though, the game is solid and worth a look regardless if you're an Air Hockey fan. Despite the graphical and sound limitations, I think Shufflepuck Cafe is a little better than some of the games available on the iPad / iPhone.

In the future, look out for some more reviews on older MS-DOS / PC games as we move away from the 1980's and into the 1990's.





# Commodore Du Jour

by Marc Douglas



## Prince Of Persia

Since it is February, the month of romance, I felt that I had to find a game that brings people together. A game that spoke of love, romance and the trials that one will go through to achieve that love.

Strip Poker...Nah. Too obvious.

Samantha Fox Strip Poker...Nah. Can't afford the celebrity endorsement.

What to do, what to do. That's it! I remember back in October of 2011 as I was revisiting some Commodore websites that there was a mention of the Broderbund and Jordan Mechner classic, "Prince of Persia" being converted for the C-64/128. After a little more sniffing around, I found the ROM here, <http://noname.c64.org/csdb/release/?id=102540> and decided to give it a go.



I remember being impressed by the visuals of the Apple II version of the game and figured that there would be a C-64 version available down the road and since I worked at a computer store at the time (back in 1989) that I would get a look at a copy when it came in. Days turned to weeks, weeks to months and you get the idea. Well the 80s ended and there was no POP for the C-64 to be seen. Looking back now it is easy to see that the 8-bit systems were nearing the end of their respective lives and to dump money into a 64 version of POP would have been seen as a big risk. Plus if I remember correctly you needed 128K to run the game on the Apple II and besides running GEOS, most C-64 users didn't own the various RAM modules for the C-64.

Why not a C-128 version? Well as we all know, 128 software was very scarce. Besides some applications software, word processing and the sort, there were really no native 128 games. There were a couple of Infocom games (Trinity, Beyond Zork) and Origin's Ultima V and the only main difference besides loading times and being able to use the 128 keyboard was that you were able to hear music in the game. So as you can see, with such a stellar line-up of native 128 software, Broderbund would have been taking a huge risk making POP for any Commodore 8-bit machine. They would make an Amiga version later but by the time it came out my desire to play the game had waned.

I did have to update my version of VICE to play POP, which is considered a cartridge and not a disk. Once I did that, I could begin my quest for love and romance!

The plot of the game is typical of the time and the genre. The game takes place in ancient Persia, where the Sultan is at war, allowing his vizier, Jaffar to seize power. But the Sultan's daughter stands in the way of his plot, so like most villains do, he locks her in a tower and makes an ultimatum, become his wife, or die. Then when Jaffar finds out that the man the princess truly loves is you, he has you thrown into the palace dungeons where you will slowly expire. But since there wouldn't be much of a game if this happens, you, as the hero with no name must find a way to escape from the dungeons, get to the tower, defeat Jaffar and be reunited with the princess. Easy, right? Well it would be if you had a couple of weeks to do it. But since this is a video game, you get...



1 Hour!

Ok then, 1 hour. Off I go. First, a very impressive title screen and introductory cinematic are presented. I do like how the game introduction gives credit to Broderbund and Mechner. This gives it a retro feel and has you thinking for a moment that you are back in 1990. The cinematic is colorful and the music is excellent. The character models bring to mind early Sierra AGI games like King's Quest I - III. They are well animated and set the mood for your upcoming adventure. From viewing some YouTube videos of the Apple II version, I can say that the layout of the game is exact. I found myself thinking that yes, this game could and should have been released back with the Apple II version.

If you have played Mechner's earlier game, Karateka, you know what to expect in terms of movement and action. I feel that his games are a mix of action and strategy as they have a slower pace in terms of movement as he wants you to think out your moves before you actually try them. For Karateka this was ok, as there was no real time limit. But here, with only an hour, you will spend some time just getting the layout of the dungeons knowing so the second time you play, you will already know in advance what you want to do and how you want to do it.

I want to give a few lines about the animations of the nameless hero from now on NH. Again, going to YouTube, you can see that Mechner motion captured his brother who did all the moves for the NH. What was impressive on the Apple is just as impressive on the Commodore. The fluidity of motion of the character when he runs, jumps, climbs, duels with a sword is still a treat. Heck, even when the NH drinks a potion, it is impressive.

So what will the NH be up against in his quest to save the princess? Well besides the time limit, you have to deal with...

- Floor switches that will open and close gates
- Floor panels that will crumble after you walk over them (if you fall down the hole created by these, the drop is usually fatal)
- Spikes that will rise out of the floor and that you will find yourself falling on repeatedly when you first give this game a go.
- Jaffar's henchmen who have swords and are good at using them
- Skeletons that also have swords
- Combinations of these that will have you at times pulling out your hair as you try to find the one correct way to solve a certain screen that you are on



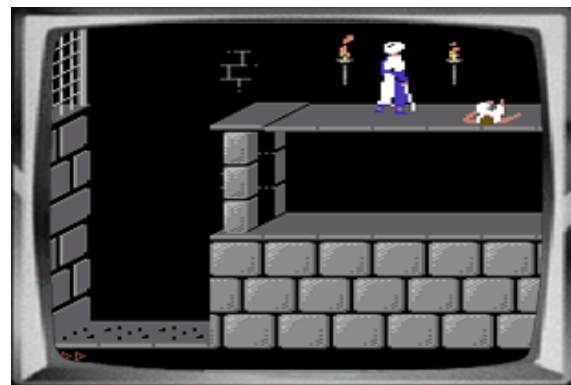
There are items in the game that will help you in your quest. Potions of various effects and yes, you will stumble upon a sword rather early in the game and trust me, you'll need it.

I am not going to be able to go into great detail about the finer points of the game, as I am still playing it and discovering and rediscovering many things for the first time (if that makes any sense).

I would like to mention again that the graphics stand up to the Apple version which I feel has a slightly more colorful title screen but as far as the in-game graphics go, I'm leaning towards the 64 as the dungeon graphics are not dithered but filled with solid colors which I feel are much easier on the eyes. The character graphics on the Apple seem to be slightly taller and more filled out, but again, I have no problem with the look of the characters in the 64 version. The swordfights are well animated and even the potions bubble when you discover them. All in all very impressive.

Music hands-down is better on the Commodore version and is well done. The SID gets a workout and as usual, handles the task with aplomb. Sound effects are sparse, but realistic. The gates creak when opening, the spikes make a nice "snikkt" noise when they shoot out of the ground.

Joystick control on VICE with an XBOX 360 controller are solid and not the least frustrating. You will find yourself at times getting slightly frustrated when you can't line up that jump or are just off the spot where you can drop down a level. As you put more time into the game, these frustrations will pass and you will find yourself enjoying it all the more. Some nice touches in this conversion are the ability to save your game after reaching level three, using the run/stop key to pause, and separate



music and sound effect toggles.

And no, I didn't forget to give credit to MR. SID, the programmer who did this incredible conversion of a game that is considered one of the best of the late 8-bit releases. I can't call it a classic, but it comes pretty close.

So in the end, get VICE (version 2.2, earlier versions won't work) and a copy of this ROM and start playing. If people ask you why you are a retro-gamer, show them Prince of Persia and they'll understand.

My score this month...



The Prince Gets A Stellar 9!!!!

Everyone have a great Valentine's Day and February as well. I'll send my apology to Sam Fox later.

Next Month: I'm finally going to review that Amiga game that I've been promising.

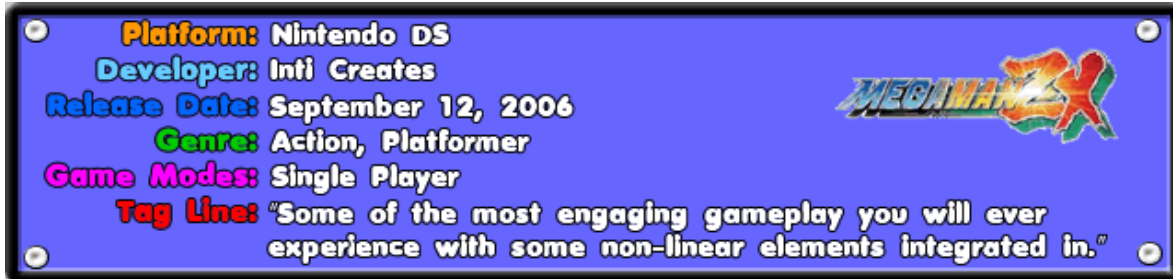


# The Pixelated Mage

by Jeff Wittenhagen



## Mega Man ZX



### Synopsis

Mega Man ZX basically falls into the Mega Man Zero franchise as it somewhat follows the storyline and has an amped up difficulty that you won't find in the original flagship series. The difficulty in Mega Man ZX pushes gamers to levels of expertise that many games fail to achieve. The difficulty has been referred to as being up to Battletoads' level. Any wrong move can result in death which can give you an adrenaline rush like no other. Combine that with intense boss battles where perfection and consistency is the key and you have one hard crazy game. Mega Man ZX gives you well blended, fast paced action with an amazing story that never gets stale.

Mega Man ZX takes place in a distant future to Mega Man X and Zero where humans and mavericks co-exist. The story begins around the Giro delivery service which is attacked while they are delivering a rare item known as a bio-metal. The attack ends up being the mavericks who want to obtain the bio-metal for their own nefarious needs. As you evade the mavericks attack, your character combines with the bio-metal which is called Model X.



### Gameplay

Mega Man ZX has some of the most engaging gameplay you will ever experience with some non-linear action and adventure elements integrated in perfectly. ZX is the first series to rely on this open ended style of gameplay as its main focus. The entire world is one giant map which opens up as you gain access cards to newer areas. You gain cards from defeating a boss, which kind of cuts off any extra exploration that could have occurred as you usually have a GPS-style dot pointing you towards your next objective.

The upgrades in Mega Man ZX puts it ahead of its sister games by allowing you to keep on your new weapons as complete customized armor per ability. Of course it must be said that the Rush Jet in Mega Man 6 was the first to have this. Mega Man ZX takes these seemingly simple armor upgrades and allows you to upgrade them even further which increase the power and/or adds new abilities. As you take on harder missions, these upgraded abilities will really help you out and allow you to progress much more easily.

### Graphics and Sound

There is really nothing graphically different in Mega Man ZX from the Game Boy Advance Zero series aside from the gorgeous anime cut scenes which help with story progression. Every aspect of these cut scenes are beautiful. There is noticeable slowdown from time to time when the action becomes intense. The slow down instead of breaking the game, can actually be used as a strategy to help you avoid hits. It looks like the game developers played it safe when it

comes to graphics as there is nothing that pushes the DS to its limits.

The music is another amazing edition to the Mega Man series and accentuates the game on every level. Each track perfectly matches its environment whether it be action packed music for tense moments or a slower moody song for an abandoned area. Mega Man ZX never fails at setting the perfect tone for each situation. Only in a few instances does the music sound a little choppy, which may not even be noticeable to most people. Each sound effect fits right in naturally with the game to where you are barely aware they are even there.

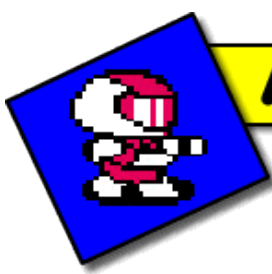
#### Why It's Rare

Mega Man ZX takes the Zero formula and greatly improves upon the flaws. While the graphics seemed to be taken out of the previous generation, they instead concentrated on giving us a perfect blend of difficulty and smooth gameplay. While it might frustrate you with its high degree of difficulty, you can master it through concentration and repetition. Mega Man ZX can be found for around \$10 online which is a steal to be able to enjoy this future rarity.

Rating = 4 Model PX Shots out of 5







# A Pixelated 21st Century

by Paul Zimmerman



Hello Pixelated fans. Sorry for the month off, but "Pixelated Paul" is back to let you know about some of the retroware highlights for the month of January. Enjoy!



Newton Vs the Horde ([Click here to see a video of the game](#))

Another physics-based, puzzle game. Destroy the monsters, anyway you can. 30 levels.

Stonekeep: Bones of the Ancestors (Video to the right)

A remake of the 90's dungeon crawler. I hear the 90's original is better.

Zombii Attack ([Click here to see a video of the game](#))

A physics-based shooter. Slingshot any object that you can find at the zombies, including zombies themselves. 18 levels, 8 different zombies, 8 different weapons, 1 slingshot.



3 Heroes: Crystal Soul ([Click here to see a video of the game](#))

Another game in the 3 Heroes series (there are now 11). More of the same puzzle-based, strategy RPG action.

101 Pinball World ([Click here to see a video of the game](#))

Not the pinball game to buy this month.

Flipper 2: Flush the Goldfish (Video to the right)

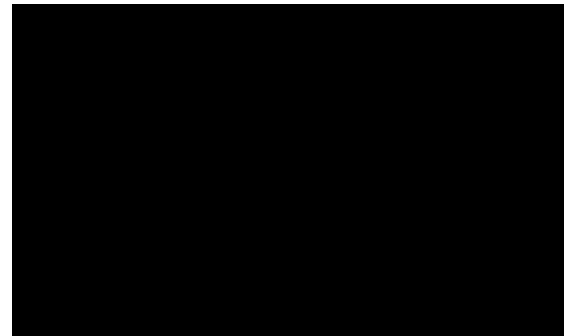
The sequel to the smash hit (and award winning) game. This time you play as Flush, the goldfish. Beautiful, retroware graphics.

Gaia's Moon ([Click here to see a video of the game](#))

A one-button game. Press a button to avoid objects. Looks like fun.

Mutant Mudds ([Click here to see a video of the game](#))

Very excited for this one! A 2D sprite platformer from the award-winning developer, Renegade Kid. Use your water





cannon and jet pack to destroy the Mutant Mudds army.

Quick Fill Q ([Click here to see a video of the game](#))

Keep Q rolling by filling in holes. This is a puzzle game for all-ages.

Samurai Sword Destiny ([Click here to see a video of the game](#))

Beautiful hand-drawn artwork, side-scrolling action game.

Zen Pinball 3D ([Click here to see a video of the game](#))

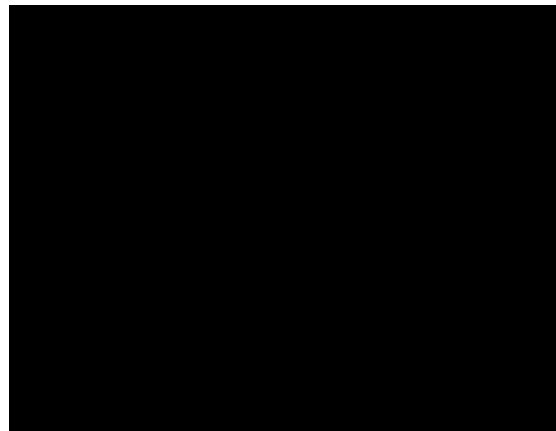
The pinball game to buy this month, if you have a 3DS. Four different tables (who needs 101 tables?), online leader board, local multiplayer.



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

Lock 'n' Chase (Gameboy) (Video to the right)

Different than the arcade classic, but still very similar. A Pac-Man-like maze game. Six levels.



As always, send me an email and let me know if you purchased any of these games and what are your thoughts about the games. Also, let me know your thoughts about any games I did not list.

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



Another issue of RTM has come to an end. Don't be too brokenhearted, as we'll be back again next month for some Springtime gaming. In the meantime be sure to search our Article Index and see if you can find what you are looking for. It's still a work in progress, but should become one of the most useful tools on the site.

Be sure to tune in next month as we get some retro PC and Amiga coverage, something of which RTM has not had enough of in its history. I know I had a lot of fun back when DOS games ruled the PC world, so it should make for a fun read. Until then!