



Printing Help



Retrogaming Times Monthly #94 - March 2012



- Press Fire To Begin
- Retrogaming News



- Retro Collecting 101 - Traveling Across Country
- Merrie Melodies - Return Of The Bloop Beep Buzz



- MAME Reviews - Mad Planets
- Commodore Du Jour - Amiga À La Carte
- Living In A PC World - The Lakers vs. Celtics & The NBA Playoffs
- Beyond The Plastic - Aladdin
- A Pixelated 21st Century



- Game Over



Press Fire To Begin

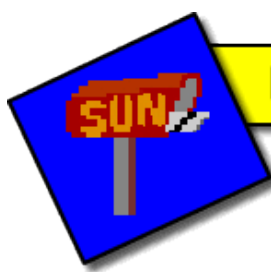
by Bryan Roppolo



I hope everyone had a good winter, I know I did! One of our columnists just moved from Florida to Indiana, so I'm sure that was a change for him. There's lots going on right now in the gaming world, with many shows this month as well as some interesting news on the homebrew front. H.E.R.O. is right now being ported to the TI-99/4A which will go along nicely with Pitfall! that was done not that long back.

Another interesting bit I want to mention is that CGE is back for 2012. I'm not sure if I made the announcement about that yet, but it's something I wanted to make sure to get out there as it's a major event for classic gamers. As August gets closer, I'll be sure to post about CGE in the News section. For those of you who don't know, CGE is being held August 11-12. Their official website can be found at <http://www.cgexpo.com/>.

Other than what was mentioned above, I don't have much to say except keep on classic gaming and I hope 2012 continues to be as eventful as it has been so far!



ANNOUNCEMENTS

[Atari \\$100,000 Pong Indie Developer Challenge!](#)

We are very proud to have the pleasure of announcing a recent development within the Atari brand. The Indie Pong Development Challenge is calling on entrants to re-imagine Atari's classic Pong for a chance to win up to \$100,000 and see their vision go from concept to market. And the best part is all of you Atari fans can vote for the winner! For more information on this incredible opportunity, please visit the link above.

EVENTS

[Louisville Arcade Expo 2012](#)

Friday, March 2 2:00pm - 12:00am

Saturday, March 3 10:00am - 12:00am

Sunday, March 4 10:00am - 4:00pm (Louisville, KY)

The first Louisville Arcade Expo was a great success! LAX 2012 is going to be even bigger and better (25,000 sq. ft), thanks to the newly renovated Ramada Plaza Hotel located at Hurstbourne Parkway and I-64. If you went to last year's show, the Ramada is located just on the south side of I-64 from where the show was held last year. This year we will we have more space, more parking, and the price of a room is only \$69.95 a night for guests if you are visiting from out of town or you just want to have a stay-cation and play games all weekend. More info can be found by visiting the link above.

[2012 Midwest Gaming Classic](#)

Saturday, March 24 - Sunday, March 25 (Brookfield, WI)

The Midwest Gaming Classic features many different things to see and do while you are at the show! From our popular "Events within an Event" to special displays at the show, everyone will have something that they find interesting that they may have never seen before!

Here's a rundown on some of the things occurring this year: there will be tournaments with over \$5000 in prizes, video game vendors, industry speakers, pinball vendors, a versus room, a family game room, a QR code scavenger hunt, an underdog chamber, Pokemon tournaments, Star Worlds arcade exhibit, an arcade hall with hundreds of machines, and a chance to tour Tom Taylor's collection of 300+ games. Follow the link above for more info!

[2012 Classic Arcade Gaming \(dot com\) Tournament](#)

Saturday, March 24 - Sunday, March 25 (Chicago, IL)

The seventh annual edition of The Classic Arcade Gaming (dot com) Tournament is being held at a new, and incredible, location this year - Logan Hardware, which is located a few miles southeast of O'Hare airport in Chicago, Illinois. The two-day event will take place over one weekend in later March; specifically, Saturday March 24 and Sunday March 25, 2012. Those who have paid the entrant fee (or will pay in person) may come out and practice on Friday (the 23rd) for a small fee (though no scores will be taken; Friday is for practice only). In addition, on that day, a number of world-class players will be going for world records on a variety of tourney, and non-tourney, games. More info at link above!

[Freeplay 2](#)

Saturday, March 31 10:00am – Sunday, April 1 12:00am (Chesapeake, VA)

Play video games on arcades, consoles, and computers in addition to pinball machines.

We're hauling out retro arcades like Pac-Man, Galaga, Robotron: 2084, X-Men (4-player!), Police Trainer, Donkey Kong, Fighting Vipers, Cruis'n Exotica, and many others! Consoles from Atari, Nintendo, Sega, Sony, Panasonic, Microsoft, NEC & Hudson Soft, and dedicated Pong machines among many! Classic computing reaches out with Tandy, Commodore, Apple, Atari, and Texas Instruments.

New pinball machines will make an appearance including Tron2: Legacy and Dark Knight, but also expect StarTrek: The Next Generation and Hook with more to come!

In addition to all of the above, there will be video game influenced movies shown as well as discussion panels talking about a broad range of gaming subjects. Need more info? Just click on the link above.

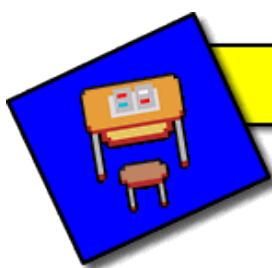
[Pax East 2012](#)

Friday, April 6 - Sunday, April 8 (Boston, MA)

PAX East is a three-day game festival for tabletop, videogame, and PC gamers. We call it a festival because in addition to dedicated tournaments and freeplay areas we've got nerdcore concerts, panel discussions, and an exhibitor hall filled with booths displaying the latest from top game publishers and developers. Even with all this amazing content the best part of PAX East is hanging out with other people who know their stuff when it comes to games.

The American Classic Arcade Museum will be hosting a pinball and coin operated video game panel discussion session in addition to having a free arcade of coin-op games. To read more and see if you want to drop by, check the link above.

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 and he'll make sure to announce it in a future issue.



Retro Collecting 101

by Jeff Wittenhagen



Traveling Across Country

Having to move from the south in Miami, Florida up north to Indiana has given the wife and I the opportunity to take an extended driving vacation across the country. Just like a few months back when I traveled through Georgia and stopped at a retro video game store, I have done it again, although this time on a much grander scale! My stops were planned to be the northern part of Florida with Tampa and Gainesville, then Atlanta, Nashville, and Indianapolis before moving on to our final resting place where we are moving to.

Because of the massive nature of this trip and all the expenses involved, I limited myself to only picking up either really unique finds or really cheap games. This allowed me to maximize my fund expenditure while allowing me to still have money for the next stop. Of course the temptation is always great when you see tons of great finds. So without further delay let the hunting begin!

R.U. Game? #1 - Tampa, Florida

Usually the first stop on any trip is a mediocre one where you don't find much. The fact that this store was in a major shopping mall didn't help my skepticism. Upon walking up to the store though, I was pleasantly surprised by what I saw.

Going into R.U. Game was insane as they had an entire wall dedicated to Japanese Famicom and Super Famicom games, not to mention the walls of NES, SNES, N64 and other retro systems. Immediately I saw a copy of Lost Vikings on the SNES CIB which I picked up for a fraction of what it is worth loose. Another rarity that I saw was the Adventures of Lolo 3 which is something I have never seen in the wild, however the price was way too expensive so I had to pass.

R.U. Game? #2 - Tampa, Florida

After seeing the first R.U. Game in Tampa, I had high hopes for the second one which was its own dedicated store in a shopping center. Luckily I wasn't disappointed as the store was just as amazing as the first. That being said, I didn't really find anything in the store that was spectacular, just your typical treasure trove of old school games and accessories. The thing is that both R.U. Games had an amazing staff that enjoyed where they worked and were great to talk to which made these stores even better.

Coming Up Short in Florida

There was another R.U. Game in Tampa that we went by and it was closed due to it being a Sunday at the time. Also another R.U. Game in Gainesville, Florida was closed due to it being New Year's Day. What's funny is each store had a little note in the window with no indication on their online store that they would be closed. So not only did you have to drive there but also go up to each place. We were just striking out when it came to Florida.



[Play 'n Trade - Atlanta, Georgia](#)

Atlanta had two retro game places for us to stop, however the first one ended up being a bust as it was either an online only store ran out of a house or simply went out of business. As we adventured to the next stop, which was simply a chain Play 'n Trade store that just happened to carry some retro games, I was already not expecting much. However, it's always been said that you always find the best finds when you aren't looking for them. This Play 'n Trade was in a pretty rough neighborhood to the point that I worried leaving my wife in the car as I went into the mall where the store supposedly resided.

Going through the mall and getting dirty looks was only half the battle, once I got to the store, which thankfully existed, there was a pretty gigantic employee with a scowl on his face. I'm 6'1" and 215lbs and this guy made me feel like a midget! Anyhow I did what I always do and strike up a conversation with the guy who was surprisingly friendly despite his scowl. I then looked in the glass case that contained retro games. The amount of games was few but Final Fantasy was right on the top which was a good omen. I asked to check out all the games as I couldn't see them all and what did I immediately see? A copy of Dragon Warrior IV sitting right there with a mint label and a very reasonable price tag on it! I started to sweat a bit but made the purchase and made my way back to my vehicle like I had just won the lottery.

[Geeks Etc. - Tullahoma, Tennessee](#)

My amazingly supportive wife actually found Geeks Etc. months back as she got me Earthbound on the SNES for my birthday from their online store. Apparently this store is the largest gaming store in the south and has their entire store available online live with their storefront. As soon as I walked in it was like I was in heaven! Retro games everywhere the eye could see! All their games were alphabetized to my surprise and made it very easy to use my online game list to pinpoint which games I needed. After scouring their store for anything I could find, which included a few rarer Jaguar games, I asked the guys behind the counter if they had any other rarities that aren't out on the floor. Apparently they had just received a lot of TurboGrafx 16 games, a majority of them being spaceship shooters, which didn't even have price tags on them. Talk about finding a megaload!

[Game Trader - Nashville, Tennessee](#)

After settling in at our destination in Nashville, I did my typical Google search for game stores in the area. Since I had been pretty good about researching this entire trip, I hadn't been finding anything except D&D game stores, until now! Game Trader popped up and just happened to be on the way to where we were heading next.

Stepping into the store there was the typical newer game front, however going into the back there was a treasure trove of retro gaming goodness! Not only did they have decently priced games, but they also had retro bundles with 5 or so games that you could buy which is perfect for a start up gamer. One spot



In The Land Of The Geeks



Trader Joe's This Is Not



All Journey's Must Come To An End...

that immediately caught my eye was a game case that had CIB SNES games in the bottom. All of the Mega Man X games and a ton of SNES RPGs were there and were listed at their loose prices! Unfortunately as I have mentioned before I was on a budget so I picked up a couple of games that were on my list to get that were the most affordable and bit my tongue at the many many other rarities that were sitting right in front of my eyes.

[Music & Movie Exchange - Indianapolis, Indiana](#)

Our final stop was a legendary gaming store in Indianapolis that I have heard about called McVann's. Driving up to the place there was a new sign that read Music & Movie Exchange. Apparently McVann's had just recently went out of business and this non-affiliated new company had opened up within the past couple of weeks.

Glass case world is all I could think about when going in this store as everything was encased out of reach of grubby little paws like mine. While they had a ton of games, nothing really stood out to me as a must have. So I did the same as at Geeks Etc. and talked to the people working behind the counter to see if there is anything else hidden in the back. As I'm talking to them I glance up and notice a boxed Sega Menacer behind them! Not only have I not seen a Menacer, the light gun for the Genesis, in the wild, but to see it boxed might be something I never see again. The price was very affordable and I picked up my last great find of the trip.

Conclusion

Overall, this trip was a huge success and I found some great rarities. From finding Dragon Warrior IV in a suspect neighborhood to randomly seeing a boxed Menacer as I'm talking with a store owner. I had to use all my game hunting knowledge in order to score big and keep the costs low which is now second nature for me. From here I have a ton of game hunting to do in my new area and hopefully I will continue to find more retro goodies (heck, I already have!). I would love to hear about your own gaming finds in the comments below!



Merrie Melodies

by Mark Sabbatini
& Jeff Wittenhagen

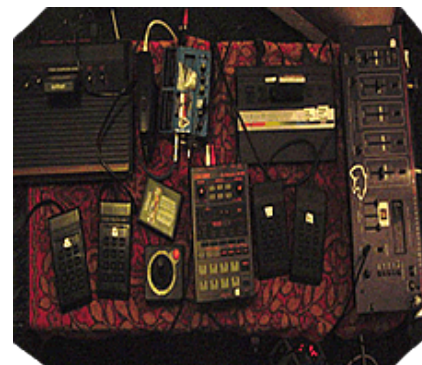


Return Of The Bloop Beep Buzz

First, a reality check: When people say an Atari 2600 game has great music, they don't really mean it has great music. Not when it can't produce the 12 chromatic tones. Not when fan polls say the game with the best music (Pitfall II) embeds its own sound chip in the cartridge.

Sure, arm a TIA chip with 64-note polyphony and full waveform control, which anyone with a half-decent computer can simulate these days, and something groovy can happen. But plenty of chiptune projects using the TIA and similar chips don't come close to the symphonic depth of the Final Fantasy franchise. Most still can't outplay coin-op classics like Gyruss and Frogger.

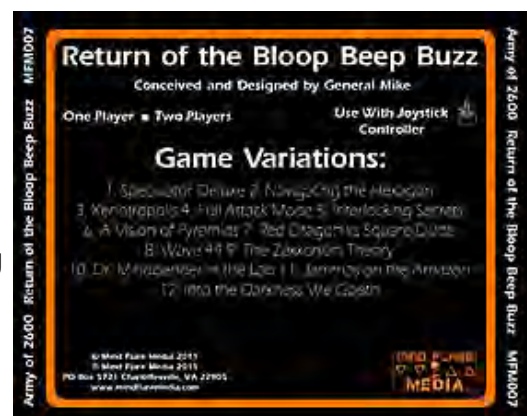
Mostly such music seems to be simple-loop hard-beat electronica whose layers are unmistakable for anything other than the sounds of their console of origin. The ingenuity of electronica pioneer Tangerine Dream, during the '70s as a radical instrumental cousin of Pink Floyd rather than a naturopathy soundtrack, was weaving Baroque complexity almost subconsciously into a 20-minute riff. Sounds were wrung from devices in a way that listeners had no idea what the hell what making them. Moreover, they were appealing as music to reasonably large audience, not just a limited cult of fanboys



Such was the mix of enthusiasm and wariness when encountering "Return of the Bloop Beep Buzz," a 12-song album promising a mix of "beat box" and "cosmic ambience" in the compositions. Generally when writing a press release it's a good idea not to crow about things shared with every electronica album in existence. "General" Mike Bourque, operating under the moniker Army of 2600, also claims in his bio "he's currently the only musician to thoroughly utilize the Atari 2600 as originally designed which, while seemingly a bit dubious, isn't something we're going to Google every end of the Earth for.

But he's got legit creds, getting plenty of raves for his broader electro-ambient stuff at events and free download sites. He says he spent more than two years on this CD, his first commercial release, and initial feedback from gaming forums is overwhelmingly positive.

Both of us wanted a crack at reviewing the album, so we agreed to make this a joint back-and-forth thing where we listen to a track and share our thoughts. Jeff probably has credibility to readers because (in addition to being vastly more savvy) he's got the physical CD, whereas Mark is listening to the MP3 version on a Mac laptop. (Mark's rather pity response is "I consider that criticism a bit absurd since Atari fans looking to relive their audio memories from back in the day almost certainly didn't have their console's audio jerry-rigged to a hi-fi stereo. I'm guessing nearly all of us were enduring the sound in Pac-Man that was every bit as bad as the game through single-speaker TV sets.")



So begins the debate, with recommended tracks getting a "+" to distinguish them:

Track 1: Speculator Deluxe

Jeff: Nice buildups throughout the song, however it doesn't seem to go anywhere. A main melody seems to not exist

and brings you into a trance like state of mind. I really like the ending with the Atari sound effects added in to the outro.

Mark: Yup, that pretty much nails it. As I suspected, the song is built around a single-loop techno rhythm that could be from the Music Minus One retrogaming collection. That primitive 2600 explosion sound sitting in as the percussionist, joined by an equally stock counter-rhythm of rapidly cycling high-pitch blips. Only the most clichéd choices for those particular roles. Nonetheless, I still have hope for this album. There's innovation in the intro, which takes those blips and intermittent snips of percussion, and builds up the tension to the main loop with an oncoming siren-like sound. I agree the ending is probably the best part, where General Mike lets the loop fade out and does some mingling riffs with the rest of his sound orchestra. If at least some of this album can harness that into compositions with more complexity than a beatbox I'll be plenty satisfied.

Track 2: Navigating the Hexagon

Jeff: The intro to track 2 sounded like it came right out of a 2600 game which is exactly what I was thinking of when I first heard of this band. However as the song continues on it kind of loses its focus in the massive amount of sound effects all stacked upon one another. The effects with the jumping into it once the multi-layered portion ended was a great touch, however it lead into another massive sound explosion. Again, I really liked the outro when they used less sound effects.

Mark: You mention expectations and, while I obviously expected a tribute to those game sounds permanently embedded in our brains, I was also hoping the General would reach beyond the expected. In particular, I was eager to hear the possibilities of a TIA as a real musical instrument. That exists on this song, but you have to plod through three minutes of cloying digitaleze to get there. The first two minutes is more beatbox humdrum, this time a simple straight-four beat. The main sound is a lot of firing blips in something of an exchange, with something vaguely like the Pitfall death jingle as an undertone. There really needs to be some kind of additional development in a stretch of that length. Finally, the song shifts into an ascending tone that produces the first sound of something that's obviously a gaming tone. Dropping 70 percent of the early clutter helps a lot as well.

Track 3: Xenotropolis

Jeff: Track 3 is a perfect example of how less is more as it gives me a feel of being in an abyss of the Wizard of Wor or stuck in the depths of Robotron. Short yet satisfying.

Mark: Easily the best track so far. Picking up where "Navigating the Hexagon" left off, it starts minimally and builds up and could easily pass as real electro/ambient music. General Mike also leaves the refuge of a pounding beat and allows the compositions and sounds to be the strength of a more relaxed piece. The best compliment I can give it is I wouldn't know the sounds are coming from a TIA chip unless I was told. One thing that stuck with me in particular is something like an amazingly authentic underwater sub pinging - that's something I'd have loved to see in a few games back when.



Track 4: Full Attack Mode

Jeff: Track 4 goes back to the techno feel however the beginning is executed very well which a decently catchy theme. Overlapping tons and tons of effects seems to be this bands forte and this song captures this technique much better than tracks 1 and 2 did. Perfect midpoint with familiar effects to break up the repetition into and flawlessly goes back into the main theme.

Mark: OK, we're back to monotonous beat tracks and looking to find the positive elements within. The steady cadence isn't as jarring as the first two tracks, which is to say it isn't all that memorable in a good or bad way. The section I went back and listened to a number of times was the middle interlude, where something sounding uncannily like a vocal sample was the contrasting presence. First time I momentarily thought "this is all done with a TIA chip?" For that the composition deserves credit, although the recommended status is still more Jeff's than mine.

Track 5: Interlocking Secrets

Jeff: Another techno song that sounds like it is out of Air Raid which brings back a lot of nostalgia. No melody to be found in this one which is a tad disappointing as the last track had gotten my expectations up.

Mark: Gaming techo "music" all the way. Nostalgia is right – I found myself thinking more of Combat, where shooting is rare, instead of the frenzy of something like Megamania. But the stuff that starts weaving in halfway through this four-minute song grabs me a bit. Unfortunately, it seems like they're all trying to get to center stage, but without enough assertiveness in ideas or volume to do so. Not a bad track, just not anything to get excited about.

Track 6: A Vision of the Pyramids

Jeff: From the name I was expecting an Arabic type of theme to the song however that was nowhere to be found, just a cluster of sound effects that kind of go nowhere. Really an underwhelming track.

Mark: It's got a catchier hitch-and-go beat compared to most of the previous tracks, but he doesn't do a damn thing with it except decorate it with occasional blots of nondescript sounds for the first half of the song. He mingles a few textured layers afterward, but where's the sense of development or tension? If these were traditional instruments it'd be one of those songs meant to fill vacant audio space in the room without actually distracting you from the conversation or whatever else is going on.



Track 7: Red Dragon vs. Square Dude

Jeff: The beat to Track 7 is much better than the previous 2 however again there is more chaos than control. A couple of times throughout the song there is a short little ditty that was enjoyable for the moments it was on.

Mark: I'm going into this thinking it has to be some kind of musical interpretation of Adventure and, well, the idea seems pretty cool. I, um, still might be able to sustain that thought. I'm trying to visualize Square Dude as the quaint high-pitch beep striding confidently through the quick, steady beat. The Red Dragon is the range of other tones that begin weaving around shortly after and some of it works. Something sounds a lot like a dragon breathing fire and it's not hard envisioning a range of other beeps as Square Dude fighting the fearsome beast. No fair giving away the ending but, when described as above, it is kind of comprehensible. Still thinking I ought to recheck my senses if I'm the one offering higher praise than you.

Track 8: Wave 44

Jeff: I really like the lower beat tracks especially in this song. The transitions were great and it again sounds like it's out of a 2600 game. This song is proof that you don't need a melody to make a great sounding tune.

Mark: The beat didn't immediately hook me, although the differing timbre is welcome. But this does indeed stand out among the game-like beat tracks so far because nothing goes long without changes and for the most part they feature a decent degree of complexity. Agree that, while there's no theme or melody, for these three-and-a-half minutes it isn't needed.

Track 9: The Zaxxonian Theory

Jeff: Maybe having Zaxxon in the title gave me higher expectations of this song but it was a bit slow paced and didn't remind me of Zaxxon at all. Another one where there is almost so much going on that it comes out staticy.

Mark: For no reason at all I went into this track with high expectations (probably all the more baffling given Zaxxon's execrable existence as a 2600 game). Maybe it's just because it's the longest track at 6:09. But what I'm getting is

roughly the opening moments of a dark "Miami Vice" montage filtered through a TIA chip. Except this one keeps going, and what would be the agonized dialogue on TV is coming here as stuff I can only describe as distorted and twisting noise. It reminds me of a hundred electronica albums I called unlistenable, only to be slammed by the composer for not being smart/cool enough to "relate" to the concept.

Track 10: Dr. Mindbender in the Lab

Jeff: Track 10 has a pretty cool beat to it however the volume is so loud that it didn't sync up properly with the track before it which. Otherwise this song is fairly enjoyable to say the least until the chaos again gets out of control about half way through which almost made me want to turn off the song. When it slows down near the end is when I like it best.

Mark: Getting back to a beat is surprisingly refreshing after sitting through "The Zaxxonian Theory" about a dozen times. The cadence is crisp and the heavy barrage of sounds, while nothing astonishing or pretending to resemble anything beyond game-like things such as shooting down waves of aliens, is catchy in a 2084 bubblegum pop way. As happened with some of the early tracks, the last minute fades into some sonic meditations. Even though the sounds (now not easily identified with the 2600) don't quite reach creative peaks, I'm wondering where this mindset was on the previous track.



Track 11: Jammies on the Amazon

Jeff: Fast paced frenzy of a song although largely forgettable.

Mark: Like Track 7, I went into this thinking it'd be adventurous in a fun way. The syncopated rhythm is chipper (no pun intended) and there's a regular procession of accompanying sounds but, yeah, where is this journey headed? If this were an Indiana Jones movie he'd be spending the first ninety minutes in his boat along the river without encountering dangers and then at the finale he'd ... well, to be honest, it sounds like he plummets into a waterfall and the buzzards circle before eating him.

Track 12: Into the Darkness We Goeth

Jeff: Was hoping for an evilish song with this one however the static overshadowed the main tune.

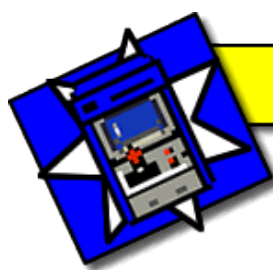
Mark: With this kind of name it's got to be a killer tune, right? I've seen plenty of mediocre albums somewhat redeemed with stuff the composer loved but buried at the end because he didn't think listeners would be as into it. And while not quite lethal, so to speak, I still think it's swinging a pretty hefty club. The aura is indeed dark, and the coming and going melody is an ungamelike overtone of apprehension. Then, alas, you're right ... the static comes in and sweeps the whole thing away. OK, if that's the darkness setting in then structurally the song makes sense, but with performing arts it's usually not a good idea to let the dark simulate the real-world hardship of complete obliteration.



Verdict

Jeff: As expected, using the Atari 2600 sound effects brings more of a techno or trance feel. If they had added in more of melodies into each song I feel it would have had a more lasting memorable effect overall. After growing up on industrial style bands like Front Line Assembly, perhaps I am a bit more fickle judgmental than most. As a whole this album isn't the worst that I have heard but certain songs shine of the potential of what could have been.

Mark: I'd agree this is a middling effort for projects of this type, although I'll give General Mike credit for working with hardware more limited than many retro machines. Obviously there should be stuff inspiring old gaming memories, but those too-brief passages where he demonstrates his virtuoso with the TIA as a musical instrument are the standouts for me. I'm suspecting that might not be a majority opinion, but assuming he continues to pursue projects like this I'm hoping he'll break more from conventional formula now that this is out.



MAME Reviews

by Mark Sabbatini



Mad Planets

One big advantage of reviewing retro games instead of new ones is perfect hindsight keeps the review from being mocked as totally clueless 30 years after it's published.

There's classic examples, such as the hacks predicting Rally-X was going to be 1980's big hit instead of Pac-Man or Defender. Catastrophes from Donkey Kong 3 to Sssnake got plenty of positive press. It's part of the ceaseless tendency by video game publications throughout history to run advertiser-friendly "critiques" that tend to look moronic in retrospect since most titles obviously aren't superstars.

One of those "can't miss" prospects came across my radar in my monthly hunt for obscure MAME ROMS but, unlike a lot that vanished because they were awful, this one is literally worth taking for a spin.

The top-ten coin-op games for 1983, as predicted by Creative Computing following their visit to the major expo for developers early in the year, includes legends such as Journey, Bagman, Joust Pinball and Zoo Keeper (now a "see-also" obscurity in Wikipedia to the Nintendo DS tile-matching game). In fairness, the article also picked eventual minor classics including Food Fight, Gyruss and Dragon's Lair (despite the latter being limited to a handful of completed scenes and right/left/sword control).

They also picked Mad Planets, which drew a huge media crowd as it was Gottlieb's follow-up to their overwhelming (and only, as it turned out) megahit Q*bert. The rough summary is it combines elements of Sinistar, Bosconian and Asteroids, while not really being much like any of them. It's an all-directions space shooter that to a casual glance resembles a hundred others at the time, so obviously it had something to stand out.

Gottlieb made about 1,500 Mad Planets machines and it wasn't a commercial disaster of the first order. It has a rarity rating of 26 out of 100 at The Killer List of Video Games, with the 21 for the seldom-seen Joust 2 serving as a point of reference. But it has a relatively scant fandom presence in the online world these days, with a few scattered non-mainstream reviews that all seem to feature the same video being narrated by a guy named John who's got a home arcade and a headcam (he's got a fun website at www.johnsarcade.com). No home versions were ever released, although an unauthorized clone for the Commodore 64 called Crazy Comets is described as largely identical except for better music (and the usual horizontally-instead-of-vertically-oriented playfield, from what I can tell from screenshots. I'm also guessing the controls were an issue, for reasons about to be obvious).

Two rather intimidating things rattle the nerves the first time you see Mad Planets in action: The gameplay is rather frenzied gameplay on its non-scrolling playfield and your ship is huge compared to most other games in this genre. Probably the next thing that hits you if you're looking at the coin-op machine is the controls are a bit odd – and if you're playing it in MAME it definitely will be an instant nightmare until you do a bit of tweaking to the settings.



Once you get going, it turns out: 1) the control scheme allows for remarkably agile movement and 2) that means you've got a chance of surviving in the not-so-empty vacuum of space as created by the Gods of Video Entertainment.

(Useless edutainment for today: C-3PO is a short-circuited dolt, because NASA calculates the real odds of hitting an asteroid in a densely crowded field is about one in a billion. Even making that a thousand times more dense in a virtual universe, Han Solo would still have to stray blindly off-course by several million miles before hitting anything. Also, while we're on the subject, what the hell was that space slug supposedly eating to survive? Presumably everyone already knows that reaching anything without hyperdrive in space would take almost as long as developing an appreciation for Jar-Jar Binks.)

Mad Planets' plot is gloriously mindless: 1) blast planets that warp onto the screen and move around at mapcap trajectories before they can fully form, or else be prepared to shoot their orbiting moons first while dodging satellites the planets launch, 2) rescue astronauts floating in space (The Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy says you can survive 30 seconds in open space but, believe me, they don't last a tiny fraction of that here, and 3) avoid or destroy comets streaking in to wreak havoc.

There's other stuff like challenge stages (where, in an unusually cruel twist, you can die), but first about those controls:

The coin-op features a spinner dial that rotates the ship and a four-direction joystick with a finger-trigger fire button. It takes a bit to adjust to the concept of the joystick moving your ship in a straight direction relative to how its rotated, but it's a remarkably agile system once you do so.



This is no problem with MAME if you've got a flight stick and a trackball, or a spinner control that apparently is available from the obscure tinkerers who seem to build and sell every type of control device imaginable. Playing with a standard desktop/laptop keyboard/mouse setup is impossible in the mind of some gamers, but actually works pretty well if the controls are configured properly. Use the trackpad or mouse (placed to the left of the keyboard) as the spinner, which is the default configuration in the ROM file. Simulating the joystick and fire button on the keyboard using only the right hand is a matter of finding four movement keys in a comfortable pattern (IJKL, etc.) that also allows you to keep your thumb permanently pressed on a fire key. Like Sinistar, there's no reason not to be rapid firing at all times.

While you're making tweaks, this is a good time to mention the DIP switches, with the best one saved for last. Options in normal play mode include starting with three or five ships, extra ships every 10,000 or 12,000 points, and difficulty settings of easy/standard/hard/very hard. The best switch, however, is switch #1, which toggles between demo and normal modes. In demo mode you can start at any round by selecting it with the rotary dial and obtain extra ships by pressing the one-player start button. Pressing the two-player start button begins the game.

OK, onto all the little extras that make things even more chaotic.

Some of moons orbiting planets will turn into deadly free-floating "mad moons." If they make it off the screen unharmed another moon begins orbiting around the planet. The comets, which appear beginning with the third wave, can be a points bonanza. They start at 100 points each, but each shooting them in succession before they escape the screen increases their value 100 points at a time up to a maximum of 1,000 (this resets if a comet escapes and at the beginning of a new wave). Another points windfall is a "perfect wave," achieved all the planets before they fully form without getting killed yourself (the bonus is 4,000 to 10,000 points and, to simplify, this increases by 2,000 each wave and then resets every third wave until round 12 and every fourth afterward).

The bonus stage rules: These occur after every three waves until wave 12, after which they occur every four (by now it should be obvious waves are clustered into subgroups where generally increasing difficulty and point totals counter other things that fluctuate). The player tries to rescue as many astronauts as possible while dodging and shooting comets. The stage lasts until the player is killed, a comet escapes the screen or ten comets are destroyed.

The pacing reminds me mostly of Sinistar and, like that game, my space piloting involves a lot of games lasting a few

frenetic minutes followed by another quick press of the start button. This is not a bad thing in this instance – even a pretty good game of Robotron doesn't last that long if you're timing it with a stopwatch.

My instinct in video games is survival above all else, with little regard for points (a luxury much easier to indulge in when you're not desperately trying to earn extra points so you don't have to feed the machine more quarters). It's not necessarily the best approach here since an aggressive offense is far more effective than a good defense. I also usually don't come close to playing more than a few seconds of a challenge stage before a comet escapes. Moreover, it's not like you're seeing whole new worlds (OK, literally speaking you are) in gameplay by advancing to later waves. Taking out as much as possible during the easier waves is the best way to ensure longevity and points prestige.

The official points record, best as I can tell, is 507,710 set by Jean Baudin on Aug. 12, 2001. One bit of trivia on that note: Gottlieb, like most company, didn't allow their designers' names to be listed, but did allow them to use initials or nicknames for the default high-score board.



Bottom line: Would Mad Planets have diverted some of my many quarters from the Robotron, Tempest and Gyruss machines that decimated much of my allowance at that time if it were in any of the arcades I frequented? I suspect it'd be one of those games that captured my attention intensely for a few weeks, much like Mario Bros. and Stargate did, before I retreated to the old favorites. The inevitably short gameplay would ultimately discourage me (those arcades were way beyond walking distance from home and I'm sure plenty of you know the misery of being stuck at one for a couple of hours with no quarters waiting for your parents to pick you up). Had I lucked out and known a kind operator willing to put the thing in demo mode (and more relevant to my real-life experience now) it'd still be a short intense stint since I'd just stockpile a mass of ships, blast through stuff and resume wherever I left off. But now or then, it 's still a pretty sweet fling while it lasts.



Commodore Du Jour

by Marc Douglas



Amiga À La Carte

Well here we are in March and time just keeps going forward. My column is going to be a little different this month. I promised myself that I would start getting the Amiga represented in RTM. I'll be doing that this month... sort of.

I'm going to be honest, I had to schlep over to my parent's house, find out where all my old Amiga equipment was hiding, get it back to my place and then test the stuff out. Well, I did that and my 2000 and 500 fired up like a charm and it was the summer of 1988 all over again (that was when I bought my first Amiga, a 500 with an extra drive, the 512K RAM expansion, a 1084S Monitor and my first game, The Three Stooges)

Next, I had to put both machines through some tests to see how they have held up over the years. Both units worked like they had before they were relegated to the deep recesses of my parent's house.

I then dusted off some old floppy disk storage cases that contained my collection of Amiga "stuff." Games, Demos, all the goodies were staring at me and I was looking at them trying to decide which floppy would I pick up first. Slowly flipping through the games brought me back and to be totally honest, I was loving the memories of being back in high school, in my bedroom sitting at the cheap computer desk that we all owned. Again, I could feel that clunky mouse that I always had to unplug when I wanted to plug my Tac-2 in so I could play The Three Stooges. I'm looking into that 13" screen again and thinking that the Amiga was the best thing since sliced bread, or at least the Commodore 128 that I was using up till that point.

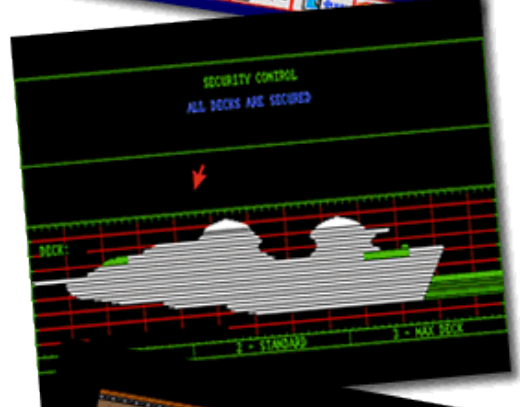
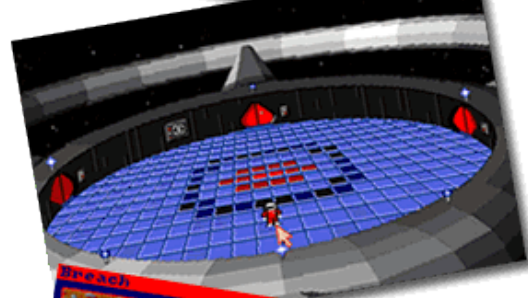
Back to reality now, I found myself stopping at Archon. I love the 64 version, so I figured this was a good place to start.

Next...Archon II
Then...Breach
Then...StarFleet I
Then...TechnoCop

I think you get the idea. What was supposed to be a quick review turned into a flashback of my late teenage years that I wouldn't want to live again, but were still cool enough to want to visit in a 16-Bit induced flashback.

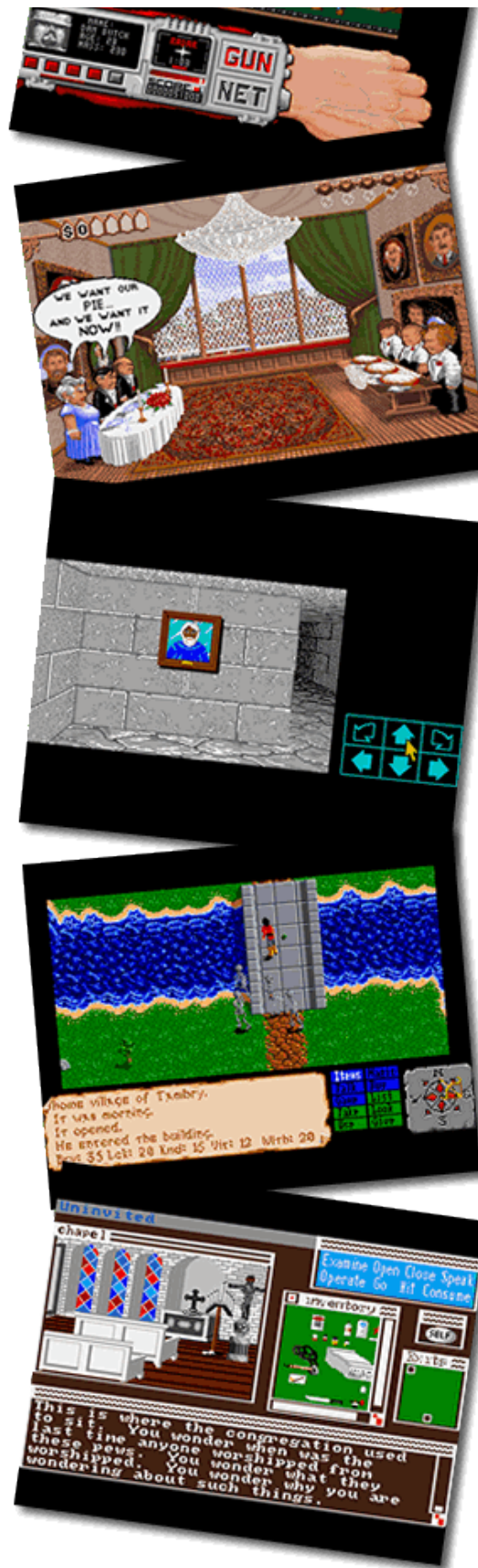
So I'm thinking, "I won't have time to sit down and give one solid review this month. Soooooo."

I'm going to give a quick list of the games that I am going to be covering for the rest of 2012 and a brief description/memory of the game if you will. I have about 15 disc cases to stumble through, so this is going to take a



while. But right now I can tell you that the games coming up these next few months will be...

- Archon - Loved it on the 64 and from my brief revisit I can say that this was an early Amiga release for a reason. The title screen is not as cool as the 64 version and the graphics are not the best, even for an early release. But it is Archon and the stereo sounds are solid and show the early potential of the system
- Starflight - This is a great port of the PC classic. Knowing that this game was coming out was reason enough to buy an Amiga. The graphics and sounds are upgraded from the PC version (which was not as common as you would think) and it plays so smooth with the mouse. I can still remember the one song that I would always play when starting another adventure, "Our Day Will Come." And my day will come when I sit down to save Arth again.
- Breach - Early tactical sim that I will admit I bought because when playing it at Electronics Boutique (where I worked many moons ago) one day I had my squad leader open a door and it made the Star Trek door noise. That sold me right there. Today the game would be labeled basic and it is. But the digitized samples were a hoot then and the game was the forefather of X-COM and the like where your leader and squad would gain experience as they completed missions. Plus you could transfer your squad leader to another Omnitrend game, "Paladin" and do the same strategic battling in a fantasy setting.
- StarFleet I - The War Begins - My God the hours I put into this one. This was Star Trek long before 25th Anniversary was released. The 64 version can't hold a candle to this one. There are actual graphics in this version and not just text/characters from other versions and the sound effects just added to the immersion factor. I will be spending a lot of time with this one!
- TechnoCop - Cheesy fun. Bloody, gory and fun. Very simple today, but there was just something about using my .88 Magnum on the bad guys that wasn't the same on the 64 or Apple.
- The Three Stooges - Wow! This is still a graphical marvel today. From the Defender of the Crown intro (Another game I'm going back to) to the speech samples that sounded just like Curly, Larry and Moe. Only thing this game is missing is Shemp!
- Dungeon Master - I love RPGs and this was the first modern one. Eye of the Beholder and all that came after it owe something to this classic that again impressed with its graphics and sounds.
- The Faery Tale Adventure - This was just another WOW game. Bright colorful graphics, a huge game world and music that still enthralls today.
- Uninvited - Doesn't crush the MAC version, but it is still a challenge today. Being able to do everything with the mouse wouldn't become the PC standard till Ultima VII. This is a tough, challenging point and click adventure that deserves a second look



To conclude, I do apologize that this isn't the usual Commodore Du Jour column. It will be next month after I decide

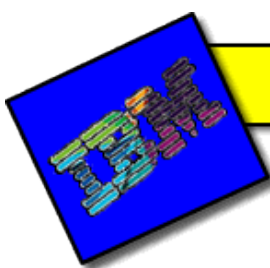
what game to pick and I'm still dealing with that Sam Fox thing from last month.

See you in April! Oh yes, one last thing. I do feel that I should give the Amiga a rating...



The Amiga gets a 10!

Did you expect anything else?



Living In A PC World

by Donald Lee

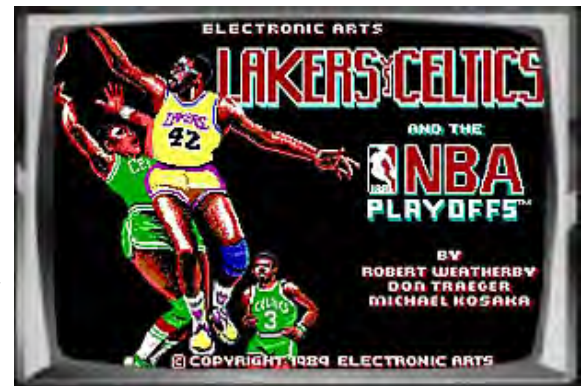


The Lakers vs. Celtics & The NBA Playoffs

As promised last month, I have decided to expand from focusing on Apple II, Atari 5200, and Vectrex games into PC gaming as well. While I grew up playing Apple II and Atari 5200 games in my youth and high school years, my college years were spent using a Windows 95 PC. Obviously I did homework and other things on my Windows 95 machine, but I also played my fair share of games as well.

But before I go into some of my favorite games during my college days, let's talk about my first ever PC game that I played. It should be no surprise that it was a basketball game: The Lakers vs. Celtics and the NBA playoffs by Electronic Arts.

According to Wiki, Lakers vs. Celtics was released in 1989 though I don't think I played the game until the summer of 1990. This game should probably be called the precursor to EA Sports' NBA Live series. I recalled the game being released though being an Apple II user, there was no way for me to play it. However, I did some summer work for my dad and they had an MS-DOS/PC at the office. I borrowed a copy of the game from a friend and played it at the office during off hours.



What attracted me to Lakers vs. Celtics was that it was a 5-on-5 basketball game unlike other games that had been released for the Apple II (One-on-One, GBA Basketball, and Street Sports Basketball). Though I didn't think about it at the time, Wiki confirmed that Lakers vs. Celtics was the first 5-on-5 basketball game released for computers or video game machines.

Game play wise, Lakers vs. Celtics is much like older games that featured full court play. The court is split over two screens though the switch over from screen to screen is much smoother than the older titles. Due to the better hardware on the PC's/MS-DOS, the graphics and animation were pretty smooth. The game featured 8 out of the 16 teams that were in the 1988-1989 NBA playoffs. Players could choose between an exhibition mode between two of the eight teams or pick one of the eight teams to try and go through a playoff tournament.

My gamepad doesn't work well on the iMac so I played with the keyboard. Unfortunately, I was using a keyboard without a numeric keypad so the layout was a little clumsy and took me a little while to get used to. However, once I got used to it, it was pretty easy to dribble, pass and shoot. Defense and rebounding was a little more difficult. Also, for the younger generation, the NBA did not have zone defenses back then so you have to play man-to-man.

Sound wise, there wasn't much beyond dribbling, missed shots and made baskets. I was a little curious about this as the PC's in that era had sound/music cards. According to the emulator I was using, they didn't distribute ROM's to play some of the music that were present in those games. Therefore, I missed out on some things so the game does seem a little "quiet".



However, for a late 1980's effort, it was a solid one. There aren't any plays like the current generation of NBA games,

but there are actual NBA players and some signature moves (though I didn't see a ton of them). According to Wiki, Lakers vs. Celtics was one of the few to feature Michael Jordan due to the cost of licensing his name in future years with his rise into NBA stardom.

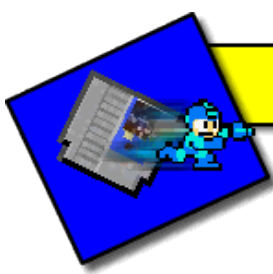
Lakers vs. Celtics is well worth checking out for those interested in seeing gaming history and how EA Sports got to launching NBA Live. For me, this was a dream come true after years of hoping to see a 5-on-5 basketball game.

NEWS/NOTES & CORRECTIONS

A correction from last month's article. I mentioned that I was using DOSBOX (<http://www.dosbox.com>) as my MS-DOS/PC emulator of choice. While technically that was correct, in reality, I was actually using BOXER (<http://boxerapp.com>), which is a DOXBOX front-end for MAC users. The author of BOXER responds quickly to email and questions. In fact, he implemented a feature to emulate the MS-DOS keypad on my small iMac keyboard to allow me to play Lakers vs. Celtics properly.

On another note, in an effort to get the word out on Retrogaming more, I started an Examiner.com column called "SF Retro Video Games Examiner". I had previously covered high school sports but that has been inactive for a while. I decided to start the retro video game column to supplement what I do here at RTM. Don't really know how the column will go but it won't take away from anything I do here. Follow the link below to check it out:

<http://www.examiner.com/retro-video-games-in-san-francisco/donald-lee>



Beyond The Plastic

by Elena García Méndez



Aladdin

Aladdin was always a videogame I wanted to have but never actually got. Checking online recently, to my surprise it was still available. I rushed to buy it! When it finally arrived home and I got to play it, it was like going back to my childhood. I have played it three times so far, and I don't get tired of it.

So what are we waiting for? Let's review Aladdin right now!

Story

Aladdin, the hero of our story, is a "street rat" who steals food in order to survive while always avoiding Agrabah's guards. He has a friend, a monkey named Abu who helps him to steal and survive each day. However, this monkey gets Aladdin into trouble because of his greed—he always takes more than they need.

Meanwhile in the sultan's palace several things are going on. Jafar, the royal vizier, wants to replace the sultan. Jafar is after a magic lamp that can be found in the Cave of Wonders. But the cave warns that only one may enter, one whose worth lies deep within—a diamond in the rough.

Aladdin turns out to be this diamond!

One day, Jasmine, the princess of Agrabah, tired of her father wanting her to marry a prince and never seeing the world outside, decides to run away and meets Aladdin in the market. They soon like each other but the guards entrap Aladdin and Jasmine is separated from him. Jafar, dressed as a beggar, frees Aladdin so that he can get the magic lamp from the Cave of Wonders.

When Aladdin and Abu are finally in, the cave warns them not to touch anything but the lamp. Abu cannot resist temptation and the cave in rage replies: "Infidels! You have touched the forbidden treasure! Now you will never again see the light of day!"

Soon everything starts to fall apart and when they reach the entrance, Jafar asks for the lamp. When he grabs it, he tries to kill Aladdin but Abu saves him and he also steals the lamp from Jafar!

While in the cave, Aladdin rubs the lamp and a genie appears who will grant three wishes to him! Since Aladdin doesn't want to lose a wish, he tricks the genie and they are out of the cave without him ever wishing for it. His first wish is to become a prince so that he can win Jasmine's heart.

Some other problems occur and Jafar manages to steal the lamp. Jasmine then finds out that the prince is none other than Aladdin. A battle commences and Aladdin needs to gain back the lamp so that Jafar does not rule Agrabah.

After Aladdin tricks Jafar again by saying he could never be as powerful as the genie, Jafar wishes to be a genie! But Jafar has forgotten that genies are not free, and must serve their owners until they wish for their freedom, if that ever happens. Jafar gets trapped in his own lamp and the sultan changes Agrabah's laws: from now on, the princess can marry whomever she wishes. Of course she chooses Aladdin!

Aladdin's final wish is for the genie's freedom. It all ends well!



How to play

- Use the control keys to move Aladdin's character either left or right
- Press the Y key to make Aladdin run
- Use the B button to make Aladdin jump
- The A button will allow you to throw apples at your enemies
- If you collect the rug, you will be able to cushion falls by pressing the R button
- The L, X and Select buttons are not used for this game

The objects

- **Apples:** You can collect them when opening chests or green jars. The maximum number of apples you can carry is 99. Use them against your enemies!
- **Bread and Chicken:** These are Aladdin's main source of strength. A loaf of bread will replenish one heart for your heart meter, while chicken will replenish all your hearts, whatever the number of them you have
- **Emeralds:** There are two types, green and red. The green ones are worth one point, while the red ones are worth three points. If you collect a hundred of them, you will earn one extra heart for your heart meter.

Apart from beating the game, another objective is to collect the 10 red emeralds which are scattered in seven stages of the game. If you manage to find them all, you will get to see a special ending when you finish the game

- **Jars and treasure chests:** Open them to get apples, food, an extra life or the scarab!
- **Scarab:** This is usually hidden in a treasure chest. The golden scarab will try to escape just like the snitch in Harry Potter's adventures! Grab it so as to get access later to the genie's bonus level!
- **The magic lamp:** This will enable you to have an extra life for you to finish the game
- **Rug:** This item is extremely important. You will find it in the first level, Agrabah. It will allow you to slow your falls and also to help you grab emeralds!

The Genie's Bonus Level

Have you found and gotten your golden scarab? Good! Now you will have a chance to spin the wheel of fortune! It is divided into seven segments. However, they are not divided equally. Three portions are for a start symbol meaning you will get an extra credit, or continue if you lose all your lives. One portion is for one up—meaning you will get an extra life—another portion for the two up.

The two remaining sections are for hearts (if you have empty hearts from getting hit by enemies, the genie will replenish them) and a genie face. The genie face is the hardest one to get, as its portion is the smallest. If you are lucky enough to get it, you will earn an extra heart for your heart meter.

Remember the maximum number of hearts you can obtain is 10, so if you already have that quantity, and you happen to get the genie face, then you will get three ups instead!



The Enemies

- **Sand bats:** You will encounter these bats in the pyramid level while you rescue your friend Abu
- **Scorpion:** You will find these in the Cave of Wonders. They climb cliffs. You can only defeat them by throwing apples at them
- **Skeleton:** He will appear in the treasure section of the Cave Of Wonders
- **Ghostly swords:** These will attack you as soon as they notice you. Jump on them and they will hurt you no more!
- **The guards:** There are three types of guards you have to deal with in this game:

The standard guard will run at you and try to grab you. The next type of guard will throw barrels at you and if he misses, he will turn red and start pursuing you. The final guard is an archer who will shoot one or two arrows at you. All of these enemies can be defeated by jumping on them or by using your swinging abilities!

- **The market place seller:** This seller sure is angry at you for saving Jasmine! He will approach you with his sword. When he finishes swinging the sword toward you, jump on him. A few hits will take him down! (You will find this seller in the last level of Agrabah)
- **The swordsman:** This type of enemy will throw swords at you and they will return to the swordsman like boomerangs. You can defeat both swords and swordsman by jumping on them. If you time your jumps on the swords correctly, they will give you an extra bounce enabling you to reach the red gems in midair!
- **Pots with feet:** These pots can fly and seem to have a life of their own! They can even pursue you! One jump and you'll get rid of them! They can be found all along Aladdin's path
- **Bats:** These you will see in the Cave of Wonders. Again, one hit will defeat them. Use the same jumping strategy on the bats as with the swords to help you reach some red gems!
- **Whirlwind:** This can be found in the genie's level. You cannot stop it, only avoid it!
- **Iago:** This is Jafar's bird friend. You will come across him in the last stage of the game. He is carrying a skull in his claws and will release it to bomb you!
- **Jafar:** You will have to defeat him twice: once in human form and the other in the form of a snake! You need to hit human Jafar six times while you must hit the snake Jafar eight times

The levels

Agrabah (stage one)

This is a great level for you to get familiarized with the controls and learn how to beat the enemies. It's also where you will find the rug that will help you cushion your falls and assist you in obtaining many gems! It's an extremely important object so by all means, use it!

The Cave of Wonders (stage two)

In this stage you will encounter some new enemies previously mentioned: bats and scorpions mostly. Also, you can swing from stalactites to help you along your way. In part two of this stage, you will have to jump on logs in order to finish the level. If you fall into the water, you will lose one life! Sometimes you will need to pull a rope so as to open a big stalactite and proceed to the end of the level. Apart from this, you must avoid spikes and some rocks coming your way!

Escape from the Cave of Wonders! (stage three)

The cave is sure in a rage! Now you will have to jump onto the next platform and swing onto stalactites so as to avoid the lava! If you think this is easy, there is an extra difficulty: the screen will move as you do, so if you swing too far backwards you will lose one life!

In the next part of the level, you don't have to obtain any gems, only get out of the cave while riding the magic carpet which Aladdin first encounters in The Cave of Wonders! Avoid the lava that is pursuing you and the rocks and be careful too with the walls! Make a tiny mistake and Aladdin will crash and you will be forced to start over! The good news is, this is a pretty short level. Good luck!



Inside the magic lamp (stage four)

The genie has invited you to visit his lamp! It sure is a magic world!

The platforms you will encounter are in the shape of the genie's face. They will smile at you but when you climb them, they will take on expressions of surprise! Some other types of platforms in part one of this stage include balloons, clouds and cards!

In part two of this stage, there will be balloons shaped like the genie's face! If you jump on them they will explode and if you grab the handle they have, they will sink slowly under Aladdin's weight! They will also change their expressions as in the previous platforms. Here you will find some whirlwinds which will try to knock you off the platform you're on!

The last level of this stage is divided in two parts. In the first one you will have to work your way up by jumping onto the next genie's tongue! Some flying pots will try to prevent you from reaching the next platform! Soon you will arrive at some genie shaped springs. Simply jump on them and climb your way up!

The next part of this level consists of more platforming. This time, the platforms are squared shaped but will collapse the moment Aladdin jumps onto them! So be fast and move to the next one or you will fall!

The pyramid (level five)

Your friend Abu has disappeared into the ruins of an ancient pyramid! Your mission is to find him and rescue him! Be careful with the sandy bats and the sand itself! (The sand comes out from a cobra statue.) It can pull you down into a pit!

In the next part of this stage, you will have to deal with spikes that open and close momentarily and platforms in cobra form that will move up, down and in circles.

The third part of this stage includes a new feature: chains that move up and down—you must grab them at the correct time so as not to fall onto more spikes.

You will also encounter the swordsman for the first time!

Bonus Level

After so many adventures, Aladdin deserves to rest a little bit! While you enjoy the company of sweet Jasmine as you ride the magic carpet together, you can take a chance and grab as many gems as possible! Can you find the ten gems that are scattered in this bonus level?

Oh, and enjoy the fireworks at the end!

Jafar's Palace (stage six)

Iago has stolen the magic lamp and now the genie has a new master: Jafar! Aladdin has to stop him from ruling Agrabah! In the first part of this stage, you will encounter the widest variety of enemies: guards, swordsmen, ghost swords and flying pots. You will also have to go from platform to platform in order to not fall into pits.

In the second part of the stage you will confront Iago, who will try to drop a skull on you! You can also burn your enemies by swinging into a lamp filled with fire! The moment you stop swinging, the lamp will fall, scorching your enemies!

ESCAPE!



OH NO, ABU! WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?
THE CAVE IS ANGRY, LET'S GO! RUN!

GENIE'S LAMP



INTO THE MAGIC LAMP, DOWN, DOWN,
THE GENIE'S WORLD IS ALL AROUND!

THE PYRAMID



ABU, ABU, THAT MONKEY'S IN
TROUBLE! ENTER THE PYRAMID, ON
THE DOUBLE!

BONUS STAGE



IT'S CRAZY PLATFORMS IN THE GENIE'S
LAMP; THE MOST IMPORTANT WORD,
ALADDIN: JUMP!

In the last part of this stage you will have to deal with fire! It flickers up and down from the screen so you must time your movements to avoid getting burnt!

There are also some handles on the palace walls; use them to direct the platforms in the directions you need! At the end of this level Jafar (in human form) will be waiting for you. Good Luck!

Final Battle

You've done so well so far, and now the final battle commences!

You will have to defeat Jafar in the form of a giant snake! He has two ways to attack you: by throwing rocks at you (turn them to your advantage by using them as stepping stones in order to reach his head) and hurling his body up and down! Also use this to your advantage: when his body reaches its peak, you'll be able to attack him. Watch out so you don't fall into the fire below! Repeat this process until you have hit him eight times.

Hooray! You've completed Aladdin! Congratulations!!

The ending you experience will depend on how many gems you have collected: If you have obtained between 0-50 gems, you will see the standard ending, which is Aladdin and Jasmine on a magic carpet ride, as in the bonus level. If you have obtained 51-70 gems (the maximum) you will view Aladdin through the various levels eliminating enemies or jumping on platforms. The very last scene you will see in the second ending is the Agrabah palace with The End at the bottom.

And The Verdict Is...

Let us consider a few aspects of Aladdin before reaching the overall grade.

Like every other Capcom/Disney game, the graphics are surely a pleasure to the eyes. Aladdin's character is beautifully done, as are Abu and the rest of the stars forming the dramatis personae of this game.

Following with the soundtrack, you will immediately recognize the music from the movie, such as when you're playing in the lamp stage and you're hearing "Friend Like Me". Likewise, when you're completing the bonus level, you will hear the famous song, "A Whole New World". As for the rest of the soundtrack, it can probably sound repetitive, especially if you get stuck in one stage or level. But one thing is for sure, you will have to admit it's pretty upbeat!

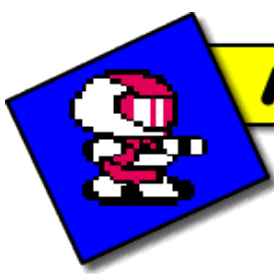
As for the gameplay, Aladdin is pure platforming! Just watch how Aladdin climbs, pulls ropes, grabs stalactites and performs those acrobatic jumps!

It's also a bonus that in this game Aladdin isn't armed the way he is in the other versions. Pick any one you like—Game Boy Color, Mega Drive, Amiga—they all make Aladdin carry a sword and kill enemies with it. In this variation, you always get rid of your enemies by jumping. This is the only version that is different from the other consoles.

What about the replay value? The game is not hard at all. Actually there is no level of difficulty option and you will be able to complete this game in about an hour. But I can tell you, you'll go back to this game over and over! Have you gotten all the red gems? That's what will make you return to replay Aladdin!

Overall, I would say that this is the best Disney game I have ever played. I'm sure that if you're fond of platforming and a Capcom/Disney fan such as me, you won't be disappointed with it. I will therefore grade it with nine stars out of 10. It certainly doesn't deserve any less!





A Pixelated 21st Century

by Paul Zimmerman



Hello Pixelated fans. "Pixelated Paul" is here to let you know about some of the retroware highlights for the month of February. Slow, short month, but there are some gems. Enjoy!

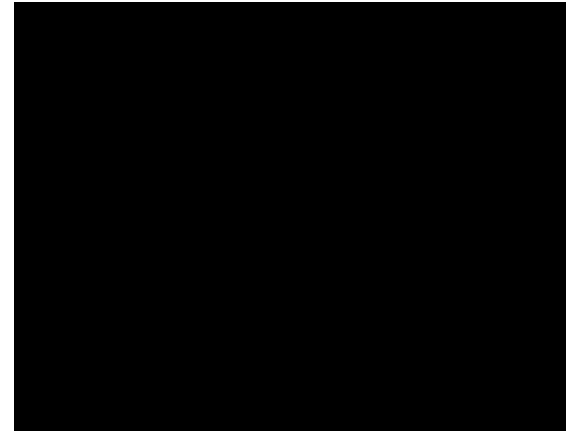


2 Fast 4 Gnomz (Video to the right)

I love scrolling-platformers. All about reaction time and thinking on the fly. This one looks fast and fun.

BurgerTime World Tour ([Click here to see a video of the game](#))

Not true retroware, but it is BurgerTime, so I had to include it in this series. It is an updated version of the classic and I love the remix of the theme song! The game is fun, still feels like BurgerTime, but is updated with 3D graphics and many new game-play elements (jump?!). Due to the distant camera, it is sometimes hard to see enemies, items, your chef, etc. So, it can be frustrating, but I still enjoy it.

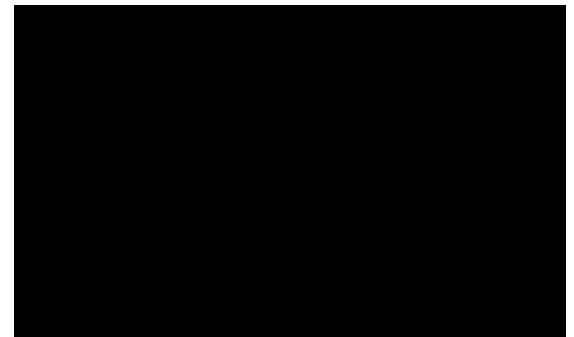


40-in-1 Explosive Megamix ([Click here to see a video of the game](#))

Not quality over quantity.

GO Series Undead Storm (Video to the right)

Kill the zombies! Up to 4-players. Gun and run! Great action-packed shooter.



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.

Maru's Mission (Gameboy) (Video to the right)

I never heard of this game and I never played it. A scrolling, action-platformer where you play as Maru, a ninja, traveling the world in search of his girlfriend in 6 different levels. This one looks good.

Strider (Genesis) ([Click here to see a video of the game](#))

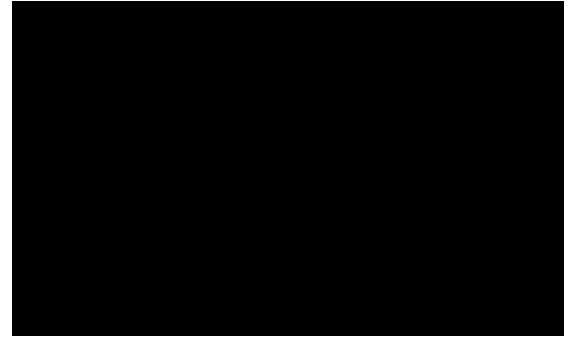
This Genesis port is pretty much arcade-perfect. But, is that a good thing or a bad thing? The game is a hard action-platformer, including 5 levels with mid and end-level bosses. I always enjoyed the NES version more.

Super Mario Bros (NES) ([Click here to see a video of the game](#))

The NES version? Really? Kind of cool to have an NES game for a 3DsVC game, but I was totally expecting the GameBoy Color version, Super Mario Bros Deluxe, to be released for the portable system. So, want the NES version on the go? Buy this classic game!

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





As I close out this issue, I would like to wish you all the best of luck on St. Patrick's Day this year! Good luck in finding that rare video game, good luck in beating that game that seems next to impossible to beat, good luck collecting all the known cartridges in the universe!

Come back next month as we do a little bit of Easter celebrating. Speaking of celebrating, did you all know that this year we will put out our 100th issue of RTM? This will come in September, so be sure you are here for that monumental occasion. If you would like to contribute something towards that issue, contact us! See you all later!