



Printing Help



Retrogaming Times Monthly #97 - June 2012



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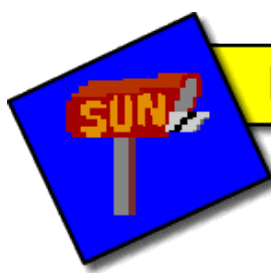
Press Fire To Begin

by Bryan Roppolo



I hope you all had a great Memorial Day weekend! Last month I got word that the current commenting system that we have been using here on Retrogaming Times Monthly is going to be phasing their service out. Therefore, I had to scrounge around to find another one and realized that Facebook actually had their own that could be integrated into the website. Therefore, you will now see a “Comments” tab on the right side of the screen for each issue which when clicked on will bring up the familiar Facebook comments box. If you want to get rid of the “Comments” tab, simply click on the “X” at the top of the screen to hide it and click on the “!” to bring it back up. Simple as that. What’s nice about this is that now the comments that you make can be cross posted to Facebook so others can see what you have to say.

I recently received an e-mail about two websites which I wanted to share with the readers of RTM. The first chronicles all of the Acorn Electron games which is a computer that probably most of the readers here know little about, as it was native to the U.K. Check out <http://www.acornelectron.co.uk/> to find out more. We have never had any Acorn coverage in the magazine that I know of, so this is definitely something that might be of interest. Also, there is another U.K. effort to digitize the Personal Computer News magazines from 1983-1985 at <http://www.personalcomputernews.co.uk/>. With the recent anniversary of the ZX Spectrum, it might be a good time to see what was going on on the other side of the pond back the ‘80s. Enjoy this month’s issue as we get even closer to that milestone issue #100!



Retrogaming News

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Revival Studios Announces New Odyssey^2 Releases

Revival Studios is putting out two new cartridges for the Odyssey^2 game system, Mayhem and Colorclash. In Mayhem you use the right joystick to control Wizzy and avoid rotating sticks, while collecting coins to score. If you are using the voice module, you will be alerted whenever a new stick will appear. In Colorclash the player has to shoot various colored gems that are falling down from the top of the screen. The gems are marked with symbols and the player has to match up the symbol on his ship with the symbol on the gems. To find out more about these games, see screen shots/videos, or place an order, visit the Mayhem page at <http://www.revival-studios.com/?page=125> and the Colorclash page at <http://www.revival-studios.com/?page=130>.

Pixel Lincoln Is Coming To Kickstarter On June 5th!

Island Officials is kicking off the "Summer of Abraham Lincoln" with Pixel Lincoln: The Deckbuilding Game; a card game version of everyone's favorite Super Nintendo-era video games. The game was designed by award-winning game designer and creator of Pixel Lincoln, Jason Tagmire and will launch on the crowd-funding site, Kickstarter, on June 5th.

Following in the footsteps of deck building games such as Dominion, Ascension and Nightfall, and branching off into a world of its own, Pixel Lincoln: The Deckbuilding Game mixes the style of modern board games with the nostalgia of retro video games. With side-scrolling levels, power ups, cheat codes, extra lives, boss battles, checkpoints and most of all, high scores, it brings you right back to the glorious heyday of video games when Megaman was king and Samus was queen.

Pixel Lincoln: The Deckbuilding Game is based off of the upcoming Nintendo DS game, Pixel Lincoln. Our hero Pixel Lincoln is trying to save the world from John Wilkes Booth and his band of enemies, who stole Lincoln's hat and disrupted the time-space continuum. Lincoln travels through space and time fighting enemies such as Luchadors, Puking Turtles, Skateboarding Dinosaurs, and Laser Sharks while using his trusty beardedang and whatever weapons he can get his hands on. Visit <http://www.pixellincoln.com> to read more.

Little Big Adventure 1 & 2 Now On Dot-Emu

DotEmu.com, the retro-gaming digital distribution service, is thrilled to announce the release of Little Big Adventure (also known as Relentless: Twinsen's Adventure) and Little Big Adventure 2 (also known as Twinsen's Odyssey) on the platform. These two Frédéric Raynal masterpieces had a great success in the 90s and are now available on DotEmu.com, compatible with Windows XP, Vista and Windows 7 (32 and 64 bit).

Little Big Adventure allows you to play Twinsen, a young hero living on the fictional Twinsun planet, whose mission is to eradicate the dictatorship of Dr. FunFrock. Little Big Adventure 2 takes place after the first one. You just freed the people of this tyrant and you discover that some alien visitors landed on your planet. Nobody knows why they are here but you need to fight against them and to kill their evil god to save the world!

EVENTS

[Too Many Games 2012](#)

Friday, June 15 5:00pm-10:00pm; Saturday, June 16 10:00am-7:00pm; Sunday, June 17, 2012 10:00am-5:00pm
(Philadelphia, PA)

This year's TooManyGames is June 15th-17th at the Greater Philadelphia Expo Center. We're packing their largest hall with games! Video games, board games, arcade games, card games, and more will line the floor!

Score some rare games to fill gaps in your collection, or pick up some of the awesome artwork to adorn your house with in our marketplace! Play brand new unreleased games in the Indie Game Showcase! Show off your video game chops in tournaments all throughout the weekend, including Soul Calibur 5, Street Fighter X Tekken, Halo Reach, Call of Duty, Pong, and more! Are tabletop games more your speed? We'll be running Magic: The Gathering and Yu-Gi-Oh! tournaments over the weekend, plus we've expanded our board gaming area! We'll be demonstrating some of board gaming's most popular titles throughout the weekend, including Carcassonne, Ticket to Ride, Dominion, Puerto Rico, and more!

Of course there's more going on at the show, but that's a good start! Make sure you check out our website, www.toomanygames.com and our Facebook page www.facebook.com/tmgexpo to get all the latest info on TooManyGames!

Three day passes start at \$25 and single-day passes will be on sale at the door.

[Oklahoma Video Game Exhibition](#)

Saturday June 16, 2012 9:00am-5:00pm (Tulsa, OK)

Classic video games will roll in like a storm from history, as mid-America's one and only OVGE returns for the ninth Oklahoma Video Game Exhibition!

On June 16, 2012 video game collectors and enthusiasts from Oklahoma, Arkansas, Kansas, Missouri, and even further will come together at the Spirit Bank Event Center in Tulsa to celebrate the history, hobby, collecting, and entertainment of the video gaming industry. "Before the OVGE, people from the surrounding states had to travel across the country for events such as this," said Jesse Hardesty, founder and organizer of the event.

Numerous video game systems, computers, and arcade machines, will be set up for the public to play plus tournaments and door prizes! Vendors and exhibitors will have memorabilia on display with many items for purchase.

Doors will open to the public at 9:00am and close at 5:00pm. Cost of admission for ages eight and above is \$5 dollars at the door. For more information, visit our website above.

[CCAG 2012](#)

Saturday June 23, 2012 12:00pm-8:00pm (Fairview Park, OH)

This year's CCAG is being held at the American Legion Hall in Fairview Park, OH. Admission is only \$3.00, but children 12 and under are free. All vendors and attendees will receive 3 Chinese auction coupons, so you don't want to miss out on that.

There will be three different tournaments this year: an Xbox 360 Soul Calibur V tournament where the best man or woman wins, a Robotron arcade tournament with the highest score taking the prize, and finally a SNES Starfox top score weekend, with the person who has the highest score at the end of the weekend gaining the crown.

Robotron, a Ripley's Believe it or Not pinball machine, and much more will be available to play at the show. Be sure to stop by our website at <http://ccagshow.com/> for more information.

[Video Gaming @ London Anime Con](#)

Saturday June 30, 2012 11:00am-12:00am (London, UK)

London Anime Con is an 18+ anime and gaming event on June 30th and July 1st at The Rocket Complex, Holloway Road. Pricing is reduced £15 for two days or £8 for Saturday & £7 for Sunday if you register now!

Brought to you by the likes of NeoEmpire, Namco-Bandai, Arc-Systems and DS:London the Sunday of London Anime Con on the 1st of July shall be a special-gaming themed-day! They will be running an entire days worth of gaming tournaments with big-cash prizes at stake. But that's not all, for there is also a lot of gaming going on Saturday as well! Check out the provisional timetable at the link above.

[2012 Video Game Summit](#)

Saturday July 14, 2011 11:00am-6:00pm (Lombard, IL)

Remember how much fun you used to have playing Atari, Nintendo and all kinds of games on your computer? Well, you will have the rare opportunity to play these great games again at the Video Game Summit, Chicago's premier video game trade show. In fact, dealers in retro games will be on hand offering games, controllers, systems and memorabilia and will be prepared to buy or trade for the games you have held onto since you were a kid. Who knows, you might just have an Atari cartridge worth \$1000 or more collecting dust in your attic.

The date of the show will be July 14th, 2012 from 11am to 6pm at The Heron Point Convention Center, 665 West North Avenue, Lombard, IL (adjacent from the Fairfield Inn and Suites hotel), Admission is \$5.00 per person (children 12 and under with an Adult are free) and booths are \$30.00 (a booth consists of three 2 x 5 tables, 2 side tables and one front table). For more information visit our website 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.



Apple II Incider

by Donald Lee



Free Tools Association

Happy Memorial Day everyone. It's Friday of Memorial Day Weekend as I write this. I had a quiet day at work today and met up with a friend afterwards to hang out a bit. I'm home now to relax, watch some TV and chill. Of course, I have to write the article for this month's RTM as well!

This month we're going to take a look at a software development group named the Free Tools Association. For most of its computing life, the Apple IIGS languished in the shadow of its more powerful contemporaries such as the Commodore Amiga and the Atari ST series.

Most game companies produced games for other computer before translating them to the Apple IIGS. There were only a few games that were produced exclusively for the Apple IIGS. Most of this was due to the fact that developers felt the Apple IIGS was slightly inferior in terms of graphics and sound when compared to the Atari and Commodore systems.

Enter the Free Tools Association (FTA). Comprised of various developers from France, they had a goal of showcasing the Apple IIGS's capabilities to the masses. The FTA created several freeware games that took the Apple II world by storm.

Games like Blue Helmet and Bouncin' Ferno showcased the excellent graphics, sound, and music that the Apple IIGS could generate. Additionally, FTA created some demos such as Nucleus that showcased the computer's musical capabilities.

Unfortunately, while the games were playable to a certain extent none of them were ever formally completed. The legacy of FTA is one of promise that was never completely fulfilled.

However, FTA's programs live on at their website:

<http://www.freetoolsassociation.com/>

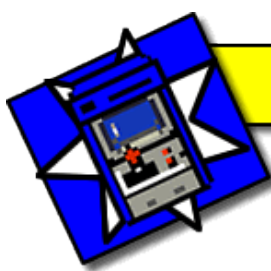
At least a few of FTA's programs are also available at the Virtual Apple 2 game site (<http://www.virtualapple.org>)

For a brief time, some of FTA's best programs/demos (including ones created under different names for the 8-bit Apple II systems) were available via an iPhone app called "The Best of FTA". I know because the app is still on my phone. Upon checking tonight, the app is no longer available in the US Store according to iTunes.

In taking a look at some of the games/demos via my iPhone and Virtual Apple 2 site, I had difficulty getting into the games as I didn't really understand some of the mechanics and controls on my iPhone.

Therefore, I can't really judge the quality of the games/demos myself. However, if you were a fan of FTA back in the day, it is worth your time to drop by the FTA or Virtual Apple 2 site to give some of the games/demos a spin.





MAME Reviews

by Mark Sabbatini



The Pit

Once upon a time, three pixelated miners set out simultaneously to stake their claims by tunneling through the digital underground. One struck it rich. One earned a solid living. One got the shaft.

All three picked similar land, had similar skills and faced similar dangers. So was it luck or some small difference in prospecting instincts that sent one to the mother lode and another to the scrapheap?

The tycoon, Dig Dug, hardly needs the tale of his success retold. The story of the esteemed Mr. Do is almost as well known, and many old-time sourdoughs consider him the superior excavator despite his more modest fortunes.

Then there's The Pit which, fittingly for its name, vanished into a black hole.

For those thinking this coin-op by Centuri was a failed wannabe trying to cash in on Dig Dug's bonanza, the former may have been the first to stake a claim. Although released to the public in 1982, the same year as the other two games (Dig Dug in April and Mr. Do in December), development of The Pit was completed in 1981.

The Pit's objective is the most complex of the three and those extra elements resulted in it being hailed as the forerunner to another video game achieving a small amount of success known as Boulder Dash. In fact, that's truly The Pit's lasting legacy as Peter Liepa, who wrote the original Boulder Dash in 1983, studied the older game's strengths and weaknesses when writing the original title of a franchise that has developed a seemingly infinite lifespan.

"After examining (The Pit) more I didn't think the game had any 'legs' – too much of it was predetermined," Liepa said in a 2005 interview posted at www.boulder-dash.nl. "But I started playing with basic elements of dirt, rocks and jewels, and within a couple of days had built the basic 'physics engine' of what was to become Boulder Dash."

The Pit's basic goal is to dig from the top of the screen through boulder-heavy soil, retrieve at least one buried jewel at the bottom and return to the start point (the parts somewhat resembling Boulder Dash), while avoiding the patrolling baddies (the Dig Dug part). Naturally, there's a lot of complications venturing there and back again I'll get to shortly.

Is The Pit an example of two great concepts falling apart when combined? Not really (and obviously not the programmer's intent since the other games didn't exist). The fundamental concepts might be sound, but nearly everything surrounding them from the first screen to the last is a calamitous list of what not to do when programming video games. That makes it an interesting case study, especially using an emulator with features allowing you to observe and play portions of the game that are all but impossible otherwise.

To summarize the weakpoints: 1) There's too many rough edges and too little charm to lure new gamers, and 2) Those who do become proficient will discover there's too much monotony and an exasperatedly premature conclusion. To literally give away the ending early here, The Pit's "kill screen" is wave 12, unavoidably reached within minutes if a player has the skill to do so – and the final few waves are completely drained of any semblance of fun.

Yet The Pit still has a few fans, with a handful of online forum posters praising the gameplay and challenge.



"We used to play this a lot at our local youth centre," wrote Fizza, a member of the Lemon64.com forum. "It very difficult but very addictive at the same time ... if you could beat the first level everyone thought you were (expletive) hot at it."

The Pit has a rarity rating of six out of 100 on The Killer List of Video Games Scale, most likely meaning it was in scattered arcades here and there. It also got one major-label official home port, with as HES releasing a near-exact Commodore 64 version in 1983 (it's a bit easier). Then again, a quality home port is hardly much of an accomplishment from my perspective after trudging through the coin-op's train wreck of flaws.

The Pit has – by far – the ugliest title screen I've ever seen in a coin-op game. The large block letters, with "pit" depicted in a vertically stretched atrocity covering the bottom 80 percent of the screen, can be duplicated by the worst home machine imaginable (Fairchild Channel F, Sinclair ZX81, Home Pong ... take your pick). If that doesn't immediately repel you to the point of fleeing, the attract mode is an improvement, but only in a relative sense. Arcade games of the era nearly always looked and played far better than anything available at home due to custom hardware and controls. But The Pit resembles an early eight-bit home computer game and not a bestselling one. It's easy imagining machines from the Atari 2600 to ZX Spectrum replicating it in most aspects.

Each wave begins with a UFO dropping off your character at the top left of the screen. From there he must "dig" one length at a time to the jewel room at the bottom center of the screen, making sure he moves quickly past any rocks he clears ground under (unlike Boulder Dash where a rock stays in place until you move, those in The Pit crush you almost immediately). There are also a few enemy miners who enter the sparse pre-existing tunnel network from the top right of the screen who you need to avoid or shoot. They're not terribly aggressive and I found them a virtual non-factor since they're easily avoided on slow waves and irrelevant once you're forced to use precision-movement patterns on the fast ones. The timer for each level is depicted with a tank at the upper right of the screen that blasts through the terrain between it and your spaceship. You need to return to the spaceship with at least one jewel from the bottom of the screen before the tank shoots it.

The two legitimately challenging parts of the game are the jewel room and the last part of the return trip. The room has entrances on the left and right that are the same size as your character, so precise navigation is necessary. Once in the room spikes begin falling from the ceiling, so trying to pick up more than one jewel to increase your point total increases the risk to your mortality.

The return trip differs little than the trip down until the final part. The path you took when departing the ship will always be cut off by a falling rock (since the screen layout is the same for every wave), so you'll need to cross over "the pit" that is the game's namesake. There's a bridge that rapidly vanishes from right to left the instant you step on it, leaving barely enough time to move across it and exit upward through a narrow opening (which, like the doors to the jewel room, is the same size as your miner, making the timing of this move the hardest part of the wave). If the bridge gives way under the miner he falls into the water-filled pit where a moat monster bouncing around maniacally awaits.

The playfield is a 26X25 matrix, excluding the eye candy at the top, so the characters and objects are small compared to their digging cousins. That means an Atari 2600 version might have to use those featureless playfield block graphics to depict most items, but no great loss – the coin-op's graphics aren't distinct enough to give anything much character. Dig Dug and Mr. Do feature a memorably adorable cast of Pookas, Alphamonsters and other personalities. But the



only creature larger than a few pixels in The Pit is the moat monster, which is more likely to repulse you like a crazy 300-pound mother-in-law locked in the attic bedroom (which it essentially is).

Watch the attract mode for a couple of cycles and you'll see the main character both getting killed and completing the first level, the latter of which is enormously helpful to first-timers who don't want to waste several games figuring out the solution. Unfortunately, you'll quickly discover "mastering" The Pit essentially means doing the same thing ten more times with increasing speed, the point where the last couple of waves are practically impossible unless you're using an emulator with speed control. Not only are the insane speeds virtually unplayable, but the short time limit on those waves means few if any errant moves are possible.

The final indignity is if you do reach the wave 12 "kill screen" the action slows to an absurd super-slow-motion pace where the frame rate is measurable in seconds. So instead of a quick execution you're doomed to a slow and torturous death (multiple times if you happen to have spare men).

You can adjust the DIP switches so that, in addition to starting with three or four men, you can toggle between slow/fast speeds and short/long timers. But the slow gameplay setting is intolerably so during the initial stages, and both of the latter DIP settings don't affect things much in the end. I don't think too many people are going to care if they can survive a few extra moments once the impossible screens are inevitably and quickly reached.

So is this a case of "I suffered through this game so you don't have to?"

Not entirely. I can think of at least three reasons to give it a quick tryout: 1) it's interesting enough to play until you get through the first wave or two, at which point you've seen pretty much all there is without a large investment of time; 2) as mentioned above, it's a great study in how to turn a potentially promising idea into a train wreck if you're a game programmer or interested in the subject; and 3) this is a game from the same company that brought us minor classics like Vanguard, Time Pilot and Phoenix during the same time period, so it's amusing envisioning the conversation among execs either suffering from delusions of grandeur or trying to rationalize why it was worth releasing something that was total crap.

Another final reason, of course, is The Pit's legacy in helping create Boulder Dash. While I've attacked the former as a classic example how to screw things up, the optimistic mirror image of that is realizing the beauty that can be seen in ugliness, so to speak. It's hard holding a grudge against a failure of creative effort, at least compared to most of today's awful games that are the result of mega companies shamelessly pillaging customers with rushed and overpriced rehashes of a few tired concepts.





Commodore Du Jour

by Marc Douglas



Starflight

Summertime! And it feels like it today in New Jersey as I write this. So what can I do to cool off? I know! I'll take a trip to the cold reaches of the galaxy by revisiting a classic by Electronic Arts. A game that many believe made the IBM PC a viable gaming platform. What game, you ask? In a word...

Starflight

By Electronic Arts

The original PC version was released back in 1986 and was labeled an instant classic by just about every reviewer at the time. I have vivid memories of the first time I saw this game being played. It was at an old high school friend's house and I believe he had a Tandy 1000 that to me was not as impressive as my Commodore 64. Then he loaded Starflight and my 64 suddenly didn't seem so impressive. Being a huge Star Trek fan, this game was a nerd's dream. The next thing I know, hours have passed and I didn't want to leave my friend's apartment. I remember it was a school night, but I didn't care.



Jumping ahead 25 years my first question is, will Starflight still be able to captivate? To get the answer, I have to make a few command decisions. The first being that I will be reviewing the Amiga version as that was the version that I was finally able to play when Electronic Arts finally ported it over in 1989, three years after the PC release. I briefly thought about giving the C-64 version a go, but by 1989, the 64 was really starting to show its age and like another late release, Ultima VI, the game just runs too slow and sacrifices had to be made to squeeze the game into 64k.

I remember buying this game back when I worked at The Program Store in Princeton. This was right before it closed down on 12/31/89. Getting home and opening the package produced one game disk, a command summary card, the instruction manual, the copy protection code security wheel, and the star map which is still cool looking today. I'm not going to spend too much time on the backstory as most readers of RTM know what Starflight is about. So now let's jump to today and see what happens.

I quickly assembled my crew of six and being on full nerd mode named my Captain, Kirk, my Science officer, Spock and so on. I think you can guess what I named my ship as well. I did make sure to make my Captain and Science officer human, my Navigator and Engineer Velox (and insect type race), my Communications officer a Thrynn (Reptilian) and my Doctor an Elowan which is a plant type race who by the way can't stand the Thrynn which makes for some interesting in game moments.

As with all games of this type, you start with limited funds called MUs which you will use to buy weaponry, engines, shielding, armor and cargo pods for your ship. Because shielding is very expensive, you will only be able to afford armor in the beginning and perhaps a laser (you'll want missiles later). You will want to make sure you have some MUs left over for fuel and to give your crew some training so they will be able to survive once they leave spacedock. After about ten or so minutes, I was all ready to go. I checked the announcement board to see if there was any last minute information the game could give me to help me out in my quest. Once that was done, my ship left dry-dock. This is where you will use the security wheel. After giving the code, you will be able to leave spacedock, but if you give the wrong code, the copy protection police will find you and



destroy your ship which for 1986 was an inspired bit of programming.

Before I go into any more detail, I should give a quick mention of what your mission is. In a nutshell, it seems that a Crystal Planet is travelling through the galaxy and it causes any planets in its path to flare up and burn out killing all life forms. Your mission is to find out where the planet is, find out how to land on the planet and ultimately, destroy it before it reaches your home planet of Arth. This reminds one of Star Trek IV and the TOS episode, "The Doomsday Machine" both classics in my mind. This is pretty important stuff to be assigned to a novice captain and a green crew, but in the world of PC gaming, we have come to expect these plot devices.

When you enter space, the Star Trek feel really takes over. Your early mission will be to explore star systems and find planets that have materials that you can sell back at spacedock to buy more fuel, better ship upgrades and to train your crew. When you discover a planet, your Science Office will scan the planet and tell you if it is habitable and can be explored. If so, you will land on the planet and explore the planet in your all-purpose terrain vehicle. The fractal map used to lay out the planet terrain is very impressive and wowed me back in 89. As you explore planets, you can discover life forms that can be captured and sold, minerals that can be sold or used to repair your ship and if you are really lucky, you can find an item that can cloak your ship, or ultimately, destroy the Crystal Planet. Your TV is equipped with lasers so you can fight your way out of most situations. Be careful though, as your crew can get damages when exploring a planet and if your crew dies, the game ends. The early part of the game is going to mostly be trading with Arth as you really can't do much else and you are going to want to get your weapons up to snuff so you can handle some of the more difficult encounters that you will come across in the game.



That is one of the big plusses in the game is that as you explore you don't know what you are going to discover. When you do, prepare for anything. You will meet the usual alien races, some living, and some mechanical. There are also some special encounters in the game the neatest one being that you can run into the USS Enterprise! It pays to get your Communications officer skill up as quickly as possible as it will make it much easier to understand what the other races are saying when they communicate with you and it can possibly keep you out of combat.

Speaking of combat, it is very basic. If you are forced into combat, you must make sure to arm your weapons and raise your shields. After that it is simply a matter of being able to press the mouse button quickly. If you are far away from an enemy, you will fire missiles. Once you close in, lasers will take over to hopefully finish the job. One neat aspect of the game is if you go into an encounter with your shields raised and weapons armed, the enemy will take this as a sign of aggression and attack. Sometimes you will need to be a Kirk-like diplomat and use your charms to get what you want.



After combat ends, you can scan the wreckage and grab any useful items that might have survived. This is a neat touch.

Also, as you explore you might discover fluxes that act as the game's version of Warp Drive. Fluxes can be used to quickly travel from one part of the galaxy to the other without using fuel. The more experience your navigator has, the easier it will be to find the fluxes (a pulsing set of stars) and not get lost after travelling through one. I remember making a copy of my star map and then using my copy to label the flux locations. Yes, this is another nerd moment.

Not to get into what I did and didn't like about Starflight.

Graphics – Better than the PC version but looking at them today, they really don't push the Amiga much. I like the redesigned Starport/Spacedock that to me seems more colorful than that of the PC version. The planet models are solid (The rotating effect is cool) and I love the landing sequence to this day. I feel that the planetside graphics could have been given a little more detail as they look very close to the PC. The same with combat, there is really not that much to discuss, the missiles are little dots and the laser is just a solid line. When you get the close-ups of the various

alien races, you will not be overwhelmed nor will you be disappointed. I do have to say that travelling through a flux is very weak and I would have loved a Star Trek II warp speed effect.

Sounds – Not a lot here. There is a theme in the beginning of the game, but that is really it. Your weapons make appropriate sounds but I wish the sound of travelling through a flux was beefier. The sounds are in stereo, but there could have been so much more especially for a game that took three years to port over.

Controls – You can use the mouse for just about everything here except for when you name your ship and characters. Control is smooth and the interface is excellent. The screen is broken down into sections containing the main view window where you explore the galaxy and it is also used to show close-ups of the ships you scan, the planets you'll explore and the aliens you'll encounter. The second area is your status box which tells you the condition of your ship and crew. There is the dialog area where any in game text will be presented and then finally, a section that you will use to interact with the game. Any decisions that you have to make you will click on with the mouse. Everything is very streamlined and easy to use. Saving and loading is a breeze as well and you are given five save slots which is just right for the game.

What I liked – Starflight gives you the Trek experience in terms of scope and plot. This is an intelligent game with a well thought-out story that makes sense. You will find yourself staying with the game telling yourself, "Just one more planet then I'll go to bed." That feeling of wonder is there when you find a new planet or plot device and that keeps you coming back. I also like the little touches of being able to colonize a planet and give it a name. It is those aspects of a game that make it memorable. Again, I liked the interface and controlling the game is easy. The message board at spacedock is a blast to read as there are many side stories in the game that are going on and you keep hoping to find another update when you return home.



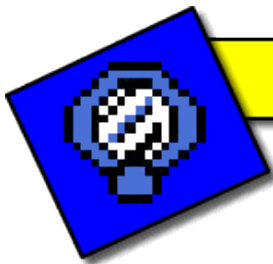
What I didn't like – The sounds and graphics could have been expanded upon. I really wanted more and back in 1989 we Amiga owners demanded it as we knew our machine could handle it. I just feel that for a three year old port, more could have been done. Also, combat is very basic and comes down to being able to crush your mouse button. There are no real tactics to be found in the game. More music would have been appreciated as well. But when you take Starflight as a whole, it is a game not to be missed. This is one that every classic gamer should play so that they can appreciate games like Mass Effect which was heavily influenced by Starflight even more. Now to the final score...

Final Score



Starflight Gets A Well Deserved...9

See you in July!



Dual Perspective

by James Sorge



Super Mario Kart (SNES)

Hello, this is James Sorge back with Dual Perspective, the column that reviews games from both the playing and the World Record Perspectives. This month, we will be covering the madness of Super Mario Kart, which launched the shell-smashing fun of the Mario Kart series.

Graphics: 5/10

The graphics look kind of ugly and blocky at times, this was certainly not one of Nintendo's most attractive games. I'm honestly going to say this looked at times like an Atari 2600 game in some perspectives. This was later fixed in Mario Kart 64 and later iterations.

Sound: 9/10

It certainly has some recognizable tracks. Mostly good, some bad. Ghost Valley sounded like the Ghost Houses, Mario Circuit was pretty catchy as well. Only strike was Rainbow Road's theme, sounded weird.

Difficulty: 5/10

If you build up your skill, this one isn't hard to unlock everything. 150 CC can be madness at times, but with repeated lives this one isn't terribly hard. Just play on 50 CC first to get used to the controls.

Replay Factor: 10/10

This is one of those classic games that looks horrible but is a lot of fun to play. It never gets old to fire a red shell and bump someone off of Rainbow Road with it. Trust me, I know.



The World Record Perspective:

A lot of dispute, a lot of competition, and not exactly the easiest to shoot for. This is one game that I can officially say that Twin Galaxies and Speed Demos Archive don't have the best players for. There have been some nice times posted, the [1:29:00 in Time Trial on Rainbow Road by Eric "Fellowroot" Schaefer](#), the [1:24:00 by some guy on YouTube](#) which looks relatively clean (can't say for sure). SpeedDemosArchive measures by Grand Prix, not tracks, so it's hard to make a comparison, though I do have to say the [1:35:00 on Rainbow Road](#) definitely needs to be improved. In the SNES heyday I think my Rainbow Road time was lower when I beat it. The other tracks looked great though. If you practice enough, you could probably be in competition for some of the world records. It will be a close shave though.



The Penguin Says:

"I have to say the graphics really do drag this one down a bit. It hurts the game and makes it sometimes awful to look at. But it is fun, and there's still room for improvement on the records, though it will be hard.

The dispute surrounding some of the records helps, leaving room for discussion. Overall I give this a

7.5/10 with a world record potential of **4/5**."

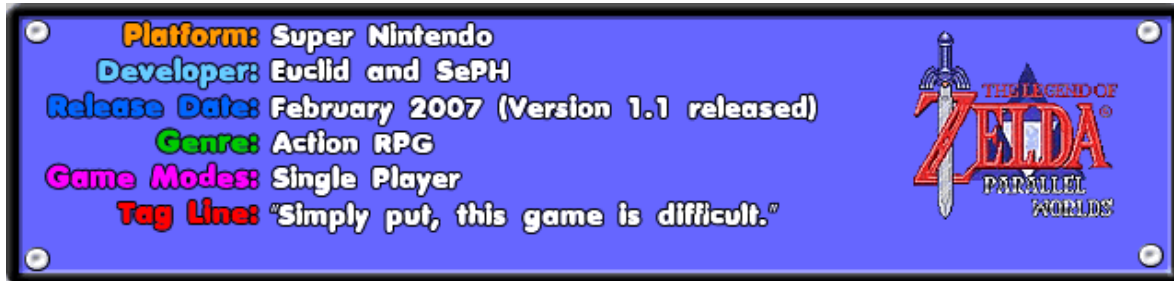


The Pixelated Mage

by Jeff Wittenhagen



The Legend Of Zelda: Parallel Worlds



Synopsis

Taken from the official site, Parallel Worlds is a fully hacked version of Zelda 3 (aka A Link to the Past). A majority of the game has been changed. There may be a few rooms which can be said to be similar to some from the original game.

General changes involve:

- Brand new Overworlds, I promise you won't find an area which is unchanged!
- Brand new Dungeons, all dungeons are completely different from the original!
- New house indoors and caves, some of these you may find similar to the original game.
- New Graphics, a lot of the graphics has been changed.
- New Screen layout, similar to Ocarina of Time yet not exactly the same.
- Some new music, the original game had great music, these are not to be changed!
- New Story, while some events maybe similar to the original game, but it's intentional.
- A lot of other changes, and surprises!



Parallel Worlds is a result of 4 years (maybe 5) of "behind the scenes" hard work, lots of assembly hacks and fixes etc. This game was known as Tower of the Triforce which some people may remember. Simply put, this game is difficult. You'll need to have every trick from the original game memorized plus more to beat this. Puzzles are everywhere in this game. Some dungeons are more puzzle-oriented, while some dungeons are more fighting-oriented. While there aren't many enemy changes, there are a few, which I won't spoil here. There are tons of secrets in this game. Some are original while some are just brought over from other Zelda games.

Gameplay

On the surface it appears to be a simple hack of A Link to the Past, however as you dig deeper into the game you quickly realize how wrong that generalization is. First thing is that your magic refills automatically. This allows for different strategies to be played out as you can now rely on the Cane of Byrna for protection, and trust me you will need it! The next thing you will notice is that when you beat a dungeon boss, they do not drop a heart. Instead there are now more heart pieces throughout the land which adds to the exploration factor.

The other major gameplay factor is the simple fact that you don't get the level 1 sword until you have almost completed the first dungeon, which is the guardhouse. While this initially seems overly cruel, it really does cause you to master the controls of the game and makes you better Zelda player in the end. Also, be aware that you cannot save until you have gotten the sword so if you die at anytime prior to this you will have to start all over. Even the developers recommend that beginners use save states!

Some items have added functions such as the Book of Mudora allows you to warp to the entrance of a dungeon. There are even some secret button combinations that have special functions such as causing fake items to disappear. The developers really went out of their way to make Parallel Worlds a unique experience.

Graphics and Sound

The graphics and sound are largely unchanged from A Link to the Past, however there are subtle differences. One is the style of Link himself is more like Ocarina of Time, from his hair and mail to the shields he obtains. Some of the enemies are slightly modified but nothing too drastic. One overworld change that I really like is the modification of the desert into docks with boats and everything! All the different sceneries really give Parallel Worlds a personality of its own. The only real musical different that I noticed was the addition of the original Legend of Zelda dungeon theme for what I call the "Classic Dungeon". The first time I went into the dungeon it gave me chills down my spine which is what great gaming is all about!

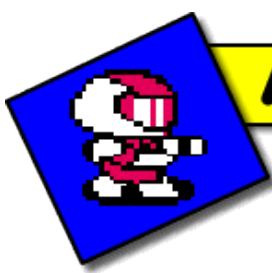


Is It Worth Playing?

For anyone who considers themselves a Zelda fan or even of Action RPGs, Parallel Worlds is a must play. Casual fans will be turned off from the increased difficulty level right from the get go, however those who put in a little time and get the sword will find out that Parallel Worlds is a thing of genius and beauty!

Rating = 5 Fortune Telling Mages out of 5





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 May. Sadly, no Retroware WiiWare games again. But, a bunch of Virtual Console ones! Plus, a game with my name; a sequel to a fun shmup! Also, there is a free update (free if you already own the game) to the Retroware masterpiece Mighty Switch Force which is updated with five new levels, better 3D effects and a retry button. Enjoy!

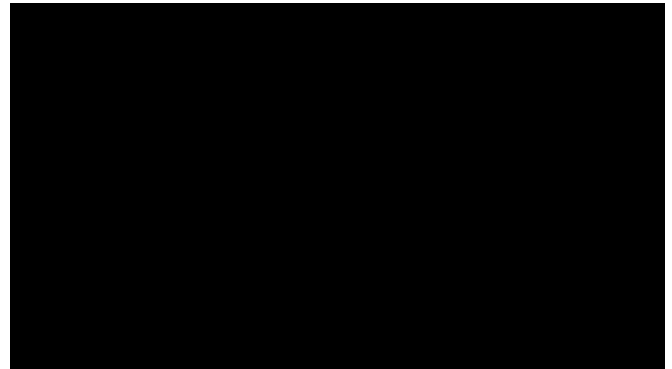


99seconds ([Click here to see a video of the game](#))

The sequel to 99bullets. This time try to survive. Survive for 99 seconds!

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

This RTS looks very interesting, since it involves the microscopic world. Something unique for the RTS genre. Feed and grow 9 different amoebas, discover new species, and battle unfriendly microbes in 12 missions. Use the terrain to your advantage and deploy different technological probes.



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

Fly, dash, soar, glide and collect bonuses on the way to Africa. Avoid the obstacles and try to get all 20 achievements. Also, extras to unlock. Beat your high score.

Paul's Shooting Adventure 2 (Video to the right)

The sequel to the baby shmup. But, this time also play with Paul's twin brother or play co-op. Defeat the new enemy, Insectians.

Snakenoid Deluxe ([Click here to see a video of the game](#))

A Breakout style game where you control a snake. Destroy the boulders, avoid the enemies, collect the bonuses.



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.

Game & Watch Gallery 2 (Gameboy Color) ([Click here to see a video of the game](#))

5 Game & Watch games – Parachute (great), Helmet (fun), Chef (hard), Vermin (ok) and Donkey Kong (not bad). Each game includes the original version and an updated version. There is also a 6th game that you can unlock. Plus, you can unlock the Museum which gives you info about games that are not included, tips and music. This game is excellent!

Kirby's Block Ball (Gameboy) (Video to the right)

It's a Breakout game with Kirby! Destroy the blocks, obtain the powers, defeat King Dedede. The paddle is on the bottom, but also on the top and the sides. There are bonus stages. This game is excellent!



Metal Slug 3 (NeoGeo) ([Click here to see a video of the game](#))

Like the Run-and-Gun games? The third one is always the charm, right? 5 huge levels, with multiple branches. 10 different attack vehicles. The intense action builds after each level. This game is a classic. This series is a classic.

Monster World IV (Genesis) ([Click here to see a video of the game](#))

The first time this amazing game is available outside of Japan! The final chapter in this classic series. Play as Asha, defeat evil and save the Elemental Spirits. Your friends Pepe and Genie can help you. Beautiful game.

Rayman (Gameboy Color) ([Click here to see a video of the game](#))

9 worlds, 30 levels of platforming heaven. Save the Toons, defeat Mr. Dark. Only for Gameboy Color.

Super Hang-On (Arcade) ([Click here to see a video of the game](#))

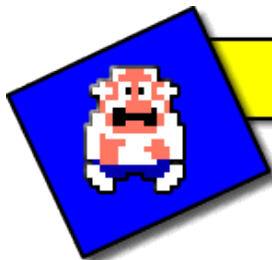
Fun, hard, motorcycle racing game. The sequel to the classic Hang-On. Race around the world.

Wonder Boy in Monster Land (Arcade) ([Click here to see a video of the game](#))

Tom-Tom returns to Wonder Land, which is now Monster Land. 12 levels. Defeat the dragon and change Monster Land back into Wonder Land.

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!



Middle Aged Gamer

by Tom Zjaba



Simple But Fun

Welcome to the third installment of MAG (see above if you cannot figure it out). This month, I am going to talk about something that I thought I would never see again, the return of the simple but fun game. Back in the golden age of arcade games, the games were limited on what they could offer. There were no CD or now Blu Rays to fill up. Graphics (other than Dragon's Lair) were limited to what someone could draw. There were no rendering programs or motion capture, just hand drawn graphics. Sounds were usually limited to a looping soundtrack and a handful of sounds. Arcade programmers had to depend on making a simple to play game that was addictive enough to bring people back to play over and over again. This also spilled over to the home consoles as they were even more limited than their arcade counterparts.

While games were limited, the programmers were not constrained as their imaginations ran rampant. Anything and everything was a game concept. The early games were mostly based on space with hits like Space Invaders, Galaxian and Asteroids, but it was not long before the game concepts were more alien than the creatures we were shooting. From riding an ostrich in Joust to making jobs like being a bartender (Tapper) to fast food (Burgertime) seem fun, the ideas flew fast and furious. Where else would you find a police mouse chasing burglar cats as you did in Mappy or a clown throwing balls at giant walking letters like in Mr. Do.

For a period, almost every visit to an arcade yielded a new gem. Games that the average person could never dream up were becoming a reality. We climbed buildings in Crazy Climber, rode a buggy across the surface of the moon in Moon Patrol and even battled the devil himself in Satan's Hollow. Those were glorious times and times that I never thought I would ever see again.

For years, games became more and more complex. The days when simple controls and a good concept were enough seemed to be a thing of the past. Today's games were all about making bigger, better looking games. We went from a single button and a joystick to four or more buttons as well as four triggers and dual joysticks. You almost need to take a class to learn how to play some of these games out now. But then something happened that has made those simple games all the rage again, the evolution of the phone into a gaming device.

For the first time ages, people were playing simple games again. With touch screens, programmers found all kinds of new ways to get people to play games. And new popular games hit the market like Angry Birds and Doodle Jump. And what do these popular games have in common with classic arcade games? Simple controls and a good concept. Yes, it is the 1980's all over again! And like those days gone by, new concepts for games are coming out all the time. Sure, there are a ton of clones of Angry Birds and Doodle Jump (back in our era, there were a ton of Pacman and Galaxian clones), but I have seen some really unique game ideas. While I expect it to eventually get ruined as more and more big companies start to dominate the market and more games become freemium, I am going to enjoy it while I can. It has been a long time since a buck bought me hours of gameplay. In fact, it has been decades.

Here are some more ways to tell if you are a Middle Aged Gamer:



If you refer to a Vectrex as the one that got away.



If you ever looked at an Ostrich and considered riding it.



If your first computer's memory was in kilobytes.



If you ever earned or tried to earn an Activision patch.



If you the term multiplayer makes you think of Warlords.

Tom Zjaba (Who is a Middle Aged Gamer and proud of it. Don't believe it, check out his two websites full of video game stuff – Tomorrow's Heroes (<http://tomheroes.com>) and Arcade After Dark (<http://arcadeafterdark.com>)).



Thanks for tuning in to another issue of Retrogaming Times Monthly! We wish you the best this summer and hope you all stay nice and cool. Speaking of keeping cool, how about we conclude this issue with a listing of some of the cooler games for some of the classic systems. Might as well leave on a refreshing note:

- Mr. Cool (C64, Atari 8-Bit)
- Cool Croc Twins (C64)
- Cool World (C64)
- Cooltris (Atari 8-Bit)
- Kool-Aid Man (Atari 2600, Intellivision)
- Ice Trek (Intellivision)
- Thin Ice (Intellivision)
- Antarctic Adventure (Colecovision, MSX)
- Ice Hockey (Atari 2600)
- Pengo (Atari 2600)

Now go cool off with some of these cool games and enjoy your summer!