

# The Retrogaming Times

THE BIMONTHLY RETROGAMING HOBBYIST NEWSLETTER

SEVENTEENTH ISSUE - NOVEMBER 2018

## HERCULEAN HOMEBREW HEROES!

The Retrogaming Times  
- The Bimonthly Retrogaming Hobbyist Newsletter -

The Retrogaming Times
Seventeenth Issue - November 2018
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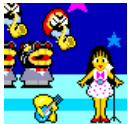
### Prepare to Qualify

by [David Lundin, Jr.](#)

Hard for me to believe it's November already, with the holiday season fast approaching and the end of the year just over the horizon. It may be overly cliché but this year really seems as if it went by quickly. Then again perhaps I'm just beginning to get older, where the end of the year is more surprising than exciting. Even harder to believe, this will close out our third year since returning to publication. That is due to our amazing staff and outstanding readers who continue to keep this slice of retrogaming fandom alive and well. It may still sound corny but I have an unbelievable amount of pride in the opportunity to publish this newsletter every other month.

We close out the year with Merman documenting the results of RESET magazine's second 4K coding competition in More C64! This homebrew competition report shares this issue's cover story. Donald Lee muses about how differently Apple's fortunes may have fared had they continued support for the Apple II line over the Macintosh in the Apple II Incider. Everyone seems to be releasing a retro-themed console to ride the wave of homebrew and throwback systems based around compact computer architecture. The new Atari VCS didn't seem to stand out from the pack until it raised a hefty amount of capital via crowdfunding. Tom Zjaba gives his thoughts on this upcoming modern retro console. Following his coverage of Pac-Man games on the Atari 2600 and 5200, Eugenio "TrekMD" Angueira continues Atari's console lineage with Pac-Games on the 7800 ProSystem, part of this issue's cover story. After years of holding fast to cartridges for their mainline gaming hardware, Nintendo moved to optical media for their GameCube. However they continued to buck convention with smaller size discs and a controller that fell somewhere between unique and conventional. Todd Friedman takes a look at this era of Nintendo in The Controller Chronicles. All that and more are ahead in this issue of The Retrogaming Times.

I want to again remind our readers if they have comments or questions about anything covered in the newsletter, or there is something they would like featured in a future issue of The Retrogaming Times, to let us know via The Retrogaming Times on Facebook at [facebook.com/theretrogamingtimes](#) or contact me directly at [trt@classicplastic.net](#)! Follow [@TRTInfoClub on Twitter](#) for release notifications and immediate newsletter updates! Of course submissions are also always open. If you have something ready to go, the address is the same, [trt@classicplastic.net](#). **"If there is something you want to write about, send it in!"**



### Upcoming Events

Compiled by [David Lundin, Jr.](#)

**Sac Gamers Expo, December 9th 2018, Sacramento, California, USA**

A regional video game convention featuring special guests, panels, vendors, artists, game developers, tournaments and so much more! Sac Gamers Expo is a family oriented event for all levels of gamers. Free admission for children eight and under with a paid adult!

Online pre-registration opens October 9th!

For more information and to purchase tickets, visit <http://www.sacgamersexpo.com/>

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**Midwest Gaming Classic, April 12th - 14th 2019, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, USA**

The Midwest Gaming Classic is a trade show featuring 100,000+ square feet of retro and modern home video game consoles, pinball machines, arcade video games, computers, table top gaming, crane games, collectible card games and air hockey, and that's just the start.

The Midwest Gaming Classic is about celebrating gaming, trying new things, learning about the gaming hobby, about meeting others who share the love of gaming, and having fun doing it! No matter if you have one console and a handful of games or thousands of games in every room of your house, you'll find something to celebrate with us!

For more information, visit <http://www.midwestgamingclassic.com/>

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**Pintastic Pinball & Game Room Expo, June 27th - 30th 2019, Sturbridge, Massachusetts, USA**

Flippin Fun For Everyone! Are you looking for a little relief from the hot summer sun? Look no further than Pintastic New England, which is the first of its kind, centrally located in Sturbridge, Massachusetts. This expo is 30,000 square feet of fun for the whole family. The kids can have never-ending excitement with a caricature artist, face painting, friendly clowns & balloon animals. The adults can bring out their inner child with over 200 pinball machines set on free play, all while enjoying an ice-cold craft beer.

For more information, visit <https://pintasticnewengland.com/>

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**KansasFest, July 15th - 21st 2019, Kansas City, Missouri, USA**

KansasFest is the world's only annual convention dedicated to the Apple II computer that revolutionized the personal computing industry. Held every year in Kansas City, Missouri, KansasFest offers Apple II users and retrocomputing enthusiasts the opportunity to engage in beginner and technical sessions, programming contests, exhibition halls, game tournaments, and camaraderie. Any and all Apple II users, fans, and friends are invited to attend this year's event.

Registration will open at a later date.

For more information, visit <http://www.kansasfest.org/>

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If there is a show or event you would like listed here, free of charge, please contact David directly at [trt@classicplastic.net](mailto:trt@classicplastic.net). Please include a short official blurb about your event along with any relevant links or contact information and it will be published in the next issue of The Retrogaming Times. The event listing will remain posted until the issue following the event date. Big or small, we want to promote your show in our newsletter. **Check out these great events, shows, and conventions and let them know you read about them in The Retrogaming Times!**



This was the second coding competition organised by the magazine RESET, with the restriction being that each game could only take up 4K of the C64's memory. The subtitle of the competition is "Craptastic," which is a double-edged sword. Many small games end up being "crap" because of the lack of space, but many of the games in this and the first competition were fantastic. The results have now been announced, so let's take a look at the games in reverse order.



**\$100 BOX by Cout** -- a very simplistic guessing game.

**Plunko by Cout** -- inspired by an old round of TV show The Price Is Right, drop the balls from the top of the screen to land in the prize pot.

**I Found A Moon Rock In My Nose by Cout** -- taking a quote from Ralph Wiggum, can the player pick their nose without making it bleed?

**G7000 Racer by IgmarCoenen** -- a very ordinary dodge the car game, with limited graphics and sound.

**Roll Roll Roll by Cout** -- another written in BASIC, roll the dice and try to keep the highest score.

**Sheeps! by Matthew Clarke** -- Amazon are delivering sheep by drone, so the farmer must use the remote control to help them land safely. Spoiled by very difficult controls.

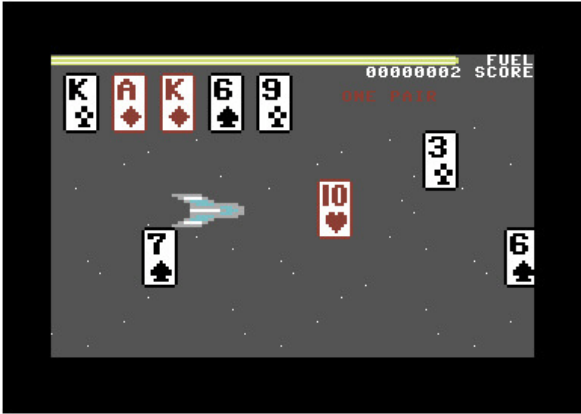
**4Kventure by Endurion** -- a text adventure crammed into 4K, starting with the player trapped in a dark room. The lack of commands makes this frustrating despite being a clever technical achievement.

**Parking Assist Chicken (PAC) by Goerp** -- inspired by the parking sensors on modern cars, two players must drive towards each other and "play chicken." Hard to play but nicely presented.

**Memory Safe by Jamie Fuller** -- using paddles or keys, turn the dial to complete the sequence and unlock the safe. What let this down was the very loud sounds, but the dial effect is nicely done.

**Toxic by Richard Bayliss & Shaun Pearson** -- clear up the toxic green sludge before it covers too much of the screen. Not a bad idea, just very repetitive.

**Freaky Fish by Chris Page** -- the fisherman is using dynamite to fish, so the freaky mutant fish must blow up a bubble and float it back up to hit the boat. A very original idea with good graphics, but the timing is very tricky.



Freaky Fish (left), Space Poker (right)

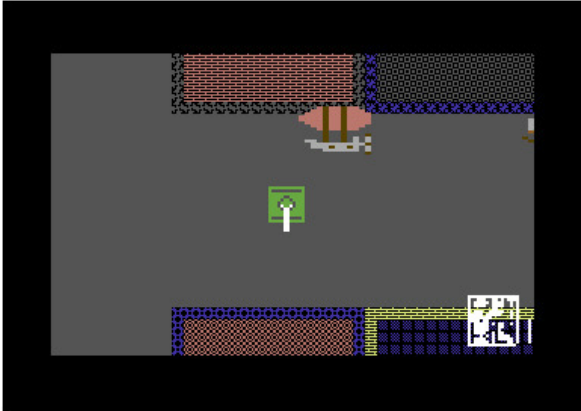
**Mind The Mines by Derek** -- a variation on Minesweeper, run to the top of each screen dodging the hidden mines (a counter tells you how many are nearby). Gets boring after a few plays.

**Rabid Robots 4K by Richard Bayliss & Alf Yngve** -- protect the boy and his dog from waves of rampaging robots. Alf's graphics are cute but it lacks variety.

**Elevator Eric by Derek** -- Eric must race to the top of the building, collecting objects and dodging the moving elevators (or lifts as we call them in the UK). With only ten levels to play this one has not got the lasting appeal.

**Space Poker by Karol Stasiak** -- an original idea where the spaceship must shoot playing cards to form high-scoring poker hands; the more the hand is worth, the more fuel is put back into the tank. With a bit more polish this could have been a winner.

**Endless Worlds by Derek** -- a cute blue blob must collect diamonds as it falls down the platforms that are scrolling up. Enjoyable and cutely made, with the only problem being the long delays between games.



Endless Worlds (left), Mach Tank (right)

**Trump Tower by Megastyle** -- grab the money (and the cat) while dodging the hazards in the many floors of the tycoon's tower. The clever parody graphics and music add to the experience but it gets too hard too quickly.

**KalleKloakk 4K** -- trapped in a shopping mall toilet, our hero must collect the toilet paper onscreen to escape. Unusually this platform game lets you set the height of the platforms to jump across before you try it. A different idea but limited in its presentation.

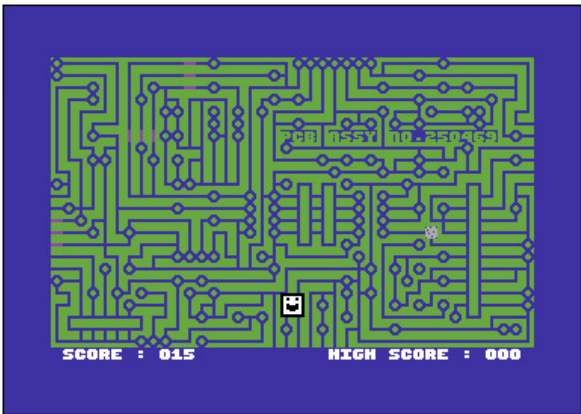
**Mach Tank by Malcontent** -- in the near future, a powerful tank must destroy the enemy cities and the all-important factory making war machines. Clever procedural generation creates the changing city maps and ten levels gives plenty to beat; all it needed was slightly better graphics and sound.



KalleKloakk 4K (left), #2vABC (right)

**#2vABC by James** -- this makes good use of PETSCII, with the number 2 having to collect all the dots on each fiendishly-arranged screen. Later levels add more features including patrolling bad guys (the letters ABC). A neat wall-slide and double-jump helps the player get around, but the tough time limit makes progress difficult.

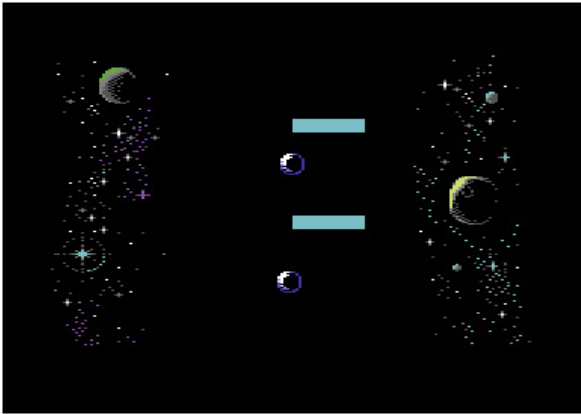
**Dustin' by Privy Software** -- from the creator of The Bear Essentials game comes this neat single-screen game. Dustin the robot must sweep up dust from a circuit board, avoiding the electrical pulses. Clean and clear graphics plus the neat pulse effect are encouraging, and it is fun to chase high scores.



*Dustin' (left), Chef Quest (right)*

**Orbs by Raffaele Formato and Federico Sesler** -- this challenging puzzle game has the player in control of a pair or orbs, which can rotate either clockwise or counter-clockwise around each other. The trick is then to avoid the blocks and other objects scrolling down the screen. Very neat presentation helps, but it does get very frustrating after just a couple of levels (especially being thrown back to the starting point of the section time and again).

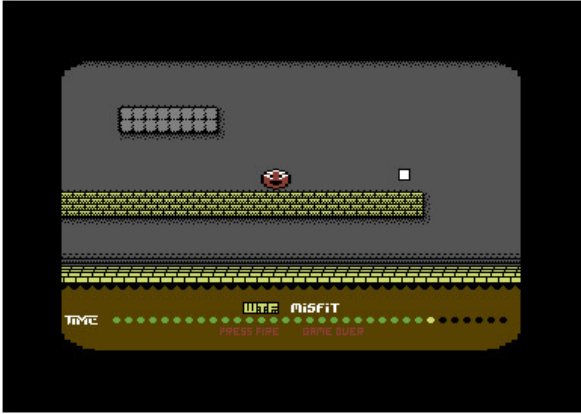
**Chef Quest by Anthony Stiller & Vanja Utne** -- this mini-RPG sees a chef seeking out special ingredients in a dungeon. Rooms and corridors are generated onscreen, and then the chef faces combat against scary foods. Fighting is all about timing the attacks with onscreen prompts, while raiding chests offers various bonuses. This was a personal favourite of mine, beautifully presented with great graphics and music.



*Orbs (left), Snake-a-Space (aka Molly) (right)*

**Wave Hero by GeirStraume** -- this one-button game has elements of mobile app Flappy Bird. The player rides their water craft, which can dive into the water (by holding the button) to jump into the air. This is needed to get over the rocks and reefs scrolling towards the player. The wave animation is very good and the graphics in general are well put together. It soon becomes very challenging, but the incentive is there to keep getting better scores.

**Snake-a-Space (aka Molly) by Jamie & Molly Fuller** -- Jamie's daughter Molly designed the game, which sees our spaceman hero on the back of a space snake. As the snake undulates its back, nasty pigs come rolling along it to hit our hero. The player must jump over the pigs and collect the falling objects. If any hit the snake, the player loses a life. Hearts award an extra life. Lovely graphics, the superb waving snake and an interesting background "sound" are all impressive; it just lacks the spark to make it a competition winner, as the difficulty builds rather slowly.



*Wave Hero (left), WTF (right)*

**WTF by Misfit** -- this unusual platform game has the player moving the PLATFORMS rather than the hero (a bouncing red ball equipped with lasers). In each level the ball must collect the bonus blocks without hitting the spikes or falling off the level. It takes a lot of getting used to, but it looks amazing for just 4K. The difficulty is possibly set a little high, but there is no doubting the skill shown in making it.

**Conga 4096 by Paul Koller** -- Paul's latest "demake" takes PC game Pan-Dimensional Conga Combat and compresses it into just 4096 bytes (hence the title). The player's character has a "tail" of white dots. These are used to kill enemies on contact, or drawn in a circle around an enemy portal to close it. If the tail touches the Purploids (large purple enemies) then the player's laser is charged up with an audible sound increasing in pitch. This laser is necessary to kill the large evil cross-shaped enemies and can clear multiple smaller enemies in its path. This is an amazing arena shooter and thoroughly deserving of winning the competition. The animating background tiles, the different types of baddies and the number onscreen all show great programming skill - and it has that addictive, "just one more go" quality that will keep you playing.





Conga 4096

About the placings:

A panel of judges (which included the writer of this article) had to judge the games in seven categories - Originality, Concept, Execution, Presentation, Gameplay, Lasting Appeal and OMG Factor (in other words Oh My God, How Did They Do That in 4K?). Each category was marked out of five, giving a total possible score for each game out of 35. The judges' scores were added together and then divided to give an average score, which determined the game's overall placing. As you can see it was very close behind Conga 4096, with six games scoring within a point of each other.

**RESET 4K Competition 2018 Placings**

- 1. **Conga 4096** by Paul Koller (28.86)
- 2. **WTF** by Misfit (26.71)
- 3. **Snake-a-Space (aka Molly)** by Jamie & Molly Fuller, **Wave Hero** by GeirStraume (26.57)
- 4. **Chef Quest** by Pond / Privy Software, **Orbs** by Raffaele Formato / Federico Sesler (26.43)
- 5. **Dustin'** Pond/Privy Software (26.14)
- 6. **#2vABC** by James (24.57)
- 7. **KalleKloakk 4k** by Megastyle (24.43)
- 8. **Trump Tower** by Megastyle (24)
- 9. **Endless Worlds** by Derek, **Mach Tank** by Malcontent (23.43)
- 10. **Space Poker** by Karol Stasiak (23)
- 11. **Elevator Eric** by Derek (21.43)
- 12. **Rabid Robots 4k** by Richard Bayliss / Alf Yngve (21.14)
- 13. **Mind the Mines** by Derek (21)
- 14. **Freaky Fish** by Chris Page (20.43)
- 15. **Toxic** by Richard Bayliss / Shaun Pearson (19.43)
- 16. **Memory Safe** by Jamie Fuller (19.29)
- 17. **Parking Assist Chicken (PAC)** by Goerp (17.58)
- 18. **4kventure** by Endurion (16.57)
- 19. **Sheeps!** by Matthew Clarke (16.29)
- 20. **Roll Roll Roll** by Cout (14)
- 21. **G7000 Racer** by IgmarCoenen (13.71)
- 22. **I Found A Moon Rock In My Nose** by Cout (12.57)
- 23. **Plunko** by Cout (12.43)
- 24. **\$100 Box** by Cout (11.14)



**Apple II Incider - What if Apple Had Stayed With  
The Apple II Instead of the Macintosh?**  
by [Donald Lee](#)

This article was submitted a bit late (back to my old ways) but I do have an excuse (or two). One, I was on the east coast for work training all of last week. I got back Friday evening, had dinner and immediately delved into a basketball referee exam I had to take AND pass before Wednesday. I got that done Sunday evening. Then Monday (last night), I was out playing basketball and my car was broken into. Some work stuff was stolen but no personal stuff fortunately. Ill have to fork out money for replacing the window and some other things but no injuries to me and stuff can be replaced. I really didn't have a lot to say for this issue as I've been so focused on my tasks at hand. But since it's the last issue of the year, I thought I would throw in a speculative column. What if Apple had stayed with the Apple II instead of eventually discontinuing the Apple II line in favor of the Macintosh line.

I'd have to do a ton of research to confirm things but I believe Apple didn't want a fragmented market with the Apple II dominating the educational market, while the Macintosh was supposed to be the PC killer and moving into the business arena. Plus, the Macintosh established a pretty nice niche in the creative markets that still exists today. At the time, it was desktop publishing newsletters. These days, it's graphics and other multimedia type stuff. But during the transition from the Apple II to the Macintosh, many schools actually turned to the low cost PC's instead of the Mac's which were more expensive. Apple seemed to struggle around the mid to late 1990's until Steve Jobs revived Apple with the colorful iMac's.

It was a shame that the Apple II was not allowed to continue. The 8 bit Apple II's (Apple IIe / Apple IIc) were mainstays in schools and homes despite having inferior graphics and sound capabilities. But the sheer volume of users made it worthwhile for developers to make programs for the machines. When it was announced and released around 1986, the Apple IIGS was a major step up from both the Apple II and the Macintosh computers at the time. It had a graphical user interface and color graphics. In hindsight, the Apple IIGS was limited in its processor, memory and other things. But the machine was fairly popular and could have been great. However, Apple never made any drastic upgrades to the IIGS before the machine was discontinued.

The Apple IIGS could have morphed into the machine that had compatibility between both the Apple II and Macintosh lines. Instead it was some Mac's (the Performa's I believe) that introduced 8 bit only Apple II emulation later on. Today, the current iMac's are not only descended from the colorful iMac's but even the original black and white Mac 128. Some acknowledgment should be made that the Apple IIGS was the first Apple computer to have a color graphical user interface. I would love it if someone at Apple would throw a reference to the Apple II in a future product somewhere.

Happy Holidays!



## What to Make of the Atari VCS

by [Tom Zjaba](#)

Many game systems have used crowd funding to raise capital. The most famous being the Ouya, which was a good concept but had some major flaws. Since the Ouya's success with crowd funding, many other have followed suit, most with disastrous results (Coleco Chameleon anyone?). But it wasn't until this summer that the Atari VCS was put on Indiegogo and raised a staggering \$3,000,000, that a system really caught people's attention and became one of the most hotly debated systems ever.

Let's start with what we do know about the Atari VCS, the first new system to sport the Atari name since the Atari Jaguar. The system does appear to be a type of a single board computer that are very popular due to their low cost and small form factor. The Raspberry Pi and the Odroid are two well known examples of these. The specs at first glance appear to be better with 4 GB of built in RAM, a Bristol Ridge processor and separate GPU. But numbers on a page and actual performance are two different things.

The one place I will say the Atari VCS does shine is in its looks. It has a sleek design that is a modern take of the classic Atari 2600. There is even a version that has a wood grain front for an additional fee. Unlike the Dreamcade Replay that is just a clunky looking box, this one has style. Will the finished product be as nice as the prototype is anyone's guess. But at least it has the potential to be classy looking.

Speaking of design, the joysticks also are a nice mix of modern controllers and one that is a redesign of one of the most famous controllers of all time, the Atari 2600 joystick. The modern controller looks like a fairly generic PC controller that tries to look like the XBOX or PlayStation controller. If they put the time and money into it, it could be really good or they could take some stock controller and throw their brand on it and end up with disappointed customers. It will be interesting to see how it turns out.



But the classic joystick does look great! It looks just like an original Atari 2600 joystick with a few minor modern touches. It looks to be able to twist like a paddle controller. It also has LED lights that flash in what direction the joystick moves. While this is interesting, I hope they put more effort into making it as accurate and durable as they can and save the flashy gimmicks. While I understand wanting to make it more authentic, I do believe only having a single button is a mistake. Adding a second button greatly increases the type of games you can play with the classic controller. Seems more practical to me than some flashy LEDs, but what do I know.

While I was intrigued by the new system, I did not jump on the preorder bandwagon. There were three main reasons for this. The first is the long wait. The campaign was in June 2018 and they are not planning on shipping until July 2019 at the earliest. After the long wait for the Dreamcade Replay, I have a sour taste in my mouth for preordering systems, especially on crowd funding sites. The second reason was the price. You were looking at \$200.00 - \$300.00 depending on how many controllers you wanted and if you wanted a little piece of wood grain. That is a lot of money to pay for system from a company that is Atari in name only and then have to wait a year at the earliest to get it. For that price you can get a PS4 or XBOX One and have a far superior system with a ton of content.

Speaking of content, the biggest reason that I passed on this was games. As of right now, there are only two software titles for it, one is the Atari Vault that comes preloaded. This is a collection of 100 Atari arcade and 2600 titles. While there are some good arcade games (Missile Command, Centipede, Asteroids) and some good Atari 2600 games (Yars' Revenge, Adventure, etc...) the vast majority of the Atari 2600 games are forgettable. Except for a quick stroll down memory lane, why would you bother playing Warlords on the Atari 2600 when you have the arcade version on the same collection? Same for Centipede, Millipede, Crystal Castles and others. Atari 2600 sports games range from awful to mediocre. And you can buy this collection right now on Steam for \$10.00 or wait for a sale and get it as low as \$3.00.

The only other game that has been announced for the system is Tempest 4000. The game is already out on the PC, XBOX One and PS4 and ranges from \$20.00 - \$30.00. Or you can wait a year to play it and who knows how much they will charge for it on the Atari VCS. I have played it and while it is good, it is not a system seller by any stretch of the imagination.

While many of the other systems had emulation as a selling point, there is no mention anywhere of emulation support on the Atari VCS. That makes sense as they will probably be trying to sell you vintage Atari games in a store front. But it does limit what will be available for the system and right now it is sorely lacking in content.

While I hope the Atari VCS is a success and I hope that they do live up to their promises and deliver new versions of classic Atari games and some great original content, I am not expecting much. With the \$3,000,000 raised, they have a good start. It would be nice to see a new Atari branded system be a success and make people care about the Atari name again.



by [Eugenio "TrekMD" Angueira](#)

This is a follow up to my previous articles "A History of Pac-Games on the Atari 2600" and "A History of Pac-Games on the Atari 5200." This time I will be looking at the Pac-Man games that were released for the Atari 7800 during its commercial life and those by homebrew developers years later.

**Commercial Releases**

The Atari 7800 had the fewest Pac-Man titles released to its library during its commercial life as only Ms. Pac-Man was ever released. That's right, the 7800 did not even get a port of the original Pac-Man for its game library. So of all the Atari systems, the 7800 got treated like the black sheep of the family when it came to giving it games based on the Pac-Man franchise. So let's have a look at the one commercial game the system received.

**Ms. Pac-Man**

Atari's port of Ms. Pac-Man is a superb game that captures the magic of the arcade quite well. The mazes have been flattened some to adjust for the TV screen but they are mostly arcade accurate. Their colors do not entirely match those of the arcade but the dots and mazes approximate what is seen in the arcade. I'm not certain why Atari didn't match the colors better but it is what it is. The ghosts do have their eyes done fully with an iris and they look in the direction they move. Ms. Pac-Man looks great with her bow and so do all the fruits and bonus items as they move about the mazes.



*Ms. Pac-Man (Atari)*

The intermissions have all been included and a nice title screen reminds you of the one from the arcade. Despite the lack of a POKEY chip, the game does have nice sound effects. Where the game may differ a bit from the arcade is the speed. Early on things are faster than they usually are on the arcade but Atari may make up for that increase in challenge by starting the player off with five lives, instead of the usual three. This lady of the arcades is not to be missed!

**Homebrew Releases**

Atari may have neglected the 7800 when it came to Pac-Man games but homebrew developers have done a super job at filling the gap by giving us plenty of Pac-Man games for the system. One particular programmer, Bob DeCrescenzo, has single handedly expanded the library of Pac-Games for the 7800. Thanks to him, the 7800 currently has five different homebrew titles already released and one new one currently in development. These titles are Pac-Man Collection, Jr. Pac-Man, Super Pac-Man, Crazy Otto, and Baby Pac-Man! Yes, you read correctly, Baby Pac-Man. There are numerous hacks of Ms. Pac-Man to create various versions of Pac-Man games as well but I will cover only one in this article, Crazy Otto, because of its historical significance. So let's look at how homebrew developers have filled the gap in the 7800 game library...

**Pac-Man Collection**

Atari gave us a wonderful port of Ms. Pac-Man for the 7800 but they never released the original Pac-Man to the console, despite the system clearly being quite capable of reproducing that title. Maybe that was a good thing since it inspired Bob DeCrescenzo into developing more than just a port of Pac-Man for the 7800. Instead we now have a collection of Pac-Man games in one cartridge! Of course the original Pac-Man is here in all its glory but so is Ms. Pac-Man along with a thorough set of options for both games that also give you the well-known "Plus" versions of both titles.



*Pac-Man Collection (Bob DeCrescenzo)*

You can now select to play on the original mazes or new mazes, select the type of game you want to play, the speed at which the Pac-Characters move, the level of difficulty, the number of players, etc. This is all done through a very nice

options menu that appears right after the well-rendered title screen. The game is available with standard TIA sounds, which are done quite well, but a POKEY version is also available for use with the 7800 XM (or you can donate a cart with POKEY chip, such as Ballblazer, to have a cart made). Of course, the POKEY chip makes things sound even better. The game graphics are superb and in some cases improve upon what Atari did with Ms. Pac-Man, as some of the maze colors and character details more closely match the arcade original. Pac-Man Collection is a superb title that is an absolute must for any 7800 owner.

**Jr. Pac-Man**

We all remember that scene in Ms. Pac-Man where Pac-Man and the Ms. are waiting for the stork to bring little Junior. Well, Junior has grown enough to have his own game and this time things are faster and crazier than before. With seven full mazes that are so wide that the screen has to scroll horizontally and toys for bonus items, Jr. Pac-Man is one of the toughest Pac-Man games to play. Heck, the bonus items are even a headache as they destroy the energizers should they reach them! Since Atari never created a port of this game for the 7800, Bob DeCrescenzo decided to tackle creating a version for the system and what he programmed is truly fantastic.

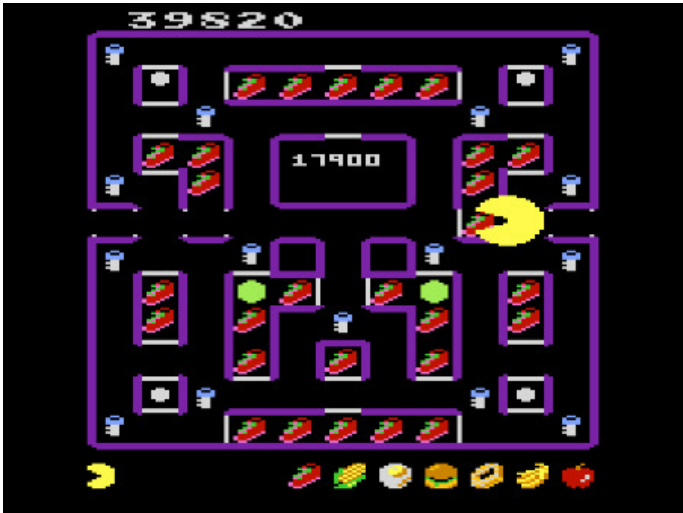


*Jr. Pac-Man (Bob DeCrescenzo)*

Jr. Pac-Man for the 7800 is as accurate as it gets when comparing it to the arcade original. The game has all the mazes, all the bonus items, and Jr. has his characteristic spinning hat. All the intermissions are included as well. The game has a gorgeous title screen that is just like the arcade's and you use the joystick to select the level to start and one or two players. You can also use the difficulty switches to change the speed at which Jr. Pac-Man moves and the number of lives. There is also even a hidden "Easter Egg" that gives you the famous "Plus" mode of other Pac-Games. You can't go wrong with Jr. Pac-Man on the 7800! Oh, and as if that weren't enough, Bob has even created a hack of this game called Snow Day which is a winter themed version of the title where Jr. wears a Santa Hat, the ghosts have a blue hat, and there are snow crystals (instead of dots) for Jr. to chomp.

**Super Pac-Man**

Super Pac-Man was the first official sequel by Namco for Pac-Man and it was released in 1982. This game completely changed the formula for Pac-Man by having Pac-Man eat keys, instead of dots, in order to open doors behind which fruits, prizes, and energizers can be found. The player completes a level once Pac-Man eats all of the fruits / prizes in the maze while avoiding the ghosts. The maze has two types of energizers, the standard kind that turns the ghosts blue making them vulnerable to Pac-Man, and the Super kind which make Pac-Man large and impervious to the ghosts but also capable of eating any of the fruits without having to open the locked items. A bonus item does appear in the center of the maze, between two boxes with various symbols, in the shape of a star. The value of the star depends on the items in the boxes and whether they match or not. The game also has Bonus Stages where the player must eat all the items before a timer runs out.



*Super Pac-Man (Bob DeCrescenzo)*

Adapted to the 7800 by Bob DeCrescenzo, Super Pac-Man is an accurate port of the game, which includes all the levels and intermissions from the arcade. The details that have been added to this port are impressive. For example, should an energizer be eaten when the ghost eyes are on their way back to the pen, they turn blue. Likewise, if Pac-Man enters the pen and eats a ghost inside it (yes, Pac-Man can enter the ghost pen in this game), the eyes never leave until the ghost regenerates. Not only does the game look great but it also sounds impressively good considering only the TIA chip is being used. The game has a nice replica of the arcade title screen which has been slightly modified but includes the same animations. Though Super Pac-Man does not have the same following as the other Pac-Games, this port deserves a spot in your game library.

**Crazy Otto**

Ever heard of this character called Crazy Otto? This character was created by the guys from General Computer Corporation (GCC) as an upgrade to Pac-Man. This upgrade made various changes to the characters and the mazes in the game to create a new experience. Crazy Otto is the main character of the game, replacing Pac-Man, and he is more than just a rounded character. Otto has legs and blue eyes and he moves facing sideways, forward or backward



depending on the direction in the maze. The monsters were also changed to have feet and moving antennae. New mazes in different colors were created, music and sound effects were updated, and the bonus fruit were also changed and no longer stayed under the center of the monster pen. The game also has new intermissions where Otto's female friend meets him up until we even meet their child.



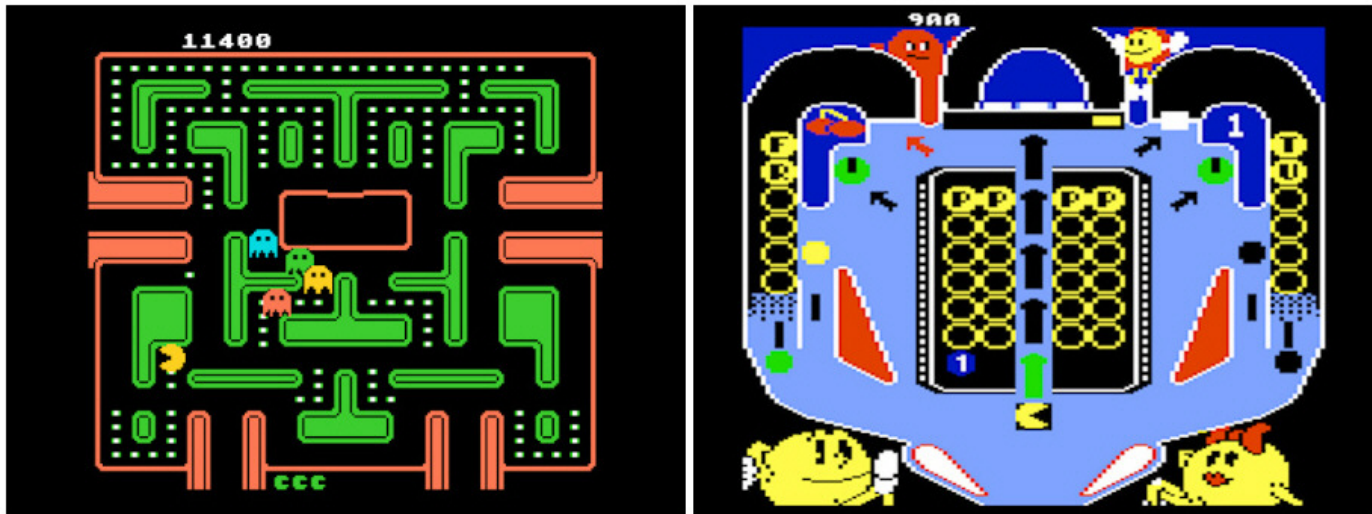
Crazy Otto (Bob DeCrescenzo)

Crazy Otto was transformed to Ms. Pac-Man by Midway after they licensed the game, so pretty much all the elements on Crazy Otto became part of that game. So how did Crazy Otto make it to the 7800? "Easily." Bob DeCrescenzo took Ms. Pac-Man for the system and changed the characters to transform the game into Crazy Otto. Bob changed the colors of the mazes and ghosts of the original Ms. Pac-Man to better match the arcade colors and updated the intermission screens. In the end though this is another version of Ms. Pac-Man that can be seen as a "reverse" hack into what Ms. Pac-Man had originally been envisioned to be. It's a cool change that I consider of video game historical relevance. The game is, of course, as fun to play as you'd expect but not that different from the 7800 Ms. Pac-Man. It's up to you to decide if you want this historical curiosity in your game library.

**Homebrew Releases In Development**

**Baby Pac-Man**

Baby Pac-Man is a hybrid video / pinball game originally released by Bally Midway in 1982. The game cabinet was about the same size as a standard arcade machine but had two components: a 13-inch video screen at the top where the video portion of the game played and a horizontal pinball table just below and in front of the video screen. The game has to be played in its two modes, with the video game being the first mode to be played. Here the player controls Baby Pac-Man through a maze where he must eat the dots while avoiding the ghosts. This is pretty much like all Pac-Man games. What's different is that there are no energizers and that there are four tunnels in the maze. The tunnels on the sides serve the standard function of other Pac-Man games but the two in the bottom take the player to the pinball mode. Once in the pinball mode, the video portion stops and the player must hit the ball on the pinball table to obtain energizers, new fruit bonuses, extra lives, and change the tunnel speed. All of these are used the next time the player goes to video mode, which happens when the ball is lost on the pinball table. Back in video mode, the tunnels heading down to the pinball table remain closed until the player loses a life.

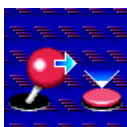


Baby Pac-Man (Bob DeCrescenzo)

Baby Pac-Man was never adapted to any home systems given the unique characteristics of the game. Bob DeCrescenzo has decided to take on the challenge of porting the game to the Atari 7800, which would make it the first home adaptation of the game and an exclusive title for the 7800. As of this writing, the game is still in development but so far it is quite impressive. The video game portion is fully playable already but the pinball area is still in early development. Bob does have an options menu that can be used to just play the video portion of the game, in which case the energizers will be present. Of note, the purple ghost is absent and replaced by a yellow ghost. This was done because of hardware limitations. The game looks promising and you can count me among the many who are eagerly waiting for its completion.

**Concluding Remarks**

Despite Atari releasing only one title for the Atari 7800 during its commercial life, homebrew development has allowed the system to flourish and it now not only has as many games as the other Atari consoles, but it also has one upcoming title that is exclusive to the system: Baby Pac-Man. It shows how the community's support of the system allowed it to give its owners the same, if not at times a better experience than in both the Atari 2600 and 5200. Certainly, Pac-Man Collection offers so many variations in the Pac-Formula to keep anyone playing for many hours. Who could have ever guessed back in the 1990's that the 7800 would have such a rich library of Pac-Man games when the system was removed from store shelves?



by [Todd Friedman](#)

This issue we look back at a controller that was very interesting at first glance but a great controller in my opinion, the Nintendo GameCube controller. Released in 2001, the Nintendo GameCube was a unique system in many ways. The system itself was a square, sort of like a little box, which also had a handle on it to carry. The games were a mini version of a CD and were very tiny but held big game content. Then there was the controller. Coming off the N64 system and the negative response to that controller, Nintendo switched up the three-handle design with a standard two-handle profile.



The GameCube controller has two analog sticks and a total of eight buttons. Each giving off a unique gameplay experience. The gray analog stick on the left side features the traditional movement for the character and the right yellow analog stick gives gamer the ability to move the screen around as if you were looking around. The right side of the controller has four buttons, three of them different colors. The red B Button and a larger green A Button as well as gray X and Y Buttons. The small middle button is the Start/Pause button. Like earlier Nintendo controllers, there is a conventional plus sign looking directional pad. The top of the controller contains L and R bumper buttons, along with a purple Z bumper on the right side. Unlike the separate extra rumble pack needed for the N64 controller, this controller has the rumble feature built inside. This controller has a good feel to it and is much smaller than the previous Nintendo N64 system. The next question asked was, how would the games for the system play with this unorthodox looking controller?



*Luigi's Mansion*

One of the more popular games that came out at launch was Luigi's Mansion. This was one of the first games that starred Luigi. He was earlier featured in a game called Mario Is Missing but this was more of a specific game for just Luigi. The cool thing about this game was the ability to use Luigi's flashlight as a tool and as a weapon. You can shine your light on the ghosts to stun them and then vacuum them up out of sight. To move Luigi around the stages you will use the left analog stick. To move the flashlight or Vacuum weapon you will need to use the right analog. To throw from your vacuum things like fire or water you will hit the left bumper trigger. To suck up ghosts and other items, that will utilize the right bumper trigger. There is dialogue along the way in the game and to progress through the talking you can hit the A button. You can also use the A button to open doors you come across in the rooms. The gameplay was great, and the storyline was even better. Fans of this game will be excited that another addition to the Luigi's Mansion series is coming soon to the Nintendo Switch.

Another popular game for the GameCube is Luigi's main partner in crime, Mario. Super Mario Sunshine was another addition to the Mario gaming franchise. This game is still popular today and you can see people streaming speed runs for this game. This game got mixed reviews from the fans because of all the differences compared to the Mario games before it. The controls were a big part of the frustration of the game. The backpack water gun that follows Mario was a big difference in the way Mario would achieve victory. The standard jumping, and swimming of Mario is used by the A Button. To slide you will need to hit the B Button. To operate your water gun is where the left and right triggers come in to play. To squirt water, you will use the right trigger, then to switch the nozzle from water to hover mode you would have to hit the X Button. To move around the camera while you play you would use the right yellow analog stick. You can also fix the camera position to the original by hitting the gray Y Button. Needless to say, there were some gamers who picked up on the controlling of Mario, but the majority found frustration in the game and would go back to their Mario 64 game, but like I said you can still see people play this game online and it is fun to watch when the player knows what they are doing.

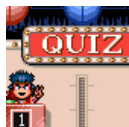




*Super Mario Sunshine (left), Metroid Prime (right)*

Another great game in my opinion and one that is adored by fans is Metroid Prime. This was a one of the greatest games in the Metroid series amongst gamers. Released in 2002, this was the fifth installment of the popular franchise. This was the first Metroid game to use "3-D" graphics with an open world feel. This game is one of the highest rated games to date among the gaming industry. The controls of the game were not that bad considering the multiple buttons and camera angles the game possesses. As always in most of the game, controlling Samus is done with the left analog stick. The right analog stick will select your beam weapon. You can fire the weapon with the A Button. As in most Metroid games you can morph into a ball and this is done with the gray X Button. It will also switch you back to normal mode when needed. The tricky part in my opinion is the shooting. The left trigger will lock on to the enemies and the right trigger when held will make you look around and aim your weapon. This takes some time to get used to but works well when it is mastered. The B Button will make Samus jump as well as activate the boost ball when morphed. The graphics in this game are pretty well done for the time and makes gamers excited to get further into the game and the story.

Overall you will get mixed reactions when discussing the controller for the Nintendo GameCube. Many people love it and many people hate it but to me it really stands alone as one unique controller. The GameCube also was one of the first console game systems to do wireless controllers well. This Wavebird wireless controller was not as popular as they hoped but it did pave the way for reliable wireless controllers for most systems in the future.



## Weekly Retrogaming Trivia Recap

Compiled by [David Lundin, Jr.](#)

Every Friday on The Retrogaming Times Facebook page ([facebook.com/theretrogamingtimes](https://facebook.com/theretrogamingtimes)), we present a Weekly Retrogaming Trivia question. This just-for-fun trivia challenge provided each week is an opportunity to test your arcane and oddball retrogaming knowledge. The answer to the question from the previous week is posted along with a new trivia question every Friday!

Below is the recap of all questions and answers posted between this issue and the previous issue:

### **08/31/2018 - WEEK 80**

Question: What fashion model and actor is featured on the cover of IronSword: Wizards & Warriors II?

### **09/07/2018 - WEEK 81**

Question: What is the only Sega Master System game to be based on a movie that won the Academy Award for Best Picture?

### **09/14/2018 - WEEK 82**

Question: What classic Sega arcade game can be found in the Dreamcast game Shenmue (1999), but is out of order and cannot be played?

### **09/21/2018 - WEEK 83**

Question: What TurboGrafx-CD run and gun features an English translated idol pop song as a stage theme?

### **09/28/2018 - WEEK 84**

Question: In Mike Tyson's Punch-Out!!, an opponent who gets up on the count of "1" will always have what trait?

### **10/05/2018 - WEEK 85**

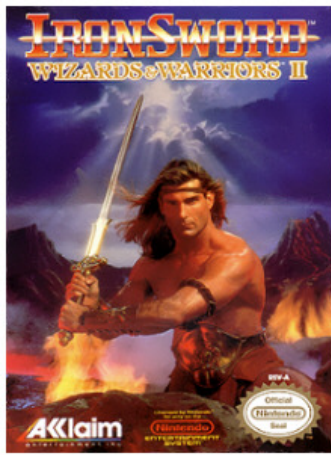
Question: What two games were released along side the PC Engine CD-ROM System in 1988, becoming the first two video games released on CD-ROM?

### **10/12/2018 - WEEK 86**

Question: What two worlds in Super Mario Bros. 2 only feature a single life increase mushroom each?

### **10/19/2018 - WEEK 87**

Question: What computer game directly inspired the design of the Atari coin-op Gauntlet?



Fabio on the cover of IronSword (left), Fighting Street and No-Ri-Ko begin the CD-ROM gaming revolution with similar style case design (right)

#### Answers:

Week 80 Answer: Fabio Lanzoni.

Week 81 Answer: Rocky (1987), based on the feature film that won the Academy Award for Best Picture of 1976.

Week 82 Answer: Astro Blaster (1981), a true lost gem.

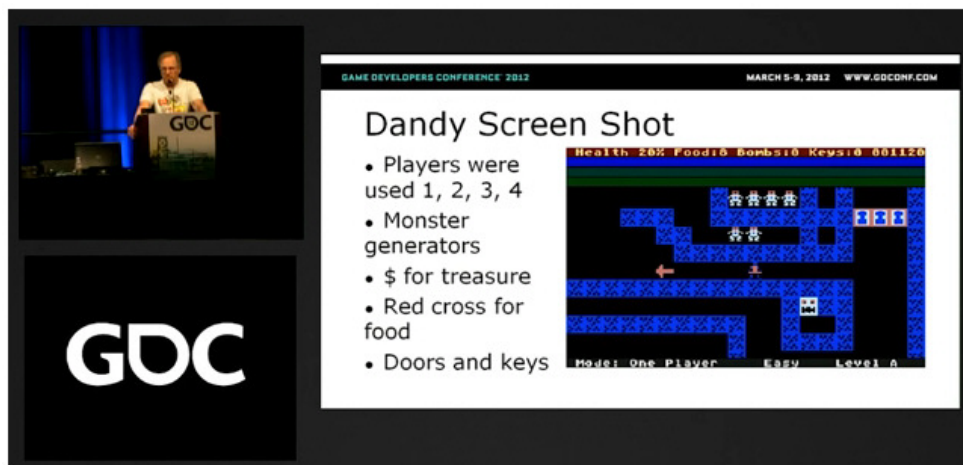
Week 83 Answer: Final Zone II.

Week 84 Answer: A single uppercut will knock them back down regardless of health.

Week 85 Answer: Fighting Street and No-Ri-Ko, both released in Japan on December 4th, 1988.

Week 86 Answer: World 2-1 and world 6-2.

Week 87 Answer: Dandy, originally released for the Atari 8-bit computer line in 1983.



Famed Atari programmer Ed Logg describes Gauntlet's origins at the 2012 Game Developer's Conference (courtesy GDC)

**Don't be left out!** Be sure to follow [The Retrogaming Times on Facebook](#) or [The Retrogaming Times Info Club on Twitter](#) for a new retrogaming trivia question every Friday!

**We need your questions!** If you have a trivia question you would like to submit for possible inclusion in the Weekly Retrogaming Trivia question pool, e-mail it to [trt@classicplastic.net](mailto:trt@classicplastic.net)! If your question is selected to be featured, you will be entered in our year-end prize drawing!



See You Next Game

by [David Lundin, Jr.](#)

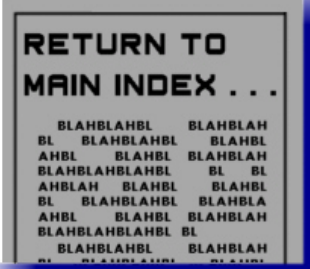
The November issue concludes our year at The Retrogaming Times and leads into the dreaded late December deadline in preparation for the January issue to begin the new year. This time of year has traditionally been the bread and butter quarter for the video game industry. I can remember in the late 1990's when I first began to really pay attention to release schedules and retailer retrofits. By the turn of the century I found myself right there in the sales trench and back then the hardware companies would begin to ramp up in late August. After that every week would be filled with tons of new games and endless variety. While release frequency continued to be healthy, the variety began to dry up as games became more costly to produce. A couple years into the PlayStation 3 / Xbox360 era is when I began to notice the more quirky and fringe games begin to taper off. Funny enough, those games were always my favorites. As we head into the holiday season of 2018 the video game industry is bigger than ever, however this is the first season in almost twenty years where I am completely out of the loop concerning modern games. Part of that is due to a shift in my career of choice but I think a bigger part of it is due to just not wanting to keep up anymore, to take a breather from the bleeding edge for awhile.

In wrapping up 2018 at The Retrogaming Times, I thank each and every one of our readers for continuing to come back to us every issue. Additionally a tremendous thank you to our contributors for this year and years previous. If you enjoy our content but have yet to check out the Newsletter Legacy Archive, go download a couple issues from earlier incarnations of the newsletter. Even better, consider submitting an article yourself! We'll be back in 2019 to begin another year of The Retrogaming Times. Until then, Happy Holidays and may you all have a wonderful end of this year.

Thank you once again for reading The Retrogaming Times. We'll be back on January 7th with our next issue. Be sure to follow [The Retrogaming Times on Facebook](#) and join our community for the latest updates and information! Additionally [The Retrogaming Times Info Club on Twitter](#) features up-to-the-moment news and notifications for all things The Retrogaming Times! I sincerely hope you enjoyed this issue and that you will return to read the next issue and possibly submit an article yourself. Remember, this newsletter can only exist with your help. Simply send your articles directly to me at [trt@classicplastic.net](mailto:trt@classicplastic.net) or check out the submission guidelines on the main page. Submit an article today and join a great retrogaming tradition!

See You Next Game!





Content and opinions on this page are those of their respective writer(s)  
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