

THE BIMONTHLY RETROGAMING HOBBYIST NEWSLETTER
EIGHTEENTH ISSUE - JANUARY 2019

CATCHING CLASSICS JUST LIKE FLIES!

The Retrogaming Times
- The Bimonthly Retrogaming Hobbyist Newsletter -

The Retrogaming Times

Eighteenth Issue - January 2019

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Prepare to Qualify

by David Lundin, Jr.

The new year is upon us and torrential rains at The Retrogaming Times HQ are sure making it feel like January. While this generally would make a perfect excuse to stay in and play classic video games, the power outages that have come along with the weather keep bringing those plans to a halt in an instant. Thankfully this issue is still heading out in time and it's a great one.

The year begins with a showcase of games based on Marvel Comics properties on the Commodore 64. Merman has the details on this collection of games that feature genres as varied as the characters that star in them. Donald Lee wraps up the holiday season by looking up classic games on modern hardware and checking out current incarnations of long-running sports franchises. Following the ever continuing trend of retro hardware names on new devices, Tom Zjaba reports on the upcoming Intellivision Amico. Eugenio "TrekMD" Angueira finishes up his series of articles detailing Pac-Man games on Atari hardware, this time rounding out the Lynx and Jaguar offerings. Rob Luther returns with a look back on his beginnings with Pokémon and its continuing popularity generations later in The Retro Junkie. After the incredible success of Atari's VCS they finally released its planned successor, the 5200 SuperSystem, and Todd Friedman takes a look at its unorthodox controller 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](https://twitter.com/TRTInfoClub) 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.*

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. 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!**



More C64! - Marvel Licenses on the C64

by Merman

EXCELSIOR!

As a tribute to the late, great Stan Lee, let's look at the Marvel games that made it to the Commodore 64 and uncover a couple of titles people may not be aware of.

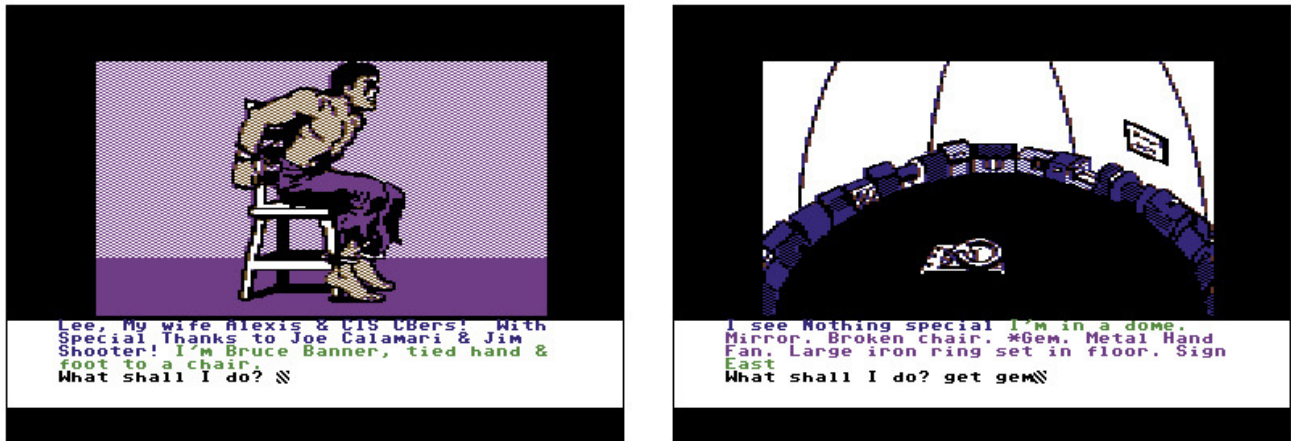
A PROBING QUEST (Questprobe series, 1984-1986, Adventure International)

Scott Adams was one of the earliest superstar game designers, with his company Adventure International specialising in text (and later text & graphic) adventures -- what is now called interactive fiction. In a shrewd business move, Scott signed a license with Marvel comics to create a series of adventures based on Marvel characters. Three games would be released, with each coming with a special tie-in comic in the box. Scott would appear as the Chief Examiner in the comic strips and in-game graphics. For European users, a tape version without graphics was also published; this was necessary as all the games accessed the disk regularly to retrieve new locations, graphics and to check the player's inputs.

QUESTPROBE #1 -- THE HULK

Bruce Banner finds himself tied to a chair inside a mysterious dome surrounded by desert. Can he escape and find who imprisoned him there? This game is probably most famous for its first puzzle; how do you escape the chair? The answer is of course to turn into the Hulk, but if you know the solution I would bite your lip and not tell anyone. The game then becomes a straightforward quest to collect the gems hidden around the dome. The major limitation is the parser - it only allows the player to enter two words (usually in NOUN VERB format).

Play online in a browser at:
<http://www.ifiction.org/games/play.php?cat=44&game=37&mode=html>

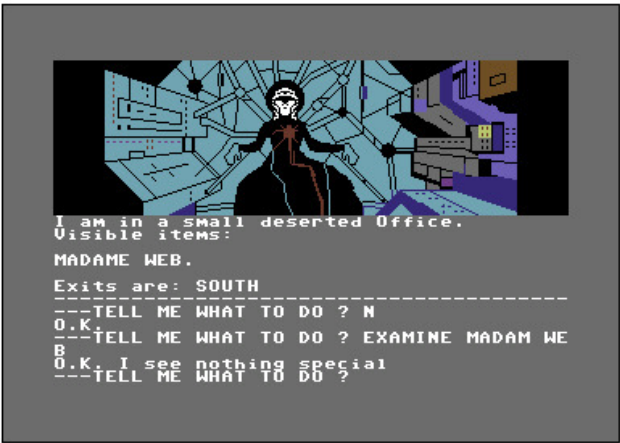


Bruce starts the game tied to a chair, before collecting gems.

QUESTPROBE #2 -- SPIDER-MAN

The Chief Examiner strips Spidey of his knowledge, leaving him to face Mysterio and regain his powers. But beware Mysterio's gas canisters that can render the web-slinger helpless. The parser is much improved, with more complex commands that can be entered. It got much better reviews than The Hulk.

Play online in a browser at:
<http://www.ifiction.org/games/play.php?cat=44&game=46&mode=html>

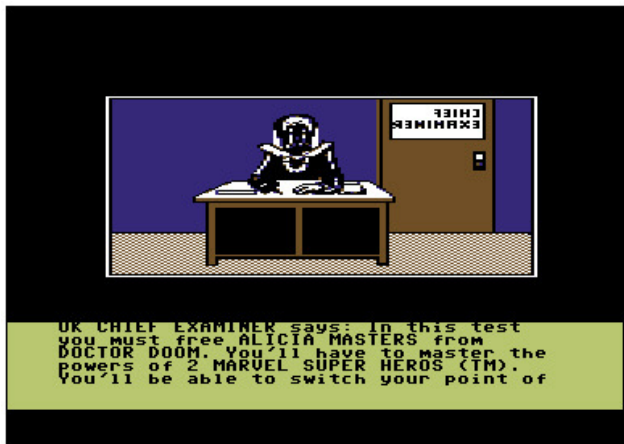


Spidey must deal with villains including Hydroman and Madame Web.

QUESTPROBE #3 -- FEATURING HUMAN TORCH AND THE THING

Two members of the Fantastic Four are at your disposal, as the Chief Examiner challenges you to rescue Alicia Masters from the clutches of Dr. Doom. The player can switch between the two characters anywhere in the game and issue commands to make them do something. The reviews were not as favourable. For tape users, the game code was actually based on Terrormolinos by Melbourne House as the disk version was too complex to transfer directly to tape. When playing from disk, a yellow text panel tells the player to press return to allow them to continue reading or enter a new command.

Sadly iFiction does not have an online version of this game, possibly down to the complexities of the code and having two characters to control.



Meeting the Chief Examiner, and outside Dr. Doom's Castle.

There was to be a fourth Questprobe game featuring the X-Men, but it was not to be released. Adventure International went into bankruptcy before it was completed. It sounds like it would have included more than just two characters, allowing access to the diverse special powers of the mutants.

DUCKING THE ISSUE (Howard the Duck, 1986, Activision)

Howard the Duck is almost a forgotten Marvel character. George Lucas produced a film version in the 1980s that has gone down in history as a huge flop, gaining seven Golden Raspberry nominations and a terrible 15% on film website Rotten Tomatoes. Howard was glimpsed in the recent Guardians of the Galaxy films, but we go back to Activision's tie-in game of the film.

Howard's human friends Beverly and Phil have been kidnapped by the Dark Overlord. They are being held on Volcano Island as a trap to lure Howard there so the Overlord can stop the duck from interfering in his plans to take over the world.

Scrolling around the island and the caves, Howard can use his Quack Fu moves to kill enemies (who spawn from small mounds in the pathways). Quicksand must be jumped over, but if Howard lands in it he is pushed back at the cost of time. And there is just an hour to save Bev and Phil. Another handicap is that Howard can't swim in the water or fly -- he must find the jetpack to allow him to travel (slowly) over the water between sections of the island.

The pace of the game is excruciatingly slow, it's too easy to get Howard stuck on scenery (accompanied by a grating beep sound every time) and the enemies lack any sort of intelligence. Typical of many American games of the time, a lot of effort has gone into the presentation (including the well-animated but slow-moving Howard sprite) at the expense of a heavy multiload. This isn't a duck, it's a real turkey -- just like the film.



Pre-game presentation is great, but the enemies are awful.

CAPTAIN AMERICA IN THE DOOM TUBE OF DR. MEGALOMANN (1987, GO!)

The man with the shield has to infiltrate the Doom Tube, filled with toxic gas. In a clever piece of presentation, Cap uses the "orbivator" controls to select the level to tackle next. But this flashy view with its monitors and controls is replaced with tiny platform levels where the aim is just to fling shields at enemies. Without the instructions this is very confusing to play, and was one of a series of disappointing games released on the GO! label (part of British software house US Gold).



Dr. Megalomann taunts Cap, who must destroy these enemies with his shield.

X-MEN: MADNESS IN MURDERWORLD (1989, Paragon)

This game never got a full release in Europe, and is actually the earliest X-Men computer game (with Uncanny X-Men, a NES title, arriving later in the same year). The accompanying comic reveals the plot - Magneto and Arcade have kidnapped Professor X, hiding him somewhere in the strange theme park known as Murderworld. To stop Magneto's power, the X-Men must assemble the parts of a special device hidden around the park. But lots of enemies stand in their way, defeated with basic fighting moves or powers. The action happens at the top of the screen, while pressing Space switches to the icon display at the bottom. Here the player can manipulate objects, switch characters and use special powers (limited by an energy bar). There are several characters to switch between, including Dazzler, Nightcrawler, Cyclops and Wolverine. The mix of fighting and arcade adventure is slightly laboured and it is tricky to make progress when enemies respawn.



Cyclops takes on a Sentinel while Nightcrawler looks at a crate.

THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN AND CAPTAIN AMERICA IN DR. DOOM'S REVENGE! (1989, Empire)

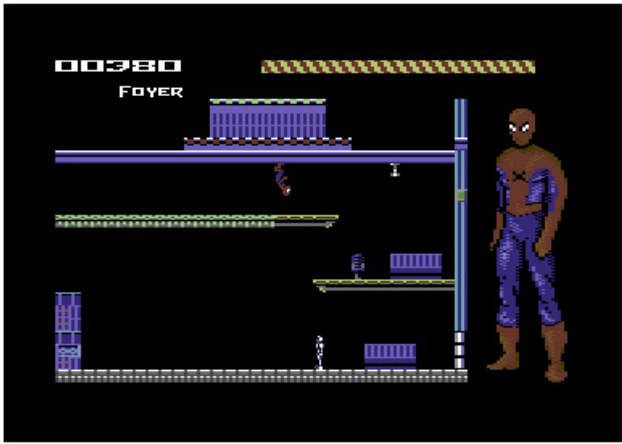
Two superheroes for the price of one, and another game that came with a special comic in the box. Spidey and Cap have to infiltrate the castle where Dr. Doom is hiding. Excellent comic-style cutscenes are followed by brief action sequences. These are mini beat 'em ups, alternating between the two heroes as they tackle a variety of enemies (including some well-known Marvel villains) or dodge fireballs and lasers flying across the screen. Ultimately this game is very unsatisfying with its short periods of control and long periods of loading data from disk or tape. Savaged by the critics at the time.



The great-looking cutscenes give way to poor fighting action as Spidey takes on Machete.

THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN (1990, Paragon/Microprose)

Spider-Man has probably had the best video game versions, and this is one that does a lot right. Mysterio has kidnapped Mary Jane and is holding her on a film set. Spidey must use his web-slinging skills to rescue her, swinging on a web line or climbing on the ceilings. Switches can be turned on and off to open up doors or paths, lifts move between floors and enemies can be stunned with a web or avoided. Contact with enemies or shimmering floors will deplete Spidey's energy, but special recharge rooms can be found. The main Spidey sprite is small but really well animated, with a variety of enemies and backdrops thanks to the setting. Control is good for the most part, with just the occasional frustration when you fall or try to swing from the wrong point. A free comic and poster in the box were nice additions to the overall package, which got fairly good ratings across formats.



The loading screen is pretty amazing, as is Spidey's dancing on the ceiling.

C64 MINI - LATEST

A quick update on the C64 Mini, which was featured in many Black Friday deals around the world. The Mini has formally launched in North America, with a slightly different line-up of games. (A couple of games are also featured under their US name -- Tower Toppler is known as Nebulus in Europe, while Coil Cop is actually Thing Bounces Back).

At the time of writing new firmware has been released -- v1.1.4. This works on both NTSC and PAL versions. Put the .bin file on a USB stick, plug it into the Mini and go to the System menu. Selecting System Information will scan the USB drive for any available firmware updates. Choosing to perform the upgrade will see a progress bar onscreen filling, followed by the device restarting automatically. Going back to System Information should reveal the updated version number (but you cannot re-install an older version; you would need to do a factory reset from the same menu and re-install the firmware you want).

Among the changes are detecting new USB devices and adding a file loader icon (which looks like a USB stick) to the menu. This file loader caters for subdirectories, with a limit of 256 entries per directory level. The file loader supports more file types, including .TAP (tape), .CRT (cartridge) and .D81 (1581 image). There is no DIRECT way to change disk images once a file is running, making it difficult to use games (or demos) spread across disk images.

Another change is the CJM configuration. This allows you to add characters and commands to the filename that the Mini recognises. This is useful for games that need a specific joystick port or to reconfigure the controls. Shane Monroe (formerly of Retrogaming Radio) has released a special configuration utility for Windows to help with the process.

The new firmware opens up running many more games on the Mini and is a big step forward for the usability of the device. I myself have even used it to playtest new C64 games on it before their release... There are hacks out there to add games to the "carousel" rather than through the USB loader, but use at your own peril.

For more on the firmware upgrade, visit:
<https://retrogames.biz/support/upgrade/>



Apple II Incider - Buying Games, Playing Games and Other Miscellaneous Retro Themed Stuff

by [Donald Lee](#)

As I write this, it is December 21st 2018, thus my last official column for the 2018 calendar year. Due to various things, its been a busy time and I haven't done a lot of retro related things with my Apple II. But there a few things I can mention that I've been doing and tie it back to retro gaming.

During Black Friday, I was in the mood to buy some games for my XBOX One and Nintendo Switch. While I debated on some other potentially retro themed FPS shooter games including Doom and Wolfenstein 2, I ultimately decided on getting Madden 19 for my XBOX One and NBA2K19 for my Nintendo Switch. As a sports fan, these were the natural choices. Plus, these games have a long history. Madden 19 obviously ties to the original John Madden Football on the Apple II back in the late 1980's. NBA2K19 isn't quite as old but harkens back to the earlier era of the Sega Dreamcast and later the Sony PlayStation 2 (which I had) among other systems. Having not played Madden or NBA2K in the current generation systems, I can tell you the controls feel different and there's a bit of a learning curve.

A few days later, I decided to plunk down some more money on the Midway Arcade Classics package on the Microsoft Store. The package was originally for the XBOX 360 but adapted to work on the XBOX One. I really wanted the package to focus on a couple of games: Robotron and Sinistar. The current generation of game controllers (with two sticks) works well with Robotron. Sinistar was a fun game in general but at the default settings, it is a difficult game to get very far. I also played Defender, Defender II (aka Stargate), Spy Hunter and Super Sprint.

For some reason, I've never been a fan of the arcade versions of Defender / Defender II (Stargate). Even though I don't have to hit the thrust button any more and can fly the ship just fine, the game just doesn't play as well as I remember on my Atari 5200 (Defender) and Apple II (Stargate). Spy Hunter was fine though the controls were a bit difficult. Super Sprint did not play well at all. You definitely needed a steering wheel which was a disappointment.

Also around Black Friday, my friend and I made a trek to High Scores Arcade in Hayward. The original shop was in Alameda but a second one was open in Hayward a few years ago. It's a smaller location but still plenty of games to play and lots of people dropping by. I played my usual suite of Pac-Man, Galaga, Donkey Kong, Robotron and a few others. My friend and I combined to play a racing game for a good hour or so. The racing game really benefited from having free play. Think back to the days of those long games you had to plunk down lots of dollars to play. Now you can play them at High Scores without spending too much money.

Lastly, to complete my holiday shopping, recently, I was just poking around online to buy myself a Christmas present. I had enough sports related stuff (hats, jackets, sweats, etc). It was by accident that I stumbled upon an advertisement for an Apple II related book:

<https://juiced.gs/store/sophistication-simplicity/>

As a fan if history and a personal historian (I have converted VHS video to digital and scanned a lot of family photos to digital), I love this kind of stuff. I plunked down my money to support those who still support the Apple II.

While the book won't be here for a while, I was able to download interviews with the author and a review of the book which was cool.

So that wraps a fun 2018 year both personally and professionally. Thanks for reading and look forward to a great 2019!



Last issue, I talked about the new Atari console and my reservations with it. Now, we have the Intellivision Amico joining a crowded marketplace. There is already talk about a rematch of the original console war between Atari and Intellivision. Will they battle it out? Who is poised to be the victor?

When the Atari VCS was announced, there were only two games mentioned. This is not the case with the Intellivision Amico. They have already announced 30+ games. Granted they are all older games that will be updated, but at least they are giving a large library to start off with. I must admit that I am intrigued with some of the games. First there are the Intellivision games that are being reimagined. There are some classic games listed here like Astrosmash, Night Stalker, Utopia and Shark! Shark!. Granted some classic games will be renamed for licensing reasons. NFL Football will have some generic name and Dungeons & Dragons will be Cloudy Mountain. I must admit that I am excited for some of these games. I hope they also update some of their later releases like Thin Ice, Tower of Doom and Diner. I know that Diner is a Burgertime spinoff, but considering they are also having a Super Burgertime coming out, we can hope.



**Preliminary Conceptual Designs Subject to Minor Modifications*

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Intellivision Amico conceptual design, courtesy intellivisionentertainment.com

There will also be updated versions of Atari games which is quite odd, considering the new Atari console. They listed Missile Command, Tempest, Centipede, Adventure and Yars' Revenge. While I do welcome this, I just find it odd. Considering many of these have solid gameplay, I would be all for updated versions that had improved graphics, sound and extra levels and challenges. While they did not list them, I would like to see updated versions of some of the later Atari games like Klax, Rampart and Toobin'. It would be nice to see them do something that hasn't been done multiple times before.

What really has me excited are the updated Imagic games. For me, these were the must own games on the system. They were among the most original games of the era. With games like Dracula, Microsurgeon and Truckin, you have some very unique games. And there are also fan favorites like Atlantis, Demon Attack and Dragonfire. This is by far the selection that gets me the most excited.

There is also a selection of other games that have been announced like Toejam and Earl, Miner 2049er, Archon and Moon Patrol. I am not sure what to make of this, but the more games the better. I wish they could get Activision on board with this. Next to Imagic, Activision had some of the best games for the system. I would welcome updated versions of Beamrider and Dreadnaught Factor. I know a lot of people would like to see another version of Pitfall and River Raid. Maybe if the system is successful, we will see this.

I do have some concerns about the system. My first concern is that the price point for games is a maximum of \$7.99. While this is nice for the pocketbook, I think it limits what games will come for the system. The combination of a small user base and low price point for games will make many publishers bypass the system. The other stumbling block is that the games must be exclusive to the system. I am not sure how this will work. Is it only when they first come out or is there a certain time limit they must remain exclusive to the Amico? I feel this will limit the number of games that come out.

Another concern I have is the controller. While I appreciate that they are trying to keep with the original look of the controller, I think it is a mistake. The Intellivision was never known for having great controllers. They offered more options than their competitor, the Atari 2600 with the joystick and single button, but they were not fondly remembered by most people. I hope they offer other options for people than just the joysticks pictured.



**Preliminary Conceptual Designs Subject to Minor Modifications*

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Intellivision Amico controller conceptual design, courtesy intellivisionentertainment.com

With the price point, I do expect most of the games to be equivalent to what you see in the Apple Store and the Google Play Store. Some good games but nothing that revolutionary. For me this is fine as I prefer the simpler games of yesteryear, as opposed to the games today that you need to take a college course to learn how to play them. I think this sounds like a perfect system for me. Now is there enough other people like me to make this a success? That is the million dollar question. I am not so sure of that. I did have a laugh when they said in an

earlier press release that the first 100,000 people that sign up to the mailing list will be able to buy a limited edition version of the console. I don't see them running out of those anytime soon.

They do have a solid group of people working on the console. With people like Dave Perry and Tommy Tallarico, they have some people who know the video game industry. While this is great, will it be enough? The bottom line is people have a ton of options for video games. From the big three systems (Sony, Microsoft and Nintendo) to phone and tablets to micro consoles, there are enough choices for anyone who wants to play games. And with the release not for two years (it is scheduled to come out on 10/10/2020), how many people will remember or care about it in two years?

While I am very excited about this and do plan on ordering one when preorders start in a year or so, I do not have high hopes for it. I hope that I am wrong and there are enough people that want to play these classic games with their updates. But unless they get some awesome games, I see it as an uphill battle. I don't think there is enough nostalgia with the Intellivision to entice enough people to get onboard and make it a success. I have a feeling this time the console war is going to be more like a skirmish.

Intellivision Amico official site: <https://www.intellivisionentertainment.com/>



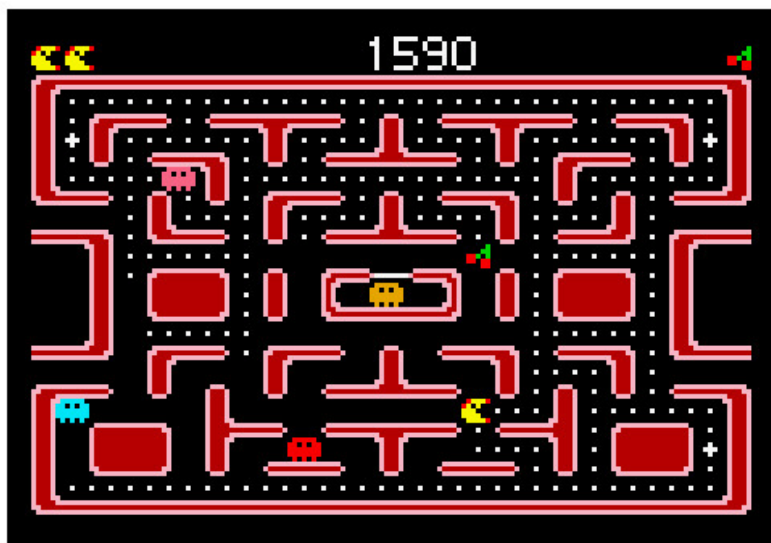
This article is my final article looking at Pac-Man games on Atari gaming systems. The prior articles had various games from commercial and homebrew titles released for the Atari 2600, 5200 and 7800 consoles. This article will look at the two titles released for the Atari Lynx and the one available title for the Atari Jaguar.

Atari Lynx

The Atari Lynx only got two ports for Pac-Man games during its commercial run: Ms. Pac-Man and Pac-Land. It is unfortunate that more Pac-Man games were not ported to the system since the Lynx could certainly handle any of the titles seen in the arcades. Perhaps it was just the mindset at Atari at the time, believing gamers were more interested in other types of titles. At least the titles that did get ported to Atari's little cat were well made. Let's have a look at these.

Ms. Pac-Man

Only one traditional maze game from the various Pac-Games made it to the Atari Lynx and that was Ms. Pac-Man. I suppose that if one had to select only one title for any given system, the Lady Pac would be one of the top choices. The game was programmed by Eric Ginner and Jerome Strach. In porting Ms. Pac-Man to the Lynx, these gentlemen did more than just port the original arcade game. While you can certainly find the four mazes from the arcade here, along with all the bonus items, the intermissions, and the ghosts, Atari took advantage of the wider screen on the Lynx to create 21 additional mazes for players to enjoy!



Ms. Pac-Man (Atari)

Atari also added one new element to gameplay by including Lightning Bolts that appear randomly and for a few seconds in the mazes. If Ms. Pac-Man catches the bolt, she will have a speed boost for 15 seconds. Now, the player can choose this speed boost immediately or save it for later use; however, the bolt must be used in the maze it is found or it is lost. Also losing a life means losing the bolt.

Ms. Pac-Man on the Lynx looks and sounds great. The Lady Pac herself has her bow and lipstick and though the ghosts are simplified in design, they look good. Sound effects are not quite like the arcade but they are good approximations. I'm not sure why there are not more arcade accurate given the sound capabilities of the Lynx. Overall, this is one excellent title for the Lynx that will give anyone plenty of hours of fun. Even if you're an expert in the four arcade mazes, the 21 new ones will keep you busy!

Pac-Land

Pac-Land was released by Namco to the arcades in 1984. This game used the Pac-Man characters as seen in the Pac-Man TV show to create a side-scrolling platformer that used many of the same elements from the original Pac-Man games. The game featured parallax scrolling for background elements at a time when this was not common in video games. The game is divided into various trips in which Pac-Man must get the fairy hidden under his hat to Fairyland and to get back to Pac-Man's home. As the voyage starts, Pac-Man moves from left to right and faces various obstacles along the way. When he reaches Fairyland, he is given magical boots that he can use on his return trip home (going all the way back from right to left) where Ms. Pac-Man, Baby Pac-Man,

Sour Puss, and Chomp-Chomp wait for him. The latter two are his cat and dog respectively, as seen in the cartoon series.



Pac-Land (Atari)

The Atari Lynx port of Pac-Land is a near-perfect adaptation of the arcade game. The graphics retain their cartoon-like appearance, the music is all here and the sound effects are spot on. The other thing that is spot on is the game's difficulty! Many may think that because the game has a rather "cute" look that it is just as easy. Nope, not at all. You have to stay sharp and be quick in order to survive through all the obstacles along the way and the ghosts, who now not only chase you on "foot" but also in cars, buses, and pogo sticks! Fans of the arcade can definitely have fun with this port thanks to its accuracy but this game is not for everyone. People who are into platformers may not find this game to be as much fun as games from Mario or Sonic though. Regardless, it is nice to see this title was ported to Atari's little cat.

Atari Jaguar

None of the Pac-Man titles were ever released for the Jaguar during its commercial life, which is quite unfortunate. The console was clearly capable of reproducing the arcade versions of these games perfectly or even with enhancements. While no "official" Pac-Man games exist for the Jaguar, there is a clone of one particular title in the family of Pac-Games that did not appear in any of the other consoles, Pac-Mania.

JagMania

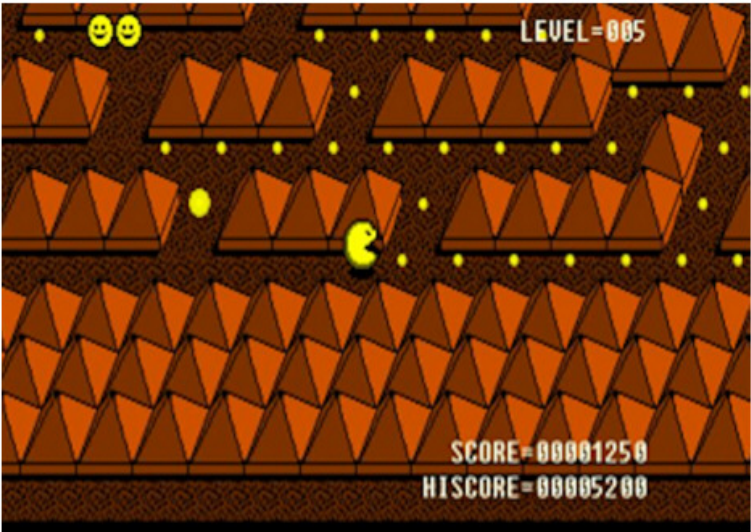
In 1987, Namco released a new game in the Pac-Man family under the name Pac-Mania. This game uses a pseudo-3D formula to create the mazes in which Pac-Man moves to eat the dots within while avoiding the ghosts. While the basic formula remains the same, the game does have some new features. First, the entire maze is not visible on screen. The view scrolls to keep Pac-Man in the center of the screen. Ghosts can be avoided not only by running from them but also by jumping over them. This only works for the original ghosts as there are two new ghosts that will also jump when the player presses the button: green and gray. Speaking of the original ghosts, they are all here, and I mean ALL: Blinky, Pinky, Inky, Clyde and Sue (she's purple now). The new ghosts are called Funky (green) and Spunky (gray). While in the original Pac-Man there were only four ghosts chasing Pac-Man, in Pac-Mania there can be as many as nine ghosts in the maze. The game includes bonus items just like before but now some of these will be power ups. At times these can make Pac-Man speed up while other times the point value of the ghosts is doubled. The game features mazes in four different areas: Block Town (a Lego-like land), Pac-Man's Park (a maze based on the original Pac-Man), Sandbox Land (pyramid structures for walls), and Jungly Steps (an area with paths that have no side walls). Unlike prior Pac-Man games, Pac-Mania also has background music that plays in each maze. The music is quite festive and fits the game well. An interesting aspect of the game is that it has a menu screen before the player starts that lets the player select at which level to start. Each of these levels has its own intro that gives the player a sense of what to expect in the level about to start. There are a total of 21 screens the player must survive through. If you reach the end, you just get to enter your initials for your score. Pac-Mania was not as well received as the prior Pac-Man titles but it does have its place in Pac-Man history and it did receive various home ports.



JagMania (Matthias Domin)

Pac-Mania was never ported to the Jaguar but, thanks to homebrew programmer Matthias Domin, a clone of the game exists under the name JagMania. The game is freely available for download and can be burned into a CD to play with the JagCD add-on or through the ROM cart. While this game clones the gameplay from Pac-Mania, it is not an exact duplicate of the game. The game features a title screen that also has instructions on how to play

and a level selection menu. Here you only have three levels to choose from (1, 5, or 9) but the game in its entirety has 32 screens to play through. Each level is simply designated by a number rather than a bonus item. Level one has walls made of block with the Atari logo in them, level two imitates Sandbox Land, Level three imitates Block Town and then from there you will see various different designs that vary from blocks to forests and others.



JagMania (Matthias Domin)

What about the characters? Well, you do control Pac-Man and he spawns from a marked area in the center of the mazes. This area is actually a safe haven for Pac-Man, so you can use it to sort of hide from the monsters. Speaking of monsters, they do look like the traditional monsters in some mazes, robots in others, and mushrooms in others. They will still have the traditional colors but the number of monsters in a maze is never as high as in Pac-Mania. There are also various bonus items that move around the maze, which generally speed up Pac-Man if caught. There are energizers for Pac-Man to gobble up and you can still jump over the monsters to avoid them. As in Pac-Mania, there is in-game music that plays but it is not the same as in the original game. Here we have some classical music and a festive tune to enjoy. I should also note that the graphics are simpler than those in Pac-Mania but they still do look quite nice and colorful. Overall, this is a very nice clone of Pac-Mania and a welcome title for the Jaguar.

Concluding Remarks

Despite the capabilities of both the Atari Lynx and the Atari Jaguar, their library of Pac-Games is limited. This is unfortunate as it really feels like a missed opportunity for both of Atari's cats. The Lynx at least got two official releases during its commercial life and one of the entries was unique among the Atari consoles. The Jaguar, on the other hand, was totally ignored and did not have any Pac-Man games. Were it not for homebrew developers, it would be the one Atari console with no Pac-Man game at all. Perhaps now that Atari ST games are being ported for play on the Jaguar the door will open for other Pac-Man games to make an appearance on Atari's big cat.



The Retro Junkie - Pokémon and the Evolution of Memories
by Rob Luther

Happy Holidays and Happy New Year, my friends! I hope 2018 has been a safe, blessed, and merry year for everyone.

As I'm writing this article, it is Christmas night. The kids are asleep. The lady is reading in the living room. While my stomach tries to cope with a pound of turkey and dressing, I'm both grateful and awestruck by how my life has come full circle in so many ways. Tonight, of all things, it's Pokémon that has me feeling so complete.



Remember when Pokémon: Red and Pokémon: Blue were all the rage in late 1998? I admit that, on paper, I was a little old for the craze, as I was in seventh grade, nearly 13 years old, and spent most of my time playing

hockey and trying to keep a low profile in middle school. However, it was in middle school itself that I discovered Pokémon in the first place - in my rowdy first period class, no less!

Please forgive me if I'm remembering this wrong, but I think there used to be a program called Channel One that we would watch from 7:45 until the beginning of first period at 8:00 am. It was a news program for teenagers by teenagers. During one of the commercials, I specifically remember an ad for the Game Boy Color, which was something I definitely wanted for Christmas that year. I had played the Game Gear before, so I was used to colored handhelds, but seeing a portable Mario or Zelda game in full color just seemed so alluring to me!

Then Pete, a quirky buddy from class who always had the latest game or gadget, turned to me and said, "I'm getting that Game Boy and Pokémon: Blue for my birthday this weekend." I had no idea what he was talking about.

"What's a Pokémon: Blue?" I asked.

Well, that opened the floodgates to a fountain of information on the wonderful world of pocket monsters! Like I mentioned before, on paper, I was a bit old for Pokémon, but Pete was even older than me; and his excitement was contagious!

Pete knew I loved classic 8 and 16-bit RPGs - Final Fantasy IV-VII, Dragon Warrior, Shining Force - you name it. If a game had a good story, memorable characters, great music, and tons of grinding, I was all over it. So, he explained that basically Pokémon was a collector/RPG fan's dream come true. With over 150 unique Pokémon to collect, level, evolve, trade, and battle - each with his or her own strengths and weaknesses - there were hours upon hours of gameplay to be had!

I was sold immediately. I had to have this game. I didn't care if it was for kids. I didn't even care if I was teased for liking it - after all, I'd already been down that road when the Power Rangers came out.

Pete, true to his word, did get his Game Boy Color and Pokémon: Blue that following Monday. The lunch tables were bustling with passionate nerd rage and excitement! I sat at the table a mere spectator, transfixed. My buddies were catching rare Pokémon like Mew, earning new badges from gyms, using link cables to trade their Charizards for Blastoises. Some friends even had the cards and tried to teach me how to play - but I didn't really care to learn. I just liked looking at the pictures and reading the descriptions of each Pokémon. All I really knew for sure was that I wanted in on the Game Boy action, and Christmas couldn't come soon enough!

Christmas of 1998. When I think about it now, twenty years later, it was such a simple, yet absolutely perfect Christmas memory and snapshot of my childhood/early teenage years. Nothing on the surface was extraordinary about that Christmas. I just specifically remember being so happy - not because I did get that Game Boy Color and Pokémon: Red from my dad (though that certainly didn't hurt!) - but because all seemed to be right in my little world.

I remember my Aunt Dot preparing Christmas dinner - cussing away in Dad's tiny kitchen. I remember tearing into presents with my sister as "A Christmas Story" was offset by Nat King Cole in the living room. I explicitly remember opening the box of my translucent purple colored Game Boy Color, gingerly pulling it out, and beholding it with wide-eyed wonder. Beside it lay - you guessed it - Pokémon: Red. I was absolutely on cloud nine. That Game Boy Color with Pokémon: Red truly was my Red Ryder BB Gun that year.

I played and beat Pokémon: Red over Christmas break of '98. And while there were tons of fun stories involving Pokémon trading and battling over my seventh grade year - it never really got better than that Christmas break, sitting on the couch with my dad catching Pokémon while he watched TV.

The Pokémon craze, like all crazes, would die down a bit after that year - at least in my school. I still played for quite a while before eventually focusing on other games. I then moved down south in high school, got a job and girlfriend (who eventually became my wife - God bless her!). Life got busier and busier as it tends to do, but in a good busy kind of way. I was blessed to graduate from college, become a teacher, a husband, and a father of two healthy, beautiful children.

However, I'm still a kid at heart. No amount of adulting can change that!

And this is where things have come full circle. It's now the Christmas of 2018, and as I sit here finishing up this article which was meant to be about a quarter of this length (go figure!) I really do feel fortunate. I'm not sure what happened to my original Game Boy Color. I'm assuming it was lost during many the many moves over the years. Yet, recently, my dear friend James surprised me with a new Game Boy Color - translucent purple. Sincerely, it is just as special to me as the one my dad gave me twenty years ago. James, if you're reading this, thank you. You're a good man.



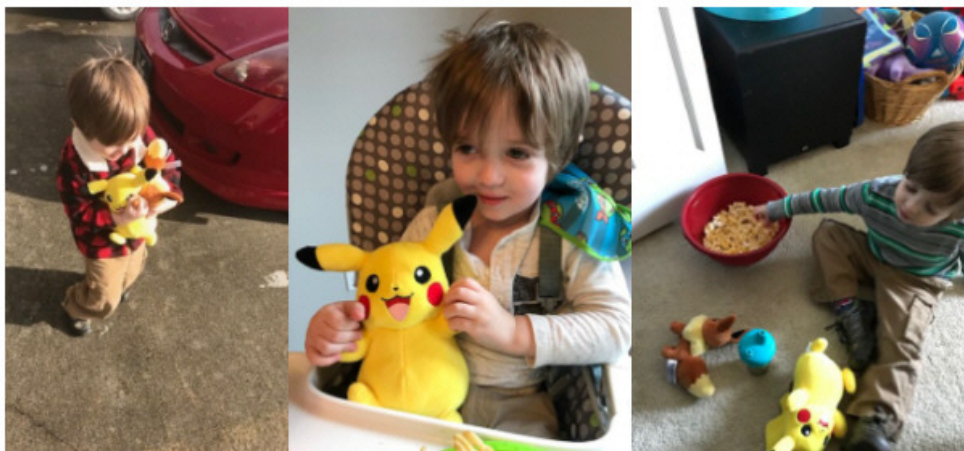
My new GBC, thanks to James

Furthermore, my family and I were recently blessed with a Christmas bonus at work and had just enough money to spare after bills and tithes to get a Nintendo Switch for Christmas. By the way, remember me mentioning my wife reading in the living room? She's reading a strategy guide for Pokémon: Let's Go, Pikachu. She has been absolutely hooked on this Pokémon game since we got it and has logged in over thirty hours so far! I asked her recently if she liked the game. Her only response was, "I think I have a problem."



Don't worry, though. We're still taking good care of the kids!

Speaking of the kids, my son, Grayson, is hooked on Pokémon, as well! He calls it the "Pikachu Game!" He has no idea how to play it, but he always gives us a high five when we catch a Pokémon or win a battle. Grayson also carries around a stuffed Pikachu and Eevee everywhere he goes. I've even caught him playing hockey with them - Pikachu is usually in net since he's the bigger Pokémon of the two.



Well, my friends, it's late. I guess I better wrap things up and turn in. If I could say one last thing, I'd just like to say that life is good. Seeing my family fall in love with a game I loved so many years ago has brought the magic back - rekindled the fire of my childhood. In my experience, I've learned that I'm just a kid that happens to be 32. And I'm proud of that. Everything coming full circle tonight reminds me that some of the good chapters in life don't have to end. They can be revisited. They can be continued with new characters and a new setting no matter how many years have passed.

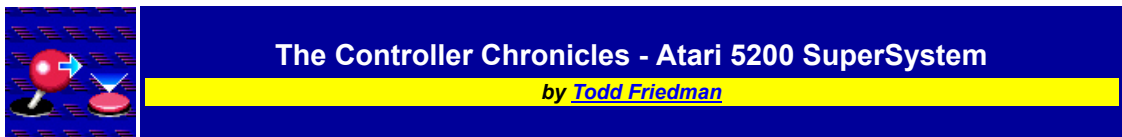
Cheers to a new year, my friends. Thank you all for reading!

And thank you, David, for all of your hard work in keeping The Retrogaming Times thriving in the year 2019!

Now, if you'll excuse me, I've got a Snorlax to catch!



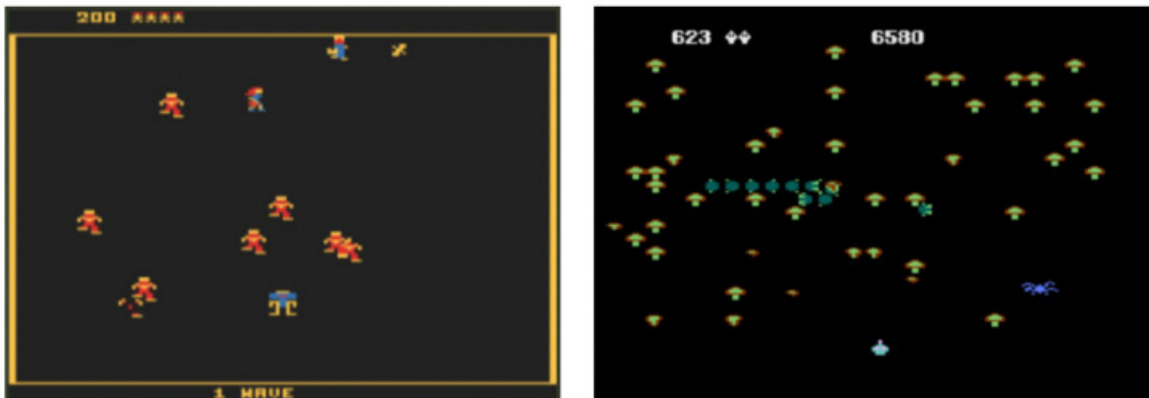
Rob Luther has been writing for The Retrogaming Times since 2012. He is also the cofounder of [The Retro Junkies Network](#), a family friendly podcast and YouTube video network dedicated to all things retro. In addition, Rob is a cohost of The Retro Junkies, Turtle Flakes, and Genesis Gems podcasts. Outside of the gaming realm, he is a proud husband and father who enjoys teaching, reading, writing, hockey, guitar, and all things Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. His email is rob2586@comcast.net, and you can follow him on Twitter @rob2586.



After the success of the Atari 2600, it was only fitting to come out with a newer and more advanced model. That model was the Atari 5200. There were some competitors in the market at that time when Atari needed to step it up. Intellivision and ColecoVision were slowly gaining popularity, so Atari came out with a console that could match up nicely. This console was completely different than the most popular 2600 model. The ever popular 2600 controller was as basic as you could get, so the next model would be a 360-degree turn, literally. The 5200 joystick is an odd mix of a non-centering stick, analog control, and a keypad. Taking a page out of the Intellivision controller, Atari decided to go with a keypad that would control options like start, pause and reset. The control stick would now go 360-degrees versus the 8-way direction of the 2600 controller. This would make moving the characters or weapons on the screen a lot smoother. Atari revised the 5200 controllers design several times and had plans to release completely redesigned controllers. However, these did not materialize before the system became outdated. Another problem with the controllers was that the joystick was not self-centering, and this made it very difficult to use with some of the most popular games of the time.



There were popular arcade titles that made the library of the Atari 5200. The first game that comes to my mind when thinking arcade to console move, is Robotron: 2084. Robotron: 2084 is an arcade video game developed by Eugene Jarvis and Larry DeMar of Vid Kidz and released by Williams Electronics in 1982. I have had a chance to talk to Eugene Jarvis and Larry DeMar a few times and I know that Robotron: 2084 is very special to them. The controls are much different on the 5200 than the arcade version. The arcade had two joysticks, one to control the character and the other to shoot. On the 5200 model you would move with the joystick but shoot with a button on the side. Atari did something clever to mimic the arcade by giving the player the choice of using both joysticks together in a one player game. The Player 1 joystick would move, and the Player 2 joystick would shoot. It was not the same but gave players the realistic feel of how the arcade played. You could also play with two players and have one move the character and other shoot. That made it fun as well as easier to play. The only other buttons needed were the # button to choose one or two players, the start button to begin gameplay and the pause button to, well, pause. There have been better console versions of this game, but the 5200 was the most unique to play.



Robotron: 2084 and Centipede

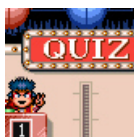
The next arcade to console crossover for the 5200 is Centipede. Centipede is considered one of the golden age games of the early 1980s. This version however would have more gameplay variety and a wider array of insects than the original. This game comes with a number button overlay that gives the player the exact spot to select players and to choose which game type to select. There are four levels to play, Novice, Standard, Advanced, and Expert. Controlling the shooting figure or "magic wand" is simple as the arcade. Move the "magic wand" with the controller's joystick and fire with top right red button. Centipede has been part of almost every retro console including digital downloads of current consoles and handhelds, even smart phones have downloadable Centipede. Many TV plug and play systems have Centipede on it. The concept is the same for all units, but the Atari 5200 was one of the first to display this game to the home user.

The last game I will cover for this system that was an original arcade game is Pole Position. One of the very first realistic car racing games, this game required speed and timing to succeed. This game was one of the trickier Atari 5200 games to control. Timing was everything and the controller was the key to success. In the arcade, there was a steering wheel, gas and brake pedals. Atari had to find a way to replicate that with the 5200 controller. To accelerate in the game, you would hold down one or both of the bottom red buttons. The key was to always start in low gear. To shift the gears, you would need to move the control stick up for the low gear and down to move to the higher gear. To move the car, you would simply steer with the control stick. There was a brake pedal as well by using the top red buttons. If you saw yourself driving too fast and need to slow down you had the option of releasing the joystick, hitting the break or shift the car back into low gear.



Pole Position and Atari's 5200 Trak-Ball

Atari tried their hand in also creating a Trak-Ball controller which made Robotron: 2084 and Pole Position more realistic to the arcade, however it was a lot more difficult to play as the buttons were different and the controls were not user friendly. Some games did benefit by using the track ball controller, such as Centipede which does have a track ball on its arcade version. All in all, the Atari 5200 system was very competitive in the console market at that time. Of course, the NES came out in 1985 and we all know how that went for all the competitors. The 5200 controller was not state of the art of ahead of its time, but it did serve the purpose of what we need to play a home console game, control.



Weekly Retrogaming Trivia Recap

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

Every Friday on The Retrogaming Times Facebook page (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:

10/26/2018 - WEEK 88

Question: What power-up item in the NES game Faxanadu actually decreases your power due to a programming error that reverses its implementation?

11/02/2018 - WEEK 89

Question: What jellybean flavor seen in early previews was removed from the NES game A Boy And His Blob?

11/09/2018 - WEEK 90

Question: What Japan-only Game Boy game was used as the technical design basis for The Legend of Zelda: Link's Awakening?

11/16/2018 - WEEK 91

Question: What NES game actually had a scene of cigarette smoking added to the North American release that was not present in the Japanese original?

11/23/2018 - WEEK 92

Question: 'Tis the season: What is the only sports game on the Nintendo Entertainment System to feature a turkey?

11/30/2018 - WEEK 93

Question: What is the only first-party Nintendo Entertainment System peripheral to contain an arcade microswitch?

12/07/2018 - WEEK 94

Question: What futuristic sports arcade game contains a cameo featuring characters from Dig Dug?

12/14/2018 - WEEK 95

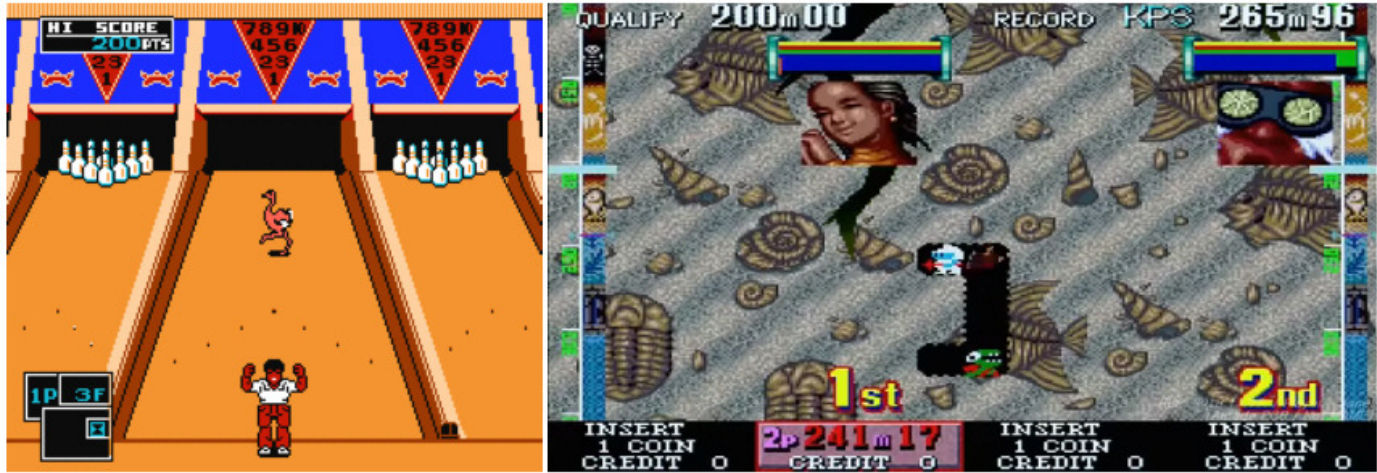
Question: Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: Tournament Fighters had a different turtle featured on the cover of its three North American releases (NES, SNES, Genesis) - which turtle did not get a cover?

12/21/2018 - WEEK 96

Question: What was the only NES game published by INTV Corporation, the company formed from Mattel Electronics' Intellivision assets?

12/28/2018 - WEEK 97

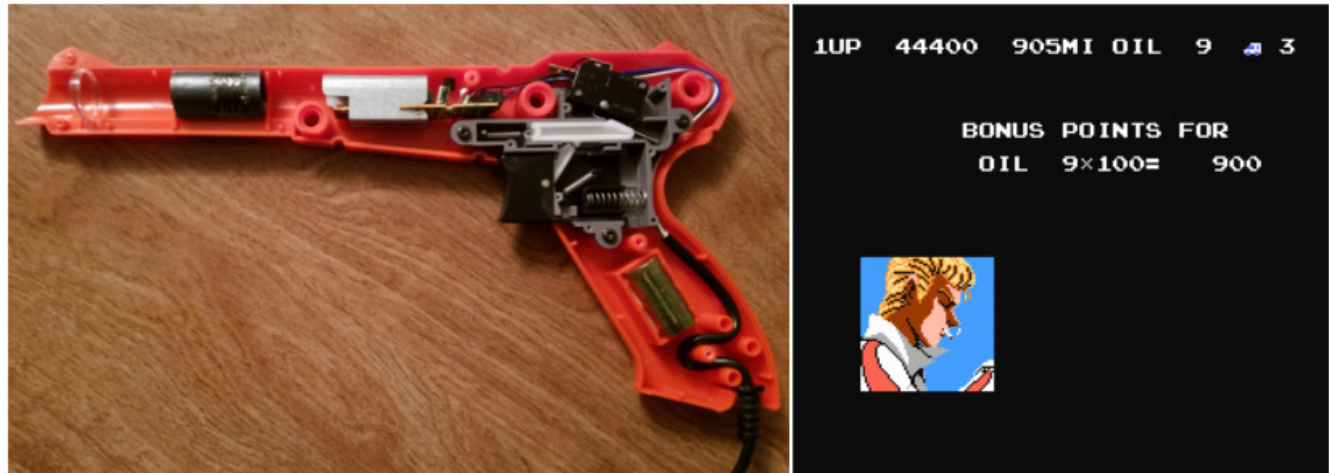
Question: The Super Nintendo version of SimCity featured two scenarios unique to its release at the time, what were they?



Bowling a turkey in Championship Bowling (left), revealing Dig Dug characters deep underground in Mach Breakers (right)

Answers:

- Week 88 Answer: The Pendant, found in the Tower of Suffer. The error causes its strength increase to be in effect from the beginning of the game until it is obtained, rather than the other way around.
- Week 89 Answer: Grape, used to transform Blobert into a wall. It was replaced with the ketchup jellybean to prevent the player from becoming separated from Blobert.
- Week 90 Answer: Kaeru no Tame ni Kane wa Naru, which has been fan-translated as "For the Frog the Bell Tolls."
- Week 91 Answer: City Connection, replacing the cutesy female driver of the Famicom version with a male thief who takes a smoke break during one of the NES intermissions.
- Week 92 Answer: Championship Bowling. Three strikes in a row, called a "turkey" in bowling, causes a turkey to run across the lanes.
- Week 93 Answer: The Zapper, its trigger moves a series of actuators that depress an arcade microswitch.
- Week 94 Answer: Mach Breakers (1994), in the Ground Spike event Taizo and a Fygar can be revealed tunneling deep underground.
- Week 95 Answer: Michelangelo. Leonardo was on the NES, Donatello on the SNES, and Raphael on the Genesis.
- Week 96 Answer: Monster Truck Rally (1991).
- Week 97 Answer: "Las Vegas UFO Attack - 2096" and "Free City - 1991."



An arcade microswitch sits at the heart of an NES Zapper (left), lighting up a cigarette in the NES release of City Connection (right)

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! 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.](#)

Although 2019 will be the fourth year in which The Retrogaming Times is in publication, this year carries a more poignant anniversary for me in relation. Fifteen years ago I began writing for Retrogaming Times Monthly, the previous incarnation of this newsletter. In December of 2004 the first entry of my first column, The Titles of Tengen, went live - it was their seventh issue. While I didn't contribute to every issue from then on, I was a frequent contributor for the next nine years with many long-running columns. What I find most striking is it doesn't seem all that long ago. Heck, it doesn't even seem like The Retrogaming Times has been in publication for very long but here we are wrapping up our eighteenth issue.

As 2019 begins, I want to extend a request that no matter how much you may collect, write, or read about games - that you play them at least equally as much. These games we all discuss and write about were meant to be played - after all, that's why they were created.

Thank you once again for reading The Retrogaming Times. We'll be back on March 1st 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 or check out the submission guidelines on the main page. Submit an article today and join a great retrogaming tradition!

See You Next Game!



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