The Retrogaming Times

THE BIMONTHLY RETROGAMING HOBBYIST NEWSLETTER

ELEVENTH ISSUE - NOVEMBER 2017

MANIC MINER'S FORGOTTEN CONVERSION!

The Retrogaming Times
- The Bimonthly Retrogaming Hobbyist Newsletter -

The Retrogaming Times

Eleventh Issue - November 2017

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Prepare to Qualify

by David Lundin, Jr.

The end of 2017 is fast approaching and with it comes our last issue of the year. As we now step forward into the start of the third decade of this open online retrogaming newsletter, the popularity of classic video gaming has never been more widespread or diverse. Nintendo has recently released a second generation emulation-based console in their Nintendo Classic Mini line, this time showcasing the Super Nintendo. New independently published games for long discontinued hardware are released on a weekly basis, continuing the spirit that began the video game industry. Advancements in flashcart design are continuously moving closer to an affordable flash memory solution for virtually every classic console, including those that are CD based. Dedicated fan translation groups continue to share their time and their talents to make great games accessible to larger audiences than ever before. While this continuing explosion of retrogaming in the mainstream may further push prices upward, it brings with it a variety of alternate methods to play, including licensed emulation and flash memory products. I still stand by my comment from the beginning of 2017 that I play more games on a weekly basis now than I ever had in the past. I've played through more fan-translated games this year than I have at any other time in my life. This is all due to the modern interest in retro video games and everything good that this mainstream interest has brought along with it.

We close out the year with Merman reviewing two recent Commodore 64 releases from the long-running Psytronik software label in More C64! With the currently renewed interest in the Super Nintendo, Todd Friedman takes a look at its timeless controller as well as some key games in The Controller Chronicles. With all the mainstream attention that gaming receives it can sometimes be forgotten that there's an obscure side to the same coin. Throughout the entire age of video games, right up until the modern day, there have been pieces of hardware that never gained massive acceptance yet still featured unique experiences. Tom Zjaba recalls these instances of Betting On Dark Horses, both then and now. In this issue's cover story, one of the absolute worst video games ever made shares a surprising bloodline with one of the most loved and important British computer games in history. Come to the realization yourself that what is greatly celebrated may in fact be despised By Any Other Name. 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! 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 10th 2017, Sacramento, California, USA

A video game convention featuring special guests, panels, work shops, vendors, food trucks, displays, artists, game developers, tournaments, console gaming room, viewing room, video game museum, video game music and so much more! Sac Gamers Expo is a family oriented event for all levels of gamers.

Online pre-registration opens October 10th!

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

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Pintastic Pinball & Game Room Expo, June 28th - 20th 2018, Sturbridge, Massachusetts, USA

Do you love pinball? 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, yo yo and juggling show. 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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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! - Argus and Planet Golf

by Merman

The fantastic software label Psytronik has been around for over 20 years, and continues to release amazing games for the Commodore 64. Two new releases over the summer will be reviewed here - Argus and Planet Golf.

LET THE ADVENTURE BEGIN

The game's logo and cover artwork, by designer Trevor Storey.

Argus is a first-person 3D RPG, with an incredible 1500 locations to explore. Fortunately the boxed game comes with a handy map, and the digital download provides you with a downloadable graphic version. To quote the story from the manual, "For decades Zoran has sat in the temple of lies waiting for his moment to free Legion from the pit. With the starchild kidnapped only one man stands in his way. Thoran son of Thryne. The object of the game is to fight your way through the hordes of darkness and find the starchild."

The screen display shows the view ahead at the top, with a compass display beneath. This shows the possible exits, and the current room number to help find the position on the map. The player rotates the view left and right. Up moves forward, while down activates the menu. A flashing red border warns that a monster is attacking, and the player must rotate to face it. Fire attacks with the current weapon, of which there are six types to discover. Keys are needed to unlock doors and chests, while potions and meat heal energy. There is an in-game auto-map feature, where the player can also save and load their progress.

The introduction sequence with its scroll, and the main game screen.

The graphics and design are by Trevor "Smila" Storey, who has been involved in many great games recently. The 3D view works smoothly and changes with different types of terrain. It seems to draw inspiration from the 16-bit game Obitus (on Amiga, Atari ST and SNES), by British company Psygnosis. Achim Volkers created the code, and that includes the easy-to-use icon system. The graphical intro sequence is also impressive. Music and sound FX were provided by Saul Cross. One of the main themes sounds a lot like the classic Rob Hubbard tune Master of Magic and really fits this game well. If there is one bugbear, it's the way that it can be tough to rotate to face an enemy - a clue/dot on the exit display might have helped. But this is a small niggle when there is a massive adventure to explore.

Taking on enemies in the North Forest and the Temple.

THE NINETEENTH HOLE

Planet Golf is a clever game, inspired by both the modern app Desert Golf and the classic moment when Apollo astronauts played golf on the moon. There are five different planets to play golf on, although only three are initially available. The others are unlocked by achieving high scores. In a nod to modern gaming, there are also Achievements to earn for performing certain tasks.

The basic game display shows the current hole at the top, with the power meter below. The player adjusts the angle of shot first, then holds down Fire to set the power. Cleverly, the action of the shot can be fast-forwarded by holding Up. If the ball lands out of bounds or in a hazard, the shot must be replayed. Each hole has a Par score, and the fewer the number of shots taken the better. Hills, water and gravity must all be overcome - and pesky birds and aliens are also roaming the course. Different planets have different gravity settings and different friction between ball and ground, meaning it will take time to perfect.

The title screen and the tricky 19th hole on Mars.

The game is beautifully presented, with a clean-looking menu and easy to understand controls. On the second side of the disk is an outstanding introductory sequence with full-screen animation, digitising actual footage of the Apollo missions. It really sets the scene for the game. There is even a hidden game to find. Music by Aldo & Gaetano Chiummo is excellent. Another standout feature is the clear and funny speech that really adds to the atmosphere. Chasing a low score will keep the player coming back. After the excellent P0 Snake, Antonio Savona has programmed another hit.

Two more tricky holes, with a hidden Morse Code message and a roaming Martian.

BOX CLEVER

Both of these games are available in impressive Ultimate Editions from Psytronik, who have not spared any detail in the packaging. Both have amazing cover artwork by Oliver Frey, the well-known illustrator of classic British computer magazines. Both come with a soundtrack CD, stickers, pin badges, art card and poster. Argus comes with two posters, with one double-sided poster featuring the all-important map, while Planet Golf also has a poster. The Ultimate Editions come with a free digital download for use on emulators.

The Ultimate Edition boxed version of Planet Golf.

For those on a budget, there are cheaper Premium+ and Budget disk versions (and for Argus, they still come with the map). Argus is available on tape, but will only save/load to a disk. And the digital downloads can be purchased separately.

So that's two more impressive Commodore 64 games released in 2017. Fans are eagerly awaiting the Kickstarter RPG Unknown Realm and the forthcoming Hunter's Moon Remastered (a cartridge remake from the revived Thalamus Digital), plus the long-awaited Sam's Journey from Knights of Byte to be published by Protovision in December. Thirty-five years after the machine hit the stores, there's still more to play...

WEB LINKS

http://www.psytronik.net - the Psytronik website, with details of all their games

http://www.binaryzone.org/retrostore - buy Psytronik games here

Please note: the web store is closed at times during the month, this is a hobby rather than a business so please allow time for your order to be processed.

The Controller Chronicles - Super Nintendo Control Pad

by Todd Friedman

This issue we discuss one of the most popular systems from Nintendo and a classic brought back to life recently, the Super Nintendo. The SNES Control pad was a step in a new direction form the previous NES version. Going from 2 buttons to 4 buttons (A, B, X, Y) as well as putting left and right triggers on the top made this controller more versatile yet still simple to pickup and learn. Of course, you still had the classic Select and Start buttons for pausing the game or choosing how many players. Also, Nintendo went from the rectangular shape of the NES to a more rounded off edges controller for a sleek look. With the addition of two button and the bumper pads (left and right trigger), it made for a super fun experience with a multitude of new releases and games that still today are ranked among the most popular.

Super Mario Kart paved the way for almost all kart racing games to follow. Released in 1992, this addicting driving game put Mario behind the wheel in the beginning of a chain of games to follow. The controls were simple enough for any age to pickup on and play. To accelerate you would hold down the B button and to steer you would use the D-pad. The brake, if needed would be the Y button. What made Super Mario Kart different than other racing games were the items you can pickup and use while racing. To use an item such as a koopa shell or fireball you would hit the A button. If you chose to, you could also change the view and look behind you to see who is following by hitting the X button. Another feature that would be key to the success of Mario Kart and wining a race is "drifting." To do so, you would use the right or left trigger buttons to slide your way through a turn. This would make your kart gain precious seconds you may need to win. This beginning of a racing franchise brought 8 more racing games to other platforms and still to this day is the most popular kart racing game on any system.

Super Mario Kart (left), Super Metroid (right)

Another popular game and franchise that continued to captivate gamers is Metroid, and the Super Nintendo delivered on another gem, Super Metroid. Samus still to this day is one of the most popular characters of any game and they just came out with another game for the 3DS. The controls for Super Metroid were easy to learn and every button was useful in being successful in the game. To run left or right, you would use the directional pad. To jump you would use the directional pad and the A button. To shoot your weapon you would use the X button, pressing the directional pad while shooting will direct the shot, which is key on this game as some of the enemies are not within an easy range. If you hold down the B button and run it will give you a speed burst to run faster. The trigger buttons added a more direct way of shooting an enemy. If you hold the left trigger it will aim the shot down. The right trigger will aim your shot up. This made for more accurate shooting and made the gameplay more exciting. This game also involved more advanced movement such a wall jumping and the moonwalking ability. Overall, this game and franchise will go down as one of the top 5 in gaming history. The Super Nintendo kept the franchise alive with this fun filled game.

Diddy Kong and Donkey Kong in Donkey Kong Country

The third major hit that I will cover in this article is Donkey Kong Country. This was a side scrolling adventure starring Donkey Kong himself as well as Diddy Kong as his partner in crime. This was a much different feel of a game than the typical side scrolling Mario games. The unique atmosphere of the jungle and the incredibly hard levels with many new enemies made this game challenging yet addicting to gamers. The controls were easy yet if your timing was off, it could cost you a life or two, or three or four, etc. It took a lot of skill to master each level and the controls were part of the skill. Like other games to move Donkey Kong left or right you would use the control pad. The B button would make you jump and the control pad would steer the direction of the jump. In swimming levels, the B button would also make you swim. The Y button is a crucial button in it can do multiple things in the game. Holding down the Y button will make you run faster. The Y button will also pick up barrels you find along the way to throw at the enemy. The Y button will also make you do a roll or cartwheel to avoid enemies and to move around difficult areas. The fun part of this game is that you can switch between Donkey Kong and Diddy Kong if you have both characters with you. To choose between the two characters you can hit the A button and tap in your partner. This makes some of the situations easier depending on the character you control. This is one of the games where the left and right trigger are not utilized in the game. Still with all the levels and detailed graphics, this game is still one of my favorites and fun to play even today.

There are so many other fun titles for the Super Nintendo I could go through, but I picked my favorites. Others that are worth mentioning are Star Fox, Final Fantasy III, Mega Man X and NBA Jam. Thanks to the popularity and the great design of the system and controller, The Super Nintendo has become a must have retro system for gamers of past generations. As you can see with the sellout the SNES Classic, the system is still going strong and is here to stay.

See you next issue when I will talk about a controller that does not have anything to do with Sega or Nintendo, it is the TurboGrafx-16. A system that is underrated and was one that got lost in the console wars, but still is a system that is worth owning.

Betting On Dark Horses

by Tom Zjaba

The old cliché goes "Insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results." This is the best way to describe my obsession with buying obscure gaming systems and hoping they will work for my gaming needs. Often I try to rationalize why I become obsessed with some upstart gaming system from some unknown

company and end up with a few months of excitement and an expensive paperweight. My only explanation is the excitement in being on the ground floor for something and hoping this is the one.

Part of me blames my parents for starting this trend. When I was young, I asked for an Atari 2600 for Christmas. My cousin had one, my friends had one and I wanted one. But they did not get me an Atari 2600. Heck, they could have bought me an Intellivision and I would have been happy. But instead they bought me an Odyssey 2. No one I knew had one so I could not trade games. Heck, most people never heard of it.

This trend would continue when others were big into the Sega Genesis or the Super Nintendo. But I bought a TurboGrafx off my brother cheap with a stack of games. So I became obsessed with it. Yeah my friends were playing Sonic, Joe Montana Football and Super Mario World, but I had Bonk, Devil's Crush and Military Madness.

Even my computer of choice back then was the Atari ST. A computer so neglected that I had to order most of my games from mail order catalogs. But it did have Dungeon Master and that alone made it awesome.

You would think that as I became an adult and made my own purchases that I would stick with a proven winner like Sony PlayStation or Microsoft XBOX. Well, I have had those systems as well, but I keep finding myself drawn to some obscure system that sounds good on paper but rarely succeeds. Yes, I keep betting on dark horses and losing. Check out this list of tenants in the video game graveyard: The Onlive, which was a great idea with not enough money to back it. The Ouya, which was fun for emulation but the original games ranged from terrible to mediocre with only a handful of worthwhile games. The Madcatz Mojo, which lied so much about their android compatibility that I returned it in a week. The Nvidia Shield, which is a good handheld but quickly abandoned. The Steamlink, which is fine if you don't use it with Wi-Fi, which was the main selling point that you could play your Steam games on your TV.

That should give you an indication of how deep my problem is. Why I don't just stick with my playing my XBOX One and ignore these is anyone's guess. And the worst part is that I am doing it all over again. This time it is the kickstarter system called the Dreamcade Replay. It is supposed to make emulation easy. It is supposed to make finding games simple. And it will probably fail like all the other systems that I bought into. Oh well, I put out a small price to get a system with a controller and a license to dream that it will be the "One Console to Rule Them All" as their slogan says. Most likely I will end up with one more paperweight and I will ask myself why I keep chasing these dark horses. But as soon as I say I am done with supporting these obscure systems, another one will come around and catch my eye and I will be all excited again. Guess that makes me insane.

If you have an game console idea and need at least one sucker to buy into it, send me an email at tomheroes@aol.com.

By Any Other Name - Back to the Future Part II & III

by David Lundin, Jr.

It has been said imitation is the sincerest form of flattery. Yet what if the ideas and design of a very popular video game were reused in an unrelated title, resulting in a game considered to be one of the worst video games ever made. Back to the Future Part II & III would take concepts from a much-loved game and drop them wholesale into an otherwise unrelated train wreck of a licensed film adaptation. Back to the Future Part II & III was developed by Beam Software, an Australian outfit founded in the late 1970's. Beam Software generally made terrible games, displaying a relative lack of understanding as to what makes a game play intuitively or have rewarding goals. While they had reasonable console success in their native Australia with a pair of regionally targeted sports games, Aussie Rules Footy and International Cricket, Beam isn't a fondly remembered studio even as quick and cheap contract developers go.

That isn't to say they couldn't produce great games with the right staff. 1992's Nightshade on the Nintendo Entertainment System was a tongue-in-cheek adventure game set against a pulp noir backdrop. It featured an open-world on par with Sierra's adventure game offerings, lots of puzzles to solve and people to talk to, and a solid sense of humor that made the game stand out against similar titles on the platform. The Super Nintendo version of Shadowrun, released in 1993, plays a lot like Nightshade with a detached cursor system in addition to direct character movement. Even more so than Nightshade, this control method was further refined and blended adventure and action gameplay into a single package. Paul Kidd designed both Nightshade and Shadowrun while at Beam Software, having written and directed the former title. Shadowrun was based upon the popular tabletop role-playing game of the same name, originally created by FASA Corporation. Another very popular FASA property, MechWarrior, itself a spin-off of FASA's long-running BattleTech universe, had a Super Nintendo adaptation also developed by Beam Software. MechWarrior on the SNES is a first-person combat simulation that puts the player at the controls of a hulking robotic death machine. With a deep and engaging story as well as satisfying and challenging gameplay, it is easily my favorite of Beam Software's games.

Back to the Future Part II & III on the other hand is easily the worst of Beam Software's catalog, if not one of the worst games ever released on the NES. Released in 1990, one year after the abysmal Back to the Future NES game also developed by Beam Software, the sequel eschews the simple arcade style gameplay of the previous entry. Instead Part II & III is a platforming game with all sorts of ridiculous and repetitive complexities. Essentially a massive fetch quest, Marty McFly must travel through time to find objects that Biff Tannen has scattered across the space-time continuum and hidden behind locked doors. Once each item is recovered it must be returned to its correct time and location. Finding and returning all objects to their proper times and locations allows Marty to retrieve Gray's Sports Almanac, which as in the film was used by Biff to amass wealth and power by betting on sporting events. It's never revealed how Marty comes into possession of the sports almanac after completing his adventure but that is far from the most ridiculous occurrence this game has on offer. While the majority of Marty's trek plays out like a poorly designed and rough approximation of Konami's The Goonies II, and returning objects requires solving word jumbles in addition to finding the proper locations, the process in which those objects are obtained is where there's an interesting lift of a much-loved classic computer game.

Seven years earlier in 1983, British computer programmer Matthew Smith created a game for the ZX Spectrum, an affordable home computer that was just beginning to take the United Kingdom by storm and lead the early home computer revolution in that part of the world. Matthew Smith's game was called Manic Miner, a platforming game in which the player guides Miner Willy to collect treasures within twenty caverns and then escape onward toward the surface. Along the way Willy must avoid patrolling enemies as well as numerous hazards including disintegrating floors, conveyer belts, and odd little plants. Coming into contact with an enemy or harmful hazard, regardless of how Willy may touch it, results in an instant death. Additionally falling a long distance, similar to games like Donkey Kong or Spelunker, will kill Willy. Manic Miner requires absolute precise platforming and total mastery of Willy's movements for success, which makes the game strangely addictive. Additionally the game is a wonderful showcase for what can be done on the ZX Spectrum, especially this early on. The graphics are detailed and make good use of the hardware's limited color capabilities, the game plays smoothly and predictably, and was actually the first ZX Spectrum game to feature in-game music. It's very easy to see why Manic Miner was so popular and would go on to be converted to nearly every home computer of the time, even if in an unofficial capacity. Even today the game is fondly remembered and enjoyed (with the MSX version being my favorite) and was massively influential to game design of the time.

That's where we come back to Back to the Future Part II & III. While the main portion of the game requires Marty McFly to platform through three time periods in the style of Super Mario Bros. or The Goonies II, the doors behind which Biff Tannen has hidden the objects that need to be retrieved feature challenges borrowed from a different era of gaming all together. One could make the assumption that a group of Australian computer programmers in the late 1980's would have at least been familiar with Manic Miner. Honestly once this portion of Back to the Future Part II & III is compared directly to Manic Miner no other assumption seems remotely feasible.

Miner Willy dashes across disintegrating floors in Manic Miner (left), Marty McFly surveys IP theft in Back to the Future Part II & III (right)

These rooms change the platforming gameplay that lead into them to a single-screen affair in which Marty McFly must collect all the clocks before the timer runs out. Once all the clocks are collected the lost object will appear and must be collected as well. Virtually everything that looks hazardous will kill Marty, or rather cause him to fall down off the stage and appear back outside the door. As can plainly be seen, the majority of these areas are directly taken from Manic Miner design assets. The disintegrating floors, patrolling enemies, conveyer belts that prevent movement against their travel, even the strange little plants that cause instant death. If Marty comes into contact with any hazardous objects, including his head hitting one while passing through a platform above during a jump, it is an instant death and failure of the level. Rather than an air gauge, a simple countdown timer is now used. Marty's movement and animation feels a lot like Willy's although Marty's running is a little more spastic while his jumping is slightly more responsive. Additionally Marty can survive long falls unscathed.

The crazy thing is that while Back to the Future Part II & III is a widely hated game, the puzzle rooms are often cited as one of the worst parts of the entire package due to their core gameplay concept. The same core concept that is at the heart of one of the most beloved early British home computer games of all time, Manic Miner. Unlike a lot of the rose-tinted perspective concerning early home computer games, and ZX Spectrum games in general, Manic Miner is honestly a very polished and fun to play game. Sure it can be punishing but that's what gives it replay value. I do agree that the puzzle rooms in Back to the Future Part II & III aren't anywhere near as well designed as those in Manic Miner, leading them to be far less fun to play, especially when success only means heading back out to the rest of the terrible game. It's still odd to see two pieces of game design that are so closely similar to one another, where one is universally loved and the other is universally despised.

What surprises me is how I've been unable to find any previous mention of how similar these areas are to Manic Miner. I mean it is a total and complete lift. I can't be the only person who doesn't recognize that in hindsight. Yet here not only did Beam Software make yet another terrible Back to the Future game, they couldn't even come up with an original idea for the core challenge element. If it weren't for the floors disintegrating in exactly the same way and the game featuring those same strange little green plants, I could possibly believe it was just some sort of odd coincidence at a stretch. However there is absolutely no way that these areas weren't designed without Manic Miner in mind. It is a direct gameplay and design lift. Of course Back to the Future Part II & III only saw release in North America and Manic Miner was much more of a European title, so I guess us Yanks would never know either way and no one in the UK would see the the rework.

Treasures to collect change level to level in Manic Miner (left), while the clock collecting obsession from Back to the Future continues in the sequels (right)

With that all said it should be clear that I don't completely hate this developer as they could do good work when they actually tried. Their lack of effort on their truly horrendous titles can't be simply dismissed as something that comes with the territory of licensed games either. While Nightshade was an original story and concept, both Shadowrun and MechWarrior were based on established and much-loved franchises. Granted a good portion of Shadowrun's core was taken from design ideas created for Nightshade and MechWarrior is a rather unique entry in the storied franchise, but both serve to expand the license rather than shame it. Unfortunately the majority of Beam Software's games have little to no redeeming value, even when they borrow assets from one of the most popular microcomputer games of all time, as with Manic Miner in Back to the Future Part II & III.

If you've noticed a strikingly similar but generally overlooked example of a game being hated By Any Other Name, send me an e-mail at the link above and I may feature it in a future issue.

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:

08/25/2017 - WEEK 29
Question: What was the last commercially released arcade game that Sega legend Yu Suzuki worked on?

09/01/2017 - WEEK 30
Question: Exidy was an early arcade developer and manufacturer who released dozens of classic arcade games such as Venture, Mouse Trap, Circus, Death Race, and Pepper II. The name "Exidy" is a portmanteau of what phrase?

09/08/2017 - WEEK 31
Question: The 1996 arcade racer Sega Super GT was known as SCUD Race in Japan and Europe. In the game title, what does SCUD stand for?

09/15/2017 - WEEK 32
Question: The original North American releases of Pokemon Red Version and Pokemon Blue Version used which singular Japanese Pokemon release as their core design basis?

09/22/2017 - WEEK 33
Question: S.T.U.N. Runner was a graphically impressive arcade game released by Atari in 1989. What does S.T.U.N. stand for?

09/29/2017 - WEEK 34
Question: It's widely known the North American release of "Super Mario Bros. 2" was adapted from a Famicom Disk System game titled "Yume Kojo: Doki Doki Panic." When the North American version of Super Mario Bros. 2 was later released in Japan, what was it re-titled as?

10/06/2017 - WEEK 35
Question: The MSX standard for computer architecture was extremely important to the Japanese video game industry throughout the 1980's. What does MSX stand for?

10/13/2017 - WEEK 36
Question: What series of Namco arcade driving games is widely considered to be the spiritual sequel to the Pole Position series?

10/20/2017 - WEEK 37
Question: What was Namco's first arcade game to be completely developed within the company?

An Exidy arcade catalog (left), Namco goes into the arcade business for themselves (right)

Answers:
Week 29 Answer: Sega Race TV (2008).
Week 30 Answer: Excellence in Dynamics.
Week 31 Answer: Sports Car Ultimate Drive.
Week 32 Answer: The Japanese release of Pokemon Blue Version, which was a later release in that region that contained better artwork and cleaner program code.
Week 33 Answer: Spread Tunnel Underground Network.
Week 34 Answer: Super Mario USA.
Week 35 Answer: Machines with Software eXchangeability, according to MSX creator Kazuhiko Nishi.
Week 36 Answer: Final Lap.
Week 37 Answer: Gee Bee (1978).

Super Mario USA for Famicom (left), the MSX boot splash screen (right)

Don't be left out! Be sure to follow The Retrogaming Times on Facebook 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 you question is selected to be featured, you will be entered in our year-end prize drawing!

See You Next Game

by David Lundin, Jr.

As we close out for the year I want to again express my thanks for the opportunity to publish The Retrogaming Times and put this publication out six times a year. That in today's busy society I am so fortunate to have people who set time aside to write articles for no monetary gain but rather to share interest and opinions and give back to a wonderful common interest. We are equally as fortunate to have so many readers who browse the newsletter every issue, talk about it in their gaming communities, and dare I say decide to submit articles of their own. With that in mind I want to apologize for some of my failings over this past year. I have three new columns in mind that I was never able to spin up and get going, however I still plan on doing so. Two of them are music based and the first entry in one of these columns will feature Steve Hickey's work over at facebook.com/PixelatedChipTunes, please do go check out his chiptune music. There has been a lot of interest expressed concerning the upcoming legacy archive that will stretch back across the full twenty years of newsletters. I am still diligently working on pulling the last of it together but I recently hit a few snags that took some time to get worked out. As it stands now, it has all been archived and I'm going through some final clean up before distribution can begin. I'm still really trying to have it all in place before the end of 2017 but there is a real possibility that it will leak over into the beginning of next year. I can assure everyone that it will be worth the wait and feature one simple format to allow the entire history of the newsletter to live on for all time.

From me to you and your family, please have a merry Christmas, happy holidays, and absolutely everyone please have a wonderful end of this year. Have some fun, play some games, go easy seasonal retail workers, make some memories and be sure to join The Retrogaming Times once again next year.

Thank you once again for reading The Retrogaming Times. We'll be back on January 7th with our next issue, the first one of 2018! Be sure to follow The Retrogaming Times on Facebook and join our new community! 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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