

The Retrogaming Times

THE BIMONTHLY RETROGAMING HOBBYIST NEWSLETTER

TWENTY-FIRST ISSUE - JULY 2019

MASSIVE COMET DRAWS NEAR EARTH!

The Retrogaming Times
- The Bimonthly Retrogaming Hobbyist Newsletter -

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Twenty-First Issue - July 2019

- [Prepare to Qualify](#)
- [Upcoming Events](#)
- [More C64! - What's Going On](#)
- [Motherly Recollections](#)
- [Arcade Obscure - Dream Shopper](#)
- [Import Review: Dramatic Dungeon Sakura Taisen](#)
- [The Retro Junkie - Game Boy Color: Pikachu Edition](#)
- [Restoring PlayStation Network Access on PSP](#)
- [Patrick Hickey, Jr. Interview](#)
- [Found In Translation - Pretty Soldier Sailor Moon: Another Story](#) *COVER STORY*
- [The Controller Chronicles - Atari Jaguar](#)
- [Video Game Haiku](#)
- [Weekly Retrogaming Trivia Recap](#)
- [See You Next Game](#)



Prepare to Qualify

by [David Lundin, Jr.](#)

Our twenty-first issue is jam packed with retrogaming goodness on a vast array of gaming topics. Starting from the top, Merman gives us a rundown of some recent events concerning both himself and the Commodore 64 in this issue's More C64! Donald Lee looks back on fond gaming memories shared with his mother in a special article. Arcade Obscure returns with a wacky action title that may make you shop 'til you drop. Sean Robinson has an import review on tap featuring an interesting take on Sakura Taisen. After an absence The Retro Junkie is back as Rob Luther details the specifics of a popular Game Boy Color hardware variant. Learn how to restore PlayStation Network access on your PSP in our first technical article since the newsletter re-launch. Todd Friedman has an author interview with an interviewing author, Patrick Hickey, Jr. Twenty years after release, a classic fan translation is given a new lease on life with a modern re-localization. Its story kicks off a new column about fan translations and also serves as this issue's cover story. While the Atari Jaguar attempted to portray a cutting edge image, its controller was more akin to something from the past, as is evidenced in The Controller Chronicles. Then unwind with some Video Game Haiku and express yourself by submitting one of your own. 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](https://twitter.com/TRTInfoClub) on Twitter for release notifications and immediate newsletter updates! Of course submissions are also always open. If you have something ready to go, the address is the same, trt@classicplastic.net. **"If there is something you want to write about, send it in!"**



Upcoming Events

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

Video Game Summit, July 13th 2019, Villa Park, Illinois, USA

Remember how much fun you used to have playing Atari, Nintendo and all kinds of games on your computer? Well, you will have the rare opportunity to play these great games again at the Video Game Summit, Chicago's premier video game trade show.

The Video Game Summit, now in its 16th year, brings together classic and modern generation gamers from all over the country to swap stories and games. Best of all, admission to The 2019 Video Game Summit is only \$10.00 per person (kids 12 and under with adult are free). We will have Early Admission (\$15.00) this year again due to positive response from last year.

The Video Game Summit is being held on July 13th, 2019 from 10 am until 6 pm at The Odeum Expo Center, 1033 North Villa Ave., Villa Park, Illinois.

For information on the show visit us at: <http://www.VideoGameSummit.net>

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KansasFest, July 16th - 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. Mark Pelczarski of Penguin Software, well-known for numerous graphics utilities, books, and games, will join us this year with a keynote presentation to celebrate the Apple II.

KansasFest invites any and all Apple II users, fans, and friends to attend the largest and longest running annual Apple II conference. For photos, videos, schedules, and presentations from past year's events or to sign up for the email list and for inquiries, please visit the event website.

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

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California Extreme 2019, July 27th - 28th 2019, Santa Clara, California, USA

California Extreme is very pleased to officially announce the dates for this year's California Extreme Arcade and Pinball Show. It will be held on July 27-28, 2019 at the same fantastic location - the Hyatt Regency in Santa Clara, California. Please join us for our 23rd show with hundreds of your favorite arcade and pinball games, both past and present, all gathered together for another fun-filled weekend of arcade excitement for everyone!

The Hyatt, Hilton, and Marriott are now accepting room reservations. Pre-registration for the show is currently open as well!

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

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Classic Game Fest, July 27th - 28th 2019, Austin, Texas, USA

Classic Game Fest is "The Biggest Retro Gaming Event in Texas." The 12th annual Classic Game Fest will be on July 27 - 28, 2019. Enjoy 70,000 square feet of retro video games and fun at the Palmer Events Center in Austin, Texas. Overlooking Lady Bird Lake and the downtown Austin skyline, the Palmer Events Center is conveniently located only a short walk from many hotels, restaurants, bus stops, and bike rental stations.

For more information, visit <https://classicgamefest.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! - What's Going On

by Merman

So, a change to the usual article I write. This past month I have been exceptionally busy due to an important event - my wedding to the wonderful Alison. That means I have had less time for the C64 and writing this column, but so much has been happening. Here's a round-up of some recent events...

TESTING TIMES

As a follow-up to my last article on testing C64 games, this month I have been involved in testing another new C64 game designed by the talented Trevor Storey. RUN DEMON RUN is an infinite runner where you have to jump over gaps and duck to roll under obstacles. Hitting a wall or falling off the platforms kills you, as does contact with the enemies. Rolling or jumping into enemies will kill them, adding a token to your jet meter. Fill the meter and the jet boost appears, transforming the demon into a fast-moving jet; now you can collect the red bonus icons for even more points. Credit must also go to the fast-moving and atmospheric music by Richard Bayliss.

Testing revealed a major bug. The demon could end up with its feet "stuck" inside a platform, and trying to roll would then kill the player. Fortunately a rewrite of the code by programmer Achim Volkers has removed that bug. What you can't see in screenshots is the superb animation of the demon, with over 70 sprites dedicated to this large and impressive player character. It should be released in the next few months. Here is a video of the game in action.

<https://youtu.be/mtBt5GGWBhI>

The release date was announced as June 29th as this article was being finalised, so check out:

<http://www.psytronik.net>

<http://www.binaryzone.org/retrostore/>

<https://www.psytronik.itch.io>

For the information, to order a physical version and the digital download respectively.



The fantastic loading screen, and the huge demon starts running

ZZAP BACK

After the success of the 2019 ZZAP Annual - based on the classic British gaming magazine - a new Kickstarter campaign this May brought in over 1500 backers and £50,000 to fund the 2020 edition. Stretch goals included a mini magazine (FUSION 64) filled with more articles on the C64, a calendar of art by Oliver Frey and a ZZAP key ring. I am heavily involved, writing articles and interviews for the annual, writing for FUSION 64 and doing the music for Chaos Generator; this is a free game download for everyone who backed the annual.

If you want to pre-order the annual and some of the extras, the link is:

<https://app.crowdox.com/projects/47744432/zzap-64-annual-2020-lets-do-this-again>

TO HULL AND BACK

An incredible event took place in Hull, England on June 15th - just one week after my wedding. The 8-BIT SYMPHONY was an orchestral concert with a difference, played by the Hull Philharmonic Orchestra. All the music was arrangements of classic C64 music, some of them arranged by the original composers. The legendary Rob Hubbard was musical producer, with C64 Audio's Chris Abbott the organiser and co-host. As the music played a projector screen showed video footage. There were also tributes to two composers who are no longer with us - Ben Daglish (The Last Ninja, Trap) and Richard Joseph.

Part of the event was a VIP reception during the afternoon before the concert. There I was lucky enough to meet and talk to Paul Norman, creator and composer of classic games including Forbidden Forest and Aztec Challenge. (His music for those games was actually arranged for the concert by Tomb Raider composer Peter Connelly.) It was a fantastic opportunity to get Paul's signature in my C64 book.

Although there are no plans to release a recording of the concert and cameras were not allowed during the show, the arrangements will be part of the 8-Bit Symphony CD collection. There will also be the unique set of printed orchestral scores to buy.

Find out more at:

<https://www.c64audio.com>

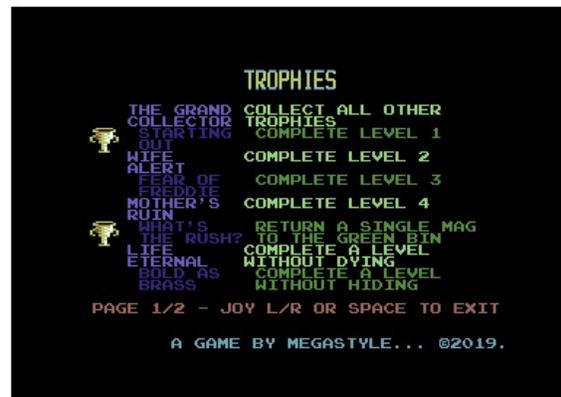
Click on the Concert tab for more on 8-Bit Symphony and the Music tab for more on the boxset.



Paul Norman (left) meets Merman (right) in a photo taken by Alison Fisher, and during the interval at Hull City Hall

MANCAVE

A new game from Megastyle has been released through Psytronik this past month. Rodney's kids have found his old adult magazines and spread the pages around the house, so he must collect them up before his wife sees them! Rodney's stress is rising rapidly and he must return the pages to the basement before his heart gives out. Running into his kids or his wife costs a life, so he can hide behind certain furniture. What makes this game stand out is the diminutive but well animated sprites, and a great soundtrack filled with cover tunes.



The opening level of Mancave, and a look at the Trophies screen for completing in-game achievements

Read more here:

<http://www.psytronik.net/newsite/index.php/c64/109-mancave>

Order from:

<http://www.binaryzone.org/retrostore/>

Limited edition clamshell, standard cassette, budget disk and premium disk versions as well as a digital download (see <https://psytronik.itch.io>) are available. Psytronik also released Age of Heroes recently.



Motherly Recollections

by [Donald Lee](#)

I missed last issue due to a family issue that will be explained a bit here. If you're not in the mood for sad stories, then you may want to skip my column this time.

Back in mid-March of this year, my mom developed what is known as a bowel obstruction. The condition prevented food and waste from going in and out of her systems. Sometimes these conditions can clear by themselves. But sometimes they don't and surgery is required to clear up the condition so no further issues develop. Unfortunately, my mom had other long-standing health issues that played into the situation. As my mom was unable to make her own decisions, my dad and I had to make assess the situation and decide the path forward for my mom. After several weeks of getting input from doctors and others, my dad and I made the difficult decision to not have surgery performed on my mom. Of course, this effectively meant that my mother's time on Earth was limited. And on April 3rd, 2019, my mom quietly passed away around 9 PM in the care facility where she had spent her final weeks.

With the sad part out of the way, I was originally going to share some video gaming recollections in the previous issue. It would have been perfect as the issue would have come out in May around Mother's Day. But as you can imagine, things were a blur after my mom's passing between the funeral and eventually going back to work. I let the deadline for the last issue slip and didn't submit anything.

But it's a nice Saturday evening out here in the Bay Area and it's a good time to share some of my video gaming times I shared with my mom.

THE VIDEO ARCADE DAYS

When I was young, my dad worked at a Hungarian restaurant that was located at a fairly popular tourist attraction called Ghirardelli Square in San Francisco. My mom and I would visit my dad often at the restaurant after I had gotten off from school. But usually we wouldn't go until later in the evening. So what did we do usually? My mom and I would walk to the Fisherman Wharf and Pier 39 area and hang out. We would check out shops, get some white chocolate / macadamia nut cookies from Blue Chip Cookies and walk around.

The thing I enjoyed the most those days was playing video games. In the Fisherman Wharf's area there were two small arcades in the shopping complex and the tourist attraction at Pier 39 had the largest one. If I recall correctly, there were bumper cars and other things besides video games there. My mom and I spent a great amount of time at those arcades for years. As I got older, we stopped visiting my dad as much at the restaurant. Also, video arcades slowly went by the wayside and the two smaller arcades eventually closed while the Pier 39 arcade was moved around several times. It looks like there is still an arcade at Pier 39 as part of the Players: Arcade & Sports Grill so the tradition continues even in 2019.

THE ATARI 5200 DAYS

I've mentioned this story in earlier iterations of the magazine. My dad bought me both an Apple IIe and Atari 5200 when I was young. To this day, I'm not sure why he went for the Atari 5200 and not the older (but still popular) Atari VCS/2600.

Here's an interesting trivia question for folks: What was the pack-in game for the Atari 5200?

For a good number of Atari 5200 owners, they may say the pack-in game was Pac-Man. That would not be incorrect. But what most people don't know is that there was another pack-in game for the 5200 when it was first released. The game? SUPER BREAKOUT.

For whatever reason, when my dad bought the 5200, he spent hours playing Super Breakout. It's funny that some people thought Super Breakout didn't really showcase the 5200 system. I guess my dad didn't really care much. He really broke in those weird 5200 joysticks.

I can't remember if my mom played Super Breakout. But I definitely got her hooked on Pac-Man and Mario Bros. My mom was never much of a gamer. But she could handle the simpler games like Pac-Man. Mario Bros wasn't as simple but she could understand what to do and play it. I may have gotten my mom to play Ms. Pac-Man as well. It wasn't just my mom playing herself, but we would play two player games which was fun.

As time went on, the whole family just stopped playing the 5200 and the system was mothballed. The system may still be around at my parent's house. We'll probably have to dig it up and see if it still works.

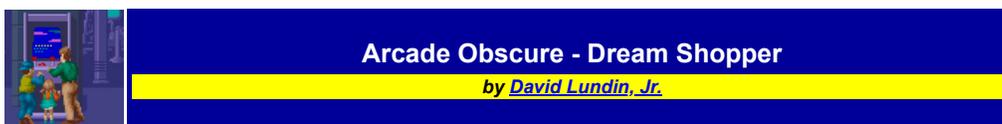
POST-MORTEM

If all of my experiences with my mom had occurred in more recent times, I may have a ton of photos or videos documenting my experiences with my mom at the arcades or at home playing video games. Alas, I haven't seen anything. But it's ok. These are experiences that will live with me and by sharing them, I ensure my mom's memory is never forgotten.

In conclusion, my mom's passing was a tough time for everyone in my family. But it's been over two months and life is slowly getting back to normal. As anyone who's dealt with someone's passing, you never really fully get over what happened. All

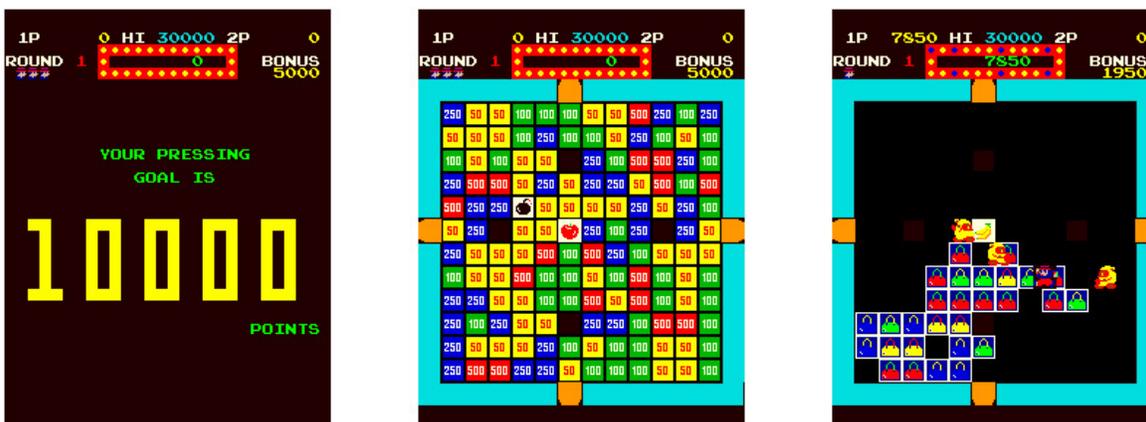
you can do is remember the happy times.

Rest In Peace Mom.



Some arcade games are obscure due to having a limited release, others are obscure because they have a non-standard objective, and others still are obscure given that they're simply flat out strange. Dream Shopper is one of the few games to be a victim of all three. Released by Sanritsu in 1982, it apparently never left Japan, relegated to slip between the cracks of the rapidly advancing arcade landscape. I only first stumbled upon the game years ago when I was setting up my mini MAME cabinet - looking for games that used a vertical monitor orientation, a single joystick, not more than two buttons, and would run on the older hardware I was using. That criteria would uncover many forgotten arcade gems, including Dream Shopper.

The concept behind Dream Shopper can be hard to follow but the core objective is to obtain a specific number of points on each round by uncovering spaces of varying value on a grid. Think of Pac-Man with no maze walls except the outermost boundaries, with wrap around tunnels at the top, bottom, left and right. At the beginning of each round a "Pressing Goal" will be displayed, this is the amount of points that must be earned to complete the round. Before the round begins, the point value of every square on the grid will flash a few times. Values are generated randomly and are marked 50, 100, 250, or 500 points, with a corresponding color for each. Then all the squares go to black and the round begins, with the player controlling a regular looking shopper guy that can move in the four cardinal directions. Pressing the action button will cause the shopper to reach down and uncover the square he his standing on, adding the value of the square to the total at the top of the screen. Uncovered squares become different items of merchandise depending on the round - things like bags, sneakers, and tennis rackets. Enemies that roam the screen are the biggest threat to the shopper, as coming into even the slightest contact with one will cost him a life. Additionally there are instant death holes on the grid that the shopper must avoid falling into. Although the holes are a slightly different color than the black background, the difference is very slim and easy to overlook.



The Pressing Goal is presented at the start of a round (left), all values are briefly shown at the start (center), uncovering squares (right)

At the very center of the screen is a white square with a piece of fruit on it. Walking across the fruit square will temporarily show the value of every square on the board and stun any enemies currently roaming the grid. While enemies are stunned they can be defeated by running the shopper into them, however a better strategy is to make use of the time to uncover high value squares. The fruit square will reset after a few seconds, appearing as a different type of fruit but performing the same function. After being collected a few times the fruit square will disappear, so use them wisely.

Most rounds will also feature randomly placed bomb squares. Once uncovered, a bomb will instantly activate, giving the shopper only moments to move out of its blast radius to avoid being killed. On the flip side, bombs will kill any enemies caught in the blast radius and using them effectively becomes an important strategy after a couple rounds. Furthering the randomness of Dream Shopper, some squares will reveal a frog that will leap across the screen in the direction the shopper was moving when the square was uncovered. As the frog leaps along it will uncover any squares that match its color, adding their value to the round total. However any squares in a frog's path that are already uncovered will be changed to whatever value the frog was generated from. While this can increase the value of uncovered merchandise, more often a low value frog will hop across high value squares, decreasing their value and reducing the current round total. That's right, unlike most games, the round score is liquid in this regard. How your luck plays out with the frogs can either make or break a game, as the round doesn't end until the current total reaches or exceeds the Pressing Goal.



The shopper must make his way to his girlfriend (left), a 100 point frog upgrades uncovered 500 point squares (center), running away from a bomb (right)

After a Pressing Goal is met, the second type of gameplay in Dream Shopper begins. This plays much more like a conventional maze game, with routes that enemies patrol along the path between the shopper's house and his girlfriend at the top of the screen. Along the way items can be picked up for bonus points but even the slightest contact with an enemy will knock the shopper out. While these areas may seem like bonus stages, losing a life in them takes one away from the reserve stock. This isn't apparent at first, as win or lose the game will advance to the next round, presenting a new Pressing Goal to reach and a fresh randomly-generated grid to uncover. Subsequent rounds feature more enemies, faster enemies, enemies that move in different ways, more bombs, and higher Pressing Goals. The path complexity and enemy frequency also increase in the girlfriend stages, eventually requiring flat out control perfection.

Presentation wise the game certainly looks its vintage, with simple graphics and solid bright colors. The sprites are serviceable but the enemies look like mutant sheep and don't seem to gel with the concept of uncovering modern merchandise - then again, the frogs don't fit in either. Sound effects are the usual beeps and boops associated with actions, along with short musical tunes at the beginning and ending of rounds. Interestingly, the melody from Bibbidi-Bobbidi-Boo (yes, the song from Cinderella) is played at the beginning of each Pressing Goal stage. While the audio is over all rather simple, I do enjoy the ringing sound the plays as the Pressing Goal number is presented - it sounds like a point value being displayed on an 80's game show or something.

So we have a reasonably simple game, built around unconventional game mechanics, with strange enemies, and pretty much zero consistency in terms of design. Why would anyone ever want to play Dream Shopper, especially over thirty-five years after it was released? The only answer I can provide is that it is a strangely fun game due to how frantic everything is. From the very start the game is total chaos and requires constant motion and fast thinking. The level of randomness in Dream Shopper plays into that sense of urgent strategy and lends itself to addictive gameplay. This is definitely a "one more game" type of title. It's unfortunate that Dream Shopper is so obscure, apparently only having a single home conversion on the equally obscure Japanese Sord M5 computer in 1983. Thankfully the arcade original has been preserved thanks to the efforts of the MAME team and is certainly worth giving a try.



Import Review - Dramatic Dungeon Sakura Taisen

by Sean "Nz17" Robinson

If you would like a cute, fun, and funny portable Rogue-like for the Nintendo DS, Dramatic Dungeon Sakura Taisen is an excellent choice. It features the full cast of the first five mainline Sakura Wars games from Tokyo to Paris to New York. It's an all-new adventure featuring a new villainess and her minions bent on a mysterious task which ends up involving the protagonists from the whole line of games.



Image courtesy the official Sakura Taisen Web site, <http://sakura-taisen.com/archives/game/ds/>

Each set of stages begins with a bit of story to help set the scene and to tell the goal for the mission. Most stages are randomly generated with enemies and items scattered about the levels. After the set of levels is completed, a boss fight will ensue with additional story sequences unfolding. In-between exploring the dungeons, players will talk with the various other characters and choose whom they wish to take into battle, with extra story scenes during this time that can positively affect the result of battles.

Though there is a bevy of Japanese text in this game, it can be safely ignored and the game played to completion. Obviously it is better if one can read Japanese to enjoy the full story and the character dialogue, but the action of the dungeon stages and the humorous slapstick of some story sequences will keep even non-readers amused. And if one already knows the characters of Sakura Wars, events in the character interactions are obvious enough without reading the Japanese text.



Images courtesy msmunedatei, <https://gamefaqs.gamespot.com/community/msmunedatei>

All-in-all, Dramatic Dungeon Sakura Taisen is a fun little game that is a must-have for Sakura Wars fans. Even non-fans and casual game players will find this game fun and easy to pick up thanks to its simple-to-understand game-play and low consequence for failing a mission as the missions can be tried repeatedly until one succeeds. I can confidently recommend this game to anyone who enjoys Japanese games or Rogue-like adventures.

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Import Statistics:

English name: Dramatic Dungeon Sakura Wars ~Because You are There~

Japanese name: ドラマチックダンジョン サクラ大戦 ~君あるがため~

Genre: Rogue-like

Release date: March 19, 2008 (Japan)
Rating: CERO B (ages 12+)
Players: 1 to 4 players (wireless multi-player requires multiple game cards)

Developer: Neverland Co., Ltd.
Publisher: SEGA
Editions: Standard Edition and All-Star Pack
Original price: Standard - 4800 yen (approx. \$44 USD), All-Star - 6800 yen (approx. \$62 USD)
Nintendo Product ID's: Standard - NTR-YS9J-JPN, All-Star - HCV-1002

Extras:
The All-Star Pack includes a "black and gold" carrying case for a DS Lite, three tags each featuring one of the mascots from the three divisions, a clear "guard cover" for the DS Lite featuring the game's logo, and three different emblem stickers, one for each of the three divisions (Tokyo, Paris, New York).

Special features:
The player can call the characters by name using the microphone. While this is not required to win nor proceed, using the microphone this way will unlock useful extra items and hidden secrets throughout the game's story scenes and during gameplay.

Discontinued features:
* Sakura Wars Cell Phone Club - This feature would allow people to scan QR codes using their cell phones to visit the Web sites of Yahoo! Japan, i-mode, and EZweb to unlock special quests via passwords sold for 315 yen each.
* Internet-based multi-player - online multi-player via Wi-Fi alongside either your choice of random players or friends-only

Game chronology: Dramatic Dungeon Sakura Wars takes place after Sakura Wars V (PS2, Wii).



The Retro Junkie - Game Boy Color: Pikachu Edition

by [Rob Luther](#)

The One That Got Away

Let's be honest, friends. Growing up, we've all had at least one game or system that, for whatever reason, we let get away. It happens to the best of us. As a matter of fact, I can add insult to my own injury here, because when I was a teenager, as much as I secretly wanted the Game Boy Color: Pikachu Edition, I didn't ask for one because I thought I was "too old" for that Pokémon kid stuff. Please don't get me wrong - I was a big Pokémon fan my seventh grade year. I had beaten Pokémon: Red, played the card game, watched Indigo League with my sister, used link cables to trade with friends at lunch - all that great stuff! However, by eighth grade, I guess I thought it was time to "grow up" simply because no one else was playing Pokémon at school anymore. The fad was over. Pokémon was done. Time to move on, right?



Ah, the irony! Fast forward 21 years, and here I am - a 33-year-old dad, and I can't get enough of the wonderful world of Pokémon! I owe all of this to my lovely wife who recently discovered the series when we picked up Pokémon: Let's Go, Pikachu on the Nintendo Switch this past Christmas. Her new-found adoration and enthusiasm for the Pokémon series sincerely rekindled my childhood passion for it - plus, it's a great series we can enjoy with our kids! My wife and I have recently read the Pokémon Adventures manga collection by Kusaka and Mato, we've collectively spent close to 200 hours on Pokémon: Let's Go, Pikachu, we're working our way chronologically through the cartoon series leading up to and including Sun and Moon, we're gradually working our way through the 20-year backlog of video games, and when we walk the local

greenways, we always make sure our cell phones are charged just enough to run Pokémon: Go for a couple of hours. Needless to say, it's so much fun to be a kid again. The older I get, the more I realize that age truly is just a number - but that's a tangent for another day!

There's Just Something Special About That Game Boy Color

As I mentioned earlier, the Pikachu Game Boy Color (particularly the blue and yellow system) was a handheld I always pined for as a kid and adult. In fact, I did ask my sister if she still had it a few years ago, but unfortunately, she had sold it. There was just something magical about that Game Boy. Perhaps it was a symbol or snapshot of a really fun time in my life. Perhaps it was the sentimental nostalgia, because it always reminded me of my dad and the day he surprised my sister with it.



Perhaps it was the design of that particular system, which I loved - the blue back cover, the yellow front cover, the red and green A B buttons complimented by the blue D-pad. Side note: I'm embarrassed to admit that I didn't even catch as a kid that Blue, Red, and Green, were, in fact, the names of the three protagonists from the original manga / cartoon. So, kudos to the designers for incorporating those particular colors. And lastly, the screen overlay sported Pikachu on the bottom left of the screen, Togepi and Jigglypuff on the bottom right, and (really nice touch, here!) a Pokéball on the top left centered around the red power light, making the Pokéball look like it is glowing while the system was powered on. I just loved everything about that Game Boy, but chalked it up as a system I would probably never own since the prices for authentic Pikachu Game Boy Colors are so high these days.

A Gift to Remember

That all changed about two weeks ago thanks to my generous and gracious wife. I have to give her credit - she completely played me. About a month ago, we were clearing out the garage and having a yard sale - all with the idea of making room for my wife, Kris's, art studio. I was so excited to get her started, but then, just prior to setting up her studio, she told me she actually wanted something else for her birthday: a Pokémon Edition Nintendo 3DS XL, which was apparently at CM Games in our local mall.



Well, that was all she was talking about one Saturday morning, so I was excited to take her to the mall and pick it up. She asked me to wait in the car since both babies were asleep. And not even ten minutes later, she returns with a smile on her face, hands me this box, and says, "Happy Birthday, Rob."

It was the Game Boy Color! Yeah, the Pikachu one! For once in my life, I was speechless. Kris literally used all the money I had been saving for her birthday gift just to surprise me. What a woman and what a blessing! Apparently, she had been looking for the Pikachu Game Boy Color for months and was even in cahoots with my neighbor and dear friend, Eric, to make sure that the system they found was an authentic Pikachu Game Boy Color. Anyway, I wouldn't accept the gift unless she agreed that it was for the both of us, to which she did finally agree. What a special gift from a very special woman.

Authentic VS Reproduction Systems

Shortly after receiving this amazing gift, my wife expressed how much of a challenge it was finding an authentic Pikachu Game Boy Color at a decent price. First of all, I didn't know there was such a saturation of reproduction Pikachu GBCs out there, but sure enough, I discovered firsthand that nearly half of the systems I found on eBay were repros. Please allow me to preface the rest of this article by stating that I believe there is absolutely nothing wrong with Game Boy repro cases and designs. In fact, they can be really neat, convenient, and functional - whether it be a sleek and colorful case, custom overlay, backlit screen, etc. However, when sellers advertise a repro / refurbished system as an authentic / original system and charge full price, therein lies the moral dilemma. Unfortunately, this seems fairly common online. For example, my wife asked my neighbor, Eric, who was a member of a local game trading group on Facebook, to keep an eye out for the Pikachu GBC. Shortly after his inquiry on the group page, he was private messaged by a seller who sent him pictures of the GBC, but only the front of the system. After Eric asked to see the back of the system, the seller kept giving him excuses of why he couldn't send any more pictures. According to Eric, who later educated me on a few tips in how to distinguish authentic systems from repros, that was a big red flag.

Just a Few Tips That May Help

Tip #1: Know your colors!

From what I could find during my research, there were only two officially licensed editions of the Pikachu Game Boy Color: the Yellow / Blue GBC that was bundled with Pokémon Yellow in North America in October of 1999 and the Silver / Gold version (which is primarily a gray system with Pikachu and Pichu on the screen overlay) in October of 2000. Below are pictures of the original systems:



Therefore, if you see a Pikachu Edition Game Boy Color with a different color scheme or shell, most likely you are looking at a repro / refurbished system. Fortunately, most sellers that I have seen on eBay have been very up front about the systems being refurbished. An example of a refurbished system I recently found can be seen above on the far right.

This is a neat translucent orange GBC. Chances are the seller refurbished an original/basic, GBC, replaced the original gray buttons and D-pad with the colored buttons and replaced the original / basic shell with this orange aftermarket shell. The seller wants \$70 for this system, which I think is relatively fair since the basic Game Boy Color systems range from about \$35 - \$60 online and the custom shell kits cost around \$15 - \$20. If you're a buyer who doesn't care whether the system is authentic or not, I would actually recommend this repro. Again, the seller was very up front that this system was refurbished, his price was fair, and his feedback was very good.

Tip #2: Know your stickers!

Here's where things can get dicey. The back cover of the Pikachu Game Boy Color will have three stickers. Here is a picture of our system:



The first / top sticker will be a serial number. From what I've gathered, there are two types of these top stickers: one gray / black sticker with just a serial number, which were among the first units produced, and one with a barcode and serial number like this system below, which was produced later. Apparently, these barcodes were supposed to be scanned in retail stores to help keep track of how many units were sold and regulate returns. See the back of the box for more details. The second / middle sticker of the system is a black / gray that displays spec information about the Game Boy Color unit. And the last / bottom sticker, located on the battery cover of the system, is simply the hotline for Nintendo tech issues. (I wonder if this number still works!)

Now, the awareness of these three stickers isn't foolproof, but it does help narrow things down in determining the authenticity of a Game Boy Color. Going back to what I had mentioned earlier when my neighbor inquired to see the back of the seller's

"authentic Pikachu GBC," the seller never sent pictures of the back. I am wondering if the seller had an aftermarket shell on the GBC, but no stickers on the back. I have also seen several Game Boy Color repro systems that do not include the back stickers. On the other hand, these back cover stickers can be easily reproduced, which leads me to tip number three.

Tip #3: Check for wear!

General wear can often help narrow down whether the stickers are original or reproduced. If there is a brand new, pristine sticker on a 20-year-old GBC system, chances are this is a reproduced sticker. On the flip side, perhaps the original sticker was ripped off for whatever reason, and this new repro sticker is just a replacement on the original GBC. That's when you could check the rest of the system. Is there wear on the shell or screen? Is there wear on the other stickers? If not, then perhaps you are looking at a repro instead of an original GBC. There is some mild wear on the stickers that match the wear on the shell of our family Pikachu Game Boy Color. Below is a side by side perspective of our GBC (left) compared to the repro GBC (right):



While the pictures are a bit difficult to see, the left barcode has a bit more wear than the right barcode does. Not to mention, the repro is missing the Nintendo hotline sticker. (Who you gonna call?!)

Again, this tip isn't exactly foolproof either if you are attempting to purchase a brand new, factory sealed authentic Pikachu Game Boy Color. My advice would be to check out some great YouTube videos for other tests. I watched one in particular where a guy used a black light to compare the authentic shell casing to the aftermarket shell - and believe it or not, I could see a difference. Perhaps that could help!

What's in the Box?

Side note - if you are purchasing a brand new, factory sealed Pikachu Game Boy Color, the following things should be included: the system itself, the Game Boy Color manual, the game (if it was the bundled system) and manual, and a really cool Nintendo promo poster that shows off other Game Boy Color / Nintendo 64 systems and games that were coming out at the time - not to mention the iconic Pokémon Nintendo 64 system. Just be prepared to pay at least \$250 - \$350 for a factory sealed system online or in retro retail stores. See picture below for box and contents:



Final Thoughts

If I could say one final thing, it is that I am so grateful for my wonderful wife - not just for this gift, but for all the many times she's put others before herself. How I landed this amazing woman, I'll never know, but such kind and generous acts like this certainly inspire me to pay it forward to her and others in some way. To have a gift bring back that child-like excitement and gratitude is absolutely invaluable. So, why not surprise someone you care about with a gift you know they've always wanted? Who knows how far a kind word or action can go?

Anyway, that's enough of my rambling for one article. Thank you all for reading! Cheers to a great summer and cheers to staying young at heart forever. Now, if you'll excuse me, I've gotta catch 'em all!

If you have any feedback or further information regarding this article or any retro topic in general, please send me an email at rob2586@gmail.com. I would love to hear from you.



Restoring PlayStation Network Access on PSP

by Sean "Nz17" Robinson

Do you still use your PSP to access the mobile version of Facebook? (Some people do.) Well you can't anymore... without doing some work to get things working again! And without going to this effort, you can't use the PlayStation Network (PSN) to buy or download games either. But here's the why and how of fixing it.

You see, late in 2014 there was an attack, an exploit, made publicly known as the Poodle Attack. There is a flaw in the design of SSL 3.0

which basically makes "secure" connections insecure if they are being attacked by someone using the Poodle Attack. Due to this, most Web sites accessed over HTTPS dropped support of SSL to force connections to use the newer and secure TLS. However, PSP's with version 6.60 and older of the PSP firmware only have support for SSL and no support for TLS. But with the disclosure of the Poodle Attack, security-conscious Web sites dropped support for SSL. Thus if you go to one of these ever-growing-in-number Web sites (such as grc.com, duckduckgo.com, facebook.com, or m.facebook.com) you will be unable to connect with the PSP's Web browser.

Now while this isn't a concern for many PSP owners as most of them don't routinely use their PSP's to connect to Web sites, some do - and more importantly for most PSP owners, you can't use PSN for **anything** if you don't address this issue. That's right, no visiting PSN, no downloading games, DLC, videos, music, or anything else through Sony's services nor any other site which uses only TLS.

But there is a solution! Surprising many people including myself, Sony issued a firmware update numbered 6.61 for PSP's. This was released on December 12th, 2014. However, if you were to go by the description on the official Sony page about it, you'd never know what it is for. Why? It reads, verbatim -

Originally Posted by Sony:

New for 6.61: System software stability during use of some features has been improved.

There is nothing there about SSL, nothing about TLS, nothing about PSN not working, and nothing about how many Web sites are unreachable on PSP's running anything earlier than 6.61.

Worse yet, due to the generic language of the boilerplate instructions Sony has on its firmware page, it makes it seem like you can just

download this update over Wi-Fi and have the PSP automatically apply it or use a UMD to get it. This is not the case! Because all Sony online services dropped support for SSL by December 2014, you can't use the update feature to have the PSP go online to get its update. You'll just get an error message. And you can forget about getting a UMD with the update on it. Production of physical copies of PSP games stopped in North America long ago, and even the latest ones wouldn't have the newest version of the PSP firmware.

Here are some of the errors which I encountered with the 6.60 firmware. If you see these then you'll know you need to fix your PSP by upgrading it to version 6.61 or newer of the firmware.

Here are the error messages:

PSN:

A connection error has occurred. (80435061)

A connection error has occurred. (80431075)

HTTPS Web sites with only a TLS option and no SSL option:

SSL communication cannot be performed. A transmission error has occurred in SSL.

System Update:

Connection to the server failed. A DNS error has occurred. (80410414)

So if you can't use System Update from the menu of the PSP to download and apply the update, what can you do? You'll need to download the firmware using your computer, tablet, etc. and manually transfer the firmware over to your PSP's memory card. There's two ways to do that.

For older PSP's:

1) Download the 6.61 (or newer) firmware. Go to your desktop computer (or other form factor of computer) and visit the official PSP firmware page at <https://www.playstation.com/en-us/support/system-updates/psp/> There you will find the firmware update. It is about 31 MB in size. It will save with the name "EBOOT.PBP".

2) Get your PSP's memory card hooked up to your computer. This can be accomplished by either connecting the PSP over a

USB cable to your computer or by removing the PSP's Memory Stick (its type of memory card) and inserting it into a compatible card reader connected to your PC.

3) You need to make sure the PSP's firmware update is named correctly and is put in the right place on the memory card. These file and directory names are case sensitive and thus must all be written in capital letters. The firmware's file should be named EBOOT.PBP and it should be saved in the PSP/GAME/UPDATE directory. So using Linux/UNIX-style parlance, your file should be named /PSP/GAME/UPDATE/EBOOT.PBP On Windows, it might read E:\PSP\GAME\UPDATE\EBOOT.PBP

4) Be sure to unmount the Memory Stick so that it can finish writing the files and directories (also known as folders) to the memory card so it can be safely removed from the computer system without anything being corrupted by having the card removed while the computer is still trying to write to it. On Windows, this is achieved by right-clicking on the memory card's icon and selecting (depending on which of its icons you use) "Eject" or "Safely Remove". You can find this in the Windows file manager called Windows Explorer, or "My Computer," or by using the USB notification icon in the system tray by the clock. On Mac, drag and drop the icon for the memory card to the trash can - doing so will change the trash can's icon to an eject symbol. On Linux, use your desktop environment's file manager to unmount the memory card (often by just right-clicking its icon and selecting "Unmount" or "Remove") or by using the "umount" command at the terminal (command prompt).

5) Remove your PSP's Memory Stick from the PC. Return your memory card to your PSP.

6) Update your PSP to the newest firmware. To do this, do **not** use the System Update option on the XMB (the "cross-media bar," the user interface of the PSP). For some reason, this will not work. Instead, you must go to XMB -> Game -> Memory Stick and then select the Update option where it will be mixed in with all of the games and apps you have loaded on your Memory Stick. It will most likely be located at the top of the listing as the app list tends to be in sequential order by newest-to-oldest.

Then the PSP will reboot into the firmware update app which you loaded onto the memory card. You can then follow the simple prompts to apply the firmware. The actual application of the firmware is rather fast, so you don't need a big charge on your battery to install it. But as

always, it is a good idea to have a complete battery charge before going in or running the update while on A/C power so that you don't need to worry about the possibility of losing power and corrupting your console's firmware. While it has only a small chance of occurring, if

the partially installed firmware does get corrupted, it might render the PSP un-bootable and you'll have to send it in for repair. However, most of the time if you do run out of power during the update, the console will just "turn itself off" (in reality, it goes into a low-power standby mode) wherein you can then get the unit to an A/C adapter to charge it up. Next time you boot it up after charging, it should still be in standby mode and thus will wake up and pick up where it left off.

Now you are all done and you can reboot your PSP with your newly installed firmware. Once again you will be able to access PSN, over-the-air system updates using Wi-Fi, and any Web pages which use TLS over HTTPS. And don't worry, you can still apply custom firmware to your PSP even if you install the 6.61 version of the official firmware.

For newer PSP's such as the PSP Go:

Install Sony's Media Go software for Microsoft Windows. Connect your PSP Go to your PC running Windows and start Media Go. The Media Go application will download the firmware's file from Sony's server and upload it to your PSP. From there just follow the other steps to complete the installation of the firmware.

Installing Custom Firmware on your PSP instead:

It is better to install custom firmware (available from a variety of Web sites) without installing the official firmware these days. The reason

is that today's custom firmware (CFW) integrates all of the functionality of the official firmware without you needing to install the official firmware at all.

Why would you want to install CFW? It enables a lot of cool features for your PSP including the ability to run homebrew software. These include things like media players which support more formats than Sony's software; file managers for managing what's on your PSP, UMD's and memory cards; UMD copiers to copy your UMD's to your PSP as ISO's or compressed ISO's; the ability to play your ISO's from your PSP; emulators to run both new and old games; and unlocking the official PS1 emulator on the PSP to use with ISO's you make of any of your PS1 games.

All said, it is a very worthwhile payoff for your technical venture. However, while this article won't go into the details of where to get

CFW nor how to install it, the World Wide Web is full of excellent tutorials which will show you the way. Just use them to install a 6.61 custom firmware on your PSP and you can unlock all these features and more!

Congratulations, gamers! You are "back in business." Now enjoy your PSP!

Patrick Hickey, Jr. Interview

by Todd Friedman



Patrick Hickey, Jr., is the founder and editor-in-chief of ReviewFix.com and a lecturer of English and journalism at Kingsborough Community College, in Brooklyn, New York. Over the past decade, his video game coverage has been featured in national ad campaigns by top publishers the likes of Nintendo, Deep Silver, Disney and EA Sports. His upcoming book, "The Minds Behind the Games: Interviews with Cult and Classic Game Developers," from McFarland and Company, has already earned praise from Forbes, Huffington Post, The New York Daily News and MSG Networks. He is also a former editor at NBC and National Video Games Writer at the late Examiner.com. I Talked with Patrick about his new book and the behind the scenes look at what it took to make this great looking publication on Gaming Designers.

What inspired you to write this book and when did it start?

This is my second book in The Minds Behind the Games series. This one solely focuses on Adventure games or ones that transcend genres and cater to the adventure they take the player on. My inspiration was simple- my first book was a special one for me, but I didn't want to be a one-hit wonder. I initially wanted to do a bigger sequel, with games of all genres, but my publisher believed it was better to focus on one particular genre to give myself more room to develop. They were right. I initially had 42 games featured for the sequel and now have 63 for this Adventure book and the upcoming Sports book.

How long of a process was this book from start to finish?

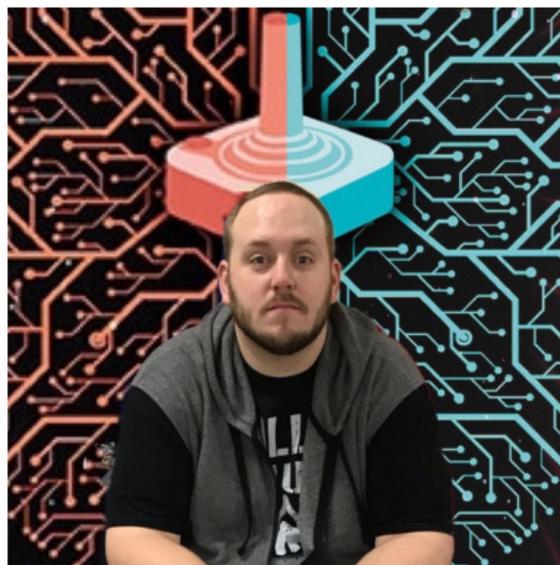
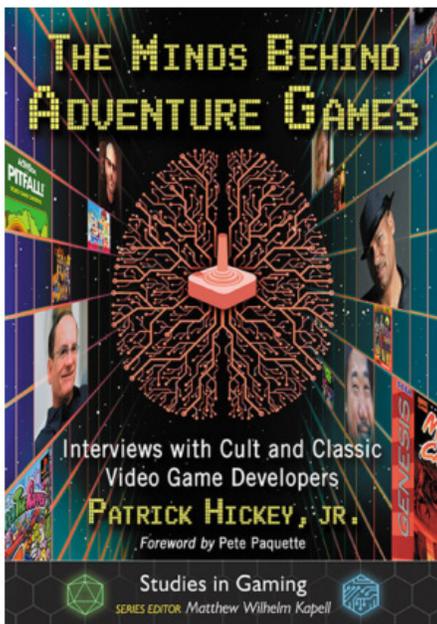
I started writing this book right after I submitted my original manuscript in May of 2017. However, it was more a side project, as I was voice acting and writing in a few video games. By August 2018 however, it became my sole focus, so I'd say about eight months.

What were your toughest hurdles on getting through the book?

The biggest obstacle was getting developers. This is a book series all about voice. The voice of the Minds Behind these amazing games. It's not a review or reference book. It's not written in a minimalist style. It's not a history book. I send pitches out every single day and I interview and report. That's how these books get written. I'm trying to build the network every single day. Most of the time, I never hear back, but I'd say 10 percent of the time, I get connected and when I do, the developers are always great to me.

Who were the hardest developers to get an interview with and how did it end of happening for the book?

I'd say the most difficult were Dave Cowan, who was the programmer of the original Grand Theft Auto on PlayStation and Masaya Matsuura, the creator of PaRappa the Rapper. Dave is on the Minecraft team for Microsoft and Masaya is still a super busy creative. They were amazing in their own ways. Dave ended up providing me with so many amazing stories for the book and we chatted a ton on Facebook about gaming and life. He's definitely one of my favorite voices in this book. It was just a matter of getting him in one place for a period of time. The stories for the original GTA here are without a doubt some of the best in the book. I can't wait for people to read it.



With Masaya, he wanted Sony's full approval on my project so we could get the best photos. It took a while. I was pretty aggravated about it to be fair because I already got quotes from the North American producer, Perry Rodgers, and Rodney Greenblat, the artist. It was the final piece of the puzzle. Once we finally got the approval from Sony, Masaya was more than

forthcoming with information.

Have you written other books before this?

Yes, I have covered the video game industry for nearly 15 years for NBC, Examiner, ReviewFix, Tri-Games, Old School Gamer Magazine before I began my book career. The Minds Behind Adventure Games is my second book in the series. I have a Sports and Shooter editions in the hopper as well.

What was your first book or publication and what do you remember about it?

My first book was The Minds Behind the Games. You can order it here: <http://patrickhickeyjr.com/minds-behind-games/>. As far as what I remember, it was a great experience putting all of the interviews together. It was a tough experience at the same time, considering my wife and I just had our first child and my mother was fighting Stage IV lung cancer. Sadly, she never saw the book in print.

Were there items in the book you wish you could have added or something that you feel was missed?

Of the chapters I have featured, I am beyond happy with what I have. I don't feel like much was "missed" because I literally annoyed the hell out of these poor developers. I messaged them; I called them; I Skyped with them; I met them. I made sure I got it "right." There were a few developers whose time constraints limited them from getting involved and those would have been great.

Were there any others that helped in the collaboration of this book?

Away from the developers, I got quotes from Michael Thomasson and Brett Weiss, two amazing authors to provide context for a few games, as well as a great reader in Shane Stein, but this is not a contributor-based book. These are the stories of some amazing games, told by the people who made them.

What do you see yourself doing next after this book, any projects in the works?

I have a Sports and Shooter edition in the works. I am also a voice actor and writer and am developing a Top Down Shooter, "Kroom," with Pete Paquette (Overwatch, Bioshock Infinite) and his brother Jeffrey Paquette for their Orange Door Studios brand. I also have a comic book series that just began active development. If that wasn't enough, I also run my own entertainment website, ReviewFix.com.

Where can this book be purchased and ordered?

My first book, The Minds Behind the Games is available on Amazon, Barnes & Noble and wherever fine books are available online. However, if you order directly through me, here <http://patrickhickeyjr.com/minds-behind-games/>, I will personalize your copy and I usually sneak in some goodies as well like trading cards and game codes.

The Minds Behind Adventure Games, my latest book, is scheduled for a Fall 2019 release. You can pre-order it here: <http://patrickhickeyjr.com/the-minds-behind-adventure-games/>.



Found In Translation - Pretty Soldier Sailor Moon: Another Story

by David Lundin, Jr.

In the year 2019 fan translations of video games, both retro and recent, are widely known of and nearly mainstream. Through the efforts of dedicated individuals and translation groups, we are able to play in our native languages games that were otherwise previously inaccessible. This work isn't done for financial gain but instead for the enjoyment of other gamers. Recently a fresh re-localization of a Super Famicom RPG based on the Sailor Moon anime and manga property was released, almost twenty years after it had previously been fan translated. Many including myself had been waiting for a new release after hearing rumblings about it being in the works but why get so excited about a game that had already been translated? Before diving into that, allow me a little backstory to set the stage of why this translation patch is so incredible and why this game is so important to me.



Codename is Sailor V volume 2 (left), Pretty Soldier Sailor Moon volume 3 (right), author's collection

Bishoujo Senshi Sailor Moon (Pretty Soldier Sailor Moon) was created by Japanese manga artist Naoko Takeuchi in 1991, spawned from a slightly earlier work of hers, Codename is Sailor V. When Takeuchi was approached to adapt Sailor V into an anime series, she redeveloped the concept to feature a battle team rather than a single main heroine. Sailor V became Sailor Venus in the resulting work, with both Pretty Soldier Sailor Moon and Codename is Sailor V running along side one another in print, while the Sailor Moon anime series would adapt and expand the manga stories for television audiences. Centering around a group of teenage schoolgirls who transform into the Sailor Soldiers to vanquish evil and defend the solar system, the Sailor Moon anime series became massively popular in its own right. Striking at the perfect time during both the 1990's anime boom in the West and the rise of fansites on the Web, Sailor Moon quickly became a global phenomenon. Along with an unbelievable volume of licensed merchandise in Japan, Sailor Moon video games were released on virtually every platform of the day - mainstream to obscure. No system fared better in this respect than the Super Famicom, with a pair of beat-em-ups, two fighting games, four puzzle games, and the lone Sailor Moon RPG.



Bishoujo Senshi Sailor Moon: Another Story box art, one of the few instances in which young adult Sailor Saturn is seen with the full anime cast

Pretty Soldier Sailor Moon: Another Story was released in 1995, when the anime series was about half way through its fourth season. The game takes place between the third (Sailor Moon S) and fourth (Sailor Moon SuperS) anime seasons, serving as a direct follow-up to the conclusion of the Sailor Moon S anime. Although an original story that follows the anime continuity, Another Story is unique among licensed Sailor Moon properties in that it also incorporates some elements of the manga into its narrative. The story involves a group of citizens displeased with the rule of Neo Queen Serenity in 30th Century Crystal Tokyo. They band together as the Oppositio Senshi, a counterpoint to the Sailor Senshi, and serve under the rule of a mysterious woman named Apsu. Together they aim to change their destiny by rewriting the past, preventing Sailor Moon's legend from ever happening. Due to their influence, previously defeated enemies from the entire series up until that point begin to reappear and history begins to unravel.

When Another Story was released in Japan, the English localization of the first season of the anime was just beginning to air on North American television. While popular, the series aired in first-run syndication in the United States rather than having a major network behind it. This meant that air times and availability varied wildly depending on location. I myself first began

watching Sailor Moon on a small local Bay Area television station that aired it in the afternoons. As I was no longer living in the area, I was only able to watch the show over a month one summer while visiting family, before it eventually made its way to Cartoon Network when I was in high school. By this time it was 1998 or so, anime and Japanese entertainment culture was exploding around the globe, the World Wide Web was buzzing with individual fansites about every subject imaginable, and once limited online communities were now being enjoyed by the masses. It should be no shock that I ran a Sailor Moon fansite myself. One of the very first things I did once I got online a couple years earlier was to look up the series, only to realize that so much more of it existed outside what aired in the USA. The Web truly did expand my anime horizons, learning more every day, and interacting with other fans in the process.



The original Bishoujo Senshi Translations homepage, with the original patch release announcement, courtesy Archive.org snapshot

One of those fan groups I stumbled upon was called Bishoujo Senshi Translations. They endeavored to do something that was at the time totally alien to me - they were going to translate a Japanese Sailor Moon game into English. This era of the Web also coincided with the rise of emulation and ROM dumps of video game cartridges. Learning that there were so many Sailor Moon video games was one thing but now there were people attempting to make the Sailor Moon RPG playable in English? Could that even be done? Reading about the Bishoujo Senshi Translations effort served as my introduction to the concept of ROM hacking and fan translations of video games. I was absolutely fascinated and quickly stopped slogging through Another Story with my limited Japanese knowledge and instead waited in anticipation of the translation patch. On September 10th, 1999, in correlation with the fictional birthday of series character Ami Mizuno (Sailor Mercury), Bishoujo Senshi Translations released their English patch for Another Story.

The resulting Bishoujo Senshi Translations patch was pretty incredible given its release vintage. However it wasn't safe from the usual issues that fan translations of both video games and anime suffered from at the time - and still do in some respects. One of the biggest problems with the Bishoujo Senshi Translations release was the large amount of Japanese words that were romanized rather than translated or transliterated. Most of these are words that come up again and again and as plot devices in the game, an early example being the romanization of "Ginzuishou" rather than translating it as "Silver Crystal." Additionally otherwise common words and titles were romanized rather than translated, which tend to throw off any narrative flow when reading text, especially for someone unfamiliar with them. There are also many mistranslations in the patch that have come to light over the years, including areas of dialogue that severe liberties were taken with. From a technical perspective, the patch was a solid effort that even went as far as translating the dozen or so Japanese language signs in the game's overworld. Mixed as the end result may have been, the abundance of passion that was put into the project is as clearly visible now as it was then, and for two decades it remained how most non-Japanese speakers enjoyed the game.



Usagi gathers the team (left), defeated enemies return and Hotaru rapidly ages (center), the Oppositio Senshi report to Apsu (right)

Or so it was until **June 6th, 2019** when a complete English re-localization of Another Story was released. Lead by ROM hackers mziab and vivify93, the new patch brings the game up to modern ROM hacking standards with an accurate and polished translation. The re-translated script is far more than a simple buff and polish, as according to vivify93 over four-

hundred mistranslations found in the original Bishoujo Senshi Translations patch were corrected. In addition all previously romanized text has been translated and localized, as have any instances of Japanese cultural humor, such as Minako Aino's proverb goof ups. Additionally a few error and bug fixes are applied with the patch that correct issues with the original game. Their work is simply incredible and gives the game the professional caliber translation and presentation it has always deserved.

I won't go into plot specifics about the game, as if you're familiar with Sailor Moon and have yet to play Another Story I wouldn't want to spoil anything. That said, the story is interesting and fits in perfectly with the series, almost feeling like a lost season of the anime. It helps to have at least a basic familiarity with Sailor Moon, specifically the third season of the anime, Sailor Moon S. The entire original anime voice cast is featured in the game, with attacks being called out just as they are in the anime series - very impressive and a rarity at the time. Leveling up is handled much in the same way as in standard RPG games but Another Story changes things up in terms of special techniques, known as Link Techs. Unlike virtually every other RPG, all Link Techs are available to be discovered from the very start of the game. A separate "Make Up Link" menu allows the player to mix and match characters from the cast into different groups of two or three. If the characters are compatible, a Link Tech will be displayed and remembered in the Link Tech menu on the battle screen. The trick to discovering compatible links is place characters together that make sense - for instance Neptune and Uranus as they are a couple, or Mercury and Neptune as they both utilize water as an attack element.

While the story, presentation, and battle system are all very solid, the core RPG mechanics of Another Story are where the game is lacking. The above described Link Tech system may attempt to do something different with combination attacks but unfortunately many of the Link Techs are weaker than a standard single character technique. Techniques that cost more EP (Energy Points, Another Story's magic points) don't always deal as much damage as those that cost fewer EP to use. The maximum amount of EP that any character can have tops out at twelve points - that's right - twelve points. Although EP is fully restored at the conclusion of a battle, this is no help during a long boss battle. This means that early boss battles are generally a slog of using up a character's EP, replenishing their EP with expensive items, then using it all up again with a couple attacks - over and over and over again. The second chapter of the game involves the inner senshi setting off on their own to recover special items, which means a boss battle for each character in this fashion.



Searching out Link Techs in the Make Up Link menu (left), a typical battle scene (center), nearly every character makes an appearance (right)

Enemies are also crazy strong at the beginning of each new area but after grinding a little and building up a character's level the enemies become ridiculously weak. I guess you can't fault a game based on a licensed property originally targeted at school age girls in Japan for having some balance issues, but I can fault Another Story for having insanely high enemy encounter rates. I can't think of another RPG with encounter rates as absurdly high as Another Story (perhaps Xenogears) and admittedly they do become a hindrance to the flow of the game. To help alleviate this, mziab has included a separate optional patch within the translation package that halves enemy encounter rate while doubling earned XP and yen, effectively removing the level grinding aspect of the game without crippling power or spending ability. A pair of cheat codes built into the original game allow all characters to begin at either level 16 or 99 respectively and the method to enable them is detailed in the patch's readme file.

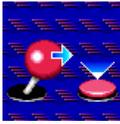
On one hand Another Story is yet another RPG based on a licensed property that suffers from unbalanced enemy encounters, an unconventional special attack system, and somewhat underdeveloped gameplay mechanics. On the other hand Another Story is one of the few RPGs based on a licensed property that actually does the license justice - with an interesting and compelling story, scenario writing that feels true to the characters, and a narrative that only takes liberties with the established source material when necessary. To me, the Sailor Moon S anime was the pinnacle of Sailor Moon, with even the manga arc it was adapted from and the two anime seasons that would follow it falling short. The way that Another Story directly follows after Sailor Moon S, without disassembling its satisfying conclusion, while incorporating elements of the manga is perfect - far better than it was done in the Sailor Stars anime series in my opinion.

If you're a fan of Sailor Moon, vintage anime, or classic RPGs then you've probably already given this one a try but if not it's certainly worth your while to do so. If you played it years ago with the old translation then you owe it to yourself to play it again with the re-translation and experience it as was intended. I can remember checking the progress page at Bishoujo Senshi Translations over twenty years ago, waiting and waiting and waiting for the patch to finally be released. That we've been given a fresh translation of such a fondly remembered fan translated game is simply incredible. What shines most with the recent translation patch is the passion for making this game accessible to English speakers, just as it did with the original Bishoujo Senshi Translations release. For a fan effort, with two different teams, released twenty years apart, to come full circle in that regard is certainly something special. Such seems to be the allure this game has, whether it's 1999 or 2019.

The new patch with complete documentation can be downloaded from ROMHacking.net at: <https://www.romhacking.net/translations/4654/>

Information about the original BST patch can be found at FuSoYa's Niche: <http://fusoya.eludevisibility.org/smrpg/index.html>

Please play fan translated games either via an emulator or flash cartridge. Please do not support unlicensed reproductions of freely available fan translations.



The Controller Chronicles - Atari Jaguar

by [Todd Friedman](#)

When asked about Atari most people think about the first system. The Atari 2600 was where it all began for most gamers. This was the system that launched multiple follow up systems such as the Atari 5200 and 7800. After the sluggish fan base on the later systems, mostly because of Nintendo coming out with the NES and Sega with the Genesis, Atari had to think out of the box and create a new console that could possibly keep up with the giants of Nintendo and Sega. The mid 80s and early 90s were ruled by these two companies when it came to home video gaming in America. So in November of 1993, Atari launched a new console called the Jaguar. The best way they could grab crowd attention is to market the system as the first 64-bit system. Sega had the Genesis and Nintendo had the Super Nintendo, both 16-bit systems. Atari was trying to beat the competition to the punch. The system design was highly unconventional, and the controller also followed those rules. In my opinion, this controller is in the top three as the most unusual looking controller design. There are some great games that came from the Jaguar library and playing them with the controller can take some practice and getting used to but works well if you master it on some of the popular titles.



The controller can look and sound complex. But here is really the breakdown of how it works. It really is a compilation of controllers made before the Jaguar. Like the Intellivision, the Jaguar controller had a numeric pad which can be used with a control overlay to easily hit the correct buttons. The control pad can be compared to the Sega Genesis with the plus shaped D-pad that can move in circular rotation, as well as the A, B, C buttons. There are two buttons in the middle that control pausing the game and bringing up the option menu.

One of the most popular titles for the Jaguar, and in its short shelf life there were about 50 games for the system, is Alien vs. Predator. First person shooters (FPS) in the 1990s were starting to take off with games like Doom and Quake. Alien vs. Predator (AvP) was based off the movie of the same name. It took the same kind of genre of the other FPS games but changed it up by using Aliens rather than monsters and people. The graphics were as good if not better than the competition. The controls were unusual but easy at the same time. There are three different overlays for the game depending on which mission you choose. You can choose Marine, Alien, or Predator. To move your character, you will use the Direction Pad, which is standard on all overlays. The buttons are consistent as well based on your mission choice. The A button is like an action button, it will open doors, use the computer and enter doors. B button is the main attack button for whatever weapon you may have, and the C button is used as a sidestep function which sometimes can be useful for dodging at the last minute. Like most games, the more you practice, the better you will get. This game is to some the best of the best for Atari Jaguar, I highly recommend playing it.

Another fun game I played is a vertical shooting game called Raiden. There would be multiple sequels to the game on different platforms along the way. A typical story line of Earth being taken over and you as pilot of the ship have to defend and conquer the aliens to take back the planet. This game has a great flow to it and many different powerups to make the game exciting and challenging at the same time. The controls are pretty standard as this is really a matter of dodging and firing at the enemies, all the while moving around the screen to pick up weapon powerups. The A and B button can be used to fire, and C is used for the Bomb, if you have any. The overlay is not really needed to play this game, it just makes the controller look more a part of the experience. The series continues today with Raiden V released on the Xbox One in Japan and PlayStation 4 in U.S. If you are looking for a good vertical scrolling shooter, this is a must have for the Jaguar.



Alien vs. Predator (left), Raiden (center), Tempest 2000 (right)

Probably the most talked about game for Atari Jaguar owners is Tempest 2000. Released in 1994, This remake was from the original arcade game called Tempest. A mildly popular arcade game that tested each gamers hand eye coordination and skill. Even though this version of the game was released for some other platforms, the Jaguar was the first to showcase the game. The controls were not as smooth as the arcade, but it was close enough to enjoy the ride. In the arcade version, it used a knob that would control the blaster. This was replicated with the Atari Jaguar D-pad. Not as smooth, but it worked for this game. Like other shooting games, the B button would shoot but the C button would fire your Super Zapper, as they called it. The A button would be for the jumping feature. The overlay would do many things that were not necessarily needed in the game but had some extra features like zooming in and out on the ship and turning the music on and off. This game is still to this day super fun to play. Tempest 2000 was one of the top selling games for the system.

As most systems do, the Jaguar came out with peripherals and extras. Atari after a few years came out with the Jaguar Pro Controller, which did not sell very well as it came as the system was on the decline. This addition to this controller were the added two Left/Right triggers on the top and three additional face buttons which were not used very much. Another attempt to keep up with the competition was to add a CD attachment, to play what they hope to be more games via the CD market. Atari had a vision to keep the system going longer but with the lack of games and developers it was hard to keep it going. I consider this system underrated and a truly needed system for anyone's collection.



Video Game Haiku

by [Sean "Nz17" Robinson](#)

The Arcade

The flashing lights call
I hear the sounds echoing
Tokens for credits

Shark! Shark!

Small fish looks for food
Flees big fish, eats more to grow
Still small; flee from shark!

Programming at 2 A.M.

Programming language
Assembly code is my tool
The colors cycle

Fleet Falcon

I leap across pits
Nimble, deftly I progress
A bird brings my death

The Evening News

World 6 at long last
First time here; power-off though
Mom says time for news

28 Years

A blue streak speeds by
Sonic The Hedgehog's birthday
How time flies with fun

Have a video game haiku of your own? [Send it our way!](#)



Weekly Retrogaming Trivia Recap

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:

04/26/2019 - WEEK 114

Question: What Taito arcade game is now considered to be a spiritual predecessor of Bubble Bobble?

05/03/2019 - WEEK 115

Question: Skeeet Shoot was the first Atari VCS game released by what company?

05/10/2019 - WEEK 116

Question: The A-Train series was created by what Japanese software developer?

05/17/2019 - WEEK 117

Question: An unlicensed Sean Connery cameo appears in what arcade shooter?

06/07/2019 - WEEK 118

Question: What suds slinging arcade game uses the song Oh! Susanna as one of its pieces of background music?

06/14/2019 - WEEK 119

Question: Frenzy (1982) is the sequel to what arcade game?

06/21/2019 - WEEK 120

Question: What was the only NES game published by toy manufacturer Matchbox?



Chack'n Pop (left) was later refined into Bubble Bobble using many of the same character designs (right)

Answers:

Week 114 Answer: Chack'n Pop (1983).

Week 115 Answer: Games by Apollo.

Week 116 Answer: Artdink.

Week 117 Answer: Carrier Air Wing / U.S. Navy.

Week 118 Answer: Tapper (1983).

Week 119 Answer: Berzerk (1980).

Week 120 Answer: Motor City Patrol (1992).



While Carrier Air Wing had a commander who resembled Sean Connery (left), in the Japanese version, U.S. Navy, he was a dead ringer (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

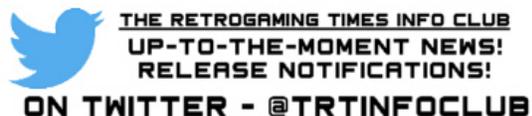
by David Lundin, Jr.

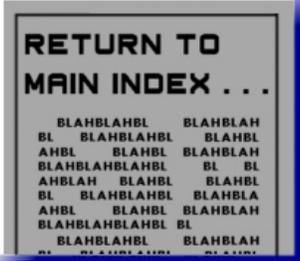
In early June Konami announced their plans to release a TurboGrafx-16 / PC Engine mini console, similar to what Nintendo has done with the NES / Famicom, SNES / Super Famicom, and Sony with the PlayStation. These are emulation based systems enclosed in a shell that resembles a miniature version of the console they represent, designed for use with standard modern HD televisions. A complement of games is included on each, generally curated to be a collection of the most popular titles for a specific region. While the vintage age consoles (Atari, Colecovision, Intellivision) previously had all-in-one systems, the emulation and build quality were generally lacking and they were relegated to little more than a novelty. Additionally the bootleg market is crammed with plug-and-play systems based on the Famicom architecture - if you've been to a flea market in the past fifteen years you've probably seen at least one. Nintendo changed the perception of what a licensed all-in-one system could be with the release of the NES Mini. Featuring a clean interface with an excellent assortment of games, it became a rare example of a nostalgic product that satisfied both the casual and serious gamer. These systems also provide a legal way to purchase old games that directly support the license holders.

I never had much interest in any of the mini consoles as I prefer the file flexibility of using flash memory cartridges on original hardware. Additionally I prefer to play classic games on a CRT television. However the announcement of a TurboGrafx-16 / PC Engine mini struck a chord with me. While I already have a couple PC Engine consoles and a Turbo Everdrive, and the mini is just another emulation box, it'll allow me to flow some money to Konami in support of their classic Hudson IPs. I missed the TurboGrafx-16 era, only buying a system during the very last days of Turbo Zone Direct, which means I've only ever bought two games (Cosmic Fantasy 2 and Exile Wicked Phenomenon) from a first-run licensed dealer. I've owned lots of hardware, games, and accessories since but it was all purchased secondhand. No one may care but I see this as an opportunity to make that right in a sense, a thank you for all the games I enjoy. It doesn't hurt that I also love the idea of an officially licensed PC Engine that is even smaller than an original PC Engine. Konami has announced that there will be three different hardware styles dependent on region: TurboGrafx-16 mini (North America), PC Engine mini (Japan), and PC Engine CoreGrafx mini (Europe). A full game list has yet to be released but at the moment it appears there will be different games included based on region. If the emulation is solid then I plan on buying a TurboGrafx-16 mini on day one. More than likely I'll also buy a PC Engine mini once the console is inevitably hacked / jailbroken to allow other games to be loaded on it and make it my general HD emulation box. Are you excited to see the PC Engine return? Drop me a line and let me know your thoughts!

Thank you once again for reading The Retrogaming Times. We'll be back on September 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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