

The Retrogaming Times

THE BIMONTHLY RETROGAMING HOBBYIST NEWSLETTER
TWENTY-SIXTH ISSUE - MAY 2020

IMPERIAL COMBAT REVUE ON TOUR!

The Retrogaming Times
- The Bimonthly Retrogaming Hobbyist Newsletter -

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- [Prepare to Qualify](#)
- [Upcoming Events](#)
- [More C64! - THEC64 Unboxing](#)
- [Don's Desk - Video Gaming Exercise](#)
- [Arcade Obscure - Route 16](#)
- [Book Review - Unofficial Atari: A Visual History](#)
- [Caught On Film: Sonic The Hedgehog \(2020\)](#)
- [Forgotten Famicom - Route-16 Turbo](#)
- [Found In Translation - Sakura Wars \(Sega Saturn\)](#) ***COVER STORY***
- [The Controller Chronicles - Nintendo Famicom](#)
- [Weekly Retrogaming Trivia Recap](#)
- [See You Next Game](#)



Prepare to Qualify

by [David Lundin, Jr.](#)

Welcome to the Twenty-Sixth Issue of The Retrogaming Times and a subject of newsletter introduction I could have never imagined writing before now. As I'm sure everyone reading this is well aware of, we are in the midst of an unprecedented time in modern history with the outbreak and subsequent pandemic of Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19). I personally live in Santa Clara County, in Silicon Valley's South Bay Area, which was one of the initial hotspots on the West Coast of the United States. It was also the first place to begin "shelter in place" restrictions in the United States, with both it and neighboring counties attempting to get ahead of further spread. Thankfully I am healthy, I have been able to work remotely for the most part, and I am able to abide by the requested precautions both locally as well as statewide. I implore everyone to continue to abide by any and all local restrictions, to err on the side of caution, and to protect yourselves however possible. Society will change a bit, possibly for a while, but I believe it is the goal of most everyone to see it continue on.

If you're stuck inside or need a bit of an escape, we have a great issue on tap for you. Merman boots up this issue with his detailed look at the full size counterpart to the C64 Mini in More C64! Keeping active and in shape while under shelter in place restrictions can be a challenge but a retrogamer's approach is to look for workout opportunities with gaming in mind. That's what's coming across Don's Desk this issue, as Donald Lee breaks down a modern workout that any retrogamer can pick up. Cars, money, mazes and bombs all feature into Route 16, an interesting arcade game from the edge of the golden era, presented in Arcade Obscure. While many books have been written on Atari's arcade and home console history, a new book takes the digital road less traveled and features a visual history of Atari's very popular 8-bit computer

line. Eugenio Angueira gives his thoughts on this new tome, with a book review of Unofficial Atari: A Visual History. Our film review column is revived for the first time since re-launch, with Sean Robinson's take on the new Sonic The Hedgehog theatrical film, presently the highest grossing film of 2020! Route 16 makes a quick comeback with an enhanced remake on the Famicom but does the "Turbo" in the title give the game new zip or is all that power just for show? - Find out in Forgotten Famicom. In this issue's cover story, Sean Robinson talks about the current history of the Sakura Wars games, including the very recent release of a fan translation of the very first game in the series. Additionally he conducted a special interview with the head of the translation and localization team that gives insight into the fan translation process. Definitely an article not to miss! Famicom love continues with Todd Friedman's comments concerning its unique input setup as well as a few games that would make the transition to the NES in the Controller Chronicles. All that and more are ahead in this issue of The Retrogaming Times!

I want to again remind our readers if they have comments or questions about anything covered in the newsletter, or there is something they would like featured in a future issue of The Retrogaming Times, to contact me directly at trt@classicplastic.net! Of course article 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!"**

If you're stir crazy at home and are a retrogamer, there has to be something on your mind - let us know by submitting an article!



Upcoming Events

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

NOTICE: Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, many shows and events have canceled, postponed, or modified their dates. For the latest on the events listed below, please visit their individual websites or contact their relevant customer support channels as the current situation continues to unfold. Thank you.

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Pintastic Pinball & Game Room Expo, June 25th - 28th 2020, Sturbridge, Boxborough, USA

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

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

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Video Game Summit, July 11th 2020, Villa Park, Illinois, USA

The date for the 2020 Video Game Summit has been set! It will be held on July 11th at The Odeum Expo Center, 1033 North Villa Ave., Villa Park, Illinois. More information to follow shortly!

For more information, visit <http://www.videogamesummit.net/>

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KansasFest, July 21st - 26th 2020, Kansas City, Missouri, USA

KansasFest 2020, the 32nd annual Apple II convention, is scheduled for July 21 - 26 in Kansas City, Missouri. Robert Woodhead of Sir-Tech Software, well-known as the co-creator of the Wizardry series of computer role-playing games, will join us as the keynote speaker.

At an early age, Robert Woodhead, aka Trebor the Mad Overlord, was consumed by two passions; computer programming and not having to have a real job. He first achieved this by writing computer games for Sir-Tech Software, most notoriously co-authoring the first four Wizardry CRPGs, first for the Apple II, and

later for other, lesser computers. In 1989, deciding that this wasn't nerdy enough, he founded the oldest surviving anime releasing company, AnimEigo. Other things he's done include: writing one of the first MMO bots, building a 2-time National Champion Combat Robot, serving 4 terms on the EVE Online Council of Stellar Management, and not being "liquidated" by his wife. Yet.

KansasFest is an annual convention offering Apple II users and retrocomputing enthusiasts the opportunity to engage in beginner and technical sessions, programming contests, exhibition halls, and camaraderie. KansasFest was originally hosted by Resource Central and has been brought to you by the KFest committee since 1995. Any and all Apple II users, fans, and friends are invited to attend this year's event. Registration details will be announced on the KansasFest Web site, and registration will open on March 31. For photos, videos, and presentations from past KansasFests, please visit the event's official website.

Will you be among the 2020 attendees? Mark your calendars for July 21 - 26, 2020.

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

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California Extreme 2020, July 25th - 26th 2020, 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 25 - 26, 2020 at the same fantastic location - the Hyatt Regency in Santa Clara, California. Please join us for our 24th show with hundreds of your favorite arcade and pinball games, both past and present, all gathered for another fun-filled weekend of arcade excitement for everyone!

We will announce later when the hotel will be accepting reservations (please don't contact the hotel as the block is not set up yet) and when show tickets will be on sale.

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

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Classic Game Fest, July 25th - 26th 2020, Austin, Texas, USA

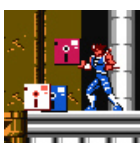
The biggest retro gaming event in Texas is back on July 25 - 26, 2020! Classic Game Fest returns to the Palmer Events Center in Austin, TX on July 25-26, 2020. The annual summer event will feature all the expected attractions including special guests, live music, free play games, a massive vendor hall and more. Vendor booth and ticket information will be available soon.

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! - THEC64 Unboxing

by Merman

Back in the Fifteenth Issue of The Retrogaming Times (July 2018), I took a look at the C64 Mini - a retro console designed to resemble the classic Commodore 64. In December 2019 the company behind the Mini, Retro Games Ltd, released its follow-up console known as the THEC64 (referred to by some as the Maxi, or Full-Size). What have been the key changes and updates, and is the new version worth buying?

HISTORY:

Retro Games Ltd was formed to create the C64 mini console, and launched an IndieGoGo crowdfunding campaign in April 2016. Although it did not reach the full goal, as it was a continuing campaign the company pushed ahead with its plans. This did mean that certain planned features - a working keyboard, compatibility with existing C64 hardware and a cartridge slot - were dropped in creating the first C64 Mini console. Those who had backed the full-size concept were given a free Mini, and the Mini itself went on wider sale during the summer of 2018. There have been some bargain prices for the Mini recently, making it even more attractive (since it can attach so easily to a modern HDTV). After a manufacturing delay and other setbacks, the full-sized THEC64 with working keyboard launched and I had pre-ordered one that arrived the day after release.



The front of THEC64 box.

UNBOXING:

The exterior packaging is once again designed to look like a classic C64 box, with the blue and white stripes and plenty of information on the sides and back. One major change this time - depending on the region, there is an appropriate USB power plug included. Although many TVs now have USB ports, there was some disappointment that the Mini did not include such an adapter.



The back of the box.

Also included in the box are the micro-USB power cable and the HDMI cable. The cables and power adapter are found inside the small box that sits beside the main console. Also in this box is the new micro-switched joystick with a USB connector. This is based on the classic Competition Pro stick, with the extra triangular buttons on the front and four menu buttons on the back seen in the Mini's joystick design.

The main console itself sits under a plastic cover, and is much larger than the Mini. A side-by-side comparison shows it is also marginally larger than the original "breadbin" case of the C64, but the keys replicate the look and feel of the original really well. On the back of the machine there are the HDMI and power sockets, plus a USB port. On the right-hand side of the machine is the power switch, along with three USB ports. This means you can plug in two joysticks, plus a memory card reader or USB flash drive/memory stick, at the same time.

Side-note: What was the Commodore key on the original C64 features a small THEC64 logo instead. This is due to what happened during the bankruptcy of Commodore in 1994. The Commodore Germany subsidiary claimed to have bought the rights to use the logo, and in the series of transfers and takeovers since the exact ownership of the "chicken lips" logo (as some call it) has been highly disputed. The actual emulation itself is fully licensed from Cloanto, as was the case with the Mini.



A closer look at the contents of the box, including the Quick Start guide to help you set up the machine.

BOOTING:

With the USB power cable plugged in and the HDMI lead attached to a TV or monitor, the machine can be started up with the power button. A short intro sequence leads into either the Carousel or Classic modes.

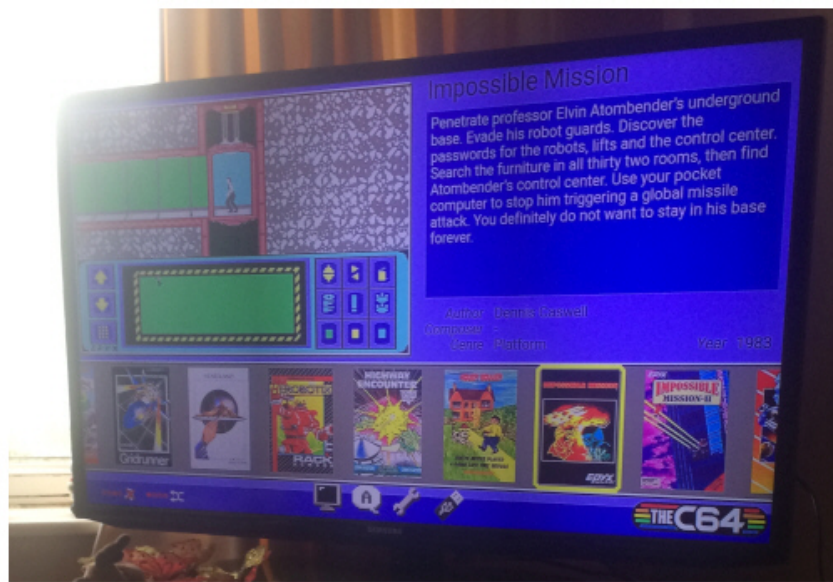
The Carousel mode is how the C64 Mini booted, displaying a large picture of one of the in-built games and various menu options. The Carousel features the same Matt Gray music as the Mini, which can be turned on and off. If a USB stick is attached, a small icon at the bottom of the screen is used to access the files on it.

Classic Mode goes straight to the BASIC ready prompt, where you can attach files and program in BASIC as before. While the actual machine is being emulated, using the fourth menu button opens up a pause menu similar to the Mini's. Here you can load and save the current state (up to four saves per game on the Carousel / file) and use the virtual keyboard (only really useful if you cannot get to the keys).

The biggest change is in the in-built games. These now include some VIC-20 titles, as the THEC64 can emulate both the C64 and the earlier Commodore machine. Classic Mode can be set to boot into either computer, as a PAL or NTSC machine to help with accurate timings. The display options include a CRT filter

and the Mini's "pixel-perfect" setting, which is the one I prefer.

Switching off the machine can be done by selecting Power Off from the Settings menu or holding down the power button.



Looking through the built-in games using the Carousel mode, stopping on Epyx classic Impossible Mission.

FIRMWARE:

Retro Games Ltd has continued to update the firmware that runs the C64 Mini, and has already issued an updated firmware for the THEC64. This one file now covers both machines, and brings extra functionality and a patch to enable longer filenames on a USB stick or card. Updating the firmware is as simple as:

- Downloading the firmware .bin file to a USB stick.
- Putting the USB stick into the Mini or THEC64.
- Going to the System Information menu, choosing Firmware and selecting Apply to add the new firmware.

An animated progress bar shows how far through the process the machine is, and it will switch off and reboot once it is finished. Note that once the new firmware is applied, an earlier version cannot be reflashed. A factory reset will only clear the settings, not any firmware changes.

Another addition to the firmware for both machines is the CJM configuration option. This works in two ways.

1. You can add "flags" to a filename to make changes in how the machine is configured when you run that file.
2. You can create a ".cjm" file that is stored in the same directory as the file containing these settings.

Among the settings you can change are whether a fast loader or accurate drive emulation is used, which virtual port the joystick is attached to, and alternative settings for using different input devices (such as a USB joypad or arcade stick). The port setting is particularly useful; while the majority of games use the C64's port #2, there are quite a few that rely on port #1 and there is no option within the emulation to switch ports once a game is started.

The CJM configuration is also really useful in VIC-20 mode. As many games on the older machine require a memory expansion of some sort, from between 8-32K, the CJM flags can include selecting which bank of extra memory is available when a file is started.



Running a recent C64 cartridge game from USB stick, this is Ms. Rodman by Misfit.

THE STICK:

One sticking point - if you will pardon the pun - with the Mini was the original joystick. People complained that it was flimsy and suffered from "lag." The new stick is more firmly built and uses proper microswitches for more precise control.

The "lag" itself comes from two sources, the response of the emulator to input and the display update speed. Some users found that their display added lag, thanks to the settings. This may be a "game" mode or because the TV is upscaling/filtering the image. Turning off these modes can reduce the problem. In terms of input lag, I personally have found few problems with the new stick.

There are photos floating around online of broken sticks, and there are lists of other devices that will work well with the Mini and THEC64. (Some of these will require a CJM file to help map buttons to particular inputs; for some games this can actually be really handy, allowing you to define a separate button as jump instead of using Up).

THE GAMES:

There have been a few changes in the games list. As noted there are now a couple of VIC-20 titles, plus the C64 games from Thalamus have been removed. (This is because there is a new company, Thalamus Digital, reviving the company's past games commercially).

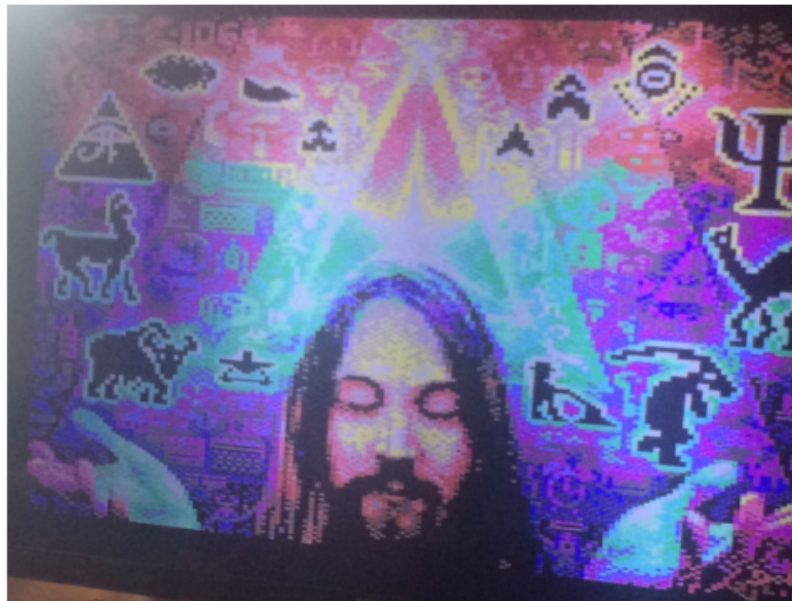
Here is the list of games included, the new titles marked with a *:

AlleyKat, Anarchy, Attack of the Mutant Camels*, Avenger, Battle Valley, Bear Bover*, Boulder Dash, Bouncer, California Games, Chips Challenge, Confuzion, Cosmic Causeway, Cyberdyne Warrior, Cybernoid II, Deflektor, Destroyer*, Everyone's a Wally, FireLord, Galencia*, Gateway to Apshai, Gribbly's Day Out, Gridrunner (VIC-20)*, Heartland, Herobotix, Highway Encounter, Hover Bover*, Impossible Mission, Impossible Mission II, IO, Iridis Alpha*, Jumpman, Mega Apocalypse, Mission AD, Wanted Monty Mole, Monty on the Run, Nebulus, Netherworld, Nodes of Yesod, Pitstop II, Planet of Death*, Psychedelia (VIC-20)*, Rana Rama, Robin of the Wood, Silicon Warrior, Skate Crazy, Speedball II, Spindizzy, Steel, Street Sports Baseball, Street Sports Basketball, Summer Games II (includes events from Summer Games), Super Cycle, Sword of Fargoal, Temple of Apshai Trilogy (three games in one), The Arc of Yesod, Thing Bounces Back, Thing on a Spring, Trailblazer, Uridium, Who Dares Wins II, Winter Games, World Games, Zynaps.

Of the new games, Planet of Death is a text adventure and so uses the keyboard more. Bear Bover is a platform game inspired by arcade classic Burger Time. Galencia was a recent commercial release originally added to the C64 Mini's firmware as a bonus; it's an impressive Galaxian-style shoot 'em up with power-ups and large bosses to fight. It is nice to see representation for UK programming legend Jeff Minter, and his early C64 game Attack of the Mutant Camels. Iridis Alpha is a game I personally love, but its "split screen" approach takes some getting used to. Jeff's Psychedelia for the VIC-20 is a "light synthesizer", allowing you

make patterns of light and characters move around the screen, and Gridrunner (also for VIC) is an impressive Centipede-style blaster. And you don't get much more British than Hover Bovver, a game all about mowing the lawn...

From the Carousel you can also select BASIC to go into the BASIC prompt for the current machine setting (VIC-20 or C64) and view the THEC64 Hall Of Fame. This is a small demo showing the names of the original crowdfunding backers and other key people.

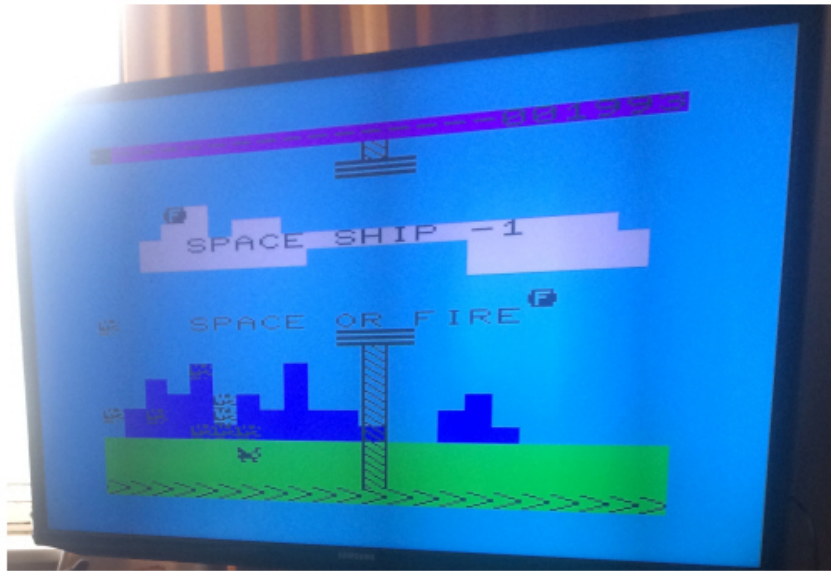


"Heart of Neon", an amazing C64 bitmap by Robin Levy and Paul Docherty, celebrating a planned documentary film on the career of programmer Jeff Minter.

VERDICT:

The new THEC64 puts right a few of the flaws and problems that people had with the Mini. Playing a C64 on an HD screen is really useful, and the new keyboard works extremely well - it feels very much like the original keys did, and makes playing some of the games a lot easier. (While it was / is possible to use an external USB keyboard, it feels so much better now). The updated firmware has made using the Mini and its follow-up even easier. Being able to download a file, copy it to USB stick and insert it straight into the console is so easy - and many of the current software companies are trying to provide compatible files for ease of use on purchase. The VIC-20 emulation is an added bonus. The working keyboard has pushed up the price of the "Maxi" but it remains a good investment for casual players when compared to some of the other mini consoles out there.

In some ways it is a shame that Retro Games Ltd have not been able to achieve their goals of compatibility with existing hardware and cartridges, but since both would risk the user damaging or breaking the machine by plugging something in (especially when the power is on) it is perhaps wisest to leave those options out. Similarly, there are ways of changing the games displayed on the Carousel - by hacking the Linux-based software - but this is entirely at the user's risk, as the company has stated online.



Running a recent VIC-20 game, Spaceship Minus One (which mixes elements of Flappy Bird and Scramble).

At the time of writing, the release of the THEC64 from American sellers has been delayed due to the coronavirus holding up manufacturing and shipping.

WEB LINKS:

<https://retrogames.biz/> - official site of Retro Games Ltd.

<https://retrogames.biz/thec64> - more info on THEC64.

<https://retrogames.biz/thec64/support> - Support page for THEC64, includes a link for the latest firmware.

<https://retrogames.biz/thec64/retailers> - list of retailers (note that US and Canadian retailers listed currently only have the C64 Mini available).

Note: the reviewer paid for the hardware described here and is not affiliated with the company behind it.



One final image, from the Ben Daglish tribute demo created by Jason Page.

Take a look at my unboxing and firmware update video of the THEC64, produced for the Scene World YouTube channel here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g-vFgwXCHYk>



Welcome to this month's edition of Don's Desk. As I write this, it's April 9th, 2020. I hope everyone who is reading this is safe and sound. Things have certainly changed since the last issue was published. A lot of the United States (though not all) is under a shelter in place order (aka lockdown). For those of us in the San Francisco Bay Area, it's been over three weeks now but it wasn't just the COVID-19 issue I had to deal with. So before delving into my column this month, let me catch people up on the good and bad that happened to me before COVID-19 took over everyone's life.

The bad thing happened in mid-January. I was informed by my company that due to some changes, my position was going to be eliminated and I was going to be laid off, effective in early February. I had expected that I might get laid off at some point in 2020 though the timing did catch me off guard. But I wasn't too worried about it. I felt fairly confident I could find a job quickly if I wanted to. Plus I was getting some money with the layoff so it wasn't all bad.

The layoff did have one other good benefit: I was freed up to officiate the rest of my high school basketball season without worrying about work and on March 3rd, 2020, I accomplished the main goals for my 2019 - 2020 high school officiating season. I was nominated and officiated a Northern California high school state basketball playoff game. The game was a blowout but it didn't matter, just getting to work a state level playoff game was a dream come to true. I had never even considered the possibility until last season when I was nominated but didn't get a game. But as we all know now, that positivity didn't last long. It was just a couple of weeks later when the SF Bay Area (and a few days later, all of California) was put into a shelter in place. For most of the past three weeks I have been home. I had gone out to walk around my neighborhood early on but the past two weeks, I have only gone out to my backyard to get some air and some jogging in place or jumping jacks.

So the last paragraph is a good way to segue into my column this month: VIDEO GAMING EXERCISE (COVID-19 special edition).

As I stated, early on in the shelter in place I generally took two walks a day around the neighborhood. I usually walked about 10 to 15 minutes. I was trying to avoid running into too many people and my neighborhood is fairly quiet. As things progressed, we were encouraged to not even leave the house at all. For my safety, I just decided to stay indoors and only go out when absolutely needed.

Besides walking and my backyard, I didn't have any of the usual options for exercise. I had no weights or aerobic machines. Fortunately, I did have several video gaming options and discovered a couple of more. I'll talk about each of the games I have, what I do with them and give people an idea of my routine.

Option 1: Nintendo Wii - Wii Sports

My dad decided to remodel his house and asked me to clean up my stuff and move whatever I wanted to my house. I still had a Nintendo Wii and rather than getting rid of it, I moved it to my house in early January. The main reason was I still have a love of Wii Sports (especially baseball). Since the Switch didn't really have an equivalent to Wii Sports, it was a good decision to keep the Wii.

My go to game on Wii Sports are the baseball training games. In the training, you can do a home run derby, targeted batting practice and just straight batting practice. Why do I like those games? Well, the pitches come come quickly. Plus, I literally simulate swinging my Wii-Mote like a bat. So if I go through a few rounds of the baseball training games, I get a small sweat going. Wii Boxing is fun but having to use the Nunchucks is annoying. But it does get me a decent workout as well if I want to use it. I like Wii Bowling and Golf (both games and practice) but they don't get me much of a workout. Wii Tennis is a tad boring for me so I don't play much.

Option 2: Nintendo Switch - Fitness Boxing

In an interesting bit of coincidence, I purchased Fitness Boxing for my Nintendo Switch on April 9th, 2019 (I just checked my old emails!).

Why did I buy the game? At the time, I traveled a few times a year to different places for work. While I

would pack some workout clothes, trying to motivate yourself to go to the gym sometime is a challenge. I figured if I brought my switch along, I would have no excuses. I could squeeze in a workout in my room if I felt lazy. Alas, the times I traveled in 2019 didn't afford me to workout much in the hotels or otherwise. So was purchasing the game a waste? Not 100%, I actually used the game to workout a few times during 2019. Probably much less than I expected though. But with the shelter in place orders, Fitness Boxing becomes a godsend. I get to do a boxing routine for about 35 minutes. I have the game set to work all of my muscles. By doing it for 35 minutes, I can get a decent sweat in. I actually try to do all the exercises the right way and not try to go the lazy way out.

Option 3: Nintendo Wii - Wii Sports Resort

When I brought my Nintendo Wii over to my house, I grabbed a couple of other games I had. Among them was Wii Sports Resort. When I had first gotten the Wii back around 2008, I got my mom involved in playing Wii Sports. My mom was told by doctors that she needed exercise. So the Wii Sports games (especially bowling) worked for her. I got Wii Sports Resort for some variety but I think my mom preferred the original Wii Sports. Also for whatever reason, I didn't try to learn the games on Wii Sports Resort and so the game effectively collected dust.

Well I dusted the game off and immediately found a game I loved: Swordplay. The three options in Swordplay (Speed Slice, Duel and Showdown) are all fun. Speed Splice has you competing to slice objects. The first to get to 10 wins. Dues is one on one versus the computer (or another person). You try to battle the other person and knock the off the ledge. Showdown has the player fighting a ton of computer players and try to knock the computer players out before they hit you three times.

Swordplay has me swinging the Wii Mote like a madman sometimes. I definitely get some work in playing this game I've also tried all the games that just require the Wii Mote. I haven't tried the ones that need the nunchuck but will get eventually. Swordplay is definitely the one for a workout though the others are good if you want to move a little bit without exerting yourself too much.

Option 4: Nintendo Switch - ARMS

Sometime last week, I was researching if there were any other motion based games I could get that might give me some exercise. I had forgotten about Ring Fit Adventure. Alas, it didn't matter anyway as Ring Fit Adventure had been sold out for sometime even before the shelter in place orders got into place. I looked into the Nintendo Wii version of Punch Out. Apparently, that version used motion controls. I saw I could probably do a curbside pickup from a GameStop but I didn't really want to make a trip out to just pickup a video game.

As it so happens, I saw some articles talk about ARMS for the Nintendo Switch. There was a demo version so I downloaded the demo and played it a little bit. It was actually pretty fun! In another twist, Nintendo was offering people who subscribed to the Nintendo Online service to play the full ARMS games for FREE over the weekend of April 3rd to April 6th. So I downloaded the full version of ARMS and gave it a spin most of the weekend.

The game was fun and I got a decent workout in playing it. The downside was that the game is \$60 and there wasn't a sale. I didn't really want to pay the full \$60 for the game. The good news was I had some gift card credit on Amazon that I saved up. I decided to use some of the credit on ARMS. I think it will be worth it.

WORKOUT PLAN

With all of the descriptions above, let me talk about my general plans for a workout incorporating the games and other stuff.

1. Two workouts a day.
2. Ideally, each workout is about 15 to 20 minutes each though I adjust it on the fly.
3. One workout after breakfast.
4. One workout after lunch / before dinner.

The current plan is:

1. Fitness Boxing 35 minute workout once every 2 days - so I get a day of rest in between.

2. On the days I do Fitness Boxing, I could skip a second workout or maybe I play a light Wii Sports game like Bowling just to incorporate some movement in.
3. Go to my backyard on the other days I'm not playing Fitness Boxing and do 10 minutes of jumping jacks and maybe some jogging in place during the day. I did order a small stepper so I have another option for aerobic exercise.
4. Play one of the above games in the evening as my second workout in the evening.

As with all plans, I have to modify as it goes. It was raining last weekend so I spent the whole weekend using my games as exercise.

So that's my life under the shelter in place orders. It's not ideal but you have to make do with what you have. I'm also lucky to have a friend I talk to almost every day and some weekly Zoom chats with other folks.

I hope everyone reading is doing well. Stay safe and I look forward to writing for our next issue - hopefully life is much improved then.

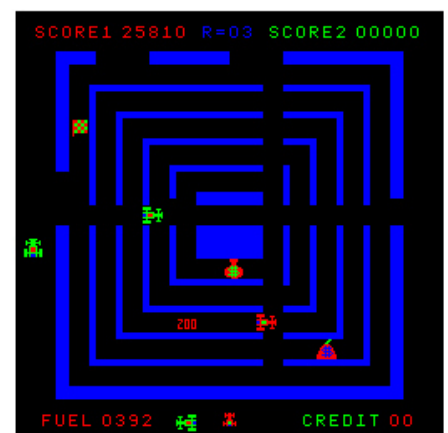
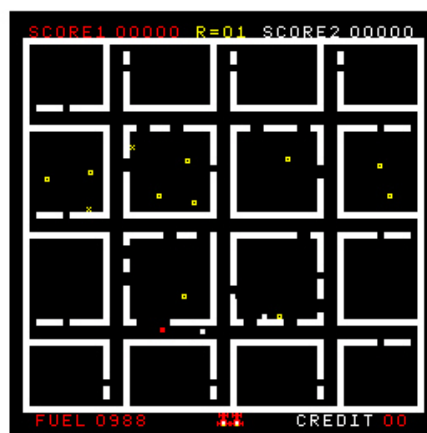
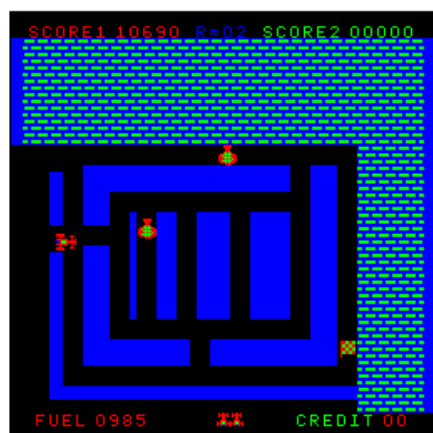


Arcade Obscure - Route 16

by *David Lundin, Jr.*

As with many obscure arcade games I would go on to enjoy, I first encountered Route 16 when I was setting up my small size vertical MAME cabinet. Although it was a game I hadn't heard of, its requirement of a single joystick and single action button made it easily file into the criteria of the control panel I was using. While I was unimpressed with the initial presentation of the game, after playing it a few times I became hooked by its fast-paced and challenging gameplay.

Released in 1981 by Sun Electronics and Tekhan, Route 16 is a maze game viewed from an overhead perspective. The player controls a red car tasked with picking up items to clear each round and avoiding collisions with hazards. These come in the form of bombs, creatures that roam the mazes, and a fleet of enemy cars that are in constant pursuit of the player. At the start the player begins in a full screen maze with a line of enemy cars at the bottom and a money bag to grab. While there's no denying that on the surface Route 16 looks like a much less polished clone of Namco's Rally-X from 1980, the difference has to do with the breaks in the outer walls of each maze. Escaping through one of these passages changes the screen to a large overview showing sixteen rooms (or routes) that contain different mazes, hence the name Route 16. Additionally the overview displays small icons representing the player car, enemy cars and items. The overview isn't a static screen or radar, the player is in full control and the enemy cars will quickly spill out into the alleyways and continue the chase.

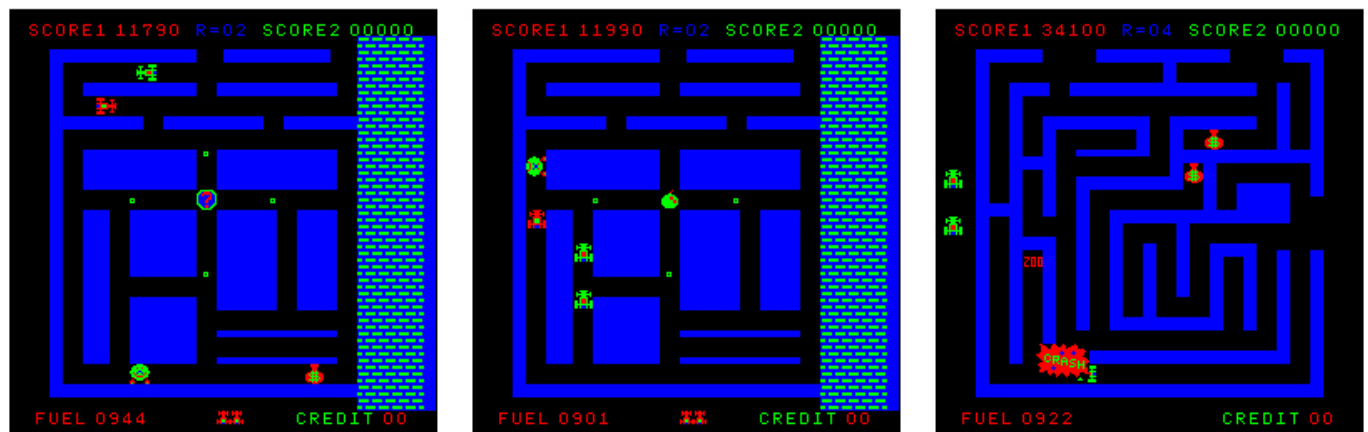


Grab the cash and continue on (left), the overview shows the 16 routes in a round (center), enemy cars enter a route (right)

What makes Route 16 unique is that all the objects in each set of sixteen mazes must be collected to complete a round. While some mazes will be totally empty, they can still be used to cut through areas of the overview and circumvent enemy cars, as it is virtually impossible to pass them in the alleyways. Unlike Rally-X, which featured the ability to stun enemies with clouds of smoke, Route 16 doesn't give the player any instantly accessible defensive weaponry. Here the player's only recourse is a turbo boost, activated by

holding down the "Speed" button, increasing their speed as long as fuel remains in the tank. Evasion is the key in Route 16, leading enemy cars down longer paths they will get hung up on so you can give them the slip and escape their rush. Running out of fuel doesn't end the game but without the ability to use the speed boost it doesn't take long to be overtaken by the enemy cars.

While avoidance will keep you alive, the real objective is to collect all the money in each round, represented as both money bags and money bells. Money appears as static, changing, or hidden. Static money bags are just that - they don't move or change and simply need to be driven over. Changing money bags cycle between money and an oil slick - driving over an oil slick will temporarily slow the car to a crawl, although the item will still count as collected for round clearing purposes. Hidden money bells are the most tricky, concealed behind a "?" mark with four small switches around them. Driving over a switch will change the "?" either into the money bell or a bomb. Colliding with the bomb destroys the player's car, so other switches must be driven over until the bomb changes into the money bell. The hidden money bells add a tremendous amount of chance to the game. Learning how to quickly dash up to a switch and make the determination whether to charge on forward and grab the bell or turn around to avoid the bomb is a requirement for success in Route 16. In addition to the bombs and enemy cars, creatures will roam around some of the mazes in seemingly random paths and must be avoided.



"?" blocks are uncovered by driving over a switch (left), the first switch reveals a bomb (center), trapped by an enemy car (right)

All the hazards spread out across each round give the enemy cars quite an advantage over the player at all times. They're easily the biggest threat as they can be rather relentless, often forcing collisions with other objects as the result of a squeeze play. However the player does have one trick up their sleeve to balance the scales, at least temporarily. In addition to the money bags and bells, there are also checkered flags throughout each round that must be collected. Driving over a checkered flag temporarily turns all enemy cars into money bags which can then be collected for bonus points and a temporary stun of the affected enemy car. The checkered flags are essentially Pac-Man's energizers but because the enemy cars can literally be spread out across multiple mazes it's more of a defensive weapon rather than a bonus opportunity.

Admittedly Route 16 is quite lacking in the presentation department, as it was released right on the edge of a graphical revolution in arcade games that would give the world classic sprite art that remains popular to this day. Its audio package is also more representative of the earlier era of arcade gaming, with repetitive chirpy music and minimal sound design - although it should be said the crash sound when hitting an object is appropriately startling. That all considered, the cabinet artwork that Centuri designed when the game was released is amazingly beautiful. The art package makes the game look like some crazy version of Death Race (the movie, not the Exidy game) with Formula 1 cars. I had an opportunity to pick up a dedicated Route 16 cabinet years ago and I kick myself every time I see pictures of a complete one. Thankfully Centuri didn't use any of their horrendous flyer artwork on the cabinet.



A dedicated Route 16 arcade cabinet (left), and the terrible artwork and slogan Centuri used on the flyer for the game (right)

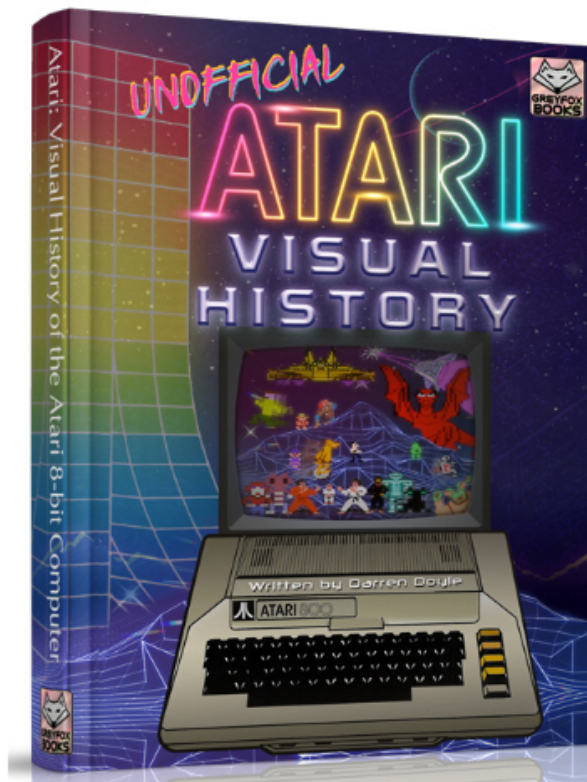
The game Route 16 reminds me most of is Exidy's Venture, released to arcades in the same year, due to the similarities of having a series of rooms contained within an outer area of hallways. I suppose Route 16 is sort of like a strange mash-up of Rally-X, Pac-Man, Venture, and Sega's Head On from 1979. While that combination may not be for everyone, especially given Route 16's vintage, it remains an exceptionally challenging and addictive game. Adding to its obscurity, it only ever had a direct port to the Emerson Arcadia 2001, which is actually a very solid representation of the original. An enhanced remake on the Nintendo Famicom would follow in 1985 and that game is covered later on in this issue. As for Tekan, they would continue to develop quirky arcade games until they found their footing on home consoles as Tecmo, becoming one of the most prolific developers of sports, action, and fighting games. So if you're interested in looking through the early back catalog of a well-known developer, give Route 16 a test drive.



Book Review - Unofficial Atari: A Visual History

by *Eugenio "TrekMD" Angueira*

Released by Greyfox Books, Unofficial Atari: A Visual History is a hardcover tome that is dedicated to the Atari 8-Bit family of computers and the various third-party games released for them. The book was published and designed by Darren Doyle with editing by Ian Evenden and Sean Townsend. It contains 420 pages that are nothing short of a feast for the eyes with plenty of images, color, and information for the reader to enjoy.



On the cover, the book has an artistic rendition of an Atari 800 computer and a drawn computer screen full of video game characters. In its opening pages, Unofficial Atari includes acknowledgements and thank you's to those who contributed to the book as well as an introduction to the book by Darren himself. In this introduction, Darren briefly tells us his own history with the Atari computers as well as some background history of the 8-Bit series of computers created by Atari to compete with the likes of Apple, Radio Shack and IBM. After the introduction you'll find a well organized table of contents. Next, a foreword by Douglas Crockford (best known for his involvement in the development of the JavaScript language) where he shares his own story about learning about computers, his fascination with the Atari 800, and his experience working for Atari.



Though these 8-Bit machines could be used for business applications or just for word processing, most fans of the Atari computers remember them for their extensive game library. It is this game library that the book focuses on as well as the different 8-Bit computer models released by Atari. Within the book's pages you'll find interviews with various game programmers, reviews of a variety of games, and even a section about emulators for these venerable machines. This latter section will help you figure out how to "test the waters," so to speak, should you be interested in getting your hands on one of these computers.

But how does this book organize its content? After all, it sounds like it packs a lot of information, right? Well, the book organizes the information in a manner that makes it easy to read and follow. You'll have descriptions of a particular model of Atari computer, followed by a programmer interview or company profile, reviews of several games, and then another interview or company profile.

The computer descriptions provide a brief history of any given model, a description of the hardware, and even descriptions of peripherals. Within these sections you will find pictures of the computer being discussed and / or their peripherals, artwork from Atari for the same machine and / or other interesting items that could be associated either with Atari or an 8-Bit computer. The text in these sections is easy to read, informative, and of just the right length to not become overbearing. The interviews include pictures with the programmer and images of their game(s). These interviews, like the computer descriptions, are not overly long but are interesting as the programmers share their stories of working with the Atari computers and developing games for them. Some of the individuals interviewed include Noah Falstein of Lucasfilm, Steve Englehart from Atari's Advanced Games Group and Jon Williams. The company profiles provide a brief history for each company and interesting anecdotes. These profiles are adorned with box art and screen shots of the various titles they released. Some of the companies featured include Brøderbund and Synapse Software.



Though what you really want to know is about the game reviews, right? No worries. Each game reviewed is given two pages. Within these you will find a large image of the box art on one side, various screen shots and short reviews (about 200 words) from the various contributors to book, and artwork of the game. The backgrounds on these pages also use elements unique to the game that is being covered and there are occasions when a picture of the game programmer for the specific title is also included. The reviews, though brief, do include a description of each game and some personal experience of the person who wrote the review as it relates to that particular game. This latter inclusion adds a personal touch the reviews and the book overall. These reviews make up the bulk of the book and, with over 150 games included, you can see why the book has over 400 pages.

This book is of excellent print quality, all the pictures and images within are sharp and colorful, and the text is easy to read. Given this is a visual history book, you can be assured that your eyes will be very satisfied

with all the imagery within Unofficial Atari's pages. For those who are fans of the Atari 8-Bit series of computers, this is a must-have. For those who want to learn about these machines and the games released for them, this book is also for you. For those who just love anything Atari, this book is for you. Even if you just like retro systems and computers, this book is for you.

It is clear that a lot of effort was made to make this a book that properly presents both in text and visuals the history of the Atari computers and their games. You can find Unofficial Atari: A Visual History at Greyfox Books' web page (<https://www.greyfoxbooks.com/>). Head over and place your order. You will not regret it!



Caught On Film: Sonic The Hedgehog (2020)

by Sean "Nz17" Robinson

If you were to have told me in 1991 that Sonic The Hedgehog was going to star in a movie, then I would have thought that was awesome. Now that the movie is here, was my past self right? For me at that age, absolutely. The good news is that at my current age, I would still say that watching the movie is totally worth your time!

Let's step back for a moment. What is this Sonic movie? Well, it is definitely not the same as Sonic The Hedgehog: The Movie, the 1990's American localization of the Sonic The Hedgehog OVA (Original Video Animation, direct-to-home-video release). That was a two part home video series that was stitched into a "movie" when it was edited and dubbed into English for its North American debut. Ironically, this new 2020 movie is called, "Sonic: The Movie" in Japan itself.



But, in many ways, the two "movies" are similar. If you look beyond mere superficial appearances, then you will find many things that they have in common. First, they both feature a short total running time. Personally, I prefer short movies, and the 2020 Sonic film runs about 100 minutes, making it a great match for me. Another similarity is that both feature a down-to-basics approach. The 90's film features the game characters Sonic, Tails, Knuckles, Metal Sonic, and Dr. Eggman / Robotnik. All of the other characters are original to the OVA / film. The 2020 film features Sonic and Dr. Robotnik, and, you guessed it, most of the other characters are original to the movie. In both films, Sonic and his best friend go on an adventure where they travel across the world. Both movies are mostly comedies where the heroes are seeking to stop a bad

situation from getting worse. Along the way, our protagonists encounter dangers and detours. Approximately several tons of debris are made out of the robots that stand in their way so there is plenty of destructive spectacle to be seen too!

The nice thing is, though, that the 2020 film is much more watchable today than the 90's film. The 90's movie was going more for slapstick humor and trying mostly just to appeal to young male viewers. This newer movie has more variety to its humor and it is aiming more for viewers of all ages and genders - though some might not like its generic structure of "road trip movie meets buddy cop movie."

Instead of being a hand-animated 2D adventure like the 90's movie, Sonic The Hedgehog (2020) is a combination of live action and 3D computer generated imagery. That introduces a problem. Not that 3D CGI is inherently flawed - the problem is that the creatives wanted to make a "realistic-looking" Sonic, something that would match the creatures of the real world that we live in to make him "more believable." For example, instead of wearing white gloves, they thought it was more modern and realistic for him to just have white hands. (Strangely enough, he was still wearing red shoes, so go figure.) If you haven't been reading any of the Sonic movie news stories on the Internet for the past year, that choice resulted in a 3D model that many people found to be quite unsettling, so much so that the huge backlash in the forms of mockery and Internet memes convinced the movie studio to remodel their new model.

The good news is that this introduced a much more visually appealing Sonic that is truer to his modern appearance in the video games. The bad news is that this introduced a flaw into the film that wouldn't have existed without the change in his 3D model. Without spoiling too much, let's just say that a situation could have been resolved in the film by Sonic just removing one of his gloves, something that wouldn't have been possible with early-movie-model Sonic. The 2020 film has a few little logical flaws like this, but if you are willing to ignore them or if you just don't notice them, then they obviously aren't going to be deal-breaking problems. However, if you are the kind of person that hyper-focuses on things, then it shouldn't be a deal-breaker either: just remember to relax and enjoy the roller coaster ride that this movie is meant to be! It's a fun popcorn flick for the whole family as well as the video game aficionado.

Honestly speaking, Sonic (2020) has a nice emotional range. Yeah, Sonic gets a little too upset and angry and preachy during a certain truck ride, but it can be overlooked. The movie has good messages about the importance of those whom you care about and how a place is more than just a collection of buildings. There are times where you laugh and if you are the kind of person - a person such as myself - there are times where your eyes... tear up a bit at the altruism, bravery, friendship, sacrifices, and warm-heartedness present in the film.

Personally, I wasn't too keen on the idea of changing out long-time voice acting staples of the Sonic series for Hollywood celebrities. Roger Craig Smith and Mike Pollock have been playing Sonic and Dr. Robotnik for a long time and I saw no real requirement to substitute new guys into their roles. That being said, both of the new actors give good performances and I thought they filled their roles well. Writing of which, while I am attempting to type a spoiler-free review, it is tempting to throw caution to the wind and include all sorts of awesomeness that can't be mentioned without spoiling things. But I will note that there are several excellent Sonic game references in the film, especially near the beginning. However, things taper off after the first half-hour, and that's something I found a bit disappointing. I would have really liked it if they had kept the references rolling as frequently throughout the rest of the movie as during that first thirty minutes or so. But what is there is good stuff and I look forward to more game and series references in any future sequels.

But let's backtrack just a step. Remember Wreck-It Ralph? Out of all of the video-game movies and video-game-inspired movies that I have finished watching, the two best were Tron: Legacy and Wreck-It Ralph. Was Sonic (2020) as good as those two movies? The short answer is, "No, but it is very good," and I liked it more than Detective Pikachu. (With that movie, while it is good, it is still better to stay with the Detective Pikachu 3DS game that inspired it in my honest opinion.) Sonic works as both a stand-alone, "I've never seen a video game before in my life" movie as well as a "I'm a total fan of Sonic for life!" movie. Writing of Ralph, the end credits for this movie - much like that wonderful Wreck-It Ralph's credits - are totally worth watching, both as a cool homage to the Sonic game series as well as a knowing reference to the end credits of Wreck-It Ralph.



Unlike the games, however, Sonic's friend and sidekick that helps him throughout the adventure and occasionally faces up to Robotnik is a small town police officer with big dreams of big things in the big city. If you have watched Sonic X, think of Officer Tom as Chris Thorndyke, only as a man that's less emotional and clingy than that boy was. Tom has a wife, a dog, and a house, but he wants to leave his small town life behind to move to the big city. Throughout Sonic and Tom's adventure, we meet those people that are a part of Tom's life and by extension, Sonic's. But ultimately, while all of these extra characters have their roles, the important players in our story are Sonic, Tom, and Robotnik, and all three perform admirably in this film.

What's a hero without a villain? Just an ordinary guy, yet he is someone who, when called upon, rises to be the warrior of light that opposes the darkness. Our villain here is Doctor Robotnik and some say he steals the show in Sonic (2020). As I grow older, I understand and empathize more and more with Dr. Robotnik, both here in the new movie as well as in general. He seems like a genius often surrounded by unacceptable conditions and an endless parade of idiots. He sees the flaws in biological creatures and the inherent merits of machines. He wants to use his intellectual gift to create superior substitutes for the things he finds subpar in the world, and he sees himself as naturally destined for greatness. Whereas he views himself as a leader primed for ruling the world and reworking it into his ideal vision, those around him don't take him seriously and see his plans frequently foiled. I guess that's all a part of growing older: you see the flaws of the world more frequently and think about them more often and how you'd like to change things if only there weren't so many obstacles in your way. Perhaps that's one of the running themes of the Sonic series: the bright-eyed hopefulness and optimism of youth versus the cynicism and bitterness of those who are older and want to make the world match their ideas about how things ought to be who are meanwhile leaving behind polluted environments and the destroyed dreams of others. While the movie doesn't go into great depth in this territory, it certainly plays it up with Dr. Robotnik and his backstory which gets sprinkled throughout the tale. He's a genius that is used to always being right and always succeeding, and with the hedgehog running free, the doctor's routine and personal world order are upended. Seeking to set things back to the way they were, he seeks to "neutralize" Sonic for his own personal edification and to further his scientific research. Every time he is foiled, he is made more determined and hard-boiled in his pursuit of Sonic.

The good news for anyone that enjoys this flick is that it had been grossing big bucks at the box office. As a matter of fact, it has been surprising the cynics and the accountants that typically underestimate video-game-movie adaptations. How so? By totaling a sum in ticket sales in excess of \$200 million USD worldwide. That's not just good news for its movie studio, Paramount Pictures, and its licensor, SEGA: that's also good news for fans of the movie and Sonic as there is talk about this film getting a sequel and possibly - "probably" is more like it - being a trilogy.

I could wax poetic about the themes in the series, this movie's qualities and content, and the Sonic franchise in general, but to say anything more about the movie would likely require me to step into spoiler territory.

Let's conclude this movie review with the following:

Are you a Sonic fan?
See this movie.

Are you not a Sonic fan?
See this movie.

Are you a fan of any of the actors or other creatives featured herein?
See the movie.

Are you part of a family looking to go see a movie that is entertaining to more than just those kids younger than 10-years-old?
See the movie.

Know people who like E-rated video games?
Then you... probably get the idea. See Sonic! It's a solid 75% on the movie review scale, an 80% if you are a fan of the Sonic series.

If any of the above sounds like you, then don't walk, but run to see the Sonic movie. And the next time there's a very good video game movie released, be more like Sonic The Hedgehog by remembering: you gotta go fast!

Editor's Note: Due to the coronavirus pandemic closing many theaters, Sonic The Hedgehog (2020) is currently available for digital purchase, with physical media releases slated for May 19th, 2020.



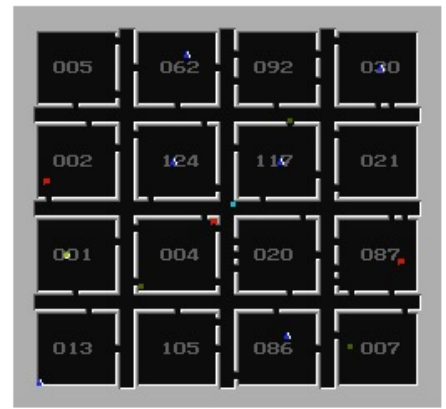
Forgotten Famicom - Route-16 Turbo

by [David Lundin, Jr.](#)

Earlier in this issue in Arcade Obscure I reviewed the arcade game Route 16, a game that had an American arcade release. As mentioned in that column, Route 16 had a reasonably direct, at least for the hardware, home conversion for the Emerson Arcadia 2001. In 1985 the game would return again, this time with an enhanced sequel on the Famicom appropriately titled Route-16 Turbo. It would be Sunsoft's second game on the platform, the first being a pretty terrible conversion of their arcade game Arabian released a few months earlier. Would Route 16 fare better or would Sunsoft enter the burgeoning Famicom market with two duds?

Rather than a direct conversion or a true sequel, Route-16 Turbo splits the difference and falls into the category of an enhanced remake. The core of the arcade original returns, as the player is tasked with collecting money bags and flags from within sixteen mazes (routes) connected with a grid of alleyways to complete a round. Functionally the game controls the same as well, with directional movement and a single button used to allow a speed increase at the expense of draining a fuel tank. The playfield dimensions have been reworked for horizontal aspect televisions but this doesn't change anything other than the individual mazes being more wide than they are tall.

Thankfully the graphics have been given an upgrade over the original, yet they remain relatively simplistic. The player now controls a blue sportscar and the enemy cars have been redesigned with a bit more of a sci-fi flare but the order of the day is still to avoid them at all costs. There is a lot more color throughout the game with a few different styles of barrier graphics and more detail in the items and objects. It's nothing incredible but well in line with the Famicom games of its day. My favorite new feature is a "zoom in / zoom out" effect when entering or leaving a maze that makes it far easier to gain your bearings when heading out into the overview screen.



Hitting switches to reveal a money bag (left), many routes are now narrow and winding (center), routes are numbered in overview (right)

Money bags return, this time bags of both dollars (200 points) and yen (500 points) must be collected in the mazes, in addition to checkered flags. The checkered flags no longer turn the enemy cars into money bags but instead turn them red and allow them to be temporarily tagged for points and stunned. I much prefer this visual change over how it was handled in the arcade original, as the cars changing into money bags didn't really make much sense. Oil slicks are present and generally alternate with money bags, requiring proper timing to grab, as driving over an oil slick will slow your car down for a few seconds as in the arcade. "?" marks are here as well, surrounded by switches as in the arcade original that will either change them into a bomb or a money bag. A collision with a bomb will unsurprisingly destroy your car, so dashing across the switches until a bomb turns back into a money bag is just as important as in the original. New in Route-16 Turbo are rings scattered about that can be collected for bonus points. While rings do not show up on the overview map, their collection is also not required to complete a round. The most welcome addition is a gas pump icon which will add 100 units to the fuel meter, finally providing a way to replenish the speed boost within a round. The creatures that roam the mazes and must be avoided are far more detailed than in the arcade original and have a bit more personality, although they still don't fit in with the rest of the game in my opinion.

Without a doubt the biggest enhancement in Route-16 Turbo is that of room design variety and challenge. As difficult as Route 16 may have been, the individual maze designs never really got all that interesting. Route-16 Turbo spices things up quite a bit with extremely varied maze designs and many routes that have long winding single paths from end to end. Although the game doesn't completely implement it, there is a lot of pseudo diagonal movement and the control input feels much more zippy and responsive than the arcade version. There are also mazes that have pictures or text in them to liven things up a bit, including a few that use manji, a common Buddhist symbol in many parts of Asia. Obviously this is a symbol with a generally different connotation in the west, although the The Legend of Zelda's third dungeon level is itself in the shape of a manji - and made it through localization unaltered. A few rounds in, tunnels begin to appear in the mazes. Beginning with only simple back and forth movements on a single screen, eventually they act as warps between different routes of a round, becoming almost confusingly complex in their implementation. The audio package has also been improved with a few different musical tracks depending on the selected difficulty. The music is nothing incredible but much better than what was heard in the arcade.



Some areas are whimsical (left), fuel replenishment is a new feature (center), enemy cars zero in (right)

Unfortunately what appears to be a game-breaking oversight made its way into the game, causing over half

of the game's twenty rounds to be inaccessible. From what I understand, Round 9 contains 13 items to be collected, however the game program expects the player to grab 15 items before it will complete the round. This makes the game get caught in an impossible to complete situation just before the halfway point. Thankfully a patch is available that fixes the error and allows all twenty rounds to be played as was intended. I've heard that if you play on the "Difficult" setting the Round 9 bug doesn't occur but honestly the game is way too frustrating on that setting, as the enemy cars zero in on you the moment you cross their paths.

As much as I enjoy Route-16 Turbo, I can completely understand many reasons why this game never appeared on the NES. Even though publishers would frequently reach back into the well of old Famicom releases when selecting games to publish in the west, the obscurity of the original Route 16 wouldn't have helped its case. The routes that feature manji barriers would more than likely have to be redesigned but considering the game would need to be reprogrammed to fix the Round 9 glitch, some work under the hood was already needed. Above all I believe the simplicity of the game would prevent any chance of Route-16 Turbo being an NES release candidate. While many simple arcade conversions were released on the NES, many to great success, this title has little to no name recognition to ride on. It's not Pac-Man, it's not Galaga, it's not Joust, it's not even Gauntlet or Millipede. Yet for a Famicom game of its vintage it is a perfectly serviceable game and an appropriate modernization of the original Route 16.

Get the Route-16 Turbo Level 9 Fix patch at Romhacking.net: <https://www.romhacking.net/hacks/2794/>



Found In Translation - Sakura Wars (Sega Saturn) Special Q&A With Noah Steam, Project Leader

by [Sean "Nz17" Robinson](#)

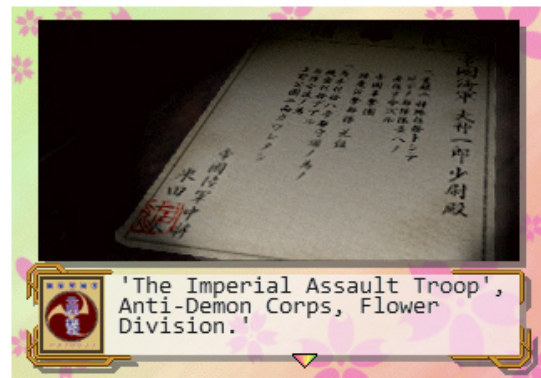
The epic endeavor to translate and localize **Sakura Wars 1** - an adventure game and strategy RPG for the Sega Saturn - from Japanese into English was a massive undertaking. It took a talented team of dedicated people nearly two full years to complete. Yet in December 2019 that's exactly what culminated: for the first time in history, Sakura Wars 1 - whether official or fan-powered - was finally totally playable completely in English, side paths, mini-games, and all.



No more were the days of having to use a printed walk-through in a binder alongside the video game running in Japanese on a home console, referring back and forth to the guide in order to understand either the next choice to make in the game or - if you were lucky - to read a fan-translation of the on-screen dialog along a selected path through the game. The problem with the old approach was not only was it difficult to balance the game controller and play the game while switching your attention back-and-forth to a printed or

digital walk-through, it only really allowed you to follow the one path taken by the fan who had written the walk-through. There was no freedom to follow the path you wanted to take. You couldn't take the obviously bad choice at a junction even if you wanted to see the hilarious results that could happen. If you wanted to follow a particular path in the dialog trees or visit certain locations at particular times and the guide's author didn't make the same choices, then you were playing "blind" if you didn't understand Japanese.

But now all of that has changed. A person can play *Sakura Wars 1* (*Sakura Taisen*) from start to finish independent of a prescribed walk-through guide, making the play-through truly his or her own. The group to thank for that is not Bernie Stolar's Sega of America of the 1990's nor Peter Moore's Sega of America of the late 1990's and early 2000's nor even the Sega of today. Those to thank are a non-profit, zealous group of both professional and aspiring translators and programmers. Their relentless pursuit of bringing Sega Saturn gems from a state of "Japan-locked" to one where anyone who can read English can play them has been a major boon to those who always wondered, "What if?" about the missing classics of the console. Many a person who read the Import Section of *Electronic Gaming Monthly*, *Game Informer*, *GamePro*, *GameFan*, *Official Sega Dreamcast Magazine*, or any of the others from the 1990's or early 2000's would see an article - or several - talking about the *Sakura Wars* games for the Sega Saturn and Dreamcast and lamenting how they and their steam-powered, demon-fighting, alternative-history world wouldn't be released in North America or Europe or anywhere else in English. Many times these magazines would even report about rumored localization of one or more of the games. When *Sakura Wars 1* and *Sakura Wars 2* were given enhanced ports for the Sega Dreamcast, the rumor mill said that these might see the light of day in the West given how awesome the originals were and how they were made even better for the Dreamcast.



Yet it would take until 2010 for any *Sakura Wars* games to be fully translated into English and released for home video game consoles in the West. *Sakura Wars V* (5) for the PlayStation 2 and Nintendo Wii - though the first game of the series to be translated into English or released for consoles in the West - was actually the third *Sakura Wars* game to get a western release. The first two were actually Russian releases of *Sakura Wars 1* and *2* for PC! While both are good games, their little-known official yet third-party localizations read like a machine translation or a game translated word-by-word using a Japanese-to-Russian dictionary. NIS America (NISA), the Western branch of Nippon Ichi Software, was the one to finally fully break the ice by bringing *Sakura Wars* to the rest of the West. Unfortunately, the task was much larger than the company estimated. The release was a ton of work thanks to the game's branching dialog trees, translating massive mountains of text, miscellaneous localization work, and recording the spoken lines from the game into an optional English dub. These things caused production to be delayed by two years past the first official estimate for release. While *Sakura Wars V* was an excellent game with a score of 81% on Metacritic for its PS2 release, its sales suffered from a release late in the life cycles of both PS2 and Wii, causing it to be overlooked by many gamers. By the time the game finally saw the light of day, it ended up being a financial loss for the company.

But that third endeavor was exactly what the series needed, for while it lost money for NISA, it proved wonderful for fans in both the short-term and the long-term. Not only did the fans get *Sakura Wars V*, an excellent introduction to the series, but it also proved to Sega that there was serious corporate and fan interest in the series outside of Japan. Several non-game English releases had been made by various western companies of things such as the Japanese comics, cartoons, television series, direct-to-home-video releases, and the theatrical movie in North America, Oceania, and Europe. Sega would announce in the late 2010's its intention to return to the series and release the sixth mainline *Sakura Wars* game, known as *Shin Sakura Taisen*, in Japan. The even better news was that, with NISA having acquainted even more gamers with *Sakura Wars*, Sega finally had the motivation which was required for it to release a *Sakura Wars* game in the West - and what's more, it would be localizing the newest *Sakura Wars* by itself too! Initially, the Western release was code-named Project *Sakura Wars* and later it was finalized as merely

Sakura Wars with no subtitle nor number to differentiate it from the original nor the rest of the series. Whatever one might call it, Shin Sakura Taisen was released in Japan in December 2019 and it was one of the best-selling games for not just December of that year but also one of the best-selling games for the entire calendar year in Japan - and now it is heading west!

So on Thursday, February 13th, 2020, Sega of America and Sega of Europe launched a coordinated release of dual trailers for the game on their YouTube channels. With that we found out a bevy of information including the game's new official Western moniker: Sakura Wars! Despite being a slightly odd choice for Sega to "reboot the numbering" by ignoring the previous dozens of side games and mainline entries via its name change announcement, we nonetheless had the excellent news that the project was right on track and that the game would be released worldwide earlier than expected on April 28th, 2020, for the PlayStation 4 in English, French, Italian, German, and Spanish!

But what about those previous games, the ones before, during, and after the release of Sakura Wars V? Well, there's no knowing what the future will hold for the rest of the series, but the good news is that the first game is playable today in English thanks to an unofficial patch which was made by "Noah Steam's" translation team. Perhaps with good wishes and a bit of fortune smiling down upon us, some kind souls will translate further games in the venerable series in the future. After all, we seem to be entering a new age of fan translations. Previously it seemed that most efforts were focused on localizing games that were overlooked for the NES and SNES. While those were noble efforts for deserving consoles, some might say that the attention paid to Nintendo's consoles has been disproportionately high. However these days, not only is more attention being paid to Sega's consoles than previously, but it seems that fan translators are giving more attention to the 32-bit and later consoles such as the Saturn.



That is where **Noah Steam**, a graduate of the DigiPen Institute of Technology (a video game university), and his ragtag team of volunteers enter the picture. During early 2018 a friend of his shared a game-play session of Sakura Wars with him. That experience left a lasting impression on him, one of fascination. That day lead him on a journey that would take up almost every ounce of his free time for two years of his life as he formed and then lead a motley crew of veterans from the video game and Japanese translation industries alongside hopefuls looking to break into professional translation or game programming.

To co-ordinate their efforts, the Web site SakuraWarsTranslation.com was registered on June 6th, 2018. This acted as their central hub to collaborate on the Sakura Wars translation project. But it also acted as a reference site. The crew was distributed around the world and it required guidance to make everything happen. The site acted as a depository for technical and translation information and guidance for the entire group so that their translation would form a cohesive whole. After all, there are any number of ways to translate something from one language to another, particularly when dealing with languages like English and Japanese. Therefore the team's official list of proper nouns was created for the group to follow to ensure consistency.

Eventually during 2018 or 2019 I was made aware of the group's efforts as I run a Web site called News from the Sakura Wars. Using Twitter as our medium, we were in frequent communications so that those who read my Web site or joined my Facebook group could stay aware of the awe-inspiring and rapid progress by the translation team. Many people had attempted to translate Sakura Wars in one way or another over the decades but this team was getting serious results! Part of that was the extensive research conducted by Noah Steam about the technical aspects of the Sega Saturn hardware. After all, he had to figure out both how the Saturn's hardware operated on a very technical level using documents from Sega and former Saturn developers which had found their way onto the Internet over the years; as well as how

the Japanese Sakura Wars game worked without any of its source code nor documentation to guide him.

~ ~ ~

Q & A with Noah Steam, Project Leader, conducted between December 22 - 30, 2019:

Sean Robinson: Would you be willing to answer questions about the translation project?

Noah Steam: Sure, I can answer some questions.

Sean Robinson: What license did you all choose for the translation? The Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)?

Noah Steam: There was no license chosen for the patch actually.

Sean Robinson: Why localize Sakura Wars?

Noah Steam: This all started when a friend of mine brought back a bunch of Saturn games from his trip to Japan in the spring of 2018. One of the games he picked up was the special edition of Sakura Wars, the one with the mouse. I had heard of the game of course and knew it was very popular in Japan but had never actually seen or tried it. I was immediately drawn in as I watched the first little bit of the game and wondered if it had a translation patch for it. Searching online I found that there had been a couple of attempts but unfortunately nothing had ever materialized. Also, none of these patch attempts were for the Saturn version. So out of curiosity I grabbed a copy of the game and started looking through the files to see if I could figure out where the text data was. As I slowly figured what needed to be done in order to patch the game, it became a kind of challenge to myself to see if I could actually patch this game.

Also I thought it would be great to have another Saturn title brought over for the western audience. Being a huge Sega and especially a Saturn fan, I wanted to help contribute to the preservation of the Saturn's legacy.



Sean Robinson: How did your previous fan translation and Sega Saturn work help with this project?

Noah Steam: I have never actually hacked a game before. I worked on Dragon Force 2, but with that one, Faust Wolf and his team had already figured out all of the data formats and their locations. All I had to do was write a tool to extract and insert the data (along with fixing a ton of pointers).

With this one, there was nothing. I had to figure out how to actually find all of the data within the game's files, how to debug the game, modify the game's code, and most importantly how the Saturn hardware worked.

I started off by reading through the entire VDP1 documentation from Sega. This was actually more enjoyable than it sounds. It was really neat to discover how this machine actually worked.

I think what helped most from having worked on Dragon Force 2 was knowing how to create a patched image of the game. Meaning which tools I needed, which format to create the image in, and the fact that I needed to copy the first 32k bytes of the original image onto my generated one. Things like that can take a long time to figure out when you're just doing a trial and error approach, so knowing all of this saved me a lot of time and headache.

Sean Robinson: What was the most difficult technical part of the localization?

Noah Steam: There were quite a few challenges here, and I'm not exactly sure which was the most difficult because each step of the way I'd think, "This has been the most difficult problem so far." So I'll list a few.

1. Figuring out where the text data was. This was the first step, and since I didn't have any idea how to actually debug the game at this point, this was pretty difficult. Cyber Warrior X had attempted to patch this game a long time ago, so I used some of his notes and comments about how the game stored text to finally crack this problem. Knowing what I know now about hacking Saturn games, this would've been pretty simple now, but at that point it seemed impossible.

2. Finding translators. This actually proved to be one of the most challenging parts of this project. I had reached out to people on RHDN, Twitter, and also to Kevin Walters who I knew from the Dragon Force 2 project. He had managed to assemble a small army of translators toward the end of that project so I thought the same could be done with Sakura Wars. Although he did get me in touch with lots of people who wanted to help, most of them didn't end up contributing. In the end, it was a small group of very dedicated translators who stuck around and saw the project through to the end.

3. Figuring out the kind of compression the game used. In Sakura Wars, a lot of the image data is compressed. For example all of the System UI, much of the Battle UI, parts of the mini-game text, and some other items. In order to extract and patch these, I needed to figure out what kind of compression the game was using so that I could un-compress and compress it. This took a while and I almost gave up a few times.

4. The battle menus. The original game has very small images that contain each option in the battle menu. The base options (Attack, Defense, etc.) were just 16x16 pixels and the sub-options were 32x16. There was no way to fit English text into those boundaries so I had to expand them. Unfortunately the game stores all of the battle sprites in memory using hard-coded values. So when I expanded the sizes of the menu options, there was a whole bunch of stuff I had to move in memory in order to make space.



Sean Robinson: What was the most difficult language or cultural part of the localization?

Noah Steam: Probably the translators would know more on this, but I know there were a lot of puns and plays on words which were difficult to translate. For example, all of the titles of the mini-games are plays on words referencing something in Japanese culture. When translating them, the pun would be lost, so we changed them a bit sometimes to try to maintain the play on words. For example, the name of Kanna's mini-game was a pun that referred to "Ah! My Goddess!" The pun was lost when translated, so we went with "Oh my children!" which was a reference to a western show.

There was also a lot of debate within the team about honorifics and especially what Iris would call Ogami. In Japanese she says "Oniisan" and no one wanted to translate it as "brother" [a common and general way to refer to a male of a certain age in Japanese culture regardless of who he is. -author] Originally we had chosen "Uncle Ichi" but that sounded awkward as well. Eventually someone threw out "Mon Frère" since Iris is French. I think it was actually a pretty clever solution.

Sean Robinson: How much more work was the project than you initially imagined?

Noah Steam: A lot! Ha ha ha! I had originally planned to just substitute in the translation from GameFAQs,

but I quickly realized that'd be impossible for a number of reasons. Also, I didn't originally plan to translate anything besides the main text of the game. I wanted to quickly throw out a patch so people could just follow the main story. I figured the system menus were all self-explanatory. But as the project went on, I kept patching more and more things and toward the end Trekkies Unite joined in as well. He started by adding subtitles to all of the movies and then helped me figure out how to find data that was being rendered using the VDP2 chip. This included the loading screens, title screens, and the initial boot up sequence starting from the opening credits to the animated Sakura Wars logos. So by the end of it, we ended up patching basically every bit of text and image that contained text. The only thing that remained was the end credits.

Sean Robinson: How many volunteers worked on this Sakura Wars localization project?

Noah Steam: Seventeen. The full list of credits can be found in the README file that's included in the patch.

Sean Robinson: How many total hours of work were poured into the project?

Noah Steam: I put in close to 600 hours, maybe more. It basically took all of my free time and also working late into the night towards the end when we were trying to wrap it up. I think the main translators probably put in at least a hundred hours each and Trekkies Unite also put in 100+ hours.

Sean Robinson: What should fans expect from the next software patches for Sakura Wars?

Noah Steam: I plan to fix the known bugs that are listed in the README. Notably the lip movement not working and the 1 frame sprite corruption when the player's mech is damaged. Bowl of Lentils is also continuing to improve the script of the game.

Sean Robinson: What happens now with the localization of Sakura Wars for Windows / PC?

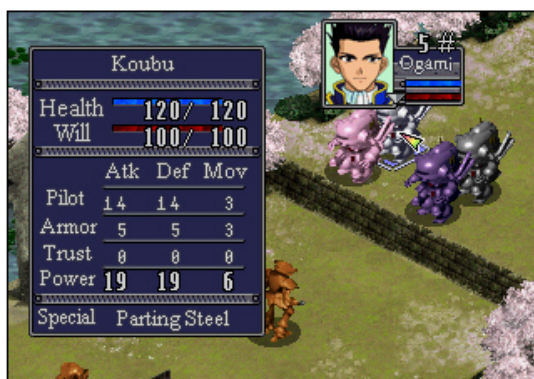
Noah Steam: I believe CJ Iwakura announced it on his Wordpress site, but the PC version is now axed. It would require a ton of work and it doesn't make much sense to do that now since the Saturn version can be played perfectly on PC as well via an emulator.

Sean Robinson: No license was chosen for the finished work of the localization such as a Creative Commons non-commercial license. Why was this? Does this mean that the terms of your copyright are, "All rights reserved?"

Noah Steam: I'm not too savvy with legal stuff. Do ROM patches have licenses? I didn't think it was necessary.

Sean Robinson: How has the enforcement of the not-for-profit status of the localization work been?

Noah Steam: Well, unfortunately we can't really enforce that. I patched the boot up credits screen just so I could add the "Not for sale" message in there and several of us on the team have spoken against the sale of the patched game on Twitter. Patches like these require a ton of time and effort to do and they're done for free and put out for free. To see people trying to make a quick buck by making a cheap printed cover and case is a bit sad.



Sean Robinson: What are your thoughts about the Sakura Wars 1 for Sega Saturn translation project now

that it is completed?

Noah Steam: I'm happy that it turned out as well as it did. As I stated earlier, my original goal was far less ambitious than what we managed to achieve at the end. Having subtitles in the movies was especially cool.

Sean Robinson: What is the next project for you?

Noah Steam: Catching up on my backlog of video games, TV shows, and books.

Sean Robinson: Thank you for your answers and time! Please expect to see the interview on the News from the Sakura Wars Web site as well as The Retrogaming Times. Have a wonderful day!

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Conclusion:

Sakura Wars 1, when patched with the English fan-made translation, runs wonderfully when using the cross-platform multi-console-and-computer emulator Mednafen. It is the emulator which the Sakura Wars Translation Project recommends. I tried it with ver. 1.22.1 running on Debian GNU/Linux 10 (Buster) and it works like a dream! In addition to Linux, Mednafen is also known to run with FreeBSD, NetBSD, OpenBSD, and Microsoft Windows. 32-bit and 64-bit binary executables for Windows as well as the source code to Mednafen are available to download on its Web site from the Releases section.

For the nicest experience, I recommend changing some of the settings for Mednafen. I suggest setting "cd.image_memcache" to "1" to pre-load the entire game into memory first to cut down on disk accesses which will provide the smoothest playback - especially for things like the game's real-time streaming video and audio. Also the setting "ss.stretch" can be set to "aspect" to scale the Saturn's image output to better fit a higher resolution monitor while maintaining the game's original aspect ratio. There are many more settings which can be found in the program's documentation. That way someone can customize Mednafen to match his or her exact preferences. The Mednafen emulator can even automatically create a save-state of the game whenever the program is quit and automatically load the save-state when the game is next resumed. Naturally the user also has the options of creating manual save-states as well as using the save system originally built into the Sakura Wars game. And don't forget that the project's finished work is fully compatible with a real Sega Saturn, so if you would prefer to play Sakura Wars on original Saturn hardware, there are ways to make that happen too!

I am quite looking forward to completing a run-through of Sakura Wars for the Sega Saturn this year!

Finally, I'd like to personally thank the entire crew of the Sakura Wars translation project for all of their work which they have poured into this endeavor over the years. We Sakura Wars fans have awaited this for decades! With the fan project having translated the first game into English and the newest game finally being released - even here in the West! - after the series was dormant for so long, this is like a "new spring" for Sakura Wars. Truly the team's work will benefit Sakura Wars fans, both existing and those-to-be, for countless years yet!

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Further reading:

Sakura Wars (Fan) Translation Project
<http://sakurawarstranslation.com/>

Mirror of the Sakura Wars English Fan Translation Patch Version 1.0 (for the Sega Saturn) hosted at the Internet Archive
<https://archive.org/details/sakurawarsenglishpatchv10>

Mednafen, the Multi-system Emulator
<https://mednafen.github.io/>

News from the Sakura Wars
<https://www.nz17.com/sakura-wars/>

Wikipedia article about the Sakura Wars series
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sakura_Wars

Sakura Taisen Wiki

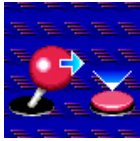
<https://sakurataisen.fandom.com/>

Official Sakura Wars Web Site (English)

<https://games.sega.com/sakurawars/>

Official Sakura Taisen Web Site with info about the old and new games and more (Japanese)

<https://www.sakura-taisen.com/>



The Controller Chronicles - Nintendo Famicom

by *Todd Friedman*

Before the NES (Nintendo Entertainment System) hit the states, Nintendo had a console in Japan that would start a revolution of gaming. It was called the Famicom, or the full name, Family Computer. In 1983 the console hit the homes of gamers in Japan. With Japanese design and colors, this console was a smashing hit with top arcade conversions and great graphics. Unlike the NES this console has the two controllers attached to the system. They can also be stored in slots on the side. One of the controllers has a microphone on it for voice activated games. The cartridges for the system are small in size compared to the NES version which launched in 1985. The popularity of the Famicom inspired a number of other companies to jump in and try their own hand at creating a console. It was indeed a pioneer of home consoles following the earlier crash of home gaming.



Unlike the angular corners of the NES controller, the Famicom has round edges for a smooth feeling. The color of the controller was a unique shade of red with black buttons. I can't think of any other controller with that shade of red. The buttons are identical to the NES which has the plus sign control pad with the A and B buttons on the right. Controller 1 (or I) has the standard Select and Start buttons Nintendo is famous for. As mentioned earlier, controller 2 (or II) has a built-in microphone which never really took off but was a profound idea. One big difference in the Japanese and USA version is the length of the cord of the controllers. The Famicom used a very short cord, with the NES controller cord being three times its length. For me personally that is a negative selling point for the Famicom.

Pro Baseball: Family Stadium by Namco was later named R.B.I. Baseball in North America. There are two modes of play, you can play against the computer or play against a human opponent. This was the most realistic looking and playing baseball so far at that time. It was very detailed on all aspects of the players, field and music. There are many different ways to control the game with the Famicom controller. The direction pad and buttons would depend on the situation, whether its offense or defense. The D-Pad controls the fielders on defense and the A button will throw the ball to the selected base. When pitching you can control the pitch based on the direction and speed as well as choose different pitches. On offense, the direction pad can help the runner get to the next base or direct where the ball is going to go when hit. This game became a hit in the USA and was the top sporting game for the NES at that time.



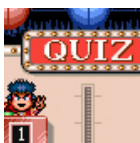
Family Stadium (left) was localized as R.B.I. Baseball (right)

Another game that made in mainstream after the Famicom release is Track and Field. The Japanese port was called Hyper Olympic. This version only included four of the six events from the arcade version. Later on, the NES version would include all the events from the Famicom version as well as its Famicom sequel, Hyper Sports. The exciting part of this console game was the competition. You can compete against the computer and go for world records or play against a friend in a 2-player battle for the gold. The key of this game and the controls depended on the event. The A and B buttons would be used to make your player run and the quicker the buttons were hit the faster the player would go. The direction pad would put action to the player, like jumping and throwing, depending on the sport. The arcade version of the game put players to the test and even had some special ways of hitting the buttons. The players would sometimes use a pen to quickly go back and forth to run faster. I admit I am guilty of that as a child. It was harder to do that with the Famicom controller and sometimes would scratch the buttons too. A definite top early release for the system.



Famicom Hyper Sports and Hyper Olympic were combined into Track & Field for the NES

USA gamers tended to stick with the NES during the 80's and even now in 2020 there are collectors and gamers who look for and hunt down the Nintendo Famicom system. It is a unique and ground-breaking system that started in Japan and changed the way the United States and the world played console gaming. Definitely worth the time to get one.



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:

02/28/2020 - WEEK 153

Question: The Super Hang-On song "Outride A Crisis" was apparently inspired by what Richard Marx song?

03/06/2020 - WEEK 154

Question: Long before his work on Sonic the Hedgehog, Yuji Naka got his start designing what SG-1000 game?

03/13/2020 - WEEK 155

Question: How is the flashlight obtained in the NES game Friday the 13th?

03/20/2020 - WEEK 156

Question: Pino and Acha are the stars of what Namco arcade game?

03/27/2020 - WEEK 157

Question: Following Midnight Landing (1987), Top Landing (1988), and Landing Gear (1996), what is the final game in Taito's "Landing" series?

04/03/2020 - WEEK 158

Question: The objective of Konami's arcade game Gyruss is a journey to what celestial object?

04/10/2020 - WEEK 159

Question: In Dig Dug, the appearance of bonus items is activated by performing what action?

04/17/2020 - WEEK 160

Question: On what date in Mike Tyson's Punch-Out!! did Little Mac become WVBA champion?

04/24/2020 - WEEK 161

Question: What country does the computer game D/Generation take place in?



The quest begins in Toy Pop (left) Gyruss' final objective is actually shown on the title screen (right)

Answers:

Week 153 Answer: Should've Known Better, off his self-titled debut album. ...seriously, listen to them back

to back, you'll be blown away.

Week 154 Answer: Girl's Garden.

Week 155 Answer: By lighting the all fireplaces located in the six large cabins.

Week 156 Answer: Toy Pop (1986).

Week 157 Answer: Landing High Japan (1999).

Week 158 Answer: The Earth.

Week 159 Answer: Dropping rocks.

Week 160 Answer: April 1, 1987 per the newspaper article shown after defeating Super Macho Man.

Week 161 Answer: Singapore.



Little Mac wins the World Video Boxing Association belt (left), D/Generation begins with a rooftop jet pack landing (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.](#)

I opened the last issue by talking about how the TurboGrafx-16 Mini console was just over the horizon and how so much other great stuff was just around the corner. Unfortunately a lot of that has been thrown into disarray now, including the international launch of the TurboGrafx-16 Mini. Virtually every convention I attend throughout the year has been deferred until 2021, and I've seen many doubling down on family, close friends, and staying connected by way of our current digital era. I think staying connected while distanced is going to continue to be the most important thing for the time being. Thank you for connecting with us and spending a bit of your time reading our newsletter.

Something cool that I want to share with everyone is that **Bandai Namco Entertainment is currently offering Pac-Man Championship Edition 2 (PS4 / Xbox One / Steam) for FREE until May 10th, 2020.** This is the full game download, no subscription service required, as part of their "More Fun for Everyone - at Home" campaign. [This official link has the details](#), additionally searching for the game on each respective platform's online shop will yield the free download result. You only have a few days left to grab the download but once you have it installed it's yours to keep. Thank you to Bandai Namco Entertainment for offering some free entertainment during this difficult time.



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