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Classic Gamer Magazine

Because newer isn't necessarily better.

**Premiere
Issue**

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COLECO
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Special Report:
World of Atari '98

Monkeying Around
Revisiting Donkey
Kong

Believe it or Not!
The Legend of BIRA BIRA

Lost Arcade Classic
WARP WARP

Chris Lion
Rediscovered his Atari

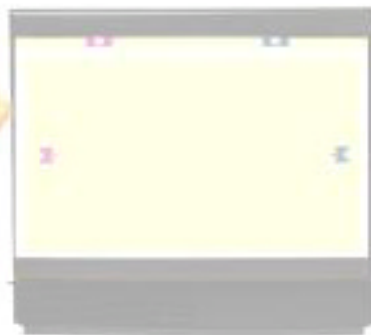


MATTEL ELECTRONICS
INTELLIVISION

ATARI 2600

IMAGIO

ATARI



- Game Reviews
- Latest News
- Your Guide to Halloween Games



In the beginning Nolan said,

"Let there be Pong".



So there was Pong.

Nolan saw that Pong was good.

And so did we.....

Classic Gamer Magazine

**Volume 1, Number 1
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PUBLISHER/EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Chris Cavanaugh

ASSOCIATE EDITOR
Sarah Thomas

STAFF WRITERS
 Kyle Snyder - ksnyder@internic.net
 Chris Lion - cmlion152@aol.com
 Patrick Wong - patrick707@aol.com
 Darryl Guenther - Turbo1970@aol.com
 Mike Genova - mj72w@aol.com
 Damien QuicksilverDamienq@yahoo.com
 D.B. Caulfield

LAYOUT/DESIGN
Chris Cavanaugh


PHOTO CREDITS
 Ryan Allshouse - Staff Photographer
 Pong Machine scan (page 1) courtesy Sean Kelly - Digital Press CD-ROM
 BIRA BIRA Photos courtesy Robert Batina

CONTACT INFORMATION
 Classic Gamer Magazine
 769 E. El Camino Real #268
 Sunnyvale, CA 94087-2919
 e-mail: cav@classicgamer.com
 on the web:
<http://www.classicgamer.com>

SPECIAL THANKS
 To Sarah. Thank you for all your help and encouragement. I love you!

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1st Issue Dedication

To my Mom and Dad who fed my video game addiction with an endless supply of cartridges and accessories. And also to my mom who had a never ending quest to obtain the family high Pac-Man score and who would consistently panic when the Beetles raced towards her in Lady Bug. And to my dad who could never quite get the hang of any of the games but would play anyway and be a



by
Chris Cavanaugh

Catching Up To Katz, Kunkel and Worley

In the early 80's I always looked forward to the next issue of "Electronic Games Magazine". The anticipation of waiting for the latest edition would nearly kill me month after month. There was no greater feeling at the time than seeing the new issue on the magazine rack at my local Long's Drugstore. Arnie Katz, Bill Kunkel and Joyce Worley delivered, without fail, an informative, entertaining and fun-to-read magazine month after month. After the great video game shake-out the mid-80's, Electronic Games released their final issue. Sadly, it was the end of an era.

As a video game player the mid-80's was a dark time. Atari was a shell of its former self, Activision started producing computer games in order to survive and the words "video game cartridges" became obscene words in the hard hit retail sector. After Nintendo and Sega reinvented the home video gaming industry and the Internet started to explode, people began remembering their gaming roots. We dragged our Atari 2600's out of attics and basements, dusted off our Colecovisions, and once again cursed at our Intellivision

controllers (and wished we had kept our Vectrex system!). The magic seemed to be back for us. But it never really left, did it? We just temporarily stored it away.

Once again we manned tanks in Combat and became Star Raiders. We swore along with Q*Bert, swung from vines with Pitfall Harry and wondered if we could still earn those Activision patches. "Doom and Quake who?", we asked ourselves. We even paid Pac-Man and E.T. a return visit on the VCS (although, understandably, probably not for very long.)

On the Internet we found we weren't alone. "Finally! Someone who understands my quest for game cartridges and lost systems!" Now we trade, sell and auction our classic favorites freely on the World Wide Web (and keep each other in line to make sure that we aren't ripping each other off!). We scour the flea markets digging through dusty boxes and when passing a garage sale we can't help but think, "I wonder if there's any rare cartridges there?". Of course, when we're done searching and weary from the day's hunt we log back on to the Internet and brag of our rare finds or

missed opportunities to envious and sympathetic ears.

Since the fun is back in playing these classics we thought it only wise to publish a magazine dedicated to the games of yore. Whether you are a hardcore collector, casual hobbyist or just like to play a game of Asteroids every now and again we hope you find this magazine fun, informative and entertaining. Inside you'll find news, reviews, humor, opinion columns, where to find the best classic gaming websites and of course, "The Legend of BIRA BIRA".

While we can only hope to achieve the greatness of Katz, Kunkel and Worley we hope you enjoy this first issue of Classic Gamer Magazine of which we hope to be many more.

-Chris Cavanaugh
Editor-in-Chief

CGM



SEND US YOUR LETTERS

and we'll answer them here!

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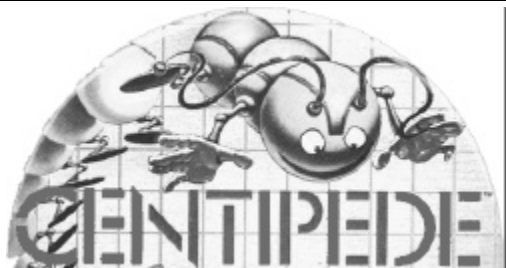
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CLASSIC GAMER NEWSWIRE



HASBRO INTERACTIVE ACQUIRES ATARI GAME PROPERTY ASSETS!

Hasbro Interactive acquired the assets of the Atari Division of JTS Corporation. These properties and assets include over 75 games properties including **Centipede, Missile Command, Pong, Breakout and Tempest.** The new division will be known as Atari Interactive, Inc.

Centipede will be released in the Fall of '98 for both the PC and Sony PlayStation. The new Centipede will be an adventure set in a 3D world giving the player an entirely new outlook on the older gameplay. Players will be able to choose Arcade Mode or Adventure Mode. The Arcade Mode will play exactly like the classic Centipede but will have a 3D perspective. The Adventure Mode will allow the you to take on the enemies face to face and to choose unique perspectives to help in your quest to destroy the marauding insects.

Hasbro Interactive are also the creators of the remake of "Frogger" available for the PC and Sony PlayStation.

For more information visit them on the Internet at: <http://hasbrointeractive.com>

ACTIVISION TO RELEASE ATARI 2600 TITLES FOR SONY PLAYSTATION

Thirty classic Atari 2600 games will available for the Sony Playstation in late Fall at a value price. The compilation of titles will include games such as **Pitfall, River Raid, River Raid 2, Star Master, Kaboom!, H.E.R.O., Chopper Command, Crackpots** and Imagic's **Atlantis** for the retail price of \$29.95.

New features, including a 'save game' option will be added on.

"For the first time, Playstation gamers will be able to experience the magic and fun of these original classic arcade games," said Robert Kotick, Chairman and C.E.O, Activision, Inc.

For more information visit them on the Internet at: <http://www.activision.com>



**Activision's
Kaboom!**



ASTEROIDS, SPACE INVADERS AND BATTLEZONE II HEADED FOR HOMEFRONT COURTESY OF ACTIVISION

Following up on their hit, "Battlezone" for the PC, Activision, in conjunction with Pandemic Studios, are developing **Battlezone II** for the PC. You can also join their "Hit Team" at <http://www.pandemicstudios.com> to be consulted for ideas, changes and playing styles to be incorporated into Battlezone II.

Recently, Activision acquired the worldwide publishing rights (except Japan) from Taito to produce games based on the hit classic, **Space Invaders** for the PC, PlayStation, Nintendo 64 and Nintendo Gameboy. Activision has promised to update the aging game with a special effect face-lift to exploit the latest technologies.

A new and improved **Asteroids** is also on the horizon for home systems. Updated graphics and gameplay as well as a first or third player point of view are some of the improvements being made. The arcade original will be hidden in the game.

DIGITAL PRESS CD-ROM VOLUME II AVAILABLE CHRISTMAS 1998



Sean Kelly announced that Volume II of the Digital Press CD-ROM could be available as soon as this Christmas. In Volume I, Sean amassed an amazing collection of game info, rare screenshots, and game manuals for just about every classic video gaming system. For Volume II Sean promises updated information, more screenshots and over 20 new classic gaming commercials, all viewed via your computer's browser. To obtain more information, or to order Volume I, you can contact Sean Kelly via e-mail at:

skelly@xnet.com
or visit his website at:
<http://www.xnet.com~skelly/>

ATARI ANTIC PROJECT NOW ON THE WORLD WIDE WEB



Kevin Savetz has acquired the rights to publish the library of **Atari Antic** and **STart Magazines** on the Web. These magazines focus on the 8-bit Atari Computers popularized in the 80's. His goal is to publish every magazine (currently at 12!) and he is seeking volunteers to help him in his quest.

You can visit his website at:
<http://www.atarimagazines.com>
or contact Kevin at:
Savetz@northcoast.com

Visit us on our website!
<http://www.classicgamer.com>

CLASSIC VIDEO GAMES COLLECTOR'S GUIDE VOLUME V AVAILABLE SEPTEMBER 30TH

This guide is your "ultimate source for classic gaming" according to Joe Santulli, Editor of the **Digital Press** fanzine. This print version will be 300 pages in length and will feature classic 8-bit systems including Atari, Bally's and Channel F and newer systems such as the Sega Master System. The guide will be priced at \$20.00 for US and Canada. To order the guide contact Joe Santulli or send check or money order payable to Joe Santulli at:

Digital Press
44 Hunter Place
Pompton Lakes, NJ 07442

You can also e-mail the Digital Press gang at:
digitpress@ix.netcom.com

or visit them on the web at:
<http://www.digitpress.com>

NYKO TECHNOLOGIES LAUNCHES 'CLASSIC TRACKBALL CONTROLLER' FOR SONY PLAYSTATION AND NINTENDO 64

With Hasbro's Centipede coming to the Sony PlayStation, NYKO announced the debut of the Classic TrackBall controller to honor this title.

The design is based on the original molds of the first Atari TrackBall to give it authenticity and will also include a Turbo Fire feature.

Classic Gamer Magazine was given the opportunity to get their hands on the prototype when it was unveiled at the World of Atari 98 show.

The TrakBall itself proved to be very responsive on the two PlayStation games we played, namely Centipede and Missile Command. Although a third button would be a bonus for playing Missile Command, we were very impressed with what we saw.

The proposed retail price is \$29.95.

WORLD OF ATARI 98 VIDEO TO BE MADE AVAILALE



Couldn't make it to the Vegas extravaganza? Just want a visual souvenir of the event? Mark Santora is making videotapes available via mail order for those interested.

This high quality tape will cover the various guest speakers, direct feed of the Battlesphere competition, as well as the dealer floor and the auction.

Each tape will be NTSC version and priced at \$25.00, which includes the shipping cost.

Visit Mark's website for learn more information or to fill out the order form:

<http://home.earthlink.net/~santora/woav.htm>

NINTENDO 64 RELEASE SCHEDULE FOR UPDATED AND CLASSIC RELATED GAMES



November

11/17/98 - Star Wars: Rogue Squadron (LucasArts/Factor 5)

11/17/98 - Superman: The Animated Series (Titus)

11/24/98 - The Legend of Zelda: The Ocarina of Time (Nintendo)

4th Quarter '98

TBA - Lode Runner 64 (Big Bang)

1st Quarter '99

TBA - Castlevania 64 (Konami/KCCK)

TBA - Gauntlet Legends (Midway/Atari Games)

4th Quarter '99

TBA - Asteroids 64 (Crave/Activision/Utopia Technologies)

TBA - Battlezone 64 (Crave/Activision)

TBA - Paperboy 64 (Midway/High Voltage Software)

Rumored in 1999:

TBA - Magical Tetris Challenge Featuring Mickey Mouse (Capcom)

TBA - Space Invaders 64 (Activision/Taito)

TBA - Super Mario RPG 2 (Nintendo/HAL)

TBA - Tetris 64 (Nintendo/Blue Planet Software)

TBA Beyond 1999

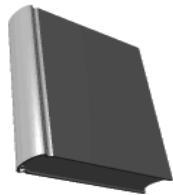
TBA - Donkey Kong 64 (Nintendo/Rare)

TBA - Mario Artist Series (64DD) (Nintendo)

TBA - Nintendo 64 Disk Drive

TBA - Sim City 64 (64DD) (Nintendo/HAL)

TBA - Super Mario 64 II (64DD) (Nintendo)



Book Bytes

Reviewed by Patrick Wong

Joystick Nation (Herz)
 Joystick Nation: How VideoGames
 Ate Our Quarters, Won Our Hearts,
 And Rewired Our Minds
 by J.C. Herz
 230 pages. Little, Brown and
 Company. \$23.95

It would seem videogames are marketed primarily to males and whenever a female shows interest, every guy should stand, take notice and wonder, 'what's this girl thinking about?'. In "Joystick Nation" J.C. Herz describes how videogames played an important part in her childhood and tells how "videogames ate our quarters, won our hearts and rewired our minds."

When first glancing at the pages, you'll immediately assume that "Joystick Nation" is more of a look back at video games of the 80's rather than a history of the video game world. Herz fondly remembers, "I was toggling a joystick before I learned to read, mastered Breakout stratagems before memorizing the multiplication table, conquered Asteroids before solving the mystery of long division." She would definitely fit the profile of a hardcore gamer.

However, almost immediately after that, the book turns into an analysis of how videogames relate to other media and everyday life. She observes, "Videogames are

perfect training for life in fin de siecle America, where daily existence demands the ability to parse sixteen kinds of information being fired at

you simultaneously from telephones, television, fax machines, pagers, personal digital assistants, voice messaging systems, postal delivery, office e-mail, and the Internet." Ms. Herz is obviously a very busy woman.

She begins at the birth of video games when a Digital Equipment Corporation computer landed on the doorsteps of MIT and a bunch of students collaborated in their spare time to program a game called "Space War." From there the book lays out a timetable

covering almost everything; starting from the legendary Atari 2600 up to today's revolutionary Nintendo 64. She then follows up with a chapter in which she describes gametypes by their categories: Action, Adventure, Fighting and so on and sees fit to include a few quick reviews on some of the various games, "Batman Returns (a good Super NES and Sega game), Bram Stoker's Dracula (a bad SNES and Sega game), Home Alone and Home Alone 2 (awful), Hunt for Red October (worse), Rambo 3, The Last Action Hero, Hook, Robocop and the Rocketeer (ugh), Wayne's World (bogus)."

The author tries to cover as many topics about modern gaming as she can. Everything from the

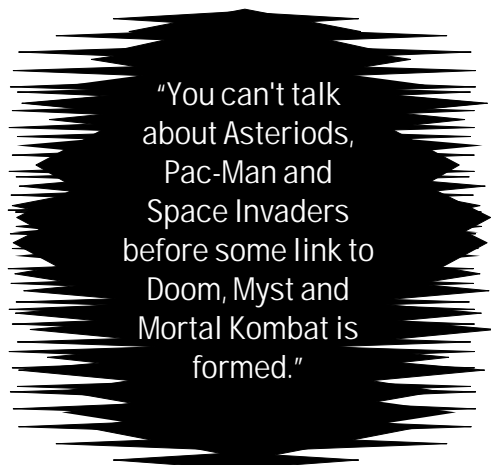
dark, gloomy pinball parlors of yesterday to the evolution of today's neon sign covered video arcades. It brought back memories of how kids used to beg to be left at the video arcade at Coney Island while their parents went on rides.

There is also a discussion about Western and Eastern cultures where she tries to break down the primary differences between DC/Marvel comic art to Japanimation art. Although in the end she admits, "Of course, to kids playing Comix Zone or Marvel Superheroes or Tekken 2, the distinction between comic book and videogame or Asian and Western is completely

irrelevant. The only categories they recognize are "fun" and "not fun".

She leaves no stones unturned, as there is even a chapter on Boys vs. Girls. She plays Pop Psychologist when she describes a woman's response to beating a level in the game Tetris, "Yes! The Mess is vanishing! I can make the Mess disappear! It's not about blowing things up. It's about cleaning things up. Tetris speaks volumes about the difference between women and men vis a vis videogames." She may be right. All I have to say is remember Tetris 2? If Tetris is for women than Tetris 2 is definitely for men. Use bombs to clean up the mess! To quote Tim Allen, "More Power! More Power!"

There is, however, a disturbing



chapter on Videogame Porn where she writes, "Not coincidentally, the price and variety of plastic-sealed videogame periodicals corresponds to the shrink-wrapped magazines on the other side of the newsstand, the ones that artfully pose topless nineteen-year-old covergirls. It's curiously symmetrical: Nintendo Power, Game Pro, Flux, Playboy, Hustler, Juggs." Later in the chapter, there seems to be some underlying sarcasm when she describes her visit to Nintendo. The author seems to resent Nintendo's wholesome family oriented, kid-friendly environment and goes on to describe Nintendo's tip line as the flip side of a phone sex line. It's disturbing because the Nintendo tour doesn't seem to belong in the chapter yet because it's there it leaves you with the impression Nintendo Power will eventually lead to Juggs Magazine and calling

Nintendo's Hotline will lead you to porno 900 number addiction. At least it seems mapped that way.

For those readers looking for a book about someone reminiscing about videogames' glory days, "Joystick Nation" includes a few. She describes a walk down memory lane while visiting the American Museum of the Moving Image, "You look up from a game of Galaxian half expecting to find yourself back in the mall as a teenager, surrounded by shanky metalhead kids in their Van Halen T-shirts and black rubber bracelets." Everyone has to remember those black rubber bracelets! She then tells us of how the phrase "YOWIE MOOEY!!!" became her and her brother's sibling code word for the last moment before a situation falls apart in a game. Kind of like how I would say "OH NO!!" and then "BOOM" the game was over.

If "Joystick Nation" were to have another name, it would be "JoyPad Nation." As historically accurate as the book may be, it doesn't go into the old Atari games nearly enough. You can't talk about Asteriods, Pac-Man and Space Invaders before some link to Doom, Myst and Mortal Kombat is formed. There's a continued blurring of arcade and video games to computer games that's likely to continue. It used to be so easy to talk about Atari games and not have to bring up PC games. Herz's "Joystick Nation" blurs the picture even more.

CGM



Jerry G's Classic Gold Video Game Collectibles

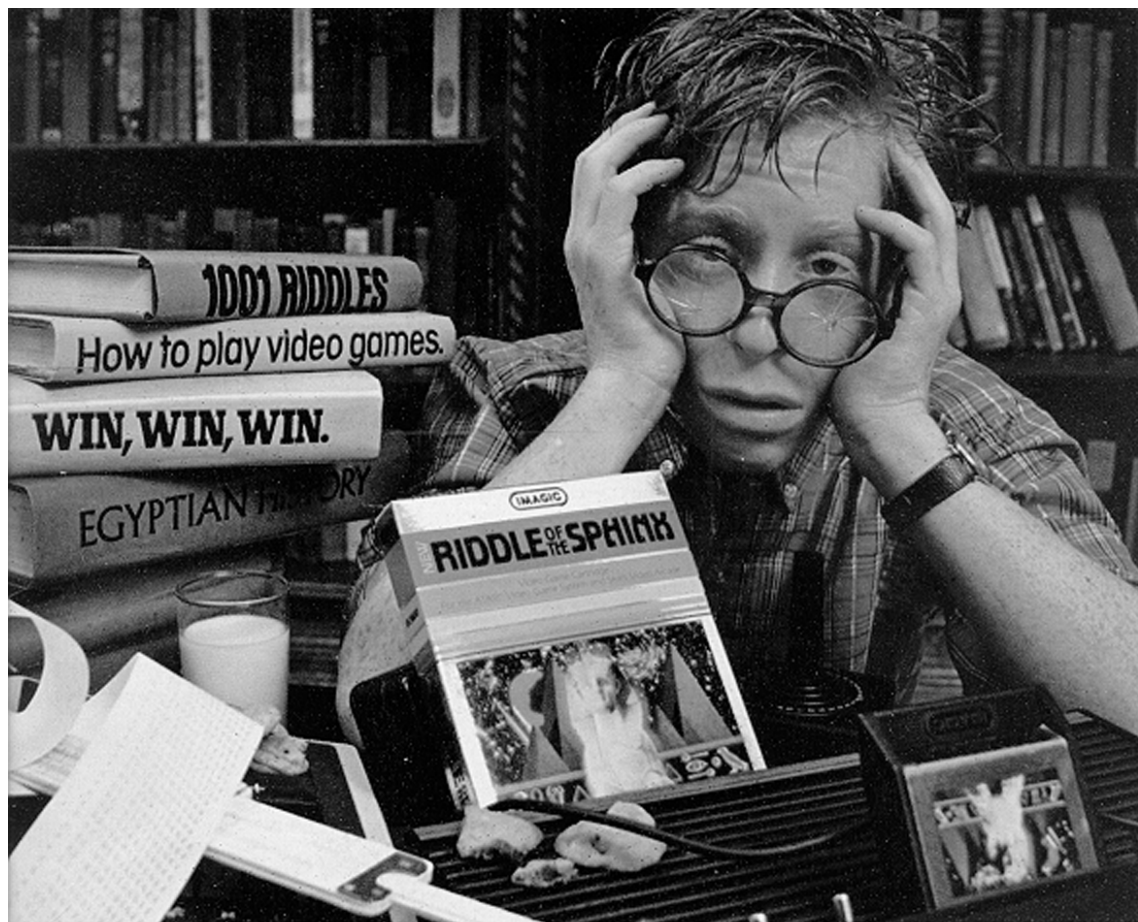
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Classic Ad 1982



GARY LARSEN THOUGHT HE HAD ALL THE ANSWERS.

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not have the correct offering. Ra was not satisfied. Gary had to go back and try again.

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The Atari 5200

a closer look



by Patrick Wong



tari's motto was "Power without the Price"; it should have been "Power at a Price."

When Atari took their low-end computer, the Atari 400, gave her a facelift, a number twice the value of the 2600 and called her their "Super System", they also gave her an enormous price - \$299.95 (I guess it also had to cost twice as much as the 2600). But Atari promised she would be worth every penny and of all Atari's millions of promises, it was probably one of the few that Atari kept to their loyal supporters.

The 5200 was Atari's answer to the Colecovision. From the second you picked it up at Toys R' Us, you knew you had (as Atari

put it) a "Super System" in your hands. It came packaged in a huge box. When you opened the box and picked up the system, you could feel the power in your hands. Size? This system was BIG. Twice the size of the 2600. She had a sleek, black design with a silver strip running across the middle of her, four controller ports (the later models were made with two) and a storage place at the top of the system where you would store your controllers when they weren't in use, hidden from sight. If you put the 5200 next to the old style Sega Genesis and asked someone which one looked "State of the Art", chances are they would choose the Atari.

The controllers looked futuristic

as well, although they ended up being some of the worst controllers ever made. Atari made sure everyone was aware that this system had a "Pause" button on the controllers which was unheard of unless you owned an Intellivision.

The moment you turned it on, you were greeted by a giant, multi-colored Atari Fuji; You knew it was something special.

The games were equally as special. The "Super System" brought the arcade games home to you. Even though the Colecovision may have had slightly better graphics, the Atari 5200 had the big name titles and

something the Coleco games didn't feature (and which no arcade experience would be without in the 80s): the intermissions.

Who could ever forget how awesome it was to beat the strawberry board in Pac-Man and be awarded by the animated intermission featured in the arcades? Who could ever forget the awe of playing a Pac-Man game that actually resembled the arcade version? Everyone remember how awful yet fun the 2600 version was? If the 5200 would be remembered for anything, it would be that it was the first system to bring faithful translations of the arcade home to you.

From Defender to Dig Dug to Galaxian to Joust to Mario Bros. to Ms. Pac-Man to Moon Patrol to Pac-Man to Pengo to Pole Position and Vanguard, the Atari 5200 had the big

arcade games that Colecovision didn't. Add Atari's enormous trakball along with Centipede, Millipede or Missile Command and you'd swear you brought the arcade experience home. Yes, the 2600 had the same titles as well but it didn't stand up to the 5200's graphics and sound. Games like Pengo and Vanguard were almost pixel perfect translations of the arcades.

Atari also brought us a special feature that made the 5200 "State of the Art" among other 8-bits of the time: Voice synthesization without a voice synthesizer. The voice synthesizer in Atari's RealSports Baseball helped make America's favorite past time that much more enjoyable. To actually hear the balls and strikes being called out was like hearing words in the early motion pictures reels. A small step towards bringing us something we'll later call "Multimedia". Sure, there were games that featured synthesized speech at the time but none that were featured in a baseball game. This made it all the more significant because it was a glimpse into the future as to what sport games were going to offer - not just hearing balls and strikes but hearing commentary and line-ups as well.

There were also many little things that may have gone unnoticed by gamers. How many remember the controller attachment that allowed two controllers to be held together to play Atari's Space Dungeon? One to move, one to shoot. It may not sound like much but there was something about it that made the

"The Atari 5200 had the big arcade games that Colecovision didn't."

MY 25

By Damien Quicksilver

Let's Get Back to Basics!

Let's begin at the beginning...the Atari 2600. Here we have a system that brought gamers the one and only thing they wanted: Games. Now I know perhaps that statement seems like one that could be taken for granted, but stop and think about it for just a moment. It didn't have fancy graphics, it didn't have a tricky controller. It just had games.

People passed many hours on Space Invaders, Breakout, and Pac-Man, just to name a few. (I know there are many of you avidly against the Atari 2600 Pac-Man, but admit it, you played it... a lot!) Sure, the resolution was low, the colors were few, and the sounds were noise. But just as it is with someone whom you truly love, one could easily see past the flaws of the oyster to find the perfection of the pearl.

So all we have are games. We have a video game system, played by game players, who play games. Do you really need anything else? Well unfortunately it seems that there are quite a few people who are eager to answer, "Yes". So with this thought begins the advancement of technology, and the de-evolution of home video games.

It seems a common claim (and perhaps a misconception) is that advancements in gaming technology are made with the intent to bring the arcade into the home - though they never have quite hit the mark on that one. (Neo-Geo made a strong attempt, but at an arcade price as well) So if the gaming industry is unable to bring the arcade into your home, then how is a system to stand out? Enter the gimmick.

When the desire for arcade quality graphics becomes a higher

priority than arcade quality gameplay - the de-evolution truly begins. The 2600 was followed-up by the Odyssey's keyboard, the Intellivision's disc controller, the 5200's analog controller with keypad, and the voice synthesizers on both Odyssey and Intellivision. All-in-all, it got to the point where the gaming industry was a confusing mess; flashy graphics surrounded by gimmick...and very little substance at that. Thus occurs video armageddon - destruction of an industry that was really not worth saving.

History has always repeated itself. Every civilization has crumbled, and new ones always rise in their place. So it should have been no surprise when a new force came in to rebuild the gaming industry. Enter Nintendo.

The Nintendo Entertainment System (NES) was the new standard in simplicity. Yes, it was advanced. It had more colors and higher resolution than previous game systems, but it wasn't gimmicky. Sure, the controller had four buttons, but it was basic. Two action buttons seemed just right. The start and select were really nice to have as well. (I really wish the 2600 had select and reset on the controller).

So what else did we want? Games, of course! And the NES delivered quite a few of those. We

got large, multi-level games. These levels weren't just faster, or different colors, they were totally different in graphics and design. We got games with a goal other than just a high score. Don't site previous examples for me...the point is that the new standard in gaming wasn't an exception...it was a rule.

Nintendo wasn't alone as the same era had similar systems with the Sega Master System and the Atari 7800. But neither of these systems could compete with Nintendo's sheer number of games. The NES reigned supreme and it seemed like it would be that way forever. But flash and gimmick entered the picture again.

The Genesis and TG-16 were all flash. They really weren't too bad, but again the emphasis was lifted off of game play. Not to be outdone, Nintendo introduced the Super NES.

Now...about the SNES. First, the positive side...they made a damn good arcade port of Street Fighter II. Now, for the problem - MODE 7!!! This really bugged me. This was the first true union of flashy graphics and gimmick. Which, of course equals - Gimmicky graphics! When combined with annoying buttons it marked

I know there are many of you avidly against the Atari 2600 Pac-Man, but admit it, you played it... a lot!



lost Arcade Classic



by Kyle Snyder



When you ask the average Joe or Josephine what video game they associate most with the early 80's, you get a variety of answers...Space Invaders, Donkey Kong, Asteroids, Galaga, and of course, Pac-Man and his family. Not ONCE will you ever hear somebody excitedly shout..."OH YEAH MAN!!!! WARP WARP WAS AWESOME!!!!!"

This is not to say that this game has nothing going for it at all...in fact the game play and origin is rather interesting for such an unknown game.

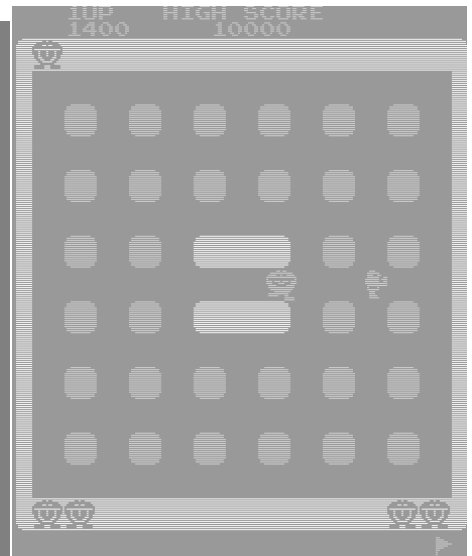
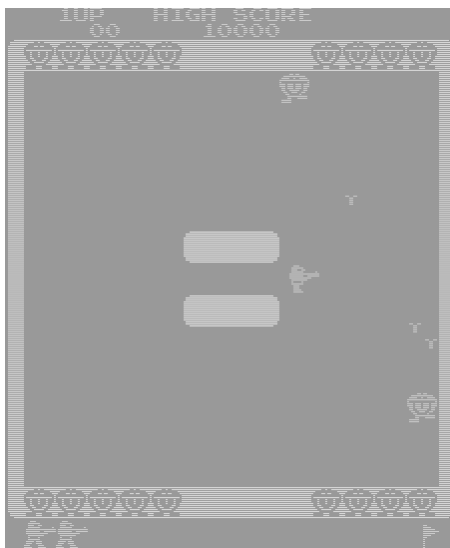
It SHOULD have been big... It had a lot going for it. Imagine this... Spring 1981...Namco, the highly successful Japanese programming powerhouse just made fortunes for Bally/Midway in 1979 and 1980 with Galaxian and PacMan, respectively, and were the hot ticket of the industry. Then there was Rock-Ola, one of the biggest manufacturers of jukeboxes the music industry had ever seen. With video games being at the biggest

high the industry would ever see, it was only natural that Rock-Ola would see opportunity for expansion into the arcade market. So, they contacted Namco for the exclusive rights to manufacture the "next mega-hit" from our Japanese friends. Seemed like a sure thing.

The game that resulted is a surreal maze & shooting game wherein you control a little spaceman with a four way joystick. You began play in a large open field with the only walls being the outer borders, and two large rectangles that formed a hallway in the center of the field. These rectangles would flash from time to time with the word Warp. Hence he title "Warp Warp". If you entered this warp hallway during the time it flashes, you are transported to a basic maze comprised of evenly placed squares, much like Exidy's Targ. You could "toggle" back and forth in between these two screens each time you entered the flashing hallway. Of course, there has to be some kind of baddie, or there wouldn't be too much of a game...

From out of the corners, strange creatures emerge one at a time, resembling giant walking tongues or pointy headed spiders. The object is to destroy these monsters with your gun before they destroy you. Pretty basic pathos for an early video game. Of course, the uglies speed up and take on a rather frantic abruptness to their movements which adds to the challenge. Oh yes, they also shoot at you in addition to chasing you down.

Unfortunately, the game never saw a great deal of success. I never saw this game in person, and I only discovered this game when I saw a wrestling game called Mat Mania in a white cabinet with Warp Warp artwork on the side. Then, I decided to do research in back issues of RePlay magazine to find out about this lost classic. I found an article with the presidents of Rock-Ola and Namco shaking hands over the contract for the "next big thing". It's a shame really. (Funny that the next hits from



FOCUS ON Intellivision



Pac-Man™

Atarisoft

Released 1983

Also Released Under INTV Brand

System: Mattel Intellivision

Pac-Man is quite possibly the most translated arcade game of all time. Versions appeared on nearly all home platforms from the Atari (2600 and 5200), Commodore Computers, the NES, the Game Boy, and recently, the Playstation. One of the better incarnations however, is largely overlooked...the

Atarisoft Pac-Man for the Mattel Intellivision (later, INTV would publish the identical game without the "Atarisoft" logo on the opening screen).

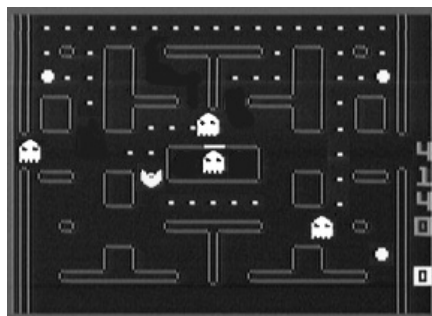
Atarisoft's Pac-Man was released right before the great crash of 1983, so not many collectors got a chance to see it shine. In 1983, the main focus was the Atari 5200 versus the Colecovision, and the poor Mattel console was left in the dust.

Nevertheless, Atarisoft translated a wonderful version of Namco's dot-gobbler. The graphics are very close to the

arcade. The maze is a little stunted as the sprites are rather large, but the walls are the familiar blue solid walls of yore. Pac-Man is the roundest that I have seen him appear on a classic console, and the ghosts are well done, although the eyes are still not quite right. The fruits actually look BETTER than the arcade versions! Check out the light gradation on the oranges of the third and fourth rounds.

Possibly the most welcome and unexpected detail comes after two boards are cleared! Yes, Atarisoft included the intermissions!! In the first intermission, Pac-Man is chased right to left by Blinky, and then emerges as a HUGE Pac-Man (Super Pac-Man's first cameo?) chasing the now scared stiff blue ghost! The later intermissions are intact as well, and produce the same chuckles as their arcade counterparts did.

My only real complaint is that the Intellivision's disc controllers are not well suited to a game of this variety. My advice would be to comb the flea markets and thrift stores for the snap-on joystick topper, as it makes this game



exemplary.

You can't go wrong with a little Pac-Man, and Atarisoft's Intellivision adaptation definitely delivers!

Overall Rating: ***

Reviewed by: Kyle Snyder

Activision

The Dreadnaught Factor™

Copyright 1983

System: Mattel Intellivision

Definitely "borrowing" from the Star Wars saga, The Dreadnaught Factor allows you to go toe-to-toe with hulking space cruisers while piloting your *Novaray Hyperfighter*.

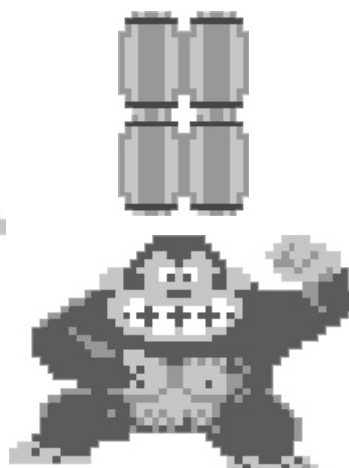
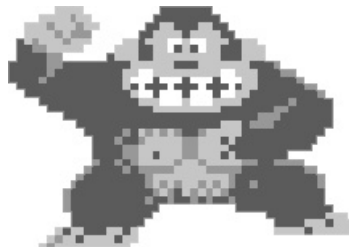
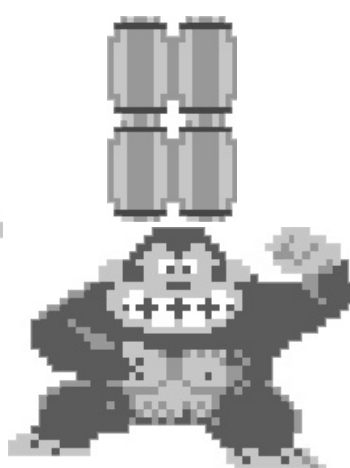
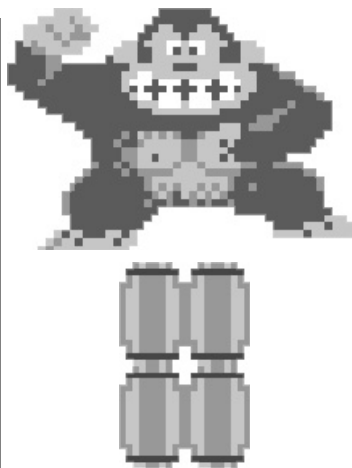
These Zorban Dreadnaught Battlecrafts are making a path for a stargate so they can wreak havoc on the planet of Terra. Your only hope is to pilot a Terran fighter through the stargate and battle the juggernauts head on.

You begin with ten Novaray Hyperfighters in your arsenal. As the Dreadnaught ship lumbers slowly from the right side of your screen, your ship passes over it "head on" from the left. Your goal is to destroy the ship by dropping bombs on the sixteen energy vents located throughout the vessel while avoiding and destroying their gun batteries with your laserfire. Once beyond the ship you will return by passing through the stargate, appearing on the left of the screen to meet up with the now weakened Dreadnaught. Each time you fly over, the Dreadnaught will get closer to accessing the stargate which would result in the destruction of Terra. (Tip: Destroy the ships engines, located in the rear, to slow its progress)

Although this is one of the more difficult Intellivision games to locate, I would recommend tracking it down as it is definitely a gem.

Overall Rating: ****

Reviewed by: D.B. Caulfield



by
Darryl
Guenther

Doin' The DONKEY KONG

Back in the day when arcades and corner markets were after school hangouts, one could expect to hear the “whacka-whacka” sounds of Pac-Man, the lasers firing up in Defender and the crackling, shooting sound of Centipede. There weren’t any life-like PCM samples or 3D graphics. That was much of the charm of video games of the past; they were unique to themselves. They were characters that only lived in that world. These games generated sounds that did not exist until the game was created. Donkey Kong, by Nintendo, was one of those games. It had the unique, cutesy sounds necessary for a good game. However, not only did it have the sounds, it also had the cute on-screen characters. In fact, a couple of the characters were to be much more. They became mascots that have stood the test of time.

Back in 1981, Nintendo released Donkey Kong, the mistranslation of “Stubborn Monkey” in Japanese. It is the brainchild of Shigeru Miyamoto. Mario, originally labeled “Jumpman”, was said to have been modeled after Shigeru’s landlord. He didn’t actually become officially labeled as Mario until 1982, where he became the bad guy, capturing Donkey Kong in Donkey

Kong Jr. Later on, Mario would star with his brother, Luigi (not “Loogy” for my Jr. High peers of the time), in Mario Bros. Then he went on to star in the Super Mario series. Donkey Kong himself has continued on also. He now stars with all of his friends in the Donkey Kong Country series of games.

Now that we’re all familiar with



Arcade

the characters, let’s talk about the game. Donkey Kong was not just based on cute, detailed characters, music, and interesting sound effects. It was much more! The entire package was put together in such a way, that it seemed to come to life. The detail ranged from the actual characters to the game play elements. Donkey Kong seemed to have a mind of

his own, throwing barrels whichever way he deemed necessary. The fireballs (all levels except “rivets” screen) and firefoxes (“rivets” screen) roamed in a very unpredictable manner (such as fire does). Other objects such as springs and mud pies were not “alive”, but they were kept in motion by the forces around them. All of the elements fit together so well, that it was easy to be swept away into that world.

Much detail was also placed on control. It was very easy to find the bottoms of the ladders. Mario could also jump off a structure and spring back from any of the outer edges. Timing was the essence, as one never knew what pattern the barrels could end up in by the time they reached the player. Many of these details were left out of the home system conversions that followed.

One could leap off the end of a structure only to be bounced back up from the edge in the arcade version. Many home versions (except a few by Atarisoft) just ricocheted one backwards, without the upward spring. Even Nintendo's home version left out the "spring-back" jump.

There were four screens to the game: The barrels, the rivets, the elevator and the conveyor belt (left out in most home conversions,

except those by Atari and Ocean). The rivets screen was always the screen that ended the level. Two different configurations of these levels existed. The Japanese version simply cycled through the above order. After the rivet screen, Donkey Kong would fall from the disassembled structure, and Mario would be reunited with Paula.

The American version differed in screen order. Level one was the barrels and rivet screen. Level two consisted of the barrels, elevator, and rivet screen. Level three consisted of the barrels, conveyor belt, elevators, and rivets. From then on, many other combination of screens followed. For this reason, many people didn't even know that the conveyor level existed. Between turns, level progress was displayed in meters, shown by a number of Donkey Kongs stacked. The Max was 6 high (150m).

As mentioned earlier, many home versions spawned from the original. In fact, Donkey Kong was

Colecovision's flagship, packaged game, practically selling the system. However, it was a very rough version. The top level was eliminated, placing Donkey Kong on the opposite side of the barrels screen, and the fireballs and "crazy barrels" were eliminated. The elevator screen was missing the springs (or affectionately called



Commodore 64

"springers"). Instead, they were replaced by non-menacing, duck-like, firefox wanna-bees! The rivet screen was intact, except for one level. Unfortunately,

the cute animations, such as the dying sequences and intermissions were missing.

One may ask, "If the Colecovision version is so bad, why did it sell the system?" The answer lies in Coleco owning the right to all console system versions.

Coleco programmed the already limited Atari 2600 (VCS) version. This one only consisted of two levels, the barrels and rivets. The barrel screen was so limited, one couldn't even walk or fall off the end of a level. Subsequently, falling off the level on the barrels screen of the Colecovision version would not result in death either. It would cause Mario to drop the

hammer and continue on. In the VCS version, the player didn't even have the satisfaction of walking off or even reaching the top of the screen before continuing to the next level.

The rivets screen wasn't much prettier either. It consisted of 5 levels that extended across the entire screen. The firefoxes looked even more like a poor rendition of a duck. They were not able to travel up and down the ladders; thus, once the hammer was used on the fireball of that level, the player had to patiently wait for it to disappear. Once a rivet was removed, the player would lose a turn for falling in the hole. However, Mario wouldn't fall. He would just freeze, as when he gets hit by an object the "death" music would play.

Thanks to Atari and Atarisoft, they obtained the rights to the home computer version. The version for Atari computer systems was much more accurate. All of the music, animation and intermissions were present. The screens even



NES

followed the arcade's order, and best of all - the conveyor screen was present. However, due to the lower resolution, the screen was not as cosmetically appealing, and the top level of the barrels screen was also cut off.

All enemies were included, although the fireballs and firefoxes were combined into a hybrid of sorts. Crazy barrels were unpredictable, as were the paths the regular barrels would take. The spring-back jump was

Crazy Kong

Another similar game (unlicensed copy as far as I know) is Crazy Kong. Crazy Kong has a different sound chip, and the music is gone. Crazy Kong only throws three barrels at one time, and he doesn't move to pick up each one. It was more of a corner store/bowling alley, discounted game. Subtle changes have been made, such as changing the level screen to, "How High Can You Try??" Also, a different graphic is used for Crazy Kong on the other screens. The end of the barrel screen girders have been cut off at the ladders.

Crazy Kong Tips: The "black hole" level warp can be done by climbing up the first complete ladder on the barrels screen. Tap the joystick until Mario is hanging one foot off, and jump to the right. If done correctly, Mario will fall through the floor, and he will warp to the second screen.

Another Crazy Kong trick is to get to the second conveyor screen (it's faster). Grab the first hammer. Run to the right side of the screen, as the conveyor travels that direction. Once Mario reaches the far right, he will drop the hammer, however, it will still be there. If it is pointed down, it will continue to hammer pies, even when Mario is on other levels. Also, on the Rivets screen: Don't use the top hammer, and it will turn into "Gold Bars" as a reward. Also, notice the true Donkey Kong image behind the Large, Crazy Kong image.

correctly implemented also.

Also from Atari came the Commodore Vic20 and C-64 versions. As one would expect, the Vic20 version looked awful. The crazy thing was, somebody took the time to cram all of the intermissions, boards (conveyor too!), animations, (lose turn spin), fireballs, crazy barrels, etc. into the 5k available in the Vic! Maybe Coleco could have taken some tips from that Atarisoft programmer when they programmed their 16-24k version of Donkey Kong.

The Commodore 64 version looked pretty good, however the control was slow and sluggish. Finding the bottom of ladders could be difficult and it was missing the "How High Can You Get?" screen and music. Of course, the sound was fairly weak due to the "SID" sound chip, which was designed more for music than games. All-in-all, the versions were pretty impressive for their time, especially compared to the other options available.

Some other versions popped up over the years. In 1987, Ocean gained the rights from Atari, and they created a new C-64 version, along with an Amstrad PC version. These versions featured more animation and all screens were present (even the High Score and Insert Coin screens!). The Ocean versions followed the Japanese version: barrels, conveyor, elevator, and rivets. Overall, it was set up as

close to the arcade machine as anything of its time for the systems.

Later, on the home-front, Nintendo had their own home version for the NES. Here we have a system perfectly capable of recreating the arcade experience at home. What does Nintendo do? Nintendo left out the conveyor screen, limited the fireball of the rivets screen to not ascend above the second level and raised the second level hammer up one level to where the fireball can't reach. They had the graphics, the sound, everything, but they chose to use a smaller cart. The average person didn't seem to know any better. Many didn't even know the missing conveyor screen even existed. Those who did, settled until Donkey Kong Jr. was released. DKjr. included all four of the DKjr levels, but still lacked animation and intermissions. Strangely enough the Atari 7800 version (programmed by Coleco) was an almost exact duplicate of the NES conversion. However, the sound was *horrible* and the resolution not quite as sharp. Gameboy's conversion was well done considering it was on a small b/w portable. It even added some additional levels.

If you ever have a chance to play (or buy) one of these great machines, or home ports, don't pass it up. The game is 17 years old, but it can sure take one back to the past in a heartbeat.



Donkey Kong Playing Tip:

Donkey Kong had a few tricks. One favorite "show-off" move was to "jump over" Donkey Kong's foot. This was done on the rivets screen by placing Mario next to Donkey Kong's foot. Don't get too close, or you will die! Jump, standing next to him, and press the joystick away from him at the top of your jump. One hundred points will be awarded to you. You can do this as many times, until time runs out. It only pays if you can earn 100pts faster than the bonus clock ticks down...

Atari 2600 Game Reviews



COMBAT™



Model Number CX2601

Released 1977

Programmer(s): Larry Kaplan, Joe DeCuir, and Larry Wagner

Released as "Tank Plus" for Sears Atari/Atari VCS (2600)

For most of us, Combat was our introduction to the Atari VCS. After what seemed like an eternity of having your dad set up the system to the back of the TV set, we inserted the cartridge, flipped the power switch and were treated to the image of two tanks on either side of the screen poised for battle. After the reset button was pressed, you and your challenger charged at each other with bullets flying. From this point forward we knew we were hooked.

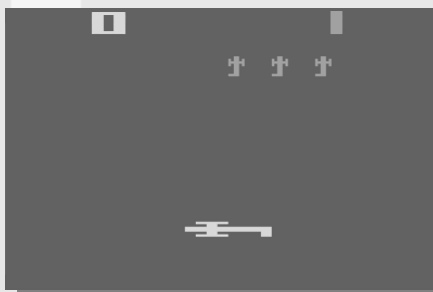
Combat is still an outstanding two-player game. What it lacks in graphics is more than made up for in gameplay. There are many tank and fighter plane game variations to keep even the most jaded classic gamer happy. There are tank battles on empty battlefields, mazed battlefields, invisible tanks and tanks with bouncing bullets (knowing geometry really pays off in this one). The

fighter plane variations include standard BI-plane dogfighting, jets and the grossly unfair three small planes vs. the one large plane (which seems totally incapable of mounting any significant attack against the three smaller ones.)

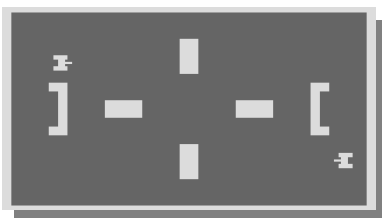
Although these are all strictly two player games, who doesn't remember wanting to play so badly that you would go at it alone anyway and experience considerable glee in destroying the unmanned aircraft and tanks? Besides, when else were you going to practice your bankshots?

There are a few bugs in this game, which enhance gameplay, such as being able to 'warp' yourself to the other side of the battlefield. You can accomplish this with a little practice by placing your tank in a corner of the maze and turning your joystick and moving forward at the same time. You'll find this maneuver comes in handy for surprise attacks.

Combat was originally planned to be built into the VCS. If you look inside the original six-switch model you will see a spot on the motherboard to hold the Combat ROM chip. For reasons unknown this idea was abandoned and the cartridge came included with the system. We also don't recommend you install the Combat ROM



3 Vs. 1?? Is this fair??



On the prowl...

yourself as we've heard this can fry your unit.

A sequel, "Combat II", was planned but never released.

**Overall Rating:
***1/2**

*Reviewed by: D.B
Caulfield*

GORF™

Released 1982

CBS/Atari VCS (2600)

Some of the most successful arcade games from the first wave of video gaming were of the "slide and shoot" variety. Move a laser bunker from left to right on



the bottom of the screen, firing upwards at targets. The most famous of course, is Space

Invaders, which later begat games like Galaxian, Galaga, Astro Fighter, and even Carnival. Some companies realized that the genre was getting rather overpopulated, so they released games with different and distinct qualities. One of the best of the group was Bally/Midway's arcade hit Gorf. This masterpiece features five different screens, four way directional movement, and striking speech capabilities (for the era...).

When CBS games licensed Gorf for the Atari 2600, certain liberties had to be taken with the gameplay to fit into a 4K cartridge. For instance, obviously the voice had to be scrapped, but we accepted that. What is odd, however, is that CBS reduced the player's spaceship to a simple left-and-right movement pattern, reducing the great fun of narrowly avoiding an alien's swooping attack while moving down and to the left.

As a result, the 2600 cartridge of Gorf plays very flat. CBS did, however duplicate some of the manic feel of the arcade game in the variety of the screens. The first screen is essentially a remake of Space Invaders, with a much smaller army of aliens, and plays virtually identical to the groundbreaking classic. The second screen features a tiny group of attackers with one laser cannon. But what a cannon it is! It fires a solid bolt of energy down towards the player's ship, deadly to the touch, which remains on the screen for longer than any standard bullet. Once this force is destroyed, we are transported to the blackhole screen, wherein spaceships spiral from a central point at varying speeds and angles to attack the player. This screen is rather unique, as the player does not have to destroy all the aliens to progress. If an alien is not destroyed, it flies out into the depths of space never to be seen again. The player simply has to survive until the end of the round. Finally, on the fourth and final round, the player is asked to defeat the Gorfian mothership. This monstrosity flies across the top of the screen, dropping yellow bombs. The only catch is that the vulnerable point is a tiny little vent on the underside of the ship. It takes quiet a bit of a skill to aim at such a tiny target, but when accomplished, the spaceship shimmers with different colors to indicate it's destruction.

All things considered, CBS' Gorf for the VCS is not a bad version of the game, but then again, without the voice and the four way direction, it's not exactly Gorf.

Interesting side trivia: The arcade game's third screen is a remake of Galaxian. This screen was not included in the 2600 cart, not due to memory limitations, but due to legal limitations. Atari had already grabbed the licensing rights to Galaxian by this time, so to avoid copyright infringement, CBS omitted this screen from the home version.

Oddly, if you play Galaxian (aka Galactic Invasion) for the Bally Astrocade, it plays and sounds exactly like the missing Gorf - Galaxian wave! I guess that's one way to have a complete Gorf!

Overall Rating: ***
Reviewed by Kyle Snyder

River

Activision/Atari VCS (2600)
Designed by Carol Shaw

One of the more unique distinctions of River Raid from other video games is that it is designed by a woman. I must admit when I first agreed to review this game my sexist side came out and I worried that there was some sort of 'nag program' installed. I half expected to find the game questioning my moves, wondering why I didn't refuel and telling me to JUST ASK FOR DIRECTIONS. I am pleased to report that no such program exists.

The skills required by River Raid do not just require the typical hand/eye coordination, but tactical skills as well. The player is required to navigate an ever changing riverscape along with a continually decreasing amount of fuel stops. One may be good at blowing things up, but with poor planning, may run out of fuel and crash.

The objective of the game is to fly up a river, destroying the

enemy's bridges and fuel supplies. While the enemy may have ships, planes and helicopters along the route, the bridges and fuel supplies are the most valuable, and thus, carry the highest point value.

The graphics of the game are nice. It is easy to discern not only what each target is, but also any obstacles around the fighter. The colors are simple, blue for water, green for land, and the ships and planes are obvious. The player is never left wondering, "what the heck is THAT?" In fact, I was always impressed the clarity of the graphics.

One drawback with this game, as with most of its generation, is the maneuverability. Control is limited to the very simple forward, right and left, leaving the player with a feeling of very little "real" control. Often, when I would veer off to avoid an object the plane seemed to keep drifting until I pulled back hard.

There are treats in this game that make it really fun. The fuel tanks are quite unique. If one blows up the tank, they are blowing up their own fuel supply. If one leaves the fuel, it is left for the enemy to supply themselves. A great trick is what I dubbed the "gas and blast": fueling up and then blowing up the tank. I got my much needed fuel and also earned extra points and denied my enemy of fuel. It's a great trick, although it takes some practice to master.

Overall, I give River Raid two thumbs up. It's a fun game, with a clear objective and solid graphics. It plays well in a single player mode or against an adversary.

Overall Rating: ***
Reviewed by Chris Lion

How rare do you like your cartridge?

A Guide to Rating Your Classic Collection

By Mike Genova

What defines a rare cartridge? All collectors have different interpretations of the word, but to me it has a simple meaning. A cartridge that is harder to find than most carts. Here we'll examine the many factors that can make a cartridge rare. Examples cited are for the Atari VCS/2600

1. Low production run/ Poor sales - a good example of this would be the cartridge "The Music Machine". This cartridge was packaged with a record and "poor sales caused many of these to be recalled and destroyed" as quoted in the Digital Press Guide Fourth Edition (DPG). Also, if a game was distributed in isolated areas around the world, it may be a tough find.

2. Limited Availability - What is meant by this is if a game was only available through mail order such as the Atari Club. There were many games only available through mail order such as *Quadrant*, *Chase the Chuckwagon*, *Crazy Climber* and *Atari Video Cube*. This factor makes it less likely that you will ever find these carts in thrift shops or flea markets.

3. Prototypes - A prototype is defined, as being a game that was never released or is still in its pre-production stages. Prototypes aren't generally fun to play because of bugs and glitches in the unfinished product, but they would highlight anyone's collection of video games. Such examples of prototypes would be *Grover's Music Maker* and *Dukes of Hazzard*.



Of all of the games I've mentioned so far, I have yet to obtain one of them. This just goes to show that once you find a rare cartridge, you could possibly be holding a one of a kind cartridge in your hand. Because who knows? In ten years from now, you may have the only remaining legitimate copy of that cartridge.

Next I'll explain the various kinds of rarity symbols classic gamers put on cartridges. Here they are from most common to most rare:

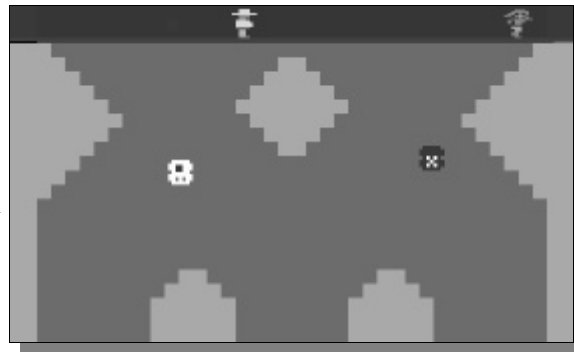
Common (C) - A common game can be classified as a *Missile Command*, *Pac-Man*, *Combat*, *Space Invaders*, or *Pitfall!* You will most likely find plenty of these in

your various garage sale/ thrift shop/ flea markets runs.

Uncommon (U) - An uncommon game is a bit more rare than a common game, but will still be pretty easy to find. You can classify these games as a *Video Pinball*, *Food Fight*, *Brain Games*, or *Battlezone*. You may have to look a little bit harder, or pay a bit more money for these, but they will always be found somewhere.

Rare (R) - A rare game isn't always what it seems to be. A rare game in your area, may be an uncommon game in my area. I guess you can say that for all rarities, but a rare is sometimes misinterpreted. You can call *Millipede*, *Othello*, *Video Checkers*, or a *Basic Programming cart* a rare. These will be

somewhat harder to find than commons and



Dukes of Hazzard
Atari VCS

uncommons, but shouldn't take more than a few months to acquire. Most respectable collectors will have these for sale or in their auctions for fairly cheap prices, but that may vary from one dealer to the next.

Extremely Rare (ER) - An extremely rare cart is one that most people will have some

smartest idea, because you will pay a substantial amount of money for it, or you will have to trade off something of good value. Finding them at garage sales, thrift shops, flea markets, friends, second-hand stores, would be less costly, but those tend to have your average commons or uncommons.

Extremely rare carts would include Crazy Climber, Chase the Chuckwagon, Pengo, Rubik's Cube, Pigs in Space and BMX Airmaster.

Ultra Rare (UR) - An ultra rare cart is a one-of-a kind type of cart because they would more than likely lighten up anyone's collection. Don't count on finding one of these at a thrift shop because it probably won't happen. There's always the possibility, but don't keep your hopes up. An ultra rare cart would be classified as a Swordquest: Waterworld, Fatal Run, or a Motorodero.

Never Released (NR) - This one is pretty self-explanatory. If a cart was never released, it did not hit the market and store shelves, was either never completed, or was completed, but exists in prototype form. A prototype generally has no labels and sometimes has the label "Lab Loaner" on the front of the cart. An example of a never released cart would be Qix, Preppie, Dreadnaught Factor, or Zenji.

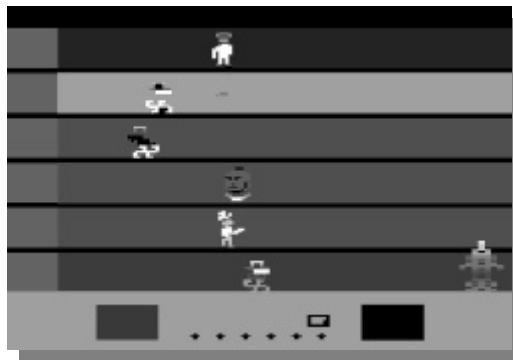
Well, that pretty much rounds out this article about rarities. I hope you enjoyed it, and learned something as well. Just keep searching, and believe you can find even the rarest of carts!



Chase the Chuckwagon
Atari VCS



Texas Chainsaw Massacer
Atari VCS



The A-Team
Atari VCS

Other System Rarities

Do you own any of these other rare classics? Check your attics and basements! On some of these only a few copies are known to exist.

5200

- AE - Parker Brothers
- Battlezone - Atari
- Frisky Tom - Atari
- Meteorites - Electra Concepts
- Millipede - Atari

Intellivision

- Crosswords - Mattel
- Defender - INTV
- Fathom - Imagic
- Tutankham - Parker Brothers
- Yogi's Frustration - Mattel

Colecovision

- Dig Dug - Atarisoft
- Illusions - Coleco
- Jungle Hunt - Atairsoft
- M*A*S*H - 20th Cent. Fox
- Super Donkey Kong - Coleco

Vectrex

- Dark Tower - GCE
- Polar Rescue - GCE
- Pole Position - GCE
- Web Warp - Milton Bradley

Odyssey²

- Demon Attack - Imagic
- Power Lords - NAP
- Q*Bert - Parker Brothers
- Killer Bees - NAP

Classic Trivia: DID YOU KNOW?

After Atari shipped it's one millionth cartridge of Missile Command for the VCS, programmer Rob Fulop's bonus was a certificate for a complimentary holiday turkey at Safeway? (Which he still has to this day.)

The World of Atari '98

A Classic Gamer Magazine Special Report



by
Chris Cavanaugh

During the weekend of August 21st, 1998, classic video game aficionados assembled in Las Vegas at the Boardwalk Hotel and Casino to pay tribute to the history of gaming. **The World of Atari '98** gave the everyday classic gamer an opportunity to buy, sell, trade and play their favorite games and allowed them the privilege of rubbing elbows with the people connected to the history of video games. But best of all, it was a chance for gaming geeks to get together and talk nothing but classic gaming for three days. I was fortunate enough to attend and I witnessed a wildly successful event.

Welcome Reception

On Friday night, pre-paid attendees congregated in the Speaker's Room and were treated to a feast of vegetable platters, chips and dips and mouth-watering Brie. Bartenders were on hand to serve drinks to the happy crowd. Although it was difficult to see in the dimly lit room, people squinted their eyes at nametags in hopes of recognizing a familiar name. The mainly all-male crowd huddled around tables and stood as groups in the main hallway, eagerly talking of joysticks, favorite games and prototypes. The few wives and girlfriends who did attend seemed to have a vacant stare which said, "What the hell did I get myself into?".

Former Atari employee, Don Thomas, welcomed the crowd with a few, well delivered opening remarks as well as offering a big thanks to Keita Iida, Richard Tsukiji and John Hardie for organizing the entire event. Keita, Richard and John received thunderous applause from an enormously grateful crowd.

The biggest energy seemed to be focused in the hallway next to the showroom. Since the showroom was closed Friday night (and protected by a security guard) all one could do was catch small glimpses of the displays inside. The Best Electronics booth stuffed with

products, as well as a few arcade games positioned against the walls, were all we were able to see. The anticipation of not being able to enter was quite frustrating, but only helped build the excitement of what was to come the following day.

Day 2

On 10 a.m. on Saturday, the exhibit hall opened. When I first entered, my first impression was, "Gee, this sure is small", but I reminded myself that this wasn't Comdex and that I was happy to be here regardless of the size. The Best Electronics booth was completely mobbed and I figured I wouldn't be able to investigate that until much later. On my left sat a Tempest, Centipede and Asteroids machine. On my right was a Wizard of Wor, Star Wars and Battlezone. In the corner sat a mint condition Computer Space and arcade PONG machine. All games were set on "free play", so what more could one want?

As I wandered around I was impressed by the quality of vendors the show had attracted. You could pay top dollar for a rare prototype or just spend a dollar to get that "common" cartridge that's been eluding you. Sean Kelly was selling his "Classic Videogame Commercials" videotape as well as his few remaining copies of the ever-popular Digital Press CD-ROM. Across the aisle, Intellivision



Welcome Banner

seemed to be the order of business. Throughout the showroom one could basically find whatever classic game or memorabilia one wanted. Ms. Pac-Man dolls were in abundance as well as Atari T-shirts, pins and bumper stickers. I should note here that across from the aforementioned Sean Kelly's booth sat an aberration. A dirge-ish looking couple, sitting in the corner, was selling death-related items such as plaster skulls, blacklights and Metallica doo-dads. Absolutely nothing to do with classic gaming. I've heard rumors that some show attendees are still having nightmares to this day.

At 10:30 I wandered across the main hallway into the Speaker's Room. Donald Thomas was entertaining the crowd with his tales of Atari. Don's Atari stint was during the later days when Tramiel was running the show. He helped to launch the Lynx and Falcon as well as the Jaguar. His talk was centered around the fact that videogame companies need to stop and take a look at their gaming roots before venturing on with new projects. Or as he put it, "Always check the mirror, before you start the car". His philosophy seems to be that if the game is missing "The Fun Factor" then it shouldn't be made at all. He also pointed out the inability to score points in today's game and would like to see that feature reinstated in modern games. Most importantly, he put out a call to have those responsible for creating games to be put into the spotlight, like a movie director or film star would be.

Later, Arnie Katz and Joyce Worley, of **Electronic Games Magazine** fame, gave a keynote address telling the history of their famed magazine and where they thought the industry was heading. Bill Kunkel, who spoke later that day, was also present in the front row and assisted in fielding

questions from the audience.

After Katz and Worley left the podium, Rob Fulop (most famous for designing Imagic's Demon Attack) took their place and entranced the show goers with his tales of the early days of Atari and Imagic. Holding up a copy of a game he designed, (Night Driver for the VCS) he said it was quite a thrill to be able to buy one's own work years later. (Personally, I would have thought he had crates of Night Driver in his attic, but what do I



Computer Space

know?) He spoke of how wonderful Atari Culture was in the early days and even promised to dig up an old videotape from 1981 called, "A Day at Atari", to sell (hopefully) soon. He also spoke of his nightmare experience designing "Night Trap" and having to see Captain Kangaroo on the Senate floor testifying about what an evil game it was. Rob then graciously answered questions about his games and the various "Easter Eggs" he had hidden in them and told the stories behind the games which now give them added

dimension. Currently Rob is not making games as he feels the industry, at the moment, is "messed up".

Also on the speakers lineup that day was Jag Programmer, Scott LeGrand; game musician, Stephanie Wukovitz; Taz creator, Steve Woita and 8-bit Atari designer, John Harris.

Down the hall, away from the main showroom, I ventured into the **WOA'98 Museum Exhibit**, presented by **Namco**. This was a small room filled with an amazing collection of rare (and not so rare) gaming systems, accessories and paraphernalia. Some of the highlights included the "Entex Adventurevision" from 1982 which featured LED's shown on spinning mirrors to view the game screen, the Atari Mindlink Controller prototype which would allow the player to control the action on the screen by moving ones forehead muscles as well as a prototype of an Atari Space Invaders Handheld Box, which was intended to cash in on the lucrative handheld market. Other items of note: The Atari 2700 (prototype), the Atari 2800, The Fairchild Channel F, the Spectravision CompuMate and a mint condition GCE Vectrex which would show up later at the auction.

Third (and Final) Day

Sunday was a much quieter day for the show. The Warlords and Battlesphere tournaments were winding down and the crowd was much smaller. Only a few keynote speakers were scheduled for the day including Dan Kramer, Jerry Jessop, Lance J. Lewis, and game programmer, Dave Staugus who programmed Exidy's Venture as well as Millipede for the 2600 and Krull for the Atari 5200. I was also able to check out Best Electronics table better this day. While a bit on the pricey side, there was a huge variety of mostly Atari products

from which to choose. Best was also selling the newest game for the Atari 2600, **Alfred's Challenge**, which he sold out of quickly. Unfortunately, this game was produced in limited quantity for the show and we are still trying to get our hands on one for review. O'shea, LTD. was also present with their fantastic eighty cent Atari cartridge deals, however you could only purchase the games through mail order. I'm sure if they had brought some stock along they could have made a small killing on the spot.

The Auction

If you were present at the auction during the final hours of the show, you're stomach may still be sore from laughing at the asking prices for some, if not most, merchandise. A professional auctioneer was on hand to preside over the bidding. He did a fantastic job and maintained his sense of humor when, well, basically nothing was selling.

Following are some examples of what was being auctioned and didn't sell due to the high minimum bid needed to start the bidding process. All names are being withheld to protect the guilty! Prices in parentheses reflect the minimum bid.

Coke Wins Prototype (\$140), Crazy Climber, in box (\$140), Frog Pond Prototype (\$70), Klax Prototype (\$85), Waterworld (\$100), Spike's Peak/Artillery Duel (\$45) Bugs Bunny Prototype (\$70).

If it wasn't so funny it would have been embarrassing. This was worse than the shenanigans that go on at "e-bay" on the Internet. The



Rob Fulop admires "Night Driver"

classic gaming market, unfortunately, seems to have its share of people trying to make a quick buck. Fortunately, most people educated themselves before entering the auction and knew what most of the merchandise was "worth". Quick tip: When you're at a convention filled with people extremely knowledgeable of the products they are potentially bidding on – don't overprice it. It can only hurt your credibility.

Some of the merchandise that sold included an original Pong

(\$42), three "Adult" games (\$65), a RomScan 10 game changer in box (\$39), lot of 10 common Atari games (\$8), shrink-wrapped Atari Basketball (\$1) and a Vectrex (\$115).

There were definitely two main highlights of the auction. First, when a framed Atari letterhead which read "From the Desk of Jack Tramiel" stationery set was presented for auction, someone from the rear of the audience yelled "Burn it!" and secondly, when the auctioneer was forced to say, "Beat 'em and Eat 'em" much to the juvenile delight of everyone.

Overall, the World of Atari 98 was an outstanding success. Keita Iida, Richard Tsukiji and John Hardie pulled off nothing short of a

miracle and they are already planning next years event. The atmosphere was upbeat and everyone was friendly. Even the various news and camera crews roaming around seemed to lend a bit of "importance" to the event.

Weeks before the show there were rumblings of disappointment from those who couldn't attend. Their main beef seemed to be that Las Vegas was just too far and it should have been held somewhere more central. I don't think there could have been a better location than Las Vegas. One is always able to find an inexpensive package deal to Vegas no matter where you live in the U.S. and there is also a lot to see in the area. Right across the street from the show you could go to

the colossal Sega Gameworks arcade or take a quick cab ride over to the Hilton to enjoy The Star Trek Experience. Accommodations are cheap and the food is very low priced. Not to mention it's much easier to entice quality keynote speakers and special guests to attend who seem mainly to be located in nearby California. Personally, I would like to see it held in Las Vegas next year, as well.

To those who couldn't attend, make your plans early! Next years show promises to be even better and you will

definitely not want to miss out. Go to <http://www.atarihq.com> to keep posted on the latest happenings for World of Atari '99 because we expect to see you there next year!

To check out more WOA98 photos visit our website at:

<http://www.classicgamer.com>



The Auctioneer

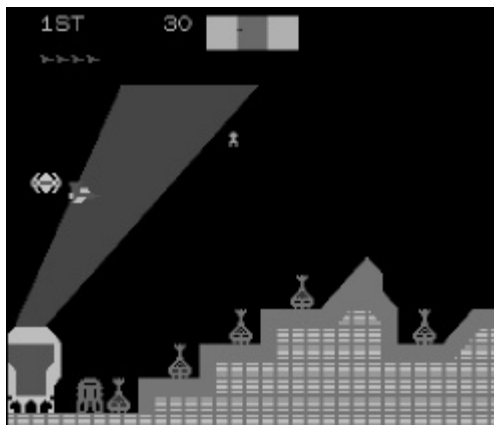


Coleco- Cosmic Avenger : VISIONS in the Spotlight

by D.B. Caulfield



An underdog in the arcades became a winner in the living rooms. Based on Universal's sleeper arcade game, Cosmic Avenger became a huge hit for the Colecovision. As with many of their arcade ports Coleco took a chance in bringing this game to the home market.



Universal's Cosmic Avenger

However, the gamble paid off and encouraged Coleco to go after more obscure yet highly entertaining titles.

If you played this game often enough when it first came out I'm sure you can still remember the opening theme fanfare you were greeted to upon starting. While not an incredibly groundbreaking game it still is very fun to play. It's quirky color scheme (purple and yellow?), creative sounds and crisp graphics make it one of the more

unique and enduring classics.

You assume the role of a space fighter who, judging by the game boxes artwork, has the same tailor as Boba Fett. The first level consists of flying over heavily guarded domed cities on an alien planet.

As you fire missiles and drop bombs on the cities you must avoid the defensive battery of UFO missiles, land missiles and heat seeking rockets. On the second level tanks try and halt your progress by firing missiles towards you and finally on the third, and most difficult level, you find yourself battling it out in an

underwater cave avoiding torpedoes, mines and heat seeking rockets.

When I originally played Cosmic Avenger when it was first released I recall being perturbed by the fact I was unable to blow up the annoying spotlight. To this day I still can't resist dropping a bomb on it and having to settle for a moral

victory at best. The transitions between levels also could have been smoother.

One minute you're destroying the tanks and the next your faced with a wall of water.



Level 2

Strange physics on this planet! The tank level is still the simplest of them all. It's a matter of flying your ship at ground level and firing your missiles at them. Works like a charm every time.

We still recommend this game as long as the difficulty level is set to two or above. And if you are able to blow out that spotlight, please let us know!



Level 3 - Under Da Sea!

Overall Rating ***





The Legend of BIRA BIRA

by D.B. Caulfield

THE 23rd PSALM of BIRA BIRA

Bira Bira is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in thrift store bins; he leadeth me beside the piles of URs; he restoreth my Supercharger; he leadeth me in the path of functional 4k Rom dumps. Yea, though I search through the bins of the shadow of Pac Man, I will fear no OCs; for thou art with me; thy Q-Bert Cubes and thy Cosmic Avenger they comfort me. Thou preparest an Atari 2600 for me in the presence of Mike N., Paul S., etc...; thou anointest my carts with isopropyl alcohol; my VGR list runneth over. Surely MagiCard and Tempest prototypes shall follow me all the days of my collecting; and I will Chase the Chuckwagon in the Reef Store of Bira Bira forever.

- Chris Cracknell

As collectors of classic video games we know how frustrating it can be when we hit upon a dry period of finding classic cartridges and game systems. We know the feeling of wanting to spit nails when seeing the mother lode of rare cartridges walk off with somebody else at the local flea market. We've even gone as far as appealing to a higher power to end this rare cartridge drought. Apparently we've been appealing to the wrong higher power.

While visiting a thrift store outside of Columbus, Ohio, collector Robert Batina found a carved wooden figure lying amongst

a pile of rare Atari cartridges inside a Tupperware bowl. Being in a hurry, he grabbed the entire bowl of cartridges (including the wooden statue) and purchased the entire contents. When he searched the bowl he found several hard to find games for the Atari VCS: Brain Games, Strawberry Shortcake, Starmaster, MASH, Crypts of



Chaos, Revenge of the Beefsteak Tomatoes, Commando Raid, and Miniature Golf. A good find, he thought. He also inspected the wooden figure more closely.

As Robert described it:

"It is about as wide as half the width of an Atari cart, and almost as tall as the length of 2 Atari carts. It is light wood, with a very dark stain applied to it, with carvings all over it, making it appear as some sort of warrior, with a large menacing face and an amulet. And, on the back of the figure, there is a carving that appears to say: "BIRA BIRA"

Not thinking too much of it at the time, he went to the next thrift store

he regulars for classics and was dismayed to find that they had switched to ALL CLOTHING!

While lamenting his bad luck, he ventured on to the next thrift store. This time he remembered the wooden statue. He grabbed it, gave it a rub for good luck and entered the store. Jackpot! There he found a Channel F system with ten games - for only ten dollars! The powers of BIRA BIRA had been unleashed!

He scanned an image of BIRA BIRA and placed it on the Internet and asked people to explain what its origin might be and to feel free to channel the powers of the wooden image in their quest for classic systems and games.

People did. And The Believers were rewarded. Collectors who used the image found new bounties of old video games. Vectrex's appeared where there were none before. XONOX Double Enders inventories grew exponentially and where there were droughts in thrift stores, it now rained Intellivisions. The Believers were happy. And a small "church" (and cottage industry) was born.

Chris Cracknell borrowed the original BIRA BIRA statue from Robert and made plaster replicas (with instructions), which he now sells for \$5.00 a pop. He has also written an original game for the Atari 2600 entitled "Rescue BIRA BIRA" (actually it's a modified

version of a rated "X" game, "Jungle Fever") including original label artwork and an instruction manual. He's even seen fit to write a comic strip about BIRA BIRA and his arch nemesis "Mr. Friendly".

Robert has also entered into the plaster BIRA BIRA market and he knows of a good place to get BIRA BIRA bumper stickers if you need such a thing.

While this statue (Saint BIRA?) has his Believers, some feel he may be satanic or of Voodoo origins and perhaps people may be selling their souls for the sake of finding the rare cartridge and/or system. For the sake of fairness in reporting, I decided to try out the powers of BIRA BIRA. Being somewhat of a skeptic I have to admit that I didn't go so far as to actually purchase a plaster statue. So I decided to wing it, as many others have, by chanting his name inside my car before entering thrift stores and flea markets. Yes, I felt a bit foolish.

My first stop was a thrift store that has been dry of cartridges and systems for about as long as I can

remember. I asked BIRA BIRA to bless me with a good cartridge find. I figured this would be a true test due to the history of scarcity of cartridges in this store. When I approached the bookshelf that holds the games I didn't notice anything. Feeling frustrated I was about to turn away and end the experiment when I noticed a stack of ColecoVision cartridges with their labels turned to the back. Probably commons, I thought. I picked them up and

found Looping, Victory, Popeye, Q* Bert, Frogger II: ThreeDeep, SubRoc, Mr. Do. and Frenzy. Pretty good for a drought!

When I arrived at the neighborhood Goodwill Store, I didn't find any



BIRA BIRA Icon

cartridges but did find a hard to find Sears Tele-Games storage unit. Not bad again. Perhaps there was something to this BIRA BIRA thing.

Then I hit another long period of not finding anything. However, I would be remiss in not pointing out that the

dry spell didn't occur until after I called upon BIRA BIRA to grant me the next lottery numbers. I figured what the hell? Let's really push these powers to their limits. If the Legend of BIRA BIRA is correct, then I was being punished for my greed. Like I said: a long dry spell hit.

After what I guess was about a month of punishment I was once again blessed at a flea market with a reward of rare Intellivision cartridges. It was such a good haul

that I swore off antagonizing BIRA BIRA for the latest lottery numbers. For now anyway.

So is the Legend of BIRA BIRA fact or fiction? Are the followers of this idol being led astray? Will these

Believers one day congregate at a commune in Sunnyvale, California with their leader Robert Batina (with BIRA BIRA in hand) encouraging them to ingest Kool-AID Man cartridges? Is it possible they could perish in bizarre surfing accidents in Waikiki?

It's Hard to say, really. What I do know is that I've found some

pretty good cartridges of late. If that means I have to yell to a fictional Tiki god in my car then so be it. Just please don't call the police on me if you see me burning Combat cartridges on a pyre and dancing naked to appease the mighty BIRA BIRA!



Rescue BIRA BIRA

To Visit the official BIRA BIRA website by Robert Battina point your web browser to:
<http://www.infinet.com/~rbatina/other/birabira.html>

To receive more information about obtaining the "Rescue BIRA BIRA" game for your Atari 2600 write to:

RANDY CRIHFIELD
 P.O. Box 1332
 Pepperell, MA 01463

Or visit the "Rescue BIRA BIRA" website at:
<http://www.freenet.hamilton.on.ca/~ad329/birabin.html>



READERS POLL

We here at Classic Gamer Magazine want to make this the best darned publication about classic gaming you can get your hands on. By letting us know what game systems you would like us to focus on and any other aspects of classic gaming you would like to see, we will be able to provide you with these in future issues. This will also let us know your all time favorite games, handhelds, systems, computer and arcade games. All responses are guaranteed confidential.

Please return this entire poll sheet (photocopies accepted) to: Classic Gamer Magazine 769 E. El Camino Real #268, Sunnyvale, CA 94087-2919 or e-mail your answers to: cav@classicgamer.com

SEX: ___Male ___Female

**NUMBER OF CHILDREN
IN HOUSEHOLD:** _____

AGE: _____

AGES: ___Under 2 ___3-5

MARITAL STATUS: ___Single ___Married

___6-11 ___12-17

HOUSEHOLD INCOME:

___Under \$15,000 ___\$15,000-\$24,999

___\$25,000 - \$49,999

___\$50,000 - \$99,000 ___\$100,000+

Check off all gaming systems or equipment you own or plan to buy within the next 12 months

	Own	Plan to Buy		Own	Plan to Buy
Atari VCS/2600	___	___	Nintendo Gameboy	___	___
Arcadia/Starpath Supercharger	___	___	SuperNintendo	___	___
Intellivision	___	___	Nintendo 64	___	___
ColecoVision	___	___	Sony Playstation	___	___
Odyssey 2	___	___	Sega Master System	___	___
Atari 5200	___	___	Sega Genesis	___	___
Atari 7800	___	___	Sega Saturn	___	___
Atari Jaguar	___	___	Sega 32X	___	___
Atari Lynx	___	___	Atari 400/800	___	___
Nintendo 8 Bit (NES)	___	___	Apple II	___	___
IBM PC Compatible	___	___	Macintosh	___	___

Other game systems, equipment, computers: _____

How Much Money Do You Spend Per Week on Video Games?

___Under \$5 ___\$5-10 ___\$10-25 ___\$25-50 ___Over \$50

How many people (besides you) will read this issue of Classic Gamer Magazine: _____

Your Top Three Favorite Videogame Cartridges Are: (Game and System)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Your Top Three Favorite Computer Games Are: (Game and System)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Your Top Three Favorite Arcade Coin-Ops Are: (Game and System)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

GAMES THAT GO BUMP IN THE NIGHT

A CLASSIC GAMERS GUIDE TO THE BEST SCARY GAMES



With the advent of Fall upon us, the appearance of ghosts, witches and vampires at our front doors is not too far in the distance. Yes, Halloween is here once again. What better way can you think of spending a Halloween's eve curled up with your classic gaming system in a darkened room playing a scary game while ignoring the cries of begging children? Pathetically, enough I can't think of any! So, Classic Gamer Magazine presents a list of some of the more popular scary games to get your adrenaline going on a cold, dark and rainy night. (We'll understand if you sleep with the light on and barricade your door with your cartridge collection after playing these.)

Haunted House for the Atari VCS/2600. Still considered to be one of the best "atmosphere" games for the VCS. You play the part of explorer (shown as a pair of eyes) of an old haunted house (although, I seriously doubt there are any 'new' haunted houses) and your task is to find the three pieces of an urn and bring them back to the front room without losing your nine lives. Not really an easy task since most of the time spent in the house takes place shrouded in darkness. Your score is not based on points but on how few matches you use to light your way. Also, impeding your search you will find a vampire bat, hairy tarantulas

and a ghost who are all pretty hell-bent on "scaring you to death" which results in a loss of one of your lives. What this game lacks in graphics it more than makes up for in sound. Wind, slamming doors, lightening and footsteps all add to a



Haunted House

genuinely scary ambience. Play this one with the lights out for maximum effect. We dare ya!

Smurf, Rescue From Gargamel's Castle for Colecovision. Ok, so while we admit Smurfs aren't exactly horrifying (however, people who collect Smurf memorabilia are!) we give this game a few chill points based on the stalagmite caverns and the creepy interior of the castle. Your mission is to rescue the cutesy Smurfette from the clutches of the evil Gargamel (never seen) who has her held hostage, bondage-style, atop a giant skull inside his castle. This is a fairly important mission for the Smurfs since she *IS* the only female Smurf and I'm sure they would like to guarantee the survival

of their species for future generations - whatever species that may be. Along the way, your poor Smurf is attacked by crows, Vampire Bats and spiders which you must either duck or jump to avoid them.

Aside from its childish theme, this game is an appealing side-scroller. Crisp graphics and creative music (particularly in the castle) make this game an enduring winner.

Dracula for Intellivision by Imagic. One of the truly great games for the Intellivision. This unique game, by Imagic, boasted outstanding gameplay, great graphics and unique sounds for an underrated system. You play the role of Count Dracula, Lord of the Vampires. Your goal is to see how many London residents' necks you can bite before sunrise. Out to get you are police officers armed with wooden stakes who seem to take advantage of the fact they can simply throw them at you to kill you. You can always escape by turning into a bat and we also encourage you to use this bat transformation technique to catch unsuspecting victims off guard. Once you've bitten your victims necks they transmute into zombies and you can now send your new legion of the dead to exact revenge on the stake wielding police. For a

good old-fashioned thrill we suggest you play it. Just be sure to have Drac in bed before dawn, ok?

Halloween and The Texas Chainsaw Massacre for the Atari VCS/2600 by Wizard Games.

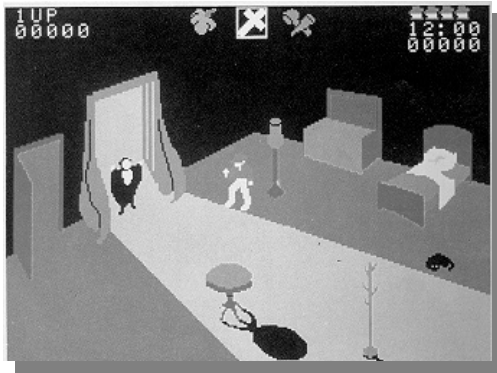
When Wizard released these games, it created quite a stink with parents. Which, of course, just made us kids want them all the more. In retrospect, it's comical to try and determine what the big deal was about these games. They both lack any real significant gameplay and the graphics were rather bland. However, gruesome stabbings and decapitations DO seem to make a good selling point.

Your job in Halloween is to play the role of babysitter and protect some children in a large, two-story



The Ghost of Jerry Garcia??
Ghost Manor

house from the fatal intentions of a knife wielding Michael Myers. You have to first locate the children (who are hiding) and corral them into "safe rooms" at either ends of the house. (Why these rooms are "safe", I'm not too sure but I heard it's where the PMRC takes shelter). You, in turn, have to avoid the maniacal stabbings of Mr. Myers who seems to supernaturally



Dracula

(illogically) pop out of nowhere. However, you can turn the tables and stab the unwanted homicidal lunatic intruder when you find the knife which lays randomly around the house. You are rewarded points for every child you deliver unharmed to the "safe rooms". This game gets an honorable

mention for the eerie music which accompanies it.

In **The Texas Chainsaw Massacre** you get to be the chainsaw toting Leatherface. For some reason (you had a bad childhood, I would imagine) you chase down victims through a field and when you manage to catch up to them, you proceed to mangle their bodies with your Craftsman power tool. What stands in your way between frustration and the simple glee of churning human torsos to your hearts content are cow skulls, fences, thickets and Wheelchairs(?). It is also imperative that you ration your chainsaw's gas for maximum decapitation enjoyment. You earn 1000 points for each victim and a fresh supply of gasoline at every 5000 points. Overall, a fun yet pointless game to kill some time. So to speak.

While these games have violent themes, the graphics are hardly what you would call "graphic". But Wizard was the true pioneer in what would later become standard gore in video

games.

Ghost Manor for the Atari VCS/2600 by Xonox. A few unique things stand out with this game. First thing you'll notice is that it's one of the "Double-Ender" cartridges put out by Xonox. (On the other end of the cartridge, you'll find a game called "Spike's Peak"). Another unique trait is found in the gameplay. Before playing the game, you are able to choose if you would like to play the boy or girl character. Role choosing in gaming was pretty much unheard of at this point.

The object is to rescue your

friend from the evil castle of Dracula AND find your way back out within a certain timeframe.



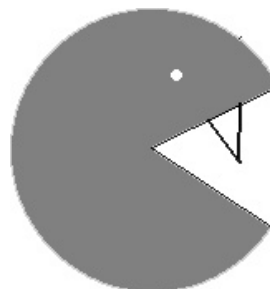
Yeah Baby!! It's Mike Myers!
Halloween

This also is unique since most games of

this nature end when you reach the goal of rescuing the damsel in distress. (I mean, what exactly did happen after Mario rescued the girl from Donkey Kong?). This game has five levels of challenging fun and is appropriate for a scare-themed evening. However, when you look at the "Rainbow Ghost" you have to wonder what exactly the programmer was smoking.

Pac-Man for various systems.

Yeah, so it doesn't make your hair stand on end. We know that. But you DO get chased by ghosts! And that should count for something, don't you think?



Drac-Man?

CGM

Atari Gaming Headquarters
<http://www.atarihq.com>

Keita Iida, has amassed an amazing amount of information for the "Atari Gaming Headquarters". Filled with pictures, interviews, system and cartridge information for everything Atari, including the Jaguar and Lynx. Keita and his staff leave no stone unturned and display their vast knowledge impressively. We give this site our highest recommendation.

The Blue Sky Rangers
<http://www.makingit.com/bluesky/home.shtml>

The Blue Sky Rangers were the programmers for the Mattel Intellivision and M Network games for the Atari VCS. Their site gives the inside scoop of what really happened back in "the days". Great stories, unreleased prototypes of hardware and software and the hype of what never came to exist are all here. You can also relive your old favorites there as well. Available to download on the site are six classic Intellivision games to download and play on your Mac or PC compatible as well as an old "Burgertime" commercial.

Daves Video Game Classics
<http://www.davesclassics.com/>

The emulator capital of the Internet. Every video game system emulator you could possibly want is here for your Mac or PC. Download classic as well as newer system emulators and game ROMS to play (for most of them). We highly recommend you download the MAME emulator (Multi Arcade Machine Emulator) which allows you to play arcade perfect versions of vintage games. You can also download older computer emulators such as the Apple II and the Atari 400 and 800. Chat rooms, message boards and utilities for the emulators

round out an incredible site.

The Vectrex FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions)

<http://www.gamesdomain.com/games/vectrex.html>

Maintained by Gregg Woodcock, it's everything you need to know about the Vectrex game system. Includes game list, repair tips and the history of our favorite tabletop. It doesn't appear it has been updated recently but then again it probably doesn't need to be!

picture of your t.v. displaying your high score? Rodney Siddall has displayed pictures of many of the patches that were available at some point including the Intellivision patches. Be sure to check out the military style Starmaster patches decorating a sleeve. Go relive the days when earning points in video games got you something in return.

NOT Recommended...

The VGS bulletin board area on America Online (**keyword: VGS**) is a huge disappointment for fans of classic gaming. What could be a great bulletin board is instead plagued by the never ending chants of thirteen year olds proclaiming "Playstation ROOLS! Atari DROOLS!". The AOL board moderators do absolutely nothing to keep people on topic as they seem to be too concerned with the multi-level marketing scams that seem to engulf these boards. We can only recommend this classic gaming spot if you enjoy psychotic rantings and unintelligent posts.



The History of Home Video Games Homepage
<http://videogames.org/>

What this page lacks in style it makes up for in content. It's basically an interactive timeline where you can choose a year between 1972-1996 and find out what happened in video game history during that era. If you do nothing else at least go to the site to view the picture of Sesame Street's Grover.

Activision Patch Page
<http://members.aol.com/donna0169/rodneys433a/rw/actptchs.htm>

Remember the patches you could win from Activision if you sent in a

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by
Chris
Lion

"My Nemesis"

When I was in high school, the only friend of mine that had an Atari video game was Rosalind Goldberg. Roz, as we called her, was from a family that not only owned the most ultimate high tech video game player available—the Atari 2600—but also had a home computer! They were the first on the block to own a real life home computer - an Apple II. The Goldbergs kicked ass.

I spent almost all my free time, with 4 other neighbors, at the Goldberg's waiting for my chance to play a video game. My favorite was Super Breakout. I loved the rainbow bright colors shimmering on the Trinitron, and the goofy little noises it made. Plus, it was reminiscent of the first (and yes still my favorite) video game: Pong. There was only one problem when I played: I sucked.

I could not hit that ball with the paddle for my life! And the Goldbergs being such fair people, made sure everyone got a turn until they lost. For me that was about 2 seconds, usually to Rosalind's mom, Gladys. Suffice to say that every afternoon I would wait an hour for a chance to play, only to lose to a 53 year old woman that was suffering the ravages of menopause. She was not what one would call a "gracious winner."

My friends didn't laugh at me too much, because they were getting their asses kicked too. Roz,

however did manage to laugh at us... a lot. Mrs. Goldberg felt it was her place to mock us endlessly. She would always say, "No hard feelings. Right?" This was after crushing the ego of a 15 year old boy.

It was not until Rosalind was leaving for college that she finally told me why her mom played so well. The woman slept only 4 hours a night and spent all of her free time playing video games! For every second I struggled to get the paddle to hit the ball, Mrs. G had 3 hours of solid playing time. That old bag (no hard feelings, right Mrs. G?) had set us up. Once Roz left town, I figured I would never play video games again.

Then fate stepped in.

A dear friend had heard me boasting about how 'I could have been a contender,' far too many times and so, he proceeded to present to me a pristine condition Atari 2600, several cartridges and a cartridge storage case (in smoke). Amongst the collection of games lay my teenage nemesis: Super Breakout.

I glared at the black plastic cartridge with its simple text and colorful graphics that looked nothing like the game and hissed "We meet again."

With its faux wood grain finish and easy to use levers, I admired the sleek lines of the 2600. I let my hand gently slide over the contact

paper finish of the wood grain, my fingers gently fondled the six levers. Taking the cartridge out of the plastic holding case ("holds up to 16 games!"), I inserted Super Breakout. As I picked up the paddles my heart began to race; my palms began to sweat. Suddenly, I felt a calm envelope me and confidence filled my soul with an inner peace I had not felt in years. I pressed start and began to play.

I promptly missed the damn ball three times in a row.

Trying again, I clicked start and again missed the ball. My second ball shot out from its hiding place and slowly drifted down to my awaiting paddle. Just before the ball hit my paddle, I thought to myself, "is the paddle working? Better check!" and whiffed it again.

On the third try, I hit it! Man, I smacked it! I punched it good! Maybe not "punched," but it did lightly bounce off my paddle. I felt the raw energy just smacking something, even if it was only virtually. I felt electricity surge through me as the ball gently smacked a green square and make a cute little "bloop" sound. As the ball gently drifted down to my awaiting paddle, I again felt the surge of confidence. Naturally, I missed it.

However, the fact that I had made my first shot filled me with a new sense of well being. No, not well being... a sense of immense

On the VERY off chance you happen to find this game intact, play a few rounds, and see if it isn't infectious and well done. Or, check it out on MAME like I did.

ATARI 5200

shoot. It may not sound like much but there was something about it that made the arcade experience that much more enjoyable. Anyone who played that game would agree how great it was just to play a game like Space Dungeon at home.

Of course not every arcade conversion was perfect. Although most were developed by third parties, disasters like Parker Brother's Popeye, Q*Bert, Star Wars: The Arcade Game and Fox's Wizard of Wor made the 5200 look more like a "Stupid-System" than anything super. What happened to Brutus' head in Popeye? Did the fight start before the game was turned on? Where are the intermissions in Q*Bert? No intermission. No arcade experience. Star Wars: The Arcade Game was just plain awful, it lacked the gameplay and the voice synthesis the arcade version featured. Wizard of Wor looked the same as the 2600 version. Surely the 5200 can do a better version of Wizard of Wor than the 2600? They looked almost identical. Other disastrous conversions: Sega's Congo Bongo and Buck Rogers. Both are lacking some boards from the arcade classics.

There were some splendid third party titles as well. Fox's Blue Print and Parker Brother's Mr. Do's Castle were well-done. After their other disastrous attempts, these stood out.

Some mediocre titles included Atari's Defender, Pole Position and Qix. Fun to play but far from their arcade counterparts.

Surprisingly Atari left out the voice synthesization in their conversion of Pole Position even though the 5200 was capable of it.

While the marketing term, "State of the Art" is generally used to hype gaming systems (much like Sega's "Blast Processing" moniker) it was the proper phrase for the time in marketing to the consumer. The Atari 5200 truly offered "State of the Art" entertainment. and set the standard for future "State of the Art" systems.

My .025

the new downfall of the gaming industry.

Now we've got a bunch of CD-ROMs, Polygons (The next graphical gimmick after Mode 7), and we've got super-funky controllers. The Playstation has two buttons on each shoulder. (I just HATE having buttons on the shoulder of a controller!). And the N64 has the most annoying and gimmicky controller design this side of Intellivision. By all logical reasoning it would seem that after eroding to this point, the gaming industry would crash again thereby forcing a new beginning and a new basic standard. But it's worse than anyone could have foreseen...the very minds of gamers have been corroded so as to not only expect, but to DEMAND these gimmicks. The most basic of the three main systems of the current generation (Playstation, Saturn, and N64) was the Saturn. This made it my favorite...but it also made it fail. (If you haven't played it yet, give NiGHTS a chance as it's the only polygon game I have seen to offer fun, basic gameplay (it plays almost like a 2-D game.)

So where do we go from here? Will the gaming industry ever find redemption? Only time will tell. I don't know why people can't learn to see past a pretty face, maybe it's a

part of human nature. (People gave up the efficiency of DOS in exchange for the graphical flash of Windows 95).

My suspicion is that there will be a time when graphic technology will reach a peak and then developers will be forced to think about gameplay. Then maybe, just maybe, modern gamers will realize that this is what they wanted all along.

Deep Thaw

made my first shot filled me with a new sense of well being. No, not well being... a sense of immense power! Like greased lightning, my hand smacked the reset button and I began to play again..

Like a blur, my hands were frantically moving the paddle around as I did battle with "the wall." Each bing, blip and bloop the game emitted filled me with a desire to continue on.

Finally, at 4:00 AM, after 10 hours continuous play, with my hands tired and my eyes red and bloodshot, I put the paddle down. While I never managed to get the entire wall to disappear, I feel that I grew a lot that day. I faced an old challenge head on and I came out the other side with sore fingers and a personal high score (187).

In my heart of hearts, I know that one day I will take my place among the stellar champions of Atari and Atari compatible games throughout the world. I am now anxious to start on some other games that I could not master in my youth, like Adventure and River Raid. I will report on my growth and progress, both as human being and as a future Atari 2600 champion.

As for Mrs. Goldberg, here this: I'm coming for you bitch! I'm gonna tear your heart out with a spoon, you old hag. No hard feelings, *right?*

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