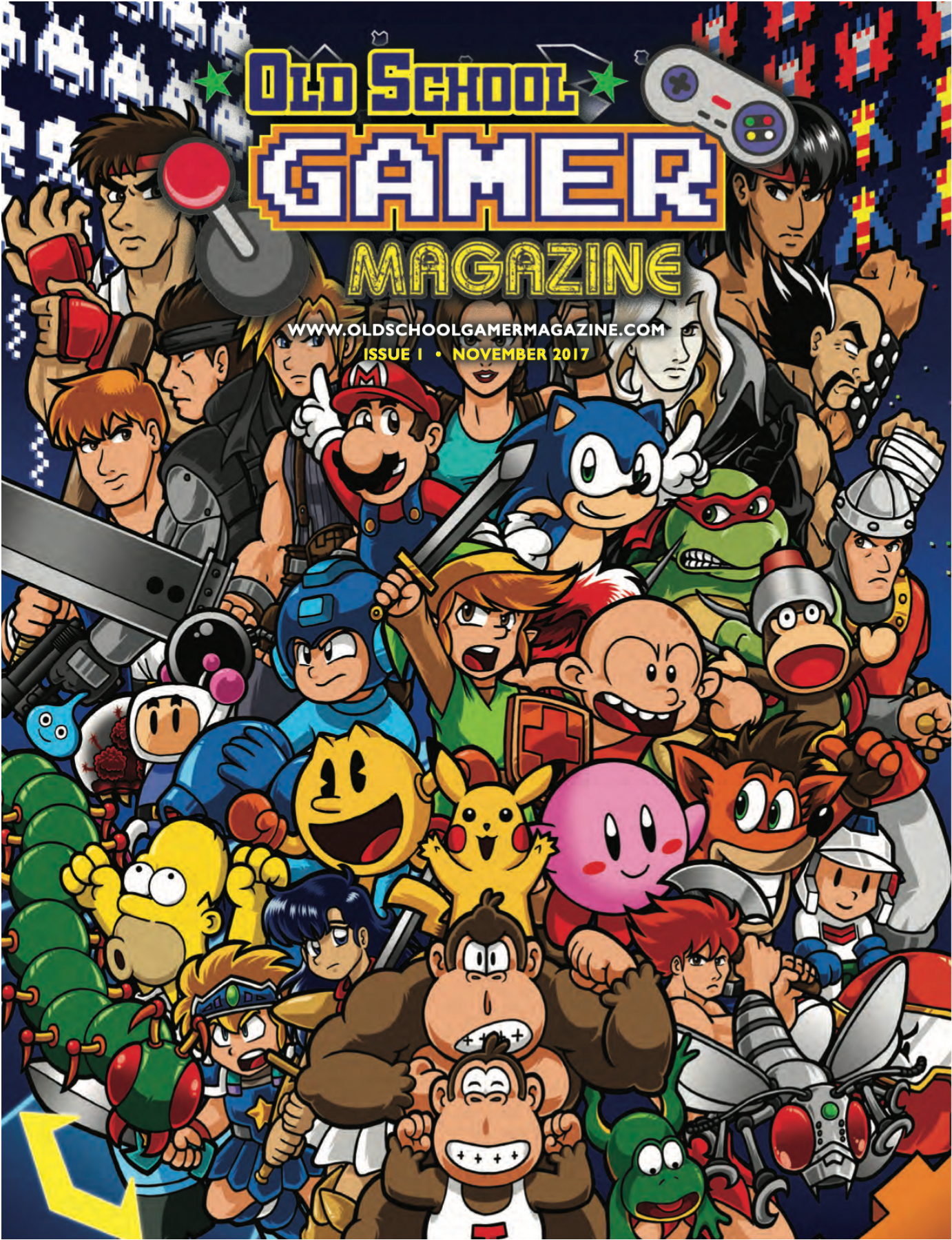


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Classic Game Fest - Austin, TX

WE DROVE 14 HOURS FROM IOWA...WHY WEREN'T YOU THERE?

By Ryan Burger



Members of the Old School Gamer crew (even before we were the Old School Gamer Crew) drove 14 hours for the Classic Game Fest in Austin TX. We had previously gone to Midwest Gaming Classic, CES and other events but never another classic gaming event. And, to say it simply, we had a blast!

The whole crew that runs the Classic Game Fest did and continues to do great job at welcoming everyone to the event and making sure they feel that Texas Hospitality. The pre-registered early line moved quickly, we all got in on the floor within minutes of the doors opening and there's where the fun began. Our crew (Ryan, Paige and Marc) split up and started taking in what we wanted to see. I personally hit the expo floor for unique collect-

ibles and my constant hunt for completing my Atari 2600 and 7800 cartridge collection while Paige and Marc took in the bands in the back half of the hall right next to the arcade machines. We loved all the vendors, especially Video Game Coffee Tables (videogamecoffee.com) who I've still got to get my order in with.

Of course in addition to the hall, arcade, and musical entertainment, the stage was brought alive by speakers such as Walter Day and Billy Mitchell, GameSter81, The Game Historian and others.

Be there! July 28-29, 2018, Austin, TX. Check out more information at classicgamefest.com! 🎮

National Video Game Museum

By Ryan Burger

The city of Frisco, Texas wanted something unique for their town and no doubt they got it! The National Video Game Museum was looking for a home and found it in a northern suburb of Dallas, Texas in mid-2016! As Sean Kelly, Director of the NVM told me in an email "How is it possible that an industry that impacts the lives of hundreds of millions of people doesn't have someplace where people can learn about its history? There is a museum of salt and pepper shakers and more than one museum of carrots but nothing for video games?"

I first saw a large portion of the NVM at the Classic Gaming Expo several years ago in Las Vegas and was thoroughly impressed with the depth of material that had been accumulated for our industry. And the same question came across my mind, also came across the minds of Sean, John Hardie and Joe Santulli's.... "Why the heck hadn't someone else made a museum to not only preserve the history of the video game industry but also share it with the public?" Yes places like the Smithsonian have an exhibit that they opened Video Games for a while, but if baseball has Cooperstown, Hollywood has well...Hollywood, why can't the video game industry

which is estimated to reach over \$100 billion dollars this year have a museum (Global Games Market Report).

On our way down to Austin for the Classic Gaming Fest, we planned a day of a little bit of travel and a lot of fun. We spent approximately three hours there and could have spent a lot more.



Play pong super-sized!

As you come in to the museum, you are greeted with a massive building that includes the NVM and several other interactive type museums and activity centers that Frisco has brought into this complex. Passing by a really cool multi-tv/video exhibit you see

a bit of history shown on the screens and approach the main part of the museum. After buying your tickets the first thing you see when you walk in is themed areas including the massive Pong clone that plays on a retro styled TV.

Going through the location you are



Collections of games



walking through areas that are set aside like a traditional museum with stuff behind glass. The themed areas are the best part. You can see what a Video Game store was like in 1983 (complete with the discount bin), a bedroom set in the mid 80s theme and a family room complete with a wood console TV and an Intellivision set in the late 70s early 80s vibe. Sean Kelly tells me that the Intellivision was his favorite video game console and back in the day it was mine also. My dad always had a purchasing style of buying the better technology unit, and not always what was popular....Betamax vs VHS, and Intellivision vs. Atari are the perfect examples.

The feeling that the NVM is setting up is that of nostalgia, as Director Kelly told us. "The thing that us "old-timers" have that makes those feelings even more powerful is that we watched the birth of the industry and the "wonder" we felt playing video games for the first time is like nothing that can ever be felt again. Kids today take video games for granted in a sense because they have always been there from their earliest memories," said Kelly.

The completeness of the nostalgia is amazing. A bedroom with an NES of course with gun sitting out and R.O.B. with a Members Only jacket on the bed. Keeping it going with a Pee-Wee Herman character doll hanging out, 1980s cassette tapes on the shelves, Ferris Bueller's Day Off, U2 and Madonna posters decorating the walls! The detail that these gentlemen put into the setting is just amazing.

Other interactive exhibits include a speed test system where one of the two cameras will take your picture, and you can select the speed (measured in years - as to the transmission speed of data that year) and it will send the picture to the other side. There is a programmer's studio area where a 1980s era video game program-



1980's Bedroom


WE STOPPED BY

mer worked, back when there weren't mega crews working on a game and often they were made by one or two people. And of course there is a cool retro arcade and gift shop at the end of the museum where you need to plunk down your tokens and play a couple games.

Details and decorations are amazing. Just noticing that the glassed in cabinets in the middle of the floor is done up like cocktail arcade games that you might remember from Pizza Hut is just amazing! A ton of the items are out for interactive usage. I personally spent some time playing Parsec on the TI-99/4A computer system they had sitting in that area. The old school computer area was cool and the console gaming area was well set up too all interactive with cool games already loaded. The areas are very well labeled and have detail on the history of each piece.

While this museum covers everything from the birth of Video Games through the current day, my decades were the 80s and early 90s. This is because of the explosion of the industry in size during that time a ton of it bounces off of that.

Sean told us how one day the lead singer of the Cars showed up. John and Joe happened to be standing in the gift shop at the time when John looked out the window and saw someone who "looked like" Ric standing in line to buy a ticket. John poked Joe and said "Hey...doesn't that guy look like Ric Ocasek??" Joe looked at him and said "Yeah, he kind of does look like him doesn't he?" Ric was on the other side of the glass and could see (but not hear) John and Joe looking at him and apparently read their lips and started to smile. They both pretty much tripped over each other trying to get out of the gift shop to see if it really was Ric. It was and they were able chat with him and his family and get some great pictures. We're kids of the 80s...and naturally HUGE fans of The Cars so it was an amazing, non-videogame-related treat!

You need to get there if you have any excuse to be near Dallas, Texas. Check it out at <http://www.nvmusa.org> and plan your trip now! 

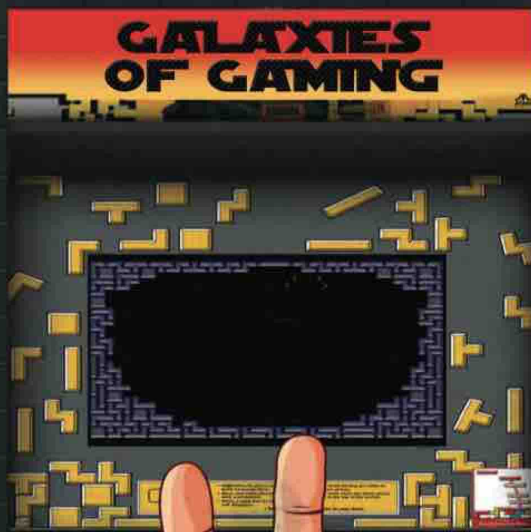
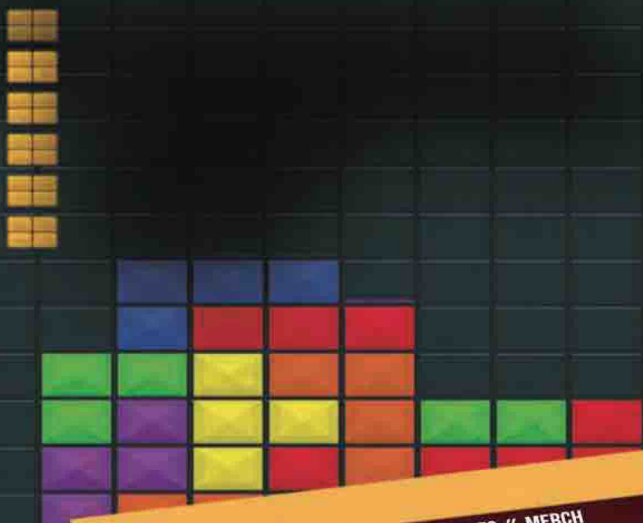


Photos this page, from top: 1970s Family/TV Room, Collections, Arcade, 1983 Game Store

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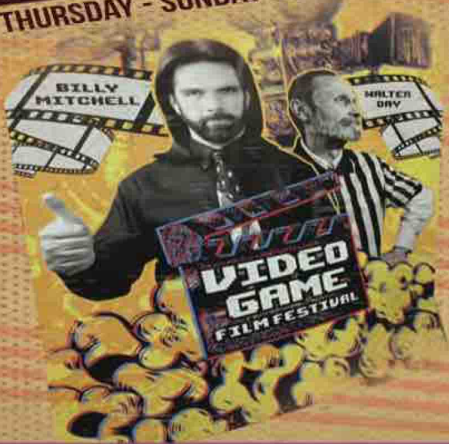
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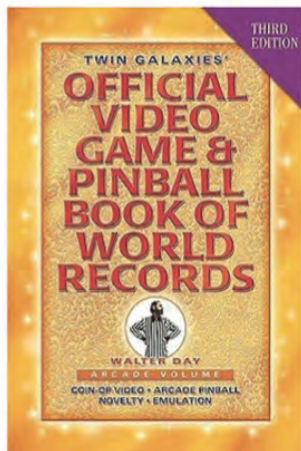




Billy & Walter Go To The Library of Congress

By Walter Day

Once calculated that I had spent more than 1,000 hours writing the 1st edition of the *Twin Galaxies' Official Video Game & Pinball Book of World Records*. I started on Thanksgiving Day 1996 and worked diligently until the 984-page volume was finished in October, 1997. Five thousand copies of the volume were eventually printed at a cost of \$28,500 and the book was released on February 8, 1998 with a big "launch party" in Fairfield, Iowa that attracted almost 200 friends and gamers from all over the USA and Canada. Unfortunately, my publisher had an ironclad contract with a distributing warehouse in Kansas City that gave them complete control over the storing and shipping of our books, and when that distributor went out of business, 1,500 copies of the book were sent to the paper recycler. So, only 3,500 copies of the reference book ever made it into circulation. (See card #576)



satisfied me. It would have a gold cover (TG Book 2nd cover) and was not going to be just about tables of scores, but would have feature boxes that divulged the forgotten history of video game & pinball playing.

By the summer of 2005, six documentary film crews were following Twin Galaxies around -- all seeking to be the first to report on the origins of organized video game playing. In time, all the film crews dropped out leaving only two remaining contenders. One set of filmmakers would go on to produce *Chasing Ghosts: Beyond the Arcade* and the other would come up with the *King of Kong: A Fistful of Quarters*.

By July, the film crews had most of their needed footage in the can, and I was now free to work on finishing the 2nd edition of the *Twin Galaxies* book of world records. This would become the popular gold-covered book that came out on June 1, 2007. To get the book ready for its day of destiny, Billy Mitchell and I had to travel to Washington DC to find the remaining information I needed to complete this volume. As briefly stated earlier, I had decided that the 2nd volume would not just have world record scores, but would also feature snippets of history that documented the arcades, gamers, high scores, and contests of the 1970s-1990s -- for both video and pinball.

So, this plan required a visit to the

Library of Congress. The film crew making *Chasing Ghosts* was intrigued by our plan so they decided to go to the LOC with us and film our efforts to unearth little known facts of video game and pinball lore. Not surprisingly, footage of our trip found its way into the final cut of *Chasing Ghosts*.

The Library of Congress proved to be much bigger than I expected. Even though our research was focusing only on the history of the video game and pinball arcade, I found mountains and mountains of original reference material to plow through. And, it was all in the form of back-issue magazines.

Billy stayed as long as he could at the LOC, while I stayed for an entire week, going through every back issue of *Vending Times*, *RePlay Magazine*, *Play Mater*, *FunSpot Magazine*, *Variety*, and *Cashbox Magazine* published between the years 1970 and the early 1990s. On top of that, to gather information on the early history of pinball, I had to also go through every edition of *Billboard Magazine* from 1930 to the beginning of the '70s. When I found that the LOC had gaps in their holdings of *Vending Times Magazine*, I had to schedule a further trip to NYC to visit VT's editorial offices. Only there could I lay my hands on every issue of *Vending Times* from the '40s up to the '90s. Between the trips to Washington and New York City, I found myself going home with an estimated 2,000 xeroxed magazine pages. A fact never revealed before is that Billy Mitchell personally paid for all the xeroxing expenses and hotel charges for the trip, simply because he believed it was important to find this information and publicize the untold history of competitive gaming.

And, yes, we found marvelous stuff. For instance, we found historical mentions of the first major pinball championship, which was held in Milwaukee, WI. Held the weekend of May 24-26, 1935, in Milwaukee's Futuristic Ballroom, it was history's first national pinball championship. Called the "Big Whiffle Tournament," the event attracted pinball fans from all over the United States where the contestants played on 200 whiffle pinball tables (whiffle was considered the first pinball



But, I had moved on to greater things: namely, publishing the 2nd edition of the book.

It wasn't until 2004 that I finally created a page layout for the new book that

machine) and offered \$1,000 in prizes (including a "fine bedroom suite"). This surprising information inspired the creation of trading card #340, shown at right. The story of this championship was one of the stories featured in a two-page "pinball spread" that was researched by Twin Galaxies for the 2007 Guinness World Records book.

Digging deeper into the stacks at the LOC, I found that, on June 29, 1935, history's first company was created for the purpose of setting up coin-op arcades in theatre lobbies. Plus, we found a news story on the All-Japan TV Games Championship which was sponsored by Sega in Japan in 1974. With further research, we learned that the first arcade coin-op equipment poll (later popularized by *Replay* and *Play Meter* Magazines) was pioneered in 1948 by *Cashbox* Magazine. That information was used to create card #2768, shown at right. And, at the time of that 1948 poll, shuffleboard was the biggest game in coin-op entertainment. Next, we saw that Ron Mowry played a pinball marathon in Florida non-stop for 72 hours in 1972. Equipment polls in *Play Meter* and *RePlay* magazines showed that in 1981-82, *Defender* bested *Pac-Man* in gross revenues month after month, even though *Pac-Man* would later transcend to world iconic status.

As for contests, there was a plethora of contests. Among them was the 1980 *Space Invaders* Championship organized by Atari that saw more than 10,000 participants. My favorite contest was the 1984 *March of Dimes International Konami/Centuri Track & Field Challenge*. Until another larger contest is discovered, this may be the largest arcade contest conducted during the Golden Age of Arcades. According to stories found in a multitude of magazines in the LOC, more than 1 million contestants played *Track & Field* between April 30 and May 26, hoping to be among three finalists going to Japan to represent the USA. As a fundraiser for the *March of Dimes*, the event was held in Aladdin's Castle arcades and National Convenience Stores. Gary West of Oklahoma City won the U.S. Finals, but Phil Britt, of Riverside, California, won the World Championship in Tokyo on June 10, 1984. (See card #487 - page 12)

I think my favorite discovery was the story of E. H. Pineau, a pinball player who, according to the June 1, 1935 edition of *Billboard* Magazine, was called upon to defend the fledgling sport of pinball. The article said: "Syracuse, June 1, 1935. While Justice Leo Yehle and a swarm of police,



detectives and lawyers looked on, E.H. Pineau, Syracuse, demonstrated conclusively that the Champion pinball machine, subject of a test case here, is a game of skill, not chance. Samuel Kay, restaurant proprietor, arrested nearly a year ago for possession of the machine, is making a fight that will set a precedent for entire up-State New York, and after two State legislators testified for defense, Judge Yehle gave Kay's attorney, Willis Sargent, permission to prove the game's accuracy. Pineau made the ball do everything. Judge Yehle asked him to score 1,000. He did. Assistant D.A. Homer

Twin Galaxies' Superstars of 2012 VIDEO GAME TRADING CARD SET

History's 1st National Pinball Championship

History's first national pinball championship was held the weekend of May 24-26, 1935, in the **Futuristic Ballroom**, in Milwaukee, WI. Called the "**Big Whiffle Tournament**," the event attracted pinball fans from all over the United States. The contestants played on 200 whiffle pinball tables (whiffle was considered the first pinball machine) and offered \$1,000 in prizes (including a "fine bedroom suite"). The event was produced as a charity fund raiser for the **Badger State Advancement Association of the Blind**, and certain whiffles were adapted to allow blind teams to participate in the event. This would be the last attempt at creating a "National" event until the 1970s dawned. Old-timers affectionately referred to this as "The Milwaukee Event" for decades until it faded from memory. However, this event came to light again when it was featured in a two-page "pinball spread" that was researched by Twin Galaxies for the 2007 Guinness World Records book. This "pinball-spread" was historically significant because it was the first time ever that Guinness World Records recognized pinball accomplishments.



Twin Galaxies is the official scorekeeper for the world of video game playing, responsible for creating and enforcing the rules, adjudicating the contests and crowning the champions of the video game world.

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Walter Day's SUPERSTARS OF 2017 VIDEO GAME & PINBALL TRADING CARDS

THE BIRTH OF THE EQUIPMENT POLL

Pioneered by *Cash Box Magazine* in 1948

The first equipment poll was created by *Cash Box Magazine* in 1948. At that time, shuffleboard was the top game in the world of coin-operated amusement. By the 1970s, equipment polls were standard fare in trade journals like *Play Meter Magazine* and *RePlay Magazine*. In the March, 1976 edition of *RePlay Magazine*, a survey was published that ranked the relative success of the arcade games that were in use during the 1935-76 period. This data was gathered through an arcade questionnaire published in *RePlay* and reflects the opinions of the arcade operators of 1976. Even though video games had been in existence only four years by that time, the top five games on this list were video games. The top twenty winners were:

1. *Bank (I and II)* (Atari-Kee) • 2. *Wheels (I and II)* (Midway) • 3. *Gun Fight* (Midway) • 4. *Super Shifter* (Allied) • 5. *Indy 500* (Atari-Kee) • 6. *Air Hockey* (Brunswick) • 7. *Wizard Pinball* (Bally) • 8. *Grand Trak* (10 & 20) (Atari-Kee) • 9. *Skee Ball* (Phila. Toboggan) • 10. *F-14* (Allied) • 11. *Twin Racer* (Atari-Kee) • 12. *B-Plane* (Fun Games) • 13. *Racer* (Midway) • 14. *Demolition Derby* (Chicago Coin) • 15. *GO! Pinball* (Williams) • 16. *Riffs* (Ranger Systems) • 17. *Street Burner* (Allied) • 18. *Crown Basketball* (Midway) • 19. *Amigo Pinball* (Gottlieb) • 20. *Grand Prix* (Sega).

The Walter Day Collection of Video Game & Pinball Trading Cards was created to commemorate the history of the global video game & pinball culture, honoring the people, the games, the technology, and the historic milestones.

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Walsh asked him to put the ball in a 500 hole, supposed to be the hardest shot. That was a cinch for Pineau. Walsh asked him to get 1,500. He did. Then he was asked to score by hundreds, from 100 to 600. He got 100, 200, 300, 400 and 600. Reversing, he got 1,000, 900, 800, 600 and 500. Pineau's only misses were on request for score of 3,800, when he got 3,900 and 3,600. Court reserved decision, but verdict, expected in about week, is likely to be for machine as the result of Pineau's convincing demonstration. Previously State Senator Esquirol, author of the state law, testified for Kay,



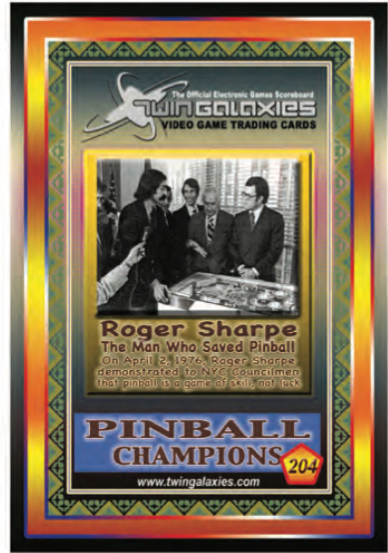
Walter Day's
SUPERSTARS OF 2013
VIDEO GAME & PINBALL TRADING CARDS

TRACK N FIELD CONTEST
The Golden Age's Largest Contest

The Twin Galaxies' Official Video Game & Pinball Book of World Records (Arcade Volume) lists history's largest video game contest as the "1984 March of Dimes International Konami/Centuri Track & Field Challenge." The editors say: "More than 1 million contestants played *Track & Field* between April 30 and May 26, hoping to be among three finalists going to Japan to represent the USA. As a fundraiser for the March of Dimes, the event was held in Aladdin's Castle arcades and National Convenience Stores. Gary West of Oklahoma City won the U.S. Finals, but Phil Britt, of Riverside, California, won the World Championship in Tokyo on June 10, 1984. The production of this trading card was made possible through a financial grant generously donated by Michael Brian Rich, of Atlanta, Georgia.

The Walter Day Collection of Video Game & Pinball Trading Cards was created to commemorate the history of the global video game & pinball culture, honoring the people, the games, the technology, and the historic milestones.
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asserting pinball machines never were considered by lawmakers when the bill was passed and that the law does not apply to them at all."

That makes this such a wonderful discovery is that history repeated itself on April 2, 1976, when noted pinball author and enthusiast Roger Sharpe demonstrated his pinball skills in front of a group of New York state lawmakers. Mr. Sharpe's expert testimony was needed because pinball was illegal in many parts of the USA: pinball had been outlawed in Chicago in 1936, in Los Angeles in 1939, and in NYC in 1940. An article in the May, 1976 edition of *Vending Times* said: "...Roger C. Sharpe, noted author and pinball historian, who, on April 2, 1976, demonstrated to New York City Councilmen that a good player can get a better score, making pinball clearly a game of skill. As he demonstrated his expertise on Gottlieb's Bank Shot pinball, members of the small crowd in attendance applauded in support. One month later, New York Mayor Abraham

Beame signed the bill repealing the 34-year-old ban on pinball." (See card #204 - this page)

Despite my exhaustive research, the Library of Congress certainly has more untapped historic gems that will someday be surrendered to future arcade historians. Thanks to the historical treasures found in the LOC, the 2nd edition of the book of records became a guided tour of our arcade legacy, focusing on the gamers and contests of the past. But, there is more to come. Our arcade hobby has a rich legacy that will be examined by Billy and Walter in further articles in *Old School Gamer Magazine*. With approximately 2,000 xeroxed pages still in hand from the LOC's archival holdings, there are many more stories, trading cards, and magazine articles that can be published here to honor the historical tradition of competitive arcade gaming. **KG**

Twin Galaxies'
Superstars of 2012
VIDEO GAME TRADING CARD SET

ROGER SHARPE

Co-founder of the Professional and Amateur Pinball Association (PAPA) and current Co-director of the International Flipper Pinball Association (IFPA), Roger Sharpe's contributions and impact on the coin-operated amusement game industry have been evident for over 30 years. His acclaimed book, *PINBALL!* (E.P. Dutton, 1977) remains the definitive historical chronicle of PINBALL as an entertainment art form and it was his testimony and game playing demonstration before the New York City Council on April 2, 1976 which helped to overturn a law banning the operation of pinball machines that had been in effect since 1941. For over 12½ years as the Director of Marketing and Licensing for Williams Bally/Midway, Sharpe not only implemented consumer and industry driven strategies but also significantly influenced product design and development through his license acquisitions. These led to over 30 branded pinball machines, including *The Addams Family*, *Star Trek: The Next Generation* and *Twilight Zone* to highlight only a few. As an International TV & Film Festival award winner, Sharpe was the Managing Editor of *Gentlemen's Quarterly Magazine* and the Editor-in-Chief of *Video Games magazine*. Today, Sharpe's pinball legacy continues with his sons, Joshua and Zachary, who are contributing editors for *Play Meter Magazine* and President and Vice President respectively of the IFPA and world-ranked competitive pinball players.



Twin Galaxies is the official scorekeeper for the world of video game playing, responsible for creating and enforcing the rules, adjudicating the contests and crowning the champions of the video game world.
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Walter Day - As the founder of Twin Galaxies, the oldest video game scorekeeping and adjudication service in history, Walter Day is known as the creator of e-sports and has often been called The Patron Saint of Video Games. His remarkable efforts to find, verify and catalog video game world records has led to a decades-long partnership with The Guinness Book of World Records.

A GAME-BY-GAME history of the interactive entertainment industry

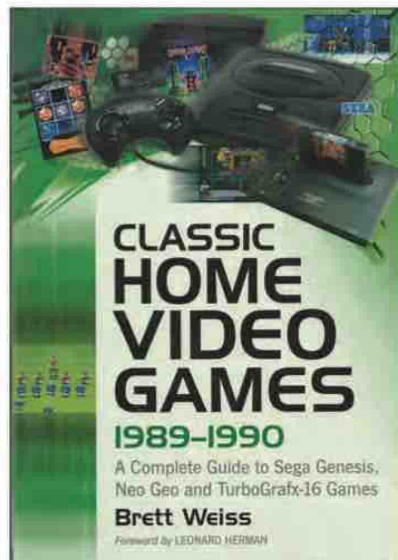
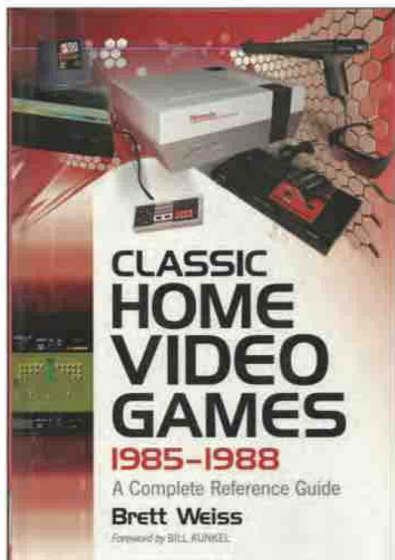
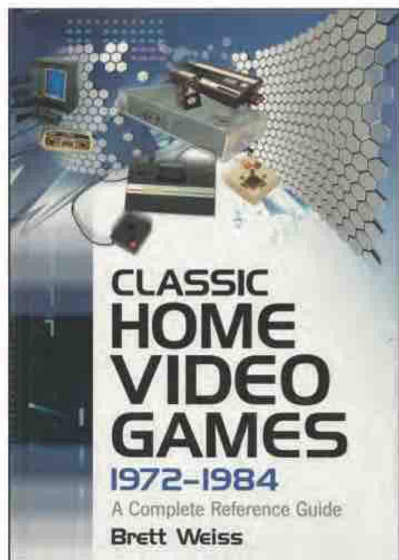


Written by noted video game author and historian Brett Weiss, *The 100 Greatest Console Video Games: 1977-1987* and the *Classic Home Video Games* book series are available on Amazon.com.

For more info, check out Brett's website:
www.BrettWeissWords.com

Author Brett Weiss knows his stuff... a respected name in the classic gaming community... he provides insightful behind-the-scenes information... suitable for just about any type of video game fan.

—Dave “The Video Game Critic” Mrozek



The Old School Gamer Advisory Board



Doc Mack

Galloping Ghost Arcade/Productions – Doc is the owner of the 600+ arcade game Galloping Ghost Arcade in Brookfield, IL. He's a gift to this industry that is working with the entire arcade scene to grow it and develop it further. His other related enterprises include Galloping Ghost Productions (newly developed arcade games), and Kombat Kon (fan event for Mortal Kombat fans).

Billy Mitchell

History's most famous video game player. Proclaimed the Video Game Player of the Century at the 1999 Tokyo Game Show, Billy has enjoyed a remarkable career that included history's first perfect score on Pac-Man (3,333,360 points on July 3, 1999) and appearing in the 1982 LIFE magazine photograph that featured the video game superstars of the Golden Age of video games. Famous the world over as the iconic creator of Rickey's World Famous Sauce, Billy is based in Hollywood, Florida and is the co-creator of the annual Kong Off (the official Donkey Kong World Championship).



Dan Loosen

Midwest Gaming Classic / GOAT Store – Dan Loosen has been running the GOAT Store, LLC with his business partner Gary Heil for 18 years. The company was formed when the pair was trying to collect video games at a time that people selling games didn't think about their collectible nature. The company has grown and changed throughout the past 18 years, now having more than 20,000 items in stock, and selling throughout the world! The GOAT Store has expanded to publish games for retro consoles and host the annual Midwest Gaming Classic trade show in Milwaukee, Wisconsin that draws more than 10,000 gamers together. Dan will bring this "behind the scenes" knowledge in his articles.



Walter Day

As the founder of Twin Galaxies, the oldest video game scorekeeping and adjudication service in history, Walter Day is known as the creator of e-sports and has often been called The Patron Saint of Video Games. His remarkable efforts to find, verify and catalog video game world records has led to a decades-long partnership with The Guinness Book of World Records.



Why An Advisory Board?

BECAUSE I NEED ONE!

By Ryan Burger

When this magazine was started earlier this summer I knew a lot of people within the industry, some of them directly, but many of them indirectly. Two of our advisory board are friends I've had in this industry thanks to the Midwest Gaming Classic that I've attended for years (Dan and Doc), and both of them knew I was looking for a niche to be involved in the retro gaming community. The other two I had met momentarily due to friends in common but hadn't spent much time with them other than quick casual conversations, Billy and Walter.

All 4 of them were excited when they heard about what I was wanting to put together with Old School Gamer and all of them come to us with different but intersecting backgrounds and with tons of ideas as to what a magazine can do to serve the retro community of gamers.

There is a fantastic super extended family that gets together either virtually online or in person at the various expos and other events happening all year long across the US, and for some of them around the world. This community has brought us great podcasts, Youtube channels and more, but hasn't brought us a trade magazine that has lasted through a couple years. That's where I come in with my experience in niche publications. My job is to work with these advisors to gear the magazine to what all of you want, working with the fantastic group of writers that have stepped forward to help lead Old School Gamer.

Honestly we are still looking for probably two more members of this advisory board. If you know of someone who could serve in this way, please have them contact me at rb@oldschoolgamer magazine.com or call my office at 515-986-3344x300.

Ryan Burger
Publisher



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Galloping Ghost Arcade

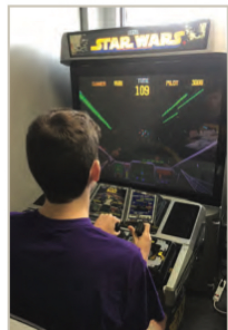
By Old School Gamer Staff

For this inaugural issue of Old School Gamer, I went to the what must be the largest single collection of arcade machines in the world... Galloping Ghost Arcade in Brookfield (Chicago area), Illinois. Bursting at the seams with over 600 games operating at one time this amazing location is run by Doc Mack and his crew for the last 7+ years. I was able to sit down with Doc personally before spending a couple hours in the arcade with Old School Gamer's Aaron Burger.

Galloping Ghost's Doc Mack has one of the absolutely largest hearts for the arcade industry I have ever seen. He has personally consulted with and helped to open over 20 other similar arcades, many of them within the realm of being competitors in the Chicagoland area. I've seen him educating, informing and doing everything he can at the Midwest Gaming Classic for the last couple of years to help others. His involvement in the arcade

industry goes well beyond what most people see at Galloping Ghost. GGA's involvement in its production house making new games and bringing previous retro projects back to life, its ownership of the Aurcade scoring system and finder, Kombat Kon where you can attend and meet the actors, programmers and more of the 90s popular arcade series and more

Now on to the arcade... when my wife heard I was going to Chicago, she just assumed (correctly) that I would be going to Galloping Ghost, not a DJ store for my other publication, Wrigley



Above: Doc Mack, owner of Galloping Ghost
Other pictures on page: Star Wars Arcade, 1993; Death Race, 1976

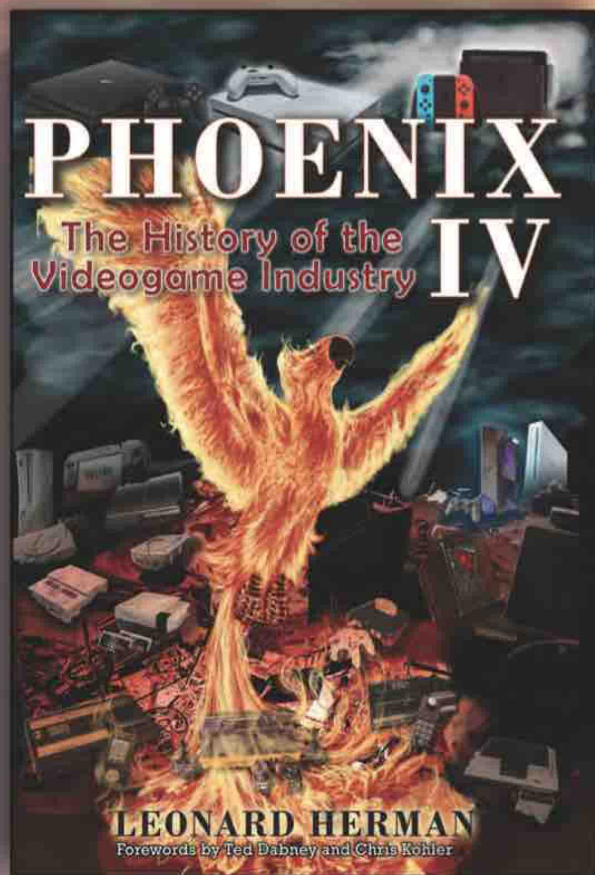
Field because I love those Chicago Cubbies, but Galloping Ghost. Galloping Ghost has a nice website at gallopingghostarcade.com and there are plenty of video tours that various YouTubers have put out there on their experience at the arcade, but all of those can't do justice to this place. The only way to do it is to experience it for yourself. And if it's your first time there, plan on 4-5 hours.

I would consider a trip to there being like going to a science center, zoo or museum for the first time. The first time you go, you

will want to stay for longer than you initially planned on being there, and then you will want to come back. For instance in between the last time I was there and this most recent trip, they added an additional full room, and found a way to pack another 50+ games into what was their existing space the last time I visited.

Being a gamer from the 1980s and early 1990s and having spent a ton of time at the local arcades in Central Iowa back in those days, I thought I had played everything out

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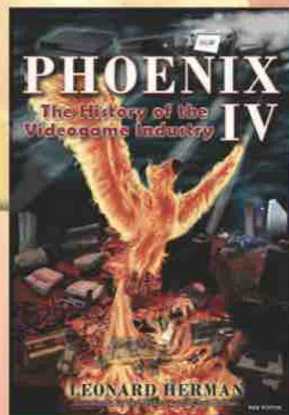
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* Rated by Game Informer magazine as,
"the #2 videogame book of all time."

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there. But Chicago is the big city, and this place is just amazing with the collection they have acquired. I was there on a Monday when they debut a new game every week. For those of you that are nerds/geeks like me, the excitement around there is like Thursdays for New Movies at the theaters, Tuesdays at the Redbox when they get new stuff, and "New Comic Book" day that the guys on Big Bang Theory talk about.

The way the place works, which I understand isn't a GGA original but they have helped to spread it heavily throughout the industry, is that you pay \$20 for a ticket in the door, and then there are no quarters needed. You can stay all day, or just stay for an hour. \$20 (aka two rolls of quarters) is what all of us kids when we were younger would dream of getting from Mom and Dad to play at the arcade, or when we had our own jobs we would go through on a session of gaming at the local "Fun Factory" in my case.

As to the game generations that they have there, really everything from the 1970s Night Driver, Death Race and similar games through the 80s with it's Tapper, Pac-Man, Robotron, Gauntlet, etc, up to the mid 90s and 00s. One big thing that Doc pointed out is that you won't find any Golden Tee games here, and I only found 2 pinball machines in the place. I found hundreds of games that were right in my gaming ballpark that I had never played when I first came out here several years ago. The games are packed in tight and I can only imagine the craziness of Friday and Saturday at GGA. We came on a Monday and there were a couple dozen other people there at the time. Because of the variety of the games available, there was only maybe 4-5 minutes that I ever had to wait to play a certain game that I wanted....if I chose to sit there instead of finding another target for my button mashing, joystick wiggling needs for that moment.

A couple of games that really blew me away that I hadn't seen before was a Star Wars sit down from the mid-1990s and Timber that is done in the likes of Tapper and appears to be where the bartender from Tapper went to after retiring from bartending.


A feature that I noticed and paid more attention to this time in the arcade is the tags on top of every game in the arcade. They list basics of lives and settings that the game is set on, the World Record on those settings and the high scores within this arcade. While I had noticed that before, the QR code to the left of such is what got me going this time. When you install the GGA app on your Android or Apple device you can scan the QR code and get to a whole new archive of information about the games, including descriptions,



From top: Gauntlet II, 1986; Timber, 1984; Krull, 1983

videos, controls and much more. Other neat features to check out while you are there, is the Hardcore Title, the Mortal Kombat row with autographed pictures from nearly all of the actors, and the Aurcade scoring system mentioned earlier. For an example of this see GGA's App on the next page. From what I could tell they had this system on practically every game in the arcade.

In short if you live anywhere in the midwest, you need to road trip to Chicago, and if you are a fanatic like me and live

anywhere in the states, you need to make a Chicago weekend out of it with the family. Take in a Cubs game, and hit the Museum of Science and Industry and the Field Museum of Natural History plus this museum that you can actually play with all the stuff in it, at the Galloping Ghost Arcade! 

9415 Ogden Ave
 Brookfield, Illinois 60513
 (708) 485-4700
<http://www.gallopingghostarcade.com>

GGA's App

As mentioned on the opposite page, Galloping Ghost Arcade (GGA) has indexed all of its games into this unique QR scanning app. Available on both iTunes and the Google Play Store it is a great way to unlock a ton of data about all of the games in GGA. Download it and be ready to learn!



Install the app from your favorite App store and look for the QR code on each game's high score card.



Scan the QR code with the app to see a screen similar to this one; containing gaming options, high scores, videos and more, for each title at GGA.



Then it takes you to pages like this one, the Aurcade scoring system and a database of high scores for venues that use the system.



On Saturday August 23, 2017 the Galloping Ghost Arcade hosted its annual Mortal Kombat convention called the Kombat Kon! The event originated as Shang Tsung's Fight Night but after five years grew from being held at the arcade to a bigger venue. Now in its seventh year, this year event drew its biggest number of attendees to date and was held at the Holiday Inn in Countryside! This year's event was very special as it commemorated the 25th anniversary of Mortal Kombat being released in the arcade! VIP were announced and sold out quickly.

Kombat Kon featured the majority of the original actors and developers from the original arcade games. The event is a reunion for many of the actors that knew each other even before the iconic video games were filmed. While some of the actors use the arcade as a home base for meeting with fans, it was the first time for some of the actors (Liz Malecki Sonya & Chris Alexander (Johnny Cage) to appear since the early 90s. One of the biggest treats for the fans was seeing several of the actors (Daniel Pesina - Sub Zero, Rich Divizio - Kano, Tony Marquez - Kung Lao, & Phillip Ahn - Shang Tsung) put on their costumes for photo ops!

Fans flew in from all over the world including Australia, Luxemburg, Chile, Argentina and of course from all over the US to come meet with the Legends of Mortal Kombat. They actors signed memorabilia that they brought with them and photos that were provided by Galloping Ghost Arcade.

The Kon also featured several other

events through-out the day. Tournaments in all four original arcade games were held with custom Mortal Kombat themed prizes awarded to the winners. Cos-player took part in a costume contest judged by the actors themselves! A presentation of the Insert Coin Midway documentary was shown. A birthday celebration for Brian Glynn (Shao Kahn) took place with a custom cake for everyone to enjoy! An awards ceremony and was also held to thank the actors for coming to meet with their fans. Also three new statues were unveiled of sculptures done in the likeness of the actors!

The evening concluded with an exclusive VIP only after party back at the Galloping Ghost Productions offices in Brookfield. The after party event kicked off with Tony Marquez's band Kung Lao and the Scorpions performing!

The Legends of Mortal Kombat

Daniel Pesina - Johnny Cage, Scorpion, Sub-Zero, Reptile -- Carlos Pesina - Raiden -- Phillip Ahn - Shang Tsung -- John Parrish - Jax -- Liz Malecki - Sonya -- Sal Divita - Nightwolf, Sektor, Cyrax, Smoke -- Ho Sung Pak - Lui Kang -- John Turk - Sub-Zero Shang Tsung, Scorpion, Sub-Zero, Reptile -- Katalin Zamiar - Kitana, Mileena, Jade -- Kerri Hoskins - Sonya -- Chris Alexander - Johnny Cage -- Brian Glynn - Shao Kahn -- Lia Montelongo - Sindel -- Tony Marquez - Kung Lao -- Rich Divizio - Kano, Baraka, Kabal, Quan Chi

Industry Developers: Josh Tsui, John Vogel, Dan Forden

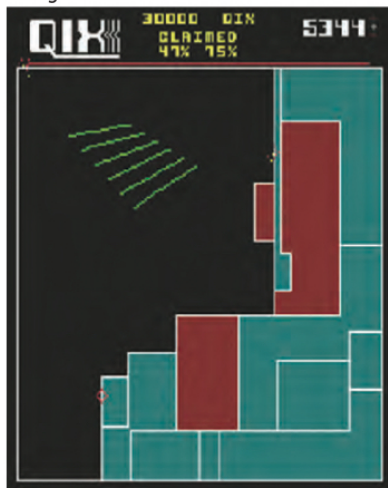
Get Your Kicks From QIX



By Michael Thomasson

The screen flickers “Your marker controlled with joystick. To draw stix press fast or slow. Claim areas by joining walls with stix.” Or so the first three simple sentences of the original Qix attract mode boldly stated. It continues, “Scores based on area. Fast score 250. Slow score 500.” Ten words on how I am to be rated. Already a sense of urgency is mounting within. However there is more – a SURPRISE... “Claim more than 75% of playfield for special bonus.” What could it be? I must know. All that lies between me and the goal are the “Opponents: Qix, Sparx, Fuse, Spiral Death Trap.” These odd and abstract antagonists move in such an uncanny manner. What methods do I need to apply to “Evade Qix” and “Dodge Sparx?” What do I need to do to become a coveted “Kicker” member?

The fall of 1981 and an eleven year-old boy's mind stumbles with many intriguing questions, including the obvious. How do I pronounce this crazy game, anyway [quix], [sqix], [quicks], [kicks]? It is only three letters long and my fourth grade education is already failing me!



The true diction is not “QUIX” but “KICKS.” There are two stories that explain the possible origin of how the game was named. As with much lore, the tales should be taken with a grain of salt, and not argued amongst friends

at classic gaming expos across the country.

The first tales goes something like this: Taito debuted the Qix machine at the 1981 AMOA show. As with such events, the press was on-hand for the event and after Taito unveiled the game, it was made available for play to attendees and honored guests. This was the early eighties and Atari was on top. Much of the camera eye focused on Atari founder Nolan Bushnell. Rumor has it that Nolan took the time to sample Taito's new game, giving the cabinet “kicks” in frustration as he quickly lost his markers to the machine.

While it is not wholly unusual for a product to be displayed before a product name has been assigned, and while this event is recorded to have happened, it is probably more plausible that the second account is more accurate. This alternate story reports that co-designer and programmer, Randy Pfeiffer (half of the rhyming husband and wife team of Randy and Sandy Pfeiffer) had an automobile sporting a vanity license plate stating “JUS4QIX.” According to his wife Sandy, Randy enjoyed the phonetically sounding variant so much that he named his game after it: Qix!

While maze games and intergalactic battles ruled the early arcades, Qix was a breath of fresh air and a shot of originality when it appeared on the scene in 1981. Being the first “drawing game” there was nothing like the title in the arcades, and it was very much ahead of its time.

The game was published by Taito, the same company that brought us the fondly remembered Space Invaders in 1979. Unlike Space Invaders and most Taito games, Qix was created in America and not imported from the Japanese market.

As the attract mode of Qix implies, it is a simple but very challenging strategy game. The player controls a marker that is shaped like a small diamond that moves around the game screen similar to the popular child's toy, the Etch a Sketch. Using two different speed buttons and a 4-directional joystick, the player tries to gain real estate from the unpredictable moving Qix by enclosing parts of the play area a single block at a time. The player must keep his eye on the countdown timer and avoid working himself into an irreversible death spiral. The player is safe from the menacing

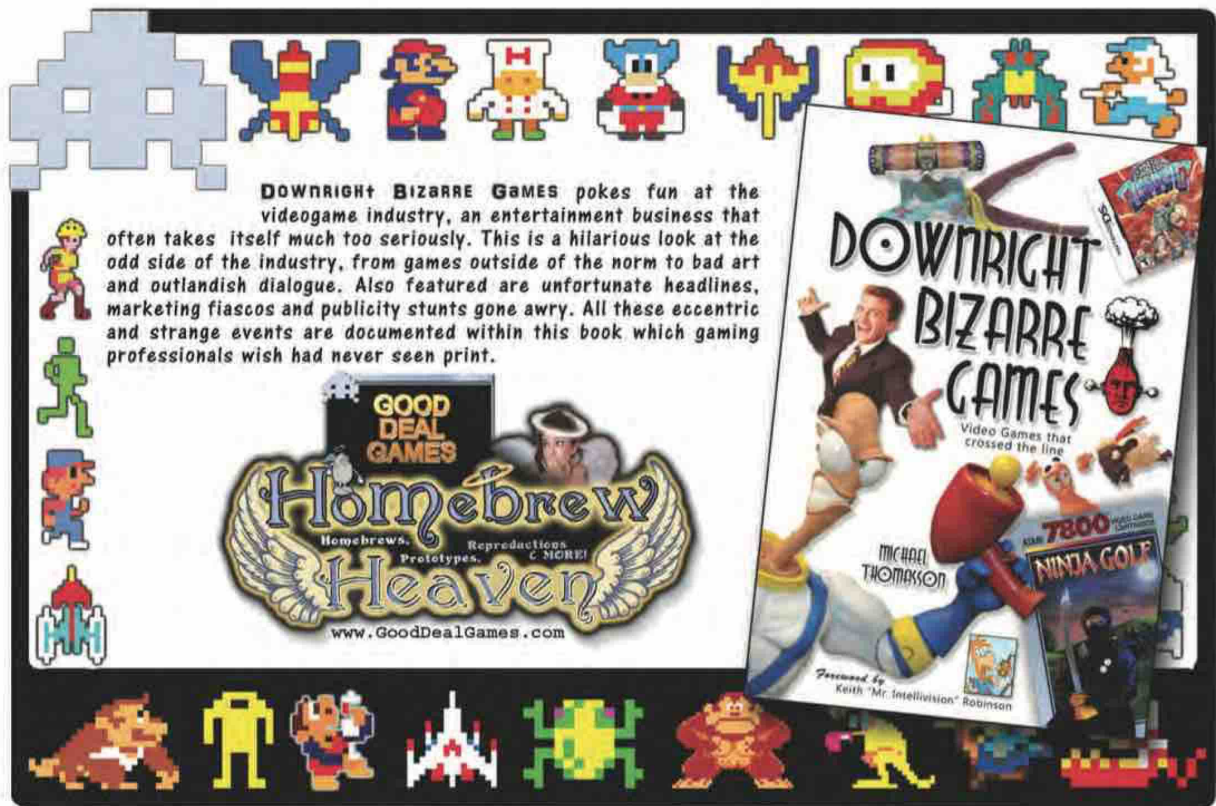
Qix while not drawing, but it is pursued by and vulnerable to sparks and fuses that can travel on any player-created line paths. This dynamic of always being safe and in danger at the same time is a unique element and a big (ahem) DRAW to the game!

Qix was an immediate hit upon its release. It performed BIG numbers for Taito, especially in more logic-minded location such as on college campuses. Qix was also profitable among older players in bars, where inebriated clientele fumbled their pocket change into this difficult quarter-eating machine at an amazingly fast rate. The casual gamer, those not wearing “beer-goggles” or of an eager mind were often turned off by the plain nature of the game and color scheme.


The early eighties arcade scene, like many other arenas, had its share of societal rules. For games that required a large portion of playing time, it was a trend for eager players to place their waiting quarters against the glass screen of the coin-op machine to imply that they had “dibs” on the next game. Many game players at the time would brag by learning patterns or strategies that would allow them to take enormous amounts of time on a machine, piling up anxious quarters and endearing and frustrating fans. Since crowds entice more to gather, it makes a dynamic and fuels the popularity. This was NOT the case with Qix. The machine was deemed as “simply unbeatable” by masters of the trade because of the random and unpredictable movement of the dreaded Qix. With an enormous amount of possible movement combinations and no patterns to fool the Qix opponent, even the best of players lost interest when they could not improve their scores and best the Qix cabinet.

Qix vanished from the arcades rather quickly after a short but modest success. Most machines were converted to better earning Taito titles. The arcade version of Qix is a rare find and is becoming more valuable to coin-op collectors and fans alike. Many enthusiasts have been pursuing the Japanese counterpart of the game, known as “Volfied.”

After offering an enhanced variant that offered a different color scheme, “Qix



II Tournament," also by the rhyming couple Sandy and Randy Pfeiffer, Taito placed "Qix" in a state of dormancy for years. In 1987, Taito released "Super Qix" to little fanfare. Taito also licensed "Qix" for release on the Nintendo Entertainment System and Game Boy. Unfortunately, these reissues of the Qix titles sold quite poorly. When the rise in popularity of strategy and puzzle games emerged with the release and continued success of Tetris, Taito chose to revive the series as "Twin Qix" in 1995. However, Taito was too late and a slew of other manufacturers had already overcrowded the market with competing games of "Tetris" variations or other thinking games such as "Bust-A-Move", "Columns", "Klax" and a handful of others.

Qix is currently enjoying a loyal cult following. In 2004, a small publisher by the name of Mud Duck, quietly released the latest Qix installment, Qix Neo, for the original Playstation. A year later, a classic game compilation that collected twenty-nine Taito coin-ops was released under the moniker Taito Legends. This collection, available on the Playstation 2, X-Box and PC, includes many fantastic games, including Volfied and Super Qix. 

HOW TO PLAY QIX AT HOME

- Original Qix
- Atari 5200 (1982), Atari XE (1982), Tandy (1984) -- Released as "Quix", Apple II (1989)
- Commodore C64 (1989), Commodore Amiga (1989), PC-Compatible [MS-DOS] (1989), Nintendo Famicom (1990), Nintendo Game Boy (1990), Atari Lynx (1991)

QIX SEQUELS

- Sega Genesis -- Released as "Ultimate Qix" (1991)
- QIX RIP-OFFS
- Super Nintendo "Cacoma Knight in Bizylant" (1993)



Michael Thomasson is one of the most widely respected videogame historians in the field today. He currently teaches college level videogame history, design, and graphics courses. For television, Michael conducted research for MTV's videogame related program Video MODS. In print, he authored Downright Bizarre Games, and has contributed to nearly a dozen gaming texts. Michael's historical columns have been distributed in newspapers and magazines worldwide. He has written business plans for several vendors and managed a dozen game-related retail stores spanning three decades. Michael consults for multiple video game and computer museums and has worked on nearly a hundred game titles on Atari,

Coleco, Sega and other console platforms. In 2014, The Guinness Book of World Records declared that Thomasson had "The Largest Videogame Collection" in the world. His businesses sponsor gaming tradeshows and expos across the US and Canada. Visit www.GoodDealGames.com.

Ed Averett is KC Munchkin

AND OVER HALF THE OTHER GAMES ON THE ODYSSEY

By Michael Thomasson

Ed Averett developed a whopping twenty-four games for Magnavox's Odyssey2 system. Responsible for roughly half the game library, Ed believed in the Odyssey2 and kept it humming long before Magnavox and parent company Philips saw the light. His creation, KC Munchkin, pitted Magnavox against industry leader Atari in the courts over the fate of maze games resembling Pac-Man.

MT > You generally stay off the radar and rarely grant interviews. How did Old School Gamer Magazine get so lucky?

EA > During the Odyssey years, staying off the radar was very intentional. First, there was just no time, I was locked down 24/7 designing games trying to show the potential of the Odyssey system and video games in general. Those were the days when there were many doubters of the future of video games and computer graphics. Just like today, it's hard to see how impacting both will be 30 or 40 years into the future.

Second it would not have served Odyssey's best interest if everyone knew there was only one person working on games for Odyssey² vs all the game designers at Atari.

I've always been a fan of listening to others unless I really have something worthwhile to say. So I've done a lot of listening and watching over the last 30+ years.

MT > Lets start at the beginning. Do you ever feel that the Odyssey² lead engineer, Robert Lenarducci, got the short end of the stick?

EA > Roberto was to Odyssey² what the Woz was to Apple. Roberto was designing the Odyssey² at the same time the Apple 1 was coming out. Roberto saw the potential of the Odyssey² as a computer, thus the keyboard. He also designed the first speech hardware for general

use. He was all of that and a great person to work with at Magnavox. Roberto's hardware design gave Odyssey² every chance to dominate and not be a footnote. So has he been overlooked?... Absolutely.

MT > Magnavox and Philips seemed prejudiced about the Odyssey² in the beginning. A ten percent share, even during the best of times, must have been discouraging when measured against the mighty Atari. What changed the sour outlook and gave the system a fighting chance in the marketplace?

EA > Magnavox DNA was building commodity products like radios and TV consoles where the basic technology seldom changed and the value add was manufacturing efficiency and style changes. So, they saw the Odyssey series in that light. It was very hard for them to evolve that basic DNA to embrace a product that was so different. When they saw the profits that could be made from video gaming, they tried really hard to change but the change was too little and to late.

But neither Atari or Magnavox/Philips appreciated that with great profits comes the need to reinvest those profits in new, more advanced hardware to keep giving their customers exciting experiences. There is only so much that can be done with 7 colors and 8x8 graphic figures.

The fighting chance Magnavox always had was manufacturing, distribution and the 8244 chip from Intel.

MT > Why did you believe in the system when it seemed that no one else did.

EA > I believed in the Odyssey² because at the time for the consumer, Odyssey² was the most advance graphics system in the world and could solve a universal



Ed Averett in his home lab with his family where he developed many of the games he's known for.

desire... having fun and feeling good about overcoming challenges.

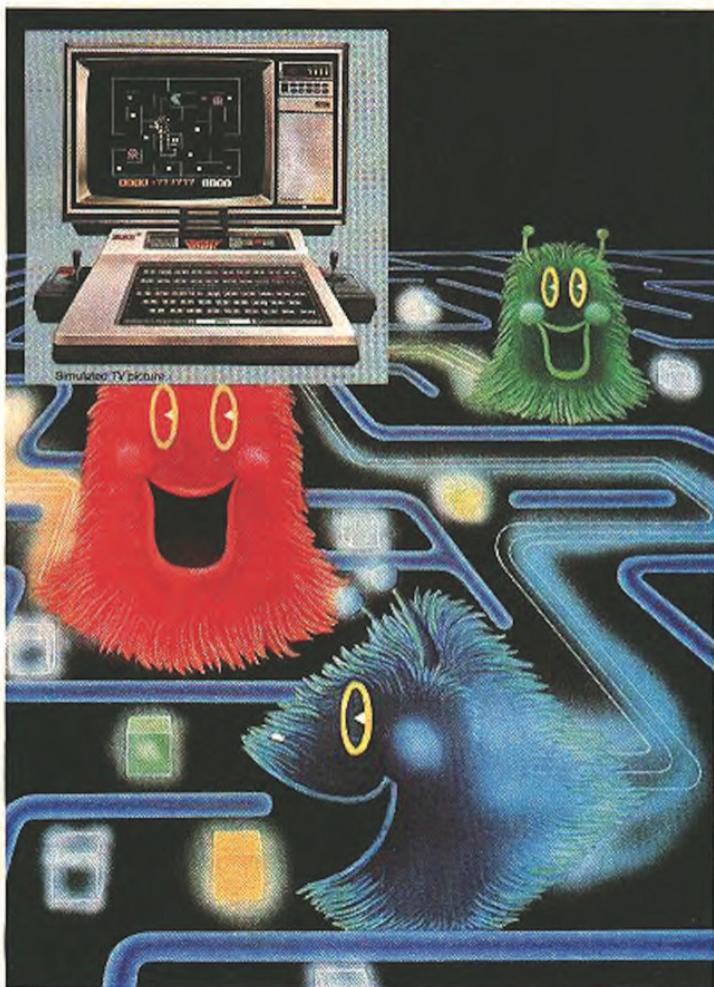
MT > The original game mechanics of K.C. Munchkin were more diverse before Magnavox asked you to make the game more "Pac-Man -like". Do you remember details about any early versions of the game? What did we miss out on.

EA > I was very happy with the changes that allowed me to give KC more of a personality, things like the bebops, the color, the smile and the grin, a bit of a personality. I had really wanted to add that same level of differentiation to the ghost/chase characters.

But remember the Magnavox legal mindset was that if I could reproduce the original Pac-Man exactly, that would

ON YOUR MARK, GET SET, MUNCH.

With new K.C. Munchkin from Odyssey²,
you don't destroy your enemies, you simply eat them.



How many Munchies can your Munchkin munch before your Munchkin's all munched out? Play K.C. Munchkin and see!

It's fun. It's exciting. It's challenging. Your whole family will love it!

A Munchkin, three Munchers and 12 Munchies float in a maze with a rotating center. The more Munchies your Munchkin munches, the more points you get. The more points, the faster the computer makes the game go. And the more skill you need to score and to keep your Munchkin from getting munched by one of the Munchers!

The better you play, the greater the challenge!

Program your own mazes.

Use the Odyssey² keyboard... there's virtually no limit to the number of mazes you can create. There are even invisible mazes for when you're ready to turn pro.

Choose from more than 40 arcade, sports, education and new Master Strategy™ games, from Odyssey². They're waiting for you now at your video games or Odyssey² dealer.

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The excitement of a game.
The mind of a computer.



have been fine as long as I did not copy the code itself. Based on their experience with Atari and Pong, that was not an unreasonable mindset. So in that context they did give me a lot of room to be creative.

MT > You were employed at Intel when they sold the 8244 chip, the first programmable sprite based game chip, to Magnavox. As it turned out, the chip design was flawed and delayed the release of the Odyssey². Do you think the positioning of the Odyssey² against Atari in the marketplace would have been much different if the Odyssey² had reached store shelves a year earlier as originally anticipated?

EA > Actually, the design of the 8244 was

not the problem. There was a masking layout mistake. That was in the day when the all the masks was laid out by hand with no computer checking.

If the 8244 had arrived on schedule, I doubt if history would have changed that much. When the Odyssey² was launched, it was still the most advanced graphics system available and Magnavox had excellent manufacturing and distribution systems. The delay did however significantly impact Magnavox's confidence that they understood the speed of the market and complexity of video games business.

Also, the culture of Atari could not have been more different than that of Magnavox. If the Atari culture was needed to succeed in video games, they

knew that was a business that was not suited to their DNA.

MT > You worked your magic in your Tennessee home. Describe your work environment there?

EA > Ha, ha...It was total chaos! We foolishly decided to undertake a major remodel, 3 years, while living in the house and there were 2 small children to add to the distractions. The really good part is that it was a very dynamic and highly energetic world just like a video game.

A huge advantage was only a 2 hour drive to Magnavox in Knoxville as opposed to taking all day to get to Magnavox from Silicon Valley. Remember, there was no Skype in those days.

MT > Whatever happened to the cocktail napkin that birthed the Master Strategy game series? Those were all great—especially The Quest for Rings!

EA > I believe Mike Staup, the VP in charge of video games, took that back to Magnavox. I credit Mike for pushing outside of the box in getting that idea to reality. It was not an easy sell for him.

MT > Your wife Linda also helped you develop some of the Odyssey² titles. Certainly it must have been that experience that set her up for success as a Vice President at Microsoft.

EA > I think she will agree that she learned that there were other thinking styles that can be successful. Linda and I tend to approach solving problems and design from the polar opposite direction. Her natural approach is perfectly aligned with the needs at Microsoft. What we learned working together was very helpful to us both.

MT > You were asked to program a Pac-Man like game. As a result, K.C. Munchkin resulted in a landmark legal ruling (see Bill Kunkel's "My Three Trials: Experiences as an Expert Witness in the Electronic Games Industry: Atari v Magnavox") which would intimidate most individuals. What legal considerations were contemplated by Magnavox, and what was your reaction?

EA > First, in my opinion, both the Federal Court's and the Appeals Court's rulings were correct. They were actually ruling on a totally different argument on copyright infringement...

The Federal Court was addressing copyright infringement from the point

of view that both Magnavox and Atari presented at the time; that is, were their codes, algorithms or circuitry copied? There was no evidence or discussion on the issue of "look and feel" copyright infringement in the Federal Court. Therefore, Magnavox was confident in victory. That was reinforced by the judge's ruling, strongly in Magnavox's favor.

Having lost on that approach, Atari cleverly changed tactics to argue an infringement based on "look and feel" in the Appeals Court. Its ruling was based on the evidence presented in the lower court, as the Appeals Court does not accept new evidence, and only rules on the evidence presented in the lower court's ruling. Since none of the significant differences in "look and feel" could be considered in the Appeals Court ruling, there was no attempt by Magnavox to address the "look and feel" differences there. So, the Appeals Court ruling was logical given the evidence it had to consider. It would have been helpful if the Appeals Court had addressed Atari's change in position and referred it back to the lower court, but that's not what happened. There was a lot of frustration at the time; not because we lost, but by the way we lost.

Now a little background...

At that time, the understanding for what was legal in video games was set by Odyssey's original ball and paddle game and Atari's Pong - another ball and paddle game. It concluded that if what was on the screen was not a result of copied code or circuits then there was no infringement. This was determined by an out of court settlement between Magnavox and Atari and thus had no legal precedence, but certainly influenced the thinking at Magnavox and Atari. However, there could not have been more similar "look and feel" games than the original Odyssey's Tennis game and Pong.

In my case, I doubt anyone confused KC Munchkin with Pac-Man because of looks or personality. In addition, my thinking was to develop a different, better "Western"...more later on that. With a character more likable and a game that improved on the concept of Pac-Man, you actually had a different, happier feeling. The character and the challenges were different. The player was not controlling a robotic "chomper" but a character that interacted and made you smile. Remember the graphic limitations of home video games of that day, an 8x8 mono matrix. Since the "look and feel" issue was not addressed by either Magnavox or Atari in the Federal Court, I

did not get a chance to elaborate on how KC Munchkin had achieved this.

I remember clearly reasoning for myself how TV westerns of the day had similar infringement issues. In all the TV westerns, the setting was the same. The characters moved around on horses, saved damsels in distress, and got the 'bad guys'. But you knew if you were watching The Lone Ranger or watching a Roy Rogers western. There were observable differences. Similarly, it's my strong feeling that there were significant differences between KC Munchkin and Pac-Man such that no one would buy KC Munchkin and think they were getting Pac-Man. If I logically compared KC Munchkin's and Pac-Man's "look and feel" to TV westerns, KC Munchkin was not close to having infringement issues. But the Appeals Court could not consider these points since they were not presented in the lower court.

So, the frustration was that the "argument" of infringement changed from the Federal Court where Magnavox won strongly, to the Appeals Court where we lost. The evidence had to stay the same; that is, no code copying. And none of the "look and feel" differences could be introduced to the Appeals Court.

It was for Atari a big short term victory taken from the jaws of defeat. But as we all know, the long term fate of Atari and Magnavox video games were the same for similar reasons.

MT > Okay, here is a question that I've been asking myself for years. Why are there two versions of K.C. Munchkin? In some iterations, one of the ghosts is blue in color. In another, that same ghost is yellow?

EA > That was not by my design. So I can only conclude that it was a result of a ROM or chip problem. A collector's item? :

MT > Your final game for the Odyssey² was Attack of the Timelord. How did you feel in your gut knowing that your time with the Magnavox's machine was coming to an end? Losing that mental connection with millions of players must have been tough...

EA > That was indeed tough. I really, really enjoyed designing games for Odyssey², working with the people at Magnavox and Philips, and most of all the relationship I had with the players. Huge mail bags from all ages and all over the world were sent daily.

I remember quite clearly pushing back from my DECwriter when I finished Attack of the Timelords, taking a deep breath

and knowing it was the end of an era. All that I could do had been done.

MT > Why were you not involved with the failed Probe 2000 project, which aimed to release new games for competing consoles such as the Colecovision?

EA > There were three reasons:

1. Linda was able to convince me that attention needed to be focused on our family and not making any more \$s.

I credit her for the foresight as it was time wisely spent. People are important not just making money.

2. Intel was not interested in pursuing the video game or graphic business after I left. They were the best of the best when it came to silicon chips but they had a difficult time seeing the importance of graphics in the future.



3. Magnavox and by then, Philips, were most interested in driving down the cost of a game system secondarily to driving the graphic capability of the system - again the DNA of a large scale commodity product manufacturer. We can all now see clearly that new consoles need to be many times more powerful than the last version - not an incremental improvement.

It would have been a much harder decision to exit completely if Magnavox/Philips had pursued evolving the Odyssey² into a personal computer. There was a complete design to that end done by Roberto to compete with Apple II and Dell's PC machines. That would have been a very interesting path for all.

MT > Do you miss assembly programming and working in binary?

EA > When I was young, I loved my bike. It was simple and straight forward like assembly programming. I understood exactly how it worked and what was possible to do with it. But now if I want to fly across the country I really appreciate air travel with all its complexities. And I'm really looking forward to self-driving cars to free up more of my time.

So do I miss programming in assembly? Yes but am I really happy to have the power of C++? Absolutely.

MT > During our conversations, you have referred to video games as, "real time graphic problem solving." Care to expand on that?

EA > Video games at their core present problems to users graphically. When solving problems graphically in this way was first presented in the Odyssey² and Atari, almost everyone embraced the basic idea.

Of course, some games require quick reaction times and some require deep thought but they all are still about presenting a problem graphically.

Almost all of the problem solving in video games today are "make believe" problems. The future that excites me most is where video games present real life problems to be solved. KC Returns! attempts to show that technology has progressed to the point that we can now start "thinking" about solving problems related to DNA among other things. I'm quite sure when my grandchildren are my age and they get sick they will be able to see the issues in a video game format and be able to solve their cold, their flu, or their cancer themselves. Now how cool will that be! We are going down that path now at warp speed. Someday, folks will look back at our current games and think of them in the same light as the very first video games.

MT > Even the biggest KC fans may not be aware that a series of KC children's books are available on Amazon. What is the story behind these... stories?

EA > KC children's books do the same thing that the addition of the board did for the Master Strategy game series in the Odyssey². It expands the story line beyond what is currently possible in the video game.

The books specifically give a richer example of where we are going. The books are directed at young children



Ed Averett enjoying life and adventures with KC Munchkin

because it will most likely be them that make the possibility that I see for video games, a reality - that is, solving real life problems that will all have.

MT > You still own the intellectual property to the K.C. Munchkin name and character, and recently unveiled your upcoming KC Returns project. Please tell us about this exciting new project!

EA > KC and I have watched from the sideline as video gaming, real time problem solving, has made giant progress over the last 34 years. I found very little I could add to what was being done by everyone in the industry. But now, I believe we are at another inflection point where technology (processing power, graphic power, memory available and the cloud) have advanced to the point where there are whole new possibilities for video games. That is, applying video gaming attributes to solving real world problem.

KC Returns! Attempts to show a glimpse of that future, a future where anyone can explore in rich graphic detail DNA on a \$200

computer. The game part (everyone wants to have fun) of KC's Returns! embraces some of the best of KC's past with enhancements possible today. There is a learning option about DNA that allows for even more enhanced game play.

KC Returns! Is basically a Suite of 3 interconnected parts: 1. Exploring, 2. Learning, and 3. Playing (game)

My hope is that by playing or seeing KC Returns!, DNA will be a bit more demystified and understandable. And that some will see a future where working with DNA will be as easy and common as working with a word processor today, except a whole lot more fun.

Why DNA? It affects all that we are and all our health issues - from colds to cancer. If that was not enough, DNA will play a significant role in the future of computing and memory storage. It's really important to understand.

KC Returns! is free to all. It's my gift to my grandchildren that I'm sharing with everyone.

It's currently available in the Microsoft App Store and based on feedback from my friends, a new, significantly enhanced version will be available in the coming months.

THANK YOU! Old School Gamer Magazine thanks Ed Averett for making the Odyssey2 sing! In our minds, he'll always be the "Wizard of Odyssey." 🎮

Be sure to check out the KC RETURNS website! <http://www.kcmunchkin.com/>



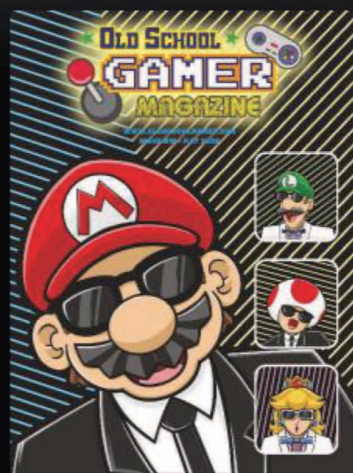
Michael Thomasson is one of the most widely respected videogame historians in the field today. He currently teaches college level videogame history, design, and graphics courses. For television, Michael conducted research for MTV's videogame related program Video MODS. In print, he authored Downright Bizarre Games, and has contributed to nearly a dozen gaming texts. Michael's historical columns have been distributed in newspapers and magazines worldwide. He has written business plans for several vendors and managed a dozen game-related retail stores spanning three decades. Michael consults for multiple video game and computer museums and has worked on nearly a hundred game titles on Atari,

Coleco, Sega and other console platforms. In 2014, The Guinness Book of World Records declared that Thomasson had "The Largest Videogame Collection" in the world. His businesses sponsor gaming tradeshows and expos across the US and Canada. Visit www.GoodDealGames.com.

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