

OLD SCHOOL
GAMER MAGAZINE

10

2019
MAY

\$

MULTIPLAYER ISSUE

Old School GAMER MAGAZINE



WWW.OLDSCHOOLGAMERMAGAZINE.COM

ISSUE #10 • MAY 2019



THE NEW MARKETPLACE JUST FOR RETRO GAMES

THE GAME CHANGER



BUY AND SELL retro games worldwide
DISCOVER more than 110,000 retro games
MANAGE your game collection **FREE**

retro+place.com



Why not get the original and best

GAME BOY COLOR

Worlds first brand new 2019 BACKLIT LCD for the GameBoy Color



**BRAND NEW 2019
BACKLIT LCD!!!**

THE SUCCESSOR TO THE GAMEBOY

THE 1998 RELEASE OF THE GBC

Hand-restored to it's original condition, with new **backlit LCD screen**, a new shell, buttons and glass screen. Boxed in an awesome RetroSix box, making the perfect gift for a die-hard gamer.

**GET IT
NOW!!**

at www.retrosix.co.uk



- 06** **MULTI-PLAYER**
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
BY SHAUN JEX
- 08** **MULTI-PLAYER**
Arcades: The Granddaddy of Social...
BY ADAM PRATT
- 12** **MULTI-PLAYER**
Warlords
BY MICHAEL THOMASSON
- 14** **BRETT'S OLD SCHOOL BARGAIN BIN**
Warlords and Mega Bomberman
BY BRETT WEISS
- 18** **FEATURE**
Ice Cold Beer and Arcade Tournaments
BY PHIL DAY
- 22** **FEATURE**
Entering the Digitized Era - Part 2
BY WARREN DAVIS
- 24** **FEATURE**
ToeJam & Earl: Back in the Groove
BY CONOR McBRIEN
- 28** **FEATURE**
Tecmo Bowl
BY SAM FRITZ
- 31** **NEWS**
OSG Events Calendar
- 32** **NEWS**
Convention Update
BY OSG REPORTERS
- 34** **PEOPLE AND PLACES**
Contra
BY STEVE DELUCA
- 36** **THE GAME SCHOLAR**
What's in a Name?
BY LEONARD HERMAN
- 37** **REVIEWS**
3 Big Books
BY OLD SCHOOL GAMER

- 38** **PEOPLE AND PLACES**
The Game Chasers
BY BRETT WEISS
- 44** **REVIEWS**
Retro Games on Modern Consoles
BY BRAD FEINGOLD
- 45** **COLLECTOR INFO**
Nintendo Game Cube Pricer
PRESENTED BY PRICECHARTING.COM
- 45** **NEWS**
Who's on the Cover?
BY OLD SCHOOL GAMER
- 46** **NEWS**
Great Retro Shops
BY OLD SCHOOL GAMER



Publisher
Ryan Burger

Editor
Brian Szarek

Business Manager
Aaron Burger

Design Assistant
Marc Burger

Art Director
Thor Thorvaldson

Editorial Consultant
Dan Walsh

Con Staff Leader
Paige Burger

Editorial Board
Dan Loosen
Doc Mack
Billy Mitchell
Walter Day

HOW TO REACH
OLD SCHOOL GAMER:
515-986-3344
www.oldschoolgammagazine.com

Subscriptions, address changes, or back issues go to: www.oldschoolgammagazine.com, or contact Old School Gamer by mail at: 222 SE Main St • Grimes IA 50111
Back issues (if available): \$6 plus shipping
Subscription rates: US and possessions: \$30 for 1 year
Shipping address: OSG • 222 SE Main St • Grimes IA 50111

Postmaster - Send address changes to:
OSG • 222 SE Main St • Grimes IA 50111
Postage paid at Grimes, IA and other mailing locations.

Old School Gamer Magazine
(ISSN# 2574-8076 ONLINE/2574-8068 PRINT)
is published by BC Productions, Inc.
222 SE Main St • Grimes, IA 50111

Copyright © 2019 by BC Productions, Inc.
All rights reserved. Reproduction of copy, photography, or artwork is prohibited without permission of the publisher. All advertising material subject to publisher's approval.

TO ADVERTISE IN OLD SCHOOL GAMER OR WORK WITH US ON SOMETHING ELSE, CALL 515-986-3344 x300 OR EMAIL SALES@OLDSCHOOLGAMERMAGAZINE.COM

LET THE PONG TABLE BE THE CENTER OF YOUR SOCIAL EVENT!

A CLASSIC GAME IN A COCKTAIL TABLE DESIGNED FOR BARS, PUBS, RESTAURANTS, ENTERTAINMENT VENUES

CREATES A LIVELY ATMOSPHERE THAT ATTRACTS CROWDS AND KEEP GUESTS ENTERTAINED

1 - 2 PLAYER; PLAY AGAINST AN AI OR AGAINST A FRIEND



HEIGHT ADJUSTABLE TABLE

DRINK HOLDERS ON BOTH SIDES



NUMEROUS OPERATOR SETTINGS AND CUSTOMIZATIONS



TABLE TOP LIFTS FOR EASY PLAYFIELD ACCESS

Dimensions: W40" x D44" x H38"

UIS

CALINFER

ATARI TABLE
PONG

www.tablepongproject.com

Email: sales@tablepongproject.com

MULTI-PLAYER

**TURTLE
POWER
To Work For You!**

TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA

TURTLES



Turtle Power

By Shaun Jex

The Free Play Richardson arcade in North Texas sits in the middle of a non-descript strip mall. There is a Sherwin Williams and Bar flanking it, a noodle joint a few doors down, and a Taekwondo academy just beyond that. A neon sign with the words "retro arcade" is about the only thing hinting at the wonders inside. Step through the doors and you're in a dimly lit retro wonderland. There's a steady stream of new wave music blaring through the speakers, pinball machines, a bar stocked with items like Surge soda, and row after row of classic arcade cabinets.

In a corner of the arcade sits one of my all-time favorite games: 1989's Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles by Konami. I remember playing the game obsessively at the Tilt arcade that used to be in our local mall. I'd bring a pocketful of quarters and feed them in one after the other as I tried to rescue the lovely April O'Neil and the sage Splinter, then fight my way through to the ever menacing Shredder. I never had enough quarters, even when I was lucky enough to have a few friends with me (the game, you may recall, could accommodate up to four players at once). Fortunately, the games at Free Play are...well, free, and I'm not playing alone. My wife and both my kids are playing. Not to brag, but we're killing it. Well, we're doing okay. With an unlimited amount of continues there's not a lot of pressure and there's no one else waiting to play. Despite all of these advantages, there's a feeling of sheer elation when we finally defeat Shredder and the end credits begin to roll.

Though it's clearly an arbitrary designation, I consider the game one of the greatest multi-player arcade games ever created. In terms of the sheer fun of the gameplay, the charm of the graphics, and the ability to play it with a whole horde of friends, it ranks right alongside

Konami Inc. 1989 KONAMI is a trademark of Konami Industry Co., Ltd. Exclusively licensed by Sargent Licensing, Inc. All rights reserved. Trademark used granted to Konami under license from Mirage Studios, USA.



KONAMI INC. • 900 Deerfield Parkway • Buffalo Grove, IL 60089-4510
Phone: (312) 215-5100 • FAX: (312) 215-5144 • Telex: 6871385 KONAM U.S.A.

- DEDICATED UPRIGHT
- HORIZONTAL MONITOR
- BUY-IN FEATURE
- CONTINUATION FEATURE



TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES

The Simpsons, released by Konami two years later.

The game was based off of the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles animated series, which debuted in 1987. Playmates Toys provided the impetus behind the original show. The company had been approached about creating a line of action figures based off of the comic created by Kevin Eastman and Peter Laird three years earlier. Nervous about the cult nature of the characters (they had essentially been created as a parody of comics like Cerebus, New Mutants, Ronin, and Daredevil) Playmates wanted a television series to run before creating the toys. The show was a hit and toys and the arcade game soon followed.

If it's been awhile since you donated a few quarters to the TMNT cabinet, here's a quick recap of how it played. The game could accommodate from one to four players. It was a side scrolling beat 'em up game. The joystick was an eight way directional control, and your buttons were jump and attack. The character you played depended on your position at the cabinet. Facing the machine from left to right you could be Leonardo (with a blue joystick and buttons), Michelangelo (yellow), Donatello (purple), or Raphael (red). Though this was the most common configuration, the Japanese version of the cabinet only supported two players, and two player ports could occasionally be found elsewhere as less expensive alternatives to the full four player mode. In the two player version, players could select which character to play. Your character fought with their signature weapon: a katana for Leonardo, nunchucks for Michelangelo, a bo staff for Donatello, and sais for Raphael.


The majority of your enemies were foot soldiers from the Foot Clan. These characters were color coded to represent their manner of attack. Purple soldiers were the most common and were typically unarmed. Blue foot soldiers used knives, while white foot soldiers fought with katanas. Red soldiers used machine guns. Yellow soldiers carried boomerangs, and dark purple soldiers carried sledgehammers. Light blue soldiers threw snowballs. Other enemies included Roadkill Rodneys (a unicycle style robot), Mousers (small, chompy type robots), Tubular Transports (mosquito-like helicopters armed with a laser gun), helicopters, and artillery mechanisms. There were also mechanical scorpions and evil snowmen. In any other game, the spectre of murderous snowmen might have seemed absurd but this was, after all, a game about ninja turtles.

Levels included a burning apartment building, city streets, the sewer system, a parking garage, the highway, skateboarding, a warehouse, and the Technodrome. Perhaps the most memorable of the levels was when the Turtles jumped on motor powered skateboards. Your enemies (at least some of them) were also on skateboards and carried guns that shot out rings that could inflict damage. As if that wasn't enough, helicopters attacked from above, dropping bombs and firing machine guns at the wily terrapin heroes.

The bosses in the game were equally memorable. Bebop was a muscle bound pig with a ring through his nose, a jean jacket, and sunglasses. Rock Steady was a giant rhinoceros who attacked with a devastating shoulder charge and also toted a machine gun. Baxter Stockman was an inventor and a mutant fly you fought in the sewers. General Traag and Granitor were giant rock soldiers, Krang was a brain-like alien in a powerful mech suit, and then, of course, there was Shredder. Though Shredder was a human, he was the most powerful and intimidating of all of your enemies, the antithesis of everything that Splinter and the Ninja Turtles represented.

A curiosity of the game can be found in the NES port, which was released in 1990. The title to the game was changed to Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles II: The Arcade Game and featured a wealth of in-game advertising for Pizza Hut. Fans of the Ninja Turtles will recall that the brothers were obsessed with the noble pizza pie. In the movie, the turtles chowed down on Domino's. In the VHS release, a Pizza Hut commercial ran before the movie. There was even a bizarre live musical tour called "The Coming Out of Their Shells Tour" by Pizza Hut that featured the Turtles dancing, performing and, naturally, battling Shredder. A soundtrack and VHS were released in conjunction. So, it should come as no surprise that product placement was part of the video game. Pizza Hut logos could be seen throughout each level, and the game box included a coupon for a free personal pan pizza.

Both the arcade and NES ports were a smash hit. The characters were wildly popular and the success of the cabinet even surprised the developers. In the December 1989 issue of the magazine Cash Box, Konami's senior vice president of the coin op division stated, "...we felt we had something good but we didn't realize that it would become overwhelming." The article went on to state that the cabinet had far exceeded all expectations. It referred to it as the industry's "most talked about, most sought after game" and even went so far as to say, "just when ops were losing faith in the power of the video game along came Turtles."

It's been thirty years since the game debuted in arcades, but playing it today still seems fresh. It's exciting, over-the-top, and endlessly engaging. It seems to have an almost limitless replay ability. I've now beat the game multiple times, but still find it just as thrilling to step in front of the cabinet and begin playing it as I did the very first time. Beating the game remains tricky, especially if you have to pay for each continue, but the reward is more than worth it. As Master Splinter says, "The path to what we truly desire is long and difficult, but only by following that path do we achieve our goal." 

Flyer provided by Arcade-Museum.Com

Shaun Jex is a lifelong gamer, a journalist, and pop culture historian. His love of video games began with a Commodore 64 he played growing up, late night sessions on his NES, Game Boy and Sega Genesis, and frequent trips to the local Tilt arcade. He edits the Citizens' Advocate newspaper in Coppell, Texas and writes about Disney and Walt Disney World history for Celebrations Magazine and the Celebrations Magazine blog. He runs a channel with his wife Kara called "The Marceline Depot," dedicated to Disney, amusement parks, and travel.

Arcades: The Granddaddy of Social Multiplayer Fun

By Adam Pratt

Years before four-player split screen, online play and MMOs, gamers had a place they could visit to experience multiplayer video excitement for 2 players and beyond: the arcade. For this issue, I'm going to highlight various titles that made social gaming a "thing" well before the term was mainstream. We will mainly focus on games that proffered simultaneous 4-player fun and up to people (as talking about 2-player games will end up becoming a novel).

When arcades really got off the ground with Atari's PONG, multiplayer was a necessity for the game to work, as the computing power for AI-controlled players just wasn't available yet. Every Pong clone on the planet was 2-players, so Atari would take the next logical step: make Pong four players with Pong Doubles (September 1973). Pong Doubles was Atari's fourth game, ironically enough, and mimicked doubles tennis as best as the technology could manage at the time. As many competitors would soon release their own Pong Doubles knock-offs, Atari would quickly follow-up with Quadrapong (March 1974). Quadrapong was the first cocktail arcade game and changed up the formula of Pong just slightly by creating a square tennis court and each player had to defend a large goal that took up most of their entire side. This simple change and the cocktail cabinet led to plenty of shouting and excitement at the local bar that would add one of these to their game floor, as captured on the Quadrapong flyer.



Both 2 and 4-player games continued to dominate the industry at this time, but fortunately developers realized that they had to move beyond Pong to keep location operators buying, so along came fresh concepts. 1975 would see two influential creations from Atari that would go beyond the 4 player threshold: Steeplechase and Indy 800.

Steeplechase is a game that could possibly be considered the first "party game," in that it pits up to six players against each other and the simple gameplay is controlled by only a single button. Your goal: get your jockey & horse to the right side of the screen first, using the button to jump over the gates or get tripped up and lose ground. I came across one of these once and found it to be a great deal of fun - one of those games that you wish you could buy for your own collection. It's too bad it is very hard to find, as I imagine that many retroarcades would love to please their customers with one.

Indy 800, an Atari game released under the sneaky "Kee Games" label (a story for another time) was also quite significant in that it was the first 8-player arcade game ever created. Because computer networking wasn't feasible for an arcade environment at this point, this behemoth came in an enormous and expensive cabinet that allowed up to 8 players to compete on a closed circuit track. Each player had their own realistic steering wheel, brake & gas pedals and even a horn. It was among the first games to be presented in color and it was also the first video game to use 8-channel sound (1 channel per player, so they could each hear their own engine 'growl'). All of this awesome tech came at a price though: units initially sold for around \$6500 in 1975 dollars. Not to mention that you needed a least 16' of floor space to house it, with more space than that to allow players comfortable gaming room.

That said, experiences like Indy 800, and the later cousins: Tank 8, Sprint 4, and Sprint 8, captured the essence of what makes playing games at an arcade special. Consoles have attempted local play to good success in many instances, Nintendo holding the line the longest in that regard. But at the arcade, it's still different from being at home on the couch. The arcade is a place to not only enjoy such games with friends, but to play with friendly strangers too. You could show off your gaming prowess in front of a crowd, in public, that you can't do at home. Because of this, many relationships were forged from the social fires of the arcade, whether those were lifelong friendships or even marriages.

With the advent of the CPU, games became more elaborate, more detailed and more fun. This did push more development into single player experiences, but multiplayer would receive benefits too. Atari created an overhead driving shoot 'em up called Cops 'N Robbers in 1976, presented in an upright cabinet with joystick & gas pedal controls for each of the four players. Then developers embraced a whole new genre that seemed tailor made for the four player experience: the light-cycle or snake game. Several companies would create this kind of game in 1976/77, enough that it is unclear who was first with the concept. Some of the games were only made for two



MISSOURI GAME CON

MOGAMECON

**AUGUST
3 2019**

**ST CHARLES
COMMUNITY
COLLEGE**

4601 Mid Rivers Mall Dr
Cottleville Mo 63376

**RETRO GAME VENDORS
ARTISTS**

COSPLAY CONTEST

CELEBRITY GUESTS

**INCLUDING THE MAN, THE
MYTH, THE LEGEND.**

WALTER DAY



**TICKETS ON SALE NOW
WWW.MOGAMECON.COM**



players, but three had 4p support: Barricade (Ramtek, 1976), Checkmate (Midway, Jan. 1977), Comotion (Gremlin, 1977).

After Space Invaders landed on the scene, simultaneous 4-player games would take a hiatus for a long while, enough that we have to jump up to 1985 for the next significant game. This is one you probably cut your teeth on at arcades, being one of your first real local multiplayer experiences – Gauntlet by Atari Games. Gauntlet wasn't unique by featuring 4-players, but it was in the sense of making you work together towards a common goal as opposed to a competitive effort. It was also one of the very few examples of an RPG-like game hitting arcades, which, to that point, were exclusive to the realm of sophisticated computers.

Gauntlet was influential enough that it pushed other companies to come up with their own co-op multiplayer games. Sega had the odd sidescroller Quarter in 1986, while Midway would release the building smasher classic Rampage along with the more obscure monster truck crusher Power Drive that same year. Thanks to the likes of Rampage and Atari's Super Sprint, you had a little renaissance of 3-player games like Xenophobe (Midway), Dark Adventure (Konami, 1987) and The Real Ghostbusters (Data East, 1987), but soon it was back to 2 players for most games. I would also argue that Gauntlet's focus on co-op is the influence that would give us the beat 'em up genre and delights like Double Dragon, Final Fight, TMNT and others.

1987 would be the year that would mark a revolution in multiplayer gaming thanks to Namco and Atari. Linking games together (better known as networking) had been attempted on some prototype games prior to this year, but nothing was ready for the market until Final Lap would be released. Final Lap was a lot like an enhanced version of Pole Position, but it cranked things up a

notch by allowing operators to link up to four of the twin cabinets together. This meant that a location with the space and the deep pockets could offer an eight player racing extravaganza, instantly making that location the raddest place in town.

This technical influence wasn't readily apparent, as most companies continued to release single player racing games for a few years, until Sega picked up the concept and made sure that practically every driving game after Virtua Racer (1992) could link multiple units together, usually 8. One exception was Daytona USA 2, which allowed up to 16. Networked cabinets didn't have to be limited to driving games, fortunately; Capcom did release Super Street Fighter II: The Tournament Battle in 1993, which allowed locations to hold eight player tournaments on everybody's favorite fighting game. Atari Games would release Space Lords in 1992, bringing first-person space combat to arcades with quite the cabinet that used linking to reach eight players. Linking cabinets together is still a common practice today, mainly on racing games, but once in a while a unique game will do this, such as UNIS' Fantasy Soccer, a four player-per-cabinet soccer game released this year which can link two units together to reach up to eight.

Stepping back from that technical innovation, the end of the 80's and beginning of the 90's saw various attempts to build upon the foundation that Gauntlet had set. Sports games like Tecmo Bowl (Tecmo, 1987), Cyberball (Atari Games, 1988), Main Event (Konami, 1988) and High Impact Football (Williams, 1990) demonstrated how you could glean more entertainment out of those genres with more players (eventually leading to the likes of NBA Jam and NFL Blitz). But it was the aforementioned beat 'em up that would benefit the most.

In mentioning beat 'em ups, your mind likely recalls titles that mainly came from

Konami – Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, The Simpsons, Crime Fighters, and the mothership of them all, X-Men. While that was released in a 4-player model like TMNT, Konami took it a step further with the cabinet that you probably remember first when X-Men and arcades are mentioned in the same sentence – the massive 6-player, dual screen model. I've had one of these for some years, and while it isn't fun to move, it's a blast to play, especially with five other people. It represents the epitome of the co-op beat 'em up, providing the kind of social local gaming spoke about earlier. Unfortunately it wasn't long after that where we saw the genre take a backseat to 1v1 fighting games, due to the enormous popularity of the latter. It was only in very recent times that the genre has made a slight comeback to arcades, with the release of Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles by Raw Thrills in 2018.

To the point, arcades are still bastions of social gaming – whether they are focused on retro games (retrocades and bar/arcades) or brand new stuff. Some locations even make tournaments a part of their business model, playing up the "eSports" aspect of competitive play. As of late, there has been an explosion of locations opening their doors to bring arcade goodness back to the masses, although that growth has been severely underreported by today's gaming media. We've also been seeing more games focused on the multiplayer experience – not just linked racing games, but 10-player (5v5) battles as seen in Killer Queen Arcade or 4-player retro fun in titles like Pac-Man Battle Royale, Cosmotrons, Retro Raccoons or Galactic Battleground. So if you happen to have an arcade facility near you right now, be sure to take a friend – or two – and make a weekend out of it, where you can experience one of the finest forms of multiplayer fun! 

Adam Pratt - Owner and operator of the Arcade Heroes news blog and of the Game Grid Arcade (West Valley City, UT) that opened in 2008. He began collecting arcades in 2000 and has done everything in the business; from game sales to writing game reviews, marketing, QA testing, and consultancy, to name a few. He released his first book, *The Arcade Experience*, in 2013. Adam lives in the Greater Salt Lake City area with his wife and three kids.

**For Less Than \$1.13 A Day, You Can
Give These Games A Home**



**Will you be an Angel for
a helpless video game?**

Video Games Monthly UGM
.COM

Video Games Monthly is a monthly subscription service that delivers
retro video games to gamers who own classic gaming systems from the 70's – 2000's

PLAY THE PAST INTO THE FUTURE

Warlords

By Michael Thomasson

Atari's Warlords is considered one of the best competitive video game titles of all time. Warlords is a simple game that took Atari's early games Quadrapong and Breakout and greatly improved upon them. By taking the multi-player paddle premise and spinning the concept by mashing-up Dungeons & Dragons with Arthurian legend, Atari created a classic still beloved almost four decades later.

Originally codenamed Castles & Kings, the title was changed to



Warlords when unleashed in arcades. Similar to Atari's other ball and paddle games, Warlords implements the use of spinner dials to break bricks.

The game's objective is clear cut; protect your own castle while deflecting fireballs toward opposing adversaries' castle walls to obliterate them. The game begins with a winged red and yellow dragon flying onto the playfield. It hurls a fireball from its mouth that immediately starts breaking down the fortresses one by one, brick by brick. Each castle is controlled by a human

king, or a computer controlled Black Knight. Castles can be defended by controlling a moving shield to repel oncoming attacks. It is also possible to capture an incoming projectile and aggressively catapult a more destructive spinning fireball back at rival foes. Up to four fireballs can ricochet around the arena at once, making for quite a bit of chaos!

Warlords initially appeared in the arcades in April of 1980 and was quickly ported to the Atari VCS for release the following year. In 2002, the Atari Revival Pack released for the PC, which offered a 3D updated version of Combat, Missile Command, and, of course, Warlords. In 2008, a high-definition Xbox Live Vision version launched, allowing competitors to watch each other gloat, cry, and throw tantrums on screen.

A massively updated reimagining of Warlords was made available via digital download on Xbox Live and Playstation Network in 2012. This version named the characters, giving them themes and abilities based on the elements of nature,

and modernized the tired four-corner square layout with fluctuating playfields. It also introduced minion Snoot characters which players can order to attack opponent's castle walls, repair their own castle, or implement power-ups such as shield boosters and armor-plating.

You can play Warlords on the go via compilation packs published for

Flyer provided by Arcade-Museum.Com

MICHAEL THOMASSON'S
JUST 4 QIX



the Nintendo's Game Boy Advance, the Nintendo DS, Sony's PlayStation Portable, via the Apple Store, the Android Market, and even Nokia's N-Gage. The Sega Dreamcast, the original Playstation, PS2, PS4, Xbox, and Xbox One all offer Warlords via compilation packs. The most recent release of Warlords is via Steam in the Atari Vault.



Michael Thomasson is one of the most widely respected videogame historians in the field today. He teaches multiple college level videogame courses, and has contributed to dozens of gaming texts and television shows including MTV's Video MODS and the highly-rated book Downright Bizarre Games. He has written business plans, managed a multiple game-related retail stores, and consults for multiple video game and computer museums. Michael has helped publish 100s of games on Atari, Sega and other console platforms. In 2014, The Guinness Book of World Records declared that Thomasson had "The Largest Videogame Collection" in the world. Visit www.GoodDealGames.com.

WARLORDS™

The Backstory

Once long ago in a distant land lived a king named Frederick. He took very good care of his subjects and pretty much let the kingdom run itself. One day King Frederick and his wife, Queen Christina, decided to start a family. To their surprise, Queen Christina soon gave birth to quadruplets. Four healthy sons, all at once. The King and Queen were overwhelmed.

The years passed quickly and Frederick's sons (Dominick, Marcus, Felipe, and Restivo) grew to be strong young men. But they were nothing like their kind and peaceful father. They were just the opposite. The four sons of King Frederick fought constantly over anything and everything. Their fighting was so fierce that even the normally unconcerned Frederick became concerned. Left to his violent and competitive sons, his peaceful kingdom could very well be destroyed after he was gone, or perhaps even sooner.

The solution King Frederick decided upon was drastic, but he knew it had to be. Dominick, Marcus, Felipe, and Restivo were banished from their homeland and sent far away to a forbidden land. There they became warlords, dividing their newly acquired territory into four equal sectors, which incidentally, was the first and last thing they ever agreed upon. They then took to building their own castles, after which the battling resumed and never ended. They stopped catapulting fireballs and lightning balls at one another only long enough to rebuild their damaged and war-torn castles. After repairs were made, the fighting always began again with renewed ferocity.



Warlords and Mega Bomberman

By Brett Weiss

Like a good, epic solo adventure like H.E.R.O. for the ColecoVision, or God of War for the PlayStation 2, as much as anyone, and I also enjoy playing (and replaying) any number of quickie twitch games, all by my lonesome.

However, there's nothing quite like facing off against fellow gamers for a little couch co-op. Even better are the battles. The laughs, the trash talking, the intense onscreen fights, and possibly the occasional real-life tears—it's as much fun as you can have with your clothes on.

Two of my favorite multi-player games I return to again and again are Warlords for the Atari 2600 and Mega Bomberman for the Sega Genesis. The former is a rock-solid port of one of the best four-player games of all time while the latter is my favorite Bomberman game for any console. In the Weiss household, we break out both games every time my nephew Chris comes home from Japan to visit.

For cartridge only, you can easily find Warlords for \$5 or less at most any well-stocked retro gaming store. Mega Bomberman is much more expensive at \$30 or so, but the countless hours you'll likely spend playing the game make it easily worth the price.



WARLORDS
ATARI 2600
PUBLISHER: ATARI
DEVELOPER: ATARI
GENRE: BALL-AND-PADDLE
1981

Like many Atari 2600 games with a coin-op cousin, Warlords invents a backstory and features painted box art that bears little (make that no) resemblance to the actual game. In this case, a king named Frederick has quarrelsome quadruplets, each of whom establishes a kingdom in a faraway land. Said kingdoms are engaged in constant battle. The cover art shows a knight wielding a sword, with a catapult in action transposed over his torso.

In reality, the game is a top-down hybrid of Quadrapong (a four-player Pong sequel released in 1974) and Breakout (1976).



While this concoction isn't as romantic conceptually as the deceptive story and art combo, it makes for a potent, engaging, thoroughly entertaining game. Each player controls a paddle-like shield that protects one of the warlords positioned in the four corners of the screen. Surrounding each warlord is a brick castle. By using a paddle controller, each player maneuvers his or her shield around their castle perimeter, protecting it from a ricocheting fireball (slow) or lightning ball (fast).

If the player misses the ball, it can destroy castle bricks. If the ball makes it past the paddle and the depleted brick wall and hits the player's warlord contained within the castle, that player is defeated. The last warlord standing wins the round. The first person or computer player to win five rounds is declared the victor.

As with Circus Atari, Super Breakout, Kaboom!, and Video Olympics, Warlords is an excellent fit for the Atari 2600. The system's paddle controllers operate the shields quickly and smoothly, giving players the arcade experience at home. Since two paddles plug into one control port, four-player action is possible, not to mention highly recommended.

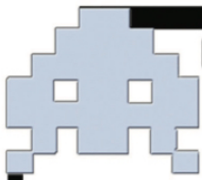
The arcade version of Warlords, which Atari released in 1980, has better graphics (textured castle walls, a lighted/mirrored background, warlords represented by a crown or a death mask) than the simple looking 2600 cartridge (which isn't much more sophisticated in appearance than Breakout), but both versions represent some of the best party-style, four-player gaming ever created.



MEGA BOMBERMAN
SEGA GENESIS
PUBLISHER: SEGA
DEVELOPER: HUDSON SOFT
GENRE: MAZE/TOP-DOWN ACTION
1994

In Mega Bomberman, which is based on Bomberman '94 for the PC Engine, up to four gamers guide their little Bomberman around a top-down, non-scrolling maze, strategically releasing

Game Covers provided by TheCoverProject.net



Publishing NEW items
for CLASSIC consoles.
New Games, Books,
Audio CDs, Magazines
and MORE!



Homebrew Heaven

Homebrews, Reproductions
Prototypes, & MORE!



www.GoodDealGames.com



bombs so they will explode in the pathways of other Bomberman that roam the maze. Exploding bombs also destroy soft blocks, but hard blocks are indestructible.

Certain destroyed blocks reveal power-ups you can grab. Firepower increases the distance of bomb blasts while Bomb increases the maximum number of bombs that can be set at one time. Skates make Bomberman move faster while Bomb Boot lets Bomberman kick bombs away from you (a really fun strategy for staying safe while destroying enemies). Other power-ups let you do such things as pass through soft blocks and bombs, take one hit without losing a life, and walk through enemies and bomb blasts for 20 seconds without taking damage.

There are numerous high quality games in the Bomberman series, including such stellar titles as Saturn Bomberman for the Sega Saturn and Super Bomberman R for the Nintendo Switch, but Mega Bomberman is my favorite for a variety of reasons, not least of which is that you can ride five kangaroo-like characters called "Louies", which are found in eggs when you blow up certain soft blocks.

Each Louie has a different skill. Green Louie dashes at high speed, but he can't stop until he runs into an obstacle. Yellow Louie kicks soft blocks while Purple Louie jumps over one soft block or bomb at a time. Pink Louie does a "Louie Dance," and Blue Louie kicks bombs over walls and blocks. Another nice aspect of riding a Louie is that if you get hit, the Louie will take the damage and be destroyed instead of your Bomberman. Few gaming experiences are as much fun as when all four players are riding a Louie.

You can play Mega Bomberman by yourself as you work your

way through Bomber Planet, which consists of Jammin' Jungle, Vexin' Volcano, Slammin' Sea, Crankin' Castle, and Thrashin' Tundra. However, 2-4 player Battle Mode is where the real action resides. After selecting the stage, prepare for a raucous good time. Just beware of "skull items" that are exclusive to Battle games. Touching one of these infects you with a malady, such as slow sickness, reverse direction disease, perpetual motion sickness (Bomberman keeps moving and can't be stopped), bomb burp (you'll set bombs uncontrollably), premature detonation disease (bombs explode almost immediately after being set), or delayed detonation disease (bombs take too long to explode).

Next time you plan a party or host a retro gaming convention, make sure to have Warlords and Mega Bomberman on-hand for guests to play. I guarantee they'll have a great time. 🎮

Brett Weiss - Noted video game historian Brett Weiss is the author of 10 books, including the Classic Home Video Games series, The 100 Greatest Console Video Games: 1977-1987, Retro Pop Culture A to Z, and The SNES Omnibus Volumes 1 and 2. He's had articles published in numerous newspapers and magazines, including the Fort Worth Star-Telegram, AntiqueWeek, Game Informer, Classic Gamer Magazine, Video Game Trader, Video Game Collector, Filmfax, and Fangoria.

Prepare Yourself For A Journey Through History!



Remember the simpler age of video games?



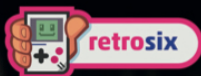
Relive your childhood as old friends share their memories of the games we loved...



Listen to the Legend of Retro podcast weekly, for a blast of nostalgia!



www.retrosix.co.uk



Why not get
the original and best

GAME BOY ADVANCE

for the modern retro gamer?



**UPGRADED AUDIO AMP
AND SPEAKER!!!**

THE SUCCESSOR TO THE GAMEBOY COLOR

THE 2001 RELEASE OF THE GBA

Hand-restored to it's original condition, with the circuit board restored, a new shell, buttons and glass screen. Boxed in an awesome RetroSix box, making the perfect gift for a die-hard gamer.

Only
59.99 £ at www.retrosix.co.uk

Tax included



Ice Cold Beer and Arcade Tournaments

By Phil Day

By and large, the great achievements of early arcade gamers from the 80's remained known only to the faithful few until 2007, with the release of the feature length documentary film, *King of Kong*. At first, the film seemed peculiar: a niche subculture of competitors striving for the highest scores on some of the earliest video games. Even more peculiar, the competitors were serious about claiming the highest scores on these classic arcade games. Seemingly, none more than surpassing Billy Mitchell's one and only ever verified *Donkey Kong* 'Kill Screen' score of 874,300 points set on the 13th August, 1982. Mitchell's score was deemed, by some, as unbeatable. This wasn't to be the case.

On the August 17th of 2000, Mitchell's score was tumbled by Tim Sczerby with a score of 879,200 points. Sczerby's victory paved the way for what could be described as the *Donkey Kong* Epoch. Soon Sczerby's world record would be beaten and trade hands by an elite few: Steve Weibe, Hank Chein, Robbie Lakeman, Wes Copland, and, as of today, John McCurdy. And equally impressive is the eighty individual competitors who also surpassed Mitchell's 874,330 points in the hope of claiming the world record.

The real point is the *King of Kong* clearly made a deep impression on video game arcade enthusiasts who were children or teenagers of the 80s. Having watched the *King of Kong*, many of those viewers found their way to the *Twin Galaxies* leaderboards with the hope of besting world records on titles they were better than average on in their youth. Soon, the treasured video game world records of 'antiquity' were being taken. Many classic titles – *Asteroids*, *Dig Dug*, *Galaxian*, *Track & Field*, etc., were being given a much closer inspection. It didn't take long before many of the long-standing world records were being broken, with very few exceptions. One of those few is exceptionally rare and exceptionally different: *Ice Cold Beer*.

The International Arcade Museum and *Killer List of Videogames* (a video game forum that tracks the rarity of arcade titles – both cabinets and printed circuit boards) offers an insight to the rarity – and presumably popularity of sales – of *Ice Cold Beer*. The forum ranks arcade titles on a scale of zero to one hundred. Zero being the least common, and 100 being the most common. *Ice Cold Beer* has a rank of four (4). There are currently only 93 *Ice Cold Beer* titles accounted for. Of the 93, 91 of them are original dedicated cabinets, and 2 of them are printed circuit boards. It's fair to say it's a rare title, possibly due to its unusual appearance and design mechanics.

The dominate motif of *Ice Cold Beer*'s bezel art is decorative floral lines that have more in common with the distractive 'whiplash' curves of art nouveau (circa 1900) versus the sharp vector lines or blocky 8-bit graphics. The design mechanics are so unlike typical video games that *Twin Galaxies* chose not to recognize it

The one game customers ask for by name!



as an 'arcade' game, rather it is categorized as a 'novelty', which is somewhat understandable. *Ice Cold Beer* looks more like the missing link between pinball and an arcade video game, which would be understandable if it were released between *Bowl-O* (1970) and *Computer Space* (1971), but it wasn't.

Taito released *Ice Cold Beer* in 1983, and it bears little to no resemblance of its ancestry to Taito's revolutionary 1978 title *Space Invaders*, nor is it anything like the very popular *Elevator Action* (also published by Taito and released in 1983). It is also nothing like other popular releases of 1983, such as *Dragon's Lair* (Cinematronics), or *Gyruss* (Konami). *Ice Cold Beer* doesn't ask the player to assume the role of a sharp shooting spy (*Elevator Action*), save a buxom blonde bombshell drawn by Don Bluth (*Dragon's Lair*), or pilot a spaceship across the galaxy to a techno arrangement of Bach's *Tocatta and Fugue* in D minor (*Gyruss*). There isn't even a monitor screen – no luminous electric hues from a cathode-ray screen. Instead, there is a painted plank of wood drilled with holes, and a steely *Tom Bowler* to play. *Ice Cold Beer* is truly unlike any other arcade title, pinball or video game. With a stainless steel ball and two two-way joysticks – it's equal parts pinball and equal parts video game – the monotreme of arcade machines. I can understand that a 'pure' pinball or video game player of the 80s would thoroughly feel the urge to ignore *Ice Cold Beer*, and they did. Except for one man, Greg Grunter. Mr. Grunter was the first competitor to submit an *Ice Cold Beer* score to *Twin Galaxies*; a score of 170,660 in 1984. It wouldn't be until 2011 that Mr. Grunter's score would be beaten by Zach Kaczor with a score of 350,000 points. Kaczor's score would be passed by two more players in 2018 – first by Mathew Ackerman with a score of 651,760 points; then by Rasmus Roien Madsen with a score of 2,087,070 points. The point being, in almost four decades, only four scores have officially been recorded. In contrast to the *Ice Cold Beer* leaderboard, Jeff

TRADE!!!

**THE BEST
TRADE-IN VALUES
ON THE PLANET!™**

HDMI REPAIRS!



FIX!!!

\$38

\$42

XBOX ONE PS4

BUY!!!

**THE LARGEST
VIDEO GAME SELECTION!**



eStarland®

Gaming Like No Other since 1991.



screen' competitor); and Jon Tannahill (Space Invaders, Word Record holder). Statistically, Ice Cold Beer shouldn't draw such competitive interest, and arguably it may not, but in Brisbane it does. George Riley (Donkey Kong 3 World Record holder and Youtuber on classic arcade video games) suspects he may know why that is:

In America, collecting video game cabinets seems to be more important than witnessing how they are competed on by top players. Competitive players aren't given as much credibility as what an arcade collector has found or amassed. For example, Armando Gonzalez [Galaga marathon world record holder], could be at an arcade event, but the recognition he'd receive would be nothing compared to a collector who roll's out an original white Japanese Galaga cabinet. From what I've noticed Brisbane is different. Less priority is placed on collections; the priority is on gamers – competitive gamers. US arcades are never promoting players, not at any level. Competitive players are in the background. Whereas in Brisbane, competitive players are sought after by the arcade. These arcades are planting seeds and nurturing them into great players. Because of this, I believe Brisbane is shaping up to be the biggest city for classic arcade competitive gaming in the world.

Riley may well have a point, and if so, it is most likely thanks to the competitive spirit forged in the early Twin Galaxies Arcade (1981-1984, Iowa, USA); Funspot's Annual Classic Videogame and Pinball Tournament (1999 – 2012, New Hampshire, USA); Richie Knucklez's Kong Off (2011-2019, USA); Score Wars International Galaga Tournament (2018, Meow Wolf, New Mexico). The much younger arcades of Brisbane are combining various aspects of USA style tournaments with USA style arcade venues (most notably Barcade, NYC and Galloping



Ghost, Chicago).

Brisbane's Netherwold hosted two Australian Kong Offs (2017, 2018) before it celebrated its second birthday. And a third Australian Kong Off is scheduled for August this year to be held at Brisbane's Ekka - Queensland's largest annual event, averaging 400,000 visitors. And with the Ice Cold Beer tournament complete, Pincadia has already started promoting its Gala-Gala - a Galaga tournament between Australia/New Zealand and Canada/USA. And unlike Ice Cold Beer, Galaga boasts one of the most competitive leaderboards, possibly only second to Donkey Kong. For this reason, players from Canada, New Zealand, USA, and from around Australia have already registered to compete in the Gala-Gala live event at Pincadia in May. Drawing such attention already, it'll be interesting see how this annual event develops into its second year. 

Harris's Donkey Kong Forum has registered five hundred scores ranging from Brett Wheeler's 100 points (2018), to John McCurdy's 1,249,500 points (2019). Despite these facts, Pincadia of Brisbane, Australia, reopened its doors with an Ice Cold Beer tournament. Why choose a rare and hardly competed on non-pinball-video-game title for the relaunch of their pinball and video game arcade?

Thematically, Ice Cold Beer is a fitting choice for a pub cum arcade ('barcade'), doubly so considering the event was held on Australia Day. But this doesn't change the unfamiliarity of the rare title. Despite its rarity and lack of competitive play globally, over thirty people registered for the event. This included skilled competitors, including: Johnny Bonde (Donkey Kong 'kill screen' competitor, and Pang Word Record Champion on MAME); Michael Kibby (Nibbler Word Record holder on MAME); John McNeil (Bump 'n' Jump World Record holder); Jacob Paint (pinball competitor - Australian ranking: 33. World Ranking: 508); Shane Sawle (Donkey Kong 'kill

Phil Day - Phil Day held the Galaga TGTS world record from 2009 to 2011. He now prefers to write on classic arcade culture, and when possible, give his commentary on arcade tournaments and world record attempts.



GAME ON EXPO

ARIZONA'S LARGEST GAMING CON
PHOENIX CONVENTION CENTER
AUGUST 9TH - 11TH, 2019



CHARLES MARTINET
VOICE OF MARIO

RETRO AND MODERN GAMING
FREE-PLAY ARCADE
TABLETOP GAMING
ESPORTS



VERONICA TAYLOR
VOICE OF ASH



JEN TAYLOR
VOICE OF PEACH

COSPLAY CONTEST
LIVE MUSIC
ANIME



TARA JAYNE SANDS
VOICE OF BULBASAU



KENNY JAMES
VOICE OF BOWSER

LARGE VENDOR HALL
SPECIAL GUESTS & PANELS
CASH PRIZES AND MORE...



@GAMEONEXPO



@GAMEONEXPO



@GAMEONEXPO

WWW.GAMEONEXPO.COM

Entering the Digitized Era – Part 2

By Warren Davis

In the last issue, I told the story of how I was introduced to video digitizers in the mid-1980s while working at Williams and began to explore their use in obtaining photo-realistic images for arcade games. The first digitizer I played with was made for an Amiga computer. It was crude and impractical, but it got me started on the path.

A real breakthrough came when I learned about a group within AT&T called the EPICenter (for Electronic Photography and Imaging Center) that had created a trio

of graphic cards for PCs. They were the VDA (Video Display Adapter), ICB (Image Capture Board), and TARGA (Truevision Advanced Raster Graphics Adapter) board. The group split from AT&T in 1987 and called their new company Truevision.

The VDA was just a display card, but the ICB had the ability to digitize images from an external video source, such as a standard consumer camcorder. Its pixel resolution was identical to our video game hardware (256 x 240) and its color resolution was 2 bytes per pixel (5 bits each of red, green and blue, with an extra bit left over) for a total spectrum of 32,768 colors. It was also a true-color board in that it didn't use a palette. Every pixel could be any one of those 32,768 colors. Of all the Truevision boards, the ICB seemed ideal for our purposes.

It came with software called TIPS (for Truevision Image Processing Software) which was basically a capture and paint tool. The real beauty of this board was that it had an SDK (Software Development Kit). That meant I could write my own software to control the features of the board the way I wanted. This was the turning point. This was a real start down the path of creating digitized images for our games.

What we needed, though, was game hardware that could support more than 16 colors, the industry standard. To that end, our hardware designer Mark Loffredo, began working on a 256 color system, made possible by recent drops in memory chip prices. He didn't get far, though, because around this time, the legendary Eugene Jarvis, who had left Williams before I was hired, returned to head and build up the video department, which had been drastically reduced during the industry crash of 1984. Eugene had his own ideas for our new 256 color hardware and Mark immediately switched gears.

Meanwhile, I made use of the Truevision SDK to develop a

software tool to meet our digitizing needs. While image acquisition on the ICB was pretty fast, it wasn't quite real time. So any action needed to be videotaped first, then an artist would have to freeze frame the video, digitize a single frame and manually strip out the background before storing each image. Since the digitized images were true-color, my tool needed to be able to reduce the number of colors to a palette of 256, the maximum that our game hardware allowed. As mentioned last issue, I'd familiarized myself with the latest color reduction algorithms, and I added that feature to my software, which I dubbed WTARG.

With new hardware and tools in place, it became time to start making some games. The video department had only enough manpower to start two projects. Eugene, programmer George Petro and artist Jack Haeger began work on NARC, while John Newcomer and I headed up a game we called USSA. Both games used WTARG to generate digitized graphics. While NARC was completed and released, USSA was cancelled. I left Williams shortly after that and was hired by Premier Technologies to develop a new arcade system which led to the game Exterminator.

While I was gone, Williams continued to use WTARG on some of its games: High Impact Football and Trog (which used digitized clay-mation to great effect) were both released in 1990, followed by Super High Impact in 1991. The next game in development was Terminator 2: Judgment Day based on the soon to be released movie. When one of the programmers on that team quit suddenly, I got a phone call and soon found myself back at Williams.



Above: A screen shot from NARC, the first Williams game to use digitized images. The bad guy in the trenchcoat was our hardware designer, Mark Loffredo.

Capture images that capture attention.

TV-quality images far beyond conventional PC graphics.

AT&T Advantage: True-color images for graphics products can enhance graphics you never dreamed your PC possessed. The power to work with color images, including the ability to digitize and store your own images, with incredible fidelity, and the power to store a file of bits, with remarkable density.

Amazing features: Digitize an image with our Truevision Advanced Raster Graphics Adapter (TARGA) or Image Capture Board (ICB). And don't just digitize images—improve them! TIPS lets you enhance your digitized images. To crop portions of the image and blend them. Smooth.

AT&T
The Right Choice.

Top: This ad from PC Magazine circa 1986 shows the line of Truevision boards when they were still part of AT&T.

Bottom: Photo of a Targa+ board which added a chromakey feature, when used with WTARG, could strip out most of the background of an image before the image was captured.

I'd expected that in my absence, someone would have picked up the mantle and continued to improve WTARG. After all, cameras had gotten better, computers had gotten faster and memory was becoming cheaper and more plentiful. Truevision had come out with a successor to the original Targa, the Targa Plus which had chroma-key capability. To my surprise, no one had touched WTARG. For Terminator 2, they were still pulling digitized images off of videotape and hand stripping out the background. This made sense, since a lot of our reference material was shot in California on the actual sets. We

also had access to some of the actors: Robert Patrick and Eddie Furlong were videotaped doing action specifically for our game. We got Linda Hamilton's stunt double as well, and Arnold Schwarzenegger's stunt double wearing an Arnold mask.

But another game was in development by Ed Boon and John Tobias. They were looking to apply our digitization technology to a different genre, the fighting game. Ed had just worked on Super High Impact, which used digitized graphics and John on SmashTV and Total Carnage, which did not. To push the envelope, they wanted to use character sprites that were much larger than on any previous digitized game.

They brought in friends (or friends of friends) who had some martial arts skills to be the actors, and found costume pieces from sporting goods

stores, costume shops and thrift stores. To get their images, they went through the same process as previous games. They shot the actors on Hi8 video in front of a gray background and had to manually hand-strip out the

background for each frame of animation.

While working on the first MK, Ed Boon wanted to incorporate a full screen image of the character Goro into the attract mode (the screens that cycle through when no one is playing the game). This Goro image was of a very realistic foot tall model that had been digitized. The issue was that memory space was tight and it wouldn't fit. I'd been working on image compression algorithms for T2 so I could store and play back small clips from the movie between game levels. Ed was aware of that and asked if I could compress the Goro image and let him use my decompression software in MK.

I said "Sure." Then I jokingly added, "But you'll have to pay me a quarter for every game you sell."

We both laughed and I set to work. As promised, I delivered what he asked for and that full screen Goro became part of the attract mode. No biggie, I thought, and went on with my own work.

Months later, after Mortal Kombat had been rolling off the production line for some time, I found an envelope sitting on my desk. It contained a substantial, if not life-changing, bonus check for my work on that game. This was truly a kind and unexpected gesture. To this day, I'm not sure if that joking conversation played a part in my getting that bonus or not.


After T2 was completed, I had the time to return to WTARG, bringing it up to date. The biggest improvement was replacing the ICB with the newer Targa Plus with its real-time chroma-key feature. This greatly cut down the time artists spent stripping out backgrounds. To facilitate this feature even more, Williams invested in the creation of a blue-screen studio, complete with professional lights and cameras, lots of athletic pads for falling, and a treadmill that could be rotated in any direction for walking and running animations.

That blue-screen studio became home to all of the digitized games which were to



A still frame from video used to capture images for the original Mortal Kombat. This was before we had a blue-screen studio and chromakey capability, so the actors were videotaped on a gray background, and artists would have to freeze each frame they wanted to use and manually strip away the background. Since pausing a VCR resulted in video noise and the tearing of the image, artists would also have to clean every frame.

come, which included Mortal Kombat 2 and 3. John Tobias recalls about those later games, "casting became more about an actor's physical appearance in costume than their skills as a martial artist. Actually, once the image capturing part of the process was sped up with blue screen keying, we were able to spend more time in post-production with each character's individual animation sequences. That meant if an actor couldn't kick quite high enough, we could manipulate the image later to get what we were looking for. So an actor's physical appearance became more important than their athletic skills as a martial artist. Of course, it made the process easier if the actor could perform an actual roundhouse kick. There were usually only several frames of animation per sequence, but as the character rosters grew the work added up."

I'll continue next time with Part 3, when I will talk about Exterminator, NBA Jam and Revolution X. 



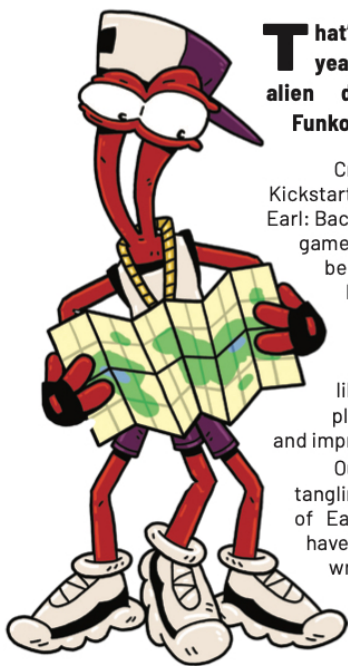
Below: A screen shot from T2: Judgment Day. That's actually Arnold Schwarzenegger's stunt double wearing an Arnold mask.



Warren Davis is a classic videogame creator best known as the designer and programmer of the original O*bert arcade game. He also co-designed and programmed Us. Vs. Them, an innovative laserdisc title featuring scenes with live actors interspersed with sci-fi combat gameplay composited over actual flying footage. His other titles in the arcade industry include Joust 2 (for Williams), T2:Judgement Day and Revolution X (for Williams/Bally/Midway). He was a pioneer in the use of digitized video. His WTARG system was used in many of Williams' most successful games, including NARC, Hi Impact Football, the Mortal Kombat and NBA Jam series', T2, Revolution X, and more. In 1995, Warren moved to Los Angeles to work for Disney Interactive on a variety of home titles. For a short time, he was an Imagineer with Walt Disney Imagineering. After Disney, he worked as a senior programmer on the console game Spyro: Enter the Dragonfly, and programmed an edutainment title, The Lunar Explorer, and spent some time at Industrial Light and Magic.

ToeJam & Earl BACK IN THE GROOVE!

By Conor McBrien



That's right! After seventeen years away, the old-school alien duo from the planet Funkotron has returned.

Crowdfunded through Kickstarter back in 2015, *ToeJam & Earl: Back in the Groove* is the fourth game in the series and the first to be independently published.

Fans of the original 1991 Sega Genesis classic have no doubt been rejoicing, as *Back in the Groove* plays like the first game but with plenty of tweaks, surprises, and improvements.

Our heroes find themselves tangling with the crazy denizens of Earth once again, but they have plenty of friends and gift-wrapped presents to help them this time around.

Back in the Groove features co-op with up to four-players and nine playable characters.

After factoring in the randomly-generated levels and the sometimes unpredictable effects of presents, the game is a chaotic but fun experience like the original game.

In December 2018, I reached out to *Back in the Groove's* developer and publisher—HumanNature Studios—with some questions about the game. The man who provided the answers was none other than Greg Johnson—co-creator of *ToeJam & Earl* and HumanNature Studios' CEO.

OSG: *The last ToeJam & Earl game came out in 2002. What inspired you to revisit the characters again after so long?*

GJ: I have been wanting to revisit ToeJam and Earl ever since [*ToeJam & Earl III: Mission to Earth*]. As you may have

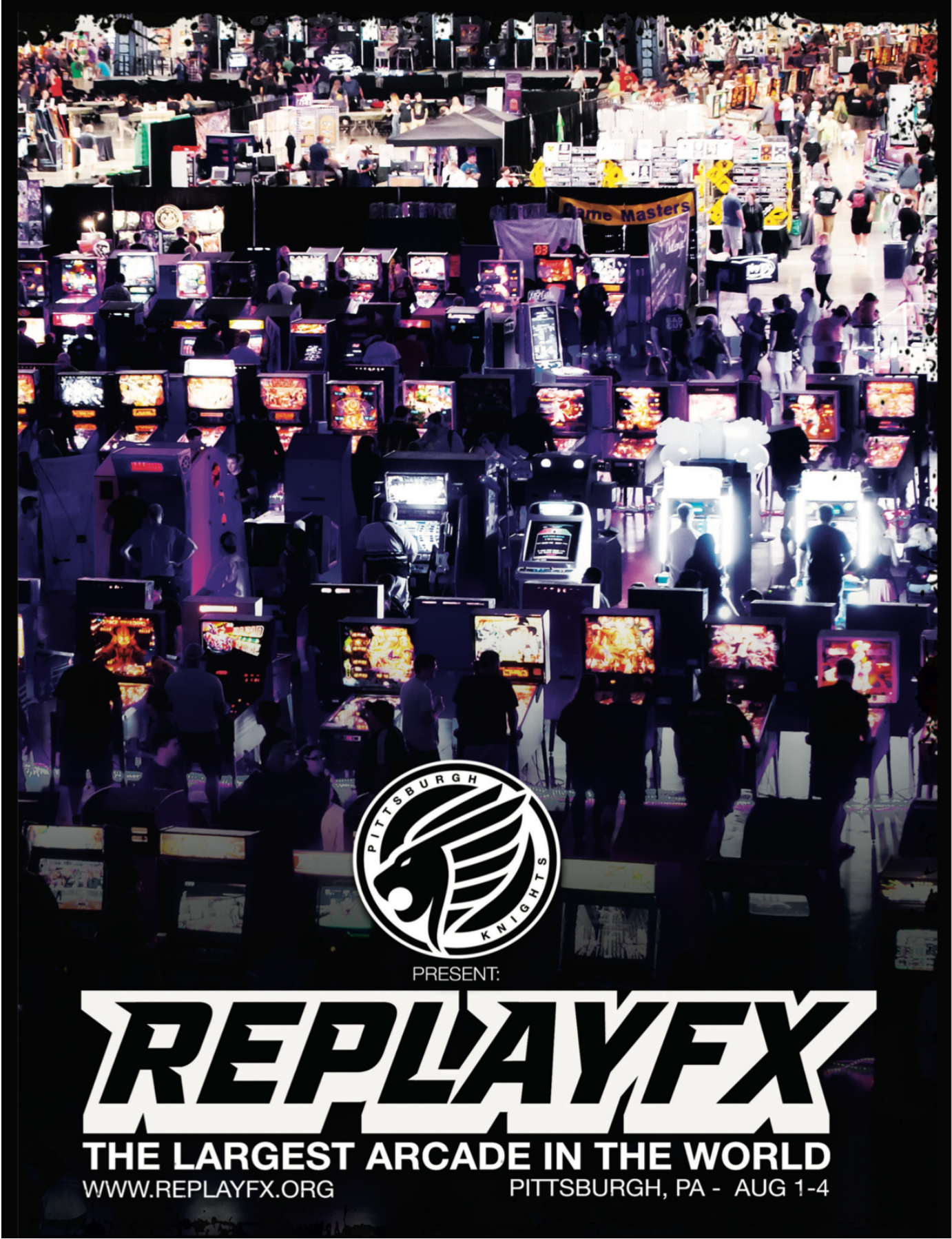
heard, that sequel started out as a spiritual sequel to [the original game], but then we had to change direction based on requirements from our publisher, so I never really got to make the sequel that I wanted to. I have been looking for an opportunity to do that since then, and with the advent of Kickstarter, and a growing interest in retro games, it seemed like I might finally have a chance. TJ&E fans have been waiting a long time for this one.

OSG: *Since this was a crowdfunded project, did any requests or suggestions from fans and backers influence the game's design?*

GJ: Yes! Actually quite a lot of the concepts in the game were inspired by fans. After we ran the Kickstarter we operated a forum where we solicited ideas and suggestions and tried to gauge what fans would want. Of course, we had to change and modify these ideas, but there were a lot of wonderful seeds, especially for new characters, new presents, and also for modes of gameplay. We also ran a closed beta for a month or so, and we had a flood of great suggestions and feedback from fans. I feel pretty confident that this game will be what TJ&E fans want because so many of them have actually told us what they want and we have listened.

OSG: *What has been the most persistent challenge throughout *Back in the Groove's* development?*

GJ: The biggest challenge for all indie game development is always the same. It is never technical, or design-related. It always has to do with simply finding enough money to finish the game. But that's pretty boring, so... maybe I should answer with what the second biggest challenge was, which was trying to find that perfect balance of new and old. You would think that doing a reboot of a game is easier than doing a new game because you know what you're building already. In some ways this is true, but in some ways it is more difficult because you have to



PRESENT:

REPLAYFX

THE LARGEST ARCADE IN THE WORLD

WWW.REPLAYFX.ORG

PITTSBURGH, PA - AUG 1-4

live up to all of the memories and preconceptions of fans, but also deliver something that feels new and fresh... somehow. It's a delicate line to walk. How do you do something that is the same as the original, and yet different at the same time? There is no real, easy answer to this. Your goal is really to capture the spirit of the original. It's fine to be different as long as it "feels" the same. Finding this sweet spot takes time. You can't expect to get it right if you rush and go for the first thing you have in mind. So it's actually a good thing we have had time to let this game "cook" and settle into the right balance.

OSG: Did any sound effects or sprites from the Sega Genesis games get used for Back in the Groove? I only ask because of the game's awesome announcement trailer, which used many of those old sound effects.

GJ: None of the sound effects are actually the same, though many of them have been replicated or inspired by the originals. While we were building the game, we used old sound effects as place holders until we could replace them with newer ones, so that is probably what you heard. We wanted to stay true to the original sound effects. That's part of the nostalgia for the fans.



OSG: There are way more characters and 4-player co-op this time around. Are there any features in the game that change when you have a full party? For example, do levels become longer or enemies more frequent?



GJ: The level sizes don't change and the enemies don't change but a few other things do. Present distributions change, and we have more multi-player presents in play. Also, character dialogue changes and the characters say different things when there are more of them in play. We did think about changing the difficulty with more players but oddly the game doesn't really get easier. Having more players means more chaos, and smaller viewing areas if you are playing on a single screen, so it actually balances itself out pretty well. Don't get me wrong, chaos can make for a lot of laughter and be pretty fun, but the most efficient team is probably a two-player team.

OSG: Where do you want to go from here? Will there be more adventures with ToeJam & Earl in the future?

GJ: As you would probably imagine, that all depends on how well this game sells. We certainly hope so. We shall see pretty soon! Also, there is still talk of possibly getting a series off the ground. Hollywood is very "hit or miss" - usually, it's "wait wait wait...miss" in my experience. Still, that would be exciting and another weight on a scale of more TJ&E games in the future. As far as I'm concerned, there is no limit to how many games we could build with these funky alien characters and this old skool funk music. Here's hoping the world wants more TJ&E!

ToeJam & Earl: Back in the Groove released on March 1, 2019 on Steam, Nintendo Switch, PlayStation 4, and Xbox One.

Game Covers provided by TheCoverProject.net

Conor McBrien was hooked on gaming as soon as someone handed him a Game Boy and a copy of Tetris in the mid-90s. His first console game was Donkey Kong Country for SNES, which made him a devout Donkey Kong fan. He has taken his hobby with him everywhere he's gone, from his home state of Illinois to Florida, from the University of Iowa to Upstate New York. While in college, Conor wrote game reviews for The Daily Iowan. Much more recently, he started writing Game Grappler--a blog where he wrestles with assorted gaming topics, including the preservation of video games, odd characters, and game analysis.



Do you like what you see?
Then subscribe!

Go to OldSchoolGamerMagazine.com
select "Magazines" then "Print Subscription"

Or subscribe issue by issue with Patreon:
patreon.com/oldschoolgammagazine

PATREON |

Tecmo Super Bowl Is Alive and Competition Is Fierce

By Sam Fritz

Down, set, hut, hut, hut, hut, hut...

If those words continue to ring in one's head then it is likely they have at one point experienced the thrill of 1991's Nintendo Entertainment System classic "Tecmo Super Bowl". You might have found yourself sprinting downfield with the machine that was Bo Jackson, throwing a pass the length of the field with Joe Montana, or sacking the quarterback with the powerhouse that was Mike Singletary. All these memories ring true for any fan of the "Tecmo Bowl" series. Even with the game maintaining popularity among casual players in the modern era, many aren't aware that the game today is more alive than ever in the competitive scene.

The date is March 9, 2019 in Detroit, Michigan. People start pouring into the third floor of the Detroit Beer Company. Televisions are lined up side by side with big blue screens filling their corners. A line is formed off to the side where people are waiting to register for the event taking place. Today is Tecmo Kumite VII, Detroit's premiere "Tecmo Super Bowl" tournament.

Tecmo Kumite's co-founders Eric O'Dell and Matt O'Toole have been running the tournament out of Detroit since 2013. This year's tournament saw the highest turnout yet with a total of 47 competitors. "(In) Detroit we started with 33, moved out to the suburbs where we had less numbers, then came back to the city because we realized we get a much bigger draw when we are back in the city. This one is our largest so far." said O'Dell. The co-founders of Tecmo Kumite found each other while attending the same tournament in Madison, Wisconsin. "He had just started playing online. I recently had gotten back into it. That was both of our first one (tournament), was their (Tecmo Madison's) 6th one (tournament). That was definitely an inspiration. It was like, 'We can do this on our own.' Got to know each other and a couple years later we started our own." said O'Dell.

The personalities come out in full at Tecmo Kumite VII. One personality who has already seen some time in the spotlight is Francis Buennagel, also known as Mort. A competi-

tive player since 2002, Buennagel is one of a handful of people to win the largest "Tecmo Super Bowl" tournament, Tecmo Madison. Buennagel also was a featured competitor in the 2012 NFL Film documentary on Tecmo Madison which Buennagel attributes to a rise in popularity in the events. "There had already been a huge following, but more people learned of it because it was on ESPN and the NFL Network. More people got to see, 'oh this is what's going on now.'" said Buennagel. When not competing at Tecmo Kumite Buennagel also provided commentary for a live stream of the event that was happening simultaneously on YouTube.com.

Another presence at this event is the three-time and current Tecmo Madison champion who goes by the name of JoeyGats. JoeyGats is a presence that is felt both at and away from the television screen. Keeping a silent and reserved demeanor away from the game, he comes alive when competing at a game he claims to have taken up out of boredom. "I was bored. I was playing Mortal Kombat, the ROM hack, and I just stumbled upon "Tecmo" in a YouTube video." said JoeyGats. Even in stumbling upon the game by chance, JoeyGats has worked hard to perfect his game in his ten years as a competitive player. While discussing how he managed to progress as a player JoeyGats added, "I played at least 2,000 games in my first year, and I watched a lot of videos." JoeyGats would go on to win Tecmo Kumite VII's Black Belt division which consisted of the tournament's most experienced players.

Every tournament is a world of its own, with unique rules, brackets, and in the case of Tecmo Kumite VII, its own divisions. This year's tournament featured three separate divisions; the Black Belt, Brown Belt, and White Belt divisions. The White Belt division is reserved for people new to the game or just there to play for fun. The Brown Belt division featured cash prizes and is for competitive players who have not won a major tournament since 2010. Finally, the Black Belt division is for the best of the best to compete, featuring



Distributed by
TECMO, INC.
Carson, CA 90746

Nintendo and Nintendo Entertainment System
are trademarks of NINTENDO OF AMERICA INC.

GAME PAK "NES-GP"

Game Covers provided by TheCoverProject.net

Made in Japan



TECMO BOWL™

TECMO BOWL™

cash prizes and the coveted Tecmo Kumite trophy.

The popularity of "Tecmo Super Bowl" and its tournaments extends further than just trophies, bragging rights, prize money, and raffles. Some organizations have found ways to channel the spirit of "Tecmo Super Bowl" into a charitable endeavor. Woodbridge High-School in New Jersey has run an annual tournament for three years now. The last two years have benefited the Marisa Tufaro Foundation, a charity that helps children in the greater Middlesex County of New Jersey.

The event's official title is "Tecmo For Tufaro" and was held on February 2nd, 2019, the day before the NFL's Super Bowl. Taking place in the computer laboratory of Woodbridge High-School, the event is organized with the help of John Bader, the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction in Woodbridge Township. Assistant Superintendent Bader believes the game lends itself well to a charity tournament. "I think it's the greatest game of all time...it's a fast game, it's a fun game, and the day before the Super Bowl... it's kind of a good way to get together with everybody for a great cause," said Bader. Bader also makes it clear that the camaraderie carries over from the competitive scene into the local

charity event as well. "It's just great to get together with friends, family, the good friends I have in the district, and for Marisa Tufaro and her family. They help so many other people in the community, so it is something I look forward to every year."

Woodbridge High-School's own Principal, Glenn Lottmann, took part in the tournament. Admitting to having not played the game since last year's tournament he still enters the competition with high hopes. "The only time I play is this one time a year, but you also want to beat these guys. Most of these guys I see every single day, so you definitely want to beat them in anything you do," said Lottmann. While winning the trophy that was made using the school's own 3-D printer is the goal of the day, Lottmann adds that everyone still plays with the same goal in mind. "It's a competitive vibe, but it's also a friendly vibe...we all know why we're here, to donate money to a great charity."

"Tecmo Super Bowl" has stood the test of time. Without seeing a new official release since 1995, the community has taken it upon itself to keep the franchise alive. It refuses to become just another classic video game. Competitive tournaments and charity tournaments take place all over the United States each year, with an online forum that still has hundreds of active users. The community continues to grow and seek more people to add to its roster each year in hopes of becoming a bigger presence in the competitive world.

If you would like to learn more about competitive "Tecmo Super Bowl", find an event near you, or join the public Discord visit <https://tecmobowl.org/>.

If you would like to learn more about the Marisa Tufaro Foundation or to make a donation visit: <http://marisatufarofoundation.org/>



Sam Fritz - Sam Fritz is a communications/journalism graduate with 4 years experience in both radio and print media. With 6 years experience in video game retail, Sam decided to start mixing his two passions together and become a video game reporter.

Play or coach one of 12 pro teams!
Write your own game plan!

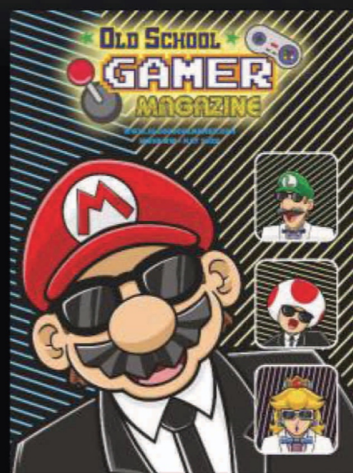
TECMO™

Total control of key players!
Scouting reports included!

ISSUE OVER

CHOOSE AN OPTION TO CONTINUE ...

You have reached the End of the Free Digital version of this issue! To read more, choose one of the options below:



For only \$10 USD / yr
upgrade to the
full-length,
48 to 64-page
digital subscribers
version

CLICK HERE

For only \$30 USD / yr
upgrade to the 48 to
64-page digital sub-
scribers version

**PLUS
the print version**

CLICK HERE

Level up to one of these plans to enjoy a steady stream of great retro-gaming info from the best writers and industry insiders only available **all together** in one place:

