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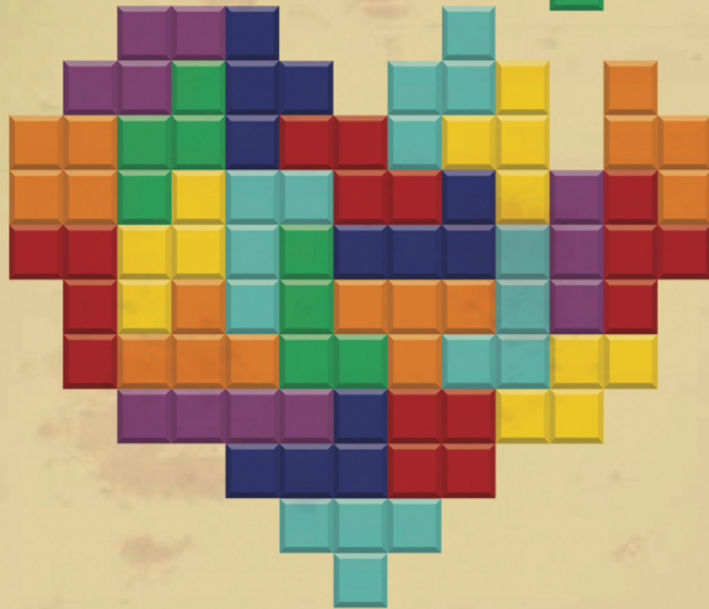
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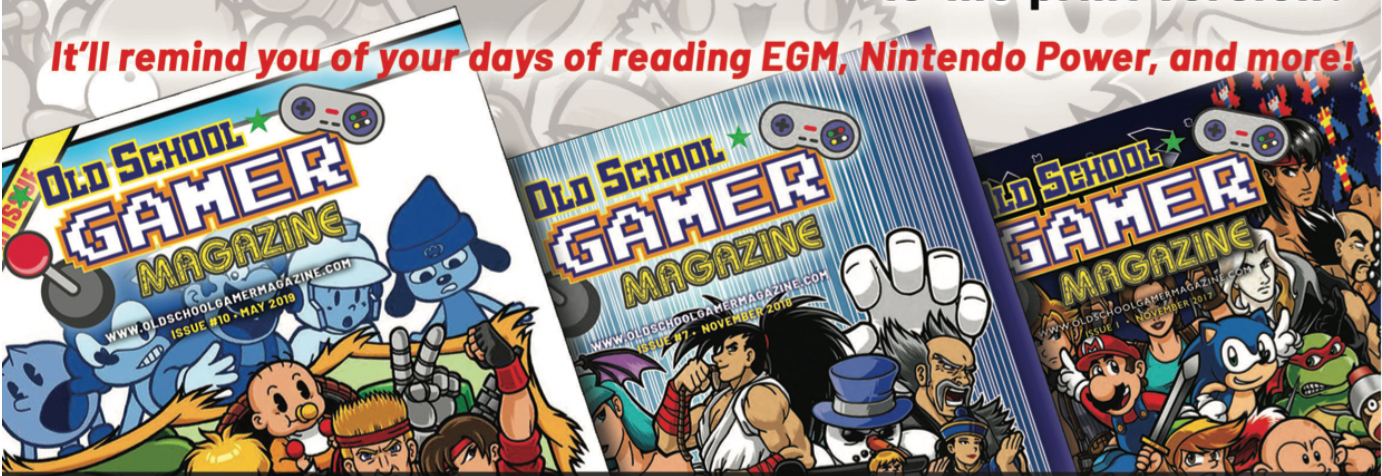
It's lucky issue number 13, and in this edition we explore the world of puzzle games. We've brought in some exciting new writers for this issue, and we also continue our insightful pieces by Howard Scott Warshaw and Walter Day. This is an issue you need to read from cover to cover (or top to bottom as it were). We hope you enjoy reading it as much as we enjoyed creating it!

Brian

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MYST

By Todd Friedman

There are a handful of games in history that were ahead of their time technically and graphically. Titles like Doom, Super Mario 64, The Legend of Zelda, and Pong are just a small sample of games that broke barriers of gameplay. Myst, in my opinion, is one of those games. Not only did it amaze people with its beautiful landscape and visionary graphics, but the gameplay and puzzle-like strategies made this game super addicting, with hours of fun for all different genres of gamers. Myst, released to the public in 1993, was developed by Cyan, Inc. and designed by Robyn and Rand Miller. The original game was only released on the PC engine for the Macintosh, but soon after that would take off on dozens of home consoles, such as PlayStation, Jaguar CD, Nintendo 3DS and Panasonic 3DO to name a few. It was the Macintosh that got people talking with its realistic environment, music, and challenging puzzles. This was a game that not many people experienced on any platform, which drew more and more people to the product. It was the best-selling PC game during its first year of release.

ADULTS

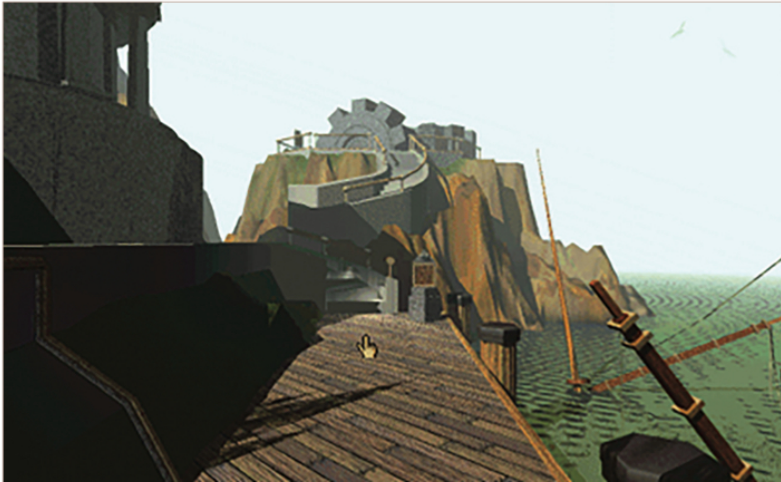


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Myst Cover and Screen Shots
From TheCoverProject.Net

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the sounds as you were moving around in the game. It really made it seem like you were in a real virtual world. The music in the game was so good that it was released as "Myst: The Soundtrack". The story goes that the designers did not want music to be in the game as it would take away the focus and concentration of the gamer. It was a gamble, but it worked. Not only did it work, but it took the gameplay to another level. It was the perfect music for the perfect game.

Myst had groundbreaking technology and high-resolution graphics. This challenged the workhorse of the Macintosh back in the early 1990's. This was a tough time to get a game created the way the designers wanted. The memory of the PC was not strong enough to handle something this intense, and the CD-ROM was slow to the punch when it came to processing the data. The Miller brothers found a way to make it work and at the same time give gamers the true experience they were looking for in a game. It did take a couple years to make it reality, but it was well worth the wait.

The Miller brothers created such a gorgeous looking game, that sometimes it was hard to realize this was an epic adventure that would test your mind and patience. When you peel back the layers of the game, it really is one giant puzzle that needs to be solved. The story line and screen by screen movement was a perfect recipe for this historic game. The controls were basic in the sense that you just needed to point and click your mouse. No other control was needed in this challenging title. You moved your character from screen to screen by clicking the side you wanted to move to while finding objects or clues that you needed to continue the adventure. An average player would need about 40 hours of gameplay to complete the game. Advanced or skilled players could possibly finish the game between 12-25 hours.

Another historical feature that the game Myst provided is the outstanding sound and music. The soundtrack to Myst is at the top of my list of gaming music. It was very important to the Miller brothers that the game had the exact sound effect you would encounter if you were really in that world: the rain, the fire, the stepping on glass, etc. This had to be perfect to make the game work. It did not disappoint. It was chilling to hear some of

The storyline consists of an adventure surrounding a book titled "Myst", which is what the island is called in the game. On the island are two more books that need to be discovered that give more clues to the game and more worlds to discover. These worlds are called "Ages". In each world are missing pages that belong to the books and need to be filled in to figure out the missing information.

The puzzle aspect of this game was unique for its time. The world you experience is the puzzle. You need to find items and areas to solve questions and continue to the next steps. The maze-like world is very difficult to get through without finding all the clues and instructions. Without putting all the pieces together, your adventure will more likely be scenic rather than accomplished. It is very easy to get mesmerized in the beauty of the game and miss a key clue that is hidden in the scene.

As a sort of "help" feature, the gamer was given an option to skip or "zip" though the maze to an already entered area. This lightning bolt ICON gave frustrated gamers who got lost to instantly go to a place they recognized and could start over.


The cool thing about Myst is that there are multiple endings. This is a feature not known yet to the gaming community. There were some "RPG"-like games created that gave a different ending or perspective depending on



what you did, but *Myst* was different as it was a puzzle game that had multiple ways out. Most puzzle games have one exit and many ways to get there.

Myst overall won many awards and accolades. Some of these were "Best Fantasy Game" in 1994, Runner up for 1993 "Adventure Game of the Year", and 11th on the list of "Most Innovating Computer Games" of all time. It really paved the way for exciting and innovating CD-ROM games. It changed the way designers looked at Puzzle and RPG games. More games followed that mimicked the "*Myst*" idea and design. By November of 2000, *Myst* sold over 6.3 million units worldwide. *Myst* was the best-selling PC game of the 1990's until *The Sims* beat it in early 2001. That is a tremendous accomplishment, considering the PC boom of the mid and late 1990's. As *Myst* became available on home consoles, more gamers were influenced by the *Myst* effect. It kept the game going for generations and helped more independent game developers come up with new ideas and designs.

Myst created four sequels to the game, although they did not live up to the huge popularity of the original. *Riven*

was released in 1997 and *Myst III: Exile* was released in 2001. *Myst IV: Revelation* was released in 2004 and the final game of the series, *Myst V: End of Ages* was released in 2005. In May of 2000, the original *Myst* game was revamped and called *Myst: Masterpiece Edition*. All the images were spruced up and made more colorful as the technology got better. This made for a real life-like environment that looked better than the original. Many consoles over the years picked up on the title. In 2012, PlayStation Network released a download for the PlayStation 3 and PSP which was the PS1 version that came out years before. Nintendo tried to raise the bar and release the game for the Nintendo 3DS, making the game more realistic in a 3D environment. It did not do as well as planned, but still was a cool rendition of the game. Nintendo will be releasing a modern version for the Nintendo Switch will be released at the end of 2019, called *realMyst: Masterpiece Edition*. *Myst* for me will go down as one of the most prolific games to come out on the PC as well as on the consoles. It still is a tremendously addicting game to play, even today. 

Todd Friedman is heavily involved in the video game community. He is currently writing for *Old School Gamer Magazine*, *Little Player Magazine*, *Retro Player Magazine*, *RetroGaming Times* and *The Walter Day Collection*. He has Co-Promoted the Video Game Summit in Illinois for the past 10 Years. Todd is an avid video game collector with over 3500 console games and 35 systems. One of his main responsibilities is keeping the *Walter Day Trading cards* alive. Todd holds over 60 world records on the Nintendo Wii game *DJ Hero*. Todd was also a nominee for the International Video Game Hall of Fame, class of 2016 and 2017.

Solve The Original *Myst* in 30 Minutes?

From the Jaded Gamer

These steps will allow *Myst* to be completed in thirty minutes, without viewing the entire game.

1. Turn on all markers (marker switches to up positions and symbols to green). At the clock tower, rotate the small wheel twice and the large wheel eight to set the clock to 2:40. Cross the bridge and turn on the switch.
2. Return to the dock and turn off the marker switch (down position). Get the white page.
3. In the Library, look at the book on the far right of the middle shelf for the pattern for page 158.
4. Input the pattern on the door in the fireplace opening.
5. Save the game. Decide which ending to display and deliver the appropriate page.

Also, to get all the different endings:

- 1 - give red book all pages
- 2 - give blue book all pages
- 3 - use green book without white page
- 4 - use green book with white page



Tetris in Pop Culture

By David Oxford

What has seven shapes (or Tetrominos, if you prefer), each consisting of four blocks, falling down a well and disappearing when lines are formed?

Obviously, a great concept for a video game – one of the greatest of all time, but unlike a Pac-Man or a Mario, there doesn't seem to be much more you can do with it, right?

Well, as it tends to do (for good or ill), the worlds of licensing and pop culture disagree. As such, the phenomenon that is Tetris has exploded into many different facets of the landscape, many in unexpected and bizarre ways.

For instance, you would think that the only way to play Tetris – a game where blocks literally vanish from existence – would only be achievable in a video game space, right?

That hasn't stopped several board-game companies from trying to adapt the premise into something a little more tangible. Milton Bradley's 1989 version (licensed by Nintendo) featured players blindly taking Tetrominos and placing them on a board from the bottom up, passing off unwanted pieces to other players, all in the name of having the fewest open spaces left in the end.

Another version from around the same time by Tomy is based more on claiming territory, and yet another from Radica in 2003 called Tetris Tower 3D uses lights and sounds to create something a little closer to the actual video game yet looks like a hybrid between Tetris and Connect Four. Throw in mini-jigsaw puzzles, a version of Jenga, and other offshoots like Tetris Dual and Tetris Link, and there's been a surprising amount of variety and life found for Tetris in the physical game space.

Tetris has spread to other types of gaming as well – specifically, games of chance. In some places around the world that allow gambling, including parts of the United States and Canada, you might find, upon a trip to your local variety or grocery store, Tetris-themed lotto scratch cards. These tend to vary by gaming commission, however, so if you're seeking to add these to some sort



of collection, just be aware that there are several different kinds.

The Russian falling block game has managed to find its way into more passive media as well, though in some cases less officially than others.

For instance, *Blokken* is a game show based on Tetris that's been running on Belgian television since 1994. With over 4,500 episodes and 22 seasons, it's reportedly the longest-running quiz show in Belgium. While maybe a little less directly inspired, Japan's *The Tunnels' Thanks to Everyone* features a segment called "Brain Wall," which English-speakers have taken to calling "Human Tetris" due to how contestants must contort their bodies in order to fit through block-shaped openings in a moving wall.

In North America, Tetris is no stranger to multimedia, either.

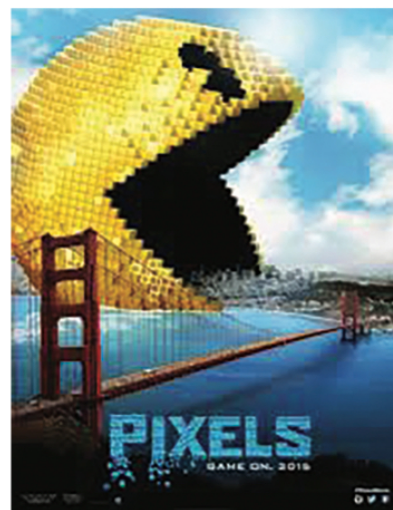
One popular example comes in the long (long) running animated sitcom, *The Simpsons*. The ninth episode of Season 14, "The Strong Arms of the Ma," opens with the family attending the bankruptcy garage sale of the Arnold-esque Ranier Wolfcastle. When Homer must figure out how to fit all the stuff they've purchased (as well as themselves) into the family station wagon, he declares that "this is what

begins to play.

As one might expect, Tetris also played a role in the adventures of Captain N: The Game Master, though perhaps surprisingly more prominent than one might expect. Two episodes take place in Videoland's world of Tetris, featuring blocky characters and the reveal of Princess Lana's long-lost brother, Lyle.

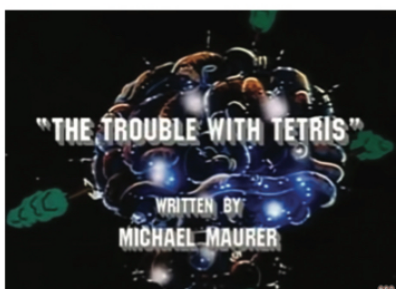
The first episode, "The Trouble With Tetris," focuses on Mother Brain's scheme to steal the Sacred Square, the Tetromino block responsible for keeping the entire Tetris world together. In "Totally Tetrisized," a new villain called the Puzzle Wizard has taken over the world of Tetris, and turned everyone into Tetrominos, leaving it up to the N Team to vanquish the villain and return the populace to normal.

Perhaps the most prominent example of Tetris breaking into pop



they do when a full row is filled and taking out floors of the buildings.

There's an even bigger moment to come. That same year, it was




all those hours of playing Tetris were for." As he visualizes everyone and everything as a Tetromino and begins fitting them into the vehicle, "Music A" from the Game Boy version of the title

culture is in the 2015 Adam Sandler vehicle *Pixels*, which pulled in \$244.9 million. While brief, a part of the movie shows Tetrominos falling from the sky and landing on buildings, doing what

announced that Larry Kasanoff (who helped bring *Mortal Kombat* out of the realm of video games and onto the big - and small - screens) was working not only making a movie out of Tetris, but making it a trilogy at that.

"We want the story to be a surprise, but it's a big science-fiction movie," Kasanoff told Empire. "I came up with the idea as I was thinking about Tetris and the theme of creating order out of chaos."

The film was to begin shooting in 2017, though reports since the earlier announcements of a trilogy have been few and far between. 

David Oxford - Lover of fine foods and felines, as well as comics, toys, and... oh yeah, video games. David Oxford has written about the latter for years, including for *Nintendo Power*, *Nintendo Force*, *Mega Visions*, and he even wrote the book on *Mega Man*.



Puzzle De Pon

Platform: NEO-GEO MVS & AES
 Developer - Visco Corporation
 Release Date - 1995

By Mike Mertes

Many people would look at a screenshot of Puzzle De Pon! and automatically assume that its a Puzzle Bobble/Bust-A-Move game. In actuality, it is not. Don't feel bad though, despite having played Puzzle De Pon! for years; I thought the differences in the games were simply in name alone.

Both games share a similar mechanic - Players shoot randomly colored balls upward on-screen to matching colored balls. When three of the same colored balls are connected; they disappear from the level. The differences between the two games start right after that, however. In Puzzle De Pon!, players are tasked with releasing a token plate trapped by the color balls to beat the stage. These tokens vary in form and symbol, and due to their shape, colored balls can be difficult to connect without precision aiming. In Puzzle Bobble, players are tasked with clearing out all the colored balls in a stage to complete it, with no token plates to contend with like in Puzzle De Pon!

To further define itself from Puzzle Bobble, Puzzle De Pon! features several power-ups that can drastically help players clear stages in record time. Shooting an "Allow-ball" marked with an arrow will give you the ability to see a line indicating exactly where your ball will end up when shot. Using this power-up makes those challenging trick shots a cinch and becomes an instant relief when they show up as the next ball to shoot. Next up is the "Bomb-ball" that will destroy all balls clustered together, which is extremely handy for destroying spike stone obstacles that can not be removed easily in some stages. Finally, the "Star-ball" will eliminate any of same color balls across the entire level you connect it with, so choose carefully when the chance to shoot it appears. Don't take too long though. You only have 5 seconds before your ball launcher will shoot for you and you have a limited amount of time to complete each stage. If you can't manage your shots, you will quickly find yourself running out of space, and if the balls reach the line on the bottom of the screen, it's game over.

Puzzle De Pon! is an enjoyable experience in both its



stand up arcade cabinet MVS version or home console AES edition. Both versions contain a fun, head to head two-player mode and control comfortably with either a joystick or gamepad. Whenever I have a game night in my basement arcade, Puzzle De Pon! is continuously requested to be set up on the NEO-GEO MVS cabinet. It's an addictive game, and its popularity warranted a sequel called "Puzzle De Pon! R!". So the next time you walk by a game cabinet that looks like its playing Puzzle Bobble, give it a second look. It may be Puzzle De Pon! you see before you.

Tetris Attack and Zoop

By Brett Weiss

Two of my favorite action puzzlers are on the Super Nintendo: *Tetris Attack* and *Zoop*. Both are dynamic, fun, and easy to pick up and play for gamers of all ages. You can get a complete copy of *Tetris Attack* for around \$20 (\$10 cartridge only) and a complete copy of *Zoop* for approximately \$12 (\$4 cartridge only). A bargain to be sure, as these games will keep you busy for hours and hours.

TETRIS ATTACK

Produced by Gunpei Yokoi, the chief architect of the Game Boy, *Tetris Attack* deviates significantly from the falling block gameplay mechanic established by the original *Tetris* and copied by countless sequels and rip-offs. The game features colorful square panels - with a star, heart, diamond, or other such design - that rise from the bottom of the screen. Players quickly zip a cursor around the playfield, rearranging the panels two at a time with the goal of aligning three or more identical colors in a row, effectively eliminating them from the screen. While you can only switch the panels horizontally, the identical panels matched up horizontally or vertically will be erased. Combos and chain reactions reap an assortment of

rewards, such as bonus points and the encumbering of your opponent's playfield with garbage blocks.

While cuter and more colorful than most of the other games under the Tetris umbrella, *Tetris Attack* is in no way less exciting or less addicting. It's downright frightening how quickly the hours can melt away while you are mesmerized by this thoroughly challenging game, which is especially enjoyable in two-player (split-screen) mode. The nifty in-game tutorial hosted by Yoshi is a nice bonus - the game features characters and settings from the great *Super Mario World 2: Yoshi's Island*. The redundant sound effects are pedestrian, but the restrained new age melodies are very easy on the ears.

The game's only true flaw is what I call the "panic" maneuver. If you are having limited success clearing panels, you can move the cursor around the screen at top speed, switching panels randomly, hoping to luck into some

matches, combos, and chain reactions. While not a surefire method for success, this kind of "cheating" works well far too often. To look at it another way, this method does give less skilled players a fighting chance, so it will be a net positive for some.

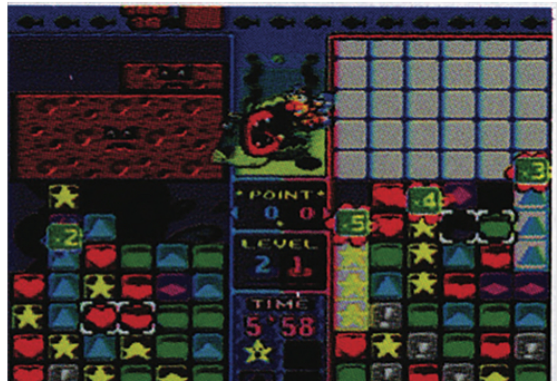
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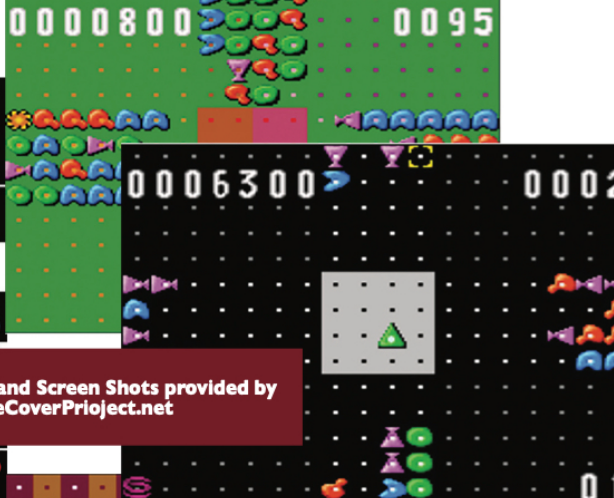


Game Covers and Screen Shots - From TheCoverProject.Net

Tetris Attack, which is very similar to *Pokémon Puzzle Challenge* for the Game Boy Color and *Pokémon Puzzle League* for the Nintendo 64, was also released for the Game Boy. That version utilizes the Link Cable for two-player action. The Super Famicom release was called *Panel de Pon*. It features fairies as the primary characters in a fantasy setting.

*Excerpted from *The SNES Omnibus: The Super Nintendo and Its Games, Vol. 2 (N-Z)*





ZOOP

In the Advance Edition of the Digital Press Collector's Guide, Zoop is referred to as "Cosmic Ark meets Tetris," and that's an apt description of this time-draining puzzler.

The object of Zoop is to eliminate a random sequence of colored shapes advancing toward you from the four sides of a square-shaped grid. You control a shape-shooting triangle trapped in the Center Square of this grid. You can maneuver the triangle up, down, right and left. If you shoot a shape that's the same color as you, it will disappear from the screen (entire rows of the same color can be destroyed at once). If you shoot a shape of a different color, you will switch colors with that shape and the shape will remain on the grid. When you have cleared enough shapes from the playfield, you'll advance to the next level, and the action will get faster and more crowded.

In each of the 99 levels, power-ups randomly appear on the grid: proximity bomb (blows up pieces in a 3x3 area centered at the target piece); line bomb

(clears the entire target line of pieces); and color bomb (clears all the pieces in a quadrant that match the target piece). Also, if you collect five spring pieces, the entire playfield will be cleared out.

Zoop is an excellent game for many reasons: elegant simplicity, high level of challenge, and engrossing gameplay. Maneuvering the little triangle, quickly switching its color scheme, desperately trying to keep all the shapes from entering your territory, is challenging and a whole lot of fun. You'll constantly feel like the odds are against you (they are), so when you do make it past a level, your spirits will soar, at least for a second or two, until the next wave of shapes begins descending on you.

One thing that would've been nice is a two-player mode. The ability to control the advancing shapes while a friend tries to keep you from invading his Center Square would add another dimension to this already excellent game. A two-player cooperative mode would be interesting as well, especially

when the game gets too difficult to go it alone.

This version of Zoop is like its Genesis counterpart, but with one overriding exception: the controls. In the Genesis version, when you aim your triangle up, it sometimes goes to the left or the right. Neither game has perfect controls, but the Super Nintendo control pad works better in this case. You'll quickly become addicted to either version, but the Super Nintendo game is a more satisfying, less frustrating experience. Zoop was also released for the PlayStation (in a long box), Game Boy, and Jaguar.

*Excerpted from The SNES Omnibus: The Super Nintendo and Its Games, Vol. 2 (N-Z)

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. Check out Brett's new YouTube show, "Tales from a Retro Gamer."



The Birth of An Arcade

By Walter Day



“Hey!” shouted a cheerful voice from a truck stopped in the middle of Ottumwa, Iowa’s bustling East Main Street...**“Where can I find a video game arcade around here?”**

Two men, precariously perched on two tall ladders in front of a modest storefront, swung around and excitedly shouted “We’re right here.” Their excitement was almost uncontrollable because they knew the truck had arrived with a shipment of video games. Before the day would be over, John Bloch and Walter Day would be the proud proprietors of Southeast Iowa’s newest video game arcade, and the wooden sign they were installing above the main entrance to the establishment at 226 East Main Street proudly proclaimed this fact with the words “Twin Galaxies.”

It was November 10, 1981, and Bloch, the creative genius of the two, had just figured out that very morning how to use a jig saw and cut a long stretch of plywood into the words “Twin Galaxies.” Shimming down the two ladders, Day and Bloch looked up at their new sign with divine satisfaction. They both absolutely loved playing video games and now they owned their own arcade.

Running to the back door of the building, they arrived just in time to meet the truck that was backing up to the loading dock.

A vending machine operator, who had already put their games in 25 other arcades throughout Iowa and Missouri, had agreed to supply 22 games to the new arcade on a 50/50 split. Bloch took out his camera and took more than 100 photos of the entire process as the vending company wheeled in the 22 games – many of them brand new, fresh out of their boxes. The games included Asteroids Deluxe, Battlezone, Centipede, Donkey Kong, Defender, Dragster,

Frogger, Galaxian, Gorf, Lunar Lander, Make Trax, Omega Race, Pac-Man, Qix, Red Baron, Space Fury, Sprint 2, Star Castle, Super Cobra, Tempest, Turtles and Wizard of Wor.

“It took little time to unload and set up the games because John and I often stopped to play our favorite games. I loved Gorf, Pac-Man and Centipede and John loved Red Baron and Wizard of Wor. It’s funny how one’s perspective can change with time. I complained about Wizard of Wor being included, but the game supplier looked at me in astonishment and scolded me, saying this was a great game. Today, I completely agree with him and when I am at conventions, I often choose Wizard of Wor as the only game I ended up playing.”

“The only downside of the day was that the hundred or so photos we snapped during the delivery and set up process turned out bad and couldn’t be developed by the film laboratory.”

“The photo that you see included with this article may be the only known photo of Twin Galaxies showing the original wooden sign. The photo was published in the 1982 Ottumwa High School Yearbook as part of their feature section that described the activities in the community that were enjoyed by the student body. Twin Galaxies was definitely a major destination during the 1981-1982 school year.”

“The wooden sign would adorn the front of our building until April 1982, when it was covered up by the colorful electronic box sign that everybody knows and loves from all the later photos. Ten years later, when the electronic sign was taken down, the old wooden sign was found beneath it, still heralding the glory of Twin Galaxies.”

“Funnily enough, when the big moment came to open the doors to the public, I was not there. I had to leave to drive 24 miles back to my office in Fairfield where I had

an appointment with a news reporter from WHO-TV (ABC in Des Moines), who was filming me for an evening news segment. Was it about video games? No, the reporter was there to report on my famous occupation as a vintage newspaper salesman — supplying old, historic newspapers from the 1600s through the 1800s to collectors, restaurants (for interior decor) and school teachers looking for teaching aids for the history classroom."

"By the time the reporter had left, nighttime had fallen, and I called John back at the arcade. John, who by now had finished the arcade setup, was elated. 'Walter, you have to see it to believe it! There is a slight rise in the floor as the room goes towards the back of the arcade and it gives the appearance of the games rising to a point in the middle.'"

Our game supplier loved this amazing effect and forever after described this effect as the "Twin Galaxies look."

"I couldn't wait to get back and enjoy the very first moment of being an arcade operator. But, before I could hang up the phone, John shouted: 'Wait, our first customers have come in!'"

"Yes, two customers had walked in the door and stopped in amazed silence. The one in front simply said, 'What!? An arcade?'"

"It was Dan Fogelman and Shawn Heaton, two local OHS students. Sadly, I wasn't there for this moment. I was like a new father whose child had been born while they were out getting coffee, completely missing the moment."

Yet history was born. [G]

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.

n cited itions

ie Binford, of Marshalltown, rked for 60 years as a social and was a long-time associ- pioner social worker Jano s. e Chapman Catt, of Charles ho was chosen by Susan B. nt to succeed her in 1900 as y of the National Woman s Association.

Abella Mansfield, of Des County, who became the male attorney in the nation the passed her bar exam in Henry County in 1889.

mette Dozier, of Iowa City, a been a state senator and stative and a leading advo- women's rights, rape law re- venue justice, and child

A Amelia J. Bloomer, of Coun- ties, who did not create the pants but wrote about it, a popular, and gave it her members of the hall include Samuelson, of Shenandoah; Rosefield, of Ames; Jessie Braugh, of Shenandoah; Pendra, of Magalloway; Louise Smith, of Eddyville; Vitenmeyer, of Davepsort; Ruth Jackson, of Hawarden; Jane Odell, of Des Moines; uningham, of Des Moines; Lee, of Clearfield; Catherine as far as 180 and stores in warehouses on the West and east coasts. He says he has three to eight copies of the paper, for instance, for every day back to 1960.

(By the way, seven million newspapers is more than the Hawk Eye prints in a whole year.)

ansplant ccess

is alive in her. I feel very her and I've been praying and hope with all my heart as it because that will mean made it."

's brother, Carl Jones, said proud his brother's organs id in the historic operation of the family was following obika's progress on tele- id in the newspapers.

said Robert was in good and probably had a strong cause was fairly athletic. yed volleyball and basket- at school," he said. ras in 8th grade. Robert in need to walk to school to- very day," Carl recalled. d to fight a lot like brothers e still went places together.

e hope the lady lives. It's still alive."

geless

e conscientious and king and possess good t from years of work." b job seekers can receive ing for a job at the Bur- fice, 1000 N. Roosevelt, anager Terry Jamison loyers interested in hir- workers should call the

ould not be the prime sion in hiring employ- ability to get the job old be the true meas- McCormick said.

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Newspapers present living history

By John Stewart
"Stillwater, Mont., July 20 (AP) — "Gen. Custer found an Indian camp of 2,000 lodges on the Little Horn and immediately attacked the camp. Custer took five companies and charged the thickest portion of the camp. Nothing is known of the operations of this detachment only as they trace it by the dead. The Indians poured in a murderous fire from all directions, besides the greater portion fought on horseback. Custer, his two brothers, a nephew and brother-in-law were all killed and not one of his detachment escaped. — Two hundred and seven men were buried in one place, and the killed is estimated at 300, with only 31 wounded."

FAIRFIELD — This contemporary account of Custer's Last Stand appeared in the Postgraduate (now York's Weekly Telegraph) nearly two weeks after the event. Yet, there is a dramatic quality which is lacking in the standard history books students are forced to consume.

One man who has recognized the teaching value of old newspapers is Walter Day, of Fairfield, a native of Boston, who claims Benjamin H. Day as an ancestor. Benjamin H. Day founded the New York Sun in 1833 — the first modern newspaper with a wide readership.

Day said Masthead has a business based in Fairfield called When History Was News. He has seven million newspapers in stock going back as far as 180 and stores them in warehouses on the West and east coasts. He says he has three to eight copies of the paper, for instance, for every day back to 1960.

DAY SELLS his old newspapers to other collectors, historical societies and recently to people interested in a paper from the day they were born. He is currently marketing his papers in this area.

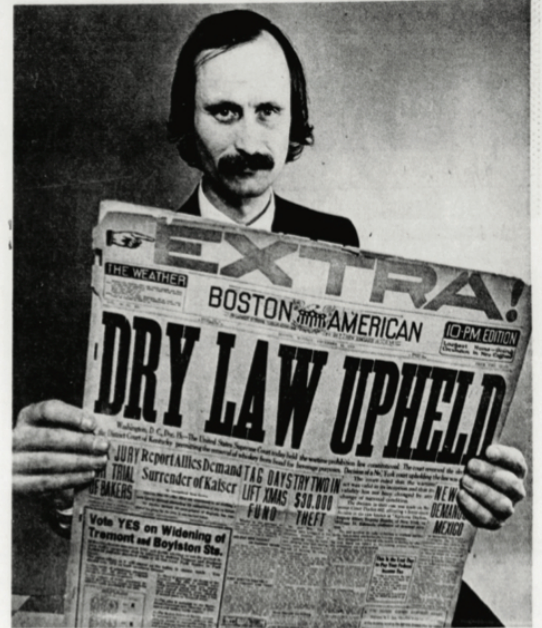
I became interested in collecting newspapers as a student at Salem State College in Salem, Mass.," Day said. "I edited a journal called Masthead from 1976 to 1978 to promote teaching with old newspapers."

Day said Masthead had a circulation of between 4,000 and 8,500 during its lifetime and went to educators all over the world. The journal used accounts such as the one on Custer's Last Stand to show history students how people thought in previous times and to show journalism students how newspaper writing and production has changed.

Masthead was a big money drain on Day and he has found his new approach to marketing his mammoth stock of papers will eventually become a money maker. "I love what I'm doing but it's still a novelty right now and there isn't real money in it right now," he said.

STORAGE AND SHIPPING is the big problem for a collector working on Day's scale. He charges about \$30 for a newspaper but he claims it is a good deal. "The New York Times offers a copy of the front page of their issue for the day you were born for \$25. I sell you the whole paper — sports, local, advertising — in a carefully packaged envelope."

The New York Times sell over a thousand of these volumes per month, according to Day. Day gathered his collection from archive and institute holdings and took advantage of a change in his policy at the Library of Congress



Walter Day displays extra addition of the Boston American

to get a huge number of newspapers free.

The Library of Congress began to convert its newspaper stocks to smaller, easier to store, microfilm in the 60s and 70s and throw away many papers. "They have been doing it for decades," Day said, "but now they aren't throwing them away like they did. I just happened to be in the right place at the right time."

DAY IS STILL INTERESTED in using newspapers to teach and hopes to start up Masthead or something like it again. When asked, he makes presentations to grade school and high school students.

One lesson to be learned from Day's papers is that if readers think today's journalists are biased, they should look to old journalists used to write.

The Newark Daily Advertiser for April 26, 1865, had an account of the army's hunt for President Abraham Lincoln's assassin, John Wilkes Booth and an accomplice. The article began "They are bringing back the dead monster (Booth) and the living reptile (his accomplice, captured alive)."

Modern papers usually maintain their composure but reporters and editors of the 1860s felt no such compunction.

SEARCHING through the decades, Day also comes up with humorous anecdotes like this account of a woman who married four times and

finally remarried her first husband. From The Lowell (Massachusetts) Courier of 1850:

"On the day twenty-five years from her first marriage, she parted with her fourth husband, attended the funeral of her second, was married to her first, and the marriage ceremony was performed by her third husband! She is now living with her fifth, or rather her first husband, and is doing well, and is some woman yet!"

Day found an account of what he thinks to be Jesse James' first train robbery near Adair, Iowa, in the

Boston Traveller. It tells of how the robbers derailed the train and rats in part:

"As soon as the train stopped large, athletic men, masked in full Ku-Klux style, appeared at the express car, and commenced firing rapidly into the car yelling, 'Get out of there... yo, get out of there... Two of the robbers marched up to the car yelling, 'Get out of there... and down the train threatening to shoot any person who showed his head on the train, saying, 'Get down out of sight... yo, or we will shoot you...'"

Lady Di lookalikes

LONDON (UPI) — If imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, Lady Diana Spencer is the most sincerely flattered young lady in Britain.

Other British girls won't be able to have Prince Charles for a husband, but they can try to buy the same clothes, wear the same engagement ring, drive the same car and have the same hair cut.

Copies of Diana's engagement ring already are available. Sales of the car she used to drive are climbing. Hair stylists report a stampede of women demanding the "Lady Di cut" — hair trimmed short, layered and combed low on the forehead.

izes indicate it's all the rage in Helsinki.

"It's creating quite a problem for us," said Diana's own hairdresser, Kevin of the firm Head Lights.

"Everybody who asks for the style thinks that they will look exactly like Lady Diana. In fact, the hairstyle doesn't suit everybody. You need the right face."

But it was not just the face that grabbed sales in Britain's newspapers Tuesday. Bare shoulders and low-cut bodices are rare in royal circles, "but Lady Diana has both the figure and the confidence to wear it well," fashion expert Kathy Phillips said.

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At the time Twin Galaxies opened, Walter Day was well-known throughout the American media as a "newspaper historian," who was buying and selling vintage editions from the 1600s through 1800s and selling them to collectors and history teachers

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Atlanta, GA • Southern Fried Gaming Expo • southernfriedgamingexpo.com

JULY 9-12, 2020
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JULY 25, 2020
Cleveland, OH • CCAG • ccagshow.com

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Plug and Plays

By Leonard Herman, the Father of Video Game History

Following the success of the NES Classic in 2016, we've seen the SNES Classic, the forgettable PlayStation Classic and the well-received Genesis Mini. Although these gaming machines are referred to as dedicated consoles, they are not derived from the early '70s dedicated video game consoles that had their few games built-into them. Instead their lineage goes back nearly twenty years to a group of miniature consoles known as Plug & Plays, which got their name because they literally just plugged into the television and they were ready to play.

The first Plug & Play device was from a company called Toymax, which released the Activision TV Games Video Game System in 2001. Looking like a generic controller, the console featured two D-pads and two shoulder buttons, and plugged into a television's audio/video inputs via two attached RCA cables. Built-into the unit were nine ported Activision Atari 2600 games including River Raid, and one from Imagic, which had been purchased by Activision.

Toymax was purchased in 2002 by Jakks Pacific, a seven-year old toy company, which released a second Plug & Play console exclusively through Avon. This one was called Atari 10-in-1 TV Games. This unit looked very much like the iconic Atari 2600 joystick with reset, select and start buttons on its side and audio and video cables sticking out of its back. The built-in games included several of the most popular 2600 games including, Adventure, Asteroids, Missile Command and Yar's Revenge. Oddly, three paddle games, including Pong and Breakout, were also included in the joystick.

In 2003, Jakks Pacific released the Atari joystick in stores. It also repackaged the Activision collection in a modern-looking joystick. Finally it also released a collection called Namco TV Games, which featured five games, including Pac-Man. During that year, Technovision entered the Plug & Play market with its 25 Intellivision Video Game System. This system, too, resembled a generic controller, and featured a D-pad, thumb-stick and five buttons. The infamous Intellivision controller that utilized overlays and featured a 12-button keyboard and a 16-position dial was not



25 Intellivision Video Game System



Jakks Pacific Atari 10-in-1 TV Games

duplicated.

In 2004, several more companies entered the Plug & Play forum. Software publisher Majesco released two entries that both contained Konami-licensed games. Its Konami Collector's Series: Arcade Advanced featured six Konami arcade games, including Frogger. Strangely, Majesco's other Plug & Play unit was Frogger, and it included only that title.

Other arcade games that were released in 2004 as Plug & Plays were Space Invaders and Tetris, courtesy of Radica, a company that had previously manufactured electronic casino games. Radica also released a pair of Plug & Play units called Arcade Legends. These looked like miniature Genesis 2 consoles, with the only difference between them being that one had a blue Genesis controller and the other was red. Each featured six built-in Genesis games including Sonic the Hedgehog, which was on the blue set, and Sonic the Hedgehog 2, which was found on the red one. These would not be the last Plug & Plays to feature Sega Genesis games.



Radica Arcade Legends

Jakks Pacific released a sequel to its popular Namco TV Games. Mistitled as the Ms. Pac-Man Collection, the unit featured Ms. Pac-Man and four other Namco games that had nothing to do with Ms. Pac-Man at all. The company also issued a follow-up to its Atari 2600 joystick unit. Atari Paddle Games was in the shape of an Atari paddle controller and included thirteen games that required that controller.

Ironically, Jakks Pacific encountered competition from the company from which it had originally licensed games. Atari released its first console since 1993's Jaguar in the guise of a Plug & Play that looked like a miniature Atari 7800. Called the Atari Flashback, the unit featured fifteen Atari 2600 games and five Atari 7800 games. Three of the included



Toymax Activision TV Games Video Game System



Atari Flashback

2600 games, Adventure, Breakout and Yars' Revenge were already available on Jakks Pacific's joystick unit. On the other hand, Sabatour, a 2600 game that had never been available to the masses, was also included.

Two historic changes occurred to Plug & Plays in 2005. First, Jakks Pacific reissued its Ms. Pac-Man Namco Collection in a new, wireless version. The Plug & Play concept was still alive, but it was no longer the console itself that was being plugged into the television. The other big change to the genre was that the consoles became programmable.

In the early days of video games, video game consoles were dedicated. This meant that they were sold with built-in games without the ability to add more. The release of Fairchild's Video Entertainment System (more commonly known as the Channel F) in 1976 introduced the idea of ROM cartridges where additional games could be purchased separately and played through the cartridge. These expandable consoles were known as programmable consoles. Prior to 2005, all Plug & Plays were dedicated. But that year brought two new units that were, in a sense, programmable.

One was a third release of Jakks Pacific's Ms. Pac-Man collection. Like the original that had been released a year earlier, this model was not wireless. The difference between it and its year-old predecessor was that this unit featured a slot in which optional gamekeys could be inserted (which provided additional games). The concept was not successful and Jakks Pacific discontinued it in 2006.

The other programmable

machine was Atari's new Flashback 2. This was a successor of the original Flashback, and like the original, had been designed by Curt Vendel of Legacy Engineering under contract by Atari. The unit looked very much like a miniature Atari 2600 and was packaged with a pair of joysticks that closely resembled the originals, which could also be used in the system. The Flashback 2 utilized a custom chip that was similar to the TIA chip used in the Atari 2600, thus it could play the original games, instead of ports of the games as was the case with the previous Plug & Play offerings. The system featured forty Atari 2600 games, including several homebrews. But this unit was also programmable, even though this was a feature that had

not been advertised by Atari. Vendel designed the unit so hobbyists could easily modify it so a cartridge port could be added that would accept the original Atari 2600 cartridges. The Flashback 2 did very well. Vendel claimed in 2007 that the unit sold 860,000 units in the United States. That Flashback would remain the top-selling Plug & Play for nearly a decade, until Nintendo released its NES Classic.

But before that could happen, other

companies began licensing old games and releasing them in Plug & Play units. Technosource, the company that had released the Intellivision Plug & Plays, went back to the early eighties and found another company in which retro-gamers had shown interest. In 2005, the company released two Coleco-branded units, but there was one major problem with them - both featured generic games that had never been issued by Coleco.

Radica also returned in 2005 with two new Plug & Plays featuring Sega Genesis games. Outrun 2019 was housed in a steering wheel body that was used as the controller. Menacer was a lightgun that contained six Genesis games and was patterned after the original Menacer light-rifle that Sega had released in 1992. The six games built into the Radica device were the same six games that had been included on the cartridge that accompanied Sega's rifle.



AtGames POGA

2006 brought more built-in Sega games to the market. This time, a Chinese company called AtGames joined the party with a controller-like unit called the Poga, which featured thirty Sega Master System and Game Gear titles.

AtGames returned with a vengeance in 2008 with heaps of new Plug & Plays, all featuring Sega 16-bit games. The Arcade Classic included twenty built-in Genesis games and a wireless controller that somewhat resembled a Genesis controller. The unit also featured a cartridge slot that accepted original Genesis and Mega Drive cartridges. A switch on the back of the unit toggled between PAL and NTSC.

The Arcade Motion was a blue Plug & Play console in the shape of Sonic the Hedgehog's head. It used motion controllers that were similar to Nintendo's Wii. It contained fifteen Genesis games, eight of which overlapped with the games included on the Arcade Classic. However, in addition to



Sega Genesis™ Arcade Motion

the Sega games, the unit also included seven generic interactive sports games and eighteen generic "arcade" games.

The Arcade Motion Classic fell somewhere between the Arcade Motion and the Arcade Classic. The console itself was the same as the Arcade Classic, although it was white instead of black, but it did come with the same motion controllers. The game lineup was exactly the same as the Arcade Motion right down to all of the included generic games. This unit also came with extras pieces that plugged into the controller, including a tennis racket, baseball bat, golf club, and ping pong paddles. These extras did nothing to enhance the game, but were meant to make the player feel as if he was actually playing the included sports games.

AtGame's fourth Plug & Play of the year was called the Arcade Master. This one featured a joystick with a large red grip and six buttons. The artwork on the console suggested that it was for fighting games, but the 26 built-in Genesis games proved otherwise. With a few exceptions, the lineup was the same as that on the Arcade Classic. However, while the Arcade Classic allowed the addition of new games via original Genesis cartridges, the Arcade Master accepted additional games through an SD Card.

In 2011 AtGames released the Arcade Blast. This was in the form of a Genesis controller and looked very similar to Radica's Arcade Legends, with the exception that it plugged directly into a television without using an intermediary console. The Arcade Blast offered nothing new in the way of games. All twelve of its built-in games had been available before in different AtGames collections.

While it looked like AtGames was



trying to fill the marketplace with licensed Genesis Plug & Plays, in 2011 it released another console that would eventually become synonymous with the company itself. This was the Atari Flashback 3. On the outside, this looked almost exactly like the Flashback 2 that had been distributed directly by Atari, with the exceptions including the controller ports moved to the front and the absence of a color/bw switch. But on the inside the sixty built-in 2600 games were ported and the unit could not be hacked to add a cartridge port. Atari 2600 diehards noticed that the sound was set to a lower pitch than normal.

Between 2012 and 2018, AtGames would release an additional six editions of the Flashback, steadily increasing the number of built-in games in each package. Other changes eventually included wireless controllers, HDMI output and the ability to add additional games via SD cards.


In 2014 AtGames released ColecoVision and Intellivision Flashback units. Both came with miniature versions of the controllers that came with the original consoles. The Intellivision model even used overlays. AtGames also continued to release Genesis Classic Game Consoles, but keeping up with the different editions wasn't as easy as it was with the Flashback and its incrementing numerals after its name. The only apparent differences were in the

number of games and the box that the unit came in. This continued until 2017 when AtGames released the Sega Genesis Flashback. Unlike the previous AtGames Sega consoles, this new one resembled a miniature Genesis. The 85 built-in games were displayed in high definition but only 45 of them were original Genesis games. Also included were seven SMS and five Game Gear titles. The remaining 28 games were generic.

The Sega Genesis Flashback would be the last Sega Plug & Play that AtGames would release. In 2018, it released its Legends Flashback, which looked like the older Arcade Classics, only now it was filled with fifty games from Bandai, Capcom, Acclaim and several other software companies. AtGames also released six handheld units. Most of them resembled the Genesis controller with built-in games,



Legends Flashback

but they featured titles such as the Legends Flashback Blast! and the Bandai Namco Flashback Blast! There were also three volumes of Atari Flashback Blast!, although the console for Volume 3 resembled an Atari 2600 paddle controller instead of the Genesis one. Finally, there was an Activision Flashback Blast!, which brought the story of Plug & Plays full circle. 

Leonard Herman – The Game Scholar, is regarded as one of the earliest and most respected videogame historians. The first edition of his book Phoenix: The Fall & Rise of Home Videogames, which was published in 1994, is considered to be the first serious and comprehensive book about the history of videogames. He has written articles for Videogaming & Computer Illustrated, Games Magazine, Electronic Gaming Monthly, the Official U.S. PlayStation Magazine, Pocket Games, Classic Gamer Magazine, Edge, Game Informer, Classic Gamer Magazine, Mancini Games, Gamespot.com and Video Game Trader, which he also edited. In 2003, Mr. Herman received a Classic Gaming Expo Achievement Award in recognition for his accomplishments in documenting game history.



The Best Video Game In The World!

FROM THE WRITER FORMERLY KNOWN AS THE JADED GAMER

By Bill Donohue

It was 1994, and I had just started my new position as Managing Editor of Game Players magazine. I'd been a computer gamer for years, but this was my first step into the world of video game consoles. I learned a lot about console games by watching the game reviewers playing the games at a very high level, completing a game in days that would take a civilian weeks to finish. We'd get new games that no one had ever seen before every day in the mail. It was heaven... and then, one day, a Super Bomberman 2 game came in for review.

While the single player game was very intense, the first time we booted up the multi-player battle game every one knew that this was a very special game... a game for the ages.

For the next 3 or 4 weeks, there were SB2 battles raging day and night! It got so intense that, at one point, I had to outlaw the game so we could get the issue out. That issue got wrapped in record time, and the battles roared on!

I was so hooked on SB2 that I did an unheard-of thing: I went out and bought a SNES and a copy of SB2 and immediately took it home. I plugged into the big screen and started playing the battle mode against the machine. I did this every night for a week straight. My band mates and friends noticed that I'd found a new addiction. And then it happened...

It was a Friday night, and we'd just finished a two hour rehearsal. Some of the neighbors had come by to hear the band and drain a few cold ones, so all told, there were eight folks who were going to get a new addiction...

I hooked up the multi-tap to the SNES, plugged in four controllers and turned on the SNES. "So who wants to get blown up?", I asked and before you could say "Hey, that's my beer!", the first Richmond California Super Bomberman 2 Marathon began.

The eight of us started that game at 10:00 that evening. It

finally ended at 4:00 the next morning. When someone won a game, they'd sit out and another player would join in. We lost all track of time. We were hooked.

It got to the point that we would stop and end rehearsals with Super Bomberman 2 wars. I had a crowd at the house every Friday night for 3 months, at least. We started talking in our own language, with terms like

Gillikill, the Rhee, Drive-by, Zane Gray, and Bofus. I even wrote out the whole glossary and it was published on the Game Players website. Yes, we were addicts, but we were happy addicts!

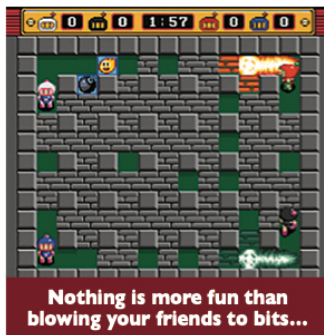
We even wrote two songs dedicated to SB2: (He Ain't Got) No Boot and Hypnotized. Both songs appeared on our first CD, Ride Of The Walkyries (you have to see the cover to get the joke), and Hypnotized re-appeared on our third CD, Trapped Like A Trap In A Trap.

And then, just when we thought it couldn't get any better, we got a phone call from the SB2 development team, asking us if we'd like to play at the Super Bomberman 3 release party!!! We held back for about 2 seconds, and then said "YES!!!"

I think the high point of the day was when Super Bomberman himself made an appearance and jammed with the band! We also got to play Super Bomberman 3 in the Hudson Soft offices weeks before it was released to the public. I may not have been to Heaven yet, but that day was pretty darn close!

We still play the game to this day, some 24 years later. We still start and end our rehearsals with SB2 sessions, even though some of our band members have passed on. We've had marathon tournaments with

over 30 players. I even played against the machine today, and that's what inspired this story. I miss the Bombers who are no longer with us and I look forward to the Bombers to come, because, at the end of the day, Super Bomberman 2 is still The Best Video Game In The World.



BOMB SQUAD or Boom Goes The Dynamite!

FROM THE WRITER FORMERLY
KNOWN AS THE JADED GAMER

By Bill Donohue

In order to function perfectly under extreme stress, a Bomb Squad must be made up of outstanding individuals.

First, there's me: Guy Mandood. I'm the guy who makes things go Boom! Or not... I think not is better here. Definitely not...

Then there's Frank. He's the Shot Caller. We call him that because he calls the shots, like "Remove this part first." or "Lower... lower." or "Remember to breathe."

Then there's Fluggi and Mojo. They perform that irritating music that's always playing in your headset while you're trying to work. And let's not forget about Bob Bob Jr. He drives the Bomb Squad van around the block, setting off the siren every once in a while so we all can feel important.

And last, but not least, there's Boris. He sets the bombs to blow up buildings. I know, he's a terrorist, but if Boris didn't go around setting bombs, we'd all be out of work, pushing shopping carts and eating dog food.

Back at Bomb Squad HQ, it was Aloha Casual Friday, so we were all dressed in our touristy best, including Boris, who switched out his usual black trench coat for a black trench coat with a pineapple embroidered on the lapel.

Frank started the daily briefing. "Boris will be setting one bomb today, but in honor of Aloha Casual Friday, he'll keep it simple, with only one code number, and simple boards. Thank you, Boris!"

Boris stood up, grinning. "It won't be easy!", he said. We all cracked up. That Boris was a real joker. We gave him the usual one hour head start, while we decimated the Pineapple Cheddar fondue. Then we all piled into the Bomb Squad van and headed out.

Frank parked the van across the street from Boris'



intended target. It wasn't hard to find. The building was marked with a red spray-painted message: You'll never find it in time! That Boris really cracks me up...

Frank tested the radio gear, while Fluggi and Mojo tuned up their instruments and Bob Bob practiced hitting the siren button. I put on my body armor and headed into the building. "Don't forget to breathe, Mandood!" Frank muttered into my headset. Fluggi and Mojo got into a solid groove on the bongos and pan flute, Bob Bob blasted the siren and... BOMB SQUAD WAS GO!

I located the bomb beside a spittoon in the Boom Boom Bar. It was a black metallic box that gave off an oily stench and ticked ominously. I turned on my helmet cam and carefully opened the top lid on the infernal device.

"Talk to me, Frank."

"Okay... simple board... remove the transistor first. Remove the capacitor second." I got out my snips and started cutting wire. Fluggi and Mojo were really in the groove, which did make it a little hard to hear Frank.

"You've got to pick up the pace, Mandood! We've only got 10 minutes left!" Frank bellowed. I wiped the sweat from my eyes and started on the second board.

And that's how the afternoon dragged on: Frank yelling instructions, Bob Bob blasting the siren, Fluggi and Mojo filling my headset with that Devil music, and me cutting



Oh well... there's more buildings where that one came from.

endless wires, replacing countless transistors, soldering infinite connections.

I was sure that we must be getting to the end of it. Sweat was pouring down my face and into my eyes. My hands were beginning to shake. I'd just cut a transistor free when Bob Bob hit that damn siren again. I flinched and dropped the transistor.

The clock on Boris' bomb sped up. Minutes flew by like seconds. Frank was giving me a countdown. There

"Five seconds! Call it!!!

One or four?

One?

Four?"

And suddenly I knew the correct number was four... but then everything went black...

I woke up wrapped in bandages. Everything that could hurt did hurt. I heard a door opening and, out of the corner of my eye, I saw Boris entering the room, carrying a large bouquet of flowers.

"I am so sorry, Mandood," said Boris. Tears rolled down his face and into his borscht-stained moustache. "You must get better soon, my friend, so we may continue our little game."



This is a circuit board. It needs fixing. Now!

wasn't much time before the bomb went off!


"Listen to me, Mandood." It was Frank, speaking slowly and clearly in my earphones. "You've only got 15 seconds left. You've got to take a guess at the code now before the bomb goes off!"

I looked over at the digital readout. Several lights were gleaming green, but not enough of them for a definite answer. The code could be either be a one, or a four. Which was it?

"Ten seconds, Mandood! Make the call!"

One or four?

He put the vase of flowers on the table next to the bed. "These are for you. I hope they will cheer you up." Sniffing, he turned and left the room.

The flowers certainly were beautiful, sitting there in that lovely, ticking vase... 

Bill Donohue – He ruled over The Cleansing and The Rinsing with an iron fist. Yes, he's back. He's the man formerly known as The Jaded Gamer... Bill Donohue!

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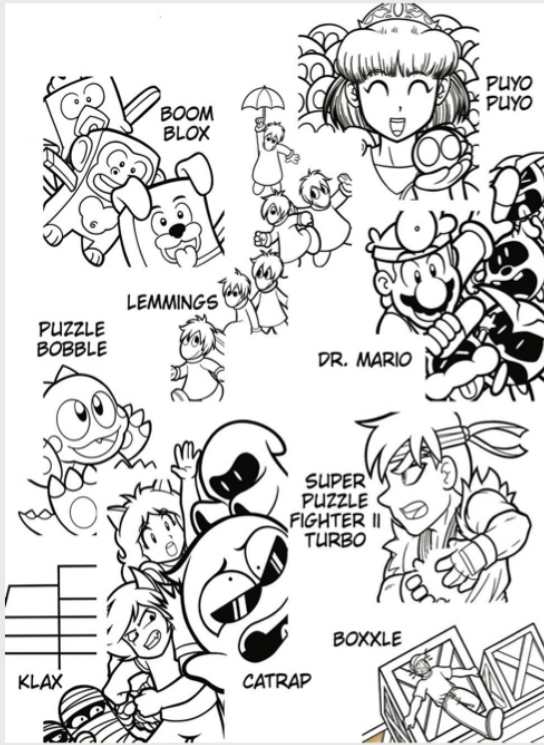


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30 Years of TurboGrafx-16

By Rob Faraldi



Jeff Masser of Chicago, Illinois is a proud father and honorable veteran. He's also an incredibly enthusiastic videogame collector with a fondness for the three-decade old TurboGrafx-16, a game console that's notoriously expensive to collect for these days. Called PC Engine in Japan, its wide array of excellent games helped the system become a legitimate competitor to the Nintendo Famicom in its home country. In the U.S., it helped kick-start the 16-bit era, but was never a true competitor to the then-newly launched Sega Genesis and Super Nintendo, released in 1991.

For those who were lucky enough to play TurboGrafx-16 and its various add-ons and accessories, they knew what the Sega and Nintendo fans were missing out on. As the years went by – 30 on August 29, 2019 – more and more collectors and gamers were able to experience those great, very Japanese videogames too, and in turn, respect for the system and its library increased exponentially. Because of this admiration and relative scarcity associated with a failed system, the value for hardware and certain games has been driven up dramatically to what would have been unimaginable heights even a few years ago.

In honor of the system's 30th anniversary, Masser was kind enough to sit down for an interview explaining his relationship with the system and how he built one of the finest TurboGrafx-16 collections in the world. Following the interview, Masser was kind enough to share photos (all photos courtesy of Masser) of some of the greatest and most interesting pieces in his impressive collection along with his commentary.

If you have any grasp of TurboGrafx-16 collecting you will understand how impressive these museum-quality pieces are. For everyone else, be impressed. What Masser has amassed is truly amazing.

OSG: *What does TurboGrafx-16 and its library mean to you? What feelings does it conjure when you think about it all?*

JEFF Masser (JM): TurboGrafx-16 came out in the United States at a perfect time for me. I was 12 years old and very much into videogames. I had gotten the Nintendo Entertainment System (NES) in 1986 and loved that console so much; it was so different than anything I had experienced before.

By 1989 I was looking for new games with better graphics and sound. Being here in Chicago, NEC (TurboGrafx-16's manufacturer) had an office my family and I would often pass while driving, so when they announced a console and showed off the gorgeous graphics and the fact they were on those tiny cards, I had to have one

It represented a complete change in what could be done with videogames. Being able to not only play these amazing games on a home console, but on a portable, the Turbo Express (Turbo Express utilized the same games as TurboGrafx-16), was mind-blowing.

OSG: *So not only were you an original fan, but in a sense, Turbo was a "local" console for you regardless of its Japanese origins.*

JM: Correct. I followed magazines at the time, so I knew of the PC Engine, but only what I saw of it in Electronic Gaming Monthly (EGM) magazine for the most part.

I had to get one. I started selling off my Nintendo stuff – games that I had meticulously saved the boxes and manuals for, in addition to the carts. I sold them at my parents' garage sale, and in addition to that, I got my first jobs, including a paper route and mowing lawns, to get enough to buy the console and a game at launch! Saving up almost \$300 was quite an accomplishment at 12 years old!

OSG: *You grew up in Chicago near NEC. Did that prove to be an advantage in building your collection?*

JM: Yes. They did a lot of promotions here in Chicago, and Chicago was a main distribution region of TurboGrafx, meaning that every Toys R Us, Babbages, Kay Bee Toys and Electronics Boutique sold them. People in many other regions couldn't find them outside of mail order, but I could walk into most retail stores and buy stuff.

It would also later be instrumental in building my collection of employee items, merchandise and a lot of stuff that couldn't be purchased at a store.

OSG: *I must imagine they had a lot of stock leftover that they blew out.*

JM: Yes, especially at the end, and even later! Especially when the NEC offices officially let go of the TurboGrafx and it switched over to TTI (Turbo Technologies, Inc.) in California.

OSG: *What was the process like; locating NEC employees and what was their reaction when you wanted to purchase their stuff?*

JM: I began looking at local classifieds and would get this paper once a week called "The Advertiser." People would take out ads when they were selling stuff, estate sales, etc. A sort of Craigslist before Craigslist.

I started looking at these classified ads and found a TurboGrafx-16 console with 15 games for \$150. I came to find out it was from a former employee who had bought the stuff while working for NEC and TurboGrafx but wasn't really a gamer. So, he bought it, ended up playing it a couple times, and stored it.

OSG: *I imagine this was a Eureka moment to see if you could find more employees or see what else this person had.*

JM: Exactly. I found more former employees and met a couple gentlemen that made agreements with NEC upon its closure to buy remaining stock and merchandise. I met another employee and some other guys that bought heavily when Turbo Zone Direct (A company formed to distribute remaining TurboGrafx-16 stock) was dumping stuff.

OSG: *What do you think of the TurboGrafx-16 Mini? Will renewed interest in Turbo push the value of original games even higher?*

JM: I believe it will renew interest from people like me who have an affinity towards it from their childhood, or those that always wanted one. Whether it raises prices, I don't know for sure, but I think the Internet and eBay has already shown that prices continue to rise regardless of a Mini console.

I'd like to thank Konami for the upcoming Mini consoles (Three different versions will be released worldwide); I hope they do well, and we can see more of the library available and the IPs resurrected for future generations.

OSG: *I'm lucky I sourced most of my stuff before the boom or from local collectors/gamers for a good price.*

JM: Yeah, up until a few years ago, a complete in box Magical Chase (one of the rarest and now most expensive TurboGrafx-16 releases) was attainable for \$5K or less. These days, getting one under \$10K is considered a deal, akin to the increase in value we've seen with Stadium Events on NES.

OSG: *What do you think of Magical Chase?*

JM: I love it. I think it's a highlight of the North American

library. The games we call Cute 'Em Ups are some of the greatest shooters on both PC Engine and TurboGrafx-16.

Magical Chase has a certain mystery surrounding it. Some people believe it was only available through Turbo Zone Direct or only 2,000 copies were produced.

I know it was sold at retail, but at the time it released, very few stores sold TurboGrafx games. Of those stores that actually carried them, they would only get a couple copies.

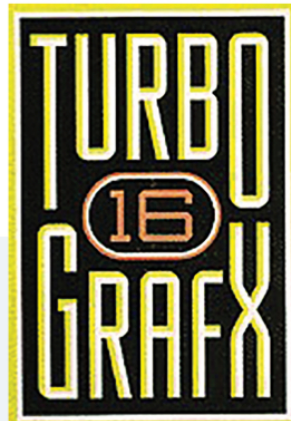
OSG: *How do you know?*

JM: One that I purchased was from a retail store. The game also has a Vidpro card (cards retailer Toys R Us used in stores to indicate which games were in stock), with one surfacing last year. This means there's a good chance Toys R Us sold Magical Chase.

My copy came from a mom & pop store that sold new TurboGrafx-16 releases.

OSG: *Collecting for the system is out of reach for a lot of people today due to skyrocketing prices. What advice would you give to someone interested in getting into Turbo collecting today? Or is that effectively a non-starter?*

JM: I would suggest that you join the online groups. Facebook has many and people are often selling games under ridiculous eBay prices. You can usually get a discount by buying in multiples or bundles and trade is often a good way of getting them. Go in with realistic expectations, but be optimistic. TurboGrafx collecting is fun, and the games are edgy and just spectacular.

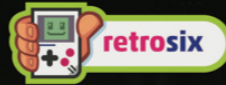


OSG: *Would you ever recommend going the game reproduction route?*

JM: I bought a repro once, knowingly. It was for an English-translated version of Castlevania: Rondo of Blood. I wanted to play the game in English on my DUO (a unified version of TurboGrafx-16 and its CD-ROM add-on), so I didn't see an issue. Is it wrong? Maybe, but the options at the time were not there.

OSG: *Is there anything else you'd like to add or say to Turbo fans and collectors?*

JM: TurboGrafx-16 fans and collectors: Don't give up on collecting! This stuff is still out there and don't be afraid to continue looking for it. Every day more stuff is found, so keep on looking! 📺



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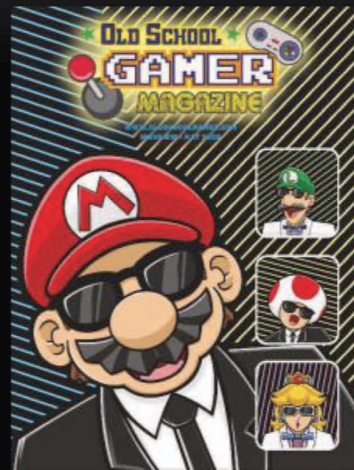
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