#19: Rush.
RUSH.
EDITOR'S BLURB by Joe Santulli

"Whoa!", you're thinking - "a whole fanzine devoted to games inspired by Geddy Lee! Awesome!". I am sorry to inform you that this is not the case. The theme is in fact, speed games, panic games, or any combination thereof. We found as we charted out this issue that there are just so many of these types of games that we left out the generic shooters, no matter how good or bad they are - for another issue. The games you'll find here are the ones that will kill you in 20 seconds or less if you don't know what you're doing. Players unite, unite!

Before you delve into this issue, let me ask you all to think about something. Do you LIKE the theme issues? I haven't heard much by way of complaints or criticisms, so I'm assuming that it's a good thing. We've decided that we really like doing DP this way. It may seem like we're restricting ourselves, but when you look back, you'll see that there's always a gamut of games we can discuss on virtually any theme. It's part of the benefit of doing a multi-system, multi-era fanzine like we do. And for Team DP, it's been fun figuring out how to fill the theme. I guess it's all just a big game, something we all can relate to. And if you still think we're limiting ourselves, just WAIT until you see what we have in store next issue (#20)! A classic!

I HAVE heard lots of pros and cons about "opening up" to you guys. Some people feel that I get too personal sometimes. I even had a reader once write to me urging me to cut out all of the "silly stuff" and get more into the facts. He frankly admitted that he wasn't interested in what we do, who we are, or what we think. Information. Information and facts, that's what he wanted. On the other hand, there are those who feel we're "strangers". What kinds of games does Kevin like? Is Schultz as violent in real life as his columnist persona? Is Liz a babe or what? I've made a decision here and the upshot of it all is, I'm going to tell you more about us. Whether you like it or not. We'll start here, in a small corner somewhere, and that "personal" info will grow or shrink depending on the feedback we get. So let me know what you think!

I saved this tiny little spot right here to thank DP (and Electronic Games) readers for voting us "Fanzine of the Year". You all know I'm not one to blow my own horn. I'm just an honest guy who loves video games. I'll take the honor and glory humbly... except from video game manufacturers, whom I shall expect much "free stuff" from! Seriously, thanks - we'll always be here for you guys! Now onto the meaty goods!

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Digital Press 2
LOVE MAIL

Dear Genius,

Your zine is still my favorite. I love reading it. I encourage more people to subscribe.

- Dale M. Curtis

San Mateo, CA

MORE "FOOLISH"NESS

Joe,

I was just reading about another April Fool's issue, but congratulations on the April Fool's issue! My one and only goal is to have fun and outsmart my enemies. Keep it up, Joe!

- John Doe

San Francisco, CA
to be a great "sweater egg" that really stretches the fun out of an otherwise boring game. Other tips? Avoid Little League if you want children, and make sure you soil your diapers (or pants) as often as possible to build the parental frustration factor high enough that they'll let you go away with anything when you reach the age where you'll want to.

I can't believe that you liked the Fanatical Gamer 'zine' - I mean, he goes out of his way to give us color covers, but all the gory pics of famed casualties remain inside in ho-hum, yawning, instilling black & white - what gives? I hope he'll give us color when his video version arrives.

Rusey Perry, Jr.
Omaha, WI

Thanks for the tip, Russ. I had the same problem you did in this game at around age 17 until I figured out how to avoid this early death. You have to start searching for a really out-of-the-way place to hide when you reach puberty and remain there until you're about 30. I chose Pumpkin Lakes, NJ as my hiding spot. Since there are really no crimes committed in those areas, there are also no cops around to discover you. When you reach this stage of adulthood you can do something inconsequential like say, produce a fanzine for video game players. This game really IS starting to grow on me. Oh is that a third arm?

MORE RARITIES

Dear Joe,

I've been collecting 2600 items since around 1986, but I haven't really gotten heavily into this hobby until 1991. Since then, I've also adopted the 5200, 7800, and ColecoVision, and I'm toying with the idea of collecting the Mattel Intellivision. As a result, I've seen many things that haven't been mentioned in your excellent DP Collector's Guide. So, in no particular order, I've listed things you may want to consider as additions to the next edition of your Guide.

Taken from an article in a 1982 issue of Electronic Games, the 7800 was supposed to have a high-come cartridge available. Apparently, the high store cart goes into the cartridge slot and the game of choice goes into the high score cart. It can supposedly save up to 500 rounds of gaming. Maybe a prototype exists.

From the same magazine, a full page ad by Atarisoft states: "If you thought you'd never find fun game for your hardworking home computer, happy days are here. Because now Atarisoft has all the great hits... Pac-Man, Donkey Kong, Centipede, Defender, Jeot, Jungle Hunt, Moon Patrol, Pole Position, Galaxian, Ms. Pac-Man, and
did-it-yourself, and we've got them for all the hit computers... Apple, IBM, Commodore 64, Vic-20 and ColecoVision...." I know that Centipede, Galaxian, Defender, and Jungle Hunt are available for the CV, but what of the rest? The bottom of the ad, in fine print, states that Donkey Kong and Battlecruiser are not available, thus implying that the rest are.

Hrm!

Did Specter, Slide Track, Rip Card, Donkey Kong II, or Horse Racing ever get released for the CV? I have a ColecoVision catalog showing all of these games but DK3, and I believe I've seen DK3 on someone's prototype list.

I am the proud owner of an Atari Touch Tablet. It produces odd effects on the 2600, but I've heard that it was only intended for the 400X200 series of computers. What's the deal?

I also remember reading in Electronic Games along the way that Wizard released another game, an X-rated one called Flesh Gordon for the 2600. Supposedly based on a porno film. Any ideas?

Kyle Snyder
Waldorf, MD

Abright, where to start... first, Kyle, we're addressing many collector's needs in the next edition of the Guide by adding a "rare" list. If you spend enough time going through these old magazines, you'll find a whole lot more of these planned titles such as the Atari 7800 High Score Cart and the Atarivision titles. Truth is, none of them were ever released, and no one has yet reported a prototype. Therefore, the High Score Cart for 7800, ColecoVision Pac-Man, Jeot, Moon Patrol, Pole Position, Ms. Pac-Man and DK3 (which vary only on the "rare"") will all appear on the "rare" list. Sorry! I'd have loved to see these games produced as much as the next guy, but the fact is, they don't exist. Neither do many titles listed in the ColecoVision catalogs packed in with the console. I still feel cheated by that. You have to wonder why they went to so much to assign product numbers to these games, repeatedly advertise them, then never release 'em? Change in priorities, perhaps? Maybe someday we'll know.

QUESTIONS, QUESTIONS

DP,

Several things: 1) Can anyone give me some specifics on the Supergrafx. How many games were produced - more importantly, how can I get a copy of getting my hands on them? I already have the machine, that was hard enough). Please send all or any info. 2) Can you tell us some good mags from overseas that cover the PC Engine, Duo, or Supergrafx? 3) Mr. Kelly, could you

BACK ISSUES:

- GET 'EM WHILE THEY'RE HOT!

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#4: Whatever Happened To...?, Vector Check, Worst of Intellivision, Videogame Mags Side-by-Side, Atari 2600 Rarities pt I.
#8: The Darker Side of Gaming, Odyssey 2 Checklist, SuperCharger pt I, PsychoPanda Begins.
#9: Ups & Downs of '92 Night Trap Solution, SuperCharger pt II, Intellivision Checklist pt L
#11: DP Interviews Daniel Bass - Intellivision Programmer, Worst of ColecoVision, Atari 2600 Rip-offs pt II.
#14: SCRAPBOOKERS: Scavenger Hunt '91, Collectors Special.
#15: SCARY: Creepy Classic Carts, Horror Games We'll Never See, Rare Ware: Comput-Mate, Fanzine X-ing with VG Experience.
#16: BRAZIL: Six Intangibles of Videogames, Tournament Fighting, Games Side-by-Side, The Perfect Fighting Game, Atari Jaguar First Impressions, Upgrading your Genesis, Fanzine X-ing with Zipocella, Worst of Neo-Geo, pt I.
#17: BRATS: Jess Ragan's Land of Rare & Exotic Coin-ops, Hollywood Looks at Videogame's, Classic Kids' Games, Jagaur Relativ
#18: FOOLISH: April Fool's 1994 - purely for laughs.
please tell me how much it would cost me for you to make a multi-cart with all Vector ( & demos) games on it? Just tell me what it would cost and I'd be more than happy to send you the money. Are Dark Tower, Maze Plane, or Tour de France on it? 4) I have some Japanese NES (Familycom) games. I need a converter to play them on my NES. Could you help me? 5) Could you tell me how to get an Action Replay code book from Datel Electronics? I've written but haven't gotten a reply. 6) Could you tell me all the games made for the Sega Master System and the prices of them? I hear that there are several games available in England (Alien 3, Sonic, etc.) but not here. Is it true? Can I get any for a reasonable amount? 7) Is the Lynx dead? It's my opinion that it's the best handheld on the market. Too bad Atari didn't get their foot in the door more. 8) Why didn't I find out about you guys sooner? Finally, someone who looks at video games the same way I do.

Dan Adams
Waukesha, WI.

ANSWERS: 1) Only six games were made for the Supergrafx (1984), Aladdin, Battle Ace, Darius Plus, Ghouls N Ghosts, and Grancor: The Mountain King. You may still find some overseas merchants with stock left over at a "cutting edge" importer like Die Hard (774-2000) or Game Stock (778-459-GAME). 2) Good luck on that one, I'll print your whole address so anyone who may have an idea can get in touch with you! 3) Shawn sells them for 465-475 each, depending on the style you request. The title you list have not been confirmed releases. Contact Shawn at 578-9111 Milwaukee, Chicago, IL 60648. I have one for sale at 470. She classified in back. 4) Again, Die Hard or Game Shock could help. They'll sell a Familycom adapter to you for under $25. 5) Danl doesn't seem to be supporting the Pro Action Replay anymore. The program was picked up in the U.S. by a company called Innovations. Their number escapes me at the moment, but you can probably find them advertising in Gamepro or Game Fan in the last few months. 6) The Master System isn't dead in England, that's for sure, but it's probably about as popular as the NES is here and now. In Mean Machines, we saw a recent review of a new game called Dragon (based on the movie about Bruce Lee) that looks pretty hot. I'd recommend picking up a copy of Mean Machines or MacIntosh at any "cutting edge" bookstore (I've even seen these at Software Etc.). 7) You'll be seeing more Lynx if the Jaguar takes off. Again, much more popular in England! Wish I lived there. 8) Ask club.

PROZINE HYPE

Dear Joe,
Thanks for the terrific issue of DP. I'm looking forward to future issues. Well, now that I buttered you up, I'd like to talk about something that I think would be a great theme for a future DP issue, and that is "Super Hype".
The one thing I hate most about prozine is when they build a game up to be better than it is. For instance, while reading through a current issue of a popular magazine, I see a review of the Sega CD game "Rebel Assault". Not this was a game that many video game magazinewere going crazy for when it was announced last year. They said it would sell the system and that tons of people, including themselves, were in awe of what they'd seen.
Now, several delayed months later, the game is finally released to little or no fanfare. The same prozines that were extolling the games' virtues just a few short months ago, are now giving it disappointing reviews. What gives? Didn't those people even try the game before they made their glowing remarks? Prozines must realize that their readers depend on them to get the straight scoop, not a bunch of hot air. Do you remember the game "Silphroad"? This was another prime example of a muzzle of a game that was hyped to be an Arabian stallion. It hit totally blow Star Fox away", they said, "It will revolutionize shooters", they said. Come on fellows and gals, prozines need to be careful of what games they back and do more testing before they can come forward and give their blessings.
It reminds me a lot of baseball managers getting a vote of confidence from the owner. And we all know what that means.

Craig Benusa
Arcadia, WI.

Dear Craig,
What's a "prozine"? I understand the part about the Arabian stallion, but you lost me on the rest of your letter.

Joe "El Presidente" Santulli

ABOUT THE CARICATURE: "Yes, the beard is for real. Hey, the goatee style is coming back! Look at pro sports - Mark McGwire, Jack McDowell... I'm at least as trendy as they are." ABOUT GAMING TASTES: "Over the years I've shifted around quite a bit. I've come to the conclusion that I'm more of an 'instant gratification' gamer, which is why quick games like Tempest 2000 and just about anything on a classic system appeal to me. The worst games to me are the ones that you have to find something in some room and bring it to another room to continue. This would be your Shadowgate, Maniac Mansion, etc. games. Not for me.

SOMETHING YOU DIDN'T KNOW: "That I have a real job!" WHAT HE'S PLAYING NOW: Mostly Sega's World Series Baseball and Atari's Tempest 2000. Recently acquired some Arcadia 2001 carts and have been fiddling with them, too.

Kevin "Mini-Boss" Oleniacz

ABOUT THE CARICATURE: "Are my cheeks that dark?" ABOUT GAMING TASTES: "My interest usually drifts toward Role-Playing Games - Final Fantasy II is one of my favorites, I also really enjoyed Maniac Mansion, and of course Atan 2600 Adventure. I usually don't get into the fighting games (the SF2 craze never really interested me). I'm just sick of seeing them in every magazine. I just skip over them now.

SOMETHING YOU DIDN'T KNOW: "I'm also an avid non-sports card collector. I used to be into baseball cards, but eventually got bored with the hobby. My prize collection is my complete set of Wacky Packages - every sticker from the 1967 die-cut set to the very recent 1991 release, including all of the 1970's classics stickers, posters, patches, etc." WHAT HE'S PLAYING RIGHT NOW: John Madden 3DO and Total Eclipse are keeping me very busy.
COLLECTORS: INTELLIGENT HOBBYISTS OR WHINING OLD BIDDIES?

What a job I've got here at DP. I basically just sit here and think of cool things to bitch about. So far it's been pretty easy because I've had plenty of things to choose from as far as what to write about in my column. This month "things that piss me off" were exceptionally plentiful so the only real difficulty I had was in choosing one to write about.

Well, I've decided on an issue and I'm gonna call it my state-of-the-union of videogame collecting : subtitled "LIGHTEN UP!!!". I've grown extremely tired of the attitude more and more videogame collectors seem to be sporting of late and something has to be said about it. We, as a group, act a hell of a lot more like a bunch of old ladies at times instead of a group of people out to do nothing but have a little fun. The "fun" part of collecting games is slowly fading away and we're starting to look no better than the baseball card/comic book collecting groups. It's pretty pathetic in my opinion.

There's something common to nearly all game collectors I know and that's the fact that they long for the days when games were made to be fun rather than "pretty". Back in the early days of the 2600, programmers only had 4k to work with and were "assigned" to cram as much fun as possible into that tiny amount of space. Most of the time, they did a pretty damn good job. Games like Air-Sea Battle or Circus Atari may not be something you're gonna whip out to impress your friends, but most people could sit down for a couple of games and actually enjoy themselves. Neither of these games (along with quite a few others of the same caliber) are gonna keep your attention for an entire evening as something like Phantasy Star might, but they weren't designed to. I think most of us can agree that quite a few classic games can still hold their own in the fun department of videogaming.

A common scapegoat for the people I've talked to that recognize the trend in videogame collectors' attitudes is the Digital Press Collector's Guide. Scattered debates over its necessity can still be found on occasion. Basically, the problem does not lie in the guide itself, but rather in the misuse of it by it's owners. It was never intended to be the bible some collectors and/or dealers refer to it as nor was it meant to be the sole basis for trades between individual collectors. When we first put it together, we wanted to have something for new and long-time collectors alike to get an IDEA (remember that word - quiz later!) what their games MIGHT (no yellow highlighter on the printer, but there's another one of those buzzwords) be worth to other collectors. Let's look at some simple examples here... Let's say you've got a copy of The A-Team by Atari. You might be thinking "Hey, this game is worth 75 bucks - what a find!!". Bzzzt! The A-Team can be had from Best Electronics for around 15 bucks. Now, let me ask this hypothetical you a couple questions. Is the game fun? Do you enjoy playing it? Did you have it in your collection already? If you answered "Yes, Yes, and No", it's a HELLO OF A FIND! Let's use this same A-Team example here and apply it to a pricing issue. How many of you out there have a copy of The A-Team in your collection (raise your hands)? Hmmm...I see quite a few hands up out there. Now how many of you have a copy of say... Criminal Pursuit in your collection? Not many hands this time - but wait!! I just read The A-Team is listed at $75 but Criminal Pursuit is only worth a lousy twenty bucks!? Doesn't sound like the official Digital Press algorithm was applied here to me. Guess what...there is no algorithm! The prices in the GUIDE (hey...sounds like another one of those words you might need to remember) are intended to GUIDE you as to what certain games might be worth. Other factors need to be taken into consideration when buying/selling/trading classic games.

You know I just had a thought that could have made me a pretty decent chunk of cash. Recently Rob Fulop, the programmer of Cubicolor, sold off the copies of his game he had held onto all these years. Now the fool only asked a lousy hundred bucks for the carts and we all know they're guaranteed to be worth $500 (it says so in the guide ya know!). Well, I heard he had about 50 copies of the game for sale so with a $5000 investment I could have made back $25,000 if I had thought of this earlier. Damn! There I go again missing out on those once-in-a-lifetime deals! Something else about this deal Rob was offering kinda bothers me though. He said that the copies of Cubicolor he offered for sale a few
months ago were the only ORIGINAL cartridges in existence. I
could have sworn I saw it listed on several people's collection
listings way before anyone even knew where Rob was living??
Guess what - those are COPIES of the game and not original
cartridges.

Copies of games huh? Here's another issue that has been
brought up over the past few months and guess who's right
smack dab in the middle of this controversy? Well, I don't have
to tell most of you who it is, but I do have a little bit of news for
some of you : copies of Atari 2600 games have been around
a hell of a lot longer than I have. Back in late 1984 a device was
for sale called the Prom Blaster which would copy any Atari
2600 cartridge onto one of the "blank" carts sold by the same
company for a couple bucks each. People that were able to get
their hands on these Prom Blasters back then were selling
copies of cartridges they had made with it as originals to
unsuspecting buyers (can you say Jim Redd?). This is most
likely where the copies of Cubicolor mentioned above came
from. Is this such a bad thing? The fact that they were
represented as originals is definitely "uncool". Would the
buyers have still bought the cartridges if they knew up-front
they were copies? Probably so as games like Cubicolor are
next to impossible to run across. Once they had the copies,
would these same buyers still actively pursue an original
cartridge of the game - most definitely. Copies of classic
cartridges serve two purposes: they make the impossible-to-
find games readily available to everyone and the make the
hard-to-find games affordable to most. There are also a couple
of "sub-purposes" of copies of games. They can offer certain
games that may only be available on systems with games built-
in individual cartridges and in some cases can offer NTSC
versions of games that are only available in PAL format. They,
in no way, take the place of owning an original to the true
collector, but they do offer a means to play what might be a
pretty cool game until or if an original can be located as well as
offer a way to see a PAL game on an NTSC TV.

The point I'm trying to get across here is that when nearly
everyone reading this started collecting classic games, it was
merely for fun and/or nostalgic reasons but somewhere along
the lines, prices and value entered the picture. This is a natural
occurrence if you ask me, but when price and value start
to take precedence over the fun that was originally intended
then there's something wrong. The dealers out there treating this as
a business are a welcome addition to the hobby as they're
willing to do the "leg-work" in tracking down the hard-to-find
stuff some of you may not have the time to do, but trades
between private collectors don't need to be quite as business-
like as they have become of late. Try to keep in mind whether
or not you'll enjoy the game or whether the title has any
nostalgic value for you when making trades. Paying 75 bucks
for a game that sucks and you've never heard of before just cuz
the damn book says it's hard to find is what I would call "less
than intelligent". OK one last thing here. Let's keep those videos coming in to
Joe for the Digital Press "Live From Your Home" video
compilation. Joe's been just sitting around the house leafing
through old Woman's Day magazines waiting for tapes to come
in. Hey...I've heard rumors even WERNER is sending one in!!
Besides, I'm dying to see all your ugly mugs! Later...

US Games - Here's another example of an "outsider" getting
in on the video game craze of the early 80's. US Games is a
subsidiary of Quaker Oats - the same guys that make breakfast
treats. Even with this background, US Games was successful
in this industry. They started out in 1982 with the corporation
name of Vidtec on the box, instructions, and game label, then
switched to US Games late in the year. The box art became
more colorful and the serial numbers "reset" when they
released Gopher in 1983.

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Bashing a rodent on the head with a shovel, heaving eggs at a

PARTS U THRU Z

by Joe Santulli

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Some interesting concepts abound in their game library.
Bashing a rodent on the head with a shovel, heaving eggs at a

maniacal bird, and gunning down parachutists (hey! Even
that's against the rules of warfare!) was never more fun, yet
this is the precise object in their games Gopher, Eggomania,
and Commando Raid, respectively. There are a lopsided
number of "panic" games (racing against the clock or
overwhelming odds) in their library.

We love Towering Inferno, despite it's obvious connection
with the lame-o 70's disaster film). Piece O' Cake reminds us
of the 'I Love Lucy' episode where she had to beat the
conveyor belt to construct a series of cakes, and we'll never get
tired of Entombed, where you run the risk of getting trapped in
a subterranean maze - even more fun when you play against
another player and only one of you can survive.

SOFTWARE INFORMATION:
# OF TITLES: 14 for Atari 2600. TITLE LIST: Commando
Raid, Eggomania, Entombed, Gopher, M.A.D., Name This
Game, Picnic, Piece O' Cake, Raft Rider, Squeeze Box, Sneak
N Peek, Space Jockey, Towering Inferno, Word Zapper.
DIGITAL PRESS FAVORITE: Towering Inferno. DIGITAL
is a worthy entry to the guide merely because it proves that an Intellivision game could be fast moving and display hundreds of sprites without flicker or slowdown. This game is probably one of the most underrated, overlooked, and most addictive games of its time and we just wanted to mention it. The idea is similar to Missile Command - protect your crops from an onslaught of bugs. At higher levels, your eyes will bug out themselves. Graphics: 9, Sound: 7, Gameplay: 8, Overall: 9.

Xonox - A division of K-Tel, Xonox is thought by many to be an innovator in that their initial cartridge design, the "double ender" was both economical and inventive. Economical and inventive it may be, but it was not Xonox's idea. The first company to produce double-ended software on cartridges was a company called Playaround, who dealt in adult home video games. But that is another subject.

Xonox was a division of K-Tel, the corporation that brought us so many bad disco albums in various compilations that their name has become synonymous with cheap products. Xonox had that same "cheap" edge. It's hard to put your finger on it, but the games seem rushed, with few exceptions.

Artillery Duel is a classic PC game that had been seen on practically every home system of this era. Xonox's version is true to the original. Their best titles are Ghost Manor and Spike's Peak, which appear on a fairly common double-end game. In Ghost Manor, there are four challenging screens to conquer as you attempt to negotiate an evil castle. In Spike's Peak, more multi-screen action awaits as you scale to the top, avoiding everything from falling rocks to sneaky bears. One of the worst ideas Xonox ever had was to create an all-text game on the cutting edge game system of its time, the ColecoVision. It was called - most inappropriately - It's Only Rock & Roll.

SOFTWARE INFORMATION:
# OF TITLES: 8 for Atari 2600 (in 15 different cartridge combinations), 9 for ColecoVision. TITLE LIST: ALL ARE ATARI 2600 EXCEPT WHERE NOTED: Artillery Duel (2600, CLCO), Artillery Duel/Ghost Manor, Chuck Norris Superkicks (2600, CLCO), Chuck Norris Superkicks/Artillery Duel, Chuck Norris Superkicks/Ghost Manor, Chuck Norris Superkicks/Spike's Peak, Ghost Manor, It's Only Rock N Roll (CLCO), Motocross Racer (2600, CLCO), Robin Hood (2600, CLCO), Robin Hood/Sir Lancelot, Sir Lancelot (2600, CLCO), Slurpy (CLCO), Spike's Peak, Spike's Peak/Artillery Duel, Spike's Peak/Ghost Manor, Tomarc the Barbarian (2600, CLCO), Word Feud (CLCO). DIGITAL PRESS FAVORITE: Spike's Peak/Ghost Manor. DIGITAL PRESS DUD: It's Only Rock N Roll.

Yar's Revenge - One of the most brilliant "original" games from the classic era. This Atari 2600 game was designed by Howard Scott Warshaw and produced by Atari. Its theme is classic - you play a Yar, a member of a pee-on race of
intelligent intergalactic houseflies, being dominated by the merciless Qotile - a sort of fireball spewing, tyrannical war-machine with sunglasses. Chip away at the Qotile’s shield, then blast ‘em. The game gets tougher as you get better, and the weird sounds and fast action are without equal. There’s even a neat little “Easter Egg” in the game (although it happens unintentionally far too often!). It appears as if Atari had something up their collective sleeves (a series of games? A TV show? A book?) but didn’t follow through. Not to be missed. Graphics: 9, Sound: 9, Gameplay: 9, Overall: 9.

Zimag - Many game companies in 1983 were set up simply because video games were such a large market that if you had the resources, you couldn’t possibly lose money. Well, that was true UNTIL 1983 - when the market was so flooded with mediocre games like those from this magnetic-tape turned video game producer that the consumer simply packed up and left the hobby.

Zimag was gone almost as soon as they appeared. Their four paltry titles a testament to their staying power. Only Tanks But No Tanks, with it’s flickery graphics and inconsistent sprite collision detection belongs off of a “Worst of the 2600” list. The others are a pathetic combination of bad programming, dull graphics, and just plain boring games. The apathy goes from Cosmic Corridor - a claustrophobic space shooter that you can play forever, to I Want My Mommy, a children’s game that concludes after completing just two screens. Fortunately in less than a year, Zimag was back to producing just the cheapo-video tapes and cassettes that had been their bread and butter before their dismal venture into electronic gaming.

SOFTWARE INFORMATION:
# OF TITLES: 4 for Atari 2600. TITLE LIST: Cosmic Corridor, Dishaster, I Want My Mommy, Tanks But No Tanks. DIGITAL PRESS FAVORITE: Tanks But No Tanks. DIGITAL PRESS DUD: Dishaster.

Zircon - The manufacturing company that took over the production of the Fairchild Channel F game console and software development in 1980. Zircon saw their chance to cash in on the swell of video game consumers by re-releasing the grandfather of home consoles. They improved the original model, retailed it at a competitive price, and even offered it as an “upgrade” to current owners, but it just wasn’t enough. The Channel F, with its sub-standard resolution and sound was already an antique in most consumers’ minds.

BY JESS RAGAN

As you boys and girls in DP’s audience know, we rarely get into the arcade scene. Quite frankly, we’ve got plenty of games at HOME to keep us occupied. However, being that this is the kids’ issue, we thought that we’d delve back into every enthusiastic gamer’s past, in a dimly lit “Chuck E Cheese”, with crude perverts in rat suits swatting you with their tails... and games galore.

Somehow, there’s always one of these oddball coin-ops that plants itself firmly in your mind despite its obscurity and haunts you for the rest of your life (since that game was either gutted for yet another SF2 machine or is impossible to find again). These are some of those games.

One of the oddest shooters I’ve ever seen is Rabbit Punch, ostensibly by Video Systems. Assuming the role of two cutesy lagomorphy/ashcan combos, you must blast through hordes of similarly tin-plated animals. As strange as it may seem, rotating cans of carrots hover through the air and give you the opportunity to power-up with carrot missiles, invulnerability, and other such oddities. Get hit too much and your metal-laced bunny bites it, as one would expect from a game of this type. Very strange and very rare - don’t go hunting this one out as it’s really not worth the trouble.

Several true stinkers are floating around under the Bally/Sente label, several of which include Vigilante, Stocker, and Hat Trick. Thankfully, what must be the worst of these was locked out of any further opportunities to nauseate hapless players on their home systems. Yes, Stocker, a racing simulation with unforgivably weak audiovisuals is that game.

Taito’s been known for laying a few odd games across
the table as well, including Zoo Keeper, the infamous Breakout in reverse with elements of Donkey Kong thrown in to keep the pot simmering. Exerion was one of Jaleco's first designs - I'm still not sure why they chose this. Flying across odd parallax screens, you must pluck several aerial invaders out of the sky with your choice of a Gatling gun (replenished by wasting more enemies) or a double shot which is inexhaustable. The view is exhilarating at first, but the ship is too sensitive in this cross between Phoenix and Galaxian to enjoy fully. Alcon was a game that Taito expected to release with plenty of fanfare and hype, but this tepid Terra Cresta clone just didn't have what it takes to "click" with its intended audience. Russ Perry Jr. proclaimed me as "frighteningly clairvoyant" when I recalled the game in response to his memory lapse about it. P: I staffer Yes-Man has a handy hint for you potential Alcon players out there - DON'T TOUCH A THING. If you let your first life go down the drain, your second will be fortified with wings and firepower. Jungle Hunt was actually Jungle King before its adaptation to home systems. For reasons unknown, the Tarzan character was replaced with a dashing Dr. Livingston-ish explorer. Anyone still retching over Rasta Saga 2 can blame Nastar Warriors as its origin, although the former was at least filled with cool parallax and bright graphics. Similarly, those who've gushed over Space Invaders '91 for the Genesis have The Invaders Return to thank for this. TIR isn't really anything like the home adaptation, but it does seem to have the power-ups, new formations, and the like to keep things interesting. Namco's had plenty of their own closet classics (remember those, Joe?), as well, including Pac-Man Jr. and Super Pac-Man. PMJ was similar to Baby Pac-Man only with more intricate play mechanics and less (about 100% less!) pinball action. SPM is one of my favorites. In it, Pac-Man can increase to grotesque sizes, eat real food instead of pellets, and the game has a more in-depth playground. Rolling Thunder was actually a small release, as was Splatterhouse, but both helped to fortify Namco in those tough times when the Pac just wasn't enough. Gaplus was an abject failure, however; utterly devoid of the fun that made its predecessor, Galaga so easy do dive into. One nice touch was the ability to steal the CPU's characters!

Here's a few more for you to chew on. In The Pit, a tank sits on one side of the screen with your UFO on the other. A hill divides the two, but not for long, as the tank menacingly erodes it. Your only hope? A series of VERY deadly tunnels which eventually lead to your soon-to-be vaporized UFO. Sound intense enough? Try this one: Pitfall by SEGA of all things! Pitfall Harry looks kind of like Alex Kidd here, but anything is better than the rancid NES game. Us Vs. Them is a full-motion video extravaganza similar to today's ultra-cheesy Sega CD games, complete with shooter scenes reminiscent, but far inferior to Crystal Dynamics' Total Eclipse. Maybe we'll see it on the Sega CD some day. Chinese Hero and Shanghai Kid: a weird licensee (Taito? Taimyo?) produced these precursors to the Culture Brain NES games, although the home versions seem watered down in comparison to either. In Cliff Hanger, Stallone has nothing to do with the game. In fact, this laserdisc has close ties to the anime classic "Castle of Cagliostro". Castle of Dragon (my, how articulate!) is much better than its NES counterpart, but still very sloppy (le sigh). BagMan is a game I don't remember very well, but it was featured on the ultra-exciting game show "Starcade", as was Cowboys n Indians, an utterly brilliant coiner which allows players to leap from horse to horse in an overhead view contest to prevent native Americans (my, I'm politically correct today) from taking the train that you're sworn to protect. A true classic. Revenge of DOH is NOT a game about Homer Simpson; it's the sequel to the surprisingly popular Arkanoid. Whoever invented JailBreak should be Rodney King'ed immediately. Ataxx is a coin-op version of Othello and Spot for the NES, presented in an eerie style with blobs representing the chips. Snow Bros. is a personal favorite: the play mechanics are highly reminiscent of Bubble Bobble, which is a plus for me all the way. Gun.Smoke is a Capcom coin-op similar to Cowboys n Indians, but has more links to Commando and 1943 with its similar feel and audiovisials. The first Street Fighter is a wonderful example of how once-awful games can be reworked into masterpieces (SF2).

Fabbek's Sports Match is basically Shanghai with a mole-like referee which destroys the sports imprinted chips as you form matches. The Real Ghostbusters is a Data East failure that tried to incorporate the film and cartoon into a Commando-lish playground; the drab graphics and execution left many bewildered and wary of playing it again, which contributed to its demise. Space Dungeon was actually a
Taito coin-op before it became the 5200 hit that most people recall it as, and Gottlieb's Reactor, with its grinding industrial metal, was once again a much prettier coin-op. Mr. Do!'s Wild Ride could be redefined as Mr. Do!'s MILD Ride - the play is just too simple for anyone to get involved for long. Stern had many obscure arcade games, including Tazmania (yet another standup which as nothing whatsoever to do with the cartoon of the same name), a Robotron: 2084-ish romp which is actually quite entertaining. Rockola entered the coin-op arena before wisely forging back into jukebox territory with Eyes, a clearly demented Pac-Man clone centered around a pair of innocuous peepers blasting other, more wicked optic nerves and blowing away odd twirly things. The Glob is perhaps the worst of these titles. I had the misfortune to play a ready-for-the-junkyard standup which was set up in a debug mode of sorts. The game, whether operative or not, still clearly blows, as the solidity of the enclosure theme just wasn't there and some rounds were just insanely unfair. Let's put it this way - it looks like IBM shareware. Williams' MakeTrax isn't much better, with ear-piercing shrill sound effects and user-abusive play controls. SNK's Sky Soldiers and Sky Adventure are two closely related blasters, and finally, Mr. Do! had a "last hurrah" in which he was confined to a Crystal Castles/Pac-Man type maze with spiked cylinders and the omnipresent power ball to save his hide. I still can't recall the name of this one. Anybody?

There are more that will still probably haunt me for the rest of my days, like that bubble in the sink game, or the coin-op where you have to blast swastikas with orbs in their centers, or Williams' 50 center which refused to show players any pre-game demos (@#$&@), but some mysteries were never meant to be solved. Kind of like my ever-receding hairstyle at 20. Or maybe Sega's Barney game. Or why nobody's burned down the GamePro building. Or...

The Wacky World of

RARE 'WARE: THE GAMELINE SYSTEM
by Al Backiel

Soon, Sega will be launching a new cable TV system called The Sega Channel. Genesis owners will be able to download and play games from Sega's software library via their regular cable TV company. Sega is also forming another game network in conjunction with AT&T (The Edge 16) which will be interactive and accessed by modem. Sounds pretty high-tech, right? As the old cliche goes, this is "nothing new under the sun". Atari 2600 owners had a similar setup way back in 1983-84. This online was actually operating for about a year. For the $50 start-up fee you got initial access and the Master Module which consisted of the following: The Master Module (modem), Owner's Manual (very user-friendly!), temporary game directory & instructions booklet (of about a dozen games, Nexar being the rarest), registration guide (an application card to join the service), and a few membership cards (you put your name and personal ID number on it). Also included was a duplex T-adaptor (for splitting the phone line) and one patch cord.

The MM is silver in color and larger than Starpath's Supercharger. The back bears the date of July 1983. A battery was required for high score memory. The people at CVC (Control Video Corporation out of Vienna, VA) were able to receive uploads from users with high scores as entries to monthly contests. This was the closest this system got to being interactive.

What does this system do today? Practically nothing. You get to see two screens: the first says "- READ MANUAL - / - PRESS RESET - ". The second is a flashing multicolor "CALLING" notifier. After that, you hear the autodialer kick in and attempt to reach a now non-existent phone number. A few more buzzes and clicks, then the screen goes blank.

The rest of the scenario would have gone something like this in 1983. You turn up a screen to log on by entering your PIN. The next screen is the game selection menu. You use the joystick to enter the three digit game code. The game is then downloaded to the Master Module and you're in business. Each game allows a number of plays (8 to 12) which decreases by one each time you press reset.

What killed the system? Obviously, the "Crash of '84". Why rent the same games that you could buy for practically nothing? Besides, the distribution was never that widespread. I found one too late in a video store where it was collecting dust on a shelf. I paid $5 for it. The dealer was happy to get it off his hands. It was the only one he had and I suspect it was on a trial basis. I did see another one for awhile in NYC's Port Authority Bus Terminal. Maybe a fellow collector picked it up?! GameLine was advertised heavily
at the time in the various game mags. I, like probably many others, did not try to join directly, but adopted instead a "wait and see" attitude.

"What about overzealous younsters running up phone charges?" you may be asking yourself. They thought about that too. Parents could establish credit limits with the company. Any minors wanting more time would have to bug mom and dad to bump up their limit. "What about tying up the phone?" No problem. The actual transmit time was about 1 or 2 minutes, then the phone was free again. Since the programs were small (no more than 8K), I'm sure there would have been storage upgrades off into the future.

For all of you techies out there, here is what's under the hood of the Master Module:

1 - serial# PROM (proprietary encryption i.e. "security")
2 - 4K masked ROM (for menus).
3 - 1K CMOS RAM (processor for customer profile/high score).
4 - 2K RAMS (memory for downloaded games).
1 - Custom Digital IC (interface between MM & Atari VCS).
1 - PC board gold plated edge connector (port).

1 - modem circuitry (800-2000 BAUD capability, 900-1800 BPS transfer).
2 - battery connection (9V to hold onto high scores).
3 - calibration device (facilitates interface & includes memory writer).
4 - relay (dialer/phone switch hook).
5 - transformer (couples/isolates CVC & phone line).
6 - modular clip (female phone connection).

There were big plans to add on a whole range of services, if the thing took off. There were BBS (bulletin board systems) in the works for EMAIL, sports line, stock market, opinion line, news, home banking, and a general info line (plane schedules, travel, horoscope, classifieds, etc.).

What would have been a selling point for me was the talk of using the network to test-market new games. As a matter of fact, I heard a rumor that the never released Save the Whales was available at one time. If any readers out there were members, I'd love to hear from you. Maybe you could verify what software was really available and how many issues of the newsletter "Gameliner" were actually produced!

"PANIC" GAMES OF OLD

BY KEVIN OLENIACZ

Various degrees and forms of intensity are reflected in the vast library of "classic" games. Virtually all but the lamest of shooters are addictive for these systems, since the controls are so easy to master. Some famous arcade favorites such as Defender, Centipede and Asteroids were produced for multiple systems. Unfortunately, games from the "intense" mold are highly concentrated within the Atari 2600 library. I'll touch upon a brief synopsis of games in this genre, right here, right now.

Atari designed several games along the lines of the venerable coin-op Breakout: Super Breakout (2600, 5200) the obvious successor, and Off the Wall (see review). Jinks (7800) sports a very limited voice and has bizarre music, a variety of options, and flexible gameplay which includes selectable screens. Arcadia/Starpath designed Fireball (2600), which hosts a slew of options and some unusual brick configurations. The Emerson Arcadia 2001 even offered a clone called Breakaway, a horizontal version of Breakout. Let's not forget one of the best Breakout spin-offs of all time, Magnavox's Blockout/Breakdown, which also has two player competitive, simultaneous action. Along similar lines are two closely patterned Atari VCS games: Ram It by Telesys and Squeeze Box by US Games both require you to shoot blocks that are moving in on your character. The game ends when you are crushed to death by the approaching bricks!
Classic gamers are familiar with Activision's Kaboom! (2600, 5200) where one catches bombs continually dropped to earth by a madman. In the 2600's library, Boom Bang (Rainbowvision) an Australian import, is a reverse version of Kaboom! and sports major graphic alterations to its American cousin. Other descendents of Kaboom! include Activision's own Crackpots (falling bugs), US Games' Eggomania (falling eggs), Apollo's Lost Luggage (falling suitcases), and Telesys' Coconuts (falling coconuts). Mattel's Astrosmash for the Intellivision and Astroblast for the 2600 offer a similar play mechanic but incorporate a chaotic shooting theme as well. All the world loved the "shoot 'em" style of Astroblast, as is evidenced by overseas games like Dimax' Astro War and ITT's Meteor Defense, both of which are Astroblast going sideways. The Music Machine by Sparrow (2600) stresses moral values throughout, but even non-christians can spot its obvious connection to Kaboom!

Q*bert is another of the "rush" games - you have to change all of the blocks on a 3D pyramid to one color while being pursued from all angles. Inspired by (ripped off from?) the Q*bert genre is Boing! (First Star) and Rabbit Transit (Starpath) for the 2600, where the lovable animal-thing is replaced by a bubble and a bunny wabbit, respectively. A more worthy sequel is Q*bert's Qubes, a game Parker Bros. released for both the 2600 and ColecoVision. Both are rare finds. Another gem in this pack is Imagic's Quick Step, a dual player masterpiece involving many twists and dirty tricks. Atari VCS exclusives: Dragon Defender combines air and ground based attacks in the Defender vein. Gas Hog by Spectravision employs a split-screen and is reminiscent of the classic Moon Patrol. Following on the footsteps of the coin-op Gyruss is The Challenge of Nexar (Spectravision), Spacemaster X-7 (a dandy by 20th Century Fox), and the import Spider.

The art of the culinary masters seem to be stressed in several 2600 releases as well - and not one of them is as relaxing as you'd expect the real-life job to be. Swallow high-flying junk food while avoiding purple pickles in Fast Food by Telesys. Cakewalk (CommaVision) and Piece O' Cake (US Games) are a baker's worst nightmare. In each, you have to assemble cakes as they fly off of super-accelerated conveyor belts. Catch more flying food in Taz by Atari. Both Asterix (also by Atari, overseas) and Turmoil by 20th Century Fox exhibit similar play mechanics but different graphics. Adhere to the demand for customized sandwiches or die in Activision's Pressure Cooker. Plague Attack (Activision) and Tooth Protectors (DRD) require defending teeth from junk food - a perfect follow-up to any of the above food-related games.

The Vectrex deals almost exclusively in this genre. Asteroids, whose vector style graphics inspired an era, also provides the premise to many of GCE's releases. Bedlam is much like Asteroids with your ship anchored at center-screen. Cosmic Chasm is Asteroids one room at a time. The built-in game Mine Storm is as close to Asteroids as you get without calling it that. Non-Asteroid related games such as Star Castle and Star Hawk are arcade coin-ops. While the incredible vector arcade game Tempest never made it to a home system, Vectrex owners were treated to Web Wars, a palatable substitute.

There are a few others worth mentioning. Sinistar, a 2600 prototype by Atari is unpolished but reflects the hectic pace of the coin-op. CBS' Mountain King redefines "panic", excellent on both the 2600 & 5200. Bomb's Wall Defender (2600) requires one to save a fortress from destruction. War Room (ColecoVision) is a frantic Missile Command hybrid. Tapper (2600, ColecoVision) is based on the hit coin-op. The Astrocade's Incredible Wizard, along with CBS' Wizard of Wor (2600,5200), are "can't miss" dual player delights, as is Entombed by US Games (2600). Astrocade's Cosmic Raiders is similar to Defender. Activision's Worm Whomper is arguably the most intense game ever produced for the Intellivision. If fast-paced frenzy games are your cup of tea, you can't go wrong on the Atari 2600 and Vectrex, but you'd be hard pressed to find enough to do on other classic systems.
This month, you will read countless reviews of Atari's Tempest 2000 for the Jaguar. Undoubtedly, the pro mags will gush over its intense speed and addictiveness. They'll orgasm over the techno music, calling it 'revolutionary'. And I'm almost positive that just about every fanzine in publication will do the same, marvelling over the graphics and flashy, pyrotechnic effects. You'd expect more than that from me, though, wouldn't you? Sorry, I agree with them this time. Tempest 2000 is a wonder to behold.

Twelve years ago, I was in the prime of my youth. It was sophomore year at Lakeland Regional High. While most of my peers were spending their Friday nights partying and learning about the opposite sex, I could be found in a run-down diner playing Tempest. At the tender age of seventeen I was a gambling lad, taken in by the sights, the sounds... the smell of horse racing. Accompanied by a similar misfit of adolescence, we'd cruise to the Meadowlands after work, gamble a portion of the week's earnings, then make the inevitable "last stop" of each week's odyssey: the Oakland Diner. These pages couldn't possibly fit all of the anecdotes I could share with you about this armpit of society, but it was here that I learned the wonders of Tempest. It's stark backgrounds, simple geometric playfields, and uncomplicated controls belied the true power of the game. It was - and is - the consummate shooter. Addictive, fast-paced, powerful, and completely uncomplicated. Tempest doesn't even have a boss, nor are there any power-ups in the game. This to me is what gaming is all about - there's no "beating" it. It just gets harder and harder until it beats you. You got a good score? That's nice.

When the Atari 5200 came to town shortly afterwards, it seemed that Tempest might come home. Advertisements prepped 5200 owners for the arcade experience in the comfort of your own easy chair. Alas, this would never really happen, as Atari had obvious difficulties with the vector to raster translation (I own a prototype of Battlezone, and it's just as well they didn't finish it). The closest we ever really got was Web Wars for the Vectrex, which was impressive graphically and played a pretty mean game, but it wasn't

(Continued on page 21)
If you’re familiar with the arcade classic Asteroids (i.e. you haven’t been hiding under a rock all these years), then you already know the concept behind Meteorites. Allow me to summarize.

You control a triangular ship which initially begins in the dead center of the playfield. Use your joystick to thrust forward. Reversing direction and thrusting slows your momentum. In round one, three large asteroids travel vertically, and slowly drift towards you. Shoot one and it splits into two smaller meteorites which veer off into different directions and gain velocity. Shoot one again and several tiny meteorites are created. Their stature has diminished but they’re still deadly, as all collisions are fatal. A UFO crosses the screen at regular intervals. Avoid its missiles. Besides firing upon it, the astroids can also pulverize a UFO, but this will result in no additional points. Warp by pressing the extra controller button. You have the ability to wrap around the screen but gravity is absent. The pace quickens with the passage of time. Advance to the next round by clearing all of the meteorites.

Twenty-four progressively difficult levels await to test your skills. The eye-pleasing but simple vector graphics of Asteroids are replaced by alluring luminescent raster scan graphics. Other than this, Meteorites mirrors the popular coin-op, from the repetitious but addictive gameplay down to the nerve-wracking, pulsating beat. Dedicated Asteroids addicts who were given the cold shoulder by Atari (who produced 2600 and 7800 versions but no 5200 version) should be deeply satisfied with this translation. The horrendous controllers (which wreak havoc on the appeal of many other 5200 releases) have a minimal effect on this game. However, when compared to the 5200 library, this is above average at best.

Constructed by a relative newcomer to home videogames, I expected improvements or modifications to the original, rather than a carbon copy. Why didn’t they alter that irritating music? Why not add new foes besides flying saucers? Did selectable options ever cross the programmers’ minds (other than two-player competitive mode)? Electra Concepts can be partially forgiven for their lack of originality as they specialized in peripherals (the appealing but elusive Masterplay Interface comes to mind). All in all, Meteorites is an admirable clone of the favorite coin-op but falls quite a bit short in depth.

I remember spending some quality time at the arcades playing games like this one, but I wouldn’t spend five minutes at home with it now.

Meteorites is probably the toughest Atari 5200 title to find (with the exception of prototype carts). The current Guide lists it at $20, but expect to see it rise soon.

**Power Users**

Just like in Asteroids, your best strategy is to clear all but one or two meteorites, and wait in a corner for the UFOs. They’re worth the most points, and you can use hyperspace with less fear when you’re about to be hit.

**Origin**

Two Atari think-tanks, Lyle Rains (who designed the concept) and Ed Logg (who programmed the game) are behind the original coin-op. Asteroids inspired a multitude of clones, games called Space Fury and Mine Storm and Suicide Mission among many others.
Finally, a CD game that shows off some of the things all of us gamers have been looking forward to when the Sega CD came out some year and a half ago. Tomcat Alley has restored my faith in the Sega CD.

In TCA, you are Shadow Force Five, a junior flyboy controlling the weapons on a state-of-the-art F-16 fighter plane. Shadow Force is a branch of the U.S.A.F. (a secret one) functioning out of a hidden base in the desert and attempting to stop a mad Russian colonel from trying to destroy the world. Even though the Russians are our allies, some people (especially mad colonels) don't adapt to change very well. Your job is to blow MiGs out of the sky while protecting your friends and countrymen from a new chapter in Communism and global domination.

TCA takes the things that made me want to buy a Sega CD and puts them all into one neat little package. This CD can be best described as a cross between Sewer Shark and Cobra Command, but goes one better. Hey gang, this is a real-life version of Afterburner - with real people, real (model) plane footage, and real explosions.

The graphics are nothing short of amazing. You feel as though you're living inside the F-16 Tom Cruise flew in Top Gun. Credit this to Sega, who in their infinite wisdom has figured out how to use the whole screen for the FMV rather than a small section surrounded by flight controls. The only thing I can find fault with is that sometimes the color is muddled into monotone shades of blue or grey... but hey, you can't have everything on a system that wasn't designed to do everything. The actors in the game give credible performances, something that has been lacking in other Sega CD games.

The sound is excellent. Pumping through my stereo, I feel like I am in that plane. The explosions can make my walls rattle (an indicator I use to determine how good the sound is). The background music is decent, but it won't get your rockets off.

Keep in mind that this is a shooter and not a simulator. The coolest thing about this game is that all you have to worry about is blowing things up while avoiding enemy fire. You can avoid enemy fire by dropping chaff, which will deter enemy missiles. Careful, flyboy, you only have a limited amount of these, so use them sparingly! To score a kill, use the D-pad to line up an enemy target. A "lock" indicator will appear - fire any one of four different weapons (two to air or two air to surface). If you launch when the lock is on, you'll blow 'em to smithereens! Blow a shot and you'll probably have a Ruskie on your tail.

I could go on forever about how much I enjoyed TCA. Okay, so sometimes it's a bit repetitive, and you can learn what's going to happen after you play it a few times, but it doesn't really matter. There is a certain "randomness" to the game that prevents it from being a memorization game, and that's what counts to me. TCA is the best game to come to the Sega CD in a long time. Movie buffs and shooter fans will surely want to earn their wings with this game. Happy Hunting!

Definitely one of the better Sega CD efforts. I enjoy FMV games more than the next guy, though. Some of the explosion scenes are really cheesy! Model parts all over!

Collector Notes

We've played every Sega CD game there is, and to date, Tomcat Alley falls in the top 5. If you enjoy full motion video games, games like Cobra Command, or dig "B" movies with bad acting, buy this one. Otherwise, at least rent it.

Power Users

You can usually get out of danger simply by running from it. If you see the indicators to engage a new enemy on the screen, go for it.

Origin

An obvious spin-off of Cobra Command - you don't fly the plane, just fire the guns. The looks are reminiscent of Afterburner.

Can you say "Top Gun?" Tomcat Alley will remind you of a certain Tom Cruise movie, with you in the lead role. The explosions are great and the action is just right.
Off The Wall

Atari 2600

BY KEVIN "I STILL LIKE PONG" OLENIAKCZ

Dating back to the infancy of videogaming, the concept of hitting a ball to knock out bricks was originally illustrated in the arcades in a game called Breakout. With Off the Wall, Atari improved upon this theme. It was introduced in the late '80s, when Atari initiated a feeble comeback for the 2600.

Solo or competing against a friend, knock out all of the bricks or nail the dragon (situated at the extreme top of the playfield) six times to gain an additional life and advance to the next round. A blackbird soars between the player and the multi-faceted brick wall, acting as a barrier to deflect your shots.

During gameplay, five special tokens fall frequently. Acquire a distinct limited power whenever one of these is captured. Distorted "raindrop" icons can enlarge your paddle, represented by a boy clutching a staff. "Bombs" will allow the ball to take out large chunks of the wall. "Z"s force the ball to travel in a zig-zag pattern. "M"s allow the ball to be controlled as a "guided missile" while it obtains magnetic qualities on its return path. Since the latter is the most powerful feature, it's no surprise that it lasts half as long as others. Last but not least is the "?" symbol which will randomly produce one of the four other effects. You can get an extra life or bonus points when you catch the "?", and on occasion it will also immobilize the bird or speed up the ball.

Completing four waves initiates advancement to the next level of difficulty. I discovered that all classic games in this genre seem are also highly addictive. Back when this idea was fresh and original I spent many afternoons practicing Breakout. Some adjustments were necessary to keep up with gamers' growing appetite for challenge and variety. I believe Atari successfully met these demands with Off the Wall. There appears, however, to be a few quirks worth mentioning.

Occasionally, even on the easiest level, the ball tends to unexpectedly speed up significantly and revert to a new angle. As a result, you cannot react quickly enough and the ball zips past you. You have to wait for the score to accumulate when a life is lost or at the conclusion of the round. The graphics are minimal. These include the blackbird and dragon, which could be mistaken for a bat and a worm, respectively if not for the instruction manual's statements to the contrary. In addition, the ball and all of the special items are accompanied by irritating flashing. Gameplay is the most important factor on games like this one, and it outweighs Off the Wall's shortcomings. It is one of the better offerings in this genre.

Collector Notes

Released when Atari attempted a 2600 comeback in the late '80s, Off the Wall is neither rare nor is it especially collectible. The current DP Guide value is $8, and it can usually be found in its box.

Power Users

Greed will be the downfall of most players in this game. Try not to be distracted by the numerous power-ups. Concentrate on the ball!

Origin

A direct descendant of Breakout, a popular coin-op in the mid-'70s. Off the Wall also steals some of the ideas that made the 80s coin-op smash Arkavoid successful (power ups).

This game wouldn't set the world on fire, but it is fun. The fast gameplay is cool, but I still prefer the original "paddle" at the bottom.
**Sub-Terrania** is a hybrid offspring of a couple of games that go WAY back. It seems to be across between Atari's Asteroids and Space Wars. Actually, the more you play this game, the more influences from early arcade classics you'll spot. The classics seem to have had a major impact on the designers of this game.

The premise of Sub-Terrania is pretty basic: in your high tech subterranean craft you must explore a distant moon's many treacherous caverns and save the lives of the humans held captive there by more nasty aliens. Believe me when I tell you that this is no easy feat.

This cartridge may be one of the most frustrating to come down the electronic gaming highway for quite some time. You have to guide your craft through craggy rock-strewn caverns loaded with hostile enemy craft and power-up items you'll find essential to completing each stage. The problem with this is that you are doing all of this shooting and collecting in zero-gravity with only front and back thrusters to propel you. The controller's directional pad rotates your ship while the front and back thrusters (controlled with the B button) determine how fast you move and where. The A and C buttons fire weapons. The fact that you are floating in space much like Asteroids makes it difficult to fight aliens that are anchored in place on cavern walls or robots whose arms can stretch out and smash you in a heartbeat. Fortunately, some protection comes in the form of a shield that automatically raises whenever you hit rock walls or are attacked. On the down side, this shield doesn't last very long. If you don't master the controls, you won't last twenty seconds between ships!

Play's like a cross between Asteroids and Gravitar. The action is far more intense than either of these. The sound could have used some improvement.

**Collector Notes**

This game has been getting a lot of press from Sega (see the contest flyy attached), but it's not for everyone - rent it first.

**Power Users**

When fighting the last boss in the game, stay low and don't spare any of your weapons. It will take all of your patience and concentration to down this ugly SOB.

**Origin**

Draws inspiration from Asteroids, Gravitar, and Defender, but still has a different feel.
Alien Brigade is a fine example of a well-constructed 7800 title with all the qualities of a top-notch arcade game. Rather than adding another run-of-the-mill galactic shooter, Atari designed a first-person rescue mission along the lines of Operation: Wolf and its ilk.

Your goal is to eradicate the aliens patrolling the surroundings. Some are disguised as friendly soldiers and are easily distinguished by their slow gait. Others operate helicopters, river boats, tanks, and other military vehicles. Along the way, you can gather ammunition, weapons, energy, and food rations as well as rescue hostages. If you can survive the five scenarios (jungle camp, river resort, underwater, cave, and mountain base) and defeat the queen alien, all of mankind will be saved.

Undoubtedly, the challenge is here. You can't get a moment's break from the constant barrage of alien attack. The enemy displays a number of mannerisms and tactics, such as ducking in doorways and appearing up-close in your face. For the most part, the graphics are cartoonish, but well defined. They even appear comical at times. The sound effects are par for the course. Since the embedded circuitry of the Atari 7800 does not possess extraordinary audio capabilities, my expectations weren't very high.

The reason why I give this shooter high ratings is due to the incredible gameplay. Although repetitive in nature, the selection of weapons along with a high volume of activity and very pleasing graphics support this exceptional effort by Atari. I could pop this cart in at any time, time and time again without getting bored.

In addition to a selection of arms, specialty weapons are equipped within certain scenarios. For example, a dart gun is available only during the underwater sequence. Returning to reality, one has the option of utilizing either a joystick (to guide an onscreen crosshair) or a light gun. Since no light gun was designed specifically for the 7800, the Atari XE model will do. Unlike many light-gun games, the response is fast and accurate. I would recommend the light gun approach in a session of Alien Brigade.

My gripe, albeit a minor one, is that in some instances it's impossible to avoid getting shot, as several bullets fly at you instantaneously. I can almost guarantee that no gamer will grow weary after a few sittings of Alien Brigade!
FAST FOOD
TELESYS, FOR ATARI 2600

Imagine french fries, soft drinks, pizza, ice cream and other fattening goodies flying at you at accelerated speeds. Doesn't this sound like a teenager's dream? This dream is transformed into a nightmare in this 2600 game. You control a pair of lips, catching a variety of sweets and savory treats. In later rounds it's impossible to catch all of the food, so concentrate on the higher value items (cheeseburgers, pizza, and fries). Swallow three purple pickles, and the game ends, leaving you with a bad case of indigestion. The graphics, set against a black background, are very clean and crisp. Although simple, Fast Food is quite addictive and is arguably the most intense title for the 2600. Definitely recommended. Quickly snatch up this title the first chance you can.
- Kevin Oleniacz

PEPPER II
COLECO, FOR COLECOVISION

There is a certain undefined qualitative mix of intangibles which make or break a game. I cannot substantiate the precise reasoning behind my high rating for Pepper II. Perhaps it is the pressurized task of encircling grid sections while being pursued relentlessly by hostile creatures. Maybe it is the supporting sound effects which, in conjunction with the renowned Hitchcock theme, form the "Zipper Ripper" of the game. It engulfs your entire field of vision. Overall, this is a "can't miss" for the ColecoVision. Rumor has it that this game exists in prototype form for the Atari 2600 as well.
- Kevin Oleniacz

ROBOTRON: 2084
ATARI, FOR ATARI 7800

An experiment that went wrong! The humans created the Robotrons - robots who think and act on their own. They thought too much - and acted worse. Robotron: 2084 gives you all of the frantic action and play as the coin-op. It's up to you to rid these mutants with your (what else) anti-robot laser, while trying to capture some survivors you can. Wave after wave you'll be bombarded with a screen full of enemies, not all of which can even BE destroyed. This game has non-stop action - about the only time you get a break is when you press the pause button. The 7800 version handles the graphics very well, placing well over fifty moving objects on screen with no sign of flicker or slowdown. Early on, Atari was claiming that over one hundred objects were on screen at once. You can use both joystick and in the Williams arcade version, although I prefer to use just one. Either way, you'll be coming back for more, as this fast-paced gem has exceptional game play value. An excellent showcase piece for the 7800.
- Edward Villalpando

TAZ
ATARI, FOR ATARI 2600

The object of Taz is to chew down on all of the food items while avoiding the indigestion caused by eating a stick of dynamite. There are eight alternating, scrolling rows on the screen. The sprites are well-depicted while Taz himself is shown as a whirlwind. Since each level features different food items, it's a hoot just to get it to switch to the next one. Taz starts off slowly and builds in difficulty until you reach around 33,000 points and the "crazed wave". At this point the game gets frantic! It's as if somebody floored the gas pedal - you're now playing an extremely intense contest. The greatest challenge is to clear each of the levels three times. If you succeed, you get to see a "mystery dessert". I, myself have only gone through once. A friend of mine managed to get through twice. It seems like it may not be humanly possible (a challenge to all DP readers follows!). There are no intermissions besides the short, crazed wave announcement screen. Collector's note: there is a European version of this game called Asterix. The game play is identical, but the sprites are related to the ancient Roman theme the comic strip character inhabits.
- Al Backiel

WORM WHOMPER
ACTIVISION, FOR INTELLIVISION

What? A "rush-rush" game on the Intellivision? I don't remember any... oh, there was that ONE. That bug game, right? Yeah! For you charter member DP subscribers, you may remember a little "classic" called Worm Whomper, mentioned in an early issue. You know, this is one of those games that never gets OLD. Do you like Missile Command? Worm Whomper is basically the same game, but it's more frantic. It starts out so slow that you'll be fooled into thinking it's an easy game. You have to eliminate an increasingly ferocious insect attack, aimed at your precious crops. It's just a few 'lil inchworms at first, then some caterpillars, then snails (who drop shells that block shots and incoming pests or slime that wars bugs forward), slugs, moths (tough targets!), and cornsnakes. By the tenth round you'll be gasping for a breath - and it's just starting to get tough! A must-play by Activision's Tom Loughry, who also designed The Dreadnought Factor, another ripping game.
- Joe Santulli
TEMPEST 2000

(Continued from page 14)

Tempest. Nor were the countless imitators found on home computers for a few years. Then the Nintendo came along, then the 16-bit wars. Then CD-ROM game systems. Still no Tempest.

Three months ago I was running at the mouth about how my Atari Jaguar was nothing but a great funnel for dust. I absolutely loathed Cybermorph, and it was easily the best of the four initial Jag games produced by Atari. Even Tempest 2000, a distant beam of light in distance, didn't seem like it would be enough to sell this system. I'm a man who can admit when he's wrong, and I was. The smartest thing Atari could do right now is pack this game in with every Jaguar. They wouldn't be able to keep up with the sales.

If nothing else, Tempest 2000 brings the arcade experience home at last. Actually, the "traditional" version of Tempest is a bit tepid - much slower and less aggressive than the coin-op ever was. But the new version, "Tempest 2000", makes the coin-op look like the relic it is. This game is fast. It has CD-quality music, power-ups, bonus levels, and the wildest, most frantic gameplay I've seen in years. If it sounds like I'm gushing, that's because I am. I'm thoroughly addicted to this game.

It's not the perfect shooter it once was, but only because it still appears Atari cut some corners. For example - the music, which is probably the best I've ever heard in a videogame, consists of a mere four main tracks. There are a few others, heard in bonus rounds and in the demos, but they're inconsequential. The rippin' techno that actually made Kevin Oleniacz' eyes bulge when he first heard it is played for sixteen levels at a time before it changes. I would have preferred shorter pieces and more of them. I also think the bonus levels could have been more inventive, although they certainly are eye-catching. My final nit is the overall display, which at its most frantic is too cluttered to see what the hell is in front of you. I guess that's the price you pay for a game that's this hectic.

My Jaguar now sits poised to take over the shelf where my Super NES has held a spot for over two years. I'm starting to think of Nintendo's unit as the dust gatherer and the U.S. console as the worthy challenger. Let's see who has that enviable shelf position at year's end. For now, I'm thrilled with Tempest 2000, and all I have to say is "YES! YES! YES! YES! YESYESYES!"

WHO'S GOING TO THE SCES?

If you're planning to go to the show this summer, please get in touch! Maybe we can hook up there - we'll probably be lodging in the corner of the Quality Inn at Downtown Chicago, like last year. So if you don't know until the last minute, look us up when you get there.
FOR SALE: One Vectrex multi-cart, with most of the Vectrex titles plus diagnostic test: $70. This is the same cart sold by Sean Kelly. Other exceptional values: Atari 2600 Bridge $8, Activision Checkers $9, Coconuts $5, Double Dunk (new) $5, Encounter at L-S $6, Flash Gordon $8, Frostbite 7, Megaforce $6, Mogul Maniac $12, Skateboardin' $5, Solaris (new) $5, Space Invaders (in box) $5, Tax Avoiders (in box) $12. War Wolf $5. Atari 7800 $5 each, NEW: Ace of Aces, Asteroids, Hat Trick, Karateka, One-On-One, Robotron 2084, Super Huey, Tower Toppler. ColecoVision War Room $9. Vectrex Hyperchase (with overlay) $8. WANTED: Boxes for most of Imagic's Intellivision titles, also boxes for ColecoVision titles. Also wanted: "weird stuff" - mugs, t-shirts, hats, watches, posters, patches, etc. i.e. anything videogame related but not videogames. Joe Santulli, 44 Hunter PI, Pompton Lakes, NJ 07442.

WRITE FOR INFORMATION on different games and other stuff!! Send for videogame address book/fax list. Only $2.00. Lists third-party addresses, game magazine addresses, game tip hotlines, and much, much, more. Must send $2.00 cash or check to Tommy Donoho, 1804 Tony Lane, Wichita, KS 67212-1578.

FOR SALE: Paperback for SMS, includes box and manual - $8.00. Also Super C for NES, includes box and manual - $8.00. Shipping is free! Write Shawn Surrick, 25 Truman Ct., Boyertown, PA 19512.

FOR SALE: Game cartridges, manuals, hardware, and more. Hundreds of titles in stock for Atari 2600, 5200, 2600. ColecoVision/ADAM, Intellivision, Odyssey 2. Fred Horvat, PO Box 493, Chesterfield, OH 44026. (216) 729-0761.


WILL BUY, SELL, OR TRADE games and software for most classic systems. Including all Atari systems, ColecoVision and Intellivision, Atari 600 computers and Commodore 64. Low prices, plus specials. Some collectibles available too. NES, TurboGrafx-16 and Duo CD's also wanted. To receive a list or exchange lists, write: Mike Casey, 1655 E Sahara Apt 1106, Las Vegas, NV 89104.

FOR SALE: Atari 2600: Bump N Jump, Glj Joe, Pete Rose, Pressure Cooker, Room of Doom, Sentinel; Atari 5200: Space Dungeon, Super Cobra, Mario Bros, Berzerk, Astro Chase; Atari 7800: Alien Brigade, Motor Psycho, Jinks, Planet Smashers, Pete Rose; Intellivision: Ladybug, Melody Blaster, Nova Blast, Commando, Demo Cart, Chip Shot Golf, Spiker, Defender, Centipede; Fairchild: #1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16; Bally: Basic, Bally Pin, Speed Math, Incredible Wizard, Football, Blackjack. Many other games and systems available. FOR TRADE: Atari 2600: Gremlins, Mr. Do's Castle, Popeye by ???, River Raid by ???, Spider by ???, Track N Field; Atari 5200: Gremlins, Intellivision: Sewer Sam, Blockade Runner, Computer Adapter; Fairchild: #10, 18, 21, 23, 24, 26. WANTED: Atari 2600: Crazy Climber, Atari Video Cube, Water World; Atari 5200: Beamrider, Tutankham, Spitfire; Intellivision: Stadium Mud Buggies, Body Slam. Edward Villalpando,

13525 Ulica St., Whittier, CA 90605.


HARD TO FIND ATARI 5200 GAMES, some boxes & instructions. Cheap, new 7800 games. Common 2600, some wbox & instructions. Send SASE to Mark Allen, 1609 Newton St, Eldorado, IL 62930.

OVER 4000 CARTRIDGES spanning all classic systems. Many semi-rare and rare 2600, 5200, Coleco, Intellivision, Vectrex titles available! Also have games for the semi-classic SMS & TurboGrafx-16 as well as GameBoy, SNES & Genesis. Call or write for lists. Bill Zandrew, 631 S. Home, Oak Park, IL 60304. (708) 386-2308.

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"Pac-Man Fever," the single inspired by the most popular video game in America is a huge hit! Its driving rhythms have inspired even championship players to new heights!

Now, the "Pac-Man Fever" album is here! Like the single, the other songs on the album were inspired by the nationwide video game craze. Each song is devoted to a specific game and contains sound effects from that game. Whether you're obsessed with Frogger, Centipede, Asteroids, Donkey Kong, Defender, Mousetrap or Berzerk, there's something on here for you!

And there's a bonus that's bound to improve your score—a special inner sleeve which shows five winning Pac-Man patterns!

So get "Pac-Man Fever," the album, now! If you don't your competition will eat you alive!
NOTE-worthy

NES PRICE LIST AVAILABLE

Another perk for DP readers! Fellow fan-ed Jeff Beedham ("Game Force") has produced his OWN price list for the Nintendo 8-bit games! If you mention that you saw this in DP, he'll give it to you for a paltry $1.00! Hey, that's a mere bag of shells for us rich cutting edge types! Let's support Craig by sending him that $1.00, because we all know you'll just end up wasting it in some go-go bar anyway. Write: Jeff Beedham, c/o NES PRICE LIST, PO Box 1610, Belen, NM 87002.

NEW 7800 TITLE DISCOVERED!

Previously known to exist exclusively for the Atari 2600, Sentinel (by Atari) has been recently discovered in Europe. Utilizing a light gun, sensational graphics, and intriguing gameplay accentuate this rare find. Unfortunately, a 7800 PAL console is required to play. If you use it on your crummy NTSC (North American) system, the screen will black out after the Atari logo appears.

CLASSIC SYSTEMS BOOK

So you still don't believe that the "classics" are coming back into style? Well, disbeliever, what do you say about this, then? Leonard Herman has just completed a whole book on the subject, titled Phoenix (The Fall & Rise of Home Videogames), self-published par excellence! Still skeptical. Mr. or Mrs. high pockets? Well, you can change your wicked ways. Just send Lenny $14 and he'll rush the book out to you chop chop. I've read it cover to cover and I must say - a job well done! Hey, wanna write for us, Leo? Send that money NOW to Leonard Herman, 2069 Stecher Avenue, Union, NJ 07083-5307.

DP GUIDE 3 JUGGERNAUT ROLLETH

It's underway! Wow, over 100 pages already and I haven't added in the pictures yet! Yes, I'm hyping it some more - sue me! Better yet, PRE-ORDER the DP Guide #3 by May 31st, 1994 and get it for just $12 - that's $3 less than it's gonna cost when June rolls in and the Guide starts shipping. Look, it's got all the stuff the first two editions had plus lots more "reading material" by your favorite contributing editors like Russ Perry Jr. and Jeff Cooper, a complete unabridged "PsychOpedia" (with corrections and many additions), a "Rumor Mill" section of games that were proposed but never released, lots of classic advertising, a brand new "Collector's Connection", and oh so much more. That's $12 to Joe Santulli, DP GUIDE #3 PRE-ORDER, 44 Hunter Pl, Pompton Lakes, NJ 07442. Expect the final product to arrive at your doorstep the week of June 20th.