



2600 Connection

Issue Number 3

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2600 Hardware Parade

by Russ Perry Jr

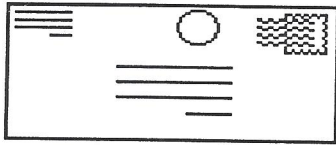
Over the years, many companies have announced pieces of hardware to upgrade the Atari 2600, but unfortunately for technophiles and collectors, most never saw the light of day. The reasons for adding hardware were to overcome various limitations of the 2600. When the 2600 was designed, the engineers put in double the memory capacity that they needed. This was seemingly on a whim, but it was a whim that eventually paid off. When the system became popular, the game writers had more room to work in and it allowed the games to evolve in sophistication. It also kept the system from becoming obsolete quickly, the way other systems did. However, as time passed, it wasn't enough. Memory became cheaper, and newer game systems with better capabilities were competing with the 2600. To overcome limited memory, some companies experimented with cartridges with extra memory built in. Most designers learned a technique called bank-switching which effectively doubled available memory. Of course, this still left a limit on what could be done.

An interesting solution was produced by a company named Arcadia (Starpach after a legal dispute). Starpath produced a module called the **Supercharger** which had extra memory and allowed games to be loaded off a standard audio cassette. Loading games in sections allowed more complex games to be designed, like the wonderful **Escape from the Mindmaster** and **Dragonstomper**. Amiga designed a similar module called **The Power System**, planning a line of cassette-based games including a selection of 3-D games, but their product was never released, at least to the best of my knowledge. Unitronics announced yet another cassette loader called the **Expander I**, but it too never reached the market.

This brings me to another limitation - the lack of user controllability. Partway into the 2600's life, personal computers became popular and it was feared that dedicated game systems would become obsolete. So, companies began announcing hardware to upgrade the 2600 into a full-fledged computer. Atari led the way with an upgrade alternately dubbed **My First Computer** or **The Graduate**, never quite deciding on the marketing approach. They promised a disk drive and a printer and even applications software, but the idea was eventually scrapped. The story was the same for Unitronic's **Expander II**, which was never sold after being announced. Entex met a similar fate with the **Piggyback 2000**, though it may have been available in limited quantities. Spectravision, as far as I can tell, actually sold their **Compumate** module, offering an artist's easel and a music creation program. But how many were actually sold, and whether or not any additional hardware or software was sold, is unknown. It certainly wasn't a hit. Answer Software developed a piece of hardware called the **Personal Game Programmer**. This unit allowed the user to change the program of any cartridge inserted into it — provided the user knew what he or she was doing. Unfortunately, it did not allow storage of the changed programs, a serious drawback in my eyes. It was available in test quantities, but apparently had a problem with a rolling screen and it was never available to the general public. Milton Bradley set about to produce a voice synthesis and voice recognition module in conjunction with Atari. A baseball game was planned as the first game, but the partnership fell through with no word of the level of completed technology. As it stands, Atari's **Quadrun**, a pretty rare game, is the only voice game for the 2600. The game says "Quadrun Quadrun Quadrun" without any special hardware. Atari also demonstrated a biofeedback controller called **Mind Link** which was basically just

a headband that sensed electrical impulses in the forehead and used them to direct screen movement. This interesting gadget was shown at trade shows, but never materialized. Vidco produced a device, the **Copy Cart**, that allowed a person to copy a game onto a blank cartridge. The company offered blank cartridges, too. Romox planned a similar concept, though more legitimately, using terminals in stores where you could buy a blank cartridge and then buy a game program to be programmed onto it for a cost less than that of a standard cartridge. A game could be erased and a new one programmed, so it was in effect a sort of a rental outfit. However, this interesting scheme was never implemented. Commavid did release a unit called the **MagiCard**. This was a cartridge that plugged into the 2600. With the use of keyboard controllers, the user could write games. Finally, there was Control Video's **Game Line Master Module**. It was basically a modem that allowed the user to download games over the phone for a small fee per so many plays of the chosen game. Control Video held high score contests successfully and tested news, but the service did not last very long. Now, there are a few things I would have liked to have tried, using the Copy Cart. First, I wonder if it would have been possible to save games programmed on the Personal Game Programmer. And second, I wonder if it would have been possible to save games downloaded from Game Line. Both would have required some sort of adapter, I would imagine. Before I finish, I would like to ask anyone who knows of certain things I may have missed or gotten wrong in this article. Please inform us. There are often regional differences in availability, so things may have been sold elsewhere but impossible to find in another area in the U.S.A. Also, if anyone has any of the above equipment for sale, please contact me.





MAILBOX

Dear Editor: I really enjoyed *The 2600 Connection*. It brought back many of the memories that I have from my days growing up with our 2600. We bought our first 2600 years ago for \$260! About five years later, we had worn that one out and bought another for \$75. Over the years, we've had more than 50 cartridges, but are now left with a bare minimum. Having mastered those games, having less time, and more games for our Apple IIe, the 2600 would not even be around today if it wasn't for Dad. He plays it all the time. For Dad, playing *Bridge* (by Activision) has been a simple way to relax for over six years. We always know where he'll be before dinner. It is the second thing he does after coming home from vacation (the other being a pitstop). The millions of combinations possible in the game have kept him entertained all of these years. It is a remarkable accomplishment for any one game. Somebody at Activision deserves a pat on the back for this one. The game has even begun fighting back. Occasionally, mysterious characters, other than the traditional four suits, appear. And even now that I've moved away from home, I know that when I go home, Dad'll be there playing *Bridge*.

-Greg Oliver Kitchener, ONT Canada

Thanks for sharing that story with us. The game designer for Bridge is Larry Kaplan. To find out more about Activision, check out the Activision article within this issue.

Dear Editor: A friend and I recently tried to solve the *WORDQUEST* games by Atari. We've had no luck. Hopefully, you can help.

-Andy Patrizio Cranston, RI

You're in luck. Our next issue features the solution to the WORDQUEST games. Stay tuned!

Dear Editor: I'm glad to see someone standing up for the 2600. I've been a cartridge collector for several years now and I find that most people are surprised when they see how many games were produced for the system. I currently have over 330 different games. In your tips on finding games, you left out one good source - pawn shops! I've found several rare games, such as *Spy Hunter* and *Galactic*, at pawn shops. Your cartridge list in issue 2 was a great help. Are you going to do a complete list of 2600 games? On your list, you missed 3 games that were produced by Atari for Sears. They are *Submarine Commander*, *Stellar Track*, and *Steeplechase*.

-James Davis Hartford, KY

Thanks for the pawn shop tip. We have received many letters regarding the cartridge list. As mentioned in issue 1, we are going to print the entire list in small installments each issue. Last issue, we covered the games made by Atari. This issue, we are covering games made by Activision. Each issue, we will print another section. We have received some corrections and additions to Part One (issue 2). Once the information is verified, we will offer the revision to the readers.

Dear Editor: Was a *TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE* game ever produced? If so, by who? Also, was a *SUPERMAN 2* ever made?

-Brandon Smith Springfield, MA

To my knowledge, Superman 2 was never made. Texas Chainsaw Massacre was made by Wizard Video.

Computer Electronics Source

by Timothy Duarte

We have received many letters from 2600 fans who are trying to find rare, less popular games. Last issue, we published a guide which listed seven companies that sell Atari 2600 games. Let's look at one of those companies:

The Computer/Electronics Source has the largest selection of NEW (not used) 2600 software. You are not buying an old, beat-up copy. All of the games I ordered arrived with the game instructions and the box in the original plastic wrapping. This may seem trivial, but the boxes and instruction booklets are valuable to some collectors. The catalog offers games for almost all video game systems. There is a total of four full pages in the 2600 section. Here are some of the catalog's highlights: 55 different cartridge titles by Atari, 19 by Activision, 10 by M Network, ect. Games made by less popular companies, such as Fox, CBS, Telesys, and Tigervision, are also in the catalog. A few prototypes (Models) are also available: *Off Your Rocker* (by Amiga), *Halloween* and *Texas Chainsaw Massacre* (both by Wizard Video), and *Gauntlet* and *Malagai* (both by Answer Software). Note: *Gauntlet* is a space game. It is not to be confused with the popular coin-op by Atari. The *Starpath Supercharger* and the cassette games are also available for a low price. The best thing to do is write and request a catalog because there is too much to mention. Owner Gonder Tom is very helpful and offers fast service. Write to: The Computer/Electronics Source 41-30 70th Street Woodside, NY 11377-3952 phone: (718) 426-9614.



News & Notes

-Time-Warner has re-acquired Atari Games. This is the company that once owned Atari during 1977 to the early 80's. If you didn't know, Atari makes games for Nintendo under the Tengen label. Perhaps they will choose to do something with the 2600. Right now, the 2600 game system hasn't been discontinued, but Atari seems to be putting all their effort towards the portable Lynx game system. Don't leave us 2600 owners "in limbo"!

-Froggo Games, one of the companies listed in "Places to Find Games" (Issue 2), has apparently gone out of business. All mail sent has been returned to respectful senders. I had recieved the company's new Post Office Box, but it too has been closed. Please do not request a catalog from them or you will waste a stamp. If we hear of a new address, we'll let you know. But, we're pretty sure the frog has croaked.

-Atari is releasing some new 2600 games! They are: *BMX AIRMASTER*, *IKARI WARRIORS*, *MOTORODEO*, *STREET FIGHT*, and *WHITE WATER MADNESS*. We plan to review 'em as soon as we can get our hand on them. *BMX AIRMASTER* is now available and the rest are "Coming soon."



Adventure's Secret Message

by Russ Perry Jr. and Scott Stilphen

In Atari's Adventure, there's a way to find a secret room which contains the programmer's name. Select game level 2 or 3. You may want to kill all three of the dragons. This is optional, but your task can be much easier with these pests off your back. Find the key to the black castle and open it. Bring the bridge inside the castle. You will need it to find the secret dot. In the black castle, there's a part of the catacombs (red maze) that can only be reached with the bridge. Refer to the map on page 2 to get in the right position. In the lower right hand corner of this little oasis, you will find the mysterious dot. You will hear a sound when you have picked up the secret dot. If you are still unsure, press against a wall to see the dot. Now, take the dot to the rightmost room in the hall below the gold castle. You will need to pass through the thin black line in this room. In order to do so, the line must be blinking. If you bring in additional objects (sword, chalice, ect.), the line will blink and you will be able to pass through it.

Since you can only carry one object at a time, you may have to drop the dot in order to get additional objects in the room. Don't worry. Just remember where you dropped it so you can get it back! The dot is invisible when you are not carrying it. If you want, place the additional objects in this room BEFORE you get the dot. This way, you'll never have to drop the secret dot. Once inside the secret room, you will see the programmer's name. If you can sneak the sword and the chalice into the room, you can pass right through the name, too!

Here are some other tips and tricks in ADVENTURE:

- A dragon cannot eat you if you are pressing down on a barrier.

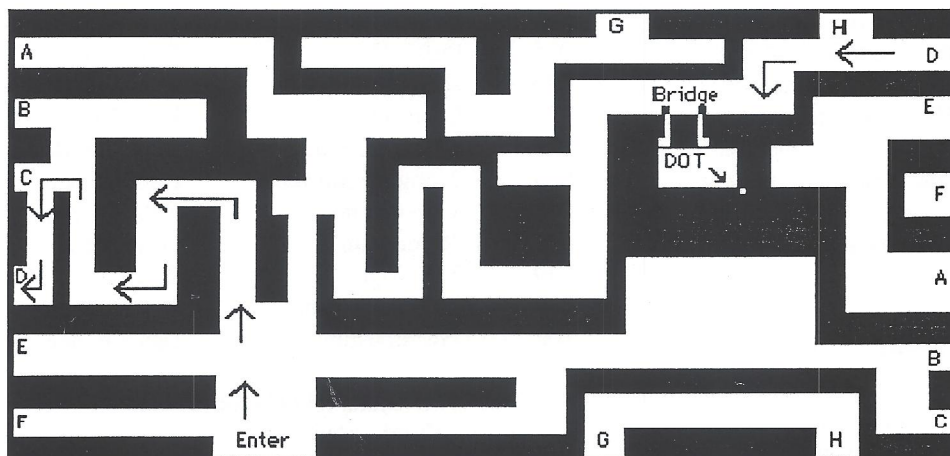
- Use the bridge on certain screens to magically appear on top of castles. On some of the castles, you will not be able to get off. You must RESET the game. An easy one is to put the bridge on the bottom of the screen right below the yellow castle. Make sure you can see part of the bridge, otherwise you will lose it. Also, try the secret room for a shortcut.

- You can lock yourself out of a castle if you wish to do so. When closing a gate, drop the key as soon as the gate begins to drop. The gate will close with the key inside. You cannot get back inside unless you RESET.

- Is the bat bothering you? Simply lock him up somewhere. The best place for the bat is in the white castle. Make sure you get any items you may need before doing this. Have the key waiting outside the gate. Take the bat and drop him inside the castle. Quickly run out, get the key, and close the gate. Try to get the bat to place all the dead dragons inside before you lock him up. This will make things easier if you have to RESET.

- If you want to see some serious screen flickering, put all the objects, including dead dragons (with the bat's help) and the dot, into the gold castle. As the last object, bring in the bat while it holds the chalice and prepare for a show. Oh yes, wear your sunglasses.

- There have been rumors of a purple dragon and a wizard. Has anyone ever seen them?



Adventure Map: Follow the arrows and place bridge as shown on map.

The Dot is located in the lower right hand corner of the secret room.

Note: You cannot see the dot.

Classified Ads

Wanted: Realsports Basketball, Pengo, Asterix, Jinks, Crazy Climber, Quadrun, Frostbite, Ladybug, Up n Down, Steeplechase, Fire!, X-men, Wall Ball, London Blitz, Death Trap. Compumate, Romscanner, Electronic Games Guide to the 2600. James G. Davis, 405 Barrett Ave., Hartford, KY 42437. 502-298-7327 after 6pm CST.

Wanted: Atari 2600 games, racks, magazines & instruction books missing from my collection. In exchange, will pay cash or trade Intellivision, Vic-20, Nintendo or Atari games and equipment. Barbara Harrington, 115 Greenbrier Lane, Sandusky, OH 44870. 419-626-2172.

Wanted: Lady Bug, Montezuma's Revenge, Frogger II, a 2600 Computer Keyboard. Brian Stout, 704 St. Martin, Cahokia, IL 62206-1760.

Wanted: Condor Attack, Spider Kong, Quest for the Idol, Karate (all by Ultravision) Write: John Dzuberka, 1625 West Plum St. Apt. F65, Fort Collins, CO 80521 or dzuberka@handel.cs.colostate.edu

Buying: Pengo, Pele's Chmp. Soccer, Codebreaker, BASIC Programming w/ overlays, rare Atari prototypes, adjustable rapid-fire, Atari tv-pong units, old Atari games without pictures on them, catalogs, posters. Selling: games \$3 each (write for list), 2600's (good cond.) \$15 each w/ adaptor, switch box). Scott Stilphen, RD#1 Box 177-A, Harding, PA 18643.

Wanted: Beamrider, Bumper Bash, Cake Walk, Crypts of Chaos, Death Trap, Earth Dies Screaming, Gremlins, Harbor Escape, Kick Man, London Blitz, Lost & Found, Mangia, Master Builder, Nightmare, Off Your Rocker. Steve Bender, 727 N 4th Ave., Kent, WA 98032. 206-850-3152.

Wanted: Swordquest series-members only cartridges, Turbo, Astro Warrior, Boing, Bristles, Marine Wars, Mission X, Crossfire, Winter Games, Summer Games, California Games, Stellar Track, Steeplechase. LCpl. Brandon A. Scott, MALS-13(FWD) W/C 650, FPO San Francisco, CA 96608-6070.

Wanted: Airworld & Waterworld w/ comic books. Write: Andy Patrizio, 35 Rockwood Ave., Cranston, RI 02920. Bitnet: AAW151@URIACC.BITNET

Wanted: Waterworld, Crazy Climber, Pengo, Texas Chainsaw Massacre, Trick Shot, Ice Trek. Jeff Adkins, 11 Windsor, Attica, NY 14011. (716)-591-1519

Wanted: Starship, Miniature Golf, Video Chess, Slot Machine, Fun w/ Numbers, Hangman, Road Runner. Must have box & manual. Also buying 5200 carts. Nicholas Thurn, 1025 S. High St., Columbus, OH 43206-2527, E-mail: niethu@mcorp.UUCP

Wanted: River Raid II, Donald Duck Speedboat, Good Luck Charlie Brown, Miss Piggy's Wedding, Dumbo's Flying Circus, Double Dunk, Jinks, Secret Quest, Radar Lock, Turbo, Ladybug, Cosmic Avenger, Mr. Do, Time Pilot. Carl Howard, 2351 Egremont Dr., Orange Park, FL 32073. (904)-264-7056.

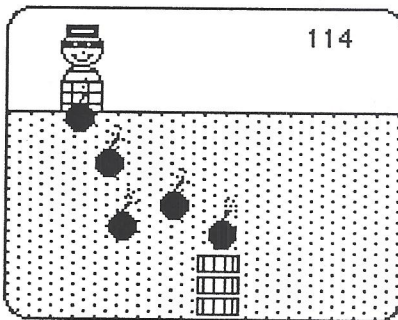
For Sale: Star Raiders, Combat, Warlords, Space Invaders, Defender - carts only...sloppy labels..make an offer. Wanted: Zaxxon, Z-Tack, Zenji, X-man, Underworld, Q*Bert's Qubes, Nexar, He-Man, Hangman, Harbor Escape, Espial, Eli's Ladder, Eggomania, Alien, Amidar, many others. Russ Perry Jr., 104 S Randall Ave., Madison, WI 53715. (608)-256-1910.

Cartridge List Part 2: Activision

by Tim Duarte

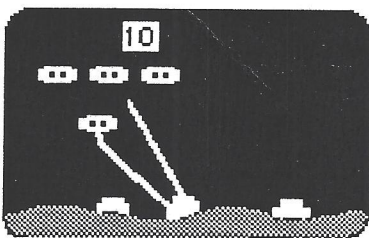
In the second installment of the cartridge list, we'll take a look at the games that were made by the company called Activision. Actually, the company was formed by a group of programmers who designed a number of cartridges for Atari. They left Atari and formed their own programming team in 1980. The first cartridge released was **Dragster** and many more followed. While some of the releases were "flops", many were extremely popular among 2600 owners. By 1983, **Kaboom** and **Laser Blast** were each certified one million sellers. Activision games were attractively designed with

quality graphics. One reader stated, "Activision made the consistently best line of games for the 2600 — they wrote their games around things the 2600 hardware could do rather than bending the game to fit the hardware." Activision games do not "blink" as other Atari games do when too many objects appear on the screen (The 2600 can only handle so much). Activision always credited the game designer. Each instruction booklet contained helpful hints and a small profile of the designer. If a game player reached a certain high score, Activision offered team patches if you sent in a picture of your tv screen displaying your high score. Unfortunately, Activision stopped this when the 2600 population seemed to be fading away in 1984. Activision is still around today,



Kaboom


but it's not the same company it once was. The programmers who formed the company have left. The 2600 Connection would like to contact the programmers to find out where they are and their opinions of the 2600. If anyone out there can help us get in touch with them, please let us know. The numbers following the programmers' names correspond to the cartridges they designed. Here's the list of all Activision cartridges. Some of these are discontinued and hard to find.



Laser Blast

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The 2600 Connection Staff: Editor: Timothy Duarte, Designer: Brett Quintin, Writers: Russ Perry Jr., Scott Stilphen

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001	Dragster	David Crane
002	Boxing	Bob Whitehead
003	Checkers	Alan Miller
004	Fishing Derby	David Crane
005	Skiing	Bob Whitehead
006	Bridge	Larry Kaplan
007	Tennis	Alan Miller
008	Laser Blast	David Crane
009	Freeway	David Crane
010	Kaboom	Larry Kaplan
011	Stampede	Bob Whitehead
012	Ice Hockey	Alan Miller
013	Barnstorming	Steve Cartwright
014	Grand Prix	David Crane
015	Chopper Command	Bob Whitehead
016	Starmaster	Alan Miller
017	Megamania	Steve Cartwright
018	Pitfall	David Crane
019	Sky Jinks	Bob Whitehead
020	River Raid	Carol Shaw
021	Spider Fighter	Larry Miller
022	Seaquest	Steve Cartwright
023	Oink	Mike Lorenzen
024	Dolphin	Matthew Hubbard
025	Keystone Kapers	Garry Kitchen
026	Enduro	Larry Miller
027	Plaque Attack	Steve Cartwright
028	Robot Tank	Alan Miller
029	Crackpots	Dan Kitchen
030	Decathlon	David Crane
031	Frostbite	Steve Cartwright
032	Pressure Cooker	Garry Kitchen
033	Space Shuttle	Steve Kitchen
034	Private Eye	Bob Whitehead
035	Pitfall II	David Crane
036	HERO	John Van Ryzin
037	Beamrider	Dave Rolfe
038	Cosmic Commuter	John Van Ryzin
039	Kung Fu Master	Dan Kitchen
043	Commando	Mike Reidel
048	River Raid II	Dan Kitchen
049	Rampage	Bobco.
050	Double Dragon	Dan Kitchen
108	Ghostbusters	Dan Kitchen

Dreadnaught Factor (NR)
Zenji (NR)

NR = Never Released

