



# 2600 Connection

September / October 1993

Published Bi-monthly

Issue Number 18

## A Few Thoughts on Collecting Videogames

by William W. Smith Jr.

There is no doubt that videogames will become collectible. Items such as baseball cards, comic books, and toys have become collectibles. Even cereal boxes have become collectibles. For example, a 1940 Kix cereal box with an atomic bomb ring ad on the front of the box is worth over \$1,000 in mint condition.

Other groups of collectors have started to show an interest in videogames. There is a large group of people who collect Star Trek and/or Star Wars memorabilia. According to The Official Price Guide to Star Trek and Star Wars Collectibles (Ballantine, 1991), **Star Trek: Strategic Operations Simulator** (by Sega) and the four Star Wars games—**The Empire Strikes Back**, **Death Star Battle**, **Jedi Arena**, and **Star Wars: The Arcade Game** (all by Parker Brothers)—are worth \$8-15 each. There are also strong fan followings for E.T., Raiders of the Lost Ark and other movies. These collectors will surely want to add these videogames to their prized collections.

Comic book collectors may very well be interested in **Superman** (by Atari) and **Spiderman** (by Parker Brothers). Even characters like Big Bird, Cookie Monster, Snoopy, Mickey Mouse, Popeye, G.I. Joe, and others have their respective followings and collectors.

During the videogame craze of the early 1980s, some of the focus was on arcade coin-operated videogames. Many gamers were happy plucking quarters into the full-size coin-ops in the arcade parlors. As these machines vanish from the arcades, the gamers will want to obtain the 2600 cartridge versions so they can play them in their own home. These arcade translations may become valuable collector's items in time.

Advertisement premium collectors may also seek out certain videogames. Ten years ago, Ralston-Purina's **Chase the Chuckwagon** and Johnson and Johnson's **Tooth Protectors** were advertised in

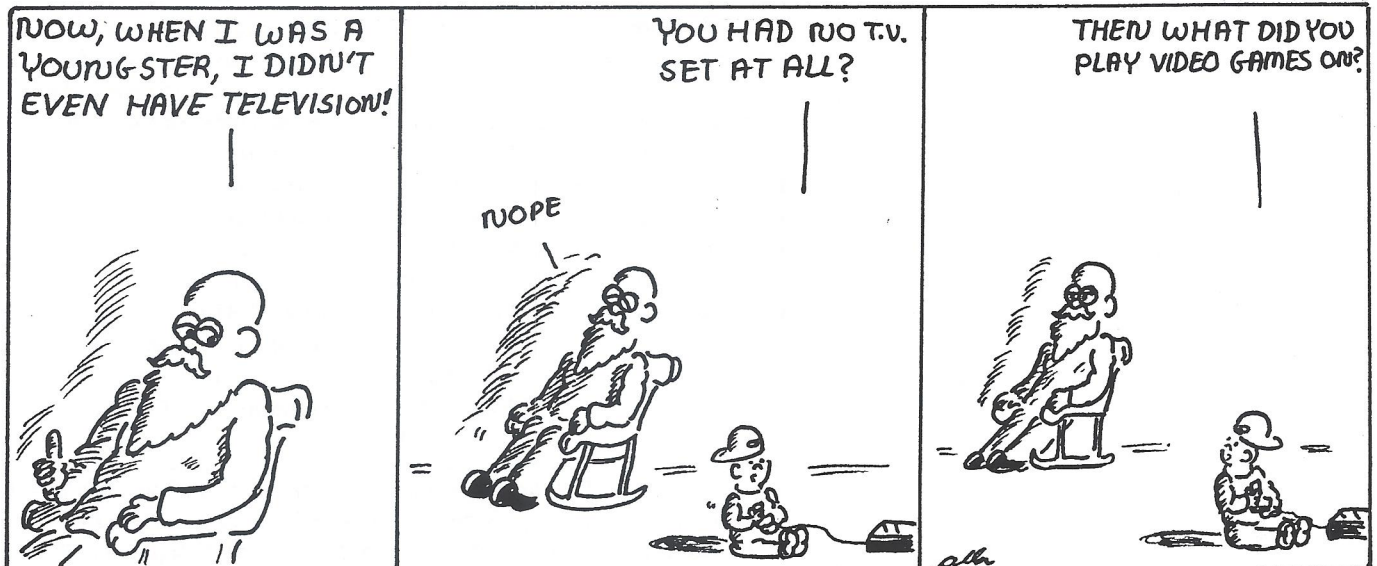
magazines and the Sunday newspaper coupon inserts. These two sponsors must have manufactured a large number of these games—at least 75,000 to 100,000 units. Were all of these games sold? This is a good question because both of these games are rarities. I often wonder if cases of these games are gathering dust in a warehouse somewhere.

Another small niche may come forth—collecting by programmer. Some gamers find a certain programmer/designer's games to his/her liking more than the others. For example, a collector may want to obtain all of the games that David Crane designed. (See issue 12)

In my opinion, we are going too far by making a videogame price guide. At the present time, there can be no more than 1,000 videogame collectors. There are still a lot of questions that need to be answered. We haven't reached the "golden age" of videogame collecting, but the dawn is beginning to break.



ARCADE ARTIST by David Allen





**Dear Editor:** I have been collecting videogames for my Atari since 1983. There are two games—*Lady Bug* and *Up n' Down*—that I am very interested in finding for my collection. I have offered \$50 each in the past, considering the game is in excellent working condition and the instruction books are included. I am sure there are a lot of other games out there that I have not even heard of nor do I have in my collection, such as *Swordquest: Waterworld*, *9 to 5*, and *Polaris* to name a few. If you have any information on these games, please let me know.

Mervil Carmickle  
318 West 6th Street  
New Albany, IN 47150

*I don't believe Coleco released a version of Lady Bug for the 2600. However, I may be wrong. A few months ago, a subscriber wrote a letter which stated he found Lady Bug. I asked him to photocopy the cart to confirm its existence. Unfortunately, I am still waiting for a reply.*

*Up n' Down was released by Segal Bally Midway. It is a tough game to find. Swordquest: Waterworld (by Atari) and Polaris (by Tigervision) can both be obtained from a number of sources. Try contacting the various companies in the directory on page 7. Another source to check out is The Videogame Trader, the all-classified ad newsletter. Send \$1 for a sample to: The Videogame Trader, P.O. Box N664, Westport, MA 02790.*

**Dear Editor:** If games were still being made for the 2600, do you think versions of *Mortal Kombat* or *Street Fighter II* would be popular? I bet Activision could have done a good job at creating versions of these games for the 2600. I don't know why companies do not make games for these classic systems anymore. *Tetris* would have been a hot seller. Sure, it's old technology. From what I've seen, people still play games on the classic systems.

James Catalano  
639 West Grace, #336  
Chicago, IL 60613

*I've often wondered why companies gave up on the 2600. There are a number of reasons. The 2600 is obsolete compared to the videogame systems of the 1990s. There will always be a videogame system that features new technology and better graphics. We all know the 2600 has limitations, and versions of the new 16-bit games of today would probably be too much for the 2600's microprocessor to handle. On the other hand, I believe an excellent version of Tetris could be programmed for the 2600.*

**Dear Editor:** I really dig *The 2600 Connection*, especially the column about "frying" the 2600. I'm pleased to see that someone is documenting this stuff. It's like resurrecting a long-lost martial art that no one has used for centuries.

Jon B. Snyder  
Box 23, 2300 Market St.  
San Francisco, CA 94114

*Glad to hear you enjoy The 2600 Connection. The 2600 really is a lot of fun, and it's things like frying which makes the system so unique. The technique of frying is actually very mysterious. I'm not exactly sure what causes the games to have strange effects. Perhaps a reader can explain what actually happens and why the frying technique changes gameplay.*

*By the way, Jon is the editor of an excellent magazine called Star Wars Generation. If you're a fan of the movie(s), then you must check out this magazine. Send \$3 for a sample issue to the address above. Please make checks payable to: High Drive Publications.*

**Dear Editor:** I recently purchased some videogames from a second hand shop. Since the games were not in boxes, they had no instructions. I located instructions to one of the games, but not the other. Maybe you or one of your readers could help me. I am looking for the instructions to *Venture* (by Coleco).

Mike Balzer  
504 Valerie #12  
Addison, IL 60101

*Venture is one of my favorite games on the 2600. Since I own the game, I have made a photocopy of the instruction booklet for you. Also, many gamers swap and sell the instruction booklets. Try contacting some of the "2600 Survivors" on page 7.*


**Dear Editor:** I'd like to tell you that your Atari cartridge list in issue 2 is the most complete I've ever seen. I am particularly interested in *Sinistar* (by Atari), which you list as a prototype game. I have been waiting for a home version of this game for over six years! Could you please tell me the story behind the prototype games? I have never seen any of the prototypes in store. Are these games obtainable at all? I am looking forward to future cartridge lists.

Kevin Griffin  
1972 Cherry Laurel Drive  
Ormond Beach, FL 32174

*I must credit Russ Perry Jr. for the Atari Cartridge list that appeared way back in issue 2. He did all of the research involved in creating that list. By the way, the Atari listing has been updated and is available to anyone who sends a self-addressed, stamped envelope to our address.*

*Prototypes are "test" cartridges that the marketing offices of Atari sent to videogame reviewers and others in the industry. Prototype games gave the reviewers the chance to provide Atari with ideas on improvements for the games. This information was valuable because Atari could make changes to the game program before mass producing the cartridge, designing a label, and getting the game on store shelves. The prototype games are in plain, black cartridge without a fancy label design. Unfortunately, some of the prototype games are not complete in programming. Sinistar is one of these games—it is only about half-done.*

*As far as obtaining prototypes, Best Electronics has a good selection. Sinistar, Grover's Music Maker, Xevious, A Team, and others are priced at \$12 each. Check the directory on page 7 for contact information on Best Electronics.*

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## Cartridge List Part 17: Tigervision

In the spotlight for this issue's third-party 2600 cartridge manufacturer is Tigervision. The company was actually a division of Tiger Electronic Toys, a company which still exists and manufactures handheld LCD videogames.

Most of the games are uncommon. There are even a few that are extremely hard to find. Here are some interesting tidbits of information about Tigervision's library of games.

**King Kong**, the first release, is a spin-off of *Donkey Kong*. The graphics are primitive and the game only has one playfield screen. At least *Donkey Kong* has two screens! There are some differences, though. *King Kong* throws down bombs from the top of screen, but he can switch to the bottom of the screen and throw them upwards. Tigervision gained approval of licensing the *King Kong* trademark, which is owned by Universal Studios Inc.

**Jawbreaker** is simply a *Pac-Man* clone. Again, there are some minor differences between the games. Instead of a round, yellow character, the player is represented by a pair of jaws. Instead of ghosts, there are four smiling faces which chase the player while he/she munches the candy bars throughout the maze. The vitamin pills, which change the color of the smiling faces, do not appear in the four corners of the maze. Instead, a vitamin pill appears in the center of the maze three times per level. Despite these differences, it's still the basic *Pac-Man* concept.

**Miner 2049er**, originally conceived by Bill Hogue of Big Five Software, will go down in computer and videogame history as the first cross-system game. The intention behind this idea was to create a version of the game for every videogame system and home computer. This would allow a large number of people to play the game. To my knowledge, versions of *Miner 2049er* exist for the Atari 2600, Atari 5200, Atari 8-bit computer, Vic-20 computer, Apple II computer, TI-99 computer, Coleco ADAM computer, Colecovision, and IBM PC Jr. Okay, it's not available for every system—an *Odyssey2* nor an *Intellivision* version do not exist. Still, the game is available for many systems. The interesting thing about the 2600 version is that it consists of two separate cartridges, **Miner 2049er** and **Miner 2049er Volume II**. Apparently, the Atari 2600 did not have enough memory to fit all of the different screens of the computer game into one cartridge. *Miner 2049er* has three screens—The Slides, The Transporters, and The Cannon. *Miner 2049er Volume II* also has three game screens—Lift, Crusher, and Radioactive Waste.

**Polaris** is a shooter in which the player controls a submarine which must destroy enemy submarines and enemy planes which fly above the surface. **Threshold** is another multi-screen shooter which is reminiscent of *Megamania* (by Activision). *Megamania* has eight different "waves" of attackers; *Threshold* has 11. **Espial** is yet another shooter. The player must defend himself and destroy oncoming attackers and obstacles through three enemy bases—Block, Fantasy, and Diamond. In **Marauder**, the player must the enemy's weapon base while shooting enemy robots.

**Springer** is a tough game to find because it was released in 1984, around the time of the videogame market crash. The player assumes the role of a bunny that jumps on clouds and collects objects for points. **River Patrol** is probably the hardest Tigervision game to find.

There are a few questionable games which were announced by Tigervision, but were never released. These games include *Intuition*, *Scraper Caper*, *Changes*, *Sky Lancer*, and *Super Crush*. It was also rumored that Tigervision planned to release *Matterhorn* and two games based on the B.C. comic strip—*Quest for Tires* and *Grog's Revenge*.

To my knowledge, the Tigervision library consists of ten games. None of the games mentioned in the previous paragraph have been confirmed to exist. If anyone owns any of these games, please write in and include proof, too. A photocopy of the cartridge and videotape of the game is excellent evidence of existence!



Sources: Russ Perry Jr.'s Cartridge List, *ABC to the VCS* by Leonard Herman, and *The Digital Press Collector's Guide #1*. Introductory article by: Tim Duarte

TV7-001 King Kong  
 TV7-002 Jawbreaker  
 TV7-003 Threshold  
 TV7-004 River Patrol  
 TV7-005 Marauder  
 TV7-006 Springer  
 TV7-007 Polaris  
 TV7-008 Miner 2049er  
 TV7-011 Miner 2049er Volume II  
 TV7-012 Espial

## News & Notes

- Atari is offering a special "2600 & 7800 Bonanza Deal"—25 game cartridges (2600 and/or 7800) for \$149.75 plus \$10 shipping. The cost breaks down to be \$5.99 per game, not counting shipping. Contact Atari for a listing of 2600 and 7800 games to choose from. Atari's address and phone number is on page 7.

- Activision is bringing back three classic games—**Kaboom!**, **Pitfall!**, and **River Raid**—for the Super Nintendo system. Look for *Kaboom: The Return of the Mad Bomber*, *Pitfall Harry: The Mayan Adventure*, and *River Raid: Mission of No Return* soon. Now I have to buy a SNES in order to play these games. Rats!

- Our apologies for the delay of Sean Kelly's article about modifying the 2600 so that it has separate video and audio outputs (for hookup to a computer monitor). We also received another similar modification from Richard E. Toy. An article entitled "Composite/Audio/Chroma/Luma Output for Atari 2600" by Thomas Clancy also appeared in issue #2 of *Concordant Opposition*. Send \$1 to Jeff Bogumil, 187 N. State RR2, Apt. B-201, New Martinsville, WV 26155-1631 to receive the issue. Scott Stilphen also informed us that PAL (European) games can be played on a monitor without any adjustment.

- The NAEGE (mentioned in issue 14) has disbanded. All members should have received a \$10 refund by now. A new organization, Gaming Enthusiasts of America (GEA) has been formed. A one-year membership is free to anyone who joined NAEGE. To join, send \$10 to: Gaming Enthusiasts of America, 19 Vermont St., Methuen, MA 01844



## 30 Minutes of Videogame Commercials

Part of the whole videogame craze of the early 1980s made its way into our homes on our television sets—with our 2600 videogame systems turned off. How was this possible? Many of the videogame companies advertised and reached the people with TV commercials. Thanks to Andy Floyd, an avid videogame fan, we can recollect on some of these commercials. Andy has made a compilation audio tape of several videogame commercials.

Many of the commercials are for Atari 2600 games. Atari advertised quite frequently during "the glory days." On the tape are eight Atari game commercials: Phoenix, Star Raiders, Vanguard, Dig Dug, Moon Patrol, and Mario Bros. I liked the tune from the Mario Bros. commercial. The tune is actually a spin-off of the *Car 52, Where are You?* television show from the 1960s. Instead, the line is, "Mario, Where are You?"

Coleco's commercial for Smurf is also interesting. In it, a father and some children are eagerly playing the game, and get quite excited while doing so. Other third-party game companies also created ads. Imagic's Dragonfire and Atlantis are included as well as Parker Brother's Star Wars: The Arcade Game and Spiderman. Activision even goes as far as crediting the game designers in the commercials—Pitfall II: Lost Caverns by David Crane and River Raid by Carol Shaw.

Not all of the commercials are 2600-related. Andy included a Colecovision, Intellivision, VIC-20, Atari XE game system, Atari 5200, Atari 7800, and several commercials for Atari 8-bit computers. Just hearing the audio from some of these commercials triggered memories from years ago. I specifically remember Atari's 5200 commercial where the game player receives a telephone call from his girlfriend named Judy. He presses the PAUSE button on the 5200 controller and answers the phone with a corny "Hello, Judy?" voice. The commercial was obviously designed to demonstrate the convenience of a PAUSE feature.

The collection also includes a news excerpt about a manufacturer of Pac-Man snack tables, a piece on how psychologists believe videogames are harmful to youths, and parts of a Ms. Pac-Man tournament which aired on the 1980s television show called *That's Incredible*.

My personal favorite on the tape is Atari's rap-style commercial for the 2600. This must have come out in the late 1980s when Atari re-released the 2600 as a smaller, compact version known as the 2600 Jr. The lyrics are listed below.

Andy also includes some documentation with the tape, and personally numbers each tape. It's worth checking out. Now, if we can find someone who has these commercials on videotape...

—reviewed by Tim Duarte

*"It's the twenty-six hundred from Ah-tar-ri  
It's the video system with classics galore  
from Space Invaders to cars that roar  
A real hip joystick controls the screen  
Solaris is hot and Midnight Magic is mean  
And one more thing,  
it's got a special low price  
Under fifty bucks  
Fifty bucks?  
Yes! Now isn't that nice?  
The fun is back, oh yes sir-ee  
It's the twenty-six hundred from Ah-tar-ri"*

To receive a tape, send \$4 to:  
Andy Floyd, 114 Euclid Ave., Minerva, OH 44657-1519

## Tips and Tricks

by Scott Stilphen

### Decathlon (by Activision)

In using the pole vault trick mentioned in issue 6, after clearing heights over 7', the mat (and later, the bar) will start to disappear. After 9.8', the height meter resets to 0.0. If you keep playing, the game will usually "lock up" between 3.2' and 4.6'. "Harry" will then take an impressive victory lap around the stadium—by floating!

Also, the score counter can't "handle" printing the "2" in 20,000. If you score this high, the "1" will still be there. To attain such scores, I used an Atari Trak-Ball (CX80) in TB mode. This also works good with **Track and Field** (by Atari).

### Crazy Climber (by Atari)

Falling girders will sometimes wrap around to the other side.

The electrical signs show some glitches graphically (supporting wire changes, lower left corner, different size letters). The loose wire can only harm you if it touches your upper body. If you go up the right side of the building when it splits, the sign will be covering both columns of windows. Sometimes, if you move fast enough up the left column, you can get past the wire before it jolts you. To avoid this glitch, I suggest staying to the left.

Shirt glitch: Move up under the wire and quickly go up and then right. Your shirt will start flashing the same colors as the sign. This will only last until you go higher.

### Swordquest: Fireworld (by Atari)

In some rooms, corner warping can be used to go left, right, and down besides up. In room E, sometimes when trying to warp to room G, you will reappear on the other side of the room instead. You can also get stuck on the walls in this room when trying to some corner warps.

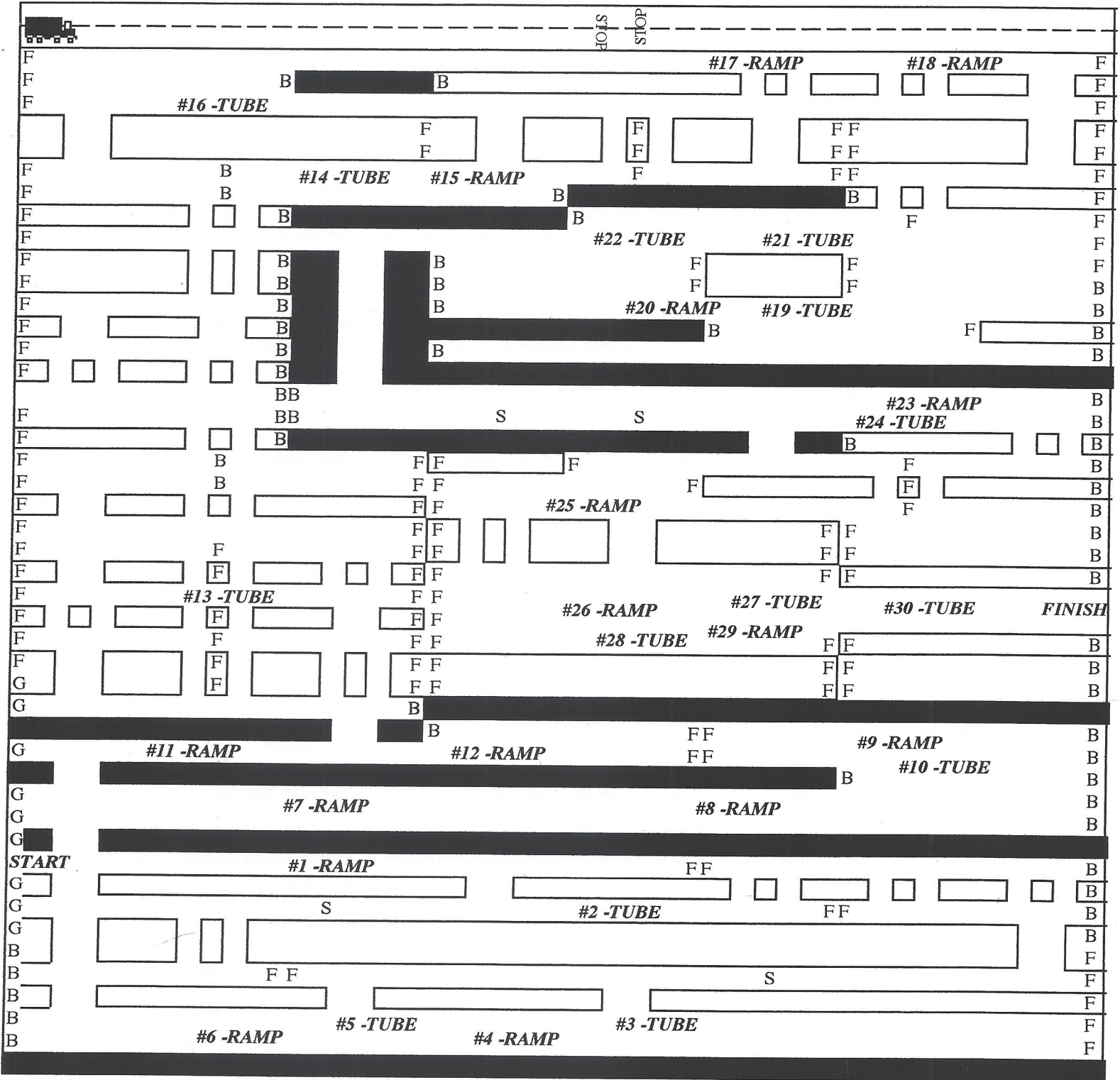
Occasionally when you find a clue, a block (a cursor) will appear in the inventory. To get rid of it, go in a treasure room and place your cursor over it and drop it. Otherwise, you won't be able to carry six objects.



The solution to

# Skateboardin'

(by Absolute Entertainment)



- B = BRICK WALL
- G = GRASS
- F = FENCE
- S = SAWHORSE
- = GRASS
- = WALL

### The Skateboardin' Solution Team:

Al Backiel	Mark Androvich
253 Rock Rd.	7912 Emerald St.
Ridgewood, NJ	Ventura, CA
07450	93004

A tip: Using a pencil or pen, draw a line that follows the numbers in increasing order to create a visual path. Make a photocopy of this page so you don't ruin it. You may find alternate routes. Have fun! For further reading, **Skateboardin'** was reviewed in Issue #2



# Nolan Bushnell: A Man and his Empire: Part 2

by Scott Stilphen

Nolan Bushnell's hobby as a youth was ham radio—his call letters were W7DUK. From this hobby, he developed his first business of repairing radios, televisions, and washing machines. He learned the various aspects of running your own business. After leaving Atari, these skills were put to the test.

With continued growth and success of Pizza Time Theatre (PTT), other firms began to open similar restaurants. The first was Robert Brock. He owned the largest and most profitable PTT in the chain, and was convinced he could take Bushnell's idea and do it one better. He filed a lawsuit against Bushnell in order to be released from his contract. Show Biz, with mascot Billy Bob Brockall, was his version of PTT.

In 1981, both PTT and Show Biz were the leading pizza chains in profits. A host of other competitors followed suit in 1982, including such well-known videogame companies as Bally, Sega, and even Warner. At the same time, Bushnell was using this good fortune to plan his re-entry into the videogame business. With the creation of Sente, Nolan hoped to take over a large percentage of the arcade market. Its other purpose was to help promote the PTT arcades, giving him an edge over the others with a steady influx of new coin-op machines. Sente's games were developed by Videa Inc., a game software company composed of ex-Atari engineers. Bushnell bought Videa for \$2.2 million. Sente's president was Roger D. Hector, former manager of advanced projects at Atari and co-founder of Videa. One of Roger's projects at Atari was *Cosmos*, the never-released handheld game that incorporated holography for added realism. He hoped to use holography in future Sente games. The other co-founder of Videa was Howard Delman, creator of the graphics system for *Asteroids*.

At the height of PTT's popularity, new restaurants were opening at the quick pace of one every five days! All these new businesses fought fiercely for valuable land sites. Many businesses were forced to settle with sites that soon proved to be unprofitable. PTT's first loss, at the sum of

\$3.3 million, came in 1983. Further substantial losses followed and halted PTT's expansion. Customers also began to tire of the idea altogether, mostly due to either bad service, food, or the high prices on the menu. On top of everything, PTT had poor marketing and neither the addition of new robotic characters nor the benefit of Sente helped to turn things around. However, some of the more successful PTT restaurants survived and can still be found today, under the name of Chuck E. Cheese, in larger shopping areas across the country. The restaurants in California are still very popular with kids. Some nationwide TV ads were recently run to promote the chain.

Possibly foreseeing the eventual fallout of PTT, Nolan expanded his interests during its peak. He and his wife, Nancy, opened the trendy Lion & Compass restaurant in April of 1982. Located in Sunnyvale, CA, the name derived from an etching on the building's antique facade window that they both admired. Being the opposite of PTT, Nolan once referred to it as the "Polo Lounge of Silicon Valley."

Catalyst Tech., started in late 1981, was the base from which Nolan could launch new companies. In his own words, its purpose was to "mass produce small companies." It provided a sound, financial base from which fledging companies could grow and eventually survive on their own. At the same time, Nolan would help them avoid costly mistakes and common industry "pitfalls." "King Pong's" pioneering efforts certainly did not stop with Atari. Here are some of Catalyst's "spin-offs":

## ACTV

ACTV developed a system to allow TV viewers to interact and customize programming contents.

## ANDROBOT

The popularity of Nolan's cyberamics system with PTT restaurants prompted him to start his own robotics firm. The company's main goal was to produce robots for use in the home. Some models would be capable of performing simple household chores while others could be viewed as an electronic

pet. A few of the robot's original design specifications were: three feet in height, aluminum construction, joystick-controlled, and heat-sensitive and infrared sensors. Androbot began development on a product called The Androman. It was one foot in height and included a cartridge for use with the Atari 2600. It may have appeared as a prototype that appeared at a Consumers Electronics Show. To my knowledge, it was never released.

## AXLON

Axlon is one of the more successful Catalyst companies. Axlon worked on designing handheld computer terminals, memory boards, and software. Axlon programmed a number of games for the Atari 2600! **MotoRodeo**, **Off the Wall**, and **Secret Quest** appear under the Atari label. Nolan programmed Secret Quest; his picture appears on the box. It is unknown if he worked on any others. A closer look at the Axlon games and some of the plans for other 2600 games will be discussed in the final installment of this series.

## BYVIDEO

Byvideo developed an electronic retail shopping network.

## CINEMA VISION

Cinemavision worked on high-resolution televisions (HDTV) and TV receivers.

## ETAK, INC.

This company developed on-board navigational equipment for automobiles.

## KADABRASCOPE

This was a computer-aided animation group comprised of experts from Walt Disney Productions and Hanna-Barbara Productions Inc., and the contribution of Computer Graphics Lab Inc. The main objective was to create a computer-aided design system that would greatly reduce the effort involved in creating a normal cartoon. Eight cartoons were scheduled to be made, including one with Chuck E. Cheese, and a half-hour Christmas special. Initial showings were to be on large-screen TVs in

PTT, with the potential for sales to various cable TV stations.

**TIMBER TECH**

Timber Tech was a network of computer camps for kids. It provided a rustic, redwood scene where campers brought their own sleeping bags and were offered "Visicalc with volleyball."

Denison Bollay pioneered the business idea when he started Computer Camps in 1980. Kids learned how to use various types of computers (Apple II, Atari 400, IBM PC Jr.) and how to program in different languages, such as BASIC and LOGO. Other companies started up their own camps; Atari and Texas Instruments were major computer companies that ran camps using their respective products. The costs for these camps were often expensive. A four-week stay at Atari's computer camp was almost \$1,600; an extra four weeks cost a total of \$2,790.

**VISTAR**

This was a production company that worked on cable TV, TV broadcasting, and cable systems.

It's unclear whether most of these small companies are still around today. With the advent of fiber optics, the research and development done by relevant companies such as ACTV and CINEMAVISION may have been bought up by larger companies. The knowledge could be used to further projects with HDTV, interactive cable, and customized pay-per-view programming.

Part 3, the final installment, will cover some of Nolan's newer companies, his work with Commodore, contributions to CD-ROM and virtual reality systems, and projects for the 1990s.



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# The 2600 Connection Mail Order Directory

If you happen to live in the Sunnyvale, CA area or you plan to be vacationing there in the future, perhaps you would like to know where Atari's headquarters are. The address is: Atari Corporation, 1196 Borregas Ave., Sunnyvale, CA 94089. The telephone number to the main desk is (408) 745-2000. I am not sure if they allow tours of the building.

Atari is quite busy these days with the Jaguar and the portable Lynx game systems. The 2600 is no longer being manufactured, but Atari still has an inventory of games which they sell by mail order. (See the first address in the directory)

Researching this directory is no easy task. Mail order companies can come and go quite quickly. Below is a current listing of sources for 2600 games. Some are major corporations, some are "Mom-and-Pop" shops, and some are aspiring 2600 hobbyists on the brink of starting a small business. When requesting information, please tell the companies you heard about their business in The 2600 Connection.

I've also compiled a listing of 2600 fans who love to buy, sell, and trade games. Send a self-addressed, stamped envelope (S.A.S.E.) to 2600 Connection, P.O. Box N664, Westport, MA 02790 and you will receive a 2600 *Survivors* listing.

**Order Department**  
**Atari Corporation**  
 P.O. Box 61657  
 Sunnyvale, CA 94089-1657  
 (408) 745-2098, (408) 745-2031

**Best Electronics<sup>1</sup>**  
 2021 The Alameda, Suite 290  
 San Jose, CA 95126-1127  
 (408) 243-6950

**Computer/Electronics Source**  
 41-30 70th St.  
 Woodside, NY 11377-3952  
 (718) 426-9614

**Dayton Discount<sup>3</sup>**  
 Hwy 92 West  
 Belleville, WI 53508  
 (608) 424-6111

**FMH I.S. Games<sup>1</sup>**  
 P.O. Box 493  
 Chesterland, OH 44026  
 (216) 729-0761

**Jeff's Atari Outpost<sup>3</sup>**  
 Jeff Morin  
 P.O. Box 771244  
 Lakewood, OH 44107

**Jerry G Visionaries**  
 Jerry Greiner  
 14700 NW Bonneville Loop  
 Beaverton, OR 97006  
 (503) 629-9064

**Mars Merchandising**  
 1041 E. St. Charles Rd.  
 Lombard, IL 60148-2059  
 (708) 627-7462

**O'Shea, Ltd.**  
 9229 Ward Parkway, Suite 370  
 Kansas City, MO 64114  
 (800) 669-0903

**Scottith's Games**  
 Scott Stilphen  
 RD #1 Box 177-A  
 Harding, PA 18643

**Telegames<sup>2</sup>**  
 Box 901  
 Lancaster, TX 75146  
 (214) 227-7694

**Video 61**  
 22735 Congo St., N.E.  
 Stacy, MN 55079  
 (612) 462-2500

**Video Game Network**  
 1232 Coon Rapids Blvd.  
 Coon Rapids, MN 55433  
 (612) 757-5509

**Video Magic<sup>2</sup>**  
 Frank Polosky  
 P.O. Box 9542  
 Pittsburgh, PA 15223

KEY

- <sup>1</sup> = send S.A.S.E. ; request 2600 list
- <sup>2</sup> = send \$1 for catalog
- <sup>3</sup> = send S.A.E. with two stamps for catalog



# Tales of the 2600

by Paul A. George

One evening, my wife and I were at a local pizza parlor and our conversation got on to the subject of videogames. I expressed my opinion that today's games lack originality and innovative game play. Almost every one of today's games involve horizontal movement and very little vertical movement. I explained that older games, such as *Asteroids* (by Atari), involved horizontal, vertical, and diagonal movement. On top of that, we had to be concerned with the momentum of the ship in order to keep control of it.

I then expounded on the idea of control and how I felt many games on the 2600 and other classic systems involved more vertical and diagonal control. Nintendo and Genesis controllers are designed for horizontal play and are not particularly good for other types of gameplay. As a matter of fact, I find it odd that after the advent of Nintendo, all controllers have been essentially designed for a left-handed player.

Just then, four kids sitting behind us in the next booth decided they had heard enough.

"Those old Atari games were cheesy and the controllers—I mean, they only had one fire button," said one of the kids.

"Well, the graphics are not great by today's standards, but they were just as challenging as those arcade games over there in the corner. I agree that it's great that the new controllers have six or so buttons, but the directional pad isn't as good as a joystick," I responded.

"Well, I could beat you at *Street Fighter II* anytime," one of the kids replied.

I took his challenge. We walked over to the *Street Fighter II* arcade coin-op in the corner of the restaurant. I took a quick look at the controls. Nothing too tough—just punches and kicks. We plopped in our quarters and picked our characters. I picked Ken and he picked Ryu. Having never played this game before, I immediately picked up his character and slammed him into the ground. Then I picked him up and did it again!

"Not bad, you've got that move down," said the boy.

I then did a few combination attacks and KO'ed his character. On the second round, the boy won—but not without a fight. On round three, I went in punching and kicking and Ryu was a goner. He plunked another quarter into the machine, but to no avail. After a few games, he gave up. It was a friendly challenge and we had a good time.

"Hey, you're good. Good game."

"Too bad they don't have *Missile Command*."

"What's that?"

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Maybe I just had a lucky day, but I would hope the reason I beat that kid was from years of playing games on the 2600. I am not trying to put down *Street Fighter II*. I actually enjoyed the game and purchased it for my Super Nintendo. Today's games rarely offer a real challenge. I see a lack of originality in today's games—rarely does something original become a hit. Almost every kid I talk to has beaten a game and it is always a horizontal playing field game. Today's games have great graphics and sounds, but very few of them require the finesse it took to play *Asteroids* or *Defender* (both by Atari). Long live the Atarians!

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