



# 2600 Connection

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## What's Going to Happen to the 2600?

by Tim Duarte

Just think—the Atari 2600 has been around since 1977. 16 years have passed and people are still talking about it and actively playing games on it. That is quite a feat. Many people encourage and thank me for keeping the 2600 alive by publishing this newsletter. It simply creates a voice for us 2600 owners. But, I will once again ask you to think about something I wrote about in the very first issue: the future of the Atari 2600.

1994 may be a big year for Atari. The Jaguar videogame system may give Atari some respect once again. If the Jaguar is successful, Atari may very well "dump" the remaining inventory of 2600 and 7800 games. Even though Atari stopped making new games for the 2600 in 1991, at least you can still buy a selection games from their customer service/ mail order department. So if Atari liquidates their 2600 and 7800 stock and decides to have nothing to do with these systems ever again, it does not matter. We will survive.

What I'd like to see is a company buy the rights to the 2600 and market it as their own system. Telegames of Lancaster, TX took this route with the Colecovision videogame system. They attained the rights to market a Colecovision clone known as the Telegames Personal Arcade. It even has Nintendo-style controllers. Perhaps Telegames or another company will do the same type of thing with the Atari 2600. Change the name, include a Nintendo-type controller, and state that the system is compatible with the hundreds of Atari 2600 cartridges. New games could be written for the system as well. You have to admit, it is a good idea. It never hurts to dream.

Another group of supporters for the 2600 are the collectors. Some just collect certain games, while others may want to try to complete a collection of the entire 2600 cartridge library. The important thing we must do is to make more people aware of the hobby of collecting 2600 cartridges. It's not just the cartridges, either. Many also collect the Atari-related merchandise (Magazines, hats, t-shirts, and other various memorabilia). There are numerous antique and toy collector publications that are available at bookstore and newsstands. *Toy Shop* and *Today's Collector* are two examples. Both of these publications offer classified ads, but neither of them have videogame sections. Hopefully, things will change and the hobby will gain some attention. Both also print feature articles about collecting various items. I don't believe an article about classic videogames has been published as of yet.

Another good idea is to have some sort of classic videogame convention. Arnie Katz once wrote about it in his columns in *Videogames and Computer Entertainment* magazine, but nothing materialized. Jeff Adkins recently mentioned it in his editorial

in *Classic Systems and Games Monthly*. I would gladly participate in forming a convention. It would be a great opportunity to meet many interesting people, discuss ideas, and buy, sell, and trade games and other merchandise. It would be the ultimate videogame swap meet. All of this sounds good on paper. In reality, such an event would require a considerable amount of money and time to organize.

I've thought of a more realistic and logical step than a full-fledged convention. In each issue of *Toy Shop* and *Today's Collector*, there are listings of antique and collectibles shows across the USA. Dealers and collectors get together and agree to meet at a specific show, tables are rented, etc. All we have to do is agree on a show to attend in 1994. "Piggybacking" an antique/collectible show may be more practical than a separate classic videogame convention at this point in time. It would be a great opportunity to attract potential collectors, too. I am going to stop by a show in Taunton, MA in November to see if this idea may work. I would like to hear your comments, suggestions, and ideas about keeping the 2600 alive.

*Toy Shop* and *Today's Collector* are published by:

Krause Publications  
700 E. State St.  
Iola, WI 54990

phone: (800) 258-0929



### Trivia Question Contest

Here are two Atari 2600 videogame trivia questions for you to answer:

1. Name the new NBC television show that is also the name of a game by Activision.
2. Name the new Mariah Carey song that is also the name of a game by Activision.

Send your answers on a postcard to:

2600 Connection  
P.O. Box N664  
Westport, MA 02790

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**Dear Editor:** I discovered the 2600 in 1980 when I was 10 years old. I was into it until I was 14, when I got out of videogames and into girls. In those four years, I witnessed the second and third waves of videogames — Intellivision and Colecovision. I was totally out of videogames when Nintendo and Sega started up and now that I have a lot of friends who have them, I can't say I'm all that interested. It's made me long for the classic simplicity of a 2600. I started to scour garage sales and eventually picked up a vintage 1978 system with 40 cartridges. I didn't even know Activision made **Pitfall II**. It's great!

At first, people scoffed at me for having something so primitive in my house. As soon as I mentioned games like **Pitfall**, **Demon Attack**, and **Yar's Revenge**, their eyes started to get misty and their mouths watered. Soon, they were inviting themselves over and challenging me to games of **Home Run**, **Ice Hockey**, and **Super Challenge Football**. I mean, who in this great country did not spend a huge chunk of their adolescence waiting for **Pac-Man** and **Donkey Kong** to come out for the 2600, or spent afternoons trying to conquer **River Raid**, **Defender**, or **Montezuma's Revenge**?

For me, I love the 2600 for a myriad of reasons. Firstly, it's a nostalgic item from my formative years and, along with perhaps *Star Wars*, the 2600 is the defining moment of a portion of my life. Second, these games are still great today. I'm 23 and I still can't figure out **Raiders of the Lost Ark**. A good 2600 game is magical because the programmer had so little to work with. He had to wrench every ounce of energy out of that little console. As the hours of my youth went up in blips and colored dots on the TV screen, I just didn't seem to mind.

After ten years, I'm getting back into the 2600. It's a drag having to buy all this stuff twice, but who had such forethought as a kid? Did you? It's great to have *The 2600 Connection* not only as a reference guide, but to know that there are others who feel the same way I do. I particularly like the "Tales of the 2600" columns—it puts a

human face on the otherwise sterileness connected with collecting.

A question: How come **Ms. Pac-Man** was a really great translation when just a few years before Atari did such a horrible job with Pac-Man? Pac-Man is so blocky and only moves from side to side while Ms. Pac-Man looks pretty close to her coin-op counterpart and moves in all directions. Ms. Pac-Man also has different boards and just all-around better gameplay.

Jeff Gomez  
736 St. Andrews Rd., Suite 117  
Columbia, SC 29210

*In 1989, I went through the same thing you're going through now. Despite the number of hours of enjoyment and entertainment the 2600 brought during my youth, I sold my 2600 and all related memorabilia at a yard sale in 1984. It wasn't so bad buying stuff the second time around because the prices were much cheaper than they were in the early 1980s. As you know, this is a very inexpensive hobby to get started in. It's the rare and unusual games that are expensive.*

*The 2600 version of Pac-Man was a rush job. Atari desperately wanted to get the product to the public. It was released and will probably go down in videogame history as one of the worst coin-op translations for a home videogame system. The programmer for Ms. Pac-Man was not under such pressure, and took the time to create a decent product. It's a great version.*

**Dear Editor:** I do not believe that Mars Merchandising of Lomard, IL should be listed in the Mail Order Directory that appeared in issue 18. As of last week, they had less than 30 common Atari cartridges, one 5200 cartridge, and several common 7800 cartridges for \$15-20 each. They have several Intellivision cartridges that they want close to \$20 for.

I'm really not trying to "bash" Mars Merchandising, but I don't believe they are a viable source of 2600 items.

Bill Zandrew  
631 S. Home  
Chicago, IL 60304

*Thanks for the info. I did speak with a clerk from Mars while I was researching the directory. Unfortunately, the number of games in stock did not come up in our conversation. I was also told I would receive a listing of 2600 games, but have not received it as of yet. For the 1994 directory, hopefully you can take another trip to Mars Merchandising and fill us in on what they have to offer ahead of time.*

**Dear Editor:** Back in the mid-1980s, Atari released a game called **Sorcerer's Apprentice**, which was based on Disney's *Fantasia*. What exactly was the object of this game? Is it a hard-to-find cartridge?

Philip Louie  
108 Dorado Terrace  
San Francisco, CA 94112

*The object of the game is for Mickey Mouse to prevent a cavern from flooding with water. This is done by catching falling stars with the Sorcerer's hat which Mickey wears. Mickey can also throw fireballs at the stars to create empty buckets for bailing out water out of the cavern. It is not one of Atari's cartridges that is easy to find.*

## Other Stuff...

Edward Villalpando has discovered a **64 in One** "Fantastic Game." The manufacturer is unknown, and it is in PAL format. Setting six tiny switches on the front of the cartridge allows you to choose one of the 64 games. For more info, contact Ed at: 13525 Utica St., Whittier, CA 90605

Werner Bleys has discovered an adult game by Playaround. It is a double-ender cartridge (product #206). The first game is **Geneal Retreat**, which is actually the same as **Custer's Revenge** (by Mystique). The second game, **Westward Ho**, puts the characters of the first game in a role reversal. For more info, contact Werner at: Jagerstraat 9, 2140 Borgerhout, Belgium.

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## Cartridge List Part 18: Froggo

Around the time the 2600 was re-released in its smaller, compact version, a Froggo Games Corp. executive got an idea. Instead of taking the time to design new games for the Atari 2600, the company would re-release other company's games under their name. The titles of the games were changed as well. Froggo may have been able to fool some of the consumers, but they couldn't fool die-hard 2600 fans. We knew what they were up to. This company took the easy way out. Needless to say, Froggo is out of business today. Froggo must have closed shop right around the time their ad appeared in the Jul/Aug and Sep/Oct 1989 issues of *Atarian* magazine. The games are quite common and were distributed quite well to nationwide toy stores in the U.S. This is surprising.

The games are nothing to get excited about. As mentioned above, the games are clones of other games. **Karate** is a blocky, stick figure karate simulation. I realize the 2600 has graphic limitations, but these are really bad. We all know the 2600 can produce better graphics than what this game has to offer. Just look at what Activision accomplished with the graphics in their games. A lesser-known company called Ultravision planned to release a game of the same name but never did so. Froggo's **Karate** may be that game. **Spiderdroid** is actually *Amidar* (by Parker Brothers). **Task Force** is essentially *Gangster Alley* (by Spectravision). Some of the graphics were changed a bit, but there's not many differences.

Froggo's three other games were rip-offs of three games by a company called Sancho. Back in the early 1980s, a company called Panda released a number of Sancho's games. It is unknown if Panda obtained the rights and permission to release these games. **Cruise Missile** is *Exocet*. **Sea Hunt** is *Scuba Diver*. **Sea Hawk** kept the same title as the Sancho/Panda release.

None of these games are really exciting to play. The cartridges are in an Activision-style casing and the labels have a white background with different colors for the text and art. These six games by Froggo are easy to obtain; the beginner collector will have no problem finding these games at reasonable prices.

Froggo also released two games for the Atari 7800—*Tank Command* and *Water Ski*. These are not as common as their 2600 games. According to their ad, four more 7800 games were planned—*Pyromania*, *Scorpion Squad*, *UFO*, and *Night of the Ninja*. It is unknown if these games were actually released. If you have any information or opinions about Froggo and their games, please write and share your information with us.

FG1001 Karate  
 FG1002 Spiderdroid  
 FG1003 Task Force  
 FG1007 Cruise Missile  
 FG1008 Sea Hawk  
 FG1009 Sea Hunt



article by: Tim Duarte list: Russ Perry Jr.



**ARCADE  
 ARTIST**

by David Allen

## News & Notes

- Check out *The Atari Zone*, one of the oldest newsletters in the videogaming community. 1993 is their fifth year of publication! For a sample, write to: Dan Iacovelli, 1411 N. 36th, Melrose Park, IL 60160-2726

- *The Laser* is yet another newsletter which offers some 2600 coverage. Editor Michael Palisano is a big fan of our favorite system. Send \$1.75 for a sample to: Michael Palisano, 2 Rock Ridge Dr., Norwalk, CT 06854

- Jerry Greiner is now in charge of publishing *The Videogame Trader*, an all classified ad newsletter for videogame owners of all systems. Some changes have been made, but classified ads are available for as low as one dollar! Send \$1 for a sample to: The Videogame Trader, 14700 NW Bonneville Loop, Beaverton, OR 97006. Jerry's telephone/FAX number is (503) 629-9064.

- The second edition of *Digital Press' Classic Videogames Collector's Guide* is now available. Not only does it provide reference to the 2600, but also for every other system from the classic era. This 64-page guide features a color cover, interesting introductory articles, and a money-back guarantee. Send \$8.95 to: Digital Press, c/o Joe Santulli, 44 Hunter Place, Pompton Lakes, NJ 07442-2037

- *APE* (Atari Power Entertainment) is a newsletter which provides coverage on the Atari Lynx and Jaguar. For a free sample, write to: APE, c/o Clinton Smith, 2104 North Kostner, Chicago, IL 60639.

- The second 2600 *Survivors* listing will be available on January 1, 1994. This listing includes the mailing addresses and phone numbers of folks who are looking to buy, sell, and trade games with other 2600 owners. To get on the list, send your name and mailing address (phone number is optional). To receive the listing, send a S.A.S.E. This is a new list; *Survivors* from the first list must register again. You may enter the trivia contest on page one at the same time. Our address is on page one.

# A Conversation with Rob Fulop

by Scott Stilphen

Recently, I had the privilege to speak with Rob Fulop, an accomplished 2600 game designer with both Atari and Imagic, and now the Creative Director and co-partner of P.F. Magic. His work with the 2600 earned him several industry accolades, and the prestigious *Game of the Year* award in 1982 for his ground-breaking achievement with **Demon Attack**.

SS: Let's start with your educational background.

RF: *I have an Electrical Engineering degree from the University of California in Berkley (in 1978). From there, I went right to work at Atari. I was hired by Nolan Bushnell and actually started working in the coin-op division doing sound effects for a pinball machine called Superman. After that, I moved to the home division when the 2600 was released. My first games were **Night Driver** and **Missile Command**.*

SS: Those were the only two you did?

RF: *No, I also did Space Invaders for the 400/800 computers. That was also around the same time when Atari's home computers were released.*

SS: Your method of hiding your initials was very ingenious!

RF: *My initials are in Missile Command, but I think it was later taken out in some versions of cartridges. That really upset me because I thought it was neat that when it was found, people could tell their friends. Atari was mad because I had left to go work at Imagic, so they went back into the code and took it out. As far as I'm concerned, that just made it a collector's item.*

SS: Exactly, because not that many have them.

RF: *Right. But then, of course, games like Super Mario came out. Those games are just filled with easter eggs.*

SS: So after Atari, you went to Imagic.

RF: *I had first worked on some stuff that was never released, and then I went to Imagic and did **Demon Attack**, **Cosmic Ark**, and **Fathom**. Right after **Demon Attack**, I did a game called **Cubicolor**. It's a two-player puzzle game based on Rubik's Cube (the handheld puzzle). This was when Rubik's Cube was very popular. It wasn't released because Imagic wanted an action game*

*at the time. It got put aside, and after Imagic folded, I ended up with about 50 prototype carts. If there's a market for 2600 games, this will be a collector's item. People who have played it seemed to like it—it's a fun game.*

SS: **Demon Attack** was probably your biggest seller.

RF: *Yes, that was the best one.*

SS: What was it based on? What was your inspiration for it?

RF: *Galaxian. That's pretty obvious! The idea was to have a game where there was a lot to see. The farther you got, the more there was. There are basically seven different monsters, and we colored them eight different ways. This led to 56 variations. Actually, there are 84 waves. It's a big game to see everything.*

SS: The manual mentions that after 84 waves, the game stops.

RF: *That's an interesting story. I thought no one would ever "wrap" the game. I actually programmed it so, at the end of the game, if you beat the demons, they would just turn off. Two days after the game was released, some kid wrapped it. After the initial run of carts, I went back and took the "bug" out. I changed one line of code. I made it so you can play the game forever, but it never gets harder past the 84th wave.*

SS: **Cosmic Ark** was a pretty hard game.

RF: *That was difficult?*

SS: I thought so.

RF: *You see, that's the problem with making a videogame. If it's more difficult than the designer can play, then how do you test it? I don't know if it's possible at the higher levels.*

SS: I've gotten up to these "Pac-Man" type beasts, at which point it gets so fast, it's unbelievable.

RF: *We actually had a promotion at Imagic to try to name all the creatures.*

SS: Is there some kind of connection with **Cosmic Ark** and Dennis Koble's **Atlantis**?

RF: *Oh, right. The little space ship. At the end of **Cosmic Ark**, this little space ship flew away, and we wound up putting it in **Atlantis**. We were going to put the ship in a bunch of games.*

SS: I noticed on some versions of **Cosmic Ark**, the TV type switch flips the star background on and off. Were you aware of this?

RF: *No. The star field was done because of a bug in the 2600 hardware. Later models don't have this, so there may be some differences there.*

SS: Getting back to **Demon Attack**, what was the lawsuit with Atari all about?

RF: *Atari sued us (Imagic) over the **Demon Attack** version for the Intellivision. It looked like a game that Atari did, but the suit was later dropped.*

SS: Were there any games in your 2600 career that you never finished?

RF: *I worked on an Egyptian-themed game at Atari before I left. It never quite worked out, and we didn't like it so it never got finished. Later on, it became **Riddle of the Sphinx**. About half the games that got started were never completed. Bob Polaro did a neat **Road Runner** game. Was that ever released?*

SS: Yes, it actually came out about four years ago. I think it was done very well.

RF: *He started that game about eight years before. I think the best cart of all time was Douglas Neubauer's game...*

SS: **Solaris**?

RF: *Yes. That was the best thing when I left and he spent two years "in the dark" just doing that game. But there was no market for it when he was done.*

SS: That's a fantastic game.

RF: *What do you think is the best 2600 game?*

SS: Probably **Solaris**. It's definitely one of my favorites.

RF: *I also have a **Game Line** unit from back then. It let you load carts over the phone...*

SS: That's definitely a collector's item! I remember seeing the ads for it when they were trying to get people to sign up. Did you ever use it?

RF: No, it never worked.

SS: With your Imagic games, were there any little tricks that you put in? In Fathom, the company's address is shown at the end of the game...

RF: I never liked Fathom.

SS: Really? I thought it was a good game. The layout is quite big.

RF: It was an 8K game. That was the last game I did. I never knew what it was when I started. For all the other games, I had a vision for what they were going to be. Fathom started with a neat picture that Michael Becker drew of a dolphin jumping out of the water. He drew this graphic and we made a game out of it. There was never any vision of what the game was. It was this kind of "epic" where you're underwater, then you fly in the air. There's mermaids, too. It just never felt like a game. The best games are simple with a real vision of what it is—like *Pitfall* (by Activision).

SS: That had a similar beginning as well. It started with a little demo of a running man. He (David Crane) just sat down and figured out the rest.

RF: Well, we can't do that anymore! Now, with CD games, it's like making a movie. You have 10 people working on a project, and you can't just sit down and make it up as you go along.

SS: After Imagic, what did you end up doing?

RF: I did some on-line games for *Quantum*, and then started making active video for Hasbro. I did a few games for them, one of which is for the Genesis CD called *Night Trap*. It's basically a movie. It's interesting—if you look back at *Night Driver*, it had 2K of code. The last project we finished involved 650 megabytes of code. Even though 12 years have gone by, and we have 2000 times as many resources to use, the skills that make use of those resources to design a game are exactly the same.

SS: It's still the same process of approaching it?

RF: I think so. You're basically resource-constrained. It's funny—I often call these CD players the "VCS" of video. The 2600 VCS was really a horrible machine to program on.

SS: Other programmers have mentioned the same thing—it was really hard to get a good game out of it.

RF: It took a year.

SS: How long does it take you to do a CD game?

RF: A year, but now it's 20 people and the budgets are half of a million dollars. With games such as *Night Driver*, it was one guy sitting down for nine months—like writing a book.

SS: So after Hasbro, you went to P.F. Magic?

RF: Yes. At P.F. Magic, we do about five or six large projects a year.

SS: Is this your own company?

RF: I have a partner. There's 18 people in the company.

SS: May I ask what "P.F." stands for?

RF: We don't ever tell anyone—it's our secret!

SS: I thought maybe there was something with the names—Imagic and P.F. Magic.

RF: I just like "magic" in the title of a company. There's really no connection.

SS: What exactly are you working on?

RF: We're working on games for the Sega Genesis CD, the 3DO platform, CDI, and the Super Nintendo.

SS: People in the industry are predicting the 3DO to be...

RF: We don't know. At this point, I've worked on 15 platforms in my life. To me, they're all the same. It's the next "2600." Whatever comes out next—they'll say it's wonderful and it won't have enough memory! The 3DO is definitely the next big thing to get excited about. But it's all the same—none of them have enough memory or processing power to do what you want, and they all take a year to do products for. That's been the same for the last 12 years.

SS: What do you think about virtual reality?

RF: Well, there's definitely no rush. I don't think it's going to happen anytime soon—not in the way it's being portrayed. It's just not that exciting. At the end of the day, I think *Tetris* is more fun! I think something cool can come of it, but it won't be for awhile.

SS: It will be interesting to see where they take it. Right now, it's sort of a gimmick, or a toy. Virtual Reality has been around for years.

RF: *Battlezone* was a "virtual" game.

SS: What are some of your favorite games?

RF: *Tetris*, *Q\*Bert*, *Pac-Man*... I like puzzle-type games, and those that are abstract, rather than those that are more realistic or that try to imitate reality.

SS: Do you ever see any of your old fellow 2600 programmers?

RF: Oh yeah. I see Dennis Koble all the time, and David Crane. Many of them are still active in the industry. I think Warren Robinett went to work for the military, and Howard Scott Warshaw doesn't design games anymore...but most of them are still around today.



## Rob Fulop's Softwareology

**For Atari 2600:**  
*Night Driver* (Atari)  
*Missile Command* (Atari)  
*Demon Attack* (Imagic)  
*Cosmic Ark* (Imagic)  
*Fathom* (Imagic)  
*Cubicolor* (Imagic) \*

**For Atari 8-bit computers:**  
*Space Invaders* (Atari)

**For America On-Line:**  
*Rabbit Catch*

**For Sega Genesis CD:**  
*Night Trap*  
*Sewer Shark*

**For CDI:**  
*Third Degree*

\* never officially released by Imagic

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*The Atari 2600 Treasure Chest*

# CUBICOLOR

Rob Fulop designed a game for Imagic in 1982 called **Cubicolor**. It was never officially released by Imagic, so Rob independently sold it himself. Each cartridge is signed and numbered by Rob, but some duplicate "copied" versions exist.

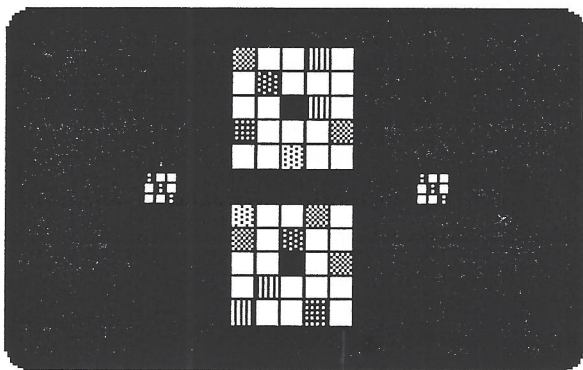
This puzzle game must have been planned when the Rubik's Cube craze hit the USA. Cubicolor is a unique game that puts a twist on the cube craze.

The screen consists of two cubes—player one on the top and player two on the bottom. Each cube has 24 squares plus one blank square, which creates a 5 x 5 matrix. When RESET is pressed, the 2600 generates a pattern of nine squares in a 3 x 3 matrix. The pattern appears in two spots—on the right and left center of the screen. The object is to match the nine central squares in your 5 x 5 cube with the 3 x 3 pattern. This is accomplished by moving and shifting the squares around—one at a time. Using the joystick, place the blinking cursor on a square. The 24 squares can only be moved into the blank square, so making the moves requires planning and logic. It's sort of like an electronic version of those small plastic games where you move around numbered squares until they are in numerical order. Depending upon the position of the blank square, you can move or "slide" one or up to four squares at once.

Pressing SELECT allows you to choose between three game variations: Complete the game in the shortest amount of time, complete the game in the fewest number of moves, or solitaire. Since two people can play simultaneously, find a friend and see who can complete the pattern first. This feature can be a lot of fun.

Cubicolor shows the beauty of the 2600 because there are no fancy graphics or music and it's still a great game. It would be no different playing this game on a 16-bit system because it's actually very simple to play.

*The Digital Press Collector's Guide* values this game at \$500. Consider yourself lucky if you have one of the originals. Rob is offering the game through a special offer mentioned on this page. If you like puzzle games, then you will enjoy Cubicolor. Not only is it one of my favorite games, but it is one of the prized cartridges in my collection.



Of all cartridges for the 2600, Cubicolor may be the hardest cartridge to find. However, "bootleg" copies do exist

In the interview, Rob mentioned the existence of some Cubicolor cartridges that are currently in his possession. This is the only complete game of his that was never released. It is his desire to distribute them to us avid collectors. This will certainly become a valuable collector's item.

The price is \$100 for each cartridge, which includes a small sheet of instructions personally autographed by Rob Fulop. Since there is only about 50 cartridges, this is a limited-time offer. To order, send a money order for \$100 (payable to Rob Fulop) to:

P.F. Magic, c/o Rob Fulop (Cubicolor)  
501 Second St., Suite 120, San Francisco, CA 94107

*The Atari 2600 Bookshelf*

## ATARI 2600 VIDEO REVIEW VOLUME 1

I often browse through book stores and wish that there were books written about the Atari 2600. I never find any. I wander to the magazine section and usually flip through the pages of *Electronic Games* and *Videogames Magazines*. I occasionally find bits of 2600-related information in the letters, question and answer, or historical flashback sections of these magazines. Thankfully, these magazines promote videogame newsletters like *The 2600 Connection* and give us a free plug from time to time. One other fine publication is *Digital Press*. Joe Santulli and Kevin Oleniacz have created a product which is better than a book about the 2600! It's a videotape which contains footage of various companies' videogame libraries. The viewer gets to see around 20 seconds of each videogame. The first tape, Volume 1, contains the complete game libraries of Avalon Hill, Tigervision, Data Age, Coleco, M Network, CBS Games, Froggo, and Imagic. A commentary sheet is included with the tape, which includes various tidbits of information about the games. Showing the tape to a newcomer would be a great way of introducing the hobby.

I thought it was interesting that the staff called upon master collector Al Backiel to borrow a few of the rare games from his collection to complete the tape. I did notice that the tape failed to include **Springer** (by Tigervision). Perhaps some footage of this game can be edited in or added to the end of future tapes.

Overall, I enjoyed the tape—especially the music-filled company introductions. It was also nice to finally see what some of those rare games look and play like. You can't get that from a book! I look forward to future volumes of these tapes. Volume 1 has found a nice place at home—on my bookshelf.

To order a videotape send \$8 to:

Digital Press  
c/o Joe Santulli  
44 Hunter Place  
Pompton Lakes, NJ 07442-2037

*Atari 2600 Playing Strategies***ROAD RUNNER**

by Scott Stilphen

- Moving up and down allows the coyote to gain on you. Try to keep the coyote from straying off the screen. If this happens, he'll reappear—running faster! On levels two and up, he will have rocket skates. Eating bird seed will nullify the effects of the rocket skates, magnet, and the coyote's extra speed.
- On the levels with oncoming trucks, wait until one passes, then move behind it and stop. This lures the coyote into the truck's path and is worth 1000 points. This strategy also works well with land mines.
- On the cannon levels, stand in front of the first cannon (firing left). When the coyote gets close, run and jump left, then move to the upper roadway. When you reach the other cannon, keep running left. This forces the coyote to move backwards. When the cannon fires, quickly move down and jump left. Sometimes the cannon will keep hitting the coyote, netting the player a lot of points. If the coyote falls behind, he'll sometimes reappear on a rocket. Try to get on a pathway connecting the two roads and move up or down to avoid him. After two passes, the rocket will disappear.
- The levels with falling rocks are the most difficult. Stand next to the rock face and wait for rocks to fall past you before running underneath it. Be careful—the rocks can bounce unpredictably! While waiting, move the joystick quickly back and forth to keep the coyote from catching you. The last two rock faces won't have any falling rocks.
- There is a way to pause the game indefinitely. While on the cliff levels, if the coyote trails off the screen, he won't reappear until you are between a long stretch of roadway. Get the coyote to fall behind and stop as soon as you appear between two visible cliffs (before he reappears) and the trick should work.
- According to Jeff Adkins, there are rumors of possible initials to be found in the game. I've flipped both the score and level counters, but haven't found anything. The only interesting thing I noticed is that on levels with widening and narrowing roadways, small dots sometimes appear along the edges. This could be a programming flaw, but it doesn't happen all the time. If you have any tips, please let me know.

Road Runner (by Atari) is CX2663.

**Tips and Tricks**

by Scott Stilphen

**Donkey Kong** (by Coleco)

- There's a few glitches on Screen 1. Sometimes barrels roll off screen before reaching the bottom when you are nearing the top level. Barrels may also temporarily "glitch out" when falling down ladders near the lower right side and by the oil can.
- There can only be one barrel on any ramp at one time.
- Use the hammer on both screens to get the most points. On higher levels, stand by the ladder under the girl to get the barrels as they fall. Remember that "hammer time" is different for each screen. Using the timer: 1st=600, 2nd=500.
- There are some glitches on the second screen that appear. At certain scores, fireballs begin to "shake," making it impossible to jump them. Some scores to watch them for are: 80,000-120,000, 150,000, 270,000, and 290,000-300,000.
- Fireballs can jump rivet holes at any time.
- If a fireball "hangs up" in a spot, try moving around. This usually frees it up.
- A neat trick is to trap fireballs on the outer girder sections by jumping over them and clearing a rivet at the same time.

**Cosmic Ark** (by Imagic)

- Some versions of this cart allow the background to be turned on and off with the COLOR/B-W switch. The label on these carts have smaller and lighter type.
- Press left and right or up and down on the planet screen. The scout ship will move much quicker.
- I've seen up to seven different "beasties." Has anyone gotten past planet 14? This planet has a purple ground and has "Pac-Man" type beasties.

**Ghostbusters** (by Activision)

- Upon reaching the Marshmallow Man (MM) screen, notice that he moves his legs when passing between the second and third column of windows from the left. Now move your player under the first column of windows. As MM starts to jump away from you, run until you're under that 3rd column. As MM jumps toward you, wait until his right foot is just about overhead, then start running. Your player should be between his feet as MM shifts them. Both feet can be cleared. It requires practice. You must get two of the three men to complete the game. If you manage to finish it, you can start a new game with the extra money earned.

**Star Raiders** (by Atari)

- After finishing a game, you can sometimes change your rank and rating to something else by pressing the hyperwarp key (#3). "Scout 3" changes to "Cook 5," and "Pilot 1" will change to "Atari 3" (mystery rank). Has anyone managed to save the base in any game version?

**Coming in Issue 20:**

- Shooting Arcade (by Atari) prototype found!
  - The Atari 2600 Winter Olympics
  - Three more 2600 videotapes reviewed

# Tales of the 2600

by Mark Androvich

It was Christmas day, 1979. At the crack of dawn, I woke up and ran downstairs to the Christmas tree the way any other 13 year-old boy would. I wanted an Atari 2600 VCS more than anything. But at a price of \$140, I knew it was too big of a gift to expect—especially since our *Super Pong* game system was now collecting dust. My Christmas gift wish was a Mattel hand-held football game.

As I approached the tree that morning, I realized that none of the packages were the size of an Atari 2600 box. As I opened the presents a few hours later (after my parents awoke), I also noticed that none of the packages were the size of a hand-held football game either. I tried not to act disappointed. After all, I truly appreciated all the other gifts. But when a 13 year-old sets his sights on a specific Christmas gift, as I did, trying not to appear disappointed is about as easy as trying not to appear nervous on one's first date.

Finally, only two gifts remained. One was an envelope—obviously a card and a gift certificate of some kind. The other was a small square box from my grandmother. My parents had "forgotten" to place it under the tree. My heart leaped! This had to be the hand-held football videogame! My heart sank again when I picked up the box. It didn't feel like a hand-held football game. It wasn't. Instead, it was an Atari cartridge which my father and I had played frequently in the stores—**Air-Sea Battle**.

"But I don't have an Atari VCS," I cried.

"Grandma must have misunderstood when we told her you wanted a videogame," my parents explained. "We'll just have to return it."

I was heart-broken. Not only did I fail to get the football game I had asked for, in its place I received a game cartridge for a videogame system I didn't even own! I felt disappointed, and I also felt guilty for feeling disappointed. After all, Christmas is about giving, togetherness, and love. Why was I acting so selfish?

I picked up the envelope and opened it. Instead of a card inside, there was a small, hand-written note which simply said: "Look under the bed." I recognized my parent's handwriting and looked at them, wondering what they were up to. They were just sitting there smiling at each other. I took off for the bedroom as fast as I could, but I already knew what I would find. Under the bed, unwrapped, was an Atari 2600 VCS.

"It was expensive," my father said, "but we figured it would probably last longer than a hand-held football game."

He was right. It's 14 years later and I'm still enjoying the best Christmas present I ever received. Thanks, Mom and Dad!

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*Do you have a tale to tell? If so, please send it in.  
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