

ORPHANED COMPUTERS & GAME SYSTEMS

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This issue is kind of a milestone for us. It is about twice the size of previous issues, but it took much less effort. Chris and I have hit full swing with our abilities to communicate what we have to say to readers. There is nothing quite like sitting and working on a project together. My enthusiasm for gaming and collecting has come to mean much more to me since I met Chris.

But there is more to the hobby than two guys playing games. It is about friendship, conversation and taunting. Chris might say, "Yeah, you *are* better at *Warlords* than me, but how about we play a game of *Doom*!" I would not really have a response to that either, since he is better at *Doom*. I can only hope that somehow I can talk him into playing *Doom* with Paddles. ("Oh, it is so much easier that way -- try it," I will say.)

Editing and writing this newsletter exposes both Chris and I to people we would not meet otherwise. At a local video game store, Replay Games, I spoke to someone who'd received a plaque for beating *Raiders Of the Lost Ark*. Ideas get bounced around with other people as well. I've been thinking about creating a compilation of Bally Astrocade games on CD that could be loaded into the *Bally BASIC* cartridge. This is an idea that I have received some support for, but more input is needed from users of the Bally. (Next issue will have more details about this.)

This has been a great issue to put together. Chris did great work with all of his articles, as is usual, but pay close attention to his article "Making Worlds." He makes it seem as though anyone can make a game. And, after all, isn't he right? I am especially proud of my son's input in this issue. He plays games more than I do, and his opinions count very highly to me. The other reviews in this issue are dedicated to late Atari 2600 releases that we think deserve special attention.

You will also find Chris's game solutions and Easter eggs. Chris makes it his personal duty to show me every Easter egg he finds. I do not have the patience to search them out. Chris does all of the hard work for me; I get to reap the benefits. Aren't I a jerk? The Atari 5200 and ColecoVision comparison is not unique, as similar comparisons were made when the systems were released. But fifteen years of hindsight can lend great insights. (Too bad hindsight and foresight together are like double-negatives -- totally useless...)

Enjoy!

-- AT

There are three things that I love to do enough to justify wasting space in an editorial to mention them. One is playing music. Gotta get that out of the way.

The next one's playing video games with Adam. You really have to find someone who has the same sort of past gaming

fascination as you to connect on a 4k level. There's nothing like sitting there for a few hours, not worrying about anything but playing Atari; just having a ball picking games and playing them.

Sometimes we pick 8-bit games (like the *Pitfall II* excursion we bragged about last ish). Sometimes we network our PlayStations and spend hours in *Doom*-land together. Anyway, this all threw me for a loop, because from my mid-'teens (mid-eighties-ish) through to the age of 25, it was a solitary experience for me. So it's like I've discovered all of these new games (the two-player cooperative mode in *Joust*, etc.).

The third thing that's more fun than anything is sitting there coding and listening to the soundtrack of *Tron*. Wendy Carlos (of *A Clockwork Orange* soundtrack fame, as Adam informed me) composed it, and it's beautiful music in its own right, but it starts all the old, overtly enthusiastic synapses firing and keeps me in the mood to program, and program *well*. I don't need such a sensory catalyst, but it makes it *so* much fun. In this hearty double-issue somewhere, you'll find an article about my age-old fascination with *Tron*. Anyway, enjoy the super-sized stack of syntax you hold in your appreciative appendages, and enjoy the Atari convention (if you're going, which we are -- nyah nyah!).

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