

'SCRATCH'

one more off your list

IN THIS ISSUE

Sealed Games

Is that factory?

CopyNES

What the heck is it?

Fun

A whole lot of it.



How to scratch Stadium Events games off your needs list for free

Article by Dan Langenvin

Before I dive in, let me take a minute to show you my needs list: a little free advertising for yours truly, the NA editor-in-chief. Not just because I can, but it really is relevant as well.

Cheetahmen 2
Double Strike
Dragon Fighter
Great Waldo Search
Monster Truck Rally
Secret Scout
6 in 1 Myriad
Stadium Events
Bubble Bath Babes
Peek-a-Boo Poker
Hot Slots

Now, a quick magic trick. I'm going to take an expensive, daunting and persistent list of needs and make it into something quite different:

Double Strike
Dragon Fighter
Great Waldo Search
Monster Truck Rally
Secret Scout

For the low, low price of \$0 I've eliminated all of the most difficult titles from my needs list. No longer will I have to worry about interest rates in relation to my home mortgage to fund my hobby! No longer do I need to worry about fakes, frauds and repos! It's liberating! But is it fulfilling? Is my set really going to be complete with just under \$100 left to spend and 5 carts to go?

A year ago I wouldn't have thought so. I, along with scores of other collectors, simply said to myself "I want them all." Others had already done it by the time I made that personal decision, others have completed their sets in the meantime, and still more will do so in the future. Some CIB, some with Sachens, some sealed. Some without SE, some without Racermate II, some without Panesians, still others

WELCOME TO THE EZINE

(And now, a letter from your Editor-in-Chief)

without any unlicensed games whatsoever. It's been said many times before, there's no "one count" for the NES set. Sure, there are definitive numbers in the hobby. There are, for example, a finite number of titles. It's lower than the 776 that many people accept as the total number of "games" to collect though. The actual number would combine all of the Pac-Mans, Impossible Missions...even the 6-in-1's since they're all variants of the same name, just different publishers.

How about just getting all of the different games, all of the different "play experiences?" That's also a finite goal...but one that requires thought as well. We can eliminate multicarts like 123/ABC and SMB/DH/WCTM, most Aladdin minicarts, and title changes like Stadium Events since they essentially already exist in another form. Same game, different name. You could certainly complete a set of these, but would it really be complete in the eyes of other collectors?

My point is, that whichever you choose to collect, it's arbitrary. Although our database at NA is enormous, your collection is your own. Lately with the tremendous increase in users and posts at the site, we've also seen a correlated increase with values of NES games. There's no mistaking this effect...the NA effect, to coin a phrase. Sure, Digital Press and other forums have existed for years, Etlar's list has launched 1,000 collections, and eBay has had Nintendo games on it from day one. But it's NA that has galvanized the community and combined the hobby with pure, concentrated information in a way no single entity has done yet.

Those few who used to collect have been able to rest on their laurels, enjoying the ballooning of their collection's value... those boxes sitting in the closet may have doubled in value (and then some!) over the course of a year. But there are a great deal more collectors just entering the hobby because of the excitement, allure and ease that NintendoAGE embodies. It's free, 24 hours, friendly, and extraordinarily well-designed. But I digress, this isn't an advertisement for something you've already "bought

into," it's an editorial.

Getting back to my \$0 investment into my own collection... why would I choose to set my personal finish line a few feet short of the "generally accepted" one? Why would I "give up" with so few games left to go? Partially, it's because I love the hobby more than I love the games that go with the hobby. It's perhaps difficult to explain, but documenting and discussing the NES is way more valuable to me than any one game. When you're discussing a game, searching for a game, and yes, playing a game (good gracious!), there's something intangible that happens. It takes on its own personality, it becomes more than an inanimate object; it becomes an object of desire and fun, a topic; something upon which focus is put. To simply own a game, especially a chase game, is an achievement in and of itself, but I find it to be fleeting.

I look at my collection of well over 1,000 games and have trouble focusing on any one of them. There are ones of which I am proud for a number of reasons. Bargains, nostalgia, favorites and rarities. Some are just plain cool. But once I have them...that's it. I can't "have" them once again; they're HAD! I've already "had" so many games, I'm content NOT having the last few expensive variants and pirates that comprise the ones I've erased from my needs list.

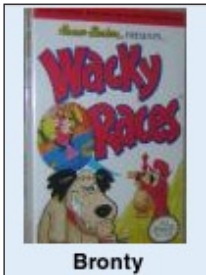
So there's a mixture of relief knowing the end is much closer. Not having to compete with the scores of other grail-chasers that log in with only the word "ALL" in mind is liberating. The kids that overpay, and resell to the next collector who wants to overpay using the previous person as an arbitrary benchmark. Grail-chasers; an ironic term because there's very little chasing to be done. All it takes is more money than the next guy. There's not much of a chase in that. And shaking off this angst cost me a grand total of jack squat. Hey guys, I'm almost done! Relief, liberation...and honestly...but no feelings of disappointment, envy or deficiency. Not after watching this whole show for as long as I have.

BRONTY'S BABBLINGS

How was it sealed?

Article by Dan Maresca

“So Bronty, did this title come with the H seam? How about that one? What about unlicensed games?”



Bronty

These are some of the questions I get on a pretty regular basis. I think a database of information on how individual NES titles were sealed is long overdue. Accordingly, I am using a combination of memory and my own collection to document how each title was factory-sealed. There will probably be a mistake in this listing; let's get that out of the way now. Furthermore, there really isn't enough space in the e-Zine (nor do I have enough time in just one month to dig up all the games I want to double-check on) so I will publish a partial list now with others to come later. For the most part it will be broken down alphabetically over the space a few e-Zine articles, but there may be some titles early in the alphabet that I can't check until later.

First thing's first: clearly, not all games were sealed the same way. Most licensed games have the “horizontal” seam which is well known but really probably better described as an “H” seam: seams on the long thin sides of the

Below: Typical factory-sealed “H” seam, compared to a reseal.



box connected by a seam in the back middle of the box forming an “H” shape overall. This is nothing new to many collectors.

How ever, there are also licensed games sealed in other manners, the most common of which being the “vertical overlap” seam: a seam

at the top flap, a similar one on the bottom, with a small area down the back of the box, from seam to seam, where the plastic is two layers thick (the overlap). Unlicensed games had all manners of different seams based upon the title, manufacturer, and soforth.



Above: Always check for overlapping, as re-seals rarely do this.

To further complicate matters, not all copies of each game were sealed the same way. (Attention variant hunters!). For example, I have definitely seen two different seal variants on Popeye. From what I've seen over the years, the most common seal on Popeye is a variant of the normal H seam. I've heard it called the step seam in the past, and for lack of a better term, I will continue to refer to it as such. Normal “H” seam copies definitely also exist though. I've owned both and am 100% sure that they are legitimate seams. I've seen other step seam copies of Popeye and even a step seam Genghis Khan as well, which was from a source I trust 110%. Why Popeye? Why Genghis Khan? What other step seam games are out there? Who knows. Perhaps one particular factory (or even an assembly machine or two within a factory) was a little different than the rest. Hard to say, but there's no doubt at all in my mind that it's a legitimate (if poorly understood and poorly documented) seam variation.

As another example, Stack-ups are sealed without a horizontal seam due to their large size. They have seams on three of four sides of the box. However, two different versions clearly exist, one with a black circular “Nintendo” sticker under the plastic, and one without. Both of these versions are sealed on three sides, but it's a different three sides depending on whether or not the sticker exists.

The point is, this list that I am publishing is far from exhaustive. It is a first attempt at documenting what collectors need to know. But it certainly won't be able to address every possibility because clearly seal variants do exist. This will just be an attempt at publishing what I know and/or believe to exist... it will be up to other collectors to add to this list or point out any inaccuracies that may have crept into it dur-

ing its creation.

A word on Color Dreams, Bunch Games and Wisdom Tree titles: clearly these guys were all over the map when it came to sealing games, the same way they were all over the map with regards to contents. Collectors will notice while perusing the list (as it becomes more complete in the coming months) that there are definite trends to how all other manufacturers sealed their games. For example, LJN and Acclaim games appeared to have started out with H seams, eventually switching over to vertical overlap seams. We even track the date of the switch, as I will address in a future article. But CD/WT/Bunch? No sense. No rhyme. No reason. I suspect the collector is best off using other methods beyond seam type to determine whether or not a given CD the mill in the future).

I have had to leave some titles out, as previously noted due to not having them handy to double check. These will hopefully be addressed in a future issue.

Below: Various other factory-sealed games.



Nintendo NES Factory Release Info Letters A-C

Legend:

Flatback – No horizontal or vertical seam.

L – Left Seam

R- Right Seam

B – Bottom Seam

T – Top Seam

Abadox	Horizontal	Bionic Commando	Horizontal
A Boy and His Blob	Horizontal	Black Bass	Horizontal
AD&D: Dragonstrike	Horizontal	Blackjack	Vertical Overlap
AD&D: Heroes of the Lance	Horizontal	Blades of Steel (Reg. & Classic)	Horizontal
AD&D: Hillsfar	Horizontal	Blaster Master	Horizontal
AD&D: Pool of Radiance	Horizontal	Blue Marlin	Horizontal
Action 52	LRB / Flatback	Blues Brothers	Horizontal
Addams Family	Horizontal	Bo Jackson	Horizontal
Addams Family: Pugsley's	Horizontal	Bomberman	Horizontal
Adventure Island	Horizontal	Bomberman 2	Horizontal
Adventure Island 2	Horizontal	Bonk's Adventure	Horizontal
Adventure Island 3	Horizontal	Boulder Dash	Horizontal
Adventures of Tom Sawyer	Horizontal	Breakthru	Horizontal
After Burner	Vertical Overlap	Break Time Pool	Horizontal
Air Fortress	Horizontal	Bubble Bath Babes	B / Flatback
Airwolf	Horizontal	Bubble Bobble	Horizontal
Al Unser Jr. Turbo Racing	Horizontal	Bubble Bobble 2	Horizontal
Alfred Chicken	Horizontal	Bucky O'Hare	Horizontal
Alien Syndrome	Vertical Overlap	Bugs Bunny Birthday Blowout	Horizontal
All Pro Basketball	Horizontal	Bugs Bunny Crazy Castle	Horizontal
Alpha Mission	Horizontal	Bump n Jump	Horizontal
Amagon	Horizontal	Burai Fighter	Horizontal
American Gladiators	Horizontal	Burgertime	Horizontal
Anicipation	Horizontal	Cabal	Horizontal
Archon	Horizontal	Caesar's Palace	Horizontal
Arch Rivals	Horizontal	California Games	Horizontal
Arkanoid	TLB / Flatback	Captain America and the Avengers	Horizontal
Arkista's Ring	Horizontal	Captain Comic	TBR / Flatback
Astyanax	Horizontal	Captain Planet	Horizontal
Athena	Horizontal	Captain Skyhawk	Horizontal
Athletic World (FFF) Black Circular Sticker Seal - does *not* say Nintendo		Casino Kid	Horizontal
Athletic World (non-FFF)	Horizontal	Casino Kid 2	Horizontal
Attack of the Killer Tomatoes	Horizontal	Castlian	Horizontal
Baby Boomer	LRB / Flatback	Castle of Deceit	LRB / Flatback
Back to the Future	Horizontal	Castle of Dragon	Horizontal
Back to the Future 2&3	Horizontal	Castlequest	Horizontal
Bad Dudes	Horizontal	Castlevania	Horizontal
Bad Street Brawler	Horizontal	Castlevania 2	Horizontal
Bad News Baseball	Horizontal	Castlevania 3	Horizontal
Bandai Golf: Pebble Beach	Horizontal	Caveman Games	Horizontal
Bandit Kings of Ancient China	Horizontal	Challenge of the Dragon	LRB / Flatback
Barbie	Horizontal	Championship Bowling	Horizontal
Bart vs. the World	Vertical Overlap	Championship Pool	Horizontal
Baseball	Horizontal	Cheetahmen 2	LRB / Flatback
Baseball Simulator 1000	Horizontal	Chessmaster	Horizontal
Baseball Stars	Horizontal	Chip 'n Dale Rescue Rangers	Horizontal
Baseball Stars 2	Horizontal	Chip 'n Dale Rescue Rangers 2	Horizontal
Bases Loaded	Horizontal	Chubby Cherub	Horizontal
Bases Loaded 2	Horizontal	Circus Caper	Horizontal
Bases Loaded 3	Horizontal	City Connection	Horizontal
Bases Loaded 4	Horizontal	Clash at Demonhead	Horizontal
Base Wars	Horizontal	Classic Concentration	Horizontal
Batman Returns	Horizontal	Cliffhanger	Horizontal
Battle Chess	Horizontal	Clu Clu Land	Horizontal
Battleship	Horizontal	Cobra Command	Horizontal
Battle Tank	Horizontal	Cobra Triangle	Horizontal
Battletoads	Horizontal	Code Name Viper	Horizontal
Battletoads / Double Dragon	Horizontal	Color a Dinosaur	Horizontal
Battle of Olympus	Horizontal	Commando	Horizontal
Balloon Fight	Horizontal	Conan	Horizontal
Bard's Tale	Horizontal	Conflict	Horizontal
Beetlejuice	Horizontal	Conquest of the Crystal Palace	Horizontal
Best of the Best Championship	Horizontal	Contra	Horizontal
Bible Adventures	LRT / Flatback	Contra Force	Horizontal
Bill Elliot's NASCAR	Horizontal	Cool World	Horizontal
Bill & Ted's Excellent Adventure	Horizontal	Cowboy Kid	Horizontal
Big Bird's Hide & Speak	Horizontal	Crash and the Boys	Horizontal
Bigfoot	Horizontal	Crystalis	Horizontal
Bignose Freaks Out	LRB / Flatback	Crystal Mines	Flatback
Bignose the Caveman	LRB / Flatback	Cyberball	Horizontal
		Cyberoid	Horizontal

This Month's Member Spotlight:

FLYINGDUCKY

Name: Peter Melnick

Age: 30

Location: Chilliwack, British Columbia, Canada

Occupation: Hydro Excavator Operator

Children? "I had a son who was just born on September 11, 2007. His name is Benjamin. His favorite thing to do is poop."

Favorite NES

Game: "Hmm, I like Bubble Bobble. I think it's funny watching the guys run around. I like the music, and the two-player mode is a lot of fun."

Least Favorite NES Game: "Teenage



Mutant Ninja Turtles, just because after all these years I still can't beat it."

What would you spend your money on if you didn't collect for the NES? "Porn. Just kidding. I'm not sure. I guess other systems and games. Yeah, most likely that, since I do collect all the other systems."

Fondest Memory of Video Gaming: "I remember one year at Christmas sneaking downstairs and pre-opening some games from under the tree and playing them all night. Once morning came, I re-wrapped them and put them back under the tree. My parents never found out I did that. The games were R.C. Pro-Am and Ninja Gaiden."

Any website you want to show off?

<http://flyingduckynintendohaven.com>

Anything you'd like to say for all the world to see? "It's been a lot of fun getting to know other members from the site and becoming friends with them. Everyone's

been very knowledgeable and has helped me with whatever questions I might have had. I find NintendoAGE to be one of the best sites out there for NES collectors."

Want to be featured?

Each month from now on, we'll be featuring one member from our community. Want to be part of it next month? The subject for each month's issue will be selected at random from people in the chatroom. So log on, and hope mewithoutYou52 drops by.

Just remember that there are hundreds of members, so don't get discouraged if you can't get in next issue.



Hot Tip: Collecting on Ebay

Article by Dustin Lett

When's the last time you were able to get a decent CIB game for a good price? With the crazy increase in prices on eBay and the ever-grow-



ing number of new collectors, it has become nearly impossible to find a great bargain like you could in the past. It seems that eBay is swamped with new collectors who don't know the values of the games and can't determine what really is rare and

what's not.

Today, there are more people than ever searching eBay for the rarest NES games and there are fewer and fewer copies available as they are ending up in the hands of collectors. With the low supply and high demand, prices are being driven up to outrageous amounts. Undoubtedly, the NES scene has definitely become

more of a seller's market than a buyer's market right now.

So you still have the desire for those games, but can't stand to dish out the unprecedented amounts of cash they are fetching right now? Here are some tips to help you score big without breaking the bank.

Of course, the perfect solution would be to find rare games in the wild. Try looking for games at your local flea market, thrift store, pawn shop, yard sale, etc... There are always good deals to be had at places like these as people are usually just looking to get rid of their old, unused stuff. Although, if you are like me you will not always have good luck in the wild and will need another source for those games you desire.

Another great way to get games is to trade with fellow collectors. Often times I have found that I have an extra copy of a game that I don't really need and it turns out that someone else is actively seeking it. When you are searching for games it is smart to not just look for what you don't have, but to also look for items that you could trade towards something that you do need. A big key to making great trades is to stay organized. It makes it easier to trade if you have a current list of items you have for trade and items that you want to trade for.

Last and definitely not least is eBay.

Without eBay most of us would not have the collections that we have today. Some items are just so scarce that you are almost certainly not going to find them in the wild. For those rare items already in others' personal collections, trading is likely out of the question as well. Knowing how to use eBay without spending a bundle will be a big advantage for you as your collection grows. Patience is an important virtue to have when browsing eBay. Just because a game sells for a high price does not mean that you will have to pay that much to get it. Over time you will see that you can find games for less than they "normally" go for. You might find a good bargain because of a poor listing, catching a good buy it now, or some other reason that may cause the auction to not draw a lot of attention. I have found with most items that it is usually better in the long run for you to be patient, than to over-pay.

Obviously, to obtain certain games for your collection, you are going to have to shell out the big bucks. To ensure more funding for the rest your collection just make sure you don't pay more than you have to for any one item. NES collecting is a ton of fun but it can become too expensive if you just start dishing out money on games that can be had for much less with just a bit of careful searching.

DreamTR's Diaries of a DIABOLICAL MADMAN

“Fly-By-Night” Collectors

Article by Jason Wilson

There are a lot of “fly-by-night” collectors out there. You know who I’m talking about, the ones that accumulate everything in about a year or two; then sell everything piece by piece. Blips on the collecting radar; coming onto the scene and disappearing like they never existed. I’ve actually had people contact me about buying the rarest games possible for their “collection”, then all of a sudden turn around and sell it just a week later, along with everything else they own. Since the NES web community has really only been around for 10-11 years, it’s amazing how many people have left, returned, and left again in this relatively short time. How do these guys accumulate and reacquire collections so quickly you ask?

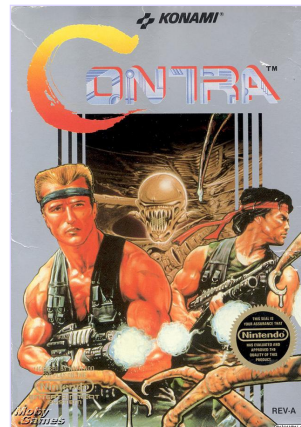


DreamTR

Well, I’m not sure how THEY do it, but I can tell you, when I ended up with a full NES collection at 23, I was not rich by any means. I left Chicago to work at a video game magazine in California for a measly \$27,000 a year BEFORE taxes. Of course, this was my dream job, and I was 21 years old at the time, and had a good head start to my collection with 400+ NES games. I had acquired most of my titles from various trades while growing up in Miami, and from Funcoland mail order catalogues. These catalogues were crucial, as they gave me the opportunity to finally purchase games without depending upon lucky garage sale or flea market finds.

A lot of my earlier trades involved trading “up” sub par games for better games, or trading a good/decent title for 10 “crappy” titles. One in particular that I fondly recall is when I turned a Contra into 10 games. A friend of mine in 9th grade was obsessed with Contra, and really wanted it badly. I was finished with the game, and he had a plethora of titles I had never seen before. Early titles like Spelunker and Raid on Bungeling Bay captured my attention, and I figured I would never be able to come across these again, so I started high in asking for 10 “crappy” games. I tried to convince him that they were indeed nearly worthless, but without a price guide or any used games stores really in exist-

tence yet, who knew? I ended up using this 1-for-5 and 1-for-10 trade with many friends who wanted better titles that I found at the flea market. I would either send extras to Funcoland in trade for better titles, or just accumulate larger numbers in my quest to complete the NES collection.



Contra: His friend probably wasn't the only one obsessed with this one ...

The web eventually became a resource and a privilege in the mid 90s (even on dial-up!). While using this new source of information, I slowly began to realize collecting the entire set would not be as daunting of a task as I thought. In retrospect, this was also the beginning of my realization that a much larger, scarier task was at hand – one that to this day still borders a gray area of legality that no one can be too sure of...

The Wizard's Hidden Treasures

Where Have I Been?

Article by Michael Zazulak

Well, it’s that time again. Another edition of Hidden Treasures: Revealed. But to be honest, I really don’t feel like writing this week. In fact, I’ve been absent from the community for the majority of the month. This happens all the time with new collectors – they come in, and they disappear. Nobody really notices. But with an established collector like myself, just disappearing off the face of the earth tends to not go unnoticed. I figured this month, I’d use my column to kind of explain what’s been going on. Who knows, it may help someone else in the same position at some point in the future.

Not many people on NintendoAGE know this about me, but I suffer from Bipolar Disorder, also known as Manic-Depressive Illness. I was diagnosed a little over two years

ago after a severe manic episode, which I would rather not get into. Suffice it to say, it was serious enough to be involuntarily confined to a hospital for the better part of a day. Now, you might be wondering how this relates to me not being around, or not choosing a title to review this week. Be patient – I’m getting to that.

Bipolar disorder is very much a treatable condition. However, you need to follow up with your doctor regularly. I have failed to do this over the past two years since my diagnosis. Over the last few months, I’ve fallen into a progressively severe depressive state. Had I followed up with my doctor, I may have had my meds adjusted the way I needed, but being the stubborn arse that I am, I just let it go. I felt normal. People around me knew something was wrong, but the people that would’ve made me get help had no idea. Turns out, the medication I was on only treats manic episodes; it does nothing for the depressive phases. So while I’m going through these lows, the medication was doing nothing to help. And things just got worse and worse.

I ended up pushing away the woman I love, to the point that she no longer loves me back. I’ve strained my friendships, my relations with my family, and have had difficulty at work. I no longer take joy in the things that once

made me happy, including gaming. I chose not to review a game this month simply because I haven’t actually played anything this month. I have no desire to pick up a controller.

Two weeks ago, I crashed and burned. I just mentally collapsed, almost to the point of no return. Now I’m getting the treatment I need. It almost seems like too little, too late, because of what I’ve lost in the interim, but one day, I’ll rise again, like a phoenix, from the ashes of what once was. Until then, I’ll be conspicuously absent from the forums. I can still be reached by email, MSN, and occasionally AIM. I’ve also been checking GameFAQs, but the community there is a lot smaller, so I don’t feel overly pressured. And if anyone really wants to know what’s going down, they can ask Jason (NGD), Nick (burnambill), or Basil (Dr. Morbis), as they’ve all had semi-regular contact over the last month. I hope to be back to my old self soon, but just in case I’m gone for a while longer, I didn’t want anyone to worry too much. And I hope to be able to review a game next month...or maybe two, to make up for the one I missed this month. I’ve got a lot of gaming to catch up on.

[Editor’s note: I know that everyone at NA will join me in wishing you a speedy and full recovery, Mike. You’ve been missed.]



the wizard 666



CopyNES

Article by Mark Lacey

Many of you may have heard of this device before, but maybe you don't know exactly what it is or what it does. CopyNES

is a device developed by Kevin Horton around the year 2000, although it did not become readily available to the general public until late 2005. Arguably, its primary function is to back-up ROM data from NES cartridges, often referred to as "dumping", but it is much more than that! The device itself is supplement board that interfaces directly with the 6502 CPU in the original version of the NES. This direct access is what gives CopyNES such flexibility.

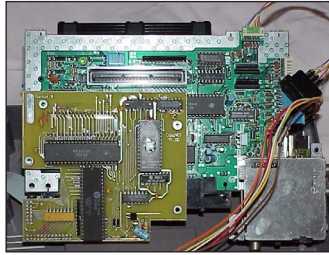


The PCB can be seen in its "resting place" attached to the bottom of the NES' CPU board.

The NES has always been one of the most difficult systems to create a device like this because of the vast array of in-



cartridge hardware that handles operations like bank-switching. A NES cart with no special hardware can only access up to 32KB of Program ROM (PRG) and 8KB Character ROM (CHR). These are quite restricting limits, so it was not long before developers began using additional hardware to allow programs to swap segments of the ROM(s) in and out of the NES's address space. There are literally hundreds of unique hardware setups. CopyNES overcomes this problem with its plugin system. A plugin in this case is a small block (1KB) of code that gets uploaded to the NES and tells it how to cycle thru each ROM bank and send it back to the PC. The plugins also take care of things like determining mirroring and ROM sizes as well.



Here's the board connected up to the CPU's socket. The notches on the board are there so it clears the mounting standoffs in the NES.

Some other useful features of the CopyNES is the ability to read and write back to a cart's save RAM. This is handy if you want to retain your data while switching a battery out or if you like to cheat and upload hacked saves that give you all items, etc. If you have a Game Action Replay, you're probably aware of its major downfall: if the battery dies, RAM data critical

to its operation is lost! Luckily, CopyNES has a function to restore this data.

Many of its features are geared towards development. With a RAM cart such as the PowerPak Lite, you're able to quickly load and test your code on real NES hardware. Another amazing feature is that CopyNES has a built-in emulator which basically allows you to step thru code running on a cart. This is invaluable in figuring out how "unknown" hardware works.

This original version communicates with a PC via a parallel port, which ended up being the device's primary downfall. Many PC's these days do not even come with a parallel port installed, in which case you'd also need to get an add-on card. Even worse, many PC's that do have a parallel port, simply don't work with CopyNES at all. Quite often it will take a bit of tweaking BIOS settings to get the port to work. Typically, the BIOS in a PC will allow you to select a port mode, i.e.: Standard, Bi-directional, EPP, ECP, EPP + ECP, etc. If you're having trouble, try them all! Sometimes the cable itself can also cause problems by picking up interference from other cables. Try to keep it as isolated as possible from other cables.

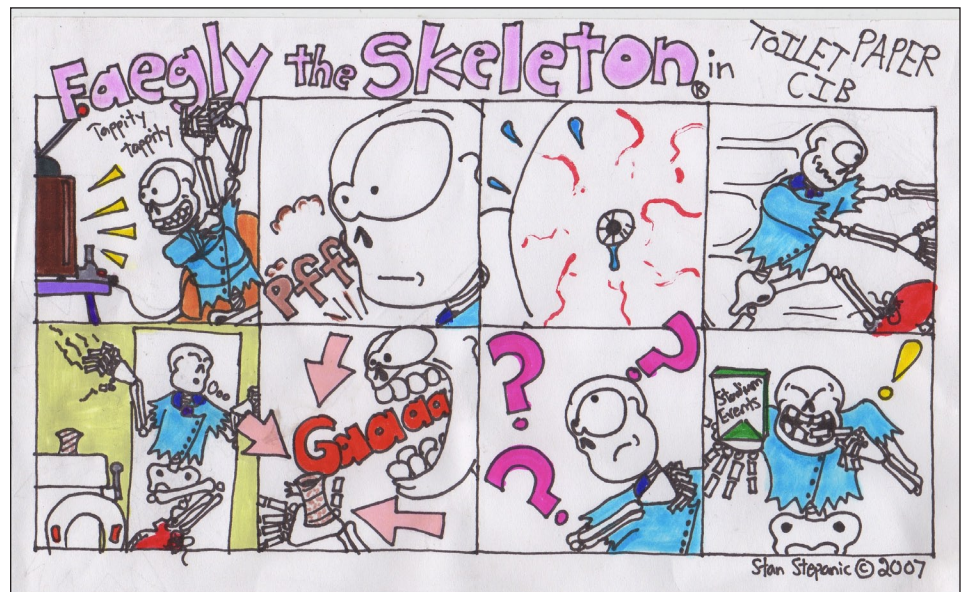
Just recently, Kevin Horton announced that he was sold-out and would not be making anymore units. However, Brian Parker of RetroUSB.com has developed a USB version to replace it! It functions the same, however it does not have the compatibility problems of the original version. Keep an eye out for the USB CopyNES available soon at www.retrousb.com.

If you're interested in some more detailed technical information, check out Kevin Horton's CopyNES page www.tripoint.org/kevtris/Projects/copynes/



Want to be featured?

Do you draw? Do you paint? Do you knit? Do you blow up lots of balloons and try to fly into the atmosphere while doing Sudoku? Do it up, we'll put it in.



Stan Stepanic © 2007



Sara Parker's Pool Challenge

Review by Jason Smith

History

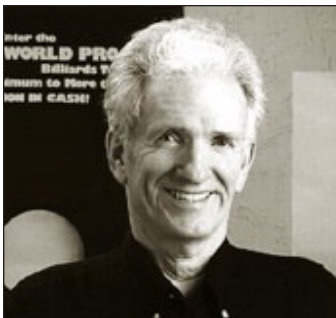
In early 1992 Odyssey Software in Boston, Massachusetts began development for American



Video Entertainment (AVE) of Robert Byrne's Pool Challenge, which later would receive a name change to Cuestick. Robert Byrne is a world-famous pool shark (pictured right) who won

numerous national tournaments and was widely known in the billiards community. Byrne must have also been a shameless self promoter, because he had a whole screen at the beginning of the game to

promote his numerous books and videos. George Rucker III and Art Cestaro were the original developers on Pool



Challenge and did most of the initial work. After Robert Byrne requested some changes to the game that must have been fairly substantial, the game was then renamed Cuestick. The developers were having a lot of trouble with the ball physics and brought in a coder by the name of Mike Smith. Art Cestaro, founder of Odyssey Software and producer of CueStick, was quoted as saying:

"Cuestick actually came out really good. The ball physics were right on. Took along time to get them right. George was having



problems but we hired a friend of Lane's named Mike Smith. He was really good with math. George and he sat down for like 2 weeks do math, physics and stuff and came up with all the formula's for that. It was amazing. Especially since the nes 8 bit had like no computing power. Just to calculate the formulas on that thing was amazing let alone animating the results on screen."

But on top of all the delays and problems at Odyssey Software, AVE closed its doors near the final stages of game development, and the game was never released. This was planned to be the last NES game that AVE produced anyway, but they closed their doors just a few short weeks before the game was to be finished. Unfortunately neither company made a dime from the game because of AVE's untimely demise.

I know some of you are wondering why the game is called Sara Parker's Pool Challenge now instead of Cuestick or Robert Byrne's. There is a simple answer for that, bunnyboy wanted to rename it and release it, similar to his NWC, Sudoku 2007 and Airball offerings. He held a contest among eight of his friends. All eight played games of straight pool, and then the 4 winners played 8-ball, then in the championship round the contestants played a game of Kelly Pool to decide the victor. Sara Parker (bunnyboy's wife) just happened to win, the prize being her very own game.

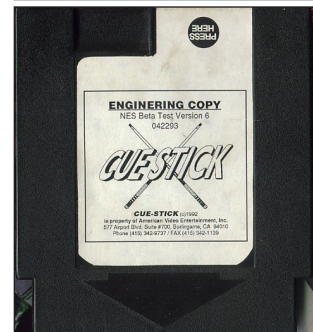
Protos

So far, 4 known prototypes have surfaced for this game: 3 for Pool



Challenge and 1 for Cuestick. All the protos came from the same source, Phil Mikkelson, a former AVE/Color Dreams employee. Phil was one of the graphics guys on the game and wound up with lots of AVE/Color Dreams protos after those companies closed up shop. He sold several protos sometime around 2001-2002 to a few NES collectors. Here is a list of the current prototype owners, and the timeline of who has owned them (the best I can figure):

- Cuestick: Phil Mikkelson -> Martin (NESworld)
- Pool Challenge #1: Phil Mikkelson -> Martin (NESworld)
- Pool Challenge #2: Phil Mikkelson -> TRM -> Muresan -> DreamTR
- Pool Challenge #3: Phil Mikkelson -> undisclosed owner



There is also one other version of the game out there in proto form. The final Cuestick cartridge had 1 gold demo copy of it made, but was lost in the mail on its way over to Martin in Denmark. Hopefully it will surface someday so we can check for differences. The Cuestick proto that Martin has is labeled "NES Beta Test Version 6"

and is thought to be the last version before the game was completed. At least 2 of the 3 Pool Challenge carts look exactly the same and the third one is assumed to be very similar.

The Breakdown:

Title: Robert Byrne's Pool Challenge/Cuestick
 Current Title: Sara Parker's Pool Challenge
 Genre: Sports
 Developed by: Odyssey Software
 Programmed by: George Rucker III, Mike Smith, & Art Cestaro
 Original release date: unreleased
 Current release date: mid-December 2007
 Produced by: Bunnyboy
 Purchased at: retrousb.com
 Cost: \$40

THE REVIEW

Sound / Music



The music to Pool Challenge is very catchy. The more you listen to it, the more it gets stuck



in your head. I had it open for hours when I was working on the manual for the game

and I caught myself bouncing my feet or moving my head in rhythm with the music several times. I do wish the music would have been switched up a bit on the different pool games instead of the same music, but I enjoy it none the less. The in-game sound effects are lacking a little, but they don't take anything away from the game play.

Graphics



The graphics are probably the worst aspect of the game. There isn't a whole lot that can actually be done with a pool-style game. Pretty much the whole game is either a text menu screen or a pool table. The end of the game scenes are pretty



plain; just still shots that look pretty average for NES game. Considering this is a 3rd party unlicensed game though, it is about on par with what you would expect. The biggest problem I found with the game is that off the break shot the gameplay slows down on-screen. The console doesn't have quite enough power to handle all the simultaneous ball movement well. This happens on several games when too much is happening on screen at once. It only does it on the breaks though.

Controls



The controls are a piece of cake once you get the hang of them, or if you have any billiards experience at all. I picked up the different types of shots and the in-game geometry pretty quickly. The controls are very basic and extremely easy to learn, yet they do the job quite well. Once you get the hang of the power bar and cursor angles



you will become quite skilled at this game quickly.

Challenge



This game can be as easy or challenging as you want it to be. There is an option to change the pool friction from being slick as ice to being as course as sand paper. If you want a super easy match then select ice and watch the balls go nuts, but if you want a skilled precision match then choose the sand paper so you have to have precision shots. The game of pool is all about angles and knowing what shot to take, and Sara Parker's Pool Challenge captures that very well.

Replay



Ever since I got a sneak peek at Pool Challenge, I have been constantly playing it. I have beaten each type of pool numerous times and I just keep going back. It is a great way to kill 10-15 minutes for a match, and have a great time. Even if you are not a pool fanatic, with the different types of options and styles of pool, you can continually find something to keep you entertained and learning. It is such a shame this game never saw an original release on the NES, it would have done very well.

Game Play / Realism



Pool Challenge is quite realistic in terms of actual pool mechanics. You have to hit the correct spot on the cueball with just the right amount of force behind it, while lining up your shot just right. Just like in real life it can be a tad frustrating at first but can be learned quickly, and improved upon each game. The pool ball movement has a natural flow, and is very realistic.

Overall



I don't see how anyone could possibly go wrong with Pool Challenge! For the sheer fact that it is an unreleased game and we are finally getting a chance to play it is reason enough to want a copy in my collection. But on top of that, the whole game is solid. This is not the type of title that you expect an unlicensed game to come out with. It was under development late into the NES lifecycle so the developers knew how to

take advantage of the hardware and get the most out of it. With realistic and solid controls, good music, a huge amount of challenge, and a high replay value this is a great title to have brought into the NES library.

By supporting projects like this we will continually have new games to buy for our good old systems, and keep the NES alive for years to come. Go to RetroUSB.com and pick up your copy sometime in mid December for the low price of \$40.00 plus shipping. This game also comes complete in box with a clear cart, sleeve, manual, and box. This will be the 2nd game in over ten years to come complete in box for the NES. Pool Challenge is also equipped with the powerful CIClone lockout chip to allow for NTSC and PAL collectors alike to enjoy this new game.

Special thanks to bunnyboy for letting me get involved with his projects. I'd also like to thank Martin (NESworld.com) and Dreamtr for helping out with the history section and general info.

Past RetroZone releases:

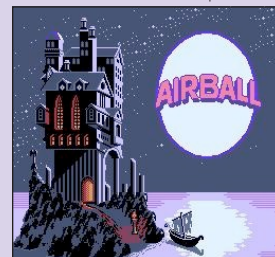
Nintendo World Championship 1990
\$45



Sudoku
\$20

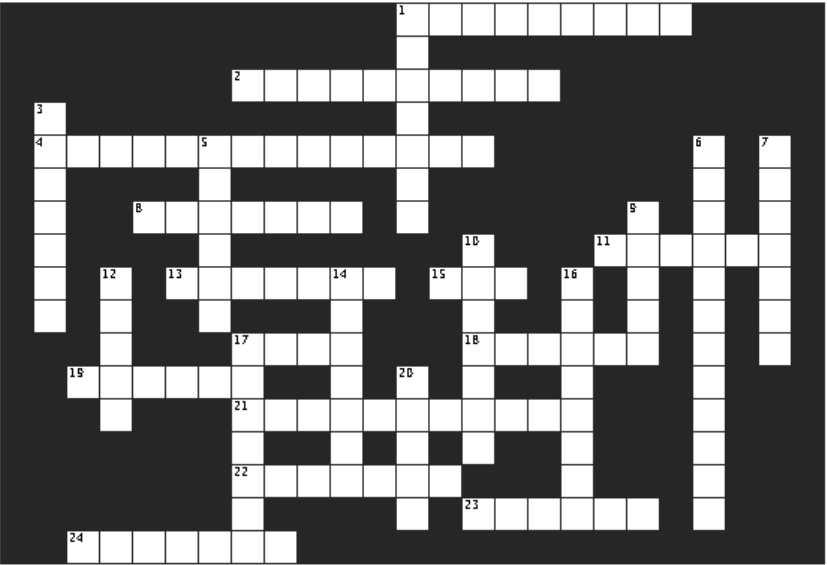


Airball
\$35



Welcome to the FUN PAGE

Take a break from the deep thoughts of the NES community's finest.



Across


- Mario's original occupation?
- Lady that Zelda is named after? (surname)
- Best team in Baseball Stars?
- Rodent that can be put in microwave in Maniac Mansion?
- Name of opponent in Punch-Out!!! _____ Honda.
- Original name of hero in Donkey Kong?
- Number of palaces in Zelda 2?
- Number of teams in Double Dribble?
- Number of lives given after entering Contra code?
- First enemy encountered in Super Mario Bros.?
- Game with clothes rotting off kidnapped girl as game progresses? (two words)
- Only two player Zapper game released on the NES?
- Creator of Sudoku on NES (surname)
- Author of all daily polls?

Down

- Newest release by Retrozone as of this issue? (original name)
- Name of damsel kidnapped at the start of Donkey Kong.
- Nintendo Competition held in late '91/early '92. _____ Challenge.
- Metroid code to begin undressed with all weapons? (two words)
- Name of recent NintendoAGE scammer?
- Double Dragon Player. Not Jimmy.
- Number of Color Dreams games.
- Main character in Wizards & Warriors?
- First complete NES release by Retrozone?
- Ghoul School programmer surname (Issue 2)
- Japanese equivalent of the NES?
- Number of games released on the Aladdin Deck Enhancer?

I feel asleep.

By Dan Langevin. Sprites from Sriters-Resource.com



Panel 1: Rick is in a room with blocks and a door.

Panel 2: Rick is on a platform, looking up at a target.

Panel 3: Rick is on a hill, talking to a character.

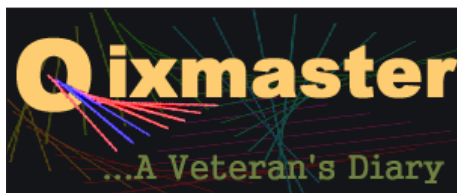
Panel 4: Rick is on a hill, talking to a character.

Panel 5: Rick is in the sky, talking to a character.

Panel 6: Rick is on a hill, talking to a character.

Panel 7: Rick is on a hill, talking to a character.

Panel 8: Rick is on a hill, talking to a character.



How it all started ... to how it all started again.

Article by Josh Byerly

Prior to popular belief (mainly that of my lovely girlfriend of six years) collecting video games is not an addiction. More importantly, playing video games is not an addiction. The American Medical Association can go F' themselves (that's right, a capital F) with this new term of video game addiction. But that topic

is for another time.

So yeah... video games and collecting video games... not an addiction.

It is a hobby to some or even a lifestyle... but for me it is a way of never truly growing up.

I am a relatively young NES enthusiast and some may even still call me a kid, but at age 24 I have experienced quite a bit of the real world. I graduated high school, found the girl of my dreams, went to college with said girl, traveled to Europe with girl, came back, traveled to Africa for an internship, came back, graduated College, slacked all summer and just landed my first "real job" (but that is still up for debate since I'm not quite sure what I think of my career choice).

I am getting older and life goes on. So, whatever, right? WRONG!

This is a BIG deal to me. I don't want to get older. I never have wanted to get older. I want to grasp my childhood like it's my Darth Vader toy case and never let it go! I miss those days hanging out with Grandma playing Asteroids on a 2600 that would only work on the black and white setting. I miss building with blocks, playing He-Man, Thundercats and G.I. Joe. But most of all I miss playing my NES every damn day with my sister.

From age five up until the launch of the Super Nintendo Entertainment System I played video games everyday (seriously). I would even play on Sundays when I wasn't supposed to (according to my parents, God didn't like me playing them on "His" day). My parents couldn't regulate me! I wouldn't have it!

After church my mom would go to the barn to feed the horses and my dad would work on his cars. I would sit up in our little apartment attached to my grandparent's house where we lived, and waited until they were both out

of sight. As soon as they were safely gone I would pop in DuckTales and see if I could conquer it before they came back up. Granted I did get caught sometimes, but it seemed as if I beat DuckTales every Sunday until Super Mario World became my new itch.

Don't get me wrong, I was still an active kid. I played every damned sport from grades one through eight, and then in high school I ran cross-country and track. I was an above average student and paid attention. I cared about my education because my parents cared. I was NOT addicted to video games. I just loved them very, very much.

Flash forward to my sophomore year of High School. I was turning 16 in less than a week, I had a girlfriend who didn't care that I had bad acne, and I was just about to run one hell of a cross-country race. Since it was Saturday morning, my parents, in their ritualistic garage sale ways, didn't quite make it to my race in time for the start. Little did I know that while the gun was sounding the start of the race my parents were at a sale down the road buying a Nintendo Entertainment System with 17 games, four controllers, two zappers and one Beeshu Zoomer for five bucks. At the end of the race my teammates, my girlfriend, and my parents congratulated me (they had arrived just in time for the finish). My parents told me what they had purchased and I wasn't exactly impressed as I was still basking in the glory of running a damn good race (alright, so I didn't win, but I did very well).

After the race that evening I was on the phone with my girlfriend (please note this is NOT the current girlfriend, thank God) and she was starting to bore me. I knew it wasn't going to work out, but I still needed a date to Home-

WWSMD? Do you think that Scrooge McDuck would mind you playing on Sunday?



Above: Jaws wants you to say he sucks to his face.

coming (wow, I was an asshole). My mind started to wander... The NES was still in the back seat of the car! The 17 games were nothing too exciting, except for one. Bubble Bobble. I remember Bubble Bobble well from my youth. My sister and I used to play the shit out of Bub and Bob. So I made up some excuse to get off the phone and I went to the car, got the system and hooked it up like good ol' times. That night I played Bubble Bobble until God knows when... probably well into Sunday morning. Thankfully I had grown out of those old "no playing NES on Sunday" rules.

From that Sunday on I vowed to the holy Gods of NES that I would get, play and enjoy every single NES game. And well folks, the rest is history...

Not really. I forgot to mention that a good quarter of the NES library absolutely sucks shit. I mean have you guys ever played Jaws for the NES? Good God is it awful. You would think it would have been a great game, but nooooooo! They had to have some scuba guy swimming around shooting shit, while waiting for Jaws to appear.

So after a good year of collecting I changed my vow to collect every game even if it was horrible (yes, I am talking about you Barbie and you Home Alone). Also, my games had to be complete in their original boxes. By this time I had a good 300-350 games and had just started finding complete games in the wild. I liked complete games very much. How they looked, how they felt and how they made me feel. If a NES game was complete I felt complete (com'n guys, you know what I am talking about).

I became a NES maniac. I raided the thrifts, bought out failing video game store businesses, found all the rental stores that had once carried NES games, and started selling off my duplicates to fund my new-found obsession.

Flash forward to the first term of my junior year of college (actually my fourth year, but hey, college is a bitch when you don't know what you want to get out of it). I have just discovered a major I actually might enjoy. I start taking classes and what do you know? I like it! While I am getting established in the School of Journalism and Communications at the University of Oregon I discover a study abroad program that allows students to intern for different media outlets in Sub-Saharan West Africa, in the small country of Ghana. I talk with my girlfriend (alright, alright, her name is Laura and she is a fox, maybe I will get a picture posted in the mug shots thread one of these days) and we both agree that it is an opportunity of a lifetime. There is one big problem. It isn't exactly the cheapest study abroad program out there. Not to mention school is making me go broke and I am down to the extreme rarities in my NES collection. In other words I really don't see this trip happening.

I have just come face to face with a harsh reality. Why the hell do I have all these games in my closet that I never play and have no room to display properly? I really thought hard about it and when the time came (just after the start of the New Year in 2006) it really boiled down to what mattered most in my life: my future. I had held on to this part of my childhood from 16 until 22 and I realized that it was time to let it go. I knew that what mattered right now was to get out and see the world. So I sold it.

All of it...

Goodbye
Chubby
CherubMinty
box. Good-
bye complete
with questionnaire
C a l t r o n .
G o o d b y e
R a c e r m a t e
Challenge II
carts. Good-
bye Chee-
tahmen II.
Goodbye Ac-
tion 52 vari-
ants. Good-
bye upside
down label complete
in box Yoshi.
Goodbye Flintstones 2.
Goodbye sealed
collection of every
Camerica game.
Goodbye all you
damn complete
Color Dreams
games that took
me FOREVER
and too much
money to find.
Goodbye my
massive amount
of 30 plus
OfficeMax
filing boxes
filled with
complete NES
games. Goodbye.

So I sold it. I traveled to Africa and had the time of my life. Beer in Ghana is cheaper than water so you can guess what I was doing every night. I didn't get Malaria but I did end up eating some goat leg, which led to a bad feeling in my stomach for the next five days before I



Above: A young goat, ready to be feasted upon.

left. I later learned that I had contracted Giardiasis and Amebic Dysentery. I came back to the States and ended up feeling like shit for a while until I went to the doctor who said, "hey poop on this stick." They gave me some pills for it and it went away, so it wasn't all that bad.

After coming back I had some bad gaming withdrawals. I hacked apart my Xbox and put every NES rom I could find on it. That lasted for about a week and I started school back up for my final year. I told myself to focus and finish school strong. I did so without buying games for a collecting throughout that school year.

All of the sudden I was tired of this poor substitute (my Xbox) for the real deal. I still had my NES and a pile of games so I dug into Mega Man 2 and it all came back to me again.

And here I am today. I haven't really been buying games like I used to, but instead I've been quite picky about condition. I only will buy sealed NES games anymore these days or rarities that haven't quite caught on yet. Another major draw that has attracted me to this community is this site. NintendoAge was something I had always wanted when I was all gung-ho on collecting and now that it is here I don't want to pass up this chance to be a part of something so great! Thank you to everyone who has been so kind over the years and I am so happy to be back in the swing of things.

Index:

dangevin: Scratch SE Off Your List / 2
Bronty: How is it Sealed? / 3-4
Nistle: Hot eBay Tip / 5
Member Spotlight: flyingduddy / 5
DreamTR: Fly-by-the-Night Collectors / 6
The Wizard: Where Have I Been? / 6
BootGod: CopyNES / 7
Funny of the Month (Stan) / 7
NGD: Pool Challenge / 8-9
Fun Page / 10
qixmaster / 11-12



NintendoAGE eZine Volume 1 Issue 4: December 2007
Copyright 2007 NintendoAGE & Dain Anderson

All rights reserved. No portion of this document may be copied, reproduced, hosted, redistributed or sold, in any part or whole, without express written consent of NintendoAGE.

Staff:

Editor-in-Chief / **Dan Langenvin (Dangevin)**
Layout Artist / **Kevin Hanley (mewithoutYou52)**
Executive Supervisor: **Dain Anderson (Dain)**

Staff Writers:

Jason Smith / **NationalGameDepot**
Jason Wilson / **DreamTR**
Michael Zazulak / **The_Wizard_666**
Dan Maresca / **Bronty**
Josh Byerly / **qixmaster**
Mark Lacey / **BootGod**
Dustin Lett / **Nistle**

This is, and always will be a free publication available exclusively to the registered members of NintendoAGE.com - if you acquired this document from any other source, please notify us at webmaster@nintendoage.com