NIGHTMARE BEFORE CHRISTMAS

*Written by:*
Silent Hill aka Aaron Clark

What scares you? Darkness, gore, aliens, mimes? If you answered yes, boy have I got some games for you! (OK maybe not for you metamfiezomaiophobia sufferers, which is a good thing, right?)

Let's take a look through time at some games that will pucker your butthole. One of the earliest horror games I played was *Resident Evil* for the Sony PlayStation, and what an unsettling experience that was. I remember being on the edge of my seat, wondering what was around every corner and if I had enough resources to take it on. Traversing throughout the mansion was thrilling and mysterious, especially when an obscure puzzle or a zombie stood in your way. The mark that this game left on me was unable to be ignored, but it was soon trumped by a new horror franchise.

I rented *Silent Hill* when it was released in 1999 at the age of thirteen. I had already played through *Resident Evil* and was craving a new horror fix. What I got was a completely different experience than *Resident Evil*, one that focused on a different, deeper aspect of the horror genre. An opening montage of characters and scenes from the upcoming adventure that was accompanied by an oddly eerie yet soothing theme song greeted me. I then awoke in a crashed vehicle after careening around a strange girl who was standing in the middle of the road. And my character's daughter was missing.

I didn't expect such a simple setup to result in an immediate drive to stumble toward the town of *Silent Hill* to find her. It's pretty apparent from the start that this is not an ordinary town. There is a thick fog layering the streets, and from a distance you continually catch brief glimpses of a figure that seems to be your daughter. Whenever you begin to chase the figure, she runs away from you – driving you deeper and deeper into the twisted history of the town, and its inhabitants. That's about all I want to say regarding the story, as it needs to be experienced by everyone. Spending too much time on *Silent Hill* and its sequels would take away from the main point of this article which is to shed some light on some of the "lesser known"

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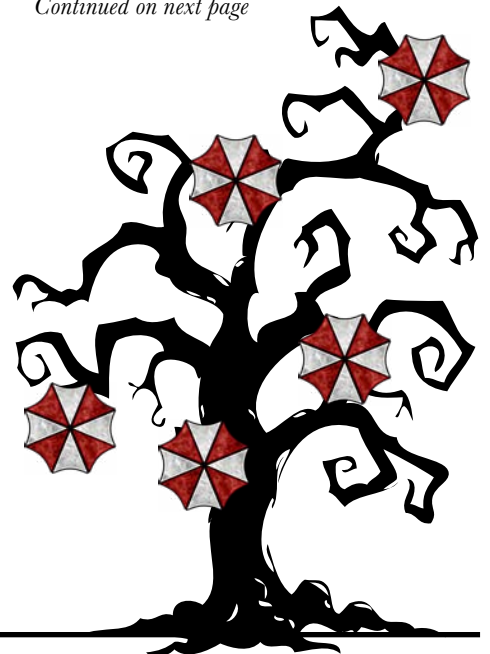
horror titles, so I'll end it with this: play *Silent Hill 1-4* as they are the best in the series (2 is my personal favorite). There really aren't any other games quite like them.

It seems all good things must come to an end, and when *Silent Hill* and *Resident Evil* started going downhill, the horror genre itself seemed to follow. There were some great titles released for the PlayStation 2 right before the fall of the genre. Games like *Fatal Frame, Kuon, Rule of Rose, Echo Night Beyond, Haunting Ground, Siren,* etc. *Condemned* even brought a valiant effort to the Xbox 360 at launch, but that franchise has been stagnant for years at this point. They all brought something fresh to the table, but they weren't enough to keep the genre moving forward. Through the darkness, there would be a single light at the end of the tunnel. That light was *Dead Space.*

I had read some previews for Dead Space and it reminded me of one of my favorite sci-fi horror flicks: *Event Horizon.* I was pretty much sold at that point, especially since it had been years since my favorite horror franchise *Silent Hill* had pumped out a decent title. It failed to disappoint as it offered a fresh new spin on the genre and incorporated heavy action with sci-fi roots. I can't think of many things more unsettling than trudging through a deserted spaceship only to find out that it's packed with creatures. Great pacing, relevant backtracking, and terrifying creature design made this game stand out and it is a heavyweight in the genre.

Fast-forward to more recent times and we are starting to see the genre come back with some very solid titles. We've only recently been treated to games like *Alien Isolation, Outlast,* and the *P.T.* demo (which we all know the sad story behind this), each bringing a unique twist to the genre and some faring better than others. I hope to see this trend continue with fresh ideas and tweaks to the horror genre. With the technology that is currently out there or even right around the corner, we could see some truly terrifying experiences come to fruition.

IN THE ZONE

Written by: AirVillain aka Adam Tottle

It looks something like this: Your face glowing with an array of shades of blue and green like the Northern Lights. A blank stare is in your eyes with seemingly nothing breaking your concentration. You don't only see one part of the screen, or your character, you see every pixel and color that was destined to have eyes laid upon. You see everything, and you see it all at once. You are interacting with the screen and the controller you hold is an extension of your eyes and consciousness with your body, arms, and hands being only the apparatus that joins the two. This isn't some Nintendo version of The *X-Files* or *Fire In The Sky…* you are "in the zone".

Okay, so maybe it doesn't have to be so overly dramatic but it certainly is an intense place to be. The way that you can immerse yourself in gameplay so that your hands no longer become part of the equation and you are strictly playing from a reaction standpoint is extremely powerful. You are no longer simply playing the game; you're in it.

A lot of times these moments come when we face heavy battle and lots of action on the screen. This forces our eyes to not focus on one or two things, but to take a step back and see the entire screen as one entity. If you're not watching the bullets, enemies, power-ups, and yourself at the same time you're going to get zapped pretty quickly. Out of necessity we are forced to sink into "the zone" and go toe to toe with everything on the screen at once.

This allows us to sink away from everyday life, something many of us play games to do in the first place. This allows our consciousness to let go of our troubles, even for a moment, and allows us to move past things that might be holding us back. We can just be free to play. While it may only be for a few moments or minutes, these are the stress-free and joy inducing moments we all need to recharge our batteries.

If anything, we can put into perspective our video game and real lives. Breaking away from real life can allow us to realize maybe we are taking things too seriously, over thinking things, or simply misunderstanding someone. These moments give our subconscious time to deal with problems in ways our consciousness cannot.

Much like music or movies can "take you away", video games can do so in a much more immersive way by allowing the player to attach themselves to the characters and gameplay the medium of the controller. Now you are the one making the movie, you are the one composing the music. When you're "in the zone" you ARE Mario and you ARE Samus. You get to slay Dracula, you get to save the princess, you get to destroy the vile Red Falcon and save the universe. Consider yourself a hero.
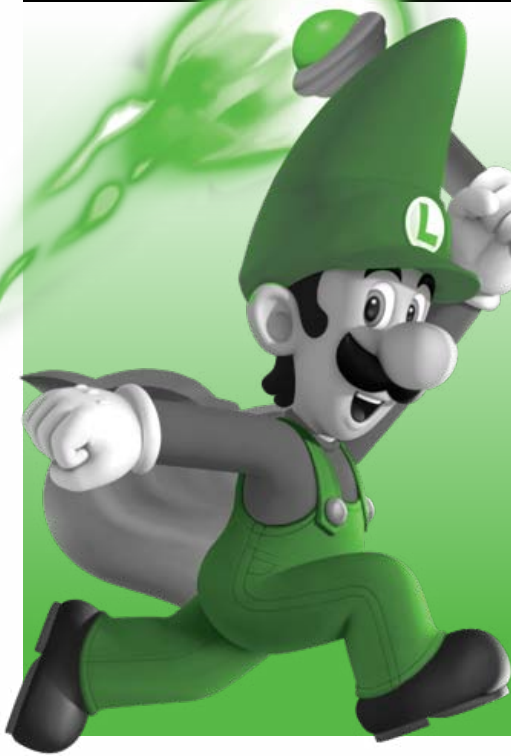
TIME FOR MAGIC

Written by: XYZ aka John Mad

This article is not geared towards someone just getting into collecting video games, but rather, for the already experienced collector looking to take things a level higher.

I liken my amazing video game collection to that of a magician's performance: Jaw-dropping and mystifying. "How in the world did you do that?" Today, I am going to share several methods on how to build an amazing video game collection, both online and offline. Once you learn a few of my trade secrets, you may very well be on your way to finally getting your collect' on! A part of me feels like the masked wrestlers exposing the secrets of the industry. Of course, whether these strategies are really secrets doesn't matter to me – so long as I can help facilitate better skills to my fellow collectors then you're golden and I'm happy! So then, let's now begin administrating some perestroika in your ways of video game collecting!

I must say that like a magician, five people could perform the same exact trick to very different results. The magician who aced the trick probably also practiced the most. The magician who botched his or her trick most likely was not ready to perform in the first place. I must warn you that to be a successful video game collector, you must be committed to the hobby long-term and you absolutely must be willing to accept those days where there is no new loot out in the field. The more time spent practicing and researching, the better your overall performance will be. This golden rule is so simple, yet so overlooked by others in the hobby.

I have interacted with 100's of other Video Game Collectors (herein referred to as VGCs) over the years, both in person and online. It no longer shocks me when a so-called "game collector" resorts to such failure-prone strategies when out in the field or hunting for games. It happens ALL THE TIME. Let's begin with the most common scenario that I see: VGC is in a thrift store and has spotted some video games and whips out the cell phone and queues up an app showing prices for games. VGC begins checking the price on every single game on the shelf (in this example, let's say there's 10 games across various systems). *Rad Racer* in an original box for NES lays out in the open, priced at $10.00, but VGC's app says it's worth $15.00! Boom! *Resident Evil 4* for PS2, priced at $5.00, app says $3.00: definitely not worth it! Pass! After realizing the other 8 games are sports titles for PS2, VGC proceeds to the checkouts and completes his purchase of *Rad Racer*.

VGC is wasting valuable resources and showing a huge lack of knowledge in using a system like this. For starters, what is VGC's endgame? Is he trying to find a "steal of a deal or just looking to add new titles to the collection? VGC has already invested time and resources by going to the thrift store to hunt for video games in a most likely picked-over and dire setting. Then spending several minutes scouring through a bin of mostly junk and having to rely on an app to know the value of any of it: This all clearly spells failure in my mind. VGC not only has nothing memorized in his head and has to rely on an app, but he also has wasted precious time setting himself up for failure. After realizing that today's big find is going to be *Rad Racer* for 10 bucks, VGC goes home and makes a YouTube video discussing the day in retrospect. Whether he tells the viewers that today's hunt was a failure or not, he is most likely saying "WTF" to himself mentally. OK fine, that there was a blatant rip at those self-proclaimed YouTubers who I can't stand! But seriously, after today's trip to the thrift store, VGC is probably feeling more like Mickey Rourke at the conclusion of *The Wrestler* than like a seasoned video game collector.

So then Mr. XYZ, what then could have been done differently? ***A lot.***

1. Build Your Own Database
"1-up VGC by building your own database for video game prices and collection tracking."

No app can properly value a title, especially older generation games that fluctuate in value so wildly depending on how complete the item is and what sort of condition said item is in. Having a ground-up Excel spreadsheet allows you to customize your game collection and track other critical data. For example, I use a method in my personal spreadsheet that implements BOLD, ITALICS, UNDERLINE, and COLOR FILLS to identify certain criteria. If I am in the wild hunting games and I whip out my list and a game has the right criteria, I immediately know what to do. Meanwhile VGC may be questioning the app and its prices or hoping for some bandwidth in the store to connect to eBay for a confirmation on the price. While VGC is still scratching his head with what to do, I am in line paying for my item(s) and ready to move on.

Take *Rad Racer* for example. My spreadsheet has some valuable data that no app will have. Granted, I have this one memorized in my head, but for this instance, let's pretend I don't. *Rad Racer* is marked with a red color splash that identifies this title as having some sort of a pack-in item. In this instance, it's a pair of 3-D glasses. Of course, VGC's copy didn't have the 3-D glasses, thus lowering the value. Also, VGC failed to examine the box and cart for condition. The cart is impeccable but that damn box looks like it was run over. Poor VGC spent 10 bucks on a CB copy of *Rad Racer* with a rough box and thinks he got
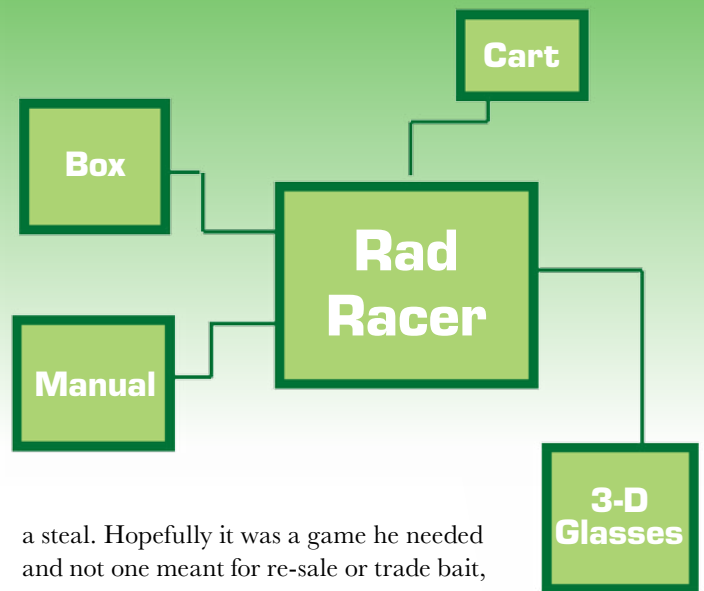
a steal. Hopefully it was a game he needed and not one meant for re-sale or trade bait, because someone is about to lose money after eBay fees. Missing is the 3-D glasses, a manual, and never mind that VGC has no clue what 3-screw and 5-screw means because he failed to even check the title for that at the thrift store. A good spreadsheet will also identify all 3-screw/5-screw variants and/or have a separate tab just for that one aspect of the NES library.

2. Do the Research
"Optimize your time by researching video games more and spending less time on wild goose chases."

You must study before the test if you want an A+. VGC has received a C- for his performance today. Perhaps the free time on his shoulders would have been better spent trying to learn what games are rare and why. As it turns out, *Resident Evil 4* for PS2 also has a Premium Edition in a steel case worth quite a bit more than the original edition. Turns out VGC didn't know that and neither did his app! Had VGC spent some time learning things like this, he may have decided to buy RE4 and not RR. How does one research? Read forums, scour eBay-completed items and try searches like "PS2 Limited" and go through every damn result until you know it all. And then do it again 5 more times because you'll continue to find out new things that will shock you. Eventually, you will start to know what to look for rather the other way around. A huge misconception that VGC's make is that anything old is valuable and anything newer is not. I can't tell you how many valuable items roam the earth for systems like PS2 and Wii. Often times, this stuff is overlooked because it's "newer than N64 stuff". You learning what is and what isn't is key here.

I DID NOT KNOW THAT!
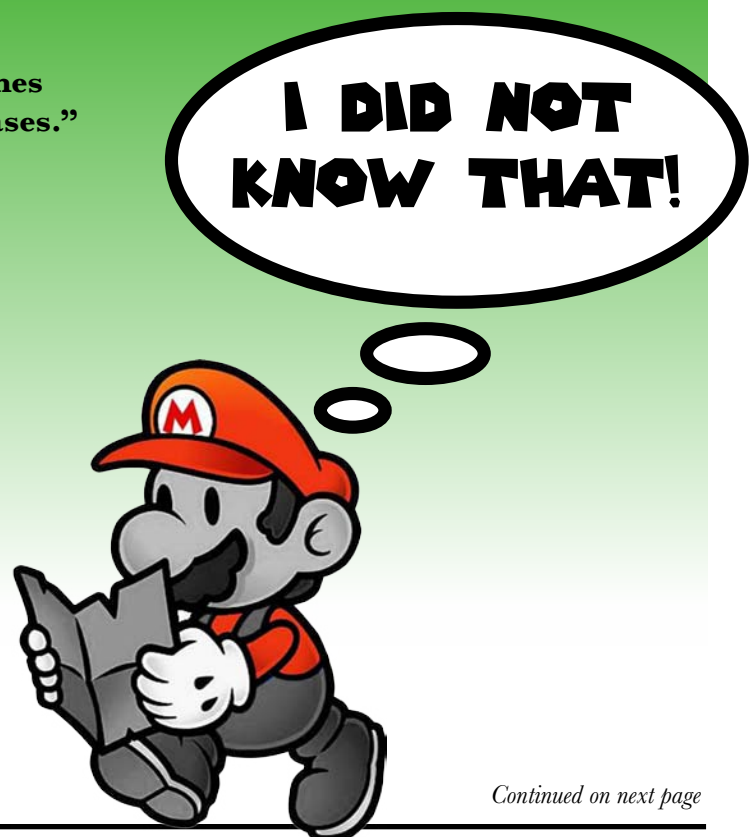
3. Cut Coupons, Negotiate, Trade Bait
"Learn to negotiate and find alternative ways to save money."

Many thrift stores offer coupons for making a donation or for purchasing a certain amount of merchandise. Sometimes, with the right circumstances, you may be able to get a coupon for 50% off a purchase. Save that coupon until the day it expires if you have to, waiting for the right moment to cash in. Imagine getting 50 bucks worth of games for 25!

Many video game shops and exchange stores offer trade-ins. If you want to buy some new items, consider a trade-in to help offset the price paid for your new purchase(s). The ideal items to trade in are duplicates, lower condition items, or anything you simply don't want or can't sell elsewhere. Perhaps selling three dollar games on eBay is not feasible after fees, but ten of them together at the local game shop could very well equal some nice trade value towards your next purchase. It adds up, trust me. VGC didn't want RE4 because he has the same game for GameCube and didn't see enough reasons to throw down 5 bucks for a game he already has (never mind they have many differences). However having rare trade bait is always good, too. Anything uncommon will eventually pay off as trade bait, whether in the forums, eBay, or locally. Mark my word. And if in the unusual situation where it doesn't, trade it to your game shop if you must for the slightest loss.

I can't tell you how many times I have come across crazy rare items out in the open that others passed on because they probably didn't know what it was. Take the *Read Dead Redemption* strategy guide as an example. The standard Brady strategy guide is worth a few bucks at most. But the red hardcover is worth fifty dollars or more. I have bought no less than five of them over the past year at various shops in town for approx. five dollars apiece. Each time I find another, I am in shock how no one else is jumping on such a pricey item for so cheap. I also happen to know this is a GOTY guide that was a GameStop exclusive. Did VGC? Probably not. Having one of these lying around will make for a damn good trade bait item down the road. VGC, rather than learning the system of collecting, let his app do the thinking. Too bad the app only prices and tracks video games and not items like strategy guides or accessories!

4. Good is Good, Bad is Bad
"Visit new places and visit the same old places regularly, but avoid the shit always."

Often times, I hit stores weekly because you never ever know what you'll find. I also try to visit new places as often as possible. If it means exploring a new part of town, so be it. If it means taking a road trip for the afternoon, then that's that. I also avoid certain stores that have produced terrible results regularly. The best example is a local chain in my region called BuyBack$. I don't care what any defender of this chain says: they suck a big fat one and then some! There are enough reasons that I could write an entire e-zine article all about 'em. But I digress, and this article is about the magic of collecting video games. With that being said, I know my magic does not work in certain places and therefore, I avoid some shops under all circumstances. It's precious time saved and allotted for a better adventure. Sometimes no adventure in the wild is better than a hayride into shitty stores with bad pricing and shit inventory.

I hit some stores on specific days: many thrift shops have sales on certain days of the week which attracts large crowds and leaves the inventory picked over. A good time to hit those stores is the night before a sale or the day after when the shelves are replenished and the pickers are nowhere to be found. It's all about developing strategies that work and knowing what doesn't. There is a local store I never go to because one of the employees is a VGC who is also in charge of pricing trade-ins and gets an employee discount. He buys anything of value at deep discount. I know that going into that store is a waste of my time until further notice.

STRATEGERY

5. Phone a Friend
"Find a good friend you can phone for emergency information, kinda like that one TV show!"

Many times my phone simply can't help me the way a desktop computer could. I have a good friend I can call anytime for a quick lookup or question if need be. My spreadsheets work without Internet access (Google Docs and many online game pricing sites don't). I can't tell you how many times I have walked into a store and my cellular signal drops off. Sometimes it's like the store jammed me on purpose; other times I realize I am in BFE. There will be times where you need to access your list and don't have Internet. So the spreadsheet saves the day. But that friend on the phone can come in handy if you need to discuss a larger deal or need some information that isn't coming to fruition on your cellular. E.T. phone home! I've used Sprint, Verizon, and AT&T and they all provide awesome dead-zones for their customers, so nobody is immune.

6. That's So Hot Right Now
"Find out what's hot and swoop in on it while you can!"

This is such an easy trick that so few participate in. The first time I saw the masses do this was with Amiibo's. Little does everyone know, there's more to the world than rare Amiibo's. I personally like to zone in on hot items that I have a real good chance of getting my hands on. I recently learned on NintendoAge of a new release from NIS America for Rodea the Sky Soldier. Turns out, some editions contained the Wii version as a pack-in. As soon as I read about this, I pre-ordered the item because from everything I know about video games, this was a guarantee for being a future rarity or high demand item with low production. Research, research, research. Then become the *predator* you always wanted to be and swoop in for your kill.

DEVILS THIRD FOR THE WII U, YOU WILL BE MINE!

In conclusion

Due to time and space constraints, this article cannot go on forever. My examples are limited and surely each one has "what ifs" and "yeah rights", and had I more space to write, this would all be addressed fully. But for the sake of this article, you must look at the bigger picture and remember that some days will be great and others might result in no loot at all. Surely, some of these examples may be unlikely to you but not to all, especially depending on your geographic location. But trust me when I say this: These strategies will help you and they are also only a few of the many ways to turn your results around in the hobby of video game collecting. By opening your mind to new ways, you will begin to mold your methods in other new ways too. Thanks for reading this article my fellow magicians and good luck in all of your future endeavors as a VGC!

COUNSELOR'S CORNER

Written by:
acidjaguar aka Andrew Morgan

Captain Nintendo Message   May 14th – May 20th

You have tapped into the Official Nintendo Universe. This is Captain Nintendo bringing you the hottest tips and latest news from Nintendo Headquarters for the week of May 14th.

An important technique to master in Ninja Gaiden is the ability to climb walls without a ladder. This way you can get to otherwise unreachable territory and also have the upper hand on many of the toughest enemies. Jump up to a wall, press and hold the A button, and rock the Control Pad left and right rapidly. Perfect the timing and your character will be able to climb up quickly. Some great new releases are on the way! **Let's get the scoop from Emerald.**

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EMERALD: I am now receiving store check data.  Games
reaching a critical proximity to NES retailers are
Guardian Legend from Broderbund and Taboo from Tradewest.
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Thanks Emerald!

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EMERALD: My pleasure, of course.
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Here's a helpful code for Gradius, Life Force and Contra. On the controller, press Up, Up, Down, Down, Left, Right, Left, Right, B, A. That's Up, Up, Down, Down, Left, Right, Left, Right, B, A. Enter this code during the title screens of Life Force and Contra, and start the game with thirty characters. After beginning Gradius, pause then enter the code for full options.

Tune in next week for an all new Captain Nintendo message featuring Legacy of the Wizard. There's a new message every Sunday and you can call 24 hours a day. Remember, the cost of each call is a dollar fifty, so be sure to get proper clearance before you dial. Until next week, this is Captain Nintendo signing off!

We all remember the Nintendo Tip Line that may have gotten us in trouble from time to time. These quick tip articles come from a collection of inner memo packages AcidJaguar received from a former Game Counselor. Ferris asked AcidJaguar who exactly EMERALD was supposed to be. This is what AcidJaguar found:

She was the AI....."I am an **E**lectro-Organic **M**icrochip **E**ducative **R**easoning-**A**ctive **L**anguage **D**evice," the monitor again interrupted. "E.M.E.R.A.L.D., for short. EMERALD - the omin intelligence. My function is to absorb random information, assimilate it into a logical order, and determine reasoned conclusions. Is that impressive or what?"

"Where did you come from, uh, EMERALD?" asked Brett.

"Search me," the monitor answered. As near as I can surmise, I am a result of special microchips fused into this particular cartridge format. It's pretty comfy, actually."

Pulled from old Captain Nintendo script.

FIND THE HIDDEN RE-RELEASE

Written by: cirellio aka Nick Brown

"I used to rent that game all the time when I was a kid. Now it's too expensive." Sound familiar?

Let's assume the game happens to be available through some ephemeral online service like Xbox Live, Steam, or Nintendo's Virtual Console. It doesn't scratch that collector's itch very well, does it? And we know that hard drives corrupt over time, that your purchases probably won't carry over to the next console, and that download services inevitably get shut down. In other words, for a long-term retro gamer/collector, downloading games is a stop-gap at best.

Maybe you grew up playing games like *Ninja Gaiden III* and *Spatterhouse 2*, fell in love with *King of Dragons*, and perhaps you're like me and wish you hadn't somehow lost that copy of *Earthbound* when you moved to a new apartment ten summers ago.

Well, there may be another way (or two) to alleviate your itch for physical

games and save a good amount of money at the same time. No, I'm not talking about repros. I'm talking about … let's call them 'hidden re-releases'. That is, re-releases on collection discs, or hidden as 'extras' in newer games.

Take *Ninja Gaiden III.* We all know it's fairly expensive; certainly not a game you come across every day. *Ninja Gaiden Trilogy* may come to mind as an alternative, except that the trilogy is perhaps even more prohibitive to obtain. So what's a collector to do other than hope they 'luck' across an affordable copy, or bite-the-bullet and feed the sharks over at eBay?
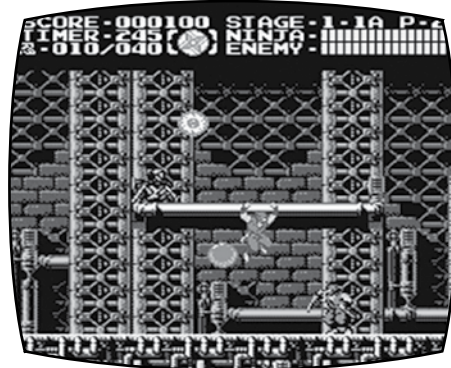
The 2004 XBox release of *Ninja Gaiden* just so happens to include *Ninja Gaiden Trilogy.* And it can be obtained for under five dollars USD. (I got mine for three.) That's a lot of gaming budget saved and a ton of bang for your buck. Sure, you might have to invest in a controller adapter, but I'd say it's well worth it, and it frees up money you can spend on other titles that never got re-released.

What about the *Splatterhouse* series? Just one of these games can run you $90+. But *Splatterhouse* arcade, along with parts 2 and 3, all happened to hitch a free ride with the 2010 release *Splatterhouse* for the XBox 360 and Playstation 3.

You get the idea.

Exploring what's on collection discs can be just as rewarding and beneficial. Let's take a look at one of my favorites: ***Capcom Classics Collection Volume 2.***
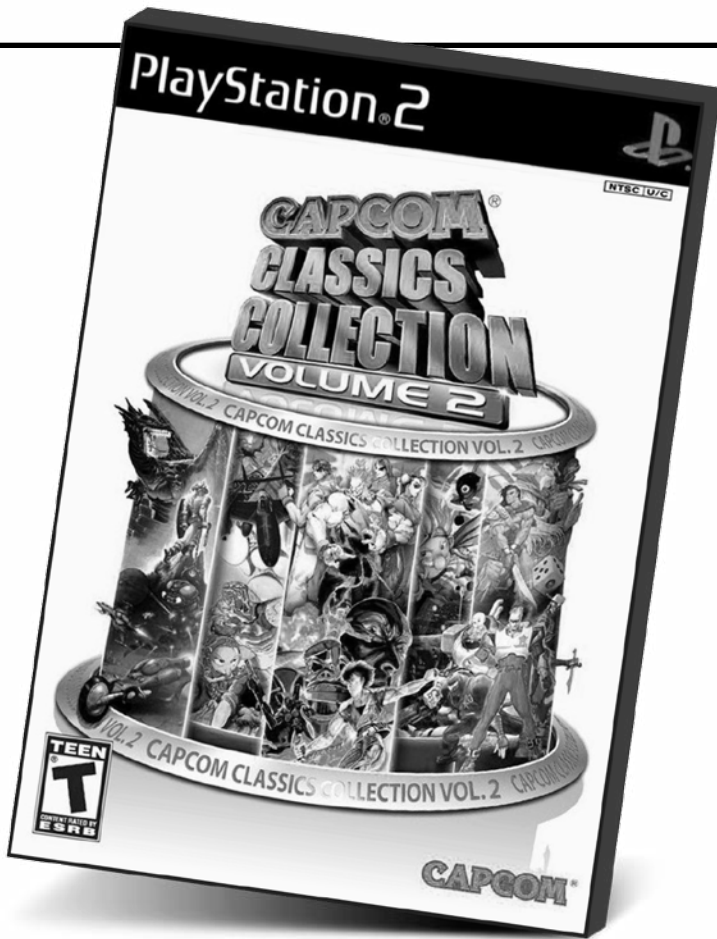
Available for both PS2, Xbox, and a similar releases for the PSP, this is a collection that is a force to be reckoned with. As far as money savers go, it includes the Avengers arcade beat'em-up and arcade Strider, both of which are arguably better than their Genesis counterparts, *Chiki-Chiki Boys* in the form of *Mega Twins, King of Dragons,* the very same AD&D beat-em-up that happens to be quite expensive on the SNES, and *Super Street Fighter II Turbo,* which is in my opinion the definitive Street Fighter
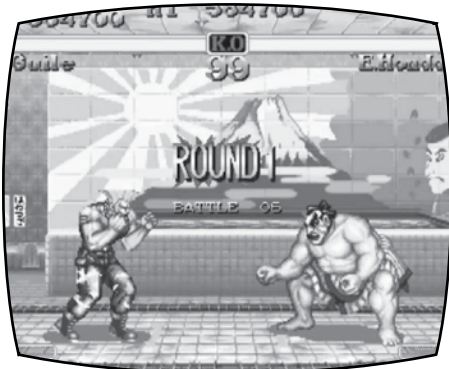
II experience since it introduced supers and air combos. Sure, you could buy Super Turbo on the Panasonic 3DO … or you could buy it here for much cheaper, plus you get to use a superior controller. As icing on the cake, you'll get games that are just plain awesome such as *Black Tiger*, a classic most arcade aficionados hoped would see a home console release one day, *Captain Commando* and *Knights of the Round*, both fantastic beat-em-ups, *Eco Fighters*, the most fun eco-warrior SHMUP you've probably never played, the original *Street Fighter*, perhaps to see how the SF phenomenon all began, and *Quiz & Dragons*, the Best Game Ever Made. No, seriously.

My point is that these collections are worth checking out. A game you've been dying to play, but is just plain too rare or expensive could very well be hiding out on a five dollar

compilation disc or waiting for you on newer game as an extra. Find game lists online. And be sure to check out the differences between the XBox and PS2 versions, like with *Taito Legends 2*. You might be surprised.

As for *Earthbound*, we can always hope for the rumored Mother/ Earthbound Trilogy. However, as all diehard *Earthbound* fans are well aware, holding our breaths would not be wise. Since this cult hit isn't in a collection, and it's not a hidden extra on any games, the next best thing to shelling out for the US release just might be importing. Yes, the menus and dialogue would be in Japanese, but unless I miss my guess, clone machines that can apply translation patches will become all the more common as years crawl on.

As the cost of physical game collecting goes up, it might be a good idea to check for those 'hidden re-releases' or imports any time you're searching for a cost-prohibitive game. You'll hear us talk about importing as an alternative quite often on the NintendoAge forums, especially for genres that require little-to-no reading. Checking for these alternatives is never a bad idea. Who knows? Your wallet, your inner-gamer, and even your inner-collector might thank you.

NES HOMEBREW SHOWCASE 2015

## ALL NEW GAMES MADE BY CURRENT DEVELOPERS FOR THE CLASSIC SYSTEM YOU LOVE

8-BIT XMAS 2015

There's nothing more emblematic of the Holiday seasons than the cozy feeling you get waking to a fire and conifer brimming under with presents. That feeling of togetherness and warmth and holiday spirit shared while singing songs of the season with friends and family. That feeling of dominating your friends until they throw the controller at your TV. Ah, such memories!

This year's game tests your abilities when your life lasts only twelve seconds. The blinky LEDs count down until you die where you stand. Navigate jumping puzzles to reach the exit at the top of the screen. You will need to use sacrifices to build towers or bridges to complete levels. All stats are saved on the cart, so beat your best time or use the fewest lives! Can you escape all 99 challenging levels?
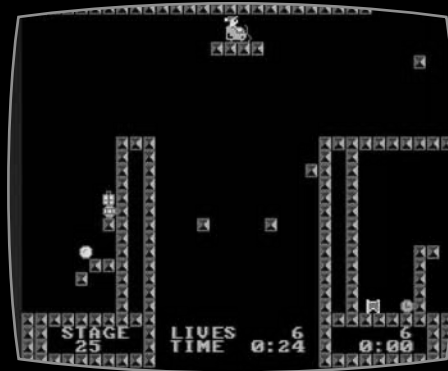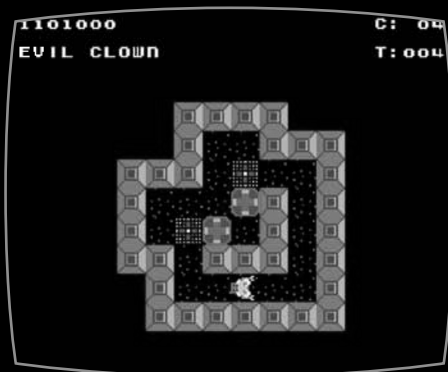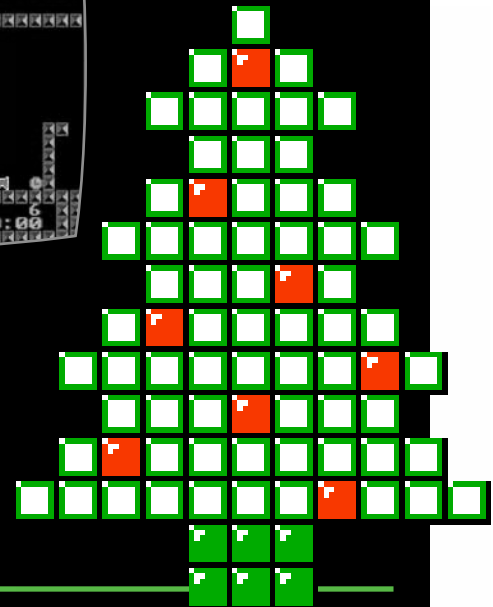
retrousb.com

THE INCIDENT

The year is 2415. Mankind has evacuated the city, leaving a once thriving commercial warehouse completely abandoned. But something has happened, awakening Sam, box-pushing robot model number KSS-084. Can you help Sam escape the basement? Featuring over 100 levels of box-pushing puzzle action, strain your brain to complete them as you move floor to floor, and come one step closer to whatever is outside.

What was The Incident, who caused it, and what will the repercussions be for mankind? Find out today, in The Incident, a new game for the Nintendo Entertainment System.

Game includes:
- Over 100 levels of puzzles!
- A rockin' soundtrack, including 12 songs by NES composer, Zi!
- Flash saving! No more worrying about failed battery backups. Save your progress as you go!
- A full level editor!
- Ability to import and export user created levels!
- An intriguing storyline!

khangames.com

MAD WIZARD

The evil summoner Amondus from The Order of the Talon has taken over Prim, Hekl's once happy homeland. And nothing drives a wizard more crazy than having their territory trampled on!

Can you help Hekl defeat the enemies that Amondus has populated throughout the landscape? To do so, you will need to master the art of levitation, find magic spells that will assist you in reaching new areas, and upgrade your weapons. All of these will be necessary in order to give Hekl the power he needs to restore peace to Prim. Do you have what it takes? If you dare, venture into this, the first installment of the Candelabra series!

retrousb.com

RISE OF AMONDUS

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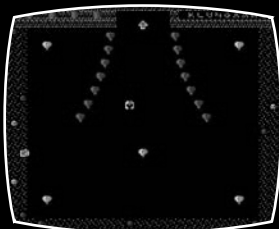
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QUEST FORGE

You are Sir Nils, knight of the castle Axvald, and the king needs your help. The world orb has been stolen and the demon gate can now be opened. By the orders of the king, you have to stop whoever is plotting to unleash evil on these lands.

Explore the world, from the bottom of the sea to the top of the mountains. Defeat enemies with a combat system that combines timing and statistics based RPG combat. Search for the eight magical artifacts that will enhance Nils' abilities.
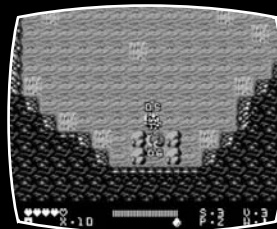
pikointeractive.com

SHE GAMES, EH?

Written by: csylve01 aka Chantelle Sylvester

The idea that the gaming world is predominantly ruled by or for men isn't new. As a female gamer, I've often felt like the minority. Some study groups, however, show the ratio of female to male gamers is actually growing closer to the ratio of females to males in the population at large. According to ESA, in 2012 the ratio of female to male gamers in Canada was 46:54 and in the USA was 47:53[1]. From my own experiences it wouldn't seem that way as I'm often outnumbered in any gaming-related context. Guys seem surprised at how into gaming I am, and even more surprised at what I know, or that I'm actually good at it. There can be a stigma attached to being a female gamer, but once you get to know me, you'll see I'm not that. I'm sure some have labeled me as a casual gamer or that I do it with the intention of getting attention. I actually consider myself to be experienced, versatile, and knowledgeable though. I would never claim to be hardcore or anything, but gaming is inherent to my being. I may often game socially with friends, but I also game solely quite regularly.

When I'm not physically gaming, I tend to spend my free-time watching or reading material on the subject or talking about it on the Internet. I know that the definition of "gamer" can be broad depending on who gives it, and I could write an article contrasting all sides to that. I do wonder though, if ESA's ratio data is a bit glossy and represents gamers under a larger umbrella; there are obviously going to be more females considered gamers if they play Facebook games or apps on their Smartphones, for example. To give a sense of how I identify as a gamer though, I mostly play NES, SNES, N64, WiiU, 3DS, & Playstation. Needless to say, I game on consoles or handhelds, and don't personally consider other platforms to be my thing. In any case, the numbers are in, and chicks dig games too.

Starting as a little girl who befriended boys who had home consoles to now being one of the few girls at swap meets, game shops, and Internet forums like NA, I've often felt like the rare one. Regardless, gaming has certainly become a big part of who I am and I realized this when I was three. My cousin had an NES and I played the typical gateway games: *Mario and Duck Hunt, Zelda, Pac Man,* and *Tetris*. I started experimenting with harder stuff shortly thereafter: *Battletoads, Bucky O'Hare,* and *Metal Storm.* My uncle had a Sega Genesis and I played *Sonic the Hedgehog* more than him. I've always preferred gender-neutral games rather than those that adapted girl-oriented material; and if you've ever played *Barbie* on the NES, can you really blame me? I fell in love with the SNES at a friend's house when I was five, and *Super Mario All Stars* was gold to me. Choosing which Mario game to play on one cartridge rocked, and I especially liked the new save features that the originals lacked. I hung out more with my friend's older brother than her because she never wanted to game. I tried playing NES carts on the SNES, realizing it wouldn't work. I later learned that Nintendo planned on making the SNES backwards compatible, but the cost of one console would have been upwards of $275 (comparable to $500 today).

I felt gamer rage for the first time playing the Frogger mini arcade, funnily enough. Obviously it was just the sense of frustration rather than violent content and it led to a fierce sense of competition. I enjoyed challenging friends, especially boys, and I still get a kick out of beating dudes. Some guys might not like when I beat them, but it's just a

game, right? On that same note, a sense of disparagement of female gamers exists in the gaming industry (not to say that everyone does it). Evolutionary psychology is to blame for male hostility towards female gamers, according to a 2015 article: Sexism in Video Games[2]. When there is a disruption in male-hierarchy that is female-initiated, males stand to lose the most status; as a result, hostile behavior in poor performing males may occur. The study found that lower-skilled male players of *Halo 3* were more hostile towards players with female voices. I wonder if that's why the majority of female players in competitive gaming mainly get exposure in female-only tournaments.

In the summer of 1997 I experienced something similar when I played SNES at a boy's house almost everyday. He didn't like that I was better than him, told me that video games were for boys,

and that I played unfairly. He didn't like when I showed him secrets or how to unlock things. He didn't like that all my save data was more complete than his. I got the impression he didn't like that I was a girl playing video games; it didn't stop me though. Maybe it was the fact that I didn't have video games at my house (yet) that kept me craving to play. Or maybe it was just that I was good at it, was being told I shouldn't do something, or that I had something to prove. Whatever it was, it was time to get my own console.

I went into a game shop in the same plaza as my dance studio and I saw advertisements and a kiosk for the Sony Playstation. I hung out there after dance to play the different demos and received my own PS1 for Christmas; I was the cool kid on the street then. I couldn't get enough of Crash Bandicoot and looked forward to getting each release in that series. I wasn't surprised to learn it was one of the only North American video game series to have blockbuster success in Japan. I was addicted to Tomba, and particularly liked that it was based on a mission system rather than just a platformer. I think it was the first game that fueled my drive to reach completion; although the missions aren't all required to progress in the game, they are to achieve full completion. The developer Whoopee Camp went out of business after the sequel came out though, giving *Tomba* a high rarity status as a result. Unfortunately, I sold my original copy in high school, having no idea that it would one day be rare.

I rented PS1 games all the time and missed school from staying up all night playing. I wanted to try out everything, and I began to develop an interest in different styles of gameplay.

I read manuals and gaming magazines from front to back because I loved learning. I discovered that the "father" of the Playstation, Sony engineer Ken Kutaragi, designed the SPC700 sound chip for the SNES in secret from Sony. This makes sense considering Nintendo and Sony had earlier plans of teaming up which fell through over licensing disagreements.

As the years passed and I became a teenager, that sense of nostalgia kicked in. I still had my PS1, but I wanted to play more retro games. I saw titles from my childhood and wanted them at my fingertips. I got a Gameboy Advance SP for Christmas in tenth grade with a handful of games. I brought it to class and would play it inside my desk, getting a detention for it once. At the end of high school I started dating fellow NA member, nes_pimp. His collection of NES games sat around the seventy mark back then and I thought that was a lot; little did I know. People who know us might think I'm only into gaming because of him, but we both shared that hobby when we met.

We went to flea markets every Sunday that we could, but as a young woman, I often felt out of place. Vendors with game booths didn't seem to always take me seriously. I would get, "Here are the Mario games" or, "Who are you buying games for?" Of course I loved Mario games, but I already had them all and I was on the hunt for other things. It seemed like they assumed I only cared about the flagship characters or games. It was a bit sexist to me, but I realized it just wasn't the norm so I kept doing my thing. Eventually they recognized me and I started to get good deals. Game hunting became a hobby, and I got a

thrill from it. I started learning about other sellers in the area, and made friends along the way.

With such a gender disparity in the gaming industry, it's no wonder some male gamers feel like it's their territory. According to a 2009 study published in New Media & Society, 85% of playable characters in video games are male[3]. Being able to play as a woman is even sometimes considered an optional extra by developers and publishers. To be honest, I could care less about that since I mostly choose male characters anyway. Generally they're created to be stronger and have better abilities, which I'm sure is deliberate. The point I guess I'm making is that some critics indicate the seeming lack of female interest in video games is attributed to an under representation of female characters and/or the objectification of women. I've been aware of it of course, but never have I cared enough to be offended; I've just considered it to be part of the culture of gaming and can see it from a business standpoint. Some females in the industry look down on this acceptance and "it is what it is" attitude that I have regarding gender disparity, but it's a bit too feminist for me otherwise. The only thing that I get defensive about is when people have archaic views and say that gaming isn't for girls. I can accept scanty armor, unrealistic breasts, and damsels in distress; but don't tell me I can't play.

The thing that sucks the most about being a female gamer is that I still can't find female friends who are into it like me. Sometimes I wish that I could call up a girl and ask her to bring over beer and beat a lineup of games. While I do have some friends who don't mind picking up a controller once in a while, they just don't get it like I do. It's tricky to meet new friends and maintain friendships with old ones when your interests don't align. I would much rather stay home on the weekend and party while I game rather than go out; that's probably why most of my friends are dudes. Sometimes I see other girls at swap meets or working at game shops and I consider asking them to hang out. I always refrain from that because I don't want to seem like a weirdo or come across as desperate. I also am leery of it because I don't know anything about those people and I'd be inviting them into a house of valuables. From my perspective it's easier for guys to network and connect in the gaming world, because there are more of them in one place at once on a more consistent basis. I guess that's why I married a gamer though, but it would still be nice to have a lady to connect with.

When I was born in 1988, Nintendo reported that only 27% of NES players in the United States were female[4]. More recently, in 2013 however, Nintendo claimed that 50% of its users were female[5]. There's an obvious increase in female gamers and with the evolution of technology and the greater access and development of consoles and other platforms, and this makes sense. Some have argued that this increase can also be attributed to newer controllers, such as the Wii Remote or Kinect, making the games easier to pick up and providing a level playing field. It was probably those same types of people who developed *Borderlands 2* since they created a "girlfriend mode" with decreased difficulty. Whatever the reasons, more females are joining this primarily male gaming world. According to Tech Times, women account for approximately half of the $21.53 billion the video game industry rakes in;[6] that must account for more than just mothers buying games for their kids. There may not seem to be as many female gamers out there in our immediate communities, but we know they're there. Don't underestimate them; you never know, you could learn a thing or two and they just may be better than you.

[1]http://www.isfe.eu/sites/isfe.eu/files/attachments/esa_ef_2012.pdf

[2]http://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0131613

[3]http://nms.sagepub.com/content/11/5/815

[4]https://archive.org/stream/06Kahle001551#page/n7/mode/2up

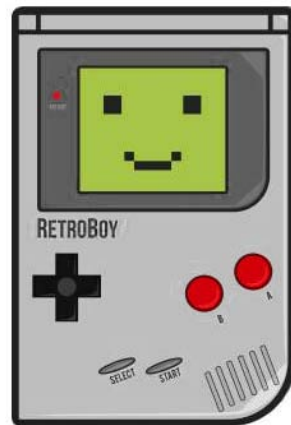[5]http://www.geekwire.com/2013/dudes-38-xbox-users-female-51-kids

[6]http://www.techtimes.com/articles/13886/20140824/more-adult-women-gamers-than-teenage-boy-gamers-esa-research.htm

RETROGAMECON

Written by: NintenDarr aka Ryan Darr

I have always had a passion for video games and not much else. I love playing video games, I even love reorganizing my own collection, but discussing games new and old with friends new and old is what keeps the hobby fresh for me. I have been in the collection scene for a about seven or eight years, ever since I began buying up all the games I used to own in my childhood or games I missed out on back in the day that looked fun. Being a naïve kid, I sold my older games for newer systems, like my PlayStation 2 and Xbox, not knowing that I'd have a huge desire to go back and replay them when I got older. Rebuying didn't just get back my old games though, it also brought back this dream I had even before I started collecting games: to open my own game store. I always thought the guy at my local video rental store, Video World, was some kind of deity because of his knowledge on any video game I could ask him about. He always knew exactly what to recommend. There was something about being "that game guy" that I knew I wanted to be someday.

After all these years, I find myself fairly new to the convention scene. I have been to quite a few over the years but they were always scattered and often, last minute decisions. I find myself now searching for these events because they are great places to get the games I'm missing for my collection and also a great way to meet new people that share my hobby. Playing with the idea of opening my own brick and mortar store, I decided to try vending at a few conventions to see if this is really what I want to do. I recently had my first experience as a vendor at a gaming convention: Retro Game Con 2015 in Syracuse, NY.

I prepared the best I could, stockpiling games from my trade piles and gathering duplicates from my collection. I stepped up my Goodwill game in the weeks prior to the event and was confident that I'd have at least enough games to fill my table. Both of my parents were nothing but supportive. My mother spent weeks hand painting Nintendo characters onto shot glasses and Christmas ornaments while my father, who I have never seen even play a video game, offered to come with me and spend an entire Saturday completely out of his element. I made two custom *Tetris* carts and planned a "High Score", and "Most Lines Cleared", competition at my booth. I was ready.

The drive was five hours. I couldn't get any of my gamer friends to get time off, and didn't want to subject my dad to such a long day with stuff he didn't know much about. Instead my girlfriend Kelly and I headed off to Syracuse together. We got to the hotel around 12:30 AM but I didn't go to sleep until at least 3:00 AM. I was so nervous I ended up spreading out every item I had on the hotel room floor and evaluating everything again, for the tenth time. After a solid three hours of sleep and a long day ahead of me, I headed to the convention center. As I watched trucks and trailers pull up and people unloading display cases, TV's, and 80's living room setups in front of the venue, I was pretty intimidated. Kelly saying, "Looks like we are running with the big dogs," didn't help my nerves much either.

I wandered the floor until I found a table with "Ryan Darr" written on a piece of paper, I had signed up for my booth months earlier, categorized inventory, but it wasn't until I saw my name on that simple piece of paper that it became real to me; I was a vendor at a retro game convention. My fear and intimidation turned instantly into excitement. I spent longer than most people setting up my

table. I wanted everything to be perfect. Halfway through my set up, another vendor came over and started chatting about the event. He bought a *Knuckles Chaotix* box for Sega 32x from me for $10. It was my first sale! My confidence returned and the event was underway. I was starting to feel good.

I planned to meet up with thesubcon3 and by surprise, got to meet Captain Maroney, both members of NintendoAge. Thesubcon3 was promoting his book *The Complete NES Collection*, which Kelly got for me as a Christmas gift, but only after negotiating for an autographed copy and a picture of me with the author. Captain Maroney was filming for his new movie *The Bits of Yesterday* which I was both thrilled and honored when he asked to interview me. It was not only cool to match some faces to their usernames, but also great to meet such great guys and see the amazing projects they are working on, outside of an Internet forum. I introduced myself to Scott Haugen, a YouTube personality and frequent guest on

The Game Chasers, and gave him a sweet deal on a *Contra: Hard Corps* box. I also met James Rolfe, the Angry Video Game Nerd, who I am a huge fan of. I caught him outside his booth so I had the opportunity to talk to him about some of his videos outside of gaming, which he seemed to really enjoy.

Mostly I was manning my table because Kelly was not familiar with the prices on games and didn't want to give a bad deal to people. I was on my feet for about eleven hours straight that day, but couldn't be happier. I got to meet new people and talk about games. I got to recommend games to new gamers, and give some people some great deals so they could add stuff they needed to their collection. I didn't make too much money. I covered my expenses for the trip and had enough left over for a well-deserved pizza and wings feast at the hotel with Kelly. I was thoroughly satisfied. I finally got to see what it was like to sell games in my own space, face to face and not in online transactions. The whole experience was better than expected and I laugh now at how nervous I was. I know I made the right decision to go and can't wait to return next year as a vendor. My advice to anyone thinking about vending for the first time is to just go for it. Being nervous is a healthy part and you will learn a lot from everyone around you. You will never know what it's like unless you try it out!

WHY 1996 WAS MY FAVORITE YEAR IN GAMING.

Written by KrakenSoup aka Mike Pellegrino

If I had to pinpoint one year, or even one exact moment, when I transformed from "someone who has played video games from time to time" to a full blown gamer, it would have to be the first time I set eyes upon *Super Mario 64* in 1996.

I received my first NES with *Super Mario Bros. and Duck Hunt* on Christmas day in 1987, I bought a Game Boy with birthday money in 1993, and I bought a Super Nintendo in 1995, so I was there for the most part when these classic systems were in their heyday. Yet, I would never have classified myself as a gamer. Sure, I played video games with my family, by myself, and with friends, but it was really only one of many hobbies I had. I also loved to read, draw, and play outside. Video games were an occasional thing back then, especially since I had to share the sole family TV with everyone during most of my childhood. Once I finally got my own TV in my bedroom, I tended to play video games a bit more than before, but I wouldn't play for more than an hour at a time, or even more than a few days a week. So prior to 1996, gaming was something I enjoyed but was ultimately on the back burner. Besides, I only owned five

to ten games per system prior to the Nintendo 64.

That all changed in 1996. It was a magical year, and not just because I turned thirteen and was going through puberty. It was the year that I discovered some of my absolute favorite games of all time. Super Nintendo might have been on its last legs with the Nintendo 64 quickly approaching in September of that year, but man did the Super Nintendo go out with a bang!

First we were treated to the stellar *Super Mario RPG: Legend of the Seven Stars* in May. One of my favorite

games on the system, it pushed me further to seek out other games within the genre. Without *Super Mario RPG*, it's likely I would have missed out on a lot of Super Nintendo RPGs like *Final Fantasy III, Chrono Trigger,* and my all-time favorite game, *EarthBound*. Because of Super Mario RPG, I was introduced to the role playing game. This is all besides the fact that *Super Mario RPG* is a truly great game, even by today's standards.

Next, we had the brilliant puzzle game, *Tetris Attack* in August. While not a complete game changer, it is still one of my favorite Super Nintendo games, as well as one of my all-time favorite puzzle games.

Last, we were treated to *Donkey Kong Country 3* in November. Some people will argue the game doesn't compare to the first two games in the series, but I wholeheartedly disagree. DKC3 is my favorite, and my third favorite game of all time. I loved the previous two Donkey Kong Country games, but DKC3 just took it to the next level. Like it or not, *Donkey Kong Country 3* is the final swan song on the Super Nintendo. At the time of its release,

Nintendo 64 was already upon us, and I won't beat around the bush - the N64 is main reason I'm writing this article at all.

The Sony PlayStation and Sega Saturn may have beaten Nintendo to the punch in the 3D video game market, but when the Nintendo 64 launched, they made sure everyone knew it. At the time, I was still getting into Super Nintendo, so I didn't think I was ready for the 3D game revolution of the mid-90's. That was, until I saw *Super Mario 64* in Blockbuster. I remember it vividly - I was walking around a Blockbuster store, looking at movies and Super Nintendo games to rent, when I happened to see the big Nintendo 64 kiosk in the front of the store. Initially, I scoffed at the notion that 2D games were quickly becoming a thing of the past, since I was convinced all I needed was an NES and Super NES. Yet, I still gave Super Mario 64 a try. Little did I know, that moment would forever change my life.

I wrapped my hands around the oddly shaped controller, moving Mario around in a 3D environment with the analog stick for the first time. I ran, I jumped, I dove, and did backflips. It only took a few minutes of playing to realize that I needed a Nintendo 64 as soon as possible. I was only thirteen at the time, and being unemployed, I didn't have but a dollar to my name. My parents insisted I wait for my birthday in the following year to get one. I couldn't wait that long, so I rented a Nintendo 64 and *Super Mario 64* from the same Blockbuster shortly after their release. I played the game all weekend when I had it. Being that it was my first 3D game, I initially found it to be much more difficult than I do today, and as a result it took me much longer to finish it than it should have. Eventually, in March of 1997, I was able to buy a Nintendo 64 with the money I received for my birthday. Since the system didn't come with a game, and I didn't have enough money for a system and a game, I had to wait several months until I earned enough allowance to be able to buy one or two. My purchases were, of course, *Super Mario 64* and then *Mario Kart 64* in September of 1997.

Nintendo 64 revolutionized both gaming and my life. Prior to playing Super Mario 64, I was ready to call it quits. I was becoming discouraged with new games since my favorite console at the time, Super Nintendo, was on the verge of being put to rest just as I was getting into it. For a while I swore I didn't want a Nintendo 64. But then I played it. Nintendo 64 may or may not be my favorite console of all time (this is something I can never set in stone) and it may have been a failure by Nintendo standards, but it did help revolutionize gaming as we know it, and ever since I have been very passionate about the hobby. Without the Nintendo 64, we might not have analog sticks, 3D Marios, 3D Zeldas, or the many other classic titles that found its home on the system. Like it or not, it laid the foundation for every Nintendo system to follow, and at the very least should be appreciated for that.

1996 was my absolute favorite year in gaming. Without those games and without the Nintendo 64, I would most likely not be the same person I am today.

ISSUEALLY INTERVIEW
Written by Shane aka Shane Morphis

Track list:

1. Filtered Blow
2. Contra
3. Blaster Master
4. Kalinka
5. The Legend of Zelda
6. Ninja Gaiden: Acts 1-3
7. Troika
8. Double Dragon
9. Bradinsky
10. Ninja Gaiden: Acts 4-6
11. The Soviet Mind Game
12. Zelda II: The Adventure of Link
13. Korobeyniki
14. Castlevania

Vomitron's 2011 release No NES for the Wicked is a juggernaut of a NES metal album that stands above the rest. Incredible musicianship, great production, and a track list featuring some of the best music on the console makes it a must have. Every track is accurately translated to guitar, bass, synth, and drums.

Today I have the pleasure of speaking with the mighty Vomitron! Thanks for taking the time to conduct this interview. Firstly, how and when did Vomitron come about? Was there a musical direction in mind?

Vomitron was always my "side project" pretty much since about 1998. This turned into a MAIN project essentially. But yeah that's when I came up with the name and started writing songs for it, rather than just riffs.

My musical direction was decidedly metal, but with all kinds of experimental twists and turns, without much in terms of song structure. And it turns out, a lot of those songs kind of sucked looking back on them because of that. Haha! I'll probably not write like that ever again.

Vomitron has two releases with the first being 2007's self-titled debut *Vomitron*. The debut album consists of mainly original material with a wide range of tempos and styles. What are some of your main musical influences?

Oh jeez. There's a boatload dude. But speaking strictly for the *Vomitron* record... All the thrash/metal greats: Iced Earth, Megadeth, Slayer, Metallica, Iron Maiden, and Motorhead.

And then a lot of more ambient/epic/progressive/power stuff like Strapping Young Lad, Opeth (PRE Deliverance, everything after that just SUCKS), Nightwish, and Rush. And of course my guilty pleasure, electronic stuff: Rob Zombie, Static X, Fear Factory, and any 80's movie

soundtrack involving a shitload of synth. But those lists are insanely incomplete. Too bad I couldn't just show you my iPod.

Who do you prefer between Eddie Van Halen and Randy Rhoads?

Holy shit dude, that'd be like saying, "Hey if you had to choose, which leg would you prefer to be amputated??" I love both those guys so equally. But if I had to choose, I'd go with Eddie, just because I think of the two I find him a little more creative and discernible. Probably going to get crucified for saying that, but whatever. Love that dude. But I love Ozzy more than Van Halen, so go figure.

Haha that's a great analogy! How about Ozzy's *Blizzard of Ozz* or *Diary of a Madman*?

Oh jeez! At least let me select from two different Ozzy guitarists!! But I suppose if I had to choose, I'd take Blizzard because not only is the production a little clearer, I think it's just a stronger record. I love both so much though. ARGGGGH!!

One thing that stands out to me while listening to No NES is the level of technicality. Everything sounds very accurate and precise. What's your musical background like?

Well, I've had all kinds of formal training on classical piano since I was like seven years old. Classical music has always been the base of everything I do, whether it's metal, electronic, etc. That's kind of where I came from. In terms of guitar, that I picked up on my own and taught myself. I continued classical piano training straight up through college!

With Vomitron's debut album being almost entirely original music how did the idea of *No NES for the Wicked* come about?

It came about from having done that original version of Contra in the MP3.com days, around 2001ish. The response was so overwhelmingly positive that I started to think about doing a number of those classic games. It wasn't until about four or five years later that my buddy and I started talking about *Blaster Master* and what an AWESOME soundtrack it had back in the day. And he was like, "Didn't you do that Contra song a few years ago? Why don't you hash one out for *Blaster Master*??!" and then I did. The response on

THAT was so good that the gears started to turn in my head to do a whole record's worth! Fast forward to 2011, fourteen songs were recorded! Including my other buddy getting all pissed off at the NES system not starting up properly. HAH!

How did you go about picking the tracks to do on No NES?

The one's I loved to play as a kid! Simple as that dude! The same will go for the follow up!! ;)

What was the recording process like for No NES? Aside from playing every instrument on the record, did you also produce it?

Yes sir! It was a one-man show. I'm kind of fortunate in that regards; I actually do mixing and mastering for a living, so that part of it was very much a no-brainer. And cheap, too, since I didn't have to pay anyone for those services. Haha! Shit can get expensive! But yes, I played, programmed, and produced everything myself. I hate that word "produce" because I have trouble thinking of myself as a "producer." To me, a producer is the fucking guy that sits in the corner and lets the engineers and musicians do all the work, gives the thumbs up, and then takes all the credit. Even though I know that's not always true. But it has been plenty of times in my experience being in that line of work. It sucks for the producers that actually get involved and work their balls off.

How difficult was the process of learning and transferring these songs to the instruments played on the record?

Hah! Holy fuck.... All I can say is if I didn't have today's ROM technology and things like NESticle and programs like that, I sure as shit wouldn't have been able to do it with nothing but the MEMORY of those tunes in my head of course. I had to go back and listen over, and over, and OVER AND OVER AND OVER. Slow them down, speed them back up; adjust EQ so I could discern the different parts correctly. I was a Nazi about it too; I wasn't satisfied until I knew they were 100%. Basically for each track I broke it down and assigned each part into one of five categories: Drums (or anything that sounds like drums), Bass (or what I could judge to be a bass part... BIG gray area here), Rhythm guitars, Leads (be they on synth or on guitar), and Synths.

Then I would sometimes repeat a part, and flip the assignments. For example, the first time through a particular

section the lead would be on guitar, then the next time through, on synth... I'm sure you heard all that being done on the record.

Do you have a favorite track off of *No NES for the Wicked* and what was the most difficult track to finish?

My favorite track would probably be Castlevania. It was just so much fucking fun and translated so flawlessly. And it was easy to arrange too. Some of these tracks were a pain in the ass to arrange, and I STILL second guess them from time to time. The most difficult track(s)? Ninja Gaiden... both tracks. That was a nightmare. That one alone took months just to translate. When it came time to record it, it was a breeze compared to trying to figure out all those parts. Just wasn't meant to be played by a human being. Hahah CLEARLY!

Growing up what game systems did you play on and what are you currently playing on?

NES ONLY! I was a loser. Plus my folks refused to buy me anything else. HOWEVER BEFORE THAT, I was also a huge gamer on the Commodore 64 (my first love). Then of course after that on to PC gaming through the early and mid 90's.

What are some of your favorite games?

My favorite on the NES is probably *Contra*. It was a joke to beat, but it was just so much fun. My friends and I used to time ourselves on getting through it quickest. Which of course ruled out using anything more than 1 life. Loved that game. On other systems I adored *F-Zero X* on the N64 in college. Big drinking game, haha! Then through the 90's on the PC there was all kinds of awesome ones, like *Wolfenstein*, *Doom*, and I'd say my all time favorite was the original *Quake*. It was so cool because there WAS NO music, which made it that much more eerie and desolate sounding. Not to mention Trent Reznor did the sounds for it, and it was fucking awesome.

What are the future plans for Vomitron?

Ugh. I always hate to project anything except NEAR future – however as you know the follow up to NO NES is on its way and will be released in the first half of 2016. Hopefully earlier rather than later. Beyond that, I also am working on a complete and total remix of the original *Vomitron* record, as there was so much about it that was fucking sloppy, right

down to the engineering. Now that I've been at it for so many years, I realized I could go back and really make that record sound the way I originally intended. It doesn't right now and will probably be a total waste of time, but I feel like I have to if for nothing else than my own satisfaction. So that will also be released in 2016, probably only in digital format, though. Beyond that, I have a lot of original material that needs to see the light of day; I'm also considering doing a record of more hybrid metal/electronic stuff, hopefully with vocals too! Which was taboo to even think up till now, but whatever. No one will probably hear it anyways. Heh!

Dude I was beyond jacked to hear there will be a follow up to No NES! Can you tell us a bit about the follow up and what the track listing will be?

Wouldn't you like to know!! Hah... I would too, to be honest. At the moment, suffices to say that there WILL be a follow up, and I expect it to happen in the earlier half of 2016. Facebook (ugh) and Twitter updates will be happening soon so stay tuned to those!

Aside from visiting Vomitron's website at www.vomitron665.com, how else can people follow you?

Well, I'd say Facebook, but MAN I suck at that. I feel bad every time I think about it too, because I haven't updated it in so long. I need to start using Twitter or something just to drop an update every now and again. I just never think to do it. And I'm sure people think I'm not doing anything or not being productive, but holy crap nothing can be further from the truth. But I ALSO HATE IT when a band gives updates every twenty seconds on what they're doing. It's so.... tacky, I guess. Hah! But I'd say stay tuned to Facebook for any MAJOR updates, and of course the website will be updated as well as I get close to releasing the NO NES follow up.

Thanks again for taking the time to do this interview. Being a big fan of Vomitron it's been awesome! Is there anything you'd like to say in closing?

I am Error.

Be sure to visit www.vomitron665.com to get your copy of *Vomitron's* No NES follow up in 2016.

THE EVOLUTION CONTINUES WITH THE AVS

1983

1985

1993

Today

When retroUSB started it was using spare parts in a guest bedroom retrofitting NES controllers. Then came the first USB adapters, a huge step to take a product to full manufacturing. Now chinese copies are everywhere. We mastered controllers and realized we could do more.

We brought you the first NES homebrews using all brand new parts. This continuing effort expands the future of NES gaming, and fulfills the childhood dreams of many programmers and artists. Next we went high tech with the PowerPak, a ground breaking device for the system. We mastered cartridges and realized we could do more. We realized we could use our full knowledge of the NES to build great devices.

We realized we could use our devices to build great experiences. Starting today, retroUSB takes the next step in the evolution of the NES to bring you the AVS. 30 years after the NES, retroUSB becomes a complete console company. The AVS is a console as beautiful as the pixel perfect HD images it generates. This is the greatest product we have ever made.

Couldn't be simpler, works just the way you expect it to. Real hardware means no boot or loading times. No stolen software emulators or buggy NOAC chips. A wide range of gamepad, video, and cheat options to play the way you want.

We decided a few key features define the experience. From the start we were dedicated to the ultimate in compatibility for both NES and Famicom. Not just all past carts, but future ones as well. Not just compatibility with carts, but gamepads too. All regions, all devices. It's so bad even your Power Glove works.

That attention to detail extends to the HDMI video, with super sharp pixels. Zero lag scaling, optional scanlines with variable darkness, and multiple regions let you select the perfect picture. A NES with composite compared to the AVS is a stunning difference in picture quality.

The design even extends to the back, with a standard USB cable for power that can be plugged into the back of many TVs. No ugly power brick needed. No problem when you need a replacement in 30 years.

This is what technology is for. Its not about megahertz and gigabytes. Its about reliving those special memories, and creating new ones. Its the sound the plastic makes when you load a familiar game. Its about discovering a new game, even if that game is 30 years old. Play your NES carts in amazing HD with the AVS!

Video: 720p wide screen HDMI output, 60Hz (NTSC) and 50Hz (PAL)

Audio: 44.1kHz HDMI output with expansion audio from carts

Display: Variable pixel scaling including integer options(1:1, 4:3, 5:3) with optional variable darkness scanlines

Carts: Front loading NES, top loading Famicom

Ports: Built in NES Four Score Pro, Famicom Expansion Port

Ports: HDMI Type A for video and audio, USB Mini B for power and data

Cheats: 5 cheat code slots with built in code database supporting Game Genie, Pro Action Replay, Pro Action Rocky, and raw formats

Online: NA Scoreboard online score system through USB

Updates: Upgrade FPGA configuration and menu system through USB

retroUSB

retrousb.com

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

by Ferris Bueller

NA NAME:
bruleski

NAME:
Eric Brule

OCCUPATION:
Graphic Designer/
Art Director

FERRIS - Why'd you bring back the E-zine?

BRULESKI - Actually, the opportunity to work on the E-zine sort of fell into my lap, but it seemed like a perfect way for me to share my expertise and to contribute to the NA community so I jumped at the chance.

I probably hold the record for least amount of posts for any active NA member—I visit NA almost daily and have for a few years now, but regrettably I NEVER post. I usually just read what others are saying. I see working on the E-zine as my way of being involved with the NA community.

It just dawned on me that my lack of posts means that 99.9% of NA have no idea I even exist. Let me fix that... Hello, my name is Eric, I like video games too.

FERRIS - What's your story? How'd you get into collecting?

BRULESKI - I grew up on a pretty healthy diet of Nintendo, Sega and Playstation but by the time I hit college, I had sold all my games and moved on to other interests. That was until one day in mid 2010 when I spotted a copy of Crystalis at a used movie store. Nostalgia took over and I bought it. (I didn't even have a NES to play it on.) Boom! that's all it took, I had gotten the collecting bug. 2500+ games later I still play and hunt for games every day.

FERRIS - I heard you were a part of the Let's Play Gaming Expo. What's your role with them.

BRULESKI - That is true. I guess you could call me the "marketing, website, customer service, poster and t-shirt making guy." I wore many hats—we all did.

At its inception, the expo was supposed to be a small "grass roots" gaming event but six months later it had grown into something far beyond anything we had imagined. In the end, we had more than 90 arcade cabinets, roughly 80 vendor tables, a national Smash tournament, a kick-ass Tetris tournament, retro gaming stations, indie game developers, artists, cosplay and even an outdoor 4-square tournament. Somehow we pulled it off, AND IT WAS AWESOME!

I admit it was a lot of work and I lost a lot of sleep, but it was totally worth it and I'm looking forward to the next one.

FERRIS - Favorite NES game?

BRULESKI - At the risk of sounding predictable, my vote goes to The Legend of Zelda. I'll never forget spending entire evenings with my family huddled in front of the TV all working together to figure out where to go next. Nothing quite beats that pre-internet 8-bit exploration.

FERRIS - Least favorite game?

BRULESKI - Rise of the Robots for the Super Nintendo. Twenty years later that turd still burns.

FERRIS - Fondest video game related memory?

BRULESKI - What stands out most to me is playing through Secret of Mana for the first time with my closest childhood friend. That game rocked our socks off. A 3-player co-op action RPG? Soooo awesome.

FERRIS - Collection goals for 2016?

BRULESKI - Spend less time hunting for games and more time playing them. That's what they are for, right? Over the past few years, I've managed to acquire all of the games that I had as a kid and most of the games that I've always wanted. Now I plan on sitting down and experiencing those games that I've worked so hard to get. I figure that should take me well into retirement.