



## Silver Lining in the Big Gloomy Cloud

Sadly, it's now official. Atari, for all intense purposes, is no more. It's officially been merged into the hard drive company, JTS. If you look in the American Stock Exchange listings, Atari is no longer listed. What does this mean to you and me? For me, it means that coming out with these last couple issues of APE is going to be challenging to say the least. Atari's intent to support the Jag for at least one more year seems to have disappeared.

Don't despair just yet though. There are at least 5 more games still on the way (and maybe more).

**Worms:** The Lemmings-esque game from Team 17. The game is finished and will be yet another Jag release from Texas based Telegames. Some magazines have delighted in pointing out that Atari could've had Worms as a Jag exclusive but turned it down. No offense magazine guys but Worms is at best an okay game and you probably would've given it the "looks 16-bit" treatment if it were only on the Jag.

**Battlesphere:** It could be the greatest Jag game ever...if they'd only finish the darn thing while people still have any interest in the Jag. Making sure a game is perfect is a noble cause but the time has come to let this bird fly from the nest.

Long time supporters Telegames have come through again with word that they're releasing 3 new Jag titles.

The role-playing game **Towers 2** is actually in production!!! Look for it in November.

Telegames just announced in the last couple of days that they're also going to be releasing **Breakout 2000** and the 3-d space game, **Zero 5**.

There's some speculation that Telegames may pick up some more of the unreleased Atari titles. If you think that's a good idea, let Telegames know about it. They want to make sure that it will be worth their while (buying Towers 2, Breakout 2000, and Zero 5 might also help make up their minds).

Write to:

Telegames  
c/o Terry Grantham  
1001 E.Pleasant Run  
DeSoto, TX 75115

Word has also popped up that C-West (the company that released Pinball Fantasies and Cannon Fodder) may also be in the hunt to release some of the unreleased Jaguar games.

Finally, one last bad thing to report. Champion of all things Atari, Don Thomas, has left the company. Sadly it came down to the fact that there wasn't very much for him to do anymore. Like many other Atari employees of the past, Don quickly found a position at another consumer electronics company. Don is now doing PR work for Sony and the Playstation. Good luck Don. P.S. Don also had a little something to say about the end of Atari, look for it elsewhere in the issue.

### PC Stuff

If you follow the PC world at all, you've probably noticed that Atari's PC games division died before it even began. They did manage to get the MS-DOS version of Tempest 2000 out and it's started showing up on the shelves of computer retailers (I've seen it for \$30). If you lean towards Windows 95, you'll be pleased to know that Interplay is releasing a version of Tempest 2000 for that operating system.

PC controller manufacturer Logitech has just released their new Wingman Warrior controller. The formidable looking joystick was built with action games in mind. One of its more interesting features is a 360 degree spinning control knob that allows you to spin around quickly in Doom-style games. It turns out that this knob would also be perfect for Tempest-style games. As a result, one of the shareware titles Logitech has included with the unit is the

shareware version of Tempest 2000.

As for the other Atari Interactive titles, Panasonic has snagged the rights to the oft-delayed PC version of Baldies and Gametek has a title called Mutant Penguins (could be the Atari game) coming out.

While we're on the subject of PC games, over the past year I've played a lot of them. I've also noticed that quite a few titles are almost cousins to some of our Jag favorites. If you're going to be getting a PC or if you already have one, here's some recommendations for games which are along the lines of what you enjoy on the Jag.

### Iron Soldier

Giant robots abound on the PC but most are a little deeper than Iron Soldier's arcade-action oriented approach. This can be a plus or a minus depending on your tastes.

**Mechwarrior 2** by Activision: The current big daddy of mech games, it features great graphics, sound, and varied gameplay in its various missions. An extra mission disk is available and a special graphically enhanced version of the program is showing up as a pack-in with many of the new 3-d graphics boards.

**Mechwarrior 2: Mercenaries** by Activision: This just released sequel features improved graphics and lets you play as a gun for hire.

**Shattered Steel** by Interplay: Also just released, Interplay's entry in the mech category has stunning audio-visuals and easier controls than MW2 so it might be more what you're looking for action-wise.

### Alien Vs. Predator

Many magazines have touted Alien Trilogy as being superior to AvP. Bah humbug. Not even.

## THE EDITOR'S DESK BY CLINTON SMITH

The issue is more than a little late. I worked up a couple of early drafts and frankly they just didn't work. I didn't want to come back to you until I had some kind of news(hopefully of the good variety)as to what we could expect concerning the near future of the Jaguar. Well, I finally have an issue that I'm happy with. Let's hope the last 3 issues have an easier time of coming out.

### A CURSED GENERATION?

The Jag may be on it's final legs but it's certainly not headed to the great beyond on it's own. In the years between the release of the SNES and the Playstation, a horde of also ran systems/add-ons have graced the shelves.

Sega has been hit the hardest with the double failures of the Sega CD and the 32X. Neither one lived up to it's hype and third party developers dropped them quickly. The 32X can be had for \$20 at Toys R Us(a \$30 package is also available there with Virtua Fighters included) and it's games are all in the \$20 range. The Saturn just barely escaped this fate by the grace of several good games last Christmas.

3DO was being called the next VCR by Trip Hawkins. When will people stop considering this guy an expert? It's initial price of \$700 went over like a lead balloon. You can laugh a hearty chuckle as you now pick up one for \$90. Games fall in the \$10 to \$20 range.

Finally, Nintendo may have a smash with the Nintendo 64 but their last new system, Virtual Boy, made many wonder if Nintendo had any clue as to what they were doing. Black and red 3-d stereoscopic graphics were hardly what people were looking for, especially at it's debut price of \$200. Personally, the thing always made my eyes hurt after just a couple minutes of play on the demo unit at Toys R Us. It's down at \$99 now but people still don't seem any more interesting in going Virtual.

### CHEAP GAMES

The only bright spot about a system reaching it's end is that games which were once oh so expensive suddenly become affordable.

The best value right now is on Time-Warner's 2 Jag releases. Check at your local Electronics Boutique. Power Drive Rally can be had for only \$10!(and I thought when I paid \$30 it was a good deal) and Primal Rage CD is only \$20. Perhaps you skipped Sensible Soccer in the past, it might be worth trying now. EB also has this title at \$10.

If you know of any places that sell used stuff, keep your eyes open. I recently got Pitfall, Rayman, and Atari Karts for only \$15 a piece at such a store. I've also seen titles like Defender 2000, Battlemorph,

Myst, Braindead 13, and Dragon's Lair in that same price range.

If you've been looking to broaden your Jag library, now is the best time to do it.

### WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

High Voltage Software(the company that did Vid-Grid, White Men Can't Jump, and Ruiner) is currently putting the finishing touches on the Playstation version of Tempest X(Tempest 2000). My only concern is that they decided to make some IMPROVEMENTS on the game.

Wondering where a lot of the people who did many of the classic Lynx titles are now? Several of them worked on the just released PC game Strife. The game combines the Doom engine with role-playing elements.

Kesmai is developing an on-line Alien Vs. Predator game. Some of the folks who handled the graphics for the Jag game are rumored to also be working on this title.

### CHANGE THE SYSTEM

I don't know about the rest of you but I took the plunge and got a Nintendo 64. I really hadn't planned to be an early adopter yet again but when I heard back in August that they had dropped the price to \$200 and Mario would only be \$60(dropped from it's original \$70 price) at Toys R Us my initial idea of waiting disappeared.

The only problem was that by the time I heard about the price drops, I wouldn't have enough time to save up enough cash to get the system, Mario 64, and Pilotwings 64(I know most people are most excited about Mario but the original Pilotwings is what convinced me to get a SNES and I was very interested to see the thrill of flying brought into the 64-bit realm). One day while pondering this dilemma, I rode past a collectibles store and they had some Shogun Warrior robots in their window. I still had mine from when I was a kid and it suprised me to see these toys from the 70s on prominent display. I was even more stunned when I saw the \$70 price tags on them.

I headed down to my basement to rummage. I was a big Star Wars fan(heck, still am) and had a lot of the toys. I still had the box for one particular item and the toy was still in excellent shape. I did a little checking and found out that this particular toy was rather rare and in demand. To make a long story short, I was able to sell something I paid \$30 for back in 79 for \$200!

As soon as the pre-sell tickets popped up I put my \$25 down on an N64. If I had any doubts

Got some Lynx News or Info you want to pass on? SEND IT TO:

APE

2104 NORTH KOSTNER

CHICAGO, IL 60639

Or contact me via Genie, my mail address is C.SMITH89

I can also be reached via INTERNET at

c.smith89@genie.geis.com

about it, they were swiftly erased when they put up the demo units and I got to play Mario 64 first hand.

I've always been a big fan of 3-d graphics and the system certainly delivers. Actually, there's also a strange sense of deja vu. The N64 has 4 built-in controller ports and sports analog joysticks. The last game system to have these features was the good old Atari 5200 back in the early 80s.

Next Issue: I'm going to shoot for an early December release(fingers crossed). Finally, those Battlemorph tips, the final Christmas buyer's guide for Jag(and the Lynx too), and whatever else I can dig up.

### JEFF'S ATARI OUTPOST

P.O. BOX 771244

LAKWOOD, OH 44107

	2600	7800	
XE	5200		ST
	LYNX	JAGUAR	

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If you are looking for creepy AvP style thrills, how does this sound? You awake from cryo-sleep aboard a space station. Dead bodies litter the halls and strange blood-thirsty creatures are trying to add you to the piles. **System Shock** from Origin does share some familiar plot points from AvP. The major difference is that the main baddy is an out of control artificial intelligence program called Shodan. The space station in System Shock is huge(dwarfing the AvP base) and sports truly 3 dimensional levels unlike the Wolfenstein-ish layout of AvP. Some computer magazines labeled it as a Doom-clone but System Shock is more of an adventure game with plenty of combat. Best thing is that System Shock only costs \$15 via Electronic Art's classic line. Even better is a compilation pack that goes for \$30 and comes with System Shock, Wing Commander 3, and a game from our next category, Bio-Forge.

**Highlander**

Whenever I've mentioned Highlander in the newsletter I've always labeled it as an Alone in the Dark-ish type game. After playing Alone 1 and 2 on the 3DO, I now see that I've been doing Highlander a disservice. While the Alone series was the trendsetter in this field, it also had a number of annoying flaws as you'd expect from being the first. Highlander was much stronger visually and gameplay-wise. As you can expect, I'm not recommending the Alone games in this category. However, there are 2 other terrific games in this genre.

**Bioforge** from Origin sports excellent graphics and a really nifty sci-fi story as you awaken as a half-man, half-machine in a cell.

**Ecstatica** from Psygnosis takes a unique approach in that it builds it's graphics using ellipses(circular objects) instead of the usually very square polygons. The result is visually very impressive. The bare bones interface is easy to deal with but can make figuring out how to accomplish tasks difficult(there's no use function, you can only pick-up and drop objects). Still, it's worthwhile and you can usually find it for \$10 packed in with 10 cd jewel cases. It's sequel is due out real soon and features SVGA graphics.

**Club Drive**

Now I know most people didn't care for poor ol' Club Drive but I dug it. If you want a fun 3-d driving game which actually has good control(unlike Club Drive) and pretty fast 3-d then look no further than **Big Red Racing** from Domark. It goes for \$20 to \$30 and features racing around the world in everything from cars, trucks, boats, helicopters, and even lunar

rovers.

**Doom**

Since Doom came from the PC market, this one is pretty obvious. If you want Doom-style action on your PC you have your pick from Doom, Doom 2, Ultimate Doom, Final Doom and it's medieval cousins Heretic and Hexen. My favorite Doom-style games are...

**Dark Forces** by Lucasarts: A Doom game where you're blasting stormtroopers. Doesn't anything more need to be said. A must for Star Wars fans. Also keep an eye for it's upcoming sequel **Jedi Knight**. Improved graphics, a lightsaber, jedi powers, and multi-player network gameplay.

**Duke Nukem 3D** by Formgen: Take doom, mix-in generous portions of the humor of the film, Army of Darkness, and add oodles of immersive gameplay(working lightswitches, breakable glass, blood you can track around, etc...). The easily offended should stay away due to some adult language and the scantily-clad earth woman hostages which can be found all-over the levels.

**Quake** by ID: Some have complained that the long-awaited Doom follow-up is still too much like Doom, gameplay-wise. Hey, if it ain't broke, don't fix it. The truly 3-d enviroments are stunning looking and the animation on the creatures is a sight to behold. If you're feeling bad since this was a long rumored title for the Jag, don't. The Jag wouldn't have had enough processing power to handle it.

**CyberMorph/Battlemorph**

Microsoft has just released a new 3-d shooter that should feel right at home for morph fans. Hellbender has you blasting and exploring over numerous 3-d planets. To get the highest quality graphics, you'll need a 3-d graphics card but even the low-end graphics are pretty good. One advantage over Cybermorph...we had the annoying Skyler, Hellbender has EVE who's voiced by the X-Files' Gillian Anderson.

Also keep an eye out for **Scorched Planet** from Virgin. When I saw this at Comdex, my first thought was, "Hey, that looks like a Cybermorph game!". The major difference was that it runs at 640 by 480 resolution at 30 frames per second. This game also really needs a 3-d card.

**BattleWheels**

Beyond Games is working on a PC version of

their Lynx classic but until it's done, you should check out SSI's new game **Necrodome**. You drive around in an armed car, you can hop out and take on opponents on foot, and it supports multi-player action. It feels alot like Battlewheels and you can pick-up a shareware version for only \$10.

**LYNX WRITE-IN CAMPAIGN**

One of my readers, Chris Purviance(who is a die-hard Lynx fan)has started a write-in campaign called the Lynx Coalition...

"The following individuals at the following companies need to hear from Lynx users. They want to hear from **you**. They have stated that no new Lynx games will be released **unless**, the Lynx owners and users **say** they want to see more on the market. **Tell** them the games that you want to buy and play. Be it 1 game or 24 of them, at least this many are completed and waiting to go into production at Atari and Hand Made Software alone. This isn't including several that Telegames and Beyond Games have to release for the Lynx. Let them hear from you, show them your

**WANTED!**

Chris Purviance of Avant-Garde Gaming(see ad on page 8) is looking for the following items...

1. Atari Explorer Magazine: Looking for issues after June 1992
2. Gamemaster/Gamemaster News: Want all issues of this Atari Lynx publication. It started hitting a limited amount of newsstands between October 1991 and January 1992. It was also available by subscription.
3. Lynx User: This Atari Lynx publication from the United Kingdom(Europe) saw only 2 or 3 issues before it stopped. Want all the issues. It was only available by subscription.
4. The Lynx/Wild Cat!: This was done by Phil Patton in Santa Cruz, California. It was available only by subscription starting in October/November 1990 through December 1992 for the "The Lynx". Then "Wild Cat!" took over from January 1993 through January 1995. The last issue was shipped on January 7th 1995. Want all issues of "The Lynx" and January 1993 through April 1994 of "Wild Cat!"

5. On Target: This Atari Lynx Publication was done by Matt Szewczyk in Cumberland, Rhode Island. It started in October 1991 and ended in December 1992 or possibly a little later. Looking for entire series that was published.

6. Color Hands: Another Atari Lynx publication that was started in October of 1991. This one was done by Mark Nelson of Brooklyn, New York. It stopped in July or August 1992 (later?). Want entire series that was printed.

7. Also wanted!! Lynx prototypes, Lynx Alpha and Beta game cards, other system prototype games, Atari press kits, Lynx Promotional literature. Anything you may not want anymore. Even used Lynx and Jaguar games. Also Lynx accessories. Classic hand-helds too!!

8. I need a pair of SegaScope 3-d LCD shutter glasses for 3-d games (Sega Master System). Either "New in Box" complete or very good used and complete with docs.

## Lynx Stuff

I guess you should never count any system out. I learned that recently when I heard some interesting info about Lynx games.

First, I got a call from a Lynx enthusiast who recently got to play the Lynx versions of Road Riot 4WD and Raiden. Don't ask me where he got them from (he didn't say). He did say that they were pretty good. It's kind of interesting that games like this are floating around out there. Makes you wonder what other Lynx goodies might be lurking out amongst the unofficial channels.

Word has also come in that there's several small third-party companies still working on Lynx titles.

A company called Teflon Soft is working on 5 titles...

**Centipede**

**Classics 2000**

**Lexis:** some type of puzzle game

**Road Fury:** a driving game

**Wolfenstein 3-D**

Edward Castle is working on an action game called **Edward 2000**.

Kurt Oslan is working on **Load Runner**.

Digital Thunder is working on a title called **Project H2**.

Harry Dodgson is working on a title called **Zow**.

## ATARI SECRETS

As a rule, I generally believe that you should try to beat a game without using cheats. They should only be used as a last resort. However, you occasionally run across a game which, while excellent in many ways, has been hobbled by a bad design choice. Rayman is such a game. For some ridiculous reason, it's designers came up with the boneheaded idea of limiting you to only 5 continues. Once they're gone, you're dead. In this case, I believe you're justified in getting some extra help.

These codes can be entered during the opening sequence when Rayman is putting himself together.

50 Lives- 5,1,5,2,5,3

Rayman breakout game- 1,3,6,4 (Upon winning you get unlimited continues but only for as long as the system is turned on)

All powers and Maps- 1,3,5,7,9

Enter the following to see numerous dedications...

1,2,3,0

0,1,0,2,7,1

1,5,9,0

2,7,2,6,9

2,2,0,4,7,3

3,4,4,7,0

1,5,9,#

9,6,2,7,2

0,0,7,\*

9,3,1,0,0

1,5,9,\*

2,1,1,1,6

1,2,4,5,7,8

3,4,0,8,0

4,5,6,8

2,2,71

## Don Thomas on Atari's Demise

Did you hear anyone say "Goodbye"?  
by Donald A. Thomas, Jr. (10/4/96)

It's odd to imagine an institution, which was as

big and as powerful as Atari once was, to have been shut down in recent days. The real amazement for me is that it was all accomplished without a measurable flinch from within or outside the gaming industry. I can understand that gamers wanted to push Pong out the door early in the timeline. I can appreciate that the classics such as Missile Command and Asteroids do not push 32-bit and 64-bit systems to any technological limits. I know all these things intellectually, but the heart cannot face the truth that the world and the corporate machine known as Atari could not find an amicable way to coexist.

On Tuesday, July 30, 1996, Atari Corporation took each and every share of its company (ATC), wrapped them all in a tight bundle and presented them to JTS Corporation, a maker and distributor of hard disk drives. On Wednesday, the shares were traded under the symbol of JTS. Within a few weeks, the remaining staff of Atari that were not dismissed or did not resign, moved to JTS' headquarters in San Jose, California. The three people were assigned to different areas of the building and all that really remains of the Atari namesake is a Santa Clara warehouse full of unsold Jaguar and Lynx products.

It was only as long ago as mid '95 that Atari executives and staff believed things were finally taking a better turn. Wal-Mart had agreed to place Jaguar game systems in 400 of their Superstores across the country. Largely based on this promise of new hope and the opportunities that open when such deals are made, Atari invested heavily in the product and mechanisms required to serve

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the Wal\*Mart chain. But the philosophical beliefs of the Atari decision makers that great products never need advertising or promotions, put the Wal\*Mart deal straight into a tailspin. With money tied up in the product on shelves as well as the costs to distribute them to get there, not much was left to saturate any marketplace with advertising. While parents rushed into stores to get their kids Saturns or PlayStations, the few that picked up the Jaguar were chastised by disappointed children on Christmas day.

In an effort to salvage the pending Wal\*Mart situation, desperate attempts to run infomercials across the country were activated. The programs were professionally produced by experts in the infomercial industry and designed to permit Atari to run slightly different offers in different markets. In spite of the relatively low cost of running infomercials, the cost to produce them and support them is very high. The results were disappointing. Of the few thousand people who actually placed orders, many of them returned their purchases after the Holidays. The kids wanted what they saw on TV during the day! They wanted what their friends had! They wanted what the magazines were raving about!

In early 1996, Wal\*Mart began returning all remaining inventory of Jaguar products. After reversing an "advertising allowance" Atari was obligated to accept, the net benefit Atari realized was an overflowing warehouse of inventory in semi-crushed boxes and with firmly affixed price and security tags. Unable to find a retailer willing to help distribute the numbers required to stay afloat, Atari virtually discontinued operations and traded any remaining cash to JTS in exchange for a graceful way to exit the industry's back door.

Now that JTS has "absorbed" Atari, it really doesn't know what to do with the bulk of machines Atari hoped to sell. It's difficult to liquidate them. Even at liquidation prices, consumers expect a minimal level of support which JTS has no means to offer. The hundreds of calls they receive from consumers that track them down each week are answered to the best ability of one person. Inquiries with regard to licensing Atari classic favorites for other applications such as handheld games are handled by Mr. John Skruch who was with Atari for over 13 years.

In spite of Nintendo's claim that their newest game system is the first 64-bit game system on the market, Atari Corporation actually introduced the first 64-bit system just before Christmas in 1993. Since Atari couldn't afford to launch the system nationwide, the system was introduced in the New York and San Francisco markets first. Beating the 32-bit systems to the punch (Saturn/PlayStation), Atari enjoyed moderate success with the Jaguar system and

managed to lure shallow promises from third-party companies to support the system. Unfortunately, programmers grossly underestimated the time required to develop 64-bit games. The jump from 8-bit and 16-bit was wider than anticipated. In addition, Atari was already spread thin monetarily, but were required to finance almost every title that was in development.

After the initial launch, it took Atari almost a year before an assortment of games began to hit store shelves. Even then, having missed the '94 Holiday Season, many of the planned titles were de-accelerated to minimize problems caused by rushing things too fast. Consumers were not happy and retailers were equally dismayed. The few ads that Atari was able to place in magazines were often stating incorrect release dates because that information changed almost every day although magazines deadline their issues up to 120 days in advance.

It was in 1983 that Warner Communications handed Jack Tramiel the reins of Atari. By this time, Atari was often categorized as a household name, but few households wanted to spend much money on new software and the systems were lasting forever. No one needed to buy new ones. That, combined with Warner's obscene spending, amounted to a "daily loss" of over \$2 million. Atari was physically spread all over the Silicon Valley with personnel and equipment in literally 80 separate buildings; not considering international offices and manufacturing facilities. Mr. Tramiel took only the home consumer branch of Atari and forced Warner to deal with the arcade division separately. Within a few years, Jack took the company public, introduced an innovative new line of affordable 16-bit computers and released the 7800 video game system.

To accomplish these miracles for Atari, Jack implemented his "business is war" policies. While people who publicly quoted his statement often felt that policy meant being extremely aggressive in the marketplace, the meaning actually had closer ties to Tramiel's experience as a concentration camp survivor. Of the 80 buildings in Sunnyvale, Santa Clara and Milpitas, almost every one of them were amputated from Atari's body of liabilities. The people, the work, the heritage, the history were fired or liquidated. Those who survived were unsympathetically required to fill in the gaps and while most tried, few actually found a way to be successfully do what a dozen people before them did. Atop the

mountain, Jack pressed with an iron thumb. All Fed/Ex mailings were required to be pre-approved by one of a handful of people. "Unsigned" purchase orders went unpaid regardless of the urgencies that inspired their creation. Employees found themselves spending valuable time trying to find ways around the system to accomplish their jobs. Many of them lost their jobs for bending the rules or never finding a way to make things work. As horrible as it all sounds, it actually was the only way to protect Atari as a company and give it a chance to survive as it did and did very well.

Jack's introduction of the 16-bit computer was initially hearty in the United States but it went extremely well in Europe. Europeans were not accustomed to "affordable" technology and although the Atari computers were not IBM compatible, it didn't matter because people could afford them. Jack's private laugh was that the computers were sold at prices much higher in Europe than Americans were willing to pay. As a result, most of the machines made were being shipped to European destinations to capture the higher margin. This enraged the people in the United States that had been Atari loyalists. While waiting months for stores to take delivery domestically, international magazines were touting ample supplies. Those in the know within the U.S. became dismayed. The remainder never knew Atari was slowly abandoning the value of Atari's name recognition as it became easier and easier to forget some assuming Atari had long filed for bankruptcy.

On a technical level, Atari 16-bit computers were designed beyond their time. For less than \$1,000, consumers could enjoy "multimedia" before the phrase was ever really widely used. The icon-based working environment proceeded Windows popularity although the essential attributes of the two environments were very similar. MIDI was built-in and became an instant hit in the high-end music industry. Tasks were activated and manipulated with a mouse and the system accepted industry standard peripherals such as printers, modems and diskettes.

With all the genius that went into the technology of the machines, very little of equivalent genius went into the promoting and marketing the machines. Mr. Tramiel was the founder of Commodore Business Machines. When he introduced the PET computer in

## 64-BIT DEJA VU

1977, Jack discovered he didn't have to call a single publication. Instead they all flocked to his door demanding an opportunity to see the product. News magazines. Science Journals. Business newsletters. Newspaper reporters. They were all there with microphone, camera and pen in hand. And they kept coming back. Adding a switch, announcing a new 4K application or signing a new retailer were all big stories the press wanted to handle.

Today, a new video game announcement may generate a request from any of the dozens of gaming magazines for a press release, but a lot of costly work has to be done to assure fair or better coverage. Editorial people are literally swamped with technical news. Samples are mailed regularly to their attention. Faxes fly in through the phone lines and e-mail jams up their hard drives. It takes a lot to grab their attention.

While Atari retained hopes to be successful with the Jaguar, Atari's marketing people were fighting established standards in the industry with severe handicaps. Since cartridges (the Jaguar was/is primarily a cartridge-based system) were so expensive, editorial people were required to return them before new ones would be sent. Editorial people like to assign review projects. So finding cartridges they sent out was not always easy to do. Additionally, reviewers often love their work because they get to keep what they write about. Regardless, the few magazines willing to cover Atari products were more often turned away because of a lack of programmable cartridges or any number of other indecisive barriers. In-store signs and posters were sometimes created, but many retail chains charge premiums to manufacturers that want to display them. Some direct mail campaigns were implemented, but Atari often could not afford to keep those things being advertised on schedule. Therefore, the advertisements were published and distributed, but the product was not available.

Clearly, Jack's experience with the world beating a path to the door of a company making a better mousetrap no longer applied. The world had revolved a few times beneath him and he never noticed. The tactics used to successfully sell Commodore computers were simply antiquated notions from the past. Meanwhile, Sony launches the PlayStation with over \$500 million in marketing funds. Today, the PlayStation is considered the most successful next-generation gaming machine throughout the world. Sony bought the market. Tramiel's Atari never learned how to do that. Actually, they never could afford it anyway.

After the 1990's got underway, Europe as well as the rest of the world, discovered that IBM-compatible

computers were becoming more powerful and more affordable. The world always did want computers at home just like in the office and companies like Dell and Gateway exemplified the industry's trend toward home-based office computers. As a result, companies like Commodore, Atari and Next couldn't compete any longer. While the dedicated user base of each of them felt abandoned by these companies having to leave the computer market, the inevitable prevailed. Commodore jumped ship, Next changed business goals completely and Atari invested what they had left in the Jaguar game system. Even today, Apple is kicking and screaming. As good as Apple was at creating a huge niche for themselves, they focused more heavily on education. When kids grow up and get jobs, they want business machines. IBM was always the business standard.

When one examines the history of Atari, an appreciation can grow for how many businesses and people were a part of the game over the years. Chuck E. Cheese Pizza was started by Atari's founder, Mr. Nolan Bushnell. Apple Computer was born in a garage by ex-Atari employees. Activision was founded by Ace Atari programmers. The list goes on and on.

But for some pathetic reason Atari's final days came and went with no tribute, no fanfare and no dignified farewells. Why? Where did all the talent go? Where are all the archives? Where are the vaults? Where are the unpublished games and where are the originals of those that were? Why has no company stepped forward to adopt the remaining attributes Atari has to offer? Where are the creditors? What has happened to all the properties and sites? Where are the databases, warranty cards, promotional items, notes on meetings, unanswered mail? Who owns P.O. Box 61657? Who goes to work in Atari's old offices? Where do consumers have their systems fixed? Who is publishing new games? Who still sells Atari products? Why are there still a lot of people talking about Atari on-line?

I'm an ex-Atari employee and proud to have been. I'm still an Atari devotee and proud to be. To me, these are questions which all deserve an answer, but who will ask them?

The best people to ask these questions are those who have exposure to the public. If you believe Atari left us without saying goodbye, contact Dateline at [dateline@nbc.com](mailto:dateline@nbc.com). If you REALLY believe, then send this article to 10 of

your friends in e-mail. AND if YOU REALLY, REALLY believe, mail a few to newspapers or other news programs. A letter in your own words would be great!

I'd spend money for a thorough retrospect on Atari. Wouldn't you?

Wouldn't it at least be nice to say "Goodbye"?

--Don Thomas [75300.1267@compuserve.com](mailto:75300.1267@compuserve.com)  
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### 64-Bit Deja Vu?

It's a 64-bit cartridge based videogame system. It only had two games at launch, many of it's eagerly awaited titles are suffering delays, and it lacks overwhelming third party support. Sound familiar? Of course I'm talking about the Nintendo 64.

As you can see from the opening paragraph, Nintendo's newest system has several things in common with the Jaguar. Despite those shortcomings, it still looks like the Nintendo 64 is going to be a huge hit. Why is it able to succeed where the Jaguar failed?

1. Money- As much as I hate to agree with Trip Hawkins it turns out that he was correct in stating that you need a lot of money to effectively sell a game system. And it's not just about big advertising budgets. For example, the Jaguar and the N64 both sold out upon their release. So what's the difference? There were 20,000 Jags available for it's release. There were 350,000 Nintendo 64s available (and that still wasn't enough to meet demand).

2. Marketing- This hasn't been one of Atari's strengths in recent years. So what has Nintendo done right? A month before the system was even due to be released, they had multiple demo units at Toys R Us stores. Slick TV and magazine ads are all well and good, but the best way to hook someone on a game system is to get a controller in their hands and give them that hands on experience. It certainly didn't hurt that the first game they got to try was...

3. Mario- Throughout the years many companies (and gamers) have fallen under the impression that for a system to succeed, it

needs a mascot. Mario helped fuel this idea (along with Sega's resurgence thanks to Sonic) but people are paying too much attention to the obvious. A cute, marketable, recognizable character can't save a crummy game. The Mario games work because they have excellent gameplay. Mario 64 takes that trademark gameplay and wraps it up in some incredible looking 3-d graphics and gives the gamer complete freedom to explore a 3-d environment. I watched gamers of all ages get hooked on this game. If you're a game company you pray for your system to have a title like this.

4. 64-bit Perception- Let me go on record as stating that the Jaguar is categorically a 64-bit system. If somebody tries to tear it down by comparison with the N64, they're full of hot air along with possibly other substances. How many bits a system processes is important but there's a lot more to a game system than that. The Nintendo 64 can produce superior looking games because it has a faster processor, a heavily optimized 3-d graphics chipset, and more onboard memory (twice that of the Jag). It certainly doesn't hurt that the low-end games are 64 megabits (8 megabytes), twice that of the high memory Jag titles.

The Jag is a great system but in many cases it just didn't live up to the expectations of what non-technical consumers thought 64-bit would mean. The Nintendo 64 is providing the kind of whiz-bang stuff that they were expecting and shows a definite advance over what the Saturn and Playstation provide.

5. Third parties- Compared to the vast hordes of developers working on Playstation titles, the N64 does seem to have some shortcomings in the field of third party support. We know what that's like. The main difference between the Jag and the N64 is that Nintendo has more big name companies and high profile titles. Even when we had someone like Williams they stuck us with Double Dragon 5. Their first title on the N64 is Mortal Kombat Trilogy. We were lucky enough to get Doom but the N64 has a whole squad of top notch PC titles like Doom, Quake, Duke Nuke'm 3D, and Descent.

6. Nintendo- The N64's biggest asset is Nintendo themselves. Atari was a big name and had some familiar titles in it's catalog but they were lacking recent hits that could draw in gamers. The promise of new 64-bit editions of games such as Mario, Zelda, Metroid, Donkey Kong, Star Fox, etc.. give the N64 a great appeal.

Lest you think that the Nintendo 64 is perfect, think again. No game system ever is. Some third party companies are going to stay away because it's cart

based (their titles designed for the CD format won't fit and it's harder to make money because cartridges cost more to manufacture). On that same vein, you're also going to be paying more for N64 carts as opposed to CDs. Some people have been spreading horror stories about \$100 games but it looks like the reality is going to be from \$60 to \$80 (still pretty steep). The N64 can't fill the role of all-around system (you pretty much have to have a cd-based system) but if you're into 3-D games or are a fan of the various Nintendo games, it fills an important slot in the serious gamer's library.

## Defender 2000

### Defender Classic

#### General Tips

1. Even though your ship can travel at high speeds, it's best to take it easy as you fly. It's all too easy to smack into enemy ships or their shots (which have a tendency to just kind of hang out in one spot).

2. One of the deadliest enemies in the game is the pod. They look like the asterick on a keyboard and when you shoot them, they split into several hard to hit red ships known as swarmers. If you run into a bunch of pods, use the smart bomb to take them out and you won't have to deal with the swarmers. If you're out of smart bombs, after you blast the pod with the laser, quickly move up and down while firing your laser. Hopefully, you'll nail most of the resulting swarmers.

3. Be careful and stay out of the way of enemy craft as they warp in. This is where you are going to lose a lot of your lives. If you see the particles starting to form up, get out of the way immediately.

4. A classic method of keeping the aliens from wiping out all your humanoids, is to let them grab one. Then you rescue him and then just hang on to him for the rest of the level. As long as you have your hands on him, they can't get their alien paws on him.

5. Finish off the level as quickly as possible or deadly flying saucers will start to show up. The longer you stay, the more of them will start to show up and these guys are especially deadly in packs.

6. Although the manual doesn't mention it your ship has an emergency hyperspace escape feature. Activate it by pressing any key on the keypad. Use it sparingly though because it's

unstable and you can blow up (and lose a life) in the process.

7. Your main priority is to keep the aliens from destroying all the humanoids. If they succeed, the planet will explode and you'll find yourself in space with a horde of killer mutant kamikaze ships.

8. Your shots can kill the humanoids, so be careful when you're trying to rescue them from the clutches of landers or when fighting near the ground. You might accidentally blast them while engaging the enemy.

9. If a lander gets a humanoid to the top of the screen they change into a mutant kamikaze craft. This is a bad thing. If it comes down to a choice of killing the humanoid or letting him become a mutant, you're better off destroying him.

10. If you shoot a lander while it's still close to the ground after grabbing a humanoid, the humanoid will safely land back on the surface. If he's too high in the sky, it's up to you to grab him or he'll go splat.

11. The bombers don't look like much (they're just squares) but the trail of mines they leave behind them in the sky can be a major pain. Eliminate them as soon as you spot them. I love to nail them with a smart bomb while they're onscreen with a bunch of the pods.

### Defender Plus

#### General Tips

1. The main addition to the plus version of the game is the warp gate located in the center of the level (actually it's something Jeff borrowed from the arcade sequel, Stargate). Fly through it and you're teleported to the other side of the planet. If a humanoid is being abducted it will send you to it's location so you can make the rescue. Your drones don't teleport with you so you have to wait for them to fly to your location.

2. If you move your ship up and down as you fire, you'll have twice as much firepower on screen thanks to the laser cannon that's mounted on your other wing.

3. The droids are a huge help. They'll grab humanoids that are falling and bring them right to you. They'll also blast aliens all on their own.

4. Your ship also has the deadly lightning laser. You only have so much energy for it, so

use it sparingly. This weapon is especially handy if you choose to go in without the drones.

5. Along with the classic enemy types, new ones show up. Especially deadly are the really big ships. They pop up from the bottom of the screen(usually when you least expect them) so it's a good idea to stay high as you fly.

6. Unlike classic Defender, you have rapid fire. Keep your fire button pressed down at all times and you'll have a steady stream of laser powered death for the bad guys.

7. Making out the humanoid blip on the radar is more difficult so you'll have to be extra careful in protecting them.

8. Many of the tips that apply to the classic Defender, also are important here.

### Defender 2000

#### General Tips

1. Watch your radar carefully. Defender 2000 is an extremely busy game and all too often the alien

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**CLINTON SMITH**

attacker that gets you is the one that comes up from behind while you're fighting the swarm in front of you. You have to watch the screen while also watching the radar at the same time. It's tough and takes a great deal of concentration but you get used to it.

2. The key to Defender 2000(much as it was with Tempest 2000)is the collection of power-ups. If you don't power-up your ship, you are going to be destroyed in no time flat. Priority 1 is blasting your first attacker because that will give you your first drone ship. If you're being swarmed right at the start nail the aliens with a smart bomb to make the first orb appear. The drone'll give you a little extra firepower and can snag falling humanoids for you. They are very important to your survival(see next tip).

3. Building a chain of humanoids underneath your ship is also a must. Unlike their weak little forefathers from the first 2 games, these guys are well armed and will add considerably to the firepower of your craft. The more you have hanging down there, the bigger a radius of fire you'll have.

4. Start on the highest level that you've reached. If you get through it, you'll receive a big points bonus. Thanks to those big points you'll get a bunch of extra lives and smart bombs. You're really going to need them up on the higher levels.

5. Keep an eye out for the purple warp power-up orbs. Snag 4 of them and you get to the warp bonus game. It's very similar to the "stay on the green path" bonus from Tempest. It's actually pretty easy, so you'll get an easy advance of 5 levels.

6. You can fly backwards as you shoot. This can be a big help if you're being chased by a swarm of deadly aliens. Just keep an eye on the radar to make sure you're not going to accidentally back up into another alien attacker who can take you out.

7. When humanoids get turned into mutants, a giant tombstone will fall from the sky at their location. Get out of the way immediately(if not sooner). There's nothing more humiliating or

annoying than being destroyed by a giant tombstone.

8. Never take on a mirror ball face to face since it can reflect your shots back at your ship. Let your drone ship handle it while you cower safely near the bottom of the screen, out of harm's way.

9. Beware of the giant "we're number 1" hands(sometimes you really have to wonder about that Jeff Minter). Their most aggravating aspect is the way they suddenly shoot up from the bottom of the screen. You can recognize when they're on the way from their movement patterns on the radar.

10. If only one humanoid remains, fly to his location as soon as your ship appears and guard him. Use smart bombs if you have to, to nail aliens that warp in near the location. Taking these guys on in the blackness of space is far from fun.

11. If you do lose all your humanoids, remember that you just have to get to the next level that's a multiple of 5 and you'll get them all back. If you make it past that level you'll get the option of starting at that point in the beginning.

12. If you're on your last life and you have a mess of smart bombs don't be hesitant to use them. Every 20,000 points you get an extra life. Your bombs just might be able to wipe out enough bad guys to get you to that next 20,000 point plateau.

13. Watch out! Pretty much every enemy craft in this game will try to destroy you by ramming into your ship. Ordinarily I would suggest that you keep moving but in this game, that's tough to pull off. You need to strike a balance between holding your ground in one spot and nailing waves of ships as they come toward you and taking evasive action so you don't get swamped from both sides at once. It an't easy so good luck.

14. Many of the tips from the classic and plus modes of Defender will also help you out in this variation.

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