

# ORPHANED COMPUTERS & GAME SYSTEMS

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I must thank my wife Gabriella for purchasing a T-shirt of one of my favorite bands, Bauhaus. By coincidence I was wearing that T-shirt at the World of Atari assembly on Friday evening. Someone asked if I was going to see them. "When?" I asked. It turned out that they were playing in less than an hour! By some twist of fate, I was able to get tickets right next to the stage for a concert that was sold out weeks before. The weekend began with an excellent start! It only got better.

Chris and I arrived in Las Vegas at about 11:30 AM on Friday, August 23rd in preparation for World of Atari '98. We caught a shuttle to the Holiday Inn. Onboard, we met two guys who were also going to the show. We talked about rarities, like the original Mattel Intellivision computer, and losses. "Yea, I passed one of those up, still in the box," one of the guys said. We all have our collecting war stories, of course. If I had a nickel for every cool item that I passed up when I was originally only collecting Atari...

Eventually, after some problems, we checked into our room and prepared to hook up the 7800 we had brought. But that didn't work out, even with a call to the front desk. No big deal; we could find something to do.

Just as I had expected, at the show, there was Atari software and hardware everywhere for every Atari ever made. I'd figured that that was the reason I was going to the show -- to buy Stuff. I did

manage to get some really neat items, but it turned out that the best reason to be there was for the speakers. They were incredible! They made the show the success that it was.

If you missed World of Atari '98, you must make sure to attend in future years. I heard a rumor that the next show might have less concentration on Atari. Wouldn't it be great to hear Intellivision gossip from the Blue Sky Rangers? If the quality of upcoming speakers is half as good as this year's, then it is reason enough to attend World of Atari '99. I know OC&GS will be there! -- AT

Slot machines *everywhere*. In the restaurants. In the airport. I was surprised not to see them at the damn *bus stop*. The Holiday Inn lobby was actually a huge casino, and people were pulling levers at 5 in the morning when I went down for coffee. It was fun to go out walking around in the middle of the night, because the city's awake all the time. And it's still more in the hands of white-collar gangsters and entrepreneurs than police; you can pick up newsprint porn off the sidewalk or solicit "escort services" in front of the Denny's (if you're so inclined). You can definitely find a band you want to see somewhere in the city (Adam dragged me to Bauhaus), or just sit there and play one of the electronic Poker games built into the bar top. No one will tell you it's time to go home; the casinos are conspicuously devoid of clocks. Nobody's going to stop

you from ordering more drinks; the rampant lack of water fountains is deliberate.

The two chicks who picked us up while we were walking in traffic weren't told that we were in town to attend the Atari show; we explained that we were there to pass out demo tapes for our band. It made me wonder why I was embarrassed to come off as a gaming enthusiast. We were, after all, in the city of quarter-droppers and lemon-watchers. It made me realize that video games, old or new, are social stigmas if one's too fanatical about them. You're not cool if you fixate on imaginary screen characters, yet it's perfectly okay to holler at the TV during a ballgame or discuss LSD-induced hallucinations.

It goes along with something Arnie Katz (*Electronic Games* magazine daddy) said during his keynote: We really are viewed as "mentally feeble" geeks, supposedly choosing lives of hermitage among our machines. I don't understand how this image happened. Did our mass media, a honed, cultivated chunk of deliberate mediocrity and stupidity, do this on purpose? Do video games initiate imaginative thought a little too much for the 1%?

This issue mainly deals with coverage of the World of Atari '98 Convention, and there are some nifty surprises. But there are other articles too, and Adam and I certainly hope you'll love sinking your lobes into this tantalizing tower of text and relish in the visions therein. -- CF