

Contents

Layout & Design Nicholas Bray

Graphic Creation Daniel Mousseau

Cover Design Andrew Brown

Editing

Alex Culafi Andrew Brown

Contributors

James Jones Justin Baker Tom Malina Neal Ronaghan Pedro Hernandez Karl Castaneda Jonathan Metts Nate Andrews James Dawson Josh Max J.P. Corbran Carmine Red Mike Sklens Jared Rosenberg Daan Koopman James Charlton Minoru Yamaizumi Aaron Edwards Becky Hollada Andy Goergen Zachary Miller

3 THIS MONTH

EXCLUSIVE ARTICLES

4 YOUR GAME IS STUPID

PREVIEW

7 POKÉMON X AND POKÉMON Y

BLOGS

10 TOPPLING THE NOOK EMPIRE

12 STOP AND SMELL THE ROSES: MY NEW APPRECIATION FOR ANIMAL CROSSING'S PLODDING PACE

14 WII PARTY U IS ACTUALLY REALLY FUN

FEATURES

15 GRINDING GAME GEARS: AN OVERVIEW OF SONIC'S PORTABLE ORIGINS

17 RHYTHM HEAVEN: A MUSICAL PARADISE FOR NINTENDO FANS

20 STAFF SEZ #3: NINTENDO'S FINANCIALS

EXTRA LIFE

20 MARIO KART: SUPER CIRCUIT

COMIC CORNER

21 MAYOR CROSSING

INTERVIEWS

22 INTERVIEW WITH GUNMAN CLIVE DEVELOPER BERTIL HÖRBERG 24 PGC INTERVIEWS FACTOR 5'S JULIAN EGGEBRECHT PART 2

27 STAFF PROFILES

REVIEWS

28 PIKMIN 3

30 RESIDENT EVIL: REVELATIONS

32 SHINING FORCE: THE SWORD OF HAJYA

33 TAILS ADVENTURE

34 MARIO & LUIGI: SUPERSTAR SAGA

37 NEXT ISSUE

TH IS MONTH

By Nicholas Bray



After the massive E3 issue from last month, we are returning to a more normal issue of Powered Off.

James Jones returns with an all new exclusive article, this time with an attention grabbing headline, 'Your Game is Stupid.'

Some of our other content includes, a preview for Pokémon X and Y, some interesting blogs on Animal Crossing, an in-depth look at Sonic the Hedgehog's portable games, an Extra Life on Mario Kart: Super Circuit and two interviews. One being the continuation of our Factor 5 interview, and the other is with Gunman Clive's developer, Bertil Hörberg. On the review front we kick things off with Pikmin 3, then follow on with some Resident Evil, Game Gear titles and finally with some Mario & Luigi action.

Andrew Brown has also returned with another all original comic, if you are into Animal Crossing it should be quite relatable.

Please enjoy the issue!

We need your questions for the mailbag! Send them to: poweredoff@nintendoworldreport.com.

Your Game is Stupid

Your Game Is Stupid, I Love You! Your Game Is Stupid, I Hate You! – How One Dumb Game Has Me Writing Darksiders X Dead Rising Fanfiction and Another Makes Me Pleased Smash Bros. Lacks a Story Mode.

No, I'm not bipolar, but for some reason I've found myself awash in games that absolutely flow with deep veins of stupidity. In the last few months I've experienced games ranging from Asura's Wrath to Kid Icarus, Liberation Maiden to Project X Zone. Three of these are masterdumbs — smorgasbords of stupid insanity. One is a buffet of childish inanities. I love three of these games. I hate one of them.

This would make sense if one of these games played poorly and the other three played well, but the difference isn't that simple. Asura's Wrath is 90% quicktime events with a smattering of mediocre brawler mechanics. Liberation Maiden is mostly just flailing the stylus about the 3DS screen. Project X Zone is a linear tactical RPG that lacks meaningful tactics as well as RPG exploration and storytelling. Kid Icarus is an artist's showcase of terrible control decisions. Functionally, none of these are strong games.

So why are Project X Zone, Asura's Wrath, and Liberation Maiden great and Kid Icarus Uprising a downfall? The answer is simple: being smart when being dumb.

Liberation Maiden is the stupidest concept Japan could hope to muster. Japan has fallen under the sway of a nameless extraterrestrial menace and their giant monsters. The Presidency of Japan (a position that does not exist) has passed into the hands of a young woman, following the passing of her father in a dynastic maneuver more befitting their crazy neighbor across the Sea of Japan. Also, she's a teenage schoolgirl – pleated skirt included. The positive is that her office seems mostly ceremonial, with the exception of what seems to be her only duty – pilot a sophisticated mecha as it shreds the machinery of the occupation. Besides leaving me with deep concerns for what Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and his Liberal Democrats have planned for Japan's constitution, this froyo bar of Japanese anime tropes is glorious self-satire that remains a love letter to the medium. Despite the surrealist trappings, it does deal with issues of personal responsibility to society and of occupation both heady topics in post-war Japan that influenced media and culture. Liberation Maiden is the smartest moron in the room.

If Liberation Maiden is a send-up of a wide swath of anime and gaming tropes, Asura's Wrath is focused with laser-like intensity on shonen manga and anime. Asura is an all-powerful god, who becomes more powerful simply by becoming more deeply enraged by the omnipresent evil he encounters. With dramatic flourishes that would make Dragon Ball Z feel pedestrian, Asura manages to prevent the finger of a planet-sized god from reaching Earth, decimates an entire space fleet by a powerful scream, and transports himself to the Moon to battle a mentor from Lunar Orbit all the way to Earth re-entry. Each chapter of Asura's Wrath knows what it wants to do - it wants to be so over-the-top it's hard to find the brainpower to question what you're looking at. Scenes of impossible enemies and overwhelming (and bloodless) carnage simply foreshadow the even crazier thing just around the corner. Subsequent enemies may never reach the Sun-eclipsing size of the first foe, but rest assured Asura is nowhere close to running out of things to scream about.

Asura's Wrath rages its way into your heart – he screams his stupid screams while you smile. Asura is the irate ignoramus with a heart of...anger, mostly.

While Liberation Maiden and Asura's Wrath are loving parodies, Project X Zone is the real-deal. Sounding like the most insane premise @fanfiction_txt will tweet on a given day — a series of dimensional rifts have pulled franchise headliners from Sega, Capcom, and Namco Bandai into the same world to battle their combined enemies. While I'm thrilled that it's now canon that Street Fighter, Virtua Fighter, and Fighting Vipers characters know one another, and overjoyed that apparently Mega Man X and Zero are fully versed in the goings on in The World, to me the pairing of characters is the greatest joy any game could ever give me. The little interactions between party members is the game's biggest charm. It's remarkable how solid the writing is in that respect.





Not only does everyone remain in character, they interact with one another in ways that makes sense. I spend a lot of time shuffling parties just to see more interactions, trying to create interesting pairings that will lead to fun interactions. I want to give special props to whomever decided to pair Hsien-Ko of Darkstalkers with Frank West of Dead Rising. The interactions of a zombie and a zombie hunter are unironically lively and playful. The two of them interrogating Tron Bonne for weapons is especially uproarious. At this point it's taking every ounce of resistance I have to keep from writing Frank/Hsien-Ko fanfiction, and if Capcom decided to give them their own game I'm 100% on board, regardless of genre. Project X Zone is the sharp writer who delivers the punchlines and characterization that's witty at being stupid.

If Asura's Wrath is a parody of "serious" shonen like Dragon Ball Z, Kid Icarus is more a parody of the "light-hearted" Dragon Ball. There are no ripping enemies asunder, volcanic rampages, or epic screaming matches ending in the death of millions. It's cartoon enemies popping like soap bubbles, pierced by your heart-shaped projectiles. There's plenty of comedy to be made at the expense of this source material, but the inherent challenge is that the target is already making a lot of the same jokes, and often those jokes just aren't funny. Kid Icarus Uprising is basically a shooting gallery set to the ever-present droning of a bunch of self-absorbed gods spurting "ran-dumb" lines about everything from their favorite food to what colors are in style – seemingly oblivious to Pit's perilous quest. While the other three games have dumb dialog, they execute their stupidity with a sophistication that's hard to put your finger on; their stupidity always feels well-anchored to the rest of the game. For Kid Icarus, it always just feels like babble that may be connected to the action but not really connected to the game. Yes, Asura is a blithering idiot, but everyone in the world of Kid Icarus Uprising is a moron with Attention Deficit Disorder. Kid Icarus Uprising is stupid at being stupid; it's like the friend you had that once he got drunk he said whatever nonsensical garbage popped into his head. Don't be that friend.

I think it's easy to say random things and call it funny, comedy is in the timing and the setup. While occasional randomness can be funny, the constant deluge of randomness deprives "being ran-dumb" of the randomness. It seems easy to look at a game that deliberately acts dumb and simply write it off, but it isn't easy to do well. Masterful setup is why I love Project X Zone, Asura's Wrath, and Liberation Maiden. The funniest joke of all is how hard it is to successfully be stupid.





Original Publication: June 24, 2013

Pokémon X and Pokémon Y

By Alex Culafi

A new era of Pokémon.

Pokémon X and Y (no "Version" on the end anymore!) represent the sixth generation of

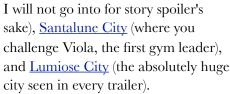


Pokémon titles, and the first batch to hit 3DS. Taking place in the Franceinspired Kalos region, the new titles seem to offer more new stuff than just about any previous sequel in the series. Things like a new type, new ways to battle, and the most ambitious connectivity features yet might just provide enough reason to believe that X and Y are not your typical Pokémon offerings.

Before talking about the good stuff, the first thing immediately noticeable are the new full-3D graphics. The new visuals look substantially better than anything in the series beforehand, with battles that look even more extravagant than the Pokémon Stadium games and cel-shaded graphics that keep the game looking smooth. One more neat touch is that text boxes have been replaced with actual speech bubbles, which make conversations more visually appealing. Granted, this might all still be the same old game with a new coat of paint in some ways, but we at least know that the coat of paint is a spectacular one.

Though we know little about the Kalos region (outside of it being based on France) or the story within, the region is confirmed to be absolutely massive — to the point where the regional Pokédex is split into west

(Coastal Kalos Pokédex), middle (Central Kalos Pokédex), and east (Mountain Kalos Pokédex). So far we've seen several towns: Vaniville Town (your hometown where you meet other trainers who act as your friends — which



As for the Pokémon themselves, there have been nineteen revealed and one new form. I don't know at which point Pokémon species become spoilers, so I'll focus on the commonly paraded ones and a couple of my recently-revealed favorites. The three starters are Chespin (grass), Fennekin (fire), and Froakie (water). Beyond that, the cover Pokémon are Xerneas (of X, who looks like the Great Forest Spirit from Princess Mononoke), and Yveltal (of Y, who looks a bit like a wyvern or dragon of sorts, and looks like a big Y

when it takes flight). Though not as fundamental, the other two big Pokémon pushed include Sylveon (Eevee's new Fairy-type evolution — more on that soon) and a new "awakened" form of Mewtwo, who is not a new Pokémon (as previously believed), but a new, sleeker-looking form.



Finally, some other favorites of mine include Noivern (a crazy Flying/Dragon bat monster who I am betting money on being the new pseudo-legendary), Gogoat (a Grass-type Pokémon that you can ride around on), and Litleo (an adorable Fire/Normal lion cub who I pray is available early in the game — seen above).

Of course, when talking about the new Pokémon,

one would be remiss to not discuss the new Fairy-type revealed during the latest Nintendo Direct at E3. The only thing we really know so far are that Fairy-type moves are super effective against Dragon Pokémon (to give them a much needed balancing), and that five species are confirmed to be the new type. The two new species are the aforementioned Sylveon, and the alsonew Flabébé (who has multiple forms that we know little about); old Pokémon that are joining the Fairytype include Jigglypuff, Gardevoir, and Marill. I don't know if we know enough to predict anything right now, but I would like it if Normal-type moves had an advantage over Fairy, if only to balance the typing a little bit more.



With Ruby and Sapphire introducing Double Battles and Black and White introducing Rotation Battles and Triple Battles, Pokémon X and Y offer two new battle-types of their own: Sky Battles and Horde Encounters. Sky **Battles** are battles that take place entirely in the air, and are initiated by communicating to a trainer of a different elevation (like on top of a cliff or something) and agreeing to the battle. These battles are unique because the only Pokémon that can participate are creatures that are Flying-type or have Levitate as an ability, and take place entirely in the air. Horde Encounters are encounters where five Pokémon (which can be of one or multiple species) can be fought at a given time. Because of the way the Pokémon are positioned, hitting the right Pokémon with the right move can consequently segue into all five Pokémon being hit at the same time.

A second major gameplay mechanic is that you can ride certain Pokémon in certain circumstances. Gogoat can be mounted in Lumiose City, and Rhyhorn has been seen breaking stones on a rocky mountain. It is unknown how far this can be taken (i.e. whether it is for specific situations or a viable means of getting around), but I wouldn't be surprised if this new feature can make a few of the Hidden Machines (which traditionally have done things like move boulders, break rocks, and surf over water) no longer required.

Speaking of traversal, moving around in X and Y will be a bit different this time around. Instead of a four-direction grid like in all of the previous games, the new titles will be stepping up and allowing players to move in eight directions (similar to Super Mario 3D Land). When I asked during the Pokémon E3 Q&A why this was, Director Junichi Masuda stated that the purpose was because things like wild encounters are easier to calculate on a grid. It was however stated,

though, that movement will be more free than previous games. Rollerblades can now be used to get around (I know for a fact bikes are returning thanks to the intro video shown in the roundtable) and that they allow free movement, but I am not sure whether they can only be used in certain situations or even in grassy areas (which relies on the movement grid, as previously stated).



As for the game's new "Pokémon activity that has little to do with regular gameplay," like contests and PokéStar Studios were in previous games, Pokémon-Amie was recently revealed. Somewhat similar-looking to activities in Kingdom Hearts 3D, Ni no Kuni, and Nintendogs, Pokémon-Amie allows you to interact with your Pokémon in an affectionate way never before seen in the franchise. Though we know little about how the mode is accessed or what benefits it provides, the activity allows you to feed, pet, and play with your Pokémon using multiple features on the 3DS. The Pokémon can be <u>displayed</u> on both screens on the system, and some applications shown include making a Snorlax happy by petting it, and having a Pokémon mimic the faces you make from identifying them with the camera. I would hazard a guess by saying that the Fairy-type Eeveelution Sylveon may even have this activity as Eevee's evolution method. If I was to go further, I wonder if this could replace the near-invisible friendship

system in previous games, or at least make it more substantial.

One of the other huge new features to X and Y is the <u>Player Search System</u> (<u>PSS</u>), the new online initiative to make the games more connected and the online play easier than ever before. Taking place as a menu on the bottom screen, the PSS allows you to trade with and battle players wherever you

are without
having to go to
a Union Room
in a Pokémon
Center like in
previous games.
The PSS is split
into three lists:
Passerby,
Acquaintances,
and Friends.
Friends are
anyone you
have noted as

such in-game or added from your 3DS friends list, acquaintances are people who you have played with but haven't been designated as your friend, and Passerby are people you have not yet interacted with, but seem to (I can't find full confirmation either way) be found either randomly online or through something like StreetPass.



This allows for an (optional) alwaysonline Pokémon experience, which would be an extreme first for the series. Furthermore, it has been revealed that trading is as functional as it was in the past, but battles have been upgraded to feature multiple rule sets and customizable (although to what extent is unknown) music.

Finally, trainer customization is the last main feature touted for the new games thus far. Though the <u>male</u> and <u>female</u> protagonists are the same and can't be heavily altered, you are now <u>able to</u> <u>select</u> from three presets per gender that offer differences in skin tone and hair. In addition, you can obtain clothing throughout the game that can be changed into at your in-game home to change your appearance.

Pokémon X and Y releases worldwide on October 12 this year.

Credit to Serebii for some minor details







Toppling the Nook Empire

By Justin Baker

Original Publication: June 13, 2013

Something must be done, we cannot put up with these injustices a moment longer.

As a veteran Animal Crossing player, I was ecstatic to pick up New Leaf. I can say this is definitely the best Animal Crossing yet, and I've spent countless hours mining the depths of its content. At the same



time, I've also contemplated the game's economy, and I've come to some shocking conclusions. What I'm about to say may disgust some of you, even cause some of you to recoil in horror at the veritable truth of these claims. But soldier on, dear villagers, because the truth must be told.

Let's set the scene: Tom Nook has taken to doing real estate full-time, and opened his own office to handle all his building and home loans. His nephews, Timmy and Tommy, have been left to take care of the family business of selling tools and furniture at the aptly renamed Nookling Junction. Both Nook businesses have been moved to the city, which is across the tracks from the town itself, meaning that the Nooks are blind to the everyday activities of the villagers. They've built their ivory tower where they sit dishing out home loans and tools to keep us toiling—unaware of what's really going on.

A new shop (in fact, the only shop) in the town is Re-Tail, a secondhand shop that (after some effort



on the player's part) also specializes in working on furniture. Oddly enough, Re-Tail doesn't take a cut on any items sold second-hand, so the question must be asked: how are they still in business?

In the beginning parts of the game, Cyrus, the furniture expert, is constantly sleeping due to, as Reese puts it, "working all night." Well, doing what exactly? Here's

where it gets horrible: he is clearly making all the furniture for Nookling Junction. If Cyrus is a furniture expert, then I could simply go and ask for the specific piece of furniture that I need, but that would put a damper on Nook's business of selling a paltry (and random) two pieces of furniture a day. It's obvious what's going on here.

Cyrus is Nook's supplier, which means Nook has a huge stock of furniture that he dishes out piecemeal to create demand from villagers. This just raises more questions, like why doesn't Cyrus simply turn Re-Tail into a furniture business and give villagers what they want on order instead of funneling it all through Nook's? Nookling Junction is all the way in the city, it would be more beneficial to the town and to Cyrus and Reese if they simply turned their second-hand shop into an ondemand furniture store.

So what's really going on here? Reese and Cyrus obviously owe Nook something, and they're being strong-armed into providing his furniture stock. As we discussed, Nook is in real estate. Reese and Cyrus are in deep for the loan they took out to open Re-Tail, and Nook is squeezing every last bell out of them. Imagine, two young lovers with a passion for furniture looking to open shop in a small town and make whatever their customers desire! A kind old real estate tycoon steps in to help make their dream a reality, but everything goes wrong.

Suddenly Nook begins demanding higher payments because of some sort of loophole



in their loan contract. The only way they can pay him back is to begin making furniture for him and selling second-hand items on the side. But Reese and Cyrus have a plan. They'll resell items, and make no profit themselves. This makes second-hand sales something anyone can break into, no matter how poor. Now villagers can deal with one another directly instead of fueling the Nook Empire.

Once Cyrus trusts the villagers, he begins undercutting Nook's business further by offering to refurbish furniture directly. That trust can eventually lead to unrest, and maybe one day a revolt against the strong-arm business tactics of the Nooks. "Nook's stranglehold on our town has gone too far," he'll cry, "and it's time we do something about it." Yet even the town's mayor, Tortimer was forced into retirement to make room for a new puppet mayor who could be kept in check, firmly under Tom Nook's thumb.

You may fight to scrounge up enough fish and bugs to pay off your loan, but the very fish you pull out of the sea are all a part of Nook's plan. I don't know about you, but I've never seen a single villager eat a fish. Not once. So where do they go? Consider this: what would a real estate agent or his repressed storeowners need fish for? Nothing. They are dumped directly back into the ocean to be fished back out and traded for bells so you can pay off your home loan, and once that's done what does Nook tell you: "Great job paying off that loan! But, don't you think your house is a little small? How about an expansion..."

Then the next day your humble housing representative tells you that your expansion is complete...and it will cost twice as much as last time. This cycle continues, and by the time villagers catch on to it they're so deep in Nook's pocket that even an entire inventory of Coelacanths won't save you.



Though Nook rose from humble beginnings, he has become a giant that will gladly crush us all beneath his heel. So, dear villagers, I implore you: do not shop at Nook's furniture emporium of deceit! Deal directly with your fellow villagers and maybe one day in the future our children won't have to fish from morning to night just to break even. Maybe one day we can build furniture of our own...¡Viva la Revolución!



Stop and Smell the Roses: My New Appreciation for Animal Crossing's Plodding Pace Original Publication: July 3, 2013

By Tom Malina

After logging 100 hours in 2 weeks, Tom explores what sustains his crippling addiction to New Leaf and suggests why it can be important to break the Bell-farming rut.

Why do I play Animal Crossing? Why do I, and so many others, keep playing Animal



Crossing? And why do some people stop?

I began to think about these questions when, out of curiosity, I checked my Nintendo 3DS Daily Log application today to find that Animal Crossing: New Leaf had shot to the top of my Software Charts by a great margin, at 102 hours played. I started playing the game on June 19. Granted, that's not all me, as my sister has logged some significant time with her character, but still, it's enough for me to contemplate the idea that I might have a problem.

Evidently, I'm not alone - in our recent Games of the Year So Far feature, the Nintendo World Report staff concluded that Animal Crossing: New Leaf is, at the moment, our favourite game of 2013.

Already, we have had quite a range of responses to this pick - some understand the addictive hold of this game, while others have expressed concerns that they might already be burning out on it. New Leaf is probably the most acclaimed entry in the series since the very first one, but there is still a bunch of early adopters who feel

that not that much has changed and who have become frustrated with the game's deliberately slow

pace.

I had some of the same misgivings about the previous instalment, Let's Go to the City (known as City Folk in the US) on Wii. Having plumbed the depths of the GameCube original and Wild World on DS, I felt I could dissect the systems of Animal Crossing and as such, I tried to

accelerate the Wii version along. Essentially, I was trying to force progression, which was a big mistake, so I played considerably less of the game as a result. It wasn't fun for me any more - it was more akin to work, and it was my own fault for playing in that fashion.

Some people would probably argue that Animal Crossing has always been a game of chores and



busywork, but I beg to differ. It seems against the spirit of the type of game this is to tell people how to play it, but I believe that if this is your outlook on Animal Crossing, I implore you to rethink what you are actually trying to get out of playing the game.

As I put it at the top of the page, the new appreciation I have gained for Animal Crossing in my time with New Leaf, and why I have enjoyed it more than any prior titles in the franchise, is that I began to stop and smell the roses - and I don't mean the roses that you plant and water around town.

There has been plenty of discussion in the past on the presence of goals in these games. However, what I've noticed is that some people are losing sight of the reward for completing these goals, and are just focusing on the act of achieving the goal.

I suppose it is typical that certain players would approach a "sandbox" type of game like this one by making their own missions. By playing this way, some have adopted the mentality that Animal Crossing is entirely governed by money; an endless pursuit of finding stuff to sell and paying off loans. It's as if they

game into a score attack challenge, where the high score to aim for is a 300,000 Bell house payment or a 250,000 Bell donation to a public works project.

have turned the





you feel that you have to be making money at all times even though it might not be very fun, then maybe this series just isn't for you.

But at that point, what are you putting all this work in for? What's the sense in paying off the second floor expansion of your home, only to immediately return to hours of running between the shop and the town with pockets full of fish and bugs to work on the loan for your basement? You haven't even taken the time to do anything with the new space you just earned. How many of you have dumped findings into your museum as some sort of arbitrary completion objective, without taking the time to explore the exhibits you made?

Nothing in Animal Crossing happens quickly, and that's exactly the point. The error I made with City Folk was attempting to force things to happen and consequently becoming irritated. With New Leaf, I'm really enjoying my more laid-back, contemplative style of play that harkens back to what I loved about the original GameCube title. There's little benefit to trying to understand what parameters the game operates under - not knowing how it works makes it all the more pleasant of a surprise when Dr. Shrunk unexpectedly shows up outside your house petitioning to open a club.

Of course, I still set goals for myself to accomplish. There's always got to be a drive to keep going. But now I'm no longer thinking about them along the lines of "I need to make X amount of Bells." It's more in terms of what I want this section of my town to look like over the long-term, or what I'd like to do with this specific part of my house. When I visit other people's towns online, I'm not thinking about plundering the place for all the foreign fruit; I am more concerned with gathering ideas for what I might do with my own town in the future.

Only when the game is experienced at a leisurely pace can I properly appreciate my townscape as it grows and develops, and enjoy talking to my neighbours, participating in events, playing tours at the island and giving a sense of identity to my virtual world. And if you don't want to do those things, if



B

Vii Party U Is Actually Really Fur

By Neal Ronaghan

Original Publication: July 1, 2013

After playing Wii Party U with friends, I think I get why it's being made.

My initial reaction when Wii Party U was brought up during the E3 2013 Nintendo Direct was that of a sneer. Through the sputtering stream, I made out Satoru Iwata asking us to please understand that Wii Party U was delayed from summer to October, taking up one of the precious fall release slots.



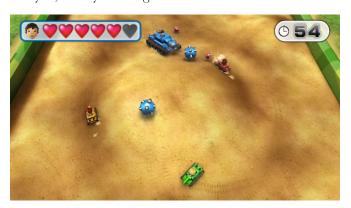
Landing among Wind Waker HD, Donkey Kong Country: Tropical Freeze, and Super Mario 3D World, I assumed Wii Party U would be dead on arrival. A game that, regardless of quality, would be lost, not gaining enough traction in the hardcore and not being a big title for the casual.

Then I played Wii Party U, and much like Nintendo Land last year, I saw the potential. Now, Nintendo Land fell short of that potential. My rule of thumb for Nintendo Land was that if I still played it the summer after the Wii U launch, it was a success. We're in that summer, and I've turned on Nintendo Land (maybe) twice in the past five months.

But I still see that same laughing-out-loud multiplayer nonsense that I saw in Nintendo Land in Wii Party U. It was clearly evident to me as I played the same few games several times with my fellow Nintendo World Report staffers Andrew Brown and Justin Berube at an event in New York City last week. We joyously played Name That Face several times, as we did dumber and dumber things to represent the simple and silly description. Justin used a bag of chips as a prop for "eating really hot food" and I managed to accurately convey "singing serious karaoke." It was good old fashioned fun.

Rivalry and competition started up when we played Operation: Sandbox and the GamePad-only Foosball game. Operation: Sandbox is sort of like the Tanks game in Wii Play if it was a focused, short, and deceptively strategic affair. For Foosball, each played used an analog stick while they looked at the GamePad.

You have just enough control over your team to make the game frantic and fun while still being a little reliant on skill. The idea of having tournaments of this minigame, which is possible to do with certain games in Wii Party U, is very enticing.



We only saw a small amount of Wii Party U's 80+ mini-games spread out across the Mario Party-like board game, the House Party mode, and the brand new GamePad Party mode, but I want to see more, even if a lack of online might kill this game before it makes it out of the gate. Even if I only have a few fleeting local multiplayer sessions, bolstered by a NWR gathering at PAX East or the rare time when I convince my friends to play a Wii U game, I'm still excited for Wii Party U. And maybe, if you can be in the right circumstances, you should be, too.

Grinding Game Gears: An Overview of Sonic's Portable Origins

By Neal Ronaghan



Original Publication: June 21, 2013

A bunch of Sonic's Game Gear escapades are on 3DS now. What is the deal with them?



With all these Game Gear games coming

out on the 3DS Virtual Console now, I'm personally baffled by all the versions of Sonic the Hedgehog on the batterysucking portable (and I even owned a Game Gear in the '90s!). So, I tried to sort out what each Sonic game was, and where they fit into the '90s Sega legacy. Most of these games will likely come out on 3DS Virtual Console, if they haven't already, but if you want to bust out your GameCube (or Wii), you can play all 12 Sonic Game Gear games in Sonic Adventure DX, and six of them in Sonic Gems Collection.

The first Sonic Game Gear game, called Sonic the Hedgehog (out on 3DS Virtual Console in all regions) came out in the fall of 1991, a few months after Sonic made his debut on Genesis. It was a bit of a weird release in retrospect, as the focus wasn't on speed, but then again, the original Genesis version wasn't focused on speed either. Sonic on Game Gear

also had a world map, and was a port of the Master System version (which is available on Wii Virtual Console) that was optimized for handhelds.



This first Sonic portable salvo is also the only one developed by the, at the time, new company Ancient, which was cofounded by Yuzo Koshiro, who is more known for his awesome musical work in ActRaiser than anything else. He also composed music for Nihon Falcom games such as Dragon Slayer and Ys, as well as Streets of Rage. Most recently, he's worked on the Etrian Odyssey series. Ancient went on to develop Streets of Rage 2, ActRaiser 2, and Beyond Oasis.

Sonic the Hedgehog 2 for Game Gear (out on the 3DS Virtual Console in Japan; coming soon everywhere else) came out around the same time as Sonic 2 on Genesis in 1992 and once again, it was a slightly altered version of the Master System version. You could also ride in a mine cart and a hang

glider, which I guess is neat. Since it was completed before the home version of Sonic 2 came out, it didn't add the Spin Dash move introduced there. This time, Sonic's Game Gear



adventure was developed by Aspect, who basically made every subsequent Sonic game on Game Gear with a few exceptions.

Chronologically, Dr. Robotnik's Mean Bean Machine, the Puyo spin-off, was next in 1993. More or less, it's a port of the Genesis version of the puzzle title but oddly enough, it



featured a brand new mode. Read our review for more details, and if you're interested, pick it up on 3DS Virtual Console in your region.

Later in 1993, alongside the release of Sonic CD, Sonic Chaos hit Game Gear. Once again developed by Aspect, this third Game Gear title was mostly based on Sonic 2 on Genesis' stages. It was also the first time Tails was playable on the handheld system, and thanks to Aspect's familiarity with the system, it ran faster. Despite being out (in Master System form) on the Wii Virtual Console, Sonic Chaos is oddly not out on the 3DS Virtual Console in Japan and isn't slated for a North American or European release, as far as we can tell.

Although, neither is Sonic Drift, the Japan-only Mario Kart clone released in 1994. This was Sonic's racing debut, and is also notable for featuring Amy Rose as a playable character. I'm thinking we didn't miss much with this release (though it is on Sonic Adventure DX). The sequel, Sonic Drift 2, came out in every region in 1995. Adding Knuckles, Nack the Weasel, and Metal Sonic as racers, this game is currently available on the 3DS Virtual Console in Japan and is forthcoming to the other regions.







Sonic the Hedgehog: Triple Trouble, the fourth Sonic platforming game on Game Gear, came out the fall after Sonic



3 on Genesis. Triple Trouble is widely hailed as the best Game Gear Sonic game, which is kind of like saying it's the best version of Mortal Kombat on the Game.com. By this point, Aspect had three games under their belt and became rather good at making decent reproductions of Sonic games on handhelds. Triple Trouble played to the system's strengths, as it was a little bit slower paced than the other Game Gear titles and had both Sonic and Tails playable. It's currently out on 3DS Virtual Console in all regions.

Around the same time, Sonic Spinball came out on Game Gear, a year after the Genesis version. The downport of the weird pinball platformer is not slated to appear on any 3DS Virtual Console service, though you can get the Genesis version on Wii Virtual Console.

In 1995, Tails got a highlight, as not one but two Tails adventures came out on Game Gear. The first, Tails' Skypatrol, only came out in Japan.



In it, Tails is always in flight and has to avoid obstacles in the sky. If you get hit once, you lose a life. Skypatrol isn't listed for release on 3DS Virtual Console as of now, so the SIMS Codeveloped title might not be available on Nintendo's new portable.

The other Tails game, Tails Adventure, is available everywhere, though. This is the closest Sonic has ever gotten to a Metroidvania, as it's more of an action RPG where you control Tails through different levels to collect items.

The only other Sonic Game Gear release in 1995 was Sonic Labyrinth, which is kind of like a demented version of 3D Blast, as you control Sonic in that same isometric style.

Robotnik created Slow Shoes for him to wear or something; it's sort of weird. I've personally never played it, but I've heard people say it's sort of like Sonic mini-golf. This game is out on 3DS



Virtual Console everywhere but North America, but it should be coming soon.

One of the last Game Gear games ever was Sonic Blast, the fifth and final traditional 2D Sonic game on the platform. While it came out around Sonic 3D Blast, it has basically nothing to do with the pseudo-3D Genesis game. Instead, it's a 2D platformer in which you can play as Sonic or Knuckles. The general consensus is that Triple Trouble is the pinnacle of Sonic gaming on Game Gear, and this entry was a bit of a

step back, likely due to the attempt at aping Donkey Kong Country's pre-rendered sprites on a handheld. Blast is now out on 3DS Virtual Console in every region, so you can be the true judge of its quality.



Rhythm Heaven: A Musical Paradise for Nintendo Fans By Pedro Hernandez

Feature

Original Publication: February 13, 2012

Nintendo
World Report
celebrates
Rhythm
Heaven by
looking at its
history at
Nintendo.

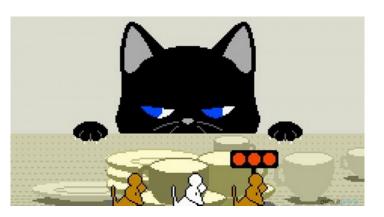


As you read this feature, Rhythm

Heaven Fever for Wii is grooving its way onto consoles around North America. The Rhythm Heaven series has recently become familiar to North American shores, but Japanese players have been experiencing the musical legacy for years now.

The series is known as Rhythm Tengoku (or Rhythm Paradise) in Japan and was produced by Nintendo's internal studio Nintendo SP&D1, who also did work on the WarioWare and Metroid games. The person credited for the creation of this series is Kazuyoshi Osawa, who also worked on the WarioWare and Metroid games.

Rhythm Heaven plays very differently from other rhythm-based games, which would consist of having players press a series of buttons, prompts for which scroll along to the speed of the song. Games like PaRappa the Rapper from Sony and Dance Dance Revolution from Konami pioneered this method of rhythm gameplay. Rhythm Heaven, however, took a very different approach. Rather than just following patterns and pressing buttons in order to hit preset patterns, players would actually have to closely follow the beat of the song and make the appropriate button presses to the beat. In other words, you weren't just pressing buttons in a timely manner but actually playing alongside the song. This made for a test of reflexes and rhythm, as the songs would follow a pattern, and every once in a while would change tempo or add more challenges to overcome within the same piece of music.



The concept is quirky, but allowed everyone to get into the game without the need of expensive peripherals or mastery of the game. If you could tap "shave and a haircut, two bits!" with your fingers or bob your head in rhythm to a pop song, Rhythm Heaven was for you. To add even an even more surreal nature to the game, the songs would not take place in a rock stage, a concert, or even a karaoke session. These scenes would often range from the fantastic to the mundane, yet they all had huge character. It could be said that WarioWare, a game that made it a common practice to make spectacular games out of the most mundane of activities, heavily influenced this. Even something as seemingly plain as a guy taking a girl out on a date while kicking balls away from them could yield many a musical result.

Speaking of music, Nintendo worked with prolific Japanese music producers in order to both make the beat-heavy gameplay work and create catchy tunes. One of these producers happens to be Tsunku, a vocalist, producer, and songwriter who has had experience working solo and with other Japanese acts. While still relatively unknown in most parts of the world, Tsunku is a major musical act in Japan, and with him behind the project, Rhythm Heaven became something truly special. He proposed that the game's music would be linked directly to the gameplay, rather than just button presses that weren't related to the song at all.

The first game in the series was released for the Game Boy Advance in Japan on August 6, 2006. Game progression was similar to that of the WarioWare series: each stage consisted of a song and a task to complete to the beat of that song. The game would assign ratings to players on how well they did in their performance. Once players advanced far enough into the game they would be able to play remix stages. These

stages would ante up the difficulty by combining all of the songs into one, meaning you would be playing a segment one minute, and in the next moment be in the middle of another stage. And just like the WarioWare series, there were other unlockables that extended the replay value of the game.



Despite worries about the game's unique approach to rhythm gameplay, Rhythm Heaven was a success. Not as big as other games, but it was popular enough that an arcade game was born out of it, courtesy of Sega. Both games would remain Japan-exclusive efforts. This, however, would end in 2008 when Nintendo released Rhythm Heaven Gold for the DS in Japan. Satoru Iwata saw great potential in the game, so it was decided to release the game overseas as simply Rhythm Heaven. The DS iteration used an interesting control scheme: players turned their DS on its side, book-style. Tapping would occur on the touch screen while the other screen presented the comical situation.



Even with the game not being instantly recognizable, Nintendo did their best to market the game to both gamers and casual game fans. Such was their belief in the game's success that Nintendo gave away free copies of the game at the Game Developers Conference in 2009 and hired R&B artist Beyoncé Knowles to star in a series of commercials for Rhythm Heaven. Critical acclaim was great for the game, praising both its inventive approach to music games and the quirky nature that gave it a lot of character.

Players hoping to get more rhythm-based goodness wouldn't have to wait long. In 2011, Nintendo released Rhythm Heaven Fever for the Wii in Japan. Even with the game still a year away from release in



North America and Europe, it still managed to create a big impact on gamers. Stages were larger in scale and more ambitious in their musical design. Some of these scenes were so funny and creative that they went on to become Internet memes, like the Wrestler Interview.

It is easy to see why, with just a few games under its belt, the series has gained a strong cult following in the Nintendo community. Rather than just doing the tried and true formula of the music game genre or making us break our wallets with expensive peripherals, Rhythm Heaven took a very simple approach, but its simplicity leads us to become addicted to the rhythm. Add to this fantastic music and a heavy dose of Nintendo charm, and you have a series that may not be as big as some of Nintendo's others, but still packs a powerful musical punch.

STAFF SEZ#3: Nintendo's Financials



By Karl Castaneda & Staff

Original Publication: November 2, 2011

Oh no! Nintendo is losing money! What do our intrepid staff members have to say about it?

Hey there, folks, and welcome to yet another edition of Staff Sez! If this is your first time reading, I present our ever-so-talented staff with the start of a sentence pertaining to a topic, and they have to



complete said sentence in under ten words. Easy, right?

This time, I thought it'd be interesting to take a look at Nintendo's earnings troubles. So here it is...

If I could give Nintendo financial advice it'd be...

Neal "TPS Reports" Ronaghan sez:

"...to actually release worthwhile Wii games before November.

Jonathan "Nahgonnaworkhereanymore" Metts sez:

...PLASTICS!

Nate "The Mondays" Andrews sez:

...to start selling me on Wii U now.

James "Swingline" Dawson sez:

...to force Capcom to localize Monster Hunter TriG.

Josh "Bob" Max sez:

...release more worthwhile games during a time other than Christmas.

J.P. "Take a Penny" Corbran sez:

...be prepared for a total third party abandonment next time.

Zach "Bad Person" Miller sez:

...don't release shit until it's done.

Pedro "Just Pass" Hernandez sez:

...to not be so damn over-confident about everything!

Carmine "Deeper and Deeper" Red sez:

...find more blue ocean, this one's turning red.

Mike "Bolton" Sklens sez:

...to un-clutter the DS offerings and only sell the 3DS.

Nicholas "Pieces of Flair" Bray sez:

...time to bring back that third pillar.

Jared "Other Bob" Rosenberg sez:

...release another Wii Sports game for Wii yesterday.

Andrew "O-Face" Brown sez:

...awesome merchandising like those Japanese Club Nintendo prizes.

Daan "Jump to Conclusions" Koopman sez:

...giving Europe its own Nintendo World Store.

James "What's Happening?" Charlton sez:

...be humble, learn from past mistakes, copying others is OK.

Minoru "Two Chicks" Yamaizumi sez:

...to take over Valve and/or Naughty Dog.



Original Publication: May 17, 2011

Mario Kart: Super Circuit By Nicholas Bray

Is it one of the best in the series?

Mario Kart: Super Circuit is my second favorite entry in the series, second only to Mario Kart 64. I received it for Christmas in 2001 along with Golden Sun. After having nothing to play on the Game Boy Advance for months, those two games definitely hit the spot.

Super Circuit is a game that has a few firsts and lasts for the series. It was the first game to be developed by a company outside of Nintendo EAD, that company being Intelligent Systems. It was the last Mario Kart game where it was possible to rank out during a Grand Prix; future games in the series gave points to all positions except for last. This means that after Super Circuit, if you mucked up a race, you couldn't just retry it. Super Circuit was also the first to feature tracks from a previous entry in the series, the game features every track from the original Super Mario Kart.



I feel as though this is the forgotten Mario Kart. Many people seem to forget about it when talking about the series, or discount it as a sub-standard entry. I had a great deal of fun playing this game over the years, the tracks are fast, filled with tight turns, and look far better than the original SNES game. The game's graphical style is a cross between the Mode 7 graphics seen in the SNES original and the Nintendo 64 character sprite designs. The backgrounds are also full of color and detail, and one track even features a sun setting over the course of the track.

Some of my favorite gameplay tweaks are lost after this game as well. Firstly, I love how you can drop red shells behind you and they act as a homing mine. Another thing is you can collect gold coins, just like in the SNES game. Collecting a lot will raise your top speed. If you can maintain a high top speed, it is possible to outrun oncoming red shells. You can keep driving around the track, and it won't hit you unless you

slow down. I have managed to survive for over a lap many times and it feels great to pull this off.



The game was also the first to feature a ranking system for completing the different cups. The best rank is a three star and can be very tricky to get. I never did know the exact requirements to obtain the best rank. Most people say you have to get lots of coins and fast times, while some say you cannot even use items. I did manage to do a bunch without using items, but I eventually lost interest in trying to do every cup in every class.

Super Circuit also had multiplayer, with both single-cart and multi-cart play. I only played with a friend a few times, mostly because no one I knew had the game, and single-cart only allowed for four tracks. A few years later, we did have a second copy to use, and we hooked it up through two TVs, GameCubes and Game Boy Players, which ended up being pretty fun.



I highly recommend playing Mario Kart: Super Circuit. To me, it offers a challenge without being overly cheap, and the few gameplay tweaks that are only present in this game are quite cool. Some people don't like the way the game controls, but if you take the time to adjust to the feel, it is a very rewarding experience.

Mayor Crossing





















Interview With Gunman Clive Developer Bertil Hörberg By Aaron Edwards

Original Publication: March 28, 2013

Bertil talks about his start in the game industry and eShop development.



Gunman Clive creator Bertil Hörberg recently announced his next game, and has said very little about it other than that it will be heavily inspired by classic Zelda games. We reached out to him to learn a little more about working with Nintendo as an indie developer, and to learn about his new forthcoming game.

NWR: How did you get started in the industry?

Bertil Hörberg: I've been wanting to make games pretty much all my life, and started programming in QBasic when I was around 12. I was pretty active in the Gameboy & GBA homebrew community in my teens, then I went to University and studied game development. My first job was at a small studio making kids games, after a short project there I got a job at Grin. This was right after they had started development on the Bionic

Commando reboot, a while after that they started up Bionic Commando Rearmed, and as a massive fan of the original and of retro platformers in general I made sure to get on that team as soon as I could. That project really taught me a lot and helped me realize what I wanted to do, and since then I've been moving towards smaller and smaller teams until finally going at it all alone a couple of years ago.

NWR: What advice would you give to someone looking to break into game development themselves?

BH: The environment today is very different from when I started learning programming. There are tons of tools available that let you do very impressive stuff with very little experience, but I would still like to promote doing it from the ground up and learning the basics rather than jumping directly into something like Unity.

NWR: Gunman Clive has been out for a while now, in retrospect what were the biggest challenges you faced in releasing the game on so many platforms?

BH: I don't think releasing on many platforms was really a problem. It might have been if I would have aimed for a simultaneous release on everything, but I took quite a lot of time between the different versions for the most part. Keeping all versions up to date and supporting them with bug fixes can be difficult though and something I'm not doing very well.

NWR: Compared to other services like the Android marketplace and Xbox Live Arcade, how is working with Nintendo as an indie developer?

BH: I think the eShop hits a pretty good middle ground between the complete freedom and chaos of the smartphone markets and the more strict and controlled services like XBLA. There are a bit more requirements and a higher entry barrier than the smartphones so the service doesn't get overcrowded, but they still let you self-publish without any weird screening systems like Steam Greenlight and don't dictate what features you can and can't have in your games.

NWR: What do you think Nintendo can do to attract more indie developers, such as yourself, to the Wii U and 3DS?

BH: I guess what's left is to prove that there is a market. If people have been paying attention they should know by now that it's not very hard to release a game for their platforms, but there hasn't been a lot of well publicized success stories. I'm very happy about my sales on the eShop but I'm not super rich yet, and I don't know how that compared to other games on the eShop. I think there may be an uncertainty about how big projects it can really sustain financially right now.

NWR: What games most influenced how you approach game development?

BH: I look a lot at NES, Gameboy games and early SNES games, not only in terms of game design but also in determining how much content I need and how to make it feel like a complete experience, even if the game is short.

NWR: Crowdfunding has become a boon for many smaller developers, have you ever considered using it to fund future projects?

BH: Kickstarter conflicts with a lot of my core values and principles, but these days there are so many talented developers using it that it's hard to really criticize it. Thankfully I'm not in need of any extra funding right now, and I'm planning to keep my projects small so the costs will be low anyway.

NWR: We're very excited to hear about your new game! Will you be targeting an eShop release for it?

BH: Yes.

NWR: Is there anything else you can tell us about it?



BH: I've probably already said too much considering the stage it is at now and how slow the development has been going lately. I don't have much finished game design, and it's little more than a tech demo at this point.

NWR: Lastly, if you could take over any one classic gaming franchise to mold to your vision, which one would you choose and why?

BH: I don't think I'd really want to take over a classic franchise, and with my current situation it would be too much work, but if I had a bigger team I'd love to do a Zelda 2 remake or a Mega Man game.



PGC interviews Factor 5's Julian Eggebrecht

Original Publication: November 14, 2001

Part II

Planet GameCube: What were you guys up to between finishing Battle for Naboo and starting Rogue Leader? Working on tools, Thornado, sleeping?

Julian Eggebrecht: There was no time because we had to finish Indy N64, port Naboo to the PC and get the first version of MusyX out of the door for other GameCube developers. In addition to that quite some tools needed updating for Rogue 2. We were absolutely swamped with work - believe me, if there would have been a way to start with Rogue Leader earlier, we certainly would have done it because we knew that we had to be done for launch.

Planet GameCube: What is Factor 5's current relationship with Nintendo?

Julian Eggebrecht: We like Nintendo a lot and we have quite a few good friends at Nintendo Technology and NOA. We love the GameCube hardware and really would like to stay single-platform for the time being. You can squeeze so much more out of the GameCube for second generation games and to maximize that there is nothing better than focused development on one platform without the worries if a certain trick will work on a different machine. In the end it of course comes down to the success of the GameCube and I hope we helped its birth a little bit with Rogue Leader.

Planet GameCube: Looking back at Battle for Naboo and Indiana Jones on the N64, what are your thoughts about developing those games and how they were received in the industry?

Julian Eggebrecht: Battle for Naboo had a few very strong things going for it but it also had weaknesses. In hindsight the space controls should have been much better. We focused on fixing the problems for Rogue Leader and I think the controls have come a long way in merging 360 degree movement with the simplicity of arcade controls.

Indy was a great technical challenge on all levels. We learned a lot about camera and character-control. It was extremely tricky to implement a completely new control and camera into an existing game and I think within the given constraints it worked out better than most people expected. Hal Barwood, Director of Indy PC, was very skeptical about transforming the game into a console experience but after our initial work he really came around and actually ended up doing a tremendous amount of work on the new save system.

As for the industry reception - the end of the N64 lifecycle was a quiet one so most people didn't really take notice of these last few N64 games.

Planet GameCube: What are your favorite and least favorite aspects of the GameCube controller?

Julian Eggebrecht: The least favorite aspect is the Z-Button. I am not sure if it could have been better, though. In my opinion, everything else is just about perfect.

Planet GameCube: What are your thoughts on the competition? GameCube vs. PS2, GameCube vs. Xbox?

Julian Eggebrecht: On a technical level, GameCube is stronger than the PS2 and on par with the X-Box. This means porting from PS2 and X-Box to the GameCube is very, very easy. This will work to Nintendo's advantage because third parties can easily implement a multi-platform strategy if they want to. GameCube has the huge price advantage going for it and it is arguably the easiest of the three to develop for. I hope that this, combined with the strong first-party titles and third party exclusives like Rogue Leader will give Nintendo an edge in the fight.

Planet GameCube: If there was something you could change about the GameCube hardware, what would it be, and why?

Julian Eggebrecht: Nintendo struck the balance almost perfectly, so aside from increasing every feature hundred-fold we don t have any complaints.

Rogue Leader Questions

Planet GameCube: What was it like working with the original Wedge Antilles? Did you use any other original actors for voiceovers?

Julian Eggebrecht: You would have to ask the LucasArts voice director about that - we only wrote the lines and did the post-processing for the audio files. To answer the second part of your question - Dennis Lawson was the only original actor we used for new recordings. We are also using a lot of lines directly from the movies. All of Han Solo's and Princess Leia's lines are taken straight from the originals.

Planet GameCube: How do you think Japanese gamers will respond to Rogue Leader?

Julian Eggebrecht: I hope they like it. Rogue Squadron scored pretty good in Famitsu back then. We very carefully localized the complete game this time, including Japanese voice, so

players hopefully will have the same experience as US-players do.

Planet GameCube: How much creative license does Factor 5 have within the SW world? Do you draw only from the movies

"Nintendo

struck the

balance almost

increasing every

hundred-fold we

don t have any

complaints."

perfectly, so

aside from

feature

themselves or from the entire expanded universe?

Julian Eggebrecht:

We usually have as much freedom as the specific game and its placement in the universe allows. We deliberately

tried to stay close to the movies for Rogue 2, whereas Rogue 1 was almost completely set in the expanded universe. Whenever we work in the Star Wars universe we have LucasArts check from day one if what we are proposing will work. It's an ongoing, very organic process during the development. What makes it easier is of course the amount of years we have been working with the property and the respect everybody here has for Star Wars.

Planet GameCube: Rogue Squadron featured original missions that took place in-between the SW movies but Rogue Leader recreates several missions within the trilogy. Did this enable you to provide some of your own interpretations / twists to these classic cinema battles or was much creative freedom limited in trying to stay faithful to the source material?

Julian Eggebrecht: That was an interesting aspect of designing Rogue Leader. It's easy to say "we recreate this battle" but if you dig deeper it has to work within the game mechanics and the overall game still needs to have

a natural flow. Hoth was a huge discussion point, not only because we wanted to show more than you saw in the movie but also because we had to shift from Luke Skywalker to Wedge Antilles during the course of the mission.

At the beginning of the design process I was a bit scared how much the movies would restrict us but in the end it was the opposite - the movie scenes inspired some really great gameplay elements.

Planet GameCube: Is Rogue Leader using sub-pixel antialiasing?

Julian Eggebrecht: Yes, it's using the GameCube's 3-point sub-pixel anti-aliasing and of course the excellent deflicker hardware for the interlaced output.

Planet GameCube: How does Rogue Leader utilize the GameCube's internal clock? Would you like to use this feature in future games?

Julian Eggebrecht: We always try to use as many hardware features in our games as possible, so we early on discussed how we could use the clock. It is quite fun to be surprised by it.

Planet GameCube: Are you happy with GameCube's memory bandwidth? Have you ever had to back-track and maybe trim some effects or textures down due to lack of bandwidth?

Julian Eggebrecht: There never were any problems with bandwidth. It really is the single-most impressive feature about the hardware and makes very reliable predictions about performance possible.

Planet GameCube: How flexible and useful is Gekko in assisting Flipper with custom lighting and geometry? Are you using this feature? Does it compare to the vertex and pixel shaders on the Xbox's graphics chip?

Julian Eggebrecht: Maybe without going into too much detail, we don't think there is anything visually you could do on X-Box (or PS2) which can't be done on GameCube. I have read theories on the net about Flipper not being able to do cube-mapped environment maps, fur shading, selfshadowing etc... That's all plain wrong. Rogue does extensive self-shadowing and both cube-maps and fur shading are not anymore complicated to implement on GameCube than on X-Box. You might be doing it differently, but the results are the same. When I said that X-Box and GameCube are on par power-wise I really meant it.

Planet GameCube: In a recent IGNinsider article, Greg Buchner revealed that Flipper can do some unique things because of the ways that the different texture layers can interact. Can you elaborate on this feature? Have you used it? Do you know if the effects it allows are reproducible on other architectures (at decent framerates)?

Julian Eggebrecht: He was probably referring to the TEV pipeline. Imagine it like an elaborate switchboard that makes the wildest combinations of textures and materials possible. The TEV pipeline combines up to 8 textures in up to 16 stages in one go. Each stage can apply a multitude of functions to the texture obvious examples of what you do with the TEV stages would be bumpmapping or cel-shading. The TEV pipeline is completely under programmer control, so the more time you spend on writing elaborate shaders for it, the more effects you can achieve. We just used the obvious effects in Rogue Leader with the targeting computer and the volumetric fog variations being the most unusual usage of TEV. In a second generation game we'll obviously focus on more complicated applications.

To be continued.



Staff Profiles



Becky Hollada

Nickname: Dangerface

Age: 22

Location: Tennessee

Favorite Game Character: Link, forever and always.

Favorite Obscure NES Game: I think Paperboy is about as obscure as it gets.

Can't say I played too many of those on the NES.

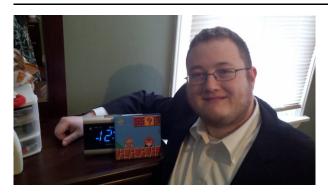
Nintendo ID: Wii - 0826 4917 4398 0050, 3DS - 0748-1536-5181

Game of the Month

Monster Manor! This little StreetPass game got me hooked the first day I played it. If I had more people to StreetPass with, this game might be competing with Shin Megami Tensei IV for hours played.

Most Looking Forward To?

Pokemon X and Y. New Pokemon games always get me a little too excited. I just hope it lives up to my expectations.



Andy Goergen

Nickname: DrewMG

Age: 33

Location: Iowa

Favorite Game Character: Link

Favorite Obscure NES Game: Cobra Triangle

Nintendo ID: DrewMG

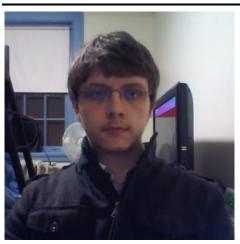
Game of the Month

I was really surprised how much time I ended up putting into Shining Force:

The Sword of Hajya on 3DS Virtual Console. I've been a fan of the series for a really long time, but I haven't actually FINISHED a Shining Force game since I was in middle school. Still, I kept on with the Game Gear classic until the very (not bitter at all) end. It's a simpler take on a strategy RPG that hooked me without being overwhelming.

Most Looking Forward To?

Pikmin 3 is a game that I've waited far too long for, and now it's literally only days away from being here. I absolutely can't wait to see what the game plays like, and to explore the forested world that the game provides. While online play would be nice, it's mainly a solo campaign type of game for me anyways.



James Dawson

Nickname: JD

Age: 20

Location: Fredericksburg, VA

Favorite Game Character: Dry Bones **Favorite Obscure NES Game:** TwinBee

Nintendo ID: TalesOfFan

Game of the Month

Shin Megami Tensei IV. I've put some time into Persona 3 and 4 in the past, but SMT IV is really the first time I feel like I've actually "experienced" a Shin Megami Tensei title. Needless to say, I'm having a blast with it.

Most Looking Forward To?

I've started watching a lot of tokusatsu series, such as Ultraman and Super Sentai lately, and they've gotten me pretty hyped for The Wonderful 101. First Attack of the Friday Monsters! A Tokyo Tale and now this: tokusatsu's influence is alive and well on Nintendo consoles.



Pikmin 3 By Andy Goergen

REVIEW

Gather your army and storm the garden; Pikmin 3 is here.

The Pikmin series sits in an odd place in the Nintendo universe. The series, regarded by many as the last substantial IP created by Nintendo, is dearly beloved by some, disliked by a few, and ignored by most. The series hasn't seen a sequel since 2004's Pikmin 2, despite multiple rereleases for Wii with arguably better controls. In 2013, we finally have the long-awaited third installment, Pikmin 3. The game seems to be the perfect opportunity to show off what Nintendo can do in HD, and while it may not be the game to spur sluggish Wii U sales, it is absolutely what Pikmin fans have been craving for almost a decade.

The feeling of attachment you get to the Pikmin is remarkable. You are everything to the Pikmin; their protector, and also, their executioner. It's up to you which Pikmin live and which Pikmin don't, and sometimes it can be overwhelming to have to choose. The series has always had a penchant for creating a powerful sense of responsibility, and Pikmin 3 is no exception.

In most ways, Pikmin 3 is actually not much of a deviation from the path already established by Pikmin 1 and Pikmin 2. The narrative of the game feels more like a reboot of Pikmin 1 than a sequel to Pikmin 2, as it's clear that some time has passed in the world of Pikmin. The story of Pikmin 3 is stronger than either of its predecessors, and at certain points, the plot will dictate how you approach your day-to-day strategy.

This is mostly done by collecting fruit to survive. Unlike the original Pikmin, there is no real hard limit on the number of

days you can play (technically there is, but it's a massive amount). Pikmin 2 gave you no direction and let you play a day for just a few seconds to grab one item from a stage and then advance to sunset. While that's still an option, it carries consequences in terms of food rations. The need to collect fruit is a neat trick that gives you a sense of focus when advancing through the campaign.

In terms of gameplay, Pikmin 3 feels like an evolution of what has come before. White and purple Pikmin have been replaced by two new types which are quite useful: pink flying Pikmin and gray rock Pikmin. These new types of Pikmin are there to help you with new types of obstacles, naturally. The flying Pikmin can travel with your captains through water by flying above, which helps when dealing with heavily-aquatic areas. The rock Pikmin help out during battle, like their absent purple brethren, but also allow you to break through glass walls and cages, which usually house useful items. The cracking of the glass as it comes shattering down is quite satisfying, much like most of the environmental touches in Pikmin 3.



The campaign, which lasts a little over 10 hours the first time through, spans five different areas. All of the areas are fairly complex and will require thorough investigation to completely clear, especially considering that it's not until late in the game that you are granted access to all five types of Pikmin. The slow unlocking of different types of Pikmin gives you reason to go back and explore previously inaccessible areas of the map. As per usual in the Pikmin series, exploration is the name of the game, and it's never been better than in Pikmin 3.

Graphically, Pikmin 3 impressed me on almost every level, with lifelike foliage and terrain. The fruit you collect is incredibly realistic looking, as well. Lush greenery and autumn leaves beneath a gentle rainfall add a definitive sense of place and weight to your exploration. Some of the special effects and character models might be a bit too beholden to the design of the GameCube original, but I think it actually adds a bit of charm to the world.



Pikmin 3 also offers several local multiplayer modes. The lack of online play (outside of leaderboards) is unfortunate but not terribly surprising given Nintendo's history with that sort of thing. The modes that are there, however, are a blast. The mission mode features timed stages that require you to collect fruit or defeat as many monsters and bosses as possible, either by yourself or with a partner. Working together with a friend to plan a strategy on how to most efficiently conquer a map is very rewarding, and the online leaderboards give you something to strive for.

Bingo Mode, which more closely resembles the multiplayer mode from Pikmin 2, is the other multiplayer offering. This mode pits two players against each other trying to collect specific fruit and monsters from the map to fill out a bingo card. There are quite a few options for handicapping one player or the other, not the least of which is that the player using the GamePad will have a map, which is a huge advantage. This mode offers a great hectic multiplayer experience, particularly for competitive Pikmin players.

Pikmin 3 also feaures plenty of customization. There are three control schemes available to you: Wii Remote and

Nunchuk,
GamePad, and
Wii U Pro
Controller. OffTV play is
supported on
the GamePad
and, amazingly
enough, you
can even use
the Wii Remote



and Nunchuk control scheme while playing Off-TV. It seems like it might be clumsy, but if you can get the GamePad on a table in front of you at the right height, it works well. It's a little difficult to see everything on the smaller screen, but it's impressive that Nintendo included such an off-the-wall option.

In theory, the Wii Remote and Nunchuk control scheme works the best, but there are drawbacks. Having to place the GamePad on a table in front of you to use the map is less than convenient, and losing direct control of the camera can frustrate as well. The GamePad control scheme gives you that camera control and better access to the map, but aiming using the analog stick is far less precise than the Wii Remote Pointer. I found myself switching back and forth during gameplay, usually settling on the GamePad simply because I didn't want to find an extra surface near me to place it on for use of the map.

There's a lot to love about Pikmin 3. This is a Nintendo masterpiece, and easily one of the best games on the Wii U. The lack of a hard limit on the number of days you can play coupled with the requirement to stay focused on the task at hand eliminates the problems created by the time limit in the original. It's a thoughtful solution for a game that screams charm and elegance. Pikmin 3 is a must-play for Wii U owners, and the first true reason to pick one up if you haven't already.

Score - No online multiplayer - Slight problems with all control options - No options



Resident Evil: Revelations By Zachary Miller

REVIEW

Revisiting the Queen Zenobia.

Resident Evil: Revelations was my most-anticipated game for the 3DS, and I was thoroughly impressed with it last February. When the HD console version was announced earlier this year, I was happy to see that the Wii U would be getting some exclusive content. Now that I've played through Revelations a second time, I can safely say that those Wii U features aren't all that exciting, but more importantly, Revelations is still one of the best post-RE4 Resident Evil games. If you haven't played it already, this is definitely the way to do so.I won't go into the core game here—you can read my previous review for that information—I'm just going to talk about what's changed for the console release.

First and foremost, the game looks great on the big screen. While I initially mourned the lack of 3D, something that worked really well on the 3DS, having pretty HD visuals on your TV screen is just as good. I'd be hard-pressed to say how much better the game looks, though. Character models might've been touched up here and there, but nobody looks as impressive as, say, RE6 (which, despite being terrible, had nice graphics). Cutscenes are where the minor alterations stand out, such as sweat on Chris' forehead or subtle animations on Jill's face. Enemies tend to have a disturbing sheen about them. A certain shellfish-like opponent is MUCH easier to deal with on the big screen, especially since his weak points are much easier to make out.

Gameplay-wise, nothing has really changed. You use shoulder button combinations for aiming, shooting, scanning, and grenade-throwing. Although the game doesn't tell you, you can press ZR by itself to stab things (like crates) with your knife. The window for hitting a successful dodge has

been lengthened a bit, I think. The only irritating change is that the final boss is more aggressive and now has a "window of vulnerability," as if he wasn't hard enough on 3DS. I recommend saving a rocket launcher and all your magnum ammo for him. As in the 3DS game, you get New Game Plus here, too.

While the Campaign is basically the same, Raid Mode has been significantly changed. There are a lot more weapons and mods now, and weapons tend to have more mod slots than they did on 3DS. The downside is that things seem to cost more BP (earned in the Campaign and in Raid Mode), so you might not acquire a sizable arsenal as quickly. You can sell guns and mods that you don't need for extra BP, which is a nice way to pad your wallet. Raid Mode can be played solo or online, and I highly recommend online. Traipsing through any given stage with a friend will make it easier on both of you, and you'll probably end up with a higher grade at the end (which nets bigger rewards). Unfortunately, even though the game's been out for a week, there aren't many people playing.



Replacing StreetPass missions are in-game Achievements, and hitting certain Achievements will unlock new weapons, characters, or costumes. For example, if you manage to get through a Raid Mode mission at a lower-than-recommended level without taking damage AND killing every enemy in the area, you'll unlock Rachel in Raid Mode.

Now, let's talk about the Wii U-specific features. Both are extensions of Miiverse: in Raid Mode, you can send out a message that will appear in a speech bubble above a random enemy's head in a random game. It's pretty worthless. More impressive is the "death message:" when you die, a bunch of Miiverse messages pop up from people who also died in that spot—and you can post your own message, too. Most of the time, it's gamers bitching about dying, but sometimes somebody offers a helpful tip! As usual, however, the real Wii U takeaway is Off-TV play, which was invaluable for me, as my wife recently became addicted to Gossip Girl. The game actually constantly gives you the option of playing just on the GamePad, just on the TV, or on both, in which case your weapon selection is on the GamePad so you can tap to equip weapons. You can also play with the Classic Controller Pro, but for once I actually preferred playing on the GamePad—I know, I'm scared, too.

I'm not sure how much I can recommend this HD remake for people who already got their Revelations fill on the 3DS, but if you haven't played it before, Wii U is the way to go. It's a fantastic game, and while I still disparage the plot and the insistence on having a partner everywhere you go in the Campaign mode, there's nothing quite like it. Also, as I've said before, Jill Valentine in a catsuit in HD is reason enough to at least try the demo.



Score

- + Achievements and unlockables are fun and doable
- + Continues to be an awesome RE game
- + Nice changes to Raid Mode
- + Off-TV play or TV + GamePad are both great

- Aiming feels a little different
- Final boss is more aggressive, less
- The kill room Campaign missions are still terrible



Shining Force: The Sword of Hajya by Andy Goerger

REVIEW Mini

If you like Fire Emblem, then I have the Game Gear game for you!

If you've played a Shining Force game before, chances are it was not The Sword of Hajya. A surprisingly rare Game Gear release from 1994, The Sword of Hajya is a somewhat watered-down version of the Sega-exclusive tactical RPG franchise, but one that keeps all of the core mechanics of the series. The end result is a fun but predictable strategy RPG, which should appeal to fans of the Fire Emblem series.

If you've never played a Shining Force game, here's a synopsis: It's Fire Emblem without

permadeath.



While the console Shining Force games included between-battle exploration segments, those are missing in the handheld version, which makes the game feel even more like Fire Emblem. The game hops from battle to battle, interspersed with small in-game cut scenes to drive the story. The story isn't really even worth mentioning, as it's completely unmemorable. Even so, the characters are likable and you'll find yourself developing favorites.

The other major difference between Shining Force and Fire Emblem is that your units do not move as a team. Instead, all units, including those on the enemy team, have a statistic that determines their battle turn order. It's always difficult to know for sure whether or not an enemy in range will be able to attack one of your units before you have a chance to move another unit in to assist. It adds a bit of unpredictability and tension to the game, but it can be frustrating as well.

While the graphics aren't particularly noteworthy, they do make for a decent Game Gear approximation of the colorful style of the Genesis games. It's never hard to tell what's going



on, and the portraits are actually pretty well drawn. The music is similarly catchy, but not memorable.

In all, Shining Force: The Sword of Hajya is a pretty good Virtual Console release that should hit home with fans of Fire Emblem looking for a similar experience without breaking the bank.

Score &

- + Catchy soundtrack
- + Core strategy gameplay is rock solid

3

- No exploration segments
- Uninteresting story



REVIEW Mini

Tails tries to dress up like Samus and Firebrand and just looks silly.

Among the litany of 2D Sonic platformers on Game Gear, Tails Adventure is a rather stark contrast. Unlike the usual linear, miniaturized experiences, this Tails-starring platformer is slower paced and focused more on exploration and discovery. Tails uses a variety of items, 26 in total that range from bombs to hammers, to defeat enemies and solve puzzles.



But while the basic concept of Tails Adventure screams Metroid, it really isn't like that in practice. It's more like the Game Boy classic

Quest, though despite having color, it feels less rich than Capcom's monochrome adventure. It's levelbased, though you travel between levels to unlock different paths as you accrue items. The items are restricted since you can only bring a maximum of four items into a level, and if you didn't bring the right one to reach a new area, you need to start the level over, which is always frustrating.

The levels themselves feature a lot of secret passages that are just walls you can walk through, among other confusing and annoying hidden areas. The level design is mostly bland,

which is even worse when you have to revisit the 12 stages often to find new areas and items to progress. The most interesting gameplay is usually derived from the Remote



Robot, a tiny robot you can control from afar.

Tails Adventure is more of a curiosity than anything else. It isn't a terribly good game, though it is a Sonic game that tries something different. The experience is woefully hampered by the system's limitations and uninspired design. Unless you're really interested in reliving the Game Gear's Sonic-fueled days, then Tails Adventure is a game to safely ignore.







Mario & Luigi: Superstar Saga by Jonathan Metts REVIEW

Nintendo and Alpha Dream offer the best reason yet to own a Game Boy Advance.

After two and a half years on the market, Game Boy Advance is finally starting to see truly mature software from a range of developers. Leading the pack is Nintendo and its associates, and now leading that pack is Alpha Dream, a Japanese development house that has created possibly the best GBA title yet in Mario & Luigi: Superstar Saga. Many fans yearn for handheld titles to compare with the polished, deep, lengthy experiences of console games; Mario & Luigi is one of the few to attain this ideal.

The game is very much a sequel to Super Mario RPG and Paper Mario. Each game in this series has had a different developer (Squaresoft, Intelligent Systems, and Alpha Dream, respectively), and each one offers a distinct experience, centering around the Mario universe. Mario & Luigi specializes in two major areas: platforming and humor. Backing up these emphases is a foundation of timing-based combat, RPG elements, and outstanding production values, all of which live up to (or past) the standards set by the earlier games.

To be clear, Mario & Luigi is just as much of an RPG as its predecessors. The brothers earn experience points and coins, gain levels, and equip items. Battles are turn-based and dependent on clearly defined numerical statistics, such as hit points and attack power. Story development takes a key role in the game, and each portion of the game is directly tied into the plot. And the game is lengthy, with at least twenty hours of gameplay for experienced players and more for anyone else. My final game clock shows 24:20, not including the 45 minutes it took to beat the end boss.

Where the game departs from RPG tradition is in how it gives you complete, direct control over the characters. Press a button in the field, and Mario jumps. Press a button in battle, and Mario jumps. The same goes for other actions, which become available through the course of the game. What's really bizarre is how Mario & Luigi gives you control of both brothers at the same time. They walk together but jump and perform other moves independently, and often in combination. The feature could easily have been a cheap gimmick, but the game makes brilliant use of it by designing literally everything around this dual-character scheme. Level design, puzzles, and combat are deeply ingrained with the mechanic, such that I can't imagine playing the game any other way. Statistically, Mario and Luigi are evenly matched (though you can customize them during level-ups), but their abilities diverge as the game progresses. In a masterful stroke, just as you start to get used to controlling both brothers at once, the game begins providing situations in which they must separate and complete some tasks alone. Not only are these sequences more challenging than playing as a duo, but they actually strike an emotional chord of separation. You'll feel genuinely relieved once the brothers are reunited.



Replete with goofball humor, sight gags, obscure cultural references, and double-entendres (from Nintendo!), Mario & Luigi will make any player laugh out loud at least once. The story and style of the game as a whole are already whimsical, and the fantastic writers and translators at Nintendo of America have clearly had a blast with the dialogue. Every named character is memorable, from the back-talking henchman Fawful to the overzealous Hammerhead Brothers. And just wait until you get a tender massage from the Jelly Fish sisters. The story begins in our beloved Mushroom Kingdom but soon takes a trip to the neighboring Beanbean Kingdom, full of brand new characters and locations. But, being not so far away from the usual setting, you can expect to see loads of old faces and enemies. There's even an immigrant community of "toads". Mario & Luigi is nostalgic nirvana the likes of which we haven't seen since Super Smash Bros. Melee. Expect to see references to practically every Mario platformer ever released, including recent entries like Luigi's Mansion and Mario Sunshine. Aside from the gratification for any serious Nintendo fan, the huge array of cameos and incorporated elements offers an impressive perspective on just how much ground this franchise has covered in the past twenty years.

Yet Mario & Luigi is its own game, and an incredible one at that. Its long and varied quest is more than a little challenging. The timed attack bonuses and dodges in battle aren't easily abused, because the timing for them is hard to nail down consistently, and because enemies eventually become so tough that these techniques become essential to survival itself. From the beginning of the game, the world is designed so that you must make very clever use of the two brothers just to get around from place to place. There is a surprising bulk of platforming, none of it particularly difficult but all of it quite engaging. The many puzzles are definitely interesting in their own right, but they can also get downright nasty. The game asks the brothers to interest with each other and the

interact with each other and the environment in some truly ingenious ways. On top of all this great gameplay is a handful of minigames, each extremely well done and worth playing over for additional difficulty levels and bonus prizes.

This review wouldn't be complete without a nod towards the impeccable graphics and nearly equally impressive sound production. Mario and Luigi sport animation that most GBA characters wouldn't dream of. The style of movement and expression is integral to the game's storytelling, and enemy animations are tied in with combat timing. Beanbean Kingdom is a colorful place with

its own organic style, similar and yet distinct from the Mushroom Kingdom. The game features perhaps the best use yet of sprite scaling and rotation on the GBA. The soundtrack contains some great new tunes, all within the established spectrum of Mario music (which is pretty wide these days). There are also numerous remixes of classic songs from games throughout the series, along with several musical cameos that fit right in and will surely stir up hardcore fans. Mario and Luigi are technically mute (they have no text dialogue), but they talk up a storm to the player. The digitized speech is thankfully not reused from other games and, also thankfully, doesn't completely saturate your speakers. Rounding out the package, many of the sound effects are lifted directly from classic Mario games, including the all-important jump and coin sounds.

Mario & Luigi is a remarkably full, wonderful experience that you can play anywhere. It pays loving tribute to its



heritage while offering many new ideas and twists on old ones. It's a long, satisfying handheld adventure that is actually superior to both of its beloved predecessors. In fact, it's one of the best RPGs I've ever played, and that's saying a whole lot. Rare indeed is the game that can bring a perpetual smile to your face and a constant pressure on the gamer part of your brain. This is one such game, an instant classic that belongs in every GBA owner's hands and heart.

Score 🚆

- + Arguably unsurpassed graphics and sound on GBA
- + Intuitive fusion between platforming and RPG gameplay
- + Long, challenging, satisfying quest
- + Mini-games, side-quests, and even Mario Bros. boost lastability

9.5

- _ Control isn't completely intuitive
- _ Waiting for the next game in this series











Nintendo World Report T-Shirts are available to buy over at: <u>ninwr.spreadshirt.com</u>

The various designs feature logos and artwork from two of our great podcasts, Radio Free Nintendo, and Connectivity. Go on and grab yours today!

The original RFN shirt design features "character art" of Jonny, Greg, James, and Lindy, all provided by listener David Ochart. The overall graphic design is by Amanda Albert. The front features all four beloved RFN personalities arranged in the style of the classic "black box" NES packaging; the back says "NintendoWorldReport.com" and "Est. 1999".









NEXT ISSUE



Got some ideas? Or just want to have your say? Then send your mail to:

poweredoff@nintendoworldreport.com