



At the First Annual Rocky Mountain Pinball Showdown in Golden in 2004, contestants of all ages (yes, young people too) flocked to play the old-fashioned arcade game. For twentysomethings, pinball is a very retro, fun game to play these days — even if it costs a small fortune to repair them. [CHRIS HARDY/COURTESY ROCKY MOUNTAIN PINBALL]

# Reliving 8-bit memories

## KNOWING YOUR GAMING ROOTS IS COMMON FOR TODAY'S TWENTYSOMETHINGS

By CASEY FREEMAN  
Colorado Daily Staff Writer

**T**imes used to be much simpler. Before video game gangstas could talk, eat, work out and beat up hookers, Pac-Man could open and close his mouth.

When the Desperate Housewives were still single, people used to hang out in a

tiny underground Boston bar called "Cheers."

Long ago there were no video lottery machines in bars, bowling alleys or arcades. One machine ruled supreme... pinball.

Reliving youth is nothing new. Think of all the bald dudes driving sports cars or moms (or grandmas) racking up plastic surgery bills.

But now, it's time for a dif-

ferent generation to relive their youth. This wasn't a generation of stickball, government cheese or the Red Scare. This generation pretty much wasted its youth on video games and TV.

### EVERY TIME MEGA MAN DIED, A PIECE OF ME DIED TOO

"The original video game generation is getting older and

wants to get back to its roots," says Phil Schlagel, the assistant manager of Rhino Games on 1933 28th St. in Boulder. "A lot of the games were really good."

Schlagel sees twentysomethings in his store all of the time checking through old games. Some of the more popular games and titles that people look for are the original "Final Fantasy" games for the original Nintendo Entertainment System,

and other old role-playing games for the first Playstation and Super Nintendo.

Super Mario and Sonic the Hedgehog also show newcomers to the video game circuit how it's done.

Mario, the overall-wearing plumber featured in hundreds of Nintendo games, remains steadily popular in all his forms, but Mario Kart for SNES and Nintendo 64 are treasures in

the retrogame world.

"We had a Mario Kart for 64 and sold it as soon as we got it," says Josh Barnhill, assistant manager of EBGames, just down the street and around the corner from Rhino Games.

"NES is still one of my favorite systems of all time," says Barnhill. "I'm definitely one of those people (who still

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## RETROTAINMENT

## RETRO: Nostalgia a good thing

A classic pinball machine from the 1960s.



[RETRO, from page B11] favorite systems of all time," says Barnhill. "I'm definitely one of those people (who still plays old video games.)"

Even though video games are more complex now, games are easier to make. Schlager (who takes video game design courses at Westwood College in Denver) thinks there is a problem with the quality with some of the new games.

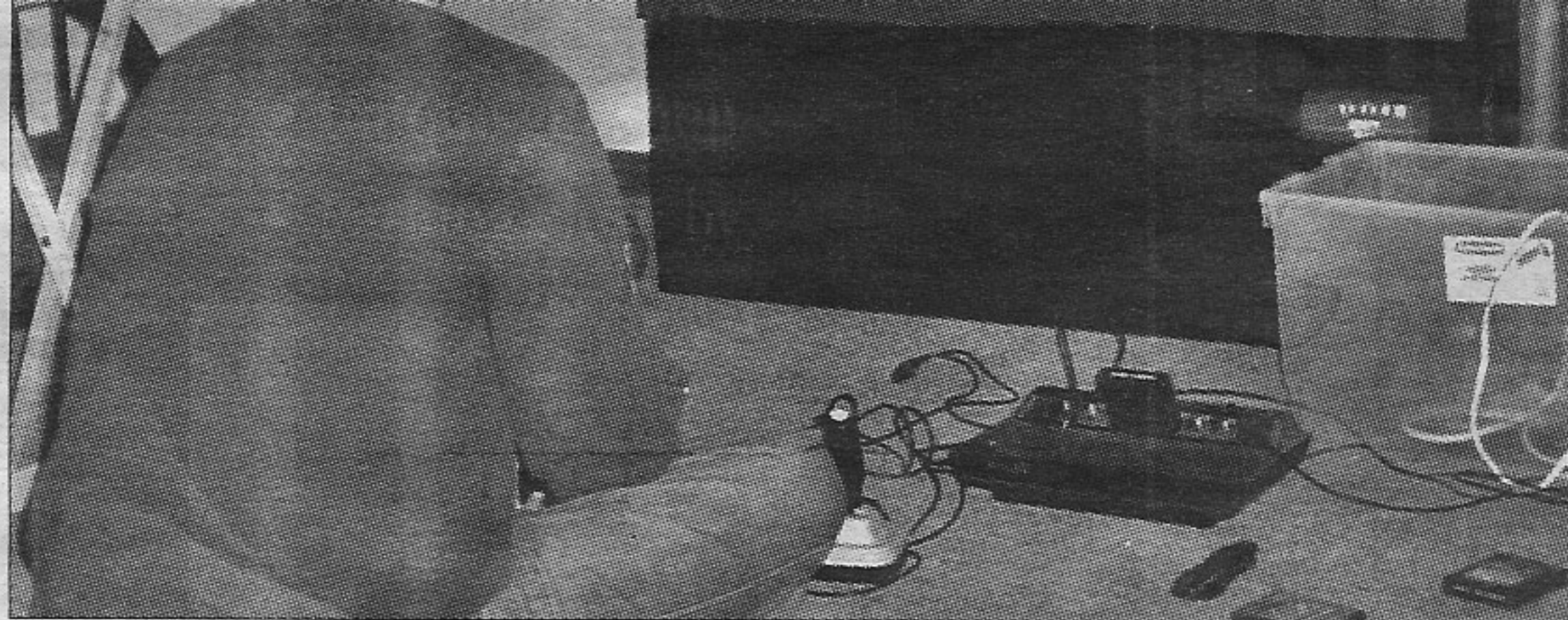
"People know there's a lot of junk out there and if they get an old game, they know they're getting a quality game," says Schlager. "People get bored with new games quicker than old games. When they were kids they sit around playing the same game for hours, so they do the same thing now."

Barnhill says people dust off old video games "because we are constantly bombarded with ridiculously complicated games, that sometimes aren't the best games. Sometimes it's just nice to have a simple game."

But since many of these games are no longer being

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As popular as the newest "Grand Theft Auto," many young people are finding old school Sega Genesis, Super Nintendos or even original Ataris (shown here playing "Missile Command") at online stores like eBay, or find emulators that puts all the games onto a gamer's personal computer.

[ERIN WIGGINS/COLORADO DAILY]

# RETRO: Old TV shows are back

[RETRO, from page B22]

made, demand is high, but supply is becoming increasingly limited. Older systems can be found at both Rhino and EBGames. Many people find Sega Genesis, Super Nintendos or original Ataris at online stores like eBay, or find emulators that puts all the games onto a gamers personal computer.

## BOING, WHOOSH, TILT! PINBALL WIZARDS

Some people used to drop quarter after quarter into slots not to eat ghost, shoot aliens or rescue the princess, but to bang a metal ball against buzzers, flippers and bumpers.

While home video game systems nearly wiped out arcades, pinball's worst enemy was itself.

"(Pinball) is repair intensive. It's a repair nightmare," says Kevin Carroll, owner of Lyons Classic Pinball at in Lyons. "If a pinball machine is broken, it's not fun."

He closes the arcade down two days a week for maintenance. Now he owns one of the only operating pinball arcades in the area, and brings in new and old players from around the globe.

"We're giving it to them again," laughs Carroll. "I knew I would go if there were 35 games in one spot. If you make it, they will come."

Carroll has regulars all around Colorado as well as Kansas, and always has visitors from out of town.

"If people have any business to do in Colorado, they make a special trip," says Carroll, who started Lyons Classic Pinball with his own col-

## WHASSUP

To find some more retrotainment fun, check out these places

- Lyons Classic Pinball  
339-A Main St.  
Lyons, CO (about 15 minutes away from Boulder)  
(303) 823-6100
- The Video Station  
1661 28th St.  
Boulder, CO  
(303) 440-4448
- Rhino Video Games  
1933 28th St.  
Boulder, CO  
(303) 440-8326
- EB Games  
2760 Canyon Ave.  
(303) 440-1282

lection.

While a Playstation 2 or X-Box will burn a hole in your pocket pretty fast, buying an old pinball system can cost you an arm and a leg.

You can find a fixer-upper for about \$500, but working games more than \$1,000. The most expensive game on the market is "Medieval Madness," which costs about \$6,000 to \$8,000.

Understandably, most pinballers don't have games in their houses, but still love to come down and play.

"There's something about standing at the original game with original pinball," says Carroll. "Come down and see for yourself."

While Carroll's arcade is a pinballer's heaven, they don't throw bricks at customers if they ask for video games. Lyons Classic Pinball carries video game classics like Pac-Man, Galaga and Battlezone.

If you really want to show everyone who has the fastest

flipper fingers in the land, go to the tournaments at Lyons Classic Pinball the third Wednesday of every month. The next tournament will be August 17 and starts at 7 p.m. The entry fee is \$5, and the winner wins all the money from the entry fees, which is about \$100 to \$150. The runner-up wins something from the restaurant next door.

## IN THE '80S, ALL YOU NEEDED WAS A SWEET CAR...

Children of the '80s may argue about politics, religion, whether or not people should eat meat, but they will agree that the '80s had the best cartoons.

"Cabbage Patch Kids," "Transformers" and "Gem and the Holograms" have all witnessed a rebirth in toys and cartoons.

"People like watching old TV shows," says Sheri La Pres, co-owner of The Video Station. "Those old shows you watched when you were a kid, they just have something about them."

Sometimes people see how stupid the cartoons actually were after renting and watching shows about talking bears that get bouncy after drinking a special juice or machines that change into robots. But with all the "extracurricular substances" in Boulder, even those can be fun again.

Old live-action shows are also highly desired. The Video Station has thousands of them, from "Mork & Mindy" (sort of shot in Boulder) to "Twin Peaks." Trekkies and Trekkors can find just about any episode of "Star Trek," then argue who was the greatest Enterprise captain.

"We have people checking in on old 'Dallas' and 'Dynasty,'" says La Pres, who says she recently watched an old episode of "Night Gallery" from the 1960s, which still scared her.

Some students will rent hours of episodes and have marathon nights of "X-Files," "The Twilight Zone" or "Buffy the Vampire Slayer." Video Station makes hours and hours of old TV not only fun, but also cheap. TV shows on VHS or DVD are 99 cents on Wednesdays.

"They're fun and entertaining and definitely nostalgic," says La Pres. "People definitely have a place in their hearts for these old shows. It's a phenomenon."

## DIFF'RENT STROKES, FOR DIFFERENT FOLKS

If you spent your youth inside playing video games or watching TV, skip Boulder's trails, outdoor parks and mountain paths.

Whether you want to beat "Contra" without the code, score a multiball or just vege out in front of old cartoons with a giant bowl of sugared cereal, Boulder has plenty of entertainment to tickle your old aging and aching funnybone.

*Editor's Note: Writer Casey Freeman used to run home from elementary school to watch "G.I. Joe" every day. To miss it was to be ridiculed for at least a week on the playground.*