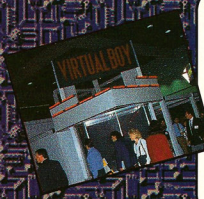


3-D HOUSE OF HORRORS

NINTENDO NEVER RELEASED PHOTOS OF THE GAMES FOR VIRTUAL BOY, BECAUSE THEY SAID IT WAS NECESSARY TO SEE IT IN REAL-LIFE TO GET THE FULL 3-D EFFECT OF THE GAMES. WELL, AFTER VISITING THE VIRTUAL BOY BOOTH WITHIN THE NINTENDO BOOTH (BOOTH'S WITHIN BOOTH'S! WHERE WILL IT ALL END?) I HAVE A CONFESSION TO MAKE: I STILL DON'T GET IT! I LOOKED AT THE GIANT SCREENS THROUGH MY 3-D GOGGLES, I PLANTED MY FACE ON THE VIRTUAL BOY'S VISOR AND PLAYED THE GAMES SILLY, AND NEVER HAD ANY SORT OF LIFE-ALTERING GAMING EXPERIENCE. THIS PRODUCT WILL NO DOUBT BE DIFFICULT TO MARKET, BECAUSE YOU CAN'T SHOW THE GAMES ON TV OR IN PRINT ADS AND HAVE THEM LOOK THE LEAST BIT INTERESTING. IT MAY BE 32-BIT, BUT THE GAMES I SAW LOOKED LIKE LITTLE MORE THAN COPIES OF THE VECTOR ARCADE GAMES OF THE EARLY '80S. I ALSO LEARNED THAT THE STRAP THAT HOLDS THE VIRTUAL BOY TO YOUR FACE WON'T COME WITH THE BASIC SET, BUT WILL BE AVAILABLE ONLY AS AN ACCESSORY. SHEESH! WHAT A BUNCH OF VIRTUAL CHEAPSKATES!



JAGUAR VR TEST DRIVE

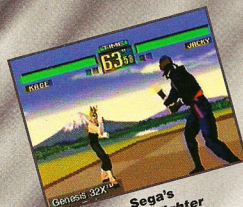
FOLLOWING THE DISAPPOINTMENT OF VIRTUAL BOY, ATARI GAVE ME A CHANCE TO PLAY AROUND WITH REAL VIRTUAL REALITY. I HAPPILY STEPPED UP ONTO A STAGE AND PUT THE RIDICULOUS-LOOKING JAGUAR CYBER-VISOR ON MY HEAD. THE ILLUSION OF REALITY WAS AS GOOD AS COULD BE HOPED WITH EVEN MINOR HEAD MOVEMENTS REGISTERING ON THE VISOR'S SCREEN. MY ONLY COMPLAINT ABOUT THE DOOM-LIKE GAME I PLAYED WAS THAT IT NEVER REQUIRED THE PLAYER TO TAKE FULL ADVANTAGE OF THE HARDWARE'S POTENTIAL BY LOOKING STRAIGHT UP OR STRAIGHT DOWN. THE THING ABOUT VIRTUAL REALITY IS THAT TO PEOPLE ON THE OUTSIDE, YOU LOOK PRETTY DARNED STUPID AS YOU SIT THERE SPINNING AROUND AND BOBBING YOUR HEAD ALL OVER THE PLACE. SO I WAS YELLING THINGS TO MY CO-WORKERS BELOW LIKE, 'WHOOH! I'M IN CYBERSPACE! WHOO! WHOO!' OF COURSE, WHEN I TOOK OFF THE VISOR, MY 'FRIENDS' WERE LONG GONE, AND I FELT LIKE AN IDIOT. STRANGELY ENOUGH, THIS WAS ONLY A HARDWARE DEMONSTRATION. THE GAME I PLAYED WAS RUN ON AN IBM COMPUTER AND NOT THE JAGUAR. BUT IF THE GAMES ON THE JAGUAR END UP LOOKING AS GOOD AS THE ONE I PLAYED, ATARI HAS ONE HECK OF AN INNOVATIVE PRODUCT ON ITS HANDS.



REBEL YELL

I KNOW, I KNOW, REBEL ASSAULT II IS ONLY GOING TO BE AVAILABLE ON COMPUTER PLATFORMS AT FIRST, BUT I COULDN'T RESIST THE CHANCE OF SEEING THE LONG-AWAITED SEQUEL TO REBEL ASSAULT, AND MAYBE EVEN RUBBING ELBOWS WITH THE MAN HIMSELF, GEORGE LUCAS. LUCAS NEVER SHOWED, BUT REBEL ASSAULT II WAS MIND-BLOWING. THE GAME DESIGNERS AT LUCASARTS FILMED PEOPLE WEARING ACTUAL STAR WARS COSTUMES, THEN COMPOSITED THOSE PEOPLE INTO COMPUTER-RENDERED SPACESHIPS. UNLIKE THE SHIPS IN MOST GAMES, LUCASARTS TEXTURE-MAPPED DIRT AND GRIME ONTO THE SHIPS' SURFACES TO MAKE THEM APPEAR DINGED UP LIKE THE MODELS USED IN THE ORIGINAL MOVIES. THE RESULT IS SOMETHING THAT LOOKS LIKE A WHOLE NEW STAR WARS FILM. FOR GEEKS LIKE ME, THAT'S A BIG DEAL. WITHOUT BEING SPECIFIC ABOUT THE DATES OR PLATFORMS, THE LUCASARTS PROMOTIONAL WEBSITES I MET WITH TOLD ME THAT REBEL ASSAULT II WILL EVENTUALLY BE MADE AVAILABLE FOR CONSOLES, JUST LIKE ITS PREDECESSOR WAS.

WHEN E' ENDED, I HEADED FOR HOME AND COLLAPSED. EXHAUSTED AFTER DAYS OF DODGING THE DOZENS OF IRRITATING PROMOTIONAL MIMES HIRED BY VARIOUS COMPANIES. (MEMO TO CLUELESS GAME COMPANIES: EVERYONE HATES MIMES!) MY FINAL ANALYSIS OF THE CONVENTION? CUTTING-EDGE VIDEO GAMES, STAR WARS AND THE CHANCE TO INSULT MIMES. I LOVE THIS JOB.



Sega's
Virtua Fighter



Sega's
Kolibri



Sega's
Wild Woody



Sega's
Wirehead



Sega's Adventures of
Batman & Robin

32X

GABE



E³: VIDEO GAMES AND NOTHING BUT, A SHRINE BUILT TO WORSHIP ELECTRONIC MAYHEM. MECCA FOR MANY A GAMER, AND THE UNDOING OF MANY A MAN'S SANITY. BOY, WAS I LOOKING FORWARD TO IT! UNLIKE THE WINTER CES, I WAS GOING TO BE OVERLOADED WITH INFORMATION BECAUSE 1995 IS THE YEAR THAT IT'S GOING DOWN; THE BIGGEST YEAR EVER IN VIDEO-GAME HISTORY. THE PLAYSTATION, THE SATURN, 3DO'S M2 EXPANSION, NEW SNES AND GENESIS GAMES AHHHH! I HADN'T EVEN SET FOOT INSIDE THE DOOR AND MY BRAIN WAS ALREADY ON OVERLOAD.

VIRTUAL BOMBER

I CHECKED OUT HUDSON SOFT'S NEW VIRTUAL BOY BOMBERMAN TITLE, PANIC BOMBER, AND IT BLEW ME AWAY. IN THIS PUZZLE-TYPE PUZZLER, YOU BATTLE THE MYSTERIOUS MIDNIGHT BOMBERS WHO'D LIKE NOTHING BETTER THAN TO BLOW YOUR BOMBERBUTT TO KINGDOM COME. THE GAME'S ADDICTIVE PLAYABILITY MATCHED WITH THE VIRTUAL BOY'S VERTIGO-INDUCING 3-D EFFECTS COMBINE TO CREATE YET ANOTHER BOMBERMAN CLASSIC.

EARTHWORM JIM 2: GROOVY!

YES, IT REALLY DOES EXIST. WHILE HORDES OF FOLK ARE BREATHELESSLY AWAITING THE ARRIVAL OF DONKEY KONG COUNTRY 2, I'M LOOKING FORWARD TO THE RELEASE OF THIS STELLAR CART. I WAS PRIVILEGED ENOUGH TO PLAY QUITE A FEW LEVELS AT THE SHOW AND WHAT I SAW KNOCKED ME OFF MY FEET. SHINY HAS DONE WHAT EVERYBODY HOPES A VIDEO GAME COMPANY WILL DO WHEN THEY MAKE A SEQUEL: LOOK TO THE ORIGINAL FOR INSPIRATION, BUT WHEN IT COMES TO THE GAME'S EXECUTION, BE BRAVE ENOUGH TO ROCK THE BELLS. THE STAGES I SAW WERE INCREDIBLE! ONE LEVEL HAS JIM RUNNING OVER MOUNTAINS OF PAPERWORK AS GHOSTLY TAX FORMS FLOAT IN AND OUT OF THE BACKGROUND, AND YET ANOTHER IS AN AMAZING FLYING LEVEL WHICH LOOKS LIKE IT WAS LIFTED STRAIGHT FROM PETER PAN. THESE STAGES WERE EVEN COMPLETELY FINISHED AND I'M DROOLING! YOW!

INTERPLAY BUYS SHINY ENTERTAINMENT

DURING E³ INTERPLAY ANNOUNCED THAT IT HAD ACQUIRED SHINY, THE MAKER OF EARTHWORM JIM. WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR SHINY AND INTERPLAY? THEY'LL BE MAKING LOTS OF DOUGH, THAT'S WHAT IT MEANS. WITH THE EARTHWORM JIM ANIMATED TV SERIES DEBUTING THIS FALL ON THE WARNER BROTHERS KIDS NETWORK AND THE IMMINENT RELEASE OF THE COOL EARTHWORM JIM TOYS FROM PLAYMATES, '95 IS TURNING OUT TO BE THE YEAR OF THE WORM.

NEO GEO CD REVISITED

ACCORDING TO SAKI, THIS SYSTEM IS FINALLY GOING TO SHIP IN THE FALL. IT'LL COST YOU SOME BONES, THOUGH: FOR WHAT THEY SAY WILL BE WELL UNDER \$600, YOU'LL GET THE SYSTEM, A CONTROLLER AND A FEW PACK-IN GAMES. WITH APPROXIMATELY 70 TITLES AVAILABLE AT LAUNCH, A DEDICATED FAN BASE AND A MUCH LOWER SOFTWARE PRICE THAN THE OLD NEO GEO SYSTEM, I'LL BET THAT SAKKAN HOLD ITS OWN. THE NEO GEO CD HAS GAMES THAT ARE FUN TO PLAY, AND THAT'S ALL I CARE ABOUT. IF YOU HAD BEEN THERE, YOU STILL WOULDN'T HAVE

MAN, YOU'RE A CHARACTER

ONE OF THE STRANGEST THINGS ABOUT SOFTWARE EXPOS IS THE ABUNDANCE OF DRESSED-UP FREAKS IN ATTENDANCE. THESE PEOPLE ARE HIRED BY COMPANIES TO DRESS UP AS THEIR SIGNATURE CHARACTERS FOR THREE DAYS AND ACT LIKE THEY REALLY ENJOY FRANSING AROUND IN A HELLISHLY HOT COSTUME. THERE WERE MIMES, SPACE ALIENS, BIG BUGS, EVEL KNIEVEL AND EVEN JULIUS CAESAR. SOME GUYS, LIKE THE DUDE DRESSED UP AS WALDO, HAVE GOT MADE; HE'S SUPPOSED TO WANDER AROUND, FOR OTHERS, E³ MUST HAVE SEEMED LIKE A NEVER-ENDING ORDEAL. I HAD TO RESIST THE URGE TO HASSLE THE EYE-LESS WALKING RED PYRAMID FROM THE 3DO GAME ICEBREAKER, BECAUSE IT WAS BEING LED AROUND BY A WHITE PYRAMID AND I WAS AFRAID THAT THE WHITE PYRAMID WOULD PERFORM SOME JUDO ON ME. SOME COMPANIES HAVE A SET-UP IN WHICH THEY ENCOURAGE YOU TO SIT DOWN WITH THEIR CHARACTER WHILE THEY TAKE A POLAROID OF YOU. MY FAVORITE CHARACTERS WERE GAMETEK'S BALDIES, NIDGETS DRESSED UP IN FOAM HEADS. THEY WERE FORBIDDEN TO SPEAK, BUT ONE OF THEM BROKE THE SILENCE WHEN SHE ASKED ME, 'WERENT YOU HERE YESTERDAY?' AS I SAT DOWN FOR ANOTHER PICTURE, YES INDEED, I SURE NUFF WAS

BELIEVED IT. THREE DAYS OF SEEING NEW VIDEO GAMES, PLAYING NEW VIDEO GAMES AND A LOT OF WALKING AROUND. THE SCENT OF COMPETITION WAS HEAVY IN THE AIR AT E³ BUT FOR GAMERS LIKE YOU AND ME, IT LOOKS LIKE 1995 IS GOING TO BE TOTAL PARADISE. THE BOMBERMAN SAGA CONTINUES...

PLAYSTATION



Sony's
Demolition Derby



Virgin's Spot Goes to
Hollywood



Psygnosis'
Wipeout



Imagesoft's
Warhawk



Psygnosis'
Lemmings 3D



Psygnosis'
Myst