

GX Internal Newsletter

new @  **GAMERS.COM**

name - dept - handle/icq

Total GX: >74

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Many Reports from Joel Downs:

Development Update

Development is chugging along. With the addition of Andrew, Ricardo, and Norman, we're twelve strong now. Hiring continues, as does planning. Training is getting interesting as we work with some new technologies that seem very promising and are a huge improvement over the last version of the site. No offense, Mr. Gates.

The Endearing Berkeley Office

We now have a trash dumpster, so the office is no longer littered with large, black trash bags. Rich "Ethel" Tang makes a cameo appearance on occasion, but is as elusive, abusive, and enigmatic as ever. I replaced the burned-out light bulb in the bathroom, and it started to smell better almost immediately afterwards. The sounds of K-Pop and Yo Yo Ma fill the room at night, while during the day headphones are the norm. Mikey and I have made a couple of pilgrimages to visit the pool table, but we miss her dearly. You guys get a Ferrari in your lobby, but we have a broken, peach-colored La-Z-Boy loveseat and a pair of mushy tangelos – let's see you top that.

Accounting

We still have money in the bank and money coming in. 'nuff said.

March 2000:

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GX Poll: *After 6 Activities*

GX Classifieds

Jim Burns' War Stories

Sven's Weird Games: *Battle Cattle*

The GX Library - Round 2

GX Profile: Sandy Brundage

Terence's Top Tens

Capcom Fighting Tournament #1

GX Profile: Adam Traver

Sam & Sandy on *Video Wars*

Devin's Soul Windows

GX Profile: Justin Hall

CardFighters Clash Standings

Kenn Hwang Rocks the Production Report:

The phrase "chugging along" has thankfully been permanently repealed from the vocabulary of the Production/Editorial crew. With the move to the new office, we are now "full steam ahead" and will continue to be so until it becomes as clichéd a joke as "chugging along."

In regards to progress, each of our platforms are well-underway and are easily projecting to hit their April 3rd deadlines of coverage for top games. Pats on the back to all, and keep up the good work!

We'd like to take the opportunity to welcome Che Chow and Che Chang to the Prod/Edit departments. Che is coming on as Dreamcast/Playstation Editor (we'll decide which after a few games of Soul Calibur and DOA2), and Che will be our new PC Strategy Associate Producer. After a long and grueling tour of duty under Rik, Gabe has risen from his cocoon and has now metamorphosized into a full-fledged Producer, complete with bright colors and dainty wings (OK I'm lying about the bright colors) – he'll be taking responsibility for the whole of PlayStation (1).

Congrats also go out to Devin Passage, who has fled from the clutches of Team Database and will be building out our new Arcade platform, and Stephen Kleckner, who despite losing his hard drive in the move to the new office, will be helping to flesh out the Linux Games platform in addition to continuing work on a file serving solution.

Honorable mention goes to Sam Parker, who also lost his hard drive but didn't get anything out of it.

Inquiries: Justin "Fusty" Hall - justin@gamers.com

Help & Attitude:

Terence "Nemesis" Wong & Sam "Ren" Parker

Photos:

Scott "Gruuv" Richardson & Nat "Binky" Baldwin

Proofreading: Nat "Binky" Baldwin

More Reports

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The FiringSquad Report by James:

FiringSquad's been pretty busy, we're working hard on having a strong finish this month. I have to put up an article now... so I'll have a longer update when I can spare the time.

Hank's Hamster Hoedown:

The hamsters have been redistributed to their rightful caretakers after a weekend long reunion. As you may have noticed (or smelled), all the hamster cages were sitting together along one of the walls of the production side of the room. Big thanks to Tammy, who saved the hamsters from the possibility of having to be transported in a Norcal box or keyboard bags. Brandon's hamster is enjoying the freedom of having twice the desk area to explore (his and Sam Z's) as well as being able to experience higher flight altitudes, since the ceilings in this building are significantly higher than the other one. Sometimes, one may mistake Brandon's hamster being tossed around in the air for a flying squirrel. The constant 24 hours of light have confused the bejeezus out of my two hamsters, Britney Jean and Eggroll. They seem to sleep for 48 hours then come out and play for 24 hours straight.

A new addition to the hamster lifestyle has been the workout wheel with odometer. Tiff (Chris' gf) showed us the long rumored but never previously discovered site with the product at Petsmart.com, where, for the low low price of \$12.99, the hamsters are now blessed with not only a wheel with digital odometer, but also a calendar-style chart where you can record their progress. The wheel measures the distance by means of two tiny magnets on opposite ends of the wheel. Thus every time the wheel spins halfway around, it clocks 1 foot onto the resettable digital counter. As far as the effects these little magnets may have in scrambling the brain cells of the little critters, that is yet to be determined. The first night, Tuesday night, (nocturnal animals), my hamsters clocked 4,925 feet, equivalent to about .93 miles. On Wednesday night, they clocked in a mind boggling 17,625 feet, equivalent to about 3.33 miles. Apparently this wore them out tremendously, as they clocked 0 feet Thursday night and are still asleep. Strange creatures. Bob's hamster has yet to take advantage of his workout wheel, so there will be more updates and statistics once his very "laid back" hamster starts running.

Operations Update by James "Thump" Mecham:

it's pretty much the same as last time. This time add moving offices to the pot...

David, GX-Hoagy presents The state of Editorial:

I believe the appropriate phrase is "chugging along," yes? We're in the process of hiring the very finest Producers and Editors in the console/PC/RPG/running-about-woods-waving-rubber-weaponry departments. Additionally, we're also pillaging from our own Production teams. To this end, a polite ripple of applause for Sam Parker is in order, as he's about to embark on a PC news-based gig, along with Sandy – just as soon as we've cloned replacements.

A man with a rather interesting beard came in to interview for a Copy Editor position, and although he'd be sitting in the "facial hair corner" of the building (anyone got any Rogaine for my chin?), his salary requirements was enough to cripple the economy of a small South American country. Instead, I re-advertised, and I'm currently wading through responses. Additionally, if anyone knows of a candidate who can right proper, let me know.

As the editorial style guide begins a ponderous trek through "tweak city," I'm pleased to announce the arrival of, well, me. I'm from incite Video Gaming. Don't hold that against me. Then the hordes of Ziff descended at around the same time, and I'm pleased to announce that the not inconsiderable talents of industry legends Dan "Shoe" Hsu (EGM), John "off to Japan" Ricciardi (Expert Gamer), and Che "just got here" Chou (EGM) are now available for your delight and delectation. On behalf of all the ex-magazine boys, many thanks for making us feel so welcome, and we look forward to working with everyone to make Gamers.com a multi-faceted behemoth of gaming.

Finally, the multi-talented and multi-hued Justin was initially all a-smiles, punching his color-coordinated fist high into the sky to exclaim his interest about his new role as Features Editor, and good for him, I say. Expect amusing content-driven prose with oodles of exciting media clips to keep even the most attention-deficient reader enthralled. And just as soon as a guy who can update information from one of the four Nintendo sites is found, Nat will join Mr. Hall. If you'd like to see a game feature (ideally with more than just screens and text), let Justin know, and he'll growl like a caged dingo as he's now realized just how much work the job entails.

Right, I'm off to update more Fighting Fantasy Gamebook links... Until next time.

GX Poll:

Activities:

What's your favorite activity for after 6?

Sunny/Crazy Toon:

Quack and hang out with my g/f

SamParker/Ren:

Ragging on Che's EverCrack habit.

Binky: selling drugs to schoolchildren

Tammy: Are we talking things to do after 6

(at work or after)? um, watch people play quake...that is so great! The excitement and teamwork between all the employees is great! This is what we are all about!

Hank/Ever: dyslexic foosball!! (since the poles/players were installed backwards)

Jen/Sp1nn3r: I normally like to sit in 8 miles of backed up traffic trying to make my way to the Bay Bridge...this 8 mile journey takes about 30 minutes, btw!!!!

GX-monkey: DDR

GX-Assassin: sleeping

Polling: Sam "Ren" Parker

Brody/Luxor: UO, I after all have a town to run.

Trish/Dish: Watching the Simpsons

Anj: MORE WORK=) AND WORK-OUT.....

Justin/Fusty: I like to stay working or goofing off until 7.35pm, then leave and drive like hell to get to Berkeley Bowl before closing at 8pm. I buy some groceries and I go home and cook with my girl, drinking wine and listening to music. Then we watch a movie or eat the food in front of our computers.

CheSpaceMan: Jogging With My Neo Geo Pocket Color

David/Hoagy: Quake 3 (actually, UT)

D5-Kenn: Dinner!

Alice: hmmm....I can't remember.

Jim/Grognard: After 6?: getting home before 8:00PM :-)

Billis: playing Q3 and EQ

Nao/Peon: there's stuff to do besides work?

Gabe: dinner

JoelWemmick: Playing pool badly, and playing Super Sprint well

Dan/Shoe: pooping

Allan/SvenOgre: It's far too rude to mention in this newsletter. A close second would be role-playing games like AD&D or Torg, and of course watching my daughter chase the cats. Or sending an ICQ to Joel that just says "Hi."

JamesYu: Most of FS is still working after 6, but we're known to sneak in a few Q3 CTF matches after hours.

Stephen/ZhiZi: Ponder on how much longer Che is going to be playing EQ.

Sarju/Guido: i dont think my response would be appropriate :)

Terence/Nemesis: I would like to contemplate the the existence of being, pondering the meta-state of conscience, wondering why we are.

But I usually end up playing quake.

Sandy/

AngelWithThorns: Grok.

Blair/Houston: usually driving home and smoking, or QUake 3

Scott/Gruuv: do you really want to know...? (he..he..)

James/Thump: John/mad :7. Strange question. Time of day has nothing to do with my favorite activity. But in any case, I probably shouldn't discuss my favorite activity in the newsletter; it might embarrass my wife.

Either that, or 'smoke a cigarette and go to sleep' :p

Devin/DarkFarmer: wander around the office.

Tim: basketball, as the weather gets better =)

GX CLASSIFIEDS

I'm selling a 1998 Yamaha Virago XV1100K(C) Motorcycle. Red/maroon color with extras. \$5000. - Rik

Hey - let's call Terence "Mr. T" cuz he's tough and it's his first initial. - Justin

Crazy John Joh is having a Sale Sale Sale! Runaway Bride DVD NEW! \$13

Harry Connick Jr. Star Turtle - Opened CD \$3
Snorlax Pokemon Stuffed Animal \$6
Sengoku Turb for Import Dreamcast Used \$25

Trade: Willing to part with barely used 25oz bottle of Herbal Essences Extra Body Shampoo for Fine Hair or Limp Hair AND 25oz bottle of Herbal Essences Extra Body Conditioner for Fine Hair or Limp Hair for a full size Multi-ball Pinball machine or Twix.
Jenifer

Terence: Slightly used pager, \$10!

Previous issues of the newsletter are available on the intranet as PDF files:

<http://www.internal.gamers.com/>

War Stories

By GX-Grognard

Hello for those of you who do not know me yet, my name is Jim Burns and I'm the wargames producer here at Gamers.com. Justin has asked me if I would contribute to the newsletter and I thought I'd give it a whirl.

For those of you unfamiliar with my site moniker (Grognard) I want to assure you it has nothing to do with fancy ales or rare beers. Grognard is a word taken from the French that was used to describe the soldiers of Napoleons 'Old Guard Corps' in the early 1800's. It can be translated to mean either veteran soldier or grumbler. Grumbler has become the more common translation over the last hundred years or so.

Board wargamers are well known for their rules arguments over a game table and early in the hobby's inception the term grognard was applied to those serious wargamers that spent way to much time learning the different rules systems and debating their meanings. I unfortunately graduated from a simple hobbyist to a grognard about 15 years ago when I decided to found a wargaming hobby club in San Francisco. I haven't looked back and have been very active in the hobby since then.

I have given considerable thought to just what it is I can contribute to the news letter and my original idea was to focus on a good board wargaming system each month, hence the title 'War Stories'. After taking a second look around the office I realized that most of you are more into action games than historical ones and you would probably get bored with my dry commentary rather quickly. Sooo after reading the title again I thought that perhaps a good war story from when I was an Oakland police officer would be more appropriate each month even if it is unrelated to Gamers.com.

The one catch is I need everyone's help. I feel more than a little self-conscious when telling war stories, and most are buried deep in the old cranium. I'm getting a little long in the tooth and a few gray hairs are showing in the beard, not to mention CRS (can't remember s**) is also starting to set in. So I would ask that if you like the idea of me doing a regular column each month, that you would submit questions to me at jim.burns@gamers.com about anything that interests you about the job that you'd like to hear about. That way I can read through your questions and perhaps a good story will shake loose from the cobwebs. Also in deference to the ladies in the office I'd like to keep the more extreme stuff out of the newsletter, so don't ask for descriptions of internal organs and such. ;-)

This month's question came from James Li. While a

group of us were talking, James asked "*so what's it like to be a cop anyway?*". That was a tough one not easily answered and I'm afraid I very rudely failed to respond (sorry James).

I'm sure everyone has heard the tired old phrase "police work is long periods of boredom interrupted by brief moments of sheer terror". This is sort of a cop-out (pun intended) that gets officers off the hook since the question is very difficult to answer when speaking to someone who isn't an officer.

The truth of the matter is police work is very interesting, challenging and fun, if you're the right person for the job. Also there are moments of sheer terror, even for a seasoned veteran like myself. The story that comes to mind when I try to explain the term 'sheer terror' concerns a murder that occurred in West Oakland when I was working district one. At this point in my career I had been around for about 5-6 years I would guess, so this made me an old timer on the streets in Oakland.

Markus Brown was a 16-year-old drug dealer that I had had many dealings with in the area around Cypress Village (the housing projects near the old freeway that collapsed in the earthquake). He sold drugs in front of the liquor store on Cypress Blvd., and I was always chasing him through the yards. Because he was a juvenile he was always released on pro-

bation to one relative or another, and never served any real time for all the arrests I and others made on him.

Well inevitably Markus shot and killed someone at the liquor store point blank by putting the gun to the victim's eye. I was the first officer on scene and saw one of my local informants so I grabbed them up and got good info on who had done the shooting (very rare in Oakland). Homicide had an arrest warrant out for Markus the next day and we started pressing our informants to dig up information on his whereabouts.

Late that night I was contacted by one of my informants and found out where Markus was staying. The informant also told us that Markus had an Uzi and was determined to shoot it out with police. He had done the murder with a pistol, so the fact he went and got an Uzi gave credibility to the informants warning.

I got a bunch of units together from the squad and we went to the house with a warrant and made entry. After an intensive search we were about to leave when we heard Markus moving in the ceiling. We found the entrance in a closet roof, and suddenly we all realized someone was going to have to go through first (Markus didn't respond to repeated orders to give up).

"The informant also told us that Markus had an Uzi and was determined to shoot it out with police..."

War Stories *Continued*

Up to this point the entire investigation had been fun and interesting and everything had been falling into place. Since this was pretty much my baby from the start, I realized I couldn't let someone else go first. The responsibility of them getting shot or killed was more than I was willing to deal with, so I faced the fact I was going to have to stick my head through the hole and expose myself to possible gunfire. I would need both hands to pull myself through, so I wouldn't even have a gun in hand for the critical few seconds it would take me to climb up.

This is the sheer terror part of the job, everything natural to human instinct is screaming at you not to do this thing. The blood is roaring in your ears and you develop extreme tunnel vision, almost to the point of blacking out you vision completely. Having been on the job for quite some time, I recognized these symptoms almost as soon as they started to set in. To overcome this almost paralyzing fear I immediately stopped thinking about it by filling my head with thoughts of small tactical issues. Things like where to put my gun, should I turn my flashlight on or off when I tossed it into the crawlspace ahead of me. If it's on will it silhouette me to the suspect and give him a good target, if it's off will I be unable to see him in time to respond to a threat.

This is the only way to overcome your fears and do the job. It is also the deciding factor on whether or not you are right for the job. If you fail to overcome your fears the first time you are truly terrified, chances are it will be harder the next time it happens until you reach the point of being unable to function on the job at all.

Anyway back to Markus. While going over the hundreds of tactical details I climbed into the crawl space as fast as possible expecting to be met by automatic gunfire. To my utter delight Markus was gone. I know I know, cops are supposed to want to catch the bad guys, but my over-riding concern at that moment was not to be ventilated with 10-20 bullet holes. Markus had kicked out a vent window and crawled outside onto the roof. He was able to evade the perimeter officers and escaped.

My informant told us he was in a motel in East Oakland the next day, so we crashed his room and arrested him while he was watching Dynasty (some tough guy huh?). I do not remember how much jail time he got, but I'm sure he's out by now.

Well that's the first one, let me know what you think. Do you like it, hate it, feel it's out of place and shouldn't be in the newsletter? I'll continue doing these as long as everyone sends in questions to help jog the old gray matter and expresses an interest in hearing them.

Later,
Jim

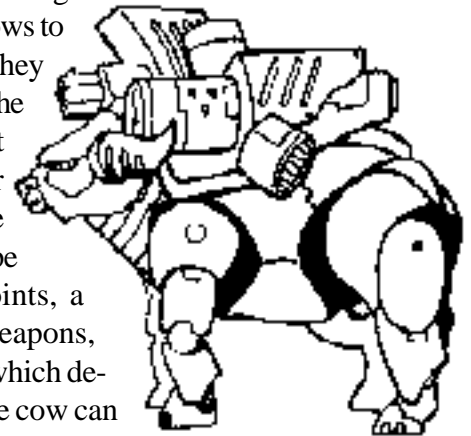
Sven the Ogre's: WEIRD GAMES

B a t t l e C a t t l e

"Battle Cattle" by Wingnut Games - In the future, the average citizen has grown tired of traditional sports. No one wants to watch another football game or tennis match. Instead, everyone has become obsessed with watching heavily armed cows go at it in a gladiatorial fight to the death. These high-stakes combats are vicious bloodbaths; the winner gets repaired and upgraded -- the losers are ground chuck.

A humorous miniatures combat game is a rare thing, being both difficult to create and hard to sell. Battle Cattle triumphantly succeeded at both tasks, having sold out of all three massive print runs, ensuring Wingnut Games' continued existence. Sure, players had to go

buy their own plastic cows to use in battle, but when they get to use weapons like the "Mad Cow Disease Dart Gun" and "Anthrax Air Raid," no one minded the extra expense. Each type of cow has health points, a speed rating, armor, weapons, and a "tipping" value, which determines how easily the cow can be tipped over. While out of print



for now, copies of Battle Cattle aren't hard to find, and will only set you back about \$8.

The game has been so popular, Wingnut is working on the following expansions:

- Battle Cattle 2nd Edition: Land, Sea & Air
- Battle Cattle: The Quest for the Holy Pail
- Battle Cattle: Cows in Space
- Battle Cattle: The Masquerade

Ex Libris by Justin "Fusty" Hall

The library has moved along with the office - now you'll find the GX books on the white shelves near the white couch and the yellow chairs with Dreamcast swirls.

Please feel free to reference the books and even take them to read. Please return them to the shelf once you're done. And keep track of "idle time" with these books - if you haven't cracked the cover in a week, it's time to reshelve it.

Here are the latest additions to the GX Library:

Computers As Theatre by Brenda Laurel

Pretty highbrow examination of the way we interact with computers with an eye towards the future of computer-human interaction. Written in the 1980s, she presages things like advanced VR and the worlds of Quake 3. Laurel was a part of the Atari Systems Research Laboratory, a short lived outcome of the success of Atari in the console games business; they studied future technologies and digital storytelling. There's some of that here, between the references to greek dudes and geometric diagrams of story-arc. Note: that is a picture of her on the cover, lookin' kinda wacky!

The Art of Human Computer Interface Design edited by Brenda Laurel

This giant tome contains essays by and interviews with major thinkers in the realm of interface design. While the book is a bit dated, being from 1990, you'll find a lot of computer interface design fundamentals here. The essay/interview format makes for some good quick education chunks.

Digital Dreams: The Work of the Sony Design Center by Paul Kunkel

Consumer electronics pornography. Beautiful photos of beautiful products. A history of Sony design in pictures and text. The section on the PlayStation includes a bunch of the PlayStation logos that were considered and abandoned. Covers up through the recent products, including the memory stick technology. If it's not the library, John Joh has it.

Growing Up Digital: The Rise of the Net Generation by Dan Tapscott

From Amazon.com: "Don Tapscott, author of *The Digital Economy*, turns his attention to the way young people—surrounded by high-tech toys and tools from birth—will likely affect the future. In *Growing Up Digital: The Rise of the Net Generation*, Tapscott parlays some 300 interviews into predictions on how today's 2- to 22-year-olds might reshape society. His observations about this enormously influential population, which will total 88 million in North America alone by the year 2000, range from the kind of employees they may eventually be to how they could be reached by marketers." This book has won praises for turning a studied eye on the digital literacy of young people and you might hear it mentioned at some game conferences. Useful data for the people who sell

and tell stories to young minds.

Sony: The Private Life by John Nathan

Fantastic articulate biography of Sony. The author had incredible access to very high level people at Sony, accordingly, the stories behind new product launches and design decisions are peppered with the dense stuff of relationships and commentary from Sony people on the differences between American and Japanese ways of doing business. Sony is a major company in the games field (the launch of the PlayStation is in here), but besides that there are fascinating stories of how they created the market for personal listening devices - Walkmen were to be called "Sound Around" in the US and other such fascinating trivia of our times. It's deep too.

According to Hoyle: Official Rules of More Than 200 Popular Games of Skill and Chance With Expert Advice on Winning Play

"Whether you play card games, dice games, parlor games, word games, chess, checker, backgammon, or solitaire games, here is a comprehensive, up-to-date book with the complete rules of your favorite games of skill and chance." sez Charles H. Goren on Amazon.com.

Chess for Dummies

Nat received this book from his work with FiringSquad, he donated it to the GX Library recently. Contains basics as well as deep strategy for the game of "Chess," an old turn-based strategy board game with pieces mirroring Medieval military and government units, and it has checkered squares and stuff.

Understanding Comics by Scott McCloud

A seminal modern work of visual literacy. McCloud breaks down the visual language of comic books and in so doing describes the shape of storytelling when you bring graphics and text together. Kinda like a lot of PC adventure/role-playing games, you end up reading a novel on screen. Wish those guys would read this book and dress up their words a little bit! McCloud is an accomplished comic book style illustrator, and in this book he demonstrates a ready grasp of some of the deeper scientific and cultural properties of visual perception.

Game Developers 2000 Conference Proceedings

Big as a phone book and perhaps about as useful to read? Actually if you're looking for some very niche content on the fabrication of games, you might be well advised by the lectures and seminars contained herein. Looks like most people who did seminars submitted papers on their topics, so if you missed out or slept through most of GDC, we've got oodles of text to compensate for you.

Besides these books, expect more titles in the coming weeks. If you can think of a book we might have missed, please suggest it to Justin. Ex Libris, written in the front of many of these books means "From the Books" or "From the Library" BTW. *Note: Thanks to Tammy for her continuing help gathering these books.*

GX Profile: Sandy Brundage

ICQ: AngelWithThorns / 44893563

DOB: September 2

What do you do at GX?

I'm the producer for PC Adventure and Interactive Fiction, and Web MUDs & Role-playing.

What do you do when you're not at the office?

Read anything I can get my hands on, cook, look for odd nooks and crannies around the city, design computer games. Roleplay. Sleep. Write. Paint. Play the flute. Practice karate.

Tell about your involvement in computer game design.

Right now I'm co-writing an adventure game called 'The Palace of Amnesia' for Cyberium, a company in Wales. It's a challenge, partly because the rest of the team is in England- so we can't brainstorm easily- and partly because there are all these wonderful ideas floating in the ether that need concrete shapes and sometimes they resist definition tooth and claw.

Ever think of starting up a GX karate class? What would you tell people to encourage them to join in on karate?

There's no room at the new office, unless we use the top of the pool table! I've taught karate for several years and it's something that will always be a big part of my life. The mental discipline, perhaps even more than the physical, pays off in surprising ways. And it's a hell of a lot of fun.

If this company makes you a millionaire, what would you do next?

Keep writing.

What was the last book you read?

"Titus Groan", from the Gormenghast trilogy by Mervyn Peake.

How would you describe yourself as a reader?

Eclectic.

What's your all time favorite game and why?

The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy, an old Infocom text game by Douglas Adams. I like the twisted sense of humor involved with playing a game that lies to you and gives you a manic-depressive robot as a sidekick.

If we spend over 10 hours a day with you, what should we know about you?

I like to play as much as I like to work.

Where are you from?

All over — my family moved about once a year around Europe and the Middle East; this is the 35th place I've lived.

Wow, did you get to appreciate those foreign lands your parents moved you through? Learn any languages or see exotic locales you'd like to tell us about?

It was a crash course in culture and language whenever we moved, since we weren't living on a military base. I've picked up Serbo-Croatian from my mother's family, and a smattering of German, Turkish, Arabic, Spanish and Pig Latin.

Home to me is Bosnia, which is my mother's home country. Yugoslavia was like something out of European fairy tale. Dubrovnik was a seaside city, for instance, with a huge castle rising against the rocky shoreline, lit with torches at night. In the winter you smell wood fires everywhere. My mother's family lives in a tiny town where the big weekend activity was the young people dressing up as if going to a prom, and strolling along the streets, girls on one side, boys on the other.

How did you come to be in Berkeley?

It's all Terence's fault.

What is this nefarious plot Terence devised to bring you into the Gamers fold?

'Don't take "No" for an answer.'

When is your birthday?

June 26, '71.

When did you come to work at GX?

I started working off-site in August.

What was it like working long hours for GX off-site?

Not too different from working long hours at the office! Except I got to wear my pajamas to work.

You recently moved out here from.... What do you like about the Bay Area? Is there anything you miss about your old place?

Alabama. I miss the Italian restaurant in Auburn- it had a two-story plate glass window overlooking main street, where all the trees had tiny white lights woven into their branches. As for the Bay Area... I love smelling the ocean from my balcony.

Why did you come to work at GX?

The atmosphere and the people.

Where is your favourite place to eat near the office?

The lounge.



Terence's Top Tens



Top 10 questions asked of Gamers.com employees.

10. Is it like Gamespot?
9. What's the URL?
8. So you play games all day?
7. Why did you mess up my message board?
6. What games have you made?
5. Can I play games on your site?
4. Where are the warez?
3. EY3W177 HAX0R JOUR S1G4T
2. Do you know Thresh?
1. So you make games?

Top 10 phrases heard in the office:

10. Is Justin color blind?
9. stage1 is down.
8. Close the damn blinds!
7. I don't believe you watch wrestling.
6. 99% done...
5. Don't walk over the dividers!
4. Is it 6 yet?
3. Is lunch here yet?
2. Che stop playing Everquest!
1. When's the q3ctf tourney starting?

Top 10 reasons to never leave the office:

10. More caffeine than Columbia.
9. Free soda.
8. Great view of an empty lot behind the building.
7. I337 yellow walls
6. Arcade games in the lobby.
5. More k-pop than Korea.
4. Bullet proof conference room.
3. No showers! uh....
2. Home of the largest Britney shrine in the known universe.
1. Outside the office is Richmond.

Top 10 features of the new desks:

10. The panels allow you to hang pictures of the person across from you so you can throw darts at it
9. Extra desk space = bigger Britney shrine!
8. 3 network jacks means 2 more warez servers.
7. Every other desk is shaped for left-handed people.
6. The white boards are just far enough so you can't reach them.
5. Less storage space = less garbage at your desk.
4. You can stare at that special someone diagonally across from you.
3. It's much harder to glance at a person's monitor while you walk by (easier to hid the fact that you're reading OldManMurray)
2. The shower stall-like panels remind you to take a shower.
1. Electra I337 phones.

do you have to use that ugly ass picture everytime
i write something for the newsletter?

Capcom Fighting Tournament #1

As most of you already know, I have had a deep, dark desire to hold a tournament off of the fighting machine in our "pleasure boudoir" that is located near the "unpopular kitchen" and the new "1 car garage". I can already feel the "This sounds keen hairy weirdo. Tell me more" rolling off of your tongues as you read this. So I will cut right to what I need from you.

I need to know what game everyone wants to play. The choices are....

- Super Street Fighter 2 X (Turbo in the US)
- Street Fighter Alpha 3
- Vampire Savior (Darkstalkers 3)
- Street Fighter 3: Second Impact
- Marvel vs. Capcom

I know some people want World Warrior or Hyper Fighting, but World Warrior doesn't make for fun tournament material when everyone knows what they were doing. Maybe back when we were mashing the stick forever trying to figure out how the cool Asian kid

pulled off "the fireball thingy", but past that it isn't very fun. I hate to break it to you, but the day I got my World Warrior board was the day I learned "nostalgia" was the name of a 2 dollar whore with cold hands that steals your wallet while you're asleep

No Hyper Fighting because I don't own the board yet. Double or single elimination and bracket details depend on how many people sign up. I'm thinking of an entry fee somewhere around 2-3 dollars. The only reason for the entry fee is so that the thing becomes somewhat interesting. Otherwise we are just standing around trying to find a good reason to play Street Fighter. Che automatically wins 3 months worth of Ultima Online time paid for by me just for entering.

Date and time depend on the kind of response I get and whether the machine is in FULL operational condition. I am tempted to buy brand new sticks, buttons, and switches for the event if I get a good turn out.

Contact Stephen "ZhiZi" Kleckner if you got the skillz

Where are you from?

I've been a resident of the Bay Area since I was born. I live in Dublin right now.

How did you come to be in Berkeley/Richmond Area?

Matt suckered me into a job here. I had to accept... programming is what I love.

When is your birthday?

October 24th, 1981. That's right kids, I just became legal a few months ago.

What did you do before you started working here?

I worked at a place called Microdental Laboratories out in Dublin (great commute). Basically, we made teeth for dentists. When you go in to the dentist to get a crown, inlay, or denture, the dentist would send an RX to Microdental, and we would make it. Of course I didn't actually make the teeth, because I was too busy in customer service. Oh well.

Did you get to keep any teeth from Microdental?

Well we charged doctors about \$150 per tooth (some were \$200+) and it took about a week to make each tooth, so they kept them pretty secure. The only teeth we received were from our Christmas parties (they were white chocolate).

Do you have any particular opinions of dentists after working there?

You learn which ones are good and which aren't by their RX's. If they send a tooth back for an adjustment and are livid, you remember their name in the future. Most doctors were very nice, however. Some even gave us gifts.

What did you do in customer service there?

I was in receiving and data entry. Receiving would take the cases as they came from the couriers, read the RX, and flag them for their appropriate teams. Data entry would then take the cases and enter them in the computer. The cases proceeded throughout the lab after that.

When did you come to work at gx?

February 17th, 2000.

Why did you come to work at gx?

I heard there were free sodas. I used to pay \$.65 for a can of Dr. Pepper. That and the fact that I knew a lot of people who work here and it felt like a comfortable environment.

What about this company makes it a comfortable environment?

Most everyone is my age and they're all friendly. At Microdental, we had people who were very cold and just did their job without any interruptions. It feels more relaxed at Gamers.

What do you do at gx?

I'm doing programming for the "legacy" site that we're going to have up and running for E3.

GX Profile: Adam Traver

ICQ: GX-monkey / 61456621

DOB: October 24th, 1981

How did you learn programming?

I started with BASIC about 6 years ago I guess. Then in school I enrolled in a Pascal class with my brother which was really fun. Then I learned C on my own and I've been learning more languages since then.

What is the best feature of the new gamers.com site?

Why the new admin interface! That and profile_show.

What is profile_show?

It's the first project I did when I came to Gamers. It's just the little stupid interface that pops up when you click on a user's icon in the "Users Online" link.

Where is your favorite place to eat near the office?

I usually just get whatever food we're having for lunch and then proceed to let it sit on my desk, picking at it every now and then. I usually finish my lunch at around 6 PM.

What do you do when you're not at the office?

I play EverQuest and do things for my other company, thirty4 interactive.

What is thirty4 interactive?

thirty4 is a company that my brother, three of my friends and I just started. We finally got all the paperwork done in December so we're officially a company.

I think we classified it as an "Internet Content Provider" with the state.

There are a lot of projects we're working on right now but as far as the things we've already done, there's Skinz (<http://www.skinz.org/>), Napigator (<http://www.napigator.com/>), and a slew of other things on <http://www.skinz.org/thirty4>. Excuse the interface...we're working on that.

If this company makes you a millionaire, what would you do next?

Work on thirty4's projects, and then possibly buy a castle. If not a castle, then maybe just build a moat around a very expensive house.

What was the last book you read?

B-O-O-K? I'm sorry. I don't understand the question. (I don't read books.)

more: next page ->





GX-Monkey continues...

What's your all time favorite game and why?

I think it's a tie. I'd like to say Doom 2, because there's never been another game that's kept me awake playing the same level for 8 hours straight at a LAN party. There's also DDR, however, which just has so many possibilities. It's a really fun game.

What is the fascination with DDR?

You gotta play the game to understand. It's just captivating. That, plus the fact that I tear up the dance floor... so playing DDR is just natural.

Are you a better or worse DDR-er than anyone here?

Kirk is by far the best. When we go to Milpitas and play on the arcade machine, he constantly shows me up. Mikey is really good, too. He doesn't play as much, but I'd say that he is better than me. Sometimes I'll be playing, thinking that I'm winning, and then the scores come up and Mikey gets an A to my C or something. It's just weird.

Have you taken your DDR skills to a disco, club or rave? How did it go? Or how would it go you think?

I dunno. I really suck at dancing (or at least that's what I like to tell myself) so I don't really get out to many clubs. I guess I could try that out. It might be fun.

If we spend over 10 hours a day with you, what should we know about you?

Well, know that most of that time is going to be spent juggling or doing something on the computer. I guess I lead a boring life...

Why do you go by the name "Monkey?"

I actually go by Monkey and Dark Monkey. It started as Dark Monkey, but I really didn't like the "Dark" part, so that's kinda being phased out. Here's the story, however: Back when BBS's were big (Bulletin Board Systems) I had a really stupid handle.

One day, my brother, my friend and I were driving around and we decided to get new handles. I don't know exactly what made us think of it, but we wanted some kind of twisted animal name. So my friend became The Fluffy Bunny of Chaos or TFBoc for short, and I became The Dark Monkey. It has since changed to Monkey.

How do you feel about the other dev guys moving to Berkeley?

I love it. There's so much more space in the office now and when I go play DDR, I know that Kirk and Mikey aren't going to be around to shame me. I'm kinda glad I'm not there (yet). I hear bad stories about this Rich Tang guy.

Anything else you want to add -

thirty4 owns you.

Game Night Presents: Cinema Classics A Review of "Video Wars"

By Sam Parker and Sandy Brundage

It Sucked.

"His diabolical plan seems unstoppable: He has instructed his personal satellite to randomly destroy countries by programming the world's video games and televisions for instant destruction on his command."

Sam:

Thus starts and ends the entire script for "Video Wars." This long-neglected film makes timely reference to that ever-rising popular art, the videogame, while pushing further to display the non-linear narrative innovation of a Goddard flick (without leaving you with that bothersome Gauloises dry-mouth). The spectatorial conflict so visibly embodied in the title occasionally crowds into scenes otherwise framed by busy segues and a perennial bad hair day.

Video Wars true plot innovation was to ground all character motivation in the combustion of household appliances.

Sandy:

There was a script? I suppose, had I downed four or ten beers, that there may have been a script. I would suggest the following settings for maximum viewing pleasure:

1. A completely blackened room, blacker than the blackest pit of doom, nay, blacker than that. A blindfold is best.
2. A selection of soothing background music — Tool is my choice — playing through headphones so snugly fitted that not even the Song of Sirens could slink in from the outer world.

Once properly equipped, sit back and relax for 90 minutes.

Sam:

Pros: "Families that play together, stay together."

Cons: The director's karmic imbalance gave me indigestion.

Gameplay: 1

Graphics: 2

Sound: 5

Innovation: 4

Overall: 3

Sandy:

Pros: It's only 90 minutes long.

Cons: It's 90 minutes long.

Gameplay: Suspicious.

Graphics: Yes.

Sound: Off.

Innovation: Lucas ripped off some prime moments for "Return of the Jedi" from this flick.

Overall: A four to ten beer movie, preferably consumed before viewing.

Top Ten Non Work-Related Whiteboard Messages

By Devin "DarkFarmer" Passage

Upon moving into the new office, many people were pleased with our new ergonomic chairs, relieved by our bigger desks, and impressed by our giant work-chamber. However the first thing I noticed when I sat down was that we had been given small dry-erase boards *and* accompanying pens: I cried tears of joy when I imagined all of the fun ways I could use this piece of company-furnished equipment as a means of expression for my own non-company related nonsense. I hid my tears of joy and muffled my whoops and cheers thinking I was alone in my adoration of this item: you can only imagine my excitement when I found many people throughout the office felt *exactly the same way I did* and I took a moment to compile the most nonsensical and baffling messages people took the time to scrawl on these wonderful things. You might call them mini dry erase boards: but I call them Soul Windows.

That said, onto the top 10.

10. Unknown:

"SC Rankings: Legit Wins 3. (Cheap) Ring Outs: 83. Huh, Star Craft? ^_^"

Yes. Star Craft. With the 7th gameplay patch, based on the popular demand of battle.net users, Blizzard added Ring Outs to the game. What kind of hardcore doesn't know that?

9. John:

"Madooshi" (written in Japanese) I don't know what this means but I added it merely to show off my meager ability to read hiragana. Wakarimasen!

8. Robert:

"AZ owns YOU!!" It should be known that Robert has made claims to owning almost everyone in the entire universe. What this makes his net worth equal to, I don't know, but I heard somewhere that the human body has chemicals in it that, if distilled and sold, would be worth 5 dollars. Do I smell IPO material?

7. Devin:

"I am number 70. Who is number 1? You are number 6." This is my own disastrously humorless attempt at combining both my senseless frustration at being labeled as a number during moving and the Prisoner.

6. Gabe:

"What an awesome office. But who put me next to that FREAK with the ULALA poster?" In this jovial, fun loving era, let us not forget that it is important to remember that freaks are people, too. We are past the days when freaks were branded and forced to run naked through the town square while being jeered and pelted with rancid tomatoes by crazed, salivating onlookers. In this civilized era, we put them in an innocuous-looking office in Richmond and sate their lust for gaming and pizza once a week.

5. FS Sam:

"Monday 3/20: Annoy people outside of FS. Tuesday 3/21: Set up testbed." Even though this is an actual work-related schedule I thought I would add it to show that the move did not, in any way, keep the FS from getting their vital and important work duties accom-

plished.

4. Alex:

"elite ash. I will HAX0R j00" This bale warning, which sent shivers down my spine, and sent Mike running, and screaming something about the end of all existence as we know it, is issued to anyone who doubts the 1337ness of Alex. Don't do it. Just don't.

3. Unknown:

"huLlo. Pl3ase h3lp m3" I think I saw Che struggling to write this holding the pen in his mouth as he was playing

Everquest. You may have given up on him, but after seeing this, I know inside there, somewhere, the old Che we all knew and cared about is fighting to come back. Choose life.

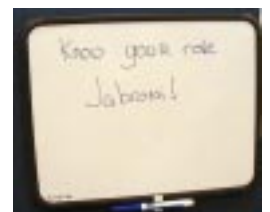
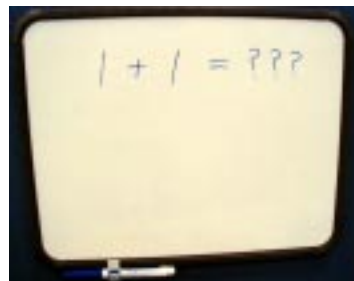
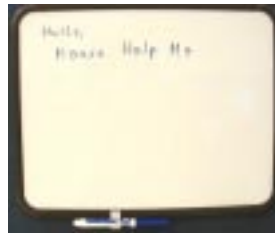
2. Che:

"1 + 1 = ???" This challenging math problem often stumps many people. One of the fun and helpful ways of solving it is to visualize the numbers in terms of objects you can understand. Try

this instead: "If you are fighting a dancing frog, and then a second dancing frog comes up, how many dancing frogs total are you up against now?" I bet you fifty platinums now the answer is crystal-clear.

1. Terence:

"Know your role, Jabroni." This simple philosophy, based on the work of Plato, is currently being embraced by spiritual leader/wrestling star "The Rock" and currently provides a guiding light to millions of people. While you cannot achieve Terence's mastery over the material overnight, everyone can start by chanting "Jabroni" ten times. Just try it. If you don't feel a little of your soul-weight float away into the ethereal plane, I'll give you a free positive-energy-thought



Where are you from?

I was born and raised in Chicago. I grew up downtown, near the "Magnificent Mile" shopping district and Lincoln Park. When the Bears won the Superbowl in 1986, the revelers overturned a cab a half a block from my house and police on horses with tear gas had to disperse them.

Is there anything you miss back East?

There's something nice about the biting snow - it really wakes you. And the dramatic passage of the seasons calibrates you to really enjoy the spring. Here, spring is part of a long nice weather continuum, it's a little numbing at times. Our winter is simply overcast skies and relentless sprinkle - it's just depressing; it doesn't really make you seek out animal skins and warm alcoholic drinks.

Otherwise I find the East has a prejudice about it - people size each other up quicker and judge according to a more strict set of preconceptions. I can live without that hassle, dude. Also it feels claustrophobic at times.

But there's fantastic food, wonderful people, great business on the East coast, especially New York. Going to New York for a few days can really make you feel plugged into the professional consciousness of the world (if you don't feel terminally behind). And there's such wondrous restaurants there, and any good or service your heart desires - it's a little overwhelming. They have better museums there too, the best. So much art and culture in a vast digestible arena. Otherwise, I miss the colored leaves in the fall. Playing in the snow. Having a real excuse to use a fireplace. Drinking hot toddies at Tavern on the Green. Well, if I'd ever done that, I'm sure I'd miss it. Hot dog stands everywhere - helps me keep my blood sugar up. I miss that. Also, one thing about Philadelphia, they really know how to make a Philadelphia Cheese Steak. I miss that sometimes.

How did you come to be in the Bay Area?

When I was in High School, I saw an ad for Wired magazine on the side of a bus. I bought it, read it, and identified with it very strongly. People on the cover of a computer magazine! Seeing quirky, aggressive digital culture affirmed me. The next year at college I applied to work at Wired in the editorial department, the design department, and the janitorial department. None of those worked. Finally I applied to be in the Online Department (after I showed them my personal site) and they hired me on as an intern. I moved into the Mission district in San Francisco, summer of 1994, and worked on the launch team of HotWired.

In San Francisco, the Bay Area, I made a good load of friends and I found a place where people were turned on to technology culture in a fantastic way. After seeing SRL and Cyborganic, the suburbs of Philadelphia (where my college



GX Profile: Justin Hall

General Labor

ICQ: Fusty / 5246346

DOB: 16 December 1974

was) appeared bloated and slow. People there hadn't heard of the web, and while that made for a lot of teaching opportunities, I wasn't nearly as stimulated there as I was here.

Your personal website, is that still on the web? Tell us what we would find there.

I started "Justin's Links from the Underground" in January 1994 to see how easy it was to publish online. I kept track of the sites I visited (being 19, I visited mostly sites about sex drugs and weird shit), and I wrote about them on my page. There wasn't much to see on the web at that time, so people visited me when they were first checking things out and I served as a sort of a guide. I figured if people were reading my site reviews and stuff like that, why not put stories online as well?

So I published my poems and stories from high school, and then I'd write up stories about my life at college or my family, and then I started writing about the connections between my family and school and my friend, and my ex-girlfriend, and my poems about her, and all that kind of stuff. So I built up this linked autobiography. I wrote a daily journal on my site for a while too, I update that once in a while. Basically, I put all sorts of stuff on my site. It became a catchall for me. I scan pictures I draw and paint and put them up there. Pictures of my appendix surgery. Pictures of me naked at the Art Institute of Chicago. Stories of visiting a slaughterhouse in Sweden. Stories from some of the weird people I've met — religious extremists, strippers, tightly-wound capitalists. Stories of the sad and beautiful times I have with my friends and family.

As I've worked here at Gamers.com I've written a bit about my experience, some of the funny stuff that happens around the office and some of my own performance anxiety in a corporate atmosphere. When I talk to people outside the company that read my GX Notes it's nice because I don't have to tell them again what an intense place this is!

My site is over 2000 pages now. I hand code it all in HTML in emacs. Most of my HTML is 2.0 - tables are about as complex as I get. You can do a lot with tables and server side includes. I use nested server side includes to make the headers and footers. My goal was to write and show pictures in a simple, direct way. My pages look equally crappy in IE 5.0 or Netscape 2.0. I don't know how they'll stand up in XML - I can't imagine retooling the whole site for the

Justin continues...

next generation of browsers. You can't look at my pages on one of those fancy web reader cell phones. My site at links.net is served by Apache off the Cyborganic.org co-op servers in San Francisco.

When did you come to work at Gamers?

I started, I believe I was employee #19, in early August 1999.

What had you been doing before coming to Gamers?

I graduated from college in Spring of 1998. I had a brief gig hosting "Web Workshop" on ZDTV - weekly segments teaching people how to make web pages. It paid obscenely well for a very little amount of work. I sued the city of San Francisco and made some money off of that, so supported by those two incomes, I played a lot of games, wrote game reviews for WildWeb for \$150 a pop and wrote an article for Rolling Stone about Slashdot. I spoke at some web conferences as well, both here and abroad, some of those paid and the travel was nice. I thought of being a professional speaker but I didn't want to prostitute myself as "The Voice of The Internet Generation" or something equally useless, which is what most speakers do in order to get regular gigs. I remember talking to Aliza Sherman "Cybergrll" at a conference in Sweden, she had just come from the "Annual Meeting of the Innkeepers of America" in Ohio where she had spoken about marketing on the Internet. I saw the future flash before my eyes and I decided to be a lazy gaming gardener.

Why did you come to work at Gamers?

Basically, I wanted to get paid to study games. I went on Craig's List looking for writing jobs in the industry, and Gamers was the most approachable. I figured, I could apply to be assistant bootlicker at Gamespot or IGN, or I could step right up and serve as an editor at a younger, hungrier company. Gamers.com received that attitude well, they were straightforward, and they were in the East Bay. DoublePlusGood!

In greater detail:

During my time at ZDTV, I was mugged in my old neighborhood of West Oakland (we had a beautiful, cheap place there with a tree growing out of the ground in the living room). My two year old hand painted Macintosh Duo laptop was taken from me at gunpoint. I switched to PC because it was cheap and I wanted to see how the other half lived. For the first time since the early 90s, I was able to play lots of games again. At first I dug up my old favorites, Microprose games like Sword of the Samurai, Sea Rogue, Covert Action, and other games including AutoDuel, Mechwarrior, MUDS. I borrowed and bought a few modern games, and got free games for a reviewing gig.

After re-immersing myself in games, I realized that nearly no

one in the web/media world that I had come from knew anything about games. Movies and books are studied out the wazoo, but few people talked about or analyzed games. The web was getting boring - everyone was trying to figure out how to make web pages dance and how to make money from dancing web pages. I decided two things - one, I wanted to study games. If games are/were under-analyzed, I wanted to be a pioneer in that field, by bringing some of the stuff I'd learned about anthropology and culture to bear on video and computer games. Secondly, after studying games and earning some cred, I want to some day design games. Because when I was playing Might and Magic VI, I was stunned at how absolutely stupid the NPC dialog was. I mean here I am, a literate person, and I'm clicking on these people, and all they say is "Lorthar is a bad man, I hope you can defeat him" over and over again. WHERE'S THE WIT? Some day I'd like to work as a story/dialog developer for video games.

Besides, I tried to get a job at Origin and Microprose before I came to work here, and my methods were, shall we say, unsound. I needed some time to discipline myself. Oddly enough, it seems this is turning out to be a good place for that!

Discipline in this crazy environment? => How has Gamers helped you focus your energies?

There's a few things. One, the sense of mission. If we define our goal as "making the best site for gamers," that's pretty direct. You can readily respect that goal, and focus your energies on it, especially if you are a gamer. Some of the other sites I've worked on, as time went on, it was harder to see what the mission was, and there was less focus. Even after a few months, it's clear that we intend to make the best gaming website/database in the world, and I can get behind that.

Plus, there're so many facets to our site, so there's a lot to work on and a lot to be stimulated by. As the company grows and more people have defined roles, the opportunities to seize projects might diminish, but not if you strain hard enough it seems. The climate here seems to reward initiative in equal measure with seniority - perhaps even favoring initiative. That's a great strength. People who are passionate about their ideas can contribute to the company and site in creative ways - they're driven. But they also need to be harnessed, and I'm glad that my bosses here have respected me while holding me to certain deadlines and responsibilities. At other jobs I would make up my own extra-curricular activities to keep myself entertained, here my extra-curricular activities are folded into the ongoing company routine!

My work at Gamers.com probably benefits from my prior



Justin continues further...

employment – I learned what not to do. I received more than one cussing out, and I watched a few sites crash and burn, or at least stray from their ideals, diverge from their core coolness and fade into trivia. So I feel as though I am lucky to have a chance to make an impact at a company where people are motivated and passionate and that is not to be squandered. So some discipline comes from within.

How do you think your media experience and cultural studies background help you see gaming?

Race, gender, archetypes.

What is the best feature of the current Gamers.com site?

The giganormous database. The potential of our database to hold all the info on any game ever created. What I'd really like to see is Gamers.com charting the history between the games - to bring the story of gaming to life, so people like me with deep gaming memories can reminisce and contribute by surfing the site and looking up the stuff we remember. We can download desktop themes and images of the games we grew up with. We can see what the developer guys are doing now. We can see how the gaming roots we remember are feeding the cutting edge games of today.

I think there is a huge market for people like me who feel games are a type of literature - I remember playing games more vividly than any movies I saw growing up. But there is no place that serves my sense of gaming history in a rich way. There's a few abandonware sites that have done a good job, albeit in a small and personal fashion. Gamers.com has the potential to own gaming history, and share in it with the world.

Have you found a favorite place to eat near the new office?

L's Ribs and Chicken. Haven't been there yet, but I hope to go sometime during the daylight hours.

L's BBQ, is that somewhere on Cutting, or hidden in some secret location nearby?

Actually L's BBQ is a fictitious amalgamation of the various restaurants I drive by on Cutting.

What do you do now at Gamers?

Depends what time it is. I applied to work with classic PC games, but Gamers needed a PlayStation Editor more. I took the job and learned about console games instead of PC games, which was probably better for me as a person. Now PlayStation is in the hands of seasoned veterans, and I'm working on feature articles, data gathering, audience participation, promotions — all sorts of stuff!

At my other jobs, my bosses didn't really understand the web and I was like this young curiosity, a webjockey. At Wired, I knew so much about the internet and they had me maintaining

their AOL space because the leaders didn't know what to do with me and I didn't know how to assert myself. It was very frustrating. So I found ways to entertain myself, mostly by talking to people, surfing the web and doing side projects. Fortunately at GX people here know the web, they live on the web, they're my age, and so if I want to stimulate myself the people around me are stimulating enough.

I did end up working as an Editorial Assistant at HotWired, helping the Executive Editor Howard Rheingold build webtriffic features, with hyperlinks! And soundfiles! And pictures! And movies! None of which ended up on HotWired (he was the first employee to quit). But between some of that experience and freelance writing I've done over the years I've got some editorial development experience so I'm using that for the betterment of Gamers.com.

And I'm trying to turn my personal research tendencies into valuable data for the company. I'm looking at user submission mechanisms at other sites like ours. I'm putting together a booklist about gaming for the company library. I built a web research start page for the production crew.

For a while, I was interviewing our readers for Gamer of the Day. That was awesome, and difficult. I wasn't ready to handle five interviews a week, nor could I manage the workflow of a few other occasional contributors. But people have said it was something they enjoyed reading, so I hope to begin working on community content like that when we have the design and editorial to support it. I learned a lot about some of the people who read our site that way.

After I was hired, many more people were hired very quickly. Preserving corporate culture and a sense of the whole as a company grows so rapidly is tough. At Wired we had a company newsletter and I remembered reading it and writing for it - that was fun. So it seemed like having a GX Newsletter was a good idea, so with help from Nat and Sam Parker, and wrestling commentary from Terence, we've put out at least an issue a month since August.

A few of the web conferences I spoke at last year invited me back this year, now I go as a representative of the company. I use the stuff I learn about games and gaming communities working here as my data and examples for the audiences. Also, I schmooze - I walk through the crowd and I talk to people and I find out what projects they are working on and then I think of ways that Gamers.com can benefit their projects and then I put them in touch with Dennis or Lyle. I'm never sure what the right title is for all of that, and I hope to have at least six other jobs here before the year ends. This is a great place to learn - between the site and the incredible brains on hand. As an internet company we have



still Justin continues...

both data and community, each of which presents tremendous opportunities and challenges. In-house we have technical minds, creative minds, editorial minds. We have so many people who know so much about gaming. I go to these conferences and people are hurling money around at such a great speed to learn just a fraction of what we talk about during our lunch breaks. If you want to straddle entertainment to ride into the future, this is the right place to jump on.

What do you do when you're not at the office?

I hang out with my powerhouse girlfriend Amy. She makes movies sometimes and I work on those with her, or her art projects. We work on our house, painting or moving stuff around sometimes. And we go on film binges where we watch a holy-butload of movies. Like five a week or more. So I watch a lot of movies with her.

I garden, or I used to before I started at GX. Then most everything died or took care of itself. I like to cook - roasting chickens or red beans and rice, poaching or grilling fish - I'm trying to expand my range of dishes.

I try to socialize sometimes, but mostly I'd rather play a game for more than a half an hour at a time, or I'm in the middle of a good book, or I wish I'd spend more time painting or something. I have some great stimulating friends, but most of them are in San Francisco and I hate dealing with that. I guess I'm kind of a media homebody.

That's a lot of movies! Have you ever seen yourself getting seriously involved in producing or reviewing movies?

Reviewing sure, some, casually, I have some movie reviews on my site. I don't know about producing - I've had some ideas and I know some great people. Amy wants to be a writer/director for movies, so maybe some day I'll have the chance to help her out - that would be great fun.

I've had the chance to do some acting, Amy did a short film about menstruation "Blood" that Joel really appreciated - I appear naked in that one. Also, a friend did a short horror film about working at a web design company called "Slasher" and I took off some clothes for that too. Back when I was in college, this guy was filming a documentary about people with personal web pages, "Home Page" and he interviewed me a lot and followed me around for a while. That showed at Sundance, a film festival in Utah, and I got to go there and bother famous people with irrelevant questions. But besides that the film business seems like a particularly lecherous affair - people act like vampires, or even worse, vampire wanna-bes. It can be exciting to watch, but I often get a sick feeling when I mingle too seriously in the wrong parts of LA.

If this company makes you a millionaire, what would you do next?

I'd bankroll my own media research and development company. Meaning, a loft/warehouse space somewhere with a stereo and a couple of computers and I'd invite artists and friends to come by and do their work and work on projects. After a while, I'd try to pull together a team to make a game, or a game prototype.

I'd probably buy a new car, too. Either a nice new German car, like my coworkers, or some stylish yet safe classic or unusual car that I could still viably park in San Francisco parking spaces.

Have you had the chance to travel much?

My dad passed away in 1983 and my mother took some of his money and spent it taking my brother and I traveling. We went to a very many places - the Yucatan, trekking in Nepal, Soviet Russia, France, Italy, Morocco, Egypt, Greece. It was a great education, even tho I was so young all I cared about was scoring hot chocolate. I wish I could go back to some of those places (I've been trying to get back to Egypt for a decade), but it'll be a while before I can afford to take a week or two in those places.

I've had the chance to do some traveling abroad for Internet conferences. The most fun I had was traveling to Denmark one time - 36 hours of flying and laying over in airports for 32 hours on the ground with an 8 hour time difference. The whole time I was either in my hotel or the conference center, surrounded by people chain smoking cigarettes all day long indoors. It was hell.



In 1997 after a couple years working for internet companies I traveled to Honduras to learn to speak Spanish and generally get offline. I discovered that La Cieba, a city there, was more smog filled and dirty than some cities here, so I left for La Mosquitia, the largest contiguous rainforest in Central America. There I hooked up with Mopawi, a group that was helping the Miskito natives take control of the rainforest. They paid my travel costs and put me up in each of fourteen villages and I wrote reports on indigenous development efforts. Once I traveled twelve hours in a canoe to get to Wampusirpi, population 1000. And when I got there the Catholic Padre had a Mac PowerBook and an HP laptop running off of solar power! So much for getting away from technology.

What was the last book you read?

"Why We Buy" by Paco Underhill - a breezy, chatty exploration of the retail shopping experience. So often when I'm in a store, I think "man, that's dumb that they make me wait over here" - this guy studies stuff like that. Reading it will help you reexamine the stores you frequent.

My friend gave me "New Rules for the New Economy," by

Justin finishes...

Kevin Kelly, which is supposed to be a great book for these times. Before I get to that, I want to finish reading the biography of Andrew Carnegie - get some perspective on the last big chance in business before I study the contemporary changes. I've borrowed "Sony: The Private Life" from the GX Library and I'm halfway through it. I was really cranking, because it's a great read, but then CardFighters Clash happened.

What's your all time favorite game and why?

Ow, that's tough. I think I'm really stuck in the late 80s computer games; I worked in a Software Etc between 1989 and 1991 and I played everything we had in stock.

I might say "Circuit's Edge" made by Infocom when they started making graphical games. It's based on a series of books I loved, When Gravity Fails by George Alec Effinger. And it was just so cool to play a game where you could take drugs, hang out with hookers, and plug different chips into your brain to take on different personality types. Gameplay-wise, it's like reading a novel in chunks. But it looks cool, and you can't beat seedy content.

The game based on Neuromancer rocks too. I love hacking into Hosaka BioCorp's BBSes and stealing info-credits, all that stuff. Fun fun, I try to replay this every few years (using some of the walkthrough I wrote for it in 1991).

Otherwise, I love the classic Microprose games, the games that simulated all sorts of cool stuff for you - Pirates, Railroad Tycoon, Covert Action let you play a spy, and Sword of the Samurai let you earn the Shogunate of feudal Japan. A foreign game distributed by Microprose, Sea Rogue, gave you the chance to be a professional deep sea treasure hunter; that was rad.

I love Mechwarrior and Crescent Hawk's Inception - the first two computer games from the Battletech world. I love that system of giant robot combat, and these have both very basic gameplay and all the juicy warring machine stuff from the paper RPG. None of the recent games from the Battletech world have gotten it right for me yet, but I think I gotta try some more ;->

I love Sentinel Worlds, Wasteland, AutoDuel, and Ultima, Wizardry especially, and Might & Magic II, III and IV; but I haven't been able to go back into the computer RPGs like I have the other genres. I think they're just too involving - I barely have time for the cutting edge RPGs, and those you don't have to remember how to spell "tiltwait" if you want to cast it.

Jagged Alliance 2 is probably my favorite recent game, I found myself going back to that game and playing it into the ground weeks after I'd finished my FiringSquad review of it. The Sims ain't bad either but I haven't gone back to that like I

have slaved over JA2. I guess I'm just drawn to linearity there. For PlayStation games, I like Syphon Filter, that's fun. Metal of Honor is intense, almost too depressing and involving. Nazi's suck! When you've spent the entire weekend fighting them and hearing them shout angry German at you, it can get to be too much. I can play the hell out of some console games, but I think computer games still wrap me up deeper, maybe just cuz I'm more oriented to camping out at a keyboard.

Probably my all-time favorite game is M.U.D.S. - "Mean Ugly Dirty Sport" an alien rugby game where you build a team and do violence to other alien weirdoes on the battlefield. Just the right combination of strategy, role-playing, arcade violence and funny sound effects. Made in Germany I think, in the 1980s.

How did you first get into PC gaming back in the 80s? Have you seen your taste in games

change since?

I always loved RPGs, but I have less and less time to play them. That's the thing that gets me wrapped up in a computer though - trying to reach the end of a Wizardry or a Might & Magic. Doing repeat dungeon crawls to raise character stats. I love the rare science fiction treatments in that genre too.

I love adventure games, and strategy games too. When I discovered Marathon on networked Macintoshes with double shotguns, I played until I saw imploding corpses in my dreams. All sorts of games are good. As I've been exposed to more console stuff here I've developed a deeper appreciation of driving games like Driver and Crazy Taxi. And of course my first person shooter skills have deepened. And fishing games, you know. This is a fantastic place to have your taste in games broadened. Thanks to John R. I'm in deep on Card Fighters' Clash on the Neo Geo Pocket Color - my first portable electronic CCG experience. You gotta love it!

What music do you prefer?

I like all types. Jane's Addiction is my favorite band - they have so much propulsive power. I love Jazz - Duke Ellington, Thelonious Monk. Those are very articulate men. I appreciate Frank Zappa in that way - Hot Rats is a great Jazz album. I like classic blues and early gospel, sort of one person, one guitar, direct music. And gospel harmonies, and the way those people push their voices. You can hear the roots of rock and rap in those musics.

Recently I listen to a lot of electronica, LTJ Bukem, drum & bass, Orb, perhaps because you can listen to it and still write.

If we spend over 10 hours a day with you, what should we know about you?

I like to know what's going on. I know a little bit about a lot of things.

Anything else you want to add right off the bat?

Not yet, sorry for the skimpy answers.



Recently many people in the office have been seen hunched over a tiny horizontal portable electronic game unit. The Neo Geo Pocket Color has outpaced GameBoys in the office due in large part to one game:

SNK vs. Capcom:



Card Fighters Clash.

A combination of Street Fighter and Pokemon, players compete against the machine in single player mode to collect cards and build their ultimate battle deck. The cards are based on characters from SNK and Capcom games, so there's Resident Evil people, Street Fighters, Megaman and many others. Once you have built up some skillz and a decent deck you can connect your unit to any other using a link cable to battle head to head.

Matt "Wilda" Wenzel with the CardFighters Clash Cramming Coverage:

With the current spread of SNK VS. Capcom: Card Fighter's Clash through the office and hearing about John R seeing Shoe playing CFC while brushing his teeth I decided to ask around I find out any other weird places people have tried to get in a quick fix.

Hank – Waiting at a red light and while driving on the freeway.

John Joh – On the toilet.

Gabe – In the car while waiting at a red light, while filling up gas and at work ... wait did I say that?!

Matt W – I have played it while on the toilet, while at work and on the toilet at work. I would probably have played while at a red light if I had a car that moved.

Nat – While sitting in the car, while driving the car and while walking around the Metreon for an hour.

These all may seem a bit absurd but we have to give the prize to Shoe who replied with the following..

Holy crap can I give you some silly stories (of me). On a road trip from Michigan to Florida, I had a Game Boy Color and Neo Geo Pocket Color. At night, when I wasn't driving, I'd get in more Card Fighter's playing time by:

1. Attaching the NYKO (?) Worm Light to the Game Boy Color.
2. Turning the GBC (sans cartridge) on to power up the light.
3. Placing the NGPC over the GBC to capture the light.

So...picture this pathetically addicted guy holding two portables just to get light on his Cardfighter's game.

AND THEN...

When we got to Florida, my woman and I went out on the beach to sun. She brought a book to read. You get one guess to what I brought to the sands with me. Like I said...pathetic. But I do have a 260/300 card album to show for it! :)

Oh, I've also played while eating, brushing my teeth, pooping and drunk (pooping and drunk are two separate things there).

Here's the current office standings (There's two versions of the game, SNK or Capcom, the version determines which cards you'll see more of initially):

JohnR: SNK... and like... none. Whatever you start with. I just started playing last night, and I lost my first battle (I'm starting over tonight, dammit!).

Gabe: Capcom 50

Stephen: Capcom 94

JohnJ: SNK 126

Nat: SNK 127

MattWilda: Capcom 153

Justin: Capcom 204

DanShoe: Capcom 260

(Note: card totals out of a possible 300)
<http://www.gamers.com/obj/0193/193760.asp>

Notes: