

## From conversations with Brett Bilbrey, ex of Action Graphics:

Note: These "tid-bits" originally appeared in *Slap Dash* issue 8, May 1999. Thanks to Russ Perry Jr. for allowing me to reprint them here. -- Adam Trionfo]

- Action Graphics was spun off from Bally, with Bob Ogden at the helm, to develop games for the Bally Professional Arcade. Brett's first project there was *Cosmic Raiders*, though he doesn't think it turned out very well. He feels his best work was *Treasure Cove* (released under the Spectrecade line)
- *Soccer* went through at least three different versions, but was never released because "it sucked", and even the guy trying to program it thought that no one would play it.
- *Muncher* was called a lot of things before release -- besides the often seen Munchie, there was also Pac and Waka, which I imagine were too similar to *Pac-Man*, it's inspiration.
- *ICBM Attack*, released in small quantities, required a custom controller they hand-made, and every one was sold as it was made so even Brett doesn't own one anymore.
- Bob Ogden worked with Dave Nutting (a big name in early arcade history) after Action Graphics, and later for Activision for a time. Action Graphics survived briefly as a software design house (doing at least one Colecovision game, *Beamrider*, for Activision), but hung it up after a couple years.
- *Gorf* was in fact named for "frog" backwards, but why? "Frog" was Jay Fenton's nickname. *Berzerk's Otto* was named after Dave Otto.
- There is a tool called *Super Sound Tweaker* by Scot Norris, to do music, but Brett wrote his own music routines to save space, since the sound routines Scot wrote took up most of a cart by themselves, leaving no room for the game code. For similar reasons many programmers wrote their own screen draw routines to be more efficient and leave more room for game code. To some extent this made it more like programming for the 2600. *Treasure Cove* is the only game to use four colors and three voices, though the Bally Demo cart also manages. [*Treasure Cove* uses 256 colors (*not* 4 colors), whereas other Astrocade cartridges normally used eight colors. It is a *four*-player game; perhaps this is what caused the confusion. -- A.T.].
- Macromedia's Director is a direct descendent of the Bally Game Animation Program, passing down through MacroMind's *Videoworks* via Jay Fenton.
- *Solar Conqueror* was never released, though it seems to be essentially finished.
- *Wizard of Wor* for the Astrocade uses the same basic code as the arcade game, since the chipset is essentially the same as the arcade hardware. The only difference really is that the resolution had to be lowered, as the Astrocade uses only 1/4 the screen RAM as the arcade game. Brett found a way to put the system in hires mode, but you could only draw on the upper left quadrant of the screen!
- At times you can see some color bars on the lower right part of the screen. This is not a mere glitch, but rather stack data overflowing into the screen RAM. Most games hide it.