

## Salute to Arcadia

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With my intern year ending, I bought myself a toy. Before I tell you about it though, I have to confess... I'm addicted to arcade games. Does that make me an Arcadian? Like that idyllic society of so long ago, arcades were enticing and pleasant. There was something so right about driving like a maniac, shooting alien ships, and of course, chomping dots and ghosts. Some of my fondest memories were of getting quarters from my parents and walking around the corner to the games at The Candy Store and Tony's Pizzeria.

Because arcades produced a back-drop for some underhanded business, by the time I was a teenager (and could earn my own quarters), they were all but extinct. So, my arcade-game playing, my "Arcadia-ness," fell to the wayside.

Then a few years ago, someone (Nicola Salmoria) figured out the old arcade games were written for the same hardware. So he wrote an emulator; a program that understands the old instruction set and translates it to a modern computer.

And so was born M.A.M.E., the Multiple Arcade Machine Emulator. You can go to MAME.net or arcadeathome.com and download MAME for Windows, Mac, Linux, PDA's, Nokia phones, and many others.

Then what? Then you download games, called ROMs. How are they better than the same ones on PlayStation? Well, if you download Ms. Pac-Man, you get the true arcade Ms. Pac-Man: same sounds, same movements, same ghost patterns, and same behavior. What you don't get is someone else's version. How many people felt the Atari 2600 Asteroids was a good copy of the arcade? Ok, in the grand scheme of things, this may not be so important, but I noticed it.

So back to my new toy. For \$21.99 at Toys"Я"Us, you can buy a joystick (www.jakkstvgames.com/namco.html). Not much bigger than the original Atari 2600 joysticks, and about the same weight, it has two RCA plugs (video and audio), requires 4 AA batteries, and plugs directly into your TV. Without any other

setup, it plays real arcade games. I bought the one with Ms. Pac-Man, Galaga, Pole Position, Xevious, and Mappy.

The control is not tight enough for good Ms. Pac-Man play. For Pole Position, the control is better than the arcade game's (you twist the joystick to turn R/L, giving better control than the arcade game's steering wheel). For the others, it works just fine. I remember all of them from the arcades except for Mappy, a cute game with entertaining music. My only gripe is the system does not have two-player games. Maybe in the next version, for another \$21.99.

In summary, there is just something enchanting about the original look, feel, and, most especially, the sounds, of these games from my youth. And now, for about \$20, you can buy a plug-and-play set. Or if you're adventurous, download MAME for your PC, and buy, beg, or borrow ROMs. Do either of these, and you too can say, *et in Arcadia ego* (translation: And I too (lived) in Arcadia). ■

## EMF grants available

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### EMF/FERNE Neurological Emergencies Clinical Research Grant

Deadline: January 16, 2004

Description: The goal of this directed grant program is to fund research based towards acute disorders of the neurological system, such as the identification and treatment of diseases and injury to the brain, spinal cord and nerves. \$50,000 will be awarded in this program annually.

### EMF/SAEM Medical Student Research Grant

Deadline: February 6, 2004

Description: A maximum of \$2,400 over 3 months is available for a medical student to encourage research in emergency medicine.

### EMF/ENAF Team Grant

Deadline: January 16, 2004

Description: This request for proposals specifically targets research that is designed to investigate the topic of ED overcrowding. The applicants must provide evidence of a true collaborative effort between physician and nurse professionals and must delineate the relative roles of the participants in terms of protocol development, data collection, and manuscript preparation. A maximum of \$20,000 will be awarded.