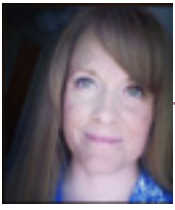


Open Letter



By Andrea Pedrick
Advisor

The hustle and bustle of the holidays is upon us. This time of year is both stressful and fun at the same time. It's easy to forge ahead with plans and forget that there are those in need of a good meal, a smile, or a kind word.

This December the Jefferson County Branch of the American Association for University Women will kick off the month with our annual gift of giving program. Every December a local organization is selected by the Board to receive a gift and members contribute toward the purchase of a gift for the organization.

Then, on a pre-determined date, AAUW members gather at the organization for light refreshments

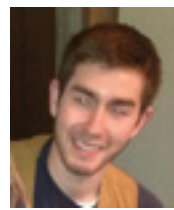
and a brief presentation to learn more about the organization that has been selected. The gift is shared and more conversation takes place. This year's recipient is Literacy of Northern New York.

Based in Watertown, they provide one-to-one tutoring to adults who are non-readers. They also teach adults basic math skills, computer literacy, budgeting and citizenship. They do all of this year round with a handful of volunteer tutors and two full-time staff.

Getting involved with organizations such as AAUW and/or Literacy of NNY is a great way to give back to others year round. There are many organizations in your area that need volunteers. Seek them out, if only to be kind to one another this holiday season.

For more information and for how to get involved, visit Proliteracynny.org.

JCC's First Fall Graduation



By Michael Vecchio
Comics Artist

This December JCC will be holding its first winter commencement ceremony. This marks a major milestone for those involved in graduation. Whether they are launching out into the world or continuing on with their education, graduation is a great achievement in one's life.

I will be among the students graduating this semester and for me the preparation for graduating has been a very positive one. Reflecting on the road leading up to this point in my life it seems crazy how fast I arrived here, especially because this past semester has flown by.

While graduation does mark the end of my academic career, it is a halfway point and comes with the

realization that I am two years away from completing my education. It is an exciting feeling but it also makes me appreciate the time I have spent working up to this point.

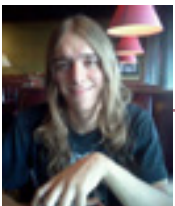
I would say to those who are just beginning their college careers to enjoy and try and get as much as you can out of the experience because it is over before you know it. It seems like everyone says something similar, but that's because it's true.

I have had a great experience here at JCC and I think that it has provided me with a solid launching point to continue on with my education. I'd like to thank the faculty and staff here for helping myself and countless other students to reach this momentous occasion in our lives.

I wish the Fall Class of 2014 the best of luck on their future pursuits following Graduation.

Congratulations!

7 Timeless Retro Video Games



By Brandon Hart
News Writer

It's easy to get lost in the haze of new video games. Often we are lost in a vortex of amazing graphics that completely clouds over the gameplay. So many times games are watered down to the point where the gaming is "press the x-button and win". It's important to look back at older games and realize that the gameplay, the stories, and the difficulty used to be challenging and engaging. Here, in my opinion, are the best, timeless retro video games.

7) *Super Mario Bros*

Released in 1985 for the Nintendo Entertainment system, there's no doubt we've all heard about this one. Released as a sequel to *Mario Brothers*, which was released two years prior, this game was simple, yet challenging. As we all know, the game is still with us today in the form of numerous sequels, remakes, and re-imaginings, proving that this is indeed a truly timeless game that will stick with us through the ages.

6) *Contra*

Shooters, you either love them or hate them. Many argue that shooters kill console gaming, while others simply stay on the loving side. *Contra* was the precursor to shooters and was released in 1987 by Konami as an arcade game. In '88 it was again released for Nintendo. With 7 stages and three lives, the game is exceedingly difficult and fast-paced. Any who think today's

action games are difficult, would quickly rescind that opinion after playing *Contra*. People still play it today as a challenge, and it has also been re-released for several different consoles.

5) *The Elder Scrolls*

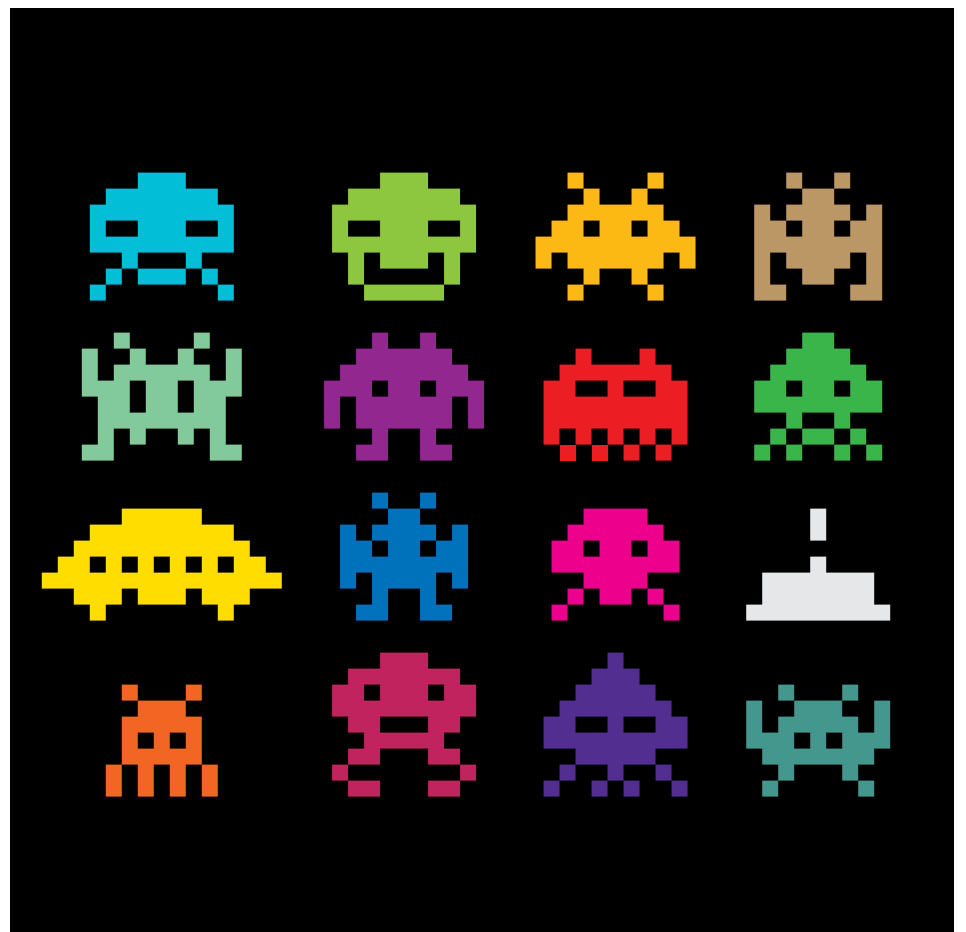
Now, you may be thinking 'this is definitely not retro, *Skyrim* was just released a few years ago!' However, The Elder Scrolls series actually started in 1994 with the game *Arena*. Originally a PC game, *Arena* and *Daggerfall* spear-headed The Elder Scrolls series, creating a massive intricate world of characters, races, and lore. In *Arena* and *Daggerfall*, the worlds were far larger than they are in *Morrowind*, *Oblivion*, and *Skyrim* - *Daggerfall's* world is approximately the size of Great Britain. Today, Bethesda still creates games that will become timeless in The Elder Scrolls series.

4) *Spyro the Dragon*

Arguable whether or not this game can be considered retro, this one will be sure to live on for its amazing gameplay and replay ability. *Spyro* was released in 1998 for the PlayStation, and is a platformer in which you (obviously) play as a Dragon. The developers were successful in creating a magical world that, no matter what age you are, you can go back and enjoy the childish whimsy and remarkably coherent story.

3) *Mega Man*

Mega Man was a spark that kindled a flame that is still burning. The original *Mega Man* was released in 1987 and was a fairly difficult action and platformer game. Today,



the huge franchise is still experiencing releases, and the original retro games are still played by gamers everywhere.

2) *Sonic the Hedgehog*

The lovable hedgehog hit the Sega Genesis in 1991. Originally a speed-based platformer, Sonic has run into the hearts of gaming fans everywhere. The music, the gameplay, the characters and the story are memorable, challenging, engaging, and frankly amazing. The series has not and will not die out any time soon.

1) *The Legend of Zelda*

The first *Legend of Zelda* was released in 1986, and sparked the first in a huge and sprawling fran-

chise. The original game was challenging, with complex puzzles, an in-depth world, and mind boggling riddles. Few games have more replay ability, and fewer still are able to boast such a coherent story, such great lasting quality, and such amazing gameplay all at once. The franchise has kept growing, spawning new imaginings, new games, and a whole cult-like following throughout the years, and has gained a spot in popular culture even now. Even if one has never played a *Zelda* game, they will generally know at least what the game is and have some knowledge of what it's all about - all the qualities of a great, timeless game.