

The anime nerdfest that is Anime Weekend Atlanta happened and while it's certainly late, Sean has a report of his experiences there. **Page 6**



Maybe speeding isn't so bad? Read Jarrett's opinion on **Page 5**



November 21, 2008

Better late than never

Volume 63, Issue 2

SPSU's Milestone Week

Jessica McNally
Senior Staff Writer

2008 marks the 60th anniversary of Southern Polytechnic State University, as well as the 10th anniversary of SPSU's current president, Dr. Lisa A. Rossbacher. From Tuesday, Sept. 16 to Thursday, Sept. 18, the university held several events in recognition of these accomplishments. Tuesday, Sept. 16

The milestone week kicked off with a convocation, or a ceremonial assembly of members of a college, in which approximately 300 persons attended in the Student Center Theater. During the event, Professor Lance Crimm, of the Electrical and Computer Engineering Technology department on campus, was revealed as SPSU's teacher of the year for the academic year of '08-'09.

Several key speakers who are or have served the university's faculty and staff, recalled certain historical facts about the campus, including:

- In 1948 there were only 116 students, of which only one was a female and two international

- In-state tuition was \$57.50 a semester, out of state was \$75 a semester in 1948

- The school moved from DeKalb county to Cobb county in 1961; today, the old school site is the Peachtree Dekalb Airport

- From 1968 until 1991 the school held an annual Bathtub Race that CNN covered during the 1980's

- By 1971 Southern Tech became a four year institution, seeing a student enrollment increase of 35%

- SPSU's first president, Stephen R. Cheshier, is inaugurated on April 12, 1981

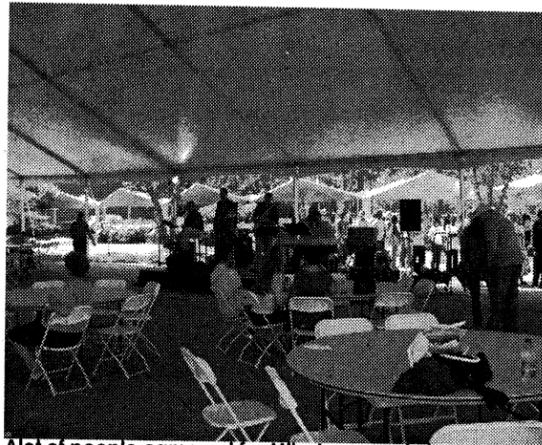
- In 1986 the name changed to Southern College of Technology

- 1990 is the first year that the Southern College of Technology offers a non-technical degree

- In 1996, the school's name becomes Southern Polytechnic State University

- In 1998, SPSU inaugurates its second and current president, Dr. Lisa A. Rossbacher

After the event light refreshments were served in the Student Center Lobby. Later in the evening, an art show was held in the Architecture Gallery at 6:30 p.m., in



Alot of people came out for Milestone week, including that long line back there

photo courtesy of: Jessica McNally

which there was a silent bid auction for framed napkins decorated by friends and alumni of the institution. Bidding began at \$50, with all proceeds going to the Rossbacher Scholarship Fund. The event was organized by SPSU professor Liz Martin of the Architecture department.

Wednesday, Sept. 17

SPSU held its 10th annual Author's Reception in the Library Rotunda. I wasn't there, but my guess is that a bunch of campus brains sat around eating snack food and playing tiddlywinks.

Later on Wednesday, there was a Sustainability Symposium

held in the Student Center Theater. Dr. Joy Doran-Peterson, Chair of University of Georgia's Biofuels, Biopower and Biomaterials, was the guest speaker for the event.

Thursday, Sept. 18

The milestone week

winded down with a Geology Symposium in the Student Center Theater at 11 a.m. Dr. Lisa M. Pratt, Geologist and close friend of SPSU president Dr. Lisa A. Rossbacher, intrigued a small audience of nerds (around 75 of us) about current outer space explorations. Here are some provocative questions that were raised:

- It is believed that there are ice caps on Mars similar to some of the tundra in Canada. Is it possible that there are micro-organisms in the selected Martian terrain? In other words, is there life on Mars?

- With the way the universe exists, is it possible that we came

from Mars to Earth? Are we Martians?

- What kinds of universe polluting are we doing when we explore other planets? How can we ensure that we leave less behind on our visits?

After the symposium, the nerds stumbled out of the Student Center Theater into the daylight around the Globe, and a ridiculously long line for free Varsity food. Hotdogs, Hamburgers, greasy French fries, and some awesome cake was served while SPSU's own Friday's After Five band played. A large portion of the campus community enjoyed the sunshine, music, and food.

Well that concludes our 60th anniversary, here are a few accomplishment's the school has achieved under Rossbacher's leadership:

- Atrium Building, Building J, is opened in 1999

- New Architecture Building, Building N, is opened in 2002

- New soccer program introduced in 2006

- SPSU has largest enrollment ever in 2007, with 4,466 students

ETC Groundbreaking

Jessica McNally
Senior Staff Writer

Southern Polytechnic State University celebrated the groundbreaking of the new Engineering Technology Center on Thursday, September 25, 2008. Nearly 200 faculty, staff, students, and media personnel attended the event, including Georgia's state governor Sonny Perdue.

The ceremony began with a speech by SPSU president Dr. Lisa A. Rossbacher. Afterwards, governor Perdue said a few things, pretty much what had already been said by SPSU's president, and seemed interested in the new mechatronics major that the school is now offering students, one of the new Engineering Technology programs that the new building, when complete, will house. Other programs that the building is scheduled to house include computer, mechanical, electrical, and telecommunications engineering technology.

The completion date for the new Engineering Technology Center is scheduled two years from now. The \$33.3 million dollar project was approved by governor Perdue for



Christmas comes early

Photo by: Jessica McNally

the 2009 fiscal year. Approval came based on the recommendation by the Board of Regents. When complete, the building will be 123,000 square feet, house 12 classrooms, 2 seminar rooms, 36 labs, and a 200-seat lecture room, making it slightly larger than the Atrium, or J building, on campus.

It should probably also be mentioned that part of the approved \$33.3

million dollar budget will be used to expand the I building on campus, allowing for more Architecture studio space.

SPSU will continue its commitment to campus sustainability, ensuring that the new building is green, or echo-friendly, making sure that all Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification requirements are met.

Gaming Lab is Live

Sean Fine
Editor-in-Chief

In room J201 of the J Building, the much heard about gaming lab has finally been set up and had its official opening and what a sight to behold. With two Wiis, a Playstation 3, and fifteen Xbox 360s set up, there is a lot of opportunity for gaming development.

The Lab is divided into two sections, a lounge area where students and faculty can come by and play various games of all the platforms. The other section is the development area, with a Xbox 360 hooked up to each computer so that aspiring programming students can boot up their games from the computer and test them out. The course is currently being taught by Professors John Prestion and Brianna Morrison.

Currently, the computers are installed with XNA 2.0, the current development kit for Xbox 360s, which allows students to make games with the processing

power of the Xbox 360, as well as an earlier version Visual Studio, the proper coding program for game development.



Looks a little something like this

Photo by: static.flickr.com

Plans are in motion to update both XNA to 3.0 and Visual Studio to its 2008 version. Both will not only increase efficiency of coding games, but XNA 3.0 will allow programmers to make community games on Xbox Live and the Zune. Currently, the plans to upgrade the computers are scheduled to begin when XNA 3.0 is released later this year.

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Lower the Standard or is it Lowering Yourself?

Should the drinking age limit be lowered? Twila McConnell is pretty passionate about her answer.

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DID YOU KNOW THAT?

Jessica McNally has some interesting information about history of convenience stores. Read up and then you'll know!

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It's the God Damn LEGO Batman!!!

Was LEGO Batman worth the wait? Our own David Spivak has his review talking about the highs and lows of this title

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ROW! ROW! FIGHT THE POWAH!

A little low in your anime intake? Sean Fine might have a anime that will blow your mind at how awesome it is!

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ONE WISH GRANTED MORE TO GO:

Freedom By Design Celebrates Project Completion

Jennie Marucci
Free Lance

Thousands of people feel confined within their own homes because, due to a disability or handicap, they cannot easily get into their showers, ascend stairs, or open or pass through doorways. In addition, their homes are not designed for their special needs so in the case of an emergency, they would not be able to escape from their home without outside assistance. In fall 2007, Southern Polytechnic State University's American Institute of Architecture Students started the first chapter of Freedom by Design (FBD) in Georgia. FBD is a non-profit organization, in which students can use their knowledge and passion for architecture and design to benefit the lives of physically challenged individuals within the community. This unique opportunity brought the team a great first client, Marcella, an eleven year old girl, confined to a wheelchair by muscular dystrophy. Marcella faced accessibility challenges within her own home, which presented the FBD team with two projects. The first project was to replace the thick carpet in Marcella's living area with carpet tiles which would allow her

to have more freedom within her home. The second project was to extend the family's back patio while adding a handicap accessible sandbox to grant Marcella more leisure outdoors. With the support from several individuals and volunteers as well as guidance from construction Mentor, Pete Corbett along with Will Norris of the Niles Bolton, FBD was able to design and implement several modifications in and around Marcella's home.

To grant Marcella's wish, the FBD team tore up the old carpet, which had hindered her in the past, and installed new, donated carpet tiles. The rest of the team vacuumed and cleaned other rooms within the house, and did yard work outside the house. For the second part of the wish, FBD held a design charrette, which encouraged all willing students to submit a practical, fun, and whimsical design entry for the backyard patio extension and sandbox design. From that point, the entries were further developed and combined to create the most efficient design for the project. The FBD team brought their shovels, hammers, and ingenuity to create an enjoyable and accessible backyard for Marcella. The final backyard design included an extension of the

existing patio with new pavers, a retaining wall/planter system made with railroad ties, and a stainless aluminum, adjustable and accessible sandbox, which was designed to double as a writing surface. This project exhibits the collaboration of a determined team, learning from devoted leaders, using ordinary materials, and a simple design strategy to enhance the life of someone deserving of the effort.

In one year's time, Freedom by Design has evolved from an idea into a reality. Earning accomplishments such as the SPSU Student Government Association's Organization of the Year and being awarded a Michael Graves Mentorship, FBD has become a positive force on SPSU's campus and throughout Marietta. The team can feel a sense of accomplishment because one wish has been granted, but there are many more to go. As George Eliot said, "What do we live for, if it is not to make life less difficult for each other?" So if you know someone who could be a potential client, if you would like to volunteer or show your support, or if you are interested in learning more about Freedom by Design contact us at fbdpsu@gmail.com.

Have a Happy Thanksgiving!

Jessica McNally
Senior Staff Writer

The Sting staff hopes that all students and faculty have a safe and Happy Thanksgiving this year. What follows is a quick list of safety tips on traveling and cooking so your Thanksgiving is a holiday and not a nightmare.

When traveling please keep the following in mind:

- Inspect your vehicle before going on a long road trip; make sure the car is up to date on its service and that all the fluid levels are at the correct quantities they should be at.

- Buy a real road map, a Rand McNally map if you can of the entire region you are traveling through. Mapquest and GPS can be handy for short drives, but they can fail to give you the big picture of where you are going.

- If you are flying, pack only what you need, leave room in the suitcase if you plan on shopping or

collecting items, don't carry more than the bag can fit by plane. Keep all personal identity stuff on you at all times while in the airport and on the plane. Leave early and plan for lines and delays, buy a whole bag of chips or can of nuts instead of just snack sized.

- Make sure you have fresh batteries in your electronic devices and a small amount of petty cash for quick food and gas buys on the go!

When cooking or eating, keep the following in mind:

- Never put raw poultry directly onto countertops. Thoroughly wash your hands, equipment used, and the area where the raw poultry was placed. Use bleach on the surface the raw meat touched and antibacterial soap for your hands.

- For those of you with food allergies, make sure you know the ingredients of each dish you are about to eat before you consume it (really pay attention to what may be in a cas-

serole). Also, make sure the eggnog isn't spiked before you go drinking it and then driving.

- Make sure the turkey is thawed properly before cooking it, buy the turkey several days in advance and closely follow the instructions on the label, different turkey sizes will take different amounts of time to thaw.

For more tips, a simple online search will bring you a wealth of practical information and tips. There is even a site dedicated to keeping your pet safe during the holiday!

<http://www.doggienews.com/lib/education/missfidomanners-thanksgiving.htm>

Most important, please remember to be kind and patient to all walks of life during this time. Many people are busy running around during this time so it is important to be considerate of them as well as your loved ones. We are all one big happy family on this little blue planet and the Sting staff would like to see it stay that way!

TKE Fall Rush Rocks SPSU

Keaton Wheeler
Free Lance

The Teke's have really kicked off this year right with an excellent rush, recruiting 11 new members by the end of the first week. The fraternity had food and games out every morning and afternoon, as well as our cars showing up almost daily.

There was also a huge participation from the alumni, and we would like to thank all of you for coming out. The chapter

would really like to thank Matt Simon for his great planning and hard work to make this rush as successful as it was.

Also the chapter, as well as SPSU, would like to thank Charlie Song for his hard work for this chapter, and other fraternities on campus. Charlie song won the Junior of The year award, as well as the Greek Man of The Year for the school year of 2007-2008. More on Charlie next time.



One heck of a party

Photo by: Keaton Wheeler

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Any student paying Activity Fees is eligible to join *The Sting*, though final decision is made by the Editor-in-Chief. We prefer creative students who have passed English 1101. Come to our meetings Friday at 1:00 PM in A252, upstairs in the student center, or call (678) 915-7310. This includes YOU, all you so-called members that never attend. *The Sting*: It's not a job, 'cause a real job pays more.

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SPSU is on the up and up!

Jarrett Bell
Staff Writer

SPSU is on the up and up. Enrollment is up; the amount of people living on campus is up; traffic is up. The school is getting on the map. As with this boom of more bodies on campus, the school must be able to handle the increasing capacity. One of those ways of handling the increasing capacity is increasing student housing on campus.

For those who were living on campus in the previous year, you probably will remember a survey was conducted to get an idea of student demand. The survey showed proposed layouts for new on campus housing. From that survey and with the increasing demand for on campus housing, the school has been moving forward in looking for ways to increase the amount of beds on campus while taking input from students on what layouts they would prefer.

Because of the increasing enrollment, current housing on campus is deficient by 200 beds, as of this year. This deficiency is only expected to increase as people are trying to get on campus. Since everything on campus is full, people are getting help from the school for reputable apartments off campus. This project would help to get those people on campus and into new

housing.

So what does this plan include? This project can be seen as a two part plan- general student housing and special student housing, which will be for groups on campus that want to have their own designated house. Combined, the estimated cost of this proposed project would be a show-stopping (drum roll please)

ing freshmen are more likely to see the new housing facilities and actually be able to use them before they graduate.

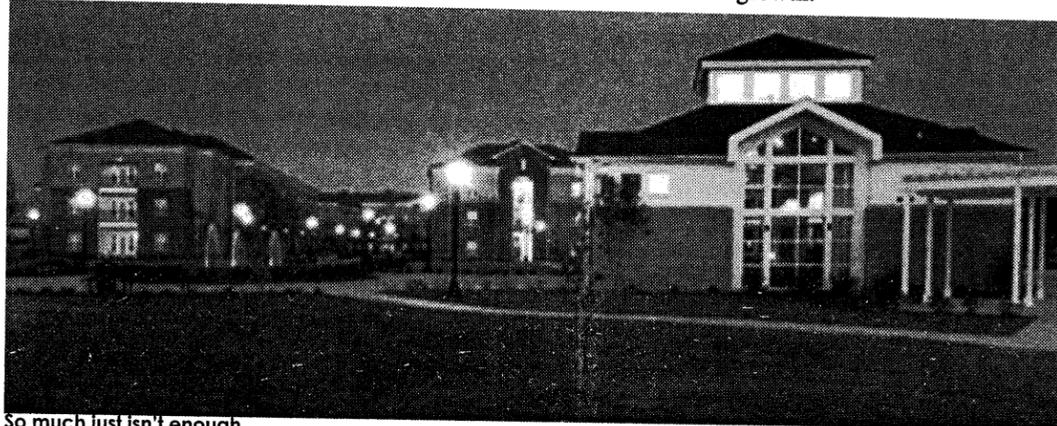
Where will the new housing go? The special student housing is easy; the special student housing will be located near the tennis courts at the southwest corner of campus near the South Cobb Drive entrance. There is

the strength of the school. Due to the obvious increase of enrollment and other factors, this puts SPSU in a good position to attract funding for this project. One of those ways in attracting funding is engaging in Public-Private Ventures, or PPVs. This allows for selling of bonds to entities willing to invest in the school's growth.

not be done.

While cost per student may be an issue, some people will end up flocking to the new housing when they find out that part of the plan includes building a new cafeteria among other amenities, since the capacity of the Student Center's cafeteria is being stretched. It should be noted that the final details of the makeup of the new housing are not written in stone and are subject to change.

Despite the possibility of the project not being able to progress or the details of the composition of the new housing possibly changing, this bold plan to increase housing on campus shows the strength and vitality of our school. I look forward to coming back to this school to visit and seeing the growth of the school in the form of new housing and amenities, which will help to spur more growth in terms of student activities and sports. That is what puts SPSU on the up and up!



So much just isn't enough

Photo by: www.spsu.edu

\$38 million. The proposal would bring 720 beds to the main campus, with 120 of those beds going to special student housing.

We'll come back to the finances. Perhaps you really want to know when will it be available, should the project come to fruition. Juniors and seniors, unfortunately, you won't be able to enjoy the new housing. Should the plan stay on track, it is scheduled to open by the fall of 2010. Sophomores and incom-

plenty of open space that will be an ideal location for this type of village housing. However, the general student housing will not be so easy, as there are proposed locations but none of them are definite.

So how will the school finance such a project? According to Mr. Patrick McCord, Vice President of Business and Finance says that securing funding is based "on the strength of the project" which is dependent on

Most people want to know how much the new housing will cost per student. This is perhaps the biggest question for the school, as according to McCord, this is one of the "litmus test" on whether the project will actually proceed or not. The rationale is if the cost per student is too high, students will opt not to live in the new facilities and the facilities will not be able to pay for themselves. Therefore if the rent is too high, the project will

Gaming Industry Partying Too Much?

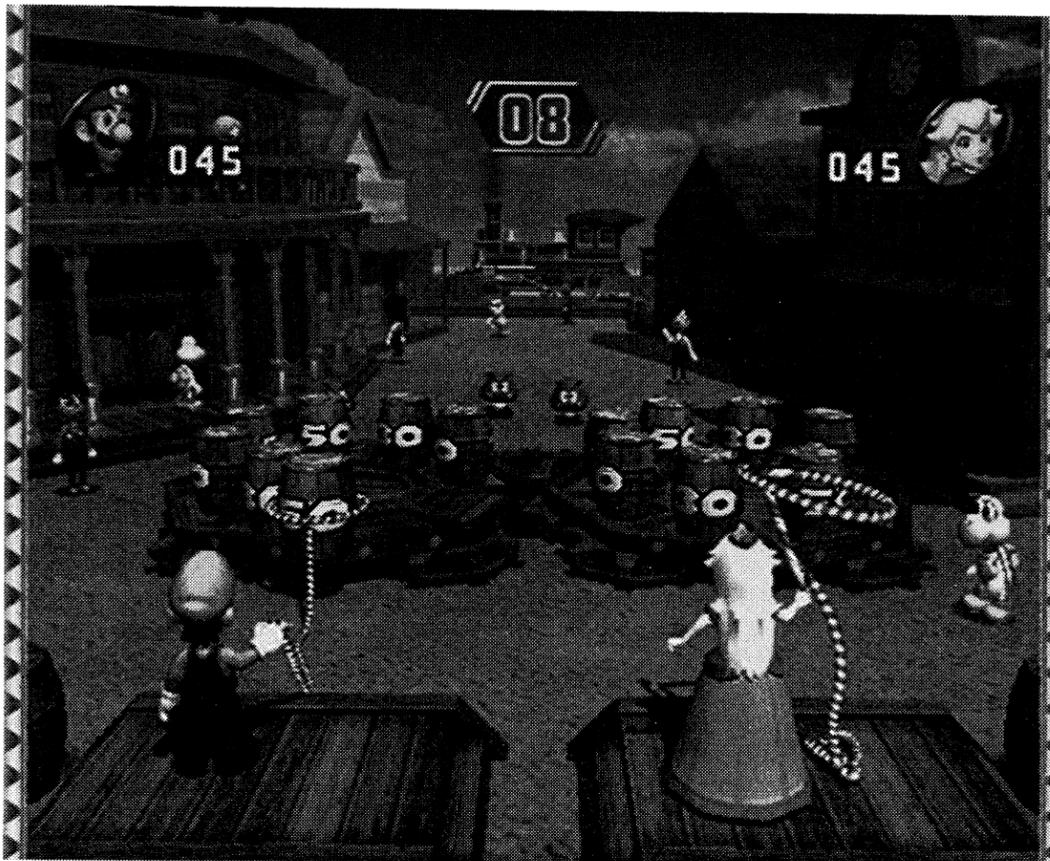
Where the other games at?

Sean Fine
Editor-in-Chief

One thing that has constantly urked me over the past half year is that the majority of gaming industry has taken a hint from the gamer populace that what's hot right now are Party Games. Games like Mario Party, Raving Rabbids, and yes, even Rock Band has become so mainstream that it's becoming increasingly difficult to appreciate the gaming industry, when the number of developers just want to churn out games try to only be that... simple-minded games.

The biggest victim of this is no doubt the Wii, because of the popularity of it's initial launch title: Wii Sports, there have been numerous knock offs to try and achieve the same amount of success, such as Carnival Games, Cooking Mama, Raving Rabbids. Because of this, it seems that the Wii has gotten a reputation as a 'Strictly Party Game' console, despite some of it's more fascinating games like Mario Galaxy, No More Heroes, and even though it could also be counted as a party game as well, Super Smash Bros. Brawl is also more involving because it isn't just a game that's only half-assed collection of mini-games.

It's not that mini-game games or games like Rockband can't be fun, it's just gotten to the point that there's too many of them and so long as people keep buying them, developers will get the incentive that "Hey, people are buying these games



A party game is fun once in a while but damn!

photo courtesy: cache.kotaku.com

that took us less than 3 months to make much more than this one title that took us over a year to design and develop. Let's make more of those cheap and easy games." And therefore, there will be an over saturation of these types of games.

So what exactly is causing the problem? Surprisingly enough, I believe the person causing the problem is a percentage of the 'hardcore' gamers. By hardcore, I mean two

types of people, a) the people that don't want to go off the beaten path of games like Halo 3, Mario, and Final Fantasy, and try out a game just because it looks different (ie. Odin Sphere) and b) the people that will try any sort of game because they have found a way to acquire these games practically for free, pirating.

Let's take an example: Gamer A and Gamer B both own a Wii and both want to get a new game. Gamer

A is a fairly casual player, wanting instant gratification when he plays his games, and thus will spend his money on a party game, such as say, Rayman: Raving Rabbids. Gamer B considers himself a hardcore gamer and is not interested in party games, so instead he finds a copy of No More Heroes... he heard very little of it, but is fascinated by the cover of the main character wielding a light saber. Having very little

money, Gamer B decides not to buy No More Heroes and instead, find the file on the internet and pirate it. At this point, Gamer A and Gamer B are happy because they have what they want.

The sales (or Sale in this case) is transferred over to the games' respective companies and they examine, "Ah, Raving Rabbids was bought a lot more than No More Heroes... we should make more games like Raving Rabbids." Fast forward a couple of months and both Gamer A and Gamer B are looking online for upcoming games. Gamer A is pleased to see more and more party games coming out, while Gamer B is frustrated to see no games that could even stand up to the fun he had with No More Heroes coming out. Gamer A is happy but Gamer B is mad.

What about a solution? I think the solution is two parts. A) Don't Pirate for one. You may be getting a free game out of it, but in the end, you'll be the cancer killing the game industry. B) Play games that look interesting to you. It's not bad to go with the flow and get games that you know (or at least, really expect) to be good, but when you're in the game store or if you're browsing a game website and something catches your eye, take a look at it. If you like what you see, why not give it a shot? How else will you find the true gems of gaming?

THE TENSTONE PAPERS

THE 'GET IT CORRECT' SERIES - KNOWLEDGE IS NOT POWER

Jarrett Bell
Staff Writer

The Tenstone Papers is a set of commentary that I write on subjects that can range from politics to general common issues. Some of these issues can be considered taboo, issues that people do not want to discuss or absolutely controversial issues. However, these papers are meant to engage in an educated discussion over a specific topic and bring about viewpoints that may have never been considered.

This particular paper is a special installment of the Tenstone Papers, the first of what is known as the 'Get it Correct' series. This series is dedicated to commonly used and well known statements that can be shown to be logically flawed and can be debunked. It is a tragedy when people use such statements without taking the time to analyze them logically. These statements are nonetheless misleading and truly counterproductive when they are analyzed. This series is dedicated to picking apart a statement and establishing a parallel of what would be a more correct statement with something that is well known and already proven (the subject of this installment is Physics.)

The format of this series is as follows: first, I will present the statement that is commonly used

incorrectly; second, I will present a statement that is more sensible; finally, I will present an analysis of the original statement, establishing the parallel and showing the logical disconnect between the parallel and the original statement (as well as showing how the new statement goes logically with the parallel established.)

So let us begin, shall we? Consider the following statement:
Statement: Knowledge is Power.

What I feel the statement should be: Applied (or executed) knowledge is power.

To demonstrate why the first statement is fundamentally flawed, one must review two definitions: the word 'knowledge' and the word 'applied.'

Before we proceed, we must note that since the statement does not mention how to execute the knowledge, we can safely assume that attaining the knowledge translates to power. The point of this discussion is based on this assumption, since we are trying to show that the statement does not imply how to make use of that knowledge. If we did not make this assumption, this discussion is null and void.

The definition(s) of the word 'knowledge', according to Dictionary.com are as follows:

1. Acquaintance with facts,

truths, or principles, as from study or investigation; general erudition; knowledge of many things.

2. Familiarity or conversance, as with a particular subject or branch of learning: A knowledge of accounting was necessary for the job.

3. Acquaintance or familiarity gained by sight, experience, or report: a knowledge of human nature.

4. The fact or state of knowing; the perception of fact or truth; clear and certain mental apprehension.

Since we are introducing definitions, let us introduce the definitions of 'applied' as well. These definitions will be used later.

1. To make use of as relevant, suitable, or pertinent: to apply a theory to a problem.

2. To put to use, esp. for a particular purpose: to apply pressure to open a door.

3. To bring into action; use; employ: He applied the brakes and skidded to a stop.

These are only four of the definitions of the word 'knowledge.' However, using the definitions that we have listed above, none of these definitions say anything about utilizing that 'knowledge.' For knowledge to be power, knowledge has to be used to create that power.

For a logical comparison,

consider kinematics in physics- a block sitting at rest on a flat, frictionless surface. Due to Newton's First Law of Motion, the Law of Inertia, the object will remain at rest or remain at constant motion unless a force is applied on the object. In other words, the system requires an outside force to stop the block if it is moving or put it in motion if it is not moving. However, if no force is applied, will the block accelerate? Let's look at this issue with the object at rest. When the force is applied, the object moves a displacement of d , which consequently means work was done on the object. The amount of work being done on an object over a given period of time is equal to the power of the object.

Given that example, consider the block to be 'knowledge.' We can deduce from the preceding example that if the block is knowledge and it is sitting in someone's head but if the person does not have the drive to want to utilize it (which synonymously is the 'force'), then that knowledge will not be in motion. Inversely, if the person who has the knowledge takes what they know and utilizes it by applying it to any given situation (the application of this knowledge is synonymously the 'force'), then the person is moving forward with their lives by moving from their current state

to a more successful state (which synonymously is the "displacement") and thus working with their knowledge (since the person's knowledge is in motion.) Consequently, when a person works with their knowledge over their lifetime (hopefully speaking) that person will exert their power over specific areas within their expertise.

Hence, we have established a parallel between Physics and what I feel the statement should be. Given this parallel that we established, it is clear that knowledge cannot translate into power if it is inactive and no work is being done to apply that knowledge. Considering the definitions of the word 'applied', the definitions directly correlate with the parallel that we concocted. Now, given these definitions, we can say that when you put knowledge to use to better your current state and exert your influence in your area of expertise, you are putting your knowledge to work and thus giving you power (or your influence) in those respective areas or subjects. Finally, since we have observed that the original statement does not reference the application of the acquired knowledge, we can safely say that the original statement is logically incorrect and misleading.

Don't Fail Yourself

Twila McConnell
Editor Emeritus

I'm simply not a believer of the sentiment that the best way to fix a problem is to stick a Band-Aid on it. This is what I feel is happening with the drinking age. Well, we can't stop underage drinking, so we'll just lower the standards. What I'd like to ask is, how is this going to solve the problem?

1. First of all, the accessibility to alcohol will rise dramatically. I will be turning twenty-two this year, so it wasn't that long ago that I was eighteen. I turned eighteen as a senior in high school earlier than most - in October. While I have never smoked, I knew plenty of people who did and had several requests by friends to purchase them cigarettes.

It is obvious that if people were asking me for cigarettes, they certainly would have been asking me for alcohol. Currently, high schoolers have to ask older siblings who are likely away at college or people they work with to get them alcohol or they have to steal it from stores or their parents. Usually, due to the maturity level of someone who is 21 is much greater than someone who is 18, after likely gaining much more responsibility for themselves, and most 21 year olds I had contact with when I was 18 wouldn't have given me alcohol if I'd asked. Although my friends had more contacts, there was rarely alcohol available in mass quantities more

than once a week, sometimes not more than once a month.

However, if 18 year olds have alcohol available to them, it will be much easier for those who are juniors, sophomores, freshman, and even potentially middle schoolers, to get their hands on alcohol. I know when I was a freshman I had never been to a party that involved alcohol or new anyone who could get their hands on it, or even wanted to. If kids are exposed to alcohol earlier, won't this increase their drive to



Is this REALLY worth it?

If experienced drivers are unable to control themselves driving while drunk, with all the maturity to make the decision not to drive, how then do you expect a young kid who has likely not had a driving license longer than a year and a half (with the rise of the age required to get a license) should have the maturity and experience not to get behind the wheel of a car? I know that this is up to the individual person, but I simply can't believe, knowing myself personally, that most 18 year olds

drink, lowering graduation and test scores even further?

2. Of course I'm going to have to mention drunk driving. We all know the horrors of drunk driving, so I won't bore you. I hope you have never had to experience the pain of it, but if you have, you know it's nothing to take lightly.

have the maturity required to take this responsibility seriously.

3. If you can die for your country, you can have a drink. People seem to feel strongly that if you're in the military you should be allowed to drink. Well, I have news for you: with a military ID, you can drink, no matter your age.

So this argument is completely invalid. I do feel that if you have the maturity to give up your life for this country, than clearly you have the maturity to drink. However, most 18 year olds I know don't have that maturity in the slightest and that's why they're not in the military.

4. You can vote, but voting isn't a drug. The argument that the government trusts you votes but not alcohol is completely invalid to me. Voting is a right you have to change the course of your country. You can also buy a house, open bank accounts by yourself, buy cigarettes and porn, and in almost every way you are a legal adult (you still can't rent a car, though.) However, alcohol is a drug. It's a legal drug, but it's a drug. A drug that isn't safe for the development of a typical 18-year-old brain. I'm not going to bore you with research you've already heard; you can find more information on line. There really are no similarities between voting and drinking: voting doesn't change your personality, voting doesn't impair your judgment, voting doesn't slow you reaction time. Nor do any of the other things you are responsible for when you turn 18 (with the arguable exception of cigarettes.)

5. I don't want kids sitting in a bar with me. Do you really want to sit down next to two kids discussing their SATs? Do you really want to sit down next to a hot chick and slip out your hottest

moves and best pick-up lines on her, just to find out she's 18 and going to your old high school? I'm going to be honest, I don't. I have younger siblings, and I don't really want to imagine them sharing a drink with me quite yet. At least not until they get a little more discussable life experience.

5. It will teach that you don't have to take responsibility for your duties. Instead of actually taking responsibility for drinking and making campus' dry like SPSU's, they would much rather just have the drinking age lowered so they don't have to deal with it. In addition, those who would have taken responsibility for their inhibitions through legal action, no longer have to. In high school a friend of mine was arrested for drinking under age. Did he learn his lesson? No, because his father got him out of the whole ordeal, being a lawyer, and he learned nothing other than that his father would get him out of anything - even that which he deserved to experience. So of course, his actions didn't change and there was no personal growth.

If we, as a society, want to raise responsible adults, we have to come from responsible institutions, and I can in no way see this possible by changing the drinking age. Not only will the colleges have failed us, but the government as well. And if the government is a power of the people, then we will have failed ourselves.

Photo by: www.scottishyouthparliament.org.uk

(Not) the end of the world

As we know it

Jasmine King
Staff Writer

So I'm fairly sure that everyone's heard about the Large Hadron Collider. If you haven't, I'll sum it up quickly: particle collider, Higgs Boson, conditions right after the Big Bang, awesome sciencey things, and something about the possibility of micro black holes or strange matter annihilating the entire planet.

As this point, you're probably all screaming and preparing your "The End Is Nigh" signs. To be frank, I think it's a bunch of crap. The world's not going to end, calm down. Here's my thought process:

Reason #1: IT'S BROKEN.

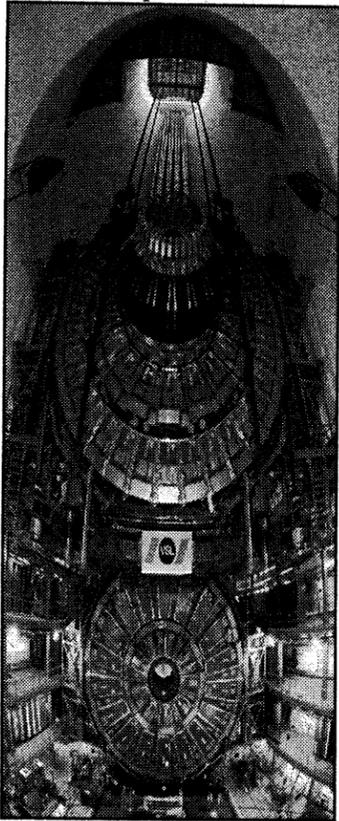
Like seriously. It's busted. A few weeks ago, one of the magnets (which are supposed to be kept near absolute zero) messed up, so the entire project is postponed until next year. But for sake of argument, let's pretend that it's been fixed and turned on again. I'm STILL not worried.

Reason #2: Half of that stuff happens already.

It's been proven that a good portion of the fun things they're expecting from this project already happen naturally other places in the universe—including, but not limited

to, the earth's atmosphere, and we're still here, aren't we?

Obviously, there's a chance that something can seriously go wrong with anything that we do, but I highly doubt that the world will end. The only thing I'm really worried about is someone over at CERN blasting themselves into oblivion with an errant proton beam.



So much panic over something so... big.

Photo courtesy flickr.com



Happy Thanksgiving!

THE TENSTONE PAPERS

Speed Doesn't Kill!

Jarrett Bell
Staff Writer

Have you wondered about the validity of the statement 'speed kills'? This is one particular statement that I do not like- it is not a true statement for all cases and it is not a properly worded statement. The statement 'speed kills' attempts to personify speed as a representable element of human nature. Secondly, in conjunction with the first reason, the statement 'speed kills' can implicitly assume that going in excess of a posted speed limit will result in death, which is absolutely ludicrous. Aside from the logical reasons why this statement is not properly worded, the statement itself was formed on a poor representation of facts that has resulted in grossly lowered speed limits and higher revenues for cities, counties and states while using the blanket of 'safety' to successfully market their campaign.

From dictionary.com, there are many definitions for the word 'speed.' However, the definition that we will use is the following: "rapidity in moving, going, traveling, proceeding, or performing." Now, let us consider that in Physics, there are two types of quantities- scalar and vector quantities. The definition of 'scalar' is "representable by position on a scale or line; having only magnitude." A vector quantity is "a quantity possessing both magnitude and direction..." In the study of kinematics in Physics, speed is a scalar quantity- magnitude with no direction and velocity is speed with magnitude and direction.

How does this really apply to the discussion? Given the definition of scalar and since speed is a scalar quantity, it is representable by a position on a scale or a line. Now, let us consider the statement 'Speed Kills.' How can something kill that is only representable by a position on a scale or a line? From Physics, we know that Newton's Third Law of Motion states for a force there is always an equal and opposite reaction. For our purposes, we can word this law in lamest, overly simplified terms as for every action there is a reaction.

Now using the terms we just concocted, we can say that there has to be an action that will result in a reaction of speed or increased speed. Speed does not increase or an object does not start from rest with increasing speed without an action or a force initiating that increase. Since an action is required for rapidity in moving, going, traveling, proceeding, or performing, as the definition of speed says, something has to be capable of taking that initial action. Something that is capable of taking that initial action has a degree of autonomy. Given what has been stated, an object with the capability of controlling speed can kill.

However, given the face value of the original statement and the statement 'Speed Kills' and this newly created statement deduced

from logical reasoning, they are obviously not the same statement. Therefore, the statement 'Speed Kills' is not a properly worded statement.

So the proposed statement, "People who fail to manage speed causes deaths" is a better statement to say. Since speed is a result of an action, we must ask ourselves who and/or what is controlling that action. A typical example is the usage of a car. While stripping out the complexity of how a car and its internals function, the very base of which starts the initial action which spurs many cascading reactions is when the person operating the motor vehicle presses the gas pedal. Hence, we can say that the person operating the motor vehicle is the one who is ultimately controlling the speed, as the reactions that occur from the action of the person operating the motor vehicle will result in ultimately increasing or decreasing the speed of the motor vehicle.

With that said, let us introduce the definition of 'manage.' From Merriam-Webster Dictionary Online, the first definition of manage is stated as "to handle or direct with a degree of skill." Considering this definition in conjunction with the new statement concocted, we are now raising the issue that for someone to speed there is skill(s) involved, as with simply operating a motor vehicle without speeding- case in point, NASCAR drivers.

If we were to use the original statement 'Speed Kills' in apply it to NASCAR drivers, by face value, every NASCAR driver should have been dead, depending on how speeding is scaled. However, our

new definition is a much better fit, as NASCAR drivers have skills to manage their speed. While accidents do occur, it is the result of many factors, including one failing to manage their speed at a particular given instant.

How does this apply to the average driver? Just as we said that if the original statement 'speed kills' applied to NASCAR drivers they would all be dead, the same applies to average drivers. However, not all average drivers are capable of speeding because there are average drivers that do not handle speed with a degree of skill or do not have the skills to speed in a prudent manner. People need to understand that speeding cannot be done recklessly. According to dictionary.com, reckless means 'utterly unconcerned about the consequences of some action; without caution; careless.' In reference to people recklessly speeding, this does not necessarily connote to them lacking the skill(s) of speeding but instead implies that these people are speeding without using skill(s) they may have which ultimately creates the hazard.

The idea that people need to remember is that we all need to manage our speed appropriately. Going in excess speeds is technically not the problem- the true problem is the lack of skills that are being used when going at excess speeds. Those who use their skills wisely and properly, as well as prudent judgment will be able to operate a motor vehicle safely and responsibly and will be able to properly adjust to changing road conditions. That will be how lives will be saved on America's bustling roads.



If Sammy Hagar can't drive 55, then he'd have a lot of trouble on this road.

Photo courtesy wikipedia.org

The Machine Girl

Planet Terror but with Ninjas

Sean Fine
Senior Staff Writer

Mentioned in our previous, albeit much late, issue of the Sting, *Machine Girl* is a fun little movie about a girl named Ami Hyuga, who loses her family and arm to a Yakuza family, only to get her arm replaced with a machine gun, hence the title. Yet, the movie stands out as such a hilarious gore-fest of a B-rated Movie that further detail is necessary to truly appreciate how amazing the film actually is. Who knows? You might just want to pick it up for a nice "scare" or laugh or two.

the process, Ami stumbles and slips her hand into some tempura batter and one parent proceeds to force her hand into a pot of boiling oil.

Painful, I know but somewhat over the top in terms of pain. It goes to show how creative (if not silly) the writers were willing to go to depict painful moments. Additionally, the ending result of the tempura hand is so cheesy looking, it amazing.

Characters: The characters in *Machine Girl* are fairly generic in terms of your typical Japanese villains: There's the evil Yakuza Boss, his even more evil wife,

(read: gross) sexual stimulation, with characters dressed in constantly bloody school girl outfits, dismemberment, even a mention of necrophilia, but with that out of mind, the female leads are rather attractive for the characters they're portraying.

Sound: The music really adds to the fights scenes in the movie and doesn't over do it, adding a nice blending of tension and excitement throughout the movie with some silent spots which somehow adds to the suspense of certain fight scenes, kind of like how the music in *Kill Bill* was presented.

The actors portray their characters well (for a fictional Japanese "horror") adding just enough bad acting to make the experience enjoyable than boring or horrendous. Vocally, the Japanese voice track is done welling, with the actors giving good performances and expressing their character's emotions well (albeit over exaggerated in some scenes). While I have admittedly not had the chance to listen to the complete English version, the scenes I have viewed in English have that same level of good, yet bad enough quality of voice acting to be funny.

Overall: In the end, *Machine Girl* is a great movie, if for some of the wrong reasons. It's funny as hell, has good actor portrayal of characters, excellent fighting choreography with nice, although cheesy special effects, and to reiterate, the main character gets a MACHINE GUN ARM! These benefits of the film make its short comings seem insignificant as you're laughing your ass off. You could just rent it for a weekend laugh, but I personally will be happy to present it on my movie shelf. 8/10

his cowardly yet smirking ass of a son and everything in between, though there are little twists for the villains that are so unbelievable that as I watched and laugh, I was asking no one in particular, "Wait... what?"

When it comes to the "good guys", the archetypes are a little more diverse, though the main characters are all driven by the same motive of revenge. It's a little boring when you initially think about, but then you remember that the main character gets a bloody MACHINE GUN FOR A ARM!!!

It might just be me but I have a feeling that the staff was aiming for some really kinky



Prelude to a beatdown

Photo Courtesy: www.cinemaisdope.com

Presentation: With the main synopsis out of the way, the only thing left to really talk about is the presentation of the story and the characters and all I can say is "wow". The story is so hilariously written that you have to wonder what the hell the writers of the film were thinking. The movie is defined as a horror/thriller movie, but if anything it's a very gory comedy.

For instance, in one scene, Ami finds herself fighting the parents of son related to the death of her family and the parents, conveniently Yakuza members as well find out her intent for revenge, they proceed to try and kill her right then and there. In

Did you know?

Convenient History

Jessica McNally
Staff Writer

Did you know that 7-Eleven pioneered the convenient store concept back in 1927? The company operated as Tote'm, beginning in Dallas, TX. In 1946 the company changed their name to 7-Eleven to reflect their operating hours. Today, there are more than 34,800 7-Eleven stores operating in 17 countries, serving over 7 million customers each day. The buzz word Slurpee is a trademark of the company. Last year, the company made 46.6 billion dollars in sales.

RaceTrac, down the street from the SPSU campus on 120, first began in 1934 under the title Carl Bolch Trackside Stations in St. Louis, Missouri. Today the company has over 525 stores in 12

out of 50 United States, operating mainly in the southeast. They have been headquartered in Atlanta, Georgia since 1976 and offer over 4,000 different kinds of products to customers.

QuikTrip, another convenience store around town, originally began in a retail strip complex in 1958 in Tulsa, Oklahoma. The company grew its profit margins by jacking up prices on groceries in the name of convenience. It wasn't until 1971 that QuikTrip stores began to sell gasoline. The company did not move into the Atlanta area until the mid 1980's with store plans similar to the ones you see today. Sales exceed 1 billion dollars in 1996. Today the company operates more than 325 stores throughout nine different states ranging from the mid western to the southeastern



A Closer look at some of the brands you have grown up with

Photoshop by: Jessica McNally

Anime Weekend

Atlanta: 2008

Sean Fine
Senior Staff Writer

Every year, the local anime convention of Anime Weekend Atlanta (or AWA) occurs, and many people come to the Renaissance Waverly Hotel just to participate in the dealers room, the cosplaying, and the various panels to go to. I was no exception to this matter and AWA this year was plenty of fun. With the sudden interests in new series such as *Code Geass*, *Gurren Lagann*, and so forth, there was a lot of fandom at AWA this year, with plenty of merchandise in both the artist gallery and the dealer's room as well as some panels dedicated just singular animes such as *Code Geass* and the ever popular *Naruto*.

Anime showings were slightly lacking however, with the showings of things most con-goers have probably seen already, with a few minor exceptions such as the *Fist of the North Star* OVA of Yuria's Story and the official dub showing of *Claymore*, a series about dark fantasy warriors made to slay human-feasting demons. One showing room that failed to disappoint was actually the live-action room, presenting amusing presentations such as a *Sentai Marathon* (that's Japanese Power Rangers for those who don't know) to films such as *Machine Girl*, which has the plot synopsis of a girl losing her family and arm to Yakuza and gets it re-

placed with a machine gun! Good, gory, Japanese fun.

Panels that weren't dedicated to animes probably were more informative than just simple fun such as the artist workshop with Fred Perry of *Gold Digger* fame, or the Costume Armor Making panel that taught those interested how to make a suit of armor for costume purposes. Other panels usually consisted of Q&A sessions with special guests such as artists or voice actors who answered the questions of many fans, though this years selection of voice acting guests seemed to be... a repeat of the same stuff I saw before. Not to say that those actors are bad, but it's just I don't care anymore because I've seen them already, but to each their own.

Speaking of costumes, the selection of cosplays this AWA were quite wide, with numerous poorly thrown together Jokers and plenty of surprisingly thought-out *Code Geass* costumes. Personally, I went as Kamina from *Gurren Lagann* and while there were plenty of better costumes than mine, it was still fun.

Overall, the experience of another AWA is always fun. Though I hope next year has a fresher presentation in terms of anime showed and guests invited, I can't say that I disliked this year. I look forward to next year's events and I hope it's even better.



You can find these people at AWA. Not sure you'd want to...

Photo courtesy www.awa-con.com

regions. The company has its own gasoline brand, Redline, as well as food brands HOTZI and Quick 'n Tasty sandwiches.

I could go on and on and on, but I think you get that the idea of convenience is something that has been surrounding us for several generations now. I don't know if 24 hours of convenience has been a good thing or a bad thing for us, but to find out, I guess you would have to consider what kinds of things convenient stores provide and in what kinds of ways those things affect us.

LEGO Batman

Dave Spivak
Copy Editor

There have been more than a few LEGO games published in the last several years, and they've been pretty popular. *Traveler's Tales* is now drifting away from a solely Star Wars based LEGO franchise, and giving some other iconic universes a LEGO treatment. One of the most highly anticipated installments in the series, *LEGO Batman* pits Gotham's Dark Knight against a host of his most famous rivals (and Killer Moth). Who is Killer Moth? Well, I read the blurb and defeated his level in the game. I still don't know. In addition, you also face off against Clayface, Mr. Freeze, Poison Ivy, Two-Face, The Riddler, Catwoman, Killer Croc, Bane, The Man-Bat, The Penguin, Scarecrow, The Mad Hatter, Harley Quinn, and The Joker. What's even more impressive, there's a villain story mode that allows you to play as every one of these characters. The game also has many other characters that you can unlock.

The game has rather ingenious levels that require ample amounts of replay. There are a number of obstacles that require abilities your characters simply don't have to get past them. You have to return with a larger assortment of characters to unlock everything from any level. The Hero Story mode pits Batman and Robin against a wide array of challenges that require the use of four unique suits each. Swapping suits leaves Batman and Robin with their core abilities intact, but with a new look and new special ability needed to complete a particular challenge. Much of the other gameplay should be very familiar to fans of other LEGO games. Essentially anything in the game that's made of LEGOs is destructible, and will explode in a shower of studs that you'll want to collect. At other times, you'll see a dancing pile of LEGOs. That's your clue to build the solution to your puzzle. Half the game's content is derived from Batman, and half from the fact that the characters are all made of plastic building blocks.

Co-op play is the focus of the game, and it works really well. The problem is when you are playing single player. *Traveler's Tales* seemed to have a need to make Robin useful, so you constantly have to tag between characters, which you can do on accident to the complete ruin of your plans. Spend ten minutes trying to navigate a difficult jump puzzle, only to accidentally switch to the character that hasn't even begun to follow you, and have the character that just completed the nerve-wracking challenge jump down making you start the whole thing over. You'll understand what I'm talking about. Couple that with the fact that you need to rely on quite honestly one of the dumbest AIs ever made to successfully follow you and help you complete challenges, and you're sometimes in for a world of unnecessary difficulty. You'll find yourself many times wishing for a partner who wasn't a complete moron.

Each of the three stages features a level catering to one of the legendary Bat-vehicles. These levels are intensely fun, and you can really rack up the studs quickly. It seems that you attain the highest reward for the most property damage, and you'll see fiery plastic blocks and studs flying everywhere, especially in the Batmobile level. The only real problem is that the controls are relative to the camera. If the Batmobile is pointing left, you need to hold left to go straight, pressing up makes the Batmobile turn and drive away from the camera. This takes quite a lot of getting used to, and the controls are the same for all the other vehicles. All of the vehicle stages make use of a tow-cable and have a strong puzzle element. The Batboat uses a tow-cable to tow mines, which are needed to unlock new parts of the level and are needed in the fight against the Penguin's Sub. Robin in the Bat-Copter uses a tow-cable to tow mines in the Batwing level, however these airborne mines follow some of the most questionable physics I've ever seen. Thankfully they're only needed on a few occasions in that level.

Now for a breakdown:

Story/Characters: 18/20

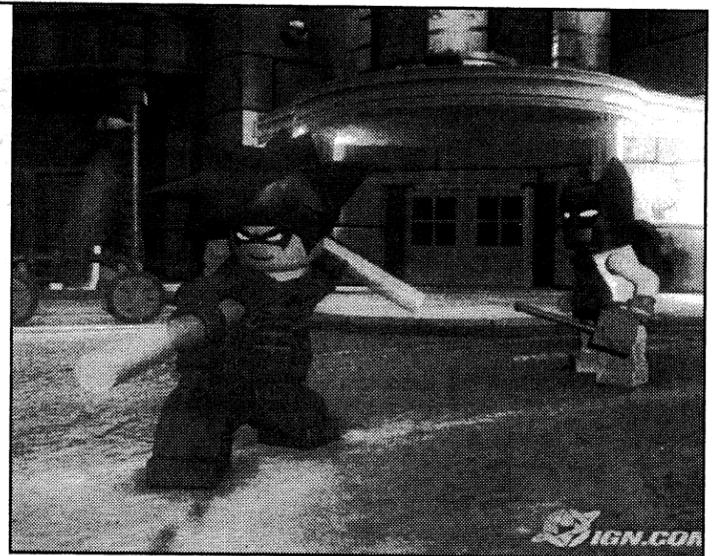
The story is completely original, and though not very complex,

Two-Face is only immune to toxins, so are Poison Ivy, Mr. Freeze, and others.

And seriously. Killer Moth? If you really wanted to go obscure you couldn't do the Clock King, Rupert Thorne, Count Vertigo, or the Ventriloquist and Scarface, or even not obscure but Ras Al Ghul?

Gameplay/Fun: 16/20

There are four kinds of challenge in any video game. 1) Challenges that make you feel like a genius or otherwise give you a great sense of accomplishment when you figure it out. These are the challenges every game programmer should seek, they are the ultimate goal of designers, and *LEGO Batman* has a few of these. 2) Challenges that make you feel like a retard for not figuring it out sooner. These are a bit of a problem, but they make replaying the level take only a fraction of the time the first run did. This game features a great many of these, unfortunately. I've wondered around aimlessly for five or ten minutes with no idea what to do next time and time again. 3) Challenges that make you feel like the designers are retards for making something so simple into something so complicated. There's not that much of this kind of challenge in *LEGO Batman*, although



When you see characters like Nighthawk, you know there's a deep reach for Batman character

Photo courtesy IGN.com

will eventually break your wrists. Thankfully, you could adjust the defaults. The PC version uses WASD for movement, which is now officially the gold standard. The problem is that this kind of input really only allows for 8 directions. 90 degree angles (45 degree angles when using a pair of keys) are really all this type of control allows for, and that's perfect for the majority of the game. There are a few parts, however, that require you to come at a ladder at a 15 degree angle, or drive a truck across a long bridge with a 30 degree slant making it

Audio/Video: 19/20

Aside from lag and other technical issues, the animations are very fluid and crisp. Most of the environments are more realistic and not made of LEGOs. At first this seems a little disappointing, but it really fits with this game. Overall it has a real gritty feel that meets my expectations of Gotham City. The LEGO aspects of the game all look like shiny, bright colored plastic building blocks.

The score is predominantly an homage to Danny Elfman's theme from the *Batman* movie, and frankly it's quite good and deserves to be used time and again. The sounds are generally standard fare, but very crisp and clear. I also just take some sadistic pleasure in the far off sound of a bad-guy breaking into dozens of little plastic pieces offscreen.

Replay/Extras: 17/20

This game has more content to unlock than it has content available without unlocking. Every level in the game requires a host of different abilities to find everything in, and there's a host of things to find. Extras, Suit upgrades, characters, even Wayne Manor and Arkham Asylum levels to unlock. Unfortunately, some of the harder items to unlock are the least rewarding, while the most rewarding unlockables, the villains, are the easiest to acquire. This game will have a good deal of replay for a while, but I think it may wear thin regrettably fast. Wayne Manor was absolutely loads of fun, and completely unexpected. I won't ruin the surprise, but I will say that I want to unlock the villains' bonus level after playing it.

The final score is 75% or a "C", although that score would be much higher if it weren't for persistent technical and control issues. It's very much worth a look, and with the modest price tag, a great way to kill your time for a few weeks. After that, you could easily find a friend who wants to play it.



Its LEGOs and it's Batman. What is not to love?

Photo courtesy IGN.com

it's still very entertaining. Sight gags and slapstick in the numerous cutscenes poke fun at virtually everyone in the Batman universe. Some are absolutely hilarious. None of the characters have any dialog beyond monosyllabic grunts, sighs, yelps, or other sounds. Most of the villains are done well, and many are very fun to play. Many have either a completely unique ability (Such as Poison Ivy, Mr. Freeze, and the Joker), others a unique combination of abilities (Clayface has double-jump and super strength) and others are unfortunately completely worthless.

sometimes you do have to wonder why they make you build all these things during boss battles instead of just having them built when you get there. 4) Challenges that wouldn't be a challenge so much if only the controls worked. Sadly, there's a bit of that in *LEGO Batman*. More on that in the next section.

Controls/Stability: 5/20

This score really only reflects *LEGO Batman* for PC. I can't rate the system performance of other systems, and I'm almost certain the controls are much better on other systems. First, let me say that the defaults for keyboard controls

nigh impossible to not fall off the edge a million times.

The PC version also suffers from intense lag, enormous loading times, having the video freeze making me miss the last 5 seconds of every cutscene in the game, game stopping, and until the third reinstall, one point early in the game where the game would crash every single time I played without fail. The game was in serious danger of being reviewed "UNPLAYABLE". This is an impressive laundry list of loading, video, audio, and lag issues for a game that's supposed to run on only half my system.

Contra 4

AKA: Ball Buster 4

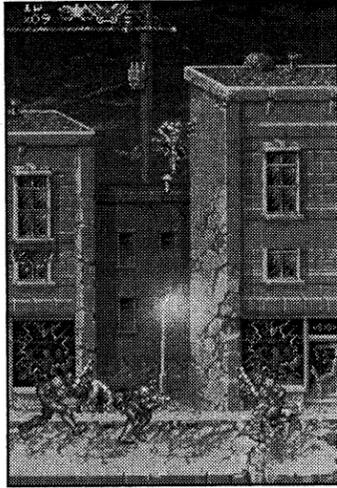
Sean Fine
Editor-in-Chief

Genre: Action Shoot 'Em Up
System: DS

Who remembers Contra? Back in the days of the NES, this game was fun for its extreme difficulty, yet accomplishable levels. Not to mention the music was pretty kick ass. Even going back today, one can pick and play Contra and enjoy it despite its brutal difficulty. Now we have Contra 4, which may have its number count wrong, considering there was Contra: Shattered Soldier, Super Contra, and so on and so forth, but I've seen worse mess ups in terms of chronology. Does this DS title fit the \$30 bill?

Story: The official story is that reoccurring alien villain, -, has returned once again to conquer Earth, but the beefy, shirtless badasses that stopped him before (along with some new color swaps of the same sprite) aren't going to take that without a fight. So they suit up, gun up, and do what badasses do best, charge blindly into the enemy, blasting your guns, kicking ass and taking names.

The story is practically non-existent other than tidbit. You have no cutscenes, save the opening for the game, and frankly, who needs a story when you're a shirtless Rambo-type, gunning aliens down? Not Contra, that's who.



Alot of enemies get on screen so it can get frantic.

Photo courtesy presthebuttons.typepad.com

Gameplay: Gameplay in Contra hasn't changed much and that's fine, because the original Contra formula: Running through the stage, gunning down an endless assault of enemies, picking up gun-powerups which vary from a machine gun to a spread shot, and then taking down a huge boss at the end of the stage is plenty satisfying.

If this is your first Contra game, then know that you have one shot and you're dead, making the game incredibly difficult, yet the controls and gun power-ups keep it from being entirely frustrating. For those familiar with Contra, there are a few changes besides the new level designs, and that is the weapon swap

ability and weapon drop feature. With weapon swapping, you can carry two special weapons at once, so when you die, you can at least have a back up special gun to help fight that boss. The weapon drop feature is helpful mostly in multiplayer when you want to give your gun to your buddy. Otherwise, if you've played Contra before, some of the stuff won't be terribly new, but damn is it satisfying to blow everything up.

If there is a major addition to the game, it's the Challenge Mode, unlocked after completing the game once. In this mode, there will be five missions with particular objectives ranging from "Kill all the baddies" to "Complete the level with an accuracy of 90%" to "Don't kill the hostages!" All of these challenges must be completed with one life, making them almost more difficult than the main game itself, but with persistence, you can unlock a plethora of bonus material, from the original Contra game to new characters and so forth. It certainly adds a lot of playability to the game after it's been completed, which is good cause the main game is relatively short, complete-able in a couple of hours, but the real replayability of the main game is that it's so hard yet so fun to try and beat it.

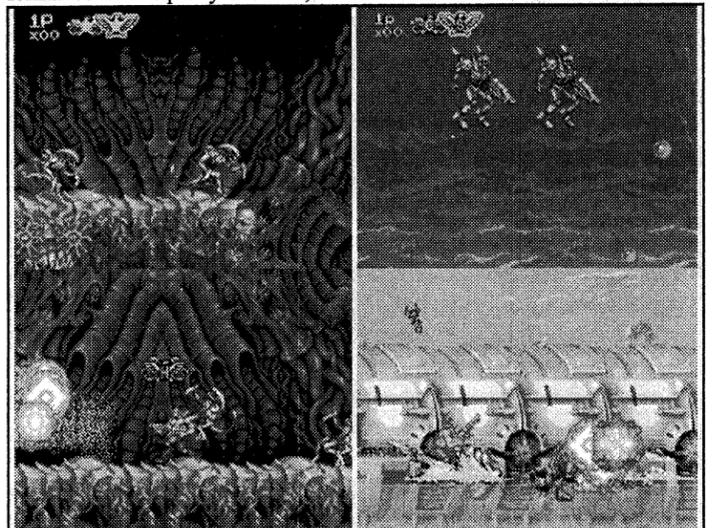
Graphics: The game uses both the high pixels count and the dual-screen feature of the DS to its

advantage and the game looks nice and runs nicely, only with bits of lag in multiplayer when both players are shooting too many bullets on screen. Otherwise, the game looks very crisp and clean for a platforming shooter, and while the faces look blurry, there is a lot of action on the screen, from explosions, to tiny bullet (that I repeat will kill you in one hit) that you perform such epic leaps of gun blazing awesomeness that the only way the presentation be any better is if the two dudes you're playing high five each other after you beat a boss with an explosion in the background!

Sound: Music is retro is performance and is pretty kick ass, as

they should be since you'll more than likely hear the same tunes over and over again from dying so much. The game also includes something of voiceacting if only for when your character dies and respawns into battle and they all work fine, though the original four characters are practically carbon copies of each other.

Overall: In the end, Contra 4 is a nice throw back to the old NES classic, being both difficult as hell, but invoking hot-blooded feelings as you practice and become better at it. Despite its ridiculous difficulty and short main game, it has enough replayability to warrant a purchase. 8/10



From Alien Strongholds to Waterbike Sequences, you'll have many action sequences.

Photo courtesy www.darkclub.com

Tengen Toppa Gurren Lagann

What the hell do you think I'm watching!?

Sean Fine
Editor-in-Chief

Genre: Anime Mecha

Few animes have truly pulled me so deep in the story that I practically end up watching the entire series within a single day. Up to date, these animes include Elfen Lied, Diamond Daydreams, and most recently Tengen Toppa Gurren Lagann, which is unique in the sense that the other two series last under 14 episodes, yet Gurren Lagann lasts nearly twice that amount. What makes it so appealing though?

Story: Set in a wasteland-ish earth, Simon, a 14 year old adolescent with a pinch of self-doubt, is a digger in his underground home. He's a good digger, but in his mind, that's all he is, a digger. One day, Simon finds a string of peculiar artifacts, which eventually leads Simon, his respected brother-in-soul Kamina, and a sudden pop-in sniper Yoko through the barriers of the underground walls and to the surface, only to find it's inhabited by beastmen piloting giant machines. From there, the plot takes off to battle the beastmen forces through whatever methods possible, even by "Going beyond the impossible and kick reason to the curb" (Gurren Lagann)!

While the first couple of episodes might seem slow at first, by the 7th episode, you'll be hooked as a developing plot, sudden revelations, and twists abound will pop up, but it's not just the plot that really makes the anime so enticing; it's the characters. Kamina, one of the major characters,

stands as such a symbol for the theme of 'Never give up and Never give in' that he's willing to say to a person in doubt, "Don't believe in yourself. Believe in me, who believes in you!" And initial seemingly pointless turn out to be more complex and contributive to the overall experience than one would guess.

Even with the twists and plots intrigue within the first half of the series, even larger and unexpected twists pops up within the second half that truly defines the anime as 'Epic'. Yet, once you finish the series and everything is said and done, you can't help but cry out for more!

Animation: Gainax is notorious for their excellent quality in animation. With animated works like Neon Genesis Evangelion and FLCL under their belt, it's hard not to deny that the animators at Gainax are well-rounded and experienced and it shows in Tengen Toppa Gurren Lagann. Characters moves with fluid motion and are very expression in both their actions and faces. Sure, a occasional bad frame will pop up, but in the long run of things, when one episode about halfway through the series has more frames than your average anime's final episode, you can't say that the animators are skimping on details.

Character designs are also quite interesting and unique. Even with the most simplistic of characters, they look interesting and, in a Japanese anime-sort of way, they seem realistic in the sense that not everyone is pretty nor not is everyone just one



Best Characters ever.

Photo courtesy blogspot.com

sort of style. Simply put, the show's animation has diversity among its characters and it's just amazing to watch.

Music: The soundtrack for Gurren Lagann is wide, epic, and inspiring. Even the first piece you

hear as you watch the anime practically sits you down and tells you that this isn't something average, but something attempting to break the boundaries of quality. From there, you have a assortment of music to listen from, from the uplifting rocking

jam that is the opening music to the heavy-beat hip hop music that tells you to "ROW ROW FIGHT THE POWAH," there's a lot of music that will be pleasing to the ears.

Because of this diversity however, the entire soundtrack might not be enjoyed by a single individual, but when has that never been the case when it comes to soundtracks? I personally enjoy a good selection of the soundtrack and listening to it always gets me excited for whatever lies ahead. That's the kind of music that makes me enjoy Gurren Lagann so much.

Both in Sub-titles and in Dub form, Gurren Lagann is excellent in choosing their Voice Actors, yet this is a time to explain the difference between subs and dubs and which is better. It's all about preference. In the subbed version of Gurren Lagann, Kamina may sound like a strong leader type, but in the dub, he sounds... like a leader type, just with a different voice, yet I know there are people who will complain about it regardless. To those people, the dub isn't bad at all... now Naruto, there's a terrible dub for you.

Overall: In the end, Tengen Toppa Gurren Lagann is such a marvelous piece of action, drama, and humor that some fans rumor that anime was made just for the series itself. While no attempts to debunk this rumor have appeared yet, one thing is clear; Gurren Lagann is one of the best animes created within recent years. Here's one looking forward to the movie.