

0:00 Opening Ceremonies

Blu Ryder, Joseph Martin, Paul Franzen, Nathaniel Hoover, Anna Bryniarski

Join us as we open the show and honor all GameCola has been so far!

00:00-00:28

After running the “5 is average” theme at the beginning, the show opens with Joseph singing the song from the opening of SBemail 200 “Email Thunder” with “emails” replaced by “podcasts.” Joseph introduces the premise of the livestream and introduces the first hour participants: Blu Ryder, Nathaniel Hoover, Paul Franzen, and Anna Bryniarski.

Joe welcomes people in the audience including James Pelster and “Sailormoongrl412,” the latter of which is actually Anna. Anna mentions that their profile picture has a picture of themselves in it. Joe tries to defend himself saying that picture is too small and that Anna changed their username. Anna says that the username was changed automatically at some point.

A commenter, assumedly from Nathaniel’s sphere, comments about interest in Nathaniel’s participation. Later, they ask for article recommendations and a few are given by the participants. Nathaniel suggests his review of Mega Man 10.



@watchmccloud5873Are there any about Megaman?



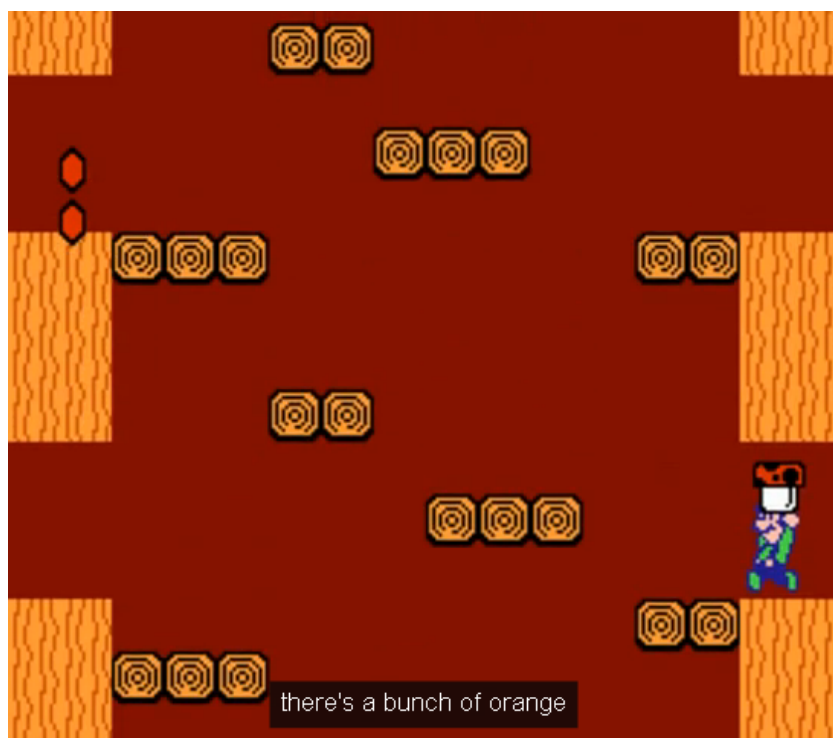
@watchmccloud5873Megaman 7?



@watchmccloud5873Sounds like me, I wasn’t a fan of 10

0:28

Paul suggests Impaired Closed Captioning





Blu mentions This Yard Has Saled

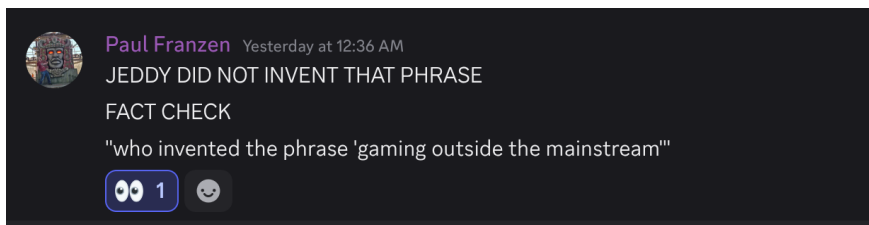
00:30



@paulfranken114

23.5 hours left let's goooooooooo

00:36: Joe mentions that Jeddy came up with "Gaming Outside the Mainstream." Shortly after, he notes that he needs some trivia questions from Paul for a later segment. Paul posts the following on #staff-podcast



00:36-1:00

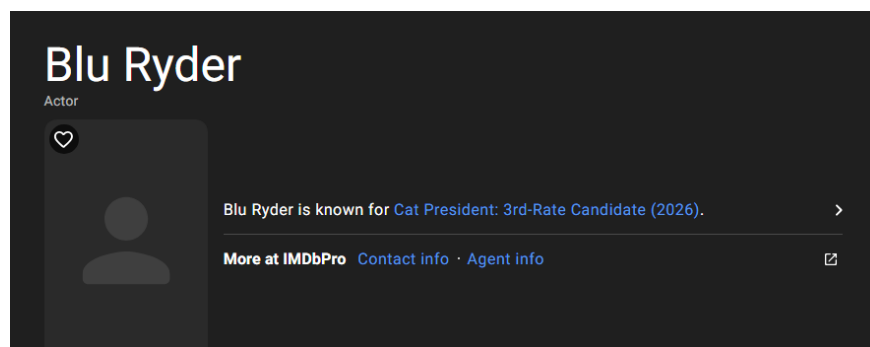
The discussion then turned to Paul and Anna's frequency of tweeting the word potato at each other, with Paul doing research. Paul "has dibs on potato" despite Anna's father's plans about her career. Some tweets include things like Joe's volunteering to come up with puns and Anna referring to their varying interest in returning to the topic.



I HAVE DIBS ON POTATO.

People start talking about Paul and Michael's work with *Oh, a Rock! Studios* and in particular how fun it is that by participating in some of the games, various people on the stream now have IMDB pages. Nathaniel discusses his roles such as on *Too Many Santas*. He says it's fun to use it in social games like Two Truths and a Lie. Blu shares similar sentiments. Paul mentions how he found out about this idea in general, and now adds people in himself. Some of the professional actors like Victoria Buckley that have had starring roles in games like *The Pizza Delivery Boy Who Saved the World* also find it practically beneficial.

0:49



1:00 Newsletter Hour

Blu Ryder, Joseph Martin, Paul Franzen, Nathaniel Hoover, Anna Bryniarski
Dive into the history of GameCola as it got its beginnings as a newsletter.

Paul talks about the beginning of GameCola as a newsletter to go with his brother's movie newsletter.



Paul Franzen 4/22/26, 1:04 AM

GameCola: Volume 1, Issue 1 - March/April 2002

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Joe asks about how Paul came up with the name for GameCola. Paul responds that he got the idea for GameCola from looking around his room and being inspired when he saw his recycling can. He says that he believes the story isn't very interesting. Joe comments on how GameCola sounds very good to say. Joe goes on to wax about how this might be because the G and C in GameCola are the same fundamental sound, but one is "voiced" and the other is "aspirated," though he is unsure of the terminology he uses. Anna notes that it would be really helpful to have someone with a degree in speech therapy, to which some members realize that this is the case for Anna. Anna confirms the broad strokes of what Joe was saying about G and C. Joe goes on to suggest that even if the story sounds mundane, Paul probably had some good intuition to decide to go with GameCola instead of any other name he may have considered while looking around the room for ideas.

Joe asks Nathaniel whether the site was still in the newsletter format when he first joined. Nathaniel answers that it was right before the transition from the monthly to daily structure of the website. He tells a story about how he missed out on writing a review on *Mega Man 9*. Paul does some digging and finds that it was Rick L. who got the review at the time. (This may also be when James discussed how he has written the longest article on the website?)



Paul Franzen 4/22/26, 1:22 AM

Mega Man 9 (X360-XBLA)

Mega Man 9 is a happy jump back to my childhood. It was really great to see the old graphics and sounds I love come back in a brand-new 2008 videogame. I'm a massive classic gamer and Mega Man enthusi

Contributed by Rick L on January 1st, 2009 in Reviews

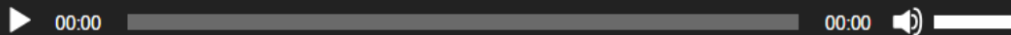
[NSFW] GC Podcast #3: Mid-February Edition

We talk about...Mega Man! And that's pretty much it.

Contributed by Michael Ridgaway on February 15th, 2009 in Podcasts

With content involving dirty jokes, Mega Man, Michael Gray, Michael Ridgaway, Nathaniel Hoover, NSFW, The GameCola Podcast, Zach Rich

In this edition of "The GameCola Podcast," Michael Ridgaway, Michael Gray, Zach Rich, and Nathaniel Hoover talk about...Mega Man! Why he's awesome, why he sucks, what his best and worst games are, and so on. And that's pretty much it.



Possible newsletter for the 25th GameCola anniversary? James' idea. Referenced again later in a recorded section of the event.



@QuietusTigeryayayayayay

The gang discusses that one of the things that makes GameCola unique is the group of people participating, and how collaborative the whole endeavor is. The cast discusses the success of the *Super Mario Bros. 2* playthrough, noting how it still provides apparently a valuable resource due to the structure of its one-level-per-episode structure. Joe notes how it's interesting that this structure wasn't targeted to optimize some goal, but was a consequence of how GameCola and YouTube worked at the time.



@DanielDugovicAlso, the commentary covers a variety of topics, for buzzword bingo.



@Sailormoongrl412

We love buzzword bingo

Joseph mentions how he thinks about ways to reproduce the best parts of this kind of format. One idea he has is to play Mega Man 7 in a way where at the end of each video, the viewer can select which stage to go to next and go to an episode that corresponds to that order. Nathaniel expresses skepticism of the practicality of the endeavor.



@DanielDugovic I like the idea of having to do dozens of Mega Man videos to handle most boss orderings.



@DanielDugovic

Not sure what inspired this exchange. (We were talking about GameColaDotCom being our white whale and what we would do if we got it.)



@DanielDugovic Legally distinct from Game Co, LA



@Flashman85LIVE Hehe.

Joe responds via the GameCola account:



@GameCola That's our backup business

As the cast talks about the longevity of the GameCola Podcast, James asks a question.



@CaptainSwag101

Have we considered submitting GameCola to Guinness Book of World Records for longest continuously running gaming podcast?

Joe talks about how he looked into this and that GameCola is very much not the longest running gaming podcast, even aside from all the questions about how it would fit in the idea of “continuous.” He mentions the GiantBomb podcast as an active podcast that meets this criteria (editor’s note: the GiantBomb podcast seems to have started around early 2008, February according to their RSS feed. It already had over 50 episodes by the time GameCola released its first episode for January 2009). Joe also talks about how there are some podcasts in general that had a gradual shift from radio to podcasting that it might be difficult to properly categorize, but you could argue “started” in the 90s. A discussion of the development of music/media players prompts this comment from James.



@CaptainSwag101

The iPod, if you will. Holds many pods.

Joe notes how he is going to need to stay up longer than he planned since there’s no one on the list to join Blu and Jeddy at their respective times past 5am. It is suggested that he take a nap during the next hour and during the clip show to try to build up some sleep to make it through the rest of the show, which he agrees to do.

2:00 Blu Hour

Blu Ryder, Paul Franzen, Anna Bryniarski, James Pelster

An hour of fun hosted by Blu Ryder

Blu discussed superhero games with Paul and James. Blu mentions that the Oh! A Podcast used to mention that the studio was working on a superhero dating sim. The three of them then begin discussing Anna’s potato dating sim, Mash Maker. Paul then provides photos from his dedicated Food With Faces folder on his computer.



Paul Franzen 4/22/26, 2:08 AM



Anna Bryniarski 📖 TEA 4/22/26, 2:09 AM

That's suave potato



Paul Franzen 4/22/26, 2:09 AM



Paul's particularly curvaceous pepper is described as being brought out an hour too early, because the After Dark Hour is next.



@Sailormoongrl412

I'M BEING HAZED THIS IS ILLEGAL



@paulfrenzen114
anna you are fired



@paulfrenzen114
I'm firing you



@Sailormoongrl412

nice try



@Sailormoongrl412



@paulfrenzen114



@Sailormoongrl412



@paulfrenzen114
thumbs down emoji

The three hosts discuss how they go about suggesting games to people. Blu expresses that he values having a good track record in this department so that people will listen to him when he suggests a truly great game to them. This means that he feels bad for missing the mark so much by suggesting Blue Prince to James. James then informs Blu that he does not dislike the

game as much as Blu has come to believe and that he might head back to it at some point, he is simply prone to getting distracted from finishing videogames.

Blu then starts a hard-hitting philosophical question about the extent to which large companies benefit from fan interaction and how much true freedom and meaning can be reclaimed from brands when used in self expression. James explains that if a fan has merchandise, it must have meaning to them. While it is sort of free advertising, the person is not getting compensated in any way, and thus they would not be flaunting their fandom if it didn't inherently have a value that exists outside of the scope of sheer advertising. Paul discusses that he agrees, but if he ever were to get a tattoo, it would be a pair of Mickey Mouse ears, and he has very conflicted feelings about having Disney brand iconography permanently put on his body. As the Blu Hour wraps up, Paul states that the Blu Hour has been the best hour yet.

Joe returns from his nap near the hour to say goodbye to folks and start up the next hour with Blu.

3:00 Gaming After Dark

Blu Ryder, Joseph Martin

Late night Gaming Chats about topics only allowed After Dark

James is also still listening in and replying in the livestream chat.

Joe considers the time difference between himself and Blu at this moment.



@CaptainSwag101

Correct, midnight here

Blu notes that he doesn't really have a good sense of what this is supposed to be about. Joe says that he really came up with the name before thinking about what would actually be discussed; it's a good name for an episode at this hour.



@CaptainSwag101

Gaming outside the light-stream

One of the first questions Joe asks is if anyone has ever pulled an all-nighter playing videogames. Blu talks about a few times he would play a game with friends all night. They proceed to categorise them in ways like nights where they couldn't sleep and eventually decided to play games instead, and all-nighters where they were simply too invested in a game to pull themselves away and go to sleep.



@CaptainSwag101

Longest I've stayed up for gaming adjacent reasons was the finale day of AGDQ 2026 and the subsequent 12 hours of travel day back home, totaling 36 hours of awake-ness. That was not great.

Joe says he's probably pulled an all-nighter a single digit number of times: a few times intentionally at summer camp and the rest when he is just unable to fall asleep by 5am and tries to loop back around to have another go at it. He doesn't usually play videogames in this case though, but watches bad movies. He talks about Anchorman or Anchorman 2 (editor's note: it was definitely Anchorman 2) Director's Cut and how instead of it being an extended plot, it was just that they added back in a bunch of alternate takes of scenes that were clearly set aside to have improv moments. He also watched *Alpha and Omega* a movie about wolves. Blu asks why he would do such a thing. Joe says it was intentional to watch bad movies and he posted on Twitter about it at the time, which is now of course illegal.

Joe goes on to say that there are games that he has played longer into the night than he should. *Pokemon Showdown* is an example he gives, since it's so easy to do "just one more" with that format. *Balatro* is a game that is doing this more recently. Joe was worried that he was going to develop an unhealthy relationship with the deck-building roguelike, but has thankfully found that after the initial impact of the game wore off he's found himself getting satisfied with shorter playtimes. Joe goes on to describe the structure and mechanics of *Balatro* in more detail. He gives an abridged version of this explanation later in the recorded part of the event, so we won't reproduce it here.

Blu asks Joe about Pokemon Sleep, and Joe describes how he only really wanted to do it for a year and probably wouldn't have kept doing it aside from wanting to talk about the experience on the podcast.

Another topic of discussion that matches the After Dark tagline is games with mature themes, which Joe segues to. Blu mentions that he still finds the name confusing and non-specific.



@CaptainSwag101

GameCola: After Hours

Joe brings up a comparison about how mature games are treated and how we avoided a potential Bad Future from when parents were trying to effectively ban M rated games because they didn't want to have to look at a letter to see if they should buy a particular game for their children.



@CaptainSwag101

We have acknowledged that those are just Bad Parents :tm:

Joe talks about the distinction between wanting it to be allowed to cover mature and potentially disturbing topics in the medium from videogames while also wanting people to be held accountable socially for what they communicate and portray via those themes. Joe brings up *Horses* because he knows Blu has played that game, and Blu talks about how he thinks this game handles things well with respect to what Joe described generally.



@CaptainSwag101

It would be a devastating tragedy if we could not explore mature and complex themes through the medium of video games