



Happy birthday Sierra Chest!

It's amazing how fast time flies by. It seems as if the site was created only a few months ago. But no, the site went public on October 11th 2008. On the first anniversary of the Chest, I would like to take the opportunity to explain how things came to be, where they are now and what is to be expected from the Sierra Chest in years to come. Yes, one year passed by, but this is just the beginning and some special additions are planned.

Although the forums of the Chest have been as good as non-active lately, the site itself and related sites have been booming. The visitor counter of the Chest is currently well above 33,000, the number of subscribers to the [Sierra Chest Youtube Channel](#) has finally hit triple digits and the Sierra Chest Facebook profile has attracted many new people, including more than 50 former Sierra employees. If you haven't signed up yet, just search "Sierra Chest" on Facebook and add as a friend. To immediately be updated with the new videos, feel free to subscribe to the Sierra Chest Youtube channel. Also a [guestbook](#) has been added to the main menu for you to leave your impressions of the site, so you are welcome to sign it ;-).

Of course more games have been inserted in detail and more are in development. Gold Rush has been added, as well as Space Quest 3, Johnny Castaway and the Colonel's Bequest. Gabriel Knight: the Beast Within is in development and other additions for the near future will be Hunter Hunted, Police Quest 1, Quest for Glory, and Phantasmagoria. A full agenda for the weeks ahead.

I will also mention some special auctions which occurred on eBay, and the new additions to the Sierra Chest collection. And last, but definitely not least, there have been several very interesting Sierra related news reports.

Enjoy the read!

Rudy Marchant
Sierra Chest admin



The Sierra Chest



Inside the Sierra Chest

How it all started

Some day in 1988: A 12-year old kid is happily surprised when his dad comes home from work with a bunch of 5¼ inch soft floppies. It's the game "King's Quest IV: the Perils of Rosella" from a company called Sierra On-Line. The kid never heard of the company, but that didn't matter: it was his first computer game! He switched on his 80-88 PC with a 20MB hard disk, no soundcard, and monochrome monitor, and started playing it. He continued playing until he completed it and then played it all over again. It was love at first byte, but it would be the only Sierra game he would get his hands on for several years, perhaps for the best. The passion however never faded.

Halfway the nineties, the kid, in his late teens now, started doing student jobs. While his friends used their money to go travel or party, the kid used it for one sole purpose: new Sierra games. Since he knew King's Quest IV by heart, he first bought the 1994 King's Quest Collection which came with a game catalogue. Seeing what else Sierra On-Line all created, the kid moved on by purchasing "Gabriel Knight: the Beast Within", then "Leisure Suite Larry VI", and many more. The more Sierra games he played, the more he wanted to try out others.



It went on like that for several years and by the year 2000, when he finished university, got his first real job, and moved on his own, that's when things really got into hyper speed. Several times per week, he went to the store after work to check if anything new was released, usually picking up anything without even reading what the game was really about. It didn't matter. All that mattered was that it was labelled "Sierra", so it had to be good.

At the same time, he started digging into the company history and the people who created these games. He wanted to know *everything* about it. It came as quite a shock when he learned that the company actually no longer existed since 1998, but nonetheless he still very much enjoyed the games from the new owner, Vivendi Games. However, realizing that he missed out on many games from the 80ies and 90ies, he set up an eBay account to try and get those titles which were no longer available in stores. The collecting madness began.

Around the same time, he joined up on the official Sierra forums: initially the webX forums, which were in July 2005 replaced by the Jive boards. Meeting all these people who shared the same passion for Sierra games was fantastic. They learned a lot from each other, about game play, about fixing technical issues and, after some time on the boards, even about each other. They no longer considered themselves as forum members, but rather as friends, a family with a common interest.

His collection in the mean while kept growing and, is today known as the Sierra Chest Collection, currently containing around 300 Sierra games. And the obsessed collector is, I'm sure you guessed by now, yours truly. I guess the idea of creating an enormous fan site, dedicated to everything about Sierra over a time span of nearly 3 decades, started when I became a moderator on the forums, back in 2006. The problem was that I had no idea of how to set up a thing like that, so it remained nothing more than an idea.

That changed in 2008 when, following the Activision-Blizzard merger, it was announced that the Sierra forums would be taken down. I could not let that happen. Sierra's legacy must be continued. The Sierra Chest was born.



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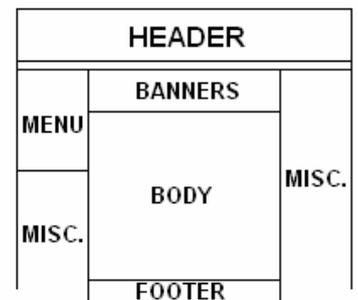
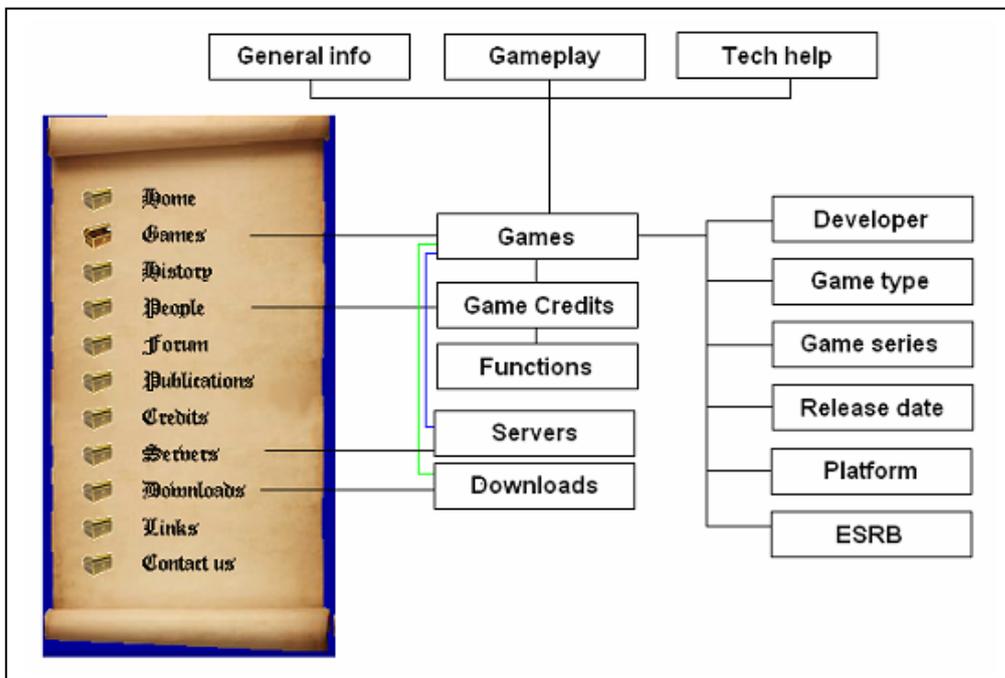
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The Chest's design

Since my knowledge of webpage design was quasi zero, I asked a friend, Bojan, a programmer, to help me out with it. The site would have to be dynamic, easily adjustable, and be able to contain a motherload of data without any limitation. Bojan would design the basic layout of the site, the underlying database structure and link everything together so that it is all interconnected and user-friendly. The basic structure, shown below, allows users to jump from any game to anybody involved with the game or to the company that developed it, or to other games within the series and so on. It also works in the opposite direction, allowing users to find anything with just a few clicks. I would hereby like to thank Bojan for the outstanding job he did bringing that userfriendly structure into reality.

My job is of course to fill out all the data itself within the database. Over the past year it has mostly been the games themselves that had most attention. I'm going to continue inserting games of course. Considering how many games were published by Sierra, that is basically a continuous process for years. Sections which did not get a lot of attention yet, are the history and biographies (people section), but those will be gradually filled up aswell.



So, what's next?

When enough games and data has been inserted, it will become possible for people to become a Sierra Chest member and create their own profile on the site itself. Members will be able to play a whole range of Sierra quizzes and minigames, write and score game reviews, add fan art, simulate and store their own Sierra Collection, participate in contests, polls and lots more. So yes, the Sierra Chest site will considerably open up to public input and online entertainment. Users will receive a ranking, and unlock medals and collectables, based on their actions on the site. I'm currently also checking out the possibilities to launch 24/7 servers to replace those which have been cut out by Vivendi about 2 years ago. Classic games may once again be experienced in multiplayer. Quite a sandwich, but it can be done!

The Sierra Chest



One door closes, a Gateway opens

When it was announced that the official Sierra forums would be closed, it was a heavy blow to the Sierra community. Many members had been part of the family for many years, some even more than a decade. It seemed like all those years would be suddenly wiped of the table, removed from the web as if it was never there. Friends would lose contact with each other, tech support would no longer be available for those games that we grew up with, and there would be no longer any discussions about which game character is most loveable, how to build a nice defence in any strategy game, how to solve tricky puzzles in adventure games, which weapon would be the best to kill a boss in an FPS and so on. On top of that, servers were taken down, game titles in production got shelved and several studios got closed, sold or severely cut in manpower.

However, the Sierra community has been through this kind of event before, 10 years ago, and they are not the kind of people who hang their head down, give up and walk away. They make the best out of any kind of situation, and in this particular case, they even made something better.

The Sierra Chest is definitively not alone on the level of preservation of Sierra's computer gaming legacy. By the time the official Sierra forums closed, on March 13 this year, several of the forum members had created their own fan site and forums. Some were already created years ago, others, including the Sierra Chest, were created following the announcement of the official forums' demise. Soon we realized that, if everybody would go their own way, the fan base and community would totally fall apart. There would not be one ultimate source for Sierra fans to go to. Cooperation was a crucial requirement to maintain unity. Therefore, these fan site owners put their heads together and created... the [Sierra Gateway](#).

The Sierra Gateway is an umbrella site, which connects all member fan sites to each other, offering effortless transition from one site or forum to another, holding the community together and expanding it. Often one can go to another forum and encounter the same members of another forum one just came from. Each site is either specialized in a game, game series or game designer, or is a site which covers Sierra games in general.

Starting out with a few member sites last year, the Sierra Gateway soon expanded with new member sites, currently supporting 12 of them. These are:



Click on the icons to access them, or simply go to www.sierraforums.com to access the entire Gateway.

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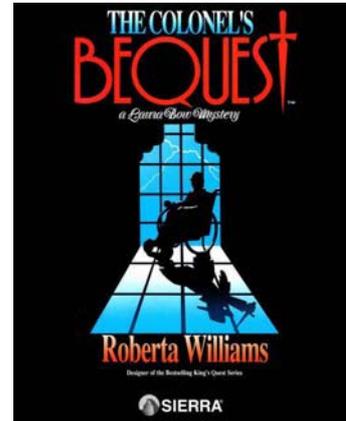


Completed games

[Laura Bow: The Colonel's Bequest](#)

In this first game of the Laura Bow series, Laura travels to an old family mansion of her friend, Lillian. Upon her arrival, she finds herself in the middle of a dispute on the heritage of the old and eccentric Colonel Dijon, owner of the land house and plantation. Then the murders begin... Who is killing the relatives and associates of Colonel Dijon? The lawyer, the doctor, the cleaning lady, the cook, the butler? Find out by investigating the grounds and sneaking up on private conversations, but beware, murderers don't like sneaky investigators.

We went into detail on this one. You will find the complete video walkthrough with both endings, a text walkthrough, character descriptions, inventory items, Easter Eggs, maps, the Sleuth-o-Meter, box art, tech support, credits, and more.



[Screen Antics: Johnny Castaway](#)

Johnny Castaway may not be a game, but it is more than just an ordinary screen saver. The screen saver tells the story of Johnny, a man stranded on a desert island. Normally, he will just sit around, read, sleep, and fish. However, there are many special events that will happen over time. Pirates will come to the island, he meets a mermaid, he encounters other people passing by, and he may even try to do a rain dance to battle the heat.



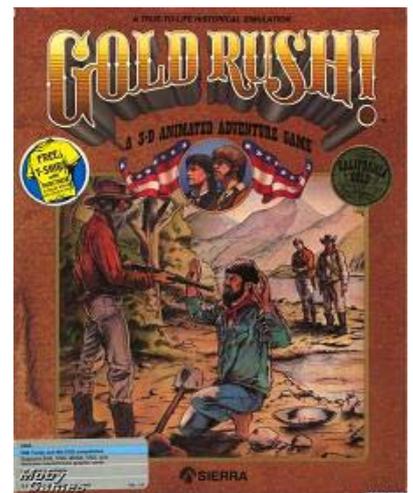
Inserted in the Chest are videos of all of Johnny's actions and special scenes. There is also a list of special days, accompanied with illustrations. And yes, even the screensaver itself, now shareware, can be downloaded. In the tech support section you will find how to run it on newer operating systems.

[Gold Rush!](#)

In this 3-D animated adventure game, the player assumes the role of Jerrod Wilson, a journalist in Brooklyn in the mid 19th century. Upon the announcement of the discovery of gold in California, Jerrod is among the thousands of adventure seekers to travel there.

This is probably the first Sierra adventure game where the player has a choice to travel 3 different routes to reach the same destination: the land route, the Panama route or the Cape Horn route.

The walkthrough, box art, trailer and credits have already been inserted in the Chest. Just a few more bits, such as inventory items, maps and general information, and it will be complete.



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[Space Quest III: The Pirates of Pestulon](#)

The first Space Quest game to be completely inserted in the Sierra Chest. The other titles will of course also be inserted in time. In Space Quest 3, Roger Wilco travels to Pestulon to rescue two Andromedan programmers, known for developing Astro Chicken. They are held captive by the software company Scumsoft. On his journey, Roger will need to find his way out of a junk freighter, escape Arnoid the annihilator android, pass Monolith burger and visit the volcanic planet Ortega.

The video walkthrough, text walkthrough, Easter eggs, inventory items, trailer, box art, credits and more have been inserted in the Chest.



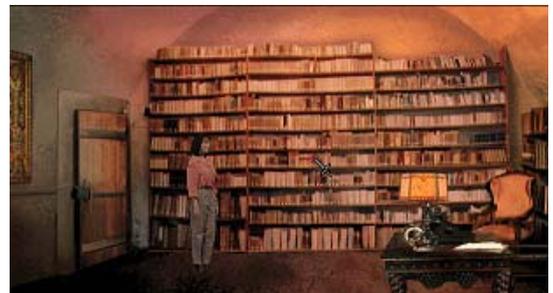
In production

[Gabriel Knight: The Beast Within](#)

Some time ago, Gabriel Knight 3 was inserted in the Chest. Now it's time for one of my absolute favourite adventure games of all time: The Beast Within. After leaving New Orleans, Gabriel moves to the Ritter Castle in Bavaria, Germany, his family heritage. One day, a group of villagers approaches the castle, and the elder tells you about a terrible death of a little girl, who was killed by a vicious wolf. Suspecting the wolf could be a supernatural creature, the villagers ask the Schattenjäger to pursue and destroy the evil. The investigation brings Gabriel and his assistant Grace Nakimura to the mysterious Hunter Society and to Bavaria's dark past.

Writer and designer Jane Jensen traveled to Germany to do her research on this game, using actual locations and Bavarian history, blending it together with a fictional story, resulting in the most incredible FMV game experience and multiple awards.

The entire video walkthrough is currently in the make. In addition to the usual information, there will also be a making-of section, a fiction versus reality section, and lots lots more.



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More to come

Police Quest: In Pursuit of Death Angel

Sonny Bonds is a small town policeman who must fight against the rising tide of drugs in his city. The game is based on real police procedure and adheres carefully to following the rules of police work. Beginning as a patrol officer and working into detectives, Sonny will chase down the infamous Death Angel and put an end to his criminal underworld.



Hunter Hunted

This arcade game, designed by Dynamix, is part of the Starsiege Universe. Players choose to be either the hunter, a ferocious beast from outerspace, or the hunted, an urban guerrilla called Jake. To stay alive, you have to solve enigmas, side-step traps and challenge your enemies to deadly battles against the clock. The game features over 50 levels of gameplay and a split-screen option for two player death match mode.



Phantasmagoria

In this FMV game, made by Roberta Williams, you play as Adrienne. Shortly after moving into an old mansion with her photographer husband Donald, Adrienne begins to experience horrifying nightmares and have odd encounters inside the creepy old abode. Further, the house is having a severe effect on her husband, changing him for the worse. Can you discover the horrible events that once took place here?



Hero's Quest (Quest for Glory 1)

The town of Spielburg is surrounded by forests and mountains, where all kinds of weird creatures dwell. The town has everything it needs, even a Thieves Guild, except a strong, brave hero that would protect it. Are you interested? Develop your skills as either a fighter, a mage, or a thief. The choice of class will influence many events in the game.





Sierra-related news

The Incredible Jeff Tunnell

Jeff Tunnell, founder of Dynamix, did it again. Last year GarageGames, co-founded by Jeff, acquired the IPs of the Starsiege Universe, which was originally designed by Dynamix. And now, on October 1, Jeff announced that PushButton Labs (founded by him and Rick Overman in 2008) has acquired the full rights to **The Incredible Machine**, the legendary physics puzzle games! Though it was a long process to get it done, Jeff could finally say that *“it feels like having a long lost child finally come home”*.

Congratulations, Jeff! Good Old Games has it ready for sale, a [bundle Mega pack](#) that includes four versions of TIM for \$9.99, compatible with XP and Vista 32 and 64 bit. As for TIM’s future, this is what Jeff stated: *“While we are not announcing our future plans for the TIM franchise, you do know that I still work with Kevin Ryan (co-designer, programmer for original TIM) and PushButton Labs creates Flash technology and websites, so you can draw your own conclusions”*.



Space Quest II remake

After completing their King’s Quest III remake, which has currently been downloaded over 150,000 times, [Infamous Adventures](#) started working on a remake of Space Quest II: Vohaul’s Revenge. The game will feature redrawn backgrounds, enhanced close up cut-scenes and dialogue pictures, original music and a new interface.

We’ll have to wait a bit before it gets released, but in the mean while we can already enjoy the fantastic [trailer](#) they released in August.



Jane Jensen’s Gray Matter

For many years it looked like Gray Matter, Jane Jensen’s new adventure game, would never see the light of day. But since Wizarbox took over development, things seem to pick up speed. For example an awesome new [trailer](#) was released in August on GamesCom. It has also been announced on [Cort-X](#), just a few days ago, that the voice recordings for the English version have been finalized. Jane Jensen supervised all of the English recordings, which were directed by Lorelei King. Sam Everett, the main female character is voiced by actress Philippa Alexander.



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Rare eBay auctions



Gabriel Knight, triangular box

On September 16 a sealed limited edition “triangular” box of “Gabriel Knight: Sins of the Fathers” went under the hammer for an impressive \$248.57.



Twice Ultima 2

“Ultima II: The Revenge of the Enchantress” from 1982 appeared on eBay twice. The re-release for the Apple II (left) went for a rather poor \$91.13 on October 6, though the reserve was not met. The original for the Atari 400/800 (right) reached a better price at \$142.63 on October 11.



Time Zone

The original Time Zone from 1981, still under the name of On-Line Systems, was sold for either a buy-it-now price of \$199.99 or best offer. A lucky person managed to snatch it for only \$86.00 on October 9. The seller made a bad deal for this rare gem.



The Dark Crystal

While other Hi-Res Adventures were initially released in small folders under On-Line Systems, this last release (1982) was only published in a large Sierra Venture folder, accompanied by a poster. This one was sold on October 11 for a buy-it-now of \$125.00, a fair price.



The Sierra Chest



Latest Sierra Chest acquisitions



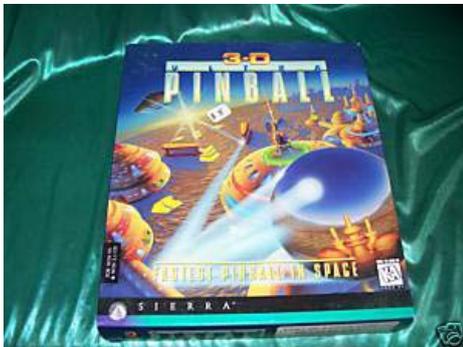
The Wrath of Denethenor

Won on October 11 for a bargain price of \$14.99. The Wrath of Denethenor is an RPG from 1986 in the style of Ultima. This release is for the Apple II.



The Quest for Glory Anthology

Though the Quest for Glory Anthology, containing QfG 1 to QfG 4, is not that old (1996), it is very high in demand. This complete version, which was won on September 23, then also went under the hammer for GBP41.55 (\$66.20)



3-D Ultra Pinball

The first of the 3-D Ultra Pinball series, 3-D Ultra Pinball: the Fastest Pinball in Space, with a theme of the game Outpost. It is a very common game to find on eBay.



Phantasmagoria Stage Fright

The 1997 limited edition collection which contains both Roberta William's Phantasmagoria and Phantasmagoria: a Puzzle of Flesh. Obtained for around \$46, a nice price since this one usually goes for twice that amount.

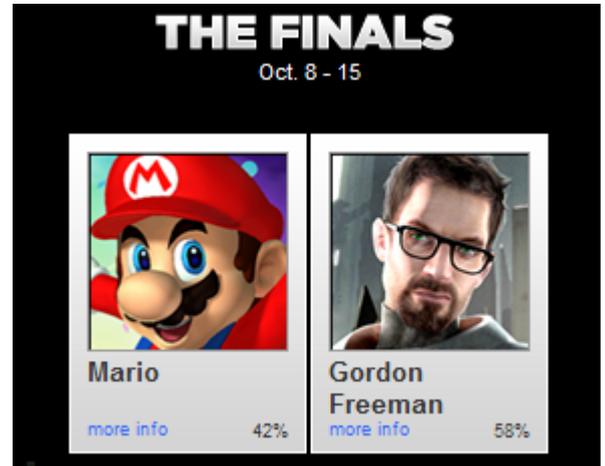




The all time greatest game hero?

At [Gamespot](#) they are holding a petition to vote for the all-time greatest game hero. Though the contest is in my opinion heavily biased, it is quite fun to see who in the final appears to head for the title. There were only 64 contestants, ranging from Lara Croft to the Prince (of Persia), from Pikachu to Pac-Man and from Ryu (Streetfighter) to Liu Kang (Mortal Kombat).

There were also a couple of Sierra characters present. Cate Archer (No One Lives Forever) lost heavily already in the first round against Strider Hiryu. Crash Bandicoot was humiliated in the first round against Snake. That brings us to the third and last Sierra character: **Gordon Freeman** (Half-Life). Gordon used his crowbar on Bomberman in the first round, roundhouse-kicked Yoshi in the second round, took revenge on Snake for beating Bandicoot in the third round (close call though), blasted Riu into oblivion in the quarter final, wiped the floor with Link in the semis and now he's in the final against... the legendary Mario! Not a chance, right? Well, think again, because Gordon Freeman just took his grenade launcher out of his back pocket, currently leading against Mario by 58% against 42% of the votes. Go Gordon!



Acrobatics and lots of blood

Remember Ruby, the sword wielding, gun-blasting, wall-running vixen with a revengeful agenda? Since September 15 owners of a PS3 or Xbox360 can finally assume her role. The game, originally planned to be a Sierra release, was published by Bethesda Softworks after Activision-Blizzard cut it out of their portfolio, following the merger. A2M however continued developing it. Gamespot gave **WET** a score of 7.5, and I quote: *“Wet isn't a particularly pretty game, and a lingering awkwardness can interrupt the acrobatic platforming from time to time. Fortunately, you'll usually be too busy enjoying the action to notice. The combination of auto-target, free aim, and slow motion makes combat relentlessly entertaining, and the vigorous soundtrack and great pacing give the game a satisfying sense of momentum”*.



Rocktober

Brutal Legend was also removed from AB's portfolio and taken over, this time by EA games. The game, with Jack Black as the main voice actor, and designed by Tim Schafer from Double Fine Productions, will hit the shelves on October 13th for the PS3 and Xbox360.

