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ELECTRONIC FUN with COMPUTERS & GAMES

Experts Rate 347 Video Games!

E.T. - Ready for Xmas

Personal Computers Explained

Favorite Games of the Stars

Special Frog Supplement



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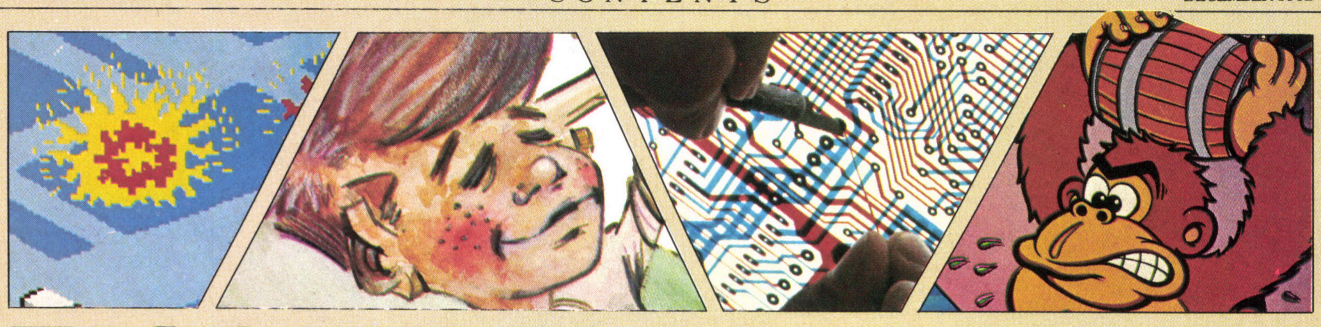
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INTELLIVISION®

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** Trademark used under license from DataEast, Inc. IntelliVoice module and voice cartridges each sold separately.
*Atari® is a trademark of Atari, Inc.



ELECTRONIC FUN with COMPUTERS & GAMES

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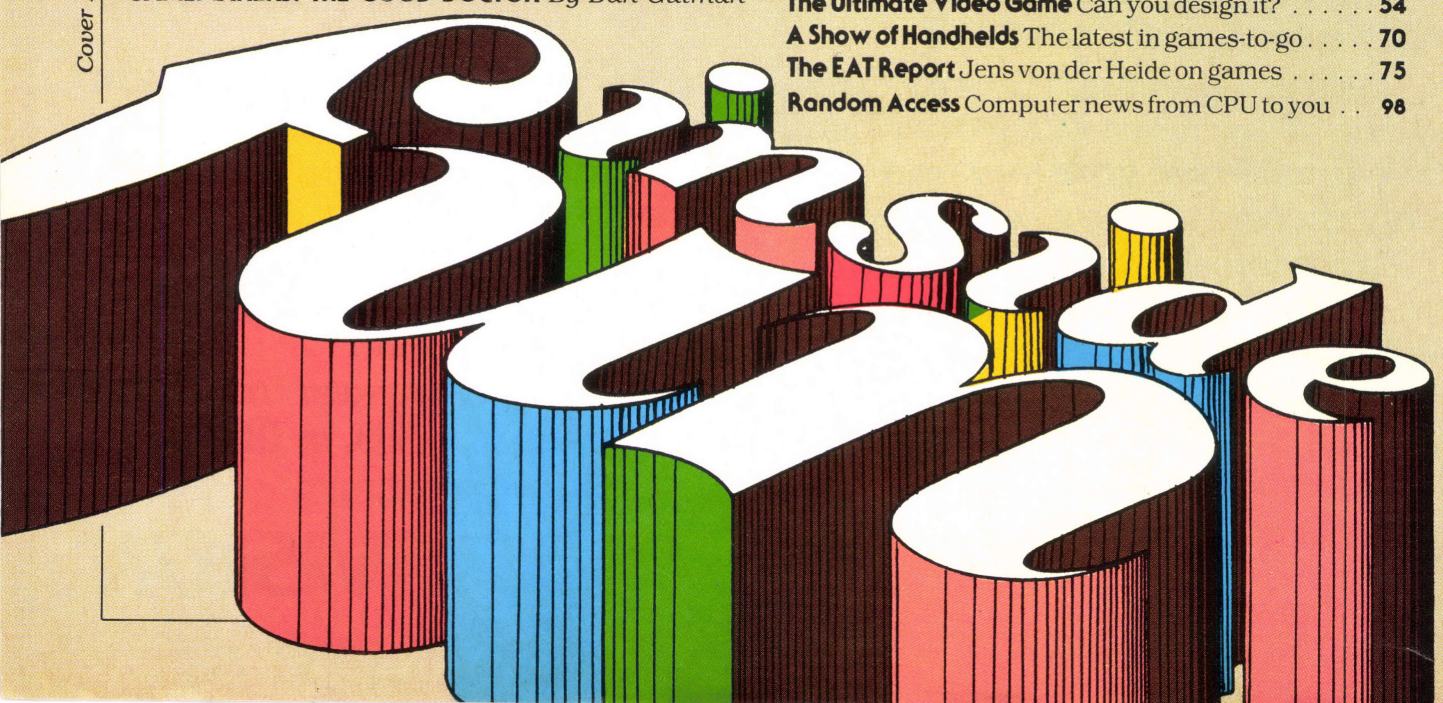
Game Reviews

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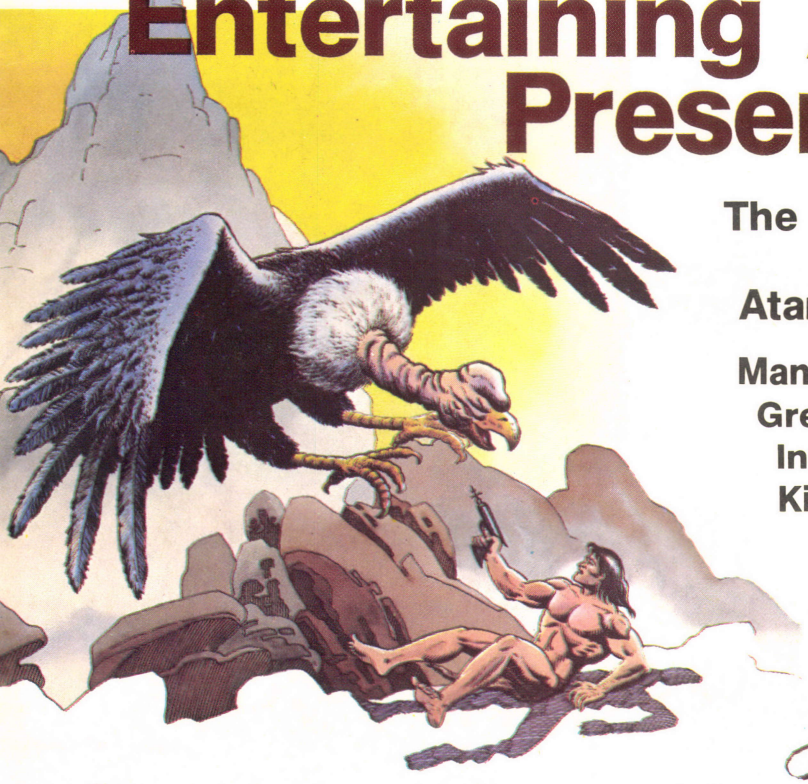
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Cover Illustration by Bunny Carter



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Editorial

Forget lemonade - games want you

Did you know that the Chicago-based Aristotle Software company is run by a 13-year-old girl and a 14-year-old boy? Did you know that a 14-year-old boy in California is making $480 a week writing computer programs in his spare time? And did you know that the largest software company in the country—VisiCorp— was begun by a Harvard graduate student with an investment of only $500, and last year it made about $24 million dollars? Sound good? Well, what's stopping you?

Many companies realize that youth is their greatest natural resource. They're no fools. Companies like Atari have the Atari Program Exchange. Amateur programmers are invited to send their work in and it will be offered, through the exchange catalog, to other computer buffs. Atari is not alone. Many other established software houses are looking for bright young stars from whom they can buy new programs—not just games but financial programs, word processing and other practical software as well.

And Electronic Fun *is also aware that the programmers of tomorrow are the game players and computer users of today. We are the first magazine to offer you a showcase for your own programs. In our monthly feature,* First Screening, *we choose a game from you, our readers, and print it—program and all—so that you can get the exposure you deserve.*

There are a lot of opportunities in software and programming for young people and the money to be made sure beats selling lemonade on the side of the road.

Apology: The editors would like to apoligize to WICO. In last month's New Products, *we said their joystick had a five inch cord. We meant five foot. Sorry.*

The Editors



ELECTRONIC FUN WITH COMPUTERS & GAMES

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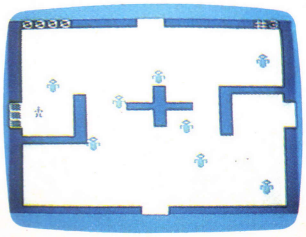
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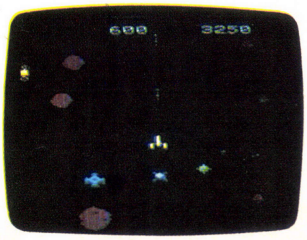
Look at these exciting choices:



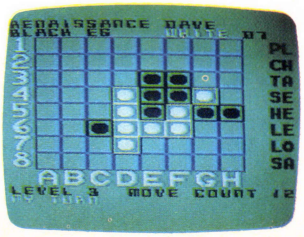
Meteor Run — 1613



Amok — 1611



Satellites & Meteorites — 1650



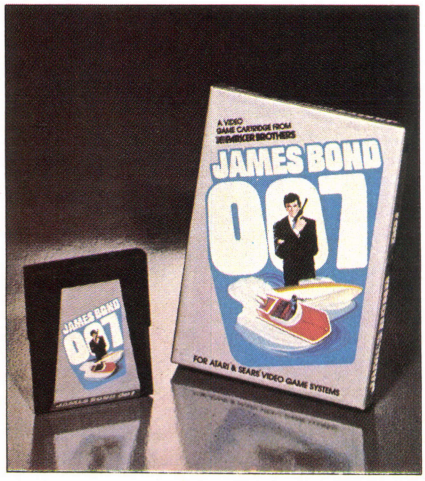
Renaissance — 1600

letters to the editors

007 WHERE ARE YOU?

In your first issue, you printed a photo of James Bond in the "Games Go Hollywood" article, but there was no mention anywhere of a James Bond game. Why did you print that picture?

Bert Hallgren
Orlando, Florida



As we went to press, Parker Brothers was planning to release a game, James Bond 007, in which you would be chased by crooks in cars, boats and airplanes. Unfortunately, the licensing agreement has fallen through and 007 will not hit the home game scene in the near future.

DEMANDING READER

I bought your first issue and enjoyed it very much. Can you give me a list of articles you're going to run in the next six months before I subscribe?

Bill Anderson
Newark, New Jersey

Sorry, no. We have a complete list of things we intend to do, but the video game/computer field is moving so fast right now, we can barely keep up with what's happening. Frequently, a new product or game will come out and we will have to bump a prepared article out of the issue to keep you up to date with fast-breaking developments.

MORE COIN-OPS!

Do you people realize that you devoted only one page (ScreenPlays) in the November issue to arcade games? Coin-ops are the lifeblood of video gaming. Shame on you!

Paul Dolimer
Roslyn, N.Y.

We repent! You're right. We love coin-ops as much as anybody. In this issue and from now on, you'll be seeing more arcade action.

GOOD, BAD AND UGLY

My favorite part of your magazine is *Hits and Missiles*, because when I'm paying $20 or $30 for a game cartridge, I want to know it's a good one. I was wondering, what made you choose those particular games to review?

Andrea Best
Austin, Texas

First, we try to review at least one game by every company that makes games. Second, we try to give an even balance of space games, adventure games and computer games. Third, if there is a game we particularly like or think you will be interested in, we'll try to include it. Fourth, we try to give you reviews of the newest games. There's only a limited number of games we can review each month, but we'll try to give you as much information as we can. If there's a game you want to know about, let us know.

HATE MAIL

I find it inconceivable that a magazine that considers itself more sophisticated than those other video game magazines would devote an article in their first issue to a Saturday-morning cartoon series. It is out of sync with the rest of your magazine, and *Pac-Man*, much less the *voice* of *Pac-Man*, is trivial, infantile and old news.

Jonathan Cohen
Troy, New York

We're sorry if you thought the story on Pac-Man *was juvenile but, as tired as we can all become of any hit game, Pac-Mania is a phenomenon that consumes as many as two million quarters a week. We try to keep you informed of all the developments in the video games field and this, even if it wasn't your favorite, was one of them.*

LOVE MAIL

I just wanted to congratulate you on the first issue of your fine magazine. While all the other video game magazines read like advertisements for video games and the companies that make them, you tell it like it is. Keep up the good work!

Walter Gravagna,Jr.
Mineola, New York

Thanks for the encouragement. We're excited about our first issue, too and we'll continue to do our best.

Write to us! We can't promise that we'll answer every letter, but we will read them all. We welcome your comments, advice and questions. Send your letters to: Electronic Fun, *350 E. 81st. St., New York, NY 10028*



GARY LARSEN THOUGHT HE HAD ALL THE ANSWERS.

Gary had an IQ of 162. He never got anything less than an "A" on his report card. He was a wiz at chess.

Then it happened.

Gary plugged Imagic's Riddle of the Sphinx™ into his Atari® Video Computer System™.

As Gary slowly, carefully made his way across Egypt's mysterious Valley of the Kings, he was attacked by rock-throwing thieves, plagued by scorpions, and tortured by thirst.

Yet he went on.

After passing the Sphinx, the Temple of Isis, the Great Pyramids, he reached the Temple of Ra where he presented all his treasures.

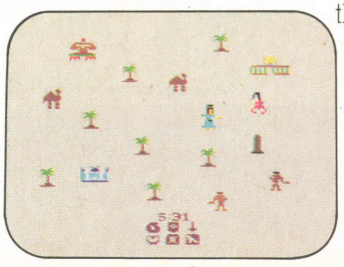
Unfortunately, he did not have the correct offering. Ra was not satisfied. Gary had to go back and try again.

And again. And again. And again. And again. And again. And again.

Here you see Gary as he is today. A veggie. Zonked out. Totally.

This is a warning. Imagic games are created by experts *for experts*. Do not try to solve the Riddle of the Sphinx if your IQ is equal to or less than your belt size.

After all, a brain is a terrible thing to fry.



For Atari® VCS.

IMAGIC

Created by experts for experts.

©1982 Imagic

Jousting With Alien Rubik's Cubes

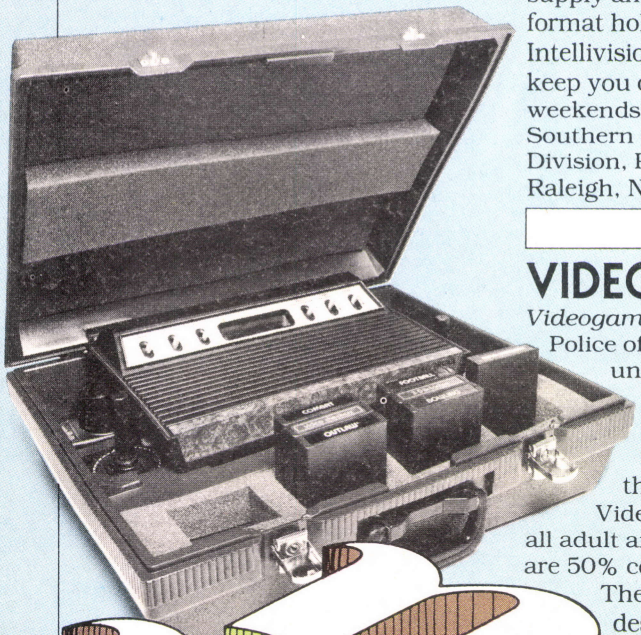


SOUTHERN CASE

Video Game Case/**$75**

A true video game fanatic can't go anywhere without taking his system with him. But who wants to lug all those joysticks and wires and cartridges around loose? Southern Case Inc. now makes a handy suitcase so you can hit the road with your games.

The case not only stores your Atari or Intellivision console, but also stores joysticks, paddle controls, television connectors, power supply and cartridges. The Atari format holds 12 cartridges and the Intellivision holds 20. That should keep you occupied for a few long weekends away from home.
Southern Case Inc., TravelMaster Division, P.O. Box 28147, Raleigh, NC 27611.



VIDEO BABIES

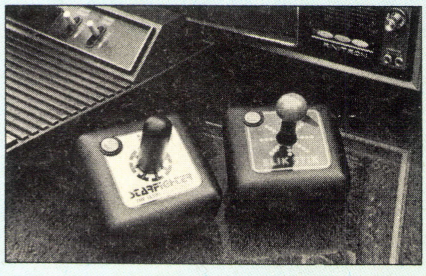
Videogame Paraphernalia

Police officers and firemen wear uniforms. Why not video game players? If you want to show people what you're into, get into these new T-shirts from Video Babies. They come in all adult and children's sizes and are 50% cotton and 50% polyester. They have silk-screened designs of *Donkey Kong*, *Ms. Pac-Man*, *Pac-Man* and *TRON*, each for $6.95.

Video Babies also sells jerseys ($7.95), baseball caps ($5.95), bumper stickers ($1.50) and Atari cartridges ($28.95). Write to them for details.
Video Babies, Inc., 145 Country Ridge Dr., Port Chester, NY 10573.

SUNCOM

Starfighter Joystick/**$16.95**



Glued to the tube because you're working on improving your score? If so, there's a good chance you go through joy-

sticks like a Ginsu through tin cans. No matter how well it's made, a plastic joystick is going to break if you play it hard enough. Suncom's new Starfighter, "The Ultimate Joystick," is made primarily of casehardened and stainless steel components and comes with a two-year factory limited warranty. The Starfighter can be used with your Atari VCS, Sears TeleGame, Commodore computer or Atari 400 or 800 computer.

Also from Suncom comes Slik Stik, a direct replacement joystick, which lists for $9.95 and has a 90-day warranty.

Suncom Inc., 270 Holbrook Dr., Wheeling, IL 60090.

WILLIAMS

Arcade Game/**Joust**

Not long ago, Williams was just one of the major pinball companies.



But with *Defender*, *Stargate* and *Robotron 2084*, it has shot into the forefront of video gaming. Their latest offering, *Joust*, introduces an innovation in arcade games. For the first time ever, two players may team up against a common enemy—the game itself. In waves four and nine you are pitted against your partner in a joust to the death, while in waves two and six the two of you collaborate to defeat the machine.

The game offers a mythological world in which you defend yourself against pterodactyls, ostriches, buzzards and eggs—a bold step from blowing away Landers and saving the last human family.

Williams Electronics,
3401 North California Ave.,
Chicago, Il 60618

RADIO SHACK

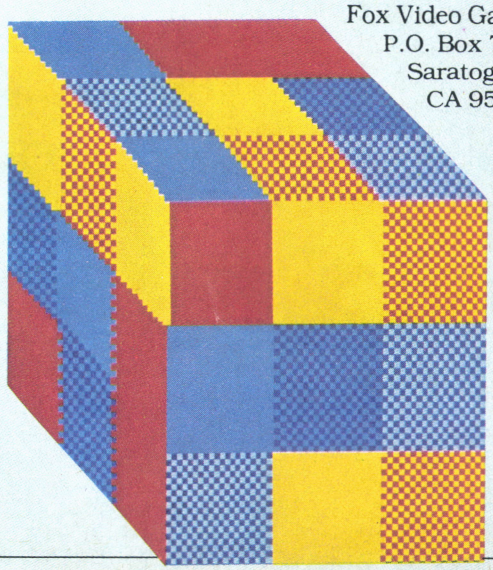
Color Cubes Program/**$29.95**

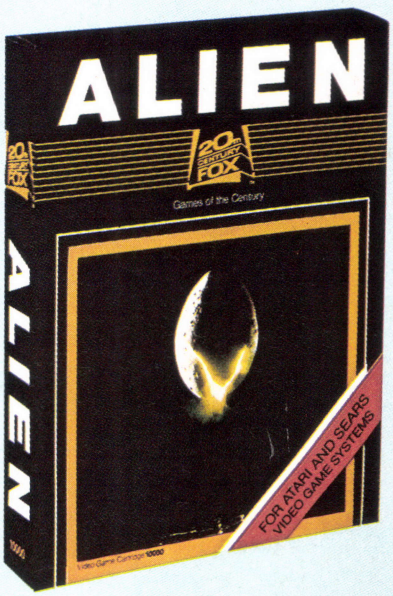
Rubik's Cube is not dead! The old square comes to simulated life with this game made for the TRS-80 Color Computer. *Color Cubes* offers a vivid video representation of a scrambled 3-D cube made up of 27 smaller "cubies" in six different colors. The goal of the game is to unscramble the array with horizontal and vertical twists and turns until each face of the large cube is one solid color.

The *Color Cubes* program has something the real cube doesn't—memory. The computer will record your last 255 moves and allow you to undo or redo them. This allows you to backtrack, analyze your game and make a fresh start from any point.

Color Cubes lets players compete by keeping running time on the progress of each.

Radio Shack, Tandy Corporation, 1800 One Tandy Center, Fort Worth, TX 76102.





FOX VIDEO GAMES

Alien/**$35**

Even if nobody can hear you scream in space, they can hear you scream in your living room. So try and hold it down when you're playing this new Atari-compatible game from Twentieth Century-Fox Games. *Alien* is based on *Alien*, the movie—one of the most frightening films made. It is a one-player adventure/maze game designed by Dallas North. Your mission is to save the universe by avoiding the alien and destroying eggs. Just like the movie. In fact, it has everything the movie has except Sigourney Weaver. Rats!

Fox Video Games,
P.O. Box 794,
Saratoga,
CA 95071

Video Game Explosion!

We rate every game in the world

Three hundred and forty-seven. That's the number of home video games in existence. And we know of 52 more games due to be released in the next few months. It seems like just a few years ago, our video game libraries were complete if we had Space Invaders, Asteroids *and* Missile Command. *This Christmas, with 22 companies producing software, there will be more games than you can shake a joystick at. That's the good news. The bad news is you can't buy them all. At $30 a pop, a complete video game collection would set you back $8,675. Unless you own stock in one of the major video game companies, you can forget that idea. If you're a games fan, you've got some choices to make and we can help. We've rated every game that we know exists on a scale from A to F (just like a report card)—A is for excellent and F is for less-than-excellent. This should make your decision just a bit easier.*

ACTIVISION

	?	✎	★
BARNSTORMING	A	A	B
BOXING	SP	C	B
BRIDGE	SP	B	B
CHECKERS	SP	C	C+
CHOPPER COMMAND	A	A	B–
DRAGSTER	D	A	B
FISHING DERBY	SP	A	B
FREEWAY	A	B	B
GRAND PRIX	D	A	A
ICE HOCKEY	SP	A	A
KABOOM	A	A	A
LASER BLAST	S	B	C
MEGAMANIA	S	B	B+
PITFALL	AF	A	A
SKIING	SP	B	A–
STAMPEDE	SP	B	A
STAR MASTER	S	A	A
TENNIS	SP	A	A

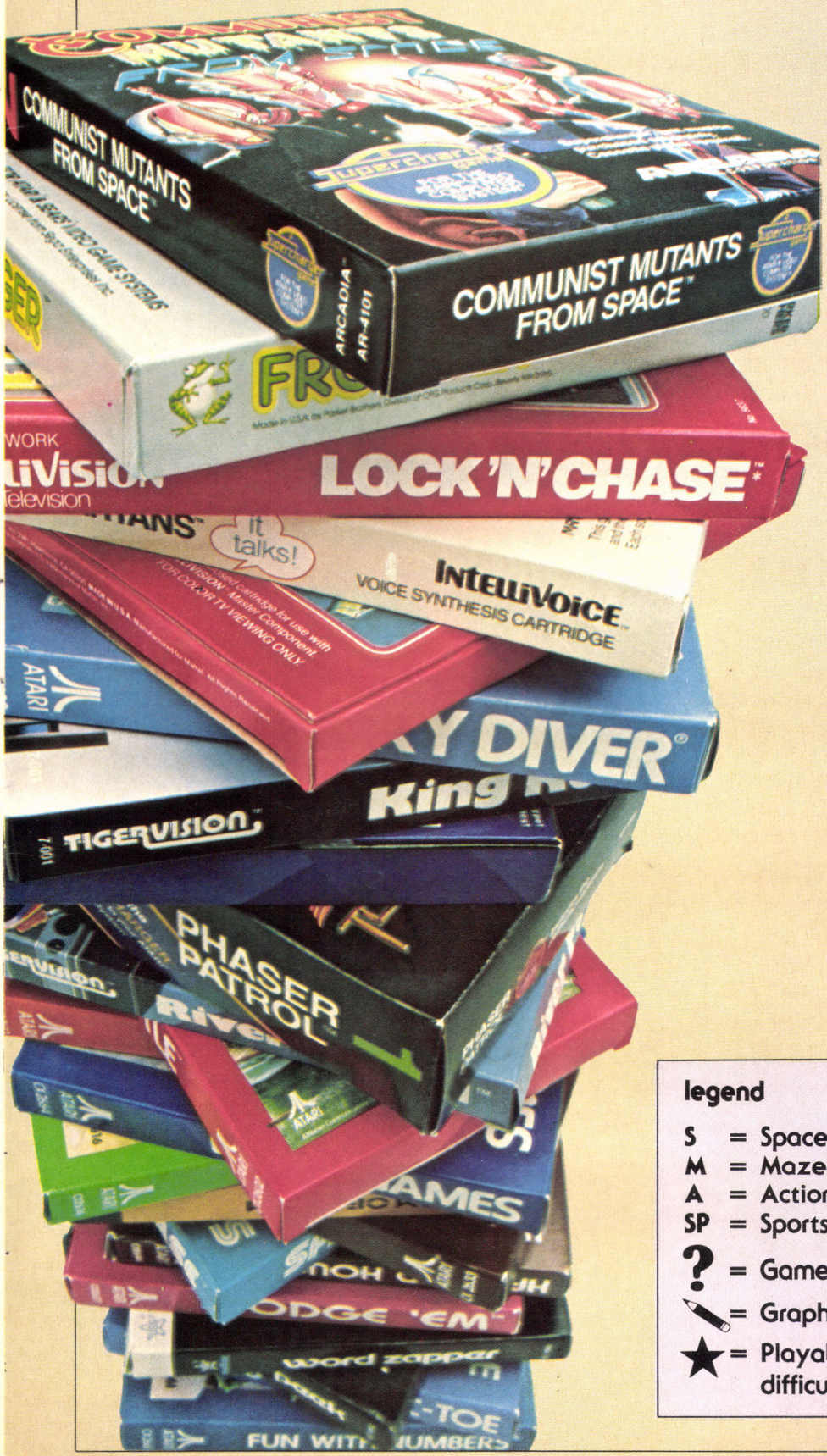
APOLLO

	?	✎	★
LOST LUGGAGE	A	A	B
RAQUETBALL	SP	B	B
SHARK ATTACK	M	B	B
SKEET SHOOT	SP	C	C
SPACE CAVERN	S	B	B+
SPACECHASE	S	B–	C

ASTROCADE

	?	✎	★
AMAZING MAZE	M	B	B+
ASTRO BATTLE	S	A	A
ARTILLERY DUEL	A	B	B
ASTROCADE PINBALL	A	A	A
BASEBALL/HOCKEY/TENNIS	SP	B	B
BIORHYTHM	E	B	B+
BLACKJACK/POKER	G	C	C
BRICKYARD/CLOWNS	A	B	B
CONAN THE BARBARIAN	AF	B	C
COSMIC RAIDERS	S	A	B
CREATIVE CRAYON	E	A	A
DOGPATCH	A	B	B+
FOOTBALL	SP	B	A–
GALACTIC INVASION	S	A	A
GRAND PRIX	D	B	B+





	?		★
THE INCREDIBLE WIZARD	AF	A	A
LETTER MATCH	E	B	B+
MUSIC MAKER	E	B	A
PIRATE'S CHASE	A	B	B–
RED BARON	A	B	B+
SEA WOLF	A	B	B
SOCCER	SP	B	B
SPACE FORTRESS	S	A	B+
SOLAR CONQUEROR	S	B	B+
SPEED MATH	E	B	B
STAR BATTLE	S	B	C
ZZZAP/DODGEM	D	B	B–
BOWLING	SP	B	C
BASIC	E	A	A

ATARI

BRAIN GAMES	E	B	A
BREAKOUT	A	A	A
ADVENTURE	AF	A	A–
AIR-SEA BATTLE	A	B	B
ASTEROIDS	S	B	A
BACKGAMMON	SP	B	A–
BASIC PROGRAMMING	E	B	B
BASKETBALL	SP	B	A
BERZERK	A	B	A
BOWLING	SP	B	C
CANYON BOMBER	A	B	B
CASINO	G	B	A–
CIRCUS ATARI	A	A	B–
CODEBREAKER	E	B	B+
CONCENTRATION	E	C	B
DEFENDER	S	A	A

legend

S = Space
M = Maze
A = Action
SP = Sports
AF = Adventure/Fantasy
G = Gambling
E = Educational
D = Driving
? = Game Type
= Graphics
★ = Playability (including challenge, difficulty and interest level)

Aaron Rezny

legend

S = Space
M = Maze
A = Action
SP = Sports
AF = Adventure/Fantasy
G = Gambling
E = Educational
D = Driving
? = Game Type
✎ = Graphics
★ = Playability (including challenge, difficulty and interest level)

ATARI (continued)

	?	✎	★
DODGE 'EM	M	B	B–
FOOTBALL	SP	C	D
GOLF	SP	C	D
HANGMAN	E	B	B+
HAUNTED HOUSE	AF	B	A–
HOME RUN	SP	C	D
HUMAN CANNONBALL	A	C	C
INDY 500	D	B	C+
MATH GRAN PRIX	E	C	B
MAZE CRAZE	M	B	A–
MISSILE COMMAND	S	A	A+
NIGHT DRIVER	D	B	A–
OTHELLO	A	B	B+
OUTLAW	A	C	C
PAC-MAN	M	C	B–
PELE'S SOCCER	SP	B	B–
SKY DIVER	A	B	C
SLOT RACERS	A	B	C–
SPACE INVADERS	S	A	A
SPACE WAR	S	B	C
STREET RACER	D	B	B
SUPER BREAKOUT	A	A	B+
SUPERMAN	AF	A	A–
SURROUND	A	B	B+
3-D TIC TAC TOE	A	B	B
VIDEO CHECKERS	SP	B	B
VIDEO CHESS	SP	B	A
VIDEO OLYMPICS	A	B	B+
VIDEO PINBALL	A	B	A–
WARLORDS	A	A	A
YAR'S REVENGE	S	A	A
FLAG CAPTURE	E	B	C
FUN W/NUMBERS	E	C	C
EARTHWORLD	AF	A	A
RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK	AF	C	C
BASEBALL	SP	B–	B–
VOLLEYBALL	SP	B–	B–
FROG POND	A	B–	C–
DEMONS TO DIAMONDS	A	B	C
GALAXIANS (5200)	S	A	A
STAR RAIDERS (5200)	S	A	A
CENTIPEDE (5200)	A	A	A

COLECO

	?	✎	★
CARNIVAL	A	A	A
COSMIC AVENGER	S	A	A
DONKEY KONG	A	A+	A
FIDELITY'S CHESS	SP	A	B+
FIDELITY'S HORSE RACING	SP	A	B
HEAD TO HEAD BASEBALL	SP	B	B+
HEAD TO HEAD FOOTBALL	SP	B	B+
KEN USTON'S BLACKJACK/POKER	G	A	A–
LADY BUG	M	A	B+
MOUSE TRAP	M	A	A
MR. TURTLE	A	A	B
RIP CORD	S	A	A
SIDE TRAK	M	A	B
SKIING	SP	B	B
SMURF EDUCATIONAL GAME	E	B	B
SMURF RESCUE GAME	E	A	B
SPACE FURY	S	B	A
SPECTAR	M	A	B
TUNNELS AND TROLLS	AF	B	B
TURBO	D	A	A
VENTURE	AF	A	A
ZAXXON	S	A	A

CBS

	?	✎	★
WIZARD OF WOR	A	B	B
GORF	S	B	B+

COMMAVID

	?	✎	★
COSMIC SWARM	S	C	B
ROOM OF DOOM	A	C	B



DATA AGE

	?	✎	★
ENCOUNTER AT L-5	S	B–	B+
WARPLOCK	S	C	C+
SSSNAKE	A	C	B–
AIRLOCK	S	C	B–
BUGS	A	C	B–

FOX

	?	✎	★
WORM WAR I	A	B	B
BEANY BOPPER	A	B	B
FAST EDDIE	A	A	B–
DEADLY DUCK	A	A	B
TURMOIL	A	A	A

IMAGIC

	?	✎	★
ATLANTIS	S	B	B
COSMIC ARK	S	B	A
DEMON ATTACK	S	A	A
FIRE FIGHTER	A	B	C
MICRO SURGEON	AF	A	A
RIDDLE OF THE SPHINX	AF	B	C
STAR VOYAGER	S	B	A
SWORDS AND SERPENTS	AF	B	A
TRICK SHOT	SP	A	B
BEAUTY AND THE BEAST	A	A	B

MATTEL

	?	✎	★
ABPA BACKGAMMON	SP	A	B+
ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS	AF	A	A
ARMOR BATTLE	A	A	A–
ASTROSMASH	S	A	B
AUTO RACING	D	B	A–
BOXING	SP	A	B
CHECKERS	SP	B	B
FROG BOG	A	B	C
HORSE RACING	SP	A	C
ROULETTE	G	A	B+
LOCK 'N CHASE	A	B	B–
MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL	SP	A	A+
MATH FUN	E	A	B+
NASL SOCCER	SP	A	A–
NBA BASKETBALL	SP	A	A–
NFL FOOTBALL	SP	A	A
NHL HOCKEY	SP	A	A
NIGHT STALKER	A	A	B
PBA BOWLING	SP	A	C
PBA GOLF	SP	A	A+
REVERSI	A	B	B
ROYAL DEALER	G	A	B+
SEA BATTLE	A	A	A
SNAFU	M	A	B
SPACE ARMADA	S	B	C
SPACE BATTLE	S	A	B
STAR STRIKE	S	A	B–
SUB HUNT	A	A	B+
TENNIS	SP	A	B
TRIPLE ACTION	A	B	B
TRON DEADLY DISCS	A	B	B
TRON MAZE-A-TRON	A	B	B
SKIING	SP	A	B
UTOPIA	AF	B	A
WORD FUN	E	A	A
SPACE HAWK	S	B+	B–
USCF CHESS	SP	A–	B–
SPACE SPARTANS	S	A–	B+
B-17 BOMBER	A	A	B+
BOMB SQUAD	A	A	B+
TRON SOLAR SAILOR	A	A	B–
ASTROBLAST (M)	S	B	B
SPACE ATTACK (M)	S	A	A

ODYSSEY

	?	✎	★
ALPINE SKIING	SP	B	C
ARMORED ENCOUNTER	A	C	B
BASEBALL	SP	B	B
BASKETBALL	SP	B	B
BLOCKOUT	A	B	A–
BOWLING	SP	C	D
CASINO SLOT MACHINE	G	B	B
COMPUTER GOLF	SP	C	D
COMPUTER INTRO	E	B	B
CONQUEST OF THE WORLD	A	B	A–
COSMIC CONFLICT	S	A	A



legend

- S = Space
- M = Maze
- A = Action
- SP = Sports
- AF = Adventure/Fantasy
- G = Gambling
- E = Educational
- D = Driving
- ? = Game Type
- = Graphics
- ★ = Playability (including challenge, difficulty and interest level)

	?		★
ELECTRONIC TABLE SOCCER	SP	B	A
FOOTBALL	SP	B	B
HELICOPTER RESCUE	AF	B	C
HOCKEY/SOCCER	SP	C	C
INVADERS FROM HYPERSPACE	S	A	B
ALIEN INVADERS PLUS	S	A	B
K.C.'S KRAZY CHASE	M	A	A
LAS VEGAS BLACKJACK	G	B	B
MATCHMAKER	E	B	B
MATH-A-MAGIC	E	C	A
MONKEYSHINES	M	B	A
PACHINKO	A	B	B+
PICK AXE PETE	A	B	B
POCKET BILLIARDS	SP	C	C

	?		★
THE QUEST FOR THE RINGS	AF	B	A
SHOWDOWN IN 2100	A	C	B–
TAKE THE MONEY AND RUN	A	B	B+
THUNDERBALL	A	B	C
UFO	S	B	C
VOLLEYBALL	SP	C	D
WAR OF NERVES	A	B	A–
WALL ST. FORTUNE HUNT	AF	B	A
DYNASTY	SP	B	A
KEYBOARD CREATIONS	E	A	A
SPEEDWAY	A		
FREEDOM FIGHTERS	A	A–	A–
TYPE N TELL	E	B	B–
K.C. MUNCHKIN	A	A	A–
NIMBLE NUMBERS NED	E	A	A
I'VE GOT YOUR NUMBER	G	B	B

PARKER

EMPIRE STRIKES BACK	S	A	A
FROGGER	A	A	A

SPECTRAVISION

PLANET PATROL	S	A	A
GANGSTER ALLEY	A	B	C
TAPE WORM	A	C	B–
NEXAR	S	A	A+

	?		★

STAR PATH (Formerly Arcadia)

COMMIE MUTANTS FROM SPACE	S	A	B+
PHASER PATROL	S	A	A
FIREBALL	A	B	B
SUICIDE MISSION	AF	B	C
LABYRINTH	M	A	A

TELESYS

FAST FOOD	A	A	B
COCO NUTS	A	B	C+
COSMIC CREEPS	S	A	B

TIGERVISION

JAWBREAKER	A	C	C
KING KONG	A	B	B
THRESHOLD	A	B	B

ULTRAVISION

KARATE	SP	C	C–
CONDOR ATTACK	S	C	B

U.S. GAMES

SPACE JOCKEY	S	B+	B+
SNEAK N PEEK	E	B	B



	?	✎	★
WORD ZAPPER	E	A	A
COMMANDO RAID	A	A	A
TOWERING INFERNO	A	B+	B+

VECTREX

ARMOR ATTACK	A	A	B–
SPACE WARS	S	A	A
STAR HAWK	S	A	A
RIP-OFF	S	A	B
SOLAR QUEST	S	A	A
SCRAMBLE	S	B	A
BERZERK	A	B	A
STAR TREK	S	A	A
BLITZ	A	A	B
CLEAN SWEEP	S	A	B
HYPERCHASE	S	A	A
COSMIC CHASM	S	A	A
MINE STORM	S	B	A

ZIRCON

TIC-TAC-TOE	E	B	A
HOCKEY	SP	C–	C+
DESERT FOX	A	B–	C+
VIDEO BLACKJACK	G	B–	C+
SPITFIRE	A	B–	C+
SPACE WAR	S	C+	C+
MATH QUIZ #1 & #2	E	C	C
MIND READER/NIM	E	C–	A–
DRAG STRIP	D	B–	B+
MAZE	M	B–	B+

	?	✎	★
BACKGAMMON	SP	C+	C+
BASEBALL	SP	C+	B
TORPEDO ALLEY	A	C	B+
SONAR SEARCH	A	C+	A–
MEMORY MATCH	E	C	C
DODGE 'IT	A	C+	B+
PINBALL CHALLENGE	A	C+	A–
HANGMAN	E	C+	A–
VIDEO WHIZBALL	A	C–	A–
BOWLING	SP	C	C+
SLOT MACHINE	G	A	B–
GALACTIC SPACE WARS	S	C+	B–
PRO-FOOTBALL	SP	C–	B–
CASINO ROYALE	G	B–	C
ALIEN INVASION	S	C	C
TENNIS	SP	C–	C

Next Year's Hit Games

ACTIVISION
SKY JINKS

APOLLO
KYPHUS
GUARDIAN
FINAL APPROACH
WABBIT
POMPEII
SQUOOSH

ARCADIA
FRANTIC
KILLER SATELLITES
LAST LINE OF DEFENSE
EXCALIBUR
LABYRINTH
JUNGLE RAID
SWORD OF SAROS
CLONE ATTACK

ATARI
E.T.
FAILSAFE
FIREWORLD
AIRWORLD
WATERWORLD
SOCCER
QIX

COMMAVID
MINES OF MINOS

FOX
MEGAFORCE
SIX PACK
9 TO 5
PORKY'S
THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL
ENTITY
TOUGH ENOUGH

MATTEL M NETWORK
SPACE ATTACK
ARMOR AMBUSH
INT. SOCCER
LOCK N CHASE
DARK CAVERN
SEA BATTLE
TRON DEADLY DISCS

Continued on page 94



output input

"Can I copy games illegally?"

Other magazines give you the question first and then they give you the answer. But we're not like other magazines. We give you the answer first. Why the answer and then the question? Because we here at EF think the answer is the most important part, so we put it first. And have we got answers for you!

The answer is: A computer add-on can be a joystick forever. You don't have to use the keyboard. Although all computer games *can* be played using the keyboard as controller, not all of them *have* to be. The games that require more complex control require the keyboard. Other games—and these will say so in the instructions—can utilize a joystick add-on that is easily plugged into the computer's joystick port. Quite a few computer companies market their own joysticks, or you can buy one made by the multitude of independent manufacturers—such as WICO—now making such add-ons for computers. Be aware that computers like the Apple don't have a joystick port built in. You must purchase an adapter in order to use joysticks.

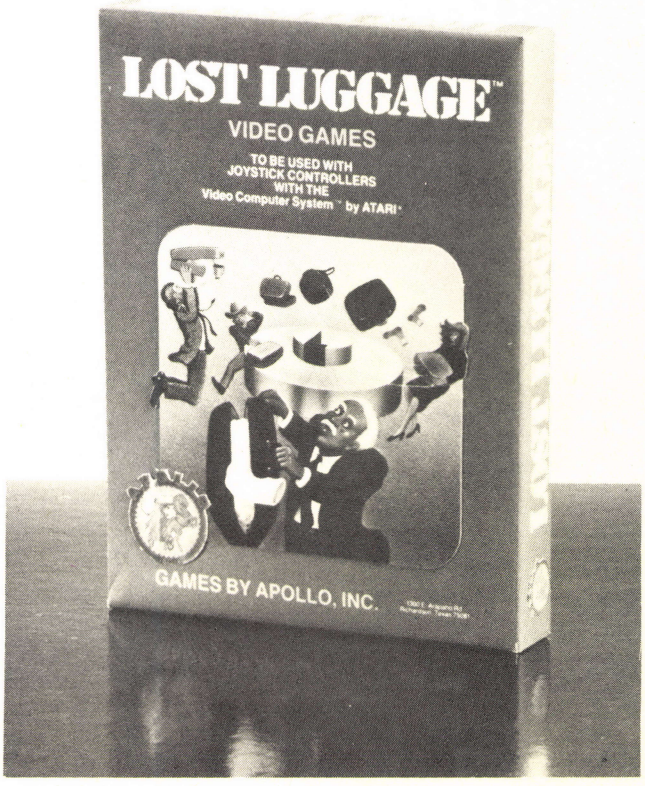
I have a computer and I like to play games on it, but frankly, I've never been much of a touch typist. Must I use the keyboard to play or are there joysticks available for computers?

Jean Halpern
Michigan

The answer is: Randy Fromm's Arcade School. Founded in 1980, Randy Fromm's Arcade Schools offer training programs in how to repair coin-operated video games. The six-day course includes lectures and lab sessions that give students hands-on experience. Late model video games are used during both labs and lectures to increase familiarity with the types of machinery most likely to be encountered on a job. No previous knowledge of electronics or video games is required. Tuition is $400 and Arcade Schools are located in 11 major cities. For more information write or call: Randy Fromm's Arcade School, 6123 El Cajon Blvd., San Diego, CA 92115 (714) 286-0172.

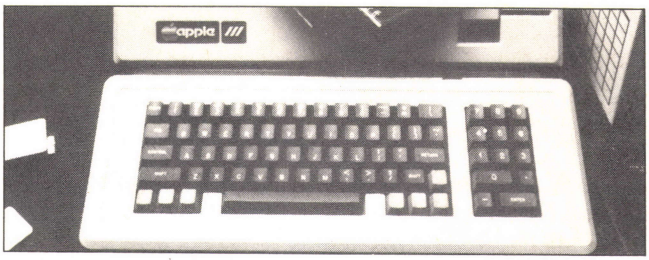
I'm interested in going into business for myself. Since I'm a very avid video game player I thought that something related to this area would be perfect. Where can I go to learn to repair arcade video games?

Sandy Goldberg
New York



The answer is: Of course. And you're right. The number of companies making games—not only for the VCS but for all the systems—is legion and keeping track of them is harder than remembering all the names in a Russian novel. Here's a list of those companies currently making VCS-compatible games: Activision, Apollo, Arcadia, Atari, CBS Video Games, Coleco, CommaVid, Mattel M Network, Spectravision, Telesys, 20th Century-Fox, Tigervision, Ultravision and U.S. Games. Phew! Later in the magazine, you'll see our ratings for every one of these games and others.

With all the new companies making Atari VCS-compatible games, it's hard for one person to keep track of them. I was wondering if you could possibly print a



list of the companies and the games they produce in your magazine.

Randy Abel
California

The answer is: You can use both. The Atari Expansion Module comes with joystick ports all its own, and both the Atari joysticks and the ColecoVision controllers may be plugged into it. So it's all a matter of personal preference.

And while we're on the subject of ColecoVision and expansion modules, if you had any plans to purchase the Intellivision Expansion Module, don't hold your breath. According to Michael Katz, vice president of Coleco, the company has no immediate plans to produce a module for Intellivision games.

I own a ColecoVision and want to buy the Atari Expansion Module. What I want to know is, when I play Atari games, do I use the Atari joysticks or the ColecoVision controllers?

Bill van Horn
Virginia

The answer is: No. Although Mattel's new M Network includes games that are similar to games available for Intellivision, the M Network is made exclusively for the Atari VCS and will not fit or work on the Intellivision Master Component. Unfortunately, some of them don't fit or work on the VCS either. Many people have had problems with the *Super Challenge Football* cartridge, for example. If you have trouble with any of your M Network games, simply bring it back to the store where you bought it and it will be replaced with a new one. Mattel promises that in the future all M Network cartridges will be perfect.

I have Intellivision and I really love the games. I notice that Mattel has a whole new line of games called the M Network. Since I want to own all the games that Mattel makes, I want to know, can I play the new M Network cartridges on my Master Conponent?

Avi Liberman
Illinois

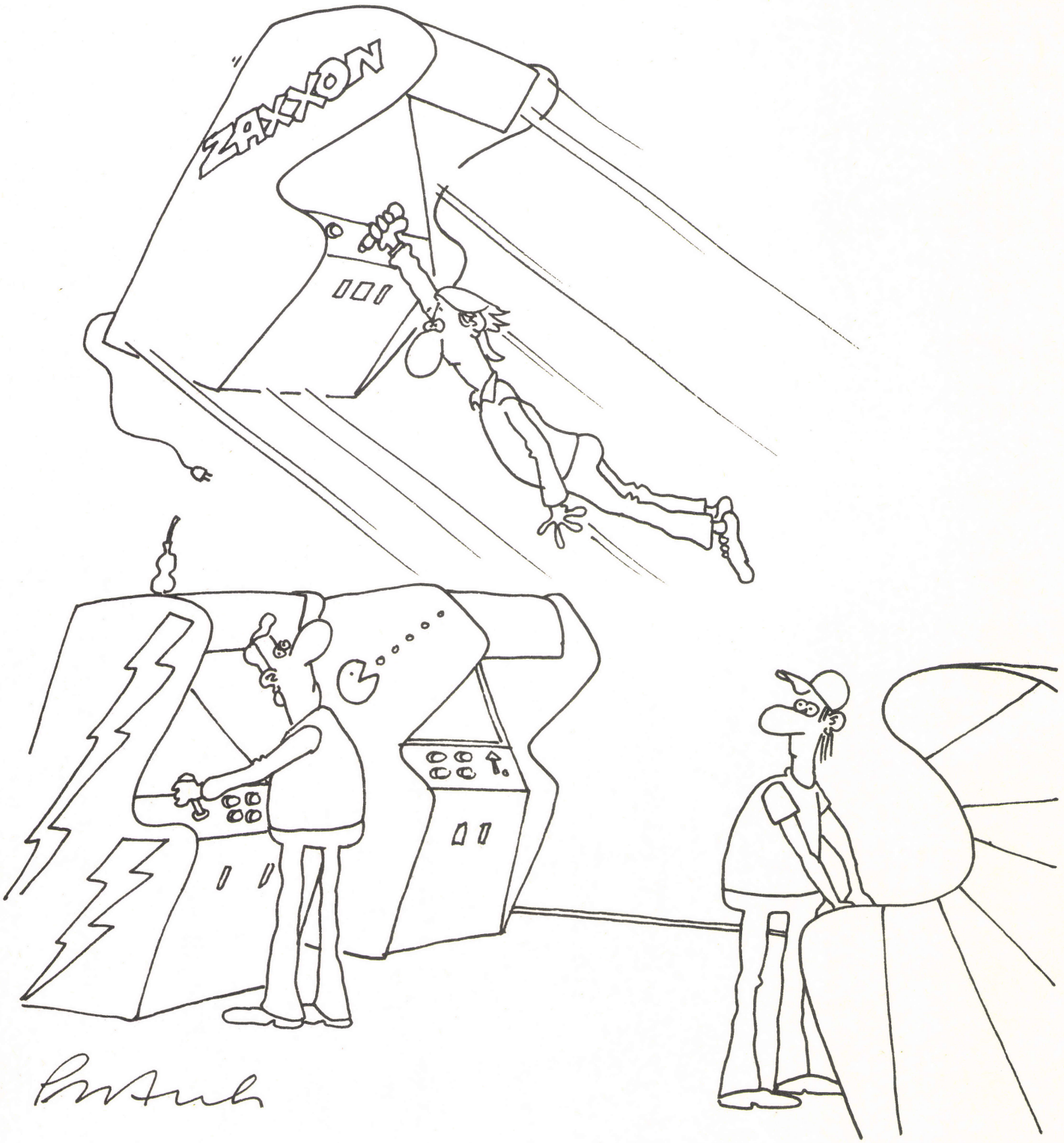
The answer is: Because nothing is simply black and white anymore. Not only does the color/b&w switch control the obvious, it is also being used in an innovative way by two companies—Activision and Spectravision. In *Star Master*, the color/b&w switch is used to call the galactic chart which informs you of your location in space. In Spectravision's *Nexar*, the switch is a "pause" button allowing you to interrupt game play in case you are losing and need a break, winning and need a break, or winning but have to take out the garbage.

There are a lot of switches on the Atari VCS and all of them seem to do something useful: reset, difficulty switch and, of course, on/off. I notice there's also a color/b&w switch on the console but no one has a b&w TV or plays games in black and white anymore, do they? Why doesn't Atari just get rid of it?

Michael Dinora
New York



With a sixth sense that is not to be believed, we have already divined all the answers. All we need now are questions. Do you have a question about video games or computers that matches one of our answers? If you do, send it to: Output/Input, Electronic Fun, *350 E. 81st St., New York, NY 10028.*


ZAXXON

Screen plays

Tackling tut-vultures are on your tail





By Michael Blanchet

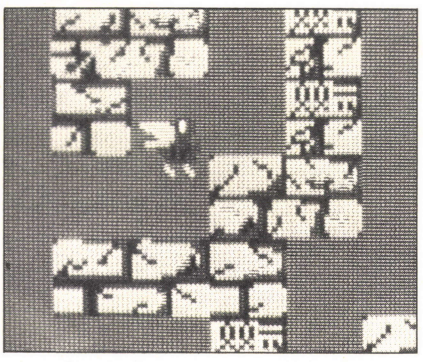
Of all the maze-game variations that followed in the wake of *Pac-Man*, Stern's *Tutankham* is the first reworking of the popular labyrinth theme to show any originality and consequently, any new challenge. Assuming the identity of an intrepid treasure-seeker, the player's objective is to navigate through a series of underground hallways in search of valuables and keys.

Since each maze differs from the one before and each creature you encounter moves at random, executing a preset series of moves or patterns is worthless in *Tutankham*. Familiarizing yourself with the rules of the game is the first step to mastery.

As you might expect, the brief description Stern supplies on how to play *Tut* is just that—brief and somewhat incomplete. The difficulty most first-time players encounter is not knowing what to do.

Your man is controlled by a four-way joystick, while your gun is aimed and fired either left or right by a two-position control handle. It is very important to remember that firepower can only be used facing east or west. When treading through a vertical corridor, be sure no one is following too closely. Your weapon fires on an automatic basis. Therefore, it is not necessary to return the joystick to center after each volley. In *Tut*, like *Robotron*, the game that pioneered the dual joystick control, you can fire and move independently. In simpler terms, you can fire as you retreat to cover your tracks or you may shoot ahead to clear your path.

The best approach to *Tut* is to make haste. Bonus points are awarded based on the amount of time left on the timer at the end of the round. This is the most lucrative source of point revenue. Hanging around to battle the snakes, vultures and bats is not only unsafe, but also unwise, economically speaking. If you choose to hold your ground and blast away, the points awarded for killing each creature are offset by the value of bonus points lost. Furthermore, the longer any round lasts, the greater the number of bats that will appear. By virtue of their speed and erratic flight, bats are your most dangerous opponents. By firing in defense only and stopping only long enough to pick up the keys and treasures, you guarantee yourself the highest possible bonus.



Don't waste time on vultures

When you reach the second maze, your strategy should not vary. Backtracking is required though, since there are two keys and two locks to be opened. After picking up the first key, proceed to the end of the maze and unlock the door. Now turn back and get the second key. Once you have found it, return to the first door and continue on. You will enter a large room. The second keyhole is in the lower right-hand corner of the screen.

Having a Flash at your disposal once you enter this room is very important. As you head toward the lower corner, bats will begin to materialize all around you. In this open-field situation, they have a superior strategic advantage. Use the Flash judiciously in the earlier stages of the game to ensure that you have it when it will really count. On the other hand, it is foolish to be too frugal with them. You are granted one Flash per game life, not three per game. The Flash is not retroactive and any game life lost before the Flash is used deprives you of a valuable weapon that cannot be recovered.□

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Save the WORLD

By Michael Blanchet

Can you fight your way out of these life and death situations?

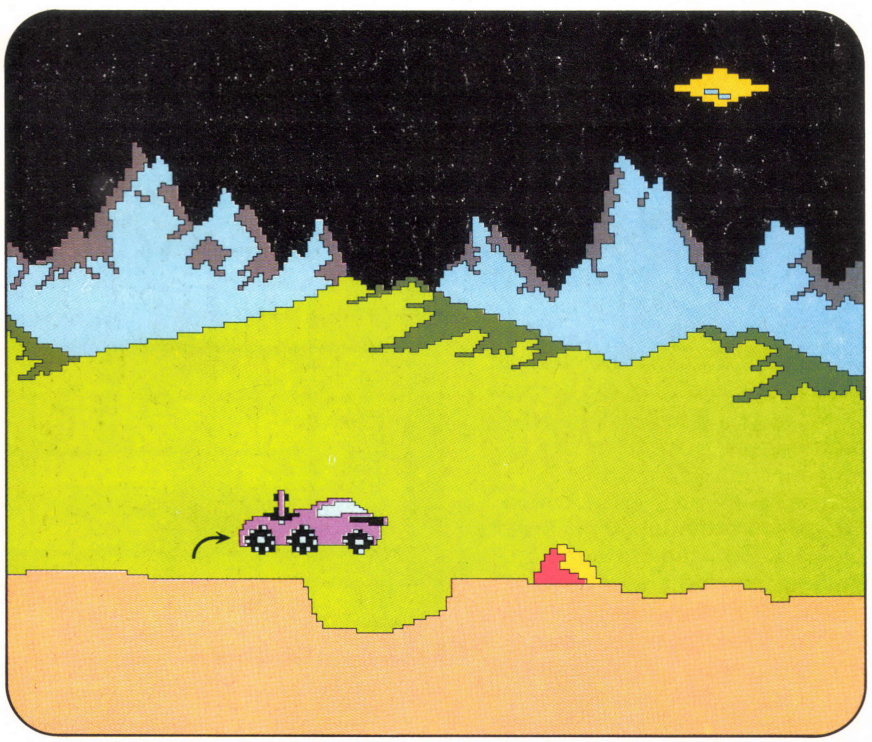
A good video game requires that you have the instincts of a panther, the concentration of a jet fighter pilot, and the reflexes of a home run hitter. Because a video game, by its nature, attempts to place you in progressively more difficult situations until, finally, you make a mistake, your score is actually a reflection of how well you handle crisis situations. It is the video game player with the calmest nerves and highest stress threshold who consistently gets to punch his initials into the list of "All-Time Immortals." Here are six tough predicaments in six hot arcade games. If you had to defend these worlds, would they survive?

The Trap

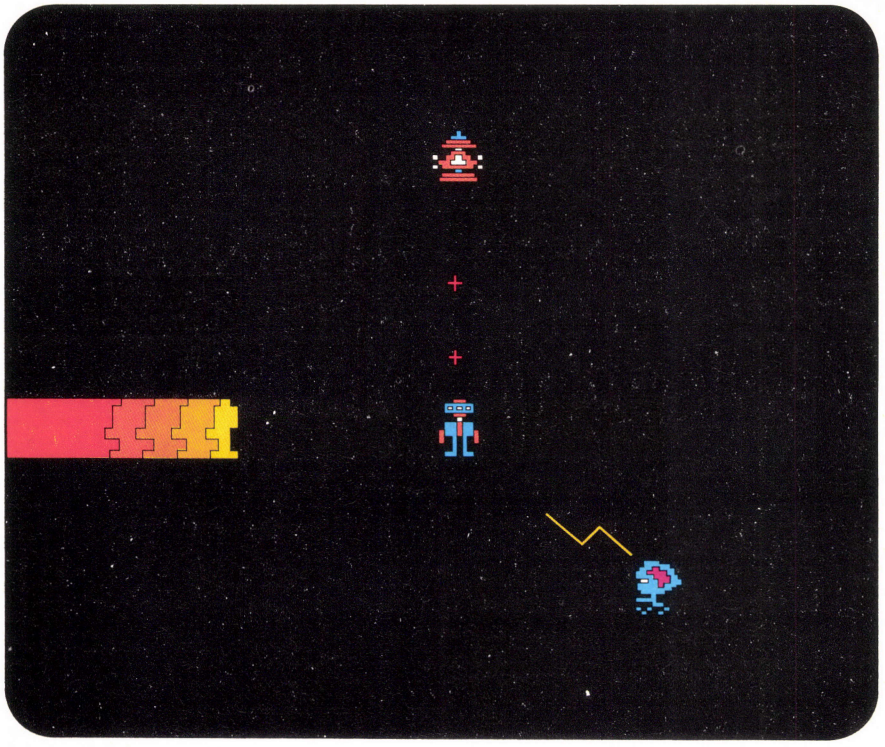
As you speed along the lunar landscape in *Moon Patrol*, you zero in on a deep crater that lies dead ahead. As you make the approach and prepare to vault over it, you also notice that a boulder sits just past the other side of the precipice. How can you safely land on the other side without ramming the boulder?

The Escape

These large rocks must be shot *twice* to be destroyed. This requires split-second timing. Since your forward gun has a limited range, the first shot must be fired just as you begin your descent. Just after touchdown, hit it again.



Nina Wallace



The Trap

You are in the fifth wave of *Robotron*. You are confronted with three final foes. A brain and his snaking cruise missile, an Enforcer that hurls deadly sparks and Prog, the apparition of a reprogrammed human. If all three pose an immediate threat, how can you end the round and preserve a game life in the fewest number of shots?

The Escape

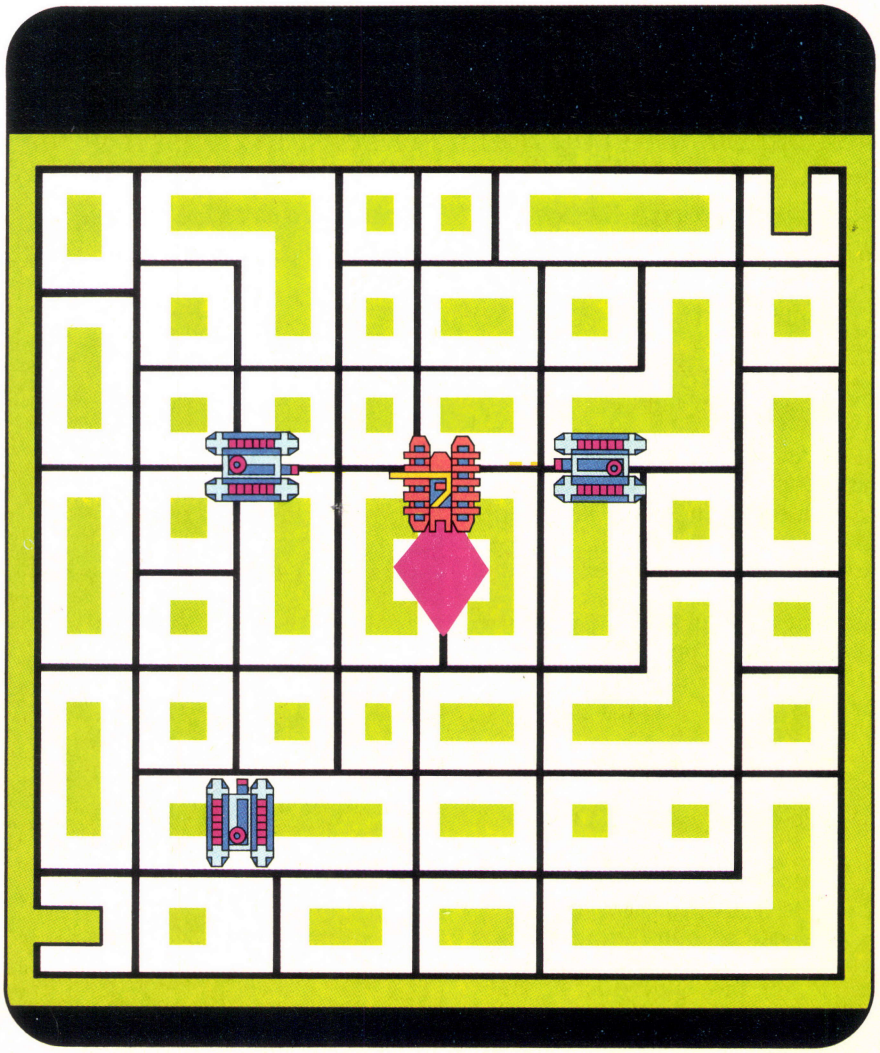
The Progs, like Hulks, do not have to be destroyed in order to advance to the next wave of play. The best course of action is to kill the enforcer first, since he is the fastest character present on the screen, then shoot the Brain.

The Trap

Of all the diverse situations you must face in *TRON*, one of the toughest and most perplexing is the second time you do battle against the enemy tanks. The second time around, it's three against one. Considering that each tank must be hit twice in order to die, and they have a quicker trigger finger than you do, the odds are stacked quite heavily against you. Is there a safe way for you to come out of this hazardous situation alive?

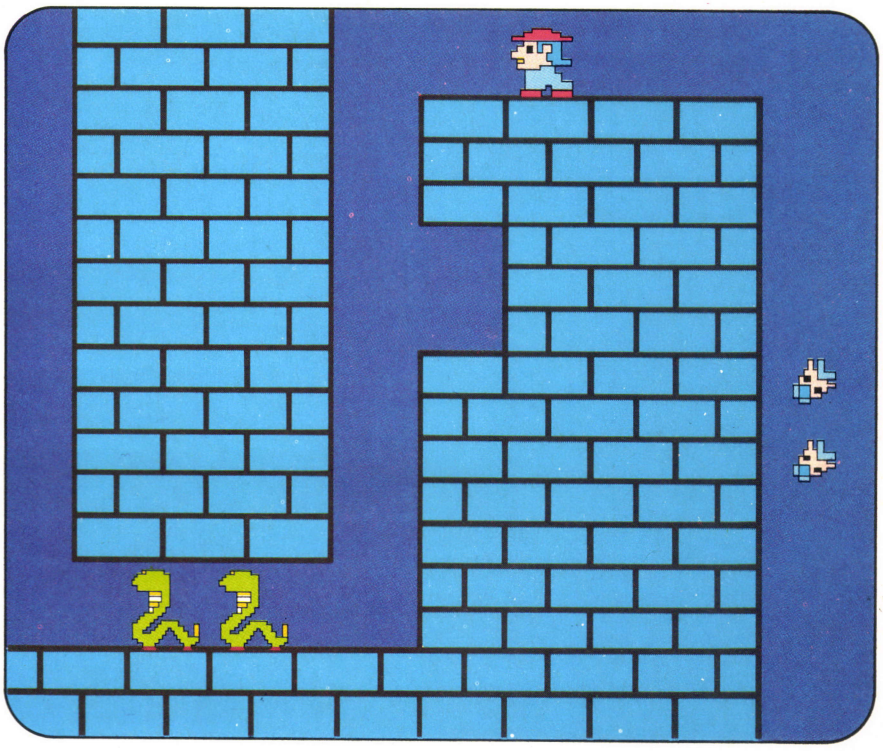
The Escape

Did you know that the pink diamond in the center of the screen can serve you just like a hyperspace button? Just drive into it and your tank will jettison to another spot on the grid. Armed with this information, your best bet is to back your tank into the diamond and turn the gun turret left or right. Fire away until the enemy gets too close. Then, just disappear. But beware—you might reappear in a situation that is even worse!



The Trap

You are on the second *Tut* labyrinth, where two keys must be found. After unlocking the first door, you must locate the second key. To your right is a room with Bats. To your left, Cobras are heading toward the vertical corridor that is your route to the key. You have no Flash. How do you get that key?



The Escape

To head right without a Flash would be foolish. Scoot down the vertical corridor and duck into the niche to the right. Wait for the snakes to reach you before firing. When the coast is clear, move to the adjoining horizontal corridor and get the key.

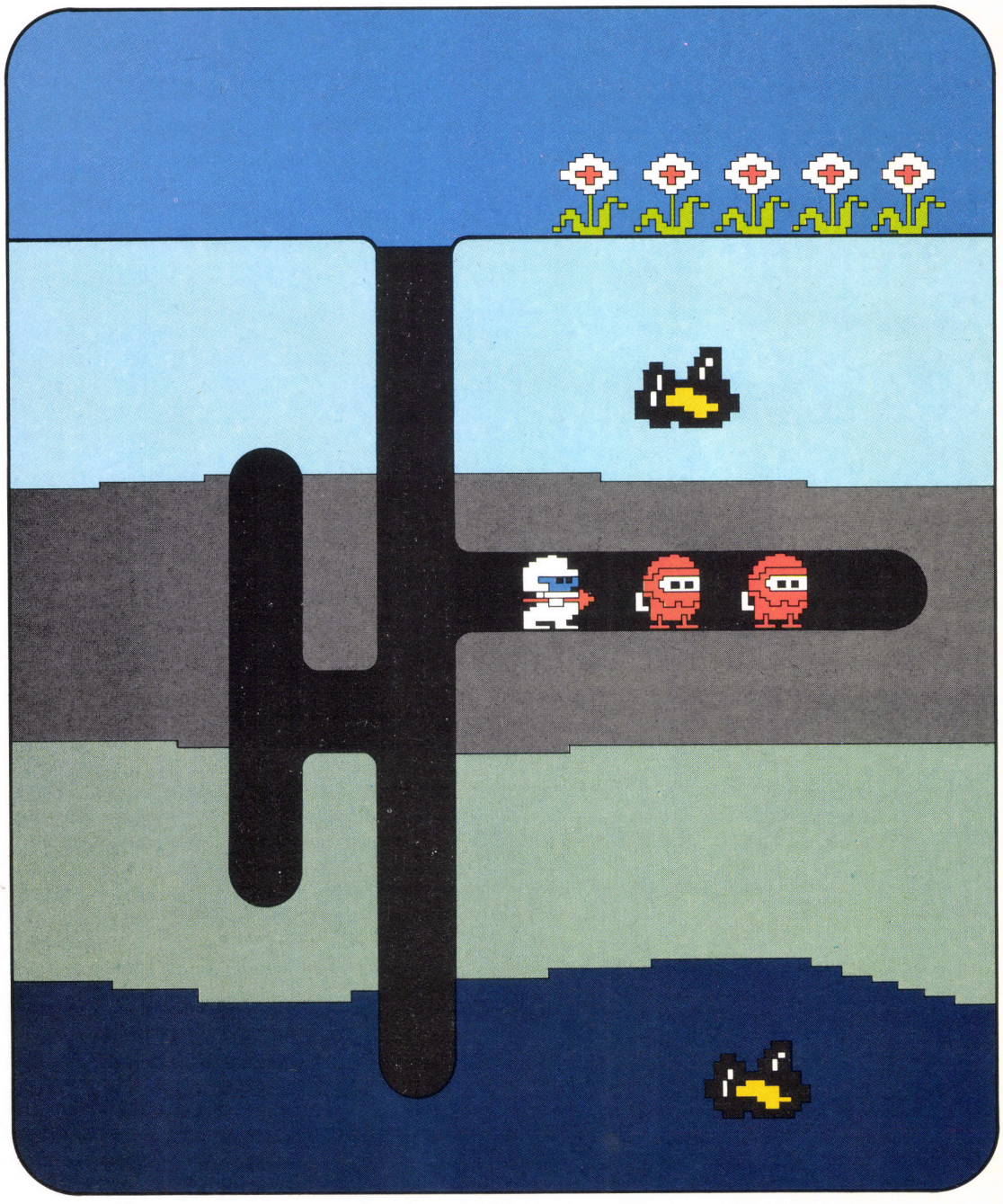


The Trap

You are steadily hammering away at the *Galaga* alien formation with dual fighters from a position mid-way between center screen and the left corner. Suddenly, a lone alien peels away from the main group and tosses a salvo of bombs in your direction. Standing still is certain death for both of your fighters. Next time, you'll be sure to move right fast so you don't get trapped in that left side corner. But right now, the world as we know it is coming to an end. What is your best course of evasive action—moving to the left or moving to the right?

The Escape

Since your ship is limited strictly to horizontal movement, *Galaga* does not lend itself well to strategy, save for pure defensive manuevering. The key in this situation is to simply cut your losses. The safest evasive move would be toward the left corner. At the very worst, you may lose one of your fighters. If you move to the right, you will surely lose them both.



The Trap

As your little Dig Dug plods along the playfield, a pair of Pookas pick up your scent and begin to make chase in close formation. If you turn to pump up the leader, the fella trailing him is sure to capture you where you stand. These two punks are very cute, but also extremely hazardous to your health. Is there a safe way to puncture both Pookas and save your own skin too?

The Escape

To stun the leader and temporarily render him motionless, hold down the Pump button long enough to get a couple of puffs inside him. Now take a step back in order to give yourself some breathing room. The second Pooka will pass his frozen buddy. Pump him till he bursts. Hopefully, when this is finished, the first Pooka will come out of suspended animation.

E.F.G. Times

VOLUME ONE, NUMBER TWO DECEMBER 1982

$150,000 ATARI CONTEST DETAILS

As we mentioned last month, the new Atari SwordQuest series (*EarthWorld, FireWorld, AirWorld, WaterWorld*) are games you can win—$150,000 worth of prizes will be awarded. Here are the details for the first game, *EarthWorld.*

- With the help of the games and DC comic supplied, you must find five "word clues." There are 11 clues, but only five are correct.
- Send your word clues to Atari. The best 50 entries will be invited to California for an all-expenses-paid playoff using a similar game made especially for the playoff. Other winners will receive an Official Atari Challenge Certificate of Merit.
- The winner of the playoff will receive a gold Talisman medallion with 12 diamonds, worth $25,000 and fashioned exclusively for Atari by the Franklin Mint.
- After all four medallions have been awarded, the ultimate *EarthWorld, FireWorld, AirWorld* and *WaterWorld* winners will be flown to Atari for a final playoff to claim the Sword of Ultimate Sorcery, valued at $50,000.
- *EarthWorld* deadline is March 15th.
- Just one entry per person.
- Good luck!



Is there a $25,000 clue in this panel?

Monthly Contest

Each month we pick a home video game and award a free cartridge to the reader who achieves the highest score. To enter, send a clear photo of your score on a TV screen. The highest score we receive by December 10, 1982 will be the winner and he or she will receive the cart of their choice. This month . . . *Kaboom!* Send entries to: *December Contest, Electronic Fun, 350 E. 81st St. New York, NY 10028.*



Send us your high score.

Computer Price War Erupts

If you ever considered buying a home computer, *now* might be the time. According to an article in *Time* magazine, "this Christmas will be the breakthrough in personal computers," and the prices will be right.

In 1980, sales of home computers hit 35,000. This year 1.5 million are expected to leave the stores and that number should double in 1983. To compete for that computer dollar, the manufacturers are engaged in a price war that can only mean good things for the consumer.

On September 1st, Texas Instruments offered a $100 rebate on its popular TI-99/4A, which lists at $299. Commodore has cut the price on its VIC-20 by $40. Radio Shack's TRS-80 Color Computer is $98 cheaper than last year. And Atari is giving $60 worth of discounts on its library of software.

It will be very interesting to see if this Christmas will do for computers what last Christmas did for video games. And if so, where will that leave video games?

Parker Brothers Strikes Back

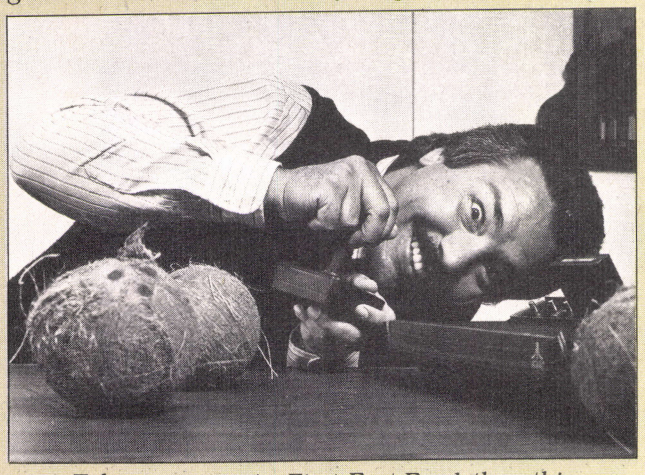
Following the incredible success of *Frogger* and *The Empire Strikes Back,* Parker Brothers has several new titles planned for your Atari VCS. Keep your eyes open for these . . .

January—*Super Cobra, Star Wars*
February—*Reactor*
April—*Sky Skipper, Tutankam*
June—*Revenge of the Jedi*

E.F.G. Times

This Man Is Not Normal

He is Rich Taylor, president of Telesys, a company that makes games for the Atari VCS.



Telesys goes nuts. First Fast Food, *then this*

Telesys has quickly gained a reputation for producing "funny" games. First came *Fast Food*, in which Mr. Mouth has to eat as much food as possible to gain calorie points while avoiding the dreaded Purple Pickle. Now Telesys has *Coco Nuts*, where Stanley I. Presume must fend off coconuts thrown by a monkey in a tree.

We assume that this is why Mr. Taylor is seen here manipulating a joystick with coconuts on his desk and a demented gleam in his eye. On the other hand, maybe he's just weird.

Joystick Finger Transplant?!

You can have a heart transplant. You can have a kidney transplant. But a finger transplant? Michael Reese Hospital in Chicago has been getting a lot of calls lately about an operation performed there in which two fingers of an *Asteroids* champ were sewn onto the hands of a young man who couldn't score 100,000 points in the game. It seems this information was provided in *The Winner's Book of Video Games*, by Craig Kubey.

The whole thing, of course, was a hoax perpetrated by Kubey. "I'm amazed anyone would take that part of my book seriously," he says. "I think that's even funnier than what I wrote."

Stay Out Of Malaysia

Video games are already against the law in the Philippines and Indonesia. Now there is a movement in Malaysia to put a ban on them. "These games glorify violence, destruction, war, killing and racing," said Martin Khor, of the Consumers Association of Penang. Mr. Khor went on to say that children are stealing from their parents to play video games and bringing the games to school to play during lessons. "Video games are destroying our traditional games and children are no longer interested in, say, flying kites or top-spinning." he told *The New York Times*.

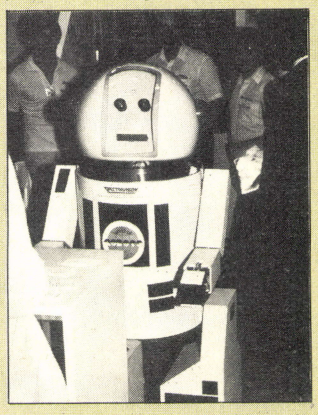
If You Can't Beat 'Em . . .

For the first time in ten years, the cover of *Mad* magazine is not graced with the presence of Alfred E. Newman, the mag's mascot. Instead, the September issue featured another star—Irving Pac, Man of the Year. Irving is a vicious-looking, carnivorous, unfriendly version of the dot we all know and are sick to death of. He also appears inside the magazine, gobbling up articles and headlines.

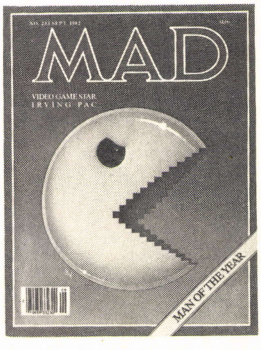
Kids today are spending more of their quarters on video games and less on magazines. It is only natural for *Mad*—and other magazines of that ilk, such as *Cracked*—to try and regain some of that business. *Crazy* magazine, put out by Marvel, has stopped publication entirely. Watch for some video gaming TV shows shortly.

Computer Games From Spectravision

Hot on the heels of their first five Atari-compatible games come three new Spectravision games to be played on the Commodore VIC-20 computer. In *Cave-In*, you must dig your way out of a collapsed mine shaft before you are buried alive. In *Reagonomics*, you must balance your national budget despite a plummeting stock market, a monetary crisis and clashes with foreign powers. And *Number Crunch* allows you to improve your match skills and have fun at the same time. These games are $35 each.



Spectravision's robot





The "juvenile magazines" jump on the bandwagon.

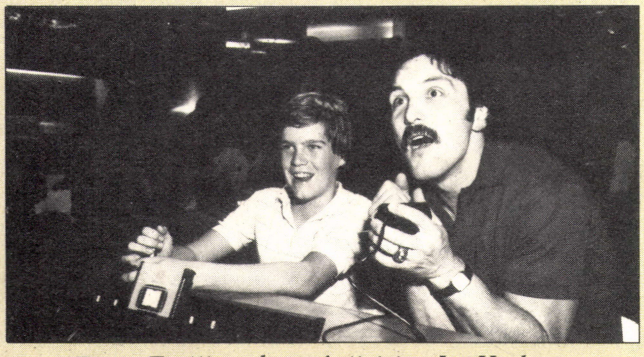
E.F.G. Times

News From Activision

• The world's largest store, Macy's, played host to the Activision Ice Hockey Tournament recently. Hockey stars Ron Dugay and Brian Trottier (pictured here) were on hand to try the home version of their profession. A group of 14-year-olds proceeded to beat the skates off them.

• Latest Activision game—*Sky Jinks*. It will retail for $22.95 and should be in the stores any day now. These guys must be hooked on planes. Similar to *Barnstorming*, *Sky Jinks* puts you in a P41 racer, flying through a slalom course of red and blue pylons. *Sky Jinks*, is the 19th game from Activision.

• With more than a million Intellivisions in use, Activision decided it was time to act. *Pitfall!* and *Stampede* will be available for Intellivision by Thanksgiving for $31.95.



Brian Trottier plays Activision Ice Hockey.

Kermit The Frogger?

What do you get when you cross Atari and *Sesame Street*? We'll find out in June when the first children of this union hit the stores. Atari Inc. and the Children's Television Workshop have joined forces to produce games based on Jim Henson's characters from *Sesame Street*. The games, according to Atari president Michael Moone, "will be child-tested, age-appropriate, discovery-oriented and blend entertainment and learning opportunities." They will be available for both the Atari VCS and 5200 system.

There is no truth to the rumor that the first two games will be *Big Bird Attack* and *Oscar the Grouch Laser War*.

Watch For These New Arcade Games . . .

Jungle King (Taito)
Zektor (Sega)
Subroc 3-D (Sega)
Moon Patrol (Williams)
Slither (GDI)
Radical Radial (Nichibutsu)
Oli Boo Chu (TAI)
Gravitar (Atari)
Mighty Monkey (Yih Lung)
Pengo (Sega)



Coleco proves video games are descended from apes.

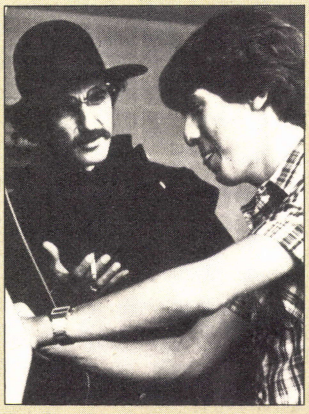
Kong Strikes Back

The theory of evolution was disproven last week when a baboon and a chimp scored significantly higher in *Donkey Kong* than a pair of human beings wearing similar clothing. However, in this version, you have to move this ape up a building and dodge flying pizzas.

In other Coleco news, there will be 15 carts for ColecoVision by Christmas. Also, there will be seven Coleco games for Atari VCS owners and five for Intellivision owners.

Is Heaven A Big Arcade?

Yes, but there are no change machines. Pictured here is Father Guido Sarducci (Don Novello), ex-*Saturday Night Live* superstar priest, on the new CBS series, *Square Pegs*. The Father has been recruited to exorcise Marshall Blechman (John Femia), who is possessed by video games. It doesn't look like Sarducci is making much progress.



Father Sarducci

It is rumored that more than 10 new TV shows about video games are in the works. Keep an eye out for next month's *Electronic Fun* for more info, pictures and interviews about the shows.

Quote Of The Month

"Eventually, you die. But the question is, how well did you do until that time? Did you do better than other people? If you did, you won. It's like life. Everybody dies, but it's what you do in between."

Lyle Rains,
Inventor of *Asteroids*,
in *Secrets Of The Video Game Superstars*

Have you got an item for the EFG Times? News events, game tips, photos and other information are gladly accepted. Send material to: EF, 350 E. 81st St., New York, New York 10028.

CHRISTMAS *Wish List*

". . . And on the fifth day of Christmas my true love gave to me, five Quest for the Rings, *four* Weird Birds, *three* Freeway *hens, two* Mr. Turtles *and a cartridge in a pear tree." These may not be your idea of the ideal Christmas gifts, but what can we say? We didn't have time to contact all of you so we call up the following stars and pros instead. Season's Gamings!*

Aileen Quinn, Star of *Annie:* The two games I'd really like would be *Centipede*—the arcade game —and *Pitfall!* by Activision. They're really neat. Especially *Pitfall!* I like the way Harry jumps onto the crocodiles.

Marty Ingels, The voice of *Pac-Man*: May all your life be pellet-rich, With fruited dreams come true. And Christmas days be wacka-white, While all your ghosts are blue.

Michael Blanchet, Author of *How to Beat the Video Games*: After nine months of being in charge of a video game arcade room and then coming home to play and write about home games,



Micheal Okamoto

what I'd really like is a long vacation on an island where there *are* no video games.

Cathy Garver, Star of the *Spider-man* cartoon series: If I could create my own game machine, I'd like one that could talk but not talk back. I'd like to see an adventure game in which I could be any one of the characters.

Tom Snyder, WABC news anchor-man: I'm addicted to *Donkey Kong* so what I'd like for Christmas is a ColecoVision. This way I wouldn't have to go down to the arcades every time I got the itch to play.

Todd Rodgers, *Gorf* world champion: What I'd like to see is an adventure game in which I could see the action from all points of view. For example, if the game featured a fire-breathing dragon, I'd like to be able to see the screen through his eyes.

Spencer Christian, star of *ABC's Eyewitness News*: I'd like to be locked up in a room with a *Pac-Man* machine. I love *Pac-Man*. I can't get enough of it. In fact, I only hang out with athletes who love *Pac-Man* also.

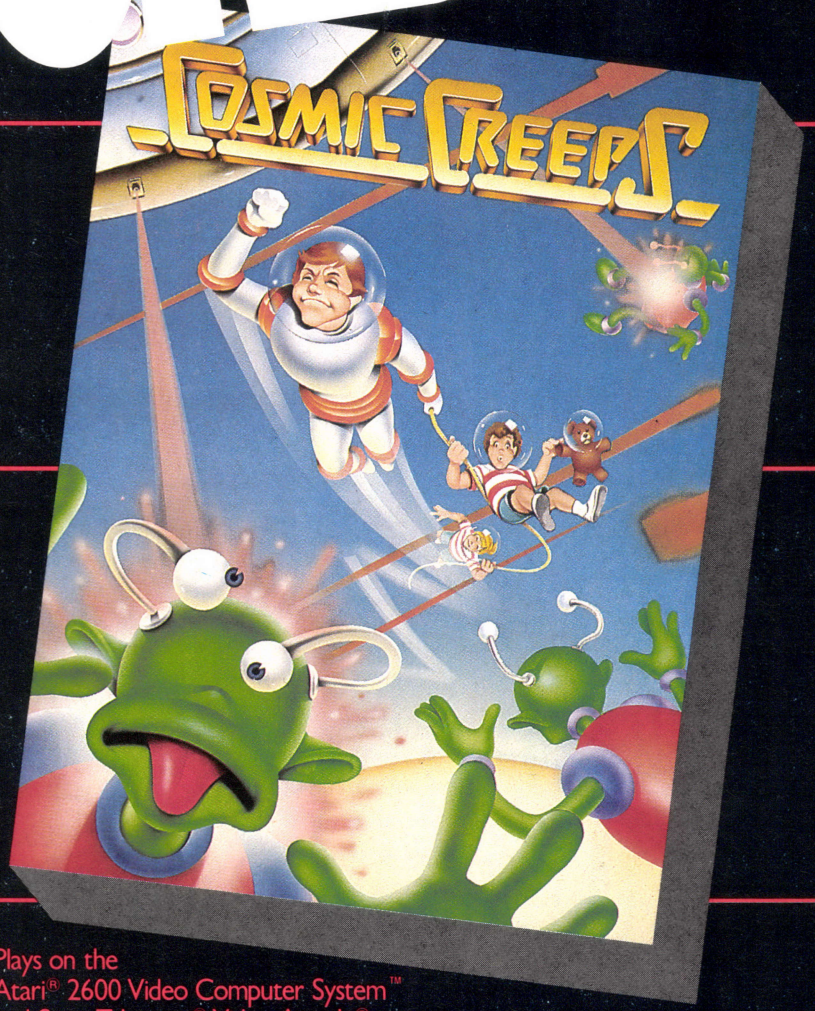
Al Miller, Senior Designer at Activision: I want a complete sen-surround, tactile, feedback experiential game device with a direct brain interconnect and alpha state control.

David Crane, Senior Designer at Activision: After a hard day slaving over a hot microchip, I want to be able to come home, sit back on my bed and play video games. So, I want a remote control, Atari-compatible video game system, so I can play without having to get up. In the event that I do have to get up, I want a pair of tennis shoes.

Andy Breyer, *Asteroids* champion: I'd like a game system—either cartridge or disk, it doesn't matter—that allows whatever type of game I'm thinking of to appear and be played.

ET, alien: I want a phone.

ORB IT!



Plays on the
Atari® 2600 Video Computer System™
and Sears Telegame® Video Arcade®

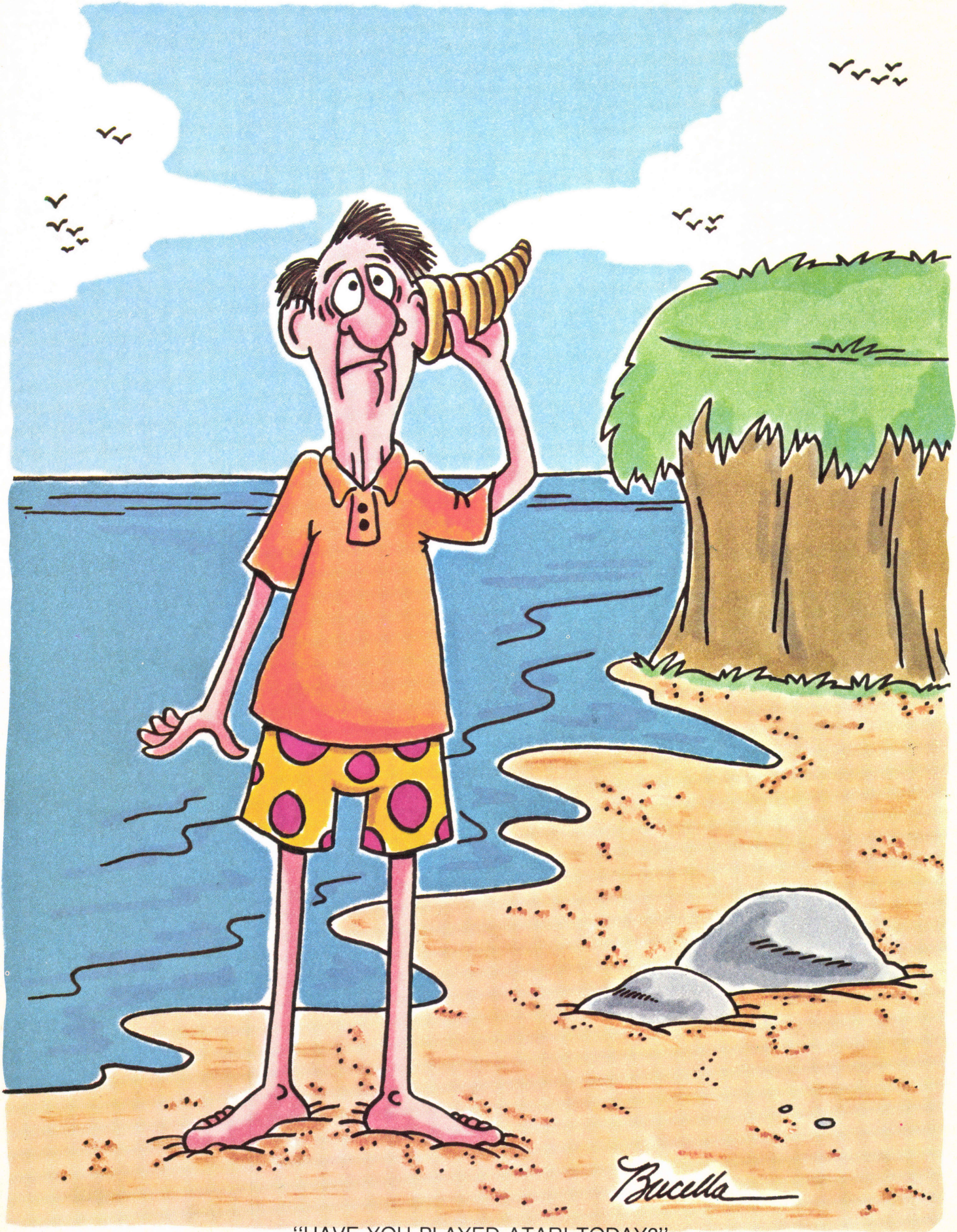
***Cosmic Creeps* will send you right into orbit—out of this world to a galaxy where Space Skeeters carry unsuspecting Orbinauts into oblivion. Where Creeps are constantly on the attack. And where it's up to you to save an entire generation of Cosmic Kids.**

Even the most space-weary videonauts will love *Cosmic Creeps*. It's a test of astronomical skill, strategy and stamina. And it's a lot of fun.

For the whackiest blast-off ever, take a trip to the store and get *Cosmic Creeps*. It's a space game from a different universe.

Telesys™
FUN IN GAMES.
43334 Bryant Street, Fremont, CA 94539

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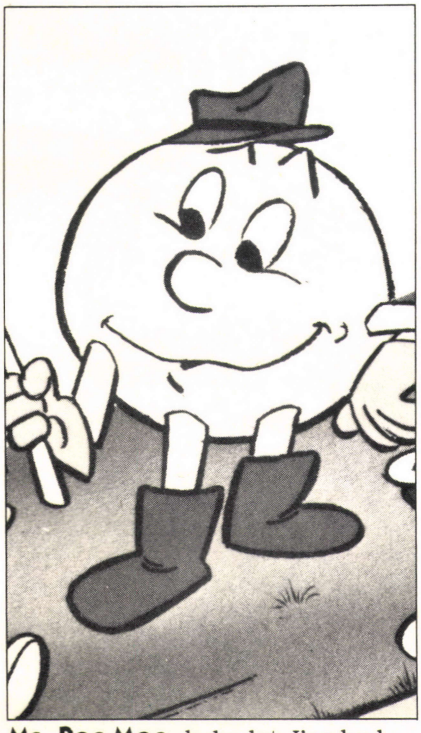


"HAVE YOU PLAYED ATARI TODAY?"

Mario, carpenter and high-hurdler: I tell you. Just once in my life I'd like to climb to the top of those stupid girders and get Betsy out of the clutches of that crazy gorilla. I haven't had a home-cooked meal in months.

Donkey Kong, ape: Frankly, I'd like to meet a nice girl. Then I could settle down, go to work for her father and quit this low-paying, thankless job. I'm just a middle class, family ape at heart.

Pac-Man, dot: I'm full. For Christmas I'd like to stop running already and get some rest.



Ms. Pac-Man, lady dot: I've had enough pellets to last me a lifetime. I'd like to join a health club, take some of this excess weight off and go to Studio 54 or Europe or something.

Pitfall Harry, big game hunter: I'd like some weapons. It's tough being a lost in the jungle without a gun or a knife or insect repellent. You try it. See how you like it.

KC Munchkin, smiling dot: I think what I'd like most of all is to have a date with Ms. Pac-Man. Pac-Man just doesn't appreciate her. If she were my girl, I'd never make her work for a living.

STICK IT!



Play on the
Atari® 2600 Video Computer System™
and Sears Tele-Game® Video Arcade®

When it comes to video games, there's nothing else like a game by Telesys. Nothing whackier. And nothing more challenging.

Eating little white dots is pretty bland, compared to munching the flying burgers, shakes and fries in *Fast Food*. It's a furious feast!

Keep Stanley I. Presume hot-footing it as he dodges Coco's barrage of nuts in *Coco Nuts*. But *don't* laugh—this is serious business. It's a knock out!

And try *Cosmic Creeps*—a space game that's out of this world. It's up to you to save the Cosmic Kids from Skeeters, Creeps and oblivion. It's a blast!

Stick it, with Telesys video games. You'll be stuck on them for good.

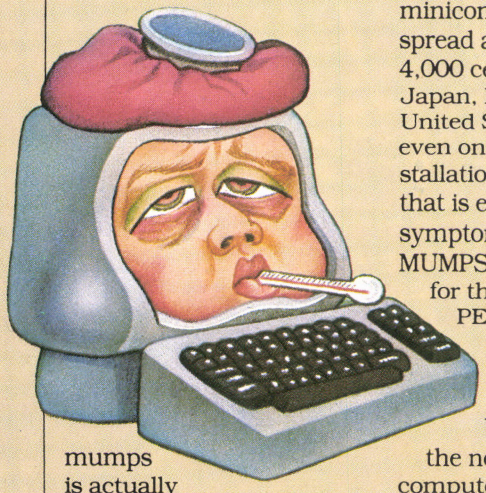
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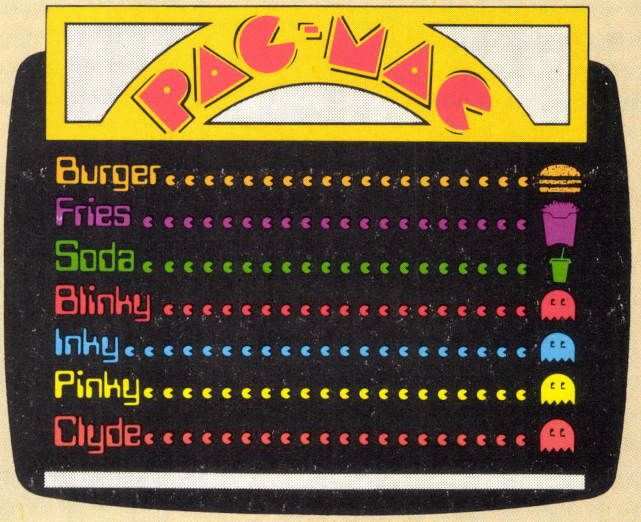
A comical catch-all of odds and ends

Terminal Disease

There's a new strain of mumps running rampant through Massachusetts General Hospital and doctors are doing nothing to stop it. That's because



mumps is actually MUMPS (*M*assachusetts General Hospital *U*tility *M*ulti*P*rogramming *S*ystem)—a new computer language. MUMPS includes an application programming language, all linkage editing and loading tasks, a database-management system and a data-communications monitor. It was originally written for minicomputers but it has spread and infected about 4,000 centers throughout Japan, Europe and the United States. There's even one military installation in Europe that is exhibiting symptoms as well. MUMPS is available for the Apple, Super-PET and some Z80 systems. We don't know about you, but we're waiting breathlessly for the next medical computer language: MALPRACTICE (*M*edical *A*nalytical *L*anguage for *P*rogramming *R*eal *A*nd *C*omputer *T*ime *I*n *C*omplex *E*mergencies).□

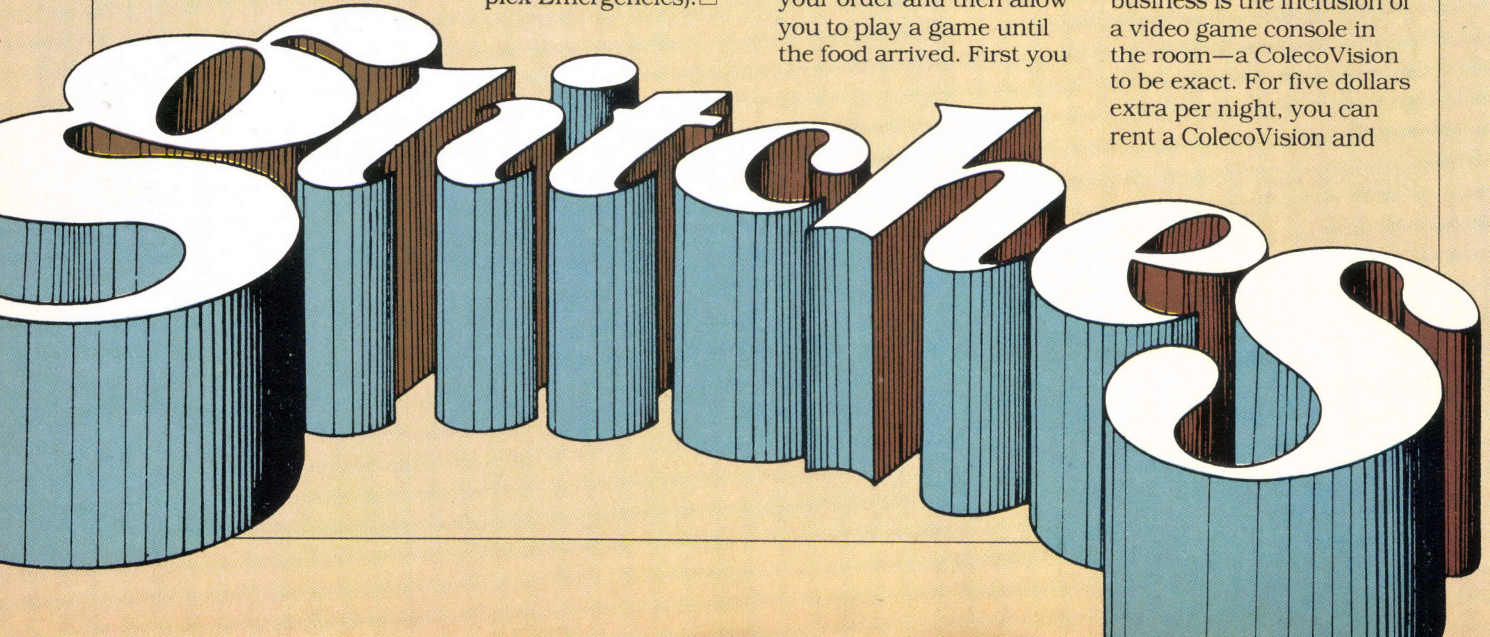


Pac-Mac

McDonald's reputation is built on the fact that it delivers food in a very speedy way. But no matter how quickly that's done, if you're hungry, it still seems to take a long time—especially if you order something without ketchup. What could be a better way to while away the time than by playing video games? With this in mind, McDonald's has approached a manufacturer about designing a video game that would take your order and then allow you to play a game until the food arrived. First you beat the game, then you eat. A classic case of eat and won.□

Space Inn-Vaders

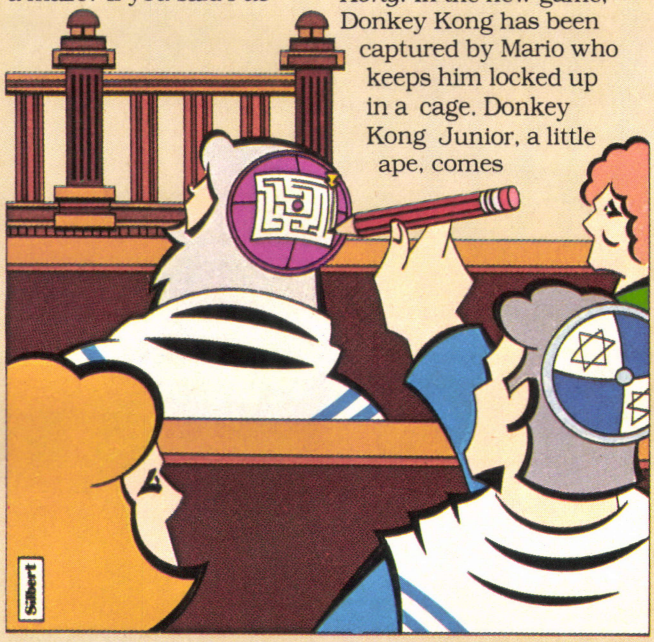
There's a new item in hotels that can be requested when you call room service. Along with your scrambled eggs, toast and coffee, you can also order *Donkey Kong*, *Ladybug* or *Cosmic Avenger* (among others). The latest development in the hotel business is the inclusion of a video game console in the room—a ColecoVision to be exact. For five dollars extra per night, you can rent a ColecoVision and



the use of an assortment of cartridges. Universal Concepts, Ltd. is the brains behind this deal. They've already begun installing units in Howard Johnson motels. Now, when someone asks you for a hotel recommendation, you can say, "The beds were lumpy and the food was mediocre, but the graphics were great!"□

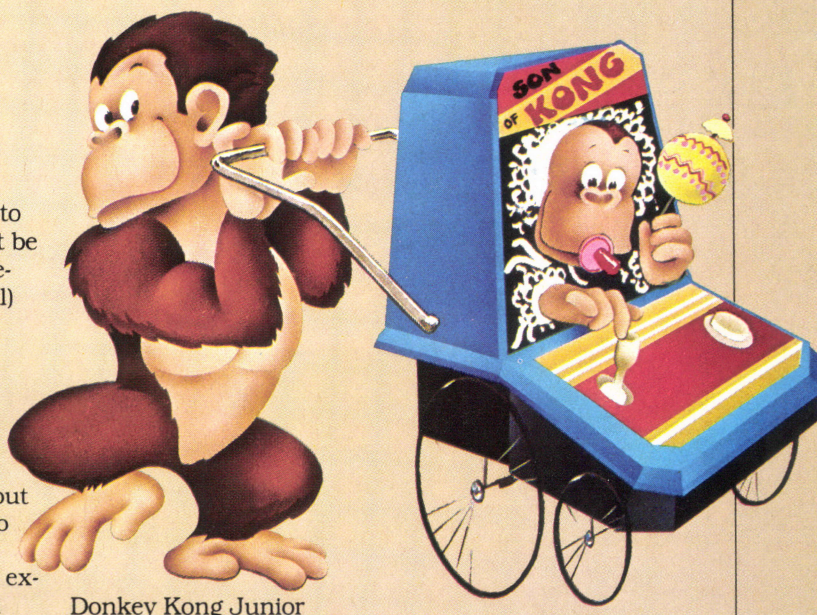
Oy Maze?

What's round and uses a maze? If you said *Pac-Man*, you're wrong. It's a skullcap worn by Joseph Reif. Reif, a lecturer in Ramat Gan, Israel, added a new twist to this tradition. He designed a maze for his skullcap and had a friend crochet it for him. Reif says it has become something of a conversation piece and the people sitting behind him in synagogue have had trouble following the service because they were trying to do the maze. It may not be electronic, but it's something to take your (skull) cap off to.□



Bringing Up Baby

When people talk about second generation video games, I don't think *Donkey Kong Junior* is exactly what they have in mind. *Donkey Kong Junior* is the successor to the very popular *Donkey Kong*. In the new game, Donkey Kong has been captured by Mario who keeps him locked up in a cage. Donkey Kong Junior, a little ape, comes to rescue his forlorn daddy. Players can make him jump in four directions and he can slide down a single vine or climb up two vines at a very high speed. Avoiding obstacles such as ape-eating birds and energy pods, Junior has to maneuver his way upward so that he can grab the keys away from Mario and set free his hairy parent. Since



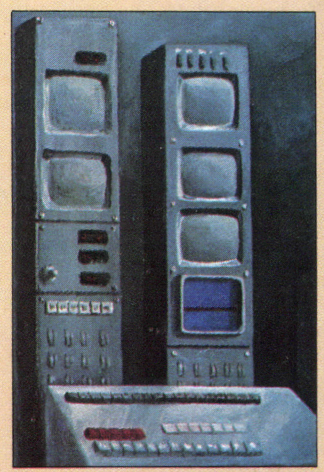
Donkey Kong Junior seems to be every bit as cunning and clever as his father, it's safe to say he's a chimp off the old block.□

Sexual Interface

There are a million adult computer games in the Naked City and you can keep track of them by subscribing to *The Dirty Book*—a user's guide to erotic software. In addition to program reviews, *The Dirty Book* features articles and amusements such as *The Binary Hooker* and dirty crossword puzzles. While most of the programs reviewed in the issue we saw were for the Apple and TRS-80 computers, perhaps future issues will get into heavy PET-ting.□

May The Source Be With You

A long time ago, indoor plumbing wasn't necessarily standard equipment in any given living space. Now it is. So it's not unreasonable to think that home computers will become standard equipment in your living space sometime in the future. A building in lower Manhattan—built in 1896—is being converted into lofts, and Jonathan Rose, who is doing the converting, is including a home computer in each. Each computer is to be linked up to The Source, a personal computer data bank with access to about 1,200 user services. Those who don't want the computer can knock $700 off the price of the apartment. Of course, those who don't want the apartment can knock $186,300 off the price of the computer.□



Micheal Okamoto, Pat Kinsley, Bill Silkert, Jane Beaulieau, Bob Winterson

ATARI® INTRODUCES

A video game series so challenging, you could win up to $150,000 in prizes for solving it.

Atari's new SwordQuest takes you on a journey through four separate worlds—actually four separate video game cartridges—in search of a jeweled sword. The Sword of Ultimate Sorcery.

But along the way, you could actually win four different $25,000 jewel-encrusted treasures (one for solving each game) and even the ultimate treasure: a $50,000 jeweled sword in the Atari $150,000 SwordQuest challenge (see game rules for details).

To help you solve each game, you'll find a SwordQuest DC-Comicbook enclosed with each cartridge. It contains the detailed story of that SwordQuest game along with the clues you'll need to master its mysteries.

In fact, if you can solve any one of SwordQuest's four separate video games, you'll be considered



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SWORDQUEST™

an expert player. And you'll be rewarded for it.

Just send us the form enclosed with each game cartridge (EarthWorld™ entry must be submitted by March 15, 1983), fill in the appropriate clues and we'll rate your performance for that game. If you've solved enough clues you'll receive an official Atari SwordQuest Challenge Certificate of Merit.

EarthWorld, the first SwordQuest cartridge, is here now. FireWorld™ is coming soon. WaterWorld™ and AirWorld™ will be out by Fall, 1983.

So start solving new Atari SwordQuest now.

The sooner you start, the sooner you'll get to the bottom of it.

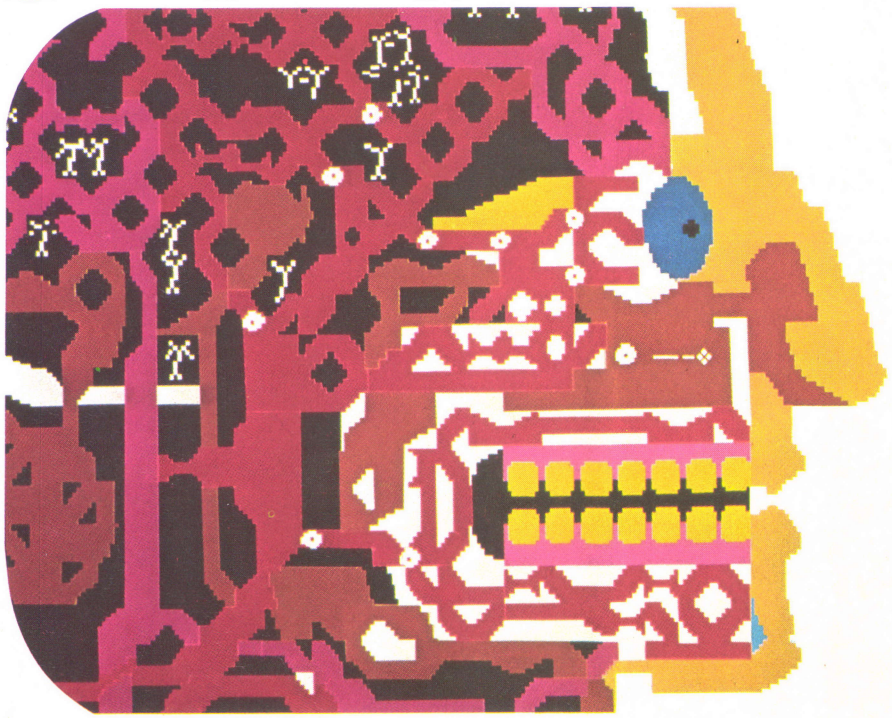


ATARI

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Gamemakers:

the good doctor



Imagic's Rick Levine went from medicine to Micro Surgeon

Every so often a game comes along that is different than the average "run and gun, search for secret treasure" fare. Micro Surgeon *is such a game. In this new Imagic game for Intellivision, you become a doctor without having to take the Hippocratic Oath or spend all those years (to say nothing of dollars) in medical school. In* Micro Surgeon, *you are transported,* Fantastic Voyage*-style, into the human body where you must cure one of over 200 patients of medical problems that range from kidney stones to brain tumors. Rick Levine conceived this offbeat game and we sat down with him and talked about video games, medicine and* Micro Surgeon.

EF: How in the world did you get the idea for MICRO SURGEON?

RL: I generally like to take ideas for games from events in my own life. I've always been interested in science fiction and medicine in particular. When I was in college I was a chemistry/pre-med major. The last year I was doing some work for a company in optics, I got involved with eye surgery. I got the thought that, via a computer, it would be possible to do surgery in a video game form.

EF: It sounds like you have quite a knowledge of medicine. Tell us a little about your background.

RL: Well, I'm 29 years old now. I got a math degree from UCLA and then went on to get a degree in computer science.

EF: Would you say that UCLA is a good school for someone who wants to make a career out of video games?

RL: Yes, but it's not the only one. I'd say that any school that has a good engineering program would be the one to look for if you're interested in video games. That would be an interesting concept—The University of Video Games. The students would spend all their time studying things like "Pong—The Beginning" and things like that. Actually, I could see some school offering a degree in video entertainment very soon.

EF: How did you go about designing MICRO SURGEON?

RL: The first thing, of course, is the idea for the game. After I have that, I sit down and write about five or six pages of notes about what I want to do—things the game should have in it. I knew I wanted to illustrate the inside of the human body—the major organs, the circulatory, lymphatic and other systems—not to mention the various tumors, tars, diseases and the weapons to fight them. Of course, I wanted to make the graphics spectacular, but you are always limited by the amount of information you can stuff into a cartridge and fit on the screen. Then I conceived the rules of the game—how much time you have, what can shoot at what and how many times, how bad does the patient have to be to be dead and how good does he have to be until he's cured—things like that. Once I had all that down, I consulted with the other designers here.

EF: How long did it take you?

RL: Depending on how difficult it is, a game can take anywhere from four to five months to a couple of years to design. *Micro Surgeon* seemed to come together easily. In all it took five months from the idea to completion.

"After you cure the critical organs, work on healing the rest of the body."

EF: Can you give us any hints on how we should go about getting a high score in MICRO SURGEON?

RL: Sure. When you start the game, there are always quite a few organs that are damaged. You should head straight for the ones that are in the worst shape, the critical ones, and try to cure them. But it's not such a good idea to *completely* cure them. You should try to get it out of the critical area. Then go back to check the status chart every once in a while, because while you're in there knocking out tar in the lungs, the brain might be getting terminal. Once that happens, there's a good chance the patient will become terminal. So instead of trying to cure one organ completely, spread yourself evenly and



conserve your shots because they use a lot of power.

Another good strategy tactic is that once something has gone terminal, the brain for instance, if you're lucky enough not to have died yet, spend your time and effort on the other parts of the body. Once something has gone terminal, you can't cure it anyway.

EF: What do you think are the elements of a good game?

RL: Number one, it has to be fun. Nobody's going to play the game if it isn't fun, and if nobody plays the game, it's all over. But also, I think there should be some inherent value in a game. You should be able to get something out of it. It should teach you something, even if it's only eye-hand coordination. You shouldn't be able to play a game for a weekend and get tired of it.

EF: With that in mind, what do you consider your favorite game?

RL: Tough question. I can't say I have one favorite game. Right now I'm playing *Zaxxon* a lot in arcades. In home games, it's tough to top our own *Demon Attack*, designed by Rob Fulop for Atari and Gary Kape for Intellivision.

EF: Two separate designers worked out DEMON ATTACK?

RL: Sure. You can't just take an Atari-compatible game and plug it into an Intellivision. The systems have very different graphics capabilities. A game has to be almost completely redesigned in order to put it out in the opposite format. Most designers are more familiar with one system over the other, so that's why two designers work on separate formats of same game.

EF: Many of our readers probably would be interested in doing what you do for a living—designing video games. What advice can you give them?

RL: The most important thing is that you know games, not just computers. You should really play every new game that comes out, home and arcade, to discover the idiosyncrasies of each. The more expanded your horizons are, the better. Of course, a computer science background is helpful, but there are a lot of designers with other backgrounds. It's not how much you know about computers—it's how good your game ideas are.

EF: What do you do when you're not designing video games?

RL: I'm a sports enthusiast. I spend a lot of time playing tennis, golf and bowling.

EF: Are you married?

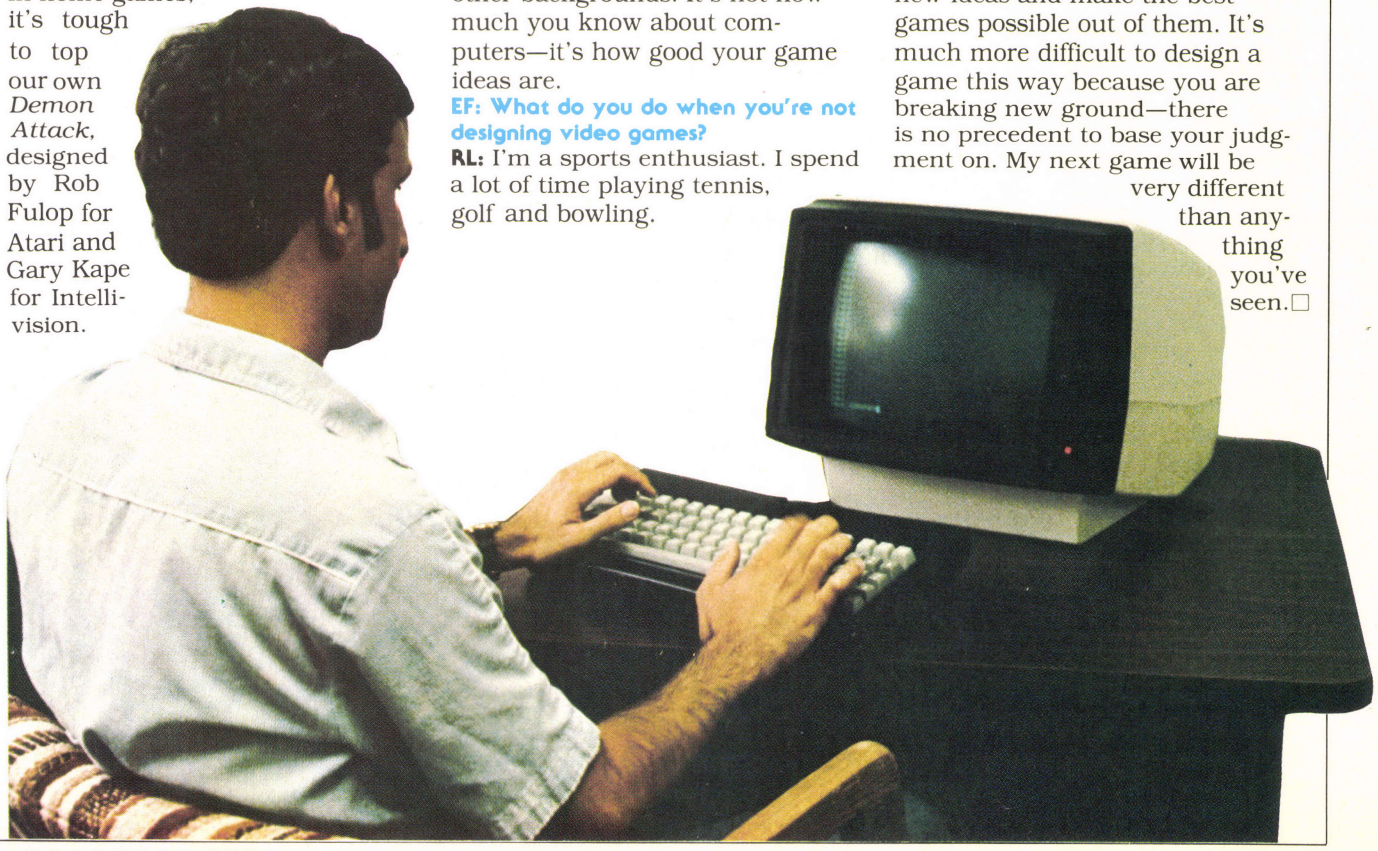
RL: Engaged.

EF: How does she feel, marrying a guy that makes games for kids as a living?

RL: She enjoys it. She herself doesn't play video games much, but she likes the fact that I'm doing what I enjoy. Sometimes it's better like that. After working all day with video games and other programmers, it's nice to go out and talk about something else.

EF: Can you give us an idea of what your next game will be like?

RL: Naturally, I can't tell you exactly about my next game because someone might be able to make a cheap copy and rush it out. One thing I can say about most games I might design is that there will be a definite uniqueness about them. I think *Micro Surgeon's* biggest asset is that it's different than any other game in the world. It's not a space game, a maze game or an adventure game. Rather than taking a familiar game and trying to improve upon it, I like to think of new ideas and make the best games possible out of them. It's much more difficult to design a game this way because you are breaking new ground—there is no precedent to base your judgment on. My next game will be very different than anything you've seen.□



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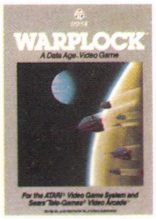


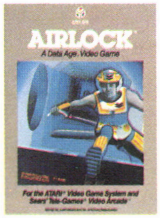
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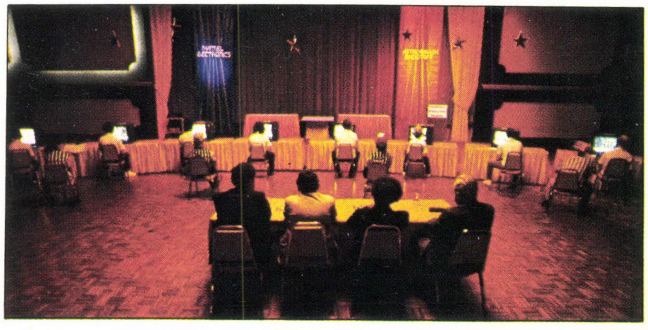
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Space SUPERBOWL

Top guns score in Mattel's Astrosmash Shoot-Off

It was one of the most spectacular video game tournaments ever—the National Astrosmash Shootoff in Houston. After 13,000 people from the ages of 11 to 51 had sent Mattel photographs showing their top Astrosmash *scores, 16 of them were flown for a three-day trip to the Astrodome to test their skills for one hour . . . and $100,000 in prize money. According to Peter Pirner of Mattel, these video athletes "literally smashed their way through our game's computer programming." When the dust had cleared, 18-year-old Manuel Rodriguez from Stockton, California came out on top. Pictured here are some of the Astrosmash champions.*

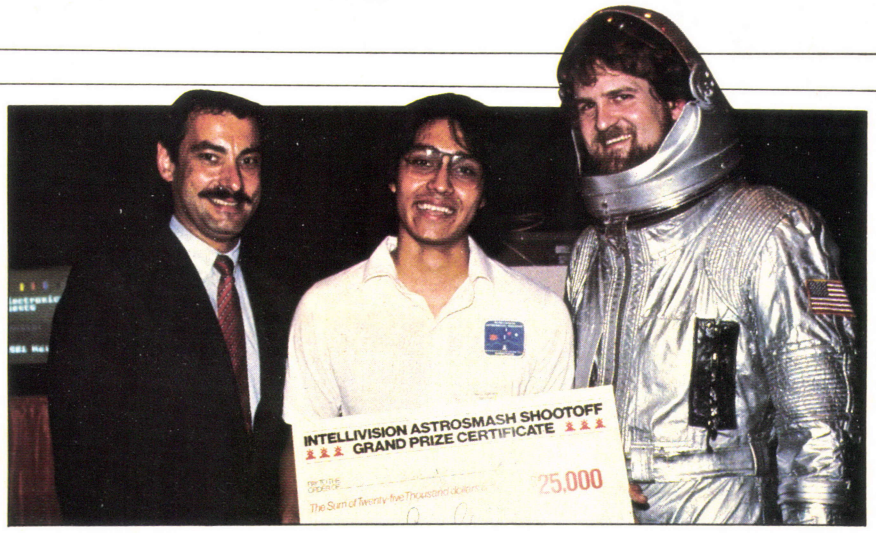






Right, the world Astrosmash champion, Manuel Rodrigues. On the opposite page, bottom right, is second-prize winner ($12,500) Chuck Tappan of Elmira, New York. Above Chuck is the youngest of the finalists, 11-year-old Chad Junge of Arizona. To his left is fourth place finisher Byron Nelson.

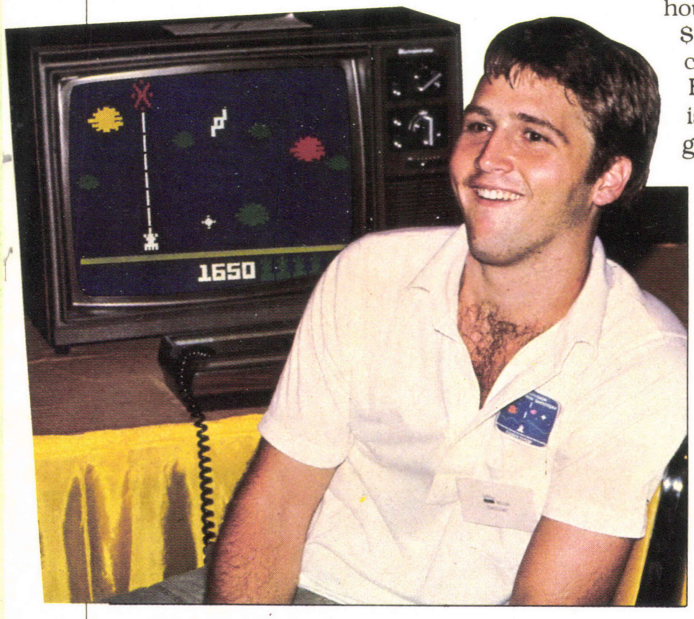


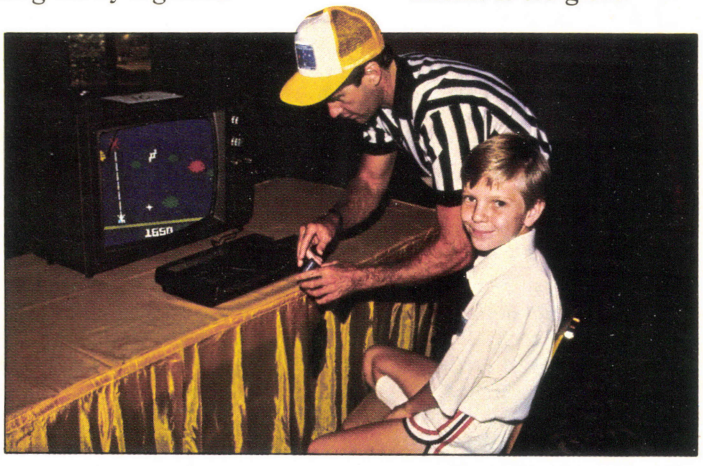


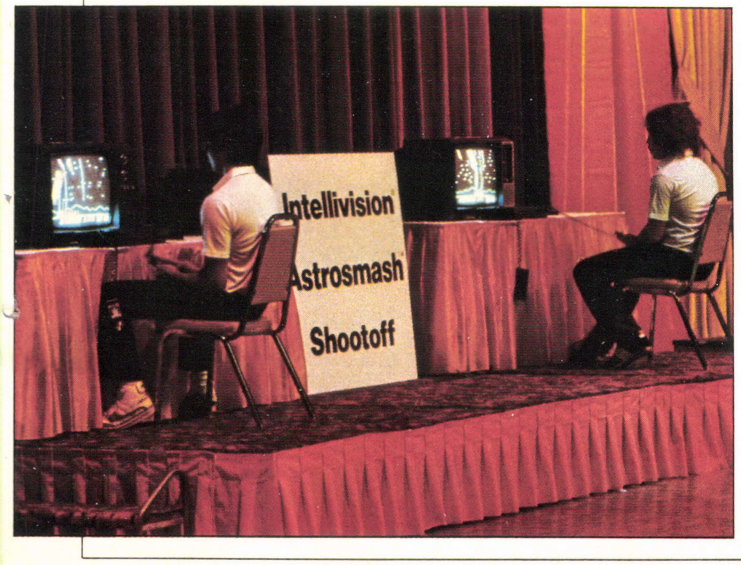
HOW THE WINNERS WON

They all use Autofire while pressing the single shot button. Michael Miller (eighth place) explains that playing at the fast speed makes you better at the beginning of the game, when the action is slow. Byron Nelson (fourth place) says, "when you hit everything that comes down at the beginning, you get up to six times as fast for the higher totals."

But practice is the key. The winner, Manuel Rodriguez, practiced 15 hours a day for a month in order to score 835,180 points and win $25,000. After that month, he says, "I practiced how well I could do in one hour," to mirror the conditions of the contest. Except for Manuel, most contestants believe using hyperspace is helpful. Manuel thinks that with hyperspace, the risk of getting hit by a guided missile is too great.









why FROGS?

By Randi Hacker

Frogs are everywhere: arcades, homes, swamps, high school labs. And now frogs have managed to get themselves on TV as well A plague of frogs is upon us. Not since biblical times have frogs enjoyed the notoriety they are presently enjoying in the video game format.

First came *Frogger*, a delightful little game in which you steered a frog across a road and a stream while avoiding street and river traffic. Almost immediately, everybody was jumping on the frogwagon and we were deluged with a plague of *Frog Pond* (Atari), *Frogs and Flies* (M Network) and *Frog Bog* (Intellivision). Let us now analyze in the strictest scientific terminology the reasons for this Frogmania. Why frogs?

Frogs Are Fun

First of all, there's nothing like a frog if you're looking for a good time. They're the kind of Good Time Charlies that will eat flies even if they're not drunk. You can usually call a frog up at the last minute and more likely than not, he'll hop on the next bus or call a cab and be down to boogie in a flash. Frogs don't stand on ceremony. If anything, they stand on lily pads.

Throughout history, frogs have been the life of the party. In ancient Egypt, for example, frogs displayed their already highly developed sense of humor by raining on Cairo. This was very funny. Millions of them falling from the sky. There is nothing quite as funny as a dead frog squashed between your toes, except perhaps for a live frog. Of all the animals on the evolutionary ladder, only the frogs could think up this gag. Not even the cats and dogs, although they got the credit for it. A week later, the same frogs opened at Lake Tahoe with David Brenner.

Women love frogs. It was one clever frog that first said,"A wicked witch has put a spell on me. If you will kiss me, I'll turn back into a prince." What a line. Imagine what is said in frog locker rooms after a night of duping gullible sap



John Burgoyne

princesses into performing untold unnatural frog acts.

It is no wonder then, that frogs have come to have such a fun reputation. If real frogs can be such fun, it stands to reason that video frogs would be the next evolutionary step. Let us now trace that evolution.

The Evolution of Frogs

Millions and millions of years ago, there were no frogs. Then, slowly, over the course of thousands of years, frogs evolved. Today, there are many frogs. That just about sums up frog evolution. Frogs haven't changed much since the beginning of time. This is convenient. All frogs can wear the same suits and shoes.

The evolution of the video frog is very similar. First there was no television. Then there were lots of televisions. Then there were frogs on television. All video frogs do not wear the same size cartridges. Nor do they wear pants or clothes of any sort, preferring to stroll around stark naked and display their disgusting private frog parts for all to see (see diagram of nude frog).

VIDEO FROGS vs. REAL FROGS

By now you're probably asking yourself, "What, if any, differences are there between video frogs and real frogs?" This is the question we will attempt to answer here.

Evolutionarily speaking, video frogs have it all over real frogs. Video frogs are drier, more compact and don't smell three weeks after they die. Real frogs, on the other hand, may be fooled into thinking it's winter by putting them in the refrigerator. Each group has its little advantages and disadvantages. A more detailed list of differences follows:

*Video frogs, in general, have better graphics.

*Video frogs don't die if you forget to feed them.

*Video frogs have eliminated the messy tadpole stage, going from chip to adult with no in-between stages.

*A good French restaurant will not carry video frog's legs.

*You can't keep video frogs in an aquarium. The cartridge will sink to the bottom. This is boring.

*Video frogs have about 8K of memory.

*If you kiss a video frog, it won't turn into a prince. On the other hand, it is drier.

*Real frogs are fun to put in people's sandwiches.

*Real frogs don't come with a 90-day limited parts and labor warranty.

*Real frogs have no reset button. If your real frog can't cross the road, too bad.

*If you try to play with a real frog on your TV set, it will just make a big mess.

*Real frogs forget everything. Tell a real frog its name and five minutes later when you ask, it won't remember.

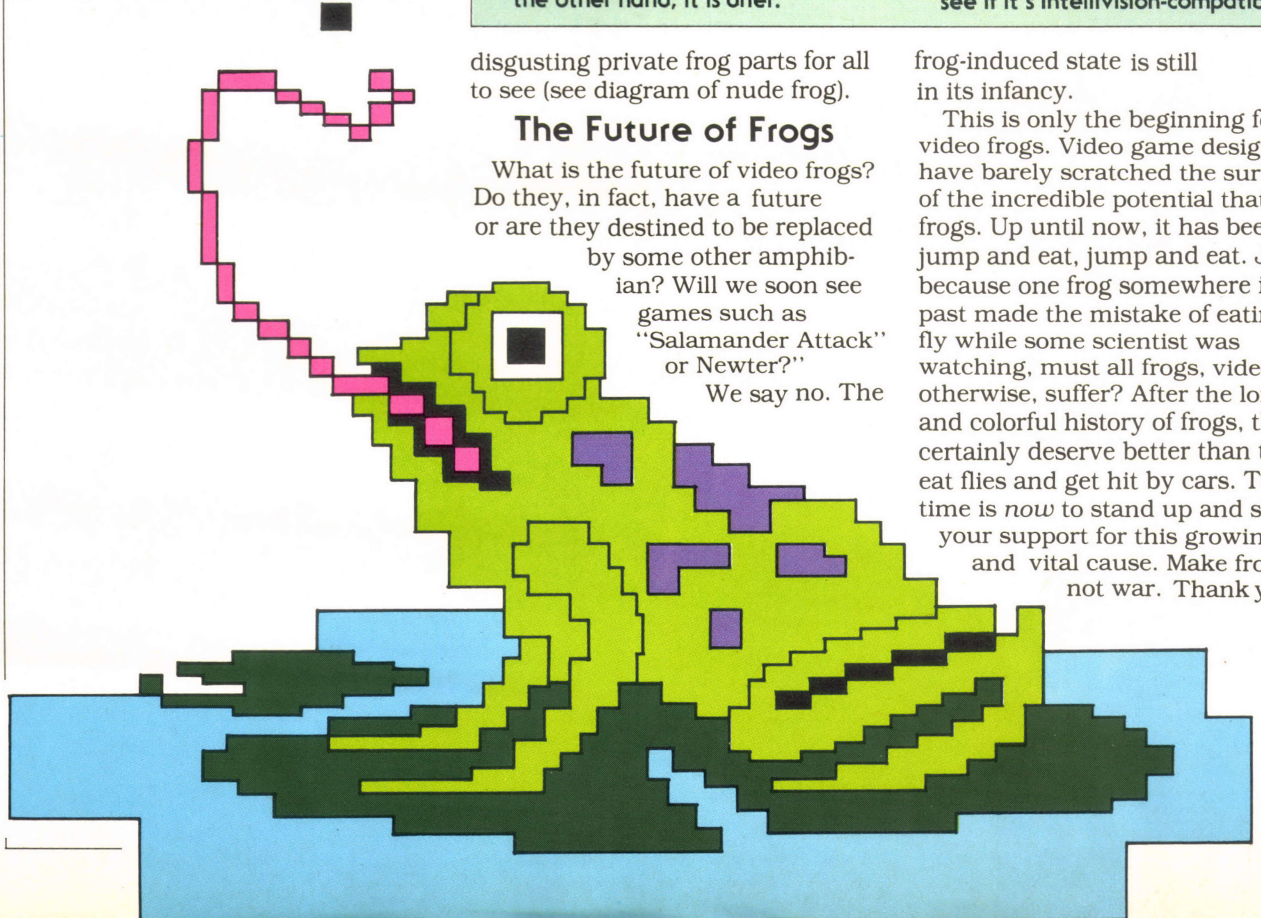
*When you purchase a real frog, you don't have to check to see if it's Intellivision-compatible.

The Future of Frogs

What is the future of video frogs? Do they, in fact, have a future or are they destined to be replaced by some other amphibian? Will we soon see games such as "Salamander Attack" or Newter?"

We say no. The frog-induced state is still in its infancy.

This is only the beginning for video frogs. Video game designers have barely scratched the surface of the incredible potential that is frogs. Up until now, it has been jump and eat, jump and eat. Just because one frog somewhere in the past made the mistake of eating a fly while some scientist was watching, must all frogs, video and otherwise, suffer? After the long and colorful history of frogs, they certainly deserve better than to just eat flies and get hit by cars. The time is *now* to stand up and show your support for this growing and vital cause. Make frogs, not war. Thank you. □

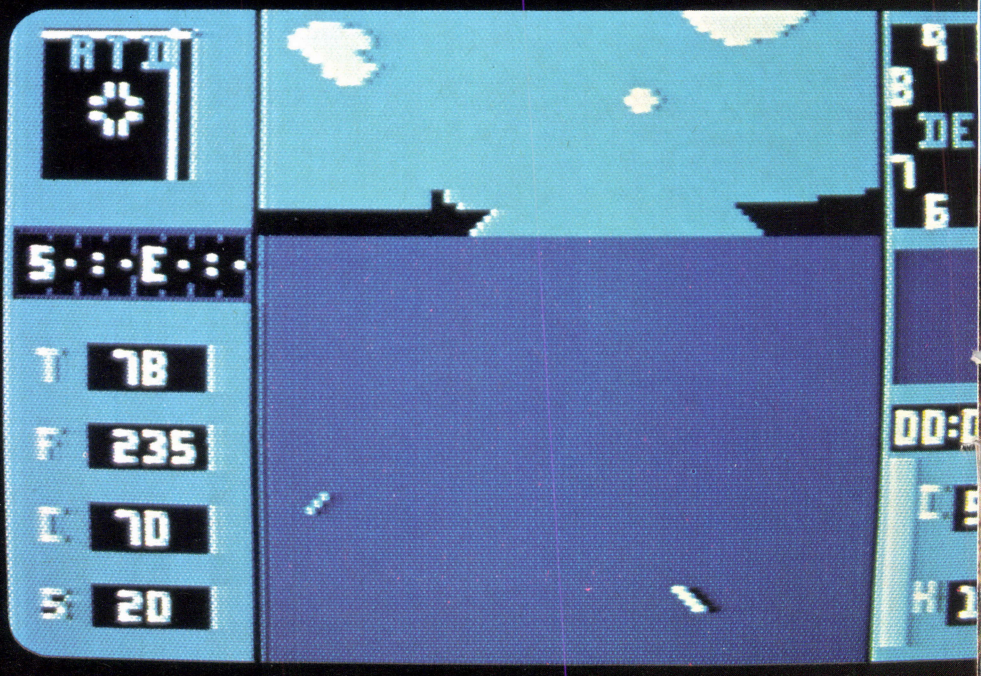


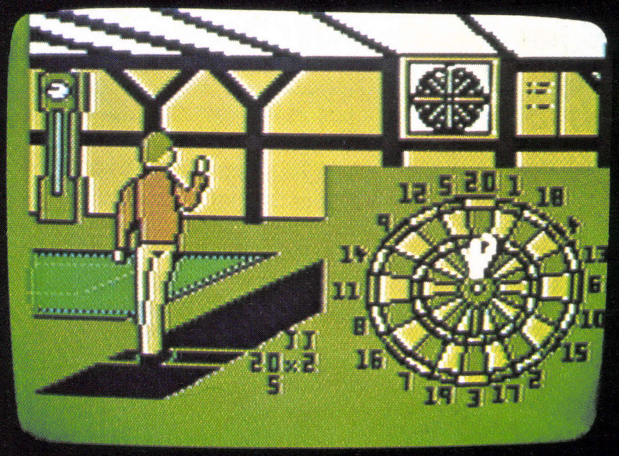
Nina Wallace

PLAYFC

COMPUTER GAMES THAT ARE THE CLOS









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to hold my breath for that last one, knowing how long it's taken for the legendary Intellivision keyboard component to get on the market.)

A spring-loaded slot on the top of the console accepts the Coleco game cartridges, which are a little bit bigger than the standard Atari VCS or Intellivision cartridges. The Coleco carts contain considerably more ROM (Read-Only Memory) than those for other games, at least as much or more than those designed for Atari's 5200 or their Model 400 computer.

A six-foot cord connects the ColecoVision to its plug-in power supply (#55416), which has got to be the largest external transformer of its kind I've ever seen. It resembles a large, black brick, weighing at least a couple of pounds. A four-pin cable feeds both five-volt and 12-volt DC power to the console. Since this power supply has two built-in transformers instead of the usual one, it's not hard to understand the reason for its size and weight. I must warn users that during my extended tests, this power supply got very warm to the touch, even after playing games for just a couple of hours. As the manufacturer recommends, it's a good idea to unplug the transformer when the console isn't in use.

Next to the power supply jack is a phono jack for the 15-foot RF cable, with a small switch to choose between channels three and four. I had a few problems with Coleco's modulator, which sometimes caused a lot of interference on channel three. I solved the problem by switching it to four, which seemed to work fine, despite the fact that my area already has a TV station on channel four.

Evaluating The Controllers

The ColecoVision controllers are unique, essentially combining the basic design for the Intellivision keypad with a short, stubby VCS joystick. Each controller measures about $6^{3}/_{8}$" x 3" x 1" and features two large grey pushbuttons on the top sides as firing controls. Twelve light-touch membrane switches comprise the keypad. The con-

Continued on page 52

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Dad,
This is the system we've both been waiting for.
ColecoVision has everything!
It plays the best arcade games - It looks and plays just like the real arcade. And it plays the *most* arcade games. It's got a plug-in attachment that will allow us to play all of Atari's VCS games!

Bill

P.S. And look at this, Dad, ColecoVision is also a *computer*! And that's important - because, you know, I don't want to just play games. Could we go to the store and take a look?

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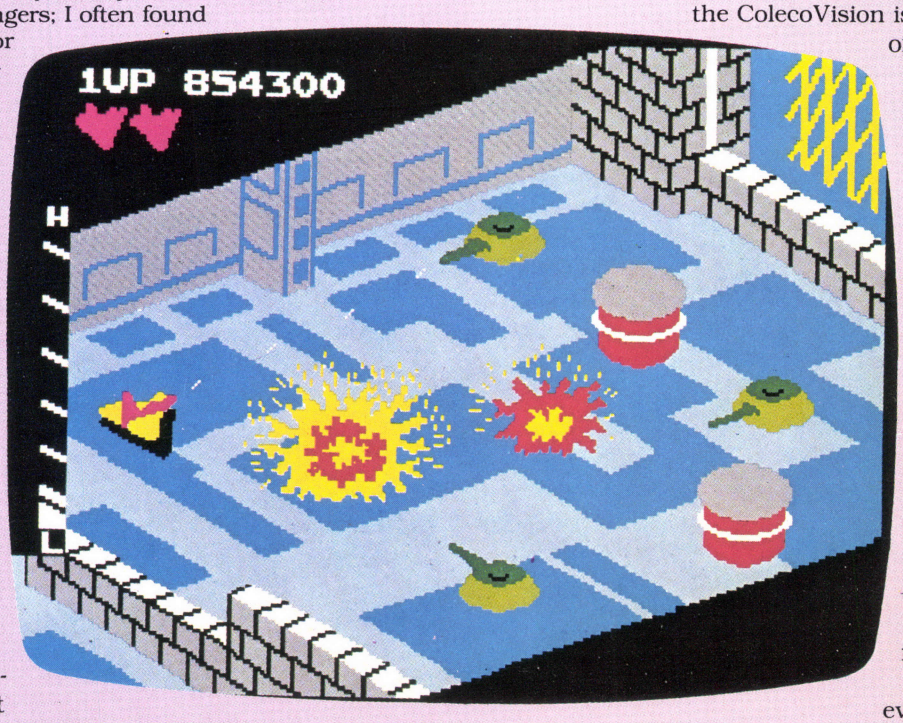
troller comes with an attached five-foot coiled cable.

The Coleco joystick, which resembles an Intellivision disc paddle combined with a round handle, takes a lot of getting used to, especially if you now play with Atari's VCS joystick. I found the ColecoVision joystick to be a little cranky and unwieldly for my admittedly fumbling fingers; I often found myself longing for the more responsive Atari joystick. Just on a hunch, I tried plugging the Atari joystick into the ColecoVision console, and *voila*—it mated perfectly with the jack and worked like a charm. The only problem is that since all ColecoVision games require selecting the number of players and the difficulty level, you'll have to do some quick joystick swapping at the beginning of two-player games. I noted that the Atari CX-21 Video Touch Pad will likewise fit the Coleco and can be used for game selection and other numeric keypad entries as well.

A ColecoVision spokesman disagreed with my opinion of the controller, explaining that their joystick provides more precise control over the game action than competitive models. The Coleco controller *does* offer the ability to change the speed of the action during certain games, but the games I've evaluated at present don't take advantage of this feature. Joystick selection is a very subjective decision for any game player, so I'll agree that your conclusions may not be the same as mine. But for my money, the simple Atari joystick is easier and more comfortable to use and that's that. It is to Coleco's credit that they give you the choice of using another company's joystick.



"A few of the games by Coleco are too tough to handle."



An Elephant-Sized Memory

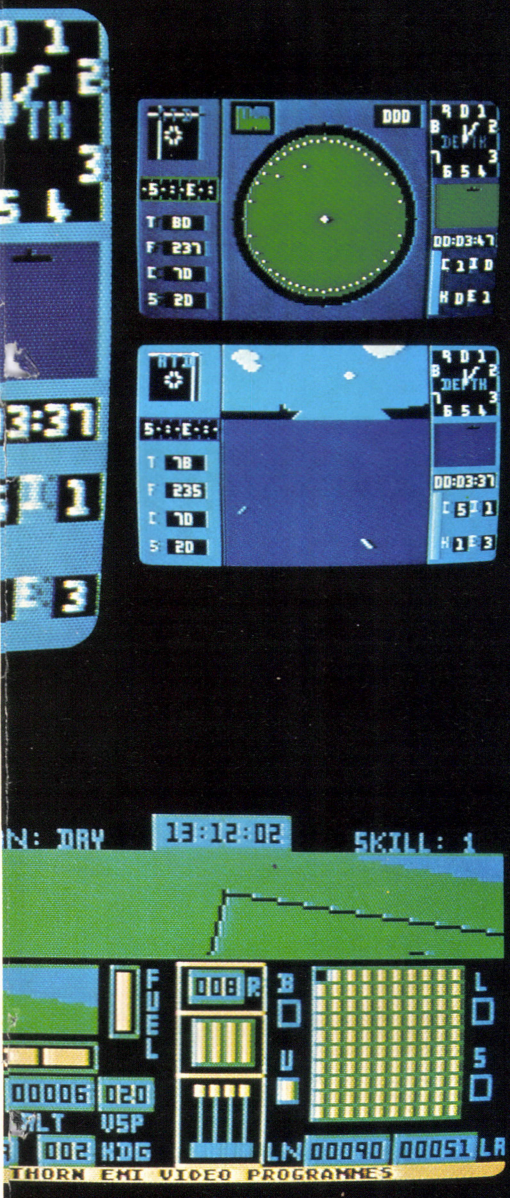
Some of you cynics out there may say, "OK, great—that's all well and good, but what about the *games*? That's where we really separate the men from the boys!" Glad you asked. The ColecoVision console is the first on the market to offer a whopping 32K of internal RAM—*double* that provided by either Intellivision or even Atari's 5200—making it the most powerful video game console in the world. It's really out of the league of most mere home games, crossing over the threshold into the world of the small personal computer, like Atari's model 400 or 800. Granted, there's no keyboard, disc drive or printer yet, but my guess is that the ColecoVision is just as capable of interfacing with all of these peripherals as a genuine 32K computer. With all this memory, the video and sound output of the ColecoVision sets a new standard for video games now on the market. Let me say that again, to make sure you heard me right: The ColecoVision is my new favorite, no two ways about it. Based on the Coleco carts I've evaluated (including *Donkey Kong* which comes with the console), I'd say that the ColecoVision comes closer to providing true "arcade-quality" graphics for the home than anything else I've seen. For $200, the system is a steal—right between the list price of the basic Intellivision and VCS consoles, and about $70 less than Atari's 5200. With the added bonus of the VCS expansion module, it would seem to be a perfect way for Atari owners to advance to a world of better games without obsoleting their present collection.

So far, more than twenty ColecoVision game cartridges have been announced: *Donkey Kong, Venture, Cosmic Avenger, Lady*

OR REAL

EST THINGS TO REAL LIFE CHALLENGES.

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Game Workout:

COLECO VISION

Hot new game of the year

By Marc Weilage



Think that when you've said "Atari, Mattel and Magnavox" you've said it all when it comes to game systems? Think again. Because if the big three are Fords and Chryslers and Chevys, a system called ColecoVision is bucking to become the Rolls Royce of the game world.

The word "unique" gets a special workout when you're talking about ColecoVision. It combines superior graphics, twice as much RAM as its major competitors and the capability to be compatible with other manufacturers' games.

All this adds up to make ColecoVision the system to watch in the months to come. It probably comes closer to resembling the Mattel console and controllers than Atari's VCS and 5200, but on the outside and inside, Coleco's system combines and surpasses many of the features gamers favor in other video game systems.

It's a handsome black and silver unit about 15" x 9½" x 3," with a large well in the top left side for storing the two keypad/joystick controllers. Nearby are two switches: one latching type that turns the console on and off, the other a light-touch recessed button for resetting the game.

Expansion

What sets the ColecoVision apart from every other game system on the market is a unique sliding door on its front right side which pulls up to reveal a slot for adding accessories and modules.

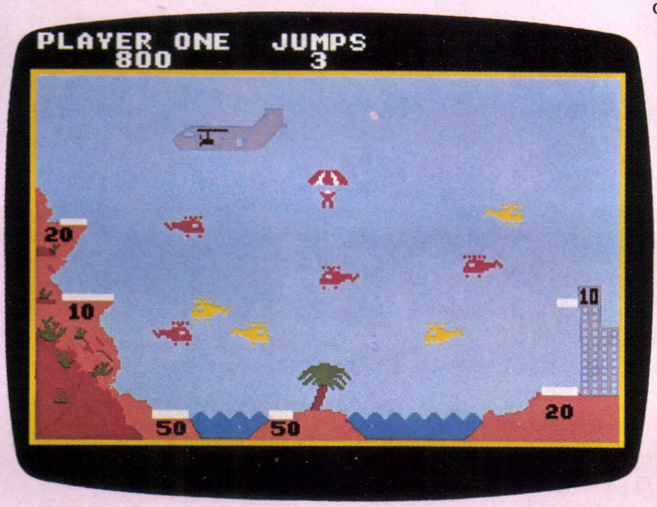


This Expansion Module Interface slot will ultimately accept an Atari-compatible adapter (designated "Expansion Module #1") available for about $60. It's designed to allow the playing of any VCS game on the ColecoVision system. Also coming up is a driving module that will allow real hands-on steering and acceleration for Coleco's version of Sega's famous *Turbo* arcade game. Already on the drawing board is Expansion Module #3, a keyboard module designed to turn the ColecoVision component into a small, but fully functioning personal computer. (I'm not going



Above, TURBO, ZAXXON (opposite page), RIPCORD (below left) and VENTURE (below).

Bug, Smurf—Rescue in Gargamel's Castle, Carnival, Zaxxon, Turbo, Mouse Trap, Spectar, Rip Cord, Side Track, Space Fury, Mr. Turtle, Smurf—Play and Learn, Skiing, Head-to-Head Football, Head-to-Head Baseball, Ken Uston's Blackjack and Poker, Horse Racing, Tunnels and Trolls and *Chess Challenger*. The first nine of these will be available in both VCS and Intellivision versions. All will sell for around $30 except for *Turbo*, which will be about $80 (including the Steering Expansion Module #2).



Third Generation

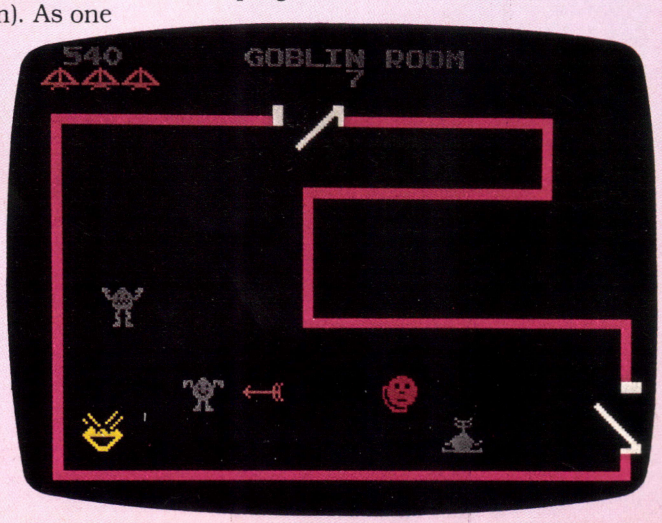
I've had a chance to carefully evaluate the ColecoVision versions of *Donkey Kong, Venture, Cosmic Avenger, Lady Bug,* and *Smurf* at press time and enjoyed them all immensely. Because of the ever-changing game screens, the high-quality graphics and the imaginative music and sound effects, I found the games to be always entertaining and rarely boring—no easy feat, with my limited attention span. If anything, my only complaint is that some people might find a few of the ColecoVision games to be *too difficult*—something that you don't usually hear about a standard game. This can be good or bad, depending on how competitive you are.

The ColecoVision games put other versions to shame. The VCS *Donkey Kong*, for example, gives you a simplistic "bare bones" display, without any of the subtleties or the arcade-like background music of the ColecoVision game.

The VCS omits the last, most difficult level, the infamous "elevator level." By comparison, the ColecoVision version was a near-perfect duplication of the arcade classic, with all of the sound effects and most of the visuals left virtually intact.

The ColecoVision execs are extremely proud of their system, which they consider to be the first Third-generation programmable on the market, right after the original Atari VCS and Odyssey² (first-generation) and the Mattel Intellivision (second-generation). As one spokesman told me: "The coin-op designers are always worried about keeping the home versions of their games as accurate as possible and so far we've had nothing but praise for our ColecoVision designs." I'd have to agree with his assessment.

The only question that remains is whether or not Coleco will be able to get their system and games on the market fast enough. So far, dealers have been clamoring for the ColecoVision consoles, which have been in extremely short supply since their introduction this fall. My bet is that those consumers who are lucky enough to be first on the block with a ColecoVision will find the wait well worth it. The system is great, but there's one thing Coleco has to fix. Before any game you have to stare at the words "ColecoVision" for 12 seconds. And when your game is over, you have to stare at it for *another* 12 seconds. Maybe Coleco wants to let us run to the refrigerator between hours of *Cosmic Avenger*, but when *I* play, I just want to *play*. □



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In 200 typewritten words or less, send us your description of *The Ultimate Video Game*. Enclose one drawing of the game playfield. One entry per person. Be sure to include your name, address and phone number so we can reach you. Sorry, we cannot return entries. All entries become property of Fun and Game Publishing. Entries must be postmarked no later than December 31, 1982. Void where prohibited by law. Send entries to: *Electronic Fun, 350 E. 81st St., New York, NY 10028*

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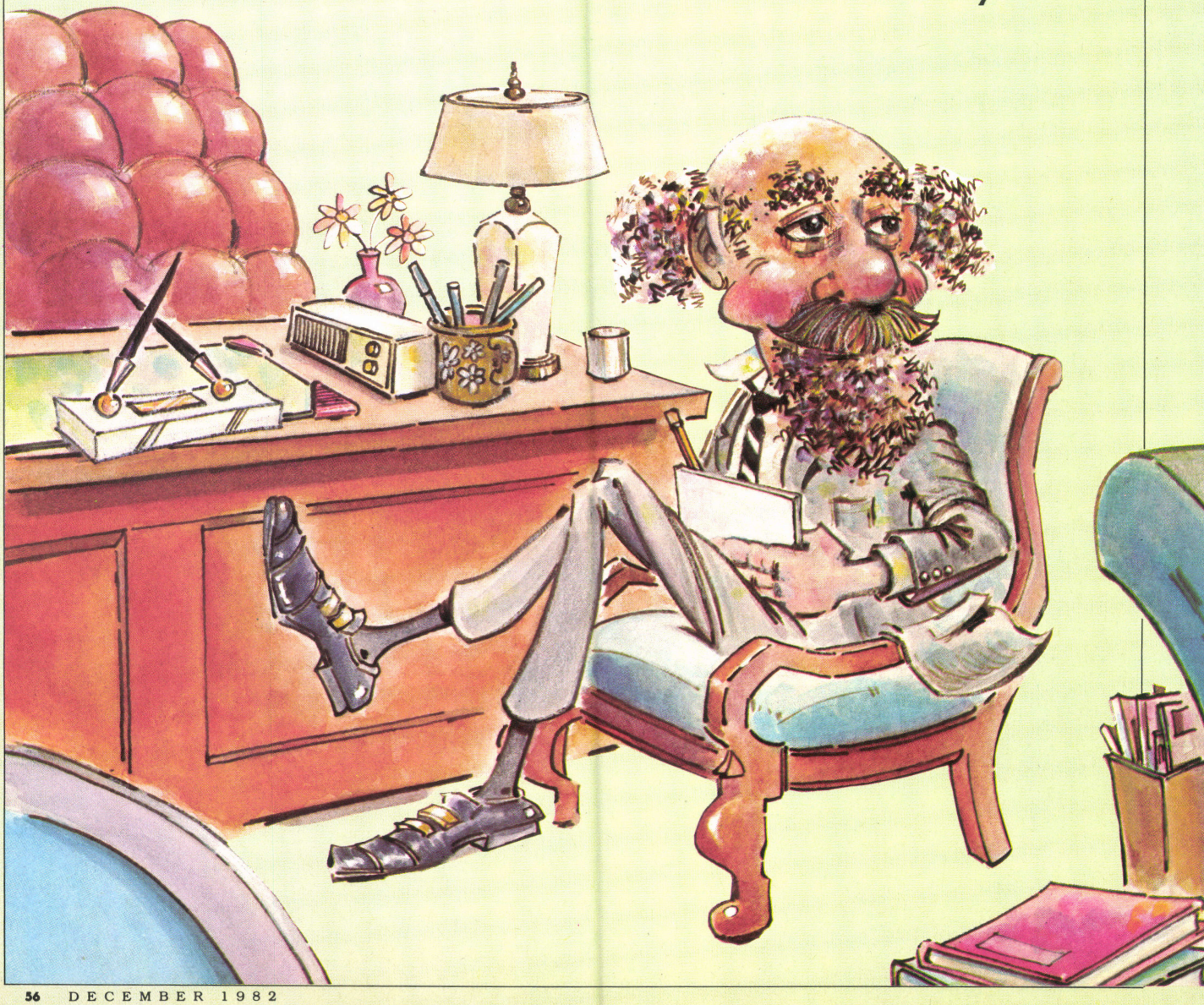
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*Based on a national survey among players of Atari® CX-2600 VCS™ and Mattel Electronics® Intellivision®. © 1982 General Consumer Electronics, Inc. All Rights Reserved. Atari® and VCS™ are trademarks of Atari, Inc. Mattel Electronics® and Intellivision® are registered trademarks of Mattel, Inc. ™ Trademark of General Consumer Electronics, Inc. ** Trademark of and licensed by Stern Electronics Inc. © 1980. † Trademark of and licensed by Konami Industry © 1981. ‡ Trademark of and licensed by Cinematronics, Incorporated © 1980. Simulated picture of actual game play.

You are what you PLAY

Do Video Games Reveal Your Secret Personality?



By Elayne J. Kahn, PhD, and David A. Rudnitsky

Why are video games so popular? One reason is that they are willing to go all the way without an argument. A second reason is that they simplify and project a whole range of complex human behavior onto a two-dimensional screen. The most successful of the games touch upon our most fundamental feelings: aggression, survival, paranoia and often, pyromania. They reduce our perceptions into clearcut symbols that can be manipulated and controlled.

What do your favorite video games reveal about your personality? Does loving *Donkey Kong* indicate that you want to climb the evolutionary ladder from ape to man and ultimately to woman? Does a yen for *Fast Food* mean you have an oral fixation? Does loving *Ms. Pac-Man* mean you have to worry about gender identity or that you like false eyelashes and lipstick? Find your favorite games below and discover what they reveal about your personality. We don't promise that the analyses that are about to follow are the absolute truth, but we do think you'll be able to find yourself somewhere in there and thus be warned so that you can change your favorite game before it is too late.

On the other hand, maybe you have no personality. Here's your chance to get one.

FROGGER

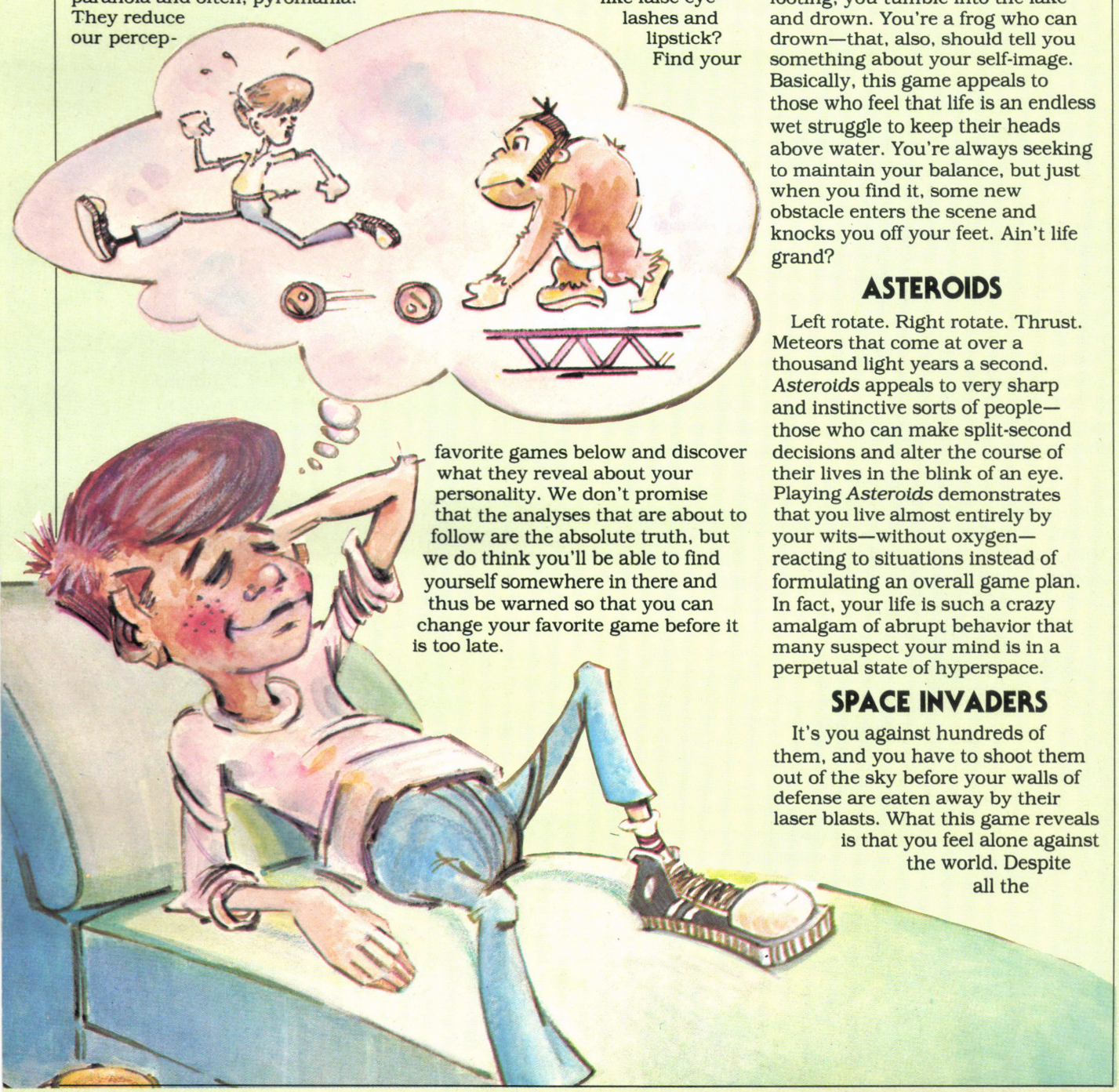
Frogs are for people who can't face reality. In this game you start off as frog—which should already give you some clues to your self-image. You must try to hop your way over a series of speeding cars and logs that move side-to-side across the screen. If you miss your footing, you tumble into the lake and drown. You're a frog who can drown—that, also, should tell you something about your self-image. Basically, this game appeals to those who feel that life is an endless wet struggle to keep their heads above water. You're always seeking to maintain your balance, but just when you find it, some new obstacle enters the scene and knocks you off your feet. Ain't life grand?

ASTEROIDS

Left rotate. Right rotate. Thrust. Meteors that come at over a thousand light years a second. *Asteroids* appeals to very sharp and instinctive sorts of people—those who can make split-second decisions and alter the course of their lives in the blink of an eye. Playing *Asteroids* demonstrates that you live almost entirely by your wits—without oxygen—reacting to situations instead of formulating an overall game plan. In fact, your life is such a crazy amalgam of abrupt behavior that many suspect your mind is in a perpetual state of hyperspace.

SPACE INVADERS

It's you against hundreds of them, and you have to shoot them out of the sky before your walls of defense are eaten away by their laser blasts. What this game reveals is that you feel alone against the world. Despite all the



Frank Sciacchitano

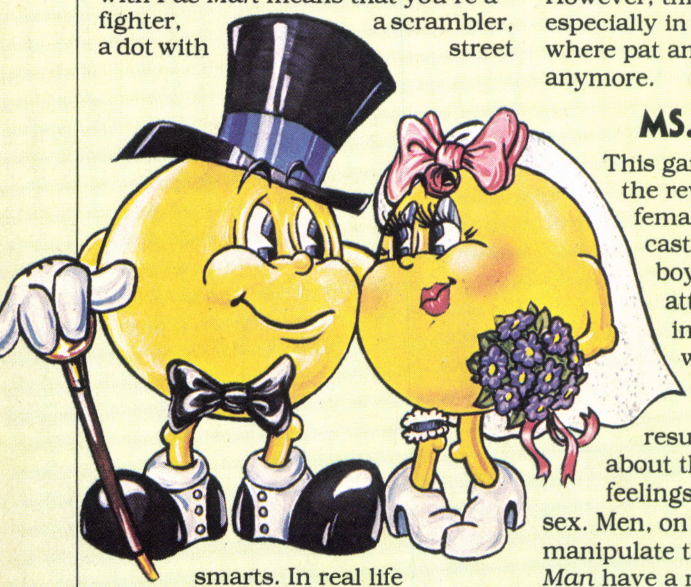
obstacles or people you overcome, more always seem to appear to take their place, so that life becomes a never-ending onslaught and you begin to feel like *Alice In Wonderland* when the Queen tells her that you have to run as fast as you can simply to stay in one place. To you, life is a game you can't win but, one you challenge head-on nevertheless.

CHESS

Playing against the ultimate foe—a video cartridge programmed by a chess master—shows that you're the type of person who likes to learn from those more experienced than you. You have humility. You have a thirst for knowledge. You don't have a conventional chess board. You're patient and willing to spend long hours mastering a career, hobby or skill. Though reserved and quiet, you're not easily intimidated, even when playing against the computerized knowledge of Bobby Fisher.

PAC-MAN

Although it's only a microchip you're challenging, being obsessed with *Pac-Man* means that you're a fighter, a scrambler, a dot with street smarts. In real life vanquishing your enemies is never enough; you would like to absorb them into your sphere so that they can feed your power. You never let up. Where many find only a perplexing maze and are hopelessly lost, you always seem to find—or eat—your way out.



Quickies: Here are some games we couldn't fit below. Take them with a grain of salt.

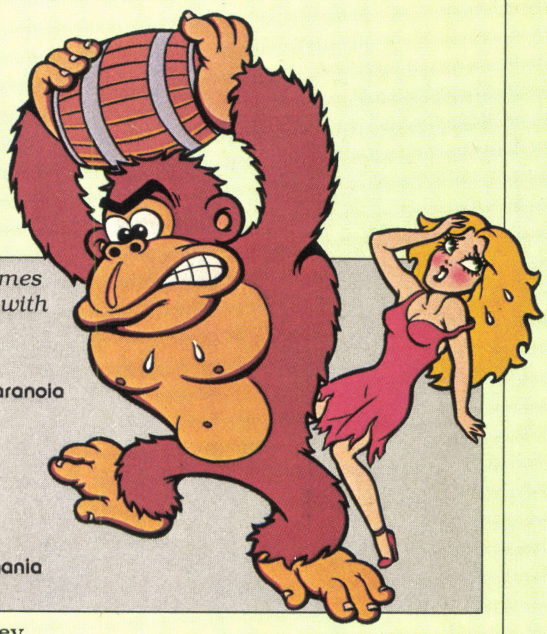
*Berzerk—Antisocial tendencies
*Communist Mutants From Space—Paranoia
*Freeway—Self-destructive
*Room of Doom—Claustrophobia
*Fire Fighter—Pyromania
*Fast Food—Oral Fixation
*KC Munchkin—Follower; Conformist
*Conan the Barbarian—Macho-type
*Take the Money and Run—Kleptomania
*Utopia—Eternal optimist

BASEBALL HOCKEY/ETC.

Even in this computer age, you are a traditionalist. You're a person who requires a familiar point of reference before attempting something different. When taking a whack at solving a new problem, you seek to draw upon tried and true solutions, rather than organizing a new mode of thinking. However, this can prove limiting, especially in an expanding world where pat answers don't seem to fit anymore.

MS. PAC-MAN

This game represents the revenge of the female adolescent as she castrates all the obnoxious boys who have been attempting to back her into a corner. Women who play this game have emasculating qualities that result from insecurities about themselves and their feelings toward the opposite sex. Men, on the other hand, who manipulate the controls of *Ms. Pac-Man* have a mother fixation and identify all females as creatures who will eventually devour them.



DONKEY KONG

This is a game for the man who wants his ideal woman to embody all the timeless blonde qualities of Fay Wray. In other words, he prefers them helpless, screaming and in trouble so that he can summon up all his macho wiles to rescue them. *Donkey Kong* appeals to the man who suffers from the damsel-in-distress syndrome, someone who usually falls for someone who has been battered around by one too many gorillas. As the game is played, the player surmounts tumbling barrels as he climbs up ladders rung by rung to save his beloved—which is only fitting since he intends to put her on a pedestal anyway.

PONG

This video variation of ping pong pits your skills against those of another human opponent. You have no bones to pick with technology, since you view computers as the servants of humanity, not the masters. Therefore, unlike the habitual player of *Pac-Man* and other similar games, you're not driven to continually assert your superiority over a sophisticated collection of micro-circuits and transistors.

"You Are What You Play" is excerpted from Elayne Kahn and David Rudnitsky's 1,001 Ways You Reveal Your Personality, *which will be published by Signet in January 1983.*

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Attack of the digital apes

DONKEY KONG

Coleco/ColecoVision, Atari VCS, Intellivision

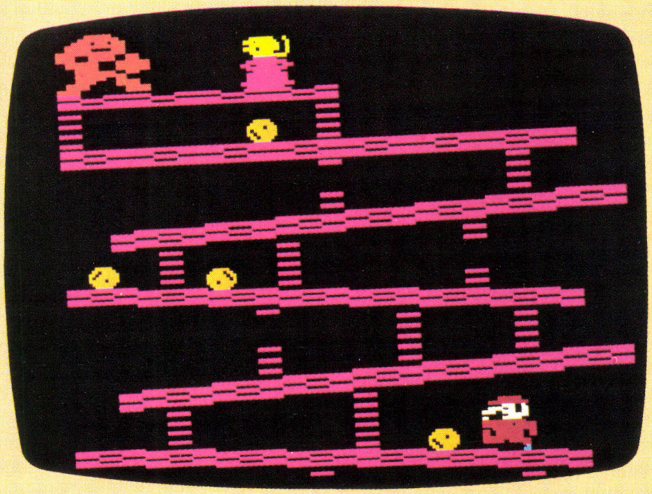
By Michael Blanchet

After seeing all three versions of Coleco's *Donkey Kong*, it is safe to say that all video games are not created equal. But then again, neither are all home games systems. Even though all the *Donkey Kongs* were cast from the same mold, each one has emerged with quirks, idiosyncrasies and a graphic personality all it's own. This was inevitable, since any game can only be as sophisticated as the hardware it was designed for.

If there were Academy Awards for video games, ColecoVision's *Kong* would walk away with Oscars for Best Picture and Screenplay (no pun intended). This is no *Pac-Man*. Coleco, in translating Nintendo's coin-op hit to the home medium, has managed to capture almost every subtle nuance of play for their own home game system.

Coleco's attention to detail is what makes this game. Mario, Mr. Kong and each of the game's playfield configurations were carefully emulated, not bastardized. Mario even looks like a squatty little carpenter with a mustache, overalls and Casey Jones hat. Gamers who have come to accept the simple, nondescript graphics of home videogames are sure to find ColecoVision's *Donkey Kong* a sophisticated departure from the norm.

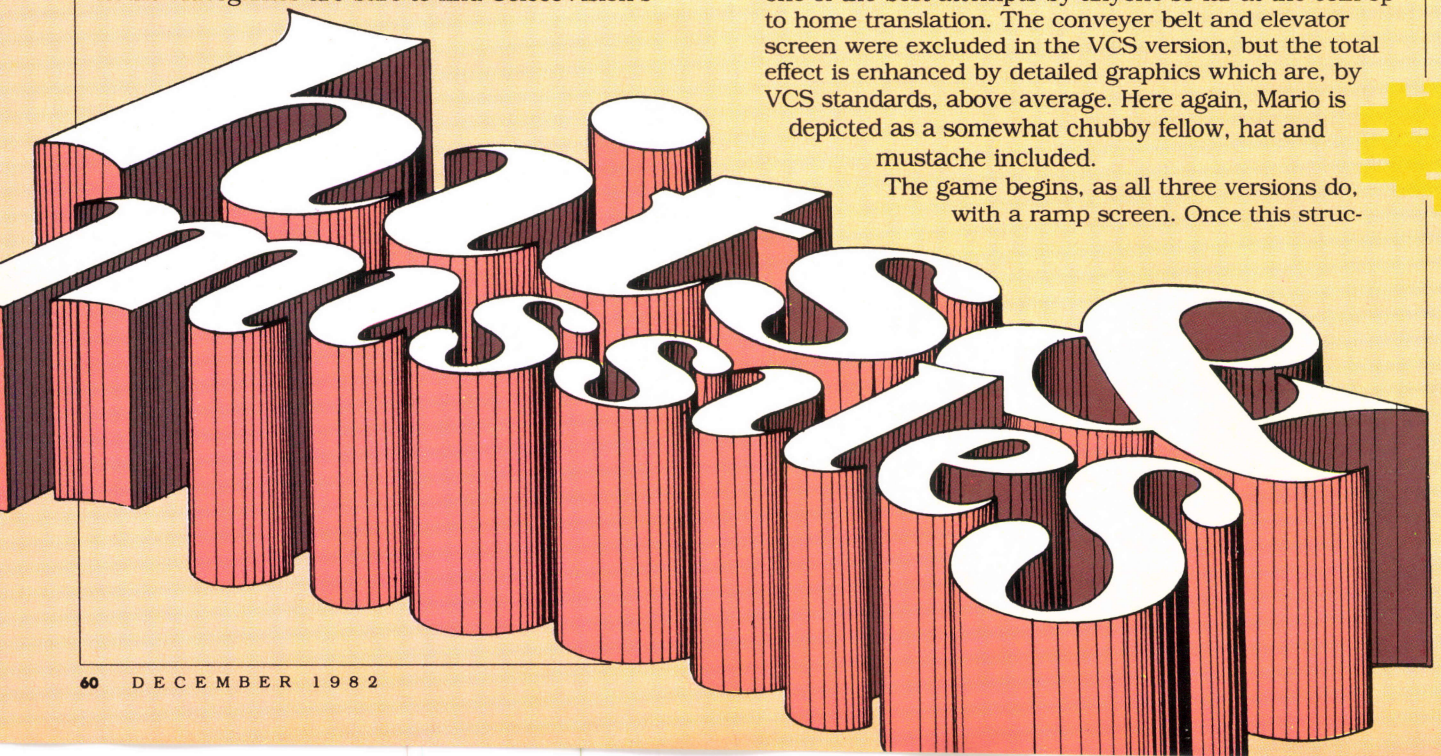
Hardened arcade goers, who have all but written off home games as "too easy," will be surprised at the challenge this game presents. On the flip side, those of you who have never set foot into a coin-op game room will get a good taste of what arcade action is like.



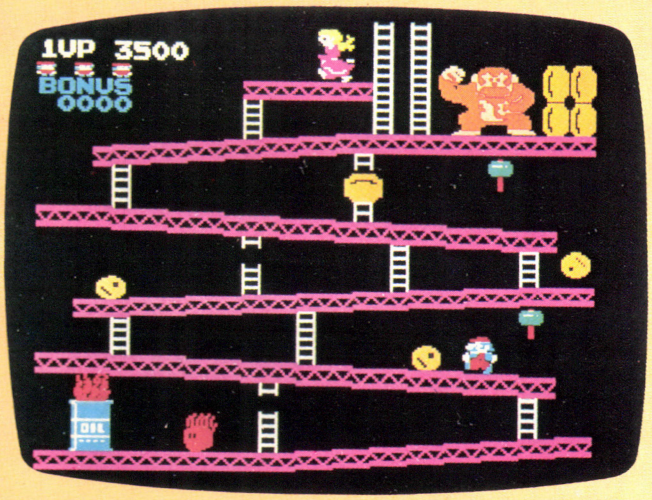
The conveyor belt and elevator screen are excluded in the VCS version but the total effect is enhanced by the above average graphics.

For the ever-growing ranks of Atari owners, Coleco offers *Donkey Kong #2451*, a laudable effort considering the limitations of the almost antique VCS. Though not nearly as sophisticated as the ColecoVision *#2451* is one of the best attempts by anyone so far at the coin-op to home translation. The conveyer belt and elevator screen were excluded in the VCS version, but the total effect is enhanced by detailed graphics which are, by VCS standards, above average. Here again, Mario is depicted as a somewhat chubby fellow, hat and mustache included.

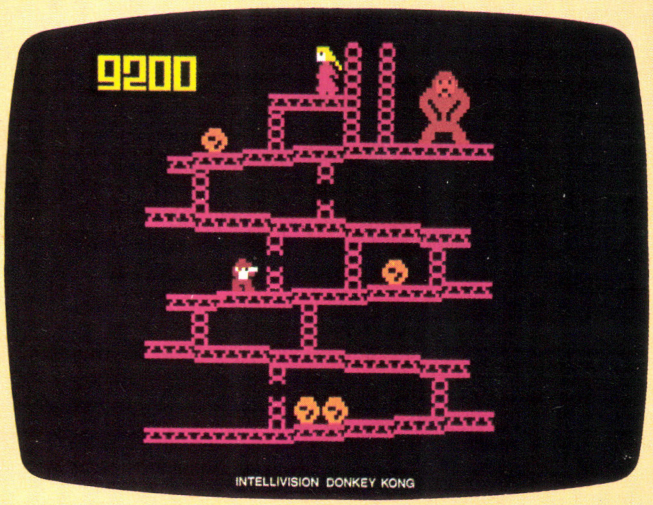
The game begins, as all three versions do, with a ramp screen. Once this struc-



ture is scaled, Mario finds himself at the bottom of the rivet sequence. here is where Coleco changed a few things around. In this version, each of the four floors are equal in length. The tenacious fireballs are confined to one level and patrol their respective story by moving back and forth at a constant speed. Once all the rivets have been removed, Mario returns to face Kong again on the ramp screen.



ColecoVision's DONKEY KONG: If there were Academy Awards for video games, this one would walk away with Best Picture and Screenplay.



A welcome change of pace for Intellivision owners, this is one of the few cartridges that doesn't require an esoteric keypad code.

By the way, I take great pleasure in reporting that the infamously agile garden variety Atari joystick performs well in every situation you may encounter in *Donkey Kong*. My only gripe with the game is that the conflict between Mario and Mr. Kong is never really resolved. The foolhardy carpenter's climb is treacherous, but at no point in the game does he ever actually save the fair maiden. Then again, the fun lies not in the triumph, but the struggle.

Programming Quirks

Donkey Kong #2471, the Intellivision compatible rendition, is a welcome change of pace for Intellivision owners. This is one of the few cartridges in the system's library that doesn't require the player to constantly refer to the instruction booklet and punch in an esoteric code on the keypad. The game flows, somewhat. The hindrance here is the directional disk. It takes a little practice to find up, down, left and right, but most Intellivision veterans have probably already deciphered the action of the controller. The delay between the time the jump button is pushed and when Mario reacts on the screen can be very irritating.

As far as graphics are concerned, they struck me as a bit disappointing by Intellivision standards. The overall tone of the game characters is a putrid green. Hence, Mr. Kong looks more like *Swamp Thing* with gangrene than an ape.

Even though *#2471* is not the best-looking Intellivision compatible game available, it *is* one of the few licensed arcade games in the system's library. Most of the other cartridges available in the Intellivision format are reworkings or generic versions of popular titles.

After playing the ColecoVision for a few weeks, and *Donkey Kong* especially, it appears that this system will be a wealth of secret messages and those little programming quirks we have come to know and love. For instance, in the first screen of *Donkey Kong*, I have found I could climb up the girders, leap off the right side and bounce off a wall instead of falling off the building! I have also seen barrels rolling upward and Mario "beam up" ladders without having to climb them.

While a lot of people may think of these quirks as mistakes or flaws in the program, I think most video game fans look upon these idiosyncrasies with a sense of humor. It's fun to discover these clues and wonder if they were accidents or were intentionally placed in the program for sharp video gamers to discover. It seems that in the 1980s, instead of looking for clues that Paul is dead on the covers of Beatles' albums, we are examining our video game cartridges very closely to see what they *really* say.□

Don't waste time bashing barrels. Every second you are losing 100 bonus points. Take the shortest route to the top of the screen.

Michael Blanchet is the author of How To Beat The Video Games.



PITFALL! ♪♪♪♪

Activision/Atari VCS

By Raymond Dimetrosky

Video games aficionados can be divided into two very distinct camps—action game freaks and adventure game freaks. But *Pitfall!*, Activision's new one, is an adventure game that may intrigue people who *hate* adventure games.

Your mission is to make your way through a jungle collecting treasures while you avoid obstacles such as crocodiles, scorpions, cobras, swamps, quicksand and tar pits. The outstanding feature of *Pitfall!* is the game's complexity. Instead of just 10 or 20 "rooms" to explore, *Pitfall!* has 255 jungle scenes. In addition, there is an underground passageway that can shorten your trip by allowing you to move at a faster pace.

Pitfall! requires a great deal of eye-hand coordination. It is necessary to jump over rolling logs and other obstacles, the same way you do in *Donkey Kong*. However, even if you are an expert hurdler, there still is the problem of limited time. You have to complete the entire course in 20 minutes, and if you think that's plenty of time, just wait.

The problem with a lot of adventure games is that once you know the course, all the "adventure" is gone. But in *Pitfall!*, not only must you race against time, but you must also attempt to score a maximum number of points (You begin with 2,000 and lose or gain points as you play). So even after you know the route through the jungle, you can still beat your own previous score.

There is one scene that is especially difficult. You are faced with a pond filled with three crocodiles. There is no rope to swing from. You have to cross the pond to continue and the only way to do that is to walk *over* the crocodiles. The first 10 or 20 times you try, you'll probably fall into the drink. However, there *is* a trick to help you (see tip below).

Pitfall! is an extremely colorful game with graphics so good you'll really feel like you're in the jungle. The burning fires, slithering cobras and swinging vines are incredibly detailed. And effects like the wild Tarzan yell when you swing your vine across the snapping crocodiles makes this the best game from Activision yet.

Don't try to jump over all the crocodiles at once. Jump on the first head. Wait. Jump on the second head. Wait. Jump on the third head. Wait. Jump off.

SPACE JOCKEY ♪♪♪

U.S. Games/Atari VCS

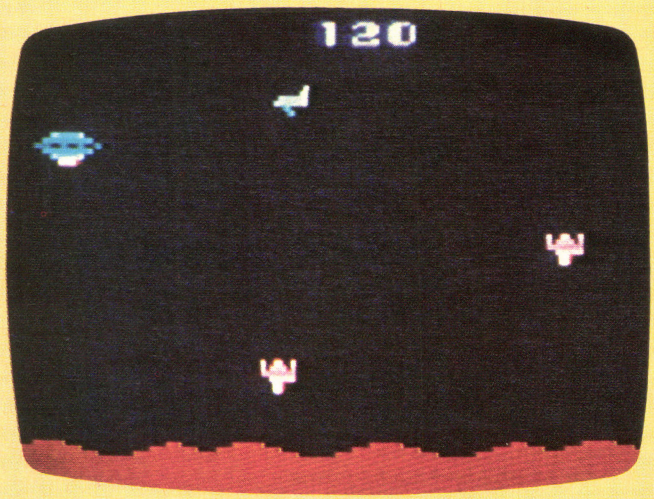
By Dan Gutman

The true test of a game is whether you come back to it. *Space Jockey* is a game that, if you like this certain type of game, you'll come back again and again.

Similar to *Defender* and *Chopper Command*, you are an "Attack Saucer" with vertical mobility that must fight various enemies that stream at you from the right side of the screen. Points are awarded for shooting tanks, jets, prop planes and helicopters. Of course, they're gunning for you too and their trigger fingers are *very* quick.

There is nothing meaty here. This is a simple theme stripped to the bare essentials. But that doesn't mean it's *bad*. *Space Invaders* was the simple kill-or-be-killed variety of game also. The graphics here don't knock you out. The sound is nothing to phone home about. *Space Jockey* is a pure test of your reaction time and doesn't pretend to be anything more.

Space Jockey has two features that might interest you. First, if you wiggle the joystick, the screen will flash the score of the highest game since the machine was turned on. Second, if the phone rings in the middle



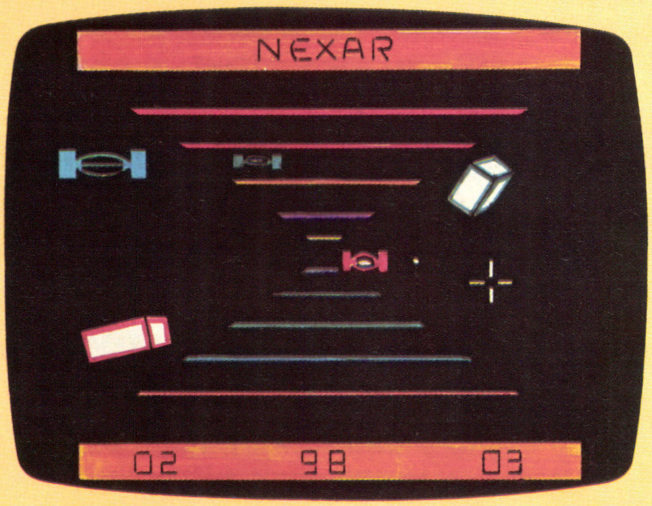
of your battle, you can park your attack saucer between the lanes of the oncoming enemies and sit there in com-

plete safety until you are ready to violate the ceasefire.

If you're the type of person who says, "Hey, watch me knock that milk bottle off the fence," you'll probably want to become a Space Jock. If you like exploring secret rooms and video caves in search of hidden keys and things, you will probably look at *Space Jockey* as mindless, electronic cotton candy drivel. But cotton candy tastes *so* good!

Don't wait around to see the result of your shot. By that time, you'll probably be hit. Shoot and move before looking back.

Dan Gutman is Managing Editor of Electronic Fun with Computers and Games.



NEXAR ★★★★

Spectravision/Atari VCS

By Dan Gutman

Ever since *Tempest* hit the streets, we have been told that it's too complicated to be turned into a home game. But games come and go in popularity and now that it's getting harder and harder to find the game in the arcades, Spectravision has taken the *Tempest* theme and translated it into a home game that will knock your socks off.

There's a lot of talk about 3-D games lately. But as long as a TV screen is a flat two-dimensional object, true 3-D is impossible. The best we can achieve is the *illusion* of 3-D. This can be accomplished with glasses (as in 3-D movies) or shadows (as in *Zaxxon* and Activision's *Tennis*). But you can get a very powerful 3-D illusion simply by having objects start as a pinprick on the screen and make them get larger. This is what Atari did with *Tempest* (on a vector screen), and Spectravision has now done the same with *Nexar*.

In *Nexar*, you are in a space warp (a black field really, with horizontal lines to indicate perspective). Radioactive Beacons and Impact Exploding Saucers originate as dots in the center of the screen and come at you, getting bigger the "closer" they get. You may avoid them or shoot them. Unlike *Tempest*, you are not restricted to the outer rim of a platform. You may wander freely all over the screen and let aliens zip right by if you like. However, also unlike *Tempest*, there is a time limit. Unless you destroy the squadron in 90 seconds, the game is over regardless of how many lives you have left.

Nexar will keep you busy for awhile. There are 99 levels and the highest possible score is 999,995. Spectravision warns "Do not attempt *Nexar* if you have high blood pressure." If things get too hairy, you can freeze the action indefinitely by flipping the color/black & white switch. But frankly, this game is so fast, by the time you take your hand off the joystick to flip the switch, you're a dead man. This game will definitely make you sweat.

Play with your feet. Rest one toe on your color switch and flip it if you are about to get hit. As the action is frozen, survey the field and act accordingly.

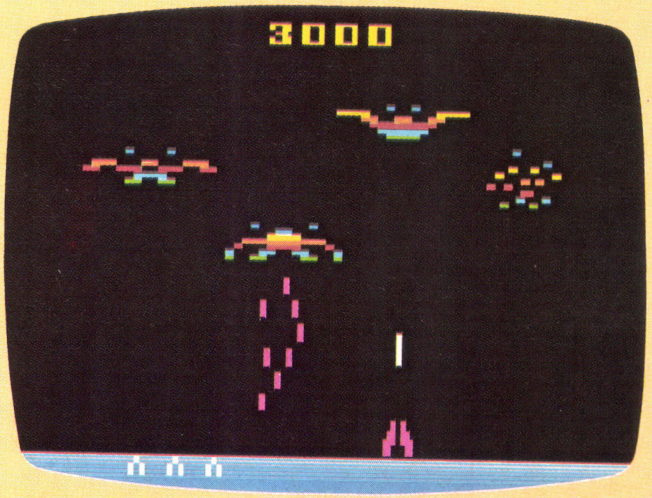
DEMON ATTACK ★★★★

Imagic/Atari VCS

By Randi Hacker

Not since Hitchcock's *The Birds* has anything inspired such a fear of winged creatures as *Demon Attack*. In this vibrantly colorful, highly imaginative and challenging game, Imagic has replaced the standard relentlessly descending aliens with wave after wave of rainbow-colored birds who, by a strange quirk of evolution, have developed lasers as part of their anatomical makeup.

The birds are assembled right before your eyes, too.

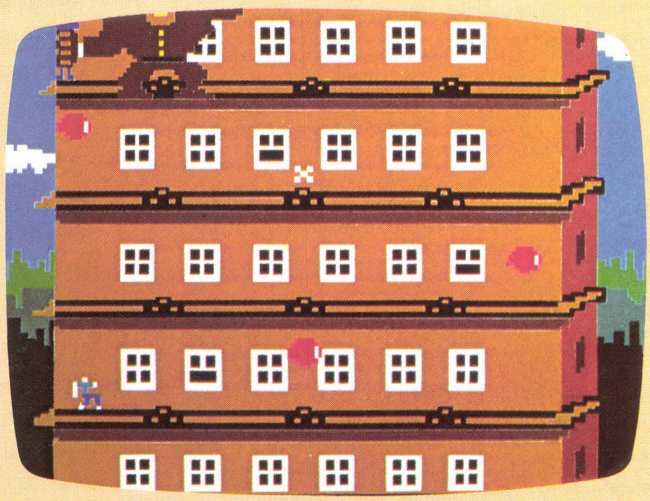


Instead of having square-looking invaders marching in orderly rows, half of each winged attacker flashes across the screen from an opposite end, fusing in the middle, where it wastes no time before it starts to drop bombs. They swoop and swerve and you have to be quick and a little clairvoyant to anticipate where to shoot first.

Different game variations (there are eight) give you different shooting capabilities. For example, variation one allows you one shot at a time, while the succeeding ones allow for rapid fire. This is much better. You can just keep on shooting and one of your shots will hit something sometime. But remember, you've also got to avoid being hit by their fire.

As the game progresses, it becomes increasingly difficult. Where one bird was easily destroyed by a single shot in the easier variations, it now takes two shots because each one you hit, like the Hydra, becomes two. And these two are much smaller and much quicker and therefore much harder to hit. (Rats. Just when you thought you were getting good, too.)

The game is challenging yet not discouraging. Although it is tough to destroy the birds, it's not so tough that you don't get any of them. You do manage to get through enough waves to feel rather self-satisfied and it is this that is one of the most appealing aspects of the game. It invites you, by tantalizing you with a taste of victory, to continue. . . then it destroys you.



BEAUTY & THE BEAST ♪♪♪

Imagic/Intellivision

By Randi Hacker

High atop the Empire State Building, Fay Wray is being held captive by King Kong (or a gorilla that looks remarkably like him). No, this is not another movie remake. This is a video game remake. Fay Wray seems to have lost most of her golden hair and appears to be solid gray, but let us not forget that she's been in this simian's clutches for close to fifty years now.

Taking that into account, she looks damn good.

Your incarnation in this game is that of a little man and you must scale the walls of the skyscraper to rescue Fay (or, if you prefer, think of her as Jessica Lange). This is not as easy as it sounds. If, in fact, it sounds easy at all. You have to align yourself with an open window and then jump up to the ledge above it. The windows have minds of their own. They open and close in an annoyingly random way, and if a window is closed, you cannot use it to go up. Once you've attained the ledge, you then make another mad dash for the next open window and continue upwards. There are four ledges in the first screen.

While you're running around looking for open windows, you've got to watch out for hazards such as falling rocks, flying birds and little kitties that will trip you and knock you back to the ground floor.

If you do manage to get to the ledge where King Kong (or his facsimile) is standing, the screen flashes to a picture of a city skyline and a little biplane flies overhead trailing a banner which reads either "Well done." "Good job," or "Lucky," among other messages. Then you find yourself back on the side of the building, several floors higher than you were before.

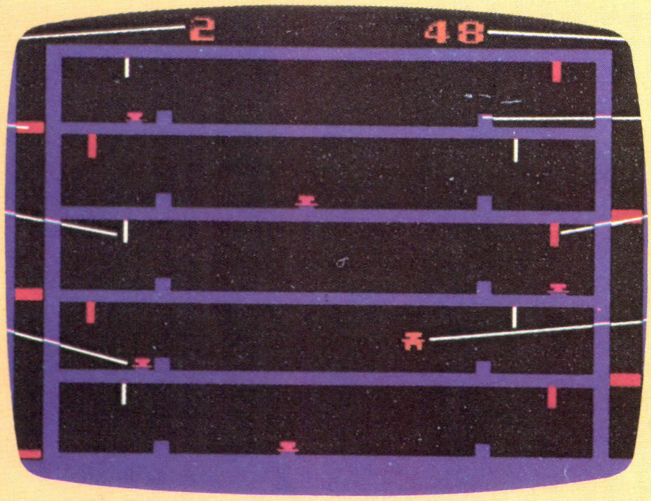
In order to levitate to the next ledge, it is necessary to push the buttons on the controller at the same time that you depress the top of the disc. This keeps the little guy afloat longer and higher, enabling you to float effortlessly up.

A word of warning: While evading birds and other creatures, don't get too enthusiastic about running away. You can run right off the edge and fall several stories to a grisly end.

One thing I am happy to report is that, although *Beauty & the Beast* is an Intellivision game, it doesn't require that you memorize different numbers on the keypad for different functions. All you use are the disc and fire buttons. This makes it even more enjoyable. This does not, in any way, mean that the game is not challenging or complex. It is. It takes 20/20 peripheral vision to anticipate and avoid the rocks and other flak, as well as a sharp eye and quick trigger finger to time your leaps precisely. The running, dodging and evasive action, as well as the burning curiosity to know just what awaits you on the next level, definitely maintain the interest level. This is no game for acrophobes.

Climbing up the side of a building is no picnic. In order to do this most efficiently, you must hold down the two firing buttons and press the top of the disc simultaneously.

Randi Hacker is Senior Editor of Electronic Fun *and author of Video Review's* Last Word on Home Video Games.



AIRLOCK 1

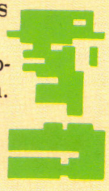
Data Age/Atari VCS

By Frank Lovece

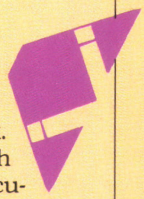
"Winning," Vince Lombardi once intoned, "isn't everything. It's the only thing." Vince Lombardi obviously never lived to play video games. The best anybody can do is hold out as long as possible until the end.

What distinguishes *Airlock*, then, isn't its graphics, its play value or its degree of challenge—all of which are pretty undistinguished—but the fact that it's one of the first video games ever that you can win. Not just turn the counter over, or walk away from when the timer runs out, but *win*. Vince would've liked that.

The fact you can beat *Airlock* isn't enough to save you from a fate similar to that which befalls the on-screen protagonist—drowning. He at least has the short-lived satisfaction of knowing he's going down with his ship or, in this case, submarine. *You* only get to drown in boredom. *Airlock* is one more variation on the *Donkey Kong* theme, with your protagonist leaping over vaguely described "barriers" and rolling torpedoes knocked loose "by an eerie current from deep under the sea floor." He must retrieve, in order, two airlock keys for each of the submarine levels to which he must ascend via elevator. He has 49 or 99 "seconds" to reach the top level and escape, with water flooding successive levels every 10 "seconds." (In real time, 10 game-seconds takes about 20 seconds in the easy mode and 15 in the difficult.) You can choose five- or 10-level, as well as one- and two-player variations (which doesn't make much sense to me, since you only get one man per game and could just share a single joystick).



At first, the game is challenging because, in the difficult mode at least, you can't slip up even once. Trip over a barrier, get bowled over by a torpedo, or even take more than one leap to get a key, and when those first 10 seconds are up, you're sunk. But once you've got that first level down, each progressive level becomes easier because you accumulate unused seconds.



There's little to this game once you've passed the first level. The torpedoes are easy enough to avoid, and the grand trick of timing your man to leap over both barrier and torpedo at once doesn't take much practice. And granted, video games ought to be as free from the close scrutiny of logic as movie musicals, but this game doesn't even have internal consistency.

Why, for example, do the torpedoes pass ghostlike through the barriers while your hero can't? Why does each level fill up with water in the blink of an eye, scuttling your hero even if he's made it to an elevator and is no more than a fish's whisker from the next level? Sinking vessels may take on water quickly, but not *that* quickly, and having the man slosh through rising water may have made the game more interesting. Even the central conceit—that you can win by escaping—loses its gloss when you see your character jumping for joy atop a soon-to-be-ex-submarine, with no rescue ships in sight.

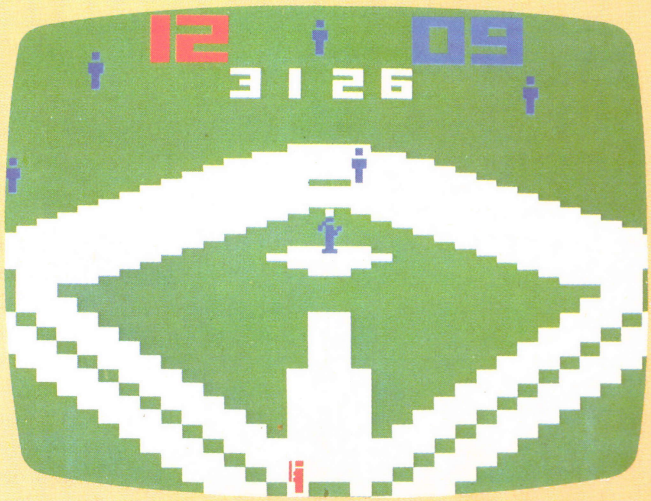
I have to give Data Age credit for fleshing out one of my video game fantasies—beating the machine—but with *Airlock*, even when you win, you lose.

SPACE ATTACK 1111/SUPER CHALLENGE BASEBALL 11

Mattel/Atari VCS

By Suzan Prince

One of the pioneering M Network space games is *Space Attack*, which is a translation of the Intellivision game *Space Battle*. Here the Atari joystick does prove



superior to the infamous disc.

Space Attack starts out in a confusing green screen known as the radar mode. You must select an alien fleet that will be the object of your attack and then dispatch one of your squadrons to do so. If you fiddle with the joystick and red fire button long enough, you will end up in the battle mode, where you train your gunsight on alien ships and proceed to fire your lasers. Destroy the alien fleet and you go back to radar mode, dispatch another squadron and so on. When in battle mode, you must avoid the aliens' red photon blasts.

The battle mode is entertaining but not that challenging. The lack of overlay makes the radar mode a chore. Until you memorize the different maneuvers necessary for choosing the aliens you want to go after and the squadrons with which you want to attack, you will find yourself glancing at the instructions often, putting you at an disadvantage.

Although Intellivision's space games have never measured up to Atari's, their sports cartridges have set the standard for the industry. One of the first armchair athlete competitions produced by M Network was *Super Challenge Baseball.*

Super Challenge Baseball is a worthwhile investment for the VCS owner. It is not quite the equal of Intellivision's *Major League Baseball*, but is more than adequate for any video sports addict. Graphics remain realistic despite the absence of a shortstop. Sending the center fielder after the ball did prove difficult.

Mattel has more M Network cartridges for Atari use rolling out of the factories. Titles include *Armor Ambush, International Soccer, Frogs 'n' Flies, Dark Cavern, Lock 'n' Chase, Sea Battle. Super Challenge Football* and *Tron Deadly Discs.*

Some of the joystick functions overlap so commit the joystick movements and what they control to memory as soon as possible. This will improve your precision.

Suzan Prince is the author of How To Win At Home Video Games.

WORD ZAPPER ♪♪♪♪

US Games/Atari VCS

By Sheryl Anthony

Everything, it seems, is eventually updated. First there were silents, then talkies. First there was TV, now there are video games. And *Word Zapper* is the electronic update of the traditional spelling bee.

The object of this war of the words is to read a word generated by the computer and then, using your Zapper spaceship, shoot out the letters in their proper order as they whiz by at the top of the screen. This is a race against time and attackers—attackers, I might add, who want nothing more than to see you fail spelling.

There are four different enemy types: Doomsday Asteroids which destroy you when they hit you; Scroller Asteroids which scramble the order of the alphabet and Bonker and Zonker Asteroids which simply shift the position of your ship and ruin your aim.

Pressing the fire button without touching the joystick directs the laser beam upward towards the letters and beams them down to the bottom of the screen. Moving the joystick allows you to shoot right or left at the various predators.

You get three words of up to six characters and, as time runs out, it gets tougher and tougher to capture the letters you need in time.

A delightful game of alphabet swoop.



If the letter you need is at the end of the alphabet, let one of the Scroller Asteroids hit you.

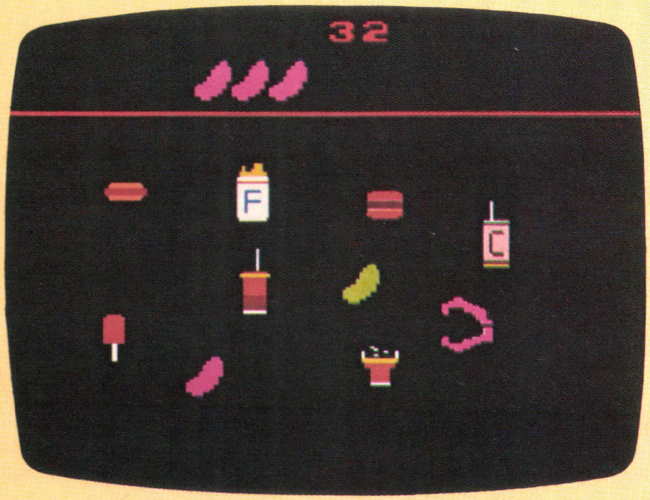
FAST FOOD ♪♪♪

Telesys/Atari VCS

By Randi Hacker

Anyone who's spent time denying themselves all the rich, greasy, delicious stuff of which fast food and dieters' dreams are made, rejoice. There's a new game that allows you to eat up as many calories as you want without having to worry about thunderthighs. Appropriately named *Fast Food*, it doesn't cause zits, obesity or tooth decay.

You are Mr. Mouth. You speed up and down, back and forth across the black screen as you try to gobble down all the unhealthy, American staple foods that zip in from the left side of the screen. As the difficulty



increases, so does the speed at which the food flies. From *Fast Food* to Faster Food until they become SSTs (SuperSonic Tidbits).

There are milkshakes, cans of soda, french fries, hamburgers, ice cream cones and more. And the graphics are remarkably detailed. The ice cream sodas have a fizzy, frothy head and sesame seeds can almost be seen flying off the buns as the hamburgers gun by you. Mr. Mouth himself is a fantastic replica of those little chattering teeth my uncle used to sell in his store.

Points are calories and the more calories the item you catch in Mr. Mouth is worth, the higher you score.

Among the flying vittles (sounds like a team of trapeze artists) are pickles. But, as any gourmand will tell you, there are pickles and there are *pickles* and not all pickles are as innocent as they look. There are the garden variety green pickles which go well with hamburgers and then there are the nefarious purple pickles which give you indigestion. This makes sense. Purple is not a good color for pickles.

At all costs, avoid purple pickles. If you eat six of them, you're out. The screen goes blank and the word "Burp" appears. This is embarrassing and considered gauche (except in India where it's considered polite).

Although the graphics are, as I said, really excellent and very, very colorful and it is a great deal of fun to race Mr. Mouth back and forth across the screen and watch him turn around, the game itself is oddly unsatisfying. You get full after a couple of rounds but, unlike Chinese food, one hour later, you're not really hungry to play again.

Stay to the extreme right of the screen no matter how hungry you get. Advancing on the food doesn't leave you enough time to tell the purple pickles from the green.

K.C.'S KRAZY CHASE ////

Odyssey/Odyssey²

By Art Levis

Weep no more *K.C. Munchkin* lovers, K.C. is back with a vengeance in *K.C.'s Krazy Chase*—and the folks at Atari may just have done the folks at Odyssey a big favor. The original *K.C. Munchkin* was yanked off store shelves after Atari got the courts to agree that it looked—and played—a little too much like you-know-who (*Pac-Man*, if you don't). *K.C.'s Krazy Chase* is more complex, faster and more interesting than its predecessor and K.C.'s new nemesis—the dreaded Dratapillar and her Drats—are far more menacing than the original Munchkin monsters. If the Drats don't get you, the Dratapillar will.

In this new game, the object is to nibble up all the little Dratapillar segments before the darting Drats or the devious Dratapillar's head get you. Once you've gobbled up all those segments, the game enters a new phase, with a new Dratapillar and two new Drats moving at a faster, more furious pace. The Drats aren't always dangerous, however. Every time K.C. digests a Dratapillar segment, the Drats go white with fright and become legitimate targets for Mr. Munchkin.

But beware. When the blood starts pumping and they regain full color, the Drats once again become lethal K.C. stalkers—one inadvertent brush with a Drat and it's curtains for K.C. As with the original *K.C. Munchkin*, the new game offers a variety of different mazes, but *Krazy Chase* also offers players the option of programming their own mazes, presenting a nearly infinite number of maze configurations.

Scoring is relatively simple: three points for each Dratapillar segment eaten; 20 points for all segments;

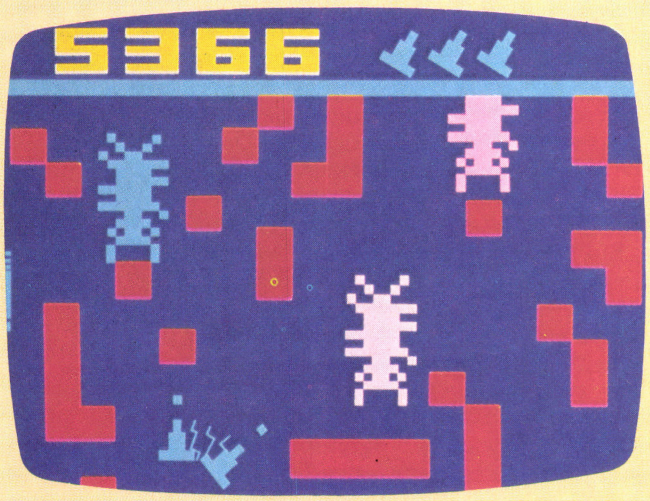


10 points for nibbling up a Drat and one point for ingesting one of the numerous trees that dot the hazardous landscape.

KC's Krazy Chase is one of Odyssey's new voice-enhanced cartridges, although it can be played without The Voice. With The Voice, KC acquires an extensive vocabulary and is able to say things like "Remarkable!"

Stay right on the Dratapillar's tail. Resist the temptation to go off in search of frightened Drats. When you do that, the wily Dratapillar senses your vulnerability and doubles back to bite your blind side.

Art Levis, a well-known figure in the electronics field, is editor of Consumer Electronics Monthly.



COSMIC SWARM ♪♪

CommaVid/Atari VCS

By Mark Trost

Are all video game programmers frustrated exterminators? Judging from the recent rash of bug-oriented games, it appears to be so. To further confirm the belief comes *Cosmic Swarm*, a better-than-could-be-expected *Centipede* clone that carries a fair challenge but falls short in the graphics and control departments.

The preliminary (and mostly unnecessary) scenario attempts to get you into the vermin destroying mood by placing you on the "immense" (but never seen) Waypoint Interstellar Trade Depot. Aboard the vast ship lies a dormant colony of giant alien mineral-eating termites. The nasties have invaded the main power-conversion chamber (they must not have been dormant after all). It's up to you to put down the alien menace by guiding a tiny *Asteroids*-style probe ship and blasting the cosmic crawlers out of existence.

As in the usual game regime, you get three ships, but there's a hitch. After every 30 seconds, you must refuel your craft by docking with another ship. Despite the ease of blasting the bugs, even experts won't score millions. Hitting a blockless termite or one without a nest is worth a mere one point. Hitting a termite with a block is worth just two points.

The graphics are about as simplistic as the scoring. Everything, including the ships and the termites, is square-shaped and solid colored. The blocks that represent nests are just that—blocks. After a while, the screen looks as if you're playing bug checkers. The controls are no more of a bargain. When the fire button is up, pushing the joystick will move your ship horizontally, vertically and diagonally. When the fire button is down, pushing the joystick will move the probe ship vertically, rotate the direction of the ship or do both at the same time.

The uninspiring graphics and complex controls utlimately make *Cosmic Swarm* alluring only to those who want to "play 'em all" or think spraying a Raid can is just about as much fun as humans should be allowed to have.

Be alert to the buzzer sound that heralds the refueling ship. Begin to move towards that side as soon as the vehicle begins its descent.

Mart Trost is a New York-based freelance writer and consultant specializing in video and cable TV.

LOCK 'N' CHASE ♪♪♪

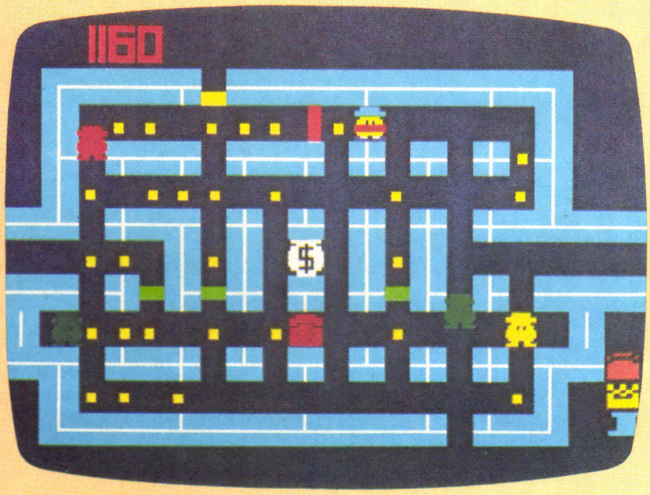
Mattel/Intellivision

By Howard Polskin

Disregard the misleading title of this game. Stripped of its cops-chasing-a-bandit theme, *Lock 'N' Chase* is Mattel's version of Atari's mega-hit *Pac-Man*—and they've created what appears to be a sure winner.

In *Lock 'N' Chase*, a quick-witted thief is loose in a maze-like bank vault. Scattered throughout the vault are dozens of gold coins (not unlike the dots in *Pac-Man*). The thief glides through the alleys and corridors picking up the loot and racking up points. Four somewhat slower policemen chase the bandit. After five bandits are caught, the game is over.

Fortunately, *Lock 'N' Chase* has some distinctive features that make it much more than just another shameless *Pac-Man* clone. Several times in the course of a game, a cash bag appears in the center of the vault. The thief must sneak into the heart of the vault to pilfer the dough and score extra points. Also, at other moments, gold crowns and other valuable treasures suddenly materialize. If the thief makes off with any of them, the score soars as well.



One of the major assets of *Lock 'N' Chase* is the ability of the player to lock doorways behind the thief with a flick of a button on the keypad. If too many policemen are stalking the thief, he can make a door slam in back of him and literally obstruct justice. Learning just when to close the doors is a sophisticated piece of video gamesmanship, but it's a shrewd design ploy that adds points and excitement.

Lock 'N' Chase has some other nice touches. The graphic quality is superb. Sparkling blue walls line the dark, narrow corridors. Crisply colored gold coins, remarkable in their clarity, dot every inch of the vault. In short, the game has visual splendor.

The only flaw in *Lock 'N' Chase* is directing the thief as he zig-zags through the maze. The disc at the heel of the keypad controls the direction of the thief. Many times, however, the flat disc seems incapable of properly managing vertical and horizontal movements. A joystick would undoubtedly handle the task more effectively and with far less stress on your thumb. The tendency is to press harder to make your thief run faster. This, of course, doesn't work. The result, sadly, is a radish-colored thumb that feels like it got caught in a vault door.

But that's a small price to pay for the enjoyment of *Lock 'N' Chase*. Once you're playing the game you tend to forget about the pain in your hand and concentrate on grabbing the gold.

Howard Polskin writes for Time Inc's new publication TV Cable *as well as for* TV Guide *and other magazines.*

STAR RAIDERS ★★★★

Atari/Atari 400/800

By Phil Gerson

Star Raiders takes full advantage of the superb graphics capabilities of the Atari computer to create a game so realistic and challenging that it could very well become a standard against which other combat games will be measured. The game plot is simple: In the cockpit of your space fighter, you hop from sector to sector in the galaxy destroying alien ships which threaten the Star Fleet's base stations. *Star Raiders* has been widely copied by makers of standard video game cartridges—Atari now has a version for the VCS console—but none has come close to the original.

Play demands constant use of four different view screens, each acting independently. There are four skill levels, ranging from relatively easy to virtually impossible to master and, at game's end, you are awarded one of 55 possible performance ratings from "Galactic Cook" to "Star Commander Class I," although it's doubtful you will see the latter flash on the screen with any frequency.

At the lower practice levels, the defense shields provide complete protection from alien fire, but at higher skill levels things get more difficult. Your objective, of course, is to shoot down the enemy ships, but it isn't easy. The aliens know how to take care of themselves. They attack in swoops from all angles. Their torpedoes can knock out your photons and leave you unarmed, blow away your shields, blast out your engines and navigational aids and turn your ship into so much space debris.

Using your joystick for flight control and the computer keyboard for screen and speed selection, you check the galactic chart for enemy locations. Then engage hyperwarp, activate front viewer, turn on navigational-targeting computer display and put up your shields. A flashing red alarm tells you when you have entered an invaded sector. The alien ships may attack instantly, or hang back. Your status board shows their distance and direction, or you can pinpoint their locations by switching to your radar-like sector scan.

The alien fighters attack from both front and rear, often at the same time. Your photon torpedoes fire in either direction, and the selection between forward and aft view screens can be manual or left up to your onboard targeting computer. But be warned—a wrong choice can be fatal. When fighting aliens on aft view the movements of the joystick make objects behave oppositely—as they would in real life.

At the top skill levels the game moves at a frantic pace, and split-second decisions and reactions are needed just for survival. Video game fans who find that some games get too easy after a while will have no such complaint with *Star Raiders*.

When fighting aliens on aft view, turn the control around so that the firing button is at the bottom. This makes it easier to bring the enemy into your gunsight.

Phil Gerson is 17 years old and a 10-year veteran of the video game wars. Last year he graduated to computers.

a show of hand helds

Sharks and solar powered mummies

PALMTEX

Octopus, Donkey Kong, Turtle Bridge, Snoopy Tennis

Our topic this month is "Creature Feature," or "How to Deal with a Raging Octopus." *Octopus* is from Palmtex, a fairly new name to home arcaders. The company makes a line of palm-sized pocket portables designed by Nintendo of Japan, the people who brought you *Donkey Kong*. In *Octopus*, the object is for the diver to recover sunken treasure without falling into the evil clutches of that eight-armed devil. It's a bit like the diver who must avoid the Nessie character in *Shark Attack* (Apollo). Here, though, the sea monster is portrayed as a sleepy-looking thing.

If you can't wait till you get to an arcade to go ape, there's also the pocket-sized version of Palmtex *Donkey Kong*, a double-screen affair with one screen on the bottom and one on the top. Like a compact mirror, the game snaps closed so it can be carried easily and safe ly when you're not playing. The handheld game is wonderfully loyal to its arcade predecessor and goes by the same rules as life-sized *D.K.* Other beasties in the Palmtex menagerie appear in *Para chute*, where you control a swerving life-boat in shark- infested waters while trying to catch sky-divers leaping from a heli copter; *Turtle Bridge*, where agile tourists attempt to carry their luggage from one lake shore to another by stepping on the backs of some awfully temperamental turtles and *Snoopy Tennis*, which stars the Peanuts pet as he matches wits on the court with good old Charlie Brown (cameo appearance by Lucy).





Palmtex's Octopus

BANDAI

Shark Island, Escape From The Devil's Tomb, Invaders Of The Mummy's Tomb

More shark infestations are available from Bandai Electronics, which brought forth the first handheld line of solar powered games in the industry. *Shark Island* begins when an airplane crashes into the sea, leaving the poor survivor to dodge hungry fish. You eventually direct the castaway to a deserted island. If you're successful, you have the opportunity to attack sharks yourself while waiting for a floating log to take you to a rescue ship.

For those whose tastes run to the downright creepy, there's solar-powered *Escape from the Devil's Doom*. Scene I starts in the "horrors of hell" where you must avoid attacking demons and bats as you climb out of the inferno. If you escape, the scene changes to heaven where you must catch feathers dropped by angels.

Invaders of the Mummy's Tomb features game action that occurs first outside, then inside a pyramid of Egypt. Outside the pyramid, you defend your camel from vicious snakes and scorpions. Once inside, however, you face treacherous mummies and spiders before you can finally make off with hidden treasure and win points.

Like Palmtex's double screens, each Bandai pocket game is contained in a snap-close compact case. A solar-voltaic (photo-electric) cell powers the game under ordinary room light (at least 60 watts or daylight). In a darkened room the game screen begins to fade away, but light quickly revives it. You never need batteries.

Bandai's Mummy's Tomb

MONEY-BACK GUARANTEE! SEE PAGE 4

5 EXCITING NEW GAMES!

US GAMES NEWS

EARTH DOOMED?



LONE SPACE JOCKEY FIGHTS BACK!

With every human attack weapon captured by alien forces and turned against Earth, surrender seemed inevitable... until you captured one of the alien attack saucers!

Screaming through the atmosphere, you cut forward and back, up and down to escape relentless alien firepower. You blast back, firing directable missiles into alien planes, tanks, and other obstacles.

Can you beat the aliens with their own machine? You can... if you're fast enough, if you're accurate enough, if you're good enough.

★ ★ ★



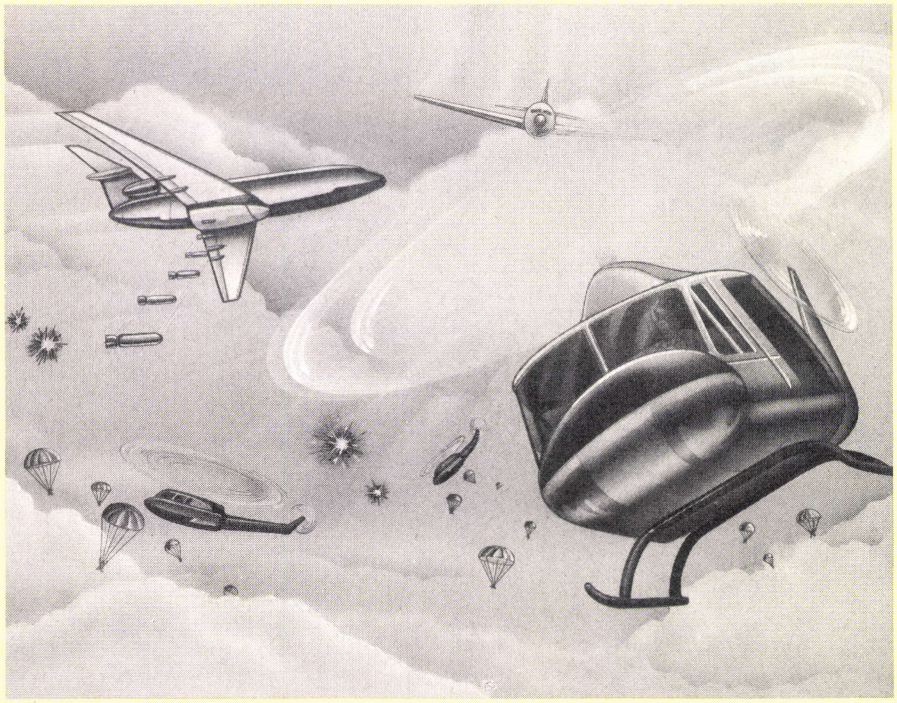
Can you beat the aliens at game level 16?

ANDROID RAIDERS ATTACK!

HOT GUNNER COULD SAVE CITY!

With attack choppers dropping android commandos and fighter-bombers delivering payload after payload, our city would be destroyed by now if it weren't for one brave gunner... you.

Only your quick eye and quicker trigger finger can hold off wave after wave of android parachutists. Only your skill can keep them from tunneling under the city and taking you out. The game is Commando Raid, and you're the city's last hope.

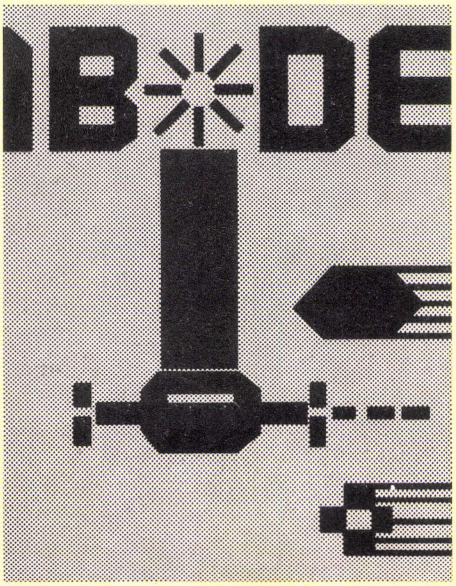




The action gets faster with each commando attack wave!

★ ★ ★

ZAPPER A FAST BLAST!



HOT GAME CHALLENGES THE BEST!

Just when you think you've thought fast enough, you've got to think faster! You've got to fire left and right to zap deadly asteroids... one hit by the Doomsday asteroid and your saucer blows!

But that's just defense! To win you've got to fire overhead with incredible skill to blast away the letters of the alien's language. And it will only work if you follow the computer's lead. Can you beat Word Zapper through all 24 games? Can anybody?



Why is Ronald Evans smiling? Did he beat the zapper?

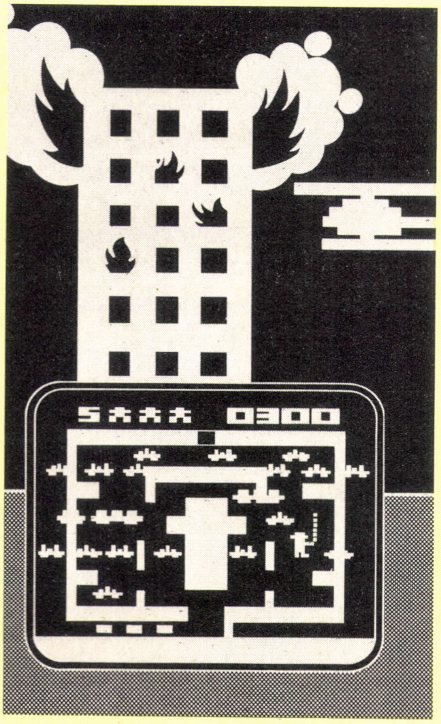
FIERY DISASTER AVERTED!

BOLD FIREFIGHTER SAVES HUNDREDS!



It was the worst fire you'd ever seen... a high-rise going up like a torch. With a different fire-filled maze on every floor. And hundreds with no way out... unless you could get them out to the rescue chopper.

It's a race against time and the fury of fire that can destroy innocent occupants... and you! You're the firefighter... do you have the skill and strategy it takes to beat Towering Inferno?





Relive the movie in this challenging maze game!

★ ★ ★

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★ $3.00 cash rebate on any game!

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MISSING PERSON MYSTERY SOLVED!

ENTIRE FAMILY CAUGHT UP IN SEARCH.



Four different rooms with lots of sneaky places to hide.

It seems simple enough... somebody disappears, and you find them. But this is a spooky video world, with electronic hidey-holes that happen where you least expect!

You can seek a friend or family opponent... or take on the computer! You've got to beat the clock, or your Sneak 'N Peak opponent has you dead to rights!

★ ★ ★

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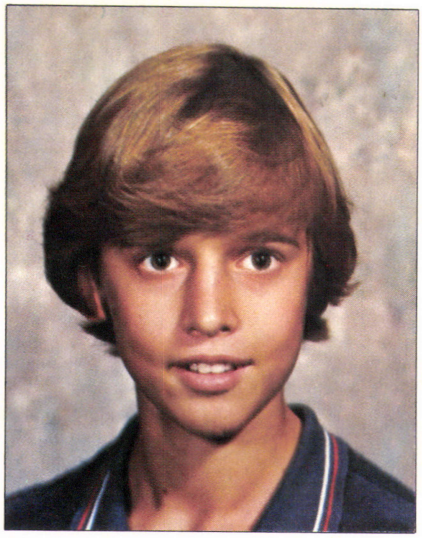


WHEN YOU WANT YOUR ATARI ACTION *GUARANTEED HOT...*

U.S. GAMES™

the EXA report

Secret messages in games



by Jens von der Heide

If you get a lot of pleasure out of uncovering skeletons in your friends' closets, imagine how much fun it would be to discover the secrets of the aliens in your video games—especially after you've had the cartridge for a month or so and have already mastered it. Don't let those games sit around collecting dust. Play them, not to top your score, but to search for idiosyncrasies, program bugs and secret messages.

Several games offer you this opportunity. I have chosen to focus on the following: *Laser Blast* (Activision), *Maze Craze* (Atari), *The Empire Strikes Back* (Parker Brothers), *Space Invaders* (Atari), *Missile Command* (Atari), *Grand Prix* (Activision) and *Adventure* (Atari).

In order to find many of these quirks, you will have to turn the game on and off repeatedly, so a word of warning is in order. This can be hazardous to the health of your video game cartridge and we don't recommend that you do it too often. Each time you turn a game on and off, the game becomes just that much more vulnerable to power surges. In other words, you can fry your cartridge if you're not careful. It's safe to try, however, if you don't go overboard.

Laser Blast

By turning the game on and off several times, you will eventually come up with a messed-up playfield. By "messed-up," I mean that instead of getting a normal picture, you'll get a slightly skewed representation of the playfield—the *Laser Blast* ground area may be one-quarter of the screen higher than usual or the picture may be blinking or faded. After you get this, reset the game. If the word "Activision" at the bottom of the screen is spelled funny, you'll find yourself—90 per cent of the time—playing the game without having to worry about the aliens firing back at you.



You'll also notice that every other number in the score is backwards.

Maze Craze

While the *Laser Blast* quirk might take a while to find, the *Maze Craze* quirk generally appears much faster. By turning the game on and off repeatedly, you can find, as well as play, the very basic grid which all of the other randomly generated mazes are based on. What happens is that the color shifting that normally occurs—which prevents you from seeing the screen while the computer is generating the new maze—is stopped and the maze grid is frozen on the screen.

The Empire Strikes Back

By turning the game on and resetting it simultaneously, you can cause the Imperial Walkers to appear on the scanner at the bottom of the screen, but not on the screen itself.

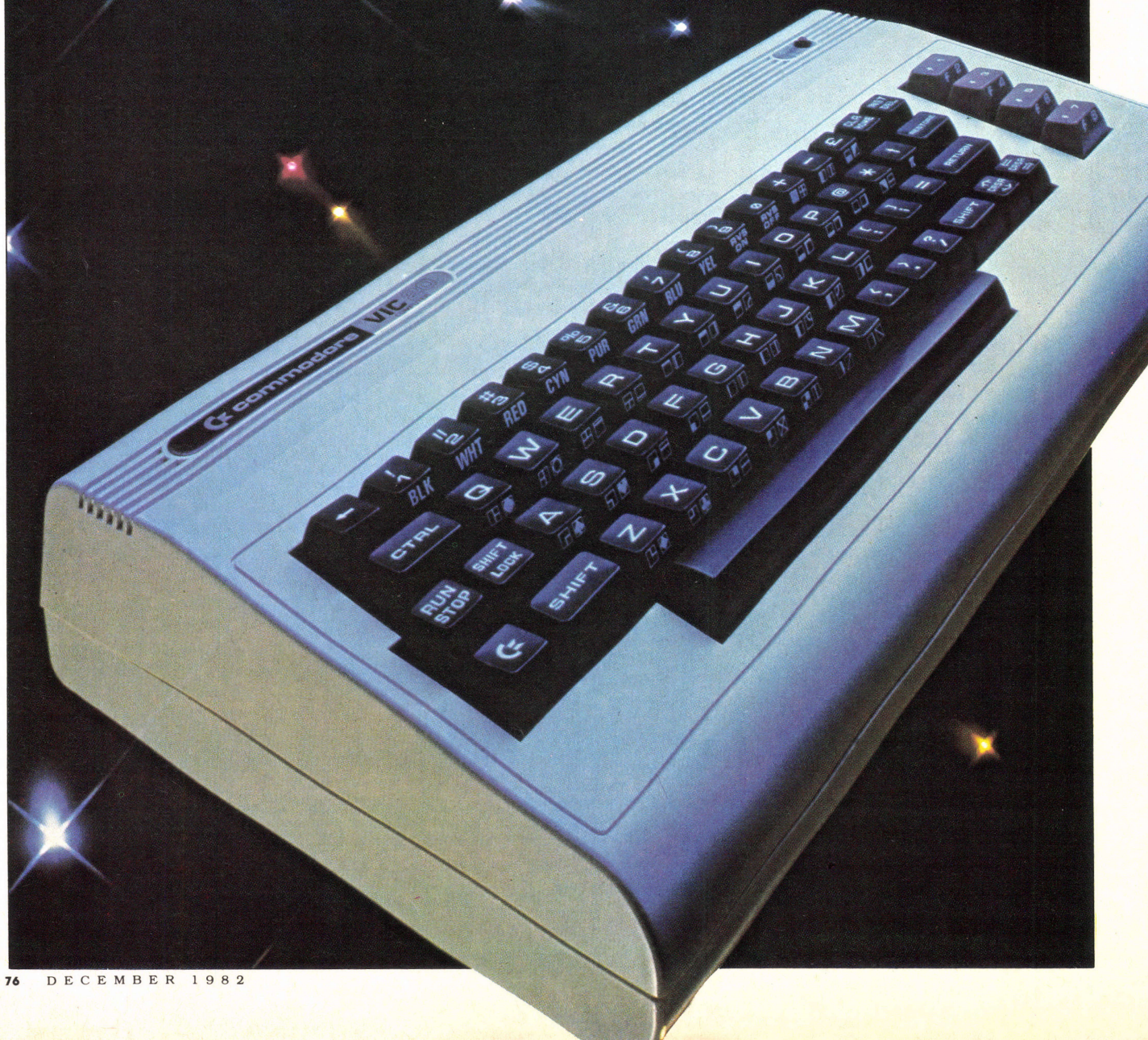
Missile Command

One of the most intriguing quirks is found on *Missile Command*—an extra, lost dot in the explosions. It will appear only when you have your cursor lined up at a point vertically above the left half of the top plateau of your missile base. You'll find the dot either on the upper right or the lower left of the explosion. You should also notice that there is a dot "missing" from the other side of the explosion (lower

Continued on page 94

Computer Workout:

Give me VIC-tory!



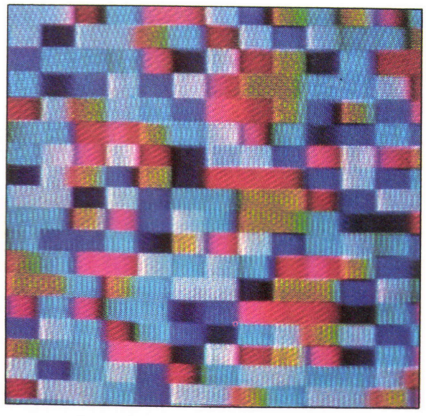
Programs... Computers... and Games.

by Walter Salm

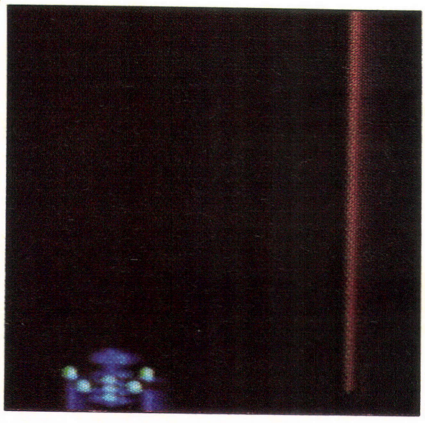


A lot of games enthusiasts are having trouble making a decision about that second purchase. A bigger, better game system? A personal computer? A machine that combines the features of both? And what about price? If you're asking yourself questions like these, take a long hard look at the VIC-20 from Commodore. It could answer them all.

Right now the VIC-20 is selling for from $179 to $199—less than most game consoles. It has some impressive graphics, fascinating games quite different from anything on conventional game systems, and 5K of memory. Though that may not sound like a lot, the VIC-20 is a *computer*, and that



The keyboard itself is very similar to a conventional typewriter's and has a good touch and feel. With the special character keys and the four function keys, the machine provides up to eight programmable functions. And while writing your own programs is challenging and fun, games players will be happy to know that play on the VIC-20 is just as exciting.



means programming power.

Solving even the simplest problems becomes an intensely gratifying experience when you've written the program yourself. The instruction manual—an especially good one—gives some samples, but from then on, the sky's the limit.

One of the best features of the VIC-20 is its built-in VIC BASIC which means you can start programming as soon as you turn it on. VIC BASIC is almost identical to conventional BASIC, but provides you with all kinds of programming shortcuts using character keys for special functions.

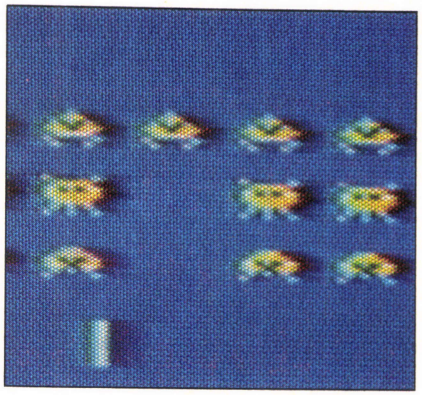
There are a couple of dozen games available from Commodore, retailing for from $29.95 to $39.95, including *Jupiter Lander, Radar Ratrace, Slot, Poker* and *Sargon II Chess.* New entries include arcade favorites like *Omega Race* and *Gorf* and more are on the way.

Some of the games use the keyboard only, while others let you use a joystick—the same one that's compatible with the Atari VCS. The game carts fit into a slot at the back of the machine, and one problem is they're hard as the devil to plug in. One solution to this tight fit is an expansion board plugging into the slot.

Some games and programs are available on tape cassettes, which makes them a lot cheaper. The company has some "six-packs" of cassettes priced so the average cost is about $10 per tape. Some of these are excellent, while others need help. Nevertheless, to use any of them, you'll need a VIC cassette unit with a special plug that fits into the back of the VIC machine. It's a worthwhile investment.

Games are also available from United Microware Industries (UMI) and Thorn EMI. Now that the VIC is becoming so popular, more people are getting into the VIC games business. Cartridges like *River Rescue* from Thorn EMI and *Meteor Run* from UMI add some extra zap to your game play.

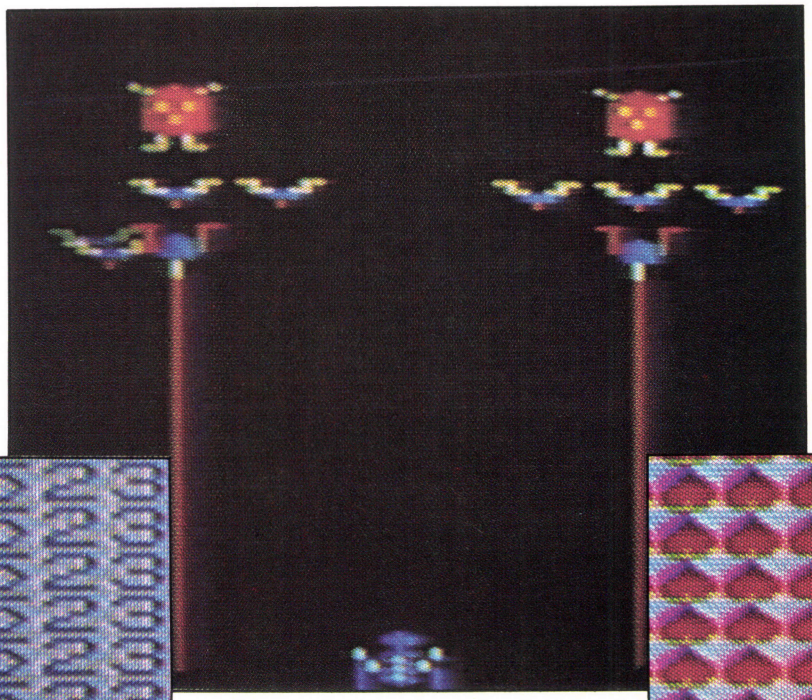
In general, most VIC games are for one player. The two-player games use the keyboard only, and this can be awkward, as each player has to lean over to enter his or her own gameplay instructions. A case in point is Commodore's *Casino Blackjack.* While it's one of the better blackjack games I've seen, generally only one player can sit at the VIC and she or he has to enter bet amounts and actions dictated by the second player. But in spite of this shortcoming, it's still head and shoulders above other home video blackjack games.

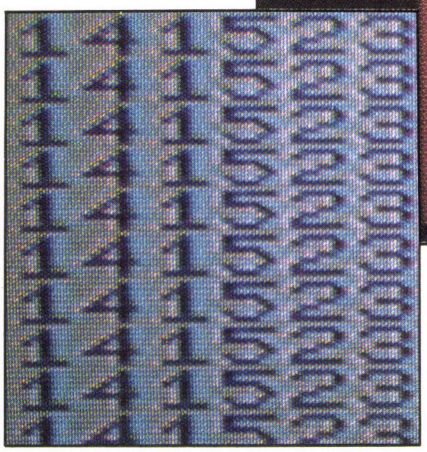


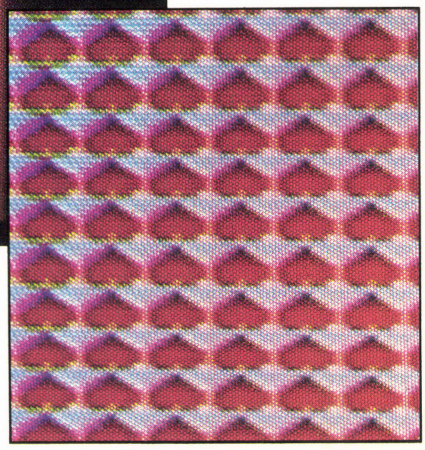
One of things you can do with the cassette unit is save programs

you write so you can run them later. It uses short, cheap cassettes—in fact, the shorter the better: Using tapes longer than C-60 can strain the cassette machine's motor. And, since the cassette recorder draws power from the VIC, this can also lead to problems in the VIC's own power supply. You can buy C-30's at Radio Shack for about 70 cents apiece in three packs. They work very well and each cassette will hold several programs.

One of the most exciting features of the VIC-20 is its superior graphics, and simple programs in the instruction manual let you try some screen graphics right away. One program, for instance, fills the screen with a random patchwork of colored squares which make up a colorful kaleidoscopic display.







In addition to excellent game playing graphics, the Commodore VIC-20 allows you to program some simple but colorful patterns.

Another VIC program lets you create a rather simple "bird"—a large dot with wings—and then lets you animate it. Other short programs show you how to create a bouncing ball and then vary the animation using "POKE" and "PEEK" commands. By the time you've gotten a third of the way through the manual, you will have already learned how to map screen locations.

Error In Line 210

The VIC isn't bashful about telling you if something's not right. When you try to run a program that needs some debugging, it will flash such messages as "SYNTAX ERROR IN LINE 210," which means you ought to go back and take another look at that line in the program. Very often, the error simply consists of having misspelled a command or having put in a ";" when a ":" was called for.

In spite of the VIC's many advantages, there will come a time when you want to add more capability to the machine and plug-in memory expansion of 5K, 8K or 16K is available for just this contingency.

There's also the Commodore Programmer's Aid—a plug-in cartridge that provides a number of additional commands and instructions for writing programs.

Probably the most useful single accessory for the VIC is the cassette recorder. This is the "poor man's" mass storage. The cassette will do nicely until you find your needs getting more serious. It lets you save programs that you write, files of data, information and addresses.

The printer is another story. The one printer made for the VIC is Commodore's graphic printer, which costs $395. This isn't likely to be discounted by very much in the stores. It's a dot-matrix printer which doesn't give good letter-quality printing if you happen to be interested in using VIC for word processing. The VIC printer plugs into the computer's printer port, which is a European DIN-type jack. It's very difficult to make other printers run from this particular port.

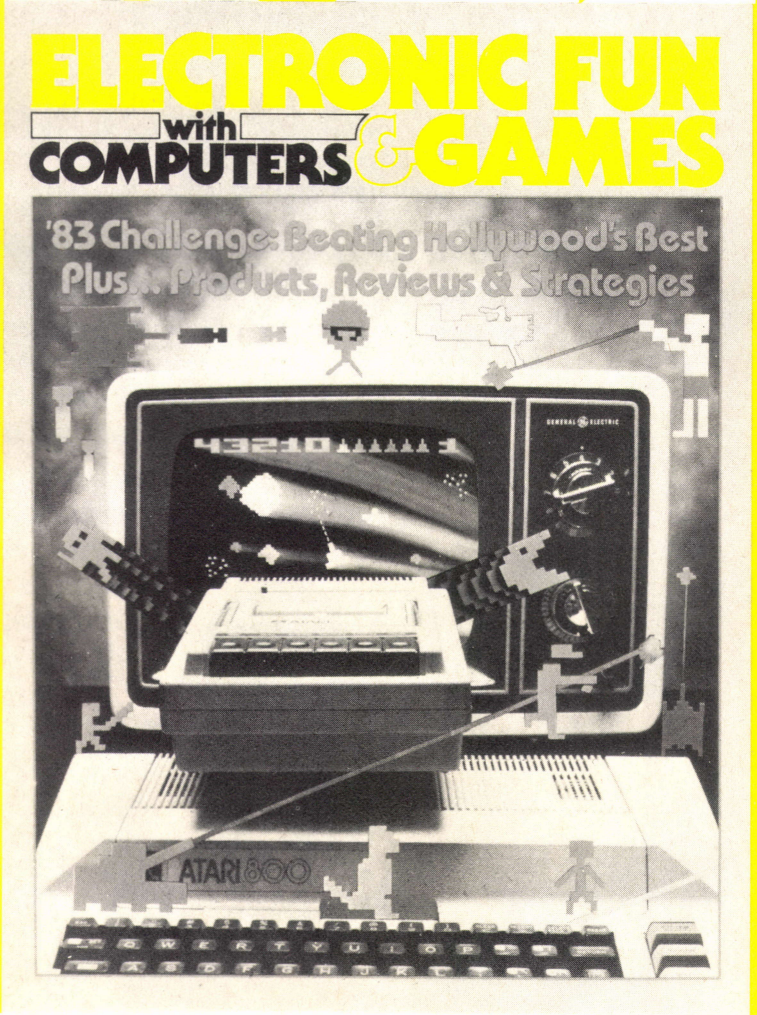
Game/Expansion Port

The expansion chassis is a circuit board that plugs into the VIC's game/expansion port. On the chassis are three or more connector strips that let you plug your program or memory expansion cartridges into the board, rather than into the back of the VIC. This way you can use more than one plug-in cartridge at a time. This feature is especially helpful if you want to, say, plug in a 16K memory expansion cartridge and the Programmer's Aid cartridge at the same time. It also lets you "stack" smaller expansion memory modules that you may have purchased one at a time.

A useful plug-in comes from Quantum Data. Called the "40/80 Video Combo," this expansion device gives you more characters on each line on the video screen. It will give you a choice of 40 or 80 columns (the VIC normally provides 24 characters per line), and will let you type upper and lowercase letters. If you're doing programming or editing, it's a must.

Continued on page 95

FUN FOR SALE



First Issue: November, 1982
Cover Price: $2.50

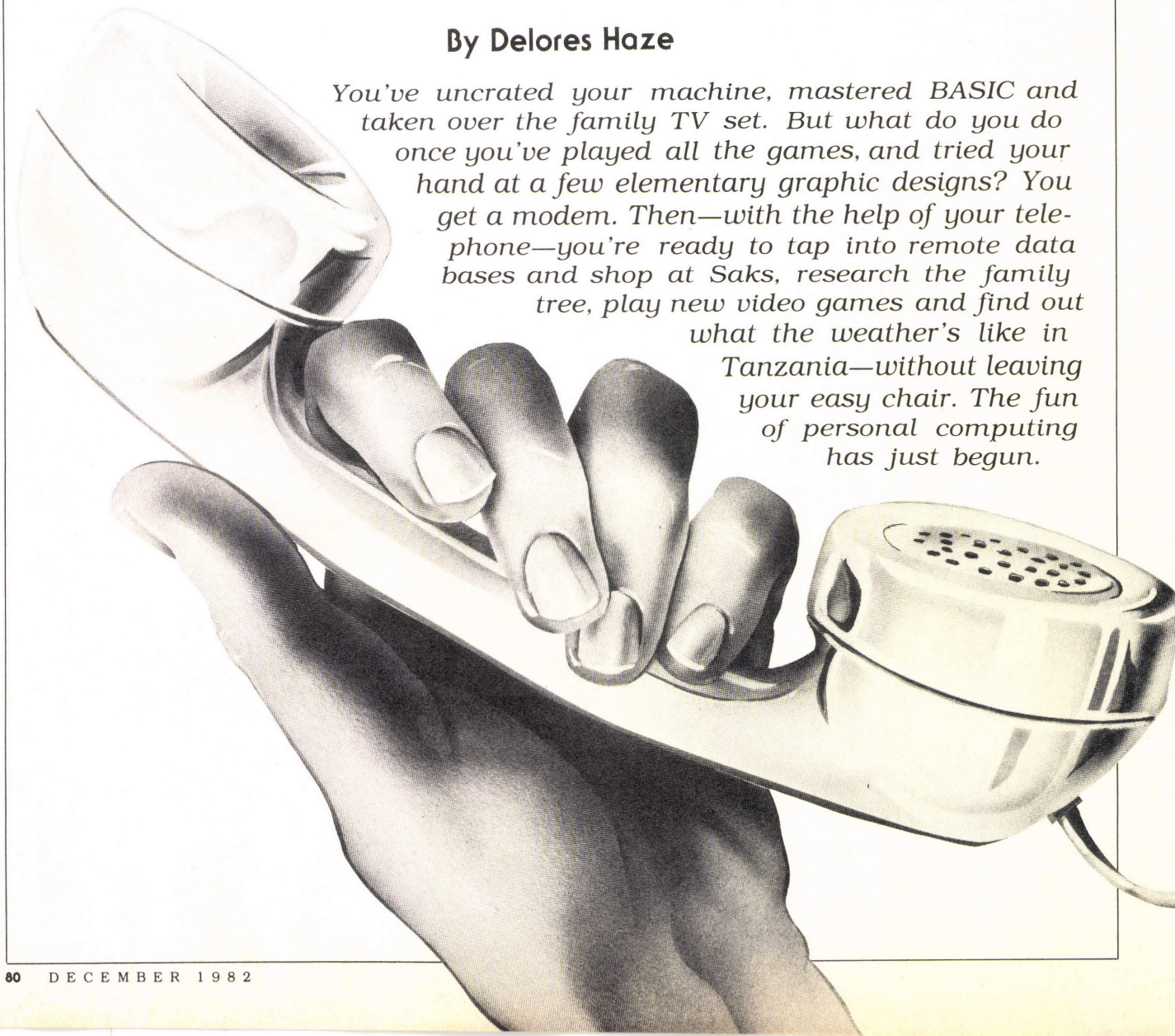
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Dial M for MODEM

By Delores Haze

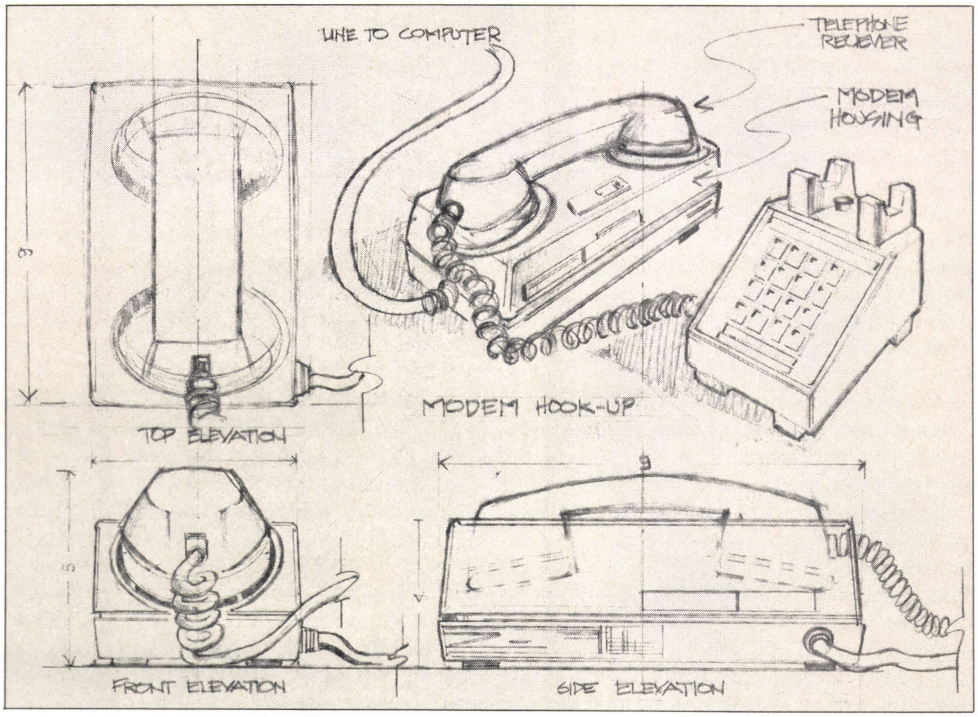
You've uncrated your machine, mastered BASIC and taken over the family TV set. But what do you do once you've played all the games, and tried your hand at a few elementary graphic designs? You get a modem. Then—with the help of your telephone—you're ready to tap into remote data bases and shop at Saks, research the family tree, play new video games and find out what the weather's like in Tanzania—without leaving your easy chair. The fun of personal computing has just begun.



Ann Newman

All you need to make your home terminal a gateway to the best of what the world has to offer is a push-button phone, a modem and, of course, your trusty computer. Your modem (short for modulator/demodulator) will translate the computer's digital signals into Ma Bell's analog (voice) signals. A modem at the other end of the line unscrambles the message back into digital signals, and you're in business.

The modem itself is a device about the size of shoebox costing anywhere from $195 to $450. Hooking up into databases involves calling a number (this means paying long-distance rates if it's out of your area), typing in the database's account number and password and browsing through the "menu"— the list that will appear on your computer screen detailing the services your database can offer.



Modem blueprint — telecomputing made easy

Dennis Cohen

Let Your Fingers Do The Walking

If you're a video gamer turned computer user in search of something that challenges more than just your reflexes, GameMaster's interactive strategy game service might be for you. The Evanston, Illinois-based service (312-328-9009) features an interactive gaming network modeled after a house, with 35 different game "rooms." The service costs an initial $40, which nets you a 50-page documentation book, a map of the house, game rules and two hours of free playing time.

Take notice. Video games offered via telephone lines are long on strategy and excitement, but short on graphics, which are difficult to transmit. Many games are text only, with a few of the games featuring rudimentary graphics. Unlike arcade and home versions, many of GameMaster's offerings allow up to 10 players to participate. In the GameMaster War Room is *Nuke Strike*, a two-player game, while the Engine Room features *Air Flight Simulator*, a single-player game with constant real-time readouts of flight data. A two-to-four player game, *Oil Burn*, involves bidding on the rights to drill for oil in different locations. A multi-player, real-time game called *18 Wheeler* involves moving three trucks to three different locations using data based on actual interstate mileage.

Other rooms include the Locker Room (Football, Baseball), the Board Room (Chess, Checkers, Backgammon), Classroom (lessons in French, Spanish, German and real-time math exercises for children) and the Observatory (horoscopes). The Parlor allows up to six people to just sit and chat via computer. For an extra dollar, you can get a private "box" to receive electronic mail in the Mail Room. In the Kitchen are recipes from users; system subscribers are allowed free system time to put their recipes on line. The GameMaster service is on line 24 hours a day. Should you get hungry for spaghetti and meatballs at 3 a.m., now you know where to call.

One of the earliest computer information services, and certainly the database with the most services, is CompuServe, an H&R Block company. Originally started as a database geared to the needs of large corporations, the company decided to make use of the computer power left unused after the business day ended. The purchase fee is $29.95 for personal computer owners. The starter kit includes a user ID number, system password, printed users' guide and one hour of free time.

What do you get? Well, CompuServe has a variety of games, some of them interactive, including *MegaWars*, which can involve up to 10 players and includes some graphics. Most of the games are all-text. Others include *Adventure, Football, Backgammon, Banshi, Black Jack, Bridge, Chess, Civil War, Concentration, Craps, Cube Solver, Eliza* (an online computer simulation of a psychiatrist), *Hammurabi, Maze, Mugwump, Othello, Real Time Trek, Roulette* and *Scramble*, among others.

Future File

CompuServe doesn't limit itself to games and some of its programs and services are well worth the $5-an-hour connect time. If you've blown your youth away playing video games and need a little help getting into college, CompuServe's The College Board service provides information on adult education, choosing a college, financial aid and SAT test information. Most

personal computer owners are technology buffs and CompuServe provides Future File, a collection of articles and interviews with futuristic authorities on business, political, military and technological subjects.

Also available to users is the electronic version of the *World Book Encyclopedia.* A clearinghouse for consumer information about making and saving money through manufacturers' refund offers is part of the service. This Refundle Bundle provides specific information and has an interactive section in which users can receive answers to specific questions.

Users can also shop at home with the Compu-u-star, a service supplied to CompuServe by Compu-u-card. It offers thousands of items at up to 40 per cent off suggested retail prices.

If you're looking to communicate with other computer owners, CompuServ's "CB Radio" has 40 "channels" allowing you to talk with a variety of people. Other services include the Associated Press wire and access to *The Washington Post, St. Louis Post* and *Columbus Dispatch.*

The Source (703-821-6660) is probably the second largest consumer database service. It has a one-time hookup fee of $100 and charges $7.75 per hour after 6 p.m.

CompuStore

The Source, like CompuServe, has an electronic shopping service—CompuStore—which offers about 30,000 different items from refrigerators to cotton shirts for sale, usually at a discount. In the educational lineup, this service features very basic language lessons in Esperanto, French, German, Greek, Italian and Spanish, and math and geography lessons, also geared to the grammar-school level.

It's possible, if not to fly electronically, then to check the schedules of all North American flights to domestic and foreign destinations with information about departures, arrival times and airline meals. The *Mobile Travel Guide,* updated yearly, provides restaurant reviews from across the nation, categorized by state, area, type of food and whether entertainment or live music is provided. The company also offers news (UPI wire) and weather services.

Refrigerators aren't the only thing you can buy via your computer and telephone. The Telephone Software Connection sells software packages outright. Potential buyers must own a Hayes Micromodem II or Novation Apple-Cat II modem in order to access the service (213-516-9430). The software is designed for the Apple II computer. When you access the network, the service presents its software and prices, along with some free goodies—samples of its software. The computer programs (paid for by credit card) are loaded directly into the computer, which in turn can be loaded onto tape or disc.

Game software from TSC includes *Lunar Lander II, Chess Connection* ($35) (which allows you to play chess with a friend over the phone), *Go-Moku* ($20) and *Tele-Gammon* ($35). Educational programs are Math Tutor, Time Tutor (both $25) and Spelling Tutor (820). One program that should interest videophiles is the Video Librarian ($40), which maintains an electronic card catalog for video tapes and videodiscs and is designed to locate entries by title, category or keywords.

There are plenty of other uses for your modem. Electronic bulletin boards are scattered across the country and they're yours for the accessing. All it costs is the price of a long-distance telephone call.

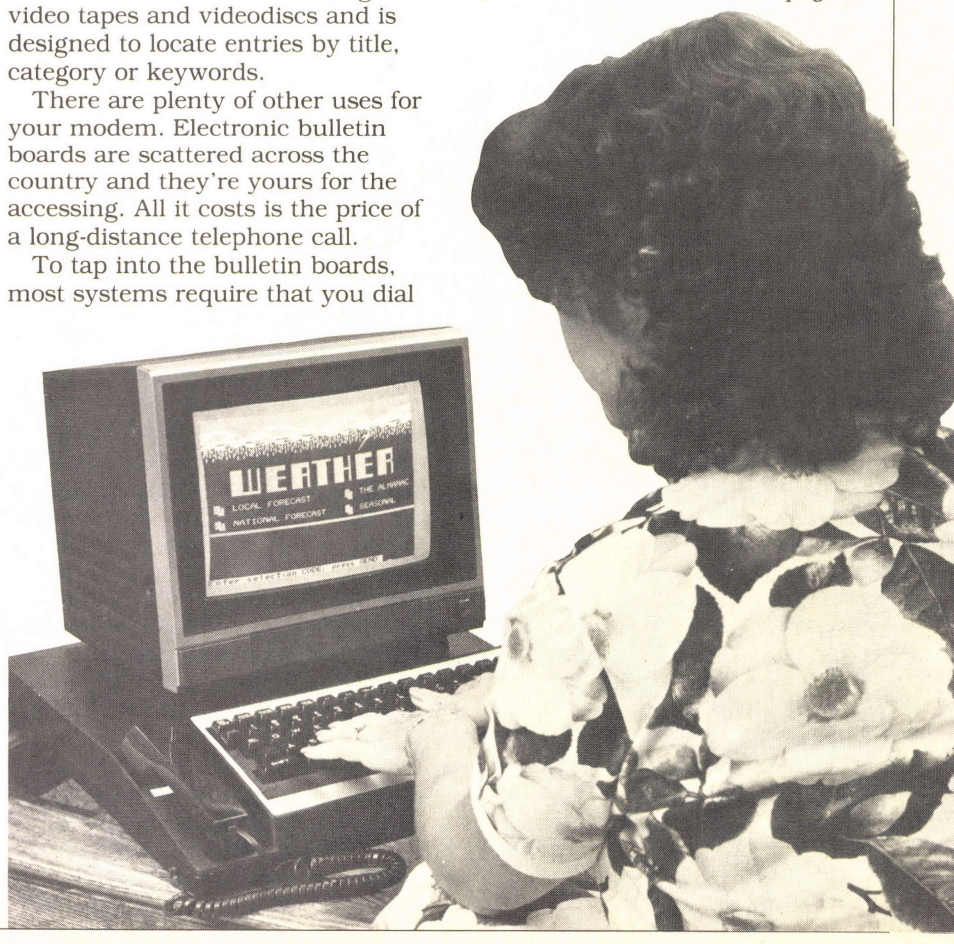
To tap into the bulletin boards, most systems require that you dial the number, wait to hear a high-pitched tone, then place the phone handset in the modem. You'll probably then hit the computer's return key, so the system will know that you're there. Some computer bulletin boards are up and running 24 hours a day. By the way, CompuServe, The Source and GameMaster operate bulletin boards, but you'll have to pay for interconnect time.

Your Family Tree

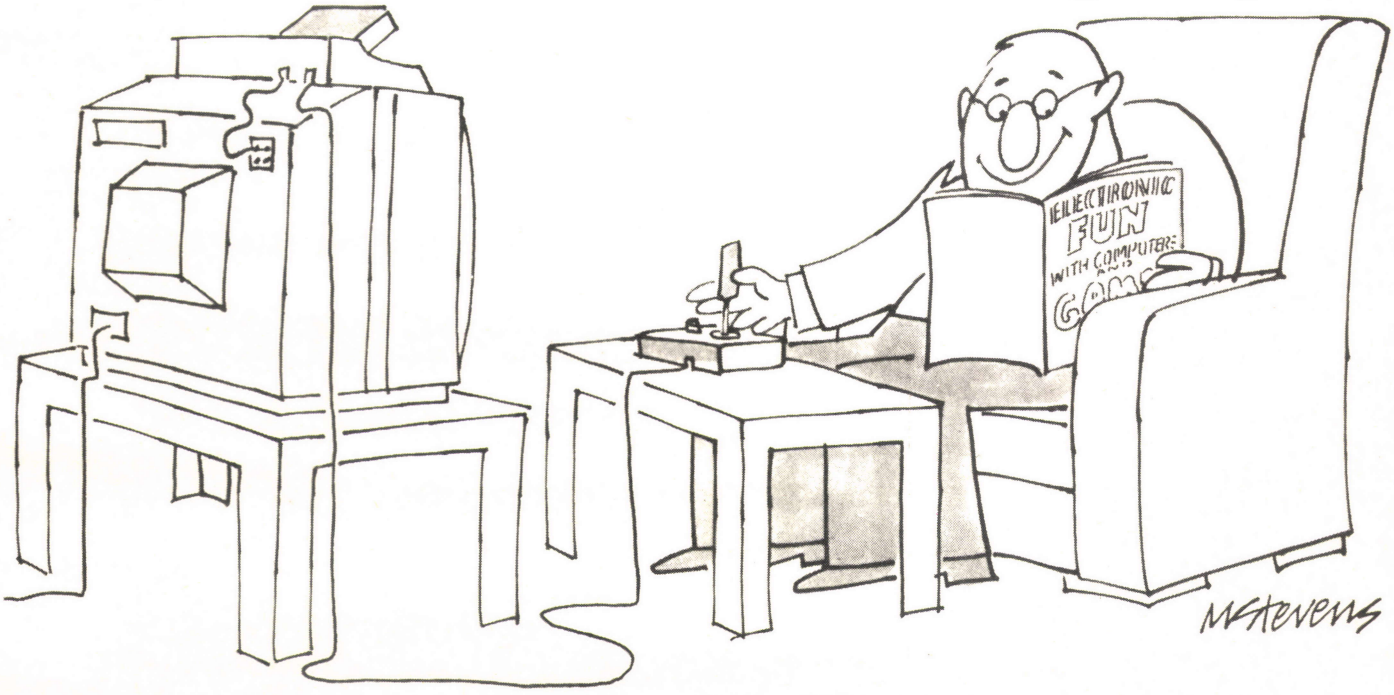
Once you tap into one network, most systems carry information about other computer community bulletin boards. Also helpful is the *On-Line Computer Telephone Directory,* available from Jim Cambron, PO Box 1005, Kansas City, MO 64111.

Probably the oldest free bulletin board is CBBS in Chicago, first established in 1978 and operating 24 hours a day. Call (312) 545-8086. The Family Historian Forum-80 out of Fairfax, VA, is set up by the publishers of *Genealogical Computing,* to help you in researching and keeping track of your family tree. Dial (703) 978-7561. Other

Continued on page 96



Now... a magazine about video and computer games that's as much fun to read as the games are to play!



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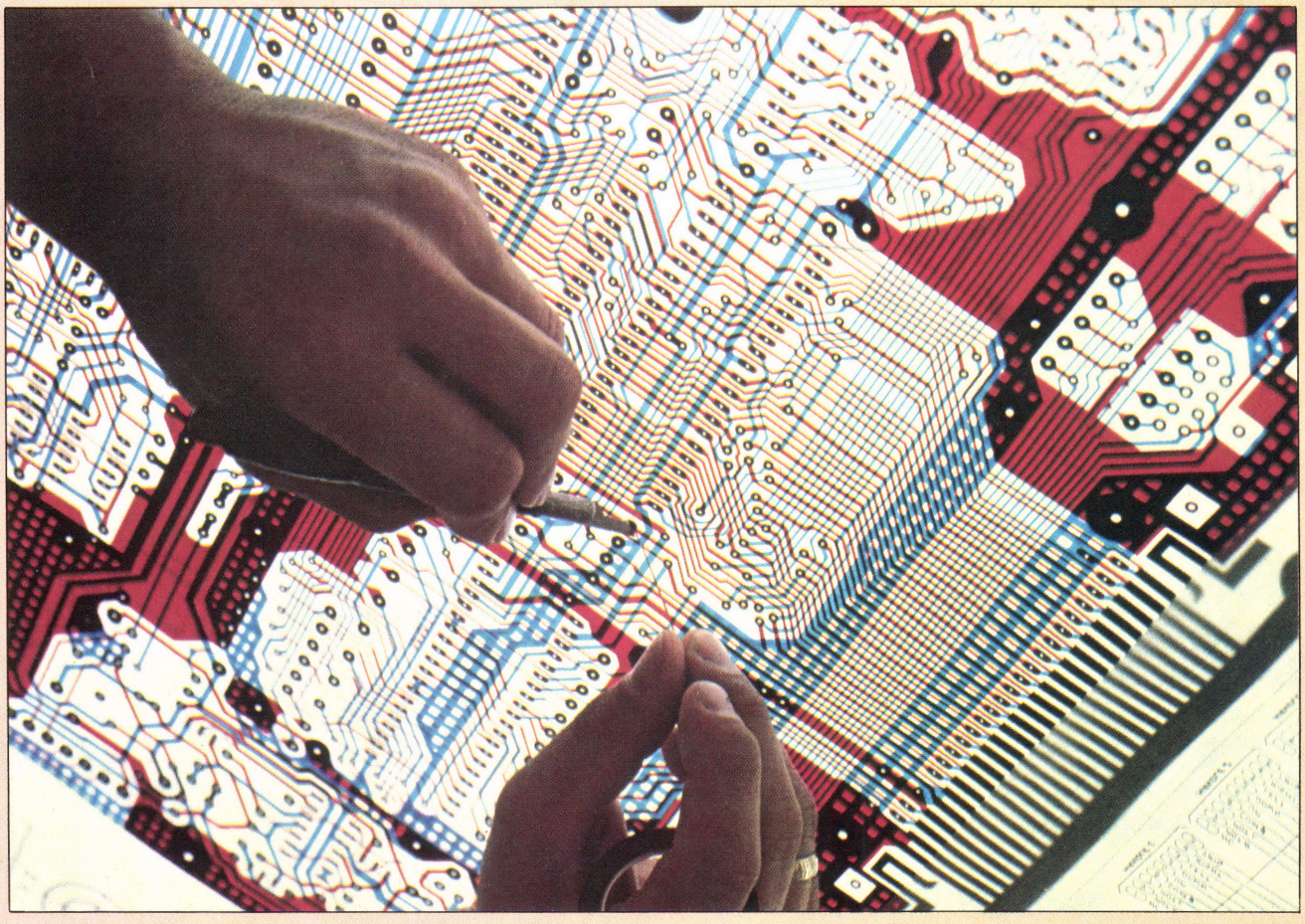
729101

Novice Guide:

COMPUTERS made easy

Their bark is worse than their byte

What's your computer IQ? Do you still think a chip is a snack food? A RAM is a male goat? Do you think that interface means to, like, relate, you know? Well, the world is rapidly becoming computer literate. Kids that are five and six years old are writing their own programs. If you're over 14, you're over the hill. But don't panic. There's still time to catch up. But you'd better start now. ROM wasn't built in a day, you know.





By Douglas Turing

Computerphobia. That's the term that's been going around for the last couple of years. Fear of computers. Let me tell you something right now—you can be afraid of snakes and you can be afraid of heights—but *don't* be afraid of computers. Computers are the simplest machines in the world and before you get ripped off by semi-literate computer salesmen, I'm going to tell you all you need to know about them.

What Is A Computer?

That video game system you have sitting in the living room—is it a computer? Can you turn it into a computer? The answers to these questions are "No" and "Sometimes, but it's seldom worth the headache." Video game systems are not full-function computers. Your microwave oven is not a computer, even if it *does* have a mysterious "micro-processor" in it. And that talking Coke machine down the street with a speech-synthesis chip in it is not a computer.

So what's the dividing line? How do they differ? Simple. A computer is a device that lets you write and store your own programs and data (information) files. Now, before I tell you any more, let me define some of those words that have been floating around in your head.

CHIP—also known as an integrated circuit. A chip is a very tiny electronic device that contains all the microscopic gates that control the way information moves through the computer. It gets its nickname from the slices of silicon that are used to construct it. Now you know why they call the San Jose, California area "Silicon Valley."

ROM—Read-Only Memory. ROM is the part of memory that is fixed and permanently set at the factory. It is unchangeable. With your video games, ROM refers to the game itself—the non-erasable cartridge you plug into the machine.

RAM—Random Access Memory. RAM is the fun part of memory, the part you can edit, store and change again and again as much and as often as you like. Most RAM is volatile, meaning that the letter you're composing or the program you're writing will vanish if you turn the power off. If you want to save what's in the computer's RAM, you have to store it on a recording cassette or a floppy disk. More on floppy disks later.

Byte—A byte, in the simplest terms, equals one letter or one number. The letter A and number 7 are each one byte long. Therefore, a computer with 48K (K means kilobyte, or 1,000 bytes) means that you can sit down and write 48,000 characters before you run out of memory and need to store your file on cassette or disk. So if you're using a computer with 16K, you will be lucky to get 3,000 words into the main memory.

Boot—This is a term that computer salesmen really love. All it means is "get the system running."

CPU—Central Processing Unit. The electronic nerve center of the computer. The CPU retrieves program instructions from memory, decodes them and then executes the instructions.

Floppy Disk—A circular piece of magnetic material housed in a square jacket, sort of like a record album. It spins inside a "disk drive" and is used to store data, as a tape recorder stores sounds. If you open the door of the disk drive while the disk is still spinning, your disk will look like a crumpled Dixie cup.

Interface—Something that links a computer with a peripheral.

Peripheral—Printers, joysticks, monitors, etc.

There's nothing to be afraid of when you "pop the hood" of a computer. Home computers are like Nautilus weight machines—they may seem like torture at first,





but they're undeniably good for you. As a beginner, there will be a lot of things that baffle you. But always remember—there's no such thing as a stupid question in the electronics field. Let's start with a question most people are too embarrassed to ask...

How Does A Computer Work?

Computers deal only with "digital" information expressed in binary (instead of the usual decimal) numbers. In other words, all the information being processed by the machine—whether it's words or mathematical equations—gets broken down into long strings of either zeroes or ones. If you want a for-instance of how the digital system works, when you type the capital letter A on a computer keyboard, the computer reads the keystroke as 01000001 (or 65 in the binary system). So your computer must turn all information into zeroes and ones in order to work on it—computers don't speak English. Similarly, your stereo translates the analog (waves) information stored in a record album to produce the sound waves we call music.

The zeroes and ones that stand for the letter A are called bits, which is an abbreviation of *b*inary dig*its*. Most home computers are eight-bit machines, which means that they understand eight bits as one byte. Each byte has its own pigeonhole in the computer's memory.

When you plug a ROM game cartridge into, say, your Atari VCS, the system is indeed reading long strings of zeroes and ones, just like a computer does. But the big difference between a game system and a real computer is in the RAM. To repeat, RAM is the part of memory which you, the computer user, get to play around with. You can write stories, programs, shoppings lists—you name it—and then store that information on disk or cassette. Your ROM game cartridges are also understood by the machine, but there's nothing you can do to change them short of pulling them out and plugging a new game in.

When you store a computer program, a microscopic "bump" appears on the cassette or floppy disk to stand for "one." The absence of a bump stands for "zero." That way, when this stored information is entered back into the computer at a later date, all the data is converted once again into zeroes and ones.

Computers don't speak English, but they can understand what is known as a high-level language. In a high-level language, the codes you enter are English-like rather than long series of zeroes and ones. In BASIC (*B*eginner's *A*ll-purpose Symbolic *I*nstruction *C*ode), for instance, there are numerous English (or English-like) commands such as PRINT, FOR, GOSUB, GOTO and so forth.

One of the great things about computers is that they can take a high-level language and rapidly break its commands down into *machine-language*, the zeroes and ones that the computer understands. No computer in the world understands commands like "KICK ME" or "PRINT LIST." The computer only understands the interpreted commands, the complex patterns of zeroes and ones. When you write programs in languages such as BASIC or LOGO, you don't have to worry about making the



A Texas Instruments computer with a number of peripherals. A good letter-quality printer can cost more than your computer, terminal and disk drive combined.

machine understand your high-level commands. The computer already has the smarts needed to turn that information into zeroes and ones.

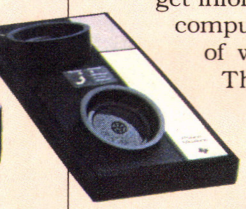
Should You Learn BASIC?

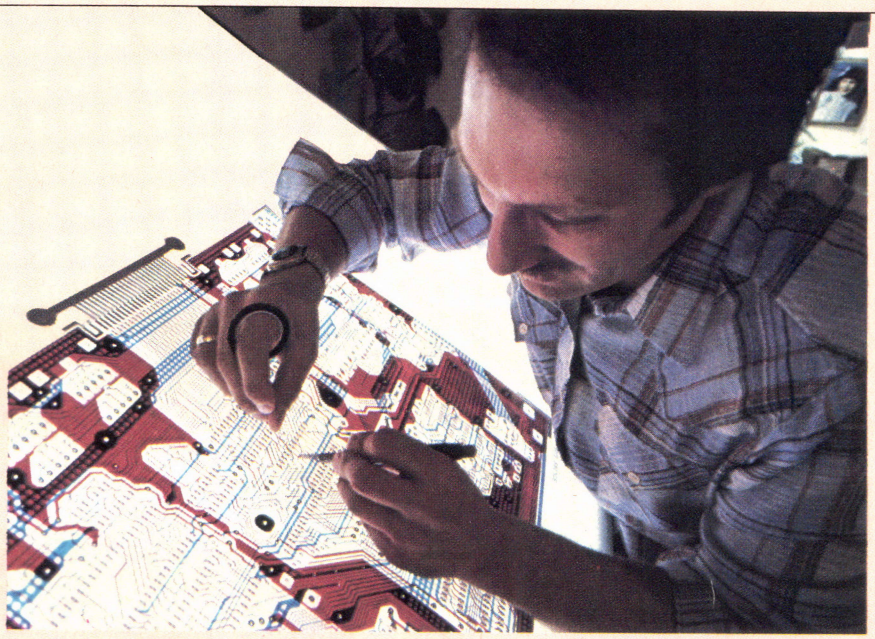
BASIC was invented at Dartmouth University in the late 1940s to make slide-rule problems a snap for non-technical students. To this day, it remains a very good language to get started with because it was devised with beginners in mind. Most of the home computers on the market today offer one version or another of BASIC. On Apple computers, it's called Applesoft BASIC. On Radio Shack, it's known as Level II BASIC. About 95% of the books on the market are geared to the BASIC programmer, so don't think it's a waste of time to learn about it.

There are, however, many fine languages that are newer and less cumbersome than BASIC. The LOGO language, which runs on Apple, Radio Shack and Atari computers at present, is much better than BASIC at telling the computer how to take advantage of color graphics.

Inputs And Outputs

A computer is just a brain and a brain is useless unless you have a way to get information into it and out of it. There are several ways to get information into the computer, the most common of which are keyboards. They look a lot like regular typewriter keyboards with the addition of some extra keys for special functions. If you're not a top-notch touch typist, have no fear. We're starting to see some touch-sensitive screens that require no typing at all. Your monitor will flash five choices and you just press the corresponding part of the screen.





You don't have to know about circuits to use a computer.

The joystick that you use for a video game is an input device also. When you move the stick, it sends instructions to the computer just as a keyboard does. And it won't be long before we start seeing voice inputs—you just talk into a microphone and the computer follows your commands.

The computer gets its information to the outside world with output devices such as terminals and printers. The terminal is the gizmo that looks like a TV set and displays information. (For your information, orange and green are the best colors for terminal display. They're much easier on the eyes than black and white.)

Printers are devices that print out what you see on the terminal. These paper "printouts" are called "hard copy," something you can take away from the computer, read and save. There are two types of printers—dot-matrix and letter quality. Dot-matrix printers (starting at $300) create their images by hammering little dots onto the paper. When someone says, "This looks like a computerized letter," they're probably referring to the tiny dots of a dot-matrix printer.

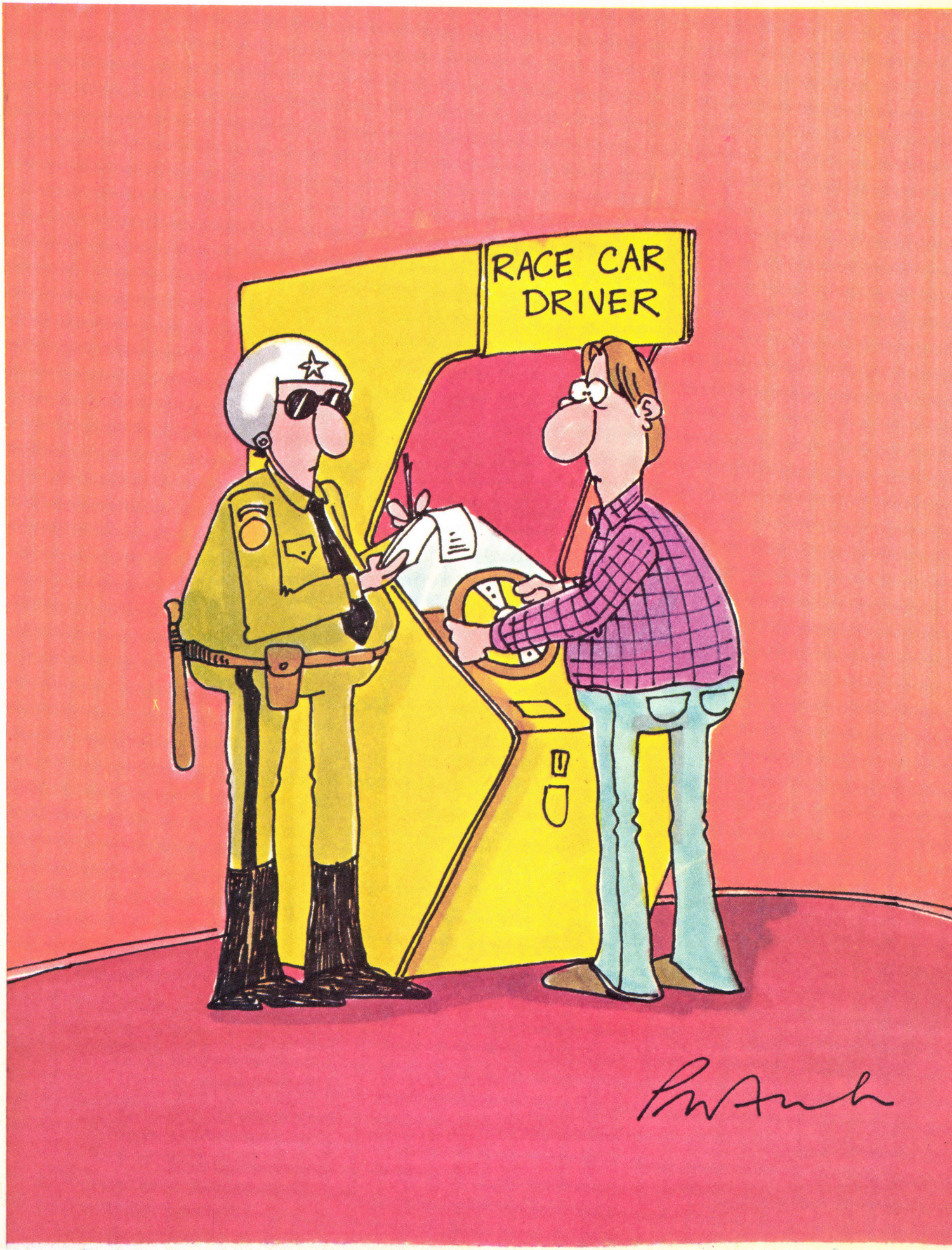
Letter-quality printers are just that—your hard copy looks typewritten. The only problem is that letter-quality printers may cost more than your computer, terminal and disk drive combined. So, before you invest in a computer, it's very important to give a lot of thought to just what you want your computer to do.

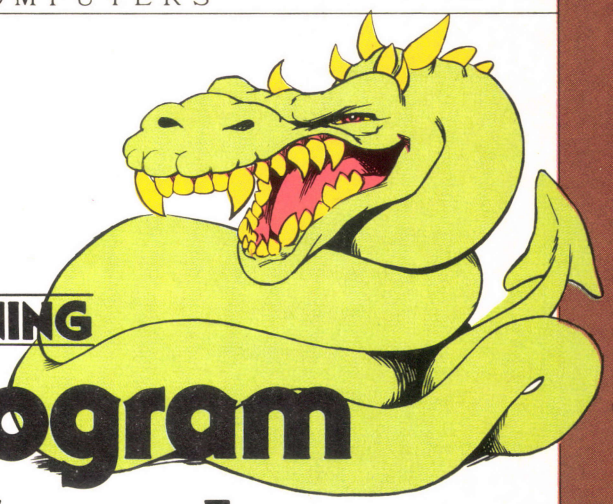
Which Computer?

Don't rush out and buy the first home computer that looks sleek and high-tech. It's very important for you to determine what you want this machine to do. Will it be a games system? If so, you'd better shop around for the computer with the best color graphics. Will you use it for word processing? In that case you'll want at least 48K memory and a reliable printer. Without a lot of hemming and hawing, here's how I rate some of the best selling computers based on the tasks you want them to perform . . .

* **Radio Shack Model II**—Very good for word processing. Not so hot for games and graphics.
* **Radio Shack Color Computer**—All the dazzling graphics that were left out of the Model II are present here.
* **Apple II**—No good for word processing. The graphics are terrific and there's a ton of excellent software for it. It's also good for composing music.
* **Atari 400 / 800**—Naturally, the graphics and games are sensational. They're also starting to get serious about business and word processing applications, too.
* **Timex Sinclair 1000**—For

Continued on page 97


RACE CAR
DRIVER



FIRST SCREENING

Reader Program Of The Month

We're waiting to discover you.

Send us a game program that you've written and maybe we'll send you $100. Each month in First Screening, *we're going to print a program that one of our readers has written. If you think you have hidden talent as a game designer and you have a game that you think deserves recognition, send it to us. Be sure to let us know which computer it's for and to include the complete computer printout. For more information on how to enter,* *see page 90.*

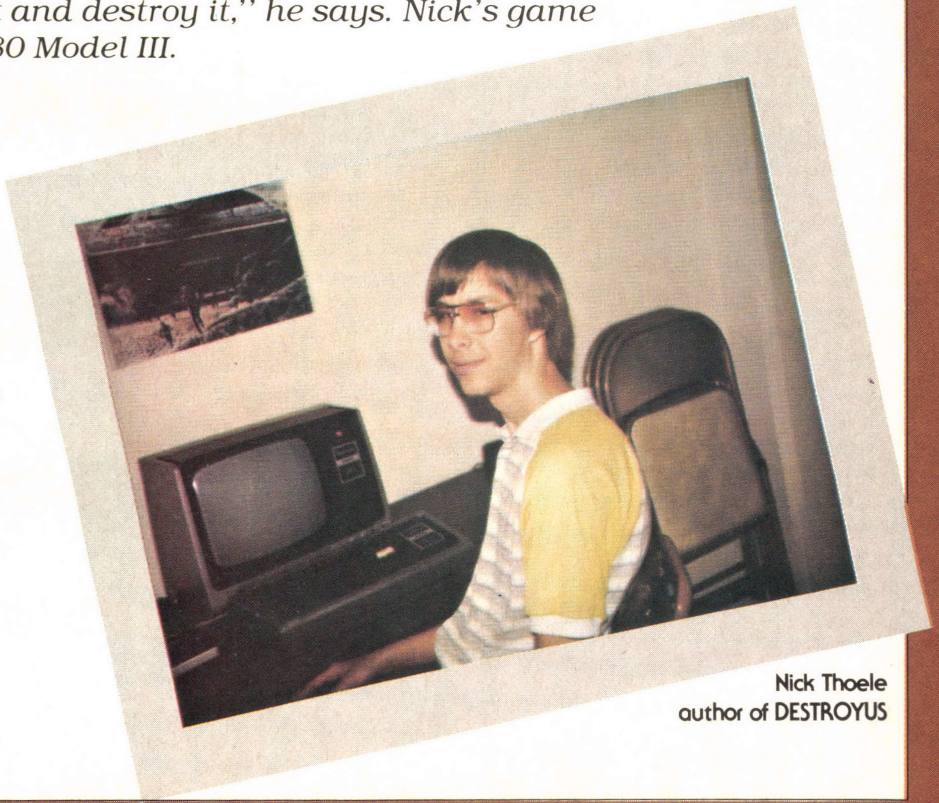
This month's winner is Nick Thoele. Nick is a 17-year-old high school senior from Albuquerque, New Mexico. He's been writing computer programs for four years and likes games best, though many of his programs don't survive. "I just program the game, play it and destroy it," he says. Nick's game Destroyus *is for the TRS-80 Model III.*

DESTROYUS

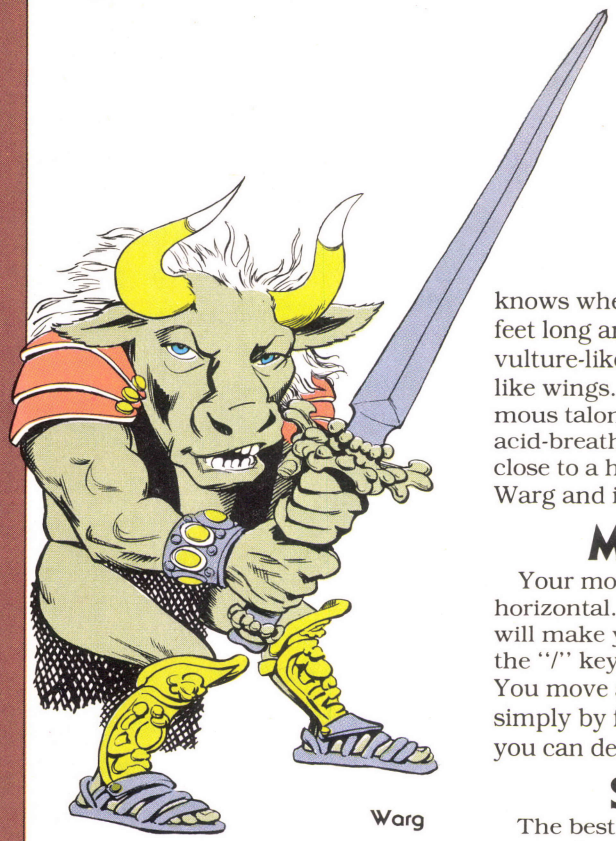
Destroyus is a real-time action game for the TRS-80 Model III computer. It can be made slower by adding a simple loop to the program but it can't be made any faster. Don't worry, however. Although it only has one difficulty level, it is a tough game to master. Most of my friends who have tried it only got 50 points before they lost. You know how it is: You hit one Warg and you die.

How to Play

Back in medieval times, there existed a horrible creature known as the Destroyus, that created havoc and ruin everywhere it flew. In this game, you *are* the evil Destroyus, flying over cities destroying all who stand in your way. You must wipe out as many humans and injured



Nick Thoele
author of DESTROYUS



Warg

Wargs as you can. Wargs are injured as a result of being attacked by your cohorts in evil, the Slayus. You don't want to slay a Slayus: They're your allies. And destroying a friend costs you 25 points. Running into an uninjured Warg costs you your life.

As Destroyus, you are represented on your screen by the letter "v." Healthy Wargs are represented by the letter "W" while injured Wargs are seen as "I." Humans have been given the letter "H" and the Slayus are depicted by the letter "S."

Monsters

Including yourself and the humans, there are four types of monsters. The Wargs are good. They're very muscular, 10 feet tall and resemble minotaurs with shaggy white hair. They're smart, fierce, good fighters and equipped with magical swords with which they defend the humans and destroy Destroyus.

Friends of Destroyus, the Slayus are serpent-like creatures that measure about 12 evil feet in length. They coil like a cobra and attack humans.

As for the Destroyus itself, no one knows where it came from. It's 50 feet long and totally black with a vulture-like head and huge dragon-like wings. Its six legs end in enormous talons and, what's worse, it's acid-breathing. It just has to get close to a human or an injured Warg and it's curtains.

Movement

Your movement is restricted to horizontal. Pressing the "Z" key will make you fly left and pressing the "/" key will make you fly right. You move at a very fast speed and simply by flying over something, you can destroy it.

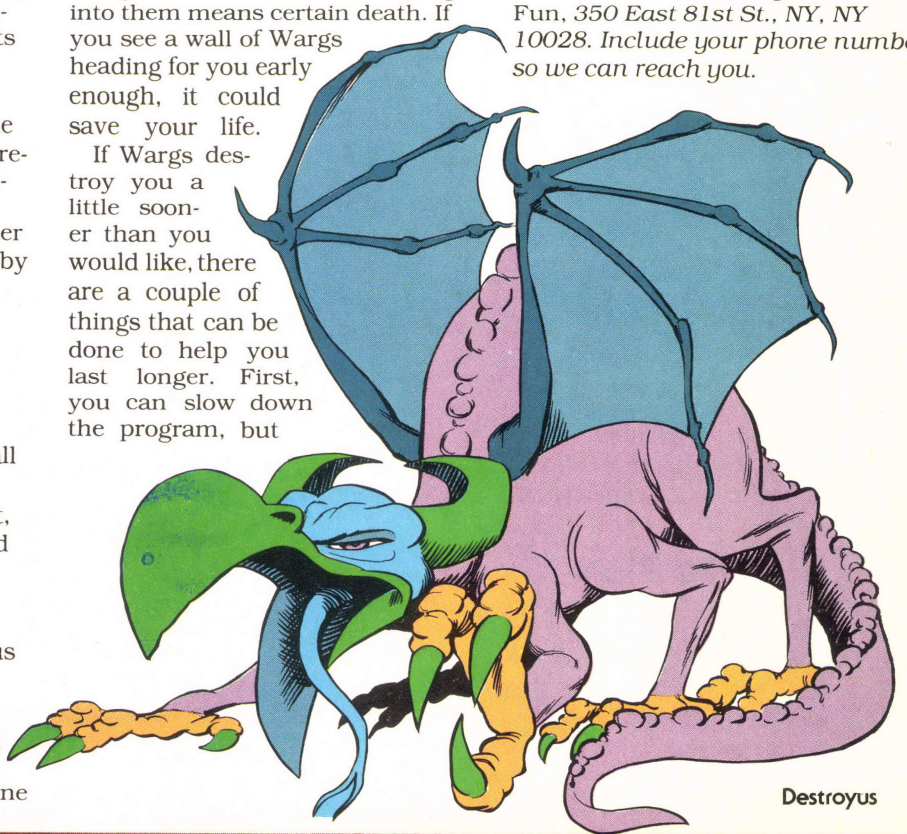
Strategy

The best strategy for this game is to avoid risky situations. This can best be accomplished by staying in open areas and only going for points when doing so is relatively safe. Watch out for what's ahead. Wargs often form walls and flying into them means certain death. If you see a wall of Wargs heading for you early enough, it could save your life.

If Wargs destroy you a little sooner than you would like, there are a couple of things that can be done to help you last longer. First, you can slow down the program, but this subtracts from the fun of the game. A solution I recommend is to replace the "W" character (Warg) with a character that stands out more on the screen, such as a star. It is also suggested that the small "v" which is used on the Model III to represent Destroyus be replaced by a down arrow on the Model I. The down arrow is CHR$(92). Variations in the program such as awarding yourself a bonus Destroyus every 2500 points or so could also make the game more interesting.

Good luck and remember, as an injured Warg might say "Destroy us, Destroyus!"

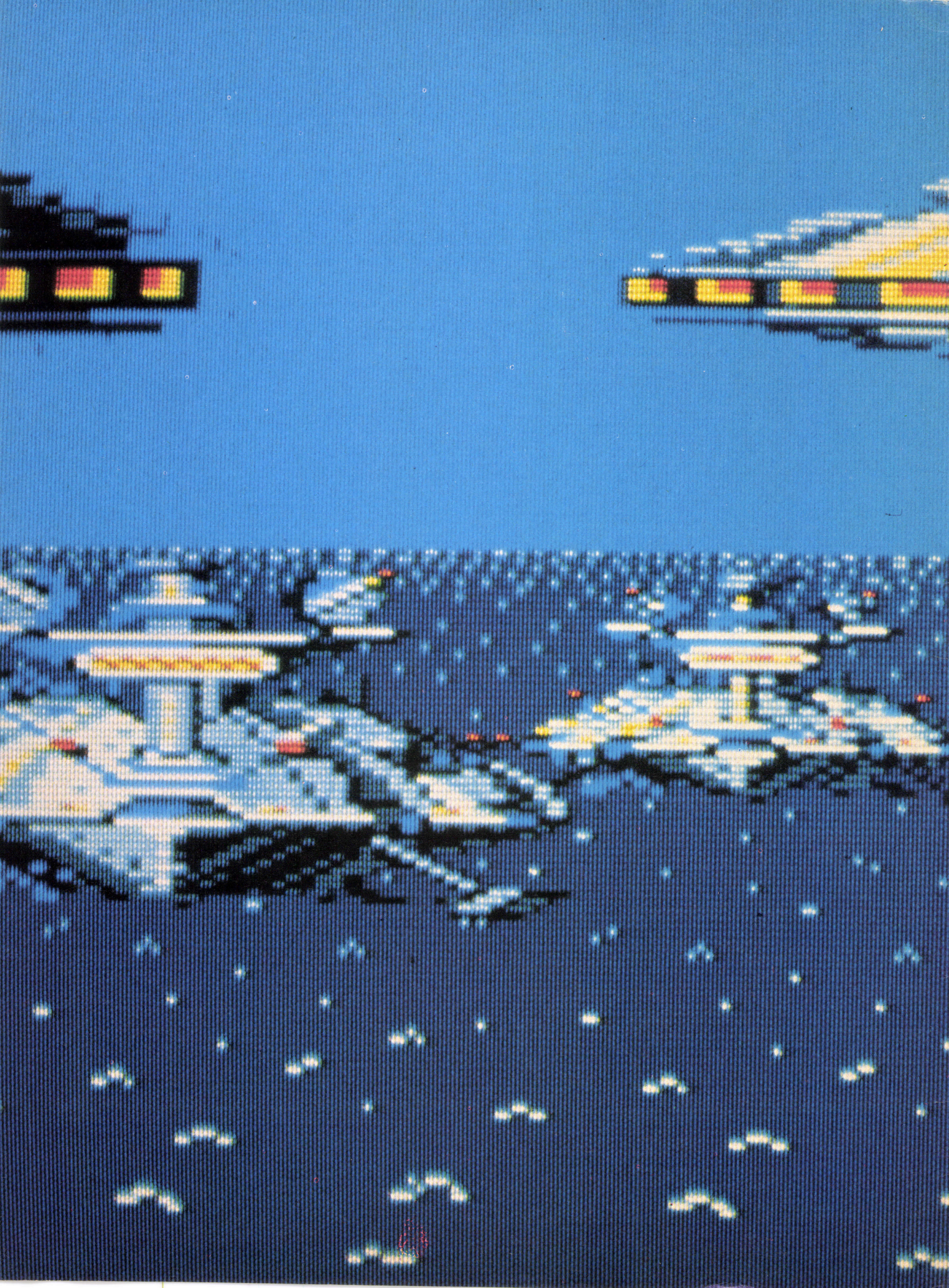
In order for us to consider your entry, we need the following items: a complete computer program, a brief game description, photographs or drawings of the graphics, a picture of you and a self-addressed, stamped envelope. Send it all to: First Screening, Electronic Fun, *350 East 81st St., NY, NY 10028. Include your phone number so we can reach you.*



Destroyus

Micheal Okamoto

```
                          BY NICK THOELE
10 'DESTROYUS
20 CLS:PRINT@320,"DESTROYUS";@448,"INSTRUCTIONS";:INPUTQ$
30 Z$=" /"+CHR$(92)+"' ,":IFQ$="Y"ORQ$="YES"THENCLSELSE320
40 PRINT@69,"THE DESTROYUS IS AN EVIL, VULTURE-LIKE BIRD THAT"
50 PRINT"IS GREATLY FEARED BY HUMANS BECAUSE IT HAS BEEN KNOWN"
60 PRINT"TO DESTROY ENTIRE CITIES.  THE DESTROYUS FLIES OVER A"
70 PRINT"CITY AND BREATHS ACID AT THE PEOPLE THERE.  HORRIBLE"
80 PRINT"AS DESTROYUS IS, BEINGS EXIST THAT CAN DESTROY IT."
90 PRINT"THESE BEINGS, KNOWN AS WARGS, CAN KILL THE DESTROYUS"
100 PRINT"BY USE OF THEIR SPECIAL MAGIC SWORDS.  THESE SWORDS"
110 PRINT"CAN SLAY ANYTHING THAT IS TRULY EVIL.  THE WARGS ARE"
120 PRINT"GOOD CREATURES THAT PROTECT THE HUMANS AT ALL TIMES."
130 PRINT"      THE SLAYUS ARE EVIL SERPENT PEOPLE THAT THINK"
140 PRINT"THE DESTROYUS IS A GOD.  THEY FOLLOW DESTROYUS TO"
150 PRINT"THE CITIES AND FIGHT THE WARGS THERE.  OCCASIONALLY"
160 PRINT"THEY INJURE A WARG, AND THIS ALLOWS THE DESTROYUS TO"
170 PRINT"KILL THE WARG.                    <HIT ANY KEY TO CONTINUE>"
180 Q$=INKEY$:IFQ$=""THEN180ELSECLS
190 PRINT@197,"YOU ARE THE DESTROYUS, REPRESENTED BY THE";Z$
200 PRINT"YOU CAN MOVE LEFT BY PRESSING THE 'Z', OR RIGHT BY"
210 PRINT"PRESSING THE '/'.  WHEN THE DESTROYUS FLIES OVER"
220 PRINT"SOMETHING, HE BREATHS OUT A STREAM OF ACID.  IF A"
230 PRINT"HUMAN, REPRESENTED BY 'H', IS DESTROYED, 10 POINTS"
240 PRINT"ARE SCORED.  IF AN INJURED WARG, REPRESENTED BY 'I',"
250 PRINT"IS DESTROYED, 50 POINTS ARE SCORED.  IF A SLAYUS,"
260 PRINT"REPRESENTED BY 'S', IS DESTROYED, -25 POINTS ARE"
270 PRINT"SCORED.  AN UNINJURED WARG, REPRESENTED BY 'W',"
280 PRINT"CANNOT BE DESTROYED.  IF YOU FLY OVER A WARG, THEN"
290 PRINT"THE WARG WILL DESTROY YOU AND THE GAME WILL BE OVER."
300 PRINTTAB(25);"<HIT ANY KEY TO START>"
310 Q$=INKEY$:IFQ$=""THEN310ELSECLS
320 CLEAR99:RANDOM:E$=STRING$(64," "):D$="V":DIMC$(9),C(4)
330 C$(1)="W":C$(2)="W":C$(3)="W":C$(4)="W":C$(5)="S":C$(6)="S"
340 C$(7)="H":C$(8)="H":C$(9)="I":C(1)=87:C(2)=83:C(3)=72
350 C(4)=73:L=203:R=235:L$="Z":R$="/":H$="HIGH SCORE:"
355 TM=50
360 S$="SCORE:":P=219:' END OF INITIALIZATION
370 CLS:S=0:D=P
380 FORA=1TORND(4)+4:PRINT@906+RND(32),C$(RND(9));:NEXTA
382 FORXX=1TOTM:NEXTXX:TM=TM-1
385 PRINT@907,CHR$(170);@939,CHR$(170);
390 PRINT@D," ";:Q$=INKEY$:IFQ$<>""THEN470
400 X=PEEK(D+15424):PRINT@128,E$;:PRINT@999," "
410 PRINT@13,S$;S;@35,H$;H;@D,D$;
420 IFX=C(1)THEN520
430 IFX=C(2)THENS=S-25
440 IFX=C(3)THENS=S+10
450 IFX=C(4)THENS=S+50
460 GOTO380
470 IFQ$=L$THEND=D-1
480 IFQ$=R$THEND=D+1
490 IFD=LTHEND=L+1
500 IFD=RTHEND=R-1
510 GOTO400
520 FORA=1TO4:PRINT@D,CHR$(136);@D,CHR$(161);@D,CHR$(166);
530 PRINT@D,CHR$(182);@D,CHR$(147);@D,CHR$(134);:NEXTA:CLS
540 PRINT@320,S$;S:PRINT"A WARG GOT YOU!":IFS>HTHENH=S
550 PRINT@512,"ANOTHER GAME";:INPUTQ$:IFQ$="Y"ORQ$="YES"THEN370
560 END
```




SUBROC
Game of the month
Stereo sound and the projection of different images to the left and right eyes make this game incredibly realistic.

SECRET MESSAGES

Continued from page 75

right and upper left respectively).

Missile Command also contains the designer's signature. Rob Fulop's initials can be found near the bottom right-hand city in game 13—if you *don't* score any points. Fulop, the designer of several of Atari's best-selling games, placed his initials on *Missile Command* because he wanted more recognition. When he didn't get it, he quit and now works at Imagic. Subsequently, Atari removed the initials so games manufactured later don't have them.

Grand Prix

Most quirks are caused by a program loophole or are just mistakes. But sometimes they are deliberate—little shortcuts the designer uses to program the games or additions that can be helpful to the player. *Grand Prix* is a good example. If you travel at the same speed as one of the competing cars, it will stop when you get near a bridge or the finish line. Since the other cars are there to get in your way, this is a good way for you to get across first and win. Also, if you travel slowly enough over an oil slick, you will see it pass "under" the driver's seat. That's because the driver's seat is really a hole in the bottom of the car.

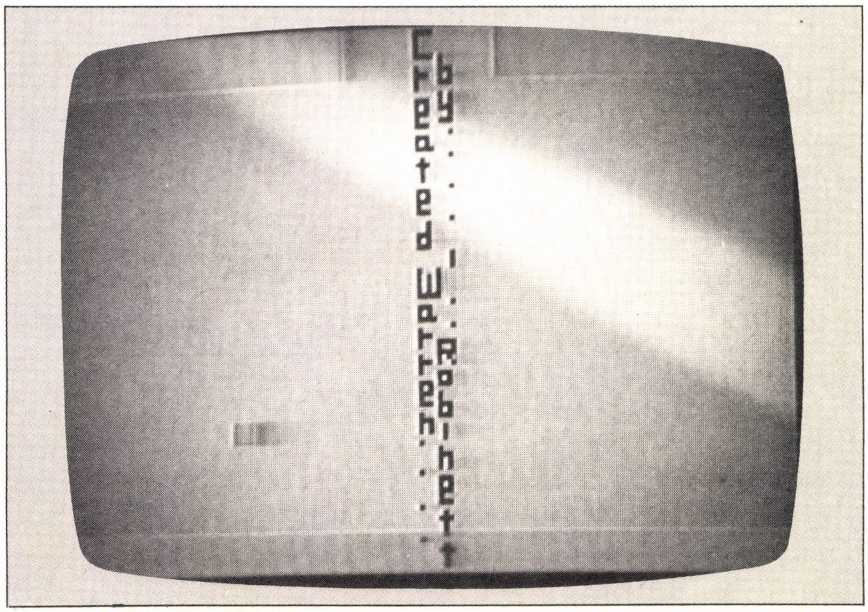
Space Invaders

Turn the game on and reset it at the same time. In game variation one, you'll be able to fire two shots at a time. This quirk will remain as long as you don't turn the game off or reselect the variation.

Adventure

By now you probably know the famous *Adventure* quirk. If you follow a particular set of steps in Game 2, difficulty B, and pick up the Transmolecular Dot, the words "Created by Warren Robinett" will flash on the screen. Also in *Adventure*, when you've been eaten by a dragon, if you wait before hitting the reset button, a bat will fly in and carry you away inside the dragon. You can control the bat by using your joystick.

These are only a few of the quirks that are out there. By fooling around with your cartridges—and being careful not to fry them—you might discover some of your own. Game makers might even want to capitalize on the popularity of secret messages and, who knows, maybe in the future, finding secret messages and discovering quirks will *be* the game.□



GAME EXPLOSION

Continued from page 17

ODYSSEY
SMITHEREENS
SID THE SPELLBINDER

PARKER
AMIDAR
SUPER COBRA
SPIDERMAN
TUTANKHAM
SKY SKIPPER
REACTOR

SPECTRAVISION
CHINA SYNDROME
CROSSFIRE

U.S. GAMES
MISSILE INTERCEPT
GOPHER ATTACK
MAZE CHASE
SQUEEZE BOX
GUARDIANS OF TREASURE

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RIVER PATROL
MARAUDER

EMERSON
CAT TRAX
SPACE ATTACK
ESCAPE
FUNKY FISH
SPACE RAIDER
BRAIN QUIZ
SPACE VULTURE
ALIEN INVADER
SPACE MISSION
MISSILE WAR
OCEAN BATTLE
3-D BOWLING
AMERICAN FOOTBALL
BASEBALL
SOCCER
BREAKAWAY
STAR CHESS
CAPTURE
TANKS A LOT
GRAND SLAM TENNIS
PLEIADES
JUNGLER
SUPER COBRA
STRATEGY X
AMIDAR
GOTANG

VIC-tory

Continued from page 78

All these add-ons use electrical power, and if you plug in two or more at the same time, you could burn out the VIC's power supply. For this reason, there are several power supply add-ons available.

The trouble is, by the time you finish with all of this expansion—much of it just to add to the memory size—you may have spent over $600, including the cost of the VIC. The VIC-20's bigger brother, the Commodore 64, can sidestep all of this if you want to spend $599 right off the bat. This VIC look-alike has 64K of memory already built in, which is quite a lot for the home computer. There are times when that large-size memory comes in handy.

In addition to the games on cassette tape, Commodore and other software companies make business and home programs of many types. You can run programs that range from simple biorhythm calculations to loan/interest tables that will compute a 30-year mortgage. There's a planning calendar that not only lets you plan ahead, but will also call up the calendar for any month of any year within the last century. And there's Commodore's $16.95 *Programmer's Reference Guide*, a detailed second volume to the instruction book that comes with the computer. Once you get over the first excitement of playing VIC games, the book is a must for serious home computing.

One of the most appealing things about the VIC-20 is that it's fun for the whole family. My wife, a professional programmer who spends her days with a $150,000 Data General Eclipse, lately has been spending her evenings with the VIC and is frankly amazed at how much is in that little package—for under $200. And my 80-year-old father-in-law has a ball playing *Slot*. "Just like Atlantic City!" he keeps saying.

The VIC can't replace a good game console, not with the range of software available for the major systems. But when it comes to quality games and high-level screen graphics, as well as the fun of home computing, the VIC is really a fascinating little machine. □

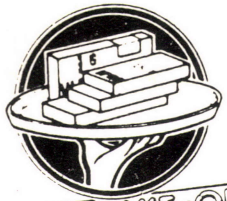
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DIAL M

Continued from page 82

Forum-80 lines are in Kansas City, MO, (816) 861-7040 and Shreveport, L.A. (318) 631-7107. The Remote North Star NASA in Greenbelt, MD (301) 344-9156, provides information about space shuttle missions. HEX stands for the Handicapped Education Exchange in Silver Spring, MD (301) 593-7033. And that's just a sampling of the hundreds of bulletin boards out there—all of them free.

That's what's happening today. Major corporations, however, are launching exerimental database projects in anticipation of someday entering the market in a big way. CBS and AT&T are now conducting a joint field experiment involving 100 homes in Ridgewood, NJ and will add another 100 by next year. The high-quality graphics service provides international, national and local news, weather and sports from the *New York Times*, the *Wall Street Journal* and the *Newark Star-Ledger*, among other papers. With this service, a user can order groceries from Grand Union Stores and have them delivered to his home, as well as order from Saks Fifth Ave and J.C. Penney. Home banking and electronic notepads are also part of the trail project's service.

But you have to start with a modem and the best way to find out more about them is to contact the people who make them:

***A.M. Jacquard,** 3340 Ocean Park Blvd., Santa Monica, CA 90405;
***Anderson Jacobson Inc.,** 25 Olympic Ave., Woburn, MA 01801;
***Astrocom Corp.,** 120 W. Plato Blvd., St. Paul, MN 55107;
***Backus Data Systems,** 1440 Koll Circle, San Jose, CA 95112.

Once you've got your modem, personal computing is a whole other ballgame. It's no longer a matter of mere software or learning complex programming techniques and foreign languages. It's no longer dependent on the information you bring to it; now it can bring you information and services in a way that makes your poor old telephone look like a prop from *The Flintstones*.

COMPUTERS

Continued from pg. 87

the money, it's the best learning tool you can buy. But once you've gotten acquainted with computing, you may become impatient with the Sinclair.

***Texas Instruments 99/4A, Commodore VIC-20**—These computers are leading the pack in what's known as "price-performance ratio." These are real computers, not just video games systems, and both are affordable enough to be called home units.

Hype

Finally, if you *do* buy a home computer, don't get snowed by all the media promises being made about these machines. They can't change a flat tire for you, nor can they improve your social life or your ability to slam-dunk a basketball.

Computer Truths

*The machine you buy is just about worthless unless you get good software and prompt servicing in case it breaks down.

*Telecomputing (see our feature on modems) can be a lot of fun, but a $20 per hour during the day, *very* expensive.

*Beware of conflicting operating systems. Most software can only fit one system. So your Apple II software won't run on a Radio Shack computer.

Computer Myths

**Computers will soon be as cheap as digital watches.* Don't bet on it. Prices probably won't get much lower than they are right now.

**Computers are great for balancing your checkbook.* Actually, you can probably do it twice as fast by hand.

**You can't work computers unless you are good in math.* Programming is really more of an exercise in language arts and logic.

**Computers will soon replace doctors in the diagnosis of illnesses.* No. When a computer is wrong, it's very wrong. Heart disease can very easily be diagnosed as athlete's foot. □

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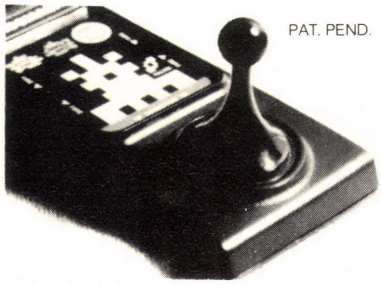
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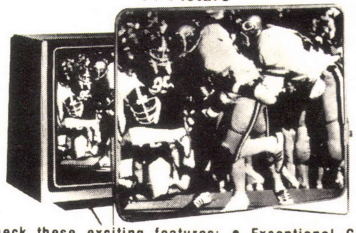
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random access

MAKING SENSE OF THE PRICE WARS: In the wake of Texas Instruments' $100 rebate on the **TI 99/4A** home computer and Atari's $150 software giveaway (for purchasers of the **Atari 400**), many consumers are working themselves into a frenzy not seen since the Great Calculator Price Wars of the mid-'70s. Yes, we've finally reached that confusing moment when the prices of home computers are being slashed to levels comparable to those of VCS machines with add-ons. In other words, there's a glut of hardware in the $199-$399 range and it's difficult to decide whether to upgrade your **Odyssey²** or just say, "Forget about it," and buy a full-fledged computer like the Commodore **VIC-20** or the aforementioned products from TI and Atari.

While it's important to keep abreast of the late-breaking news regarding price cuts, it's even more important to know *why* you're being offered all these gizmos at substantially reduced prices. Before the advent of the Bic throwaway razors, there used to be a marketing slogan that went, "Give away the razors and make your money on the razorblades." And that is essentially what the computer companies are planning to do in 1983. The manufacturers' profit margins on the CPUs (the "brains" of the computer) are pretty good to begin with. For example, **Radio Shack's Color Computer**—now selling for around $399—reportedly costs just under $200 to produce. Many industry insiders estimate that Commodore's VIC-20 costs as little as $80 to produce, so look for that machine's list price to come down steadily . . .

NEC ADDS "DEADLINE": Today's private eyes are cut from the **Magnum P.I.** mold rather than Humphrey Bogart material, but that won't stop you from enjoying the 1940s-style mystery game called ***Deadline***, now available on **NEC PC-8000** home computers as well as the **Apple II** (48K required). Unless you've spent a good deal of time hanging out in San Francisco pool halls, it'll probably take you at least 12 hours to solve this top-notch whodunit. Suggested retail price for the NEC version is $49.75 . . .

SICKO SOFTWARE: All you computerists who have 48K memory have probably noticed a sudden abundance of computer games that are psychotic enough to have been written by the Manson Gang. This month's Antisocial Award goes to a game called ***Firebug*** (**Muse**, $24.95), which has to do with arsonists and their victims trapped in burning buildings. Then there's ***Pig Pen*** (**Datamost**, $29.95), where the slow-of-hand get gored to death by rampaging wild boars. If you're needing an occasional break from all the violence, reach for ***Beer Run*** (**Sirius**, $29.95), a game which makes the quest for a stinkin' six-pack seem almost as noble as climbing Mt. Everest!

Now don't get us wrong—we're not crying out for computerized versions of "College Bowl" and other scholarly software. We just want some reassurance that our games software is being written in Silicon Valley offices, not in federal penitentiaries! . . .

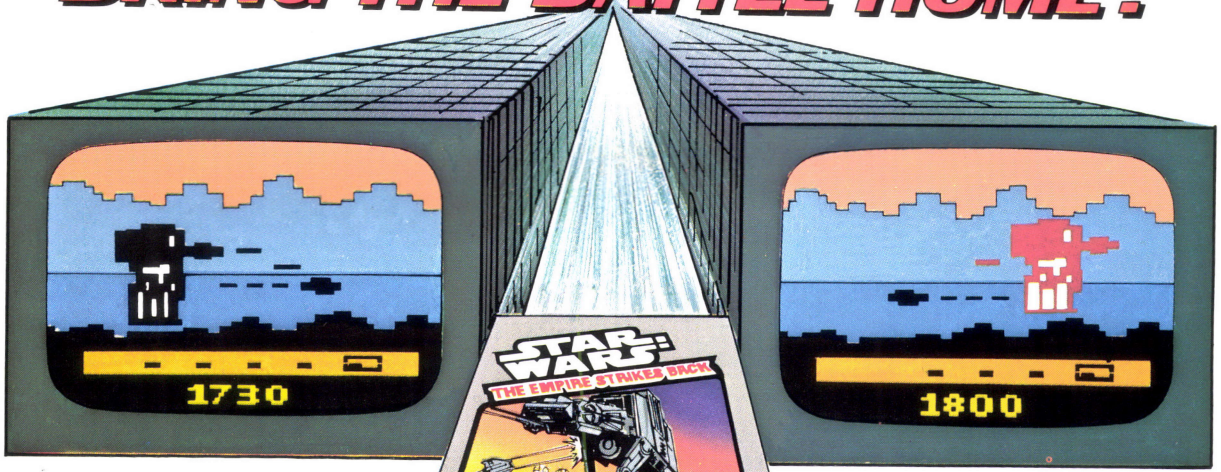
32K-MART: Everyone is getting into computers these days. That's the hardware and the software of it. And **K-Mart** is no different. The discount chain now offers four lines of home computers. There among the polyester you'll find **Sinclair/Timex**, **Atari**, **Commodore** and **Texas Instruments** . . .

HOW GOOD IS SINCLAIR SOFTWARE?: The **Sinclair ZX81** and **Timex TS 1000** are selling at such a blistering pace internationally that it makes you wonder whether **Sinclairmania** will be this decade's version of **Beatlemania**. Even though "Uncle" Clive Sinclair is chairman of the British chapter of MENSA (an organization of people with IQ's of 145 and over), there are some critics who feel that Sinclair software isn't being written by geniuses. Our opinion is that the jury is still out. Game software for the Sinclair is lagging far behind **Atari** and **Apple** and Sinclair's intergalactic-game arsenal would put even Harrison Ford to sleep. But if Sinclair programmers can start writing games that are more exciting, they'll begin to gain ground on the folks from Apple and Atari . . .

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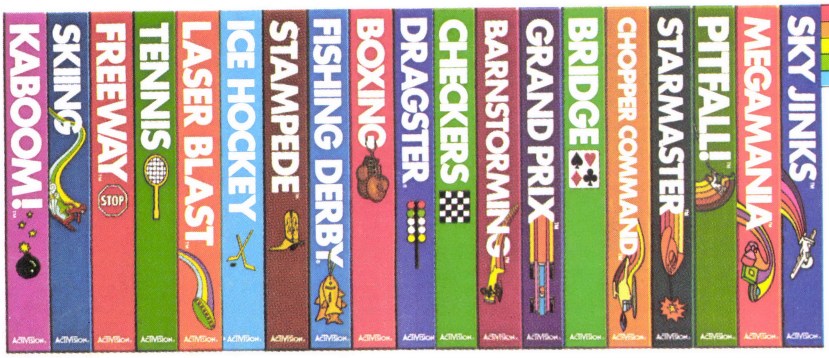
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