

THE PLAYERS GUIDE TO FANTASY GAMES

electronic GAMES

Videogames · Computer Games · Stand-Alone Games · Arcades

DELL 04114

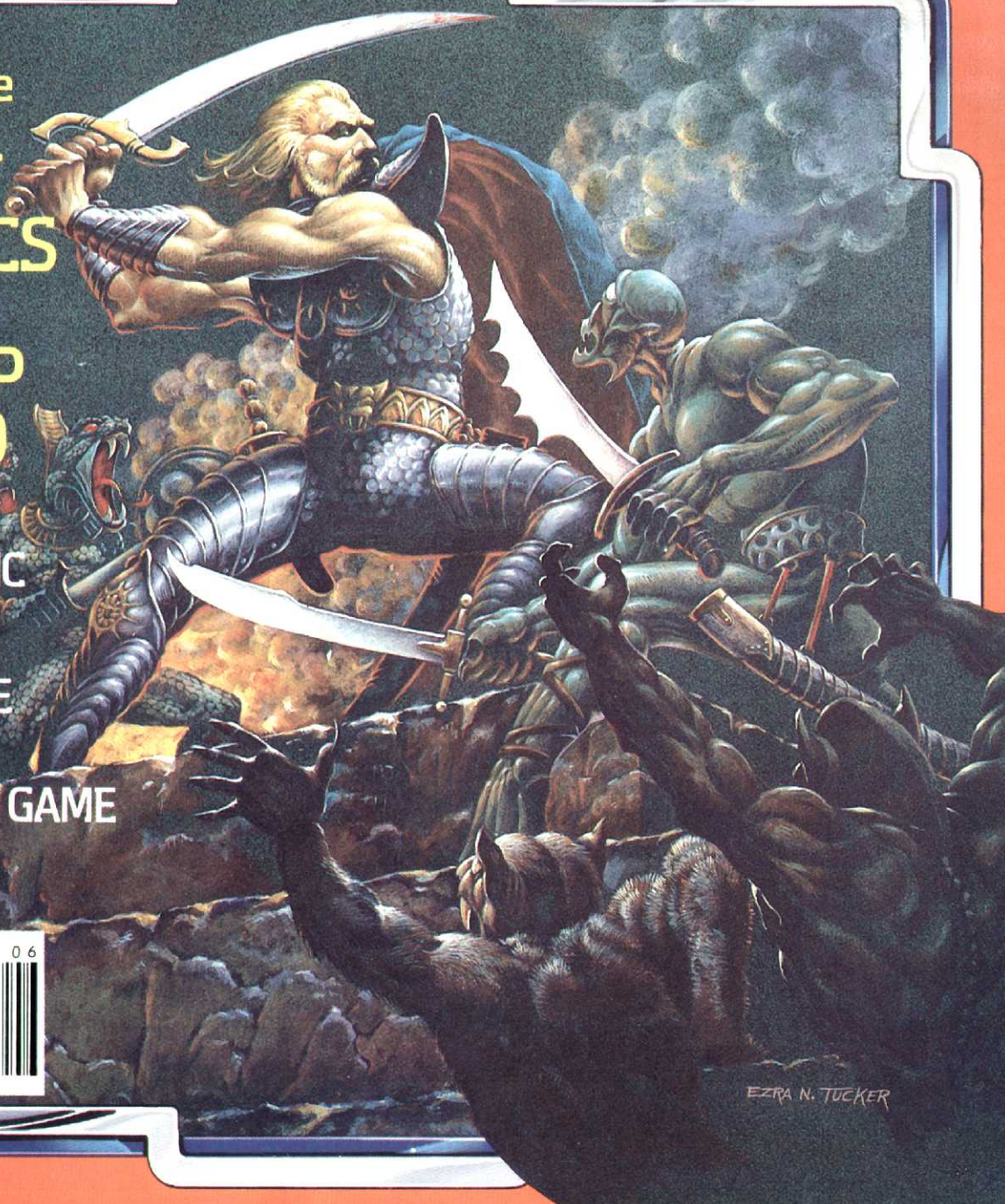
JUNE, 1983 • \$2.95

Don't Miss
Out on These
Games

**CLOSET
CLASSICS
OF THE
COIN-OP
WORLD**

PLAY
ELECTRONIC
GAMES ON
YOUR
TELEPHONE

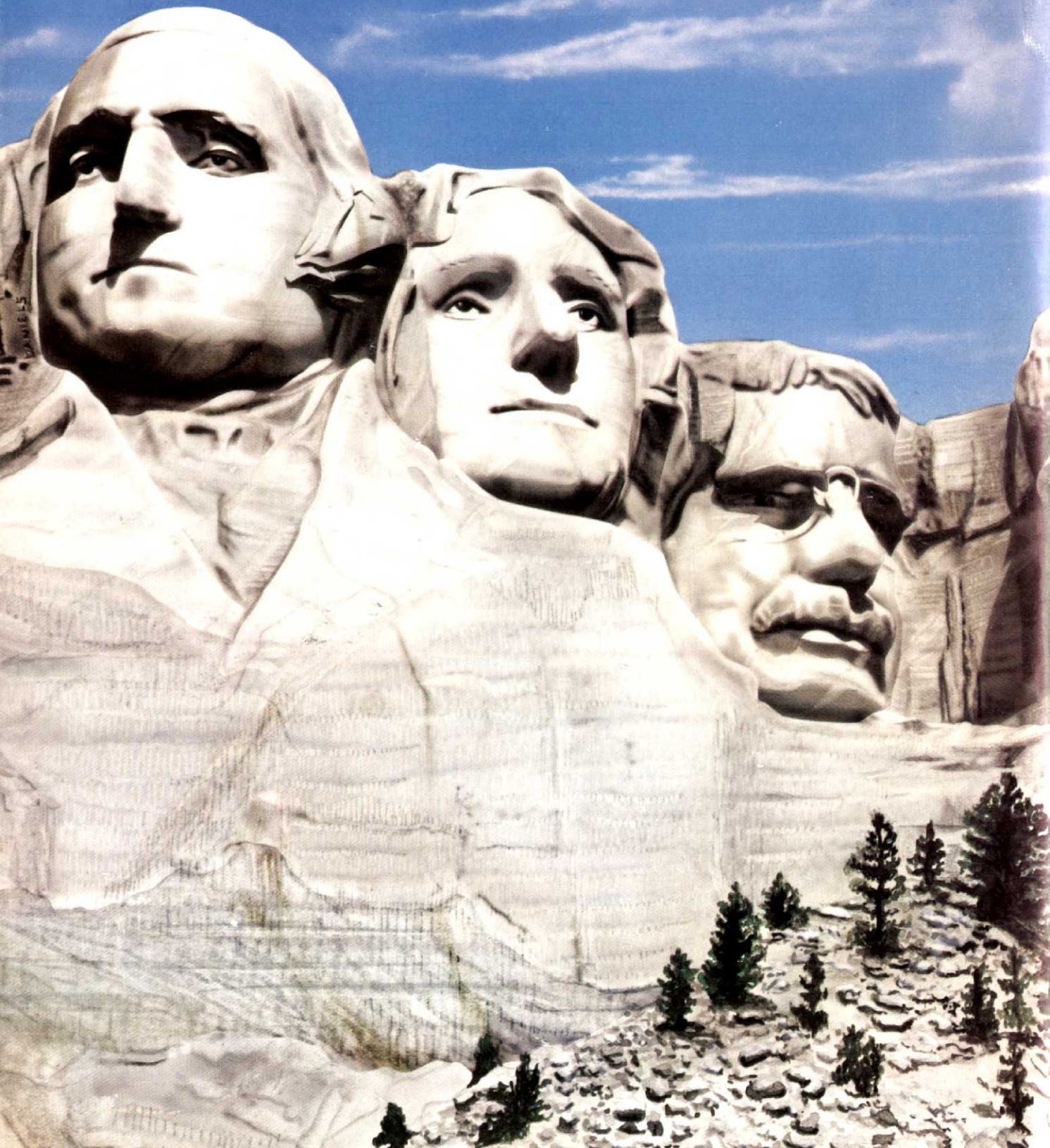
EXPANDED
COMPUTER GAME
COVERAGE



EZRA N. TUCKER



**Design the best new M*A*S*H™
video game, and you'll get
something money can't buy.**





Fame.

That's right. F-A-M-E.

Because if the game you design is good enough, we'll make it and put your name on every one we sell.

And remember, you don't have to be a computer programmer to come up with a great game. You just have to have a great imagination, and give us a short description of your idea.

IF FAME ISN'T ENOUGH, HOW ABOUT A FORTUNE?

\$25,000 to be exact. That's how much the game contract will bring you. Guaranteed. What's more, we're giving away a whole list of prizes for the other great game ideas we get.

- Four First Prize AMC Jeeps®
- 400 Second Prize Texas Instruments 99/4A™ Home Computers.
- 4000 free Fox Video Games.

EVERYBODY WINS.

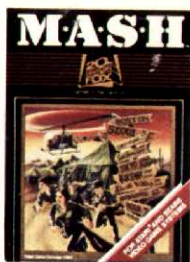
Because the new M•A•S•H game comes packaged with a smashing M•A•S•H T-shirt.

Absolutely free.

HOW DO YOU GET STARTED?

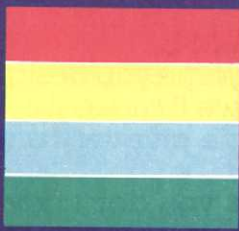
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And if you win, you might say the rewards are monumental.



Games of the Century

**THE M•A•S•H™ CONTEST.
IT'S A SMASH.**



electronic GAMES



FEATURES

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Strap on your sword, polish up your magic shield and prepare to venture into realms of wonder with...

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THE PLAYERS GUIDE TO FANTASY GAMES

For every Pac-Man, there are several coin-op games that don't make it. Failure is not always deserved. So here they are,

CLASSICS OF THE COIN-OP WORLD

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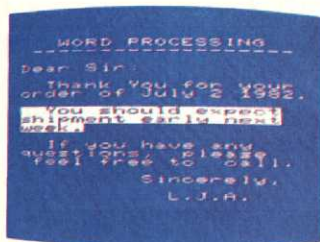
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IF YOU OWN A COMMODORE COMPUTER, YOU KNOW IT CAN DO ALL THIS.



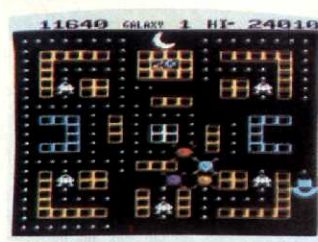
BUSINESS



EDUCATION

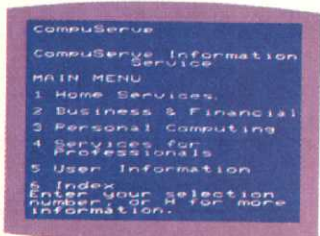


PROGRAMMING

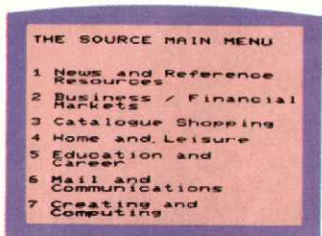


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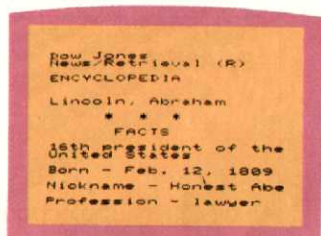
BUT DID YOU KNOW FOR ABOUT \$100, YOU CAN ALSO GET IT TO DO ALL THIS?



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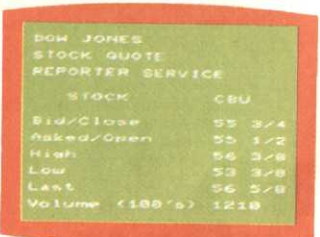
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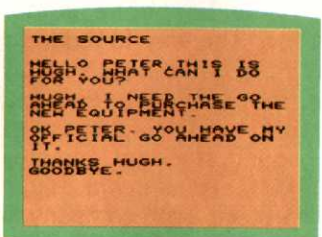
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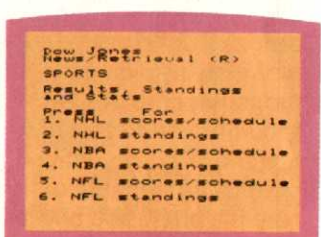
SHOP AT HOME



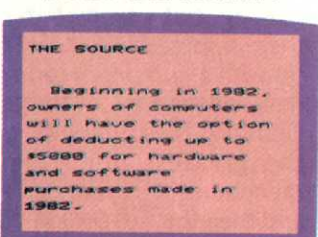
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NEWS/RETRIEVAL**



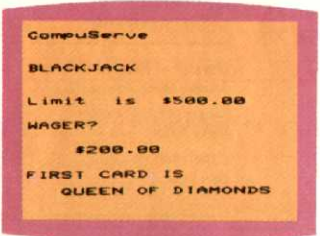
**ELECTRONIC
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**WIRE SERVICE
NEWS**



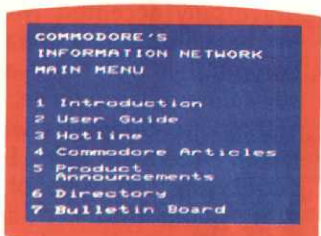
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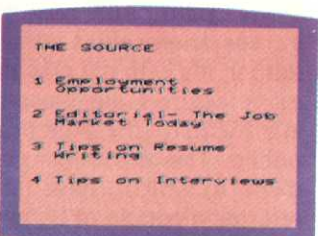
GAMES



**TRAVEL
INFORMATION**



**COMMODORE
INFO. NETWORK**



**EMPLOYMENT
OPPORTUNITIES**



The screens at the top of the page show a few examples of how versatile the VIC 20™ or Commodore 64™ can be with the addition of Commodore software.

The screens below them give you a few examples of how much

more versatile they can be with the addition of a Commodore VICMODEM.

For around \$100, the Commodore VICMODEM will turn your VIC 20 or Commodore 64 computer into a telecomputer.

To make matters even better, Commodore includes a few little extras (such as a free hour's time on the two most popular telecomputing services) that add up to a value of \$197.50* A nice return on

an investment of about \$100.

Most computer companies think it's reasonable to ask as much as \$500 for a modem that'll give you telecomputing capabilities such as ours.

However, with a VICMODEM priced at around \$100, we think we're being a lot more reasonable. Don't you agree?

 **Commodore**
COMPUTER



By ARNIE KATZ

Author! Author!

Don't say this intending to dampen anybody's enjoyment of electronic gaming, but I tend to think there's something the matter with a number of today's new videogame cartridges. Granted, their graphics are the greatest, their play-mechanics are marvelous, and their themes couldn't be more diverse or original. Yet something important's definitely missing.

My quarrel isn't with the games themselves at all. Rather, it's with the way the manufacturers are presenting them to the American public. The missing ingredient, to which I have now referred a couple of times is the name of the author — or the translator — of the program.

In this era of lawsuits regarding the ownership of copyrights for the leading commercial as well as home arcade titles, it is strange to find that all the electronic artists who brainstorm gaming ideas and turn them into reality are often the forgotten men and women at the very companies which are fighting hardest to prevent from such publishers from infringing upon their legal rights to these works.

All designers of electronic games are just as much creative artists as painters and novelists. A good game can take up to a year — six months is an average — for a programmer to design. Why shouldn't the creator of such a work of art be entitled to reap the praise and brickbats of gaming consumers?


The idea of the programmer as an artist is almost universally accepted within the computer software community, but there are still numerous producers of videogame cartridges who haven't seen the light. Encountering this type of a videogame that includes credit for its inventor is almost as rare as finding a computer disk that doesn't do so.

Companies generally give one of two reasons for not recognizing game creators. One is the fear that printing their names will attract the interest of rival publishers who may try to spirit them away. Sure, that's a danger. But the plain fact is that the names of the designers are hardly a dark secret within the electronic gaming industry. Almost any company executive worth a paycheck

can find out who designed any given cartridge — and probably get the inventor's home telephone number, too. The way to reduce the impact of designers jumping from manufacturer to manufacturer is to develop a sound standard agreement for the gaming industry that protects both company and artist, not make the designers toil in anonymity.

The other reason boils down to a desire to put the corporate name forward at the expense of credit for any individual. That is understandable, but it is certainly at variance with the way things are handled in other mass culture fields. Can you imagine buying a new rock record that didn't tell you the name of the band, or a novel that didn't mention the name of its author on the cover?

It is time to give credit where credit is due and put the names of the programmers on the cartridges they design. Providing all this information is a definite consumer service, since it gives videogame-lovers a chance to zero in on their favorite designers.

Let's not cheat the designers of their due. 

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PRESENTING THE REMARKABLE SV-318.



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THE PERSONAL COMPUTER YOU'LL GROW INTO, NOT OUT OF.

	SPECTRAVIDEO SV-318	APPLE II PLUS	ATARI 800	COMMODORE 64	NEC 6001	RADIO SHACK COLOR COMPUTER
BASE PRICE	\$299	\$1,540	\$899	\$595	\$399	\$299
COMPUTING POWER FEATURES						
BUILT-IN ROM	32K	12K	10K	20K	16K	8K
EXPANDABLE TO	96K	N/A	42K	N/A	32K	16K
BUILT-IN EXTENDED MICROSOFT® BASIC	YES	YES	ADDITIONAL COST	NO	YES	ADDITIONAL COST
BUILT-IN RAM	32K*	48K	16K	64K	16K	8K
EXPANDABLE TO	144K**	64K	48K	N/A	32K	16K
KEYBOARD FEATURES						
NUMBER OF KEYS	71	51	61	66	71	55
USER DEFINE FUNCTIONS	10	N/A	4	8	10	NONE
SPECIAL WORD PROCESSING	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
GENERATED GRAPHICS (FROM KEYBOARD)	YES	NO	YES	YES	NO	NO
UPPER/LOWER CASE	YES	UPPER ONLY	YES	NO	YES	YES
GAME/AUDIO FEATURES						
SEPARATE CARTRIDGE SLOTS	YES	NO	YES	NO	NO	NO
BUILT-IN JOYSTICK	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
COLORS	16	15	128	16	9	9
RESOLUTION (PIXELS)	256 x 192	280 x 190	320 x 192	320 x 200	256 x 192	128 x 64
SPRITES	32	N/A	4	8	N/A	N/A
SOUND CHANNELS	3	1	4	3	3	1
OCTAVES PER CHANNEL	8	4	4	9	8	10
A.D.S.R. ENVELOPE	YES	NO	NO	YES	YES	NO
PERIPHERAL SPECIFICATIONS						
CASSETTE	2 CHANNEL	1 CHANNEL	2 CHANNEL	1 CHANNEL	1 CHANNEL	1 CHANNEL
AUDIO I/O	YES	NO	YES	NO	NO	NO
BUILT-IN MIC	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
DISK DRIVE CAPACITY (LOW PROFILE)	256K	143K	96K	178K	N/A	170K
	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
CP/M® COMPATIBILITY (80 column programs)						
CP/M® 2.2	YES	NO***	NO	NO****	NO	NO
CP/M® 3.0	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO

* 16K user addressable plus 16K graphic support
** 128K user addressable plus 16K graphic support

*** Apple II can accept modified 40 or 80 column CP/M
**** Commodore 64 accepts 40 column CP/M

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Sadly, many personal computers will become tomorrow's junk in the attic. The SV-318 is one that will not. Because as you get better, it gets better. It does so because of its capability and expandability—both far beyond those of any other affordable computer.

CAPABILITY. The SV-318 isn't just more capable. It's much more capable. No other computer at even twice the price combines all these extraordinary features: 32K ROM expandable to 96K; 32K RAM expandable to 144K; Extended Microsoft Basic (the industry standard); even Standard CP/M 80-column capability so you can immediately utilize over 10,000 existing software programs. The SV-318 also has a unique built-in joystick/cursor control—an immeasurably useful feature when it comes to playing your favorite video game.

EXPANDABILITY. As you become more and more skillful with computers, you'll love how the SV-318 "stretches" to meet your demands (and actually leads you in fascinating, new directions). For one thing, all eleven of our important peripherals are available immediately. With most other models, you have to wait months. For another, the SV-318 is beautifully designed to interface with new options as they become available.

AFFORDABILITY. The SV-318 is not only eminently affordable, it's the first true bargain of the computer age! Besides home budgeting, business applications, word processing, programming and self-teaching, the SV-318 is the best entertainment value in town. Not only can you use it with your TV to play hundreds of different video games, you can also use your SV-318 with a TV as a drawing tablet or music synthesizer. In play, as in work, the SV-318 will continually expand to meet your potential.

Whether you're just wetting your toes in computers, or fully afloat on the waters, the SV-318 is a computer that will serve you for many, many years. You see, we believe that even in the computer age, you don't become an object of real value unless you're around for a while.

FOR UNDER \$300

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SV-318
PERSONAL COMPUTER

SPECTRA VIDEO, INC., 39 W. 37th St. N.Y., N.Y. 10018

Look what for your VIC 20.

Fast action. Complex strategies. Interesting characters. Superior sound effects. Multiple levels of play.

These are the things you want from your VIC 20.[™]

They're also the things you get from Tronix. From the people who brought you *Swarm!*, *Sidewinder* and *Galactic Blitz*.

And now, there's more.

Now Tronix brings you the same rewarding rapid-fire excitement in three brand-new game cartridges.

Each one is something different. Something new. But they all have one thing in common.

They're all designed to bring out the best in your VIC 20.

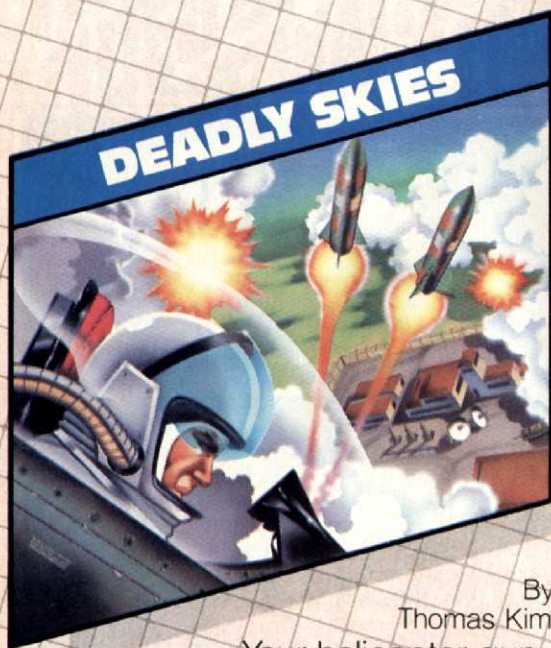
You shouldn't settle for anything less.



By
Jimmy Huey.

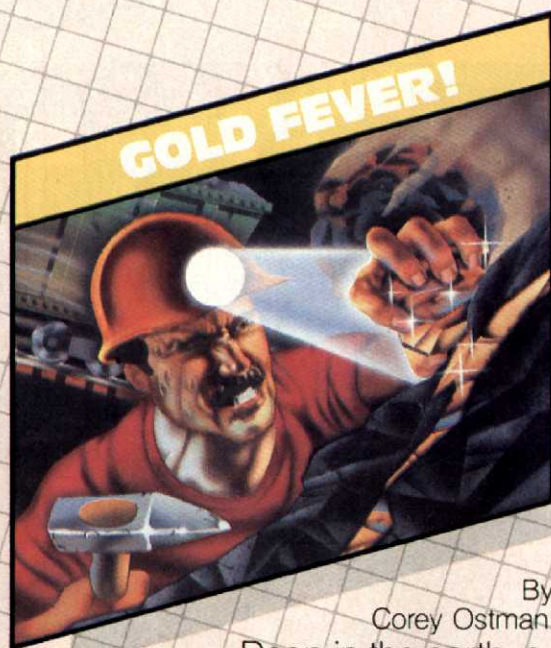
In a predatory world of killer worms, dragons, stalkers, pods and fly traps, the scorpion prowls the maze in search of sustenance. Frogs and their eggs mean survival to the scorpion. But they can also mean instant death! (Suggested retail \$39.95)

we have in store



By
Thomas Kim.

Your helicopter gunship hovers over the enemy's military bases and missile emplacements. Your mission is to destroy them. But as the sky fills with smart bombs and anti-aircraft fire, there's less and less room for a wrong move! (Suggested retail \$39.95)



By
Corey Ostman.

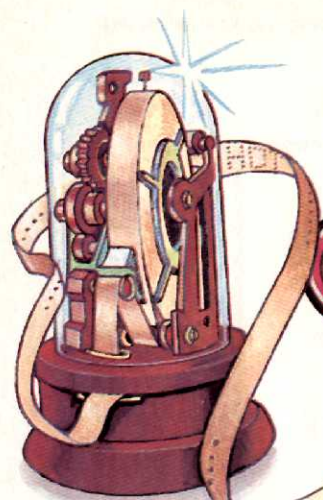
Deep in the earth, a fortune awaits. But the dark passageways are filled with peril as well as profit. Runaway boxcars. Crashing boulders. A claim jumper with murder in his eyes. Be careful. But be quick—oxygen is in short supply! (Suggested retail \$39.95)

TRONIX™

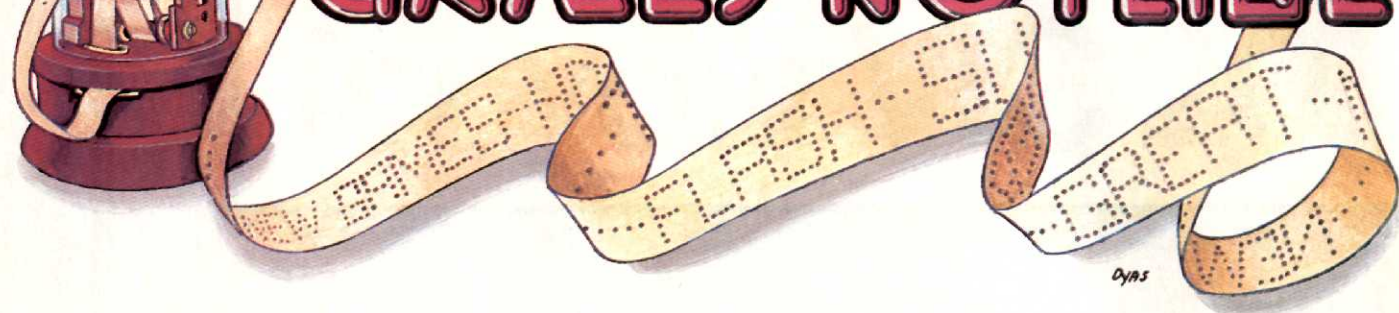
8295 South La Cienega Blvd., Inglewood, CA 90301

Look for Tronix games in your nearest store. If you can't find them there, write to us.

VIC 20™ is a trademark of Commodore Electronics Ltd.



ELECTRONIC GAMES HOTLINE



COLECO UNVEILS "ROLLER-CONTROLLER"

The "Roller Controller" is a control device that features a free-rolling tracball. Designed by Coleco for the ColecoVision system, players just snap two regular ColecoVision controllers into the console for ready access to fire buttons and joysticks, and then spin the tracball to move.

Coleco's latest creation, **Slither**, is included with the controller, and some additional games, which utilize the

new device, are almost ready for release.

Speaking of new devices, how about the "Super Action Controller"? It incorporates a pistol-grip design with four control triggers to direct game play, and an eight-directional joystick that has a keypad mounted on top of the handle grip. **Challenge Baseball** is the game that comes packaged with a pair of these controllers.



The "tracball" comes to ColecoVision.

Here's Donkey Kong Jr. as a mini-arcade.



MORE MINI-ARCADES A COMIN'

Coleco's expanding its line of self-contained tabletop arcade games, successfully introduced in 1982. The first four titles — **Pac-Man**, **Galaxian**, **Donkey Kong**, and **Frogger** — sold approximately three million units, so it's no surprise that more are on the way.

New releases for 1983 include **Ms. Pac-Man**, incor-

porating *eight* increasingly more difficult mazes; **Donkey Kong Junior**, wherein that antagonistic ape's son tries to rescue his dad from a cage in which Mario has him contained, and **Zaxxon**, the ever-popular arcade space game. Its playfield combines two vacuum fluorescent displays to produce multi-colored 3-D fun!

GOOD GRIEF! IT'S PEANUTS!

Atari has just arranged for a new licensing agreement with United Features Syndicate

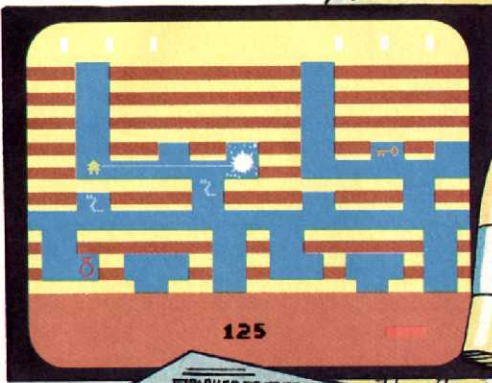
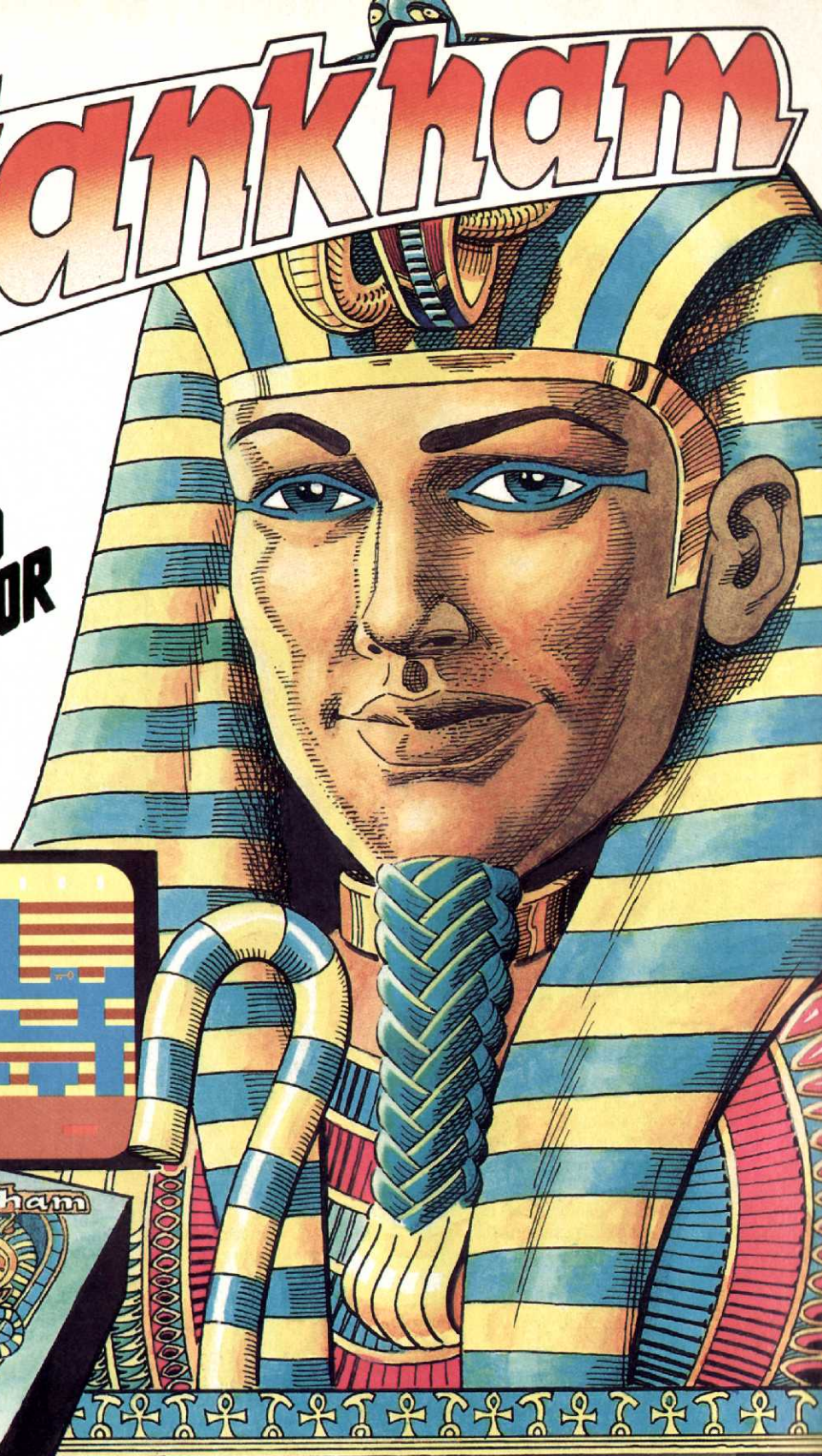
and "Peanuts" creator, Charles Schulz, to design videogame software based upon the famous "Peanuts" gang.

Schulz says, "I'm delighted to be working with Atari's talented design and marketing groups on the development of these games." Up till

now, Snoopy hasn't said anything, but we'll let you know as soon as he's ready to come down off the roof of his doghouse and make a statement.

Tutankham

THE HOME VIDEO GAME YOU'VE WAITED 3000 YEARS FOR



Tutankham, the video game where you race through a pyramid to find Tut's treasure. The game where you're attacked by the fiendish guardians of the tomb. And you fight back with your laser guns. You capture the keys to the treasure room and then the treasure is yours. All the action of the hit arcade game is coming to your Atari® or Sears® home video system. From Parker Brothers, of course.

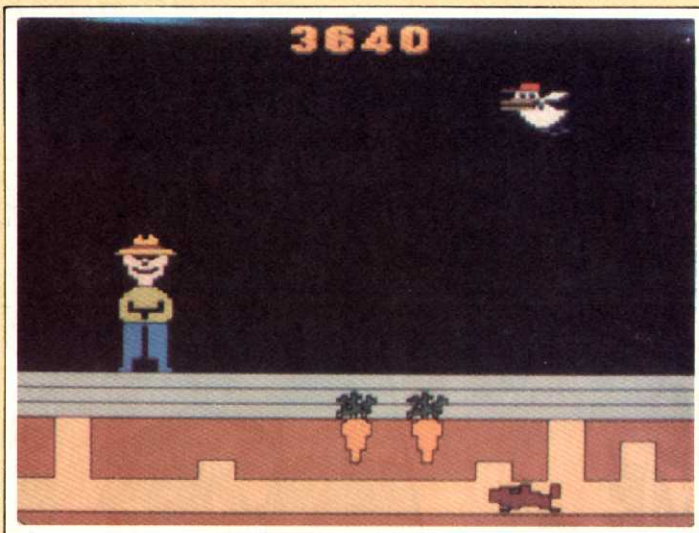
PARKER BROTHERS THE ONES TO BEAT

© 1983 Parker Brothers, Beverly, MA 01915. TUTANKHAM game graphics © 1982 Konami Industry Co., Ltd. TUTANKHAM is a trademark of Konami Industry Co., Ltd. and used by Parker Brothers under authorization. Atari is a trademark of Atari Inc. and Sears is a trademark of Sears Roebuck and Co.

U.S. GAMES PROMOTES FAMILY ARCADING

U.S. Games is releasing a new series of games that embraces family fun as its main theme, while down-playing the space and/or shoot-'em-up action.

Some of the new breed of games will include: **Gopher**, which lets gamers play the part of "Mr. Green Jeans", forced to battle marauding rodents in a carrot patch; **Squeeze Box** in which a jail-bird shoots his way through

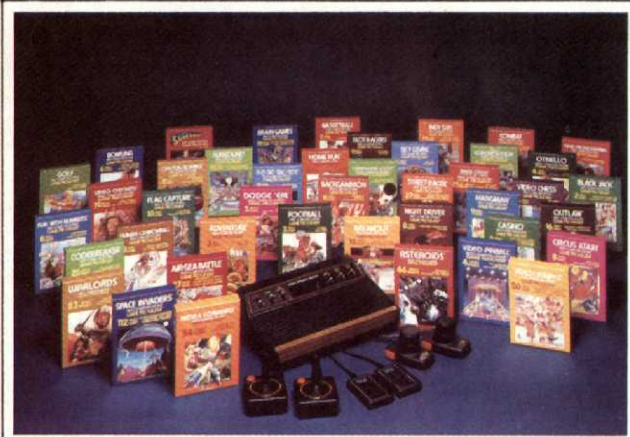


GOPHER

some quick-closing walls; **Eggomania**, which exhibits a circus bear catching eggs and pitching them back, and **Picnic**, which makes *you* the bearer of a much-needed fly-swatter that'll save you from a swarm of buggers. Also on hand will be **Bakery**, which requires a deft-handed chef to drop cakes onto a conveyor belt, **Raft Rider** where gamers are forced to maneuver a raft down treacherous waters, and **Entombed**, a cartridge that lets you explore an ancient tomb.

And, that's right folks, not a one is a shoot-'em-up!

Atari has upgraded its service effort.



ATARI OFFERS HOME REPAIR

Atari wants consumers to get even greater value for their money, so the company's bestowing, free of charge, "Accessory Test Consoles" to qualifying dealers. Now, gamers will be able to take their ailing equipment to the nearest Test Consoles, located at their favorite electronic game stores, and find out what happened to their systems.

This should prove invaluable

to arcaders, in saving lots of time and trouble when videogame-related entanglements arise.

Atari has also recognized potential joystick problems by introducing the "Atari Joystick Repair Kit". Contained within are all the necessary replacement parts and easy instructions, allowing gamers smooth-sailing repair procedures instead of having to buy new joysticks.

IMAGIC GAMES GO INTELLIVISION

Intellivision fans can now look forward to playing even more new games on their favorite system — this time, courtesy of Imagic.

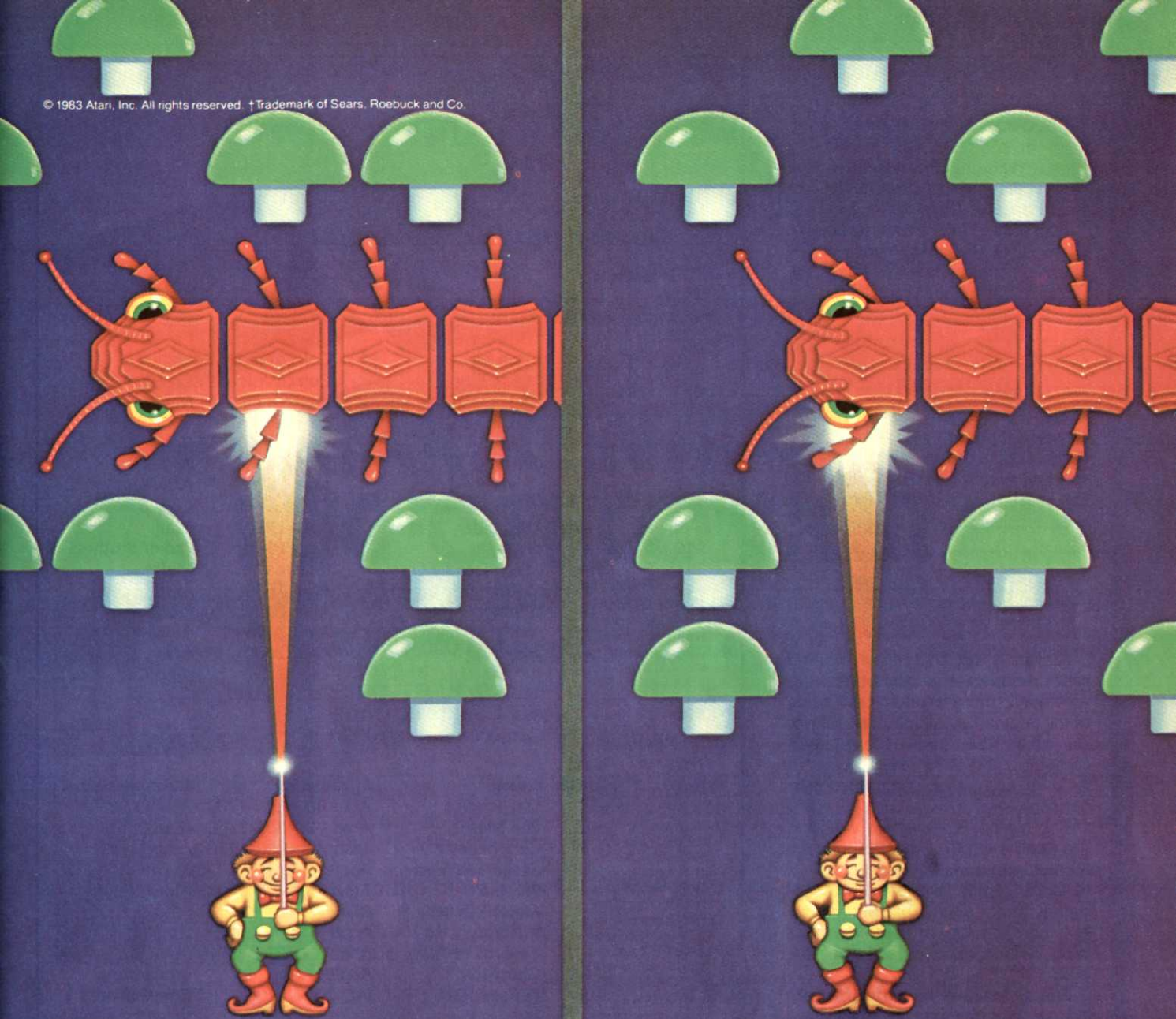
Among the forthcoming selections are all types of games from shoot-outs to adventures.

Ice Trek summons adventurous arcaders across frozen wasteland, while attempting to avoid charging caribou. At the same time, gamers are required to build an ice bridge and attack the Frost Giant's fortress. **Dragonfire** pits the gamer against fire-breathing serpents, while **Swords and Serpents** employs the buddy system in the form of a wizard and a knight who must team together to battle the beast and win over his treasure.

Dracula casts *you* in the role of that blood-thirsty Count, forced to eat and run — back to his crypt, that is — before day breaks. **Tropical Troubles** takes place on a desert island, allowing gamers the opportunity of finding out just exactly what kind of Robinson Crusoe they'd make. Adventure and peril also abound in **White Water**, a jungle river-type thriller. **Safecracker** is a graphically outstanding cops and robbers shoot-out for all the law-abiding gamers, while **Truckin'** pits the videogamer against another trucker in a race between the two rigs, requiring strategic choices concerning what cargo is to be left behind and what's to be collected across the countryside.



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Which player is heading for victory?

Better find out. Here comes Centipede™ from Atari.

Look out. Centipede's escaping from the arcade. Grabbing every great arcade feature it can. And it's only from Atari, for use with the ATARI® 2600™, Sears Video Arcade† systems, and the ATARI 5200™ SuperSystem.

There's the same relentless attack of centipedes, scorpions, fleas, and spiders. A mushroom garden. Changing screen colors with each new centipede. And each new one gets faster. So points get tougher.



And if it's points you want, you can get 10 times more by shooting for the head. Like the player on the right. He's about to hit the head for 100 points. But the player on the left is about to hit a body segment for a measly 10 points. A cheap shot.

So don't let Centipede get away. That wouldn't be using your head.



A Warner Communications Company.

PINK PANTHER TO PLAY

U.S. Games has just inked an agreement to create expanded memory games, featuring the delightful Pink Panther and his ever-present arch enemy, Inspector Clouseau.

Trail of the Pink Panther is ready to hit the shelves any moment now — that is, if nobody bungles things up. Kato, that means you!

SPECIAL VIDEOLYMPICS

The Special Olympics, a long-standing series of events in which the handicapped compete in a series of sporting events, is adding videogames this year!

INTELLIVISION DEBUTS HOT HARDWARE

Mattel is set to release, among other products, the Intellivision II (a revamped, more economical version of the original), a keyboard module for the Intellivision I and II, the Aquarius computer, and plenty of software for its own and other companies' systems.

The big news, however, concerns the Intellivision III, expected to reach market with an initial selection of six to eight games, and a price tag of slightly under \$300. That isn't cheap, but there are lots of marvelous features, which more than justify the cost.

The system will be software-compatible with the original Intellivision and the Aquarius, and will have a built-in voice synthesizer (with special module). This allows it to play Mattel voice cartridges without an adapter. The Intellivision III also sports remote control command devices that incorporate the company's version of the traditional joystick.

With approximately 12K of ROM and 10K of RAM, Intellivision III's graphics are just sensational. Resolution's 320x190 pixels, and the system displays an infinite amount of different colors on-screen, as well as being able to manipulate 64 objects on-screen simultaneously.

Possible game releases include **Air Ace**, throwing gamers into the cockpit of a fighter plane, assigned to patrol a full-screen landscape seen from three-quarter perspective. Other projected titles lean toward multi-screen adventure games, incorporating a first-person view of the action.

E.G. READERS PICK THEIR FAVORITE GAMES

Most Popular Videogame Cartridges

Position		Game	System	Manufacturer
This Month	Last Month			
1	2	Donkey Kong	ColecoVision	Coleco
2	4	Zaxxon	ColecoVision	Coleco
3	3	Lady Bug	ColecoVision	Coleco
4	—	Advanced Dungeons & Dragons	Intellivision	Mattel
5	6	Venture	ColecoVision	Coleco
6	1	Pitfall	Atari 2600	Activision
7	5	River Raid	Atari 2600	Activision
8	9	Turbo	ColecoVision	Coleco
9	—	Defender	Atari 2600	Atari
10	—	Frogger	Atari 2600	Parker Brothers
11	—	Tron Deadly Disc	Intellivision	Mattel
12	13	Vanguard	Atari 2600	Atari
13	—	Demon Attack	Atari 2600	Imagic
14	15	Megamania	Atari 2600	Activision
15	—	Berzerk	Atari 2600	Atari

Most Popular Computer Games

Position		Game	System(s)	Manufacturer
This Month	Last Month			
1	1	Star Raiders	Atari 400-800-1200	Atari
2	2	Pac-Man	Atari 400-800-1200	Atari
3	3	Centipede	Atari 400-800-1200	Atari
4	4	Castle Wolfenstein	Apple, Atari	Muse
5	—	Preppie	Atari 400-800-1200	Adventure, Int.
6	—	Miner 2049er	Atari, Apple, IBM	Assorted
7	10	Wizardry	Apple	Sir-Tech
8	—	Caverns of Mars	Atari 400-800-1200	Atari
9	—	Choplifter	Apple, Atari	Broderbund
10	6	Omega Race	VIC-20	Commodore

Most Popular Coin-Op Videogames

Position		Game	Manufacturer
This Month	Last Month		
1	1	Donkey Kong	Nintendo
2	6	Tron	Midway
3	7	Donkey Kong Jr.	Nintendo
4	3	Zaxxon	Sega/Gremlin
5	5	Ms. Pac-Man	Midway
6	4	Dig-Dug	Atari
7	—	Q*Bert	Gottlieb
8	—	Centipede	Atari
9	9	Tempest	Atari
10	—	Tutankham	Stern

Since mere *quantity* of play doesn't necessarily equal actual popularity, **Electronic Games** bases its standings on the votes of its readers. These lists of most popular games are based upon more than 1000 Reader Polls. We update the "picked hits" lists in every issue of **Electronic Games**. So send in your votes!



ENTER THE ATARI® CENTIPEDE™ BUG-OFF CONTEST



**YOUR HIGH SCORE
COULD WIN YOU:** 🍄 An ATARI 5200™ Super-System or 🍄 An ATARI 5200 TRAK-BALL™ Controller and two 5200 game cartridges 🍄



🍄 A trip to San Francisco to compete in the U.S. CENTIPEDE Championship Play-Offs 🍄 A grand prize of an ATARI MILLIPEDE™ arcade game 🍄

MILLIPEDE™



🍄 A trip to Munich, Germany to represent the United States in the ATARI World Video Championship Competition 🍄

HOW TO ENTER: 🍄 1. Purchase a CENTIPEDE game cartridge for your ATARI 2600™ or 5200™ game system. (You may compete in either the 2600 or 5200 game division, but not both.) 🍄 2. Practice zapping the crawly creature until you reach your top score! 🍄 3. Snap a picture (black-and-white or color) of the CENTIPEDE game screen showing your best score, making sure that the score is clearly visible, and send it to us along with a completed entry blank or 3" x 5" card with your complete name and address, and the proof-of-purchase seal from the back corner of your game manual. 🍄 4. In the lower left-hand corner of your envelope, write your game score and the ATARI game system (2600 or 5200) you played on. **Your entry must be received by June 30, 1983.**

HOW TO WIN: To find out who's really buggy about CENTIPEDE, we've divided the country into 20 geographical areas.

To win an ATARI 5200 SuperSystem, be the top scorer in your area in the 2600 game division. (*THE 2600 CARTRIDGE TEDDY BEAR LEVEL IS NOT ELIGIBLE FOR ENTRY IN THIS COMPETITION.*)

To win a TRAK-BALL Controller and your choice of two 5200 game cartridges, be the top scorer in your area in the 5200 game division.

HOW TO WIN MORE: If you're buggy enough to be one of the five top-scoring winners in either division, you'll receive an expense-paid trip for two to San Francisco for the U.S. CENTIPEDE Championship Play-Offs this summer where you'll have a chance to compete in a timed CENTIPEDE play-off for a grand prize of an ATARI MILLIPEDE coin-op arcade game, awarded to the top scorer in each game division.

THE ULTIMATE BUG-OFF: Here's your chance to prove you've got what it takes

to tell everyone to bug off: the two grand prize winners will compete in a final play-off on both game systems and the player with the *highest combined score from both games* will win an expense-paid trip for two to Munich, Germany to represent the U.S. in the ATARI World Video Championship Competition in mid-September.

If all these prizes are getting you even buggier, there's only one thing to do: *get a complete list of official rules* from any participating dealer or by sending a self-addressed stamped envelope to: ATARI CENTIPEDE BUG-OFF CONTEST OFFICIAL RULES, P.O. Box 10890, Long Island City, N.Y. 11101. *Read and follow them carefully.* And then get busy sharpening your playing skills with CENTIPEDE, the ATARI arcade hit that's driving everyone buggy.

*Note: When a CENTIPEDE score reaches 999,999 on the 2600 or 99,999,999 on the 5200, the score display will revert to zero. Therefore, scores closest to but not exceeding the above amounts will win.

Photo Tips: For best results, take the picture after dark with room lights off. If you use an instant or instamatic camera, tape opaque paper over the flash compartment or insert a dead bulb to force the lens open. **DO NOT USE A FLASH!** (We suggest you try a few practice shots, just to be safe.)

Contest open only to U.S. residents. Employees and families of employees of Warner Communications, Inc. affiliates, subsidiaries and production agencies and Marden-Kane, Inc. are not eligible to enter. Official rules and entry blanks available at participating dealers. Void in Florida and Vermont and wherever prohibited or restricted by law. All federal, state and local laws and regulations apply.

ATARI® CENTIPEDE™ BUG-OFF CONTEST ENTRY BLANK

Send this entry blank, a clear photograph of your highest CENTIPEDE score and the proof-of-purchase seal clipped from the back of your game manual to: THE ATARI CENTIPEDE BUG-OFF CONTEST, P.O. Box 10425, Long Island City, N.Y. 11101. Please check one: 2600™ game division 5200™ SuperSystem division

Name _____

Street Address _____ City _____

State _____ Zip _____ Phone (____) _____

All entries must be received by June 30, 1983. Remember to write your score and game division on the lower left-hand corner of the envelope.



A Warner Communications Company



THE NATIONAL VANITY BOARD

Today's Top Coin-op Scores

Electronic Games is proud to announce the creation of the National Vanity Board to identify and honor the nation's arcade aces. Just as the **Electronic Games'** National Home Arcade salutes the achievements of the lords and ladies of living room gaming, the National Vanity Board will monitor the triumphs of the kings and queens of the coin-op videogaming world.

EG will update the listings each month based upon information provided by game manufacturers, arcade operators and, most importantly, our hundreds of thousands of readers. If you or one of your buddies rewrites the record book for *the* most popular commercial arcade machines, getting the proper recognition for the new champ is as easy as following these three steps:

1. Set the record.
2. Show the arcade manager on duty your record score and have him (or her) sign the proper portion of the report form — copies or facsimiles are fine.
3. Mail your score report to: **Electronic Games**, 460 West 34th Street, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10001.

Score Report Form

Name of Player (Please Print) _____

Player's Address _____

Name of Game _____

Score _____

Name of Arcade _____

Arcade Address _____

Arcade Operator's Signature _____

Here Are the Arcaders to Beat!

Missile Command (Atari)

Joe Fernandes
Artesia, CA
Record: 52,246,260

Centipede (Atari)

Darren Olson
Calgary, Canada
Record: 15,207,353

Donkey Kong Jr. (Nintendo)

Joel Ferrer
Corvallis, OR
Record: 763,500

Ms. Pac-Man (Midway)

Mike (XYZ) Schneider
Los Angeles, CA
Record: 326,970

Super Pac-Man (Midway)

Mike (XYZ) Schneider
Los Angeles, CA
Record: 1,233,410

Dig-Dug (Atari)

Mike Strain
San Angelo, TX
Record: 6,269,720

Donkey Kong (Nintendo)

Bill Schenley
Ocean Grove, NJ
Record: 11,800,300

Frenzy (Stern)

Randy Gordon
Everett, WA
Record: 1,143,743

Frogger (Sega/Gremlin)

Dave Marsden
Santo, TX
Record: 2,400,050

Galaga (Midway)

Jack Pardo
Lansing, MI
Record: 9,635,070

Stargate (Williams)

Mike McCrary
Albuquerque, NM
Record: 64,830,268

Robotron (Williams)

Ken Vance
Las Vegas, NV
Record: 200,257,350

Tempest (Atari)

Ken Vance
Las Vegas, NV
Record: 4,999,993

Vanguard (Centuri)

Guillermo Toro
Caba Rojo, PR
Record: 2,238,220

Wizard of Wor (Midway)

Andy Jaworski
Ventura, CA
Record: 461,200

Zaxxon (Sega/Gremlin)

Tim Williams
Climax, NC
Record: 2,136,200

Eyes (Rock-Ola)

Craig Seitz
Cuba, MO
Record: 4,663,820

Tutankham (Stern)

Steve Pearson
Cold Springs, MN
Record: 141,160

Burgertime (Midway)

Brian Taylor
Virginia Beach, VA
Record: 550,050

Megattack (Centuri)

Jay Rector
Crawfordsville, IN
Record: 1,007,416

Kick-Man (Midway)

Randy Laskowitz
Sullivan, MO
Record: 5,507,225

Mouse Trap (Exidy)

Dwight Love
Alberta, Canada
Record: 35,069,980

Lady Bug (Universal)

Rich Calhoun
Los Angeles, CA
Record: 244,330

Tron (Midway)

Dave Libby
Hampton, VA
Record: 5,999,522

Solar Fox (Midway)

Greg Bray
Rockvale, CO
Record: 4,030,490

Thief (Pacific Novelty)

Brian Wathen
Owensboro, KY
Record: 6,130,930

Space Dungeon (Taito)

Shannon Sharp
Aurora, CO
Record: 2,251,455

Kangaroo (Atari)

Terry Rowley
Philadelphia, PA
Record: 473,500

Looping (Venture Line)

Ed Leech
Frankfort, IL
Record: 1,256,810

Joust (Williams)

Mike Krulewicz
Indianapolis, IN
Record: 21,559,500





Kids Protest Maze Games

COARSEGOLD, Calif. - Carrying placards and shouting slogans, kids across the United States took to the streets today to protest tedious and outdated computer maze games.

No injuries were reported, and damage was limited to games based on stale mazes.

"The turn-out doesn't amaze me," said R. Kaid, chairman of "M.A.D. - Mazes Are Dumb."

"Kids are tired of moving in and around walls," he said.

News of the demands struck to the heart of the arcade game industry. The most innovative of

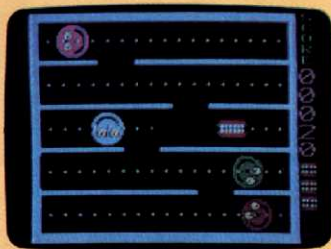
companies - Sierra On-Line, Inc. and Tigervision - responded with the new Jawbreaker.

"The entire screen moves - the happy faces, the set of chompers, even the walls," said Kaid.

"No maze creates as much excitement as our Jawbreaker," he said, and added, "The colors are brighter, the figures bigger, the action faster."

While maze makers waited for someone to buy their games, kids and other M.A.D. members gobbled up the NEW versions of Jawbreaker.

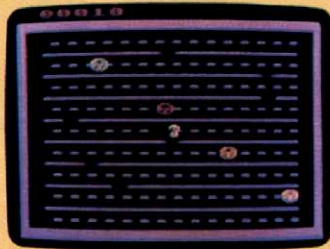
THE END OF THE MAZE CRAZE



APPLE, ATARI, COM 64 AND
IBM VERSIONS BY

SIERRAVISION

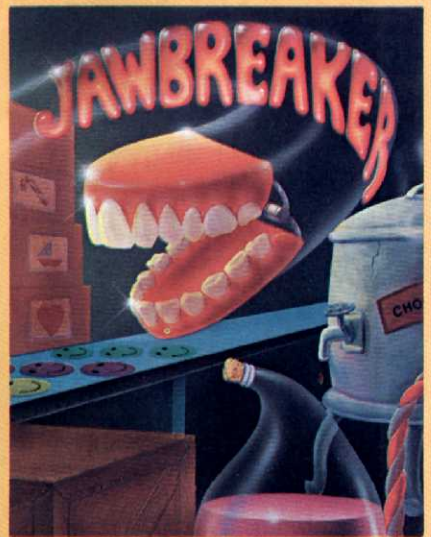
Sierra On-Line, Inc.
Sierra On-Line Building
Coarsegold, CA 93614
(209) 683-6858



VCS VERSION
BY

TIGERVISION;

Tiger Electronic Toys
909 Orchard
Mundelein, IL 60060
(312) 949-8100



APPLE

ATARI

COM 64

VCS

IBM

★ THE NATIONAL ★ ARCADE SCOREBOARD

THE BEST SCORES FOR POPULAR VIDEOGAMES

Photos of readers' best scores are really pouring into the offices of **Electronic Games**, and the competition among the land's arcade aces is even keener than expected. There are plenty of top players out there, and the rankings listed here show that they're hitting the joystick hot and heavy in a bid for national recognition.

The scores tabulated here reflect the first group of games which the editors of **EG** selected to kick off this continuing compilation of home videogaming records. We'll be adding more games and updating their scores each month, a few at a time, until we're covering most of what's hot.

To have your gaming achievements recognized in the National Arcade Scoreboard, all you've got to do is follow a few simple rules:

1. Every score must be accompanied by a photograph of the TV screen showing the score. These photos do not have to be of publishable quality, just readable by our judges.
2. All photographs received become the property of **Electronic Games** and none can be returned.
3. Be sure to include your complete name and address. (We will print only the name and city in the magazine, but we may want to contact high scorers for helpful gaming hints.)

Games currently eligible for the National Arcade Scoreboard are:

- ★ **Asteroids** (Atari) — Game #6
- ★ **Defender** (Atari) — Game #1
- ★ **Grand Prix** (Activision) — Course #4
- ★ **Space Hawk** (Mattel) — Game #1 (auto-fire, if desired)
- ★ **Spacechase** (Apollo) — Game #1
- ★ **Tron Deadly Disc** (Mattel) — Game #1
- ★ **UFO** (Odyssey) — Game #1
- ★ **USAC Auto Racing** (Mattel) — Course #1

THE HONOR ROLL

Asteroids/Atari/Atari VCS/Game #6

1. **579,660** — Lance Simon, Carmichael, CA
2. **298,100** — Jim Franz, Germantown, WI
3. **199,990** — Ed Semrad, Waukesha, WI

Defender/Atari/Atari VCS/Game #1

1. **9,068,400** — Gene Fruit, Maroa, IL
2. **7,500,150** — Wade Zimmerman, Ithaca, MI
3. **6,171,800** — Vic Beard, Ithaca, MI

Grand Prix/Activision/Atari VCS/Course #4

1. **1:34:93** — Perry Brenkman, Florence, AZ
2. **1:35:41** — Mike Ratledge, Charleston, SC
3. **1:35:54** — Dave Gonelli, Leominster, MA

Space Hawk/Mattel/Intellivision/ Game #1

1. **11,201,030** — Nikk Salata, S. Berwick, MA
2. **10,305,220** — John Malley, Aurora, IL
3. **10,142,040** — Luc LaBelle, Manitoba, Canada

Spacechase/Apollo/Atari VCS/Game #1

1. **185,075** — Tom Garcia, Whittier, CA
2. **175,400** — Rich Bryan, Taylorville, IL
3. **93,300** — Ed Semrad, Waukesha, WI

Tron Deadly Disc/Mattel/Intellivision

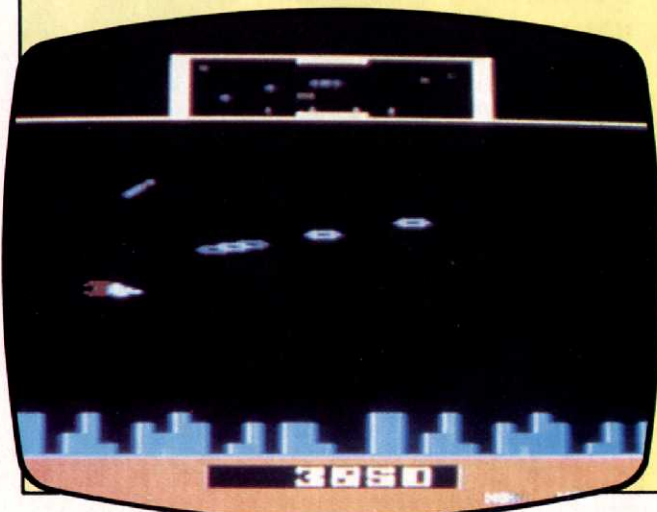
1. **5,400,900** — Ed Cason, APO, New York, NY
2. **1,505,350** — Jeff Wallace, Edison, NJ

UFO/Odyssey/Odyssey 2/Game #1

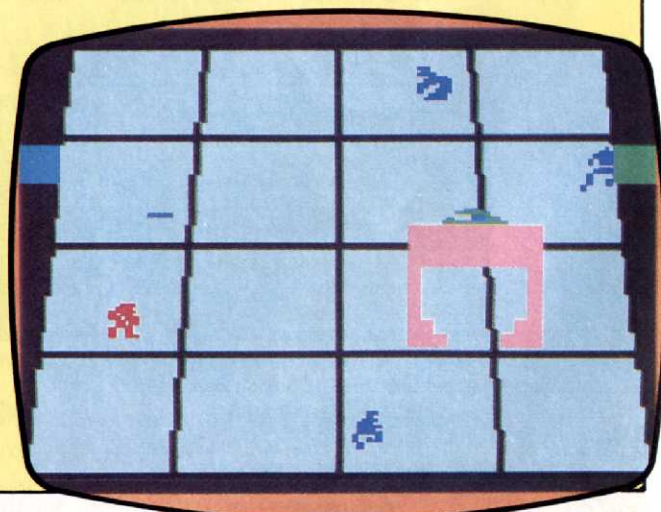
1. **6,163** — Dave Jacksch, Raf Bentwaters, UK
2. **1,872** — Bill Simsalek, Cleveland, OH
3. **1,858** — Thomas Reed, Chandler, AZ

USAC Auto Racing/Mattel/Intellivision Course #1

1. **2:49** — John Malley, Aurora, IL
2. **2:52** — Ken Barley, Canby, OR



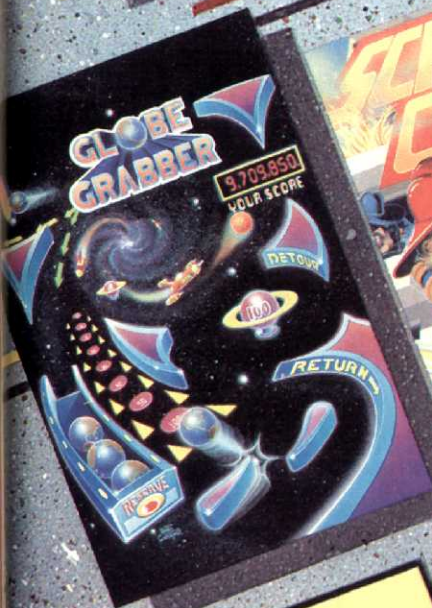
DEFENDER



TRON DEADLY DISC

Now your Colecovision™ can get maxi-action from Microfun™.

Before, only IBM™ and Apple™ owners could enjoy the maxi-action of Microfun™. If you had a Colecovision™, you were left out. No more! Here are four new games for Colecovision™ that you can get only from Microfun™. Each game takes full advantage of Colecovision's™ features with full-color and full-resolution super graphics. The games you have been waiting for from the leader in computer assisted entertainment, Microfun™.



All the lights, bells, buzzers and flipper action of a heavy-weight arcade pin ball machine — right on your Colecovision™. You've got to be faster than fast, or you won't last!



Bounty Bob's taken a fireman's job in the city to fund the chase for Yukon Yohan. Will you burn out before helping Bob rescue Miss Betty's poodle from the burning skyscraper? Or will you go down in flames in the collapsing stairways, crashing elevators and water hazards?



It's the legendary mounty, Bounty Bob! You've got to help him track Yukon Yohan through an abandoned uranium mine — all ten levels of it! — grabbing buried treasure and avoiding deadly radioactive mutants along the way. If you're a video gamer who likes challenge, Miner 2049ER™ is a gold mine.



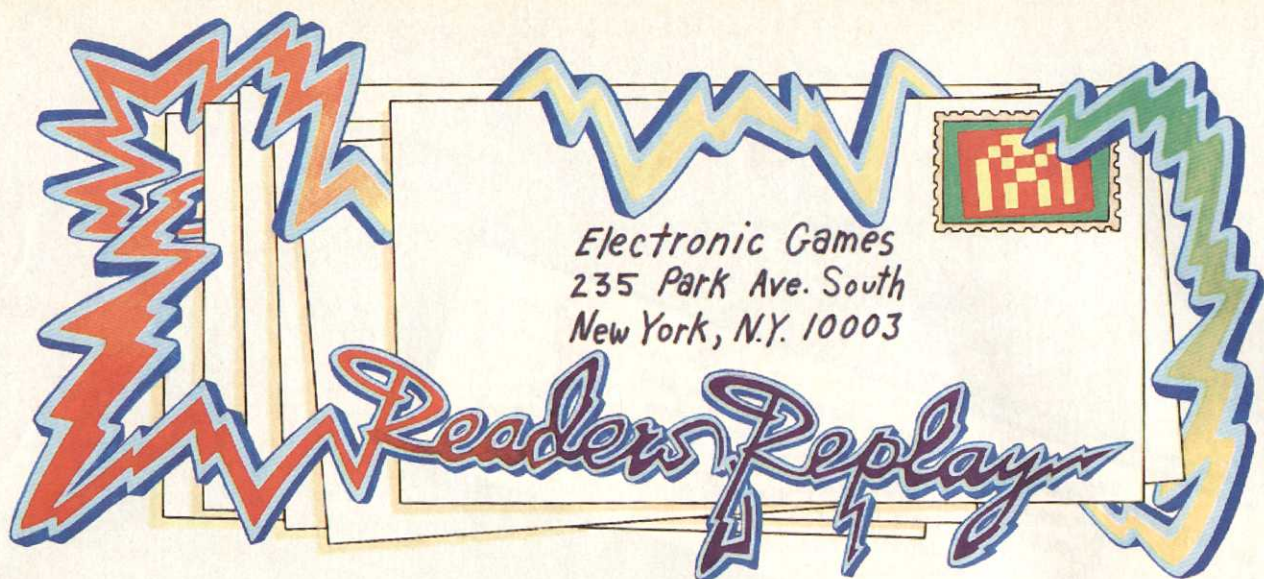
You're racing against the clock and menacing aliens to build a space platform. As soon as you're done, there's another, different shaped platform to be built — and the aliens are still gobbling the clock's still ticking! You can't beat it, but you can get better at it.

from micro fun™

entertainment division
of micro lab

2310 Skokie Valley Road
Highland Park, IL 60035
(800) 323-5083

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IBM is a trademark of International Business Machines Corporation.
Apple is a trademark of Apple, Inc.



A "MATCH" FOR EG?

As an American living in Germany, I was delighted to see a new magazine on my local newsstand called, *Match*. According to the cover and interior copy, it's being produced with *EG*. However, I noticed that not all the material matches the corresponding issues of *EG* that American friends are kind enough to send over. What's the deal — is this the German version of your magazine or what?

Darren Klinger
West Berlin, Germany

Ed: "Match" is, indeed, the licensed Germanic version of EG. The editors, however, reserve the right to produce their own art and even their own original material. After all, what might be pertinent to a U.S. gamer might be totally meaningless to a German compatriot.



In fact, *EG* is turning up all over the world! "Tilt!" is the title of our French edition, there are also Scandinavian versions, as well as several other countries bidding for the rights to the first and foremost electronic gaming title on this planet.

We wouldn't even be surprised to hear from Darth Vader of the Empire, requesting his own special rights to the title!

TO INTEL THE TRUTH

Enclosed is a copy of a letter that appeared in the January 1983 issue of *Electronic Games*. The writer, when discussing the IntelliVoice refers to the system as "Intel". As you are aware, "Intel" is a registered trademark of our company, Intel Corporation.

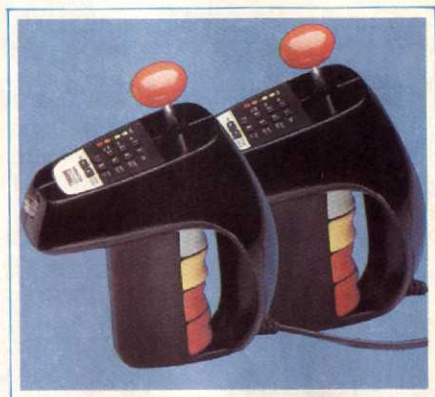
Since I am sure Mattel is just as anxious as Intel to prevent any possible confusion that might arise as the result of such usage, please inform your distributors regarding the proper use of trademarks.

Ella S. Gaetz
Legal Assistant

Ed: First off, we wish to apologize for the unintentional reprinting of the abbreviated version of "Intellivision" in EG. When that Readers Replay was typed, the editor had never heard of "Intel", and therefore had no idea trademarks were being so shabbily treated. You're absolutely correct, and we're printing this here so all of our readers will become aware of the situation.

LOSING CONTROL

As an enthusiastic ColecoVision owner, I have greatly appreciated the



attention that your magazine gives to this fine new product. Most of the articles mention the inadequacy of the stock controllers provided with the unit. My four complaints regarding the controller are as follows:

1. It's too difficult to operate so many buttons and a joystick on a hand-held control — especially games utilizing both buttons.
2. The bubble card keypad gives poor response that can only be worsened by an overlay. Bubble cards are known to wear out quickly.
3. The joystick is stubby and ineffective (especially in games using eight-point control), and the contact buttons are due to wear out quickly.
4. The controller cord is just too short.

There is a "Y" cord (a double cord that will hold one ColecoVision stick and another, compatible controller), but this seems like a clumsy way to

I WAS A TEENAGE ZOMBIE!

MIDWESTERN YOUTH TELLS HOW INFOCOM DEPROGRAMMING BROUGHT HIM BACK FROM A LIVING DEATH.

"IT GOT SO I COULDN'T LET GO," confesses John Carlson of Hickory Falls, Iowa. "My hands were welded to my joystick twenty-four hours a day. Blisters covered both my thumbs, my wrists ached, my eyes throbbled . . . I'd given up eating and sleeping." It had started as a mind-

less hobby for young Johnny. But now, it was turning his mind to green jelly.

Finally, a concerned relative decided it was time to take action. Johnny remembers: "I'd passed out after 63,000,000 points—I forget which game. When

I came to, there was this personal computer in front of me, with an Infocom game in the disk drive. I just sat there, numb, staring at the words on the screen."

Then, the extraordinary happened. "It was like there was this voice in the computer, talking to my imagination. Suddenly, I was inside the story. It was something I'd never experienced before—challenging puzzles, people I could almost touch, dangers I could really feel. Kind of like Infocom had plugged right into my mind, and shot me into a whole new dimension."

"Sure, I still play video games. But the Infocom experience opened my eyes. I know now there's more to life than joysticks."

Johnny's folks agree. "We've got our boy back," says Mrs. Carlson, "thanks to Infocom."

We can't save all the Johnnies out there. But hope still remains for countless thousands in the remarkable prose of the ZORK® Trilogy, DEADLINE™, STARCROSS™, and SUSPENDED™. So please—before it's too late—rush today to your local computer store. Step up to Infocom games. All words. No pictures. The secret reaches of your mind are beckoning. A whole new dimension is in there waiting for you.

INFOCOM™
The next dimension.

Infocom, Inc., 55 Wheeler St., Cambridge, MA 02138

For your: Apple II, Atari, Commodore 64, CP/M 8; DEC Rainbow, DEC RT-11, IBM, NEC APC, NEC PC 8000, Osborne 1, TI Professional, TRS-80 Model I, TRS-80 Model III.



At last, the first joystick that puts the firing button where it should have been in the first place.

The new Triga-Command is like no other home video joystick controller you've ever used.

The firing button is directly under your trigger finger, the finger with the fastest reflex action. Which means your thumb doesn't ache any more after playing long games, your firing is more accurate, and your scores are higher.

No other joystick gives you such a terrific grip either. That's because the handle is big and comfortable, not thin and spindly like the others. It's shaped to fit your hand, and has a diamond-cut textured surface to give you the "feel" of genuine Arcade-style joysticks.

Another unique feature are our removable suction cups under the base which clamp Triga-Command firmly to any smooth playing surface for total single handed operation.

And our joystick is tough. It's made from high impact plastic, so it won't crack under pressure.

Do you use an Atari 400 or 800 computer, the Atari 2600 system, Vic-Commodore computers, or Sears Tele-Games? No problem. Triga-Command fits them all.

All thumbs with ordinary home video joysticks? Get a grip with Triga-Command. It's the first joystick to put the firing button under your trigger finger. And isn't that where it should have been in the first place?

TRIGA COMMAND



play games that use the keypad. It also, of course, is useless on games using *both* action buttons, as all other Atari-compatible sticks have only one button.

Knowing what I really wanted from a controller, I set out to customize the perfect controller for the ColecoVision unit. This controller is not just an eye-catcher — it really delivers! All of the components that I have used are known to most, if not all, video fanatics as being top-notch, with regards to performance and durability.



"THE SPRINGSTEEN STICK"

I chose a touch-tone telephone casing because I feel that with a table-top model, your hands are free to activate all facets of the controller. The WICO joystick assembly (15-9454-01), is the exact leaf-switch type controller that is used in the arcades. Each individual leaf switch is a snap-in replaceable unit. The keypad is taken directly from a touch-tone phone and modified to work with the ColecoVision. When was the last time you heard of a telephone keypad wearing out? The fire buttons are a pair of Realistic soft-touch buttons, mounted one inch apart, below the keypad. This makes a game like **Cosmic Avenger** a real joy to play. On **Zaxxon**, you can peel off a volley of missiles so quickly they seem to be connected.

For games requiring an overlay, the Multi Flex Corp. has filled the bill. They have made a clear, pliable, "viziflex seal" that fits over all the keys. I placed one overlay face down, then put small squares of paper with symbols, colors or words, face down in the appropriate

cups. Finally, I put one more overlay inside facing down, to hold them in place and layed it over the keys. Multi Flex is currently working on an easier overlay technique.

It cost me about \$80.00 to build this controller but a company, such as Coleco, could produce them for a whole lot less.

Ken Springsteen
Davenport, IA

Ed: Ken, you definitely win this month's "Dedication Above and Beyond the Call of Gaming" award. You're right — I've never heard of a telephone keypad wearing out, and certainly no other type of input device is so frequently used. Your sturdy, obviously play-worthy stick is a real beauty.

You'll be heartened to know, however, that Coleco has heard enough griping to convince them that the joystick/keypad is the weak link in their system. In response to the many reasoned complaints, they will be issuing all new joystick/keypad/multi-fire controllers, with the much asked-about speed rollers fitted on the prototypes anyway, in their upcoming Baseball cartridge. The sticks can then be used with all their other joystick-controlled cartridges.

Ken also invites fellow ColecoVision owners to get on the cases of those third-party software companies who have yet to announce production of C-V compatible games. Activision, Spectravision and Imagic have already given the high-sign.

Thanks for sharing your thoughts and obvious talent with our other readers, Ken — perhaps they may want to try and duplicate your efforts.

EXPERIENCING US

I've heard several reports recently of a mammoth rock/computer festival that was staged in Southern California recently. All I know is that the sponsor was Mr. Wozniak, the creator of the Apple computer. Got any more info?

Hugh Devlin
Trenton, NJ

Ed: The incredible festival to which you refer was indeed sponsored by the world renowned "Woz" and was dubbed the "US" Festival. The idea was that the 70's had become known as the "me" generation and the 80's would return the spirit of "us" to America.

The festival was also intended to be a merging of rock and computer tech-

Continued on page 121

MORE GREAT ARCADE CHALLENGERS FOR ATARI COMPUTERS

ULTRA EXCITING STAR CRYSTALS

The caverns of the planet, Croga, hold the key to endless power — Star Crystals that amplify solar energy. To get to them you have to penetrate the Crogan defenses both on and under the surface. Once you capture a Crystal, you have to get it to the surface and go after another. Each time it gets tougher and more exciting. For one or two players. 24K Disk, and Joystick; 16K Cassette & Joystick.

Eat 'Em Up! SWAMP CHOMP

Life in the eerie Muckedoo Swamp can be pretty rough, particularly if you're a defenseless Gorx. Alligators, snapping turtles, vampire bats and even ghosts come at you from every side with one goal — DINNER. But, if you can make it across the swamp to the feeder station, you'll metamorphose into a Swamp Chomper who fights and bites back! 1-2 players. 24K Disk & Joystick; 24K Cassette & Joystick.

AMAZING FUN DUO ANDROID

ANDROID challenges you to find your way out of a 5-story maze despite armed robots, earthquakes and hidden time bombs. In CAPTIVITY, you race the clock through mazes, armed with only a map and your robot's 3-D view. Varying levels of difficulty in each game. 40K Disk & Joystick with optional voice cassette.

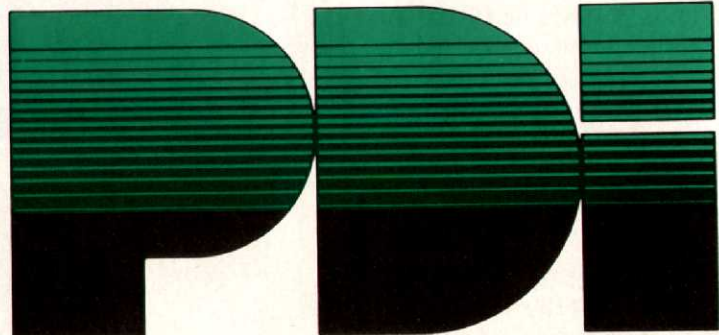
AWARD WINNING MOONBASE 10

Io is a great voice-activated arcade game with three sequential adventures. 1) Navigate the alien mine field. 2) Defend Moonbase Io. 3) Attack and destroy the mother ship. Winners get a personal Presidential Commendation from Earth. 24K Disk, Cassette, & Joystick; 16K Cassette & Joystick.

Clipper "Aye-Aye, Captain"

You're captain of a San Francisco-bound clipper ship in 1850. And you're really in charge! You pick vessel, cargo, crew and course. Then, use your skills to overcome storms, icebergs, illness, delays, doldrums, mutiny and more. A voice-narrated high-adventure. 32K Disk, optional voice cassette, & Joystick; 24K Cassette & Joystick.

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CONTROLLER



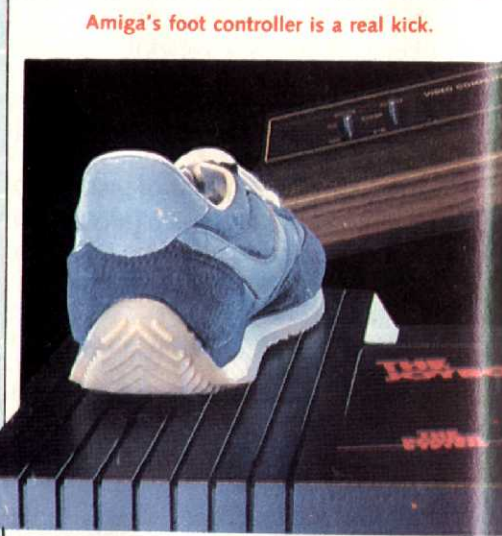
PUSHER'S "GRABBER"

controllers into something resembling a stick. These adapters either fit right over the discs or are used to replace them. The Stickler, from Pusher Sales, is a standard, high, thin shaft, as is the Enjoy-A-Stick and Jenco's controller. For players who prefer a lower, knobbed gripper, there's the chess pawn-shaped Skil-Stik from C&T Creations.

The most intriguing approach to "Intellivision thumb", especially for the many players who actually *like* the disc but would prefer to live life without the pain, is the Thumb Saver. This excellent Video Masters' creation consists of a soft pad with an adhesive bottom that acts as a sort of "foot-saver" for the thumb.

By far, the most popular member of the non-joystick pantheon is the tracball. Players have debated the utility of this type of controller in the home market almost from its inception. So few games are actually designed for home programmables or personal computers with the tracball in mind that gamers must seriously weigh the pros and cons involved in what is, almost invariably, a quite expensive purchase.

If you want tracballs, however, you won't have any trouble finding one.



Amiga's foot controller is a real kick.

In our last look at the world of deluxe controllers (March, 1983), the subject was joysticks. We looked at leaf switch-operated, potentiometer-driven, micro-switching and remote control sticks. There were loose sticks, tight sticks, top-firing and trigger-controlled. The variety seemed both endless and exotic.

This issue, however, it's time for a walk on the wild side of the videogame controller universe. If joysticks — whatever their persuasion — are the meat and potatoes of the controller cosmos, today's items are the cotton candy. Some are extremely functional, and many even utilize the look and sometimes the technology of the arcades. There are tracballs and dial-a-games, cluster controllers and stick-stands, but we'll be taking a detour through the joystick jungle to reach them. . .

Our initial subject is, you see, *almost* a joystick — at the very least, it attempts to turn Intellivision's disc-

WICO's sturdy roller-controller has been the leader of the pack thus far, but several of the hardware systems' manufacturers are going to be bumping tracballs with the joystick giants.

Atari has a pair of tracs on the way this year, one model for the trusty old 2600 and the second for the non-compatible 5200. The 2600 model is a small controller with a deeply inbedded tracball and downward slanting

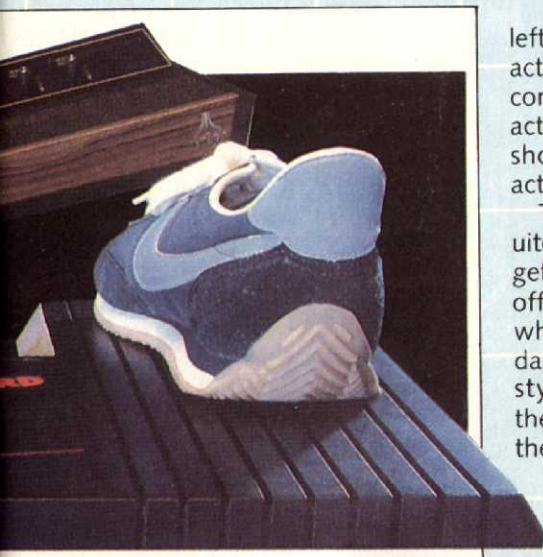
5200 TRACBALL (ATARI)



UPDATE:

Probing the World of the Exotic

By BILL KUNKEL



left and right pair of buttons which actuate the action buttons on those controllers for lefties or righties. The action is a fluid joy and this controller should be adaptable to all joystick actuated cartridges.

Tracballs have now become so ubiquitous, in fact, that even the Apple's getting at *least* one. TG Products is offering the TB-600 Track Ball; a chic, white, stair-step shaped item with a dark roller ball and a pair of arcade styled-action buttons, situated on the lower lip. The longtime leader in the creation of game-worthy controllers for the Apple II, TG has created another winner with their slick TB-600 (see sidebar).

sides, each bearing an action button; one for lefties and one for righties. As has become traditional with this genre of controllers, no two manufacturers seem to spell the word "tracball" the same way. "Tracball" is the traditional coin-op spelling, but Atari's 2600 version is dubbed the "trak-ball" while the sleek 5200 peripheral is known as a "trakball controller".

The 5200 "trakball" is a nifty looking piece of work that actually fits over the face of the system. The low-slung cue ball resides in the center with a pair of buttons flanking it on either side. A pair of keypad inputs fit over the top left and right of the 5200.

Testing of the 5200 controller has been extremely limited and no hands-on experimentation with the 2600 model has been possible.

We have seen Coleco's "trackball", however, and it's a dandy, scheduled to be packaged with an excellent ColecoVision version of GDI's coin-op, **Slither** (one of the most perfect trackball games ever designed). The trackball comes as a separate peripheral, with left and right slots for the standard joystick/keypad controllers and a



THE "GRAND STANDS"

There is, however, much more to the offbeat controller scene than roller-controllers. The cluster button system (a quartet of buttons situated in compass positions used for games having horizontal and vertical movement) has developed considerable popularity. K-Y Enterprises, a virtual non-profit cottage company who produces a catalog of fascinating products especially suitable for the handicapped (see "Gaming and the Handicapped", February, 1983). Their cluster controller, however, will prove an excel-

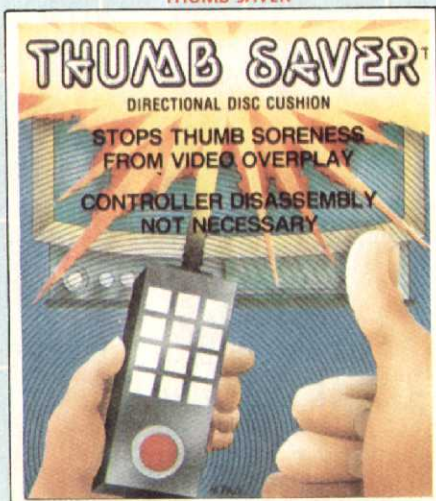
lent videogame peripheral for *any* player, and is marvelous for invader contests. Remember the initial coin-op **Space Invaders** with its left-right buttons? A few rounds with the horizontal axis buttons on the cluster controller will have many arcaders tossing out their joysticks.

All right then, we've gotten our feet wet at least. Perhaps now we'll be better prepared for some of the more *outré* items promised earlier.

Sure, you know about the console controllers, such as BC's and the Starplex model, and we told you all about the latter's automatic shooting option. How'd you like to turn every joystick-compatible controller in the house into an auto-fire juggernaut? The Gammation people have just the answer with a tiny (1" by 3/8") plastic block housing a pair of lead wires. Easily installed, they turn your single-shot sluggards into rapid-fire comandos.

For all of the gamers who like to sit back in a big, easy chair, or perhaps recline in a super-modern lounge while playing, you have *got* to see the new "Grand Stand" line. Trim, and modernistic in styling, these wooden stands are finished in walnut and allow arcaders to mount any of several types of videogame controllers. But

THUMB SAVER



THUMB SAVER

DIRECTIONAL DISC CUSHION

STOPS THUMB SORENESS
FROM VIDEO OVERPLAY

CONTROLLER DISASSEMBLY
NOT NECESSARY

CONTROLLER UPDATE

even if you like to sit on the floor and play, imagine the prestige involved when a friend walks in and sees your Atari 2600 joystick standing upon a polished wood stand.

Practically speaking, these stands also have bases upon which the player can plant his or her feet for additional ballast. Also know that the sticks, when being used (not stored) on the Grand Stand, must be mounted, via screws drilled through their backs.

One of the wildest — and most innovative — trends in the world of exotic videogame peripherals, is not a *play-controller* at all. What these new wonders control, instead, are the videogames being selected!

Looking initially like all the world for a million and one other cartridge storage units, you could almost overlook these new marvels, but for one curious thing. You see, there's a very long connector ribbon as well



PUSHER'S "STICKLER"

as an unmarked cartridge housing protruding, tail-like, from the rear of the cabinet. Then there's the switch, allowing players to, literally, dial-a-videogame!

The first of these fantastic machines was shown to **EG** by Starplex. Dubbed the "Game SeleX", it boasts nine

cartridge slots into which are inserted the most frequently-played titles in the arcader's collection at any given time. The "dead", unmarked cartridge is then plugged into the 2600 or emulator and dial that title! If, say, **Pitfall** is located in slot seven and you'd like to do some vine-swinging and tar pit vaulting, then just flick the selector on the right side of the corresponding number and turn on the 2600. *Voila!* Instant *Pitfall!*

As time goes on, the products begin to resemble the videogame world's version of "The Gong Show". **EG** recently received for testing an item dubbed the "Videogame Glove" from the Nancy Company. The model for right-handed players bore a striking resemblance to a golf glove with every finger crudely hacked off with the mystifying exception of the thumb and middle fingers. This is especially puzzling as the middle finger has

"GAME SELEX" (STARPLEX)



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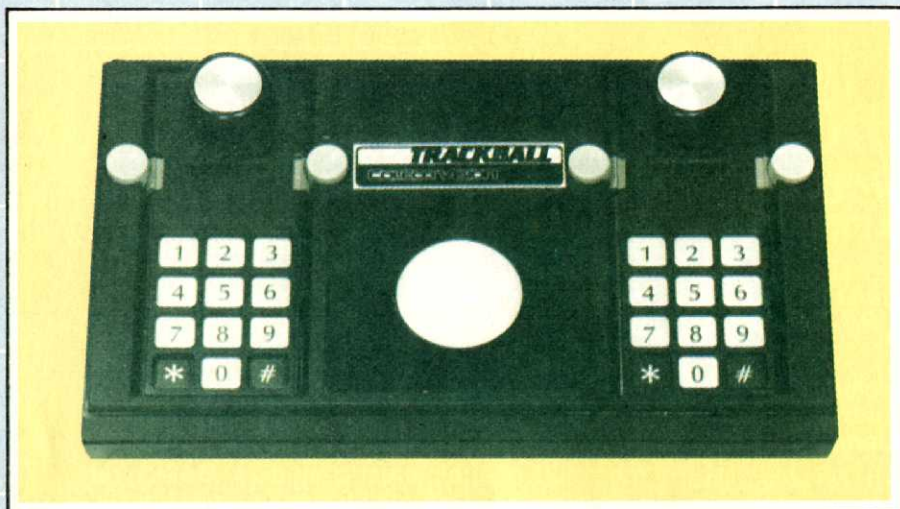
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CONTROLLER UPDATE



TRACBALL (COLECOVISION)

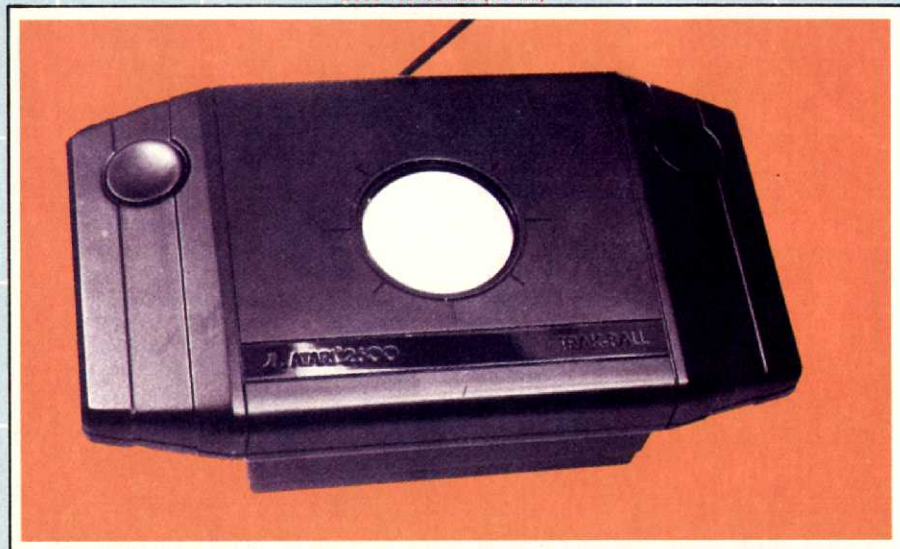
nothing to do with the manipulation of any existing joystick!

Then there are the likeable pair of game-loving carpenters who will custom construct — out of wood! — videogame trays (for playing in bed) lap stands (better give them accurate thigh measurements or you may never get it off!) and a device that works much like Coleco's very own tracball triggering mechanism. It's a wooden housing for the ColecoVision joystick with a pair of Nintendo-style button controllers rigged to depress the side action buttons found on the Coleco controller. This comes with a positively

bizarrely-shaped joystick "extender" that fits over the standard stick's control nob. Alas, it fits on with only one screw, so no matter how tightly it's installed, pressure exerted in the opposite direction will not only yank off the controller but may pull apart the nob as well!

Or who could forget the CBS "Stick Stand" originally announced by and then reportedly abandoned by K-Byte before their purchase. This product consists of a housing for the standard Atari joystick, a stationary base and a nob that fits over the top of the shaft. Unhappily, the shaft on the Atari stick

2600 TRACBALL (ATARI)



is not constructed to stand up under the incredible torque this stand creates on it. Even gentle-handed players will find the shaft coming off in their hands on a regular basis. Nobs alone (such as Pusher Sale's "Grabber" with the trademarked **Pac-Man** logo gracing it), can work, but once Atari sticks are then placed in housings, watch out!

Obviously, controllers are busting out everywhere, so much so that an occasional feature can't do the field justice. So watch **EG** for a new column that will deal with the latest in joystick and alternative controller technology, as it applies to game-playing!

The ultimate question, however, remains to be answered: Do these gourmet sticks actually help gamers play any better?

The answer, for the moment, is

TG'S TRACBALL (APPLE)



undetermined. But as with all hobbies, the participants are always looking for items to enhance their enjoyment of this pastime. For the moment, the focus is certainly on controllers. As long as it remains there, so will **EG**.

Or, as they used to say at the conclusion of those awful science fiction movies from the fifties: "The end — or the beginning?"

NEWSFLASH: With consumer interest in game controllers at an all-time high, this magazine has decided to start the world's first review column for such devices. "In Control" will begin publication in the August issue of **Electronic Games**.

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CONTROLLER UPDATE

THE BEST VIDEOGAMES FOR TRACBALL PLAY

MISSILE COMMAND (from Atari coin-op, home versions for 2600, 5200 and all Atari computers). The Rob Fulop-designed 2600 version of this Atari arcade classic first started home gamers thinking in terms of how neat a tracball would be. With the subsequent release of the computer and 5200 versions, players' appetites were further stimulated.

There is absolutely *nothing* like a tracball for zipping this contest's sighting-cursor around bomb-riddled skies or setting up umbrella-styled defensive bursts!

CENTIPEDE (from Atari coin-op, home versions for 2600, 5200 and all Atari computers). This arcade smash first introduced both limited vertical movement and tracball control to the classic left-to-right, right-to-left invasion contest. For ducking spiders and blasting scorpions, there's nothing like the smooth, rounded trajectories made possible by roller-controllers.

This is one of those games that just doesn't make it without a tracball.

SLITHER (from GDI's coin-op, home versions for the ColecoVision, with alternative versions scheduled by Coleco). Somewhat of a bi-directional variation on the *Centipede* theme, *Slither* really moves and grooves under the magic ball's guidance. Players hold their positions near center screen, firing both up and down as they roll over the sandy, desert terrain.

BASKETBALL (Atari 400/800). Al Miller's groundbreaking full-court home game creates the illusion of depth by drawing the playfield as a trapezoid. For making the moves and ducking around opponents, nothing will rack up the points like a tracball controller. It creates the fluid grace that makes playing video roundball like real ball.

TENNIS (Activision for the standard Atari 2600). Al Miller's sports simulations are about as good as they get on the 2600, with the Arkie-winning *Tennis* a perfect example.

Fast full court movement, recovering quickly and other elements required for a good game seem to be helped by the tracball, allowing a truer simulation of actual player movement.

CONTROLLING THE APPLE II

More games are available for the ol' Apple II than for any other microcomputer, but you would never know it from the meager assortment of controllers on the market at the present time. Apple's indifference to the home arcading needs of its owners causes real problems for those who need paddles and joysticks to pursue their hobby.

In fact, the standard Apple II doesn't even have an external connector port for a game control device. The only way to avoid having to open up the console every time you'd like to change controllers is to buy a gadget such as the E-Z Port, Port Authority or Joyport that adds this important feature to the system.

TG Products is probably the best-known name in controllers for the Apple. The company has long made a joystick and a paddle, and it is scheduled to introduce a tracball this year. The newest addition to the line works very well, but there is a distinct shortage of Apple games that are good candidates for use with such a controller. Surely, the existence of the TG tracball and a similar unit from WICO will encourage programmers to

create Apple software that capitalizes on the capabilities of this type of command device.

Kraft Systems is now offering both a joystick and a paddle for the Apple. Like the TG stick, the Kraft peripheral features a pair of buttons for firing and such as well as a center-sprung stick with vertical and horizontal trim controls for fine-tuning the response. One advantage of the Kraft unit is that it is possible to disconnect the spring by just flicking a couple of levers on the underside of the base, thus making the device a bit more useful for maze-chases and other types of contests in which automatic center return is a disadvantage.

Instead of putting the twin action buttons one directly above the other, Kraft has placed one of these controls on a slanting panel on the side furthest away from the player when it is held normally in the hand. This makes it easier to work both buttons at the same time — hit one with the thumb and the other with the index finger of the same hand — in shoot-'em-ups, but is slightly more difficult than the old standard arrangement (as found on the TG unit) for programs like *David's Midnight Magic* that capitalize on having just two side-by-side buttons. All in all, however, the Kraft stick is lightweight, moderately easy to hold and is very responsive. Those who've become used to manipulating the stick by holding a finger on its top rather than by grabbing the barrel may find the fluted top cuts into the fingertip, but a bit of filing soon cures any problem. And those who control the stick in a more conventional manner will find that the Kraft version is the easiest one to handle, currently on the market.

Also worth consideration by any gamer is the line of controllers manufactured by WICO. Although these devices, which have been described at length elsewhere in *EG*, were originally intended for use with 2600-compatible ports, the company is offering versions of its own bat-handed stick with top-mounted button and an adaptor that allows it to be connected to an Apple. These are not suitable for Apple games that require two action buttons, but otherwise provides excellent action. ☺

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What Mother Bell Never Told Us About Fun on the Telephone

By ARNIE KATZ

Reach out and play someone is the slogan of GameLine, a division of Control Video Corporation, that will soon offer the nation's electronic gamers a so-far-unique new service. Properly equipped with GameLine's Master Module, any home arcader who owns an Atari 2600, Sears Video Arcade or Coleco ColecoVision Module #1 will be able to buy playing time on any of more than 30 cartridges each month, at a bargain rate that works out to roughly \$1 for 40 minutes of action.

Company president Bill von Meister's description of how the GameLine concept came into being is a classic case of a good idea that only needed the proper fine-tuning to be successful. The mechanology that makes GameLine possible was originally developed for Home Music Store, which hoped to provide music to cable services via satellite. When scared retailers mounted a campaign that dulled the enthusiasm of the major record companies for this service, Von Meister and the other CVC honchos asked themselves, "So now what can we do with the technology?" The company had all kinds of expertise in the transmission of encoded data, but suddenly found itself looking hard for an opportunity to utilize it.

One field that immediately attracted CVC's attention was the growing electronic gaming hobby. "If we can build a modem cheaply enough," Von Meister told his cohorts, "we could download software. We could pump 300 games a second through a cable."

The idea struck sparks, but there was still a big hole in it. To make the projected game software downloading operation economically feasible, GameLine would need something that didn't exist, a truly inexpensive modem. A hefty chunk of the new company's \$2-million research and development budget went into clearing out that particular bottleneck. When CVC vice president of engineering,

Ray Heinrich, and consultants, Seven Systems of Hartsville, AL finished applying their brand of super-science to the project, GameLine had become the proud possessor of an auto-dial modem, that is, in the words of Bill von Meister, "the cheapest auto-dial 1200-baud modem on the market by a factor of 100!"

It is this technological breakthrough which, more than any other factor, makes it possible for GameLine to offer its fun-on-the-phone service at a price that should be well within the reach of most home arcaders. If tele-gaming had to depend on people going out and buying a \$300-\$500 computer modem, the whole idea would be totally impractical.

As things stand, however, GameLine can be enjoyed by anyone who has the following four items: a TV set, an Atari 2600 (or a 2600-compatible system such as the one sold by Sears), a credit card and the GameLine Master Module.

Getting hooked up could not be easier. CVC is mindful of the fact that many members will have had no previous experience doing anything more complicated than connecting their videogame system to the television



and shoving a cartridge into the slot. Accordingly, they've made the process of getting started about as simple as anyone could imagine.

The Master Module, which will carry a suggested list price of \$49.95, will be sold by leading retailers all across the country, including mega-merchant Sears Roebuck. The module is inserted into the 2600's slot just like a typical ROM cartridge and connects to the telephone's base with a standard connector. The modem has the ability to

determine if it is connected to a dial or touch-tone phone, and works just fine with either type of instrument.

Turning on the 2600 automatically puts the instructions for completing the registration process right on the screen. Briefly, the would-be Game-Line calls an 800 number, registers, and receives a personal identification number. From then on, the system will know to whose credit card the charges should be added after a play-session. Initial registration costs \$15, and there



GAMES ON THE PHONE



will be an annual service charge of \$10-\$12 beginning in the second year of membership.

Each month, every member will get the latest issue of *GameLiner*, the service publication. Along with articles, interviews and the like, *GameLiner* carries a monthly menu. This listing indicates both the titles of the games available through the system, and the order number for those players who don't want to use the electronic menu that can be summoned at the start of each play-session. When a videogame is offered for the first time, the *GameLiner* will publish an easy-to-follow set of instructions, including basic strategy hints and a photo of the playfield, to acquaint members with what may be an unfamiliar title. New members will also get a GameLine library catalogue that contains 25-30 instruction sheets for the cartridges already on the system.

GameLine expects to increase its selections by approximately five new games each month, including some so new that they just may be heading toward the stores for the first time. A few software publishers plan to sneak preview new entries from time to time, considerably in advance of their actual publication, to give the manufacturers a chance to see how their audience of hyper-interested gamers likes a vid-

GAMES ON THE PHONE



eogame, before risking commercial distribution.

So, what do you get for your buck? A dollar buys a play-session with any cartridge available through the system. The exact length of time will vary, depending on how long it takes the average home arcader to play the contest in question. That means the member might get "only" one round of video chess for the dollar, but might get a chance to play some super-tough shoot-'em-up five or six times before the clock runs out. Naturally, if a game is in progress, you'll always be able to fight it to the finish.

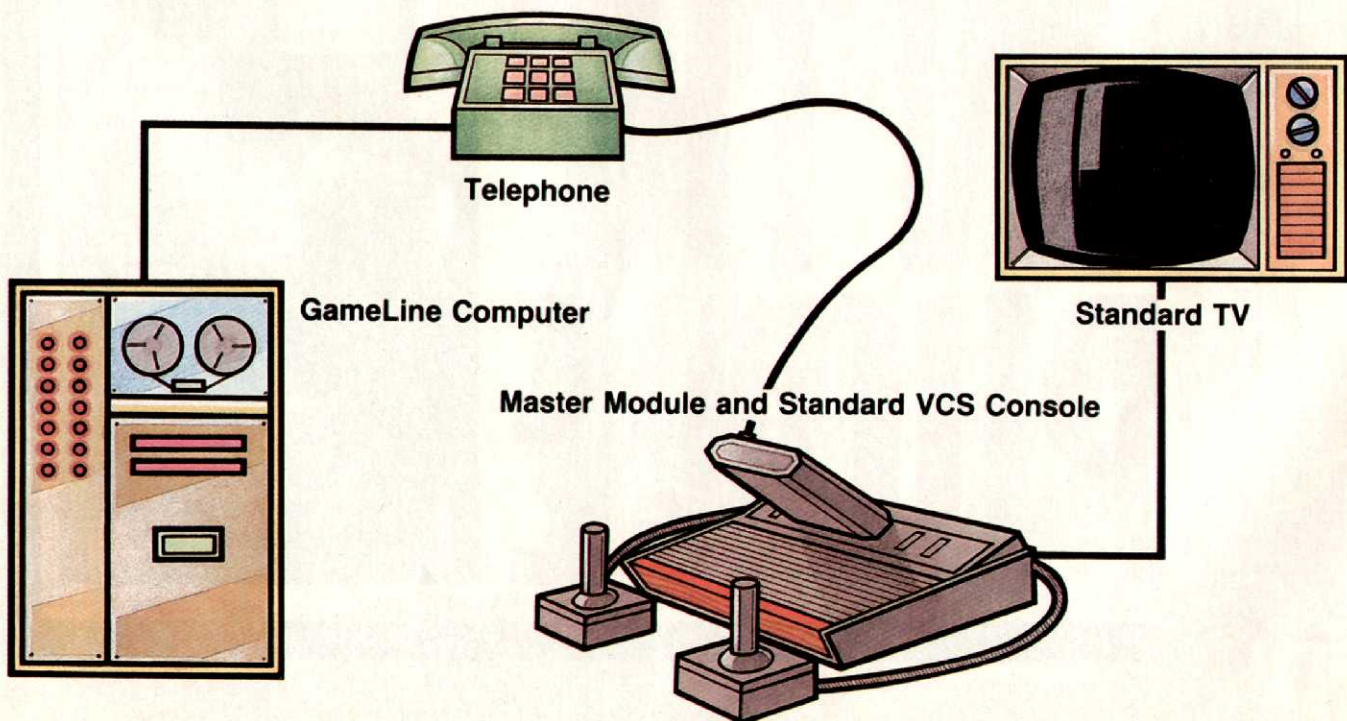
Speaking of money, the use of credit cards might be a red flag to some, especially in these tight money days. GameLine's set-up makes a sincere attempt to keep things from getting out of hand. Each player in a house-

hold connected to the system will get an individual personal identification number. A parent can set a monthly limit for a child during the registration procedure, and that player will not be able to spend any more during the 30-day cycle. GameLine avoids any potential "hidden" costs of long distance telephone charges by making use of toll-free (800) numbers. The family won't even have to worry about the line getting tied up by the service, since every cartridge can be downloaded in a matter of seconds, after which the telephone is once more available for other uses.

The fires of competition surely burn brightly in the GameLine universe. Members will be able to participate in a minimum of two contests per month. One will usually involve a classic cartridge, while the other will be built around a newer title. A small additional fee — an extra quarter looks like the tab at this juncture — for the session will enter the arcader's score in the tournament.

A pyramiding series of competitions is planned, starting on the local level through the GameLine system and culminating in a face-to-face shoot-out for a prize of \$100,000. Even if you can't aspire to winning the crown as the best in the land at a particular game, thousands of local and regional

THE COMPLETE GAMELINE SYSTEM

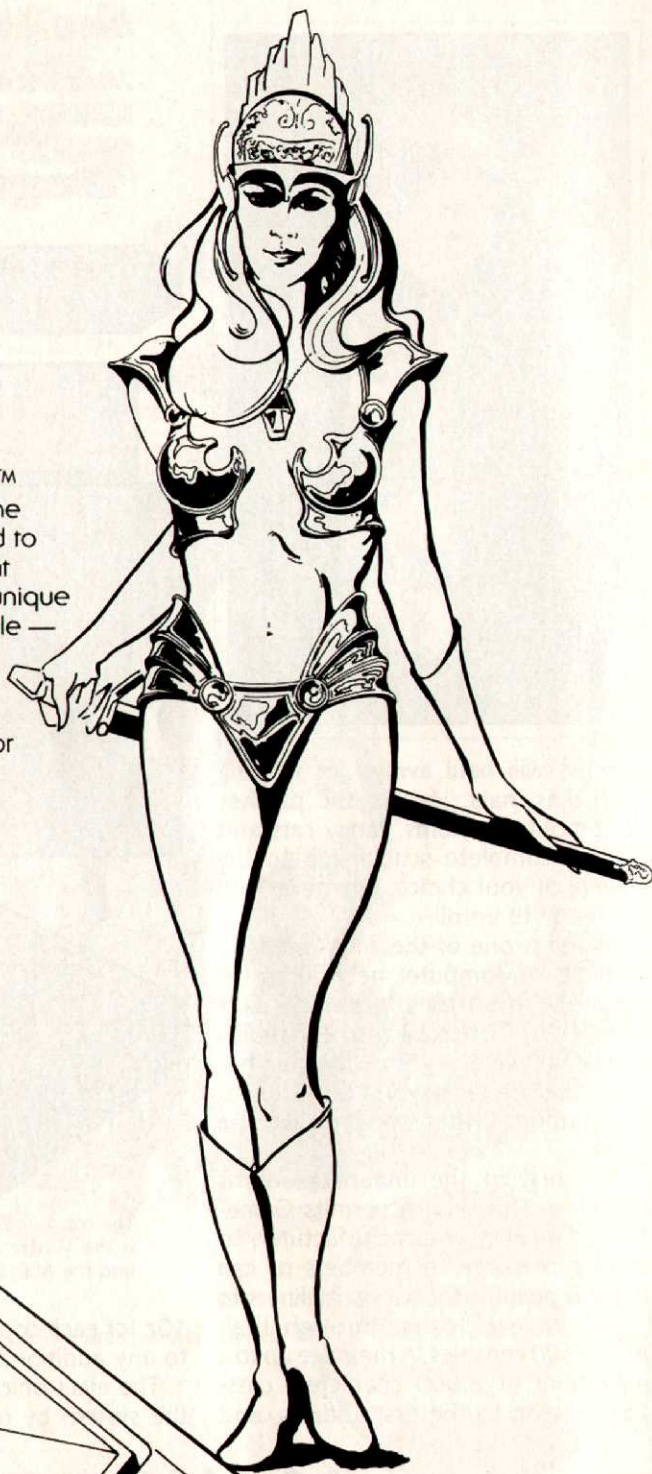


Let Me Introduce Myself.

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I wanted you to see our newest product, The Enjoystick™ for the Atari* 400, 800, 1200, 2600, the VIC-20** and the Commodore 64**. This exciting new controller is designed to conform naturally to the gripping planes of the hand. That means real comfort when the games run long. Another unique feature of the Enjoystick is the reversible fire button module — easily switchable for either right or left-handed play.

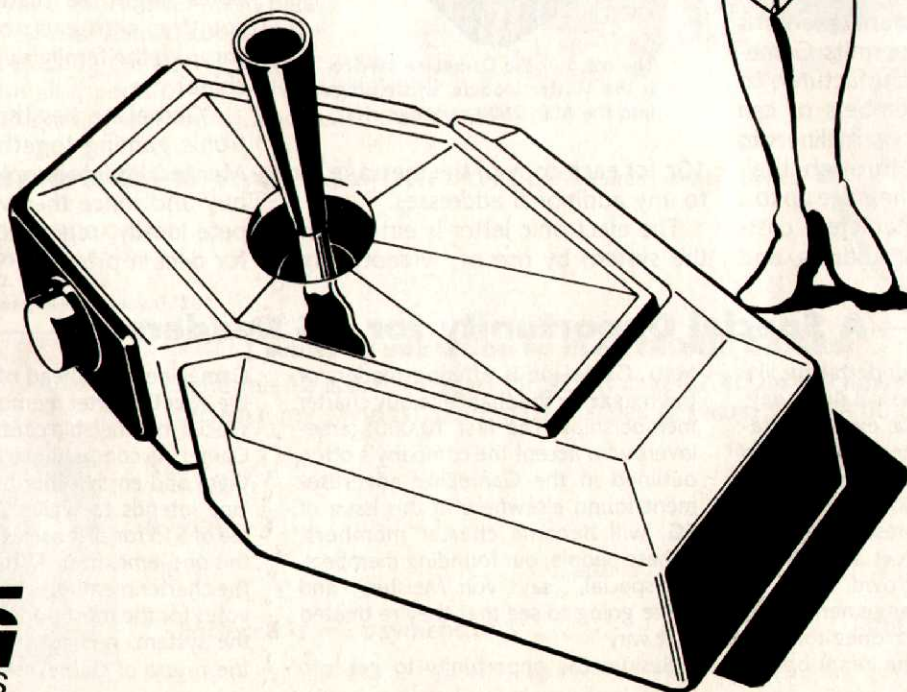
Come by and see us at the CES in Chicago. We're in booth #6438 with the new Enjoystick and all of our fine accessories for home computers. You can also be there for the unveiling of our fantastic new software products — from games to business software. Oh yes, my poster will be available there with all the clues necessary to solve the riddle of my origin. See you there.



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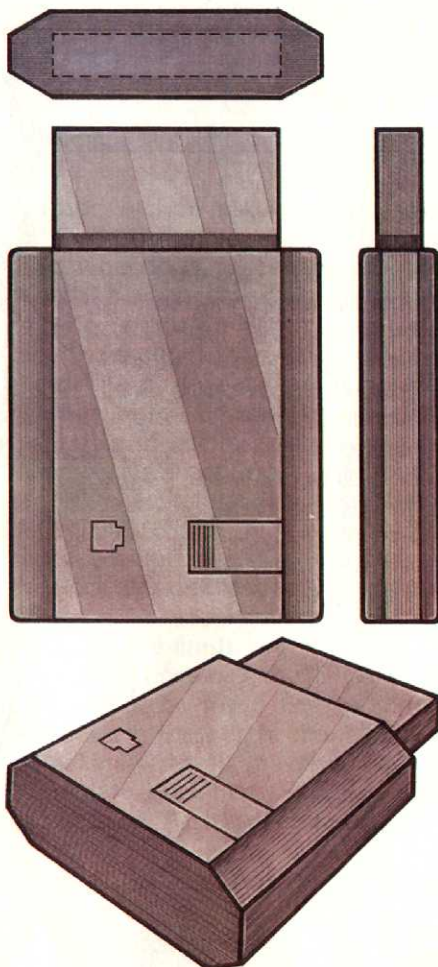
"GameLine Ties the Hobby of Electronic Gaming Together!"



winners will haul away loot ranging from pins, hats, jackets and patches to computer systems, fancy cars and even a complete scholarship to the college of your choice, whenever you are ready to enroll.

As befits one of the acknowledged pioneers in computer networking — he made his first big splash as a founder of *The Source*, the nation's largest network — Von Meister has plans that go far beyond "just" playing games. Other services will be added.

The first of the enhancements is MailLine. This service permits GameLine, a retailer, or a manufacturer, to send a message to members or can make it possible for two gameliners to "talk" to each other through their Atari 2600 consoles. A message up to a maximum of 8,000 characters costs 15¢ to send to the first address, and



The heart of the GameLine service is the Master Module, which plugs into the Atari 2600 cartridge slot.

10¢ for each copy of the message sent to any additional addresses.

The electronic letter is entered into the system by use of "videotyping".



There's a keyboard on the screen, and the writer uses a joystick to manipulate a cursor on this display, picking out one letter at a time.

Other services scheduled for the GameLine system include SportsLine and StockLine. More to the point as far as home arcaders are concerned, the ability of GameLine to offer members a chance for "real time" communication opens the way for the development of role-playing games, in which the players manipulating the heroes and heroines might be scattered across the country, with each one participating through the family's videogaming machine.

"GameLine ties the hobby of electronic gaming together," claims Von Meister. "It lets people try before they buy and, once they've bought, compete locally, regionally and nationally for decent prizes." E

A Special Opportunity for EG Readers

Launching a major undertaking like GameLine isn't done in a single day. After a period of intense experimentation and trial runs, GameLine intends to stage a full-scale test of the system by permitting a select 10,000 home arcaders to get a jump on the rest of the world by joining GameLine just a couple of months ahead of the crowd.

Through special arrangements with **Electronic Games** (which does not have any financial stake in the infant opera-

tion), GameLine is offering readers of this magazine the chance to buy charter memberships. The first 10,000 gameliners who accept the company's offer, outlined in the GameLine advertisement found elsewhere in this issue of **EG**, will become charter members. "These people, our founding members, are special," says von Meister, "and we're going to see that they're treated that way."

Besides the opportunity to get into

GameLine way ahead of the gamer on the street, charter members will receive special membership cards, participate in GameLine competitions created just for them and enjoy other benefits. GameLine intends to waive the registration fee of \$15 for all those who join through this one-time offer. At the end of 1983, the charter members will be able to cast votes for the most popular cartridges in the system, perhaps helping to shape the future of GameLine's library.

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PROGRAMMABLE

PARADE

Take a Fantastic Voyage — into the Computer!

By ARNIE KATZ and BILL KUNKEL

TRON MAZE-A-TRON

Mattel/Intellivision

This is without a doubt the most subtle, but also intriguing home arcade program yet inspired by last year's Disney videogame fantasy film, "Tron". Although it's hard to precisely categorize this solitaire contest, since it contains elements of several different genres, the closest approximation is to call it an action adventure with strong maze-chase overtones.

The interior of the computer is the battleground within this two-scenario challenge. In the first phase, you are Flynn, the courageous young programmer of the movie, on a mission to zero-out the RAM chips which are set up in banks along the circuitboard's playfield. To achieve this, you must locate the latch chips, enter from the side and begin storing up zeroes for later use when you get to the RAM chips.

The second — and slightly less enthralling phase brings Flynn face-to-resistors with the MCP (Master Control Program) itself. The gamer must closely monitor all the so-called "bit stacks", particularly noting the numbers ("1"s and "0"s) at the top of each

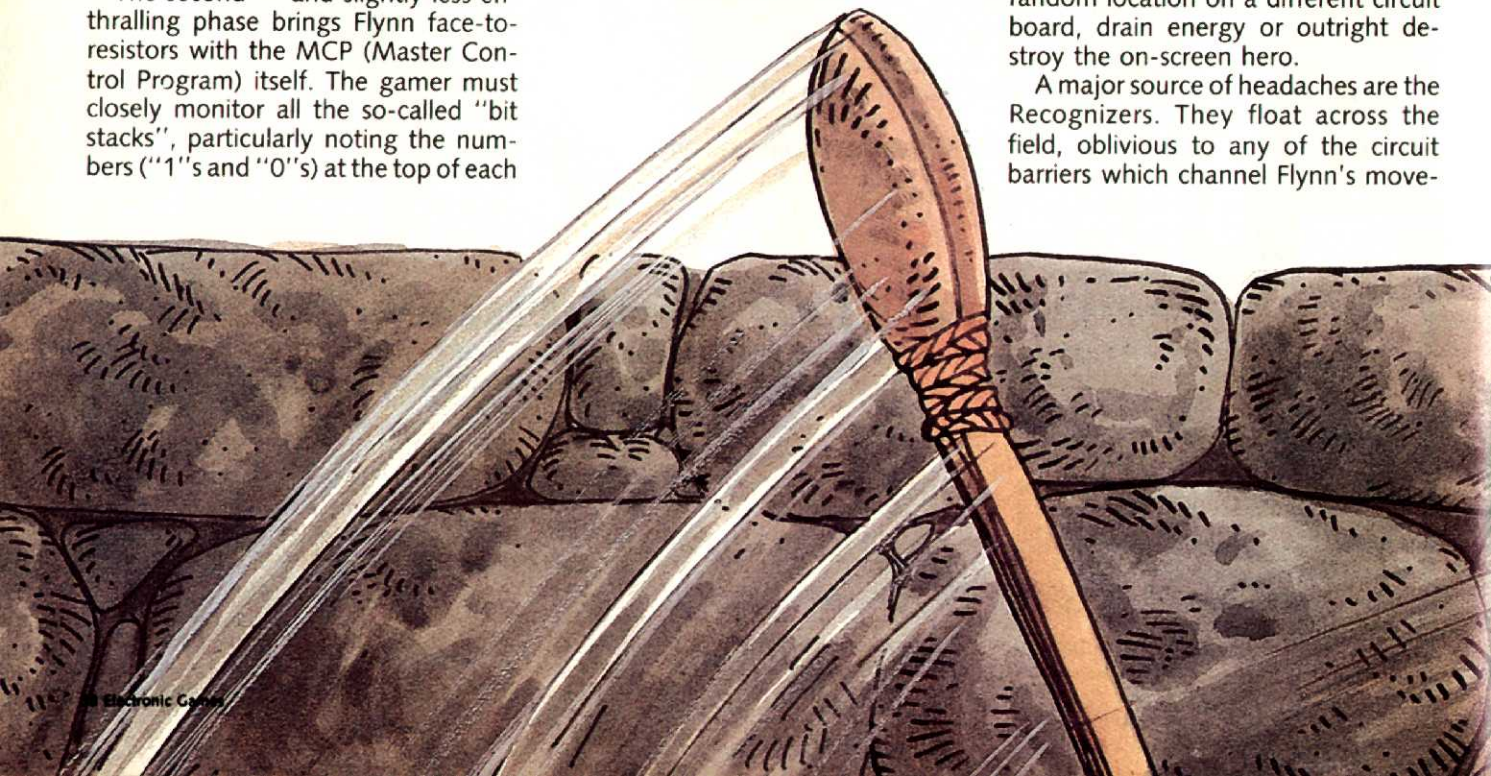


TRON MAZE-A-TRON

stack. Between the bit stacks are a pair of bit streams. The object in phase two is to locate a pair of numbers in the bit stream that match the top two numbers in the bit stacks, and then use the "bit gun" to turn the appropriate numbers in the bit stream black by shooting at them. The MCP will try to destroy you with its optical laser blasts, and it will be necessary to activate your shields to prevent receiving the three hits that would otherwise lose one of your three precious turns.

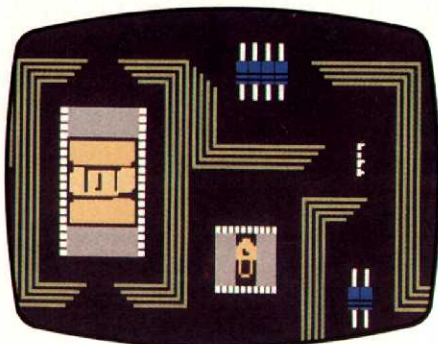
The most novel aspect of the game is the way the anonymous designer has created a set of highly differentiated chips, each with its own special function. There are flip-flops that will allow you to reverse the direction of the scrolling playfield, which begins moving to the right the instant Flynn appears on the screen for the first time. Other chips let you collect energy for your shield, transport the player to a random location on a different circuit board, drain energy or outright destroy the on-screen hero.

A major source of headaches are the Recognizers. They float across the field, oblivious to any of the circuit barriers which channel Flynn's move-



ment across the display, and can de-rezz the arcader's representative with a mere touch. The only defense is to expend some shield-power so that the Recognizer touches the deadly barrier. Once it does turn blue, it's harmless. Actually, there's a slight variant to this strategy. You can lead the Recognizer through one of the ROM chips while your shield is activated. This protects Flynn from immediate death, but there's nothing to stop the ROM from zapping the Recognizer when it follows you.

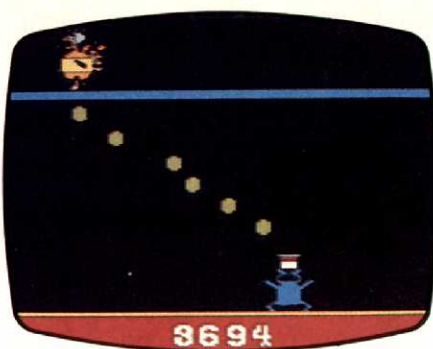
Like most Intellivision cartridges published by Mattel, this one offers a choice of four basic speeds. The choice of speed governs the rapidity with which the playfield scrolls on the first level. Each time you complete a full round of play — that's one successful



TRON MAZE-A-TRON

trip through each phase — the next round will begin at a higher level of difficulty. Also included is a practice mode, which can be very helpful in learning how to move Flynn through some fairly tight spots with the directional disc on the controller.

Tron Maze-A-Tron isn't a snap. Like many Mattel releases, this is a long way from "plug and play". Of course, that's what makes this cartridge so fascinating; you won't use it up in a



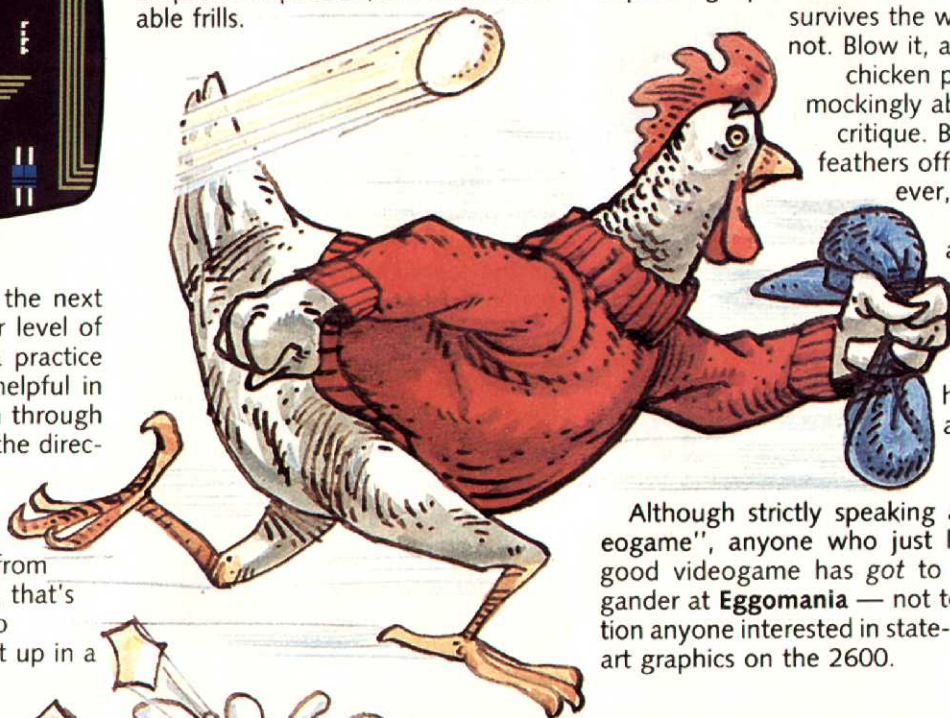
EGGOMANIA

couple of play-sessions. Hats off to Mattel for producing this excellent licensed game.

EGGOMANIA

U.S. Games/Standard Atari 2600

Not to be confused with **Megamania**, this delightful entry from the new U.S. Games group takes the popular **Kaboom!/Avalanche** avoidance play-mechanic and turns it into a fully-animated delight that might even eclipse its inspiration, in terms of adorable frills.



At the top of the playfield, you see, there's a wacky dancing chicken who cha-chas cockily on-screen and suddenly begins laying eggs a mile-a-minute! The player is represented by a little chap at the base of the screen toting a white bowl in which he must catch the falling hen-fruit. But remember, these are eggs being caught, so if they should land on the bowl's rim, they'll shatter and the round will end.

Complete a wave successfully, though, and gamers will get a taste of revenge. The game format suddenly shifts as the paddle controllers are used to position the bowl underneath the chicken. Gamers should blast all the captured eggs back up at the chicken by hitting the firing button. A direct hit will literally knock chickie's feathers off, leaving her clad only in a garish pair of polka-dot underwear!

The chicken dances to several tunes, depending upon whether the player

survives the wave or not. Blow it, and the chicken prances mockingly about in critique. Blow its feathers off, however, and it limps around to an appropriate humble accompaniment.

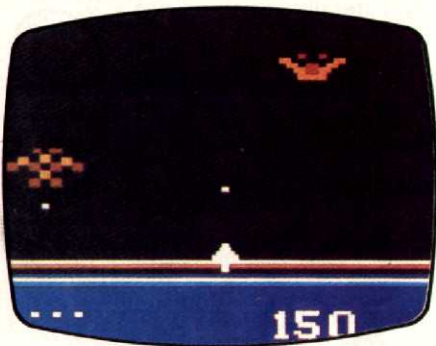
Although strictly speaking a "kid-eogame", anyone who just loves a good videogame has got to take a gander at **Eggomania** — not to mention anyone interested in state-of-the-art graphics on the 2600.

PROGRAMMABLE PARADE

DEMON ATTACK

Imagic/Odyssey²

Here it is, the first cartridge ever produced for the Odyssey² programmable videogame system by an independent publisher. Appropriately enough, the game chosen as the vehicle for achieving this milestone, **Demon Attack**, is an extraordinary title



DEMON ATTACK

that copped the 1983 Arcade Award as "Best Videogame of the Year" with its Atari 2600-compatible edition.

Demon Attack is a good choice for the Odyssey² in another respect: its monochrome background, essentially free of graphic images, dovetails well with the system's graphic capabilities. So this *Demon Attack* retains something of the look, as well as the play-action, of the original design.

Not that there aren't differences. For one thing, there seem to be fewer aliens in each wave. Another is that all of the attacking creatures drop the same kind of bomb. That is, the laser beams are not to be found here. Also, each creature fires only one bomb at a time, not the dual death beams that keep the home arcader zipping the cannon back and forth across the bottom of the screen to stay safe.

On the other hand now, this one- or two-player invasion contest is an excellent translation of the original concept. There are numerous types of winged creatures to battle, and the more fearsome ones split into two smaller monsters when hit, just as in the 2600 edition.

The introduction of *Demon Attack* in this format gives Odyssey owners the opportunity, at long last, to sample

a home arcade game that has thrilled millions of players who do their gaming on other machines. Our advice: don't miss this chance to enjoy one of electronic gaming's most enjoyable experiences.

SPIDER FIGHTER

Activision/Atari 2600

Larry Miller's videogame debut for Activision is a keen disappointment: it's a mediocre title from a superior game company.

There's nothing horribly *wrong* with **Spider Fighter**. The graphics are flashy and cleanly rendered against a black background. The sound effects are adequate, and there's plenty of action as gamers man the good old horizontally mobile laser cannon and launch volleys of guided missiles at the spider eggs, hatching at the top left of the playfield. The spiders, if allowed to multiply, start plucking from the trios of strawberries and other fruit that fill the top right-hand corner of the screen.

Once a bug reaches a piece of fruit, it slowly begins pushing the fruit to the left, toward its nest. The spiders can be destroyed during this migration, but the fruit remains where it is, making it easier for the next arachnid to push the goodie all the way home. The

game is played in waves, with action continuing until the spiders steal all the fruit.

The trouble with *Spider Fighter* is its hackneyed play mechanic and totally uninvolved concept. The cartridge doesn't have any juice. The average videogamer has seen so many invasion shoot-outs that it takes something *special*, such as Steve Cartwright's **Megamania**, to make gamers get excited. What we've got here is a lifeless, good-looking videogame. But then, that would also serve as an apt description of the first title served up by *Megamania's* creator. Maybe he'll bounce back next time.



SPIDER FIGHTER

Miller obviously has the tools. Just as soon as he sinks his teeth into a meaty game concept, he should really take off.

NAME THIS GAME

U.S. Games/Standard Atari 2600

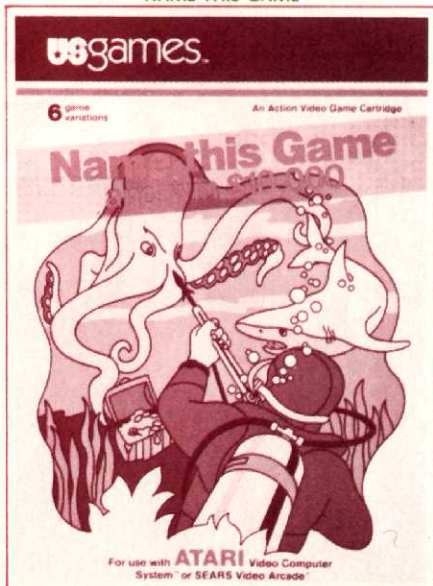
Variouly dubbed "Guardian of the Deep" and "Guardians of the Treasure", this first-rate Ron Dubren-designed game has finally been released (*without* any title at all!) In fact, U.S. Games has built an entire contest around creating a sobriquet for this game.

If ever a videogame deserved a name, this one does. What at first deceptively appears to be a mindless invasion contest set underwater, actually proves itself to be a highly playable and satisfying program.

Players take the role of an underwater diver, swimming from left to right at the base of the playfield, guarding a cache of glittering gold bars. At the top of the screen, a boat likewise drifts back and forth just inches above a monstrous octopus, whose ever-growing and shifting tentacles play a vital part in this contest.

Also patrolling these waters is a hungry shark, moving ever-downward in serpentine fashion toward the

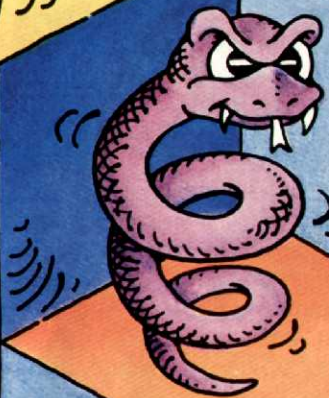
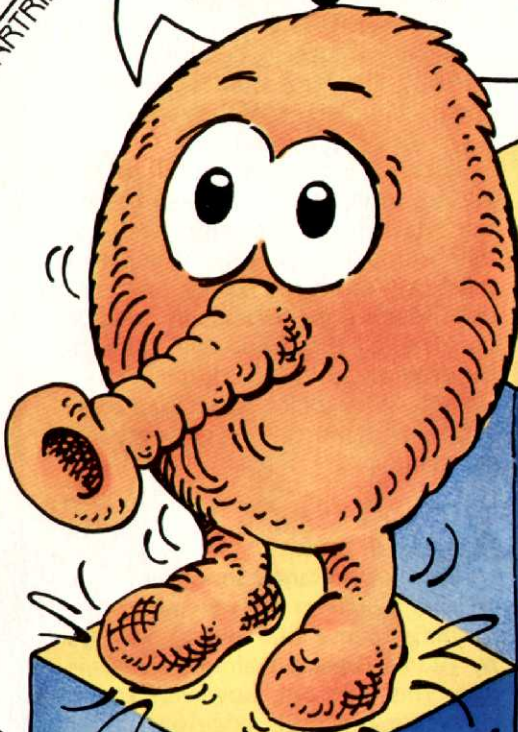
NAME THIS GAME



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PROGRAMMABLE PARADE

vulnerable diver, who must fire a blast upwards at the carnivore of the deep in order to send it back to the beginning of its route. Should the shark reach the diver, however, the end of that round is only a gobble away.

PHOENIX

Atari/Standard Atari 2600

When Centuri decided, at the eleventh hour, to sell the home rights containing a clutch of its most popular arcade titles to Atari instead of Coleco, the company was definitely rolling the dice. Coleco's juggernaut of a third-wave system, ColecoVision, so overwhelmed the gaming world upon its release that it began to look as if Centuri had lost the crapshoot. Surely, no one at Atari could do real justice to graphics-oriented coin-op translations like **Vanguard** and **Phoenix** — or so it seemed.

Atari has obviously begun using



PHOENIX (2600)

new designers to create their 2600 titles. In the wake of such video sleeping pills as **Yars' Revenge** and **Demons to Diamonds**, the quick release of **Vanguard**, **Ms. Pac-Man** and **Phoenix** is a wake-up call.

Impressive as **Vanguard** is, **Phoenix** somehow manages to be even better. It is perhaps the finest invasion title ever produced for the 2600!

The excitement begins with the stair-step formation of embryonic bird-beasties making their on-screen appearance. Two racks of these young monsters, just beginning to take wing, must be eliminated before players get to meet the grown-up version.

Suddenly, the screen swarms with

the dreaded Phoenix birds! Sweeping left to right, dropping death-bombs all the way, the birds must be hit dead center. Blow off one of their wings and it will merely grow back!

After dealing with the adult threat, we get to meet the evil alien behind the attack itself. Ensconsed within a bomb-dropping spaceship, the player must use his limited shields and constant, darting movements in order to punch a hole, **Breakout**-style, through the craft and into the cockpit.

Fantastic graphics, unexcelled play-action and more — highly recommended!

RAM IT

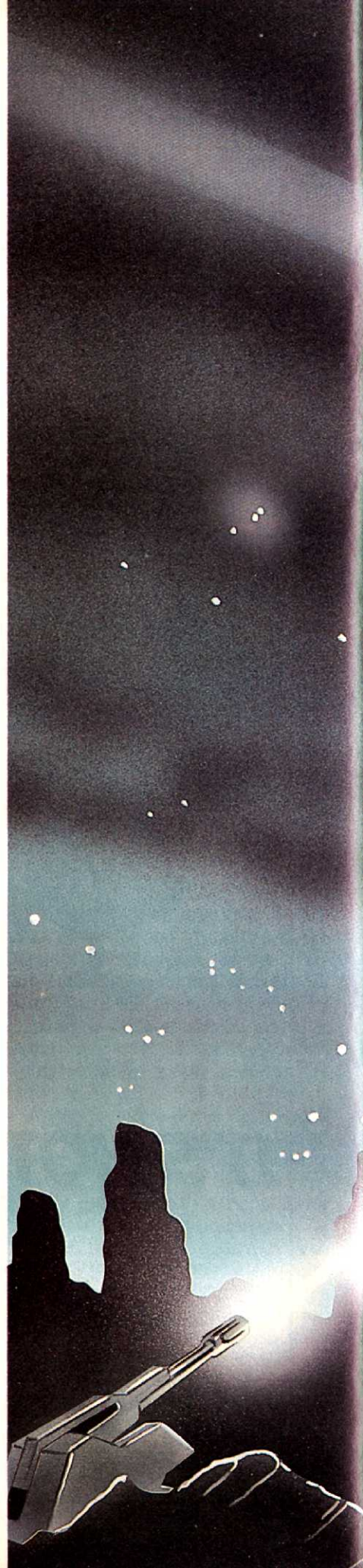
Telesys/Atari 2600

This abstract target shoot-'em-up is a clever switch on the venerable wall-bashing theme that was pioneered by Atari's **Breakout** almost six years ago. This time out, however, you're smashing the walls edge-on, rather than knocking them apart with a frontal assault.

The gamer uses the joystick to move a shooter up and down the line which vertically bisects the playfield. Pushing the joystick to the left or right while holding the action button, fires a burst in the desired direction. At the left and right edges of the display are a series of horizontally-oriented bars in a rainbow of colors. The bars are stacked one above the next, with a short space separating each one.

At the start of the action, all the bars begin growing toward the center of the screen. You can whittle away a segment by shooting the end of one of these bars. If you manage to blast away the entire bar, it stays out of play for the balance of the round. In some of the variants included on the cartridge, the gamer can scrag an entire bar with just one shot if you strike while the target is flashing.

The visuals are fairly nice in **Ram It**. The Telesys designer has kept the limitations of the 2600 firmly in mind and has, consequently, not asked the machine to produce images that incorporate more detail than it is capable of presenting.





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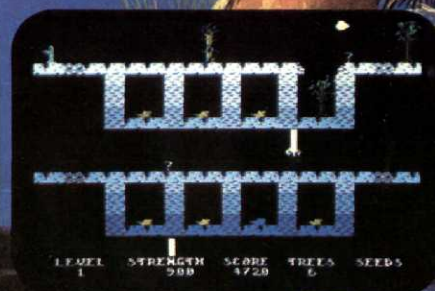
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THE PLAYERS GUIDE TO
FANTASY
GAMES

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THE SCIENCE OF FANTASY

It is ironic that the computer, that proud product of modern science, has become the medium for the presentation of so much fantasy. Yet that is precisely what has happened over the last couple of years. Though science fiction remains the most frequently used theme for electronic games, fantasy is currently no worse than third — and closing rapidly on sports in second place.

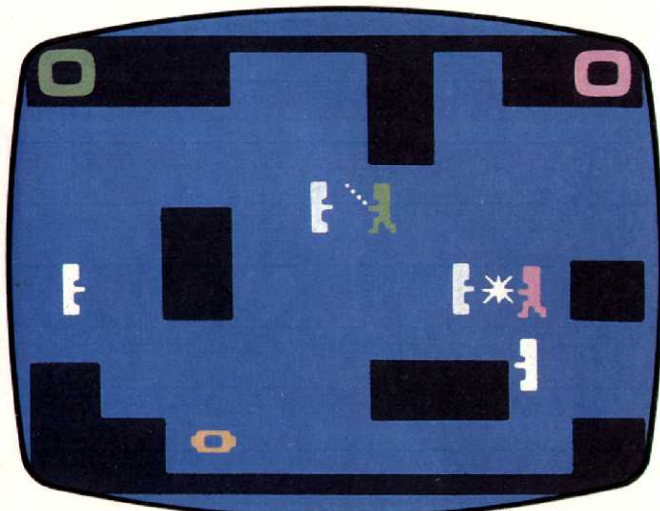
Just as public interest was generated by television series like "Star Trek" and movies such as "Star Wars" as well as "Close Encounters of the Third Kind", fantasy gaming got a tremendous boost from the success of "Lord of the

Rings" as a book first and then as an animated film. Sword and sorcery tales grew in paperbacks and comic books and we saw the invention of **Dungeons & Dragons**, the fantasy role-playing game. (It's no accident that almost all of the videogame adventure cartridges are based on classic fantasy concepts.)

Why do gamers love fantasy? Well, everyone enjoys an escape from the humdrum, and nothing could be more out of the ordinary (for most arcaders, at any rate) than mounting your trusty winged steed and taking up your enchanted blade in the cause of "ultimate good" versus "total evil".

SLAYING DIGITAL DRAGONS

Advanced Dungeons & Dragons has finally reached the home gaming screen, by courtesy of Mattel, and this Intellivision-compatible cartridge proves to have been worth the wait. The player navigates a three-person adventure team over a terrain

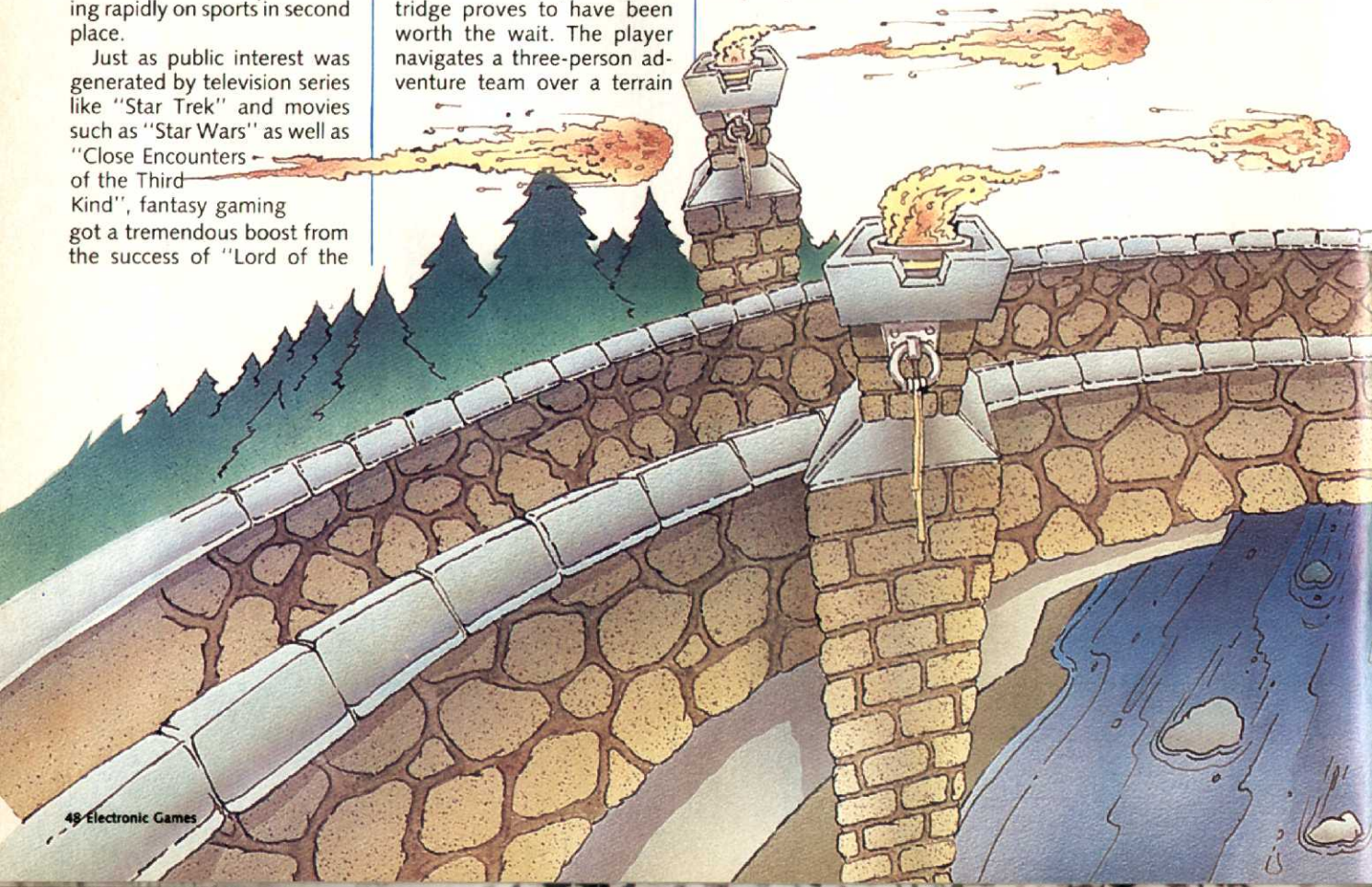


QUEST FOR THE RINGS

map, switching to a different display whenever the party enters one of the labyrinths that lie beneath some of the mountain ranges.

Quest for the Rings, the boardgame/videogame hybrid from Odyssey for the Odyssey² and new O³, allows

several would-be heroes to participate in the struggle to round up the 10 magical keys which the nefarious Ringmaster has hidden beneath the castles. There are three different layouts of mazes, a whole roster of character types, each with special attributes, and



Land of Fantasy

plenty of dragons, orcs and such to prevent the forces of good from triumphing too easily.

Dragonstomper, a multi-load game for the Supercharger from Arcadia, is sure to appeal to all quest game fans. You must traverse the countryside, help the oppressed village and then wrest the druidic amulet from a dragon. On-screen prompts cue the players when it's time to enter any of several types of command instructions that can give more scope for interesting action than do most other videogame adventures.

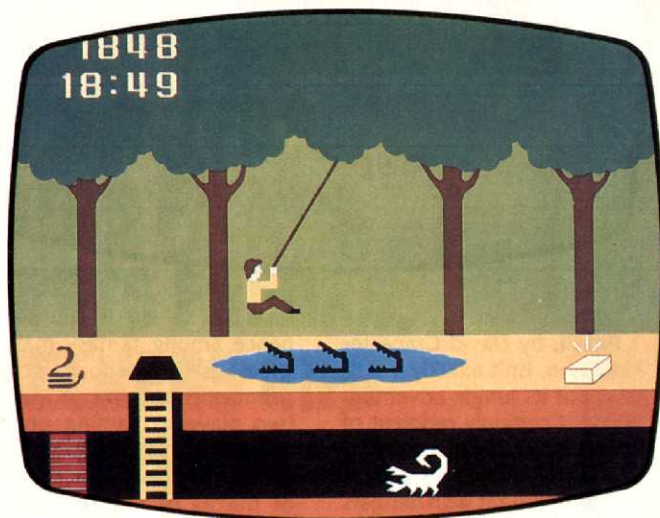
More arcade-like but still in the action-adventure genre is Imagic's **Dragonfire**. Especial-

ly useful as an introduction to fantasy gaming for younger players — while still having enough thrills to please the rest, the contest requires the player to dodge the dragon's fireballs and then snatch up the valuable prizes before the roguish reptile can fry the on-screen character.

STRANGE PORTS OF CALL

Not all fantasy games involve sword-swinging barbarians or displayed dragon-slaying knights. Adventures in exotic locales redolent of the fearsome unknown are all the rage in videogaming today, possibly being spurred by the tremendous impact of "Raiders of the Lost Ark" in the nation's movie theaters.

Heading the list is **Pitfall**, the 2600 cartridge from Ac-



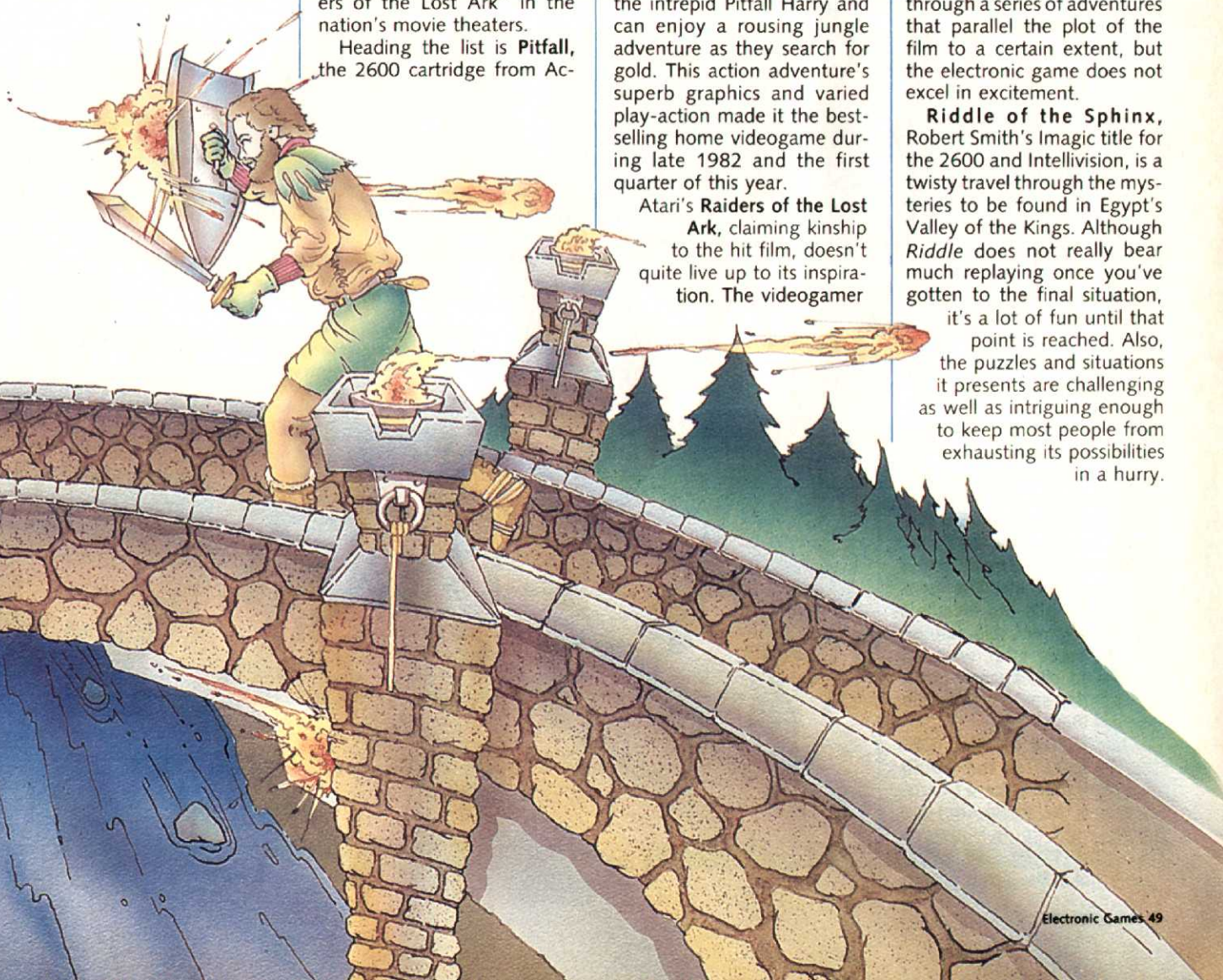
PITFALL

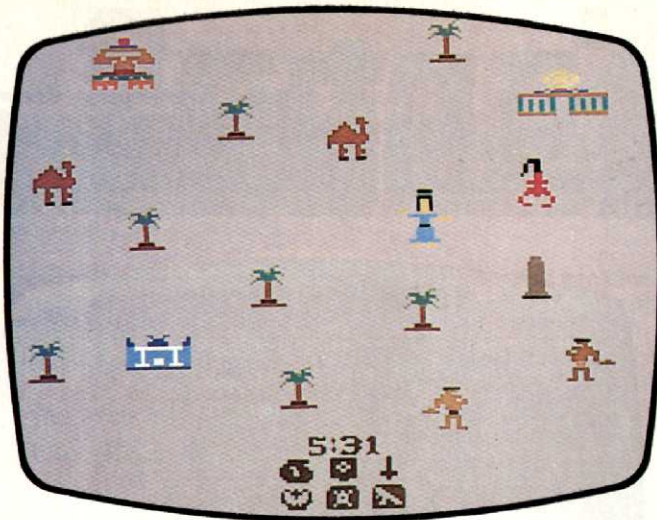
tivation. The gamer becomes the intrepid Pitfall Harry and can enjoy a rousing jungle adventure as they search for gold. This action adventure's superb graphics and varied play-action made it the best-selling home videogame during late 1982 and the first quarter of this year.

Atari's **Raiders of the Lost Ark**, claiming kinship to the hit film, doesn't quite live up to its inspiration. The videogamer

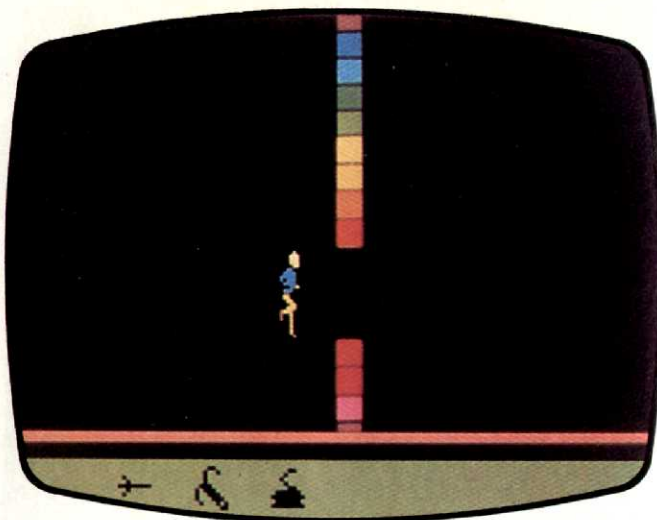
moves the on-screen hero through a series of adventures that parallel the plot of the film to a certain extent, but the electronic game does not excel in excitement.

Riddle of the Sphinx, Robert Smith's Imagic title for the 2600 and Intellivision, is a twisty travel through the mysteries to be found in Egypt's Valley of the Kings. Although **Riddle** does not really bear much replaying once you've gotten to the final situation, it's a lot of fun until that point is reached. Also, the puzzles and situations it presents are challenging as well as intriguing enough to keep most people from exhausting its possibilities in a hurry.





RIDDLE OF THE SPHINX



SWORQUEST

Pitfall, by David Crane for Activision, isn't exactly a fantasy, but its jungle adventure theme is certainly redolent of the novels of Burroughs, Haggard and Mundy. It's a treasure hunt fought with dangers on all sides.

THE FANTASY ARCADE

Demon Attack is to fantasy as **Space Invaders** is to science fiction.

Both are essentially arcade games that include visuals which embody, respectively, fantasy and science fiction images. Rob Fulop's Imagic release, the 1983 Arcade Award winner as "Best Videogame of the Year", is now available for several systems, including the 2600, Intellivision and Odyssey², and is fine in all formats. The invasion game pits the arcader's horizontally movable cannon against wave after wave of sleek and deadly creatures, which often split in two when you hit them.

The Wizard of Wor (CBS Videogames for the 2600) and **Incredible Wizard** (Astrocade for the Astrocade) are both based upon Midway's *Wizard of Wor* coin-op. This game holds the same promi-

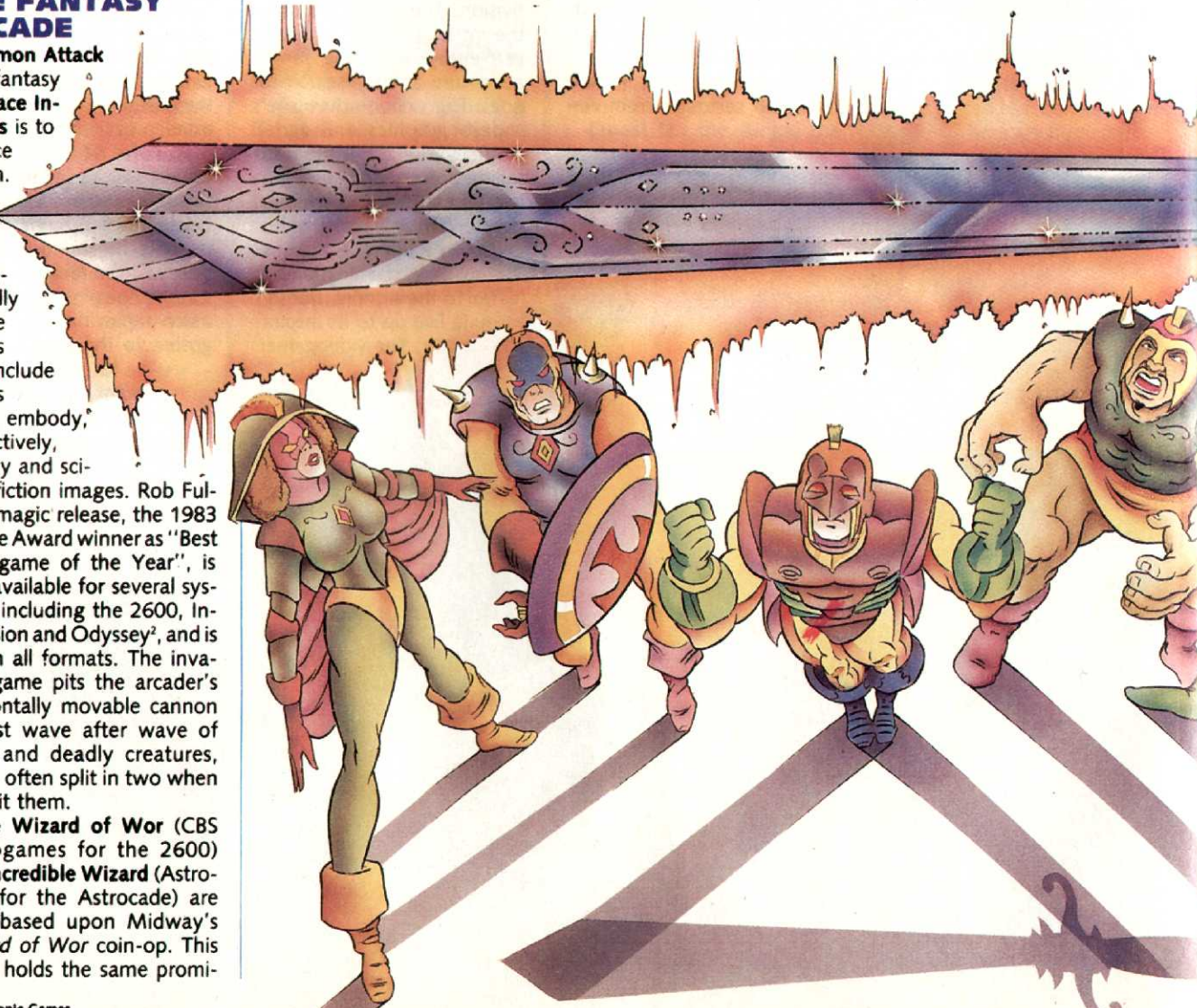
nence among fantasy mazes as **Berzerk** does among science fictional ones. One or two players, teaming up or competing against one another, must clear a succession of mazes of raging beasts, some of which can become invisible, and occasionally pit

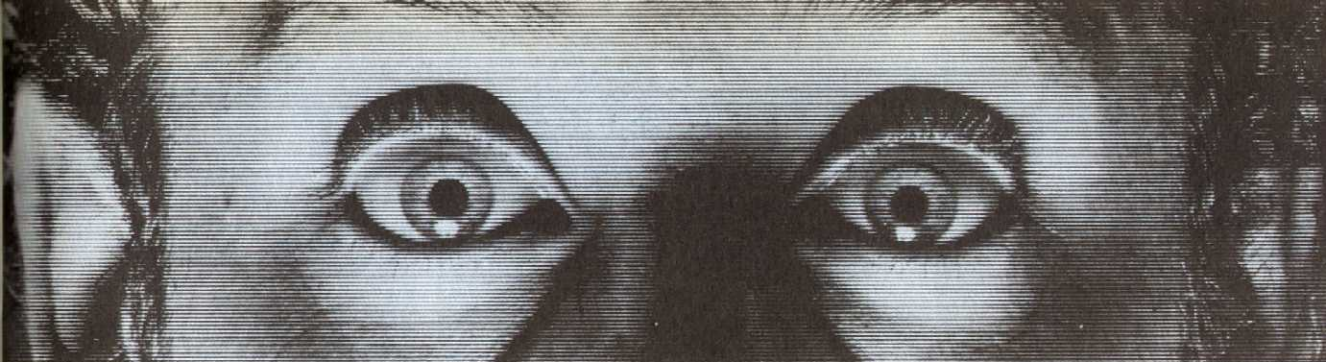
swords against sorcery in a showdown with the elusive wizard himself.

Wizard of Wor is also made available for all the Atari 400/800/1200 computers in an outstanding edition from Roklan. It will shortly join Colco's line of cartridges.

THE ADVENTURE BEGINS...

When Atari picked "Adventure" as the title of the videogame field's first fantasy cartridge, the company did so with a profound sense of history. **Adventure** is the name





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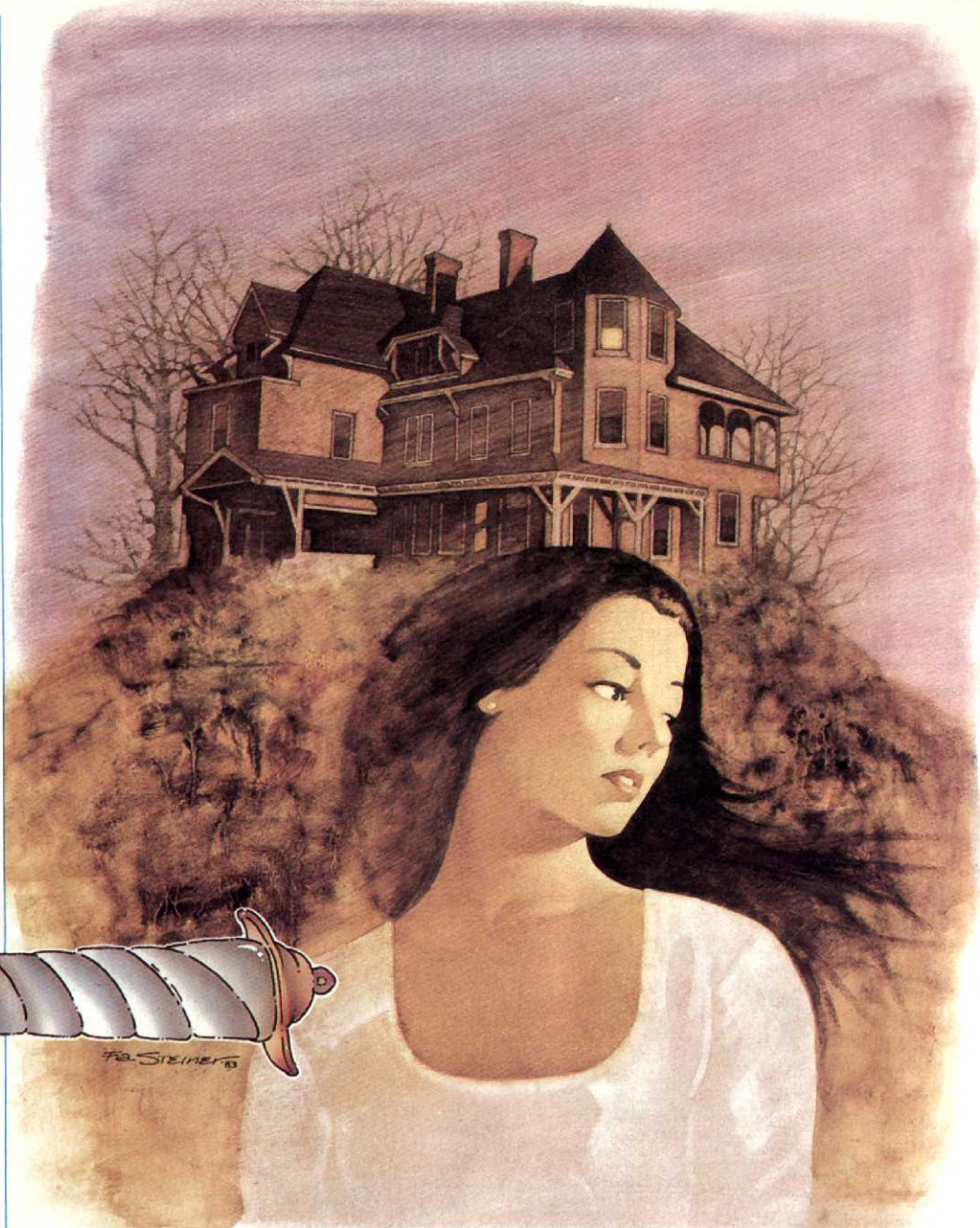
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Crowther and Woods gave to the first computer text adventure program that served as the model for several generations of prose quests.

Even though it has been on the market for a couple of years, *Adventure* still has the power to fascinate. The player, who has a choice of three levels of difficulty, can roam through a varied fantasyland finding the keys, fighting the dragons and eventually locating the chalice and returning it to its rightful owner. The graphics are tame stuff (the hero is only a humble cursor), although the action adventure concepts introduced in *Adventure* are still viable today.

Haunted House is based on a more supernatural view of the fantastic. In this relatively simple 2600 cartridge, you must prowl through a multi-level mansion as you assemble pieces of an urn while avoiding the frightening ghosts and other horrors too unspeakable to mention. The graphics for

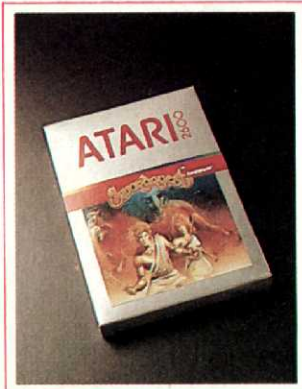
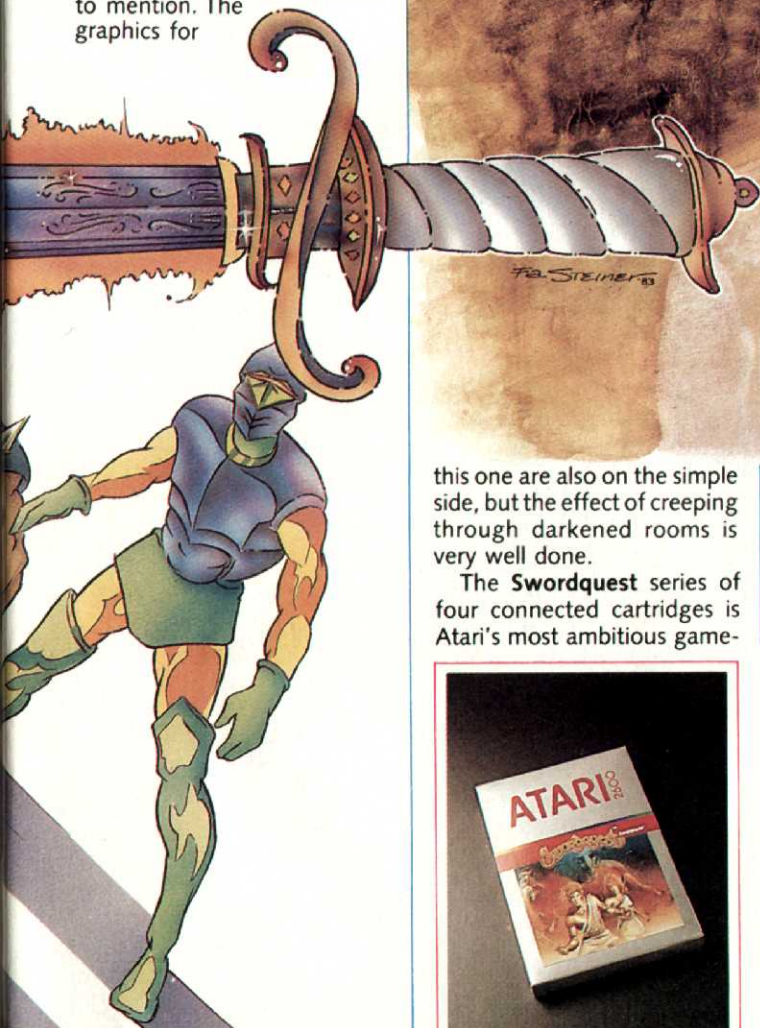


this one are also on the simple side, but the effect of creeping through darkened rooms is very well done.

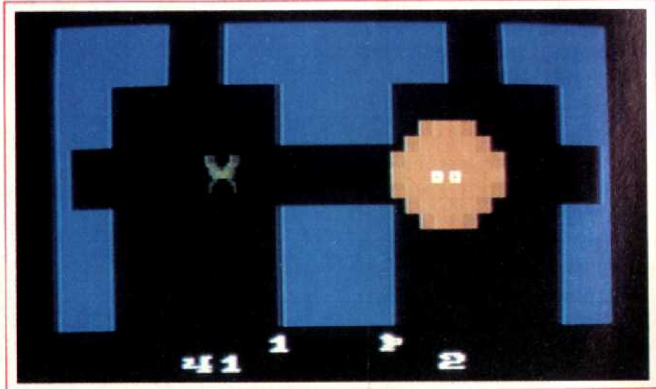
The *Swordquest* series of four connected cartridges is Atari's most ambitious game-

fantasy. Buttressed by a parallel series of comic books, one of which will be included inside of each package, *Swordquest* will eventually take arcaders to four different worlds, one each for earth,

fire, water and air. Each individual cartridge concerns a quest for a major artifact, though clues from all are needed if the player is to solve the major mystery and claim the bejeweled sword.



SWORDQUEST



HAUNTED HOUSE

EXPLORE THE WORLDS OF COMPUTER FANTASY

SWORDS AGAINST THE APPLE

Wizardry, by Sir-Tech, is without a doubt, the most popular fantasy adventure game for the Apple II at the present time. Although the limitations of this program, as compared to a round of *Dungeons & Dragons* refereed by a human dungeon-master, will become obvious after a short period of test-play, no other game comes closer to providing the type of contest favored by most players of non-electronic role-playing games.

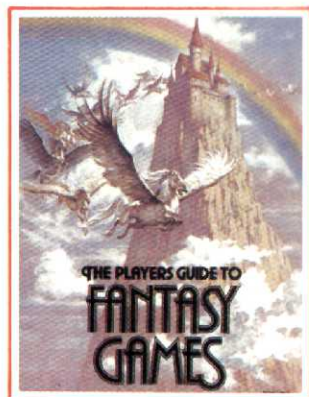
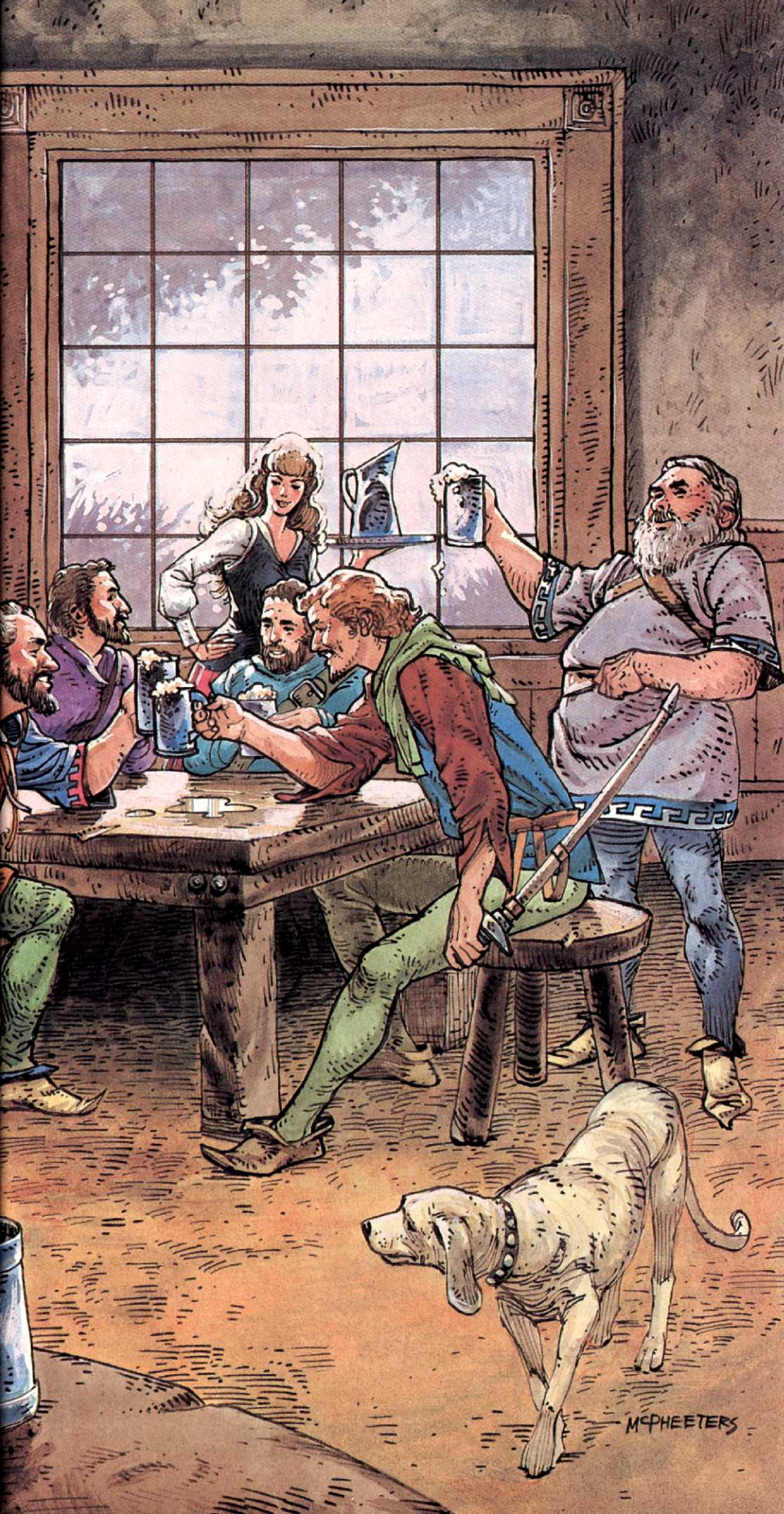
Wizardry comes with an introductory scenario called "Proving Grounds of the Mad Overlord", in which the players can learn the system and work their characters up to higher levels of experience at which they will acquire superior powers and abilities in their

chosen class. Once you have guided a party to victory in "Proving Grounds", you can then easily transfer those same characters to new adventure disks, the very first

of which, **Knight of Diamonds**, is already available.

Among the strengths of *Wizardry*, you can adventure with a party of up to six characters, the order for each of which can be entered sepa-





rately in response to screen prompts during the combat phases of the game. There are eight classes of character classes, though several are special professions for which only certain characters will possess the qualifications, and each character is rolled up individually utilizing the smooth Wizardry generation system. In the labyrinth, a party of explorers sees a mouse's-eye view of the maze, which is updated each time the party moves. During combat, a full-color drawing of the principal foe is also shown.

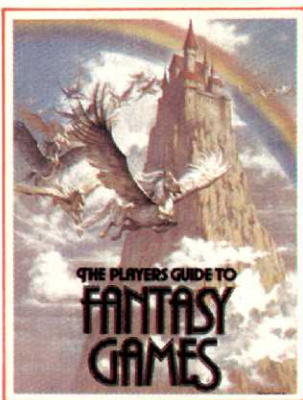
The most serious limitation is that the party must move and fight as a unit. That is, it's impossible to split the "thief" character off from the main party for a little solitary sneaking. The other lack is that this is primarily a combat-oriented fantasy videogame. The party generally must either fight or run, leaving very little chance for actual role-playing.

Sir-Tech is believed to be readying a super-duper version of Wizardry, one which will require a dual disk drive, and this **Wizardry II** may well address some of these lacks.

Taken as a whole, however, *Wizardry* is one outstanding programming achievement, and an absolute "must buy" for those fantasy-gamers who own an Apple.

KNIGHTS OF THE COMPUTER

You are situated at King Arthur's right-hand, at the Round Table in the fabled city of Camelot. In **King Arthur's Heir**, a new action adventure from Automated Simulations, you have the opportunity to prove that you're the proper knight to succeed the great monarch on his throne. De-



signer Mark Benioff casts the solitary player as Sir Galahad, who must travel through the seven lands of Camelot, find the Scroll of Truth and bring it back to Camelot so that he may claim the right of following Arthur as King.

Color graphics and special sound effects enliven this real-time quest for action on the Atari 400/800/1200XL computers. Movement and combat instructions are entered by using the joystick, which makes the play fast and exciting as well as quite challenging. Roam the magical land, picking up treasures and magic items, but watch out

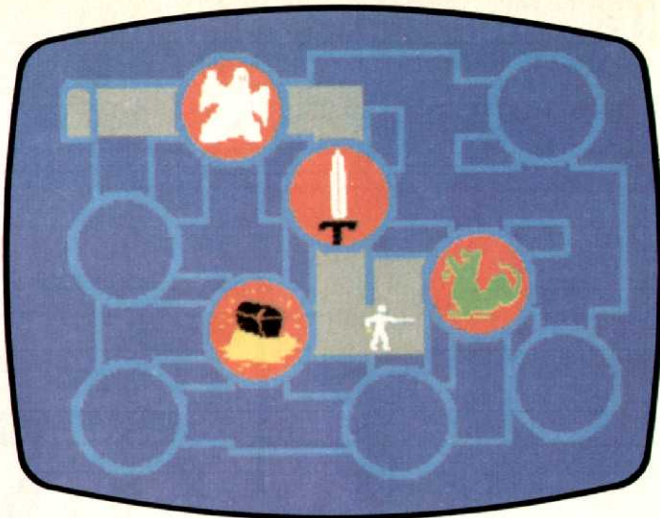
for the wizards and other minions of evil who will seek to frustrate your quest and keep you from the kingship.

INSIDE THE DEADLY TEMPLE

Descend the stone steps of the mysterious Aztec temple and search its musty, and at times, lethally dangerous rooms for the sacred idol which has brought you to this strange place. That is the theme of **Aztec**, a one-player action adventure for the Apple II from Datamost.

The player controls the on-screen explorer by entering a succession of single keystroke commands that govern activities such as movement and combat. Although this will take computerists a bit longer to master than wielding a joystick to get things done, the system is remarkably clean and logical. By taking advantage of the option of setting the difficulty of each round of play, you can start at an easy setting while you're learning and then graduate to a more demanding test later on.

Aztec is, in a way, a cross



ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS

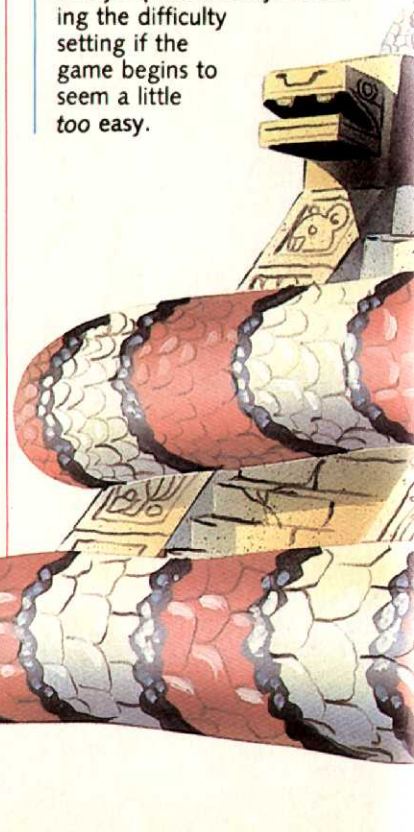
between an adventure and a climbing game. You must go up and down ladders to various levels, occasionally leaping over a chasm when there's no other route to your objective.

During the course of your travels, you'll encounter an assortment of beasts. Some are hardly any more than annoyances, but when you come face to face with the huge tentacled horror which guards a key staircase, you'll

need every bit of skill you've got to win through. As you search for the idol, you'll also find numerous chests and piles of rubble, which may be searched for valuable treasures. Of course, those same hiding places may also contain bombs with lit fuses, but it would not be an adventure without a bit of danger, now would it?

Because the exact layout of the temple is generated anew by the computer before each game, **Aztec** isn't one of those games which you'll solve once and pack away in the back of your collection. The excitement remains keen through game after game, and you can always up the ante by increasing the difficulty setting if the game begins to seem a little too easy.

SWORD AND THE SORCERER



COMING ATTRACTIONS

One of the most exciting aspects of computerized fantasy gaming is that this segment of the hobby is just in its infancy. The steady increase in the memory capacity of both videogame and computer-game systems is certain to continue and the ever-more powerful machines will then be able to handle even more remarkable fantasy contests than the ones which we enjoy today.

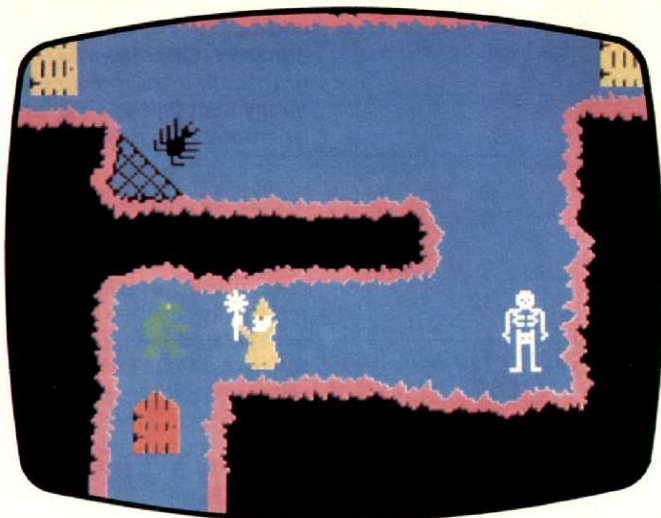
Coleco will be getting into the adventure game field with a couple of titles for the ColecoVision this year. One is tied to the movie "Swords and Sorcery" while the other is a licensed computer edition of the non-electronic role-playing videogame, "Tunnels and Trolls".

Mattel intends to follow up its success with *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons* by publishing a whole line of simi-

of simi-



MADD



TUNNELS AND TROLLS

lar adventure games. E. Gary Gygax, the co-creator of *Dungeons & Dragons* is reportedly scripting one personally, which should be a real treat for fantasy adventurers. The same publisher also plans

to have several adventures to go with its Intellivision III system, due out in the fall. These games will feature numerous screens of action, all characterized by absolutely stunning graphics.

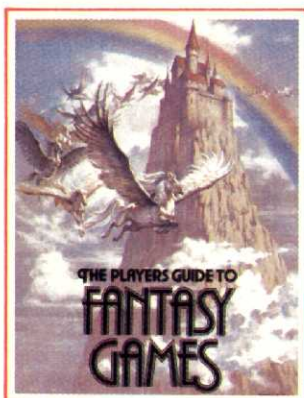
COIN-OP FANTASY

VENTURING FORTH

The first coin-op game to overtly court the fantasy theme was clearly Exidy's *Venture*. Definitely designed with play-action, rather than role-playing, as its central theme, players moved, initially, over a schematic drawing of the floor plan on each level of the dungeon.

Winky, the arcader's surrogate, consists of a smiling face armed with a bow and an end-

less supply of arrows. Avoiding the roaming "hall monsters", Wink approaches the chambers one at a time. Each room is distinctive, with its own prize and guardians — hence: the Goblin Room, Snake Room, etc. There are rooms which have moving walls, and it isn't necessary — nor does it earn points — to waste the guardian ghoulies. The idea is simple: get the treasure and get the heck out. Everything else is incidental.



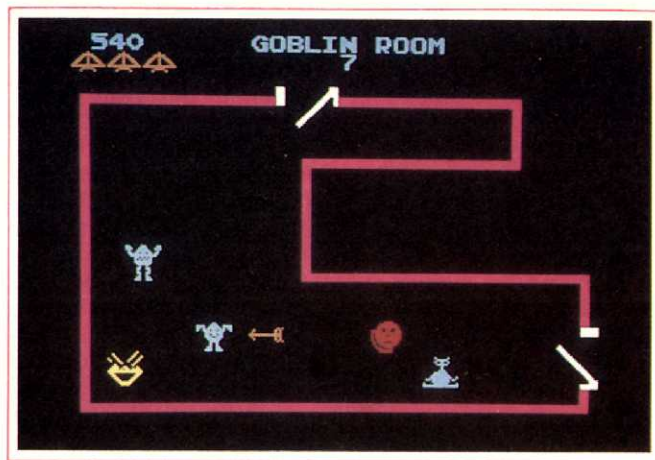
Special music gives each room a further identity with "theme" songs for goblins, snakes and all of the other denizens of the first coin-op

dungeon. Oh, remember, do not dawdle in the rooms or the boogy man (in the guise of a hall monster) will getcha'!

THE WONDERFUL WIZARD OF WOR

Science-fantasy, unlike science fiction, usually doesn't rely strictly on either known or extrapolated laws of science for its context. Instead, plot elements from the sword and sorcery genre are intermixed with the more familiar SF artifacts such as rocketships and alien planets.

Wizard of Wor, designed by Dave Nutting Associates for Midway, used the dungeon



VENTURE

theme, combined freely with wizards and a shifting labyrinth full of fantasy denizens, all set on an alien world!

Essentially a maze shoot-out, this labyrinth becomes emptier and emptier as players move through the racks, eventually reaching The Pit, where there are no walls at all and the space monsters must be battled in the open. A radar scanner appears at the base of the playfield to pinpoint the invisible aliens.

Perhaps *Wizard of Wor's* most unique play mechanic was its "tandem" format. A marvelous solitaire contest, *Wizard* is a blast as a head-to-head game. But when the two arcaders cooperate, in standard adventure fashion, you have got a unique playing experience.

Occasionally, game-playing partners accidentally blast one another, but those are the, eh, "fortunes of Wor"!

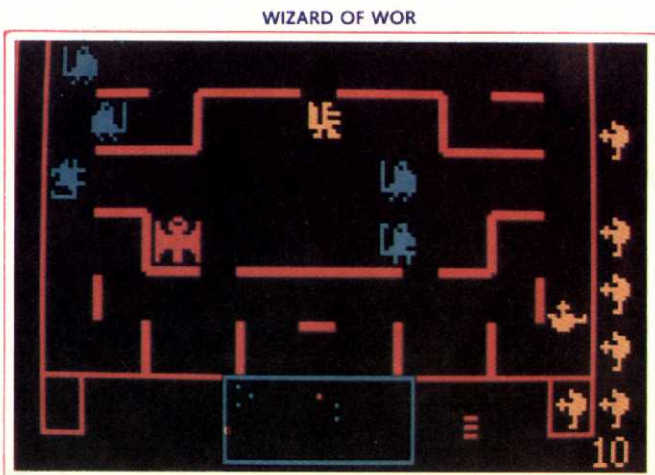
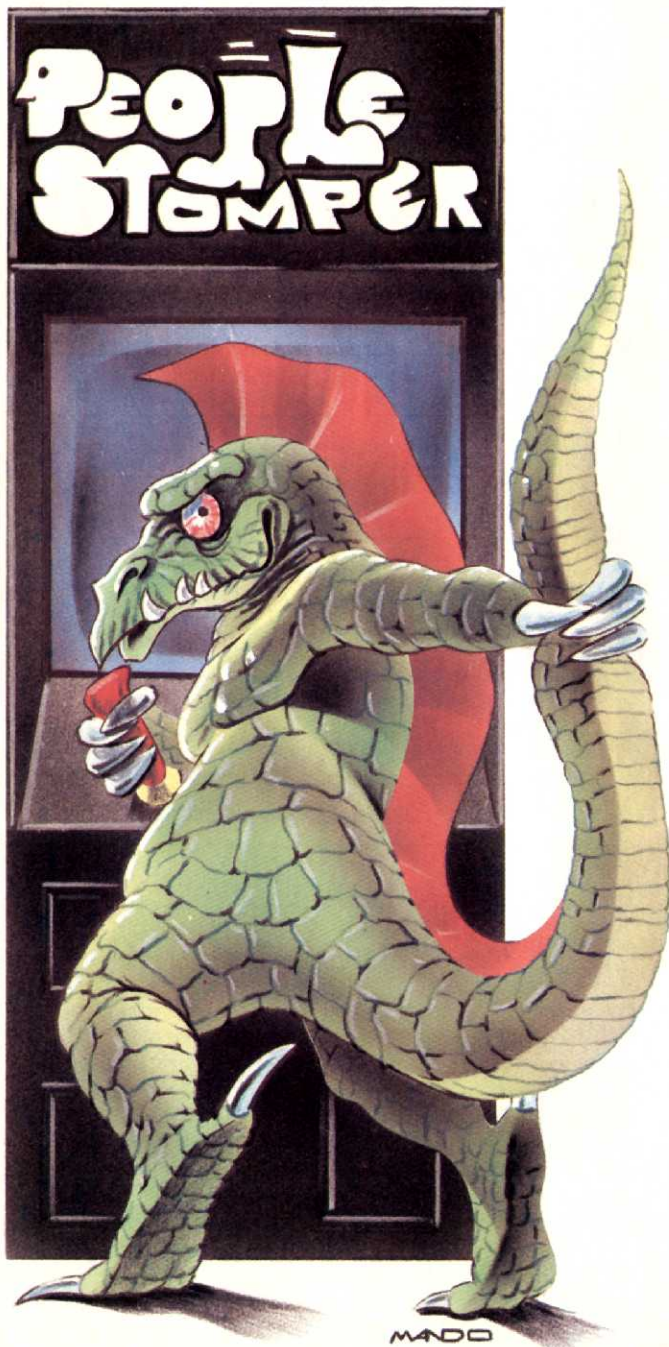
TOMORROW'S JOUSTING!

The medieval joust was

perhaps the archetypal symbol of feudal, one-on-one combat. The days of chivalry were at their high point, and horses draped with their master's war colors pranced in the sunlight, carrying the proud form of an armored warrior on their strong backs.

The image of lance striking shield at full gallop stirred the blood and gripped the imagination. In fact, it still does, as the blossoming popularity of medieval history continues to prove.

"Jousting" has now gone electronic, with Williams' tremendously popular science fictional updating theme found in *Joust*. Great, long-legged warrior birds are incorporating one of the few head-to-head arcade machines. Electronic medieval futurism? Whatever the game's name, whatever the genre, *Joust* proves the viability of traditional fantasy symbols and characters (a sort of science fictional re-creation of the days of Ivanhoe) in an electronic game setting!





Poos

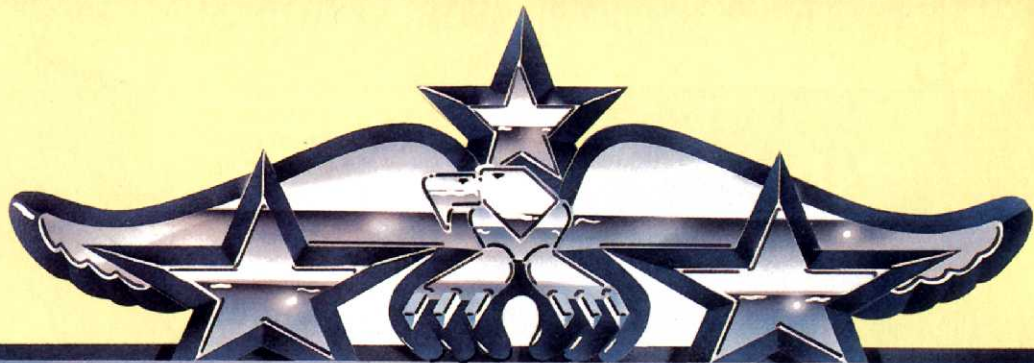
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STRATEGY SESSION

MICROSURGEON

Imagic/Intellivision

The patient is critical. You're the microsurgeon, controlling a small probe through the patient's bloodstream, fighting off bacteria, viruses, and other diseases. Your mission: clear out all deadly conditions before they become terminal.

The probe is controlled by the controller disk while firing off treatments is done using the side action buttons.

There are some three different treatments; — ultrasonic rays that can take care of almost everything, antibiotics which ward off bacteria, and aspirin which eliminates viruses. You can pick your own treatment with the keypad and may change it at any time.

The conditions must be treated before they go terminal or before the probe runs out of energy. The status chart shows the condition of each organ from "good" to "terminal". The more of the disease that's destroyed, the better that organ's condition will become.

The main strategy of **Microsurgeon** is to refer to the chart and treat the most serious afflictions first. If more than one item is serious, pick one, and don't attempt to cure it totally. Simply clear out enough to bring it to a fair condition and get right to the other organ, otherwise you'll run out of time

Play Doctor with Imagic's New Cartridge

By FRANK TETRO JR.

and the second organ will go terminal.

When traveling throughout the body, try to stay within the veins and arteries, as movement there is much faster than in organs or bones. Once the probe leaves the confines of the

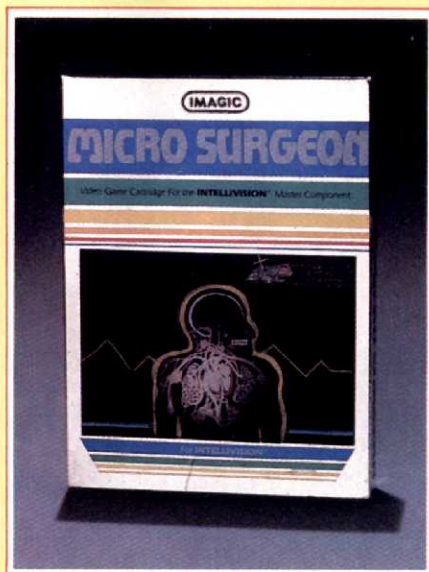
veins it will be attacked by white blood cells which will drain energy from it. Firing ultrasonic rays will destroy white blood cells. It is important to remember that when the chart says that the heart needs treatment, it's not really the heart that needs help, but the buildup of cholesterol in the veins throughout the entire body. As you move through the body, simply shoot out these cholesterol as they slow your velocity as well.

Bacteria have the power to disappear, so once you *do* see one, get to it quickly. Studying the map of the body in the center of the instruction booklet is also very helpful, as it will teach you the fastest routes through the body.

Remember the organs which are paired (i.e., lungs, kidneys), for you must treat both in order to improve their condition.

When roaming the body, it's best to be armed with the ultrasonic ray, since this kills almost everything and will help you clear cholesterol as you go along.

When the status chart reads "infection serious", this means that there is a buildup of bacteria in the body. Use an antibiotic. It's best to move through the body when searching for bacteria, because if you stay in one place, the bacteria will not appear as often as if you are mobile. Once you



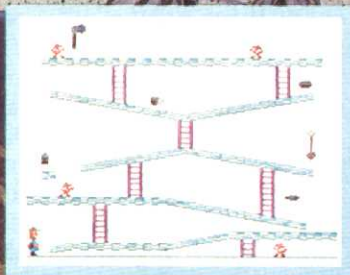
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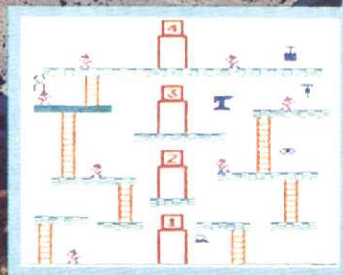


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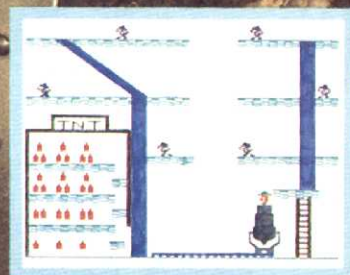
Here are just three of ten rounds in the game:



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Round 10: The Cannon.
Shoot yourself to the top!

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see bacteria, head directly for it as it only stays on the screen temporarily.

The virus moves around through the body at will. If you can hit the virus with one shot, you will be awarded extra energy for your probe.

The tumors in the brain grow like real tumors. Some, if very small, take only one or two shots to destroy, while bigger ones may absorb up to four rays before shrinking down to nothing.

Another thing to keep in mind is that it is not necessary to go face to face with the virus, bacteria, tumors, etc. in order to shoot them. You have a fair range of fire, so shoot at conditions from a distance. This will save time and energy.

The most important thing to remember in *Microsurgeon* is to treat the most critical things first, and deal with the secondary threats last.

If you don't, you just may face a video-malpractice suit!!!

WIZARD OF WOR

Roklan/Atari Computers

In *Wizard of Wor*, you are the galactic defender who must clear out the many dungeons of a subterranean cavern, in search of the ominous wizard of the world of Wor.

Each dungeon consists of maze-like passages in which your player may traverse, as well as an escape tunnel on each side which transports the player from one side to the other (but must rejuvenate for a few seconds after each use). The dungeons are patrolled by many alien creatures, all capable of firing on the defender, with the exception of the 'worluk.



The easiest of the enemies is the blue Burwors. They don't shoot much and aren't very intelligent. Shooting a Burwor earns you 100 points. The second, more deadly, enemy is the yellow Garwor. He is more intelligent, and may fade in and out at times. The last of the patrolling monsters is the red Thorwors. They are fast, intelligent and very deadly, and are worth 500 points apiece. Once the dungeon is cleared of these creatures, a worluk will appear (except in dungeon 1). He is extremely fast and will attempt to run over you in a mad scurry for the escape tunnels. If he makes it to one, he escapes. If you shoot him before he leaves, your defender will be awarded 1000 points. In addition, the next dungeon he enters will double all point values.

Once the worluk is dealt with, there is a chance that the wizard himself will appear, hurling lightning bolts at you. He can appear and disappear at will, but will remain on-screen until he is either destroyed which will earn you 2500 points, or he destroys you which is, obviously, at the very least, worth nothing.

The best strategy for *Wizard of Wor*

is to watch the small radar screen and plan your moves by it. After playing for some time, you will see that the monsters don't like to come to you. They like to move up and down in one spot and let you come to them. The best thing to do is to find a corridor to stay in with only two exits and just let them come to you so you can shoot as they enter the corridor. Try to keep your distance from the creatures as they can also kill you by running over you. Use the escape tunnel if you need it, but remember the creatures may use them too, so don't remain near an entryway to a tunnel.

In the first few dungeons, it's okay to be the aggressor. That is, run after the creatures and shoot them. However, after that you must go on the defense and let them come to you, even though it's extremely tempting to chase after them. If you do, however, they can easily turn around, shoot, and turn back around. Once the board is cleared and the worluk appears, watch his motions. He likes to find a single wall and go around and around it a few times before leaving. When he does, move a few inches away and keep firing into the wall he's lurking around. Eventually, he'll come around and walk right into your line of fire.

When the wizard appears, *do not panic!* Quickly go to a corridor with the least amount of entryways and wait for him to appear in it. Keep firing down the corridor, and once he appears, hit him immediately.

There are two special boards in *Wizard of Wor* which are truly difficult: Dungeon 4 (the arena), where the middle of the screen has no walls, and Dungeon 12 (the pit), which has absolutely no walls. When faced with an open area, it is best to stay in one place and fire around you as the creatures approach. Most importantly — don't chase them or you will not live to regret your folly!

When the radar shows an enemy on-screen but you can't see him, approach slowly; walk to where the radar shows the enemy to be and keep firing ahead of you. The creature will become visible when he enters the same corridor as you. When this happens, shoot fast or become a permanent denizen of the dungeon. . .

MOUSE TRAP

Coleco/Coleco Vision

In *Mousetrap*, gamers direct a hungry little mouse who must make his way through a maze of corridors and



MICRO SURGEON

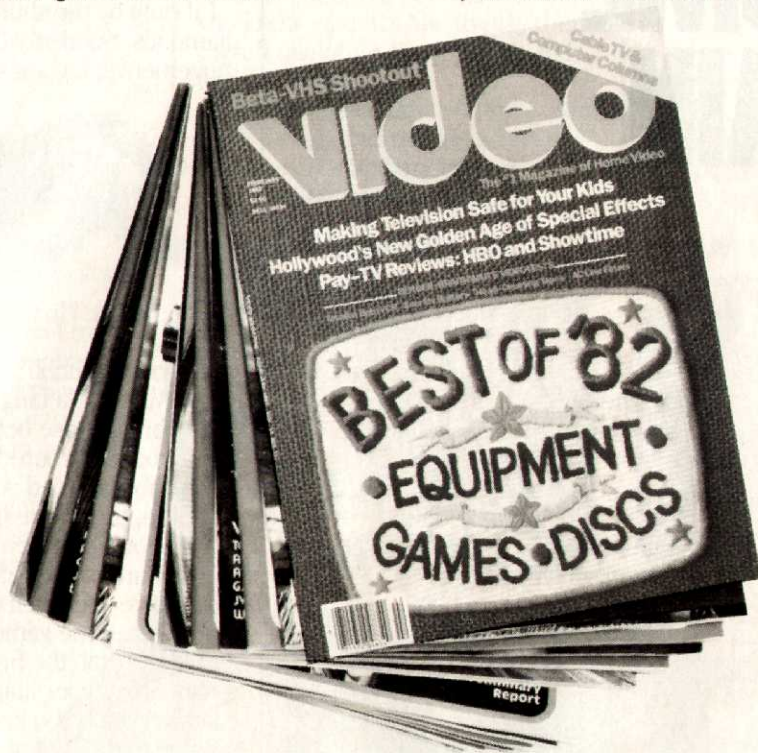
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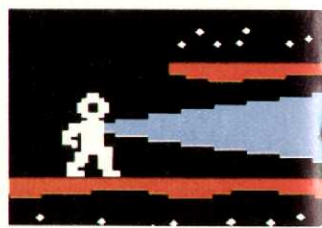
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YOU'VE GOT FROM NOW 'TIL THE END OF THIS PAGE TO BECOME MOUNTAIN KING.

flashlight.
The Flame Spirit
is very near.
A flicker. Out of
the corner of your eye.
Shine that light!



There
it is. Now,
kneel
before the
Spirit and
grab it.
Gotcha! Run!
Run to the
Temple. Watch out! Behind you!

A vampire bat trying to
steal the Flame Spirit. Climb down,
below the ledge. Another bat!

Down. To the very bottom of the
mountain.

To the pit. And the darkness.

Lit only by the shimmer of
diamonds. Suddenly there's a rush of
movement... a giant spider—after you.



Run. Jump. Up to the ledge. Hurry!
Jump again!

Aarrrrgggghhhh! You're caught.

Woven in a tangled web. Hurry,
break loose before he returns and
you're devoured.

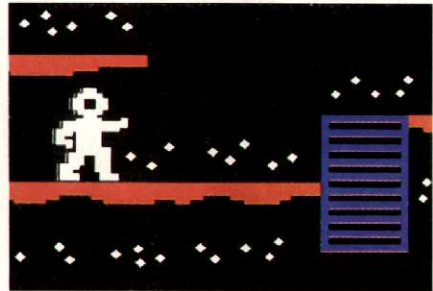
Ah! You've freed yourself. You've
lost time, but you've gained character.

Now, on to the Temple.

But beware of the guardian flames—one
false move and you'll end up charred
... and out of the game! Get to the
Temple Portal, the Spirit in your
grasp. Shine your light on the giant
guardian skull. You kneel. (Not out of
respect, but out of need—for without



No, don't
go there.
You've already
stripped that
vein of diamonds.
Go where no one
has ever dared
venture before.
Follow the caverns.
Deeper and deeper.
Down the ladders. Over to
the right—more jewels... and
CURSES!... you've fallen.
And you're losing time.
Grab those diamonds.
Ah ha! You've reached 1000!
The Flame Spirit has been set free.
Now you must capture it.



Quick—down another ladder.
Listen!

Ghostly music
floating
through the
black tunnels.
That means
the Flame Spirit
is hiding nearby.



The music grows louder as you
draw closer.

Now softer (quick, go back the
other way). Louder again. Shine your

GO!

See all those
glittering diamonds?
Grab 'em.

You need 1,000 diamonds fast.
To score, you have to
burrow deep. Deep
into the caverns.

You craftily cop a dozen
jewels. Then, jump to the ledge
below. Then down to another. And
another. But, STOP!

There's nothing but an abyss
below. Nothing for you there except
a bad fall—and even worse, delay!

kneeling,
entering the
Temple is forbidden.)

The entrance yawns
open. And you leap in. There,
enshrined deep within the

sacred Temple,
emblazoned
with gold, is the
sovereign
crown. You must
get that crown.
Without it, you
cannot become

Mountain King. With it, you'll rule.

But now comes the tough part.
Can you make the treacherous climb
back to the surface? Can you
avoid the relentless bats and
spreading cave fires on the
way? Can you even find the way?

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into your home computer. It will
plunge you into the depths, and lift
you to the heights.

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adventure, it's every bit as involving
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Your challenge is to tunnel to
safety beneath the surface of an
unknown planet as hostile, alien
vultures seek to turn you into a
buried fossil, entombed in an alien
life form.

While day turns to night above
ground, you use your trusty roto-
auger to claw a path to safety
below ground—through tons
of earth, boulders, and the
ever-spreading green
cave fungus.

Fortunately,
you can unearth
time bombs along
the way to blast away
the hazards the vultures
toss at you.

But the crawling fungus
spreads as time runs out.

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you know what it's like to play them,
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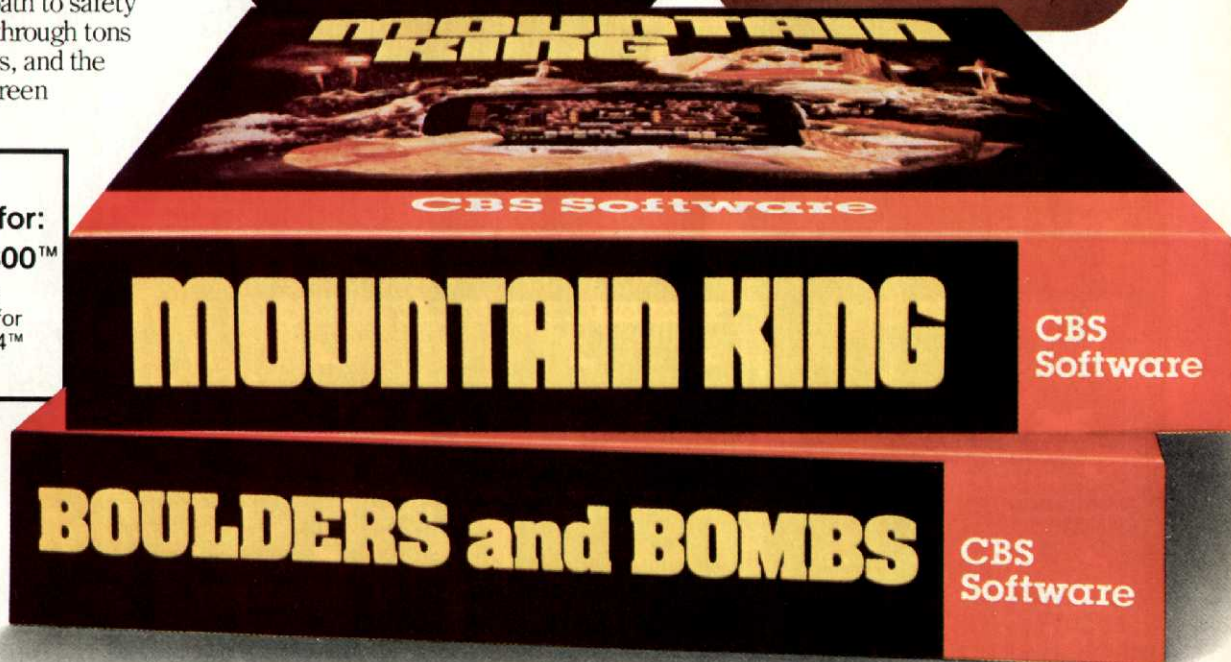
NEW! BOULDERS AND BOMBS



ROM
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available soon for
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and VIC-20™)

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CBS Software. You know what you're getting.

doorways eating cheese and various other objects. Your mouse is relentlessly pursued by a gang of six cats who will stop at nothing to reach it. The only defenses are the doorways which you may close and open upon command, and the bones which can temporarily turn you into a cat-devouring dog.

Each piece of cheese is worth 90 points. The prizes start at 1000 points and increase in value by 200 points. The first cat eaten will earn the little mouse 100 points and each additional mouse adds 200 points.

The main strategy behind *Mouse-trap* is to keep moving. The player may find the mouse a little difficult to control because of the speed at which he moves. Using light taps instead of constant pressure is more effective when trying to make a turn. The control can be mastered only after practice. Divide the screen into four sections and concentrate on clearing one part at a time.

STRATEGY SESSION

Another trick which must be mastered is learning where the colored buttons are located on the keypad without having to look down during play. The sequence is red, yellow, and blue. If you can remember that, you can look at the screen and avoid the cats while opening doors. Also learn where the "dog" button is as this can help you out of some tight spots, so don't be afraid to use it. Remember you can hit it once for all four quadrants as there is one bone located in each corner.

When a cat is moving back and forth

in his home and he suddenly stops in the middle, stay away from that house as the cat is about to jump out onto the maze, and if you are there when he jumps, it's curtains!!

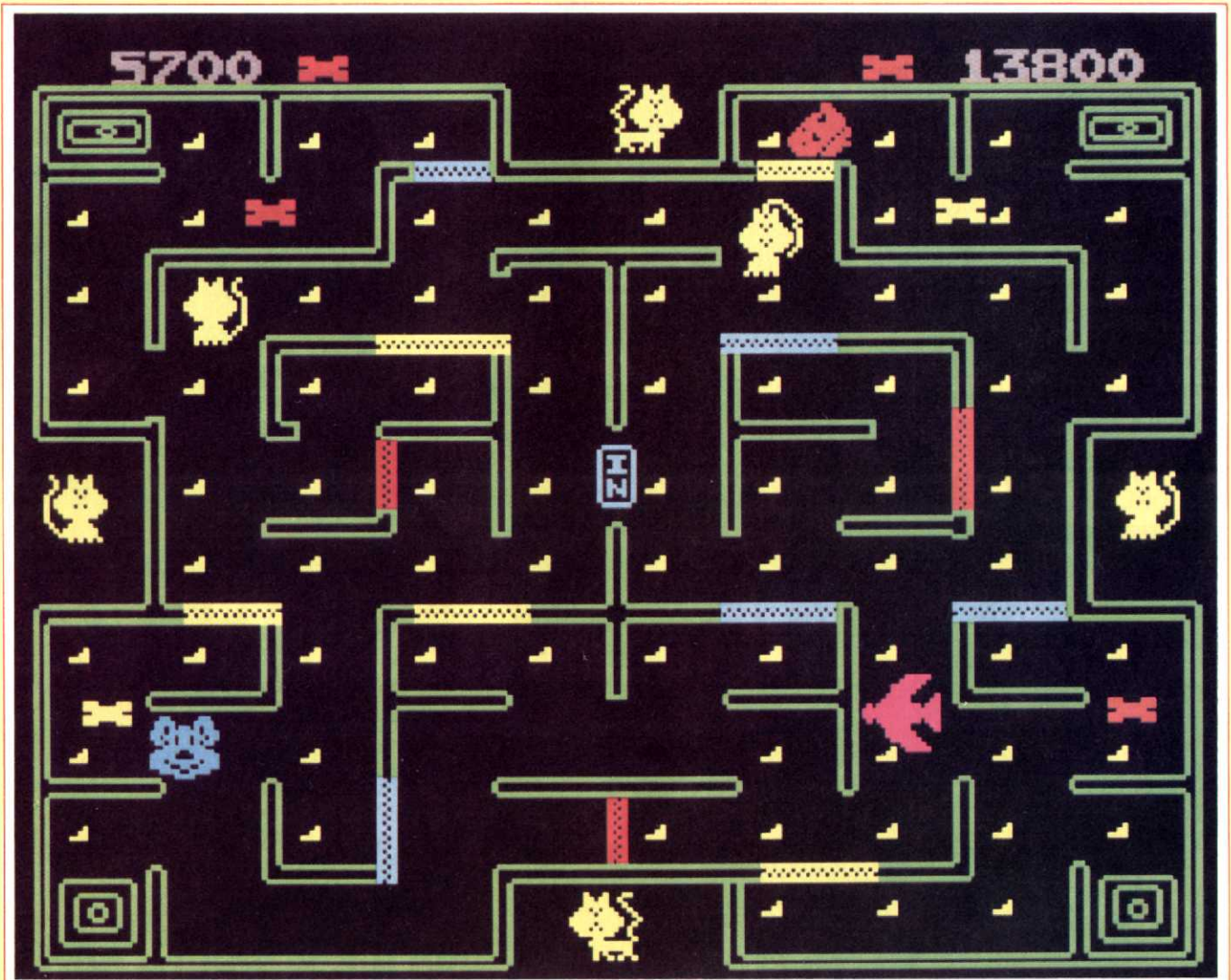
The prizes are worth a substantial amount and should be eaten wherever possible. However, don't risk your life to get a prize. It's not worth it.

In game levels 2, 3 and 4, a hawk randomly appears and chases the mouse. Turning into a dog has no effect on the hawk. The only hope is to immediately head for the "in" block located in the center screen, which will transport you to one of the four corners at random, and instantly befuddle the hawk.

So good eating, and when things look grim, remember "man's best friend"!

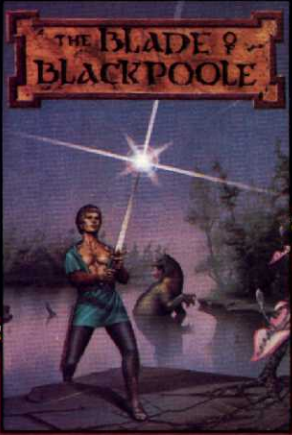
What games would you like to see strategized in coming issues? Why not drop me a line, in care of the magazine, with your ideas and we'll try to schedule them. G

MOUSE TRAP



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THE BLADE OF BLACKPOOL

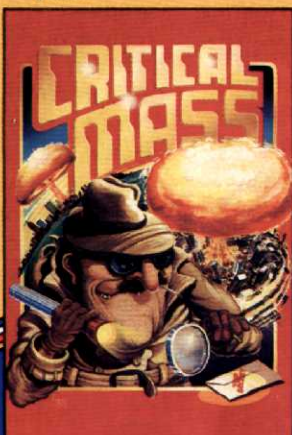
AN ILLUSTRATED ADVENTURE

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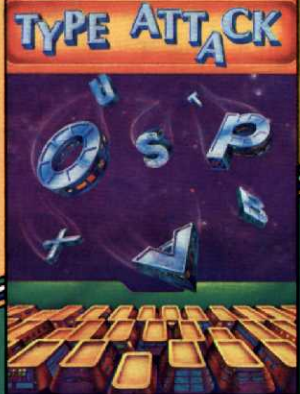
AN ILLUSTRATED ADVENTURE

Critical Mass

On Jan. 1st at 10:00 am, the U.N. received this message: "Good Morning, in exactly 9 days, the world's 5 largest cities will be destroyed by thermal nuclear weapons." At 10:03 am, you received this assignment: STOP . . . THIS . . . LUNATIC!

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TYPE ATTACK

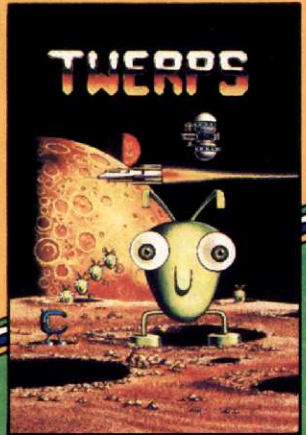
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COMPUTER

BULLDOG PINBALL

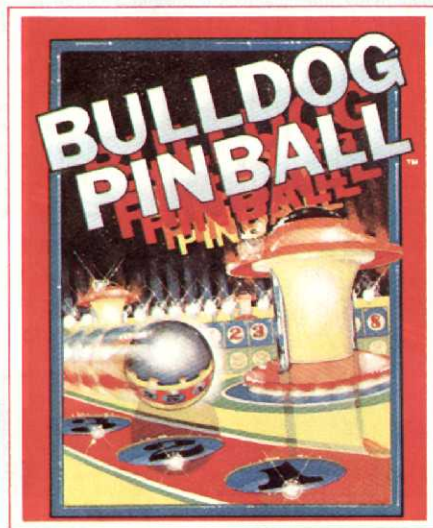
Hayden Software/Atari 400-800-1200
Tape 16K

Hayden Software's recent entry into the category of action-oriented games has had its share of ups and downs.

Bulldog Pinball is one of the latter. Certainly, bad pinball simulations — as well as excellent ones — are no rarity in this world of programmable and computer videogames. Therefore, to create a video pin program that stands out even among the wealth of dross in this category takes some doing.

In any case, it *has* been done. The playfield is constructed to supposedly resemble a bulldog, hence the title, with various point totals awarded for scoring through the entry lanes or various features (ears, teeth, jowls etc.) of the mutt's countenance. The visuals are extremely crude, with almost no bumpers, drop targets or anything of visual or audio interest. The ball

moves at high speeds owing to the use of machine code program-



BULLDOG PINBALL

ming, but does not come close to recreating the actual sense of a true pinball's roll seen in more sophisticated programs such as *David's Midnight Magic* or *Raster Blaster*. To be fair, however, those games had considerably more memory to play with.

The primary objection to this one or two-player contest is its astonishingly awkward play-mechanic. Only sloppy programming could present a game wherein the *left* paddle is controlled by the joystick button, while the *right* flipper is activated by the "shift" key on the *left* end of the computer's keyboard! To say that this renders the game virtually unplayable is being kind.

The depth of understanding that Hayden has, regarding the Atari com-



GAMING

Four Scenarios Of Fighting Aliens Make Gorf a Tough Test

puter, is best demonstrated in its own documentation. Quote: "To control the speed of your ball's release, press and hold the 'shift' or 'break' key; for joysticks, the second button." Atari users will be astonished to learn that there is a second button on their joystick controllers. Now if only Hayden could let us know where it is.

(Bill Kunkel)

GORF

Commodore/VIC-20/ROM cartridge

Since many of its games are not too original or exciting, Commodore made a wise decision when it licensed Bally/Midway's *Gorf* for its VIC-20. Whether or not you're familiar with the arcade machine, if you're a fan of invasion games, this fast-moving, colorful entry is a must.

In the world according to *Gorf*, players must fight their way through four different battle-type scenarios. Although each screen is very different, they *do* have a few things in common. The player is always using the joystick to move the fighter up and down over a varying range, as well as left and right. Gamers who are followers of the blast-away theory of defense must resist the temptation to just keep that fire button down. So although continuous fire can be effective at short range, at any distance, it causes the missiles to lose their power.

Each contest is of the hit-and-run variety; players have to strike and then quickly dodge the enemy's powerful onslaught. Complete all four waves, and you move up in rank. Put 20 successful missions behind you, and you become a Space Avenger. Of course, all is not glory — each wave becomes harder to defeat as you climb the space ladder. Defeating the enemy earns you a comforting message from a bouncing Gorf that reads, "Bite the dust."

Wave One, dubbed Astro Battles, is

a new variation on the invasion game theme. Instead of bunkers to hide behind, though, the player has a rather weak forcefield which doesn't really do much to discourage the Gorfian attackers. Gamers have more chances to earn bonus points, since two types of ships and a Gorf scamper across the screen, offering almost constant opportunities.

If you survive the first wave, a brief intermission will inform you that the laser attack is next. Two forces are out to get you, each headed by a laser ship and backed by three attack ships and a Gorf. All forces involved keep on coming until you eliminate each and every one.

Wave Three starts out even faster



GORF (VIC-20)

than the second. Space warp fighters spiral out from a central launch site and send out homing torpedoes while they are at it. And, of course, there's the occasional Gorf trying to get you.

The final wave is slightly different from the earlier waves. The Gorfian flagship appears, travelling back and forth across the top of the screen while launching fireballs at you. The ship is protected by a forcefield that's notice-

ably stronger than the one you had back in the first wave. The gamer must first shoot away at the forcefield before he can actually hit the ship. Then, watch out — it hits back. Each blast that scores a hit sends a chunk of the ship flying off, and it *can* be quite fatal.

The flagship can only be destroyed by exposing the power reactor, causing it to explode in a volley of flashing colors. Gamers can pound away at the hull to accomplish this, or take a short cut — a la *Star Wars* — and if you can aim a blast into the reactor vent, *boom!*

Better players might find a disadvantage in having to start from *Space Cadet* each time they play, since you can't select a skill level. Another drawback is the inability to start a game over if you get off to a bad start. But all in all, this is one of the best games available for the VIC-20.

(Charlene Komar)

BELLHOP

Hayden/Apple II/48K disk

Those who like their games complex and involved should probably skip on to the next review. Those who like graphics so outstanding that they almost make you forget about the game while enjoying the show, should also now go elsewhere.

Bellhop is for home arcaders who think a good game can still be a simple game with sparse graphics, but with a totally charming play mechanic. In *Bellhop*, nobody gets blasted and no foreign countries or planets are visited or conquered. Instead, it's just a gamer trying to deliver seven pieces of luggage to seven suites, all located on the sixth and top floors of the hotel.

In the first round, the gamer starts with \$60 in tips. The longer it takes to deliver the suitcases, the more of the tip will be lost. If the tip total reaches \$0, the game is over. If all seven pieces are delivered with money to spare, a second round starts, this time with \$50

in tips. The third round is \$40 in tips, and the hotel ghost appears, ready to take the luggage off the seventh floor and run it back down to the first floor. Round four has \$30 in tips and the pesky ghost. When all the money runs out at one level, or all four levels are completed, the screen displays a total for the game.

The bellhop gets up and down this building by using the elevators, but if he really expects to get through all four rounds, he must learn to take the shaft. After delivering a piece of luggage on the sixth floor, if he gets back on the elevator just as it starts to move, he will then tumble down the shaft, much faster than the elevator, without getting hurt (this is a non-violent game!).

One negative point is that play is accomplished solely by use of the keyboard. The arrow keys move the bellhop left and right, the space bar stops him, the escape key calls the elevator to the bellhop's right, and the number keys (1-6) will indicate which floor the elevator should stop at. There is also a reset function and a pause control.

This seems to be a game that could have been played quite nicely with a joystick-keyboard combination, but even with this minor flaw, *Bellhop* released by Hayden makes this gamer hungry for a look at what's on the drawing board.

(Rick Teverbaugh)

MOLE ATTACK

Commodore/VIC-20/ROM cartridge

It's a mole invasion! The pesky little devils are popping up all over, and it's up to you to rout the beasts and send them fleeing back underground — and you've only got 60 seconds to do it!

The moles appear out of nine holes, arranged in three rows of three moles. The idea is to bring your little hammer down upon their heads — and the

sooner, the better. You can earn four points if the critter's head is just barely out of its burrow, decreasing to only one if he's in full view.

But wait! Should you bop the creature's rear instead of his head, you can lose as many as five points, with the

heaviest loss occurring when the mole's buns show the least. Now, it just may sound pretty easy to tell a mole's head from his buns, but the resemblance is actually extraordinary, all the way down to the tail that can look a lot like a wisp of hair in the heat of battle.

A big plus is this videogame's spiffy graphics. The jumbo-sized moles appear in a variety of bright colors, and grimace convincingly when hammer meets head.

Players have the option of using a joystick, but many may prefer to play with the keyboard. Controlling the hammer's location as you rush from hole to hole can be difficult with the joystick.

Mole Attack will probably be a favorite among younger arcaders. Even though the eye-catching graphics combine well with the time-limit excitement, adults will probably find the game too simple and repetitive to get many repeat plays.

(Charlene Komar)

MICROBE

Synergistic/Apple II/48K

Even the youngest children love playing doctor. Many have grown up but still derive much entertainment from the profession of saving lives, if somewhat vicariously, through such shows as "Ben Casey", "Marcus Welby" and "Trapper John M.D."

Microbe is a game that can satisfy that "little kid" desire to play doctor again, while at the same time capitalizing on a grown-up fascination with the remarkable healing tools available to modern medicine.

The year is 1990 and scientists have built a miniaturization device that can shrink any form down to microscopic size. A submarine and crew has undergone this process and can now be injected into an ailing human body for a session of real life microsurgery. Or, in the words of Steve Martin: "Let's get small!"

As a cadet *Microbe* com-



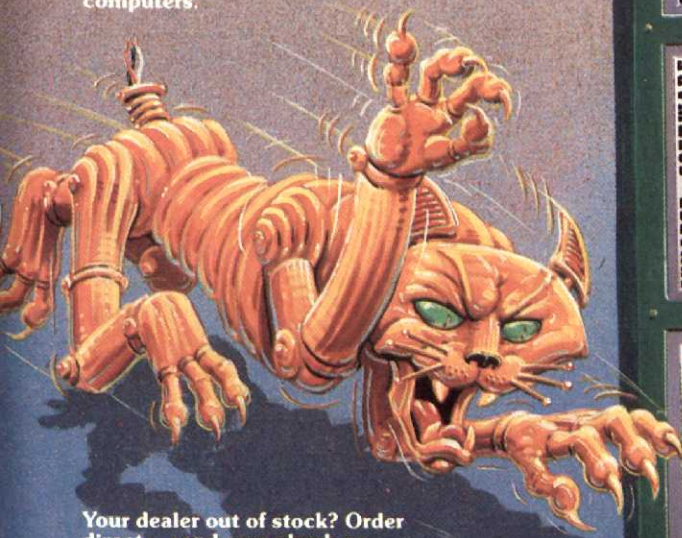
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A fortune—yours for the taking. But can you avoid the ghost of Rama and the evil mummy? Are you nimble enough to leap the chasms and avoid the booby traps standing between you and freedom?

SURVIVOR
The first multi-player cooperative space adventure. Alone or with your hand-picked crew (1 to 4 players) you must out-maneuver the Xenogryph fleet and destroy their space fortresses. Can you train yourself and/or your crew to survive?

SHAMUS
The odor tells you the Shadow's there—in one of four levels of 32 rooms, each bristling with danger. You know it won't be a high school prom, but there's no turning back. Shamus—the sleuth adventure classic.

FT. APOCALYPSE
Your mission—fly your helicopter to capture fuel and weapons from the Kraalthan lords of inner Earth, free the enslaved masses and destroy the fortress itself. Will you triumph or be crushed by its fiendish defenses? Encounter Fort Apocalypse!

PROTECTOR II
You are the last hope! The Fraxullan Slimehordes are attacking your cities and carrying off their citizens. Can you get your people to safety as volcanoes erupt and enemy forces conspire to thwart your every effort?

synapse

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mander you have your work cut out for you. *Microbe* can be played by one to seven people, and the action changes depending on the number of participants involved. In other words, the computer compensates for positions you don't have filled with humans by providing the missing information.

There are four other mission options beginning with the background. If the "gamer" variant is selected, the computer's physician side will provide diagnostic and treatment information. In the student or physician mode, less information will be provided.

There are three selectable skill levels, and a speech option available to those with a speech synthesizer for the Apple. Also, the difficulty of the case is controlled by selecting the Health-Safety or Medicine modes.

Four members are included in the submarine. First there is the captain (you, in the case of solo adventures) who runs the show, issues commands and guides the ship. Then there is the technician, who repairs damage to the sub and performs diving duties. The navigator displays maps of the body and tracks the sub's position within the body. Then there is the physician, who will identify any attackers, perform blood analyses, monitor vital signs and recommend treatment.

Orders are entered by using the keyboard or a keyboard/paddle combination. The graphics are extraordinary. Documentation's all that can be asked for such an involved and lifelike game. Whether used for educational or recreational purposes, *Microbe* is the one game serious gamers will want to buy, play, and then use to impress friends with the power and versatility of the home computer.

(Rick Teverbaugh)

BOLO

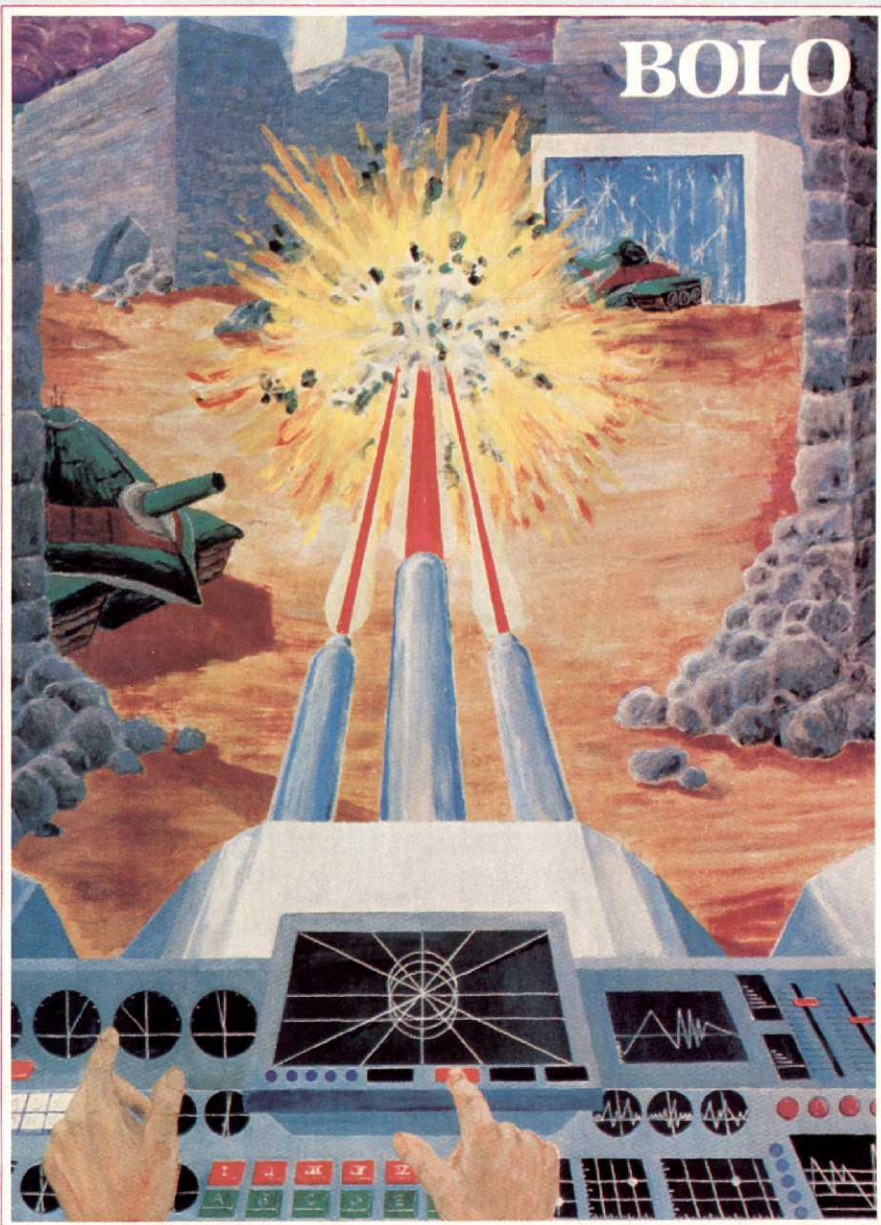
Synergistic Software/Apple II/48K disk

The identity of the designer who hides in back of the *nom-de-cursor* "Elvyn Software" is still unknown (at least to me), but he or she has done a good job of fabricating a playable, enjoyable game from the "Bolo" science fiction stories by Keith Laumer. Not that any knowledge of Mr. Laumer's output is essential; this maze-shoot-out is most certainly engaging enough to justify some gaming time in and of itself.

Using either keyboard or joystick control, you command a super-tank of the future, the Bolo Mark XXIX, in a battle against rather dumb, but multi-

tudinous enemies within a labyrinth that's 132 screens in size. Traverse the corridors of what the instruction leaflet describes as the alien proving ground, always on the lookout for the nearly mindless alien weapons and the replicator stations which manufacture them at a frenetic rate. The only way

only thin lines, though there's nothing half as flashy as the explosions in that Sir-Tech instant classic. Yet *Bolo's* play-action is, in its way, every bit as entertaining as the earlier game. In fact, those who absolutely hate the thrust-movement system inside *Star-Maze*, will infinitely prefer *Bolo's* sim-



BOLO

to shut off the endless stream of new enemies that enters the game through these mighty factories is to destroy them. Once your Bolo has blasted all six stations in the immense maze, you move to a higher level in which additional dangers such as meteor storms will confront your fighting vehicle.

The graphics are a bit plain, particularly compared to that other recent mega-maze contest, *Star-Maze* (Sir-Tech for the Apple II, 48K disk). The walls of the maze, for instance, are

multiple directional steering set-up. It's now possible to turn the turret 45 degrees with a single keystroke, even when you're handling movement with the joystick, though this is admittedly a move that only an experienced Bolo pilot is likely to attempt.

Adventure games have been the stock in trade of Synergistic Software, but *Bolo* indicates that executives at the company can spot a good action game when one is shown to them.

(Steve Davidson)

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WARP DESTROYER

Piccadilly/Apple II/48K

The key to an enjoyable game for some is the way it challenges the computerists' mind and body. For those of that persuasion, **Warp Destroyer** fits the bill several times over.

For others, though, a game needs to be fair. It should open with a skill setting that is neither too easy, nor too difficult. *Warp Destroyer* doesn't fail on the latter of those two counts, but is a disaster in the former respect. This reviewer had to battle four times after first booting the disk before even starting to penetrate the game system.

Warp Destroyer opens with a blast-off. Then there is a hyperdrive mode, during which the gamer must keep cross hairs aligned with a cross in the center of the screen before the first of a series of battles.

Once the novice surmounts that initial stumbling block, the game improves, but only slightly. The graphics are nicely done, but the game system suffers from poor documentation. It seems as if there is much going on as the gamer works his way through mines and aliens on the way to the mother ship, but getting the most out of the program is largely trial-and-error.

It would take more than the standard two hands to play the game with keyboard control, but paddles and joysticks are also possible options. Either does an adequate job. If the gamer succeeds in destroying the Zalbian base, there are more difficult levels to attempt.

Few could question the challenge *Warp Destroyer* can bring to those who have made carnage of some of the easier games on the market, yet many more are likely to find less frustrating and more enjoyable offerings in the marketplace.

(Rick Teverbaugh)

POOL

Thorne-EMI/Atari 400-800-1200

Tape 16K

Those British game designers at Thorne-EMI are turning out some high quality games for the Atari comput-



POOL

er systems. The publisher's latest entry, **Pool**, lacks the graphic finery of some billiard simulations, but it has play-value to burn. There are no leather-looking pocket-guards, polished-wood, or green felt playing surfaces here, just three brands of playing action. Gamers can opt for a practice round, a little **8 Ball** or go all the way with two-player **Tournament Pool**.

The most interesting element is the shooting technique. Players move a

cross-cursor around the display, setting it at the point at which they want the cue ball to strike. If there's another ball in the way, of course, the shot will not succeed, but line it up right and shots that were never attainable with the old mechanic (a moving dot representing the tip of the cue stick rotates around the cue ball, allowing up to 16 angles), are possible here.

The force of the shot is determined by a vertical bar located at the left side of the screen. The space fills up and empties with black fluid in rapid sequences. When the bar fills with black, the shot will be a blast, while an empty gauge nets the shooter a mere tap. Levels in between, of course, determine fine gradations of force.

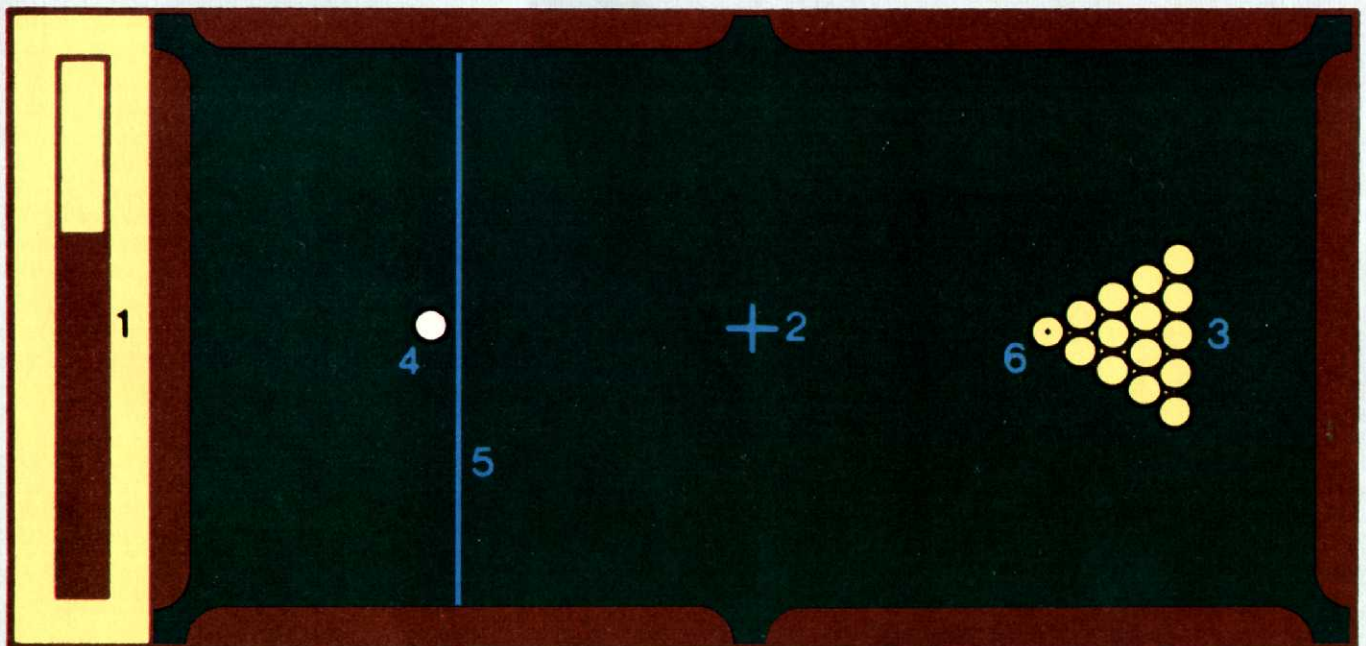
Tournament Pool involves "calling" a shot before it's taken. A point is scored for pocketing a called shot, with bonus points awarded for any other balls sunk beyond this point. The game even re-racks by hitting the "Start" button on the keyboard with the fifteenth object ball still in play.

Again, this isn't going to knock your eyes out, but if you like a great game of video pool, this one's hard to beat.

(Bill Kunkel)

Electronic Games and its publisher, Reese Communications, has moved to much larger quarters right near New York City's forthcoming new Convention Center.

The magazine's new address is: **Electronic Games**, 460 West 34th Street, New York, NY 10001. Our phone number is: (212) 947-6500.

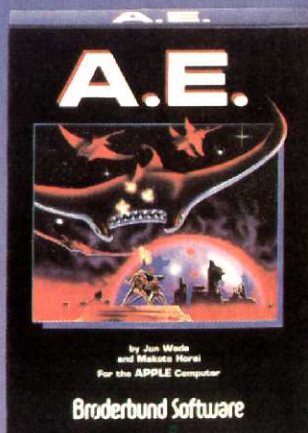


1. Black strip 2. Cross (move with joystick) 3. Object balls 4. Cue ball 5. Head string 6. Foot spot

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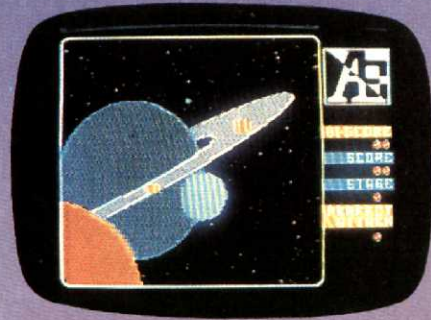


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Fight Europe's Next War

By NEIL SHAPIRO

GERMANY 1985

Strategic Simulations/Apple II/48K disk

It's a frightening thought — the two greatest superpowers, the United States and Soviet Russia, clashing in armed confrontation in West Germany.

Many strategists and military authorities agree that if the next war begins in a conventional (non-nuclear) manner, it will transform western Germany into a battlefield. While this computer simulation, **Germany 1985**, takes away none of the fear, it *does* simulate the complexity of fluid, changeable modern warfare and illustrates the terrible cost of such a showdown even more dramatically than any book or magazine article ever could.

As always, Strategic Simulations (SSI) has taken a very convoluted subject and made it both understandable and playable via the home computer. This battalion-level contest uses a revamped gaming system that adds a number of new wrinkles and features to the realm of computer war gaming. Indeed the *Germany 1985* system will form the basis for at least four other game scenarios (at least one of which, **RDF — Rapid Deployment Force**, may be available by the time you read this). This reviewer found the present game system of *Germany 1985* to be the most advanced computer war game yet. There are a few spots that may, we hope, be touched up in subsequent releases, but if SSI settles on this system as a "standard", it will not be

wronging its videogaming audience.

Two separate gaming scenarios are offered on the disk — "*Invasion*" and "*Advance to Contact*." The computer can take either the NATO or USSR side in a solitaire session, or it can referee a match between two human generals. In the "*Invasion*" scenario, the Russians must airdrop forces, establish a perimeter and breakout to capture cities. In "*Advance to Contact*", the NATO forces from the west must meet with and defeat the USSR forces blitzing from the east. In each scenario the bottom line victory condition is which side controls the most villages, towns and airfields by the end of the game (which lasts from 20 to 22 turns).

The action is displayed on stunning hi-res maps of western Germany.



The menu-driven option screen of *Germany 1985* makes it relatively easy to fine-tune the gaming experience.

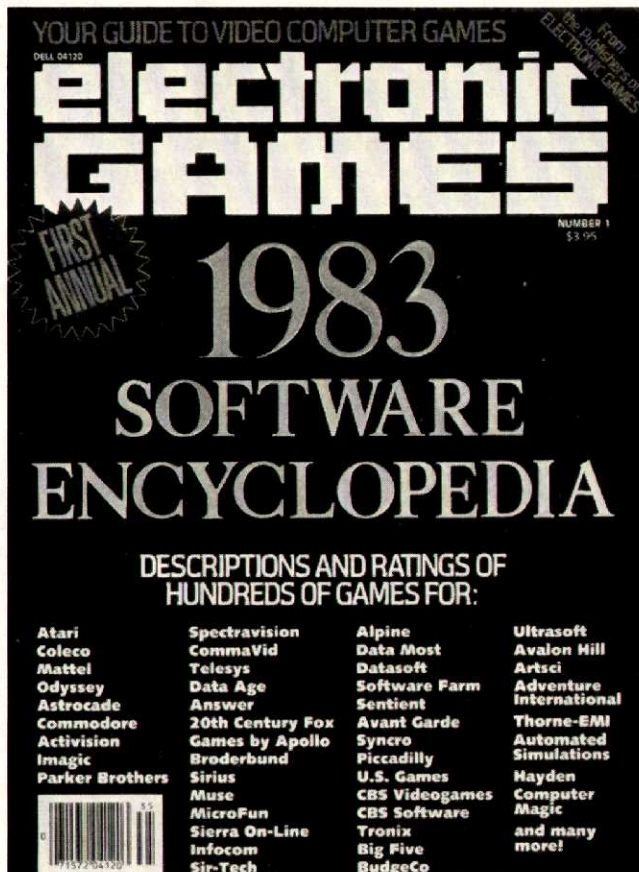


The liberal use of high resolution graphics makes it a lot easier to analyze the situations in the game.

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Bright greens delineate the forests, and shades of orange and brown make up the two types of rough terrain; blue rivers and lakes frame the symbols for roads and bridges as well as the all-important cities and towns. The main map is comprised of nine video screens large enough so you can only see one map-area at a time. There is also a strategic map which occupies only one screen, but only shows the terrain and where the units are present (not what those units are.) But, SSI has made it very easy to work with a map larger than your monitor screen.

The movement keys allow the player to scroll the map in any of four directions. Or, the program can immediately "jump" to any of the nine map areas. It takes less than one game, using the nine-area map, the strategic map and a prepackaged six-color, printed map before you can begin to find your way around automatically. To jump to a view of map area 4, for example, involves just entering the command "S4".

Units on the map are shown as detailed silhouettes. The tanks, armored personnel carriers (APC), self-propelled artillery guns (SPG), airplane-shaped airstrike markers, attention infantry battalions, artillery guns, and jeep-shaped NATO Reconnaissance Battalions and USSR Katushka Battalions are as finely detailed as the counters in any board game.

Moving the units is quite simple. The player hits "escape", which turns on an auto-move mode. At that point the computer will cycle among units in a division (or all units: the choice is the player's) and allow them to be moved. Movement can be in six directions — a hexagon numbered clockwise with 1 at the top and 4 at the bottom.

The computer is a fine accessory to



this movement. Anyone who has ever played a board-style war game and mentally struggled with terrain effects charts, only to face the hassle of moving an unwieldy amount of cardboard counters, will absolutely love this new, computerized method. First, the bottom four lines of the screen show a wealth of information. Part of this data shows exactly what hexsides (directions are referred to as hexsides, even though the hex grid is not drawn on-screen) the piece being moved can cross. And, even better, you can issue your piece an order for automatic movement. If a tank battalion is in map area 1 and you want it to join its division in map area 2, you don't have to enter the 20-odd keystrokes for hex-by-hex movement. Instead, typing "02" would order it to map area 2. It would move automatically to that destination, calculating its own movement costs as it goes. And, it would find the most efficient route in terms of movement costs. Movement, both automatic and manual, must pause if a friendly unit enters an enemy's zone of control — which are the hexes immediately surrounding that unit. To leave such an area requires combat.

The outcome of combat, in this game, is very dependent on a slew of variables. While the computer does keep track of all of them automatically, a canny player must know and weigh all of the many intricacies before initiating combat — if he wants to be repetitively successful.

First thing the computer calculates is called the Attack Factor. The Attack Factor is determined by seven variables.

First variable is called the Attack Mode Shift. A unit may be in one of eight modes — Defense, Support, Normal, Transport, River, Attack, Fire and Reorganization. A unit in Attack mode versus one in Defense mode will receive a smaller number factor than if it were facing a unit in Normal mode. Next, the unit's strength is divided by four. The third variable divides the unit's efficiency factor by two. Then the number of enemy units that can sight the combat is subtracted. The fifth variable involves how distant the unit is from its divisional headquarters. The sixth factor gives a bonus for all non-artillery support, and the last factor is given for supporting artillery. Add all this together and you get the Attack Factor.

The combat result itself is calculated by first finding the Combat Shift. The Combat Shift is the Attack Factor minus the Defense Factor. Defense Factor is another multi-faceted variable calculated from the defender's point of view.

Finally, when the Combat Shift is arrived at, the computer calculates yet more variables, to decide how many strength and efficiency points each unit will lose and how far the defender may have to retreat.

All of the relevant tables are given in the back of the manual, though there are only two rather skimpy examples of their use. While it is true that the computer does calculate all of this in an instant, the player must sometimes be able to at least estimate the result. We hope that later versions of this system will include an automatic readout of every unit's partial attack factor on-

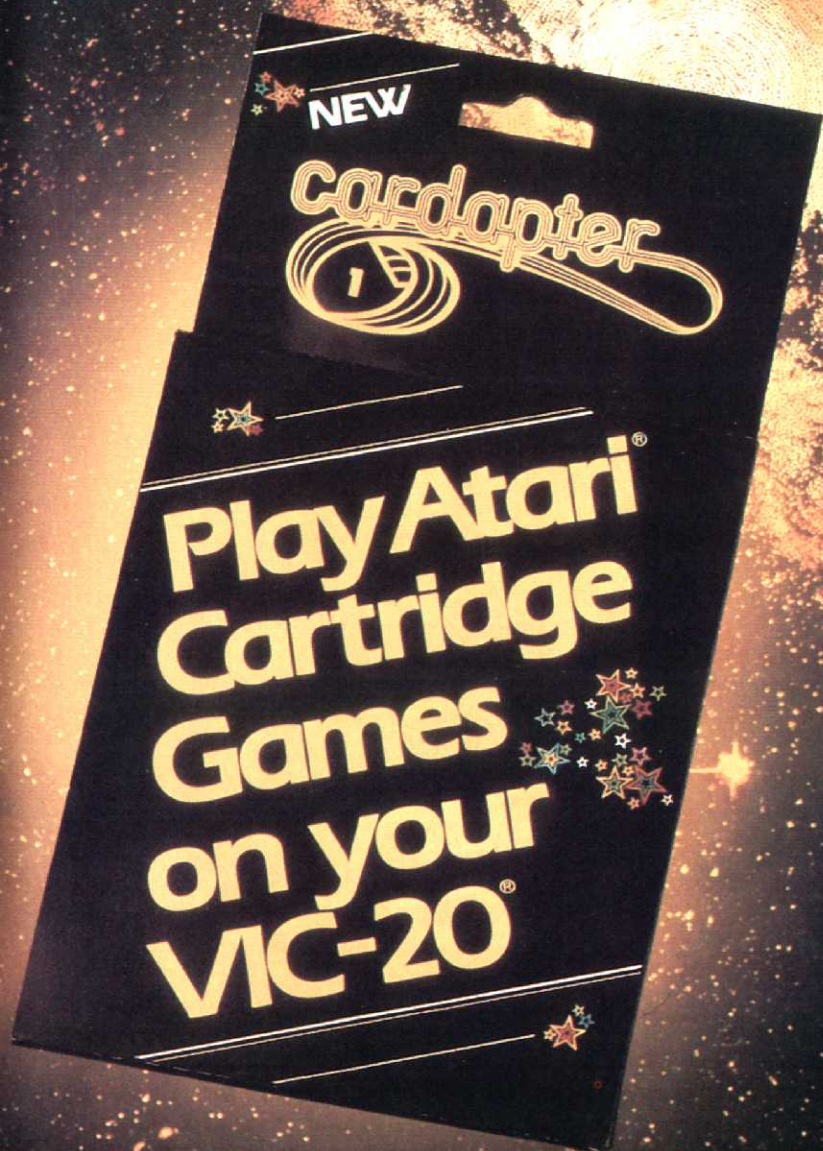


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screen (perhaps everything except the mode vs. mode bonus as the unit moves). That would eliminate the need for a little four-function calculator we had to use in order to beat the computer (who as a solitaire player, after all, doesn't just estimate these figures but knows them exactly). We'd like to see some more examples, with detailed step-by-step explanations of cross-referencing the charts — such would have saved us much time in the beginning.

It is indeed possible to play a fairly substantial game without having to do this calculation by using certain rules-of-thumb. It is obvious that the less enemy units that can sight you, the better. It's also a truism that you should keep a unit as close as possible to that unit's divisional headquarters. And, it does not take much examination to see that the more units near you in Support Mode, the better the final combat result will be for you.

Because of the complexity of combat, most players will likely want to go the first few rounds with exposed movement, where all units, both friendly and enemy, are visible. Later, you can add the realism of hidden movement and very reasonable and automatically effected spotting rules.

The rule book states that, in the beginning of a scenario, no major all-out attacks should be launched. What the book doesn't state, is that the temptation to do so is almost irresistible. After all, these highly

mobile units can be literally found all over the board by the end of the third turn. Many war gamers will be itching for that final, massive confrontation. But, instead, concentrate on individual combats that were set up so as to achieve specific goals. Make certain that there is a strategic reason for every tactical decision. When it finally does come down to combat, pay particular attention to *how* the combat results are calculated. It will be surprising the first few times, when it is noted just how heavily results can be changed by such things as the number of enemy units sighting the aggressor and how many friendly units are in support of the defender. It is all too likely that your first few games will end in a hang-your-head rout. The computer is one tough, wily opponent. But, with a little practice and seasoning, you should be able to hold your own.

Overall, the *Germany 1985* system does a remarkable job of simulating the way a conventional war would have to be fought. The fluid, and very rapid changes; the way that combat results are so influenced by the long-ranged presence of enemy units; the level of divisional integrity; all of these factors make for a top-notch simulation. While this game will require careful thought and effort throughout the learning stage — we think any war gamer will feel his efforts have been richly rewarded.

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CLOSET CLASSICS

By RICH PEARL

Imagine that you have just entered a huge, cobwebbed vault. Stepping into the semi-darkness, it takes a second for your eyes to adjust to those gloomy surroundings. Once they have, however, the sight that greets them is one to stir any arcader's blood: arcade videogames, old and new, each covered by a coating of dust.

Reacting as if by instinct, you drop a quarter into a slot and the entire room springs to whirring, clanging life. It looks as if you're in for a long and



Qix, by Taito, has a rabidly loyal following, but was too cerebral for many arcaders.



Exidy's Starfire is at least a cousin of such home arcade classics as Star Raiders and Star Master.

pleasurable afternoon.

Wander about. The initial reaction is that this apparently forgotten vault contains every game ever produced. Look closer, however, and you begin to notice some totally unfamiliar titles. The dust is thicker here, and when the old man who makes change in this strange arcade-world is questioned about the mystery machines, he only smiles enigmatically.

You have discovered the "Almost" row, a special collection of unsuccessful games deserving of a better fate. A few plays and you're dumbfounded! How could such wonderful games possibly have failed?

Let's dust these curious old coin-ops off and take a look at them. Perhaps they hold within them some clue as to their curious lack of success.

Playing them, however, tells only the smallest part of this story.

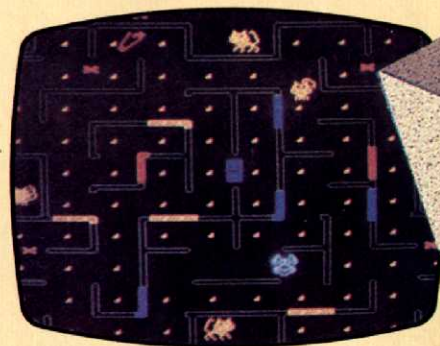
Every year dozens of new coin-op machines go from the factory to the arcade. Few ever enjoy the popularity of a **Pac-Man**; most are marginal or partial successes. Each game was tested and evaluated for its marketability before production began, yet no matter how much advance testing was done, they all flopped. Some were truly ingenious and novel in concept.

Given another time or place to find their audience, maybe they too could have stood with the likes of **Defender** and **Tempest**.

Starfire, out of the Exidy line, was the first total environment game. For this sit-down, the gamer got into an enclosed cabinet which gave him the feeling of piloting his own rocket ship. This was far-sighted thinking — from one of the few American companies that then designed its own games — but as the prototype for others it was ahead of its time and unable to find a market. *Starfire* was perceived as something different.

Without any like games to compare against, it had to stand on its own merits. No ready-made audience had stood waiting for a newer version; *Starfire* was on its own, boldly travelling where no game had ever gone before. Ground-breakers must create their own markets. Perhaps this number never got the time to develop a following. A game must either make it fast or it's doomed.

"The bottom line on any game," says Lila Zinter, at Exidy, "is does it make money? Total success is measured by what is in the cashbox. It isn't

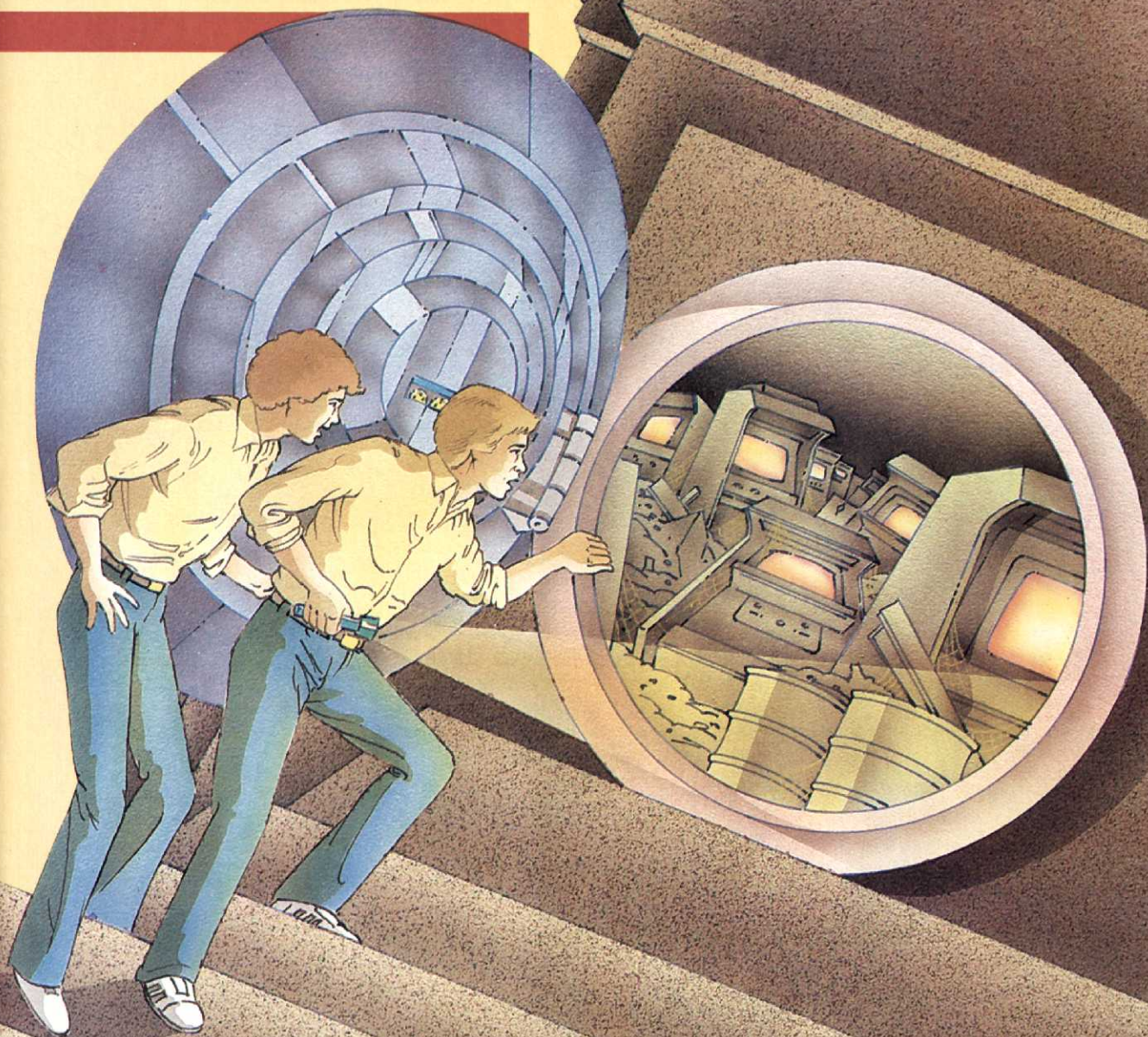


MOUSE TRAP

easy for a small manufacturer to wait for a hit — and there are a lot of reasons a good game might fail. Timing is but one."

A game has to come out at just the right time. What's on the market has a direct bearing on how a new title is

**The Machines have
Been Overlooked, but
Not Forgotten**



CLOSET CLASSICS



Midway's *Robby Roto* offers a hero who rescues the helpless while scooping up treasure.

viewed. Are there others parallel in play? Will it have to share time with another? In a saturated market, no matter how innovative the game, it's not going to get the attention it needs.

The average life span of an arcade game is only four to six months. This does not leave much time to be discovered. As Dave Nutting says, "Players want to get up on a game right away. They like to see their quarters go a long way." Some of the best closet classics took too much time to master.

Robby Roto, designed for Midway by Nutting, has only a small cult following hooked on it. Although initial testing was positive, there were less than 2000 units sold. It never matched the success of Atari's *Dig-Dug*,

out at approximately the same time.

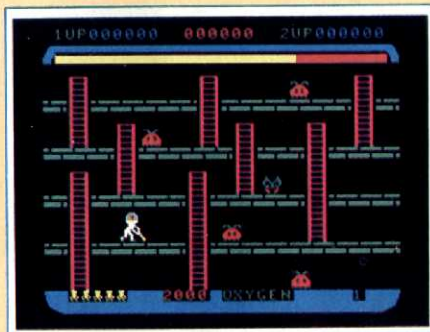
Robby Roto is a character who digs under the ground to find hostages held by monsters, and buried treasures. He has to wend his way through three mazes, each one increasingly more difficult. With the help of a magic button that freezes his enemies and makes Robby invisible — we could all do with such help — he scrambled and burrowed his way into the hearts of only a few.

"Conceptually, *Robby Roto* was right on," claims Nutting. "You'd be surprised at the fervent calls we get from those who play it. But it was a very complex game and those that played it found themselves on the defensive — most were intimidated. Gamers like to be aggressive."

Obviously then, a good game not only captures the player's attention, but also gives the gamer a measure of control over the action.

When *Qix*, by Taito, was initially released, it grabbed the gaming world with its color and imaginative design. Almost immediately it rose to the top of the charts. Everybody tried *Qix*, a game so visually stimulating and equally challenging its future seemed as unlimited as its patterns. So what is it doing in this end of the closet?

"*Qix* was conceptually too mystifying for gamers," Keith Egging admits. "It had a random mapping program that allowed for constant alteration. It



Universal's *Space Panic* spawned the computer game hit, *Apple Panic* a couple of years back.

was impossible to master and once the novelty wore off, the game faded."

A game can only be as sophisticated as its audience. Somewhere down this aisle is Universal's *Space Panic*. This was not only the first of the climbing games, it was also the first of the digging games. That's quite a load for a player on a new game. No punning intended when I say that the rungs

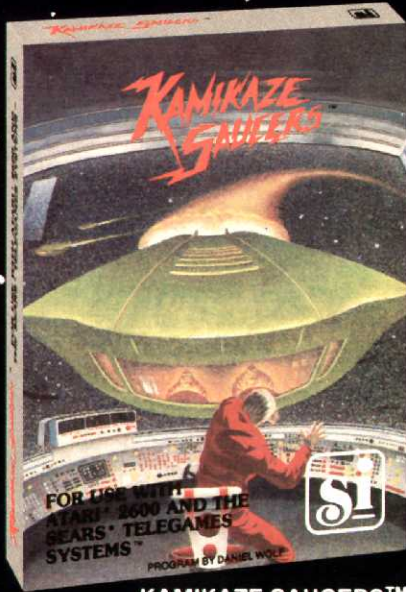


Lady Bug did just all right in the arcades, but has turned into a popular home cartridge.

were too high for the average gamer to scale.

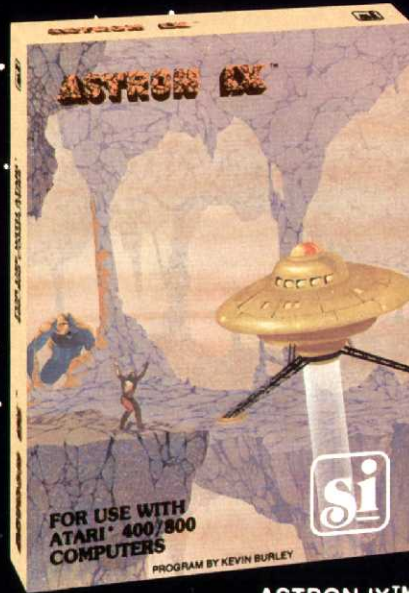
In playing this game, players move from level to level by way of the now popular ladder while pursued by apple-shaped aliens. When you came in contact with them you died — with

GAMES THE WORLD OVER



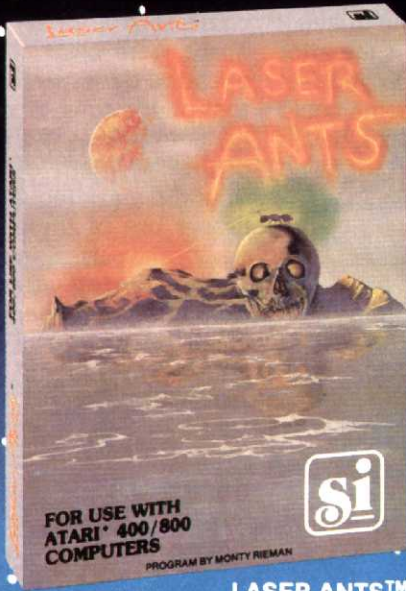
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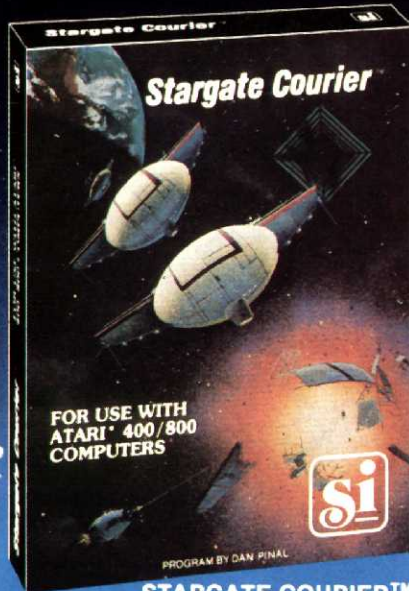
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CLOSET CLASSICS

three deaths to a game. The object of the game was to catch the aliens by baiting them into pits you'd dug, and then covering them before they escaped. This was accomplished with the "digging" button. As you got to the higher levels you had to dig two holes, perfectly placed, one above the other, to keep the alien in.

The average playing time for *Space Panic* was 30 seconds. You felt like you'd been hit going up the ladder by a brick falling through the arcade. Or maybe you'd dug a hole too deep to escape from. Whatever it was, *Space Panic* played too hard and had to be buried.

Someone must have seen it though,



BOSCONIAN

and liked it, because the game was released as a computer game by Broderbund under the name **Apple Panic**. This software version is deliciously true to the original. So perhaps there *is* life after the arcade! Do you feel the home could amass a haven for failed

game titles? Can the extended popularity of **Donkey Kong**, in the arcade, be traced to the emergence of the videogame at home? The games certainly have a greater life span at home. **Wizard of Wor** was only a moderate success as a coin-op, but it walks on water as a home cassette. Maybe we should keep a watchful eye on some of these games in the closet and see where they go.

Want to play some more? I warned you — we might be here awhile.

Players aren't the only ones with a say about a game staying alive. The distributor has something to say as well. When Exidy introduced **Mouse Trap**, they had visions of the world beating a path to their doors. This complex little number was a maze-chase with a lot of unique features. There were color coded trap doors, operated by respectively colored buttons on the console, and time delayed metamorphoses where you chose the proper moment of transformation from the meek mouse to a fierce dog. Proper use of these buttons were a significant part of the strategy of this game. Coming after **Pac-Man**, the distributors and operators chalked this game off as basically another maze game. Though not totally true, it effectively killed off the title.

"Exidy is an innovator, but because we lack the big money of an Atari," claims Lila Zinter, "we have a hard time breaking through the politics in getting a game a fair chance. A game can be at a large disadvantage if the distributor doesn't like it. A product that does not get to the consumer in sufficient quantity is not likely to get its necessary exposure."

Banking a game — having more than one, side by side — so that several gamers may simultaneously play, instead of standing around and watching, can often help to give it a better chance to be seen. You couldn't play what you can't find. Sometimes the hardest part of a game is knowing

Kick Man was planned as a sequel to **Pac-Man**, but didn't catch on to anywhere near the same degree.

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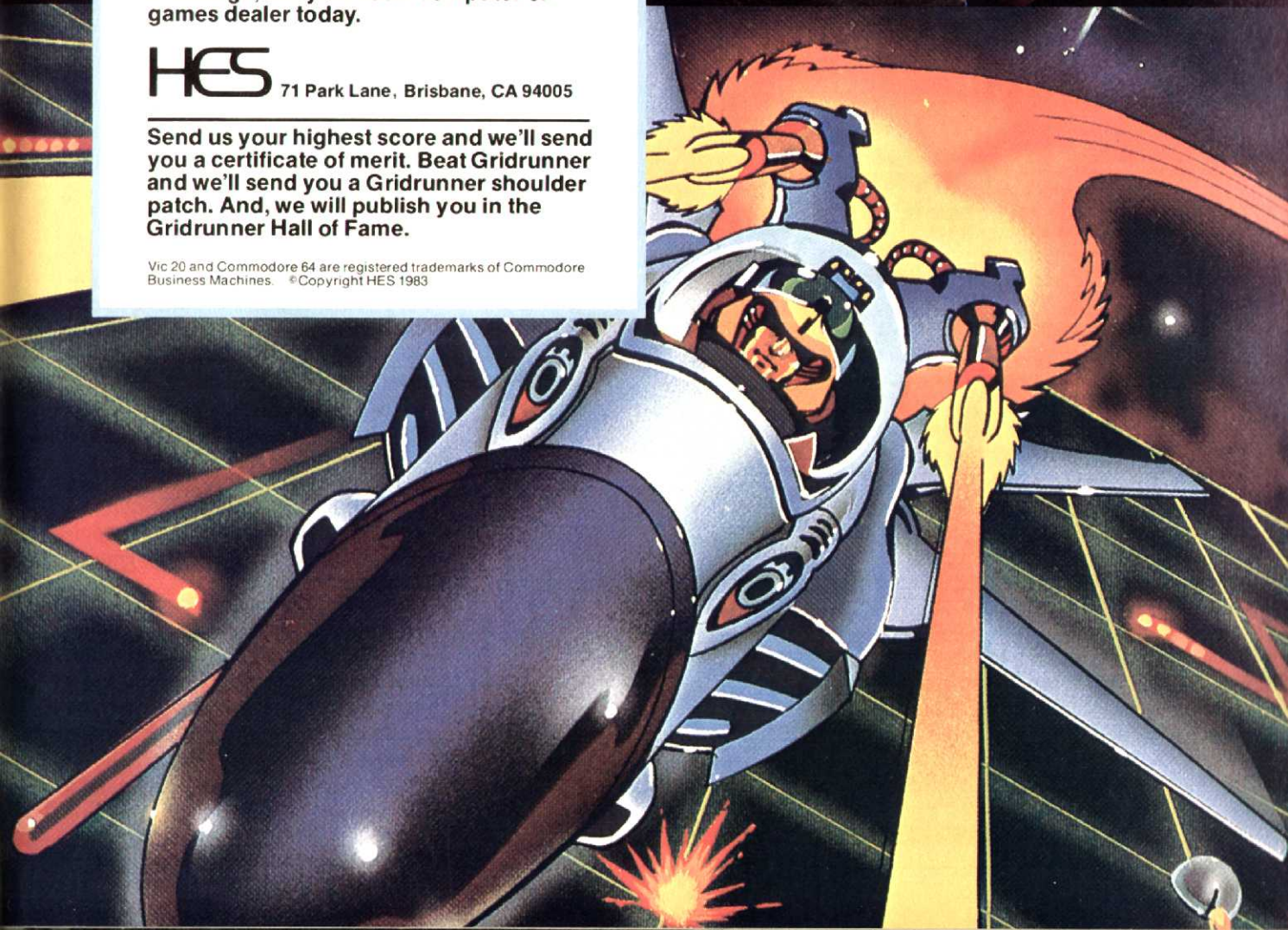
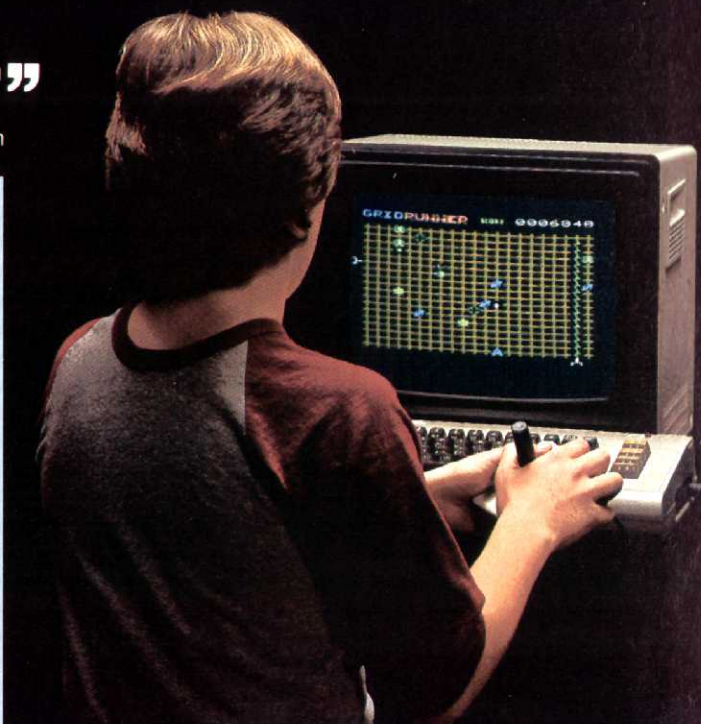
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CLOSET CLASSICS



Starcastle, in which players try to break through a space station's defenses, is yet another classic.

notch background graphics and special sounds for effects. Can you imagine a game featuring Pac-Man that *didn't* make it? *Kick Man* is it.

"A great script and a super cast with a famous director insures nothing. You still don't know they'll produce a big hit," cautioned Bill Adams, head of the team that helped develop *Kick Man*. "Maybe *Kick Man* relied too much on reaction skill and didn't have enough strategy. We tried to put it in, but guys in bars wouldn't play it — it was too cute. And it wasn't banked in the arcades. It just didn't catch on."

Kick Man had a lot of work in it, however, that didn't die. "It has the basic hardware system that pushes *Tron*," according to Jim Jarocki. The



Though it contained many elements that have since sparked up other games, Spectar did only so-so.



Targ combined constant movement and firing at enemies in all possible directions.

where to find it. Good thing we found this closet!

But what if we hadn't?


So what do they do with a failed game? There isn't really a home for dead games, a wayward station filled with our classics. So what happens if a title doesn't make it? Do they save the cabinet and bury the rest?

Kick Man had been a Bally/Midway game where a clown on a unicycle travelled back and forth catching balloons on his head as they fell off a rack onto the screen. He had very large feet so he could kick those he missed into the air and then catch them when he could. A pin that is on his hat bursts the balloons, but as the game progresses the pin fails to pop them and they sit on his hat. Pac-Man finally shows up to gobble these. This game had top-

MCR, Midway Cart Rack, as the general gaming system is known, was one of the first in-house systems Midway developed — and it had several high powered features.

The MCR system uses three boards, one on top of the next. They generate the foreground, background and any sounds needed for the game.

In a kind of arcadian evolution, a failed game may become the progenitor of the next *Pac-Man* or the genesis of the next *Joust*.

Every good game may not survive, but something from it does. Next time you're in an arcade just remember, there's a closet somewhere, housing a game that left its mark on the machine you're playing — and you don't have to blow away the dust to see the result. 

SOME FORGOTTEN COIN-OP GEMS

SPACE PANIC (Midway): The best flat-out action SF game introduced in '82 and it died on the arcade floor. Full directional scrolling, radar scanners, mother ships and guardian squadrons — all in addition to dual-directional firing that allows players to take out enemies in front and on their tails simultaneously.

TARG (Exidy): One of the most unique approaches to the maze-chase contest presents alien invaders moving over a grid of city streets seen in overview. The game has become a home classic in a slightly altered form as *Cross-fire* from On-Line for the Apple II and Atari computers.

LADYBUG (Universal): The most wonderful blend of strategy and maze-chase thrills ever concocted. The ladybug must not only avoid



the guardian insects and the poisonous skulls, but must also employ great strategy in opening and closing the many turnstiles only she has access to.

In its ColecoVision format, it is proving one of the most successful home videogames ever.

RED BARON (Atari): Gorgeous quadra-scan graphics and magnificent audio frills just weren't enough to create interest in a first-person flying game. Hopefully, this marvelous flight simulator with a combat theme will re-emerge in home format some day.

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ARCADE

The Sounds of Gaming

By ERIC NASH

The Berkshire Hills in Western Massachusetts are alive with the sound of **Pac-Man's** "wacka-wacka" and the scent of a jungle hunt. Cows graze only a parking lot away, but New England videogamers can get all the high-tech thrills of their favorite coin-op games in the The Dream Machine at the Hampshire Mall in Hadley, MA.

The Dream Machine game center, part of a 25-member national franchise, features the latest in arcading adventures, but don't call it an arcade around John Leary, District Manager for Western New England. "We're a family entertainment center," Leary points out. "We target the family — Mom, Dad and the kids."

Gamers come from up to 30 miles away to tweak the joysticks and bang the buttons of The Dream Machine's 86 games. They're from all age groups, ranging from teenagers to kids too little to reach the controls. "We even have grandmothers that come in and play sometimes on senior citizens' days," says Leary, who helped found the arcade four years ago. The Dream Machine managers want to attract adult arcade fans, somewhere between the ages of grandparents and grandchildren. "They probably aren't in the majority yet," Leary says about grown-up gamers among his customers, "but they will be."

Most of the regular gamers are 15- to 18-year-old teenagers, and mostly males, but Leary notes that some of

the non-shooting coin-op videogames appeal to females. *Pac-Man's* attraction for the opposite sex is well known, but Leary also finds that *Jungle Hunt* can be quite a ladies' game. He attributes the games' universal appeal to their cute characters.

The Dream Machine makes gaming a family affair through package tie-ins with local restaurants, and promotions such as birthday parties, when you can

play a half hour of game time for just \$1.50, or a full hour for \$3 on your birthday. Birthday players find an hour is enough time on the joystick to get rolling with *Donkey Kong* and start jumping with *Joust*.

Some parents objected when the Hampshire Mall announced the opening of The Dream Machine in December, 1978, but Leary notes, "Once we get them in here, we're on the right track."

"When most people think of the word 'arcade', you get the connotation of 'pool parlor' ", he observes,



AMERICA

"but parents change their minds when they see The Dream Machine because it's absolutely spotless, well-lit and well-supervised." That supervision includes full-time manager Louis Bordeaux, (who can be seen out in the game room playing **Ms. Pac-Man** pinball), an assistant manager and eight part-time helpers. There are never less than two supervisors to make sure that everything runs as smoothly as the tracball action in **Centipede**.

Leary is pleased to point out that The Dream Machine has never had to call the local authorities to take care of

any unruly arcaders, and adds that the atmosphere of the Hampshire Mall "doesn't invite misconduct." Shoppers who have food at the nearby indoor fountain, or roller skate to rock and roll music in the rink upstairs, find themselves being lured by the laser blasts and exploding sound effects resounding in The Dream Machine. The game center also is conveniently located near the marquees of the Hampshire Mall Four Theaters, a cinema with four first-run film showcases. **Dig-Dug** is a good way to fill a few minutes before show time, and gam-

ers can play right up to the midnight show, when The Dream Machine closes.

Donkey Kong and *Pac-Man* in all its varieties are the most popular games, but *Jungle Hunt* may soon reign. *Jungle Hunt* seems to be a very good machine," Leary notes. "It's holding up strong."

"Any new machine will make money for the first couple of weeks," he adds by way of caveat, "but if it *continues* to make money, then you have a good machine." His customers ask for all the newest games, and the Boston-based Dream Machine franchise "will buy at least one of everything that comes out. If it works out, we buy more."

Sharing the spotlight as New England's favorite games are **Asteroids** and the ever-popular **Space Invaders**. The managers believe in positioning new games in the central area of the gaming room near the entrances, and *Ms. Pac-Man* pinball basks in a red spotlight. Tubular chrome rails on the ramps and The Dream Machine's colored neon logo give the center a futuristic look for the video vanguard.

By staying up to date with the latest technology, and keeping videogaming all in the family, The Dream Machine is building a new image for the old-fashioned arcade. "We're succeeding in getting rid of the old penny-arcade myth," Leary says. "There have always been pizza parlors and movies and places where kids can hang out," he says, "but The Dream Machine provides a place for the whole family.



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Will Popeye Save Olive Oyl?

By ROGER G. SHARPE

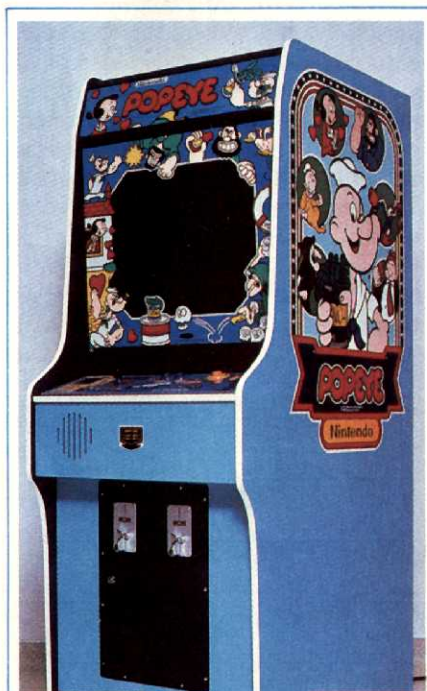
POPEYE

Nintendo

Their monkey business had players going bananas for months, and now Nintendo has struck again with that legendary cartoon hero — **Popeye** — along with a full cast of characters including, Olive Oyl, Bluto, Wimpy, Sweet Pea and even a Sea Hag, in addition to some other entities which round out the storyline as well as the action.

Needing only to master a lone joystick and button, players might, initially, find the game to be yet another variation of a theme that's become all too familiar since the success of **Donkey Kong**, but there are some nuances, not the least of which are the graphics and sound effects, that tend to allow the game the benefit of the doubt in execution.

Basically a three-screen creation,



Popeye sets the stage with our hero trying to maneuver around and about a scene that features side staircases and Olive Oyl on the uppermost level tossing down hearts, which Popeye must "catch" before they hit rock bottom and begin to break apart. This seemingly innocent action wouldn't be simple if that was all there was to the game, but add in an unrelenting Bluto swiping about to knock Popeye down, and a barrage of beer bottles which must be punched, and you begin to get the idea that there's more to this than originally meets the eye. Of course, Popeye *does* have his ultimate weapon — spinach — randomly placed around the board, but getting to it is the challenge, before the old sailor-man can spring into action and give Bluto his just reward.

Survive this phase and it's on to another obstacle course, this time

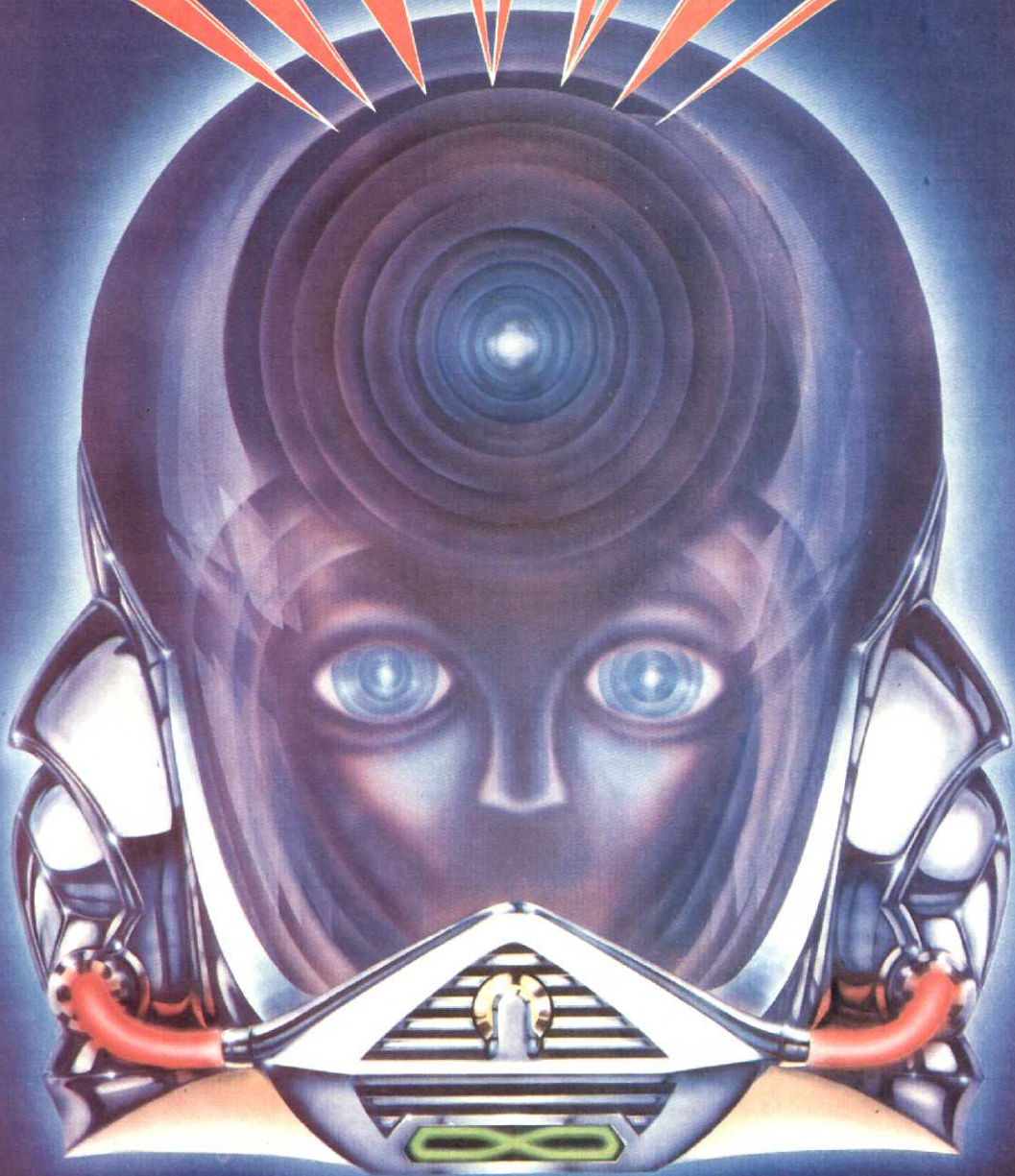


Great artwork that captures the charm of the original comic strip is one of the big attractions of Popeye, the new coin-op based on the licensed character, from Nintendo.



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embellished by the appearance of the Sea Hag who's throwing wine bottles at Popeye, and the fact that Olive Oyl has changed her tune and is now throwing down "notes", which must be reached before they begin to break apart at the bottom of the screen. The routes of escape and pursuit are altered to further shake any players out of feelings of complacency, before we can reach the final test.

The side view of a ship now appears, with Bluto being joined by rolling skulls and streaking vultures. As for Olive, her message is clear — with the letters H-E-L-P being cast down in this final conflict, before we can begin anew the mission at hand.

As mentioned earlier, the graphic effects are this game's strong suit, even if you might have been let down by the Robin Williams/Shelley Duvall big-screen rendition, with the background sounds and interludes, as well as game play effects, only adding to the overall impact. Even if you never previously cared for the antics of the one-eyed pipe smoker, *Popeye* does offer some interesting play that is more than complemented by the cosmetics.

POLE POSITION

Atari

Over the years, driving games in almost any form or visual presentation have proven themselves to be coin-op staples that always earn their fair share of success. This time around will be no exception as Atari presents a licensed effort from Namco (the folks responsible for *Pac-Man*, *Galaxian* and other standout machines), that keeps the action on track from start to finish.

Available in an upright cabinet and a sit-down model, the latter offers a foot brake in addition to the two-position gear shift (low to high), steering wheel and accelerator pedal, as well as four-channel sound instead of stereo. But whatever the version you have access to, you'll find solid, realistic graphics and challenging play.

Rather than tooling down city streets or past scenic landscapes in a race to pass the competition, or just speeding through a seemingly never ending course, *Pole Position* brings to life the Fuji Speedway and Grand Prix conditions that even feature roadside signs ala the old Burma Shave placards, only this time updated to reflect the times as well as the companies involved with the game.

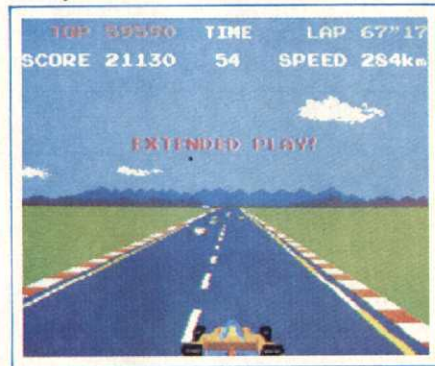


And, keeping reasonably faithful to real life, the moment the green light comes on, players must prove their worth during an initial qualifying lap which must be finished in 73 game seconds or less, in order to move into the main event that follows. If this standard isn't achieved, you'll find yourself running out the time in an extended version of the qualification round. Beat this round and it's off to the races and the chance for greater glory.

There are eight starting positions available, all based on time, with the ultimate "pole position" possible for those who have broken the 58½ game second barrier. Bonus scoring values are earned here as well, since there's also "score" to worry about along with your driving savvy. What's nice about the game, if you're fixated on numbers and detailed feedback, is that the screen will display top score, lap time allocation, incrementing lap time, car speed and your own score, so you always know where you stand during the course of play.

As for the main race in *Pole Position*, you're trying to finish the lap in the fastest time possible, while passing

This year's champion in the tire-squealing sweepstakes is *Pole Position*, a first-person driving game developed by Namco in Japan and distributed to this country's arcades by Atari.



POLE POSITION (COIN-OP & UPRIGHT)



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cars on all sides and avoiding water slicks sporadically appearing on the track. Finish with time to spare and it's off for another run and extended play up to a maximum number set by each operator and location.

The continuity of play is apparent, but what makes the experience of *Pole Position* something special are some very rich color images on-screen, as well as good dimensional depth to the graphics, not to mention the sound effects, whether you're sitting down or standing up. The result is that you just might want to shift into gear and try your hand at Formula 1 racing that definitely puts players in the driver's seat.

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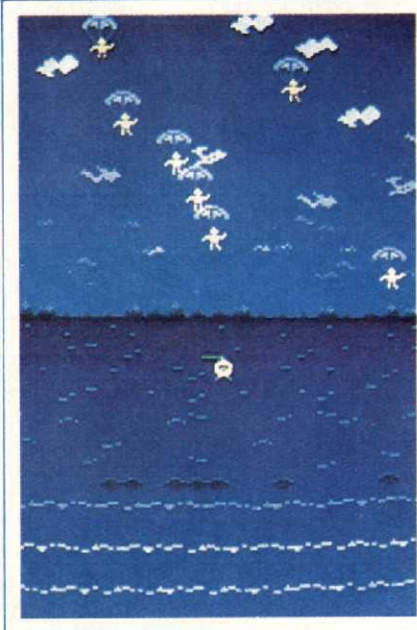
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RESCUE

Stern has consolidated and expanded operations in a new facility just outside Chicago, unveiling one of their newest home-grown entries, the interesting adventure game, *Rescue*.

Players must learn to master a dual joystick control as well as an additional "sub-bomb" button, in an effort to navigate their helicopter over the open seas. The mission? To spot stranded paratroopers and pick them up while


not crashing into the water or getting wiped out by enemy aircraft or submarines and ships. As for the paratroopers, they've another danger to face in the form of roaming sharks ready for a tasty meal.

This give and take in the play and strategy of *Rescue* has become an increasingly prevalent dimension in many recent vintage videogames and, here, it enhances the build-up of continued play as more paratroopers appear ready to be saved, only to be joined by larger numbers of enemy forces. So it's a question of moving side to side and up and down — continually — which might conjure up images of other games, although this machine really doesn't cross the line of being too intimidating or taxing for the average videophile.

If anything, *Rescue* could well be missed by players wandering around their local game rooms, because it seems to be more of the same when, in fact, it isn't. The graphics alone bring into action a more dimensionalized and realistic style, complete with a wide expanse of open seas (including waves and ripples), a sky filled with clouds as well as dropping paratroopers, and other craft and, finally, an overall setting that goes from morning into night as play continues.

It's just a question of whether you can get to those guys treading water in time and pick them up, which is more difficult than it might sound. First, forgetting about any nearby enemies intent upon your destruction, you have to maneuver the copter close enough to your human target, hover above, and wait while a ladder drops down and the fellow begins his ascent to the safety above. Remember to move before he's totally inside and you'll find him falling back down into the briny blue. Pick up the specified number of men in each round, and every third round will find you earning points, a promotion in rank and also a bonus round.

With *Rescue*, everything ties together in a neat package that's not only fun to play, but also increasingly challenging the further you're able to go in the mission. For some it will be mission possible, for others, unfortunately, mission impossible. But, no one ever claimed that every game was designed for every player. Just think about your own tastes and preferences and see if you don't agree.

So find a *Rescue* unit and, like we always say, insert coin here. 

POPEYE

HOW IT PLAYS

Amid some colorful artwork on a blue background, the control panel for **Popeye** brings into play the bare essentials. A left side, four-direction joystick controls the hero's movements up or down, as well as side to side, while a lone orange button over to the right, surrounded by a burst of yellow, comes in handy when you

want to knock out any approaching objects — just as long as Popeye is facing in the right direction — which means that you need to coordinate the defensive more with the joystick.

Meanwhile, at the far left, there's a graphically embellished breakdown of target values for any of the three game levels.



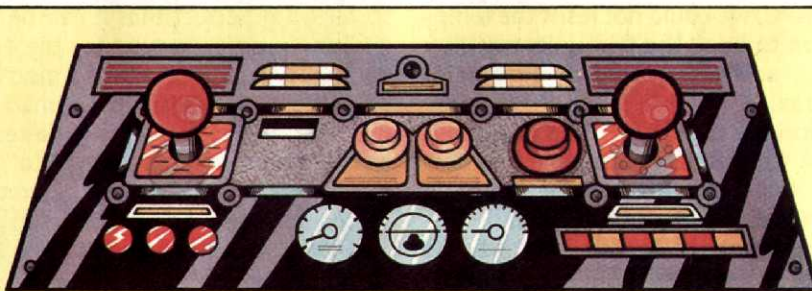
POLE POSITION

HOW IT PLAYS

Unless you're only able to drive an automatic, **Pole Position** shouldn't pose too much of a problem since it runs fairly true to form compared to games of similar type. There's no ignition key to worry about (just a coin slot), nor a clutch — just a steering

wheel and a two-position gear shift for either low or high speed settings. At the base of the cabinet (in the upright model) there's an accelerator pedal, while the sit-down version adds in a foot brake as well.

Okay, then, that's a big 10-4!



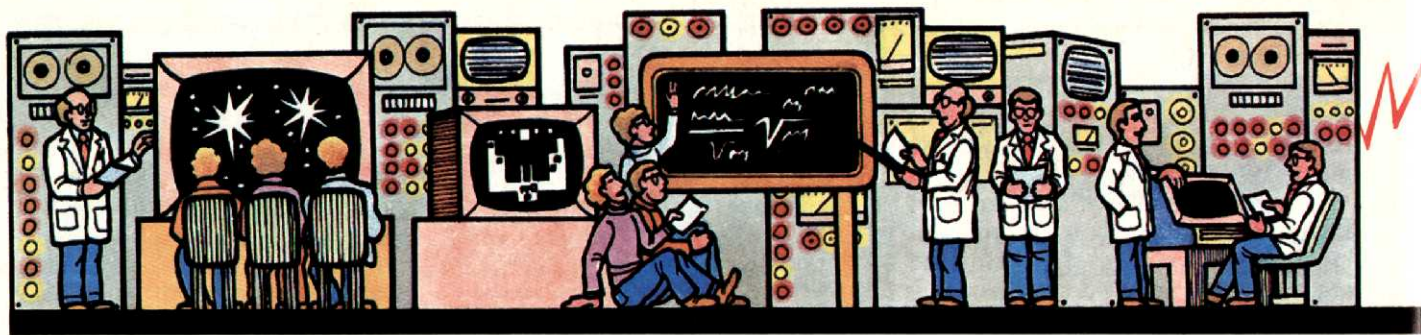
RESCUE

HOW IT PLAYS

Further testing the agility and concentration of players who might be able to pat their heads and rub their tummies at the same time, or any variation thereof, **Rescue** serves up the action via a dual joystick control. At the left, an eight-position joystick controls the flight direction of your helicopter, while a complementary joystick on the right gives you eight-direction fire-power against any en-

croaching enemies. If that weren't enough for most two-handed players to master, *Rescue* also features a "sub bomb" button just to the left of the right joystick.

A nice touch to this array is a graphic treatment which incorporates gauges and other details to reinforce the feeling that the arcader is actually seated in the cockpit of an authentic air-sea rescue vehicle.



Type 'N Talk Makes Your Computer Speak

Intellivision's "Intellivoice" and Odyssey's "The Voice" may be new ideas to home videogamers, but voice synthesis linked to computers is hardly a recent innovation. For several years, the Votrax Division of The Federal Screw Works has marketed a product called the "Votrax Type 'N Talk'". The heart of the unit, or the patented SC01 voice synthesizer chip, is found in many speech-oriented toys and learning computers for kids. It has just about become the standard of the industry.

As *EG* has recently acquired a brand-new Zenith Data Systems Z-100 computer, a unit similar to the IBM-PC, we could not resist the temptation to hook the two units together for a no-holds-barred evaluation of Votrax.

Now we could have used one of our Atari 400s, 800s or an Apple II for this test, but there is something about an 8/16 bit, 128K, dual-disked, RGB-headed state-of-the-art machine that made things seem a bit more interesting. Actually the Z-100 gives us a chance to try the Votrax using all manner of input from games to business applications software. In fact, this article was prepared on the computer and read back to the writer using the Votrax.

Voice synthesizers are difficult to evaluate for several reasons. First there are precious few brands around, and second, those that are available all use one of about three available chips. Lastly, none of them sound at all like people. Because we are used to hearing people speak, we have a tendency to evaluate machines that speak

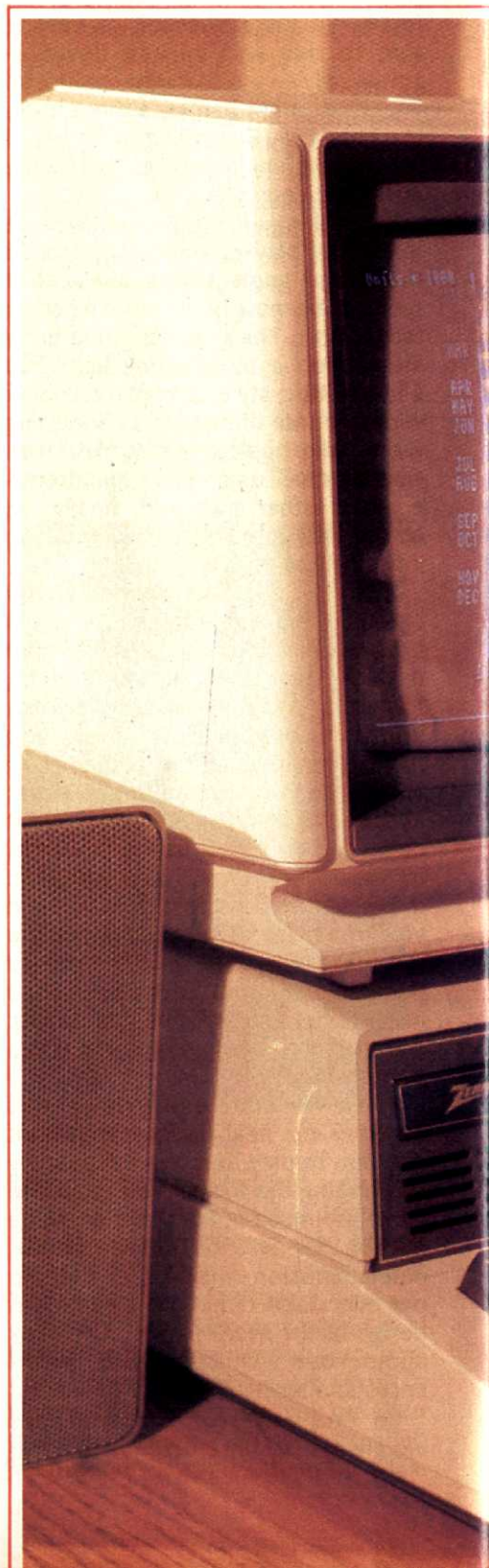
against the yardstick of the human voice. This is a no-no as they must be judged against one another, given the fact that the current art of speech synthesis is not all that far advanced.

Taken in this light, the Type 'N Talk is very good, indeed. As a replacement for a human voice, forget it. It sounds like a robot from Zenbar. It doesn't sound any *more* like a robot than other units, but it definitely has an accent. On the plus side, if you're willing to put in the time, you can make the TNT pronounce its words clearly enough for virtually anyone to understand.

As it proofreads material, it is comprehensible most of the time. Alas, it is so far from perfect that it can be annoying. In order to type for the TNT, you have to stick to either a modified phonetic spelling or try to outsmart the machine. For example, it is easier to clearly enunciate the word "to" by typing in the number two (2) rather than the word. Similarly, the name "Annette" is better typed as "Ann Et", "mommy" as "mom e", and so on. Of course, there are other ways of misspelling words that will work just as well, but this is a trial-and-error situation. In its advertising, Votrax claims that the unit properly pronounces conversational words 95% of the time. I would estimate something a bit lower, but not by all that much.

Programmers of course will initially derive a great deal more from the unit than hackers.

The TNT's value to videogamers is that if you operate virtually any popular home computer or small business computer, the Votrax can be configured to work with it. In simpler terms,



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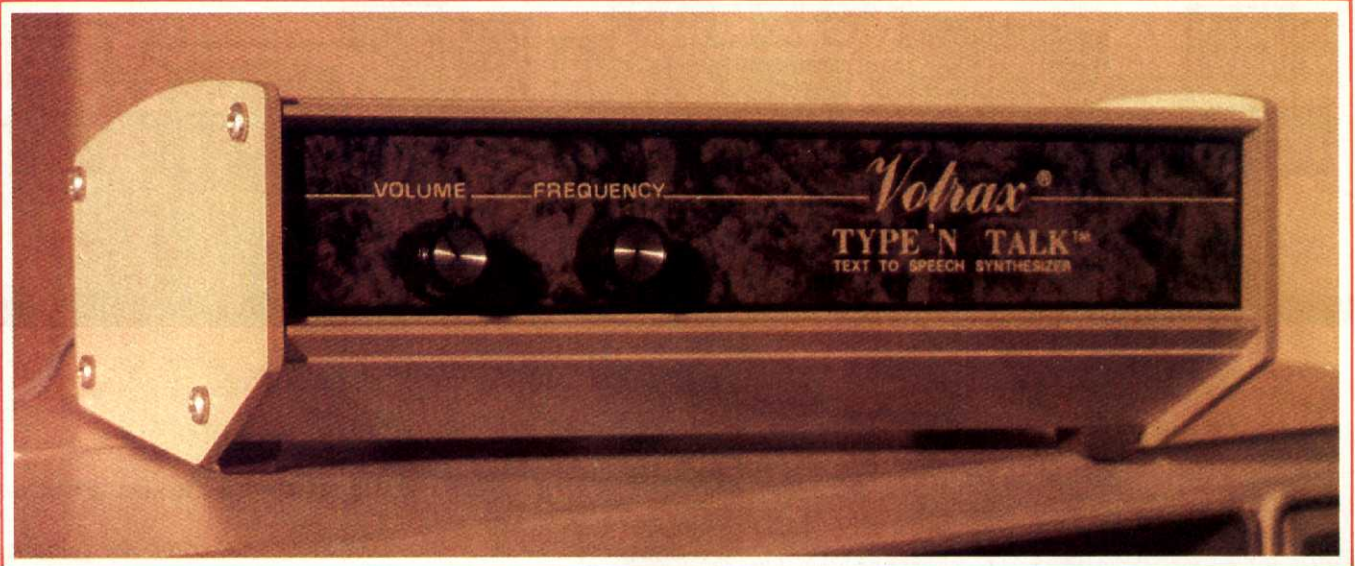
Type 'N Talk adds the extra dimension of human-like speech to computer programs and is already in use by several commercial game manufacturers.

it will attach itself to just about any computer.

Like most true computer peripherals, it doesn't come ready to plug in and play. The proper cable must be purchased from Votrax or the dealer and the unit sent to the printer along with the baud rate of the computer. This is because the Votrax thinks it is a serial printer and accepts computer output as such. So if you play games that can or are being fed to a printer, this unit will work almost immediately for you. If you don't have a printer, you will have to learn a bit about getting your computer to print so that Votrax will articulate something beyond its built-in "System Ready" call.

The unit is expensive, costing as much as many home computers. Votrax has augmented its line by adding an even more expensive, bigger brother called The Personal Speech System (list priced at \$395.00). The TNT is available for about \$249.00. Whether or not this represents a bargain to you is a personal decision, but it used to cost a good deal more. There are only two operating controls on the TNT after the unit's turned on—volume and frequency. The latter, while covering a broad range of lows to highs appears almost superfluous, because there seems to be only one proper setting. Otherwise, it talks too slowly in a low rumbling pitch or sounds like Mickey Mouse.

The one major annoyance with the unit is that it is slow to speak. Remember, unless a program is written specifically for Votrax, it won't phrase correctly. If you are listening to a letter and have doublestruck your name and address, Votrax will dutifully and carefully articulate your name and address twice. Only once did it completely fail to speak a written phrase. Curiously the term was CP/M, referring to the



Type 'N' Talk is small enough to sit atop your monitor.

disk operating system under which it was running. The CP got lost and it kept calling the system "M" — shades of James Bond!!!

On the other hand, the unit is built like a tank. There's no question about this being a high grade piece of work built for many years of service. The single glaring omission: a built-in speaker has been corrected with the

new unit, but will only serve as a utility system. The TNT when hooked up to a high quality loudspeaker sounds great, and more important, it's a whole lot easier to understand. It contains an apparently low distortion 1-watt amplifier and so should power most any reasonable speaker you may want to hook it up to. Just remember to keep the speaker away

from your disks and monitor screens, as the magnets contained may cause damage to the media or distortions to the picture.

A number of software firms are now producing programs specifically geared to Votrax speech enhancement.

In sum, the Votrax TNT is a fine enhancement to a computer-driven



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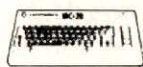
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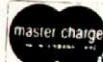
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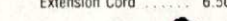


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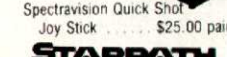


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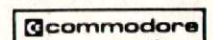
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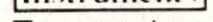


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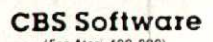


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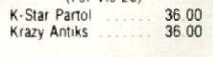
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Can You Survive the Treasure Hunt?

By JOYCE WORLEY

LOST TREASURE

Parker Brothers/\$42

Hidden way beneath the blue-green waves are treasures of silver and gold, waiting for courageous and strong-hearted divers to bring them to the surface. You have an ancient ocean chart to help with your search. Sail through the island chains and visit exotic ports, as you seek the best spot to try your luck. Then dive into the azure waters to search for the sunken treasure. But keep your eyes on the air supply gauge. If you run out of air before the dive is completed, any treasure you find drops back to the ocean floor.

Parker Brothers went to the bottom of the sea for **Lost Treasure**. This electronic deep-sea diving game is the next best thing to being there yourself, as you locate and dive for gold and silver. Sail your ship to the treasure location, then make tracks for port to cash in the loot. But beware of pirates. If another player lands on a space next to yours, he can try to take any treasure you have on board.

Two to four gamers can participate in *Lost Treasure*. Each places a boat on one of the eight ports located on the map board — an ocean chart of islands and water divided into 64 numbered sections. Each section is a possible treasure location, and there are nine diving areas in each location.



Lost Treasure is Parker Brothers' new electronic boardgame.

Start your turn by searching for treasure using the Electronic Dive Control Center. Enter coordinates of the boat's location, then press the appropriate direction key to see if the treasure lies north or south, or east or west of your location. A flashing light circles the direction indicator, stopping at either N, S, E, W, or the center, to show which direction the treasure lies from your boat.

Then move the buoys included with the game, to mark the area where the

Dive Control Center indicates the treasure lies. Next, roll the dice and move your boat toward the loot's location. When the Electronic Dive Control Center shows that your boat is over the treasure, pay the bank \$50,000 for diving rights, fill your air tanks, and start searching the ocean depths for booty.

Enter the sector number where your boat is on the Electronic Dive Control Center, then press "air". If there's no treasure, two low tones signal you've

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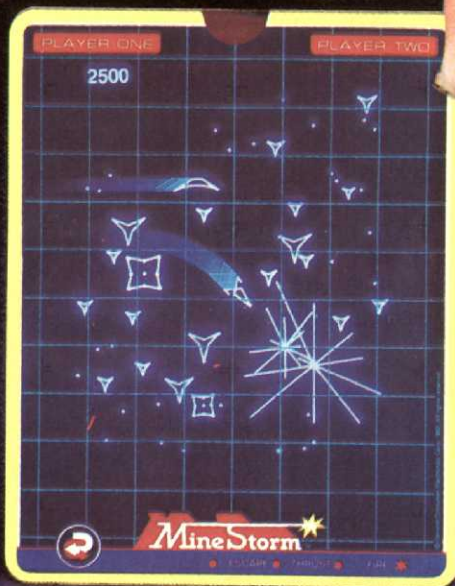
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missed the mark, but if there's loot in that location, the air tanks fill. Lights on the air gauge turn on one at a time until the tank is full. Then use the keypad to enter the number of the area you'd want to search first, 1 through 9. You don't have enough air to explore all nine areas in one dive and still return to the surface safely, but you can search as many spots as possible in any order. Just hold down one of the nine number keys. A descending tone tells you the diver is going down, and the air tanks empty as he plunges into the depths. When he reaches bottom, a deep tone will tell you there's no treasure in that spot, or a high trill of notes lets you know the diver has picked up something good. If there's enough air left in the tanks, try another dive. Just remember to save enough to get back to the surface, or any treasures you might have found fall back to the bottom. When the air reserves begin to dwindle (and the halfway mark is a good time to halt the search), it's time to go topside. Reach the surface with the treasure, and two safety bells signal you've made it. Then the value of the booty lights up on the gauge. The banker gives you treasure chests to total the winnings, at the rate of \$50,000 per chest.

To convert the treasure to spendable cash, sail to the closest unoccupied port. But beware your opponents. They may decide to pirate away your earnings. Any ship landing on a space next to yours can attempt to steal your treasure chests. Each player rolls one of the dice, and the high number wins all the chests from both gamers.

Unlucky divers who use their nest egg dollars without finding treasure can get another grubstake by returning to an unoccupied port. Each visit to port gains the gamer another \$150,000 which finances the next treasure hunt.

A few simple strategies can really help. For example, using your own boat to block a narrow channel between islands can force an opponent to sail the long way around, and give you a bit of uninterrupted time at a treasure site. When actually diving, mix up the order of the numbers you press, to make it harder for the other players to remember what sections have been searched. Although all players are entitled to share any information from the Electronic Dive Control Center, there's no law that says you have to make it easy for them to recall what you've done.

The map board is quite attractive, and the player-pieces are pretty, molded plastic ships and miniature treasure chests. The Electronic Dive Control Center is the *real* guts of the game. It's a handsome battery-operated unit that emits pleasant sonar sounds throughout the game. The flashing lights of the air gauge and the spinning lights on the direction indicator are colorful enhancements. Best of all are the musical tones that accompany every action.

Lost Treasure is a nice diversion that the entire family can enjoy. It takes roughly an hour to play a game. If you want to go deep-sea diving, and can't make it to the ocean, this is certainly a game for you!

BULL FIGHT, ASTRO DESTROYERS

Zykkor/\$29.95 each

Pocket game-watches are hot items this year. There's hardly any arcader who wouldn't like

one of these diversions for odd moments when a larger game might be inappropriate. Zykkor has a couple of hip-pocket models that will keep you on time for your appointments, then give you something to do while you wait for your date to show up.

Most pocket game-watches are standard vest-pocket size in rectangular shape. But Zykkor has chosen some unique designs that add a lot of eye appeal to these functional devices. Both feature accurate digital clocks, and one of them, **Astro Destroyers**, adds a good alarm to the works.

Bull Fight adapts the ancient sport to the electronic arena, with a unique game that, so far, is one-of-a-kind. Although other types of violent sports (wrestling, karate, and sword fighting) have been featured in hand-held formats, this is the only bullfight game currently marketed. Personally, I applaud the laws that keep this blood sport out of our arenas, and suggest that video screens are perhaps the best home for bullfighting. No one gets hurt, and Ferdinand gets to continue grazing peacefully in his



pasture, even while arcaders have a good time playing the part of the on-screen matador.

It starts with the matador standing in the middle of the bull ring, armed only with a sword in one hand and shield in the other. As the angry bull charges toward him, the arcader can raise the shield, or try to land a sword blow on the beast. Gamers have three matadors and the game continues until all are dead.

Action is pretty simple. One control rotates the shield counterclockwise. Raise it in front of the bull's mad rush, and he'll be turned away. Then use the sword button to connect, and Ferdinand dies. But the bull is very fast, and

circles angrily around the matador until he completes his charge. He is a worthy opponent and more often than not, it's the matador that lies unconscious in the bullring when the battle ends.

Scoring on the game is very complex. *Bull Fight* is a five-inning game, with eight rounds (battles) per inning. After completing the fifth inning, the



game starts over while the score continues accumulating. In each round of play, scoring depends on the amount of energy exerted by both El Toro and his nemesis. Defending with the shield while simultaneously stabbing with the sword costs the matador the least amount of energy while gaining the most points, resulting in the highest score. An animal lover might decide to try going through the entire campaign using only the shield for defense. It's possible for both the on-screen fighter and the bull to survive in this way, but the accumulated score at the end of the contest will be smaller.

Zykkor left the mud of the sports arena behind for *Astro Destroyers*. Game one takes the arcader into space where he is the Earth's only defense against the invaders, as they tromp down the screen toward his cannon. In game two, the player defends Earth against a UFO laser beam attack, firing anti-laser beams to destroy the enemy.

Astro Destroyers is unusually pretty, and since it's equipped with a stand, would look great on an arcader's desk. The familiar space invasion game features two crab-like monsters marching down toward Earth. A saucer occasionally zips across the top of the screen, presenting extra scoring possibilities. Gamers should quickly fall into a rhythm of moving and firing, then moving again, to halt the invaders high on the screen where they give the most points. Game two features the UFO from the invasion game scouting across the sky, while emitting laser beams toward the gun emplacements

on the surface. Gamers must move the launcher to the proper position and fire their own beam toward the ship before the attack strikes Earth.

Both contests are easy to play and seem well suited for younger arcaders who might lack patience for more difficult games. *Astro Destroyers* is an especially good looking alarm-clock-game unit. Zykkor paints an attractive sky scene behind the LCD action. A star-studded blue sky, complete with a couple of planets and a strip of terrain at the bottom to represent Earth, adds graphics that greatly enrich the game, and the handsome space drawings on the cabinet of the pretty yellow unit make this one very desirable and ornamental desk clock.

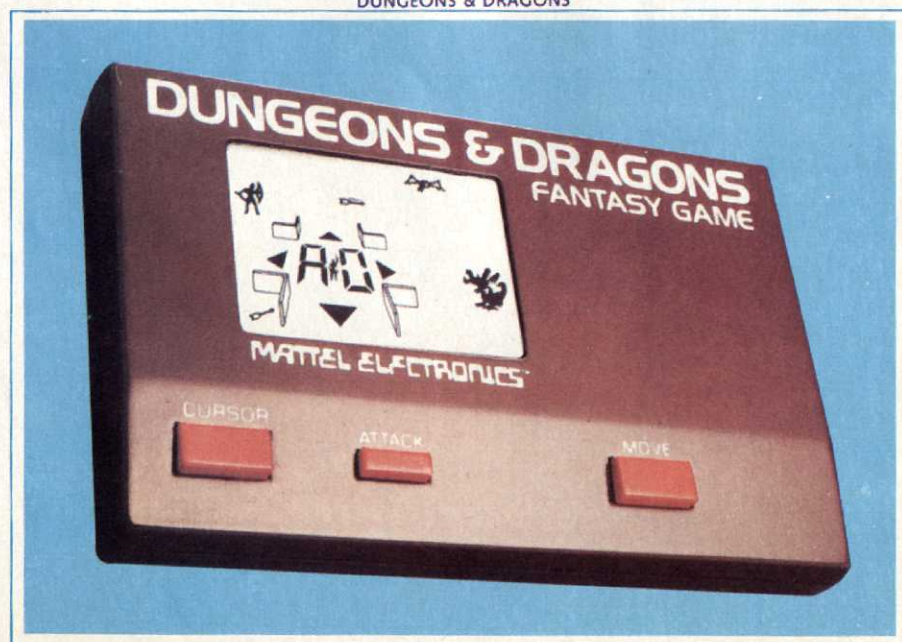
DUNGEONS & DRAGONS

Mattel/\$40

Pick up your sword, don your armor, and gird up your courage. There are treasures to find and dragons to slay. **Dungeons & Dragons**, the king of all armchair adventures, has made it to the stand-alone field, and the handheld version from Mattel Electronics is sure to win your heart.

Dungeons & Dragons, the great role-playing fantasy adventure developed in the mid-1970's by Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson, charmed millions of enthusiasts while spawning a host of similar role-playing games that continue to dominate the non-electronic gaming field. Arcaders also owe a tip of their hats to the gaming concepts that captured the imaginations of so many and inspired an entire genre of entertainment. There's hardly

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS





any company that doesn't have at least one fantasy adventure in its catalog, and many of these frankly owe their inspiration to the masterpiece marketed by TSR Hobbies, Incorporated. A number of books, at least one movie, and scores of publications are devoted to *Dungeons & Dragons*, and there's hardly a gamer in the country who doesn't thrill to the drama of a well-run *D & D* campaign.

Mattel Electronics was quick to recognize the potential of electronic adaptations of *Dungeons & Dragons*. The company licensed the trademark from TSR Hobbies, then put programmers to work to see how many games could utilize the great themes from *Dungeons & Dragons*. It has been fertile soil for the company to plant

their hopes in. First, Mattel released the stand-alone computer labyrinth game, *Dungeons & Dragons*. Players move tokens around a grid and receive sound clues to help them locate the treasure while avoiding the dungeon dreadfuls.

After the labyrinth game, Mattel mined the dungeon for more gold. Several video and computer cartridges have resulted, including **Advanced Dungeons & Dragons**, **Advanced Dungeons & Dragon's Treasure of Tarmin**, and **Advanced Dungeons & Dragon's Cloudy Mountain**. It seems certain it won't end there. A rich vein of ideas like *D & D* won't be tapped out soon. It should be good for almost endless numbers of future scenarios.

Mattel went back into the dungeon for another treasure, and came out with the **Action Arcade Series**

Dungeons & Dragons in hand-held format.

Its postage-size screen holds all the excitement and urgency that has been missing from the labyrinth. Arcaders move through a large 100 room dungeon searching for a magic rope, magic arrow, and try to avoid several nasties. The passageways are treacherous, and there is always a terrible danger of plunging into a pit. If the adventurer doesn't have the magic rope to enable him to climb out of the trap, he perishes. Giant bats flutter through the rooms. If one encounters

the warrior, it picks up your adventurer and carries him over several rooms before dropping him, sometimes right into one of the pits. Most wicked of all is the evil dragon. An encounter with the serpent ends in death unless the brave warrior shoots it with the magic arrow before the beast sees him.

The playscreen holds an overhead view of one room in a maze-like grid, with the warrior waiting in the middle of the room. Push the cursor button until the arrow points in the direction you want him to move, then use the move button. The view of the dungeon room disappears. You see the warrior walking, then the scene shifts to the room he has just entered, with its coordinates clearly shown in the middle, so adventurers can always know where their man is at every moment.

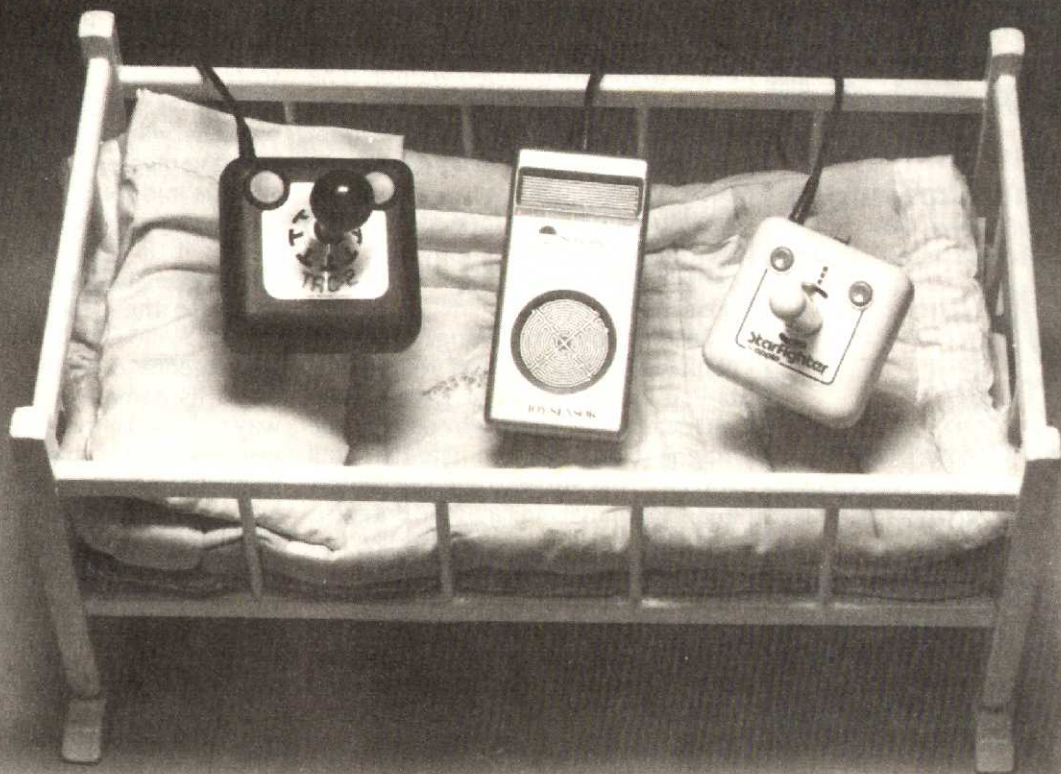
On-screen indicators show if the warrior is in a room adjacent to any of the dungeon denizens, but not which direction they lie. If he enters a room containing one of the prizes, he gains possession. Move into a room with a dungeon dreadful, and it will do its worst. For example, if the hero walks into a room with a pit, he immediately falls in. If he doesn't have the rope, he dies there and the game ends. If he is carrying the rope, animation shows him first in the pit with the rope dangling down, then safely out and ready to continue journeying through the cells. If the warrior moves into a room with a dragon, it's all over for him. But when the on-screen indicators show he's adjacent to a room with a serpent, he can fire the magic arrow in the direction he hopes the dragon lies. If successful, he kills the dragon and then wins the game. Choose the wrong direction to fire and the arrow is lost. There won't be another similar chance during this game since there's only one magic arrow per round.

Sound effects greatly enhance the game. Musical signals warn that the bats are moving through the dungeon. Descending tones indicate the hero's plunge into the pit, and rising notes accompany his climb to safety. His travel through the pit is made audible with walking noises. Special warning notes signal the approach of the beast, and dirge noises mark the demise of our hero.

There's a large element of luck in *Dungeons & Dragons*. When on-screen indicators show the warrior that he is one room away from disaster, there's really no way to know which



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way the danger lies. But the experienced dungeon-crawler will map his travels through the labyrinth, and this will help steer him around the deadly pits. Stumbling into a pit spells instant death to the unequipped warrior. If he has the rope when he falls, he immediately scampers free of the trap, but then the rope disappears into another room. He'll have to locate it again before he can then risk another plunge. Be careful when the hero isn't carrying the rope, and give pit locations a wide berth.

Move through the dungeon rooms, mapping your position as you go, until you locate the magic arrow. Then just search out and try to destroy the dragon. Don't even go near him until you have the arrow; if the hero enters into a room that indicates the dragon is adjacent, back out very carefully, but indicate the vicinity on the map. By moving stealthily around the area, you can possibly pinpoint the actual room where the beast lies waiting. Then when you have finally located the arrow, go back and fire it into his lair to win the day and the game.

The game ends when the hero dies, the beast dies or when time runs out.

Players score one point for each five seconds of time in the dungeon, up to a maximum of 99. The object is to kill the serpent in the shortest possible time, so the lowest score is the best score.

There are three skill levels. In level one, the warrior enters the dungeon with the magic rope. In level two, the rope is hidden somewhere in the dungeon and can't be used until he locates it. In level three, there is no magic rope at all in the game, and any step into the pit kills your man instantly.

Dungeons & Dragons doesn't live up to its namesake, since there's no way to imbue the computer version with the charm that normally comes from the dungeon master's own imagination. Yet this is an exciting and novel approach to the famous fantasy game, and gives arcaders a hero's chance at killing the dragon. 

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By THE GAME DOCTOR

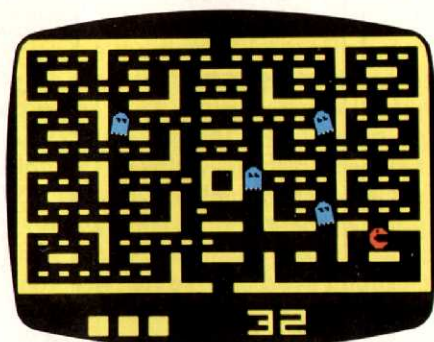
Well, gamers, hope this issue finds all your fingers in great shape, since the questioners we have lined up this time around represent some of the sharpest queries the Programmable Practitioner has ever seen. Boy are you guys getting smart! I may actually have to start reading my videogame medical books again! I haven't browsed through those since *Space Invaders* was a twinkle in Taito's eye. . .

In any event, we've got a pair of T-shirt winners this time out! First, David LaVerda offers the Doc a technical query and then Blu Gilliland, of Montgomery, Alabama, shocks yours truly with a "Q" that I've never "A'd" before! Take it away. . .

Q: *I have heard quite a bit about blinking on the Atari 2600. One of my favorite games, Amidar, from Parker Brothers, comes up in a clean, clear as a bell display. Once play begins, however, the various characters begin to periodically blink on and off. What causes the characters to be sharp one minute and flickering the next? I'm totally confused!*

(David LaVerda, Pittsfield, MA)

A: Well, Dave, the reason for the occasional blinking on *Amidar* is easily



PAC-MAN

explained — once you understand the technological limitations of the 2600. The VCS's primary graphics weakness is its inability to show objects on the same horizontal plane moving in different directions. What's happening is that as the various paint-rollers, apes, natives and piggies move around the field, they are creating random configurations that are, for a second or two, more than the VCS can handle in terms of image generation. So it responds by blinking, just as in *Pac-Man*, for example, or dozens of other 2600 videogames.

Q: *Over the months I have been reading your column and I've noticed a pattern. Everyone seems to ask about one videogame or another — no one asks about you or your column. So*

I decided to break this tradition and ask about "Q&A" itself.

Do you answer letters on a first-come, first-served basis or hand pick them from all your mail? And how much mail do you receive between monthly installments?

(Blu Gilliland, Montgomery, AL)

A: This is a definite T-shirt winning "Q" if ever I've seen one. So send me your shirt size and we'll get it off to you first thing, Blu.

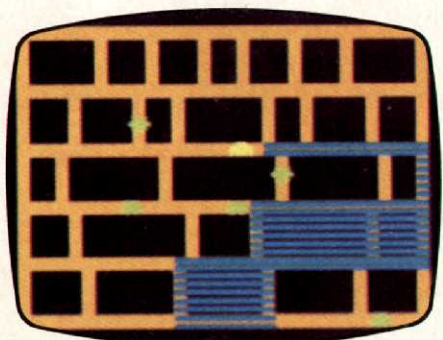
Now, on to your question. Incredible as it may seem, the Doctor receives well over 1000 questions *each and every month!* Even with the help of invaluable assistance from staff members, Lisa Honden and Kathy Carter, in pushing the old wheelbarrow, it is physically impossible for your enfeebled medico to actually read, in-full, every letter that crosses this desk. Why, if I did that, I'd never get to see the ninth green on my favorite golf videogame, my WICO 9-iron would rust, my answering service would quit and I'd probably be thrown out of videogame medicine for over-diligence!

There are some things you just can't ask a doctor to do.

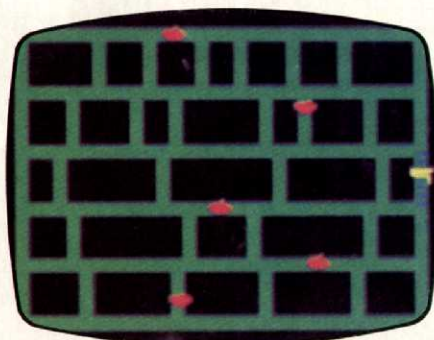
What, in fact, happens is this: as deadline draws near, the Doc peruses the most recent hundred or so questions. After scanning these, certain themes will become apparent — people asking about the 5200's VCS adapter or the Supercharger, for instance. The best articulated of these is then chosen to be the representative inquiry.

Occasionally, it's possible to go through over 100 letters and then be asked, essentially, five to 10 questions that are not duplicates of other letters.

The *real* quest is for the month's



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best question, and the doctor has at times plowed through as many as 300 letters before hitting upon the right one.

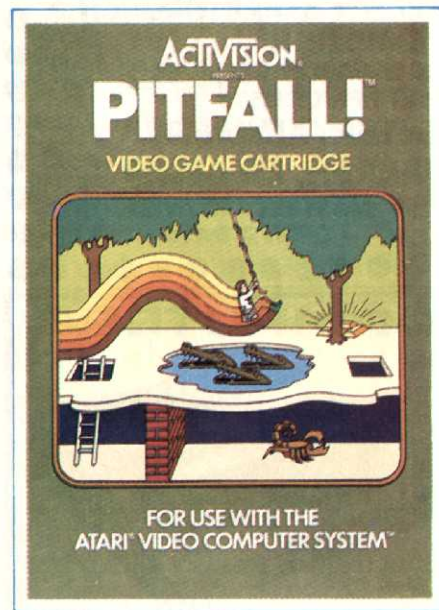
Timing is also important. What can be a highly relevant query one month can be yesterday's news the next. On other occasions, the question is actually answered elsewhere in the issue, in the form of a review or news item.

So that's the behind-the-scenes look at how the Doctor operates. It has all been revealed for you, Blu Gilliland, because "you asked for it!"

Q: In *Pitfall* — which I otherwise love — I can't get past the crocodiles without a swinging vine! How do you do it?

(Mike Thacker, Alberta, Canada)

A: That's an easy one, my friend. Just time those sequences involving the opening and closing of the croc's maw. Once you've got them down, wait



PITFALL!

until the jaws are just about to close, then jump from one to the other and onto the other side.

And remember, always run from right to left — that way, if you fall in the pool, or tar pit, or wherever, you'll be reincarnated on the safe side rather than have to re-cross the danger zone.

Q: What causes the time delay when I put my ColecoVision cartridges in? On my old VCS the games appear right away, but with ColecoVision I have to wait about 10 seconds before the menu appears. How come?

(Lawrence Rice, Santa Monica, CA)

A: Interesting question. When Co-

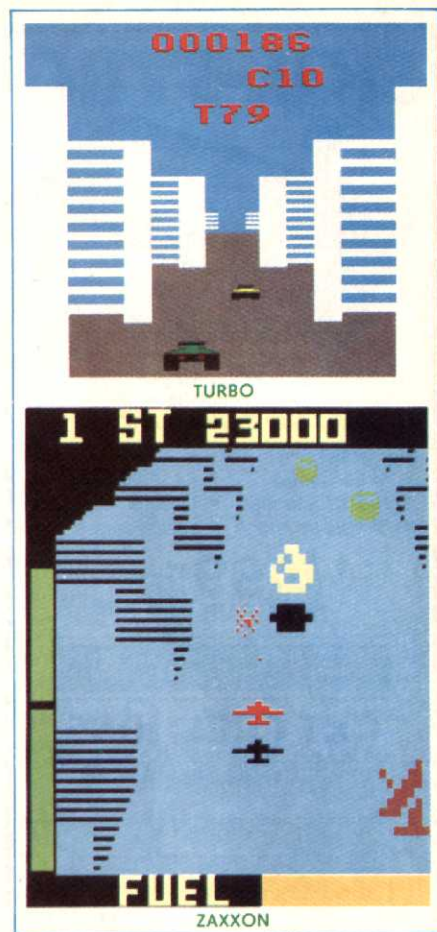
leco first started designing its game library, they realized they would need a lot of titles — and quickly. For that reason — as well as their recognition qualities and sales potential — their initial entries were almost exclusively coin-op adaptations. Using a full-time artist and musician to create audio-graphics, their programmers worked in the PASCAL computer language. PASCAL is famous as a quick-writing programming language, and allowed the company to get almost a dozen gaming titles into the stores by Christmas time — something that could never have been done with, say, Z-80 machine code.

It will be interesting, however, to see if third party software companies will try to see what this super-system can do in assembly language. The result should be fast-moving, eyeball-popping stuff!

Q: Who makes the new Ultravision system?

(Mark Stagney, Cincinnati, OH)

A: You are a man of few words, eh, Mark? Well, my answer will be almost as brief — Ultravision is produced by a company called. . . (drum roll, please)



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"Ultravision, Inc.!" They have been bought and sold at least once since announcing their system, but have kept the trademark company name throughout it all.

Q: I would like to know who designed the ColecoVision Smurf cartridge. I was playing the game on level three, moving erratically between screens when everything stopped, my score disappeared and three green initials appeared in the corner of the playfield.

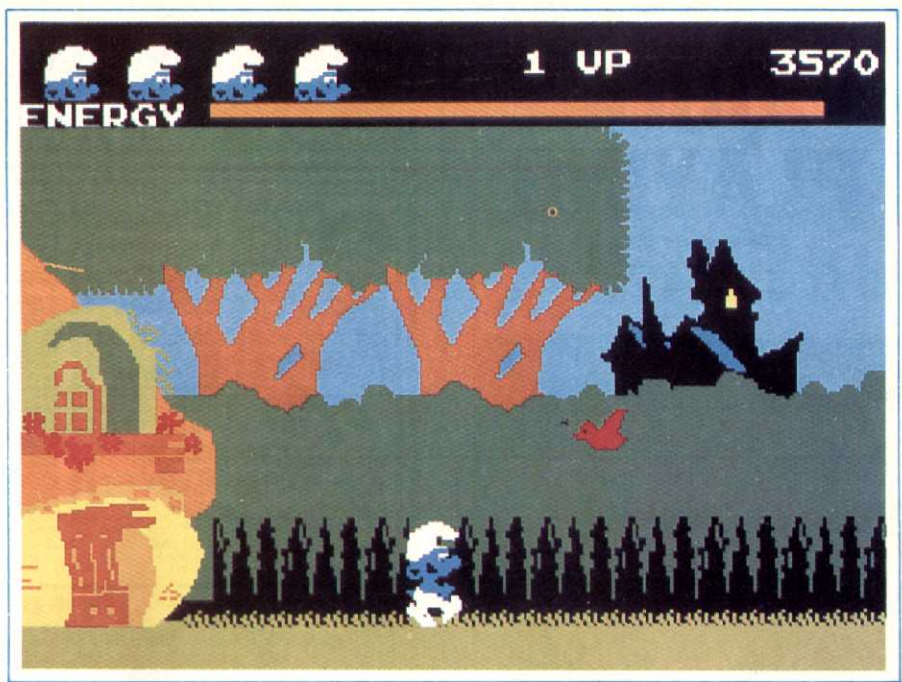
This doesn't work on levels one or two, but on level four, I did the same thing and was rewarded with two initials and a super-high score of 919,500!

It only works on the original three scenarios, however — you can't run back and forth between the forest and the hills, just between two forest scenes.

Are these the designer's initials? Have I found the first ColecoVision secret message — or just a weird defect?

(David Feldman, Las Vegas, NV)

A: While we're not at liberty to reveal the names of ColecoVision de-



SMURFS' PLAYFIELD

signers at this precise moment in time, we can say with some certainty that you have indeed stumbled upon the very first ColecoVision "Easter Egg".

As for a name to fit those initials, keep watching these pages (as if we could stop you! Ha!)

Q: I'd like to share with you some interesting visuals I've encountered with the Intellivision cartridges, *Lock 'N' Chase*, *Dungeons and Dragons*,[™] and recently, *Pitfall*.

First let me say that I'm pretty sure my master component is working properly. During *Lock 'N' Chase*, I took my little crook into the upper right-hand corner of the maze and he proceeded to jump out of it. Because of the scrolling effect that showed up at the bottom of the screen, he repeatedly went up and out and down until my score (which ballooned to 17,300) seemed high enough, so I touched the disc again and a policeman stopped the round. This was viewed again by a friend at a later date, when the robber, situated near the top right tunnel, went through a wall and around and around until the cop grabbed him.

The sound component might have caused the other problems. During a game of *Dungeons*, the adventurer-archer turned half invisible! His bottom half disappeared and he gained invincibility against the monsters. Unfortunately when he left the mountain and entered the next scenario, he was quite normal. And today I turned on *Pitfall* with a finger on the action button, and poor Harry started the game swinging in midair, unable to leap from his invisible vine until I reset the game. Any ideas or comments?

(Name, address, unknown)

A: Most videogames have little
Continued on page 118

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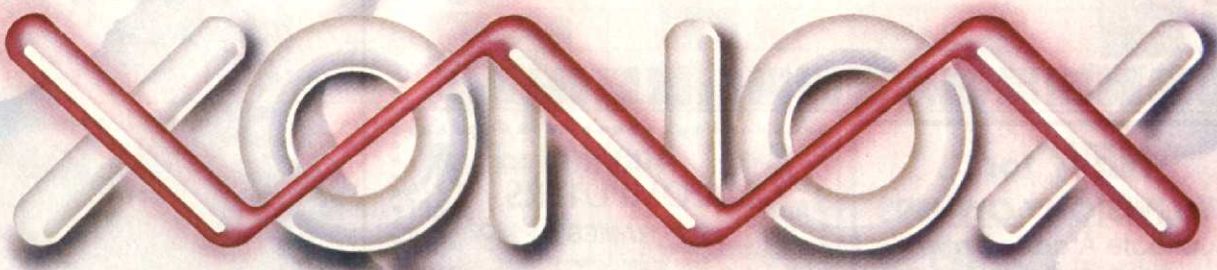
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Q & A

Continued from page 115

things in them (sometimes referred to as "glitches") that make the contest take on peculiar directions, do unlikely things or reveal heretofore hidden messages. This is the result of a random movement that the programmer never accounted for in the original design.

Remember, games are not designed with the expectation that the player will be roaming around waiting for weird things to happen. It's just part of the fun.

Q&A QUICKIES: Everyone is asking about the VCS adapter for the 5200. We have it via a fairly reliable source that the prototypes have already been built, but a shipping date for the peripheral that will allow the third-wave system to play 2600 games has



yet to be announced. So watch this space! Regarding the many readers who also wondered about the games (such as Tigervision's) that just won't work on Coleco's VCS emulator: Tiger is working on it, along with Coleco. Coleco has been very helpful to interested producers of third-party software and we're hoping the bugs will be sprayed by the time you read this. Also on the subject of the ColecoVision — that system seems to be on everybody's mind this month — not all Atari-compatible joysticks will work perfectly on the Coleco system. Atari 2600 controllers, you see, have nine socket-holes for connection-pins but not every joystick manufacturer makes use of all nine pins. Unless they do, it may not play on your ColecoVision.

Until next month, keep your joystick primed and your mind sharp. Happy trails. . .

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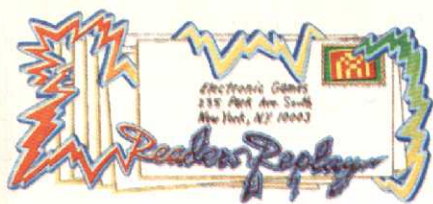
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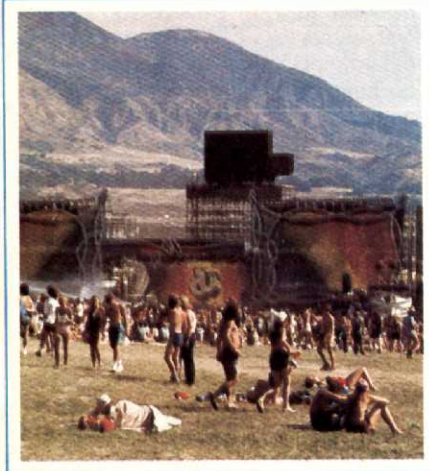


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nology, with famous concert promoter Bill Graham handling rock acts such as Tom Petty and The Kinks, and whole circus-sized tents filled with Apples,



Apple software and other computer and videogame-oriented products.

Held amid the scenic mountains of Southern California, only the oppressive temperatures — over 100 degrees each day of the festival — kept the crowds down.

PAC'S INCREDIBLE

Is it true that a national Ms. Pac-Man tournament was held recently on TV? Any news on this event?

David Luchen
Knoxville, TN

Ed: The "EG Information Center" strikes again! "That's Incredible" did indeed recently stage a Ms. P-M tournament, as witnessed by the



photo provided courtesy of Alan Landsburg Productions. Names of winners and scores, however, were not enclosed.

Remember to send all reader mail regarding this column to: Readers' Replay, c/o Electronic Games, 460 W. 34th Street, New York, NY 10001. ☺

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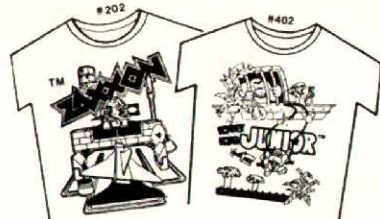
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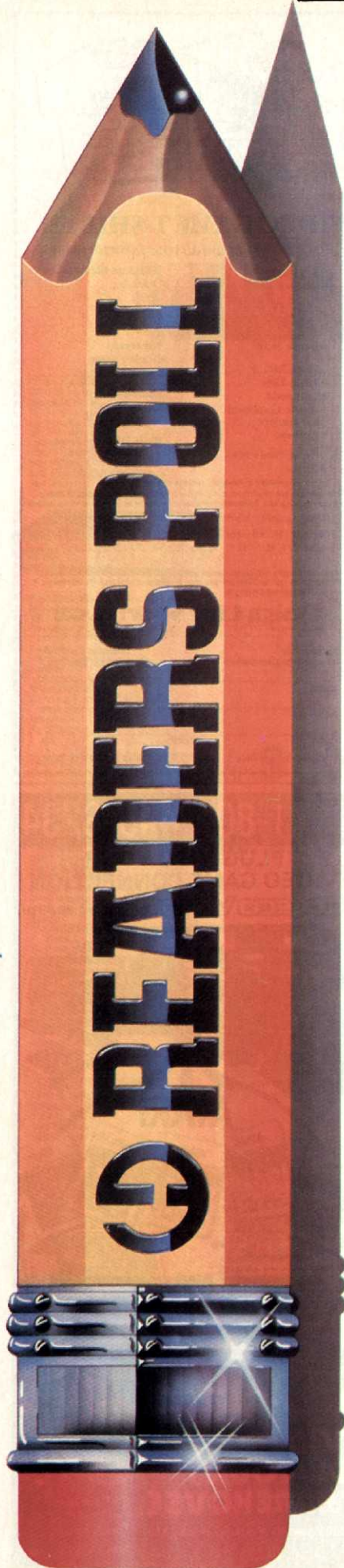
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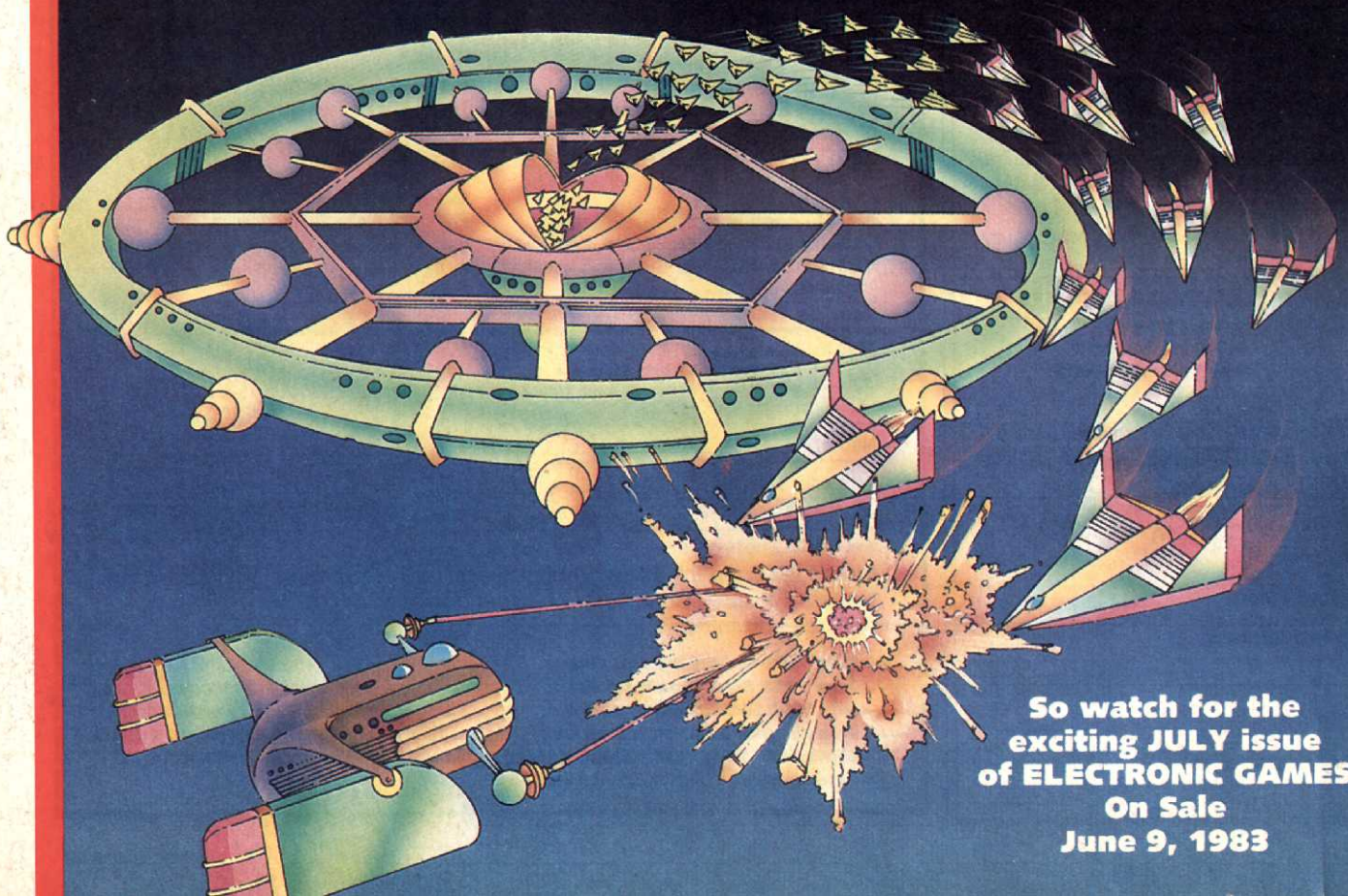
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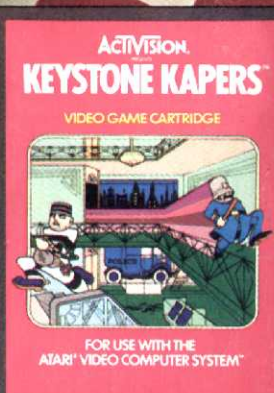
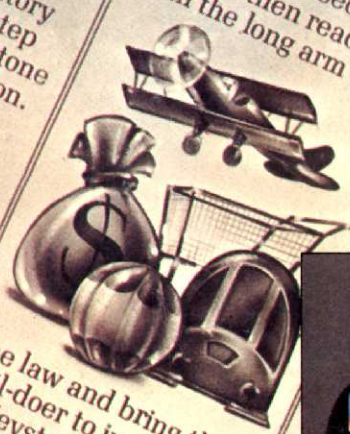
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