

PLAYERS GUIDE TO VIDEOGAME SYSTEMS

MORE THAN  
30 PAGES  
OF ARTICLES, REVIEWS  
AND NEWS ABOUT  
**COMPUTERS**

# electronic GAMES

Videogames • Computer Games • Stand-Alone Games • Arcades

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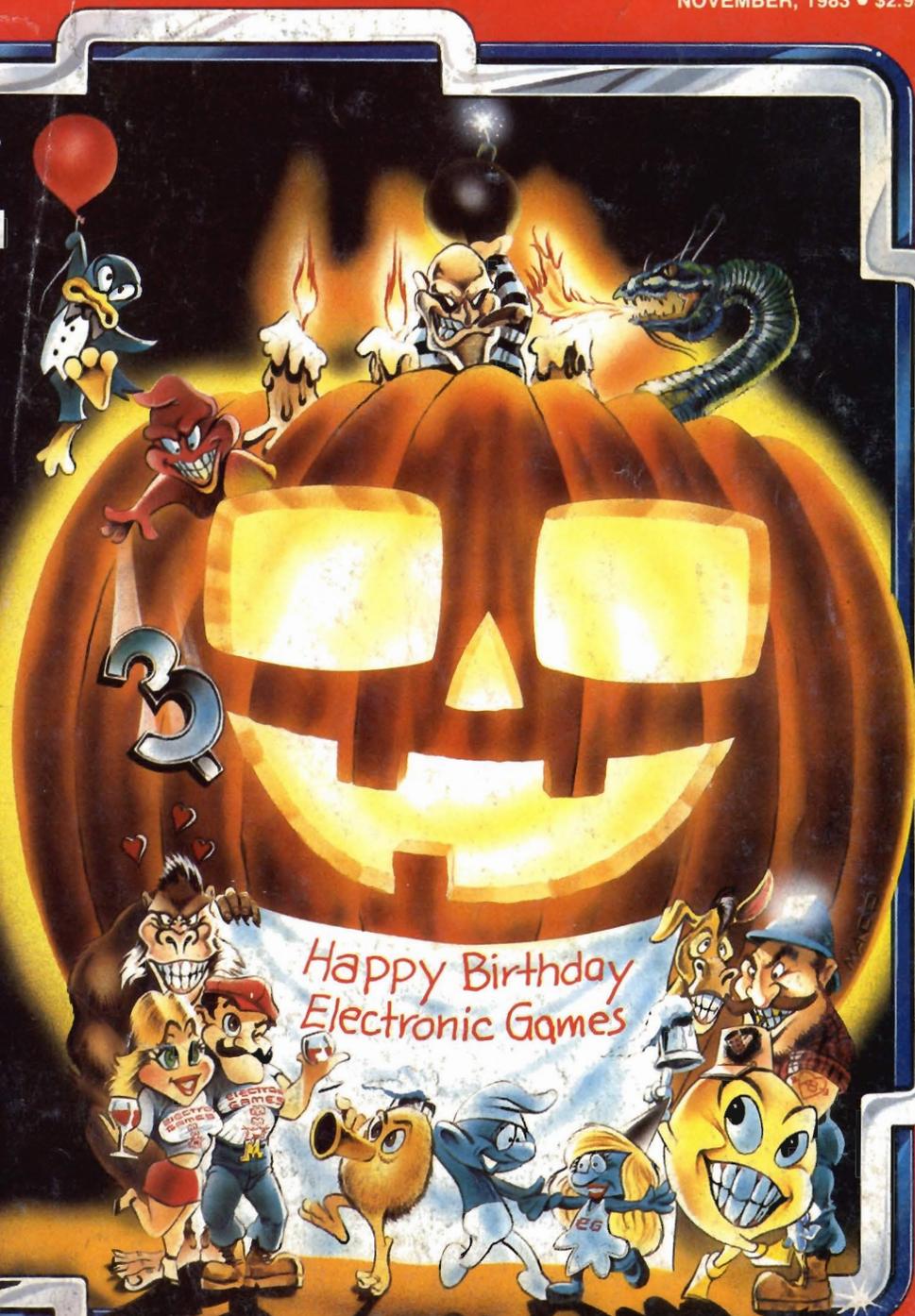
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SHUDDER WITH  
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FLIPS-OUT!**

**GOODIES  
FOR  
GAMERS**

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# electronic GAMES



## FEATURES

### THE VIDEOGAME HALL OF FAME

The votes are in — and two games entered the shrine. Find out if your favorites made it—or will they have to wait for next year?

# 30

### 34 SCARY GAMES

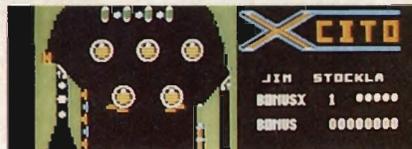
A few electronic shudders are waiting for those of you who believe Halloween tricks are treats.

### GOODIES FOR GAMERS

Here are some nifty little gadgets and accessories that can make anyone's arcading more fun!

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### 48 VIDEO PINBALL FLIPS OUT

Video versions of the traditional flipper games are turning on thousands of electronic gamers.

It's the holiday season, and for the scoop on the leading programmables, from the ColecoVision to the Atari 2600, read

### THE PLAYERS GUIDE TO VIDEOGAME SYSTEMS

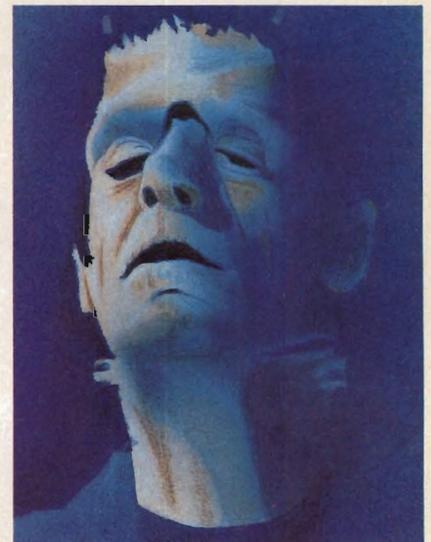
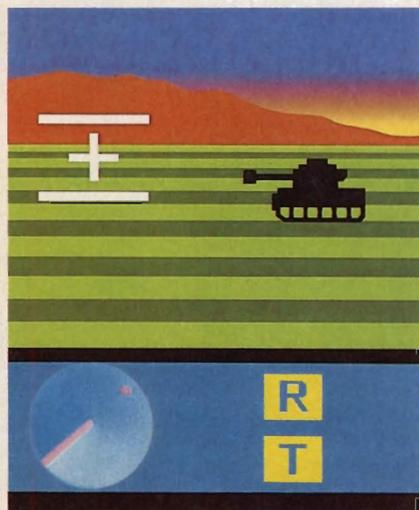
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### 114 Q\*BERT COMES HOME

If you love Mylstar's block-hopper, there's Q\*Bert merchandise awaiting you!



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ELECTRONIC GAMES (ISSN0730-6687) is published monthly by Reese Communications, Inc., 460 West 34th Street, New York, NY 10001. Application to mail at second-class postage rates pending at NY, NY and additional mailing office. © 1983 by Reese Communications, Inc. All rights reserved. © under Universal, International and Pan American Copyright conventions. Reproduction of the editorial or pictorial content in any manner is prohibited. Single copy price, \$2.95. Subscription rates: one year

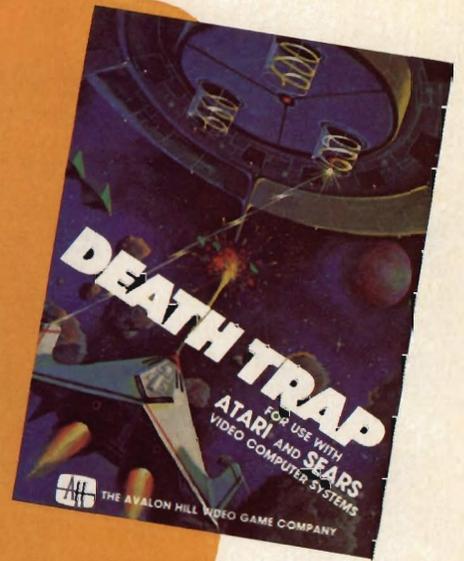
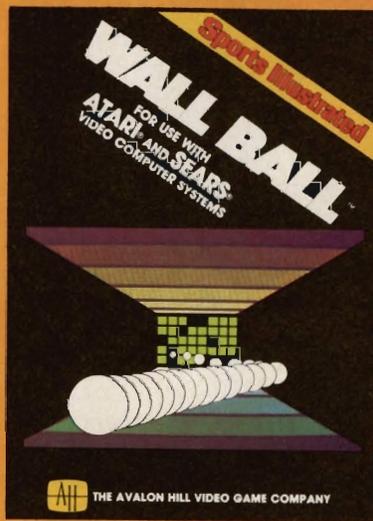
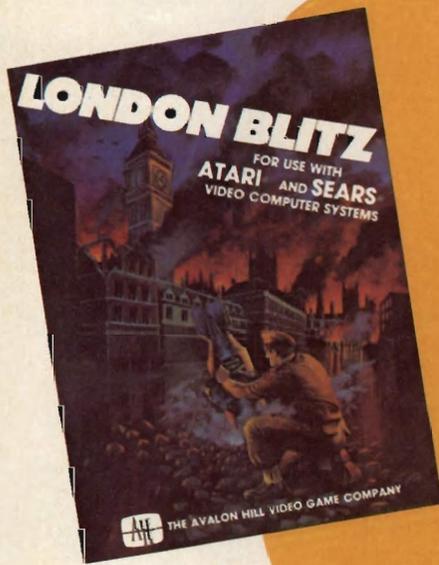


(12 issues) \$28; two years (24 issues) \$48; Canada, one year \$32; foreign, Air Mail one year \$64. Address subscription orders and correspondence to ELECTRONIC GAMES, P.O. Box 1128, Dover, NJ 07801. Change of address takes 60 days to process; send old address label, new address and zip code. All material listed in this magazine is subject to manufacturer's change without notice, and publisher assumes no responsibility for such changes. Printed in the U.S.A.

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## Bye, Bye High Score Hijinks

By ARNIE KATZ

Sometimes the best way to improve a magazine is through addition by subtraction. Pruning weak material and replacing it with stronger stuff makes a publication more interesting and entertaining.

That's what we hope will happen as a result of our decision to stop printing high scores for coin-op and home electronic games. Although some readers avidly follow the listings, EG's monthly survey show that most folks don't care all that much. We feel our exclusive "Newsmaker" series and another new feature we'll unveil in January will make better use of the pages.

The main reason we axed the scores is purely practical: There's no way to authenticate them. And if the scoreboards aren't fair and accurate—why bother?

Let me explain the situation more fully. The main problem with charting coin-op scores is that most current machines have an operator-adjustable difficulty gauge that the players can't see. This makes comparing point totals achieved in different game parlors virtually impossible to compare

in any meaningful way. One arcader can out-point another by a two-to-one margin and still be the less skilled competitor. The difficulty setting makes *that*



much difference in the score.

Things get even trickier when it comes to the home games. Some cartridges roll over too easily, while others are a snap to gimmick if you know how. That means that many home game titles simply can't be tracked since there's no way to determine if the person sending the photo of the screen has rolled the score one, two, or 20 times—or even just found a little glitch in the program.

Perhaps it's just as well that we're ditching high scores. They don't really prove much, anyway. The important thing is how much you enjoy the mind and body challenge of the game, not the exact number of points on the screen at the end. As gamers have said to me again and again during the course of my travels throughout the country, the important thing is not to outdo someone else's score, but rather to raise the ceiling of your own "personal best".

As the motto of **Electronic Games** magazine puts it so succinctly: "The play's the thing!" Let accountants and figure-filberts worry about the scores. 

# Spectravideo's new Quickshot™ III gives you a better handle on Coleco™ Games

With Spectravideo's new Quickshot™ III joystick, you'll really be able "to handle" those challenging Colecovision games.. whether it's Coleco's own games or the exciting ones Spectravideo now makes for Colecovision.

Not only is the Quickshot III a big improvement over other Coleco-compatible joysticks, we think it's the most advanced, superbly-crafted joystick controller in the world.

The two buttons (for separate functions) on the grip make one-hand play possible, and this is a real advantage. However, if your trigger fingers tire, you can simply switch to two-hand control by employing the two fire buttons on the controller base. The grip itself is contoured and unbelievably comfortable, and the easy-read Numeric Keypad allows you to select game levels and number of players. The Quickshot III also features self-stabilizing suction cups and a convenient extra long cord.

If you're tired of coming out second best to those tough (but fun) Colecovision games, pick up the Quickshot III. And show 'em who's boss.

- Two sets of Independent fire buttons.
- Special "Easy Read" Numeric Keypad.
- More comfortably designed contoured handle.
- Extra long cord plugs into either Colecovision game machine or Spectra Video's Coleco Game Adapter.
- Built-in suction cups.



**SPECTRAVIDEO™**

## Quickshot™ III

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# BECOME A IN YOUR OWN

## GRAND PRIZE (1):

FUTURISTIC VIDEO ROOM FEATURING:

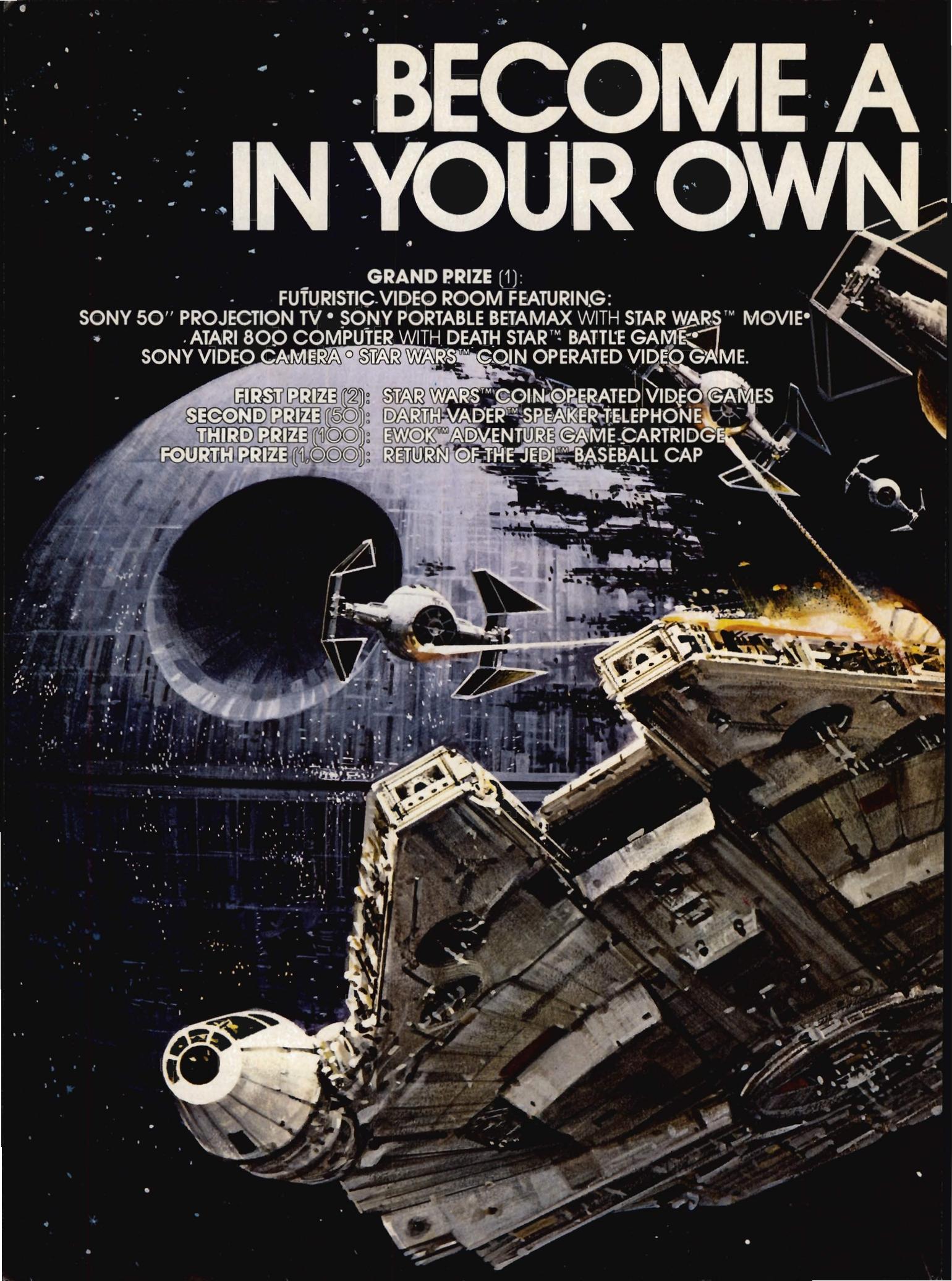
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# JEDI MASTER™ VIDEO ROOM

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2. Enter the sweepstakes as often as you like, but each entry must be mailed separately to:

**Death Star Battle Sweepstakes  
Post Office Box #621, Lowell, IN 46356**

Entries must be received no later than June 30, 1984.

3. You may obtain a Free Official Entry Blank by sending a stamped, self-addressed envelope to Death Star Battle Sweepstakes, P.O. Box #575, Lowell, IN 46356. The correct answers to which scene and screen comes first may be obtained by sending a stamped, self-addressed envelope to this same address, marked "CORRECT ANSWERS" in the lower right hand corner of the envelope. Residents of Washington State need not stamp their return envelope.
4. Winners will be selected in random drawings from among all correct entries received by VENTURA ASSOCIATES, INC., an independent judging organization whose decisions are final. The odds of winning are determined by the total number of entries received.
5. One major prize to a family. No substitution for prizes as offered, except as may be necessary due to availability. Taxes are the responsibility of winners.
6. Sweepstakes open to residents of the United States. Employees and families of Parker Brothers, their advertising and production agencies, VENTURA ASSOCIATES, INC., Lucasfilm Ltd. (LFL) and suppliers of prizes are not eligible. Void where prohibited by law. All federal, state and local regulations apply. Winners will be asked to sign an affidavit of eligibility and their names and likenesses may be used for publicity purposes.
7. For a list of major prize winners, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: Death Star Battle Sweepstakes Winners List, P.O. Box #783, Lowell, IN 46356.

OFFICIAL ENTRY FORM

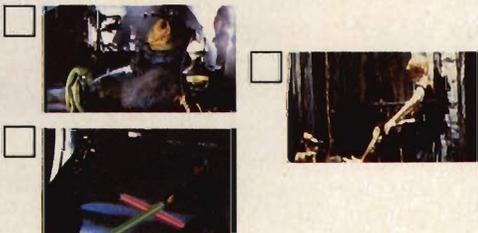
## DEATH STAR™ BATTLE SWEEPSTAKES

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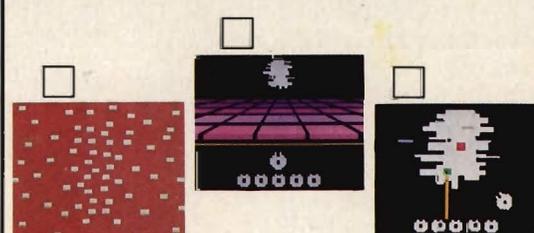
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 B Check the screen that appears first in the Parker Brothers' DEATH STAR™ BATTLE Video Game.  
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**MOVIE**



**VIDEO GAME**



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CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ STATE: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_



# ELECTRONIC GAMES HOTLINE

DYAS

## IMAGIC CHANGES PUBLISHING COURSE

Imagic, which had sales totalling over \$75 million last year, plans to create computer games for several computer systems.

Even though Imagic will continue to produce games for the Atari 2600, Mattel Intellivision and Coleco ColecoVision, it will now delve much more deeply into the research and development of enter-

### TRUCKIN' (IMAGIC)



### WHITE WATER (IMAGIC)

tainment software for popular microcomputers.

William Grubb, president of the Los Gatos, CA firm, comments on the move, "No one adequately anticipated the magnitude of industry changes of recent months. The expected merger of the videogames and home computer industries was seen in the distance—and it's all happening now!"



COLECO'S ADAM COMPUTER

## COLECO UNVEILS ADAM

"We think it will have the same impact on home computing that the introduction of ColecoVision had on programmable videogame systems," boasts an official of Coleco. Those who've had an advance look at the Adam have come away so thoroughly impressed that, for once, the product may live up to all the advance publicity.

For a suggested retail price of approximately \$600, the

buyer gets everything, except a video terminal, needed to get into the thick of home computing. The Adam comes with its own digital data storage drive, sports a daisy-wheel printer, has modem capability, plays all ColecoVision cartridges and offers a resident memory of 80K bytes. Coleco will produce games on data storage units for play exclusively on the Adam.

Some machine, huh?

## SPECIAL OLYMPICS ADDS VIDEOGAMES

The Special Olympics—in which handicapped children compete in games tailored specifically to them—should prove even better than before with the addition of electronic games to the 1983 Summer Games Tournament.

A "special" fund-raising tourney is scheduled in order to help out the Olympics Public & Parochial schools. There's also a good possibility that videogames will be added to the actual calendar

of events for the Special Olympians, due to the many technological advances being made in mouth controllers for paraplegics.

A sum of \$60,800 in prizes will be awarded among all age groups entered in the competition, \$20,000 in cash. The marathon takes place over 16 weeks and it's expected that members of the gaming industry will play a major role in bringing this event to public notice.

## ALL-STAR POSTER ART

Videogame All-Stars, the Garden City, New York-based videogame club that issues its own publications has just jumped into the poster business. Its initial offering is a montage work featuring everything from a Pharaoh's deathmasque to combat in outer space, drawn in exquisite color airbrush by Fred Appel.

To pick up a copy, drop the All-Stars a line at: 666 Old



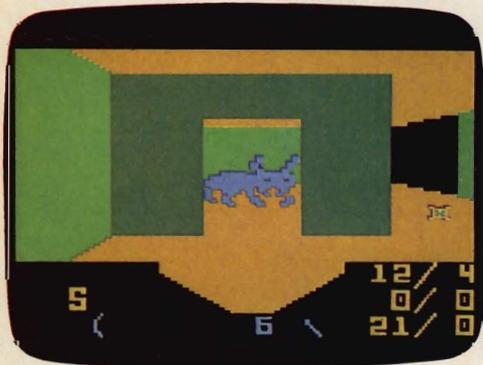
VIDEOGAME ALL-STARS POSTER

Country Road, Garden City, New York 11530. Do it before Dec. 31st and this fine poster will only cost \$7.50, plus \$2.50 for postage and handling. After the New Year, the price goes up an additional \$2.50.

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4539 TUNNELS, 256 DUNGEONS, 1 HIDDEN TREASURE  
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TREASURE OF TARMIN™\* cartridge is the newest video game challenge in the **ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS™\*** series for Intellivision. But beware. It is no game for mere mortals. You must be more than clever. You must master the skills of mystic weaponry and sorcery. Or suffer destruction by over fifty different types of hideous creatures. And once you begin your quest for the treasure, there's no turning back.



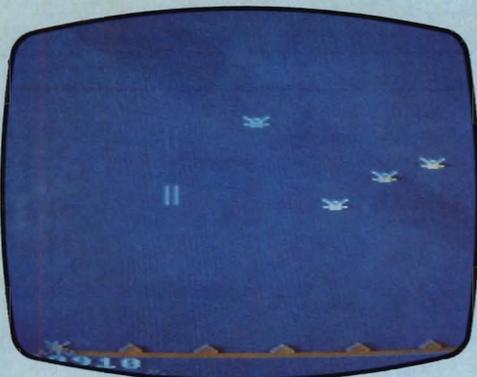
So if you dare take on this video game, remember, you've been warned. These dungeons are going to give you the creeps. Getting rid of them is your problem.

MATTEL ELECTRONICS®  
**Advanced  
Dungeons & Dragons™**  
TREASURE OF TARMIN™

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MOONBASE IO (PDI)



MOONBASE IO (PDI)

### "MOONBASE IO" WINNERS ANNOUNCED

Program Design Inc., creators of the Arcade Award-winning title, *Moonbase 10*, recently announced the winners of its first game tournament. The champion player was 26-year-old William

Kemp of Frederick, MD. Running up a score of 47,730, the victorious video-gamer earned \$500 for his efforts.

Runners-up were Jason Smith, a 13-year-old from Painted Post, NY (45,480

points), and Hosea Battles Jr., a 26-year-old airman from Mathers A.F.B. CA (44,100). Both Moonbase-men were rewarded with \$300 prizes for their achievements.

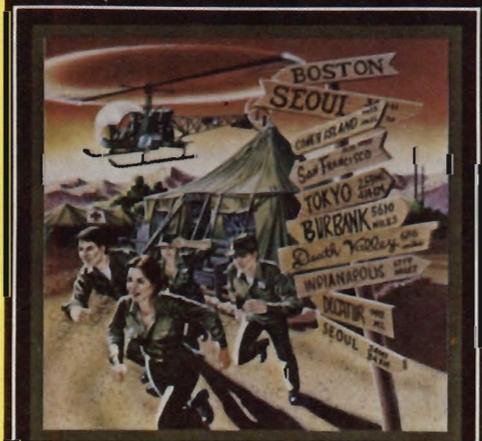
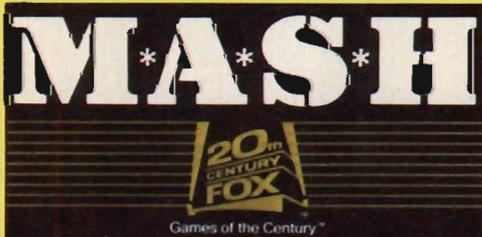
Congratulations!

### ATARI, BUSHNELL BURY HATCHET

Instead of duking it out in court, it looks like Atari and its founder Nolan Bushnell have reached an agreement on a joint venture. Atari had launched a suit against Bushnell, charging that his recent activities constitute an infringement of the "no competition" clause in the contract drafted to cover the sale of the business to Warner Brothers.

The just-concluded contract between Atari and Pizza Time Theater gives the former rights to any coin-op videogames produced by Bushnell, Joe Keenan, Pizza Time Theater and Sente Technologies. This set-up is not expected to affect Bushnell's previously announced plan to produce robots for the home market.

What kind of games will Bushnell create? It's all guesswork at this point, but coin-op veterans are betting on machines that utilize more than one full-size display screen to present the visual portion of the contests.



MASH (20TH CENTURY FOX)



MASH (20TH CENTURY FOX)

### FOX LOWERS COST OF MASH

The retail price for the Atari 2600 version of *MASH* is being reduced to \$14.95, courtesy of Fox Video Games. Originally, the cartridge was priced at about \$29.95.

According to Fox president, Frank O'Connell, retailer con-

cern over the current market glut of VCS-compatible games was the reason cited for the decrease in price, but also went on to say that this shouldn't be interpreted as a future trend for the company or industry!

Other *MASH* versions, set to be released later this year for the ColecoVision, Atari and Commodore systems, will go back to its premium-prices!

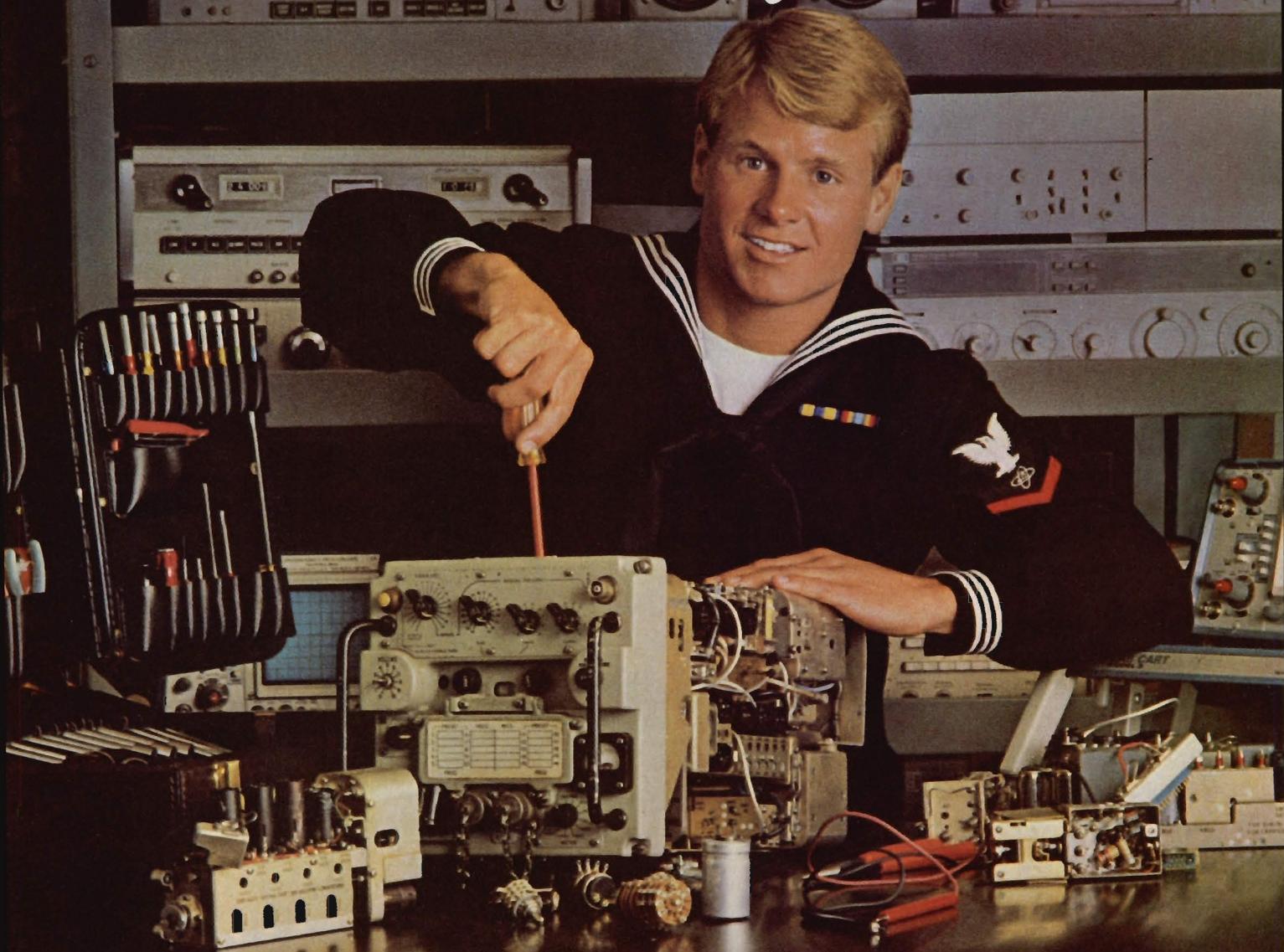
Guess we can't win them all, huh?

### GAME PUBLISHER AIDS PBS

One distressed company that needed some cash in a flash—and got it—was KETC. The St. Louis, MO, public broadcasting station was generously assisted by EduFun Division of Milliken Publishing. The software firm bestowed 40 packages of EduFun products, which were auctioned off during the 10-day fundraiser hosted by KETC.

Audience response was so resounding, Milliken has decided to go national with its gift-giving campaign. Through PBS Washington, the firm has donated over 250 packages of EduFun software to stations scattered across the country. The value of the gifts is estimated at over \$18,000.

# New Challenges Are Part Of The Navy Adventure.



Every day as a Navy specialist you encounter new challenges, new tests of your rapidly growing technical skills.

And you're ready.

Because the Navy Adventure begins with first-class training. Training that's tough, demanding, and extensive. Navy classroom training that prepares you to meet the new challenges that are part of today's important technical

skills. Then, practical hands-on experience helps you master the job you chose.

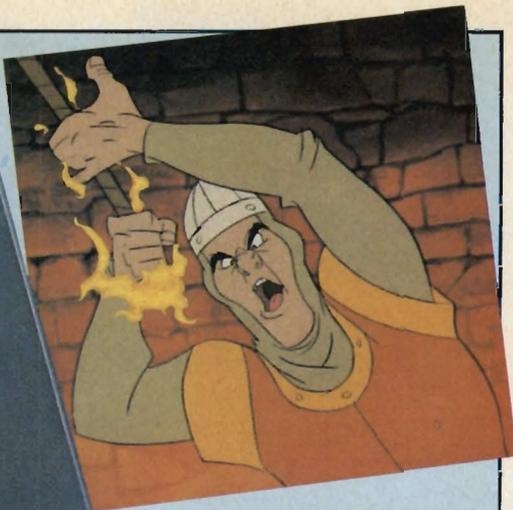
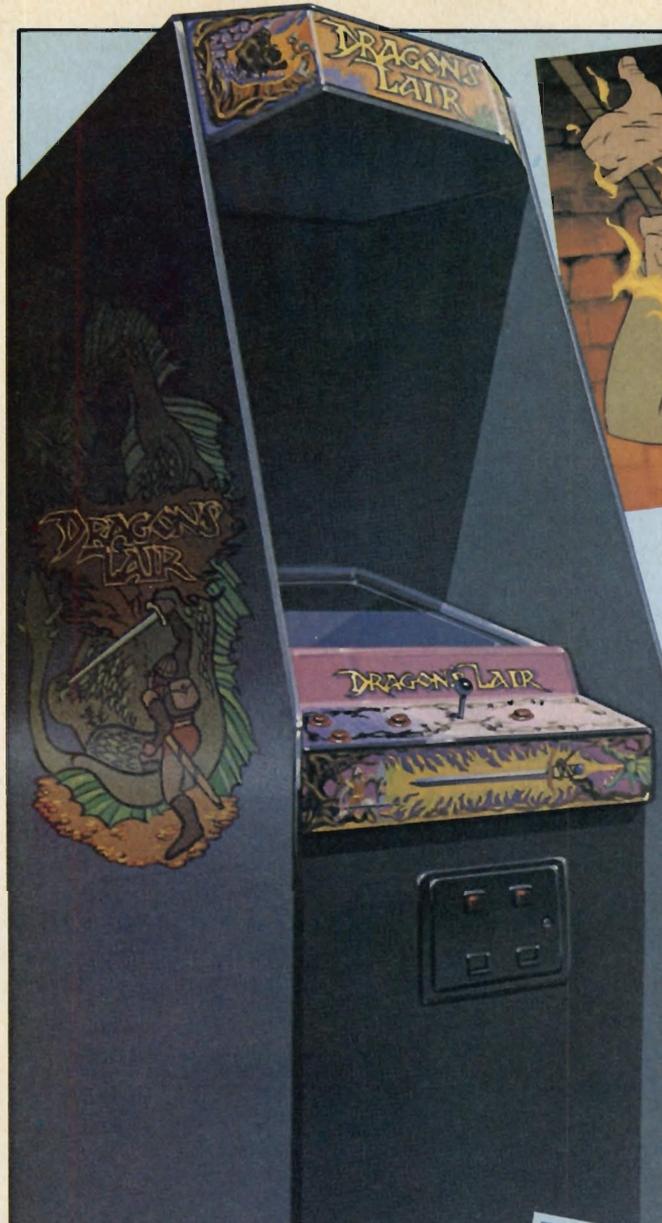
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### 'DRAGON'S LAIR' DEBUTS AT REESE

The very first coin-op to commercially use laser-disc technology to produce on-screen visuals, **Dragon's Lair**, first appeared to gaming fanatics at a giant open house, hosted by Reese Communications, Incorporated.

The publisher of **Electronic Games**, **Arcade Express** and **Video**, plus a slew of other magazines, recently moved the corporation's headquarters to the Grumbacher Building in NYC.

The animator who created this fabulous gaming concept, Don Bluth, lent a hand in demonstrating the machine and answering questions from any of the more than 500 party-goers who basically came to warm up Reese's new home.

### NEW NAMES AT ATARI

John J. Morgan, a former vice-president at Phillip Morris, is the new chairman and chief executive officer at Atari. He succeeds Ray Kaszar, who previously resigned.

Morgan is basically a marketing-oriented manager, which probably means that the company intends to become much more hard-hitting and sophisticated in its approach to selling its software and hardware lines.

### ARE COMPUTERS "REALLY" TAX DEDUCTIBLE?

A new book, that's been long-overdue, answers the ever-popular question many computerists ask: "Can I deduct the cost of my computer?"

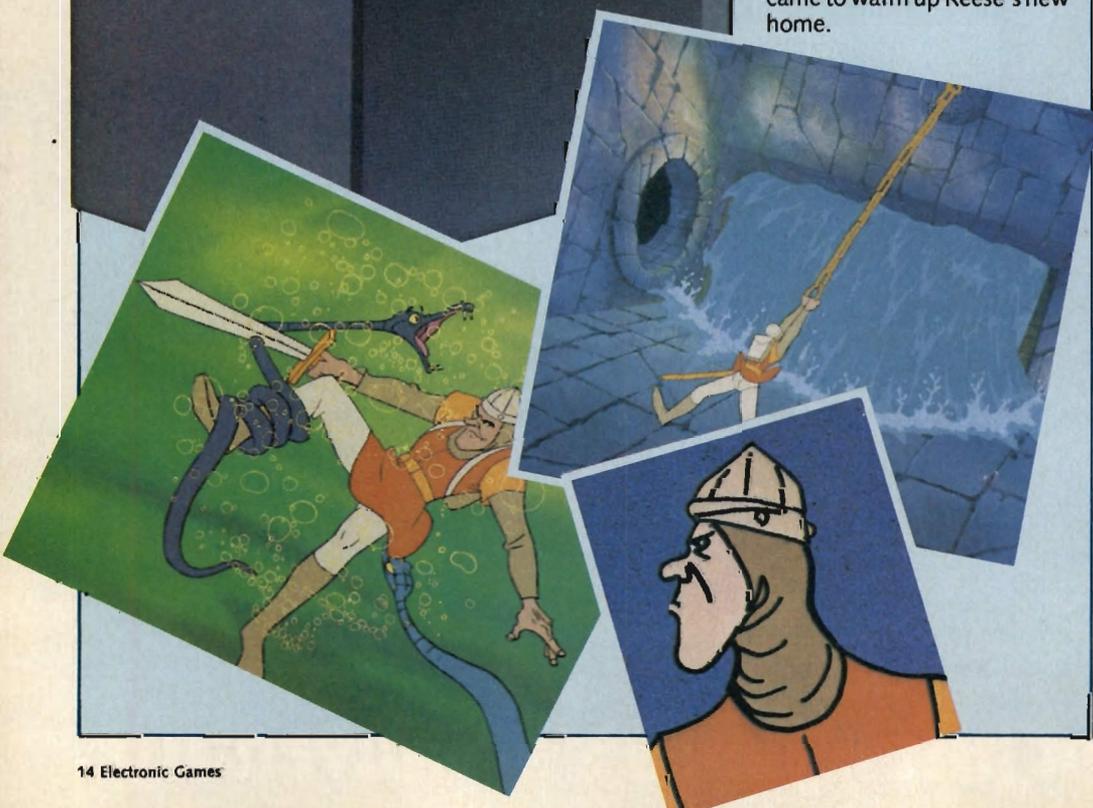
The author, CPA Vernon Jacobs of Kansas, believes that a majority of people *can* get a deduction for their home or office computer systems, although many owners either aren't aware of the facts or just plain fail to take advantage of this valuable tax break.

"Tax Breaks for Computer Buyers" is available in a concise 26-page report for approximately \$9.

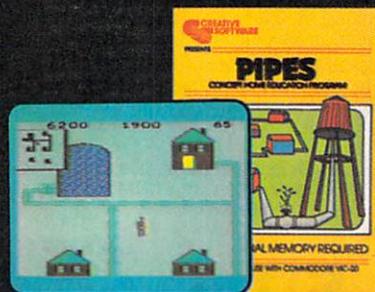
### AT&T CONSIDERS TELE-GAMING

"It's highly probable that a tele-game service will be test-marketed before the end of this year," says a source inside AT&T. The firm's marketing concept would be to retro-fit existing game consoles with low-cost modems that would retail for approximately \$50.

According to Bell Labs' Hal Alles, the idea is to produce cartridges which adapt existing games to competitive play over the telephone. For example, Alles informs that his group has modified Atari's *Star Raiders* so that each player pilots an individual ship and both vessels are simultaneously displayed on the screen as they jockey for position against each other.



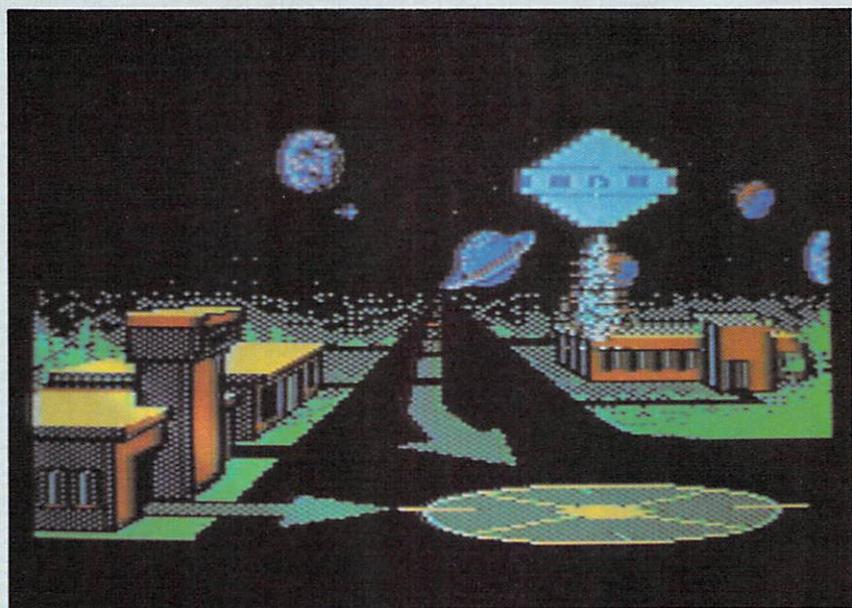
# HELP WANTED:



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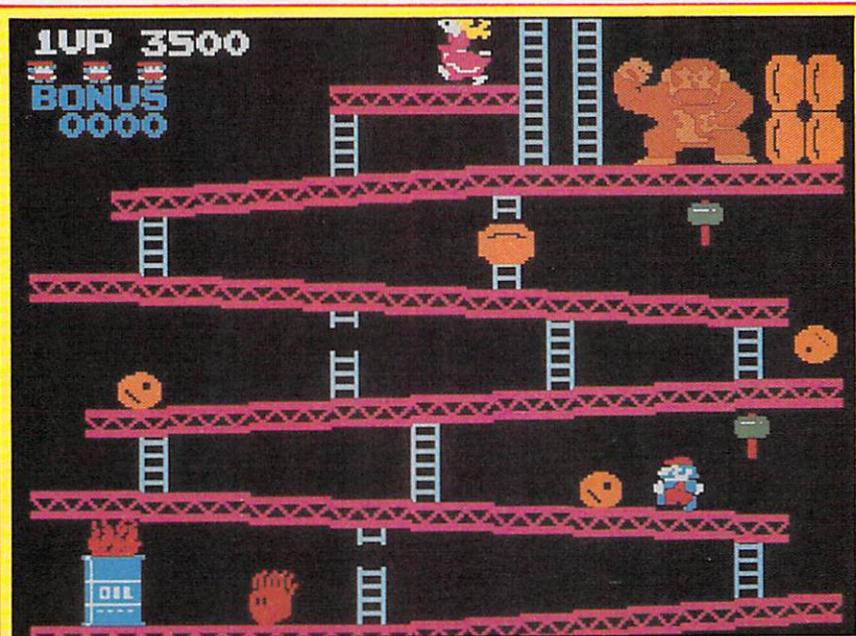
ASTRO CHASE

### PARKER LICENSES ASTRO CHASE

Parker Brothers has bought the game rights to *Astro Chase*, designed by Fernando Herrera, who also authored *My First Alphabet*. So far, Parker plans to market videogame and computer versions of the title, but First Star will still retain the coin-op, hand-held and

counter-top game rights.

*Astro Chase* offers gamers such special features as animated cartoon intermissions and single-thrust propulsion—a process that allows a craft to maintain a course and still fire in any direction, even backwards!



DONKEY KONG

### ATARI TO PUBLISH FOR OTHER SYSTEMS

"We plan to make the best popular game titles such as *Pac-Man* and *Donkey Kong* available to consumers, regardless of which home computer they've purchased," says Keith Schaefer, senior vice president of Atari's Home Computer Division.

Plans call for games which will be playable on the Apple II, Commodore 64, VIC-20, IBM Personal Computer, Radio Shack Color Computer and the Texas Instruments 99/4A. Additional systems are currently under consideration as well.

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2. All entries must be postmarked by midnight, February 29, 1984.
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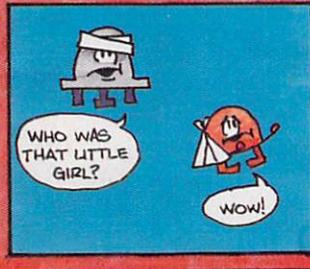
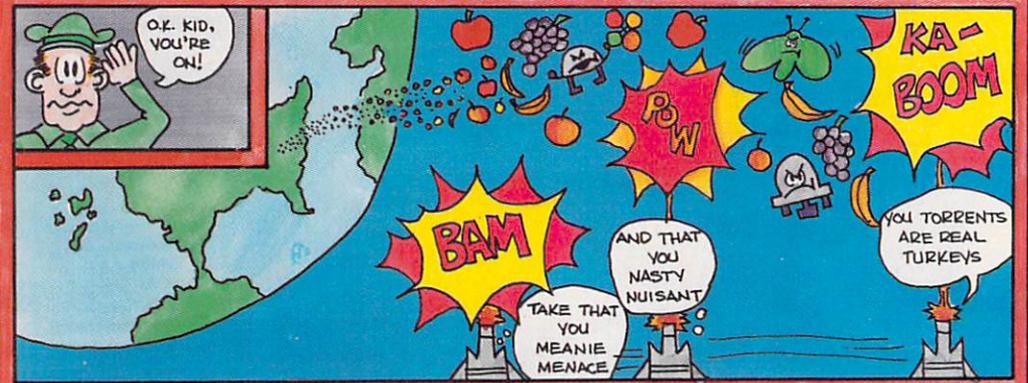
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# BANDITS™



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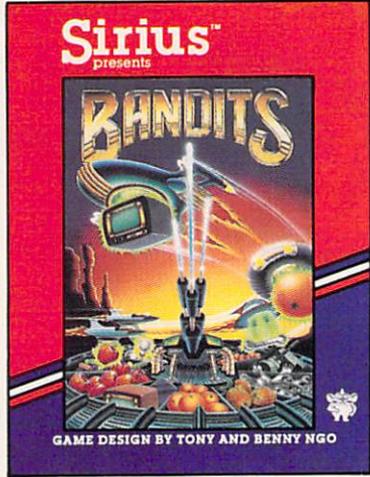
For more information contact your local Sirius dealer or contact Sirius directly at 10364 Rockingham Drive, Sacramento, CA 95827, (916) 366-1195.

Game design by Tony and Benny Ngo. VIC-20 version programmed by Leonard Bertoni. Package, program and audio visual © 1982 Sirius Software, Inc. All rights reserved.

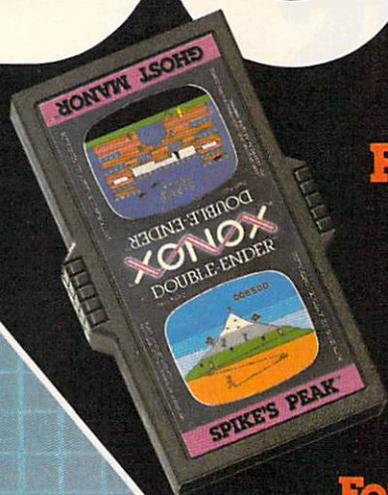
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# Double-



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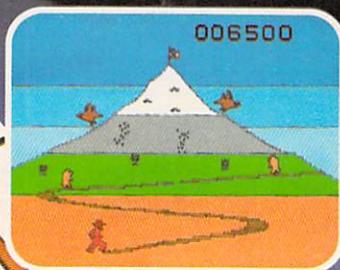
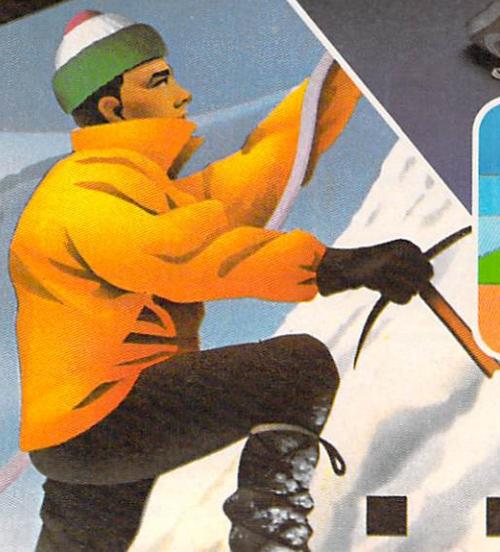
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# SPIKE'S PEAK™



# Trouble



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## MCA, ATARI LINK IN MOVIE-GAME DEAL

A company, co-created by Atari and MCA Video Games, will soon begin developing coin-op, home video and computer games based on previous hit movies and TV shows. Since MCA just happens to be the parent company of Universal Pictures, Studio Games will have access to a large library of film and television titles.

Currently being tossed around as potential tv/game revamps are: "Knight Rider" and "Magnum P.I.," although Studio Games hasn't yet announced definite plans regarding the nature and content of any specific games.

## START YOUR DAY OFF RIGHT— WITH CEREAL

Early-bird arcaders can now start preparing themselves first thing in the morning for that long day of videogaming just ahead. **Pac-Man** has been licensed as the star of his very own breakfast cereal, due soon from General Mills.

Ralston Purina is giving General Mills' "Pac-Man" a run for its money by introducing a presweetened new "Donkey Kong" cereal, which has bits shaped like the actual game's "video barrels".

## TEENS SPEND MORE ON VIDEOGAMES

Average spending on coin-operated videogames by 13- to 15-year olds moved up to fifth place in all spending categories in 1982, reports The Rand Youth Poll. This is up from seventh place in 1981. Spending on coin-ops came in sixth place for 16- to 19-year-old males.

The ranking of all teens owning home videogames systems moved from ninth place in 1981 to sixth place in '82.

So what's all this talk about a videogame slump?

# E.G. READERS PICK THEIR FAVORITE GAMES

## Most Popular Videogame Cartridges

Position		Times on List	Game	System	Manufacturer
This Month	Last Month				
1	6	4	Donkey Kong, Jr.	ColecoVision	Coleco
2	14	11	Zaxxon	ColecoVision	Coleco
3	9	4	Centipede	Atari 5200	Atari
4	1	12	Donkey Kong	ColecoVision	Coleco
5	5	12	Pitfall	Atari 2600	Activision
6	2	8	River Raid	Atari 2600	Activision
7	3	7	Advanced Dungeons & Dragons	Intellivision	Mattel
8	4	8	Lady Bug	ColecoVision	Coleco
9	10	4	Ms. Pac-Man	Atari 2600	Atari
10	New	New	Enduro	Atari 2600	Activision
11	—	5	Turbo	ColecoVision	Coleco
12	7	3	Pac-Man	Atari 5200	Atari
13	New	New	Defender	Atari 5200	Atari
14	New	New	Pepper II	ColecoVision	Coleco
15	13	12	Venture	ColecoVision	Coleco

## Most Popular Computer Games

Position		Times on List	Game	System	Manufacturer
This Month	Last Month				
1	1	19	Star Raiders	AI 4-8-1200	Atari
2	2	17	Pac-Man	AT 4-8-1200	Atari
3	3	12	Centipede	AT 4-8-1200	Atari
4	6	9	Choplifter!	Atari/Apple	Broderbund
5	4	6	Miner 2049er	Atari/Apple	Big Five/MicroFun
6	5	18	Castle Wolfenstein	Atari/Apple	Muse
7	7	3	Defender	AT 4-8-1200	Atari
8	New	New	Zaxxon	AT 4-8-1200	Atari
9	—	2	Shamus	AT 4-8-1200, VIC-20	Synapse HES Games
10	9	4	Astro Chase	AT 4-8-1200	Atari

## Most Popular Coin-Op Videogames

Position		Times On List	Game	Manufacturer
This Month	Last Month			
1	1	3	Pole Position	Atari
2	5	3	Q*Bert	Gottlieb
3	2	13	Donkey Kong	Nintendo
4	3	9	Joust	Williams
5	4	13	Dig-Dug	Atari
6	7	14	Zaxxon	Sega
7	6	2	Burger Time	Data East/Bally
8	New	New	Time Pilot	Centuri
9	11	11	Centipede	Atari
10	New	New	Xevious	Atari

## Readers Choose Top Games

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!



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# DRAGON'S LAIR

# NEWSMAKERS



## Don Bluth Builds a Dragon's Lair

By TRACIE FORMAN

**D**ragon's Lair treats arcaders to more than just the chance to explore 38 rooms of a booby-trapped castle, or the opportunity to play the very first laser-disc-operated coin-op videogame ever released. The main appeal of Starcom's first coin-operated fantasy adventure epic lies in its stunningly animated cartoon visuals, which are spectacular even by movie standards.

The adventures of Dirk the Daring, the hero of the story, can be a pleasant, if shocking, revelation to the Saturday morning kiddie show set, many of whom have never seen such fluid movement, brilliant colors, and breathtaking scenery in any of the animated cartoons they grew up on. In fact, many critics have compared *Dragon's Lair's* graphic splendor to an old-fashioned Walt Disney movie.

It's not surprising that Don Bluth, the mastermind behind *Dragon's Lair's* look, is an ex-Disney animator schooled in the "classical" style developed in the studio's early days. Although he now finds himself on the cutting edge of videogaming's hottest new technology, Bluth sees the new laser disc offerings as more than just a

great new way to play games. To Don Bluth, *Dragon's Lair* is a way of exposing people to the type of high-quality animation techniques that shaped his own boyhood.

Growing up on a farm in Payson, Utah, he became entranced by the type of films to which he now devotes his life to making. "I'd ride my horse to the movie in town and tie him to a tree while I went in and watched the latest Disney film," he recalls. "Then I'd go home and copy every Disney comic book I could find."

Despite the fact that he never took an art lesson, his perseverance paid off after he graduated from high school when he landed a job at Disney. As an assistant animator, he worked under veteran John Lounsberry on the now-classic Disney film, "Sleeping Beauty".

After a year and half on the job, Bluth grew restless and left, explaining that "I was too young to face a life at the animation boards. I needed to get out, to see some of life."

Seeing life included a trip to Argentina, a stint at Brigham Young University (where he earned a degree in English), and running a small theater with his brother in Culver City, CA.

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# NEWSMAKERS

Finally, in 1967, Bluth decided that animation was indeed his true life's work, and he returned to the field as a layout man for Fimation Studios. He stayed there until 1971, when Disney announced a new training program for animators. It was an offer he couldn't refuse.

Back at Disney, he established an impressive list of credentials. He animated parts of "Robin Hood" and "The Fox and the Hound," and directed the animation on "Pete's Dragon". At the same time, he and fellow animators Gary Goldman and John Pomeroy started working nights and weekends in Bluth's garage on their own animated featurettes.

While at Disney, Bluth became disenchanted with the studio. In spite of its excellent reputation, he felt that the classical animation techniques created by Walt Disney had been allowed to fall by the wayside in an effort to cut skyrocketing animation costs to the bone. He left the studio for good in 1979 along with 13 others, in a highly-publicized dispute over creative quality.

Bluth sums up his artistic convictions by saying that, "There are two kinds of animation: the "Bambi" and "Pinnocchio" classical style, and the Saturday morning cartoon type. I'd rather sell shoes than do the latter."

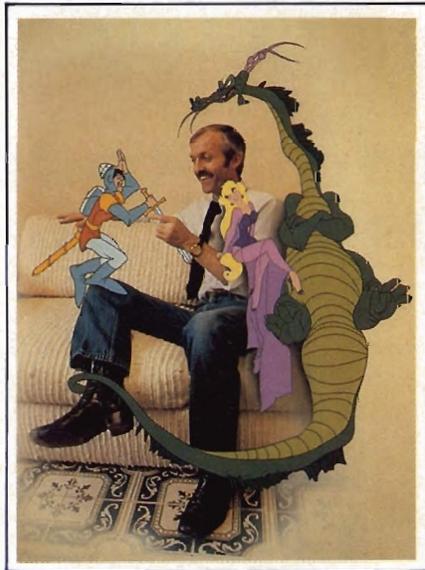
And so he created Don Bluth Animation, a production company dedicated to re-establishing the intricately-detailed, high-quality technique that, until then, seemed destined to fade into history. The new company's first effort, "Banjo the Woodpile Cat", aired on ABC-TV.

"The Secret of NIMH", Bluth's first feature-length effort, first catapulted his artistic perfectionism into the public eye. Movie critics hailed it as a return to the good old days of animation, when the bottom line was the overall quality of the picture — not the cost. But, although it was a critical success, MGM (supposed to market and distribute the film) backed off on its promise to spend money promoting the picture at the last minute. The ex-

ecutive producer managed to come up with some advertising money, but Bluth feels that "NIMH" was short-changed in the long run.

"Animated films aren't being produced or marketed well," says Bluth, pointing out that there are a number of feature-length works collecting dust on movie studio shelves (among them: Ralph Bakshi's "Fire and Ice", an adaptation of Richard Adams' best-selling novel "The Plague Dogs").

When Rick Dyer, of Advanced Mi-



Don Bluth and his friends from *Dragon's Lair*; Dirk and the Crypt Creeps (below).



crocomputer Systems, invented the technology used in *Dragon's Lair*'s laser disc operation, he initially approached Bluth's studio with the idea of animating a medieval-themed adventure game. Bluth was so excited by it that he and his fellow workers immediately started working overtime on the project. They all worked with-

out getting any money paid to them, but the company received one-third partnership of Starcom. (A.M.S. owns another one-third, and Cinematronics, which manufactures and markets the game completes the trio.)

All in all, Bluth and associates produced over a million dollars' worth of animation for the game. They designed it to look like a quality motion picture, with changing camera angles, special lighting effects, and the like. "But," he laughingly remembers, "When we looked at the final product, we all agreed there was no game!"

Realizing, belatedly, that what works for a film may not work in a videogame, Bluth set out to the arcades for some hands-on research. He played the best and worst games he could find, carefully examining each in an effort to learn what made the good ones so exciting.

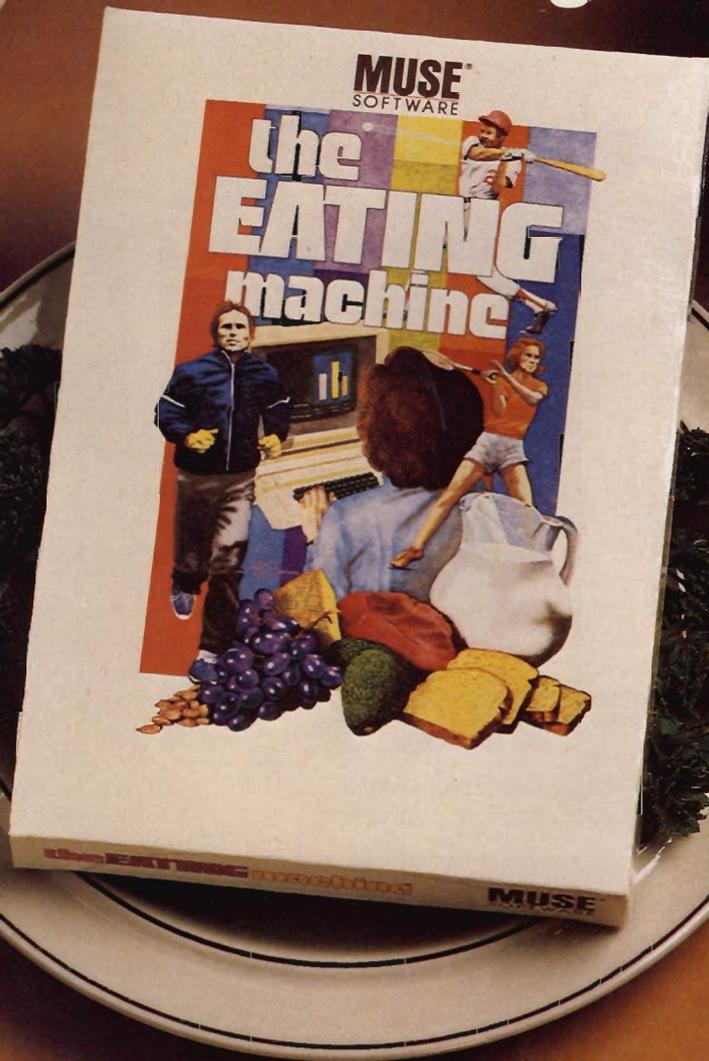
He also called in game designers from Advanced Microcomputer Systems. Together, they salvaged what they could from the original work while infusing *Dragon's Lair* with the rhythms, rapid-fire stimulation, and illusion of constant danger found in the best arcade games.

Bluth is already nearly finished animating Starcom's second laser disc adventure. The new game, a science-fiction thriller entitled *Space Ace*, is a high-action chase starring a 16-year-old, huge-eared nerd, named Dexter. The nebbishy, 98-lb. weakling must rescue his friend Kimberly from evil aliens bent on destroying the Earth. The way to rack up points is to keep Dexter out of danger, but if the need arises he can turn himself into Super Dexter — a strapping, macho hunk invulnerable to destruction — for 12 seconds, anyway.

The new game promises as much action and adventure as *Dragon's Lair*, plus adding enhanced sound effects that include full dialogue. Coleco, which has bought the rights to *Dragon's Lair*, has first refusal on this title game as well.

What's next for Don Bluth? Besides *Space Ace*, he has several more concepts up his sleeve, and expects the money that *Dragon's Lair* earns to finance more full-length feature animations. So when arcaders drop their quarters into their local *Dragon's Lair* game, they can rest assured in the knowledge that, besides having a great time playing, they're contributing to the revival of classical animation. Not bad for a couple of quarters.

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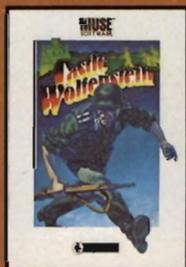
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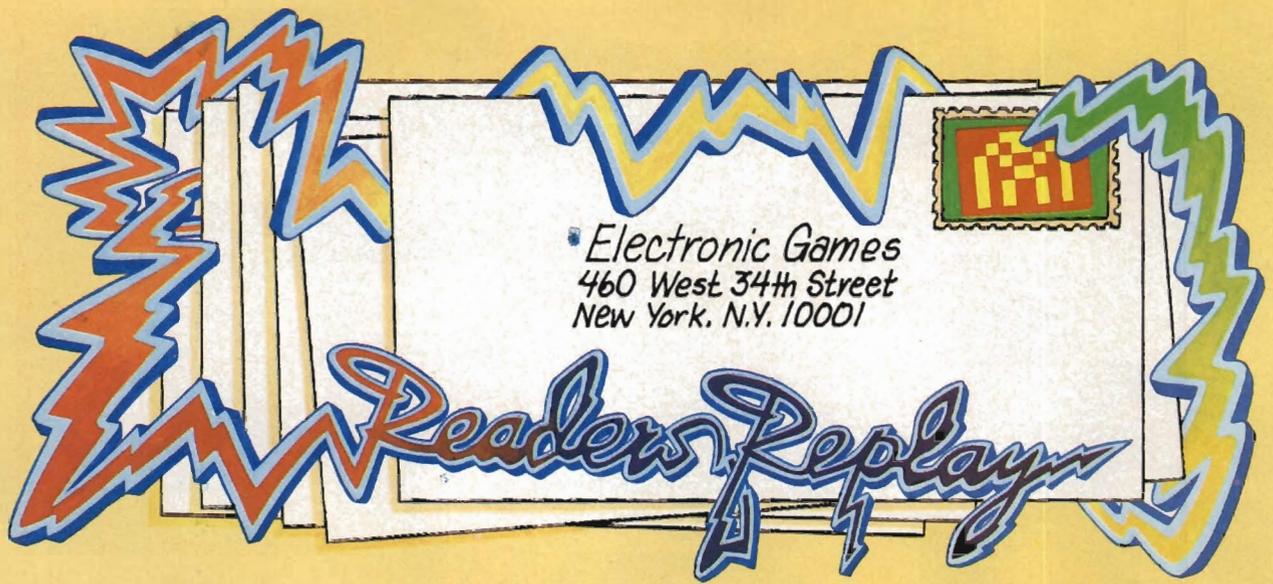
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# Readers Replay

## AUTHOR! AUTHOR! PART II

In response to the editorial by Arnie Katz entitled "Author! Author!", my response was, "Hooray! Hooray!"

The people that are bringing electronic games to life are authors and artists, and they should be treated as such. When someone translates a game from one system to another, that can be a painstaking proposition. Very often you are dealing with apples and onions, and the people who translate video and computer games should also receive credit.

Arnie Katz hit the nail on the head when he referred to the manufacturers' fear that their talent would be "pirated". It's my belief that this thinking at the corporate level is backwards. It's been my experience that there are two major reasons why designers jump ship: No author credits and no royalties. Activision does not lose people. This tells me something!

In all fairness, I must say that other companies are following suit. It's taking time, but it *is* happening. If they don't give credit where credit is due, who can blame a designer for seeking greener pastures?

Jack D. Cooper  
Agency of Video Authors and Artists  
Long Beach, CA

## HOW TO PIRATE VIDEOGAMES

I recently purchased a Starpath Supercharger and I was wondering if it was possible to record Starpath's tapes onto another cassette. Would it work? I'm afraid to try it because I think I might damage my Supercharger.

P.S.: Please don't print my name. Thanks.

Ed: In answer to your question,

*what you're talking about is video piracy. Not only is it illegal, but it deprives software designers and manufacturers alike of the fair profits they deserve for taking the time to put out those games. If the companies don't make a profit, they won't be around to manufacture any more videogames. Software pirates hurt not only the people who make games, but they also hurt the people who play them. No wonder you didn't want us to print your name!*

## INTELLIVISION III DROPPED

I read in your May issue that the

Intellivision III was being released. According to you, it has great features, but you added that there was more to it than what was mentioned. When is it being released? Could you print a picture of its prototype?

David Brookman  
Astoria, NY

Ed: Unfortunately for Intellivisionaries, Mattel has scrapped plans to market the Intellivision III completely. Like Coleco, the company is putting its full marketing strength behind its Aquarius computer, which plays souped-up versions of all the Intellivision favorites.



AQUARIUS COM/PAC (MATEL)

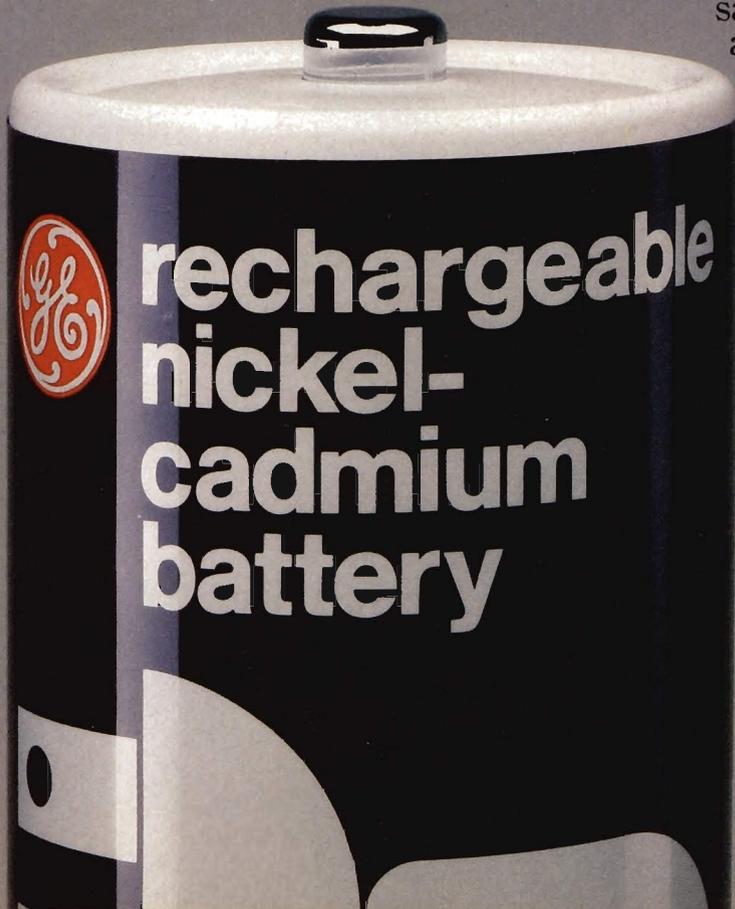
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## WARNING: INTELLIVISION JOYSTICK ADD-ONS

BEWARE! When using a joystick adapter on the Intellivision controllers, excessive forward pressure on the joystick may cause irreparable damage to your hand controller. Mine literally broke in half.

Jim Taylor  
Morgate, FL

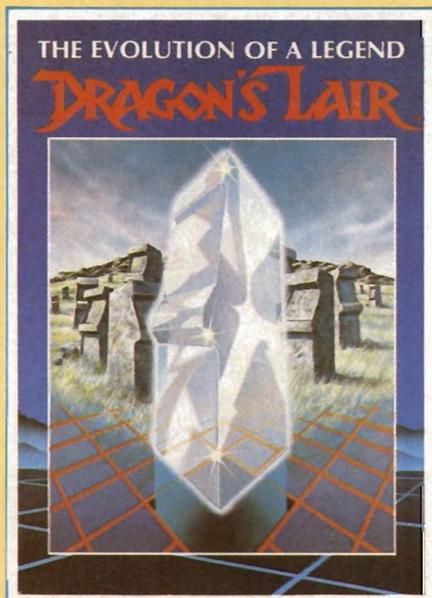
## THE SUPERGAME CANCELLED

I just called Coleco and found out that its much-ballyhooed Supergame Module has been *cancelled*, effective 6/2/83, and won't be available until "sometime in 1984". They must be taking lessons from Intellivision, announcing new products months ahead, and then not delivering. Can you shed some light on the reasons why the Supergame was cancelled? Coleco wouldn't tell me.

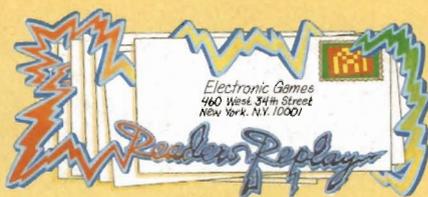
George M. Knochel  
Lakewood, CO

*Ed: The Supergame was cancelled so that Coleco could devote the majority of its production to the new Adam computer, an 80K, ColecoVision-compatible system with built-in word processing and data storage drive (not a conventional tape or disk drive). The Adam is available as a free-standing computer, or as an add-on to existing ColecoVision units. It can play all of Coleco's brand-new Supergames, in effect replacing the old Supergame Module.*

*Don't feel too bad about the cancellation — or should we say postponement — of the Supergame system. The entire thing is being revamped to accommodate an even*



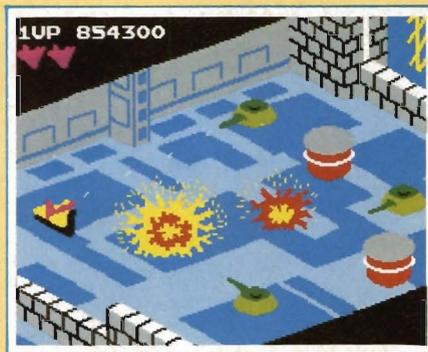
CINEMATRONICS' DRAGON'S LAIR



*newer technology. Want a hint? Coleco has already bought the rights to Dragon's Lair, the first coin-operated laser disc videogame ever produced. Maybe the Supergame will be worth waiting for.*

## RESTING IN THE SKY-CITY

When playing ColecoVision's **Zaxxon** on Level 1, you can take a rest whenever you want by placing the



ZAXXON

ship on the third notch from the bottom. This way, turret shots and walls are too low to hit, and you're out of tractor missile detection range.

Jeff Winter  
Edina, MN

## CONTROLLING THE COLECOVISION

I found your review of joysticks most helpful in my search for a trigger-style top-firing model. I followed your recommendation for a Pointmaster by Discwasher and have been very pleased with it. Using the Pointmaster this way makes the play on Coleco games, such as **Gorf** and **Zaxxon**, much better. My question is this: Can this cause damage to my ColecoVision unit?

Also, I suggest you add **Megamania** to your arcade scoreboard for high scores. How does my high of 530,150 compare to the national high?

Michael Meier  
Elkhart, IN

*Ed: The Pointmaster can not damage your ColecoVision unit! Neither will any other Atari-compatible controller on the market. And to answer your second question, your score is excellent. But Electronic Games is*

*dropping the national arcade scoreboard this issue, for a number of reasons. First, though gamers are on their honor in many cases, there are ways of cheating even home videogames. Certain games can actually be set to play forever, so even photos of home screens may be the result of several hundred turns on the same game. Second, the point of playing videogames is first and foremost to enjoy them. Top scores are nice, but they shouldn't be the gamer's sole ambition.*

## CHOPLIFTER TIPS

I've scored up to 61 on the Atari version of Broderbund's **Choplifter**, by using the following methods:

On your first run, go along at medium-low height and blast the tanks. You can open the barracks by getting down to their level and shooting once (only once or you'll kill your own people.) Never land on the barrack's opening or the people trying to get out will be killed. Don't leave until you've picked up a full load of 16 passengers.

After the first sortie, travel as low as possible. The instant you see a jet, stop until you see it fire. Always try to land beside the barracks, because for every person who comes aboard the chopper, another one comes out of the



BRODERBUND'S CHOPLIFTER!

building. Your chopper will be filled in seconds. Always lead tanks away from people to keep them out of the line of fire.

Mike Grubbs  
Katy, TX

## ARKIE ANNOUNCEMENT

To clear up any confusion resulting from the Arkie nominations presented in our Sept. issue, the eligibility dates for all games are: 10/1/82 to 9/5/83.

Also, under consideration for computer game of the year, **Miner 2049'er** from Big Five is for the Atari, while Micro Lab created the excellent Apple III version.



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Was Never  
So Much  
Fun!"*

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# VIDEOGAME

## Two Great Games Attain Immortality

By THE EDITORS OF ELECTRONIC GAMES

The gold-encrusted heavy doors swing majestically open again, as they do but once each year, to admit two deserving titles to the Videogame Hall of Fame. More than 1,000 readers of **Electronic Games** sent in their special nominating ballots to tell the world which coin-op, computer game or videogame cartridge they thought deserved to be enshrined along with the other members of this exclusive club: **Pong**, **Space Invaders**, **Asteroids**, **Pac-Man**, **Quest for the Rings**, **Major League Baseball**, **Defender** and **Star Raiders**. (The latter two games entered the Hall of Fame last year in the first annual voting, while the first six were the charter inductees.)

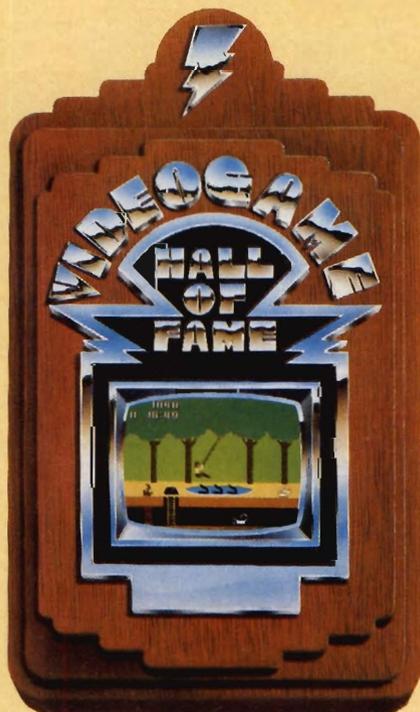
Following the dictates of the voice of the people, two superb games have earned their places in the Videogame Hall of Fame. Dominating the voting with nearly twice as many nominations as any other title is **Donkey Kong**. Interestingly, the coin-op machine drew many votes, but the ColecoVision cartridge shared just about equal responsibility for the vote-topping performance. "It's a fantastically faithful reproduction of a classic climbing game," says reader Dennis Venerus (London, Ontario, Canada) referring to the home version. "Donkey Kong

has broken new ground in climbing games," notes Brad Bruner of Madisonville, Tenn., in a comment that seems to sum up voter feeling, "and it's as much of a delight to see as it is massively entertaining to play."

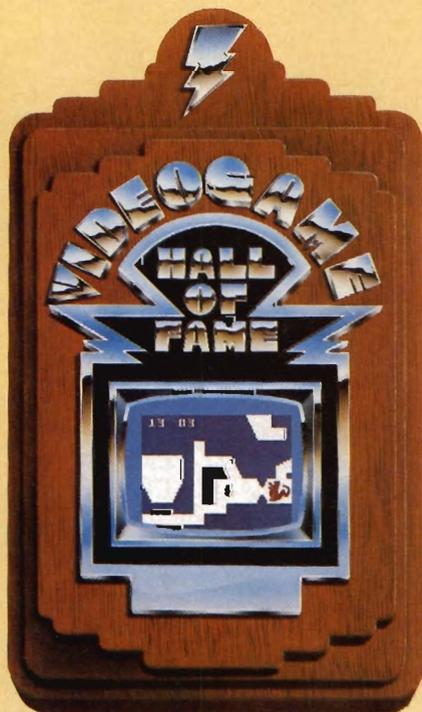
The other winner, **Zaxxon**, also benefitted from several excellent home editions (by Coleco and Data Soft), but most balloters appeared to have the pay-for-play version on their minds. "It has 3-D effects, good graphics and both air and land battles," points out Greg Baker, Corvallis, Ore. "It has superb graphics and fine playability," seconds James Paulus, Burlington, Ia.

With so many excellent games eligible for the Hall of Fame, it's inevitable that some will get left out in the cold. That was certainly the case this year. Among the potential future Hall of Fame members that ended up just a few votes shy were **Tempest**, **Centipede**, **Pitfall**, **Advanced Dungeons & Dragons**, **Tron**, **Vanguard** and **Joust**.

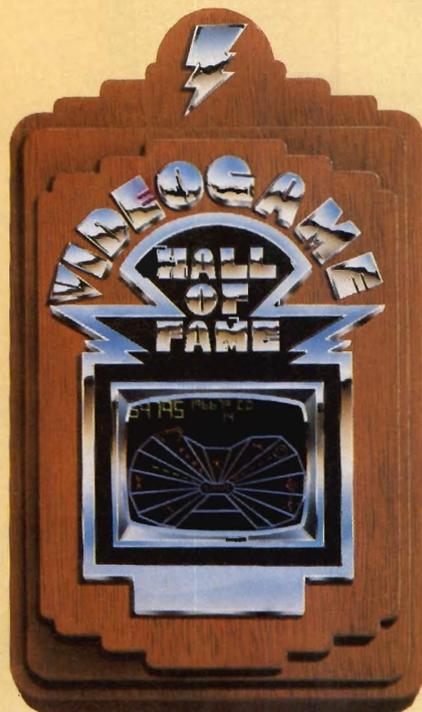
Will these games do better in next June's vote — or will they slip back as last year's near misses — **Missile Command**, **Demon Attack** and **Astrosplash** — did? Only time — and the electronic gaming public — will be able to tell whether they do or not.



PITFALL  
(Activision)

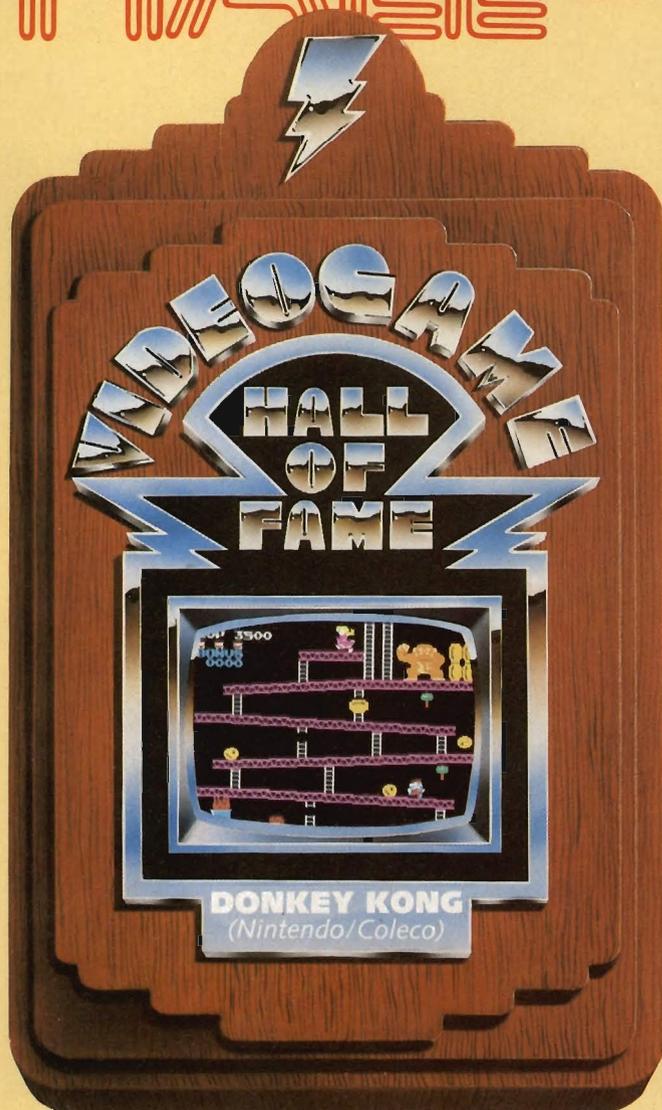


ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS  
(Mattel)



TEMPEST  
(Atari)

# HALL OF FAME

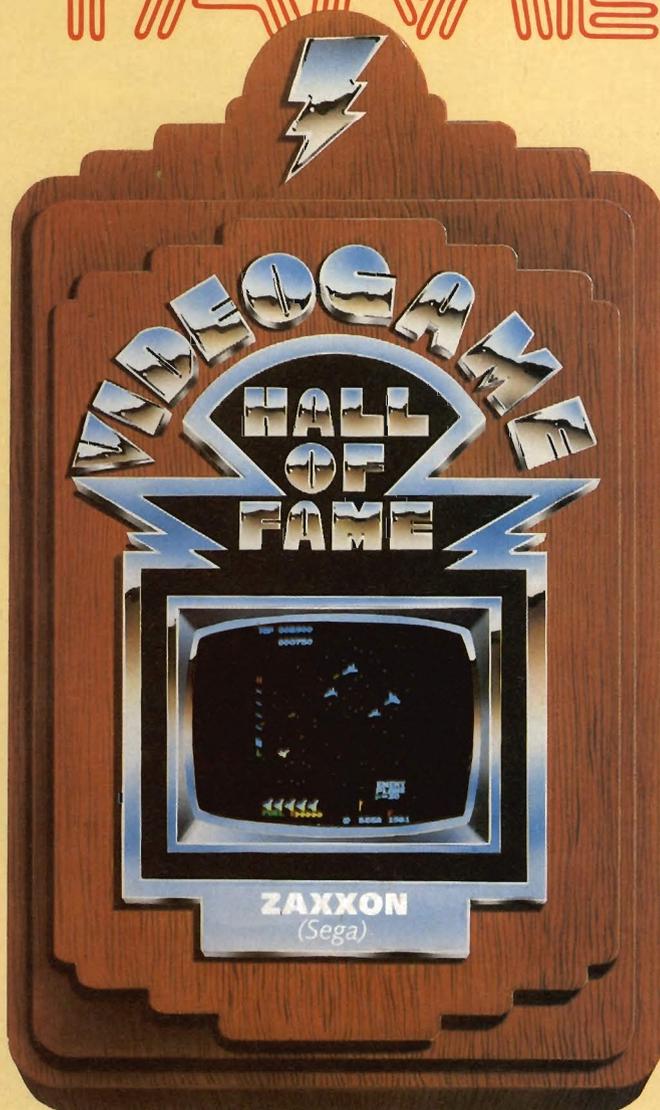


**DONKEY KONG**  
(Nintendo/Coleco)

All other famous apes had better content themselves with their past press clippings, because Donkey Kong and his antagonist Mario the maintenance man have become the most famous pair of foes since Jim Tunney got off the canvas after the "long count" against Jack Dempsey.

This multi-screen climbing game has greatly influenced the current direction of both the home and arcade fields. It has shown that an action-adventure, offering a variety of challenges and dressed up with charming graphics, is still the heart's desire of the typical player.

Small wonder that **Donkey Kong** has effortlessly made the transition from an arcade mainstay to assuming the mantle of most popular home contest. Its theme of pursuit and rescue is timeless, and the play-mechanic, with all its climbing, leaping and dodging, is surely one of the most enthralling ever presented. And when you finally vanquish that mighty, love-starved king of apes, you will realize that you have really accomplished something truly special.

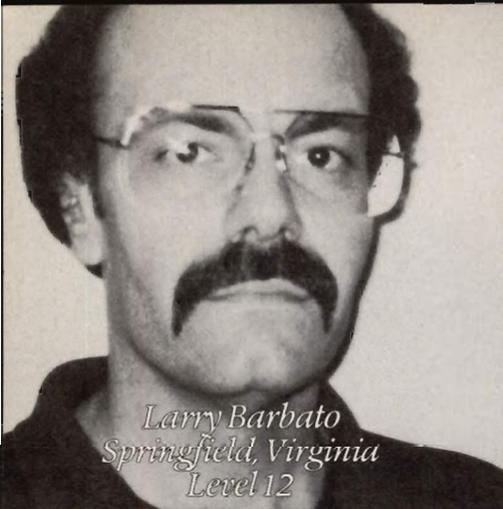


**ZAXXON**  
(Sega)

The special brilliance of **Zaxxon** is that it takes the highly entertaining scrolling shoot-out play-mechanic and gives it an entirely fresh lease on life by creating the illusion of three-dimensional movement. It also doesn't hurt that *Zaxxon's* graphics were indisputably the most intricate and beautiful ever created for an electronic game at the time it hit the family amusement centers like a thunderbolt.

Another part of the secret of this game's success is the inclusion of the space dogfight between the two sky fortress phases. Not only does it give thumb-weary pilots a (relative) breather, but it also reinforces the science fiction theme, reminding players that everything is actually taking place in outer space, after all.

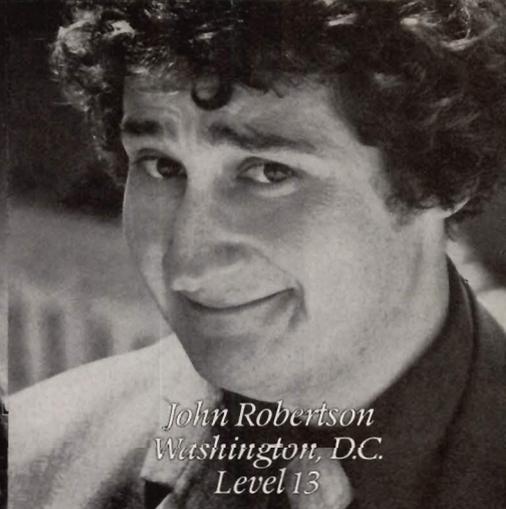
*Zaxxon* is obviously not an easy game to master. Some even credit the "bozo" level of Coleco's home edition with making it accessible to the average joystick jockey. Yet if any electronic contest is worth a little extra practice, gamers agree that this is the one.



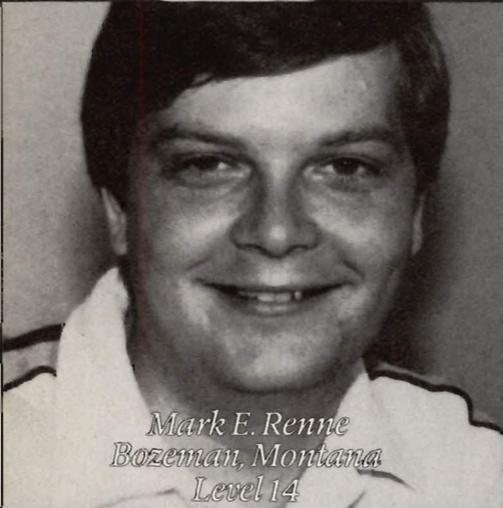
Larry Barbato  
Springfield, Virginia  
Level 12



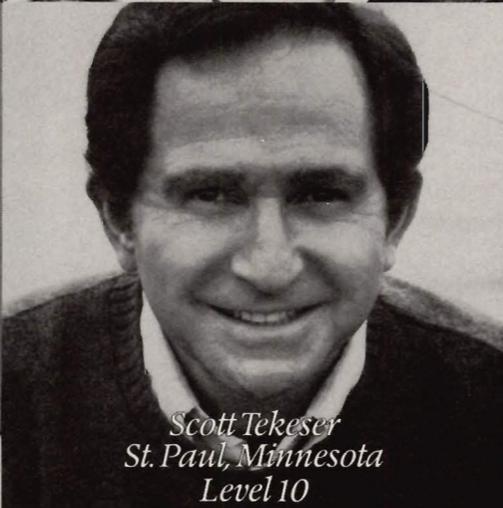
Cindy Horne  
Portland, Oregon  
Level 11



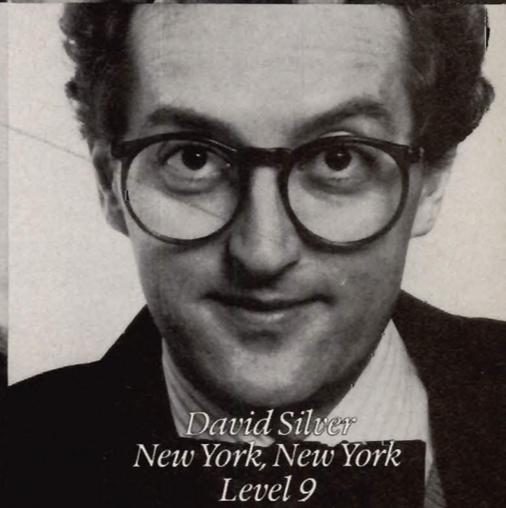
John Robertson  
Washington, D.C.  
Level 13



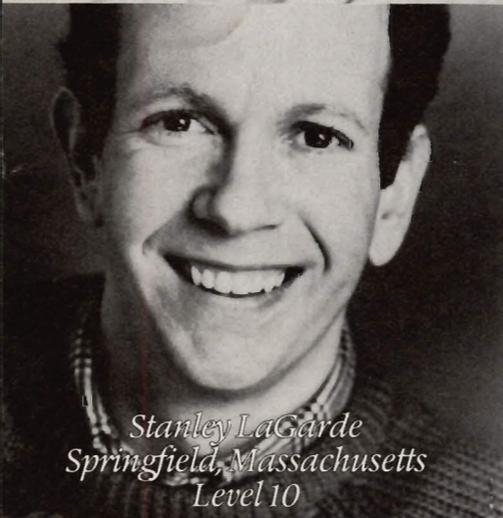
Mark E. Renne  
Bozeman, Montana  
Level 14



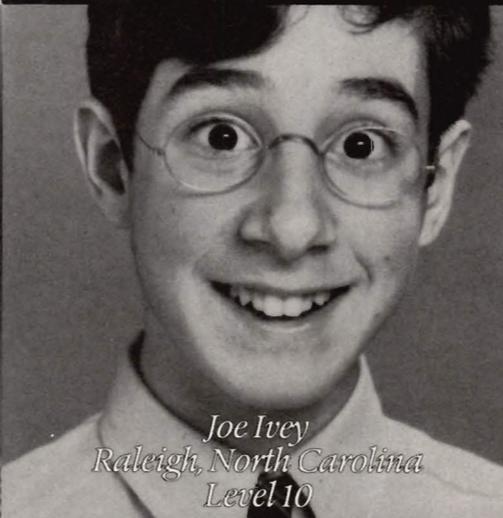
Scott Tekeser  
St. Paul, Minnesota  
Level 10



David Silver  
New York, New York  
Level 9



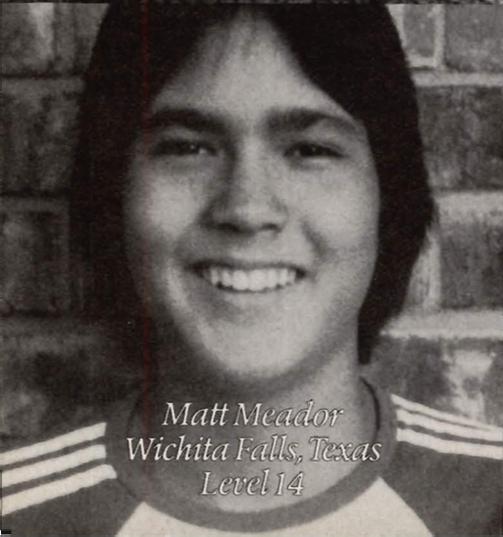
Stanley LaGarde  
Springfield, Massachusetts  
Level 10



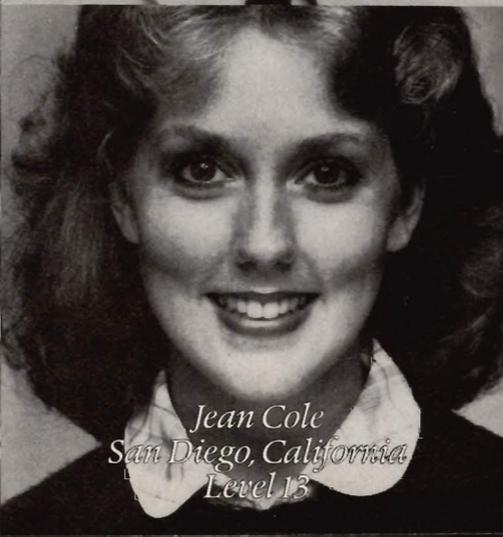
Joe Ivey  
Raleigh, North Carolina  
Level 10



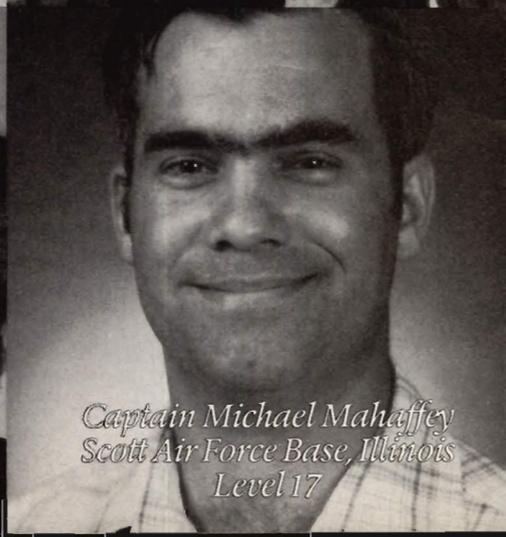
Mary McDermott  
Fort Lauderdale, Florida  
Level 9



Matt Meador  
Wichita Falls, Texas  
Level 14



Jean Cole  
San Diego, California  
Level 13



Captain Michael Mahaffey  
Scott Air Force Base, Illinois  
Level 17

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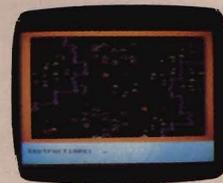
Even better, you can carry your experience from one game in the *Warriors of Ras* series to the next. You may need to. *Dunzhin*, *Kaiiv*, *Wylde* and *Ziggurat* are increasingly difficult.



*Dunzhin*



*Kaiiv*



*Wylde*



*Ziggurat*

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# SCARY VIDEOGAMES

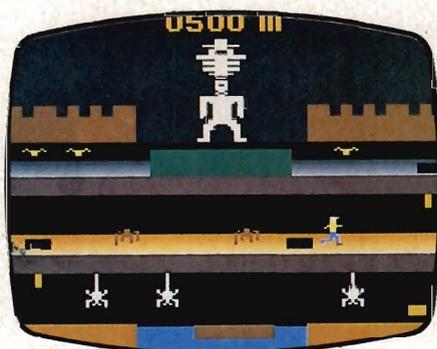
## Games That Go "Bump" in the Night

By BILL KUNKEL

It's the night of Halloween, which our ancestors once called "All Hallow's Eve". You're curled up snugly in an armchair, a copy of H.P. Lovecraft's "The Strange Case of Charles Dexter Ward" cradled in your lap, and hot chocolate brewing on the stove when the urge strikes!

Suddenly, there's nothing in the world that seems as appealing as a bit of electronic gaming. What to play? It is Halloween, after all, so the subject of tonight's gaming session should be something appropriate. How about some scary electronic games, for a chilling change?

Actually, computer text adventures have dealt with the subject of the macabre quite extensively. Scott Adams' **The Count** and **Voodoo Island** were among the earliest of that prolific software author's "Adventures". Crystalware, a controversial software



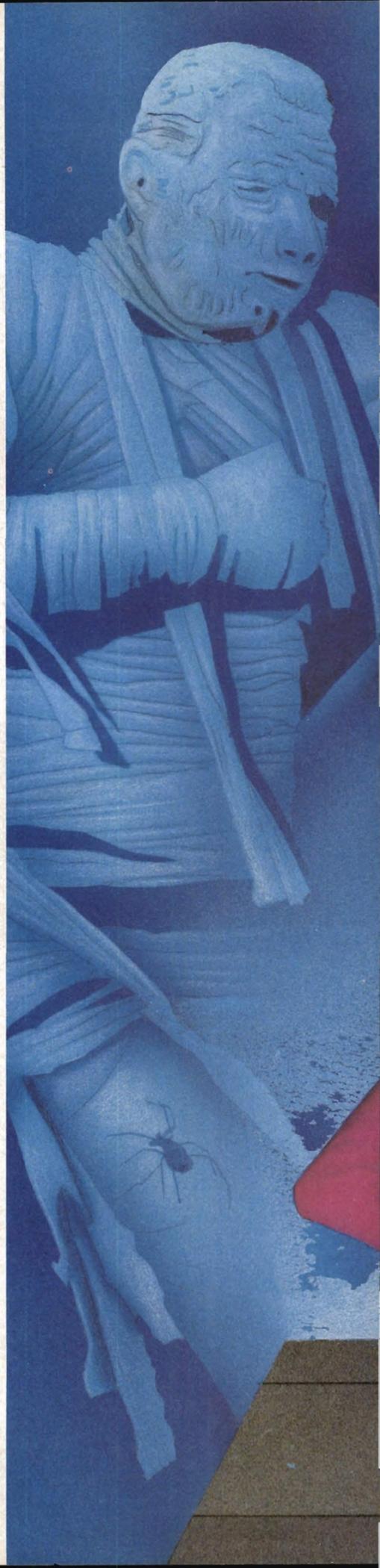
FRANKENSTEIN'S MONSTER

house that has since gone to its last reward, still walks the earth in the form of an early, stylized action-adventure based on Edgar Allen Poe's classic "House of Usher".

In spite of the licensing binge on which the electronic gaming industry is currently embarked, very little has been done to bring classic horror themes—with the exception of the done-to-death science fiction "alien-vasion"—to electronic life. Sierra On-Line's recent adaptation of "The Dark Crystal", a grim fantasy film employing sophisticated "muppetry" to create an entire world, has proven a better piece of work than its inspiration, even though Ken and Roberta Williams bent over backwards to stay faithful to the original screenplay. It merely whets the appetite for future projects based on classic or contemporary horror concepts. Some enter-

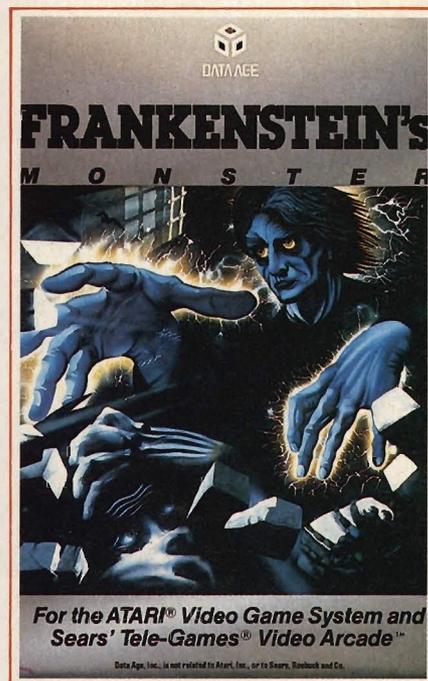


DRACULA (COLECOVISION)





prising software house could even buy the rights to "The Thing" and produce two versions. One could be based on the original claustrophobic masterpiece, the Howard Hawks version, with a superintelligent vegetable cutting off the stranded members at an arctic outpost. The final confrontation outside the generator room, where the alien is fried in an "electronic fly-trap," would make a spectacular visual. Then there's the more recent John Carpenter remake. It's closer in spirit to the short story on which both films were based, John Campbell's "Who Goes There". It would confront players with a shape-changing invader



FRANKENSTEIN'S MONSTER

who might be the simulation sitting right next to you!

Classics aside, there is no shortage of sleazoid monster movies. Theodore Sturgeon probably conceived his premise "99% of everything is crud" after seeing a particularly awful scare-'em. For some reason, however, the nut-case fringe of what the French call *cinema fantastique* has proven more popular with game translators than with movie critics. Tobe Hooper's early experiment in what has come to be known as the "spatter film" genre, "The Texas Chainsaw Massacre", a bloody recounting of a real-life horror story, has both its friends and foes. It makes a highly dubious subject for a videogame, especially in Atari 2600 format. The actual game isn't nearly as offensive as one might fear—it's actually a rather tame mazechase, but it has drawn considerable negative

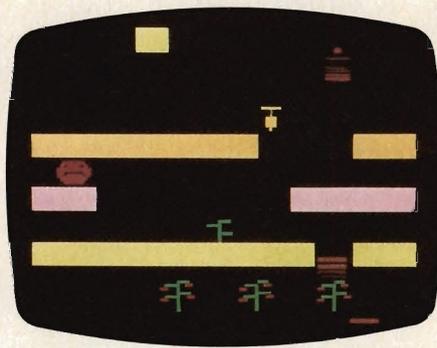
# SCARY VIDEOGAMES



press to the hobby of electronic gaming.

A new title from Fox Video Games, **Revenge of the Beefsteak Tomatoes**, is a sequel to a legendary, awful horror "satire" dubbed "Attack of the Killer Tomatoes." The film consists of tomatoes plopping out of faucets, turning up in basements, etc. in a wild parody of the sinister-invasion theme. In the videogame "sequel" a heartier strain of violent veggie gives humanity a "taste" of their vengeance. The Beefsteaks, by the way, are the result of acid rain! ECO-Horror?!

Speaking of 2600 entries in the scary genre, don't overlook the defunct Data Age's **Frankenstein's Monster**, in which a tiny on-screen adventurer must brave poisonous spiders and trapdoors to descend three levels, float across a deadly moat, and retrieve blocks with which to wall in the creature, chained at the top of the



REVENGE OF THE BEEFSTEAK TOMATOES

playfield. Lightning, the monster's staff of "life", crackles through the skies, and the creation of Victor von Frankenstein constantly grows stronger. When he turns totally green, it's party time! The monster runs amok and snuffs out those annoying villagers' torches once and for all.

There are currently two versions of Bram Stoker's ultimate vampire, "Dracula". The story of the Transylvanian Count is based on the actual exploits of Vlad Tepes, a bloodthirsty Wallachian ruler who was fond of impaling lawbreakers alive and staking them to the roadsides.

Upcoming for ColecoVision is a **Dracula** in which the gamer assumes the role of vampire hunter. The existing "Dracula" game, for the Intellivision from Imagic, is the finest scary videogame yet created. In this far riskier premise, the gamer is *Dracula*, turning from manform to bat and fleeing from stake-wielding policemen through the London night. The game features several astonishing effects, most memorable being the opening in which the moon rises, a great crypt opens and —*Voila!*—out flies a large black bat. It flaps out onto the street and changes into the caped Count and

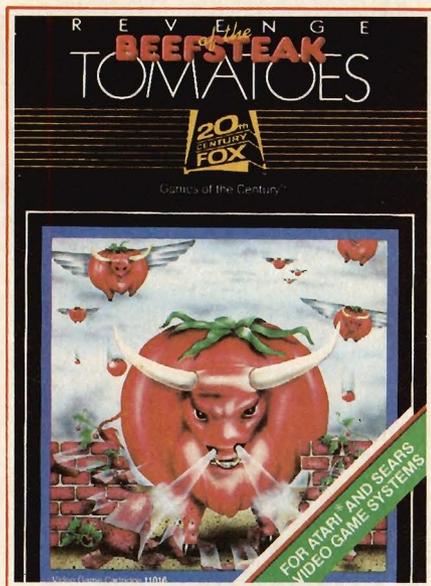
begins stalking the streets for hapless victims. (His preferred method is to watch the windows for tell-tale "eyes", then simply knock on the door to gain entry.) If the human within is dumb enough to leave his domicile, the count's fangs are waiting. Bite a victim on the neck and they disappear, replaced, rather unsettlingly, by their point value.

Not only do the stupendous graphics make Imagic's *Dracula* a winner, but the vicarious thrill of actually portraying a vampire is presented to the electronic gamer for the first time. How controversial this game concept will prove remains to be seen, but it would be foolish to deny that violent impulses lurk within *all* of us.

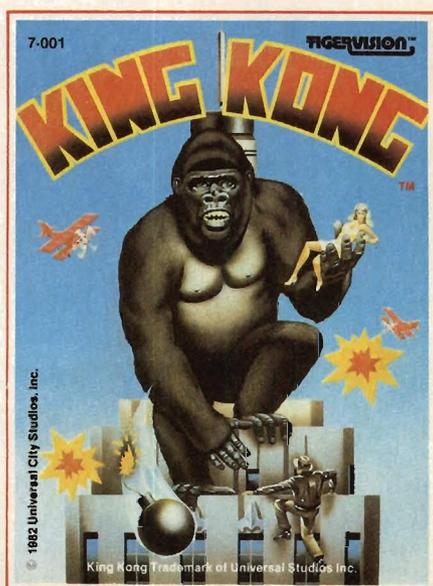
Big monsters, that is, *really* big monsters, seem to be the favorite of game designers. In Nintendo's **Donkey Kong**, an ape climbs through four scenarios up the skeleton of a skyscraper, carrying a fair damsel in its hairy paws. Tigervision's **King Kong** got the title right but the game wrong. A crude simulation of the venerable movie, the table-top version of *King Kong* is actually superior to the videogame version on the 2600.

The ultimate in vicarious monster-stomping, however, has got to be Epyx's **Crush, Crumble and Chomp** in which text and graphics are combined to allow the gamer to play any of several prehistoric beasties modeled on creatures from Japanese horror flicks. Players are allowed an intriguing number of options, including versions where points are gained for property, human and/or military destruction.

So this year, give some trick-or-treater a scary videogame. ☹



REVENGE OF THE BEEFSTEAK TOMATOES



KING KONG (TIGERVISION)

TAC-2™. It stands for Totally Accurate Controller, and it means it. With most joysticks, you can't feel your move until it's too late. With TAC-2 by Suncom, it's like your hand is part of the game. TAC-2 has tactile feedback — feedback you can feel. It also has an extremely tight reaction time, a short throw distance and right and left hand fire buttons to keep you a step ahead of the game. With TAC-2 you know absolutely, positively the exact moment you make a move — any move.



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*Yukon Yohan* has escaped to the city and *Bounty Bob* is after him! Only this time, *Bob*'s run out of bucks, so he's taken a job as a fireman to fund the chase. And guess which villain has torched a skyscraper to trap *Bounty Bob*?

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**HOTTEST  
YET IN...**

**SCRAPER  
LAPER**

Programmed  
by Bill Hogue



Poss  
Poss

# GOOD

## Products to Increase Your Gaming Pleasure

By THE EDITORS OF ELECTRONIC GAMES

**H**owling autumn winds bring in more than just the start of another long cold winter. It also signals the start of another season of holiday cheer.

It's a time when most folks start thinking about how to help friends and family pass those long chilly months more pleasantly. If you've got some videogamers on your holiday shopping list—and who hasn't these days? — or if you're just looking for something that'll make playing a little more fun, have we got some spiffy stuff for you!

You see, now that electronic gaming is a hobby enjoyed by more than 40 million Americans, companies have arisen which exist to do nothing beyond catering to this immense market of game-lovers. So if you want a gourmet joystick or a multi-colored t-shirt, chances are good that some outfit, somewhere, is ready to supply it to you.

Here is just a sample of some of the goodies guaranteed to gladden the hearts of any true electronic arcader:

### GAMING GARB

Not only are t-shirts comfortable, but they also give wearers the opportunity to express their opinions to the world. Photo-Lith, one of the largest t-shirt manufacturers in the country, has licensed the rights from a number of excellent games. **Frogger**, **Zaxxon**, **Q\*Bert** and **Subroc 3-D** are just a few of the hot titles offered, and many



ASTEROIDS COSTUME

stores can customize the shirts to include the gamer's name or high score.

Pint-sized players who want to get a little more into character can check out Collegeville Flag & Manufacturing Company's videogame-oriented Halloween costumes. These vinyl all-in-one suits feature game illustrations

across the chest, plus a mask to complete the outfit. **Q\*Bert** and **Defender** are among the costumes offered, but the editors' choice is definitely **Asteroids**. It comes complete with a pitted, stonefaced mask guaranteed to scare the dog under the bed for a week. Trick-or-treating Pac-fans will no doubt be interested in Ben Cooper's gobbler costume, sized for kids, which includes a Pac-mask.

And speaking of Halloween, there are plenty of videogame-oriented treats to satisfy sweet-toothed arcaders. After polishing off one of Popsicles' Pac-Man ices, hungry gamers might want to freshen their breath with Topps' Video Arcade Gum, bite-sized coated chewing gum packaged in cardboard "arcade machines" like **Frogger**, **Zaxxon**, and **Donkey Kong**, then top it all off with a hearty bowl of Ralston's new "**Donkey Kong Cereal**." These bite-sized barrels taste a lot like Captain Crunch cereal, and are vitamin-fortified to boot.

### THE SERIOUS GAMER

Most hard-core videogame players have, at one time or another, developed painful hand or joint cramps from using hard plastic controllers. In-tellevision owners have enjoyed a degree of relief thanks to Electrocomp's stick-on disc cushion, the Thumb Saver. The same company recently developed a cushion grip for Wico-stick fans as well. The nifty little slip-on, aptly-named the Hand Saver, comes

# IES FOR GAMERS

packed with four "Octoputs" suction disks, which can be easily attached to the bottom of the joystick to allow for one-handed home gaming. The Thumb Saver and the Hand Saver each retail at under \$10.

Anyone who really yearns to take home the arcade "feel" now really can, thanks to Techna Inc.'s Video Station game cabinet. Just assemble the pieces (instructions are enclosed), put the television set and videogame on their respective shelves, and presto!, an instant home arcade machine. The complete Video Station stands 30½" high and can accommodate any TV up to 27" long. It provides a comfortable, eye-to-screen view for adolescent players, and sells for about \$129, including arcade-like details on the top and sides. The top section, featuring the arcade-like monitor frame, can be bought separately for about \$70 while the bottom piece (that turns it into a stand-up machine) is about \$60.

Sony's 13-inch HIT color television set is a perfect choice for the serious home arcader. It comes with a game input jack built right in to the front of the TV set, eliminating the tangle of wires and switches that clutter the backs of many gamers' TVs. At under \$500, it's priced competitively with other, conventional units.

Trendy home electronics hobbyists might find one of the Robot Factory's creations a real blast. The Robot Factory manufactures and sells a variety of mechanical marvels that can be built to almost any specifications, from looks (super high-tech to character likeness) to capabilities. The robots can be made to move, talk (through a remote-controlled microphone or a



VIDEO STATION GAME CABINET

# GOODIES

## FOR GAMERS

### ROBOT FACTORY'S CREATIONS

built-in cassette player), grip objects, inflate balloons...the sky's the limit! However, this also applies to the price. The Colorado-based Robot Factory's ready-made droids start at \$4,500 and can go a lot higher, depending on special features ordered. Well, no one said it would be cheap to be the first on your block to have one.

### CONTROLLERS

While the sheer number of controllers on the market keeps us from mentioning them in this space (see the new column, "In Control", for in-depth reviews of the latest controllers), one product is so unusual that it deserves a notice: the Amiga Joyboard, a surfboard-like contraption that gamers



actually stand on to control their games. Packaged with a skiing cartridge game for the VCS, the Joyboard should be out in plenty of time for Christmas.

ColecoVision owners who just can't get used to the clumsy, mushroom-styled controllers packaged with the system can now hook Lasky's ColecoVision Injoy-A-Stick up to the old keypad to get more of a "real" joystick feel in their games.

An excellent gadget for the gamer on the run is a Nelsonic Industries game watch. Available in two styles—*Frogger* and *Q\*Bert*—these wristband timepieces go wherever the arcader does, bringing fast-action fun to the fore at the touch of a button.

Home arcaders who prefer the com-



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Vectrex has a large and expanding library of "High Performance" games, including popular arcade classics like Pole Position\*, Scramble\*\* and Berzerk†. All Vectrex cartridges are ready to challenge you and transport you to the stars... and beyond!

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# GOODIES

FOR GAMERS



STARPLEX'S GAME-SELEX

forts of home to the outside hustle and bustle can save wear-and-tear on their valuable cartridges with Starplex's Game-Selex cartridge case. The unit stores up to nine videogames, which can be booted up with the flick of a switch through the main power cart, connected through the VCS' cartridge slot.

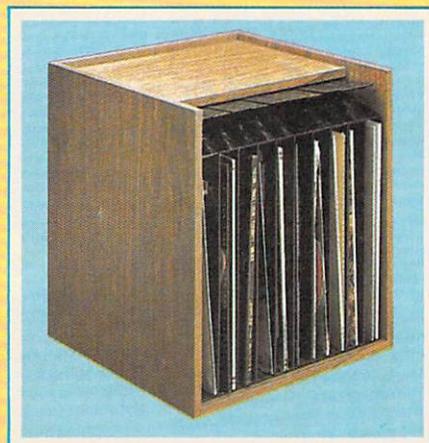
After a rousing play session, home gamers can call their friends to talk about it on the sleekly-styled Pac-Phone, which sells for under \$50 and is available at many telephone centers.

## THE STOREBOARD

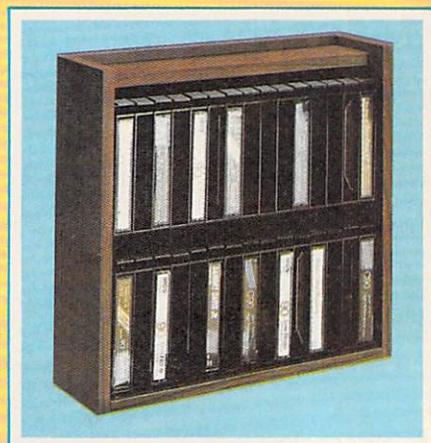
It's impossible to keep an extensive videogame library neat and organized without some sort of storage/organizing system. The Pusher storage cases represent the ultimate in cartridge,

cassette, or videodisc organizers. These walnut-toned cabinets can store 10 or 20 videogame cartridges, 15 or 30 computer cassettes, or 30

videodiscs, depending on the model bought. Each unit has a unique "pusher" button atop each storage slot, which ejects the game from its



PUSHER'S VIDEODISC CABINET



PUSHER'S AUDIO CASSETTE HOLDER

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There's no assembly. Plug the SuperCharger unit into your Atari 2600 game slot and insert the cord into the earphone jack of any cas-

sette player. Now you've got 49 times more RAM power. Graphics comparable to a home computer. And an arcade's worth of action.

Action that's prompted enthusiastic comments from people who know video games. *Rolling Stone Magazine* says: "The SuperCharger System will revolutionize the games business." *Electronic Games* says: "Starpath has one of the greatest products to enter the field of video gaming."



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# GOODIES

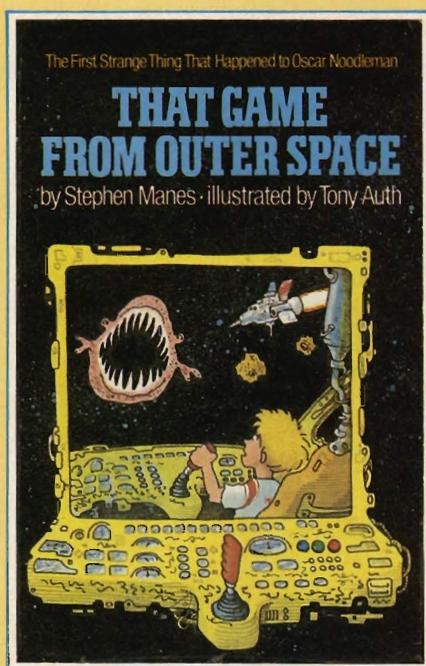
## FOR GAMERS

casing when pressed. Pusher Sales Inc., a Woodland Hills, California-based company, sells the storage units for under \$50.

There are several good products available for players who are tired of racking up high scores, only to have them disappear forever when the cartridge is removed from its slot. Video Take-Out's Videogame Scorebook lets gamers immortalize their high scores (and lows) on pre-printed sheets in a special, bound notebook. People who prefer more immediate gratification can try Image's Video Game Labels. These stickers, priced at \$2.95 for a set of 24, can be pasted right on to the cartridge itself, allowing names and scores for four players per sticker.

Of course, dusty hardware isn't conducive to high-scoring play. Classic Covers has a videogame or computer dust cover to fit just about every major system on the market, so just pick one out. These attractively-styled

PUSHER SALES' VG-10



STEPHEN MANES' NOVEL

brown vinyl covers are widely available, and are priced at under \$20.

### THE LITERARY VIDEOGAME

After a long, hard play session, kids might want to curl up with one of Kenner's plush Q\*Bert cuddle toys and read "That Game From Outer Space" by Stephen Manes. It's about a boy named Oscar Noodleman, who's trying to stop playing arcade games so he can save up the money to buy his own computer. One fateful day, a giant videogame mysteriously appears in Pete's Pizza Parlor, Oscar's favorite hangout. The game looks like a huge spaceship with unreadable markings, and despite his resolution, Oscar rises to the challenge. "That Game From Outer Space" is available from E.P. Dutton Inc. of New York, and costs \$8.95.

The list of gaming goodies goes on and on, but there are so many out there we can't cover them in just one article. Stayed tuned for EG's "Third Annual Gifts for Gamers", coming up in the December issue. 



PUSHER SALES' VG-20

# Do you have what it takes

to survive the Devil's Dungeon? Or escape the uncharted jungle? Can you race in the Grand Prix? Or catch the daring jewel thief? How about trying the Rubik's Cube? Chills and challenges await you in Hayden's world of thrilling adventures, exciting chases, fast-paced action battles, and brain-teasing puzzles.

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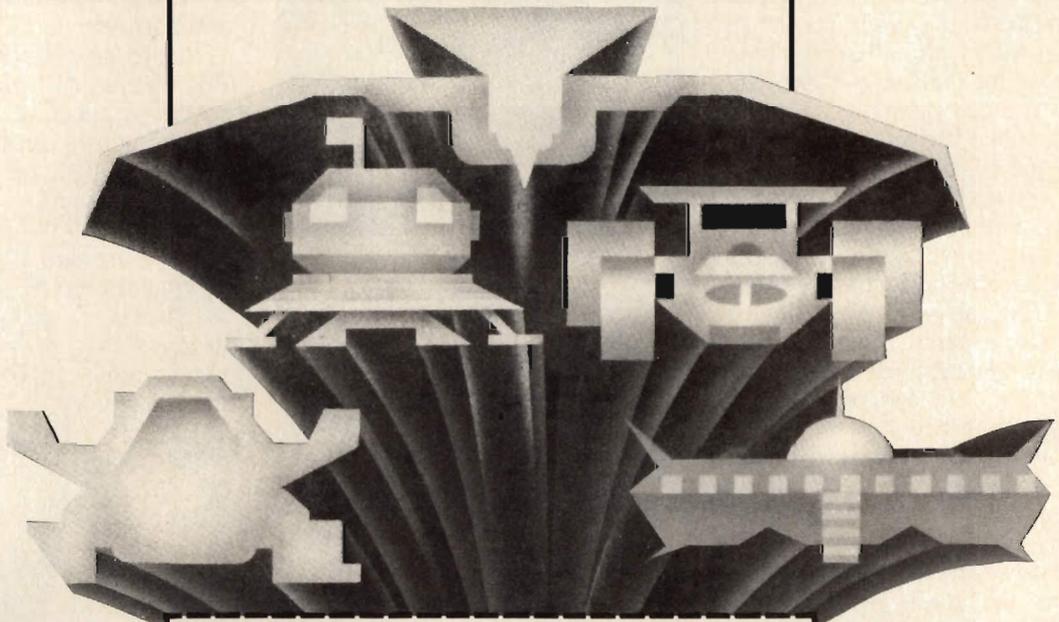
**VIC™ Games** (Hampshire) Contains 36 exciting game programs for the VIC-20. Arcade style and strategy games provide the thrills—driving skills are tested in the Grand Prix, nerve is tested in a field of landmines, cunning and daring is required to escape the jungle, patience is the key to solving Rubik's Cube. #1060, \$12.95

## Pascal Programs for Games and Graphics

(Swan) Here are 22 more programs for video enjoyment—control space traffic at a busy moonport, compete in "light" bike races, and more. Also generates exciting displays of moving light, and the graphics editor allows you to custom-design character sets, save and change pictures up to full screen, and print a hard copy of the finished product on most printers. #6271, \$15.95

## Computer Bridge

(Throop) A must for anyone interested in bridge programming. Shows how it can be implemented on a microcomputer. Bridge programs such as Bridge Challenger, Bridge 2.0, Goren Bridgemaster, and Bridge Tutor are evaluated for strengths and weaknesses. Sample hands illustrate bidding and playing options. #6253, \$9.95



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VIDEO PINBALL

# TIPS

## The Silver Ball Keeps Rolling

By RICK TEVERBAUGH

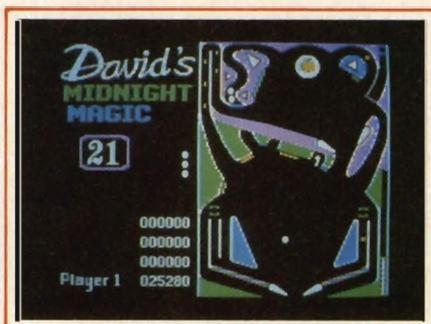
With the possible exception of war games, pinball simulations have made the most extensive use of the capabilities of the computer. While the home video pinball recreations may look like the real thing, it takes the power of the computer to make the contest play like the real thing, too.

Bill Budge started the entire phenomena with his *Raster Blaster*, voted 1981's most popular Apple II game. The program proved so popular that it has since become available for Atari 400/800/1200 as well.

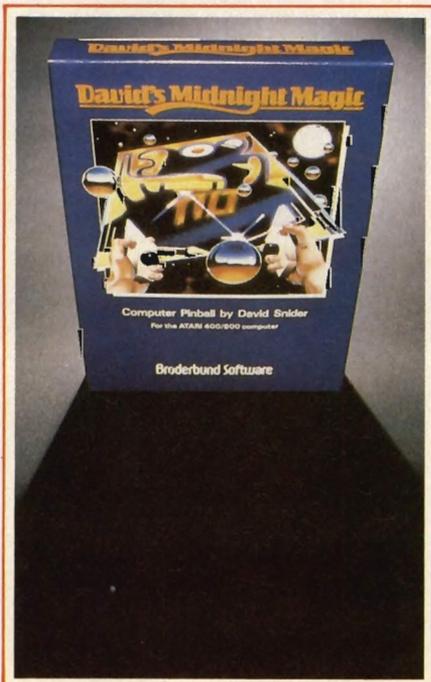
On the *Raster* table, the ball speeds out of the launching chute and toward the top of the field, where there are four lanes that the ball must go through in the same round. If that happens, a bright orange "R" lights and the gamer is 10,000 points to the better.

Further down the table are four lively bumpers right under the lanes, the bottom two of which have three targets each. When the ball strikes these six targets, it activates the machine's claws. Two of the claws are toward the top of the table and the other is in the middle to the left-hand side.

When an active claw grabs the ball, it holds it there and the gamer gets another ball. If each claw grabs a ball during the same round, all release the spheres simultaneously for some real



DAVID'S MIDNIGHT MAGIC



eye-catching, frenzied play. Getting all three claws to catch balls is also worth a grand total of 25,000 in points and bonuses.

Not to be left out, the right side of the unit has three special targets that, when hit, are worth 10,000 points and light the "B" in the word "Blaster".

There are two settings for *Raster Blaster*. When in the easy mode, the ball-saving shields are always on. When at the more difficult setting, the player must knock down the two sets of center targets to activate these game extenders. The game can be played by up to four players and, as with most computer pinball disks, control of the flippers is established through the buttons on the game paddles.



and **David's Midnight Magic** is the table's name.

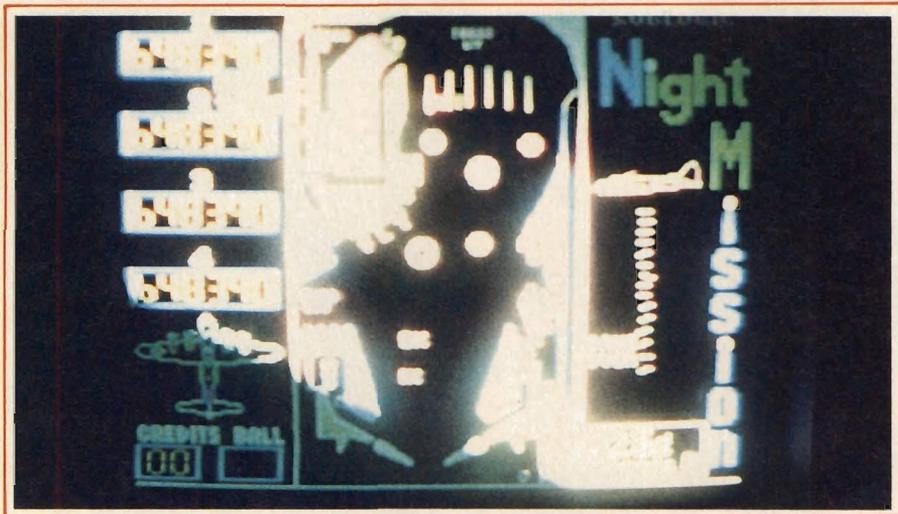
Of course, with *Raster* such a huge hit, *David's Midnight Magic* needed to capture the best aspects of that entry and then add some twists of its own.

Snider accomplished the feat so well that it won the 1983 computer game of the year statuette in the 1982 Arcade Awards competition.

*David's Midnight Magic* is much busier than *Raster Blaster*. The game has a two-level playfield and a second set of flippers at the bottom of that upper level to keep the ball there a while longer. *DMM* can be played with the keyboard or a combination of keyboard/joystick or keyboard/paddles. It is playable by up to four gamers.

Even as *Raster Blaster* was enjoying tremendous success, the folks at Broderbund were readying a new challenger for the computer pinball championship. David Snider is the programmer

# VIDEO PINBALL



NIGHT MISSION

The reason the keyboard is needed in combination with paddles or joystick is the ball-saving and table-bumping features of *DMM*. The machine can be nudged by tapping the space bar, but be careful not to tilt! Then, there are some magnetic ball barriers that can save the sphere from falling down one of the two unguarded drains at the bottom left and right of the table.

The drop targets are the key to high scores. Bonus points are tallied by hitting the drops, and after each ball those bonus points are multiplied by 1,000 and added to the total. The five drop targets on the upper level are worth 5,000 points and five bonus points. The rollover dots along the left-hand strip of the table really make bonus points.

All these points are even more important if the player can smash his ball through the semi-circular track at the top of the lower table. This feat advances the bonus multiplier by one.

The ball-catching feature of *Raster Blaster* is one of the table's highlights, so *David's Midnight Magic*, too

makes use of this concept. The ball catcher is on the top level. Just lodging a ball there lands the gamer a hefty 10 bonus points and gives the gamer a replacement ball.

There are three ways to release the caught sphere. The first, and most difficult, of these is to trap three at once. An arrow at the top of the lower table, when lit and hit, will release any captured balls and the most often used is losing your last ball for the game, which releases any trapped balls.

Easily the most complex of the computer pinball simulations is **A2-PB1 Pinball** from SubLogic, which forever after in this article at least will be called **Night Mission**. What the other tables may have lacked in special features or flexibility is more than made up for here.

Bruce Artwick, who designed what is easily the best fly-your-own-airplane package, **Flight Simulator**, did his best to put together a complete pinball machine with *Night Mission*. There are 10 modes available when you boot up, but that's just a start.

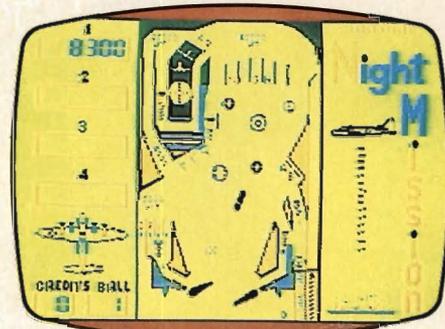
By adjusting parameters like ball speed, bounce off the flippers or bumpers, visibility of the ball and tilt sensitivity to name only some of the more than 20 options, the gamer can create whatever version he/she likes best. Then that individual creation can be saved on a separate disk.

That separate disk is also needed to keep track of high scores, a minor annoyance that keeps other less scrupulous gamers than you and I from running up a big score on a table created purposely easy.

*Night Mission* is designed around a theme which other pinball games before it were not. You are the pilot — what else would you expect from Artwick — of a World War II plane on a night bombing run over the Pacific. Instead of making sounds to entertain or jangle the gamer's nerves, *Night Mission* has sound effects to augment the overall theme of the table.

To start a game of *Night Mission*, the arcader must first insert a quarter. You do this by pushing the "Q" key. This feature makes winning free games much more meaningful.

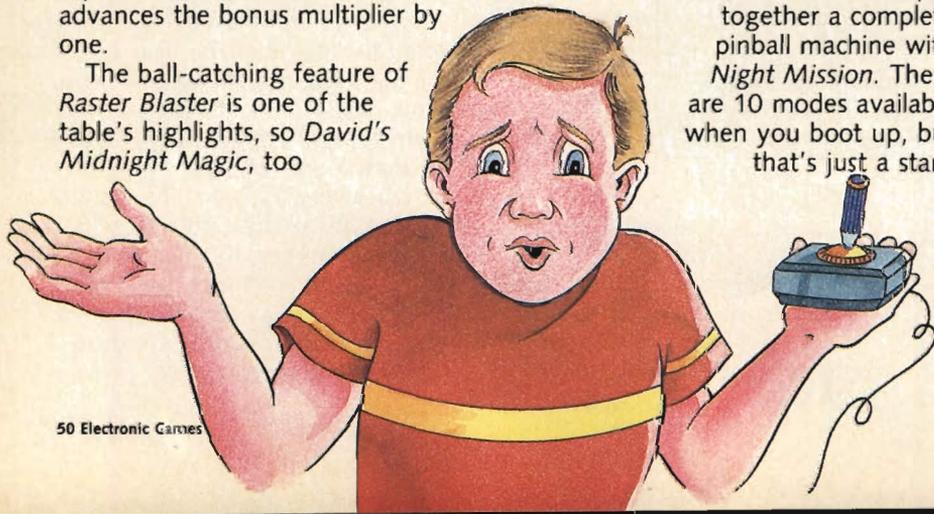
The play on the machine is so complex and varied, it would take the rest of the magazine to explain all the pos-



NIGHT MISSION

sibilities in detail. Up to four gamers, using keyboard alone or a paddle/keyboard combination, can play. You can bump the machine on the left side by hitting any key on the left-hand side of the keyboard. Bumping the machine on the right is done by the right-hand side keys.

In the main competition mode, the following scoring rules apply: There are seven stand-up targets, two at top left, three at left center and two at lower right, which must be knocked down for 1,000 points and a bonus advance. The "NIGHT" rollovers are worth 1,500 points and a bonus advance and the "DROP" rollovers are worth 2,000 points. Getting the "ROP" rollovers without the "D" activates the special light.



# These instructions could save your life.



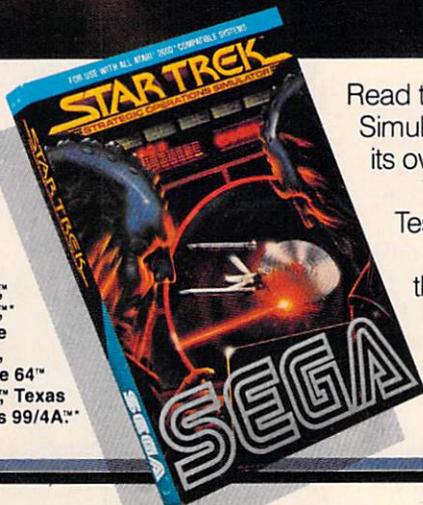
Phasers are armed and ready for constant fire. They are the only weapon effective against the mighty Nomad.

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A photon torpedo can take out a cluster of Klingons. But they're in short supply, so don't waste 'em.



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# VIDEO PINBALL

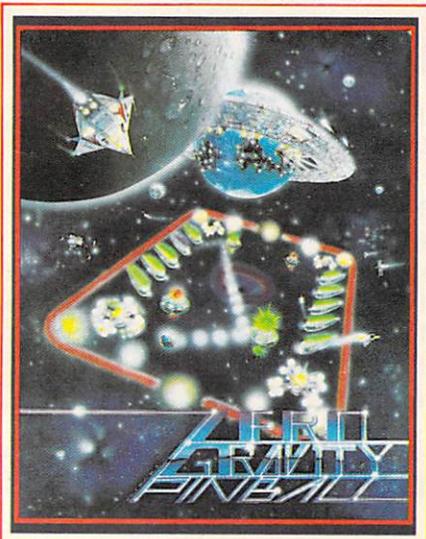
Getting the "NIGHT" rollovers earns 10,000 points, lights the "NIGHT" arrows and activates the bomb release. Up to 30,000 points are possible by getting all the cities bombed and knocking off the "ABCD" targets. There are two spinners on the board, a hole kicker and multi-ball play when the dive bomb chute hold fills with balls. The scoreboard will keep track of up to five million points. You get free games for matching the final two numbers when the game is over or for exceeding the current high score for a particular mode.

*Night Mission* is available for the Apple, Atari, and IBM PC computers.

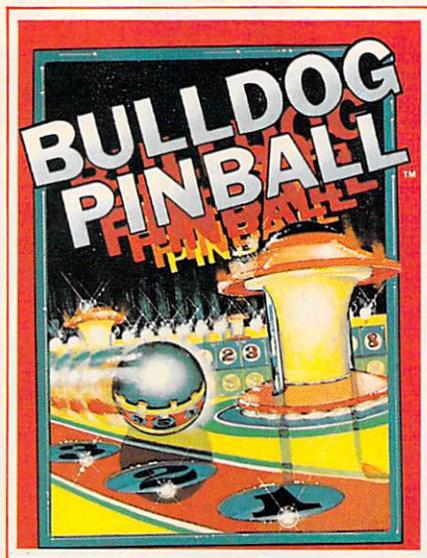
One thread that runs through these programs is the simulation of gravity pulling the ball down the table, despite the gamer's best efforts to keep it up in the scoring area for as long as possible. *Avant-Garde* rids the gamer of that constant frustration in its flipper game entry, **Zero Gravity Pinball**.

*Zero Gravity* is played using a combination of paddle/keyboard inputs. In this outing the pinball table is in the middle of a void and the ball must be kept within the confines of the playfield by any one of 10 flippers or the electroplasmic force fields.

The ball is kicked into play from the center space ring. There are five flippers to the right and five to the left, to keep the ball from exiting out either



ZERO GRAVITY PINBALL



BULLDOG PINBALL

side. Force fields at the top and bottom perform the same function. The paddle controls the flippers. Turning the paddle will control which one of the 10 flippers is activated, and pushing the paddle button causes the chosen flipper to go into action.

To activate the force field at the top of the screen, hit any key except the space bar. To activate the lower field, hit the space bar.

Targets are worth differing amounts of points. The center space ring scores 25 points, but it can also act like a black hole and eat your ball. Space bumpers are worth 100 points, spinners 200 points, buzzers 300 points and corner bumpers 500 points. There are five levels of difficulty and *Zero Gravity* is available currently only for the Apple.

For those who yearn for pinball just like the arcades, *Zero Gravity* will hold little appeal, but for those wanting a table with a bit of a different challenge, it just might be the ticket.

Since *Zero Gravity* is available only for the Apple, it seems only fair to tackle one that's only usable on the Atari 400/800/1200. The game is **Bulldog Pinball** and it comes on cassette tape from Hayden. Since the game uses just 16K of memory, the gamer shouldn't expect all the frills of the other pinball games and he'd be correct in making that assumption.

The playfield roughly resembles

that of a bulldog, and "rough" would be a good adjective to describe the visuals.

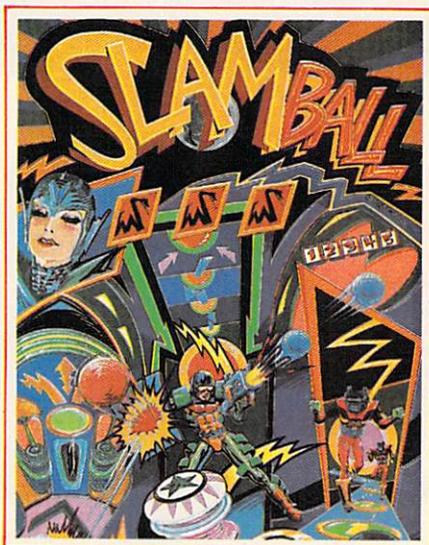
The scoring is easily described as there are nearly no drop targets or bumpers to enhance play or complicate the scoring. The entry lanes are worth 20 points each, but other parts of the dog's anatomy—ears, teeth, jowls, eyes and nose—are worth 10 points each. You get between 50 and 300 points for the dog's eyes and/or nose which are blue, and 2,000 points for going up the left side lane. Getting all eight ear targets are worth double that ball's score and igniting the left side lane after getting the eight ear targets triples that ball's score.

Bad programming forces the gamer to use the only button on an Atari joystick for one flipper and a key on the keyboard for the other bat. The instructions are unclear.

From the slightly less than spectacular to the overwhelming is how we should categorize the step from *Bulldog Pinball* to the **Pinball Construction Set**. Bill Budge's newest creation is a masterpiece of programming. Now pinball fanatics can not only adjust some parameters, like they did in *Night Mission*, but they can also create a whole new table, all on their own.

Even more important, it isn't that difficult. It might take painstaking labor to get a polished professional look and feel out of a disk, but that eases up as you become more familiar with the set's features.

The *Pinball Construction Set* provides all the tools to put together a pinball game of your own. A pointing hand, moved by joystick, copies objects from the tool box to the playfield.



SLAM BALL

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Enter as often as you like. No purchase required. Mail a 3 x 5 piece of paper with your name, address, zip code and the words "Super Cobra™ is next to impossible" to Super Cobra™ Sweepstakes, P.O. Box 539, Lowell, IN 46356. Entries must be received no later than Jan. 31, 1984.

Winners will be selected in random drawings from all entries received by VENTURA ASSOCIATES, INC., an independent judging organization whose decisions are final. The odds of winning are determined by the total number of entries received.

Sweepstakes open to residents of the United States. Employees and families of Parker Brothers, their advertising and production agencies and VENTURA ASSOCIATES, INC. are not eligible. Void where prohibited by law. All federal, state and local regulations apply. Winners will be asked to sign an affidavit of eligibility and their names and likenesses may be used for publicity purposes.

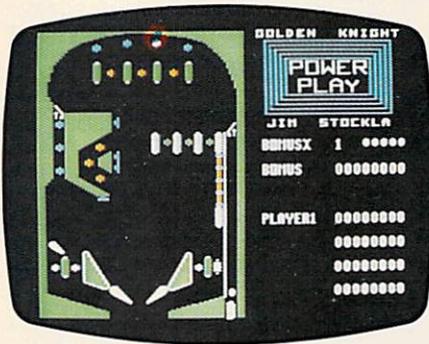
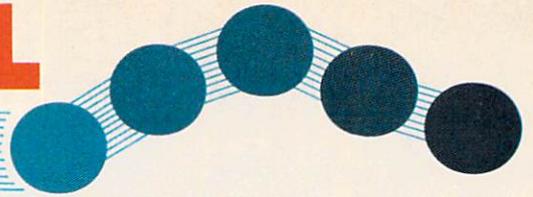
For a list of major prize winners, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: Super Cobra Sweepstakes Winners List, P.O. Box 766, Lowell, In 46356.

No duplicate winners. No substitution for prizes as offered except as may be necessary due to availability. Taxes are the responsibility of winners. Winners will be notified by mail.

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 **PARKER BROTHERS**

# VIDEO PINBALL



PINBALL PARADISE

An arrow moves walls, a hammer adds points, and a pair of scissors subtracts points. Once you've wrought some pinball magic it is permissible, even advisable, to grab a ball and bounce it around on the table to find out what's what.

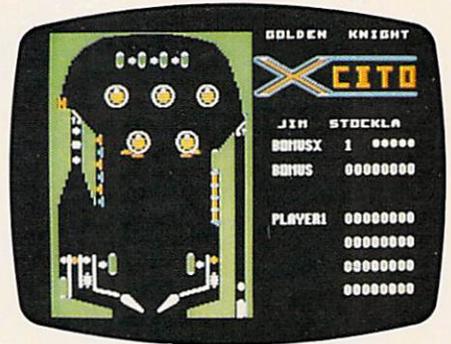
There are also a couple of painting

modes to create just exactly the right touches to make your table look professional. Another feature allows you to alter the sounds, physical reactions and bonus points in the game.

One person who has spent some considerable time with *The Pinball Construction Set* and put it to commercial use is Jim Stockla at Golden Knight Software. He currently has two pinball products on the market, *Pinball Paradise* and *Pinball Paradise II*.

The first, which contains four different tables, has fewer frills than *Paradise II*, but each table is an example of what can be accomplished with the *Pinball Construction Set*.

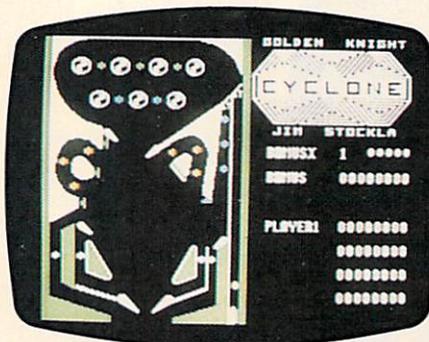
A lack of sufficient documentation mars both *Pinball Paradise I and II*, but for those who enjoy a good game of pinball and don't mind finding out on



PINBALL PARADISE

their own exactly what targets are worth what amount of points, either program will likely fit the bill nicely.

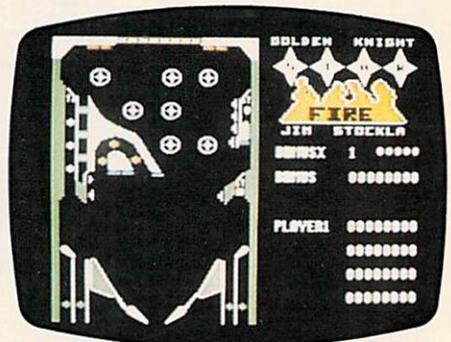
All eight tables included in the two packages are challenging, with the two separate tables of *Zontar* from the first disk and the raw speed of *Cyclone* on the second disk rating as highlights.



PINBALL PARADISE II



PINBALL PARADISE II



PINBALL PARADISE II

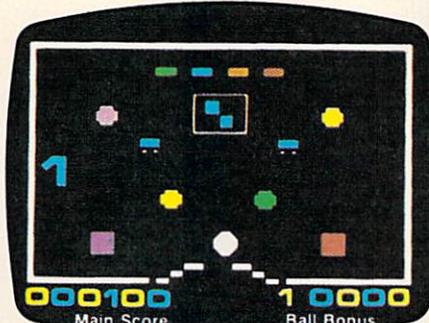
## Flipper Games for the Popular Programmable Videogame Systems

Programmable pinball used to shine quite brightly before the more powerful computer programs overshadowed the videogames. However, for those with only a videogame system to keep them warm, there are some pinball alternatives.

The most recent arrival is the new Vectrex entry, *Spinball*. It's very fast and exciting, with the same quality visuals that have marked the unit's earlier releases.

*Spinball* owes much of its pinball feel to the specially shaped screen of the Vectrex and is more successful for not having to convert a playfield to the geometry of a television screen.

Atari's *Video Pinball* still packs some magic, although the game plays more like pinball than it looks or feels like pinball. Many of the elements found on the full size



THUNDERBALL

machines are translated into the Atari version, including rollovers, bonus targets and free ball conditions.

Yet the complaint that there are too many dead areas on the Atari table is still valid. At times, the ball seems to bounce

around interminably without racking up any significant points. Using the joystick to operate the flippers isn't a natural solution for pinball aficionados, either.

*Pinball for the Odyssey<sup>2</sup>* is called *Thunderball*. Up to four players can compete and the table, while super-simple in design and quite chunky in graphics, is unusually involving. It includes moveable flippers at the bottom of the screen.

Mattel has never gotten its long-promised pinball cartridge off the drawing board. Since none of the independent game manufacturers have put together a pinball game, Intellivision owners are still out in the cold. Coleco has no immediate plans for any pinball activity, leaving its owners no choice but *Atari Video Pinball*, which can be played through the emulator.



# GIVE YOUR KIDS A LESSON THEY'LL NEVER FORGET.



When kids have fun and learn at the same time, they're more likely to remember more of what they've learned. What's more, when they associate the two together — learning becomes an enjoyable activity. So they'll do more of it.

That's the basic principle behind the Learning Fun Series from EPYX.

## **FUN WITH MUSIC. PARENTS TAKE NOTE.**

Fun with Music™ is designed to appeal to both you and your children. It comes with a songbook and has two modes of play. In the first mode, you can enter songs from the songbook — or compose your own. Then

play the songs back, adding or removing notes and changing tempo or key. Your computer is like a musical instrument with memory, and you see every note of it displayed on your screen.

The second mode lets you play your song in a fun-filled action game. You control a drum major trying to touch the notes before a small but pesky poodle catches up to him and slows down the parade.



Either way, Fun with Music gives you and your whole family the perfect mix of learning and play.



## **FUN WITH ART. JUST PICTURE IT.**

Creating art on the video screen is one of the newest forms of "high-tech" play for kids. And adults, for that matter. Plus there's nothing to clean up afterwards.

Fun with Art™ uses the computer and joystick to transform your TV screen into an artist's canvas with astonishing results. 128 colors, numerous brush strokes, all kinds of geometric shapes, and special fill-in and magnifying options are some of the 24 different modes and features available to create works of art never before possible.

Fun with Art brings out the artist in you, no matter what your age!

## **MORE LEARNING FUN ON THE WAY.**

These two are the first of an extensive series of Learning Fun games we have planned. Look for these, as well as other EPYX titles, wherever computer software is sold.

 **EPYX**  
COMPUTER SOFTWARE  
**LEARNING FUN SERIES.**



## Consulting Activision's Kitchen Cabinet

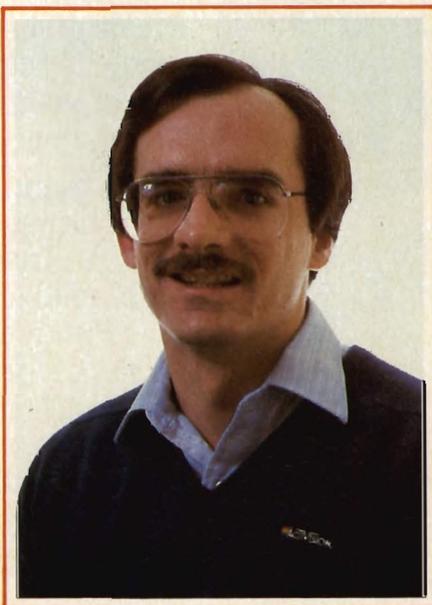
By BILL KUNKEL

It is commonplace to find members of the same family active in the same field of arts and entertainment. The Brontes and Benchleys are literary royal houses, Liza Minelli and Lorna Luft have followed in the showbiz footsteps of their mother Judy Garland, and they didn't name that southern rock band "The Allman Brothers" because they all came from the same town.

Brother acts are probably the most frequent form of this phenomenon. Baseball had the Deans, DiMaggios, Boyers and Waners. Hockey currently

on retail store shelves right now.

Only one spectacular set of siblings fits this description — the Kitchen Brothers. Before venturing too deep into conversation with this trio, it's a good idea to draw up a scorecard. Let's begin with the "elder" of Clan Kitchen, 32-year-old Steve. It was he who actually got the ball rolling for all of them by building a working computer in his basement in 1962 at the advanced age of 10. He dubbed it "The M.A.N.I.A.C." (the meaning of the letters has been lost to posterity). The huge computer was a small step

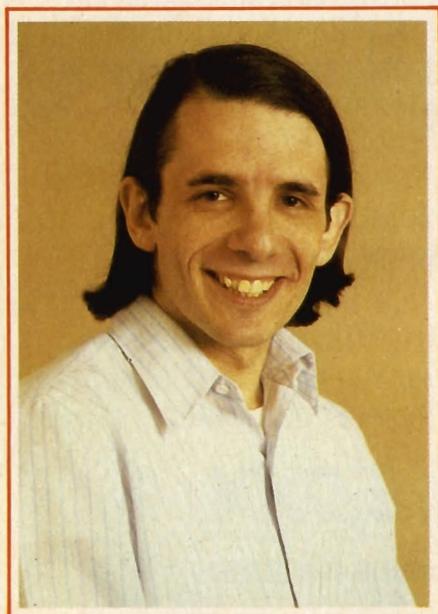


GARY KITCHEN

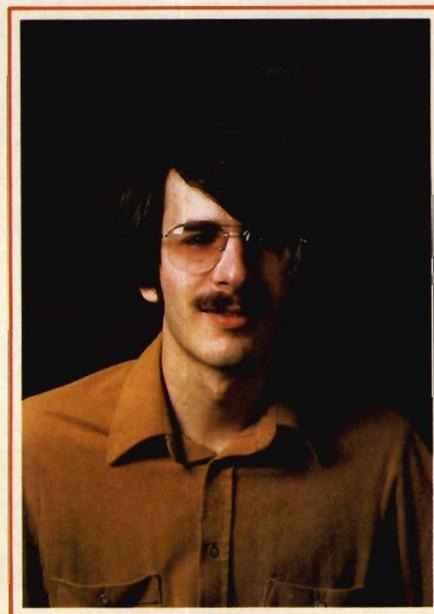
boasts the Maloney siblings and the enormous Sutter clan, and football once had a pair of Rotes, Kyle and Tobin.

This type of family spirit has now come to electronic gaming in a very big way. Imagine, if you can, not two but *three* game-designing brothers. Better yet, all are at or near the top of their profession, and all create under the Activision banner.

If that's not enough to whet your appetite to know more, how about this? All three have produced top titles in the last year, and all have hot games



STEVE KITCHEN



DAN KITCHEN

# JUMPMAN'S A GREAT GAME. BUT YOU'VE GOT TO WATCH YOUR STEP.



Meet the Alienators. A fiendish bunch who've planted bombs throughout your Jupiter Command Headquarters.

Your job? Use your lightning speed to scale ladders, scurry across girders, climb ropes and race

through 30 levels to defuse the bombs before they go off.

That's the kind of hot, non-stop action we've packed into the award-winning, best-selling Jumpman,™ and into Jumpman Jr.,™ our new cartridge version with 12 all-new, different and exciting screens.

Both games force you to make tough choices.

Should you avoid that Alienator, climb to the top

\*1983 C.E.S. award winner.

and try to work your way down, or try to hurdle him and defuse the bombs closest to you before they go off?

If you move fast you'll earn extra lives.

But if you're not careful, it's a long way down.

So jump to it. And find out why Jumpman and Jumpman Jr. are on a level all their own.

*One to four players; 8 speeds; joystick control. Jumpman has 30 screens. Jumpman Jr. has 12 screens.*



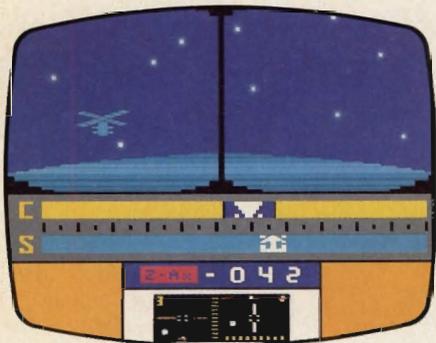
**EPYX**  
COMPUTER SOFTWARE

**STRATEGY GAMES FOR THE ACTION-GAME PLAYER.**



for the Kitchens, but a large leap for electronic gaming.

Ten years later, Steve found himself designing calculators for a Taiwanese firm. Not finding a lot of creative fulfillment there, he moved to an outfit known as K&L Associates. By 1977, he was turning out *the* state-of-the-art stand-alone electronic games of that



SPACE SHUTTLE: A JOURNEY INTO SPACE

era—matrix-oriented, “traveling” dot classics such as the early pool simulation, **Bank Shot**.” I learned a lot from that one,” Steve comments.

The basic idea in this work was to lay down a matrix from which a series of circles were cut in column form. Once the shot was taken, lighting up the cut-out dots at the correct speed and in the proper sequence made it seem as though the ball were traveling and caroming off the bumpers.

From this stroke of genius came **Wildfire**. Both the new game and **Bank Shot** were sold to Parker Brothers, who presented truly impressive and durable housings for



these classics. **Wildfire** remains the *finest* hand-held pinball simulation. Again taking advantage of a much more sophisticated and detailed matrix-lighting system, animated pinballs careened down the launch slot and into a *Tron*-like universe of illuminated thumper-bumpers and glowing flippers.

At this juncture in the Kitchen Chronicles it's time to meet brother number two, Gary. He's a mustachioed gentleman of courtly manners and great powers of articulation. Originally, Gary intended to be a fine artist. Ironically, he ended up becoming an artist of an entirely different type. As he says it, “I gave up art and got into engineering, moving up to Wickstead.”

Gary never *really* gave up art of course. “I built my storylines in my dreams,” he explained. “My storyline, my theme—I work it all out while I'm asleep. It's not at all unusual for me to jump out of bed in the middle of the night after working out a new way to play with those funny little hats on some game I'm designing.”

Videogames conceived in the dreamstate. Is Gary Kitchen the Poe of videogames? Certainly, he's not near-

ly as macabre. His storylines and games themselves bear the whimsical, fun-to-play trademark that Activision has turned into an artform.

Steve, meanwhile, had started up a hand-held production company of his own, NPI, and **Space Invaders**, one of the most popular and well-known of the early hand-helds, was nothing



CRACKPOTS (ACTIVISION)

more (or less) than Gary's school project that year.

I'd say we're now about ready to observe brother number three get smitten—or is it “bitten”?—by the game bug. The process was accelerated somewhat by a gift of an Apple II, bestowed on youngest tribe member, Dan, by his elder brothers. After that, it was Dalton Gang, move over!

Gary made his mark by back-engineering the 2600 in order to produce Coleco's VCS version of **Donkey Kong**. His biggest smash since then, however, has been the enchanting **Keystone Kapers** with its period flavor graphics and breakneck pace.

BANK SHOT (PARKER BROS.)



# PITSTOP™ WHERE WINNING IS THE PITS.



You'll never make Grand Prix champion just driving in circles.

You've got to stop sometime. The question is when. Right now you're in the lead. But the faster

you go, the more gas you consume. And the quicker your tires wear down.

If you do pull into the pits, though, you lose precious seconds. So it's up to you to make sure the pit crew is quick with those tires. And careful with that gas. Otherwise, poof! you're out of the race.

See your retailer for available computer formats.

So what'll it be, Mario? Think your tires will hold up for another lap? Or should you play it safe and go get some new ones?

Think it over. Because Pitstop™ is the one and only road race game where winning is more than just driving. It's the pits.

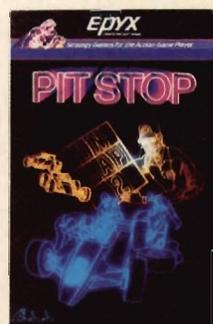
Goggles not included.

*One or two players; 6 racecourses, joystick control.*



**EPYX**  
COMPUTER SOFTWARE

**STRATEGY GAMES FOR THE ACTION-GAME PLAYER.**





Steve's first major ACTV release will be **Space Shuttle**, a highly sophisticated, but highly entertaining, marriage of simulation and the old hand-eye blitz, while Dan's "upside down **Kaboom!**", the cutesy **Crackpots**, is already available.

Do all three brothers take the same application to game designing, or does each approach it from his own idiosyncratic technique?

Well, Steve is a "storyboard" man. "Yeah," he nods, smiling, "I 'spiced out' every inch of *Space Shuttle*." Some of this "pre-planning" includes working his name, or initials, into his games in some sort of tricky, "Easter egg" fashion. (A videogame goodie to the first reader who finds Steve's name in a certain early VCS game by rolling it over. Send us your name, address, and the name of the game to win.)

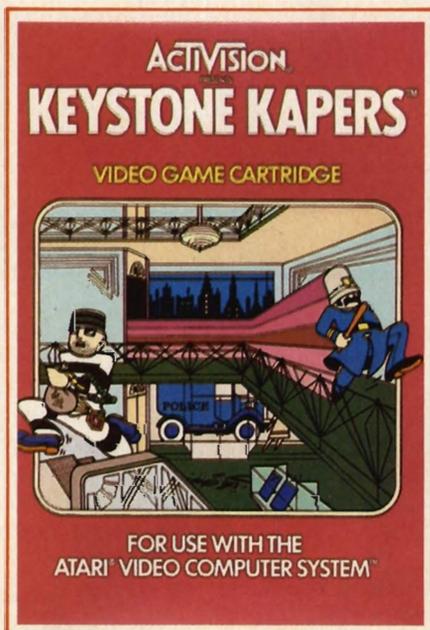
Gary, on the other hand, is most comparable to a sculptor. He begins with a block of computer graphics, then starts "playing with it."

"Storyboards restrict my creativity," Gary explains, shuddering as the distasteful thought of being wed to a particular graphic image before the entire game is cast. This same "keep playing with it" approach brought such touches of genius to his games as the Philco radios in *Keystone Kapers*.

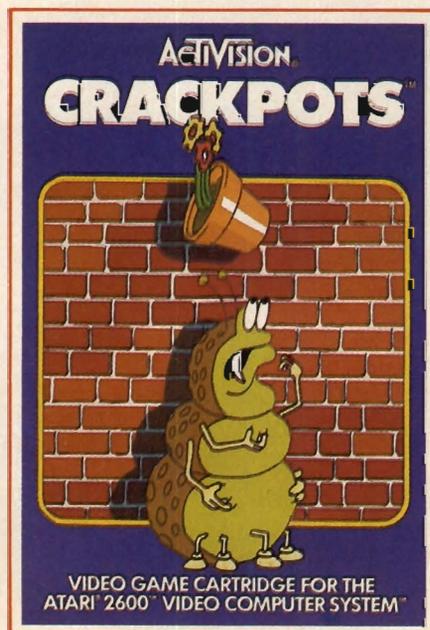


Dan, on the other hand, likes little bugs, and adheres faithfully to the Microprocessor Musketeers' code of honor: "Never go home with a bad edit!"

In the end, of course, you can't argue with success. But the Kitchen brothers *can*, and frequently *do*, have heated discussions with one another. Actually, they get on pretty well for a trio of siblings, especially three immersed in such a competitive market as *this*. Still, Gary seems to say it all when he declares matter-of-factly: "Steve just wants to show up his brothers." G



KEYSTONE KAPERS (ACTIVISION)



CRACKPOTS (ACTIVISION)

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## Profile of a Video Maniac



**Name:**  
DAVID McLEROY

**Age:** 18

**Favorite Arcade Game:**  
DRAGON'S LAIR

**Accomplishments:**  
FIRST TO SLAY DRAGON,  
Game House, Capo Beach, Ca.  
July 7, 1983

**Preferred Sportswear:**  
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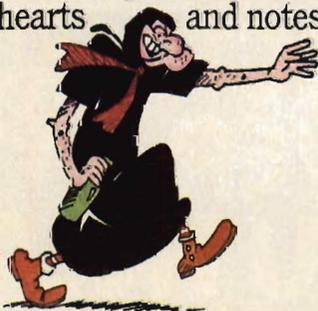
*Popeye* The Sailor Man



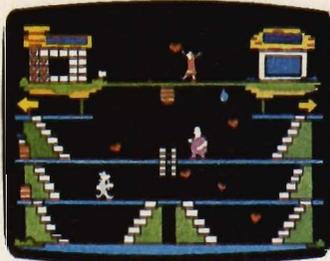
*Ya gotta capture Olive's hearts. Or else.*

You thinks it's all fun and games bein the world's most famosk sailor? Then, I suggests you tries it yerself.

You try makin points with Olive Oyl, that fickle, damanding, stringbean of a dame. Likes you got nothin better to do than runnin around tryin to catch her hearts and notes.



You try bein chased around by that fat swab Brutusk, without a chance to catch yer breath.



*As soon as ya gets yer sptnach, they all runs away.*

And I'll tells ya, that big blubber ball ain't as dumb as he looks.

You try doin all that whilst yer gettin pelted with beer bottles by that discustipatin

Sea Hag. She ain't no lady, that's fer sure.



And you try fightin off the vultures whilst Olive screams for H-E-L-P.

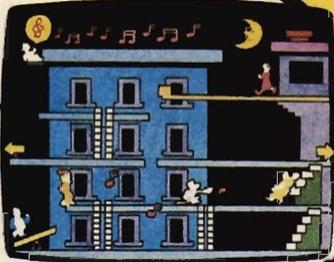
And you try to keep from gettin yerself killed by them bouncin skulls. I doesn't know where they comes from, but I doesn't like 'em one bit.

And woist of all, whilst you're doing all this,



*Ya gotta punch out these bottles before they punch you out (I hopes they're non-return).*

# YA CAN'T BE WIMPY IF YA WANTS TA PLAY POPEYE.<sup>®</sup>



*Olive drops notes whilst you runs around tryin to make points.*

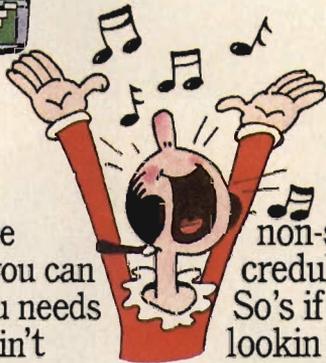
they keeps movin the spinach around so's you can never find it when you needs it. Blow me down, it ain't hardly fair.

I'll tell ya, ya gotsta be some kinda sailor to play Popeye.<sup>®</sup>

You gotsta be fast. And ya gotsta thrive under pressure.

Cuz, me home video game is just like the hit arcade game by Nintendo... With three screens of

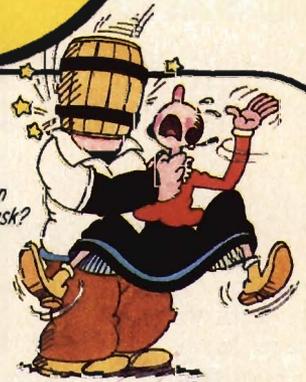
*Here, boldie. I'll blasticate yo.*



non-stop action and incredulous graphics. So's if it's a challenge yer lookin for, and ya thinks ya gots what it takes, why be messin around with them other silly games. Do what I does every day. Play Popeye from Parker Brothers.



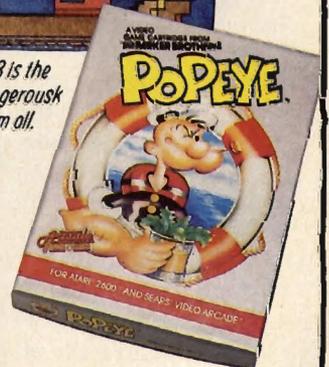
*Ya thinks itsk fun tonglin with Brutusk? You try it.*



Just one piece of advice. I doesn't suggest ya tries it if ya eats yer spinach in a quiche.



*Screen 3 is the most dangerous of them all.*



**PARKER BROTHERS**

Popeye is available for Atari 2600, Intellivision, Atari 5200 and ColecoVision Systems; Plus Atari 400 and 800 and Commodore VIC 20 home computer systems.

# ARCADE



## Third Star from the Sun!

By DAVID LUSTIG

**W**henever proprietor Robert Blake travels from one of his electronic game centers to the other, he goes from planet to planet, and never leaves Montebello, California.

For Robert and his parents, as well as wife Becky, operate a pair of arcades named "The Electric Planet," the newest of which opened its doors in August of 1982.

Parents Jess and Ryna operated a traveling arcade for over 30 years, bringing young son Robert along whenever possible. But overhead costs were just getting out of hand and — tired of traveling like gypsies — decided to plant electronic roots in their home town of Montebello, near Los Angeles, opening their first "Planet" in February, 1980.

The Blakes pride themselves on running clean, trouble-free establishments, achieving it through efficient management and good security, even repairing their own machines! When applying to open up the second store however, it still took more than six months to get the proper permits through the planning commission, city council and public hearings. Now, the senior Blake says, city officials and local police officers come into the Planets not to inspect, but to play the games.

And there is good reason why the two arcades are so popular. Enter-

ing the newest, located in the Garmer Plaza at 2313 W. Whittier Blvd., a visitor is greeted by an airy blue-tinted main room. Over in one corner is a small but efficient snack bar serving some of the best in munchies including Nathan's hot dogs, Vienna pastrami sandwiches and their award-winning "Planet Chile."

Nearby, in another corner, is a gigantic television screen tuned in to "Music Television", a rock cable network. The music, in stereo, is piped throughout the 2600 square foot store. Strip lights are mounted on the walls, the ceiling and in the floor, and are synchronized to the music, so it's hard *not* to tap your foot while destroying enemy invaders.

Seventy-six of the newest video-games fed by tokens keep customers busy and, in an age of twenty-five cent affairs, at the Electric Planet you can get five tokens for a buck. Obviously one of the better deals in the galaxy.

The top five games continue to be: **Tron, Dig-Dug, Zaxxon, Robotron** and **Ms. Pac-Man** and the Blakes claim to have few flops, thanks to an ingenious testing system. When a new game comes out, a small group of kids are escorted to the distributor to road test it. If they like it, there's a good chance a number of new machines will find their way into the Blake's business.



# AMERICA



Operating hours are from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. seven days a week, 365 days a year, and at least four people are helping patrons and keeping the operation running smoothly at all times with the aid of an extensive security system. Also, if you're under 18 and supposed to be in school, the employees won't even let you near the machines until after 3 p.m., unless you can prove you're legally excused from school.

The family is heavily into local community activities, including fund-raisers for Lions International, of which Jess is a member.

Future plans call for a third planet, also located in Montebello at a yet-to-be-built mall. If the Blakes are successful in their bid, it will be the largest yet, with over 5000 feet of floor space and a complete pizza parlor to boot! ☺



  
Pac - Women

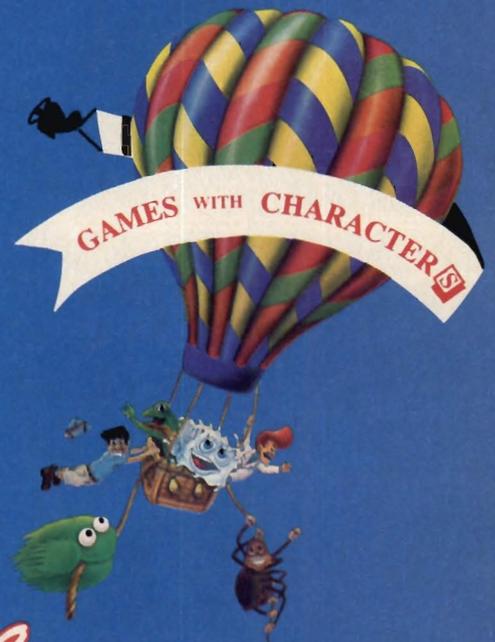
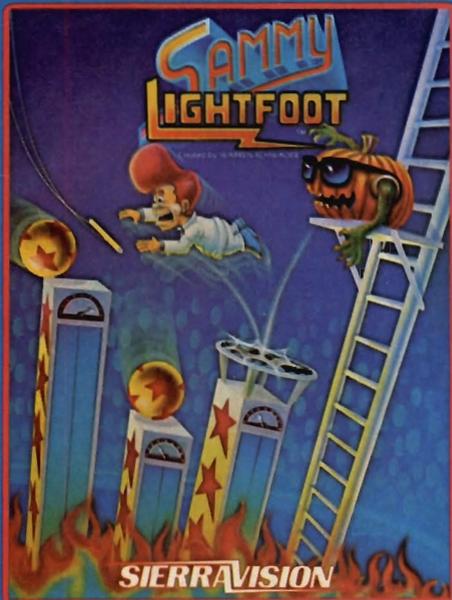
  
Pac - Men



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# FLY HIGH WITH SAMMY!

**S**ammy Lightfoot's itching to break into show business. He's lined up an audition, and now you must put him through the toughest three rings of excitement this side of Barnum and Bailey. Run, leap, bounce and swing your way to the top in Scene One. Hop and glide through Scene Two. Dodge, duck and fly in Scene Three. The pace quickens through 12 levels of action, each with three scenes. Sammy Lightfoot's ready for the biggest break of his career. How about you?



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# PLAYERS GUIDE TO PROGRAMMABLE VIDEOGAMES



# ATARI 2600:

## 2600 HARDWARE

Who would have believed, back in the dim, dark days of 1977, when the videogame universe consisted of Pong-alikes, that an unknown California company with a Japanese name would dominate the hardware end of the industry for the next six years?

The Atari 2600, or VCS, proved to be a software-oriented system that could grow as far as the game designers could take it. Originally, the unit was slated to carry only 2K of memory, but the technicians bloated the count to 4K. A couple of years later, sophisticated flip-flop bank-switching technology brought the system's potential up to its current 8K.

Next came the add-ons and accessories. RAM-enhanced cartridges, power boosters and computer keyboards—along with a cosmos of joysticks—have joined the ever-growing roster of 2600 peripherals.

Through all of this, the price of the most popular videogame system has dropped again and again. It's now at the point where virtually everyone can afford the Atari VCS. It would not be at all



THE KRAFT JOYSTICK



THREE-WAY DELUXE JOYSTICK (WICO)

surprising to see the sales of this unit rise again this Christmas.

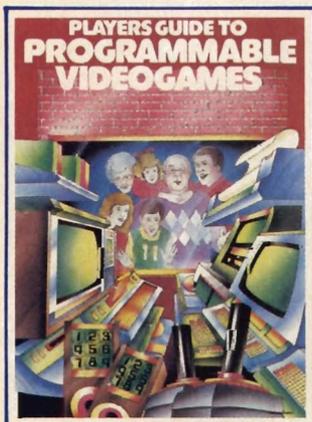
The 2600 is a standard, or first-wave, programmable system. It is capable of producing only low-resolution graphics and suffers greatly from a paucity of screen RAM. For instance, it lacks the ability to move more than one on-screen object on the same horizontal line in different directions. Still, cartridges such as Imagic's *Demon Attack*, Activision's *Chopper Command* and Atari's *Ms. Pac-Man* proved that designers, who think in terms of overcoming the VCS's limitations rather than hiding be-

hind them, can work miracles with the 2600.

About a year ago, Atari made a slight cosmetic alteration on the 2600: the difficul-

ty toggles moved behind the console instead of flanking the cartridge slot where they resided for so long. The major difficulty with this change comes in games that utilize the difficulty switches as game-play elements, such as Imagic's *Star Voyager*.

The system comes ready to go, complete with joysticks, paddles and a starter cartridge (either the primitive *Combat* or, more recently, *Pac-Man*).



SOLAR STORM (IMAGIC)

# THE PEOPLE'S CHOICE

There are also keypad controllers, now antiquated, for use with video word games, such as **Hangman**. Some titles, such as **Indy 500** and **Star Raiders**, are packaged with the special controllers they require.

Other switches on the streamlined version include the on/off toggle, a black & white/color activator (also frequently incorporated as an input device in newer soft-

ware due to the preponderance of color sets), a game selector and reset switch. Controllers are plugged into the 2600 via the rear console nine-pin male connectors.

## PERIPHERAL PARADISE

The 2600's standing as the world's most popular videogame system keeps the stream of peripherals flowing wide and strong. There are

joysticks for every taste—and price—including the Pointmaster, the excellent Kraft, the Wico, the micro-switch operated Supr Stick, and the Amiga line. All of this is in addition to Atari's own line of controllers!

The Super Charger allows gamers to plug a special cartridge into the 2600 slot and load RAM-expanded tape software through a regular cassette machine.

Atari, Entex and Spectra-video now offer keyboard units for the 2600. There are even system-compatible light pens from Tech-Sketching (the LP-10 for arcaders of modest means and the \$119.95 LP-15 for the true—and well-heeled—game maven).

## VCS SOFTWARE EXPLODES

An encyclopedia would be

more adequate than a few short paragraphs to discuss the 2600 explosion in game software. Atari rebounded powerfully in 1983 after a weak year and titles such as **Centipede**, **Ms. Pac-Man**, **Vanguard**, **Phoenix** and **Jungle Hunt** re-established the Sunnyvale firm as an industry leader.

Activision had its usual phenomenally high-quality year, turning out the season's hottest title — **Pitfall** — by David Crane. Other smashes included **Megamania**, **Enduro**, **River Raid** and **Robot Tank**.

Among companies appearing for the first time upon the scene, one of the more interesting is Xonox. This outfit will market "double-enders", which have two different game chips slotted into the

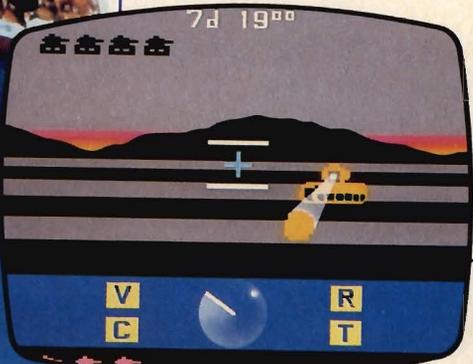
ATARI 2600 VCS



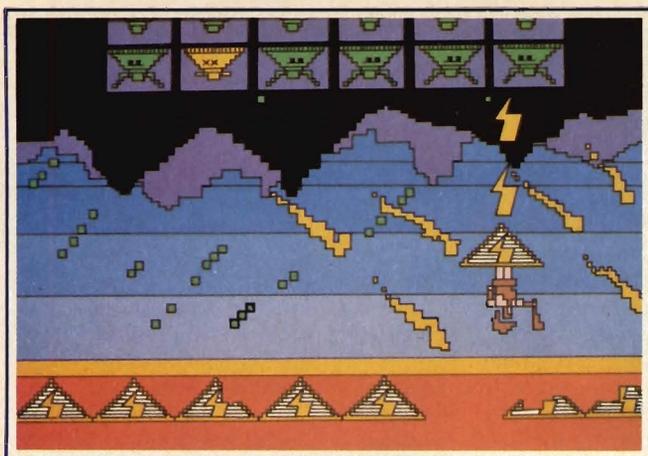
ENDURO (ACTIVISION)



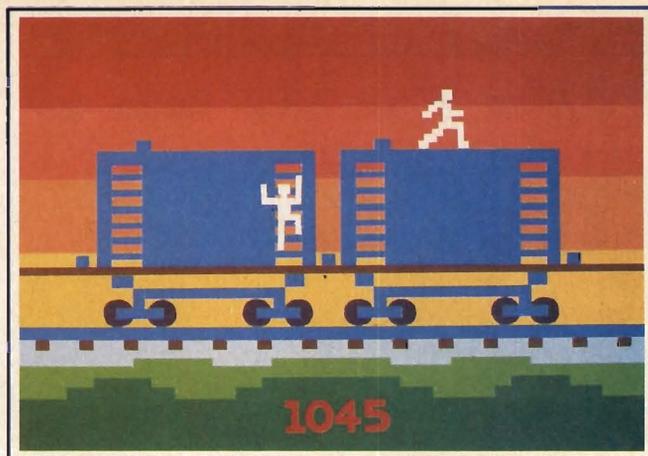
PITFALL (ACTIVISION)



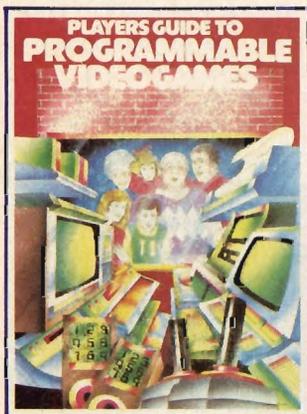
ROBOT TANK (ACTIVISION)



HERCULES (XONOX)



JAMES BOND .007 (PARKER BROS.)

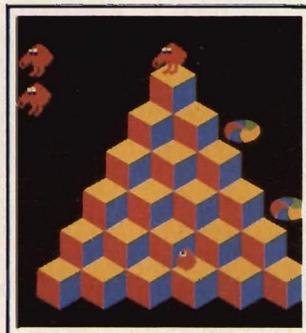


top and bottom of the cartridge. The actual games, which include **Thundarr** and **Hercules**, are impressive. The line-up of freelance design talent gathered under the Xonox banner is enough to insure, at the least, a prominent launch.

First Star, formerly a computer software company, has "burst" onto the scene with the amazing soap bubble-exploding **Boing**. Tigervision kept the faith with their excellent 2600 version of **Miner 2049er**, Imagic's **Solar Storm** revived interest in the invasion videogame, and 20th Century Fox's **Flash Gordon**

turned Sirius' computer game, **Spider City**, into a VCS triumph. Fox also pulled off a videogame first by turning a mediocre film, "Megaforce", into a VCS star.

Parker Brothers mostly treaded water, disappointing some gamers with **Spiderman**



Q\*BERT (MYLSTAR)

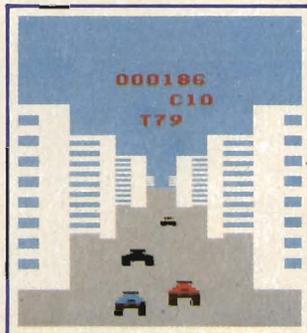
and annoying purists with a slowed-down but otherwise decent home translation of the coin-op **Amidar**. The forthcoming titles **Tutankham** and **.007** may well re-establish Parker as one of the top three 2600 software producers. There's also much anticipation over the home edition of Mylstar's **Q\*Bert**.

Coleco and Mattel (with its "M-Network" series) are still

turning out 2600 versions of their major titles.

CBS has surfaced as one of the true innovators in 2600 technology. Besides its excellent coin-op translations like **Solar Fox**, CBS' RAM-expanded games, **Wings** and **Tunnel Runner**, open up new

coin-op clone in terms of its appearance, though the graphics are extremely serviceable. The bottom line here is speed. Centipedes like their play more than a trifle on the frenzied side, and the 2600 version actually outdoes its computer cousin. Especially



TURBO (COLECO)



SOLAR FOX (CBS ELECTRONICS)

possibilities for the system cynics have written off many times.

## THE 2600 GOURMET LIST

Let's take a brief look at some of the most popular games currently available for the Atari VCS (Manufacturers' names are in parentheses.)

**Centipede** (Atari). This is no

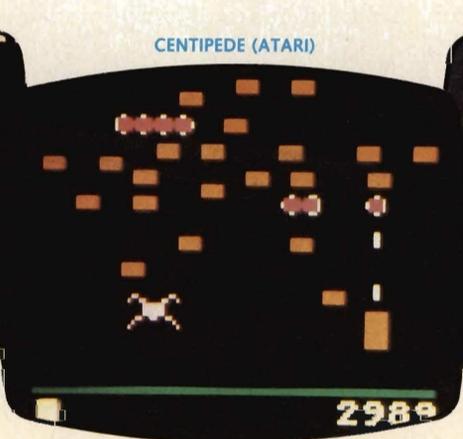
good play is available with the new Atari-produced VCS tracball. Bomb those buggers!

**Keystone Kapers** (Activision) The player is a Keystone Kop chasing a wily felon through a multi-level floor plan, with escalators and period-piece prizes ranging from Philco radios to old-fashioned elevators.

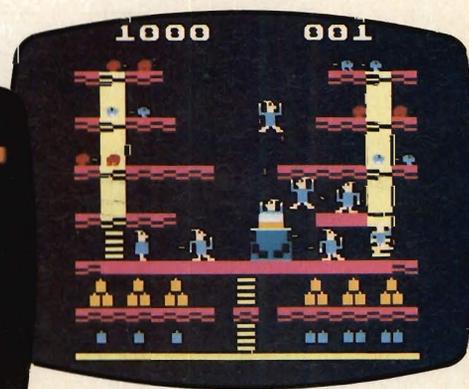
You can outrun the thief the first few rounds, but once



FLASH GORDON (20TH CENTURY FOX)



CENTIPEDE (ATARI)



MINER 2049ER (TIGERVISION)

you become involved with the elevators—watch out!

**Solar Fox** (CBS). The Midway-produced coin-op also ran adapts perfectly to the home VCS format. Best part: After clearing away a sufficient number of racks, the player's ship must claim a pair of bonus items layed out in parallel rectangles—within a *tight* time limit. High frustration on this level.

**Flash Gordon** (Fox Video Games). This may well be the finest use of the radar screen in a 2600 program. You're the intrepid Flash, clearing out solar systems to keep life safe for democracy.

Other intriguing new items on the horizon include a series of Muppet games from Atari, **Crackpots** from Activision, and 2600 editions of Coleco's big hits such as **Zaxxon** and **Turbo**.

Finally, fans of **Miner 2049er** have a big surprise coming from Tigervision. The company will soon publish a multi-scenario sequel—and then a game that casts Bob as a fearless firefighter!

## AMONG THE MISSING

When so many companies rushed into the software sweepstakes, a shake-out of weaker companies became inevitable. Consumers voted with the pocketbooks, sending a few companies that never found a reason to exist right to the wall—and the bankrupt courts.

The most significant loss was U.S. Games. Originally a small software producer with two titles to show, it was purchased by Quaker Oats, also owners of Fisher-Price, the famous children's toy markers. The F-P produced games were outstanding, with super graphics, magnificent packaging and, fresh promises. In the end, Quaker decided it didn't want to be in the videogame business very badly after all, and so they pulled the plug.

Another major victim was Data Age. It spent so much money promoting **Journey's Escape**, a rock videogame that never lived up to its promise. Data Age's swan song, however, was a really intriguing game—**Frankenstein's Monster**.

# ODYSSEY.

## THE FLEXIBLE SYSTEM

### A CHANGE FOR ODYSSEY?

Odyssey is the most venerable name in programmable videogames, since its first system appeared more than a decade ago. That machine turned out to be a little ahead of its time, but the standard programmable Odyssey<sup>2</sup> system, which made its debut in 1978, is now in slightly fewer than one million American homes.

Nevertheless, all of the efforts of North American Phillips have never quite established the Odyssey as anything like the equal of the Atari 2600. Now it looks like the company may be easing back from the hardware race with the intention of focusing its creative efforts on software

made for various popular videogame and computer systems like the ColecoVision and Apple II.

N.A.P. showcased a system dubbed the Odyssey<sup>3</sup> about a year ago, but it has since decided to put it back on the shelf. The unit had improved graphics, modem capability and compatibility with the O<sup>2</sup>, but company officials feared that it would be out-of-date by the time it reached retail stores.

### THE PINK PUSSYCAT

To show the world how serious Odyssey is, the firm quickly snatched up the rights to the departed U.S. Games' **Pink Panther** titles, having

already been quite well developed by the Fisher-Price Software Division of U.S. Games.

Within the next six months the new direction being taken by Odyssey will become quite clear. They have even developed early versions of ColecoVision-compatible software.

### NOTES TO THE SURVIVORS

NAP, of course, has released close to 50 titles for the O<sup>2</sup>, including this year's exciting new numbers like **KC's Crazy Chase**, **Killer Bees** and **P.T. Barnum's Acrobats**. It's convenient for O<sup>2</sup> fans who don't own voice modules, in that voice games can be played with or without the speech



ODYSSEY<sup>2</sup>

unit, which only enhances existing beeps, bops and boops.

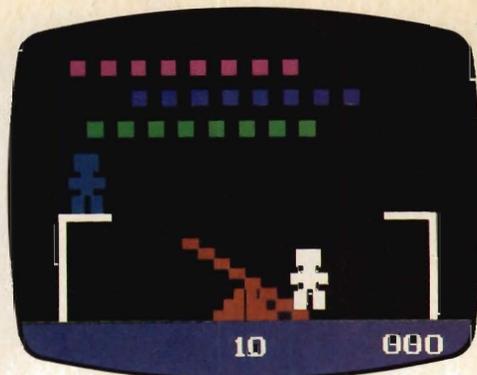
Those half a hundred titles encompass one of the most wide-ranging libraries of games within the home videogame field. Let's look at some of the classics.

**UFO (Odyssey)** One of the best ideas anyone ever had for a space shoot-out. A moving saucer with a rotating cannon mounted as if around a nucleus is the player's weapon here, as whirling deathships merge and whiz crazily toward your craft.

The enemy can be either taken out with cannonfire or



ATTACK OF THE TIME LORD (ODYSSEY)



P.T. BARNUM'S ACROBATS (ODYSSEY)

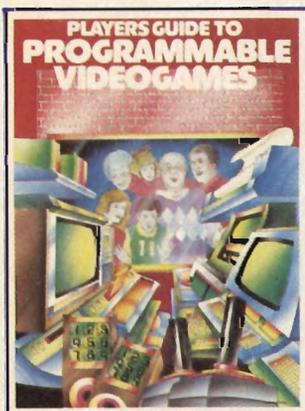
rammed—but there is a period, albeit brief, in which the ship must recharge its

forcefield. During these most vulnerable moments, the feeling of helplessness can be

overcome only by ace-level maneuvering.

Watch it, this game gives

# ASTROCADE:



## ENTER THE ASTROCADE

The Astrocade's story is a modern saga of a good product at the wrong time. Produced by Bally shortly before the introduction of the 2600 and the Odyssey<sup>2</sup>, it was a deluxe machine. However, the public wasn't excited about upscale videogames at that time. Few people were ready to spend heavy cash for what was perceived as "just a game player".

However, Bally intended to produce more computer additions. In addition to the Bally BASIC (and later Astro BASIC) and the built-in calculator



ASTROCADE: THE PROFESSIONAL ARCADE

keypad, the company promised a full-stroke keyboard. Suddenly, though, Bally decided it didn't want to sell videogame home systems anymore. A project, along with all inventory (and even the Bally logo!!), was sold to a Columbus, Ohio firm known as Astrovision, later called Astrocade.

Users are still waiting for the keyboard, although the privately manufactured Viper

apparently interfaces successfully with the system.

Ray George, the evangelist of videogames and head man at Astrocade, toured the world, preaching the word. He managed to keep the company going long enough to add several fine cartridges to the catalogue.

**The Incredible Wizard** was Bob Ogden's re-styling of his arcade hit with Dave Nutting Assoc.. Along with the excel-

lent, older cartridges such as **Football** and **Space Fortress**, it gives this system a small, if quality-oriented library.

## HARDWARE CHITCHAT

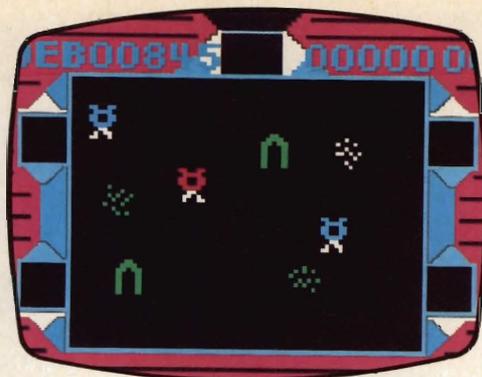
The Astrocade has changed virtually not at all since Bally's wild and crazy crew of geniuses designed the prototype. Various dubbed the Bally Home Arcade, the Bally Professional Arcade and, ulti-



K.C.'S KRAZY CHASE (ODYSSEY)

players only one life, but immediately sets up for replay. Between that and the high-

score volatile vanity board, this game may become habit forming!



KILLER BEES (ODYSSEY)

Killer Bees (Odyssey). No, baby, this ain't John Belushi—not even an NASL soccer

team—this is the real thing. Bees and honeycombs and lots of excitement that blends arcade elements with more strategically-oriented play.

**Attack of the TimeLord** (Odyssey). At first, it was dubbed "Snake Ships from Sirius", this is made for players who love to fire at serpentine alien formations. If you have the voice module, the big cheese himself will verbally abuse you between rounds.

**Demon Attack** (Imagic) The first independently-produced software for the O<sup>2</sup>, they just don't make invasion games any better.

# A SYSTEM THAT COULDN'T

mately, the Astrocade, this is the single most awesome piece of hardware ever introduced within the videogame industry. The rear of the casing is a rack for cartridge storage, covered over in a tinted plastic casing. In addition to the aforementioned keypad, there's a cartridge slot and a reset switch and four inputs for the highly individualistic trigger grip joystick-paddle. This distinctive hybrid used a small, nobbed shaft at the top of the grip for joystick and rotation movement.

All in all, it was the ideal gaming machine.

## THE ASTRO UNDERGROUND

Apropos to such an eccentric and revolutionary system (it came about a year ahead of its time, but in computer terms, we're talking eons!) it spawned the most unique cadre of supporters any videogame has ever garnered.

When Bally gave up on their brilliant infant and the flood of classics such as **Pinball** and **Galactic Invaders** (actually called "Galaxian" on early releases) petered out, did those brave pioneers, still in love with the Home



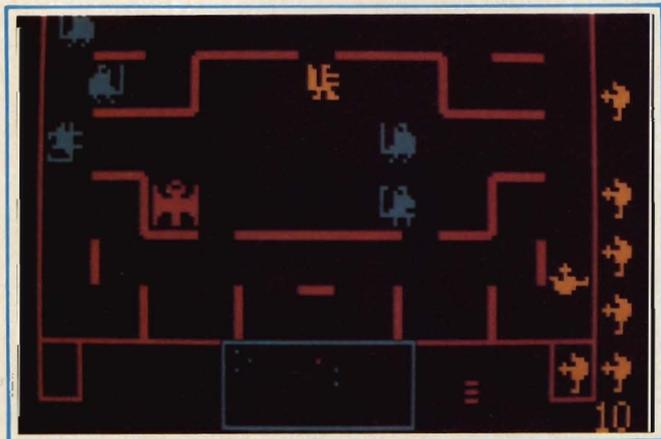
BALLY'S ORIGINAL ASTROCADE PROTOTYPE

Arcade, surrender to the throes of despair? You bet your joysticks they didn't!

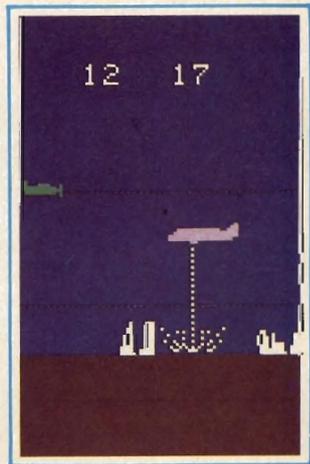
Using perhaps the most peculiar, frustrating and totally maddening computer language ever designed by man (Bally BASIC, which applied up to three input signals per key!) whole cottage industries sprang up, producing software that loaded into the BASIC cartridge through a built-in slot and wire.

Companies such as L&M and Wavemakers continue to produce software on a prolific—if somewhat uneven—basis. The newer titles even employ machine code play, proving that no matter what a

company does, some things are just built too well to die.

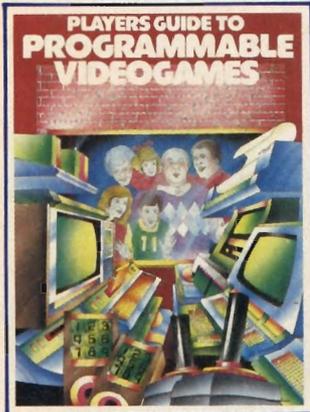


THE INCREDIBLE WIZARD (BALLY)



SUB HUNT (ASTROCADE)

# INTELLI



## WHERE'S PAPPA?

The strange saga of Mattel's entry into the videogame universe began in 1981 with the release of the Intellivision. Actually, the company called the unit "Intellivision's Master Component" because it was slated to be the main brain for a modular computer system. Mattel also announced such peripherals as a sophisticated keyboard.

Somehow, that keyboard never made it. After running out of sports simulations and discovering that strategy games sold poorly in the programmable market, Mattel turned to arcade action games. Alas, the Intellivision plays somewhat ponderously, and the designers needed more time to work out the bugs involved in writing fast-action programs.

The system itself is a second-wave, or senior, programmable system with a reported 8K resident memory. Character articulation is excellent, but animation is, again, slow. The controllers also present problems. Their cords are too short, and they are even permanently attached. The tight cord acts as a leash, chaining the gamer to the system, while the internally-connected plugs make replacement of defective controllers a project approached with fear and trepidation. Movement is attained through the highly controversial "direction disc."

The Intellivision I is very attractive, with recessed casings for the controllers and a side cartridge slot, making the unit a good-looking system, clean and simple. Only a power and reset switch cover the silvertop finish.

## SON OF INTELLIVISION!

After virtually abandoning plans for the proposed Intellivision keyboard, announcements leaked concerning the Intellivision II. This system differs very little from the earlier version except in size—it has been re-engineered into a remarkably compact format. Although the direction-discs are included in the design of

## INTELLIVISION II AND PERIPHERALS



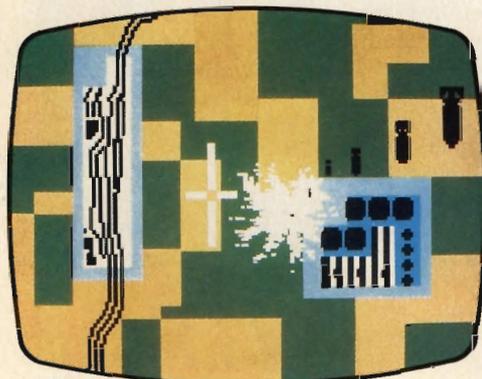
the newer model, gamers can now plug and unplug them independently.

Mattel Electronics, now a

full-fledged division of the parent company, reports some progress toward production of Intellivision peripherals. A keyboard for the Intellivision II and an electronic piano module are planned as the first releases. It is only fair to note, however, that the keyboard had still not entered national distribution as this issue of **Electronic Games** went to press.

## STEERING A FRESH COURSE

The Intellivision III drew ooh's and aaah's from sneak-peekers last January,



B-17 BOMBER (MATTEL)



DEMON ATTACK (IMAGIC)

# VISION:

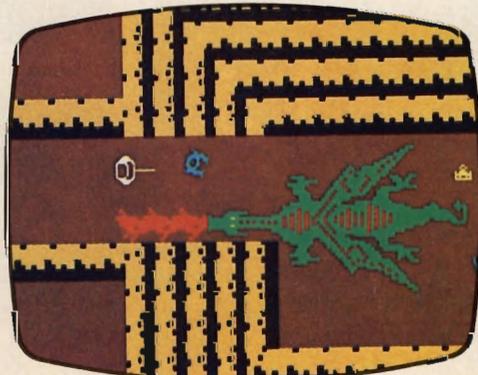
## REDESIGNED FOR TODAY



but the project seems to have been put on hold around mid-year. The III used massive amounts of screen-RAM to produce scintillating graphics and had loads of other features (like remote control joysticks).

Mattel officials have clearly had second thoughts about this system. Perhaps the fear was that by the time the Intellivision III got into the action during fourth quarter 1983, the other third-wave programmable videogames (ColecoVision and Atari 5200) would have too tight a hold on the market. Whatever

the reasoning, the company is expected to concentrate on developing software for a wide range of machines and



SWORDS & SERPENTS (IMAGIC)

expanding the audience for its own Aquarius computer.

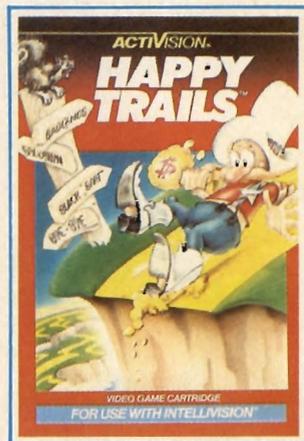
The company's software program is getting mighty exciting, especially with the purchase of *Burger Time*. The cute game was big in the arcades, and there's no reason to think that home gamers won't enjoy building those sandwiches, too.

One definite bright spot for Intellivisionaries is that at least four major independent software houses are now turning out either original software, or translations of pre-existing hits for the Intellivisions.

Although Activision published several translations (*Pitfall* and *Stampede*), it truly struck gold with Carol Shaw's original puzzle challenge, *Happy Trails*.

Parker Brothers is making versions of *Frogger* for every game playing system that walks, crawls or burrows beneath the earth. Its Intellivision edition of the game, that is as easy as falling off a log, is a real stand-out arcade translation.

Imagic remains the master of the Intellivision and has the ace design staff for the system. *Swords & Serpents*, the incredible *Demon Attack* translation, and *Nova Blast* have added not only quantity to the Intellivision software library, but also a quality that is hard to beat.



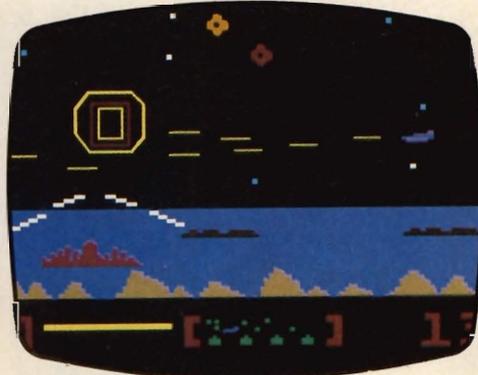
HAPPY TRAILS (ACTIVISION)

### THE TALKIES

Shortly after introducing the modular Intellivoice peripheral for the original Mattel gaming system's Master Component, Mattel unveiled a short but varied lineup of voice-only game cartridges. Though the games were playable solely through voice module on the original system, Intellivision II owners get the bonus of a built-in Intellivoice, allowing them access to all system software.

Because of its revolutionary graphics and highly sophisticated simulation quality, the voice cartridge with the most intensely loyal following is *B-17 Bomber*.

Among the voices available are an exotic-sounding female and an evil robot voice.



NOVA BLAST (IMAGIC)



**THE HARD FACTS**

ColecoVision is the first product in the history of modern advertising to actually surpass its pre-release hype. This third-wave super-system offers dynamic graphics and audio capability, and comes pre-sold with a library of outstanding software.

The unit itself is sleek and trim, with a top-mounted cartridge slot and a recessed area at the left side into which the

controllers can be laid. The front of the unit contains an interface slot into which the numerous game modules, keyboard and exotic controllers can be plugged.

The system's clearest weak point is its controllers: A combination keyboard/joystick with twin side firing buttons that can turn even a nimble gamer's hand into a claw.

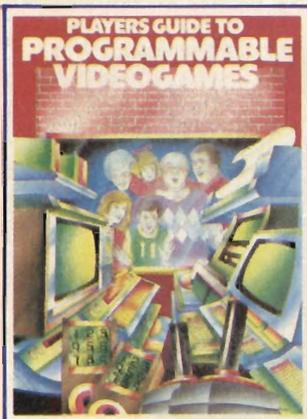
However, the real problem with the Coleco controller is the short, fat, stubby nob.

Despair not, however, since the gourmet ColecoVision-compatible controllers are on the way. Amiga has an excellent adaptation of its VCS joystick on the way as does Supr Stick, the latter from D-Zyne Corp. of Waterford, CT, using jet-fighter type micro-

switches. Both of these controllers should be here soon.

**SOFTWARE AND SUCH**

The ColecoVision's multitude of screen-RAM allows it to faithfully duplicate virtually every major coin-op title the company licenses, whether the game was originally in raster or vector graphic form.



**COLECO**  
**THE THIRD WAVE**



firefighter in *Scraper Caper*), are preparing to widen the scope of the system's library.

While arcadians revel in such super coin-op translations as *Mr. Do*, *Subroc* (not in 3-D, but looking good!), *Wizard of Wor* and *Frenzy*, fans of new and original gaming concepts can expect to be well satisfied.

Sports fans are apt to enjoy *Rocky Battles the Champ* and *Baseball*; movie buffs will probably like videogame versions of *Dracula* and *Sword & the Sorcerer*; just-plain-home-arcaders can challenge *Front Line*, *Skiing*, *Smurfette's Birthday*, *Destruction Derby*, and many others.

### CAVEAT DEPT.

One curious thing about the ColecoVision is its off-on compatibility with Atari peripherals. While many 2600 joysticks fit nicely into the ColecoVision slots and work with games that don't need keypad input and only one action button, almost as many do *not*. Early reports indicate that the Wico tracball, as an example, doesn't interface correctly with C-V software, nor do any joysticks that do not use all nine of their pin sockets.

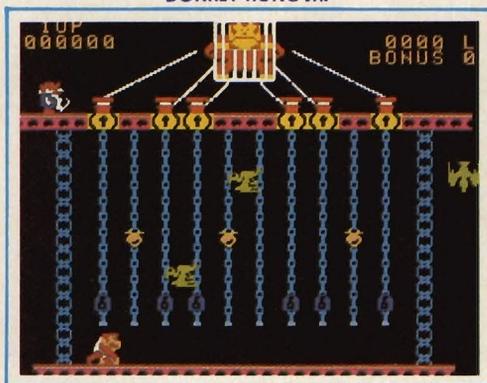
The question of cannibalizing Atari equipment for ColecoVision use will become a moot point when Coleco and

a horde of peripheral support companies throw themselves into the breach. Coleco's own tracball should be released with their version of GDI's *Slither* and the prototypes given hands-on testing at a recent trade show tested well. The lightweight unit fits over the top of the Coleco console.

### MODERN SHOPPING

While many arcades felt the quality of ColecoVision's software declined slightly after the initial rush of 10 titles, a little time has made believers of many former skeptics. Let's look at the newest release quite critically.

DONKEY KONG JR.



TURBO



SWORD & THE SORCERER



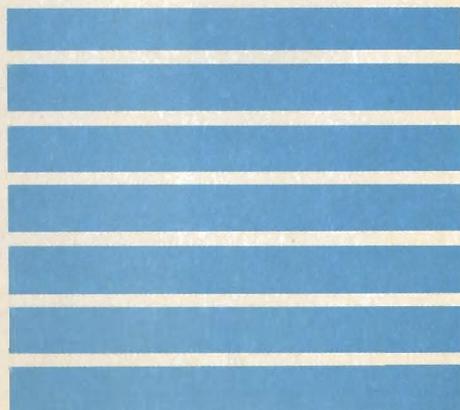
MOUSE TRAP



So far, Coleco has progressed through a series of arcade adaptations that range from *Donkey Kong Jr.* to *Turbo* (complete with steering wheel and gas pedal), with *Smurf* the sole original title. Coleco, along with independent software producers such as Micro Fun (offering *Time Runner*, *Miner 2049er*, *Globe Grabber* and *Bounty Bob* as a

# VISION =

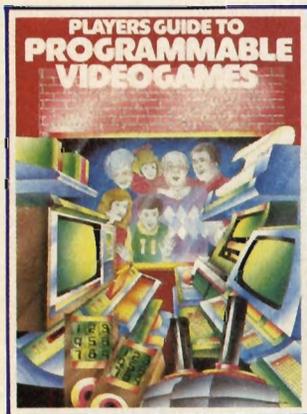
## KEEPS ROLLING



# ATARI



SUBROC

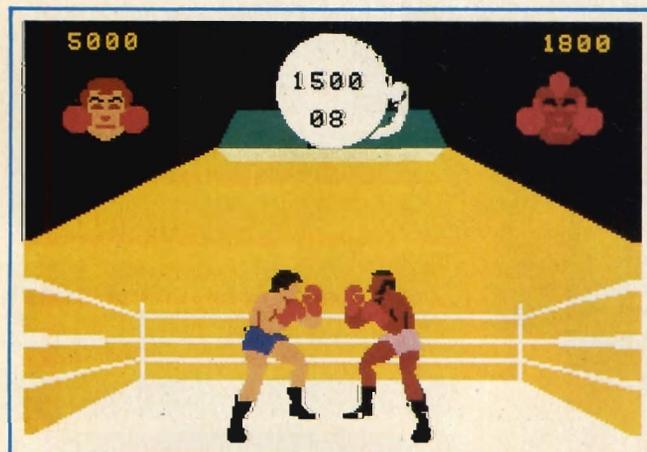


**Space Fury:** Though a marvelous imitation of vector graphics in raster-scan, nothing can disguise the fact that this Sega coin-op was a novelty success. The first talking coin-op, the haughty boastful alien can only be "heard" by lip-readers in this home version, of course, with the creature's imperious insults being broadcast TV news bulletin-style in subtitles across the bottom of the playfield. The game itself is an *Asteroids* variant with a series of four bonus racks that rank as the most ridiculously easy

challenge ever to insult a gamer's skill.

**Mouse Trap:** Exidy's clever maze chase coin-op blossoms in this home format into a compulsive contest involving cats chasing cheese-eating mice around a playfield filled with color-coded doorways. Pressing the corresponding color on the controller-keypad opens that hatch. The mice can also eat bones and become energized, turning into daunting bulldogs for a few seconds, but the metamorphosis is dictated entirely by the gamer. Each time a bone is eaten, it registers at the top of the playfield. Thereafter, the little mouse can become a junkyard dog by the player simply activating the "dog" button.

**Pepper II:** Okay, so there wasn't a *Pepper I* (the coin-op was actually Exidy's own re-vamp of *Victory*, which really hadn't done much in the arcades). This is still a devil of a videogame with irresistibly cute graphics and a truly innovative theme. This is about as good as a home version of a coin-op gets.



ROCKY BATTLES THE CHAMP



## ATARI'S TOP OF THE LINER

Unique among all existing programmable and computer systems with game-playing applications, the 5200 is essentially a computer with all the strengths and memory implied by that description. The difference is that this is a computer built for only one purpose: playing the best videogames a home TV screen has ever broadcast.

That certainly doesn't sound like a simple task, but

daunting projects have never stopped Atari. The exact specs regarding RAM and ROM capabilities still remain somewhat clouded.

The stylized, slanted console is a sleek, black box with a minimum of gadgetry and clutter. Aside from the power switch, the controller inputs and cartridge slot are the sole input devices on the console itself. The use of multi-function joystick-keypad controllers transfer a multitude of functions over to the gamer's

# 5200: THE LIVING ROOM ARCADE



ATARI 5200

other format (Atari computer version of *Qix*, while no disaster, positively *wilts* when seen alongside the 5200 version), there are several large, tangled flies in the ointment.

Problem one may soon be resolved, that is, the 5200 connects to the TV set through an RF connector that is incompatible with the industry standard—set largely by Atari itself.

Atari engineers vow to resolve this difficulty in future systems, making multiple system owners a lot more relaxed and giving computer and programmable game-laden editors a trip to the Promised Land.

But an even bigger problem is still without a real solution: the 5200 has awful controllers. True, joysticks are a matter of taste. Nonetheless, when the vast majority of mail from EG readers and the industry itself universally concurs, chances are they're right.

The 5200 stick is a non-centering joystick, meaning that it does not automatically return to the neutral (center) position when released, thus

hand, such as game select, re-set, pause and menu or function selection.

When all is said and done, the games Atari has made available for its prize child are extraordinary. *Qix* rates among the finest coin-op translations ever seen—in addition to working much better in the home format. *Kangaroo*, *Jungle Hunt*, *Tennis*, *Soccer*, *Centipede* (available for play with a dreamboat of a tracball, a control device Atari seems to make

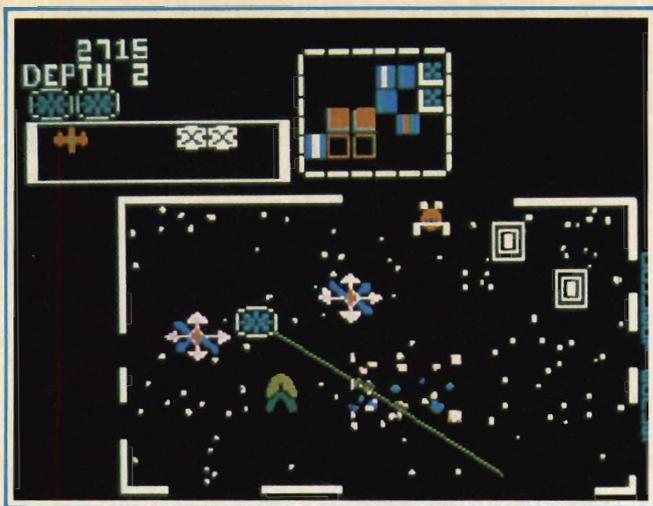
better than anyone in the world) and the year's sleeper classic, *Space Dungeon*, are all state-of-the-art masterpieces. The next few months, in fact, may be even *more* rewarding with the upcoming releases of *Moon Patrol*, *Battlezone* and *Tempest*!

## DISCUSSING THE DOWNSIDE

In spite of the collection of dream titles on the 5200, games unmatched in any

KANGAROO (ATARI)





SPACE DUNGEON (ATARI)

forcing the arcader to sit on the stick at all times. This set-up also requires, in linear games such as **Pac-Man**, that movement in any of the compass directions be accomplished *on-the-nose*, leading to at least one company, Entertainment Systems, to design a North, East, South and West stick guide.

The sticks also tend to wear out very quickly. On our packaged test system, one controller did not work at all while the second stood up to less than two weeks of rigorous play before losing all tautness and going completely slack.

Owners of the 5200 who

are already giving their arcade-style trackball controllers a good workout, can only hope that Atari will now move quickly to bring out other peripherals. Atari has made a frequent claim that the 5200 plays more different games than any other system, but this boast is predicated on the existence of a module that permits use of 2600-compatible cartridges. This gizmo has yet to emerge from the R&D lab.

### SO WHAT'S NEXT?

Few independent software manufacturers have thrown

# VECTREX:



VECTREX GRAPHIC COMPUTER SYSTEM

### THE PORTABLE PROGRAMMABLE

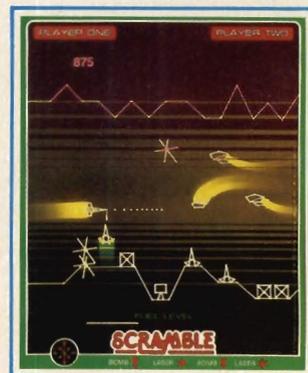
Do videogames hurt TV sets?

This is almost certainly the most frequently asked question in electronic gaming. It all stems from the early games which used bright, white perforated lines running down the center of the playfield in order to simulate a ping pong set.

When a color, especially a bright white, is left stationary on a CRT (cathode ray tube, the TV screen), the image burns itself onto the screen, leaving an ugly checked line running down playfield center—no matter what is being watched on the set.

This difficulty is almost exclusively a thing of the past, since current computers and programmable videogames employ sophisticated color-shifting routines to keep any one hue from etching its pattern into the screen's surface. Nonetheless, many folks, mostly the parents of would-be gamers, cringe at the suggestion of hooking a game system to the family TV. In addition to being a unique and satisfying videogame system, the pro-

grammable Vectrex from GCE offers its own 9-in diagonal vector graphics monitor. You remember vector graphics! **Asteroids**, **Space Fury**, **Battlezone**, **Eliminator**, **Star Castle**, **Space Duel**, **Red Baron** and the dozen or so other big titles that turned the coin-op industry away from traditional TV-style raster

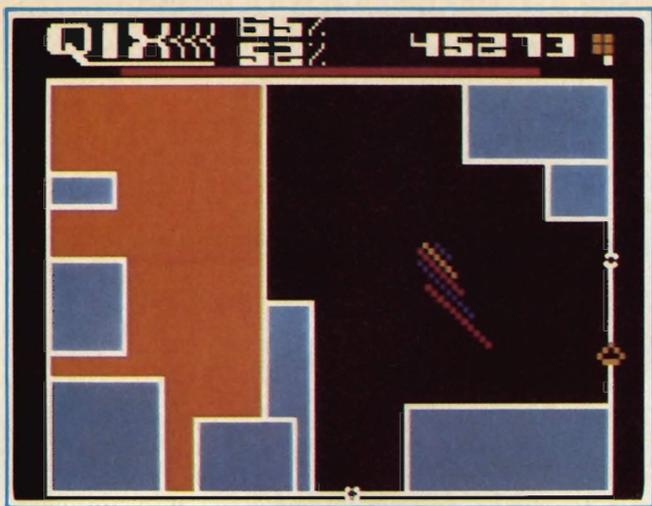


SCRAMBLE (VECTREX)

scanning into vector graphic junkies.

Alas, even with the smash arrival of the early color vector (or "Quadrascan" as Atari called the process) games such as **Tempest**, leaps in raster technology soon relegated vector graphics to the arcade-fad dustbin.

The monitor itself is black and white, but each game



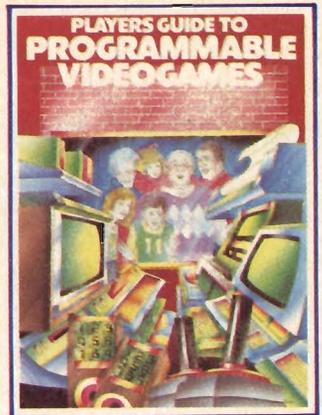
QIX (ATARI 5200)

their oars into the water. One exception is Parker Brothers, which is preparing a 5200 edition of *Frogger*.

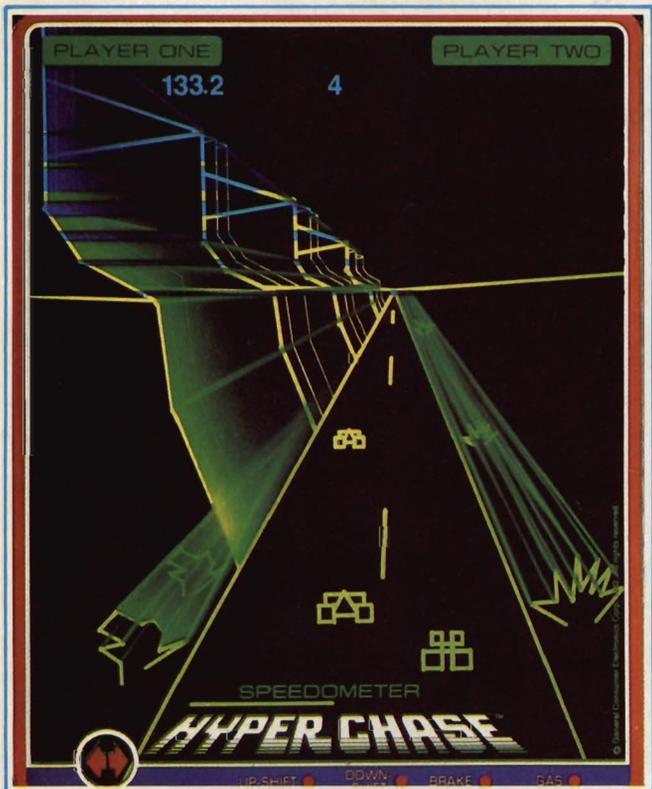
Whether or not Atari can single-handedly keep the pump primed with top software remains to be seen. Despite a ho-hum group of introductory titles, and even in spite of the numerous technical drawbacks, the 5200 is one of the best pure videogame systems ever produced.

But as we have seen, without game support—strong and continuous—not even technological masterworks can thrive. Software remains

lifeblood of any system. Therefore, the future of the Atari 5200 lies in the hands of the programmers.



# WHERE NO VIDEOGAME HAS GONE BEFORE



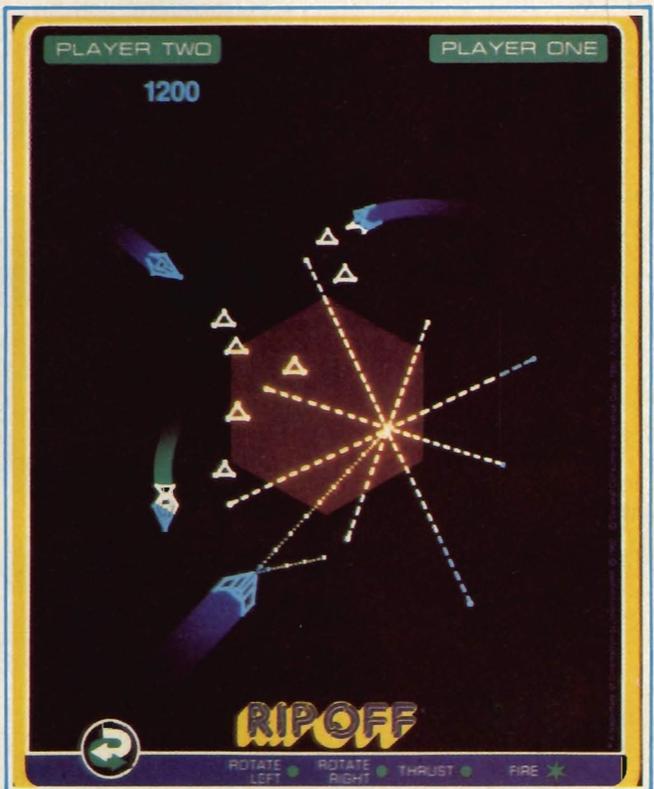
HYPERCHASE (VECTREX)

comes with a transparent colored overlay for placement over the screen, with a narrow control console that recesses into the base of the system.

A simple solution, but one that works.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING VECTOR

The primary difference between vector and raster-style graphics can best be seen in the analogy between a drawing made by connecting some



RIP OFF (VECTREX)

closely spaced dots and the clean-cut line produced by an "Etch-A-Sketch" with a single, flowing movement.

Vector lines are invariably sharp and bright, holding a consistency of illumination

previously unseen in videogames.

## THE OVERNIGHT GAME LIBRARY

Vectrex has done a remarkable job of keeping the soft-

ware pipeline filled for their system. Though their earlier titles were either very well-known coin-op adaptations (*Scramble*, *Rip Off*) or clones of existing games, the last six months have brought a treasury of vector finery for own-

ers of this remarkable unit.

**Web Wars** is among the finest arcade blast-up contests ever to drive a gamer into paroxysms of excitement. **Hyperchase** is a sort of **Turbo** with elements of high speed vertigo introduced to produce

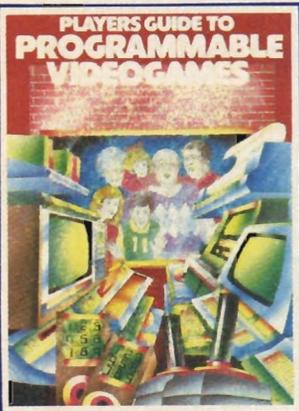
an absolutely dizzying effect. **Fortress of Narzod** is a tank vs tank battle requiring a healthy knowledge of angles and deflection.

Finally, Vectrex is adding even more exciting software, more in line with top-of-the-

line computers. Also available are musical peripherals and a game creation package featuring a light pen that is capable of bending lines like rubber bands and then spinning them in three dimensional simulation.

# WHATEVER HAPPENED TO...

## CHANNEL F, ULTRAVISION AND THE ARCADIA 2001?



### DID SOMEBODY TURN OFF CHANNEL F?

Fairchild's Channel F was one of the earliest programmable machines. This unit was a total of 10 minutes ahead of its time. Utilizing a crude, graphics mapping technique, the system could not stand up under the heavier technological punch of the competing programmables.

Fairchild soon realized this and sold off their entire inventory to the California-based

Zircon, who have released less than five new titles since taking ownership several years ago.

Still, there are some interesting, unduplicated software titles available for the Zircon Channel F, particularly **Whizball**, with its still-uncopied and totally compulsive play-mechanic.

### DEMISE OF THE ULTIMATE ARCADE?

It was billed as every arcader's dream machine. Lounging in a chair that would make Captain Kirk's command throne look like a Salvation Army sofa, the subject would don earphones, and armed with the most sophisticated weapons controllers ever conceived by

man, challenge the computer world. The system promised 64K of resident memory, hi-fi audio and its own color monitor.

Oh yes, it was also supposed to be 2600 compatible.

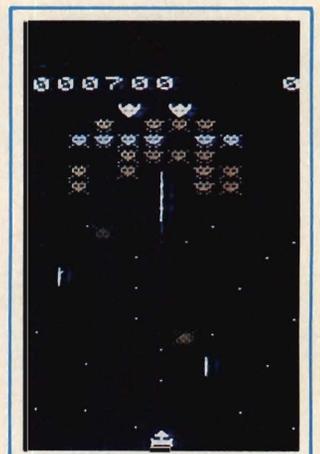
If this all sounds a bit too good to be true, evidently the manufacturers agreed. After the unit was sold at least once, the project remains in limbo, where it will probably stay.

Ultravision's sole legacy, in fact, is a VCS game, **Condor Attack**, a shoddy variation on **Demon Attack**.

### WHITHER THE ARCADIA 2001?

So what about Emerson's powerful little system with the terrible joysticks but the memory of a personal computer?

Well, after the price dropped lower than a spider's navel, the Emerson Arcadia 2001 moved into the unique position of becoming a pro-



GALAXIAN FOR THE ARCADIA 2001

motionally priced item. Whether used as a loss leader or given away as a bonus with the purchase of a toaster, the Emerson is still available in department stores across the U.S.

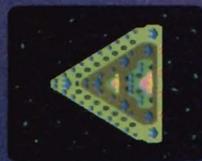
It's doubtful that any further software will be added to the catalog, but it may be a system worth looking at for the price.



ARCADIA 2001 SYSTEM



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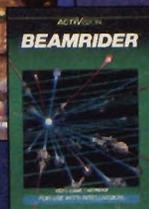
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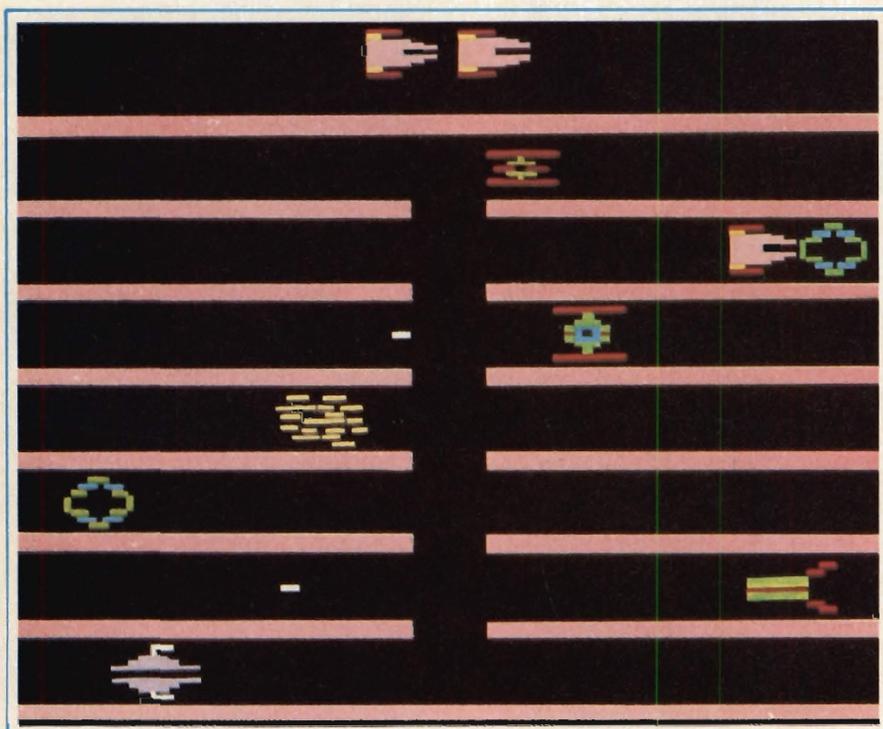


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# PROGRAMMABLE PARADE

**Blast Some Sense out of the Turmoil!**



TURMOIL (FOX)

## TURMOIL

Fox Video Games/Atari 2600

When Fox first cast corporate eyes on the videogame field, it turned to Sirius Software and that company's roster of designers to produce the first batch of games. The results, in general, proved that designing a good program for the Apple II wasn't necessarily a good qualification for creating a cartridge for play on the 2600.

This solitaire contest, created by Mark (Sneakers) Turmell is clearly several cuts above those initial titles. Perhaps some old designers can learn new tricks after all.

*Turmoil's* play-mechanic is unusual enough that it's hard to shove this cartridge into any of the existing categories. It combines aspects of titles like *Ram It* and *Squeeze Box* with echoes

of both *Jawbreaker II* and the scrolling shoot-outs.

The home arcader directs an on-screen ship with the left joystick. This craft patrols a vertical corridor that bisects seven horizontal rows. The object is to zip up and down the screen and blast various targets as they streak across the display from the left or right edges. You've got five ships at the start of the action and get additional ones by completely demolishing an entire wave of attackers.

Four types of objects fill the screen, apart from the player's ships, of course. Three are targets, while the fourth is a series of bonus-point prizes which pop up in the lanes periodically. The idea is to streak down a lane, snag a prize and then hightail it back to the center alley before more aliens show

up to cause a lethal collision.

Ships are the most numerous — and straightforward — foe. Blast them, keep moving to duck return fire and pile up the points. The arrows are just as deadly if they touch the player's craft, but they turn into even more fearsome tanks if they get all the way across the playfield. Tanks are the greatest danger to the player's own ship, because they can only be shot from behind. (Hitting one head-on just moves it back toward the edge of the screen an inch or so.)

The player can really pour out the firepower in *Turmoil*. The friendly ship shoots constantly as long as the red button is held down, and there's no limit to the number of bullets which may be on the screen at any given time. Enemy invaders appear thick and fast once you get past the first couple of waves, and only an optimist would call the player's ship too heavily armed. You'll probably need every available bullet to keep those pesky aliens at bay.

The visuals are only slightly better than serviceable, but are surely good enough to do the job. *Turmoil's* play-action, on the other hand, is first-rate, making the cartridge a solid bet to hold up through hours of intense gaming.

(Steve Davidson)

## MISSION X

Mattel/Intellivision

Soar through the flak-filled skies of World War II in this military action contest for the Intellivision I and II. The solo player uses the direction disc to steer over land and sea areas which are absolutely choked with tempting enemy targets. The player employs the appropriate action button to either strafe or bomb as the occasion warrants.



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## Weekly Reader Family Software

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# PROGRAMMABLE PARADE

The control system is surprisingly streamlined for this type of quasi-simulation. Pushing the top edge of the direction disc causes the attack bomber to lose altitude, while pushing the bottom edge produces a climb. Depressing the left or right edge sends the aircraft in the corresponding on-screen direction.

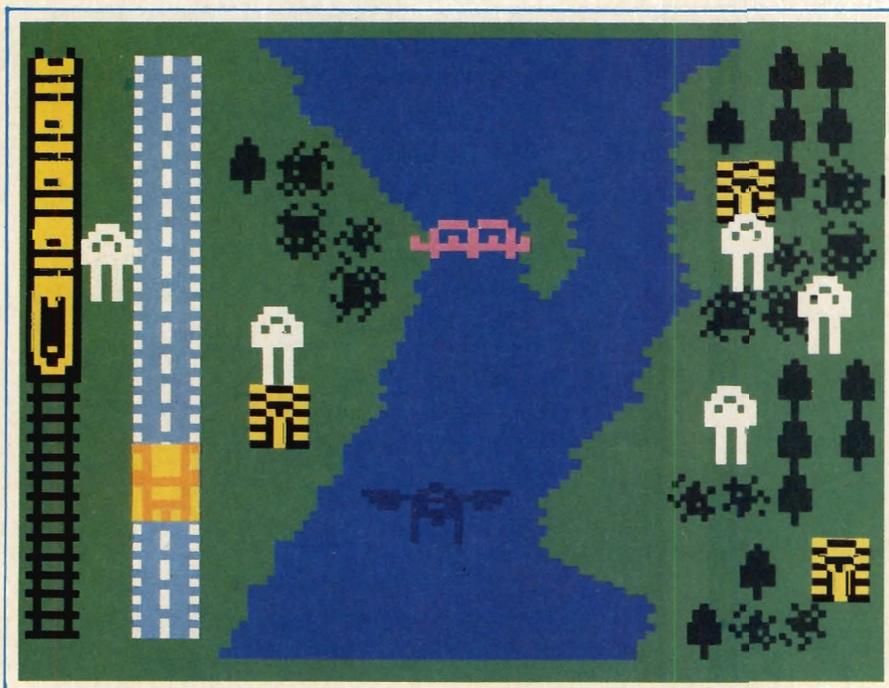
The method used to indicate altitude is highly innovative and logical. Instead of ranks of gauges along the main display, **Mission X** simply adjusts the sizes of objects depending on how far off the ground they are. In other words, when the arcader's bomber is large, it is at a relatively high altitude. When the silhouette of the plane shrinks, it means that it is approaching ground level. After a few games, it becomes relatively easy to estimate whether an oncoming defensive volley or hostile plane is likely to cause the bomber any trouble.

Except for the runways which allow the player to land, learn the current score and maybe even catch a breath between missions, everything on the screen is fair game. The 12 types of foes (with their point values) are: road

(10), train track (20), anti-aircraft (50), tank (80), small ship (100), train (100), bridge (150), truck (150), large ship (200), train engine (300), aircraft carrier (500), enemy plane (500).

Making a good landing is also worth some bonus points. The arcader gets 80 points for every second during which the plane is over the

runway at the lowest possible altitude. Bombing the runway by mistake costs either a



MISSION X (MATTEL)

1,000-point penalty or blows up the bomber, depending on whether you drop the explosive from a high or low altitude.

The player begins each round of play with four bombers, available one at a time. Reinforcements in the form of extra bombers are awarded periodically as the player exceeds various score milestones. The first free aircraft comes at 10,000 points, the second at 20,000, the third at 40,000, the fourth at 80,000 and so forth, until the 99,000,000 roll-over is reached. That is, it always takes twice as many points to get the next extra bomber as it did to acquire the previous one.

This brings up a philosophical problem with *Mission X* and several other Mattel creations. They appear to be designed to

crease so that the program continues to grow more challenging even as the score mounts into the multi-millions. Many gamers find that such cartridges don't get hard enough quickly enough to be a real bracing test in the first hour or so of play. *Mission X* will strike some as too slow even when set at the fastest of its four speeds, though the patient will learn that this cartridge does become harder to beat as the game progresses.

Decked out with the usual fine Mattel graphics, *Mission X* certainly rates as one of the best action games in the

in the direction indicated by the arrow at the top of the screen. To change directions, players must first point the arrow in the direction they want to move by pushing the joystick left or right. To actually move the man, the joystick must be pressed up or down.

Has all of this gotten you a little confused? Well don't be; because as the man once said: "You ain't seen nothing yet!"

When the player actually finds a time bomb, he or she must defuse it by sliding three rows of squares back and forth along three grids, in an attempt to position them in the proper "combination" that renders the bomb harmless. Progress is measured each time the player attempts to disarm the bomb. When the gamer presses the action button (signalling an attempt), three slide indicators along the bottom light up. Their colors indicate the current status of the bomb slides. If an indicator is green, it means the slide on the corresponding grid should be moved to the right, while a red indicator shows that the slide must be moved left. If a slide indicator is black, its corresponding row is properly positioned already.

Avalon Hill has long had an excellent reputation for strategy games. *London Blitz* is not one of the company's best. While the graphics are eye-pleasing (the point-of-view cityscape is particularly noteworthy), the

entire Intellivision library of cartridges. Despite its few minor shortcomings, this cartridge delivers the brand of action and excitement, leavened with a heavy dose of strategy, that characterizes the best of the home game titles. (Arnie Katz)

## LONDON BLITZ

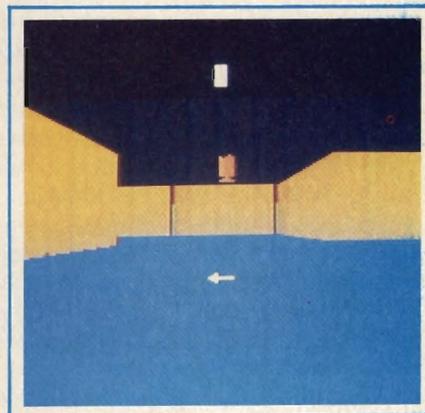
Avalon Hill/Atari 2600

The streets of London are laid out as a scrolling maze chock full of enemy time bombs in Avalon Hill's latest strategy game for the VCS. Players assume the role of an intrepid member of the British Army Royal Engineers, charged with defusing all of those explosives. . . or dying in the attempt.

Gamers find themselves looking at an overhead map of the city. After using the map to chart a path to the nearest time bomb, a press of the red button presents players with a soldier's eye view of the city.

Instead of the conventional way of moving around a playfield, Avalon Hill designed *London Blitz* around a confusing, sometimes frustrating system in which the joystick moves the Briton

please home arcaders who like a game to go on for just about forever. It is possible to record more than 2.5 million hits in *Mission X*, and it's hard to believe that many gamers will want to stick with it from start to finish. The problem with these marathon games is that the designer tends to stretch out the difficulty in-



LONDON BLITZ (AVALON HILL)

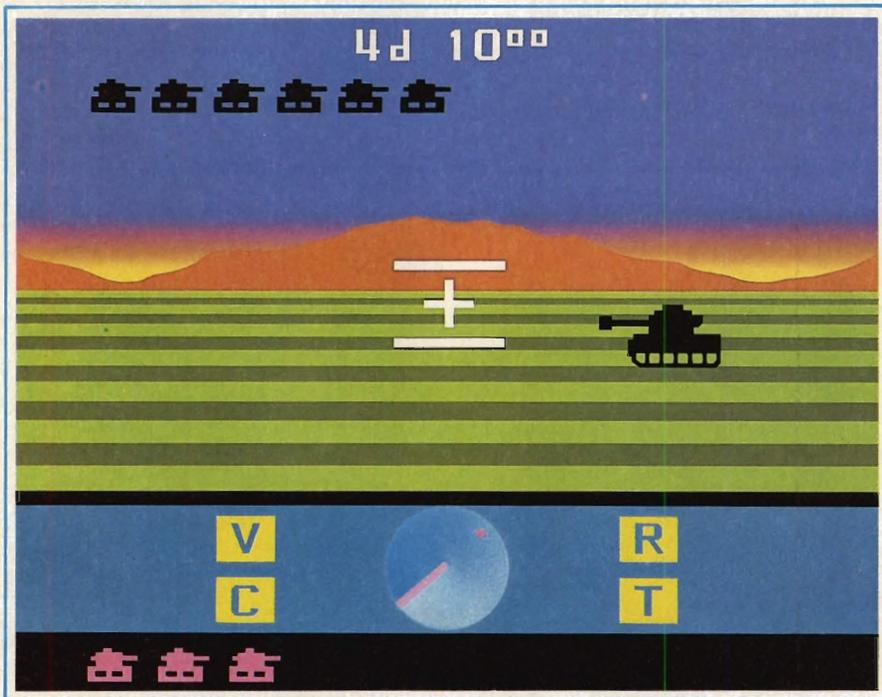
game is little more than a hit-or-miss guessing game, lacking both suspense and the incentive to play again and try to do just a little better. There's not enough hand-eye skill needed to make it a satisfying action game, while the strategic elements are too sparse to be tremendously challenging.

In spite of its obvious good intentions, *London Blitz* is — pardon the pun — a dud.

(Tracie Forman)

# PROGRAMMABLE

# PARADE



ROBOT TANK (ACTIVISION)

## ROBOT TANK

Activision/Atari 2600

Few 2600 game designers have become so proficient that, like the Beatles or George Lucas, each new creation not only meets its audience's high expectations, but actually surpasses them! Among those few, none stands out more strikingly than Alan Miller.

The guru of rendering three-dimensional effects on the VCS has created the "full-depth" trapezoidal play court for **Basketball**, then evolved the illusion even farther with his shadow-casting white ball in **Tennis**.

For a new challenge AI conquered outer space with **Starmaster**, and with

his latest dazzler, **Robot Tank**, he combines some general play-mechanics from **Battlezone** with a scenario out of a John Carpenter movie.

*Robot Tank* is perhaps the finest target-arcade program ever developed for the 2600. Originally intended to be the U.S. Defense Department's ultimate weapons, a line of computer-activated "Robot Tanks" were developed. But, as in all good science fiction scenarios, *something goes wrong!* The tanks do not respond! What was originally intended as a country's super security blanket has begun to turn nasty — choking the sleepers they were created to protect!

Solution: Get your butt into a manually-operated, computer-assisted super-tank and take on the renegade armored vehicles. From the tank's cockpit, a TV displays the outside terrain while a circular radarscope detects the presence of nearby robot tanks.

Once the enemy has been spotted, align the gunsight with the radar needle pointing up to twelve o'clock. Move forward until within striking range, then let fire!

Graphically, this stuff is non-parallel in the 2600 universe. Tanks whirl, and fire shells which loom ever-larger as the gamer frantically attempts to evade the crushing death blow. Still, even a non-mortal strike can cause serious damage, as indicated by the control signals flanking the radar screen. These letters indicate status of radar, cannons and such, and must be monitored constantly.

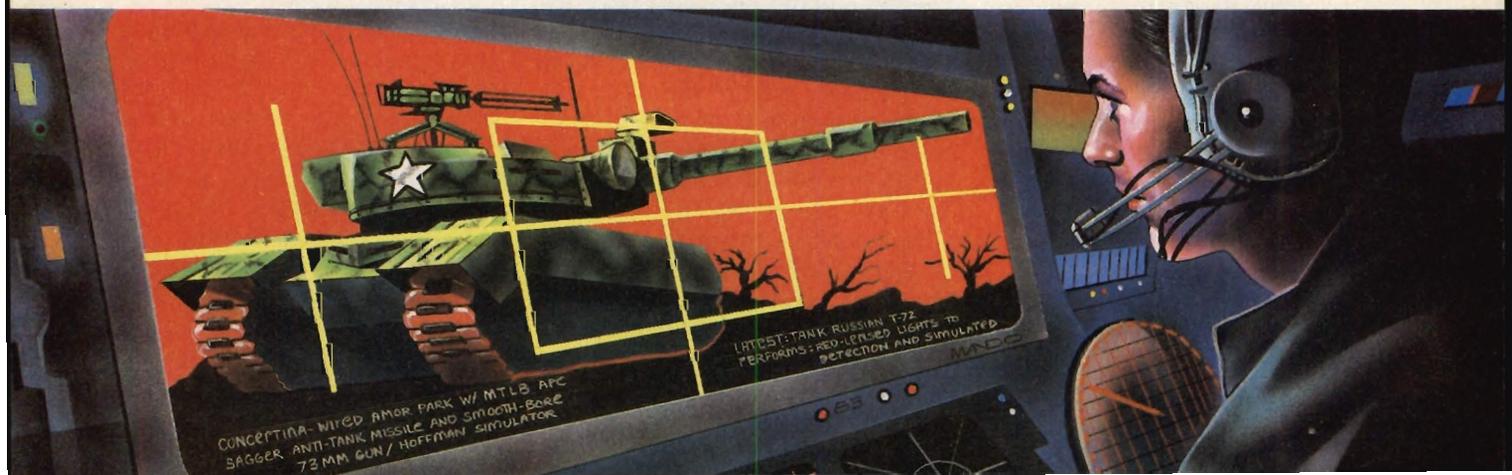
The most startling effect, however, concerns the increased — what else? — use of depth perception. For this one, though, Alan goes in a completely new direction. As your mighty tank rumbles forward over the shredded battlefield, she drops and rises with each pass over an existing tank track or burrow. This dip and climb technique will literally have the player's head bobbing in time with the hypnotic movement.

Don't be too hypnotized, however; tempestuous rainstorms and pea-soup fog — along with the inevitable coming of night — produce heavy challenges for even armchair desert foxes.

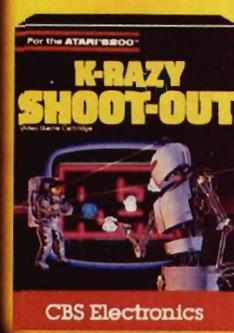
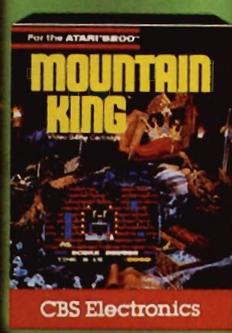
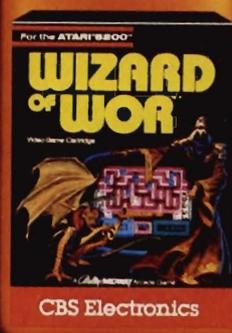
At the height of darkness, players must rely exclusively on the radar gun. Use it or lose it, as they say. Without the radar, you simply sit tight, engage in sporadic evasive action, or fire blindly at the horizon, hoping the sun comes up pretty damned soon!

*Robot Tank* is a masterpiece from every direction — even looking right down the barrel!

(Bill Kunkel)



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never ends.

# COMPUTER

## ARACHNOID

UMI/VIC-20/cartridge

Are you beginning to feel buggy? Are creepy crawlies haunting your dreams? Does it feel like something's

*craw-l-l-l-l-ing* up your back at this very moment?

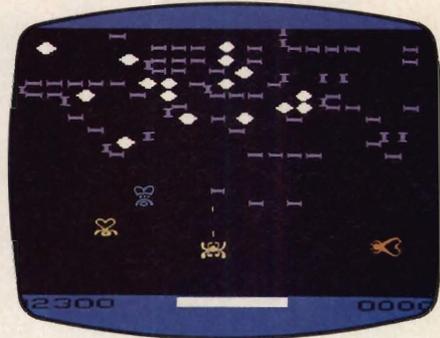
Well, don't look to **Arachnoid** for relief from the electronic creepy crawlies. This is another variation on the

segmented-bugs-are-coming idea. In this game, the player is a spider who's just laid a nest of eggs. Unfortunately, a horde of ants have decided they'd like some spider eggs for lunch. The female spider's only real defense is to try to stick each little ant in place with a bit of webbing.

Gnats, flies, intelligent ants and wasps make occasional appearances to make the defense of the eggs more difficult. The spider must keep her eggs safe until they hatch—starting a new, more difficult round.



ARACHNOID (UMI)



Obviously, there are some departures from the classic garden invasion game. The invading bugs are individuals, not one divisible insect, but since they appear in single-file groups, it really doesn't make much difference. A different strategy's needed for success. Building a wall across the screen is really the point here, with the special-guest-star insects often disrupting that effort. Other changes are also evident.



1605

## ARACHNOID™ GAME CARTRIDGE FOR THE COMMODORE VIC 20™

SWARMING ANTS • BUZZZZING FLIES • DEADLY WASPS



ARACHNOID (UMI)

# GAZETTE

**Webbing  
Through Life  
In Arachnoid—  
The Game that  
Will Drive  
You Buggy!**

Still, the similarities are quite strong. One wonders why UMI chose to put this out as well as its excellent **Video Vermin**. It seems unlikely gamers would want to purchase both. But if you'd like to try out another offering in this genre, *Arachnoid* is up to UMI's usual high level of quality.

(Charlene Komar)

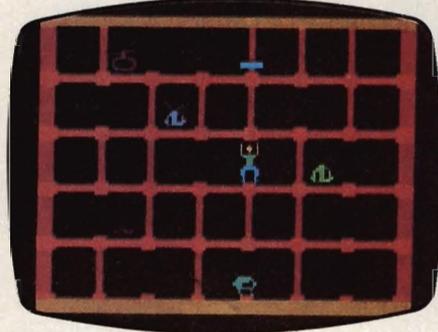
## **SQUISH 'EM**

Sirius/Atari/16K cartridge

A million dollars is a good incentive, even when you've got to climb up the

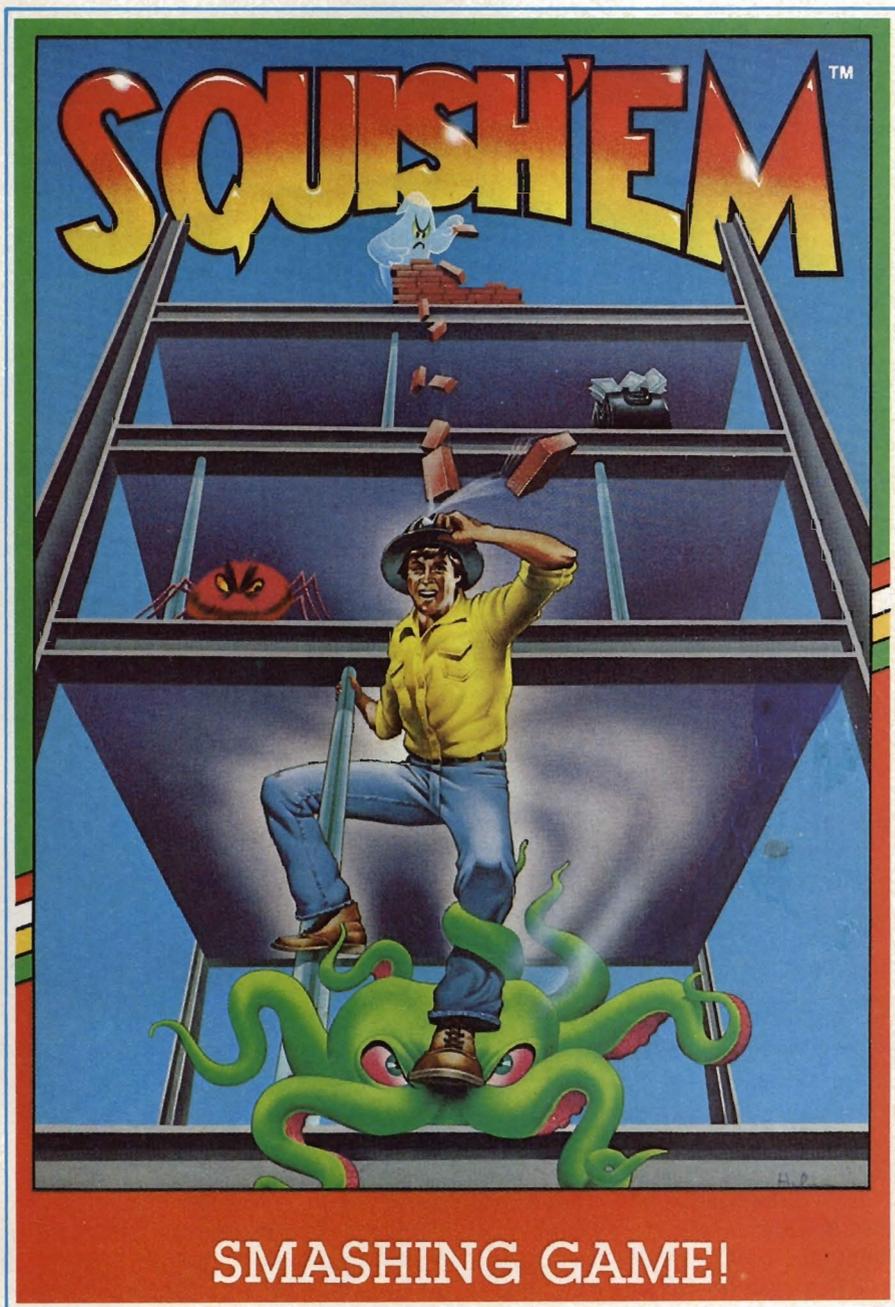


SQUISH 'EM (SIRIUS)



outside of a 48-story building infested with creepy, crawling creatures to get it. That's the object of **Squish 'Em**, Sirius' aptly-named climbing game. The title refers to a convenient way to disable the creatures—for a little while, anyway.

The action begins with the gamer's on-screen persona hanging on to an iron beam for dear life. Forty-eight floors above is a suitcase stuffed with unmarked bills, and it's not going to



**SMASHING GAME!**

SQUISH 'EM (SIRIUS)

come down by itself. Climb the beam by moving the joystick, which can also maneuver the man left or right when looking for a beam that ascends even higher. Once the climber has moved

past a floor, he can't return to it.

To complicate his life, creatures lurk on every floor (except a few orientation floors at the beginning of the game). If they touch the man's side, he

# COMPUTER GAMING

automatically loses his grip—and a chance to take the money and run.

A good way to deal with the patrolling beasties is to press the red button on the stick, which makes the climber stomp the offending creature into dust. It remains that way for several seconds. This trick only works once per monster, though, so after squishing one, it's advisable to leave the vicinity.

When the on-screen man reaches a high enough level, he's got to fend off more than just monsters. Unseen enemies hurl bricks down at the helpless thief. They'll send him on a one-way trip to the pavement below, unless he avoids them.

Each suitcase picked up earns players hefty bonus points and advances them to the next, more challenging level. All in all, the Atari version of *Squish 'Em* is a decent, graphically spare game with a somewhat well-worn play-mechanic (climbing a grid while avoiding evil creatures). While it's not the most visually interesting game on the market, the higher levels are fast-paced and challenging enough to keep players on their toes.

(Tracie Forman)

## GOLD FEVER

Tronix/VIC-20/cartridge

Video mining has suddenly become the fashionable pastime for electronic gamers. That dirty and dangerous vocation is magically transformed into an avocation that's clever, challenging, and a heck of a lot of fun.

Tronix is the latest game company to jump into the boxcar, as it were, with **Gold Fever**. The gamer finds his or her on-screen alter-ego in an abandoned mine, with plenty of piles of glorious gold left behind by its last unknown inhabitants. The new miner must gather all the glittery stuff before the limited oxygen is breathed away.

Unfortunately, the pit isn't in the very best of shape. There are chasms on virtually every level. What's more, old boxcars careen through the mine in an endless dance of destruction. Needless to say, getting hit by a boxcar is a quick way to end a mining career.

Luckily, gamers can use the boxcars to travel across the chasms. Tronix refuses to explain exactly how that's accomplished in the instructions, and we won't reveal the secret here, except to say it isn't all that tough to figure out. But there are other dangers in the mine which can't be turned to your advantage.

For instance, the Claim Jumper isn't above murder to gain wealth. He is about as smart as a boxcar — and that's how you can treat him.

Another little headache is the occasional boulder. Remember, a miner shaped like a pancake won't enjoy being rich!

## SHAMUS, CASE II

Synapse/Atari/48K disk

The sinister Shadow is at large once more, and only the dauntless Shamus has a prayer of penetrating the crime czar's monster-filled underwater fortress. This action-adventure sequel to the hugely popular **Shamus** once again asks the home arcader to take up the case of truth and justice—and prize-winning marksmanship.

As in the first encounter, the Shamus must move from room to room, cleaning up the nasties until the opportunity arises to meet the Shadow in the heart of his lair for a decisive confrontation.



GOLD FEVER! (TRONIX).

There are nine levels of play in this joystick-controlled game. As the play level rises, more gold appears and the action gets faster. Although play begins with three miners, bonus ones are awarded at levels three, five, seven and nine. Two mazes alternate to keep gamers on their toes.

Fans of climbing games will enjoy this effort, which is just a little bit different from the most familiar games in that genre. The time limit imposed by the disappearing oxygen combines with enough action to demand attention and a bit of brainwork.

(Charlene Komar)

The ion-shivs of yore are gone, replaced by plasmar detonators. The Shamus can fire a projectile by hitting the action button while the joystick handle points in the desired direction. A plasmar detonator stays "live" as long as it remains visible on the playfield, no matter how many times it may ricochet off walls, monsters and other barriers. Only two such destructive spheres can be in action at any one time, but they wreck a satisfying huge amount of havoc on a room full of fiendish undersea creatures.

**Shamus, Case II** has some elements usually associated with climbing con-

tests. Many of the rooms are not directly connected to each other. They are reached only after navigating a series of ladders and pits. Outside a chamber, the Shamus can jump over a pit *if* the arcader pushes the joystick in the appropriate direction and presses



SHAMUS, CASE II (SYNAPSE)

the action button. The ladders-and-pits portion of the adventure contains an extra hazard, as if most players will need one. Savage snakes zip along tiny tunnels which horizontally cross the screen. While the Shamus can leap over the serpents with room to spare, it forces the gamer to stay on the alert just about constantly, because a set of fangs in the ankle costs the Shamus one of the three "lives" with which the evil-fighter starts the mission.

Confrontations with the Shadow's minions in the chambers all follow a similar pattern. A first wave of nasties converges upon the Shamus, who must blast them away before they make physical contact. Avoiding the creatures isn't enough, because each one that gets past the Shamus eats away a section of the floor. If the whole floor gets wiped out, the Shamus tumbles into a previously conquered room—equipped with a full complement of monsters.

Once the first wave is demolished, the bird ally makes its appearance. "Ally" seems a funny way to describe a creature that drops bombs on you, but perhaps the Shamus can't afford to be choosy when battling such astronomical odds. In any case, hitting the bird ally three times turns it into a crea-



# COMPUTER GAMING

ture that looks like a salamander. It functions the same as a plasmar detonator, though it is not directly controlled by the player. And when it really gets going, it can take out the second wave of monsters in a chamber virtually unassisted.

Few games with such a high degree of excitement offer such a wealth of strategic possibilities. The program allows players to see a map of their progress toward the Shadow's sanctum, and it takes a good bit of figuring to decide which route is the correct path to the fortress' nerve center.

*Shamus* was an outstanding game, but the guess here is that *Shamus, Case II* will become an even bigger hit. (Arnie Katz)

## HI-RES COMPUTER GOLF 2

Avant-Garde/Apple II/48K disk

For at least two years one of this gamer's favorite computer sports games has been *Hi-Res Computer Golf*, even though the program has problems. For instance, all the hazards were symmetrical and you could never blast your way out of the trees.

Both complaints are a thing of the past. These changes and several other improvements have been made in *Hi-Res Computer Golf 2*. Stuart Aronoff has addressed each and every minor complaint about the first package in this revised edition.

When the gamer first boots up, there are nine menu options. One is a demonstration of the game, another a golf lesson, a third is some swing practice and a fourth is a practice hole. At its most complex and challenging, computer golfers will need that swing practice because manual dexterity determines how accurate the swing will be.

After the duffer has selected a club and determined the strength of the swing, he or she must select the direction of the shot with a game paddle. Factors include allowing for any wind that might be present. Then the gamer is set for the greatest challenge—hitting the ball.

There is an auto-swing option for first-timers which allows for a perfect swing every time. That means no

hooks or slices, no tops or undercuts. For those brave enough to ignore this attractive option, a world of frustration is open for you to enjoy.

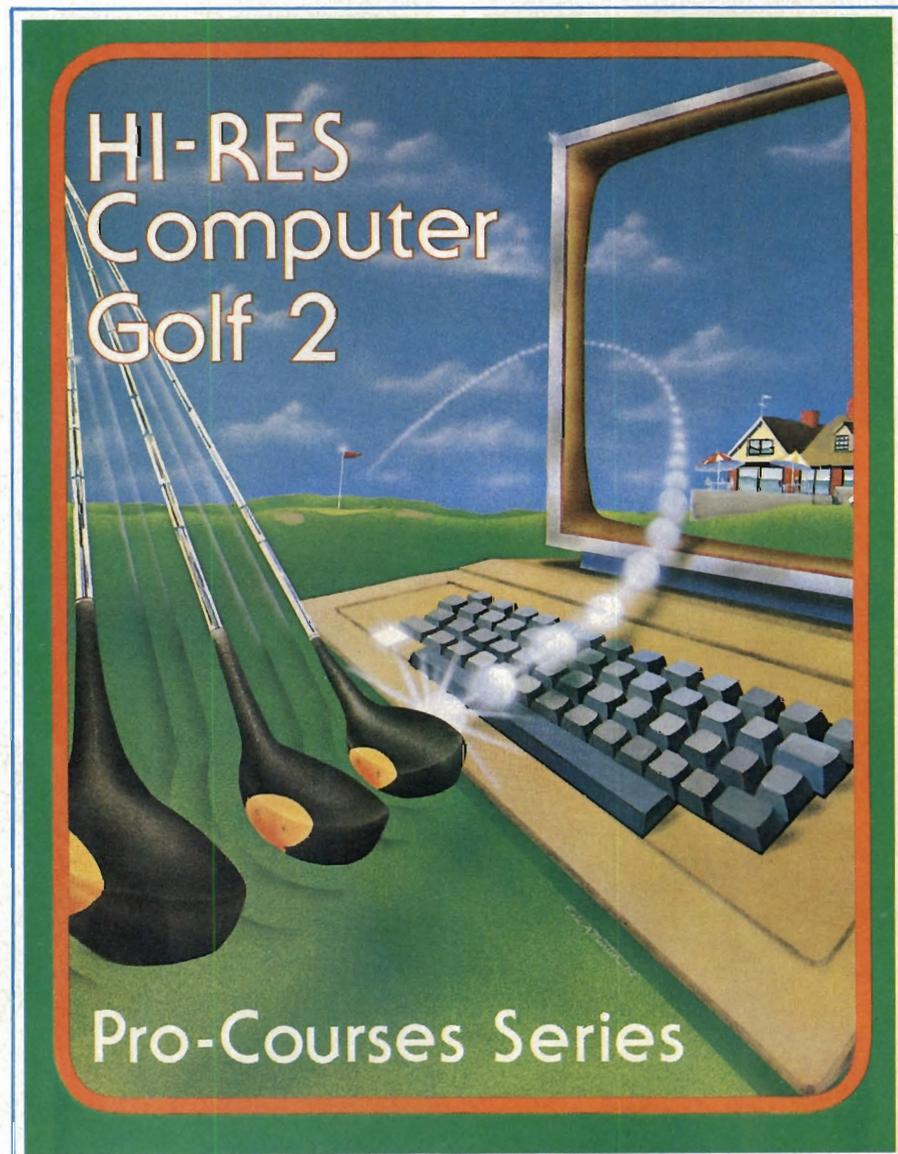
Nine keystrokes are needed to move the club head through the assigned swing path and into solid contact with the ball. Deviating from that path, one way or another, will result in shot errors like hooks and slices. Experts at the program will even be able to use minor hooks and slices to put the ball exactly where they want it.

There are four types of screen displays utilized during the game. One shows the fairways, another shows a

close-up of the green, a third shows the swing path of the club and a fourth is strictly the text information displays. Those information screens aid in club selection or enable the golfer to see his scorecard.

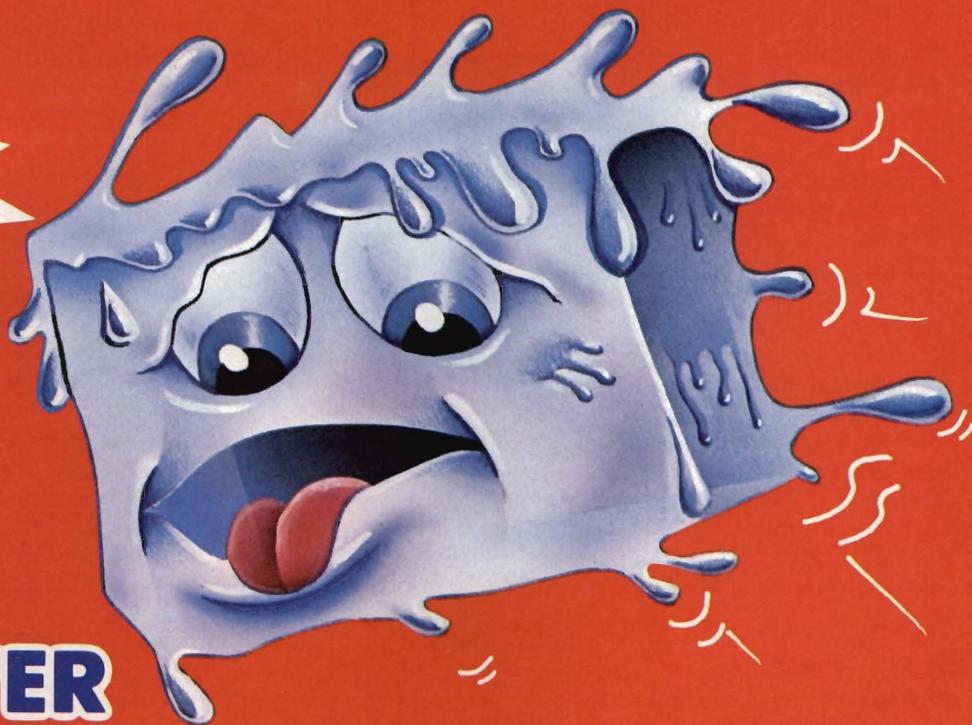
Fairway displays depend upon the length of the hole and its configuration. The normal hazards of golf are represented: sand, water, trees and rough. Each takes its toll on how the ball reacts when hit into or out of them.

Another encouraging part of this program is the pro courses series. Included in the *Hi-Res Computer Golf 2*



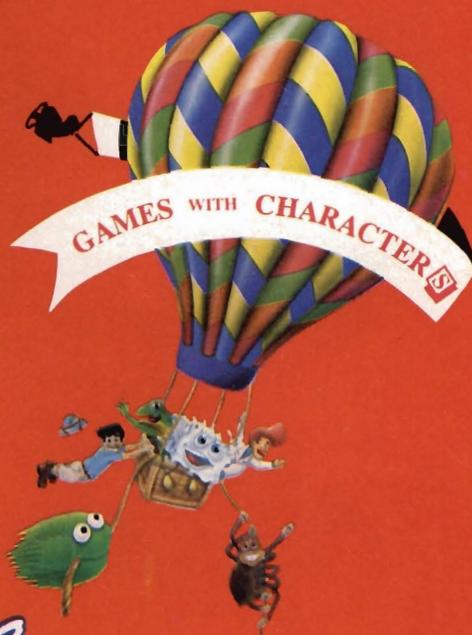
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# COMPUTER GAMING

package is the master disk on one side, which has all the practice options and a beginner's course. On the other side are three courses which simulate professional equivalents. Though these courses aren't named, real golf fans shouldn't have any trouble recognizing their real-life counterparts.

Avant-Garde promises more courses in the future. The package would really be complete if the publisher would offer the gamer a chance to create custom designed courses. As is, *Hi-Res Computer Golf 2* certainly beats early morning tee times.

(Rick Teverbaugh)

## M.U.L.E.S

Electronic Arts/Atari/48K disk

Take a bullish day at the stock exchange, add a dash of science fiction, mix liberally with the spirit of healthy competition, and toss in enough random events to destabilize even the best-laid plans, and you've got

**M.U.L.E.s**, Electronic Arts' refreshingly innovative strategy game for one-to-four players. It challenges gamers to out-produce each other in land, goods and cash in a fierce, dog-eat-dog struggle to win the coveted title of the colony's First Founder.

Players assume the guise of any one of eight different alien species in one of the best opening sequences ever seen on a computer game (the computer advises players to pick the species that most resembles them) before they begin to colonize the distant planet Irata.

After dropping off the four colonists (the computer always picks up the slack in one-, two- or three-player games), the transport ship departs with a promise to return in 12 months. Left to its own devices, the colony has to parlay the little it has into a small fortune—at least \$60,000 in total assets—or it's a Federation-sponsored trip to nowhere for everyone involved.

Food, energy, and metal are severely limited at first, and there's only one way to keep from starving to death—produce! The more you have, the more you can sell to other players and the general store—at a hefty profit, if you plan it well.

Each month (or turn) takes players through several phases. The land grant lets colonists choose a free plot of land, which they can later outfit to produce any of the vital commodities. Sometimes it's also possible to pick up extra land at random property auctions.

Next comes the development phase. Each player must properly outfit and install one Multiple Use Labor Element—or M.U.L.E.—on each plot of land in order to produce any goods on it. The M.U.L.E. can be as stubborn as a you-know-what, though, and will run away from its master unless perfectly maneuvered from the center of town to the undeveloped plot.

Once all players have installed their M.U.L.E.s—or tried to, anyway—it's time to reap the harvest of these labors. Production units spring up on all developed property. Production is subject to a host of random natural disasters (like animated pest attacks, mountain-shifting earthquakes, and acid rain storms, to name just a few) that can increase or reduce average yields. The amount of energy, food, and mining ore made is also subject to strategic variables, like the type of land (river land is best for growing food, while mountain land is worst for the same purpose) and the player's expertise at producing a given product.

Once production is finished, it's on to the auction phase, where colonists sell off their excess goods and replenish depleted supplies. The idea here is to buy low and sell high, and careful planning and manipulating (or a lucky break) could send the price of commodities soaring. Think the price of food can't go from \$10 to \$300 per unit? Anything's possible with supply-side economics.

At the end of the auction round, all the colonists parade onto the screen for a summary of their current positions, with the leading player at the



M.U.L.E.S. (ELECTRONIC ARTS)

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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."

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# COMPUTER

# GAMING

top. The game alternates between land grants and development and the auction stage, until the transport ship arrives at the end of the twelfth turn to check up on the colony's progress.

The final summary awards the prestigious title of First Founder to the winning player, and the on-screen crea-

ture swells up to twice its normal size with pride. Then, the Federation delivers its final evaluation of the colony, deciding the fate of the four space-age entrepreneurs in a final, lasting judgement.

After playing all three versions of the game for hours on end, the final

judgement on *M.U.L.E.s* is: "Outstanding". After a few games of this entertaining, wits-oriented merchandising bonanza, most closet capitalists will never play Monopoly again!

(Tracie Forman)

## NIGHT FALLS

*Omega Microwave/Apple II/48K disk*

Certain cities come alive at night. As a city-scape commander in **Night Falls**, you must prevent your Emerald City from doing just the opposite—dying in the dark. In fact, records at each of the nine skill levels don't reflect some abstract scoring system, but how many nights the city remained alive.

When Bev. R. Haight created this game, there must have been an ear cocked to hear the complaints of the computer arcade fanatics. One need that is successfully addressed here is the need for strategy and complexity to give the gamer a different challenge each time out.

The game is a vague cross between **Space Invaders** and **Missile Command**. The city is attacked by nine different UFO's, including a wave of invisible varmints.

The city's gun, which the player controls with a paddle, skims over the top of the city's buildings. The firing button allows the gamer to shoot straight up from his gun's placement.

The ultimate challenge to the commander is the protection of the cosmic reactor. It is nestled beneath a section of the buildings. The gamer must make sure those buildings directly above the reactor are kept intact. Should death rays or X-bombs break through the reactor's seal, the city will be destroyed.

Once a night—and again at each daybreak—there is an opportunity to enter the "Rebuild City-Plex" mode, which will allow you to add levels to buildings eaten away by invader bombs. There is also an option that allows you to repair a damaged reactor core. How much of this repair can be accomplished is a direct consequence of how well you've done as a commander. The number of units of stored reactor energy are directly transferred into the number of units you have to rebuild the city.

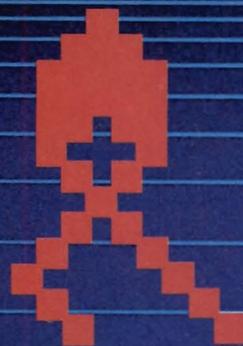
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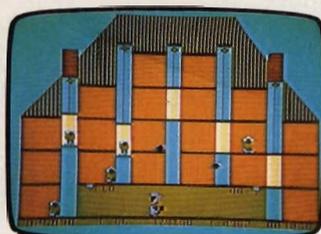
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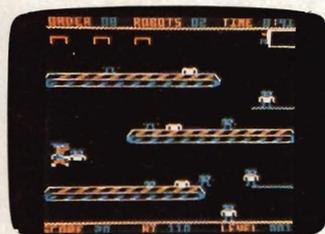
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Novice players may find the display of letters and numbers at the bottom of the screen a bit confusing and hard to grasp during the heat of the battle, but there is a pause feature to allow the gamer a look at his status.

Graphics and sound both deserve applause in *Night Falls*. The invading threat is adequately displayed and the gamer is never confused as to his position on the screen. As could be imagined, there are more details about *Night Falls* than could be covered here. The game's manual is 22 pages long, but there's enough room here to announce that arcade enthusiasts will be thankful for the day they purchased this game. . . that is, at least until "night falls".

(Rick Teverbaugh)

## RIVER RESCUE

Thorn EMI/VIC-20/cartridge

One of the biggest drawbacks of the Commodore VIC computer as a game-playing machine, is that the software companies are just gearing up to design for the low-priced unit. Undoubtedly, as the VIC continues to fly out of the stores, that will change. For the present, though, Thorn EMI stands as a pioneer in the VIC software field, producing a variety of interesting games for the system.

One of its first efforts, *River Rescue*, boasts a clever premise. Three explorers are lost, separately, in a jungle. The player, as captain of a boat based on the river that meanders through the dense vegetation, tries to rescue the intrepid threesome, earning 500

points for each feat, and bring all three to the jungle hospital for a handsome reward — 1,500 points.

The river's width varies as it follows a tortuous path, twisting its way across the screen. At times, it becomes so narrow the boat can barely squeeze through. But the changing size and shape of the channel isn't the only thing that impedes point-scoring; the water is home to crocodiles, giant anaconda snakes and dugout canoes that must be either blasted to smithereens with the bow gun for 30, 30 and 50 points, respectively, or carefully dodged. Hit one — or the river bank, as you try to avoid the floating menaces — and your ship blows up.

Each of the explorers is waiting by a jetty and transmitting a radio signal to alert the captain that he's nearby. Once the boat successfully docks, the explorer boards the vessel and the rescue is recorded by the appearance of a smiling figure atop the screen. If the boat is destroyed after one or more successful rescues, the explorer(s) will still be on board when the next ship appears.

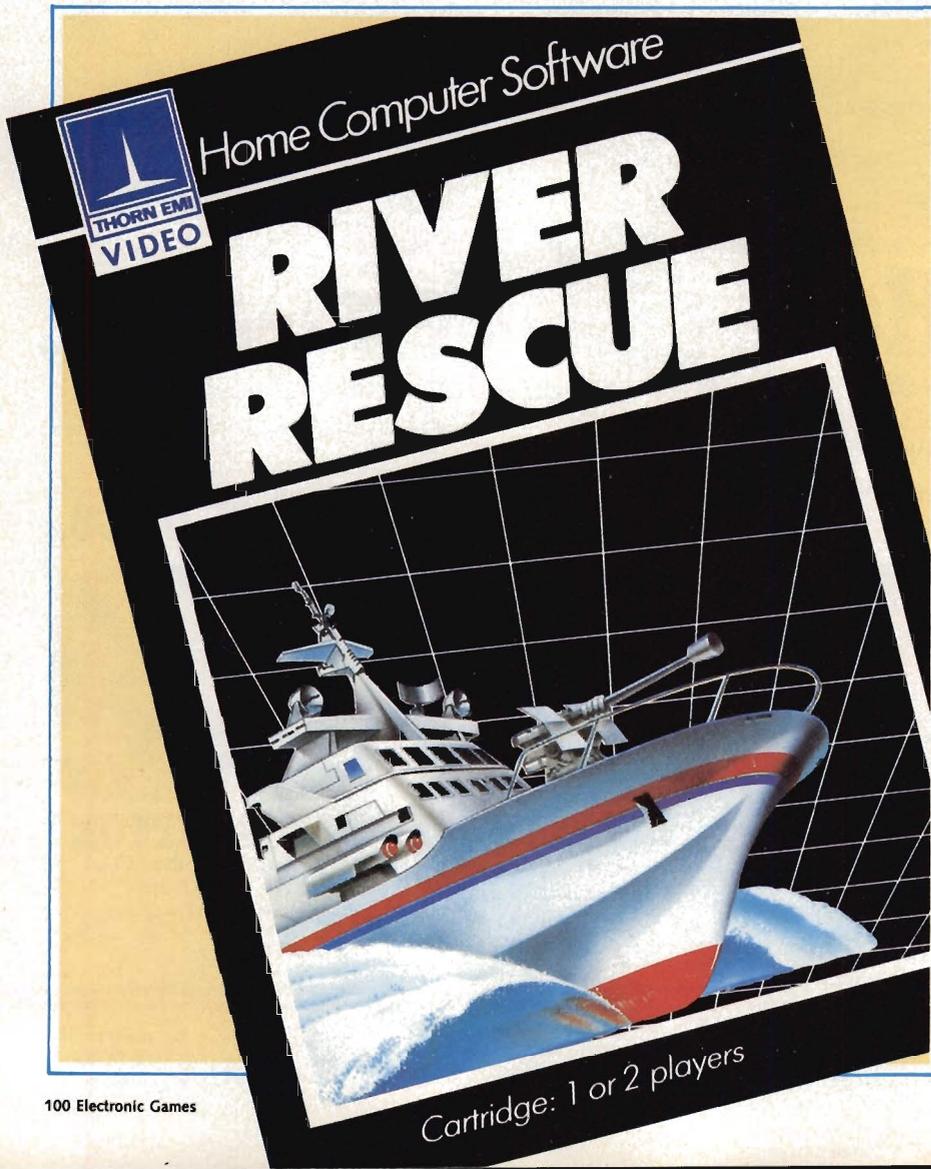
After rescuing the trio, the boat must deposit them at the hospital's dock. After each leaves the boat — and disappears from the scoring area — a new river appears, differing in color from the original blue one. The second is pink, the third red and the fourth yellow.

Players can use the keyboard to control speed, vertical direction and to fire, but it seems likely most will prefer the joystick.

The game has several advantages missing from many other VIC games. There are three play variations, offering the regular, three-life game for either one or two players or an extended one-player game which allows six boats and is nice for the beginner. And if a player gets off to a bad start, he can just press the appropriate button and start over.

Besides recording rescues, the scoreboard keeps track of high score and the number of remaining boats. Score 7,000 points and a free boat is yours, except on the extended game.

(Bill Kunkel)



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By TRACIE FORMAN

# IN CONTROL

Once gamers had to search high and low just to find a couple of replacement sticks to fix an ailing system. During the last year, however, the "gourmet" joy controller market has come alive, filling store shelves with just about every type of device you can imagine. Dozens of new ones boasting all kinds of features — and backed by all kinds of promises — are making their debut every month.

To help clear some of the underbrush away from the path through the joystick jungle, **Electronic Games** is, with this issue, establishing the first regular monthly controller review column in the world.

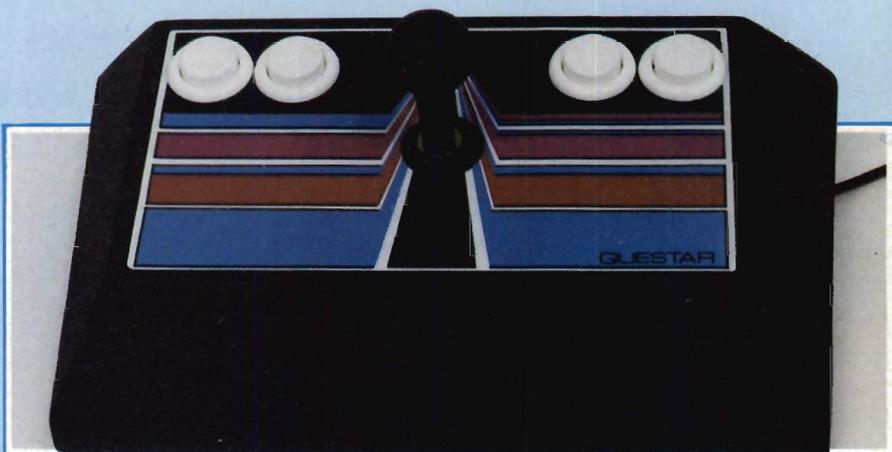
Before the historical importance of this milestone bowls all of us over, let's leave the boring world of "first column" introductions and get down to some of the best of the new controllers reaching the **EG** offices this month. . . .

## QUESTAR CONTROL CONSOLE

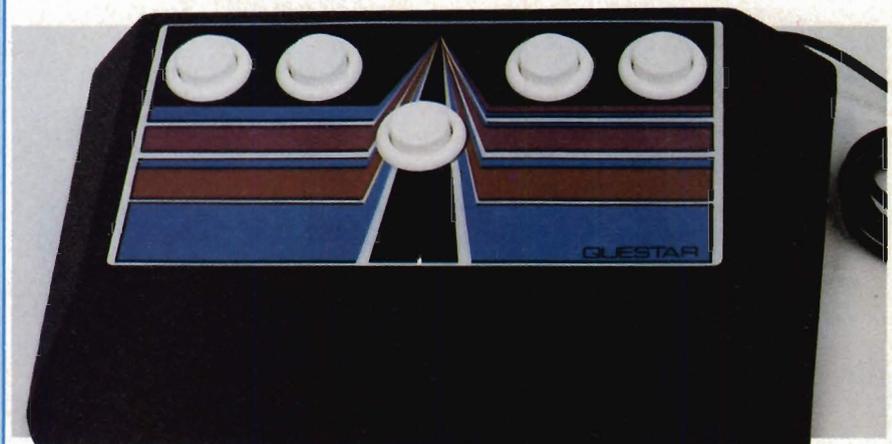
Questar/Atari 2600 compatible

If someone ever gives a prize for the best-looking controllers on the market, Questar definitely takes first place with its arcade-style control consoles. The joyboards are designed to give the ultimate in coin-op flavor to gamers who may be bored with average-looking joysticks. The consoles, available in three different styles, are much wider than the typical home controller, as they are designed to rest on a table or lap to free players' hands to blast, gobble, or climb the same way they would in their favorite amusement center.

The consoles are decorated coin-op style in high-tech bands of blue, red, and purple. They slant slightly towards the player to provide more comfortable play. While the boards are a bit too light to perfectly simulate the industrial-strength feel of their arcade



QUESTAR CONTROL CONSOLE (MODEL QC-II)



QUESTAR CONTROL CONSOLE (MODEL QC-I)



QUESTAR CONTROL CONSOLE (MODEL QC-II)

## The World's First Controller Review Column!

counterparts, the buttons are large and easy to press, and the joystick does its job smoothly. Like its coin-op cousin, the Questar control panel is easily used by both right- and left-handed players.

Each model is designed to fit slightly different gaming needs. The basic console features a center-mounted, ball-topped joystick with an action button on each side of it. The buttons have the same function no matter which is pressed. The second Questar controller has two buttons on each side, making it compatible with all ColocoVision cartridges.

Questar created its third console with the *Asteroids* fan in mind. It will appeal to any gamer who prefers his or

joystick is unshielded by any protective rubber pads against hard blows. In other words, one *really* hard thump, especially straight down, could knock it out of commission. Considering the care with which Questar designed the outer casing, it's surprising — and disappointing — that the firm put less thought into the *durability* of the product.

Still, gamers who have a lighter touch will find Questar's consoles highly satisfying, comfortable to play with, and eye-pleasing to boot. One hopes that Questar's future efforts will be as durable as they are beautiful, so

that even the hardest-hitting players will be able to use them.

### THE KRAFT SWITCH-HITTER

*Kraft/Apple and IBM compatible*

At last, long-suffering Apple and IBM users can pick and choose among a variety of good controllers! Gone are the days of envying Atari and other systems which use the "standard" nine-pin system. Joystick manufacturers are finally giving Apple (and IBM) owners their due, as evidenced by the sudden flood of Apple-compatible joysticks entering the market.

Among the finest of the new con-

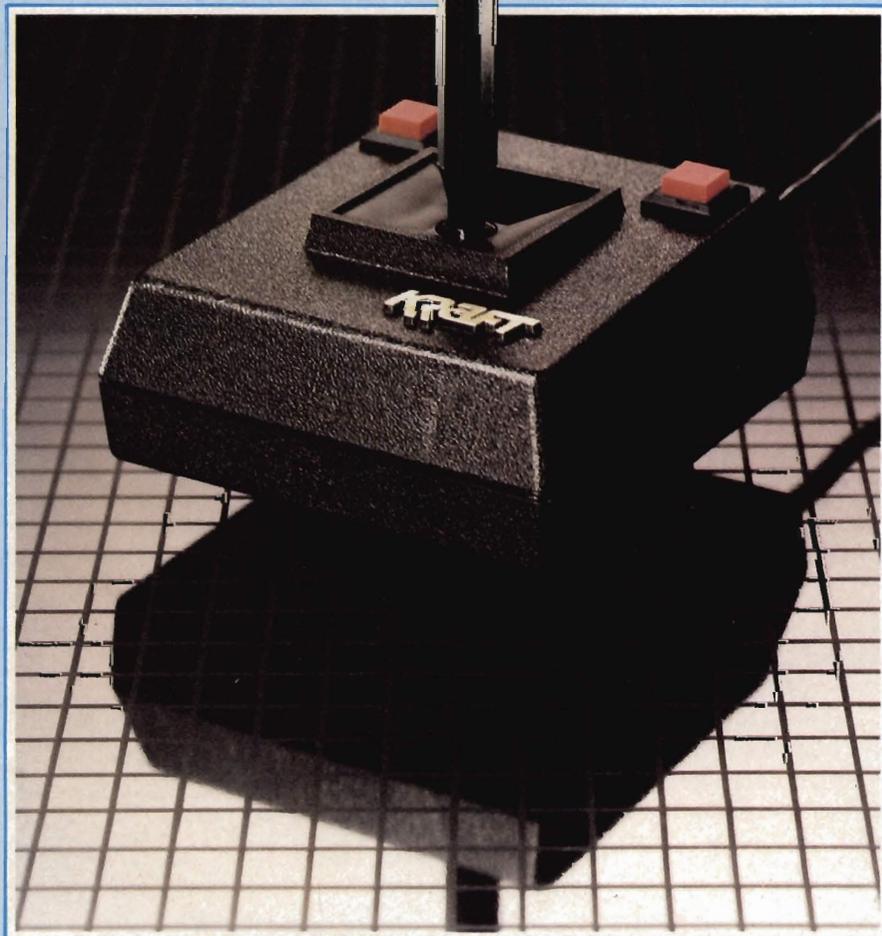


ASTEROIDS (ATARI)

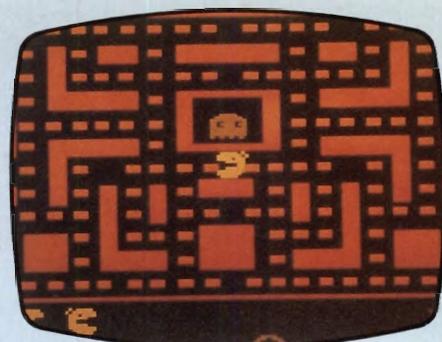
her on-screen action to be exclusively controlled by buttons instead of the joystick. Home gamers thinking of buying this particular control panel are advised to test the console *with the games they'll want to use it with*, to make sure it will work with their favorite games.

While the outer trappings of these controllers are as "professional" as any home arcader could ask, gamers who are particularly hard on their joysticks are warned that the Questar panels don't appear to be designed to take arcade-style abuse over a prolonged period of time. The leaf-switch system surrounding the base of the

KRAFT'S SWITCH-HITTER



# IN CONTROL



ATARI'S MS. PAC-MAN

trollers is Kraft's Apple/IBM-compatible joystick. This little dynamo is a double blessing for beleaguered fast-action fans. Not only does it put split-second control at the fingertips, but it also provides hours of comfortable play, even for small-handed gamers, like women and children.

The Kraft stick is sleekly styled, with a small, square beige-colored base. The two independently functioning, base-mounted action buttons are designed for comfort and ease of play. The light base is supported in the player's left hand, while the left index finger rests naturally on the black button at the side of the base. The thumb is positioned to hit the red button on top. This is a particularly comfortable position when playing games that utilize both action buttons, since it allows accurate control over which button gets pressed (and which doesn't!). Left-handed players aren't as lucky as righties, though, since there's no provision for a "southpaw". Right-handed gamers are sure to appreciate the well-thought-out placing of the action buttons.

A special feature allows players to "trim" the joystick's self-centering functions, vertically, horizontally, or both. Instead of automatically springing back to the center position, the stick can be set to return to any point picked by the player.

A second built-in bonus lets home arcaders turn the joystick into a functional vertical or horizontal paddle, virtually eliminating the need for any other controller.

All in all, the Kraft Apple/IBM Joystick is one of the best, most versatile sticks available for those systems. It's small and light enough for a child, yet durable and accurate enough for a hard-bitten video pro.

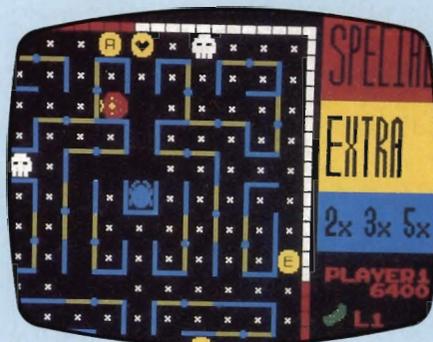
The only problems are minor ones, but they must be mentioned just the same. Both action buttons are flat and sharp-cornered, making for an occasional sore finger after a particularly active play-session. Likewise, the top of the joystick is too sharp for players who like to use the tip of the right thumb to manipulate the joystick. Yet

these are only minor annoyances that barely detract from the joystick that, to many Apple and IBM owners, will come as a welcome reprieve from the incompatibility blues.

## THE SUPR-STICK

D-Zyne Products/Atari 2600 compatible

This ball-topped metal joystick has few of the visual frills found on some of its flashier competitors. The heavy, rectangular base — which contains a



COLECOVISION'S LADYBUG

single, right-hander's fire button — is a businesslike black, perhaps as a signal to home arcaders that this is one serious joystick.

But how does it play? On most games, pretty well. But plug in a maze-game, pick up the Supr-Stick, and chances are you'll never put it down. The joystick's loose, responsive control makes it a natural for the sort of razor-sharp turns and hair-splitting direction reversals found within the structured boundaries of the maze.

Since the majority of maze games don't require the use of an action button, the somewhat inconvenient location of the fire control doesn't show when you play *Ladybug*, *Lock-N-Chase*, *Ms. Pac-Man*, and the like.

For most home arcaders, though, the usefulness of the Supr-Stick depends on the individual's preference and style of play. Ball-topped joysticks tend to be more controllable for fingertip players than for those who put a lot of wrist action into their joystick jockeying. Lefties are advised to look for a more adaptable controller, but if maze chases are your idea of super fun, the Supr-Stick could be just the ticket to high scores!

SUPR STICK (D-ZYNE PRODUCTS)



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# INSERT COIN HERE

## Save Yourself! The Sinister Sinistar Lives!

By TRACIE FORMAN

### SINISTAR

*Williams*

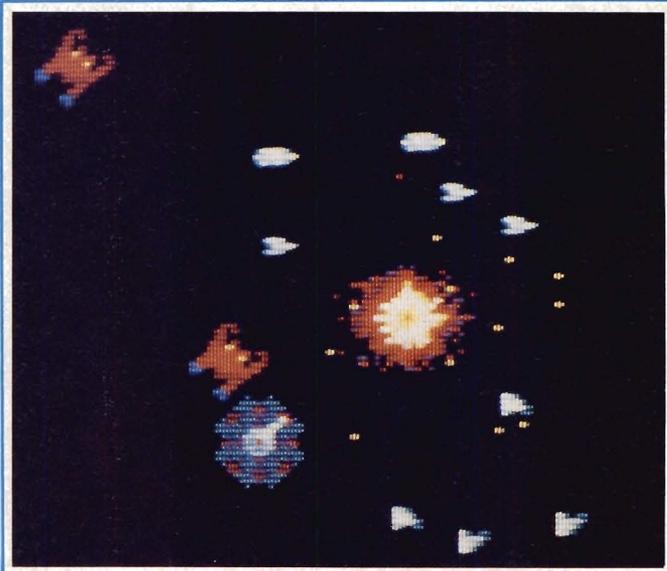
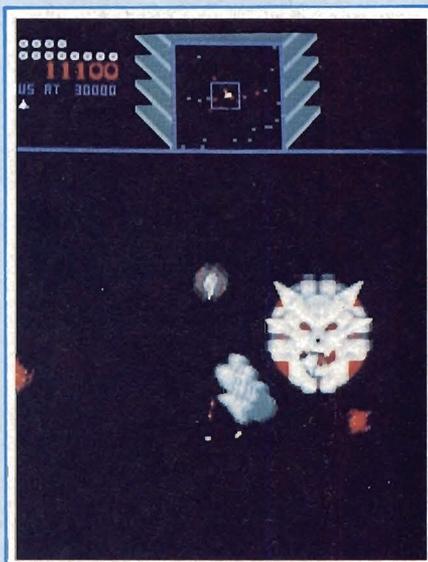
Gut-wrenching, pulse-pounding, thrill-a-second space chases are in no danger of becoming obsolete at the arcades, as Williams' **Sinistar** clearly proves. In spite of its harmless appearance, this is one tough game.

The action is set against an **Asteroids**-style playfield. Realistically-drawn space rocks float randomly through the void. Gamers take charge of a mining ship, which has to blast the galactic debris to loosen tiny, glowing bits of sinisite. This innocuous crystal is the most valuable commodity in the universe, as it's used to build the gargantuan supership — the dreaded Sinistar himself — and also to make

the bombs that can destroy him.

The arcader's mission at the start of the game is to blast as many asteroids as possible, then collect the shimmering sinisite bits by passing over them as they float. The mining craft is dogged every step of the way by flitting red drone ships that try to grab the precious crystals as the gamer shoots them free.

Missile-shooting space cannons also appear to bar the ship's progress. Though the red drones are reasonably harmless to the mining ship in spite of their ferocious appearance, one well-placed cannon shot destroys the player's ship. To survive the first phase, gamers should shoot these deadly enemies as soon as they show up.

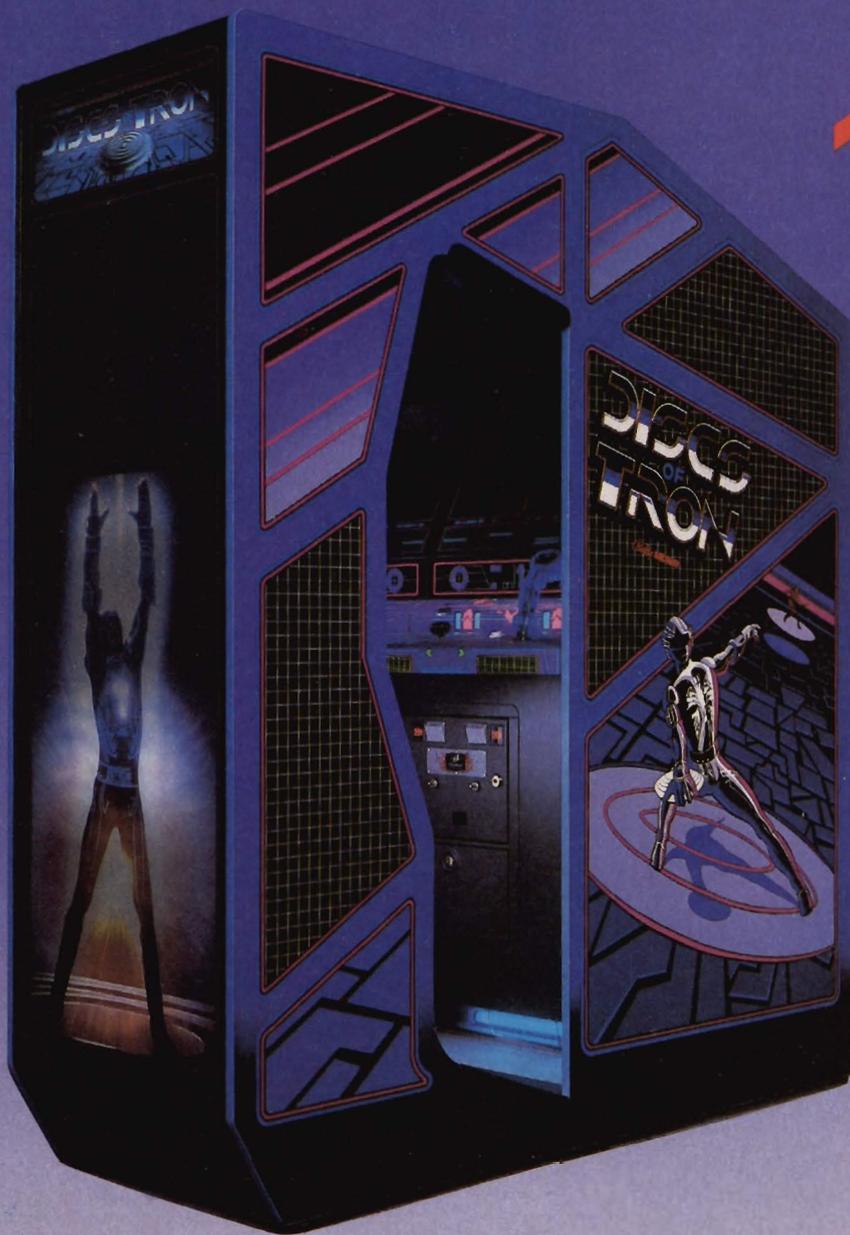


SINISTAR (WILLIAMS)

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The early part of the game is a race against time to collect enough precious sinisite crystals to deal with the ultimate foe. Each time a drone ship makes off with a crystal, it brings the precious mineral to a distant space port, where alien forces struggle to complete the Sinistar as quickly as possible. It takes a total of 20 pieces of sinisite to complete the mechanical monster. Meanwhile, gamers collect as much sinisite as possible, because each crystal is then converted to a Sinibomb.

Sinibombs are the only weapons capable of destroying the Sinistar. But even these megabombs are weak compared to their intended target, and on the first level of play the gamer must hit Sinistar with 13 bombs to completely destroy him. (A total of 20 bombs can be held in reserve at any one time; to replenish, players have to collect more sinisite crystals.)



From left to right: the birth of a truly evil-looking adversary—the sinister

When Sinistar receives the 20th piece of sinisite, he becomes fully operational. In a deep-throated bel-low announcing his first few gasps of "life", his echoing voice taunts the arcader with the simple words "Be-ware — I live!" Even the most experi-enced arcaders would do well to heed

the creature's advice — the Sinistar is a stone-faced behemoth that moves quicker than a centipede with a hot-foot, and it gobbles spaceships whole.

As the ultimate enemy approaches the mining ship, Sinistar's advice is to "Run, coward!" Spacefarers who value their skins take his advice liter-

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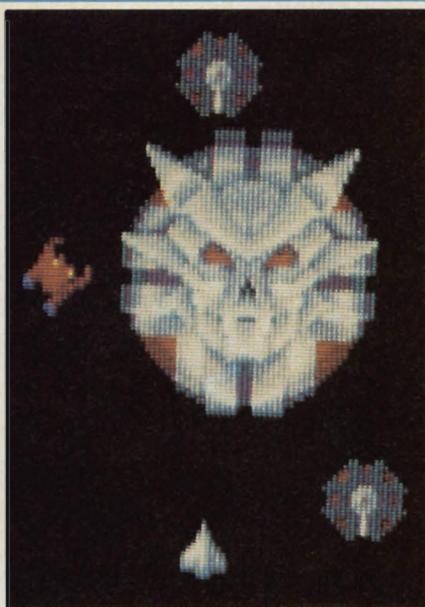
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108 Electronic Games



Sinistar whose very first words, "Beware—I live!" are followed by, "Run, coward!"

ally, but scatter sinibombs into his path as he takes up the chase. The Sinistar pursues relentlessly, even when damaged by a sinibomb. The only way to stop him is to hit him with the 13th bomb. Then, it's on to the next level, where it takes fewer crystals to complete the monster.

While not as original in concept as many of Williams' other fine quarter-grabbers, *Sinistar* is, plain and simple, a great game. A few fast, furious play sessions left this arcader with palms sweating, heart thumping, and hand groping into the pocket for another two bits.



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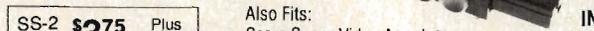


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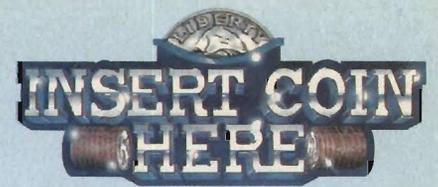
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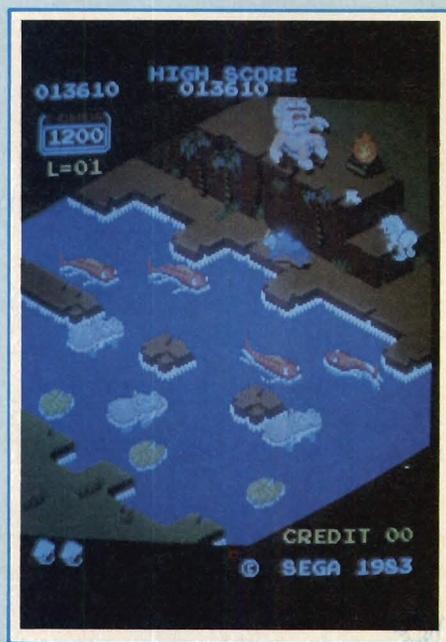
## CONGO BONGO

Sega  
 It's a jungle out there! After a long, hard day of exploring the innermost reaches of a thick, tangled jungle grove, almost any intrepid wilderness adventurer would expect — and rightly so — to find a brief respite from the strains of the day in the form of a short nap. Unfortunately, Bongo the ape has different ideas. The smart-aleck simian's decided to practice his latest practical joke—the hotfoot—on the unwitting explorer, snoozing peacefully in his tent.

So begins **Congo Bongo**, Sega's riveting jungle epic. The object of this game has nothing to do with rescuing fair damsels, defending cities from attack, or even plundering hidden treasure. The motive for this game is plain, simple revenge, folks, and if you can make it through all four playfields, that vengeance can be sweet.

The first screen finds Bongo perched atop an ominous stone mountain, slinging coconuts left and right in an effort to liberally bowl our hero over. The explorer is hard-pressed to scale the granite steps, jump over the gurgling waterfall, and keep the monkeys off his back if he doesn't want an all-expense-paid trip to the Pearly Gates. Make it to the top and

Congo Bongo is not just monkeyshines.



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the cowardly ape scampers further into the jungle depths.

It's not that difficult to find the scurrilous simian, but reaching him is another story. The gorilla's taken refuge at the far end of a treacherous river, leaving the angry adventurer on the scorpion-infested edge of the swamp. To cross the lake, the hunter must dodge slithering snakes and poisonous insects, then jump onto the backs of passing hippos to leap to safety at the far side of the river.

The third screen brings the explorer to the edge of Bongo's secret lair, which is guarded by herds of charging rhinos. To avoid them, gamers have to jump over them or take refuge in one of the mole holes scattered across the landscape.

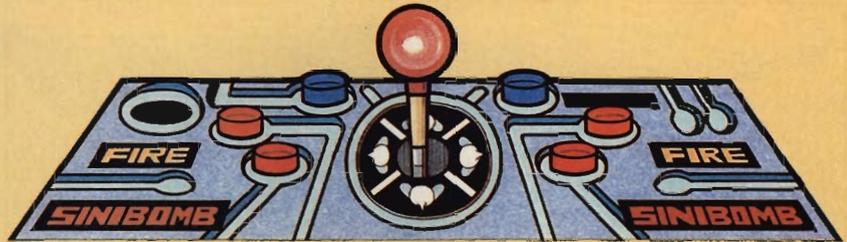
Get past the rhinos and the hunter reaches Bongo's inner sanctum, a tiny island where the giant ape relaxes peacefully in his beach chair, confident in the knowledge that his pursuer is miles away. Now's the time! If gamers can successfully cross the water by hopping from lily pads to hippo backs to the bodies of floating, carnivorous fish, it's just a few more steps—and rampaging rhinos—to the ultimate victory of man over beast.

*Congo Bongo* is unquestionably the most beautiful climbing game ever designed. With its lushly-drawn 3D-perspective graphics, drawn in breathtaking detail, and the rhythmic thump of distant drums, players can practically smell the loamy jungle air and feel the twigs snapping underfoot. The realistic graphics provide an interest-

ing counterpoint to the cute-character animation and cartoonish depictions of the two main characters.

This game is guaranteed to test the limits of most climb-and-jump fans, both in skill and in endurance. Because

of the 3-D perspective, the controls take some getting used to, but even so, most arcaders won't want to stop after just one quarter. When you come right down to it, *Congo Bongo* is more fun than a barrel of humans. 



### SINISTAR HOW IT PLAYS:

After selecting the one- or two-player game, use the joystick to control your mining ship while gathering sinisite crystals and attacking or avoiding the enemy.

Use the fire button to blast the crystals free and to obliterate pesty red

drone ships. If you're unlucky enough to run across Sinistar, press the sinibomb button to drop bombs into his path. Remember though, in order to use the sinibomb button, you must have passed over some sinisite crystals earlier in the game.

### CONGO BONGO HOW IT PLAYS:

After selecting a one- or two-player game, use the joystick to maneuver the hapless hunter across the screen.

The action button makes him jump, either to leap over dangerous currents or to detach him from marauding monkeys. When hiding from a hippo, get into the pit and press the action button. This makes your explorer duck into the hole.



It's a beautiful climbing game with four screens and enough obstacles to make a monkey out of almost any human.





By THE GAME DOCTOR

## The Logarithmic Lowdown from the Doctor

**I** ever before, in all my years of birthing EPROMS and mending joysticks have these rheumy old eyes beheld such confusion among gamers. Software prices, which just a few months ago were growing like crazy, have suddenly begun to shrink like a cheap suit.

There are emulators, adapters, cassette loaded games for the VCS, keyboards, and gourmet joysticks in all colors, shapes and sizes. What is the poor arcader to do?

For one thing, use common sense. Demand a demonstration of a lower-priced game. Many of them are classics (albeit cobwebbed with disuse) from companies forced out of business often by arbitrary decisions that bore no relationship to product quality.

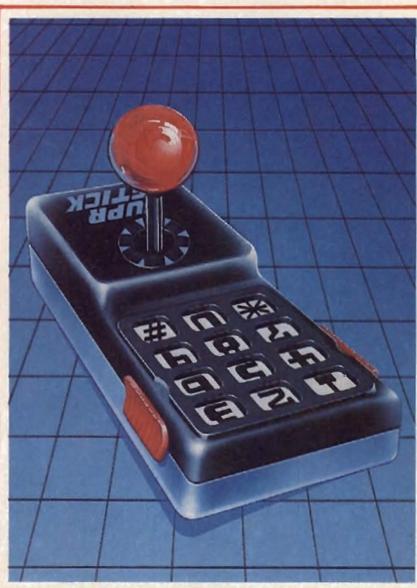
However, the real answer is to ask the old game doc. I may not have all the answers, but I know all the questions and I've never been shy about asking. So keep those cards and letters coming in. The doc just loves 'em.

Okay, enough of my folksy chit-chat, let's get on with some serious questions, such as this oft-asked query from an Odessa resident. Take it away, Ken. . .

**Q:** We would really appreciate a discussion of joystick options available for owners of the ColecoVision. Its own standard controller is quite inadequate for many of its own games and very little else is available as far as we know.

(Ken Newton, Odessa, MO)

**A:** Toss those beanies in the air, game mavens, your ColecoVision controller woes are over. Two major producers of quality 2600-compatible



SUPR STICK FOR COLECOVISION

controllers are making available fully compatible, dual-action button ColecoVision keypad/joystick hybrids.

D-Zyne, producer of the magnificent micro-switching Supr-Stick, has a wonderful new keypad with a slightly smaller shafted version of the famous Supr-Stick at the base.

Amiga, similarly, is grafting a keypad with dual action-buttons onto its tiny 2600-style joystick, with excellent results at the prototype level. Even Kraft, the King of Apple and 2600 joysticks, may enter the Coleco scramble before too long.

Meanwhile, as I've mentioned in the past, there are a number of existing 2600-compatible sticks which can be used with the ColecoVision, but be extremely careful here. Wico tracballs, for example, are seemingly inoperable on the C-V, as are any joy-

sticks not utilizing all nine pin-inputs (check this out by peering into the black connector switch that's inserted into the back of the VCS and make sure each and every slot has a pin in it).

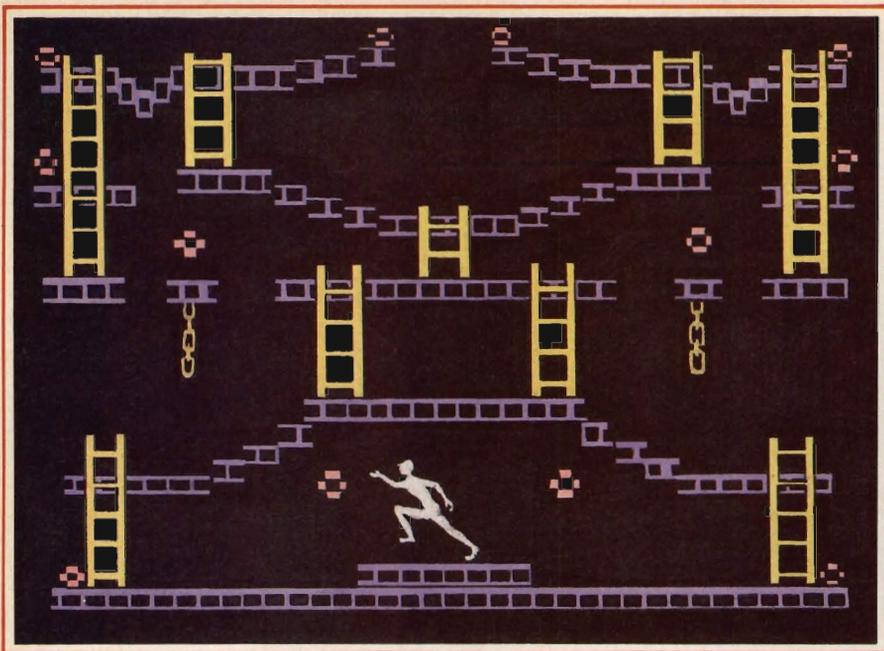
It seems inevitable that other companies, Wico among them, will soon be jumping aboard — and leave us not forget the new keypad/joystick grip-controller coming from Coleco itself.

**Q:** The Tempest playfield shown on page 87 of the February issue of EG looks like something Atari might produce for the 5200. Is it?

(Adam Zebari, Farmington Hills, MI)



THE POWER-STICK (AMIGA)



JUMPMAN

**A:** Once again, fooled by modern high-tech artistry, I see. Actually, Adam, the playfield to which you refer is a detailed rendering by artist David Prestone who, along with Amy Madwed (she did the *Jumpman* playfield in *EG's* August issue), draws

many of the newer or hard-to-get screens.

Remember, very few of the "playfields" seen in magazines and on the packaging are actual photographs. Through improved photographic techniques and via the use of several

photos per game, we can give gamers a look at all visual aspects of the game. In the "one shot" playfield, however, it may be necessary for an artistic representation to be used so that all the important game elements — which may never be seen simultaneously in actual game play — are pictured in a single screen-shot.

Of course, none of this is to say that you should not use the playfield artwork and photographs to help you make your decision when purchasing a new videogame. Even when the playfields are rendered by one of our artists, the actual game screen doesn't vary much from what appears alongside the review in the magazine.

That about wraps up another saga in the Days of the Game Doctor's Life. So, before any more sick microprocessors turn up at my door, I'd better pick up my video golf joysticks (I've got a Wico 9-iron you wouldn't believe) and hit those simulated links. Until then, stay sharp, keep your noses clean and stay tuned for next month's installment.

And keep those cards and letters coming in. . .



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- NEC-PC6001
- Commodore Vic-20
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# Q\* Bert

## A Catalog of Q\*Bert Merchandise

★ Q\*Bert, the cutest kiwi ever to cuss his way into arcaders' hearts, is coming home to roost — that is, if manufacturers of everything from bath mats to bubblegum cards have anything to say about it.

Because of the immense arcade popularity of the fuzzy-faced block-hopper — and because he's so darned cute — Gottlieb, Q\*Bert's manufacturer, has been selling licenses for Q\*Bert goodies faster than you can say "@!..?@!"

Parker Brothers, which is translating the arcade hit to cartridge and stand-alone formats, will follow up that coup with two non-electronic versions of the cube-climbing contest. Parker's Q\*Bert card game challenges players to build a four-tiered pyramid, while eluding that snake-in-the-grass, Coily.

Our favorite fuzz-face is also the star of a two-player board game that lets gamers alternate between taking the role of Q\*Bert and his adversaries in a territorial war for control of the cube pyramid. Both games should be in the stores in plenty of time for Christmas, as will, Parker Brothers' Q\*Bert flying disc, a kiwi-topped frisbee that can fly anywhere fuzz-face fans want to wing it.

Q\*Bert and friends are also popping up in the classroom, in the form of like-shaped eraser pens by Papermate, Presto-Magix rub-off transfers by the American Publishing Corporation, and Tri-Star's self-inking stamp set — for that distinctive touch on notebooks, term papers, and notes —

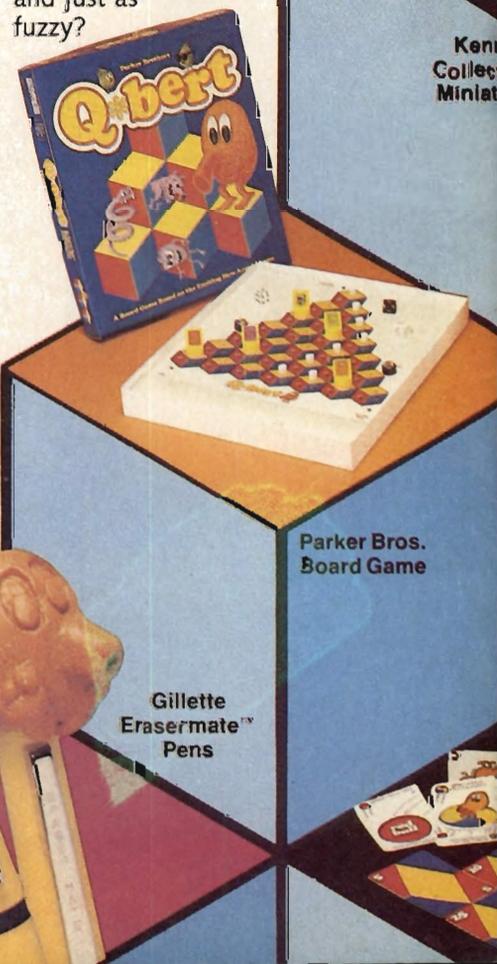
and lunch pails by the Ohio Art Company. Check out how many minutes are left until recess on Nelsonic Industries' Q\*Bert game watch, and carry it all to school in one of Remco's Q\*Bert tote bags. Maybe there's even room left in the bag for a few schoolbooks!

Of course, Q\*Bert will be just as comfortable in the home as in the classroom. Kids can even take him to bed — in the form of Q\*Bert sleeping bags by ERO Industries. Or, if beds are more to your liking, you can nod off to dreamland between J. P. Stevens Co.'s block-hopper sheets. For a perfect match, choose one of the Q\*Bert nightshirts, pajamas, or warmup suits designed by the W.S. Wormser Company, all sized just right for kids.

The well-dressed infant can bundle, sleep, or creep in one of Kent Inc.'s Q\*Bert baby outfits to match parents wearing Photo-Lith's T-shirts, sweatshirts, and baseball jerseys. There's even a Q\*Bert Halloween costume for those who dare. The flame-retardant children's costume comes with a cube-hopper mask and full-body suit guaranteed to warm the heart of any young arcader this Halloween.

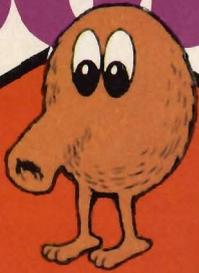
Q\*Bert products aren't just for wearing. Kenner has assembled

a line of collectible Q\*Bert figurines, which feature the block-hopper in a variety of amusing poses, clad in everything from hard hats to Walkman headsets and a skateboard. There's even a wind-up figure that can be set into motion with just a few flicks of the wrist. And what Q\*Bert collection would be complete without one of Kenner's huggable plush dolls, shaped and colored just like the original, and just as fuzzy?



# Comes Home

By SUSAN COOKE



Gottlieb  
Arcade Video  
Game

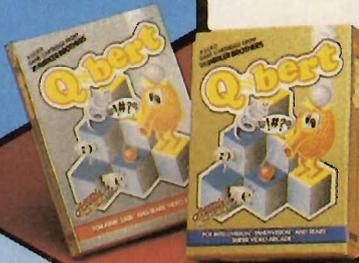


Photo-Lith  
T-Shirt

Remco  
Tote Bag



Kenner  
Plush  
Dolls



Parker Bros.  
Home Video  
Cartridges

Parker Bros.  
Card Game



Parker Bros.  
Table  
Top  
Game

Kenner  
Wind-Up  
Figure



Creative cube-climber fans have plenty to choose from. Kenner's *Play-Doh* play set comes with everything Q\*Bertniks need to shape their own block-hopper from colored clay. Another make-it-yourself-kit, *Color-*

*forms' Shrinky Dinks*, lets kids make their own Q\*Bert in shapes that shrink to fit whatever they want them to. Fundimensions Inc. is introducing three new ways to be creative with the cussin' kiwi. One set lets fans paint their own characters, the second is a Q\*Bert version of the successful *Make-It-Bake-It* series, and the third is the sweetest of them all. Q\*Bert candy molds are the perfect treat for hungry arcaders, and once used up, the molds can be refilled with anything candy lovers crave.

There's plenty of inflatable fun on the way for summer hopping or winter bopping. Lewis Galoob Industries is coming out with air-filled bop bags that let players bean each other — softly. The same company also makes a Q\*Bert life raft and chair, which might come in handy one hot summer day while taking a dip in Empire of Carolina's backyard children's swimming pool.

Of course, everything is festooned with the likeness of the kooky kiwi and his arrogant enemies. Blowhard block-hopper fans can channel all that hot air into one of the National Latex company's Q\*Bert balloons.

Even the Ohio Art Company, makers of the venerable *Etch-n-Sketch*, is

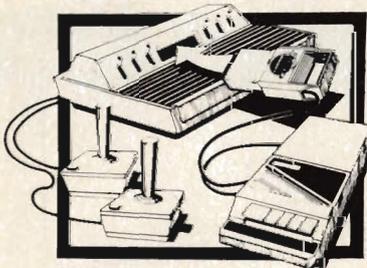
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# Q\*Bert

introducing a special screen for its classic best-seller, featuring good old you-know-who. Hasbro's Lite Brite is not immune to the kiwi craze, either. A Lite-Brite replacement set, that comes with patterns kids can follow to create their own pictures out of light pegs, includes a portrait of the block-hopper. The same company's Canadian division is making a Q\*Bert riding toy. So is Empire of Carolina. Although plans for the vehicles are still on the drawing board, both companies are working like the dickens to have their kiddie-karts ready in time for Christmas.

Other products also expected to be on the shelves by then: two target-shooting sets, by Place Products (darts) and Synergistics Research Corp. (velcro); a hand-held game by Sega; a plastic bank by A.J. Renzi Plastic Corp.; and a number of children's books by Parker Brothers Publishing.

Sticker lovers are certain to have their day, too — Topps Chewing Gum Inc. is detouring from the traditional sports card route to market Q\*Bert stickers, rub-off game cards, candy, and cardboard picture cards, and even has a special book available for serious sticker collectors. In a similar vein, Diamond Toymakers has an assortment of vinyl puffy stickers, scratch-n-sniff stickers, and paper flicker stickers.

Merchandisers haven't been so enthusiastic about a videogame character since Pac-Man. While the Q\*Bert craze may, or may not, end up as pervasive as Pac-Mania, it's certainly coming close. Like the dot-gobbler, Q\*Bert is starring in his very own Saturday morning cartoon, airing on CBS. Who can tell? Perhaps, if Q\*Bert's popularity mounts high enough, arcaders could be treated to a Ms. Q\*Bert pay-for-play machine sometime in 1984 or 1985. ☺





## Two Games for Thrill-Seekers

By JOYCE WORLEY

**A**dventure is the theme this month. We'll look at a trio of state-of-the-art stand-alones that take us from space to the screaming thrills of the auto race, to the deepest recesses of imaginary universes where strong-armed heroes struggle against cravens...all enjoyable from the warmth of your cozy armchair.

### ZAXXON

Coleco/\$60

Battle in space against the alien armies under the command of the robot Zaxxon. This merciless overlord uses computer-controlled armies to conquer the universe. They already control the asteroid belt, and if someone doesn't stop this mad machine, Zaxxon will enslave the entire galaxy. What's needed now is a fearless ace to rocket over the barriers and through the treacherous guards surrounding Zaxxon. But only a pilot with nerves of steel and pinpoint accuracy can fly the torturous course, demolish the hunk of nuts and bolts, and save the world from Zaxxon's armies.

Sega Enterprises' outstanding three-dimensional coin-op introduced **Zaxxon** to the gaming world, thrilling arcaders with its spectacular graphics erupting from the screen.

Coleco bought the videogame rights to the coin-snatcher, and home arcaders got a chance to play their



ZAXXON STAND-ALONE (COLECO)

favorite space thriller with the ColecoVision cartridge. The company also produced versions for the Intellivision and the Atari 2600.

They said it couldn't be done, but the technical wizards at Coleco must not have been listening! Now, *Zaxxon* has been fashioned into a stand-alone table-top model.

The unit features two vacuum fluorescent displays which combine to produce multi-colored 3-D action that is calculated to leave gamers bug-eyed with amazement.

The joystick-jockey mans a jet fighter that must clear out the alien emplacement on the asteroid. There

are high fortress walls that must be traversed in order to get to the battle on the other side. Use the mini-controller to fly over the wall, or glide through the gaps, then fire energy blasts at the missiles, tanks and fuel reserves that compose the robot's arsenal. Once past the fortress walls, the jet soars out into open space. But the battle isn't over yet! Enemy fighters roar out of the darkness and launch missiles at the jet. The resulting combat puts the arcader nose to nose with disaster as he twists and turns, banking left and right, climbing and diving to evade on-coming projectiles.

Once past the space fleet, the arcader's jet flies on to the next asteroid Zaxxon controls. This time the robot himself is on the spot, personally directing his troops. Fly over the barrier walls, blasting tanks, fuel dumps and missiles, then try for a clear shot at the golden goliath. It only takes one hit to make him disappear. The robot isn't really dead, and returns to challenge the heroic pilot again and again.

The game recycles when the arcader completes the course, but this time the enemy missiles are more deadly, game-speed is faster, and those barrier walls possess teeth in the form of electronic shields. The fortress is now topped by an electric fence, and if the fighter flies into it, the barrier zaps the plane. On the second level and above,

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it's necessary to fly very carefully through the gaps in the wall, since the electrified barrier makes it impossible to just glide over the top.

The player gets four space fighters at the beginning of each game and wins a fifth if the score hits 100. Everything the fighter shoots gains points for the gamer. The fuel arsenals are four points each, the tanks are six, shooting a missile tallies two, and the golden robot, Zaxxon, is worth 20 points.

This mini-arcade is styled to resemble the Sega coin-op. Twin fire buttons flank an aircraft-style joystick. Pull down on the stick to make the plane climb, and push away to dive. Bank the fighter left or right by pushing the stick in the appropriate direction as it climbs or dives. It takes a little practice to handle these controls, but they're very precise once the gamer is accustomed to the joystick.

The designers had to make some sacrifices in graphics when shrinking the coin-op to table-top size. The lush richness of the pictures in the pay-for-play and home videogame versions is missing from the mini-arcade. What is left may seem pared down.

The graphic treatment is minimal, compared to the video versions of Zaxxon. The fortress walls stretch across the screen, and markers indicate the sides of the asteroid, but the ground isn't shown, so the barriers seem suspended in space. On the other hand, the game components are attractively rendered in blue and red. The fighter ship and all missiles are scarlet. Barrier walls are blue, and tanks, enemy emplacements and fuel arsenals all combine these hues. The on-screen scoring is florescent green, and the unit retains high score until it's turned off.

True to its coin-op ancestry, the table-top Zaxxon is not easy to master. Novice gamers may become frustrated just trying to fly over the barriers. Fire the missiles constantly, and note if they clear the wall. If one does, a jet can pass over safely as well. If not, the jet will surely crash. Beyond the wall, it's practice-practice-practice makes perfect, as Zaxxon throws his

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best troops in the path to try to halt the gamer's attack.

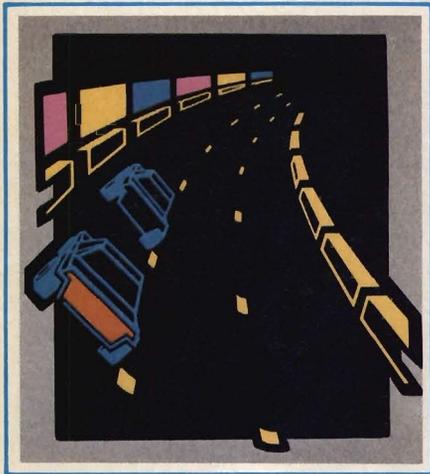
Arcaders who liked the coin-op version of *Zaxxon* because of its ornate graphics may be disappointed in this table-topper. But if it's action you crave in your stand-alone games, then this is the one for you!

### TOMYTRONIC 3-D THUNDERING TURBO

Tomy Corporation/Under \$50

Enjoy a day at the brickyard with *Tomy's Thundering Turbo*, a stock-car competition for would-be Mario Andretti's. Tomy put three lanes of traffic into a field-glass-styled handheld unit that puts the track right before your eyes in three-dimensions. It's the next best thing to driving the Indianapolis 500!

The *Thundering Turbo* housing resembles futuristic binoculars. The goggles separate the images, just like



THUNDERING TURBO (TOMY CORP.)

paper glasses in 3-D movies, so the scene comes together in stirring graphics that seem to pop right off the screen! You can almost smell the dust off the track, and hear the scream of the motors, it's that real!

A three-lane highway fills the playfield. The race starts with a fanfare, then the arcader steers his vehicle in a high-speed contest. Fences line the track, and billboards add spots of color as the car streaks past.

Jam cars appear in all three lanes, moving at slow speeds in the right lane, moderate in the middle, and racing along at a good clip in the left lane. Outrun the jam cars to score points, swerving from lane to lane to pass the other vehicles. Be careful not to crash, or your car wrecks in a stirring graphic display. Wheels fly, and the auto flips end over end, all the way across the track's three lanes.

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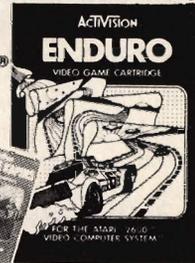
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The driver's controls are right at fingertip level. Buttons move the racer right or left, from lane to lane, and the accelerator increases the speed. Release the accel button, and the car immediately slows down.

Score one point for each jam car

passed, and lose a point every time one passes you. Games consist of three races, each approximately 100 seconds long. The arcader gets three cars per race. If he wrecks all his vehicles during one contest, the game ends, but manage to hold onto even one and the next race starts again with three. At the end of each race, the score is doubled, so the tally really begins to mount up if the gamer can survive the traffic for all three heats.

The sounds are a delightful addition. A fanfare starts the game, racing motors accompany the contest,

and wrecks are marked by a cacophony of noises. Everytime the racer passes a jam car, there's a sound signal; and a fanfare salutes the victory if the driver survives 'till the end of the race.

Many electronic games look awful in too much light, but the *Tomytronic 3-D* design is completely unique. It uses a skylight in the housing to permit roomlight (or sunlight if you're outdoors) to stream into the image, producing a glowing picture on-screen that is only enhanced by additional illumination. So this 3-D hand-held is just the perfect beach companion. In fact, it even comes with a strap to make it convenient to carry around your neck.

*Thundering Turbo* isn't difficult to play at its easiest level. Even a very young arcader should be able to have hours of fun. But the skill level increases after each race is completed, by adding more jam cars on track. If

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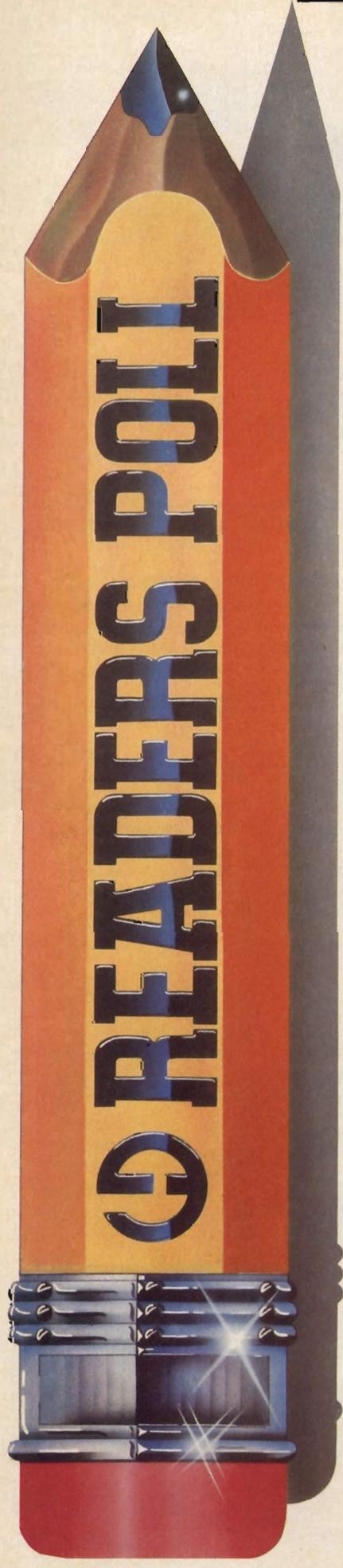
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the car is racing down the track and there's no room to pass between the on-coming jam cars, the players will have to slow down until the traffic clears up. The key to high scores with this game is avoiding collisions, then getting back to top speed as quick as the track opens.

*Thundering Turbo* can't be turned off during a race. But it shuts itself off automatically if the unit isn't played for three minutes. This battery-saving feature is especially nice for families with small children who might forget to turn off the viewer when they've finished the game.

This is undoubtedly the best hand-held racing game produced to date. The action is fast; the graphics are stunning, and it really is 3-dimension-  
 all!



Interaction between the readers and editors of **Electronic Games** helps make this a better magazine. The more we here at **EG** know about who you are and what you want to read, the better we can satisfy your needs and desires. That's why we run a Reader Poll in every single issue of this magazine. Rest assured that even though we protect the anonymity of every respondent to our survey, the editor personally reads each and every ballot received. And of course, this is also your ballot for casting your vote for the most popular videogames, computer game programs and coin-op arcade machines.

Please return this poll sheet — or a photocopy, if you prefer to keep your **Electronic Games** in perfect condition — to: **Electronic Games**, 460 West 34th Street, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10001.

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	Own	Plan to Buy
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Apple II	_____	_____
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How many hours per week do you spend playing various electronic games:

Less than 2 hours  2-5 hours  6-10 hours  More than 10 hours

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How many people, besides yourself will read this issue of **Electronic Games**: \_\_\_\_\_

My favorite videogame cartridges are:

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3. \_\_\_\_\_

My favorite coin-op games are:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

# Coming Attractions

## THE PLAYERS GUIDE TO MICROCOMPUTERS

Low-cost computers have become the ultimate home arcades in the last year or so, with hundreds of fascinating disks, tapes and cartridges keeping gamers busy with keyboard and joystick. EG's magazine-within-a-magazine covers all the major brands to help you make the right buying decision.

## EYE ON MONITORS

Lots of home arcaders hook their machines to the family television set, but more and more are becoming attracted to the advantages of using a monitor. Our technical guru has studied the available monitors inside and out. His report is "must" reading for anyone thinking about going out and buying one of these peripherals.

## EG's THIRD ANNUAL GIFTS FOR GAMERS

The holiday season is coming, and we've all got a lot of presents to purchase. Once again, Electronic Games presents more gift ideas than even Santa needs for those gamers in your life.

## LETTERS TO PAC-MAN

Santa Claus isn't the only one who gets

letters from youngsters. Here's what a bunch of young game-loving kids wanted to say to the gallant gobble.

## JOYSTICK DENTISTRY

It's hard to believe, but there's really a dentist who uses videogames to soothe patients while he drills. Read the amazing story in December! And no, his name is not Dr. Dental.

There'll be plenty of other exciting articles and features of interest to arcaders, plus these regular columns:

- |                                |                         |                              |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------|
| ★ <b>Passport to Adventure</b> | ★ <b>Switch On!</b>     | ★ <b>Stand-Alone Scene</b>   |
| ★ <b>Q&amp;A</b>               | ★ <b>New Products</b>   | ★ <b>Mini-Arcade Gallery</b> |
| ★ <b>Inside Gaming</b>         | ★ <b>Test Lab</b>       | ★ <b>In Control</b>          |
| ★ <b>Arcade America</b>        | ★ <b>Readers Replay</b> | ★ <b>Strategy Session</b>    |
| ★ <b>Computer Gaming</b>       | ★ <b>EG Hotline</b>     | ★ <b>Insert Coin Here</b>    |
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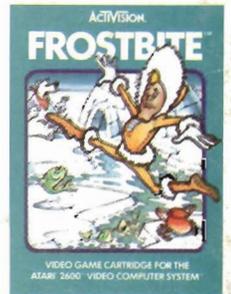
or he becomes a polar popsicle.

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