PLAYERS GUIDE TO MICROCOMPUTERS

# electronic GAMES

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EG's THIRD ANNUAL
## GIFTS FOR GAMERS

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## EYE ON MONITORS

EVALUATION OF NEW JOYSTICKS:
## IN CONTROL

## LETTERS TO PAC-MAN

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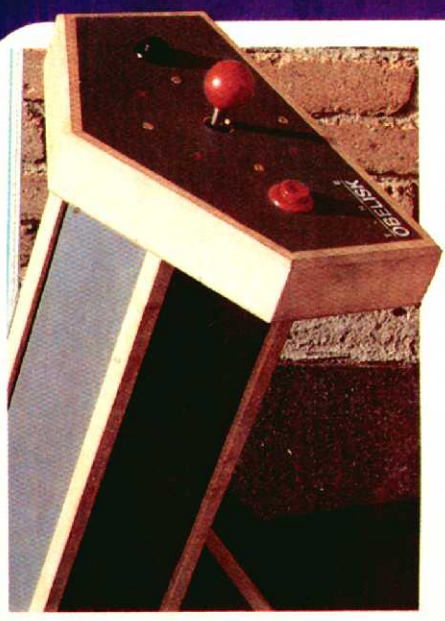
# electronic GAMES



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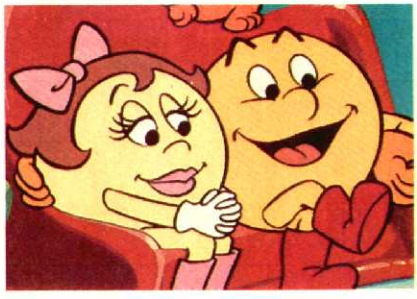
*All TV celebrities get fan mail, and the gallant gobbler is no exception. Here are the sometimes funny, sometimes sweet missives kids write to America's favorite pouncer on power pills.*

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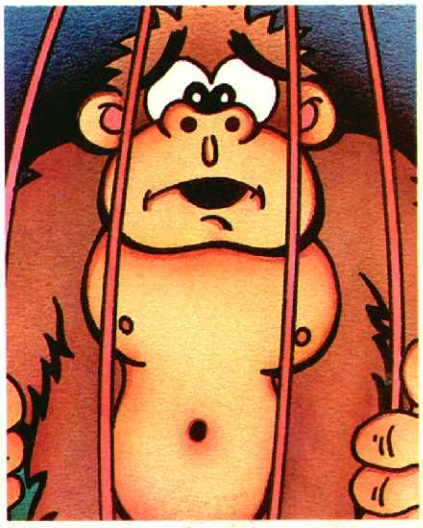
### 112 EYE ON MONITORS
*Until recently, everyone ran home fun machines through TV sets. Now the computer gaming age has brought special video display terminals. Read this article to get a clear picture.*




**ELECTRONIC GAMES** (ISSN 0730-6687)) is published monthly by Reese Communications, Inc., 460 West 34th Street, New York, NY 10001. Second-class postage paid at New York, NY and additional mailing office.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Single copy price, $2.95. Subscription rates: one year (12 issues) $28; two years (24 issues) $48; Canada, one year $32; foreign, air mail only, one year $64, U.S. funds. Address subscription orders and correspondence to **ELECTRONIC GAMES**, P.O. Box 1128, Dover, NJ 07801 or call (201) 361-9550. 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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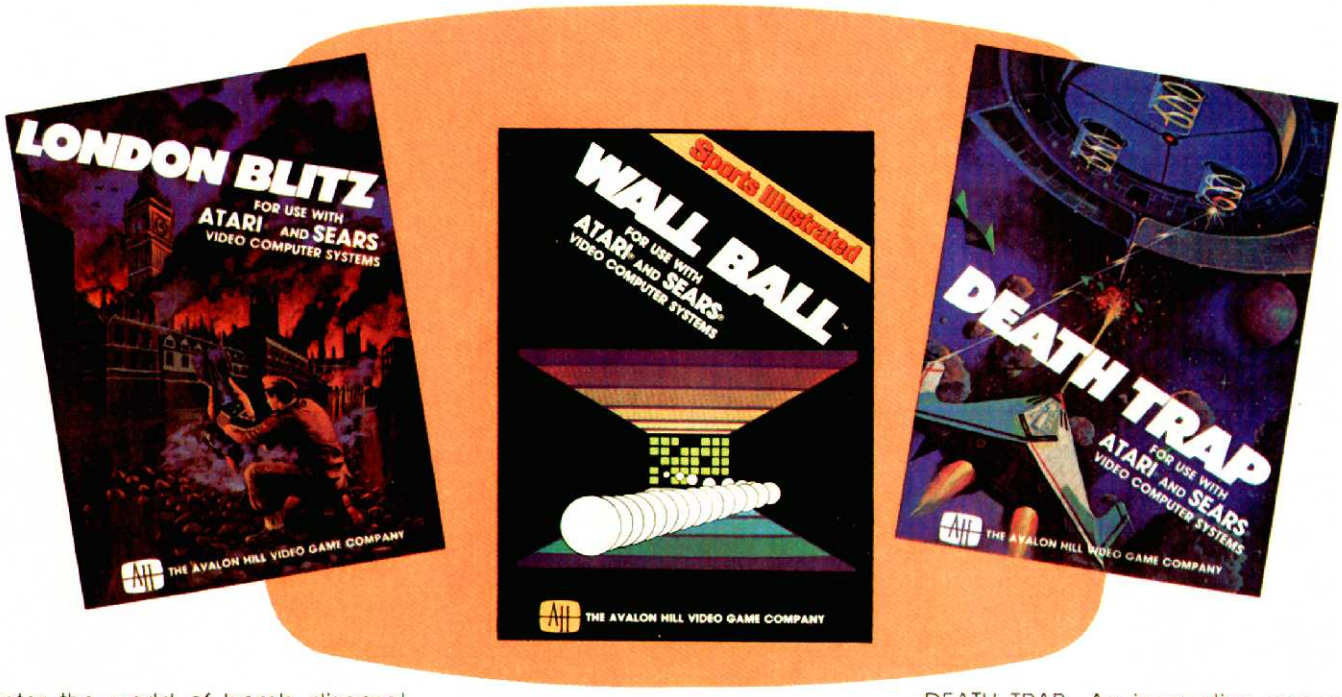
# "AH!"

## Finally, Video Games that really defy boredom!

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# Some Dreams Really Do Come True

By ARNIE KATZ

As I sit here in Reese Communications' palatial offices overlooking the historic Hudson River, I almost feel like I should give myself a quick pinch to make sure that I haven't drifted out of this world into fantasyland. That's probably what the 12-year-old Arnie Katz would have thought, if he could see how things stand now.

Like most kids, I had a full storehouse of wants and wishes, none of which I ever really expected to see come true. One fantasy stands out in my memory from all the other notions about humungous translayouts and the like: I wanted to be rich enough to own a personal arcade.

I think I got this idea from reading articles about millionaires who had their own indoor swimming pools, target ranges and bowling alleys. None of these actually appealed to me that strongly, but I'd have given up my mint baseball card collection to cram a half-dozen pinball machines into one of the rooms in the finished basement of my parents' Long Island home.

I can still see that adolescent vision in my mind's eye. What heaven, my younger self thought, to play and play without having to shovel silver into the coin slot.

That dream of 20 years

ago has come true so thoroughly and completely that it makes my childish imaginings seem pale and uninspired by comparison. Thanks to technology that was little more than far-out science fiction back then, I've got an apartment that would have kept that teenaged Arnie Katz pop-eyed for months. Instead of the four or five games that would've made me feel like a king in 1960, I've probably got over a thousand if you count up all the videogames, computer games and standalone units that line every shelf and fill every closet of my apartment.

Quantity isn't the only way in which reality has surpassed my wish. Today's electronic games present a variety of mind and body challenges that pinball by itself could never equal. Imagine being able to blast a horde of attacking aliens one minute — and then assume the role of a super-sleuth out to crack a tough murder case the next!

So, as I enjoy the traditional holiday pastime of counting up my blessings, I hope you loyal **EG** readers are doing the same, and that you have many, many dreams-come-true of your own now and in the future. From all of us here at **Electronic Games**, a merry Christmas, happy Chanukah and joyous New Year to our fellow game-lovers everywhere!

Volume Two, Number Ten
December, 1983

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# NOW YOU CAN GET INTO POLE POSITION* AT HOME.

*Prepare to qualify for Pole Position right in your living room. Because the #1 arcade hit of 1983 is now available for the ATARI® 2600™ Game and the Sears Video Arcade† systems. As well as an exclusive version for all ATARI Home Computers and the 5200™ SuperSystem.*

*No other racing game will demand your total concentration like Pole Position will. The hairpin curve will tax your reflexes. And avoiding accidents will challenge your ability to make split-second decisions.*

*Prepare yourself for the ultimate driving experience—Pole Position—the home version by Atari.*

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# HOTLINE

## VECTREX ADDS TO ITS PERIPHERALS

Believe it or not, the Vectrex stand-alone unit can now be transformed into a home computer! With the assistance of a new keyboard, developed by General Consumer Electronics, the plug-in adds 16K ROM and 16K RAM to the unit, and even incorporates a 65-key typewriter-style keyboard.

Software for the computer is made on wafer-tapes, providing for 128K bytes of storage. BASIC's built into the system, and the keyboard is just the first step toward a word processor that'll be introduced in early 1984.

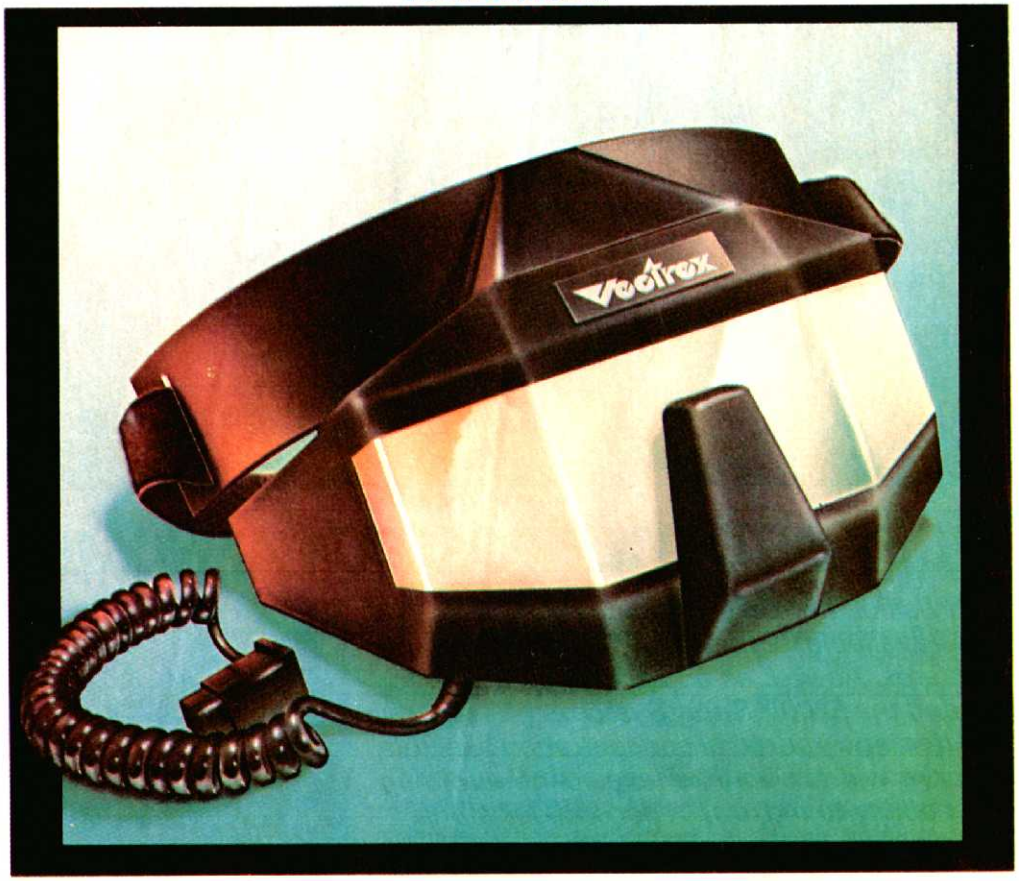
LIGHTPEN (VECTREX)

Five cartridges for the '83 computer include: **The Sound Studio**, a music composition aid; **Exploring the Solar System**; **Create-A-Game/Maze**, which teaches the user to program his very own video-entertainment; **Basic Animation**; and **Basic Science**, a game teaching the fundamental concepts of physics.

The Vectrex "3-D Imager" plugs into the second controller slot so gamers can play full games in three dimensions. Another new creation, the "Vectrex Light Pen", lets gamers interact with their consoles, by creating graphic effects, composing music and/or animating their very own cartoons straight off their screens.

Four games designed for use with the Light Pen are: **Art Master**, **Melody Master**, **Animation** and **Mail Plane**.

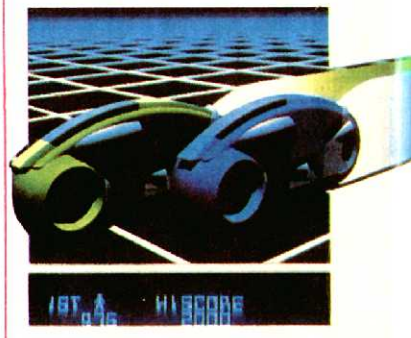
3-D IMAGER (VECTREX)

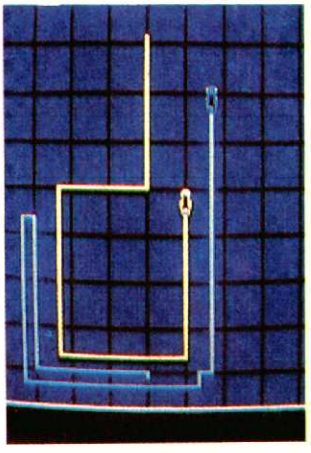



## DISNEY GETS SUED FOR "TRON" MOVIE

A NYC filmmaker named Daniel Risdon is currently sueing Disney Productions and "Tron" screenwriter, Steven Lisberger, charging copyright infringement.

Risdon maintains that "Tron" is based on the plot of "Megalopolis, The Computer City", a screenplay he wrote in 1977.





Supposedly, Risdon showed the script for "Megalopolis" to Lisberger, and he states that "Tron" contained several essential elements from his play "disguised within the formula plot."

Risdon is asking for $14 million in damages, as his share of the profits from the movie and book sales published by Simon & Schuster and Ballantine Books.

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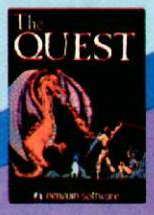

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### Fantasy Role Playing

Games for Apple, Atari, Commodore, and IBM computers

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# HOTLINE

## GAMERS CASH IN ON 'FAX' VIDEOGAME

Exidy hosted a contest offering assorted prizes for questions and answers to be used in the next version of its **Fax** game. Applicants had to submit at least 15 usable Q&A's in order to be eligible to win. In fact, Exidy advised gamers to submit *more* than the required 15, since the entrant who submitted the most questions Exidy decided to incorporate into the game, would win the Grand Prize. More on this later.

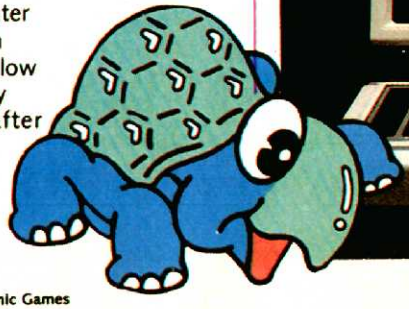
## ATARI BRINGS "MARIO BROS." HOME

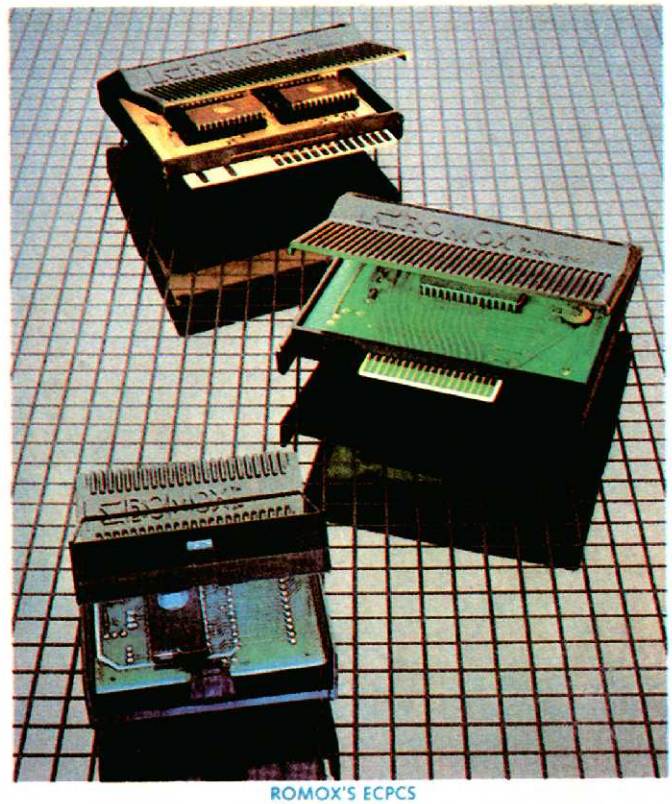
Nintendo has consented to grant Atari exclusive worldwide (except Japan) licensing for home videogames *and* computer games based upon the **Mario Brothers** quarter-snatcher.

MARIO BROS. (NINTENDO)

Atari already owns the rights for the **Donkey Kong** and **Donkey Kong Junior** computer versions, which, by the way, should be on the shelves as this goes to press.

For all those gamers desperate for Atari's *Mario Brothers* home version, just hang on a little longer and you can look forward to its debut sometime around Santa-time, while the computer version will follow shortly thereafter in early 1984.





ROMOX'S ECPCS

## REPROGRAMMABLE CARTRIDGES

The cartridges used in the half-dozen or so games which Romox has marketed for the Atari computers are more innovative than some of the programs they hold. All of the company's titles were produced on revolutionary "Edge Connector Programmable Cartridges (ECPC), which allow Romox to offer a unique form of trade-in on previously purchased games.

If the company succeeds in establishing the retailer network it is currently working to develop, a gamer could simply go to an authorized store, give the clerk an old cartridge and $5 and go home a few minutes later with an entirely new game resident on it.

Besides the Atari computers, Romox hopes to get the Commodore 64 and the Texas Instruments TI 99/4A involved with this innovative system, also.

ROMOX TERMINAL

## ALL SYSTEMS GO AT INFOCOM

Instead of making games for a select few videogame and computer systems, Infocom has found a way to make everybody happy by marketing its line of prose adventures for no less than *13* different microcomputers!

All seven Infocom interactive games will be made available for the following systems: Apple II, Atari, Commodore 64, CP/M DEC Rainbow, DEC RT-11, IBM-PC, NEC APC, NEC PC-8000, Osborne 1, TRS-80 Model 1, TRS Model 111, and the Texas Instruments Professional.

## Q*BERT CARTOONS A COMIN'

**Q*bert,** that cuddy cube-hopper, is the latest videogame-TV personality to join the Ruby Spears' cartoon series "Saturday Supercade".

Airing on CBS, our man

Q*BERT

Q*bert stars in his own show set in fantasyland, as he and his young buddies "Q-Tee", "Q-Ball", and "Q-Bit", along with his gal "Q-Val" have lots of teenage adventures while simultaneously attempting to ward off the evil "Coily" and his accomplices.

Both young and old gamers alike can catch "Saturday Supercade" at 8:30-9:30 EST, or 7:30-8:30 PST.

# When you play Congo Bongo you'll die laughing.

A funny thing happens when you play Congo Bongo, the new home game from Sega. In fact, a lot of funny things happen.

You have to get to Congo, the mighty ape, before the jungle beasts get to you. Dodge falling coconuts as you scale Monkey Mountain. Shake the monkey from your back and chase Congo onto the lagoon screen. Then cross the water on the backs of hippos, lily pads and hunter-eating fish. And do it all before Congo makes a monkey out of you.

But watch your step — one slip and it's off to hunter heaven.

Congo Bongo. Straight from the arcade and into your home. It's more fun than a barrel of, well, monkeys.

**Made for:**
**Atari® 2600™**
**Atari® 5200™**
**Atari® Home Computers,**
**Commodore 64™ and VIC-20,™ Texas Instruments 99/4A™**
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# HOTLINE

THE POWER SYSTEM (AMIGA)

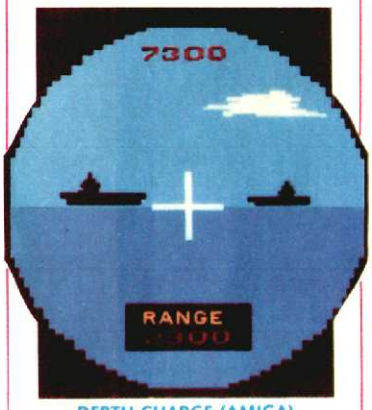
## AMIGA MAKES THREE-GAME CARTRIDGES

Remember all those oh-so strikingly innovative double-ender cartridges from Xonox? How about taking this idea one step beyond with Amiga's latest line of three-game cartridges for the Atari 2600.

The new multi-play cartridges, entitled "The Power-Play Arcade Series", each house three entirely different videogames.

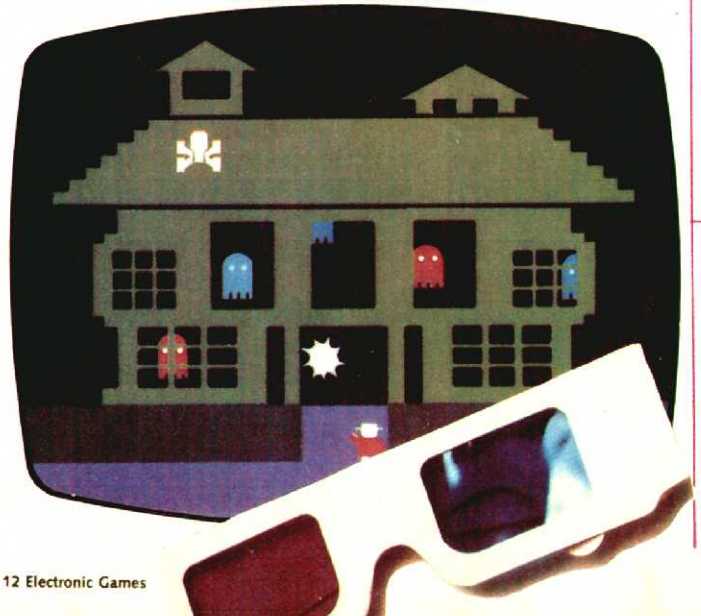
Three of the 3-D games found on the first "Power-Play Arcade" should prove pretty popular with many 3-D goers. Gamers can look forward to **3-D Ghost Attack**, **3-D Havoc**, and **3-D Genesis**, retailing from $30-$40.

As an Xmas bonus, two additional triple-play cartridges are scheduled for pre-holiday delivery, so start looking for your Xmas stockings or you just may be in for a "really" scary surprise — when you don't get 'em!




DEPTH CHARGE (AMIGA)

3-D GHOST ATTACK (AMIGA)



## JAPAN'S LATEST COIN-OP SET TO HIT AMERICA

Sega thinks it has another **Space Invaders** blockbuster in its pocket, with its latest pay-for-play machine entitled **Champion Baseball**. According to Sega's VP of Marketing, Bob Rosenbaum, *Champion Baseball* generates the very same freneticism among Japanese arcaders, as was previously found with the immortal *Space Invaders*.

Sega's latest unveiling allows arcaders to choose their favorite city's team to compete against the computer's team choice. Gamers even get the option of selecting relief pitchers or pinch hitters, while an umpire looks on attentively to make the game calls.

The action-packed coin-op comes complete with a split screen for viewing from two vantage points: one shows the field from behind home plate while the other depicts everything from the outfield. This quarter-snatcher even incorporates a detail screen depicting the batter and pitcher in all their glory!

INFOCOM'S INTERLOGIC SERIES

## INFOCOM PLANS FANTASY TRILOGY

Infocom will continue producing its award-winning line of adventure games by creating a trilogy of fantasy games.

The first title, named **Enchanter**, was co-authored by Marc Blank and Dave Lebling (the guys who created **Zork**). *Enchanter* promises an imaginative journey into a "world of magical powers and perilous predicaments", whereby gamers explore a desolate castle filled with all kinds of magical trappings, and learn to spell scrolls in order to outsmart an evil warlock.

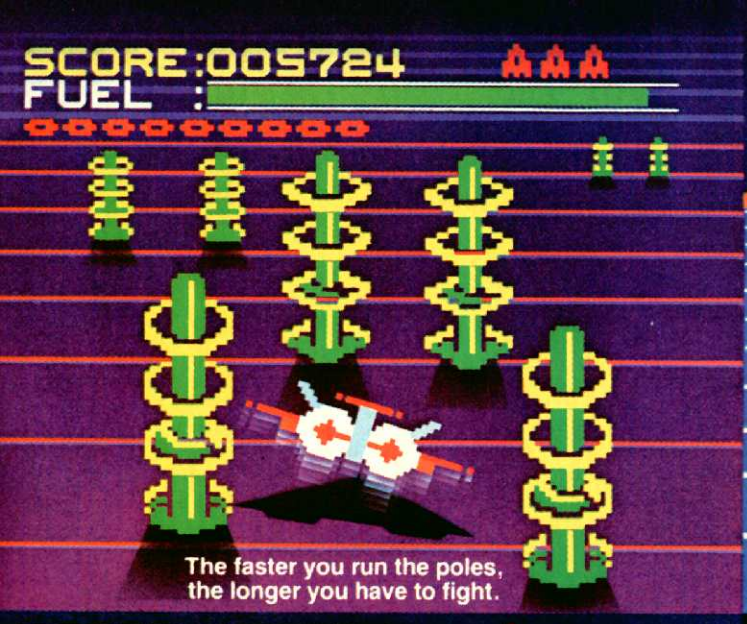
Blank states that the game was written in the *Zork* tradition, meaning its emphasis is basically on treasure and fighting. Infocom's latest *Enchanter* clearly focuses on "magic".

*Enchanter* will retail for approximately $50, and play on virtually every popular microcomputer on the market.

## MATTEL CUTS STAFF AGAIN

Mattel Electronics has reduced the number of jobs at their firm to 1140 employees by cutting another 400 workers from its staff. This follows an initial cut of 260 employees several months ago.

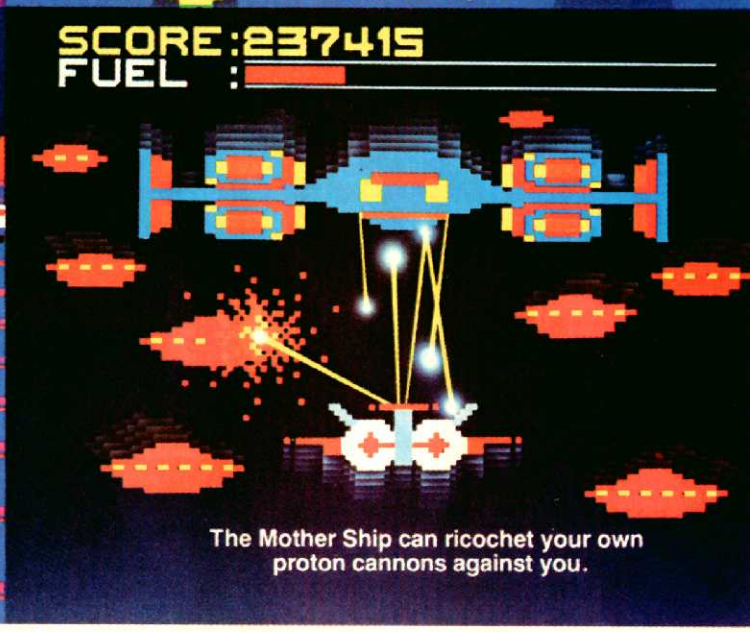
Even though the company reportedly expects a pre-tax loss in the second quarter totalling over $100 million, Mattel spokesmen declare that Mattel has *not* changed any of its plans, and will continue developing new software and hardware for videogame systems despite the layoffs. Rumors to the contrary, however, keep observers guessing.




The faster you run the poles, the longer you have to fight.

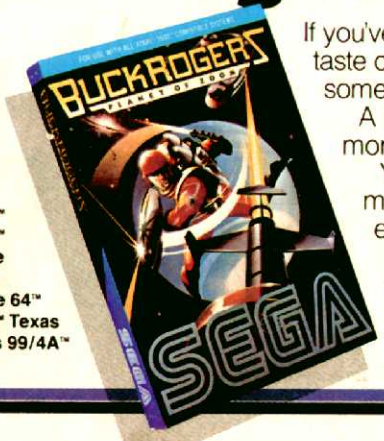
Blasting saucers gets you points, but could cost you time.

Watch out for hopping droids. They'll stomp you flat.




The Mother Ship can ricochet your own proton cannons against you.

# Buck Rogers, Planet of Zoom. Your one chance to defeat the toughest enemy of all. Time.




If you've played Buck Rogers, Planet of Zoom in the arcades, you've had a taste of what space chase action is all about. Now maybe you're ready for something even better.

A home game that takes the arcade version and makes it even faster, more challenging, more fun.

You'll battle your way through 3-D space. Maneuver through bullet-firing magnetic poles and alien saucers. Shoot it out with hopping droids and enemy fighters until you face the ultimate challenge, the mother ship.

But time is not on your side. You have to be fast to destroy the mother ship. If you're too slow, kiss mother goodbye.

Look for Buck Rogers at your local store. But hurry. This is one game that's really moving fast.

**Made for:**
**Atari® 2600™**
**Atari® 5200™**
**Atari® Home Computers,**
**Commodore 64™ and VIC-20,™ Texas Instruments 99/4A™**

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Because we've broken the sound barrier on home computer games. With music. You heard right. Music.

And we're not talking mamby-pamby little bleeps here, pal. We're talking toe-tapping, finger-snapping, Top-40 stuff. Scored just for our newest releases. And playing throughout.

Which ought to keep a Joystick Jockey like yourself humming right along through each and every blast, bomb and blow-up that threatens your existence.

From strategy games to shoot 'em ups.

Are you ready to face the music?

*If Our Music Has You Hearing Things, Wait Till You See This.*

Incredible, arcade-quality graphics.

And they're so great—how great are they? They're so great you'll want to play them again and again. And then you'll tell your friends about them. And they'll want to play. And then your family will find out and they'll all want to play. And then that fat kid down the block will want to play. And all your sister's friends. And their boyfriends. And . . . better keep our newest releases a secret. Or get Dad to pop for another Atari.

*The First Games Ever, That Tell You What The Heck Is Going On, Right At The Start.*

It's just like a movie.

Except, instead of filling both hands with buttery popcorn, you've got your hand on the Joystick, tensed up for what's to come.

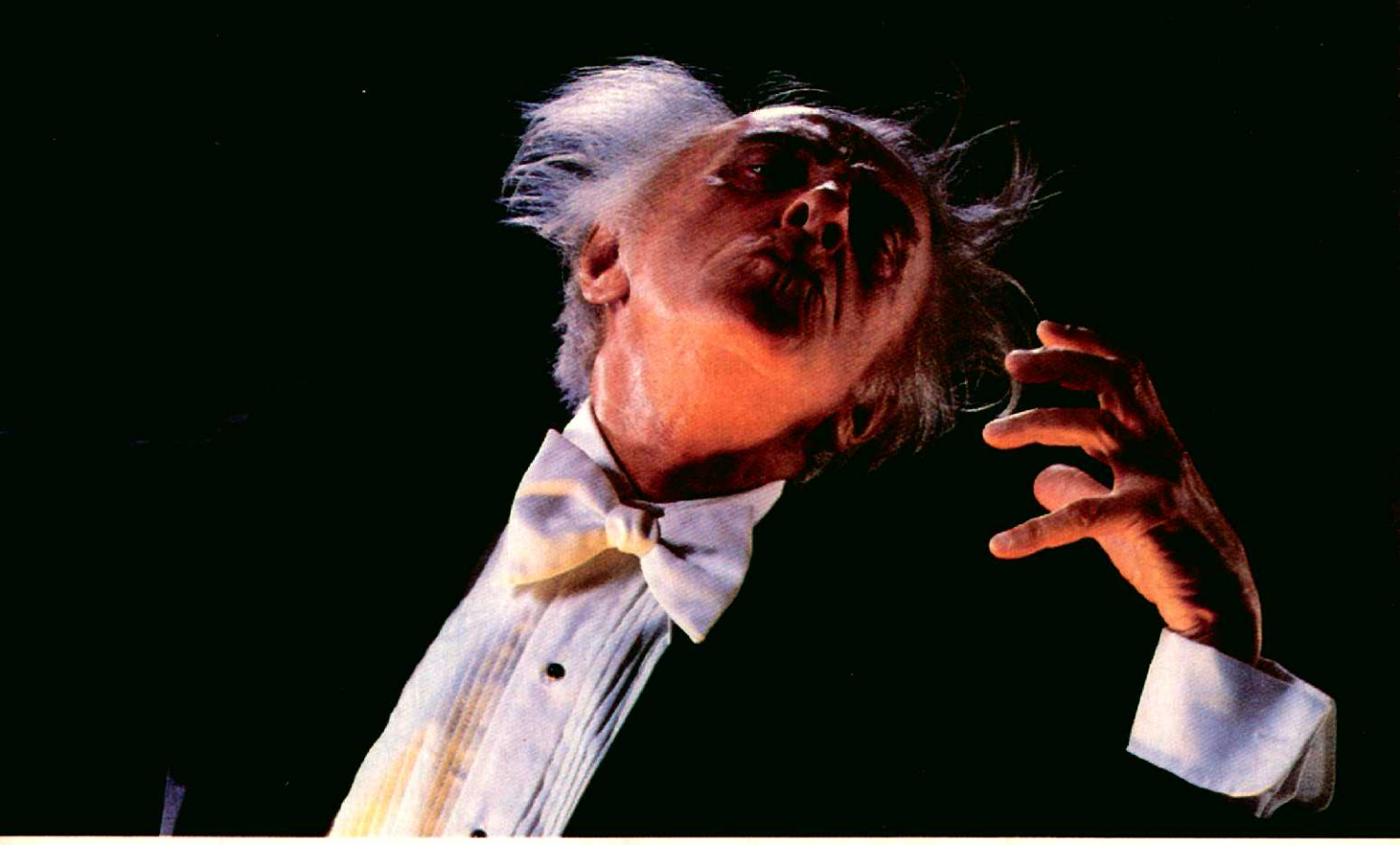
And while you wait, poised, ready, eager, you'll find out, through the terrific screen titles, the objective of the game, the characters and the scenario.

You'll find out what planet you're on.

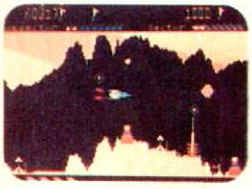
What the fuss is all about.

Why you're involved.

And perhaps of singular importance to you, how to keep from being obliterated.



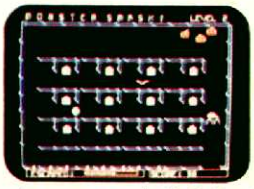
# real music for your Atari.*



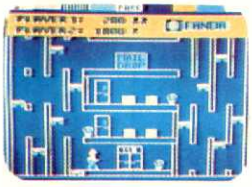
Our star. Our Numero Uno. The Tail of Beta Lyrae.™ Changes as you play. Will drive you out of your mind with unexpected switcheroonies. No one's ever mastered it. But you sure can try...

And then there's Cosmic Tunnels.™ Four games in one. Meaning four times the challenge. Four times the chance you might just get blown away. The graphics are sure to blow your mind!

Mr. Robot and His Robot Factory.™ Looking for a factory job? Here's an opening. Help Mr. Robot thwart the aliens. Screens scream with color, action and sound! Plus, a graphics kit to design your own game screens!



Monster Smash™ is the gravest game to ever hit the cemetery. And it's filled with a deathly strategy. What do you have to do? Mash the monsters! Let the visitors live.



Cohen's Tower™ gets you used to life in the Big City fast. Starting you off in a skyscraper. But the boss is really watching. So work fast. You might just get a raise... if you can handle the action.

Get ready to bring your Atari the most playable, the most graphically involving new games it's ever screened. Or heard.

It's the most out of our minds.

And together, with your Atari, we make beautiful music.

**DATAMOST**

**The most out of our minds.™**

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# E.G. READERS PICK THEIR FAVORITE GAMES

## Most Popular Videogame Cartridges

| Position This Month | Position Last Month | Times on List | Game | System | Manufacturer |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 1 | 5 | Donkey Kong, Jr. | ColecoVision | Coleco |
| 2 | 3 | 5 | Centipede | Atari 5200 | Atari |
| 3 | 9 | 5 | Ms. Pac-Man | Atari 2600 | Atari |
| 4 | 4 | 13 | Donkey Kong | ColecoVision | Coleco |
| 5 | 5 | 13 | Pitfall | Atari 2600 | Activision |
| 6 | 8 | 9 | Lady Bug | ColecoVision | Coleco |
| 7 | New | New | Keystone Kapers | Atari 2600 | Activision |
| 8 | 12 | 4 | Pac-Man | Atari 5200 | Atari |
| 9 | New | New | Vanguard | Atari 5200 | Atari |
| 10 | New | New | Looping | ColecoVision | Coleco |
| 11 | 6 | 9 | River Raid | Atari 2600 | Activision |
| 12 | New | New | Miner 2049er | Atari 5200 | Big Five |
| 13 | 11 | 6 | Turbo | ColecoVision | Coleco |
| 14 | 2 | 12 | Zaxxon | ColecoVision | Coleco |
| 15 | New | New | Burgertime | Intellivision | Mattel |

## Most Popular Computer Games

| Position This Month | Position Last Month | Times on List | Game | System | Manufacturer |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 5 | 7 | Miner 2049er | Atari/Apple | Big Five/Micro Fun |
| 2 | 1 | 20 | Star Raiders | AT 4-8-1200 | Atari |
| 3 | 3 | 13 | Centipede | AT 4-8-1200 | Atari |
| 4 | 10 | 5 | Astro Chase | AT 4-8-1200 | First Star/Parker |
| 5 | 4 | 10 | Choplifter! | Atari/Apple, VIC-20 | Broderbund Creative Software |
| 6 | 2 | 18 | Pac-Man | AT 4-8-1200 | Atari |
| 7 | New | New | Preppie II | AT 4-8-1200 | Adventure Int'l. |
| 8 | New | New | Gorf | VIC-20 | Commodore |
| 9 | 6 | 19 | Castle Wolfenstein | Atari/Apple | Muse |
| 10 | New | New | Starbowl Football | AT 4-8-1200 | Gamestar |

## Most Popular Coin-Op Videogames

| Position This Month | Position Last Month | Times On List | Game | Manufacturer |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 1 | 4 | Pole Position | Atari |
| 2 | 2 | 4 | Q*bert | Mylstar |
| 3 | 10 | 2 | Xevious | Atari |
| 4 | 5 | 14 | Dig-Dug | Atari |
| 5 | — | 14 | Ms. Pac-Man | Midway |
| 6 | New | New | Star Wars | Atari |
| 7 | 7 | 3 | Burgertime | Data East/Bally |
| 8 | 3 | 14 | Donkey Kong | Nintendo |
| 9 | New | New | Sinistar | Williams |
| 10 | 8 | 2 | Time Pilot | Centuri |

## 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!


**Sirius Is GIVING AWAY Over $35,000.00 In VIDEO GAMES!!!**

**You Can Win A Sirius Game OF YOUR CHOICE!**

Correctly answer the questions below to qualify for the FREE GAME DRAWING. Enter all of the Grud Quizzes and qualify for all 20 drawings!

**GRUD QUIZ #16: CAPTURE THE FLAG**

1. **How does the invader capture the Flag?**
2. **Does either player have any weapons?**
3. **How many exits are there?**
4. **How many players can play at the same time?**

**TO ENTER:**

Just send a postcard or 3 x 5 piece of paper to Sirius containing the following information:

1. Your name and address
2. The Grud Quiz number and your four answers

**RULES:**

1. All entries must be handwritten and individually mailed.
2. All entries must be postmarked by midnight, February 29, 1984.
3. Only one prize per person per quiz is permitted.

**1,000 WINNERS!**

If ALL of your answers are correct you will qualify for that Grud Quiz drawing. 50 winners per quiz will be randomly chosen and notified by mail on or before March 31, 1984. Each winner will receive a complete Sirius catalogue listing from which they can select the game or games of their choice.

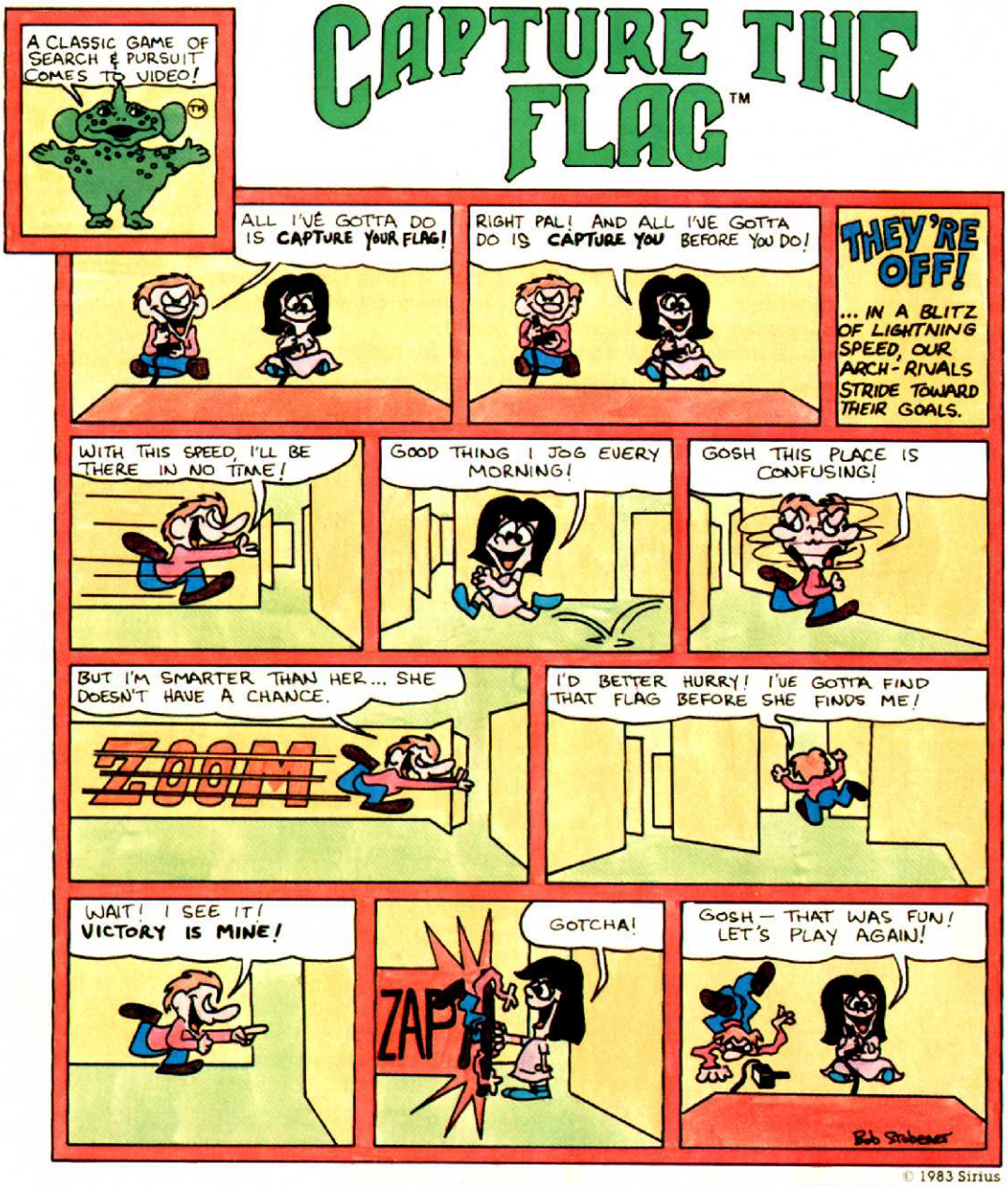
LOOK FOR MORE GRUD QUIZZES in the Oct., Nov., and Dec. issues of your favorite computer magazines or at participating software retailers.

**ALL CONTESTANTS WILL RECEIVE A FREE FULL COLOR SIRIUS COMIC CATALOGUE**

**Sirius Software, Inc.**
**10364 Rockingham Drive**
**Sacramento, CA 95827**

**(VOID WHERE PROHIBITED BY LAW)**

# CAPTURE THE FLAG™

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**Sirius**™

**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 Paul Edelstein. Game music composed by George Sanger. Package, program and audio visual © 1983 Sirius. All rights reserved.

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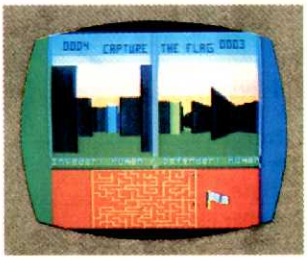


**Apple II, II + & IIe Disk**
**Atari 800 & 1200 Disk**
**Commodore 64 Disk**
**IBM-PC Disk**
**VIC-20**

*1 Or 2 Players!!!*

# HOTLINE

## SUPERGRAPHICS FOR THE INTELLIVISION

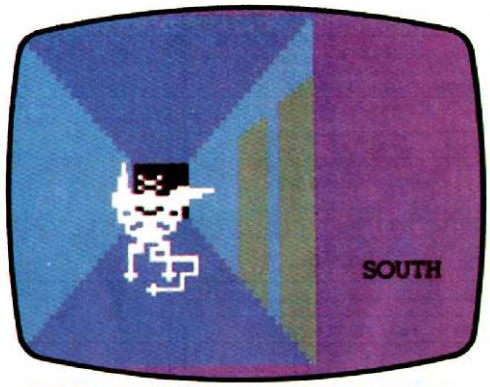
Mattel, dropping its original plans for the new Intellivision³ game console, has instead decided to concentrate on all-new software for existing systems. The company also intends to expand its line of software for other systems.

Even though the firm will create additional games for its own Intellivision and Mattel's "Aquarius" home computer, it will continue to create games for the Atari 2600, as well as introducing games for the Apple, IBM-PC, and Atari home computers.

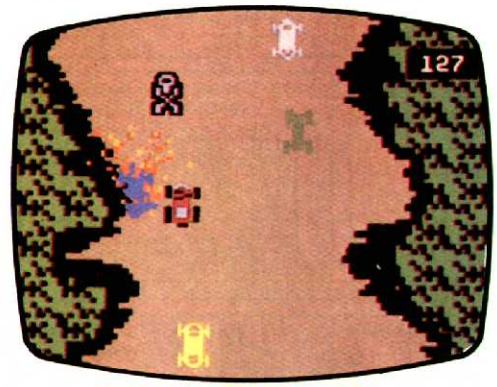
Another of Mattel's latest brainstorms, aptly entitled "SuperGraphics", incorporates a unique programming technique that richly improves the graphics capabilities of Intellivision by adding high-res definition.

The latest games that utilize the "SuperGraphics" concept boast enhanced-visual treatments (including multiple play-screens), animated title pages, scrolling playfields and even *more* colors than ever before.

Go for it, Mattel!




ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS (AQUARIUS)




BUMP 'N' JUMP (INTELLIVISION)

## TREMENDOUS INDUSTRY LAYOFFS

Atari is cutting back nearly 25% of its non-manufacturing staff, or roughly 1000 white collar workers. This follows layoffs of nearly 2000 blue-collar workers earlier this year, reducing the Santa Clara County, CA staff from about 7000 to 4000 jobs.

Meanwhile, Texas Instruments has laid off 750 employees from its plants, mainly due to production cutbacks in the manufacture of the company's home computers. According to the company, this included 700 temporary employees who'd been hired when it readied itself for increased production on the 99/4A computer. Since the increased sales of that particular unit never *did* materialize, a layoff of 2600 employees ensued. Overall, TI's workforce has been reduced by approximately 10,000 employees since the beginning of 1981.

Even Mattel could not escape the axe! Its work staff has lost 260 electronics division employees, citing recent losses.

A Mattel spokesperson explained the layoffs as "part of an industry-wide cost reduction trend" and predicted that these savings will allow the company to "increase its commitment to the future of electronic video entertainment."

arcade express
THE BI-WEEKLY ELECTRONIC GAMES NEWSLETTER

Electronic Games
HOTLINE
Formally Arcade Express
THE BI-WEEKLY ELECTRONIC GAMES NEWSLETTER

## ARCADE EXPRESS GETS NEW NAME

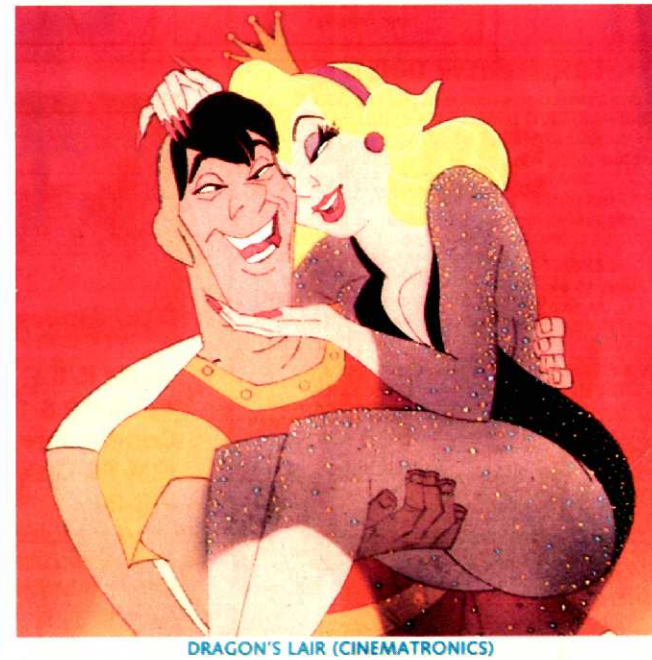
The newsletter that contains all those late-breaking tidbits concerning what's happening in electronic gaming is changing its title from the original "Arcade Express" to "Electronic Games Hotline".

"It's time to give the nation's most widely read electronic gaming newsletter a name that's truer to its field-encompassing scope," says co-publisher Arnie Katz. "Some people incorrectly inferred from the current title that this publication deals only with coin-ops. 'Electronic Games Hotline' gives a better picture of the content."

"We'll be taking this opportunity to make a few upgrades in the newsletter," adds editor Joyce Worley. " 'Electronic Games Hotline' will be even more indispensible to the hardcore electronic gamer than ever!"

## COLECO BUYS 'DRAGON'S LAIR'

Coleco Industries didn't waste any time picking up the home rights to the hot coin-op laser disc game, **Dragon's Lair**. The publisher plans to have the game ready by mid-1984, complete with all the hardware gamers will need to make it work.



DRAGON'S LAIR (CINEMATRONICS)

## MATTEL TAPS NEW PRESIDENT

Mattel Electronics has made several management changes. Foremost is the appointment of William Mack Morris as president, which company spokesmen say should help to strengthen the firm's standing in the market.

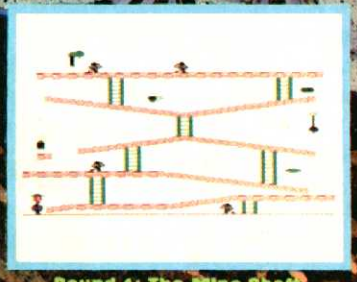
Morris, a former president of Mattel's Diversified Companies division, succeeds Joshua Denham who previously held the post for three years.

We, at **EG**, wish Morris and Mattel well!

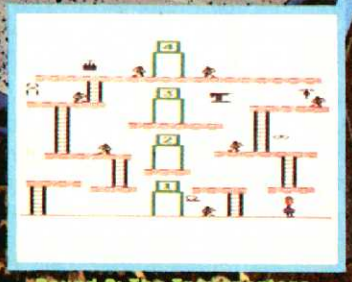
# Stake a Claim on the most exciting New Game for your Atari® 5200™ Supersystem.

- 16K ROM cartridge — the largest available for your 5200!
- Ten entirely different rounds
- High score table — where your name can be entered
- Difficulty adjustment
- Demo mode
- Spectacular sound and graphic effects that take full advantage of your 5200's capabilities.
- Available from your local dealer
- Suggested retail price — $49.95

**Here are just three of ten rounds in the game:**



**Round 1: The Mine Shaft.**
Sharpen your miner's skill!



**Round 3: The Transporters.**
Beam yourself up!

**Round 8: The Radioactive Waste.**
Avoid a meltdown!

BIG FIVE
SOFTWARE

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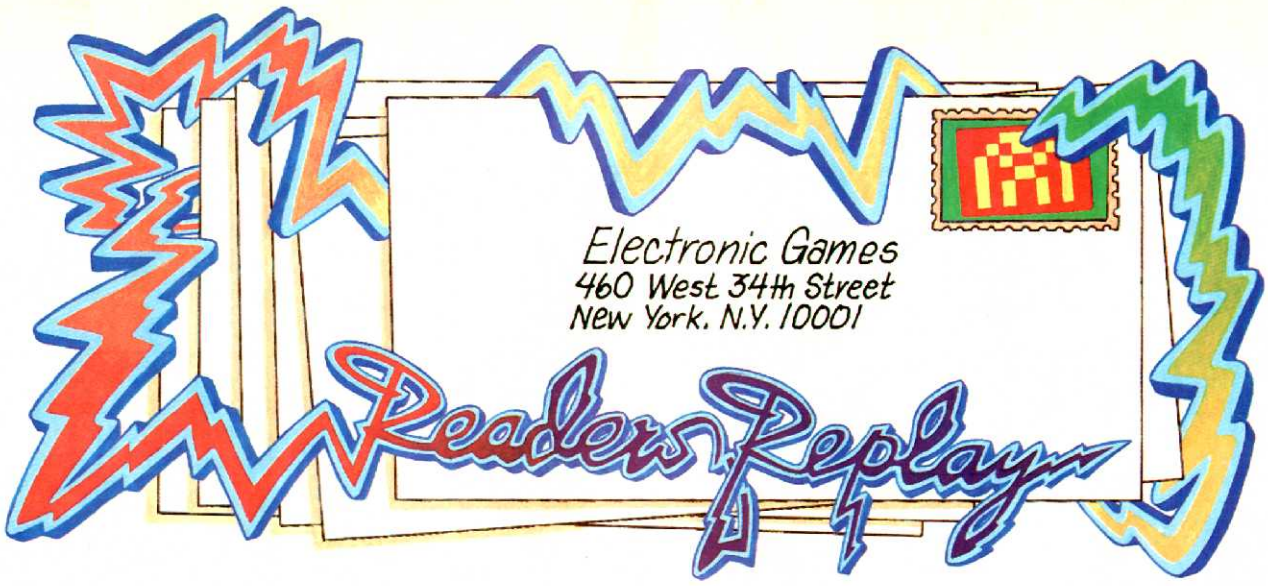
Electronic Games
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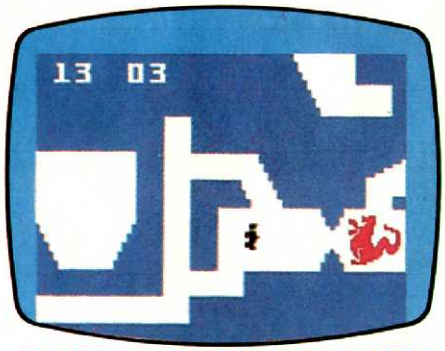
New York, N.Y. 10001
Readers Replay

## RATING THE SOFTWARE ENCYCLOPEDIA

I am sixteen years old, the owner of an Atari VCS and an Atari 800, and an avid reader of **Electronic Games**. Unfortunately, **EG's 1983 Software Encyclopedia** contained conflicting reports on several cartridges.

For example, page 34 of **EG**'s March issue contains a glowing review of Mattel's **Advanced Dungeons & Dragons**. I expected the game to receive an outstanding rating in all four areas, with an overall rating of 10. Imagine my surprise when that great cartridge received an average rating in the *Encyclopedia*! So I went to a friend's house (he has an Intellivision) and played the game. It was *great*!



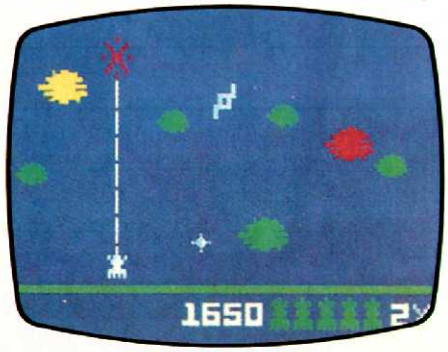
ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS (MATTEL)

And what about **Astrosmash** by Mattel — the game that *Electronic Games* has been raving about for the past year? An overall rating of 6? Are you sure?

Doug Morris
Elmwood Park, IL

*Ed: When* **Space Invaders** *first blasted its way into arcaders' hearts, it would have rated a solid 10. But time marches on, and so does technology. In other words, a game that received a glowing review in* **EG** *some time ago might be eclipsed by newer, more advanced games. Reviews in* **EG's Software Encyclopedia** *show how any given game rates with the others of that system. Insofar as* **Astrosmash** *is concerned, the original review which appeared in the June 1982 issue (page 69) was at best mixed. Nor have we raved about the game for the past year. Perhaps you're confusing it with* **Astro Chase**, *or some other game whose name begins with "Astro"?*

ASTRO CHASE (FIRST STAR)



ASTROSMASH (MATTEL)

## TI 99/4A SPEAKS

I don't know why you guys at **EG** think only Odyssey² and Intellivision are the only systems with voices. Texas Instruments has one too!

Gregory Baerg
Miami, FL

## GETTING TO KNOW YOU

I have an idea that might help us readers get to know the people at **EG** a little bit better. In one of your future issues, why not put the photographs of all the people that make your magazine the fantastic publication it is? And below the photo, print a little information about that person. For example, what that person does on **EG**, where he or she was born — stuff like that. I hope you'll look into my idea.

Ron Kekic
Toronto, Canada

*Ed: Well, shucks, Ron — we never knew you cared! Seriously, though, our readers don't shell out their hard-earned money to read about the personal lives of the* **EG** *staff. While Arnie Katz, Bill Kunkel, Joyce Worley, and the rest are well-known figures in the gaming community, the real celebrities are — and should be — the games themselves. Thanks for the thought, though. . .It made our day!*

## A 5200 EMULATOR FOR THE COLECOVISION?

Now that Atari and Coleco have settled their lawsuit, is Coleco thinking about bringing forth an Atari 5200 emulator? And why does Coleco put out their ColecoVision cartridges so slowly?

Virendra Shaw
Kew Gardens, NY

*Ed: There's no word yet on a 5200 emulator for the ColecoVision, and as it stands right now, there won't be one. . .unless of course, the consumers demand it! And, as for the amount of time between each Coleco cartridge release, no one can know why for sure. . .except Coleco's game designers. Still, third-party software manufacturers like Sydney, Imagic, and Par-*

# IN THIS NEW HOME VIDEO GAME YOU'RE THE MOST POWERFUL HUMAN IN THE UNIVERSE. UNFORTUNATELY NOT EVERYONE IS HUMAN.

Introducing Masters of the Universe™* The Power of He-Man.™* When you play this new home video game on your Intellivision® or Atari®2600, you become He-Man,™* the most powerful hero in the universe.

Which leaves you with just one thing to worry about: The most powerful villain in the universe.

His name is Skeletor™* and it's your job to try and catch him. But don't expect it to be easy. Because Skeletor may be evil but he isn't stupid.

If he can't destroy your Wind Raider™* with his deadly fireballs or Warp Trackers,™* he's got something even deadlier waiting for you inside the mysterious Castle Grayskull.™*

The Power of He-Man. It's a good thing you've got the power because you're going to need it.

Game shown on Intellivision, with SuperGraphics. Game varies by system.

MASTERS OF THE UNIVERSE™ THE POWER OF HE-MAN™ VIDEO GAME

MATTEL ELECTRONICS®

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*ker Brothers are coming out with new ColecoVision cartridges every month, which should help ColecoVision owners avoid the same-game blahs.*

### ADVERTISING AS ART

I love your magazine and all the articles inside. To get straight to the point, in **EG**'s March, 1983 issue, June Landon inquired about getting favorite pictures converted into poster-sized wall pin-ups. I have a hobby of collecting videogame advertisements and have noticed a couple of very attractive ones in your magazine. Could you send me copies of the following advertisements? They're of **Blueprint, Super Pac-Man, Time Pilot,** and **Tron**. I hope you can help me, and thanks again.

Chris Harris
Cape Breton, N.S., Canada

*Ed: As much as we'd like to help you, the ads go back to the people who placed them once they've been inserted in our magazine. If you really want copies of the original ad, the best thing to do would be to write to the company that designed it and ask them to send you a copy. Many of the companies will be happy to oblige.*

BLUE PRINT (BALLY/MIDWAY)

### WHY DOES THE PREPPIE CROSS THE ROAD?

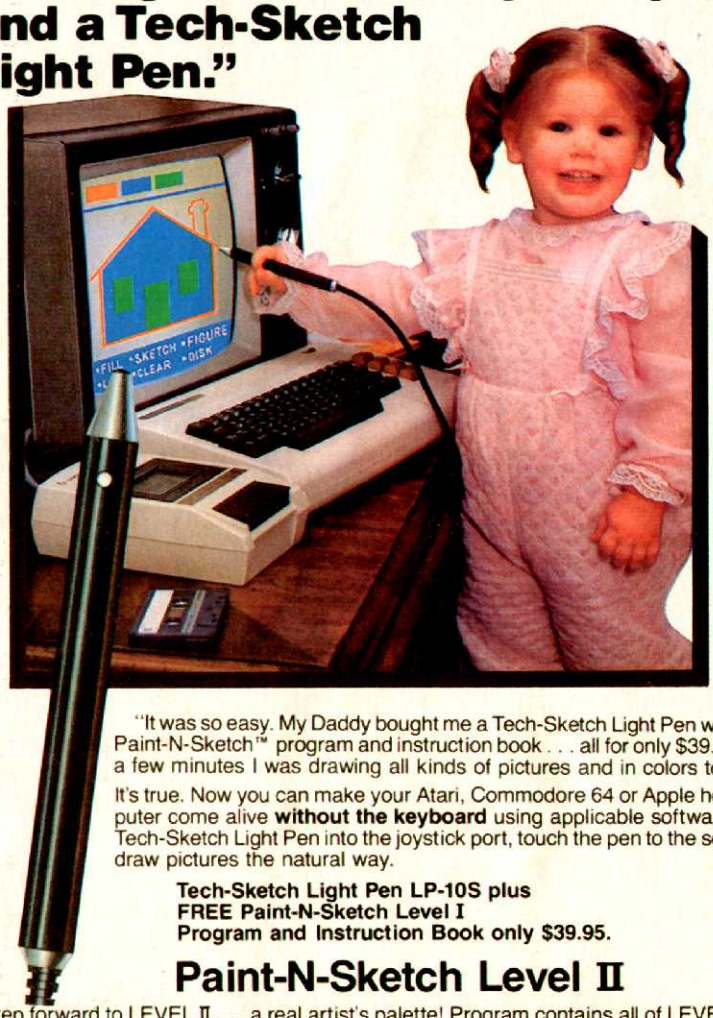
In the May 1983 issue of **EG**, I saw a game called **Preppie!** mentioned. Can you tell me more about this game, and where I could buy one?

Theresa Catt
Vincennes, IN

*Ed: **Preppie!** and **Preppie II!** were both designed by Russ Wetmore for Adventure International, a California-based company. The first game is about the adventures of Wadsworth Overcash, who must cross treacherous lawns and golf greens in an attempt to find his way home. The play-mechanic is similar to **Frogger**, but there are enough differences to make the game interesting. If you can't find it anywhere else, drop a line to Joel Gilgoff over at G.A.M.E.S. (you can find his address in **EG's** October issue of "Reader Replay"). If Joel can't get it, nobody can.*

PREPPIE! (ADVENTURE INTERNATIONAL)

**"I turned my TV into a video drawing board with my computer and a Tech-Sketch Light Pen."**




"It was so easy. My Daddy bought me a Tech-Sketch Light Pen with its free Paint-N-Sketch™ program and instruction book . . . all for only $39.95. In just a few minutes I was drawing all kinds of pictures and in colors too!"

It's true. Now you can make your Atari, Commodore 64 or Apple home computer come alive **without the keyboard** using applicable software. Plug a Tech-Sketch Light Pen into the joystick port, touch the pen to the screen and draw pictures the natural way.

**Tech-Sketch Light Pen LP-10S plus FREE Paint-N-Sketch Level I Program and Instruction Book only $39.95.**

**Paint-N-Sketch Level II**

Take a step forward to LEVEL II . . . a real artist's palette! Program contains all of LEVEL I plus 12 different colors and 3 brush sizes for different width strokes. Provides greater speed and accuracy, and many more options. For Vic 64 and Atari only $49.95 (Pen extra. Interface card required for Apple $99.95).

**13 NEW TECH-SKETCH EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS FOR MORE COMPUTER ENJOYMENT**
These programs enable children (up to grade 2) to develop: Alphabet power • Basic number counting skills • Simple addition and counting on three levels • Color figure and word association • Increased concentration, memory and eye-hand coordination • Piano note and keyboard recognition • Color and sequence memory • Expansion of thinking, spelling and reading skills and others.

All programs are available in cassette, disk and cartridge.

30-day money back guarantee. See your local dealer or call **800-526-2514. In New Jersey (201) 227-7724.**

**TECH-SKETCH INC.** Tech-Sketch is a subsidiary of Ampower Instrument Company
26 Just Road, Fairfield, NJ 07006

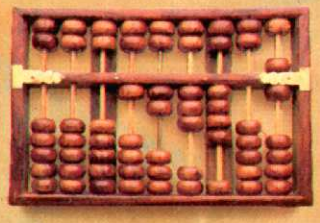
Dealers & Distributor inquiries invited. Commodore, Atari, Apple Reg. TM's.

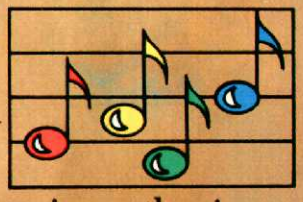
# It writes, rates, creates, even telecommunicates. Costs less, does more- the Commodore 64.

When Commodore introduced the 64, the industry suddenly realized that there would be a computer in every home, school and business years before anyone ever dreamed.

That's because Commodore 64 halved the price of high technology: while you can compare the 64's capabilities with those of any sophisticated business PC, you can compare its price with that of an average television.

What can you do with it? Create with its high resolution Sprite Graphics. Add a printer and type with it. Add a disk drive to use spread sheets and other financial programs. Learn and play music through your home sound system on the 64's professional quality music synthesizer.



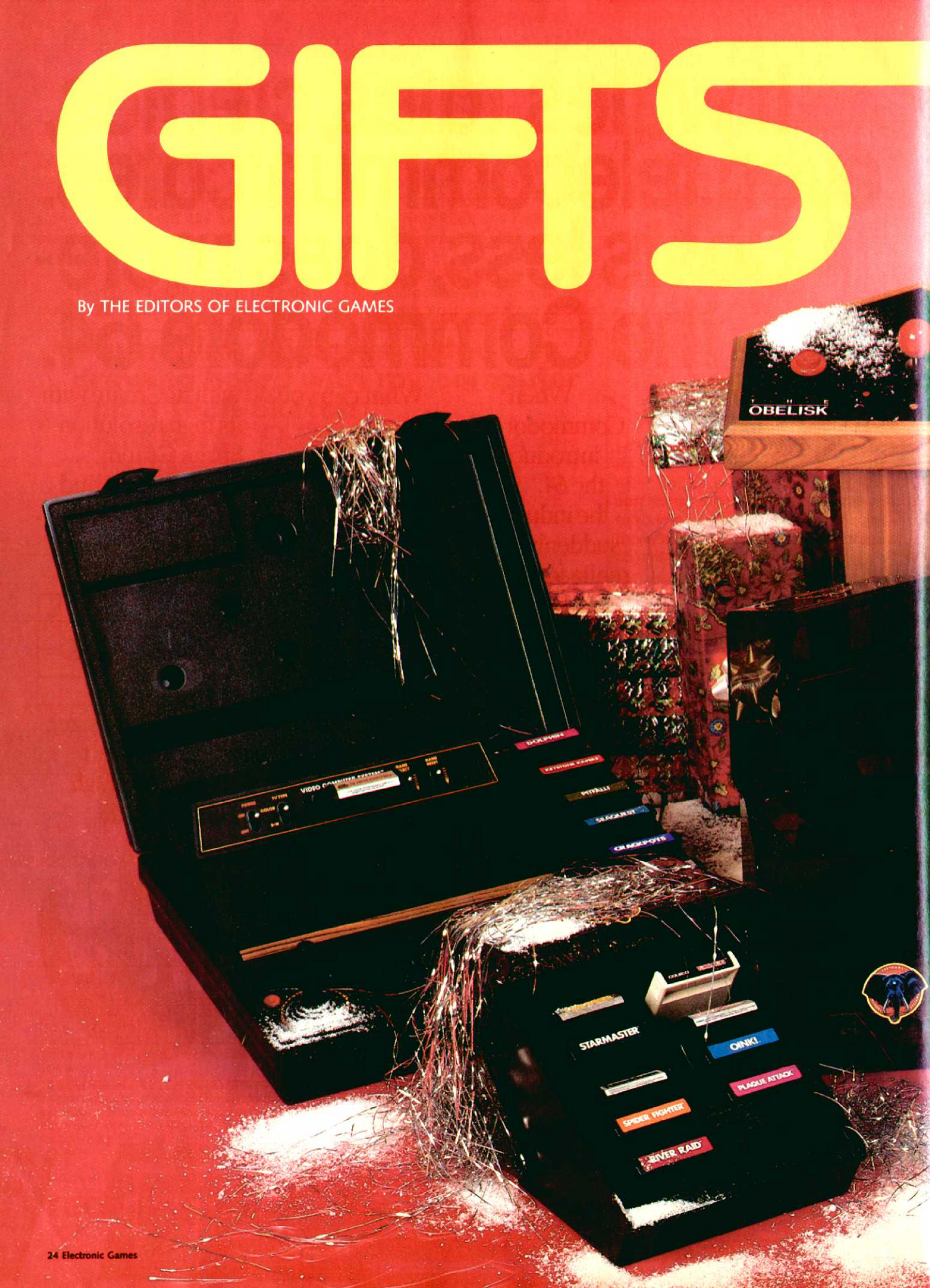


Add a modem, and hook up with the vast computer networks through your telephone. In short, the Commodore 64 is the ultimate personal computer, at a price you can afford.

**COMMODORE 64**

# GIFTS

By THE EDITORS OF ELECTRONIC GAMES



# Our Third Annual Shopping List for Serious Minded Gamers

*Last month, in "Goodies For Gamers,"* **Electronic Games** *presented several items, new products, and gadgets, which we felt would gladden the heart of many a player. This month we're offering an even broader array of potential gifts from the inexpensive to the overtly extravagant. By referring to both articles, appropriate gifts for all electronic gamers should be found in abundance. We hope you discover just what you're looking for, and wish you all the best this holiday season.*

Gamers who've been good this year might find their reward in any number of game storage cases like the ones shown below. Good storage centers are available for just about every kind of game medium, from cartridges and cassettes to floppy disks. Some cases even house the game units themselves for easy portability. Real sit-down home arcaders might add The Obelisk, a joystick that really "stands alone". It features an action button on each side to accommodate both right-handers and southpaws.

# NOW YOUR COMPUTER FITS THE ORIGINAL ARCADE HITS.

Now the excitement of original arcade graphics and sound effects comes home to your computer.

Introducing ATARISOFT.™ A new source for computer software.

If you own a Commodore VIC 20 or 64, a Texas Instruments 99/4A, an IBM or an Apple II, you can play the original arcade hits.

DONKEY KONG by Nintendo, CENTIPEDE,™ PAC MAN, DEFENDER, ROBOTRON: 2084, STARGATE and DIG DUG. (On the TI 99/4A you can also play Protector II, Shamus, Picnic Paranoia and Super Storm.)

So, start playing the original hits on your computer.

Only from ATARISOFT.

Some games also available on ColecoVision and Intellivision.

**ATARISOFT™**

Now your computer fits the arcade hits.

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Complete this coupon and we'll keep you up to date on the newest hits from ATARISOFT.™

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone _____

PRODUCT OWNED: (Check one)

- ☐ TI-99/4A
- ☐ Commodore Vic 20
- ☐ IBM PC
- ☐ Intellivision
- ☐ Commodore 64
- ☐ Apple II
- ☐ ColecoVision
- ☐ Other

Mail to:
Atari, Inc., P.O. Box 2943,
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# GIFTS FOR GAMERS

## KEEPING IN CONTROL

Atari fans who prefer their basic joystick to the host of available razzle-dazzle "gourmet" controllers can now enjoy the feel of a high-priced arcade console — without giving up their OEM staple. The Stick Station, by Skywriter of Louisville, Kentucky, is a hardwood lap board designed specifically to house either an Atari or a WICO joystick. At $14.95 apiece, it's an inexpensive way to dress up VCS play.

ColecoVision owners often complain (and rightfully so) about the squat, mushroom-style handle that sits atop the factory controller. This short, stubby, "joystick" has been blamed for everything from low scores to thumb sores. Fortunately this situation has not gone unnoticed by third party manufacturers, as there are currently several products on the market which allow ColecoVisionaires to customize their joysticks without resorting to wholesale truncation of their bank accounts.

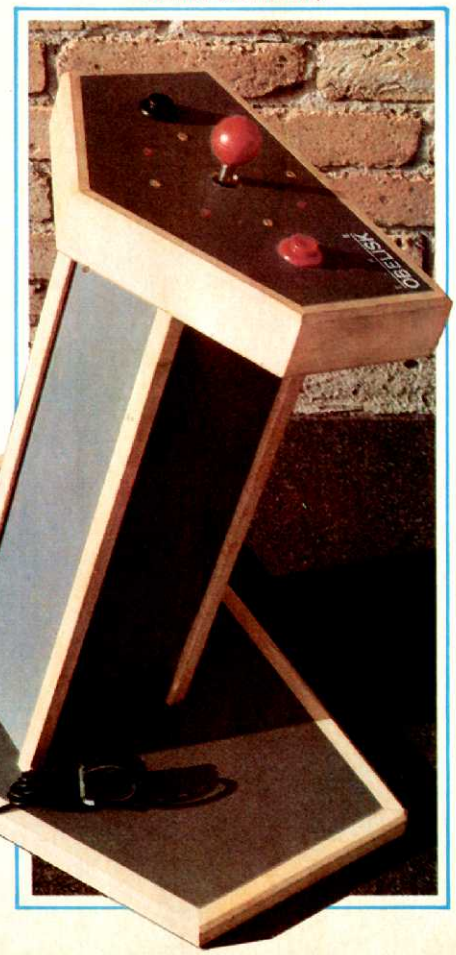
Suncom's snap-on Joystick Height Extender takes but a mere 10 seconds to install, costs only $5.95 a pair, and provides a comfortable, ball-topped joystick to the basic ColecoVision controller. Even a standard Atari joystick feels like a professional arcade console when played through GIM's Fire Command Console. The stick stand fits Gemstik or Atari sticks and, at under $15.00, is one of the best Atari joysticks around. The ever popular "pistol-grip" is also available for ColecoVision owners, courtesy of C&T Creations of Providence, Rhode Island. Their Easi-Grip Adapter, costing $6.99 a pair, installs easily and eliminates hand fatigue, while adding a whole new dimension of game play to outer space shoot-'em-ups.

For ColecoVision owners who'd rather switch than twitch, D-Zyne Video Products of Waterford, Connecticut, may have just the answer in their professional joystick line. The Supr-Stick CC is a micro-switch activated replacement joystick-keypad combination designed specifically for ColecoVision. And for you Intellivision owners, not to worry, as the firm also plans to release a controller custom-designed for your needs in the immediate future.

For those who've always wanted a tracball controller but found Wico's superb offering a bit steep or cumbersome, a new firm, Accu Co., has come to the rescue. Its first product, the Accuball Controller, is a high quality, well designed mini-tracball no Atari or VIC owner should be without. It also solves one other problem. Because of its diminutive size, it is easily handled by people with small hands, specifically some women and all children. Then there's price. Although Wico's unit has dropped to about $40.00 retail, Accuball is expected to sell for well under $35.00, and may go as low as $25.00.

THREE-WAY DELUXE JOYSTICK (WICO)

OBELISK (J.D. HOME)




Before we leave Wico without a more positive mention, their new Three-Way Deluxe controller, retailing for $32.95, is a "must" addition for any serious player. Three ergonomically designed handles compliment this unit. One is a standard bat handle, one duplicates Wico's power grip joystick, and the third defies description. For that one we'll let the picture tell the story. Regardless, this is a super joystick, actually *three* super joysticks, and even if your potential recipient owns several joysticks, this product will be appreciated and used.

While we're still on the subject of controllers, several unusual products could be just the ticket to pleasing the most discriminating home arcader.

An alternative to hand-held or lap-mounted joysticks is the Obelisk, by J.D. Home Incorporated of Bozeman, Montana. This convenient, if not inexpensive, device is a complete, free-standing joystick and push-button console, built to accommodate the seated gamer. Although the $89.95 unit is for one player, it can be converted for two-player use for an additional $29.95. Constructed of hardwood and Formica, these attractive and unique alternatives are available in four different color combinations to grace virtually any gamer's decor.

For those who feel that videogamers never get any real exercise, there's Suncom's incredible Aerobics Joystick. Recommended by its manufacturer for play with Activision's **Enduro**, this joystick hooks-up directly to a standard exercise bike. The faster the player pedals, the quicker the car tools across the playfield. Steering is provided by manipulating the hand-held joystick. The unit retails for $49.95 — far less than the cost of many weight-loss programs, and certainly less than a membership in your local health club.

## A TIME AND A PLACE FOR EVERYTHING

Pac-fans will always know what time it is with one of Executive Sales Associates' **Pac-Man** timepieces. The standard size clocks, featuring either the King of Gobblers or his Missus, are

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.

TAC-2. It's everything you want in a joystick including dependable. It's backed by a 2-year limited warranty–the longest, strongest warranty of any major joystick manufacturer.

The next fast move is up to you. Get TAC-2 for your Atari 2600, Sears Telegame, Atari 400, 600, 800, 1200, 1600, Commodore VIC-20 and 64, TI-99 / 4A (with adaptor), NEC and Panasonic personal computer.* From Suncom, the people who bring you technically-advanced joysticks, including our new Starfighter™ for Apple.*

# TAC-2. The controller that makes you part of the game.

Suncom
Always ahead of the game

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# GIFTS FOR GAMERS

battery operated and cost $34.95 at retail. Watches, available from the same source, are designed with color schemes identical to the videogame itself. With his upper and lower jaws replacing the minute and second hands, *Pac-Man*'s mouth gulps ghosts and power pills alike, as the minutes and hours tick by. The watches retail for $30.00

Dyed-in-the-wool arcade fans won't want to be without Nicoletti Production's Video Coin Holder. Priced at $7.95, the VCH features a transparent internal coin holder that can dispense up to 36 quarters quickly and easily. Available in a multitude of colors — red, blue, lavender, black, green, or for the warmongers, camouflage — the coin holder slides securely onto any belt.

Of course, holiday gift-giving means your favorite gamer will need a place to store all those nifty, new game cartridges, disks and so forth. For the 2600 and 5200 gamers, Southern Case, Inc., of Raleigh, N.C., has carrying cases. The Atari 2600 case, which carries the console, two joysticks, two paddles, the AC power adapter, the tv/game switch box and up to 12 cartridges, sells for $19.95. The 5200 carrying case holds the console, the power adapter, the switch box, and nine cartridges — all for $29.95.

If you need even more storage capability, or your game playing system is computer-based, then Wood-Rack Technologies of Brooklyn may have just the ticket. Their Computer Work Center attractively and safely houses all your major components for instant use. Room, desk space, or compartments are provided for a monitor, cassette or disk drive, keyboard/CPU, game or program cartridges, etc. This unit, moderately priced at $160.00, fits together with invisible closures and comes with casters in a handsome woodgrain finish.

VIDEO COIN HOLDER (NICOLETTI)

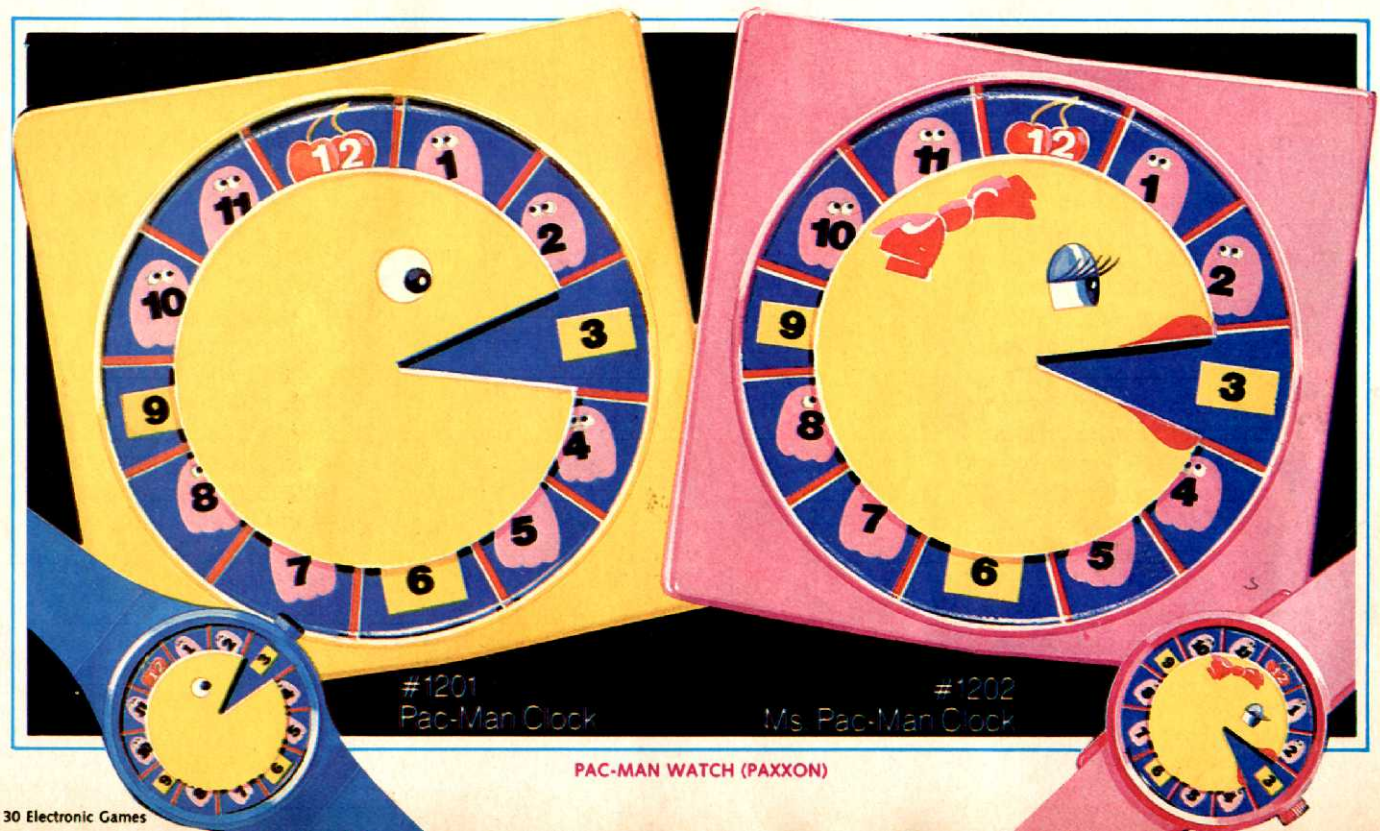
Leading Edge Products, the computer world's answer to animal lovers everywhere, features an entire line of storage accessories for the discerning gamer. The firm's four "Trunks", priced from $19.95 to $29.95, store either: up to 10 cartridges for the Atari computer systems, up to 18 cassette and game carts, up to 60 5¼-inch disks, and up to 60 8-inch disks. All Leading Edge cases are attractive, sleek plastic, with pull-up covers to protect their contents from dust.

## ELECTRONICS FOR ELECTRONIC GAMERS

This year's crop of electronic devices runs the gamut from videodisc players to used arcade machines. Within this category are products priced for almost everyone.

Let's begin in the stratosphere and work our way down to Earth, **Space Invaders** style — but please — don't aim your laser cannons at **EG**.

Of course, there's no better gift, providing you have the room, for the true arcader than his/her own coin-op machine. Used arcade machines may be purchased from any videogame distributor, and the prices vary from about $200.00 through $2,000.00, depending on the age, condition and




PAC-MAN WATCH (PAXXON)

# A Career You Can Be Proud Of Is Part Of The Navy Adventure.

There's no prouder moment than when you master a highly technical skill. But that doesn't happen overnight. It requires hard work and sophisticated training—the kind of top-notch classroom training and hands-on experience you get in the Navy.

The Navy Adventure starts with high-powered technical training. There are over sixty fields to choose from, including precision instrument repair, micro-electronics, state-of-the-art computers, even nuclear power.

You train on some of the most up-to-date equipment in the world. Then, you perfect your skills working with professionals who know their trade inside and out.

The adventure continues with the opportunity for rapid advancement. As a trained Navy specialist, you're promoted as your skills grow. And all the time, you're building a solid career that can pay off for the rest of your life.

The starting salary is solid, too: over $550 a month plus housing, food, medical and dental care, and extra pay for sea duty.

To find out how you can begin a career you'll be proud of, call 800-327-NAVY, toll-free, today.

## Navy. It's Not Just A Job, It's An Adventure.

# GIFTS FOR GAMERS

type of machine. For example a reconditioned **Tron**, the game that won **EG's** Arcade Award for Coin-op of the Year (1982), costs about $1500.00 (in excellent condition). Prices *do* vary, however, so anyone seriously interested in taking home a coin-op is advised to check with arcade owners and distributors in their area.

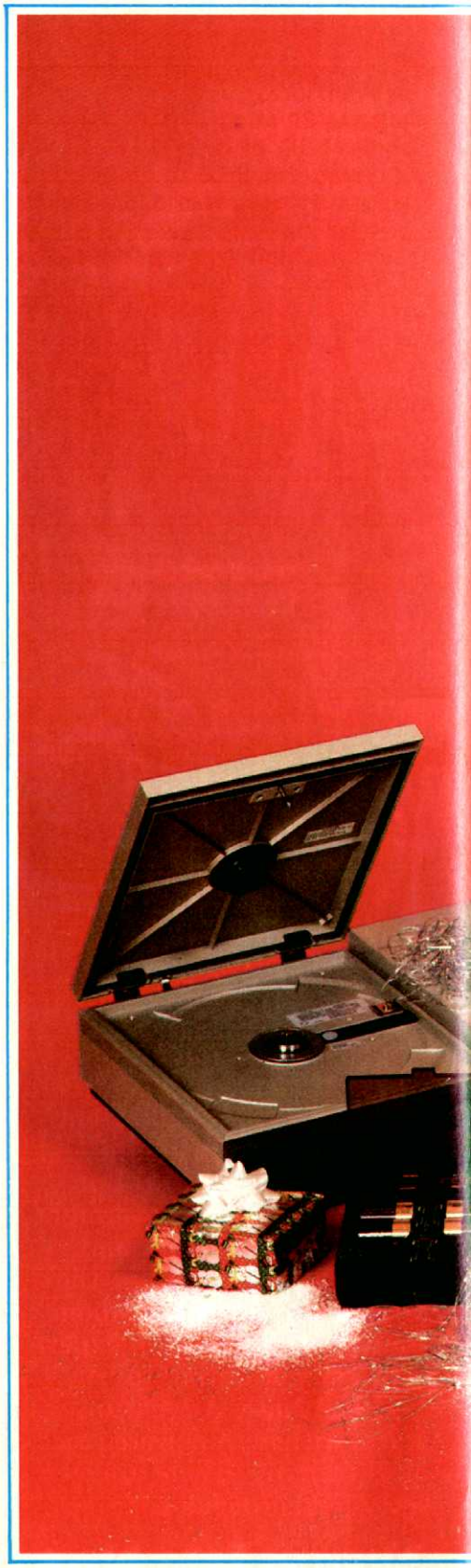
Perhaps you know a gamer who is ready for an entirely new and different electronic challenge. Why not consider some of the LaserVision Videodisc Players? These units, all manufactured by Pioneer Electronics are sold under the names of Pioneer, Magnavox and Sylvania. Over the past two years, several game discs such as **The Mystery Disc** and **The First National Kidisc**, have been produced incorporating laser technology, perfect freeze-frame, random access, etc., to enable game play. A side benefit is that LaserVision produces the finest picture quality available in the world of home video so that while the kids aren't playing games, their parents can enjoy all sorts of video fare with a sharpness and clarity unmatched by any other source. The Players are expensive, averaging a list price of $750.00, but they're worth it. Those marketed by NAP, Magnavox and Sylvania all feature a computer input jack which enables even more advanced usage with the proper interface device.

Then there's Monty, the Scrabble player, from Ritam Corporation. Monty plays up to three opponents at four different skill levels and sells for about $120.00. The unit features a powerful microprocessor which stores up to 12,000 words, and auxiliary modules are available to bring its lexicon to over 44,000 words. **Monty Plays Scrabble** has a friendly personality. It congratulates good plays, and even offers hints and encouragements to its opponents. The small console assigns letter tiles to each player (or allows them to pick their own) and keeps track of the score. All moves are displayed on an LCD screen, and the human either writes the moves onto paper Scrabble playboards or uses a standard Scrabble set. *Monty Plays Scrabble* carries on a running conversation about the game while keeping score and providing a clever opponent in this electronic version of the world's favorite word game.

If you're a player of few words and chess is your bag, then check out **Grandmaster** by Milton Bradley. This is the only chess machine in the world that moves its own men from below the surface of the board. No robot arms, just smooth, fluid motion is observed. For a fully detailed description of *Grandmaster* please refer to the "Test Lab" section of **EG** (October, 1983). The cost of automation isn't cheap as the machine lists for about $600.00, but if electronic chess is your game, all gimmicks aside, this is a particularly strong opponent at the high speed levels and a superb teaching device.

ROM selectors are becoming more and more popular as several manufacturers have recently introduced models into this new category of game accessories. A ROM selector allows the user to place up to 10 cartridges in the machine and plug the selector into the cartridge port of the game console. By pushing a button, up to 10 games are kept on-line, ready for virtually instant use. In a future "Test

ATARI CARRYING CASES (SOUTHERN CASE)



Lab", we'll fully explore these new machines. For now we are content to introduce several that are presently available.

Currently, **EG**'s favorite for the VCS is the Romscanner from Marjac Technologies. Selling for about $60.00, this unit provides housing for the game console and 10 game cartridges. An "on/off" switch provides power to the entire system, and games are selected and loaded in less than half a second. The unit's even good-looking to boot. A broader range of ROM selectors is available from Compro Electronics, under the name of Videoplexer. While somewhat slower in use than the Romscanner, Videoplexers take up less room and the VCS version is chainable. This means that one unit can be plugged into another, increasing the

So many goodies, so little time! Custom joysticks and joystick adapters, ROM selectors and storage devices, track balls, stand-alones, gaming books and calendars, EG T-shirts, battery rechargers and game-oriented timepieces are just a few of the editor's choices in the lower-priced range. Anyone wanting to spend a little more might want to check out color monitors, computer desks, top-of-the-line chess players, or laserdisk players—possibly the wave of the future—for just the right modern touch in this traditional gift-giving season.

# THEY'RE HERE.

ESC
1 !
2 "
3 #
4 $
5 %
6 &
7 '
8 (
9 )
0
CLEAR
INSERT
DELETE BACK SPACE
BREAK
TAB SET
Q
W
E
R
T
Y
U
I
O
P
RETURN

**River Raid™ and Kaboom!® are here. And your Atari® home computer just became more fun than ever.**

Because River Raid and Kaboom! have been re-designed to take full advantage of home computer capabilities.

Far beyond anything you've ever experienced before in video games.

Unique graphics, crisp detail and brilliant sound all come together with spectacular impact.

**River Raid,™ the battle adventure up the "River of No Return."**

The realism of Carol Shaw's River Raid is utterly amazing.

It challenges your reflexes, stamina and strategic savvy as you battle your way up the winding river.

Enemy choppers. Jets. Tanks. Hot-air balloons. Ships. All out to blow you to smithereens.

But you strike back.

Keeping one eye on the ever-changing terrain.

Bridges. Mountains. Canyon walls. Islands.

One false move and it's curtains.

And if you're up to it, now you can skip easier sections of the river and get right to the heart of the battle.

Everything that made River Raid such a smashing hit is here. And tons more.

**Kaboom!®, the award-winning game of catch with buckets and bombs.**

Larry Kaplan's Mad Bomber is back. The buckets are back.

But now, in Paul Willson's adaptation, you can drop the bombs, while someone else tries to catch them.

Imagine dropping bombs. Faster and faster.

To the ever-quickening pace of the 1812 Overture.

You shift right. Left. Back again. All the way right.

He misses! You win!

Now it's your turn to catch. The pressure mounts.

The bombs start flying. You dash to catch them.

And so it goes on into the night.

And everytime you hit a new high score, it's displayed after the game, just like at the arcade.

Kaboom! and River Raid for your Atari home computer.

They're here.

Just for the fun of it.

ACTIVISION®

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total number of games available on-line. We haven't tried this technique yet, but suspect it will work depending on how much power the units draw. The Videoplexers hold eight cartridges in the Atari, Intellivision and VIC-20 versions, come complete with dust covers and seem to be reasonably well-designed and constructed. The units should sell in the $40.00-$50.00 range.

The best bet in monitors seems to be Commodore's (Model 1701), list priced at $299.95. This 13-inch unit, which is often discounted, can provide your game computer system with the picture it needs to look really good. No more RF hash, moire lines, etc. — nothing but pure, clear video signals. The Commodore Monitor is not limited to functioning with only Commodore computers and will work equally well with products of other companies. You will probably need to fashion your own cable(s) to bring both the audio and video signals out, however, so ask your dealer before buying. A complete set of controls allows the picture to be properly adjusted over a wide range of signals. If your computer generates composite video as well as RF, this is an excellent buy. If you have an RGB output, however, you'll want an RGB monitor,

# GIFTS FOR GAMERS

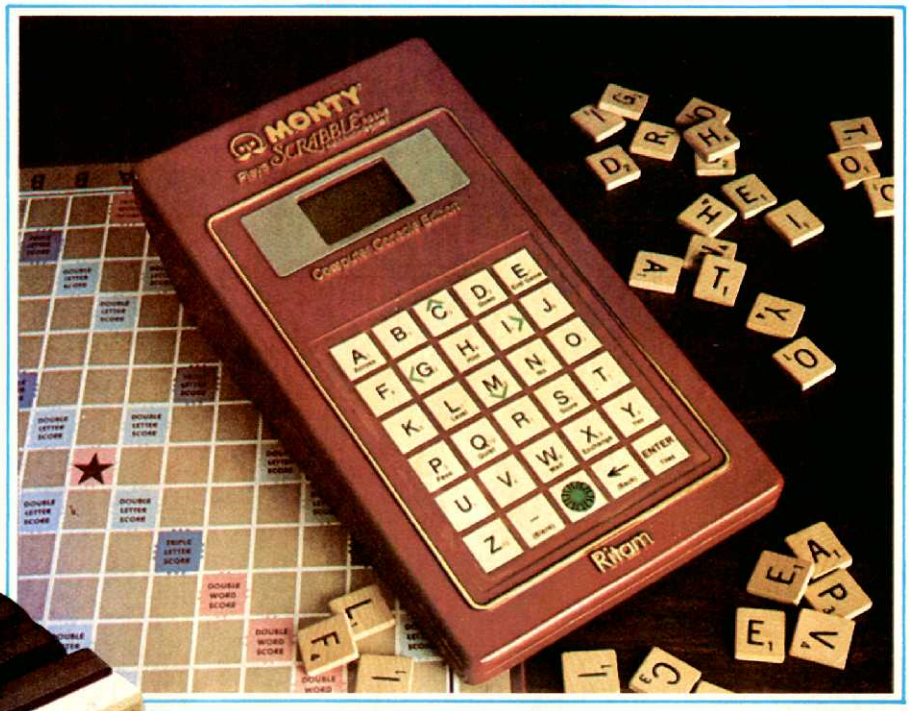
even if you have to save your pennies just a little longer.

Recently, **EG** featured an article on rechargeable batteries. The GE line of rechargers, which includes the "Charge 4" and "Charge 8", are still **EG** favorites. Either unit will allow you to recharge a full set of batteries, or 9-volt cells, in under 24 hours. While not particularly speedy, you can save cash with this system *if* you consume a great many batteries over the course of a year. For additional details refer to **EG** (July, 1983).

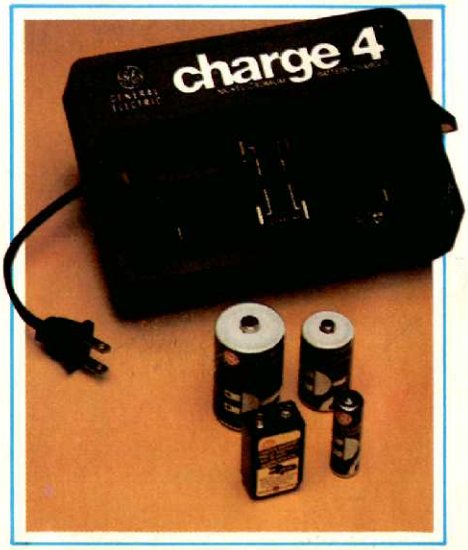
The Source, Compuserve and GameLine all provide one thing in common. That is a source of games delivered to your computer over the telephone. Although to use the Source or Compuserve, you will need an appropriate computer, modem and media storage device — either tape or disk. To use GameLine, you must buy the GameLine unit and own a VCS. If you haven't checked out these telephone coin-ops, try to do so as they all contain a wealth of games to keep you happy for years to come.

Both The Source and Compuserve house various user groups and fine catalogs of public access programs. A little practice is all it takes and you'll

MONTY PLAYS SCRABBLE (RITAM)



VIDEOPLEXER MODEL V800 (COMPRO)




CHARGE 4 (GE)

# THE BALLY MIDWAY ARCADE THRILLER

# OMEGA RACE™

## FINALLY COMES HOME!

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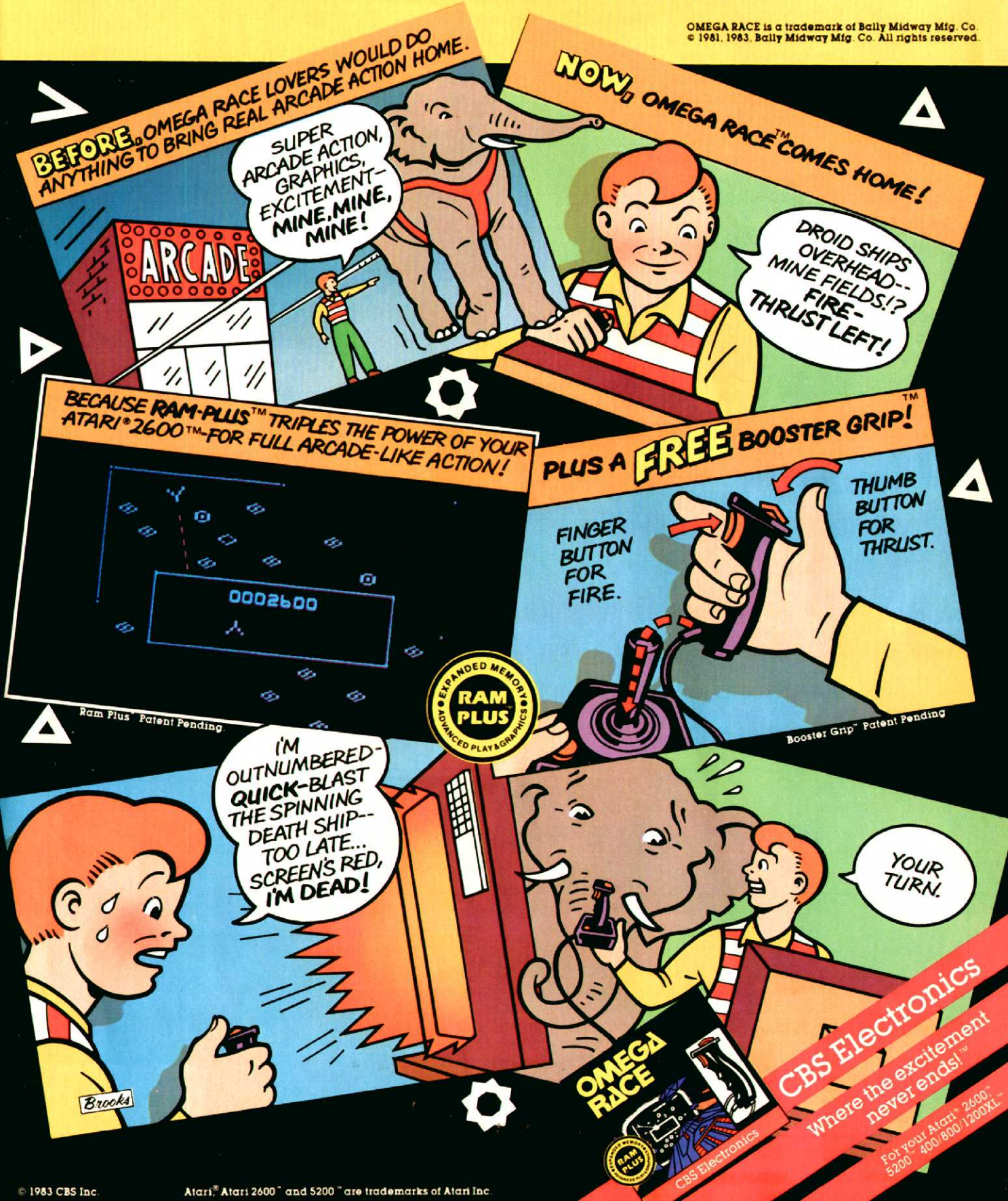


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# GIFTS FOR GAMERS

feel right at home on your keyboard as you contact these Special Interest Groups and download their programs. Also keep in mind that all manner of questions relating to your specific system can be answered — just ask. Prices for these services vary, and some may require a one-time charge before joining. After that, it's pay-as-you-go, and if you're anything like us — go you will.

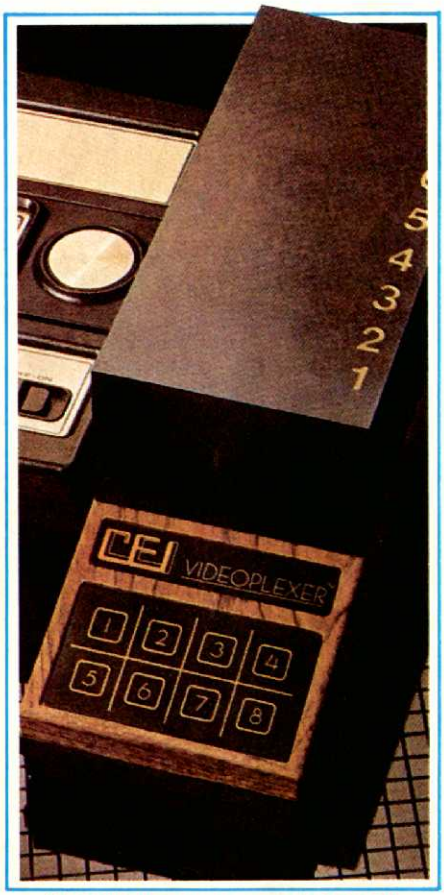
## A FEW FINAL THOUGHTS

Videogame afficianados, so inclined, are now able to mark off the days until the next major game release on the Video Game Lovers Calendar. It features a different hobby-related cartoon each month, and a layout designed to make each month fit a different coin-op classic. An example is "January Invaders". Available from Punch Posters Inc. in Annadale, Virginia, the calendar retails for under $10.00

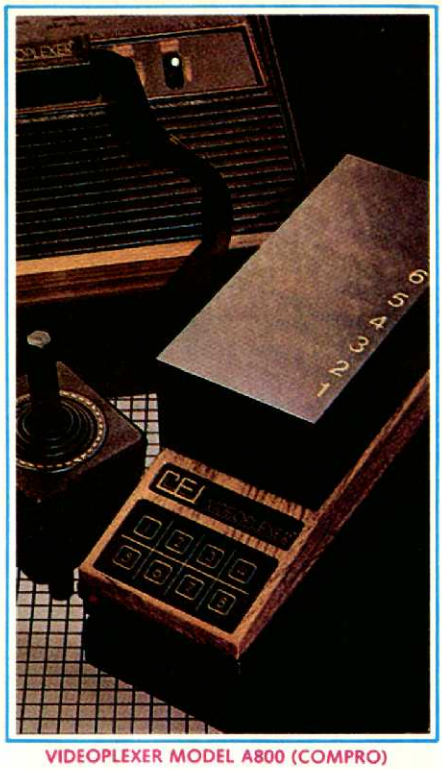
The Home Video Survival Guide, written by **EG's** own Technical Director, contains an extensive, no-holds-barred evaluation section which covers many of today's most popular home videogame systems and videogame computers. The book is highly recommended for the more advanced videogamer and video hobbyist. It sells for $10.95 and is published by Amphoto, which is a division of Billboard Publications.

To keep your favorite videogamer in the know, we'd also like to suggest a year's subscription to **Electronic Games** and its bi-monthly newsletter, **EG Hotline**. After all, videogamers deserve the best information they can get and it's available month-after-month in the pages of **EG**!

While we're patting ourselves on the back, gamers can also show the world that they play to win by wearing **EG's** own T-shirt. This grey cotton status symbol is monogrammed with **EG's** famous logo and is available in small, medium and large sizes. Just look for the ad in the back of the magazine — it's our way of providing you the shirt off our back.



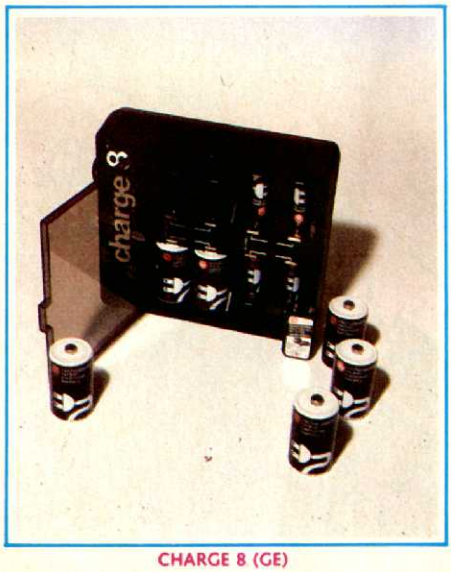
VIDEOPLEXER MODEL M800 (COMPRO)



VIDEOPLEXER MODEL A800 (COMPRO)

So there you have it, our third annual recommendation of goodies and gifts for gamers. We hope you've found just the right gift(s) in these pages, either for a friend or relative, or even for yourself!

Most of the previously mentioned products are familiar to **EG's** editors, who feel confident about bringing them to your attention. Happy shopping and more important — happy holidays!



CHARGE 8 (GE)

GAMELINE'S MASTER MODULE

# 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?

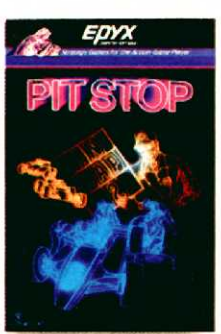
Think it over. Because Pitstop™ is the one and only road race game where winning is more than just driving. It's the pits.

Goggles not included.

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

EPYX COMPUTER SOFTWARE

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



# INSIDE GAMING

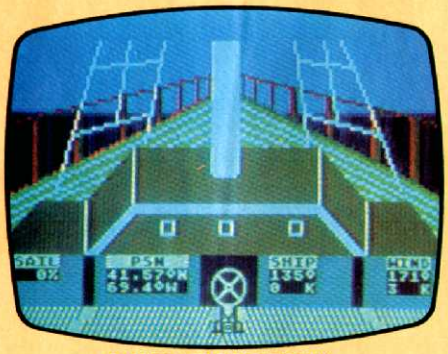
## John Bayes: Under Weigh At A Good Clip!

By VINCENT PUGLIA

It isn't very often a non-gaming publication reviews a game designer's newest creation, but this past summer a sailing magazine did just that — and glowingly, too!

The game was PDI's **Clipper: Around the Horn in 1850!** What is even more surprising is that its creator, 26-year-old John Bayes, is no Thor Heyerdahl, of Kon-Tiki fame. By his own admission, he knows only enough about sailboats to "grab that rope and pull it."

A review in a non-gaming magazine isn't the only thing that separates John from the majority of game designers. "I never go into arcades," he says. "Maybe it's because I was in Germany when the videogame explosion happened here in the States, but I don't play many games. In fact, I hate shoot 'em ups, but I do love pinball."



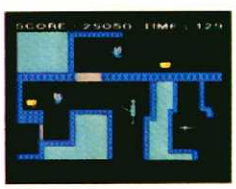
CLIPPER (BRIDGE SCREEN)

That's right, a game designer who doesn't play games! Still and all, even though John Bayes is not yet a famous game designer — *Clipper* is his first effort — he is definitely a man on the move. Not only is he going places in software publishing, but he's probably one of the most well-traveled designers working in the field today.

After graduating from high school, John joined the Army and was stationed in Fulda, Germany until December 1979. He loved Germany so

**John Bayes, designer of *Clipper: Around the Horn in 1850*, thinks of himself as one of the crew at PDI.**

# WELCOME TO APSHAI. YOU'RE JUST IN TIME FOR LUNCH.



Boy, have you taken a wrong turn. One moment you're gathering treasure and the next you're being eyed like a side of beef.

You're in the Gateway to Apshai.™ The new cartridge version of the Computer Game of the Year,* Temple of Apshai.™

Gateway has eight levels. And over 400 dark, nasty chambers to explore. And because it's joystick controlled, you'll have to move faster than ever.

But first you'll have to consider your strategy. Is it treasure you're after? Or glory? You'll live longer if you're greedy, but slaying monsters racks up a higher score.

The Apshai series is the standard by which all other adventure games are judged. And novices will not survive.

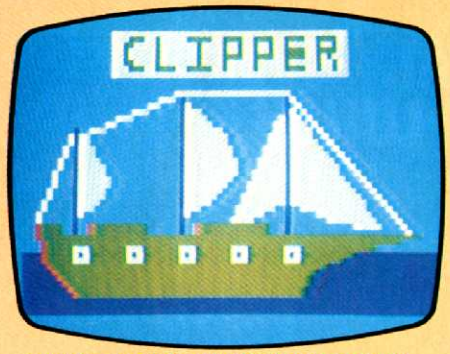
They'll be eaten.

*One player; Temple of Apshai, disk/cassette; Gateway to Apshai, cartridge, joystick control.*

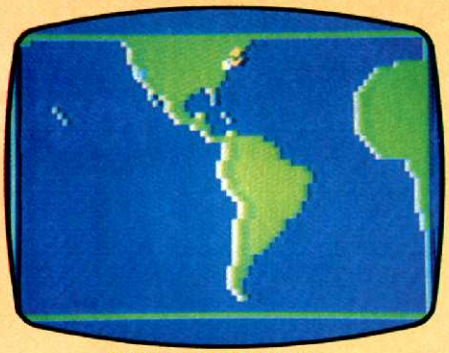
EPYX COMPUTER SOFTWARE

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

*Game Manufacturers Association, 1981




CLIPPER: AROUND THE HORN IN 1850 (PDI)



CLIPPER (MAP SCREEN)

much that when he was discharged, he stayed there for six more months. From there he went to St. Croix in the Virgin Islands, where he worked in a marine laboratory as a scuba diver. Between diving and driving powerboats, he found time to buy and build his first computer, a Heathkit model.

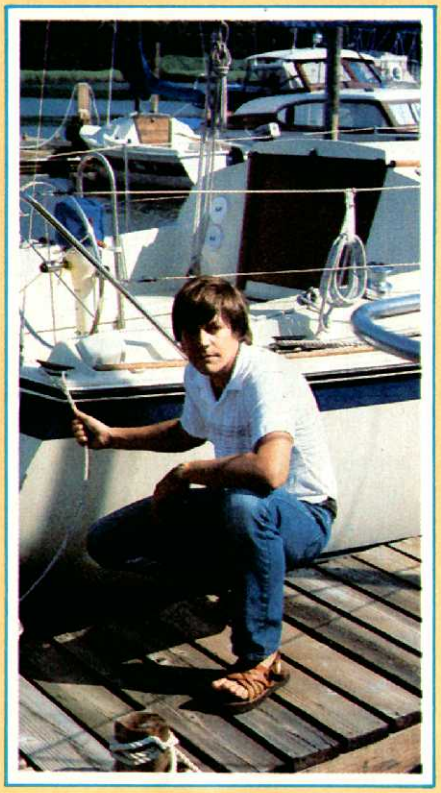
"Basically, I'm a tinkerer," John says. "Even as a child, I used to buy electronic equipment with the money I got for my birthday." Once he set up his computer, he taught himself BASIC. Eventually the lab asked him to write an accounting program. Shortly thereafter, a fellow worker bought an Apple and John managed to get some hands-on experience with the micro that started the electronic revolution.

In 1982, he returned to the States and as he puts it, "bummed around for a while, doing odds and ends." Although Bayes was off and sailing, he didn't sight land until he read an ad in a Stamford, CT newspaper.

"The ad was for PDI (Program Design, Inc.)," John says. "They were looking for someone with graphics experience to translate TRS-80 games for the Apple. Strange thing is I never did do any of the work I was originally hired for." That's because one of the first programs John was supposed to translate was **Around The Horn** by Designer George Blank.

"I saw the game once, took a look at the code, and decided to try and write something a little more complicated," John says. And complicate it, he did.

Although the goal of the game is simple enough — to sail a clipper ship from New York to San Francisco by way of Cape Horn — the play-mechanics require the gamer to know or learn something about navigation and sailing. True, John had little problem with the former — he had studied navigation in order to get his pilot's license — but he needed help in some



of the other areas, especially since PDI asked him to write it for the Atari computers.

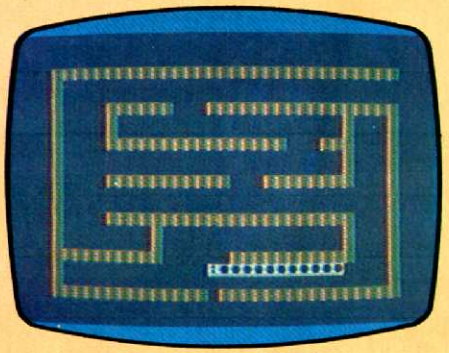
"I didn't know how to go about doing some things on the Atari," he says, "so I asked the people at PDI." One of the programmers Bayes asked showed him how to use vertical blanks to animate the waves and how to get more colors on the screen "with some machine language magic." These were new techniques to John, but he assimilated them quickly and so the coding, for the most part, became smooth sailing.

But at other times, the breeze died down and it was slow going. Because he was creating the program on his own time, he didn't have access to any of the equipment most designers take for granted — those time-saving peripherals known as digitizers and plotters. As a result, he had to plot the detailed bridge and deck of the clipper on graph paper. "I had to do the bridge two or three times," John recalls, "because I wanted it to be right. Also, whenever I added a new instrument reading alongside the wheel, I had to re-design the deck."

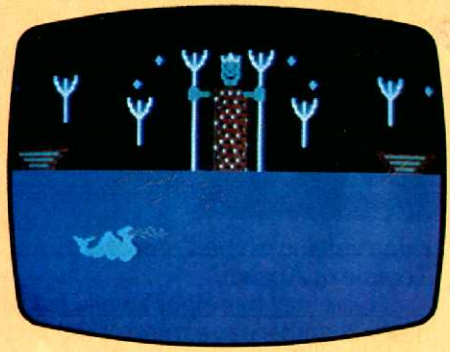
According to Bayes, almost everyone at PDI helps on a project, and *Clipper* was no exception. "John Victor (the president of this primarily educational software company) came up with the audio portion of the game," says John. "And Jenny Tessar helped with the script and documentation booklet."

John also sought help from the Coast Guard Academy near Mystic Seaport in Connecticut for historical information. "I wanted the game to be realistic," he says, "so I went through some old logs and writings to see how long provisions lasted, how big a crew was needed, things like that." For flavor, the optional audio cassette has some sea chanties sung by members of the Ex-Seaman's Institute in New York's South Street Seaport Museum.

A lot of the treasure John dug up at Mystic Seaport is in the booklet which comes with the game. "I like to think it's interesting and essential. Unfortunately, documentation tends to be the

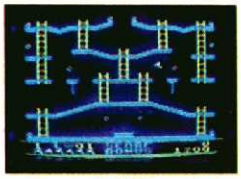


SAMMY THE SEA SERPENT (PDI)



SAMMY AND THE LIGHTHOUSE (PDI)

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

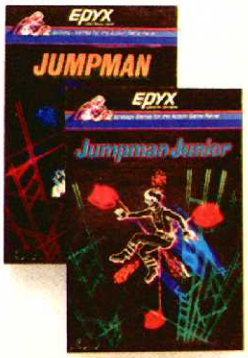
If you move fast you'll earn extra lives. But if you're not careful, it's a long way down.

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.**




*1983 C.E.S. award winner.

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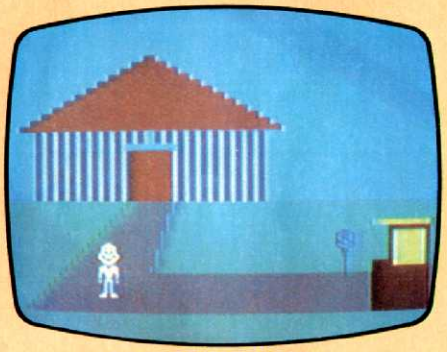
last thing people look at," he says, "myself included. But it's important and should be utilized."

It's common knowledge that most gamers try running the game immediately after opening the package; instructions are referred to only if there are problems. "In the case of *Clipper*," John says, "that type of gamer won't get very far at all. For one thing, he's going to need to use the compass (included on the back cover of the booklet) in order to get an idea of where the wind is coming." The documentation



TEDDY'S BALLOON (PDI)

also comes in handy when outfitting the clipper for the voyage.

"I learned quite a bit from *Clipper* about both sailing *and* programming. In fact, if I knew as much *then* as I do *now*. . ." However, John doesn't have time to go over something already finished, especially something that works so well. As he says, "A lot of my time is spent helping out on other programs, mostly educational ones like **Teddy's Balloon** (one of PDI's interactive storybooks for preschoolers). I do minor things such as cutting down the code to 16K and helping with the audio. I guess you can say I wear many hats — like everyone else here at PDI."

MOONBASE IO (PDI)

What's next? "Because I like pinball a lot," John says, "what I would like to do is tinker around and make some sort of inexpensive peripheral device so that if you're playing a pinball videogame it could tilt. It would be a console with buttons on the side for the flippers." He pauses and sighs. "I don't think I'll ever do that, but it *would* be different."

Right now though, John and his cohorts at PDI are working on something that just might make more than a splash in the industry. "What we're trying to do is cram a 64K program into 16K," John says.

The result, John says, is that "although some random access will be lost, more information can be loaded, including arcade elements and voice narration. Also, the gamer won't even be aware of the cassette being loaded, so it will seem as through there is no loading time lapse at all."

"It would be especially good for adventure games," John adds. "In fact, John Konopa (designer of Arcade Award-winning **Moonbase Io**) will use some of these new techniques in one of our upcoming interactive educational games — **Sammy and the Lighthouse**".

Regarding the rest of the field, John expects to see fewer shoot-'em-ups. "That genre is pretty well exhausted," he says. But adventure games, especially those utilizing new graphics techniques, will be on the rise. He also believes that, eventually, almost everyone's computer will be hooked into TV and phone lines. "When that happens, people will be communicating with each other, and games will no longer be that alienating."

But the biggest change will be in the focus of the field, which John believes is a shift from entertainment to education. For example, much of *Clipper*'s success has to do with this simulation's authenticity — everyone who plays it admits it's the next best thing to sailing — because of that and other things, John feels that educational software is the wave of the future. "As time goes on," he says, "parents will want more than games for their kids. And the major software companies are aware of this. It's at the point where everyone seems to be going into educational games."

If he's right and future games do become more cerebral, we know at least one gent who's definitely going to be on the crest of that wave— John Bayes!

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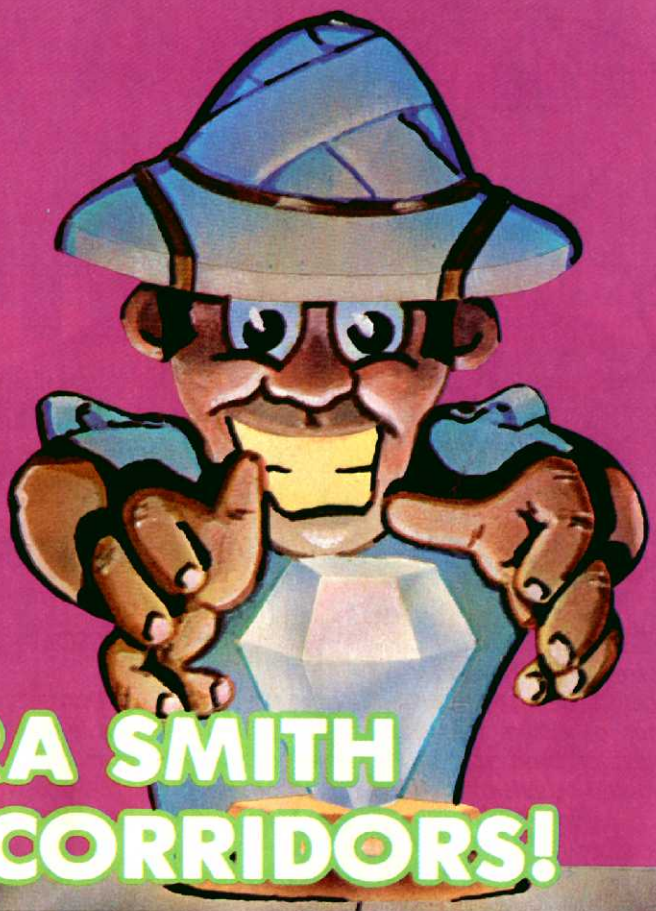
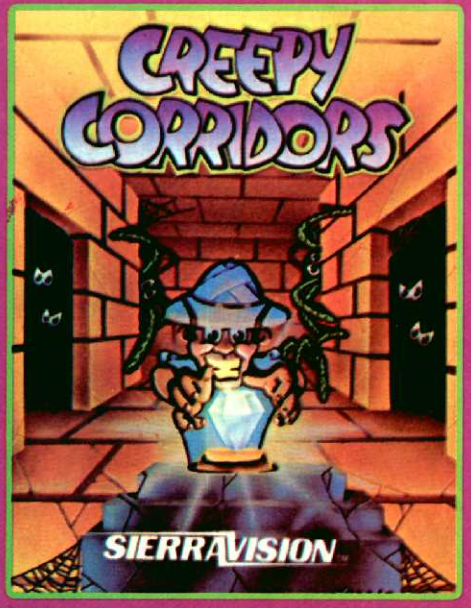
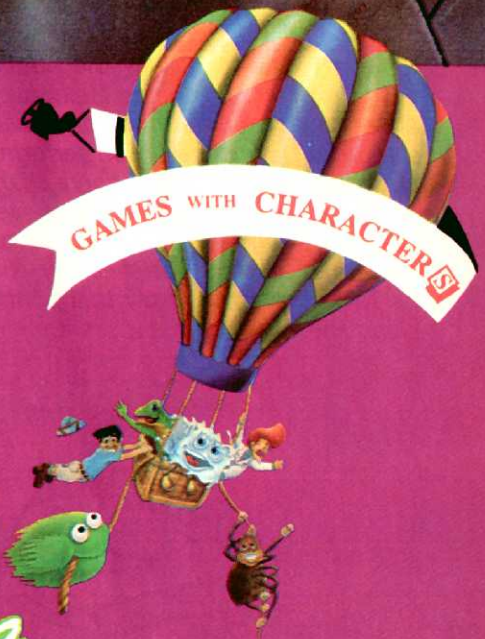


# SAVE SIERRA SMITH IN CREEPY CORRIDORS!

Sierra Smith's a real jewel of an adventurer - 24 karats of bravery. Sierra Smith's about ready for the biggest adventure of his life inside Creepy Corridors. Legend has it that some pretty strange critters protect the riches in the maze. The risks are great, but so are the rewards if you survive - enough riches for Smith and you! Above all, be careful as you gather the treasures of Creepy Corridors. Those screams you hear might be your own!



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# DEAR PAC-MAN

## Chatting with the Master Gobbler

By GABE ESSOE

*At Hanna-Barbera Productions, Inc., located in Hollywood, CA, the firm's recently been bombarded with thousands of letters for* **Pac-Man**, *the latest cartoon star in its galaxy of animated-television characters.*

*"What makes Pac-Man unique," explains Joe Barbera, one-half of the creative genius behind the cartoonery, "is that he's the off-shoot of an arcade videogame and not a standard animation character. So we really didn't expect this kind of fan letter response to him. Of course, we're delighted by all the letters."*

*Writing fan letters has always been the most traditional way the public has of expressing genuine feelings of affection and admiration for movie stars, rock singers, television performers, race car drivers, soap opera characters, etc. And would you believe, even politicians get fan letters, just as cartoon characters get them by the bagfuls. That's not to say that politicians and cartoon characters are cut from the same animation cels, but certain similarities have been documented over the years.*

*There are many reasons why people write fan letters. Though all are*

*somewhat similar, each letter is unique unto itself, and reveals the writer sometimes amusingly.*

*"Obviously, people write to us," surmises Barbera, "because they like or dislike what they see on TV and want to tell us about it. Most of the letters ask for a photo or an animation cel, and we send out tens of thousands of pictures and cels every year."*

*Here are some typical examples culled from over-flowing mailbags in Hanna-Barbera's public relations offices:*

Dear Folks:
My name is Deanna. I just love your show "Pac-Man." I love most of all "Pac-Baby." I watch it any week I can, because I am in a majorette corp. I also have a lot of parades on Saturdays and Sundays. I was wondering if you would send me a picture of the Pac-Family. I would sure a-Pac-reciate it.
your friend, Deanna F.

Dear Mr. Hanna-Barbera:
I am a great Pac-Man fan. I collect Pac-Man stickers. I have 47. I can draw them but not as good as you. I would like it very much if you would send me a poster or a picture or some

**The Pac-Clan as they look every Saturday morning. Viewers are gobbling the show up!**

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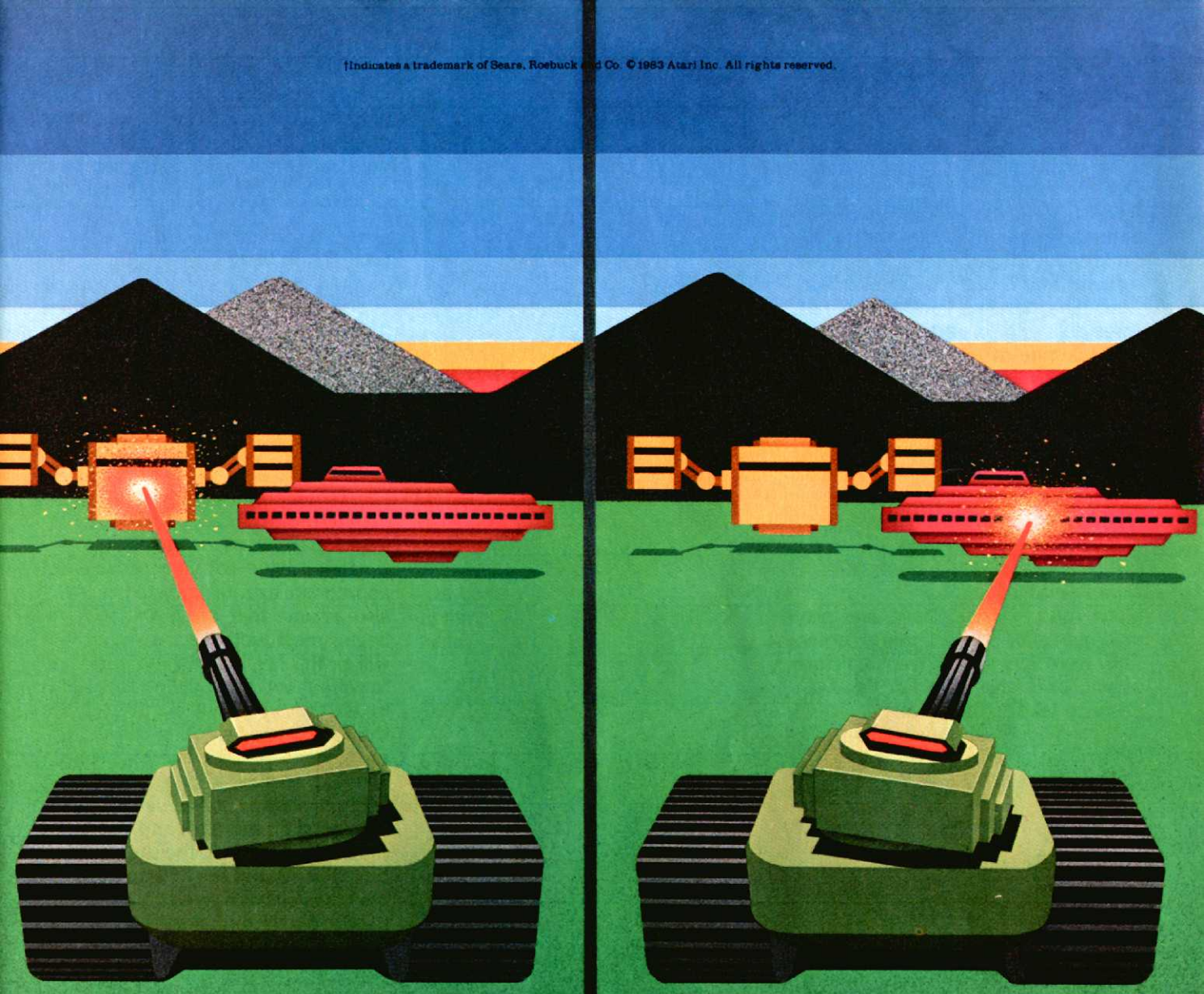

# Which player is making a tactical error?

You've fought BATTLEZONE™ tanks, flying saucers and fighters in the arcade. Now it's time to protect the home front. Because Atari's BATTLEZONE is now prepared to wage war right in your own living room.

The player on the right will most likely fail in his mission. He should've hit the fighter first. Even though it is worth 3,000 points less than the flying saucer, it is far more dangerous. It can destroy. The saucer can't.

There's another way you can rack up extra points, and you don't even have to fire a shot. By moving your tank to one side, you can often lure one enemy into another's line of fire.

Surviving BATTLEZONE is no easy mission. If you're up for it, climb into your troop transport and make tracks to the nearest store that stocks Atari games.

Only Atari makes BATTLEZONE for the ATARI® 2600™ Game, Sears Video Arcade† systems, and a version exclusively for the ATARI 5200™ SuperSystem.

ATARI®

A Warner Communications Company

stickers of Pac-Man. My favorite character is Pac Jr.. I can draw him okay.
Love, Jordan M.

*Some write on behalf of "a friend":*
Dear Pac-Man:
I watch your movie every week on Saturday morning. Your movie is really fantastic. And very interesting. I have a friend that is really crazy over Pac-Man. She has five Pac-Man games, three dolls and six necklaces. And she has a picture of you in Spanish. And her room is Pac-Man yellow. Would you please send me some pictures I can give her with all the Pac-Man guys including Baby Pac, Chomp Chomp and Sour Puss. "Please" and Thank you.
Your truly, Julie L.

*While some are mildly demanding. .*
Dear Pac-Man:
I saw most of your show, and play your game at the shopping center. They were very good. I want a picture of you ok?! and a pocket Pac-Man game to take to school ok?!
your loyal friend, Tommy D.

*. . .some insist that they are not:*

Dear Hanna/Barbera:
Please try to understand I wouldn't keep asking you about having a special autograph cartoon poster of that cartoon female girl on Pac-Man, Ms. Pac. I wouldn't keep asking you at all. Just this one time I would like to have twenty copies of her for my birthday since my birthday is July 11, as a favor to me my special request. Thank you.
Your cartoon female girl named,
Ms. Pac fan, Natalie H.

*Some are selling something:*
Dear Hanna/Barbera:
I would like to know would you be interested in a story of an adventure that will take Pac-Man back to an error in time to an age between 1800 B.C. and Genesis. I have write a good interesting fiction adventure.
by Harvey L.

Dear Hanna-Barbera:
I am sometime in the near future planning to professionally handle some of your top shows as a writer, but unfortunately I have not yet purchase the appropriate agental body to help me. I also assume that the month of june begins most work for the shows that will air this fall, so maybe it is too late to write shows for you; however I wish to ask that you send me a list of the shows you are preparing this fall so I can keep in practice like I have been with past shows. I hope you'll take this letter in extreme consideration, theresoby sending me a list and perhaps a small introduction to the shows, especially Pac-Man. I really thank you for the time you have given me by writing back to past letters, and please write as soon as time allows you to. thank you again for being first in top tv.
most considerately, mr. michael c.

*Some write as a school project:*
To Ms. Pac-Man:
I watch you every Saturday and if you could please send me a picture of you it is for a class assignment. I am in 3rd grade and I will write and tell you how my class liked your picture.
your friend, Valerie S.

Dear Pac-Man:
Hello. I am a second grade teacher. I am trying to decorate my classroom

**Pac-Man scares the sheets off of Inky, Blinky, Pinky, Clyde and Sue while their boss, Mezmaron, looks on.**

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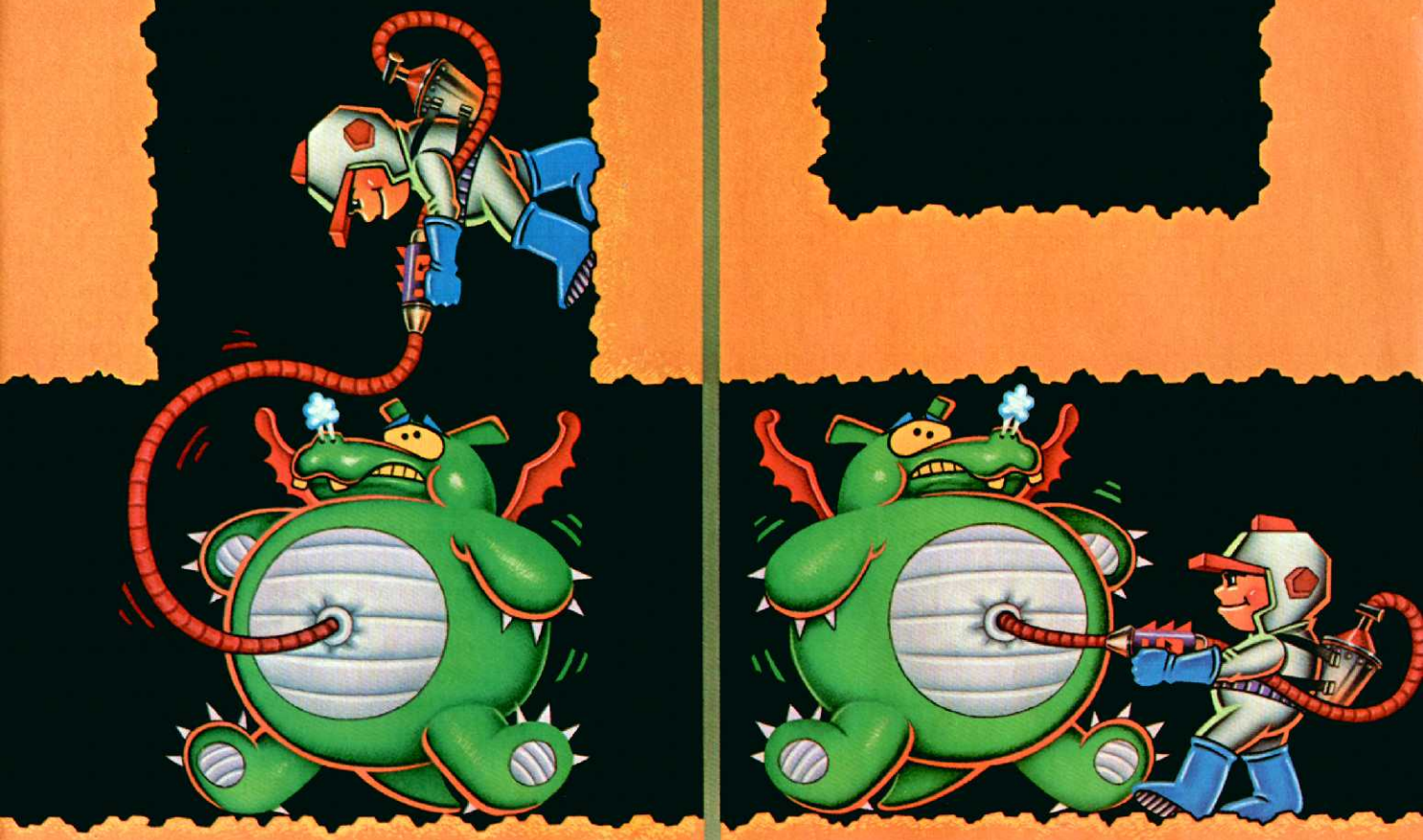
*DIG DUG is created and designed by Namco Ltd., manufactured under license by Atari, Inc. Trademark and © Namco 1982.



# Which is the best way to inflate your score?

**Better find out.** We've done our groundwork on DIG DUG so well, it plays just like it does in the arcade. So don't dig yourself a hole. Like the player on the left. Sure he'll score points for blowing up the Fygar™ in a vertical path. But blow up the Fygar in a horizontal path, like the player on the right, and score twice as many points. A landslide.

You can dig up even more points by uncovering a bonus veggie. But you get only one on each level. All you have to do is drop two boulders and you'll see it. Buried treasure disguised as a veggie.

Only Atari makes DIG DUG for the ATARI® 2600™ Game, Sears Video Arcade† systems, and versions exclusively for the ATARI 5200™ SuperSystem and all ATARI Home Computers.

So get to your nearest store and dig into your pockets. For DIG DUG.

**Here comes Dig Dug™* from Atari.®**

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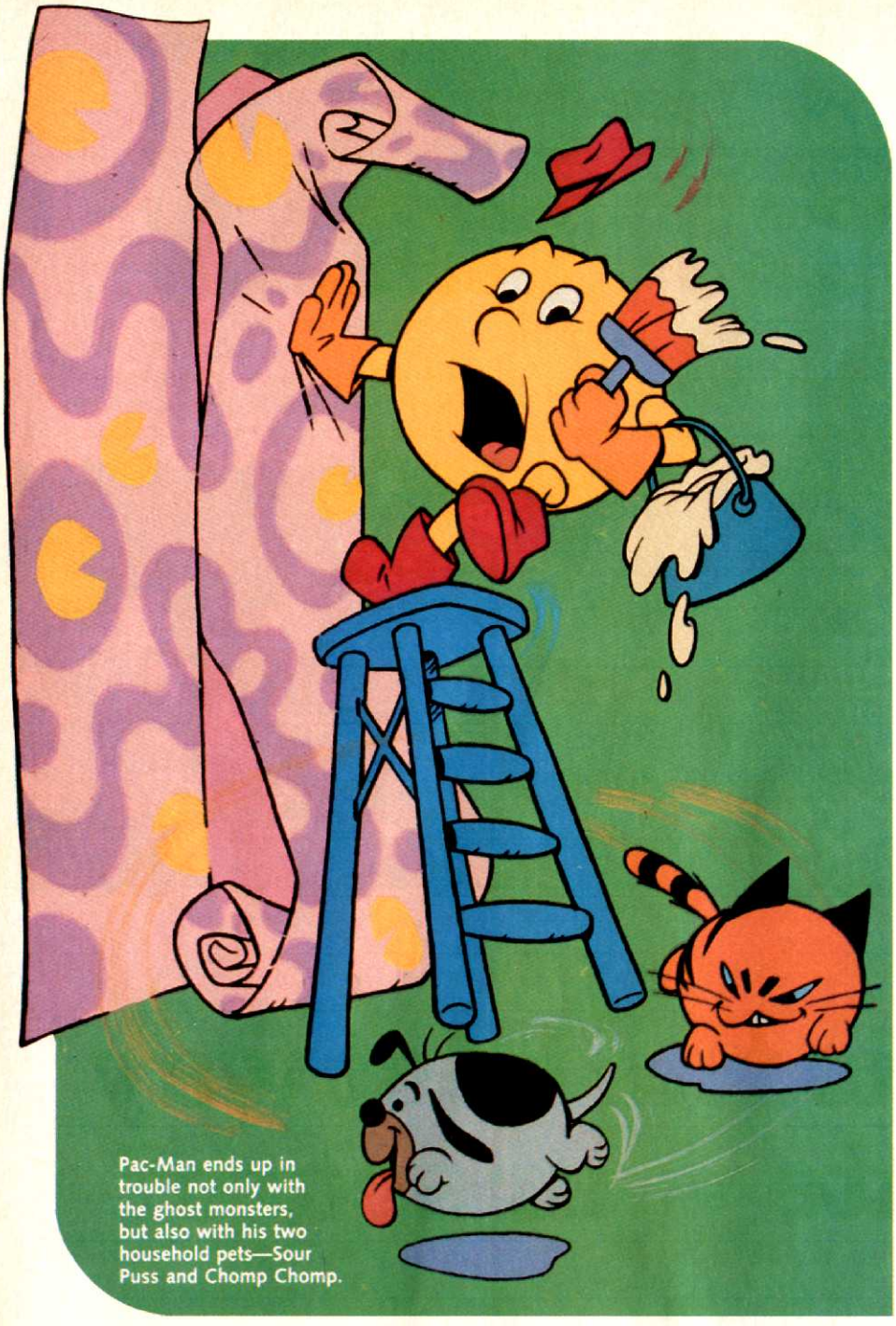

Pac-Man ends up in trouble not only with the ghost monsters, but also with his two household pets—Sour Puss and Chomp Chomp.

with a little fun and laughter. I was wondering if you would be so very kind and to send me something such as an autographed picture of yourself or a colorful poster of you and your cartoon family. You can send this to my home address below.

Sincerely yours, Marcie G.

*Some letters suggest programming:*

Dear Hanna-Barbera:

I love Pac-Man and Super-Pac. I also love your super hero shows. Wouldn't it be great if Pac-Man and Super-Pac could have an adventure with Superman and Batman and the whole justice league?

yours truly, Mark P.

Dear Sir:

My name is Betsy and I'm 11 years old. I've been watching Pac-Man for two years on ABC-TV, ever since I was 9 years old. I wonder if Pac-Man will be back next season? If it's true, would it be possible to have some guests in Pacland like Christopher Reeve, Burt Reynolds and the Greatest American Hero?!! Please write soon.

Love, Betsy T.

P.S.: My photo is attached. Please send me yours.

*Some are budding critics:*

Dear ABC:

Gentlemen, my name is Laura D. & I am 10 years old. I don't like "Pac-Man". They aren't very good and you could have on more intelligent shows. Could you please replace it? Thank you for your attention to my letter.

Sincerely, Laura D.

Dear Hanna and Barbera:

I play Pac-Man at the barber shop even when I'm don't get a haircut. It's pretty hard. Stan the barber beats me. How come your show of Pac-Man is different from the game? I like it okay, and sometimes even better, but it's not like the game. What do you think?

Sincerely, freddie R.

Do you ever play Pac-Man when you're getting a haircut?

*Some seek advice:*

Dear Pac-Jr:

I liked that show where you figured out what was going on and nobody else knew it. You are real cool. Are you played by Fonzie? If you are, can you tell me how I can ask this girl I like to the dance at school next week? I always talk about my lunch but you'd know what to say I bet. Please write back right away.

Truly yours, your friend, Andy F.

*Some are grownups in scholarly pursuits:*

Gentlemen:

As a longtime TV buff of your many cartoon series, particularly those of a whimsical nature, I have had a great interest in seeing episodes of "Pac-Man" and "Smurfs." I would like to have detailed descriptions of each of the episodes and whose additional voices appear in each, of both series. Also please include plot outlines for all episodes of "Young Samson," "Herculoids," "Birdman/Galaxy Trio," "Johnny Quest," etc., if possible. Any of this information will be enormously appreciated.

Sincerely, Peter A.

Dear Sirs:

Some time ago you celebrated an anniversary (?). Do you have any spe-

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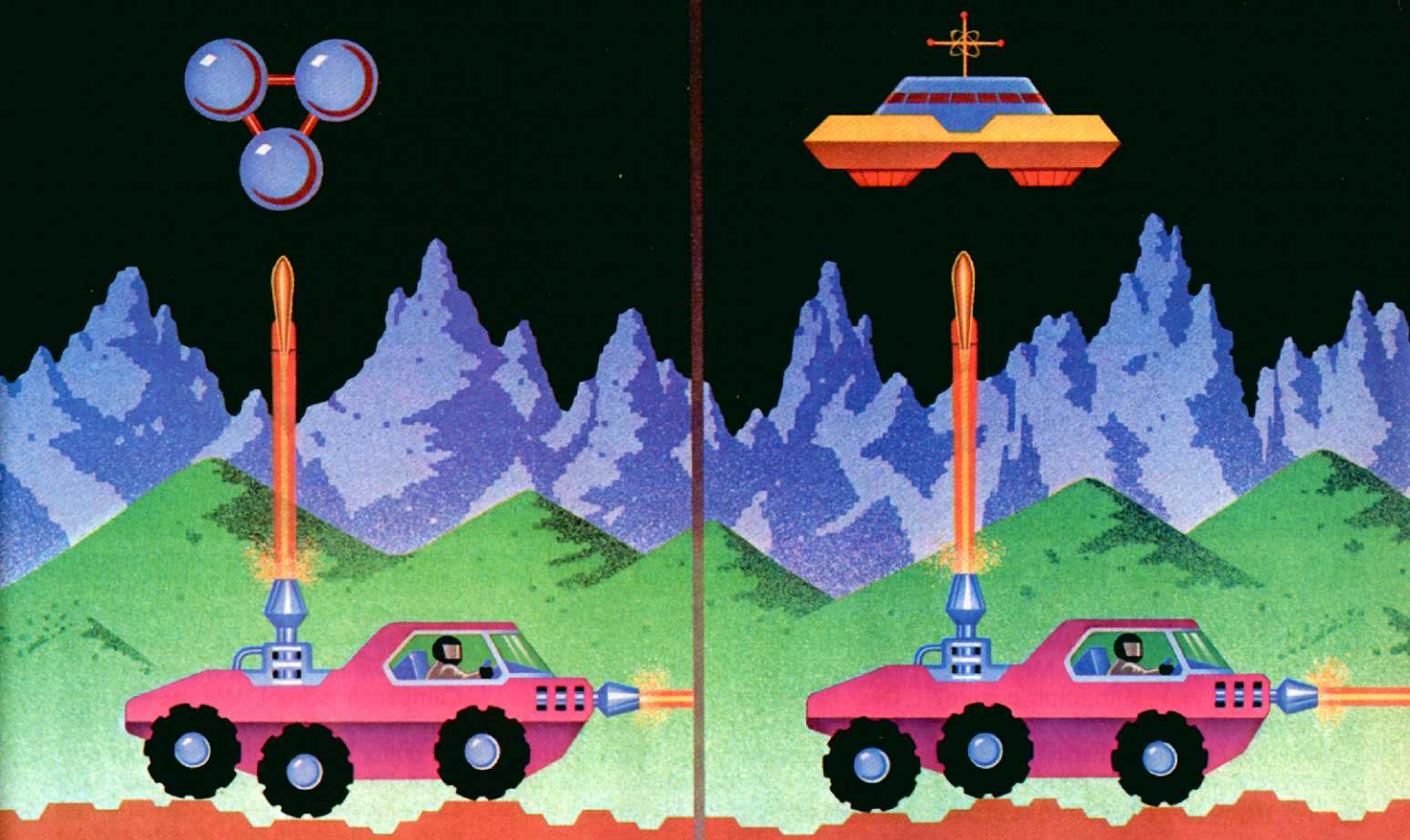


# Which player is really firing up his score?

**Think quick.** The new home version of Moon Patrol looks so much like the arcade, it could fool the man in the moon. So don't find yourself in a crater. Like the player on the right. He'll get only 100 points for using his Moon Buggy to shoot down a Moon Strafer. While the player on the left will get twice as many points for shooting down a Crater Maker. A victory as great as the lunar landing.

Your score can wax even higher. You'll get 80 points every time your Moon Buggy jumps over a rock. But you'll get 100 points when you blow up a rock.

Only Atari makes Moon Patrol for the ATARI® 2600™ Game, Sears Video Arcade† systems, and a version exclusively for the ATARI 5200™ SuperSystem.

So get on your lunar module and scan your local moonscape for Moon Patrol.

**Here comes Moon Patrol® from Atari®.**

A Warner Communications Company

cial literature you could send us for the school library on that anniversary as well as info on the history of Hanna-Barbera Productions? Also material on Pac-Man would be useful as this show seems to be a breakthrough of some kind or another. Thanks.

Mrs. J., Coldis Jr. High Librarian

*Some have an ax to grind:*

Dear Mr. Hanna, or Mr. Barbera, or both,

My name is Coleen. I love the cartoon Pac-Man! I would like to ask you something. Why is there only one girl Pac-Man, Ms. Pac? Everyone else is a boy, even the dog and cat are boys. There should be more girls and not just like the goblin Sue because she is a monster. Aren't you being showvenistic?

your cartoon fan, Coleen C. Age 8

*Some are autograph seekers:*

Dear Marty Angles (sic)

I enjoy Mr. Pac-Man, I saw you once on Dickens and Fenster, Mr. Angles may I have your autograph picture? And may I also have Shirley Jones your wife also? I enjoy her Partridge Family Show, and keep up the good work sir I enjoy you as a actor. If you know John

Astan (sic) may I have his autograph picture also? Can you get him to get Coloyal his wife in the Adams Family autograph picture before she dies? I heard she was dying of cancer, and I would ask Ted Cassady's (sic) autograph picture too. But I did not know that he has died. Well, I'm sorry but I can't say any more, but anyway I wish you the best in the future.

Your fan, David W.

*Some fans are into bondage:*

Dear Pac-Man:

I really like your show even when I'm doing my house work I always stop to watch the Pac-man show. I'm hoping I can be Ms. Pac for Halloween. I was wondering if you could send me some of your pictures. If you can, can you send me one of Ms. Pac tied up by Mezmaron.

From your dear friend, Agnes J.

P.S. I really like Ms. Pac.

Dear Pac-Man:

I like you very, very much indeed. I think you are a great actor. You do very well. My age is 14 and I'm in the seventh grade in school. I do very well indeed too. You must get alot alot of money. May I have eight pictures of you and Pac-Land please. Please write back and be sure to autograph each one.

Yours truly, Stephan N.

*Some write because they are lonely:*

Dear Hanna & Barbera:

I like all your cartoons. Pac-Man is my favorite show. On Saturday morning at 8:00 I get up go out to the tv set lay down and watch Pac-Man. My name is Jamie. And I live in Schaumburg, Illinois where we just moved. I go to Campanelli school. We are studying corn plants. Our group's corn plants are doing well. I'm in a special art program I'm in 3rd grade. I don't have many friends yet. My mom and dad work all the time. Please write and we can be pen pals. Okay?

your No. 1 fan, Jamie M.

**In this scene, the Pac-family is gathered around their TV set in the living room, watching, naturally, "The Adventures of Pac-Man".**

*"We read every letter," Barbera is proud to say, "and we answer them all. Over the years, we've had kids write to us for a long period of time, and we've always responded. They're our audience. Without them, let's face it, we'd be out in the cold.*

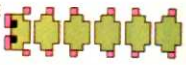
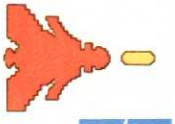
*"But it's not just kids who write us. We get letters from people of all ages, and from all walks of life. Some of it is touching, some of it amusing, and some of it is totally off the wall.*

*"For example," continues Barbera, "a few months ago, we were getting a lot of mail from a small town in northern California. A lot of it. Now, we get letters from all over the world, but rarely does it come in clusters. There was a real fan club going on in this little town. Then, when we sent the last batch of stuff out, it came back, and the envelope was stamped "PAROLES". Only then did we realize all of this correspondence had been coming from Folsom Prison," chuckles Barbera.*

*Pac-Man's mentor, Joe Barbera, has one final comment on fan mail: "Just keep those cards and letters coming."*

# How to make sure you don't get 5 pairs of underwear for Christmas.

Fill in this checklist, tear it out and give it to your parents. Help them figure out that this Christmas you'd like software and hardware. Not underwear.

- ☐ **Ms. Pac-Man**[1]
- ☐ **Centipede**™ 
- ☐ **Phoenix**[2]
- ☐ **Vanguard**[2] 
- ☐ **Jungle Hunt**[3]
- ☐ **Kangaroo**™ [4]
- ☐ **Dig Dug**[5]
- ☐ **Galaxian**[6]
- ☐ **Pole Position**[7]
- ☐ **Battlezone**™
- ☐ **Moon Patrol**[8]

- ☐ **ATARI 5200™ Super-System**

The world's most advanced video game system. Now with a $30.00 rebate offer.*

- ☐ **ATARI 2600™ System**

The world's most popular video game system. Now with a $30.00 rebate and a $60.00 rebate coupon book.*

- ☐ **ATARI 5200 TRAK-BALL™ Controller**

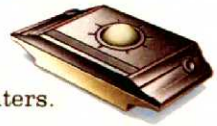
For the real arcade touch. Plays more TRAK-BALL™ compatible games than anyone else.

- ☐ **ATARI VCS™ Cartridge Adapter**

Lets your 5200 play every game made for ATARI game systems.

- ☐ **ATARI TRAK-BALL™ Controller**

For real arcade action on the ATARI 2600™ System, Sears Video Arcade† System and all ATARI Home Computers.



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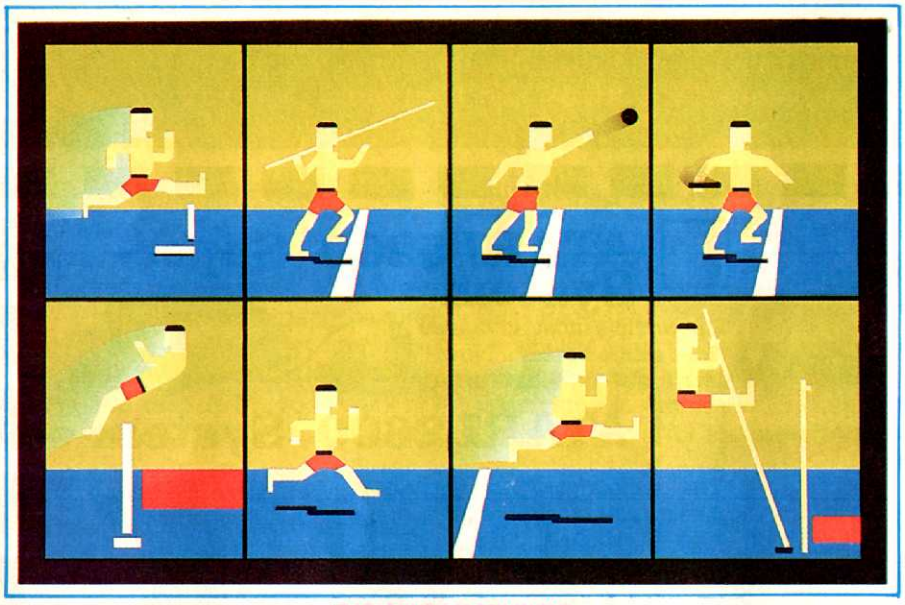
# PROGRAMMABLE PARADE

## Train for the Summer Olympics with Decathlon!



DECATHLON (ACTIVISION)

### DECATHLON

*Activision/Atari 2600*

You can almost hear the jubilant roar of the crowd as the Olympic theme trumpets the beginning of one of videogame's most prestigious accomplishments. Carrying the symbolic torch aloft, a runner moves along the track as the anthem plays, grandstands and night lights visible in the distance.

You are at the Videolympics, courtesy of David Crane, and the game is not only *called* **Decathlon**, it literally is a perfect simulation of that most legendary athletic event. That's right, a torch bearing, anthem playing attract mode and 10 different contests — each the perfect analog of the genuine thing — with up to four-player capability.

To say, beyond this, that *Decathlon* is one of the most entertaining videogames of the year pretty much caps it off: we are looking at a true classic.

Gamers can either practice up on individual events or run the full 10 contests — as grueling a session of arcading as can be found anywhere, this game could literally take pounds off you!

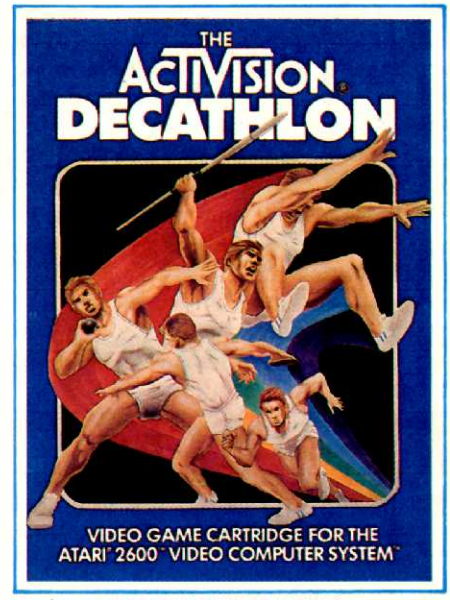
The decathlon begins with the 100m dash. This is a total sprint contest and players must move at full tilt — using the speed bar at the base of the playfield as a barometer — throughout the entire race. No pacing here, just plain, old fashioned gut-busting locomotion (for strategy, see sidebar).

The long jump is up next with gamers gaining momentum as they go and then hitting the action button before crossing the white jump line (which would scratch that trial as a disqualification). Your Bruce Jenner surrogate will be catapulted into the air and the distance of the jump is then translated into points, with totals displayed after each round. On non-racing events, players generally receive three attempts with the best score counting.

Next up, limber those arm muscles since it's time to put a shot somewhere. The shot put involves moving the athlete in tiny increments toward the nearby white line, while building up as much momentum as possible before hurling the metallic sphere into the air. Here, it arcs briefly then thuds to the earth, where an immediate reading is given regarding distance.

As with the real thing, this video decathlon offers a variety of challenges, some of which will come naturally to some gamers while others will excel in other events. The high jump requires that the runner begin at a soft lope, build up steam very quickly, then leap, arcing his body (it is hoped) over the high jump bar. The rules on jumping contests, such as this and pole vaulting, are simple. A player's given a low bar to vault. Succeeding at that jump, the bar is raised 0.2m in increments each time a jump is made. The player then has three attempts to better the previous high jump.

For the 400m dash it's still sprinting time, with arm weariness definitely




DECATHLON (ACTIVISION)

THE VIDEO GAME YOU PLAY WITH YOUR EYES AND EARS.

# MOUNTAIN KING™

LET THE MUSIC BE YOUR GUIDE OR PREPARE YOURSELF TO DIE!

**MOUNTAIN KING.™**
**IT'S MUSICAL MADNESS. WITH YOU AGAINST THE BEASTLY BATS AND BUGS WHO ALL DANCE TO THE DEADLY BEAT.**
**CAN YOU OUTPLAY THE MUSIC AND BECOME KING? FIND OUT, IT'S THE ULTIMATE UNDERGROUND EXPERIENCE!**

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1,000 DIAMONDS GLITTERING IN THE DARK, MUST TAKE THEM ALL!

THE FLAME SPIRIT, ITS SUPER POWER WILL OPEN THE TEMPLE OF THE **MOUNTAIN KING!**

GLIMMERING GOLD-- THE CROWN! MUSIC? GETTING LOUDER.

MUST GET TO THE TOP BEFORE IT STOPS-- **AHHH- BAT ATTACK!** HURRY... A LADDER? A TRICK? WHICH WAY...

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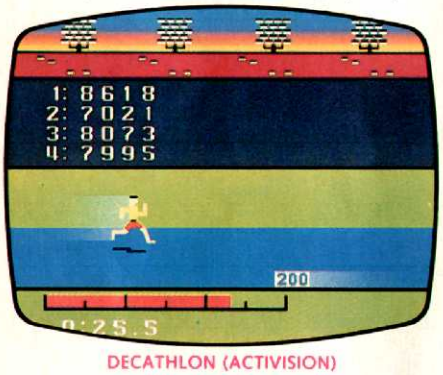
# PROGRAMMABLE PARADE

beginning to set in. But keep pumping, as you never know which event will make the difference. The 110m hurdle is perhaps the most frustrating game on the block. Players must run the proscribed distance, bounding evenly spaced hurdles as they go. Scoring here, however, is *extremely* stingy, so don't worry about a poor score — unless there's something here we missed, this one should give everyone trouble!

The discus throwing event is one of the most attractive, graphically. The on-screen athlete literally spins around as the player builds his surrogate's momentum toward the foul line, hurling the mighty discus just before reaching it.

The pole vault, like the high jump, is



DECATHLON (ACTIVISION)

a game of beating your previous best. Eventually, at 5m, this gets pretty tough.

The javelin is the last milk-run event — a beautiful exercise in which players build speed racing toward the foul line before throwing the spear high and far — before the "killer", the 1500m race. This baby begins at pacing speed, where it's fairly simple to maintain maximum locomotion and keep going — but for 1300m?!? Then the fun *really* starts! For the final 200m it's a dash, full sprint and if your joystick isn't shattered into a dozen pieces, your confidence isn't shaken, and your arm hasn't quietly slipped away from your body, you might want to sharpen your skills on those events at which you are, let us say, less than perfect?

In any case, *Decathlon* is a momentous accomplishment, a fantastic looking and playing videogame — and one of the real challenges you'll face in this life, short of entering an actual decathlon! *(Bill Kunkel)*

## DECATHLON: JOYSTICK DESTROYER DELUXE?

From the moment the press got its first chance to play **Decathlon**, the word was out — *this* sucker is a joystick breaker! You see, in order to attain high speeds in this game, it is necessary to move the shaft back and forth, left to right to left and so on at *very* high speeds. The torque, or stress, this places on a joystick shaft is considerable, and early test sessions looked like demolition derbies for controllers!

After running the game on the entire inventory of **EG** gourmet joysticks, we find that a lightweight, easy-action, short shafted joystick (for example, the Kraft) is the best stick for doing the Big Ten.

The trick is *not* to grasp the stick with the entire hand, but rather to flick the shaft left and right between thumb and forefinger, as rapidly as possible. When the hand whose fingers are running the show get tired, hold them still and move the joystick base itself back and forth.

This should net both more comfortable and considerably more successful play.

## SPIKE'S PEAK, GHOST MANOR

*Xonox Double-Ender/Atari 2600*

It's finally happened! In this highly record-influenced world of electronic gaming, a company has finally come along with double-sided videogames. That's right, Xonox, one of the newest companies to enter the gaming sweepstakes is charging in with a bang like a double-barreled shotgun.

Each Xonox "double-ender" consists of an oversized plastic game cartridge with each end housing a full 8K program. But there are no "A" and "B" sides here, instead the game match-ups were made by the play testers themselves, the hoards of kids Xonox employed to help them get the most out of their programs.

The first release is a perfect example of two games perfectly complementing one another. Initially, most instruction-loathing arcaders will be taken with the easy-to-learn and attractively presented **Ghost Manor**, a shooting gallery contest set at the entrance to a forbidding (and obviously haunted) castle.

Players control an archer who moves horizontally back and forth across the base of the playfield and must fire up at the bats and beasties protecting the entrance. Your main antagonist, however, is an axe-wielding mummy who moves back and forth just above the gamer's bowman, intent on hacking him into little pieces.

The graphics are lush, the "clop" of the falling axe and other audio effects are first-rate, and the game is exceptionally enjoyable, with five playfields full of action!

After extensive play on this one, however, the game that *really* has "legs", or play longevity, is the other game. **Spike's Peak**, designed by freelance game design wizard Steve Beck, is a mountain climbing game with as much depth and play variation as gamers are likely to find jammed into a

SPIKE'S PEAK/GHOST MANOR (XONOX)

2600 videogame cartridge.

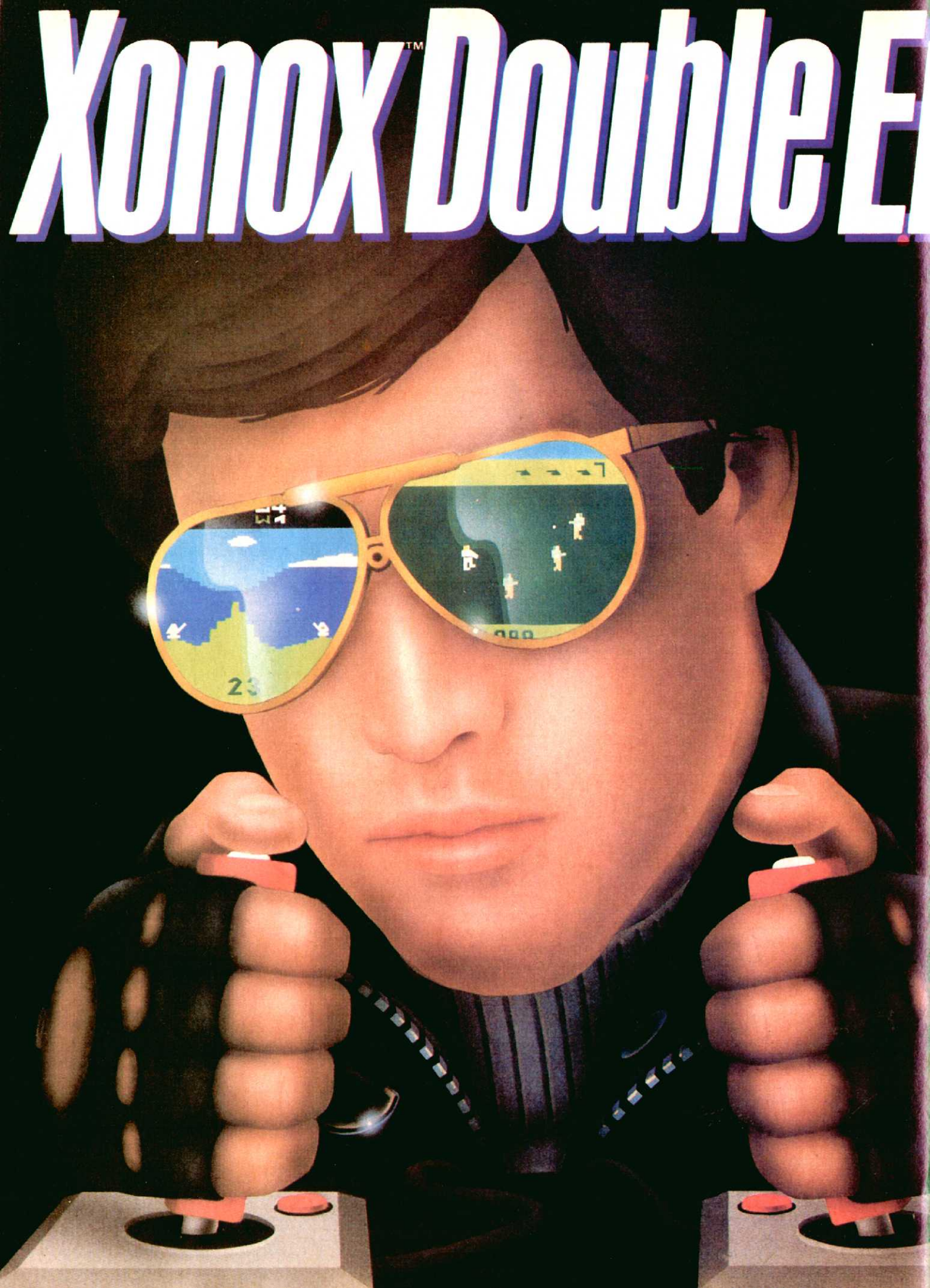
Spike begins his adventure at the base of a large, imposing mountain. As he moves along the trail, Spike will come upon juncture points at which time he will be transported to the various scenarios programmed into this contest. His first test, for example, takes place on the trail itself, leading into the mountain's foothills. Spike must navigate up a series of upwardly-angled roads, bristling with danger every step of the way.

The major dangers of this first exploration are the waterfalls, the bears and the eagle. Spike must make his way up onto the mountain's lowest level, hiding in caves to avoid bears and eagles — but make sure a pair of bearish eyes aren't peeping out at you from within that cave! — and always keeping his ears open for the tell-tale screech of a diving eagle. This is definitely a game designed to sharpen *all* your gaming senses.

Leap over waterfalls, slip past the beasties and you move further up the mountain, depicted in green at its base, becoming grey at its middle and snowy at the summit. Further scenarios reflect the weather conditions of Spike's present location as a total of five utterly different scenarios are again offered to arcaders skillful enough to make it to the top, planting pitons, avoiding avalanches and bounding boulders, and moving as quickly as possible so as not to exhaust the limited air supply.

This is a player's game, and you *will* want to read the instructions— unless, of course, being mangled by an eagle ad infinitum is your idea of a good time—but, boy, is this one worth the investment of time. The

# Xonox™ Double E



# ...ders™ Are Best...

**Independent Testing With Kids Ages 9 Through 16 Ranked The XONOX Double-Enders Against The Top 10 VCS Games, And They Rated BEST OVERALL!**

**Read What The Game Editors From The Top Video Magazines Have To Say:**

*"With a bang like a double-barreled shotgun . . . This is a player's game."* ***Will Richardson, ELECTRONICS GAMES.***

*"The graphics are top notch and the play action is excellent . . . Ghost Manor a 10, Spike's Peak a 10 . . . combined score for this cart a 20, so don't miss it!"* ***Perry Bailey, 2600 NEWSLETTER.***

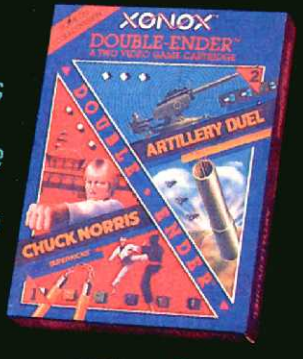
*"These games seem to be designed for the player who is bored with the usual games . . . the games act like arcade games."* ***Tim Hauser, VIDEO ADVISOR.***

*"They form an incomparable package . . . one of the best buys of the year."* ***Dan Persons, VIDEO GAMES.***

*"Scintillating game play and graphics that run the spectrum . . . videogaming's BEST BUYS of the year."* ***Anthony Contorno, JOYSTICK JOLTER.***

**Read On And Discover The Double-Ender Excitement:**

***Ghost Manor/Spike's Peak*** *— On one end challenge Spike's Peak. Fight off attacking bears, diving eagles and abominable snowman. Avoid deadly rock slides and avalanches as you climb through 5 different game screens packed with action that will really test your joystick skills. On the other end is Ghost Manor. You must fight your way past evil spirits, witches, and an axe wielding mummy to get into Ghost Manor and save your friend. Again, 5 game screens loaded with fantastic graphics and plenty of action. Available on Atari® 2600 VCS™ and Vic 20.™*




***Chuck Norris Superkicks/Artillery Duel*** *— The legendary expert is on a journey to a monastery, but along the way he's attacked by various bad guys trying to stop him. As you progress, you learn new skills and gain belts associated with karate. Lots of fighting action with realistic graphics in a real powerhouse of a game. On the flip side you're in command of an artillery gun emplacement set in an alpine terrain. You control barrel angle and powder charge as you try to zero in on your opponent. Two player action that requires you to think as you make your adjustments from one shot to another. Available on Atari® 2600 VCS,™ Vic 20,™ Colecovision,™ and Commodore 64.™* ***More XONOX Double-Enders Are Coming!*** *Watch your stores for the new Robin Hood/Sir Lancelot Double-Ender, two great medieval pursuit games that have all the graphics and joystick action you've come to expect from XONOX. Available on Atari® 2600 VCS,™ Vic 20,™ Colecovision,™ and Commodore 64.™*

XONOX™

**GO SEE IT FOR YOURSELF**

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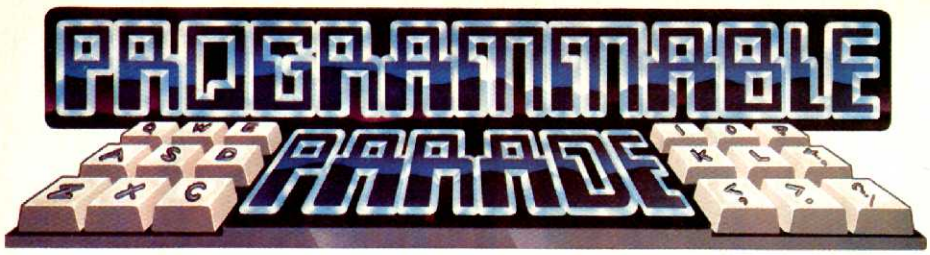



game is richly textured, filled with realistic and exciting play elements, and each scenario takes gamers to a totally different visual panorama.

Make it all the way to the top and watch Spike plant his flag before collapsing from utter exhaustion (something you may wish to try as well).

As those gum folks like to say, "Double your pleasure, double your fun."

*(Will Richardson)*

## TUTANKHAM

*Parker Brothers/Atari 2600*

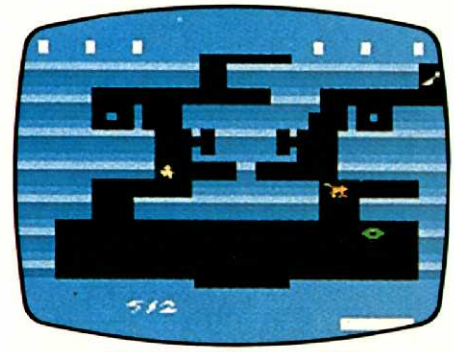
Those who've tired of the predictable adventuring and lack of action in such early 2600 titles as **Adventure** and **Haunted House** from Atari, will undoubtedly find **Tutankham** one of the most pleasant surprises of 1983.

This game has all the flavor an adventure fan could want — secret passages, puzzles, and strategic use of an allotment of three lives and three laser flares (capable of destroying all enemy creatures within the area). Since it also offers all the action devotees of, say, **Wizard of Wor** might ever crave, *Tut* is perhaps Parker's best entry since **Frogger**!

The player controls a team of three archeologists who explore — or attempt to — the four chambers within Tutankham's tomb (by the way, did you know that this game was originally to be called "Tutankhamen" but the last two letters didn't fit on the arcade casing!?) Each chamber contains greater prizes (everything from Ramses II's silver crown to Zircons) and deadlier perils. While only cobras, scorpions (smarter than its companions, by the way, and not able to be drawn so easily into *cul-de-sacs*) and giant bats patrol the first chamber, mutant viruses, deadly monkeys, lion heads and blue condors are among the menaces to be faced in the lower chamber.

Players can fire their archeologist's gun to either the left or right, and for each archeologist there is a "laser flash", a burst of light that instantly disintegrates all beasties on-screen for use in only the tightest of spots. The object is to work your way down into the chamber, grabbing treasure (leave too many behind and you'll have to go back after them). At the bottom is the map leading to the next level.

This is a real nail-biting, compulsive



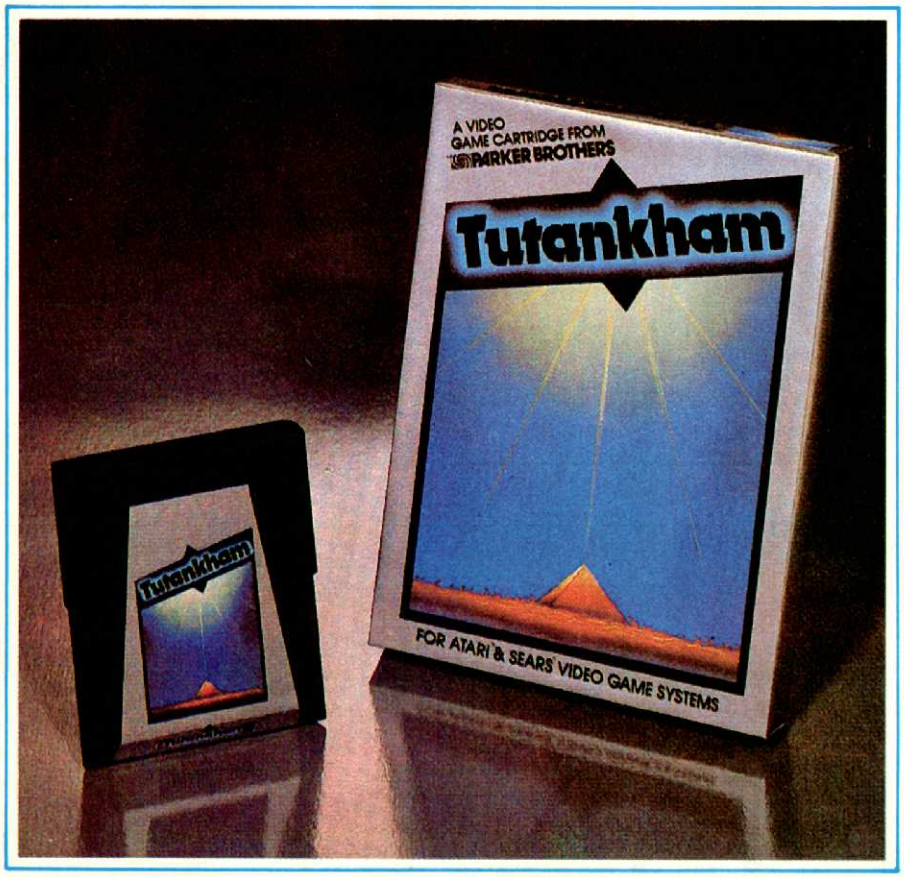
TUTANKHAM (PARKER BROS.)

piece of game playing. The graphics are quite nice, with the Arabian numbers indicating the scores and excellent articulation of the scorpions, cobras, etc..

There are four difficulty levels, with one and two player options for each level. *Tutankham* may be a few letters short, but there's very little missing here. This is a fine simulation of the arcade cult favorite and you'll soon be surprised at just how addictive this contest can become.

*Tutankham* is the best blend of adventure and action software available on the 2600.

*(Bill Kunkel)*




TUTANKHAM (PARKER BROS.)

## SOLAR FOX

*CBS/Atari 2600*

Some coin-ops don't find their real audience until they reach the home market. Examples include **Ladybug**, **Space Panic**, and **Mouse Trap**. All stumbled in the arcades only to find acceptance on home systems.

Generally, the games that miss the boat in the arcades are either too complex to be swallowed in the limited play-time available in arcades. In the case of Bally's **Solar Fox**, however, the game was just not flashy looking — at a time when titles such as **Tron** and **Zaxxon** were chowing down on tokens — and failed to even draw notice in the few arcades where it *was* actually tested.

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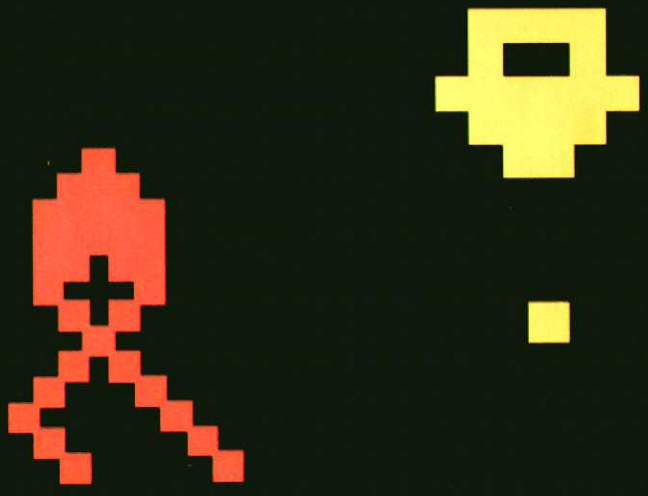

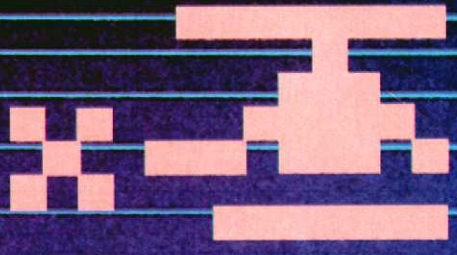

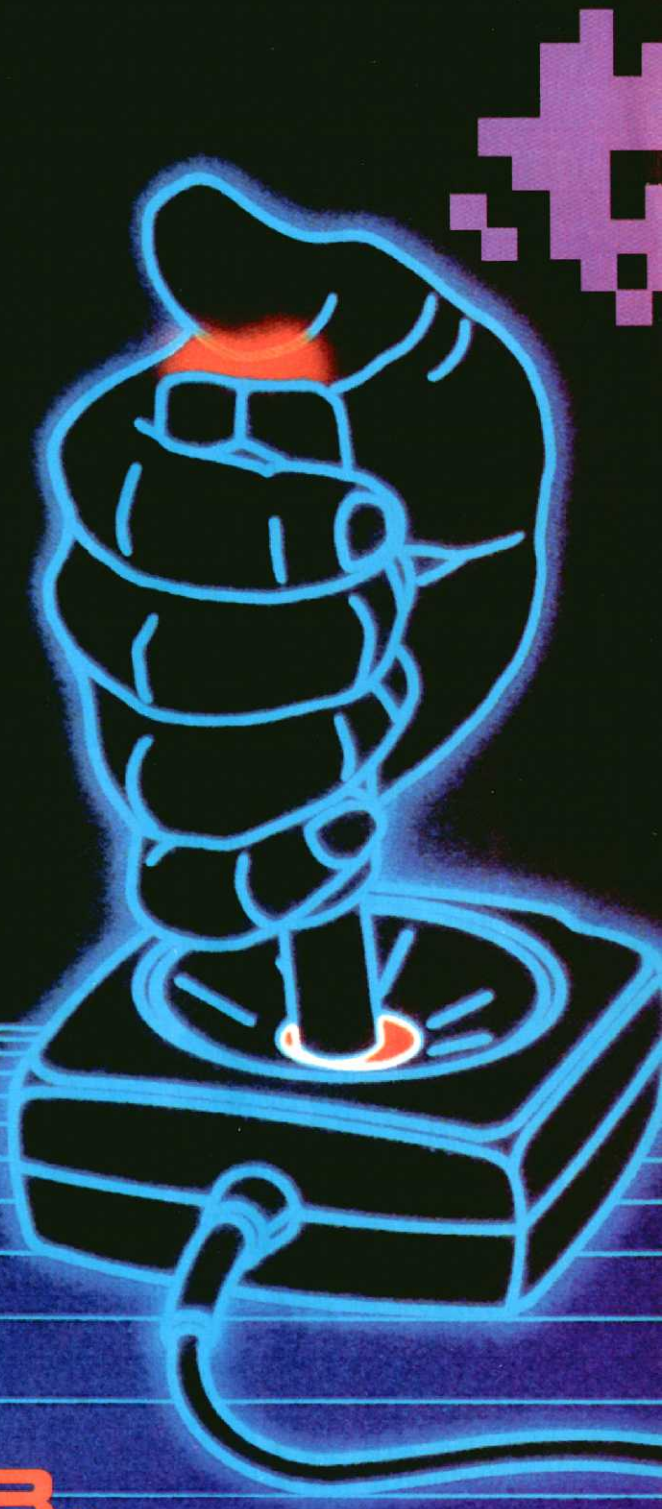

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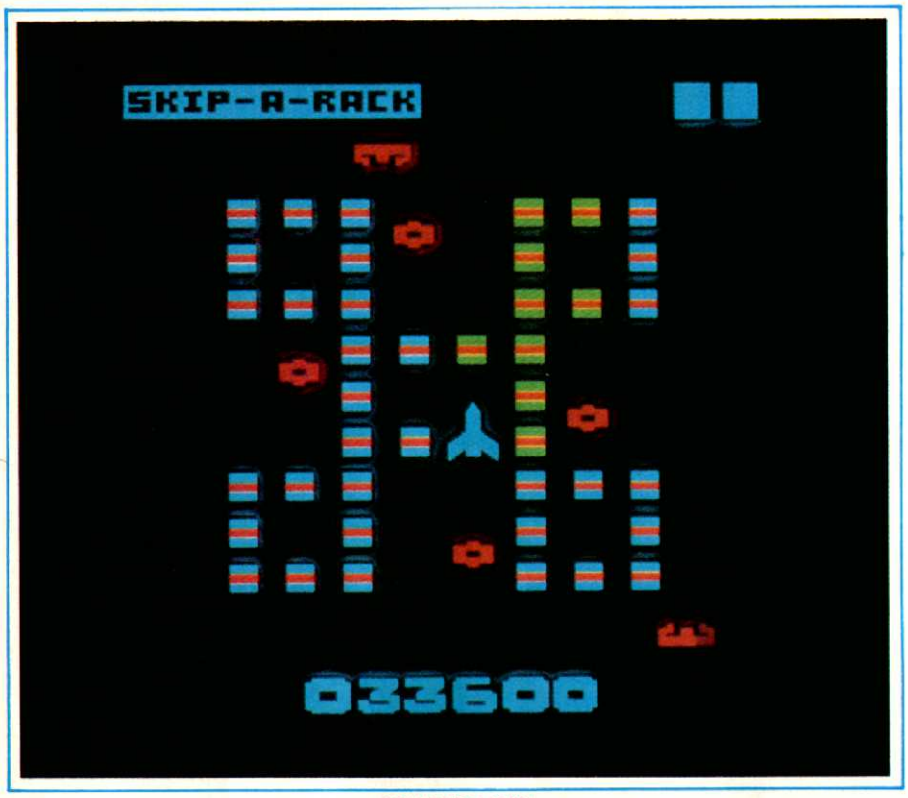
# PROGRAMMABLE PARADE

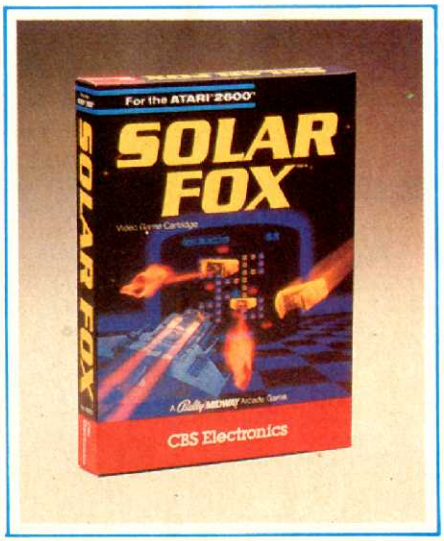



SOLAR FOX (CBS)

Obviously, translating this program to the 2600 is the best thing that can happen to it. The game challenges the gamer to pilot a ship, at either slow or accelerated speed (achieved by hitting the action button), and pass it successfully over the box-like energy panels laid out in a different pattern on each rack. Meanwhile, enemy ships are harassing your craft from above and below, lobbing bombs and fireballs that will prove quite fatal upon contact.

Each successive scenario, or rack, offers greater challenges, with more panels to be picked up and more alien attack ships to bust your gaming chops. Occasionally, a "skip-a-rack" field comes up. Complete this successfully and the game leap-frogs the next round and goes to the following rack. Complete five racks and a special bonus round begins. Two rectangles of energy planes are set up, one atop the other, and, playing against a *tight* time limit, but without alien ships to bother your craft, the player must collect all the panels before time runs out. This is an all-or-nothing number, folks, so if even *one* panel remains uncollected when time runs out, you have accomplished nothing.

With rack seven, things change color slightly — quite literally. From this point on, players are required to, initially, pass over the energy panels, thereby changing their color, before making a second pass and picking them up.




It may not be eyeball-popping in terms of graphics, but the play value is solid as bedrock, and quite compelling. *Solar Fox* is a highly recommended 2600 videogame — obviously back where it belonged all the while.

*(Bill Kunkel)*

## SEAHAWK

*Sancho/Atari 2600*

The most noteworthy aspect of **Seahawk** is right on its package — a hilariously poorly translated game description: "Shoot! Shoot!" Enemy's planes surrounding you. The intensive fire power redden (sic) the sky. . .There's an enemy battleship at right-hand side. Beware of its missiles. Go destroy it at once!" Makes you want to run right out and buy a copy, doesn't it? If Sancho, a Japanese-based maker of 2600 games hopes to break into the tough American market, the least it can do is try to hire someone who speaks the language. The instruction booklet (if you can call one tiny, typed black-and-white page a booklet) is just as bizarre.

As far as the cartridge itself goes, *Seahawk* is an airborne shoot-out that pits the arcader's lone fighter plane against a legion of attack choppers and battleships. If the inevitable happens and the plane is downed, a nice feature bails the pilot out and parachutes him toward the sea. If the gamer can maneuver the chutist onto the deck of a red rescue ship, the pilot is given another plane without having to draw a "life" from the turns in reserve.

The idea of this hard-core shoot-'em-up is to blast as many choppers and black ships as possible, without getting hit. Shooting a red ship — one of the Good Guys — loses points instead of scoring them.

An interesting feature about *Seahawk* is that it allows gamers to fire two types of missiles using a standard, one-button joystick. To fire straight ahead, players push the stick to the right or left while pressing the red button. Pressing the button with the stick in any other position results in a bomb dropping from the fighter plane.

*Seahawk* is a decent game with good graphics, though they can't be called exceptional. As far as playability goes, this game isn't addictive. . .but it ain't bad.

*(Tracie Forman)*

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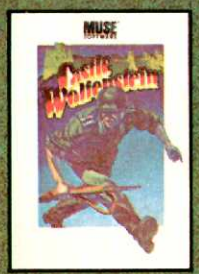


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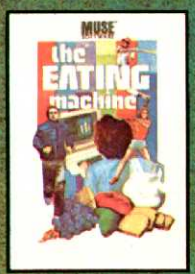


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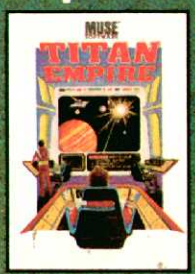


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# Warfare Roars Across the Burning Sands

By NEIL SHAPIRO

## KNIGHTS OF THE DESERT

*Strategic Simulations/Apple II/48K disk*

The hot desert sun burned down on the dusty but somehow gallant tanks as they moved ponderously, like fate cast in metal, across a featureless plain to an as-yet unknown battlefield. The packed gravel of the North African desert crunched under the treads with a sound like a giant madman gnashing his teeth, but the tanks' engines all but covered that sound with their own cacophony of engine noises.

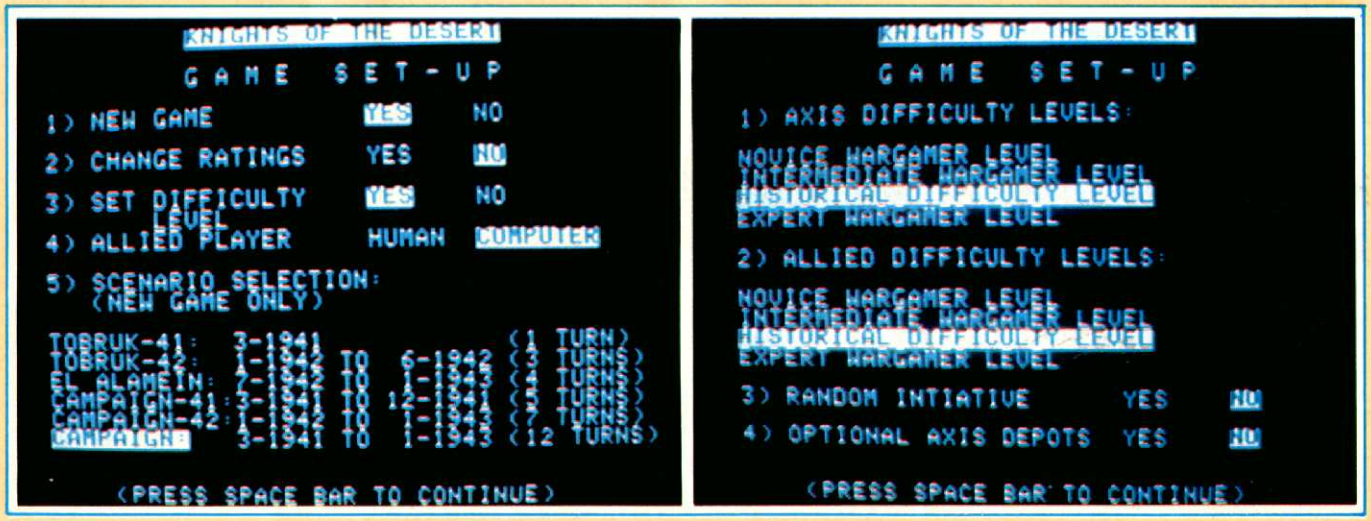
As the Panzer Division rumbled ever forward, the horizon — far off into the eye-slitting sun — began to appear strangely jagged and showed glints as of reflections. The men had seen mirages before, but as they advanced it became clear that this was no mirage but the type of reality even harsher than the desert alone could impose.

Broken tanks, Panzers and Crusaders, lay scattered about. Some had treads snapped — huge bodies rolled onto their sides with gaping wounds — others seemed to have just stopped. Dead and broken, the metal corpses lay in the hot sun like small hills on the plain as the still living passed before them in noisy array. It was North Africa in the summer of 1942. Anything could happen.

This new simulation game called **Knights of the Desert** from Strategic Simulations, Inc. (SSI) uses a new gaming system to examine what is one of the most misunderstood theatres of the Second World War. With some rough spots, they have succeeded in taking this most complex of modern battlefields and making it accessible to the armchair general equipped with a personal computer.

Solitaire play allows the user to general the Axis armies against the Allies. Or, two players can general either side. Either way quickly shows both the astonishing tactical mobility of the units involved as well as the maddeningly slow and detailed strategic decisions and plans necessary to commit those units to combat.

Players move the units and employ strategy with the help of a number of on-screen maps. Three tactical maps display the North African battlefield.




**With the first menu screen, a gamer can choose one of six scenarios; the second screen relates to the difficulty levels.**

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The units themselves are plotted on these maps and moved by keyboard control. The first map shows the western coast of Africa and the main German base of El Agheila. The next map shows the central part of Northern Africa, the area which contains the fortified city of Tobruk. The third tactical map presents the eastern coast with the British base in Alexandria. Taken all three together, they give an accurate look at the terrain and layout of the regions. The six types of terrain, all of which affect unit tactics and operations, include clear, coastal and sea hexes as well as rough, impassable sand and mountain hexes. The entire area of North Africa, detailed on the three tactical maps, can also be shown on the strategic map all at one time. Though the strategic map gives an indication of terrain and the presence of friendly and enemy units, its scale will not allow it to show such things as the specific identity of a unit.

Units are depicted on the tactical screen as the type of squarish symbols often used in military and historical journals to denote divisional level formations. A German Panzer division, for example, is shown as a slanty blank parallelogram, with two "x's" above it. Allied armor, on the other hand, is shown as a square, filled in with a circle and with two "x's" above. This is quite a departure from SSI's usual way of designating such units with silhouettes of the major type of armor or infantry within the division. At first, this reviewer was less than happy with the display — and I still wonder whether some sacrifices were made in order to make as much of the game's program code compatible with as many various computers as possible. After a game or two, however, this new display system *does* become acceptable and even lends the game a certain flavor of the HQ Operations Center.

But what really makes this game ignite players' imaginations are the new rules which govern such things as supply and mobility. Let's follow a typical game turn, step-by-step, to see not only how the game works but what some of the unusual aspects of this North African theatre of war were really like.

As in many games, the turn begins with a reinforcement phase. The reinforcements, however, can only arrive at the player's home base (Alexandria for Allies, El Agheila for Axis). No more than six units may arrive at any time.

The next phase is for supply. This is the point at which the game begins to take on the true flavor of the North African campaign, where a hard-driving general could maneuver his troops so far ahead of supply that he could lose a battle by gaining territory. Axis combat units must be within two hexes of a supply source to be supplied. Allied units must be within three hexes (four, if the computer is running the Allies).

At the beginning of the game, the sole supply sources will be the players' home bases. Generals can extend the line of supply slowly with depot units. A depot unit must be no more than six hexes from another depot unit, home base or Tobruk in order to form a line of supply. The computer automatically checks to see which units are properly supplied.

Following the supply phase is the logistics phase. In this one, the player first cycles through all his units to examine them with regard to the status of their supply, combat and morale. One problem with the game system became evident as we cycled through one hex which contained five very similar units. The problem is that the units in a square are shown only with a "stacking symbol" and when you cycle through them this symbol doesn't change. This can be very confusing and necessitates either an excellent memory or some elementary bookkeeping to figure out when to move on to the next stacking symbol and cycle through those units.

Once the player grows familiar with the units, allocating levels of replacement and resupply to them won't really chew up much time. (The Axis, by the way, must surround Tobruk if they intend to go East of it, or their supply is cut by 20%).

During the logistics phase, the combat units lose 100 supply points as a maintenance cost. Units with under 100 points remaining are eliminated. Depot units, too, face attrition as they have a supply cost of 200 plus an addi-

**The first tactical screen in the game displays the Axis base at El Agheila.**

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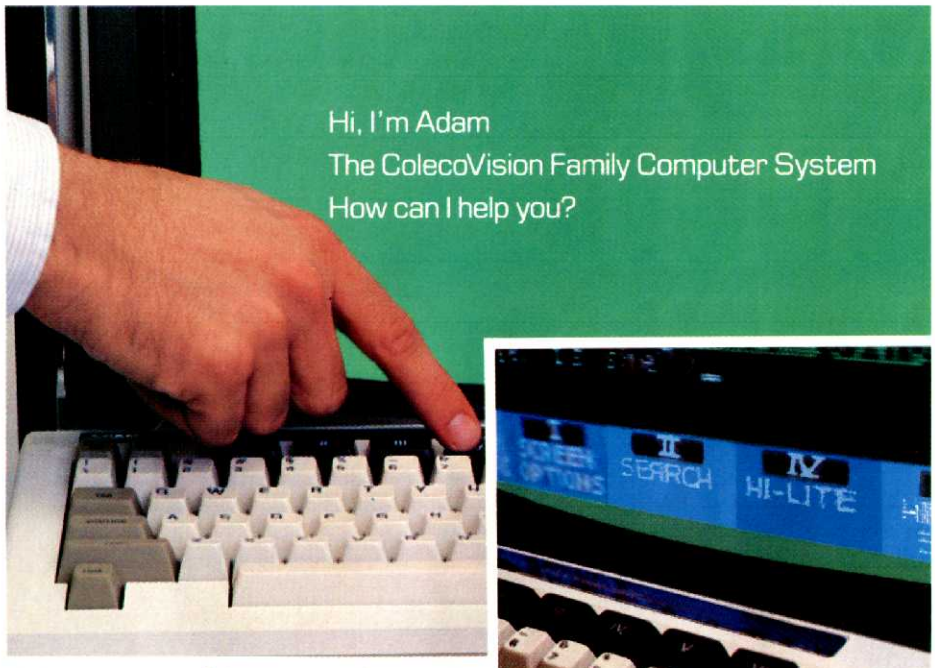


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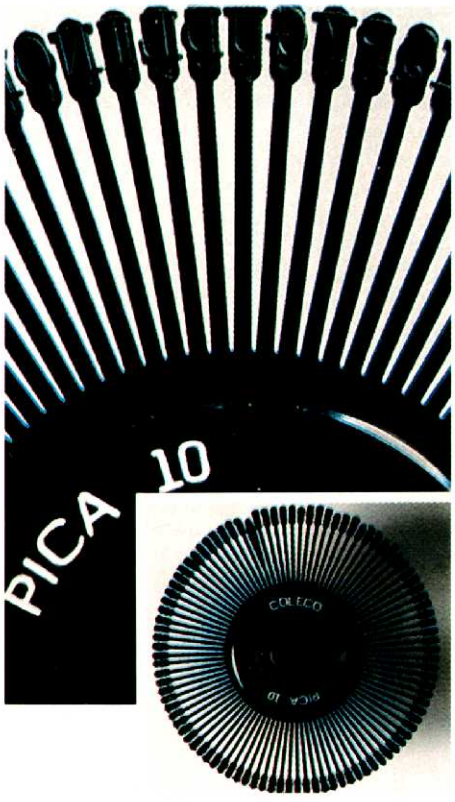

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tional 25 for every hex they are from their home base.

The next step is the operations phase of the turn. Each unit is given a certain number of operation points. Mobile Axis units get 36 and nonmobile or garrison units get 19, while the Allied counterparts get 28 and 18.

At this point, the player may move all but depot units. A cursor is moved to a stack of one or more units. The units are moved one-by-one, in response to the entry of the numbers 1 - 6. The numbers are arranged in a compass rose pattern as directional indicators. If a unit moves into an empty space (no friendly unit) which is next to an enemy unit, there is a 70% probability that this will allow the enemy unit to engage in a limited reaction.

This limited reaction rule goes a long, long way toward making this one of the most interesting simulations of the North African campaign around. The enemy may move *any* of his units up to half of their remaining operation points and may even initiate one combat.

Following any limited reaction, units which try to move into the same hex as an enemy unit trigger the combat sequence. First the attacker is allowed to cycle through all of the defending units in the hex and choose the ones he will attack. Then the attacker decides which of his units (if more than one is stacked in the hex) he wishes to initiate the attack with. The attacker selects a battle intensity (1 - 9) and a level of risk (1 - 9) along with allocating air support points. The defender finally chooses a level of risk for his troops and allocates his own air support.

Combat uses up both supply and operation points. The results of each combat are governed by a complex interrelationship of many variables including modifying defender's strength by cutting it in half if it has less than 50 supply points; multiplying defender's combat strength by terrain and fortification modifiers; modifying both defender and attacker in regard to allocated air support; attack adds combat points for nearby friendly units and subtracts for noninvolved but nearby enemy units. While there are literally dozens of variables that may factor into a combat result, the computer will cheerfully calculate the most obtruse combat in a second or so. While most human generals will not precalculate each combat on their own, the variables are such that a good general can accurately forecast whether or not he should initiate a combat maneuver.

Following the operation phase are the resupply and the enemy reaction phases. In the latter phase the other player may move his units in limited reaction. Following that is yet another operations phase, followed by resupply and depot movement again. After this, the second player gets to repeat all the phases as above with the first player, having reaction phases instead of full operational phases.

Victory points are handed out for taking towns and territory. So this game becomes a contest of countering sweeps across a broad-ranging battlefield. Just as in the actual North African campaign, victory will go to the general who understands not only how his troops move, but how to keep them in supply. The new player will find that even though the towns make tempting targets, you must be prepared to take bold risks and advance your territorial gains. Only in this manner can most victories be brought about.

As always, SSI has done an excellent job on the rules booklet and other documentation. This time they've also included a full history of the campaign written in a breezy, yet accurate, style that cannot fail to interest both historian and wargamer. It is the best capsule summary of the North African Campaign this writer has seen. (Read why General Montgomery is often less regarded than General Auchinleck by people in the know.)

All in all, this game system — leaving aside the one drawback mentioned — is a real treat.

**The screen on the left details the area around Tobruk; the one on the right zeros in on the Allies at Alexandria.**

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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?

You guessed it — Yukon Yohan!

Scraper Caper™ has all the action, adventure and excitement that can be packed into a ROM cartridge. And it features a mind boggling number of rounds, difficulty adjustment, high score table, demo mode and spectacular sound and graphic effects.

Miner 2049er is a gamer's gold mine, but you've got to beat Scraper Caper to get to the top! Scraper Caper is available from your local dealer for the ATARI® 5200 Supersystem™ and all ATARI Home Computers.

**Suggested Retail $49.95**

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HOTTEST
YET IN...
SCRAPER
CAPER
Programmed
by Bill Hogue
2049

# COMPUTER

## LODE RUNNER

*Broderbund/Apple II/48K disk*

It's called **Lode Runner**, as in Mother Lode. And it certainly looks like Broderbund, which did so well with **Choplifter!**, has struck gold again!

This disk perfectly illustrates the difference between a game that falls into an existing product group and one that simply rips off a specific existing program. Arcaders will instantly recognize *Lode Runner* as being in the same *genre*, climbing games, as such recent hits as **Donkey Kong** and **Miner 2049er**.

*Lode Runner* is the thinking gamer's climbing contest. Accurate strategic analysis will help the arcader get through more of the disk's 150 tantalizing playfields than mere dexterity with the joystick. And in the event that you're resourceful enough to bash through all 150 screens, the designer has included a simple-as-pie method by which even non-programmers can create their own custom playfields.

As with many Broderbund games, the evil Bungeling Empire is at the root of the problem the gamer must straighten out. Those nasty folks have stolen gold from the gamer's peace-loving comrades and the Lode Runner must collect that gold from the Bungeling treasury.

Using a joystick or keyboard to control the hero, the player must collect all the gold from a given screen while avoiding the Bungeling guards, whose touch is lethal. In fact, there are only two ways to lose a man in this outing — getting touched by one of the guards or getting caught in a hole.

Creating holes is the hero's defense mechanism. Pushing one of the two joystick buttons digs a hole to the left

# GAMING

## Loaded with Danger and Excitement, Lode Runner Has Struck Gold!

or right of the hero. This comes in handy when Bungeling guards are hot on your trail or when a quick escape is necessary. If a guard falls into a hole, he drops whatever gold he might be carrying. The hero can then grab the gold and walk right over the fallen guard.

Making two adjacent holes produces a gap big enough to drop through. Falling, no matter what the distance, is never injurious to the Lode Runner — or the Bungeling guards.

When all the gold is cleared off a screen, a ladder appears at the top of the screen, ready to take you to the next level. Should you get caught on your way to that ladder, you keep your points accumulated for trapping guards or seizing gold, but you will be minus one man, the gold will be replaced and you have to once again clear the screen of gold. That makes it good strategy to finish off the gold collections as near the top of the screen as possible.

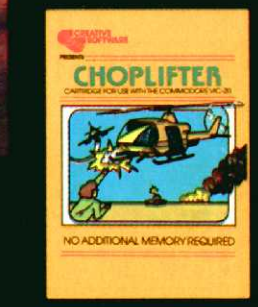
The game creator is a snap to use and absolutely no programming knowledge is necessary. What is needed is some extended experience playing the game in order to understand exactly what would or wouldn't make a good screen design.

No matter what the method of play, Lode Runner is sure to find a spot on your game shelf where it can be picked up over and over again.

*(Rick Teverbaugh)*

LODE RUNNER (BRODERBUND)

# Award-Winning Hits for your Commodore




***CHOPLIFTER****
***For the Commodore VIC-20.***

*Those are our men they're holding hostage! We don't care how you do it, but you've got to shoot your way in there and bring 'em back alive. You've got three choppers, probably not enough but it's all we can spare. And the enemy camp is pretty heavily fortified. With tanks, jetfighters and truly nasty laser bombs. Okay, maybe it's a suicide mission, but somebody's got to do it. Dozens of innocent lives are at stake. We're counting on you... don't let them down!*

Now you can play some of America's hottest computer games on your Commodore, and get a FREE introduction to Home Management Software. It's our way of showing you that action-packed gaming is only the beginning of your Commodore's capabilities.

**C R E A T I V E**

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# with a Free Software Bonus.

***SERPENTINE****
***For the Commodore VIC-20.***

*In the Kingdom of Serpents, the only rule is eat or be eaten. Three huge and evil red snakes are slithering through a complex series of mazes, closing in on your good blue serpent from all sides. Move fast and watch your tail! Try to survive long enough to let your eggs hatch into reinforcements. Swallow the magical frogs or your enemy's eggs and you can get the strength to go on... but look out to your left... and ahead of you! They've got you surrounded, and it looks like meal time.*

It can teach you. Manage your family finances. Even help you buy a new car. And now, for a limited time only, when you buy one of our specially-marked games you'll receive a certificate good for one of our Home Management Programs absolutely free.

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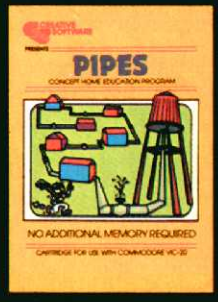


***PIPES****
***For the VIC-20 and Commodore 64.***

*Arlo is a hard-working plumber, but a touch absent-minded. He's building a water supply system for the whole neighborhood, and he really has his hands full. Help Arlo decide what kind of pipe to buy and where to put it... his limited budget doesn't leave him much margin for error. Figure out the shortest, most economical way to get everyone hooked up...and just hope poor Arlo has remembered to open and close the right valves. A marvelously entertaining and challenging exercise in planning, economics and spatial relationships for all ages.*

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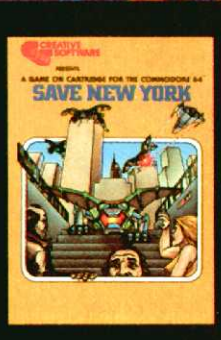
***SAVE NEW YORK™***
***For the Commodore 64.***

*It was as peaceful a day as New York ever gets, when suddenly the sky went dark and a monstrous droning noise filled the air. Hordes of grotesque aliens were swooping down from all sides, biting into the Big Apple as if they hadn't eaten for days. They were laying eggs, too. Horrible slimy things that got down into the subway tunnels and began clawing their way up. If anyone was going to save the city, it would have to be me. I leapt into my rocket and began blasting away. I thought I stood a fighting chance, but fuel's running low... another wave of invaders on the horizon ...signing off...*

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# COMPUTER GAMING

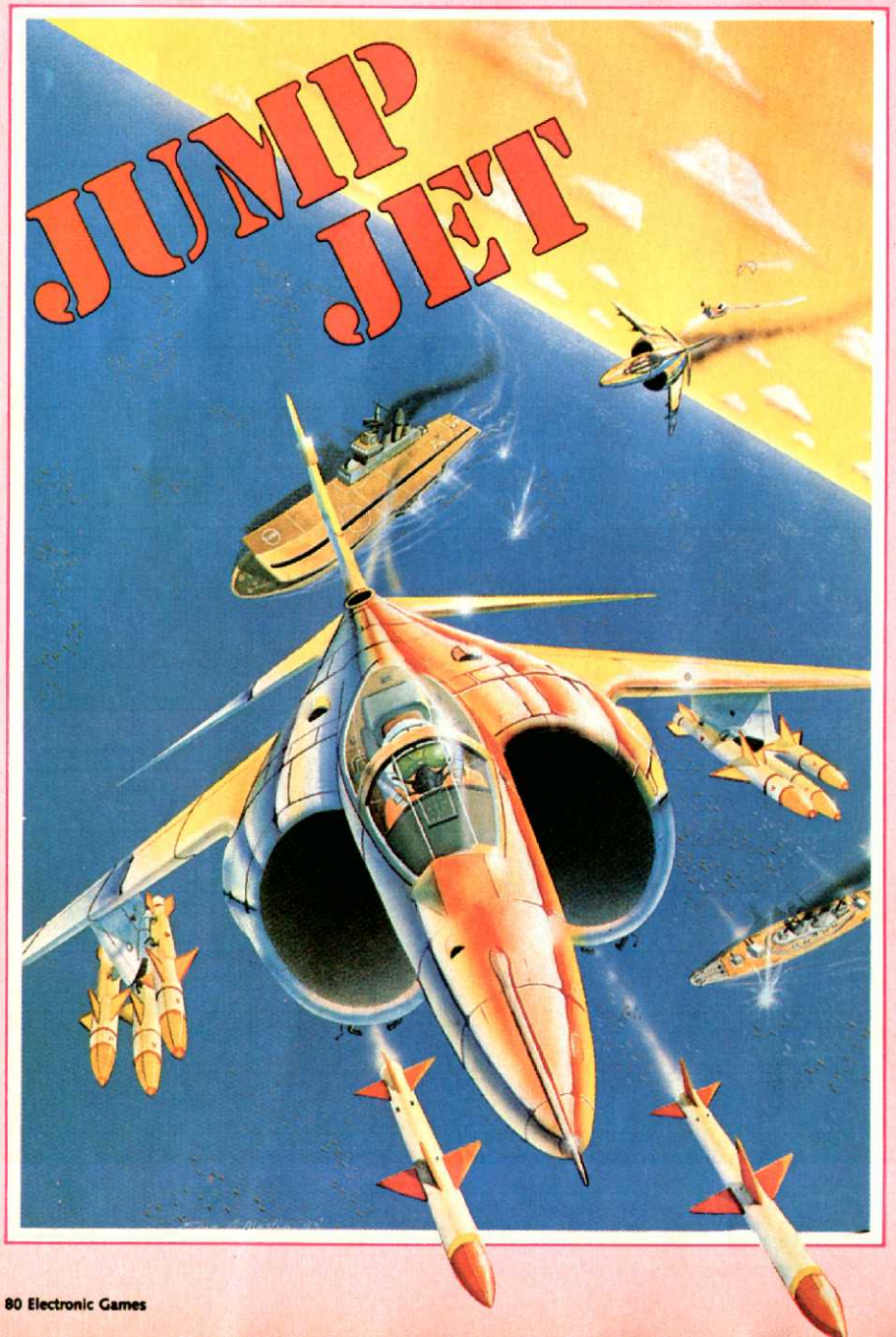
## JUMP JET

*Avant-Garde/Apple II/48K Disk*

When the release of **Jump Jet** was only a matter of weeks away, Avant-Garde hailed it as the next **Choplifter!**, hinting that it might even be better. It *is* better, in a couple of ways, but it is also inferior in a number of other respects.

To get off to a positive start, *Jump Jet* has two missions compared to one for *Choplifter!*. The first mission is to protect the Loyal Fleet, which consists of one aircraft carrier and seven destroyers from the Outside Forces, which consist of cruisers, submarines, kamikazes and rocket launchers.

As the game begins, the Loyal Fleet is headed to the right toward the enemy's island base. Between the fleet and the island are the cruisers, submarines and kamikazes, which must be destroyed by your Jump Jet. During the heat of battle against these foes, fuel will be expended. The only way to replenish your supply is to land safely on the carrier or hook up with the refueling plane. The plane will always give 99 units of fuel, but the carrier will give fuel according to how many jets you have crashed during the course of the game. The carrier is also the place to rearm your jet.




If the arcader loses all the jets or the entire fleet is destroyed before the ships and planes of the Outside Forces are eliminated, the game ends.

If the Outside Forces are annihilated first, then you move on to the second mission — destroying the home base island of the enemy. That mission consists of knocking out the enemy's rocket launchers, landing on the island and accepting the surrender. Should that happen, the game repeats, but the gamer gets to keep his score and the jets he had remaining.

It is the object of the game and the means of keeping score that causes *Jump Jet* to fail where *Choplifter!* succeeds. In *Jump Jet* you score points by destroying the enemy and saving the fleet. While there might be people on board those ships you defend, they certainly aren't as much fun to save or nearly as personable as those *Choplifter!* hostages.

In short, *Jump Jet* can stand on its own merits as a good game, but in terms of trying to land on the same strip as the helicopters in the classic Broderbund entry, *Jump Jet* is merely using up fuel.

*(Rick Teverbaugh)*

## FAST EDDIE

*Sirius-Fox/VIC-20/cartridge*

This climbing game sends your on-screen alter-ego, Fast Eddie, zipping up and down ladders and darting along five floors in his quest for prizes. The valuable items float overhead, some stationary, others bopping along at a healthy rate of speed. With the 10 prizes per screen appearing two at a time at different locations, Eddie's task is not an easy one.

Making his life even more difficult are the prize's guards, the sneakers. With at least one on each floor — and sometimes many more — Eddie must leap over them or beat a hasty retreat to a different story. What's more, each

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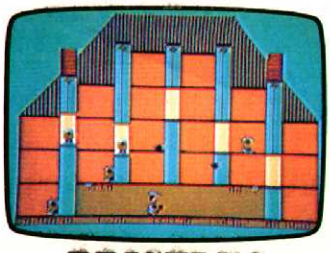

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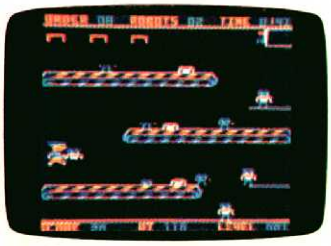

### PANIC BUTTON™

TRS-80 Color Computer by Paul Kanevsky

Vic-20 Home Computer by Wayne Lam

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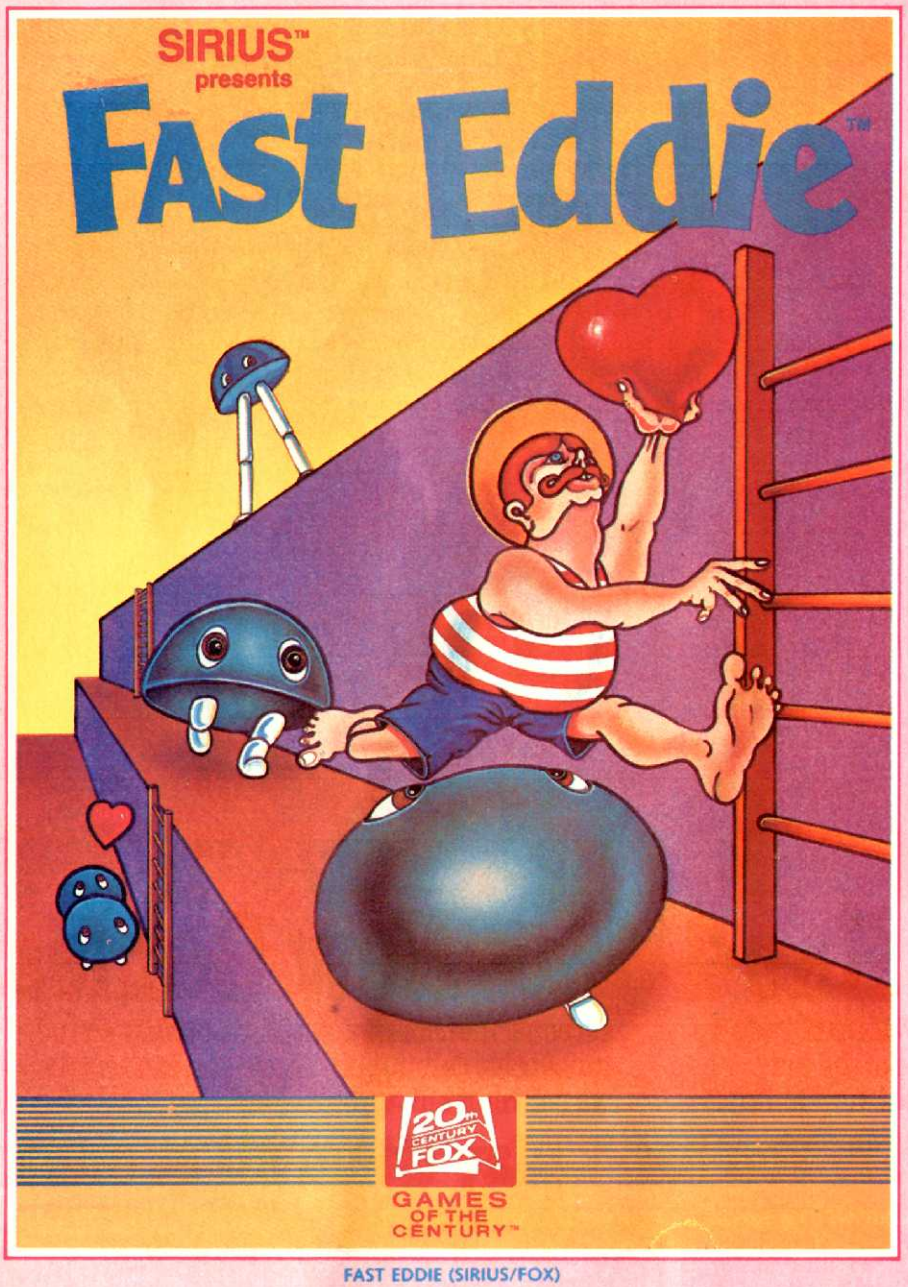
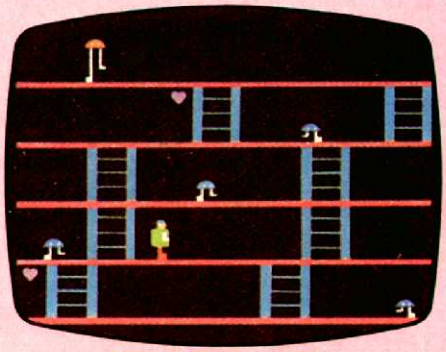
# COMPUTER GAMING




FAST EDDIE (SIRIUS/FOX)

sneaker has its own personality. Some move slowly, while others run back and forth at a frantic rate. They appear in different sizes as well, although all can be jumped — all, that is, except High Top, who prowls the top floor.

High Top must first be whittled down to size. Every time Eddie snares a prize, High Top shrinks a bit. When Eddie succeeds in jumping for his ninth prize, a key appears right above High Top. Leaping for the key is the level's ultimate challenge, and will propel Eddie to the next, harder level.



FAST EDDIE (SIRIUS/FOX)

You start the game with a trio of Eddies in reserve and earn an additional one with each key, with a limit of three. Five play screens with different ladder placement and prizes and eight challenge levels keep the game going. Challenge levels can be chosen at the beginning or earned as the game continues.

Game designer Mark Turmell, and Kathy Bradley, who converted **Fast Eddie** for the VIC-20, have produced a fun game. If not exactly state-of-the-art, it does a good job with the computer's capabilities. The graphics are okay, and the play-action adequate. Not a game to write home about, but not the worst way to pass an evening either.

*(Charlene Komar)*

## BLUE MAX

*Synapse Software/Atari/48K disk*

Bob Polin's colorful solitaire flying and shooting game puts the player in the cockpit of a World War I fighter/bomber. You must soar through the skies like the legendary "Blue Max" Chatsworth of the R.A.F., bombing key enemy targets on and around the river that dominates the diagonally scrolling, full-screen scene. Besides the buildings, bridges and boats, the successful pilot must also be able to successfully fight off the dogfighting challenges of German planes which have the temerity to challenge your control of the air.

The biggest problem with any flight simulator-type program is the level of complexity. Though designer Polin has done much to make **Blue Max** remarkably simple to learn, the disk is still likely to be a bit more than most home arcaders can comfortably handle. The main hitch: making a landing after completing the first lengthy bombing/strafing run is a feat worth celebrating, and none of **EG's** group of play testers ever succeeded in getting the craft back into the air. Since the disk we used was a pre-publication copy, it can only be hoped that Bob Polin has adjusted the game to make touch-down and take-off more automatic operations than at present.

Despite the vast difference in theme, *Blue Max* is most easily compared to **Zaxxon** among the classic titles. It is, in essence, a scrolling shoot-out which utilizes diagonal scrolling, minutely detailed graphics and rousing sound effects to produce a pseudo-three-dimensional air-sea-land battle that maintains a high pitch of excitement from the time the fighter/bomber taxis down the runway to the strains of "Rule, Britannia!"

The control panel, located just beneath the visual display, summarizes vital information for the pilot in a highly useful and usable way. The top line clocks the fuel situation and monitors the number of bombs remaining from the original supply of 20. The second line shows air speed and altitude, and the bottom line prints a running score.

The background color of the panel indicates the current altitude status. When it turns baby blue, it means that your plane is at the same altitude as an enemy aircraft; flashing green means the mission is complete; flashing yellow means the plane is so low that a crash is likely; brown means that the plane is at an altitude of 21-25 for strafing and red indicates a hit by German fire. In the event that the plane is hit, code-letters light on the top line of the display which correspond to the type of damage suffered. A hit taken after all of these letters are lit downs the plane. Naturally, each enemy hit adversely affects the performance of the plane in critical ways ranging from decreased maneuverability to the inability to dependably fire the machine guns.

The joystick-activated control scheme is a bit unusual. Pushing forward causes the plane to rise, while pulling back on the throttle initiates a dive. It's possible to modify this arrangement prior to the start of the game, but in practice, it works out a little better as it is, since the plane automatically dives when it drops a bomb. Traditionalists can change the set-up to suit themselves, as mentioned.

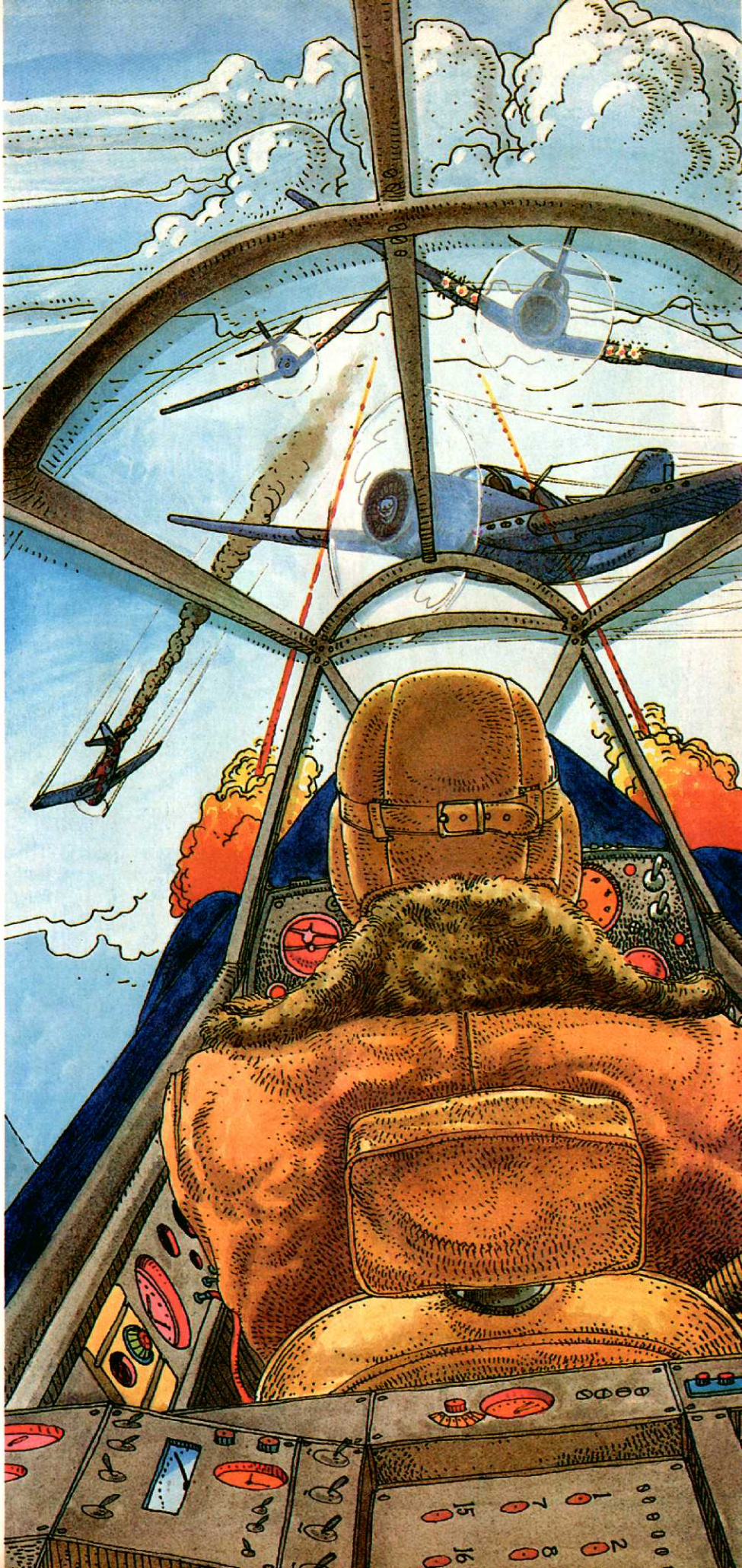
Even with the difficulty of landing, *Blue Max* is fun. If the designer/programmer had made a few more compromises with the landing procedure, however, this disk would surely rise to unequaled heights.

*(Steve Davidson)*

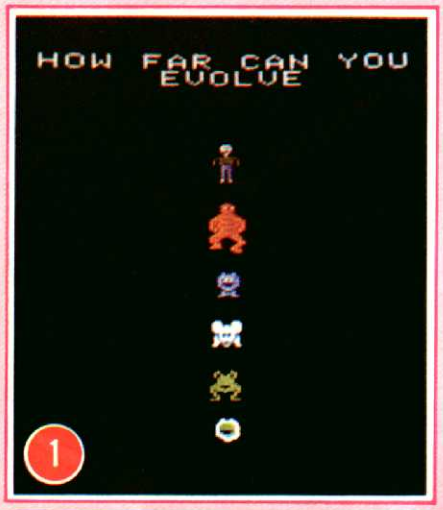
## EVOLUTION

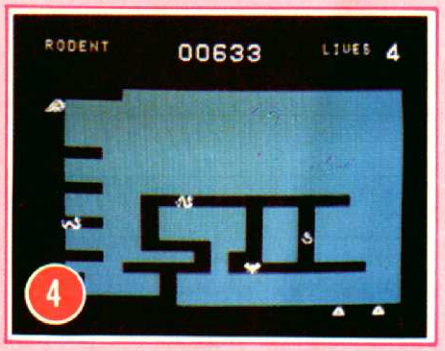
*Sydney/Apple II/48K disk*

Most arcade games let the player take the part of one character with a



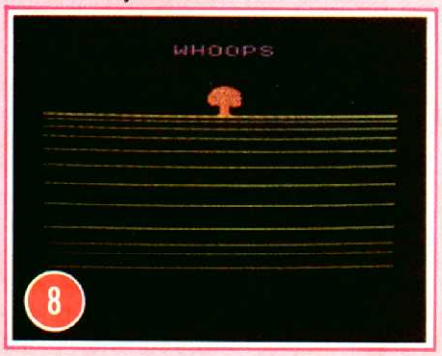
# COMPUTER GAMING






In *Evolution*, the gamer goes through six stages: amoeba, tadpole, rodent, beaver, gorilla and finally, human. Of course, that happens only if he doesn't destroy the world.

**Sydney's *Evolution* is an evolution in gaming itself. Not only does it provide gamers with a new experience in gaming—an opportunity to become more than one character within the framework of a serial arcade-style game—but it provides for 99 difficulty levels.**




single mission. How well you do in that mission is reflected in the score. Some adventure games allow the player to take a different personality each time it's booted up.

But how about an arcade challenge that lets you take on six different roles with six different tests, all within the framework of the same game? That's exactly what Sydney has created with **Evolution**.

Given the title, it isn't surprising that programmers Don Mattrick and Jeff Sember have put together a game that traces the evolutionary pattern of us humans, taking steps at Amoeba, Tadpole, Rodent, Beaver, Gorilla and, finally, Human.

Not only does each step require a different strategy, with a different goal, but each requires a different set of keys (or combination of joystick buttons) to play.

At the amoeba level, your task is to eat all the DNA and advance to the next level. You have spores, microbes and antibodies that will attempt to catch you and force the loss of a life.

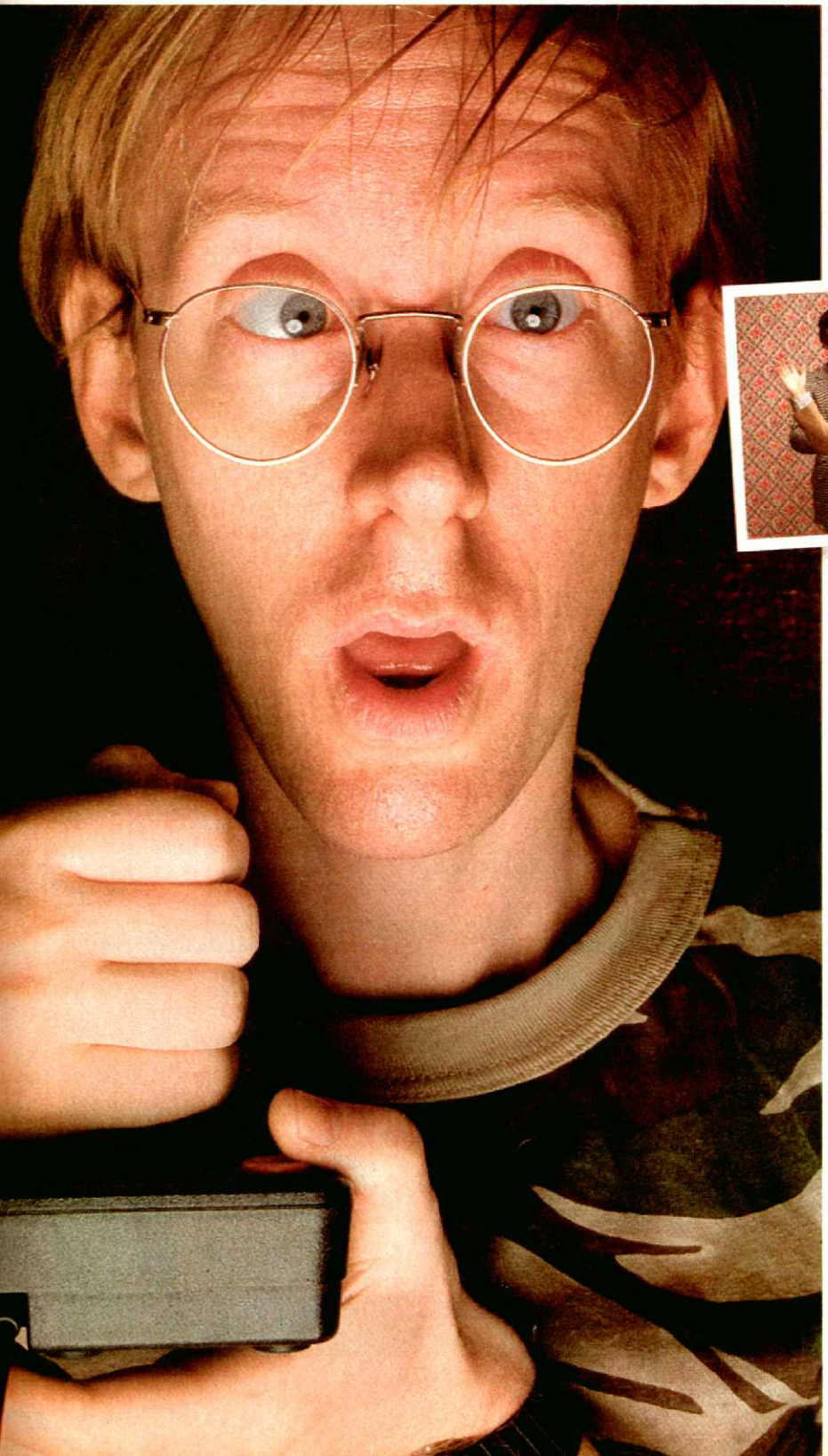
Success takes you to the tadpole existence where the sole purpose again is nourishment. Three flies are all that is needed before advancing to rodent. The rodent again wants to eat enough cheese for advancement before the snakes can eat him. What the rodent has as protection is most politely labeled dung.

Beaver, the fourth level, has more than food on his mind. He is trying to complete the dam of sticks he has begun. All he needs to do is bring five more sticks from one side of the river and take them to the other for the dam to be complete. Alligators are the main hindrance here.

The fifth level, which puts the gamer in a hairy gorilla suit, moves back to food once again. This gorilla isn't really hungry, but he expects to be soon. If the thieving monkeys have their way, by the time he's hungry, the oranges will be gone.

If *Evolution* has a downfall, it is in the final stage, where the human's put in a no-win scenario (are you listening Admiral Kirk?). The human fights genetic mutants. If he wins, he gets to watch the end of the human race, out of which, he'll appear once again as an amoeba; if he loses, the game's over.

# I WAS A TEENAGE ZOMBIE!



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

"IT GOT SO I COULDN'T LET GO," confesses John Carlson of Hickory Falls, Iowa. "My hands were welded to my joystick 24 hours a day. Blisters covered both my thumbs, my wrists ached, my eyes throbbed . . ." It had started as mindless play for young Johnny. But now it was turning his mind to green jelly.

Finally, concerned relatives decided to seek help. Johnny remembers: "I'd passed out after 63 million points—I forget which game. When I came to, I saw a personal computer in my room, with an Infocom game in the disk drive. I just sat there, numb, staring at the words on the screen."

Then—the revelation. "There was like this voice inside the computer, talking to my imagination. Suddenly, I was inside the story. I'd never experienced anything like it—challenging puzzles, realistic people, true dangers. Infocom had plugged into my mind, and shot me into a whole new dimension."

"Sure, I still play video games. But now I know there's more to life than joysticks."

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

We can't save all the Johnnies. But many can still be reached through the remarkable prose of such Infocom games as ZORK,® DEADLINE,™ The WITNESS,™ INFIDEL,™ PLANETFALL,™ and ENCHANTER.™ So please—before it's too late—step up to Infocom. All words. No pictures. The secret regions of your mind are beckoning. A new dimension is in there waiting for you.

(For more information on Infocom games, contact: Infocom, Inc., P.O. Box 855, Garden City, NY 11530.)

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# COMPUTER GAMING

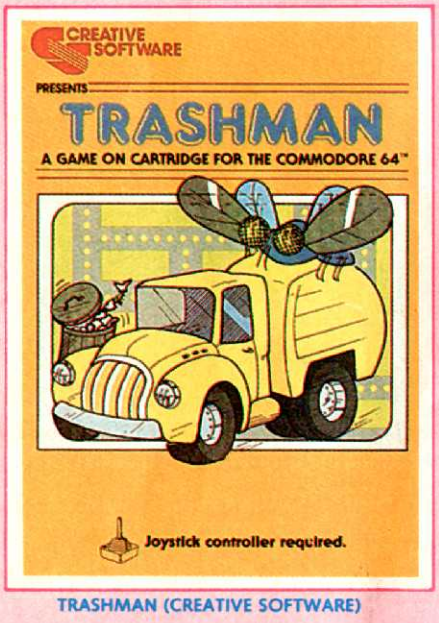
Sydney has promised 99 levels of difficulty, but someone with more patience than this writer will have to test that claim. While not really one of the world's great games, *Evolution* is certainly a varied challenge — and not one likely to fade as time goes by.

*(Rick Teverbaugh)*

## TRASHMAN

*Creative Software/VIC-20/cartridge*

Survivors of the sixties might think the object of **Trashman** is to rip apart a




TRASHMAN (CREATIVE SOFTWARE)

dean's office, but they'd be wrong. The point is a more prosaic one (though certainly environmentally sound): to collect litter and trash from the city streets, while avoiding the giant flies that think your truck would make a fine meal.

Your little truck sets out on its rounds from a central location. There's a lot of litter out there, taking the form of little yellow dots lining the streets. There are also a few blue trash barrels scattered about. Picking up one of these has a two-fold purpose: scoring a neat 50 points, and making your vehicle super-truck.

For a short time after you empty the trash can, the flies will turn white and flee. Run them down before they blink back to their normal colors and you really rack up points. Of course, should they turn the tables on you, it's on to your next garbage truck.

As you choose your route through the city, you may want to make use of the passageways that lead from side-to-side or top-to-bottom of the playfield. The shortcuts are handy for avoiding flies as well as when making for the bonus items that appear from time to time.

If *Trashman* sounds a lot like another well-known maze game, well, that's probably because there are an awful lot of similarities. But, nevertheless, it's a fine game. The graphics are very good and the setting is colorful. So if you own a VIC-20 and you like to play maze games, this one's for you.

*(Charlene Komar)*

## SUPER AMOK

*UMI/VIC-20/cartridge*

Pity the poor robot guard! It seems that no matter where it tries to hold down a job, some would-be hero comes dashing in, trying to shoot up the whole robot squad on some fool mission! How's a fellow supposed to keep his chips together?

It's no different in **Super Amok**. This time, the setting is Space Station Alpha. Those familiar but nonetheless deadly robots are lurking in the many passageways, having taken over the station. Of course, there's still one determined human out there (with two playing back-up) who's out to destroy the robots and regain control of the precious Space Station Alpha.

Needless to say, it's this human who's the gamer's on-screen alter-ego. The idea is to avoid or, ideally, destroy the artificial people in each passageway and seek a doorway, leading to — you guessed it — yet another robot-infested passage.

Keeping the action hot are some special guest enemies. Blue Blamblasters travel in veritable hordes, blasting through walls without warning. The occasional forcefield may stop the robots' fire, but it doesn't faze these guys. Nor does it disturb the high-powered sonic saws. These whirling menaces materialize in thin air, and are clever enough to dodge your fire and close off your exits. Drawing a bead on them is tough enough to make them the top point-value enemy.

All in all, Roger Merritt has done a nice job with this variation on an increasingly-familiar theme. Play-action is fine, with a plus in a pause when the gamer moves to a new passage, eliminating the old "walk-through-a-door-and-into-a-bullet" syndrome. Also, its graphics are adequate, with the hero particularly charming when in motion.

One or two can play, handing off the joystick, and you have the ability to start over if you get off to a bad start. A pause option is also welcome. In sum, a solid game if a bit less than overwhelmingly original.

*(Charlene Komar)*

SUPER AMOK (UMI)

# Last Year Over 20,000 Americans Were Committed To Asylum.

Once people enter *Asylum*, they don't *want* to leave. And neither will you.

Inside this thrilling adventure game from Screenplay™ challenges lie around every corner, behind every door. There are hundreds of doors, too!

You've gone crazy from playing too many adventure games. You've been placed in the asylum to act out your delusions. To cure yourself, you must make good your escape.

There's no one you can turn to for help. Almost every turn leads to a dead end. Or worse, vigilant guards stand in your way. If you can't outmuscle them, can you outthink them? Inmates line hallways offering help.

*Asylum runs in 48K on the Atari, Commodore 64 and IBM PC computers. See your local software dealer. $29.95.*

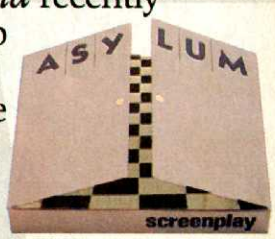
But can they be trusted?

While getting out of the asylum may take months, you'll get into our game instantly.

Smooth scrolling three dimensional graphics give you a very eerie sense of reality. This feeling is also heightened by the use of full sentence commands.

No wonder thousands of people bought *Asylum* last year, and *PC World* recently named *Asylum* one of the top ten games for the IBM PC.

Play *Asylum*. All you have to be committed to is fun.

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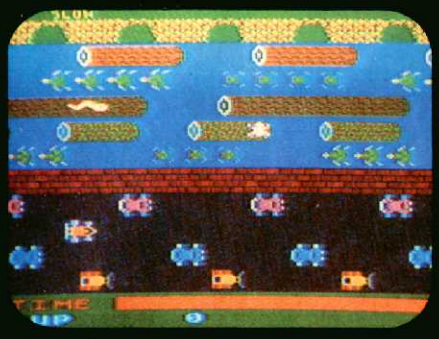
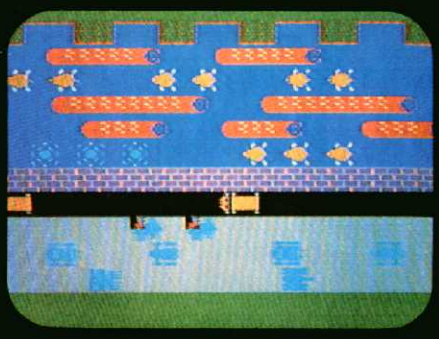
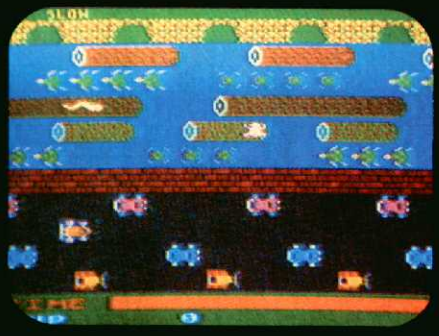
*You could win $10,000 from Screenplay anywhere our games are sold.*



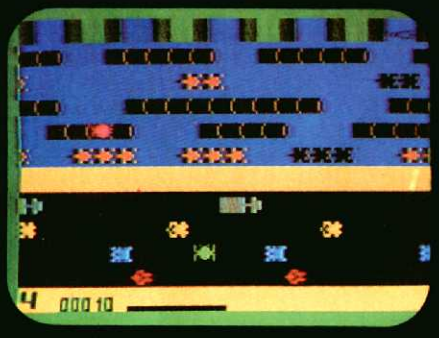
ATARI 5200



TI 99/4A



ATARI 400/800/600XL

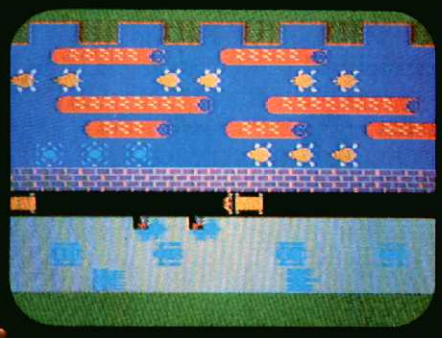


INTELLIVISION

COMMODORE VIC 20

ATARI 2600

COMMODORE 64



COLECOVISION

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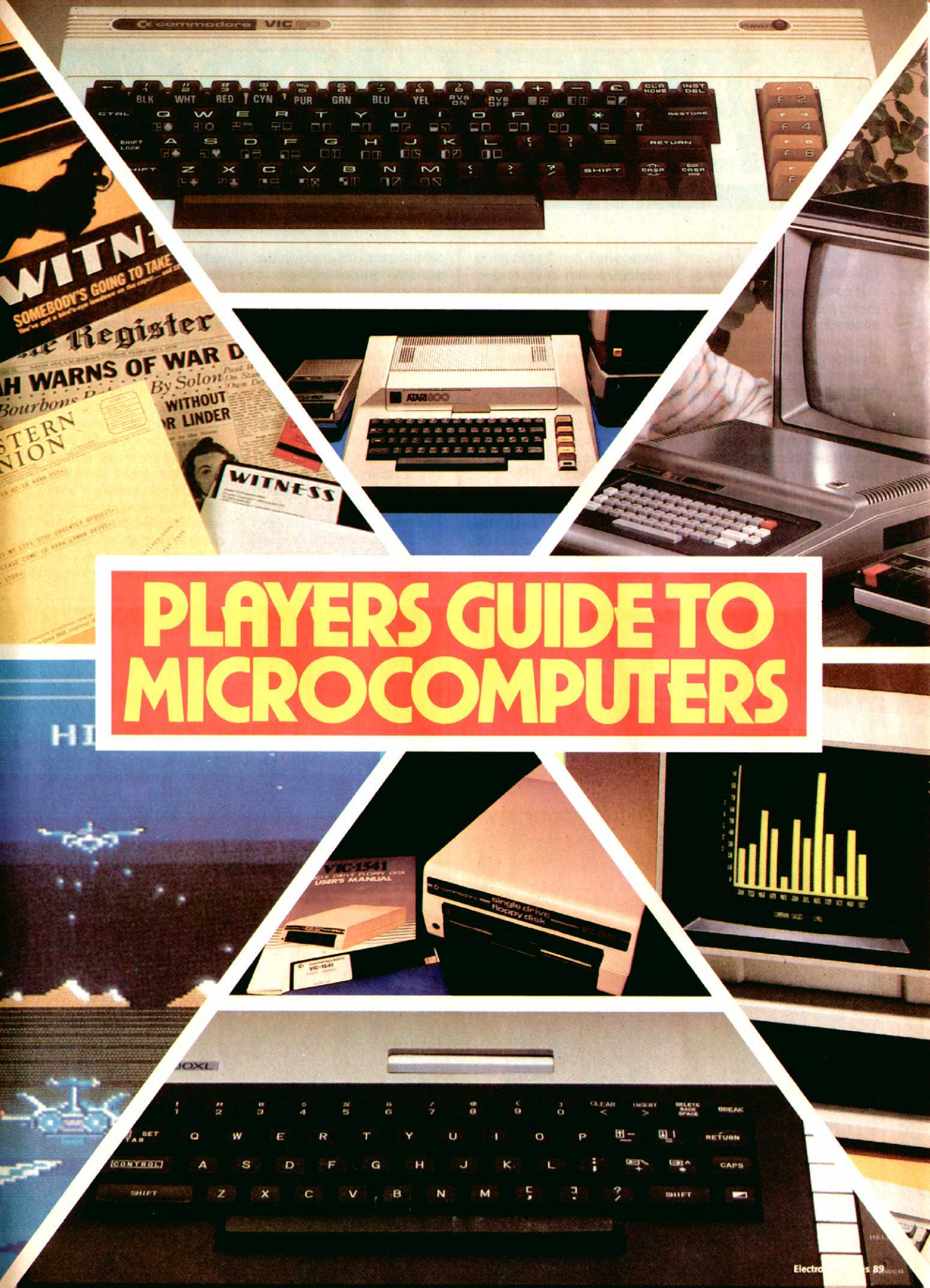

commodore VIC
SOMEBODY'S GOING TO TAKE
WITNESS
ATARI 800
VIC-1541
USER'S MANUAL
single drive floppy disk
PLAYERS GUIDE TO MICROCOMPUTERS

# THE HOME

## THE ULTIMATE FUN MACHINES

If computers were human, they'd probably feel very misunderstood. The whole subject is shrouded by a complex mythology that obscures and distorts many of the basic facts. There's a lot of misinformation out there, much of it spread by well-intentioned computer hackers who understand microchips better than human nature.

Vicious rumors to the contrary, computers aren't really soulless super-beings hell-bent on enslaving humanity. It's also untrue that only the rare double-domed egghead math whiz can approach a computer with any prospect of getting it to work. Finally, the computer is a proud product of science, not the focus of a new space-age religion presided over by programmer-priests.

The computer is a tool, pure and simple. You can think of it as an especially fancy and well-balanced hammer — powerful, efficient, but still very much under the operator's control.

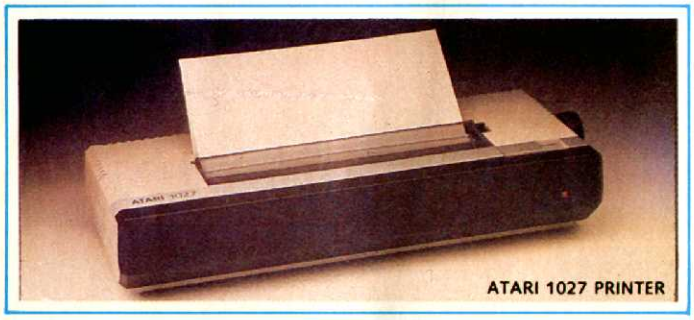
Technologically, computers differ very little from the videogame systems which **EG** readers have played their games on for several years. To continue the tool analogy, the main difference between a videogame and a computer is that the former is like a standard screwdriver, while the latter more closely resembles a screwdriver with interchangeable barrels. The videogame is specifically designed to carry out one task: play games. The computer can perform the same job as well or better, yet it also has the flexibility to do a whole range of other things.

## WHAT ABOUT PROGRAMMING?

One common misconception is that would-be computerists need lots of specialized knowledge. No so. Even if you don't know a DOS from a CPU, you can still derive hours of fun from a home computer. Anyone who is capable of successfully using a videogame and a typewriter (and no touch-typing is required) will never have to cringe in fear before the almighty computer.

Of course, learning how a computer works can't hurt, either. Most folks get a kick out of knowing why things work like they do. But lack of computer expertise won't spoil your enjoyment.

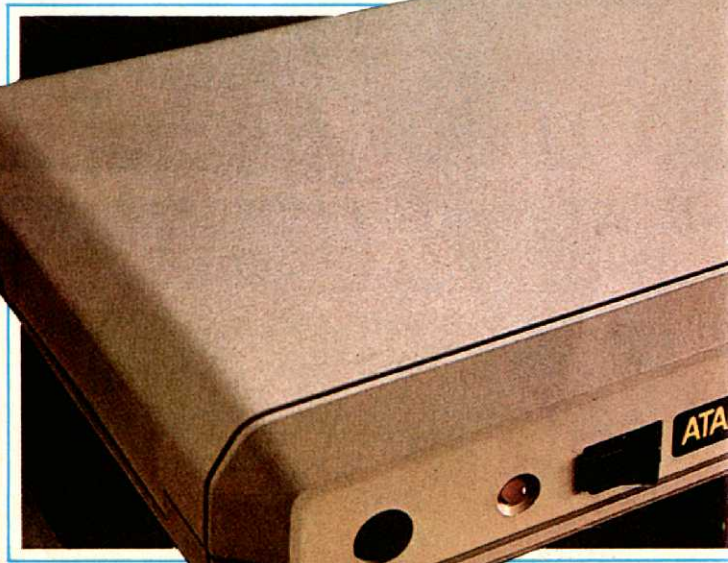
Some people who might



ATARI 1027 PRINTER

ATARI'S NEW RECORDER AND DISK DRIVE

ATARI 800 COMPUTER



# COMPUTER:
## TOPS IN HOME ARCADING

otherwise begin exploring the world of microcomputers frequently worry about having to learn how to program. Most of us don't have the time to start learning a whole new language.

Fortunately, few rank-and-file gamers have to acquire fluency in BASIC or any of the other popular computer languages. The ability to create a program in assembly language — programming games in BASIC is definitely passe — is virtually a requirement for game designers, but the rest of us can exist quite happily with the commercially prepared software that is now available in such quantity and quality for the major systems.

### GLOSSARY

**Auxiliary Storage:** Devices used for saving programs when the system itself is turned off. Since RAM loses its contents when the machine is powered down and ROM can only be programmed at the factory, auxiliary storage keeps programs between operating sessions. The most common forms of auxiliary storage are disks, cassette tapes and cartridges.

**CPU:** Central Processing Unit. This is the microprocessor — or electronic brain, if you will — that lies at the heart of every computer.

**Disk Drive:** An auxiliary storage device that works like a cross between a phonograph and a cassette recorder. By using plastic disks coated with a magnetic surface, such drives are faster and more reliable than cassette storage.

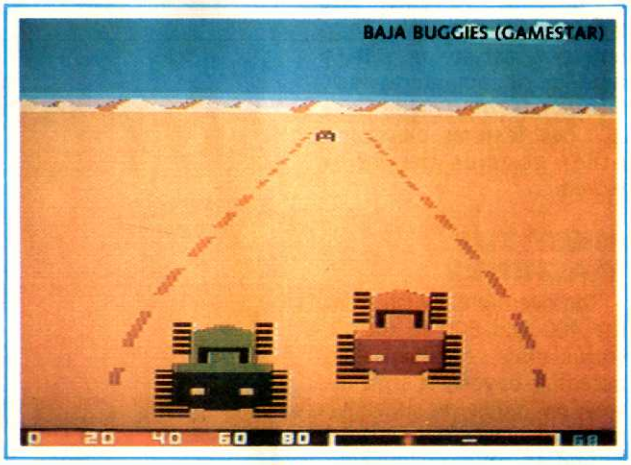
**Interface:** The part of the computer that permits the attachment of peripheral devices. These include cassette recorders, joysticks and a connection for a TV set or monitor.

**Modem:** Modulator-demodulator. This is a piece of equipment that allows computers to communicate with each other over telephone lines.

**RAM:** Random Access Memory. This is the internal memory the computer actually uses when running a program. It can be revised or read an infinite number of times.

**ROM:** Read Only Memory. This type of memory is also internal to the system, but it cannot be altered by the computer operator. Its contents are fixed at the factory and can't be changed. Most computer games bought in ready-to-play form fall into this category.

ATARI PERIPHERALS



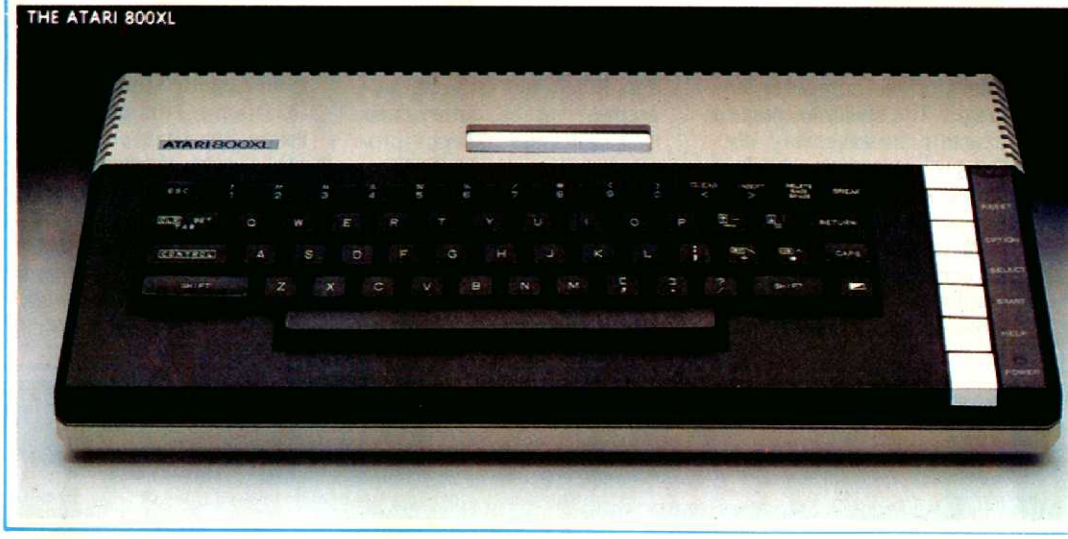
ATARI 850 INTERFACE

COMMODORE'S VICMODEM

GORF (ROKLAN)

THE ATARI 600XL

THE ATARI 800XL




# THE ATARI

## THE XL SYSTEMS

Exit the Atari 400 and 800 systems, beloved of gamers everywhere, enter the four-unit XL line. The Sunnyvale, CA giant has put all of its existing systems into retirement and replaced them with a fresh group of machines that the company claims offers consumers better value and greater expansion potential for the future.

Actually, Atari gave the world an advance peek at its R&D thinking over a year ago when it introduced the 1200 XL unit. This sleekly styled machine boasted 64K RAM, a set of user-friendly features including a "help" key and several other novelties.

The 1200 XL died in its cradle, choked by massive public indifference. Atari had second thoughts about its new top-of-the-line model and withdrew it from distribution almost as soon as it was launched.

Undaunted, Atari scientists went back to the lab. They emerged last spring with a new line of computers which incorporates most of the 1200 XL's best features, plus some other goodies the 1200 lacked.

## MEET THE MACHINES

The overnight switch from the 400 and 800 to the XL series may confuse some potential buyers. It isn't always easy to figure out which machines have which features — and Atari's dismal naming system doesn't exactly endow each model with a distinctive personality.

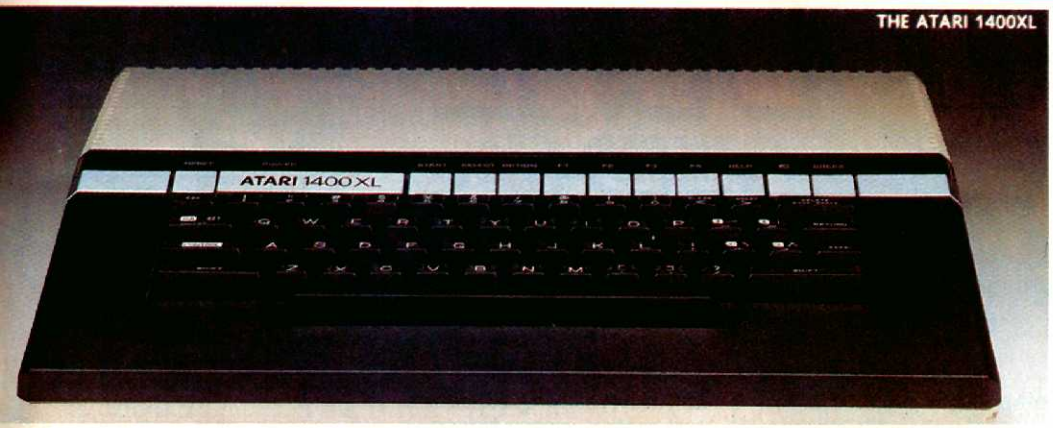
Nonetheless, telling one unit from the next isn't nearly as hard as some cynics have claimed. Actually, the 600XL, 800XL, 1400XL and 1450XLD present shoppers with a logical progression of power and price that runs from a starter system priced under $200 to a premium set-up that costs less than $1,000.

Before getting down to the differences among the four, let's look at some of the things they have in common. All of them have a typewriter keyboard with no-glare keys, built-in BASIC, a top-mounted ROM cartridge slot and 24K resident ROM. The operating system, obviously derived from the one Atari created for the 1200XL, gives the new machines such features as the "help" key, self-testing and the international character set found on the defunct 1200XL. It is also possible, on all four models, to disable the ROM (by pushing the option key as the computer is powered up) to get at extra RAM.

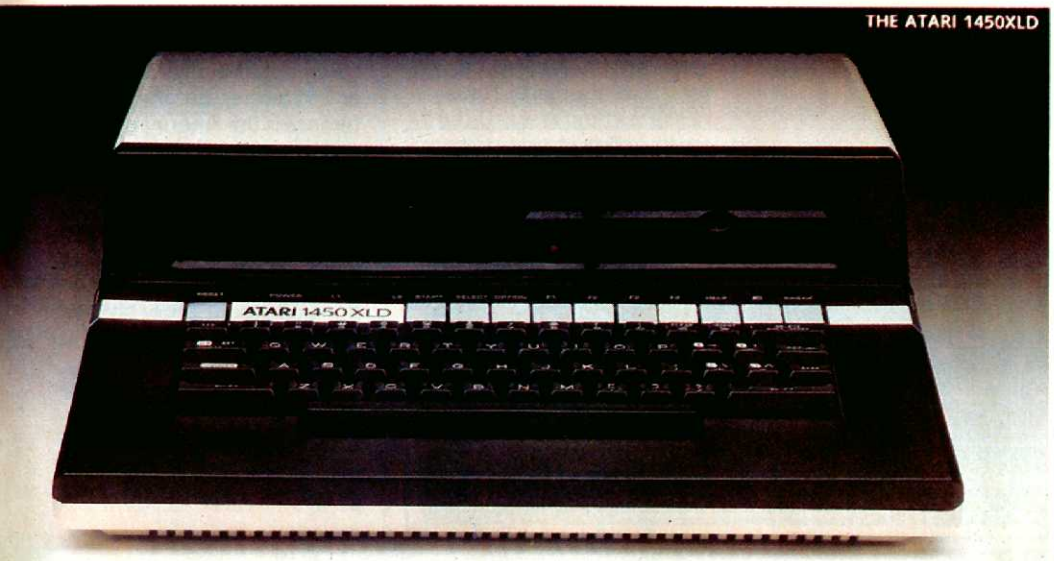
The single most important plus is the edge connector, found on the rear panel, which Atari describes as a "full processor bus". This is the key to the future expandability of the XL machines, since it offers a direct connection to the motherboard. It is even possible to use this slot to add a co-processor to the system, as Apple owners have been able to do for years.

Now on to the individual

JUMPMAN (EPYX)




THE ATARI 1400XL




THE ATARI 1450XLD

**The 1450XLD.** The main extra, compared to the 1400XL, is a built-in double-density, double-sided disk drive, which is capable of holding 256K bytes of data on a single 5¼-in. disk. A magnetically isolated disk storage compartment is available for the installation of a second drive for those who require even more storage.

## PERIPHERALS AND ACCESSORIES

What is more a obvious complement to a new line of computers than a matching batch of peripherals and accessories? That's obviously what Atari thought, too, since there's a raft of such equipment coming to market right now. (Much of it will also work with the 400 and 800, too.)

**The 1050 disk drive.** This is a single-sided double-density device that can pack 127K bytes of information onto the standard 5¼-in. disk. The trim unit, a bit smaller than the old 810 drive, lists for $449, but it should drop below $400 at discount outlets. It can automatically recognize and read the disks prepared with the older drive.

# COMPUTERS:

## FOUR XLENT MACHINES

models in the new lineup.

**The 600 XL.** Carrying on the low-price tradition of the 400, which it essentially replaces, the 600 provides such niceties as a full-stroke keyboard which the 400 did not have. It comes with 16K RAM, but it can be pushed to 64K by adding a 48K expander that is expected to sell for approximately $100 list.

STAR RAIDERS (ATARI)

**The 800XL.** This is substantially similar to the 600XL, but with two major differences. It comes with a 64K RAM resident memory and has a monitor jack for those who prefer that to the family TV set as a display medium.

**The 1400XL.** This one is a kissing cousin of the original 1200XL — with some significant improvements. It has four function keys (F1-F4), a direct-connect modem and a speech synthesizer. The price will be $500-$600.

**The Atari Expansion System.** This plug-in adds two RS-232C serial ports, a parallel port and eight card slots. That means it will be possible to easily attach such things as an 80-column card, disk emulator or other gizmos quite easily.

**The Atari 1027 printer.** This compact printer, which lists for $349, prints 20 characters per second, bi-directionally. The 80-column unit plugs into the serial port and is, therefore, matable with the older Atari systems as well.

Other items promised for early delivery by Atari include a modem, a light pen, a touch tablet and a trac-ball controller.

# COMMODORE COMPUTERS:

## POPULARLY PRICED POWER

### HIT AFTER HIT

They're starting to call Commodore's inexpensive VIC-20 the computer that refused to die. It's an apt description. The VIC still sells so nicely, at prices well under $100, that Commodore had to postpone its original plan of halting production by mid-1983. Popular demand for this well-built mighty mite is still too high for the manufacturer to put it back on the shelf.

Meanwhile, the system intended to replace the VIC-20 is making plenty of noise on its own. The Commodore 64 has sold more than 150,000 units a month since its debut, and total 64 sales for the year could exceed two million systems.

### THE VIC-20

This isn't just a cheap computer, it's a *good* cheap computer. Though Commodore's hardware sometimes lacks a little here and there in terms of user-friendliness, the VIC-20 is easy to operate. Its sturdy construction and compactness makes it a strong candidate for purchase as a youngster's first computer.

The VIC-20 emerges from its carton with 5K of RAM resident. This can be subdivided into 1.4K of graphics RAM; the rest is usable RAM. Commodore's cartridges add RAM as needed along with usual ROM, so that games often look a lot prettier than one would expect from such a small system. (The VIC-20 has less detailed graphics than the Atari computers, but overall resolution is acceptable.)

Those who wish to use their computer for other purposes in addition to gaming are going to like the typewriter-style VIC-20 keyboard. It's easily the best of its kind to be found on any machine at a comparable price. It's like manna from heaven for those who like to copy listed programs or construct their own from scratch, and it'll probably make playing adventure and strategy games requiring key input more comfortable.

A negative aspect of the VIC-20, from the home arcade standpoint, is that it only has a single controller port. That means all joystick games must be played solitaire. On the other hand, the VIC-20 is controller-compatible with the Atari 2600, which means that owners of this system can choose from among the dozens of specialized and gourmet controllers available for the world's most popular videogame machine.

GOLDFEVER (TRONIX)

### THE COMMODORE 64

In some ways, this system is like a VIC-20 with the lumps taken out. It is physically larger and heftier, but the big difference is the amount of computing power inside the cabinet. The Commodore has 64K of resident RAM, though this includes the BASIC computer language, operating system and so forth. (A traditionalist would probably peg the 64's *usable* memory at about 40K.)

Other improvements are the addition of a second controller port, 40-column display and a greater degree of graphics resolution. One

COMMODORE VIC-20

AGGRESSOR (HES)

drawback: The 64 is not software-compatible with the VIC-20. Differences between the two machines, primarily the differences found in the way they present material on a display screen, make such interchangeability unfeasible.

Like the VIC-20, the 64 has a slot that accepts ROM cartridges. It is located, somewhat inconveniently, on the back panel of the machine. As indicated, carts prepared for one system will not, however, work in the other.

## PERIPHERALS AND ACCESSORIES

Low-cost peripherals have become a Commodore trademark in the last couple of years. Fortunately, the same devices that work on the VIC-20 will also function in conjunction with the 64, so that consumers hoping to move from one to the other won't have to scrap the disk drive, printer and so forth.

One especially attractive peripheral Commodore introduced in 1983 is the 1701 monitor. It produces a sharp, bright picture that is generally free of the distortion found on some 12-in. tubes.

## THE SOFTWARE SITUATION

Lack of sufficient game software hampered the VIC-20's acceptance among home arcaders through much of 1983. This was pretty much as expected. After all, it's an axiom in the computer business that it takes about a year from the date a new computer is introduced before the software producers catch up.

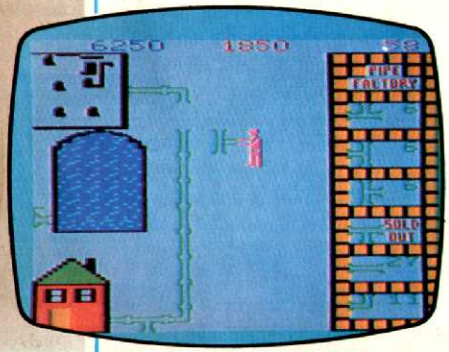
That has proven to be true for the VIC-20 and, more recently, the 64. The VIC-20's first ad campaign was a nose-thumb in the direction of gamers, and that probably didn't cause many game-makers to rush to support it.

SPIDERS OF MARS (UMI)

Then, too, Commodore's own VIC-20 products left much to be desired. Some of the games weren't bad, but the company's catalogue lacked the super-games so readily available for the Atari and Apple machines.

The fact that the VIC-20 is nearing the end of its prime sales life hasn't stopped third-party software suppliers from getting into the act. Among the companies now producing first-rate software for the system are Creative Software, HES Games, On-Line, Tronix and UMI.

The Commodore 64 is currently jogging down the same road, though the software build-up is developing at an even faster rate. There were no programs readily available for the Commodore 64 during the first month or so of its availability, but the flood is starting. Virtually every first rank software house has some 64 games on its schedule, and it shouldn't take more than the balance of this year for the system to attract an extensive and varied library or cartridges, disks and cassettes. Commodore, incidently, is making great strides in upgrading its own software efforts. Games like **Kickman** and **Lazarian** are far beyond anything the company has previously marketed.




PIPES (CREATIVE SOFTWARE)

BUCK ROGERS (COLECO)

## BEFORE THE ADAM

In one sense, the Adam made its debut in mid-1982, when Coleco set the videogame hardware world on its collective ear by introducing its "third wave" ColecoVision system. Its large memory and excellent graphics have made the ColecoVision dear to the hearts of the nation's home arcaders in a very short period of time. (For fuller details about the ColecoVision, see "The Players Guide to Videogame Systems" in the November 1983 issue of **Electronic Games**.)

The release of the ColecoVision has turned out to be merely a foretaste of what has come since then. The videogame machine is now the cornerstone of a modular system, the Adam, which is one of the most advanced, versatile and user-friendly computers yet designed.

The ColecoVision and Adam remain closely connected. For instance, the car-

# COLECO'S

COLECO'S ADAM COMPUTER

DONKEY KONG (COLECOVISION)

tridges prepared for the former will also run on the latter. The Adam is expected to list for roughly $600, but present ColecoVision owners will be able to get a complete upgrade set-up for less than $400.

## THE SYSTEM

In putting forth its claims for the Adam, Coleco has repeatedly stressed that the system is intended as a response to the question: "What do computer owners really want?" That is, the three most important computer activities at the present time are gaming, word processing and link-up to a computer network. Coleco is positioning the Adam as the system which provides a generous measure of all three.

What do you get in the Adam package? Briefly, here it is:

* 75-key, full-stroke typewriter keyboard with sculptured keys
* Memory console with 80K RAM resident, expandable to 144K
* Data Storage Drive
* Word processing program resident
* Letter-quality daisywheel printer
* BASIC language resident
* Two Coleco controllers
* **Buck Rogers** supergame on data storage pack

Actually, this list merely hints at the capabilities of this exciting new system. Given the price, Coleco is obviously going all-out to make sure that its Adam is an outstanding value even in such a hotly competitive, price-sensitive market.

It must also be said that all information concerning the Adam is, at this writing, slightly speculative in that the first production model has yet to reach a living, breathing computerist. Still, a hands-on advance look indicates that Coleco should be able to get pretty close to its goals for the Adam.

## PERIPHERALS AND ACCESSORIES

The most important peripheral, from the gamer's point of view, is obviously the ColecoVision component of the Adam. This allows the computer to play all the outstanding cartridge games Coleco and other software suppliers are putting out for the videogame system.

Looking down the road a little, however, the data storage drive is going to loom large in the nation's gaming consciousness. Technologically, it's about halfway between a disk drive and a tape cassette mechanism, slower than the former, but quicker and more flexible than tape. How *much* slower? Only the arrival of the actual device will settle the question.

The final specifications for the daisywheel printer were also not completely settled as this issue goes to press. The big question: How many characters per second will the printer put onto paper? The Coleco literature says two characters per second, but some cynics believe that it will be tough to design a low-cost printer of this type that will also work this fast. Of course, many **EG** readers don't really require high-speed printing for the short jobs that are the norm in home word processing.

## SOFTWARE FOR THE ADAM

Games will undoubtedly constitute at least half of all software produced for the Adam. Besides the ColecoVision cartridges already available — and dozens more on the way — the Adam will boast its own line of games on data packs. These will utilize the increased memory and graphic capabilities of the Adam to create home arcade titles with even more of the coin-op flair than ColecoVision games already have.

Some of the offerings from Coleco will be souped-up versions of games previously available as ColecoVision carts, such as **Donkey Kong** and **Zaxxon**, but some of the data pack games will also utilize the subtleties of keyboard order entry. Several third-party software houses are presently gearing up for the production of game software for the Adam, so the supply figures to be pretty good by mid-1984 at the latest.

# ADAM: COMPUTER IN A BOX

# APPLE IIe:

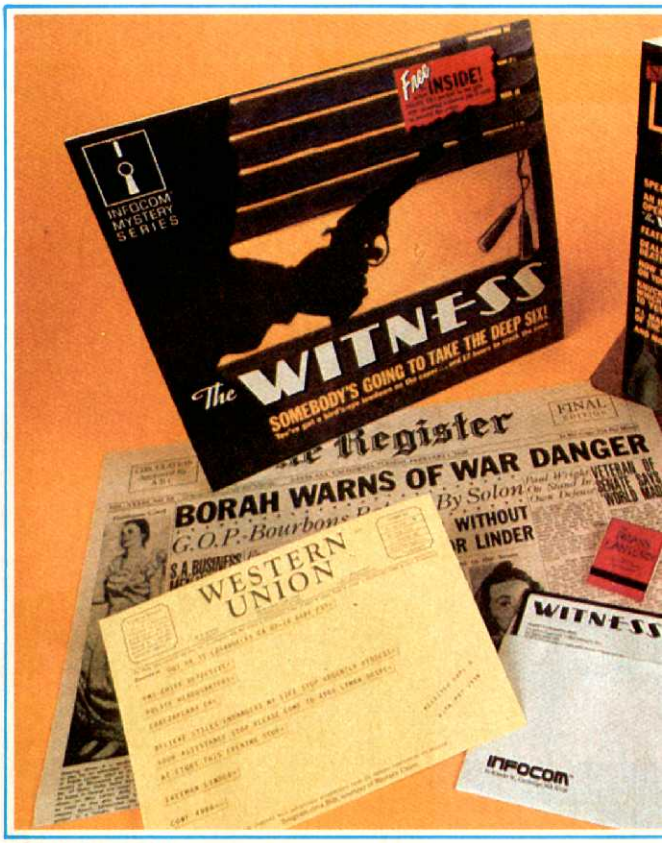
## FACELIFT FOR A FAVORITE

### ENTER THE "e"

The "e" stands for "enhanced", and that's an apt description of the newest microcomputer from Apple. While retaining compatibility with the enormously successful Apple II and II+, the IIe adds a clutch of welcome extras at a lower overall cost than before.

The changes couldn't have

APPLE II WITH AMDEK MONITOR




WITNESS (INFOCOM)

# RADIO SHACK:

## SHOWS ITS TRUE COLORS

### THE TRS-80

The TRS-80 Color computer has a host of plusses going for it, including good sound and high resolution graphics, but it has never quite jelled as a complete system. Tandy introduced its first color microcomputer with high hopes, but the competition of more enticing machines like the Atari 400 and the Commodore VIC-20 has prevented the Color Computer from making much headway in the under-$400 segment of the market.

The damning flaw is that Radio Shack has not produced nearly enough gaming software, and what there is won't win many prizes. **Dino War** is the best of the Tandy-produced programs on cassette, and it is not very exciting to say the least.

Another problem with the Color Computer, at least from a home arcade standpoint is that the control devices made for the system are bad. Response is very poor on some of the games, making them very difficult to play.

The Color Computer is not a bad machine. Those who are more interested in the programming side of computers will surely want to look it over before picking a system. Yet despite the recent efforts of some third party software firms like Spectra Associates, choices are slim.

come at a better time. The Apple is justly celebrated as the original home computer, but the II+ was starting to get a little long in the tooth. The IIe remedies some of the older model's shortcomings, but it's not such a great departure from what has gone before that current Apple owners need to worry about their unit going the way of the dinosaurs.

To the contrary, the availability of a superb compatible machine at a lower price can only serve to keep Apple riding high as one of the most popular personal computers and a particular favorite of electronic gamers. After all, the more people that have II's, II+'s and IIe's, the greater the incentive for software publishers to release games.

## NEW FEATURES

The II+ and IIe are probably more alike than they are different, but *"vive la differance!"* Among the features found on the Apple IIe are:

1. A true upper- and lower-case keyboard configuration
2. 64K of RAM (versus the II+'s 48K)
3. (Optional) 80-column display
4. External controller port (for Apple III controllers, the Apple II port is still inside.)

Actually, there are hundreds of additional large and small changes, many of them invisible until you open the cabinet and look inside. Overall, though, the Apple IIe stands as a pretty effective job of cleaning up the good old II+.

HARD HAT MACK (ELECTRONIC ARTS)

## PERIPHERALS AND ACCESSORIES

Just about anything the acquisitive computerist might want for his or her system is available to the Apple II owner. He can select from a wide range of disk drives, including two-sided and double density models, as well as the printers, modems, language cards and such that anyone could desire.

The invitingly large Apple II audience has inspired independent producers of hardware as well as software to put forth their very best efforts. Since there may be more than a dozen brands in some categories of peripherals, even the budget-conscious computer gamer should be able to make out pretty well.

Most games for the Apple are sold on disk, but tapes are still obtainable from manufacturers like Avalon-Hill and Scott Adams which like to cover *all* the bases. The Apple-manufactured disk drive, which uses the current standard 3.3 disk operating system, runs through the unit without need of an additional power source.

RADIO SHACK COLOR COMPUTER

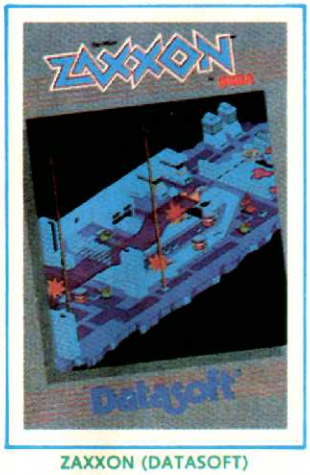
# The IBM: NEW INNOVATIONS

## IBM-PC: THE PERSONAL TOUCH AT HOME

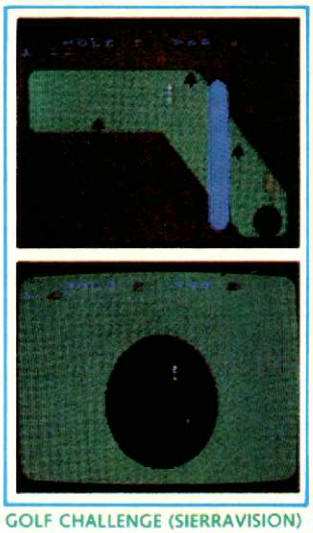
At this juncture, it's still too early to make sweeping predictions about IBM's entry into the microcomputer sweepstakes. The system's so innovative, that independent hardware and software support is still developing. Several leading computer game publishers, including Automated Simulations, Sir-Tech and Avalon-Hill, intend to make games for the IBM, but it is too soon to know how many shelves entertainment programs will claim in the IBM-PC software library.

The system itself is built around a 16-bit microprocessor, compared to the 8-bit CPU's found in machines like the Atari 400, Apple II and VIC-20. This should give the IBM much faster computational speed, that may come in mighty useful when a complicated adventure game is running on the machine.

Will the IBM Personal Computer become a major home system as well as a popular choice for small businesses? The next year should tell.



ZAXXON (DATASOFT)


GOLF CHALLENGE (SIERRAVISION)

ZAXXON (DATASOFT)

IBM-PC WITH AMDEK MONITOR

## YOUR NEXT STEP

This guide is only intended to serve as a painless introduction to the world of gaming possibilities waiting for arcaders in the personal computer field. Hopefully, you are now pointed toward one or two of the systems profiled here.

The next move, however, is very much up to you. Go out and get a firsthand view of the computers yourself. If possible, find a friend, computer club or retail store where you can actually sit down and try out the machine that has caught your eye. After all, this is an important purchase that must be given some careful thought.

And don't forget to look at the software library!

A system is only as good as the programs available to run on it — that is, unless home programming counts heavily in your case. Just make sure the computer games and such you want are actually obtainable for your system.

Now that you have a basic idea of what features you're looking for—happy hunting!

ATARI 5200

TI99/4A

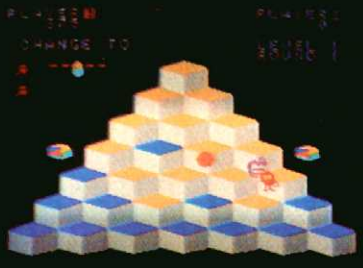
ATARI 400/800/600XL

INTELLIVISION

COMMODORE VIC 20

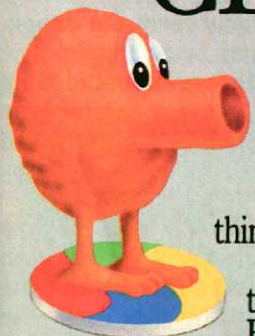
ATARI 2600

COMMODORE 64



COLECOVISION

# HOW TO GET Q*BERT™ OUT OF YOUR SYSTEM.



If you've been wanting to play Q*bert, but haven't been able to find it available for your home system, your time has come. Because now you can keep things hopping with any of these popular home video and computer formats. Get going to your nearest video store and get Q*bert today. And while you're there, check out Parker Brothers' POPEYE,® FROGGER,™ TUTANKHAM,™ and SUPER COBRA.™ All the great Arcade Action® games, now in all the great home formats.

PARKER BROTHERS

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By TRACIE FORMAN

# IN CONTROL

## A Pocket-Sized Powerhouse at Your Fingertips

### THE POWER-STICK

*Amiga/Atari compatible*

Amiga can't be accused of bringing out a line of "me-too" joysticks. You know, the kind that look and feel so similar to existing products that gamers can't tell them apart. The company's teeterboard-style *Joyboard* isn't exactly your average run-of-the-mill controller, and neither is its pint-sized cousin, the *Power-Stick*. The latter is a hand-held wonder so tiny that veteran gamers might find it hard to believe the *Power-Stick* could possibly live up to its promising name. Don't let its small size fool you, folks. The *Power-Stick* packs more wallop than most of its larger competitors.

Two *Power-Sticks* come packed to a box. The controller is tiny; the black base is approximately 3 in. long by 2 in. wide. At its widest point — the rounded center that holds the inner workings — it's about an inch thick. The stick itself is a mere two inches long. It has the thickness of a crayon at its ridged base, and a smooth upper stick that's no wider than a pencil.

The *Power-Stick* is designed to fit comfortably in the gamer's palm. To activate the red side-mounted action buttons, simply squeeze the thumb and forefinger, which depresses the buttons. While this might cause some early problems during games in which players don't want to "fire" constantly (because overzealous gamers might inadvertently squeeze the action buttons), this is a minor point, and it generally stops happening once the player is used to the stick. As far as playing shoot-'em-ups goes, the squeeze-activated firing mechanism is the most comfortable, fast-shooting way to go.

As far as all-around comfort goes, the *Power-Stick* is a winner. Not only is this miniature marvel a perfect choice for small-handed kids, but it's a revelation in comfort for adults, too. Any home arcader who likes the precision of fingertip control will surely appreciate the subtle on-screen maneuverings possible with this fast-responding, sensitive stick. It responds so quickly that some gamers might find it actually takes some getting used to — especially on maze games, when the videogame character moves so fast it might overshoot the turn.

All in all, the *Power-Stick's* light, comfortable, easy-to-grip base, its squeeze-activated action buttons, and its tiny wonder of a joystick make Amiga's experiment in controllers a rousing success. This is a joystick that can be manipulated easily by a five-year-old or a 50-year-old.

THE POWER-STICK (AMIGA)

### THE BOSS

*Wico/Atari compatible*

The company that put the "gourmet" into gourmet controllers has poured its expertise into creating a joystick aimed squarely at the lower-priced end of the market.

Called *The Boss*, Wico's newest joystick is decidedly serious in design. Its gray base and black trigger-style stick with a white, top-mounted firing button is an eye-pleasing change from the more conventional black and red color scheme. It feels light and is easy to grip.

*The Boss* is slightly smaller than Wico's top-of-the-line joysticks, both in the diameter of the base and in the size and width of the stick itself. The scaled-down stick is far more comfortable for the medium-sized hand, for which its grip indentations seem tailor-made. Like pricier models in the Wico

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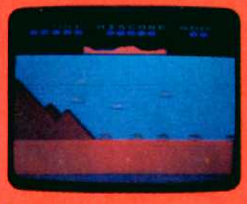
Datasoft® has added a new dimension to computer game enjoyment. Each of Gentry's™ 12 software products are available at prices that are sure to take the gamble out of the game. From $14.95 to $19.95, each selection incorporates the same quality and playability of far more expensive software. See your nearest dealer and find out how Gentry really does give you more than you bargained for.

**ROSEN'S BRIGADE™**

Face an array of war planes and choppers that come at you in wave after wave. If you can face up to the rigors of battlefield action, you'll face a hero's welcome at home. Penetrate behind enemy lines and rescue your crew. Not only must you fight off the steady onslaught of aircraft, but be crafty enough to pinpoint enemy tanks and battleships below. Your mission. To beat the clock and save your troops.



Available for Atari® Computer Systems

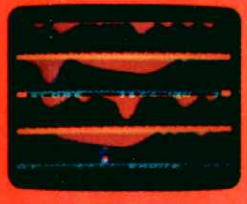
**ALIEN MUNCHIES™**

This is the space age cookout that cooks with excitement. It takes quick decisions and fancy footwork to catch these little morsels in the barbecue grill. They are downright dangerous on the ground. But let them drink your supply of propane and the tables are suddenly turned. Try Alien Munchies. It's the latest protein diet craze, but be careful, they're habit forming.

Available for Apple® II, II+, IIe

**MANIAC MINER™**

Jumping, turning and hovering in mid-air are your only defenses as you dodge dangerous bats and spiders in search of valuable jewels and treasures. And if you're lucky, defying gravity will be your only chance at defying death. The Magic Pole suddenly appears and takes you deeper and deeper into the mine. The game play is magical, the sounds, maniacal. Maniac Miner will make you crazy for more.



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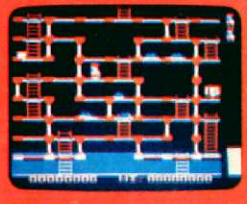
**HANDY DANDY™**

A game of many levels with four completely different screens. As the fearless fix-it man, you find yourself busy at work in a multi-level boiler room. Wild rats, leaking hot steam, falling debris, pounding pile drivers and disappearing floors will earn you an honest day's work. Race to the top of each room before the clock runs out. But watch out! As handy as you are with tools, you could find yourself in a real fix. You can't swim and the water level is rising.



Available for Apple® II, II+, IIe

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# IN CONTROL

family, *The Boss* features a grip that can rotate slightly in the gamer's hand, reducing wrist and hand cramps, especially in games that demand lots of diagonal movement. Because the stick adjusts itself to each new hand position, it puts less wear and tear on the muscles from straining against an immovable object.

STAR RAIDERS (ATARI)

*The Boss* is a good all-around game controller, suited to right-handers and lefties alike. Fans of the trigger-style joystick grip and top-mounted firing button (the combination that best simulates a high-flying feel in games like **Star Raiders** and **Zaxxon**) are sure to find *The Boss* a welcome addition to the home arcade.

## FIRE COMMAND II VIDEO ARCADE CONSOLE

*GIM/Atari-ColecoVision compatible*

Just about every home videogame is enhanced by adding an arcade-style control panel to simulate the coin-op experience. The problem with some earlier consoles was that, for all their pretty decorations and frills, they were often just too light to sit still in the gamer's lap or on the table, much less to handle as "professionally" as a heavy-duty arcade panel.

GIM Electronics, a relative newcomer to the home joystick field, is marketing the first console-style joystick to be housed in a heavy metal base. What the company saved on eye-catching arcade-style visual frills was put back tenfold into the heavy-duty construction of *Fire Command II*'s no-nonsense black base. It's heavy enough to sit where it's placed, yet light enough to rest on a lap during game play. (Lap players take note: the metal bottom can be *cold*, so don't wear shorts!)

THE BOSS (WICO)

The *Fire Command II Console* is conservatively styled. The black metal base is decorated only with the word "fire" written in white beneath each of the console's two action buttons. (The buttons are located at the right and left sides of the joystick to accommodate righties and lefties alike.) The buttons themselves are bright red, while the stick itself is basic black.

FIRE COMMAND (GIM)

The metal, ball-topped joystick is relatively small and easy to grip. It gives a satisfying "click" when moved, and self-centers when the pressure is taken off. Likewise, the action buttons are contoured to fit the finger, and offer just the right amount of resistance when pressed.

As far as durability goes, the inside works are based on the standard leaf-switch system. Although there is no visible back-up rubber surrounding the delicate innards, this reviewer actually stood on the stick without damaging its ability to work (the things we do for our readers!) This is due to a specially-cast rubber base surrounding the bottom of the joystick. Still, readers are advised to treat the console with care.

The newer *Fire Command II Consoles* feature a base-mounted switch that lets ColecoVision owners convert the two buttons, which have the same function, into two separately-functioning triggers for games like **Cosmic Avenger** and **Space Fury**.

The *Fire Command II Console*, as it is now, gets home players as close to the arcade as they can get without leaving the comfort of the living room.

# WICO

# COMMAND CONTROL™

Bat Handle Joystick

## WHY TOP PLAYERS ARE GOING WHACKO OVER WICO THIS CHRISTMAS.

You know the feeling. It's happened before. Your score and initials are in lights on the arcade scoreboard. You've once again experienced the incredible response from the arcade controls to your own hand and mind.

You've been part of the WICO response.

Over 500 arcade games use WICO controls. And now those authentic arcade controls can be used with home video games.

Famous Red Ball™

WICO engineers ergonomically designed home joysticks with the same precise feel and response as the arcade joystick. Joysticks that truly fit the hand and the mind.

Three-Way Deluxe Joystick

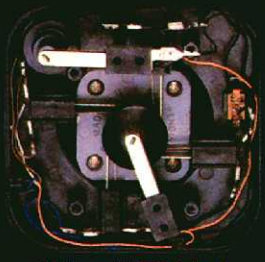
The "Bat Handle" and the "Famous Red Ball.™" The new "Power Grip.™" And the "Three Way Deluxe Joystick" that lets you change handles as easily as you change video games.

WICO features two fire buttons instead of the usual one. Rubber grips keep the base from slipping. And, of course, every handle is arcade size for the best possible grip.

Quick-action fire button

If you opened up the base of a Wico joystick, you'd see one thing. It's not a toy! Arcade owners have always demanded the finest in design, engineering and durability. And so should you.

Our electronically designed "guts" feature 6 Wico leaf switches instead of bubble-type switches. Our joysticks "exclusively" feature a Wico rubber diaphragm module for authentic arcade action and feel. And like all Wico controls, the base is made of heavy-duty, high impact ABS plastic construction that makes it virtually indestructible.



Unique WICO 6-leaf switch assembly

Wico brings 42 years of experience and know-how to the development of the world's finest joysticks. Arcade accuracy. Arcade control. Arcade durability. You're always in command with WICO.

**WICO®**

**·THE·SOURCE·**

FOR THE ARCADE—
AND NOW FOR THE HOME.

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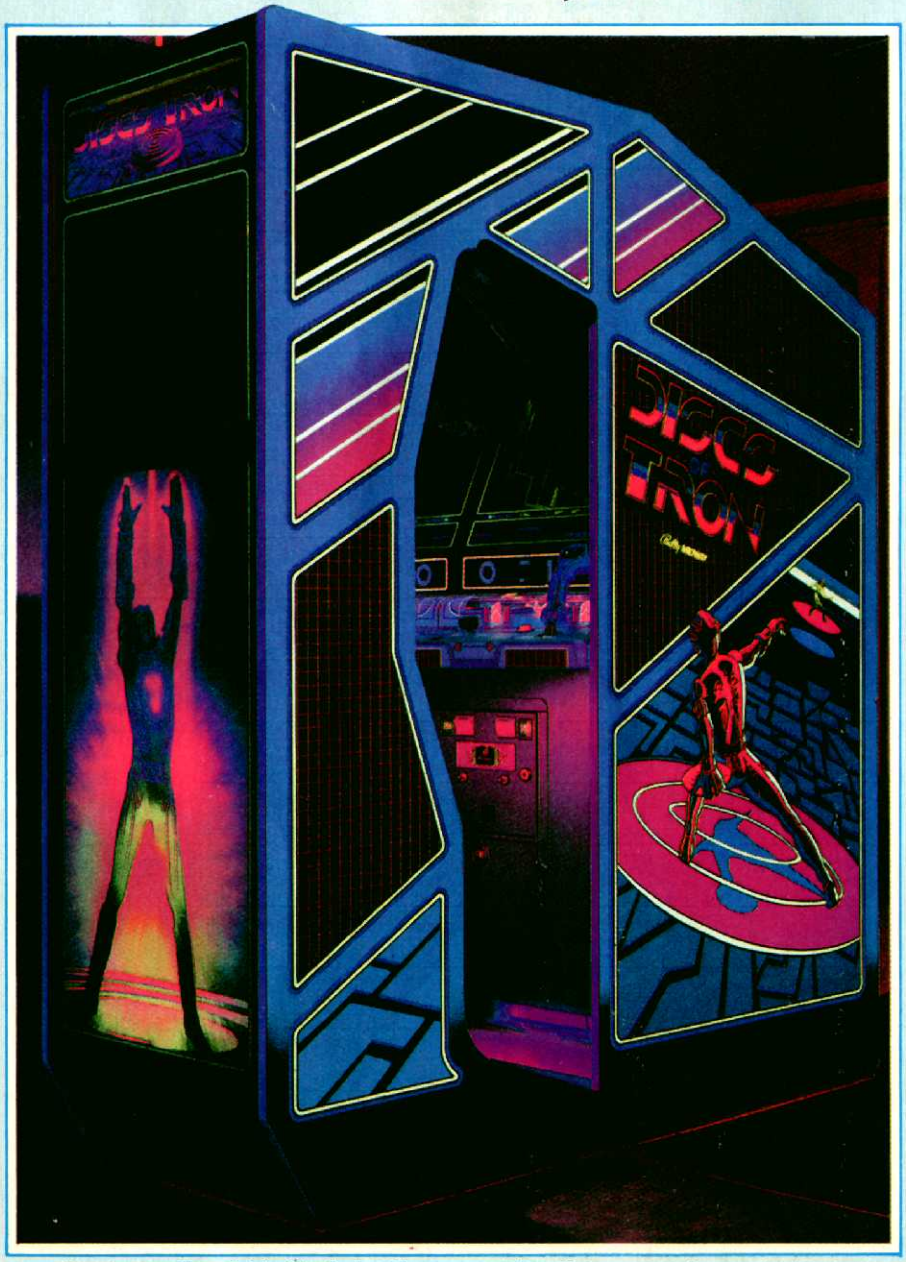
# INSERT COIN HERE

By TRACIE FORMAN




Arcaders really get into the feel of the game with Bally's custom-designed cabinet.

## Tron: Disks of Destruction

### DISKS OF TRON

*Bally/Midway*

Bally offers arcaders the chance to step into Tron's hi-res combat boots in the second coin-op installment of Disney's science fiction adventure film. **Disks of Tron** gives players the chance to do battle with the evil Sark himself in 12 different variations of the head-to-head disk decathlon.

As in the past, Bally has designed an entirely new cabinet to help gamers feel even closer to the on-screen action. To square off against Sark, players enter a dimly-lit booth complete with cut-out sides, carpeted back for easy leaning, stereo sound effects, and large energy disk on the floor. "The idea," according to *Disks of Tron*'s designer Bob Dinnerman, "is to place gamers into the arena so they feel more physically in the game."

After putting in the correct change, arcaders are treated to a breathtakingly realistic backdrop of a computer city, over which the game animation is projected. By resurrecting an old trick rarely seen since **Deluxe Space Invaders**, Bally has added a spectacular 3-D type effect to an already well-designed game.

The object of the game is to de-rezz Sark by hitting him twice with one of Tron's three flying disks. As the duel to the death begins, the arcader takes control of Tron, who appears in the foreground with his back to the player. Sark, depicted in devilish red, faces our hero from the opposite side of the are-

# DISCS OF TRON

## ENTER THE ENVIRONMENT

"GREETINGS, MASTER CONTROL PROGRAM HAS CHOSEN YOU TO SERVE ON THE GAME GRID."

With this command comes the ultimate challenge. You will be head to head with the awesome adversary—Sark. Enter the environment. Step onto the rings. Experience the dimensions of a computer arena.

"WE'LL GET YOU...IT'S ONLY A MATTER OF TIME."

© MCMLXXXIII Walt Disney Productions

Bally MIDWAY™

Tron (in foreground) faces off against the evil Sark in progressively harder levels of play.

na. Both forces have to keep their balance on floating disks that are the only "floor" in the arena. One false move and the character falls over the side — permanently.

Like Tron, Sark has a supply of three disks. These missiles can be hurled one at a time, and up to three can be in the air at any one time. Each disk automatically boomerangs back to the character who threw it.

But Sark has a few extra tricks up his tights. He has the option of tossing Seekers in Tron's direction. These super homing devices chase Tron until they run out of energy. In order to destroy them, each must be hit twice.

This is a bit more difficult to do with Super Seekers, which have delicate inner cores protected by orbitors that can deflect even a well-aimed disk if the timing is wrong.

Sark is also equipped with energy pellets. Not only do these devices split into three missiles after passing the center of the arena, but they can go right through Tron's deflector shields. The best way to deal with the energy

pellets is to destroy them completely and quickly — or else keep out of their way.

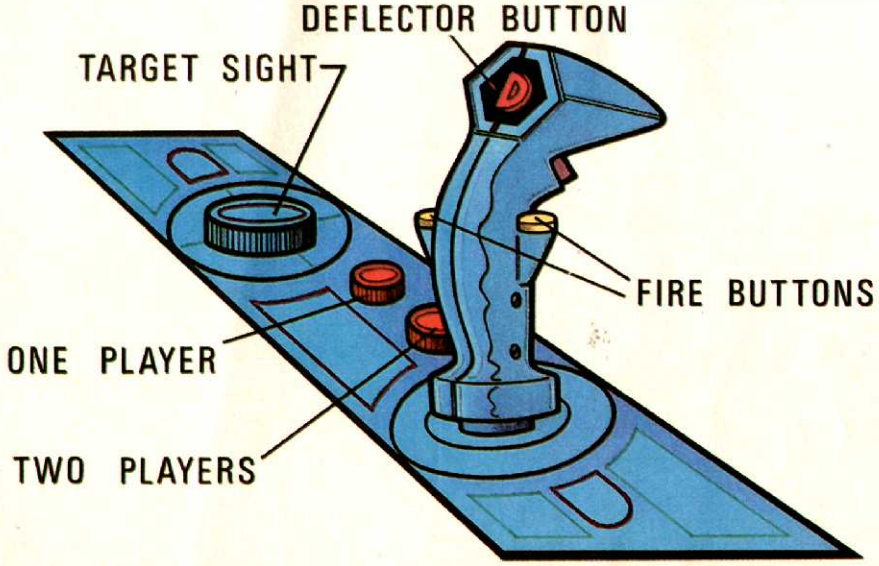
Tron has none of these fancy gimmicks at his disposal. The only means of defeating his archenemy are the standard three disks. Fortunately, Tron has a special ability to call his very own — the deflector shield. When activated, the shield protects him from being hit by Sark's disks and seekers (energy pellets can still get through, though). Arcaders can activate the deflectors twice per turn.

The first screen is a relatively simple face-off: Tron against his malefactor. Each competitor has to keep his footing on a large single disk floating alone above the void below. If Tron slips and falls — or if he's caught by one of Sark's many weapons — the supervillain lets out a deep, mocking laugh made all the more realistic by the game's excellent sound system. Two well-placed thwacks from Tron's energy disks de-rezzes the enemy and advances the player to the next level.

Subsequent screens feature two, then three disks at the computer gladiators' feet. Tron has to run back and forth across the disks if he expects to catch his wily nemesis in the crossfire. If one of Tron's disks grazes Sark without actually hitting him, the evil genius is stunned for a second or two. A few well-placed shots at the frozen foe can put him on ice — permanently.

Advanced screens offer goodies such as: barriers that have to be shot around, multi-level floor disks, and walls that scroll.

Although whether it can top the phenomenal success of **Tron** remains to be seen, *Disks of Tron* is clearly a winner. The graphics are done in a laudable 3-D perspective as seen over Tron's shoulder, the sound effects and speech synthesis (especially Sark's laugh) are excellent.



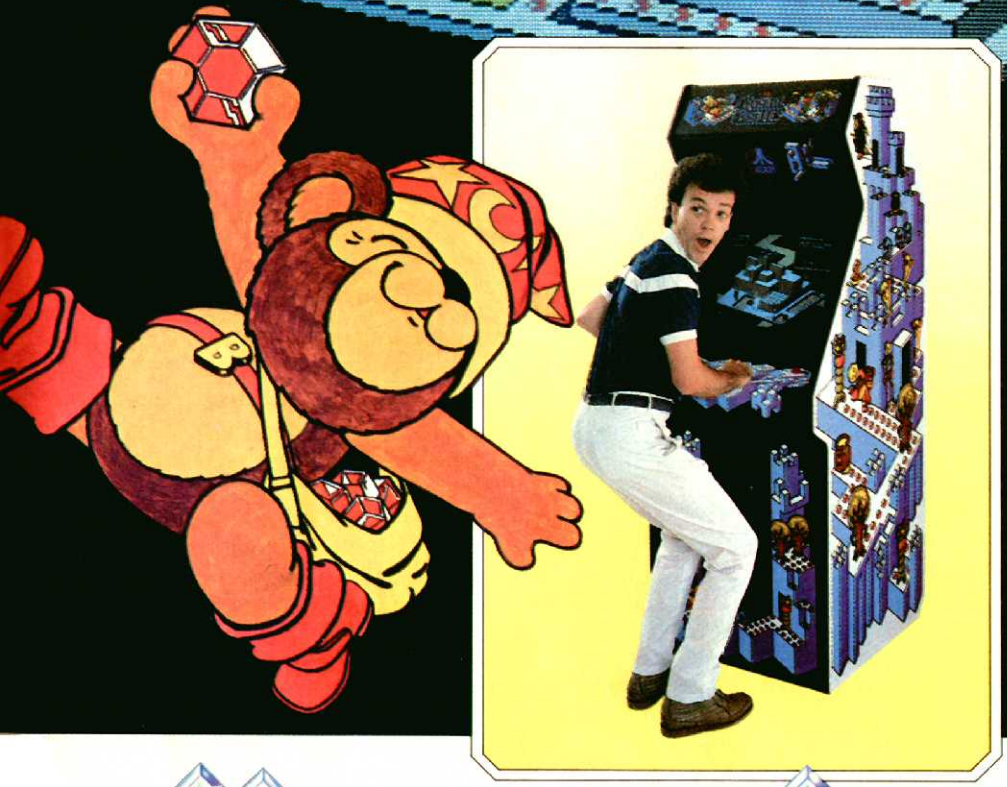

## DISKS OF TRON HOW IT PLAYS:

The trigger-style joystick is used to move Tron back and forth across the floor disks. Move the stick right, left, up or down to maneuver the hero back and forth across the disks — and hopefully, out of harm's way.

On the joystick itself are two separate "fire" functions. The side-firing buttons are pressed to shoot off a flying disk, while the button marked "D" at the back of the stick activates Tron's deflector shield.

The paddle at the far left is used to aim Tron's disk at Sark. When arcaders move the paddle, a small targeting dot moves back and forth along the center of the wall behind Sark. The disk always flies to the place the target spot was when the fire button was pressed.

# "The name's Bentley Bear™. And I've got a tip for you."



Ever since ATARI made me the star of their latest coin video rage, life's been anything but a teddy bear's picnic. But you can help me by knowing a few tricks like the Secret Warps:

**In level 1, get me to the back corner of the maze and press jump. That'll take me to level 3 where you can do the same thing—only this time I must be wearing the magic hat to jump to level 5. Now you must wait until the 3rd maze of level 5 before another secret warp can blast me off to level 7.**

If you want to get in on all my super secrets, just mail your request to BENTLEY BULLETINS, ATARI Coin Games Division, 790 Sycamore Drive, P.O. Box 906, Milpitas, CA 95035. The supply's limited, so hurry!

ATARI®

# CRYSTAL CASTLES™

**New from Atari coin video games.**

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## POP FLAMER

*Stern*

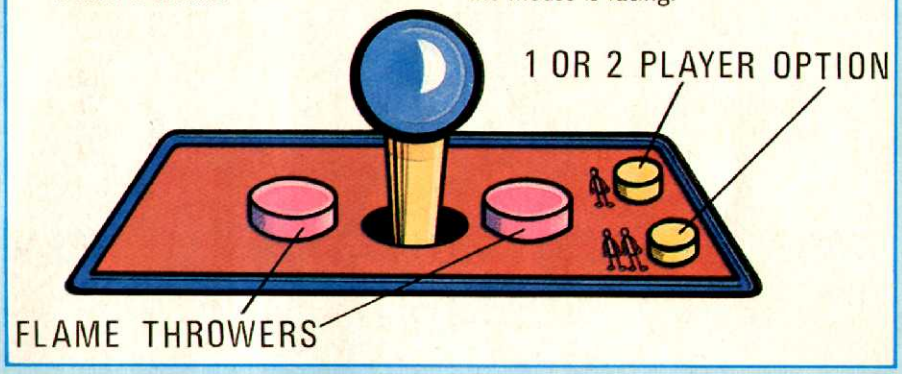
What can you say about a game with a flame-throwing mouse as its protagonist, whose mission in life is to wander up and down a vertically-scrolling playfield popping balloons and thrashing any frogs that happen to reproduce in its way? That's the basic plot behind Stern's **Pop Flamer**, and while it's not exactly logical, it's an awful lot of fun.

The mouse, armed with its trusty flame-thrower, is really a pacifist at heart. All it wants to do is pop balloons, which is accomplished by walking over them until they squish themselves into submission. The long center pathway is completely clear of the inflatables, but it isn't clear of the monsters that periodically pop out of the center-screen gazebo to chase the poor balloon-popper around the screen.

### POP FLAMER HOW IT PLAYS:

Use the joystick to move the hero mouse around the playfield. To pop a balloon, just make the mouse run over it until it breaks.

To activate the flame-thrower, press the button on the console. The flame always shoots in the direction the mouse is facing.




There are three types of monsters. The Frogs are the only creatures that can be totally eliminated with a blast from the flame-thrower. These slimy beasts hop back and forth across the screen, leaving a chain-like trail of baby frogs in their wake. Touching any frog immediately kills the mouse, so he must either avoid or fry them.

Dragons also make their appearance in the game. Though comparatively small (when's the last time you saw a mouse-sized dragon?), these lizards are fierce. They let loose a jet-stream of paralyzing breath, which stuns the mouse for several seconds if he gets caught in its path. The last type of monster is the chicken, which — like the frogs and dragons — can kill the mouse with only a touch.

Whenever the mouse shoots off his flame-thrower, the darned thing starts running low on energy. When this happens, the flame doesn't shoot as far, running down to a mere trickle if energy is really low. To replenish depleted supplies, the mouse has to drink the super energy liquid located in a glass (complete with straw) at the very top and bottom of the playfield. While the mouse is drinking he cannot move, but he can stop drinking at any time. After quaffing the thirst-quencher, he turns into "Supermouse" and can seek revenge on his pursuers by devouring them whole. The more monsters he eats, the more high-speed time is awarded. High-speed time lasts only a few seconds, so make them count, and pop as many now-yellow balloons as possible before more monsters appear.

If the mouse pops a balloon while the latter is laughing, he earns extra flame-throwing abilities, and his weapon shoots much farther.

*Pop Flamer* is as perkily cute as its plot implies. But aside from mere visual fluff, there's enough challenge here to keep even expert arcade aces from scoring too well too soon. The graphics, animation, and sound effects are everything gamers would expect from a "cute" game. To put it simply, *Pop Flamer* is a blast.

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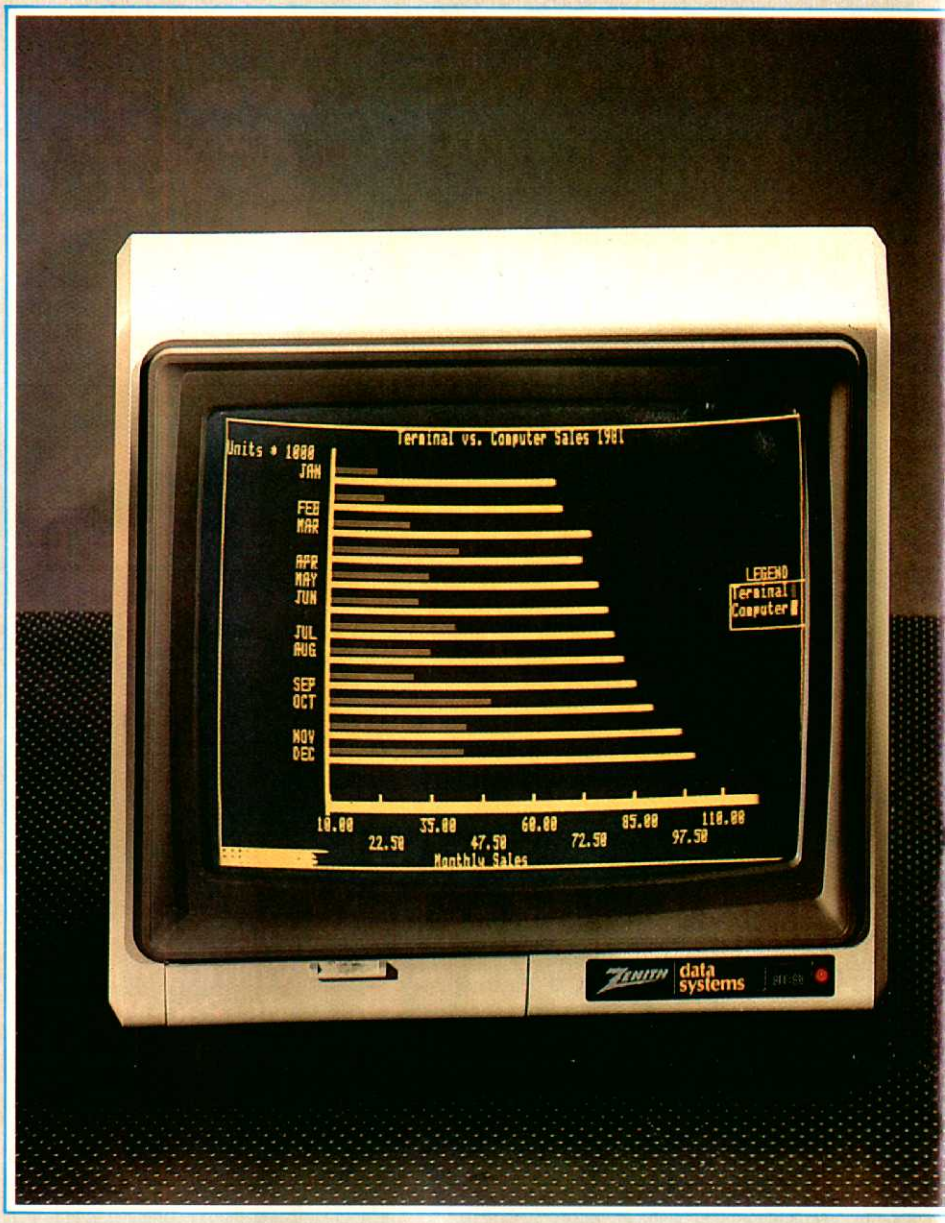
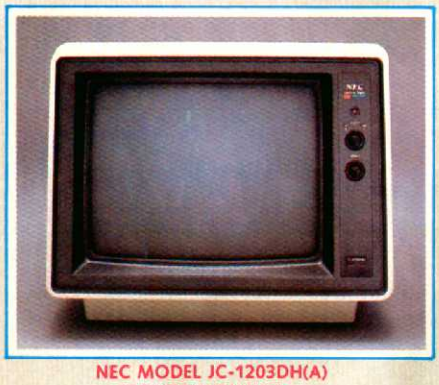



Monitors for videogamers come in three flavors: plain vanilla — a standard color television set; chocolate chip — a composite (or video) unit; and a three-scoop banana split with all the trimmings — a full-bore RGB (Red, Green, Blue) delight. Of course, it's also true that you can play some videogames on a monochrome (black and white) TV set or monitor, but that's like ordering an ice-cream



NEC MODEL JC-1203DH(A)
COLOR MONITOR

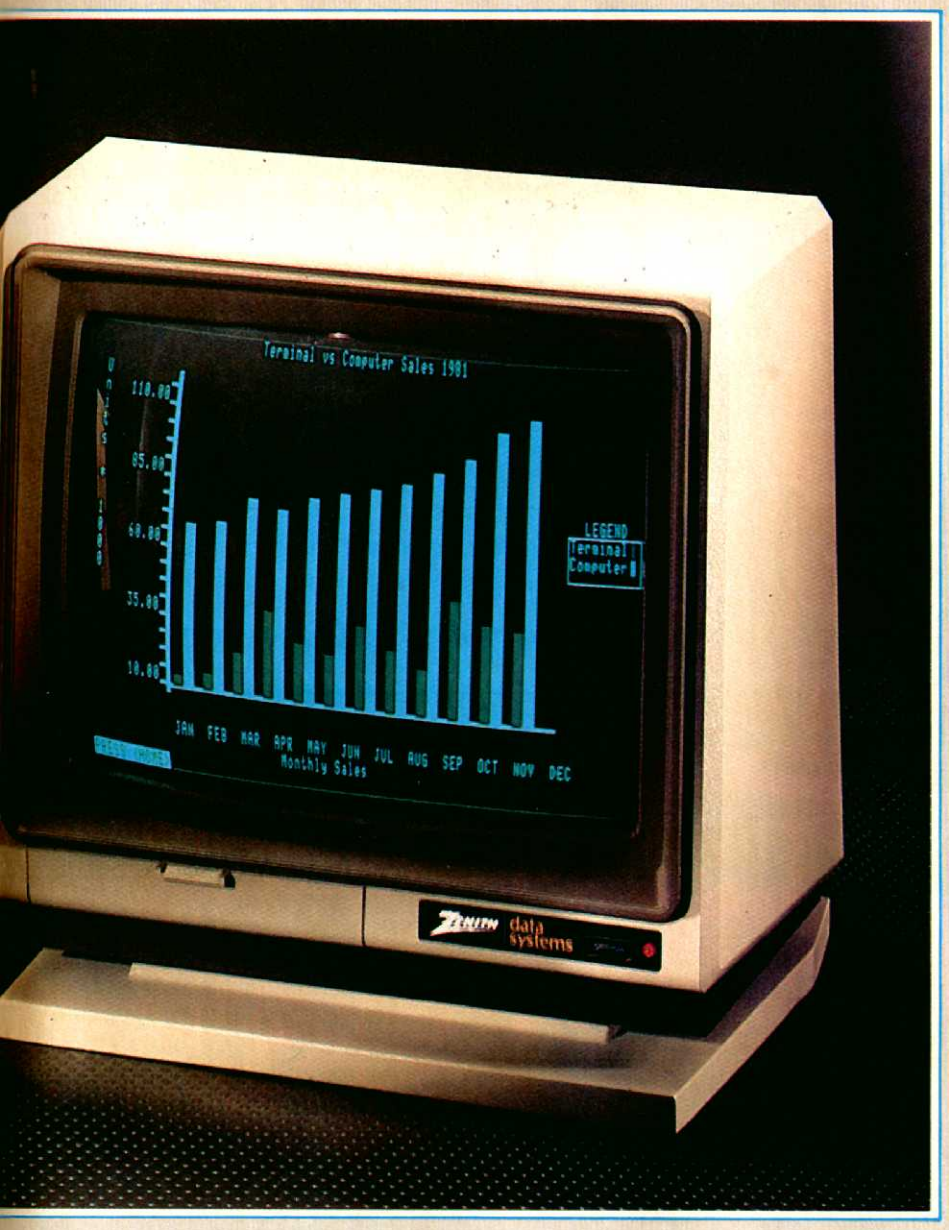
cone without the ice cream. It's a little bit flaky and not too sweet.

To really understand monitors, you have to know a tad about video signals. The basic color signal, no matter how it is generated, contains both color (chroma) and black and white (luminance) information plus all necessary synchronization data. If you were to add sound and radio frequencies (RF), you'd wind up with a television signal. If you combined only the chroma, luminance and synchronization information together (without adding RF or sound), you'd get composite video (usually just called "video"). But if you maintained the three chroma values, luminance and sync signals separately, again without sound or RF, you'd have RGB.

All this — and we apologize to any budding electronics engineers out there — is a gross oversimplification that is only meant to differentiate among the three forms of "video" signals a videogame or computer system can generate. Again, they are: RF (television signals), composite video, and RGB.

For most home videogame players,

# eye on moni




RF signals are the norm. These are the standard ultra-low-powered TV transmissions that all videogame systems produce. They are delivered, via cable, to your TV set through the TV/game switch which comes with the system. RF signals are received on a standard TV channel, most often 2 or 3.

Many home computers also produce RF signals, but as with the videogame systems, this output alone is somewhat limited as it may only be viewed on the family television set.

Stepping up several magnitudes in quality is "composite video". This signal, because it contains no RF or audio information, always produces an appreciably "cleaner", sharper picture. Gone are the "moire" patterns that intrude on an RF signal. Gone also is the possibility of your computer or videogame signal entering the airwaves and broadcasting. For all

NEC MODEL JB-1201M(A)
GREEN-SCREEN MONITOR

videogaming, video is the preferred means of transmission no matter what. But video signals cannot be viewed on the standard color television set, and so are relegated to the realm of the home computer and the world of video monitors.

At the apex of the video spectrum is the king, RGB. This signal, available only from the more expensive home and business computers, delivers separate Red, Green, and Blue information to highly specialized, but unfortunately non-standardized, monitors. You have probably seen a great many RGB images and have never known it. Most, if not all, arcade machines utilize this form of signal

# tors

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By HENRY B. COHEN

AMDEK COLOR-I MONITOR

generation and transmission as it produces the cleanest, clearest, sharpest, and highest resolution color images possible.

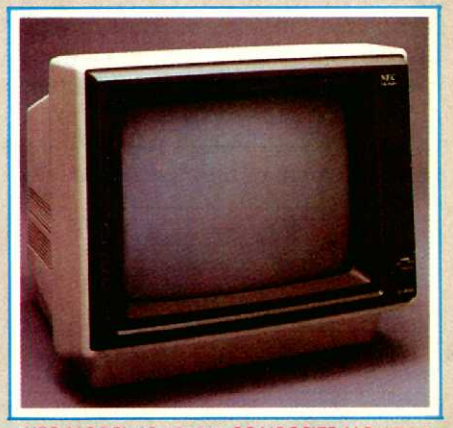
The trouble with RGB is that, as mentioned, there is no accepted standard in the industry. Each computer manufacturer can select its own wiring scheme, polarity and signal strength level, etc. In addition, some RGB configurations contain the critical synchronization information modulated onto one of their color signals, while others keep it entirely separate. Obviously there is no "standard" RGB monitor, only those that work with specific computers — and RGB monitors are usually expensive. The higher the bandwidth, all things being equal, the more you pay.

Bandwidth determines the resolution of a monitor or receiver. A standard TV set has a 4.5 megahertz bandwidth which renders it capable of resolving up to 40 characters across the horizontal plane of the screen. Entering the realm of monitors, at 6 megahertz we can see 64 characters and at 8 megahertz and above, 80 characters are possible. Keep these figures in mind when shopping for a monitor as bandwidth is critical if you plan to upgrade your game system or computer for business applications work. Yes, you can process words, etc., with a VIC-20 on a standard color TV, but do you really want to, given that with the proper expansion boards and monitor, the standard 80-character set is available to you?

When you get to the higher plateaus of monitor shopping, a new catchphrase enters the picture: "pixel resolution." Pixel is another word for picture element. We assume the "x" was added so the moniker wouldn't be pronounced to sound like a "pickle". Pixels define resolution by stating unequivocally how many picture elements can be reproduced on the monitor's screen. A pixel is the smallest element any given monitor or receiver can resolve. The point is that bandwidth and pixels are critical when defining potential picture resolution.

A final term some manufacturers like to employ refers to the "number of lines at center" a monitor can resolve. This means that if a picture (comprised of nothing but vertical lines) was displayed on a monitor, at the centerline of the screen (looking horizontally), you could clearly see X number of vertical lines displayed. Some high resolution monitors can

COMMODORE MODEL 1701



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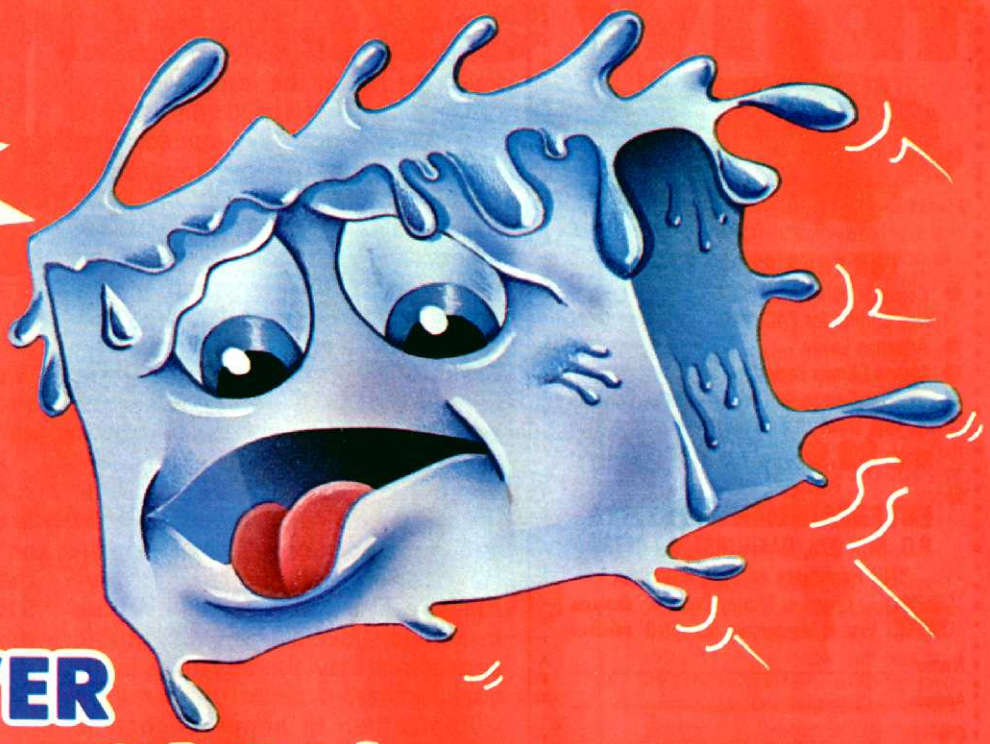

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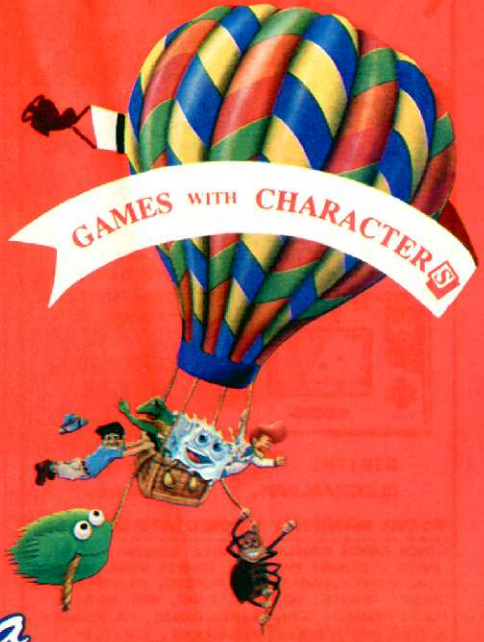


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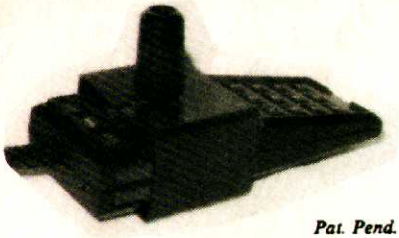

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reproduce 800 lines, while others are relegated to 250. This information provides a clear indication of the performance of any monitor so rated. Obviously the higher the number of lines, the higher the resolution.

This latter term is used most often to describe monochrome monitors because, by definition, they can provide higher resolution than any color monitor including RCB units. After all, the monochrome monitor only has one set of phosphors to worry about, usually green or amber, not the three (Red, Green, and Blue) of the color monitor.

There are other, less important criteria that may be applied when selecting a monitor for use with your videogame system or home computer. These include the actual screen size, the number of user controls available and, for videogame systems in particular, the ability of the monitor to receive standard broadcast television signals. In addition, overall size, weight and appearance may also be factors in the final purchase decision.

Remember all home videogame systems produce RF signals that can be viewed on any television set. In this instance, a monitor would not work at all but a monitor/receiver would. Still, why go to the trouble and expense of shopping for and buying a monitor at all?

NEC MODEL JC-1201M(A) COLOR MONITOR

As your interests broaden, you may suddenly find yourself with a computer capable of generating video signals as well as RF. The VIC-20, even though it is now selling for well under $100, is a perfect example. We used this unit, almost a year ago, to demonstrate the qualitative differences you would enjoy if you converted a TV set into a monitor/receiver. Other than the Atari 400, most popular home computers produce true composite video outputs. So with potentially few

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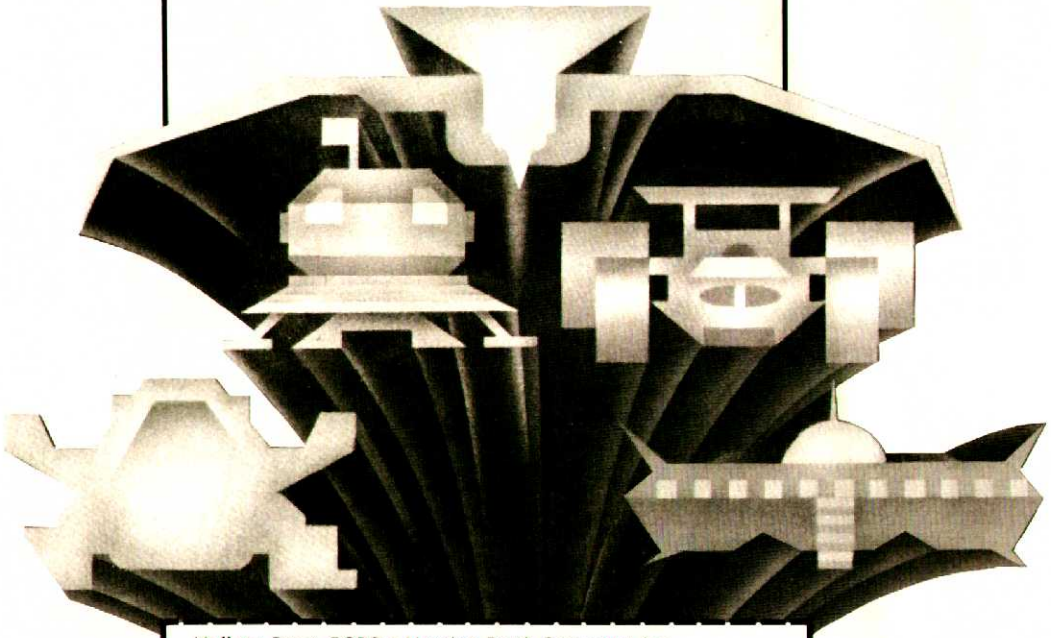

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exceptions, the computer based videogame player should take advantage and use a color monitor. Only the strict videogame system and Atari 400 owners are left out in the cold.

For the best possible computer-generated picture, RGB is the only way to go, but it is expensive and brand choices are somewhat limited.

Recently, however, a slew of monitors have become available for the IBM-PC and, for the most part, they are recommended if you can afford them. To broaden the market, some monitor manufacturers have added less costly, low-resolution RGB units to their lines. We feel that if you choose RGB, only a high resolution model makes sense. Otherwise, a good hi-res monitor/receiver is probably a better buy so long as it is able to resolve 80 character displays.

Some monitors are laden with controls, others feature a simple on/off switch and nothing more. While we cannot recommend one configuration over the other, (personal preference takes over at this point), this writer uses an RGB monitor sans controls and loves it. It leaves that much less to go wrong. If the monitor is a little too bright, or shows jet black backgrounds as something less, a simple internal adjustment sets things straight and that adjustment need be made only once. At the same time, it's a good idea to fine-tune the focus control, also an internal adjustment, so that once "tweaked" you're set to go every time you turn the monitor on.

Other people may be happier with a full set of controls such as those found on the popular Commodore 1701 composite video monitor. This unit, by the way, is made by JVC and features tint, color, brightness, contrast, horizontal position and vertical hold controls and a loudspeaker plus, of course, an on/off switch. It appears to be a repackaged color TV without a tuner. Given its low list price of $299.95 and 40 character display, it's an ideal choice for limited home computer software applications and unlimited videogame play — so long as your source provides a composite video output. The limited picture specifications of 320x200 pixels and 270 line horizontal resolution tend to underscore its family television set heritage.

ZENITH MODEL ZVM 121

As an aside, if you buy such a monitor, remember that it may also be used to view programs from any VCR or videodisc player. In addition, the VCR can function as a TV tuner allowing the monitor to be used like any normal television set when not hooked up to the host computer. This may be a good selling point if you have to convince your parents to buy you a monitor. No RGB monitor can make that claim.

Monochrome monitors are virtually essential to "serious" computerists, but they are merely doorstops to videogame players. These monitors produce the sharpest images possible, bar none, but they do it in black and white even if the black and white is green or amber. Amber is the preferred screen color used in Europe, as studies conducted there have shown it to be easier on the eyes over long periods of time. Monochrome monitors usually have an on/off switch and a brightness or contrast control — nothing more.

As far as price is concerned, you have to make several determinations before heading for the nearest retailer, as individual factors will influence the final cost of the monitor you select.

First, decide what jobs the monitor is going to do and then factor in what your needs may be in the future.

For videogame systems, any good quality color television set does just dandy. You'll never need a monitor or monitor/receiver if you're happy with your Intellivision, Atari 2600 or 5200, ColecoVision or Odyssey².

# monitors

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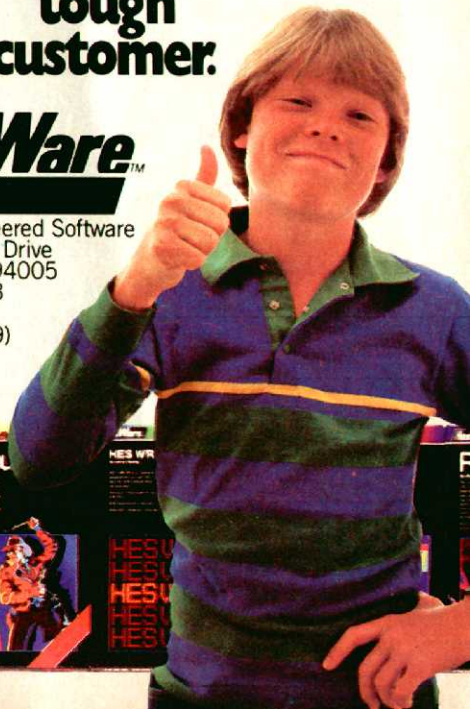

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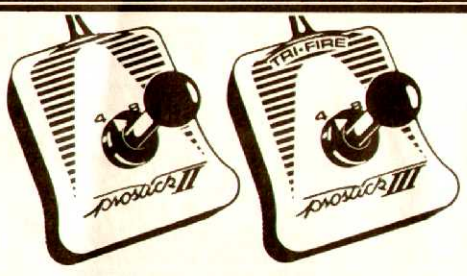


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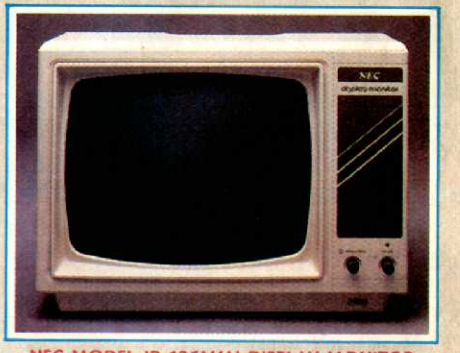
If you plan to upgrade to a computer which will provide a composite video signal — and most of them do — think about purchasing a monitor/receiver or video monitor. Remember that a monitor may be used to watch TV if you or your family own a VCR or separate TV tuner. And if you have a videodisc player, then that, too, will provide a signal your monitor can handle. Composite video, unlike RGB, is standard throughout the industry.

If you're going whole-hog and planning to buy any number of computers which can play games and provide an RGB output, or if you are planning to upgrade an Apple to provide an RGB




NEC MODEL JB-126M(A) DISPLAY MONITOR

output, then buy the best, high-resolution monitor you can afford. Reconsider your purchase if you're thinking about a low-res RGB monitor, since its performance will not be much greater, if any better, than what you can expect from a high-res video monitor.

To give you some feel for prices — and remember virtually all monitors are discounted — here are some rough guidelines: simple monochrome monitors range from $99.95 to under $150, high-resolution monochromes can run as high as $345, composite video monitors range from $299 to $500, RGB units range from $339 to $1795 and possibly higher.

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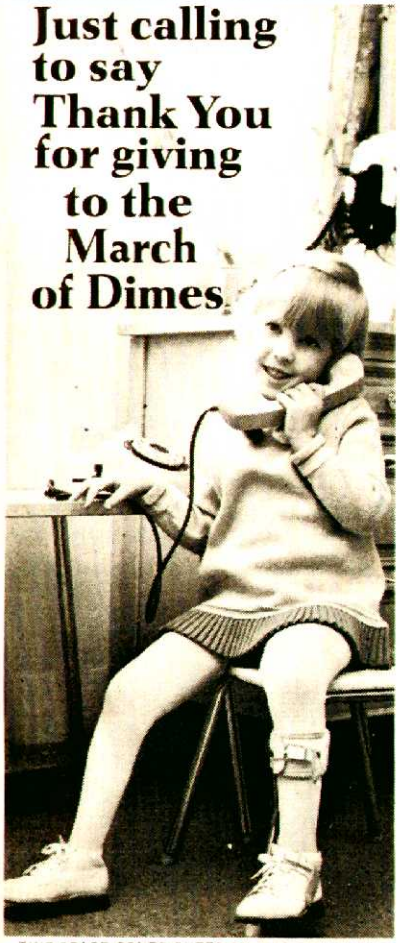

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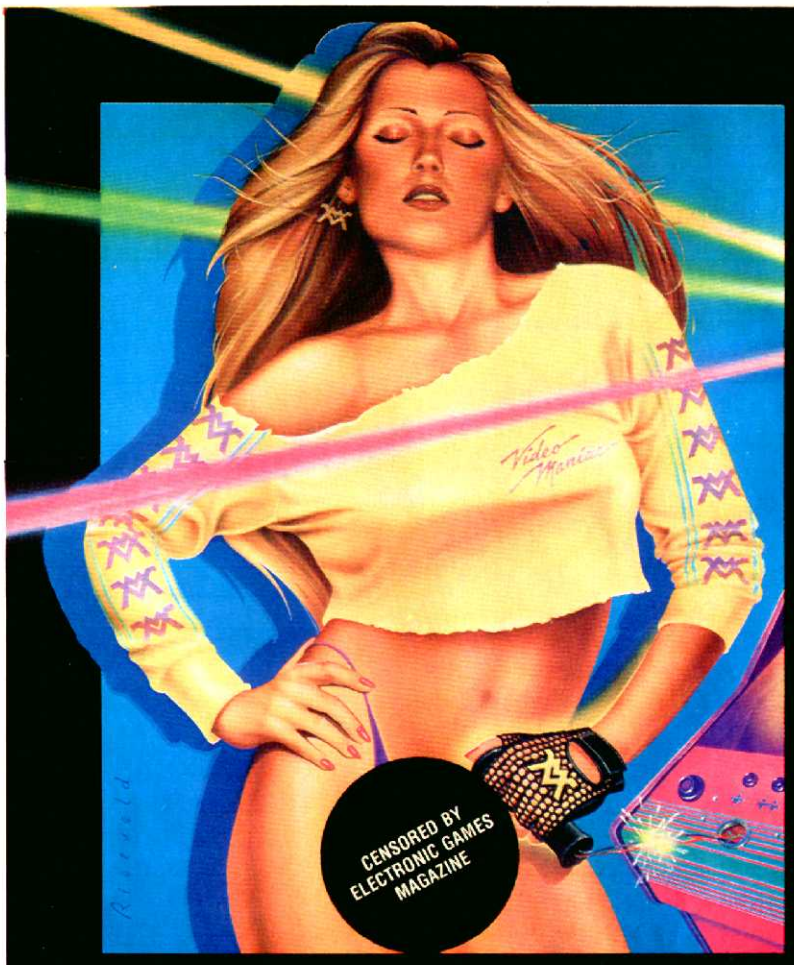


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# The Programmable Practitioner Tells All

By THE GAME DOCTOR

What a bright-eyed and bushy-tailed group of patients we have lined up with questions this month! And do you know what? I've just strolled in after 18 simulated holes of computerized laser disc golf, so you *know* the old microcomputer medicine man is ready to go the distance.

Okay, enough with the verbal jogging, let's get down to business! There are Q's to be A'd, questions of intergalactic import to be resolved . . . and a T-shirt to be awarded. This time out, "Q&A" proudly presents an **Electronic Games** shirt to a somewhat outraged Texas Instruments owner.

**Q:** *Let's face it! People are starting to turn their heads at the Apple, IBM and other expensive personal computers. I found an Apple was too expensive so I bought a Texas Instruments 99/4A and it does almost as much as an Apple but costs hundreds of dollars less. So why doesn't* **EG** *cover TI?*

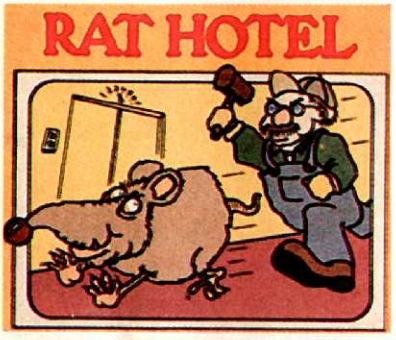
*It should get at least as much coverage as the Apple, Commodore, Atari and TRS-80 games.*

*(Shawn McKirgan, Oakland, CA)*

**A:** Agreed, Shawn, that microcomputers such as the Apple II and IBM are out of the ballpark in terms of price for the average game-loving computerist. In fact people *are* turning to less expensive computers — but they have turned to the Commodore and Atari systems instead of to TI's.

There are several reasons for this. First off, TI made the decision early on that it would control *all* software for its system. This immediately guarantees that the best independent software programmers will never produce a TI game. Beyond that, TI seemed almost embarrassed by its perfunctory game

TRASHMAN




RAT HOTEL

cartridge line. TI wanted to be known for their educational games and seemed to consider the games a carrot on a stick "for the kiddies".

TI finally broke down and has allowed the interesting Creative Software company to actually manufacture games for its system on an exclusive basis. Still, this is too little and much too late. As a sign of its stability, TI's stock plunged over 35 points in a single day this past summer! The company seemed bound and determined to ignore the computer's entertainment potential and has suffered as a result.

As to why **EG** hasn't covered TI games, that's a very simple one: TI has refused us access to a demonstration system on which to test their software, which they have also made unavailable to us, as a "gaming magazine".

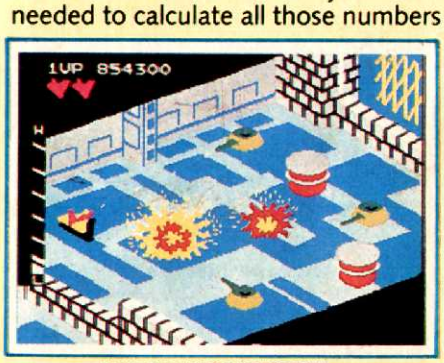
In other words, Shawn, you can't review what you aren't allowed to see. Meanwhile, have fun with your system, and look into Creative's line of game software.

**Q:** *I am the proud owner of a ColecoVision game system. The game play and graphics quality on all of my cartridges are excellent, but I have a question regarding the* **Zaxxon** *cartridge: Why did the designers only provide for five-digit scoring? It really requires six. Are there any plans by Coleco to have a game with unlimited scoring potential for contest purposes?*

*(Danny Bray, Ft. Worth, TX)*

**A:** First off, Danny, even six-digit scoring is far from "unlimited . . . potential" — as I'm sure Bill Heineman or Frank Tetro Jr. would be more than happy to demonstrate at the drop of a chip — but even so, your point is well taken.

The problem, however, is that for each new digit counter the computer has to deal with, the memory function needed to calculate all those numbers

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increases exponentially. So, easy as it sounds, the difference in terms of memory between five and six digit counters is extreme — and might even have cost a vital visual or play element.

In any case, when and if Coleco sponsors a *Zaxxon* contest, I feel quite certain that they'll deal with the problem in the long-standing tradition of videogame tournaments; that is, a monitor will be assigned to each player to insure fairness and to mark each "rollover" and restart the count.

**Q:** *I own an Atari 2600, ColecoVision and the Atari Expansion Module. I have recently found out that the Supercharger does not work in the Coleco emulator.*

*Are there any plans to change the Module? Should I sell my 2600?*
*P.S. You have a great magazine. Keep my subscriptions rolling on in.*
*(Scott Wu, Vancouver, B.C.)*

**A:** Hey, hoser! About time someone realized who's responsible for this "great magazine", eh?

But as a Game Doctor in all seriousness (a "game doctor in all seriousness"?), if *I* were you I'd return or sell the Expansion and keep the 2600! Not only doesn't the Expansion Module work with the Supercharger, it doesn't work with an alarming number of 2600 software titles. Tigervision games won't run at all, and we've had sporadic difficulty with U.S. Games titles, some of which run and some of which don't.

With a system as simple but software-oriented as the 2600, even the slight deviations that Coleco made to avoid a lawsuit (all for naught, since they reached a licensing agreement with Atari to produce both the Module *and* the Gemini, a VCS work-alike) have been enough to play hob with much of the software.

So until Coleco gets the module down pat (the problems *should* be corrected in future models, but make *sure* before buying), hold onto those 2600s!

In the meantime, keep your joysticks clean, don't hang around with videogame cheats (the "wrong crowd" but *definitely*) and remember to turn the system off.

Aloha.

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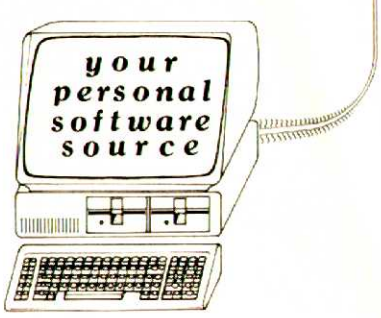


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# It's He-Man Against the Masters of the Universe!

## MASTERS OF THE UNIVERSE

*Mattel Electronics/$40*

By JOYCE WORLEY

Put a mansion full of adventure in the palm of your hand with Mattel's **Masters of the Universe** as you guide the on-screen hero through Castle Grayskull's 100 rooms. Maneuver the brawn champion through a maze of chambers, seeking the villainous Skeletor. It takes a talented arcader to get rid of the castle's murderous occupant. Just be careful not to find him *too* quickly! Stumble into the room where he's

waiting, and it's all over for the powers of light, in this mini-screen battle of good versus evil.

Mattel mined the pit for gaming gold earlier this year with its hand-held version of **Dungeons & Dragons**. Now the company has revamped that successful design, turning it into another maze-search that should excite fans of this type of entertainment. This time the arcader guides the on-screen hero, He-Man, through Castle Grayskull one room at a time, trying to locate helpful objects, avoid perils, and ultimately destroy his strong-man adversary, Skeletor.

The rooms of Castle Grayskull are arranged like a grid, 10 squares in each direction, identified by number-letter coordinates to show where He-Man is at all times. Just point the cursor in the direction He-Man should move, then when he enters the next room, the new coordinates appear in the center of the display.

There are 12 dungeon cells scattered through the castle. If He-Man moves into one of these rooms, he's immediately captured, and can only escape his predicament by using the key. If he doesn't possess it, he's permanently imprisoned and the game ends.

Somewhere in the castle there's a power sword—the only weapon that can help him against his foe, Skeletor. He-Man must first locate the sword, then try to destroy his rival.

As He-Man moves into each new location, if there are any objects in any of the four adjacent rooms, a picture of the item appears on-screen, but there's no way to know which room it is in. If it's something beneficial, like the key or the sword, just move back and forth into each bordering room until He-Man picks up what he needs. If the item depicted is something nasty, like a dungeon cell or the villain Skeletor, use more caution. Entering a cell without a key puts an immediate end to the game, and going into a room occupied by Skeletor spells instant death to the heroic He-Man.

Once the on-screen hero locates the sword, he's got a chance to rid the castle of its evil inhabitant. When he finally moves to a position that indicates Skeletor is in a neighboring room, he can hurl his weapon in the direction he thinks Skeletor stands waiting. Guess correctly and Skeletor dies, ending the game and making He-Man champion of the day. But a wrong move leads to immediate destruction.

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Luck has a lot to do with how well the gamer does at *Masters of the Universe*. There's no on-screen indicator to help decide which rooms are safe and which hold disaster. Therefore, the maze crawling gamer should map He-Man's movements around the castle. Make a 10-square grid, then mark each room as you prove it's safe. If the screen indicates a cell or Skeletor adjacent to He-Man's position, put a question mark in the unexplored squares. By keeping track of where He-Man goes and what he sees, it's possible to deduce the location of the baddies. Then it's time to fight Skeletor.

Pinpoint the villain's location, carefully mapping all the rooms in his vicinity. Then point the cursor and use the "hurl button" to fling the sword at him through the door. If the castle is mapped correctly, Skeletor is easily defeated. Make a wrong guess and there's a "poof!" Then the sword disappears. The gamer must relocate the weapon before He-Man can try again.

As if He-Man didn't have enough troubles already, he is randomly attacked by Screeech, a magical prehistoric bird. This winged monster flies through the castle until it enters the

room with He-Man. Then it picks him up, flies him away, and drops him somewhere else in the castle. It's not too bad if the new room is empty, but the silly bird is just as likely to drop the hero right on top of some object...and it might not be beneficial. If Screeech drops He-Man into the room with a cell, he'll die if he doesn't have the key to escape. If He-Man falls into a room with Skeletor, it's all over.

There are three game variations. At skill level #1, He-Man already has the key when the game begins. In level #2, the key is randomly hidden, and must be found to be used. Skill level #3 does it the hard way; there's no key, and any step into a dungeon cell spells instant doom for He-Man.

Only "time" is scored in *Masters of the Universe*. He-Man gets one point for each five seconds he survives in the castle, up to a maximum of 99. The game ends when he kills Skeletor, so naturally, the lower the score, the better the game.

The LCD graphics are minimal, yet effective. He-Man appears in the middle of a room with the coordinates of his location shown on-screen. Game elements are rendered in black and white line drawings, and the sound clues are easy to follow. The tromp of walking feet marks He-Man's movements from room to room, a singsong four-note theme warns the bird is coming, and a falling sound notes the entering of a dungeon cell. If he has the key, the cell is pictured with the key in the door, and then He-Man is moved to another, safer room. A short tune plays when he enters a room next to the sword or key, and a different song signals when he's adjacent to Skeletor.

*Masters of the Universe* is a fistful of adventure. There's not a lot of variety in play-action, but this is just the thing for strategy lovers who like to keep a tiny game in a pocket where a larger amusement might not fit.

## MONSTER MAZE

*Tiger Electronic Toys/$29.95*

There's a maze full of angry monsters darting from passage to passage, and it's up to you to clear away all the dots while avoiding the winged furies. It won't be busy, because these wicked foes really fly!

Maze-chase fans hungry for more formidable contests should look no further than Tiger's hand-held **Monster Maze**. It takes a steady hand and nerves of steel to maneuver Willi, the on-screen hero, through the passageways, while gobbling point-giving dots and avoiding the monsters.

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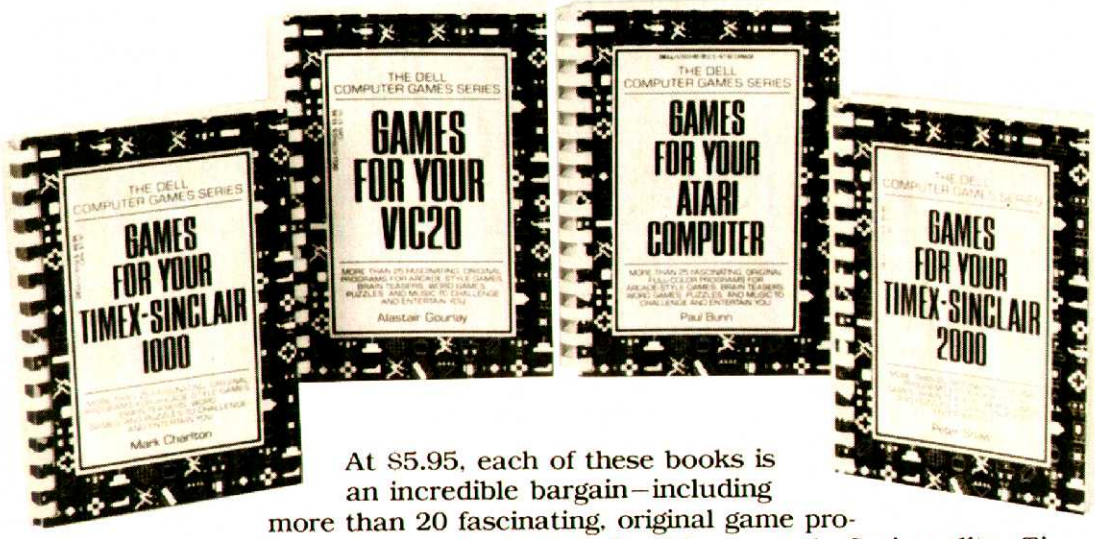


At $5.95, each of these books is an incredible bargain—including more than 20 fascinating, original game programs that would cost hundreds of dollars if sold separately. Series editor Tim Hartnell has included hints on how to improve and extend the game programs that will add to your all-round programming expertise. THE DELL COMPUTER GAMES SERIES is guaranteed to give you endless hours of fun and entertainment. Available at your local bookstore.

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When Willi eats one of the four apples, he gains energy to attack the monster for extra points. But it wears off quickly, so look out!

Tiger went back into the maze for another look at the familiar gobble game and came away with a new vision which turns it into an exciting, high-speed race that takes quick reflexes to win.

*Monster Maze* reduces the labyrinth to pocket-size so gamers can carry it with them everywhere. The on-screen hero, teardrop-shaped Willi, hungrily darts around eating the dots that litter the maze passageways. But Willi isn't alone. Winged monsters pursue him from every side. As Willi maneuvers through the maze, these flying behemoths bedevil him at every turn. If Willi eats one of the four apples, he gets bonus points and additional strength. This extra energy enables him to attack the monsters for bonus points.

This game is for gobble fans who want more challenge than afforded by some of the other maze games. The winged monsters are very, very fast. They zip around at such an exciting pace that it's extremely hard for the gamer to keep track of where they are, and almost impossible for Willi to outrun them. The average arcader will feel challenged even on skill level one. Skill level four, the top-rated contest, is so fast paced that only a real ace can keep up.

The maze contains 48 beans, four apples, and occasional bonus stars, in addition to Willi and the monsters. Each bean scores 50 points, the apples score 200, and bonus stars tally 2000. Monsters vary in value from 500 to 2000, depending on how many Willi manages to kill. If Willi clears the maze of all the fruit and prizes, the screen goes blank, then a new maze appears filled with more beans, apples, and deadly flying killers. Game play is punctuated by melodies that start each round, signal every encounter, then laud the gamer with a triumphant chorus when he clears a maze of wildlife.

There are three Willis in each contest, and the game ends when they've all been killed. The unit retains the high score and flashes it on-screen before the beginning of each new game.

*Monster Maze* is playable by one or two arcaders. The unit signals the player's turn, then remembers each person's score individually.

This is a high-speed, high-skill pocket arcade that will keep gamers entertained for many hours of challenging fun.

### MONSTER MAZE HOW IT PLAYS:

There are two push buttons, a slide switch, and a four-directional control button to operate **Monster Maze**. The slide switch on the right of the unit sets the game for one or two players. When you hit the function button on the far left, this starts the game into demonstration mode, so that arcaders can

watch the action for awhile to see how it goes. Press the function button a second time and the unit goes into skill-selection mode. Use the second button from the left to choose skill levels one through four, and push the function button a third time to start the game at the selected level. All of the on-screen action is controlled by the four-directional button in the center of the console. It's fairly easy to operate right from the start. One thumb easily manipulates Willi through all the corridors, as he races around eating beans and avoiding monsters. The unit works on three LR43 or SR43 batteries, and should be turned off when not in use.

## DONKEY KONG JUNIOR

*Coleco/$50*

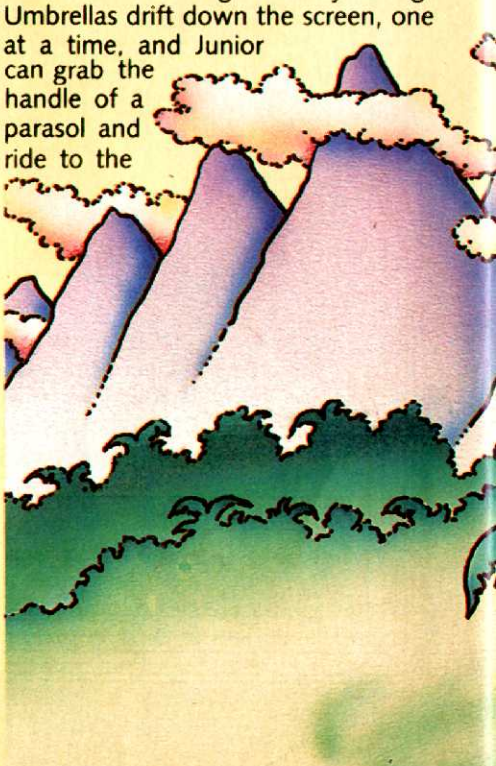
There's probably not an arcader in the entire country who doesn't know the story of Donkey Kong, whose love for a fair maiden led him down the primrose path and drove him straight up a wall. When Mario, bitten by the same lovebug, rescued his lady, he bound the beast with four strong chains, then shipped him back to the jungle.

**Donkey Kong Junior** picks up the scenario where **Donkey Kong** left off. The muscular monster is glad to be back in the rain-forest, but he needs some help to get rid of the chains that hold him prisoner. Luckily he's got a son. Now Donkey Kong Junior must set him free.

Donkey Kong Junior must find the key to unlock his daddy's bonds, then leap and climb through the jungle foliage to reach the place where the giant ape is chained. First, he jumps up and grabs the key from its hiding spot on the lower left portion of the screen. Once he has the key, Junior has to climb up vines and crawl over tree branches to try to get to his poppa. Fierce birds fly through the treetops, attacking Junior each time they run into him. Junior must try to stay out of their pathway, because one bump of his winged opposition knocks him from his tree branch and ends his life. The game is over when three Juniors have been killed.

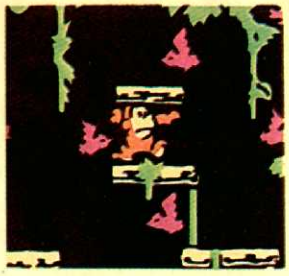
Junior can jump up and grab a coconut from the treetop, then drop it on a bird's head to dispatch the fowl. But once he's used his coconut weapon, there won't be another missile available to hurl at the birds until he gets another key.

After Junior passes through the forest, he emerges on the edge of a cliff overlooking a river. His poppa is chained and helpless on the other side, and the brave little monkey must find a way to cross the stream and undo the locks holding Donkey Kong. Umbrellas drift down the screen, one at a time, and Junior can grab the handle of a parasol and ride to the



Use the "JUMP" button to have Junior reach the key.

Then help Junior scramble up the vines. The joystick lets you move left, right, up or down.



Watch out for the ferocious birds who are hot on his trail

. . . get him in position to pick a coconut and drop it down to bonk them for bonus points.

Move Junior over to a perch where he can grab an umbrella to descend.

If you open all 4 locks, you've freed Papa Donkey Kong™

Kong waves his arms up and down, and when Junior is alongside the lock, moving the lever to the right automatically opens one chain.

If Junior misses the lock, his key falls into the water. Since he can't retrieve it, he's got to make his way back to the starting point to pick up another. As soon as he grabs it, a new coconut-weapon grows in the treetop, providing another point-gaining chance to kill a bird.

Each key can only unlock one chain, so Junior has to go back to the beginning for another every time he uses up one. But this isn't all bad, since that means he'll get another coconut as well, to dispatch another of the pesky parrots that continually crisscross the forest.

When Junior opens the fourth lock, it frees Donkey Kong. He waves his arms up and down in triumph, and music salutes the arcader. Then the next adventure begins, and the little ape has to do the entire thing again.

Junior scores two points for each bird he beans with a coconut. Jumping from the umbrella to a balloon scores one point, and Junior scores 10 for each lock he manages to undo. If the spunky little monk releases all four locks, gets 10 extra points for a job well done. If the score reaches 300, there's a fanfare, and all misses are erased from the tally, so that there are three more Donkey Kong Juniors left in the game, no matter how many of them had previously perished in the struggle. If the score reaches 300 and there have been no misses at all up to that point, then the game goes into special "chance time", and all points are awarded at double value until a miss occurs.

The graphics in this mini-arcade are nothing short of fantastic. Detailed drawings of all the game components

bottom. At the same time, balloons float slowly from the river up to the sky. When Junior gets next to a balloon, pushing the joystick moves him to his new unorthodox vehicle so he can rise upward away from the river.

As Donkey Kong Junior floats toward the sky, he passes beside the ledge where his daddy is imprisoned.

are lit through the skylight in the unit. Sunlight or artificial lamplight shining through this translucent window gives the picture a luminous quality that makes the images glow. The matrixed etchings of Junior are especially well done. The little ape's facial expressions change as he moves from branch to branch, showing apprehension, fear, and finally at the end, unrestrained pleasure at seeing his poppa free at last. The umbrella-balloon sequence is particularly cute. As Junior clings to the pretty yellow parasol, he drifts slowly down toward the water. His face first looks inquisitive as he eyes his surroundings, but then as he gets ever closer to the river, his expression becomes even more terror-stricken, until he tumbles into the drink.

*Donkey Kong Junior* isn't too difficult to play. It's easy to jump from branch to branch in the forest sequence, and the birds aren't too hard to evade by simply getting out of their paths. The parasol-balloon portion of the game is a lot of fun. A cute musical tune serenades Junior as he rides up and down. There is some skill involved in timing his jumps so that he doesn't land in the river, but the monk's facial expressions will help clue the arcader that he's getting too close to the water and had better leap to a balloon, or, conversely, that he's rising too high into the sky and had best use a bumbershoot to bring himself down a little. The only difficult part of the game is actually unlocking the chains. It takes a good sense of timing to keep the heroic chimp afloat over the river and at the same time, gauge his attempts to release the bonds at exactly the moment that Kong's arm is lined up adjacent to the key.

There are two game variations. Game A is a little slower than Game B, with fewer attack birds. *Donkey Kong Junior* is also an alarm clock that wakes arcaders with a pleasant musical whistle just in time to play another round.

Fans of Nintendo's *Donkey Kong Jr.* should be pleased with this stand-alone adaptation. When all's said and done, it's more fun than a barrel of Marios!

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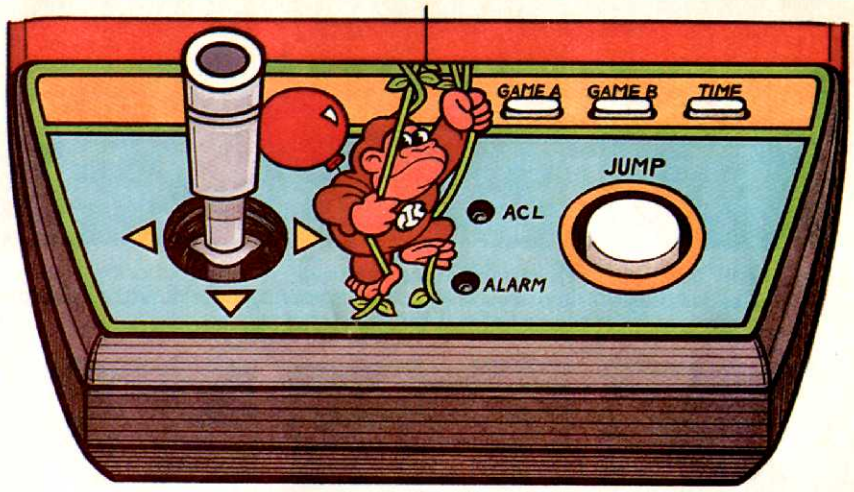


## DONKEY KONG JUNIOR HOW IT PLAYS:

The Coleco stand-alone version plays very similar to the Nintendo coin-op game on which it is based. Choose Game A for easy play, or Game B for more of a challenge. The game commences with Donkey Kong Junior in the lower left-hand corner of the screen. The "jump button" makes him leap up and take the key or grab a vine, while the four-position joystick steers him through the forest. To hop on an umbrella, or switch from umbrella to balloon or vice versa, move the lever right or left; in the direction of the desired change when the monkey is alongside his destination.

**Donkey Kong Junior** uses two "C" batteries to power the action, and the skylight illuminates the screen, so that it cannot be played in the dark, but can be played in sunlight or artificial lighting equally well.


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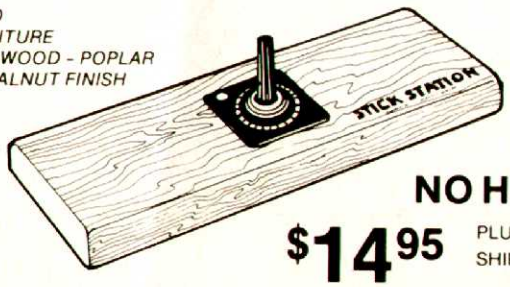


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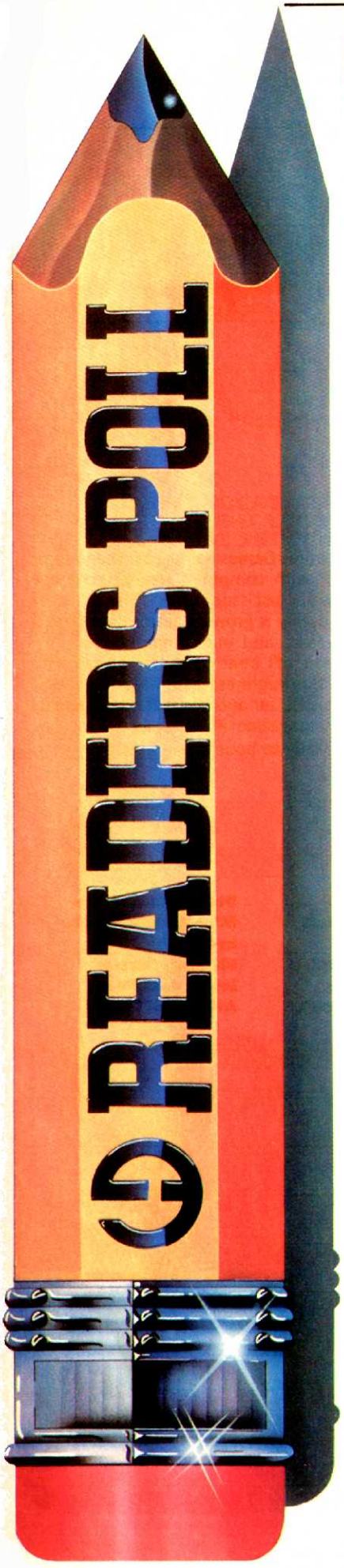


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| VIC-20 | ___ | ___ |
| Atari 400/800 | ___ | ___ |
| IBM Personal Computer | ___ | ___ |
| Apple II | ___ | ___ |
| Other Microcomputer | ___ | ___ |
| Video Cassette Recorder | ___ | ___ |
| Videodisc Player | ___ | ___ |
| Giant Screen Television | ___ | ___ |
| Stereo System | ___ | ___ |

**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

**How much do you spend per week on electronic games:**

☐ Under $2 ☐ $2-5 ☐ $6-10 ☐ Over $10

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

**NAME OF GAME** **SYSTEM**

**My favorite videogame cartridges are:**
1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

**My favorite microcomputer games are:**
1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

**My favorite coin-op games are:**
1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

# Coming Attractions

### THE 1984 ARCADE AWARDS

The polls are closed, more than 5,000 votes have been tabulated and the August Judging Committee has held its own weighty deliberations. Now here they are, the winners of the 1984 Arcade Awards, Certificates of Merit and Honorable Mentions. Did your favorites claim a prize? Find out in January.

### THE PLAYERS GUIDE TO COMPUTER GAMES FOR ATARI

The once-tiny software library for the Atari family of computers has grown by leaps and bounds in recent months. Atari itself and numerous energetic third-party software publishers have seen to that. Now **EG's** magazine-within-a-magazine takes a hard look at the best of the bumper software crop.

### THE ULTIMATE GAMING GIFT

Psssst! Wanna see something so hot it will melt a joystick? Check out this January feature on a technological creation that points the way to the future of home electronic gaming.

### GAMES ON DISC

"Videodisc" is the latest buzzword in the gaming hobby, now that **Dragon's Lair** has set coin-op sales records. Find out what's next for king-of-the-lair Don Bluth, and get a sneak preview of what some other companies have in store in this just-opening new field.

### AND INTRODUCING: EG's EXPANDED COMPUTER SECTION

**Electronic Games** has been first and foremost with computer gaming coverage since our first issue in 1981. This aspect of the hobby is growing faster than **Super-Pac-Man**, and our comprehensive new section will treat computer games with the thoroughness and objectivity that makes **EG** far and away the most widely read magazine in the field today. So, get ready to boot those disks up.

There'll be plenty of other exciting articles and features of interest to arcaders, plus these regular columns:

- ★ **Passport to Adventure**
- ★ **Q&A**
- ★ **Inside Gaming**
- ★ **Arcade America**
- ★ **Computer Gaming**
- ★ **Programmable Parade**
- ★ **Switch On!**
- ★ **New Products**
- ★ **Test Lab**
- ★ **Readers Replay**
- ★ **EG Hotline**
- ★ **Games Library**
- ★ **Stand-Alone Scene**
- ★ **Mini-Arcade Gallery**
- ★ **In Control**
- ★ **Strategy Session**
- ★ **Insert Coin Here**
- ★ **Articles of War**

# Play the game the generals play... for real.

# WAR ROOM

Feel the goose bumps on your neck begin to rise as you take your seat in front of the video monitor. The situation pictured before your eyes is critical. Actual enemy nuclear attack on your most important cities and natural resources has begun.

Only *you* can determine the best strategic defense of the nation. Only *you* can effectively repel the enemy attack.

But the situation worsens. As you're attempting to rebuild your cities and keep production of goods and services going, you pick up enemy spies lurking within your midst on your video close-up monitor. Can you effectively deal with them...even as more enemy missiles are approaching?

Your time is running out.

It's WAR ROOM. The new high-technology Probe 2000 strategy game for the ColecoVision™ game system. The game that's so realistic, generals might even play it.

Isn't it time you tested your skills?

## PROBE 2000 series

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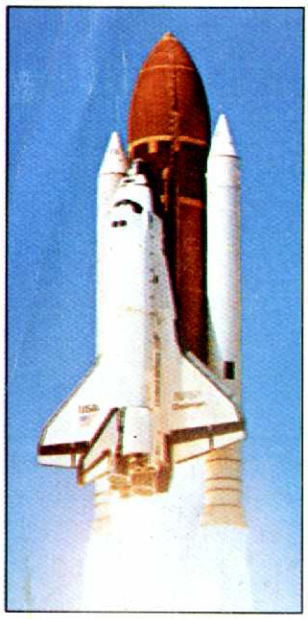
ODYSSEY
A NORTH AMERICAN PHILIPS COMPANY

*COLECOVISION IS A TRADEMARK OF COLECO INDUSTRIES, INC.

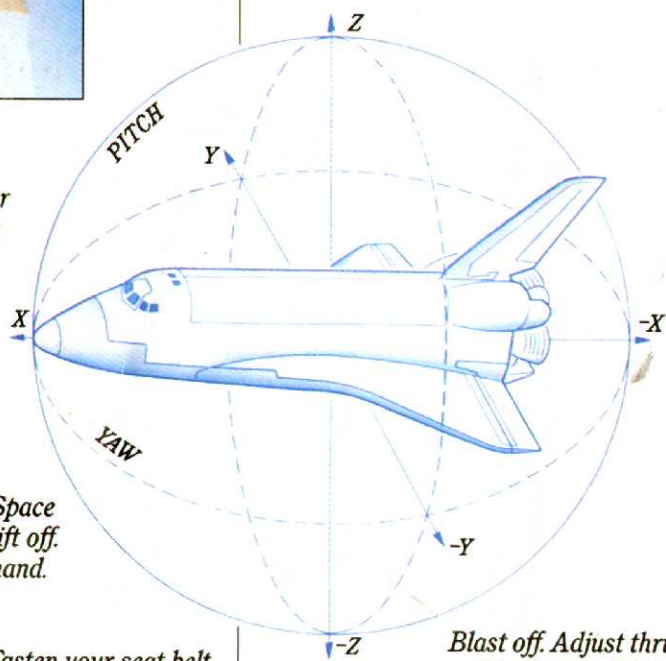
# THIS IS NO GAME.



## SPACE SHUTTLE— A JOURNEY INTO SPACE.™

*Get ready for the most spectacular launch in video history. A new breakthrough that takes your Atari® 2600™ farther than it's ever gone before.*

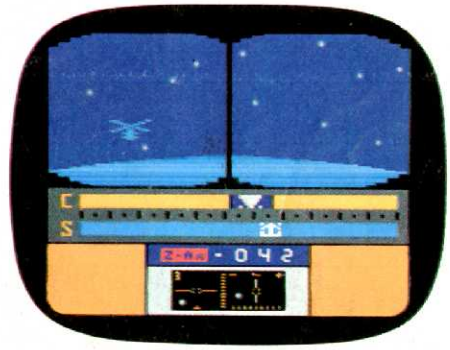
*The countdown begins. The 101st mission of the U.S. Space Shuttle is about to lift off. And you're in command.*

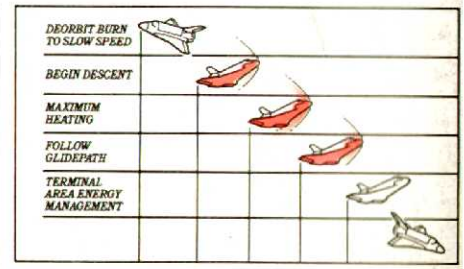


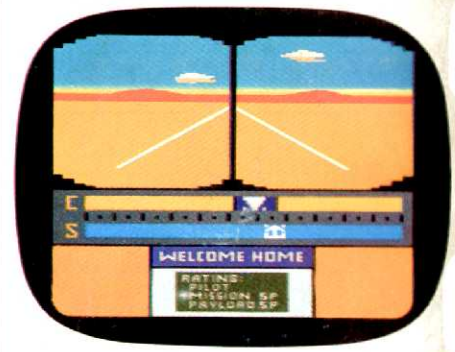
*Fasten your seat belt. Take a deep breath. And prepare for an unprecedented video challenge.*

*With astounding realism, you'll re-enact every phase of an actual Shuttle mission. Your Atari® 2600™ becomes a sophisticated control system that demands instant response, intense concentration, quick thinking and even quicker action.*

*Blast off. Adjust thrust and trajectory. Jettison first- and second-stage boosters. Check air speed. Achieve orbit. Open cargo bay doors. Rendezvous with a satellite. Set pitch and yaw. Re-enter the atmosphere. Lower landing gear and correct glide path.*




*Touch down at Edwards Air Force Base and receive your flight evaluation.*

*Make no mistake: it won't be easy. But once you've completed your first mission, you'll really have earned your wings.*

*Space Shuttle —A Journey Into Space, designed by Steve Kitchen. It's one giant step for video.*

**ACTIVISION®**

*We put you in the game.*

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