

Video Review

INCORPORATING
HOME VIDEO
MAGAZINE

\$1.95

THE WORLD AUTHORITY ON HOME VIDEO

BEST OF THE BEST

THE YEAR'S TOP TAPES, DISCS & GAMES

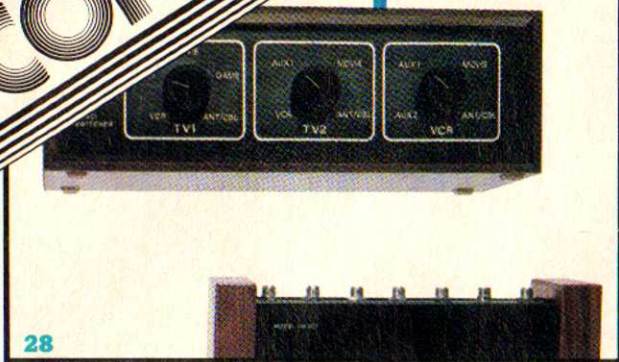
Secrets of Home Video Super-Systems

First Test of Sony's Beta Hi-Fi VCR

MTV: Rock Taping Tips



APRIL 1983 CONTENTS



SPECIAL REPORT

The Supreme Test of Videotapers' Rights By Carl S. Kaplan. The nation's highest court is finally ready to rule on the "Betamax case." An on-the-scene report on the testimony that will influence its final decision in this landmark case..... **20**

FEATURE ARTICLES

Cover Story: The 1983 Video Review Awards The year's best tapes, discs and games, as chosen by VR's editors and reviewers, with a review of what made them best..... **22**

The Worst of '83 The chaff of this year's crop of programs . **26**

Switchers: The Secret of Video Super-Systems By Barry Jacobs. How to get the most out of all that video equipment you're adding on. The factors—and the fictions **28**

Who's Got What in Switchers A comparative chart..... **32**

Reagantronics: The New FCC and You By Marcy Ressler. The FCC's effort to deregulate broadcasting could affect other video media—and you **34**

The First Total Video Home Shades of the Jetsons! A computer that lets you phone home—and the house will answer **47**

CONTINUING SERIES

Critic's Choice: Rock Shorts Ten top rock critics pick the top 10 most collectible rock video clips **40**

Plus: 20 Also-Rans A capsule checklist..... **42**

Direct It: Sydney Pollack Tells You How Home taping tips from the director of Tootsie..... **48**



Viare Publishing President: Richard Ekstract. Vice President, General Manager: Claude P. Sheer. Director of Finance: Neal C. Vitale. **Advertising Offices** East Coast: Zoe Aquilla, William O'Brien, Jim Herring, Debbie Silverblank, 350 East 81st St., New York, NY 10028 (212) 734-4440. West Coast: Shelley Funes, 3757 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 202, Los Angeles, CA 90010 (213) 380-0996. **Video Review** USPS 557-930 (ISSN 0196-8793) is published monthly by Viare Publishing, 350 East 81st Street, New York, NY 10028 (212) 734-4440. Second Class Postage paid at New York, NY, and at additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to *Video Review*, PO Box 919, Farmingdale, NY 11737. Annual subscription rates: \$18.00 in United States, U.S. \$21.50 in Canada and Mexico. All other countries: U.S. \$25.00 Surface Mail, U.S. \$38.00 Air Mail. Payment must accompany all orders for foreign countries. Subscription correspondence should be addressed to *Video Review*, PO Box 919, Farmingdale, NY 11737.

EQUIPMENT REVIEWS

The CBS Technology Center and technical editor Leonard Feldman report on their in-depth lab tests of:

- Sony Beta Hi-Fi VCR** First test of the latest technological advance in videocassette recorders **50**
- Mitsubishi Videocassette Recorder** A tabletop model with an important first among its features **54**
- Sanyo Video Monitor** Exclusive report on one major element of Sanyo's first component system **59**
- NEC Videocassette Recorder** NEC's first tabletop VCR, the Beta-format model VC-737E **61**

VIDEOGAME REVIEWS

The champs and the experts review the latest in videogames: Ken Uston on **Condor Attack**, **Karate** and **Seafox** . . . Dave Taylor on **NHL Hockey** . . . Michael Blanchet on **Centipede** . . . Karen Schwarz on **Sequest** . . . Howard Polskin on two versions of **Carnival** . . . Sheldon Leemon on **Motor Mania** **64**

TAPE & DISC REVIEWS

Feature reviews of new releases: David Hajdu on **Fun & Games** . . . William K. Everson on **America at the Movies** . . . Marjorie Rosen on **A Woman Named Golda** . . . Andrew Sarris on **Montenegro** . . . Roy Hemming on **A Night at the Movies: 1960 and The Three Caballeros** . . . Steve Simels on **The Knack: Live at Carnegie Hall** . . . Bruce Pollock on **Zara: Return to Romance Through Electronic Eyes** . . . Nat Hentoff on **Jivin' in Bebop** . . . Frank Lovece on **The Best of Marvel Comics** . . . Leonard Maltin on **The Looney Tunes Video Show, Vol. 1** . . . Al Goldstein on **Talk Dirty to Me, Part II and Body Magic** . . . plus other reviews In Brief **74**



TV REVIEWS

Advance reviews of major programs on cable and broadcast TV this month: Roy Hemming on **A Boat to Lipala** . . . Clive Barnes on **Swan Lake, Minnesota** . . . Oleg Kerensky on **The Rite of Spring** . . . Robert Christgau and Carola Dibbell on **MTV's music shorts** **99**

DEPARTMENTS

- Letters** Readers' comments—boos and bouquets **6**
- Newsbreaks** Art Levis on late-breaking video news **8**
- Freeze-Frames** A lighthearted potpourri **12**
- New Products** The latest news in equipment **14**
- On the Drawing Boards** Coming next in video gear **15**
- Questions** Video experts answer your questions **16**
- Game Previews** Carts, cassettes and discs due for release . . . **72**
- Game Plans** What's coming next in videogames **72**
- Tape & Disc Previews** Due for release soon **92**
- In the Works** Coming next on tape and disc **94**
- Game Room** Michael Blanchet on expandability **119**
- Video Views** Bob Angus serves up a new dish **120**
- Looking Ahead** Bob Gerson swashbuckles pirates **122**
- Backspace** Video Haiku by Larry Tritten **132**

Laser sex— and Sony, too?



□ **SONY—STILL ONE AND ONLY** major home video company not offering videodisc players, that is. Sony spokespersons continue to deny what Japanese press continues to insist—that it has decided to sell laser-disc players. Chairperson Akio Morita responded to reports by reasserting Sony position first laid out several years ago: Company will move into making consumer disc players when and if it feels more people are willing to buy them. (Sony already has active commercial/industrial LaserVision program.)

Meanwhile, on this side of Pacific, another video manufacturer is rumored to be looking at LV format. Zenith, which is now only nominal backer of RCA's CED disc system, has been discussing shift with Pioneer Video, according to PV president Ken Kai. No further details at presstime.

□ **... AND PIONEER PRESSES ON:** What many have long suspected is missing ingredient to successful videodisc recipe is finally being tossed into pot. Pioneer has signed deal with Key International Film Distributing to press LV version of adult feature *Insatiable*, starring porn queen Marilyn Chambers. Disc will feature soft-core version of *Insatiable* developed for airing on late-night cable TV programs, not hard-core edition shot for theaters. Price: \$39.95. RCA, developer of competing CED format, continues to insist it won't press adult discs.

* * *

□ **DEEP DONKEY?** Though controversial X-rated videogame *Custer's Revenge* has been pulled from store shelves, frisky new batch of adult cartridges is on way. GameSource, which scalped *Custer*, is adding five new X cartridges to its Playground line (each containing two Atari VCS-compatible games). Gamex, offshoot of adult videotape suppliers Select-A-Tape, is offering game players its version of *Pac-Man—X-Man*—and will follow that up with *The Rescue of Emmanuel*. Both \$49.95 cartridges are for Atari system, with Intellivision models coming soon. Also heading for stores is adult version of *Deep Throat* from company named Games People Play.

* * *

□ **TEACHER'S PET:** Long-time educational publisher Scholastic is graduating to electronics with line of computer games and teaching programs. Included: *Nerd Alert* (game designed to prevent Nerds from taking over Nerd High); *Microzine* (computer "magazine" for kids); *Turtle Tracks* (basic programming instructions taught through movements of turtle). Programs will be compatible with Apple II Plus, Atari 400/800, TI 99/4A and VIC-20 systems.

* * *

□ **HEAVEN'S GATE:** Estimated 60,000 satellite dish owners have been grounded by recent Home Box Office decision to scramble earth-bound transmissions to cable-TV operators. Previously, scrambling was done by cable operators, allowing dish owners to tune in unscrambled signals. Other pay services are said to be mapping out similar scrambling moves, and development could see issue ending up in court. "If it goes far enough," says Peter Dalton, president of leading dish company KLM, "satellite users may have to test the constitutionality of it."

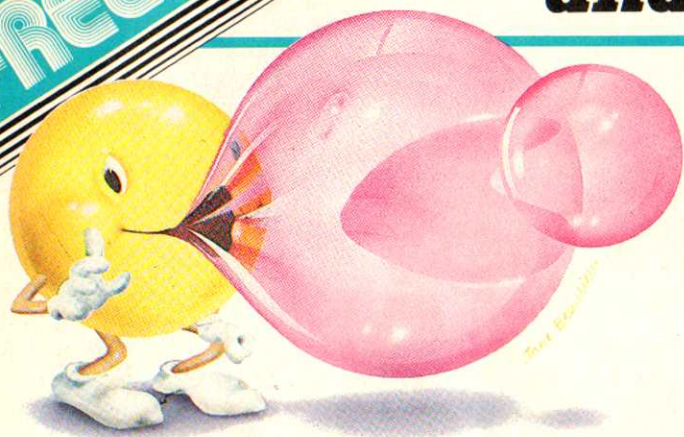
* * *

□ **PICTURE THIS:** Age of tubeless camera is clearly here. After years of developmental work, new generation of videocameras using solid-state circuitry in place of conventional Vidicon pickup tube is starting to appear. Latest to sign on is NEC, which is introducing two models: high-sensitivity model at around \$2,000 and second with autofocus (unpriced at presstime). Hitachi already offers one solid-state camera, and says it will add additional model featuring autofocus in near future. Hitachi is also adding three new tube cameras, ranging in price from about \$500 to \$1,295.

* * *

□ **TELETEXT TANGO:** TV set makers are beginning to view proposed teletext services as reality. All Zenith's new color TV sets, to be introduced this spring, will be compatible with special teletext adaptors it plans to unveil sometime this year. Other companies are expected to follow shortly. Federal Communications Commission is expected to make decision on teletext standards this year.

Beauties, beefcake and home-spun smut



Pac-Tracking

Several years ago, Pac-Man captured the hearts of the nation's young. Now he's won over their mouths.

"In less than a year, consumers have spent over \$20,000,000 on Pac-Man bubble gum and candy," says Donald Peck, president of Fleer Corp., which holds a trademark license for Pac-Man bubble gum, stickers, candy mazes and lollipops. "Pac-Man is phenomenal," he says. "We have never seen a hotter property."

Getting in on the action, the Topps Co. has started licensing Donkey Kong trading cards. It's all getting a little hard to swallow. □

Life, the Universe And Video

The biggest stars on TV won't be named Selleck or



Evans in the next couple of years, but rather Regulus and Alpha Crucis. Theatrical-

minded aliens? No, *real* stars—molten surfaces, sunspots, the works—and thanks to a space telescope that'll be shuttled into orbit in early '85, they and other celestial bodies will be showing up "live" on video monitors here on earth.

Called (are you ready?) The Space Telescope, the device will float just outside the atmosphere and transmit moving images to a satellite earth station at Goddard Space Flight Center. Scientists at Johns Hopkins University's Space Science Institute will be among the first to tune in. Since the process involved is closer to electronic photography than conventional television, this is actually one of the first practical uses of high-definition TV.

The telescope being a NASA project, can we expect home videocassettes of the final frontier, like the photos the agency makes available? It's a possibility, concedes a project spokesperson.

Just think. You could finally buy Jupiter. (F.L.) □

Teen Angle

He was with them in their swimsuits and with them in their evening gowns. A kinky cross-dresser? No, he was the

official videotaper of the 1983 Miss Teen All American Beauty Pageant, and he was in Miami Beach to capture the magic moments for electronic eternity.

For all his girl watching, though, James Egan, president of Nova Videotaping Service of Fair Haven, NJ (already immortalized here for his video menus), learned that the beauty business does not always pay big bucks. For all his footage, he's only sold 42 cassettes so far—to pageant contestants, their relatives and friends. "We lost money on it," he says ruefully. "If we go in and do it again, we'll hike up our prices."

Egan, whose daughter was first runner-up in the Miss

Video 'Buff'

Spring is here, and it's time to grab your videocamera and play auteur. Could be you're off to the ballfield. Or to an Easter party. Or maybe to your bedroom for some other kind of bunny business.

If the bedroom is your favorite recreational area, Susan's Video may be your kind of video club. By sending in a homemade videotape of yourself and your loved one(s) in carnal act(s), the club will send you two *Best of Amateur Erotic Video* cassettes, composed of clips by other wild and crazy home videophiles. Once enrolled, you can then buy or, for a fee, swap tapes. The problem is, once



Teen New Jersey contest, fully intends to go to where the girls are again. He is already angling to be named "official videotaper" for 31 state and local teen pageants around the country.

Who knows? Maybe a tape of the Miss Universe competition could come next. He could sell 43 copies of that, easy. (M.R.) □

money is involved you could lose your amateur standing.

To get the ball rolling, just set your camera rolling and send the result to PO Box 759, Frederick, MD 21701. Susan's Video also offers a \$15-a-year monthly newsletter with ads offering other video sex tapes. Whether or not they feature Susan, I don't know. (B.J.) □

Torture, Death, Deborah Harry

Few movies have really captured the phenomenon of video-induced hallucination. Few movies have captured the phenomena of melted Parmesan cheese and leaky ballpoint pens, too, but who cares? We do—this is a video magazine.

Anyway, the movie *Videodrome* may have been the first to do tube tripping justice. The title comes from a fiction-



al TV show specializing in pornographic torture and murder. The acts turn out to be genuine (in the movie's story line that is), so as to mint a new phrase: "snuff TV." Watching the show causes hallucinations that are the grand-daddies of bad acid trips. The violence gets people to watch; the signal takes over their brains.

If you decide by the time this movie comes out on cassette that you prefer TV to S&M, keep in mind that *Videodrome* includes one more thing: Blondie Deborah Harry, who can hurt men in a perfectly painless way. (James Link) □

Generic Engineering

Roll over, generic toilet paper—Teknika has stolen your no-frills thunder. The company's just introduced the first generic TV set, a 12-inch (diagonally measured) black-and-white model that has channel and volume controls, but little else. According to a company spokesperson, "It looks as ugly as it possibly can."

To make matters even worse—or better, depending on how you look at it—the \$89.95 set comes in a white cardboard box with two black stripes and no brand-name identification. If not for its size, you might mistake it for bathtub cleanser, paper towels or pickles.

Why pursue such Bizzaro-world excellence? "The unit has such an unusual value that it's been bought by many commercial and industrial companies as a gift or premium item," says Mel Hunger, Teknika's marketing vice president. But that's not all. "It serves many of our retailers as an ideal promotional item," he says.

American marketing meets Soviet aesthetics. (M.R.) □

Coffee, Tea Or Videotape?

A German coffee retailer is breaking fresh ground—and German video-store owners are steaming.

The Tchibo coffee-store chain, one of the country's largest, has taken to selling videocassette movies for the price of blank tapes. This may seem incongruous for a seller of beans and blends, but Tchibo has hawked clocks, maps, bikes and other non-comestibles at discount prices to bring in customers.

To electronics stores and their wholesalers, this is obviously war. In retaliation, more than a thousand of them are banding to sell coffee for about a buck per pound less than Tchibo. And in re-retali-



ation, Tchibo is planning to sell VCRs for about \$310.

What next? A hot *E.T.* with lemon and sugar? (F.L.) □

Whistle While You Work Out

Move over, Jane Fonda. Come on down, Chippendales. And we don't mean fur-



niture, except that these guys give new meaning to high-boys (like, "Hi, boys").

Yes, the newest entry in the exercise-by-video craze is a tape starring members of the Chippendales Men—an all-male revue that has its home in L.A., but can also be found in seven other American cities.

Promising comedy and music along with great bodies

working out, Ron Safinick of Media Home Entertainment (the company distributing the \$39.95 tape) says that the exercises presented in the 91-minute tape range from beginner's level to intermediate.

While Safinick says the tape is geared for women, he adds that Media expects a lot of men to buy it, too. (D.C.) □

Game Dropper

There's a playful, sort of sadistic, strain that runs through much of the advertising of Imagic, the videogame company. The copywriters keep coming up with all these cute little Johnnies and Biffs and Scooters who love to play Imagic videogames—and who then get blown away. Or as Imagic puts it in Valleyspeak, the kiddies get "zonked out. Totally."

The latest casualty is a red-headed tyke named Billy Grubb. "Little Billy was no match for the fierce Gorgon warriors," reads the ad, and face it, once a Gorgon warrior gets ahold of you... it's too horrible—I can't even say it. Poor Billy.

Weep not, though. Billy Grubb evidently has nine lives, or at least two of them. The other is that of William F. X. Grubb—the president of Imagic.

"The copywriters thought they'd have a little fun," says Grubb (the real one). "We're a fun company." (F.L.) □

BAD NEWS FOR INTELLIVISION OWNERS.

Disaster Attack
Atlantis
DuckDuckGoose
Beauty & the Beast

IMAGIC
Created by Experts for Experts

CORRECTION

The director of the Duran Duran short, "Girls On Film," was misrepresented in both our January and March issues as Russell Mulcahy. The directors were actually Kevin Godley and Lol Creme.

THE BEST OF THE YEAR

18



VR: VIDEO REVIEW'S 3 VTRAs



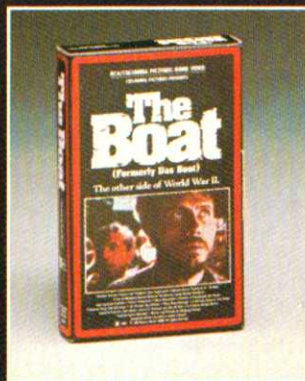
Move over, Oscar, Tony, Emmy and Grammy. It's time for ViRA—the Video Review Awards, given annually for the outstanding videocassettes and videodiscs of the past year (from April '82 to April '83) as selected by VR's editors and reviewers.

This year, we've added videogames to the awards list, reflecting both the increasing sophistication of these games and the enormous national impact

cartridge and computer games have had on the home video scene.

The awards will be formally presented to the winners at a gala party in New York. Watch for a full report on the awards presentations in an upcoming issue of VR.

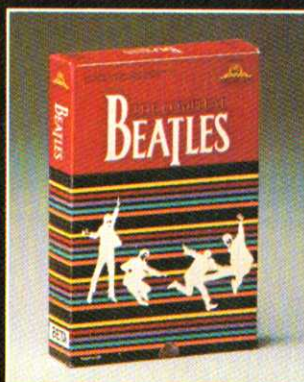
BEST MOVIE (NEW OR RECENT RELEASE)



THE BOAT (DAS BOOT) (RCA/Columbia) "A dark and splendid adventure into the mental and physical stress of men trapped on the losing side of a war. It makes a beautiful transition to video. Most scenes underscore the intense compactness of the submarine's interior. The fact that much of the suspense comes out of the sound effects also seems to suit the video version. Like any genuine work of art, the movie is redolent with political and moral implication—unlikely to pale under the light of time or to be diminished by repeated viewings." —James Link (March '83 VR)

BEST MUSIC PROGRAM (POP OR ROCK)

THE COMPLEAT BEATLES (MGM/UA) "A masterful movie-ization of the paperback bestseller. From the beginning of the program, the Beatles footage is nearly hypnotic. Some of it is rare, [showing that] before they could shave these guys could cook like the best rock 'n' roll band anywhere. It's The Beatles' performances that make this tape unforgettable. If I'd never heard of video before watching and listening to this tape, I'd trade in my first edition of The Beatles' 'butcher-babies' album for a VCR." —David Hajdu (October '82 VR)

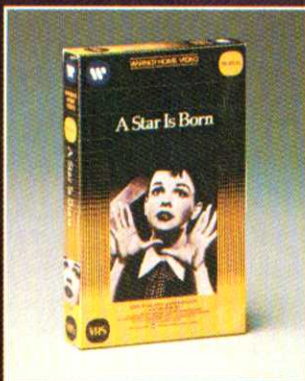


BEST MADE-FOR-VIDEO PROGRAM BEST INTERACTIVE PROGRAM

MYSTERYDISC: MURDER, ANYONE? (Vidmax) "If interactive discs have begun to reshape the way we look at the video screen, *Murder, Anyone?* may reshape the way we look at interactive video. It's not only the first interactive fiction on disc, but also the first full-length videodisc game...[as it] spins a murder-mystery to be unraveled by two to eight viewer/players. Furthermore—and this is most significant—the onscreen instructions are so well phrased that even a preteen should have little trouble." —Frank Lovece (February '83 VR)



BEST MOVIE (CLASSIC)



A STAR IS BORN (Warner) "Although it has been shown frequently on TV, the excellence of this production warrants the renewed life video affords—particularly when it can be viewed in such pristine technical condition and without commercial interruptions. It remains not only Judy Garland's best movie but also one of the best ever made about Hollywood and what it does to people." —James Link (October '82 VR)

BEST MUSIC PROGRAM (CLASSICAL)

SMETANA'S MA VLAST (MY FATHERLAND) (Pioneer) "It's satisfying technically, satisfying visually (there is some extremely imaginative cinematography here), satisfying musically and certainly satisfying as a hi-fi stereo recording. Wisely, the producers have gone beyond the usual style of taped concerts. Instead we're shown what Smetana was writing about. Where close-ups of musicians help limn the score, we have them. Where scenic or nature shots capture the mood of the music more aptly, they're here." —Robert Angus (September '82 VR)



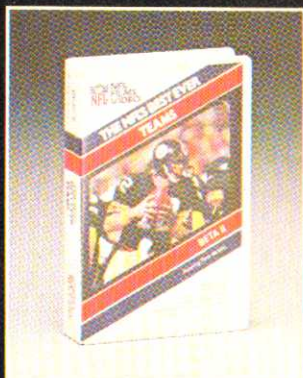
BEST DANCE PROGRAM

I AM A DANCER (Thorn EMI) "It is more sophisticated and certainly more expensively produced than most other dance biographies on video. And it celebrates the art of a genuine superstar. Here is a most potent record of how Rudolf Nureyev has danced—and even some of his thoughts and feelings. It is a cassette resting in the foothills of dance history—[showing how] Nureyev has pushed the boundaries of his own artistry and, perhaps, the boundaries of dance."—*Clive Barnes (July '82 VR)*

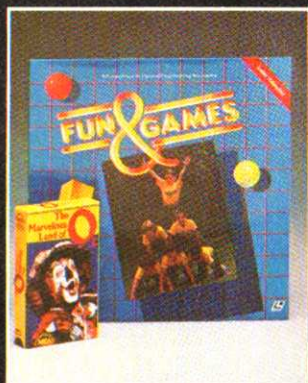


BEST SPORTS PROGRAM

NFL'S BEST TEAMS EVER (NFL Video) "In a voice that has a nostalgic ring about it, narrator John Facenda returns us to the sport's halcyon days, when it was still the province of coaches and players, not agents and lawyers. Still the 'best ever'?" The producers of this tape give a nod to the Steelers of the '70s, but strong cases are made for the Packers, the Dolphins and the Cowboys, along with the Browns and the Raiders."—*Pete Coutros (January '83 VR)*



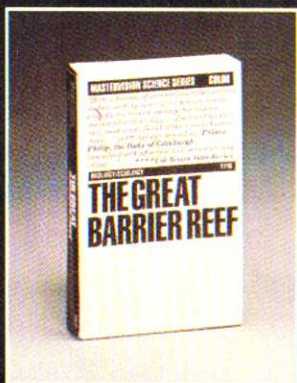
BEST KID VID PROGRAM (TIE)



THE MARVELOUS LAND OF OZ (MCA) "Just the ticket for a trip beyond the popular Judy Garland movie—to the story of what happens in Oz after Dorothy goes home to Kansas. Every aspect of the presentation . . . is of the highest quality."—*Genevieve Kazdin (September '82 VR)*

FUN & GAMES (OPA) "As durable in form as any toy of wood, glass or steel, and it's as timeless in function as any game of imagination. . . . Not only is the disc about fun and games, it is fun and games."—*David Hujdu (April '83 VR)*

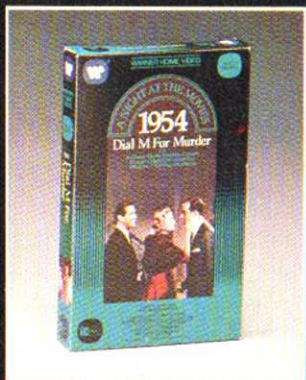
BEST DOCUMENTARY



THE GREAT BARRIER REEF (MasterVision) "Here is footage of extraordinary beauty that makes for exciting viewing for science lovers and offers a timely message for anyone concerned with ecology. Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh, is the narrator. [He explains that] the Great Barrier Reef rises like a rampart from its seabed—more massive than the Great Wall of China. Unusual footage shows the undulations of the reef's living creatures opening and closing in sync with the clever music on the soundtrack."—*Eric Berger (January '83 VR)*

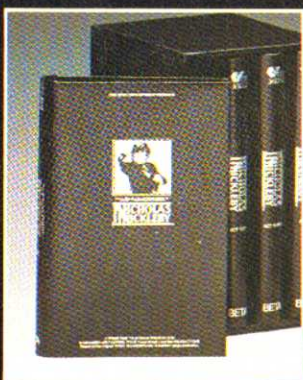
BEST COMPILATION PROGRAM

A NIGHT AT THE MOVIES: 1954 (Warner) Includes a newsreel, a cartoon, coming attractions and the feature movie, Alfred Hitchcock's *Dial M for Murder*. "A Night at the Movies is a wonderful idea—and a welcome innovation from one of the consumer-video 'majors.' The newsreel is well selected, and there's a wonderful trailer for the sci-fi movie *Them!* I'm sure people of all ages will find it all entertaining and a pleasant change of pace, whether or not they are old enough to remember the '50s moviegoing experience."—*Leonard Maltin (October '82 VR)*

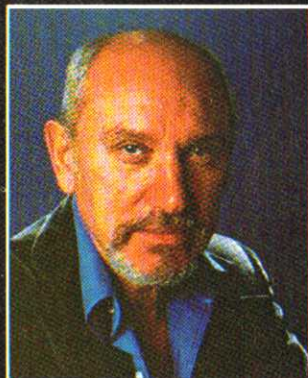


BEST SPECIAL SET

THE LIFE AND ADVENTURES OF NICHOLAS NICKLEBY (CBS Video Enterprises) "A stunning reaffirmation of the collective energy of live theater, preserved in a handsomely mounted and packaged videocassette set. These cassettes of the Royal Shakespeare Company's production should be stacked up next to Dickens' book as one of the great legacies of our civilization—and as a heartfelt tribute to one century to one of the bravest spirits of another."—*Andrew Sarris (July '82 VR)*



BEST DIRECTOR



PHILIP S. GOODMAN for MYSTERYDISC: MURDER, ANYONE? (Vidmax) "The look of the disc is much slicker than the fact that this is an independent production might have indicated. Though the camera tends to remain a bit static and Goodman opts for few reaction shots, the storytelling is clear and lively."—*Frank Lovece (February '83 VR)*

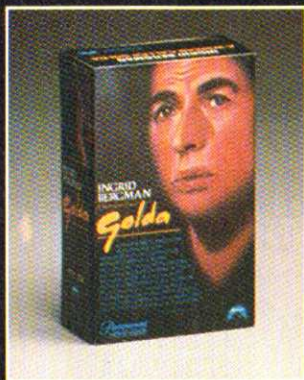
BEST GAME (CARTRIDGE)



ZAXXON (Coleco) "A TV screen is obviously a two-dimensional surface. This fact kept even sophisticated arcade videogames graphically limited—until *Zaxxon*. The sophisticated, high-resolution picture is perhaps the best yet of any home cartridge. There are scores of fly-and-shoot games, but this one has a difference. Your view is of a fighter that truly seems to be flying across a three-dimensional surface."—*Scot Morris (February '83 VR)*

BEST MADE-FOR-TV PROGRAM

A WOMAN CALLED GOLDA (Paramount) "A vivid introduction to the towering personality [of Golda Meir] and to the controversial country to which she helped give life. Golda is played by that extraordinary actress, Ingrid Bergman, in what was to be her last performance—and, indeed, it is Bergman who holds the production together by virtue of her tough and intelligent acting. Golda Meir led a life that could easily be the stuff of 10 docudramas—and this provides a compassionate, strong introduction to this great figure."—*Marjorie Rosen* (April '83 VR)



BEST VINTAGE-TV PROGRAM

TOM CORBETT, SPACE CADET (VOL. 1) (Nostalgia Merchant) "Before Luke Skywalker or Han Solo ever blasted into hyperspace, Tom Corbett was the hero of every red-blooded American youth lucky enough to have a TV set at home in the '50s. The impeccable audio and video quality of these releases returns the viewer to a long-lost age. Almost as good as the shows themselves is the cassettes' package. The boxes boast hand-tinted stills of the cast, which many TV buffs may be tempted to frame."—*Mark Tract* (August '82 VR)



BEST HOW-TO PROGRAM



RED ON ROUNDBALL (RCA Videodisc) "The ball is round, the floor is smooth. Arthur (Red) Auerbach holds these truths to be self-evident as he welcomes us to this lively video seminar on basketball, which shows how the game is played when it's played by the very best—some of whom Auerbach has enlisted to demonstrate different techniques. Still, the disc is dedicated to teaching the basics of hoopdom—and doing so insightfully."—*Pete Coutros* (March '83 VR)

BEST ADULT PROGRAM



ROOMMATES (Video X Pix) "The breakthrough X-rater of the year. It's aimed at a more sophisticated audience than the trench-coat frequenters of the usual porn houses. Frankly, I have never seen a more sensitive X-rated movie. Tape quality is crisp and everything's realistically photographed. Producers are finally realizing that by investing a little more care and money, they can actually come up with a slick and more satisfying product."—*Al Goldstein* (March '83 VR)

BEST PERIODICAL

PLAYBOY VIDEO, VOL. 1 (CBS-Fox) "The long-awaited premiere of the quarterly *Playboy Video* on cassette and disc is as glossy and lush as one would expect of an item bearing the Playboy name. We get to see the centerfolds actually moving around some incredibly lavish boudoirs. There are also magazine-style features and interviews. The lighting (almost always diffused and low-key), the music and the editing are all worthy of a first-class network-TV production. The women are almost too gorgeous to be real (a trademark of the real *Playboy*)."—*Gary Marks* (February '83 VR)

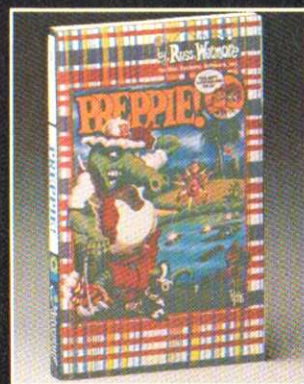


BEST TECHNICAL ACHIEVEMENT

SONY'S BETA HI-FI MUSIC SINGLES (Sony) "Video singles are to full-length music videocassettes what a turn of phrase is to a windy speech. Hour-long video concerts generally pale upon repeated viewing. What's more, most video albums are loaded with filler. But the introduction of 10-to-15-minute cassettes of just two to three songs for about \$15 provides an artist's or a group's best songs. . . . We found Sony's incredible stereo sound to be far better than what is currently available on the best audio records."—*Barry Jacobs and Len Feldman* (March '83 VR)

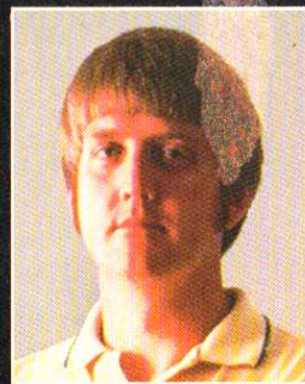


BEST GAME (COMPUTER)



PREPPIE (Adventure International) "In a field dominated by noisy, space shoot-em-ups, which leave in their wake sprained wrists, callous fingers and frayed nerves, it's refreshing to find a game with wit, style and breeding. It resembles that arcade favorite, *Frogger*—but this is a *Frogger* transformed into that sacred Ivy League institution, the upper-class twit. Like all good games, it is simple to understand and hard to master."—*Sheldon Leemon* (December '82 VR)

BEST GAME DESIGNER



DAVID CRANE for **PITFALL** (Activision) "An adventurer, Harry, runs and jumps through the jungle, seeking treasures and avoiding obstacles that can destroy him, including crocodile-infested swamps, quicksand, "cobra-rattlers" (Activision's own breed?) and blazing fires. The graphics of the game are excellent. Numerous sounds emanate from the jungle, including an electronic Tarzan-like yell when Harry swings on a vine, a funeral dirge when Harry meets his demise and an upbeat off-to-the-races blare when Harry picks up a treasure."—*Ken Uston* (September '82 VR)

BEST OF THE WORST TAPES, DISCS AND GAMES OF THE YEAR

Here are some tapes you can borrow and might enjoy. Or you can rent them for light—though somewhat unintended—entertainment. But don't, under any circumstances, buy them. Even if you're married to a lead star or if you're the parent of the director. The theory here is to spend as little money to see (or play) them as was spent to make them.

That's what makes these tapes the editors' and reviewers' best picks for the year's worst: a lack of quality in the original material or in the transfer to video. Most of the companies mentioned have done better—some even won ViRAs this year—but we hope they do much better in the future.

BEST SCIENCE PROJECT THIS SIDE OF LOVE CANAL

THE UNIVERSE (Master-Vision) "[This tape] is a prime example of how *not* to win friends for video science programs....At the end of [the] first segment, the viewer gets a shock. We learn that all this information will be needed someday to travel to the moon and the planets. Even a 10-year-old will promptly recognize that this footage was put together before Neil Armstrong left his footprints on the moon!....There is a musical score of sorts to heighten dramatic moments. It seems to have been hammered out on an anvil."—Eric Berger (August '82 VR)

BEST ANSWER TO THE QUESTION 'WHY AREN'T YOU HUNGRY?'

THE THIRSTY DEAD (King of Video) "Remember John Considine, one of Walt Disney's original 'Hardy Boys' and later the original eldest (Michael Douglas) of Fred MacMurray's *My Three Sons* on TV? Well, anyone can fall on hard times, as this ultra-cheapie horror flick demonstrates....From the first scene to the last, this movie is an embarrassment that not even the excellence of the tape transfer can disguise."—Ed Hulse (May '82 VR)

BEST BUSINESS ADVICE SINCE BILLYGATE

HOW TO SET UP YOUR OWN VIDEO BUSINESS (Kartes/VC2000) "No, this tape won't tell you how to set up lights, how to get dramatic camera angles, how to edit nor how to get any results close to those of professional standards. What it will tell you is that if you start your own business, you should consult a lawyer and an accountant, you should open a separate bank account, and you should spend anywhere between \$3,500 and \$20,000 for your initial investment....It will also tell you that for your equipment and blank tape needs you can get a better deal at VC2000....With all the commercials on this tape, they ought to give it away free!"—George Kopp (June '82 VR)

BEST LOUSY TRANSFER OF OTHERWISE OKAY STUFF

THE BEST OF THE BENNY HILL SHOW, VOL. 1 (Thorn EMI) "I have seen so many funny *shticks* on Benny's show that I can't believe this is someone's idea of his best work. I'm sure any Benny Hill fan with a VCR has probably already taped better sequences from TV....There is a problem with this tape's picture quality. I don't think the tape was well transferred from the British PAL TV system, resulting in some loss of definition—or, as some would say, focus."—Leonard Maltin (July '82 VR)

BEST CONCERT TAPE FOR WAX MUSEUMS

THE CHARLIE DANIELS BAND: THE SARATOGA CONCERT (MGM/CBS) "All but two of the songs are captured in no-frills, rock-concert video style, which would probably be okay if this were the Rolling Stones we were watching. Unfortunately, it's the Charlie Daniels Band, which turns out to be as expressionless and lifeless as any rock group capable of filling an arena. The musicians are virtual statues on stage—and the lack of movement and visual stimulation results in a stultifyingly dull program."—Ed Levine (May '82 VR)

BEST ANTHOLOGY STARRING AN EX-HIGH- SCHOOL TEACHER WEARING A SILVER JUMPSUIT

THE BEST OF UGLY GEORGE (Kenyon) "If you can distinguish between awful garbage and terrible garbage, then this is indeed the 'best' of Ugly George. For those not up on the Peck's Bad Boy of public-access cable TV, Ugly George is a former school teacher who chucked his lesson plans for a portable videocamera, a recorder and a half-hour slot on a New York City cable system....What makes this 'the best' of George is that he has cut out all the glitches and recorder hum that cable viewers get during his 'unbest' shows."—Mark Trost (January '83 VR)

BEST MADE-FOR-VIDEO SMUT ALMOST BASED ON 'HUMPTY DUMPTY'

ALL THE KING'S LADIES (Superior) "Quite frankly, this movie is not worth the tape it's recorded on. The packaging includes a line of hype that reads: 'This is the first big-budget erotic extravaganza shot entirely on videotape, offering crystal-clear images unsurpassed for beauty and quality. This movie is an important landmark in the history of erotic video.' It's a landmark alright. I found it without doubt the worst X-rater I've seen in at least 10 years....This is the worst news in X-rated movies since censorship."—Al Goldstein (September '82 VR)

BEST TAPE TO GET YOU TO WATCH SOMETHING ELSE

NAUGHTY NETWORK (Caballero) "This is strictly *el chego* carnal cinema. *Naughty Network* employs such ostensibly hysterical devices as belching, farting, goosing and stuttering in a crude attempt to incite audience mirth. Unfortunately, the movie succeeds only in making the viewer yearn for a better videocassette to drop into the deck....The acting is, by and large, worse than dreadful. Except for the sizzling *Penthouse* segment, the half-baked TV take-offs almost seem to scream 'Dumb! Dumb!' "—Al Goldstein (March '82 VR)

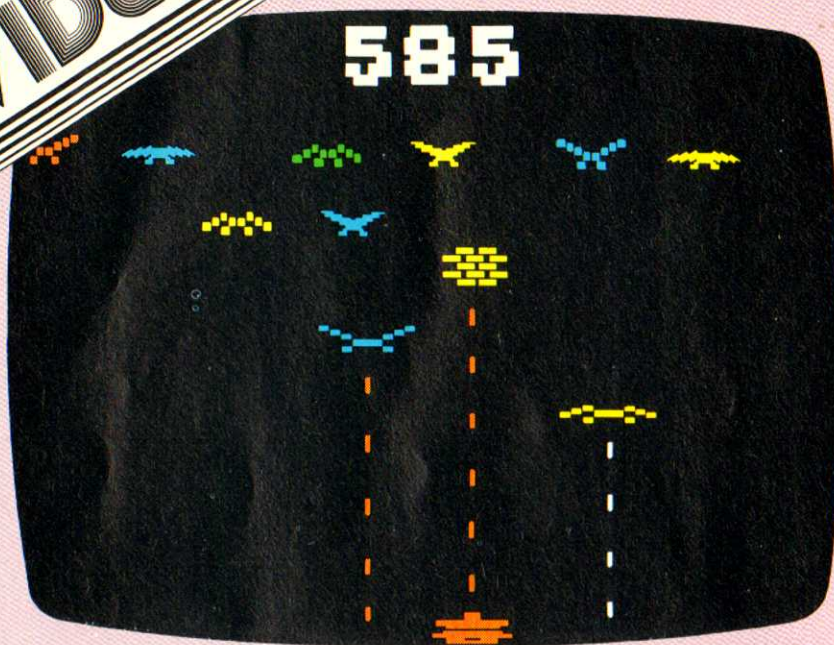
BEST TITLE

PERSECUTION (EVI) "Wandering through an English maze to eerie spookhouse soundtrack music, hobbling on her cane like a dispossessed duchess and forced to say such lines as 'You'll never leave me, David—not until I've told you everything!' Lana [Turner] gives a performance that is truly brave, considering the circumstances. She is not aided by the supporting cast of inept amateurs, and she is all but done in by cruel lighting and idiotic direction. The director is listed as somebody called John Chaffey. Lock that name in a steel box, drop it overboard 200 miles out to sea and never mention it again. Nobody else apparently has."—Rex Reed (February '82 VR)

BBEST GCGAME FOR PRODUCING ZZZs

SSSNAKE (Data Age) "The game is dull. The graphics are nondescript. In addition to the rather sparse accommodations found in the fortress, the Sssnakes are nothing more than yellow boxes following one after the other like so many obedient elephants. In fact, *Sssnake* should really be called *Sssquares*."—Randi Hacker (February '83 VR)

Special: Uston on Ultravision's first



Ultravision's VCS-compatible *Condor Attack*: for the birds.

Cartridges

KARATE ★

Designed by Joe Emillio. (Ultravision VCS-compatible cartridge. \$19.95)

CONDOR ATTACK ★ ★

Designer uncredited. (Ultravision VCS-compatible cartridge. \$19.95)

By Ken Uston

Ultravision, a relatively new Miami-based company, has some great plans: It's introducing what has the potential to be the last word in game consoles. Integrated with a color TV set and a 64K memory-loaded computer, the Ultravision console accepts not only its own game carts, but also, with upcoming adaptors, VCS and Coleco-Vision games. On my recent "test drive," it demonstrated good color graphics and high-quality sound effects. In addition, it offers earphones for late-night gaming or listening. All this for \$999. The future looks promising.

The present, however, isn't so hot. The first two Ultravision games have come out first as carts compatible with Atari's VCS.

RATINGS

- ★★★★ OUTSTANDING
- ★★★ GOOD
- ★★ AVERAGE
- ★ BELOW AVERAGE

Perhaps these initial games will be better in Ultravision's own format. For now, unfortunately, one is terrible, the other, average.

Even four years ago, in fact, *Karate* would have been rated as only acceptable at best. It offers two martial-arts fighters in a ring, battling away. You either battle the computer or engage in two-player competition.

You operate the joystick and fire button to have your screen persona take one of four offensive measures: a high or low punch or a high or low kick. The game consists of a series of computer simulated two-minute rounds. In a cute twist (about the only thing *Karate* has going for it), the fighters' belts change color after each round. You start with a white belt and, as you win rounds, progress to red, to green, to yellow and finally to the coveted black belt.

The bad news is that I beat the computer four rounds in a row with no difficulty. In fact, I progressed from green to black belt without even looking at the screen! You simply hold the fire button down and aim your fighter at the opponent; you'll give him a continuous barrage of high kicks and eventually rack up enough points to win the round.

The game figures are blockish in this definitely low-res programming effort, and the sound effects are primitive. When the combatants get caught in the corner, they mysteriously reappear in the center of the ring, as if relocated by some unseen electronic referee.

As for *Condor Attack*, you can get the idea of this game in a second. The scenario: Aliens in the sky above, threatening our planet, fire missiles downward. Your screen persona is an "earth firebase" at the bottom of the screen. You can move it left or right and fire missiles upward.

In a phrase, another space shoot-'em-up for the VCS.

This one-player game has three skill levels. At the easiest, you battle condors who fly around shooting missiles. In the second, you encounter more dangerous Niro-bean Spiders; the third level pits you against Vulcanian Bats. (What else?)

The programming of this game does not appear to be precise. For example, you can sometimes destroy some of the aliens with a near miss, rather than a direct hit. On occasion, the alien your firebase hits is not the one that disappears from the screen (although you still know you've registered a hit from the game's sound effects). Waves can be completed even if aliens remain on the screen, an unusual videogame feature to say the least.

Although *Condor Attack* is actually rather fun to play, I doubt that it would make a valuable addition to anyone's game collection. The basic theme has been done before, in many variations. □

NHL HOCKEY ★ ★ ★

Designer uncredited. (Mattel Intellivision-compatible cartridge. \$24 approx.)

By Dave Taylor

In eight years of playing college and pro hockey, I've had a broken collarbone, a broken wrist, a knee injury and various bruises and facial cuts. In two years of playing Intellivision hockey, all I've gotten are bruised thumbs. I enjoy this videogame because in many ways it's like the real thing. It has skating, passing, body contact, shooting, outstanding goaltending (which wins a lot of hockey games) and even inconsistent officiating! It has all the fundamentals of real hockey, but none of the dangers.

The game is played with two teams of three players and a computer-controlled goalie each. The two people playing the game can each control one player at a time, with the computer randomly skating the teammates around on the ice.

Just as in real hockey, the name of the game is scoring, and in this game it can be

Los Angeles Kings right wing Dave Taylor has been chosen for the NHL All-Star Game for the past three seasons, and is an avid videogame player.

tough. With this game, I usually shoot from far out (such as from the blue line) then skate in for rebounds. I also try to have teammates near the net, so they can pick up rebounds and score. Some other tips:

- Use the "shoot" button to pass (instead of the "pass" button)—the puck moves faster. Use the passing part of the game to get the puck up the ice quickly, but in around the net, I think you're better off shooting than passing to a teammate. Get the puck in front of the net, then shoot, shoot, shoot.

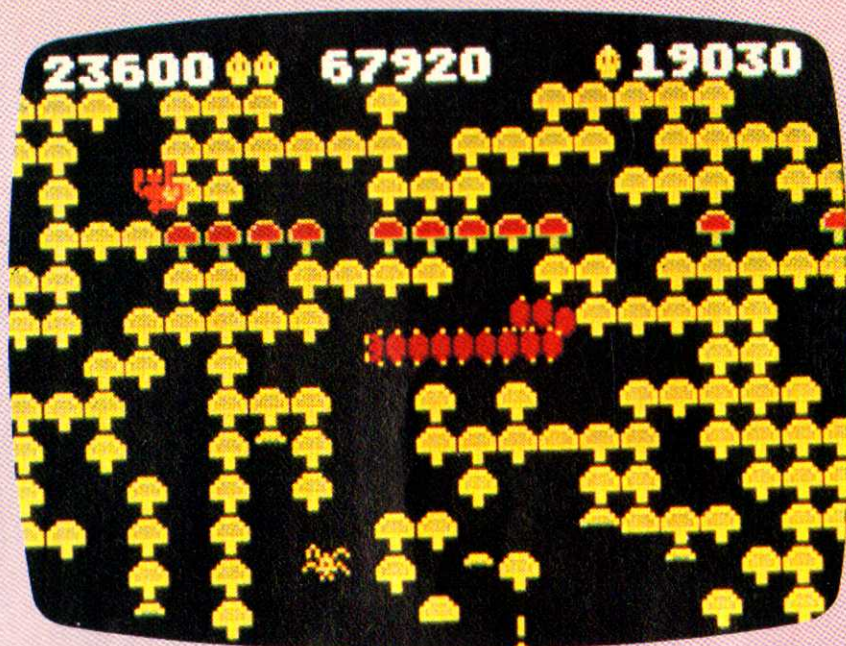
- Use checking to your advantage by knocking other players down. This gives you a one-man advantage until the fallen guy recovers. Of course, this sometimes leads to penalties, which take your player out of action for two minutes. But when you're shorthanded due to penalties you can still get hold of the puck and rag it around the ice like Bobby Orr.

- I play the power play just as in real hockey—I try to get a lot of shots "on net." The computer goalie gets tired when you shoot a lot at him, which means you'll get some easier goals later in the game.

- In real hockey, knowing what to do when you don't have the puck is extremely important. It's no different here. When you lose the puck, skate your "control" man right back into your defensive zone to intercept a pass or pick up a loose rebound. I usually position my control man in the slot area (in front of the goalie) so that any play by the opponent must go around him.

- In the NHL, teams often dump the puck into the offensive zone and then skate in after it. But in this game, you can usually carry the puck around the opposing defenseman and keep possession of it.

This videogame has three periods, whistles and lots of crowd noise. And in this game, no matter where I play, the crowd always cheers when I score a goal. That's nice for a change! □



Atari's *Centipede* for the 5200: no garden-variety game.

CENTIPEDE ★ ★ ★

Designer uncredited. Adapted from the Atari arcade game. (Atari 5200-compatible cartridge. \$34.95)

By Michael Blanchet

One of the many characteristics shared by people the world over is, I think, an instinctive loathing of insects. That's probably one reason why Atari's coin-op version of *Centipede* proved to be so popular. Another may have been its easy-to-use "track ball" controller—a sphere resting on ball bearings that Atari pioneered with its early *NFL Football* and *Missile Command* arcade games, and put to good use in *Centipede*. Now Atari and others offer track balls for the home, allowing you to replace the array of joysticks and buttons used on

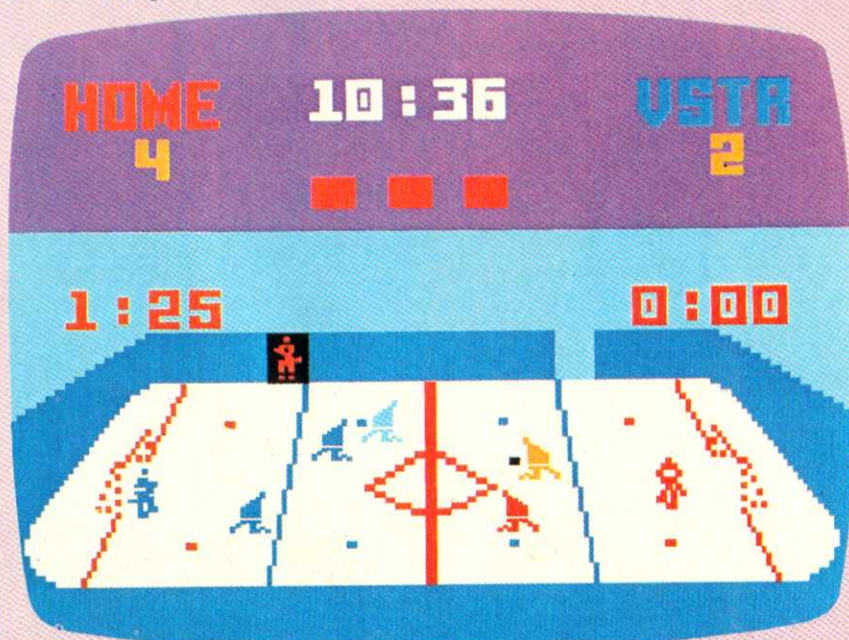
most games with a simple device you can operate proficiently with one hand.

Unless you spring for an optional track ball controller, though, the Atari 5200 version of *Centipede* will be more a source of frustration than engrossing entertainment. The play action here is kinetic, brisk and relentless, while the responsiveness of the 5200 controller is sloppy, cumbersome and inaccurate. Using the joystick controller when playing *Centipede* is like trying to clean your fingernails with a chainsaw—the tool is not suited to the job.

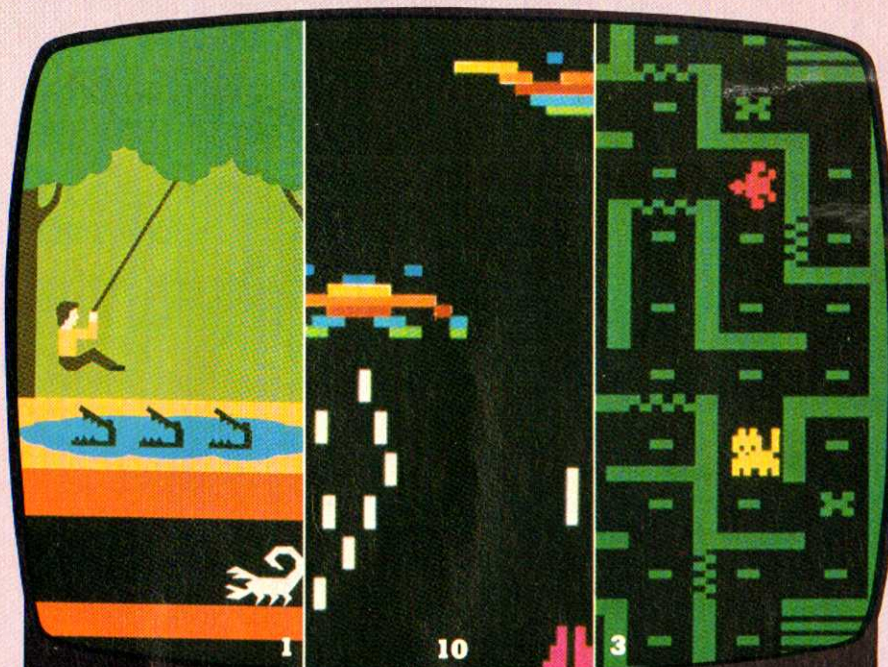
Centipede is, nevertheless, one of the best arcade-to-home adaptations—not to mention an exterminator's dream. Assuming the identity of a bug blaster, your screen persona patrols a mushroom patch. From the top of the screen, a centipede consisting of a head and 11 body segments emerges. The insect moves across the screen, dropping closer and closer to your weapon. Since any body part struck becomes a mushroom, blasts hitting the middle sections of the centipede cause the bug to split, forming two chains that move independently of one another.

Once you destroy the first centipede, a second appears to take its place. But instead of a head followed by 11 connected segments, two heads appear, one of which is trailed by 10 body segments. The following round, you face two heads plus one headless string of body segments. If you last 11 rounds, you'll confront 12 independently moving heads. In the 13th round, the heads and segments are reunited.

Graphically, I can detect little difference between the coin-op *Centipede* and its home counterpart. But, as in the 5200 version of *Pac-Man*, Atari has squashed the playfield to accommodate the home TV screen, which is wider than it is tall. (Coin-op videogame monitors are the opposite.) On this widened playfield, the distance between



Mattel's *NHL Hockey*: shooting, checking and other ice features.



Last
Month

This
Month

Top Carts*

1	1	PITFALL! Designed by David Crane. (Activision, VCS- and Intellivision-compatible, \$31.95)
—	2	RIVER RAID Designed by Carol Shaw. (Activision, VCS-compatible, \$31.95)
—	3	MOUSETRAP Designer uncredited. (Coleco, VCS-, Intellivision- and ColecoVision-compatible, \$30)
2	4	DONKEY KONG Adapted by Eric Bromley and team from the Nintendo arcade game. (Coleco, VCS- and Intellivision-compatible, \$30)
4	5	FROGGER Adapted by Ed English from the Sega arcade game. (Parker Brothers, VCS-compatible, \$30)
6	6	E.T. Designed by Howard Warshaw. (Atari, VCS-compatible, \$39.95)
—	7	TRON DEADLY DISCS Designer uncredited. (Mattel, VCS- and Intellivision-compatible, \$30)
—	8	WIZARD OF WOR Designer uncredited. (CBS Video Games, VCS-compatible, \$35)
3	9	ZAXXON Designer uncredited. (Coleco, VCS-, Intellivision- and ColecoVision-compatible, \$49.95)
8	10	DEMON ATTACK Designed by Ron Fulop and Gary Kato. (Imagic, VCS- and Intellivision-compatible, \$31.95/\$39.95)

Behind the Top 10 Carts: The games keep on coming, but you may not be able to find them. In some areas, popular titles such as **Zaxxon** and **Turbo** are in short supply owing to greater-than-anticipated demand. Also, many stores don't have enough space to stock every new title.

Already, it seems, such ballyhooed games as Data Age's **Journey/Escape** and U.S. Games' **Eggomania** aren't as easy to find as they might be, suggesting that even familiar licensed titles and major game makers aren't immune to the effects of space shortage. Video stores say, however, that such promising titles as Activision's **Spider Fighter**, Imagic's **Dragonfire** and Fox's **M*A*S*H** should be in ample supply. (M.T.)□

*Based on a nationwide survey of sales and rentals at presstime. All games are in cartridge format unless otherwise noted. Suggested retail prices are approximate.

your blaster and the centipede appears to be shorter than in the arcade game, yet the fields are about equal since the worm must move a greater distance horizontally before heading vertically.

Some may view the horizontal orientation a blessing, since the "buffer zone" around your blaster is increased from one-sixth to a good third of the playfield. Personally, I found this layout a curse, since some of the action taking place on the borders becomes obscured. If your television set's vertical or horizontal holds are too sensitive, you may lose a portion of the picture around the perimeter of the screen. On none of my three TV sets could the scores be brought into view without sacrificing the bottom portion of the picture. Forget the right and left sides. I have yet to get the playfield satisfactorily centered so that both sides appear, so I'd suggest staying away from them. Spiders emerge from the sides, and they can pounce on your blaster before you have any chance to react.

Another recommended strategy? Buy a track ball. It'll improve your game enormously. □

SEAQUEST ★★★

Designed by Steve Cartwright. (Activision VCS-compatible cartridge, \$31.95)

By Karen Schwarz

During a recent Caribbean vacation, I spent an afternoon snorkeling for bottles of champagne planted amongst the coral by my host. I got deep enough to spot a foil-topped bottle shimmering in the blue, but as I reached for it, water gushed down my snorkel tube and I was forced to surface. Champagne is fine, but breathing is essential. *Seaquest* operates on a similar principle, and is, on a less adventurous scale, about as much fun.

You command a submarine whose mission is to rescue scuba divers kicking across the deep blue screen away from deadly sharks. As your sub plows through the water, it must avoid torpedo-spewing enemy subs as well as the sharks. Of course, your sub can blast these pests with its own torpedoes and rack up points indefinitely, but, like me on my champagne mission, your sub can run out of oxygen, forcing it to resurface.

You've got about 20 seconds to rescue divers and shoot sharks and subs before the dropping oxygen gauge at the bottom of the screen sets off an impressive siren, warning your sub to surface fast. It might not make it in time or it might collide with a shark or a torpedo, in which case you lose a sub. Once it reaches the surface, you hear a wonderful whoosh of air and the oxygen gauge fills, allowing your sub to re-submerge. Each game consists of four subs, with a bonus sub every 10,000 points.

Snatching the first few divers and blasting a couple of sharks and enemy subs is easy, but wait until veritable walls of sharks or

subs float into the picture. Avoiding them as your sub races to the surface is pretty tricky, too, since your sub is larger and less maneuverable than its adversaries. You must line up your sub perfectly horizontally to your targets to blast them: It's a direct hit or nothing. On the other hand, sharks and subs need only brush your sub's hull and it's a goner.

Seaquest's graphics are nothing special, though I liked the sharks' colors changing from brown to pink to yellow. The sound effects—particularly the air-gauge warning siren and the oxygen refilling—are impressive and assets to the game.

Your best bet in *Seaquest* is to play it safe. Don't have your sub go for divers who have sharks on their tails as soon as they swim onto the screen. Your sub may get the swimmer, but it won't slip away from the shark. Also, don't be a hero and have your sub go for a swimmer who's further away than the two or three enemy subs heading toward it. Knock off the subs and grab swimmers close by.

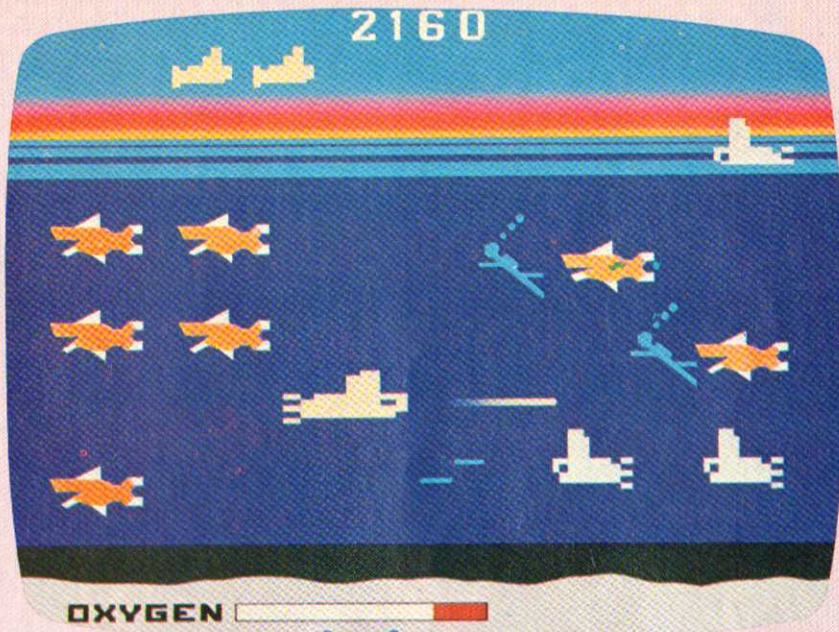
The better part of valor is discretion, according to Shakespeare, so not only did I neglect to tell my friends on vacation that I had spotted the champagne, but in playing *Seaquest*, I preferred to let the divers fend for themselves while I got points nabbing sharks and subs. I'll go back for the champagne. I don't know about the onscreen divers, though, since you lose no points for letting them get eaten. □

CARNIVAL ★

Designer uncredited. Adapted from the Sega arcade game. (Coleco ColecoVision- and Intellivision-compatible cartridges. \$30)

By Howard Polskin

I must admit to never having played the arcade version of *Carnival*. After playing



Seaquest sub, sandwiched between perils: a place for heroes?

these two home versions, I'm not sure I'd want to. Neither the ColecoVision nor the Intellivision version has much to recommend it and both are bound to be frustrating, especially to experienced videogame players.

The premise is based on a shooting gallery in a penny arcade. The gamer must shoot away at three rows of such assorted targets as simulated ducks and rabbits that glide horizontally across the screen, plus some other targets in the background. The concept is not especially inventive and the execution is boring.

Visually, *Carnival* is quite drab, offering a dark background dotted with moving targets that are neither clearly outlined nor aesthetically appealing. The game falls short, in short, of what ColecoVision and

Intellivision owners expect from their systems.

The song "The Man on the Flying Trapeze" runs continuously during the game. A word of warning: This tune will cause severe domestic problems. It runs on like a broken record, over and over and over again. It's guaranteed to turn friends and family members in nearby rooms into anti-videogame zealots and probably turn them off to real carnivals forever.

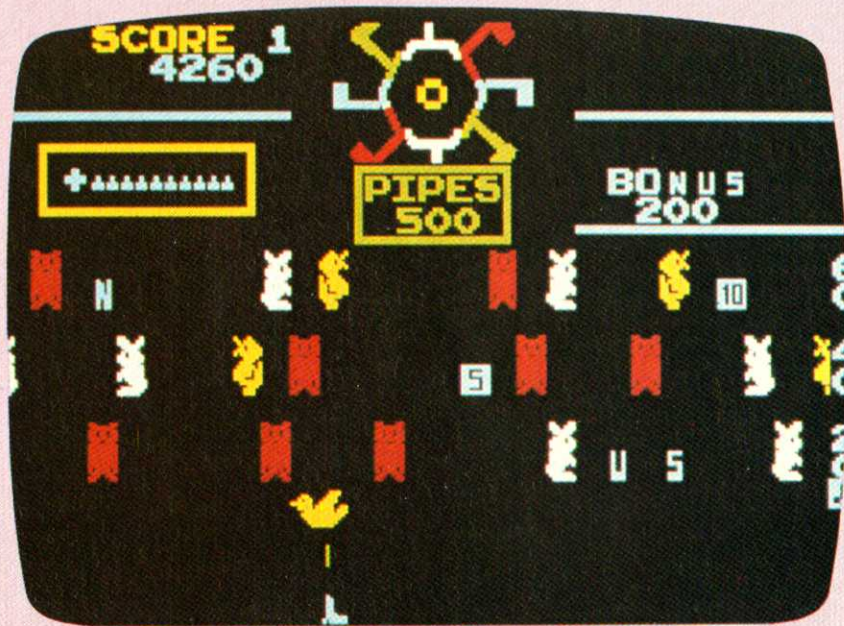
A key point to racking up high scores in both versions is to pick off the rotating pipes on an organ in the center of the screen. Only when all are eliminated can all targets be shot off the screen without mysteriously regenerating. This is particularly true of the ducks, which seem to multiply like rabbits at a certain point in the game if the pipes aren't completely shot off. The shooting-gallery ducks can also come to video life and fly off to try to eat your bullet supply in the bottom left corner of the screen. Try to shoot the flying ducks quickly. When all your bullets are gone, the game is over.

Basically, the ColecoVision-compatible and Intellivision-compatible games are the same. As you might expect, the ColecoVision game has a slight edge, albeit a very slight one. When the targets are hit in the ColecoVision game, they make a nice "ping" sound, just like you'd hear in a real shooting gallery. In the ColecoVision game, it's also easier (though not that easy) to aim the shooting mechanism.

Both games are plagued by inadequate instructions that hardly prepare the gamer for all the nuances. With or without the instructions, it takes far too many repeated efforts to figure out exactly how to play either game.

Carnival in either format comes across as a very minor game. An exciting three-ring circus it's not. It's more like a second-rate county fair. □

(Continued)



Targets in ColecoVision Carnival: Don't hurry, hurry, hurry.

Computer

SEAFOX ★ ★

Designed by Ed Hobbs. (Broderbund Software disc for the Atari 400/800/1200XL. \$29.95)

By Ken Uston

Seafox might have been one of the top videogames—either home or arcade type. Several of my book researchers and I had been playing nothing but *Seafox* for a week or so (out of hundreds and hundreds of games at our disposal). Then we discovered a fatal flaw. I'm sorry to say, the *Seafox* disc now sits in a box, gathering dust.

While *Seafox* is, as the name indicates, a sea battle, it's far from the typical submarine-shoots-surface-vessel fare becoming so prevalent in both computer and standard home videogames. The graphics, for one thing, are fabulous—the objects on the screen are colorful, and they move in in-

teresting ways. The exceptional sound effects lend realism. The plot execution has some nice touches as well.

you ready for this?) a trained dolphin which carries supplies. If your sub makes contact with the supplies, the fuel and torpedoes are replenished.

If you wait too long, a giant clam swims by. This is one smart, agile clam. It's far faster than your sub, and it tries to steal your supplies. If you inadvertently destroy the dolphin, then a giant pink fish—which swims faster than its man-made counterparts—appears, seeks out your sub, and sends it into oblivion. This is one powerful fish!

There is no doubt that the game creator gave a lot of careful thought to *Seafox*'s design. As I said, a bunch of us were mesmerized for days. But if you want to enjoy *Seafox* as we did, stop reading here.

Seafox met its demise when it suddenly dawned on us that the game could be played at the easier levels virtually forever. All you have to do is avoid hitting the merchant ships and endlessly shoot enemy subs and destroyers.

It was a horrible realization, because one

MOTOR MANIA ★ ★ ★

Designed by John Fitzpatrick. (UMI Commodore 64-compatible cassette. \$29.95)

By Sheldon Leemon

Whenever a new computer comes out, the first games that appear are usually somewhat crude and simplistic since it takes time for designers to get the hang of programming games for it. But UMI's first effort for the Commodore 64 is, if not spectacular, at least at the same level of quality as UMI's popular videogames for the Commodore VIC-20.

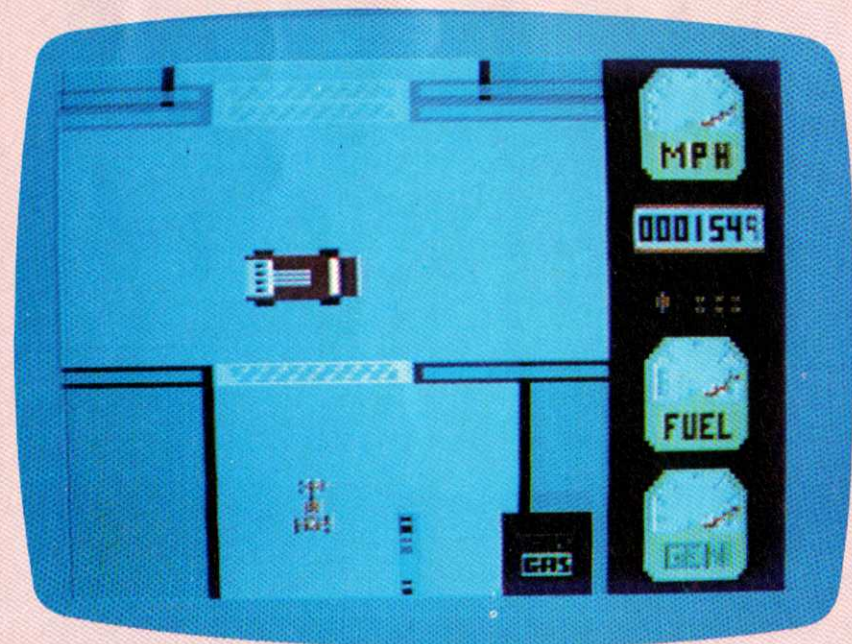
Motor Mania is a road-rally game that, unlike most such games, requires the player to think as well as react. Unlike the typical racing game, too, speed is not of paramount importance. While you do get a few points for having your onscreen auto pass other cars, this is insignificant when compared to the rewards for driving defensively: You earn the most points for having your car pass service stations without stopping and for completing map sections.

Mere survival is no mean feat, however. Going off of the road will demolish your car, as will colliding with another car. You've got to look out for fire engines crossing intersections and for rocks rolling across the road, either of which can put your car out of action. You must keep your car in good condition: You can lose a car by running out of gas, letting its battery run down (by driving too slowly), failing to repair a damaged radiator or getting a flat tire when you have no spare. Encounters with some obstacles, such as broken glass, pot holes, logs and road patches, do not necessarily cause the loss of your car, but may make steering more difficult or necessitate repairs.

In addition to the many obstacles, there are three types of roadways, which help ensure varied enough scenery to forestall a case of highway hypnosis. Three-lane highways give you the most latitude to navigate your car, but also have the most hazards. Two-lane roads have far more curves than the highways, while the dirt roads twist and turn savagely.

This is no pleasant Sunday drive. There are 10 difficulty levels, and, even at the lowest, it's quite a challenge to get through a section of the map. Though quick reflexes are helpful, knowing your limitations is even more important. Resist the urge to go flat out all the time. You must also keep in mind the difference between fatal and non-fatal hazards in case you must approach the latter to avoid the former.

The graphics in *Motor Mania* are adequate, but don't really explore the computer's potential. Likewise, the sound effects are appropriate, but don't really take advantage of the exceptional music synthesizer chips within the Commodore 64. The action, however, is varied enough so that *Motor Mania* stands up well to repeated play. It may not guarantee a road to success, but it is a promising start for this computer. □



Gauging success in Motor Mania: Speed is not of the essence.

of the most exciting games suddenly became a crashing bore. Sure, we racked up high scores, but the magic was gone.

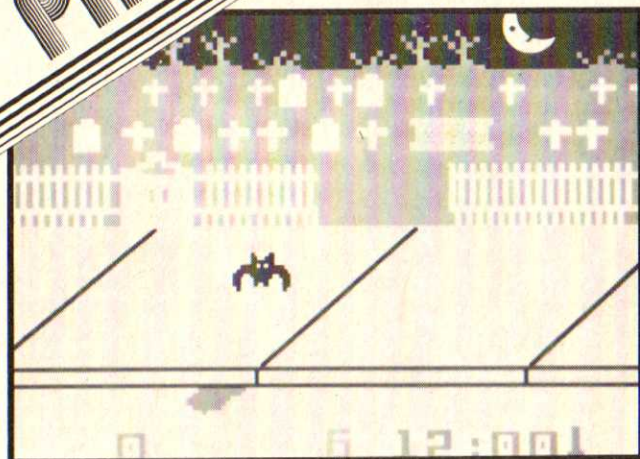
I'd suggest Broderbund revise *Seafox*. Two possible solutions come to mind:

- Put a time limit on each mission. If all merchant ships are not destroyed during a given interval, the player loses a sub.

- Change the point values so the merchant ships are worth even more relative to the other vessels. While they already are more valuable (and the point values do increase with each successive mission), the difference is not wide enough to encourage gamers going for big scores to try to complete missions.

Seafox, at first glance, is a great computer game. But, in my opinion, any game that can be played endlessly by average players has an inherent design flaw. □

For release on cart, cassette, disc



Graveyard scene in Imagic's *Dracula: love at first byte*.

CARTRIDGES

BLUEPRINT An evil blob has stolen your screen persona's girlfriend. Guided by a blueprint, your hero must track down and assemble the pieces of a machine needed to blast the villain. (CBS Video Games, VCS-compatible)

CENTIPEDE Adaptation of the Atari arcade game. A centipede weaves through a mushroom patch while your bug blaster attempts to dismember the creature. A scorpion, a spider and a mushroom-laying flea add distractions. First time in this format. (Atari, VCS-compatible)

DOLPHIN One of the first videogames to integrate sound effects with game play. Your onscreen dolphin, using its sonar echo, tries to outswim a pesky squid. Underwater currents can help or hinder its progress. (Activision, VCS-compatible)

DRACULA As the nocturnal fiend of Bram Stoker's novel, your screen persona must kill blood-rich victims before sunrise. Constables and white wolves pursue Dracula's humanoid form, and vultures can devour his bat form. (Imagic, Intellivision-compatible)

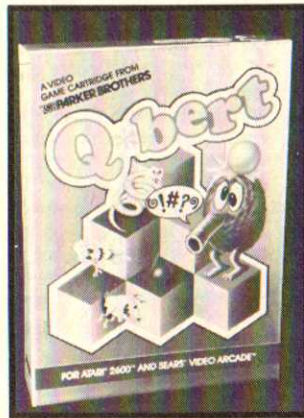
THE DUKES OF HAZZARD Adventure game pitting a bumbling, small-town sheriff and his men against rednecks in a souped-up car. Based on the hit TV show. (Atari, VCS-compatible)

GALAXIAN Adaptation of the Centuri arcade game. A phalanx of space invaders drops progressively closer to your planet, with winged warriors breaking rank to dive in kamikaze

style. First time in this format. (Atari, VCS-compatible)

HALLOWEEN Your screen persona tries to divert a knife-bearing maniac from slaughtering kids. Based on the movie. (Wizard Video Games, VCS-compatible)

MINER 2049ER Bounty Bob tries to claim various sections of a space mine and collect artifacts left by previous miners. Based on the CompuVid computer game. (TigerVision, VCS-compatible)



Q*Bert: another @!#?@! game?

MR. BILL'S NEIGHBORHOOD The perpetually put-upon clay figure, Mr. Bill, tries to take his dog, Spot, his girlfriend, Miss Sally, and his mother from their dangerous neighborhood, while avoiding barricades, traffic and the sadistic Sluggo and Mr. Hands. Based on Walter Williams' *Saturday Night* characters. (Data Age, VCS-compatible)

OINK Based on the "Three Little Pigs" nursery rhyme. Assuming the

guise of either the big, bad wolf or one of his porcine adversaries, your screen persona tries to huff and puff and blow a house down or else tries to keep the place together. (Activision, VCS-compatible)

SKIING Two games: simple downhill racing in "Ski Trails," and course maneuvering in "Slalom," with other skiers a hazard in both. (Coleco, ColecoVision-compatible)

STRAWBERRY SHORTCAKE: MUSICAL MATCH-UPS Young children's game starring the ubiquitous Strawberry Shortcake and her friends, Lime Chiffon, Blueberry Muffin and Huckleberry Pie. The Purple Pieman has scrambled their bodies, necessitating the mixing and matching of heads, torsos and legs. (Parker Brothers, Intellivision- and VCS-compatible)

THE TEXAS CHAINSAW MAS-SACRE Your chainsaw-wielding screen persona must decapitate fleeing figures before his fuel runs out.

Based on the movie. (Wizard Video Games, VCS-compatible)

STAND-ALONE

SPIKE The first Vectrex-compatible game with voice synthesis. The titular hero strives to rescue a fair damsel, Molly, from the dastardly villain, Spud. (GCE, Vectrex-compatible)

COMPUTER

BOULDERS AND BOMBS An outer-space spelunker navigates tunnels with his roto-auger, while avoiding alien vultures and green cave slime. (CBS Software, Atari 400/800/1200XL-compatible)

DEMON ATTACK Waves of space demons try to waste your lunar cannon. First time in these formats. Odyssey²-compatible cart is also planned. (Imagic, Atari 400/800/1200XL- and Commodore VIC-20-compatible)

GAME PLANS

BOARD WITH VIDEOGAMES? No, Parker Brothers' videogame adaptation of *Risk* and other popular board games will be sans accompanying playing boards, unlike the games in Odyssey's "Master Strategy" series. . . . Speaking of Odyssey, it's looking for fall intro of its new generation **Command Center**. New versions of **Pick Axe Pete**, **Smithereens** and **Attack of the Timelord** will be along for the ride. Compatible Odyssey² games are due from Imagic, first company to independently create games for that system and for ColecoVision. Expect the former in early '83, the latter in autumn. . . . Upcoming from Coleco itself are games designed by *Star Wars* special-effects man **John Dykstra**, plus movie-based **Rocky Battles the Champ**. Data Age is counterpunching with a **Mr. T** game, starring that **Rocky III** bruiser.

BUT WILL THE RANGER LIKE IT, YOGI? Mattel and Taft Entertainment have inked a pact to bring **The Flintstones**, **The Jetsons**, **Quick Draw McGraw**, **Top Cat**, **Yogi Bear** and other Hanna-Barbera characters to cartridge. First games due in May. . . . Data Age is also bearing down with **Smokey the Bear** game. . . . Parker Brothers has snatched up **Popeye**, and also joins CBS Video Games as a new maker of Intellivision carts. . . . Datasoft plans to release games based on **Bruce Lee**, cartoon creatures **Heathcliff** and **Heckle and Jeckle** and TV show **Dallas**.

@!#?@! That **Q*Bert** quote will come home from the arcade, courtesy of Parker Brothers. Atari will adapt arcade hit **Dig Dug** for its home computers. . . . At least 11 new titles are upcoming from Ultravision for its console/computer/TV set combo and a half-dozen more for the VCS. . . . **Monster M*A*S*H**: That April release from Fox will be in forms compatible with Atari, Coleco and Mattel game hardware, plus Atari, Commodore and TI computers. Other Fox TV and movie titles include **The Fall Guy** in May and **Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid** and **Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea** in June. . . . Bringing up the fear, newly formed **Wizard Video Games** promises to have at least a half-dozen horror-flick carts by year's end.

—Frank Lovece

How good is the new game gear?



As the functions of home computers and videogame consoles continue to merge, the user faces a predicament that was negligible six months ago: By what criteria is one game system measured against another? The effectiveness of judging a system simply by cost or by quality and quantity of software has been dulled by sheer numbers. When evaluating the new computer/game systems, one should now consider expandability. In fact, a system's ability to grow through add-ons to suit the user's future needs may be the most important criterion of all.

Mattel, Odyssey, Spectra-Video and Ultravision are only a few of the companies unveiling the new hybrids. Among them, most of the initial systems have the potential to accept peripherals, thereby giving the user an edge on obsolescence and satisfying the expandability requirement. The extent of and the ultimate cost of expandability, however, are what separate the winners from the losers.

Extra: Expandability

The most ambitious of these hybrids is probably the Ultravision system. This console is practically an attempt to create a beast compatible with almost every breed of software known to mankind. It succeeds to an extent, but only after the user has spent a lot more than he or she has bargained for.

The \$999 console—which includes a built-in 10-inch (diagonally measured) TV set—contains a Z80 microprocessor and comes with 64K

RAM. And expandability it has: The first two optional expansion modules planned will allow Atari VCS and Coleco ColecoVision games, respectively, to play on it. But there's a problem. Each module will go for about \$79.95, which is a ludicrous investment even if you had enough VCS- or ColecoVision-compatible cartridges to justify the purchase in the first place. If you already have VCS and ColecoVision games, you almost certainly have the equipment to play them on. You could simply connect your consoles directly to the Ultravision set, thereby bypassing the expansion modules completely.

Nearly as ambitious as Ultravision is Odyssey. That branch of NAP Consumer Electronics (the Magnavox, Philco and Sylvania people) was the first game company to envision the potential mating of the home computer and the game console: Its Odyssey² mainframe is equipped with an alphanumeric keyboard. Unfortunately, the keyboard has been underutilized until recently, and has had little bearing on game play aside from being a means to select game options. Odyssey's latest effort, the Command Center (some call it Odyssey³, though Odyssey claims to



be saving that title for an even newer system) also features a keyboard. This time around, Odyssey plans to offer peripherals that should maximize the keyboard's potential, such as a computer interface module and a phone modem, a common computer peripheral which allows users to tap into information services.

The two remaining systems, Mattel's

Entertainment Computer System and Spectra-Video's SV-318 Personal Computer, may be the best of the lot. Both display thoughtful engineering geared to those who wish to flesh out a game system to perform a variety of duties.

End Games

Both systems have a broad software base. The cornerstone of Mattel's is the redesigned master component, the Intellivision II, which accepts all current and future Intellivision games. Spectra-Video's SV-318 has CP/M 2.2 and CP/M Plus compatibility, which gives the user access to an estimated 10,000 CP/M programs. (CP/M stands for "Control Program for Microprocessor," a trademarked name for a standard



business-computer operating system.)

Both systems also offer a wide array of peripherals. Expansion System A for Intellivision makes all Atari-

compatible games usable on the Mattel console. Spectra-Video will offer the model SV-306 ColecoVision adaptor. This module will make all ColecoVision cartridges compatible with the SV-318. More on these systems in following issues. □

Gear for All Reasons: Intellivision add-ons (left), Ultravision console (above).