

Video Review

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HOME VIDEO
MAGAZINE

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THE WORLD AUTHORITY ON HOME VIDEO

COMPONENTS '83

PACE-SETTING SETS: WHICH ARE BEST?

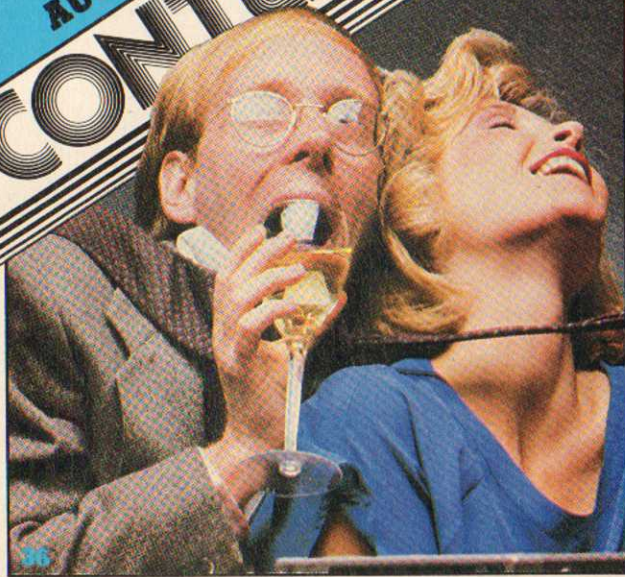
Exclusive: First Interactive CED Player

3D TV: Secrets of Taping It Yourself



AUGUST 1983

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For Chris Stein

Video director, songwriter

Q The video shorts you made in the '70s with your rock band, Blondie, seemed to me to be far ahead of their time. First of all, how did you get into video? And second, what are you working on for us to see—and hear next?

Karen Wiss
 Bellmore, NY

A I learned a lot about video equipment by using it with the band like a diary. I had this big Panasonic deck on our European/American tour and while we were in the studio recording our album *Auto American*. The batteries were heavy, I had only 20 minutes of recording time, and I couldn't use any special lighting. It was primitive, but I learned a lot about using the camera.

As for my next project, I'm working with Debbie [Deborah Harry, Stein's wife and lead singer for Blondie] on a program in which the music will be integrated as part of a story, much the way some performance art uses music. The story and the visual ideas are inspiring the music.

—Chris Stein

THE HOT SEAT

GOING ALL THE WAY?

Q I read in your July issue that Pioneer allowed an X-rated laser disc to be pressed at its plant, but only as long as it was edited down. Since Pioneer reversed itself on that point, is it possible that the company will "go all the way" and let real X discs be pressed?

Nancy Nolan
 New York, NY

A As a matter of fact, the answer's just in on that, and it's yes. As of presstime, Pioneer was in the midst of pressing another Marilyn Chambers starrer, *Up and Coming*, for the same company that produced *Insatiable*, *Key International*. A spokesperson for Key told us that only one scene, about a minute-and-a-half long, had been edited out, and that this time, no trick video editing was used.

ACCESSORY SCARCITY

Q On the strength of your product review, I purchased a Technicolor model 412 portable VCR and a camera. I love them, but I'm having all kinds of trouble finding replacement batteries and tape for the VCR. Can you suggest someplace I might try? I've written Technicolor—the company's no longer handling the recorder or any accessories for it.

D.H. Sattler
 Bridgewater, NJ

A Not in the United States, that is. However, the recorder, tape and batteries are still readily available in Japan, Germany, France and certain other European countries. If you're planning a trip to any of them (or if you know anyone that is), you should have no trouble finding everything you need.

TUBE-ULAR?

Q In your guide to color video cameras (June '83 VR), I find a discrepancy concerning the Sony model HVC 2400. In the chart you call the image pickup tube Trinicon but underneath this, in parentheses, you have Saticon.

I have just recently purchased this camera, and the specs do not men-

tion anything about the Saticon tube. I don't know if your article is correct or if this is, perhaps, an error. Could you please advise me?

Catherine Krier
 Ridgewood, NY

A Trinicon is Sony's trademark for its $\frac{3}{8}$ -inch pickup tube, which is fundamentally a Saticon tube. The important thing about this type of tube is that it's designed to produce less smear and less image retention than Vidicon tubes do, though cameras with Vidicon tubes are generally less expensive than those with Saticon tubes.

TRACKING TRACKBALLS

Q I recently purchased a ColecoVision game. I had seen an article in VR's August issue about ColecoVision which stated that the controllers had a "roller controller." My game doesn't. When I asked the salesperson why, he said he had no idea. Did I get ripped off?

Serafim Kouros
 Brooklyn, NY

A No, the company just had a change of plans. Originally, it had planned to include a trackball control with its ColecoVision console, but decided against this before the consoles went on sale in stores. Coleco and



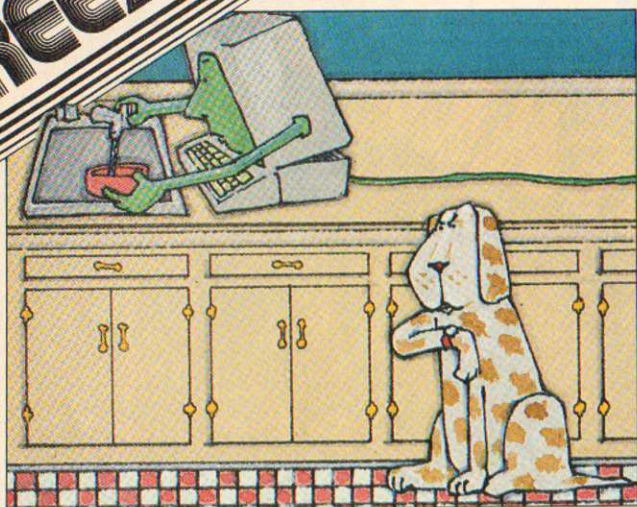
Coleco's built-in trackball taken out.

other companies have since introduced separate trackball controllers—as well as games specifically designed to be played with them—that cost somewhere between \$35 and \$60 a pair.

VHS IS NOT ENOUGH

Q I recently returned from a brief trip to London, and while there I purchased a videotape. I specifically verified that it was a VHS recording. However, when I tried to play it on my RCA

Crime, Kiss-ettes and a canine computer



Dog Dish Afternoon

Do you forget to fill your pet's water bowl—even when the beast is gnawing on your leg to remind you? Well, now you can get a computer programmed just for your pet.

RainMatic is a battery-operated, quartz-crystal computer/timer that interfaces between the faucet and a garden hose. It's indifferent to barks and whimpers, and Fido is in for a real shock if he tries to prod its memory with a nip on the batteries.

Programmable for up to eight



waterings a day over a one-week period, RainMatic can also be used for watering lawns (though you'd have to guess more accurately than the weather bureau does about rain forecasts, or you could end up with a home version of *River Raid*. Or, at least, *Puddle Raid*.) Such computer-controlled dog and lawn watering can be purchased for \$59.95 from the company, the RainMatic Corp.

of Omaha, NE, or from various mail-order services and chain stores, including Western Auto. I guess that's so you can wash your car, auto-matically.

What's next? Can we look for Sleet-, Slush- and HailMatic computers? Or maybe a version with a color monitor, called RainbowMatic? (F.P.)□

Making Scents

Ever since sound was added to silent movies, people have been trying to find ways to make the movie-going (or movie-staying-at-home) experience more complete by adding scents as well. So far, the most successful movie-house attempt was with John Waters' *Polyester*, for which audience members were given Scratch 'n' Sniff cards cued to scenes in the movie. Now Environmental Fragrance Technologies is seeing to it that the noses of home-video fans are no longer ignored. It has created the Aroma Disc System, which includes the Aroma Disc player and some 40 Aroma Discs.

The idea is that, just as you might come home from work and put on a record, you will now be able to put on an odor. The record, which resembles a computer floppy disc, slips into the Aroma Disc player and in two to three minutes your room is filled with its scent. Fragrance choices include Ocean Breeze,

Man's World ("the sophistication of a wood-paneled study"), Seduction ("setting the mood for the special night"—sorry, no specifics) and my favorite, Neutral ("a non-fragrance"—what no home should be without). Further, you'll be able to choose between regular and designer disc players, the latter to be sold only in "prestige" department stores, according to a company spokesperson.

The Aroma Disc works by speeding up the same process that takes place when you put on perfume or cologne and the scent is released as your body warms up.

So what does this have to do with home video? The company predicts that discs will be made for playing in conjunction with a movie on tape, disc or even TV. "A special disc would be made with several scents on it for use with a particular TV show or movie," explains a company spokesperson. "A cue [a sub-audible carrier signal] would be put in the program which the Aroma Disc player would pick up, telling it which scent to produce."

Naturally, we checked into this. "It's certainly not impossible to record a sub-audible carrier signal onto a videodisc," confirms a spokesperson for videodisc company Pioneer. "But, frankly, I wonder why you'd want to do it. I mean, take one of the Dirty Harry movies where Clint Eastwood crashes into a garbage dump..." (A.R.)□

Satellite Line-Up

The countdown has begun: five months till 1984. Or is it here already? On May 2, we came one more step closer to the age of Big Brother.

How so? You've heard of teleconferences? Well, so have the police department and D.A. of Baltimore County, MD, and they decided to put this technology to use for them. Getting a suspect from Sacramento, CA for a line-up seemed a security risk, while transporting a witness to California seemed too expensive. So the squad decided to do the line-up via satellite and even procured federal funds for the project.

Last May 2, numerous technicians, most of the homicide squad and anyone else who could fit crammed into the viewing room. The witness was seated before a TV screen to view the suspect and four others who were marched before cameras 3,000 miles away.

This got us to thinking about the potential of electronic crime-busting. Already, electronic crimes occur where some computer jock sits at home and figures out how to tie in to somebody else's data base, stealing information and sometimes even funds. So let's say the police work up a profile of the thief, do their line-up via satellite, try the thief via closed circuit television and convict him to 10 years electronic im-





prisonment in his home. Imagine: all this without the criminal or the police ever leaving the comfort of their own homes! 1984: The Age of the Armchair Detective. And the Armchair Patrolman. (A.R.)□

Reverse Vidlot

Stephen Baccus is living proof that videogames don't rot the mind. The heady 14-year-old, who graduated from the University of Miami this spring and will enter its law school next month, spends about 45 minutes each day playing *Pac-Man* and *Frogger* in the college gameroom. Sometimes he even sneaks out of the library to play them.

The modest Baccus says he's "pretty good" at *Frogger* and *Front Line*, his favorite game, but when pressed he admits he's the best in the school. Not so, though, for *Pac-Man*. Baccus, who has an IQ of 190, also likes devising his own games on his Apple home computer. "I never really got around to marketing them," says the teen regretfully.

Game playing isn't Baccus' only tie to the world of video. Since the age of 6, the talented lad has taken acting lessons and has already appeared in a number of movies. In Jerry Lewis' *Hardly Working*, his largest role, he played the "little brat" son of the leading lady.

The young genius also performs magic and comedy acts at local clubs. He plays the guitar, the accordian, sings and dances with other neighborhood kids. To relax, he watches about

three hours of TV sitcoms each day. They may not make him any smarter—but they don't seem to be hurting him much, either. (M.R.)□

Video or Buss

A video kiss. A video kiss-off. A Video Kiss-ette.

It's more than a note, less than a personal appearance, but it's a greeting nonetheless. A way to say "Hi," "get well," "thanks," "drop dead" or whatever sentiment you wish to express, via the recipient's VCR.

Isaac Feldman, the man behind Video Kiss-ettes, charges \$60 for a half-hour in his New York video studio, during which he'll tape (and even direct) you doing whatever it is you want to do as a message to friend or foe. He says he'll even arrange for your tape to appear on the public-access channel of your local cable system if you'd like.

His favorite so far? "An elderly woman had me tape her preparing chicken soup, as her way of sending her recipe to a sick friend, since she couldn't send the soup itself. She brought in her pots, and cut everything up while I taped it."

Feldman sees this as the beginning of a franchise business of While-U-Wait videos.

For this sort of expansion, Feldman needs one thing he admits he doesn't have among all his videocassettes and video Kiss-ettes: video assets. (D.C.)□

LAUGH TRACKS

Here's the first in what we hope will be a series of video jokes. If you have a good video joke to contribute, send it to Laugh-Tracks, c/o Video Review Editorial Offices, 350 E. 81st St., New York, NY 10028. We hope they'll be funny. But in the meantime here's one from VR contributor Jeff Menell:

It's the year 2075, and two 80-year-old men, Inky and Blinky (named after *Pac-Man* creatures), have been friends since they were kids. They've played videogames all their lives. Now they're both playing *Space Geriatrics* at the Home for Retired Zaxxonites.

Inky says, "Hey Blinky, I reckon you and I don't have too

much time left before we kick. So I was wonderin' what you think heaven is like?"

Blinky says, "Well, Inky, I'm not sure, but it would be great if we could play videogames until the end of time."

Inky smiles and says, "Boy, wouldn't that be something. Hey, Blinky, let's make a pact. Whichever one of us dies first will contact the other one and let



him know how heaven is."

Blinky agrees and they finish their game.

A week later, Inky dies. Blinky is distraught, but after a week is back playing games again. Late one night, Blinky hears Inky calling to him. Blinky says, "Inky, is that you?" Inky says, "Yeah, Blinky, it's me. And I have good news and bad news for you. The good news is that there are so many games here, I may never have to play the same one twice. The bad news is that they're putting in a new game next Tuesday." "What's so bad about that?" asks Blinky. "Well," says Inky, "it's just for you."□

Tele-Gambling

"TeleviSin"?

Betting that gambling will help videotex win, place and show up in the nation's homes is a company that suggests turning front parlors into betting parlors.

The idea, according to International Research Development researcher Dave Ledecy, is to attract a wider audience for the new telecommunications systems by offering something that will have a broad-based ap-

peal—such as gambling. People could use teletext for getting information on races and games, or could use videotex to not only get the information but also place bets from the comfort of home. In effect, the result would be similar to the large video betting parlors (where people bet on events that are then shown on a huge video screen via satellite or cable) except on a

much smaller scale—living room scale, to be exact.

One great advantage to videotex gambling, according to Ledecy, is that "bets could even be placed on events occurring within certain sporting events, rather than just on the outcome of the event. For instance," Ledecy suggests, "one could place a bet as to whether a particular baseball player is going to get a hit on his next



time at bat. Of course," he adds, "all this would have to be legalized."

Good point, Dave.

A copy of Dave's report costs only \$1,285. You'll be glad to know that the section on gambling isn't bogged down with any statistics or research. Dave says the people at his company were "just kicking around a few ideas."

I'll bet Kant never made that kind of money when he kicked around ideas. (D.C.)□

Coleco's Adam: eve of new era



Historical heavies: Winston Churchill and Joseph Stalin.

HBO Looks to Past With Eye to Future

By Jefferson Graham

HOLLYWOOD—Forget about a Canadian cancer victim hopping across the country in a one-legged race. Skip Jimmy Stewart and Bette Davis so old and sick they sign a suicide pact to eliminate the pain.

HBO, which burst on the scene with original made-for-pay-TV movies earlier this year (including *The Terry Fox Story* and *Right of Way*), is taking a new direction for '84. It stars Mussolini, Stalin and Churchill.

Scripts are now being written based on the lives of these historical figures, as well as on the lives of Edward R. Murrow, Charles De Gaulle and Gen. James Dozier.

Former network TV mogul Fred Silverman is producing the story about Murrow, who helped shape broadcast journalism as we know it, first in radio, then on TV at CBS. The Churchill/De Gaulle movie will trace the lives of the two European leaders from birth through the Second World War. The Dozier movie traces the capture of the American general by Italian radicals in '81, and the successful efforts of organized crime and the Italian government to find him and return him to the US.

HBO's goal is to produce 24 historical movies for viewing in '84. Because of their international appeal, some may be shown overseas as well. □

Cable Ready?

By Robert Gerson

NEW YORK—Right now, there's no way a video fan can know for sure if the cable-ready TV set he or she brings home will receive all the local cable channels. Some cable-ready sets are only ready for select cable systems.

The confusion will end soon when TV makers adopt a new channel numbering and labeling standard developed by a TV industry group. The standard numbers the cable channels one through 99 and calls on TV-set makers to put stickers on their sets showing which cable channels they will receive. Consumers can then match the set they buy to the cable services offered in their town. □

RAM to Reign Over Games?

By Carl S. Kaplan

CHICAGO—For many frustrated consumers, buying a home computer is like purchasing a Barbie doll: Only after you buy Barbie do you discover that you need to buy a house, clothes, Ken and more clothes.

Videogame maker Coleco is out to change all that. This fall, the company is coming out with a home computer, a letter-quality printer, a typewriter-style keyboard and other peripherals—all in one box for \$600. The 80K RAM system, called Adam, will be compatible with all games for ColecoVision and all three ColecoVision expansion modules.

For video fans who already own a ColecoVision console and want to turn it into a com-

puter, an Adam conversion system will be available for \$450.

Atari will be coming out with four more home computers this fall, too. The new models will replace the Atari 400 and 800 machines, which won't be made after the end of the year. Atari will continue to make games for the 400 and 800 machines, though, even after the phase-out. The new Atari computers will accept all three forms of 400 and 800 software, including floppy discs, cartridges and cassettes.

The new Atari home computers, which will range in price from \$199 to \$1,000, are the 600XL, the 800XL, the 1400XL and the 1450XL. New peripherals for the Atari XL models include a letter-quality printer, a direct-connect modem, a CP/M expansion device, trackball controllers and a light-pen system. □

TITLES WAVE TA-TA

By Seth Goldstein

NEW YORK—If you're a Peter Fonda fan looking for a videocassette of *Dirty Mary, Crazy Larry*, or a Chaplin buff seeking *A Woman of Paris*, skip the rest of this and run out to the closest video store. Those tapes, along with 77 others on the CBS/Fox label, won't be around much longer.

The company is recalling them from store shelves this month, to be repackaged, re-priced, repromoted and re-released in a year or so, when the number of VCRs in American homes will probably have doubled. CBS/Fox figures it can sell more tapes when more people own VCRs. Besides, scarcity is likely to increase demand for the titles.

CBS/Fox isn't the only company taking its titles out of circulation. Walt Disney Home Video recently yanked five titles, including *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea* and *Gus*, for

what a Disney spokesperson calls "an extended period of time."

Warner Home Video pulled some of its music titles this winter, in conjunction with an



DEVO: back on track.

MTV promotion. But the tapes—including *Devo: The Men Who Make the Music*, *Blondie: Eat to the Beat* and *Paul Simon in Concert*—are back in stores, at lower prices now, too. □

(Cont.)

LOADED!

Once upon a time, you acquired a game cartridge for your Atari VCS by traveling to a store and handing \$20 over the counter. Well, that's about to change. A new company called Control Video Corporation is about to launch a videogame-by-phone system called GameLine that downloads programs directly into a VCS or VCS-compatible console. You won't even have to leave your living room to receive it.

Here's how GameLine will work: A user plugs a Master Module, which accepts the telephone wire plug, into the cartridge slot in his or her console. The module then automatically dials GameLine's central computer, and the user receives a set number of videogame plays—all within 60 seconds. Once a program is loaded into the Master Module's memory (8K RAM), the phone is free for normal use.

GameLine is estimated to cost \$15 for a one-time membership fee and about \$1 per game



GameLine to players: Videogames phone home.

play, both payable by credit card only. Parents can regulate their children's use of GameLine by establishing a weekly credit limit on their cards. The Master Module will cost about \$50.

So far, videogame companies that have agreed to license their games to GameLine include CommaVid, Imagic, Fox Video Games, Spectravision and Telesys. Activision has refused to join the service while Atari,

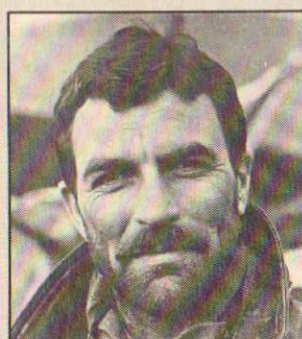
Coleco, Mattel and Parker Bros. are still negotiating.

A second company, CA-based Romox Corp., is also intent on revolutionizing the delivery of videogames. Under its scheme, a store, using a specially leased electronic terminal, will be able to program a new game onto a Romox-designed cartridge within minutes at a cost ranging from \$1 to \$20. (C.S.K.)□

Selleck Sells Thrills Cheap

Pity poor Tom Selleck. Not only is he responsible for collaring all the bad guys on TV's *Magnum P.I.*, but he's also been drafted to save Warner Home Video's plan to lower prices on the company's prerecorded videocassettes.

If *High Road to China*, in which he stars, doesn't sell lots of videocassettes at \$39.98, Warner may scrap its bargain prices and take the high road again itself. Tape sales of Warner's other bargain titles, *Best Friends* with Burt Reynolds and *Goldie Hawn*, and *Lovesick* with Dudley Moore



Tom Selleck: *Magic Magnum?*

and Elizabeth McGovern, have been disappointingly low for the company.

MCA, too, is having second thoughts about its low tape prices. The company first considered releasing a bargain-priced *Dr. Detroit*, then shifted its attention to *The Meaning of Life*, believing that Monty Python would be a greater draw than Dan Aykroyd.

With all the price cutting, the popularity of Thorn EMI's *First Blood*, which sells for \$79.95, has taken companies by surprise. They still can't figure out what Sylvester Stallone has over Burt Reynolds and Dudley Moore. Maybe Tom Selleck will show them. (S.G.)□

Odds Favor Telebets

By Gary Arlen

WASHINGTON—Although odds-makers put the arrival date somewhere between next year and never, the chances for at-home electronic gambling seem to be increasing. And some sort of videotex system will likely be at the heart of a telegambling

service, which will make the home TV set into an off-track betting center.

As cable and broadcast companies envision it, videotex gambling would be a TV-based extension of interactive videogames, offering bettors the chance to wager on the outcome of electronic tournaments—from the living room. Funds would be transferred electronically, into or out of a gambler's account.

But will state gambling regulators play cards? Will they let casinos into American living rooms? There's no clear indication that they will, even though an estimated \$25 billion is spent annually on legal bets and an estimated \$76 billion is spent on illegal ones. The rules currently on the books that govern TV and telephone transmissions restrict the development of telegambling services. So hold your horses for a while.□

MDS Adds Channels

By Lucy Huffman

WASHINGTON—Up until now, MDS (multipoint distribution system) has been a struggling one-channel technology which uses microwave frequencies to deliver HBO and adult entertainment to less than one million of the nation's viewers. But that could change thanks to a Federal Communications Commission ruling allowing multichannel MDS. The extra channels could put MDS on equal footing with cable or DBS (direct broadcast satellite) services, offering movies, news and sports programs through the air.

Despite the boost, a number of problems face MDS operators, not the least of which is the claim by the nation's religious and educational broadcasters that the extra microwave channels should be theirs. The obstacle which may prove in the end to be insurmountable, however, is a function of the MDS technology itself: Microwave needs a relatively direct line of sight between the transmitter and the home subscriber, and the most populous areas—where companies can attract the most subscribers and make the most money—are often blocked by high-rise buildings.□

PLAY TV

TV programmers are getting into the videogame act.

New this fall on broadcast TV is *Video Game Previews*, a nationally syndicated weekly program that will feature game reviews, playing tips, interviews with top game designers and telecasts of national videogame contests.

A second program, *Championship Pac-Man*, will appear on the Warner Amex Qube cable-TV service this fall. This half-hour taped presentation, produced by Kempton Werner and starring "world champion" *Pac-Man* player Ken French, is designed to teach Pac people how to raise scores to super levels. The show includes advanced game theory, pattern graphics and demonstrations. Tuition is free. (C.S.K.)□ (Cont.)

IBM BYTES NUT

Although IBM isn't talking, a number of computer industry analysts are betting that IBM's long-awaited "Peanut" home computer—the company's first home computer—will be available in stores before the end of the year. With a price tag between \$600 and \$900, the IBM machine would be sold right alongside home computers made by Apple, Atari, Coleco, Commodore and Texas Instruments. It might even force its competitors to lower their prices or drop out of the picture entirely. As one Boston analyst notes, "IBM's ability to set standards is extraordinary."

Insiders say that the Peanut will consist of a single keyboard/computer that can be plugged into a TV monitor. They expect it to have the 64K RAM needed to run VisiCalc's home management/financial program and WordStar's word-processing program—as well as built-in BASIC. It's also possible that programs for IBM's Personal Computer could also run on the Peanut.

Perhaps most significant is that IBM may choose to sell the Peanut in department stores such as Sears, JC Penney and K-Mart, rather than in computer stores. That, too, would be another first. (C.S.K.)□

DBS to Fly

Three multimillion-dollar corporations are racing towards a pay TV future in the sky which they believe is spelled DBS—direct broadcast satellite.

Satellite maker Comsat, press lord Rupert Murdoch and United Satellite Communications Inc. (owned by Prudential Insurance and General Instrument) all vow to be up in the air by at least next spring, bearing down programming to satellite dishes they hope to sell to rural Northeastern residents.

All three companies plan to offer five channels of service, which they say will be "the best of cable," two movie channels, sports, news and probably music. (J.G.)□



Second City TV Network gets second chance.

Cinemax Chuckles Over Comedy Coup

Cinemax, the 24-hour all-movie channel formed by HBO two years ago, won't be all movies anymore.

Set up as the movie lovers' service—with classic, cult, foreign and offbeat titles—Cinemax will begin running its first original series, which will be new versions of NBC's canceled *SCTV Network*. Instead of the Friday night

12:30 a.m. timeslot the parody show had on NBC, the series will now be seen biweekly on Cinemax in primetime in a 45-minute format.

Cinemax's *SCTV* will be missing the full-time services of John Candy and Catherine O'Hara, but Joe Flaherty, Andrea Martin, Eugene Levy and Martin Short will still be seen regularly. (J.G.)□ (Cont.)

Finally...a quality video audio processor originally designed for the professional market, now available to the home video enthusiast...

The Kramer Video Audio Processor Model VS-10

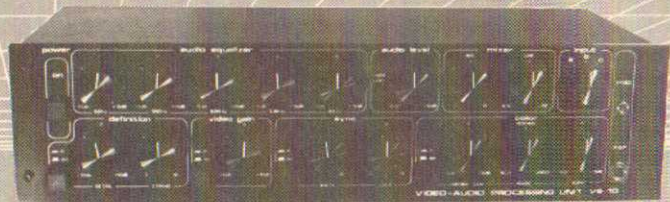
The Kramer Video Audio Processor Model VS-10 represents the newest advances in signal enhancement engineering, including original patented circuitry. The VS-10 merges electronic art in its highest technological form with the versatility you desire. The VS-10 allows you complete creative control of both your video and audio signal. Easily understandable and concise instructions will enable even a beginner to enjoy using this unsurpassed processor.

The Kramer VS-10 combines all new, exclusive design, high resolution video enhancement with full video expansion, video gain and fade control with full sync retention, video stabilizer with multi system stabilization, video color processor with complete color correction and color burst phase and chroma regulation, full bypass switching in each video section, RF video and audio conversion, digital three input video switcher with three isolated video outputs. The audio features include a five band audio equalizer, audio level and amplification with overload detection, a five input audio mixer including both line and microphone inputs and four individual audio outputs, a patented stereo synthesizer circuit with stereo line and headphone/speaker outputs. This allows conversion of monophonic videotapes for stereo recording and VCR playback through a home stereo system.

With all of its unique features, the Kramer VS-10 is ideal for the user of a single VCR or for multiple VCR rerecording.

Kramer Electronics is a leader in the fields of video and audio technology. Our statement, "Electronic Art at Your Fingertips," represents our ongoing commitment to state-of-the-art engineering. Customer satisfaction is our highest priority.

Kramer Electronics is sold at better video stores. For complete information and location of your nearest dealer, write to: Kramer Electronics, 48 Urban Avenue, Westbury, NY 11590. Tel. 516 333-5300. Dealer inquiries, please call 1-800 645-2318.



KRAMER

Kramer Electronics Ltd.

ELECTRONIC ART AT YOUR FINGERTIPS...
WHEN ONLY THE BEST WILL DO.

Guests Test Hotel Tex

If you can't wait for videotex to come into your home, you might be able to find it at the nearest hotel. Travelhost, a national company which publishes tourist magazines, has ordered 500,000 videotex terminals for hotel rooms in 80 cities.

Connected to the room's TV set, the terminals will enable guests to look up restaurant, tourist, airline and entertainment information, as well as news, sports and business data. The terminals, which will be installed by '85, also let users play videogames and send or receive electronic mail. They include buttons for Visa, MasterCard and American Express so that users can charge purchases and terminal fees directly to their credit card accounts.

Chicago's Midland Hotel was the first to be equipped with the Travelhost's electronic service. The company says it will also be installing terminals in other hotels including Best Western, Holiday Inn, Howard Johnson's, Marriott, Preferred, Ramada

Inn, Sheraton and Stouffer.

Travelhost is not the only company looking to install videotex systems in hotels. Hotel Tech International, based in California, has developed a similar system called "Suite-talk." (G.A.)□

Wrist Flick Switches Pic

Multi-multifunction remote control may be the coming thing in home video, as manufacturers accommodate viewers who don't want to pop up and down just to switch channels.

This year some Panasonic and Quasar TV sets have dual purpose remotes. The remotes operate the TV sets, and also their companies' VCRs. RCA has a triple-threat remote, capable of handling a Selecta-Vision videodisc player as well as an RCA color TV and VCR.

Each machine comes with its own remote, and if it turns out that consumers are being forced to pay for hand controls that they don't need, the companies say they'll consider giving out rebates. (R.G.)□

Japan Format Flies

Guess what you can buy in Japan but not in the US. This time, it's the VHD videodisc system, that third format that folded its tent in the US last year.

In Japan, however, the VHD format is said to be doing well. JVC predicts Japanese purchases of 150,000 disc players in the first year, compared with 50,000 VHS recorders the first year they were introduced.

Many of the discs to go with the VHD machines come from around the world: *Saturday Night Fever* and *The Jazz*

Singer from the US, *The Third Man* and *The Ladykillers* from Great Britain, and *The Blue*



VHD: for Japanese eyes only.

Angel and *Nights of Cabiria* from Europe. There are even titles from Japan, such as *Video Karaoke Gold*. (S.G.)□

YES: NOLAN

Settling a legal dispute that erupted last spring, Atari and its founder, Nolan Bushnell, have joined forces once again. The result could be a "third generation" of spectacular home videogames.

Under a new licensing arrangement, Atari, which Bushnell sold to Warner Communications in 1976, will acquire home videogame rights to

all coin-operated arcade videogames developed by Bushnell and his Pizza-Time Theatre chain of restaurants and videogame parlors. The arcade games are being developed by Sente Technology, a Bushnell owned subsidiary of Pizza-Time Theatre.

Last May Atari filed a lawsuit against Bushnell, alleging that he breached a contract that prevented him from competing with Atari. That suit has been dropped. (C.S.K.)□



Now when you buy JVC VHS videotapes, you can get these little extras.

JVC announces the Video Cassette Giftaway that'll make a lasting impression on your eyes and ears. Whenever you buy any grade of JVC's T-120 VHS videotape,* you can get more out of it than just outstanding performance.

Start saving tape inserts and you're eligible for up to 24 high-tech goodies. Including JVC high fidelity compo-

nents like turntables and cassette decks. Even JVC radio cassette recorders and more. All packed with features that only JVC can let you stagger* home with.

It's not a contest or a sweepstakes. The only thing you have to enter is your local JVC tape dealer's store. Then grab a flyer for details and start saving your Giftaway inserts.**

When you pick up a few JVC VHS videotapes, you never know what you'll walk out with.

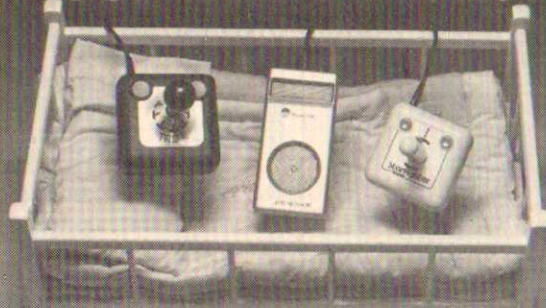
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JOYSTICK CONTROLLER FOR ATARI GAME, SEARS TELEGAME, ATARI 400/800, COMMODORE VIC.*

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Your ships will fly across the screen as easily as light flies through space. Your laser rays will fire exactly when you want them to. You will never go back to your old joystick again.



Suncom
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650E Anthony Trail, Northbrook, IL 60062

Starfighter™ for apple

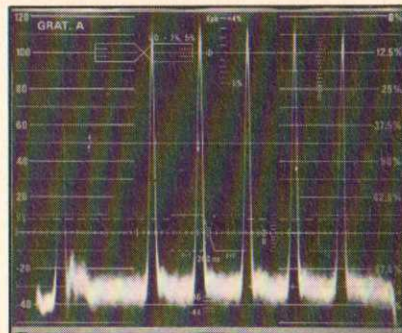
JOYSTICK CONTROLLER FOR APPLE COMPUTER*

You own an Apple Computer. You probably use it for entertainment and to play games. We think that you deserve a controller that is as up and keeping with new technology as your computer. So we designed one. From scratch. Brand new internally. Starfighter. For Apple.

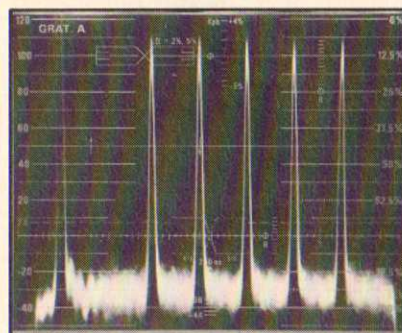
Starfighter for Apple has many of its Atari-compatible counterpart's exterior physical characteristics. Round-cornered and smooth, it won't fatigue you over those long playing sessions. And internally, its new, advanced design gives you a kind of feel and response during game play that you have never experienced before.

Of course, Starfighter for Apple comes with a 2 year warranty. From your friends at Suncom.

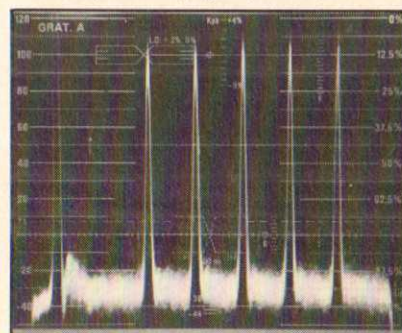
*Products and trademarks of Atari, Sears, Commodore, Apple Computer.
Consumer Hotline: 800-558-0003



Stairstep linearity: excellent at SP, TV out (Fig. 2a, above)...



...at LP, TV out (Fig. 2b, above) and EP, TV out (Fig 2c, below)...



...never exceeding a 5% deviation from perfect linearity.

that you should do so in one of the other speeds, preferably SP.

Summary

In terms of ease of use and number of worthwhile features, Akai's model VS-6U earned high marks. The sharpness control in particular, is an excellent feature, and the tape-transport operated smoothly.

The well-written owner's manual guides you step-by-step from the simplest functions to the most complex programming, but it's almost unnecessary thanks to that panel display. The latter provides a sense of assurance that the machine is doing exactly what we've asked it to do, and there's even a dimmer so you can control the brightness of this display.

Of course, we wish that the video frequency response of this VCR had been better at EP, but poor picture resolution at the slowest VHS speed seems to be a universal trade-off in return for the six- to eight-hour recording times possible at this speed. (L.F.) □

(Continued)

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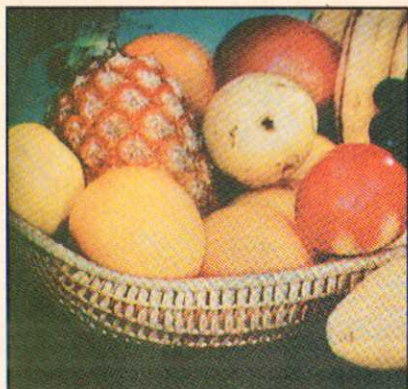
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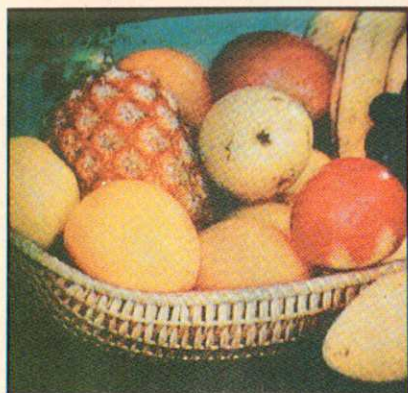
Wholesale inquiries invited.

the screen. Scanning interlace was also perfect. Transient response was excellent, and black-level retention, while not perfect, was very good, with a measured level of 85%. Black-level retention describes a TV set's ability to reproduce black areas in a picture when other portions of the scene are bright.

Color purity was excellent (Fig. 1), with unusually fine reproduction of flesh tones. Sensitivity of the TV tuner section was quite good, as indicated by the reception simulation tests. In these tests, various signal strengths are used to simulate different broadcast TV signal reception conditions, such as close-by, or urban reception (1000 microvolts of signal strength; Fig. 2a), suburban reception (200 microvolts; Fig. 2b) and fringe-area reception (100 microvolts; Fig. 2c).



Tuner sensitivity: excellent for urban reception (Fig. 2a, above)...



...with only a slight degradation for suburban reception (Fig. 2b, above)...



...and only slightly more degradation for rural reception (Fig. 2c, above).

If there's a weak spot in this monitor, it's in the sound system. Of course, given the small size of the cabinet, there isn't much room for a large speaker. Presumably, the company decided that for the speaker used, there wasn't much of a reason to install a powerful amplifier. Overall audio frequency response was only 150 Hz to 4 kHz. Output levels attainable with as much as 3.98% harmonic distortion were 75 dB. The external audio jack provides sound from the TV tuner, allowing you to play the sound through a better audio system.

Over-the-air signals were received at my lab (some 20 miles from TV transmission sites) with good signal-to-noise ratios using

the supplied dual-rod antenna. Switching to an outdoor antenna improved the reception to about as good as the American NTSC TV system is able to provide.

Summary

The Mitsubishi AM-1301 monitor/receiver is a superb product for TV viewing, for use with other video program sources or for use as a color monitor with a home computer—or all of the above. Our admiration for this set applies only to the video performance, and not to the audio quality, or rather lack of audio quality. Happily, the audio output jack even allows improvement in that area. (L.F.)□

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- Head Cleaner Kits for VCR
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Recorder
Model VR-20A \$825**

At 8.4 pounds, it may be a lightweight, but this portable, VHS-format videocassette re-



order can accommodate virtually all your taping needs, according to its maker.

The three-speed, four-head machine features stereo sound and a full-function wireless remote control.

It has 105-channel receiving capability and it can be programmed to record four events in two weeks.

The accompanying carrying bag lets you take the VCR with you wherever you go.

Canon, One Canon Plaza, Lake Success, NY 11042 (516) 488-6700



**SONY
Blank Tape
T-120 \$24.95**

Sony, making VHS tape? Yes, indeed.

The preeminent Beta tape and equipment manufacturer says this cobalt-adsorbed VHS tape is the first of a full line of VHS tapes in a range of lengths to become available in the next few months.

Sony, Sony Dr., Park Ridge, NJ 07656 (201) 930-1000

**VECTREX
Light Pen
Under \$40**

When you draw on one side of a Vectrex Graphic Computer System with this light-sensitive pen, images appear on the other.

The pen plugs into one of the system's controller ports. When used with accompanying cartridges, it lets you draw, write music and create animation.

Vectrex, 2333 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 220, Santa Monica, CA 90401 (213) 458-1730



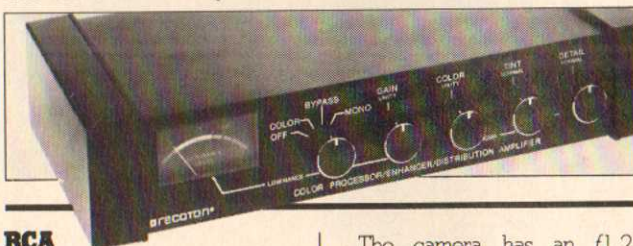
**RECOTON
Color Processor/Amplifier
Model V615 \$329.95**

You can tone up (or down) your tapes with this combination color processor/amplifier. The machine lets you tailor the shades and the shadows to your own

tastes in programs taped from TV or recorded with a camera.

It also allows you to plug in four VCRs at once for simultaneously copying from one source.

Recoton, 46-23 Crane St., Long Island City, NY 11101 (212) 392-6442



**RCA
Videocamera
Model CC030 \$2,000**

Here's RCA's first consumer videocamera with a color viewfinder. It has a solid-state MOS (metal-oxide sensor) image pickup and a 62-character titler.

The camera has an f1.2, 10.5mm to 65mm, 6:1 two speed power-zoom lens and a light sensitivity of 35 lux. -It weighs 5.7 pounds.

RCA, 600 N. Sherman Dr., Indianapolis, IN 46201 (317) 267-5000



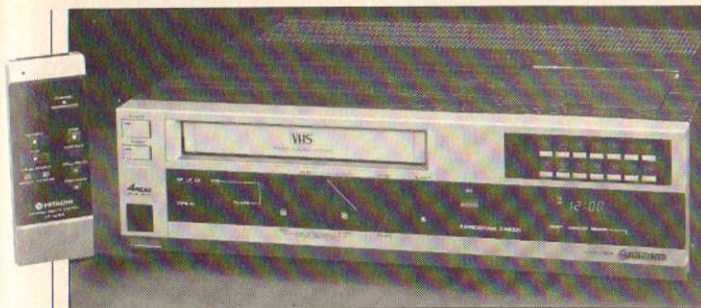
**PANASONIC
Portable Computer
Model JR800 \$499.95**

Here's a notebook-style computer that weighs less than two pounds. It's got a built-in LCD screen that can display 32 characters across by eight columns. It can be scrolled for up to 225 columns.

The machine contains a full keyboard and a numeric keypad. It has 16K RAM (expandable to 24K) and 20K ROM (expandable to 32K).

Panasonic, One Panasonic Way, Secaucus, NJ 07094 (201) 348-7000 (Cont.)

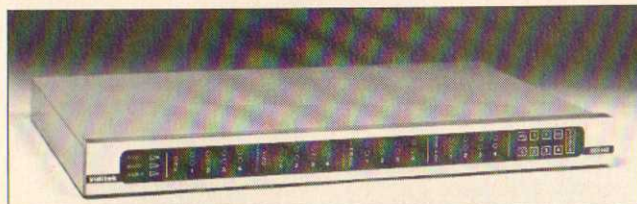
Unless otherwise noted, all New Products specifications are manufacturers' data—not results of Video Review tests. All listed prices are manufacturers' suggested retail. Availability varies.



HITACHI
Videocassette Recorder
Model VT18A \$995

This front-loading, VHS-format videocassette recorder has four heads and a 12-function wireless remote.

A three-speed tabletop model, this machine can be programmed to record six events over a two week period.
Hitachi, 401 W. Artesia Blvd., Compton, CA 90220 (213) 537-8383



VIDITEK
Stereo Video Switcher
Model SSV440 \$199

Flexibility's the name of the game with this stereo video switcher, according to its makers. It can connect any four

inputs to any four outputs. It also has a jack for a home computer.
Viditek International, 9134 Independence Ave., Chatsworth, CA 91311 (213) 998-8029



MAXELL
Blank Tape
HGX Gold T-120 \$32.95

This extra-high-grade tape is meant to provide sharper

resolution, crisper color levels and better sound than high-grade formulations. The uniformity of the magnetic oxide particles results in a lower number of dropouts, according to Maxell.
 Each cassette has a dust-free leader tape designed to prevent static electricity buildups.
Maxell, 60 Oxford Dr., Moonachie, NJ 07074 (201) 440-8020

SPECTRAVIDEO
Personal Computer
Model SV-328 \$595

Here's a personal computer that comes with two built-in programs—one for word processing the other containing programming information.

The system has built-in 80K RAM (expandable to 144K) and 48K ROM (expandable to 96K). It has 16-color graphic capability and can display 32 characters per line in the graphic mode and 40 characters in the text mode.

This computer features an 87-key keyboard with three special word processor keys, 34 keyboard-generated computer-



graphic symbols, a separate numeric keypad and an upper and lower case alphabet, according to its manufacturer.

It is compatible with all Spectravideo peripherals.
Spectravideo, 39 West 37th St., New York, NY 10018 (212) 869-7911

TOSHIBA
Monitor/Receiver
Model CZ-2013 \$899.95

There's more to see and more to hear when watching this 20-inch color TV set.

This model features a flat, square picture tube, two-way, four-speaker sound (with built-in speakers on the sides of the

screen), and audio/video terminals for stereo system, VCR or videodisc player hookups.

The set has 133-channel receiving capability. It has a wireless remote and comes with a 30-month product warranty.
Toshiba, 82 Totowa Rd., Wayne, NJ 07470 (201) 628-8000



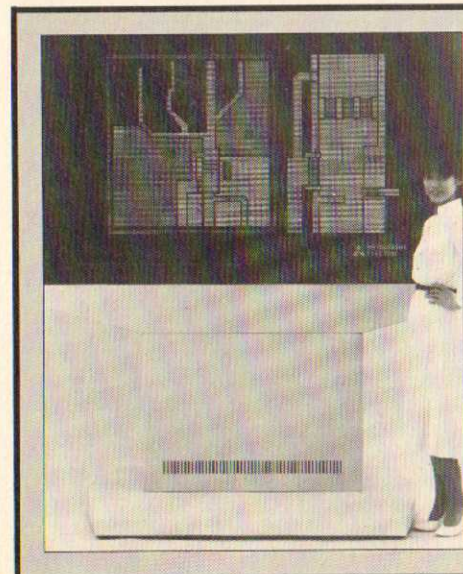
ON THE DRAWING BOARDS

CRYSTAL REGALIA: Mitsubishi has developed an 18-foot color video screen to hang on the wall. Demonstrated for the first time at the Summer Consumer Electronic Show, Crystal Color is a computer-controlled liquid crystal display (LCD) panel. It's made of a matrix of individual two-inch LCD squares, each containing sets of red, green and blue filtered elements. The panel itself is less than a quarter-inch thick, while the full display is just over an inch in thickness. Special fluorescent tubes give the display a brightness equal to that of a direct-view tube color TV set.

The matrix construction will enable Mitsubishi to offer a variety of screen sizes ranging from 5.4 feet up to the prototype's size of 18 feet (though the company says it can make panels that are even bigger). Available in the fall, Crystal Color is expected by the company to be first used only for industrial and commercial uses because of its price tag: \$100,000. Though lower-priced models are in the works, according to the company, the first panels will probably be used in hotels, airports and other public outlets.
 —Robert Gerson

DISC COUNT: Two more videodisc players will be added to store shelves this winter. Elmo, which discontinued its \$400 model last spring, expects to introduce another CED disc player—for less than \$200—in time for Christmas. Hitachi says its interactive version could be out by early '84.

WHAT YOU SEE . . . is what you get when you shoot your video movies with a portable VCR with built-in monitor. Sharp expects to have one out in January with four-inch CRT monitor. GE says it may introduce its own portable VCR with built-in monitor within a year.
 —Marcy Ressler



Exclusive: first voice-activated game



Championship Baseball: Do you voice recognize this game?

CHAMPIONSHIP BASEBALL ★★★★★

Designer uncredited. (Milton Bradley, TI-99/4A-compatible with MBX Expansion system. \$30 approx.)

By Michael Blanchet

Kids and computers are both used to hearing, "Do as I say, not as I do." The only difference between the two is that kids sometimes listen. Computers don't. Not until now, anyway. With the MBX Expansion system for the TI-99/4A, Milton Bradley has written chapter two in the book of speech synthesis. The company has also laid the groundwork for voice recognition as an integral part of computer games and video-games.

If any one category of games could stand a little improvement it would be sports games. Baseball is a slow game in real life and even slower as a computer game. Things take longer to happen, and the delay between command and reaction kills whatever realism the game has to offer. What's needed here is a catalyst, and voice recognition fits the bill perfectly.

In *Championship Baseball*, the defensive player is freed from the yoke known as the joystick. The fielders are controlled by voice

commands. After "training" the computer to recognize your voice, you need only repeat, for example, "first" to swing the first baseman into action. If the ball is in the hands of another fielder, the same command will cause that player to throw to first base. It's amazingly simple, easy to use and logical. Best of all, it speeds up game play to a pace comparable to that of pro ball.

Pro ball buffs can substitute the generic position titles with the names of real players. Thus, first base could be "Yastrzanski," second "Campaneris" and third "Nettles." A grounder sailing up the third base line is scooped up by saying "Nettles." Say "Yastrzanski," and the ball is now on its way to first base. If there were a runner on first who is now on his way to second and you say "Campaneris" and "Yastrzanski" in quick succession, the computer remembers both instructions and executes them with little or no apparent delay.

The same wizardry responsible for the voice recognition also pumps out the best-sounding computer-generated voices I've come across. Unlike similar games that claim to be "voice-enhanced," *Championship Baseball* is one of the few that can honestly claim to be so. An off-screen ump calls balls and strikes in a voice that is understandable and full of emotion.

Batters and runners are controlled manually with the wonderfully responsive joystick that comes with the MBX. As the offensive player, you can select the speed of your batter's swing by spinning the top of

the stick left or right. The defensive player uses the keyboard on the MBX to select the velocity and direction of each pitch.

The fluid play action is beautifully complemented by lifelike graphics. The ball, for instance, is followed by a shadow so fielders can properly judge the trajectory of a fly. By combining voice recognition with baseball, Milton Bradley has developed the ultimate sports game. □

BANK HEIST ★★★★★

Designed by Bill Aspromonte. (Fox, VCS-compatible cartridge. \$30 approx.)

By Mike McCaffrey

I spent 20 years of my life as a professional thief. I started driving for a bank robbery team when I was 17½ years old, so I'm pretty familiar with the ins and outs of the subject of this game. But I learned my lesson during 10 years in prison. Now I work with companies and individuals trying to prevent crime.

The object of this game is to travel through as many towns as you can, robbing banks while dodging and destroying police cars. Every time you dynamite a car, another bank appears on the screen. If you knock over nine banks in a town (before you run out of gas or getaway cars), you move to the next town, where you get a new tank of gas and an extra getaway car. You also accumulate points (actually dollars). The four mazes resemble *Pac-Man*, but the game play and feeling are faster and more exciting than most maze games'.

This game gives you the same feeling as crime, with the same bottom line: The police are the winners. The farther you go and the more banks you rob, the more likely you are to get caught.

The beginning of the game is similar to the beginning of a criminal career—the easiness of it attracts you. There are lots of banks and no cops around. And when the police do start chasing you, they aren't very fast. But as you progress through different towns, the police become faster and smarter. Pretty soon, you're not just knocking over banks, but you're being hunted—constantly on the run.

I worked a year and a half as a getaway driver in a robbery team. We didn't just pick banks at random, but studied street maps and knew where the cops were at all times. It's exactly like this game, where you get an aerial view of the town.

Mike McCaffrey is the founder of It Takes a Thief, a crime-prevention consulting firm in Los Angeles.

RATINGS

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

When you're navigating through the streets, you must have total concentration. The physical dimensions of this game bring it down in scale, but the reaction time is about the same: It's condensed, but captures the feeling exactly. Each time you hit a bank, you're exhilarated, and every car you dynamite gives you a bigger thrill.

But the best tip I can give is the warning that crime doesn't pay, and you can learn it from this game. When you're done playing, you'll be frustrated because you didn't get away with it, and that's exactly how it is in real life. Sooner or later, no matter how many times you succeed, you'll have to pay the price.

My eight-year-old son thought this was one of the most fun videogames he's ever played. He had fun, and I know he learned a lesson from it. It's a great way to fantasize without hurting anybody. □

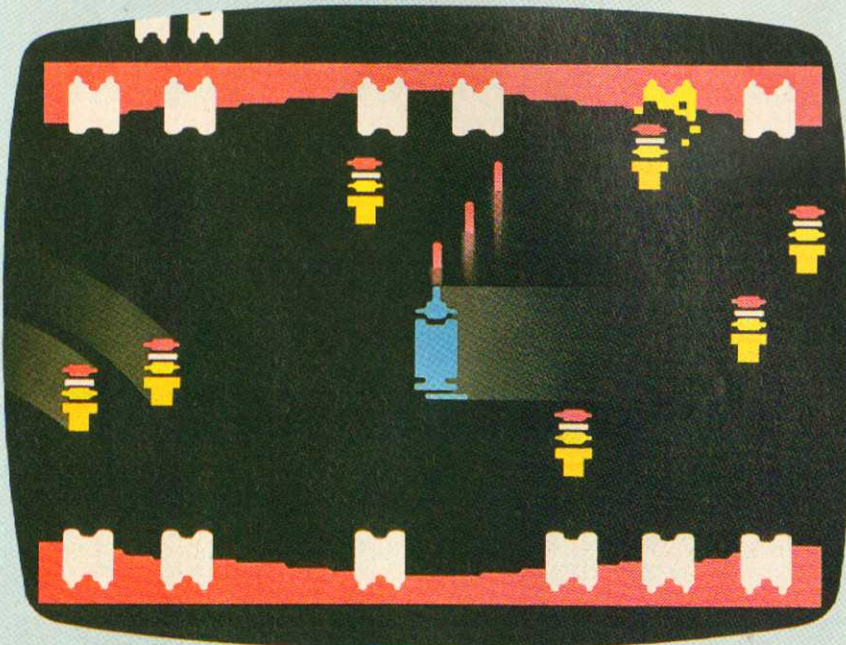
PLAQUE ATTACK ★★★

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

By Phil Wiswell
And Bernie DeKoven

Plaque Attack is a serious challenge with a good sense of humor that'll make you laugh and cry at the same time. The object is like that of protecting your cities in *Missile Command*, but you don't protect cities in *Plaque Attack*. Instead you protect four teeth, on both upper and lower gums of the crude mouth displayed on the screen, from waves of junk food.

Unlike *Missile Command*, alternate waves begin their attack from top or bottom, and your cannon (actually, a tube of toothpaste) can be positioned anywhere on the screen, but only facing up or down. The first eight waves consists of 24 hamburgers, hot dogs, french fries, strawberry candies, cherry gumdrops,



Plaque Attack: Ice cream cone decay threatens your molar management.



One step ahead of the law in Bank Heist: Does crime pay?

doughnuts, candy canes and ice cream cones that appear in trios and move toward your teeth at slow speed. If you survive all these objects with at least one tooth intact, or when you reach a certain score—whichever comes first—the waves begin again at a faster speed and with a zig-zagging motion.

Also unlike *Missile Command* is the fact that your shots are not limited, but your time is. You have just 35 seconds per wave to annihilate its 24 objects before your tube shrinks to nothing and you must use a reserve. We wish the size of your tube were not a reflection of how much time has gone by, but since it is you must try to destroy the waves in as little time as possible. The best strategy: To maximize your time, move your tube close to the

objects you must shoot. There are three ways to score points: First, for every object you hit; second, for the number of seconds remaining at the end of each wave; and third, for each tooth left intact.

The purpose of the fast food is to touch your teeth and drag them off the screen. When touched, you see your once white tooth turn yellow for a moment before it disappears. You can use that moment to shoot the object and save the decaying tooth. The game ends when you've lost all your teeth (you gain extras for every 2,000 points), so concentrate on the objects nearest the teeth and let the others pass off screen—they'll come around again.

A twist to the game is that losing a tooth causes the junk food to reverse direction and head for the opposite gum. So be prepared to quickly move your tube or you'll find yourself shooting the objects from behind. That's why we say the game will make you laugh and cry. It's funny to hear yourself screaming, "Watch out for the french fries!" But these are serious fries, bent on rendering you toothless. □

ULTIMA II ★★★

Designed by Richard Garriott.
(Sierra On-Line, two discs for the Atari 400/800 and Apple II. \$59.95)

By Ken Uston

If you like to pop in a cart (or boot a disc) and immediately start firing away at space aliens, *Ultima II* is not the game for you. If, however, you enjoy complex adventure-type challenges and are willing to spend dozens of hours in front of your computer solving complicated puzzles, you'll probably become addicted to *Ultima II*.

Ultima II is a magnificent accomplishment, awesome in magnitude. The game designer, Richard "Lord British" Garriott,

spent 14 months creating the game, assisted by three programmers, four game designers and five others who gave him "inspiration."

The player's goal is to seek out and destroy Minax, an "enchantress of evil" so wicked that the world she created makes Mondain's reign (in *Ultima I*) seem like a picnic in comparison. Minax diabolically spreads evil by sowing seeds of wickedness in the good, thus pitting good against good.

Ultima II comes with a well-written instruction booklet, which should be studied, not simply read. The user is provided with a cloth map of the world and a player's reference card, which mercifully summarizes the 26 possible instructions (including "Jump," to jump up and down to relieve frustration, and "Yell," which is "often used in tandem with Jump").

The first thing the player does is create

KILLER BEES ★★

Designed by Robert Harris.
(Odyssey, Odyssey²-compatible cartridge, \$34.95)

By Phil Gerson

Killer Bees looks like an attempt by Odyssey to cash in on the furor surrounding the strain of so-called Killer Bees that originated in South America and were supposedly moving north. However, just as the Killer Bees scare of a few years ago turned out to be little more than media hype, Odyssey's game also delivers less than anticipated.

Killer Bees puts you in control of a swarm of a dozen bees that roam the screen in response to your joystick commands. Their prey are several creatures called Beebots which continually move around on the screen. When your

higher levels. Not that this isn't challenging—as the speed increases, the game becomes more difficult. The question is whether you can stand playing it long enough to be really challenged.

Also disappointing are the sound and visual effects. I failed to see how the game was even partially enhanced by the few scattered and unrelated sounds that were programmed in. The visual effects are just average: The swarms of bees are just dots, and the Beebots rather unbelievable figures.

For those who decide to play *Killer Bees* despite its flaws, there are ways to extend your game for a few rounds. When an enemy swarm appears on the screen, it is green. After a few seconds it turns blue, then red. Only a red enemy swarm will actually pursue your swarm, so use your Bug Zapper on red swarms first. Also, in the higher rounds the Beebots can run faster than your swarm can fly. It is often helpful to have your swarm hover in one spot and let the Beebots run through it until they slow down enough for you to catch them. □

MISSION X ★★★

Designer uncredited. (Mattel, Intellivision-compatible cartridge, \$30 approx.)

By Mark Trost

There are sure to be plenty of volunteers for this mission. Intellivision's game designers have once again demonstrated their system's ability to deliver great graphics and game play with this arcade-quality, air-combat game. While coin-op buffs will swear the X in the title stands for *Xevious* and home game aficionados will see more than a passing similarity to Activision's *River Raid* and even Mattel's *B-1 Bomber*, all will admit *Mission X* manages to fly on its own.

Both a war simulation and an action shoot-'em-up (actually, blow-'em-up), *Mission X* takes place during an unspecified war, casting you as an expert bomber pilot. After taking off from a secret airstrip, you fly over enemy territory attempting to bomb anti-aircraft batteries, tanks, trucks, ships, bridges and trains, shoot down enemy planes and avoid heat-seeking missiles.

This cartridge is one of the few home games to deliver 3D-style play. As you climb and dive, the screen changes perspective: The ground actually appears to loom up as you get closer to land and fall away as you increase altitude. Bomb drops are also true to life as the time lapse between bomb deployment and delivery can spell the difference between a strike and a miss. Just in case you think war takes place only during the day, there's also a night battle sequence.

The variety of targets and obstacles plus the high-res graphics should certainly put *Mission X* on most Intellivision owners' shopping lists and show the system's advantages to nonbelievers. □ (Cont.)



The Ultimate adventure requires strength, agility, charisma and wisdom.

a "character," allocating 90 points among each of six attributes, including strength (damage that can be inflicted on a foe), agility (skill at wielding a weapon), wisdom (ability to cast spells) and intelligence (judgment to distinguish evil forces from good).

As the character progresses through the game, he or she acquires and uses various possessions such as hits (the number of blows that can be absorbed in battle and still survive) and food (the "fuel" which allows the character to continue).

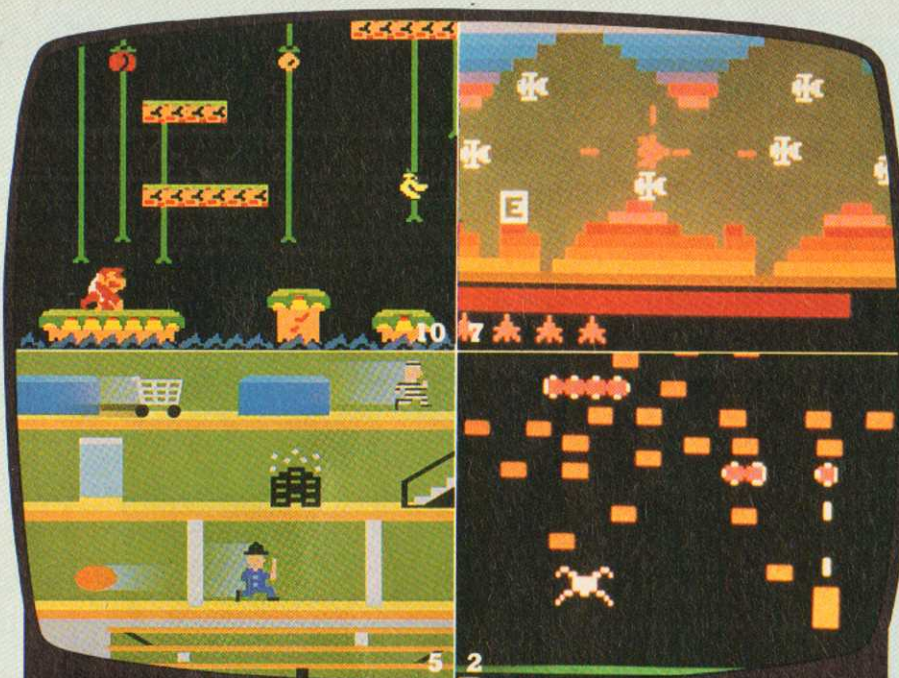
The character encounters many threatening entities, including orcs, thieves, fighters, devils and sea monsters, and progresses through villages, towns, castles, dungeons and even into outer space.

A book could be written containing nothing but playing advice and strategies for *Ultima II*. However, the single most important piece of advice is: Attempt to cause the character to transact in some way with everyone encountered. □

swarm of bees touches a Beebot, it's stung. Each sting weakens the Beebot, and it moves slower until it dies. When your swarm kills all the Beebots on the screen, you advance one level—which amounts to nothing more than an increase in the speed of the action.

To defend the Beebots, there are three swarms of enemy bees. If one of these swarms touches your swarm, some of your bees die. Losing all of your bees ends the game. Your defense is your Bug Zapper, which is charged up each time you kill a Beebot and is indicated by flashing orange squares on both sides of the screen that move up and down with your swarm. Pressing the fire button causes a beam to flash once between the two squares, killing any swarm in its path.

While the concept has merit, the game itself falls short on several counts. First, after a few plays it becomes rather tedious. Except for the increase in speed, nothing new happens as you advance to



Last Month This Month

Top Carts*

| | | |
|----|----|--|
| 1 | 1 | MS. PAC-MAN Designer uncredited. (Atari, VCS-compatible, \$29.95) |
| 2 | 2 | CENTIPEEDE Designer uncredited. (Atari, VCS- and 5200-compatible, \$34.95/\$39.95) |
| 6 | 3 | FROGGER Designed by Ed English. (Parker Brothers, VCS- and Intellivision-compatible, \$30) |
| 3 | 4 | RIVER RAID Designed by Carol Shaw. (Activision, VCS-compatible, \$31.95) |
| — | 5 | KEYSTONE KAPERS Designed by Garry Kitchen. (Activision, VCS-compatible, \$31.95) |
| 4 | 6 | SPACE FURY Designer uncredited. (Coleco, VCS-, Intellivision- and ColecoVision-compatible, \$30) |
| 5 | 7 | VANGUARD Designer uncredited. (Atari, VCS-compatible, \$29.95) |
| 9 | 8 | PHOENIX Designer uncredited. (Atari, VCS-compatible, \$29.95) |
| 10 | 9 | SWORDS AND SERPENTS Designed by Brian Dougherty. (Imagic, Intellivision-compatible, \$34.95) |
| 7 | 10 | DONKEY KONG, JR. Designer uncredited. (Coleco, ColecoVision-compatible, \$30) |

Behind the Top 10 Carts: The day of the \$30-plus cartridge may well be at a close. Hot competition among videogame makers and the failure of such game companies as Apollo, Data Age, U.S. Games and ZiMag is resulting in a buyer's rather than a seller's market. In most outlets, such recent titles as *Journey/Escape*, *M.A.D.* and *Infiltrate* are going for as low as \$5. Even companies still in business are slashing prices because of the game glut. Sega recently reduced the sticker price on its first two VCS games, *Tac Scan* and *Subscan*, from \$30 to \$9.95!

More bargain-priced titles are on the way, particularly as game makers begin offering specialty lines. Upcoming M-NetWork children's games, featuring *Rocky and Bullwinkle*, along with Atari's Sesame Street series are both expected to hit store shelves at approximately \$20. (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.

MOVIE TRIVIA QUIZ**

Designed by Paul DeMeo and Danny Bilson. (Wizard, cassette/disc for Atari 400/800/1200XL with 32K, \$24.95)

By Ed Hulse

Remember back in the '60s when the game of trivia became a favorite national pastime? Within about two years, you'll recall, the paperback market was deluged with a flood of books containing thousands of questions and answers relating to obscure points of motion picture, comic strip, sports, radio and national history.

Home computers should provide the ideal medium for reviving the trivia fad, an aim undertaken by Wizard Video Games with *Movie Trivia Quiz*. Introduced by the familiar "Hooray for Hollywood" theme, the game features 220 questions for game-playing movie-freaks. Players can set ground rules for the game. Scoring is rated as an addition of 10 points for a correct answer and a deduction of five for an incorrect guess.

Each player is represented by a colored owl in a strip across the bottom of the screen where his or her score appears. Players answer multiple-choice questions by directing a joystick-controlled light bar over what they believe to be the correct choices. Questions can be skipped, but these sometimes reappear later on in the game.

I'm not going to tip you off to the questions here; suffice it to say that they range from very easy to fairly tough. The hardcore movie buff won't find much here to tax his or her knowledge, but the casual moviegoer and Late Show addict should have some fun learning interesting facts about his or her celluloid favorites.

My real gripe is with the number of questions offered. If you play this game with some friends, it won't take very long to go through the 220 questions. Playing the game alone will delay depletion of the questions, but I found that less fun.

Movie Trivia Quiz is a good idea which deserves more elaborate treatment; a game with a larger selection and difficulty levels might be more successful. □

TROPICAL TROUBLE***

Designed by Steve DeFrisco. (Imagic, Intellivision-compatible cartridge, \$34.95)

By Suzan Prince

I love the "hero vs. bully" cartridge genre, in which your hero must overcome seemingly insurmountable odds to rescue yon maiden fair. *Tropical Trouble* is among the best of these games, and even goes a step further by adding in the excitement of a *Pitfall*-like island obstacle course. The straightforward objective is to steer Clarence, your hero, down a path littered with jungle paraphernalia by the bully—big dumb-looking Bruiser. Clarence's ultimate goal is to reach Doris, who flutters just out of his grasp.

(Continued)



Trouble in paradise: Clarence contends with coconuts, lava and a nasty native.

If Clarence isn't being bombarded with rocks from Bruiser, he's tripping over snakes, clams, ferns and hot lava pools, all of which slow him up in his lover's quest. At his most fleet of foot, however, Clarence scoops up the little white hankies Doris leaves behind as a trail. These give him "blushing vitality," allowing him to move fearlessly through every possible obstacle as long as a little tune plays in the background (about five seconds). Points are scored when he picks up hankies (50), touches obstacles while vitalized (50 each) and reaches Doris (100).

Between boards, you can watch Clarence's progress on an island map that pinpoints his position in relation to the end of the island. Getting from the volcano to the bridge is the hardest round no matter which level you choose. Above all, keep Clarence on the straight and narrow or prepare for an icky death in the lava pools. Whenever he lands a hankie, have him hotfoot it to Doris, touching everything.

Visually enticing with bright colors and an endearing main character, *Tropical Trouble* is a challenging skill game. □

TRON SOLAR SAILER ★ ★

Designer uncredited. (Mattel, Intellivision-compatible cartridge. \$36 approx.)

By Bob Borgen

The world according to *Tron* is a complex and sometimes confusing place. Understanding the game isn't a problem, but playing it is extremely difficult, making this possibly the best of Mattel's *Tron* games.

In this adventure, you navigate a "sailer" vehicle over seven increasingly difficult tracks in your attempt to have it reach the Master Control Program Center. Once it arrives, the second phase begins as you try to win by having your sailer first intercept

flying numbers and then insert them in their proper code order, which is given by one of the game's five voices. Although you earn points by having your sailer shoot obstacles in its path and by advancing it through the difficult tracks, the main goal is to destroy the MCP Center by overloading it. The points are nice, in other words, but they won't win you anything.

The embellishments are all very good. Each of the seven tracks in Phase One is in vivid colors. The game has two music themes, including a dramatic one that plays while your sailer travels along the energy beams on each track. And the different voices (supplied by the Intellivoice module) are both necessary for the game's success and varied enough to be either threatening or helpful. Some tips for Phase One:

- Don't bother having your sailer shoot grid bugs. Shooting them uses up energy. Your sailer should only blast enemy tanks when they're approaching.

- Write down the access code numbers for each track. Remember that the first of the five digits is always the track number you're on, and the second digit is always the same as that of your sector destination. The final three digits are random.

For Phase Two:

- When you try to have your sailer catch the flying numbers and insert them in the proper code order, ignore the "0"s. Just catch the "1"s and insert them in the right spots. The "0"s are already in the display.

Solar Sailer is like riding the rails on an alien world. The scenery is dazzling, but you can't let it interfere with your goal. □

THE TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE ★

Designer uncredited. (Wizard, VCS-compatible cartridge. \$39.95)

By Phil Wiswell

Role playing has always had a place in videogames, but in the vast body of games there is nothing to compare with this game. Assuming you can stomach the idea, your object is to maneuver your chainsaw-wielding character past obstacles in search of as many human victims as you can find before you run out of fuel. The murderer has to keep moving right or left in order to find the humans, and the screen scrolls in either direction. But your character must avoid fences, wheelchairs, sagebrush and cow skulls that slow down the bloodthirsty rampage.

If the theme isn't enough to keep you away from this cart, maybe this will help: *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* isn't much fun to play. And this is the only review I recall ending with this sentiment: I was grateful for the lack of graphic detail. □



Texas Chainsaw Massacre: a bloody mess?

VANGUARD★

Designer uncredited. (Atari, 5200-compatible cartridge. \$29.95)

By Dan Gutman

Vanguard for the VCS is one of the best games for that system (see May '83 *VR*). That game, like the original arcade game, is boredom-proof—you must shoot your way through seven consecutive tunnels, each with its own obstacles and weird enemies, before your climactic shoot-out with the deadly Gond. It is amazing that Atari could pack so much into a game for the so-called obsolete VCS.

The 5200 version *looks* even better. The graphics in the Mountain Zone, Rainbow Zone and Stick Zone are spectacular. The music is good. Gond is great. The 5200 controllers, however, are so slow to respond that the game is almost impossible to play. Forget about quick movements. You can't get across the screen fast enough to avoid a Harley or a wall. This game requires powers of anticipation far beyond those of mortal gamers. If you want to play *Vanguard* on your 5200, pray that Atari comes out with a different controller . . . or an expansion module. Then you can buy the excellent VCS version of the game. □

SOLAR FOX★★★

Designer uncredited. (CBS, VCS-compatible cartridge. \$30 approx.)

Solar Fox does not put pretty pictures on the screen. It's a simple, stark (nearly black-and-white), addicting, fast-action, territorial game. You pilot a Starship that flies over geometric grids of "pulsing solar cells" (plain old white blocks). To complete a board, you must touch each cell without getting hit by the fireballs being hurled from the top and bottom of the screen by "Guardian Sentinels." There are 20 waves and you have no weapons.

There are extras. Finish a wave in less than 10 seconds and you skip a wave. If you get through five waves, you get a timed "challenge" rack. Beat the allotted time and you get a "secret" letter. Six challenge racks and six letters later, you learn the "ultimate mystery" of *Solar Fox*.

My only complaint is that it's too hard to make accurate turns: The game may be too difficult. But then again, you may be quicker than I. (D.G.)□

CAKEWALK★★★

Designer uncredited. (CommaVid, VCS-compatible cartridge. \$29.95)

Anybody who says videogames aren't educational is full of it. Without the child knowing it, a game like *Cakewalk* can teach as much about analytical thinking and spatial relations as anything Piaget ever came up with.

The task is simple: Catch all the cakes as they roll down the conveyor belt, as in a well-known *I Love Lucy* episode. The conveyor belts move at different speeds, which forces you to use strategic thinking to catch all the cakes.

The game is fun as well. If you miss a cake, it falls to the floor and a little man with a broom comes along to sweep it up. Between waves, a cup of coffee rolls over to give you a much needed break. The graphics are simple but charming—the wheels on the conveyor belts turn realistically, and the birthday cakes have lighted candles. *Cakewalk* is an original, educational but fun game. (D.G.)□

JUMPMAN★★★

Designed by Randy Glover. (Epyx disc/cassette for the Atari 400/800/1200XL and Commodore 64. \$39.95)

By Sheldon Leemon

Just because a game is derivative doesn't mean that it can't be original. While a screen layout of levels of girders connected by ropes and ladders may give you *Donkey Kong deja vu*, the game play of *Jumpman* has a fresh, clean feel.

Most striking is the game's scope—there are 30 different screens to complete, grouped by three levels of difficulty. You can play each group as a set, all 30 in order or a random selection. The variety in play is remarkable: Although all the levels have the same basic goal (collect all of the bombs by jumping obstacles and avoiding pursuers), each level has its own unique twist. For example, one level features flying bricks which cause your *Jumpman* to jump when they hit him.

Best of all, this game has not only quantity, but quality as well. The graphics are very good in all 30 screens, and the animation and sound effects are excellent in both versions. By paying careful attention to important details, the designer of this videogame has really given *Kong* a jump for his money. □

ALIEN SOCCER★★

Designer uncredited. (DataAsstette, VIC-20-compatible cassette. \$19.95)

An exotic name alone does not make an exotic game. Although its title suggests otherwise, this game is closely related to *Pong* and the multitude of tennis, hockey and soccer games that it left in its wake.

You control two goalies that move up and down at the left side of the screen, trying to deflect a ball from your goal on the opposite wall, which is guarded by a column of aliens. Points are scored when the ball bounces off the wall and hits one of the flashing bumpers on the right side of the screen.

The graphics are colorful but very plain, and there is little game variation. The game can be played with a joystick, a paddle or the keyboard, but the last is frustratingly unresponsive. While the game loads and runs in the minimum amount of memory in the VIC-20 and doesn't cost nearly as much as the more sophisticated cartridge games, it clearly demonstrates the limitations of the VIC-20, rather than challenging them. (S.L.)□ (Continued)

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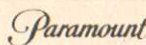
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KANGAROO ★ ★ ★

Designer uncredited. (Atari, 5200-compatible cartridge. \$34.95)

By David Tuller

Kangaroo, an enjoyable and challenging variation on the *Donkey Kong* theme, should keep you hopping back to it. Mamma kangaroo must jump over gullies, climb up trees and ladders and dodge and punch monkeys tossing apples every which way, all to rescue her little one held prisoner in a cage at the top of the playfield. Each game includes four screens with their own combinations of hazards and pitfalls. Mamma can't punch while climbing a ladder, so make sure there are no monkeys around tossing apples at her before she steps on that bottom rung. You get three kangaroo lives. One minor quibble—the second screen is by far the hardest, rendering the following two somewhat anticlimactic. □

WEB WARS ★ ★ ★

Designed by Patrick King. (GCE, Vectrex-compatible cartridge. \$39 approx.)

Shades of *The Hellstrom Chronicles!* In *Web Wars*, you control the Hawk King, whose mission is to capture 20 insect-like creatures. So what's so hard about that? Well, for one thing, the Hawk King is flying down the center of a huge "web of fantasy" that rotates back and forth to continually frustrate your perceptive faculties. For another, swarms of deadly drones are determined to fight to the death to protect the creatures. When the Hawk King entraps one of the space insects by touching it with the Capture Rod, a portal appears far back in the web. As it gets closer, avoid the drones and scoot the Hawk King into the trophy room, where he deposits the prisoners. Then, it's back to the web for more. The action in *Web Wars* is truly exciting and fast-paced, but it takes an inordinate amount of skill to capture even five or six creatures. When they first appear far down in the web, the creatures are much brighter than the drones. Use the extra time to prepare for the capture. (D.T.) □

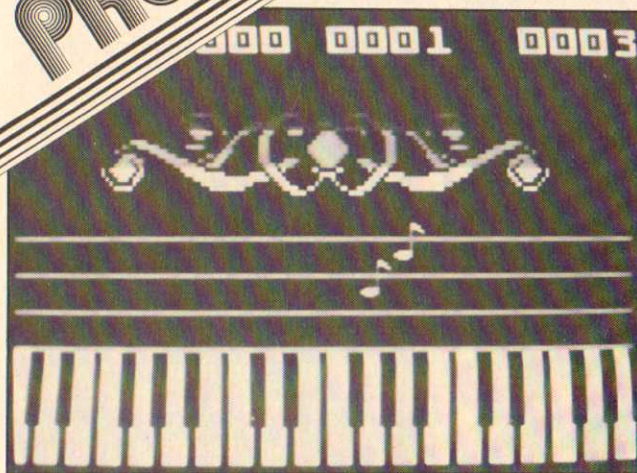
KILLER SATELLITES ★ ★

Designer uncredited. (Starpath, VCS with Supercharger-compatible cassette. \$14.95)

By Bernie DeKoven

The Supercharger allows VCS programs to contain up to 6,272 bytes of memory as opposed to the 128 bytes that comprise most VCS cartridges. But where is all that extra memory in *Killer Satellites*? To be fair, this version of *Defender*, in which you pilot a plane on a scrolling screen in search of your many enemies, is graphically superior to Atari's VCS *Defender*. But the game play is neither better nor worse, just a little different. With 50 times the memory, I expected more. *Killer Satellites* does not live up to the potential of the Supercharger. □

Coming next in cart, cassette, disc

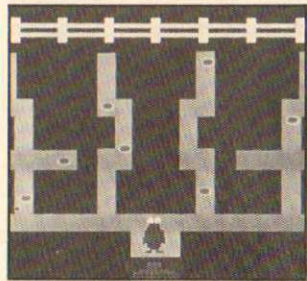


Shoot that tune with the music synthesizer in Melody Blaster.

BENI'S SPACE RESCUE Furry futurism. You and an on-screen Beni must equip your spaceship with fuel, food and other supplies, then journey through the universe to find kidnapped scientists, keeping an eye on the timeclock and the fuel gauge. (*Human Engineered Software, Commodore VIC-20*)

BIG BIRD'S EGG CATCH Hens sitting across the top of the screen busily lay eggs which Big Bird must catch before they hit the ground and break. (*Atari, VCS*)

COOKIE MONSTER MUNCH Using Atari's new Kids' Controller, you move Cookie Monster through a maze, gobbling cookies along the way. At more advanced levels, the Cookie Kid must gather the cookies and return them to the cookie jar. (*Atari, VCS*)



Cookie Monster Munchies.

CRACKPOTS A homeowner's horror. Hordes of insects are trying to destroy the home of your screen persona, who stands on top of the building throwing pots down to kill the insects. (*Activision, VCS*)

DARK TOWER, VOL. I You guide three warriors in their quest to find the four keys to the Dark Tower. They encounter boxes which may contain

nothing, something of value or a subplot from which they must escape. (*GCE, Vectrex*)

THE DREADNAUGHT FACTOR Your mission is to protect Terra, your home planet, from six deadly Dreadnaughts. Your spaceship must shoot the bomb silos on the Dreadnaughts before they reach Terra. (*Activision, Intellivision*)

FATHOM An enchanted dolphin swims the ocean in search of Neptune's treasure, but first it must transform into a seagull to find Neptune's trident. (*Imagic, Intellivision*)

FOOTBALL One of Coleco's first sports games as well as one of its first two-player games, this version of football uses Coleco's new Super Action Controllers which allow control of four characters at once. (*Coleco, ColecoVision*)

HANDY DANDY Your fix-it man must race against time and rising water to reach the top of the boiler room. He must contend with wild rats and disappearing floors. (*Gentry, Apple II*)

LOCO-MOTION With a timetable tighter than Amtrak's, you must engineer a train along scrambled tracks without derailing. Put the tracks together so your train can pick up passengers. (*Mattel, Intellivision*)

MELODY BLASTER As musical notes fall in the pattern of a popular song, you must hit the corresponding keys on the music synthesizer keyboard to shoot them down. (*Mattel, Intellivision*)

OSCAR'S TRASH RACE Garbage galore! In the first stages, you must

count the bundles of trash left behind by a garbage truck and select appropriately sized trash cans. Then Oscar races to collect all the trash and deposit it in a central bin. (*Atari, VCS*)

POLAR RESCUE In this underwater sea adventure, you must maneuver your submarine through the Arctic Ocean in search of a desperate diver. (*GCE, Vectrex*)

POLARIS You command a sub trying to avoid enemy subs, bombs and the ocean bottom on the way to a channel where your sub must contend with depth charges. (*TigerVision, Atari 5200, Atari 400/800, Commodore VIC-20, TI-99/4A*)

PSI WARRIOR Playing against the computer or up to three people, you teleport your warriors around a 3D, chess-like board, using bolts of energy to attack. (*Epyx, Commodore 64*)

RABBIT TRANSIT Your bunny must hop its way through three screens, avoiding snakes and poisonous moths and dodging falling objects. (*Starpath, VCS with Supercharger*)

RIVER PATROL Sinking suspicions. You're captain of a leaky boat which you must pilot upstream to a dam before you take on too much water. (*TigerVision, VCS, Atari 5200*)

Atari 400/800, Commodore VIC-20, TI-99/4A)

SEA BANDIT Your mission is to guide your sub along the ocean floor gathering as many lost jewels as possible before time runs out. (*Gentry, Atari 400/800*)

SORCERER'S APPRENTICE Based on the Disney classic *Fantasia*, Mickey Mouse, as a would-be sorcerer, must stop the brooms racing into the cavern. (*Atari, VCS*)

SPIDER QUAKE Eddie Eight Legs must wend his way across a busy highway and through the earthquake zone en route to Spider Mountain. (*Gentry, Atari 400/800*)

SPRINGER The sky's the limit as your rabbit hops from cloud to cloud, gathering treasures, in its attempt to reach the sun. (*TigerVision, VCS, Atari 5200, Atari 400/800, Commodore VIC-20, TI-99/4A*)

SWEAT You sweat it out as your athlete runs and jumps through the 10 events of the decathlon. (*Starpath, VCS with Supercharger*)

TUNNEL RUNNER You must find your way through randomly generated, three-dimensional mazes. Cart contains 8K chip that triples memory of VCS. (*CBS, VCS*)

GAME PLANS

SHOW AND GAME: The A-Team, Knight Rider and Magnum P.I. will soon be on TV as videogames from Studio Games, new joint venture of Atari and MCA Video Games. Under deal, MCA will license hit Universal movie and TV titles to be produced by Atari under MCA's supervision. Movie-based titles likely to include *Jaws 3-D, Psycho* and *Smokey and the Bandit*... In other joint venture action, CBS Electronics has made deal with Children's Computer Workshop to design entertainment/educational software for kids eight years old and up. First titles in summer '84.

THE CART MENAGERIE: Miss Piggy's Wedding to be first Henson title from Atari. Disney titles will include *Dumbo's Flying Circus* and *Sport Goofy*. First Peanuts game: *Snoopy and the Red Baron*.

COMPUTER KABOOM! Atari 400/800/1200XL owners will soon be able to play hit Activision games as company expands into computer games with computer versions of *Kaboom!* and *River Raid*... Imagic is also jumping in with VIC-20 versions of *Nova Blast, Dragon Fire, Fathom* and *Moonsweeper* and Atari 400/800 versions of *Atlantis, Fathom, Nova Blast* and *Moonsweeper*—to be released in fall.

GENTRY-FICATION: Software manufacturer Datasoft is introducing new line of low-priced (\$14.95 to \$19.95) games for Atari 400/800 and the Apple under Gentry label. *Magneto Bugs, Alien Munchies* and *Maniac Miner* are among first offerings... Under its own label, Datasoft will be releasing *Dallas* (based on guess what) and *Bruce Lee*.

TELE-GAMES: Control Video Corporation officially announced Game-line, a play-by-phone game system. Licensing games are Apollo, Command, Data Age, Fox, Imagic, Spectravideo, Telesys, TigerVision and U.S. Games. A selection of 40 games will be available this summer.

—Abigail Reifsnnyder