

Video Review

Equipment
Test Reports
and
Latest Tape &
Disc Reviews

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THE WORLD AUTHORITY ON

HOME VIDEO

**MARILYN
MONROE'S**
*Sexiest Tapes
And Discs: By*
**NORMAN
MAILER**

CBS Labs Report:
*How to Buy the
Right Videocamera*

First Work-Out
*Of VHD—Newest
Videodisc Player*

What Sales
*People Never
Tell You About
Video Gear*



FEBRUARY 1982
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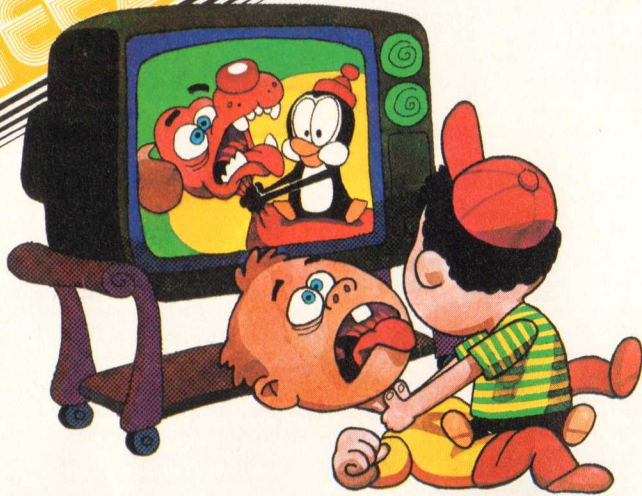
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TV Tea Party

"The table was a large one, but the three (the March Hare, the Hatter, the Dormouse) were all crowded together at one corner of it. 'No room! No room!' they cried out when they saw Alice coming. . . ."

The House of Representatives Subcommittee on Telecommunications is holding hearings on the impact of TV on society. Stay in line and pipe down; we're about to enter the committee chambers.

While you find your seats I'd like to pose a riddle. As everyone knows, Congressional committees (and subcommittees) hold hearings for the purpose of better fashioning legislation. The Subcommittee on Telecommunications last held hearings on TV violence in 1977. It was not considering specific legislation then, and it is not considering specific legislation today. Why then does a committee hold hearings, if it is not considering legislation? Hmmmm, there's no place to sit—too many TV reporters in the room. Let's stand by the back wall.

The distinguished person sitting in front of the microphone is Dr. David Pearl,

chief of the behavioral science research branch of the National Institute of Mental Health.

There is "a significant correlation" between doses of TV watching and violent behavior, says Dr. Pearl. "Overwhelming" evidence suggests "a causal relationship between television violence and later aggressive behavior."

Next up is Gene Mater, vice president for policy of the CBS Broadcast Group. "If Bugs Bunny pours a pitcher of water over Chipmunk's head, they consider that an act of violence. We don't." The level of debate is now established. □

With a Capital V

Professor Harold T. Hill, you may recall, was an



American scoundrel—the Music Man himself—who some 20 years ago exploited River City's fears about pool halls in order to sell the town some musical instruments for a right-thinking teenage marching band. These days, of course, pool halls are no longer considered the prime corrupters of youth. That spot's reserved for video games.

The electronic-era River City has to be Providence, RI. What makes the front page in the sedate Providence *Evening Bulletin* these days? Not Reagan-

Novel Success

Imagine yourself as the main character in a novel. The text, displayed on a video screen in front of you, narrates the situation. A "puppet"—your eyes and ears in the fantasy—periodically asks, "What shall I do?" whenever appropriate. You respond; the quest unfolds.

Welcome to the world of computer-assisted adventure games. Most entries in the genre engage a player in up to a 50-hour struggle with elves, pirates or dragons. But one recent addition to the sport, written by



omic budget cuts, not 8% unemployment, not even the fall TV schedule, but this: 20 video-mad teenagers were recently arrested for allegedly robbing parking meters of change to finance their "Pac Man" habits. Police confiscated over \$200 in coins as well as a stash of screwdrivers and pliers. Heavens!

Lt. James Higgans of the city's juvenile division told one reporter that kids today are "obsessed" with electronic video games. "A good kid can go bad if he's under pressure," intoned the cop.

Professor Hill, get thee to Providence! There's trombone money to be made! □

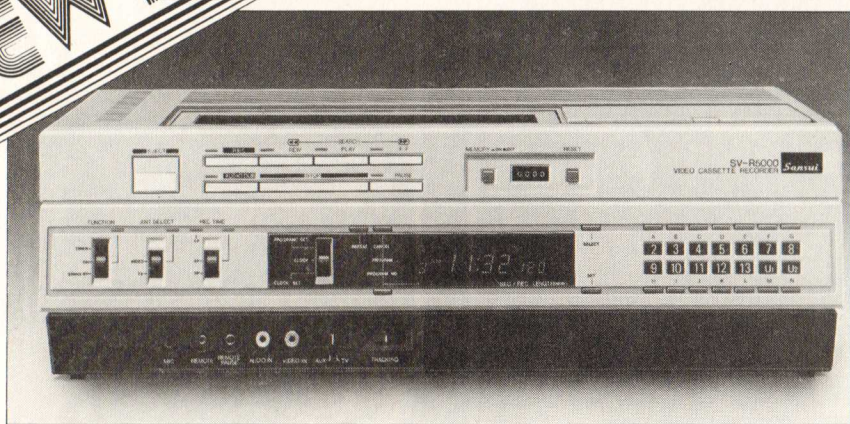
Chuck Benton and published by On-Line Systems, is a little off the beaten track.

"The year is 2020 A.D. Alas, the skies are green with plutonium, interest rates are quadrupling annually, the world has become weird and bizarre. . . . At the suggestion of a friend, you've decided to vacation in the notorious gambling town of 'Lost Vagueness' where women and games provide maximum diversion for the downtrodden work-a-day man. You set about to seduce three women before you return."

So reads the introduction to *Softporn Adventure*, the first R-rated fantasy game. □

**THE LATEST IN
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**SANSUI
Videocassette Recorder
Model SV-R5000 \$1,200**

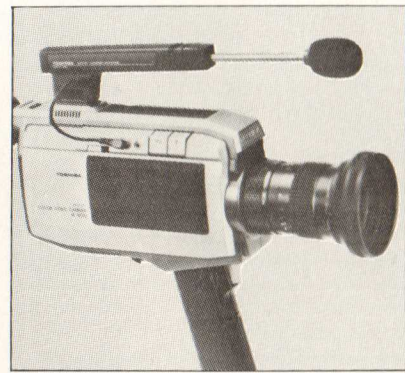
This first video product by a company long known for its audio equipment is a VHS-format model with 14-day/eight-event programmability. The Sansui SV-R5000 records in the two- and six-hour

modes and plays back in the two-, four- and six-hour modes. The top-loading VCR features two-times-normal-speed visual scan in both forward and reverse. It also includes a 10-function, wired remote control and four video heads. *Sansui, 1250 Valley Brook Ave., Lyndhurst, NJ 07071 (201) 460-9710*

**TOSHIBA
Videocamera
Model IK-1900 \$995**

There's a brand name famous among still-photo buffs on the *f* 1.6, 8:1 (12½-100 mm) lens on Toshiba's latest videocamera. Standard-feature capabilities of the Nikon lens include automatic zoom with manual override and macro focusing.

The IK-1900 offers automatic/manual white balance, three-position color and a brightness filter. A boom microphone sits atop. The image pickup tube is a modified ⅓-inch Vidicon. *Toshiba, 82 Totowa Rd., Wayne, NJ 07470 (201) 628-8000*



**QUASAR
Switcher
Model VE581U \$119.95**

For those who'd rather "switch" than fight with tangled video input and output cables, this video-component switcher from Quasar can help. It can interface up to five different video devices—including a VCR, a videodisc player, a video game console, a TV set and a personal computer or other component. A built-in RF amplifier helps counter signal loss. *Quasar, 9401 W. Grand Ave., Franklin Park, IL 60131 (312) 451-1200*

**COLECO
Video Game
Pac-Man 2390 \$55**

Save your quarters. Here's the first consumer video version of Pac-Man, one of the most popular arcade video games in the country. The battery-powered game duplicates the eat-and-run scenario on a six-inch (diagonally measured) screen. Aside from that basic game are selectable search-and-retrieval and two-player variations, plus an advanced skill level. *Coleco, 945 Asylum Ave., Hartford, CT 06105 (203) 278-0280*



**DISCWASHER
Video Head Cleaner
Under \$30**

You can clear the cobwebs—as well as dirt and dust—from your VCR's heads with this audio-accessory company's first video head cleaner. The dry-variety cassettes come in both Beta and VHS formats. Discwasher recommends a cleaning time of 30 seconds. (Photo unavailable at presstime.) *Discwasher, 1407 North Providence Road, Columbia, MO 65201 (314) 449-0941*

Unless otherwise noted, all New Products specifications are manufacturers' data—not results of Video Review tests or measurements. All listed prices are manufacturers' suggested retail. Availability of products varies according to supply and locality.

These are a few of my favorite games



Phil Wiswell

Having declined to contribute to the *Book of Lists*, the *Book of Lists About Books* and the *List of Books Listing List-Book Books*, I thought *Video Review* readers would appreciate an exclusive Top 10 list of

my own all-time favorite video games.

In all seriousness, I do seem to be getting more mail every month from readers interested in my personal favorites among the various video games. So here they are—but I must stress this: These are 10 recent games which just happen to appeal to my subjective tastes. Some game players will obviously find other games a lot more challenging or entertaining. But that's what makes horse races—the video version of the sport, of course.

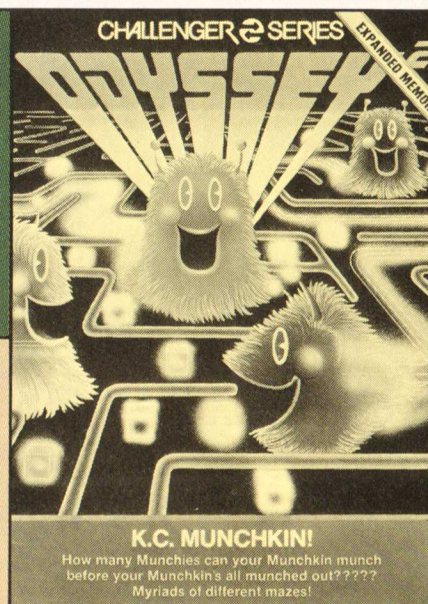
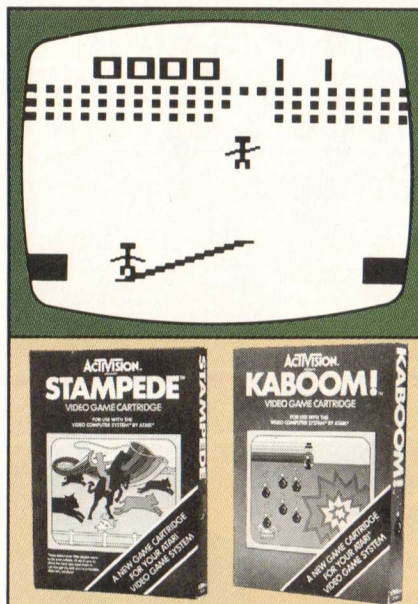
Incidentally, "Space Invaders" isn't on my list, because I think it's in a class by itself. It's the single game I would play if I had only one choice. The other 10 are impossible to rate in any special order, so...

Just Clowning Around

"Circus Atari" (from guess who) is what I consider a classic cartridge. I am sure the silly theme and the serious challenge it offers will always appeal to me. Who, after all, can resist a game in which you move a springboard back and forth trying to keep two clowns alternately aloft while aiming their pointed heads for the balloons on the ceiling? It is colorful, amusing, difficult to master and appeals to people of all ages.

Can You Munch Out?

The box that my "K.C. Munchkin" (Odyssey²) game came in says: "How many Munchies can your Munchkin munch before your Munchkin's all munched out?" That is the challenge and object of this brand new game. Yes, it is something like "Pac Man." In fact, it is a delightful new version of that principle. A variety of mazes, one



Favorite games (clockwise from right): Odyssey's "K.C. Munchkin," Activision's "Stampede" and "Kaboom!" and "Circus Atari"

chomper, many chompees and several bad guys to chase you around spells "K.C. Munchkin."

The Bomb Squad at Work

Only those who like their video games fast-paced to the point of nervous frenzy will enjoy "Kaboom!" (Activision). I suppose that covers every video-game fan. "Kaboom!" has the gut impact of its name as a menacing little bomber at the top of the screen lays out a series of bombs that will explode at the bottom. The only thing in their way is the player, who controls a paddle that appears to be a pail of water. Each successful round, the bomber drops more and faster bombs which must be caught in the order they are dropped. Miss one and, well . . . Kaboom!

Five Games in One

"Break It Down" (APF) is unique among video games, which makes me wonder why the company included the games "UFO," "Sea Monsters," "Rebuild" and four variations of "Shoot" on the same cartridge as "Break It Down." In any case, "Break It Down" is worth the price of the cartridge, even if you hate the other games. When the game begins, there

is a square composed of blocks at the bottom of the screen, with your "gun" at the top. As soon as you shoot out one of the blocks, the rest begin to rotate clockwise. The object is to shoot out all the blocks with the least number of shots, a difficult object since some of your shots will go through holes you've made. And when you have only one block left—brother, you can forget it!

Thank God for Hyperspace

"Asteroids" (from various companies) was one of the first violent blow-'em-up games to use inanimate objects for targets, which instantly appealed to a lot of people who found blasting space rocks into tiny pieces more to their tastes than disintegrating alien creatures. But to me, the fascination of this game is vulnerability: There you stand in the middle of nowhere—and I mean nowhere—as electronic asteroids gravitate toward your space ship. It takes great speed and dexterity to accomplish your task and stay alive more than a minute or two—and unlike playing "Space Invaders," you can't hide behind anything. Fortunately, the game is a good reproduction of its arcade parent, and the home version has a

"hyperspace" button that whisks you out of danger when necessary.

Keep 'Em Dogies Rollin'

Think you've seen everything? How about "Stampede" (Activision), in which your object is to herd electronic cows! That's right, you're on horseback, lasso in hand, chasing a pack of Herefords, Jerseys and Guernseys, roping them down for points. As with all good video games, the better you get the longer the roundup will last. No spurs in the living room please.

A Ball Park for the Den

"Major League Baseball" (Intellivision) has everything a decent ball park should have except the hot dogs and beer. (So buy your own.) Without a doubt, this is the best off-the-field game of baseball I've ever seen. You can play the game at different speeds, but there is no variation for playing alone against the computer. You must have two players. This is a disadvantage, but the computer-program space saved yields features not available on other video baseball games, such as base

stealing, catching a man in a run-down, bunting, pitch-out, pick-off moves, extra innings, an umpire who throws you out verbally. . . . With some of the best graphics available, I think you can see why this one hits home with me. (And I don't like real baseball.)

In Defense of the City

On the basis of the incredible success of "Missile Command" in arcades, Atari recently released a faithful home version, and it is every bit as enjoyable as its predecessor. Missiles from space begin to drop on you from every angle and you must explode them with your antiballistic missiles before they reach the Earth. Simple mechanics and 34 different variations make a game that all would-be generals will like.

Fokker versus Sopwith

"Red Baron/Panzer Attack" (Astrovision) is simply the best air-war game I've ever played. Against the computer or another human pilot, you select either the German or the Allied plane armed with only a nose gun. The game allows you to fly any

type of pattern—loop the loop, figure eights, spins, even upside down—all of which requires some fancy stick-work. There is cloud cover where you can hide indefinitely, but beware you don't come out of it with your nose pointed at the barn roof! "Panzer Attack" isn't bad either, but it's more typical of its genre than "Red Baron."

Engaged in Outer Space

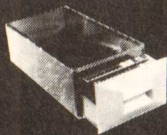
"Space Battle" (Mattel) puts me in my favorite cockpit, deep in space. The game appeals to me because it is more complicated than most. In the first place, you are engaged in not one but five separate space battles. Each squadron of enemy fighters moves gradually in different paths towards your home base, and you must go after them one by one. A radar screen can be put up at any point, showing the locations of the five groups, and with the touch of a button you are back to any particular sector of space. The graphics are not surpassed by any other video game, and neither are the sound effects.

Plus, because it is difficult to learn, the person who owns the cartridge will always be top pilot. □

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