

Video Review

\$1.95

THE WORLD AUTHORITY ON CONSUMER VIDEO

HOME-MOVIE MIRACLE

FIRST LOOK AT SONY'S ONE-PIECE WONDER

Buy a REAL Arcade Game—for \$199!

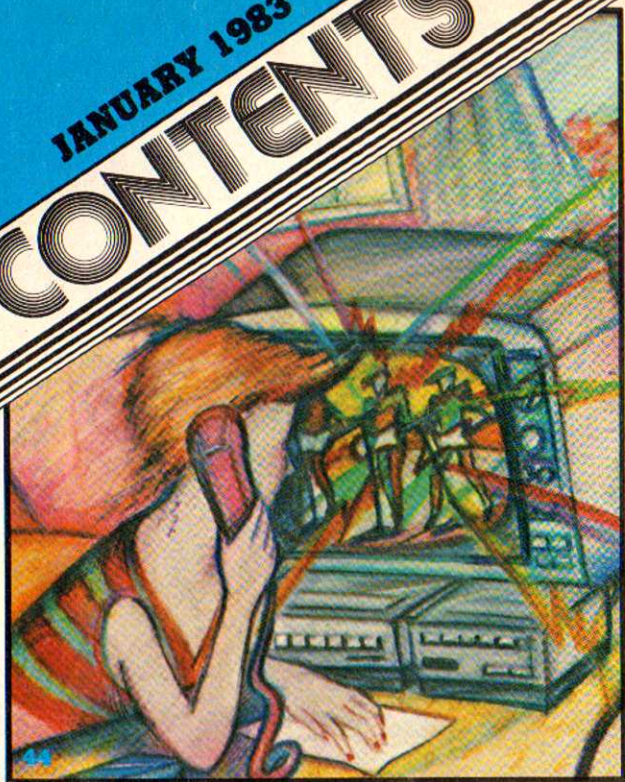
The Stereo TV Fiasco

SPECIAL:
Reviews of
STAR TREK II
And First
VIDEOGAMES
TAPE!



JANUARY 1983

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What's wrong with sex games?

"Hey, hey, ho, ho! Videogame porn has got to go!" They scrawled it on picket signs and screamed it down the New York streets when demonstrators rallied in protest over the latest hubbub in video—"X-rated" videogame cartridges. Now the slogans are growing into articles, speeches, lawsuits and bids to flatly ban the games by law.

As the critics charge, the first hardcore videogames are sexist, racist and stupid. They glorify rape, demean minorities and erode the image of videogames in general. These are serious charges—and they're all well founded, we believe.

That is, as far as the first few hardcore games are concerned. But we think it's essential to dis sever the overall notion of erotic games from the horrible errors of the first several cracks at concocting them.

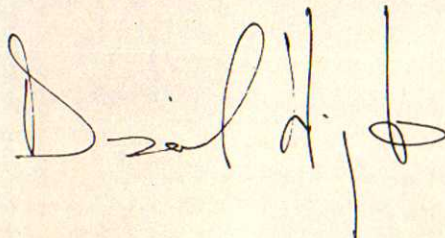
Games can be sexy, and sex can be fun, of course, whether or not one cartridge like *Custer's Revenge* is a piece of trash. So why can't a new realm of videogames for adults be exciting and moral while dealing with mature themes?

A few possibilities:

RHYTHM ACES A fun—and practical—game about the perils of recreational sex for game players morally opposed to birth control. For two players. Monogamous spouses must fight a growing barrage of contraceptives to consummate their love without conceiving—using the mysterious and unpredictable *rhythm method*.

PRO CREATION The ultimate family game, about making the ultimate family. A two-player team struggles with nature to conceive as many offspring as possible. For single players, a special test-tube mode.

WILD KINGDOM An educational game involving the wondrous variety of sexual practices in the animal world—many strange, if not sick, by human standards. Based on the private memoirs of Marlon Perkins.



Video Review

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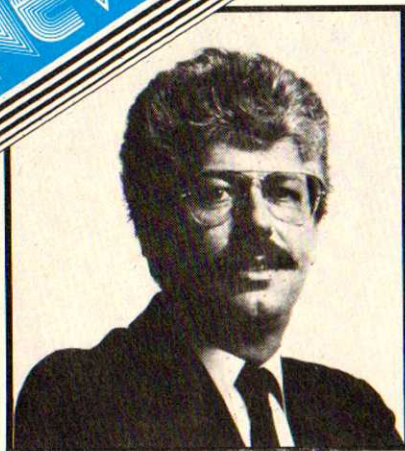
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Bunnies, Bo and other flashes



■ **BUNNY HOP:** Playboy is jumping into video, will bring magazine's unique blend of ribaldry and humor to TV screens via tie-up with CBS/Fox. First edition of Playboy Video cassette (\$59.98) and CED videodisc (\$29.98) is pastiche of nude Playmates, music (Playboy Jazz Festival, etc.), interviews (John and Bo Derek, etc.) and offbeat features (including one on famed Crazy Horse Saloon in Paris).

■ **FADING TECHNICOLOR:** Bold gamble by Technicolor to pioneer development of mini VCRs using quarter-inch tape has fizzled, with entire inventory sold to whacky entrepreneur Earl "Madman" Muntz. Technicolor had clearly hoped to beat Beta- and VHS-format VCR makers (still trying to hammer out standards for proposed 8mm system) at own game, but limited distribution and absence of support from other VCR companies killed idea. Technicolor will continue to sell quarter-inch, CVC (compact videocassette) equipment through professional video outlets.

* * *

■ **NEW TUNE FOR GRANADA:** TV, VCR rental chain Granada now talking about adding Projection TV sets, home computers to leasing programs. Though details sketchy at presstime, executives of expanding chain say projection sets could be added within six months, home computers in next year. Though British-owned company now has only 18 storefronts, plans over next few years call for significant nationwide expansion.

* * *

■ **BETA GET MOVING:** Seven Japanese companies producing Beta-format VCRs have stolen beat on rival VHS camp by jointly introducing lightest-ever conventional half-inch portable VCR. System weighs less than six pounds without battery (less than 7.5 pounds with); features five-hour recording time, forward and reverse scan; will sell in Japan for rough equivalent of \$770. Though US plans weren't definite at presstime, it's certain to show up here in near future. Only lighter half-inch VCR is JVC VHS-C unit (4.4 pounds without battery, 5.3 with), which uses tiny cassette with 20-minute recording time.

* * *

■ **COMPUTER BASICS:** Computer talk isn't cheap. Alien Group is introducing voice-synthesizer module for home computers, including Atari-compatible unit, for \$169. Module—available in tape or disc format—feeds voice through TV speaker. . . . Meanwhile, Spectravision, now supplier of videogame cartridges, says it's hitting stores with home computer priced at less than \$300. . . . Sharp is selling new home computer/13-inch color monitor combo for \$435 in Japan, could ship it to this country soon.

* * *

■ **NOW OR NEVER?** VCRs at all-time lowest prices. But Japanese VCR makers say excess VCR inventories (largely responsible for bargain-basement prices in US) will soon be thing of past, with voluntary production cutbacks already eating into oversupply. JVC exec Shizuo Takano, for instance, forecasts end to price cutting early in '83.

* * *

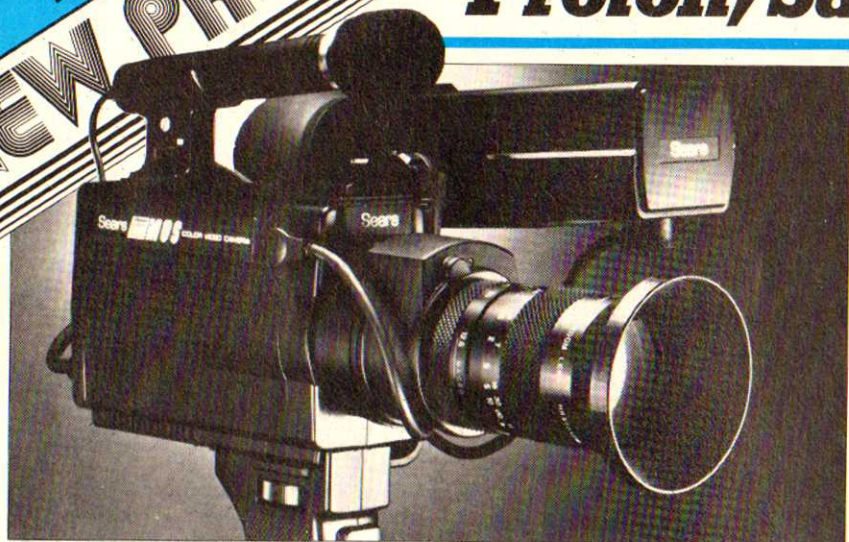
■ **VESTRON, WHO?** Vestron Video name may not have high profile of Paramount, Warner, other biggies in video field, but that could change soon. Company is aggressively snapping up variety of feature movies; recently locked up videocassette and videodisc rights to ABC's *Young Doctors in Love* and *National Lampoon's Class Reunion*.

* * *

■ **YUKON'T DO IT:** US Customs is stepping up war against Canadian mail-order houses shipping pay-TV decoders to customers in this country. Since FCC prohibits sale in US, customs agents are seizing Canadian decoders when they enter US mail and confiscating them from effects of border crossers.

THE LATEST IN
NEW PRODUCTS

Latest gear from Proton, Sanyo, more...



SEARS

Videocamera

Model 5389 \$1,499

It's easier to find tubeless video cameras, now that the nation's largest retailer will be carrying them.

This solid-state MOS videocamera weighs only 3.8 pounds. It comes with a 6:1, f1.4 (12.5mm to 75mm) zoom lens, a pause control and a boom microphone.

A remote switch on its carrying handle allows you to control your VCR's tape-transport functions from the camera.

Sears, Sears Tower, Chicago, IL
60684 (312) 875-2500

PROTON

Component TV System

600M Monitor \$650

600T Tuner/Preamplifier \$400

This component TV system matches a 19-inch monitor with a 105-channel, cable-ready tuner/preamplifier. The company claims the monitor's picture resolution is a sharp 370 horizontal lines.

It comes with a wireless, remote control. The pieces may be purchased separately.

Proton, Pacific Tower Plaza, 1431 Ocean Avenue, Suite B, Santa Monica, CA 90401 (213) 393-3721

SANYO

Videocassette Recorder

Model VCR-3900 \$399.95

Sanyo smashes the \$400 price barrier with the lowest priced VCR ever.

This two-speed, Beta-format recorder has electronic tuning. It can be

programmed to record one event over a period of three days, and its special effects are pause, scan and freeze-frame.

The one-piece VCR/tuner-timer weighs 17.5 pounds.

Sanyo, 1200 W. Artesia Blvd., Compton, CA 90220 (213) 537-5830



THE ALIEN GROUP

Computer Speech Synthesizers

Voice Box model AL-5001 \$169

Voice Box model AL-3001 \$215

You can put "mouth" in your computer's words with these programmable speech synthesizers.

The Voice Box will produce words, word fragments or sound effects typed into a home computer. The synthesizers can also be programmed to speak the commands in many computer games.

Model AL-5001 is for the Atari 400 and 800 computers and talks through your TV speaker. Model

AL-3001 is for the Apple II and II Plus systems and includes a speaker. The Alien Group, 27 W. 23rd St., New York, NY 10010 (212) 741-1770



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.



**ULTRAVISION
Videogame System
\$500 approx.**

Here's the first home videogame system that can be liberated from the home. The self-contained console comes with a rechargeable battery pack that can power up to four hours of travel-anywhere play.

All Atari VCS-compatible games are compatible with this system. It's equipped with two speakers, two headphone jacks and a volume control.

Ultravision will be expandable into a home computer with a keyboard module available in early '83.

Ultravision, 2315 N.W. 107th Ave., Miami, FL 33172 (315) 592-0878

**JVC
Videocamera
Model GZ-S3 \$950 approx.**

This pint-size camera is designed to be used with the mini VHS-C VCRs



for the most portable video setup now available.

Only 2.75 pounds, the camera has a half-inch Saticon pickup tube and a 6:1, f1.2 (8mm to 48mm) zoom lens. It also comes with an automatic-iris control and a detachable electronic viewfinder.

The camera and the VHS-C VCR can be connected by plugging each into a shoulder frame, available at additional cost. The total weight of the camera, recorder and frame is less than 11 pounds.

The camera is compatible with all JVC VCRs.

JVC, 41 Slater Dr., Elmwood Park, NJ 07407 (201) 794-3900

**MFJ
Video Control Center
Model MFJ-1440 \$219.95**

This "super black box" has all the ingredients to soup up a VCR. Five different video accessories are included, allowing you to sharpen and modify your picture.

The Video Control Center has an

enhancer, a stabilizer, a fader, a switcher and a distribution amplifier. For an additional \$50, you can purchase a model with an RF modulator as well.

It comes with a 30-day, money-back trial guarantee.

MFJ, 921 Louisville Rd., Starkville, MI 39759 (800) 647-1800



**SHARP
Color Television Sets
Model 19H600
Model 25H700**

Sharp's new 19- and 25-inch TV sets are stereo-ready with stereo amplifiers and detachable four-inch woofer speakers.

The sets have a silver mat finish and come with separate stands and

wireless, 136-channel, random access remote controls. There are audio/video input jacks in the front and back of the sets.

A three-color indicator in the corner of the screen tells you whether you're viewing broadcast TV, cable TV or a videotape or disc.

Sharp, 10 Sharp Plaza, Paramus, NJ 07652 (201) 265-5600



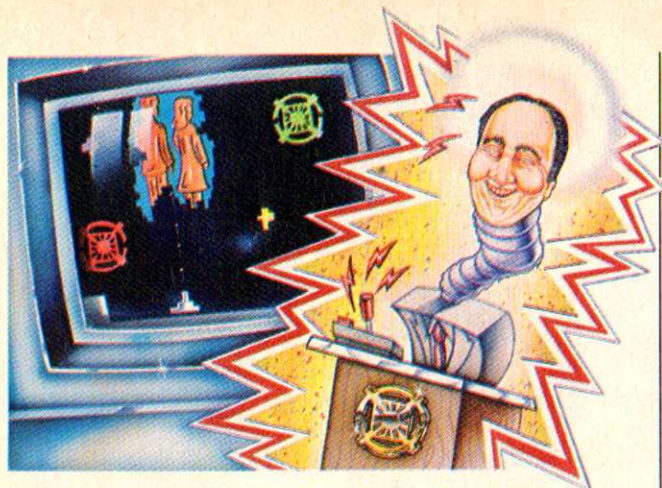
ON THE DRAWING BOARDS

SHRUNKEN HEADS, MOTORS, ETC.: In reaction to JVC's mini VHS-C VCR, Beta manufacturers will introduce mini-Beta machines weighing less than six pounds without battery and using standard Beta tapes. Insiders say they'll be front-loading, with four heads each and all the special effects of full-size recorders. **NEC** and **Sony** may make recorders available as early as March.

STEREO TO HEAVEN: Beta camp is also gearing up for stereo push. NEC, Sony, **Toshiba** will have Beta Hi Fi recorders out around April. **Marantz's** second stereo VCR will be out in May, though company is switching from conventional

stereo system to proprietary Beta Hi Fi. But will Beta Hi Fi tapes be ready? . . . On VHS stereo front, **Hitachi** has developed three- and five-head VCRs, set to be available in the US in June. Extra head is for special effects and is said to cut out noise and jitter as well as improve freeze-frame. . . JVC says it will not produce one-piece VHS camera/recorder combo along lines of Sony's soon-to-be-introduced "Betamovie," but will push on to 8mm combo to be released in about two years.

SEX AND DRUGS AND VIDEOGAMES: First rock 'n' roll videogame, called *Journey Escape* and involving the group Journey, will be out in January from **Data Age**. (B.J.)



hosted by porn star Marilyn Chambers (\$4.95 as an add-on, \$11.95 by itself).

Why two hours of the oriental programming would cost almost twice as much the three-hour adult service seems inscrutable. (D.C.)□

What's in A Game?

Litigation is the sincerest form of flattery—at least that's the way it seems with Atari. The videogame giant's latest lawsuit charges two Hong Kong manufacturers with stepping on sacred videogame ground—producing *Pac-Man* rip-offs. One of the alleged knock-offs is called *Crazy Moonie*, the other, *Puck Boy*.

What I can't understand is how anyone could come up with these names and not follow through with something other than another *Pac-Man* clone. *Crazy Moonie*? I'd love to play a game in which you have to pilot a flower-bearing member of a religious sect through city streets, swallowing dogma for extra points.

As for *Puck Boy*, the idea of flying around a Shakespearean maze of romantic entanglements sounds like a lot of fun, too. Except who wants to see characters make asses of themselves? (F.L.)□

More Spin-Offs

A flash from the researchers at *The TV Collector* newsletter:

Last month we presented some unknown, unsold TV-pilot ideas that were fortunate

enough to be reworked later to become hits. Now here's the rest (and apparently the last) of what we found in a pile of rare, dusty, old press kits. **ROCKY AND HIS FRIENDS:** starring Sylvester Stallone as a flying squirrel.

TONY ORLANDO AND DON PARDO: variety series in which Tony sings while Don gives out prizes.

PETE AND GLADYS KNIGHT: Harry Morgan replaces the Pips in this variety sitcom.

TIMMIE AND TOMA: touching family tale of a small boy and his policeman.

DAVEY AND MAGILLA: touching family tale of a small boy and his gorilla.

BRIDGET LOVES RAW-HIDE: a kinky show.

THE FARMER'S FATHER KNOWS FELIX THE CAT: the adventures of Robert Young's Swedish father and his kitty.

THEN CAME BENSON: Robert Guillaume as a wise-cracking government worker who motorcycles around trying to find work as a butler. □

Mount Eveready

Picture this: a stoic group of mountain climbers about to conquer Mount Everest. Now picture the excitement as an expedition member sets up the videocamera the group has carried along nearly 29,000 feet up to shoot the first live broadcast from the world's highest mountain. Picture microwave relays from Everest to the town of Katmandu.

Keep picturing, because it's

the only way you'll see any of this. Seems that neither wind nor snow nor anything else stayed the climbers of the most recent Everest effort from lugging that videocamera all but 3,000 feet from the peak of the mountain. That's when they discovered someone had accidentally left it on, draining the connected battery pack.

It's sort of like the song: Katmandu, Katmandu—a wonderful town. The mountain's up, and the battery's down. (F.L.)□

The Bad And the Ugly

Attention members of the Mucus Guild, the American Muck Club and the National Organization of Scurf. There's finally a video club perfect for you.

It's the Ugly George Tape Club, and it has to be the cheapest, crummiest, stupidest thing in video today. How could it miss?

As most aficionados of video dreck know by now, George—or, His Ugliness, as he likes to be called—became a weird kind of celebrity by roaming the streets of New York with his disgusting puss and a video-recording setup, which he employed to tape young female passers-by taking off their clothes in de-

serted doorways and alleys. He played the tapes for years on a New York public-access cable-TV channel as *The Ugly George Hour of Truth, Sex and Violence*. In fact, he began to attract a decent (in size, at least) audience, simply because he was showing naked young bodies on the tube. Then he got kicked off TV, simply because he was show-



ing naked young bodies on the tube.

Now His Nauseatingness has no show—and hundreds of hours of *Ugly George Hour* footage. So he's selling it. Himself, alone, with a VCR and a stamp machine. The man is lonely and poor, if not dangerous. If that's your kind of guy, the address is: Ugly George Tape Club, 314 West 52nd Street, New York, NY 10019. (D.H.)□



Reagan, revenge and a Crazy Moonie



Speaker of The Pac

What with President Reagan's kids all grown and busy standing in unemployment lines and denouncing nuclear arms, it's no wonder the chief executive isn't up on videogames.

"There are some things that're current today and sweeping the country that I haven't had time to get familiar with," he confessed at a recent Republican rally. "Pac-Man, for example, I don't know about. I asked about it, and someone told me it was a round thing that gobbled up money. I thought that was Tip O'Neill."

Speaker of the House O'Neill isn't opening his mouth about it. (F.L.) □



Scrabbling For Profits

Monopoly has lost its monopoly as the most popular game. *Parcheesi* is no longer bringing the big money

home to its manufacturers. Now the venerable word game *Scrabble* is suffering from declining sales for the first time in its history. The culprit, according to board-game manufacturers, is the videogame craze. But *Scrabble's* strategy for getting back in the running doesn't sound as though it's going to spell "relief" (nine points).

Selchow & Righter, makers of *Scrabble*, have hired a new ad agency to help change the game's image. Its short ads, airing right now to take advantage of the Holiday Bonanza, consist of beauty-contest winner, a baseball player in a ticker-tape parade and a bride leaving her wedding ceremony, all proclaiming, "I'd rather be playing *Scrabble*."

It's okay for games to be based on fantasy, but these ads may be going a little far. (D.C.) □

Rape, Racism And 'Revenge'

It was a stormy greeting for American Multiple Industries (AMI). When the company held a press conference in New York City to introduce the first X-rated home videogames, protesters rallied to lambast them in general and one game, *Custer's Revenge*, in particular.

"The game legitimizes rape and revenge," declared a spokesperson for the National Organization of Women and Women Against Pornography as the TV cameras zoomed.

"It's absolutely racist," said Michael A. Bush, executive director of the American Indian Community House.

The next day, a demonstration in front of the Hilton Hotel where the games were being shown at the National Music, Sound and Video Convention drew 150 protesters car-

in awe of their graphics," promises AMI. If they're anything as "graphic" as their first batch, round two of the sex-game battle will be hotter. (B.J.) □

With Three You Get Erotica

A subscription-TV service in the San Francisco Bay area has come up with an ingenious way to bring tiers to your eyes.

It's a new sort of video menu offered by KSTS of San Jose. If you pick one from



rying signs such as "AMI Makes a Game of Rape" and chanting "Hey hey, ho ho/ Videogame Porn has got to go!"

AMI at first took it all in stride. "We're certainly not displeased," said a company spokesperson. "Any publicity is good publicity."

But the protests have unnerved Atari, with whose game system AMI's games are compatible. Atari is now suing AMI for damages, claiming that the company used its name on its packaging and ads without authorization. At presstime, an injunction to halt distribution of the games and a court case were in the offing.

Nonetheless, AMI is going ahead and will even bring out another batch of adult videogames in January. "You'll be

Column A, you get Japanese-language programming from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. (\$19.95); one from Column B gets you Chinese-language programming from 9:00 to 11:00 p.m. (also \$19.95); one from Column C gets you three hours of Private Screenings, the erotic pay-TV service



By Mark Trost

No more fighting luses for a chance to play *Zaxxon* at the local bar. No more facing security guards—or police—to get yourself (or your kids) admitted into a videogame arcade. And, perhaps best of all, no more losing quarter after quarter after quarter to the coin boxes of video arcade games.

To more and more videogamers, an unusual alternative to the rising financial and emotional costs of playing arcade games is catching on fast. It's the little-known prospect of buying full-fledged arcade games for everyday use at home.

Like taking any electronic animal—from a juke box to a pinball machine—out of its natural environment, there are dangers in finding and nabbing the things, as well as in adapting them to domestic life. But when armed with some sound shopping guidance and a good understanding of the terrain, arcade fans can bag some great catches when big-game hunting.

How do you start? Arcade trade publications such as *Play Meter* and *Replay* are routinely filled with dozens of ads offering new and used machines to anyone who can ante up the price. If your subscription to the arcade trade papers just ran out, you might not have to look any further than your local newspaper's public notices column. Arcade-game distributors and arcade owners are increasingly turning to auctions as means of liquidating old inventories. (More on auctions later.)

'Cocktails' for Two Bills

Spanking new, a typical arcade rarely costs more than \$3,000. Yet most used games (those having seen some arcade or restaurant exposure) generally cost around \$300, no matter how popular they once were. Ironically, the same games which many videophiles might consider classics are actually the cheapest games around. For instance, an original Atari arcade *Space Invaders*, reconditioned, will command no more than \$400 to \$500. Some recent ads have even asked \$199 for a "cocktail" or coffee table version of the game, a model that could hold great appeal for game fans without a lot of extra space.

A refurbished *Missile Command* rarely tops \$600, with many priced at less than \$500. Similar prices are in store for fans of *Asteroids*, *Berzerk*, *Star Castle*, *Armor Attack*, *Super Cobra* and most other typical arcade games.

Monster-hit games, on the other hand, tend to command a lot more money, even if they were used (or abused) by a horde of fevered gamers bent on short-circuiting the devices. Used arcade versions of *Donkey Kong*, *Centipede*, *Defender* and, of course, *Pac-Man* and his *Ms.* often have asking prices of \$1,200 to \$1,800.

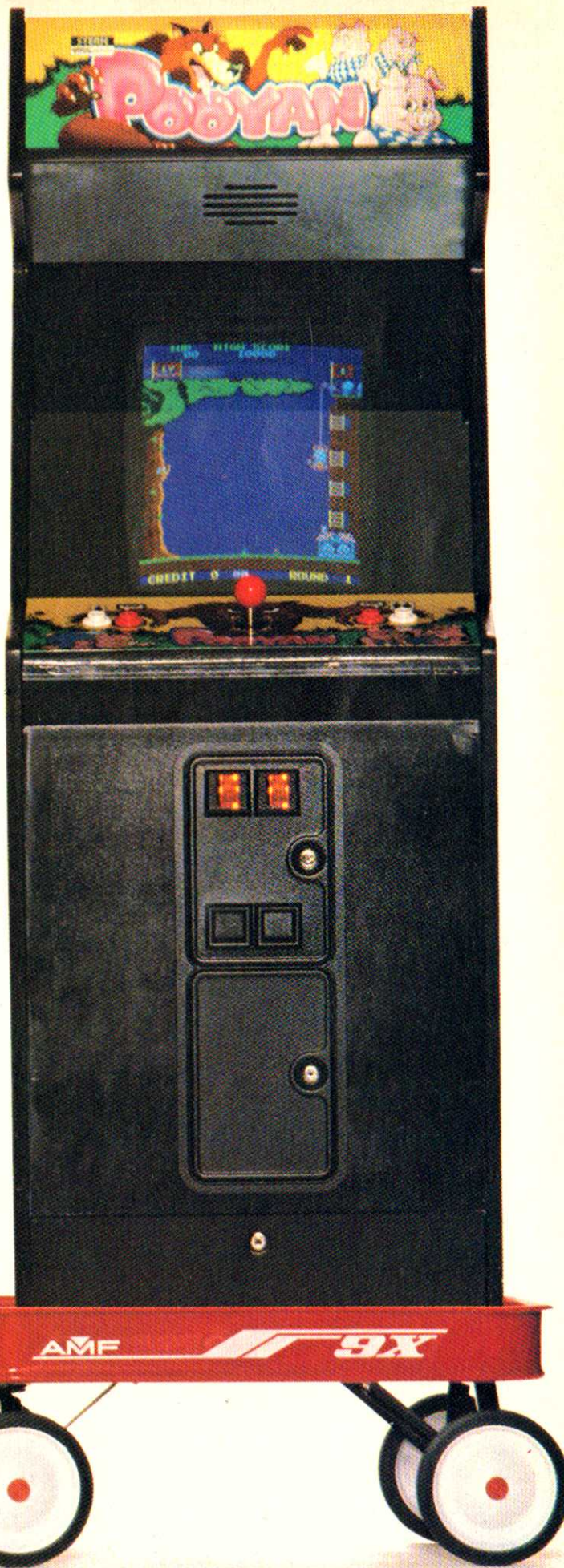
Why such a wide range of prices? It's a simple matter of supply and demand. Most games are not owned by the 7-11's general manager, for example. Rather, distributors actually own the games and either split the proceeds with the store owner or charge a flat rental fee. If the game begins to fall in popularity and isn't bringing in enough money, the distributor will replace the game with a new one and move the old model to another location along his or her route. If the game has been around long enough, and seen the entire route, it's ready for sale—to anyone who'll buy it.

"If a game isn't pulling \$50 a week, we try to sell it off," says Frank "The Crank" Seninsky, owner of Alpha-Omega

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WHERE TO START BIG-GAME HUNTING

Buying an arcade game for your home can be simple—or pretty complicated. You can call local arcades, ask if they're replacing any of their current models and strike up a deal. That's simple.

If that doesn't work, you can use the guide below for finding distributors (who supply games on the local level) with terms that seem reasonable to you. The auctioneers listed below frequently deal with arcade equipment, and may be able to get you a game you want at a good price. If neither of these tactics works, you can contact the arcade trade publications listed below and either find distributors for a specific game you want or place classified advertisements for the game.

DISTRIBUTOR SOURCES

YELLOW PAGES—"Amusement" and "Games" headings.

PLAYMETER

PO Box 24170,
New Orleans, LA 70184
(504) 838-8025

Type: Arcade trade magazine.
Frequency: bimonthly. Sub-
scription cost: \$50 per year
(US).

REPLAY MAGAZINE

PO Box 2550,
Woodland Hills, CA 91365
(213) 347-3820

Type: Arcade trade magazine.
Frequency: bimonthly. Sub-
scription cost: \$40 per year
(US).

DISTRIBUTORS

ALPHA-OMEGA SALES

3 Coral Street,
Edison, NJ 08837
(201) 738-1800

Type: Reconditioned arcade
games. Price range: \$360 to
\$2,350. Customer services:
30-day warranty; phone con-
sultation; in-home service (ex-
tra). Delivery: Will ship any-
where at buyer's expense
(average cost: \$50). Terms: 1/3
down, balance on delivery.

FAMILY AMUSEMENTS

Rt. 1, Box T-1222,
Charleston, WV 25414
(304) 725-0047

Type: Reconditioned arcade
games. Price range: \$195 to
\$1,395. Customer services: no
warranty; on-site inspection
available. Delivery: Will ship
anywhere at buyer's expense.
Terms: 1/3 down, balance on
delivery.

THE GAMES EXCHANGE

313 Nielston Street,
Columbus, OH 43215
(614) 221-3416

Type: Reconditioned arcade
games. Price range: \$395 to
\$1,995. Customer services: no
warranty; services available
(extra). Delivery: Will ship any-
where at buyer's expense.
Terms: 1/3 down, balance on de-
livery.

PINBALL +

647 N. Euclid,
Anaheim, CA 92801
(714) 991-3311

Type: New and reconditioned
arcade games. Price range:
\$550 to \$2,400. Customer ser-
vices: 30-day guarantee on
electronic parts; service avail-
able (extra). Delivery: Will ship
anywhere at buyer's expense.
Terms: C.O.D.

AUCTIONEERS

A.J. WILNER & COMPANY

(201) 623-5690

Type: Holds auctions for ar-
cade operators and distributors
to liquidate used inventory in
New Jersey area. Price range:
open bidding. Customer ser-
vices: none; maintains mailing
list to advise of future auctions.
Delivery: none. Terms: 25%
down (cash or certified check),
remainder upon removal.

JOHN JAY & ORTIZ & COMPANY

(212) 799-9190

Type: Holds auctions for ar-
cade operators and distributors
to liquidate used inventory in
New York area. Price range:
open bidding. Customer ser-
vices: none. Delivery: none.
Terms: Cash or certified check
upon removal.

—Mark Trost

Sales, a New Jersey-based arcade-game distributor with a growing business in selling arcade games to the public. "It doesn't matter how new or old the game is, if it's not pulling its weight, it goes up for sale at a drastically reduced price."

Seninsky, who prefers to sell his games directly to individuals rather than through auctions, says that some games go on the selling block far faster than others. "Most games just don't have the popularity of a *Pac-Man* or a *Defender*. For example, not a month after *Space Duel* premiered from Atari, it was a dead game. No one wanted it. We started selling it for under \$1,000—almost 60% less than its original cost. In a few months it will probably be around \$500. Even highly played games last less than six months, so those games that may seem impossible to afford today, will certainly turn up in quantity at a good price, in short order."

Super Price Breaks

In his most recent *Play Meter* ad, Seninsky offered *Lunar Lander* for \$500, *Super Breakout* for \$375, *Space Wars* at \$475 and *Barrier* at \$500. "Right now," Seninsky says, "people are just beginning to pick up on the fact that you can actually buy an arcade game for little more than one of the home games and a few cartridges. Still, a collector's market hasn't developed yet, so prices remain low."

Seninsky believes that in a few years, the prices routinely quoted today for *Space Invaders* will be little more than memories. "Today you can buy a *Missile Command* machine for \$500. That's a real steal, because 10 years from now, when people realize how classic some arcade games are, and how they've revolutionized entertainment, the prices will be far higher. In the pinball area, for example, there are some display glasses (the bright designs at the head of the game that flash the score) that are worth far more than the machine originally cost. I think *Asteroids* and *Pac-Man* will go the same route."

Now the Bad News

On the darker side of the arcade-game picture, shoppers face some serious challenges. For one, most distributors selling arcade games to the public don't offer guarantees or warranties of any kind. (Seninsky is one exception.) As far as they're concerned, it's up to buyers to make sure the machines work and continue working. "It's like buying a used car," says "Billy" of Amazing Amusement Gallery in Long Island, NY, a typical games distributor who allows customers to inspect his wares before buying, but offers no guarantee. "Some will sell a '78 Chrysler for \$700, and others will sell the same model for \$1,400. It all depends on the condition, the mileage and what the operator thinks he can get away with. Arcade games are no different."

Indeed, some shoppers could consider the parallels frightening. "Mileage" on a game machine can be measured by the play meter inside most games. But like a car's odometer, any of these meters can be rigged. A wily dealer could tell you the machine came from Grandma's video arcade, which was only open on Sunday morning—and he could show you the meter to prove it. But a wise shopper should think twice before buying the story, let alone the game. Most distributors will go so far as to refurbish their machines before selling them. Under normal conditions, distributors say, most refurbished games could last five to 10 years or longer.

One thing that can hurt an arcade game is improper connection to an electrical supply. Most games come with

standard three-pronged plugs, similar to those on most home washers and dryers. By plugging a game into a three-pronged outlet or grounded socket, you should feed the right amount of power. "If you use an improperly grounded socket, you may cause glitches on the screen you never saw in an arcade," says Seninsky. "Another thing to watch out for is line surges that could also damage the circuitry. Just make sure the plug is grounded, and you'll be alright for the most part."

Auction Action

You can find most arcade-game distributors in the yellow pages under Amusements or Games. But, if those sources don't pan out, you might be able to find an arcade auction, usually listed in the newspaper classified section under such headings as Public Auction Sale or Bankruptcy Sale. Arcade games are most often auctioned by distributors or arcade owners looking to clean house of games that are no longer worth their weight in quarters.

The same companies handling the liquidation of businesses such as ice-cream plants and used-car lots are now handling videogames. "We started auctioning the games about two to three years ago," says Mike Sklar, an auctioneer with the New Jersey-based company A.J. Wilner and Co. The organization represents a variety of arcade game distributors, holding videogame auctions on the average of once a month. "For the most part, the operator sells off his or her losing inventory," says Sklar.

In a recent *New York Times* ad, a Wilner arcade auction offered such tempting titles as *Ms. Pac-Man*, *Berzerk* and even *Pac-Man*. But according to Sklar himself, the ad was almost a "bait-and-switch" ploy. "Many times," he says, "the distributor will throw in a couple really hot games to get people to come. Usually, those games are already pre-bid for a pretty hearty sum, but there'll still be some good buys. The average game goes for only \$200, and a really good *Space Invaders* sells for just \$350."

Playing First

At most auctions, shoppers are allowed to play with the machines for up to one hour before the bidding opens. But after that, whether or not the game will work is anyone's guess and only the buyer's concern. "No auctioneer will give you any kind of warranty," says Sklar. "You buy it, take it away, and what you do with it after it leaves here is nobody's business but your own."

Cash or certified check are usually the only ways to pay for a game at auctions, although deposits as low as

25% are often accepted until the remainder is paid, and the buyer carts away the game. Naturally, you should check the dealer's reputation before you sign the check.

Unlike the norm with direct distributor sales, auctioneers rarely make arrangements for delivery of arcade games. It's in the buyer's hands alone. Most distributors claim they can often ship videogames cross-country in less than a week for less than \$100. Even if an auction were held locally, getting an arcade game home by yourself could easily cost you \$200, should you have to hire a high-priced mover or rent a van.

So, yes, you can become the owner of a first-generation arcade *Space Invaders* machine for as little as \$199. But it's up to you to make sure that you're not the only generation that gets to play with it. □



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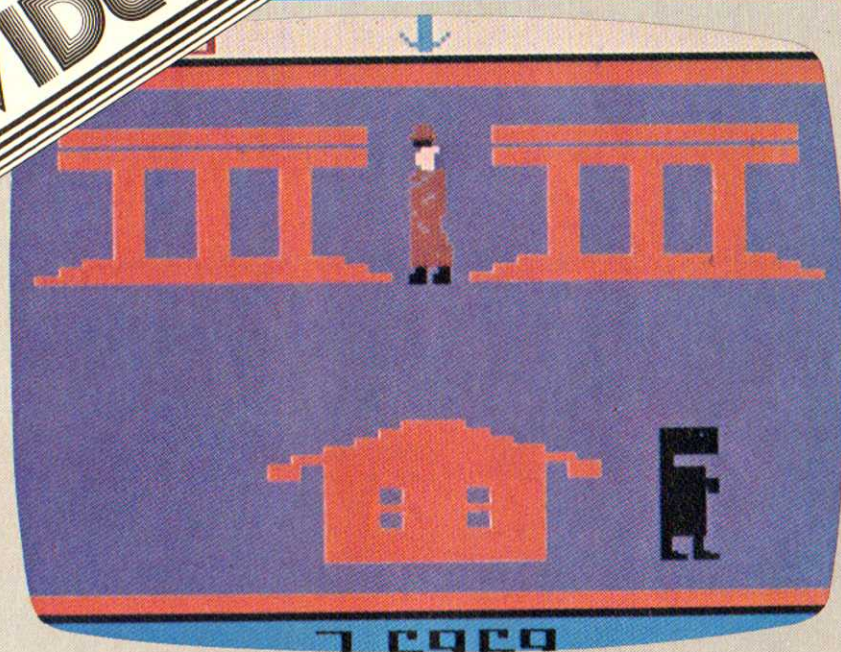
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E. T. home videogame arrives



E.T. goes videogame: Atari brings the alien home.

Cartridges

E.T. ★★

Designed by Howard Warshaw.
 (Atari VCS-compatible cartridge.
 \$39.95)

By Ken Uston

Home videogames have taken on a cinematic dimension recently, and my feeling is that it could work to the players' detriment.

First, Parker Brothers came out with a game based on a popular movie, *Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back*. Atari followed with *Raiders of the Lost Ark*. Now Atari has produced a cartridge based on the Hollywood megahit, *E.T.* Well, I don't think any of these games makes it, and I suspect the reason is because the game themes are contrived to resemble the movie themes. Moreover, I'm afraid this trend will continue, what with Atari's recent business agreements with moviemakers, in particular George Lucas and Steven Spielberg.

E.T. is an adventure game, similar to, but not as effective as, Atari's *Adventure* and *Superman*. In it, E.T. finds himself abandoned on our planet, and the player's goal

is to have him rendezvous with the returning spaceship that will take him home. But first he must find the three components of his interplanetary telephone, which are hidden in subterranean wells scattered throughout four screen configurations. After the phone is assembled, E.T. must find a zone from which he may summon his spaceship. Then he must rush to a landing zone, and await the arrival of his spaceship.

E.T. begins his journey with 9,999 energy units which are expended throughout the game. If E.T. eats the candy pieces he picks up around the various boards, his energy level can be restored. If all his energy is depleted, Elliott hastens to the rescue and revives him with 1,500 energy units, three times per game. E.T. must avoid an FBI agent and a scientist.

The graphics are effective, with deep green forest scenes, close-ups of the wells and helpful indicators at both the top and bottom of the screen. Naturally, the *E.T.* theme song is played as the game begins.

An annoying feature, though, and one I can't believe was intentional, is the frequency with which E.T. falls back into the wells after climbing out. This does nothing to enhance the game.

Two key tips:

- Watch the arrows at the top of the screen which indicate the direction in which E.T. can "hyperspace" to another board. Use these judiciously to move him quickly from board to board.
- Memorize the "call ship" and landing

zones' locations; toward the end, you'll need to find them in a hurry.

The wisdom of adapting movies into videogames eludes me, though. In many ways, videogames of *Gone with the Wind*, *Love Story*—or even *E.T.*—make about as much sense as a movie based on *Centipede* or *Donkey Kong*. □

CAT TRAX ★★★

Designed by UAL, Inc. (Emerson Arcadia-2001-compatible cartridge. \$39)

ALIEN INVADERS ★

Designed by UAL, Inc. (Emerson Arcadia-2001-compatible cartridge. \$29)

By Ken Uston

At first blush, the Arcadia-2001 appears as if it would find a niche in the consumer video market. It's a fine system for \$100, with about 20 cartridges, some really good and some not good at all. But the videogame revolution, in which a calendar year seems to equal a decade of technological progress, changes the picture dramatically. With a world of voice modules, fabulous strategy games, compatibility between different systems and increasingly better graphics, the Arcadia-2001 may be about two years too late.

Even so, this inexpensive system has a lot going for it. The console is compact, sturdy and good-looking. Its two controllers are virtually identical to those of the Intellivision console. There's a 12-button membrane (flat) keypad, firing buttons on the side and a control disc at the bottom. The two key differences from the Intellivision console are (1) there's one, not two, firing buttons on each side and (2) a knob is supplied which can be screwed into the disc, converting it to a joystick control. The Arcadia knob is a lot easier to operate than the Intellivision-type disc.

I've looked at the 10 cartridges that have been made available as of this writing. Some of the games (such as *Capture* and *Cat Trax*) are excellent; others (such as *Alien Invaders* and *Space Attack*) are average at best. To give you a balanced view, here's a review of two cartridges: one a well-designed, fun-to-play maze challenge; the other, a dull space game.

Had my first example, *Cat Trax*, come out just a few months ago, it would have been one of the best maze videogames for the home. In my opinion, it's more exciting and challenging than either the Atari VCS *Pac-Man* or Odyssey's *K.C. Munchkin*. Yet newer maze games, notably Coleco's *Lady Bug* and the Atari 5200 version of *Pac-Man*, have unfortu-

RATINGS

- ★★★★ Outstanding
- ★★★ Good
- ★★ Average
- ★ Below Average

nately surpassed the playability of *Cat Trax*.

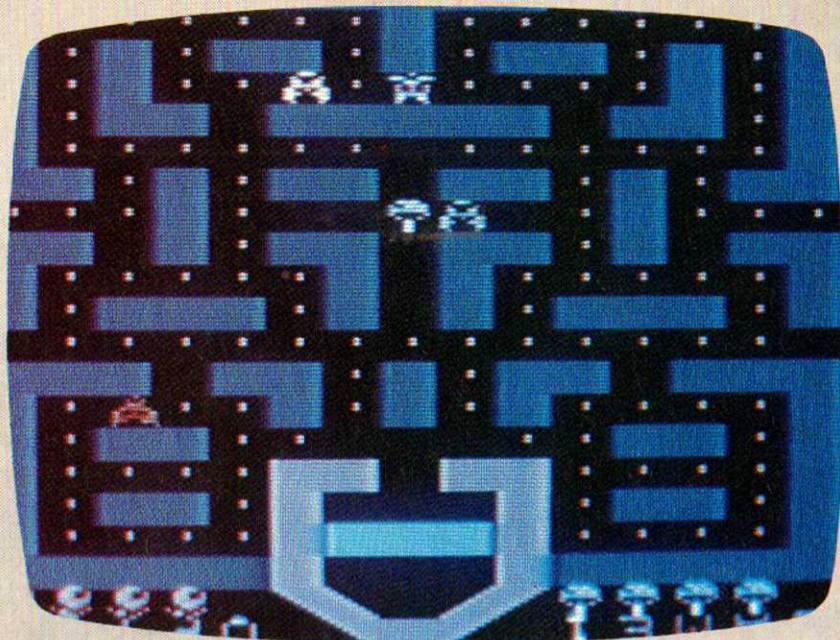
The description of the game will sound sort of familiar to Pac-maniacs. You control a little cat, which runs through a maze, eating dots as it goes. (The dots are called catnip.) The feline is pursued by three dogs and meets its demise if caught. However, a fish periodically appears in the center of the board. If the cat eats the fish, it's transformed into a speedy Dog Catching Truck which can turn the tables on the dogs, forcing them to return to their Doghouse.

The game offers four options, in which the mazes are virtually identical, but the number of tunnels through which characters may leave one side of the screen and re-enter on the other varies. Other options include a "warp" feature, which is similar to "hyperspace" in most games; pressing one of the action buttons causes the cat to de-materialize and re-materialize at a random location on the board. There's also a "gate" option in which four gates can be closed or opened to block out the pursuing dog.

My only criticism of this very catchy game is that the timing of the controls lags; it takes far more milliseconds than other maze games to get the cat to change directions. But once you get used to the delay, you can increase your maneuvering accuracy by moving the joystick sooner than normally in the desired direction.

A key strategy tip: When you're close to finishing a board of catnip, avoid the natural tendency to clean it off. Instead, stick around for a while, waiting for another fish or an apple to appear. Then your cat can eat the fish, catch some more dogs and eat an apple for many points.

Alien Invaders, my example of a not-so-terrific game, has nearly all the ingredients of the classic *Space Invaders*. It just doesn't put them together in a way that



Dogged pursuit in Emerson's *Cat Trax*: Pac to basics.

makes the gamer want to play it.

Overhead are 14 rows of five ferocious-looking aliens, each moving back and forth across the screen. You have a movable cannon at the base of the screen. Your cannon may fire upward at the aliens and duck behind three protective barriers which are gradually eroded by your cannon's missiles and those from the invaders. Yes, Virginia, there's also a spaceship that passes overhead which your cannon may target for additional points.

That's about where the similarity to *Space Invaders* ends. The alien missiles don't seem to be fired by the aliens, but materialize at a mysterious point below the attackers. The game annoyingly stops after five computer-simulated minutes, which is three minutes of actual time. Whenever a

spaceship is hit, the game is delayed for what can seem to be an interminable period during the fast action (and I use the term loosely) near the end of each board.

At the beginning of each game, we must wait impatiently as the computer sings its little *2001: A Space Odyssey* theme. Actually, the action in *Alien Invaders* is so uninteresting that we almost don't mind the wait; sort of reminds me of the restaurant where the food is so bad, you don't mind the slow service. □

ADVANCED DUNGEONS AND DRAGONS ★★★

Designer uncredited. Based on the TSR Hobbies game. (Mattel Intellivision-compatible cartridge. \$39 approx.)

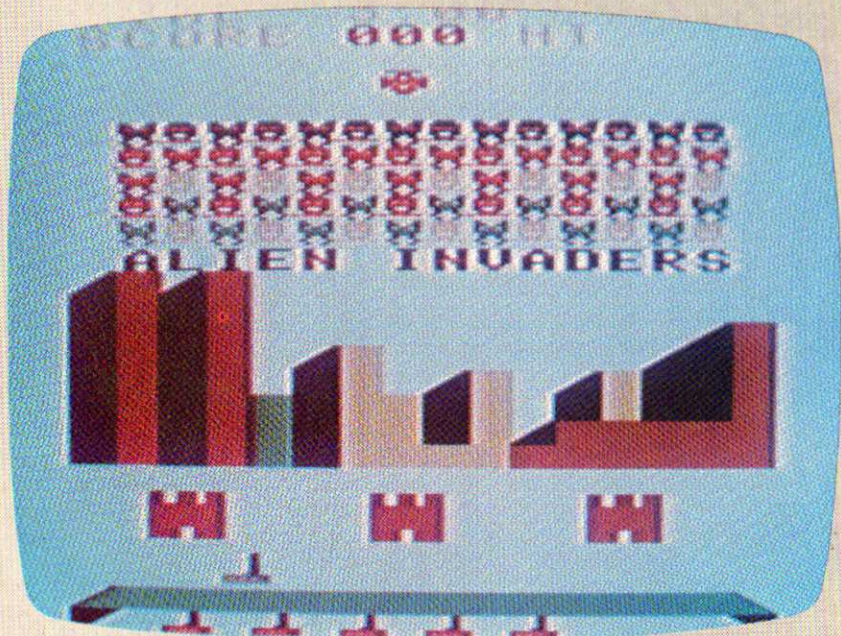
By Randall W. Lemon

One doesn't have to know how to play *Advanced Dungeons and Dragons*—the quintessential role-playing game—to enjoy Mattel's videogame version. In fact, it doesn't help at all, which is both a blessing and a curse. There are, you see, few other blessings or curses in what should be a magical game. Even so, speaking as an *AD&D* champ, I must say Mattel's conjured up a very playable and interesting videogame.

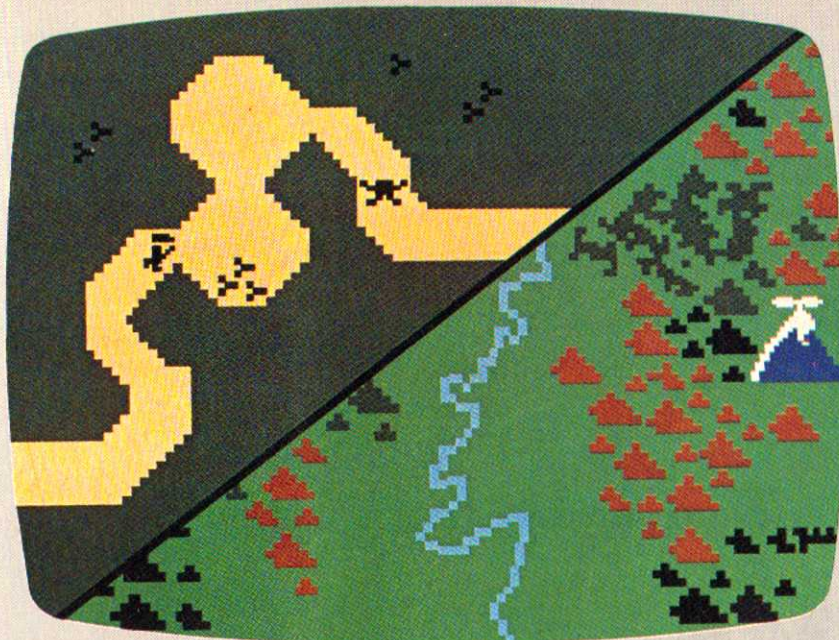
TSR's *AD&D* is not a board game, as many people seem to think, but a role-playing game limited only by the imagination of the players. Mattel gives it a good try, but a videogame can never present all the options that make *AD&D* what it is.

In the original *AD&D*, you can assume the role of a magic user, cleric, thief, ranger

Randall W. Lemon, the 1982 national Advanced Dungeons and Dragons champion, is compiling a supplemental work for role-playing games.



Emerson's *Alien Invaders*: In space, no one can hear you snore.



Inside a mountain in *Dungeons and Dragons*: swords, no sorcery.

and so forth, breathing life into a character and virtually living the part. None of these options is available with the videogame. The player gets a single heroic character (and two back-ups) who has no particular characteristic other than the ability to fight with bow and arrow. While I can understand the complexities of trying to reproduce a magical system as sophisticated as TSR's *AD&D*'s in a videogame, one would think that Mattel could have tried harder to do so. There is absolutely no magic of any kind in the game, neither clerical nor arcane. The character is nondescript, and there are only seven monsters: bats, which are annoying but seem to do nothing at all to affect the character; spiders, which don't hurt the character but do steal its arrows; and rats, snakes, demons and dragons, the last both winged and wingless, all of which attack and may destroy a character. To kill a rat, bat or spider, one shot is sufficient. Snakes, demons and wingless dragons take two, and winged dragons, three.

The purpose of the game is to advance your character from its house through several mountain cave networks, through forests, across rivers and over walls until it reaches Cloudy Mountain. Once in Cloudy Mountain, your character has to obtain the two pieces of the Crown of Kings. If you accomplish this, you win. It's that simple.

The mountains your character must pass through are represented by different colors to indicate their difficulty and what they contain. Gray is the easiest, but only extra arrows can be found there. In ascending order of difficulty are blue, red and purple mountains (containing boats, axes and keys as well as arrows).

The game offers four skill levels: sightseer, weekend adventurer, soldier of fortune and hero. The keys to the cartridge are the same as they often are in TSR's *AD&D*, namely,

stay alert and avoid a fight whenever possible. Many of the creatures announce themselves with distinct noises before they attack, so if you listen, you can often have your character kill a creature by simply shooting toward the sound. Be sure to watch out for ricocheting arrows, though. Final tip: It's best to get only what you need from each mountain and then get your character out without further combat.

A two-player version of the same game allows one player to control movement and direction while the other controls shooting and picking up needed objects.

I really enjoyed playing this videogame. The graphics are colorful, the sound effects are good, and the maze changes enough to keep the game interesting. This cartridge

may not be the *Advanced Dungeons and Dragons* that I know, but perhaps no videogame ever could be. □

DEMON ATTACK ★★★

Designed by Rob Fulop. (Imagic VCS-compatible cartridge. \$31.95)

DEMON ATTACK ★★★

Designed by Gary Kato. (Imagic Intellivision-compatible cartridge. \$39.95)

By Frank Lovece

Demons make great enemies. Aside, maybe, from S. Clay Wilson's boozin' and brawlin' Checkered Demon of underground comics notoriety, there haven't been many in literature or anywhere else that you could even tolerate, let alone call your buddy. And with E.T. having convinced us to make friends with aliens instead of having them for supper, who are we left to fight? Demons. So, blast them to ions, I say. Depending on your game console, there are two ways to do this—with Imagic's popular VCS version of *Demon Attack* or with its just released Intellivision cartridge.

In most comparisons of games adapted for the VCS and for other systems, the ones for the other systems usually win out. The VCS, say some, has started to take on the character of the Volkswagen—a low-cost videogame system "for the people," one ready to fill your screen with uncomplicated, no-nonsense games. Leave it to Mattel or Coleco or others, say the same voices, to give you RAM-guzzling luxury. Yet with such relatively recent VCS games as *Demon Attack*, Activision's *Pitfall* and Spectravision's *Planet Patrol*, to name just a few, the simple charm of VCS games suddenly becomes potent.

In the case of *Demon Attack*, the game play of the VCS and Intellivision versions

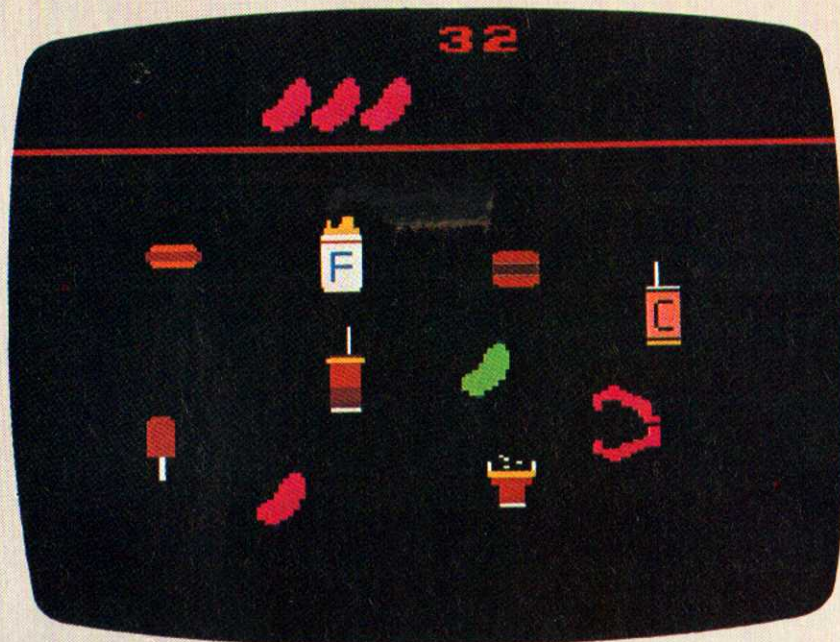


Damn the torpedoes: Imagic's elegant VCS *Demon Attack*.

are different enough that the games may just as well have different names. Each game does give you an onscreen cannon which can fire straight ahead or guided "tracer" shots at fluttering space demons which seem to follow the cannon. In each, you can earn extra cannons by getting through waves of demons unharmed.

In the VCS version, though, only one of the three regenerating demons in each wave fires missiles at your cannon; in the Intellivision version, all the demons do. In the VCS version, the fifth wave of splitting and diving demons repeats itself indefinitely; in the Intellivision version, fending off three demon waves entitles you to a kill-or-be-killed showdown with the Devil (apparently) on a second playfield. The Intellivision version has hiding places at the extreme left and right of the screen, where your cannon is safe most of the time; the VCS version has no such spots. (Also, in the Intellivision version, pressing any of the keypad buttons initiates continuous cannon fire. This may be a fluke, but with the Intellivision keypad/disc being so damned hard to operate, it's a welcome one.)

Even though the graphics of the Intellivision version seem superior at a glance, the enhancements are mostly in the background. Some time back, the arcade game *Asteroids Deluxe* offered a painted background which was supposed to make for a better game than the original *Asteroids*, which sported a plain black, though alluringly simple, background. It was a good try, but it didn't really work. The situation's the same here, at least with the first playfield. (The second is a horrific beauty, but you're too busy keeping your cannon in one piece to appreciate it.) The main problem is that when demon missiles or your own cannon are against the earth-rise background, it takes a sharper eye than I have to make them out very well.



Fast Food from Telesys: munching out with Mr. Mouth.

The less dazzling graphics of the VCS version are more than made up for in the game play, filled as it is with strategic moments and action undiluted save for an occasional graphic fillip, such as when the enemy regenerates. Tip: By avoiding the missile-spewing demon and concentrating on the non-firing demons until the wave is depleted save for the missile-bearer, you can save yourself trouble and still score the same number of points as you would by offing the armed one over and over. The Intellivision version, with its safe spots and more fanatic demons, lends itself to simpler hit-and-run guerrilla warfare.

In neither case are the demons very different graphically than standard videogame aliens, but I like the theoretical

mixing of science-fiction and sword-and-sorcery elements nonetheless. I have to admit I even like the packaging's heavy-metal artwork, an almost photographic depiction of vicious, dragon-like creatures in silver space suits festooned with missiles.

But most of all, I like blasting demons. It's nice to know that if ordinary aliens get tiresome, a little exorcising can keep you in shape. □

FAST FOOD ★ ★ ★
 Designed by Don Ruffcorn. (Telesys VCS-compatible cartridge. \$31.95)

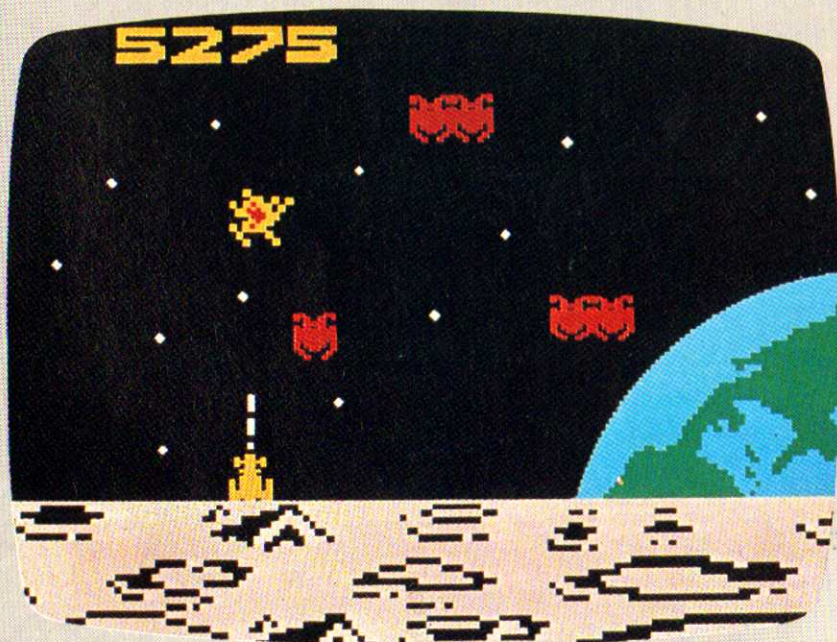
By Maury Z. Levy

Here's good news for those of you who thought that all videogames could do was rot your mind. Here's one that can rot your teeth, too.

Defender and *Space Invaders* might have offered the ultimate adventures for those gluttonous for intergalactic battle. *Fast Food* is the final frontier for those who are just plain gluttonous. The object of this tasty little game is to gobble up as much junk food as you can. A simple scenario straight out of every little kid's dream. Or maybe out of a Pepto Bismol commercial.

The screen is full of easily identifiable flying objects: shakes, fries, burgers, pizzas, pickles. It's the pickles that are a dilly, but we'll get to that in short order. You control something called Mr. Mouth. He's sort of Pac-Man with a tape worm. As the junk food comes flying across the screen, you move Mr. Mouth up and down and to and fro (or you can just move him fro and up), force-feeding him.

Scoring is a measure of how many calories he consumes. A green pickle is worth one calorie, a cola is worth five, an ice cream cone nine, and, while a hamburger will add six calories, a cheese-



Intellivision version of Demon Attack: too much background?

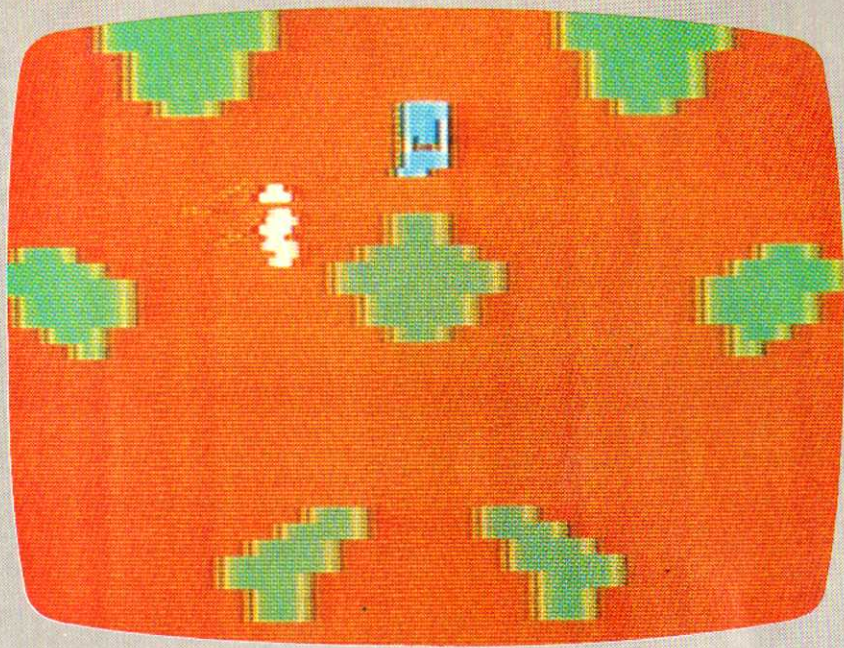
burger is worth 20. Clearly, the person who designed this did little nutritional research or was a very perverse anorexic.

There are some breathers in this onslaught of sloth. A "You're Getting Fatter" message flashes on the screen just before the food flies faster. This makes it all the harder to avoid accidentally eating one of the dreaded purple pickles. Should Mr. Mouth swallow six of these, the game is over. Just like that. There is never an explanation of why the pickles are purple or why they are shaped like the state of New Jersey, but such is life at the take-out counter in the video fast lane.

Fast Food is a fun game for one or two players. It may not be the most ingenious of ideas. (Obviously, someone thought this up on an all too long lunch hour.) But the game's challenging. The food apparently flies at random, making it hard to figure out patterns or find safe spots on the screen.

While playing at the higher difficulty setting, I easily got past the listed novice intake of 800 calories. The purple pickles started coming hot and heavy soon after, making it almost impossible to keep up with them using the standard Atari joystick, so I switched to the Le Stick replacement joystick for the next few courses. That's about the only thing that helped me keep pace with the slicin smorgasbord. Whatever your own preference in joysticks, here's a strategy tip: Since there's no penalty for food gone un-gobbled, try playing just the top two rows of the four-row screen until you get the swing of things.

Good graphics, unpredictable patterns and appetizing action are likely to make you come back for seconds in this caloric challenge. But, after the heartburn sets in, can a game that ends with a resounding "burp" really become a main course on your permanent video menu? □



Indiana Jones in Atari's Raiders: just the tip of the Spielberg.

LADY BUG ★ ★ ★ ★

Designer uncredited. Based on the Universal arcade game. (Coleco ColecoVision-compatible cartridge. \$30 approx.)

By Marc Wielage

What hath Pac-Man wrought? That little smiley-face creature, which begat K.C. Munchkin, Ms. Pac-Man and a score of similar maze-game characters, eventually gave an arcade-game maker the bug—the Lady Bug, that is, star of the coin-op classic of the same name.

Lady Bug, the game, has the same winding mazes and dangerous corridors riddled with adversaries as *Pac-Man*, except, in this case, the villains are crab-like

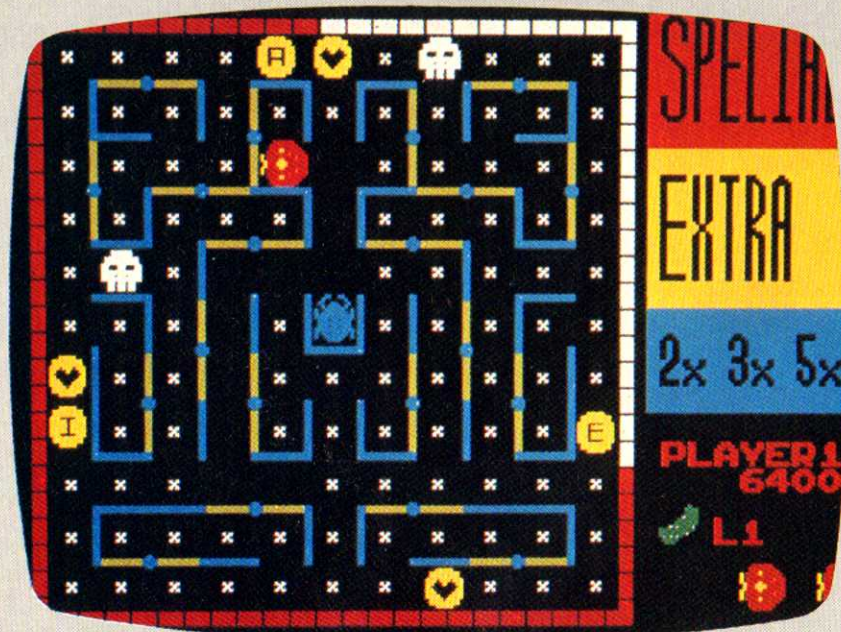
insects out to chew up our heroine. As with most ColecoVision games, this *Lady Bug* is almost a duplicate of the arcade original.

Unlike *Pac-Man*, which features power pills that allow its character to turn the tables on the bad guys, *Lady Bug's* heroine has no such carnivorous ability. Instead, our multilegged friend's only defense is her unusual talent of reshaping the maze via a series of movable walls. She frustrates and confuses her enemies without killing them in her desperate, mad-dash search for food.

The hallways are littered with colored hearts and letters worth 100 to 800 points. If the Lady Bug eats enough letters to spell out the word "Extra," you win an extra Lady Bug and go on to the next level; if you can likewise spell "Special," you win a "Vegetable Harvest Bonus Screen" and a chance for extra points. But it isn't easy to get to these tidbits, not only because of the enemy insects, but also due to the deadly skulls placed around the corridors. If the Lady Bug and her adversaries are careless enough to run into one of these grim death masks, they're immediately stricken with a terminal case of indigestion.

Playing *Lady Bug* requires the same kind of alert thinking needed for *Pac-Man*. By timing your heroine's moves just right, you can lead a hot-on-the-heels bug right into a deadly skull, or use the revolving doors to block off the insect's attack. Sometimes, by keeping the Lady Bug in one corner of the screen for a few seconds, you can lure all the bugs her way, allowing her to spin a wall shut in the nick of time and significantly slow up her predators. Be careful not to mistake a solid wall for a moving one, though.

As always, Coleco's graphics are just beautiful to behold, with fine detail and brilliant colors. The sound effects are appropriate, with catchy little tunes befitting the game. Even if you're a dedicated



Luck be a Lady Bug tonight: Coleco adaptation of the arcade hit.

gardener, I think you'll agree that this is one creepy-crawly you won't want to live without. □

RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK ★ ★
Designed by Howard Warshaw.
(Atari VCS-compatible cartridge.
\$37.95)

By Ed Hulse

As a longtime fan and scholar of the action-packed B movies and serials of yesteryear, I was delighted with the movie *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, the George Lucas/Steven Spielberg celebration of and homage to them. I wasn't alone, of course—*Raiders* became the boxoffice sensation of 1981. Now I'd like to be able to say that Atari's videogame adaptation of the movie represents a comparable achievement, but, sadly, this is not the case. With a veritable cinematic treasure trove to draw upon, the game's designers seem to have overlooked many of the film's visual treats which could easily have been transferred to the game.

Raiders is an adventure game, and its multiple playfields attempt to approximate the many and varied exploits undertaken by the movie's intrepid hero, Indiana Jones. Would that the game were as exciting.

Utilizing two joystick controllers, the player must guide Indy through several screens where he can pick up various supplies and treasures while warding off snakes, bats and Nazis. The right joystick moves Indy right, left, up, down and diagonally; the red button activates his bull-whip, which can be unleashed with impunity as the situation demands. The same button on the left controller enables our hero to snatch up his spoils, which are conveniently deposited at the bottom of the screen.

The poisonous asps which slither vertically across the playfields are nothing more than tiny electronic squiggles which can be easily avoided, and their paths become so obvious as to virtually eliminate them as any kind of challenge to even the novice player. Not so easy to escape is the Nazi villain, who dogs Indy's trail with perspicacity far in excess of that displayed by his celluloid counterpart. You win the game by successfully negotiating the various playfields until Indy reaches the Well of Souls, where he can safely recover the fabled Ark.

Aside from plot structure, however, Atari doesn't seem to have been overly concerned about faithfully translating the movie to a videogame. The graphics are so simple that *Raiders'* characters and locales are bound to be virtually unrecognizable to most younger players (and . . . ahem . . . some older players as well). Playfield images of the Map Room and the Well of Souls are unimpressive, even given the limitations of the VCS graphics. Space isn't always utilized to best advantage.

For all this, *Raiders* isn't really a bad game. The disappointment lies in knowing what Atari had to work with in terms of movie excitement. For example, why not a

playfield based on the opening sequence, perhaps with the premise of Indy walking into the South American shrine with electronic darts shooting at him from both sides of the screen? Or maybe some attempt at recreating the large boulder which threatens to seal him in—surely some rapidly enlarging sphere might have been created for the video screen.

This is after-the-fact criticism, of course, but as one of the millions who were enthralled by the rich visuals and harrowing situations concocted by *wunderkinder* Lucas and Spielberg, the videogame is but a mildly pleasurable, pale electronic shadow of the unforgettable movie. □

Stand-Alone

DEFENDER ★ ★ ★
Adapted by Dimitri Crona and
team from the Williams arcade
game. (Entex Adventure Vision-
compatible cartridge. Included with
\$69 Adventure Vision stand-alone.)

By Michael Blanchet

Personally, I detest games in which the object is not really to rack up a juicy score, but merely to put off your inevitable destruction for as long as possible. Not everyone feels the same way—*Defender*, which falls into this category, proved to be one of the most popular arcade videogames ever. So despite my reservations, I have to give this adaptation credit for being a decent effort and a faithful reproduction of the coin-op original. As the first cartridge in Entex's Adventure Vision lineup, it marks a promising beginning.

Defender, the "gimme" included with the Adventure Vision, is a cosmic shoot-'em-up with a simple and spartan objective: Armed with a limited (but replenishable) supply of "smart" bombs and an aft cannon that spits hot lead faster than a Cajun can sputter his chaw, your spacejet must try to blast nasty alien "landers" before they make off with the humanoids your screen persona has been entrusted to defend.

The landers nonchalantly float in space most of the time, and occasionally release deadly space mines which, like the landers themselves, your spacejet must avoid. Every so often, a lander will touch down and creep toward one of the humanoids. Once a lander hooks up with a humanoid, the game console sounds a warning tone. If the lander, with a humanoid in tow, reaches the top of the playfield unchecked, the two merge to form a mutant. This version's mutants aren't as tenacious as those of the arcade game and so do not pose a formidable threat, but for every mutant there is one less humanoid on the ground. If the

Syndicated videogame columnist Michael Blanchet is the author of the bestselling How to Beat the Video Games. He joins our regular reviewers this issue.

remaining humanoids are mutated or destroyed—by a stray blast from your spacejet, for example—the planet beneath your craft explodes.

The thrust and directional guidance functions are governed by the sloppy action of the Adventure Vision's console-mounted joystick. In a nice twist, you can use either of the console's two sets of buttons (one each for left- and right-handed players) to initiate the hyperspace, fire and smart-bomb functions.

Some strategy tips:

- Don't fly too fast. Your ship builds up considerable momentum under full steam, and when you try to turn it 180°, inertia can cause it to drift backwards, out of control.

- Smart bombs, which wipe out all aliens on the screen, are best saved for later rounds of play, especially when fresh waves of aliens appear.

- The hyperspace function is best avoided. True, your spacejet may very well be in the frying pan, but upon re-entry, it could end up in the fire.

- Exercise caution when stalking a grounded lander—they blend in well with the lunar terrain. If you chose to blow one away, be sure there are no humanoids between your ship and the target.

Compared to the entire galaxy of home videogames, the Adventure Vision *Defender* isn't really exceptional. The low cost of the system, however, is and makes this included cartridge a true bargain. □

Computer

CHOPFLIFTER ★ ★ ★
Designed by Dan Gorlin. (Broder-
bund Software floppy disc for Apple
II or Apple II Plus computers with
48K RAM. \$34.95)

By Sheldon Leemon

From the beginning, videogames have been dominated by macho, space-war fantasies. *Space Invaders*, *Galaxian*, *Defender*—virtually all of the "classics" relied on futuristic warfare, perhaps trading on the popularity of the movie *Star Wars*. Despite some public hand-wringing over the violent content of these games and its alleged effects, the formula was deemed untouchable—until, that is, *Pac-Man* became the most popular videogame ever. With its basis being acquisition rather than destruction, *Pac-Man* set the stage for videogames which promote more socially responsible goals than blasting our extraterrestrial neighbors to smithereens.

Chopflifter is one such game. Unlike Activision's similar-sounding *Chopper Command*, a space shoot-'em-up starring a helicopter, *Chopflifter* is a hostage-rescue game with a social conscience. The scenario, set forth in tongue-in-cheek style, is designed to stir your loftiest instincts: The Bungeling Empire has kidnapped the delegates to the United Nations Conference on

Peace and Child Rearing. You have smuggled a helicopter, disguised as a mail-sorting machine, into a US Postal Service distribution center near the hostages' barracks. If you can save the hostages, discussions on world peace can begin.

Of course, the Bungelings attack, first with tanks, later with jets and finally with drone air mines. While your 'copter may shoot and destroy these adversaries, you get no points for it. Your sole mission is to rescue hostages.

This noble activity would be as popular as giving blood if it weren't for the facts that *Choplifter* is great fun to play and employs what must surely be state-of-the-art Apple animation. The onscreen helicopter moves realistically, bouncing on landings, pitching when changing speed. The multiboard playing field scrolls by smoothly as you fly along. The little hostages scurry around frantically when the helicopter approaches, waving their arms and running to be picked up. The only noticeable defect is that the pace slows somewhat when there are many objects moving on the screen at one time.

Because of the novel scoring rules, the player is required to unlearn the strategies of other videogames. Even though your 'copter can drop bombs and shoot, there is always the possibility that some of the hostages will be killed in the fighting. Success is measured only in terms of the number of hostages rescued unharmed.

Unlike most videogames, you can actually win in *Choplifter* by bringing all 64 hostages to safety. Not that this task is so easy that you'll soon rack up perfect games. On the contrary, *Choplifter* is challenging enough to hold your interest for as long as most videogames—and perhaps longer, for here you have a finite goal to shoot for. And you don't even have to shoot. □

RIVER RESCUE ★ ★

Designed by Thorn EMI (Thorn EMI cartridge for Commodore VIC-20 computers with 5K RAM. \$39.95)

By Walter Salm

Piloting a boat down a lazy river may seem like a tame idea, but this is no lazy river. There are floating logs and other dangerous objects in the water, and colliding with any of these sinks your boat instantly. You have but two options—steer around the junk or shoot it out of the water with your boat's handy deck gun.

There are two ways to rack up points. First, by speeding up the river—a difficult job since your boat hands must dodge or shoot obstacles—and second, by tying up to a dock (which the instructions call a "jetty") and rescuing an explorer who has been marooned in the Amazon jungle for months. Once your boat's docked, you don't have to do much to rescue the explorer; he's so glad to see you he darn near bowls the crew over in his rush to get on board.

You know in advance a dock is coming up, because you hear a faint "beep-beep-beep" from the explorer's radio transmitter,

which is rapidly losing power. You have three of these guys to pick up at three docks. Naturally, each explorer you rescue adds a lot to your score. Use the joystick to control the boat and to fire the deck gun. You get three boats a game and an extra boat for every 7,000 points.

There is a second game variation that gives you five boats, but the instructions call this a practice run for novices. The game is for one player or two players sharing the same joystick.

A few tips: Don't get too speed-happy or you'll run your boat into those damn logs and other stuff right away. You can't get points, after all, if you don't have a boat. Also, when the river gets very narrow, or

when your boat is approaching a dock, slow down to a crawl. It's the only way your boat'll manage to come through it in one piece. The dock is especially tricky. You have to keep from running your boat into it, for one thing. And you certainly don't want to blast it out of water with your deck gun.

River Rescue's graphics aren't very exciting, though the boat does leave an interesting wake behind it. The attempt to show some variation in the jungle foliage is cute but very unconvincing. The game is challenging at first, but doesn't have that elusive glue-me-to-my-seat excitement. Yet, it's one of the better games for the VIC-20, so judging by the competition, computer buffs should jump in—the river's fine. □

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Year of the yack for new talking games

Like coin-op versions of Don Rickles, arcade games such as *Berserk* and *Gorf* have incorporated for some time electronic voices to insult and belittle their players. I always thought home videogames would never be able to have microprocessor mouths to achieve the same effect. But, both Mattel and Odyssey recently unveiled add-on voice modules for their game systems, adding what I think is a major, exciting new element to home videogaming.

Intellitalking

Mattel's IntelliVoice Synthesis Module (model 3330) is a small, brown and gold plastic thing with a tiny, built-in speech-synthesis chip. It plugs into the side of the Intellivision Master Component just like an ordinary cartridge, taking all its power from the Master Component itself, requiring no extra batteries, wires or an AC adaptor. Once the voice module's hooked up, you plug any Intellivision-compatible cartridge into the right side of the console and play the game as you normally would. You can even play old-fashioned, non-talking carts with the voice module in place—but don't expect them



Mattel's voice-synthesis module: no need for separate AC adaptor.

to suddenly start yakking.

Ah, but slip in an IntelliVoice game cartridge, and you'll hear a big dif-

ference! Suddenly, an eerie, metallic voice emanates from your TV set, along with all the videogame sound effects and noises you're accustomed to hearing. A small, knurled knob on the front of the IntelliVoice module allows you to adjust the volume of the voices on your set. (For my run-through, I left it almost all the way up.)

The Voice Choice

Odyssey's The Voice works similarly, but it's a much larger, silver-plastic gizmo that snaps onto the top of the Odyssey² console, covering the back panel. The main reason for its size is that The Voice features a built-in, three-inch speaker exclusively for the voice effects, with your TV set providing the standard game music and sound effects. Like Mattel's IntelliVoice, Odyssey's The Voice is designed for playing all non-talking game carts as well. With The Voice, Odyssey includes a replacement AC adaptor for its console, owing to the increased power required for the voice module.

That's the lowdown on the equipment. The big question is: How are the talking games?

As I suspected, the initial titles I evaluated—*Nimble Numbers Ned* from Odyssey and *B-17 Bomber*, *Bomb Squad* and *Space Spartans* from Mattel—each had some compromises of the straight, non-talking games I've played. Since the blabbermouth carts have about the same RAM as previous carts, their memory is limited to doing just so much visually and aurally. The voice effects eat up enough of this limited memory that the games' performance is affected—not drastically, but enough that an experienced gamer may notice it.

"Ow ood are ay?"

As for the voices, I felt the speech of both modules was awkward and sometimes a little hard to understand. For instance, the Odyssey voice module has a habit of dropping consonants, turning phrases such as "Name the shapes" and "How good are you?" into something like "ame ee shapes"



The Voice from Odyssey: The plug-in module has its own speaker.

and "Ow ood are oo?" Granted, I don't expect Henry Higgins' golden tones to come rolling out of these games, but I'd prefer something a little more eloquent than E.T.

More Talk

So far, Odyssey has announced plans to offer five talking cartridges: *Nimble Numbers Ned*, *Sid the Spellbinder*, *Smithereens*, *UFO*, *K.C.'s Krazy Chase* and *Type and Tell*. Some of these are otherwise conventional games; some are educational carts. The idea of *Type and Tell* is particularly fun, since it allows you to "program" any word (yes, even those kinds of words) by typing them in with the Odyssey keyboard and playing them through The Voice's speaker. Mattel has three talking games at presstime: *B-17 Bomber*, *Bomb Squad* and *Space Spartans*, to be followed by *Tron—Solar Sailor*.

The other game companies, including Atari and Coleco, have been reserved about any plans to offer similar accessories to their consoles. Spokespeople for both told me that while they could offer voice capabilities, they're waiting to see how fans react to the first talking games.

(For our critics' views of talking games, see our reviews of *B-17 Bomber* [Nov. '82 VR] and of *KC's Krazy Chase* [Dec. '82 VR].) □

Kristen Reilly: Custer's shaky stand

Amidst flying arrows, a naked male figure with an erection runs across the desert towards a large-breasted, naked female figure with a feather headband. If he avoids the arrows, he rapes the Indian woman as a reward. Her legs fly up to his waist with each "victory."

This is the image the player of the new videogame *Custer's Revenge* will see on his or her video screen, thanks to a company called American Multiple Industries (AMI). AMI has begun what it hopes will become a new trend in home "entertainment" by introducing pornographic home videogames, advertised with the slogan, "When You Score . . . You Score!" The phrase especially applies to another of AMI's new games, *Bachelor Party*, in which a male figure "scores" sexually with several female figures, obliterating them from the screen with each act. In the third game, *Beat 'em & Eat 'em*, two female prostitutes run across the screen trying to catch drops of ejaculate from a male figure masturbating on the roof above them. New technology, same old "game."

Another recent trend in pornography has been the attempt of producers of X-rated movies to appeal to couples. *Roommates*, released last April, was promoted as a sensual and erotic "story" movie. It presents three female roommates: a naive, aspiring actress; a drug-dependent model; and a former prostitute.

The actress is having an affair with her married acting teacher, who meets her in hotel rooms, quickly satisfies himself, then leaves. But she later falls in love with her gay male friend and captivates him into straightness. The model picks up a man who uses her and throws her out, is gang raped, defiled with a bottle and later severely beaten. The former prostitute is recognized at work by an ex-john and coerced to service clients sexually under the threat of being fired. He forces her to fellate him on her knees in the men's room, and arranges for her to service a bachelor party.

Sexual degradation and brutality is the central focus of this film, at the expense of the women's stories. Their mistreatment is trivialized, and they recover smiling.

Roommates has been praised for its technical sophistication, something like hailing Nazi propaganda for its literary style.

Little girls learn at an early age that there is ridicule, humiliation and even danger connected with being female. They wear tights under their dresses at school so their underpants won't be exposed when boys play their game of pulling up dresses. If this seems trivial to some, it's really the beginning of a lifetime of sexual harassment of females by males, from "Smile, honey!" on the street, to Uncle Fred's fondling (one out of four girls experience sexual abuse by

relatives or family friends, according to Parents United), to the ultimate violent assault of rape, which the FBI estimates one out of three women will experience in her lifetime.

By the time girls and boys are in their teens, both have received millions of messages in greatly varying amplitudes defining their sexual roles. Girls should be passive, pretty, seductive; boys should be strong and aggressive. Girls talk about makeup, clothes, pop singers; boys talk about sports scores and sex "scores."

These conditioned roles have a crippling effect on men and women who become trapped in them. Women's self-esteem becomes entangled with their physical attractiveness to men. Men's sense of masculinity becomes entwined with the ability to dominate women. Therefore, violence towards women is regarded as normal by a "real man." The reality is that wife battering is the most commonly occurring crime in this country, according to the FBI.

Pornography, which has no social conscience, reinforces these

sex role messages with a sledgehammer. Children and teenagers are the youngest victims, for pornography has become a primary sex-education resource for them. Now "X-rated" videogames have added a new dimension to the teaching capability of pornography by propelling the player into the active role of participant in "games" of sexual aggression against female targets—one step closer to real-life violence against women or girls.

When women consume pornography along with men, they're buying into a system designed by men for men, which is the antithesis of female sexual liberation. Pornography features women as creatures separate from men, with assigned habits and traits which are entertaining to watch, like watching animals in the zoo. And like animals whose natural behavior is modified by the

limitations of the cage, women's behavior is modified by the mind of the pornographer creating her script. Her script is a product of male definitions of female sexuality over the centuries, so well learned that her own feelings may be unknown to her.

As men and women, what do we want? A lifetime of servitude to unquestioned, boring, assigned sex roles? Or to lift the lid and see a shimmering, breathtaking treasury of possibilities?

The field of consumer video, supported in its infancy by pornographic tapes, is now strong enough to stand on its own. Our choices will determine whether video reaches its potential as a medium for creativity, learning and expression, or continues grinding out deadly sex-role propaganda. □



Kristen Reilly is a member of the steering committee of the New York-based organization Women Against Pornography.