

Video Review

Latest Tape & Disc Reviews and Equipment Test Reports

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THE WORLD AUTHORITY ON CONSUMER VIDEO

FIRST MINI VCR/TV CBS LAB TESTS TELL ALL

Used VCRs: Vintage Values or Junk?

Free Products



MARCH 1982
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Video Review



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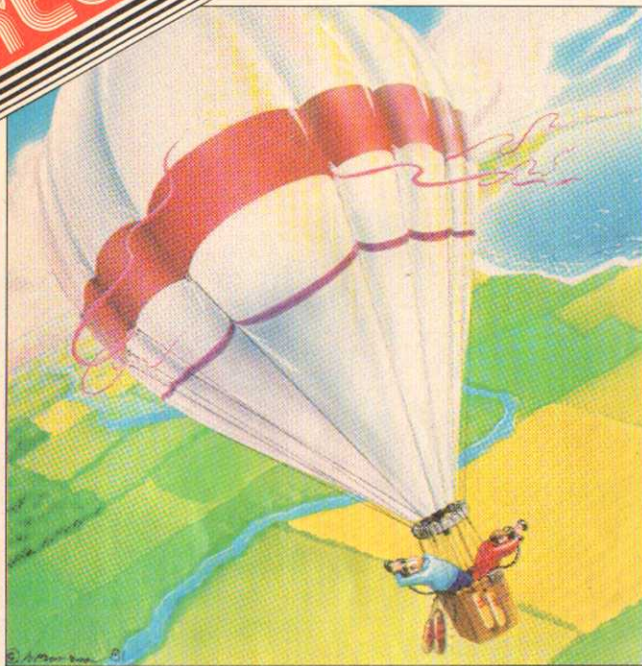
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Cover Photo: Aaron Reznay

Videotapes for the health of it



Up, Up And Away

Making video movies is not usually one of the most hazardous of art forms. But consider the case of the Double Eagle V, a manned helium-filled balloon that lifted off from Nagashima, Japan last November 10 and touched down in a remote part of California two days later. The voyage, which marked the first manned balloon crossing of the Pacific, was videotaped by the crew with consumer equipment supplied by JVC Corp.

The fiberglass gondola in which the crew resided during the trip is 18 feet long and 6.8 feet wide—the shape of a long corridor. Co-captains Ben Abruzzo, 51, and Larry Newman, 34, are both veterans of the first manned flight of Double Eagle II across the Atlantic from America to France in 1978. The other two members were balloonists Ron Clarke, 41, and Rocky Aoki,

43. Aoki is owner of the Benihana chain of Japanese-style restaurants, a qualification that no doubt came in handy at the victory party.

Since the gondola landed on a mountain ridge in California in the middle of the night, the crew wisely decided to spend its first night back in the US inside the balloon gondola, waiting for a helicopter. ABC Sports has the rights to the videotape, and I can't wait to see what Cosell makes of all this. □

Mirrored Out

When I was a kid my friends and I used the term "mirrored out" to describe the phenomenon that occurs when two mirrors face each other and the object in between is reflected ad infinitum. My head used to get mirrored out all the time at Tony's Barber Shop.

Well, the miracle of mirrors can strike outside the barber shop too—especially

when it comes to the copy-cat world of video.

Case in point: Bally Manufacturing Corp., father of "Pac-Man," recently announced that this spring it will produce a new video game about . . . video games. The Bally game will be based on a soon-to-be-released Walt Disney picture called *Tron*, in which video games come to life.

Case II: Deborah Harry, the sexy lead singer of the defunct punk band Blondie, is set to star in an upcoming movie called *Video Drome*. The flick, which is being shot in Toronto at presstime, is slated to make its box office run sometime next year. The videocassette release is scheduled for "soon after" the theatrical release, according to one Harry staff member.

The mystery at this point is what *Video Drome* is about. No one at the Harry business complex will tell us. So Freeze-Frames is left to wonder.

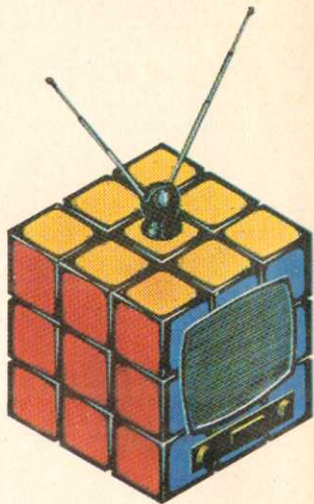
Hmmm. *Video Drome*. If only the title were "Video Drone," then the answer would be easy—a punk musical. □



Cube Crazy

The final manifestation of Rubik's Cube mania may well be a new videotape released by Karl Video Corp., *The Cube: Solved*, starring University of Kentucky mathematician Dr. Carl Lee.

During the first part of the tape, the history of puzzles is examined and the pieces of



Rubik's Cube are named. Six stages to completing the puzzle are demonstrated as Dr. Lee takes a nine-year-old child through the paces.

Lee, who professes a lifelong interest in "recreational mathematics," says he made the videotape because he feels Rubik's Cube is not only fun, but is an educational experience that sharpens one's ability to visualize spatial relationships in three-dimensional objects. Presumably, he also got paid.

7 Oaks Productions of Boulder, Colorado, produced the 108-minute (!) program. As for Erno Rubik, the Hungarian mathematician who invented the little square gold mine, he may be banging his head on the iron curtain somewhere. □



Boy, Is He Strict

Ferdinand Marcos, President of the Republic of the Philippines, recently responded to the video game "crisis" in his country by issuing a proclamation. To wit: The playing of video arcade games is hereby outlawed.

Youthful offenders are liable for a heavy fine and for up to 12 years in the slammer.

A spokesman at the Philippine Embassy in Washington explains that Marcos was concerned about the games' corrupting influence on the country's school children. □

The Big Lie

Miami Beach recently began installing 112 videocameras on traffic signal poles along its mean streets.

Naturally, the city fathers denied its video watch was a step in the direction of Big Brotherism. Police Major Fred Woolridge told a reporter, "The system is designed to undermine the confidence of killers, rapists and muggers."

No one can fault Miami for taking steps to curb its crime rate. But someone should tell Woolridge that it's proper to call a spy a spy. Videocameras—on traffic poles yet—aimed at citizens is pretty much what Orwell had in mind.

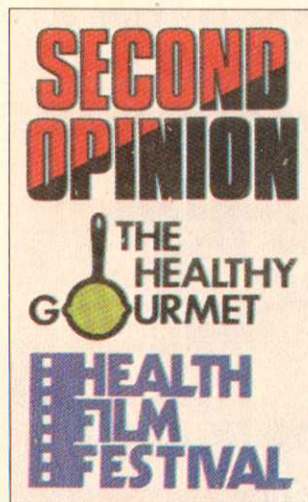
Come to think of it though, 1984 also coined the expression "The Big Lie." Maybe Woolridge is ahead of us after all. □

Healthy Dose

Hypochondriac and insomniac videotapers will have something special to celebrate later this spring—the launching of a 24-hour cable TV service devoted exclusively to health and science.

The Cable Health Network (CHN) is being formed by Viacom in conjunction with Dr. Art Ulene (a practicing physician, faculty member at USC's School of Medicine and frequent visitor to NBC's *Today Show*) and Jeffrey Reiss (former exec at Viacom and founder of the Showtime cable service). CHN plans to make the advertiser-supported service available free of charge to cable-TV systems for all "basic-cable" subscribers.

The idea is to transmit



30-minute and 60-minute programs on various health subjects throughout the day and night. Even though medical school lasts only four years, the producers say they will have no trouble coming up with enough material to feed



their hungry channel indefinitely.

Besides the usual health topics—sexuality, nutrition, psychiatric advice, sports medicine, birth control, etc.—CHN plans to offer programs in such "related" fields as beauty and make-up, personal grooming and even money. □

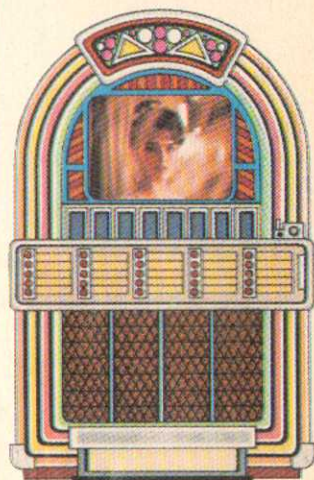
Video Shrink Shopping

Picking the right therapist can be difficult, particularly if the patient suffers from depression with symptoms of indecision. But there's hope on the horizon. Sharon Arkin, 42, a federal employee with more than 12 years in the mental-health referral field, has hit on an unusual idea—to let prospective patients choose shrinks by reviewing videotaped interviews.

Arkin manages her shopping service out of her apartment in Silver Springs, MD. She charges customers \$45 for access to her tapes. The price includes a gander at both written resumes and dating service-type questionnaires the therapists were asked to fill out.

What do people look for when they watch the tapes? Besides the impression of competence, Arkin says people watch for a therapist's body language and "feeling tone." The questionnaire fills in some important gaps, too. Among other things, a customer can read whether the prospective therapist smokes, if he or she addresses clients by their first name and what his or her favorite books are.

To date, 20 psychotherapists have agreed to tape preview sessions. How do they like having the tables turned? "Most of them really got turned on by the interviews," says Arkin. "Seeing yourself on TV is still a thrill for most people." Even shrinks. □



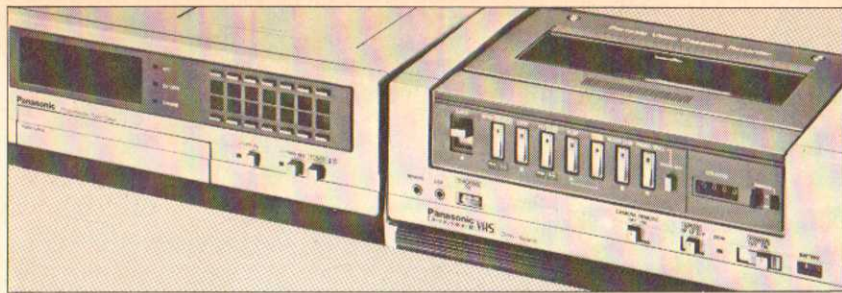
Videotapes To Go

Today's vending machines carry all types of goodies—candy, soda, coffee, cigarettes, even unmentionables. But no one ever came along with a true, consumer-oriented, cash-on-the-spot videotape dispenser.

Well, enter Video Corporation of America. President Al Markim says the company plans to introduce "Moviemat," a video vending unit to America some time next year.

Moviemat will resemble a jukebox, display movie titles and screen previews of the dozen or so cassettes it contains on a small video monitor. Each customer will be able to slip a credit card into a slot ("Visa and MasterCard welcome!"—the sign of our times) and rent a tape for a few days. A week's rental will cost \$14. When the rental period is up, the customer is supposed to return the tape back to the machine.

How Moviemat, a computer, will enforce the prompt return of rental tapes is a question too gruesome for me to contemplate. □



PANASONIC
Videocassette Recorder
Model PV-4510 \$1,400

The accompanying tuner/timer on this VHS-format portable features 105-channel, superband tuning, as well as 14-day/eight-event programmability.

The two/four/six-hour recorder offers freeze-frame, single-frame ad-

vance and nine-times-normal-speed visual scan in the six-hour mode, with these playback effects duplicated on a wired remote control. An optional remote, model PK-R70, lets you control visual scan and single-frame advance through certain videocameras.

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

ACTIVISION
Video-Game Cartridges
Barnstorming, Grand Prix \$31.95 each

In "Barnstorming," jaunty young men and women can re-create the thrill of those flying machines. For those who want something a bit "racier," "Grand Prix" offers oil slicks and other road hazards on the way to the checkered flag.

The cartridges are compatible only with Atari and Sears video-game consoles.

Activision, 759 E. Evelyn Ave., Sunnyvale, CA 94086 (408) 245-5421

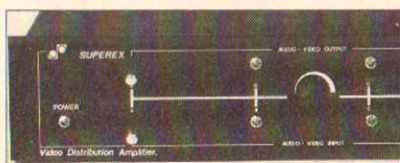


Unless otherwise noted, all New Products specifications are manufacturers' data—not results of Video Review tests or measurements. All listed prices are manufacturers' suggested retail. Availability of products varies according to supply and locality.

SUPEREX VIDEO
Dubber/Enhancer
Model VDA-7

The continuously variable video-level control on this combination accessory helps you counter signal loss when making dubs. There are video inputs and outputs for up to four VCRs, and the works are encased in an aluminum chassis.

Superex Video, 151 Ludlow St., Yonkers, NY 10705 (914) 965-6906



TOSHIBA
Videocassette Recorder
Model V-9200 \$895

This front-loading, Beta-format VCR incorporates four video heads for freeze-frame, single-frame advance, slow motion and eight-times-normal-speed visual scan. The timer

TECHNICOLOR
Videocamera
Model 412D \$950

Videocamera enthusiasts can now immediately overlay narration with a rear-mounted microphone. The first videocamera to come with both a retractable boom mike and a second, built-in mike also offers an *f* 1.6, 6:1 (14-84) zoom lens electronic viewfinder.

The Hitachi-made camera has a tri-electrode Vidicon image-pickup tube, with three internal lenses



(rather than the usual single lens) to separate colors.

There's also a standby switch to conserve battery power and an adjuster for shooting backlit subjects. The videocamera weighs about four pounds.

Technicolor, 299 Kalmus Dr., Costa Mesa, CA 92626 (714) 540-4330

is three-day/one-event programmable and the tuner portion is cable-ready for VHF, UHF and midband channels.

The VCR comes with a wired remote control.

Toshiba, 82 Totowa Rd., Wayne, NJ 07470 (201) 628-8000

