

# Video Review

INCORPORATING  
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MAGAZINE

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## ARE MOVIE RENTALS GOING UP IN SMOKE?

*Home-Movie Miracles: Camcorder Guide*

*Tape Dance: Fred Astaire at 85*





MAY 1984

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# Video psychic and the Twilight Zone



## Pac-Man Gets Canned

If the top rung of celebrity is having your visage immortalized as a TV cartoon character, the bottom tier is getting canned. Not that the *passe* figure of Pac-Man has had his cartoon canceled yet. But he is soon to be the basis for a new Chef Boyardee canned spaghetti dish.

Oh, the indignity of being brought down to the level of a ravioli! Where Pac-Man machines used to consume the weekly allowances of small children, those same youngsters, now the wiser, will consume Pac-Man—in cheese-flavored spaghetti sauce, in chicken-flavored sauce or in spaghetti sauce with mini meatballs.

"Bug juice," we used to call these fruit beverages when I was young. Which is just another sign that what's king bee in videogames today may become a common household pest tomorrow. (B.J.)

## Powers That Be

A free psychic computer service—how's that for a new medium? It may sound strange, but Mary McNeal, a psychic in (where else?) California, has set up an electronic bulletin board that enables her to conduct psychic readings via her Commodore 64 home computer.

Anyone with a computer and a modem can call, select a category (such as romance, health, finance) from a menu that appears on the screen and type in a specific question via the computer keyboard. "The question must be specific," says McNeal, "or else there's nothing to tune in to." McNeal answers the question, leaves it on the service, and callers who phone back within seven days can access her psychic impressions of them.

Callers who crave in-depth consultations can subscribe to the service for \$50 a month, which also entitles them to optional services, including biorhythm compatibility charts, astrology readings and numerology charts—"all part of the new psychic realm," says McNeal.

The service was prompted

McNeal says she currently receives about a dozen inquiries a day. Her biggest problem, she complains, is with skeptics. "One person called and wanted me to tell him where he lived and the color of his hair," McNeal's response? "What hair?" ("I had the feeling he was bald," she explains.)

If you're one of those people who's been wondering what to do with your home computer, call (707) 444-9765. (J.G.)

## Dis-Cord

"There's always a string attached." More than a cliché among wary pessimists, that saying is the basis of a new psychological theory.

Called the De-Umbilication Theory, it's based on the idea that severing the umbilical cord at birth is the "unkindest cut of all." British author Brian Champness believes we all miss that connection, and that we're all unconsciously bent on restoring that security and comfort.

In a recent lecture, Champness cited a study he conducted which showed that most people surveyed preferred cable TV to satellite TV.

On the other hand, wireless remote controls are exceedingly popular among VCR and TV set owners because activating the remote control yields a response. Get the connection? (J.G.)

## Name That Tuna

Our favorite name for a TV show: *Celebrity Microwaves*.

This is not a spoof. It's a real show, on Canadian TV.

And no, it's not what it sounds like. Celebrities don't submit themselves to microwaves to see what happens.

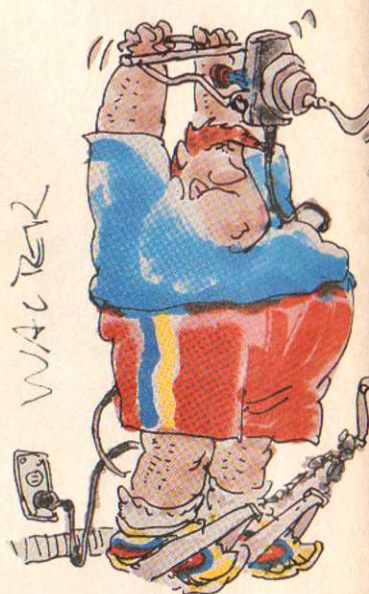
It's a cooking show. Celebrities appear with host comedian/musician Pete Barbutti to share their recipes. Lucky Americans with satellite dishes can tune this show in on one of the Anik satellites, but the rest of us can only dream.

Then again, we don't really care what the show's about. We just like the name. (D.C.)

## Aerobic Joystick

Videogamer's Thumb. *Pac-Man* elbow. These are all *passe*. Soon people may be complaining of Joystick Stomach and *Pac-Man* Ankle. How so?

The Video Fitness System (VFS) joins the ever-growing ranks of gadgets promising fitness while you fire. The device consists of a tight spring in an elasticized casing with two footstraps on one end and a handle with joystick on the other. For general aerobic fitness (according to the accompanying pam-



phlet), put both feet in the straps and hold on to the handle as you bend to a squatting position. Every time the game calls for you to fire, stand straight up, then squat.

The company advises using your favorite game as you exercise. Of course, all you *Pac-Man* fans will have to find another fave since you never fire in *Pac-Man*. In fact, *Pac-Man* "is not recommended, because then you need to force yourself to exercise," according to the manufacturer. We like that attitude. (A.R.)

## Casting Call

Attention, prospective actors: If you've been pounding the streets of Hollywood and Broadway, or wondering how to be dis-



As if all this weren't enough to confirm the (pasta) shell of a legend that Pac-Man has now become, there will soon be Pac-Man assorted fruit drinks to wash down the Pac-Man spaghetti.

partly by McNeal's belief that most people are afraid to seek in-person psychic consultations, even though they could benefit from them, and by a desire to keep up with this high-tech age.





Atlanta Braves slugger Dale Murphy (left) takes aim at Bowie Kuhn.

## Superstation Sports In Life-Death Game

Basic-cable TV sports fans may soon be yanked from their front-row seats. At the same time that many sports teams are planning to soon show their games only on a pay-per-view basis (see April '84 VR), efforts are being made to force the so-called superstations, which carry games on most of the

country's basic cable systems, off the cable.

At issue is whether cable TV viewers will be able to watch the Atlanta Braves on WTBS, the Chicago Cubs on WGN, the New York Mets on WOR and/or the New York Yankees on WPIX as part of their regular cable service. Leading the attack is out-

going major league baseball commissioner Bowie Kuhn, who thinks the cable systems, and therefore cable TV fans, should pay more for picking up the superstations and watching baseball. He recently testified before a Congressional panel against two bills which would allow cable system operators to pick up the superstation signals at what Kuhn considers to be artificially low prices.

The controversy hinges on an arcane section of the copyright

law that allows cable system operators to carry superstations without paying directly for them. Instead, operators pay into a copyright royalty fund which is then distributed to the stations and to professional sports groups and other programmers. The royalty fund, argues cable operators, allows them to offer superstations to subscribers as part of relatively low-priced basic cable packages. Increases in the fees, they say, would force operators to begin charging subscribers extra, or eliminate superstations altogether.

But Kuhn said that without a fee hike, some sports teams may decide to withhold their games from superstations and other broadcasters. Indeed, baseball appears headed in that direction if a new scheme works out. Slated for a test this 1984 season, the so-called pay TV pool will allow teams to "import" any game for airing over the new regional pay TV sports networks that are cropping up across the country. Because baseball and other sports teams often share in the ownership of these networks, superstations could find themselves without sports programming. (L.H.)

## Triumvirate Touts Text

By Gary Arlen

WASHINGTON—In a move which could speed up nationwide development of videotex—and redefine the nature of videotex technology—CBS, IBM and Sears have joined forces to develop a new service. The as-yet-unnamed system will use home computers rather than videotex terminals and could include full-motion pictures rather than the conventional computer-graphic images of most of the previously planned videotex systems.

The CBS/IBM/Sears venture will take at least two years to put together, meaning that the first tests won't be done until 1986. Plans call for a nationwide service, probably to be introduced on a region-by-region basis. That goal raises the possibility that viewers in some major urban areas may have two choices of videotex services later this decade, as the current videotex

services such as Viewtron and Keycom are established. Perhaps even greater choice will be available at that time.

CBS, IBM and Sears have tested other videotex systems independently. By teaming up, they bring strong resources to the nascent videotex business. Sears will concentrate on home banking and financial services along with catalog sales, calling on the resources of its subsidiaries such as Dean Witter brokerage, Allstate insurance and Coldwell Banker real estate. CBS will contribute software, and news and information services, while IBM develops computer hardware, software and networking facilities, and handles other technical considerations.

At the heart of the joint venture is a plan to deliver computer software and data processing power into the home for education, personal productivity and home management. The triumvirate will recruit other financial and computer companies to offer a variety of services on the system.

## I-Game Spies Second Life

By Carl S. Kaplan

NEW YORK—Intellivision owners recently received a last-minute reprieve when Mattel sold the rights to the game system to a group of investors called Intellivision Inc., rather than discontinuing the system (see April '84 VR). Now there's

Atari VCS system and for the Apple II and IBM PC and PC jr. computers). In addition, the new company plans to produce and sell the Intellivision II console, the Intellivision Entertainment Computer System and the System Changer, a device that allows Intellivision owners to play Atari games.



Vidgame survivor: Intellivision's new/old console.

more good news on the way.

Intellivision Inc. announced that it intends to produce new games this year for the Intellivision system (as well as for the

All these developments are a strong indication that, at least for now, Intellivision owners will be able to buy new games for their consoles.



## DBS: UK M.O. FOR US?

By Robert Gerson

NEW YORK—A lot of video buffs find the \$2,000 price for a home satellite receiver simply too high. But they may leap at the chance to buy one for \$145.

That's what it should cost for a complete system designed to pick up signals from the new high-powered direct broadcast satellite (DBS) services now being developed, according to England's most famous electronics innovator, Sir Clive Sinclair. In fact, claims Sinclair, his receiver could be included in a color TV set to make a one-

piece, 1,000-line, high-definition video system that would cost only about \$700.

Coming from just about anybody else, those promises would be dismissed out of hand, but Sinclair has a formidable track record. As head of Sinclair Radionics, he was first in the world with a pocket calculator that cost less than \$100. Just two years ago, with his new company, Sinclair Research, he shook up the home computer market with the \$100 computer sold here by Timex until recently. Late last year, Sinclair began selling two-inch pocket black-and-white TV sets in England, and he's promised to have them in the US this summer for about \$100.

## PIX, FRITZ CLICK

Just when it looked as though cable TV was unravelling, with the loss of service after service, along come two new ones: superstation WPIX, out of New York City, and Cableline, a labor-oriented service which will attempt to put the blue collar in bright lights.

Cableline is a creation of the AFL-CIO's Labor Institute of Public Affairs, which will reach out to some 23 member unions (accounting for 22% of all cable TV households). Early tests of the service drew a positive response from viewers, and the Labor Institute expects to begin regular telecasts later this year. Its star attraction, at least until the Democratic convention in

August, should be Walter Mondale, who's already been endorsed by the AFL-CIO. Mondale's battle with Gary Hart should be television's best drama in a long time.

Meanwhile, the New York Yankees will be the featured summer entertainment on WPIX. Actually, there's little on the station viewers haven't seen before—a sitcom rerun is a sitcom rerun.

For the record, WPIX has no say on its superstation status. That's handled by an independent outfit called United Video, which directs the satellite traffic. All the station gets is a bigger audience and, presumably, better ad rates. (S.G.)

## TV Suffers Reversal

Football fans have for years enjoyed the "reverse angle" replay, used in some broadcasts to help viewers better understand the developing plays. Now Sony has come up with a TV that lets you analyze the action in this manner yourself. It's the world's first color TV set which, at the press of a remote control button, will flop its picture to produce a reverse left-to-right image.

Sony's "Complete Reversal" TV is the brainchild of founder and honorary chairman Masaru Ibuka, the man credited with the invention of Sony's Trinitron color picture tube and the

developer of the Walkman headphone stereo cassette player. Ibuka says he got his idea for the reversal TV while visiting his barber, which should give you a clue as to one of its purposes.

A TV with a reversed picture seems perfectly normal when you're looking at its reflection in a mirror. Reversal TV sets, Ibuka feels, will catch on quickly in barber shops, beauty parlors, bars and other similarly mirrored public places where customers will find it convenient to watch TV without having to turn around. Sony's first Reversal TV will be a 13-inch color model costing about \$310, or \$20 more than comparable models designed for normal viewing only. (R.G.)

## New Fruit, Sour Grapes For Home Computerphiles

Computer users will soon have a chance to herald the new, even as they suffer the passing of the old. Consider these developments:

- Later this year, Apple will introduce a "new and improved" version of its Apple IIe computer that will carry an under-\$1,000 price tag, according to reliable industry sources. The sources report that Apple's new computer, called Apple IIc, will incorporate one 5¼-inch disc drive (unlike the IIe, which comes with no disc

slew of major software publishers are currently designing programs for the new machine.

- Tomorrow's prospective Apple owners may be today's frustrated Timex/Sinclair computer fans. Now that Timex has discontinued its computer line, independent software makers say they will continue to supply Timex/Sinclair owners with new programs so long as demand exists. Whether store owners will want to stock software for a line of "dead" computers is another matter, however—one



Timex wasted: The jettisoned Timex/Sinclair line-up.

drive) and will be able to use all Apple II software. Apple IIc will feature improved graphics and will also be transportable. A

which could seriously limit Timex/Sinclair computer owners' future enjoyment of their machines. (C.S.K.)

## US Ruling Will Raise TV Prices

NEW YORK—It's widely recognized that, at today's prices, color TV sets are among the best bargains around. But, says the US Commerce Department's International Trade Administration (ITA), the situation has gotten out of hand—sets imported from Korea and Taiwan are selling here at less than fair value. As a result of this unfair competition, called "dumping," the ITA may force the prices for these overseas sets to shoot up between \$15 and \$50 overnight.

A complaint was originally filed with the ITA by COM-PACT (Committee to Protect American Color TV), and was supported by GE and Zenith. The American set manufac-

turers say that they need protections to compete against foreign companies and make a reasonable profit.

According to the ITA, Korean and Taiwanese color-TV set makers are, on the average, selling their sets here for six percent to 14% less than they charge their customers at home, and for some individual companies, the spread is as high as 23%—making for great American bargains.

The companies could avoid problems here by simply lowering the prices in Korea and Taiwan, or by shifting production of the sets to plants in the US, something some, such as Samsung, have already started to do. (R.G.)



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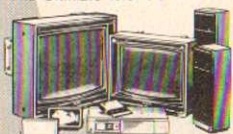
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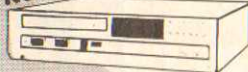
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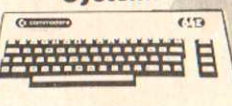


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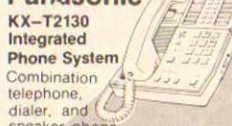


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of the TV set's color control. But those viewers who prefer slightly more intense color reproduction may prefer a VCR with this model's tendency.

Video signal-to-noise ratio, with respect to red-field chroma (color), was a bit better than average at SP, but only average at LP and EP. However, there was a negligible loss when we switched from the video output to the TV output. On the other hand, signal-to-noise with regard to luminance (brightness) was average, or even a bit better than average, at all three speeds when measured from the video output, but there was a substantial increase in noise (sometimes more than 3 dB) when we made readings via the TV output.

Audio frequency response was excellent at SP, extending all the way out to 11.8 kHz for the -3 dB cutoff point. Response was average at the two slower speeds, however, with treble cutoff (at the -3 dB point) occurring at 6.6 kHz at LP, and at 5.2 kHz for EP. The wow-and-flutter readings were better than average at SP, measuring .12% average and .16% peak. Surprisingly, average wow-and-flutter was no worse at LP, and average wow-and-flutter was actually a bit better at EP, measuring only .11%, a reversal of usual trends.

The audio signal-to-noise ratio was average for VCRs not equipped with some form of noise-reduction circuitry. We measured 44.6 dB for the record/playback cycle at SP, 45.3 dB at LP and 39.9 dB at EP. Harmonic distortion at normal operating levels (10 dB below the maximum recording level) remained sufficiently low so as not to be disturbing; .63% and .89% for 100 Hz and 1 kHz test signals at the SP, 1% and 1.3%, respectively, at the EP speed.

## Summary

This VCR was easy to operate, and we could set the programmable timer without consulting the owner's manual. Also, video and audio performance was very good and fairly consistent at all three operating speeds.

The audio system is monaural. Furthermore, audio-limiting circuitry is employed in this VCR, the limiting being of the dynamic range (the difference between loud and soft portions of music or dialogue), affecting the audio playback quality rather severely.

While we can't fault VideoConcepts for omitting certain frills, we do wish that a counter memory rewind feature (found even on the least expensive VCRs) had been included. Of course, the bi-directional scan feature offsets this omission somewhat, and since it's duplicated on the remote control, viewers won't have to stand at the VCR while searching for a specific point on a tape.

On the whole, we found the VideoConcepts model HT 2000 a well designed VCR with well balanced operating features, and video and audio performance that make it well worth considering. (L.F.)



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# Animating pipers, pictures and pitfalls



Completing your Graphic System: before and after.

## Activity

### THE COMPLETE GRAPHICS SYSTEM★★★★

Designed by Mark Pelczarski and David Lubar. (Penguin, disc for Apple II/II+//Ixe, \$79.5)

By Allen E. Meilach

*The Complete Graphics System* lives up to its title—and that's quite a recommendation. With a bounty of features all in one program at a price that's hard to beat, it will turn your Apple into a complete graphic design studio. The software needed to obtain similar results on other computers could cost many times more.

The program has both two- and three-dimensional design capabilities. It has almost every editing and graphics command common to all 2D design programs, with the added ability to form 3D "wire frame" images.

The 2D commands include line, circle, ellipse, fill, zoom, box, triangle, brush selection and palette (color and pattern) selection with 100 possible combinations. Special commands let you insert text of

varying sizes, orientations and effects on the background. There are utilities to create your own font libraries if you desire; if not, Penguin offers optional font libraries at a modest cost.

A section called "Tricks" puts advanced 2D commands at your fingertips. These commands are tricky indeed. With them you can achieve mirror images, move or copy areas, shrink images, alter colors or switch graphics memory pages.

A "Shape" program gives you the power to create and save Apple "shape tables." The shapes may be rotated, scaled, inserted or moved anywhere on the screen or saved to use with other programs.

In 3D mode, you begin by creating 2D "panels" which may be inserted, edited and combined in 3D. For example, you can design a floor plan and wall elevations as separate 2D panels. Then, in the 3D mode, you would combine the panels to form a building. Each panel, or the composite building, may be rotated, scaled or stretched. New components can be added in 3D, and the composite drawing may be viewed from any angle or distance.

A graphics program, no matter how sophisticated, is limited by the devices it supports. This program has few limitations: It supports graphics tablets, joysticks, touch tablets, paddles and mice as alternatives to the keyboard cursor control keys.

The 2D pictures are "pixel-based," which means that images are stored at the

resolution and format of the graphics display on which they were created. This format is more suitable for output to a dot-matrix printer than a plotter. The 3D pictures, stored in a special "vector format," may be sent to a plotter. 3D pictures can be converted to a 2D format and edited in 2D, but they lose plotter-compatibility.

This feature-packed program offers more options for expansion, too: a font library, a map library, graphics printer drivers, slide show utilities, animation utilities and graphics routines for your own programs. *The Complete Graphics System* has been through many revisions. The result? Mature, exciting software for a multitude of applications.

### MOVIE MAKER★★★★

Designed by Interactive Picture Systems. (Reston, disc for Atari 400/800/1200XL, \$60)

By Richard Protovin

The *Movie Maker* animation system has added a new and exciting spectrum of experiences to home entertainment.

I spent a few sessions learning the system by reading the manual and creating some odd creatures resembling robotic Kachina dolls. What interested me was not only making them move, coloring them, programming different sequences and the sound synchronizing and mixing, but especially the phenomenon of electronic control and manipulation.

This phenomenon has its roots in animated motion. Although the computerized animation systems make this process seem quicker and more immediate, there are differences of esthetics. This is exemplified by the resolution textured surface of the computer's drawings, as opposed to the graphically textured surfaces of hand-drawn or modeled animation.

### ABOUT THESE REVIEWS

To ensure that our critics' experience reviewing software parallels that of other potential users of the programs, all VR critics review software in their homes over a period of weeks.

Programs are reviewed in all formats available at presstime. When other formats are scheduled to become available after presstime, this is indicated at the end of reviews.

Unless otherwise indicated, all software reviewed is supplied by its manufacturers.

### RATINGS

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



The "hands-on" experience of image-making technology, whether with the animation camera or the computerized animation program, are essential for both learning and entertainment experiences. The difference here is that the form may speed up a process but also adds the responsibility of controlling and suitably developing new techniques and esthetics. The electronic palette becomes a "high touch" experience; that is, it does not really differ from the traditional artist's palette. It is merely a new set of rules and options which add entirely new challenges and ways of visualizing a form, idea or creature. It's also lots of fun!

The "Movie Maker Tool Kit" manual is thorough, although difficult to understand at first. When problems arose, however, it did give the answer. A series of commands, such as "Action," "Border," "Color," "Erase," "Jump," "Mirror" and "Sequence", aid in developing one's animated movie.

There are three color bars, with 16 hues per bar available on the "menu". The sound-tracks include a full scale of effects (disco, surf sounds, outer space lasers). There are four tracks with eight sounds within each, enabling one to mix a variety of bizarre sounds and tempos. Each cartoon is 300 frames long (about 10 seconds), but one can make them longer by cycling (resequencing) the entire cartoon. Also, by hooking up a VCR to the Atari computer, it is possible to record a series of cartoons.

*Movie Maker* offers one a chance to compose, record, learn, see and enjoy! Some okay commands!

*Richard Protovin is an independent animator, painter and producer and a professor of film/animation at New York University.*

## Games

### **FLIGHT SIMULATOR II ★ ★ ★ ★**

Designed by Bruce Artwick.  
(SubLogic, disc for Apple II/II+//Ile,  
\$49.95)

**By John Maesky**

Attention all flyers and would-be flyers: This is not just a game. If you're after the thrill of recklessly flying in and out of action like they do in the movies, stick to *Zaxxon* or some similar game. But if practicing real flying and working with actual flight procedures and conditions sounds appealing, you'll find this program to be as good as many desktop simulators used by pilots and students every day.

All pilots (including airline veterans) spend lots of time every year in simulators in order to stay proficient. This computer simulator will help serious flight students as

*John Maesky is Manager and Instructor at Piper Air Center in Los Angeles.*

well as pilots who are either working toward an instrument rating or want to maintain their proficiency. It won't be easy for novices, but, with some study, you'll get an idea of all the factors that go into flying. It would help to take a copilot (or, better yet, a real flight instructor) along for the first rides.

*Flight Simulator II* is modeled after the Piper Archer, and is amazingly similar—the speed, climb rates and power settings are just like what you'd get in the real thing. The program includes all the factors that go into expensive simulators (and real flying), as well as many adjustable features (such as cloud layers, day or night flights, turbulence and many more variables) that affect performance and visibility. And once you're airborne you won't feel alone, because you can be in constant communication with the ground. (Serious students can use VOR, DME and ADF navigation to get exact bearings and can practice station-to-station navigation.)

The graphics are excellent, both the very complete instrument panel and the out-the-window view. I have flown in million-dollar jet simulators whose graphics were no better than this. When I practiced takeoffs and landings from some of the airports with which I'm familiar (there are over 80 to choose from), I noticed that the distance, time and spatial coordinates were all exactly accurate. With more scenery-discs promised, you'll eventually be able to fly across the entire US.

After your first attempt, you may think you'll never master flying because everything will be new and overwhelming. But flying is a skill that you learn one step at a time. And this program may take some time to master, but if you study the two manuals that come with the disc, you'll catch on. When you get brave enough, you can try the World War I game that is also on the disc. The WWI Ace is a 3D aerial battle

game complete with bombing runs and dogfights over enemy territory.

The most important hint I can give is to make sure you scan your instrument panel. Don't fixate on any one instrument, or some of the others will run away from you, just like in a real plane. In fact, when making some steep turns during a flight on *FS II*, I experienced vertigo at one point. That's the sign of a good simulator.

(Also scheduled to be released for Atari home computers and Commodore 64.)

### **PITFALL II: LOST CAVERNS ★ ★ ★**

Designed by David Crane. (Activision, cartridge for Atari VCS, \$34.95)

**By Craig Kubey**

If you liked *Pitfall*, you'll like *Pitfall II*—maybe love it.

Selection of videogames will always be a matter of taste, and in reviewing a game one must not give undue weight to one's own preferences, impeccably valid though they may be. In all fairness, *Pitfall II*, like the original, does an excellent job of presenting a nice, cute, aimless game—suitable, I believe, mostly for children. If you dig that kind of cartridge, this one is a good bet. If you want a little action for your money, however, buy Coleco's *Frenzy* or check out the still vicious Clint in *Sudden Impact*.

If you like cute games, however, this one's for you. And cute game or not, you gotta hand it to the cats at Activision: Using a custom 12K chip, they have produced amazingly attractive, well-defined graphics in this VCS game.

In *Pitfall II* you again get to operate Pitfall Harry. This Harry carries no magnum, blows away no vermin in contravention of the US Constitution, and spends his entire life not with Sandra Locke but running around a video maze in search not of



*SubLogic's Flight Simulator: not child's play.*



money or sex or power but of tiny video points.

According to Activision, "the subterranean Incan cavern is eight screens wide and 29 levels deep, perhaps the largest matrix ever developed for the Atari 2600." Harry runs and jumps along floors, swims in the sea and floats around attached to a balloon. He must avoid bats, condors, electric eels, frogs and scorpions. He tries to collect gold bars, "the primitive rat," "Quick-claw," "the Raj diamond" and "Rhonda."

In a bow to America's dominant religions, Activision counsels, "red crosses should be touched whenever possible." And every time Harry gets wasted by an eel or a scorpion or whatever, he is automatically

returned to the last red cross he touched. This procedure, which often takes five seconds or more, can be boring.

Balancing the impressive graphics is the terrible audio. There is a repetitious melody sounding much like the nondescript organ-and-snare-drum sounds that regale riders on merry-go-rounds. On carousels, however, you usually hear this pap for only three minutes. *Pitfall II*, on the other hand, has no time limit. The music becomes so annoying that it could be used by the CIA to extract secrets from KGB agents. I like my TV—my TV and I have been together since 1975—but after hearing the *Pitfall II* theme for 15 minutes I suddenly blurted out "Shut up!" to my TV set.

## BUMP 'N' JUMP★★★★

Designer uncredited. (Mattel, cartridge for Intellivision, \$25 approx.)

By Bob Borgen

Every videogame system has its list of indispensable cartridges. Well, for Intellivision owners, here's another classic. As with *Burger Time* and a few others, beginners will find *Bump 'n' Jump* a delight, and even veteran players will have a tough time mastering the challenge.

The view is from above as you maneuver your car along 32 increasingly complex roadways (during the four seasons of the year). You use the disc to speed up, slow down, ram into and dodge around 10 varieties of computer controlled vehicles. Your car has the advantage of being able to jump over vehicles, piles of debris in the road and bodies of water that appear regularly. Of course, other vehicles can bump your car off the road.

If you'll allow for an analogy: *Bump 'n' Jump* can be approached similarly to two ways of playing hockey! Either you can emulate the old Philadelphia Flyers and hit everything in sight (picking up points for each vehicle you knock off the road), or you can make like superstar Wayne Gretzky, using speed and finesse to dart in and out of traffic, avoiding collisions. If you complete a section of roadway without any crashes, you'll pick up an astronomical amount of points. Or have it both ways—start out like the great Gretzky, but after your first collision switch styles and act like W.C. Fields in *If I Had a Million*—laughing as you get revenge against all the road hogs you've ever encountered.

(Also scheduled to be released for Atari VCS and ColecoVision.)

## JUMPMAN JUNIOR★★★★

Designed by Randy Glover. (Epyx, cartridge for Atari 400/800, \$40 approx.)

By Phil Gerson

First, let's clear up any misconceptions. *Jumpman Junior* is in no way a "junior" version of its bestselling predecessor, *Jumpman*. In fact, it would have been far more appropriate to call it *Jumpman Senior*, as its 12 screens offer more challenge and action than the 30 screens of the original *Jumpman*.

The game play is the same as in the original, with the player in control of *Jumpman* as he leaps around unsafe structures collecting bombs. Meanwhile, off-screen aliens fire bullets capable of changing both direction and speed.

Difficulty increases as you advance from level to level, and *Jumpman* players will find some familiar, if altered, screens in *Jumpman Junior*. Designer Glover has created a tougher version of the Figurit screen found in the original. Here, parts of the building appear and disappear as you pick up bombs, so you have to follow a specific trail. Similarly, the *Mystery Maze* screen is more

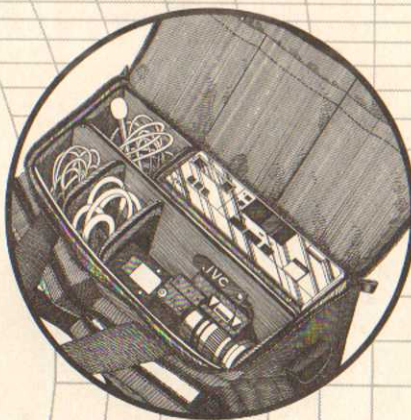
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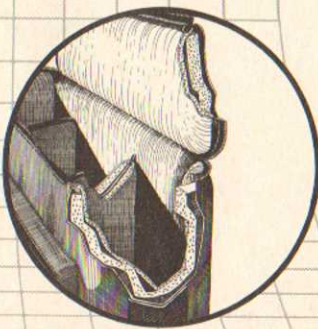


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difficult in this version. It starts as an empty screen, and building parts, ladders and climbing ropes appear as Jumpman moves about touching them. Because the background is black, rather than blue (as in the original *Jumpman*), it's up to you to remember which areas of the screen have been uncovered.

Other levels have entirely new problems, such as bombs that hatch into monsters when touched, moving walls that knock Jumpman off the building and bullets that zigzag to make evasion all but impossible.

In one particularly challenging level, each time a bomb is collected a letter or a space appears on the screen to spell out what might look like this: AEJM MNPPUXY. Collect the bombs in the right order and it makes sense. You get extra points for each letter that's in the correct place.

Despite a couple of minor flaws, *Jumpman Junior* is a magnificent game. *Jumpman* fans will need little persuasion to pick up the sequel, and they won't be disappointed. Newcomers will find it a great introduction to the fearless little jumping man.

#### FRENZY ★ ★ ★ ★

**Designer uncredited.** (Coleco, cartridge for ColecoVision and Adam, \$30 approx.)

*Frenzy* is the son of the Stern arcade machine of the same name. The arcade game is the sequel to Stern's *Berzerk*, which Atari offered for the home. In both *Berzerk* and *Frenzy*, you operate a "commando" who must shoot his way through a maze manned by evil robots and a malicious grinning basketball known as Evil Otto.

When you contrast home videogames with their arcade parents, there is always a discrepancy in both graphics and control. Here, the discrepancy, quite amazingly, favors the home cartridge. The commando you control looks more like a person (especially when he fires or dies). And you exert more precise control over him (especially when firing diagonally). The precise control means this game is fair to the player. Skill is rewarded, poor play is penalized and luck counts for little. So when you do well or badly on *Frenzy*, it means something.

The home version does lack the voice synthesis of the arcade machine, and its on-screen colors aren't as vivid. But, by adjusting your TV set's controls, you can improve them. The problem—and it isn't a serious one—is that your commando has less room in which to maneuver.

*Frenzy* is the best home videogame I have ever reviewed. It contains a lesson for the bozo managers who are losing tens of millions each quarter at videogame corporations around the United States: By keeping a game simple, they can present a game that is not too sophisticated for the limited hardware on which it must be played. Videogame company executives will drive their shareholders "berzerk" if they don't get into a frenzy to produce more games like this one.

(C.K.)

#### MICKEY IN THE GREAT OUT-DOORS ★ ★ ★

**Designer uncredited.** (Walt Disney, disc or cassette for Atari computers, \$44.95)

By Phil Wiswell

This program is divided into two sections, each containing two game/learning activities for seven- to 10-year-olds. All four games use attractive color graphics and sound effects, but the real beauty of *Mickey in the Great Outdoors* lies beneath the surface. One can tell this was put together with care specifically for the children who will use it.

"Mickey Goes Hiking" addresses word development skills. The first game displays

Mickey standing before a bridge of stepping-stones. Each stone except one contains a word, and, taken together, the words form a sentence. The player must find the correct word that is missing from the sentence in the clouds passing overhead, then time the release of an arrow to hit it. In the second game, the player must arrange four scrambled letters to form a word within a time limit.

"Mickey Goes Exploring" contains two arithmetic games. The first was by far my favorite, not only for its terrific depiction of Mickey and his butterfly net and the game concept of netting the correct answer out of the air, but because the problems one has to solve advance to the likes of  $6x ? = 162$  or

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126/? = 14, which even I found challenging. The last activity asks the player to find the next number in an incomplete sequence of numbers laid out on lily pads.

All four activities are joystick-controlled, which helps make the activities feel like games. But each is certainly based on developing a particular useful skill, and the scoring system and rounds progress in a way that will make a child eager to see what comes next. The only reason I don't give this program four stars is because it lacks a utility to generate your own sentences, words, equations and numerical sequences. Nevertheless, Walt Disney should be smiling in his grave, because this was a job well done.

## Personal

### AEROBICS ★ ★ ★

Designed by Interactive Picture Systems. (Spinnaker, disc for Atari 400/800/1200XL. \$44.95)

By Randi Hacker

Call me old-fashioned if you like, but I still prefer people to machines. If it were a toss-up between running long distances with a Walkman or discussing even the most banal of topics with a human being, I'd choose the latter. The same with aerobics. I don't do aerobics, but if I did, I'd choose Jane

Fonda's tape over this *Aerobics* program.

It's not that *Aerobics* is a bad program. As a matter of fact, it's quite good as computerized health programs go. It's very thorough, has a relentlessly complete warm-up and has exercises for all the problem areas of the body. (All of the routines, by the way, are given very cute—perhaps too cute—names such as "Out of Arm's Way," "Lay Lady Legs" and "Bye Bye Buttocks.") You can opt to forego the endless warmup and get straight to work on those flabby stomach muscles.

Anyway, it's not the content I don't like. And it's really not the animation—which was done by the people at IPS who brought you *Movie Maker*. It's the fact that, being competitive in nature, I am unable to compare my musculature with that of the instructor who has none and who, furthermore, seems to have shin bones that work something like a slide rule. This is not a look I aspire to. It's unnatural. There's no look to strive for, as there is in Jane Fonda's *Workout*, and I think that while this program may be a novelty item, its lack of that elusive human element will eventually be its downfall.

### CALMPUTE ★ ★ ★

Designer uncredited. (Thought Technology, disc for Apple II/II+/IIfx. \$79.95)

### RELAX ★ ★ ★ ★

Designer uncredited. (Synapse, disc for Apple II/II+/IIfx, Atari 400/800/1200XL, Commodore 64, IBM PC, \$99.95 Atari and Commodore; \$149.95 Apple and IBM)

By Michael Blanchet

Norman Mailer once said that the natural role of twentieth century man is to suffer anxiety. We all have anxiety just as we all have our own ways of dealing with it. Still, stress collects, and to control it we must first find out what causes it. With this information, we can construct an environment that allows us to control it. You and your home computer can now do that with *Relax* and *Calmpute*.

Both programs provide you with graphic representation of muscle tension. In *Relax*, fluctuations in your tension level are displayed on a scrolling graph. The frequency of the readouts can be changed with the control unit (included). The fastest sampling (four plots per second) is the most fascinating to watch, as well as the most enlightening. With it you can more accurately discover your unconscious reactions to different stimuli. For example, in this mode, laughing as opposed to deep breathing proved to be the most relaxing exercise for me.

Both systems monitor stress through galvanic skin resistance—the opening and closing of the pores of the skin. With *Relax*, readings are taken by sensors in a headband. *Calmpute*'s GSR monitor is a contoured block shaped to accommodate



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the posture of the relaxed hand. Readings are taken off the fingertips by a pair of stainless-steel electrodes. Functional, yes—but uncomfortable. After a scant fifteen minutes, my fingers became numb—an occurrence hardly conducive to relaxation. The headband, meanwhile, was initially irritating. Over a period of time, though, it proved to be the more comfortable.

In addition to the simple graph readout, both programs offer other modes for displaying changes in your stress level. *Calmpute*, for example, offers an exercise entitled "Getting to Know You" in which you are asked to type in your least and most favorite person, place, type of music, food and so on. The computer then counters with a scenario using your entries: Imagine yourself with \_\_\_\_\_, eating \_\_\_\_\_ while \_\_\_\_\_ing in \_\_\_\_\_.

Both programs also have game-like exercises. *Calmpute*'s "Calm-Priz," a racing game, rewards you for a decreasing stress level by increasing the speed of the on-screen car. In *Relax*, decreasing stress levels will expedite the flight of a balloon through an on-screen maze.

Neither of these programs is better than the other. While *Calmpute* is clearly the more versatile program (two stress tests, one game and three modes of display, including audio feedback), *Relax* gets the nod as the more comfortable and effective of the two. (This program allows the user to type in personal messages to subliminally reinforce the relaxation response.)

With regular use, both *Calmpute* and *Relax* can aid in the control of stress. If nothing else, these programs do prove that a home computer is good for something besides playing games.

## Educational

### ENGLISH SAT I ★ ★ ★ MATH SAT I ★ ★ ★

Designed by Eileen Shapiro.  
(MicroLab, discs for Apple II/II+ /IIfx,  
\$30 each)

### MASTERING THE SAT ★ ★

Designer uncredited. (CBS, five discs  
for Apple II+ /IIfx, \$150)

By Nancy Figel  
And Jeff Taggart

"Better late than never" seems to be the current attitude toward SAT preparation. Cram courses abound at public high schools and private test preparation centers. The courses fall into two groups: one that stresses test familiarity, reducing test anxiety and studying strategies to use when taking various parts of the test, and another that uses elaborate testing to establish the test-taker's weak areas followed by extensive

Jeff Taggart is reading coordinator at Evanston (IL) High School and teaches SAT preparation courses.

drill to improve those weak areas.

*English SAT I* and *Math SAT I* from MicroLab represent, for the most part, the first type of SAT preparation. Although they provide excellent drill activities, their main purpose is to reduce test anxiety by building self-confidence and vocabulary, and by increasing test awareness. The keys to the success of the programs are the excellent explanations and hints that lead you to the correct answers when you make a mistake.

*Mastering the SAT* by CBS Software attempts to accomplish more than the MicroLab programs. It includes a diagnostic/prescriptive pretest which is identical in the number of items and format to the actual SAT test. After taking the test,

you can get a printout of the results—a real plus for anyone planning to use this program in a formal educational setting. Students can select practice exercises in their weak areas, and, after practicing, take a posttest to measure their improvement.

In addition to the five discs in the program, *Mastering the SAT* includes a 142-page *Test Preparation Workbook*. Probably the most useful part of the book is Part I, "Test Taking Strategies," which contains specific strategies to be used while taking the test and doing the practice exercises. The strategies would have been much more useful if they were included in the actual program before each practice session.



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While the program seems to be aimed at schools, two major flaws limit its effectiveness for educators. First, the program cannot be networked to a number of computers so that a group of students can use it simultaneously. Second, only three students can save their partially completed tests to return to later.

With all these programs, the question really is how diligent and perseverant is the user going to be? If you know what you need or want and will really spend time with the programs, they can be very helpful, especially *English SAT I* and *Math SAT I*.

(*English SAT I* and *Math SAT I* are also scheduled to be released for Commodore

64 and IBM PC and PCjr. Mastering the SAT also scheduled to be released for Commodore 64.)

## Language

**DR. LOGO ★ ★ ★**

**Designer uncredited. (Digital Research, disc for IBM PC, \$99.95)**

**By Dr. Larry Greenhill**

Will *Dr. Logo* help you effortlessly program your IBM PC? Digital Research is claiming that this new, inexpensive software package's graphic language makes

programming as simple as doodling on a pad.

Although *Logo* has been adapted for a number of eight-bit personal computers, the IBM PC's 16-bit 8088 microprocessor can implement more of *Logo*'s higher level programming abilities. The PC provides more workspace for procedures, as well as more debugging, cross-reference and workspace management commands. Three other software houses offer more expensive versions of *Logo* for IBM PC: Harvard Associates' *PC Logo*, version 2.0 (\$199.95); IBM's newly released *Personal Computer Logo 1.0* (\$179.95); and Waterloo *Logo* from Waterloo Microsystems (\$180.00).

*Dr. Logo* uses the standard *Logo* "?" prompt, the triangular turtle symbol in the graphics mode and the usual abbreviations for primitives (groups of commands). It features the language's superb error messages, which are in English and comprehensible by third graders.

*Dr. Logo*, like IBM's own *Logo*, simultaneously supports a monochrome monitor for text and a color monitor for graphics. This was critical because its text was unreadable on my composite color TV but needle-sharp on the IBM's green-and-black monochrome monitor.

As advertised, *Dr. Logo* has a big memory workspace of 9,556 nodes (1 node=5 bytes), though not as big as PC *Logo*'s (10,255) or IBM's *Logo* (21,093). *Dr. Logo*'s tutorial section was the best of the three, but its dense photo-offset reference manual, with an appallingly small four-page index, proved to be poorly organized and the most unreadable 280 pages imaginable. Fortunately, a help-screen menu saves the user by listing the command primitives and their definitions.

*Dr. Logo*'s special programming features include a startup file, easy editing of disc files and a "sort" command that organizes lists quickly. It also uses all the IBM's 10 function keys somewhat better than IBM's *Logo*, which uses only five.

Unfortunately, *Dr. Logo* cannot be programmed in a higher resolution graphics mode, since there is no "setscreen" command to correct the monitor's vertical/horizontal ratio. In addition, *Dr. Logo* has unusual and demanding system requirements. Buried in the middle of *Dr. Logo*'s documentation is the fact that this program needs at least 192K of system RAM, with 256 being preferable. This means that *Dr. Logo* will not run on the standard PCjr, which has only 128K RAM of memory.

This low-priced version of the popular *Logo* language features fast graphic functions, but its extensive memory requirements and C/PM-based operating system rule it out for the IBM PC-XT and PCjr. Its documentation is thorough but terribly disorganized and inaccessible. For IBM PC users, IBM's own *Logo* program offers better features. □

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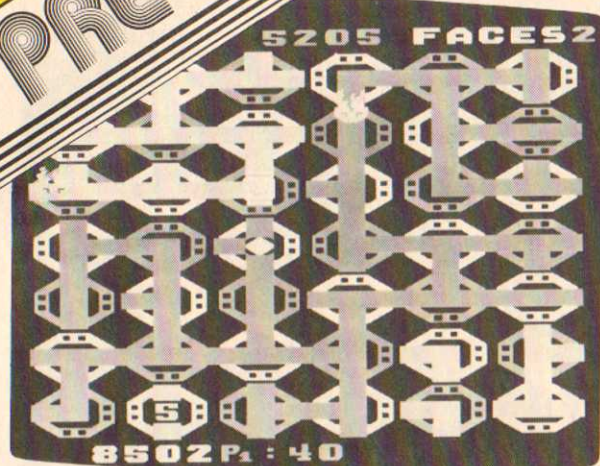
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## Coming next on cart, cassette, disc



Zenji and the art of making the Many into the One.

### GAMES

**ANKH: ADVENTURES IN A META-REAL WORLD** This meta-game of life challenges the player to experience the game in order to understand it. The player's on-screen "other" must either shoot or touch objects to open doors to new opportunities. (Datamost, Apple II/II+/IIe, Atari 400/800/1200XL, Commodore 64)

**EARTHLY DELIGHTS** Set in Hemingway's Paris, this text adventure puts the player in the role of a detective commissioned to find a priceless painting that has been stolen. (Datamost, Apple II/II+/IIe, Atari 400/800/1200XL, Commodore 64)

**KING'S QUEST** Playing for time is just one element of this combination text and graphics adventure. The player guides Sir Graham on his quest to solve different puzzles (each of which has two solutions). The player gets extra points for less obvious solutions and for solving puzzles within a time limit. (Sierra On-Line, IBM PC)

**LUNAR OUTPOST** This two-screen, 3D space shoot-'em-up takes place at the player's lunar outposts where he or she must defend Earth against the alien Zytrons. The player uses enemy scanners to determine which outposts to man, then switches to the confrontation screen to take on the Zytrons. (Epyx, Commodore 64)

**MARKET MOGUL** Players try to become Chairman of the Board by trading well. If it's not a bull market, players must grin and bear the losses in this stock market simulation. (Datamost, IBM PC/PCjr)

**MISSION IMPOSSIBLE** As a member of the Anti-Computer Terrorist (ACT) Squad, the player's video Mr. Phelps must break into the nuclear installation of a mad scientist threatening to blow up the world. He must avoid the robots as he breaks into the master computer. (Epyx, Commodore 64)

**THE PRISONER** Based on the long-running TV show, this game pits the player—"Number 6"—against evil captors trying to obtain secret information. The player must try to escape this environment of propaganda and misleading clues. (Sierra On-Line, Apple II/II+/IIe)

**SEA STALKER** Text for tots—Infocom's first for kids. In this 20,000 Leagues Under the Sea-type adventure, the player takes the role of a Tom Swift character who must come up with inventions to solve crises. Written in collaboration with a children's author, the text can be easily understood by eight-year-olds. (Infocom, Apple II/II+/IIe, Atari 400/800/1200XL, Commodore 64, IBM PC, TRS-80 Models I and III, TI-99/4A)

**SNOKIE** The player's flightless web-foot faces penguin perils as he tries to rescue his girlfriend Cara from the Grodies. Snow boulders, glacier crevasses, ice blocks, falling icicles and ice lasers are among the many obstacles hindering his efforts. (Sierra On-Line, Atari 400/800/1200XL)

**STAR WARS—THE ARCADE GAME** In this 3D space game, players face the final frontier from behind the controls of an X-Wing Fighter. Players must get past the army of Imperial Fighters to reach the equatorial trench of the Death Star

and blast its exhaust port. (Parker Brothers, Atari VCS, 5200, 400/800/1200XL, ColecoVision, Commodore 64)

**ZENJI** Zen and the art of computer game play. The player must connect a glowing maze of elements—"the Many"—to a pulsating source—"the One"—while avoiding the constant threat of Flames of Desire and Illusions. (Activision, Atari 5200, 400/800/1200XL)

### PERSONAL

**APPLEWORKS** This latest software from Apple is an integrated package including a word processor, a data base and a spreadsheet. The menu-driven program is intended to simplify the basic functions of the computer. (Apple, Apple IIe)

**HI-RES INTERIOR DESIGN** A moving furniture experience. Intended to help in designing furniture arrangements, this program lets the user draw furniture, pick it up and move it around the on-screen room. (Avant Garde, Apple II/II+/IIe)

**HI-RES LANDSCAPING** Exterior design is made easy with this landscaping program. The user can plant trees, bushes and flowers around the house, watch them grow and view the landscape from the top or the sides. (Avant Garde, Apple II/II+/IIe)

### EDUCATIONAL

**FACTORY** Recreating *Modern Times* is the object of this game for eight-year-olds. The player must create geometric products on an assembly line by determining appropriate sequences. (HES, Atari 400/800/1200XL, Commodore 64)

**FUN WITH WORDS** Lingo learning. Three spelling and vocabulary games, each with numerous variations, are intended to give different degrees of challenge to the entire family. (Epyx, Commodore 64)

**M-SS-NG L-NKS** Blanking out words in different stories leaves literary puzzles for children 10 years old and up to solve. Intended to improve writing, spelling, grammar and comprehension skills. (HES, Atari 400/800/1200XL, Commodore 64)

**SEA HORSE HIDE 'N SEEK** Shaping up color discrimination skills for three- to six-year-olds is the object of this game. Players guide seahorses across a reef, avoiding lagoon fish and a crabby octopus. (CBS, Atari 400/800/1200XL, Commodore 64)

**WEATHER TAMERS** Players try to create the Accu-Weather Report they need for their region of the country by manipulating such meteorological elements as winds, temperature and cold fronts. (CBS, Commodore 64) □

### SOFTWARES

**SUMMER SHAPE-UP:** More health and fitness software is on way from Avant Garde Software. One program will focus on nutrition, other on aerobics... Program to shape up math and vocabulary skills will be released by The Alien Group. Quiz game is winner of company's Alien Voice Box contest.

**TIME WARP WARS:** Expected release of *Warp Wars* from Activision has slipped into time warp of its own with release delayed indefinitely. Meanwhile, company's first Commodore 64-only-compatible game, *Baloney Bin*, is going through name-change operation.

**SYSTEM SOFTWARE SUPPORT:** Continuing its commitment to putting its software on every machine known to mankind, Infocom will be releasing its entire line of text adventures for Apple's new Macintosh. They'll also be ready with Coleco Adam versions—only problem: each game would use up two or three "data packs," so company may wait for release of disc drive.

**CONVERSION INVASION:** With so many computers out, companies are devoting efforts to converting successful titles to as many machines as possible. From Broderbund, look for Commodore 64 versions of *Match Boxes* and *Operation Whirlwind* and Atari versions of *Spare Change* and *Gumball...* Activision's VIRA-winning *BeamRider* will be released for Atari computers, Commodore 64, Atari 5200, ColecoVision and Adam. Also look for timely translation of Olympic event *Decathlon* for the Atari 5200 and Commodore 64... Avant Garde's *Creativity Toolbox* and *Hi-Res Computer Golf*, all currently for Apple, are being converted for IBM PC.

—Abigail Reitsnyder



## Nine home-video catastrophes

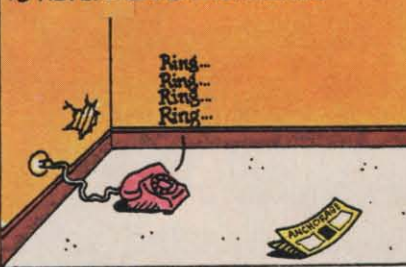
As a special treat, we offer a look at Murphy's Law as applied to home video and its videophiles, which could be subtitled "Video—The Human Experience." Equipment malfunction is nothing compared to the endless possibilities among life's little video tragedies.

This humorous article was created, written and drawn by VR subscriber Rob Suggs of Atlanta, GA.

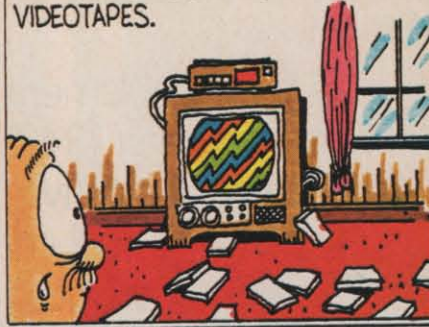
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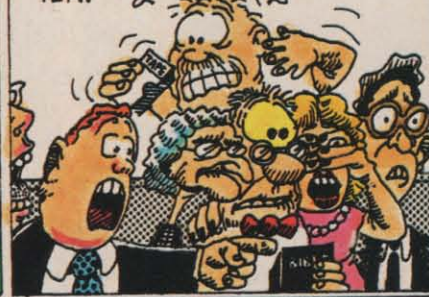
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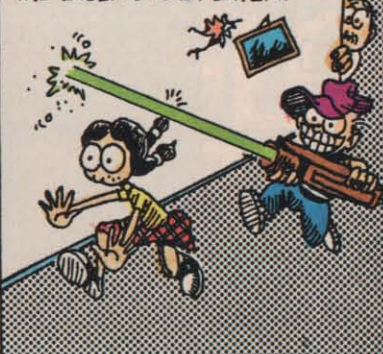
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**ANSWERS TO LAST MONTH'S TRIVIA QUIZ: (Television)** 1) a. Franklin D. Roosevelt. 2) a. *Julia* b. *That Girl* c. *The Man From U.N.C.L.E.* d. *Green Acres*. 3) b. Eddie Albert. 4) c. *The Queen's Messenger*. 5) Miguel Ferrer (Jose's son) and Anne Lockhart (June's daughter). 6) In each episode, the sign is misspelled differently (e.g., Fatty Wowlers).  
**(Videogames)** 1) All are California cities: Eureka, San Francisco, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Los Angeles, San Diego. 2) a. Mario 3) The secret message is the designer Rob Fulop's initials, which are found by playing game number 13 and scoring 0 points. The initials will then appear on the screen. 4) It put your initials into the program so they appeared on your screen while playing. 5) Computer Space, developed by Nolan Bushnell & S. Fred (Ted) Dabney. 6) b. *Spacewar*. 7) b. Atari 2600.  
**(Video Equipment)** 1) Sony invented VHS before inventing Beta, but thought VHS wasn't any good, so sold it to JVC. 2A) a. 1935. 2B) c. London. 3) b. The first commercial communications satellite. 4) c. The first consumer videocassette recorder. 5) b. The first big commercial projection television. 6) b. Videotex.  
**(Videotapes & Discs)** 1) b. George Bernard Shaw. 2) a. Buddy Ebsen. 3) b. 1/4-inch tape. 4) b. "What am I doing here?" 5) c. *The Evening News*.