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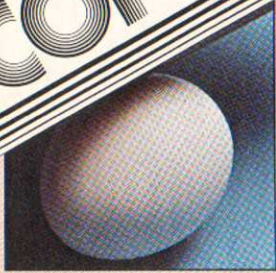
Winter Taping: Coping with the Cold

NOVEMBER 1980

CONTENTS

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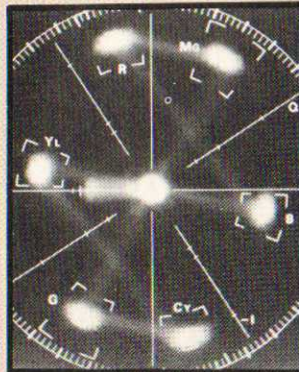
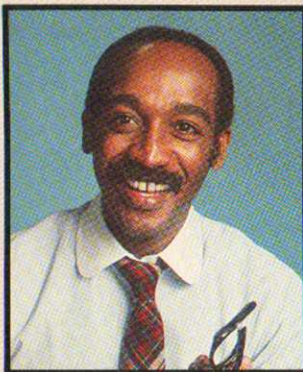
SPECIAL REPORT

- Video for the Holidays** As the season nears for Christmas lists, it's none too early to start choosing video selections for giving or asking. Demand may end up exceeding supplies in some areas this year. **52**
- Who's Got What in VCR Features?** A comprehensive consumer's guide to what different models of videocassette recorders in different price ranges will and won't do **54**
- Critics' Choice** Eight Video Review critics offer program selections in a variety of categories for family and friends on your upcoming holiday lists. **57**



FEATURES

- Direct It: Dennis Johnson Tells You How** The executive producer of TV's hit *Donny and Marie Show* offers ideas for directing your own video productions. **47**
- Winter Videotapers: Tips for Coping with the Cold** Whether you live up north or just plan to make occasional visits northward this winter, here's how to overcome cold-weather bugs that can affect your video gear. **50**
- Consumer Sources for Videotapes & Discs** A clip-and-save guide to 30 of the nation's major distributors of video programming for the home. **65**



REVIEWS

- Test Reports** Technical Editor Len Feldman and the CBS Technology Center test this month: Technicolor 212 videocassette recorder . . . Sanyo 5000 Beta videocassette recorder . . . Sylvania VC-4515 VHS videocassette recorder . . . Toshiba IK-1650 videocamera. **29**
- Feature Reviews** of new releases on videocassette and videodisc . . . Rex Reed on *That's Action* . . . Robert Schirmer on *Coal Miner's Daughter* . . . William K. Everson on *Reefer Madness* . . . Roy Hemming on *Bing Crosby Festival (The Sennett Shorts)* . . . John S. Wilson on *All-Star 1972 Jazz Festival* . . . David Hajdu on *The Kinks Live* . . . Bob Denmark on *Pete Seeger: A Song and a Stone* . . . Eric Berger on *The Amazing Apes* . . . Pete Coutros on *Super Bowl XIII and XIV and Baseball Fun and Games* . . . Al Goldstein on *Hot Legs and Cry Uncle* . . . Bob Angus on *Midnight Blue Uncensored*. **67**
- Capsule Reviews** 200 capsule reviews of movies on videotape, videodisc or available on TV. **75**
- Winners** for August's "Pick the Phony Flick" contest **94**

DEPARTMENTS

- Viewpoints** From Publisher Richard Ekstract. **7**
- Newsbreaks** Art Levis cues you on the latest in video. **8**
- Interviews** Editor Roy Hemming talks to Seth Willenson. . . **10**
- Freeze Frames** David Hajdu's potpourri of video news. . . **12**
- Coming on TV** A preview of network and cable specials. . **15**
- Looking Ahead** Bob Gerson on the tangle over rentals. . . **18**
- Video Views** Bob Angus adds a few laws to Murphy's. . . **21**
- Q&A** Our experts answer your questions. **22**
- New Products** This month's hottest hardware **26**
- Games** Phil Wiswell reports on some new handheld minis. . **96**
- Humor** More of the wholly fictitious history of television . **104**

Cover Photo: Steve Eisenberg

VIDEO FOR THE HOLIDAYS

The coming month will bring out pads and pencils—and the beginning of gift lists for the upcoming Christmas and Chanukah holidays. Partisan though we may be, we think video should be an important part of those lists.

Considering how young the home-video industry is, an astonishing array of "hardware" and "software" is already available nationwide—with more being added every month. There's certainly no shortage of goodies to choose from.

But that's if you shop early! Some outlets report that they expect demand to exceed available stock well before the holiday season is over. That's why we decided to spotlight our critics' suggestions this month instead of next.

On pages 54-55 you'll find the most comprehensive chart we've seen anywhere detailing the features of available VCR equipment (both Beta and VHS)—



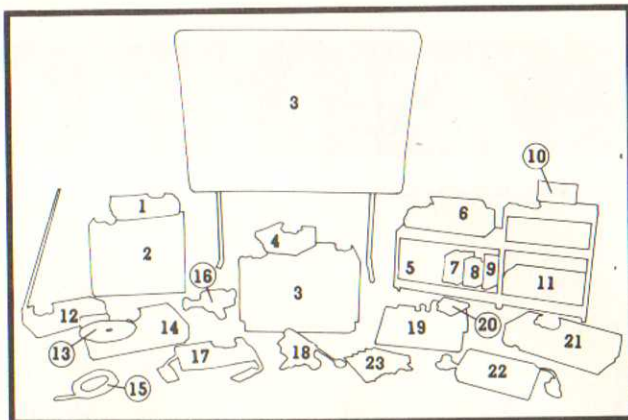
including information not generally included elsewhere about the limited modes in which certain special features (such as freeze-frame or speed search) function on different models. One of the most frequent comments we hear involves someone buying a machine to get a specific special feature and then discovering that

the feature works only in, say, the 2-hour mode and not the 4 or 6-hour modes. Our chart will help resolve such questions.

On pages 56-58, we've asked some of our regular critics and columnists to offer their recommendations from among the literally thousands of quality movies, TV shows, music concerts, sports events and other special programs available on videocassettes—and a fast-growing number on videodisc.

In putting together your holiday list, don't forget accessories—dust covers, head cleaners, maintenance kits, connector cables, program log-books, storage units and many more items your local video retailer can help you choose.

And don't forget a gift subscription to *Video Review* for your friends—the perfect way to make sure they keep up with all that's happening in the coming year in all areas of video. □



A sampler of video gift ideas for everyone on your holiday list—and yourself as well: (1) Sanyo Beta-format videocassette recorder, (2) Sampo tri-screen television set, (3) Kloss Video's Novabeam projection TV, (4) Akai stereo portable videocassette recorder, (5) O'Sullivan furniture for video equipment, (6) Magnavox's Magnavision videodisc player, (7) prerecorded videocassettes, (8) blank Fuji, Maxell and TDK videocassettes, (9) Scotch VCR head cleaner, (10) Bib VCR maintenance kit, (11) RCA VHS-format videocassette recorder, (12) JVC portable mini-TV/radio/audiocassette combo, (13) DiscoVision videodisc, (14) Pioneer's LaserDisc videodisc player, (15) Cable Works VCR cables, (16) Hitachi color videocamera, (17) Mattel's Intellivision video game console, (18) Panasonic color videocamera, (19) APF's Imagination Machine personal computer, (20) computer software cartridges, (21) Mitsubishi VHS-format videocassette recorder, (22) Atari video game console, (23) Video Review magazine.



Photo: Steve Eisenberg

The incredible shrinking video games



Phil Wiswell

CLICK! BMP... BMP...BMP...

The familiar heartbeats began. Aliens were invading from outer space, and I was the only thing in their way. I moved my laser base from side to side, follow-

ing the progress of the phalanx, firing my cannon at the first row and dodging behind my barricades as the second row fired back. With only one invader left, the mother ship passed overhead, and I leaped out in pursuit, only to be destroyed by its return fire. The game restarted, and I immediately killed the sole invader as it dropped closer to my laser base. Another phalanx began its descent nearer to me than the first, and I had to work hard to destroy the lowest ones before they landed on earth. Oops! I was hit again. The game ended.

Those of you who correctly identified the name of the game described above as *Space Invaders* were correct. But if you thought I was either standing in an arcade or sitting in front of my television set at home, then you're not as up-to-date as you may have thought you were about video games. They now fit comfortably in the palm of your hand. I was playing this game of *Space Invaders* at the beach!

As of this Christmas season, the handheld video-game revolution will be in full swing, reaching and appealing to an audience which wants portable versions of the popular arcade games.

LED and LCD Displays

To be sure, there are no handheld electronic games available to rival the sophistication of play of the best TV video games. And, obviously, the visual display and sound effects of traditional video systems far surpass that of the

handhelds. But the real question is: Considering advantages like portability and lower cost, does the computer technology behind these little gizmos provide decent adult "video play"? The answer is an emphatic yes.

Since the visual display of an electronic game must be able to translate an abstract objective into a relatable form, let's examine that aspect first. Basically there are three forms of display currently being used. The first is the familiar red LED (light emitting diode) used in many sports games (such as *Football II* by Mattel and *Baseball 3* by Entex). These games are quite a lot of fun to play, but leave something to be desired in the visual department. A red dot that appears to move by lighting a series of lamps beneath the playing field just doesn't remind me of a football player on a down-and-out pattern. And the games using a fixed number of LEDs can't simulate a television screen.

Enter the LCD (liquid crystal display). Used in wristwatches, this allows a game to utilize its full playing field because the spaces need not light up. LCDs darken when activated. The first handheld game using LCDs was Microvision by

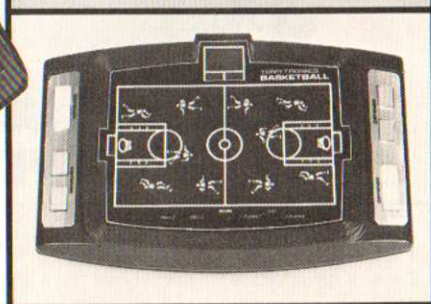
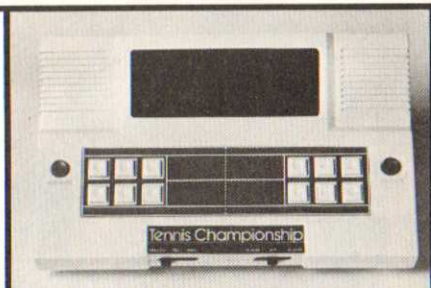
Milton Bradley—and it actually looks like a miniature television screen. In the Blockbuster game that comes with Microvision, you can trace the path of the ball as it bounces around the screen, just as you would on a TV video game. What's more, Microvision is a programmable game system that accepts seven different game cartridges. Additional games are *Bowling*, *Connect Four*, *Pinball*, *Star Trek Phaser Strike*, *Vegas Slots*, *Mindbuster*.

Credit-Card Sizes

Many other manufacturers have now found that not only do LCDs allow for a more precise "video" picture but are actually cheaper to use because they draw much less power than the old LEDs. Recently Mego introduced four credit-card sized games in a series called *Time Out*, and all work on LCDs.

Toss-Up is interesting from the point of view that no one else has come out with an electronic juggling game. And if that strikes you as odd, wait 'til you get a load of *The Exterminator*, in which your object is to stop wild moles who are on the loose before three sneak through the goal! You might call it

Continued on page 98



Three handheld "video" games: *Space Invaders*, *Tennis Championship* and *Basketball*.

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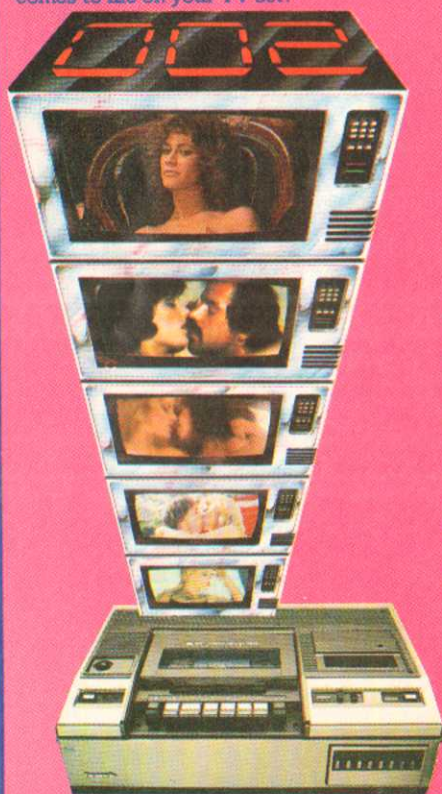
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GAMES...

Continued from page 96

Mole Invaders. (I have written to the A.S.P.C.A. about this.)

Although the LCD games create a nice visual display, they're still only in black and white—something the average TV game grew away from years ago. So a third type of display was devised for color. It is known as "fluorescent."

New games this year using the fluorescent display will certainly be among the most popular simply from their outstanding visual effects. The high-resolution graphics divide the small screens into a large number of small boxes which can light up in such a variety of ways that you get true animation from them.

Shoot-Em-Ups

In Gunfighter from Bandai one or two players can shoot-em-up. The gunfighters can move up or down and fire at will as often as they like, but must maneuver their shots past stationary cacti and moving stagecoaches. When one is hit, the machine plays a death march; and you even get a little Aaron Copland tune to begin the game.

Tomytronic Tennis, by comparison, is a more civilized competition, though none the less visual. In fact, there is more illusion of fluid motion here than in any other handheld game I've seen. The players can move to six different court positions (net right and left, mid-court right and left, and back-court right and left) from which they make overhead smashes, forehand volleys and backhand shots that are distinguishable as such.

So you've got a lot to choose from this year in handheld fun. I am not advocating these games over their video parents, but suggest that they be counted as a part of the video market. Some of you may want games you can commute with or take on vacation. Some of you may not presently own a video-game system (what are you waiting for?), in which case the \$30 or \$40 handheld games might be a good introduction, to say nothing of a nice gift. □

Phil Wiswell is associate editor of Games magazine.

If coupon is removed send order to: Kenyon Video, Inc., 904 Ethan Allen Hwy., Ridgefield, CT 06877