

Video Review

THE WORLD AUTHORITY ON CONSUMER VIDEO

BEST GIFT IDEAS! VIDEO FOR THE HOLIDAYS

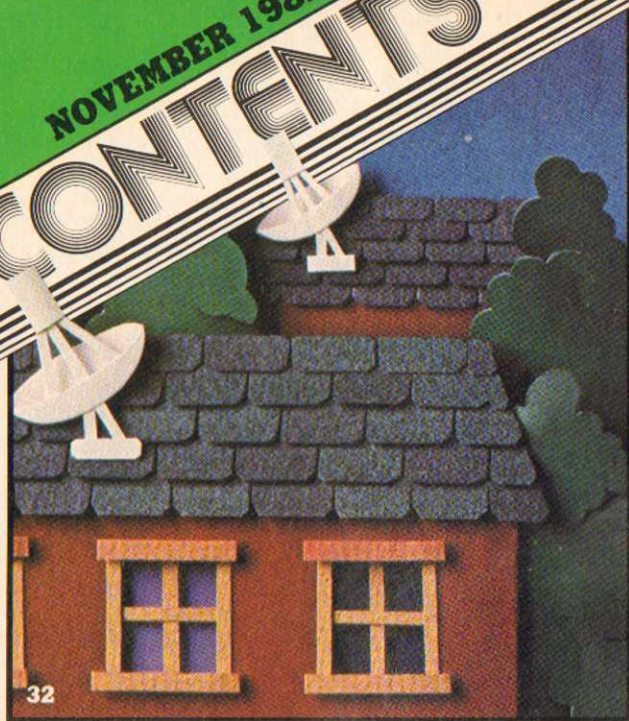


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**First Test:
Stereo Beta VCR**

NOVEMBER 1982

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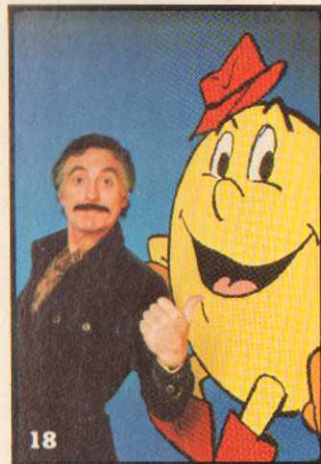
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'Star Wars' game fans strike back

SPOOF GOOF

In one of your special reports called "Unsung Wonders of Summer CES," you had a satellite antenna called the "voice-synthesizer wireless remote indoor satellite antenna." Could you send me more information about it?

Robert Braun
Germantown, MD

• *Sorry, but we don't know how you mistook that humor article for a "special report." As the story stated, the "voice-synthesized wireless remote indoor satellite antenna" is a parody of a product which doesn't exist—thank goodness.—Ed.*

MAKING STEREO TRACKS

Do companies such as Warner and MGM plan to release stereo tapes or discs of older movies—particularly Judy Garland's *A Star is Born*, *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers*, *Gigi* or *Guys and Dolls*? I understand these and some others from the '50s and '60s were originally released with stereo tracks.

20th Century-Fox Video had the right idea in making *Hello, Dolly!* and *The King and I* in both formats in stereo. I hope to see more forthcoming.

Kevin John Gee
New York, NY

• *The answer, we're told, will depend on how well the stereo releases of the ones you've mentioned do. Nothing succeeds like success.—Ed.*

'STAR WARS' GAME FANS STRIKE BACK

Tell me: What can be the point of having videogames reviewed by different people? You can't make any comparisons that are meaningful, since all of the reviewers have such different standards, some of which

Correspondence addressed to Video Review is only answered in print in the Letters or Questions pages, space permitting. Sorry, no personal replies.

they make clear. For example, I was not a little outraged by Harlan Ellison's review of the *Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back* videogame. Ellison was snide and sarcastic, and spent almost all of his time abusing videogames.

Arthur A. Bright
Croton-on-Hudson, NY

I am very pleased to see that you're now offering reviews of videogame cartridges as well as of video programs on tape, disc and TV. But I do detect a fly in the ointment—in the



Remember *The Alamo*? How about the movie's "missing" 29 minutes?

persona of one Harlan Ellison. His "review" of the videogame *Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back* was not so much a review of one videogame as it was a condemnation of all such games. When I see a review of something, I expect at least a little objectivity and not someone going on a hate trip.

In case you think I'm simply trying to defend the game that Ellison is knocking, I want you to know I tried *Empire* at one of my local video stores, and I, too, was disappointed in it.

Roger Schoolcraft
Follansbee, WV

I was pleasantly surprised to see, when my subscription copy of *Video Review* rolled in a few days ago, that Harlan Ellison reviewed the videogame *Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back* for VR. But I was more than

surprised—I was downright amazed—when I read the review and found not the expected evaluation of the blips and bleeps of the gadget, but rather an impassioned, outspoken and profound denunciation of the game concept.

I double-took and read it again, and then read it aloud to a friend, for there are those of us—even some whose homes are as full of video gadgets as mine is—who are frightened by the way (we believe) games are washing the brains of the young.

It was most courageous of you to stand up and let it be said so eloquently in a magazine that is, after all, dependent on the advertising of these videogame makers to some degree.

Robert Silverberg
Oakland, CA

• *We value the praise of such an esteemed subscriber as Robert Silverberg, one of the country's top science-fiction writers. Likewise, we value the wide variety of our readers' responses to Harlan Ellison's review, some of which agreed with Ellison and many of which disagreed. As always, we'll make a point to keep our readers' views in mind regarding future games reviews.—Ed.*

ALAMO UNDER FIRE

In your Critic's Choice article on *Americana* (VR, July '82), Ed Hulse says of John Wayne's *The Alamo* that "you'll never see it uncut on TV anymore." Obviously, Mr. Hulse hasn't watched the 20th Century-Fox Video cassette version very carefully, for it runs 161 minutes—in contrast to the 190-minute version originally released theatrically.

Jim Hollis
Alliance, NE

• *According to the Duke's son, Patrick Wayne, the original 190-minute version of *The Alamo* was shown only in Los Angeles and London. The movie was cut to 161 minutes for standard theatrical distribution. The television version is 140 minutes. For the cassette release, the 161-minute theatrical version was the only one authorized by the producers.—Ed.*

Robots, stereo games and other flashes



Art Levis

□ **AUDIO GAMES:** It's not *Tron II*, but new videogame company Data Age is offering product it says will dramatize world inside videogames—stereo audiodisc with music created by musician Craig Hundley (*Star Trek—The Motion Picture*, *The Black Hole*). Data Age, now making Atari- and Sears-compatible cartridges, says 3½-minute Mindscape disc will be offered free to customers purchasing any of its new game cartridges. Why stereo disc in addition to existing game sound effects? "The concept of portraying the visual excitement offered by videogames on an audiodisc is based on the inability of print or visual media alone to generate the viewer's total involvement and enthusiasm," says company videospeak-person.

* * *

□ **CONTINENTAL AFFAIR:** Because they've hit saturation point at home, more European electronics companies are eyeing vast US marketplace as next area for expansion. Latest to woo American consumer is Germany's Grundig, which will soon offer deluxe TV sets, plus projection-TV systems, in US stores. Company executive told *VR* at recent Dusseldorf hi-fi and video show that first US products will be 19-, 21- and 25-inch color TV sets (all with stereo amplifiers), plus 45-inch, one-piece projection-TV system. Pricing hasn't been set, but spokesperson said sets will be at upper scale of price structure, with emphasis placed on stereo, quality and European design.

* * *

□ **BUSHNELL REDUX:** Videogame industry is about to get another taste of *enfant terrible* Nolan Bushnell, founder of Atari and developer of first popular home game, *Pong*. Bushnell, who made second fortune after selling Atari to Warner Communications by founding Pizza Time Theater chain of fast-food/game-arcade outlets, says he'll produce new generation of home games using more realistic computer simulations. Games won't hit market until next year, when Bushnell's clause about not competing with Atari expires. Other project on Bushnell's drawing boards: inexpensive household robots.

* * *

□ **LAST PICTURE SHOW?** Swing by leading Japanese 35mm camera companies into video is now complete, with last holdout revealing VCR plans. Minolta is moving into US stores with portable VHS system featuring remote control and two color cameras, all manufactured by Hitachi.

* * *

□ **VICTOR VICTORIOUS:** Japan Victor Corporation (JVC) has achieved goal it set when mini VHS-C VCR was introduced—compatible mini camera. New color camera, now being offered in Japanese stores, weighs just 2.7 pounds (roughly same as 35mm camera with 6:1 zoom lens) and can be attached to VHS-C with accessory adaptor. Price in Japan: under \$700. Plans for US release of camera, and its pricing, not set at presstime.

* * *

□ **SEARS SOARS:** Giant catalogue house Sears is taking big jump into CED-format videodisc field, adding prominent displays for Hitachi stereo CED player and up to 160 disc titles in 750 stores. Through tie-in with RCA, Sears customer can order any title, available for delivery within seven to 10 days.

* * *

□ **ENOUGH, ALREADY:** No more cards and letters, please! Mail-order house offering whopping discounts on Akai VCR and camera (*Newsbreaks*, September '82 *VR*) is C.O.M.B. Liquidators, 6850 Wayzata Blvd., Minneapolis, MN 55426. Tel: (800) 328-0609.

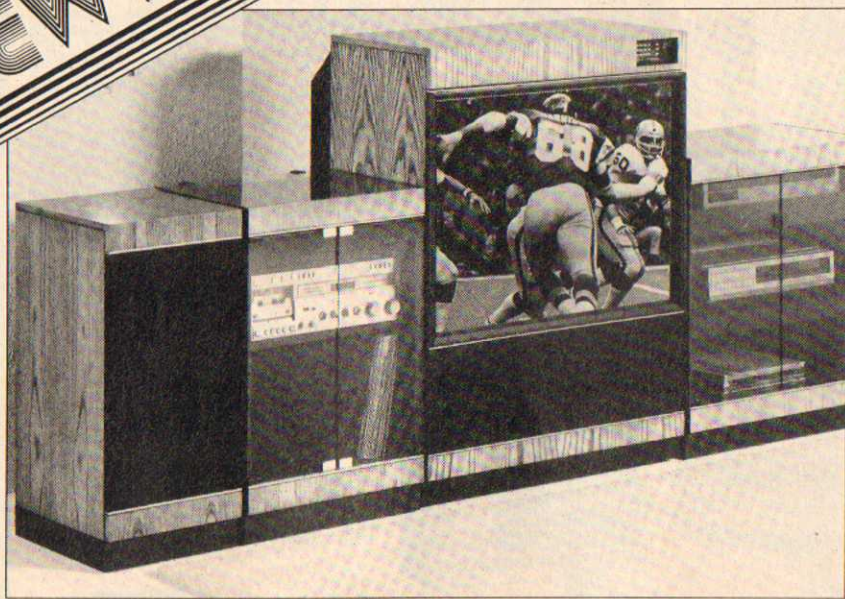
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□ **GLOBAL VILLAGE:** Direct Broadcast Satellite will get major shot in arm next year when USTV and General Instrument launch 16-state, direct-to-home TV service. Using Canadian satellite Anik C-2, venture will offer subscribers in northeastern US four channels of movies, sports and news for roughly \$30 per month. In addition, pay-per-view programming can be ordered by phone.

THE LATEST IN

NEW PRODUCTS

'Raiders' game, Magnavox and more



MAGNAVOX Component Video System System 40 \$4,190

Magnavox's first component system boasts its biggest projection television screen yet.

The 40-inch, rear-projection TV set provides 112-channel capability and comes with a 16-button remote control, plus both audio and video input/output jacks. It also comes equipped with automatic fine tuning.

The audio system is rated at 15

watts per channel, with two 10-inch woofer speakers. You can arrange it all in the accompanying ash or oak veneer furniture.

The pieces can also be purchased separately. There are matching cabinets for audio systems, for TV/VCR combinations and for storage, all of which can also be purchased separately.

Magnavox, NAP Consumer Electronics Corp., 1-40 and Straw Plains Pike, Knoxville, TN 37914 (615) 521-4316

PENTAX Videocamera Model PC-KO20A

Pentax's first tubeless, MOS (metal-oxide silicon) videocamera gives you room to shoot.

Its detachable electronic viewfinder and an optional camera cable allow you to control the videocamera's zoom and pause functions at a distance of up to 30 feet.

This camera has an f1.4, 6:1 (12.5mm to 75mm) single-speed



zoom lens and a boom microphone. An instant review feature rewinds the tape three inches to simplify viewing of what you just shot.

It comes with both a pistol grip and a shoulder bracket.

Pentax, 35 Inverness Dr. East, Englewood, CO 80112 (303) 773-1101

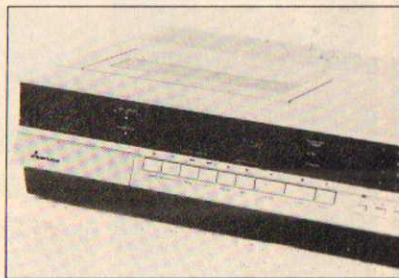
MITSUBISHI Videocassette Recorder HS-320 UR \$1300

You'll hardly ever have to leave your chair with the 18-function, wireless remote control of this videocassette recorder.

A tabletop model, this four-head, VHS-format recorder can receive 105 channels, is cable-ready and can be programmed to record eight events within two weeks. Its features include seven-times-normal-speed scan in SP and nine-times-normal-speed scan in LP and EP.

It comes equipped with Dolby noise reduction as well as an elapsed time counter.

Mitsubishi, 7045 N. Ridgeway Ave., Lincolnwood, IL 60645 (800) 323-4216

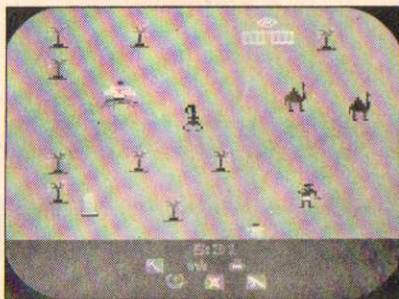


ATARI Videogame Cartridge Raiders of the Lost Ark \$37.95

Now you can get in on this Hollywood act. Indiana Jones travels through different rooms, fighting off villains and snatching treasure while searching for the Covenant of the Lost Ark.

This game is compatible with the Atari VCS 2600 and the Sears game consoles.

Atari, 1265 Borregas Ave., Sunnyvale, CA 94086 (408) 745-2200



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.

E. T., monsters and videogame smut



Cathode Crazies

For most Americans, the big question of the evening is probably, "Which TV show should I watch on TV tonight?" But for Jerry Grulkey, 33, it's: "Which one of my 134 TV sets should I use tonight?"

Grulkey, a bicycle salesperson from Vallejo, CA, has more TV sets in his home than anyone in the US, an odd and notable achievement. He is also the winner of the *National Enquirer's* contest: Who owns the most TVs in the US?

According to an interview published in the magazine, Grulkey told a reporter: "My wife Sandi and I are what you might call video addicts. We just love television. Our favorite thing is to watch our TV reruns on the same kind of set that would have been used when the shows were aired for the first time. For instance... I have 25 RCAs, and I use an 1948 RCA to watch old movies. We have a great time watching *The Honeymooners* on an Old Hoffman, my favorite set." □

Video Take-Out

If you have a yen for Chinese-language videocassettes and you live in Philadelphia, you're in luck. Go to Lai Sing Video Center at 111

North 10th Street and ask for Yuet Ha Lo.

According to an item in the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, for a fast \$50 you can get *The Iron Monkey* or *The Story of the Chinese Gods* or *Fist of Unicorn* at Yuet Ha Lo's store. Episodes of Chinese melodrama rent for \$2.50 a day. Sorry, no fortune cookies. □

Happy Birthday To You

Maybe Lou Grant wouldn't reprint rumors without checking them out, but *mea culpa*, this one's hard to pass up.

According to the *Village Voice*, a story that made the rounds at a recent teletext/videotex convention in NYC

had it that the world's first obscene electronic greeting card was transmitted early this year over a Times Mirror videotex system by a 14-year-old lad to a 14-year-old girl.

One facet of Times Mirror's experiment in electronic newspapers involves a venture with Hallmark cards. Hallmark provides a series of "greetings" complete with fancy graphics—all buried in the computer. Call up a card on the video screen, write your own message, press a button and, beep, away it goes. . . . □

Pac-Damning

"A new game is sweeping Massachusetts. It's called 'Pin the Blame on Pac-Man.'"

That's how Richard P. Carpenter, a staff writer for the *Boston Globe*, began a recent essay that was reprinted in several New England newspapers. Herewith an excerpt:

"The rules are simple. Take a videogame . . . and use it as a scapegoat for all parent-child problems. Holler and howl that the games are Trouble with a capital T that rhymes with V and that stands for Video.

"Pin the Blame on Pac-Man' is new and yet it isn't. Through the years there have been similar games with similar goals—such games as 'Blast the Beatles' and 'Take a Poke at Presley.' It's so much fun, and it's so easy, to declare that the kids are misbehaving or wasting their money or being led astray by something that has nothing to do with you." □



Freeze-Frames Meets Pac-Man

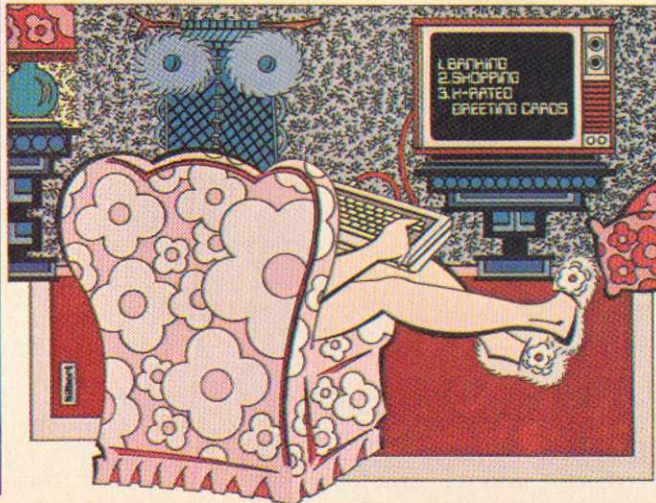
Pac-Man, a Saturday morning cartoon on ABC, stars the raspy voice of Marty Ingels (Remember *I'm Dickens, He's Fenster?*). In the the story, yellow Pac-People grow orange pellets that they munch for energy. The bad guys, in purple, bug everybody and try to discover the secret of The Power. Freeze-Frames recently interviewed the new TV Pac-Man.

FF: Hello, Mr. Ingels?

Marty Ingels: Hi, Carl.

FF: Look, I don't want to take up too much of your time, so I'll just ask a few questions. First, what's Pac-Man like?

Marty: He's a combination of Popeye, Captain Marvel, Fred Flintstone and Marty Ingels. A nice guy.





FF: If he's like Fred Flintstone, then you've got a hit.

Marty: Yes, well, I have a story about that. You know, ever since *The Flintstones*, people have believed that to be a hit, a cartoon has to have a catch phrase, like "Yaba Daba Doo." Well, I was rehearsing one day in the studio, and after my character ate a magic pellet I ad-libbed, "Paca Paca Wow Wheee!" Everybody stopped. "That's it!" they cried. "We have our catch phrase!" Then they got on the phone to ABC in New York—grown ups, you know—and the guy in New York said, "Hummm. Paca Paca Wow Wheee.' Yes. That will do." So I got the okay.

FF: That's showbiz.

Marty: No, that's Hollywood. By the way, two days after I got the part, Bally delivered an eight-foot crate to my living room—a Pac-Man game. It's still sitting there. □

Home to Mother

E.T. is the latest Hollywood creation to find its way home as a videogame. Atari promises to have both home and arcade versions, based on the hugely successful movie, out by Christmas. Director Steven Spielberg himself will pitch in his razzle-dazzle to try to turn the silver screen's most cuddly star into the video screen's next Pac-Man.

Details about the game are still under wraps but the mind boggles at its possibili-

ties: Will the game incorporate *E.T.*'s extendable neck? Will he be chased by NASA? Will he be done in by a six-pack of beer?

The addition of some kind of voice synthesizer to the visual action seems like an idea too good to resist. If so, "E.T. phone home" may not be just today's most-quoted movie line, but the battle cry for tomorrow's game freaks. (B.J.) □

Sex and the Single Blip

It had to happen: The first crop of X-rated videogame cartridges for the Atari VCS will hit the stores this Christmas. Made by Caballero Control, a porn videotape company, the games are "elegantly and tastefully presented, for adults only, of course," in Caballero's words.

The first three titles are *Custer's Revenge*, *Bachelor Party* and one other we're too embarrassed to name. *Custer's Revenge*, Caballero's Harold Bloom told us, takes place out West. An Indian woman is tied to a stake and Custer is approaching—and he does not want to play patty cake. The player uses joysticks to shoot arrows at the Blond One, trying to stop him from reaching the maiden. "If he reaches the girl, she throws her legs up and screams," explains Bloom.

Stewart Kesten, president

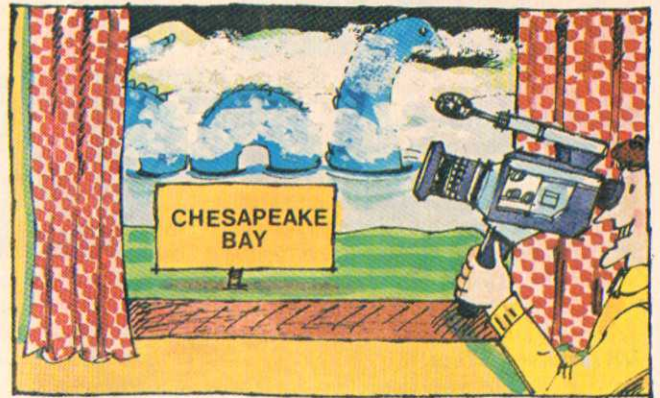


of American Multiple Industries, the game's designer, calls the cartridge "whimsical." Bloom calls it "tongue-in-cheek hardcore." Other phrases also spring to mind. □

Electronic Lottery

You know how it is. You walk into a friendly tavern, swearing you won't spend more than \$5. After the third, the fourth, or the 30th drink, your fist loosens its clutch on your wallet, and suddenly you're pumping change into videogames.

The State of New Jersey is planning to get a piece of that change. It will be setting up



its own games, on a trial basis, in taverns, private clubs and liquor stores. The nature of the games hasn't yet been determined, though they will play somewhat like an arcade game.

The theory, naturally, is that if fools and their money are going to be parted anyway, there's no reason why the state can't make a little money on it—for some worthy cause, of course. (D.C.) □

Subliminal Salad

Without a doubt, one of the most tantalizing uses yet found for video is the "video menu."

Three New Jersey restaurants now offer customers sneak peeks of their cuisine over TV screens in the cocktail lounge and hostess station. While waiting for your table, you can watch a 40-minute tape of all the food

on the menu: steaming roast lamb, for instance, and colorful vegetable salads. You even get to see the salad bar in close-up. There's no sound to disturb patrons.

"The thing works subliminally," says Jim Egan, president of Nova Videotaping Services, which made the tapes. "After producing a tape at one of the restaurants, we sat in the lounge having a drink. Suddenly, we all got up and went to the salad bar."

Nova claims there's "a significant rise in per capita consumption," which doesn't surprise us in the least. It's all the pre-dining drooling that bothers us. (D.C.) □

A Sea Story

A while back a Maryland computer salesperson named Robert Frew was entertaining friends at his home in Love Point, which is situated on a bank of the Chesapeake Bay. Suddenly, according to several subsequent newspaper accounts, a 30-foot scaly, brown, humped serpent appeared in the watery distance.

Frew flew into his house, grabbed his portable video-camera and started shooting from his bedroom window. The sea monster reportedly closed in on some swimmers and then disappeared. Later it surfaced again, swam a bit and dived out of sight.

Frew's three-minute color videotape of the beast (whom locals call Chessie, after Nessie of Loch Ness) is now being examined by scientists at the Smithsonian Institution. □

Marantz Beta VCR



George Burns and Linda Evans



Coloco-Visior Game Console



GEORGE BURNS
American institution

I'd like to give or receive a complete tape library of all the *Burns and Allen* TV shows. Jack Benny used to have tapes of them all, and sometimes I'd watch them in Jack's house. Then he raised the ticket prices.

LEN FELDMAN
VR technical editor

While what I'd really like to get is a 25-inch monitor, I think I'm better off asking for one of the new proc amps. These are handy little items, and the price tag of Vidicraft's device (\$349) is more within the range of anyone getting me a present.

If money were no object, I'd be giving the Pioneer model LS-1100 LVdisc player as a gift. In fact, I'd go all out and

get my wife Sony's limited edition \$10,000 TV set—but I'd want my name on the nameplate with hers.

Since money is an object, I'll probably be getting my videophile friends some of the good head-cleaning kits that have come out in the last year or so—Allsop's and Koss', in particular.

One item I'd love to either give or get for myself is the Seiko wrist TV set. I can't wait to get my hands on one of those—or one of those on my hand, whichever.

GREAT IDEAS FOR HOLIDAYS

ROBERT ANGUS
VR executive editor

Some of the greatest gifts for anyone into video are collections of cables and adaptors for creating all possible configurations of equipment.

Blank tapes of odd lengths also make great gifts. Fuji, in particular, has a good selection of blanks which are just right for those movies that are 10 minutes longer than the usual blank lengths.

I'd also be tempted to get a little VHS-C VCR as a big gift for someone. For any of my friends with satellite dishes, I'd get a subscription to *Satellite TV Week*.

For myself, I want very little, other than a Jensen component video system. Since I'm not likely to find one in my stocking, I'll settle for an electric satellite-dish warmer.

At \$49, that's not asking too much, since ice and snow on my satellite dish really do cause, well, snow in the picture.

Two other gifts I'd like to get are a Quasar editing console and a practical piece of electronics furniture with storage space for a VCR and a lot of tapes.

JERRY LEWIS
Director, writer, actor

One video gift I'd give anybody is a tape of *The Fountainhead*—the Gary Cooper movie based on the Ayn Rand novel. It's an old black-and-white picture, but one hell of a movie.

What I love about it is the idea that man, in spite of everything, fights to retain what he has—his talent.

Naturally, I'd also give a copy of *Citizen Kane* or any of the classics, including *E.T.*

GARY ARLEN
Publisher/editor of International Teletext Videotex News

First, I'd like to receive a good teleportation system. Since I can't get that, or what I'd really find useful (a practical video conferencing system), I'll settle for an old

Dacwasher Joystick



Pioneer LV Disc Player



Koss Head-Cleaning Products



Jerry Lewis



DuMont TV set. If I can't get that, I'll settle for some other vintage model with a real wood cabinet.

For others, I'd consider getting a friend who's connected to cable TV another tier of service, such as HBO or the Movie Channel.

Other than that, I'd stick to portable video equipment as gifts, and not just VCRs, but also monitors and mini TV sets such as Seiko's.

PETE COUTROS

Sportswriter

The videotape I'd most like to receive as a gift is *Sugar Ray Robinson: Pound for*

T GIFT FOR THE DAYS

Pound (VidAmerica).

My fantasy, though, would be to have tapes of the two greatest boxers slugging it out—Muhammad Ali and Jack Dempsey—and my two favorite tennis players going at it—Bjorn Borg and Don Budge.

JOE MONTANA

San Francisco 49ers quarterback

I would like to get Panasonic's model PK-956 videocamera to go with my video recorder.

JOHN SAYLES

Director

I would like to get all of Kurosawa's movies on tape, as it's hard to find them playing in movie theaters, especially his lesser-known movies.

NORM EISENBERG

Long-time electronics writer

My fantasy gift would be a video editing console to go with my home equipment on which I could do split-screen effects as well as dissolves, and have the console act as a switcher, too.

Another ideal product, while I'm order-

ing fantastic gifts, would be a three-foot satellite dish that costs less than \$300 and would bring all the stations in perfectly.

For someone else, I'd give one of the video head-care kits. There are quite a few good ones, such as those made by Allsop and Recoton.

KENNY ROGERS

Country-Western Star

I'd like to give a videocassette of *The Best Years of Our Lives* to my wife, Marianne. If

they were on tape, I'd give *Fantasia* to my nine-month-old son, Christopher, and *Gone with the Wind* to Dottie West. *A Star is Born* would be good for Lionel Richie, and *Black Orpheus* for Kim Carnes.

ANDY WARHOL

Father of pop art

I would like to receive. In particular, I would like to receive a complete one-inch tape editing and post-production studio, with a console and 2 CMX machines, for Andy Warhol's TV show, currently seen in Manhattan, soon to be released intergalactically. (Continued)



Joe Montana, Custom Woodwork & Design, Cabinet



Andy Warhol Photo: Mary Harry & Peter DeFosco



PCA Stereo Disc Player

TOMMY TUNE

Broadway playwright, director and choreographer

I would like to get videocassettes of two movies from my childhood, the Max Lieber production of *Lady in the Dark* with Ann Sothern, and Nelson Eddy in *Desert Song*, which is the production with Bambi Lynn and Rod Alexander.

MARC WIELAGE

VR West Coast editor

Atari has a game machine it sends to stores that carry its games and equipment. It's something like an arcade game, but it plays game carts that can be stored inside, so instead of having to change cartridges for each game, all you have to do is turn a knob. That's what I'd really like—one of those for my personal use. Unfortunately, I'll be lucky if I get just some game cartridges, so I'll ask for my favorites: *Donkey Kong* and *Cosmic Avenger*.

SHIRLEY VERRETT

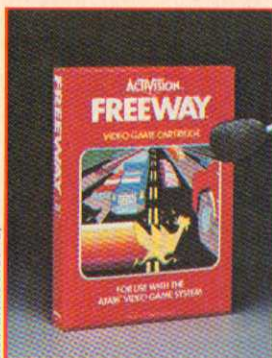
Opera diva

Opera is a great art form because it is a tradition that has been handed down from generation to generation. I would love to see some of my current operatic roles performed by some of the Legendary artists. Rosa Ponselle in *Norma*, for instance, and Conchita Suervia in *Carmen*.

There is also a tremendous history in our country of great black singers going back to the early 19th century. Many of these artists are now forgotten but in their day they were



Tommy Tune



Activision's Freeway



Panasonic Videocamera



Hewlett-Packard Home Computer



GE Mini-Combo



Sony VCR

celebrated not only in America but around the world. Such artists as Elizabeth Taylor Greenfield, Arabella Fields and Sissieretta Jones appeared in opera, concerts and even vaudeville. I would love to have the opportunity to see performances by some of these great artists.

In our own time, Marian Anderson's first performance at the Metropolitan Opera in New York was not only a milestone in the history of opera but also in the history of this country. I'd love to have a video souvenir of that occasion, not only for myself but also to share with others.

LENA HORNE

Pop stylist

I'd like to get any classic old movie on tape. Anything, as long as it's a movie that's really a *movie*, if you know what I mean.

ART LEVIS

Editor, Consumer Electronics Monthly

What I'd most like to get is Sony's new 12-inch Profeel monitor. Along with that, I'll take the voice-synthesizer for the Odyssey² system, an RCA stereo disc player with Dolby noise reduction and the Seiko wrist-watch TV set.

As much as I'd like it myself, I'll have to give someone the Hewlett-Packard home computer, because I don't know how to use it. I wish I could afford to give someone the Kloss portable projection TV set that fits into a closet and projects on a wall, because they're so convenient.

For smaller gifts, I'm planning to give videocassettes or discs of *Jane Fonda's Workout* and *On Golden Pond*—both great programs—to my friends and relatives.

RANDI HACKER**Senior editor, Electronic Fun**

The holidays are a time to revere life. Therefore, I'd like to receive a complete collection of wildlife videogames—all species: Parker Brothers' *Frogger*, Atari's *Frog Pond*, Mattel's *Frogs and Flies*, Coleco's *Donkey Kong* and *Ssnakes* from Data Age. Anything that crawls, walks, swims or hops is fine with me. Ape-men are good, too, so if you can get Miles O'Keefe, send him along also.

MICHAEL J. ARLEN**Media critic for The New Yorker**

Although they don't exist on prerecorded tape, I would like to receive a videotape of a Bert Lahr episode from the old *Omnibus* PBS series to make me laugh, and a tape of the first H-bomb test explosion at Bikini Atoll to keep me humble.

ROBERT GERSON**Senior editor, Television Digest**

If I could get anything in the world, I'd get two things that don't yet exist. First, I want a low-powered, wireless TV transmitter for my living room. That way, I could connect my video equipment to it, then broadcast the programs directly over channel three or four to my TV set without having any cables in the way.

The other thing I want is a VCR that has alphanumeric capacity, so I can index tapes at the beginning and know exactly where all the programs on a given tape are.

As for gifts, I think the giant ball control for videogame consoles made by WICO is very nifty, but if I can't get one of those for a gift, I'll get Discwasher's new joystick.

In the more expensive price range, I'd consider getting GE's color mini-combo.

SEKA**Porn queen**

Since I love Fellini's movies, I would like someone to give me *Juliet of the Spirits*, as it is one of the few Fellini movies I don't already have on tape.

If I were giving someone a tape, I would choose a rock 'n' roll tape by Fleetwood Mac (*Fleetwood Mac*, *Documentary and Live Concert*, Warner) or The Kinks (*The Kinks: One for the Road*, Warner).

MAURY Z. LEVY**Editor, Playboy Guide to Electronic Entertainment**

I'll be giving a lot of videogames this year: *Lost Luggage* to Karl Malden; *Freeway* to Frank Perdue; *B-17 Bomber* to Yasir Ararat; and *Odyssey's K.C.'s Crazy Chase* to the legal department of Atari.

I'll also be buying a Sony Watchman for Gary Coleman, so he can watch himself life-size, and a phone answering machine for Steven Spielberg, so when E.T. finally phones home, he won't miss the message.

Me? I'd like to get a Playboy bunny who's wired for cable. The ones with the rabbit ears don't seem to be very receptive.



Channel Master Satellite Dish



Sarah Vaughan. Photo: Carol Friedman

SARAH VAUGHAN**Jazz diva**

I would like to get videocassettes of Ella Fitzgerald, Duke Ellington or Count Basie in performance (*Goodyear Jazz Concert with Duke Ellington*, Video Yesteryear).

DIZZY GILLESPIE**Jazz legend**

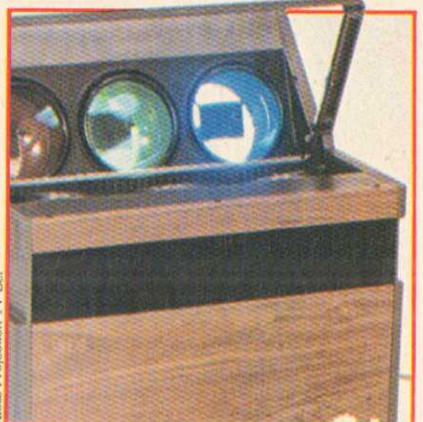
I'd like tapes or discs of all the jazz greats, especially Lester Young, Louis Armstrong, Erroll Garner and Art Tatum. I saw some movies of them when I was in Japan on a concert tour not long ago, and thought I'd like a whole tape collection of the greats in concert.

HANS FANTEL**New York Times electronics columnist**

This year, I'm going to be greedy. I want a set of high-quality video components and a Pioneer LaserDisc player, along with a complete set of opera video-discs. On top of that, I want a Channel Master satellite antenna with automatic polarization.

GEORGE KOPP**Editor, Video Business**

My biggest wish is for a Channel Master satellite receiving system and a country estate to put it on. I'd also like to get a



Klass Projection TV Set

ColecoVision game system and a *Donkey Kong* cartridge to go with it. The tape I don't have that I'd most like to get is *Elephant Parts* (Pacific Arts).

The Sony model SL-2500 slim-line, front-loading VCR would be a great gift for someone. Another thing I'd like to be able to give someone is some real wood video furniture by Custom Woodwork and Design.

But the best gift of all would be a rare, first-edition cartridge of *K.C. Munchkin*.

MICHAEL NESMITH**Video producer, performer**

I would give someone a year's subscription to cable TV. I would like to get a satellite dish.

KEN USTON**Videogame and blackjack authority**

I'd like someone to turn me into a human Pac-Man and put me in a Playboy Club maze filled with 21 gorgeous Bunnies—21, as in blackjack.

I'd like to give somebody a machine that plays every single cartridge on the market. This fantasy game console should, of course, have a table-mounted, rather than a handheld, controller to make it as much like a coin-op game as possible. □

Compiled by Mary Busch and Deirdre Condon.

By Mark Trost

It's enough to make Donkey Kong feel like a big ass. With more and more unknown games bombarding players every day, how can a gamer possibly decide which cartridges are really worth buying? While there were once only four companies making carts for the three major game systems, there are now almost five times that many offering literally hundreds of games, and even more seem sure to come.

No matter how long the game explosion lasts, it's creating some rough shock waves for players today. At least that's the rationale behind the latest phenomenon in electronic fun—videogame exchange clubs. Much like their prerecorded videotape ancestors, the game exchange clubs allow members to "play them all" without going broke. While the number of such clubs seems to

be rising almost as quickly as the number of new games, making sure you pick the right exchange group can be as difficult as the most challenging cartridge and bear similar results—making you a winner or a loser.

Most game clubs work essentially as liaisons between those who have and those who want. If, for instance, you committed the mazes and the ghosts' moves in *Pac-Man* to memory months ago, and you'd like to try out your fire button on *Defender*, a game club might be able to help you.

How It Works

Here's how it usually works: For an initiation fee of anything from \$10 to \$35, a club will attempt to arrange an amicable trade between you and another (usually anonymous) member. After you send in the name of the game you want to get rid of, along with a list of three

PAC-MAIL: EVERY PLAYER SHOULD KNOW ABOUT VIDEO GAME EXCHANGE CLUBS



Photo: Chris Moore

desired carts, the club will go through its game inventory or its list of members that have offered games for trade. If a match is possible, both parties will be notified to send their games, along with the instruction manual (a necessity), the original box (in most cases) and an exchange fee of \$5 to \$6 apiece to the club. The club will check out both games to make certain they haven't been burned out, then send them postpaid to the appropriate parties.

That's what happens when things go right. But if you just went out and bought a ColecoVision machine and want to trade off your old Atari games for Coleco carts . . . good luck. No club we've come across is willing to trade one system's games for another's.

A second dead-end scenario is any attempt to pawn off those *Combat* or *Blackjack* cartridges that came with your game system for big game hits such as

Berzerk or *Donkey Kong*. If a club even considers such a trade, it'll probably charge you an additional "step-up" fee.

For example, if you have

Atari's *Home Run*, with a list price of

Exchange clubs can be a great way to try out videogames. But you can't afford to try out clubs like you'd try out games. Unless you know all about a club from the start, you could end up losing more than a videogame.

\$31.95, you might have to pay an additional \$5 to \$10 to the club or to the person you're exchanging with to make the trade "even." Otherwise, you'll end up hitting more home runs than Henry Aaron ever did.

If you're not careful, far worse things can happen. Not getting your number-one want is always a possibility with even the most reliable, up-front club. Yet not getting *anything* after forwarding your membership fee, a cartridge and an exchange remittance is not unheard-of, either.

Address Unknown

In the past several months, ads have begun to spring up in a variety of periodicals aimed at videogame fans who might want to "save the cost of buying new cartridges by trading for the latest." Such ads usually boast all manner of alluring lists and mottos, but they just as often don't list street addresses or phone numbers (which are almost always unlisted).

"Anyone who sends in money to an ad for a videogame exchange club that has a long list of cartridges for trade but says 'limited time offer . . . allow six to eight weeks for delivery' better get ready to absorb a loss," warns Cliff Blake, president of Screen Sonics, a two-year-old St. Louis, MO-based company specializing in videogame repair and offering one of the longest established exchange clubs.

"In any hot field," says Blake, "you're going to get fast-buck artists. And if you're so determined to get rid of your *Adventure* cartridge for *Asteroids*, you may be willing to take a gamble. But with some of these companies you're bound to lose."

Computer Search

Blake says he maintains all club-related data on computer. When a member requests an exchange, Blake makes a computer search to find a match. "If we can't find the desired game," says Blake, "we send the member a note saying we'll keep the information in the computer. If we can arrange a trade, we notify both parties to send in their games."

Blake also mails periodic updates of what's available and what's wanted by his members scattered throughout the 50 states and five foreign countries. Additionally, Blake's is one of the few exchange clubs routinely questioned by Atari as to the wants of its members.

Although Atari keeps close contact with Screen Sonics, neither the VCS manufacturer nor any other game maker has endorsed any specific exchange club—nor even the idea of such organizations. In fact, when we tried to check with a few of the major game companies about their feelings toward exchange clubs,



many said they didn't even know they exist. "We really weren't aware that people were doing this," says a spokesperson for Activision. "But if it's a legitimate thing, it sure sounds like a good deal for those who can't afford to buy every cartridge they'd like to have."

In the past few months, growing numbers of video stores have begun to sponsor their own game exchange and rental clubs, much like in-store videotape clubs. At this point, rental rather than exchange appears to be more common at most video counters, but exchanges are not exceptional services. After all, unlike many movies, games are designed to be played more than once or twice. As a matter of fact, most game fans are determined to master each cartridge they come in contact with—a process that can take weeks, making exchange a far more appealing and cheaper option than renting or buying.

Some stores in the large Video Station chain, like some independent operations, are offering in-store exchange programs. The Video Station outlets in Kankakee and Bloomington, IL, for instance, have been offering game-exchange services for the past three months, according to co-owner Betsy Ahrenes. "All our movie-club members automatically obtain videogame exchange-club privileges," she says. "If would-be exchangers aren't tape club members, they can join for \$20 and exchange carts for \$5 each."

Unlike most clubs, the Video Station will exchange a used for a new cart, if the cart desired isn't in the used stock and Ahrenes sees a need for the one offered.

A similar plan is offered by the Video Game Exchange

Club of America, a mail-order operation run out of Ankar Video, a video store in Merrick, NY. Club president Jerry Goldberg claims his club is the oldest of them all, with the most flexible game exchange program. "We charge \$35 to join, and for that the member gets any cartridge he or she wants. That cartridge then becomes the member's 'club' cartridge, which can be exchanged for cartridges in the same group at \$5 per exchange."

Exchange Excitement

Like Ahrenes, Goldberg will exchange old for new, if he doesn't have the desired game in his used inventory, and if it appears on his exchange list. "We issue a new list every three months," says Goldberg. "It generally takes that long for the new cartridges to become available for exchange." (Goldberg's most recent list offered both *Defender* and *Pac-Man* for trade.)

Although it's based in a storefront, the Video Game Exchange Club of America won't accept walk-in exchanges, "otherwise we'd have every kid in New York State bringing in games. By doing it this way, we're able to keep the club manageable." At last count, Goldberg's club had 700 members.

While off to a somewhat tenuous start, videogame exchange clubs could just be the way to go for those eager to try out every new game from *Atlantis* to *Yars' Revenge*. In the ensuing months, more mail-order operations and video stores are expected to add game exchanges to their roster of services. By that time players could be ready to trade in their *Donkey Kongs* for *Raiders of the Lost Arks*. □

SIX OF THE CLUBS

Doing business through the mail is always a risky venture. While we've never heard of any complaints about the companies listed below, we can't vouch for them. If you do have any trouble with them, write us and we'll try to help.

All the exchange fees given below include return postage. Membership fees are lifetime unless otherwise noted.

EAGLE ENTERPRISES, PO Box 56096, Little Rock, AR 72215 (501) 851-3830.

Membership fee: \$20. *Exchange fee:* \$5.95. *Cartridges exchanged:* Atari-compatible, Intellivision-compatible. *Exchange procedure:* Company still formulating specifics.

INTERNATIONAL VIDEO CO-OPS, 220 N. Crescent Way, Suite D, Anaheim, CA 92801 (714) 956-8511.

Membership fee: \$35 a year. *Exchange fee:* \$5. *Cartridges exchanged:* Atari-compatible, Intellivision-compatible, Odyssey². *Exchange procedure:* Call, write or send in cartridge with original box and instruction booklet; cartridge will be held until a desired game arrives. No additional charge for trading to higher-priced cartridge. *Other features:* Membership fee includes storage rack and monthly newsletter. Members can purchase new games and additional video merchandise at "\$1 above wholesale cost," according to the club.

SCREEN SONICS, 14416 S. Outer Rd. 40, Chesterfield, MO 63017 (314) 434-0433.

Membership fee: \$7.50 lifetime, plus \$2.50 yearly dues. *Exchange fee:* \$3.50. *Cartridges exchanged:* Atari-compatible, Bally/Astrovision Video Arcade, Intellivision-compatible, Odyssey², Fairchild Channel F. *Exchange procedure:* Members list cartridge availabilities and cartridges wanted with

club. Member is notified to send in cartridge (along with instruction booklet) when wanted cart becomes available. If cartridge is unacceptable (i.e., broken), member forfeits exchange fee. Members must add moneys if trading for higher-priced cartridge. *Other features:* Members are sent return envelopes and jet packs for information and cartridges.

VIDEO FUN & GAMES, PO Box 1010, 1204 Avenue U, Brooklyn, NY 11229. (Phone number unlisted)

Membership fee: \$35 (includes purchase of one cartridge). *Exchange fee:* \$3.50. *Cartridges exchanged:* Atari-compatible, Bally/Astrovision Video Arcade, Intellivision-compatible, Odyssey². *Exchange procedure:* Members can exchange club cartridge for specific games determined by club. Cartridge must be in original box along with instruction booklet. *Other features:* Discount coupons, membership contests, newsletter.

VIDEO GAME EXCHANGE CLUB OF AMERICA, 176-A Merrick Rd., Merrick, NY 11566 (516) 379-2343.

Membership fee: \$35 (includes purchase of one cartridge). *Exchange fee:* \$5. *Cartridges exchanged:* Atari-compatible, Intellivision-compatible. *Exchange procedure:* Mail club cartridge back with original box and instruction booklet. List three choices. Club will remit used or new cartridge. *Other features:* Exchange listing sent out every three months.

XANTOR, DIVISION OF VIDEO CINEMA OF AMERICA, PO Box 5466, Scottsdale, AZ 85251 (602) 894-0150.

Membership fee: \$25. *Exchange fee:* \$6. *Cartridges exchanged:* Atari-compatible, Intellivision-compatible. *Exchange procedure:* Cartridges must have original box and instruction booklet. *Other features:* Membership includes a T-shirt, monthly newsletter and discounted video merchandise. —M.T.

MEGAMANIA™

ACTIVISION
MEGAMANIA™

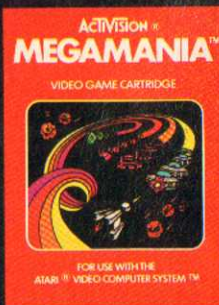
Berrilli

A SPACE NIGHTMARE.

A fleet of hostile hamburgers appears on the screen, and the nightmare begins. Keep firing! Keep moving! Because if you get past the burgers, a school of belligerent bow ties is waiting to see what you've got.

And so it goes. Wave after wave of everyday objects come at you with increasingly difficult patterns of attack and evasion. And the better you get, the better they get.

The attack is so terrifying, you just might call it the worst thing you've ever seen on television. We call it MegaMania™, a new video game for your Atari® Video Computer System™. Designed by Steve Cartwright.

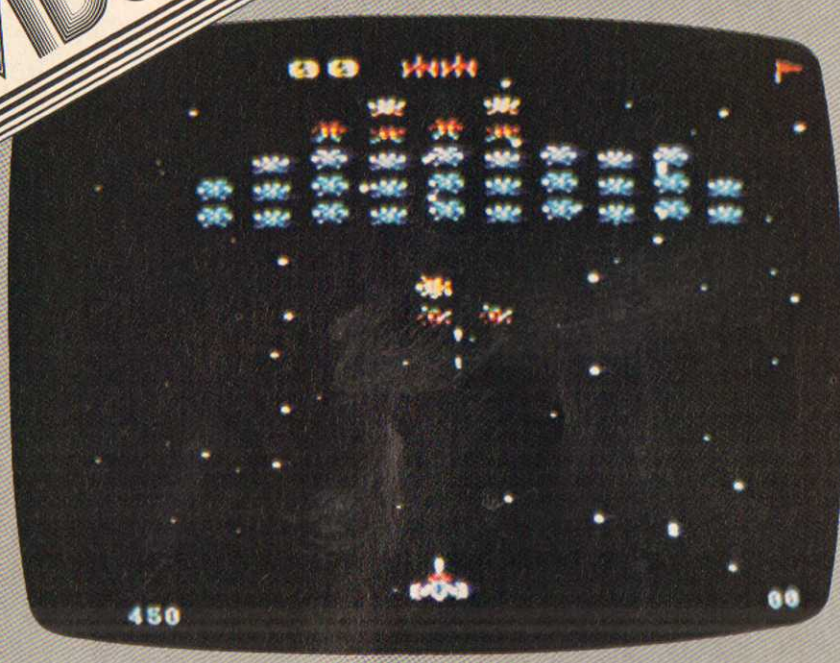


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Battling boxers, bombers and bandits



Galaxians breaking rank in new Atari game system: arcade quality?

Cartridges

GALAXIAN ★★★★★
Adapted by Joe Tung from the Midway arcade game. (Atari Model 5200-compatible cartridge. \$39.95)

By Ken Uston

I've looked at just about every one of the 250 or so home videogame cartridges that currently exist on this planet, and this arcade-game adaptation for Atari's new system still manages to impress me. So does the Atari 5200 itself. Not only are its graphics and sleekness fabulous, but also the controls are vastly improved over those of the Atari VCS—making *Galaxian* one of the finest home videogames I've seen.

Atari's *Galaxian*, as all game addicts well know, is a space shooting game along the lines of *Space Invaders*, but with somewhat different play. Four hordes of differently colored invaders threaten your planet, which you defend with a cannon that moves horizontally along the base of the screen. Your objective is to accumulate points by shooting the aliens—which can break from their formations to swoop toward you—

while avoiding collision with them or their missiles.

The types of invaders and the point values for shooting them are identical to those of the arcade *Galaxian*, but the home Atari cartridge has additional features:

- Several game options. The aliens don't fire missiles in the easiest version, which makes a great beginning variation for young children to play. There are 10 difficulty levels in which the aliens fire. The highest game level results in a virtual rain of missiles from rapidly attacking invaders.

- The aliens duck and weave even more frustratingly than in the coin-op game. They sometimes hesitate in place and then move. They linger far longer and tantalizingly just above the base of the screen. In the arcade game, it's possible to wait until the aliens are fairly close to the cannon before firing, which increases shooting accuracy. In the home version, this isn't nearly as easy because of the more elusive movements of the aliens and the increased frequency with which they launch missiles. Obviously, you should try for the attacking flagship (the yellow one which flies with escorts) since it's worth far more than any other target.

Galaxian strategy can be either offensive or defensive. At lower skill levels, try to shoot as many attacking aliens as you can. Be sure to make each shot count, because only one missile can be on the screen at a time, and, if you don't hit anything, you cannot fire again until your missile has disappeared off the top edge of the screen.

At higher skill levels, for all but the most proficient players, a defensive strategy is better. Save your cannon at all costs. Avoid the downpour of enemy aliens and missiles. Keep your finger on the fire button, and fire willy-nilly, settling for the points you'll rack up as you try to keep your cannon from blowing up.

You're going to enjoy *Galaxian*—I promise. In fact, I predict most of you will find yourselves in front of the Atari 5200 screen and in the darkness of outer space even on the sunniest of days. ☐

B-17 BOMBER ★★
Designed by Mattel. (Mattel Electronics VCS-compatible cartridge. Voice-enhanced. \$36 approx.)

By Howard Folklin

Let's leave hyperspace, astromashing and extraterrestrials for a moment and get down to some real earthy gamesmanship—like bombing the hell out of the Nazis.

That's the object of *B-17 Bomber*, one of Mattel's most ambitious, complicated and mentally challenging games. It's also one of the company's most inventive, since it's the first to use Intellivoice, a small paperback-book-size box that adds the dimension of a human-sounding voice giving suggestions during the game. So why does such a promising game leave me so frustrated?

B-17 Bomber's considerable pluses stem from its attempts at both graphic and conceptual realism. This is evident from the first image that appears on the screen: a map of Western Europe with dozens of enemy targets, such as industrial plants and airfields, sprinkled throughout the continent.

There are many pre-flight decisions to make in this thinking-person's game. First, you must choose a target. Should you pick an industrial center deep in Germany or settle for an enemy airfield on the windswept coast of Holland, worth less points? That leads to more choices such as how much fuel and how many bombs to carry—the more bombs, the less room for fuel.

Once airborne, your plane is repeatedly attacked by enemy aircraft called bandits. This is when Intellivoice plays its greatest role. Your plane is flying peacefully over the English Channel preparing to level some poor defenseless enemy airfield when Intellivoice barks out "Bandits! Six o'clock!" Press the six o'clock button on the keypad and you see a small speck on the screen growing larger. As it appears to come closer, the shape of an airplane becomes evident and you have to try to down the pesky devil before he riddles your plane with bullets.

After several minutes of flying, your plane

RATINGS

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

finally reaches its target. Intellivoice says, "Target below." By pressing another button, a new screen appears with a lush green landscape dotted with the target you picked earlier. Then it's a simple matter of setting the bombsights and dropping your load. From there you're halfway to accomplishing the goal of the game: bombing your target and returning to merry old England to quaff a few pints. (You supply the Intellibeer.)

The strategy of *B-17 Bomber* is far from simple. Yet, for all its complexity, it commits the greatest videogame sin of all: It borders on being boring. There are many stretches in the game when nothing happens. The plane just flies over parts of Europe without being attacked, kind of like flying over Nebraska in a 747.

Another problem with *B-17 Bomber* is that its instructions aren't helpful enough. They never clearly spell out the biggest obstacle to accomplishing a bombing mission—running out of fuel—which you might discover at 10,000 feet.

Sadly, Intellivoice doesn't add much, especially considering its hefty \$50 price tag. (The game pretty much *has* to be played with the Intellivoice.) Additionally, the voice is grating, and with its limited 20-word vocabulary, it sounds like a parrot that's watched *Twelve O'Clock High* too many times.

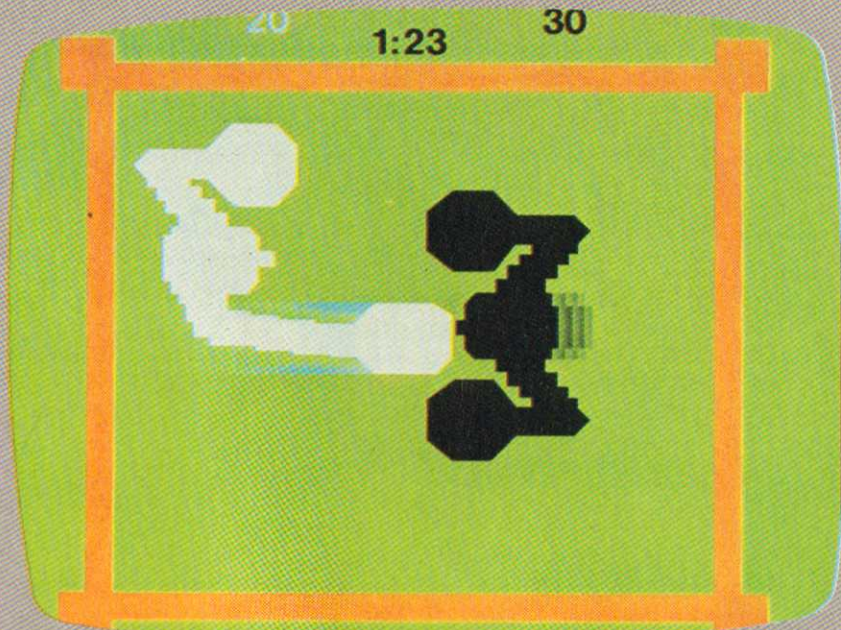
Although *B-17 Bomber* has its share of faults, it has so many diverse elements that it simply cannot be labeled a loser. It just lacks the right stuff to be an ace. ☐

BOXING ★ ★

Designed by Bob Whitehead. (Activision VCS-compatible cartridge. \$31.95)

By Floyd Patterson

Like real-life boxing, this videogame is challenging not in spite of its limitations, but because of them. I like this videogame. But



In the ring with Activision's Boxing: video-weight view from the top.

if it would let me do more, I would like it a lot more.

On the screen is an overhead view of two boxers. You can play against someone else or against the machine. You get one point for a long jab and two points for a close punch. Your boxer throws a punch when you press the control button, and throws a one-two combination when you hold the button down. A knockout is 100 points, which seems to represent a reasonable amount of effort. Otherwise, the winner's the one with the most points. Each complete match lasts two minutes. The sound effects are mostly those of boxers landing punches.

The first thing I noticed is that each boxer has only two punches—a straight-right and a straight-left jab. No left hooks, no body shots. This being the case, it doesn't take long to master them. But I kept getting the

urge to throw an uppercut or a left hook, and had to swallow it.

Your boxers can't punch and move at the same time, which isn't the same as in real boxing, of course. Everything moves in straight lines. The fighters move straight in, straight back and straight up and down the screen. They can't maneuver around each other. In real boxing, guys go around their opponents sometimes.

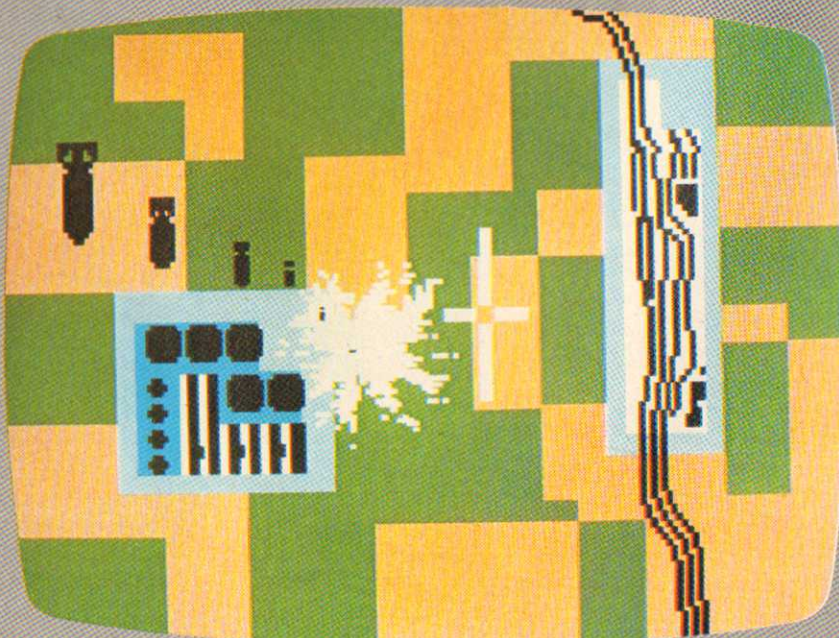
When I boxed, ordinarily I'd spin around the other guy and get him onto the ropes, where he's trapped. This game does let you get your opponent against the ropes, and, as they say, the last two places in the ring you want to be are on the ropes and on the canvas.

There are some other shortcomings here, though. You've got an overhead view, so there's not really any footwork. The boxers themselves move like robots. There's no rhythm, no elasticity.

Another thing is that they're always on offense. No defense—no feints, no ducks. In New York state, where I'm athletic commissioner, defense and aggressiveness in the ring also count.

Finally—and I really can't understand this—the boxers always lead with their right! The only kind of person who should ever lead with his right is a southpaw, which I'm not. Unless you're left-handed, it's a boxing fundamental that you always lead with your left.

Speaking for myself, though, I'd buy this videogame for my kids—and I have two girls, ages 13 and 14, so I think all sorts of people, not just boys, could enjoy this boxing game. But I think they could enjoy it much more—I know I would—if the game could do more. ☐ *(Continued)*



WWII Germany site in B-17 Bomber: Mattel has vays uf making it talk.

Two-time world heavyweight boxing champion Floyd Patterson is now the Athletic Commissioner for New York State.

ATLANTIS ★ ★

Designed by Dennis Koble. (Imagic VCS-compatible cartridge. \$31.95)

By Suzan D. Prince

Plato's legend of the isle of Atlantis is sad indeed. The Atlantians, founders of a bold civilization, were supposed to have existed off the coast of Gibraltar centuries ago, until great earthquakes and floods shook the tiny

dination. Since small ships are worth more points and issue audible warnings shortly before they enter the screen, pre-aim a gun site and fire just before you see the ship—two quick shots in succession. All the larger ships on-screen will also disappear.

Strategy or no strategy, even at its most difficult, in game variation four, when action speeds up considerably, it's awfully easy—too easy, if you ask me—to run up scores of



Undersea defense in Imagic's Atlantis: keeping invaders at bay.

island and submerged it. During a single day and night of rains, the island sank into the sea. All the inhabitants were lost.

Inspired by the legend, Imagic updated the story by resurrecting the citizens and creating an underwater cityscape of seven colorful, digitized landmarks and three defense installations.

Here, space-age disaster takes the form of two large, slow-moving aircraft worth 100 points each per hit, and a smaller, much faster craft worth 250 points. These hostile ships pass repeatedly, in waves of up to four at a time, across the black sky (sky and sea are clearly delineated to form a horizon), while you shoot at them from any of the defense sites.

At first the craft travel across the screen, close to the top. It's easy to use the center base and simply pick them off. As the airships continue their passes, however, they drop lower and lower, making it progressively harder to take accurate aim. Finally, as they pass just over the horizon level, they emit flashing laser beams that immediately blast away players' defenses and the precious landmarks. When all is destroyed, brilliant screen explosions give way to a little, green flying saucer containing the last survivors of Atlantis, a saucer which subsequently turns pink and appears in *Cosmic Ark*, Imagic's sequel cartridge.

Strategic success in VCS-style Atlantis (Imagic also makes a Mattel Intellivision-compatible version) lies in timing and coor-

120,000 and better in about 15 minutes, by just constantly shooting. While Atlantis definitely wins the endite-plot-and-charming-graphics award, I can't recommend it on the basis of game challenge. It's as though Imagic is promoting an elaborate, albeit fascinating, story line to cover up an overly simplistic playing premise. □

SPACE ATTACK ★ ★ ★ ★

Designed by Mattel. (Mattel Electronics M Network Atari VCS-compatible cartridge. \$30 approx.)

SPACE BATTLE ★ ★ ★ ★

Designed by Mattel. (Mattel Electronics Intellivision-compatible cartridge. \$30 approx.)

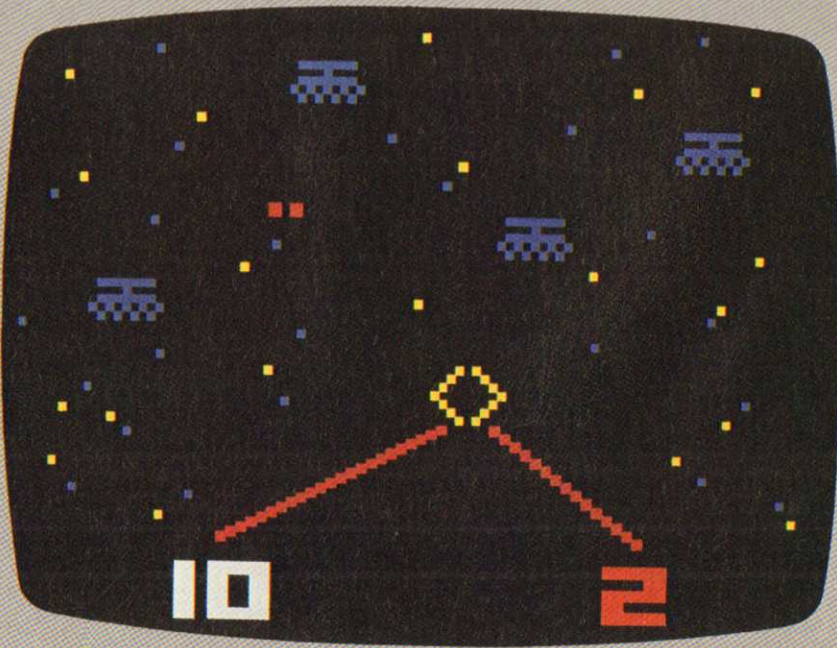
By Mark Trost

The first several of Mattel's new M Network (Atari VCS-compatible) cartridges are actually adaptations of popular Intellivision games, with slightly altered titles. *Space Attack* is a recasting of Intellivision's *Space Battle*, one of Mattel's most popular and complex games.

To be honest, I expected to be less than impressed with this one. Rumors of slipshod and hasty production on M Network ran rampant shortly before Mattel unveiled this game. But to my surprise and utter enjoyment, *Space Attack* contains almost all the features of the Intellivision cartridge.

Unlike most space shoot-'em-ups, *Space Attack* is a game of strategy, in which the object isn't to amass points (there's no scoring whatsoever), but rather to put down an alien invasion. It's a kill-or-be-killed situation. The idea of playing until a winner is named is pretty rare in videogames, most of which merely drone on as long as your three hungry dots or Italian carpenters haven't been eliminated.

The object is to defend a mother ship from destruction by six armed, alien fleets. You have three squadrons comprised of three ships each to send against the invaders. Rather than offer constant battle, *Space Attack* uses a two-screen notion to simulate a series of "realistic" space dogfights. A flick of the game select switch reveals a "radar" view of space with three of the six alien flanks moving toward the



Cockpit view in *Space Attack*, one of Mattel's first M Network games.

mother ship. You choose an alien fleet, and then dispatch any one of your three squadrons. You can also send out the second and third squadrons to engage the other two approaching alien fleets. When your squadron encounters the alien ships, you can enter the "battle" mode.

A cockpit view of the battle scene then appears on-screen. Torpedo-spewing ships attack as you attempt to line up the villains' craft in your laser-gun sights. Your fleet must dodge enemy torpedo fire and try to intercept craft gunning for the mother ship. When either the alien fleet or all your ships are destroyed, you return to the radar mode to reassign your squadron or to dispatch a second fleet to carry on the battle. If you destroy all six alien waves, an all-clear whistle sounds, ending the game.

The necessity for planning rather than winging it with a quick trigger finger makes *Space Attack* far superior to most of its ilk. You must decide how many squadrons to launch and which alien armadas they will engage. If you launch all three and engage all three alien groups, you may return to the radar mode only to discover your ranks decimated. (When more than one battle is in progress, the computer carries on the second and/or third fights, losing one of your ships for every four alien craft felled.) If you only dispatch one squadron, you risk leaving the mother ship unprotected.

Because of the smaller memory-storage capacity of the Atari console, there are some differences between the Intellivision and the VCS versions. In *Space Battle*, the alien flanks are seen on the radar mode simultaneously. In the battle mode, the aliens are constantly doing somersaults and other gymnastics, heightening player involvement. The Intellivision keypad also allows you to shift to the radar mode at any time, rather than requiring you to eliminate an alien fleet or to be destroyed first.

Aside from the minor differences, play value is the same, down to the unpredictability of the alien's flight patterns and their ability to move away from a laser attack and home in on your fighters with their torpedos.

If Mattel maintains the same degree of fidelity with all its Atari adaptations, George Plimpton might just adopt Atari's adolescent spokeskid. □

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST ★★ ★★ ★
Designed by Wendell Brown. (Imagic Intellivision-compatible cartridge. \$39.95)

By Randi Hacker

As in a scene from a Japanese horror movie, giant apes are appearing in video-games and threatening our loved ones. There's *Donkey Kong*, *Amidar*, *Monkey-shines* and now *Beauty and the Beast*. Although it's part of a growing simian trend, it's also an appealing version of *Crazy Climber*, and, like the arcade game, requires not only good reflexes but also precognition.

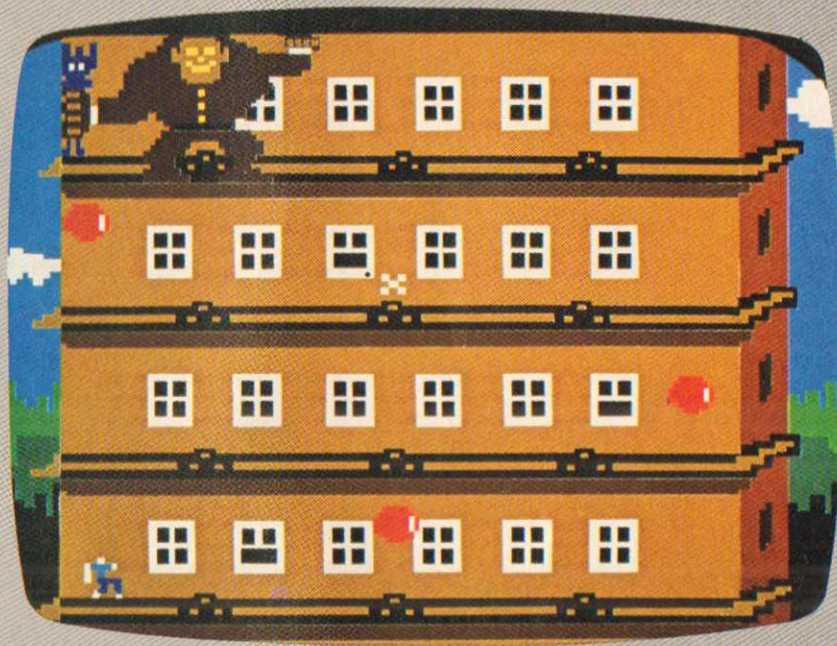
First of all, the graphics are charming. You open with a panorama of a large metropolis dominated by a huge skyscraper. Overhead, a biplane trails a banner which reads "Imagic." Jaunty music plays in the background.

The scene switches to the lowest four stories of that same skyscraper, rendered quite nicely with windows, a revolving door and a dark alley to the side.

Your incarnation is that of a small, frenetic man who runs back and forth on the sidewalk trying to figure out a way up the side of the building to get his girlfriend away from the gorilla standing on the fourth floor ledge. He does this by climbing from

lution hair—but, let's face it, it's not good for health or point accumulation. In an interesting though sadomasochistic romantic twist, you get extra points if your man is hit in the head by a falling heart.

Although the game is reminiscent of *Donkey Kong*, it's engaging in its own way. Sharp peripheral vision is necessary to anticipate rocks and kitties (or ratties) in order to jump over them before they trip up your man. A sixth sense is helpful in order to determine which window will open next. Anticipating what awaits your man as he climbs ever higher keeps up a healthy level of interest. This is not, however, a game for those who suffer from acrophobia. □



Imagic's Beauty and the Beast: another monkey, another damsel.

window to window. This is not as easy as it sounds. There are rows of them which open and shut randomly, and he can only scale the wall when he's positioned near an open window. To make him climb, you press the fire button on the controller while depressing the top of the disc. The longer you press the disc, the higher your man will float until he reaches a ledge.

After he reaches the ledge on which the ape stands, the screen flashes back to the skyline and the biplane flies by again with a new banner which says "Good job" or one of a number of other phrases. This is encouraging—as it should be, because right after that your man finds himself on a ledge several stories higher, ready to chase the anthropoid again.

In addition to having your character dodge rocks, birds and small gray kitties (or perhaps they're rats) that appear now and then in his path, you must watch out that you don't get too enthusiastic and run him off the ledge. If you do, the screen suddenly looks much like an express down elevator as your man plummets past the building to an untimely end. This is fun and exhilarating—with the wind in his high-reso-

JUMBO JET PILOT ★ ★
Designed by Thorn EMI (Thorn EMI cartridge for the Atari 400/800. \$49.95)

By Sheldon Leemon

The British are different from Americans like me. To me, the words "computer video-game" conjure up a picture of a lone defender sending hordes of invading lizard people to meet their scaly maker, to the accompaniment of bleeps, bangs and other electronic sound effects. What some of the British apparently think of is *Jumbo Jet Pilot*.

Jumbo Jet Pilot is one of a series of popular computer programs produced in England by Thorn EMI for the Atari 400/800 computers, and which have now come to the US. The program is a flight simulator which puts you at the controls of a 747. Your mission is to successfully take off from one airport, fly to another and land safely.

One look at the display screen lets you

Award-winning home-computer program designer Sheldon Leemon has written for Creative Computing. His reviews of home-games will appear regularly.

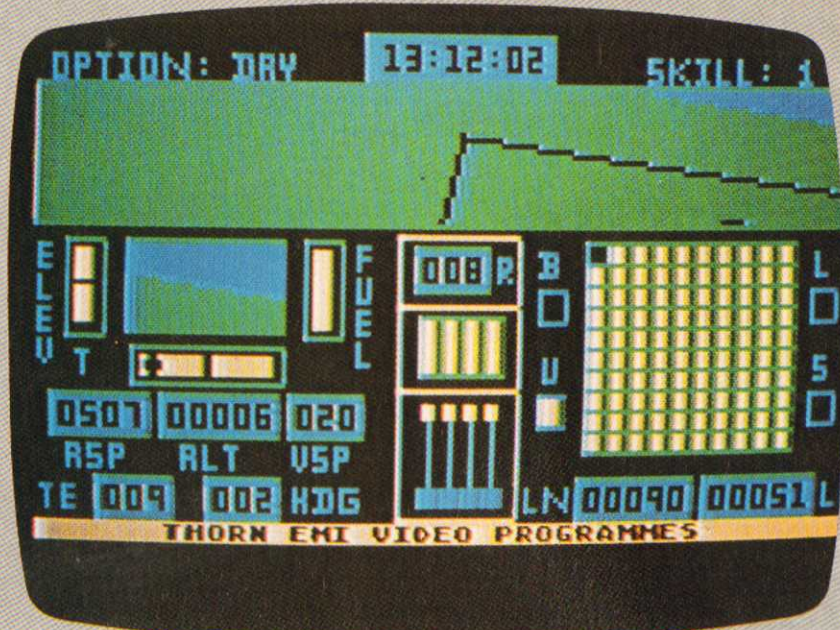
know that this is not as easy as it may sound. The control panel has indicators for air speed, elevator positions, angle of elevation, heading, longitude and latitude position, rudder setting, angle of roll, fuel, landing gear and brakes, plus a grid map, a horizon simulator and a view out the cockpit window. Trying to familiarize yourself with the controls through trial and error is likely to produce a runway crash, followed not by an FAA investigation but by a message to keep a stiff upper lip and "try again."

Faced with this desperate state of affairs, your only resort is to read the instructions, which briefly explain the operation of the controls, and a few of the rudiments of flying. For more detailed information, you are referred to your local library(!), where you may find books (!) on the subject.

The printed directions by themselves, though, are enough to get you airborne. Staying that way is another matter, for it is none too difficult to lose control and go into a stall or a power dive (thus activating the game's big sound effect, a maddening warning siren). There may be a way to recover from these catastrophes, but even the pause feature, which lets you stop in mid-crash to try and figure things out, couldn't prevent me from doing kamikaze imitations. Landing is more difficult, particularly if you insist on staying in one piece.

There is a fair degree of challenge in mastering the basic mission, and once you've done that, there are four higher difficulty levels to contend with, as well as night flying. Whether you'll want to progress to doing loops and rolls is a different story.

The graphics are convincing and good, but they consist mainly of gauges and other indicators. You have a view of the airfield on take-off and landing, but if all goes well, most of the time you will see nothing but blue skies and a dark horizon line. The number of instruments seems about right to



Control panel in Thorn EMI's *Jumbo Jet Pilot*: *The sky's the limit.*

keep you involved without turning the 45-minute flight into an endurance contest. Although the controls are for the most part realistic, there is a disturbing lag between the time you change a setting and the time at which it produces a change in your instrument readings. But the most serious problem with the simulation is that it successfully recreates the job of flying, without imparting any of the joy of flight.

The odds on this cerebral entertainment replacing lizard people seem not much better than those of *Masterpiece Theater* supplanting *The Dukes of Hazard*, so don't expect to hear "Jumbo Jet Pilot Fever" on the radio anytime soon. Like a dancing bear, this program is an interesting novelty, but not necessarily one you'll be desperate to own. □

Cassette

COMMUNIST MUTANTS FROM SPACE ★★★

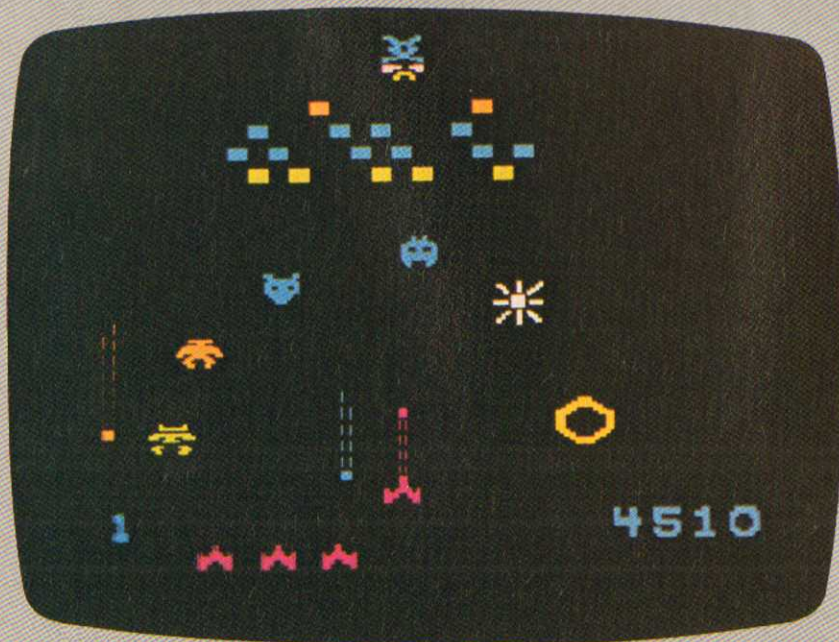
Designed by Stephen Landrum.
(Arcadia VCS-compatible cassette.
\$14.95)

By Suzan D. Prince

All you gamers of the right-wing persuasion can pipe down now—*Communist Mutants from Space* isn't about to reach through the TV set and demolish the political fabric of your hearth and home. This cassette game—designed to run in any audiocassette recorder and, using Arcadia's Supercharger, play on Atari's VCS console—was actually christened in rather capitalist fashion. In a heavy session of market research, Arcadia gathered a bunch of 12-year-olds and hit them with wild and crazy titles until something clicked.

Politics aside, *Commie Mutants* promises to be the hit of the holiday season, and not on name alone. Although designer Landrum created a story line to go with the bizarre title, the *Space Invaders*-like theme offers real play value, and the Supercharger's expanded memory allows new technological twists with Atari's console.

The story line concerns the evil ruler of the planet Rooskee (get it?), who has just launched a diabolical Mother Mutant filled with irradiated vodka. The Mutant's mission is to capture the denizens of peaceful planets by dropping Mutants on them and to persecute them until they tow the party line. Your cannon on one such world is under attack from the world *idiot* with no respite. By the time you've annihilated a wave of the spidery creatures, another has already been hatched to take its place. Mother Mutant constantly lays eggs which swiftly become Diving Mutant Attackers.



Starscape in Arcadia's *Communist Mutants*: ideological invaders.

which move and fire randomly to destroy your four-cannon reserve. Some mutant eggs appear not to hatch, a typically underhanded maneuver of this foreign despot. These unhatched eggs are actually shield-penetrating bombs that can wipe your cannon off the face of the galaxy faster than you can say "Brezhnev."

The cardinal rule is to always take the Mother Mutant first, since she's worth 500 points and is the bearer of the Mutant Armada. Use the Penetrating Fire option to cut through the Mutants and destroy her. Then you can concentrate on wiping out the entire wave of remaining Mutants for 100 bonus points as well as for extra cannons.

Commie Mutants' graphics are as eye-catching and colorful as its title. Whether Arcadia can top itself in the future remains to be seen. How about *Capitalist Pigs from Wall Street* or *Attila the Hun—2000 AD* or even *Giant Naxis from the Sea?* []

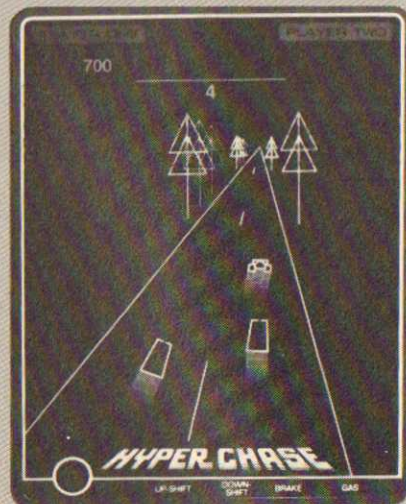
Stand-Alone

HYPERCHASE ★★ ★
Designed by Chris King. (GCE Vectrex cartridge. \$29.95)

By Marc Wielage

I've always prided myself on being a good driver. No—scratch that. A great driver. And it was with this kind of non-egotistical self-assurance that I sat behind the electronic wheel of GCE's *HyperChase*, which I presumed to be just another car-chase game.

Ten minutes later, I was mopping the sweat off my brow, after smashing my



HyperChase: one for the road.

electronic car into smithereens for the 12th time on the simulated-3D roadway.

The stand-alone game console's four control buttons are used to shift up for the straightaways, downshift for the tunnels and crowded areas, break for accidents and road hazards and accelerate when all looks clear. The joystick on the left handles left-right steering. I found this control to be a damned nuisance, since it needed only a

tiny jolt to send your speeder careening off the road and into disaster. I hope the manufacturer may be able to develop a steering wheel-type controller, similar to the one now offered by Coleco for its *Turbo*.

Although all Vectrex games are on a built-in, black-and-white monitor, *HyperChase's* lively, 3D-like graphics more than make up for this shortcoming, and a blue-and-green, plastic overlay helps simulate a color playfield. There are two game options, one in which you race against the clock and have an unlimited amount of cars, and the other in which you try to rack up points with a limited number of cars.

This game is rough—very rough. Being the speed demon that I am, I had a ten-

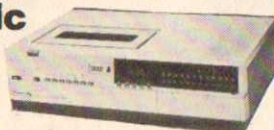
dency to go "flat out to the max"—and usually, within 10 or 15 seconds, some electronic jerk would pop up and send my car to oblivion. A crash is accompanied by a suitably gut-wrenching explosion, though I noted that the collision graphics look suspiciously like those of the arcade *Asteroids*. On the other hand, the 3D twists and turns of the race course are enormously challenging, requiring just the right touch to keep the car on the track. I would have been a lot happier if the designers had allowed you to occasionally stray onto the shoulder of the road an inch or two, but then again, if there were guard rails on the side, I guess you'd be just as dead in real life. []

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In the theater the fare occasionally seemed lightweight, insubstantial and unpunctuated. In contrast, the use of close-ups serves to underscore Ayckbourn's razor-edged and insightful dialogue, to punch up and enhance character and to create a wonderful intimacy. All this heightens not just *The Norman Conquests'* comic elements but also its power as a statement on men, women and relationships today. □

ON GOLDEN POND (1981) ★ ★ ★ ★
With Katharine Hepburn, Henry Fonda, Jane Fonda, Doug McKeon.
Directed by Mark Rydell. (20th Century-Fox cassette, color, 109 min., \$79.95)

By Mark Reiter

The boxoffice success of *On Golden Pond*, even allowing for the sentimentally astute packaging of Katharine Hepburn and Henry Fonda with daughter Jane Fonda, was not a sure thing. Movies about old age have never meant megabucks in Hollywood—for obvious reasons, though lack of quality is not one of them. The list of American movies about aging is a short but respectable one, with several Oscar-winning performances. In recent years, one thinks of Art Carney in *Harry and Tonto*, George Burns and Walter Matthau in *The Sunshine Boys* and, perhaps most notably, Melvyn Douglas in *I Never Sang for My Father* and *Being There*. *On Golden Pond*, because of Henry Fonda and Hepburn, moves to the top of this list.

The story is a simple one. During their annual summer retreat to Golden Pond in New England, Ethel and Norman Thayer

face up to a microcosm of old-age problems. Norman, a retired professor nearing 80, is a grump with an arsenal of one-liners. He rails at his weak circulatory system, his fading memory, his inability to do simple household tasks and, most poignantly, his fear of death. His wife is his sole support system—he is her "knight in shining armor"—and, as the story unwinds, she helps reconcile Norman with his daughter Chelsea (Jane Fonda) and nudges along a friendship between Norman and a sulky, pugnacious teenager named Billy (Doug McKeon) on loan for the summer.

In terms of its script, *On Golden Pond* is pretty formulaic. Most of the clichés about old age are trotted out and dutifully accounted for: The solitude, the physical vulnerability, the bitter gallows humor, the noble affection between man and woman and the chasm between generations (predictably bridged by the movie's end) are all familiar. Because the Thayers don't want for money, we are spared a soliloquy on Social Security. But, fortunately for scenarist Ernest Thompson, his two aging stars flesh out these clichés with surprising nuances. They look like an ideal couple but they also behave ideally: They show that the art of aging gracefully (a curious euphemism) most of all means being open-minded and adaptable to strangers and to old friends in new circumstances.

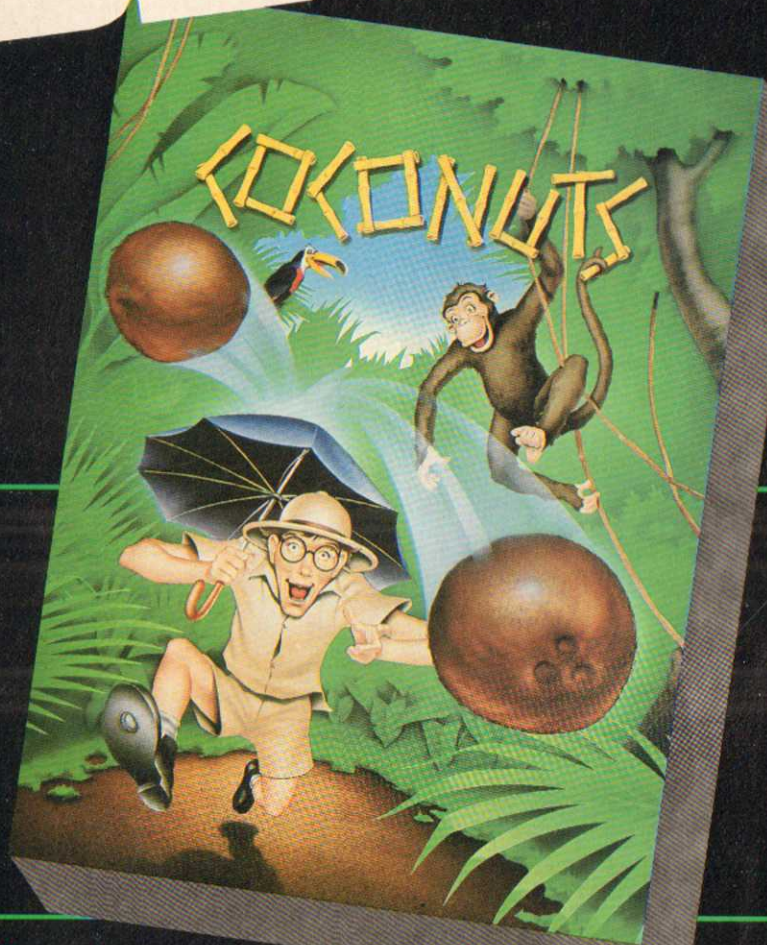
In what would be his penultimate and finest moment in the movies, Fonda blurs the distinctions between the role and himself. We have never before seen him act so thoroughly like an old man. In the way he shuffles, haltingly blurts out his punch lines or exposes the pain and anxiety on his face, Fonda proves why he endured for five decades. With a rare ability to move people both emotionally and profoundly, he's also very funny.

Hepburn, too, is good, though for different reasons. She emotes, pushes and over-



Golden Pond's Hepburn, Fondas: sniping at old age with gallows humor.

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primitive compared to the sophisticated and ingenious work of the TV series.

Finally, there is the challenge of sustaining a string of unrelated skits and non-sequitur animation vignettes for an hour and a half—a hurdle the Pythons cannot quite surmount. But—and this is a very big but—there are nuggets of comedy so brilliant, so original and so uproarious that I'm almost reluctant to carp about the lesser moments that surround them.

Almost all my favorite routines come in the second half: the story of the world's funniest joke (which causes its listeners to die laughing); the pet-shop confrontation over a dead parrot (which its salesman avows is just "pining for the fjords"); the mushrooming tragedy of a posh restaurant tainted by "a bit of a dirty fork"; a TV show called *Blockmail* in which victims must telephone to stop awful secrets from being revealed; a contest for the Upper Class Twit of the Year; and, my personal favorite, "The Lumberjack Song," which has rung in my ears for a full decade. There is also a generous sampling of Terry Gilliam's wondrous and surreal cut-out animation, which itself is worth the price of the tape.

So, if you love Monty Python comedy and don't mind wading through some mediocrities and misfires to get to the gold, this tape is a must. If you've never seen this outrageous British troupe in action, you'll be amply rewarded in the end.

Tape quality is excellent throughout. □

Animation

THE HOBBIT (1977) ★ ★ ★ ★

Animated feature, with the voices of Orson Bean, John Huston, Otto Preminger. Directed by Jules Bass and Arthur Rankin Jr. (Sony, color, 78 min., \$34.95 Beta, \$49.95 VHS)

By James Link

Whether or not you've ever read any of J.R.R. Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* series, you will sense the author's defiant other-worldliness in this tape of *The Hobbit*. Set in Middle Earth, the picture depicts a time when humans shared a world populated by trolls, dwarfs, goblins and elves. By comparison, humans are the least interesting creatures we encounter. As Bilbo Baggins, hobbit and main character, says, humans are the kind of beings who would give the town they built on Long Lake the rather unimaginative name of Lake Town.

A scholar of medieval Anglo-Saxon literature, Tolkien sees things as bland in the world as we consciously perceive it, and he feels our lives hardly reflect our deep, universal affinity for adventure. For that, he looked to the myths and folktales of preliterate culture, in which a kind of collective dreaming evolved into the first epic poems. Those were Tolkien's models, and his powerfully enchanting tales have worked like catnip on the imaginations of several

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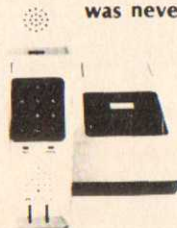


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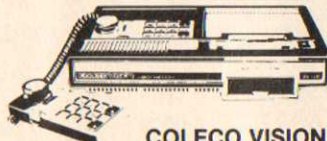
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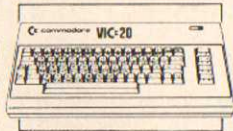
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Bergman, Ullmann in Autumn Sonata: true-to-life mother-daughter parallels?

MOVIES

THE ANGRY SILENCE (1960) ★★ ★

CBN (Christian Bdcstg. Network), Fri., Oct. 29, noon

No, it's not the look the turkey gives you just before Thanksgiving. In this low-key yet gripping British drama, a proud worker stands alone in refusing to join a wildcat strike. Richard Attenborough gives a quietly intense performance as the holdout worker tormented by the strikers. Pier Angeli is his understanding but fragile wife. It's a provocative look at a subject the

movies have usually shied away from. Produced by Attenborough and Bryan Forbes, and directed by Guy Green. (B&W, 95 min.) (J.M.)

AUTUMN SONATA (1978) ★★ ★★ ★

HTN (Home Theater Network), Wed., Nov. 10; Sat., Nov. 20; Wed., Nov. 24; Fri., Nov. 26; TBA
Actually an opus for any viewing season—as Bergman (Ingrid) directs Bergman (Ingrid). Liv Ullmann co-stars as Ingrid's lackluster, mousy daughter who needs and resents her successful and talented concert-pianist mother. It's a *tour de force* by

Ingrid, in one of her last and greatest roles, exposing more raw emotion on-screen than most of us ever experience. With Gunnar Bjornstrand, Halvar Bjork. (Color, 97 min.) (D.M.)

BALLAD OF A SOLDIER

(1959) ★★ ★★ ★
CBS Cable, Thurs., Oct. 28, 8:30 p.m., 11:30 p.m.

Probably the most "American" movie the Russians have ever made—or at least a '30s-style one in the almost naive, unabashedly sentimental style of Frank Borzage or Capra. Director Grigor Chukrai traces four days in the life of a 19-year-old soldier trying to get to see his mother in an out-of-the-way Russian village during WWII—and, in the process, meeting a number of war-dislocated people, including a girl with whom he falls in love. The only villains are the human waste and stupidity of war, and even that message is conveyed without the usually heavy-handed Soviet propaganda. The cinematography is outstanding, and you won't soon forget the leading faces, especially Vladimir Ivashev as the soldier and Zhanna Prokhorenko as the girl. The movie won both the Cannes and San Francisco festivals awards in 1960. (B&W, 92 min.) (R.H.)

THE BANK DIK

(1940) ★★ ★★ ★
SelecTV, Tues., Oct. 26, 9 p.m.
Never mind whether interest rates are going up or down—just deposit any tape you make of this in a safe place,

because it's a classic. W.C. Fields plays Egbert Souze who, after accidentally capturing a bank robber, becomes the president of the bank. Fields' impeccable timing shows why he was one of the great movie comedians. The chase scene is a perfect end to a perfect movie. With Grady Sutton, Franklin Pangborn, Una Merkel, Cora Witherspoon. (B&W, 74 min.) (J.M.)

THE BENNY GOODMAN

STORY (1955) ★ ★
Superstation WTBS, Sun., Oct. 24, 1:05 p.m.

The success of '54's *Glenn Miller Story* spurred the same production team to make this considerably fictionalized musical bio of The King of Swing. But Steve Allen (his movie debut) is no Jimmy Stewart (who played Miller), not that the saccharine script gives him much of a chance. Goodman himself recorded the clarinet solos for the soundtrack, and such former Goodman sidemen as Harry James, Lionel Hampton, Gene Krupa and Ziggy Elman are both seen and heard during the plentiful—and tapable—musical numbers. With Donna Reed and Sammy Davis Jr. Directed by Valentine Davies. (Color, 116 min.) (R.H.)

BLOOD BEACH (1981) ★

Showtime, Nov., TBA
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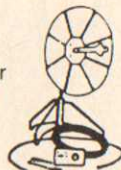
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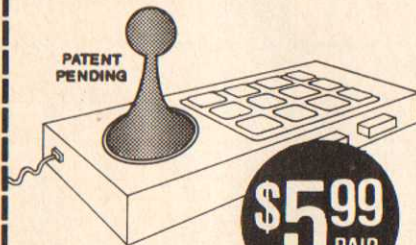
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First look at Atari's super system

Die-hard gamers have been breathlessly awaiting Atari's introduction of its latest, most sophisticated game console. It's been more than a year now since strange rumors started leaking out about some great black magic underway deep inside Atari's heavily fortified headquarters in Sunnyvale, California. Apparently, those hardworking design wizards at Atari's headquarters were getting pretty tired of George Plimpton's stinging TV barbs. So, for the past couple of years, they've been creating a no-holds-barred videogame system project known internally as the "System X."

Their goal: to bring home a new era of what they called "detailed graphics of incredible realism to provide the most sophisticated and challenging games ever produced for home play."

Stepped-Up Console

You can bet my appetite was whetted after hearing this hoopla, so I waited with my tongue hanging out until I could wrest a Super Atari away from its makers to have a go at it.

Finally, the big day arrived. Along with the Super Atari—or, rather, the model 5200 game console—came five cartridges: *Super Breakout* (which is included), *Galaxian*, *Missile Command*, *Space Invaders* and *Star Raiders*. All these have been seen before in various types of home games, so I was able to compare the new versions with the older ones.

What's the Super Atari like? Well, for \$269.95 you get a dramatically modern-looking game module, with a wedge shape that reminds me of the Triumph TR-7 sports car. It's roughly the same size as the old VCS—13x15x4 inches—but has a futuristic black and silver faceplate that looks spiffy enough to be at home in Luke Skywalker's living room. Four 15-pin jacks are provided for connecting up to four game controllers to the console. The sound is indeed good, though not as good as ColecoVision's.

The controllers of the 5200 are well designed, combining some of the

best features of the Intellivision and VCS joysticks. They're roughly about 6½x2¾x1¼ inches, include an attached four-foot cable and, all in all, have a good look and feel to them. Four red rubber buttons on the sides allow selective firing, and three additional buttons on the top are for starting, pausing or resetting the game. At the bottom is a set of a dozen tiny buttons in the shape of a telephone touch-tone keypad. These allow you to select the number of players and different levels of difficulty, as well as other specialized functions for certain games.

I found that the new controller fits comfortably in my left hand, allowing

missiles in games such as *Galaxian*.

Owners of the original VCS will be pleased to know that their old games won't become obsolete because of the new console, since Atari plans on introducing a VCS-compatible accessory module in a few months.

Stripped-Down Computer

They'll also be pleased with a few of the model 5200's niceties, such as automatic TV/game RF switching whenever the console is switched on or off. No more fumbling behind the set to switch that little game selector. The pause feature is another good one, allowing time for such luxuries as food breaks and nature calls



Atari's model 5200: Its games don't yet meet this console's potential.

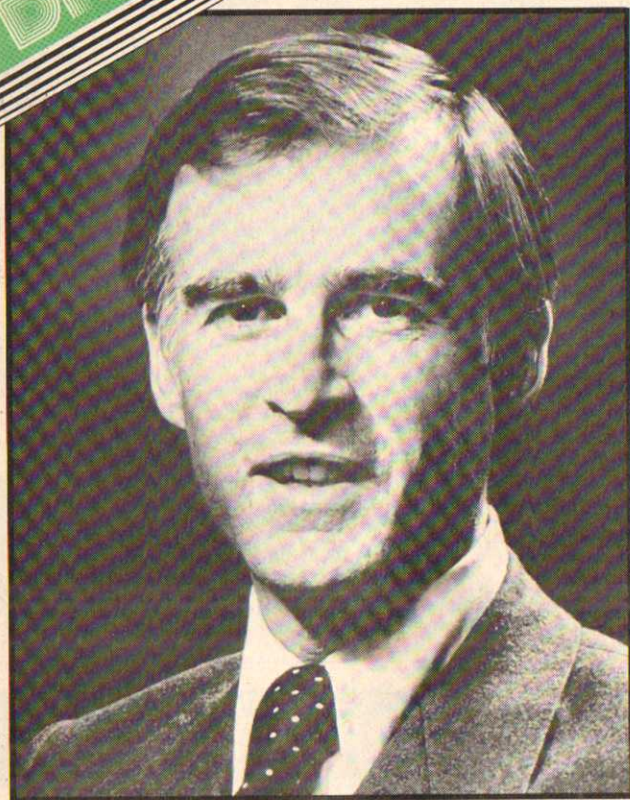
me to squeeze the fire buttons with my thumb and forefinger and leaving my right hand free to twiddle the 1½-inch joystick; others may find the opposite approach more comfortable.

One thing that surprised me right off the bat was that the joystick is not self-centering—that is, when you let it go, it doesn't automatically return to the center position. I found this both a blessing and a curse, depending on the game. One thing's for sure: The new joystick takes a lot of getting used to, especially for games such as *Breakout*, for which a paddle would be infinitely more appropriate. The joystick is a little too sensitive for these games, requiring an extremely delicate touch to avoid overshooting. On the other hand, this sensitivity means speed, important for evading hostile

without disrupting a game.

While we're impressed the Atari has been able to provide what is essentially a stripped-down version of a 16K model 400/800 computer in a game console, the games we've seen so far just barely scratch the surface of the model 5200 system's potential. Perhaps that, really, is the biggest plus for the Super Atari: Since it has as much or more potential than all of the other systems now in stores, there's a good chance it will set the standard for all home game consoles to come. Once options like the "Trakball" controller, the voice synthesizer module and the VCS-compatible adaptor become available, along with more advanced games like *Pac-Man*, *Centipede*, *Qix* and *Defender*, we'll know for sure. □

Possibilities of the Computer Age



By Edmund G. Brown Jr.

We are fortunate to be present at the birth of the Computer Age, a period when an increasing number of people will be empowered to control increasing amounts of information.

The personal computer field is expected to grow 700% between 1980 and 1985. In short, the development of the personal computer now provides the average American with unprecedented access to information services.

Computers have already changed the way we live. Our economy is certainly more productive as computers are used to plan as well as "physically" carry out production of goods faster and more efficiently than ever before. This increased efficiency is breathing new life into basic industries, such as textiles and automobiles, which now face stiff competition from foreign manufacturers.

The computer's impact on job development has been astounding. In California, for example, 40% of all new jobs during the '80s will be related, directly and indirectly, to the high technology industries that manufacture and utilize the computer and its various components.

Computers have also enhanced the quality of our schools. The microcomputer's ability to permit interactive learning provides students with instant feedback and a wide range of educational alternatives. These students participate in the learning process, work at their own pace, experiment and make errors, while expanding their imagination.

Microcomputers can accelerate learning by students and

develop creativity in ways not possible in the pre-computer era. In his trailblazing work, *Mindstorms*, Seymour Papert describes how computers will allow young children to actually design and create their own mathematic and scientific programs rather than simply learn by rote.

Deeper Understandings

When 14-year-olds find it possible to simulate a detailed computer image of the heart, or the design and operation of a nuclear reactor, they are developing far deeper understandings than the kind of rote memory upon which previous generations relied.

Computer-aided education also affects the key educational variable: motivation. The more a student *wants* to learn, the more he or she does learn. Computers motivate students to study *better* because they receive instant feedback as they think and create with the new electronic pencils of the '80s.

As *Time* noted, "Many experts, and most of the young operatives, agree that the overwhelming attraction of the machines is the lure of control, the pleasure of being able to think out and then make something happen, a satisfaction all too often denied children."

Average, gifted and "problem" students alike can be motivated to new levels of achievement.

Computers are also a welcome aid to teachers. Computers can free them of repetitious drill and practice tasks, allowing more time for personalized assistance. Most teachers find computers an aid in diagnosing and correcting an individual student's problems.

Electronic Workstations

Computer education is, of course, important to prepare students for the new technological workplace. Today's students will often find computer literacy critical to obtaining future employment in hundreds of fields. The Xerox Corporation, for example, has estimated that 90 million Americans will be linked to electronic workstations by 1990 and 36 million will need to be computer literate. *Business Week* has estimated that 45 million existing jobs will eventually be made obsolete by new information technologies, most within the next two decades.

The *New York Times* suggested in a recent series of articles: "The invention of movable type put the Bible within the reach of the common man and permanently altered the religious views of Europe. In the views of many scholars, the modern computer with its capacity to assimilate large amounts of information in entirely new ways, has the potential for altering the intellectual life of mankind. . . ."

The new computer technology is not just speeding up our present way of life; rather, it is a fundamental change affecting the very patterns of relationships which lie at the basis of society itself. □

Now completing his second term as governor of California, Edmund G. Brown Jr. is currently running for a seat in the United States Senate.