

Video Review

Latest Tape & Disc Reviews plus Equipment Test Reports

\$1.75

THE WORLD AUTHORITY ON CONSUMER VIDEO

BEST VIDEO BARGAINS

Exclusive Test Report of Sears Videodisc Player

Surprising Super TV of Tomorrow
By Arthur C. Clarke

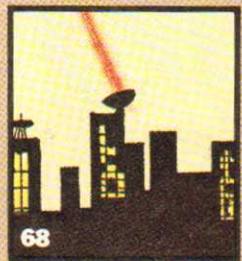


OCTOBER 1981 CONTENTS

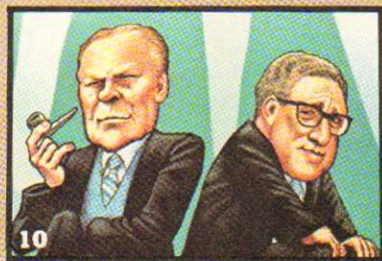
Video Review

SPECIAL REPORT

Ten True Tales of Video Fraud By Ed Levine. A VR investigative report on the worst video-age con games, bamboozles and rip-offs—with solid advice on how to avoid and counter the latest fraud schemes. **60**



68



10

FEATURES

Bargain Video: A Complete System for \$1,993 By Robert Angus. Believe it or not, you can compile a complete, five-piece, video system—from videodisc player to projection TV set—for the price of one early-model VCR. **54**

Bye Bye Boob Tube: TV Sets Enter the Video Age By Robert Gerson. Today's average TV set does little more than the TV prototypes at the 1939 World's Fair. But video has inspired a new breed of far-above-average "supersets" **56**

The 'Father of TV' Looks at Video TV pioneer Vladimir Zworykin examines the evolution of his brainchild, from his first TV tube to today's video-oriented supersets. **58**

Super TV Sets A comprehensive comparative chart. **59**

1957/1981/2001: A Satellite-Dish Odyssey By Arthur C. Clarke. A revealing look at the future of satellite TV, from the renowned author of 2001: A Space Odyssey. **68**

Top Writers' Secrets for Scripting Video Movies By Dai Kornberg and Randi Hacker. Inside tips on how to add style and structure to your video productions. **70**

Strange Video Fantasies By Frank Lovece. From "Smell-O-Vision" to mind-reading TV, early video seers had some surprising ideas about home video. **74**

CONTINUING SERIES

New Ways to Use Your Video Gear Readers share their ideas on making the most of home video equipment. **66**

Direct It: Emily Squires Tells You How By the director of TV's award-winning Sesame Street. **77**

Critics' Choice: '30s Movie Musicals By Roy Hemming. A critical home-taping guide to what many video fans consider the most collectible and rewatchable of all movie genres—the "Golden Age" of Hollywood musicals. **80**

Edward Sorel's Classics: Grand Illusion Artist/satirist Sorel takes a unique look at the classic. **86**

EQUIPMENT REVIEWS

Test Reports Technical editor Len Feldman and the CBS Technology Center report on their in-depth, hands-on tests of: Sears 934.54780150 videodisc player . . . Toshiba IK-1850APS color videocamera . . . Curtis Mathes G751 portable VCR and G755 tuner/timer . . . and VR's first test report on a home satellite receiving system, the Channel Master 6180. **21**

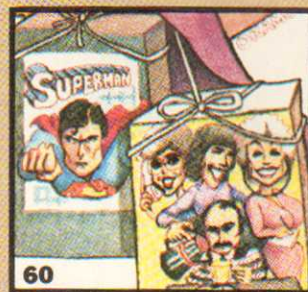
PROGRAM REVIEWS

Video Picks Feature reviews of new tape and disc releases: Robert Angus on the CED Philadelphia Story, Singin' in the Rain and H.M.S. Pinafore . . . David Hajdu on The Elephant Man . . . Marjorie Rosen on Ordinary People and Vault of Horror . . . James Link on Popeye . . . Andrew Sarris on Being There and This is Korea! . . . William K. Everson on The Black Fox . . . Leonard Maltin on Abbott and Costello/Martin and Lewis . . . Ed Levine on Rod Stewart Live . . . Ed Hulse on The Count of Monte Cristo and The Man in the Iron Mask . . . Genevieve Kazdin on Spirit of Independence . . . Clive Barnes on South Pacific . . . Pete Coutros on 1979 Baseball Highlights . . . Charles Reynolds on Magic of Derek Dingle . . . Al Goldstein on Champagne for Breakfast, Best of Gail Palmer and The Blonde. . . plus In Briefs. **89**

Video Flicks Capsule reviews of movies (old and new) currently available to broadcast and cable TV. **118**



56



60

DEPARTMENTS

Viewpoints From editor David Hajdu. **5**

Letters Readers' comments—boos and bouquets. **6**

Newsbreaks Art Levis on late-breaking video news. **8**

Freeze-Frames Carl S. Kaplan's lighthearted potpourri. **10**

Questions Video experts answer readers' questions. **13**

New Products The latest news in video equipment. **16**

Video Prevues What's due for release on tape and disc. **110**

Coming on TV Worth viewing or taping this month. **113**

Video Views Bob Angus on big news for satellite fans. **132**

Looking Ahead Bob Gerson on self-programming VCRs. **134**

Games Phil Wiswell solves some video game problems. **136**

Interview Video maestro Leonard Slatkin. **144**



Affair and Bullitt (the successes).

So why does an essayist, venture capitalist, Boston brahmin and Hollywood screenwriter agree to take over the helm at an audio/video company? "Because business is fun," deadpans Trustman.

That's one up on Jefferson. □

Inka Dinka Doo

Sometimes the explosion in the popularity of video equipment makes you think there's a Japanese idiom equivalent to Jimmy Durante's line (take off hat and slap against thigh), "Everybody wants to get into the act!"

Last year, 11 Japanese companies churned out a total of 4.4 million VCRs, 2.2 times more than in 1979. They're expected to produce an estimated 8.4 million machines this year, according to a Japanese trade report. And in addition to the old standbys—Akai, Hitachi, Matsushita and Sony—a bunch of other Japanese companies are sprouting plans to get into the video biz, too.

The oddest new video contender is Silver Seiko, a Tokyo-based producer of sewing and knitting

machines. That outfit recently announced plans to sell VHS-format VCRs and videocameras through its sales outlets.

How well could they do with so many other products already on the market? Sew-sew. □

Decisions, DecisionVision

You walk into a video store and see an interesting tape title on the wall: *Ordinary Airplane—the Motion Picture in Concert*. Unfortunately, you've never heard of the picture and the salesperson's spot summary is a little vague. What can you do?

Soon, a new device called DecisionVision might be able to help you out.

A company called Video Communication Innovators and CBS Video Enterprises are currently testing DecisionVision in selected tape and record stores as an instant video program previewer. The system—consisting of a 26-inch TV set or

monitor hooked up to a keyboard and a specially adapted LV-format video-disc player—works like this: Press a key marked, say, *Halloween Cheerleaders*, and relax as you see around 30 seconds of footage on the tube. Don't like that one? Well, press the key marked, *Tarzan Meets The Elephant Man*. No dice? How about ...

Maybe the powers that be should rename this product IndecisionVision. □

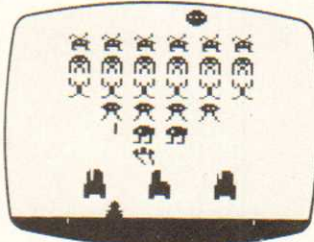
Trig or Treat?

For most students, trigonometry is the "disaster movie" of high school academia. In fact, the only one I ever knew who enjoyed the subject was the Scarecrow in *The Wizard of Oz*, who, upon receiving his smarts, fell into a trance and mumbled, "The square of the hypotenuse of a right triangle is equal to the sum of the squares of the remaining two sides!"

Yet trig days may be in for a change. Swarthmore math professor Eugene A. Klotz

has hit on an idea that might make the evil pill palatable at last: turn trig into a video game.

With a \$150,000 grant from the National Science Foundation, and a bank of



Atari computers, Klotz and company are currently at work designing Space Invaders-style video programs to teach trigonometry to high school students. By moving joysticks, students of the future will be able to control various displays of angles, triangles, lines and circles.

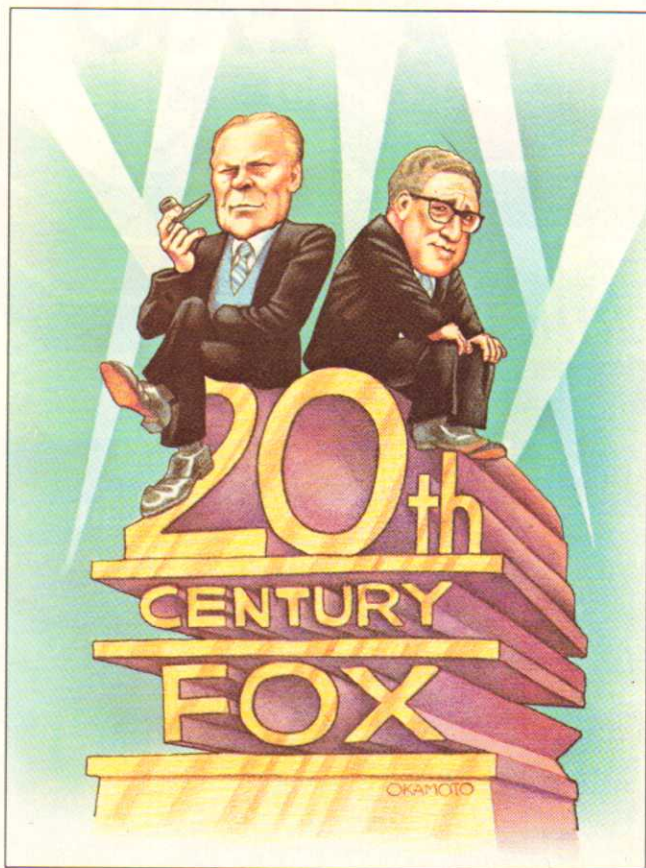
"We think an entertaining, visual, video game approach will help get rid of 'math anxiety,'" says Prof Klotz, to the applause of the PTA. □

Wanted: Ex Pols For Showbiz Slot

Captain Grimes, a ne'er-do-well Harrovian in Evelyn Waugh's *Decline And Fall*, said it best: The ruling class may hoot you out, but they never let you down. No matter how thick a soup a public school man gets into, they'll always be another p.s. chap to put him back on his feet.

In America, of course, the same truth holds, but the ball has a little spin on it. Take the case of former President Gerald R. Ford. What do old pols do besides play golf? Why, they become directors of huge corporations, that's what. To wit: A short while ago Twentieth Century-Fox named Ford to its board. (Fox is the parent of Magnetic, the prerecorded videocassette company).

Presumably, Jerry can brush up on the world of movies and videocassettes with Fox's other new board member—Dr. Henry Kissinger. □



Answers and advice from the games hotline



Phil Wiswell

Even when they're not supposed to be, video games can be perplexing and troublesome. I can prove it not only by my own varied experiences as a video-game lover—which I write about every month—but also by all the letters about video-game playing that Video Review readers write to me. For instance:

When playing Atari's "Space Invaders" cartridge, if the reset button is held down while the game console is turned on, the laser base in game #1 will fire double blasts that are much more rapid than the single blasts in the normal game. It doesn't appear to work on any game but #1, and it seems to work on all my friends' Atari V.C.S. consoles. I would think many of your readers would like to know this, as it is like a whole new game.

Michael R., San Mateo, CA

I have tried your suggestion and found that it does not work on my machine—but it does work on a friend's. However, it really doesn't surprise me that it works on some units and not on others, because the game you are getting is essentially the function of a malfunction. Atari did not plan it that way. And though it might be fun, I would not recommend its continued use, as it may cause irreparable damage to your V.C.S. Besides, the "Space Invaders" cartridge already features 112 variations. Who needs 113?

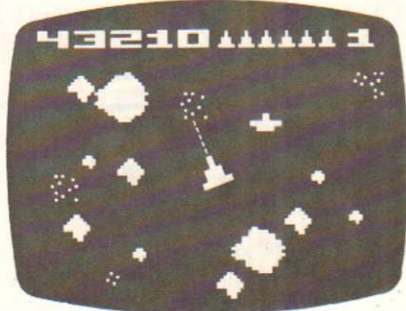
Anyone with a question concerning video games should send it to me by writing to Games Editor, Video Review, 325 E. 75th St., New York, NY 10021.

I am an "Asteroids" addict and probably spend about \$10 a week in quarters on the game at the arcade. I also have an Atari V.C.S. game console and have heard that Atari's new "Asteroids" cartridge is as good as the arcade game. Is it? I don't want to spend the money for something well below my level of play.

Richard B., New York, NY

If you really spend \$10 a week on "Asteroids," I suggest you rush out to find the cartridge for your home system. Figure it out: In less than three weeks you'll have paid for it.

To answer to your question: Yes, Atari's home version of "Asteroids" is



Atari's cartridge: Can it compare to arcade "asteroids"?

very good. You play the game with four ships or "lives," and depending on the variation you play, the asteroids move at different speeds. (You will probably want to play on the fastest speed for the greatest challenge.) As with the arcade game, you can put up your shields to avoid being hit, or you can vanish completely into hyperspace to appear elsewhere on the screen. And it's easy to flip your ship around 180 degrees.

Save your money and play at home.

I have heard that Mego is coming out with a video-game system. Any more information on this one?

Lois W., Youngstown, OH

At presstime, the system is not yet

on the market. I know, though, that it is scheduled to sell for about \$220 and is to be called Mego's Video Voice System. The reason for the title is that the game console will have a voice-synthesis microprocessor chip built in so that it can utilize a computer voice to "talk" to you during game play.

Each of the hand controllers will have 15 buttons and a joystick, which when used together form a crude type of keyboard for writing computer programs. In other words, the Mego system is supposed to be another cross between a video-game system and a home computer, expandable to 16K memory. Programs will be entered through an external audiocassette recorder, but it is unclear whether Mego will supply this. Follow future issues of Video Review for more news on this upcoming video-game system.

I buy Video Review just for your "Games" column. I also read an article by you on electronic games in Games magazine, in which you stated that the most involving electronic games are the home-computer kind. I have Intellivision, and I've never seen anything more involving than "Space Battle."

Is that the kind of game you were referring to?

John L., Jersey City, NJ

In a word, no. The video games you play on Intellivision are all solely controlled by the joysticks, and while "Space Battle" is one of the best video challenges around with its (excellent graphics and variety of targets), it is child's play compared to a game like "Star Raiders," which must be played on the Atari 400 and 800 home computers.

In "Star Raiders," you are in control of a starcruiser, and can steer north, south, east or west and fire lasers at various targets using the hand controller. On screen you

Continued

VIDEO VIEWS...

Continued from page 132

and CBS, proposed specialized services for women, blacks, senior citizens, doctors, the hearing-impaired and others.

The Catbird Seat

In addition, Satcom 1, the oldest of the present satellites, launched in 1975, is dying. One transponder after another fades, and Satcom customers move to the newer skybirds for backup and eventual replacement. Most of these services are intended for distribution by cable, many of them extra-charge premium cable services. They all require large dishes for reception because of their weak signals.

So where does that leave a person who buys a 12-foot dish today, just in time to find three-foot (or smaller) antennas sprouting up all around? "In the catbird seat," according to Jim Cassily, president of Third Wave Communications. According to Cassily, the big dishes can't handle anything the high-powered satellites put out, while the reverse is not true. In fact, says Cassily, because of their comparatively high power, the direct-broadcast satellite signals may require attenuation before going to your TV set.

For BBC Fans

If you love the BBC programs carried by PBS—such as *Masterpiece Theatre*, James Burke's *Connections* or *Monty Python*—and you live beyond the reach of cable TV, you've had some bad news this year. Time-Life, which distributed the BBC programs to PBS in the past, said it planned to sign up for its own transponder to feed cable systems on a pay-for-play basis. Starting soon, the only way you're going to be able to see those programs and other BBC material is with your own dish in the backyard.

So why shouldn't Cassily and his competitors be smiling? □

For more on the subject of home satellite receivers, see this month's *Test Report of a Channel Master dish system*, p. 47, and "A Home Satellite Dish Odyssey" by Arthur C. Clarke, p. 68.

Continued from page 137

have a view either forward or aft from your ship that shows the stars rushing by in three dimensions. The computer keyboard is also a part of this game.

You can select and change instantly one of nine cruising speeds. You can activate shields (which cost half a point of energy for every second you leave them on). You can use a computer sighting device to track your targets (but this also costs you energy points). You can dock with space stations where you will

need to refuel and repair any damages to your ship before going on. And to help you monitor the action, the bottom of the TV screen shows ever-changing information about how much energy you have left, your speed and your distance from targets as well as their direction.

So playing the game is not a matter of simple hand-to-eye coordination. Rather, you must coordinate many factors simulating a mission through space. And there are other games that are more involving when played on a computer. □

Here is Your Ticket To A...

\$2 VIDEO CASSETTE EXCHANGE CLUB!

It's simple, for a one time membership fee of \$75, you can receive video tapes of your favorite G, PG, R, Classic, or Sports feature. As fast as each movie is returned another one will be sent to you for only \$2 plus shipping charges. No limit on how often you get them or how often you watch them. Satisfaction Guaranteed.

Also

As a member you are entitled to our "Personal Touch Service" including...

- A Reservation Program
- A Gift Certificate Program
- A Video Fanatic Program
- A Title Search Program
- plus many more services

Send in your ticket today or call us collect (215) 865-1611 for more information

National Video Library Inc.
3026 Rambeau Rd., Bethlehem, PA 18017

- Sign me up today and please, send me my first selection _____
- Send more information including "Personal Touch Service".
- Send more information about Gift Certificates only.

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ Zip _____
State _____
Enclosed is my check or money order for \$75.00 or
bill my credit card.
Master Charge _____ VISA _____
Card # _____
Expiration Date _____
Signature _____

Beta _____ VHS _____ T

Coma
Fame
Jaws
Alien
Popeye
9 to 5
Xanadu
Patton
Network
Oh God!
The Rose
Airplane
Foul Play
The Inlaws
Caddyshack
Mr. Roberts
The Stuntman
Elephant Man
The Godfather
Blues Brothers
China Syndrome
Heaven Can Wait
Domino Principle
Murder By Death
Young Frankenstein
2001. Space Odyssey
Smokey & the Bandit
That's Entertainment
The Towering Inferno
Coal Miner's Daughter