VCS UPDATE...

by Lee Pappas

Since Issue #7 many new games have appeared on the market place. Twentieth Century-Foxes' Games of the Century division has announced four new game titles for release by the holiday season: **Alien, Fantastic Voyage, Turmoil,** and **MegaForce.**

In **Alien,** patterned after the science fiction/horror film of the same title, the player's mission is to destroy the horrid space creatures before they get you first.

Fantastic Voyage is based on the 1966 film which starred Stephen Boyd, Raquel Welch, and Donald Pleasence. ("Nothing's changed as far as my authority goes!") Like the motion picture, you must navigate your miniaturized submarine through the body of a critically ill patient and destroy a life-threatening blood clot, while avoiding antibodies and defensive cells.

Turmoil and **Megaforce** are also action games, the latter named after the not-so-hot film of the same name.

Alien, Megaforce, and **Turmoil** list for $34.95 and **Fantastic Voyage** for $31.95.

COLECOVISION

Colecovision will shortly have their VCS-compatible interface on the market, allowing over two hundred additional cartridges to be used on that system. The unit plugs into the regular cartridge slot and provides a new port to plug the VCS-type games into, along with two ATARI-type controller ports. Coleco will also be releasing an Intellivision cartridge adapter, but who cares? (Except George P.!)

The ATARI 5200

I've had the ATARI 5200 for a couple of months now, and must admit it's a nice mixture of hardware and software. The versions of **PacMan, Missile Command, Star Raiders,** etc. resemble those on the 400 & 800, with some added enhancements and changes. **Star Raiders** has an improved long range scan: instead of blips for moving ships and asteroids, there are now small graphic representations of each object. Meteors look like meteors, basestars like basestars, and so on. Also,

the galactic map is slightly changed. On Super Breakout, when the bricks are struck, they "disintegrate" rather than just vanishing quickly. **Space Invaders** is really wild on the 5200; the creature shapes in this game are the weirdest yet. This version also has the barriers in it.

The hand controllers are excellent, consisting of a combination joystick and small keyboard. The joystick is a non-centering variable unit with proportionality. For example, the more you push it in one direction (while playing Star Raiders) the faster the ship turns. I had a tough time getting used to the small keyboard inputs (and I'm no slouch at Star Raiders either). The keyboard has nice rubbery-type keys with very good "positive" feedback as to which keys were pressed. The games come with overlays labeling the proper keys with their corresponding functions. The controllers also have the firing buttons on both the right and left sides so there is no prejudice against left handers here.

Basically, there are similarities with the 5200 and the 400/800. The programs are virtually identical, however, the addressing points for the software are quite different, thus the computer cartridges could not work on the 5200 (cartridge size and contact pin size are also physically different). There are plans to add on a CX2600 adapter to run all of the VCS cartridges, a trackball/keyboard option, and voice synthesizer package.

VCS in 1983

Many new games from ATARI are planned for the new year! Early 1983 should see the release of **Vanguard, Mrs. PacMan,** and **Fireworld.** In March there are plans to release **Centipede, The Dukes of Hazard,** and **Galaxian.** Games for release later include **Dig Dug, Waterworld,** and several new sports games with much improved graphics. There will also be a series of **Muppets, Disney,** and **Sesame Street** cartridges. □

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