

GAMES

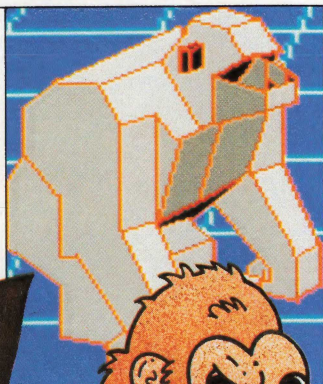
What a Doggone Paradox!

Can you find
six structural
impossibilities in
this doghouse?
And can you
figure out how
it was created?

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Difficulty Rating Smooth Sailing ★

Uphill Climb ★★

Proceed at Your Own Risk! ★★★

Mixed Bag ★☆

Cover Construction and Photograph Walter Wick

THERE'S \$1000 HIDDEN IN THIS AD.

Tell us how many tridents are hidden in this ad and how many are on the back of the Fathom™ video game package, and you might win \$1000.

And if you think that's tough, wait'll you try to find the hidden tridents in our game.



For Atari® 2600™ Soon for ColecoVision™ Intellivision™
Atari® 5200™ Atari Computers, and TI-99/4A.

You'll have to search the seas as a porpoise without getting eaten by octopuses. You'll have to change into a seagull and fly over volcanic isles without getting bumped by blackbirds.

But if you don't find the trident, you can't free the mermaid. Or win the \$1000.

So, happy hunting.

Send your entries along with your name, address, and phone number to: "Fathom Finders," P.O. Box 31001, Los Gatos, CA 95030. **FATHOM BY IMAGIC.**



All entries must be postmarked by January 31, 1984. Drawing will be held on February 28, 1984. Winner will be notified no later than March 15, 1984. Imagic will not be responsible for lost, late, or misdirected mail. All entries which are complete and have the correct answers are eligible. Winner will be determined by a random drawing from all eligible entries. The odds of winning will depend on the number of eligible entries received. Any and all taxes are the sole responsibility of the winner. No purchase necessary. Contest void wherever restricted or prohibited by law. Employees, distributors and advertising agencies of Imagic and their families are not eligible for entry.

"...COME IN, MOONSWEEPER...ARE YOU THERE?...COME IN."

"...Star Command to all video game players...we have confirmed reports that U.S.S. Moonsweeper was attacked by an alien transport... Moonsweeper last sighted clearing aurora flares on way to rescue Malanium miners on Lunar Alpha Red...she lowered shields, located Alpha Red, and began final approach...we do not know if Moonsweeper was forced into a mining tower



...or was shot down heading for acceleration rings...we do know several enemy destroyers were shot down before communications went dead...proceed to nearest video store and attempt to make contact with Moonsweeper...situation critical...repeat...situation critical...over..."

MOONSWEEPER™ BY IMAGIC



For Atari® 2600.™ Soon for Atari® 5200,™ Intellivision®, ColecoVision,™
VIC-20,™ Atari® Computers and TI-99/4A.



EVENTS

If you plan to attend any of these events, write or call to check entry fees, dates, sites, eligibility, etc. Include a stamped, self-addressed envelope with your request.

Ballooning Some 500 pilots will compete in the 12th Annual Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta, October 1-9, in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Entertainment for half a million spectators will include precision events, among them a key grab—the pilot who plucks the key from a tall pole gets a 1984 Pontiac. Contact: Balloon Fiesta, 3300 Princeton N.E., Suite 24, Albuquerque, NM 87107, or call (505) 883-0932.

Computer Graphics Computer innovations as applied to architecture, fine arts, landscaping, medicine, and manufacturing will be unveiled at the Second Annual Pacific Northwest Computer Graphics Conference, October 24-25, at the University of Oregon. Fee is about \$50 per day. Contact: Computer Conference, 111 Susan Campbell Hall, University of Oregon, Eugene, OR 97403-1204, or call (503) 686-5555.

Crosswords The Stamford Marriott Crossword Puzzle Party will be held October 15-16, at the Marriott Hotel, Stamford, Connecticut. The event features crossword contests, word games, and team relays, and will be directed by GAMES Senior Editor Will Shortz. Contact: Crosswords, Stamford Marriott, 2 Stamford Forum, Stamford, CT 06901.

Map Dash October 27 is the entry deadline for the 1983 Great Maltese Circumglobal Trophy Dash (see September Events). Entrants must complete their "trips around the world" with cryptic rules and maps by November 7. Contact: Trophy Dash, Box 53, La Canada, CA 91011.

Mystery Convention Devotees of perplexity and dread will gather at the Barizon Plaza Hotel in New York City for Boucher Con XIV, October 21-23, to hear mystery writers speak about their art. Novelist John D. MacDonald will be the guest of honor. Also planned are old mystery movies, a 1930s style radio play, and a rare book room. Fee is \$30; \$40 at the door (Sunday banquet is an extra \$30). Contact: Otto Penzler, c/o Mysterious Book Shop, 129 W. 56th St., New York, NY 10019, or call (212) 765-0900.

Scrabble Enthusiasts can "tile up" at two tournaments this month:

- At Scrabble Fun Weekend, October 7-9, on Cape Cod, players can compete in Regular, Pair, and Variation categories. The grand prize is free entry to the 1984 Greater Boston Open, with hotel expenses paid. Fees range from \$5-20. Contact: Edith Berman, 26 Ships Way, Bourne Village, MA 02532, or call (617) 759-4579.

- Contestants at The Fourth Annual Lubbock Scrabble Players Tournament play a total of nine games, October 15-16, in Lubbock, Texas. Experts and novices are welcome. Fee is \$5 (\$6 at the door). Contact: M. L. Thurman, 2627 24th St., Lubbock, TX 79410, or call (806) 744-7702.



If you're a friend of Jack Daniel's, let us hear from you.

WE DON'T HAVE MEETING ROOMS in Jack Daniel's Hollow. But there are plenty of nearby places to hold discussions.

You see, making good whiskey doesn't call for meetings. What you need is clear water and choice grain; experienced Tennesseans to distill your whiskey; and a rickyard for making charcoal to mellow its taste. Happily, we don't have to leave our distillery for any of these good things. And with Cashion's Service Station down the road, we can even hold a meeting now and then.



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MELLOWED

DROP

BY DROP

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G A M E B I T S

Edited by Curtis Slepian

Coming Soon to Your Local Arcade

Minimovies are coming to the arcades, but don't bring popcorn—you'll have your hands full playing this amalgam of video and cinema.

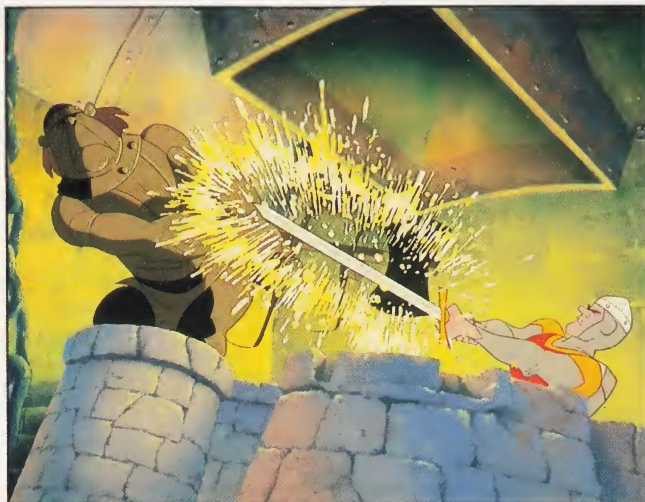
Already, the first of these electronic hybrids, a coin-op game called Astron Belt, produced by Sega/Paramount, has premiered successfully abroad and at the Yellow Brick Road Arcade in San Diego. For 50 cents, players pit their computer-generated craft against filmed images of alien spaceships that are projected onto the screen by laser-disc software in the game's cabinet. The movie footage of these enemy vessels was filmed in Japan specifically for this game.

Owing to a few bugs, Astron Belt won't be released nationwide, but Sega/Paramount is reportedly developing a Grand Prix auto-racing game in which players maneuver cars past specially filmed backgrounds.

Minimovies aren't limited to live action segments—cartoons are in the works, too. Don Bluth Animation Studios is beginning production on laser-disc "participatory" movies that use high-quality classical animation. A former Disney animator and the director of last year's cartoon caper *The Secret of NIMH*, Bluth thinks his cartoons will make the game "seem closer to human experience."

The first minimovie Bluth plans to unveil in the arcades is *Dragon's Lair*. The game's scenario follows Dirk the Daring on his quest to rescue Princess Daphne from the clutches of an evil dragon. Dirk braves room after room (42 in all) filled with perils like huge spiders and a giant chicken foot.

Of course, Dirk can't go anywhere without a player's manning the controls: a joystick that moves Dirk and a button that activates his magic sword. In the first room, for example, a well-timed tug on the joystick allows Dirk to swing on a rope over a burning pit;



Will Dragon's Lair be a cut above the coin-op competition?

too slow a reaction causes him to fall in. Fortunately, half the fun is watching the humorous death scenes, which is some compensation for getting only three lives for your 50 cents.

As realistic as the cartoons are, the player's control of the action amounts to two simple choices: commanding

Dirk to fight or flee. Then the laser disc continues the preprogrammed adventure. A time lag in the machine's response plagued the prototype copy, but Bluth plans to correct these flaws in future models. Next year, according to Bluth, Coleco promises to produce a home version of *Dragon's Lair* (it requires both Coleco's home video system and a laser-disc player).

Other movie studios are getting into the minimovie act as well. Both MCA-Universal and Lucasfilm are teaming up with Atari, and John Dykstra's special effects house, Apogee, is working with Coleco on laser-disc projects. With all the Hollywood glamour and the superior graphics of laser-disc technology, arcades may yet replace movie theaters as the place to take a Saturday night date.

—Les Paul Robley

Fits and Pieces

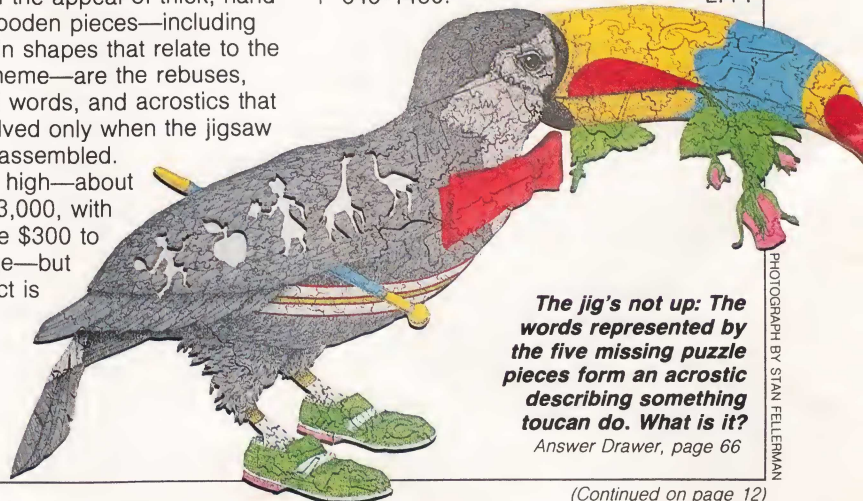
When is a jigsaw more than a jigsaw? When it's made by Stave Puzzles. The intricate puzzles handcrafted by this Norwich, Vermont, firm incorporate irregular edges; "false" edge pieces and "invisible" corners on rectangular puzzles; and, in many cases, a choice of interlocks of three levels of difficulty. Beyond the appeal of thick, hand-colored wooden pieces—including some cut in shapes that relate to the puzzle's theme—are the rebuses, scrambled words, and acrostics that can be solved only when the jigsaw has been assembled.

Prices are high—about \$195 to \$3,000, with most in the \$300 to \$700 range—but the product is unique.

One of the most spectacular constructions is "A Midsummer Night's Dream," a two-layer puzzle (one puzzle on top of another) incorporating specially shaped pieces, including the initials WS and 17 different fairies.

Stave will base a puzzle on almost any poster, print, or photograph, and Steve Richardson and his staff will consider orders for custom-designed puzzles. Contact Stave Puzzles, Main Street, Norwich, VT 05055; (802) 649-1450.

—L. P.



The jig's not up: The words represented by the five missing puzzle pieces form an acrostic describing something toucan do. What is it?

Answer Drawer, page 66

PHOTOGRAPH BY STAN FELLEMAN

(Continued on page 12)

MIND EXPANSION IN MINUTES... OR YOUR MONEY BACK!

The Tibetan monks have striven for centuries to master it. Philosophers, sages, scientists — all have dreamt of it. And now, for the incredibly low, low price of under \$50, you can tap the SECRET POWER of your imagination with any of Infocom's six MIND EXPANSION KITS.



They may look like mere computer games. Do not be deceived! Instead of primitive graphics and sound effects, we use pure prose to immerse you in epic interactive challenges. And we bring to life situations, personalities, and logical puzzles the like of which you won't find elsewhere. The secret? We've found the way to plug our prose right into your psyche, and catapult you into a whole new dimension.

Step up to Infocom games. The ZORK® Trilogy, DEADLINE™, STARCROSS™ and SUSPENDED™. The secret reaches of your mind are beckoning. The next dimension is in there waiting for you.

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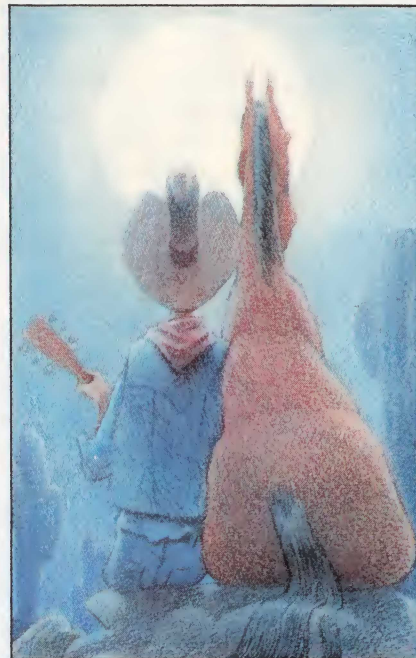
The Best of the Worst

"It was the best of wurst, it was the worst of wurst," from the fictitious novel *A Tale of Two Bagels*, surprisingly did *not* win the 1983 Bulwer-Lytton Fiction Contest, which asked entrants to write the worst first sentence of the worst novel imaginable. Good (or bad) as the above submission was, it was only one of thousands of wonderfully wretched openers that poured in. Entrants ranged from a female forest ranger to a retired British bobby to a prolific ghost writer.

"The contest had a very wide appeal for all kinds of people, including people too lazy to write anything else," says organizer Scott Rice, an English professor at San Jose State University. Now in its second year, the event is named in honor of Edward Bulwer-Lytton, a 19th-century English novelist who opened his novel *Paul Clifford* with the immortal "It was a dark and stormy night." This attention-grabber was later adopted by Snoopy as he awaited his literary muse, so it's appropriate that the grand prize in this year's Bulwer-Lytton contest was the original art for that *Peanuts* cartoon.

That dubious honor was won by Gail Cain, of San Francisco, for this great beginning: "The camel died quite suddenly on the second day, and Selena fretted sulkily, buffing her already impeccable nails and—not for the first time since the journey began—pondered snidely if this would dissolve into a vignette of minor inconveniences like all the other holidays spent with Basil."

Here, as a how-not-to for anyone working on the Great American Novel, is a sampler of other winners and "dishonorable mentions."



• "A cowboy should know his horse, but it seemed to the podnners at the Triple Q Ranch that Vernon McChew had gotten *too* close."

—Robbi Nester, Newport Beach, CA

• "There are things a good detective can feel in his bones, and Dillon Shane knew Jesimine Kimberly Collinsworth did not drown in her sleep on New Year's Eve."

—F. H. Shaw, St. Petersburg, FL

• "Her full voluptuous mouth sensually lipped an invitation to excitement and passion, while her cold steely piercing eyes unblinkingly turned aside any approach to familiarity or intimacy; or was it the other way around?"

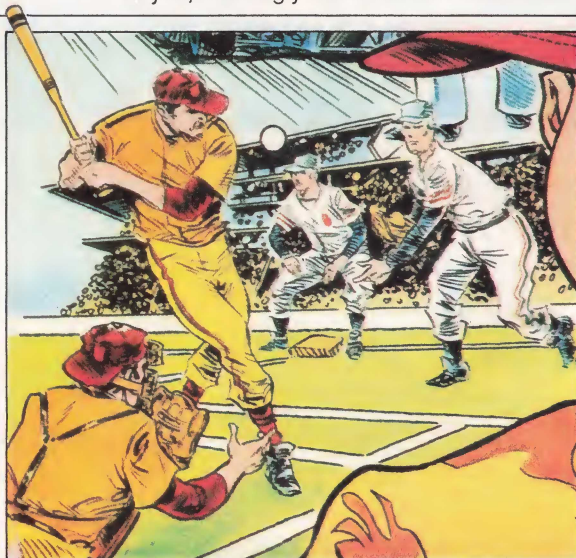
—E. Winslow, NJ

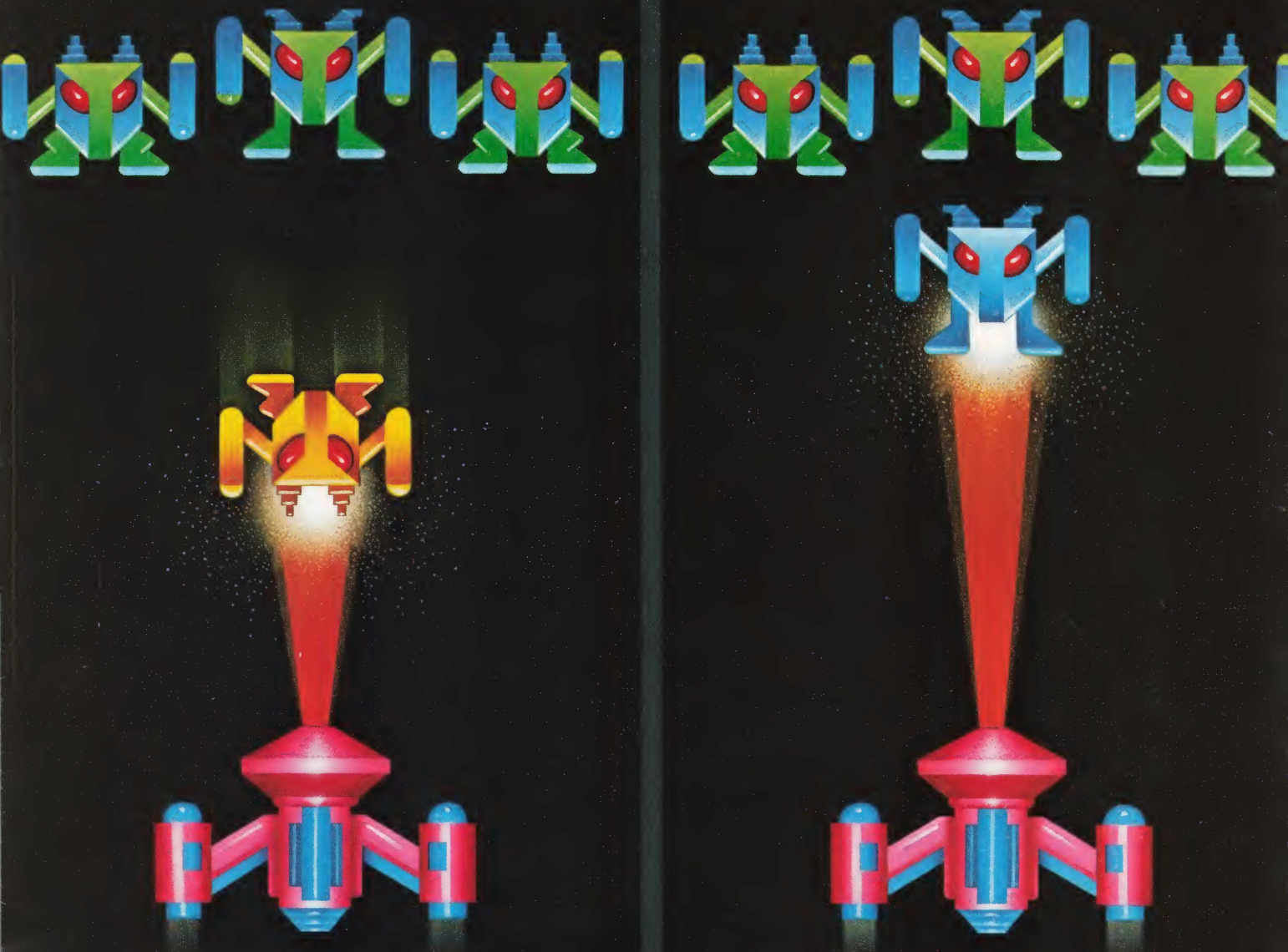
• "She flung her feverishly disquieted body onto the cool cambric of the Waldorf-Astoria bed and knew, oh yes, sobbingly knew that her love was

Baseball, Italian Style

Sure, baseball fans realize that to error is human—but this is *ridiculous*. The imaginative version of our national pastime shown at right adorns the front of a box of Kellogg's Rice Krispies made and sold in Italy. One only wonders what the cereal tastes like. Can you spot the mistakes in the picture?

—C. S.
Answer Drawer, page 66





Which player is about to score with flying colors?

Better learn fast. Here comes Galaxian* from Atari.®

Pilot to co-pilot. Galaxian invaders are approaching your home. And they're only from Atari for use with the ATARI® 2600,™ Sears Video Arcade† systems, and the ATARI 5200™ SuperSystem.

These Galaxians look, sound, and act no different than the Galaxians you've battled in the arcade. They swoop, dodge, and fire with equal cunning. So you have to know your stuff.



Like the player on the left. He's about to hit a flying yellow Flagship for 150 points. But his opponent, on the right, will score only 30 points for hitting the stationary blue Drone. Tough luck, rookie.

If you want to know even more about which Galaxians to hit, hit the stores for Galaxian.



A Warner Communications Company.

BUMP'N'JUMP^{TM*} THE VIDEO GAME FOR PEOPLE WHO SHOULDN'T BE ALLOWED TO DRIVE.



For those of you who spend more time crashing than you do driving, we'd like to introduce Bump'N'Jump. The home video game where it's not just okay to hit the other cars, it's required.



Shown on Intellivision. Game varies by system.

Your job is to crash as many cars as you can without crashing yourself. And to help you do it, you're given some unusual options. Not only can you bump them off the road, you can jump over what you can't bump.

But even with these advantages, you're not on easy street. Because waiting somewhere down the road might be the deadly dump trucks. Or the treacherous tanks. Or the sinister death car.

When you play Bump'N'Jump, you just never know who you'll run into.

Coming soon for Intellivision[®] and Atari[®] 2600.

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Bump'N'Jump^{TM*}
FROM **MATTEL ELECTRONICS[®]**

FINE TUNINGS

THE 1983 GAMES GUIDE TO HOME VIDEO GAMES

Besides being animals, what do bees, turtles, snakes, gophers, kangaroos, ducks, mice, and baby gorillas have in common?

They're all major characters in new video games. Anything that grows, swims, crawls, walks, or flies on this planet Earth—and on planets yet undiscovered—has become food for the game designer's imagination, from beefsteak tomatoes to communist mutants, from the goddess Isis to the robot warrior Zaxxon.

Game designers are something like filmmakers, blending characters, scenario, action, color, and sound into a coherent, satisfying whole. But video games are also interactive—you, the player, make things happen, and in turn react to them. This is a game's moment of truth; if the interaction isn't fun, the cutest characters and the most dazzling graphics won't save it.

In spite of a chaotic (and financially disappointing) year in the video game industry, players have an abundance of good systems and games to choose

from. All six major systems are good to excellent; for comparative details, see "Hardware the Easy Way," on page 51. The software is more uneven in quality. Of some 100 new games this year, half are guaranteed to gather dust on your shelf after a couple of playings. The other half, happily, can seduce you into frittering away more hours than you'd like to admit. Our favorites are reviewed beginning on page 50.

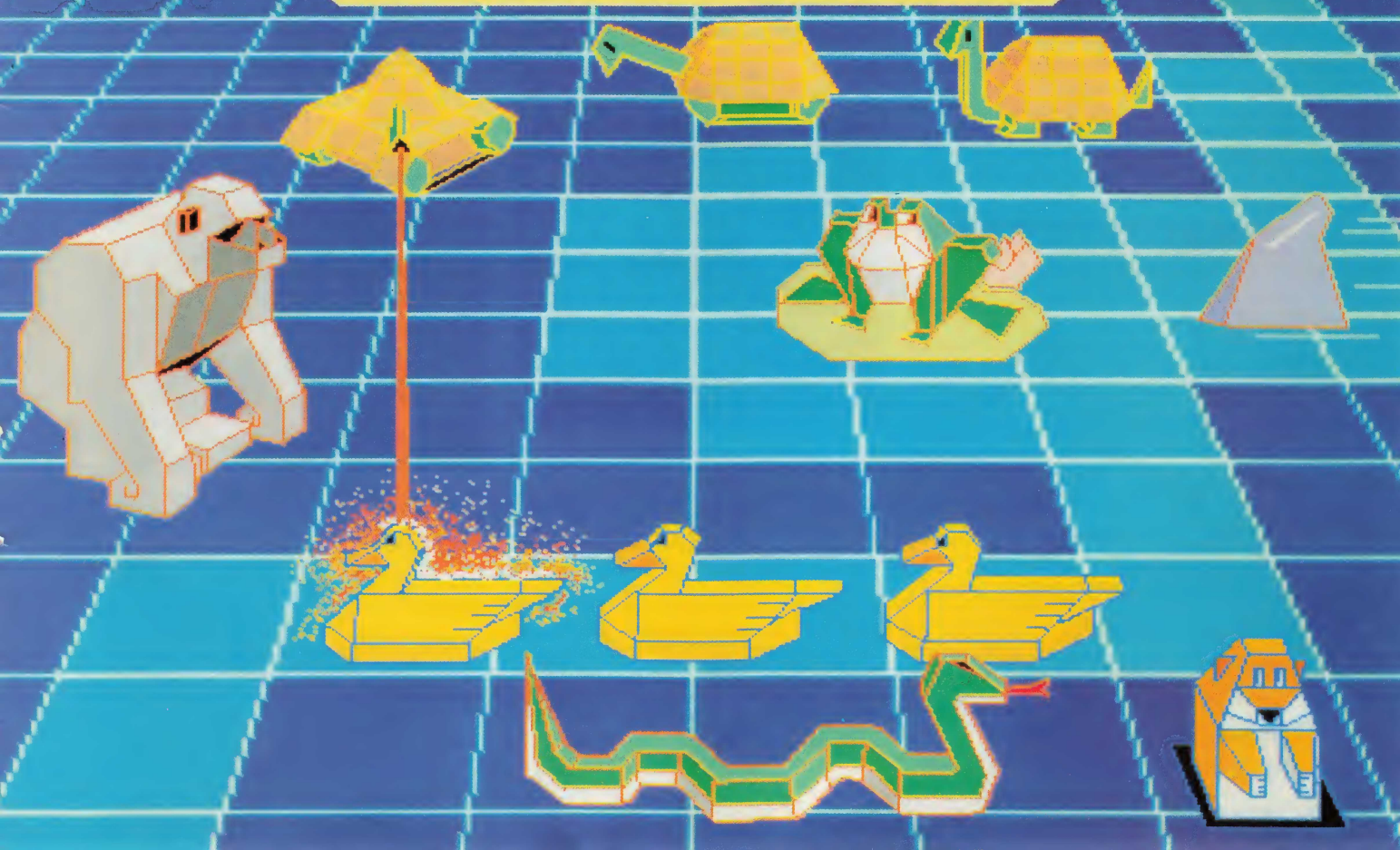
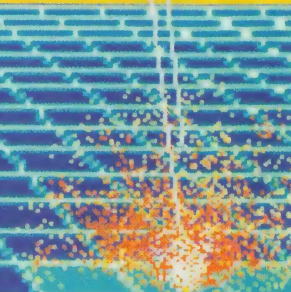
We also took a fresh look at the games we recommended last year ("Private Screenings," December 1982) and found that many were still as much fun as the best new games; they are described in "Reruns," page 54.

Many of the systems have, or will soon be adding, computer keyboards and other peripherals (available add-ons are described in each hardware review). Controllers have become an industry in themselves; some of the best—and weirdest—must be purchased separately ("The Joy of Sticks," page 52).

And now, the games.

EDITED BY BURT HOCHBERG AND R. WAYNE SCHMITTBERGER

ILLUSTRATION BY DAVID HERBICK/COMPUTER GRAPHICS BY NATIONAL IMAGE MAKERS



HAPPY TRAILS

(Activision, 1-2 alt., \$35)

Your man is on the trail of Black Bart, picking up the money he dropped behind him. The trail is in segments, which you have to link up by shifting them around inside a frame. If your man walks into the empty space that results from these shifts, or into a dead end, he's a goner. And keep him away from Bart until he's picked up the badge lying along the trail. There's a timer too—if it runs out before you're done, you're done. If you like maze games, you won't be able to stop playing this one.



HARDWARE THE EASY WAY

All six major systems have their good points. The following information highlights some of the differences among them. Manufacturers' suggested list prices were current at press time

ATARI 2600

(Atari; Identical to the Sears Tele-Game System) \$100

Cartridges Around 150, very uneven in quality, from poor to excellent.

Controllers Joysticks are reasonably good for most games; paddles are excellent.

Strengths and weaknesses Though limited in memory, the 2600 is quite capable of handling graphics for good action games. Two skill switches effectively double the number of variations in a cartridge and allow opponents with unequal skills to compete on equal terms.

Add-ons The Supercharger (\$45, with Phaser Patrol game), from Starpath, allows games of greater complexity to be played on the 2600. Starpath now offers a dozen different titles, which are all good in quality, and less expensive than cartridge games.

Several companies have announced tentative plans to produce keyboards that will turn the 2600 into a modest home computer. At press time, however, none were available for evaluation.

ATARI 5200

(Atari) \$200

Cartridges About 25, consistently excellent and including many of the most popular arcade adaptations.

Controllers Very disappointing; joysticks are sluggish and not self-centering, side buttons stick, and the rubber bushing wears out quickly. Atari promises an improved, self-centering joystick by January.

Strengths and weaknesses The animation capabilities and graphics are extraordinarily good, equivalent to Atari 400/800 home computers. A pause button allows you to halt any game in progress, then continue it later on.

Add-ons Atari promises an adaptor for playing all Atari 2600-compatible games.

COLECOVISION

(Coleco) \$170

Cartridges Around 25, consistently high in quality.

Controllers The self-centering knobs are excellent for most games and the fire buttons are conveniently located, but the wide pad may be awkward for those with small hands.

Strengths and weaknesses The system is very powerful, providing better graphics than many home computers.

Add-ons Expansion Module I (\$70) allows the unit to play nearly all Atari 2600-compatible cartridges. A computer add-on promises to turn ColecoVision into the powerful new Adam computer, which includes a letter-quality, daisy-wheel printer, and high-speed "digital data pack" storage device (due out soon for the surprisingly low price of \$400).

INTELLIVISION II

(Mattel) \$140-180

Cartridges Around 60, including very strong selection of sometimes complicated sports and strategy games.

Controllers Discs rather than joysticks, which some people like but others find impossible to manipulate with any precision; keypads with overlays for each game. Unlike the hard-wired Intellivision I keypads, those for Intellivision II are detachable.

Strengths and weaknesses Despite much more memory—which shows up impressively in its strategy games—than the Atari 2600, Intellivision is less effective with fast-moving shoot-'em-ups.

Add-ons Intellivoice Voice Synthesis Module (needed for certain games); Intellivision System Changer (which promises to play all Atari 2600-compatible games); Intellivision Computer Adaptor, which allows attachment of either music synthesizer or computer keyboard.

ODYSSEY²

(North American Philips Consumer Electronics Corporation, or N. A. P. C. E. C.) \$100

Cartridges Around 50, but many early ones are not particularly good.

Controllers Adequate, but a bit clumsy.

Strengths and weaknesses The graphic capability is relatively weak, comparable to the Atari 2600. Although it's the only system that comes with a full (membrane) keyboard, only a few of its games make much use of the keyboard's potential to expand the range of player input.

Add-ons The Voice of Odyssey² (\$60-70).

VECTREX GRAPHIC COMPUTER SYSTEM

(General Consumer Electronics Corp., or G. C. E.) \$100

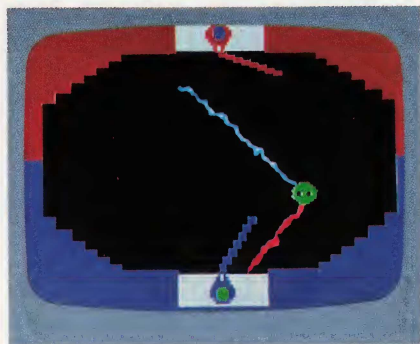
Cartridges About 20, consistently excellent.

Controllers The control panel includes four buttons (for firing and other functions) plus a small joystick that's the best of any system's; a second panel must be purchased separately for certain two-player games.

Strengths and weaknesses This very powerful system is the only one to use vector graphics, which are superior to television raster graphics for many types of fast-action games. And since it includes its own screen, it won't tie up the family TV set. Excellent sound includes built-in speech capabilities. Color is limited to what's printed on overlays that come with the games (they are, however, terrifically effective).

Add-ons Light Pen (sold with an Art Master cartridge that allows you to draw and animate on the screen); 3-D Imager (goggles that give certain games a vivid three-dimensional appearance); and, planned for next year, a keyboard that converts Vectrex into a computer.

JEDI ARENA



(Parker Brothers, 1-2 sim., \$30)

To an astonishing degree, this game captures the tension and sound effects of the *Star Wars* light-saber duels between Luke Skywalker and Darth Vader. Two Jedi knights, one of whom can be played by the computer (though we like head-to-head games better), are armed with sabers and force shields. A Seeker—the floating sphere Luke practiced against blindfolded in the original film—moves between them, shooting energy bolts at both players. The angle at which a bolt leaves the Seeker always matches the angle of your light saber, which can be rotated 180 degrees. A properly aimed bolt knocks out a piece of the opponent's shield, and a shot through this hole scores a point. The saber can also block bolts, but the best angle for defense is usually the worst for offense. The best variations are those in which the Seeker is invisible.

KILLER BEES

(N.A.P.C.E.C., 1 player, \$35)

In this honey of a game, you control a swarm of 12 bees with which you must destroy five Beebots, who are protected by swarms of enemy bees. The bad bees weaken your swarm on contact, so zap them quickly. The Beebots, meanwhile, run around the screen in ever-changing patterns. Touching one slows it down; repeated touches kill it. At higher levels of play, the Beebots move so fast they're hard to see—your only hope is the grave markers that are erected on each Beebot's death. These markers hinder the movements of the survivors, and their strategic placement can mean victory or defeat.

LONDON BLITZ

(Avalon Hill, 1 player, \$30)

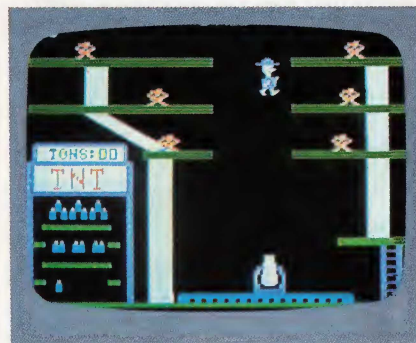
Avalon Hill is best known for its war games, and its third video game is what you'd expect: a detailed and complicated historical re-creation that involves logic and memory as well as quick reflexes. It's London during World War II. As a member of the British Army Royal Engineer Squad, you track down and disarm the unexploded bombs that dot the city. As you advance in rank from Lance Corporal to Captain, the bombs become harder to defuse and quicker to detonate; the tension can be harrowing. The game takes time to learn, but it's worth the effort.

★ MINER 2049ER

(Microfun, 1-2 alt., \$30)

The video game of the year, we say—the most complex, ornery, yet rewarding "task" game we've seen. Your miner must cover every inch of a walkway on 11 increasingly difficult levels while avoiding or bashing patrolling monsters. The best route is usually not the obvious one, and backtracking is often necessary. Learning to jump the right distance at the right moment is tricky, and gets trickier. There are elevators, moving platforms, sliding chutes, and even a cannon that requires just the right charge of TNT. Unlike Donkey Kong, this climbing game requires logic to figure out the most efficient route, as well as traditional arcade skills.

The Atari 2600 version (by Tigervision) is



slower paced and has only three levels (repeated without the tools to bash monsters with). It's good, but can't be compared with the superb ColecoVision cartridge.



—THE JOY OF STICKS—

Blaming an unresponsive or unwieldy joystick for a low score may seem a cop-out. But there's nothing so frustrating as coming within one quick turn of beating your previous high score, only to see your Pac-Person go straight when you thought you'd made a left turn to avoid doom. Dozens of joysticks, adaptors, and even hand protectors are now available, and most are improvements over the equipment that comes with each game system. This is a sampling of our favorites. Since tastes vary as much as joystick styles, we recommend trying out as many as possible and testing them in maze games and shoot-'em-ups before choosing. In the following descriptions, letters in parentheses correspond to the photos above.

Except where otherwise noted, all joysticks reviewed here are immediately compatible with the Atari 2600, Sears Tele-Game System, Commodore VIC-20, and Atari 400/800 computers. They can also be used with ColecoVision with the addition of a Y adaptor (see below).

The **Command Control Joystick** (A), by Wico (\$30), features fire buttons on handle and base (you choose which to use before you play) and is so popular it even has its own addons: **Octoputs** (B) and **Hand Saver** (C), both by Video Masters. Octoputs (\$3.95) are suction cups that replace the four little feet at the base of the stick, allowing it to attach firmly to any smooth surface. Hand Saver (\$4.95) is a spongy sleeve that fits around the stick itself, preventing blisters in marathon sessions.

We liked Wico's **Command Control Red Ball** (D) even better, because the ballgrip gives it a real arcade feel (\$35). Wico also makes an adaptor (E), allowing these sticks to work with Odyssey² units that have plug-in controllers (\$10).

Proststick II (F), by Newport Controls (\$25), is smooth and responsive and fits nicely in the (adult) hand. The fire buttons are conveniently located, and the newest version can be set for four- or eight-directional function, minimizing the risk of making a wrong turn. Also excellent is **Proststick III** (G), for ColecoVision (\$30), with a built-in adaptor into which the basic Coleco keypad controller attaches. Without the adaptor, you'd be unable to use the keypad to enter a skill level and bring the game up on the screen, much less use any special-function buttons.

★ MOUSE TRAP

(Coleco, 1-2 alt., under \$30)

The twist here is that you can alter the maze as you play. Which gates to open and close, and when, are decisions that must be made instantly—your onscreen persona, a mouse, is being chased by cats. While trying to eat all the cheese in the maze, your mouse collects bones, which turn it into a dog just itching to get its teeth into a domestic shorthair. When a hawk flies by, get out of its way (hawks eat both mice and dogs).

The ColecoVision controller action—requiring you to use four buttons and the knob simultaneously—is hard to master. The Atari joystick is no better (and that version lacks the hawk). The Intellivision version was not available for play-testing.

MS. PAC-MAN

(Atari, 1 player, \$36)

She's here, and she's a beaut! There are four progressively difficult mazes on each skill level. You can start with one ghost (level 1) and work up to four. Learn when to eat energy pills and how to use the tunnels to elude the ghosts and slow them down. The passing fruits may be sucker bait—don't risk a life for a few hundred points. Eat the dots near the center early, because they'll be hard to get to later. Since the ghosts make random "decisions" at certain points in their routes, trying to figure out patterns is probably a waste of time. And by all means get a good joystick—quick, accurate turns are a must. In graphics and gameplay, a vast improvement over the 2600's Pac-Man.

PEPPER II

(Coleco, 1-2 alt., under \$30)

You have to complete four mazes by "zip-ping up" all their rooms while roaming "eyes" try to stop you. Enclosing certain rooms enables you to hit the eyes for bonus points. When you're stuck, escape to one of the other mazes. Complete all four and you get a noisy celebration, an extra life, and four more mazes. On all skill levels but the easiest, a "zipper ripper" unzips unfinished rooms—avoid him. The harder skill levels are tougher than fixing a sprung zipper.

QIX

(Atari, 1-2 alt., \$32)

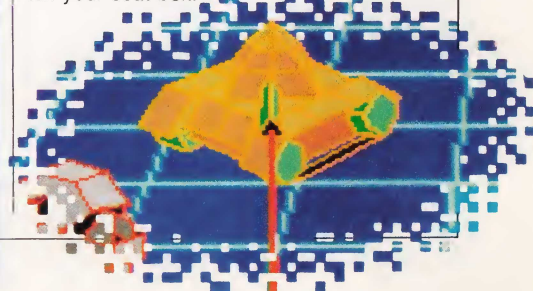
Still one of the most unusual arcade games, Qix has been faithfully translated to the home screen. The object is to fill in with patterns as much of the rectangular playing screen as possible, avoiding the deadly Qix. Try to trap the Qix into a small space, which will allow you to seal off most of the board with a single move and earn a huge bonus. Meanwhile, don't rest too long or you'll be pursued by an increasing number of deadly Sparx. Qix is the rare video game that is nonviolent. The goal is not to destroy, but to draw in strategic patterns.

RIDDLE OF THE SPHINX



(Imagic, 1-2 alt., \$30)

You, Pharaoh's son, must cross the desert to the Temple of Ra and free your people from Anubis. On your way you'll meet the goddess Isis (please her and she'll give you a treasure); nomad traders (watch your pocket); scorpions and thieves (kill them); and Anubis himself (avoid him like the plague). At every pyramid, temple, and sphinx you must offer a sacred object or treasure. If you play your treasures right and don't get stung or stoned to death, you'll reach Ra and face the final riddle. Learn the game with the skill switch on "B"; then move it to "A" and fasten your seat belt.



Questar's **Blaster** (H) is ideal for those who like large, arcadelike controllers; the four fire buttons place two different fire functions in easy reach for either righties or lefties (\$15).

Intellivision owners with blistered thumbs can pad their control discs with **Thumb Saver** (I), from Video Masters (\$3.95). Those who prefer sticks can replace their Intellivision disc controllers with **Injoy-a-Stick** (J), by Video Product Sales, \$11 (different versions of which are needed for Intellivision I and II), or wait for entirely new controller keypads being promised by Wico, Amiga, and even Mattel itself.

Trak-balls are indispensable for full enjoyment of games like Centipede and Missile Command, and Atari's **Trak-Ball** for the 5200 (K) and Wico's for the 2600 (L) are both superb, arcade-quality controllers (they cost \$70 and \$50 respectively).

For ColecoVision, **Expansion Module II** (M) includes steering wheel and foot pedal, comes with a Turbo cartridge, and will eventually be used for other driving games (\$70). The **Super Action Controller**, with three color-coded triggers, is designed for quick and complex play in Coleco's sports games like Baseball, which comes with it (\$70). It's due out in October, but was not available for play-testing at press time.

The most unusual controller to date is the **Joyboard** (N), from Amiga (\$50 for the 2600 version; \$60 for the ColecoVision). The player stands on it and shifts his weight (even the weight of a child can make it work) to cause four-directional movement on screen. While most suitable for games like Skiing (which comes with it), the Joyboard can also be used with such four-directional games as Pac-Man—the difficulty of making quick turns will keep your score low, but you'll get lots of exercise.

The **Y adaptor** (O), from Questar, Zircon, and other companies (about \$10), allows you to use any Atari-compatible joystick with ColecoVision, while keeping the necessary Coleco keypad plugged in. The **Reverse Y** (P), from Prostick and Questar (\$10), allows you to hook up a joystick to two ports on an Atari 2600, which means you can buy just one expensive joystick and share it in a nonsimultaneous two-player game.

In the odds-and-ends category, **Lefty** (Q), from Sun-Com (\$6.95), plugs into any joystick with a fire button favoring righties and turns it into a southpaw's dream. Finally, companies like Sun-Com, Newport, and Questar make extension cords (R) that allow you to carry your joystick 6 to 12 feet away from the TV (\$5 to \$10), so you can play from your favorite easy chair across the room—if your eyesight is good enough.

RIVER RAID

(Activision, 1-2 alt., \$32)

As you head upriver in a low-flying plane, you must shoot your way through enemy ships, blast bridges, dodge enemy planes, avoid islands, and fly over refueling sites. The theme is familiar (from games like *Scramble*), but in this game the scenery scrolls from top to bottom rather than right to left. For a VCS game, the graphics are unsurpassed; the wide blue river and lush jungle are soothing images that manage to make the combat a relaxing experience.

ROBOTANK

(Activision, 1 player, \$35)

The radar in your tank cockpit shows an enemy tank behind you. Swinging around, you get it in your sights and prepare to fire. Suddenly your computer flashes a fog alert, and now you can see your quarry only in that split second when it fires at you. Should you shoot, relying on your radar, and risk getting hit? How will you act if your radar is destroyed? What will you do at night, when you're in snow and lose traction? This isn't a game—it's a grim battle.

SEAQUEST

(Activision, 1-2 alt., \$32)

Your mission: Rescue six divers with your submarine, avoiding or shooting fish, enemy subs, and a surface patrol boat. When you have to return to the surface for air, a full load of divers will disembark, but one diver will be lost if you have only five or fewer aboard. Each successful mission brings faster, more plentiful fish and enemy subs, and you'll need every possible trick—firing, darting, taking refuge behind the tail of an adversary—to survive. We find it hard to keep up the frantic pace for long.

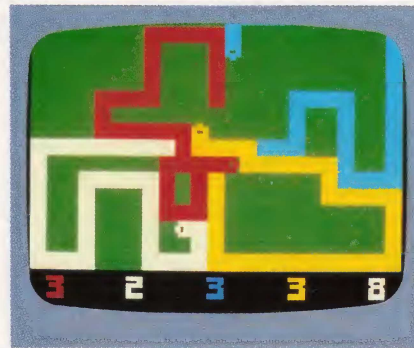
SHARK! SHARK!



(Mattel, 1-2 sim., \$14-19)

You're a little fish in a big pond. You eat littler fish, bigger fish eat you. At every 1,000 points you grow one size and can eat fish you used to avoid. At size 5 (the maximum), food is everything but jellyfish and sharks. If you kill a shark you get a big bonus—but it isn't easy. When you lose a life you return to size 1 and go back on a diet. In the two-player version, you each control one fish and compete for food. When one grows, the other had better keep his distance.

SNAFU



(Mattel, 1-2 sim., \$30)

You and an opponent (or the computer) each create a maze of trails and try to get the other to run out of space so he'll crash into your trail or his own. In some variations you can cross a trail diagonally, which is hilariously confusing. The game offers unusually good two-player interaction. The sluggish controllers, however, detract from an otherwise exciting game of pure strategy.

RERUNS-

These are the games with real staying power. All were reviewed in last December's home video section, and a year later we still play them again and again.

17 Bomber (Mattel, for Intellivision with Intellivoice, \$36) You switch views from cockpit to gunnery position to bomb bay doors and back in this simulation of a World War II raid over Germany; it's not easy to make it safely back across the Channel.

Berzerk (Atari, for the 2600, \$30; G. C. E., for the Vectrex, \$40) In this labyrinth game, don't miss the variations that include Evil Otto, who bounces onto the screen when you linger in any room for too long.

Centipede (Atari, for the 5200, \$40, and 2600, \$35) Our favorite Trak-Ball game, this superb adaptation of the arcade hit is also excellent in the 2600 version, despite simpler graphics.

Communist Mutants From Space (Starpath, for the 2600 with Supercharger, \$15) On level nine of this exciting shoot-'em-up, you'll do well to survive five seconds if you choose an option without shields; lower levels offer more reasonable play.

Demon Attack (Imagic, for Intellivision, \$40; the 2600, \$30; and Odyssey², \$35) In this video incarnation of *The Birds*, the Intellivision version offers an extra screen where you battle a spectacular mother ship.

Donkey Kong (Coleco, for ColecoVision, 2600, and Intellivision, under \$30) Though simpler than the arcade game, the best version—for ColecoVision—gives you three different boards that are more than sufficiently challenging at skill level four. (For the sequel, *Donkey Kong Jr.*, see page 50.)

Fireball (Starpath, for the 2600 with Supercharger, \$15) A video game with a sense of humor, this variation on the Breakout theme will have you juggling balls fast and furiously.

Frogger (Parker Brothers, for the 2600, \$30) Frogs have a tough life, especially when they have to cross busy highways and crocodile-infested rivers; it's one of the best arcade adaptations for this system.

The Great Wall Street Fortune Hunt

(N. A. P. C. E. C., for Odyssey², \$50) Buy low and sell high—but how quickly can you react to news bulletins and changing prices as they scroll across your screen?

Hyperchase (G. C. E., for Vectrex, \$30) Racing against the clock on crowded, winding roads, you can only hope to minimize your crashes, not eliminate them; outstanding sound effects, especially the engine shifting through all four gears.

Micro Surgeon (Imagic, for Intellivision, \$40) A weird idea that works: You maneuver your microscopic submarine through a patient's bloodstream, blasting away tumors and blood clots on the way. Fortunately, it's not at all realistic.

Mine Storm (G. C. E., for Vectrex) You can rotate smoothly, thrust, and use hyperspace while blasting increasingly dangerous arrays of mines. The game, built into every Vectrex, beautifully shows off the system's capabilities.

Missile Command (Atari, for the 5200 and 2600, \$30) You defend your cities by rapidly setting off explosions to annihilate incoming missiles in this excellent version of the arcade hit.

NFL Football (Mattel, for Intellivision, \$30) The key to winning is ball control, so when in doubt, punt for field position and try for an interception; this is still our favorite video football game.

Pac-Man (Atari, for the 5200, \$40) You'll get better at avoiding the four pursuing monsters if you learn each one's idiosyncracies; but mastering the necessary quick turns with the Atari joysticks may prove impossible. (The 2600 version is dull graphically and, in comparison with other games available for that system, rather ordinary.)

Pitfall (Activision, for the 2600 and Intellivision, \$32) In this adventure maze game, Pitfall Harry climbs, swings, and jumps past hazards while accumulating treasure.

Star Raiders (Atari, for the 5200 and 2600, \$40) Besides mastering ship-to-ship combat tactics, you must watch your instrument panel and stay up to date on the status of the galactic chart, no easy task.

UFO (N. A. P. C. E. C., for Odyssey², \$33) A game of reflexes rather than strategy, this is still one of the best shoot-'em-ups for this system.

(Continued on page 56)

SOCCER



(Atari, 1-2 sim., \$32)

Nearly as much fun as the real thing, especially for two. The action, with throw-ins, corner kicks, and headers, is fast and lifelike, and the computer-controlled goalies are tough. Loft the ball at three heights or kick it along the ground, switch control from one fieldman to another, or move a man off-screen to make him reappear on the other side—a vital strategy. The time for each half can be varied from 5 to 45 minutes.

SPACE PANIC

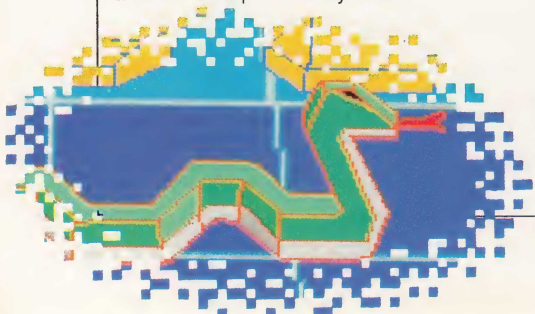
(Coleco, 1-2 alt., under \$30)

The idea is to dig holes in four levels of girders so that the monsters chasing you will fall into them. When one dies, bury him quickly or he'll get up mad and harder to kill. If you dig your holes cleverly, you can make a monster fall more than one level and earn a bonus. The "boss" and the "don," two meaner meanies, die only when they fall on top of one of their cohorts (or vice versa) or fall two or three levels. Plan your routes carefully, and dig no hole until it's time.

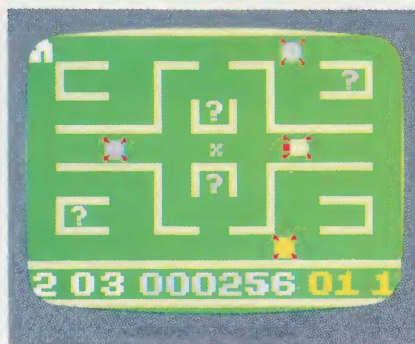
TAPEWORM

(Spectravideo, 1-2 alt., \$30)

You control the head of a worm, which goes around eating beans that appear at random on the screen. Each bean you eat adds to the worm's length; this makes him harder to maneuver, because he dies if he gets tangled up and crosses his own tail. Taking too long to get to a bean means you have to eat two penalty dots before advancing to the next board. Different obstacles appear on screens two and four, but screen three—where the screen goes dark and you have to remember where beans are from a quick glimpse—is the most challenging and the most fun. The game can be played at two different speeds; if you pick the slow one, you'll be able to make more accurate turns, but it will be harder to escape the predatory spider and bird that periodically attack.



TURTLES



(N.A.P.C.E.C., 1-2 alt., \$35)

Just because the characters and sound effects are cute and the screen looks pretty, don't assume this maze is a pushover. You're a turtle trying to pick up all the baby turtles and bring them to a house. The babies are hidden in boxes concealed by question marks, but under one question mark lurks a sleeping beetle. Waking him may be the last thing you ever do. While you're running around saving babies, other beetles are chasing you and getting smarter by the second. You carry a small supply of bombs that explode when a beetle runs over them. These must be used with care, since a second bomb can't be dropped until a beetle runs over the first—and smart beetles might not. On the succeeding seven levels you face smarter beetles, and more of them.

VANGUARD

(Atari, 1-2 alt., \$40; \$30 for the 2600)

Vanguard presents you with a logistics problem: navigating your ship through six bizarre space zones (First, Rainbow, Styx, Stripe, Bleak, and Last). On the 5200, each zone has outstanding graphics, music that signals changes in the game, and a challenging obstacle course. Your best bet is to stay near the middle of the screen, blasting a path straight in front of you. Watch for the occasional energy tanks that can give you temporary invulnerability. In the 2600 version, the graphics are uninteresting, the obstacle course is simple, and there's no music.

VENTURE

(Coleco, 1-2 alt., under \$30)

Your task is to pick up treasures in oddly shaped rooms and kill the monsters guarding them. Each room contains one treasure and a different challenge—the monsters may appear after you've got the bauble and try to stop you from leaving, or they may teleport from place to place. Also in each room is an indestructible monster that appears a minute after you enter—so hurry up. When you complete one level you go to the next, where more harrowing hazards await. Probably you'll never collect all 36 treasures.

The 2600 version lacks music, and its graphics and gameplay are decidedly unexciting. The Intellivision version was not available for play-testing.

VOLLEYBALL

(Atari, 1-2 sim., \$30)

While the sun sets and the surf whooshes in the background, you control a two-player "beach" volleyball team. You must serve, set up, and spike the ball, using its shadow as a reference point. But when the sun has set, forget about returning spikes. If you can't find a human opponent, the computer is a worthy, hard-to-beat adversary.

WEB WARS



(G. C. E., 1-2 alt., \$35)

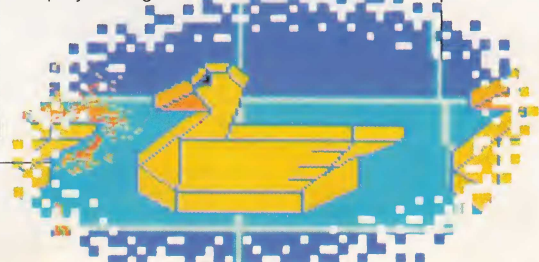
This high-speed thriller requires split-second timing and quick thinking. You're a sort of intergalactic big-game hunter, capturing fantasy creatures for your trophy room. While hunting, however, you must deal with unfriendly drones, and an antisocial dragon that blocks your escape portal. The best way to handle them is usually to whiz through the web of the title at top speed, blasting drones as soon as they appear. Otherwise, they'll chase you and make your life miserable. As for the dragon, his reflexes are slow, so you can outsmart him if you move quickly and in unpredictable patterns.

ZAXXON

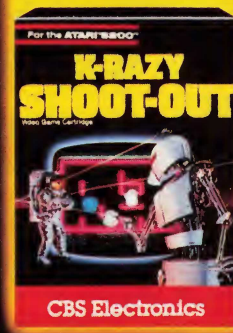
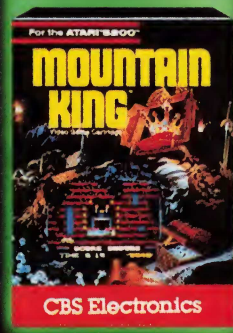
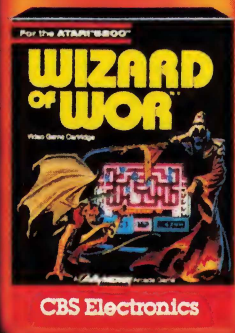
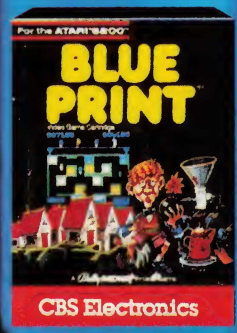
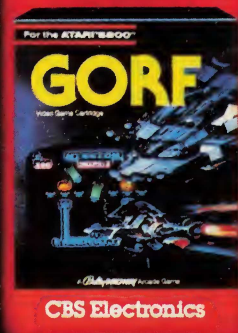
(Coleco, 1-2 alt., under \$40)

Zaxxon is a robot warrior that you must destroy with energy blasts from your fighter plane. But first you have to knock out enemy laser and rocket batteries (meanwhile refueling by shooting fuel tanks), and then eliminate Zaxxon's defender squadrons in open space. Finally you get to take on Big Z himself, and he's a formidable foe. The 3-D graphics are stunning and turn what would otherwise be a merely good fly-and-shoot game into an unusual and exciting one, especially in the ColecoVision version.

The Intellivision version was not available for play-testing.



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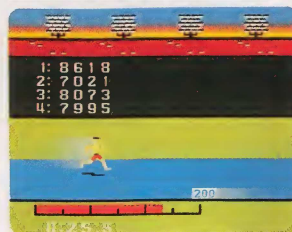
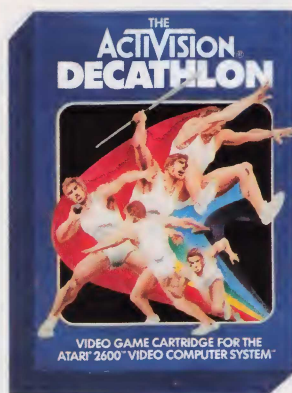
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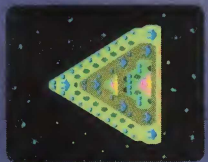


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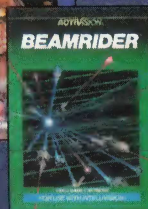
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41 Cryptic Crossword

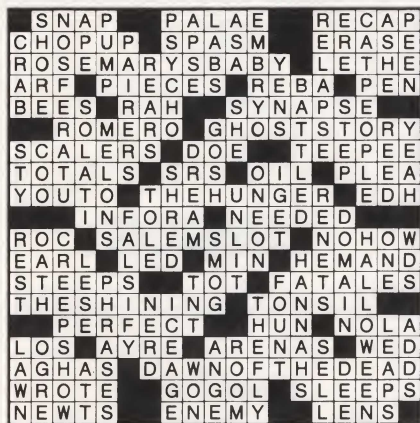
ACROSS

- 1 Crabby (cabby + r)
 4 Elephant (the Nepal)
 10 Other (her to)
 11 Estimable (aim let's be)
 12 Earnest (enters a)
 13 Pungent (pun gent)
 14 Evens (seven)
 15 Improper (imp roper)
 19 Stranger (st. + ranger)
 21 Blunt (bunt + l)
 23 Comical (co. + claim)
 26 Isolate (is + o + late)
 27 Sectional (coastline)
 28 Opium (o + up l'm)
 29 Protégés (get prose)
 30 Atoned (a + note + D)

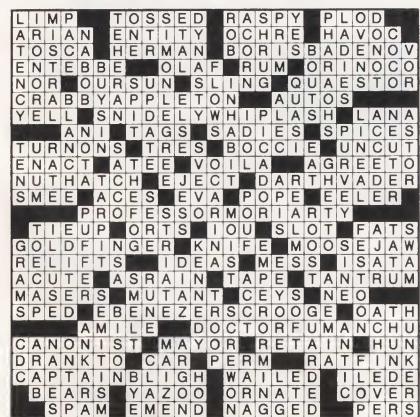
DOWN

- 1 Closeted (close + Ted)
 2 Abhorrent (bear north)
 3 Borders (boarders)
 5 Let up (pelt + U)
 6 Pimento (p + on time)
 7 Amble (gamble - g)
 8 Treaty (eat + try)
 9 Seething (see thing)
 16 Particle (P + article)
 17 Education (coed at UN I)
 18 Streamed (tree dams)
 20 Ascribe (a + scribe)
 21 Blow out (bout + low)
 22 Acts up (fACT SUPERbly)
 24 Macho (mocha)
 25 Lunge (plunge - p)

39 Horrors!



45 Ornerly Cusses



59 Eyeball Benders

The objects are:

- A. Car ignition
 B. Cup of coffee
 C. Desk calendar
 D. Shower head
 E. Escalator
 F. Alarm clock
 G. Train
 H. Image in mirror of a man shaving

The activity is going to work, and the correct order is F, D, H (the shower-caused steam on the mirror indicates our subject showered before shaving), B (the placemat, milk carton, and car keys show he had his coffee shortly before leaving home), A, G (he drove by car to the train station and took the train into town), E, C.

31 Connect-a-Word

1 WHITE	2 WATER	3 FALL	4 OVER	5 HEAD
6 HOT	7 BED	8 DOWN	9 TURN	10 ON
11 SPRING	12 TIME	13 TABLE	14 TOP	
15 BACK	16 BOARD	17 SETTING	18 OFF	
19 CROSS	20 WALK	21 FREE	22 HAND	
23 ROAD	24 WAY	25 SIDE	26 KICK	
27 BLOCK	28 OUT	29 STEP	30 IN	31 COMMON
32 PARTY	33 LINE	34 UP	35 TAKE	36 PLACE



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